

The Effect of Michael Jordan on the NBA

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A few decades ago, the National Basketball Association (NBA) was a declining production among professional sport leagues. The game of basketball did not interest many people, because it was thought of as boring and didn't receive the attention that baseball and football received. Michael Jordan emerged as a star on the Chicago Bulls, affecting the NBA to transform into the most elite basketball league on the planet.

Once Michael Jordan entered the league, he began rewriting the record books. Due to Jordan's impressive stats, more and more people would come to watch him in action. Jordan is a 6 time NBA Champion, 5 time league Most Valuable Player (MVP), 10 time All – NBA First Team, 1 time defensive player of the year, Rookie of the Year, 14 time All – Star, 2 time Olympic Gold Medalist, and is a recent member of the Basketball Hall of Fame (Michael). Jordan's impressive career averaged out with 30.1 points per game (ppg), 6.2 rebounds per game (rpg) and 5.3 assists per game (apg) (Michael). Michael Jordan also led the league in scoring for a league record 10 seasons (Smith). In the 1986-87 season, Jordan became only the second player ever to score at least 3,000 points in one season (Michael). In that season he averaged 37.1 ppg. Michael Jordan's last year in the league, he turned 40 years old. But in that season he had 20 or more points 42 times, 30 or more points 9 times and 40 or more points 3 times (Michael). He is also the oldest player, at age 40, to have at least 43 points in one game (Michael).

Michael Jordan was always loved by the fans. In 2001, Jordan came out of retirement for the second time. Only this time he would be playing for the Washington Wizards. In the 2001 season, the Wizards arena was sold out for each home game throughout the entire season. In 2003, the Wizards were the second most watched team in the NBA. They also averaged 20,172 fans at each home game and 19,311 fans on the road (Leavy). In Michael Jordan's last ever NBA game, Jordan was taken out with 1:45 left in the game, where he received the longest standing ovation in the history of sports; lasting over 4 minutes (Wikipedia). The NBA once compiled a 40-game package for satellite distribution to foreign markets. If the international broadcasters were allowed to select the games, the package would only contain the Bulls games (Smith). All the fans wanted to see Michael Jordan. Some fans would even buy season tickets for their NBA team nearest to them. They would do this, because they wanted great seats when Michael Jordan would come to play. Season tickets, for one guy; Michael Jordan made people tune into the NBA.

Michael Jordan had a great effect in changing the NBA's image, reputation, and competitiveness. He had a unique ability to instantly take over the game, and he alone could

dominate the opposing team. Because of this, opposing teams had a defensive strategy; double team Jordan. But even that didn't work. So then, opposing teams would put a defender in the lane area, to attempt to keep Jordan away from the rim. This defender would be in the lane for the whole possession, which created an argument that this was unfair. Then the NBA created a rule called defensive 3 seconds, which prohibits a defender in the lane for more than 3 seconds at a time. Failure to follow this rule results in a technical foul against your team. The year Michael Jordan was drafted by the Chicago Bulls, the franchise was purchased by a new owner for \$9.2 million. Once Jordan's career ended with the Bulls, their franchise was worth well over \$200 million (Smith). Michael Jordan led the Bulls to win 3 championships; back to back to back. Before Jordan and the Bulls accomplished that, only 29.6% of the U.S watched NBA games on television. After the three – peat, the percentage doubled to 63.8% (Wikipedia). When Jordan came out of retirement for the first time, his comeback game was watched by more people than any other regular season game in 20 years (Halbertstam). Michael Jordan is known for his many product endorsements, rendering him a social icon unlike any other (Dufrense). Jordan became the face of the NBA with his signature “stretch” dunk with his tongue sticking out, causing millions of children around the world to impersonate him while playing basketball. He has many endorsement deals with his Nike Air Jordan shoe line, which are still popular today. Jordan also has his own underwear line with Hanes. All of his endorsements make Jordan millions of dollars on top of his once high NBA salary.

Because of the growth of technology, it is easier for people to see the games in this era. When Michael Jordan was playing, people had to commit to watching the entire game. Replays or immediate stat sheets were not available. Youtube had no impact on the fans or media. An NBA fan either saw the action or didn't. By having to view the whole game, people could notice everything that Michael Jordan did. People from all over, especially kids, mimicked his every move. From the tongue action, to the way he wore his shorts, to the one-handed ball fakes, to the way he licked his fingers and how he chewed his gum, to the way he demanded respect, and the way he dominated each and every game he played in. If you ever listen to a press conference involving big stars like, LeBron James or Kobe Bryant, you may notice them refer to basketball as ‘the game of basketball.’ That is a Jordan trademark.

As new players enter the league and put their own mark in the record books and thrill fans through youtube, no one will have an impact like Jordan did. Jordan had his idol in Dr. J

and now all of the new players from the playgrounds to the arena have Michael Jordan to thank for their success.

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