

The story of the most magical basketball team in America

The Orlando Magic officially entered the NBA as an expansion franchise in 1989. A contest sponsored by Orlando Magic team officials and the local Orlando Sentinel newspaper allowed the community to suggest names for their new franchise. The contest, which drew 4,296 submitted entries, subsequently announced that the committee chose 'The Magic' to be the new name of the Orlando franchise in the NBA.

The Orlando Magic play in the Southeast Division of the Eastern Conference of the National Basketball Association (NBA). The team is currently coached by Stan Van Gundy, and has had such notable NBA stars as Shaquille O'Neal, Anfernee "Penny" Hardaway, Grant Hill and Tracy McGrady on its books throughout its young history.

Curiously, The Magic are one of only five teams in the entire NBA, along with the Chicago Bulls, Utah Jazz, Miami Heat and Toronto Raptors, to ban the wearing of headbands by its players during games.

During the 1991-1992 season, the Magic suffered with a shortage of healthy players and the team struggled through a 17-game losing streak and finished the season with a 21-61 record. However, they still managed to sell out all 41 home games.

The Magic's history was changed on May 17, 1992, when the franchise won the first pick in the 1992 NBA Draft Lottery. The Magic selected big-man Shaquille O'Neal from Louisiana State University. O'Neal, a 7 foot 1 inch center, made an immediate impact on The Magic, leading the club to a 41-41 record, with the result that The Magic became the NBA's most improved franchise, as they improved by 20 games. O'Neal was the first rookie to be voted an All-Star starter since Michael Jordan in 1985, as well as becoming the NBA Rookie of the Year for the 1992-1993 season. Despite Shaquille O'Neal's presence, The Magic missed the 1993 NBA Playoffs because they were tied with the Indiana Pacers for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference with the Pacers holding the tiebreaker.

Amway Arena has served as home to the Orlando Magic since their inception, but it was originally known as Orlando Arena during the first ten years. In December 2006, the naming rights were purchased by network marketing company Amway for four years. The Amway Arena is one of several facilities owned and operated by the City of Orlando all under the name of "The Orlando Venues", and is also the home field of the Orlando Predators of the Arena Football League and the Orlando Sharks of the Major Indoor Soccer League. Although it was only opened in 1989, the Amway Arena is already one of the oldest arenas in the country and is within easy walking distance of many shops, bars and [hotels in Orlando](#).

Despite having never won the national championship, The Magic has made it to the playoffs for almost half of their existence, recording nine playoff appearances in 19 years). Rest assured, however, that this team of magicians have a few tricks up their sleeves yet.

About the Author

Paul McIndoe is an online, freelance writer from Scotland. When not writing, he enjoys playing golf and is a keen gardener.

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