



PRESS RELEASE
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Marques Houtman Announced As Eligible Candidate For Naismith Basketball Hall Of Fame Class Of 2024

Marques Houtman, a pioneering Cape Verdean player, has been announced as an eligible candidate for the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Class Of 2024.

Houtman is a first-time nominee as a player, officially listed as representing North America. He currently resides in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he grew up. He is a dual citizen of Cape Verde through his family, who immigrated to the United States in the middle of the 20th century.

Houtman had a remarkable playing career, highlighted by his performance at the 2007 FIBA AfroBasket tournament. He led the Cape Verde National Team to a bronze medal in the competition and was named to the all-tournament team. He was considered the best point guard in Africa from 2007 to 2009. These team and individual achievements were historic for the tiny island nation off the continent's western coast, with a population of just over 500,000. In addition to his individual accolades, Houtman's decade-long international career produced more success for the Cape Verde National Team in competition than it ever had, both before and since.

Cape Verde National Team Head Coach Emanuel Trovoada considered Houtman, a 6-foot-3, 195-pound guard with strong ball-handling skills and a deep shooting range, to have an "astonishing playing style."¹

¹ CPV - "Trovoada Has Faith In Battling Cape Verde", FIBA.Basketball, August 26, 2007, <https://www.fiba.basketball/news/CPV-Trovoada-has-faith-in-battling-Cape-Verde>

Houtman made his debut with the Senior Men's National Team in 2001, at the age of 22.

His breakout performances with Cape Verde came in 2003, when he scored 24 points against Senegal and 18 points against Mali at the FIBA Pre-Qualifying Tournament, hosted in Senegal. In 2006, he helped lead Cape Verde to a bronze medal at the Lusophonia Games in China.

This unprecedented success led to a historic peak, where at the 2007 FIBA AfroBasket, Houtman was named to the all-tournament team and led Cape Verde to a bronze medal. His two best games came in wins against Nigeria (19 points, nine rebounds, three assists) and Egypt (12 points, six assists).

In 2008, Cape Verde made it to the FIBA Pre-Qualifying Tournament, where Houtman played against Germany, led by Naismith Basketball Hall of Famer Dirk Nowitzki (Class of 2023).

In 2009, Cape Verde had its best-ever finish at the Lusophonia Games, earning a silver medal. At the tournament, hosted in Portugal, Houtman's best games came through a 15-point performance against Guinea Bissau and a 13-point performance against Brazil.

Houtman turned the spotlight he earned with Cape Verde into professional playing opportunities in three different countries: Angola, Portugal, and the United States.

He played for the Boston Frenzy in the American Basketball Association from 2005 to 2006, which was coached by Joe "Jellybean" Bryant, the father of Naismith Basketball Hall of Famer Kobe Bryant (Class of 2020). Houtman averaged 13.0 points and 2.5 assists per game for the Frenzy.

Houtman played multiple years in the Portuguese First and Second Divisions. After averaging more than 20 points per game and finishing second in the Second Division in scoring with Fisica de Torres Vedras, Houtman signed with FC Porto, whom he helped guide to the Taca de Liga (Portuguese Cup) in 2007.

Houtman also played with Clube 1 de Agosto in Angola, where in 2008, the team went 63-1 through all competitions and claimed both the League Championship and Cup Championship.

Houtman grew up in New Bedford, Massachusetts, which is located on the state's South Coast and is home to one of the largest overseas populations of Cape Verdean people.

Houtman played two years on varsity at New Bedford High School. In the 1990's, the New Bedford Whalers were considered one of the best athletic programs in the country, having won back-to-back Division I state championships in multiple sports in 1993 and 1994, including boys basketball, baseball, football, and boys volleyball.

In 1993, the legendary St. Anthony's of New Jersey, coached by Naismith Basketball Hall of Famer Bob Hurley (Class of 2010), traveled to New Bedford for a game. The Whalers had an intense rivalry with neighboring Durfee High School, who was led by future NBA player Chris Herren.

Houtman began his varsity career at New Bedford in 1995 and played for two years. As a senior, he averaged more than 24 points per game. He was not heavily recruited, though, and walked on at nearby NCAA Division II Stonehill College.

Stonehill was ranked as high as No. 22 in national polls and made the NCAA Tournament Sweet Sixteen during Houtman's freshman season. But after not earning much playing time his freshman season, nor at the beginning of his sophomore season, Houtman transferred in the middle of his sophomore year to NCAA Division III UMass Dartmouth, ensuring that he would be able to play immediately due to transfer rules at the time.

Houtman had a major impact right away and went on to have, arguably, the greatest individual career in school history.

He was a two-time All-Little East Conference first-team selection. In 2001, he was selected for the LEC all-tournament team while also earning Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) and National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) first-team all-regional accolades. Houtman served as a tri-captain during a senior campaign that saw the Corsairs finish at 25-2 overall, as UMass Dartmouth captured both the Little East regular season and tournament titles and advanced to the NCAA Division III Sweet Sixteen under legendary coach, Brian Baptiste. That 2000-01 Corsair Athletic Hall of Fame squad was ranked as high as second in some national polls during that magical year.

Houtman led the Corsairs in scoring (18.8 ppg) and connected at a 42% clip from three-point range (63-151) as a senior, leading the league in three-point shooting while ranking fourth in scoring. He was the Most Outstanding Player of the 2000 Hampton Inn Classic Tournament and enjoyed many highlights during his final collegiate campaign, including a game-high 26 points in a 86-64 victory over Salem State that came in the second round of the 2001 NCAA Division III tournament. Following his final competitive game for the Corsairs, Houtman played in the annual New England Division III Senior All-Star Game.²

In describing his playing style, Baptiste said, "Marques has good quickness and he can really get up in the air. He has a natural jumping ability that allows him to get up above people, hang a little bit and hit shots that other players just can't make. He's a big-time scorer for us, and when he's shooting the ball well, we're a tough team to play because we have so much strength inside."³

Since his retirement from playing professionally, Houtman has become a well-respected ambassador for the game. He devotes much of his time to helping the next generation of basketball players through coaching and mentorship. He leads the Cabo Sports Club and assists with ASAP All Scholastic Athletic Program, and A1 Athletics & Fitness, which is centered on youth players aged 7 to 12, with programs happening both in the United States and Cape Verde.

Houtman has also played in prisons to help inmates with their morale, is active on nonprofit boards centered on helping people overcome addiction, and regularly hosts fundraisers to support both men's and women's teams competing for the Cape Verdean Basketball Federation.

He is the Founder and Senior Marketing Manager for Urban International Media Group, where he has led campaigns for advocates in social justice and human rights.

Houtman graduated from UMass Dartmouth with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Management of Information Systems (Class of 2002) and works as a Technology Facilitator for Fall River Public Schools.

"He's somebody that young people should look up to, not necessarily because of his work ethic but how he acts in the community. He carries himself very well and cares about the young people," said Tony Lima, a United States representative and strategic advisor for the Cape Verdean Basketball Federation.⁴

² "Corsair Athletic Hall of Fame Spotlight: Marques Houtman '01, Men's Basketball", February 1, 2021, <https://corsairathletics.com/news/2021/2/1/corsair-athletic-hall-of-fame-spotlight-marques-houtman-01-mens-basketball.aspx>

³ "New Bedford's Marques Houtman On A Hot Streak For UMD", The Standard-Times, February 21, 2001, <https://www.southcoasttoday.com/story/sports/2001/02/22/new-bedford-s-marques-houtman/50464434007/>

⁴ "New Bedford's Marques Houtman hopes his guard play for Cape Verde can put him on pro path", The Standard-Times, July 16, 2007, <https://www.southcoasttoday.com/story/sports/high-school/2007/07/16/new-bedford-s-marques-houtman/52846787007/>

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ABOUT

Located in Springfield, Massachusetts, the city where basketball was born, the **Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame** is an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to promoting, preserving, and celebrating the game of basketball at every level – men and women, amateur and professional players, coaches, and contributors, both domestically and internationally. The Hall of Fame Museum is home to more than 400 inductees and over 40,000 square feet of basketball history. Nearly 200,000 people visit the Hall of Fame Museum each year to learn about the game, experience the interactive exhibits, and test their skills on the Jerry Colangelo ``Court of Dreams." Best known for its annual marquee Enshrinement Ceremony honoring the game's elite, the Hall of Fame also operates over 70 high school and collegiate competitions annually throughout the country and abroad. For more information on the Basketball Hall of Fame organization, its museum, and events, visit hoophall.com, follow @hoophall, @hoophallu, @hoophallclassic, or call 1-877-4HOOPLA.

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