

Michael jordan and basketball

Sport & Tourism, Basketball



When someone says the name Michael Jordan, the first thing that comes to mind is basketball, The Chicago Bulls and Nike shoes. Through the years, Michael Jordan has proved time and time again that he is the greatest basketball player ever, and by performing in this rapidly expanding sporting field, he has gained tremendous popularity throughout the world. People of all ages and from all nationalities have gathered to watch him play. A journalist states 'even your Aunt Matilda might not know nothing about basketball, liked watching him play' (Jonathon 1999: 58). Jordan has become more than just an entertainer. He is a hero and a role model amongst basketball spectators. Johnson claims that 'he is the most famous American in the world' (ibid.). Perhaps he was born to be the best.

Even though he is a star, Michael's childhood had been very distressing. In fact, Michael Jordan was nearly miscarried by his mother. His nose bled from birth till he was five, he nearly suffocated when he fell behind the bed as a baby and nearly killed himself when an electrocution threw him three feet. In Jordan's own words, he exclaims 'I mean my girlfriend got swept in a flood and drowned when we were in college. Another time, I was swimming with a friend when both of us got pulled into the ocean by a strong undertow. I was able to get free and make it back to land. He never made it back (Jordan 1998: 96).

Additionally, after going through so many traumatic and distressing times, not many people would have been able to live their dreams. But Jordan performed the task of living his dream exceptionally well.

Despite a somewhat desperate childhood, Michael Jordan enjoyed his time at school. He did his first years of schooling at D. C. Virgo Junior High School and later graduated to Lanley High School where he began practicing intensively on

his basketball skills. He was accepted in the University of North Carolina through a basketball scholarship. At the university, Michael took on the challenge of driving his teammates to a level of performance that they might never have achieved on their own. He scored the winning basket in the National Collegiate Athletic Association championship game in 1982. A sportswriter describes 'the relentlessness with which Michael Jordan prodded and cajoled the other players in leading them to championship season after championship season' (Lazenby 1996: 37).

The glorious moments achieved by Michael Jordan were soon vaporised by a permanent shadow. In 1993, an agonising incident shattered Jordan's excitement after winning his third championship. Moments after the game, Michael's father, James Jordan, was brutally murdered by two ruthless teenagers. This was a severe tragedy in Michael's life; his father was gone. For this reason, Michael decided to retire from Basketball and play Baseball in memory of his father. This was because James Jordan adored Baseball (Jordan 1998: 112). He signed a minor league contract with the Chicago White Sox, but was unsuccessful (Encarta 1999). Hence Jordan returned to his favorable professional sport of basketball. Allison exclaims 'at a press conference, Michael only said two words, I'm back!' (Samuels 1999). The ball started to roll again.

But the anxiety of the spectators only lasted till the end of 1997. By far, the Chicago Bulls had been hit the hardest with the news of Jordan's retirement. The breakup arose when the management refused to pay Phil Jackson, coach of the Chicago Bulls, what he deserved after bringing six NBA championships to the Bulls. When Jackson abandoned the team, Jordan refused to play for a new coach. After Jordan officially announced his

retirement, basketball great, Scottie Pippen was traded to the Houston Rockets. Only four players of the previous year's team still remained on the Chicago Bulls. Stein considers 'many have made the prediction that the bulls will lose more games in this shortened season than they did all last year' (Stein 1999).

The die-hard Chicago Bulls fans will always hold a special place in their heart for Michael Jordan. They will tell their sons and daughters about him, they will get out the old VHS tapes of games that they have recorded and they will pass along basketball cards that will be worth hundreds of dollars. Those of us who have seen him play will always remember him and what he has done for the game of basketball. For those who haven't will have to settle for the endless highlight reels and Nike commercials to keep his memory alive.