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2011-12 Atlanta Hawks Preview

The Atlanta Hawks earned the fifth seed in the East after ending the season with a 44-38 mark last year. The Hawks took down an unimpressive Orlando Magic in the opening round but were beaten by Chicago in the next. While they managed an upset over Orlando, it has been obvious that Atlanta is trying to make the jump to becoming a top tier squad. After winning 53 times in 2009-10, Atlanta struggled and ended up with nine less wins in 2010-11.

The Atlanta Hawks will showcase a couple of modifications to their roster. After losing Jamal Crawford to free agency, they brought on veterans Tracy Mcgrady and Vladimir Radmanovic. Although Mcgrady is obviously not the player he was back in his heyday, he can still be efficient in limited time. Radmanovic is a 6'10 small forward with solid shooting ability and his numbers will rely on how much playing time he can get.

Atlanta will have one of the top starting lineups in the NBA. Third year point guard Jeff Teague came on in the postseason last season and will be given the keys as the starter this 2012 year. He will be surrounded with a team that includes Joe Johnson, Josh Smith, Marvin Williams and Al Horford. Johnson, Smith and Horford are all able scorers that can without a doubt put up over 20 points, but more times than not, they settle for difficult jump shots instead of driving to the basket. If head coach Larry Drew can get Horford and Smith to play more near the basket, the Hawks have the ability to be one of the top offensive squads in the entire league.

Losing super sixth man Jamal Crawford will obviously hurt the Hawks' bench this season. Mcgrady and Radmanovic will join Kirk Hinrich, Zaza Pachulia, Jason Collins among others as key reserves, but none of these players have Crawford's offensive skill set. It is likely that this team will employ a much more shared approach instead of relying on Crawford's scoring ability off the bench. The benches' play this year will determine where the Hawks will land by the end of the season.

Pick: 3rd East's Southeast Division – Our [NBA handicappers](#) think the Hawks have the skill and the pieces to compete for a top 4 seed but they can't seem to put it all together. It seems as though the guys do not have the motivation or drive to be champions and are just happy in reaching the postseason every year. Many times in the course of the long NBA year, Atlanta does not seem to have the mental toughness and motivation to do anything more than what they've done in previous seasons. Jeff Teague's play will determine where this team is going, but the Hawks also need a dynamic scorer of the bench if they want to contend in the east. This team will be very up and down and will make the playoffs as no higher than a 5th seed. They may win the opening round again, but it will be very unlikely for them to move past the second round.

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