



KANSAS LEGEND BIOGRAPHY

Wilt Chamberlain (1936-1999)

The game of basketball has seen a number of unforgettable players through the years, including Michael Jordan, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Bill Russell and Magic Johnson. But the player who holds the most individual and single-game records in the NBA, and perhaps is the most dominating player the game has ever seen, is Wilt Chamberlain.

Chamberlain was born in Philadelphia, Penn., where he gained early acclaim playing basketball at Overbrook High School. His thin, lanky 7'1" frame made him extremely difficult for teams to guard. After leading his team to back-to-back championships in 1954 and 1955, once scoring 90 points in a single game and averaging more than 38 points a game, Chamberlain was recruited by the Philadelphia Warriors before ever even playing college ball.

At the University of Kansas, Chamberlain continued to dominate the game. He led the team to the 1957 NCAA championship game, where the Jayhawks lost to North Carolina by one point in triple-overtime. Teams had to use two and three players just to guard Chamberlain, and his dominance eventually led the league to adopt new rules to rein in Chamberlain's incredible abilities. Chamberlain also left his mark in track and field at KU, participating in the long jump, high jump, shotput and running events.

Chamberlain left the University of Kansas after a frustrating junior year to play with the Harlem Globetrotters. Despite his height, the Globetrotters' coach played Chamberlain at point guard, allowing him to show off his shooting, passing and ball-handling abilities. In 1959, Chamberlain started for the Philadelphia Warriors, setting eight NBA records while earning MVP and Rookie of the Year honors.

On March 2, 1962, Chamberlain scored 100 points in a game against the New York Knicks, the most points ever scored by a player in a single game and a record that still stands today. Chamberlain stayed with the Warriors when they moved to San Francisco, before returning to Philadelphia's 76ers in 1965. Chamberlain played the last years of his storied career with the Los Angeles Lakers, leading the team to the NBA championship in the 1961-62 season.

In all of his days playing in the NBA, Chamberlain scored 50 or more points in a single game 118 times; 60 or more points in a single game 32 times; led the league in scoring seven consecutive years; led the league in rebounding 11 times; and was chosen to play in 13 NBA All-Star games. He earned nicknames "Wilt the Stilt" and "The Big Dipper," and Chamberlain is still one of only two players to reach 30,000 career points in the league.

Although Chamberlain's greatness on the court was indisputable, he was successful in almost every aspect of his life. He made a great deal of money in real estate investments, as an actor, businessman and in other celebrity ventures. He also operated a restaurant and gave back through civic and charitable contributions. Chamberlain died of a heart attack in 1999 at the age of 63.

