

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the NATIONAL BASKETBALL RETIRED PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

# LEGENDS

MAGAZINE

WNBA SEASON  
PREVIEW

OFFSEASON MOVES & TITLE CHANCES

20/22 Spring

LEGEND AMONG  
LEGENDS

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# NBA 75TH ANNIVERSARY

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# CONTENTS

## WNBA LEGENDS WORKING IN NBA

p.4

BREAKING BARRIERS AND PROVING THAT BASKETBALL IS BASKETBALL



## WNBA SEASON PREVIEW

p.31

WNBA TEAMS LOOK TO OFFSEASON MOVES TO BOLSTER TITLE CHANCES FOR UPCOMING SEASON

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### WNBA LEGENDS

p.4 BREAKING BARRIERS AND PROVING THAT BASKETBALL IS BASKETBALL

#### MARK TATUM

p.10 LEGEND AMONG LEGENDS

p.13 LEGENDS CARE PROGRAMS

p.14 LEGENDS CARE ASSISTS CLEVELAND

p.16 LEGENDS SCHOLARS TAKE ALL-STAR

#### ONE WEEKEND IN CLEVELAND

p.18 NBA 75 ALL-STAR RECAP

#### THANK YOU

p.24 DIKEMBE MUTOMBO & MUTOMBO COFFEE

p.25 DOMINIQUE WILKINS & MXS CIGARS

p.26 TRILL'S TAKE: TOP 10 ALL-STAR MOMENTS

p.28 LEGENDS MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

#### WNBA SEASON PREVIEW

p.31 WNBA TEAMS LOOK TO OFFSEASON MOVES TO BOLSTER TITLE CHANCES FOR UPCOMING SEASON

p.34 5 QUESTIONS WITH JIM CHONES

p.36 LEGENDS CHAPTERS SPOTLIGHT

p.38 LEGENDS SIGHTINGS

## LEGEND AMONG LEGENDS MARK TATUM

p.10

The NBA's Deputy Commissioner and COO Discusses Globalization, Rise of the BAL, Innovation and Partnership with the NBRPA.



## NBA75 ALL-STAR RECAP

ONE WEEKEND IN CLEVELAND

"IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT GETTING TOGETHER AND SEEING EACH OTHER, BUT WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU CAN DO SOMETHING WHEN YOU GET TOGETHER."

SHAWN MARION





# WNBA LEGENDS BREAKING BARRIERS

*AND PROVING THAT BASKETBALL IS BASKETBALL*

by HOWARD MEGDAL

*Head coach Gregg Popovich of the San Antonio Spurs sits with assistant coaches, Mitch Johnson, Becky Hammon and trainer, Will Sevenson on March 11, 2022 at the AT&T Center in San Antonio, TX.*

**W**hen Becky Hammon accepted the head coach position with the Las Vegas Aces, many cheered her ascension to the top chair and the \$1 million annual salary that came with it. But, given her tenure with the San Antonio Spurs, there was an undercurrent of worry in some circles as many saw Hammon as the best chance yet for a woman to hold an NBA head coaching job for the first time.

Hammon pushed back on that, forcefully, in a Zoom with the media shortly after taking the job. “I think it’s an ignorant statement. To think I’ve outgrown the WNBA in a coaching capacity is ridiculous,” she said. “I’d rather be

a coach in the WNBA and have my own organization and be running a team.”

It is every bit Hammon’s right to chart her own course. But even the idea on its merits — that somehow, a WNBA path closes off an NBA future — isn’t the experience of the growing contingent of WNBA players moving freely between the men’s and women’s game, long a freedom reserved only for men.

Take Sheri Sam, for example. The Vanderbilt product played for a decade in the WNBA, making an All-Star team with the 2002 Orlando Miracle and winning WNBA titles in 2004 and 2008, before serving as an assistant coach



Left: Becky Hammon #25 of the San Antonio Silver Stars drives against Sheri Sam #55 of the Detroit Shock in Game Two of the WNBA Finals on October 3, 2008 at AT&T Center in San Antonio, Texas. Right: Doug McDermott #17 and assistant coach Becky Hammon of the San Antonio Spurs discuss during the game against the Toronto Raptors on March 9, 2022 at the AT&T Center in San Antonio, TX.

for the Eastern Illinois women's basketball team, an athletic director for a high school and even some time with the PGA of Northern California. She also regularly wrote on basketball to flex her analytical muscles the entire time.

So when Portland Trail Blazers general manager Joe Cronin called her as she sat in an airport on New Year's Eve, she was ready to listen. Cronin offered her the job of Scouting Manager, working closely with Basketball Operations.

"I think for me, it has always been grasping the moment of where you are," Sam said in a phone interview. "You have to dream big goals. Yes, I do want to be a GM and run a team. But I think right now my focus is just [on] being in the moment and learning as much as I can."

The reality is, Sam said, people like Hammon helped create the opportunities simply because once NBA folks saw that women could succeed in a space previously reserved for men, other barriers quickly fell as well.

Sometimes, the one who needed convincing was the icon herself. That was the case for Swin Cash, who was approaching the end of her playing career in the WNBA — an illustrious one that included four All-Star appearances and three WNBA titles — when then-Liberty executive Isiah Thomas approached her with the idea of moving into the team's front office. At the time, Cash was enjoying a productive career on the media side and hadn't considered basketball operations.

Cash met with fellow Liberty front office member Kristin Bernert, and the two discussed KB's career path with the Detroit Shock. Eventually, Cash decided to try and do both, taking a job as Director



WNBA Legend Sheri Sam teaches kids during a Jr. NBA Clinic presented by Spalding on September 15, 2016 at the Douglas Park Field House and Cultural Center in Chicago, IL.



*Pelicans broadcaster Nancy Lieberman and assistant coach Teresa Weatherspoon pose for a photo with WNBA legend Swin Cash before the game on February 11, 2020 at the Smoothie King Center in New Orleans, LA.*

of Franchise Development with the Liberty while continuing her television career.

“And that’s how, doing both, I met Griff at Turner, and the rest is kind of history,” Cash said with a chuckle, referring to the New Orleans Pelicans GM David Griffin.

Cash now serves as Vice President of Basketball Operations with New Orleans, another barrier-breaker proving that basketball is basketball, and the women in the game belong wherever decisions are made, no matter who is playing.

“I think we’re still getting there,” Cash said of true equality in the sport. “But I love the way that the women are now thinking ... We’re thinking about our careers in a more holistic way, and I love that about our women.”

Cash said she hesitated when she was offered the job by Griffin before a conversation with her husband reminded her how much she wanted to be in the arena.

“My husband was like, ‘you sit up here, you’re on television, we’re having conversations, watching games and talking about what you would do if you would run a team and what they should be doing ...’ And I was like, oh, you know, I like a good challenge.”

That certainly describes the way Kristi Toliver entered the NBA coaching space. The Washington Wizards hired her as an assistant coach during her tenure playing for the Washington Mystics. However,



*Swin Cash, Vice President of Player Operations for the New Orleans Pelicans, looks on before a pre-season game against the San Antonio Spurs on October 13, 2019 at the AT&T Center in San Antonio, TX.*

**"I THINK THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE FOR PEOPLE AND YOU SEE MORE WOMEN IN GENERAL ON THE BENCHES, ON NBA BENCHES AND AS TRAINERS. IT'S A BIG DEAL. SO I'M CERTAINLY PLEASED, YOU KNOW, NEVER SATISFIED, BUT I THINK I HAVE NO COMPLAINTS ON THIS END."**

*KRISTI TOLIVER*

Assistant coach Kristi Toliver of the Dallas Mavericks talks to Frank Ntilikina #21 before the game against the Golden State Warriors on January 25, 2022 at Chase Center in San Francisco, CA.

the move was so new — an NBA team hiring a WNBA player, with the parent company owning both entities — that the WNBA ruled the Wizards could only pay Toliver \$10,000.

Fortunately, a new collective bargaining agreement — one that reflected the growing demand for WNBA minds in the NBA space — allowed WNBA players to be paid like other NBA assistant coaches. The WNBPA even had an informal name for the new arrangement: The Kristi Toliver Rule.

Toliver is still playing for the Los Angeles Sparks while concurrently serving as an assistant with the Dallas Mavericks. So how does she see the progress?

"I think the opportunities are there for people," Toliver said. "And you see more women in general on the benches, on NBA benches and as trainers," referring to the hiring of Jessica Cohen as head trainer in Portland. "... it's a big deal. So I'm certainly pleased, you know, never satisfied, but I think I have no complaints on this end."

Toliver, too, is dreaming bigger — she wants to be a head coach someday. NBA? WNBA? College men? College women? The answer is yes.

Even as figures like Sam, Toliver and Cash rise, they're extending the ladder for those who come after them. In Cash's case, she hasn't given up her WNBA reach either, recently becoming an investor in the league. That's right, a player who once starred in the WNBA now owns a part of it.



Left: Dallas Mavericks assistant coach Kristi Toliver and Memphis Grizzlies assistant coach Sonia Raman talk before the game at FedExForum on December 08, 2021 in Memphis, TN. Right: Legend, Swin Cash addresses the crowd during the Jr. NBA Global Championship Pregame & Closing Ceremony on August 11, 2019 at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex in Orlando, FL.





Assistant coach *Becky Hammon* of the *San Antonio Spurs* and assistant coach *Jenny Boucek* of the *Dallas Mavericks* talk prior to a game on *April 11, 2021* at the *American Airlines Center* in *Dallas, TX*.

“My Nana used to say it all the time: You’ve got to have your heart in the right place,” Cash said. “You’ve got to have your eyes set in the right direction, and my heart’s in the right place. I care about the women that are coming behind me ... I’m privileged now to be in certain rooms in the NBA space. I’m privileged to be able to make a phone call and get a connection and make a connection for somebody that may be interested not only in the NBA, but WNBA. Or even media.”

All this may seem like a lot of work to simply find equality in the game. But there are pleasures, too, from the effort. It’ll matter that Swin Cash and Sheri Sam and Kristi Toliver and Becky Hammon showed the one-way path for women in basketball was as foolish as it was limiting — men’s basketball was for too long denying itself some of the greatest basketball minds.

Their effort has changed that forever. So when Toliver found herself talking with Jalen Brunson before Dallas’ opener in Atlanta — she sees a lot of herself in him, and it’s an absolutely fantastic comp — she emphasized the parts of his game that will not only make him a better contributor, but a champion. This is the very essence of coaching.

“I’m just sharing my experiences and keeping them mindful of the bigger picture and why we do what we do,” Toliver said. “It’s not to make the dollar, it’s to enjoy the game. Have fun with your teammates. You only get to do this for so long. So I want them always to be mindful of just enjoying the journey and enjoying every single day of just being in the gym.”

Slowly but surely, that’s the way WNBA women in coaching get to think about it, too — no matter which gym or who is playing.



Assistant coach *Lindsey Harding* of the *Sacramento Kings* (R) talks with assistant coach *Edniesha Curry* of the *Portland Trail Blazers* before the game at *Moda Center* on *October 20, 2021* in *Portland, OR*.



*Kristi Toliver* #20 of the *Los Angeles Sparks* reacts to a game-winning shot by *Nneka Ogwumike* #30 in the second half against the *Atlanta Dream* at *Staples Center* on *August 19, 2021* in *Los Angeles, CA*.

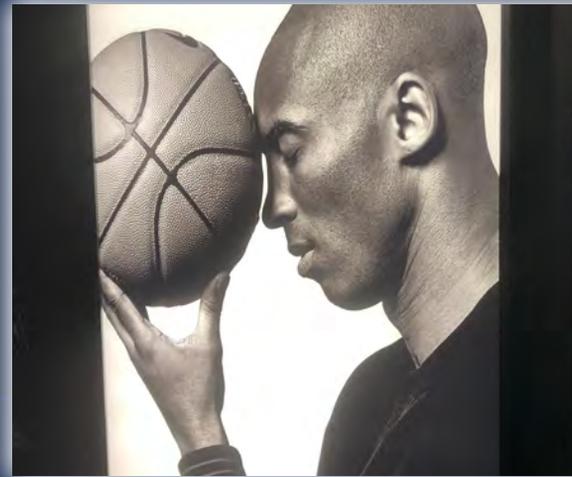


Assistant coach *Nancy Lieberman* of the *Sacramento Kings* talks with *Omri Casspi* #18 of the *Sacramento Kings* before the game against the *Indiana Pacers* on *December 23, 2015* at *Bankers Life Fieldhouse*.



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## LEGEND AMONG LEGENDS MARK TATUM

*THE NBA'S DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AND COO  
DISCUSSES GLOBALIZATION, RISE OF THE BAL,  
INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NBRPA*

by **PETER CROATTO**

**G**rowing up in Brooklyn, New York, Mark Tatum would cut out the bottom of a milk crate and tie it to a lamppost on his block. This DIY passion project allowed Tatum to shoot hoops all day long. It also introduced him to basketball's self-improvement ethos — improvisation, the value of being a good teammate and the importance of hard work.

The asphalt of New York Avenue in East Flatbush has given way to the NBA's plush headquarters on Fifth Avenue. That precocious kid is now the NBA's Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer, responsible for guiding the Association's seemingly endless expansion. The league's second-in-command has taken those childhood lessons to his position. Only this time, the bond with his teammates doesn't end with bedtime.

When Tatum attends the Legends Brunch at All-Star Weekend or inductions at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, he doesn't run into colleagues or past associates; it's more like a family. "It really does feel like a family reunion," he says. "The fraternity of people who have contributed to the sport and the league, in particular, it's a relatively small group."

The Cornell and Harvard alumnus joined the NBA in 1999. As the NBA's Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer, Tatum heads up the League's business operations, including their international efforts. He also oversees the global partnerships, marketing, communications and business operations departments for both the NBA and the G League. Expanding the game globally is the aspect of his role that he values the most.

When you consider the number of one-name superstars hailing from outside the United States — Luka, Giannis, Joel, to name a few — along with worldwide celebrities such as LeBron James, does the NBA need any more exposure?

Tatum believes it does. The NBA's global status is "remarkable," but he intends to "expand the fan base and deepen their connection to the game."

Two developments have helped on that end: NBA Africa and Senegal. NBA Africa, which launched last May, features former President Barack Obama and Oscar-winning actor Forest Whitaker as strategic investors. Its centerpiece is the Basketball Africa League, a partnership between the NBA and the International Basketball Association. A dozen teams from 12 countries played in a bubble in Rwanda's Kigali Arena.

"It was built in Africa for Africa," Tatum says. "It was a proud moment for us all."

The league's second season will launch on March 5th in Senegal, featuring 38 games in three cities over three months.

Closer to home, the G League introduced its first international team: the Capitanes, in Mexico City — the group is slated to play home games south of the border this season. That's in addition to the NBA's regularly scheduled international games, including its first contest in the United Arab Emirates this fall.

Tatum says the thrust of the NBA's international plan is "grassroots, building the game and getting more people to play around the world." That involves bringing "the live experience" to fans outside the United States and making sure the league's programming is more accessible globally.

Has the NBA considered introducing an expansion franchise outside of North America?

"In terms of an international franchise, I'll never say never," Tatum finally says, "but I think right now the challenge is the travel that would be required. I think it's possible in



*Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Mark Tatum pose for a photo next to the Louis Vuitton trunk for the Larry O'Brien Trophy on January 22, 2020 in Paris, France at LVMH Headquarters.*

North America, obviously in Canada and even in Mexico. I would think, at some point, that's something we're going to look at and try to figure out. But it's not on the immediate horizon."

The drive to increase basketball's international audience is why Tatum is never bored. But he says the NBA hasn't forgotten about engaging the fans in the States that made the league relevant. Cable, videotapes and 1992's fabled Dream Team turned a hard-charging domestic enterprise into an international colossus.

Tatum explains that the addition of the play-in game to the NBA's postseason has also added excitement to the playoffs and the playoff race for the fans.

Additionally, "The G League's expansion with Team Ignite, consisting of high school graduates wanting to go pro, helped Jalen Green and Jonathan Kuminga become lottery picks in 2021," he says, offering another example of advancements to help domestic fan engagement.

However, Tatum feels the most significant initiative moving forward will be how the game is presented. That means new camera angles, audio feeds, and apps as ways to attract new fans, most of whom have only known a wired, every-option-right-now world.

"We are fan-driven and fan-centric," Tatum explains. "Our sport doesn't thrive, doesn't grow without fans. We know we have fans from five years old to 95 years old. We are constantly



*Mark Tatum, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer at the NBA, shakes hands with Kobe Bryant #24 of the Los Angeles Lakers before the game against the San Antonio Spurs at STAPLES Center on February 19, 2016 in Los Angeles, CA.*

trying to think about how we can best serve the fan. We know some people will want it on their traditional television and traditional channels. Still, we also know there's a generation of people who no longer have cable access, and they want to stream on their mobile device."

And those fans are everywhere. NBA games, he says, are broadcast in 215 countries in 50 different languages in every format imaginable.

But fan engagement, either domestically or internationally, is not his sole focus. Keeping a connection to players of the past is a necessity.

He calls the National Basketball Retired Players Association (NBRPA) "a great partner" of the NBA; the relationship between President and CEO Scott Rochelle and previous regimes is essential. The support is a "no-brainer," Tatum says. Former NBA and WNBA players have built the leagues into what they are today and are integral to the NBA's future.

"NBA Lane," the league's cheerful short film celebrating its 75th anniversary, featured legends such as Jerry West, Bill Russell, Isiah Thomas, Bill Walton, and Grant Hill, secretary of the NBRPA's board of directors.

"These former players have such great expertise and knowledge, not only around the game but beyond [it] as well," Tatum says. "Keeping them engaged and connected to the NBA family after their playing careers has long been a focus. Their impact across different generations really does extend beyond the court — they're true ambassadors for the game of basketball around the world."

In his almost quarter-century with the NBA, Tatum has seen the good basketball can bring about. Yes, superstars Joel Embiid and Pascal Siakam participated as teens in Basketball Without Borders, but they're not the only success stories.

"We created programs for these boys and girls around the world to participate in 15 years ago, and we've seen how it's changed people's lives and given them opportunities," Tatum explains. "Even if they don't end up having a career in the NBA or playing in college, it creates opportunities for people to go on and make a big impact on other people's lives."

Basketball teaches life lessons. The same ones Mark Tatum took advantage of all those years ago in Brooklyn, where a milk crate and a ball opened up his world. Who knows how many kids in anonymous villages and overlooked small towns crave that opportunity? The world is big, and what basketball can provide is bigger.

*Top: Mark Tatum shakes hands with Vlade Divac before the game against the San Antonio Spurs on October 27, 2016. Middle: Mark Tatum talks with Dikembe Mutombo before the 2017 Basketball Hall of Fame Enshrinement Ceremony on September 8, 2017. Bottom: Satnam Singh, the 52nd pick overall in the NBA Draft by the Dallas Mavericks, poses for a photo with Mark Tatum during the 2015 NBA Draft at the Barclays Center on June 25, 2015 in the Brooklyn borough of New York City.*





# 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.*

## LEGENDS HBCU SCHOLARSHIP



The Legends HBCU Scholarship is a scholarship fund and scholars program for undergraduates attending HBCUs. Legends Scholars will receive a \$10,000 scholarship in recognition of their academic excellence and desire to positively impact the world.



## FULL COURT PRESS

Legend Care's cornerstone program - Full Court Press: Prep For Success - went virtual, giving children around the world the opportunity to learn basketball skills through drills demonstrated by WNBA Legend Sheryl Swoopes and NBA Legends Grant Hill, Shawn Marion, Dale Ellis, Fat Lever, Greg Oden and Caron Butler.



## LEGENDS GIRL CHAT

Legends Girl Chat is a virtual Legends Care program consisting of one-hour video conversations between middle school and high school girls and WNBA Legends. Partnering with the NBRPA on Legends Girl Chat is Girls Inc. Through this Legends Care partnership, all 78 affiliates of Girls Inc. are able to schedule a Legends Girl Chat to incorporate into their programming.



## LEGENDS HOME COURTS

Through the Legends Home Courts program, monetary grants are given to community groups for the renovation of outdoor basketball courts.

## BACK2BACK

BACK2BACK prepares elementary students for the upcoming school year by providing them with brand new backpacks filled with essential back to school supplies.

## THANKSGIVING COMMUNITY ASSIST

The Thanksgiving Community Assist is an annual Legends Care program through which families in need receive a Thanksgiving turkey and holiday cheer from the Legends of Basketball.



## LEGENDS MAKE ALL-STAR ASSIST FOR CLEVELAND FAMILIES

There is no doubt that Legends Care was in action during the 2022 NBA All-Star Weekend in Cleveland. As the charitable initiative of the NBRPA, the Legends Care game plan makes a positive impact on children, families and communities. That game plan was successfully executed in Cleveland during All-Star Weekend.

With one of the highest child poverty rates in the country, Cleveland has a fight on its hands against hunger and food insecurity. The NBRPA committed to joining the battle during All-Star Weekend through a Legends Care Drive-Thru Food Distribution.

Assembling a team of partners that advocate for the children of Cleveland was the first step. We found that in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD), which educates and assists 35,696 economically disadvantaged students. CMSD joined the Legends Care All-Star team and provided the site for the Legends Care Drive-Thru Food Distribution and the 500 families who would be served through the community event.

"Hunger is one of the very significant barriers that our students and families face living in a city that ranks at the top nationally for child poverty," Cleveland Metropolitan School District CEO Eric Gordon explained. "It interferes with the ability of our children to learn and succeed.

"We are deeply grateful for the assistance that partners like the National Basketball Retired Players Association and Greater Cleveland Food Bank provide to our families in need."

The Sherwin-Williams Company was the second corporation to join the Legends Care All-Star team as a volunteer partner. Founded in Cleveland



*LaRue Martin Jr. and Geoff Huston ready to place produce boxes in a family's trunk.*

in 1866, a significant component of Sherwin-Williams' mission is to give back through community engagement.

"It is an honor to take part in an event that will have a positive impact on fighting hunger in our local community," Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Sherwin-Williams John G. Morikis said. "Our team is proud to celebrate Cleveland's hosting of the NBA All-Star Game by lending our support to the Legends Care Drive-Thru Food Distribution.



*NBA and WNBA Legends man their stations during the Drive-Thru Food Distribution.*



*Janice Braxton, Brad Sellers and Glenn McDonald prepare to place backpacks and school supplies into a family's trunk.*



*Eddie Gill places a non-perishable food box into a family's truck.*



*Bo Kimble places a food box into a family's car.*



*Legends and volunteers waiting for the next car to fill.*

"We want to thank all those who made this event a reality for our neighbors in need."

The Cleveland Food Bank rounded out the Legends Care All-Star team by providing the fresh fruits, vegetables and nonperishable food that the families needed for the Legends Care Drive-Thru Food Distribution.

"We are proud to be a part of this effort!" President and CEO of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank Kristin Warzocha exclaimed. "We're so honored to be included in this NBA Legends Care event where families are getting the nutritious food they need to help them in these continued challenging times."

On Saturday, Feb. 19, before the sun had even risen, the Cleveland Food Bank trucks arrived at the site while CMSD and Legends Care staff prepared the snow-covered campus for the arrival of volunteers and participating families.

Close to 30 Legends volunteers braving the cold and wind joined approximately 40 Sherwin-Williams volunteers in CMSD's massive parking lot. When they arrived, there were rows of pallets and tables containing food boxes and prepared lunches from the Cleveland Food Bank as well as additional donations of backpacks, school supplies, toiletries and diapers from CMSD.

By the start time of 9 a.m., vehicles were lined up waiting to enter. As the day went on, the Legends Care Drive-Thru Food Distribution evolved into a wholly inclusive community event. The volunteers welcomed families arriving on foot with shopping carts and strollers.

In addition to the Legends volunteers from the NBRPA hotel, Cleveland Chapter President Jim Chones did an outstanding job spreading the word to all local NBA and WNBA Legends who showed up to help their neighbors.

One CMSD staffer was elated to be teammates for the day with his favorite Cavalier, Campy Russell. Together they dished out assists in the community.

Former NBA player and current NBRPA member Geoff Huston could be heard saying, "We're helping families," while enthusiastically clapping as the next vehicle approached his section. Shouts of "We've got two families in one car" could be heard coming from a group of NBA Legends as Cleveland Chapter Treasurer Janice Braxton and Bonnie Dove doubled back for extra supplies. This kind of teamwork and the love could be felt by everyone throughout the event.

By 1 p.m., all the food, toiletries, school supplies and diapers had been handed out to hundreds of families who now knew that Legends All-Star wasn't just in Cleveland to have fun but also to help out and make an impact through service. And it was clear to anyone who watched the NBA and WNBA Legends in motion that they had developed an unwritten playbook that worked beautifully.

Before long, the CMSD campus was clean and clear once again with staff and volunteers returning home for much-deserved warmth and rest; but as one Legend said on the shuttle ride back to the hotel, "After a while, it was just so heartwarming that the cold didn't even bother you anymore."



*Damon, Erin, Saniya and Jayla spend time with NBRPA Board Secretary Grant Hill after the NBA HBCU Classic.*

# LEGENDS SCHOLARS EXPERIENCE ALL-STAR WEEKEND

It was a year of firsts for the National Basketball Retired Players Association (NBRPA) and NBA, as the inaugural class of Legends Scholars was recognized at the NBA HBCU Classic between Howard University and Morgan State University during the 2022 NBA All-Star Weekend.

Four of the five 2021-2022 Legends Scholars\* — Damon Bryan (South Carolina State University), Erin Foster (Spelman College), Saniya Keeton (Tuskegee University) and Jayla Thornton (North Carolina A&T State University) — flew to Cleveland for the All-Star festivities.

It was the first plane ride or trip out of state for some of the honorees.

Even though the Scholars met for the first time in person on Saturday of All-Star Weekend, the camaraderie and excitement among the group was electric. After a brief visit to the Legends Lounge, where they opened their swag bags with lightning speed, it was time to head to the HBCU Classic.

The Scholars walked into the Wolstein Center while “Lift Every Voice and Sing” was being performed and filmed the historic moment with their phones.

Sitting courtside by tip-off, they soaked in the first half of the HBCU classic with the best seats in the house.

“The HBCU Classic is unmatched! It’s so exciting.” -Jayla Thornton

“The HBCU Classic is amazing, photogenic and I love the culture.” -Saniya Keeton



*Damon, Jayla, Saniya and Erin at the NBA Legends Awards Show.*



*Jayla and Saniya volunteer at the Legends Care Drive-Thru Food Distribution.*

"I feel the HBCU energy in the air!" -Damon Bryan  
 "The HBCU Classic is something that I'll remember forever." -Erin Foster

As halftime wound down, the familiar music from the Legends HBCU Scholarship promotional video filled the arena. The Scholars waved while being introduced on the jumbotron.

After the game, the Scholars had a fun meeting with NBRPA Board Members Grant Hill and Shawn Marion. They wrapped up the experience by taking pictures and videos on the court and at the scorer's table.

Community service and positively impacting the world are synonymous with the spirit of who the Legends Scholars are. This is why before the HBCU Classic, early arrivals Jayla Thornton and Saniya Keeton joined NBA and WNBA Legends who volunteered at the Legends Care Drive-Thru Food Distribution event.

The following day, the Scholars got ready for the NBA Legends Awards while figuring out which Legends they wanted to meet.

Upon arriving at the "star-studded" — to quote Erin Foster — Cleveland Convention Center, NBRPA Founders Dave Bing and Archie Clark, Dr. J, NBRPA Board Chairman Johnny Davis, NBRPA Board Members Sam Perkins, Thurl Bailey, Chasity Melvin, Bill Walton and Rick Barry welcomed the Scholars into the Legends family. Each Legend spent time getting to know the young honorees, asking genuine questions while sharing heartfelt advice and inspiration.

The Legends Scholars were in awe of seeing Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr. up close, as they were sitting in seats made just for them. Their eyes grew wide when Magic Johnson took the stage. They listened intently to Dikembe Mutombo closing his acceptance speech with, "It's in your hands to make the world a better place. Go out, do it."

They loved when Carmelo Anthony appeared wearing a pink hoodie under his NBA 75 blazer. And dashed over to Miles Brown, a star from the hit show Black-ish, once the ceremony was over.

As they prepared to head back to the airport, the Scholars could not stop expressing their gratitude for the entire experience. Damon Bryan said that the memories created at All-Star Weekend could never be forgotten.

"All-Star Weekend inspired me to continue to reach for my goals," said Saniya Keeton.

And we, the NBRPA and Legends Care will always be there to support our Legends Scholars as they strive for their goals and will continue to assist them in creating memories.

\*The fifth Legends Scholar, Tyrell Miller-Johnson (Central State University), could not attend due to his military obligations with the U.S. Army. We thank him for his continued service.



*Damon, Saniya, Jayla and Erin in the Legends Lounge.*



*Damon, Jayla, Erin, Saniya and Greydy Diaz courtside at the NBA HBCU Classic.*



*Damon, Jayla, Erin and Saniya on camera at the NBA HBCU Classic.*

# ONE WEEKEND IN CLEVELAND

by JULIO MANTEIGA & ERIN LAW





### *75 years — Wow!*

From smoke-filled gyms where pro games served as the appetizer to college basketball matinees to the glittering spectacle of today that reaches all corners of the globe — the NBA has been dazzling and delighting fans for three-quarters of a century.

For 75 years, basketball fans have been transfixed by the dominance of big men named Mikan, Chamberlain and Jabbar. We have witnessed the wizardry of Cousy, Robertson and West and have been left in awe by the gravity-defying miracles performed by Jordan, Baylor and Erving. We affectionately know them by names such as Iceman, The Doctor and Magic. These players shaped our childhood and marked our coming of age, as we discussed them with both our parents and our children. They provided us with decades long debates as to who is the best.

And for one weekend in Cleveland, Ohio, they all came together to build the greatest collection of basketball history ever assembled.

Despite frigid temperatures and the lingering effects of a pandemic, Cleveland beautifully hosted the hottest party on the planet. Legendary players came from places far and wide to celebrate the NBA's diamond anniversary at the 2022 NBA All-Star Weekend and showed the world what it truly means to be part of this basketball family. Let's look back at the weekend of the NBA's 75th-anniversary celebration.

The festivities tipped off on Friday, Feb. 18, with the National Basketball Retired Players Association (NBRPA) opening the doors to its "Legends Lounge." Greats from the NBA, WNBA, ABA and the Harlem Globetrotters mixed and mingled, caught up with long-lost friends and showed that they can still make those mid-range jumpers with precision on a newly constructed court at The Renaissance Hotel in downtown.

NBA Legends and Hall of Famers Dikembe Mutombo and Dominique Wilkins discussed with pride their latest business ventures into the world of coffee and fine cigars, respectively. Rick Barry then waxed poetic on the finer points of the pick and roll and showed off his underhanded free-throw shooting style, which still crisply swishes through the net as it did when he played. WNBA Legend Chasity Melvin noted that she "still has it" as she dribbled and posed for pictures. Meanwhile, George "The Iceman" Gervin proved that cool never goes out of style. The camaraderie was palpable and set the stage for the rest of the weekend.

Friday night, as the NBA's Rising Stars game was taking place at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse, the coaching



NBA Legend Willie Burton showcased his Excel U programs outside the Legends Lounge.

stylings of Legends Isiah Thomas and Rick Barry were on full display (Team Barry won 25-20). Legends from all different eras of basketball watched the action on a pair of big-screen television screens as they ate, drank and danced at the NBRPA's Tip-Off party at The IVY bar and restaurant. While the weekend centered on celebrating the NBA's top 75 players, this was also a celebration of all basketball players from every era and walk of life. Legends such as Brad Sellers, Bonnie Dove, Kenny Battle, Harold "Lefty" Williams and Micheal Ray Richardson were omnipresent throughout and shared stories that would be music to any basketball lover's ears.

Saturday morning saw a tremendous turnout for the Legends Care Drive-Thru Food Distribution following a night of laughs, great stories and good times. The event took place at the CMSD's East Professional Center, in conjunction with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Greater Cleveland Food Bank and The Sherwin-Williams Company.

Legends braved the freezing temperatures

and did what they always do best — dishing assists to the community and providing inspiration and support for participating families. Cleveland Cavaliers greats Austin Carr and Jim Chones lifted boxes filled with shelf-stable food items and lovingly placed them in needy families' trunks and back seats. Bo Kimble, Janice Braxton and Glenn McDonald gladly handed out the donated goods to smiling children and happy mothers, while volunteers from the NBRPA and their partners' staff worked alongside them.

For a Saturday matinee treat, four of the NBRPA's Legends Scholars recipients were treated to a courtside view of the action at the inaugural NBA HBCU Classic. They weren't disappointed, as Howard University overcame a 12-point deficit in the second half to rally past Morgan State.

Legends Scholars — Damon Germaine Bryan Jr (South Carolina State University), Saniya Keeton (Tuskegee University), Erin Foster (Spelman College) and Jayla Imani Thornton (North Carolina A&T State University) — had



**"IT'S A BROTHERHOOD.  
TO SEE EVERYONE  
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MAKES IT REAL.  
THEY HAVE MADE ME  
CHAMPION MY OWN SELF  
TO GO BACK INTO MY  
COMMUNITY AND HELP."**

LEFTY WILLIAMS



a front-row experience and were treated to a special meet and greet with NBA Legends and NBRPA Board Members Grant Hill, who was also calling the game on NBA TV, and Shawn Marion.

Saturday also featured WNBA Legend Chasity Melvin hosting an event to meet with fans of the now-defunct Cleveland Rockers franchise, where fans reminisced over one of the original WNBA teams, which called Cleveland home between 1997-2003.

As night approached, the arena began to rock with the anticipation of the All-Star Saturday

Night events — The Skills Challenge, 3-Point Shooting Contest and the main event, the Slam Dunk Competition. The hometown Cavaliers took the Skills Challenge. Minnesota's Karl Anthony-Towns — lovingly wearing his late mother's necklace — showed the world that big men could win the long-range shooting contest. And, the Knicks' highflying Obi Toppin soared for the slam dunk championship crown.

Following the events at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse, Legends and invitees made their way to the NBRPA's "Players Party," where NBA Legend and NBA 75 team member Dominique

Wilkins and Ace Prime M.X.S., his limited-edition cigar brand, served as the host of the night's festivities.

Sunday morning brought, for many, the highlight of All-Star Weekend — The 22nd Annual Legends Awards. The most notable names in roundball history filed into the Cleveland Convention Center as attendees snapped pictures of these legendary players from all eras of NBA history. The event was emceed by the gifted comedian JB Smooove. Dignitaries such as the newly named Executive Director of the NBPA Tamika Tremaglio, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and our own NBRPA President & CEO Scott Rochelle were featured throughout the day.

West was honored with the "Legend of the Year" award. At the same time, Kareem was presented with the "Legends Social Justice Award," and the inimitable Dikembe Mutombo was recognized with the "Global Ambassador Award." Reverend Jesse Jackson received the Legends' "Pioneer Award," and TNT broadcaster and longtime voice of the New York Knicks, Marv Albert, was recognized for his recent retirement from broadcasting. To echo Marv's signature call, this event received a resounding YESSSS!

Sunday evening brought us the 71st annual NBA All-Star Game — and what a game it turned out to be. Modern-day stars LeBron James, Steph Curry and Giannis Antetokounmpo displayed their game for Legends seated courtside and across the sold-out arena.

The game — played under the Elam Ending format — was closely contested and saw local





THE LEGENDS AWARDS SHOWCASES LEGENDS WHOSE LEGACY AND COMMITMENT CONTINUE TO IMPACT THE GAME

**THIS YEAR'S AWARD RECIPIENTS WERE:**

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD**

KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR

**LEGEND OF THE YEAR AWARD**

JERRY WEST

**GLOBAL AMBASSADOR AWARD**

DIKEMBE MUTOMBO

**PIONEER AWARD**

REV. JESSE JACKSON, SR.

Ohio products shine throughout the night. Curry took home the All-Star MVP hardware after dropping an awe-inspiring 50 points and breaking the NBA's All-Star 3-Point shooting mark with 16 made threes, and James drilled a turnaround jumper to give Team LeBron a 163-160 victory over Team Durant.

While the game would have been the crown jewel on any other night, this day belonged to the players named to the NBA 75 team. At halftime, a once-in-a-lifetime event took place — the 75 greatest players in NBA history were each named one-by-one and took a walk to center court.

Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson greeted each other, Dennis Rodman and Shaquille O'Neal took their place on the podium as only they could, and names from earlier eras, such as Elvin Hayes, Bob Pettit, Julius Erving and Dave Bing took in the spectacle in admiration of this brotherhood.

Generations of fans converged to honor and catch a glimpse of these hardwood heroes, on whose shoulders the modern game of basketball was built. One couldn't help but wonder if any of us would ever see something of this magnitude again, but we all knew that every one of us was fortunate to be here to see for ourselves.

Yes, for one weekend, Cleveland hosted the greatest collection of basketball talent, but this was more than that. For one weekend, this rugged, industrial city on the shores of Lake Erie became hoops heaven.





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Thank you Dikembe Mutombo and Mutombo Coffee for being a part of the Legends Lounge and Media Day during NBA All-Star Weekend 2022! The NBRPA is proud to partner with a Legend who is so dedicated to global humanitarian work and can also brew up a fantastic cup of coffee.



Thank you Dominique Wilkins and MXS Cigars for being a part of the Legends Lounge and Players Party during NBA All-Star Weekend 2022! The NBRPA is honored to work alongside a member of the NBA 75th Anniversary Team and share the experience of MXS Cigars with your fellow Legends.



# TRILL'S TAKE:

TOP 10 NBA ALL-STAR MOMENTS OF ALL TIME

by TRILL WITHERS

In celebrating the NBA's 75th Anniversary in Cleveland, we'd be remiss if we didn't thank the real MVPs: NBA President Maurice Podoloff, NBA Publicity Director Haskell Cohen and Boston Celtics owner Walter A. Brown. Although the League started in 1946, there wasn't an All-Star Game until six years later when these esteemed gentlemen hatched the plan.

In 1951, the first All-Star Game was held in Boston and it's been a midseason staple since. In honor of the illustrious weekend, let's look at 10 of the most memorable moments in All-Star history.

## 10 MAGIC JOHNSON'S RETURN (1992)

Even though Magic retired abruptly at the beginning of the 91-92 season, he was still voted into the game by fans. Scoring 25 points and dishing out 9 dimes, Magic put on an MVP-winning performance, capped by a game-closing 3-pointer.

## 9 KOBE BRYANT AND SHAQUILLE O'NEAL SHARE MVP (2009)

Five years after they last played together as Los Angeles Lakers, Kobe and Shaq combined for 44 points to share MVP honors.

## 8 AARON GORDON VS. ZACH LAVINE DUNK CONTEST (2016)

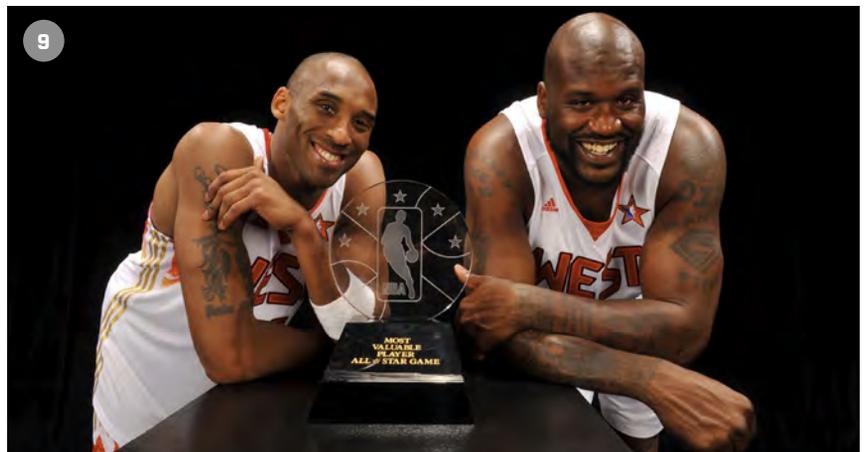
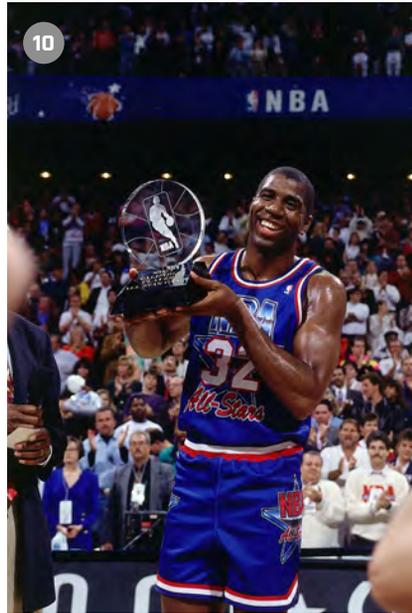
This showdown was one for the ages, with Gordon jumping over a mascot and LaVine completing multiple dunks from the free-throw line. The contest went to overtime, with Zach taking home the crown.

## 7 LARRY BIRD 3-POINT CONTEST THREE-PEAT (1988)

Bird was going for his third straight title, so the only question left was the one he asked his competition: "Who's coming in second?"

## 6 VINCE CARTER BRINGS THE DUNK CONTEST BACK (2000)

After a two-year hiatus, Carter brought back the contest with thunderous style. Who can forget VC famously saying "it's over" after completing an explosive through the legs windmill dunk with ease?

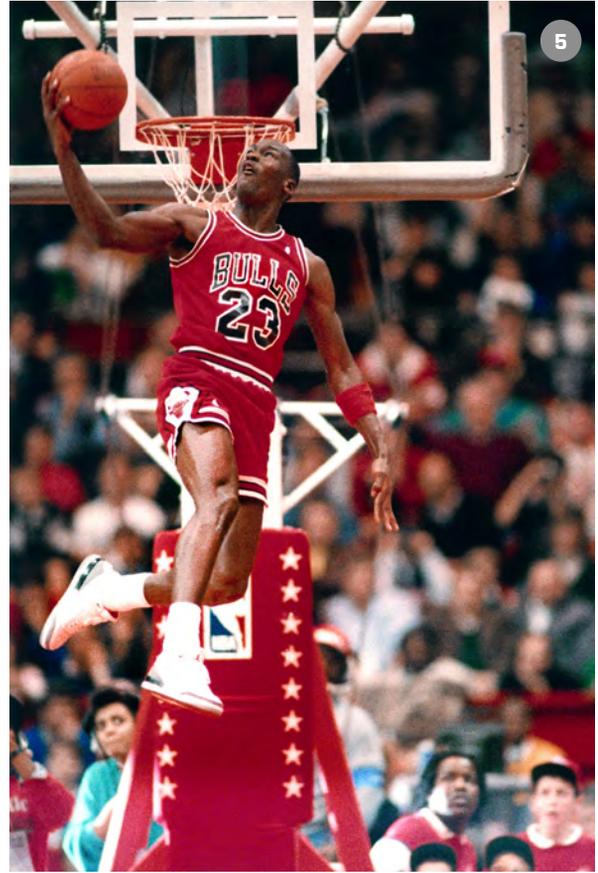




3



4



5



2



1

#### 5 MICHAEL JORDAN HOSTED THE LEAGUE (1988)

All-Star Weekend came to Chicago, and His Airness rolled out the red carpet as he won the Dunk Contest title and the MVP award in the All-Star Game.

#### 4 ONE LEAGUE ... FINALLY (1977)

The NBA-ABA merged before the season, so this was the first All-Star Weekend that saw the best from both leagues all competing together.

#### 3 ALLEN IVERSON TAKES OVER (2001)

What do you do down 21 points with nine minutes left? The only right answer is The Answer. Word on the street is that AI asked if anyone wanted to bet on the East coming back as he checked back into the game and led the East to a one-point victory.

#### 2 ALL-STAR GAME STRIKE (1964)

The first All-Star Game to be televised saw the players flex their power by striking right before tip-off, asking for a union and some sort of pension. The strike lasted for 22 minutes before the owners agreed to the players' demands, and the game went on.

#### 1 NBA 75 (2022)

Call it recency bias, but what else could top the list? Legend after Legend welcoming each other to the stage giving way to LeBron James hitting a game-winner in Cleveland. Of course, this was No. 1!

# Legends <sup>TM</sup> STUDIOS

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

Episodes of the All-Access Legends Podcast, On Deck with Scott Rochelle, Legends Live, Hoop du Jour with Peter Vecsey, and Legends Lounge with Trill Withers can all be found in one place at Legends Studios.



SUBSCRIBE to Legends Studios on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher or wherever you listen to podcasts to stay up-to-date with Legends content.





## NEWLY DESIGNED BRAND ENHANCEMENT ELEMENTS INCLUDE REDESIGNED LOGO, ANIMATED CONTENT AND MERCHANDISE DESIGNS

The National Basketball Retired Players Association, in celebration of its 30th anniversary, is teaming up with sports marketing collective HEARTLENT Group to re-fresh the organization's visual identity. As part of the partnership, the creative team at HEARTLENT Group, led by managing partner and head of creative Elliot Gerard, is creating new enhancements for the organization, including a new primary logo.

HEARTLENT is also collaborating to design digital content promoting the NBRPA's Legends Media & Entertainment platforms, including a series of custom animations showcasing previously untold stories about basketball luminaries like Charles Barkley and Alonzo Mourning.

Legends Media & Entertainment (LME), is the multifaceted storytelling platform that is home to Legends Magazine, Legends Live digital series, and the Legends Lounge w/ Trill Withers and Hoop du Jour w/ Peter Vecsey podcasts, that bring the wide-reaching stories of many of the NBA and WNBA's biggest stars to life. Additionally, HEARTLENT will create unique designs for the NBRPA's Legends Care initiative, which is the charitable arm of the organization offering programs and services that positively impact youth and communities both locally and globally. This includes a limited-edition Legends Care t-shirt that is available now until November 1 to Legends Care Tip-Off Campaign donors at [legendsofbasketball.com/TipOff](http://legendsofbasketball.com/TipOff).

"HEARTLENT Group is the perfect partner to evolve and elevate our brand positioning due to the team's extensive experience in the NBA as well as their genuine love for the game and top creative talent," said Scott Rochelle, NBRPA President & CEO. "With the growth of Legends Media & Entertainment, the timing is ideal to re-fresh our visual identity and we are pleased to be joining forces with HEARTLENT Group on this endeavor."

The new logo design incorporates both the history of the NBRPA as well as fresh design elements to display both the physical and cultural aspects of the sport. Utilizing graffiti artwork, the basketball inside the logo includes meaningful imagery like hand-

prints to signify the players who have left their mark on the game, retro sneakers to symbolize the history and culture of basketball, x's and o's to stand for what players have accomplished on the court, and much more. A nod to the organization's three decades of service, the logo also features a three-pointed crown.

"This new re-design of our logo is a fantastic representation of the historical and cultural aspects of the sport of basketball," said Caron Butler, NBA Legend and NBRPA Board Director. "The design incorporates images that have been prevalent throughout the lives of the brotherhood and sisterhood that make up the NBRPA and highlights the growth and impact of our organization and the Legends brand over the last thirty years."

"Our entire team at HEARTLENT Group is thrilled to be working with the NBRPA to showcase the storied organization in a new way while maintaining the utmost respect for its history and the legends of the sport it represents," said Gerard. "Celebrating athletes is at the core of what HEARTLENT does and we feel honored to take on this important creative work with the NBRPA."

To follow along with LME content from the NBRPA, find us on social media.

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YOUTUBE AND TWITCH:  
**@NBAALUMNI**

FACEBOOK:  
**NBA ALUMNI**



# LEGENDS MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

During NBA All-Star Weekend 2022 in Cleveland, Hall of Fame sports writer and the NBRPA's own Peter Vecsey sat down with several Legends to record new episodes of Hoop du Jour podcast in person for the very first time. His guests included NBA Legend Micheal Ray Richardson and NBA 75th Anniversary Team members George "Iceman" Gervin, Bob McAdoo and Dominique Wilkins. Search "Legends Studios" wherever you get your podcasts to listen to these exclusive and intimate interviews.





## WNBA TEAMS LOOK TO OFFSEASON MOVES TO BOLSTER TITLE CHANCES FOR UPCOMING SEASON

With the 2022 WNBA season tipping off soon, teams are preparing for what promises to be an action-packed season in the W. Immediately after the Chicago Sky hoisted the WNBA championship trophy back in October, teams began making coaching decisions and roster moves to improve their squads and unseat the champions.

When the Sky landed superstar Candace Parker in 2021 — the first year of free agency — and won the title, the league's landscape changed forever. Chicago's winning ways have teams looking to duplicate that success.

As a result, teams from both conferences reloaded and retooled this offseason to find the perfect combination of players to compete for a championship.

Let's review those moves around the league and see which fans have a legitimate right to be excited about their championship chances.



### ATLANTA DREAM:

New coach Tanisha Wright has Tiffany Hayes, Monique Billings, Cheyenne Parker and Aari McDonald returning from last year, which provides some continuity for the Dream. The additions of Kia Vaughn and Erica Wheeler add strength to the Dream's core, but the team needs to draft a strong post player to solidify their inside game.



#### CHICAGO SKY:

The defending champs didn't take a break but instead added reinforcements. The Sky retained 2021 Finals MVP Kahleah Copper via the core designation, and the team is also bringing back key contributors Courtney Vandersloot and Allie Quigley. If that wasn't enough, Chicago also secured the services of 2019 Finals MVP Emma Meeseman.

Meeseman, who sat out the 2021 campaign, is more than capable of being an offensive force. With her addition, the Sky became the first team in league history to have three WNBA Finals MVPs on their roster. Candace & Co. will be a formidable force against any opponent this season.



#### LOS ANGELES SPARKS:

The Sparks took a hyperactive approach to the offseason. While they lost Nia Coffey, Erica Wheeler, Gabby Williams, they managed to add Liz Cambage, Jordin Canada, Katie Lou Samuelson and Chennedy Carter.

With two dynamic guards in Canada and Carter, a 3-point shooter in Samuelson, and a superstar in Liz Cambage, the Sparks have added some serious firepower to the inside presence of the Ogwumike sisters — Nneka and Chiney. On paper, Los Angeles is poised for success.

#### CONNECTICUT SUN:

Instead of revamping the roster, Connecticut opted for a fine-tuning of sorts. As expected, they re-signed reigning WNBA MVP Jonquel Jones to a two-year deal. Though the team lost Briann January to the Seattle Storm in free agency, they replenished the guard position by bringing back Courtney Williams after an All-Star stint in Atlanta.

Once again, coach Curt Miller has a roster that can contend for the title.



#### INDIANA FEVER:

The Fever entered the offseason looking to improve following a dismal six-win season. Unfortunately, that proved to be disappointing thus far.

Not only did WNBA legend Tamika Catchings notify the Fever that she would be stepping down from her role as GM, but the team also parted ways with Kysre Gondrezick, the fourth pick of the 2021 draft, after only one season.

For the Indiana faithful, the hope is that the second selection in this year's draft, and two other picks in the Top 10, can revive this once-proud franchise.

#### DALLAS WINGS:

This offseason, the Wings' only move was re-signing star guard Arike Ogunbowale to a multi-year contract. With Dallas making the playoffs last season, the team hopes the current roster, along with a pair of top-six draft picks, will be enough to take them to the next level.



#### LAS VEGAS ACES:

New head coach Becky Hammon has a nice core of returning players in A'ja Wilson, Riquna Williams and Kiah Stokes. Nonetheless, the departures of Liz Cambage and Angel McCoughtry will be felt, especially in the paint.

Still, the Aces will be a pivotal team to watch. With Hammon's stewardship and Wilson's star power, look for the Aces to build on last season's 24-8 record and No. 2 overall playoff seeding.

**WASHINGTON MYSTICS:**

The Mystics, who own the No. 1 overall pick in this year's draft, look to bounce back from a disappointing 12-20 campaign. The healthy return of Elena Delle Donne will go a long way toward that happening.

Adding Elizabeth Williams and Tianna Hawkins helps the frontcourt, and if the top pick comes in and contributes right away, Washington may just surprise as they battle back into contention.

**NEW YORK LIBERTY:**

The addition of two-time All-Star and Olympic Gold Medalist Stefanie Dolson and the re-signing of Rebecca Allen creates a strong post presence for the Liberty.

A healthy return for Sabrina Ionescu and the continued growth of the 2021 Rookie of the Year, Michaela Onyenwere, will be critical to the team's success.

The roster has coach Sandy Brondello dreaming of a championship parade in Brooklyn.

**MINNESOTA LYNX:**

The Lynx have a ton of talent and chemistry on this year's squad. The return of Sylvia Fowles for a final season and the re-signing of Layshia Clarendon, Bridget Carleton and Rachel Banham will put coach Cheryl Reeve and the Lynx in prime position for another run at the title.

**SEATTLE STORM:**

Seattle made it a point to re-sign their big-named free agents — Sue Bird, Jewell Loyd, Mercedes Russell and Breanna Stewart — to keep their core intact as they prepare for another title run. And they did just that.

League insiders feel that the acquisition of Gabby Williams — trade with Los Angeles — will be the winning ticket, as she is a player with tremendous upside.

Look for Seattle to give Phoenix fits all season and be there at the end.

**PHOENIX MERCURY:**

Head coach Vanessa Nygaard has a whole arsenal at her disposal as the Mercury look to avenge last season's Finals loss to the Sky.

The additions of Tina Charles and Diamond DeShields to the Big Three of Diana Taurasi, Brittney Griner and Skylar Diggins-Smith, have the Mercury poised to be one of the top contenders for the crown.



## 5 QUESTIONS WITH JIM CHONES

We caught up with NBA Legend Jim Chones, who enjoyed a 10-year career in the ABA and NBA before his current position serving as President of the NBRPA Cleveland Chapter. Chones is also a color analyst for Cleveland Cavaliers radio on WTAM and a co-partner with elite athletic development company — Cyber Athletix.

**Q: What did it mean to the NBRPA's Cleveland Chapter to host a successful All-Star Game and series of events during All-Star Weekend?**

**A:** Well, this was special because it allowed us to showcase our city and the strength of our new chapter. Our city is 30% below the poverty line, and you guys (NBRPA) coming to Cleveland for All-Star Weekend not only helps our economy but gives the people a voice and makes them feel good. To know that Cleveland was the highlight of this global weekend was extra exceptional.

**Q: What was the significance of the Cleveland Chapter taking part in the Legends Care Drive-Thru Food event?**

**A:** The event was incredible because we had a chance to get people from all walks of life to participate. It was a challenge because it was 10 degrees out that morning, and some of the older guys didn't bring their heavy winter gear, but we pushed through. We had many palletes of donated goods, some as high as six feet tall. I thought it was a great event and very successful.

As I mentioned earlier, with Cleveland being 30% below the poverty line, the drive was very much needed for our city. In Cleveland, we've partnered with organizations and opened up what we call dry food pantries. Canned goods and non-perishables are donated, so folks just have to focus on getting meat. We are partnering with the Cleveland Food Bank to do more of that in the future.





**Q: What other initiatives is the Cleveland Chapter planning in the future?**

**A:** We are planning on turning our attention to a summer league, which would be six to eight weeks of basketball. We are partnering with the city of Cleveland, where we will be using many of their recreation centers. The program will also have a mental health component to go along with it. We will also sit down with participants to discuss the importance of education, good hygiene and nutrition.

Our boys' league will be named after our vice president Emmanuel Leakes, and our girls' league will be named after Women's Hall of Fame member Janice Braxton.

The other big project we are working on is a partnership with PNC to put on a women's summit. We want to bring in stars like Maya Moore to talk to our young ladies. The summit will take place at Karamu Hall, the oldest black theater facility in the U.S., and we will do workshops and clinics, and Janice Braxton will head that.

**Q: What advice do you have for other NBRPA chapters?**

**A:** I'd start with you have to get your members involved. Show your members that they have skin in the game and let them oversee meaningful projects. Our fundamentals are based on our bylaws, and it has to be a commitment to have an impact at the grassroots level.

We can be a voice for people who don't have a voice and struggle. I would tell them to be creative, find partners that think the same way and find new ways of doing things. Right now, we are attached at the hip with PNC, and this is just the start of many new projects. Our new summer league will also be sponsored by PNC and a company very close to me, CyberAthletix.

Lastly, be active, feed people and engage with the community.

**Q: On a personal note, you are also featured in the latest HBO series "Winning Time: Rise of the Lakers Dynasty," and the young actor that portrays you in the series, Newton Mayenge, was in attendance at All-Star Weekend. What does it mean to you to have a young actor of that caliber portray you in the series?**

**A:** It was a lot of fun for me. We are about the same height, but he looks a lot better than me. I told him, "I was afraid you were going to be ugly, but you are definitely an improvement over my personal appearance."

He stayed an extra two days after All-Star because he was so excited about the festivities. It is great to see fans see another side of their favorite athletes.





# DALLAS CHAPTER HUNGER DRIVE

The Dallas Chapter of the NBRPA, led by Chapter President Willie Davis, partnered with the Ft. Worth Police, the Dallas Mavericks, local NFL alumni and more to distribute holiday meals to 250 families.

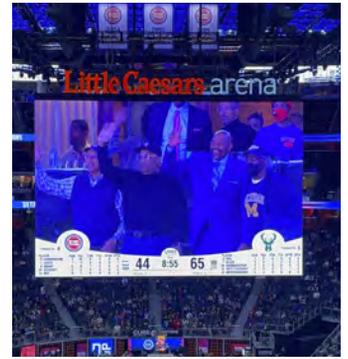




# PHOENIX CHAPTER TOY DRIVE

The Phoenix Chapter of the NBRPA, led by Chapter President Fat Lever, spread Christmas cheer by distributing gifts and signing autographs at their George Gervin Prep Academy toy drive.





# LEGEND SIGHTINGS

*ALUMNI NIGHT - DETROIT*



With the return of in-person events in 2021, the NBRPA brought back Alumni Nights, starting with hosting Legends in the Chicago area at Wintrust Arena during the WNBA Finals in October. In November, the NBRPA hosted Alumni Nights at Little Caesars Arena in Detroit and Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse in Cleveland. Members of both the Detroit and Cleveland Chapters were treated to first class game experiences from luxury suites and all the amenities they include. We look forward to hosting more Alumni Nights in conjunction with our local chapters around the country!





# LEGEND SIGHTINGS

ALUMNI NIGHT - CLEVELAND





# LEGEND SIGHTINGS

NBA ALL-STAR 2022



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