



Jamal.....

“Hooper”, “Baller”, “Gym Rat”We’ve all heard these terms when describing a person who really loves basketball. In my 42 years of coaching, I’ve been around a few, but NO ONE fits the description better than Jamal Crawford.

He announced his retirement this week after 20 years in the NBA. We all know about his amazing accolades....3X Sixth Man of the Year, 50-point games with FOUR different teams, played on 9 different NBA teams, scored 51 in his final NBA game, all-time leader in 4 Point Plays. All great feats, no doubt.

But he was more than that.....

I was fortunate to have been on the coaching staff with the Clippers when he played for us from 2012-2016. Without question, he is the ALL-TIME, #1, GYM RAT. Most of us involved in the game say we “love it”, and most really do, however, Jamal loved it, lived it, and breathed it. We would sometimes talk on the back of the bus after a road game waiting to get back to the hotel or airport and talk about NBA history. He KNEW his history.....from players to teams to coaches. But what I remember best about those post game conversations was his positive attitude. No matter if we won or lost, if he played well or not, he was ALWAYS upbeat, and often listening to Old School R & B. Just ask any media person who ever covered Jamal....he is one of their all-time favorites. Honest, thoughtful, and always positive. Did he have his moments of frustration? Sure....all NBA players do at some point of the season. But those were quick lived.

This is an example of Jamal.....and this happened several times during the 5 years of our relationship with the Clips.....we would get home late from a road trip, arriving back in LA around 2:00 am. We would usually get the young players back in the gym the next morning around 9:00. The vets usually had the day off or were required to report in later that day. Who would show up at 9:00am? Jamal.....either to get into the shooting workouts or to just sit on the sidelines and observe, usually chatting it up with our trainer, Jasen Powell. He would talk

about last night's games, what was happening around the world of hoop or just "chop it up" with the coaches and players.....Gym Rat.

Whenever I heard about an up and coming, promising young high school player, I would go to Jamal and ask about him, knowing he would have the full scouting report, especially if the kid were from the Northwest! He knew all the top college guys and even had a handle on international players.....Gym Rat.

Many times, I heard Jamal address the question of how he worked on his "handles". His answer: "I don't. I just do it".....Baller. The same with the off-balance, awkward shots he would make in games.

He loved shooting games after morning Shoot Arouns at home. He loved the half court shooting competitions after Shoot Arouns on the road. He loved, (and still does), his Pro-Am Summer League in Seattle.

I always tell kids at the camps I speak to about Jamal. "Somewhere in the world today, no matter where he is or what he's doing, Jamal will play basketball that day. It may be 5-5 or just getting up shots, but he will be on the court in some capacity".Hooper.

So, here's to wishing Jamal the best in retirement. I've seen where he is now coaching his young son. Could you imagine anything less from him? If Seattle ever gets an NBA team, he should made official ambassador. Just ask ANY player who has ever come from there.....he is THE GODFATHER of HOOPS for the 206.

It was a pleasure being around him for those 5 years.....enjoyed every minute of it fam. Best of Luck to you and you beautiful family.

"Hooper", "Baller", Gym Rat"