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The Best Beards in Basketball

These players make hoops more handsome.

It's March. And for guys across America, March means just one thing: basketball. Oh, and green beer. But mostly, basketball.

With March Madness nearly upon us, you're probably busy making your brackets and placing your bets. That means researching teams and lineups, reading predictions from sportswriters and bookies, and watching highlights from past games in search of potential upsets. While you're busy analyzing players' stats, however, one thing you're probably not paying attention to is their facial hair. That's a mistake, because basketball is home to some very badass beards.

It's true. If you aspire to better beardery, ballers are an awesome source of inspiration. To look as awesome as they do, check out the impressive whiskers on these professional athletes — then run a full-court press on your face.

James Harden

Point guard James Harden of the Brooklyn Nets has probably the most famous beard in the NBA. Although he played ball with a naked face when he was in college at Arizona State University, he began growing his iconic facial hair in 2009 when he began playing professionally for the Oklahoma City Thunder. Later on, when he played for the Houston Rockets, it became his signature. It's easy to see why: Dark, thick and shapely, it's as though a gardener mistook it for a hedge and sheared it to perfection.

Chris Andersen

Credit: AP Photo/Winslow Townson

Although he hasn't played in the NBA since 2016, Chris "Birdman" Andersen deserves a nod whenever there's talk of beards and basketball. Known for his appearance — he's bespeckled in brightly colored tattoos, and for a time wore an unmistakable mohawk atop his head like a crown — his beard isn't the first thing you notice about him, but it might be the best thing. Blonde and bushy, it's neat on top and wild on bottom. Like a mullet for the face, except much, much better looking.

Przemik Karnowski

Credit: Josh Peter (USA TODAY Sports , KING)

American ballers don't have a monopoly on great beards. For example, take Polish basketball player Przemik Karnowski, who played college ball for Gonzaga University and now plays for the Polish Basketball League in his native Poland. While the hair on his head is short and light, the hair on his face is long and dark, creating a bold contrast that perfectly frames his face. Because it's a Shenandoah — otherwise known as a chin curtain: a beard that's full and long over the jaw and chin, worn with a naked lip — it gives off a slightly Amish vibe, but in the best way possible.

Steven Adams

Credit: Jacob Rude

Steven Adams is the Jason Momoa of professional basketball. Originally from New Zealand and a longtime player for the Oklahoma City Thunder, the Momoa doppelganger is now a center for the New Orleans Pelicans, where he scores major points with his full beard — the crowning glory of which is his thick, Tom Selleck-sized mustache. In fact, his 'stache has such strong game that he sometimes sports it solo. With or without a full beard beneath it, it's easily the most iconic upper lip in the NBA.

Jonas Valančiūnas

Credit: Getty Images

Lithuanian basketball player Jonas Valančiūnas is a center for the Memphis Grizzlies — which is totally appropriate thanks to his grizzly-esque beard, which blankets his jaw from ear to ear and has a full mustache to match. Because he typically wears his hair short and neat (and often buzzed), it gives his wholesome face gravitas that it might otherwise lack. Which is exactly what good facial hair does. It's the kind of beard that makes the man.

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