Michael Jordan Essay, Research Paper

A The Early Years of the Great One

Michael Jeffrey Jordan was born on February 17, 1963, in Brooklyn, New

York. When he was still very young, Michael and his family moved to Wilmington,

North Carolina. Michael is the seconds youngest of five children. He has two older

brothers, Ronnie and Larry, an older sister named Delores, and a younger sister,

Roslyn. Michael’s Dad, James, worked at an electric plant, and his mother, Deloris,

worked at a bank. The Jordan family lived in a two-story house in Wilmington, a

quiet town on the Cape Fear River. Michael’s parents worked hard to provide a

comfortable life for their family. Michael learned about hard work and the value of

money.

As a kid, Michael played baseball, basketball, and football. His favorite was

baseball, but he also spent hours playing basketball in his backyard on a court his

dad had built. Michael played a lot of one-on-one games against his brother Larry,

who was taller, a year older, and more talented than Michael. Larry always won.

The constant losses fueled Michael?s competitiveness and made him determined to

become a better player.

Michael Jordan did not make his high school varsity basketball team as a

sophomore, the varsity coaches felt he was too small and not good enough to play at

the varsity level. They felt he was better suited for the junior varsity team. Michael

was disappointed, but he kept practicing hard, and it really paid off. In fact, in his

first season with the J.V team, he averaged 25 points per game.

Between the 10th and 11th grades, Michael grew to 6′ 3″. Because he had

improved as a player, he made the varsity team and got to play along side his older

brother Larry. Michael played so well in his junior season, that he was invited to

attend the Five-Star Basketball Camp in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania during the

summer before his senior year. Five-Star is a camp where the best U.S. high school

basketball players compete against one another to determine how they rank amongst

each other. Michael won 10 trophies at the camp, including two MVP awards. The

Five-Star Camp was the turning point of Michael?s life as an athlete. He realized

that basketball was his best sport, and he set a goal: to earn a college basketball

scholarship. By his senior year at Laney High, Michael had grown to 6′ 5″. He

graduated with a B+ average. On the court, he averaged 27.8 points per game as a

senior. Michael achieved his goal: He earned a college basketball scholarship to the

University of North Carolina.

Michael Jordan at North Carolina

Michael wasn’t expected to become a star at the University of North Carolina

(UNC). His coaches thought he had a chance to be a good player, but not a great

one. In his first practice game, all doubts about Michael’s talent quickly

disappeared. Michael made an eye-popping dunk that had the whole team, and

coaching staff in awe. Head coach Dean Smith later put Michael in the starting

lineup at guard. It was a special honor, because only three freshmen had ever started

for Coach Smith at North Carolina. Michael averaged 13.5 points per game and

was named the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) Rookie of the Year. The Tar

Heels made it back to the NCAA championship game. They faced the Georgetown

University Hoyas, who were led by seven-foot center Patrick Ewing. The game was

played on March 29, 1982, in the Superdome, in New Orleans, Louisiana. It was an

exciting contest that wasn?t decided until the final seconds. UNC was trailing,

62-61, with 15 seconds left to play. As would happen many times later in his career,

Michael had the ball with the game on the line. The freshmen coolly launched a

17-foot jump shot. It went in! UNC won, 63-62, to earn its first national title in 25

years. “The Shot” made Michael famous among college basketball fans.

In Michael?s sophomore and junior seasons, Michael led the NCAA in

scoring, and was also named college player of the year. Shortly after his junior

season, Michael had a big decision to make: Should he leave college before

graduation and turn pro? Michael?s mom wanted him to stay in school. Michael

argued that playing another season of college basketball would not challenge him,

and that becoming a pro would mean his family wouldn?t have to worry about

money. On May 5, 1984, Michael announced that he would forgo his senior year

and enter the NBA draft.

The Olympics

Shortly, after being drafted third overall by the Chicago Bulls, Michael was

invited to play on the 1984 U.S. Men?s Olympic Basketball Team under head coach

Bobby Knight. Many people considered the 1984 U.S. squad to be one of the best

Olympic basketball teams ever. Michael?s play awed the other teams. He scored

14 points against China, 20 against Canada, and 16 against Uruguay. In a game

against Spain, Michael jumped over and dribbled around defenders to score 24

points. The U.S. won the game 101-68. The U.S. won all eight of its games by an

average of 32.1 points per game. Michael led the team in scoring with an average of

17.1 points per game. He proved that he had the talent to play in the NBA. But how

good would he be? The world was about to learn the answer. Two months after the

Olympics, Michael would begin his rookie season for the Chicago Bulls.

Michael Jordan?s NBA Career

Michael burst into the bigtime with a fabulous first season, earning the NBA

Rookie of the Year award. He averaged 28.2 points per game, and had the honor of

being the first rookie in NBA history to start in the All-Star game. An injured foot

sidelined Michael for 64 games in his second NBA season, but he came back late in

the season to score an NBA playoff record 63 points against the Boston Celtics.

Starting with th 1986-1987 season Michael began a career-long onslaught on the

NBA record book. That year saw him average 37.1 points per game, which was the

first of seven consecutive seasons in which he led the league in scoring (a feat

matched only by Wilt Chamberlain). Michael proved to be more than a scoring

machine when he led Chicago to three consecutive championships. After already

being considered a legend,Michael added to his mystique with an unexpected

retirement just before the 1993-1994 season. He spent an unsuccessful year in

minor league baseball, before realizing that it was time to author another chapter in

his story by returning to Chicago late in the 1994-1995 season. In 1995-1996,

Michael won a record eighth scoring title, and led his team to thier fourth

championship in the 1990?s. From the 1996-1997 season to his retirement after the

1997-1998 season, Michael recieved a record ten scoring titles, and six NBA

championship rings.

A phenominal athelete with a unique combination of grace, power, artistry,

and improvisational ability, Michael Jordan has single-handedly redifined the NBA

superstar. The most recognizable athelete in the world, he is not only the top player

of his era, but is quite possibly the best player to ever wear the uniform of an NBA

team. Not only has Michael Jordan had an affect on the sport of basketball, but he

has captivated the hearts of the American public, and will spark our imaginations

for years to come.