

= Hakeem Olajuwon =

Hakeem Abdul Olajuwon (/ ˈhɑːkɪm ˈoʊlədʒuːwɒn / ; [ˈoʊlədʒuːwɒn ?] ; born January 21 , 1963) , formerly known as Akeem Olajuwon , is a Nigerian @-@ American retired professional basketball player . From 1984 to 2002 , he played the center position in the National Basketball Association (NBA) for the Houston Rockets , and the Toronto Raptors . He led the Rockets to back @-@ to @-@ back NBA championships in 1994 and 1995 . In 2008 , he was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame , and in 2016 , he was inducted into the FIBA Hall of Fame . Listed at 7 ft 0 in (2 @. @ 13 m) (but standing closer to 6 ft 10 in (2 @. @ 08 m) by his own admission) , Olajuwon is considered one of the greatest centers ever to play the game . He was nicknamed " The Dream " during his basketball career after he dunked so effortlessly that his college coach said it " looked like a dream . "

Born in Lagos , Nigeria , Olajuwon traveled from his home country to play for the University of Houston under Coach Guy Lewis . His college career for the Cougars included three trips to the Final Four . Olajuwon was drafted by the Houston Rockets with the first overall selection of the 1984 NBA draft , a draft that included Michael Jordan , Charles Barkley , and John Stockton . He combined with the 7 ft 4 in (2 @. @ 24 m) Ralph Sampson to form a duo dubbed the " Twin Towers " . The two led the Rockets to the 1986 NBA Finals , where they lost in six games to the Boston Celtics . After Sampson was traded to the Warriors in 1988 , Olajuwon became the Rockets ' undisputed leader . He led the league in rebounding twice (1989 , 1990) and blocks three times (1990 , 1991 , 1993) .

Despite very nearly being traded during a bitter contract dispute before the 1992 ? 93 season , he remained in Houston where in 1993 ? 94 , he became the only player in NBA history to win the NBA MVP , Defensive Player of the Year , and Finals MVP awards in the same season . His Rockets won back @-@ to @-@ back championships against the New York Knicks (avenging his college championship loss to Patrick Ewing) , and Shaquille O 'Neal 's Orlando Magic . In 1996 , Olajuwon was a member of the Olympic gold @-@ medal @-@ winning United States national team , and was selected as one of the 50 Greatest Players in NBA History . He ended his career as the league 's all @-@ time leader in blocks , with 3 @, @ 830 , and is one of four NBA players to record a quadruple @-@ double .

= = Early life = =

Olajuwon was born to Salim and Abike Olajuwon , middle @-@ class Yoruba owners of a cement business in Lagos , Nigeria . " Olajuwon " translates to " surpassing wealth " in Yoruba . He was the third of six children . He credits his parents with instilling virtues of hard work and discipline into him and his siblings ; " They taught us to be honest , work hard , respect our elders , and believe in ourselves " . Olajuwon has expressed displeasure at his childhood in Nigeria being characterized as backward . " Lagos is a very cosmopolitan city ... There are many ethnic groups . I grew up in an environment at schools where there were all different types of people . "

During his youth , Olajuwon was a soccer goalkeeper , which helped give him the footwork and agility to balance his size and strength in basketball , and also contributed to his shot @-@ blocking ability . Olajuwon did not play basketball until the age of 15 , when he entered a local tournament . It has been said that a coach in Nigeria once asked him to dunk and demonstrated while standing on a chair . Olajuwon then tried to stand on the chair himself . When redirected by staff not to use the chair , Hakeem could initially not dunk the basketball .

Despite early struggles , Olajuwon quickly became taken with the game : " Basketball is something that is so unique . That immediately I pick up the game and , you know , realize that this is the sport for me . All the other sports just become secondary . "

= = College career = =

Olajuwon emigrated from Nigeria to play basketball at the University of Houston under Cougars coach Guy Lewis . Olajuwon was not highly recruited and was merely offered a visit to the university

to work out for the coaching staff , based on a recommendation from a friend of Lewis who had seen Olajuwon play . He later recalled that when he originally arrived at the airport in 1980 for the visit , no representative of the school was there to greet him . When he called the staff , they told him to take a taxi out to the university .

After redshirting his freshman year in 1980 ? 81 because he could not yet get clearance from the NCAA to play , Olajuwon played sparingly as a redshirt freshman in 1981 ? 82 , and the Cougars were eliminated in the Final Four by the eventual NCAA champion , North Carolina Tar Heels . Olajuwon sought advice from the coaching staff about how to increase his playing time , and they advised him to work out with local Houston resident and multiple NBA MVP winner , Moses Malone . Malone , who was then a center on the NBA 's Houston Rockets , played games every off season with several NBA players at the Fonde Recreation Center . Olajuwon joined the workouts and went head to head with Malone in several games throughout the summer . Olajuwon credited this experience with rapidly improving his game : " The way Moses helped me is by being out there playing and allowing me to go against that level of competition . He was the best center in the NBA at the time , so I was trying to improve my game against the best . "

Olajuwon returned from that summer a different player . He and his teammates (including Clyde Drexler) formed what was dubbed " Phi Slama Jama , " the first slam @-@ dunking " fraternity , " so named because of its above @-@ the @-@ rim prowess . In his sophomore and junior years he helped the Cougars advance to consecutive NCAA championship games , where they lost to North Carolina State on a last second tip @-@ in in 1983 and a Patrick Ewing @-@ led Georgetown team in 1984 . Olajuwon won the 1983 NCAA Tournament Player of the Year award , even though he played for the losing team in the final game . He is , to date , the last player from a losing side to be granted this honor . Drexler departed for the NBA in 1983 , leaving Olajuwon the lone star on the team .

After the 1983 ? 84 season , Olajuwon debated whether to stay in college or declare early for the NBA draft . At that time (before the NBA Draft Lottery was introduced in 1985) , the first pick was awarded by coin flip . Olajuwon recalled : " I really believed that Houston was going to win the coin flip and pick the number 1 draft choice , and I really wanted to play in Houston so I had to make that decision (to leave early) . " His intuition proved correct , and a lucky toss placed Houston ahead of the Portland Trail Blazers . Olajuwon was considered the top amateur prospect in the summer of 1984 over fellow collegians and future NBA stars Michael Jordan , Charles Barkley , and John Stockton , and was selected first overall by the Rockets in the 1984 NBA draft .

In his autobiography , Living the Dream , Olajuwon mentions an intriguing draft trade offered to the Rockets that would have sent Clyde Drexler and the number two pick in the 1984 NBA draft from Portland in exchange for Ralph Sampson . Had the Rockets made the deal , Olajuwon states the Rockets could have selected Michael Jordan with the number two pick to play alongside Olajuwon and Drexler , who had established chemistry playing together during their Phi Slama Jama days in college . Sportswriter Sam Smith speculates that such a trade " would have changed league history and maybe the entire Michael Jordan legend " . From 1991 to 1998 , every NBA championship team included either Jordan or Olajuwon ; furthermore , at least one of Drexler , Jordan , and Olajuwon was involved in every NBA Finals from 1990 to 1998 .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Houston Rockets = = =

= = = = Rookie and sophomore years = = = =

The Rockets had immediate success during Olajuwon 's rookie season , as their win @-@ loss record improved from 29 ? 53 in 1983 ? 84 to 48 ? 34 in 1984 ? 85 . He teamed with the 1984 Rookie of the Year , 7 ft 4 in (2 @. @ 24 m) Ralph Sampson to form the original NBA " Twin Towers

" duo . Olajuwon averaged 20 @. @ 6 points , 11 @. @ 9 rebounds and 2 @. @ 68 blocks in his rookie season . He finished as runner @- @ up to Michael Jordan in the 1985 Rookie of the Year voting , and was the only other rookie to receive any votes .

Olajuwon averaged 23 @. @ 5 points , 11 @. @ 5 rebounds , and 3 @. @ 4 blocks per game during his second pro season (1985 ? 86) . The Rockets finished 51 ? 31 , and advanced all the way to the Western Conference Finals where they faced the defending champion Los Angeles Lakers . The Rockets won the series fairly easily , four games to one , shocking the sports world and landing Olajuwon on the cover of Sports Illustrated . Olajuwon scored 75 points in victories in games three and four , and after the series Lakers coach Pat Riley remarked " We tried everything . We put four bodies on him . We helped from different angles . He 's just a great player . " The Rockets advanced to the 1986 NBA Finals where they succumbed in six games to the Boston Celtics , whose 1986 team is often considered one of the best teams in NBA history .

= = = Mid @- @ career years = = =

During the 1987 ? 88 season , Sampson (who was struggling with knee injuries that would eventually end his career prematurely) was traded to the Golden State Warriors . The 1988 ? 89 season was Olajuwon 's first full season as the Rockets ' undisputed leader . This change also coincided with the hiring of new coach Don Chaney . The Rockets ended the regular season with a record of 45 ? 37 , and Olajuwon finished the season as the league leader in rebounds (13 @. @ 5 per game) by a full rebound per game over Charles Barkley . This performance was consistent with his averages of 24 @. @ 8 points and 3 @. @ 4 blocks . Olajuwon posted exceptional playoff numbers of 37 @. @ 5 ppg and 16 @. @ 8 rpg , plus a record for points in a four @- @ game playoff series (150) . Nevertheless , the Rockets were eliminated in the first round by the Seattle SuperSonics , 3 games to 1 .

The 1989 ? 90 season was a disappointment for the Rockets . They finished the season with a .500 record at 41 ? 41 , and though they made the playoffs , were eliminated in four games by Los Angeles . Olajuwon put up one of the most productive defensive seasons by an interior player in the history of the NBA . He won the NBA rebounding crown (14 @. @ 0 per game) again , this time by an even larger margin ; a full two rebounds per game over David Robinson , and led the league in blocks by averaging 4 @. @ 6 per game . He is the only player since the NBA started recording blocked shots in 1973 ? 74 to average 14 + rebounds and 4 @. @ 5 + blocked shots per game in the same season . In doing so he joined Kareem Abdul @- @ Jabbar and Bill Walton as the only players in NBA history (at that point) to lead the league in rebounding and shot @- @ blocking in the same season . Olajuwon also recorded a quadruple @- @ double during the season , becoming only the third player in NBA history to do so .

The Rockets finished the 1990 ? 91 season with a record of 52 ? 30 under NBA Coach of the Year Chaney . Olajuwon averaged 21 @. @ 8 points per game in 1990 ? 91 , but due to an injury to his eyesocket caused by an elbow from Bill Cartwright , did not play in enough games (56) to qualify for the rebounding title . Otherwise he would have won it for a third consecutive year , averaging 13 @. @ 8 a game (league leader Robinson averaged 13 @. @ 0 rpg) . He also averaged a league @- @ leading 3 @. @ 95 blocks per game . However , the Rockets were swept in the playoffs by the LA Lakers .

The following season was a low point for the Rockets during Olajuwon 's tenure . They finished 42 ? 40 , and missed the playoffs for the first time in Olajuwon 's career . He missed two weeks early in the season due to an accelerated heart beat . Despite his usual strong numbers , he could not lift his team out of mediocrity . Since making the Finals in 1986 , the Rockets had made the playoffs five times , but their record in those playoff series was 1 ? 5 and they were eliminated in the first round four times . Following the season , Olajuwon requested a trade in part because of his bad contract ; his salary was considerably low for a top center , and his contract specifically forbade re @- @ negotiation . He also expressed displeasure with the organization 's efforts to surround him with quality players . He felt the Rockets had cut corners at every turn , and were more concerned with the bottom line than winning . Management had also infuriated Olajuwon during the season when

they accused of him of faking a hamstring injury because of his unhappiness over his contract situation . His agent cited his differences with the organization as being " irreconcilable " , and Olajuwon publicly insulted owner Charlie Thomas and the team 's front office . With the 1992 ? 93 season approaching , a reporter for the Houston Chronicle said that Olajuwon being dealt was " as close to a sure thing as there is . "

Nonetheless he was not traded and the Rockets began the season with a new coach , Rudy Tomjanovich . Olajuwon improved his passing in 1992 ? 93 , setting a new career high of 3 @. @ 5 assists per game . This willingness to pass the ball increased his scoring , making it more difficult for opposing teams to double and triple @- @ team him . Olajuwon set a new career high with 26 @. @ 1 points per game . The Rockets set a new franchise record with 55 wins , and advanced to the second round of the playoffs , pushing the Seattle SuperSonics to a seventh game before losing in overtime , 103 ? 100 . He finished second in the MVP race to Charles Barkley with 22 votes to Barkley 's 59 . The team rewarded him with a four @- @ year contract extension toward the end of the regular season . In stark contrast to the previous year , the Rockets entered the 1993 ? 94 season as a team on the rise . They had a solid core of young players and veterans , with a leader in Olajuwon who was entering his prime .

= = = = Championship years = = = =

Olajuwon gained a reputation as a clutch performer and also as one of the top centers in history based on his performances in the 1993 ? 94 and 1994 ? 95 seasons . He outplayed centers such as Patrick Ewing , David Robinson , Shaquille O 'Neal , and Dikembe Mutombo , and other defensive stalwarts such as Dennis Rodman and Karl Malone . Many of his battles were with his fellow Texas @- @ based rival David Robinson of the San Antonio Spurs . In the 30 head ? to ? head match @- @ ups during the seven seasons from the 1989 to 1996 , when both Olajuwon and Robinson were in their prime , Olajuwon averaged 26 @. @ 3 points per game , shooting 47 @. @ 6 % from the field , while Robinson averaged 22 @. @ 1 and 46 @. @ 8 % .

In 1993 Michael Jordan retired from basketball , dealing a blow to the Bulls dynasty that had just won three consecutive championships . In his absence , Olajuwon led the Rockets to a championship in the 1994 NBA Finals in a seven @- @ game series against the New York Knicks , the team of one of Olajuwon 's perennial rivals since his collegiate days , Patrick Ewing . After being down 2 ? 1 , the Knicks took a 3 ? 2 lead into Game 6 . The Rockets were defending an 86 ? 84 lead when in the last second , Knicks guard John Starks (who had already scored 27 points) went up for a finals @- @ winning three . Olajuwon pulled off a clutch play by blocking the shot as time expired . In Game 7 , Olajuwon posted a game ? high 25 points and 10 rebounds , which helped defeat the Knicks , bringing the first professional sports championship to Houston since the Houston Oilers won the American Football League championship in 1961 . Olajuwon dominated Ewing in their head ? to ? head match @- @ up , outscoring him in every game of the series and averaging 26 @. @ 9 points per game on 50 % shooting , compared to Ewing 's 18 @. @ 9 and 36 @. @ 3 % . For his efforts Olajuwon was named NBA Finals Most Valuable Player .

Olajuwon was at the pinnacle of his career . In 1994 he became the only player in NBA history to win the MVP , Finals MVP and Defensive Player of the Year awards in the same season . He was also the first foreign @- @ born player to win the league 's MVP award .

Despite a slow start by the team , and Olajuwon missing eight games toward the end of the season with anemia , the Rockets repeated as champions in 1995 . They were bolstered in part by the acquisition of Clyde Drexler , Olajuwon 's former University of Houston " Phi Slama Jama " teammate , in a mid @- @ season trade from the Portland Trail Blazers . Olajuwon averaged 27 @. @ 8 points , 10 @. @ 8 rebounds , and 3 @. @ 4 blocks per game during the regular season . Olajuwon displayed perhaps the most impressive moments of his career during the playoffs . San Antonio Spurs center David Robinson , recently crowned league MVP , was outplayed by Olajuwon in the Conference Finals : Olajuwon averaged 35 @. @ 3 points on .560 shooting (Robinson 's numbers were 23 @. @ 8 and .449) and outscored Robinson 81 ? 41 in the final two games . When asked later what a team could do to " solve " Olajuwon , Robinson told LIFE magazine : " Hakeem ?

You don't solve Hakeem . " The Rockets won every road game that series . In the NBA Finals , the Rockets swept the Orlando Magic , who were led by a young Shaquille O 'Neal . Olajuwon outscored O 'Neal in every game , scoring more than 30 points in each and raising his regular @-@ season rate by five while O 'Neal 's production dropped by one . Olajuwon was again named Finals MVP . He averaged 33 @.@ 0 points on .531 shooting , 10 @.@ 3 rebounds , and 2 @.@ 81 blocks in the 1995 Playoffs . As in 1994 , Olajuwon was the only Rockets All @-@ Star .

= = = Post @-@ championship period = = =

The Rockets ' two @-@ year championship run ended when they were eliminated in the second round of the 1996 NBA Playoffs by the eventual Western Conference Champion Seattle SuperSonics . Michael Jordan had returned from an 18 @-@ month hiatus in March 1995 , and his Chicago Bulls dominated the league for the next three years (1996 ? 98) . The Bulls and Rockets never met in the NBA Playoffs . The Rockets posted a 57 ? win season in 1996 ? 97 season when they added Charles Barkley to their roster . They started the season 21 ? 2 , but lost the Western Conference Finals in six games to the Utah Jazz . After averaging 26 @.@ 9 and 23 @.@ 2 points in 1995 ? 96 and 1996 ? 97 respectively , Olajuwon 's point production dipped to 16 @.@ 4 in 1997 ? 98 . After the Rockets lost in the first round in five games to the Jazz in 1998 , Drexler retired . In 1998 ? 99 the Rockets acquired veteran All @-@ Star Scottie Pippen and finished 31 ? 19 in the lockout @-@ shortened regular season . Olajuwon 's scoring production rose to 18 @.@ 9 points per game , and he made his twelfth and final All @-@ NBA Team . However , they lost in the first round again , this time to the Lakers . After the season , Pippen was traded to the Portland Trail Blazers .

= = = Toronto Raptors = = =

Houston began to rebuild , bringing in young guards Cuttino Mobley and 2000 NBA co @-@ Rookie of the Year Steve Francis . On August 2 , 2001 , after refusing a \$ 13 million deal with the Rockets , Olajuwon was traded to the Toronto Raptors for draft picks (the highest of which was used by Houston to draft Bostjan Nachbar at # 15 in the 2002 NBA Draft) , with the player having a three @-@ year contract that would give him \$ 18 million . Olajuwon averaged career lows of 7 @.@ 1 points and 6 @.@ 0 rebounds per game in what would be his final season in the NBA , as he decided to retire in the fall of 2002 , due to a back injury . Olajuwon retired as the all ? time league leader in total blocked shots with 3 @,@ 830 , although shot blocking did not become an official statistic until the 1973 ? 74 NBA season . Shortly after his retirement , his # 34 jersey was retired by the Rockets .

= = National team career = =

In 1980 , before arriving in the US , Olajuwon played for a Nigerian junior team in the All @-@ Africa Games . This created some problems when he tried to play for the United States men 's national basketball team initially . FIBA rules prohibit players from representing more than one country in international competition , and players must go through a three @-@ year waiting period for any nationality change . Olajuwon was ineligible for selection to the " Dream Team " as he hadn't become a US citizen .

Olajuwon became a naturalized American citizen on April 2 , 1993 . For the 1996 Olympics , he received a FIBA exemption and was eligible to play for Dream Team III . The team went on to win the gold medal in Atlanta . During the tournament , he shared his minutes with Shaquille O 'Neal and David Robinson . He played 7 out of the 8 games and started 2 . He averaged 5 points and 3 @.@ 1 rebounds and had 8 assists and 6 steals in seven games .

= = Player profile = =

If I had to pick a center [for an all @-@ time best team] , I would take Olajuwon . That leaves out Shaq , Patrick Ewing . It leaves out Wilt Chamberlain . It leaves out a lot of people . And the reason I would take Olajuwon is very simple : he is so versatile because of what he can give you from that position . It 's not just his scoring , not just his rebounding or not just his blocked shots . People don 't realize he was in the top seven in steals . He always made great decisions on the court . For all facets of the game , I have to give it to him .

Olajuwon was highly skilled as both an offensive and defensive player . On defense , his rare combination of quickness and strength allowed him to guard a wide range of players effectively . He was noted for both his outstanding shot @-@ blocking ability and his unique talent (for a frontcourt player) for stealing the ball . Olajuwon is the only player in NBA history to record more than 200 blocks and 200 steals in the same season . He averaged 3 @.@ 09 blocks and 1 @.@ 75 steals per game for his career . He is the only center to rank among the top ten all time in steals . Olajuwon was also an outstanding rebounder , with a career average of 11 @.@ 1 rebounds per game . He led the NBA in rebounding twice , during the 1989 and 1990 seasons . He was twice named the NBA Defensive Player of the Year , and was a five @-@ time NBA All @-@ Defensive First Team selection .

On offense , Olajuwon was famous for his deft shooting touch around the basket and his nimble footwork in the low post . With the ball , Hakeem displayed a vast array of fakes and spin moves , highlighted in his signature " Dream Shake " (see below) . He was a prolific scorer , averaging 21 @.@ 8 points per game for his career , and an above average offensive rebounder , averaging 3 @.@ 3 offensive rebounds per game . Additionally , Olajuwon became a skilled dribbler with an ability to score in " face @-@ up " situations like a perimeter player . He is 1 of only 4 players to have recorded a quadruple @-@ double in the NBA . It should be noted that quadruple @-@ doubles were not possible before the 1973 ? 74 season , when blocked shots and steals were first kept as statistics in the NBA .

= = = Dream Shake = = =

" The best footwork I ? ve ever seen from a big man "

? Pete Newell

Olajuwon established himself as an unusually skilled offensive player for a big man , perfecting a set of fakes and spin moves that became known as his trademark Dream Shake . Executed with uncanny speed and power , they are still regarded as the pinnacle of " big man " footwork . Shaquille O 'Neal stated : " Hakeem has five moves , then four countermoves ? that gives him 20 moves . " Olajuwon himself traced the move back to the soccer @-@ playing days of his youth . " The Dream Shake was actually one of my soccer moves which I translated to basketball . It would accomplish one of three things : one , to misdirect the opponent and make him go the opposite way ; two , to freeze the opponent and leave him devastated in his tracks ; three , to shake off the opponent and giving him no chance to contest the shot . " The Dream Shake was very difficult to defend , much like Kareem Abdul @-@ Jabbar 's sky @-@ hook .

One notable Dream Shake happened in Game 2 of the 1995 Western Conference Finals against the Spurs . With David Robinson guarding him , Olajuwon performed a cross @-@ over , drove to the basket and faked a layup . Robinson , an excellent defender , kept up with Olajuwon and remained planted . Olajuwon spun counterclockwise and faked a jump shot . Robinson , who was voted the 1995 NBA MVP , fell for the fake and jumped to block the shot . With Robinson in the air , Olajuwon performed an up @-@ and @-@ under move and made an easy layup .

Olajuwon has referred to basketball as a science , and described his signature move in vivid detail : " When the point guard throws me the ball , I jump to get the ball . But this jump is the set @-@ up for the second move , the baseline move . I call it the ' touch landing . ' The defender is waiting for me to come down because I jumped but I ? m gone before I land . Defenders say ' Wow , he ? s quick , ' but they don ? t know that where I ? m going is predetermined . He ? s basing it on quickness , but the jump is to set him up . Before I come down , I make my move . When you jump , you turn as you land . Boom ! The defender can ? t react because he ? s waiting for you to come

down to defend you . Now , the first time when you showed that quickness , he has to react to that quickness , so you can fake baseline and go the other way with your jump hook . All this is part of the Dream Shake . The Dream Shake is you dribble and then you jump ; now you don ? t have a pivot foot . When I dribble I move it so when I come here , I jump . By jumping , I don ? t have a pivot foot now . I dribble so now I can use either foot . I can go this way or this way . So he ? s frozen , he doesn ? t know which way I ? m going to go . That is the shake . You put him in the mix and you jump stop and now you have choice of pivot foot . He doesn ? t know where you ? re gonna turn and when . "

= = Off the court = =

Olajuwon married his current wife Dalia Asafi on August 8 , 1996 in Houston . They have two daughters , Rahmah and Aisha Olajuwon . Abisola Olajuwon , his daughter with Lita Spencer , whom he met in college , represented the West Girls in the McDonald 's All American Game and played in the WNBA .

In addition to English , Olajuwon is fluent in French , Arabic , and the Nigerian languages of Yoruba and Ekiti . He wrote his autobiography , Living the Dream , with co @-@ author Peter Knobler in 1996 . During his 18 @-@ year NBA career , Olajuwon earned more than \$ 107 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 in salary .

Olajuwon , who earlier in his career signed a shoe endorsement deal with LA Gear , later became the face of Spalding 's athletic shoe line and endorsed The Dream , a sneaker that retailed in various outlets (such as Payless ShoeSource) for \$ 34 @.@ 99 . This made him one of the very few well @-@ known players in any professional sport to endorse a sneaker not from Nike , Reebok , Adidas , or other high @-@ visibility retail brands . As Olajuwon declared : " How can a poor working mother with three boys buy Nikes or Reeboks that cost \$ 120 ? ... She can 't . So kids steal these shoes from stores and from other kids . Sometimes they kill for them . "

= = = Higher education = = =

Attending college was also an important priority to Olajuwon . At the University of Houston , Olajuwon was a physical education major .

= = = Muslim faith = = =

In Olajuwon 's college career and early years in the NBA , he was often undisciplined , talking back to officials , getting in minor fights with other players and amassing technical fouls . Later , Olajuwon took an active interest in spirituality , becoming a more devout Muslim . On March 9 , 1991 , he altered his name from Akeem to the more conventional spelling of Hakeem , saying , " I 'm not changing the spelling of my name , I 'm correcting it " . He later recalled , " I studied the Qur 'an every day . At home , at the mosque ... I would read it in airplanes , before games and after them . I was soaking up the faith and learning new meanings each time I turned a page . I didn 't dabble in the faith , I gave myself over to it . " " His religion dominates his life " , Drexler said in 1995 . Olajuwon was still recognized as one of the league 's elite centers despite his strict observance of Ramadan (i.e. , abstaining from food and drink during daylight hours for about a month) , which occurred during the playing season throughout his career . Olajuwon was noted as sometimes playing better during the month , and in 1995 he was named NBA Player of the Month in February , even though Ramadan began on February 1 of that year .

= = Post @-@ NBA life = =

Olajuwon played for 20 consecutive seasons in Houston , first collegiately for the Cougars and then the Rockets . He is considered a local icon and one of Houston 's most beloved athletes . Olajuwon has had great success in the Houston real estate market , with his estimated profits exceeding \$

100 million . He buys in cash @-@ only purchases , as it is against Islamic law to pay interest . Olajuwon splits his time between Jordan , where he moved with his family to pursue Islamic studies , and his ranch near Houston .

In the 2006 NBA offseason , Olajuwon opened his first Big Man Camp , where he teaches young frontcourt players the finer points of playing in the post . While Olajuwon never expressed an interest in coaching a team , he wishes to give back to the game by helping younger players . When asked whether the league was becoming more guard @-@ oriented and big men were being de @-@ emphasized , Olajuwon responded , " For a big man who is just big , maybe . But not if you play with speed , with agility . It will always be a big man 's game if the big man plays the right way . On defense , the big man can rebound and block shots . On offense , he draws double @-@ teams and creates opportunities . He can add so much , make it easier for the entire team . " He runs the camp for free . Olajuwon has worked with several NBA players , including power forward Emeka Okafor , and center Yao Ming . In September , 2009 , he also worked with Kobe Bryant on the post moves and the Dream Shake . More recently he has been working with Dwight Howard , helping him diversify his post moves and encouraging more mental focus . In the 2011 offseason , LeBron James flew to Houston and spent time working with Olajuwon . Olajuwon has also worked with Ömer A??k , Donatas Motiej?nas , Amar 'e Stoudemire , Carmelo Anthony , JaVale McGee and Kenneth Faried .

Olajuwon was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame as a member of the class of 2008 . On April 10 , 2008 the Rockets unveiled a sculpture in honor of him outside the Toyota Center .

Olajuwon attended the 2013 NBA Draft to bid farewell to retiring commissioner David Stern as Stern made his announcement for the final pick of the first round . Olajuwon was the first pick announced by Stern back in 1984 .

On August 1 , 2015 , Olajuwon made a special appearance for Team Africa at the 2015 NBA Africa exhibition game . He became a member of the FIBA Hall of Fame in 2016 .

= = Awards and achievements = =

2 × NBA champion (1994 , ' 95)

2 × NBA Finals MVP (1994 , ' 95)

1 × NBA MVP (1994)

2 × Defensive Player of Year (1993 , ' 94)

6 × All @-@ NBA First Team (1987 , ' 88 , ' 89 , ' 93 , ' 94 , ' 97)

3 × All @-@ NBA Second Team (' 86 , ' 90 , ' 96)

3 × All @-@ NBA Third Team (1991 , ' 95 , ' 99)

5 × All @-@ Defensive First Team (' 87 , ' 88 , ' 90 , ' 93 , ' 94)

4 × All @-@ Defensive Second Team (' 85 , ' 91 , ' 96 , ' 97)

12 × All @-@ Star

Olympic gold medalist (1996)

Named one of the 50 Greatest Players in NBA History (1996) .

Olajuwon ended his career in the top ten all @-@ time in blocks , scoring , rebounding , and steals . He is the only player in NBA history to retire in the top ten for all four categories (he is now 12th all @-@ time in rebounding) .

Olajuwon was elected to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame as a member of the class of 2008 .

Ranked # 13 in SLAM Magazine 's 2009 revision of the top 50 greatest players of all time (published in the August 2009 issue)

= = NBA statistics = =

= = = Regular season = = =

== Totals ==

== Career highs ==

== Top shot @-@ blocking efforts ==

== Regular season ==

== Playoffs ==