

THE SPORTIER

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Yesterday afternoon brought the release of the 2020 Basketball Hall of Fame class, and though we essentially knew who was going to enter from the NBA field, it was made official yesterday. The three NBA players that will be inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame are Tim Duncan, Kevin Garnett, and Kobe Bryant, all of whom finished marvelous careers at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 NBA season. Duncan, born in the U.S. Virgin Islands, was selected number one overall by the San Antonio Spurs in the 1997 NBA Draft after winning the NCAA Player of the Year Award after his senior season at Wake Forest. Duncan, alongside Hall of Fame big man David Robinson, captured his first NBA title and first NBA Finals MVP in just his second season in the NBA. Duncan would go on to win 2 MVP Awards, back-to-back in 2002 and 2003, with the Spurs, securing a championship in 2003. During the early 2000s, the Spurs star-studded roster consisting of Duncan, Tony Parker, Manu Ginóbili, along with Kawhi Leonard in the early 2010s, was formed, as the trio ended up winning 3 NBA Finals together. This included the upset win over LeBron James' superteam in the Miami Heat. Kevin Garnett was drafted by the Minnesota Timberwolves straight out of high school with the fifth overall pick in the 1995 NBA Draft. With Minnesota, Garnett was a star, capturing the 2003 MVP Award. Minnesota were consistently in the playoffs, competing from 1997-2004, but only made it past the first round in 2004. Garnett would later be traded to the Boston Celtics, forming a core of Garnett, Paul Pierce, Ray Allen, and Rajon Rondo. This crew won a championship against the superteam Miami Heat in 2008. After being bounced to the Nets in 2014, Garnett returned to Minnesota to finish his career. Finally, Kobe Bryant. The thirteenth overall pick in the 1997 draft by the Charlotte Hornets, the Lower Merion High School (PA) product was traded on draft night to his forever home in the Los Angeles Lakers. Unlike many stars, Kobe did not get a hefty amount of playing time right away. In his second season, though, Kobe was the youngest player to make an All-Star Game, at 19 years and 170 days old. 2000 saw the first of 3 titles that featured the ever-dominant duo of Kobe and Shaquille O'Neal. The tandem won back-to-back-to-back titles from 2000-2003. After Shaq was driven out of LA, most likely due to his suffering relationship with Kobe, the Lakers struggled, missing the 2005 playoffs entirely. 2006 saw improvements, highlighted by Kobe's 81 points in a single game against the Toronto Raptors. The Lakers, then still a mediocre team, were able to sneak into the playoffs with the help of Kobe. From 2009-2010, Bryant recaptured another two NBA titles while winning Finals MVP in each of those series. Then began the slow descent of his career, though he still played at a high level, just not with the same kind of team success. After scoring an incredible 60 points in his final game in 2016, Kobe rode off into the sunset as one of the greatest Lakers ever. Though Kobe tragically passed away earlier this year in a helicopter crash, there was no doubt that Kobe Bryant would be a Hall of Famer.

Full List of 2020 Basketball Hall of Fame Inductees:

Tim Duncan (Former NBA Player)

Kevin Garnett (Former NBA Player)

Kobe Bryant (Former NBA Player)

Rudy Tomjanovich (Former NBA Coach)

Tamika Catchings (Former WNBA Player)

Kim Mulkey (Baylor Women's Basketball Coach)

Barbara Stevens (Former Division II Women's Basketball Coach)

Eddie Sutton (Former Division I Men's Basketball Coach)

Patrick Baumann (Former FIBA Executive)

Fighting the Virus

Though the world is facing a difficult obstacle, people all around sports are doing big things to help fight COVID-19. Three key contributors have been Robert Kraft, Joe Tsai, and Stephon Marbury. Kraft, the owner of the New England Patriots, used his assets for good. Collaborating with Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker, he was able to use a Patriots team plane to transport 1.2 million N95 masks from China to the United States, donating the protective equipment to facilities in Massachusetts and New York. Though it was a complicated process, as the plane had to be cleared to fly to the dangerous area, Kraft said, "It is an honor for our family to be a part of this humanitarian mission." Joe Tsai, owner of the Brooklyn Nets, also made big moves to battle the virus. As well as pledging to pay Barclays Center staff through the end of May, Tsai was able to negotiate with China to allow 2,000 ventilators to be donated to New York. New York, one of the most affected areas in the world, has now begun to replenish their supply of much-needed ventilators. Finally, former NBA and Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) player Stephon Marbury has been supporting hard-hit New York as well. The former Knicks star has made arrangements for 10 million N95 masks to be donated to New York. Having heard that New York was lacking protective gear and was paying exorbitant prices for the gear, he stepped up to give back to his home state. Though these acts are undoubtedly huge, these individuals are not the only ones contributing to a good cause. NBA teams have set up funds that are upwards of \$1 million to support seasonal event staff. Players such as Rudy Gobert, the first NBA player infected with the virus, and 19-year-old phenom Zion Williamson, Kevin Love, Giannis Antetokounmpo, and Joel Embiid have pledged to donate above \$100,000 to workers and communities. The MLB has also taken action, by donating \$1 million to emergency food services, with every team giving at least \$1 million to provide for stadium workers. Again, players such as George Springer, Freddie Freeman, and Jason Heyward have contributed large sums of money to help the cause. Though the world is going through a tough stretch, the virus will not be defeated unless everybody comes together and fights against the same enemy.

Sources