

Pittman discusses Olympics, overseas ball & more

I don't have this great introductory paragraph explaining why I chose to interview overseas baller Josh Pittman this week. The truth of the matter is I simply wanted to talk with Josh because he's one of my favorite people to interview.

Plus, I did want to discuss some things with someone that understands the overseas talent more than the average baller. Pittman is a real star over there. He even won MVP of the league in Argentina in 2006. That's big time. I'm all about the Olympics right now, so wanted to talk about that with him as well. We also discussed the rumors of NBA guys really wanting to play overseas.

J-Pittman and I also talked about women, Bernie Mac, Josh Howard, Rob Little, playing for another country in the Olympics and East Forsyth. That's his old high school. JP also told me how much longer he plans on balling and what's next for him. Take a look at our conversation from Tuesday evening.

Anthony: Josh, what's going on?

Josh: Ah, nothing much. You know. Doing the same ole.

Anthony: I see that you just got finished working out. I heard you took a year off. What was up with that?

Josh: Nah, I took about four months off. I had some important things that I wanted to get done with my daughter. I went ahead and got registered for school. I'm getting my master's degree. I figured it was a good time to do it. I'll be back on the grind next week.

Anthony: I hear that. How hard was it for you to not be playing for most of this year?

Josh: It was hard. It took some adjusting. But I stayed in the gym. I stayed on my weight program. I stayed outside running the track. I kind of went back to my roots — what Rob Little taught us down at Fourteenth Street. I got a good workout partner in Tyson Patterson. My body feels rested. Honestly, the time flew by.

Anthony: Good. What kind of injury did you have a couple months ago. You sat out of the Pro Am League because of the injury. What was it?

Josh: I turned my ankle real bad the week before the Pro Am started. We were playing in the Cleveland Church league. I kind of landed the wrong way. It took me about two to three weeks before I could really get moving again. So, I figured it wasn't worth risking it.

Anthony: Are you going back to Argentina?

Josh: Nah. I'm probably



Photo courtesy of Josh Pittman

Overseas star Josh Pittman is a former standout at East Forsyth and UNC-Asheville.

going to be going to Europe. I'm looking at different offers. I'm just weighing my options right now. I told my agent that I will probably decide on Monday. It's all a blessing from God.

Anthony: (Smiles.) I know that's right. Ay, you were about to blow up. You are only two years removed from that league MVP.

Josh: (Laughs.) Yeah. You know how it is. I was on my way to it this year. But I just didn't feel it. I felt like I wanted to come home and take care of some things. I also wanted to take a break from the game and decide whether I should keep playing or not.

Anthony: I feel that. We have the Olympics going on in China. You've seen a lot of the guys playing on the basketball teams. Do you think the U.S. will get a gold, knowing what they're up against?

Josh: I hope we do. It's an adjustment. And it's difficult. The key to winning gold is making some shots. We got to stop listening to people say we can't shoot and go ahead and shoot it. Worry about the next shot and not the one we just missed.

Anthony: That's good advice. You are one of the overseas stars. Now you have guys like Kobe and LeBron flirting with the possibility of playing over there one day. Josh Childress has already signed with a foreign team. Is this going to be a trend for NBA guys?

Josh: I can't really say that it will be. Players like Josh

Childress and (Earl) Boykins. They say that Boykins just signed with a team in Italy. But guys like Josh Childress didn't really have a great NBA career. I can see him going over there to work on his game.

But he's got to know that he's got to be the man now. No more role playing. That might be difficult for him. But I don't

I will do three and decide about the fourth year. Right now I feel like I can do this forever.

Anthony: What are you doing when you're not balling?

Josh: Right now I'm trying to get my master's in Arts and Education. I should be done with that in June. I had to do a lot of my courses online. I'm either doing that or spending



think a lot of NBA stars are going to go overseas. I really can't see that happening.

Anthony: Why is playing overseas even an option for an NBA guy?

Josh: Probably because of the tax free money. And you can sign one-year deals. A lot of the overseas money isn't guaranteed, though. Sometimes teams fold. I've known some Americans that have gone a month or two without getting paid. It's a rude awakening in some places.

Anthony: That's crazy. How much longer do you see yourself lacing up?

Josh: My agent asked me the same question. He said he was going to try to get four more years out of me. I told him that

time with my daughter.

Anthony: I know that you had an interest in coaching after playing. What other things would you like to do?

Josh: I'm probably gonna try to get my Ph. D. That will give me the opportunity to teach in college. I wouldn't mind coaching high school and giving back. I want to teach some of the things that was taught to me by Rob Little and Brian Leak. Those guys paved the way for me.

Anthony: (Smiles.) I'm not saying any names, but quite a few guys didn't agree with you saying you were the best baller to come out of Winston. Remember, you said the stats speak for themselves?

Josh: (Laughs.) That's all

opinion. If you're a ball player then you should feel that way. I don't find anything wrong with anybody saying that — if they feel like they're up there and they can get it done. A lot of friends always come to me for advice or what to work on. Now I feel like I'm in the maturing role. I want to help others get to another level. Help guys expand on their game more.

Anthony: Do you feel like the J-Ho speeding thing was blown out of proportion a little bit?

Josh: Oh yeah. Like he said, I think they took a lot of things out of context. I've gone real fast on the streets beside another car. I've gotten a ticket. But you didn't see my name in the paper. (Both laugh.) You know what I mean? Josh is a great person that's making good things happen for the kids in our community.

Anthony: OK. Which NFL team do you roll with?

Josh: My brother is a die-hard Pittsburgh fan. I like to see them do good because I like to see him happy.

Anthony: How's your love life, man?

Josh: Man, I'm single as all outside. (Both laugh.) I pretty much plan on staying that way for a while. For a long while.

Anthony: (Smiles.) Seen any good movies lately?

Josh: I saw, "Batman." That was pretty good. I saw, "Hancock." That was good. I also want to see the Mummy. I heard that was decent too.

Anthony: OK. Did you play Pop Warner football growing up?

Josh: Yeah. I played with the Indians. I played with the Ardmore Wildcats one year, and I played with the Indians after that. We won the Sertoma Bowl. I was just a role player. I was playing with Jomo Legins. He's probably a Pop Warner legend.

Anthony: What's your most memorable moment in high school?

Josh: Probably winning the Metro 4A Player of the Year (at East Forsyth) as a senior. I wasn't even expected to be on the map. It was a wonderful thing to come out of that strong conference and win player of the year.

Anthony: Let's go back to the Olympics real quick.

Josh: OK.

Anthony: Is it possible for you to be on another country's team?

Josh: Yeah. I had a chance to get my citizenship in

Argentina. But they wanted me to give up my American citizenship. I couldn't do it. It was an opportunity. But it's not important enough to give up my American citizenship.

Anthony: Not at all. What other sports are you checking out beside basketball?

Josh: To be honest with you, I've been watching all of them. I've been watching soccer. I take a lot of heat overseas because we usually don't do well in soccer. I've been watching swimming. I'm keeping an eye on Michael Phelps and his quest for eight golds. (Smiles) I've also been watching women's volleyball.

Anthony: (Both laugh.) I hear that. What are your thoughts on losing comedian Bernie Mac?

Josh: That was surprising, man. Bernie Mac is kind of with our age group. He was blowing up as we were coming up. That was surprising to me with how fast he passed. I remember his PR person saying that he wasn't endanger of death. He was just ill. Then it shocked me when I checked my email the next morning. I hope he's in a better place. That just lets us know that it doesn't matter how much money you get. If God chooses to come and get you then you've got to go.

Anthony: Definitely. Let's close out with free association. Uh, Josh Pittman.

Josh: Just trying to be the best father, son and brother I can possibly be.

Anthony: Winston-Salem, Josh: I love it. It's home.

Anthony: Late Nite League.

Josh: I miss it. I wish they could've played this year.

Anthony: Tyson Patterson.

Josh: My partner. He's been my boy since high school. I love him like a brother. And, I wish him continued success.

Anthony: Greece.

Josh: That's the place I want to visit. I've always dreamed about sitting down and looking at that water while I reflect on life.

Anthony: Favorite international food.

Josh: Pizza.

Anthony: (Laughs.) Uh, Nelo Pittman.

Josh: That's my boy. That's my brother. I love him with all of my heart. He's gotten me through good and bad. I wouldn't be half the basketball player or person I am without him.

Wonge signs with Japanese squad

Former Ram will play for the Tsusho Toyota Eagles

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Former Winston-Salem State Ram forward Darrell Wonge became the second former WSSU student-athlete to sign a professional contract in as many months when he signed a contract to play for the Tsusho Toyota Eagles in Nagoya, Japan.

Wonge is the second former Ram to sign a professional sports contract in as many months with former WSSU defensive end William Hayes signing with the Tennessee Titans in July. He will depart for Japan on

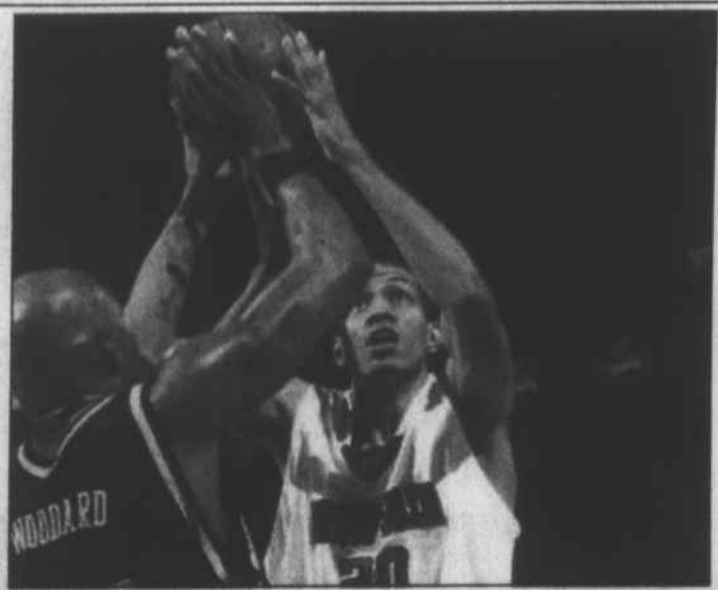
Sept. 1.

"I'm just happy that I got the opportunity to live out my dream of playing professional basketball," Wonge said. "It was nerve-wracking at first especially after a number of other opportunities fell through, but I'm very grateful for the opportunity that I've received."

A 6'6", 210-pound forward, Wonge was noticed at a player's showcase where dozens of players from both major and mid-major schools displayed their skills for a number of professional teams. The

Fighting Eagles compete in the JBL2 League where the team recorded a 14-2 record during the 2007-08 season.

During his career, Wonge totaled 845 points at Winston-Salem State with 408 career rebounds. Wonge enjoyed a breakthrough season as a senior when he averaged a career-best 10.7 points per game and pulled in a career-high 150 rebounds for the season. A versatile player, Wonge also dished out 89 career assists with 74 career steals.



File photo

Former WSSU standout Darrell Wonge will report to his new team in September.

call us first.
888.286.5259

GRANITE MORTGAGE, INC.
Financing The American Dream

Looking for a new or first home? Call Granite Mortgage for excellent customer service, quick turnaround, and a great rate. If you are looking for a first home, call us first as we have been #1 in North Carolina for First-Time Homebuyer Loans for the past 17 years. You will also receive a free pre-approval and have the opportunity to speak with one of our mortgage bankers. They will review your financial needs and assist you in choosing the best loan program for you.

Call us first.