



Keith Closs

Keith Mitchell Closs Jr. (born April 3, 1976) is a former professional basketball player, at the center position. At 7 feet 3 inches and 212 pounds, Closs played collegiately at Central Connecticut State University, leading the nation in blocks his only two years in college, and still holding the NCAA Division I career record for blocks with 5.87 blocked shots per game. After playing professionally in the Atlantic Basketball Association with the Norwich Neptunes, Closs signed with the Los Angeles Clippers in 1997.

He had three seasons as a backup center in the NBA, playing for the Los Angeles Clippers from 1997 to 2000. He averaged 3.9 points, 2.9 rebounds and 1.3 blocks per game during his spell. Closs ended his career with a club record for most blocked shots per 48 minutes (4.7). Closs later played for the Pennsylvania Valley Dawgs of the USBL in 2003, subsequently moving to the CBA. In January 2007, Closs led the league in blocks per game at 2.9 and later signed with the Buffalo Silverbacks of the ABA; he was selected 11th pick in the 5th round of the 2007 NBA Development League by the Tulsa 66ers.

In December 2008, Closs signed with the Chinese league's Yunnan Bulls and averaged 16.1 points, 11.9 rebounds and 5.9 blocks per game.

Comments by his former coach, Curt Pickering:

“My story begins with the fact that I unsuccessfully pursued Keith for two seasons to play for the Santa Barbara Breakers. Upon receiving an invitation from the Chinese government to bring a tour team over to play 10 games, I got the thumbs up from ‘Closs the Boss.’ During our 26-day journey to 9 cities, Keith and I became very close. Keith shared with me multiple stories on his difficult childhood, some of the bad decisions and road’s that he took. He carried these stories into his time with the Clippers, the Globetrotters and the Minor League Circuit. Since that time, back in October of 2008, I have continued to admire, respect and appreciate who Keith Closs (man first, basketball player second), not to ignore the great accomplishments he established with our Breaker team. During his 8 seasons playing in the red, white, blue and gold jersey, The Boss holds our all-time record for shots blocked in a game (12) and blocks per game (4.2). Keith helped lead to us to 4 WCBL Championships and was a big reason we were welcomed back to China for 12 tours of duty during the Breakers 10 year existence.”

Today, the Breakers salute Keith, his wife and family, and are retiring his jersey for the great years of service, representing The Breakers both on and off the court.