

Ricky Hickman gets up for Q&A

Local professional basketball player Ricky Hickman is an official baller.

The overseas standout has got every skill that you would want in a basketball player. He's got crazy hops. He really has Vince Carter-like jumping ability. The old Vince Carter. Hickman can shoot as well as anyone. And, his defense is pretty solid. Hickman isn't a bad passer either.

He's presently displaying some of his skills at Rusty LaRue's Triad Pro Am League. He and I discussed the league play, as well as some of the other ballers earlier this week. Ricky isn't a guy that's going to say just anything during an interview. He thinks about every answer as if he's at a postgame press conference. There's nothing wrong with that. Ricky is a smart and well-spoken athlete. So, I knew I had to throw a couple wrinkles at him to get something out of him.

He caught every question as if I were CP feeding Tyson Chandler an alley-oop. We talked about European ballers, the Olympics, Hang the Net, Wake's Al Farouq Aminu and the new Batman movie.

Take a look at some of the other topics Mr. Hickman and I discussed during a cool interview on Tuesday evening.

Anthony: What's good with you Ricky?

Ricky: Nothing much. Just relaxing.

Anthony: I hear that. What's been going on with you lately?

Ricky: I've basically just been working out the whole summer.

Anthony: I saw you getting it in during a Pro Am game last week.

Ricky: Yeah, that's another way for me to work on some things. That's a good league. There's nothing like playing in game situation. So, whenever you get a chance to play against some good competition you always want to take advantage of that.

Anthony: I saw you going against CP last week. How was that for you?

Ricky: It was good. You know, I hadn't seen or played with Chris in about a year or so. It was good to actually go up against him.

Anthony: Who's the best player in the league this year?

Ricky: Uh, I like that new kid for Wake — Al Farouq Aminu.

Anthony: (Smiles.) Yeah, I was just talking about him.

Ricky: Yeah. That kid is playing real well. He really impressed me when we played them the first game. I think he's got a real bright future.

Anthony: Is someone gonna have to sit down at Wake this year?

Ricky: Yeah, definitely. (Both smile.) He's really that good.

Anthony: (Laughs.) OK. Who's the sleeper of the league this year?

Ricky: Ben Strong. He's a guy from Guilford College. He's really, really tough. People really don't understand how good he is down low. He's really impressing.

Anthony: You've got a guy in Kevin Oleksiak, that's really good too. He gave one team 40-something last week.

Ricky: That's my old teammate. We workout every morning and afternoon. We workout with a guy named Keith Gatling. He's coming along strong. He's gotten better every year.

Anthony: What's the best part of your game?

Ricky: Getting to the basket. I've been really trying to get more consistent with my jump shot. Over in Europe you've got to be able to knock down that jump shot. You're going to be able to beat a European guarding you, nine out of 10 times. But you've really got to knock that jump shot down. That's really what I'm focusing on.

Anthony: Where did you



One-on-One

with Anthony Hill

play ball this past year?

Ricky: I played in Romania this past year. My agent is supposed to call me today (Tuesday). He just got back from his honeymoon. I'm waiting on him to give me some good news. Hopefully I will know where I'm going within the next week or two. I've got to stay on the grind and always be ready.

Anthony: How much are you enjoying playing overseas?

Ricky: It's really great because I get to make money playing ball. And, it's tax free. I miss my family a little bit. You miss being at the crib. But I will take playing ball over a 9-to-5 any day. They treat you like stars over there. We are their Jordan.

Anthony: I bet. How are the ladies treating Ricky Hickman over there?

Ricky: Ah man. (Smiles.) That's good. Everything is working out over there.

Anthony: What shoes do you like to ball in?

Ricky: I got a pair of Kobe's and Nike airmax. The Kobe's are the lightest shoes I've ever played in. I'm not trying to play in them that much because I am trying to save them for the season. Anything Nike is pretty much good for me.

Anthony: Speaking of Kobe. Is he going to make the difference for the Olympic team?

Ricky: He's going to make a big difference. But it's still going to be tough on the USA. People don't understand how strong Europe is out there. There's some tough teams in their group. They've got Spain, Greece and Germany in their bracket. Spain has a mob.

They have a lot of tough players. I thought the US should've picked up more shooters. So, we'll see what happens. They have the team that should probably win it. But it's not going to be as easy as some people think.

Anthony: Right. I agree with you. I think there should've been more shooters on the team, instead of three point guards.

Ricky: Shooting is the strength in Europe. I don't think you're going to see Dwight Howard or LeBron James dunking on people. And, the guys they played against last summer was basically the B-team. Teams like Argentina didn't bring all of their boys because they had already qualified. I'm a big Ginobili fan. So I think Argentina has a really good shot too.

Anthony: Which NFL team do you roll with?

Ricky: The Panthers all day. I've been pretty upset about the last two years. It's kind of hard to cheer for a team that isn't showing too many results. I think we need another quarterback. I'm hoping for some better things. So we'll see what happens this year.

Anthony: What did you think about Jason Taylor being traded to the Redskins?

Ricky: That's crazy. Redskins have to have one of the top defenses in the league after adding Jason Taylor. That division is gonna be tough.

Anthony: No doubt. Have you seen any good movies at the theater lately?

Ricky: Oh my goodness. If anybody hasn't seen the Batman, Dark Knight — you have to go see it. I went to go see it Friday and Sunday. That is the best movie I've seen in the last two years. You've got to go see it. Heath Ledger really did his thing.

Anthony: OK. Are you participating in Hang the Net at the Hanes Hosiery?

Ricky: Yeah, yeah. I'm going to be down there Thursday.

Anthony: Do you think you can win? It will probably come down to you and one of the Holcomb-Faye brothers.

Ricky: I think I can get them.

Anthony: (Both laugh.) All right. Let's close out with free association.

Ricky: (Laughs.) OK.

Anthony: Reyshawn Terry.

Ricky: Big. Huge.

Anthony: Ricky Hickman.

Ricky: Um, Versatile.

Anthony: Cedric Hickman (App. State football player).

Ricky: My dawg.

Anthony: Rah Davis.

Ricky: Quick.

Anthony: C.O. (Chris Oliver)

Ricky: Medium range jump shot.

Anthony: Favorite food.

Ricky: Japanese.

Anthony: Winston's best baller.

Ricky: That's Chris. Hands down.

Anthony: That's what's up. Thanks for the time, man.

Ricky: No problem. I appreciate it, Ant.

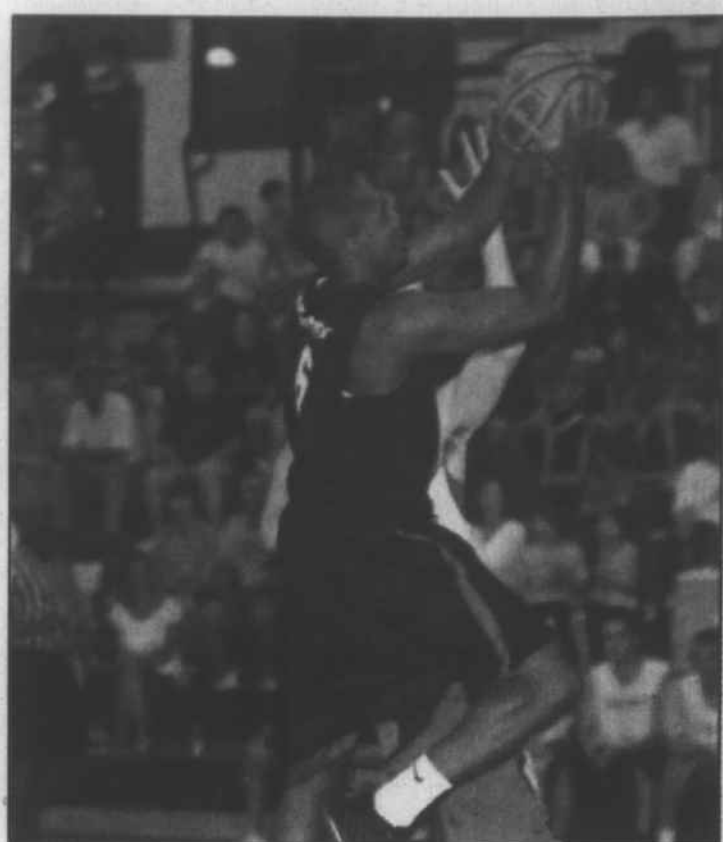
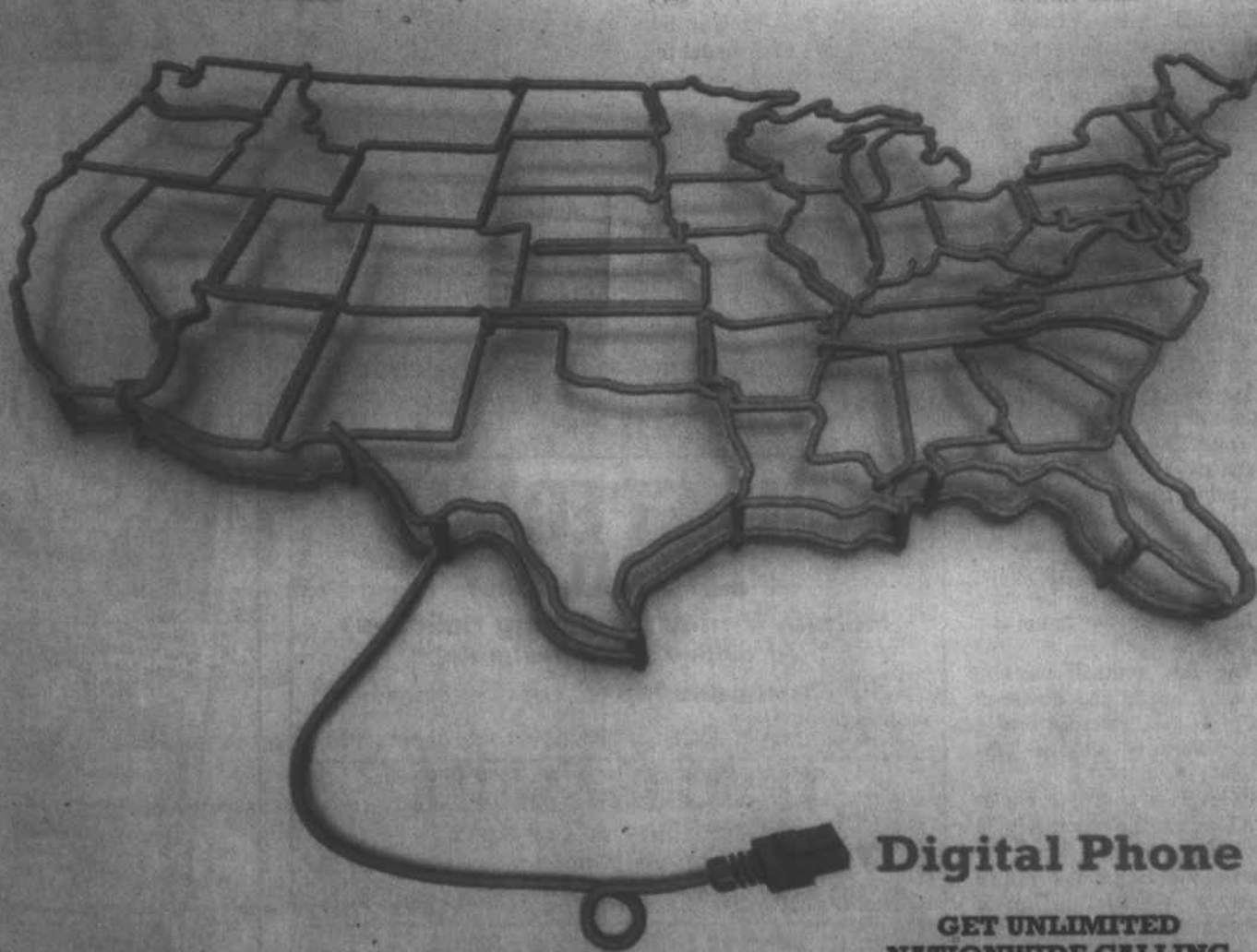


Photo by Charlie Pfaff
Former UNC-Greensboro and East Forsyth star Ricky Hickman goes up for a score during a recent Pro Am game.

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