

Black sports greats:

Oscar Robertson profile

Oscar Robertson, enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1980, carved out a record shattering 14-year professional basketball career as the NBA's first floor general with playing poise and scoring punch.

In 1961, he was the NBA's Rookie of the Year. In 1964, he was the NBA's Most Valuable Player. In 1961, 1964 and 1969, Robertson was the All-Star Game's Most Valuable Player. And today, nearly a decade after his retirement in 1974, Robertson is still the all-time scoring leader in All-Star Game history.

Robertson played on 11 winning teams in 12 All-Star appearances. In his All-Star debut as an NBA rookie, he tallied 23 points, a record-breaking 14 assists and captured the MVP honors. In his second All-Star appearance he scored 26 points and dealt a previous record-tying 13 assists.

His All-Star performance mirrored his regular season play. Robertson led the Cincinnati Royals into the playoffs six times and the Milwaukee Bucks to the NBA World Championship in 1971. He left the game leading the league in career assists (9,887) and in free throws (7,694). He also was the third leading scorer in the league's history with 26,710 points and a 25.7 average.

In his 1960 debut, the 6'1" guard pumped in 30.5 points a game throughout the season. That was nearly five points per game higher than the NBA scorers had averaged from the league's beginning in 1946 to 1959. And that was more than eight points higher than any other guard in NBA history.

In his rookie year, Robertson also dealt a record-breaking 9.7 assists per game. Robertson went on to break his own assists record six times. He averaged more than 11 assists per game in four seasons. His all-time high came in 1965 (11.5)

when he also scored 30.4 points per game.

Robertson reeled off 30-plus points a game during six of his first seven seasons. (He just missed with 28.3 points in his third year in the pros and nearly cracked the 30-point barrier—29.2—in his eighth season). He was the first guard in the NBA to rank among the league's top three scorers. He placed second twice and third five times during his first seven NBA seasons. He also led the league in assists five times and placed second twice during those same seven years. That kind of versatility earned Robertson a berth on the All-Time NBA Team honoring the best five players by position throughout the first 35 years of the NBA. Indeed, Oscar Robertson honed his "Big O" reputation on Outstanding Overall play.

At the University of Cincinnati, Robertson set 14 NCAA scoring records. Many of those records remained unscathed for nearly a decade after he graduated. Nearly a quarter of a century after his collegiate career, Robertson's 33.8 overall average is still among the best in history. He ranks third behind Louisiana State's Pete Maravich (44.2) and Notre Dame's Austin Carr (34.6).

Robertson, the NCAA's first three-time scoring leader, led Cincinnati to an impressive 79-9 record. The NCAA's first three-time Player of the Year still holds school records for the six highest scoring games, including 62 points against North Texas State and 56 points against Arkansas and Seton Hall. His performance against Seton Hall (January 9, 1959) broke a 14-year Madison Square Garden record of 53 points set by DePaul's George Mikan.

From 1957 to 1959, Robertson rattled off collegiate scoring averages of 35.1, 32.6 and 33.7



OSCAR ROBERTSON

points per game. The three-time All-American capped his amateur career with an Olympic Gold medal in 1960.

In high school in Indianapolis, Robertson led Crispus Attucks to two straight Indiana State Basketball Championships. He also sparked Crispus Attucks to a 31-0 season in 1956—the first undefeated season in the then 45-year history of Indiana prep basketball. His 87-6, three-year, high school team slate included a state-record 45 consecutive victories during a 62-1 two-season stretch. A one-point loss kept Robertson from playing on consecutive undefeated state championship high school teams.

Oscar Palmer Robertson was born on November 24, 1938 in Charlotte, Tenn. Today, he is a successful businessman in Cincinnati with interests in a construction firm and a chemical company. He and his wife, Yvonne, have three children.



(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Rose City Connection is sending a challenge throughout the community to join the Community Team Challengers to raise money for organizations who provide scholarships to Black youth in the community.

Rose City members are (l-r) Theresa Stoudamire, Barbara Taylor, Charles Stoudamire and Annette Petett.

They are looking for community residents to develop teams to compete in the 3-legged race, team relays, egg toss, long jump, tug of war and dunk tank.

Along with the regular team, there will be a fun run sponsored by Miller's Beer. Taylor said, "It is a three-mile run with a five-dollar entry fee for each runner." Taylor said she is expecting 300 runners to participate.

The Challenge will occur Saturday, June 30th, from noon-4:00 at Delta Park. For more information, call 295-3415.



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