

Isiah Thomas & Charles Oakley Beef on Twitter About the Old 'Bulls vs. Pistons' Rivalry



Miguel Costa
VladTV Staff Writer

Apr 06, 2023 3:23 PM
4,754 views



For NBA fans old enough to remember the rugged gameplay of the league during the 80s and early 90s, two rivalries amongst the upper echelon of teams were by far the most hate-fueled and globally impactful: Lakers vs. Celtics and Bulls vs. Pistons. Highlighted by Magic Johnson and Larry Bird, the former became so compelling that it modernized the NBA by ushering in a new era where games were no longer played on tape delay. Magic's Lakers faced Bird's Celtics three times in the NBA Finals (1984, 1985, and 1987). Magic's teams won two of the three highly contested meetings. The classic showdowns would go on to inspire documentaries such as *Magic & Bird: A Courtship of Rivals*, a Broadway musical called *Magic/Bird*, and a hit series on HBO called *Winning Time*. Over time, many of the Celtics and Lakers players from the 80s grew to appreciate and respect one another.

The Bulls-Pistons rivalry immediately followed the end of the Celtics-Lakers rivalry in the late 80s. Unlike their predecessors' legendary NBA Finals matchups, these inner conference battles were highly personal. Led by [Isiah Thomas](#), Detroit Pistons (nicknamed The Bad Boys) bullied and antagonized [Michael Jordan's](#) upcoming Chicago Bulls teams during an era when hand-checking and hard fouls in the lane were considered the norm. Four years into Jordan's career, Detroit Pistons won three straight division titles (1988, 1989 & 1990) en route to capturing back-to-back NBA titles (1989 & 1990). During those three years, the Pistons eliminated MJ's Bulls from the playoffs every single year. The Pistons had four all-stars on their roster (Isiah Thomas, Joe Dumars, Dennis Rodman & Bill Laimbeer), while Jordan represented the Bulls' lone all-star selection until Scottie Pippen finally emerged as one of the league's top 24 players in 1990. With a fellow All-Star by his side for the first time in his career, Michael Jordan and the Bulls swept the Pistons in the Eastern Conference Finals. From there, the Bulls' iconic duo claimed six NBA Championships in eight years, while Isiah's Pistons would never be heard from again...At least not on the court.

It's been over 30 years since the Bulls ended the Piston's bid for a three-peat. However, many players who were a part of those menacingly physical basketball games still don't like each other, especially Michael Jordan and Isiah Thomas. That became apparent when ESPN published a 30 for 30 special called *Bad Boys* in 2014, followed by *The Last Dance* in 2020, where Jordan referred to Isiah as an "Assh*le." Although the Bulls traded [Charles Oakley](#) to the New York Knicks right before the apex of their rivalry with the Pistons (in 1988), the team's old enforcer stuck around just long enough to witness a fair portion of Isiah's dominance over MJ's squads. Overall, Isiah's Pistons finished with a 36-29 record against Jordans Bulls (regular season and the playoffs). But Jordan's individual stats (30.0 points, 6.7 rebounds, 6.1 assists & 2.1 steals) were better than Isiah's (18.9 points, 8.3 assists, 5.1 rebounds & 2.2 steals). Ultimately, Jordan's Bulls got the last laugh with a sweep and a flawless legacy in the NBA Finals that far outweighs anything Isiah's Pistons accomplished.

In a recent interview on *Showtime*, Charles Oakley taunted his old rival with a remindful comment.

"He came in your city and took your city. That's why you're really mad. He took over Chicago,"

The clip was subsequently posted on Twitter. Shortly thereafter, Isiah responded with his go-to rebuttal when it comes to his ongoing feud with his old Bulls teams. Once again, the two-time champion mentioned his head-to-head record again MJ.

"I remember us kicking your a*s a lot, some one please check my record vs any team he played on! Sit down be Humble," Isiah wrote.

Isiah Thomas has sent several subliminal and direct shots at Michael Jordan over the years. But, "His Airness" rarely responds to confrontational commentary through the media. However, his best friend, Charles Oakley, has been more than willing to engage with former NBA players on the outs with MJ, such as Charles Barkley and Isiah Thomas.

Source: [Hot New Hip Hop](#)