

Sixers will have to learn to sacrifice for one another

BY CHRIS HINE
The Philadelphia Inquirer/The Tribune Content Agency

PHILADELPHIA
In the wake of the 76ers’ monumental off-season, one concern that players have already started addressing in various statements is, “How much are players going to sacrifice?”

Having as much talent as the Sixers have on their roster naturally leads to questions about roles and shot distribution, since there’s only one ball to go around.

Landing Jaylen Brown and LeBron James in the same offseason will of course invite skeptics who doubt the fit and wonder whether everyone’s games can mesh. But this is a champagne problem in the NBA. Most teams would be lucky to have this as one of its main issues heading into training camp.

“Obviously it’s a lot of guys with talent,” Brown said last month. “It’s egos, but to win, you got to be able to sacrifice, be able to have trust and communication.”

Along those lines, here’s a look at how the Sixers might address that through the lens of a statistic that measures how often a player consumes his team’s possessions, usage rate, which measures how often a team’s possessions ends with either a shot, free throws or a turnover from a particular player when he is on the floor.

A GLANCE AT THE STARTING FIVE

First, here were the individual usage rates last season (according to NBA.com) for each player in the projected starting five, and where they ranked in the league.

- Tyrese Maxey: 28.6% (27th)
- VJ Edgecombe: 19.6% (181st)
- Jaylen Brown: 35.1% (third)
- LeBron James: 26.2% (47th)
- Joel Embiid: 33.6% (sixth)

POTENTIAL PATHS FORWARD

Quick addition will show all those percentages equal 143.1 when they need to equal closer to 100 (since not everyone will always be playing together at the same time). In some lineup combinations, and in games in which Embiid and/or James don’t play, that’ll be the time for Maxey, Edgecombe and Brown to have higher usage stretches than they would have when everyone is healthy. But when all five are healthy and on the floor, likely everyone is going to have to sacrifice to make the usage pie work.

James has already indicated with his play that this is where he is headed in his career, and perhaps why general manager Mike Gansey has been

hyping up James’ ability to be a connector.

James’ usage actually hit a career low last season, as he ceded more scoring opportunities in the Los Angeles Lakers offense to Austin Reaves and Luka Doncic. This worked for the Lakers, who were playing well before Reaves and Doncic got hurt later in the season. James averaged 7.2 assists, so having him lean more into a connector and creator role in the Sixers’ offense is a prime way for the offense to generate shots naturally when the starting five is on the floor.

This could allow Maxey to play more frequently off the ball, where he can be efficient from three-point range.

LOOKING AT BROWN'S NUMBERS

Another obvious place to look for decreased usage is Brown, who saw a spike in that statistic with Jayson Tatum out for the majority of last season for the Boston Celtics. Brown went from 28.2% the prior season to his 35.1% mark last year (he attempted four more shots, averaged 2.4 free throws and one more turnover per game).

Brown returning to a usage level similar to what he had playing alongside Tatum makes sense, considering he won’t have to shoulder the burden of heavy shot creation playing alongside Maxey, Embiid and James. How he adjusts his game to the roster around him is one of the more interesting questions of the early part of the Sixers season and could go a long way to determining just what this team looks like.

A LOAD OFF EMBIID'S SHOULDERS, AND LEGS

The potential path to Embiid’s role on the team may lie in his 2024 Olympics experience playing with James. There, Embiid took on a reduced role on Team USA’s path to the gold medal.

The offense doesn’t have to run through him when he’s on the floor, especially if the Sixers are going to utilize one of the strengths of this roster - getting out in transition. This could serve a dual purpose in freeing up shots for the rest of the lineup while allowing Embiid to avoid accumulating as much wear and tear game to game.

GETTING OUT IN TRANSITION

The Sixers have four of the top 15 scorers in transition from a season ago. One way to get everyone his fill of shots is to play fast and have more possessions. If the Sixers commit to playing that way some of the usage issues will take care of themselves. Inevitably, there will still be things to figure out in the half-court, especially when it comes to who is taking

what shots late in close games.

That will take time to sort through. But the Sixers, in their comments so far this summer, have indicated they know the challenge ahead, and so far, they seem willing to tackle it head on instead of avoiding it.



MONICA HERNDON The Philadelphia Inquirer/TNS

The Philadelphia 76ers’ Tyrese Maxey (right) and Jaylen Brown will play a big part in making their star-studded roster work during the upcoming season.

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Proposal information can be accessed at www.woodford.kyschools.us/bids or pick up a copy at the Woodford County Public Schools Central Office (180 Frankfort St., Versailles, KY 40383). Proposals must be received by Friday, September 25, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. local time. Electronic or telephone proposals will not be accepted.

Those interested in purchasing may reach out to Dr. Josh Rayburn at josh.rayburn@woodford.kyschools.us or (859) 879-4600.

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*All questions must be submitted by 10:00 a.m. EST / 9:00 a.m., CST, Tuesday, September 29, 2026. After this date and time, there will be no communication. Responses will be addressed in Addendum #1, released by 5:00 p.m., EST / 4:00 p.m., CST, Tuesday, October 6, 2026.
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*All questions must be submitted by 10:00 a.m. EST / 9:00 a.m., CST, Tuesday, September 29, 2026. After this date and time, there will be no communication. Responses will be addressed in Addendum #1, released by 5:00 p.m., EST / 4:00 p.m., CST, Tuesday, October 6, 2026.
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