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When it comes to on-court performance, LeBron’s Soldier line holds its own when compared to his signature series. Does Nike’s latest entry, the Nike LeBron Soldier 11 , continue the line’s solid performance or does it concede the throne to the King’s latest signature model, the LeBron 14, as the go to LBJ sneaker on the hardwood? Only one way to find out….

Traction: Using a triangular pattern on the entire outsole, the traction on the LeBron Soldier 11 is surprisingly solid but not very consistent. The lateral forefoot is where the outsole is most responsive. You’re going to feel very comfortable doing step-backs, jab-steps, and v-cuts. However, on in-n-outs, crossovers, or any side to side move where you don’t have near perfect footwork the medial portion of the outsole starts to slip just a little bit. It isn’t a major problem but it does keep the Soldier 11 from reaching “elite” territory. As the shoe sits right now it’s a pretty solid option on virtually every court condition.

As far as outsole durability goes, the triangular nubs that Nike used on the LeBron Soldier 11 aren’t very durable ▪ but the nubs featured in the center of the outsole are more durable than the ones on the edges. This should help extend the Soldier 11’s life outdoors but there are better options available (namely, the Dame 3 or Zoom Rev 2017).

Cushion: The Nike LeBron Soldier 11 Prototype features Zoom Air in both the heel and forefoot. While it performs admirably, there really should be no excuse for not having full-length Zoom in every non-budget Nike Basketball model, especially when a name like LeBron James is attached to a sneaker.

The heel unit Nike used here is about 5.8mm bigger than the forefoot unit but you aren’t really going to know the difference. Both units provide about the same amount of responsiveness and impact protection. You’re going to feel the Zoom on your hard ladings and you’re going to feel the Zoom turn those hard landings into explosive take offs, but it just isn’t as smooth or explosive as it should be.

Full-length Zoom just makes everything better and when applied properly, it’s one

of the most versatile setups money can buy. What’s used here is a decent setup that provides a good experience ▪ it just would have been so much better with full-length Zoom.

Materials: Before we get into the materials, this review will be on the “premium” version of the LeBron Soldier 11. It features a suede overlay instead of the nylon mesh overlay that is featured in the “non-premium” colorways and trust me, you’re going to want to get a premium colorway.

I’m sure that the nylon mesh overlay that’s used on the “non-premium” colorways performs well, it’s just that the suede overlay is too nice to pass up and it actually reminds me of the way things used to be on sneakers. The more you use these the softer the materials will get and eventually they’ll end up conforming around your foot for a comfortable and enjoyable ride.

The rest of the upper is made of a soft mesh material that isn’t quite as comfortable as the suede portion of the upper but it does gives the Soldier 11s a nice modern touch. Overall, the materials Nike used here are extremely comfortable. While some may find them to be too soft, I thoroughly enjoyed what the Soldier 11s had to offer because they got more and more comfortable every time I strapped them up.

Fit: Like I mentioned in the pervious category, the materials on the LeBron Soldier 11 get softer the more you used them, almost to a fault. Straight out of the box you’re going to find that these shoes have an extremely snug but comfortable fit that really snaps to your foot. As time goes on the materials will soften up and eventually you will lose that air-tight fit and end up with a pillowy experience that feels just a bit soft.

After about 5-7 hours of use I found myself trying to tighten up the fit with the top strap but no matter how hard I pulled, the fit wasn’t the same as it was on day one. The good news is that the length of the Soldier 11s is true to size. There’s a little wiggle room in the toebox area that helps prevent to slams into the front of the shoe, despite the lack of lockdown in the ankle area. If you’re a wide footer, we recommend you try these on as the LeBron Soldier 11’s base isn’t very wide, especially in the forefoot. While the materials will conform around any foot shape,

wide-footers may feel a little unstable due to the extremely narrow mid-foot.

Support: This is the first time that I’ve ever felt like a LeBron sneaker needed more support. Usually LBJ’s sneakers have too many support features and end up feeling either bulky or overpowering. This is to no fault of LeBron or Nike ▪ they’re only trying to design a sneaker for someone who is a 6’8” demigod that requires way more support in his shoes than we mere mortals can handle ▪ but the Soldier 11s seem to be holding back in this category. Besides a standard external heel cup and slight lateral outrigger on the outsole there aren’t that many support features incorporated into the design.

The relatively high collar is deceiving since there isn’t much structure in the collar area and it actually dips pretty low to provide a pseudo-low top feel, but what hurts the Soldier 11’s support system the most is the extremely narrow mid-foot. This narrow mid-foot will give you the feeling that you’re only standing on your heels and toes (if you’re a forefoot heavy player you’re most likely not going to notice this issue) but for the rest of us, this makes the Soldier 11s feel a little wobbly, especially on side to side movements. All in all, this has to be one of the most un-supportive LeBron models to date, but it isn’t terrible by any means. It’s the definition of a sixth man waiting: it does just enough, but it leaves you wanting more.

Overall: The Nike LeBron Soldier 11 is a very versatile sneaker. Any guard or slashing forward will find something that they like. It could be the responsive but slightly explosive cushion setup or it could be the soft comfortable materials. Whatever it may be, the Soldier 11s definitely favor quick and explosive players who are forefoot-heavy. If you’re a slow big who needs a ton of support and impact protection or a wide-footer who needs a lot of stability, we recommend you look somewhere else since the Soldier 11 is lacking for both.

For $130, or $140 for a premium pair, the Nike LeBron Soldier 11 is a solid option both indoors and on the black top, yet it isn’t quite “elite.” Had Nike went all out on the cushioning and made it a little more stable, it would have easily been a top-tier performer. However, as the shoe sits right now it falls just short of a championship ▪ by three games, to be exact. http://www.kd10sale.com