

GOAT?

Basketball is a relatively new sport, getting its start in December of 1891 by Canadian gym coach James Naismith. The game had originally been created to condition his football team in the winter months. Naismith would divide his football, made up of 10 people, into two groups of 5 to play. He would then assign the individuals on each team to a position, those being the point guard, shooting guard, small forward, power forward, and center. The jobs of each position were explained to the players as such...The center is typically the tallest player on the team and their job is to score while in close under the basket and prevent the other team from doing so. The power forward is meant to be strong and back their opponent up under the basket to score while also playing defense alongside the center. The small forward position is intended to score on cuts to the basket while also being an active player in the "help defense". The shooting guard is the best shooter on the floor, scoring primarily from behind the three-point line while also being responsible for guarding the best shooter on the opposing team. The point guard has the responsibility of facilitating his/her teammates while also being the player with the ball in their hands the most.

Every position on the court is essential to the team, this is why it would be considerably difficult, if not impossible to determine who the greatest player might be. The struggles that each player faces both on and off the court cannot be compared to those of another individual and to say that one player is better than another would be to assume that the position they fill is of greater importance than the other. Though many people may have an agreement as to who the greatest player of all time(GOAT) might be, the fact of the matter is that this topic cannot be proven or disproven at any point in time. As each player is different, so is the way that each one should be viewed. Such as the following...

William Felton Russell was born on February 12, 1934, to his parents Katie and Charles Russell in West Monroe, Louisiana. He had an older brother by the name of Charlie. When Russell was 8 years old, he and his family moved to Oakland California. It wasn't too long after the move that they fell into poverty. He spent the majority of his childhood living in Public Housing Products. Katie (Russell's mother) died when he was twelve years old. His father, who was a truck driver at the time, quit his job and became a steelworker so that he could be closer to his children. It was very noticeable early on that William was an incredible athlete. In junior high, he played for the basketball team but was cut early on for lacking the fundamental knowledge needed to play the game. During his freshman year at McClymonds, he tried out for the team again. The coach(George Powles) was thinking about booting him, but he saw the potential that Russell had and pushed him to keep working. Russell's experience with white authority figures was not so great, but the kind words from his coach reassured him.

His freshman year was starting to show his improvements. He wasn't a standout player, but he held his own on the court. Russell's junior and senior years were the true turning points in his basketball career. He led his team to win back to back Highschool State Championships, but he hadn't received a single offer from any colleges as the season got closer to the finish. It was then that recruiter Hal DeJulio for the University of SanFrancisco(USF) saw him play. It was only one game, but DeJulio saw the raw potential the young center possessed. He said his scoring was quite average and that his fundamental skills were "atrocious". Despite not seeing too much in his game at the time, DeJulio saw everything that Russell was capable of becoming and he offered him a scholarship and Russell eagerly accepted his offer. He saw basketball as an opportunity for him to escape the poverty and racism that he had grown up in. It was at that moment that Russell swore to himself to make the most of basketball, and go as far as the game would take him.

His new coach in SanFrancisco(Phil Woolpert) loved Russell's game and put him in the starting lineup as soon as he arrived at the college. USF was a primarily defensive team and the young center was quick to assert himself as the most aggressive defensive weapon on the team. The coach's decision as to who was on the floor was completely unaltered by the skin color of his. In 1954, Phil became the first coach of a major college to put three black players in his starting lineup and Russell made sure to show