



# Pacers' Granger named NBA All-Star

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INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Indiana Pacers forward Danny Granger has been named an NBA All-Star for the first time.

The league announced Thursday night that Eastern Conference coaches had picked the fourth-year forward from New Mexico as one of the reserves for the Feb. 15 All-Star game in Phoenix. Fans' selections for the starting lineups were announced last week.

Granger thanked his teammates and the conference coaches after the selection was announced.

"Without them, it really would have been impossible," he said. "This is one of the goals that I set for myself when I came to the NBA and I'm glad I accomplished it. I definitely think this is a sign that the Pacers of old are really coming back after being down the past few years."

Granger ranks fourth in the league in scoring at 25.8 points a game, which would be the highest season average for an Indiana player since Billy Knight's 26.6 in 1976-77. The most recent Pacers player selected for the All-Star game was Jermaine O'Neal in 2007, his last season with Indiana.

Pacers coaches, players and executives, including team president Larry Bird, had said for weeks that Granger deserved to make the team.

"Obviously, I'm very happy for Danny," Bird said. "He has worked hard to achieve his goals. Through his hard work and dedication, he has become one of the top players in the league."

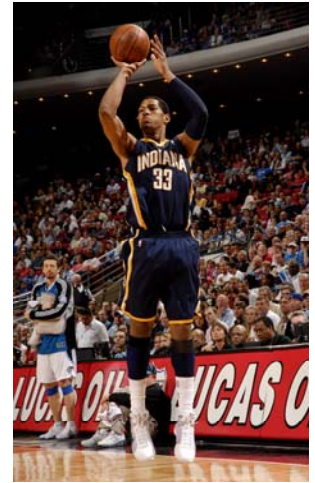
Granger solidified his case earlier this month. He averaged 34.7 points while shooting 49 percent over a six-game stretch against Western Conference teams that began on Jan. 3. He has scored more than 40 points three times since the start of December.

"He doesn't back down from any person or any challenge that he has faced, and he always plays hard," said Pacers coach Jim O'Brien. "When the intensity of the game bumps up a notch, he bumps it up another notch. If the game is physical, he's willing to get physical."

Granger also is developing a reputation for making clutch shots. He hit a game-winning 3-pointer over two-time MVP Steve Nash on Jan. 7 in Phoenix, then made a game-tying jumper late in regulation before the Pacers beat Detroit in overtime a week later.

He made another dramatic shot, a game-tying 3-pointer with 2.5 seconds left on Jan. 19 at New Orleans, before being one-upped by Chris Paul at the buzzer.

Granger signed a five-year contract extension this season worth up to \$65 million.



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