

Orlando Magic's Paolo Banchero is Playing Like an NBA All-Star This Season

ORLANDO, FL, UNITED STATES , December 26, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Orlando Magic's](#) second year forward, [Paolo Banchero](#), is playing like an [NBA All-Star](#) this season. The proof can be found in eight areas:

The Standings Say So

It's extremely rare for a team in the top four of their conference standings on Christmas Day to not ultimately be represented in the NBA All-Star Game. In fact, in each of the last nine seasons (excluding the 2020-21 campaign which started Dec. 22), at least one player from every top four East and West team on Christmas was chosen. The Orlando Magic, who are 17-11, are currently in fourth place in the East.

The Stats Say So

Banchero is one of only three players in the entire league right now averaging at least 21.0 points, 6.5 rebounds, 4.5 assists and one steal, while shooting 38-plus percent from 3-point range. The other two are no-brainer All-Stars – LeBron James and Luka Doncic.

Dominance Against Elite Defenses

“

I think he's done a great job this year making everyone around him better and growing into a leader as well.”

Magic forward Franz Wagner

Banchero erupted for 36 points against the East-leading Boston Celtics on Dec. 17. The only other two players to score 35-plus against Boston so far this season are Anthony Edwards and LaMelo Ball. The Magic forward also had a career-high 42 points against the Cleveland Cavaliers on Dec. 6. The only other player to score 40-plus against them this year was Shai Gilgeous-Alexander.



Paolo Banchero is playing like an NBA All-Star this season

Player of the Week Honor Should Matter

Banchero was named the NBA's Eastern Conference Player of the Week for the period ending Nov. 26. During four games that week – all Magic wins – he averaged 23.5 points, 5.5 rebounds and 5.0 assists, while shooting 54 percent from the floor and 53 percent from 3-point distance. Last season, every Eastern Conference POW pre-Christmas (Jayson Tatum, twice Giannis Antetokounmpo, twice Kevin Durant, twice Joel Embiid, Tyrese Haliburton, Donovan Mitchell and Pascal Siakam) were selected for the All-Star Game.

He Plays Both Sides of the Ball

Banchero has rapidly become one of the league's most underrated defenders. The numbers back that up, too. This season, opponents are shooting just 44 percent from the field with the 6-foot-10, 250-pounder as the nearest defender, per Second Spectrum tracking data. Among the 68 players who have been the closest defender to 300-plus shots so far, that ranks 11th. Players above him include defensive aces Paul George, Dillon Brooks, Walker Kessler and Evan Mobley. The Magic, as a team, have the NBA's fifth-best defense.

He Hasn't Missed a Game

Although it doesn't technically apply to the All-Star Game, starting this season players need to appear in at least 65 games to be eligible for end-of-season individual awards. Among all legitimate All-Star candidates this season, Banchero is one of the only ones who has appeared in every one of his team's games so far.

He's Been Clutch

Banchero already has two game-winning shots on his resume this season. On Nov. 2 against the Utah Jazz, he connected on a go-ahead driving layup with 14.1 seconds left and on Nov. 15 against the Chicago Bulls, he drained a go-ahead turnaround shot from the paint with 1.4 seconds remaining. Both of those games were on the road.

Magic Have Been a Totally Different Team With Him

In the two seasons before Banchero's arrival, the Magic won a combined 43 games. Already, in a



Paolo Banchero at Orlando Magic media day prior to the start of the 23-24 season.

season-and-a-quarter with him, they have won 51 games. Franz Wagner, an All-Star candidate himself, recently said, "I think Paolo should be an All-Star because he's probably the main reason why we are where we are in the standings and (he's) creating mismatch problems for the (other) team all game. Not just making plays for himself, (but) I think he's done a great job this year making everyone around him better and growing into a leader as well."

NBA All-Star voting is open. Voting is open now for the NBA All-Star Game in Indianapolis. Votes are eligible for submission once per 24-hour period. Magic All-Stars from the past were Shaquille O'Neal (four times), Penny Hardaway (four times), Tracy McGrady (four times), Grant Hill (two times), Dwight Howard (six times), Rashard Lewis, Jameer Nelson and Nikola Vucevic (two times).

Trish Wingerson

Orlando Magic

+1 407-538-0892

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/677418980>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2023 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.