

# Ivan Johnson

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## Introduction

On an episode of the Club 520 podcast hosted by Jeff Teague, the crew and guest Baron Davis got on the topic of how to handle facing LeBron James [1]. In a strategy similar to what teams did with Shaquille O’Neal, Davis and Teague discussed using players that are big, but are not truly capable of such a challenge on defense. One of those players was one of Teague’s Hawk teammates: Ivan Johnson. Considering the slim likelihood of actually being able to stop LeBron in his prime, Baron Davis made the remark “you supposed to say ‘Ivan Johnson you’re fouling out today.’” The segment, while hilarious, did also remind me of Johnson, one of those forgotten, niche 2010s NBA players.

With that being said, here are some facts about former (if someone had the courage to tell him) Atlanta Hawk Ivan Johnson, whose story is far more than a Club 520 meme.



The forward played two seasons in the NBA, both with the Atlanta Hawks [2].

## Humble Beginnings

Ivan Johnson is the only player in the history of the NBA to play an NBA game coming from Cal State San Bernardino.

Johnson, at the age of 27 years and 261 days, was the fourth-oldest rookie to debut in the 2011-12 season.

## “I Need 6!”

At 6.6 fouls per 100 possessions, Ivan Johnson fouled at the 14th-highest rate in the NBA in 2011-12 among qualified players.

Ironically, in the six games Johnson played against LeBron’s Heat, he only fouled out once when James wasn’t playing in a triple-overtime thriller.

## Nothing Comes Easy

Aside from his two-year stint with the Atlanta Hawks, Ivan Johnson has played in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, China, Mexico and Lebanon.

While practicing with the Hawks at Butler University, Johnson [shattered a backboard](#), bringing the session to a screeching halt.

[Here’s](#) a video of Johnson scoring 5 points immediately after being trashed by Charles and Reggie.

## With Enemies Like These, Who Needs Friends?

Ivan Johnson has dunked on Channing Frye [3], Andray Blatche<sup>1</sup> [4], Ed Davis [5] and Greg Monroe [6].

Johnson has been dunked on by Cleanthony Early while playing in the summer league [7].

He once called Kevin Garnett a dirty player (what a fight that would have been) [8]. Johnson alluded to Garnett’s penchant for throwing elbows and talking junk on the court<sup>2</sup>.

## Champion

Ivan Johnson has a [10-minute highlight reel](#) of his 2015 season with the Talk n Text Texters in the Philippines. He averaged 27 points, 13 boards, 2 steals and shot 36% from deep while earning 2nd-team All-PBA honors. Johnson’s squad won the 2015 PBA title in seven games, much in part due to his performances in two crucial games; he scored 27 points in Game 5, had 30 points and 11 boards in Game 7.

## References

- [1] Teague, Jeff, host. “Jeff Teague & Baron Davis on BEATING Dirk’s Mavericks, Kobe Bryant playing in Drew League.” *Club 520*, 13 March 2024, [link](#).
- [2] Photo of Johnson taken from [his webpage](#) on the National Basketball Retired Players Association website.
- [3] “Ivan Johnson dunks all over Channing Frye (Feb 6, 2012).” *YouTube*, uploaded by thehoopscene, 7 February 2012, [link](#).

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<sup>1</sup>The Blatche dunk being called a poster is a bit generous, but it’s still an explosive dunk with Blatche in the air. The other two posters are undebatable.

<sup>2</sup>Johnson was one of the better interviews of the league when he was playing, although a lot of it wasn’t printable.

- [4] "Ivan Johnson Dunks on Andray Blatche & Washington Wizards." *Youtube*, uploaded by Gerry Sevidal, 17 March 2012, [link](#).
- [5] "Ivan Johnson Big Poster Dunk On Ed Davis." *YouTube*, uploaded by timeout NBA, 6 February 2013, [link](#).
- [6] "3-9-12 Ivan Johnson slam on Greg Monroe." *YouTube*, uploaded by getbangedon, 21 March 2012, [link](#).
- [7] "CleAnthony Early Drops the Hammer on Ivan Johnson!" *YouTube*, uploaded by NBA, 11 July 2014, [link](#).
- [8] "Ivan Johnson of the Atlanta Hawks calls Kevin Garnett a dirty player." *YouTube*, uploaded by nubyjas wilborn, 30 April 2012, [link](#).
- [9] Statistics taken from Basketball-Reference and Proballers.