

## XAVIER “BUTCH” WEBSTER

*Note: This is the **second** in a series of two articles on this year’s inductees into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame. The 2002 inductees are Wilbur Holland and Xavier “Butch” Webster.*

### **PRIVATEERS' FIRST ALL-AMERICAN XAVIER “BUTCH” WEBSTER TO BE INDUCTED INTO LOUISIANA BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME**

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NEW ORLEANS --- Xavier "Butch" Webster, the first All-American in the history of the University of New Orleans Privateers athletics program, will be inducted into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame on July 25<sup>th</sup> in Baton Rouge. Webster becomes the third Privateer to be so honored, joining center Wayne Cooper (1992), former head coach Ron Greene (1996) and fellow 2002 inductee guard Wilbur Holland. The induction will take place during the Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches' 28th Annual Hall of Fame Awards Luncheon, which will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge.

Webster was a consensus first team All-American selection in 1971 after being named honorable mention All-American in 1970. He finished his two-year Privateer career with 1,235 points and 612 rebounds. His career averages of 25.2 points and 12.5 rebounds per game still stand as the best career numbers in program history.

As the Privateers Athletics Department was in its first full season of varsity status as a NCAA Division II institution, Butch Webster became the program’s first standout athlete. He led the program to a 41-8 overall record in his two seasons on the Lakefront, including a 13-1 home record in 1969-70 and an undefeated 16-0 record at the “Chamber of Horrors” H&PE Center on the main UNO campus in 1970-71.

He averaged 26.7 points and 12.8 rebounds in 1971, and 23.5 points and 12.2 rebounds in 1970 and remains the only Privateer to record consecutive seasons averaging over 20 points and 12 rebounds per contest. He had single game highs of 48 points at Ball State on December 5, 1970 and 25 rebounds against Nicholls State on February 5, 1970. He led then UNO to a No. 1



ranking in the final NCAA Division II national poll in 1971. That team finished with a 23-3 overall record and advanced to the NCAA Division II Tournament.

An outstanding athlete, the 6'4" Webster became the first of eleven Privateers to be drafted by the NBA following his senior season. The Buffalo Braves selected him in the 12th round with the 183rd overall pick in 1971. Webster would never play a NBA game, but played professionally overseas in Brussels, Belgium.

Webster was a scoring machine. He was held under 10 points only once in his career and fewer than 15 points only five times. In the words of his former coach Ron Greene, "Butch is the second best college basketball player in the state of Louisiana," (*New Orleans States Item/January 24, 1970*). A compliment to Webster, as Coach Greene was comparing him to the legend, LSU's Pete Maravich.

Webster played for Greene and alongside several great Privateers, including Mel Henderson, Johnny Ponds and Duane Reboul. Webster came to the Lakefront following a two-year stay at DeKalb (Ga.) Junior College where he earned junior college All-American honors and was highly touted by programs such as Maryland and Oklahoma.

"Butch was a phenomenal athlete," said former teammate Duane Reboul. "His competitive nature and his athleticism separated Butch from the rest of the competition. He might not have been the most gifted skilled player, but he willed things to happen and competed harder than anyone else on the floor."

During his first season at then LSUNO, the Privateers struggled to start its inaugural varsity season. The team began the season 0-2 with losses against Louisiana College and Nicholls State. The Privateers then found its groove.

The team won its next 11 straight games, including a 129-91 win over Wisconsin-Milwaukee at the H&PE Center. Webster finished with 34 points and the team scored 70 second half points. In that game, the Privateers scored over 100 points for the third time that season and would go on to average a blazing 90.5 points per game. The following season, the team posted 11 games over the century mark and increased its scoring average to 95.4.

Webster began his second season on the Lakefront just as strong as he had run through the first. He recorded the only back-to-back 40-point games in program history, with 43 against Sam Houston State and a school-record 48 points against Ball State.

Webster and the Privateers had a 27-game winning streak between 1969-1971, as the team won its last five in '69-'70 and 22 consecutive games to start the '71-'72 season. The team's final record was 23-3 with its lone regular season loss coming on the road at Houston Baptist. In its first appearance in the NCAA Division II Tournament, Webster was not the team's

leading scorer, as he gave way to Mel Henderson and Johnny Ponds in a pair of losses to Southwestern Louisiana (113-107) and Louisiana Tech (107-88).

Xavier “Butch” Webster came to UNO and successfully lifted the program from club to NCAA Division II status. His individual accolades and the team’s success gave the basketball program and athletics department a solid foundation to eventually move up to NCAA Division I status in 1975.

His statistical marks continue to be emblazoned throughout the Privateers record books — 36 double-doubles (points and rebounds) in 49 career games, scored over 20 points in 37 contests and over 30 points 13 times — but his lasting mark will be that his name will forever be synonymous with the early rise and success of the Privateers men’s basketball program and the entire UNO athletics department.

The Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame, which is located in LSU's Pete Maravich Assembly Center, is sponsored by the Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches. The Hall of Fame was created in 1975 to honor former great basketball players and coaches from Louisiana colleges.

In addition to the induction of the new Hall of Fame members, the July 25<sup>th</sup> noon luncheon 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 prestigious Mr. Louisiana Basketball award.

Tickets for the luncheon are \$15 and can be obtained by contacting the Embassy Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge. The Embassy Suites Hotel is located at 4914 Constitution Avenue in Baton Rouge (exit 158 off Interstate 10).