

= Jahlil Okafor =

Jahlil Okafor ( pronounced / ʒɑːlɪl ˈoʊkəfɔr / ; born December 15 , 1995 ) is an American professional basketball player for the Philadelphia 76ers of the National Basketball Association ( NBA ) . He played his freshman season of college for the 2014 - 15 Duke national championship team .

Okafor was heavily recruited since before high school and had been at the top of the recruiting rankings for several years . He played high school basketball in Chicago , Illinois for Whitney M. Young Magnet High School , where he earned high school national player of the year awards from McDonalds , USA Today and Parade . At the 2012 FIBA Under -17 World Championship , he earned the Tournament MVP for the gold medal winning USA team . In 2013 , Okafor led Whitney Young to the 2013 Chicago Public High School League ( CPL ) city championship . He was an All -American as a junior in 2013 . The following summer , he was an All -Tournament team selection at the 2013 FIBA Under -19 World Championship for the gold medal Team USA . Following his senior season , he earned broad All -American recognition and was named national player of the year by Parade , USA Today and McDonald 's among other players . He signed with Duke as a package with Tyus Jones , with widespread recognition as the preseason Collegiate National Player of the Year .

At Duke , he earned the USBWA National Freshman of the Year and ACC Player of the Year , and a unanimous 2015 NCAA Men 's Basketball All -American first team selection . In the week following Duke 's victory in the championship game of the 2015 NCAA Men 's Division I Basketball Tournament against Wisconsin , Okafor announced that he would enter the 2015 NBA draft . He was selected with the third overall pick by the Philadelphia 76ers .

= = Early career = =

Okafor 's father , Chukwudi , known as Chuck , is of Nigerian Igbo and African -American descent , and his mother , Dacresha Lanett Benton , is African -American and White . As a youth , Okafor split time between his mother 's home in the 127 -resident town of Moffett , Oklahoma and his father 's home in Chicago . When he was 9 years old , his mother contracted bronchitis and died two weeks later from a collapsed lung . Okafor permanently moved in with his father to the South Side of Chicago and then to Rosemont . Okafor attended Rosemont Elementary . The adjustment was difficult because he was shy and so tall that other students thought he was put in the class for having failed . In November 2008 , during seventh grade he matched his father 's height of 6 feet 5 inches ( 1.96 m ) . Later the family moved to Chicago 's North Side so that Okafor could attend Whitney Young High School .

As a 6-foot 7-inch ( 2.01 m ) eighth grader , Okafor was recruited by DePaul Blue Demons men 's basketball in violation of National Collegiate Athletic Association ( NCAA ) recruiting rules when DePaul Athletic Director Jean Lenti Ponsetto made public comments about an offer . Initially , interim coach Tracy Webster , made an oral offer on January 30 outside the DePaul locker room at Allstate Arena . The offer was noted online by ESPNChicago.com and picked up by the press , leading to the problematic statements by Ponsetto . In February 2010 , Ponsetto confirmed a statement :

This is a young guy we 've been talking with for a long time , and who has been to games and we have a relationship with because his uncle works for the Rosemont Police Department ... I think it 's a prospect who has grown up around DePaul basketball . I think he 's probably a fan and someone who has been a fan for some time , since we have played in Rosemont for the last 30 years .

= = High school = =

= = = Freshman and sophomore seasons = = =

Okafor and teammate Paul White were regarded as the best incoming freshmen in the Chicago

metropolitan area , according to the Chicago Sun @-@ Times 's Joe Henricksen . They joined a team with six returning seniors that had finished as state runners up the prior year . Along with 6 @-@ foot @-@ 10 @-@ inch ( 2 @-@ 08 m ) sophomore Thomas Hamilton Jr. and White , Okafor was part of a trio of Whitney Young players ranked in the top 10 of their respective national classes by ESPNU . Entering the season , Whitney Young was considered to resemble a college team due to its size and athleticism . That year , Okafor feels he was not one of the " key players " on the team , but attending tournaments with elite players such as Austin Rivers and Michael Kidd @-@ Gilchrist inspired him to be one .

Following his freshman season , Okafor was regarded as the second best college basketball prospect in the Chicago area behind Jabari Parker . The scouting report on him was that he possessed an improved midrange jump shot , nimble feet , soft hands and physical skills at 6 @-@ foot @-@ 9 @-@ inch ( 2 @-@ 06 m ) that made him a mismatch against almost any high school competitor . Prior to his sophomore season Dave Spahn of SLAM Magazine described Okafor as a player with the footwork and ambidexterity to dominate his opponents , placing him in the conversation for the role of best player in the national class of 2014 . In August 2011 , ESPN ranked him as the third best player in the class of 2014 .

Okafor and White were featured in Ball So Hard , the first documentary short by Life + Times .

On December 22 , in front of an audience that included John Calipari , Rick Pitino , Derrick Rose and Anthony Davis at the UIC Pavilion , Okafor had 20 points ( 10 in the fourth quarter ) , 9 rebounds and 3 blocked shots against cross @-@ town rival Simeon and its star Parker in a 62 ? 55 loss .

Following the season , the Chicago Sun @-@ Times named him to the Class 4A All @-@ State first team along with Parker , Keith Carter , Darius Paul and Fred VanVleet . The Chicago Tribune named him to its second team All @-@ State team . The Associated Press named him to its Class 4A second team . He was also selected by the Chicago Public League Basketball Coaches Association to its 25 @-@ man boy 's All @-@ City team . The Chicago Sun @-@ Times named him to its All @-@ Public League second team as well as its All @-@ area 20 @-@ man team . By the end of his sophomore season , he started appearing on ballots from ESPN HS 's 10 @-@ person panel for the Mr. Basketball USA award as the best high school basketball player in the country . He was one of twenty sophomores chosen as Underclass All @-@ Americans by ESPN HS .

= = = = Junior season = = = =

In June 2012 , Sports Illustrated named him one of their " Future Game Changers " , a group of fourteen young athletes who are considered to be the brightest talents of their respective sport ( such as Sarah Hendrickson , Jabrill Peppers , and Taylor Townsend ) . On September 19 John Calipari made Okafor an offer to play for Kentucky , joining Ohio State , Michigan State , Louisville , Illinois , Duke , North Carolina , Florida and Arizona as programs that have offered Okafor .

Okafor was one of 10 USA Today preseason All @-@ USA selections ( along with Aaron Gordon , Andrew Harrison , Aaron Harrison , Kasey Hill , Jones , Parker , Julius Randle , Noah Vonleh , Andrew Wiggins ) . Okafor was named as one of the top 5 Illinois Mr. Basketball contenders ( along with Parker , Kendrick Nunn , Sterling Brown and Malcolm Hill ) prior to the season by the Chicago Tribune 's Mike Helfgot . Whitney Young was the number eight ranked team in the MaxPreps.com national preseason poll . Young entered the season ranked fourteenth in the nation according to ESPN .

On December 20 Okafor and Young lost in overtime to Dakari Johnson 's ESPN # 1 @-@ ranked Montverde Academy . Young was ranked # 9 at the time . On January 19 , Okafor led Young to an 85 ? 52 victory over Long Beach Polytechnic High School at the Hoophall Classic with 26 points , 7 rebounds and 3 blocks . The victory gave Young a 7 ? 1 record against nationally ranked teams for the year , moving Young to # 2 in the USA Today rankings as they prepared for the January 26 crosstown showdown against Simeon and Parker .

In the Chicago Public High School League playoffs February 15 finals contest against Morgan Park

High School Okafor tallied 19 points , 14 rebounds and 7 blocked shots , including a game @-@ saving block against Billy Garrett , Jr . , in a 60 ? 56 overtime Public League Championship game victory over Morgan Park .

Okafor was recognized as a 2013 All @-@ Public League first team selection by the Chicago Sun @-@ Times along with Nunn , Parker , Alexander and Billy Garrett , Jr . On February 28 , he was named the Chicago Sun @-@ Times Player of the Year . On March 25 , Okafor finished as runner @-@ up in the Illinois Mr. Basketball voting to Parker by a 315 ? 277 @-@ point margin , including a 43 ? 40 first place vote margin . On April 17 , he was a first team All @-@ USA selection by USA Today along with Wiggins , Aaron Harrison , Randle and Parker . Following the demise of ESPN HS , HighSchoolHardwood.com undertook several honoraria selections . Although MaxPreps.com did not select him as a first team All @-@ American , they did select him as a Junior All @-@ American along with Stanley Johnson , Joel Berry , Jones , and Emmanuel Mudiay .

= = = Senior season = = =

Following his time with Team USA , Okafor participated in the Nike Pro @-@ Am Chi @-@ League , the All @-@ Peach Jam , and the Adidas Nations event . He made his verbal commitment on ESPNU to Duke basketball on November 15 , jointly with Tyus Jones . Prior to his senior season , USA Today named him to its 10 @-@ man preseason All @-@ USA team along with Alexander , Stanley Johnson , Jones , Trey Lyles , Mudiay , Malik Newman , Kelly Oubre , D 'Angelo Russell , and Myles Turner . On November 21 , Winslow committed to Duke , giving them the number one recruiting class in the nation with Jones , Okafor , Winslow and Grayson Allen all committed . Okafor was joined on the Chicago Tribune 's preseason Illinois Mr. Basketball top 5 by Alexander , Jalen Brunson , Tyler Ulis and Keita Bates @-@ Diop .

Okafor dominated the December 27 ? 30 , Les Schwab Invitational hosted by Liberty High School by leading the tournament in scoring ( 31 ) and rebounding ( 12 @. @ 5 ) and finished 2013 atop the three major recruiting databases ( ESPN , Rivals and Scout ) . Young went 2 ? 2 in the tournament , losing to Rainier Beach High School as well as losing to Oregon 's defending Class 6A state champions West Linn High School . On January 4 at the Cancer Research Classic in Wheeling , West Virginia , Okafor earned the tournament MVP based on a 24 @-@ point 9 @-@ rebound performance against Mudiay 's Prime Prep Academy .

Okafor and Young reached an anticipated city championship matchup with Curie and Alexander at the Jones Convocation Center . Okafor had 16 points , 14 rebounds and 3 blocks . Curie won the city championship 69 ? 66 in quadruple overtime as Okafor had 16 points before fouling out with 2 : 13 remaining in regulation . The CPL Championship game was attended by Mayor of Chicago Rahm Emanuel and was the lead story on the late edition of SportsCenter .

On March 14 , Okafor posted 35 points and 13 rebounds in a 75 ? 66 victory over St. Rita of Cascia High School ( who featured Kentucky @-@ bound Charles Matthews ) , earning Young its first sectional title since 2009 and leaving them one victory away from the final four . On March 18 , Okafor led Young to a 58 ? 32 victory over Loyola Academy with 12 points , 12 rebounds , 7 assists and 3 blocks . On March 21 Okafor 's 33 points and 14 rebounds enabled Young to overcome a record setting 56 @-@ point performance by Brunson with a 75 ? 68 victory over Stevenson High School . On March 22 , Okafor and Young won the IHSA Class 4A state championship by defeating Benet Academy 46 ? 44 . Okafor only produced 8 points , 6 rebounds and 3 assists as he battled Xavier @-@ bound Sean O 'Mara .

Okafor earned co @-@ MVP ( with Justin Jackson ) of the April 2 , 2014 , McDonald 's All @-@ American Game after posting 17 points and 7 rebounds , including the go ahead dunk with less than 40 seconds remaining , for the winning west team in a 105 ? 102 victory . On April 12 , he posted a 14 @-@ point 10 @-@ rebound double @-@ double in an 84 ? 73 Team USA Nike Hoops Summit victory over the world team . On April 18 in the Jordan Brand Classic , he earned co @-@ MVP with ( Alexander ) by posting 29 points and 9 rebounds .

Okafor was selected to the 10 @-@ man Team USA for the 17th annual Nike Hoop Summit on April 12 , 2014 at the Moda Center . He was also selected to the 24 @-@ player 37th annual April 2

, 2014 McDonald's All-American Boys Game at the United Center. He was recognized as first team All-American City along with teammate White, Alexander, Louis Adams, Jr. of Orr, and Luwane Pipkins of Bogan High School by the Chicago Sun-Times. On February 18, he became one of three finalists for the Naismith Prep Player of the Year Award along with Alexander and Stanley Johnson.

He was selected as the 2014 National Player of the Year from among the 20 Parade All-Americans. He was also recognized by the McDonald's All-American Game organization as its 2014 Morgan Wootten National Player of the Year. USA Today recognized Okafor as its national player of the year when naming its All-USA Boys Basketball Team along with Alexander, Oubre, Mudiay, and Stanley Johnson. Okafor beat Alexander in the Illinois Mr. Basketball voting by a 492-402 vote. He earned first team All-American recognition from MaxPreps on April 13. Okafor was named the 2013-14 Chicago Tribune / WGN Ch. 9 Athlete of the Year.

== Rankings ==

In 2011, center Dakari Johnson was named National Freshman of the Year by ESPN HS. In the following months, Okafor beat out Johnson for a spot on the 2011 FIBA Americas Under-16 Championship Team USA. Okafor spent his sophomore season ranked as the number one center and second best player in the national class of 2014 by SLAM Magazine behind Andrew Wiggins, according to SLAM's Franklyn Calle. In January 2012 during his sophomore season, he was ranked third in the class by ESPN. By April, he was ranked second. By the end of his second year, there was talk that with Jabari Parker Chicago might produce the number one high school player in the country in back to back years, something that they had come close to with Mark Aguirre and Isiah Thomas in the late 1970s. Also in the 1981 NBA draft Aguirre and Thomas were selected first and second. On October 25, 2012, Andrew Wiggins reclassified into the class of 2013, which cleared the way for Okafor to assume the number one ranking in the Rivals.com ranking for the class of 2014. As of November 2012, he was listed number one in the national class of 2014 by Rivals.com and number two by ESPN. He remained number one according to Rivals with its March 14, 2013 rankings update, following his junior season.

== College career ==

Okafor was selected as Preseason Player of the Year by CBSSports.com, NBCSports.com, SB Nation, and ESPN analyst Fran Fraschilla. Okafor was a Preseason All-American first team selection by USA Today, CBSSports.com, NBCSports.com, Athlon Sports, Bleacher Report, Sporting News, SB Nation, Sports Illustrated, and the Associated Press. In its preseason top 100 player ranking, Okafor was listed at number 3 by ESPN. For the 2014-15 Atlantic Coast Conference men's basketball season, the conference media selected him as the ACC Preseason Rookie of the Year and as a Preseason All-ACC Team selection. He finished second in the conference Preseason Player of the Year voting to Marcus Paige. He was also listed as a John R. Wooden Award Preseason Top 50 candidate. He was also named to the Oscar Robertson Trophy and Wayman Tisdale Award Watch Lists.

Okafor opened the season as ACC Freshman of the Week on November 17. In his first three games he shot 25-30 for 30 on his field goal attempts. He was again named ACC Freshman of the Week on November 24 and December 1. He had his first two 20-point performances in the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic with 24 points against Furman on November 26 and 21 against Army on November 30. On December 15 with a 25-point and 20-rebound performance against Elon, Okafor became the first Duke freshman to record 20 rebounds in a game and the second ACC freshman to record 20 points and 20 rebounds in a game, joining Joe Smith. The performance earned Okafor his fourth ACC Rookie of the Week Award and first Wayman Tisdale National Freshman of the Week recognitions. He then scored a season-high 28 points against Boston College on January 3, earning his fifth ACC Rookie of the Week, first ACC Player of the Week, and second Wayman Tisdale National Freshman of the Week recognition.

the following day . He was again ACC Rookie of the Week on January 12 and 19 . He was named to the John R. Wooden Award Midseason Top 25 list on January 14 . After sitting out a game due to an ankle injury , Okafor posted a career @-@ high 30 points in an overtime win against Virginia Tech on February 25 .

Following the season , Okafor was named Atlantic Coast Conference Men 's Basketball Player of the Year by both the ACC coaches and media and ACC Freshman of the year . He was the first freshman to win ACC Player of the Year . He was also a first team All @-@ ACC selection and among the first trio to be selected to the All @-@ ACC Freshman first team ( along with Jones and Winslow ) . He was named USBWA National Freshman of the Year and the 2015 USBWA Freshman All @-@ America Team by the United States Basketball Writers Association ( USBWA ) . Okafor was a unanimous 2015 NCAA Men 's Basketball All @-@ American first @-@ team selection by The Sporting News , USBWA , National Association of Basketball Coaches , and Associated Press . He contributed to a national championship with 10 points , including 2 key baskets in the final minutes , in the championship game of the 2015 NCAA Men 's Division I Basketball Tournament , despite spending much of the game in foul trouble while defending Frank Kaminsky of Wisconsin . Okafor finished as runner @-@ up to Kaminsky in the John R. Wooden Award voting ( 3385 ? 3060 ) . On April 9 , Okafor declared for the 2015 NBA draft .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Philadelphia 76ers ( 2015 ? present ) = = =

On June 25 , 2015 , Okafor was selected with the third overall pick in the 2015 NBA draft by the Philadelphia 76ers . After debuting with a 20 @-@ point NBA Summer League performance on July 6 , Okafor signed a two @-@ year contract with the 76ers on July 7 , with team options for two additional seasons . He debuted for the 76ers with a 26 @-@ point , 7 @-@ rebound , 2 @-@ block effort ( that also included 8 turnovers ) against the Boston Celtics on October 28 . The young 2015 ? 16 76ers team played no players over the age of 24 or with more than three years of NBA experience on opening night . In early November , he was stopped on the Benjamin Franklin Bridge between Philadelphia and Camden , New Jersey for speeding at 108 miles per hour ( 174 km / h ) , almost two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half times the bridge 's posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour ( 72 km / h ) . On November 9 , he posted his first career double @-@ double with 21 points and 15 rebounds against his hometown Chicago Bulls . In the subsequent game on November 11 , Okafor posted 4 blocked shots along with 21 points and 7 rebounds against the Toronto Raptors .

After the 76ers got off to an 0 ? 16 start to the season , Okafor was involved in a street fight with taunting individuals on November 25 in Boston . On November 30 , with additional reports surfacing that Okafor had been involved in various controversial and dangerous off @-@ the @-@ court situations , the 76ers agreed to a request to assign a security guard to accompany Okafor in public . On December 1 , Okafor and the 76ers defeated the Los Angeles Lakers 103 ? 91 . The win ended the longest losing streak in the history of major professional sports in the United States ( 28 games going back to the prior season ) and the worst start in NBA history ( tied with the 2009 ? 10 New Jersey Nets at 0 ? 18 ) . The next day , video surfaced on TMZ of a second fight in Boston from November . Okafor was subsequently suspended by the 76ers for two games . He returned from suspension against the San Antonio Spurs on December 7 , recording 10 points and 4 rebounds off the bench in a 119 ? 68 defeat . On January 16 , 2016 , he recorded 25 points and 10 rebounds in a 114 ? 89 win over the Portland Trail Blazers , helping the 76ers snap a four @-@ game losing streak and improving their record to 5 ? 37 . On January 27 , 2016 , he was named to the 2016 NBA All @-@ Star Game weekend Rising Stars Challenge lineup .

In February , the 76ers had Okafor and Nerlens Noel swap positions as Okafor moved from center to power forward . On February 6 , he recorded 22 points and a season @-@ high 17 rebounds in a 103 ? 98 win over the Brooklyn Nets . The position swap was considered an improvement over the two players splitting time or having Noel play out of his natural position . On February 21 against the

Dallas Mavericks , Okafor posted a career @-@ high 31 points in a 129 ? 103 loss , surpassing not only his NBA career high , but also his 30 @-@ point game at Duke . On February 28 , Okafor posted 26 points against the Orlando Magic , but he endured a shin contusion in a collision with teammate Isaiah Canaan that was only expected to sideline him for a game . As he missed his fifth consecutive game , 76ers head coach Brett Brown noted that Okafor had a CT scan on his knee . On March 11 , Okafor was ruled out for the rest of the season after tests revealed that he had sustained a small tear of the meniscus in his right knee .

Okafor finished fifth in the 2016 NBA Rookie of the Year Award voting and earned NBA All @-@ Rookie First Team honors .

= = NBA career statistics = =

= = = Regular season = = =

= = International career = =

In October 2010 , he successfully tried out for USA Basketball 's 2011 ? 12 USA Developmental National Team . In June 2011 , he qualified for the 12 @-@ man United States team at the 2011 FIBA Americas Under @-@ 16 Championship along with Simeon rivals Parker and Nunn . In the gold medal game , Okafor made all of his field goal attempts posting 18 points and 14 rebounds . For the tournament , his 46 rebounds over 5 games ranked him second on the United States team ( to Aaron Gordon ) and third at the Championships in rebounding .

He was a member of USA Basketball 's 12 @-@ man Team USA at the 2012 FIBA Under @-@ 17 World Championship with Parker and Nunn again . His listed height was 6 feet 11 inches ( 2 @.@ 11 m ) . At a two @-@ game four @-@ team preliminary exhibition tournament in Las Palmas , Canary Islands the week before the championship began , he was named tournament MVP . He was also named MVP of the 2012 FIBA Under @-@ 17 World Championship for the gold medal @-@ winning United States team . Okafor posted 17 points and 8 rebounds in the gold medal game . Over the course of the tournament , he was the second @-@ leading scorer with 13 @.@ 6 points per game and second @-@ leading rebounder for the United States with 8 @.@ 2 rebounds per game .

On May 21 , 2013 , USA Basketball announced the roster of 24 players , including Okafor , who had accepted invitations to the June 14 ? 19 , 2013 , USA Basketball Men 's U19 World Championship team training camp . The camp was used to select the 12 @-@ man team for the June 27 ? July 7 , 2013 FIBA Under @-@ 19 World Championship in Czech Republic . Okafor made the final roster that was announced on June 18 . The team won the gold medal and Okafor made the All @-@ Tournament team along with teammate and tournament MVP Gordon . He led the tournament with 77 % field goal percentage , and he was the only player on the all tournament team who would return to high school . However , coaches Billy Donovan and Shaka Smart told him his weak link was his conditioning .

= = Personal life = =

His mother , Dacresha Lanett Benton , died when he was 9 years old , leaving him to be raised by his father Chukwudi and aunt Chinyere Okafor @-@ Conley , whom he refers to as his " auntie mom " . His father 's full name is Chukwudi Obika Okafor . His parents met in Fort Smith , Arkansas when Chuck played basketball for a local junior college . " My deepest fear is losing someone else close to me , " Jahlil told Chicago magazine . " That 's something I think about way more than I should . "

Jahlil has an older sister , Jalen , and 2 younger brothers named Jamonte and Ashondre . His father has 5 Chicago @-@ area siblings . His uncle works for the police department in Rosemont , Illinois . His father , who is known as Chuck Okafor , is 6 feet 5 inches ( 1 @.@ 96 m ) and played

power forward for Westark Community College , West Texas A & M University and Carl Albert State College . His parents had basketball scholarships at Carl Albert State College at the same time . Chuck had been an All @-@ City High School basketball player for Bowen High School . His mother also played college basketball . Okafor plays chess and the saxophone as well as the tuba . In junior high , he participated in the stage crew for a musical . He is a distant cousin of Emeka Okafor . He is of Nigerian descent through his paternal grandfather who moved to the U.S. from Nigeria at the age of 20 . Jahlil traveled to Nigeria when he was in seventh grade .