

Indiana Daily Student

ASCENT.

Former Hoosier Victor Oladipo has become an NBA All-Star after emerging as a superstar for the Indiana Pacers this season.

By Andrew Hussey

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It was the senior night he never

Just days removed from being named an NBA All-Star for the first time, IU alum and Indiana Pacers guard Victor Oladipo made his homecoming to Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall.

Oladipo returned to be honored for the first time since he endeared himself to Hoosier fans with his dazzling dunks and relentless defense during his three years at IU.

Before IU faced Purdue on Jan. 28, IU Athletics Director Fred Glass presented Oladipo with a framed cream and crimson No. 4 jersey. As Glass held the framed jersey high in the air and turned around to make sure everyone could see it, Oladipo looked up with his beaming smile.

The crowd, which had nearly drowned out his introduction by public address announcer Chuck Crabb, was standing and cheering as if Oladipo had just thrown down one of his trademark dunks. He took in the moment before briefly addressing the adoring fans.

'I'm a Hoosier," Oladipo said. "I'll always be a Hoosier. I just want to thank you all for the three amazing years I spent here, unforgettable moments in this arena. I'm just glad to be back. Let's go beat

Oladipo - a Hoosier legend who was part of two Sweet 16 appearances and a regular season Big Ten Championship team — finally returned home. He sat and watched the game courtside as a fan, chirping at the officials and imploring the Hoosiers to pull off the upset. Situated across from the IU bench, he saw the game from a whole new perspective.

He wouldn't forget this experi-

From being a little-known high school recruit to carrying the Indiana Pacers, Oladipo blazed an unlikely trail. On the way there, he's captured the heart of a basketball-

Victor Oladipo 2017-18 stats

24.3 points per game

23.7 - Player Efficiency Rating (average is 15 for an *IUBB player)*

> **30.4** - Usage percentage

Oladipo is a humble superstar, just trying to outwork everyone else. He's always been that way, dating back to the beginning of his career.

Before his sophomore season at baspowerhouse DeMatha High School in Hyattsville, Maryland, Oladipo missed nearly the entire summer of workouts due to an injury. However, he remained present for nearly every single

workout and practice his team had. When he was healthy enough, he rebounded for teammates and was willing to even clean the gym.

No matter what, he was there because he didn't want his coaches to forget about him.

"He was not someone you said was a natural in terms of the player he was then," DeMatha Coach Mike Jones said. "The work he put in, the commitment he made to improve as a basketball player was second to none. He just always had that drive to be the best he could possibly be."

Working his way up from the DeMatha freshman team, Oladipo would play three seasons on varsity, starting only in his senior season. As a junior, Oladipo was willing to come off the bench, instead of starting, because the roster featured future NBA players Jerian and Jerami Grant and Quinn Cook.

His selflessness was rewarded.

As a senior, Oladipo joined the starting lineup and led DeMatha to a City Championship and a 32-4 record. His numbers weren't eyepopping — 11.9 points per game and 10.3 rebounds per game - but Jones said his legacy was as someone that was going to succeed, no matter what he did.

Oladipo didn't attract as much recruiting buzz, but he caught the eye of former IU Coach Tom Crean because of his personality. Crean said he liked how Oladipo interacted with his teammates and his coaches before Crean had even met

He also loved the defensive intensity Oladipo brought to the

"I loved his energy on the court," Crean said. "I didn't think when I watched him that he was interested in being a good defender, I thought he was determined to be a great defender. There's a difference. Some guys will play defense, some guys like to play defense, but some guys absolutely love it and he loved it."

Oladipo complemented his defensive aptitude with explosion and upside on offense. Crean said he liked Oladipo's character and thought he had a strong chance of developing.

The character Crean saw in Oladipo helped him when he joined the IU program.

His first summer in Bloomington, Oladipo and former IU forward Will Sheehey worked to establish a new identity for the team. Both brought a dedication to improvement with them, and they helped drive others to put in the necessary

"He didn't have any entitlement which is really rare in this day and age," Crean said. "There was nothing about him that made you think that he had anything figured out. He really wanted to learn, he really wanted to win and loved to be in the

Then-junior guard Victor Oladipo jumps to make a basket during IU's 58-52 win against Temple on at the University of Dayton Arena on March 24, 2013.

During his freshman season at IU, Oladipo started five games and averaged just over seven points per game, but the Hoosiers went 12-20. The tide would start to change for the program once current Charlotte Hornets forward Cody Zeller arrived in the summer of 2011. In Oladipo, Zeller found his competitive match.

"Coach Crean would put Vic and I on separate teams because he knew we would bring out the best in each other," Zeller said. "Neither one of us was going to back down no matter if it was in the weight room or the practice court, we even fired each other up during games. He's just a competitive

"I'm a Hoosier. I'll always be a Hoosier."

Victor Oladipo

The duo, which would revitalize the program, competed against each other daily during the two years they played together, whether it was on the court, in the weight room or even in the classroom. After Oladipo improved on both ends of the floor before his sophomore season, the Hoosiers would make it to the Sweet 16 with the fruits of the rebuild paying off.

Zeller and Oladipo would return for another season, this time leading the team to start as the AP preseason No. 1. The Hoosiers won the regular season Big Ten Championship but got upset in the Sweet 16 by

Oladipo — who started all 36 games that season and averaged 13.6 points per game — was named the 2013 National Defensive Player of the Year and the Sporting News Men's College Basketball Player of

No player worked as hard as Oladipo did at IU. Crean said there were only two days he could remember that Oladipo wasn't in the gym working on his game. One time, Crean even had to hide the basketballs to keep him from overworking himself.

From lightly recruited to becoming one of the best players in college basketball, Oladipo would leave for the NBA following his junior season.

His path back to the state of In-

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diana was circuitous.

Oladipo was selected with the second overall pick in the 2013 NBA Draft and joined a rebuilding Orlando Magic team. Asked to play a large role from day one, he was named to the First Team All-Rookie Team after averaging 13.8 points per game during his first season.

"He was thrust into a role that maybe he wasn't ready for in a sense of not being surrounded by a lot of veterans after Jameer Nelson left after the first year," Crean said. "So, he had to go into a role at the age of 21 and

"I wasn't the most talented, I wasn't the most gifted person. I wasn't the most sought after recruit or anything like that, but I worked really hard and that's what set me apart from everybody else." Victor Oladipo

22 that's very much a challenge."

The Magic struggled to win games and cycled through coaches during his first few seasons in the NBA. However, in his second and third seasons, he started in 123 combined games and averaged 17.9 and 16 points per game respectively.

"It was a little difficult, but everybody's path is different," Oladipo said. "Everything

Horoscope

happens for a reason. It was needed for my process of my growth. It was needed in my career. It was good for me. I learned everything from each coach I had."

In the summer of 2016, he was traded to the Oklahoma City Thunder. Crean said getting moved to the Thunder taught Oladipo the NBA is a business and what it meant to go to a championship-level organization.

With the Thunder, Oladipo shot a career-high 44.2 percent from the field and 36.1 percent on 3-points. Along with those individual achievements, he reached the playoffs for the first time in his career.

Paired next to point guard Russell Westbrook, who won the 2017 MVP, Oladipo learned from one of the most intense and hardworking players in the NBA. Oladipo said it helped him prepare for leading his own team and learn how to win at a highlevel.

"Realizing you have to bring that edge and that competitive itch to every game," Oladipo said. "And kind of weeding out some bad habits that I had. Just growing as a player and learning what I had to do to get to the highest level of basketball."

However, he wouldn't remain Westbrook's backcourt partner for long, with the Thunder trading Oladipo to the Pacers along with forward Domantas Sabonis for forward Paul George in June of 2017.

After getting traded, he spent the summer in Miami, transforming his body and focusing on getting in peak physical condition. The dramatic change was due in part to his work at DBC Fitness, which stands for dumbbells,



Then-Sophomore guard Victor Oladipo gets past a Stetson defender for a lay up at Assembly Hall.

barbells and cables.

DBC Fitness is a training facility focused on improving athletes' body movements. Oladipo found DBC Fitness and its owner, David Alexander, through veteran Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade, who also worked with Alexander.

Alexander said Wade told Oladipo he wished he took care of his body at Oladipo's

"I think that resonated with Vic," Alexander said. 'You're young and you have all your youth on your side, but you got to lock in and start taking your training seriously."

When he got to DBC Fitness, Alexander broke down Oladipo's biomechanics through 64 orthopedic measurements, which helped Alexander design a program around his strengths and

weaknesses. Oladipo learned how to properly move his body in three different planes of motion and Alexander said Oladipo's success came from being able to lock in and focus on the mundane exercises before advancing further.

Oladipo's desire to change was due to him seeing what his potential was and wanting to improve his numbers, Alexander said.

"I think Victor just had something to prove," Alexander said. "He really took this offseason seriously between hiring myself, hiring a nutrition coach, hiring an on-court person. When he came in, it wasn't that he had a chip on his shoulder, but I work with a hundred athletes a year and he was definitely top-five most focused I've seen in a long time."

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22) — Today is an 8 - Profit from meticulous service. Take advantage of a lucky break. Balance work with pleasure, sedentary pursuits with physical action. Grow your heart

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -Today is an 8 — Relax, and take advantage of the fine conditions for love. Enjoy family and friends. Play games, music and sports together. Pay someone special attention.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — Today is a 6 — Consider long-term plans before beginning a home renovation. Discuss ideas with family.

The hard work paid off.

For the Pacers, Oladipo has emerged as a superstar this season. Averaging a career-high 24 points per game, he is also shooting a career best from 3-point range and the field. He has the Pacers squarely in the playoff picture.

He replaced George as the Pacers' best player and the state of Indiana in turn has embraced him.

"He embodied what an Indiana basketball player and an Indiana basketball person is," Crean said. "I think that's exactly what's happening in Indianapolis now. People respect that. He's going in there an energizing the team and been a great teammate."

Oladipo isn't just satisfied with being an All-Star. He said he's addicted to the game of basketball and he has bigger and better goals.

Study color and style schemes and test before committing

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) -Today is a 7 — An answer you've been seeking is hiding in plain sight. Practice your creative arts and discover unexpected beauty. Write, paint, craft, pluck or strum.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is a 9 — Your morale gets a boost as your wallet grows fatter. Disciplined efforts pay off. Pay bills and reduce debt. Create your own lucrative opportunity

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -Today is a 7 — Make a personal change. Practice optimism and

"Everything I through was needed to get to this point," Oladipo said. "I still have a lot of work to do, I still have aspirations, a lot of goals to do in this league. I've got to continue to work hard in order to do that."

His passion for the game is what sets him apart, his effusive energy helping him each time he steps on the floor.

"I think it comes through on the court how much he enjoys playing the game," Zeller said. "He plays with a great passion every night which is huge in this league."

Even with great success, Oladipo is still the same person that came off the bench for DeMatha and surged to the national consciousness at

"He's not a partier," Alexander said. "He's not a guy that wants to be in the scene. For most athletes Victor's age, you'll catch them in the nightclubs partying, I'd say Victor's the complete opposite. He's just a guy that wants to focus on basketball and spending time with people he cares about."

The sky is the limit for Oladipo.

Each summer of his career, Oladipo has improved. Motivated by a love for the game and an intense competitive drive, he has found a comfortable role and home in Indianapolis.

However, he's not satisfied with his position in the NBA just yet.

"I wasn't the most talented, I wasn't the most gifted person," Oladipo said. "I wasn't the most sought after recruit or anything like that, but I worked really hard and that's what set me apart from everybody else."

self-care. Put aside judgments and complaints for a while, especially those directed at yourself

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26 Color again, as hair

27 TV forensic series 28 _ Pan Alley 29 Rascal

30 Ramshackle home 31 Hostile force 35 In addition 36 Kennedy and Koppel 37 Gray's subj.

with "off"

44 Foot's 12

51 Mails

38 Dismiss from work temporarily,

43 Put spots in magazines

die... ": Beatles

50 Flooring specialist

54 One step __ time

56 1101, to Romans

57 Chaney of horror

58 Bill for mdse.

52 Paris airport 53 Kendrick of "Twilight"

45 Side squared, for a square 48 Legendary Spanish hero 49 "__ like ours / Could never

55 Baby's spilled food protector

Look for the crossword daily in the

comics section of the Indiana Daily

Student. Find the solution for the

daily crossword here

Answer to previous puzzle

in peaceful privacy. Sit or walk somewhere with a lovely view, soothing music or fragrance. Nurture your health and well-being.

Today is a 5 — Stretch and rest

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is a 7 — Crowdsource a solution between your community. Organize and provide infrastructural support. You can accomplish great things with a team of talented friends

MAYBE I'M TOO DEMANDING?! MAYBE I'M JUST LIKE MY FATHER, TOO BOLD!

MAYBE YOU'RE JUST LIKE MY

BLISS

Aries (March 21-April 19) -

Today is an 8 — Forge ahead for professional gain. Your prize has long-term benefits. The stakes are high, and you have what you need. Consider pitfalls in advance.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating:

10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

Taurus (April 20-May 20) — Today is an 8 — Travel sounds nice, but wait for traffic to clear. Can you attend a meeting or conference virtually? Studies have your focus. Learn from an expert.

Gemini (May 21-June 20) -Today is a 7 — Anticipate financial changes, and put backup plans in place. New expenses may require adaptation. Discipline and

consideration now pay off later.

Cancer (June 21-July 22) — Today is an 8 — A romantic partnership blossoms naturally. Everything seems possible. Brainstorm to narrow the options and choose your course of action. Together, you're a powerful team

HARRY BLISS Crossword



'Run up to accounting, find Stern and give him a firm nip on his ankle he'll know what it's about

Publish your comic on this page. page.

8

3

Difficulty Rating:

4

9

2

1

6

2

7

4

9

The IDS is accepting applications for student comic strips for the spring and summer 2018 semesters.

Email five samples and a brief description of your idea to adviser@indiana.edu by April 1. Submissions will be reviewed and selections will be made by the editor-in-chief.

9

2

7



How to play: Fill in the grid

so that every row, column and

3x3 grid contains the digits 1

through 9, without repeating a

Answer to previous puzzle

8 1 6 7 9 3 5 4 2

4 5 6 2 1 8 9 7

3 9 2 6 4 7 5 8

1 4 3 5 2 8

5 8 3 1 9 6 2

5 2 4 1 8 6 9 7 3

© Puzzles by Pappocom

2 8 5 7 1 3 9

2 4 1

6

5 4 8 3 6 1

or 3x3 grid.

2 | 9 | 7

6

3 9 | 7

7

9 7

number in any one row, column

ACROSS 1 Send (to), as an inferior place 9 Partner of Paul and Mary

14 Trite

15 WWII bomber __ Gay

16 Trifling matters 18 Iroquois enemies

19 Editor's "never mind" 20 IRS form IDs 21 One out on the lake, e.g.

24 Cookie holder

27 Focal point in a theater 29 That girl

32 18-wheeler 33 Tablet with Mini and Pro

versions

34 John Paul Jones was a commander in it

39 Chevy subcompact 40 Rowlands of "The Notebook"

41 Originally named 42 May observance for those who

died in military service 46 Two-__ tissue

47 Troubled state

48 Has a midnight snack, say 52 __ upon a time ...

53 Kate's TV sidekick

L.A. Times Daily Crossword

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

54 Statesman born 2/12/1809 whose surname can precede the starts of four long puzzle answers 59 Señor's squiggle

62 Ones storming

60 Schemed

61 Bottomless chasm

DOWN 1 Lassos

2 Activist Medgar 3 Russian Revolution leader 4 Diving seabirds

5 Fellows 6 Busy __ bee

7 Bill with Hamilton on it 8 NYC summer hrs.

9 Be a nuisance to

10 Goes in 11 Promote big-time

12 North Pole worker 13 U.K. flying squad

17 East, to 48-Down 21 "__ there, done that"

22 "I've got this round" 23 Prickling with excitement

24 Tokyo's country 25 Tequila source

NON SEQUITUR

6

9

2

1

8

5

3

6

9

5

5

6

3

8

4

3

5

WILY **BREWSTER ROCKIT: SPACE GUY!**

TIM RICKARD



5





