

Spectacular basketball



At its highest level, basketball is a mix of athleticism, strategy, and artistry that can make it spectacular. Players like Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson are famous for their amazing skills that transformed their matches into shows. Michael Jordan, for example, had the unique ability to jump and hang in the air, while **smashing** the ball down the hoop, which was called the “Spectacular Move”, while Magic Johnson’s “no-look passes” **deceived** and confused the opponents.

backboard: *tabellone del canestro*

to deceive: *ingannare*

to pave the way:

lastricare la strada

to smash: *schiacciare*

■ The Harlem Globetrotters

However, basketball as a pure show is performed by the **Harlem Globetrotters** team. The Globetrotters are an American exhibition basketball team known for combining fun and athletic skills into a unique show. Since their founding in 1925, they have played over 26,000 exhibition games in 124 countries, becoming global ambassadors of the sport. In their games, they constantly interact with the crowd, dance, and incorporate humour into their routines. They represent the fun and creativity that can be found in basketball, having transformed a structured game into an unforgettable carnival of skill and laughter.

The most famous performance of the Harlem Globetrotters is the **Magic Circle**. It is a spectacular way of warming up before the game: the players stand in a circle and perform a series of tricks with the ball, such as rotating it on fingertips or very quick or acrobatic passes. During the game, the audience can also enjoy improbable shots: from half-court, behind the **backboard**, or even from the arena ceiling.

■ The cultural impact of the Globetrotters

The Globetrotters broke racial barriers and showed incredible skills at a time when black athletes were often excluded from professional leagues. They showed the world the talent and joy of the game, influencing a great number of players and helping **pave the way** for a fully integrated NBA championship.

This jump, performed during the 1988 All-Star Game, became the Air Jordan logo.

1  Match the beginnings and endings.

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson... | <input type="checkbox"/> | a. athletic skills and a funny game. |
| 2. The Harlem Globetrotters... | <input type="checkbox"/> | b. often interact during games. |
| 3. The Globetrotters combine... | <input type="checkbox"/> | c. are a famous American spectacular basketball team. |
| 4. The team was founded... | <input type="checkbox"/> | d. is a consistent part of their performances. |
| 5. They have played... | <input type="checkbox"/> | e. from the most incredible points in the court. |
| 6. The team and the crowd... | <input type="checkbox"/> | f. more than 26,000 games in 124 countries. |
| 7. Humour... | <input type="checkbox"/> | g. contributed to breaking the racial barriers in basketball. |
| 8. They use the Magic Circle... | <input type="checkbox"/> | h. in 1925. |
| 9. They shoot the ball... | <input type="checkbox"/> | i. to warm up before the game. |
| 10. Apart from fun, the Globetrotters... | <input type="checkbox"/> | j. are famous for their spectacular skills in games. |

2   **PAIR WORK** The following were some of the famous people who have been included in the Harlem Globetrotters' team as honorary members. Search for information about this inclusion and share it with the class.

Nelson Mandela • Kareem Abdul-Jabbar • Pope John Paul II • Pope Francis