



TAMIR GOODMAN

**ENTREPRENEUR, AUTHOR, SPEAKER, COACH, FORMER PRO BASKETBALL PLAYER,
DUBBED "THE JEWISH JORDAN"**

Tamir Goodman's journey is a testament to faith, perseverance, and groundbreaking achievement. Dubbed "The Jewish Jordan" by the media, he captivated the world with his rare blend of devout religious commitment and elite basketball talent. A top-ranked high school recruit, he made history as the first Jewish athlete to play Division I college and professional basketball while wearing a yarmulke and strictly observing the Sabbath.

His story was widely covered by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Sports Illustrated*, ESPN, CNN, and Fox, among many others. Beyond the court, Tamir is the author of *Live Your Dream*, a sought-after speaker, and a dedicated coach who has inspired thousands of athletes worldwide. As an entrepreneur, he has brought three innovative products to market, including the Aviv Antimicrobial and Moisture-Wicking Basketball Net. He currently serves as the Director of Strategic Brand Initiatives at Fabric.

Tamir holds a BA in Communications and uses his expertise to inspire and connect with audiences around the world. He is married to Judy, and together they live in Jerusalem with their five children. His family and faith continue to be the driving forces behind his life, shaping his work both on and off the court.

You can learn more at www.tamirgoodman.com

Bumper Cars

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Do you ever feel God is trying to tell you something? Nudge or push you? My life was like a bumper car ride in an amusement park. I'd start off in one direction and **Crash!** I'd head over there and **Bam!** I'd turn and **Boom!** Other way, **sideswiped!** And just when you can't move, I'm **rear-ended!** Not until it's over do you realize, you weren't hurt, you're laughing and you'd gladly do it again.

At 17, I was ranked the 25th best high school basketball player in America, while remaining faithful to my Orthodox Jewish upbringing and refusing to play on Shabbat.¹ My school² had to ask me to leave because there was so much media commotion. **Crash!**

I landed in a Christian school that didn't play on Shabbat either.³ Things were great!⁴

I accepted a scholarship at the Division I University of Maryland⁵ who said they'd accommodate me, but as it approached, things changed, so I gave back the scholarship **Bam!**

I ultimately accepted Division I Towson University's offer, which actually changed their schedule to accommodate me, and made history.⁶ Things were great!⁷

After the Sports Illustrated article called me "The Jewish Jordan,"⁸ I was all over the media.⁹ Then I received the worst phone call of my life. My coach and his entire staff were fired¹⁰ **Boom!**

The new coach made it impossible for me to stay there as a Jewish athlete. From day one, he was verbally aggressive towards me, and after many warnings¹¹ he later badly assaulted me in the locker-room. I went to the police department and filed a report.¹² I never played college basketball again. I left the team, emotionally, physically and spiritually broken. **Sideswiped!**

In 2002,¹³ I was signed by top Israeli and European League basketball team, Maccabi Tel Aviv.¹⁴ Things were great!¹⁵

Then I got traded. **Rear-ended!**¹⁶ A person could say, *"This is just too much. Nothing ever goes right. Seems like I'm going down the wrong direction on a one-way street."*

So I moved to the new city to play for the new team¹⁷ and soon after I received a phone call to be involved in a local charity event, benefitting sick children,¹⁸ and it was there that I met my wife. And that is the biggest proof of God's existence in my life.

Now you might say, *"That's not proof." Those are just events; the way things worked out.* But what are the chances that this person was an outstanding athlete from America, that had amazing colligate opportunities, but they wanted her to likewise play on Shabbat, and instead of doing that, she gave back the opportunities, and moved to Israel. Literally the exact same story as me!

We all just need to open up our eyes and take a deeper look for God's handiwork. It's obvious to me now, that when everything seemed so wrong, it was just God nudging me, pushing me, getting me right where I needed to be, to receive and appreciate my ultimate, greatest blessings.¹⁹

Footnotes:

- 1) The Sabbath lasts from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday; I also didn't play on many of the Jewish Holidays.
- 2) I was originally going to an all-boys yeshiva named Talmudical Academy in Baltimore, Maryland.
- 3) I transferred for my senior year to a 7th Day Evangelists school, named Tacoma Academy in Tacoma Park, Maryland.
- 4) I was named MVP of the prestigious "Capital Classic All-Star Game" - an award won by Shaquille O'Neal, LeBron James and other stars.
- 5) What are the chances an observant Orthodox Jewish basketball player, who refused to play on Shabbat or Jewish Holidays could get a Division I college scholarship? 100% unlikely, but I did!
- 6) I didn't have to play on Shabbat or the Jewish holidays, while wearing my kippa on the court.
- 7) At the time, I was the first freshman to start at Towson in over 11 years. I was later presented the Coach's Award for my performance on the court and I was on the Dean's list for my work in the classroom. I also roomed with a Muslim basketball player named Mohamed Fofana who until today is one of my closet friends.
- 8) (www.tamirgoodman.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Jewish-Jordan-SI.jpg). Sports Illustrated wrote an article calling Tamair "The Jewish Jordan" in 1999.
- 9) I was featured on ESPN, 60 Minutes, Fox, CNN, and others. I was written about in The New York Times, The Washington Post and in many other media sources all around the world.
- 10) My coach and everyone who had helped me, so I didn't have to play on Shabbat was now out.
- 11) I called for meetings and let many people know that something wasn't right with the new coach.
- 12) I made a police report but I never pursued the charges.
- 13) In 2022, I was 20 years old.
- 14) Former NBA Coach, David Blatt, was Maccabi Tel Aviv's coach at the time.
- 15) In 2004, I took a break from playing basketball to serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) where I was awarded "Most Outstanding Soldier."
- 16) On paper, it just seemed like the worst thing that could ever happen to my career. Maccabi Tel Aviv had 3 future NBA players on the team, they were probably one of the biggest European Teams of all time, and now I'm getting traded.
- 17) I remember thinking, "wow, how many transitions am I going to have to make in my life?" I had to leave my high school. I had to leave the University of Maryland. I had to leave Towson University and now I have to leave Maccabi Tel Aviv to move to Givat Shmuel to play for Maccabi Givat Shmuel.
- 18) The charity was "Sherut Leumi".
- 19) All the challenges, changes and hurdles just nudged me and pushed me to be right where I needed to be, at just the right moment. Two weeks later we were engaged and now we have 5 children. If you think about all the billions of people in the world, it's a miracle that I was able to find the one person who understood my individual journey.