

The Dream's Team

Summary

A documentary focused on the 30-year legacy of The Rockets 1995 Championship.

Abstract

Winning the 1995 NBA Championship was the most difficult accomplishment in team sports. The Rockets were the 6th seed, the lowest NBA seed to win it all. Olajuwon's team faced MVPs in every round and dominated them all. Olajuwon dispatched Karl Malone in the first round, came back down 0-2 in the second round versus Charles Barkley. In the third round, after watching David Robinson crowned MVP¹, Hakeem demolished the Spurs with the most dominate single player performance in NBA history. In the Finals, The Rockets faced the young, arrogant, and hungry Orlando Magic led by Shaquille O'Neal, who was swept by the master.

That's just the winning side of the bracket. On the losing side, Shaq dispatched Michael Jordan then Reggie Miller. Shaq failed the Finals in a Nick Anderson nightmare, learned from the master, and went on to dominate the next ten years, teaming with Kobe to start the next dynasty. And if we want to go in depth into the losers, there's Charles. Every quote Barkley has made in his 30 years of TV becomes hilarious when put into the context of his 90s playoffs against (and playing for) the Rockets. Chuck is funny enough without irony.

Another thread is *Inside The NBA*, the best sports show on TV for decades, which is ending this year. It's a great show, but the reason I love it so much is simple. With every joke, wisecrack, or serious critique by Kenny, Chuck or Shaq, I'm reminded of the glory of 1995. These guys would be the perfect patrons and participants, if we can lure them in. They could go out with H-town style.

H-Town is Hakeem's Town, and it will always be so if we keep this memory alive. I want to counter the indulgent and vain hero worship of *The Last Dance*, with what is important about sports; how it inspires and unites us. I've written extensively about what that season meant to me. I never doubted *The Dream*, I had absolute faith they could win despite the odds and all the turmoil that surrounded that season. It was the most inspiring sports performance I've witnessed in my lifetime; I don't think I'm alone in this feeling. It's something that connects the ages.

I was twenty-four years old, and it had a huge impact on my life. How did it effect those older, who had waited years for Houston to win a title? More importantly, how did it change those who were young? What did *Believe It* and *The Dream* mean to a 13-year-old girl and her family, who would in that year, take a giant leap of faith to chase down her dreams, and dominate music like no one before or since? I love Jay-Z, he's Kerouac without all the jazz; but the truth, the hard truth, of why he's my favorite rapper, is simple. He spat, *High post like Hakeem*, a year after Olajuwon dispatched The Knicks in the finals, tribute of truth to a rival. Uh, huh. Jay-Z respects game.

There's a sad 90s documentary called *Double Clutch* that tells the story without the drama. That updated to *The Last Dance* production and story-telling and real history is what I'm after.

¹ Olajuwon was the reigning MVP and DPOY.

Proposal

We'd put together a video series, a recap of the regular season, then each playoff series. We'll add a narrative focused on the basketball, but also what was happening off the court, in the lives of Rocket fans (as well as the fans of the teams we beat – excuse to go on a road trip). We'll have a series of watch parties, inviting people from all over the city to come and share their stories, and record impromptu and prepared interviews. We'll try to discover the true legacy of the greatest sports victory in Houston's history. Focus on how *The Dream's Team* changed people's lives for the better. Turn that footage and personal narratives into a history.

Stretch Goal

Narrated by the true voice of Houston, Beyoncé. Jay-Z to rip the jams, *moves like Olajuwon*.

Budget

Producing and holding the events should be manageable with participant funding. We don't have to do it fancy, just need a place with some Big-Screens and room to mingle. Event hosts gain co-marketing opportunities, and if we get some support, we'll have doors open. The biggest monetary hurdle is the NBA rights; These costs can be negotiated and funded once we have near finished product. Getting a sports journalist involved should help us understand those costs.

Equity

Net proceeds from the production go to We-All En (nonprofit). *The Dream's Team* was a historical blessing divinely gifted to the people of Houston, and the way to remember it is by paying it forward. If there is a streaming or distribution deal, it's appropriate that participants be compensated for their investment of time, but the equity should go back to serving the interests of the city and its patrons. This is not a commercial project.

Team

We need an executive producer (JA) to connect the team and patrons. We need sports journalists to put together the basketball storyline and connect with athletes and other media. We need writers (BA...) to weave the human stories into the basketball narrative. We need a producer and director (HA/JMA) to turn footage into a finished product. We need folk (JW...) to reach out into our diverse community, so that the stories we tell about what unite us are as diverse as we are. We need a coordinator to schedule and budget and leverage local youth programs (opportunities).

Next Steps

1. Assemble Team
2. Define plan and schedule
 - a. Houston Style – We can get it done by June. The Rockets could win it all. ²

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² So could the Clippers. Fairchild Labs sure could use a patron named Steve. Or H-Town James.