

best shots in nba history

best shots in nba history have captivated fans and defined careers, often changing the course of games, seasons, and even legacies. From buzzer-beaters to clutch three-pointers, these moments showcase the incredible skill, composure, and drama that make basketball one of the most thrilling sports worldwide. This article explores some of the most iconic and memorable shots in NBA history, highlighting their context, significance, and the players behind them. Whether it's a game-winning jumper, a deep three-pointer under pressure, or an impossible fadeaway, these shots have become etched in the memories of basketball enthusiasts. By examining these legendary plays, the article also sheds light on the evolution of clutch performance and shot-making in the NBA. The following sections will cover the most celebrated shots, categorized by era and player, to provide a comprehensive overview of basketball's greatest moments.

- Iconic Buzzer-Beaters
- Legendary Playoff Shots
- Historic Regular Season Shots
- Most Clutch Players and Their Signature Shots
- Impactful Team Moments and Game-Winning Shots

Iconic Buzzer-Beaters

Buzzer-beaters represent some of the most dramatic moments in NBA history, where a shot made just as the game clock expires determines the outcome. These shots often occur in high-pressure situations, amplifying their significance and memorability. Many of the best shots in NBA history fall under this category, symbolizing the ultimate test of a player's nerves and skill.

Michael Jordan's "The Shot" (1989)

One of the most famous buzzer-beaters is Michael Jordan's jumper over Craig Ehlo in the 1989 Eastern Conference First Round. This shot, occurring with just three seconds left, secured the Chicago Bulls' victory against the Cleveland Cavaliers and is often cited as a defining moment in Jordan's legendary career. It embodies the essence of clutch shooting and has been

replayed countless times in NBA lore.

Kyrie Irving's Game-Winning Three in 2016 Finals

In Game 7 of the 2016 NBA Finals, Kyrie Irving hit a crucial three-pointer over Stephen Curry with less than a minute remaining. This shot helped the Cleveland Cavaliers secure their first-ever NBA championship, ending a 52-year major sports title drought for the city. The precision and timing of this shot have immortalized it among the best shots in NBA history.

Other Notable Buzzer-Beaters

- Damian Lillard's 2019 series-clinching three-pointer against the Oklahoma City Thunder
- LeBron James' block and subsequent game-winning jumper in the 2013 Eastern Conference Finals
- Ray Allen's clutch three-pointer in Game 6 of the 2013 NBA Finals

Legendary Playoff Shots

Playoff basketball intensifies every possession, and the best shots in NBA history often come during these high-stakes moments. Playoff shots carry weight far beyond a single game, influencing championship outcomes and player legacies. This section highlights some of the most legendary shots made during the NBA playoffs.

Dirk Nowitzki's Fadeaway in 2011 Finals

Dirk Nowitzki's signature one-legged fadeaway jumper played a crucial role in the Dallas Mavericks' 2011 championship run. His ability to hit difficult shots consistently throughout the playoffs, particularly in the Finals against the Miami Heat, established him as one of the most clutch performers in NBA history.

Magic Johnson's Junior Sky Hook (1987)

Magic Johnson's sky hook in the 1987 NBA Finals remains one of the most memorable playoff shots. His finesse and timing against the Boston Celtics helped the Los Angeles Lakers secure a key victory, showcasing his versatility and poise under pressure.

Ray Allen's Game-6 Three-Pointer in 2013 Finals

Ray Allen's corner three-pointer with 5.2 seconds remaining in Game 6 of the 2013 NBA Finals is often considered one of the most clutch shots ever made. This shot saved the Miami Heat from elimination and paved the way for their eventual championship win. Its technical difficulty and timing highlight the rare skill required for such moments.

Historic Regular Season Shots

While playoff shots often dominate highlight reels, many of the best shots in NBA history have taken place during regular season games. These shots may not always carry championship implications but are celebrated for their difficulty, timing, and impact on the game or player milestones.

Stephen Curry's Deep Three-Pointers

Stephen Curry revolutionized the game with his deep three-point shooting, frequently hitting shots from well beyond the arc during regular season games. His range and quick release changed how teams defend and strategize, making many of his shots some of the most iconic in NBA history.

Vince Carter's Dunk Over Frederic Weis (2000 Olympics)

Though not an NBA regular season shot, Vince Carter's legendary dunk during the 2000 Olympics is widely considered one of the greatest moments in basketball history. Within the NBA, Carter's high-flying dunks, including his 2000 Slam Dunk Contest performance, have left an indelible mark on the sport's highlight reels.

Other Memorable Regular Season Moments

- Kobe Bryant's 81-point game shots in 2006
- Reggie Miller's clutch shooting against the New York Knicks in the 1990s
- Dirk Nowitzki's game-winning shots from deep range

Most Clutch Players and Their Signature Shots

Certain players are renowned for their ability to perform under pressure, consistently delivering the best shots in NBA history when it matters most. This section profiles some of the most clutch players and the signature shots that defined their careers.

Michael Jordan's Fadeaway Jumper

Michael Jordan's fadeaway jumper is arguably the most iconic signature shot in NBA history. His ability to create space and elevate over defenders to make this shot during clutch moments solidified his status as one of the greatest players of all time.

LeBron James' Chase-Down Block and Mid-Range Jumper

LeBron James combines athleticism and precision, making his chase-down blocks and mid-range jumpers crucial in clutch situations. His versatility in shooting and defense has led to numerous game-winning plays throughout his career.

Dirk Nowitzki's One-Legged Fadeaway

Dirk's unique one-legged fadeaway became his go-to clutch shot, effective against even the best defenders. This shot helped him secure a championship and numerous playoff victories, underlining his place among clutch legends.

Other Notable Clutch Shooters

- Kobe Bryant's turnaround jumpers and post moves
- Ray Allen's quick-release three-pointers
- Damian Lillard's deep threes and buzzer-beaters

Impactful Team Moments and Game-Winning Shots

Beyond individual brilliance, some of the best shots in NBA history have been pivotal in defining team success and championship runs. These game-winning shots often symbolize teamwork, strategy, and execution under immense pressure.

Bill Russell's Defensive Plays and Game-Winning Efforts

While Bill Russell was more known for defense and rebounding, his game-winning efforts on both ends of the floor contributed to the Boston Celtics' dynasty. His ability to make clutch plays helped his team secure 11 championships.

The 2016 Cleveland Cavaliers' Comeback Shots

The Cavaliers' comeback from a 3-1 deficit in the 2016 NBA Finals included several crucial shots from LeBron James and Kyrie Irving, culminating in Irving's championship-winning three-pointer. These moments underscore the importance of resilience and clutch execution in team success.

Notable Game-Winning Shots in NBA History

1. Paul Pierce's "The Truth" game-winning jumper in 2008 Eastern Conference Finals
2. Tracy McGrady's 13 points in 33 seconds to beat the Spurs in 2004

3. Chris Webber's timeout blunder in 1993 NCAA tournament (not NBA but often referenced for pressure)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is considered the best shot in NBA history?

One of the best shots in NBA history is Michael Jordan's 'The Shot' over Craig Ehlo in the 1989 playoffs, which secured a game-winning basket for the Chicago Bulls.

Which shot is known as 'The Shot' in NBA lore?

'The Shot' refers to Michael Jordan's buzzer-beater jumper over Craig Ehlo in Game 5 of the 1989 Eastern Conference First Round against the Cleveland Cavaliers.

What was Kobe Bryant's most memorable shot in NBA history?

Kobe Bryant's most memorable shot is often considered his game-winning buzzer-beater against the Phoenix Suns in the 2006 playoffs, where he scored 81 points in the game.

Did LeBron James have any iconic shots in NBA history?

Yes, LeBron James' block on Andre Iguodala in Game 7 of the 2016 NBA Finals, followed by his game-winning jumper, are considered some of the most iconic moments and shots in NBA history.

What is Ray Allen's clutch shot in NBA history?

Ray Allen's clutch three-pointer with 5.2 seconds left in Game 6 of the 2013 NBA Finals tied the game and helped the Miami Heat eventually win the championship.

Which shot is known as the 'Shot Heard Round the World' in the NBA?

Derek Fisher's 0.4-second buzzer-beater for the Los Angeles Lakers against the San Antonio Spurs in the 2004 playoffs is known as the 'Shot Heard Round the World.'

What was Damian Lillard's most famous shot in NBA history?

Damian Lillard's series-winning 37-foot buzzer-beater against the Houston Rockets in the 2014 playoffs is one of the most famous shots in recent NBA history.

How do analysts rank the best shots in NBA history?

Analysts typically rank the best NBA shots based on factors like game importance, difficulty, timing (buzzer-beaters), and impact on a team's legacy or championship run.

Additional Resources

1. *Clutch Moments: The Greatest Shots in NBA History*

This book chronicles the most unforgettable shots in NBA history, from buzzer-beaters to game-winners. It explores the context behind each shot, the players involved, and the impact on their careers and teams. Filled with vivid storytelling and analysis, it captures the drama and excitement that define basketball's most iconic moments.

2. *Last Second Legends: NBA's Most Iconic Game-Winning Shots*

Focusing on the tension and thrill of last-second shots, this book highlights the athletes who thrived under pressure. It covers legendary players like Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, and LeBron James, showcasing their ability to change the course of games in mere seconds. Fans will appreciate the detailed breakdowns and the historical significance of each shot.

3. *Shooting for Glory: NBA's Best Buzzer-Beaters*

An in-depth look at buzzer-beating shots that have sealed victories and created unforgettable memories. This book delves into the strategy, skill, and sheer nerve required to sink shots as the clock expires. It also features interviews and commentary from players and coaches who witnessed these historic moments firsthand.

4. *Swish: The Art of the Perfect NBA Shot*

Exploring the technique and artistry behind the NBA's most celebrated shots, this book combines basketball science with player stories. It breaks down shooting mechanics and highlights moments when skill met opportunity, resulting in iconic baskets. Readers gain insight into how the perfect shot is crafted under immense pressure.

5. *Game Changers: Shots That Defined NBA Championships*

This volume focuses on shots that turned the tide in NBA Finals and championship-deciding games. From clutch three-pointers to decisive drives, it tells the stories of how these moments cemented legacies and altered franchise histories. It's a must-read for fans interested in the high stakes of playoff basketball.

6. *Heroes of the Hardwood: Legendary NBA Shots and Their Makers*

Profiling the players behind the NBA's most legendary shots, this book celebrates their skill, courage, and determination. It provides biographical sketches alongside detailed accounts of their defining moments on the court. The narratives reveal the human side of basketball greatness and the pressure of performing on the biggest stages.

7. *From Downtown: The Evolution of the NBA's Long-Range Shots*

Tracing the rise of the long-range shot in NBA history, this book covers the transition from mid-range dominance to the era of the three-point revolution. It highlights key players and shots that changed how the game is played, including Steph Curry's transformational impact. The book combines historical analysis with thrilling game highlights.

8. *Frozen in Time: NBA's Most Memorable Shot Replays*

Focusing on the visual legacy of NBA's greatest shots, this book compiles iconic images and replays that have been etched into basketball history. It discusses the cultural and emotional resonance of these moments and how they've been immortalized through media. Fans will enjoy the blend of photography and storytelling.

9. *The Shot Clock: Pressure, Precision, and NBA's Greatest Scoring Moments*

This book examines the role of the shot clock in creating some of the NBA's most dramatic scoring plays. It details how players manage time constraints to execute perfect shots under intense pressure. Through compelling anecdotes and game analysis, it reveals the intricate dance between timing and talent that defines basketball's best shots.

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