

Wofford Says He's Done After Helping Jackals To Title

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There is a video on the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame website that shows 2017 inductee Maceo Wofford, then a senior at Jamestown High School, catching an alley-oop pass and throwing down a two-handed dunk.

The student section at McElrath Gymnasium that night — the Event Staff — can be seen going positively bonkers as Wofford runs back down the court in celebration of his posterizing jam.

It's been almost two decades since that memorable night in December 1998, but I remember that play as one of the defining moments of Maceo's decorated basketball career, because, well, how many 5-foot-10 high school point guards from the western Southern Tier have ever shown such explosive, above-the-rim athleticism?

I can think of just one.

Fast-forward to Sunday afternoon.

Maceo, now 38, is the elder statesmen on the Jamestown Jackals, a man whose once I-don't-believe-what-I-just-saw athletic gifts have been replaced instead with a basketball intelligence that few can match.

Sunday in Game 2 of the North American Basketball League Northeast Division best-of-3 championship series against Chautauqua at Jamestown Community College, the crowd that nearly filled the Physical Education Complex saw that Maceo still has game even though he is at least 10 years older than everyone on the team, save for another Jamestown native, Anthony Barone, who is 39.

"I think he is still able to play at a high level because of his dedication to the game and his high IQ," teammate Xavier Churnac said.

Having already won Game 1 on Friday, the Jackals needed just one more victory Sunday to claim the division title and secure a berth in the national tournament this summer in San Antonio. Yet, when Maceo checked in with 8:33 left in the first quarter, they found themselves in an 11-0 hole.



"Honestly, this is it for me. This is it. I went out a champion, so I'm good now," Maceo Wofford said after scoring 16 points off the bench as the Jamestown Jackals clinched the NABL Northeast Division title Sunday evening at Jamestown Community College's Physical Education Complex.

P-J photo by Scott Reagle

Furthermore, it was Maceo's first time on the court in more than a week, having just returned Saturday night from a vacation in Mexico. To be sure he was ready for Game 2 of the playoff series, Maceo and Jackals team owner Kayla Crosby paid a visit to the gymnasium at the Busti Church of God earlier Sunday where he put up shots for an hour.

So what did he do seconds after entering the game?

He was fouled in the act of shooting and hit two free throws.

Nothing but net.

"Honestly, I have no conscience," Maceo said. I know what I practice and I know what I shoot every day. ... It's like a walk in the park."

Jackals coach Ken Crosby had been trying to get Maceo to join the Jackals since the franchise came into existence for the 2016 season. But Maceo, who played for the Erie in the Premier Basketball League in 2014-15, said personal and professional commitments were going to keep him retired, even if his skills on the court were still as good as ever.

"A week before the first game (in January) we had a scrimmage and he put down 52 against us," Crosby said. "He sat out the last two minutes of the game and he just killed us. We won the game as a team, but it was us against Maceo.

"I went up to him after the game and said, "Maceo, I'm not taking no for an answer this year. You are playing for us this year."

Maceo, finally, gave in, but with the stipulation that his two children and his AAU teams he coaches were his top priorities.

"I said I'll play with you when I can," Maceo said.

Sunday he played.

Teammates Latrell Alford (30 points, 11 rebounds) and Michael Davenport (27 points, 11 rebounds, eight assists and tournament Most Valuable Player honors) were the headliners, but Maceo scored 16 points off the bench, including a pull-up jumper from the foul line inside the final minute that helped put the game out of reach.

"I thought his performance was great for us," Churnac said. "When he is at the point there is a different flow and consistency to the game."



Jamestown's Maceo Wofford is congratulated by teammates after leaving the game Sunday evening.

P-J photo by Scott Reagle

Asked how he is able to maintain his quality of play at an advanced age — at least for an athlete — Maceo got straight to the point.

“How? God. Seriously, the grace of God,” Maceo said. “He allowed me to keep playing. I’ve had a few bad injuries, but I’ve been able to bounce back from them. Honestly, this is it for me. This is it. I went out a champion, so I’m good now.”

I’ve heard that retirement talk before.

“He’s like fine wine,” teammate Davenport said. “He gets better with age.”

If Maceo does indeed intend to finally step away, Davenport has an idea for a second career.

“He could run for mayor,” he said. “I would vote for him.”



Maceo Wofford looks to run the Jackals' offense.

P-J photo by Scott Reagle