

= Tim Duncan =

Timothy Theodore " Tim " Duncan ( born April 25 , 1976 ) is an American retired professional basketball player who played his entire 19 @-@ year career with the San Antonio Spurs of the National Basketball Association ( NBA ) . Widely considered to be the greatest power forward of all time , he is a five @-@ time NBA champion , two @-@ time NBA MVP , three @-@ time NBA Finals MVP , and NBA Rookie of the Year . He is also a 15 @-@ time NBA All @-@ Star and the only player ever to be selected to both the All @-@ NBA and All @-@ Defensive Teams in every one of his first 13 seasons .

Duncan started out as a swimmer and only began playing basketball in ninth grade after Hurricane Hugo destroyed the only Olympic @-@ sized pool on his home of Saint Croix , U.S. Virgin Islands . He soon became a standout for St. Dunstan 's Episcopal High School , and had an illustrious college career with the Wake Forest University Demon Deacons , winning the Naismith College Player of the Year , USBWA College Player of the Year and John Wooden awards in his final year . Duncan graduated from college before entering the 1997 NBA draft as the number one pick .

Off the court , Duncan is known for his quiet and unassuming ways , as well as his active philanthropy . He holds a degree in psychology and created the Tim Duncan Foundation to raise general health awareness and fund education and youth sports in various parts of the United States .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life = = =

Duncan is the only son of Ione Duncan , a midwife , and William Duncan , a mason , and has two older sisters , Cheryl and Tricia . He was born and raised in Christiansted , a town on Saint Croix , one of the main islands composing the United States Virgin Islands . In school , Duncan was a bright pupil and dreamt of becoming an Olympic @-@ level swimmer like his sister Tricia . His parents were very supportive and Duncan excelled at swimming , becoming a teenage standout in the 50 , 100 and 400 meters freestyle and aiming to make the 1992 Olympic Games as a member of the United States Team .

When Hurricane Hugo destroyed the island 's only Olympic @-@ sized swimming pool in 1989 , Duncan was forced to swim in the ocean and he quickly lost his enthusiasm for swimming because of his fear of sharks . Duncan was dealt another emotional blow when his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and died one day before his 14th birthday . In her last days , she made Duncan and his sisters promise to finish college with a degree , which would later explain Duncan 's refusal to leave college early . Duncan never swam competitively again , but was inspired by his brother @-@ in @-@ law to turn to basketball .

Duncan initially had difficulties adapting to the game he thought would help relieve his pain and frustration . Nancy Pomroy , the athletic director of the St. Croix Country Day School was quoted : " [ Duncan ] was so huge . So big and tall , but he was awfully awkward at the time . " He overcame this to become a standout for the St. Dunstan 's Episcopal High School , averaging 25 points per game as a senior . His play attracted the attention of several universities , despite having only picked up the game in ninth grade . Wake Forest University basketball coach Dave Odom in particular grew interested in Duncan after the 16 @-@ year @-@ old allegedly played NBA star Alonzo Mourning to a draw in a 5 @-@ on @-@ 5 pick @-@ up game . Odom was searching for a tall , physical player to play near the basket . Given the weak level of basketball in the Virgin Islands , Odom was wary about Duncan at first , especially after first meeting him and thinking him to be inattentive ; Duncan stared blankly at Odom for most of the conversation . However , after the first talk , Odom understood that this was just Duncan 's way of paying attention , and discovered that he was not only athletically talented , but also a quick learner . Eventually , despite scholarship offers by the University of Hartford , the University of Delaware and Providence College , Duncan joined

= = = Wake Forest University ( 1993 ? 1997 ) = = =

In the year before Duncan 's arrival at Wake Forest University , the Demon Deacons reached the Sweet 16 , but then lost main scorer Rodney Rogers , who entered the 1993 NBA draft . In the 1993 ? 94 NCAA season , Coach Dave Odom was considering redshirting Duncan , but was forced to play him after fellow freshman big man Makhtar N 'Diaye was ruled out due to NCAA rules violations and eventually transferred to Michigan . Duncan struggled with early transition problems and was even held scoreless in his first college game , but as the year progressed , he and teammate Randolph Childress led the Deacons to a 20 ? 11 win @-@ loss record . Duncan 's style of play was simple but effective , combining an array of low @-@ post moves , mid @-@ range bank shots and tough defense . He was chosen to represent the U.S. in the 1994 Goodwill Games . Meanwhile , Duncan worked towards a degree in psychology and also took classes in anthropology and Chinese literature . Despite focusing heavily on basketball , Wake Forest psychology department chairperson Deborah Best was quoted : " Tim [ ... ] was one of my more intellectual students . [ ... ] Other than his height , I couldn 't tell him from any other student at Wake Forest . " Duncan also established his reputation as a stoic player , to the extent that opposing fans taunted him as " Mr. Spock " , the prototypical logical , detached character from Star Trek .

In the 1994 ? 95 NCAA season , the sophomore was soon called one of the best eligible NBA prospects , along with his peers Joe Smith , Rasheed Wallace and Jerry Stackhouse . Los Angeles Lakers general manager Jerry West suggested that Duncan might become the top pick in the 1995 NBA draft if he went early , but Duncan assured everyone he had no intention of going pro until he graduated , even though the NBA was planning to add a rookie salary cap in 1996 . He was giving up a lot of money , but was determined to stay in school . In that season , he led the Demon Deacons into the Atlantic Coast Conference ( ACC ) championship game against a Rasheed Wallace @-@ led North Carolina Tar Heels . During that game , Duncan neutralized the threat of Wallace , while Childress sealed the win with a jump shot with four seconds left in overtime . In the NCAA Tournament , the Demon Deacons reached the Sweet 16 , and playing against Oklahoma State , Duncan scored 12 points to go with 22 rebounds and eight blocks , outplaying Bryant Reeves , but his team lost 71 ? 66 . Still , Duncan ended the year averaging 16 @.@ 8 points and 12 @.@ 5 rebounds per game , was named Defensive Player of the Year and became the third @-@ best shot @-@ blocker in NCAA history with 3 @.@ 98 blocks per game . He was also voted All @-@ ACC First Team , a feat he would repeat in each of his two remaining years at Wake Forest .

In the following 1995 ? 96 NCAA season , Wake Forest had to deal with the loss of Childress , who graduated the previous season and entered the NBA . This provided an opportunity for Duncan to show his leadership qualities , and his inexperienced team lost only four games in the entire ACC season . The Demon Deacons won the ACC Finals again , but in the Sweet 16 , Duncan came down with the flu , and his team missed the Final Four by one win . He completed another remarkable season with averages of 19 @.@ 1 points and 12 @.@ 3 rebounds per game , and was again voted ACC Defensive Player of the Year and won his first ACC Player of the Year award . At the season 's end the Wake Forest star was rumored to enter the 1996 NBA draft , but in the end , he stayed in college .

In the 1996 ? 97 NCAA season , Duncan was helped by the addition of future NBA player Loren Woods , a 7 ' 1 " player who eased the pressure on Duncan close to the basket . The Demon Deacons won their first 13 games , but then got into a slump and failed to win a third ACC title . The NCAA campaign was just as frustrating , as Stanford University , led by future NBA point guard Brevin Knight , eliminated Duncan 's team with a 72 ? 66 win . Duncan finished with an individually impressive season though , averaging 20 @.@ 8 points , 14 @.@ 7 rebounds and 3 @.@ 2 assists per game while shooting .606 from the field and winning the Defensive Player of the Year for a third straight season . He earned first @-@ team All @-@ America honors for the second time , and was a unanimous pick for both USBWA and Naismith College Player of the Year . Duncan led the 1996 ? 97 NCAA Division I in rebounding , was 10th in blocked shots ( 3 @.@ 3 bpg ) and 28th in scoring (

20 @. @ 8 ppg ) . He was voted ACC Player of the Year again and won the 1997 John Wooden Award as the NCAA 's best overall male player based on the votes of sportscasters and newswriters .

In contrast to contemporary prep @-@ to @-@ pro players like Kevin Garnett , Jermaine O 'Neal , Tracy McGrady or Kobe Bryant , Duncan stayed at college for a full four years . During that period , he was a two @-@ time ACC Player of the Year , and a three @-@ time NABC Defensive Player of the Year . The center also made the All @-@ ACC Tournament between 1995 and 1997 , the All @-@ ACC First Team between 1995 and 1997 , and was named Most Valuable Player of the 1996 ACC Tournament . Further , 1996 was the year where he led the conference in scoring , rebounding , field goal percentage and blocked shots , becoming the first player in conference history to lead all four of those categories . Overall , Duncan led his team to a 97 ? 31 win ? loss record and finished his college career as the all @-@ time leading rebounder in NCAA history in the post @-@ 1973 era ( later surpassed by Kenneth Faried ) . He remains one of only ten players with more than 2 @, @ 000 career points and 1 @, @ 500 career rebounds . He was also the first player in NCAA history to reach 1 @, @ 500 points , 1 @, @ 000 rebounds , 400 blocked shots and 200 assists . He left college as the all @-@ time leading shot @-@ blocker in ACC history with 481 blocks ? at the time second in NCAA annals behind Colgate 's Adonal Foyle and third on the ACC career rebounding list with 1 @, @ 570 rebounds . After earning his college degree , Duncan became automatically eligible for the 1997 NBA draft .

= = Professional career = =

= = = " Twin Towers " ( 1997 ? 2003 ) = = =

In the 1997 NBA draft , the San Antonio Spurs drafted Duncan with the first draft pick . The Spurs were coming off an injury @-@ riddled 1996 ? 97 season ; their best player , David Robinson ? himself a number one draft pick in 1987 ? was sidelined for most of the year , and they had finished with a 20 ? 62 win ? loss record . However , as the 1997 ? 98 season approached , the Spurs were considered a notable threat in the NBA . With an experienced center in Robinson and the number one pick in Duncan , the Spurs featured one of the best frontcourts in the league . Duncan and Robinson became known as the " Twin Towers " , having earned a reputation for their exceptional defense close to the basket , forcing opponents to take lower percentage shots from outside . From the beginning , Duncan established himself as a quality player : in his second @-@ ever road game , he grabbed 22 rebounds against opposing Chicago Bulls Hall of Fame power forward Dennis Rodman , a multiple rebounding champion and NBA Defensive Player of the Year . Duncan was voted to the 1998 NBA All @-@ Star Game by coaches . Later , when Duncan played against opposing Houston Rockets Hall of Fame power forward Charles Barkley , Barkley was so impressed he said : " I have seen the future and he wears number 21 . " In his rookie season , Duncan lived up to expectations of being the number one draft pick , starting in all 82 regular @-@ season games , averaging 21 @. @ 1 points , 11 @. @ 9 rebounds , 2 @. @ 7 assists and 2 @. @ 5 blocks per game , and earning All @-@ NBA First Team honors . His defensive contributions ensured that he was elected to the All @-@ Defensive Second Team and was also named NBA Rookie of the Year , having won the NBA Rookie of the Month award every single month that season . Spurs coach Gregg Popovich lauded Duncan 's mental toughness , stating his rookie 's " demeanor was singularly remarkable " , Duncan always " put things into perspective " and never got " too upbeat or too depressed . " Center Robinson was equally impressed with Duncan : " He 's the real thing . I 'm proud of his attitude and effort . He gives all the extra effort and work and wants to become a better player . "

The Spurs qualified for the 1998 NBA Playoffs as the fifth seed , but Duncan had a bad first half in his first playoff game against the Phoenix Suns , causing Suns coach Danny Ainge to play Duncan with less defensive pressure . The rookie capitalized on this by finishing Game 1 with 32 points and 10 rebounds and replicating the performance in Game 2 , contributing to a 3 ? 1 victory over the

Suns . However , the Spurs lost in the second round to the eventual Western Conference Champions Utah Jazz . In this series , Duncan was pitted against Hall of Fame power forward Karl Malone . Duncan outscored Malone in the first two games which the Spurs lost , but as the series progressed , the more experienced Malone shut Duncan down on defense and dominated on offense , outscoring the young power forward in Games 3 to 5 18 ? 10 , 34 ? 22 and 24 ? 14 respectively .

During the lockout season shortened 1998 ? 99 season , the Spurs started with a lackluster 6 ? 8 record and Popovich came under fire from the press . However , Duncan and Robinson stood behind their coach , and finished the season with a 31 ? 5 run . The sophomore averaged 21 . 7 points , 11 . 4 rebounds , 2 . 4 assists and 2 . 5 blocks in the regular season , making both the All NBA and All Defense First Teams . In the 1999 NBA Playoffs , the Spurs defeated the Minnesota Timberwolves 3 ? 1 , swept the Los Angeles Lakers and the Portland Trail Blazers 4 ? 0 , and defeated the Cinderella story New York Knicks 4 ? 1 in the Finals . In this series , a large contingent of Virgin Islanders flew over to support their local hero , and were not disappointed . In the first two games , the " Twin Towers " outscored their Knicks counterparts Chris Dudley / Larry Johnson with 41 points , 26 rebounds and nine blocks versus five points , 12 rebounds and zero blocks . After a Game 3 loss in which Duncan was held scoreless in the third quarter and committed three turnovers in the last quarter , Duncan bounced back with 28 points and 18 rebounds in a Game 4 win , and in Game 5 , the Spurs protected a 78 ? 77 lead seconds from the end with the ball in the Knicks ' possession . Double teamed by Duncan and Robinson , Knicks swingman Latrell Sprewell missed a last second desperation shot , and after closing out the series with a strong 31 . 7 point and 9 . 4 rebound showing in Game 5 , Duncan was named Finals MVP , bringing San Antonio their first ever NBA championship . The accolades for the Spurs soon arrived , with Sports Illustrated reporting that the San Antonio " monkey has been shed " , and that the Spurs were no longer known as the " San Antonio softies " . The magazine praised Finals MVP Duncan , who was later quoted : " This is incredible . We kept our focus and we pulled it out . " Sports Illustrated journalist and retired NBA player Alex English added : " Duncan came up big each time they went to him with that sweet turnaround jumper off the glass . He was the man tonight [ in Game 5 ] . " And Popovich later said to losing coach Jeff Van Gundy : " I 've got Tim [ Duncan ] and you don 't . That 's the difference . "

In the 1999 ? 2000 season , Duncan further cemented his reputation . He averaged 23 . 2 points , 12 . 4 rebounds , 3 . 2 assists and 2 . 2 blocks per game , earned another pair of All NBA and All Defense First Team call ups , and was co MVP with Shaquille O 'Neal of the NBA All Star Game . However , the Spurs had a disappointing post season . Duncan injured his meniscus shortly before the end of the regular season and was unable to play in even one post season game . Consequently , the Spurs were eliminated in the first round of the 2000 NBA Playoffs , losing 3 ? 1 to the Phoenix Suns . Nonetheless , Duncan rebounded in the next season , and with strong regular season averages of 22 . 2 points , 12 . 2 rebounds , 3 . 0 assists and 2 . 3 blocks , earned himself yet another pair of All NBA and All Defensive First Team call ups . In the 2001 NBA Playoffs , the Spurs eliminated the Timberwolves 3 ? 1 , defeated the Dallas Mavericks 4 ? 1 , but then bowed out against the Lakers led by superstars Shaquille O 'Neal and Kobe Bryant , losing in four straight games . Sports Illustrated described the series as a " [ m ] erciless mismatch " , and Duncan was criticized as " silent when the Spurs need him most " .

On the back of two consecutive playoff disappointments , Duncan improved statistically in the 2001 ? 02 season . He averaged career highs in scoring ( 25 . 5 points per game , including a league leading 764 field goals and 560 attempted free throws ) and rebounding ( 12 . 7 boards per game , and his accumulated 1042 boards again led the league ) , and also averaged 3 . 7 assists and 2 . 5 blocks per game , both career highs . Coupled with another pair of All NBA and All Defensive First Team call ups , he was named the league 's Most Valuable Player , joining teammate David Robinson as the only Spurs members to earn the honor . On the other hand , Duncan 's team struggled with the fact that the aging Robinson was no longer able to sustain his level of performance , and backup center forward Malik Rose had to step in more

often . In the 2002 NBA Playoffs , the Spurs were again outmatched by the Lakers . Up against star center O 'Neal once more , the Spurs were defeated 4 ? 1 by the eventual champions . Duncan , who managed 34 points and a franchise @-@ high 25 rebounds in Game 5 , stated his frustration : " I thought we really had a chance at this series . The Lakers proved to be more than we could handle . Again , we had a ( heck ) of a run at it . We had opportunities to win games and make it a different series , but that 's just the way the ball rolls sometimes . " Nevertheless , NBA.com praised Duncan as " phenomenal " and criticized his supporting cast , stating Duncan " made 11 @-@ of @-@ 23 shots and 12 @-@ of @-@ 14 free throws , adding four assists and two blocks [ a ] nd once again , he did not have enough help . " Also , Robinson said " Tim [ Duncan ] was like Superman out there " , and conceded that the Lakers were simply better , just like in the last playoffs campaign .

The 2002 ? 03 season saw Duncan enjoy another standout season in which he averaged 23 @.@ 3 points , a career @-@ high 12 @.@ 9 rebounds , 3 @.@ 9 assists and 2 @.@ 9 blocks per game , and yet another dual All @-@ NBA and All @-@ Defense First Team call @-@ up , resulting in his second NBA Most Valuable Player Award . At age 37 , Robinson announced that year as his last season , and his playing time was cut by coach Popovich to save his energy for the playoffs . The Spurs qualified easily for the playoffs , concluding the regular season as the Conference number one seed with a 60 ? 22 record . Although San Antonio now had new offensive threats in Tony Parker and Manu Ginóbili , during the playoffs , it was Duncan 's performance in the semi @-@ finals against the Los Angeles Lakers which was singled out for praise by Popovich , who stated : " I thought in Game 5 and Game 6 , he [ Duncan ] was astounding in his focus . He pulled everyone along these last two games . " In the series , Duncan was matched up against forward Robert Horry , and was able to dominate him the entire series and closed out the series in style ; Duncan finished Game 6 with 37 points and 16 rebounds , allowing Spurs coach Popovich to call timeout with 2 : 26 left to instruct his team not to celebrate excessively . The Spurs made it to the finals , and defeated the New Jersey Nets 88 ? 77 in Game 6 to win another NBA championship . Helped by an inspired Robinson , Duncan almost recorded a quadruple double in the final game , and was named the NBA Finals MVP . Duncan said of the victory : " We were all confident that something would happen , that we would turn the game to our favor , and it did " , but felt sad that Robinson retired after winning his second championship ring . Following this successful Spurs campaign , Robinson and Duncan were named Sports Illustrated 's 2003 " Sportsmen of the Year " .

= = = Leader of the Spurs ( 2003 ? 2007 ) = = =

Before the 2003 ? 04 season began , the Spurs lost their perennial captain David Robinson to retirement . Embracing the lone team leader role , Duncan led a reformed Spurs team which included Slovenian center Rasho Nesterovi? , defensive stalwart Bruce Bowen , Argentinian shooting guard Ginóbili and young French point guard Parker . Coming off the bench were clutch shooting power forward Robert Horry , versatile Hedo Türko?lu and veterans Malik Rose and Kevin Willis . In retrospect , Robinson commented that at first , Duncan was reluctant to step into the void , still needing some time to truly develop his leadership skills . Statistically though , Duncan remained strong ; after another convincing season with averages of 22 @.@ 3 points , 12 @.@ 4 rebounds , 3 @.@ 1 assists and 2 @.@ 7 blocks , he led the Spurs into the Western Conference Semifinals . There , they met the Los Angeles Lakers again , split the series 2 ? 2 , and in Game 5 , Duncan made a toughly defended jump shot which put the Spurs ahead by one point with 0 @.@ 4 seconds left to play . Despite the little time remaining , Lakers point guard Derek Fisher hit a buzzer beater for an upset Lakers win . In the end , the Spurs lost the series 4 ? 2 , and Duncan attributed the strong Lakers defense as one of the reasons for the loss .

Duncan and his Spurs looked to re @-@ assert themselves in the next 2004 ? 05 season . Despite their new captain 's slight statistical slump ( 20 @.@ 3 points , 11 @.@ 1 rebounds , 2 @.@ 7 assists , 2 @.@ 6 blocks per game ) , the Spurs won the second seed for the 2005 NBA Playoffs by winning 59 games . In the first round , the Spurs eliminated the Denver Nuggets four games to one , and met the Seattle SuperSonics in the semi @-@ finals . After splitting the first four games , Duncan led his team to two decisive victories , setting up a meeting with the Phoenix Suns , known

for their up @-@ tempo basketball . The Spurs managed to beat the Suns at their own game , defeating them 4 ? 1 and earning a spot in the 2005 NBA Finals against the Detroit Pistons . In the Finals , Duncan was pitted against Detroit 's defensively strong frontcourt anchored by multiple NBA Defensive Player of the Year Ben Wallace . After two convincing Game 1 and 2 wins for the Spurs , the Pistons double teamed Duncan and forced him to play further from the basket . Detroit won the next two games and the series was eventually tied at 3 ? 3 , but Duncan was instrumental in Game 7 , recording 25 points and 11 rebounds as the Spurs defeated the Pistons . NBA.com reported that " with his unique multidimensional talent , Duncan depleted and dissected the Pistons ... He was the fulcrum of virtually every key play down the stretch " , and coach Popovich added : " [ Duncan 's ] complete game is so sound , so fundamental , so unnoticed at times , because if he didn 't score , people think , ' Well , he didn 't do anything ' . But he was incredible and he was the force that got it done for us . " Pistons center Ben Wallace remarked : " He put his team on his shoulders and carried them to a championship [ ... t ] hat 's what the great players do . " Duncan won his third NBA Finals MVP Award , joining Michael Jordan , Shaquille O 'Neal , and Magic Johnson as the only players in NBA history to win it three times .

During the 2005 ? 06 season , Duncan suffered from plantar fasciitis for most of the season , which was at least partly responsible for his sinking output ( 18 @.@ 6 points , 11 @.@ 0 rebounds , 3 @.@ 2 assists and 2 @.@ 0 blocks per game ) , and also for his failure to make the All @-@ NBA First Team after eight consecutive appearances . The big man came back strong in the 2006 NBA Playoffs against the Dallas Mavericks , where he outscored rival power forward Dirk Nowitzki 32 @.@ 2 to 27 @.@ 1 points , with neither Nowitzki nor Mavericks center Erick Dampier able to stop Duncan with their man @-@ to @-@ man defense . But after splitting the first six games , Duncan became the tragic hero of his team in Game 7 . Despite scoring 39 points in regulation time and fouling out both Dampier and Keith Van Horn , Duncan only made one of seven field goal attempts in overtime against Mavericks reserve center DeSagana Diop , and the Spurs lost Game 7 .

The following season , however , was another championship year for Duncan and the Spurs . Duncan averaged 20 @.@ 0 points , 10 @.@ 6 rebounds , 3 @.@ 4 assists and 2 @.@ 4 blocks per game in the regular season , and was selected as a Western Conference starter for the 2007 NBA All @-@ Star Game , his ninth appearance in the event . In the playoffs , he led the Spurs to a 4 ? 1 series win over the Denver Nuggets in the opening round of the 2007 NBA Playoffs , a 4 ? 2 win over the Phoenix Suns in the second round , and a 4 ? 1 win against the Utah Jazz in the Western Conference Finals , setting up a meeting with the Cleveland Cavaliers in the Finals . There , the Spurs swept the Cavaliers 4 ? 0 , earning Duncan his and San Antonio 's fourth ever championship . Duncan proclaimed that that championship was " the best " of his four championships ; however , he also acknowledged he played " sub @-@ par " and thus received only one vote for NBA Finals MVP from a panel of ten . His colleagues were more appreciative of Duncan ; among others , ex @-@ teammate David Robinson referred to the Spurs titles as the " Tim Duncan era " , and lauded his leadership . Coach Popovich also praised Duncan : " Tim is the common denominator . He 's [ had ] a different cast around him [ in ] ' 99 , ' 03 and ' 05 . He 's welcomed them all . [ ... ] But he is that easy to play with , and his skills are so fundamentally sound that other people can fit in . " Then @-@ NBA commissioner David Stern added : " [ Duncan ] is a player for the ages . I 'm a tennis fan , and Pete Sampras is one of the greats . OK , he wasn 't Andre Agassi or John McEnroe . He just happens to be one of the greatest players of all time . You take great players as you find them . "

= = = Playoff consistency ( 2007 ? 2013 ) = = =

With Duncan being healthy for 78 games and posting typical 20 / 10 numbers , San Antonio concluded the 2007 ? 08 regular season with a 56 ? 26 record , finishing behind the Lakers and New Orleans Hornets in the Western Conference and setting up themselves for a first @-@ round contest against the Suns . The Suns ? defeated by the Spurs in three of the past four seasons of playoffs ? were out for revenge and featured a new player in four @-@ time NBA champion Shaquille O 'Neal . In Game 1 , Duncan set the tone with a 40 @-@ point game and a rare three

@-@ pointer that sent the game into double overtime . The trio of Duncan , Ginóbili and Parker continued playing to form for the remainder of the series , and the Spurs eliminated the Suns in five games . In the first game of the next round against the Chris Paul @-@ led Hornets , San Antonio was badly defeated 101 ? 82 as Duncan played one of the worst playoff games in his career , recording only 5 points and 3 rebounds . The Spurs dropped the next game as well , but recovered in Games 3 and 4 , with Duncan putting up a team @-@ high 22 point / 15 rebound / 4 block performance in the game that tied the series . Duncan then recorded 20 points and 15 rebounds in Game 6 , and the Spurs relied on their experience to seal the series in Game 7 . However , arch @-@ rivals Los Angeles Lakers defeated San Antonio in five games in the Conference Finals , and the Spurs once again failed to capture back @-@ to @-@ back NBA championships .

Duncan started the 2008 ? 09 season with strong showings in points and rebounds per game . However , by mid @-@ season , his performance declined and he was subsequently diagnosed with chronic knee tendinitis . Despite Duncan having problems with his knee and the team losing the services of shooting guard Ginóbili for most of the season , San Antonio qualified for the playoffs as the third seed with a 54 ? 28 record . Coupled with an aging supporting cast ( Bowen , Michael Finley and Kurt Thomas were all in their late 30s ) , however , the Spurs were only considered fringe contenders for the championship . As it turned out , Duncan and Parker were not enough to help the Spurs avoid a 4 ? 1 defeat by Dallas , and the Spurs were eliminated in the first round of the playoffs for the first time since 2000 .

With the Spurs looking to provide a more solid supporting cast in the 2009 ? 10 season , they acquired Richard Jefferson , Theo Ratliff , Antonio McDyess , DeJuan Blair , and Keith Bogans . The team got off to a 5 ? 6 start , but a series of double double performances by Duncan gave them a 9 ? 6 record by the end of November . Duncan was subsequently named the Western Conference Player of the Week for the last week of November . Even at 34 years of age , he remained a constant 20 ? 10 threat , being only one of three players in the league at the mid @-@ season to average at least 20 points and 10 rebounds a game . On January 21 , 2010 , Duncan was named as the starting forward for the West for the 2010 NBA All @-@ Star Game . After securing yet another 50 @-@ win season , the Spurs qualified for the playoffs as the seventh seed , and defeated Dallas 4 ? 2 in the first round , only to lose 4 ? 0 to Phoenix in the next round .

Eleven games into the 2010 ? 11 season , Duncan became the Spurs ' all @-@ time leader in points scored and games played . Along the way , the Spurs compiled a 12 @-@ game winning streak to go 13 ? 2 after 15 games . On November 30 , 2010 , Duncan recorded his third career triple @-@ double against the Golden State Warriors . 12 days later , in a game against the Portland Trail Blazers , Duncan became the 94th player in NBA history to play 1 @, @ 000 games . Through his 1,000th game , the Spurs have been 707 ? 293 ; only Scottie Pippen ( 715 ? 285 ) had a better record with his team through his first 1 @, @ 000 games . The Spurs were 29 ? 4 after 33 games ? one of the ten best starts in NBA history ? and led the league at 35 ? 6 halfway through the season . Although Duncan produced career @-@ lows in points and rebounds per game , the Spurs ended the regular season as the first seed in the West for the 2011 NBA Playoffs , and were second in the league ( to Chicago ) . Despite finishing with a 61 ? 21 record , however , the Spurs could not avoid being upset in the first round , 4 ? 2 , by the eighth @-@ seeded Memphis Grizzlies .

The Spurs again finished the 2011 ? 12 season as the number one seed in the West ? it was a lockout @-@ shortened 66 @-@ game season ? tying with the Chicago Bulls for a league @-@ best 50 ? 16 record . Prior to a game against the Philadelphia 76ers on March 24 , 2012 , head coach Gregg Popovich decided to give Duncan a night off by listing him on the official scorecard as " DNP @-@ OLD " , poking fun at his 36 @-@ year @-@ old body . Overall , Duncan 's numbers remained at par with the previous season . The triumvirate of Duncan @-@ Parker @-@ Ginóbili entered the 2012 NBA Playoffs well @-@ rested and healthy , and the Spurs swept the Utah Jazz and the Los Angeles Clippers 4 ? 0 in the first two rounds . On May 31 , 2012 , in the third game of the Western Conference Finals against the Oklahoma City Thunder , Duncan set the record for most career blocks in playoffs history , surpassing Kareem Abdul @-@ Jabbar . The Spurs ' playoff run came to an end when the Thunder defeated them 4 ? 2 .

On July 11 , 2012 , Duncan agreed to re @-@ sign with the Spurs . Helped by a supporting cast

comprising Danny Green , Tiago Splitter , Gary Neal and Kawhi Leonard that had been maturing steadily over the last two seasons , Duncan and the Spurs would again make the playoffs with a 58 ? 24 regular season record . Duncan also returned to the All @-@ Star line @-@ up and was named to the All @-@ NBA First Team . He finished the regular season with 23 @,@ 785 career points , which broke George Gervin 's record for most points in a Spurs uniform ( 23 @,@ 602 ) . In the playoffs , the Spurs swept the Los Angeles Lakers , beat Golden State in six games and defeated the Memphis Grizzlies in the Western Conference Finals in a 4 ? 0 sweep to reach the NBA Finals . In game 2 of the Western Conference Finals , Duncan recorded his 500th playoff block , becoming the first player in NBA history to reach that milestone , although the NBA did not track blocks prior to the 1973 ? 74 season . The Spurs met defending NBA champions Miami Heat in the NBA Finals in a tightly contested series . Miami had home court advantage , but San Antonio took the first game and headed into game 6 with a 3 ? 2 lead . In that game , Duncan scored 25 points in the first half , his biggest haul in a half of an NBA Finals game . However , the Spurs lost the game in overtime , and then lost the deciding seventh game .

= = = Fifth championship ( 2013 ? 2014 ) = = =

On December 2 , 2013 , Duncan became the oldest player to record a 20 ? 20 game in NBA history , finishing with 23 points and 21 rebounds and the game @-@ winning jump shot against the Atlanta Hawks . The Spurs went on to conclude the 2013 ? 14 regular season with a league @-@ best 62 wins . The Spurs defeated Dallas in seven games in the First Round of the playoffs , Portland in five games in the conference Semifinals , and Oklahoma City in six games , where game 6 went into overtime , as the Spurs won 112 ? 107 . They setup a Finals rematch against the Miami Heat , which they won 4 ? 1 , setting a record margin for a win in the NBA Finals , for games 3 and 4 . Along the way , the Duncan @-@ Ginóbili @-@ Parker trio broke the record for most wins in NBA Playoffs history . After winning the Finals in five games , Duncan joined John Salley as the only players to win a championship in three different decades .

= = = Final years ( 2014 ? 2016 ) = = =

On June 23 , 2014 , Duncan exercised his \$ 10 @.@ 3 million player option for the 2014 ? 15 season . On November 14 , 2014 , Duncan scored his 25,000th point in the first half of the Spurs ' 93 ? 80 win over the Los Angeles Lakers , becoming the 19th player in NBA history to reach the milestone . On February 19 , 2015 , he passed Alex English to move into 16th place on the NBA 's all @-@ time scoring list with 30 points against the Los Angeles Clippers . On March 4 , he recorded six rebounds against the Sacramento Kings , breaking his tie with Nate Thurmond for ninth in career rebounding . Two days later , he recorded three blocks against the Denver Nuggets to surpass Patrick Ewing for sixth overall in career blocks . On April 12 , he played his 1,330th career game against the Phoenix Suns , which passed Moses Malone for 11th all @-@ time . He also scored 22 points and passed Kevin Garnett to move into 14th place on the NBA 's all @-@ time scoring list . The Spurs finished sixth in the Western Conference after 82 games and faced the Los Angeles Clippers in the first round of the playoffs . Their quest for back @-@ to @-@ back championships was ended May 2 as they lost to the Clippers in seven games . Duncan was later named to the All @-@ Defensive second team on May 20 for the seventh time in his career .

On July 9 , 2015 , Duncan re @-@ signed with the Spurs to a two @-@ year deal . On November 2 , 2015 , in a win over the New York Knicks , Duncan recorded 16 points , 10 rebounds and six assists in his NBA @-@ record 954th victory with one team , surpassing John Stockton 's 953 wins with the Utah Jazz . On November 11 , he pulled down rebound number 14 @,@ 716 for his career against the Portland Trail Blazers to pass Robert Parish for seventh place on the NBA 's all @-@ time rebounding list . On November 14 , in a win over the Philadelphia 76ers , Duncan had five blocked shots to become the Spurs ' franchise leader with 2 @,@ 955 blocks , surpassing former teammate David Robinson 's career total of 2 @,@ 954 . Duncan also moved info fifth all @-@ time on the NBA 's blocks list . After missing the Spurs ' last three games of December due to rest and



right knee soreness , Duncan returned to action on January 2 , 2016 against the Houston Rockets . In his return game , Duncan was held scoreless for the first time in his 19 @-@ year career ; giving him the most consecutive games with at least one point , at 1 @,@ 359 . Four days later , Duncan scored a then season @-@ high 18 points in a 123 ? 98 win over the Utah Jazz , helping the Spurs extend its franchise @-@ record home winning streak to 30 straight regular @-@ season games dating to 2014 ? 15 . On February 10 , he returned to the starting lineup after missing eight games with a sore knee . On February 27 , in a win over the Houston Rockets , he became the fifth player in NBA history to reach 3 @,@ 000 blocks . In addition , with six rebounds in the game , Duncan reached 14 @,@ 971 for his career , passing Karl Malone ( 14 @,@ 968 ) for sixth place in league history . On March 10 , Duncan became the sixth player in league history with 15 @,@ 000 rebounds , completing the feat midway through the first quarter of the Spurs ' 109 ? 101 win over the Chicago Bulls . On March 19 , he came off the bench for only the third time in his career to counter the smaller lineup of the Golden State Warriors . With a win over the Warriors , the Spurs recorded their 35th straight home win of the season and their 44th straight at home dating to 2014 ? 15 , tied for the second @-@ longest streak in NBA history with the 1995 ? 96 Chicago Bulls . On April 5 , in a win over the Utah Jazz , he became the third player with 1 @,@ 000 victories in the regular season , following Kareem Abdul @-@ Jabbar and Robert Parish . Duncan extended his mark as the NBA 's career leader in victories with one team . On April 8 , he scored a season @-@ high 21 points in a losing effort to the Denver Nuggets . Having already locked up second seed in the West with a franchise best record ( 65 ? 13 prior to Nuggets game ) , all four of Duncan 's starting teammates were rested . The Spurs went on to lose to the Oklahoma City Thunder in the second round of the playoffs .

On June 28 , 2016 , Duncan opted into his \$ 5 @.@ 6 million contract for the 2016 ? 17 season . However , on July 11 , 2016 , he announced his retirement from the NBA after 19 seasons with San Antonio . The Spurs in turn has waived Duncan , in a move to pay out the rest of his current contract worth \$ 6 @.@ 4 million .

= = NBA career statistics = =

= = = Regular season = = =

= = = Playoffs = = =

= = United States national team = =

In 1998 , Duncan was selected as one of the last two players for the United States national team for the World Basketball Championship . However , this team was later replaced with CBA and college players because of the NBA lockout . Duncan 's first chance at playing for the national team came in 1999 when he was called up to the Olympic Qualifying Team . He averaged 12 @.@ 7 ppg , 9 @.@ 1 rpg and 2 @.@ 4 bpg and led the team to a 10 ? 0 finish en route to a qualifying berth for the 2000 Sydney Olympics , but a knee injury forced him to stay out of the Olympic Games themselves .

In 2003 , Duncan was also a member of the USA team that recorded ten wins and qualified for the 2004 Summer Olympics . He started all the games he played in and averaged team bests of 15 @.@ 6 ppg , 8 @.@ 0 rpg , 1 @.@ 56 bpg , while shooting 60 @.@ 7 percent from the field . At the Olympics itself , the team lost three games on its way to a bronze medal . The record represented more losses in a single year than in the 68 previous years combined . It was also the first time since NBA professionals became eligible that the U.S. men 's basketball team returned home without gold medals at the Olympics . After the tournament , Duncan commented , " I am about 95 percent sure my FIBA career is over . I 'll try not to share my experiences with anyone . " In total , Duncan was a member of five USA Basketball teams and played in 40 games .

= = Player profile = =

Standing at 6 feet 11 inches tall ( 2 @. @ 11 m ) and weighing 250 pounds ( 113 kg ) , Duncan was a power forward who could also play center . With a double @-@ double career average in points and rebounds , he was considered one of the most consistent players in the NBA throughout his career . Regarded as one of the league 's best interior defenders , Duncan also ranked consistently as one of the top scorers , rebounders and shot @-@ blockers in the league . At the end of his final season in 2015 ? 16 , he was ranked first in regular season point @-@ rebound double @-@ doubles among active players , while he led the charts in post @-@ season point @-@ rebound double @-@ doubles ( 158 as of 2013 ? 14 ) . His main weakness for much of his career was his free throw shooting , with a career average of less than 70 % .

Apart from his impressive statistics , Duncan has gained a reputation as a good clutch player , as evidenced by his three NBA Finals MVP awards and his playoff career averages being higher than his regular season statistics . Eleven @-@ time NBA champion Bill Russell further compliments Duncan on his passing ability , and rates him as one of the most efficient players of his generation , a view shared by 19 @-@ time NBA All @-@ Star Kareem Abdul @-@ Jabbar . Because of his versatility and success , basketball experts have spoken of Duncan as one of the greatest power forwards in NBA history , while coach Popovich and teammates Parker and Ginóbili have also credited much of San Antonio 's success to him . Duncan 's detractors , however , label him as " boring " because of his simple but effective style of play ( thus earning him the nickname " The Big Fundamental " ) . Following his first championship ring in 1999 , Sports Illustrated described him as a " quiet , boring MVP " , a characterization which persists today .

Duncan himself commented on his " boring " image , stating : " If you show excitement , then you also may show disappointment or frustration . If your opponent picks up on this frustration , you are at a disadvantage . " Sports journalist Kevin Kernan commented on his ability to relax and stay focused , stating that having a degree in psychology , Duncan often not only outplays , but out @-@ psychs his opponents . Duncan has also stated that he especially likes his bank shot , saying : " It is just easy for me . It just feels good . " Additionally , Duncan 's close and longstanding relationship with Spurs coach Gregg Popovich has been described as " the greatest love story in sports " .

= = = Honors = = =

In his basketball career , Duncan collected a number of individual and team honors , including being a two @-@ time MVP ( 2002 , 2003 ) , five @-@ time NBA champion ( 1999 , 2003 , 2005 , 2007 , 2014 ) and three @-@ time NBA Finals MVP ( 1999 , 2003 , 2005 ) . As a college player , he was honored by the House of Representatives , named the ACC Male Athlete of the Year , won the John R. Wooden Award and Adolph Rupp Trophy , and was selected as the Naismith College Player of the Year in addition to player of the year honors from the United States Basketball Writers Association ( USBWA ) , National Association of Basketball Coaches ( NABC ) and Sporting News ( all 1997 ) . In 2002 , Duncan was named to the ACC 50th Anniversary men 's basketball team honoring the 50 greatest players in ACC history . In his debut year in the NBA ( 1998 ) , he was voted Rookie of the Year and elected into the All @-@ Rookie Team . He has been named to 15 NBA All @-@ Star Teams ( 1997 ? 98 ; 1999 ? 2000 to 2010 ? 11 ; 2012 ? 13 and 2014 ? 15 ) , 15 All @-@ NBA Teams ( 1997 ? 98 to 2009 ? 10 , 2012 ? 13 , 2014 ? 15 ; ten First Team nominations ) , and 15 All @-@ Defensive Teams ( 1997 ? 98 to 2009 ? 10 ; 2012 ? 13 , 2014 ? 15 ; eight First Team nominations ) . With these impressive performances , Duncan is one of only four players to receive All @-@ NBA First Team honors in each of his first eight seasons ( 1998 ? 2005 ) , along with Hall of Famers Bob Pettit ( ten seasons ) , Larry Bird ( nine seasons ) , and Oscar Robertson ( nine seasons ) , and is the only player in NBA history to receive All @-@ NBA and All @-@ Defensive honors in his first 13 seasons ( 1997 ? 98 to 2009 ? 10 ) .

Duncan was also named by the Association for Professional Basketball Research as one of " 100 Greatest Professional Basketball Players of The 20th Century " , the youngest player on that list . In

the 2001-02 season, he won the IBM Player Award and The Sporting News (TSN) MVP Award, becoming the third player to ever win the NBA MVP, IBM Player and TSN Player Awards in the same season. On February 18, 2006, he was named one of the Next 10 Greatest Players on the tenth anniversary of the release of the NBA's 50th Anniversary All-Time Team by the TNT broadcasting crew. In 2009, Duncan was ranked 8th by Slam Magazine in their list of the Top 50 NBA players of All Time, while Sports Illustrated named him its NBA Player of the Decade.

= = Off the court = =

Tim Duncan has two older sisters, Cheryl and Tricia. Like their younger brother, they were talented athletes: Cheryl was a champion swimmer before she became a nurse, and Tricia swam for the U.S. Virgin Islands at the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul.

In college, Duncan co-authored a chapter in the social psychology book *Aversive Interpersonal Behaviors*.

Duncan married Amy Sherrill in July 2001 and the couple had their first child, daughter Sydney, in the summer of 2005. They had a second child, son Draven, during the summer of 2007. It was reported that the Duncans were divorcing in May 2013, but the divorce was not finalized until November 23, 2013.

The Tim Duncan Foundation was established to serve the areas of health awareness / research, education, and youth sports / recreation in San Antonio, Winston-Salem, and the United States Virgin Islands. The foundation's major events have included the Tim Duncan Bowling for Dollar \$ Charity Bowl, A-Thon and the Slam Duncan Charity Golf Classic. Between 2001 and 2002, the foundation raised more than \$350,000 for breast and prostate cancer research. In those two years, Duncan was named by Sporting News as one of the "Good Guys" in sports. The Spurs captain also supports the Children's Bereavement Center, the Children's Center of San Antonio and the Cancer Therapy and Research Center.

Duncan cites his late mother Ione as his main inspiration. Among other things, she taught him and his sisters the nursery rhyme "Good, Better, Best. Never let it rest / Until your Good is Better, and your Better is your Best," which he adopted as his personal motto. On and off the court, he believes that the three most important values are dedication, teamwork and camaraderie. The Spurs captain has also stated that he chose #21 for his jersey because that was his brother's in law's college number, since he was Duncan's main basketball inspiration, and cites Hall of Fame Los Angeles Lakers point guard Magic Johnson as his childhood idol.

For his mixture of success and low-key personality, Duncan was honored with the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor, the highest award bestowed by the Virgin Islands territorial government, and has been celebrated in several "Tim Duncan Day" ceremonies. In 2000, Legislature of the Virgin Islands President Vargrave Richards of St. Croix said: "He is a quiet giant. His laid-back attitude is the embodiment of the people of St. Croix, doing things without fanfare and hoopla."

Regarding his own personality, Duncan compares himself to Will Hunting of the movie *Good Will Hunting*, which centers on the genial and antagonistic character of Will Hunting, portrayed by Matt Damon. He stated: "I'm just a taller, slightly less hyperactive version of the Damon character in the movie. I really enjoyed how he probed people and found out their weaknesses just by asking questions and stating outlandish remarks." He also admitted shunning the limelight because "[fame] is not me." Off the court, he has stated that his best friend is former Spurs colleague Antonio Daniels, who describes Duncan as a cheerful, funny person off the hardwood.

Duncan loves Renaissance fairs and the fantasy role playing game *Dungeons & Dragons*. An avid video game player, he acknowledges a certain joy of playing "himself" on basketball video games. Duncan states if he had the chance, he would challenge NBA legends Wilt Chamberlain and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar to a one-on-one game.

The satirical fake newspaper *The Onion* has featured many articles poking fun at Duncan's straight-laced, studious image, such as: "Citing Battle of Agincourt, Tim Duncan Urges Lakers Not To Get Too Discouraged By Game 1 Loss", and "Tim Duncan Around If Any Spurs Have

Questions About Sequester " .