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Shaquille O'Neal, a True Jersey Giant

In an Exclusive Interview, Shaq Talks About His Lottery Partnership, Jersey and the NBA

TRENTON (Feb. 14, 2025) – NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal has had success on and off the basketball court. He is also a Newark native.

He was raised in a military family, which moved to Germany before settling in Texas. He became a college basketball star at LSU and was the first-round draft pick of the Orlando Magic, starting a nearly 20-year NBA career that included four championships. Since retiring from professional sports more than a decade ago, he's gone on to become an NBA commentator and a media celebrity as a movie star, rap artist and producer and brand pitchman.

Shaq recently partnered with the New Jersey Lottery to create a $5 Scratch-Off game, "Jersey Giant Winnings," which just had its first $200,000 top-prize winner.

In an exclusive interview with the New Jersey Lottery, Shaq talks about his partnership for the Scratch-Off game, all things Jersey and the NBA. Also in the interview, Shaq reflects on the partnership with the New Jersey Lottery, the current state of the NBA and what fans should expect heading into the playoffs.

Shaq's responses on the New Jersey Lottery's YouTube page can be found on the links to the following questions:

- What does it mean to see yourself on a lottery ticket?
- How do streaming deals help the NBA?
- What are your expectations for the rest of the season?

Shaq said he felt it was important to participate in a promotion by his home state, considering the fact that 30% of all Lottery proceeds goes to the state pension program, benefiting primarily teachers, police officers and fire fighters.

"It's a big deal for myself and my family. I think of myself as a neighborhood guy who was following his dreams, but still remained humble…it just shows kids that if you follow your dreams, anything is possible," Shaq said in the interview, reflecting on his Newark upbringing. "I was having trouble in the academic world, and my father was trying all types of things to motivate me, and he knew Dr. J was my guy," Shaq said. "So he told me that if I get good grades, he'd take me to see Dr. J play. So, one day he comes in the house and says 'come on, we got to catch a train.' And then we get to Madison Square Garden. I get to see my favorite player, and he goes baseline and he throws it down and the crowd goes crazy. At that time, I remember vividly saying to my father, I know what I want to be when I grow up. I want to be just like Dr. J."

More About the New Jersey Lottery

Since its inception in 1970, the Lottery has contributed nearly $33.7 billion to the State, helping to support many worthwhile programs and services. Lottery profits currently help bolster the public employee pension system under a 30-year agreement signed into law in 2017.

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