

Top 10 NBA Draft Classes of the Last 25 Years

by MARK GREY

10. 2001 - This draft will forever be remembered more for who never panned out, then for those who did. Kwame Brown was the number pick and maybe the biggest bust in draft history (good call MJ), but the draft was still solid. The class so far has produced 5 all stars: Joe Johnson, Pau Gasol, Tony Parker, Gilbert Arenas and Mehmet Okur. The class also includes many of other solid players and possible future all stars: Tyson Chandler, Jason Richardson, Shane Battier, Richard Jefferson, Zach Randolph, and Gerald Wallace.

9. 1998 - Just like the '01 draft this class is best know for its number one overall being a huge bust. I can't really say that Michael Olowokandi being a bust was a complete shock, but the draft still had plenty of talent. The class had six all stars: Vince Carter, Antawn Jamison, Dirk Nowitzki, Paul Pierce, Rashard Lewis, and Brad Miller. Other notables included Mike Bibby, Jason Williams, Larry Hughes, Bonzi Wells, Rickey Davis, Cuttino Mobley and Rafer Alston.

8. 1993 - One of the most talented drafts ever full of people who never met their potential either because of injury or flat out lack of interest in the game. Chris Webber, the number one pick, had a great career but it always seemed like he could have done more. Penny Hardaway and Jamal Mashburn were stars who suffered injuries that prevented them from being superstars as was Allan Houston. Sam Cassell and Nick Van Exel were both all stars with solid careers. Vin Baker was an all star who ate his way out of the league, J.R. Rider just never seemed to care enough to maximize his talent, and Bobby Hurley never bounced back from his car accident.

7. 1995 - Joe Smith, the number one pick overall, never lived up to his hype but the four picks after him sure did. Antonio McDyess, Jerry Stackhouse, Rasheed Wallace, and Kevin Garnett all went on to be all stars. Michael Finley also had a great career and Theo Ratliff was an all star and a great shot blocker. Other notables included Damon Stoudamire, Corliss Williamson, Kurt Thomas, Brent Barry, and Eric Snow.

6. 1999 - In total the 99 class gave us 9 different all stars. The top 3 picks all were all stars: Elton Brand, Steve Francis, and Baron Davis, and the six others were Wally Szczerbiak (believe it or not), Rip Hamilton, Shawn Marion, Ron Artest, Andrei Kirilenko, and Manu Ginobili. Other notables included Lamar Odom, Andre Miller, Jason Terry, James Posey, Corey Maggette, and Raja Bell.

5. 1987 - The 87 class gave us two players named to the NBA 50 greatest players list: David Robinson and Scottie Pippen. Also in the draft was future Hall of Famer Reggie Miller. The class had four other all stars in Mark Jackson, Reggie Lewis, Horace Grant, Kevin Johnson. Other notables included Kenny Smith, Derrick McKey, and Mugsy Bogues.

4. 1985 - The very first year the NBA used the lottery system and the draft class has already given us two Hall of Famers in Patrick Ewing and Joe Dumars. Karl Malone will soon join them and Chris Mullin more than likely will as well. Other all stars in that rookie class were Xavier McDaniel, Detlef Schrempf, Charles Oakley, A.C. Green, Michael Adams and Terry Porter. Spud Webb, Mario Elie, and Arvydas Sabonis should also be acknowledged.

3. 2003 - Its only been five years and this young draft class has already given us six different all stars. LeBron James, Carmelo Anthony, and Dwayne Wade give this draft a chance to be one of the greatest drafts of all time when it's all said and done. Though the draft is most know for its big three, Josh Howard, Chris Bosh, and David West have all become stars with very bright futures. Other notables include Chris Kaman, Kirk Hinrich, T.J. Ford, Boris Diaw, and Leandro Barbosa.

2. 1984 - Many call it the best draft ever. Not only did this draft supply the best player ever in Michael Jordan, it also gave us 3 other Hall of Famers in Hakeem Olajuwon, Charles Barkley, and John Stockton. One could even argue that's the best point guard, best shooting guard, best power forward, and best center of all time all in one draft. The draft also had several other players who had solid careers such as Sam Perkins, Alvin Robertson, Otis Thorpe, and Kevin Willis.

1. 1996 - Although the 96 class doesn't have the same Hall Fame greatness as the 84 class it more than makes up for it in depth. This class doesn't have Jordan but it has the next best thing in Kobe Bryant. It might not have Stockton, but Steve Nash, a two time league MVP, isn't too far behind. With two future Hall of Famers in Allen Iverson and Ray Allen, this class can hold its own with the 84 class. What sets it apart is the 7 other all stars also in that rookie class: Shareef Abdur-Rahim, Stephon Marbury, Antoine Walker, Peja Stojakovic, Jermaine O'Neal, Zydrunas Ilgauskas, and Ben Wallace (undrafted). And to think ... that list of players doesn't even include 2006 Defensive Player of the Year, Marcus Camby who also came out that year.