

# Katie Smith

## Straight Shooter

**L**isa Leslie, Sheryl Swoopes, and Chamique Holdsclaw are probably the players who come to mind when you think about the WNBA. Well, make room for Katie Smith, the multi-talented Minnesota Lynx who's on her way to becoming the WNBA's brightest star.

Katie tore up the league in 2001 by setting seven single-season records, including highest scoring average (23.1 points per game) and most points in one game (46). "I'm mostly proud of the way I came into the season ready to play and maintaining it all the way through," she says.

**Hometown:** Logan, Ohio

**Height:** 5' 11" **Weight:** 181 lbs.

**Birth Date:** June 4, 1974

**Accomplishments:** Gold medalist at the 2000 Summer Olympics; two-time ABL champion (1996-97, 1997-98)

One of the league's most accurate 3-point shooters, she can post up or drive to the hoop and play every position but center. "Katie has a very quick first step and can go

by you," says Los Angeles Spark guard Tamecka Dixon. "That makes her very tough to guard."

On D, Katie is so effective that Lynx coach Brian Agler has her guard the best player on the opposing team, no matter what the player's position.

"Katie will guard anybody," says Coach Agler. "She's one of the best defenders [in the league]."

WNBA fans may just be getting to know Katie, but her name and her game were no secret to Big Ten fans. She finished her Ohio State University career as the conference's all-time leading scorer, with 2,578 points (20.8 per game). From there, she joined the American Basketball League's Columbus Quest and led the team to back-to-back championships.

Katie slipped into the WNBA in 1999 with barely a ripple. Her record-breaking 2001 performance got her some press, but the Lynx went 12-20 and fell off the WNBA radar screen.

Guard Betty Lennox, the 2000 WNBA Rookie of the Year, and forward Svetlana Abrosimova will give Katie scoring help this season, and they want her to get the notice she deserves. "The team needs to win for Katie to be in the headlines," says Betty.

But Katie has no interest in ink. "It doesn't bother me that I don't get more attention," she says. "All I want is for our team to give it our best shot. I don't think we've done that yet."

When they do, Katie will be on everyone's mind. — by Cara LaBrie



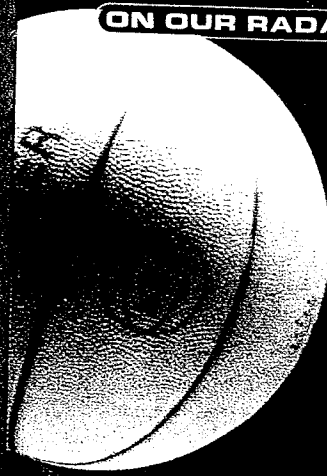
► **Random Fact:** Katie graduated from Ohio State with her degree in zoology and plans to go to dental school when her basketball career ends.

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ON OUR RADAR

# LeBron James

NBA-ready



**Random Fact:** Kobe Bryant gave LeBron a pair of his specially made Adidas American flag sneakers. LeBron wore them in a game on February 10 and scored 36 points.

**L**ike many top young basketball players, LeBron James gets asked if he's going to leave school early to join the NBA.

But those other young players are in college. LeBron is a junior guard at St. Vincent-St. Mary High School, in Akron, Ohio. "LeBron's the best high school player I've ever seen," says former NBA coach Danny Ainge.

Many pro scouts say LeBron would be the Number 1 pick in this year's NBA draft. Last summer, he was invited to join Michael Jordan's private workouts along with current NBA stars like Antoine Walker and Michael Finley. Shaquille O'Neal drove an hour from Cleveland, Ohio, last February, to see LeBron play. "I heard he was the Number One player," said Shaq, "and I wanted to see for myself. He *is* the Number One player."

But LeBron won't be in this year's draft because the NBA prohibits players from being selected until their high school class has graduated. That's okay with LeBron, because he plans to get his St. V-M diploma in 2003. "I can do more to get

my brain and my game ready [if I finish school]," he says.

At 17, LeBron is already an NBA-size 6' 7" and 223 pounds. He has the moves to blow by defenders and throw down a sky-walking dunk. More important, he's a team player. He had 5.8 assists per game to go along with his 28 points last season.

"Sometimes the coaches tell me to be selfish," he says, "but my game won't let me be selfish."

Being the focus of so much attention can be tough to deal with, but LeBron has a simple way of keeping his head on straight while the hype swirls around him: hanging out with his close friends.

"I'm under a super microscope," says LeBron. "I've got my friends to keep me cool. As long as you've got friends, you've got nothing to worry about."

— by Grant Wahl

**Hometown:** Akron, Ohio  
**Height:** 6' 7" **Weight:** 223 lbs.  
**Birth Date:** December 30, 1984  
**Accomplishments:** 2002 *Parade* magazine Player of the Year; first sophomore to win Ohio's Mr. Basketball Award (2001)

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1. Katie can play every position except?
2. Katie is the career All-time scoring champion for which conference?
3. What year did she enter the WNBA?
4. 2001 Katie set single season records in how many categories?
5. What are her plans after basketball?
6. What school does LeBron play for?
7. LeBron was the second sophomore to win Ohio's Mr. Basketball Award? True or False
8. LeBron plans on entering the NBA draft in 2003? True or False
9. How big is LeBron?
10. LeBron's scoring average last year was?