



Posey agrees to four-year deal with Hornets

By Marc Stein
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LAS VEGAS -- The reigning NBA champions are about to lose their glue guy.

[James Posey](#), arguably the most coveted unrestricted free agent left on the market, agreed to a four-year deal with the New Orleans Hornets on Wednesday worth an estimated \$25 million, according to his agent Mark Bartelstein.

"It was a really tough decision for him," Bartelstein said. "Boston was an incredible experience for him every way you look at it. If he was going to leave Boston, he wanted to make sure it was for a team that would compete for championship immediately and the Hornets certainly are in that world."

Because of future luxury-tax concerns, Boston was apparently reluctant to offer Posey, 31, more than a two- or three-year deal starting at the league's midlevel exception (just under \$5.6 million) in spite of Posey's considerable contributions to the Celtics' first championship since 1986.

Picking Up Posey



James Posey played a crucial role in the Celtics' playoff run to the NBA title last season, especially in the NBA Finals. Posey peaked scoring-wise in the championship round and helped spread the floor with his 3-point shooting.

James Posey, 2008 Playoffs

Round	PPG	3-pt FG pct.	FT pct.
NBA Finals	8.7	50.0	100
Conf. finals	5.7	31.3	91.7
Conf. semifinals	5.1	35.0	87.5
First round	7.4	39.3	62.5

Losing Posey "is not good, you know?" Boston's Kevin Garnett told ESPN The Magazine's Sam Alipour. "Him and [Eddie House] were big big parts of why we won. Hopefully, we'll continue to try to get E-House and [retain] the majority of our team.

"But I wish [Posey] the best. Posey's a personal friend, and I'll be rooting for him -- other than when they're playing against us. [The Hornets] are getting a great leader, obviously a great 3-point shooter, but really a great leader on the floor."

Getting Posey is a huge coup for the Hornets, who are coming off a breakthrough season and increasingly billed as a future power in the West with quality starters such as David West, Tyson Chandler and Peja Stojakovic surrounding face of the franchise Chris Paul.

But the Hornets went into the summer desperate to fortify their thin bench and import a proven winner like Posey, who has won two rings in the past three seasons with the Celtics and Miami Heat.

Shortly before the draft, the Hornets traded away their only draft choice, the 27th overall pick, to the Portland Trail Blazers in exchange for \$3 million in cash with the stated purpose of using that money toward a proven player in free agency who could help them win right away.

With the money they received from Portland, combined with the savings that came from not having to shell out guaranteed money to a first-round draft pick, the Hornets were able to offer a generous enough deal to bring Posey to New Orleans.

Marc Stein covers the NBA for ESPN.com. Information from The Associated Press was used in this report.