

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Another Virgin Islander Makes It Big In The NBA; Joins LeBron And Cavs

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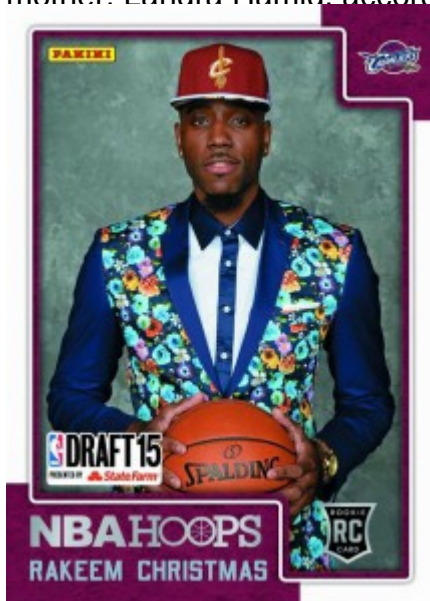


ST. CROIX -- People who knew Rakeem Christmas well say he was always a tall, focused young man with a potentially bright future. That predicted future came into focus Thursday, when Christmas was drafted to the Minnesota Timberwolves by Milt Newton, a Virgin Islander himself, and traded to the Cleveland Cavaliers to join LeBron James and company.

But even after the successful draft and NBA Deputy Commissioner Mark Tatum's congratulatory remarks at the Barclays Center late Thursday night, Christmas, a former Syracuse center, who lived in St. George area while on St. Croix, was still wearing a Timberwolves hat.

"Yeah, I don't know why I'm still wearing it," he said after that session ended, walking into a hallway as a freshman NBA player.

Christmas, originally from New Jersey, moved to St. Croix at the age of two with his mother. Landra Hamid, according to his Wikipedia page. His mother died at the age of 28 and Christmas was raised by his grandmother. The Virgin Islands' first pick in the NBA is the first for the territory since Tim Duncan.



Professional basketball player Rakeem Christmas

Days before the draft, however, Christmas updated his official Facebook profile with a status expressing gratitude to those who supported him throughout his journey of what he said was his "ultimate dream."

"I am so honored and blessed to be fulfilling my ultimate dream of being drafted and playing in the NBA," Christmas wrote. "Starting as a young'n from St. Croix, it is amazing to look back on the journey and see how far I have come."

"With the support of my family, friends, coaches, and teammates, I have been able to succeed every step of the way and improve myself both on and off the court."

Christmas said being drafted in the NBA was a new chapter in his basketball career, and added that he looks forward to "getting out on the court and competing day and night to become the best player I can be."