

The of 1992, the nba
took center



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The Dream Team Era During the summer of 1992, the NBA took center stage as the world watched the greatest team in sports ever assembled joke, pose, and finally play its way to the gold medal at the summer Olympic games.

The team was named the “ Dream Team” and it featured eleven of the NBA’s best players. Names like Michael Jordan, Earvin “ Magic” Johnson, and Larry Bird headlined the games and the play of Scottie Pippen and “ Sir” Charles Barkley stole the show. After only eight games, the world of USA basketball would never be the same. Since 1992 two more teams called themselves the “ Dream Team” and two were simply labeled as “ Team USA” but one thing is for certain, International basketball has taken a step in the right direction thanks in part to the NBA and its Dream Team era.

Over time the faces of those players may have changed, but the goal has always stayed the same and that’s the goal of bringing home the gold medal. After dominating men’s Olympic basketball for years, the men’s USA basketball team lost to the USSR in the 1988 Seoul games which cost them a shot at winning the gold medal, but they did come home with the bronze.

The United States Olympic committee decided that since the rest of the world were sending their best players into the Olympic games that when it came to basketball it was time for them to do the same. The decision was made in 1989 to allow players from the NBA to represent their country in the 1992 Barcelona games.

That one decision was the most important decision in the history of international basketball with one goal in mind; to put together the best possible team that they could. The goal of putting a great basketball team of NBA players together seemed impossible especially when it came to dealing

with the egos of today's athletes, but what seemed impossible became a reality. Established veterans like Magic Johnson and Larry Bird and future Hall of Famers/MVP's like Michael Jordan and best friend Charles Barkley were added to the team. Big men David Robinson and Patrick Ewing were added to control the paint and guards Clyde "The Glide" Drexler and John Stockton were added to run the show.

The man picked to coach the team was Chuck Daly who had won two of the last three NBA Championships with the Detroit Pistons. Knowing that no other team would ever be as potentially great as this one, sportswriters around the world dubbed the 1992 men's Olympic team as the "Dream Team". After only three weeks of practicing together, the Dream Team was ready for the world. "We were in a definite no win situation," said Chuck Daly; "we had to come back with the gold medal" (The Dream Team).

Despite being lead in overall scoring by Charles Barkley, different players would step up on different nights to take control and led the Dream Team to victory with not just scoring, but great passing and leadership ability as well. Michael Jordan who at the time was the most popular basketball player in the world showed that he is a great defensive player as well as an offensive player by averaging five steals per game during the tournament. Other players like David Robinson and Patrick Ewing provided tough interior defense and the flow of the games offensively were controlled by Magic Johnson and Scottie Pippen. The Dream Team's first game was on July 26th against the African nation of Angola and the United States defeated them 116-48 with Charles Barkley leading the way with 24 points.

Against Brazil, Barkley set a USA Olympic record by scoring 30 points on 12-14 shooting. The rest of the tournament the Dream Team faced Croatia, Germany, Brazil, Spain, Puerto Rico, Lithuania. During the game against Lithuania, one of the Lithuanian players actually sat on the side line and took pictures of the Dream Team with his camera. Many celebrities like Jack Nicholson, Spike Lee, and Arnold Schwarzenegger made the trip to Barcelona to witness the gold medal game between the United States and Croatia. The Dream Team defeated Croatia 117-85 and they were led