

COMMENTARY

Wolves need help after losing Reid and Randle. Simmons isn't the answer

BY LA VELLE E. NEAL III
Star Tribune/Tribune Content Agency

MINNEAPOLIS No, Wolves fans. You have not fallen through the time vortex and landed back in 2021.

But, yes, this is about Ben Simmons coming to Minnesota.

A report on Monday has Simmons, healthy and seeking NBA re-employment, is about to begin workouts with the Australian national team. Corresponding speculation was immediate, with a number of teams mentioned as destinations. The report mentioned that Simmons has a non-guaranteed offer on the table for training camp with a Western Conference team.

Not Minnesota, please.

It brings back memories of the constant Simmons-to-the-Wolves trade rumors that were prevalent for several months in 2021. It should be pointed out that it occurred during Gersson Rosas' tenure as president of basketball operations, not current majordomo Tim Connelly's.

This time, the Wolves should proceed as if Simmons doesn't exist and focus on getting their new-look team ready for 2026-27.

Clearly, the Wolves have a need at the four after Naz Reid and Julius Randle departed in trades. They could use a front-court player. The 6-foot-10 Simmons would bring them another playmaker who can rebound



LUKE HALES TNS

Ben Simmons of the Brooklyn Nets plays against the Milwaukee Bucks at Barclays Center on Oct. 27, 2024, in New York.

and play defense. Simmons, 30, is averaging 7.4 points a game for his career.

But the concerns outweigh what he could bring to the table.

Simmons has been limited by back issues going back to 2022 when he was with the Nets. He didn't play at all last year. While he has reportedly regained his athleticism, it's unclear how many minutes he'll be able to log. What are the assurances that his back won't flare up again? The Wolves need someone who can handle a workload of a four.

And while Simmons can create, play defense and rebound, he can't shoot from deep. That would be problematic on the small-ball, floor-spacing Wolves. LaMelo Ball, Anthony Edwards, Jaden McDaniels, Terrence Shannon Jr. and others are going to get up and down the court and look to either shoot 3-pointers, drive and kick

or finish at the rim.

In seven NBA seasons, Simmons has attempted a total of 36 3-pointers. His last attempt was during the 2022-23 season. Opponents are going to sag off of him, congesting the lane and affecting drives to the rim.

While the Wolves' signing of Trey Lyles wasn't splashy move, he has attempted over 1,800 3-pointers during his career, making 34.7% of them. Lyles, who's also 30, can help with spacing. Simmons can't.

This is 2026, not 2021. The Wolves are a different team than when they showed interest in him five years ago. Simmons needs to prove his back can hold up and handle a workload.

The Wolves need a solution at the four, not a reclamation project. So the Ben Simmons reclamation tour should not originate from Target Center.

Messi doubts playing 'for much longer' after father's death

Field Level Media

Soccer legend Lionel Messi doubts his playing career will last "much longer" following the recent death of his father.

Jorge Messi passed away on Saturday at the age of 68 after being hospitalized during this summer's World Cup.

Lionel Messi, 39, posted a statement on social media on Wednesday saying he "does not know how to carry on."

"All I ever did was play football, and now I have a fair few doubts as to whether I'll carry on doing it for much longer," the Inter Miami forward wrote. "You were by my side from the start, we were so close to the end (of his career). Why didn't you hang on just that little bit longer so we could finish it together?"

Messi, an eight-time Ballon d'Or winner as the world's greatest player, currently is in his fourth season with Miami. He led the team to its first MLS Cup championship and won his second straight league MVP award last season.

The Argentina native is under contract with Inter Miami through 2028, earning a reported base salary of \$25 million per campaign.

Jorge Messi played a significant role in his son's development and his professional career, having served as his agent and business manager.

Here is the full text of Messi's emotional post: "Dad, I still can't believe you're gone. I can't get my head round it -- or rather, I don't want to. It's so hard for me to imagine that I won't see you ever again, that we won't talk

anymore," the Inter Miami star wrote. "I know you were suffering and that this is for the best, but you left us far too soon. We still had so much left to enjoy together.

"You kept asking me to play in the last World Cup, and it was just days before it started that you took a turn for the worse. It was the first time you weren't going to be at a tournament, but Mum kept telling me you'd get better and that you'd be well enough to travel. I'd tell you that we'd make it to the final so you could travel.

"Every time a match ended, I'd wait for your message and miss it. That's when I realized the situation was really bad. Even so, I couldn't stop thinking about getting as far as possible, to give you time to watch a match. We reached the final and you couldn't be there. I wanted to win it so I could take it to you and show you another trophy. I couldn't do it, my legs wouldn't carry me any further. This time I tried to go against my physical limits, but I couldn't. I never managed to feel right.

"When I got back, you thought we'd lost the final on penalties. We couldn't talk about any of what had happened. You couldn't enjoy any of it. We didn't win the title, but you have no idea how much we enjoyed every match. Once again, you were right: I had to be there and play.

"I'm telling you this because it was the only thing we couldn't talk about, because you already know all the rest. We spoke every day and saw each other whenever we could, depending on my commitments.

"I don't know what I'm going to do without you, I don't know how to carry on. All I ever did was play football, and now I have a fair few doubts as to whether I'll carry on doing it for much longer. You were by my side from the start, we were so close to the end (of his career). Why didn't you hang on just that little bit longer so we could finish it together?"

"I know that your happiness came from seeing your family doing well -- your wife and your children, and above all, without the others finding out, watching me play ... (winking emoji)

"Ever since I was a little boy, it was always like that. You'd take me to every training session as soon as you got home from work. Mum used to take me to a lot of them because you were working.

"Of course, you never missed a single match. How you suffered watching me and how you enjoyed it, even though you never showered me with praise.

"You were a dad, a friend and a representative. You were always the person you needed to be at every moment, and you never got anything wrong. Despite the odd reproach or argument, you were always right. In the end, things always turned out as you said they would.

"I'm going to miss you so much, but you'll always be present, and above all in bringing up my children, because I'm teaching and raising them as you both did with me.

"Rest in peace and look after us from up there, just as you did here. Thank you for everything. "I love you, dad."

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