

Kobe Bean Bryant (born August 23, 1978) is an American professional [basketball](#) player for the [Los Angeles Lakers](#) of the [National Basketball Association](#) (NBA). He entered the NBA directly from high school, and he has played for the Lakers his entire career, winning five [NBA championships](#). Bryant is an 18-time [All-Star](#), 15-time member of the [All-NBA Team](#), and 12-time member of the [All-Defensive team](#). He has [led the league in scoring](#) twice, and he ranks third on both the league's [all-time regular season scoring](#) and [all-time postseason scoring lists](#). After beginning his 20th season with the Lakers in 2015–16, which set an NBA record for the [most seasons with the same team](#), Bryant announced that he would retire after the season.

The son of former NBA player [Joe Bryant](#), Kobe Bryant enjoyed a successful high school basketball career at [Lower Merion High School](#) in [Pennsylvania](#), where he was recognized as the top high school basketball player in the country. He declared for the [NBA draft](#) upon graduation, and was selected with the 13th overall pick in the [1996 NBA draft](#) by the [Charlotte Hornets](#), who traded him to the [Los Angeles Lakers](#). As a rookie, Bryant earned himself a reputation as a high-flyer and a fan favorite by winning the 1997 [Slam Dunk Contest](#), and he was named an All-Star by his second season. Despite a [feud between them](#), Bryant and [Shaquille O'Neal](#) led the Lakers to three consecutive championships from [2000](#) to [2002](#).

In 2003, Bryant was [accused of sexual assault](#) in [Colorado](#), but the charges were eventually dropped, and a civil suit was settled out of court. After the Lakers lost the [2004 NBA Finals](#), O'Neal was traded to the [Miami Heat](#). Bryant became the cornerstone of the Lakers, and he led the NBA in scoring during the [2005–06](#) and [2006–07](#) seasons. In 2006, he scored a career-high 81 points against the [Toronto Raptors](#), the second [most points scored in a single game](#) in league history behind [Wilt Chamberlain's 100-point game](#) in 1962. Bryant was awarded the regular season's [Most Valuable Player Award](#) (MVP) in 2008. After losing in the [2008 NBA Finals](#), he led the Lakers to two consecutive championships in [2009](#) and [2010](#), earning the [Finals MVP Award](#) on both occasions. He continued to be among the top players in the league through 2013, when the 34-year-old Bryant suffered a [torn Achilles tendon](#). Although he recovered, his play was limited the following two years by season-ending injuries to his knee and shoulder, respectively. Citing his physical decline, he announced in 2015–16 that he would be retiring after the season.

At 34 years and 104 days of age, Bryant became the youngest player in league history to reach 30,000 career points. He is also the all-time leading scorer in Lakers franchise history. Since his second year in the league, Bryant has been chosen to start every All-Star Game for a record 18 consecutive appearances, and his four [All-Star MVP Awards](#) are tied for the most in NBA history. At the [2008](#) and [2012 Summer Olympics](#), he won [gold medals](#) as a member of the [U.S. national team](#). [Sporting News](#) and [TNT](#) named Bryant the top NBA player of the 2000s.