

Basketball



Widely considered to be one of the world's most popular sports, basketball, despite being invented less than 150 years ago, has captivated the masses and inspired generations of fans.

The Sport's Origins

Originating at Springfield College, Massachusetts, the game of basketball developed in response to restless college students who needed an indoor pursuit to replace American football in the off-season.

James Naismith, a 31-year-old instructor, was tasked with devising a game that would be easy to play and easy to learn but be interesting enough to entertain the students.

Combining elements of existing sports, Naismith devised the original 13 rules and obtained two peach-carrying baskets from the school janitor. These were coincidentally nailed at the height of ten feet (the current height of the rim) as this was where the lower rail of the gymnasium balcony was.

The Dream Team

Often cited as the greatest US sports team ever assembled, "the Dream Team" was the nickname given to the gold-medal winning USA Olympic basketball team, the first such team to heavily feature professional NBA players in the roster. Amongst others, Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen, Magic Johnson and Larry Bird competed in the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona.



The year was 1891 and basketball was born. Once Naismith had tacked the rules to a college bulletin board, and the original class had played the game, the sport was an instant success. Within a few years, the rules had spread globally, by 1905 it was officially recognised as a winter sport, FIBA (the International Basketball Federation) was formed in 1932, the NBA (National Basketball Association) in 1946 and the BBL (British Basketball League) in 1986.

Michael Jordan: the Greatest?

Universally acknowledged as one of the greatest basketball players of all time, Michael Jordan dominated the NBA during the 90s as part of the Chicago Bulls by winning six NBA championships.

Even as a rookie, his skill and determination to achieve victory was unmatched. Magic Johnson perhaps summed it up best when he said: "There's Michael Jordan and then there is the rest of us."

While fans and pundits alike will endlessly debate the title of "the greatest", Michael Jordan's impact is not confined to the court: he became a global cultural icon with his partnership with Nike and the release of the *Air Jordan* brand. Coupled with an appearance in the cult classic, *Space Jam*, his influence and impact has forever changed the sport of basketball.