

# Understanding Player Position in Basketball

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In basketball, a five-player team scores points by getting the ball through the hoop. Each basketball player has a specific position and responsibilities. The positions — which consist of two guards, two forwards, and one center — call for different physical requirements and skills:

- **Point Guard:** Usually the shortest player on the team. Should be the team's best passer and ball handler; not primarily a shooter. Traditional role is to push the ball up court and start the offensive wheels turning. Should either take the ball to the basket or remain near the top of the key, ready to retreat on defense. Best and brightest: Derek Rose.
- **Shooting Guard:** Generally taller than a point guard but shorter than a small forward. Not necessarily a great ball handler, but normally the team's best perimeter shooter. A good shooting guard (or two guard) comes off screens set by taller teammates prepared to shoot, pass, or drive to the basket. Also tries to grab rebounds on offense. Best and brightest: Dwyane Wade.
- **Small Forward:** The all-purpose player on offense: aggressive and strong; tall enough to mix it up inside but agile enough to handle the ball and shoot well. Must be able to score both from the perimeter and from inside. Best and brightest: Carmelo Anthony.
- **Power Forward:** Has muscles or at least a little bulk. Must be able to catch passes and hit shots near the basket. A good, rugged rebounder, but athletic enough to move with some quickness around the lane on offense and defense. Expected to score when given the opportunity on the baseline, much like a center, but usually has a range of up to 15 feet all around the basket. Best and brightest: LeBron James.
- **Center:** Usually the tallest player on the team. Should be able to post up offensively — that is, receive the ball with his back to the basket and use pivot moves to hit a variety of short jumpers, hook shots, and dunks. Also must know how to find the open player in the paint and grab offensive rebounds. Best and brightest: Dwight Howard.