

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Tim Duncan Returns To San Antonio Spurs As Assistant Coach

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Legendary NBA player Tim Duncan's days with the San Antonio Spurs just received a new lease on life -- only this time it is not as power forward on the basketball court, but as assistant coach of the Spurs team, serving under current head coach Gregg Popovich.

In a release issued Monday, Mr. Popovich said, "It is only fitting, that after I served loyally for 19 years as Tim Duncan's assistant, that he returns the favor."

Spurs being the understated organization that it is, did not make a splash of the announcement, and did not even mention Mr. Duncan first in the release -- that went to Will Hardy, who will be taking up an expanded role as assistant coach for the team. In

fact, in pure Spurs fashion, all the release says about Mr. Duncan is, "Duncan, a 1997 Wake Forest graduate, played 19 seasons with the Spurs before retiring in the summer of 2016."

Mr. Duncan is a five-time NBA champion, has made 15 all-star appearances, won three NBA Finals MVP awards and two NBA Finals awards. He retired from playing three years ago but has worked at times with San Antonio's post players, according to ESPN. He has long been one of Mr. Popovich's favorites, even going back to 1997 in the days leading up to San Antonio taking Duncan with the No. 1 overall pick in that year's draft, ESPN said.

Mr. Popovich went to the Virgin Islands before that draft to get to know Mr. Duncan and was immediately sold.

"We lived on the beach for a few days and we swam and we talked," Popovich said at Duncan's retirement ceremony. "From that moment, I knew he was a special individual because he basically talked about everything but basketball. And we've been the recipients of that intelligence and that outlook on life since he's walked in here."

Mr. Duncan's hiring and Hardy's expanded role will help the Spurs replace former assistants Ettore Messina and Ime Udoka, who left earlier this offseason for new jobs, according to the ESPN report. Becky Hammon and Chip Engelland are also returning as Spurs assistants.