

ANTHONY REED

*Note: This is the **first** in a series of two feature stories on this year's inductee into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame and this year's recipient of the LABC's Mr. Louisiana Basketball award. The 2015 inductee will be former Tulane University player Anthony Reed (1989-93). Mr. Louisiana Basketball for 2015 is former LSU player Collis Temple, Jr.*

TULANE'S REED HELPED RE-LAUNCH BASKETBALL PROGRAM

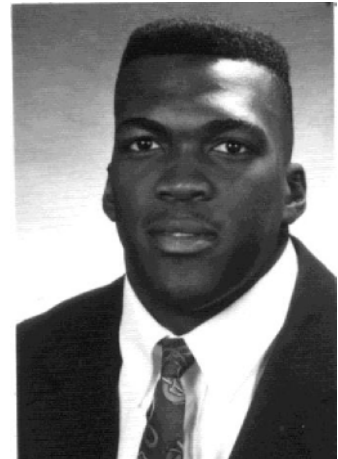
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Written for the LABC

NEW ORLEANS — A unique opportunity awaited Anthony Reed when he signed a national letter-of-intent to play basketball at Tulane University 26 years ago.

The Green Wave was re-starting its program after a four-year hiatus. Even before the self-imposed shutdown, Tulane's program had no history of success.

"I figured that since Tulane didn't have a program," Reed said during his final season with the Wave, "I could be as good as anybody else they'd bring in."

"As good" turned out to be an understatement. In four years, Reed would lead Green Wave basketball to unprecedented heights, see his number hang from the top of what is now Devlin Fieldhouse and reach the top of the university's career scoring list.



More than two decades later, the accolades continue. On May 2, Reed will be inducted into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame during the Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches' 41st Annual Awards Banquet at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge. The banquet is sponsored by the Baton Rouge Orthopaedic Clinic, Universal Coin & Bullion, Ltd. and MidSouth Bank.

Reed, a 6-foot-9 forward from Monroe, started all 118 games of his four years in a Tulane uniform, scoring 1,896 points — which now ranks second in school history behind Jerald Honeycutt — and grabbing 871 rebounds — which still ranks fourth in Tulane history. A four-time All-Metro Conference, four-time All-Louisiana and two-time first team NABC All-District selection, he led Tulane to its first two NCAA Tournament appearances in 1992 and 1993 and its only conference title in 1992.

"I never had a player that maximized his talent and ability more than Anthony Reed," said Perry Clark, Reed's coach at Tulane and himself a Louisiana Basketball Hall of Famer. "He was a warrior. He just played hard all the time and was relentless."

Clark knew Reed was talented coming out of Wossman High School, but late in his freshman year, he realized exactly what he had uncovered.

"I liked the way he could score," said Clark. "Maybe halfway through the (Metro Conference schedule), when he was getting numbers against everybody — it wasn't until that point. Everything was being set (defensively) to stop him, and he still wound up scoring."

The old Metro was a tough test every night — Louisville, Memphis State, Cincinnati, Virginia Tech, Florida State, South Carolina and Southern Miss. It was difficult on a night-in, night-out basis for Reed and his teammates to match the experience, and sometimes the bulk, of the opposition.

"I remember playing Louisville," Clark said. "One of their big kids posted Anthony up, and you couldn't even see Anthony."

Reed averaged 18.4 points per game in 1989-90, still the best ever by a Tulane freshman, and 8.4 rebounds. He not only was named the Metro's freshman of the year, but was a second-team all-conference selection.

By the end of Reed's sophomore year in 1990-91, he and his teammates were beginning to turn the corner. The Green Wave won six of its final eight games and finished 15-13, and Reed was a first-team all-Metro pick, averaging 16.0 points and 7.9 rebounds per game.

The Metro took on a new look for Reed's junior year, with Memphis State and Cincinnati moving to the newly formed Great Midwest Conference and Florida State and South Carolina joining the ACC and SEC, respectively. South Florida, UNC-Charlotte and Virginia Commonwealth came on board to make the Metro a seven-team league.

But the Metro's longtime heavyweight remained Louisville. When the 1991-92 schedule came out, Tulane's first conference game, on the first Saturday in January, was in Freedom Hall against a team it had beaten only once in its history.

Tulane finished December at 8-0 in non-conference play, but as it headed to Louisville, history was not on its side — it had only beaten the Cardinals once in its history, at home in 1985.

The Green Wave trailed by two points in the final minute when Reed, who spent much of the afternoon on the bench with foul trouble, rose up and drained a short jumper to tie the game and force overtime.

The Green Wave took over in the extra period and won 87-83. The next day, for the first time in four decades, a Tulane basketball team was ranked nationally.

For the next two months, the Green Wave —with Reed leading a now-veteran starting lineup and Clark's en-masse substitutions who earned the nickname of "The Posse" — became the talk of the college basketball world. Writers and broadcasters from across the country descended on New Orleans to tell the rags-to-riches story of Tulane.

And meanwhile, Tulane kept accumulating wins and climbing the national rankings.

"He was the star, but he was never the focal point," said Clark. "Everything just came within the flow of the game. That's why he was so easy to coach and why he was so difficult to play against."

Tulane won its final game of the regular season at Southern Miss to claim the Metro title — the first and, to this day, only championship of its kind in school history.

Eight days later came more historic news: A first-ever trip to the NCAA Tournament, where the Green Wave would meet St. John's in the first round at The Omni in Atlanta. In their final practice at Fogelman before heading to the tournament, Clark noticed something.

"I looked at his hand," Clark recalled, "and two fingers on his shooting hand were pointing in different directions. He said, 'Coach, why are you telling me about this now? I've been playing like this the whole year.'"

The two teams were locked in a tight game throughout much of the second half, and Tulane held a two-point lead when it forced a St. John's turnover with a little more than a minute left.

Clark called time out to set up his offense. "We were trying to get the ball to Anthony, and initially we couldn't enter it in to him," Clark said. "We tried to set something up to him and (St. John's) took it away."

"(Freshman point guard) Pointer (Williams) penetrated, and that's when we found Anthony. He just kind of moved around and put himself in position to get the ball."

He got it on the left baseline, 10 feet from the basket, with one second left on the 45-second shot clock.

Swish.

Reed's basket gave Tulane a 61-57 lead with 17 seconds left, a score that would hold up until the final buzzer. Thanks in large part to Reed's clutch jumper, the best story of the college basketball season got even better.

The Green Wave's season would end two days later with a loss to Oklahoma State, and Reed ended his junior campaign with averages of 14.4 points and 6.5 rebounds, both career lows.

Still, he earned all-conference honors for a third straight year, while leading Tulane to a 22-9 record.

With eight players of Tulane's 10-man rotation returning, expectations would be even higher for Reed's final season. The Wave would be ranked in all of the preseason polls.

In spite of a season-ending injury to guard Kim Lewis early in the 1992-93 season, Tulane got back to the NCAA Tournament and again won a first-round game, finishing the season with another 22-9 record. But the highlight of the year came two weeks earlier.

Saturday, March 6, turned out to be an emotion-filled, extra-special day for Reed. Not only was it Senior Day at Fogelman and his final game at home, but in a surprise announcement before tipoff, Reed's jersey was retired. Additionally, the senior class — the players who had brought Tulane basketball from non-existence to notoriety — was honored with the symbolic retirement of No. 93.

There would be more. A little less than two hours later, on his final shot in the final minute of his final home game, Anthony Reed became the all-time scoring leader in Tulane history.

"I never came in here trying to break any records," Reed said earlier in his senior season. "But I'd certainly feel good about it if I did get it." The record came in front of friends and family who made the five-hour drive from Monroe to see Reed's final home game.

"Having my family here today made it great," Reed said after the record-breaker. "Nothing means more to me than making my mom proud. I've tried to do it by staying in school, getting my degree and just being a good child and staying out of trouble."

Said Clark: "Senior Day, everybody tried to get him shots. Everybody was trying to get him open. Everybody was cheering and rooting him on. That all was special."

Reed, who averaged 15.7 points and 6.8 rebounds as a senior and earned his fourth straight all-conference selection, would go on to be the 41st pick in the 1993 NBA Draft by the Chicago Bulls, but he instead chose a professional career overseas.

Even two decades later, what Reed and those Tulane teams accomplished seems unfathomable.

"If you put this thing in its perspective," Clark said, "no one had a greater influence on his team than Anthony did at that time. The meteoric success that the program took was on the shoulders of Anthony Reed. It wasn't just him as a basketball player but as a person of character."

And now, a Hall of Earner.

In addition to the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame induction, the May 2 awards banquet will include recognition of Louisiana's major college, small college, junior college and high school players and coaches of the year, the top pro player from the state, and the presentation of the LABC's Mr. Louisiana Basketball award to former LSU player Collis Temple, Jr.

A very limited number of tickets for the banquet are available for \$25 and can only be reserved by contacting the LABC in advance at labball@gmail.com.

The Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame is sponsored by the LABC. The Hall of Fame was created in 1975 to honor former great basketball players and coaches from Louisiana colleges. More information about the LABC and the Hall of Fame can be obtained by visiting their website at www.labball.com.

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