

Dave Cowens - Celtics Legend



C-PF | 6-9 | 230 lbs. | Born: Oct 25, 1948

When it comes to breaking the mold, Dave Cowens is the cream of the

crop.

Cowens moved on from his collegiate career at Florida State, where he remains as the university's all-time leading rebounder (17.3 RPG), to enter the pros as an undersized center. Standing at just 6-foot-9, he was smaller than most power forwards, but the Boston Celtics chose to roll the dice on him and selected him with the fourth overall pick in the 1970 NBA Draft.

Red Auerbach's selection proved to be genius.

Cowens' excellent rebounding skills translated just fine to the NBA, where he dominated the boards throughout his 11-year career. During his rookie season with Boston, in 1970-71, he reeled in 15.0 RPG. The undersized big man did his work on the boards at both ends of the court, but his specialty was defensive rebounding. Cowens was, and still is, the best defensive rebounder the game has ever seen with an average of 9.8 per game during his eight seasons in which that statistic was recorded.

During his 10 seasons with the Celtics, Cowens had *at least* five campaigns in which he averaged at least 10.8 RPG at the defensive end of the floor. We say at least because, while rebounds were tracked during his first three seasons, it was not noted whether they came at the offensive or defensive end of the floor. For that reason, we'll never know how many of his 15.0 RPG in 1970-71, his 15.2 RPG in 1971-72, or his 16.2 RPG in 1972-73 were defensive. We do, however, know that Cowens' career average of 9.8 DRPG through his final eight seasons remains as the highest mark of all time.

Just because he was one of the greatest rebounders ever to play the

game doesn't mean he didn't offer plenty at the other end of the floor as well. During his tenure with the Celtics, which lasted for the first 10 years of his career, Cowens' scoring average never dipped below 14.2 PPG. His high mark came in 1972-73, when he averaged 20.5 PPG.

The ability to dominate at both ends of the floor is the mark of an all-time great, and that's why Cowens was yet another Celtic to be named to the 50 Greatest Players in NBA History list. His rebounding prowess was also key in two Celtics championships (1974, 1976), and assisted him in winning both the NBA All-Star Game MVP and the NBA MVP in 1973.

On Feb. 8, 1981, the Celtics retired his No. 18 jersey. Interestingly, he was the second Celtics player to have worn No. 18 and be memorialized in Boston with a retirement ceremony. Jim Loscutoff, the first of the two, chose to keep the No. 18 active, so the Celtics sent him into the rafters with "LOSCY" embroidered alongside the other retired numbers. That ceremony paved the way for Cowens to wear No. 18.

Cowens was later recognized by the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame as an inductee with the class of 1991.

His impact on the basketball world wasn't solely as a player. Cowens delved into the coaching realm with three separate teams, including the Celtics. He served as player-coach for 68 of Boston's 82 games during the 1978-79 season. The Charlotte Hornets (1996-99) and Golden State Warriors (2000-02) later gave him the opportunity to be a full-time head coach. He finished his coaching career with a 161-191 (.457) record.

NBA Career Accolades

3

All-NBA 2nd Team

1974-75

1975-76

1972-73

2

NBA Champion

1973-74

1975-76

2

All-Defensive 2nd Team

1979-80

1974-75

1

All-Rookie 1st Team

1970-71

1

Hall of Fame

1991

1

All-Defensive 1st Team

1975-76

1

NBA All-Star MVP

1972-73

1

NBA Sporting News ROY

1970-71

1

NBA Rookie of the Year

1970-71

1

NBA MVP

1972-73

NBA Career Stats

Season	Team	PTS	GP	MIN	FGM	FGM	3PM	3PA	FTM	FTM
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1970-71	BOS	1373	81	3076	550	1302			273	373
1971-72	BOS	1489	79	3186	657	1357			175	243
1972-73	BOS	1684	82	3425	740	1637			204	262
1973-74	BOS	1518	80	3352	645	1475			228	274
1974-75	BOS	1329	65	2632	569	1199			191	244
1975-76	BOS	1479	78	3101	611	1305			257	340
1976-77	BOS	818	50	1888	328	756			162	198
1977-78	BOS	1435	77	3215	598	1220			239	284
1978-79	BOS	1127	68	2517	488	1010			151	187
1979-80	BOS	940	66	2159	422	932	1	12	95	122
1982-83	MIL	324	40	1014	136	306	0	2	52	63