

PISTOL PETE MARAVICH

Maravich was born in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, a small steel town in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. Maravich amazed his family and friends with his basketball abilities from an early age. His father Press Maravich, a former professional player turned coach, showed Maravich the fundamentals starting when he was seven years old. Maravich would obsessively spend hours practicing ball control tricks, passes, head fakes, and long range shots. The elder Maravich required his son to make 100 shots from the free throw line in their driveway every night after supper before he would be allowed to go to bed. Maravich claimed he often made 99 straight before deliberately missing the next several shots just so he could continue playing ball outside. Maravich's father claims that at the age of 13 the younger Maravich once succeeded in making 500 consecutive free throws one evening after school, stopping only when it became too dark to see the rim, illuminated only by the elder Maravich's flashlight.

Maravich got his nickname "Pistol" in high school. He would shoot the ball from the side like he was holding a pistol. Since he wasn't strong enough to shoot it from the front someone from a newspaper said "He shoots like he's holding a pistol." [citation needed] Maravich attended and played basketball at Daniel High School in Central, South Carolina from 1961-1963. While at Daniel, Maravich participated in the school's first ever game against a team from an all-black school. In 1963, the family moved to Raleigh, North Carolina where he attended and played for Needham B. Broughton High School. [citation needed]

College

In his first game on the freshman team Maravich put up 50

points, 14 rebounds, and 11 assists against Southeastern Louisiana College.[2]

In only three years playing for his father at LSU, Maravich scored 3,667 points — 1,138 points in 1968, 1,148 points in 1969 and 1,381 points in 1970 while averaging 43.8, 44.2 and 44.5 points per game. In the process, "Pistol Pete" set 11 NCAA and 34 Southeastern Conference records, as well as every LSU record in points scored, scoring average, field goals attempted and made, and free throws attempted and made, and assists.[citation needed] In his collegiate career, the 6' 5" (1.96 m) guard averaged an incredible 44.2 points per game in 83 contests and led the NCAA in scoring three times. Maravich made an average of 13 shots a game from what is now the three-point line; if the three-point line had existed when he played, he would have averaged 57 points a game. He also set an NCAA record by scoring more than 50 points 28 times.[citation needed] He was named a three-time All-American and still holds many of these records, more than 35 years later. Notably, his 3,667 points don't factor in the 741 he scored his freshman year, or the fact that they played without the three-point line.

Maravich was a three time first team All-American and was named The Sporting News' player of the year in 1970, and received the USBWA College Player of the Year and Naismith Award as well.[citation needed] He scored a personal record of 69 points versus Alabama during a game that year,[citation needed] and garnered numerous other awards and college records. Pete Maravich was classified as one of the greatest players in college basketball history who never played in the NCAA tournament.

Maravich shone on the court and LSU slowly turned around a lackluster program. The year before he arrived, the varsity posted a 3-20 record. In Maravich's senior season, LSU was 20-8 and participated in the NIT, where they were defeated by Marquette 101-79 in the semi-finals.[citation needed] Maravich

was also a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon while at LSU.[citation needed]

NBA

After graduating from LSU in 1970, Maravich was the third selection in the first round of that year's NBA player draft[3] and made league history when he signed a \$1.6 million contract — one of the highest salaries at the time — with the Atlanta Hawks. He wasted little time becoming a prime time player by averaging 23.2 points per game his rookie season and being named to the NBA All-Rookie Team. After spending four seasons in Atlanta, Maravich was traded to the New Orleans Jazz for 8 players, where he peaked as an NBA showman and superstar. He made the All-NBA First Team in 1976 and 1977 and the All-NBA Second Team in 1973 and 1978. He led the NBA in scoring in the 1976-77 with 31.1 points per game. Prior to the 1979-80 season, Maravich moved with the team to Utah. He was waived by the Jazz on January 18, 1980 and was quickly picked up by the Boston Celtics where he played the rest of the season alongside Larry Bird.[4] Maravich retired in the fall of 1980.

In ten NBA seasons, Maravich, a five time NBA All-Star, scored 15,948 points in 658 games for a 24.2 points per game average (16th All Time).[citation needed] His NBA single game high, a 68-point explosion before fouling out, came against the New York Knicks on February 25, 1977.[citation needed]

Later life and death

A leg injury during the 1977-78 NBA season started the

downward spiral into alcoholism, and signaled the decline of his career. After the injury forced him to leave basketball in the fall of 1980, Maravich became a recluse for two years. Through it all, Maravich said he was searching "for life." He tried the practices of yoga and Hinduism, read Trappist monk Thomas Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain* and took an interest in the field of ufology, the study of unidentified flying objects. He also explored vegetarianism and macrobiotics. In 1982, he became a Christian and began traveling the country sharing his new found faith in Jesus Christ.[citation needed]

A few years before his death, Maravich said: "I want to be remembered as a Christian, a person that serves Him to the utmost. Not as a basketball player." [5]

On January 5, 1988, Pete Maravich collapsed and died, at age 40, of a heart attack [6] just after playing in a pickup basketball game in the gym at the First Church of the Nazarene in Pasadena with a group that included Focus on the Family head James Dobson. (Maravich had flown out from his home in Louisiana to tape a segment for Dobson's radio show later that day.) Dobson has said that his last words, less than a minute before he died, were "I feel great." An autopsy revealed the cause of death to be a rare congenital defect; he had been born with a missing left coronary artery, a vessel which supplies blood to the muscle fibers of the heart. His right coronary artery was grossly enlarged and had been compensating for the defect. [7]

"He'll be remembered always", former LSU head basketball coach Dale Brown said on hearing the news of Maravich's death. "When we see some tousled-haired kid with drooping socks standing on some semi-darkened court or in a yard after everyone else has gone home, he will be shooting a basketball,

and we will remember Pete."[citation needed]

Ironically, at the age of 25 and years before his death, Maravich had told Pennsylvania reporter, Andy Nuzzo, "I don't want to play 10 years in the NBA and then die of a heart attack at 40."[8][9]

Maravich is buried at Resthaven Gardens of Memory and Mausoleum in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.