

MIEL DANIELS

The 17th individual to be inducted into the Albuquerque Sports Hall of Fame is regarded by Albuquerque basketball fans as the most "complete" cager to ever play for the Lobos.

Mel Daniels, 6'9" and 205 lb. sophomore transfer from Burlington, Iowa Jr. College in 1964, was the finest scoring-rebounding star to play at UNM, and he went on to become one of the all-time greats in the old American Basketball Assn. (ABA), which later joined forces with the NBA. Today, Daniels has moved into the coaching ranks as an assistant at powerful Indiana State.

Daniels played prep ball at Detroit's Pershing High, averaging nearly 25 points per game, and played one year at Burlington, Iowa before Bob King enticed him to Albuquerque, where both made cage history.

In 1964-65 he started his sophomore year at UNM scoring 467 points in 27 games while pulling down 302 rebounds, and in 1965-66, Daniels scored 489 points and claimed 238 boards despite a severe arm injury (252 stitches) which could have ended his sports career. Daniels played limited duty in nine contests with his right arm almost completely covered by a cast.

His senior year, Daniels scored 581 points to finish with 1,537 career points, which ranks number 2 behind Willie Long on UNM's all-time scoring parade. Mel swept the boards for 313 rebounds for a career of 853 take-downs, and ranks number 1 on UNM's career list. He is also number 1 in the number of career field goals (594) and number 1 in field goals attempted (1,228) at UNM.

Daniels was the number 1 draft pick by both Cincinnati (NBA) and Minneapolis (ABA) for the 1967-68 pro campaign and opted for the ABA, and became the ABA "Rookie of the Year" and "Most Valuable Player of the Year."

Mel was sold to the Indiana Pacers and was named MVP twice with the Pacers and his eight-year ABA totals stagger the mind: 11,705 points . . . 9,473 rebounds . . . 18.7 scoring average for 626 games.

