

Who would make up the All-Time HBCU alumni starting five?

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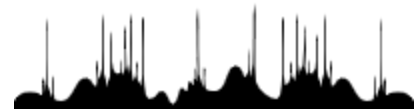
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The Mixed Bag

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Makur Maker, a five-star Kenyan-Australian forward considered an elite prospect by almost everyone, made headlines when he turned down offers from Kentucky, Memphis, and Oregon to attend Howard University.



Maker is the first five-star prospect to commit to an Historically Black College or University in the modern era of the NCAA. With high-profile prospects like Mikey Williams saying they're considering HBCUs, many have wondered whether Maker is the start of a trend.

Elite basketball prospects and the media attention and TV dollars that follow them could be a huge boon to HBCUs. These days, social media is beginning to compete with ESPN as a star-making platform. Thanks to a recent NCAA rule change, players will finally be able to own and profit off of their likenesses. These two recent developments have broken down many of the traditional barriers that have prevented players from shining at smaller schools.

While Makur Maker is the first elite prospect at the high school level to commit to an HBCU in the modern era, he's hardly the first high-caliber player to attend an HBCU.

This dude can really ball though...

In honor of Maker's big decision, here is the All-time HBCU alum starting five for you to read and argue about:

PG – Earl “The Pearl” Monroe – Winston-Salem State University



A player so nice with it he had two nicknames. The fact that Earl “Black Jesus” Monroe was legendary imaginary hooper Jesus Shuttlesworth’s favorite basketball player should tell you everything.

Monroe played for the legendary Clarence “Big House” Gaines at Winston-Salem State University from 1963-1967. He put up a staggering 41.5 points per game for the Rams en route to an NCAA College Division championship in 1967.

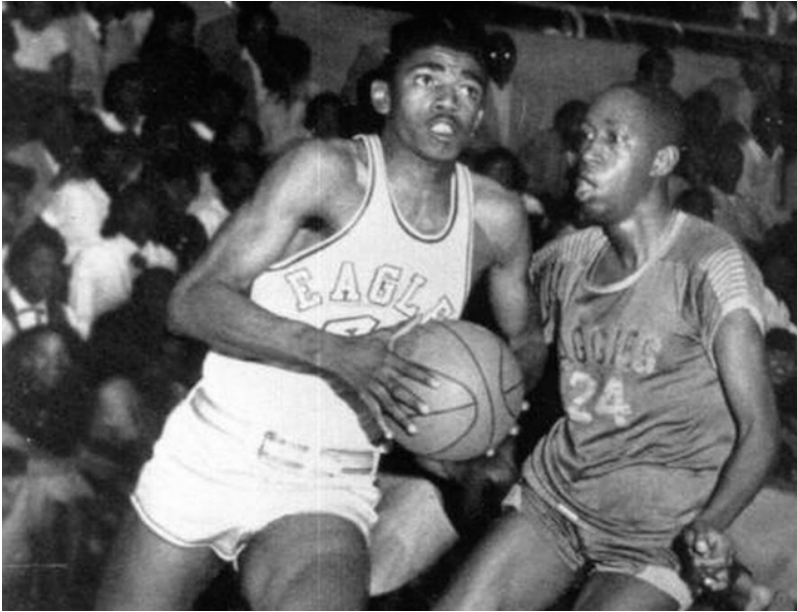
“The Pearl” was one of the first players to bring modern ballhandling into the NBA game. He also pioneered jelly layups and the mid-air adjustment, much to the delight of fans.

Does anyone doubt Earl “The Pearl” would still be dropping dudes in today’s League?

However, it wasn’t all love for Monroe. Recalling not being considered for the USA’s 1967 Pan-Am games team, Monroe remarked that the team’s coaches felt his game was “too street, too playground, too black.”

Sigh.

SG – Sam Jones – North Carolina Central University



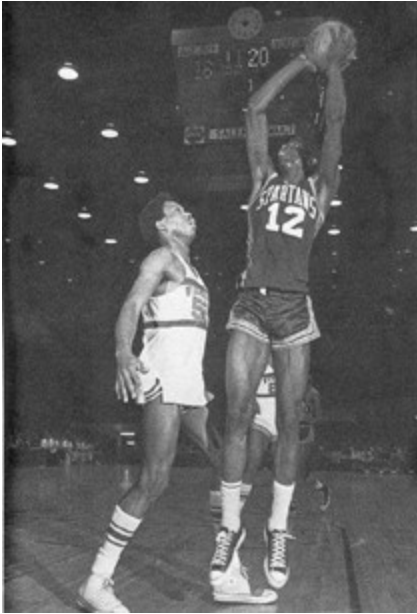
The greatest basketball player to ever play college ball in Durham, NC didn't go to Duke. Sam Jones, 10-time NBA champion and five-time All-Star, went to North Carolina College, now North Carolina Central University.

Jones played for another legendary coach, John McLendon at NCCU. Legend has it that in 1967 Celtics head coach Red Auerbach went on a scouting trip to nearby Chapel Hill to check out Dean Smith's Tar Heels. A coach tipped him off that the best player in North Carolina actually played eight miles down the road in Durham.

Auerbach drafted Jones without ever seeing him play. What followed is still the greatest championship run in NBA history. The Celtics would go on to win 10 of the next 12 NBA titles. Jones was a heady player and talented scorer and fixture in the backcourt.

Jones was known throughout the basketball for his shooting touch. His form and execution were so nice, his nickname was simply, "The Shooter."

F – Bob Dandridge – Norfolk State University



Pee Wee Kirkland, THE streetball legend, was a phenomenal ball player at Norfolk State University. However, he was not the best player on that team. Bob Dandridge was.

Dandridge was the prototype of the long, lean, hyper-athletic do-it-all wings that dominate the NBA today. Think Jayson Tatum with bigger mutton chops.

A two-time NBA champion and four-time All-Star, Dandridge was absolutely clutch. His dunk in Game 7 of the 1978 NBA finals sealed the deal for the Washington Bullets. More telling, however, is that nobody—not even Kareem Abdul-Jabbar—scored more points in the playoffs during the 1970s than Dandridge.

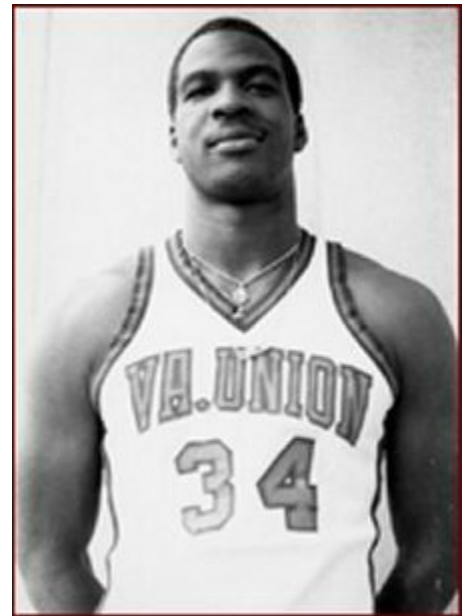
F – Charles Oakley – Virginia Union

Before he was the League’s top enforcer, Oak was a monster at Virginia Union. During his time in college, he scored 2,379 point, grabbed 1,642 rebounds, won NCAA Division II Player of the Year, and went 31-1 on his way to a CIAA championship in 1985.

After his senior year, the Bulls selected Oakley to protect a young Michael Jordan from the Detroit Pistons’ hit squad. After Horace Grant turned out to be a stud, Oakley was traded to the Knicks where he continued that role, allowing John Starks to run his mouth as much as he wanted.

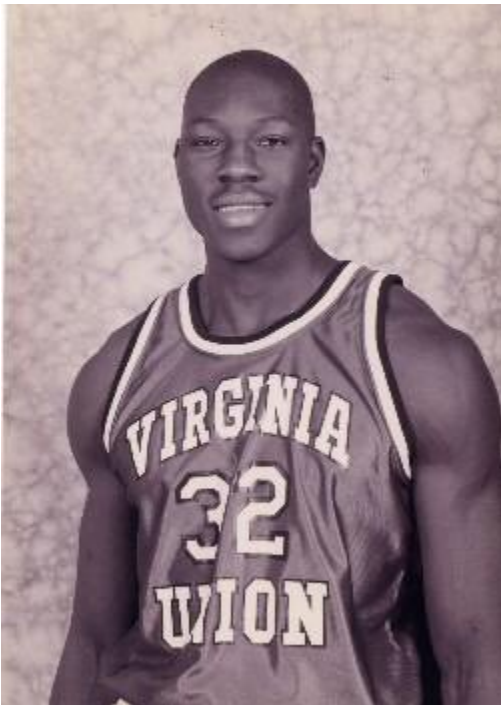
Charles Oakley’s “Greatest Hits” compilation

Oakley was an All-Star once in 1994.



Imagine getting screened by this gentleman.

C – Ben Wallace – Virginia Union



How could you not love Big Ben? Wallace was the ultimate underdog. He is widely considered the best undrafted player in NBA history. He was also a protege of Charles Oakley.

After starting his college career at Cuyahoga Community College and then transferring to Virginia Union, Wallace went undrafted coming out of school. After showing promise with the Orlando Magic, he was traded to the Detroit Pistons in 2001.

Almost immediately after landing in Detroit, Wallace became the League's best defender. A dominant rebounder and shot-blocker, Wallace put up 2K numbers for the Pistons during the early-to-mid 00s.

Seriously though, how can you not love this guy!?

Big Ben's scrappy, blue collar game made him the spiritual leader of the Bad Boys Redux teams that went to two NBA Finals and won one championship. By the end of his career, Wallace had been named NBA Defensive Player of the Year four times. He was also a four-time All-Star.

Honorable mentions –

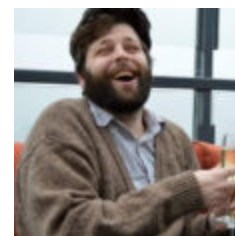
G – Avery Johnson – Southern University

F/C – Willis Reed – Grambling State University

G – Pee Wee Kirkland – Norfolk State University

Supastarr Deez

Supastarr Deez is a content creator, social justice enthusiast, and hunter/gatherer. When he's not writing you can find him cooking delicious meals for friends and family, searching out the finest coffee in your town, and trying to remember to breathe.



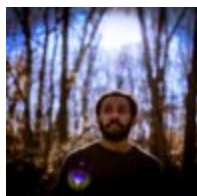
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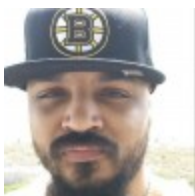


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