

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



826 Two Divergent Paths to Great Achievement

The world of basketball elected players to its hall of fame a couple of days ago. I'm Jerry Roberts and today we focus on two of those who were elected to join as members, two men who traveled far different paths to great success and the ultimate basketball recognition. That's next, on The Extra Point.

Sixteen men and women were inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. All had significant achievements during their careers, and are well deserving of the honor. I'm going to focus on just two of them. The two who couldn't be anymore different in terms of style and personality.

Tim Duncan came from the Virgin Islands, moving to the U.S. mainland at age 14. He attended Wake Forest University, and worked towards a degree in psychology, also taking classes in anthropology and Chinese literature. He was drafted by the San Antonio Spurs.

Kobe Bryant was born in Philadelphia, and spend much of his childhood in Italy, where his father played basketball in the Italian professional league. The family moved back to the U.S. when Kobe was also 14. Bryant went straight to the NBA draft out of high school, landing with the Los Angeles Lakers after they traded with Charlotte to secure Bryant's draft rights.

In an era when the majority of players end up with two or more teams on their playing resume, Duncan played his entire 19-year career with the Spurs. Bryant spent all of his 20 years in the NBA with the Lakers.

Duncan is widely regarded as the greatest power forward of all time, and Bryant would be considered the greatest shooting guard of all time, if not for a fellow named Michael Jordan. Both Duncan and Bryant were outstanding defensive players, in addition to scoring threats, and were thought of as two of the smartest basketball players who ever

laced up sneakers.

Both players won five NBA championships, along with Most Valuable Player and other awards too numerous to mention. Thus, when it came to achievements, they shared many similarities. However, there were stark differences.

Bryant saw himself as the ultimate warrior on the court. He looked to get his shot off first, only passing the ball to an teammate when he had to. He sought to dominate opponents. When he made big shots, Bryant would often pound his chest, scream, and celebrate. He craved the spotlight, and the adoration of the fans. Bryant was brash and outspoken.

Duncan was almost the opposite. His view of his role was to be a facilitator, to look for the open teammate who could score an easy basket. Unlike Bryant, he wasn't one to think of domination on the court. Duncan kept to himself, and avoided the limelight.

Both were students of the game, and shining examples of how intentionality and dedication to one's craft can lead to greatness. You would not outwork Tim Duncan or Kobe Bryant. They paid the price for their success, and their stories remind us that great achievement comes at great cost.

Bryant said this: "There's a choice that we have to make as people, as individuals. If you want to be great at something, there's a choice you have to make. We all can be masters at our craft, but you have to make a choice. What I mean by that is, there are inherent sacrifices that come along with that. Family time, hanging out with friends, being a great friend, being a great son, nephew, whatever the case may be. There are sacrifices that come along with making that decision."

(Con't.)

These words give us insight into the mind of an incredible competitor.

Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gianna, and seven others perished in a helicopter crash 15 months ago. Bryant was 41. He had transitioned from basketball, and had built an entertainment company that was getting serious acclaim after he won an Oscar at the 2018 Academy Awards, for the best animated short film.

At his induction ceremony, Duncan repeated a mantra that his mother had always said to him, to remind him of what he needed to do. The words are attributed to St. Jerome, a Latin priest who lived some 1700 years ago. "Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Until your good is better, and your better is best."

He works through the Tim Duncan Foundation, founded 20 years ago, which funds programs involving health awareness and research, education, and youth sports and recreation in San Antonio.

Two divergent paths to amazing success, both as a result of mastering fundamentals and working hard to be their best.

You and I can learn from this, then pass it on to young people we have influence with. They need this lesson.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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