

SPORTS

Saunders expects Love in Minnesota next season

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — During a weekend trip to Boston, All-Star forward Kevin Love took pictures with fans while seeing the sights, leading Celtics fans to speculate that he's going to follow in the footsteps of Kevin Garnett as the next Minnesota star to come to town and turn around a struggling franchise.

Not so fast, Timberwolves president of basketball operations Flip Saunders said. "The last I knew Kevin was under contract with us, and I expect him to be playing for us next year," Saunders said Sunday after a workout of draft prospects. "I don't really dictate where guys go on vacation or what they do. They can go wherever they want to go."

Love can opt out of his contract after next season, and the three-time All-Star has yet to make the playoffs in six years with the Timberwolves. He was also angered when former executive David Kahn refused to give him a full, five-year extension and instead gave him a four-year deal with a player option after three. That's led many to believe that he will leave next summer to play for a contender in a bigger market.

"Yo (at)kevinlove if you need advice on moving from Minnesota to Boston just let me know (hash)CityOfChamps," tweeted Red Sox slugger David Ortiz, who spent six years with the Minnesota Twins before signing with the Red Sox as a free agent and winning three World Series titles.

The situation has prompted the Timberwolves to consider a trade to avoid losing

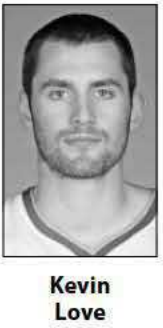
Love without compensation. But Saunders has made it clear that he doesn't feel as though he has to make a move this summer. He views Love as one of the top offensive players in the league, a 25-year-old who has improved his game every off-season.

So if other teams do want to get their hands on one of the NBA's top power forwards, it won't be easy. "I know there's a feeding frenzy out there from a lot of teams," Saunders said. "Unfortunately, they have no say. I plan on Kevin being here."

If Saunders was posturing, he has good reason. The draft isn't until June 26, and the best offers from teams desperate to land Love don't figure to start rolling in until the week of the draft, or perhaps not even until draft night, and Saunders has plenty of options.

He could move him right around draft time for what is expected to be a package that includes high picks and a veteran player or two. He could wait for July 1 and look to build a package around more established, veteran talent.

Or he could hold on to Love, try to add a few pieces to a team that finished 10th in the West, and hire the right coach to replace the retired Rick Adelman and show Love that the team is headed in the right direction. It worked for the



Portland Trail Blazers with LaMarcus Aldridge, and it worked years ago for the Los Angeles Lakers and Kobe Bryant. The Wolves can also pay Love about \$26.5 million more than any other team.

And if Love still does depart after next summer, the Wolves won't be left empty-handed. They'll have about \$17 million in extra salary cap room to attack the free agent market, though luring stars to a wintry climate to play for a team that hasn't made the playoffs since 2004 has always proved to be a challenge.

The next big step will be hiring a coach.

The Wolves had discussions with Memphis' Dave Joerger over Memorial Day weekend, but Joerger stayed with the Grizzlies, who sweetened his contract to remain with the 50-win team.

Saunders said he will meet with Wolves owner Glen Taylor this week to evaluate the search, which has been influenced some by the uncertainty surrounding Love.

When asked if he would have a coach in place by the June 26 draft, Saunders said "there's probably a better chance that we would than we wouldn't. We're not going to put a time frame on it."

As for those excited Celtics fans, Saunders said they should calm down. But he knows they won't.

"They're the same fans who thought they had Tim Duncan," he joked. "They still think they got Tim Duncan in the draft. I'm not really sure, but the last I looked he was playing for San Antonio, Old Man Riverwalk."



The Bronco girls track and field team state qualifiers who will be competing this weekend in the State Class A Meet at Hamline University include, from left, front row, Amy Auran, Breanna Shofner, Hailey Fentem, Lexi Owen. Back row, Emma Gilbert, Claire Herzig, Lexi Erickson, Valandre Butler, Savannah Olson.

TRACK

► continued from B1

won the section meet in a 51.59, the 12th-fastest seed time out of 16 teams in two heats at state. The Broncos, who qualified for state in that event for the third year in a row, had been out of the section's top two before Shofner received the baton from Butler and surged in front at the finish.

"I think I need to work on my starting, just so I can get faster times, so I don't slow us down," Owen said. "But other than that, I think we'll do fine."

Minneapolis Edison comes in as the top seed at 49.75, the only team with a seed time of under 50 seconds. Last year's state champion, Pequot Lakes, which won the event in 49.54, returns with the second-fastest seed time of 50.39.

To qualify for Saturday's finals, which the Falls wasn't able to do the past two years, the Broncos would have to either finish in the top two in their heat Friday or have one of the next five-best times among those teams not in the top two in both heats.

The Broncos also have another individual qualifier back at state for the third year in the same event. Falls senior Hailey Fentem, who placed seventh last year in the 100 hurdles (16.1), enters this year's state meet with sixth-fastest seed time of 15.46 among 22 qualifiers in three heats.

Fentem's seed time, which also set a new Falls High School record, is 32-hundredths of a second behind the top seed, Fairmont junior Sierra Schultz, who will be in the same heat as Fentem.

"It's definitely going to be fun (competing again at state)," Fentem said. "I'm definitely going to try to make it into finals there."

The top two in each heat of the 100 hurdles, plus the next three-best times, advance to Saturday's finals.

For the first time since 2001, the Broncos are sending a girls distance runner to state in track and field. Freshman Lexi Erickson, who has been part of the Falls' girls cross country teams that have qualified for state the past three seasons, will be competing in Friday's 3200 run finals after having the section's runner-up time of 12:17.17.

"It's a little different (competing at state in track), because we have the team in cross country," Erickson said. "We have a lot of girls going (to state in track and field), so it's kind of like our mini-team, but it's nice to have someone with you."

Cannon Falls senior Emi Trost, which won last November's individual state cross country championship in Class A, is the top seed in the 3200 run at 11:02.78.

The Bronco girls have two state qualifiers in both the shot put and pole vault, which will both be taking place Saturday afternoon.

Falls junior Savannah Olson, the Section 7A runner-up in the shot put, is back at state for the fourth year in a row, three of which she qualified in that event. Olson, who placed eighth at state last year with a throw of 36-6.5, has a seed mark this year of 38-10 – 2 inches behind Gilbert, the section champion – that is the fourth-longest out of 16 qualifiers.

"I'm really excited to compete with Emma and hopefully place and get a medal," Olson said. "It's super exciting competing with a team member."

This weekend will mark the first year competing at state in the shot put for Gilbert, who also is back at Hamline University for the second year in a row as

a relay runner.

"I watched a little bit of (the shot put at state) last year, and I thought it was really cool how they did things, so I think being able to compete would be pretty good," said Gilbert, who also noted her goal is to win a medal, possibly in the top three.

Last year's Class A state champion in the girls shot put, St. Clair senior Katelyn Weber, has the top seed mark this year at 45-0, the only qualifier with a throw longer than 40 feet.

Broncos senior Amy Auran and freshman Claire Herzig both qualified for state in the pole vault after they each cleared 8-6, with Auran being the section champion based on fewer misses.

"Being the fact that this is the first time that we've ever had two girls go down (to state in the pole vault) in one year, I'm really, really excited about that," said Broncos assistant coach Dan Zika, who coaches the pole vaulters.

Herzig, who was a relay team alternate at state last year, and Auran, who qualified for state in cross country the past four seasons, made the state track and field meet individually for the first time this year.

"(Finishing third at last year's section meet) motivated me to do better, just knowing that I was one place away (from qualifying for state) last year, I really wanted to go this year," said Auran, who has been a section qualifier in the pole vault since 2009.

"I'm hoping to get at least 9 feet and a (personal record at state)," Herzig said.

Auran and Herzig both have a personal-best height of 8-6 in the pole vault.

Four of the top-seeded pole vaulters at state have seed marks above 10 feet with the top seed being BOLD/BLH junior Josie Lilja at 11-1.

2015 BRONCO TRACK AND FIELD CAPTAINS



From left, the Bronco girls track and field captains named for 2015 include Savannah Olson and Tayler Hebner. Both will be seniors next year.

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