

Kobe Bryant

Kobe Bryant was an American basketball player who played for the Los Angeles Lakers for 20 years. Kobe had a hugely successful professional basketball career and held a number of records.



Early Life

Kobe Bean Bryant was born on the 23rd August 1978 in Philadelphia – a city in the United States. His mother was Pamela Bryant and his father was Joe Bryant – a famous basketball player. It is said that Kobe's first name came about when his parents saw a Japanese dish advertised on a restaurant menu and liked the name. Kobe's middle name 'Bean' originated from his father's nickname, which was 'Jellybean'.

When Kobe was six years old, his family moved to Italy so that his father could continue his basketball career. While in Italy, Kobe learnt how to speak fluent Italian. At the age of 13, the family moved back to the United States and Kobe began playing basketball at school. With Kobe on their team, the school went on to win the state championship; their first win in a long time.

A Career in Basketball

At the age of 17, Kobe made the decision that he didn't want to go to college. He felt as though his skills as a basketball player were strong enough to forge a career with; therefore, he made the decision to leave school. A few months after his 18th birthday, Kobe's talent was noticed and he was traded to the Los Angeles Lakers: his professional basketball career had begun. Incredibly, this move meant that Kobe was the youngest player in the National Basketball Association's history.

Kobe spent his entire professional career playing for the LA Lakers with his main position being the shooting guard. In a game of basketball, the shooting guard's job is to score as many points as possible for their team by shooting the ball through the hoop. Typically, shooting guards are very tall as this allows for an advantage; especially when aiming over a long distance. Kobe was just under 2 metres tall, which is the average height of a door in the UK!



Despite several injuries, Kobe continued to play basketball for 20 seasons. Each season lasts for 6 months and sees each team in the NBA play a total of 82 games. Typically, each season begins in October and ends in April; play-offs and finals follow shortly after. In 2016, after a hugely successful career, Kobe retired from the sport.

Achievements

Throughout his glittering career, Kobe earned a number of incredible achievements. A small selection are listed below.

Year	Achievement
2006	Kobe scored 81 points in a single game of basketball. This is second-highest amount of points scored by an individual during one game in NBA history.
2008	Alongside the rest of his team, Kobe won a gold medal for the United States in basketball at the Olympics in Beijing.
2012	After another successful year, the United States basketball team won a second gold medal at the Olympics in London.
2016	Just a few months before his retirement, Kobe became the youngest person in NBA history to accrue 33,000 lifetime points – a feat that only a handful of players have managed.
2018	Following his retirement from basketball, Kobe won an award for his five minute long film entitled 'Dear Basketball'.

Dear Basketball

In 2017, Kobe Bryant wrote and narrated a short film called 'Dear Basketball'. The film, which was animated with hand-drawn pictures of Kobe, was based on a letter that he wrote to announce his retirement from basketball. At the beginning, Kobe talks about himself as a child who pretended to play basketball using rolled up socks and a bin. It continues with Kobe talking about how much he loved the game and how important it was to him. Finally, the film ends with Kobe announcing his retirement. He explains that his body knew when it was time to stop and that he had reached that point.

When it was released, the short film was incredibly successful and was viewed by thousands of people. It then went on to earn multiple awards at several prestigious events.