Lute Olson

Career Records:
- 663-235 (.738) in 29 years overall
- 471-143 (.767) in 19 years at Arizona
- 167-54 (.747) in nine years at Iowa
- 11-16 (.412) his entire college coaching career

Accomplishments:
- Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame – 1999
- World Championship Team Coach – 1992
- Olympic Silver Medal Team Coach – 1992
- 5-time NCAA Tournament appearances (second most in history behind North Carolina's 26)
- 5 Best Wins
  - Arizona 68 Stanford 65
  - Arizona 70 North Carolina 52
  - Iowa 97 Minnesota 71
  - Arizona 69 Oregon State 58
  - Iowa 86 Minnesota 68

5 Best Players
- Steve Kerr – 50th / Phoenix
- Jud Buechler – 38th / Seattle
- Anthony Cook – 24th / Phoenix
- Mike Bibby – 2nd / Sacramento
- Mike Bibby – 1998

Off the court

How do you feel about Lute Olson being inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame?

— Compiled by Jeff Lund

“It’s definitely overdue.”
- Monica Armenta, men’s basketball secretary

“I think it’s wonderful that coach Olson is being recognized appropriately.”
- Lydia Burch, Olson’s secretary of 20 years

“He should have gotten this every year. He’s the best to come out of Arizona.”
- Senior forward Luke Walton

“The story of Tucson’s leading man

BY DAVID STEVENSON

He needed a change. After a Final Four appearance and nine successful seasons at the helm, something was still missing. He soon found it in Tucson, of all places. He left his native basketball program that didn’t allow him to enjoy a restaurant dinner without interruption.

He left his basketball program, the one he led the fundraising for, which was set to open the new season with an $18.4 million price tag. But the hardest change was leaving his Iowa Hawkeyes basketball team that was ranked No. 3 in the country.

But the stressful atmosphere demanded every minute of the coach and didn’t allow him a personal life.

So, Lute Olson left it all—his fame, his gymnasium and his players—to become the new head coach of a non-existent basketball program in the middle of the desert in 1983.

The privacy in Tucson allowed Olson the chance, at first, to separate his winning ways and his personal life, but oh, how quickly that privacy turned into stardom.

As a young coach in Iowa, his fishing trips at his home in Lake McBride, Mo., turned into celebrity sightings as people sailed their boats up to Olson’s to offer their congratulations and to talk about the upcoming season. Fans honked their horns.

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Lute Olson’s Wildcats in the NBA draft

- 1998 Damon Stoudamire – 7th / Toronto
- 1999 Joseph Blair – 25th / Seattle
- 1999 Ben Davies – 43rd / Phoenix
- 1999 Reggie Gurry – 8th / Cleveland
- 2000 Mike Bibby – 2nd / Vancouver
- 2000 Michael Dickerson – 14th / Houston
- 2001 Miles Simon – 42nd / Orlando
- 2001 Jason Terry – 10th / Atlanta
- 2001 Al Bruton – 36th / Cleveland
- 2001 Richard Jefferson – 13th / New Jersey
- 2001 Gilbert Arenas – 7th / Golden State
- 2001 Michael Wright – 39th / New York
- 2001 Loren Woods – 46th / Minnesota

A Timeline by Jeff Lund

- 1983 – Begins coaching career at Long Beach State.
- 1991 – Arizona reaches Final Four – Olson’s first Final Four appearance.

The legendary coach who turned the UA basketball program into a national powerhouse finally gets his place in the Hall.
Keeping company with the very best

Tomorrow, the Basketball Hall of Fame will welcome six new members into its family. Joining UA head coach Lute Olson will be five other legends, including players, a coach and an entire team.

Earvin ‘Magic’ Johnson
As a 6-foot-9 point guard, Earvin “Magic” Johnson had the ability to confuse defenses in a way no one else could. Every game was a personal highlight reel for the “Magic Man.” Whether it was his patented baby hook shot, behind-the-back passes that seemed to be generated from nowhere or his clutch ability whenever the game relied on him, Magic delivered. Magic was a 12-time All-Star in a 13-year career. He helped lead the Los Angeles Lakers to five World Championships.

In spite of all his accomplishments on the court, Magic’s biggest win has come against the HIV virus. Ten years after being diagnosed with HIV, Magic Johnson will enter the Hall of Fame on row with the virus undetectable in his body. His story has been called a medical miracle and an impossible occurrence, yet for anyone who saw him on or off the court, they simply call it “Magic.”

Drazen Petrovic
Drazen Petrovic’s impact on the NBA can be felt now more than ever. For the growing number of foreign players entering the NBA with success today, Petrovic helped pave the way. This Croatian superstar pioneered the European movement into the NBA. As one of the first European players to reach star status in the United States, Petrovic proved that the basketball world had more to offer America than a brief workout. Petrovic won the first of his two Silver Medals in the 1988 Summer Olympics and once scored an incredible 112 points in a Croatian League game in 1985.

But was enough for the NBA to take notice, and Petrovic finally burst into the league with the Portland Trailblazers in 1989 and later played for New Jersey. Unfortunately, Petrovic’s career would be cut short before he could gain the popularity he deserved. In 1993, Petrovic was killed in a car accident in Germany.

Larry Brown
Normally, when a coach moves around a lot it is the sign of an unsuccessful career. For Larry Brown, however, it is the sign of discovering talent and victories everywhere he goes. Larry Brown has coached college or professional basketball for the last 30 seasons. He has had a winning record in 26 of those seasons even while leading teams such as the Los Angeles Clippers and Denver Nuggets. Brown currently resides at

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No. 9 on the all-time NBA wins list, and is only the NBA coach to ever earn a playoff spot with six different NBA teams. In 1980, he led the UCLA Bruins to a national championship, and 20 years later he led the Philadelphia 76ers to their first NBA Finals since 1982. Perhaps more impressive, Brown has actually taught Allen Iverson that the four other guys on the court with the same shirts as him are his teammates.

Kay Yow
Kay Yow ranks fifth on the all-time list for wins by a female college coach. At Elon and North Carolina State, Yow has broken into the “W” column 625 times in just 22 seasons. Yow has always kept her teams in the national spotlight. Under Yow’s tenure at N.C. State, her teams finished in the Associated Press Top 20 poll 16 times after having a 10-minute pre-game ritual that was the hallmark of her career.

The Harlem Globetrotters
In 1927, when the Harlem Globetrotters became a professional basketball team, many people said they were a joke. Seventy-five years later, there had no idea what an amazing joke they would turn into. Contrary to popular belief, it wasn’t until the early 40’s that the Globetrotters became an “entertainment-first” basketball team. Before the Globetrotters started making their way around the world as a comedy team, they proved to the basketball world that they had talent. Several basketball experts have said that the Globetrotters induction was a long time coming. According them are the Washington Generals — the team that lost to the Globetrotters an estimated 15,000 times — who can finally say at least they won a game by a Hall of Fame team, and Scooby-Doo and Shaggy, who can finally say at least they were beaten by all those ghosts without the help of the Globetrotters.

If you watch …

2 p.m. today – ESPN Classic College Basketball
1997 NCAA National Championship
Arizona vs. Kentucky

Earning their sixth Pac-10 title (NCAC First Round),
1998 – Arizona wins eighth Pac-10 title under Olson
1999 – Arizona ties with Stanford for Pac-10 title (Olson’s ninth).
2001 – Olson’s fifth Final Four (loses to Duke in Final).

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