Men’s basketball in the Atlantic Coast Conference, better known as the ACC, is a way of life. Fans of ACC basketball whip themselves into a frenzy cheering for their teams. A win or loss against a conference rival can make or break a season, regardless of the team’s final record. This passion is what makes the ACC one of the best and most competitive conferences in men’s collegiate basketball. Its long and storied history has been filled with players who will go down as some of the best that have played college basketball.

Dan Collins has covered ACC men’s basketball as a sportswriter for more than forty years, first for the Chapel Hill Newspaper and for the last twenty years with the Winston-Salem Journal, and he is the author of Tales from the Wake Forest Hardwood. In The ACC Basketball Book of Fame he details some of the greatest players in the ACC’s history from the most recent back to the conference’s founding in 1953. While the player profiles include stories from the court, they also touch on who these players were personally, where they came from, how they ended up playing for their schools, what became of them, and how certain events, other players, and coaches affected their playing careers and lives. In my opinion, these personal stories really make this book.

However, with over sixty years of history and so many great players to choose from, how do you go about choosing the best in an objective way? You certainly cannot expect fans whose love for their team is matched only by their hatred for their team’s biggest rival to be objective. Many greatest player lists can be skewed by those who compare yesterday’s players to today’s players without taking into the account the changes to the game, or when people do not take a long view to history and only think of the players they remember. Because of the ACC’s foresight in preserving the records of the number of votes each player received for All-ACC honors, Collins was able to develop a system that allowed him to score players based on the judgments of those who actually watched them—and their competitors—play. He confesses that to exclude such players as Tree Rollins of Clemson and Dennis Scott of Georgia Tech is crazy, but their numbers just did not add up. One thing that his system does ensure is that some of the little known ACC greats like Tom Owens of the University of South Carolina and Lou Pucillo of North Carolina State University receive their due.

This book is suitable for both public and academic libraries. ACC schools, at least those in the conference as of 2013, as well as the University of South Carolina, should purchase a copy for the information it contains on players, coaches, and important teams. Due to some coarse language and stories concerning drug use, it may not be suitable for a young audience. However, it is a must read for any fan of college basketball.

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