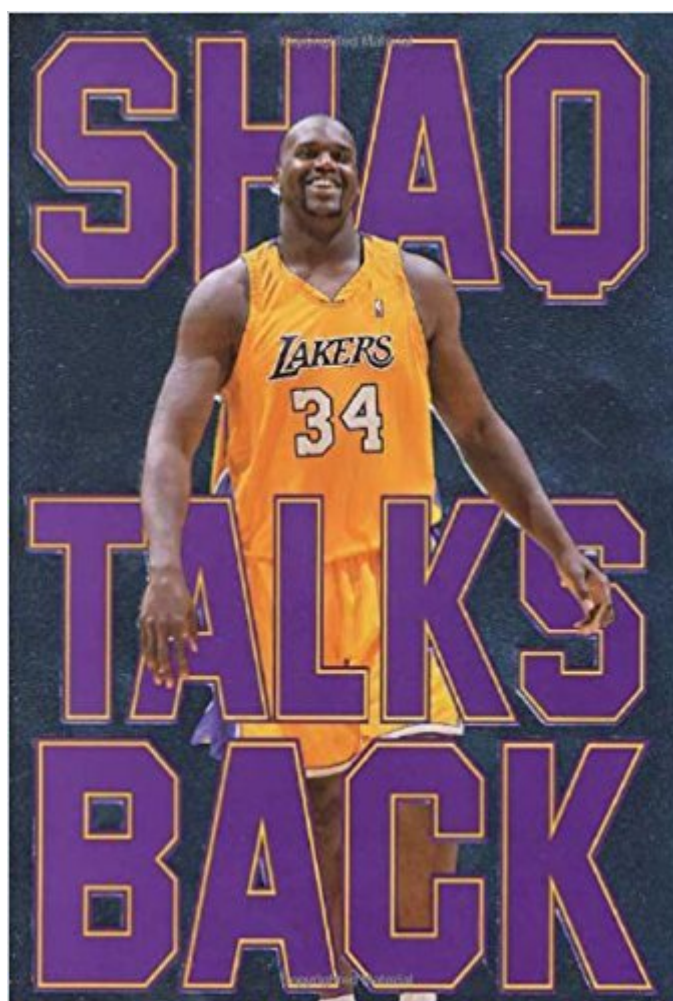


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# Shaq Talks Back: The Uncensored Word On My Life And Winning In The NBA



## Synopsis

It's rare to discover a candid sports autobiography-- even rare when the author is one of the most recognizable athletes in the world. But in *Shaq Talks Back*, Shaquille O'Neal for the first time talks frankly about his childhood, his life, his rivalries, and his career, culminating in a dramatic, behind-the-scenes account of the Los Angeles Lakers' drive to the NBA Championship. At seven feet one inch tall and 330 pounds, Shaq has always faced outsized expectations, even as a child when he towered over other kids. *Shaq Talks Back* is the story of how potential became reality-- how someone expected to be a champion finally learned to become one. Beginning with his memory of crying on the court after the Lakers defeated the Indiana Pacers, Shaq takes us back to his younger days in Newark and Jersey City, New Jersey, then to Georgia and finally to Germany, where he began to harness some of his height and strength. From there, he recounts the remarkable progress of his basketball career, changing from a big but inexperienced teenager to a dominant college and professional player. Shaq talks about:

- \* Playing at Louisiana State University for the unpredictable coach Dale Brown
- \* Signing the biggest rookie contract ever with the Orlando Magic--
- and going to the NBA Finals for the first time
- \* What happened next: dissention, disappointment, and his decision to leave for Los Angeles
- \* The dysfunctional Lakers who were never able to win the big games
- \* Dealing with egos as he finds the right chemistry with Kobe Bryant, Phil Jackson, and new additions to the team
- \* Rivalries with Alonzo Mourning, Patrick Ewing, Hakeem Olajuwon, David Robinson, and others
- \* The trouble with free throws...
- \* "Bling-bling" and women: the larger-than-life world of NBA players off the court
- \* Inside the Lakers' comeback from the brink against Portland and the drive to the NBA championship

Funny, insightful, opinionated, and unexpectedly moving, *Shaq Talks Back* is the true voice of the NBA's best player.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Shaq's new book (after Shaq and the Beanstalk) is entertaining, controversial and funny, like its author. He recounts his life story, from his childhood in Newark through winning the 2000 NBA Championship. Shaq's prose is uneven and repetitive in patches, but he writes in an authentic and likable voice throughout. Unlike other sports autobiographies, in which a co-writer essentially invents an athlete's "writing style," Shaq's words are his own fans will recognize his distinctive, opinionated voice. The text is broken up by interludes written by important people in Shaq's life (from his mother to his personal cook). Those passages provide a change of tone and lend perspective to Shaq's story. He speaks frankly about his current and former teammates and coaches, as well as the state of the NBA and of the world in general. Some of the statements in this book could get him in trouble with his NBA colleagues, but Shaq's honesty is part of what makes him such fun to read. Though Shaq devotes a lot of the book to his life off the court (his movies, rap albums, celebrity life), there's enough basketball here to satisfy hardcore hoops junkies (fans will be especially intrigued by his analysis of last season's championship run). (Apr.) Forecast: Shaq's appealing personality, controversial statements and celebrity should endear this candid, bold book to basketball fans. It would probably do well even without much promotion, but with a national author tour and print advertising, big sales seem virtually assured. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Readers who feel the NBA today is rife with self-centered athletes will be pleasantly surprised to read this book by a young man who seems team oriented and, at most times, quite level-headed. His recent difficulties with Kobe Bryant, the other star of the Los Angeles Lakers, notwithstanding, O'Neal comes across as the leader of the defending NBA champions. In many ways, O'Neal has become as disciplined as his stepfather, a retired U.S. Army NCO, but there are still hints that there is a 15-year-old trying to break out of a 30-year-old's body. What is particularly revealing here is his discussion of his career in the league, focusing on the Lakers championship under Coach Phil Jackson. O'Neal is quite candid about his relationships with his coaches, particularly several he did not feel provided sufficient leadership. Also of interest is his candid appraisal of NBA players, past and present. O'Neal is a complex man who just recently earned a college degree from Louisiana State University and tells the story of his life in an entertaining fashion. The language is a bit rough,

but the book is still recommended for public libraries. William Scheeren, Hempfield Area H.S. Lib., Greensburg, PA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Well done!!

Shaq takes you through his early days growing up in Newark, New Jersey and talks about his family and friends. Then later on in the book, he talks about how he started playing basketball, being bigger than most kids his age. He holds nothing back, always speaking what's on his mind. Towards the end of the book, he describes how the 2000 L.A. LAKERS got it all together and beat the Indiana Pacers in the finals. If you're a fan of Shaq or the Lakers, this book is for you.

My boyfriend seems to like the book he loves Shaq and NBA and loves reading about all his favorite NBA players. He wishes Kobe would come out with a book cause that is his favorite player and he loves the Lakers but he really seems to enjoy Shaq's book :)

THIS IS A BOOK BY SHAQUILLE O'NEAL CENTER FOR THE LOS ANGELES LAKERS. HE TELLS US SOME OF HIS LIFE AND CAREER IN THE NBA. MOST OF THE BOOK CONCERNS WINNING HIS FIRST CHAMPIONSHIP IN THE NBA. HE TOUCHES ON HIS TEAMATES, COACHES AND LIFE IN GENERAL IN THE NBA. I LIKED THIS BOOK AND I LIKE SHAQ, EVEN THOUGH HE IS A BIT FULL OF HIMSELF. HE ENJOYS LIFE AND IS VERY HUMAN. I RECOMMEND THIS BOOK TO LAKER AND BASKETBALL FANS.

'Shaq Talks Back: The Uncensored Word on My Life and Winning in the NBA' is a giant of a book written by a sporting superstar. Shaquille O'Neal shoots clean baskets from every part of the literary court, delighting and dazzling the reader with his unique writing style. He has as much facility with language as he does with the ball, and his words bounce off the page with effortless grace. There are many memorable encounters played and replayed throughout the text, but for me, the one that best epitomizes Shaq's sporting philosophy is seen on pages 68-81. It relates to the famous 'International Incident of 1996', and O'Neal is candid about his pivotal role: 'I first saw him in Europe and I'll never forget his name; Teodor Dobrowski. He played center for the Warsaw Warriors and he was a giant. Great skills. Hands the size of frisbees. By all reports a standup guy. So when he told me he wanted to settle in America, I arranged for him to try out for the Lakers. Even let him stay at my place. Eat my food. Drink my beer. Date my girl. He wanted to show his gratitude so he offered

to sell me his family castle in Krakow for only \$7000. I gave him cash. Big mistake. There was no castle. Not even a family. The bum scammed me. So I stuck him on an ageing Aeroflot and wished him luck. All of it bad. End of story. And he got those cuts and bruises when he fell out of the cab on the way to the airport. Honest. If I'd known that diplomats would later be recalled, two embassies closed, the Secretary of State ordered back to Washington and the UN General Assembly reconvened, I might have actually paid the cabfare before running away at the terminal. Do I regret sending the grifter back to Warsaw? Never. If there's one thing I can't stand, it's being touched by a 10-foot Pole.'When 'Shaq Talks Back', you'd better listen. Better still, read this wonderful book.

I truly am proud of Shaq. I have always been a fan, starting when he and Larry Brown couldn't quite get over the hump in Baton Rouge and when Penny Hardaway's trail of tears always seemed to make the Magic slip up in Orlando. So needless to say, his move to L.A. and subsequent submission to the coaching mastermind of Phil Jackson, especially in the wake of an NBA with no Mike, was a great surprise. As for the book, I ordered it expecting more of the same ole' boastful, jubilant can't get enough fun Shaq, and I found, in addition to all those things, a new Shaq that makes this book worth the read all the more. Written in a style that only Shaq could pull off, the book traces his life from NJ to the south and his time in high school, college, the Olympics and NBA. It gives the reader wonderful insight into a very public figure and clues you into why Shaquille O'Neal is Shaq. As for the book's merits as non-fiction, many critics have poo-poo'd the book's informal tone and Shaqisms, but frankly, that makes it worth the read (it is a quick read, easily finished in a weekend). Who wants to read a book on Shaq in the third person, or the first person for that matter? Clearly, you want to read his autobiography in the Shaqperson! Admittedly, some of the one liners and especially his use of the beatnic term 'cat' are tiresome, but ultimately are worth the trouble. Ultimately see a lot of things about Shaq that you don't catch on TNT or on the back of a trading card. Shaq is genuine, he is taking care of his family, he has learned to let the pundits be pundits (because that what they are paid to do), and is just trying to enjoy life. He has become a very impressive, very mature man, and I certainly respect him for that. Bottomline: For the sportsfan or Shaqfan, this is a slam dunk.

This is a terrific book for all ages. I learned about Shaq and his winning ways and found useful pieces of advice to use in my own personal and professional life. For example the way Shaq communicates differently depending on his audience, he might speak one way to his "crew" or "doggs", but in another manner entirely when conducting business or trying to get Bill Gates to

provide computers for the "hood". Terrific Stuff! I'll be using those techniques everyday. Shaq expounds on life lessons he has learned, coming up in the 'hood and overseas, big tall, his money and more. The wit and wisdom of Shaq is truly unsurpassed in the entire catalog of autobiographies of active Western Conference NBA centers. I have looked to a number of NBA greats for life lessons. For many years I tried to use Pat Riley's techniques to find my winner within, but frankly, to no avail. More recently, with some success, I have looked to Phil Jackson for spiritual advice while turning to Bill Bradley on the more mundane topics of anti-ballistic missile treaties and MAD, environmental policy, healthcare, and prescription coverage for our elderly. (I have a small anger management problem and I am looking forward to any advice either Latrell Sprewell or PJ Carlsimo may be able to provide.) But now I am all about the Big Aristotle - Shaq's words are all I need to make myself a winner on every level!

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