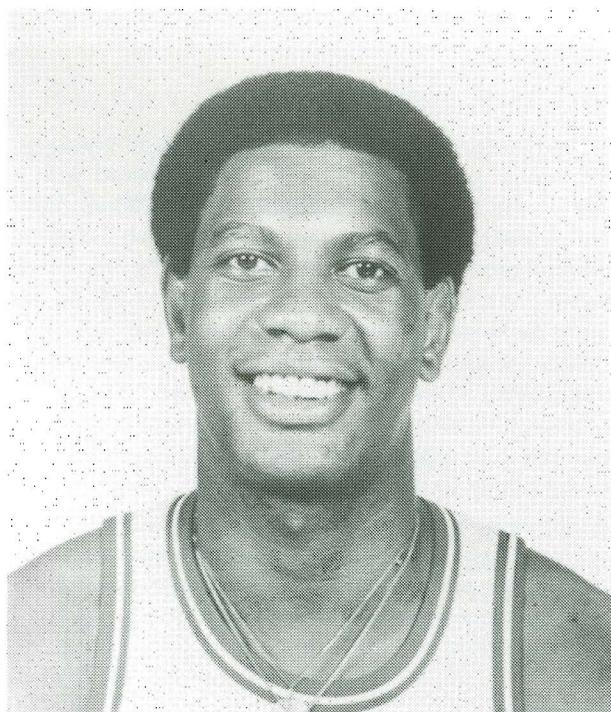


# JOHN DREW'S WINNING



John Drew, Forward — 6'6", 205 lbs.

## JOHN DREW

In mid-April of this year, I approached John Drew and asked him if he would share in an interview his winning battle against drugs. He unhesitatingly said, "Yes." I told him the purpose of the interview would be to help coaches and athletes understand why and to help younger athletes to not get involved. I told him my guidelines were to be sensitive and that I would not embarrass him in any way. John Drew's eyes flashed immediately in a piercing sort of way and he stated, "You can't embarrass me." And so, we started.

John is from Beatrice, Alabama and went to J.F. Shield High School, enrollment 800 students. He was a high school All-American. In his junior year he averaged 34 points per basketball game and led the nation his senior year with a 50-point per game average.

John could have gone literally anywhere to college, but amazingly chose Gardner-Webb College in Boiling Spring, North Carolina. He had the grades to get into any school, but really liked the assistant coach at the N.A.I.A. Gardner-Webb School. He achieved All-American honors both his freshman and sophomore years with a 25 and 27 point-per-game average respectively. At this time, John Drew was straight with drugs and alcohol. Then he made a decision to go hardship and was taken in the draft by the Atlanta Hawks.

John started for the Hawks the next eight years and was an NBA All Star for two of those years. However, in his 3rd year John became involved with Cocaine. I asked John, "Why did you do it? Was it the pressure from the travel and all the games?" John snapped, "Shouldn't be any excuse! No matter what happens to you there is **no** excuse. I don't care if your mother and father both die, there IS NO EXCUSE!"

"How easy is it to get John," I asked. "About as hard as buying a candy bar," he responded very seriously. "People look for an athlete, especially an NBA player. He wouldn't turn anybody in and the pushers know it," Drew further explained.

"A gram of cocaine costs about \$100 and I could go through that in 10 minutes. I snorted it at first and then the real problem came as I began to freebase," he vividly described. "After freebasing I'd smoke it. I'd do as much as I possibly could," Drew remorsefully noted.

"John, how bad were things?" "Ugly! I had no control over my life. The only things I wanted to do was drugs. Drugs were #1 in my life. I didn't care about anything else. I'd make bad decisions and hurried with all decisions just so I could concentrate on my cocaine habit. Freebasing tears you down quick. I became addicted."

"I asked to be traded. Any place, I didn't care. I had to get away from the people I knew. I was lucky because the Utah Jazz became my new home. However, you can't run away from your problems. I was still hooked on cocaine. It was still easy to get."

"I'm grateful to the Jazz and the people of Utah. Maybe because of the strong religious beliefs in the area with people urging me to do the right thing helped me decide to get help. Anyway, I turned myself over to a drug rehabilitation center in Maryland. The eight week program helped me to understand myself and how to stay away from drugs. It gave me a whole new philosophy about being positive in life. I was there for New Year's and I remember it was the first time in 7 years I wasn't stoned. Towards the end of January, I came back to the Jazz."

"I was scared. I thought basketball was over. It was the first time I began dealing with the real world straight. There were no drugs to fall back on. The key to me really making it came in Salt Lake City. I was in my street clothes sitting with the team on the bench and was introduced as 'John Drew now back with the Jazz after completing a successful battle against drugs.'" Mark Eaton, who was listening to our interview in the weight room, said, "They gave John a 5 minute standing ovation." It seemed everyone was pulling for John and his teammates accepted him back. Now John was free to again concentrate on Basketball. In March, John's play was so spectacular he was named as the NBA player of