

All-time lists can be tricky

By Larry Pritchett

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A couple of weeks ago, LeBron James made a statement of which players he thought should be on the Mount Rushmore of basketball. He certainly has a right to an opinion and his picks were certainly good ones. His choices were Michael Jordan, Larry Bird, Magic Johnson and Oscar Robertson. He also made the comment that he at the end of his career 'for sure' would be one of the four. Not sure who he is going to bump, but I think he would probably be in the mix of things when you start picking 'All Time' greats in the game.

One player that he did not place on the rock was Bill Russell. Russell turned 80 a few weeks ago but for sure his age is no reflection of his ability to dish out an immediate response to King James.

The old Celtic made the following statement: "Hey, thank you for leaving me off your Mount Rushmore. I'm glad you did. Basketball is a team game, it's not for individual honors. I won back-to-back state championships in high school, back-to-back NCAA championships in college. I won an NBA championship my first year in the league, an NBA championship in my last year, and nine in between. That, Mr. James, is etched in stone." Point made.

Anytime you start making lists, especially when it spans a long period of time, it is difficult not to leave someone out. Russell was the standard for a team player. Yes, he had very talented players around him, but he made things easier for everyone.

James, unless he has taken time to watch films, wouldn't have ever seen Russell play. He probably never saw Oscar play either but any basketball list that deals with talent that doesn't have Bill Russell on it has a problem.

There was another guy back in the day that wasn't too bad either—Wilt Chamberlain. Just shows you how hard it is to make lists.

It did, however, spur me into thinking about what would I choose for the Mount Rushmore of different topics. These are just a few areas that I thought about. Some are not even connected with sports but most are.

- Best Nebraska offensive football players: Mike Rozier, Turner Gill, Tommie Frazier, Johnny Rodgers.
- Best Nebraska defensive football players: Rich Glover, Ndamukong Suh, Jerry Murtaugh, Trev Alberts.
- Best Nebraska basketball players: Stuart Lantz, Dave Hoppen, Eric Piatkowski, Tyronn Lue.
- Best Denver Broncos: John Elway, Rod Smith, Shannon Sharp, Champ Bailey.
- Best KU basketball players: Wilt Chamberlain, Danny Manning, Clyde Lovellette, Jo Jo White.
- Best movies: 'Godfather,' 'The Graduate,' 'The Sting,' 'Shawshank Redemption.'
- Best movies, Comedy: 'Animal House,' 'Caddyshack,' 'Blazing Saddles,' 'Ghostbusters.'
- Beatles songs: 'Hey Jude,' 'A Hard Day's Night,' 'And I Love Her,' 'I should Have Known

Better.'

- Sporting venues: Allen Field House, Rose Bowl, Pinnacle Bank Arena, Memorial Stadium.
- Childhood heartthrobs: Audrey Hepburn, Ali McGraw, Kim Novak, Natalie Wood.
- Coaches born in Kansas: Adolph Rupp, Phog Allen, Dean Smith, Eddy Sutton, Gene Keady.
- Professional basketball players born in Nebraska: Bob Boozer, Fred Hoiberg, Dave Hoppen.
- Famous coaches from Nebraska: Tom Osborne, Mark Richt, Fred Hoiberg, Monte Kiffin.

This could go on for a long time, but I am going to stop here. I would have put Bill Russell on even if it meant putting five people on the rock!