

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the NATIONAL BASKETBALL RETIRED PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

LEGENDS

MAGAZINE

20/24 Summer

CLYDE DREXLER

*FAVORITE DREAM TEAM
MEMORIES FROM
1992 OLYMPICS*



TRILL'S TAKE

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"IT WAS SO INCREDIBLE TO HIT THAT SHOT BECAUSE YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO LOSE BECAUSE YOU'RE DOWN. AND WE COME BACK, AND YOU HIT THE SHOT... IT'S THAT MOMENT. IT JUST FELT SO GOOD!"





NBA ALL-STAR 2024

*THE HOOSIER STATE SHOWS THE WORLD
WHY INDIANA IS BASKETBALL*

by JULIO MANTEIGA

This past February, the eyes of the basketball world turned to middle America, as Indianapolis hosted the 73rd annual NBA All-Star Game and All-Star Weekend. And for those who didn't know, this small Midwest city – even with some snowfall – was about to show the world why so many consider it the basketball capital of the world. Players, teams, executives, VIP's and, most importantly, Legends were greeted at the Indianapolis airport with an NBA regulation court smack dab in the middle of a terminal as they streamed in from all over the world to take part in the midseason showcase. Right from the get-go, there was no doubt this weekend would be about hoops, hoops and more hoops.

Day one of All-Star Weekend began at the high school court of not only one of the greatest basketball players of all time, but one of the NBRPA's founders: Oscar Robertson. NBRPA Legends including Eddie Gill, Fred Jones, Sam Perkins, Metta World Peace and more made their way to Crispus Attucks High School, where the Big O's legend was formed and led an extensive Full Court Press clinic for local youth followed by a life skills discussion that, along with the memories, will no doubt stay with

the youngsters for years to come. That same evening, the annual All-Star Board of Directors meeting was held and attended by NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, displaying the exemplary collaboration and bond between the NBRPA and the world's preeminent basketball league.

Friday and Saturday of All-Star Weekend was chock-full of programming and activations for all Legends in attendance, including a Legends Care food drive at the Charles Warren Fairbanks School to benefit families living in the East Side of Indianapolis. Legends handed out canned goods and non-perishables and, as always, left a legacy in the city that will be spoken about for years to come. Friday also featured the annual Legends Media Day, where notable Pacers favorites such as Jones, Detlef Schrempf and Rik Smits spoke to the media alongside other NBA notables like Perkins, Tim Hardaway Sr. and Greg Oden. Following media day, Legends in attendance were treated to an in-depth conversation by NBRPA medical partner Endeavor Health, detailing the extensive concierge services available to all Legends as part of the most comprehensive health and pension package for former athletes anywhere. It wasn't



just talks and charity on this day, as Legends made their way to Lucas Oil Stadium and Gainbridge Fieldhouse for the Ruffles All-Star Celebrity Game and NBA Rising Star Game. To provide a night-cap to an already full day, Legends were invited to Kenny Smith's Poker Party, where Smith, Charles Barkley, Vince Carter, Dr. J all bluffed, called and showed their winning hands in what may have been the most boisterous and laugh-filled poker game this side of Las Vegas.

Saturday morning tipped off with what so many Legends call the most beneficial portion of All-Star weekend: the annual All-Star Health Screening program. One by one, they took part in a battery of health tests under the watchful eye of NBRPA Chief Medical Director Joe Rogowski and his incredible staff who aim to provide the very best analysis and testing to help our Legends lead healthy lives. The acclaimed health-screening program provided testing via EKGs, echocardiograms, brain scans and sleep-apnea studies. After attending the NBA All-Star HBCU Classic featuring Virginia Union University vs. Winston-Salem University, it was time to party at the NBRPA's Players Party at the trendy Nevermore in downtown Indianapolis. There, players, guests and partners mingled as they watched Mac McClung and Damian Lillard repeat as champions in the Slam Dunk Contest and Three-Point Shooting Contest that were the highlights of the NBA's All-Star Saturday Night.



Top: Gary Payton and Bill Walton pose together at the State Farm All-Star Saturday Night on Saturday, February 17, 2024 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, IN. Middle: Oscar Robertson, Reggie Miller and Larry Bird speak during the NBA All-Star Game. Bottom: NBRPA members participate in a Legends Care food drive at the Charles Warren Fairbanks School.



A general view in the fourth quarter during the 2024 NBA All-Star Game at Gainbridge Fieldhouse on February 18, 2024 in Indianapolis, Indiana.



On Sunday, the NBA All-Star Game is the main event, but the Legends Brunch is always the most-anticipated event. This year, it was a star-studded affair that paid homage to Indy basketball legends. This year's honorees included Tamika Catchings (Pioneer Award), Jalen Rose (Bob Lanier Community Impact Award), Reggie Miller (Hometown Hero Award) and, of course, "Larry Legend" himself, Larry Bird (Legend of the Year Award). Miller was even surprised onstage by his arch-nemesis, Spike Lee – the critically acclaimed actor, director and No. 1 New York Knicks fan. This event was the place to be for any hoops lover, as 150 of the most influential names in basketball lore were in attendance. With all of the festivities out of the way, it was back to Gainbridge Fieldhouse to watch

the very best current players take the court and dazzle with a varying array of high-flying dunks, unbelievable three-pointers from all over the court and the greatest celebration of basketball anywhere.

With the 2024 NBA All-Star Weekend in the books, it's time to look ahead to next year's edition that will be played in the shadow of the famed Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and at the state-of-the-art Chase Center – home to the Golden State Warriors. Regardless of the location, NBA All-Star Weekend has come to be the place where the past, present and future of this wonderful game come together, and what better way to celebrate the game than by having all of our Legends take part and continue to show the world how this game came to be.



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HOOP DREAMS COMING TRUE IN CLEVELAND

WOMEN'S FINAL FOUR 2024

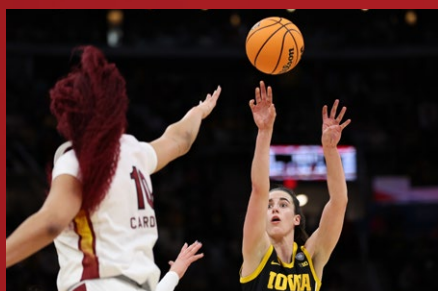
by ERIN LAW

Caitlin Clark. Angel Reese. Kamilla Cardoso. Paige Bueckers.

Excitement for the future of women's basketball is at an all-time high, and the rising stars of the game were shining brighter than ever during the NCAA Women's Final Four this year in Cleveland.

With all eyes on the college basketball world during the first weekend of April, the NBRPA was at the center of all the action both on and off the court with the return of the Women's College All-Star Game and the women-focused NBRPA Health Screenings.

To tip off the weekend's events, the NBRPA supported an exclusive dinner, hosted by our partners at Intersport, to welcome participants of the 2024 Women's College All-Star Game to Cleveland. This premier showcase of elite female DI basketball players marked the return of the event to Final Four weekend for



the first time in 18 years. During the welcome dinner, WNBA Legends Taj McWilliams-Franklin and Rushia Brown mingled with the 20 senior standouts selected to participate in the Women's College All-Star Game, discussing basketball and encouraging the young women to pursue their dreams, whether that be on or off the court following their college graduation.

Nearby at Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse that evening, #1 seed South Carolina defeated #3

seed NC State, followed by #1 Iowa taking down #3 UConn in front of a sold-out crowd, setting up an exciting National Championship showdown between the Dawn Staley-led 2022 National Champion Gamecocks and the Hawkeyes seeking their first national title.

The following morning, the NBRPA brought its women-focused Health Screenings to the Women's Final Four in partnership with the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA). This important initiative marked the second year the NBRPA expanded its Health Screenings program to include testing and consultations with a specific focus on women's health, providing WNBA Legends and WBCA coaches alike with comprehensive check-ups to ensure their long-term health and wellness. All morning long, former players and coaches made their way through their individual screenings, then grabbed coffee and breakfast while



NBRPA Director and Cleveland Rockers Legend Rushia Brown hosted several events during Women's Final Four weekend with her nonprofit Servcom, Inc. including a "Play Like a Girl" clinic to inspire local youth and honor East Technical High School Legend Barb Turner.



relaxing and catching up with their friends and former teammates.

Once the Health Screenings concluded, the momentum of the weekend shifted to the Women's College All-Star Game, held on Saturday afternoon at Cleveland State University's Wolstein Center. Eager basketball fans filed into the arena to see the rising stars of the game, as well as the star-studded lineup of coaches on Team Lieberman and Team Miller.

Nancy Lieberman, a two-time Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame inductee, led Team Lieberman along with her son and professional basketball player, T.J. Cline, as well as WNBA and Cleveland Rockers Legend Janice



Braxton. Cheryl Miller, a Hall of Famer and USC Legend, was at the helm for Team Miller and was assisted by Hall of Famer and four-time WNBA Champion Cynthia Cooper-Dyke as well as current WNBA star and two-time WNBA Champion with the Las Vegas Aces, Kelsey Plum.

As the game action tipped off on ESPN2, energetic fans celebrated every exciting steal, jumper, and rebound in a hotly contested battle among 20 of the country's top senior hooplers. Current Indiana Fever stars Aliyah Boston and Erica Wheeler, future teammates to #1 overall 2024 WNBA Draft pick Caitlin Clark, sat courtside along with Atlanta Dream shooting guard Rhyne Howard to enjoy game action as well as sign autographs and take selfies with young fans during halftime.

Team Miller finished the first quarter with a 31-13 advantage and extended the lead to 35-15 with just over eight minutes remaining in the second quarter. However, Team Lieberman slowly chipped away at the lead through the game, outscoring Team Miller 25-18 in the second quarter, 27-22 in the third, and 30-17 in the final period.

In the second half, Team Lieberman stormed all the way back to earn a 95-88 victory over Team Miller in the 2024 Women's College All-Star Game.

It was St. John's Unique Drake who stood out among the rest, earning Most Valuable Player honors after finishing with a game-high 27 points on 12-of-21 from the floor. She also added three assists, three steals and a pair of





rebounds. Three other Team Lieberman stars finished in double figures, including 19 points and seven assists from Syracuse's Dyaisha Fair, 12 points from Virginia's Camryn Taylor and 11 points from Louisville's Sydney Taylor.

For Team Miller, five players scored in double figures, led by BYU All-American Lauren Gustin's 15-point, 15-rebound effort. Auburn's Honesty Scott-Grayson finished with 14, Indiana's Sara Scalia and Toledo's Quinesha Lockett each had 11 and Baylor's Dre'Una Edwards had 10.

The weekend's action came to an exciting conclusion on Sunday as the Iowa Hawkeyes and South Carolina Gamecocks fought for

the title in a rematch of their 2023 Final Four matchup in which the Hawkeyes upset the undefeated Gamecocks. History would not repeat itself this year, as South Carolina's physicality and deep bench proved to be too much for Iowa to handle.

Iowa got out to an early 10-point lead and held off South Carolina until the end of the second quarter, when the Gamecocks would reclaim the lead and maintain it the rest of the game. Iowa's Caitlin Clark put up 18 points in the first quarter — the most in a period in the National Championship game — to break Chamique Holdsclaw's record for most career points in a NCAA tournament.

This time around, South Carolina completed their undefeated season with a 87-75 win and secured their third title (2017, 2022, 2024) under Head Coach and Hall of Famer Dawn Staley. The MVP was Kamilla Cardoso, who scored 15 points and had 17 rebounds, and would soon after get drafted as the #3 overall 2024 WNBA Draft pick by the Chicago Sky.

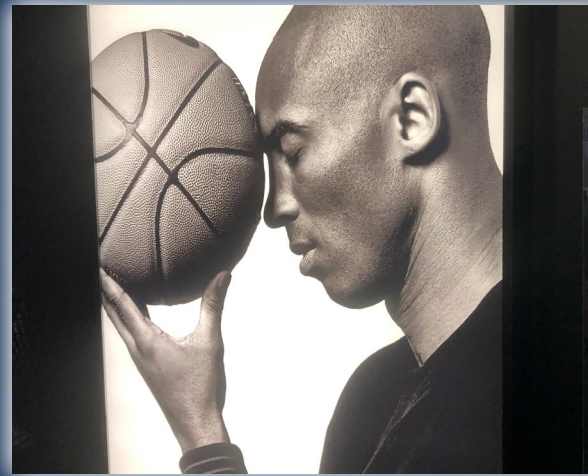
Women's Final Four weekend never disappoints, and this year's exceeded all expectations with thrilling game action and valuable NBRPA programming. As future Legends continue to emerge and the game continues to grow exponentially, we're all tremendously privileged to witness history in the making.





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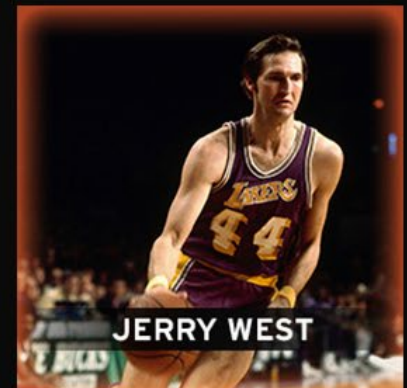
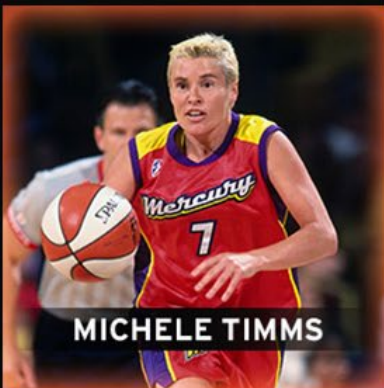
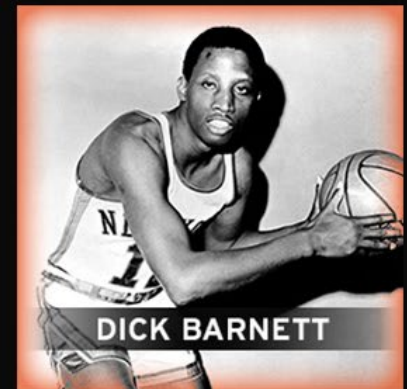
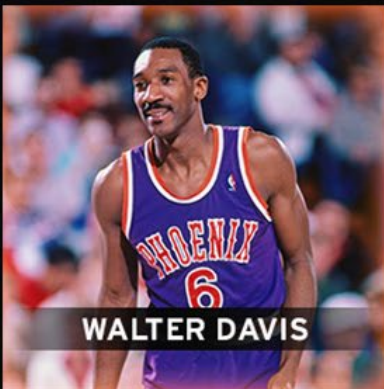
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2024 HALL OF FAME





BY ALEX KENNEDY

SEIMONE

OPENS UP ABOUT HALL-OF-FAME INDUCTION, LSU STATUE,



As Caitlin Clark adjusts to her first season in the WNBA, very few individuals can relate to the immense pressure and insane expectations she's saddled with as a "generational talent."

However, one person who understands all too well is Seimone Augustus. At 14 years old, she was on the cover of *Sports Illustrated For Women* and the title read: "Is She the Next Michael Jordan? Meet Teen Phenom Seimone Augustus"

Unlike many teenage phenoms, Augustus actually lived up to the hype. After getting drafted No. 1 overall in the 2006 WNBA Draft, she became a three-time gold medalist, four-time WNBA champion, WNBA Finals MVP, eight-time WNBA All-Star and six-time All-WNBA selection. Her trophy case also includes two EuroCup titles, a Turkish Cup, a EuroCup MVP award, two Naismith Player of the Year awards and two Wooden Awards.

In recent years, the honors have continued to pile up. Augustus was recently inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and Women's Basketball Hall of Fame. She was named to the WNBA's 20th and 25th Anniversary Teams. LSU unveiled a statue in her honor outside of the Pete Maravich Assembly Center – the first female athlete in school history with a statue. And shortly after this

interview, Augustus joined Kim Mulkey's coaching staff at LSU.

Legends Magazine caught up with Augustus to discuss her Hall-of-Fame induction, the state of women's basketball, her coaching career, her advice for retired athletes and much more.

When Sports Illustrated compared you to Michael Jordan as a teenager, what was that like? How did you deal with the hype and pressure?

Seimone Augustus: "It was crazy. Obviously, when the Sports Illustrated thing hit, that's when it really went crazy. The weekend that the magazine came out was the weekend of our high-school state championship. We ended up losing and I just remember some of the coaches and players [being like], 'Oh, she ain't as good as you think.' And obviously, they're going to rib you a little bit. But from that point on, I knew I had a bullseye on my back. I was no longer the unknown. People kind of knew me or heard about me, but never really saw me. From then on, it was just like you gotta be on top of your game, you gotta be ready for any little thing. And think about the NCAA during that time; you couldn't accept gifts, you couldn't do this or that, so it was just a lot of stuff that now I had to be more aware of that I didn't have to before. So, I mean, it

AUGUSTUS

COACHING CAREER AND FINDING A NEW PASSION AFTER BASKETBALL

was pressure, but I think it helped me become a more mature athlete and professional moving forward because I had to think differently than most other athletes. I didn't have that leisure."

What advice would you give to Caitlin Clark, JuJu Watkins and other phenoms?

Augustus: "You know what's funny? Those two players are actually handling the pressure better than anyone I've seen (aside from) maybe Candace Parker and some others. But it is just a matter of focus and then just honing in on your game. When you hear the USC coach saying JuJu had a bad game one night and then the next day she's in the gym all night to the point that the security guard was like, 'Should we call the coach and tell JuJu get out the gym?' And she's like, 'No, let JuJu be JuJu...' You don't really have to say nothing to her because she knows what she needs to do. Caitlin Clark is the same way. Prior to her season, they're posting the workouts of her at home getting shots up. She's getting 200-to-300 shots up. Those are players that get it, and that's very rare because it's not a lot of people that get it. If anything, I'd say just try to stay as humble as possible. When I say humble, have an air of confidence about yourself, but keep your head on a swivel and keep your eye on a prize."

You thrived at every level and accomplished so much throughout your career. Looking back, what is your proudest moment?

Augustus: "My proudest moment would be my first gold medal. It's crazy. That was the first team where I had their poster on my wall or anything because there was no WNBA at the time, so I was like, 'I'm going to be on the national team! I'm going to be up there with Sheryl Swoopes and Rebecca Lobo and all these wonderful women that was on this poster.' And so when I was able to accomplish that, it was like, 'Oh, I did it!' I did exactly what I said I was going to do as a child in my yard practicing. And then, my other proudest moment would probably be winning my first championship in Minnesota after all the hardships that I faced prior to that – injuries, losing, you name it. Those were probably my two proudest moments in my playing career."

How does winning a gold medal compare to winning a WNBA championship?

Augustus: "When you think about a gold medal and the dominance that [Team USA] has had over the women's basketball world on an international level, that's way more intense. And we don't have much time together; we may have two or three weeks before we have to head over and play all these games against these



countries, where some of their players don't even report to the W if it's an Olympic year so they can prepare with their national team and get ready to come and try to beat us. That journey is a lot more stringent. It is harder both mentally and physically. You got to figure out how to get some team cohesion right away. But the best thing about it is you're considered one of the top-12 players in the world. I think that's what kind of distinguishes it for me. Like, 'Oh, okay, I was considered one of the top-12 players in the world.' And I did that repeatedly for however many gold medals I got. I played at a high level for a really long time and continued our dominance throughout my time. But then on a W level, it's like these are draft picks and this team is kind of assembled through free agency. We have a longer journey together. And on that journey, every day is different – the ups and downs. And that one means more in terms of a family-type environment, like, 'Look at all this stuff we had to go through to get here!' Both of them have that different feel, but like I said, both are meaningful."

I love that you had Team USA posters on your wall as a kid and then went on to win three gold medals with them and become part of the selection committee. How do you think your younger self would react to that?

Augustus: "My childhood self would be like, 'You did it! You did it!' (laughs) And the fact that I was able to continue to do it consistently over time, I would be a little 8-year-old, 9-year-old with my heart in my chest poked out. But then when you think about after ball and being a part of the selection committee, I never in a million years would've thought that I would be a part of the process of trying to help select the next team that's going to potentially go off and win another gold medal. But that's how life works! As much as I wanted to pull away from ball and try to go do something else, basketball just kept reeling me back in like, 'Nah, come back! Come back!' So when those things happen, you have to honor it and respect it. It is a great opportunity. You're basically setting up the next generation to do what you've done."

With your coaching and role on the selection committee, you are impacting the next generation — even more so than you've already done. How important is that to you?

Augustus: “I got bit by the coaching bug. After getting into that and seeing how I can communicate and pass my knowledge on and that they would actually receive it, then I was like, ‘Alright, yeah, [this is for me].’ We do have to keep the game at a certain level in order for us to continue to grow and prosper. Well, who's going to be the ones passing the knowledge on? We have no say in when we pass the torch. When you retire, it's over — it's time for the next generation. Now, it's like... who's grooming them though? I feel like I'm in that position. I feel like I have that voice or at least that respect to be able to help as much as I can. So, obviously, they put me in that position and I accepted the role [on the selection committee] to be able to do what's necessary to keep us on top.”

It has to be difficult narrowing down Team USA's roster with how many talented players are in the pool. It's a great problem to have, but how tough is that?

Augustus: “New players are entering the pool and as the older players — the legends of the game who are starting to retire and leave — you just want to see who's next to take that torch or take on that leadership role. So you have to evaluate everything from somebody's leadership abilities to their skills. You know what their skill set is, but what else can you add to the team? Can you make adjustments and adapt with this team? You might be the leading scorer of your



team, but out here you might have to be the best defender or the best rebounder or whatever other assets you can bring to the table for this team. It's quite the process. Obviously, I'm the baby on the committee. This is new to me. You got other people who have been around the game for a very long time, and so I just lean heavily on their knowledge and expertise of the game, analytics, and all the stuff that we use to evaluate people.”

Congratulations on getting inducted into the Hall of Fame! What did that mean to you to have your career celebrated?

Augustus: “It is weird for me. I never was a player that celebrated a whole lot of stuff. When we won the championship, I celebrated right then and the next 24-48 hours, and then it was over — it was onto the next thing. It was the

same way with the gold medals. Now, it's just this celebration of your career and I'm like, oh, now I got to sit down and think about all the stuff that I did and write these speeches and talk about it and basically intro myself to new people that may not know who I am. I'm just like, ‘Wow.’ But to receive all these flowers and all this honor and to see how people speak highly of you and what you were doing while you were doing it... because we never really looked left or right! For me, I never worried about external stuff; I was just focused on what was at hand. Now, I actually get to take a deep breath and just be like, ‘Oh yeah, I did do all of that!’ ... [I was always thinking] ‘onto the next.’ We've been onto the next for so long, but now we have to be still and receive all the gifts of what we've accomplished.”

In another interview, you said that the moment you realized Bill Russell is in the Hall of Fame twice — once as a player and once as a coach — that became your new goal. What would that mean to you?

Augustus: “Yeah, I knew coaches went in, but seeing that he went in twice as a player and as a coach, it just clicked. I'm like, ‘Oh, I didn't know you could do that! Okay, cool!’ As a former athlete, we're always looking for the next thing to push ourselves toward our goals and set it. So I was like, ‘Alright, cool. If coaching is what I'm going to do, then shit, I'm going to be the best at it!’ I'm going to push myself to be the best at it or at least try to, so now I have a goal that I want to attain and I'm going to go after it as best I can.”



In addition to the Hall-of-Fame induction, LSU honored you by building a statue outside Pete Maravich Assembly Center! How did that come together and what was your reaction when you found out?

Augustus: “Man, Coach Mulkey brought it up. She was just like, ‘You deserve a statue! I don’t know why you ain’t been had a statue here!’ She went on this rampage or whatever, and I was like, ‘Well, thank you, Coach Mulkey.’ I just kind of blew by the conversation. But then the next thing I know, it goes to the board! It goes here, it goes there, and boom: statue! And I’m like, ‘Whoa!’ It felt like within a week’s time or whatever, this all happened. And I’m like, ‘What the... A statue?! What that look like?’ And then you start going through the process with the sculptor and [they’re like], ‘Well, what do you want to look like?’ I’m like, ‘I’ve never ever in my life thought about no statue!’ The jersey retirement? You are like, ‘Yeah, hang my jersey in the rafters!’ But to put a sculpture of you out forever?! Nah, you ain’t processing that. I’m like, ‘What?!’ I’m down there with Pistol Pete, Bob Pettit and Shaq! You look around at all these statues and you’re looking at what they’ve done in basketball in college and the professional ranks — everywhere they’ve went, they’ve done things — and it’s just like shit! But... I also have that same resume! I just didn’t put myself in that light! And it could be because you never see females in that light. We are just now starting to get that, with the emergence of Caitlin Clark and all the people that’s bringing the visibility. But [I] never really saw [myself] like that.”

When you look at Clark’s emergence and the record ratings and ticket sales, what are your thoughts on the state of women’s basketball?

Augustus: “I’m so excited. I’m so happy! Because I think about the legends and OGs of the game — the Sheryl Swoopes of the world — they’ve been waiting for this to happen. You honestly think that you’re going to fall into that cycle of, ‘Alright, when are people going to realize that women’s basketball is great?’ And for me, I just recently retired and it happened overnight, like boom. And we was like, ‘Goddamn, I told you! We told y’all that this was amazing!’ We had a great product! People just had to invest in it or just see it. Obviously, Caitlin Clark and Paige Bueckers and the collegiate game has done a great job, but even when you think about the COVID year when we was in the Wubble and people being able to see a little bit more of the WNBA and its players and really get the stories and we’re fighting for the Senate and all this stuff that was happening, you could see it kind of brewing. And Caitlin and the rest of ‘em just kind of took off — the rivalries and what she was doing, all the individual accolades and stuff like that. Now, people are like, ‘Yeah, women’s basketball!’ We’re like, ‘We’ve been told y’all! We’ve been told you!’ But I’m super excited. I can’t wait to see what the next few years bring for JuJu, Hannah Hidalgo at Notre Dame... I just can’t wait. Even seeing Caitlin in a couple of days at her first preseason game, it’s like, ‘Alright! This is exciting! What’s going to happen?’ All eyes is on Indiana and Caitlin Clark, and rightfully so! Their team has

been dormant for a very long time — it hasn’t made the playoffs and hasn’t really had much excitement. You could go into that arena and sit wherever you wanted, and now the season tickets are sold out! It’s amazing.”

When you think about the future of women’s basketball, what do you think is in store over the next five-to-10 years?

Augustus: “I think we’re going to be talking about expansion because we’re seeing it happen now with the Bay Area team coming. Then, there’s four or five other prospects. I heard Houston yesterday... the Houston owner said something about possibly bringing the Comets back. So [the WNBA] will definitely be expanding to possibly 16 teams or more in the next five-to-10 years. Pay equity. I think people have been talking about the shares — getting that 50% share for the players. If they get that 50% share, we are looking at million-dollar contracts, which we rightly deserve, as opposed to \$70,000 contracts or a few hundred-thousand-dollar contracts. I think in the next few years, we’ll be talking about pay equity, expansion of the league, and [what happens] with the CBA and the next television deal. Are we going to stay attached to the NBA and be a package like we have been? Or are we going to separate ourselves from them and go as our own independent entity now? There’s going to be a lot of discussions around that, and that’s even more money that we add to the pool to be able to pay the players. And the player experience has to get better across the board for most teams because it isn’t the same. You see the investment with Seattle, you see the investment with Vegas. Minnesota has always had their own situation with the Wolves that was very good, New York [too]. But every other team has to get there.”

You’ve said that when you retired, you had to find a passion outside of basketball. I’ve talked to a lot of retired players who said the same thing. What are some passions or hobbies you’ve discovered since then?

Augustus: “Since coaching looks like it’s my path, I’m like, ‘Alright, I see all these coaches and they’re stressed the hell out!’ All they do is watch video all day. All season, they’re trying to figure out this and that. So I was like, ‘I need something that’s going to combat that.’ If I’m going to be in a stressful environment, I need some calm somewhere, so I’m into gardening right now. I took it in high school a little bit, so I’m going back to it. I’m out here planting vegetables and flowers and things like that. It still gives me that activity, but it’s also peaceful. It’s serene. I don’t have to stress about if this seed is





going to grow or if I can make this flower stay alive, you know? Other than gardening, it is [the video game] Grand Theft Auto for me. That's my thing. I'm just now getting into the online and all that stuff, but they're always going to get a few of my dollars!"

What advice would you give to players who are nearing retirement or just recently retired?

Augustus: "I would say start to figure out a routine because that's the biggest struggle coming out of playing. I'd be sitting in the house like 'Alright, well, I need to work out.' I'm used to working out every day, every day, every day, so I added that as a part of my routine. Alright, now I need something to exercise my mind. Now, coaching helps with that, so I'm watching videos, studying different coaches, trying to figure out what type of coach I'm going to be. You need to find a routine because if not, we're just sitting in the house. I had a period where I was just like, 'I don't know where to go or what to do.' I would get in my car and ride around and burn gas just to get out the house. But you have to figure out, even if it's not another passion, what do you want to do? Because we've been giving, giving, giving to the game for so long that we don't even know what we like or want to do at times. So, find your routine and stick to it."

And buy Grand Theft Auto?

Augustus: "Yeah, and buy Grand Theft Auto! That's it. That's really all you need, some Grand Theft! (laughs)"

Did you always know that you were going to get into coaching when your playing days ended?

Augustus: "I was running so far away from it! I literally thought when I finished ball that I would go and venture off into something else, like I would take this gardening thing to another level or something. Like, I'm about to go be a farmer! (laughs) Literally the day I retired, Coach [Derek] Fisher was like, 'I got a spot on

the staff, if you want it.' And it just happened so quickly, I'm like, 'Yeah, I still want to be around the game.' I stayed on for two years and I got bit by the bug. I can literally remember the play. I instructed somebody to do something and they did it, and me and her both [lit up]. I was just like, 'Alright, I think this might be my thing!' So, yeah, I am stuck in coaching. I didn't want to because all the stuff that we've talked about, you're bringing that with you, so people automatically assume that you're going to have some major success right away. And you're like, 'Ah, it don't work like that. I got to figure myself out. I got to figure out what my philosophies are. I got to figure out my team. I got to figure out a lot of stuff before I see success.' It doesn't just happen overnight. Not everybody can Becky Hammon that thing and come in and get two championships! It takes a little time! I think that was my fear – that people were going to place so much on you, like, 'Oh, you was a Hall-of-Famer, so you should be able to win some championships.' And I'm like, 'Geez...' But I ain't never run away from a challenge, so I might as well try."

Did your perception of coaches change after you started coaching?

Augustus: "To be honest, I didn't even think about what the coaches do. I'm just like, 'Put me through whatever y'all are going to put me through so I can get out of here!' (laughs) But then when I got to the other side, I really understood why they would get so pissed off when you didn't follow the scouting report or do what they said. Like Coach [Cheryl] Reeve in Minny, sometimes we just weren't locked into the game-plan and we'd do some other shit on the court, and she's like, 'You gotta do what I said to do! Otherwise, I don't know if it works!' And I'm like, 'Oh, that makes sense.' But now, knowing the amount of time they put in watching video, breaking it down, trying to figure out what plays each team is going to run, figuring out

what plays we need to run against these teams, analytics, and all this shit... As a coach my two years, I was like, 'Whoa, whoa, whoa, y'all not watching video?! Hold on. I watched way too much video for y'all not to even take a peek at it!' So, I appreciated that. Now, I have a newfound respect for all coaches and the work that they put in to prepare their team for a game."

You put out a book called: Hoop Muses: An Insider's Guide to Pop Culture and the (Women's) Game. Can you tell me about it?

Augustus: "Myself, Kate Fagan and Sophia Chang put this book together, and it is funny how things work. We put this book out because it didn't exist, and it basically details the history of women's basketball from its inception all the way to what we believe would be the future – like the first \$100 million contract. And what are the chances that we are at the future now? Like, we're hitting that! The only thing is we're trying to bridge the gap between the high-school game, collegiate game and professional game. A lot of these kids, it breaks my heart that they don't know Sheryl Swoopes or Cynthia Cooper or some of these older players. Some of the players are even like, 'Who is Diana Taurasi?' I'm like, 'Wait a minute. Wait a minute. What are you talking about?!' That means you don't know the history of the game! This book will give you the history of the game, so you can get up to par and where you need to be. If you're trying to be in the WNBA, I want you to be able to say a WNBA player [as your favorite player]. That's another thing that's disheartening for me. When they're like, 'Oh, who's your favorite player?' They're like, 'Ah, LeBron.' Now, granted, I love the NBA! But I'm like, 'Nah, you supposed to be saying Caitlin Clark or whoever!' You're supposed to be saying [a WNBA player]! If that's where you're trying to be, that's who you're supposed to be calling out. So, I would say: pick that book up, educate yourself, and motivate yourself."



NATIONAL BASKETBALL RETIRED PLAYERS ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF THE NBRPA BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT

-Charitable Fund to Assist Career, Educational & Professional Development of Qualifying NBRPA Members-



Members of the National Basketball Retired Players Association (NBRPA) are now eligible to receive funding to support their transition, through a newly developed program that will provide up to Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500), to support career, educational, and professional development initiatives.

The NBRPA's Member Services and Benefits Committee will award funds to qualifying member applicants on a quarterly basis. Approved areas for funding include, but are not limited to the following:

- Equipment / Technology
- Licensing Fees
- Career Development Programs
- Vocational Training
- Other Areas Applicable to an NBRPA member



For more information, please visit
<https://www.legendsofbasketball.com/>



LEGENDS CARE

Legends Care is the initiative of the NBRPA that positively impacts communities and youth through basketball. NBRPA Legends give back through clinics, mentoring, charitable outreach and other grassroots initiatives in the United States and abroad with the goal of educating, inspiring and keeping youth active, healthy, and safe.

Ongoing Legends Care initiatives include the Legends HBCU Scholarship, Full Court Press, and Legends Home Courts. Past initiatives have included international goodwill missions, Thanksgiving Community Assist turkey donation drives, BACK2BACK school backpack drives, and Legends Girl Chats between WNBA Legends and middle school & high school girls.

To learn more about Legends Care or donate to support these initiatives, visit legendsofbasketball.com/LegendsCare

CHICAGO



LEGENDS CARE:
FULL COURT PRESS

Full Court Press: Prep For Success is one of the cornerstone programs of the NBRPA's Legends Care initiative. These fun-filled clinics bring together basketball Legends and local youth for an afternoon of basketball drills and valuable mentorship in cities across the United States and abroad. Most recently, the NBRPA brought its Full Court Press program to the State Street Foot Locker in Chicago (May 4), the TJ Ford Academy in Houston (May 18), and Core4 Athletic Complex in Atlanta (June 1).

Legends that participated in these clinics include: Alando Tucker, Bobby Simmons, Justin Williams, Lenae Ferguson, Jermaine "Hi Rise" Brown, Mo Evans, Mike James, Howard Smith, Kevin Loder, Major Jones, Rodney McCray, Wendell Carter, Dale Ellis, Rushia Brown, Sedric Toney, Mario West, Reggie Johnson, Tyrone "Hollywood" Brown, and Salim Stoudamire. Thank you to all the Legends that continue making an incredible impact in their community and showing the next generation what it means to be a Legend!

To learn more and support the Full Court Press program, visit legendsofbasketball.com/fullcourtpress.





ATLANTA



HOUSTON

JOHN WALLACE

by ANDREW POLANIECKI

HARD WORK ON THE COURT LED TO BIG STRIDES IN THE MENTAL HEALTH SPACE





Left: Forward John Wallace of the Syracuse Orangemen takes a shot against the Drexel Dragons during a game at the University Arena in New Mexico on Mar. 16, 1996. Syracuse won the game, 69-58. Right: John Wallace attends the TopSpin 2012 charity event at 82 Mercer on November 14, 2012 in New York City.

There was a time not too long ago when the mere mention of mental health was shrouded in taboo. The stigma left those afflicted feeling isolated and often incapable of leading fulfilling lives. For many, the burden of mental illness meant forfeiting careers, fracturing relationships and, in more tragic instances, succumbing to suicide as the weight of their struggles became unbearable.

Some athletes conceal their struggles to maintain an invincible image, leading to silent suffering. Some find themselves adrift in unhappiness despite their athletic prowess. One New York basketball legend has made it his mission to empower individuals contending with mental illness and help them reclaim their lives.

John Wallace, a seven-year NBA veteran from Rochester, began to make waves on the basketball scene as a freshman at Greece Athena High School. Despite initially aiming to study engineering at Cornell University, Wallace's dedication and tireless work ethic in basketball led him down a different path.

"I got my first letter when I was 14 from Jeff Van Gundy," Wallace recalls. "He was an assistant coach at Rutgers University. I was at a camp at Oneonta College in Oneonta, New York, called the Big Man Point Guard Camp. I wasn't that good at all; I was just pretty athletic. I just remember Van Gundy telling me to keep working hard and that I had a lot of potential. But that letter, I pinned it up on my wall. It was the first letter I ever got!"

Taking Van Gundy's counsel to heart, Wallace diligently worked to improve his game, and the recruitment letters continued to pour in. One year later, at the age of 15, Wallace's breakthrough moment came at the Delaware Shootout.

"Anybody who was a player back then, especially in the Northeast or in the South, played in that tournament, and it was the best teams and the best players all around. I played pretty good that weekend and when

I got home, I had like 50 letters waiting on me," Wallace remembers. "I'll never forget when I got back from that tournament, the coach of Cornell reached out to me saying, 'I heard you played pretty good, you're probably not interested in Cornell anymore.' I was like, 'Yeah, coach, I don't think Cornell is going to happen.'"

Wallace was named to the 1992 McDonald's All-American team and ultimately chose to attend Syracuse University on a full scholarship. From 1992 to 1996, he left his mark on Syracuse, emerging as the program's third-highest scorer and third-highest rebounder of all time. His name graces the top 10 lists in various statistical categories, including points per game, rebounds per game, field goals made, minutes played, total blocks and true shooting percentage.

During the Sweet 16 in 1996, Wallace made national headlines when he made the game-winning three-pointer in the final seconds of overtime against Georgia to help Syracuse advance to the Elite 8.

"That's the first time I cried on the court from pure elation – it's beyond being happy. It was so incredible to hit that shot because you think you're going to lose because you're down. And we come back, and you hit the shot... it's that moment. It just felt so good! I probably get asked about that shot more than anything else. The way it happened, the way we came back, playing with four fouls, going to overtime... the shot, the pass to Jason Cipolla from the baseline. There were so many moments from that game that made it an incredible game... unless you're a Georgia fan," Wallace said with a laugh.

The Orange would ultimately advance to the 1996 NCAA Championship Game against Kentucky. Wallace finished with 29 points and 10 rebounds in the 76-67 loss.

In February of 2020, Wallace's No. 44 jersey ascended to the Carrier Dome rafters, cementing his legacy among the Orange's greatest players. Wallace, who wore the No. 44 in Derrick Coleman's honor explained how

"The Magic No. 44" holds profound significance in Syracuse lore.

"The number is just so special, especially at Syracuse. And it started with Jim Brown. Jim Brown wore No. 44 because at the time, he couldn't get a full scholarship because black players couldn't get a full ride back then. So, 44 people donated money for him to go to Syracuse," Wallace explained, "The last football player to wear it is Rob Konrad, and I'm the last basketball player to wear it."

As John entered the 1996 NBA Draft, little did he know that a familiar figure from his past would significantly influence the start of his professional career. Van Gundy, the former assistant coach from Rutgers University who had sent John his initial recruitment letter, was now the head coach of the New York Knicks, who drafted John with the No. 18 overall pick as part of "the greatest draft of all time," according to Wallace.

"That's the best draft ever! You bring up the '84 draft because of Jordan, Barkley, Stockton and Olajuwon. You bring up the '03 draft because of LeBron, Carmelo, Wade and Bosh. But both of those drafts, the guy who went No. 2 closed their draft down," Wallace said. "We got a guy like Derek Fisher, who went 26th and won five rings with the Lakers. Between him and Kobe, that's 10 rings right there... it's not even close."

At 22, Wallace stepped into the limelight of the NBA as a fresh-faced rookie amidst a star-studded Knicks roster that included Patrick

Ewing, Charles Oakley and John Starks. Basking in the afterglow of the NCAA Tournament, his selection by his hometown team and a lucrative signature shoe deal with Karl Kani, Wallace entered training camp brimming with confidence. Yet, the harsh reality of what it would take to become a successful player at the NBA level struck him like a thunderbolt from the heavens on the first day of camp.

"We were doing three-on-two and two-on-one drills, and I didn't get any breaks," Wallace recalls. "After about 30 consecutive trips, I'm throwing up. Van Gundy is closing out on me, yelling, 'Get your ass back in line once that last drop of throw up hits, and no washing your mouth out!'"

He quickly learned a valuable lesson from the veterans, which was to shut up and play.

It was that welcome-to-the-NBA moment that made John quickly realize what it would take to earn the respect of his peers: "The only way you're earning respect with a seasoned vet team like that is by working your ass off every single day. Every day!"

During Wallace's rookie season, he was selected to participate in the Schick Rookie Game as part of the NBA's 50th Anniversary All-Star Weekend celebration where he was surrounded by the 50 greatest players of all time.

"That was incredible," he said. "It was awesome to see all those guys and just being part of my very first All-Star game festivities with my family and friends... it was incredible."

After Wallace's rookie season, the Knicks



John Wallace #44 of the Toronto Raptors shoots the ball during a game played on January 30, 1996 at Arco Arena in Sacramento, CA.

traded him to the Toronto Raptors. The trade presented Wallace with an opportunity for increased playing time as well as the chance to become more of a team leader among a younger group of players.

"This is a business. You can't take this personal. Anyone could be traded. You're either a glass-half-empty or glass-half-full person. I'm half full. So, when I got traded to the Raptors, I would never say the Knicks didn't want me. I would say Toronto wants me," Wallace said. "So, I was happy, and I was looking forward to it."

Despite the Raptors' challenging season, finishing with the league's worst record, Wallace seized the opportunity. His playing time skyrocketed from 11.6 minutes per game as a rookie to 28.8 minutes per game as a sophomore. Additionally, his scoring average surged from 4.8 points to 14 points per game.

After two seasons with the Raptors, Wallace returned to the Knicks as a free agent in 1999. Following that season, Wallace went on to have one-year stints with the Detroit Pistons and Phoenix Suns. In 2002, Wallace played overseas in Greece for the Panionios before returning to the NBA in 2003 as a member of the Miami Heat. In 2005, he concluded his professional basketball career overseas in Italy, playing one final season with Snaidero Udine.

"Being that far away from my kids and needing to get back to the States weekly... that last year of basketball took the last bit of love I had to actually get up and work out and play..." Wallace explained. "I didn't have it in me



John Wallace signs autographs during the game between the Canton Charge and the Westchester Knicks at Westchester County Center on November 19, 2014 in Westchester, NY

anymore. The things I used to love doing that I did all the time... it became a process and a chore."

Upon retiring, John's top priority was spending time with his five kids since he couldn't always do that due to his demanding basketball schedule.

"I was just Mr. Mom at first... making up some lost time with my kids," he said. "Doing all the things that you really don't get the chance to do all the time when you're travelling and playing basketball so much."

Several years later, life came full circle for John when he interviewed for an ambassador role with the Knicks' fan relations. He was offered the job on the spot and still maintains the position 15 years later.

"I can't emphasize enough how much the Knicks organization and Mr. [James] Dolan have done for myself and my family ever since I got drafted in '96," Wallace said. "I am forever indebted and grateful to the Knicks organization."

Off the court, John has been engaged with the Heavenly Productions Foundation since 2010. HPE, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is dedicated to aiding distressed children in need.

"It's been incredible giving out backpacks with school supplies to kids in impoverished neighborhoods," he said. "You'd be shocked at something as simple as a backpack, how much joy that could bring to a kid, how much stress it takes off of a family that needs to buy a backpack and buy some school supplies. The founder is Dr. Kathy Reilly Fallon. Her and her husband, Jay Fallon, do a tremendous job. I'm just one of the pieces that tries to help whenever I can. We've given out backpacks in Rwanda. We've given out backpacks in the Dominican Republic. When Hurricane Sandy hit New York, we went out to Staten Island and gave out 5,000 backpacks... Being a part of something like this has been awesome."

Alongside his responsibilities within the Knicks organization and the Heavenly Productions Foundation, John has embarked on a new venture as a business developer for Counslr – a mental health app designed for schools, businesses and organizations.

"Counslr is a mental health app that you could access if you're part of a school, college or company," Wallace said. "You have therapists at your fingertips 24/7, 365 in all 50 states ready to deal with any problems you might have. If it's something that's a real serious matter, there is a function within the app that lets the therapist



Former NBA player John Wallace poses with students from New Dorp High School as part of the NBA Cares New York Knicks Hurricane Sandy Relief Efforts on November 8, 2012 in Staten Island, NY.



Left: Former NBA player John Wallace poses with the military as part of NBA Cares New York Knicks Hurricane Sandy Relief Efforts on November 8, 2012 in Staten Island, NY. Right: John Wallace #44 of the New York Knicks speaks at the TNT tip off event at Times Square Offices on October 27, 2014 in New York, NY.

know exactly where you are so they could contact the right center to get some help out to you immediately... You don't need to call to make an appointment. You don't need to drive anywhere. You could just hop on your phone and get therapy help."

Today, the discussion surrounding mental health is no longer taboo. Wallace notes that it is now openly discussed on a regular basis.

"It's a topic of discussion that could be found in most houses across the world now," Wallace stated. "It's not something you keep hush-hush and you only talk to your therapist about. You talk to your family, your friends, whoever."

Wallace explains one of the best functions of the Counslr app is "you could get right on your phone and get some help immediately, and you can call 50 times in a day if you need to. There is no limit."

How did Wallace get involved with Counslr?

"I wanted to be a part of that solution," he explained. "If people have issues going on, I want to be a part of that. Whatever issue they may have, I want to help resolve them and alleviate some of those problems that people are dealing with from all walks of life."

Wallace gives a lot of credit to the NBRPA for creating job opportunities for retired players.

"They provide us with workshops, teaching us about various fields of work... But honestly, the healthcare package we have is enough. They go above and beyond," Wallace stated. "Just the fact that we have the best healthcare and it's free is enough."

"We all feel like Michael Jordan when we call the NBA office, or the NBRPA office; they help us immediately. I was never an All-Star, but I feel like [one when I call]. The way the NBA and NBRPA conduct their business is why we are all happy we are a part of it."



Legends Studios, presented by the NBRPA, is the #1 podcast destination for basketball fans who want to hear from NBA and WNBA Legends.

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NBRPA INTRODUCES

MIXTAPE MONDAYS



Follow @NBAalumi on Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Threads and YouTube and be the first to see the newest #LegendsMixtapes every Monday.

On Monday, September 18, the NBRPA debuted a brand-new and highly anticipated content series across all @NBAalumni social media channels, remixing some of the best moves in NBA history as part of countdown to the start of the 2023-2024 NBA season.

Mixtape Mondays, also known as "Legends Mixtapes," reimagine old-school NBA highlights set to unexpected music from a different era, starting with a contemporary showcase of 6x NBA Champion Bob Cousy accompanied by M.O.P.'s "Ante Up." The Houdini of the Hardwood himself loved seeing the new interpretation of his ball-handling talent and said: "What a treat!"

In the first 24 hours after its release, the inaugural mixtape produced over half a million views on @NBAalumni social media. The series has also featured Isiah Thomas's legendary handles, "Pistol Pete" Maravich's smooth moves, "Nick the Quick" Van Exel's timeless highlights, and Larry Bird proving why he'll forever be called "Larry Legend." The Legends Mixtapes series has, to date, produced over 3 million views and hundreds of thousands of engagements, and counting.



TRILL'S TAKE:

TOP 10 MOMENTS IN USA BASKETBALL OLYMPIC HISTORY

by TRILL WITHERS

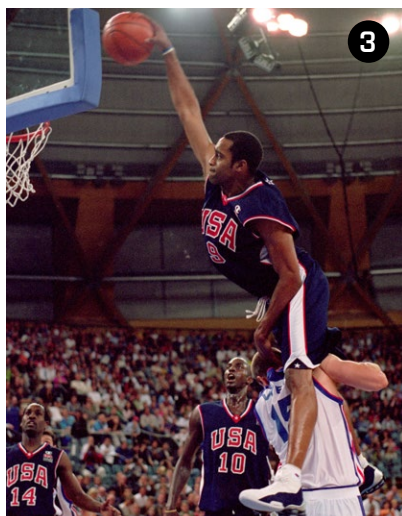
Every four years, the world all pauses at the same time to watch our best athletes compete on an international stage. With this year's festivities in Paris upon us, let's take a look back at some of some of the top moments in USA Basketball Olympic history.

TOP 10

TOP 10 MOMENTS IN USA BASKETBALL OLYMPIC HISTORY

10. Carmelo Anthony caps his Olympic career as the first man to win three gold medals while becoming Team USA's then all-time leader in points, rebounds and games played. [2016 Rio]
9. The Soviet Union beat the USA in the Semi-finals in a rematch of the 1972 Gold Medal game. This is the loss that created the Dream team. [1988 South Korea]
8. Sue Bird and Diana Taurasi make history winning a fifth straight gold medal in Tokyo. Taurasi will look to break the tie this year in Paris. [2020 Tokyo]
7. USA wins the inaugural Women's 3x3 basketball gold led by Allisha Gray, Jackie Young, Kelsey Plum and Stefanie Dolson. [2020 Tokyo]
6. The Redeem Team is formed and goes on to win the gold in 2008 after disappointing finishes in the 2004 Olympics & 2006 FIBA World Championship. [2008 Beijing]





TOP 10

TOP 10 MOMENTS IN USA BASKETBALL OLYMPIC HISTORY

5. After a silver medal their last time around, the Women's National Team won its first of nine gold medals. The team hasn't lost a game since 1992. [1984 Los Angeles]
4. Kobe Bryant and LeBron James link up again to lead the 2012 team to another gold. The team defeated opponents by an average of 32 points per game. [2012 London]
3. Vince Carter's iconic dunk over the 7-foot-2 Frederic Weis in a preliminary game against France. [2000 Sydney]
2. Candace Parker makes quite the debut winning NCAA Tournament MOP, WNBA Rookie of the Year, MVP and an Olympic gold medal in the same year. [2008 Beijing]
1. The Dream Team is unleashed on the World beating opponents by an average of 44 points per game en route to gold. [1992 Barcelona]



John Stockton, Clyde Drexler, David Robinson, Charles Barkley, Christian Laettner, Karl Malone, Magic Johnson and Scottie Pippen arrive at the 1992 Olympic Opening Ceremonies on July 25, 1992 at Estadi Olímpic de Montjuïc in Barcelona, Spain.

CLYDE DREXLER

RECALLS FAVORITE DREAM TEAM MOMENTS FROM 1992 OLYMPICS

by CHRIS SHERIDAN

For Clyde Drexler, the quintessential Monaco moment with the original Dream Team happened on a golf course as he was playing 18 holes with Charles Barkley and David Robinson using clubs borrowed from Michael Jordan.

"The vertically of that course was off the charts, and when we got to the 15th or 16th hole, Charles needed to sit down and take a break. So Charles sat on a bench at the tee box, and behind him was a small gate and a 100-foot dropoff down a cliff. He didn't see it. It was steep.

"I said, 'Hey Charles, you sure you want to trust that bench?'" Drexler recalled with a laugh in recounting some of his favorite Dream Team moments. "Let me tell you, he popped off that bench real quick."

Drexler was one of 11 NBA players on the 1992 Olympic team, the first time professionals were permitted to play in the world's premiere sporting event. Chapter and verse has been written and spoken about the exploits of the Dream Team, but not much of that history has come from Drexler, who rarely grants interviews.

But Drexler agreed to speak with Legends Magazine as part of the lead-up to the 2024 Paris Olympics, at which the United States will be fielding another superteam — this one with several older players just like the 1992 team. When the Americans start competing for the gold medal in Paris, LeBron James will be 39, Steph Curry will be 36, Kevin



NBA Legends and former 1992 Dream Team members Clyde Drexler, David Robinson and Chris Mullin pose with their old jerseys at the arena in Badalona, Spain where their games were held at the 1992 Olympics on July 23, 1992.



Durant will be 35, Jrue Holiday will be 34, Kawhi Leonard will be 33 and Anthony Davis will be 31. Comparisons to the best USA Basketball teams ever – the 1992 Dream Team and the 2008 Redeem Team among them – are inevitable.

“I think they are going to run the table,” Drexler said. “I would be highly disappointed if they lost a game.”

Drexler and the original Dream Team steamrolled the competition in 1992, first at the Tournament of the Americas in Drexler’s home NBA city of Portland, then in Monaco on a pre-Olympic stopoff, then in Barcelona when they defeated Toni Kukoc and Croatia for the gold medal after crushing the competition in the preliminary round, the quarterfinals and the semifinals.

Drexler fondly recalled the team’s first-ever game against Cuba when players from the Caribbean island were snapping photographs of themselves from the bench during the game because of the legendary status of the players they were competing against. Aside from Drexler, Jordan, Barkley and Robinson, the Dream Team included Larry Bird, Magic Johnson, Patrick Ewing, John Stockton, Karl Malone, Chris Mullin, Scottie Pippen and Christian Laettner.

“Some of those players from the East had never been cheered in Portland, which rolled out the red carpet for the team, and those guys got to enjoy restaurants, water sports, golf, concerts. It was a real bonding experience for the team, and the crowd in Portland really showed up,” Drexler said. “In that arena (Memorial Coliseum), they were close to you, right on top of you, and with the Blazers, they were our Sixth Man.”

The Dream Team also spent time in San Diego playing against a team of college players in what has been described as some of the most competitive scrimmages ever held, including one in which head coach Chuck Daly purposely messed with his substitutions in order to have his team lose – just to prepare them for the unpredictability of the international game.

From San Diego the team traveled to Monaco, the Mediterranean principality known as the playground of the rich. The Olympic team was feted at a state dinner at a medieval castle with the country’s royal family, played high-stakes card and dice games at Monaco’s casino, enjoyed the European beach factor that Barkley was fond of recalling, played golf and spent money.



"I was blown away by the elevation of Monaco, everything was vertical. On top of it being very expensive – more like three times what you would pay in the United States – people were so nice. We got to know the locals, and the place was absolutely awesome," Drexler said. "I hadn't been there before and I haven't been there since."

From there, it was on to Barcelona, with the team staying in a hotel rather than the Olympic Village because of the rockstar factor.

Since it was the first time that NBA players had competed in the Olympics, the players were larger than life figures who had crowds assembled outside their hotel at all hours of the day and night.

"Great security," Drexler recalls. "We even had helicopters, and you would have sworn we were military ambassadors or diplomats."

The Americans defeated Angola by 68 points in their opener, then watched Jordan and Pippen target Kukoc defensively in a 33-point victory over Croatia. They defeated Germany by 43, Brazil by 44 and Spain by 41

before reaching the knockout round, where Puerto Rico went down by 38, Lithuania by 51 and Croatia by 32 in the gold-medal game.

The games were must-see TV back in the United States and around the world, and the popularity of the Dream Team is credited with leading to the international explosion of basketball. Several generations of European players have said their inspiration for trending toward basketball rather than soccer was the legendary status of the Dream Team, which is considered the greatest assemblage of NBA talent ever put together.

Even today, 32 years after the fact, stories about the Dream Team and how they changed the global game have a special place in the oral and written history of basketball.

For Drexler, the ultimate Olympic moment did not come while eating the world's best paella or touring medieval cathedrals or on the medal stand when the competition was finished, but rather what he experienced at the Estadi Olímpic de Montjuïc during the Opening Ceremony.



"I never thought I would participate in an Olympics, so the moment that struck me the most was when we had on our Team USA clothes and hats. The whole team was there, and you look around and see all the athletes from the other countries, the best athletes in the world, and to be a part of that was a very special moment in time," he said. "That team, with all of the great players and great guys, was special. I would go to war with that group any time."

The 2024 team will experience something similar at the Opening Ceremony in Paris, but no team will ever experience what Drexler and his teammates went through since they were the first NBA players to break the no-professionals-allowed barrier – a change that came about after the United States finished third at the Seoul Olympics in 1988.

In the years since, there have been numerous highs and lows, and it remains to be seen whether the newest superteam can be as dominant as the 1992 squad. Chances are they will not, because several competing nations now field teams led by NBA superstars.

The dynamics surrounding the original Dream Team will never be matched, and it should be noted that Drexler and Barkley are around to recall those moments because Clyde warned Charles about a slippery slope right behind him at a golf course in Monaco.



The 1992 USA Basketball team (R to L): Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, John Stockton, Charles Barkley, Christian Laettner, Karl Malone, David Robinson, Clyde Drexler, Chris Mullin and Scottie Pippen.

PRESERVING AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE: BOB AND BEVERELY ELLIOTT

by BENNETT SCHRAMKO



Beverly Elliott, Executive Director, and Bob Elliott at the African American Museum of Southern Arizona.

Sometimes, the best ideas don't come from your dreams, brainstorming or prior life experiences. Sometimes, they come from the mind of a 7-year-old. In early 2023, NBRPA Director Bob Elliott and his wife, Beverly, unveiled the African American Museum of Southern Arizona. However, they don't take full credit for creating the idea.

For Bob and Beverly, the idea of establishing a museum that was solely dedicated to local African Americans came from their grandson, Jody.

In February 2021, Jody was in first grade and got a school assignment to write a report on an African-American hero of his choice in recognition of Black History Month. Jody asked his grandmother what local museum he could go to to research stories about African-American heroes.

"I had to tell him there's not one in Tucson," Beverly told Legends Magazine in a phone interview. "I checked with some friends, and it turns out there was not one in the state of Arizona."



9-year-old Jody cuts the ribbon of the new African American Museum of Southern Arizona on Saturday, January 14, 2023. Jody sparked the idea of creating the museum when he found out there was not a spot in Tucson that shares Black history.

As disappointed as Jody was, he looked at his grandparents and said, "I think you guys should start one, and I will help you."

And that's what they did.

Putting together a museum with a great collection of artifacts typically takes about five-to-10 years, but the Elliotts managed to receive a wide variety of donated items in just under five months. These items range from different historical artifacts to legacy stories to interactive lessons.

Throughout the museum, you will be able to view items that relate to the CROWN Act, poems, sculptures, a section where you can build your own family tree and much more.

In early 2023, the doors of the African American Museum of Southern Arizona swung open to the public for the first time, marking a huge moment not only for the city's history, but for the state of Arizona as well.

"They told us about 70-to-80 people would show up to the grand opening – 362 people lined up to come to the museum," Elliott said. "Almost everyone made a small donation as they were leaving the museum."

Former and current NBA players are finding ways to contribute to the museum as well. Hall-of-Famer Julius Erving will be holding a fireside conversation at the museum soon. In February, current NBA star Harrison Barnes and his wife, Brittany, made a donation to the museum.

"It's nice to see current players and former players embrace this project and this mission,"



A woman is showing her granddaughter an exhibit on display at the African American Museum of Southern Arizona on Saturday, January 14, 2023. The museum features three large TVs that display video footage and recordings of oral histories by Black Southern Arizonans.

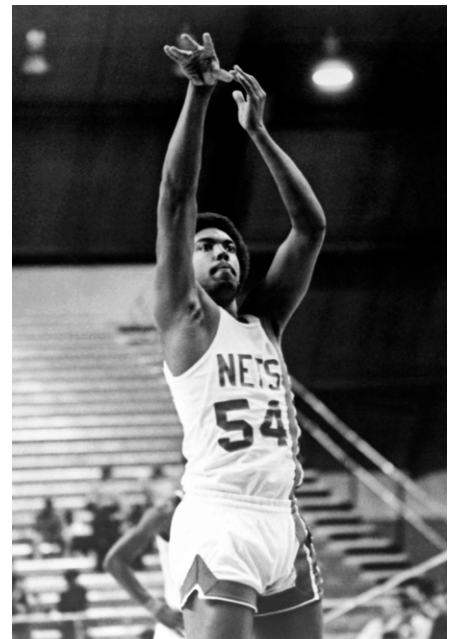
Bob said. "The league, the Players Association, the Retired Players Association – having everyone come together is always a good feeling."

If you would like to donate to the African American Museum of Southern Arizona, you can visit aamsaz.org and click the "Donate Now" button. You can also contact the museum (or Bob and Beverly directly) and say you would like to make a donation.

Bob was a three-time academic and athletic All-American at the University of Arizona. He led his team to a Western Athletic Conference championship and two NCAA Tournament appearances. He was drafted by the Philadelphia 76ers but spent the majority of his time in the NBA with the New Jersey Nets. Elliott now serves as a Board of Director for the NBRPA.



A crowd of people stand outside of the new African American Museum of Southern Arizona on Saturday, January 14, 2023. The museum is about 1,100 square feet.



Bob Elliott #54 of the New Jersey Nets shoots in 1980 in New Jersey



LEGENDS CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT DALLAS

On June 3, 2024, the NBRPA Dallas Chapter, led by Chapter President Willie Davis, hosted its 4th annual golf invitational at Brookhaven Country Club. Basketball Legends and notable names from the Dallas-Fort Worth area came together for a fantastic day of golf, networking, and entertainment for a good cause. This year's golf outing benefited Network of Community Ministries, a nonprofit organization in Richardson, Texas with the mission of providing basic needs, mental health services, and educational advancement for youth in the local community.

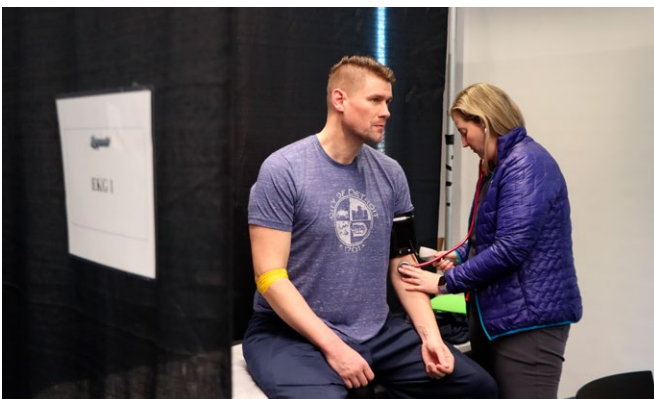




LEGENDS CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT DETROIT

The NBRPA Detroit Chapter, led by Chapter President Derrick Coleman, hosted the 2024 Black Excellence Dinner in partnership with the Detroit Pistons and Arn & Nancy Tellem on Friday, February 24, 2024. The black-tie event, held at the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation, paid tribute to the late Sam Washington, a longtime basketball coach and mentor at St. Cecilia's Gym, and Hall of Famer George "The Iceman" Gervin. The event program included remarks from NBRPA Founder Dave Bing, as well as an engaging conversation between NBA Legend Jalen Rose and The Iceman to discuss Gervin's basketball career and the rich history of Detroit basketball.

The following morning, the NBRPA and the Detroit Chapter hosted its Health Screenings program at the Pistons Performance Center. Detroit-based Legends stopped by to receive thorough and wide-ranging screening procedures, including consultations with Endeavor Health, as well as resources to promote a healthy lifestyle.





LEGEND SIGHTINGS

NBRPA PRE-DRAFT COMBINE PARTY

The NBRPA hosted the annual NBA Pre-Draft Combine Party on May 13, 2024, at VU Rooftop in downtown Chicago. This Players Party event during the NBA Draft Combine brought together NBRPA members from the Chicago area and beyond reminisce about their own Draft Night memories and network with other Legends and executives in leadership roles within the NBA. Party attendees mingled with old teammates, made new connections, and swayed to the beats of DJ Chitown Shani all night long. We wish the next class of NBA draftees the best of luck and we look forward to once again hosting one of our favorite annual gatherings during the NBA Draft Combine next year!







LEGEND SIGHTINGS

GATEWAY FOR CANCER RESEARCH CELEBRITY FIGHT NIGHT



The 2024 Gateway Celebrity Fight Night was held on April 27 at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. The evening celebrated Gateway's history of investing in cancer clinical trials, raising more than \$3 million to find, fund, and further critical early phase cancer research. Several NBRPA members attended the evening's star-studded festivities in support of Gateway and its mission.

