

NBA Greats: Michael Jordan, 1984-2003

Michael Jordan was a star shooting guard for the Chicago Bulls from 1984 to 1998 and for the Washington Wizards from 2001 to 2003. During his career, Jordan won five MVP awards and six NBA Finals Championships. Jordan was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2009 and is generally recognized as the best basketball player of all time.

Michael Jordan was born in Brooklyn, New York on February 17, 1963, and grew up in Wilmington, North Carolina. He didn't make the varsity basketball team at Laney High School as a sophomore, which inspired him to become even better. He made varsity the next year and became a star before attending University of North Carolina on a basketball scholarship.

While playing for the North Carolina Tar Heels, Jordan and his teammates won the NCAA Championship in 1982 against the Georgetown Hoyas. During the game, Jordan hit the shot to put the Tar Heels ahead and win the game. In addition to the NCAA Championship, Jordan also won the award for college player of the year in 1983 and 1984. Jordan entered the NBA draft following his junior year at North Carolina.

The Chicago Bulls drafted Michael Jordan third in the 1984 draft. Jordan was immediately a star in the NBA. In his first season, he averaged 28.2 points per game and 6.5 rebounds per game. He would go on to win the Rookie of the Year award. This was the first award of many for Jordan.

Jordan was a star individual player for the Bulls for many years but had little success in the playoffs until 1991. During that season, Jordan averaged 31.5 points, 6.0 rebounds and 5.5 assists per game and the Bulls went 61-21 during the regular season. The Bulls finally had their breakthrough during the playoffs as Jordan averaged 31.1 points and 8.4 assists, and the Bulls defeated the Los Angeles Lakers 4-1 in the Finals. The Bulls followed their first championship season with two more championships in 1992 and 1993. During each championship run, Jordan won the Finals MVP.

Jordan briefly retired from basketball after the 1993 season. During his retirement, Jordan played baseball. Jordan returned during the 1994-1995 season. The year after his comeback, Jordan and the Bulls started a run of three more consecutive championships in 1996, 1997 and 1998. Jordan led the league in scoring during every championship season and was named regular season MVP twice.

The 1996 championship team was one of the best teams in NBA history with Jordan leading the team. The Bulls finished 70-12 that season, which is the best regular-season record ever. Jordan played





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every game and averaged 30.4 points per game. Jordan won the MVP that year before the Bulls went on to defeat the Seattle SuperSonics in the Finals 4-2.

Jordan retired again following the 1998 season, but he returned a final time to play for the Washington Wizards from 2001 to 2003. Jordan officially retired for the final time following the 2003 season. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2009.

Over the course of his career, Michael Jordan led the league in scoring 10 times. His career scoring average of 30.1 points per game is the best in the history of the NBA. Jordan made the All-Star game in every full season that he played and made the All-NBA team a total of 11 times. Jordan finished his career as the career leader in scoring average.

Reader questions

1. What is the best evidence to support why Michael Jordan is considered the best player ever?
2. Why is Jordan considered a clutch playoff performer?
3. What is significant about the team that Jordan played for in 1996?
4. Why is Jordan known as one of the most consistent players in NBA history?