



PRESENTED BY
CASINO ARIZONA
TALKING STICK RESORT



TEAM NEWS SCHEDULE SHOP TICKETS ENTERTAINERS PROMOS CONNECT COMMUNITY ARENA CONTACT SEARCH

SUNS NEWS

PRINT RSS E-NEWS MOBILE ALERTS SHARE

Ball Boys Got Royal Treatment

Paola Boivin
The Arizona Republic
March 20, 2004

Nothing obscures character more than celebrity. We know how Charles Barkley behaves in front of a camera, but how did tonight's ornery, oops, honoree, treat the little people?

We sought out a former Suns ball boy for answers.

"Unbelievable," Jae Staats said. "So many players or coaches will walk through the building and ignore the cleaning crew. Charles was never that way. He'd throw a pair of shoes to the guy cleaning up the popcorn off the floor and was friends with all the guards."

Staats, 30, a former ball boy and bench boy for the Suns, believes the most under-reported story about Barkley's career is his generosity. He is thrilled the player will join the Suns Ring of Honor tonight.

"His tips probably paid for my college," said Staats, who now runs a Valley-based digital video business.



For more Phoenix Suns coverage, check out www.azcentral.com, Arizona's homepage.

help him Christmas shop.

Staats and his peers were thrilled and enjoyed the entourage that followed them around while they helped Barkley carry packages. The player then took them to lunch "and tried to hook us up with the waitress."

"As we're leaving, we say, 'Hey, Charles, that was so much fun. Thanks,'" Staats said. "He says, 'Wait, we have one more stop.' We follow him into an electronics store and he tells the clerk, 'Give me five of your best CD players.' They were \$650 a pop!

"We tell him, 'Chuck, you don't need to do this.' He says, 'I like you guys. Merry Christmas.' We all run back to the room and call our parents."

When Barkley would leave town for a road trip, he would often entrust his high-priced car to Staats, whom he called Chumpy. Barkley would ask him to fill it with gas and offer him unlimited use. "Go get yourself a date," he would say.

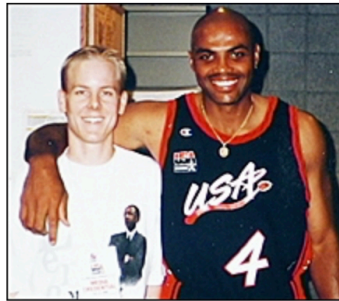
If he asked Staats to run an errand, the reward would often be a \$100 tip.

When the Suns traded Barkley to Houston, the player called all five bench assistants and left messages on their voicemails, thanking them for all their help and saying how much he enjoyed working with them. Staats still has the message and plays it for friends.

"It's like my life peaked then," he said, laughing. "He's amazing, generous. It's a story that should be told."

Consider it done.

COPYRIGHT 2004, AZCENTRAL.COM. Used with permission.



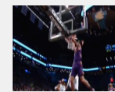
Former ball boy Jae Staats has fond memories of tonight's Ring of Honor inductee.

(Courtesy Jae Staats)

Staats remembers a 1993 road trip to Houston when he and several other bench boys (the next step after ball boy) went to a nearby mall to kill time. They ran into Barkley, who asked if they would

HEADLINES

- Suns Throwback:** Alvan Adams, Part Two
 - E-Mail Debate:** Defining Moment, Individual Story
 - Suns, Jam Enter Single Affiliation Partnership
 - Hornacek Part of Basketball Without Borders
 - Photos:** The Best of the Suns Dancers Season
 - Infographic:** Reliving the Suns of Anarchy
 - Suns Hope Chemistry Sticks Through Change
 - Season In Review:** Dragic | Bledsoe | Frye
- [More Headlines »](#)



Future Ignited: Suns Postseason Special pt.3
Take a look back at the great season that was, and the bright future ahead for the Phoenix Suns



Future Ignited: Suns Postseason Special pt.2
Take a look back at the great season that was, and the bright future ahead for the Phoenix Suns



Future Ignited: Suns Postseason Special pt.4
Take a look back at the great season that was, and the bright future ahead for the Phoenix Suns