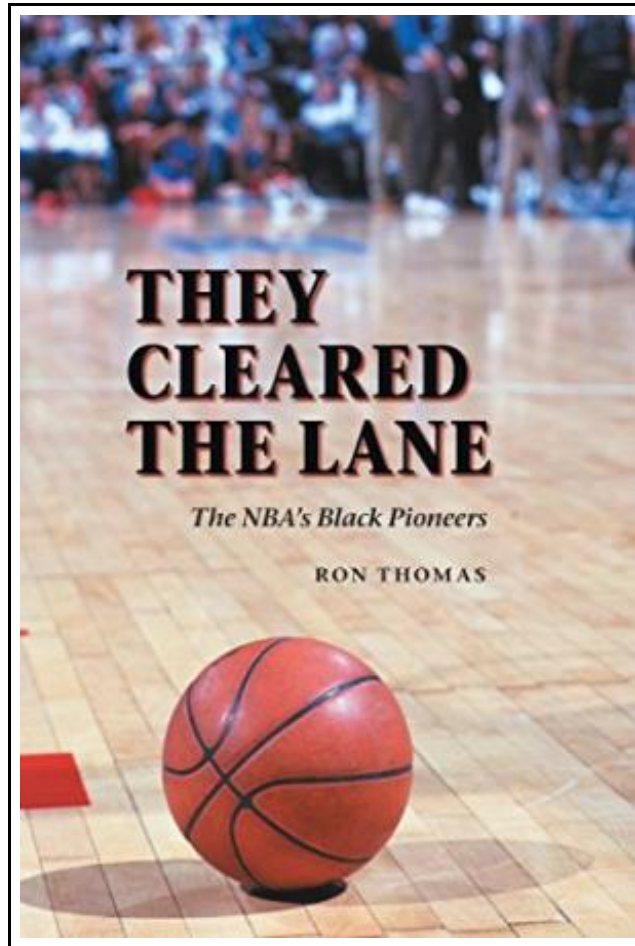


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University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2004. Softcover. Book Condition: New. 288 pages. Softcover. New book. SPORTS. Today, black players compose more than eighty percent of the National Basketball Association's rosters, providing a strong and valued contribution to professional basketball. In the first half of the twentieth century, however, pro basketball was tainted by racism, as gifted African Americans were denied the opportunity to display their talents. Through in-depth interviews with players, their families, coaches, teammates, and league officials, Ron Thomas tells the largely untold story of what basketball was really like for the first black NBA players, including recent Hall of Fame inductee Earl Lloyd, early superstars such as Maurice Stokes and Bill Russell, and the league's first black coaches. *They Cleared the Lane* is both informative and entertaining, full of anecdotes and little-known history. Not all the stories have happy endings, but this unfortunate truth only emphasizes how much we have gained from the accomplishments of these pioneer athletes. Ron Thomas is director of the Morehouse College Journalism and Sports Program. "*They Cleared the Lane: The NBA's Black Pioneers*, by Ron Thomas, came out one year ago this month, and the world shrugged. But it should have smiled. At least the sports world should have. Historians should have. And people who love basketball should have smiled and said, 'Thank you, Ron. Thanks for your journey, your persistence, your insights, your kindness.' . . . There is so much information in this book that you can start anywhere and just read a few pages and then stop and think for a while. . . . The experience, Thomas says, was 'the longest, most significant adventure of my life!' Sports fans should know what he unearthed. Everyone should know how he did it." —Rick Telander, *Chicago Sun-Times* "Thomas. . . has..



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