

Final Hang The Net Celebrity Shootout draws big crowd

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Children from all over the city filed into Hanes Hosiery Recreation center on Thursday, July 23 for the final Hang The Net Celebrity Shootout.

Since 1992, Art Blevins has brought local celebrities together for a day of basketball and fun. During the event, children from across the city get the chance to meet local TV personalities and basketball stars from the area.

According to Blevins, this year's event drew a crowd of over 500 children.

"We have a lot of summer camps from local YMCA's and church's bringing buses," said Blevins. "The event is free, and we just want the kids to come out and have a good time and meet some celebrities."

This year's event featured a number of stars. The college division of the competition featured a number of talented shooters who play or have played at the Division I-A level including: CJ Harris (Wake Forest), Clifford Crawford (NC State) and Antonio Robinson (ECU).

Most of the children were excited to see former Wake Forest and Dallas Maverick all-star Josh Howard. Howard put on a show during the celebrity shootout hanging the net multiple times in route to winning the competition.

During the event, Howard could be seen taking pictures and signing autographs. He said he comes to the event every year because he enjoys giving back to the community that helped raise him.

"I remember attending the Hang The Net Shootout when I was a kid myself," Howard said. "I know the community will

hate to see the event go, but I'm sure it will always be remembered throughout the city."

Howard also spoke highly of Blevins, who has been working in the community since he was 19 years old.

"Coach Art was a big part of my development on and off the court," said Howard. "For years he has looked out for the youth in this community. He really does a great job."

University of North Carolina basketball great Phil Ford also attended the final celebrity shootout and said he was honored to receive a Living Legend award for his community work around the state.

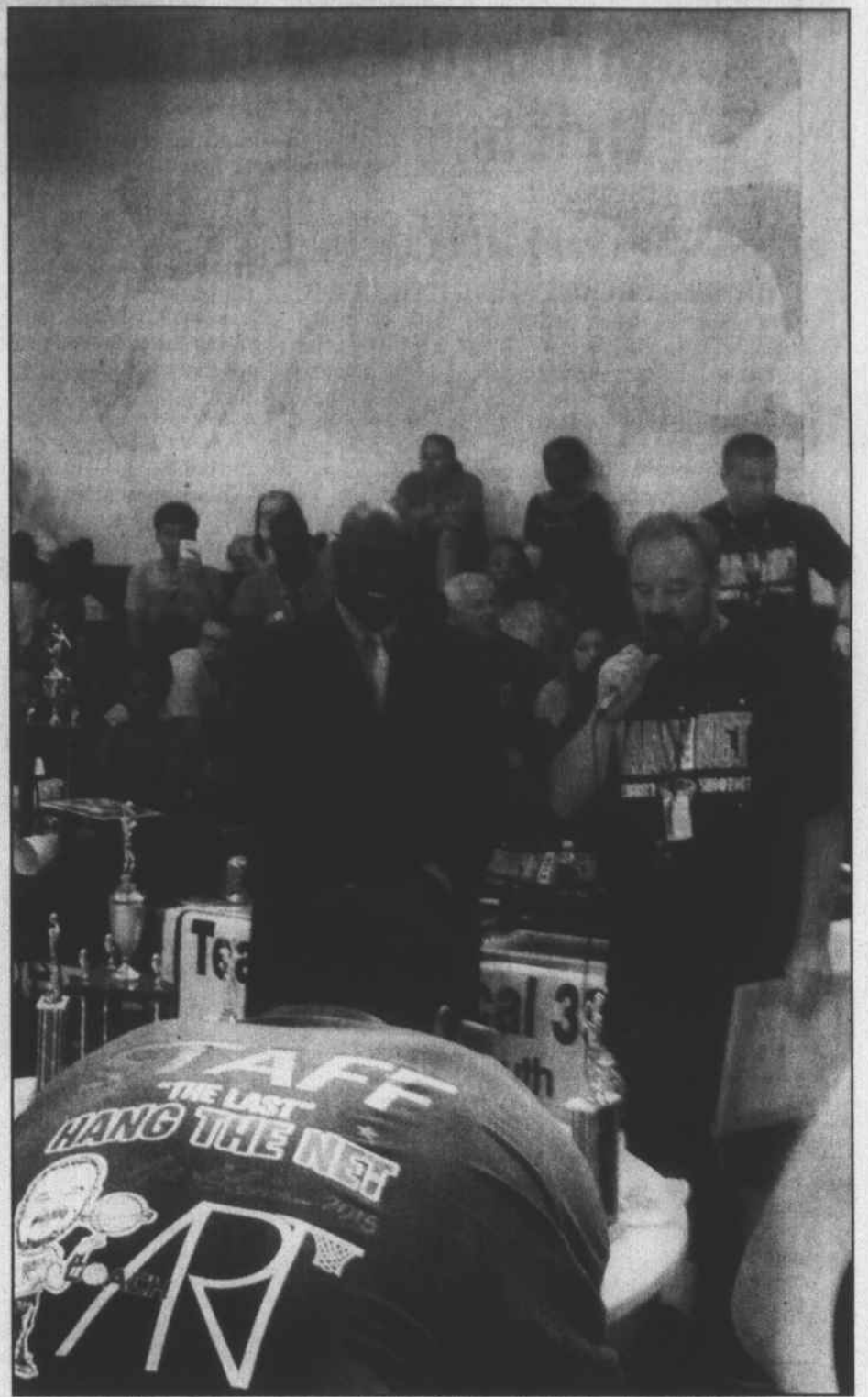
"It is a real honor to receive such a great award from a great community organization like this one," Ford said.

Every year during the event, Blevins gives out a Living Legend award to those who have made a major impact in the community. Much to his surprise, this year Blevins received a Living Legend award of his own.

"I was not expecting this at all," said Blevins. "Everything I do is for this community, I never wanted or needed any recognition for the things I do I just want to keep this youth of the community out of trouble."

Although this was the last Hang The Net Shootout, Blevins said he will continue to work with the youth in the community.

"I've enjoyed every minute of this," Blevins said. "I know I'll be lost next year, but it will give me time to focus on other things. I'm sure I'll think of another event for the kids in the community in the next couple of years."



Art Blevins, right, introduces Phil Ford to the crowd at the final Hang The Net Celebrity Shootout. As a point guard at UNC-Chapel Hill, Ford earned First Team All-American Honors and was the 1978 National Player of The Year.

Winston-Salem Roadrunners qualify for AAU Junior Olympic Nationals

BY MELISSIA SUTTON
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

There were more than just fireworks flying on the Fourth of July weekend in Charlotte. The Winston-Salem Roadrunners were shooting off sparks of their own at the North Carolina AAU Area 25 Regional Qualifier at Olympic High School.

This meet would determine what athletes would be able to attend the AAU Junior Olympic Nationals in Norfolk, Virginia, Aug. 1-8.

The Roadrunners placed fifth out of 38 teams and qualified 33 out of 37 athletes to attend Nationals. The first gold medal came from Jahnaul Ritzie-Pouncey in the 9-year-old boys' triathlon. Next was Jaden Lockhart in the 12-year-old pentathlon and the sparks were flying the rest of the weekend.

Some of the other champions were Aniya Edwards in the 9-year-old long jump, Uyi Igbiginie in 11-year-old high jump, Jahvaree Ritzie-Pouncey in the 12-year-old discus, shot put, and tied with Jaden Lockhart in the high jump. Jaden Lockhart also won the 800m. Isaac Sutton was champion in the 100, 200, and 4x100 with Brandon Johnson, Jamison Warren and Tremaine Pate. Isaac also received the Regional Meet MVP for the 12-year-old



boys' age group. Brandon Whitfield was champion in the 13-year-old high jump and 1500m.

Other Roadrunners that performed well and qualified for the Nationals are: Alia Bowles, Jericho Edwards, Jaden Glenn and Saxon Fair for the 8 and under age group; Brandon Sutton and for the 9-year-old group; Sterling Fair, Jon Gullette II, Justin Powell, Chaney Fitzgerald and Joshua Scales for the 11-year-old group; Javon Siddle, Asia Phillips, Stephanie Sutton, Celeste Neal and Gahques Ligons for the 12-year-old group; Cameron Attacks, Amar Aikens, Jady Thompson, Darius Williams and Kalani Gillion for the 13-year-old group; Gjerria Ligons for the 14-year-old group; Brycen Charles for the 15- to 16-year-old group and Jordan Johnson for the 17- to 18-year-old group. Other great performers were Jordyn Robinson, David Neal, Don Robinson III, and Jaden

Sutton. The Roadrunners were founded in 1971 by Virgil Simpson and re-established in 2012 by some of Coach Simpson's former athletes - Marcus Sutton, Harvey Sutton and Linell Johnson - along with their wives Deborah Sutton, Melissa Sutton and Lynette Johnson; with close friends Jerome and Sodonnie Warren, who share the same passion for track, the Roadrunners once again became a first-class organization. The organization serves boys and girls ages 6-18 in Winston Salem and the surrounding areas. The Roadrunner Track Club exists to promote healthy living through exercise and proper nutrition, to cultivate a competitive spirit through track and field, and to encourage education and higher learning in order to build the youth of today into leaders of tomorrow. Their website is at www.wroadrunners.com.

Ball person tryouts for Winston-Salem Open July 31 and Aug. 1

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Open will hold tryouts for ball persons on Friday, July 31 from 4 to 6 p.m. and Saturday, Aug. 1 from 10 a.m. to noon.

The tryouts are open to the public and will be held at the Wake Forest University Indoor Tennis Center, 100 West 32nd St. (adjacent to BB&T Field).

Candidates for ball persons must know how to keep score of tennis games, be able to move quickly, be willing to endure lengthy tennis matches in the sun and work well with others on a team. Ball persons must be 12 years old by Aug. 1 (proof of age required) in order to qualify.

All applicants are asked to attend a minimum of three of the two-hour training sessions from 4 to 6 p.m. on Aug. 5, 10, 12, 17 and 19 at the Wake Forest University Indoor Tennis Center. Also, applicants must be available for the entire Winston-Salem Open tournament and qualifying rounds Aug. 22 through 29.

"The primary role of ball persons is to retrieve tennis balls when they are out of play. Ball persons play very important roles in each match. Our ball persons have been an integral part of the Winston-Salem Open in past years," said Winston-Salem Open tournament director Bill Oakes. "Being a ball person is a great way to get involved in tennis, see the competition up close and have some fun at the same time, but it's also a serious commitment."

Oakes said all applicants must be knowledgeable about tennis rules, be able to stand and run for at least an hour and must be able to concentrate for extended periods. They also must be mature, have good hand-eye coordination and exhibit outstanding citizenship.

"I also want to stress that ball persons must be willing to attend three of the five training sessions we're offering and be available for possible work during the entire tournament," Oakes said. "There are no exceptions to these rules."

Applicants are asked to wear appropriate athletic clothes to the tryouts and cannot wear shoes with black soles. Ball persons serve as volunteers, and there is no fee to apply. More information, including online registration, is available at WinstonSalemOpen.com under the "Volunteers" tab at the top.

About the Winston-Salem Open

The Winston-Salem Open, an ATP World Tour 250 event with a total purse of more than \$695,000, will take place from Aug. 22-29, with qualifying set for Aug. 22. The tournament will be the final men's event of the Emirates Airline US Open Series and is the week before the US Open.

For more information on the 2015 Winston-Salem Open, please go to WinstonSalemOpen.com.

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 * Post-Game Kids Run The Bases

Saturday, August 1, 6:30 pm
 * Post-Game Kids Run The Bases

Sunday, August 2, 2:00 pm
 * Pre-Game Autograph Session,
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