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# Numbers to grow with loss of Jordan

Injury should cause point spread to rise

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As Michael Jordan went down, the numbers went up.

The Washington Wizards announced Tuesday that Jordan will undergo arthroscopic surgery on his injured right knee and could be lost for the season.

That will mean that bettors who wager on the Wizards probably will get a few more points than when Jordan was in the lineup.

Oddsbroker Cesar Robaina of Las Vegas Sports Consultants said Jordan is worth as many as four points to the line.

"I think 3, 3 1/2, maybe even 4 in certain circumstances," Robaina said. "That's a starting point, and we'll have to see how they play without him and how long he'll be out."

The Wizards have been as low as 12-1 to win the NBA championship at some local sports books, but Jordan's injury will send that number rolling in the other direction. At the Imperial Palace, the Wizards got to 25-1 on the future book but now are 75-1.

• **FUNNY LEADER** -- Race and sports book director Jay Kornegay said the Imperial Palace has written an unusually large number of tickets on the Wizards to win the NBA championship. The most future money is on the Los Angeles Lakers, who are 5-7, but the team with the most tickets is a curious choice.

The Toronto Raptors have had more bets on them to win the NBA title than any other team.

"And to be honest with you, it's by a pretty big margin," Kornegay said. "But don't ask me why. Maybe it's because of the popularity of (Raptors star) Vince Carter, or just because people in that area really support their team. It is a bit surprising."

• **BIG IMPACT** -- Robaina said that while Jordan's impact on the line was huge, the player with the biggest impact is Lakers center Shaquille O'Neal.

Robaina said if O'Neal were out for a long period or for the season, the future-book odds would have to be adjusted not only on the Lakers but on the teams behind them. Such wasn't the case when the Wizards won 10 straight earlier and the number dropped dramatically. He said that didn't affect other teams, and Jordan's loss would not cause oddsmakers to change the number on other teams.

- **TRADE VALUE** -- Robaina said he thought Dallas and Boston helped themselves the most at the NBA trading deadline. The Mavericks made the most high-profile acquisitions, picking up Nick Van Exel and Raef LaFrentz from Denver.

Robaina said that while the move unquestionably improved the Mavs, it wouldn't affect their future-book value because it is not enough to overtake the Lakers.

"They still don't have anybody who can put a body on Shaq, and nobody there is playing too much defense," he said.