



When Earl Belcher was a young boy, he like many others dreamed of being a professional athlete. So he worked hard and honed his craft like any 5'6" seventh grader would and tried to play as many rounds as he could in order to prepare his future on the PGA tour. But one summer something strange happened, he grew to nearly six feet two inches with a body better suited for playing on the hardwoods than hitting a five wood. So Earl decided to pick up the game that his cousins Hiram and Charles Sapp and Jerry Fulmer had been working on for many years, the game of basketball. As a ninth grader at Roosevelt Jr. High he began his basketball career under the tutelage of Coach Al Bullock and showed amazing promise. So when the time came to choose a high school the choice was simple: Earl would follow his cousins and attend Christian Brothers Academy a decision that would change his life forever.

The year was 1974 and the CBA basketball program was becoming one of the most successful in the area. They had won the CNYCL Championship in 1973 and tied for the Championship in 1974 and the current team seemed focused to make a run at winning the programs first Sectional Championship, a title that eluded them in their first three years of participation. So with a stacked Varsity team and his relative inexperience in the game, Earl was delegated to the Junior Varsity team to learn the CBA system and improve his game so that he could be a contributor in the following two years. That season gave us a glimpse of what was to come. The team went undefeated, rarely being involved in a competitive game. So when the varsity advanced into the sectional playoffs, Coach Felasco brought up young Earl to get some added experience. In the Sectional Championship game Earl scored the final basket.

The next two years Earl certainly made his mark on CBA and Central New York basketball history. As a junior, Earl helped to lead one of the most talented teams in CBA history to a 19 – 3 record. He and his two cousins made up the most feared front line in the area. For a first year varsity player his stats were amazing. He averaged 16.5 points and nearly eight rebounds per game. Earl played an important role in the teams second consecutive league and sectional championship. He was named first team all city (at least in one paper) and was gradually becoming recognized as one of the top players high school players in all of Central New York.



As a senior it got even better, for Earl and the team. The Brothers were looking to make history by being the first team ever to win three straight Class A championships. And with backcourt star Marty Headd... (in fact during that time they were linked together in such a way that you might think that HEADDANDBELCHER was all one word.) Most importantly of course, the team won an unprecedented third straight league and sectional championship. And along the way, Earl played like a man on a mission.(maybe that paper that didn't pick him first team all league as a junior game him the incentive that he needed.) He led the league in scoring with a 27.6 points and 14 rebounds per game average. Earl was the first player since Kevin Harrigan in 65 to lead the league in that category. He scored under twenty points only twice all season...(16, 18) and scored over thirty twice. Earl saved his best game for last. In the Intersectional game (the prelude to the state tournament) against Union Endicott, Earl shot 17 for 24 from the field and scored 38 points in his last game in a CBA uniform. For his efforts, Earl was selected on the first team all league and all upstate and was named to third team all state.

When it came time for college, Syracuse native Jimmy Satalin came to call. St. Bonaventure at the time still one of the elite teams in college basketball and was coming off an NIT Championship in 1977. He took a chance on Earl and got what turned out to be the biggest steal in all of college basketball. The mark he left on the St. Bonaventure program was even greater than the one he left at CBA. First, while at Bonnies the teams he played on won over 65 percent of their games and advanced to post season play twice. He ended his career as the second leading scorer in school history scoring 2077

points, an average of 20 points per game (this is even after a freshman year in which he averaged only 7.3 points per game.) In his junior and senior years, he led that Atlantic 10 in scoring, was named to the first team all league and was also named the leagues Player of the year in each of those seasons... not too bad for a guy who originally wanted to be a golfer! His 650 rebound were good for 16th on the all time list. For his accomplishments, Earl was named an Honorable Mention all American in his junior and senior years.

When it came time for the NBA Draft, Earl was chosen in the fourth round by the San Antonio Spurs. Unfortunately his pro career was cut short by an ankle injury but the impression that he made on the game and the programs for which he played will live on forever. Earl, you worked very hard to make yourself a tremendous basketball player. Tonight, you will rightfully take your place among the CBA's finest athletes.

