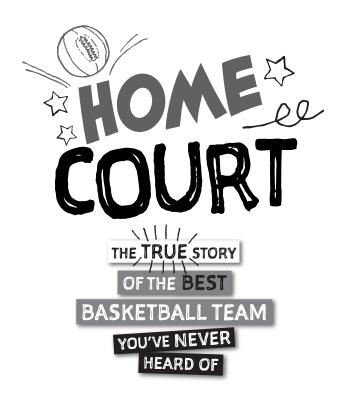




By Larry Needle

PJ OUR WAY.



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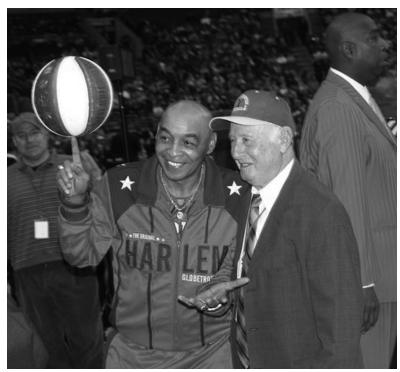


I was once asked how I would describe Louis "Red" Klotz in one sentence. I responded, "The little giant with the timeless two-handed set shot and game-winning smile."

Red and I were opponents for thousands of games, but this did not keep us from becoming the closest of friends off the court.

We traveled the world together, playing in more than 100 countries. We entertained presidents, popes, and people of all ages and walks of life during Globetrotter games.

Some of my fondest memories with Red are



Legendary players Curly Neal & Red Klotz at a Globetrotters game

exploring all the new places in which we played, looking for anything we could get our hands on to remember the trip. And, of course, I remember that night in Martin, Tennessee, in January, 1971, when Red sank the game-winning basket for his team—the last time one of Red's teams beat the Globetrotters. After thousands of

defeats, I was happy to see Red and his guys get a win.

Red is usually perceived as being the biggest loser in sports history, but it is really quite the opposite. Before he formed the Washington Generals, he was a star player growing up in Philadelphia and at Villanova, and he later won an NBA championship.

He has contributed so much to the Globetrotters and the game of basketball itself. Some of his players have gone on to play in the NBA, ABA, and some even became Harlem Globetrotters. I always thought of him as a great evaluator and developer of not only talent, but personality as well. He may have been on the losing end of the scoreboard many nights, but the laughs and thrills that we brought to audiences all over the world is what makes Red a winner every single day.

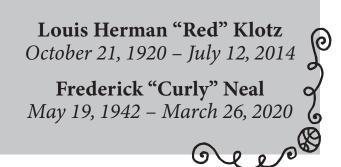
Even though our days of traveling the globe together have ended, Red still remains one of my closest friends. It is always a treat for me to see Red, his wife Gloria, his son-in-law John Ferrari (the Generals' general manager), and all of Red's children and grandchildren.

After countless games, jump shots, dunks, and pranks, the Globetrotters' show still brings joy and laughter to people all over the world.

We did it together, Red.

"Curly" Neal Harlem Globetrotters, 2012

In Memory of





The crowd started booing louder and louder, and the Sixers' coach called for a time-out. The season hadn't been a very good one, and it was more of the same on this night. The Celtics were winning by 20 and the fans were getting restless.

"Trade 'em all!" shouted one fan. "You're an embarrassment!" hollered another.

Louis and his Grandfather sat quietly, taking it all in. "These fans are pretty tough, huh, Grandpa?" said Louis.

His grandfather smiled one of his big smiles,

Jewish Players in the NBA

The first basket in the NBA was scored by a Jewish player. In 1946, Ossie Schectman scored the first basket in the very first game of the newly formed Basketball Association of America (BAA), as the NBA was known at the time.

Oscar Benjamin Schectman was from Brooklyn, New York, and his parents were immigrants from Russia. In the late 1930s, Schectman was a basketball star at Long Island University. After college he played for the SPHAS, and in 1946 he joined the New York Knicks, who were part of the BAA. Schechtman was inducted into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame in 1998.



You got the moves, Ossie!



Israeli NBA player Omri Casspi

Since Ossie's time, there have been over 20 Jewish players in the NBA, including Jordan Farmar, who played for the Lakers, Clippers, Nets, Grizzlies, and Kings; Omri Casspi, the first Israeli selected in the first round of the NBA draft; and Tamir Goodman, known as the "the Jewish Jordan." Israeli-Serbian Deni Avdija currently plays in the NBA for the Washington Wizards, who held a Jewish heritage night in 2021 that featured a message from Avdija in English and Hebrew, and video messages from the Israeli embassy, Omri Casspi, and players from Israeli National Team.

the kind Louis usually saw just before a story was coming.

"Louis, let me tell you a little bit about tough fans," he started. "Would you believe fans poking pins in your leg every time you ran down court? Or throwing bottles and trash at you? How about fans shaking the basket while you're trying to make your free throws?"

"That would never happen, Grandpa," Louis said. "That's crazy."

"I wish it were crazy, Louis. I wish it were. I think it's about time you learned about when I played basketball. I was your age, and I played for a team from Philadelphia they called the SPHAS."

"Wow!" said Louis, excited to hear one of Grandpa's stories. "Were they good?"

"I'll say," Grandpa said. "Not only were they good, they were one of the best teams in the whole world. And, Louis, would you believe the entire team was Jewish?"

"How could they have been that good?" asked

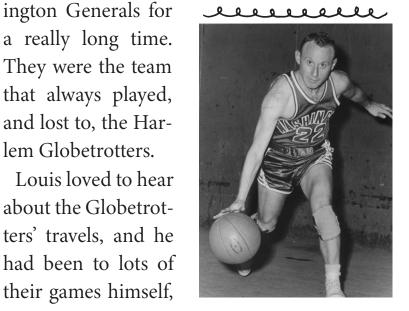
Louis. "There have only been a few Jewish players in NBA history!"

"This is before the NBA, Louis. This is when the game was just catching on in America in the 1920s and '30s. It was much different than the game today. Much tougher, actually. The people that played were the immigrants living in the cities, be they Irish, German, Polish or Italian. And there were lots of Jewish players too."

Louis knew that his grandfather, Louis "Red" Klotz, had played and coached for the Wash-

a really long time. They were the team that always played, and lost to, the Harlem Globetrotters.

Louis loved to hear about the Globetrotters' travels, and he had been to lots of their games himself,



The Harlem Globetrotters

The legendary Harlem Globetrotters basketball team, which Red would eventually play against thousands of times, wasn't formed in Harlem, New York. It was actually formed on the south side of Chicago, where all the players were raised, in the 1920s. The Globetrotters were originally called the Savoy Big Five. A team of Black American players, they were one of the main attractions of the Savoy Ballroom, playing exhibition games before dances. Not long afterwards, several of the players left to form a new team.



The star players of the Globetrotters with manager Abe Saperstein

Abe Saperstein became the team's manager and promoter. He called them the New York Harlem Globetrotters, and they began touring Illinois and Iowa. Saperstein selected Harlem, New York as their home city, since Harlem was the center of Black culture, and he thought the name would make the team more appealing.

Gradually, the Globetrotters worked comic routines into their act, and after a while they became known as much for their entertaining antics as their basketball skills.

In 1952, Abe Saperstein invited Red Klotz to create a team to accompany them on their tours. The Washington Generals became the Globetrotters' opponents, and it remained that way for thousands of games over many decades.

The Globetrotters continue to bring their entertainment to fans around the world each year.

Have you seen them play?