



## My Drift

**Title: Michael Jordan**

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If I asked you to name the best basketball player of all-time, what would be your answer? Most likely you will say, “Michael Jordan” – 9 out of 10 people do.

I went on the Internet to find out who the experts pick for the Top Five NBA basketball players of all-time. Here are the results:

Source	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
<b>Top Tens</b>	Magic	Jordan	LeBron James	Kobe Bryant	Larry Bird
<b>Bleacher</b>	Jordan	Bill Russell	Magic	Kareem	Bird
<b>CBS</b>	Jordan	LeBron	Wilt	Magic	Kareem
<b>Ranker</b>	Jordan	Kareem	Magic	Wilt	Bird
<b>ESPN</b>	Jordan	Kareem	LeBron	Magic	Wilt
<b>SI</b>	Jordan	Kareem	Wilt	Magic	LeBron
<b>FOX</b>	Jordan	Magic	Russell	Kareem	Bird
<b>Consensus</b>	<b>Jordan</b>	<b>Kareem</b>	<b>Magic</b>	<b>Wilt</b>	<b>Bird</b>

Others receiving votes: #6 LeBron, #7 Russell, and #8 Bryant

As you can see, Michael Jordan is the “almost” unanimous pick for #1.

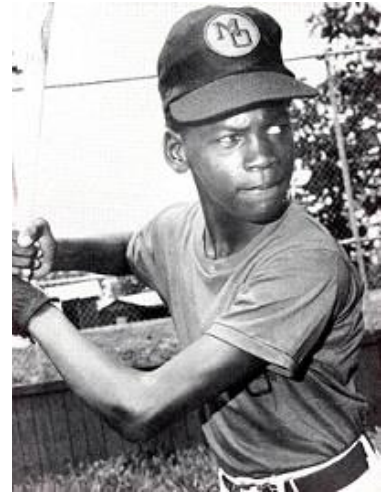
*Some things you probably didn't know about Michael Jordan are in “Blue Italics Font”.*

## BIO

### Early Years

Michael Jeffrey Jordan was born in Brooklyn, New York on February 17, 1963. He was the fourth of five children born to James and Deloris. James Jordan was a mechanic and Deloris Jordan was a bank teller. Soon after Michael's birth, James and Deloris felt that the streets of Brooklyn were unsafe to raise a family, so they moved the family to Wilmington, North Carolina.

As a youngster, Michael immediately became interested in sports. However, it was baseball not basketball that was his first love. He would play catch in the yard with his father, who loved baseball. However, he soon started to play basketball to try and follow in the footsteps of his older brother, Larry, whom he idolized growing up.



### High School

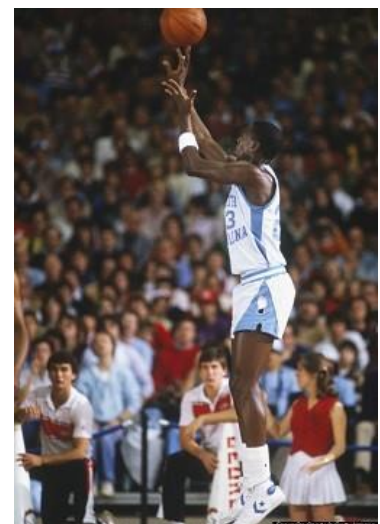
*At Laney High School, as a sophomore, he decided to try out for the varsity team but was cut because he was raw and undersized. The following summer, he grew four inches and practiced tirelessly. The hard work paid off as he averaged 25 points per game in his last two years and was selected to the McDonald's All-American Team as a senior.*



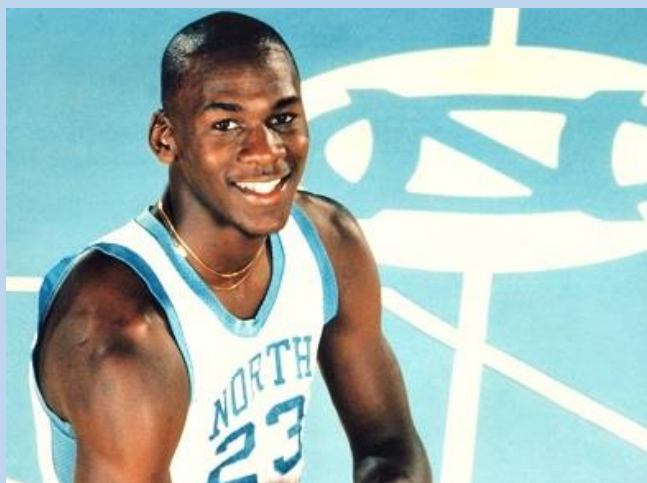
### North Carolina University

Following high school, he earned a basketball scholarship from North Carolina University where he would play under legendary coach Dean Smith. In his first year, he was named ACC Freshman of the Year. He would help lead the Tarheels to the 1982 NCAA Championship, making the game-winning shot.

After winning the Naismith College Player of the Year award in 1984, Jordan decided to leave North Carolina to enter the NBA draft. *Although he decided to leave college early, he would later return to the university in 1986 to complete his degree in geography.*



*There's a legend that a UNC Geography professor told his students the average starting salary for their major was \$250,000, but then admitted that's only because of Michael Jordan.*



**#23 Michael Jordan (1981-84)**

**Position: Guard**

**Height: 6'6"**

**Weight: 189**

- **ACC Player of the Year, First-team All-America, Olympic Gold Medalist**
- **ACC's No. 1 Male Athlete in the league's first 50 years**
- **Consensus All-America in 1983 and 1984**
- **Sporting News National Player of the Year as a sophomore and unanimous selection in 1984**
- **Hit game-winning jump shot to beat Georgetown for 1982 NCAA title**
- **Averaged 17.7 points and 5.0 rebounds as a Tar Heel**
- **Led the ACC in scoring in 1984 with 19.4 points per game**
- **Leading U.S. scorer in 1983 Pan American Games and 1984 Olympics**
- **ACC Rookie of the Year in 1982, Player and Male Athlete of the Year in 1984**
- **Steal and dunk against Virginia in 1983 is one of the most memorable plays in Carolina history**
- **Capped a 16-point second-half comeback with the slam dunk**
- *Third overall selection by the Chicago Bulls in 1984 Draft*

**Wait a second, who are the two dummies that passed on Michael Jordan and who did they select? *Well, the Houston Rockets selected Hakeem Olajuwon with the first pick. Olajuwon turned out to be a great player in his own right. It was the Portland Trail Blazers who screwed up by taking Sam Bowie second.***



## Nicknames

*Jordan was called the “Black Cat” during his childhood by other kids.*

*In high school, Michael Jordan’s nickname was “Magic Jordan” — named after Magic Johnson. Talking to Playboy in 1992, Michael Jordan revealed that Magic Johnson was an idol of his despite having career strife when he first came into the league: “I liked him when I was in high school. They used to call me Magic Jordan. My first car had a license plate with Magic Jordan on it. It was a 1976 Grand Prix ... There was a little bit of envy because of the way I came into the league. But, Magic came in with even more flair and even more success. “*

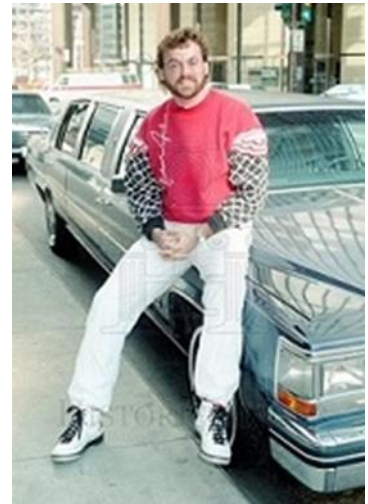
*When Jordan entered the NBA in 1984, he was given the nickname “Captain Marvel” by Johnny “Red” Kerr, the color commentator for the Chicago Bulls. However, the nickname (fortunately) never stuck.*

**Most people just called him “MJ”.**

**Jordan eventually earned the nicknames “Air Jordan” and “His Airness” for his huge dunks and high-flying style.**

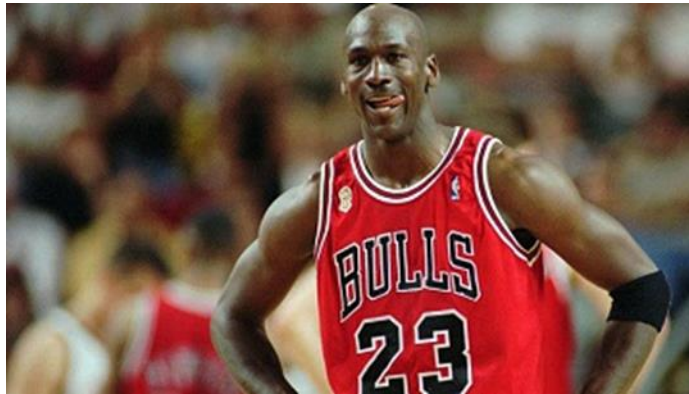
## Professional Career

*Michael Jordan’s best friend is the limo driver who picked him up when he arrived for the first time in Chicago. First landing at the Chicago O’Hare airport in 1984, the Chicago Bulls had neglected to send anybody to pick up Michael Jordan. A limo driver named George Koehler took pity on him and offered to help. Koehler was a young man as well and the two hit it off, despite an initial confusion. Koehler recounted, “I was excited because I knew who he was and I thought, ‘Holy smokes, it’s Larry Jordan.’ I played four years in high school with a guy named Larry Jordan so that name was stuck in my memory bank. When I saw Michael, I said, ‘Larry Jordan.’” Larry was Michael’s brother and so they bonded over Koehler attending the same school as his sibling. And 25 years later I don’t drive the limo for him, but we’re still really close friends. Michael likes to tell the story and say, “George was the first person I ever met in Chicago. He gave me a ride and has taken me for a ride ever since.”*



### **Early NBA years (1984–1987)**

During his rookie season in the NBA, Jordan averaged 28.2 points per game on 51.5% shooting. He quickly became a fan favorite even in opposing arenas, and appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated with the heading "A Star Is Born" just over a month into his professional career. Jordan was also voted in as an All-Star starter by the fans in his rookie season. *Controversy arose before the All-Star game when word surfaced that several veteran players—led by Isiah Thomas—were upset by the amount of attention Jordan was receiving. This led to a so-called "freeze-out" on Jordan, where players refused to pass the ball to him throughout the game.* The controversy left Jordan relatively unaffected when he returned to regular season play, and he would go on to be voted Rookie of the Year. The Bulls finished the season 38–44 and lost to the Milwaukee Bucks in four games in the first round of the playoffs.



Jordan's second season was cut short when he broke his foot in the third game of the year, causing him to miss 64 games. Despite Jordan's injury and a 30–52 record (at the time it was fifth worst record of any team to qualify for the playoffs in NBA history), the Bulls made the playoffs. Jordan recovered in time to participate in the playoffs and performed well upon his return. Against a 1985–86 Boston Celtics team that is often considered one of the greatest in NBA history, Jordan set the still-unbroken record for points in a playoff game with 63 in Game 2. The Celtics, however, managed to sweep the series 4-0.

Jordan had completely recovered in time for the 1986–87 season, and he had one of the most prolific scoring seasons in NBA history. He joined Wilt Chamberlain as the only two players to score 3,000 points in a season, averaging a league high 37.1 points on 48.2% shooting. In addition, Jordan demonstrated his defensive prowess, as he became the first player in NBA history to record 200 steals and 100 blocked shots in a season. Despite Jordan's success, Magic Johnson won the league's Most Valuable Player Award. The Bulls reached 40 wins and advanced to the playoffs for the third consecutive year. However, they were again swept by the Celtics.

### **Pistons roadblock (1987–1990)**

Jordan again led the league in scoring during the 1987–88 season, averaging 35.0 points per game on 53.5% shooting and won his first league MVP Award. He was also named the Defensive Player of the Year, as he had averaged 1.6 blocks and a league high 3.16 steals per game. The Bulls finished 50–32, and made it out of the first round of the playoffs for the first time in Jordan's career, as they defeated the Cleveland Cavaliers in five games. However, the Bulls then lost in five games to the more experienced Detroit Pistons, who were led by Isiah Thomas and a group of physical players known as the "Bad Boys".

*The Jordan Rules were a defensive basketball strategy employed by the Detroit Pistons against Michael Jordan in order to limit his effectiveness on offense. Devised by Isiah Thomas in 1988, the Pistons' strategy was "to play him tough, to physically challenge him in order to throw him off balance." Sometimes the Pistons would overplay Jordan to keep the ball from him. Most often they would run a double-team or triple-team at him as soon as he touched the ball to try to force him to give it up. And whenever he went to the basket, they made sure his path was contested. The Jordan Rules were an instrumental aspect of the rivalry between the "Bad Boys" Pistons and Jordan's Chicago Bulls in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This style of defense limited players including Jordan from entering the paint and was carried out by Dennis Rodman and Bill Laimbeer.*



**Jordan and Isiah Thomas**



**Jordan Being Triple-Teamed**

In the 1988–89 season, Jordan again led the league in scoring, averaging 32.5 points per game on 53.8% shooting from the field, along with 8 rebounds per game and 8 assists per game. The Bulls finished with a 47–35 record, and advanced to the Eastern Conference Finals, defeating the Cavaliers and New York Knicks along the way. The Cavaliers series included a career highlight for Jordan when he hit “The Shot” over



Craig Ehlo at the buzzer in the fifth and final game of the series. However, the Pistons again defeated the Bulls, this time in six games, by utilizing their "Jordan Rules" method of guarding Jordan.

The Bulls entered the 1989–90 season as a team on the rise, with their core group of Jordan and young improving players like Scottie Pippen and Horace Grant, and under the guidance of new coach Phil Jackson. Jordan averaged a league leading 33.6 points per game on 52.6% shooting, to go with 6.9 rebounds per game and 6.3 assists per game in leading the Bulls to a 55–27 record. They again advanced to the Eastern Conference Finals after beating the Bucks and Philadelphia 76ers. However, despite pushing the series to seven games, the Bulls lost to the Pistons for the third consecutive season.



*On Valentine's Day, 1990, a still unknown thief stole Michael Jordan's jersey right out of the locker room just a bit over an hour before tip-off. Unable to recover the jersey and unsure what to do, the Chicago Bulls had Jordan try on a fan's replica jersey, but unfortunately the fit was too small. The equipment manager then came up with an extra jersey kept for emergencies that simply had the number 12. It would have to do.*

*"That has never happened to me before. It's pretty irritating because you're accustomed to certain things and you don't like to have things misplaced," Jordan said to the Orlando Sentinel. He ended up scoring 49 points, although the Orlando Magic won this game in overtime.*

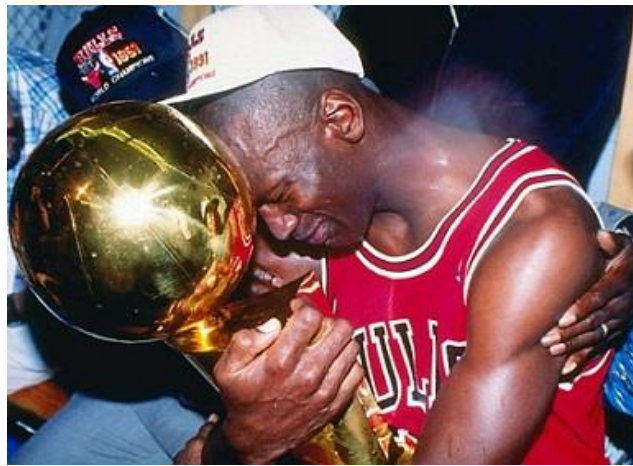
### **First three-peat (1991–1993)**

In the 1990–91 season, Jordan won his second MVP award after averaging 31.5 points per game on 53.9% shooting. The Bulls finished in first place in their division for the first time in 16 years and set a franchise record with 61 wins in the regular season. With Scottie Pippen developing into an All-Star, the Bulls had elevated their play. The Bulls defeated the New York Knicks and the Philadelphia 76ers in the opening two rounds of the playoffs. They advanced to the Eastern Conference Finals where their rival, the Detroit Pistons, awaited them. However, this time the Bulls beat the Pistons in a four-game sweep.



**Pippen and Jordan**

**The Bulls advanced to the NBA Finals for the first time in franchise history to face the Los Angeles Lakers, who had Magic Johnson and James Worthy, two formidable opponents. The Bulls won the series four games to one, and compiled an outstanding 15–2 playoff record along the way. Perhaps the best-known moment of the series came in Game 2 when, attempting a dunk, Jordan avoided a potential Sam Perkins block by switching the ball from his right hand to his left in mid-air to lay the shot into the basket. In his first Finals appearance, Jordan posted per game averages of 31.2 points on 56% shooting from the field, 11.4 assists, 6.6 rebounds, 2.8 steals, and 1.4 blocks. Jordan won his first NBA Finals MVP award, and he cried while holding the NBA Finals trophy.**



**Jordan and the Bulls continued their dominance in the 1991–92 season, establishing a 67–15 record, topping their franchise record from 1990 to 91. Jordan won his second consecutive MVP award with averages of 30.1 points, 6.4 rebounds and 6.1 assists per game on 52% shooting. After winning a physical 7-game series over the New York Knicks in the second round of the playoffs and finishing off the Cleveland Cavaliers in the Conference Finals in 6 games, the Bulls met Clyde Drexler and the Portland Trail Blazers in the Finals. The media, hoping to recreate a Magic–Bird rivalry, highlighted the similarities between "Air" Jordan and Clyde "The Glide" during the pre-Finals hype. In the first game, Jordan scored a Finals-record 35 points in the first half, including a record-setting six three-point field goals. After the sixth three-pointer, he jogged down the court shrugging as he looked courtside. Marv Albert, who broadcast the game, later stated that it was as if Jordan was saying, "I can't believe I'm doing this." The Bulls went on to win Game 1, and defeat the Blazers in six games. Jordan was named Finals MVP for the second year in a row and finished the series averaging 35.8 points, 4.8 rebounds, and 6.5 assists per game, while shooting 53% from the floor.**





**Clyde Drexler and Jordan**



**Jordan and Charles Barkley**

In the 1992–93 season, despite a 32.6 points, 6.7 rebounds, and 5.5 assists per game campaign, Jordan's streak of consecutive MVP seasons ended as he lost the award to his friend Charles Barkley. Coincidentally, Jordan and the Bulls met Barkley and his Phoenix Suns in the 1993 NBA Finals. The Bulls won their third NBA championship on a game-winning shot by John Paxson and a last-second block by Horace Grant, but Jordan was once again Chicago's leader. *He averaged a Finals-record 41.0 points per game during the six-game series, and became the first player in NBA history to win three straight Finals MVP awards. He scored more than 30 points in every game of the series, including 40 or more points in 4 consecutive games. With his third Finals triumph, Jordan capped off a seven-year run where he attained seven scoring titles and three championships, but there were signs that Jordan was tiring of his massive celebrity and all of the non-basketball hassles in his life.*

### **Gambling controversy**

*During the Bulls' playoff run in 1993, controversy arose when Jordan was seen gambling in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the night before a game against the New York Knicks. If you know anything about basketball at all, you'll know that the NBA Playoffs are some of the most highly contested games of the entire season with 16 teams vying for the championship title. This means that during these playoffs most players are highly focused on one thing and one thing only...playing basketball. We say most because back in 1993 Michael Jordan had something else on his mind and ended up playing blackjack at Bally's Casino in Atlantic City until 2:30am before heading back*



*to New York to sleep before his big game. He took a lot of heat for that decision, especially because his team lost in the next day's game. They did however turn it around by winning all of their subsequent games and earning their third NBA championship title in a row.*



### **Michael Jordan's Wildest Gambling Stories**

*Jordan's \$1.25 million Golf debt inspires a book - You know you're famous when someone can write a best-selling book about playing golf with you. Jordan was former San Diego Sports Arena manager Richard Esquinas muse for a book entitled Michael & Me: Our Gambling Addiction... My Cry for Help! According to his memoirs, Esquinas was a regular golfing buddy of Jordan's and during one 10-day golf tournament, Jordan lost \$1.25 million in bets on matches to him, but Jordan then made a comeback lowering the gambling debt to \$902,000 in subsequent games. Jordan was however apparently very slow to pay the debt as he didn't want his wife to find out about it and so Esquinas reduced the amount to \$300,000 which he finally received.*

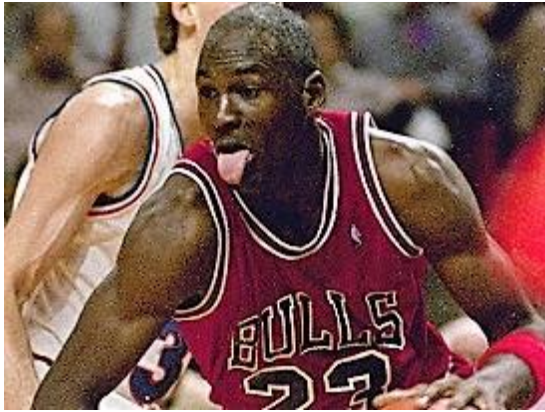
### **First retirement and the Death of his Father**

On October 6, 1993, Jordan announced his retirement, citing a loss of desire to play the game. Jordan later stated that the death of his father earlier in the year also shaped his decision. Jordan's father was murdered on July 23, 1993, at a highway rest area in Lumberton, North Carolina, by two teenagers, Daniel Green and Larry Martin Demery, who carjacked the luxury vehicle. The assailants were traced from calls that they made on James Jordan's cellular phone. The two criminals were caught, convicted at trial, and sentenced to life in prison.



**Michael with Father**



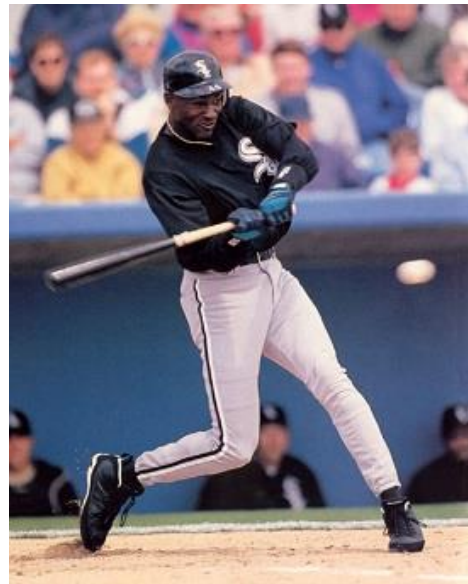


*Jordan was close to his father; as a child, he had imitated his father's proclivity to stick out his tongue while absorbed and concentrating on his work. Jordan later adopted it as his own signature "tongue wag", displaying it each time he drove to the basket.*

*In 1996, he founded a Chicago area Boys & Girls Club and dedicated it to his father.*

### **Stint in Minor League Baseball (1993–1994)**

**Jordan then further surprised the sports world by signing a minor league baseball contract with the Chicago White Sox on February 7, 1994. He reported to spring training in Sarasota, Florida, and was assigned to the team's minor league system on March 31, 1994. Jordan has stated this decision was made to pursue the dream of his late father, who had always envisioned his son as a Major League Baseball player. *The White Sox were another team owned by Bulls owner Jerry Reinsdorf, who continued to honor Jordan's basketball contract during the years he played baseball.***



**In 1994, Jordan played for the Birmingham Barons, a Double-A minor league affiliate of the Chicago White Sox, batting .202 with three home runs, 51 runs batted in, 30 stolen bases, 114 strikeouts, 51 bases on balls, and 11 errors. He also appeared for the Scottsdale Scorpions in the 1994 Arizona Fall League, batting .252 against the top prospects in baseball.**



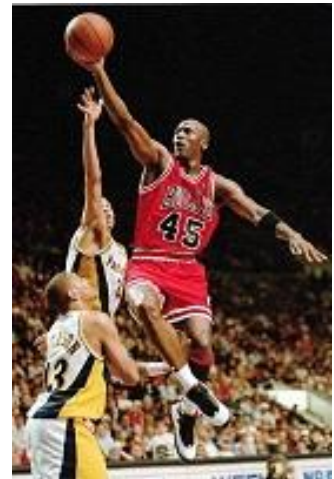
*On November 1, 1994, his number 23 was retired by the Bulls in a ceremony that included the erection of a permanent sculpture known as “The Spirit” outside the new United Center.*



### **"I'm back": Return to the NBA (1995)**

In the 1993–94 season, the Bulls, without Jordan, achieved a 55–27 record, and lost to the New York Knicks in the second round of the playoffs. But the 1994–95 Bulls were a shell of the championship team of just two years earlier. Struggling at mid-season to ensure a spot in the playoffs, Chicago was 31–31 at one point in mid-March. The team received help, however, when Jordan decided to return to the NBA for the Bulls.

*In March 1995, Jordan decided to quit baseball due to the ongoing Major League Baseball strike, as he wanted to avoid becoming a potential replacement player. On March 18, 1995, Jordan announced his return to the NBA through a two-word press release: "I'm back." The next day, Jordan took to the court with the Bulls to face the Indiana Pacers in Indianapolis, scoring 19 points. The game had the highest Nielsen rating of a regular season NBA game since 1975. Although he could have opted to wear his normal number in spite of the Bulls having retired it, Jordan instead wore number 45, as he had while playing baseball.*



Although he had not played an NBA game in a year and a half, Jordan played well upon his return, making a game-winning jump shot against Atlanta in his fourth game back. He then scored 55 points in the next game against the Knicks at Madison Square Garden on March 28, 1995. Boosted by Jordan's comeback, the Bulls went 13–4 to make the playoffs and advanced to the Eastern Conference Semifinals against the Orlando Magic. At the end of Game 1, Orlando's Nick Anderson stripped Jordan from behind, leading to the game-winning basket for the Magic; he would later comment that Jordan "didn't look like the old Michael Jordan" and that "No. 45 doesn't explode like No. 23 used to."

Jordan responded by scoring 38 points in the next game, which Chicago won. Before the game, Jordan decided that he would resume wearing his former number, 23, immediately. The Bulls were fined \$25,000 for failing to report the impromptu number change to the NBA. Jordan was fined an additional \$5,000 for opting to wear white shoes as the rest of the Bulls wore black. He averaged 31 points per game in the series, but Orlando won the series in 6 games.

### **Second three-peat (1995–1998)**

Freshly motivated by the playoff defeat, Jordan trained aggressively for the 1995–96 season. Strengthened by the addition of rebound specialist Dennis Rodman, the Bulls dominated the league, starting the season 41–3, and eventually finishing with the then-best regular season record in NBA history (later surpassed by the 2015–16 Golden State Warriors): 72–10. Jordan led the league in scoring with 30.4 points per game and won the league's regular season and All-Star Game MVP awards.



**Jordan and Dennis Rodman**

In the playoffs, the Bulls lost only three games in four series (Miami Heat 3–0, New York Knicks 4–1, Orlando Magic 4–0). They defeated the Seattle SuperSonics 4–2 in the NBA Finals to win their fourth championship. Jordan was named Finals MVP for a record fourth time, surpassing Magic Johnson's three Finals MVP awards. He also achieved only the second sweep of the MVP Awards in the All-Star Game, regular season and NBA Finals, Willis Reed having achieved the first, during the 1969–70 season. Because this was Jordan's first championship since his father's murder, and it was won on Father's Day, Jordan reacted very emotionally upon winning the title, including a memorable scene of him crying on the locker room floor with the game ball.

In the 1996–97 season, the Bulls started out 69–11, but missed out on a second consecutive 70-win season by losing their final two games to finish 69–13. However, this year Jordan was beaten for the NBA MVP Award by Karl Malone. The Bulls again advanced to the Finals, where they faced Malone and the Utah Jazz. The series against the Jazz featured two of the more memorable clutch moments of Jordan's career. He won Game 1 for the Bulls with a buzzer-beating jump shot. In Game 5, with the series tied at 2, Jordan played despite being feverish and dehydrated from a

stomach virus. In what is known as the "Flu Game", Jordan scored 38 points, including the game-deciding 3-pointer with 25 seconds remaining. The Bulls won 90–88 and went on to win the series in six games. For the fifth time in as many Finals appearances, Jordan received the Finals MVP award.

*Here is what really happened to Jordan in that so called “Flu Game”. Tim Grover, Michael Jordan’s former personal trainer, recounted what happened the night before: “I’m 100 percent sure that Michael Jordan was poisoned for that game. Everyone called it a ‘Flu Game,’ but we were all there in the hotel room in Park City, Utah. Room service stopped at like nine o’clock. And Michael got hungry, and we really couldn’t find any other place to eat so we ordered ... I said, ‘Hey, the only thing I could find is a pizza place.’ He said, ‘All right, order pizza.’ We had been there for a while, so everybody knows what hotel we were staying in. So, we order a pizza, they come to deliver it, five guys come to deliver this pizza ... I said, ‘I got a bad feeling about this.’ ... Out of everybody in the room, Jordan was the only one that ate. Nobody else ... then two o’clock in the morning, I get a call to my room. I come to his room and he’s curled up in the fetal position ... Immediately I said, ‘It’s food poisoning.’ Guaranteed. Not the flu.”*

Jordan and the Bulls compiled a 62–20 record in the 1997–98 season. Jordan led the league with 28.7 points per game, securing his fifth regular-season MVP award, plus honors for All-NBA First Team, First Defensive Team and the All-Star Game MVP. The Bulls won the Eastern Conference Championship for a third straight season, including surviving a seven-game series with the Indiana Pacers; it was the first time Jordan had played in a Game 7 since the 1992 Eastern Conference Semifinals with the Knicks. After winning, they moved on for a rematch with the Jazz in the Finals.



Jordan and Coach Phil Jackson

The Bulls returned to the Delta Center for Game 6 on June 14, 1998, leading the series 3–2. Jordan executed a series of plays, considered to be one of the greatest clutch performances in NBA Finals history. With the Bulls trailing 86–83 with 41.9 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter, Phil Jackson called a timeout. When play resumed, Jordan received the inbound pass, drove to the basket, and hit a shot over several Jazz defenders, cutting the Utah lead to 86–85. The Jazz brought the ball up court and passed the ball to forward Karl Malone, who was set up in the low post and was being guarded by Rodman. Malone jostled with Rodman and caught the pass, but



Jordan cut behind him and took the ball out of his hands for a steal. Jordan then dribbled down the court and paused, eyeing his defender, Jazz guard Bryon Russell. With 10 seconds remaining, Jordan started to dribble right, then crossed over to his left, pushing off Russell, although the officials did not call a foul.

With 5.2 seconds left, Jordan gave Chicago an 87–86 lead with a game-winning jumper, the climactic shot of his Bulls career. Afterwards, John Stockton missed a game-winning three-pointer. Jordan and the Bulls won their sixth NBA championship and second three-peat. Once again, Jordan was voted the Finals MVP, having led all scorers averaging 33.5 points per game, including 45 in the deciding Game 6. Jordan's six Finals MVPs is a record; Shaquille O'Neal, Magic Johnson, LeBron James and Tim Duncan are tied for second place with three apiece. The 1998 Finals holds the highest television rating of any Finals series in history. Game 6 also holds the highest television rating of any game in NBA history.



**Jordan's Shot Beats the Utah Jazz**

### **Second retirement (1999–2001)**

With Phil Jackson's contract expiring, the pending departures of Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman looming, and being in the latter stages of an owner-induced lockout of NBA players, Jordan retired for the second time on January 13, 1999.

On January 19, 2000, Jordan returned to the NBA not as a player, but as part owner and President of Basketball Operations for the Washington Wizards. Jordan's responsibilities with the Wizards were comprehensive. He controlled all aspects of the Wizards' basketball operations, and had the final say in all personnel matters.

Opinions of Jordan as a basketball executive were mixed. He managed to purge the team of several highly paid, unpopular players (such as forward Juwan Howard and point guard Rod Strickland), but used the first pick in the 2001 NBA draft to select high schooler Kwame Brown, who did not live up to expectations and was traded away after four seasons.

Despite his January 1999 claim that he was "99.9% certain" that he would never play another NBA game, in the summer of 2001 Jordan expressed interest in making another comeback, this time with his new team. Inspired by the NHL comeback of his friend Mario Lemieux the previous winter, Jordan spent much of the spring and summer of 2001 in training, holding several invitation-only camps for NBA players in Chicago. In addition, Jordan hired his old Chicago Bulls head coach, Doug Collins, as Washington's coach for the upcoming season, a decision that many saw as foreshadowing another Jordan return.

### **Washington Wizards comeback (2001–2003)**

On September 25, 2001, Jordan announced his return to the NBA to play for the Washington Wizards.

*For his first year out of retirement with the Washington Wizards, Michael Jordan was paid \$1 million, a sum he gave away entirely. With the tragic events of 9/11 happening just a short time before the NBA season was set to start, Jordan decided to help the recovery effort. "It's my way of giving back and hopefully aiding those in need during a terrible time," he said.*



In an injury-plagued 2001–02 season, he led the team in scoring with 22.9 points, 5.2 assists, and 1.42 steals per game. However, torn cartilage in his right knee ended Jordan's season after only 60 games, the fewest he had played in a regular season since playing 17 games after returning from his first retirement during the 1994–95 season.

Playing in his 14th and final NBA All-Star Game in 2003, Jordan passed Kareem Abdul-Jabbar as the all-time leading scorer in All-Star Game history (a record since

broken by Kobe Bryant). That year, Jordan was the only Washington player to play in all 82 games, starting in 67 of them. He averaged 20.0 points, 6.1 rebounds, 3.8 assists, and 1.5 steals per game. He also shot 45% from the field, and 82% from the free throw line. Even though he turned 40 during the season, he scored 20 or more points 42 times, 30 or more points nine times, and 40 or more points three times. On February 21, 2003, *Jordan became the first 40-year-old to tally 43 points in an NBA game.* During his stint with the Wizards, all of Jordan's home games at the MCI Center were sold out, and the Wizards were the second most-watched team in the NBA, averaging 20,172 fans a game at home and 19,311 on the road. However, neither of Jordan's final two seasons resulted in a playoff appearance for the Wizards, and Jordan was often unsatisfied with the play of those around him. He openly criticized his teammates to the media, citing their lack of focus and intensity, notably that of the number one draft pick in the 2001 NBA draft, Kwame Brown.

With the recognition that 2002–03 would be Jordan's final season, tributes were paid to him throughout the NBA. In his final game at his old home court, the United Center in Chicago, Jordan received a four-minute standing ovation. The Miami Heat retired the number 23 jersey on April 11, 2003, even though Jordan never played for the team. At the 2003 All-Star Game, Jordan was offered a starting spot from Tracy McGrady and Allen Iverson, but refused both. In the end, he accepted the spot of Vince Carter, who decided to give it up under great public pressure.

*The Miami Heat retired his number 23 jersey out of respect. The first jersey that the Miami Heat ever retired was Michael Jordan's 23. The ceremony took place on April 11, 2003, before a game between the Washington Wizards and the Heat. "No one will ever wear number 23 for the Miami Heat. You're the best," Heat President Pat Riley said to Jordan. Riley had coached against Jordan many times when he still played with the Chicago Bulls.*

Jordan played in his final NBA game on April 16, 2003 in Philadelphia. After scoring only 13 points in the game, Jordan went to the bench with 4 minutes and 13 seconds remaining in the third quarter and with his team trailing the Philadelphia 76ers, 75–56. Just after the start of the fourth quarter, the First Union Center crowd began chanting "We want Mike!". After much encouragement from coach Doug Collins, Jordan finally rose from the bench and re-entered the game, replacing Larry Hughes with 2:35 remaining. At 1:45, Jordan was intentionally fouled by the 76ers' Eric Snow, and stepped to the line to make both free throws. After the second foul shot, the 76ers in-bounded the ball to rookie John Salmons, who in turn was intentionally fouled by Bobby Simmons one second later, stopping time so that Jordan could return



to the bench. Jordan received a three-minute standing ovation from his teammates, his opponents, the officials and the crowd of 21,257 fans.

### **Olympic career**

Jordan played on two Olympic gold medal-winning American basketball teams. He won a gold medal as a college player in the 1984 Summer Olympics. The team was coached by Bobby Knight and featured players such as Patrick Ewing, Sam Perkins, Chris Mullin, Steve Alford, and Wayman Tisdale. Jordan led the team in scoring, averaging 17.1 points per game.

In the 1992 Summer Olympics, he was a member of the star-studded squad that included Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, and David Robinson and was dubbed the "Dream Team". Jordan was the only player to start all 8 games in the Olympics. Playing limited minutes due to the frequent blowouts, Jordan averaged 14.9 points per game.



**The Dream Team**

### **Family Life**

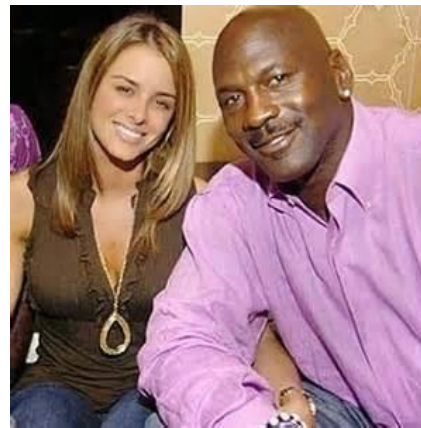
In 1989, Michael Jordan married Juanita Vanoy. Throughout the course of their marriage they had two sons – Jeffrey Michael and Marcus James – and a daughter – Jasmine – together. However, it was not to be for Michael and Juanita and in 2002 they filed for divorce. They reconciled once more for a short period before eventually divorcing in 2006.

*Jordan's gambling addiction and cheating ways led to his eventual divorce. One in which he had to pay his former wife (Juanita Jordan) a then record \$168 million dollars.*



**Michael and Juanita Vanoy**

**Michael Jordan remarried in 2013 after proposing to long-term girlfriend Yvette Prieto in December 2011. Just six months after they married, they announce that Yvette was pregnant with their first child. In February 2014, Jordan's identical twin daughters Victoria and Ysabel were born.**



**Yvette Prieto and Jordan**



**Jordan's Home**

### **Charlotte Bobcats/Hornets**

**On June 15, 2006, Jordan bought a minority stake in the Charlotte Bobcats, becoming the team's second-largest shareholder behind majority owner Robert L. Johnson. As part of the deal, Jordan took full control over the basketball side of the operation, with the title "Managing Member of Basketball Operations." Despite Jordan's previous success as an endorser, he has made an effort not to be included in Charlotte's marketing campaigns. A decade earlier, Jordan had made a bid to become part-owner of Charlotte's original NBA team, the Charlotte Hornets, but talks collapsed when owner George Shinn refused to give Jordan complete control of basketball operations.**



**In February 2010, it was reported that Jordan was seeking majority ownership of the Bobcats. As February wore on, it became apparent that Jordan and former Houston Rockets president George Postolos were the leading contenders for ownership of the team. On February 27, the Bobcats announced that Johnson had reached an agreement with Jordan and his group, MJ Basketball Holdings, to buy the team pending NBA approval. *On March 17, the NBA Board of Governors unanimously approved Jordan's purchase, making him the first former player to become the majority owner of an NBA team. It also made him the league's only African-American majority owner of an NBA team.***

### **Michael Jordan – Businessman**

*Jordan is the first athlete in history to become a billionaire.*

**Majority owner of the Charlotte Bobcats, Michael Jordan has an estimated net worth of \$1.14 billion as of March 2016, according to Forbes. The former Chicago Bulls wonder earned \$94 million in salary during his playing career. Most of his fortune now derives from endorsement deals with his biggest sponsor, Nike; he raised his stake in the NBA's Charlotte Bobcats to 80% in 2010. Michael Jordan, arguably the greatest basketball player of all time, could also be seen as the most entrepreneurial sports star of his day.**

**Perhaps most famous is his hugely lucrative endorsement deal with Nike that led to the creation of the iconic Air Jordan trainers – Brand Jordan remains a \$1 billion sales business for the sports manufacturer. He's also negotiated big sponsorship deals with the likes of Gatorade, Coca-Cola and McDonald's, as well as starring alongside Bugs Bunny in his own Looney Tunes film, Space Jam.**





*Jordan also owns several restaurants such as MICHAEL JORDAN'S THE STEAK HOUSE N.Y.C.*

*Jordan now makes more in a single year than he did in his entire 15-year NBA career:*

*Michael Jordan's 2016 endorsement earnings: \$100 million*

*Michael Jordan's career earnings in the NBA: \$94 million*

*Yes, 14 years after his last basketball game, Michael Jordan still makes over \$100 million dollars a year in endorsements. I guess he can afford to blow a few thousand dollars on gambling in Atlantic City and playing golf.*

*Michael Jordan initially wanted his brand to be Adidas, but as the company was going through succession problems, they wouldn't make Jordan an offer. Nike swooped in and sealed one of the most lucrative deals of all time. The NBA tried to ban the shoes, but Nike paid the \$5,000 fine for each game.*

*One of the most famous commercials in which he appeared was for Gatorade labeled "Be Like Mike," in which a song was sung by children wishing to be like Jordan.*



By the way, I agree with the Consensus Top Five Best NBA Players of all-time. Being the best in college does not always equate to being the best in the NBA. Michael Jordan didn't even make my Top Ten in college (I have him at number 30). Here is my list of the Top Ten in college and the NBA:

**Top 10 College Basketball Players**

1. Lew Alcindor (UCLA)\*
2. Oscar Robertson (Cincinnati)
3. Bill Walton (UCLA)
4. Pistol Pete Maravich (LSU)
5. Bill Russell (San Francisco)
6. Jerry West (West Virginia)
7. Bill Bradley (Princeton)
8. David Thompson (NC State)
9. Larry Bird (Indiana State)
10. Wilt Chamberlain (Kansas)

**Top 10 NBA Basketball Players**

1. Michael Jordan (Chicago Bulls)
2. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (LA Lakers)
3. Magic Johnson (LA Lakers)
4. Wilt Chamberlain (Philly 76's)
5. Larry Bird (Boston Celtics)
6. Bill Russell (Boston Celtics)
7. Oscar Robertson (Cincinnati Royals)
8. Jerry West (LA Lakers)
9. LeBron James (Cleveland Cavaliers)
10. Kobe Bryant (LA Lakers)

\*Lew Alcindor changed his name to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

*One of the most famous quotes by Michael Jordan is: "I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."*

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