

Rip's last run?

Richard Hamilton's current stint with the Bulls may be his last

**COMMENTARY** | It seems like ages ago that Richard Hamilton was a key contributor on a championship squad. Actually, it seems like ages ago that the Detroit Pistons were even a [championship](#) caliber team. Nonetheless, they were, and Rip was a focal point of the offense. The career of the Washington Wizards' seventh pick in the 1999 NBA Draft came to life after being traded to Detroit and playing for head coach Larry Brown.

Hamilton quickly became known for his automatic mid-range jumper. Though he did not display the range of Reggie Miller, Rip's constant movement and the way that he ran off of screens to get open was reminiscent of the Hall of Famer. It was beautiful to watch. In fact, his talent for stroking it was so superior that it led to three [All-Star](#) appearances while with the Pistons.

However, now in his 14th season, playing for the Chicago Bulls and approaching age 35, Rip's body has begun to fail him. He has already [missed](#) time this season and only managed to appear in 28 games the last. When healthy, he has [shown](#) that he can still shoot with the best of them. The problem lately has simply been an inability to take the court consistently enough for it to matter.

The third year of Hamilton's contract contains a team [option](#). Which, considering the aforementioned circumstances is unlikely to be exercised even if he makes it through the February 21 trade deadline without being dealt. Not only will his propensity for injuries be considered, but the [emergence](#) of young guns Jimmy Butler and Marquis Teague will likely deem him expendable.

Rip's run with the Bulls is all but certain to come to an end this season. The question is, will his NBA career do the same? The shooting guard has never been touted for his athleticism and is not necessarily a spot-up shooter from three. Hamilton also has never been an "instant offense" player that regularly scores in bunches. Normally, players that manage to stay in the league far past their primes can offer at least one of the three. Although the allure of his expiring contract may help, Hamilton landing in a significant role at this stage in his career may prove difficult.

Take Paul Pierce for instance. He can still be an elite scorer some nights, albeit in less dramatic fashion than years prior. Or, look at former superstars turned role players such as Ray Allen, who is still money from beyond the arc; and Tracy McGrady, who on any given night with the Atlanta Hawks last season could [easily](#) come into the game and put up 10 or 12 quick points. The same thing applies to his cousin Vince Carter, now with the Dallas Mavericks. There will always be room for scorers in the NBA. But will there be room for a jump shooter whose strength has always been beating his man around screens, when he is no longer quick or healthy enough to do so?

Whatever happens this season and the next, Rip has accomplished things most can only dream of. He

has achieved the noted accolades, has played alongside arguably the greatest basketball player of all-time in Michael Jordan and one of the greatest athletes of this generation in Derrick Rose. One would say that Hamilton's time in the NBA has been fruitful. And if employer disinterest or the fragility of an aging body should force him to walk away, in his wake will be an underrated legacy of triumph-- that somehow, will not have been brilliant enough to evoke due remembrance.