

## How Did The Cavaliers Choose Their Jersey Numbers?

Written by {ga=jdclevelandfan}

Wednesday, February 03 2010 10:00 AM - Last Updated Thursday, February 04 2010 12:50 PM

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On Sunday, I watched the Cavs play the Los Angeles Clippers via the Fox Sports West feed . . . not because I wanted to, of course, but because I live in Southern California. And that's the option.

But two fun things came out of it.

One, as much as I love Fred McLeod and Austin Carr . . . I don't mind Clippers' play-by-play announcer Ralph Lawler. He has a slew of A.C.-like catch-phrases, most notably "Bingo!", which he joyously shouts every time a Clipper sinks a 3-pointer. He even says it, albeit calmer, when an opponent hits.

Naturally, with [the insane way](#) the game started, Lawler was droppin' B-bombs so often that it sounded like he was hustlin' old ladies at a community hall.

(The Cavs hit 11 threes in the first quarter. The Clippers hit three. Lawler shouted "Bingo!" after 12 of those 14 makes . . . yeah, I actually checked. That's a 85.7% "Bingo!" rate. And after the seventh-straight Cavs three, a LeBron dagger from a few feet behind the arc, Lawler exclaimed: "I don't know what to say. 'Bingo!' wouldn't be enough." How self-aware!)

Ironically, Lawler's "Bingo!" has a Cavaliers connection. It's a reference to one-time Clipper and Cleveland Cavaliers legend Bobby "Bingo" Smith, who was notorious for hitting long shots. [But

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there wasn't a "three-point" line until his final season in the NBA, and that year he only hit 28.4% of them. Stage fright, perhaps.]

Anyway, the other nice thing to come out of Fox Sports West's telecast was a nice feature they ran at halftime . . . where they had most of the Cavaliers explaining why they chose their current jersey numbers.

I'm not sure if this ran anywhere else, but I thought it was pretty interesting . . . so I went ahead and transcribed it for you below. You know, because I'm cool like that. (?)

Check it:

### **Zydrunas Ilgauskas - #11**

"When I was growing up, one of my favorite players, [Arvydas] Sabonis, was wearing [number 11] for my hometown team [BC Žalgiris in Kaunas, Lithuania] . . . and I've been wearing it ever since I was a little kid."

### **Daniel "Boobie" Gibson - #1**

"Just because of what it symbolizes. Anybody that sees the number 1, they know that it's the best. And every time I get out there on the floor, I try to have the best attitude, I try to play harder than everybody. Number 1 symbolizes everything that I want to do out there on the floor."

### **Anderson Varejao - #17**

"I wear number 17, because when I started playing professional [basketball] in Brazil. I was

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young . . . and in Brazil it's different than here. You have juniors and pro on [the same] club. It's not college and pros like it is here. And it was the only number that they had for me. Everybody else, the older guys, they had from 4 to 15. So I took this number, and it kinda gave me some luck, and I started playing good . . . so I kept it."

### LeBron James - #23

"I wear the number 23 because I love Michael Jordan. I grew up idolizing him. And seeing him play the game of basketball was uplifting to me and encouraging for me to want to be really good and play at a high level. So, I try to carry on the legacy . . . carry on the number in the right way."

[Of course, LeBron put his future of wearing #23 [in doubt](#) back in November.]

### Anthony Parker - #18

"I played in Israel before I came back to the NBA, and I had such a great time . . . two of my sons were born while I was playing overseas and one was actually born in Israel. And I just had such a great experience that I wanted to take something from that experience. The number 18, in Judaism, it means 'chai' . . . and it's the symbol for life and good fortune in Judaism. And I thought that was something to take away from Israel and let them know I'm still representing them."

### Shaquille O'Neal - #33

"Well, it's coming towards the end of my career. I started playing with the number 33 in high school and in college . . . and the number was available, so I just wanted to wear it."

[In the NBA, Shaq wore #34 with the Los Angeles Lakers and #32 with the Orlando Magic and the Miami Heat.]

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### Mo Williams - #2

"I wear number 2 because Mark Price is retired here . . . sharp-shooter that everybody loves, including me . . . so I had to think of a number that I could start a new life with. And 2 was the number . . . nothing significant [or no] reasoning behind it, but I think it worked out for me."

[Mo, if you couldn't guess, wore Price's #25 while he was in Milwaukee.]

### Addendum:

### Delonte West - #13

Now, if you're like me, you immediately noticed Delonte West's absence. Not that it's surprising in the least . . . Delonte has been almost completely closed off from the media since his arrest on misdemeanor gun charges last September. It's a shame. Both that incident . . . and his closed-off-ness.

You just know he'd have something awesome to say in a piece like this.

It isn't much of a consolation, but I was able to find Delonte's response to this jersey question in an online chat he did not long after joining the Cavs two years ago. And it's in the more serious Delonte tone.

He said:

"Well, I originally wanted #15 when I got the Celtics and that number was retired [in honor of

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Tommy Heinsohn], of course.

"And my buddy, Eddie Basden . . . my good friend from back home . . . we had always dreamed and had aspirations of getting to the NBA together. I got there the year before him while he was still at UNC-Charlotte where he was wearing #13. And I told him, 'I'm going to wear 13 and every time you see me play, that's time to come on. I'm waiting on you.' And sure enough he got into the league . . . I think he started out with the [Chicago Bulls] . . . and there's a picture of us [together] with our 13s on.

"So, there's no superstition. I just wear #13."

### **J.J. Hickson - #21**

According to the Cavs' media guide, J.J. Hickson chose to wear #21 because he wore #2 in high school and #1 in college.

### **Jamario Moon - #15**

Jamario wore the number 15 on his first pro team, the Mobile Revelers. And according to Wikipedia, the Cavs are his 15th team since then. (Although that's probably a stretch.)

### **Darnell Jackson - #00**

Darnell has said he chose the number 00 because, quote, "it's different and kind of cool."

### **Jawad Williams - #31**

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He wore #31 in high school, when playing for St. Edward High School in Lakewood.

### Leon Powe - #44

Soon after joining the Cleveland Cavaliers, Leon said:

"Number 44 was my childhood number. I wore '0' in Boston. But I wanted a fresh start and I wanted to go back to what was working for me when I was younger, in college and playing in AAU. I'm just trying to bring back the old beast in me."

### Danny Green - #14

Danny chose #14 because his two favorite holidays . . . Valentine's Day and Flag Day . . . are both celebrated on the 14th of their respective months. Valentine's Day, as you probably know, falls on February 14th and Flag Day, as you probably *don't* know, is "celebrated" on June 14th.

By extension, Danny has also said that he's found that he plays his best basketball between those two holidays, which means garbage time is going to get a little more interesting post-All Star break.

Okay. That's a lie, obviously. The truth is, I couldn't find anything on why Danny wears #14 . . . other than that it's the number he wore for the Tar Heels.