

THE BALL SHOE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

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Call it a showdown, a throwdown. Just south of downtown, six big ballers met at the Harbourfront Community Centre in Toronto to put six new pairs of basketball shoes to the test. With their old shoes in tow, we asked them to tell us which new ones survived the hype to make the cut in performance. Sometimes, it just isn't pretty.



Name: Donna Grant
Day Job: banker
Ball background: street, prep school, various leagues & teams
Was wearing: Jordan XIIs
Good performance: Comfort, light on my feet, flexibility & protection
Good looks: Plain, but unique.
Is wearing: Converse D-Wades
Fit rating: 5/5. High-ankle support, roomy and secure
Comfort & support rating: 4.5/5. Tongue digs in ankle, supports foot arch, high ankle guard, cushioned
Weight & mobility rating: 5/5. Light on feet, room to move
Overall performance rating: 5/5. Comfortable, mobile, support all around, good grip on sole
Good looks rating: 4/5. Different pattern than other shoes, not too flashy
Any special features this shoe boasts, and how do you rate them?
Nope.
Would this shoe enhance your game?
No. Practice makes perfect, not the shoe you wear.
Would you buy this shoe?
Yes. It covers the basics of ball shoes very well.
Would you trade in your old shoe for this shoe?
Yes. The shoes I currently wear are so cushioned that they confine your foot, even though they're broken in. These shoes are more roomy and just as comfortable.



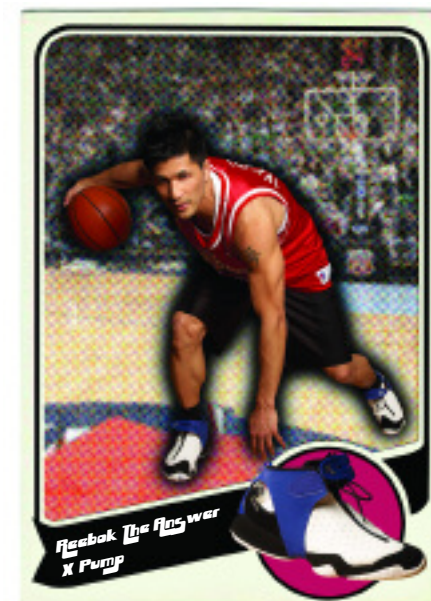
Name: Rachel Marcus
Day Job: mortgage agent
Ball background: college
Was wearing: Lebrons
Good performance: Good weight, distribution, secure comfort.
Good looks: Not too detailed. Nice and simple
Is wearing: New Balance Abzorb
Fit rating: 4/5
Comfort & support rating: 3/5
Weight & mobility rating: 3/5
Overall performance rating: 4/5
Good looks rating: 4/5



Any special features this shoe boasts, and how do you rate them?
I wouldn't rate this #1, but it's a decent shoe. The main problem is that the back of the shoe is much heavier than the front.
Would this shoe enhance your game?
This shoe would definitely force me to stay on my toes! Other than that, they have great ankle support for side-to-side mobility. But nothing enhances your game like practice!
Would you buy this shoe?
This shoe doesn't particularly stand out to me. It's not flashy, but simple. That I do like about it.
Would you trade in your old shoe for this shoe?
No, just because I like the comfort of the Lebrons better and they have better weight distribution.

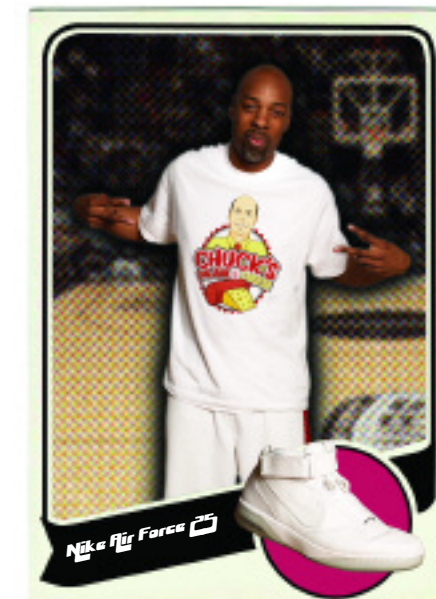


Name: Rachel Hale
Day Job: nomad and hustler
Ball background: street, high school, university, AAU, OBA, etc.
Was wearing: Jordan XVIIs
Good performance: It's comfy and has good ankle support
Good looks: It's damn sexy!
Is wearing: adidas T Mac
Fit rating: 5/5
Comfort & support rating: 4/5
Weight & mobility rating: 4/5
Overall performance rating: 4/5
Good looks rating: 3/5
Any special features this shoe boasts, and how do you rate them?
The soles are high. This makes me a little uncomfortable about rolling my ankles.
Would this shoe enhance your game?
No. They only thing that really enhances your game is practice!
Would you buy this shoe?
No.
Would you trade in your old shoe for this shoe?
No. They're also not as aesthetically pleasing as my current shoes.



Name: Dean Lebayen
Day Job: high-school teacher
Ball background: York University varsity, street in Rexdale & Malvern
Was wearing: Jordan IV
Good performance: Good fit. Good cushioning. Good arch support.
Good looks: I love Brand Jordan. Limited-edition colour.
Is wearing: Reebok The Answer X Pump
Fit rating: 5/5; fits like a glove, can be adjusted to fighter tighter/looser
Comfort & support rating: 4/5. A bit tight around the arches, but great cushioning
Weight & mobility rating: 5/5. Surprisingly lightweight
Overall performance rating: 4/5. I like the functional component, but the style is not my style
Good looks rating: 3/5. I like the colour, but the design is a bit complicated
Any special features this shoe boasts, and how do you rate them?
 The Pump system. It has come a long way, but you need directions.
Would this shoe enhance your game?
 Yes. It's lightweight with good ankle support. Perfect for fast players.
Would you buy this shoe?
 No. I prefer a more simple design, something clean.
Would you trade in your old shoe for this shoe?
 No. I love retro Jordans. You can't beat the classics!

Name: Duane 'Sweets' Watson
Day Job: marketing dude
Ball background: street, collegiate
Was wearing: Nike Shox TS
Good performance: The TS is a High to Mid shoe and offers very good support, although it is a little heavy. It has a broad base and there is no fear of roll-over. It's a solid shoe, but not entirely dynamic - a good post-play shoe.
Good looks: What?!
Is wearing: Nike Air Force 25
Fit rating: 5/5. I play in a 13.5 or 14. This 14 fits perfectly. It gives just enough room, has a soft feel and it's firm enough that I don't feel my foot sliding all over the place.



Comfort & support rating: 5/5. With the AF 25 being a Mid, support isn't an issue. It was just about right, and the Zoom Air insole gave it a soft feel.
Weight & mobility rating: 4/5. A little heavier than I like, but not a clunker. That's the trade-off for good support. Mobility is solid for good lateral movement as well as support and maneuverability for making cuts.
Overall performance rating: 4.5/5. I wasn't expecting this to be a superior performance shoe, but a good balance of support, flexibility and traction. One of the best shoes I've balled in in some time.
Good looks rating: 4/5. A modernization of a classic, it's already easy on the eyes. They cleaned up the lines, stepped up the leather, and the clear sole is definitely a nice touch.
Any special features this shoe boasts, and how do you rate them?
 I was curious to see the results of Zoom tech meets Max Air tech. The cushioning and bounce it provided was evident from my first step.
Would this shoe enhance your game?
 I don't think any shoe can enhance your game, although some may make it easier to execute certain things. The AF 25 is one of them.
Would you buy this shoe?
 Never would have considered buying it as a performance shoe based on the original AF 25's popularity as a lifestyle shoe. But it's definitely armed with the Nike hoops tech I've come to expect from the performance footwear.
Would you trade in your old shoe for this shoe?
 Definitely. It combines a close balance to mobility and support, something I'm lacking in the Shox TS.

Name: Trevis Belcourt
Day Job: media assassin
Ball background: Country-Ass Dirt Road League
Was wearing: Nike Zoom Air Kobe 1
Good performance: Love the Zoom technology: light, strong lateral support.
Good looks: Very appealing, aesthetically (and I HATE Kobe!)
Is wearing: Nike Lebron Zoom 4
Fit rating: 5/5
Comfort & support rating: 4/5
Weight & mobility rating: 4/5
Overall performance rating: 4/5
Good looks rating: 2/5
Any special features this shoe boasts, and how do you rate them?
 The Zoom is dope, and mad comfy for my old-ass knees. Slight foamposite makes for great lateral support as well.
Would this shoe enhance your game?
 I could definitely go from high school to the pros with this shoe. Word to Moses Malone.
Would you buy this shoe?
 No. It's really not a good-looking shoe.
Would you trade in your old shoe for this shoe?
 No. The Kobe is lighter, and Lebron's laces don't stay tied. I hate that on my ball shoes. Needs to stay tight!

