

President Obama honors Spurs' 5th NBA championship



By [Jordan Gass-Pooré - Spring 2015](#) Jan 12, 2015



Click on photo to enlarge or download: The San Antonio Spurs present President Barack Obama with a team jersey labeled POTUS and No. 1 on the back and a signed basketball during Monday's event honoring the team's fifth NBA Championship. SHFWire photo by Jordan Gass-Pooré

WASHINGTON – “Go Spurs,Go!”

The chant reverberated in the East Room at the White House as members of the San Antonio Spurs lined up on risers to celebrate the [2014 NBA championship](#).

A few years ago, people remarked that the basketball team was passed its prime, “not just old

but kind of boring,” President Barack Obama said, with the players behind him. “Now they’re fresh and exciting, which is basically the exact opposite of what happens to presidents.”

This event is a tradition between the White House and champion sports teams. The Spurs previously visited Bill Clinton in 1999 and George W. Bush in 2003.

Obama was accompanied at the podium by Spurs coach Gregg Popovich and general manager R.C. Buford.

The president joked with Popovich that the reason the coach didn’t have speech notes was because he typically provides the press with one-word answers.

The president said that among Spurs fans in the cheering audience was former San Antonio mayor and Housing and Urban Development Secretary [Julián Castro](#).

The Spurs helped create literacy programs and purchased computers for San Antonio schools.

“Pop is big on it, we’re big on it. We try to do as much as we can to give back,” Spurs guard-forward Danny Green said after the ceremony.

While this was Green’s first visit to the White House, teammates Tony Parker, Tim Duncan and Manu Ginóbili have been previously honored for NBA championships.



Click on photo to enlarge or download: Sharing the stage with President Barack Obama and the San Antonio Spurs is the NBA championship trophy draped with the president's new jersey and signed basketball. SHFWire photo by Jordan Gass-Pooré

Ginóbili remained humble.

“It makes you feel really good when your opponents ... the referee tells you, the president tells you that you do really good,” he said. “We have a chance to do it again.”

The Spurs are struggling toward a sixth championship.

The team won its fifth last year after defeating the Miami Heat 104-87 in Game 5 of the best-of-seven series at home. Obama honored the Heat in 2013 for winning the 2012 championship.

Since then, the Spurs have had numerous player injuries and a recent losing streak but managed to bounce back Saturday with a win against the Minnesota Timberwolves.

The team is now seventh among the 15 teams in the Western Conference.

Obama told the Spurs not to worry: “But I’ll tell you what, if you guys need any tips on winning back-to-back, you know where to find me.”

The team presented Obama with a Spurs jersey labeled “POTUS 1” and a signed basketball.

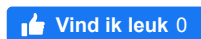
The Spurs take on the Washington Wizards – ranked fourth in the Eastern Division – at the Verizon Center on Tuesday.

Reach reporter Jordan Gass-Pooré at jordan.gass-pooré@scripps.com or 202-408-1490. SHFWire stories are free to any news organization that gives the reporter a byline and credits the SHFWire. Like the Scripps Howard Foundation Wire interns on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).



About Jordan Gass-Pooré - Spring 2015

Jordan Gass-Pooré is a Spring 2015 reporter for the SHFWire from Texas State University.



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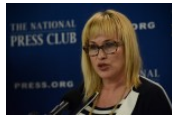
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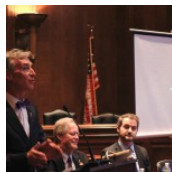
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