

Crutches don't hinder Howard at annual camp

BY CHAD ROBERTS
THE CHRONICLE

On the final day of the Fifth Annual Josh Howard Basketball Camp, the event's namesake spent the latter part of the afternoon in a chair off the court at the W.R. Anderson Recreation Center next to a fan, tending to his 8-month-old son.

It wasn't that he didn't want to play — he couldn't. He was walking on crutches.

His left foot was in a soft cast after a recent surgery, and his wrist had also been operated on recently enough to keep him out of the action.

"My college injuries piled up on me," Howard explained.

The 6'7" Howard, a Winston-Salem native who is now a star forward for the Dallas Mavericks after a stand-out career at Wake Forest, said the recreation center on Reynolds Park Road was where he came to practice when he first started playing basketball.

Now, he looks forward to coming back and holding the camp every year, even if there has to be a limit on the number of youths that can participate. Close to 200 kids came to the camp last year, he said.

"We had to scale it down, but other than that, it's been great," Howard said.

Oscar Neely served as the camp's director. With an estimated 120 kids at this year's camp, he said managers were also a part of the daily basketball lessons.

"We teach them to have good attitudes and respect each other," Neely said.



Josh Howard with Tony Oglesby and Barbara Robinson.

Assisting Neely as referees and coaches were about 20 young men, some from area high schools and others from the Josh Howard Foundation.

O.T. Hill, who previously worked with Neely in South Carolina, said this was his fourth visit to Winston-Salem for the Josh Howard Basketball Camp. He said many of the participants recognize him even though they only see him once a year at the camp.

"I always interact with the kids. That's the best thing you can do," Hill said.

Carl Brown said his son Jordan, 8,

talked excitedly about the camp for about a week before it got started. So, Brown rose at 6 every morning to make the trip from High Point every day. Though none too excited about getting up at dawn, Brown said he had an obligation to do it for his son.

"If you want to fulfill a dream, you gotta make sacrifices," Brown said. He said this was Jordan's last athletic camp of the summer. Next up were math and science activities.

"We're getting back into education for the next month or two before school," he said.

Friday was the camp's last day, and the students got a chance to use what they had learned. The six age groups — from as young as 5 to as old as 15 — split into teams and played 20-minute games.

Neely said the most enjoyable part was when a kid scored a basket.

"They might take 10 shots and miss nine of them," Neely said. "But when they do score, it's like they hit the lottery."

Howard said aside from watching the youths grow physically and mentally, holding the camp gave him an opportunity to give the kids something to do.

"That's my number-one motivation. So they can get that experience," he said.

After the 15-year-olds finished their last game, the campers came together in front of the bleachers and listened to Neely and Howard speak.

After Howard invited everyone back for next year, he took questions from the group.

Noticing Howard had been on crutches all week, one child asked when he would play again.

"I'll play when I can walk," Howard said to a round of laughs.

Another camper asked Howard what he would do when he retired from basketball.

Howard gave him a rough outline of his post-NBA business plan, which includes a day care and the real estate business. Howard also assured him that the Winston-Salem basketball camp would continue.

"Then I'll get to watch y'all play," Howard said.



Darrell Brooks

Bowie State names alum as head coach

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Darrell Brooks is returning to his alma mater to become the new head coach of the Bowie State University men's basketball team. The 53-year-old Brooklyn native is a 1979 graduate of the university, where he played point guard from 1975-79.

The Bulldogs finished 15-13 last year, including a 10-8 record in the CIAA.

Brooks described the new position as "a tremendous honor." The fact Bowie State is my alma mater makes it that much more special. My family and I are very honored and look forward to the challenge.

"We are excited to have Darrell Brooks as Bowie State's new head coach of our men's basketball team and we look forward to his leadership and to generating a new level of success among the team members," said Mickey L. Burmim, president of Bowie State University.

Brooks spent the previous eight years as head coach at George Washington University. Prior to his stint at George Washington, Brooks spent the 2000-2001 season as the head coach at Western Maryland College (WMC). Under Brooks, WMC ranked among the top three teams in the Centennial Conference in scoring, assists, three-pointers made and steals. Brooks spent 16 years as an assistant coach at six different schools including Loyola University, George Mason University (1993-97), American University (1990-93), The College of William & Mary (1988-90), Central State University (1985-88) and Bowie State (1984-85). Brooks also directed his own basketball camp, Camp Austral in Maliano, Spain (1991-1995).

Darrell and his wife, Sandra, reside in Randallstown, Md. His daughter, Kiana, has two children, Aalyiah, 14 and Alexis, 12. His son, D.J., 24, is a graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta.

Winston-Salem State track adds five to team

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Winston-Salem State

University Track & Field/Cross Country head coach Halcyon Blake announced the signing of five talented student-athletes that will join the Rams and Lady Rams this fall. The Lady Rams cross country and track & field program will welcome a standout trio while the Rams men will add a pair of talented newcomers to the 2009 squad.

"They [the signees] have competed at the state and national levels," Blake said.

"And we are really excited about the possibilities for them here at Winston-Salem State University."

The Lady Rams newcomers include Tyrak Winfrey and Korin Shepherd. Winfrey is a decorated athlete from Seventy First High School in Fayetteville who has been impressive both in cross country and in track & field. She posted a time of 19:48 in the NCHSAA 4A Cross Country Championship as well as a 1:20 in the 500 meters.

Shepherd is an addition from Mallard Creek High

School in Charlotte, where she also earned numerous honors.

"She is a hard worker, dependable, and she is respectful. These qualities place her in high esteem among her fellow teammates," said her former high school coach Joan Green. "She serves as a calming force when interactions among her teammates are heading in a less-than-positive direction."

Also joining the Lady Rams track & field and cross country program will be Kanaya M. Williams of

Romulus High School in Romulus, Mich.

The trio will join a Lady Rams cross country and track & field squad that set numerous school records last season and are poised to continue their improvement this season.

Joining the Rams squad will be the duo of Fabian D. White Jr. and Darius Cureton, both in-state signees.

The WSSU cross country season will open on Sept. 5 at the UNC-Pembroke Invitational.



Coach Halcyon Blake

Briefs

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poster version. The desktop images can't be downloaded from the WSSU Sports Web site just yet. Those who wish to receive it or the poster, should contact the office of athletic media relations in the Gaines Center Office Suite 108 at 336-750-2909.

UMES' Henry falls short at nationals

Vanessa Henry, who just completed her first year as a member of the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore track & field team, finished 10th in the women's shot put at the 2009 USA Outdoor Track & Field National

Championships.

Henry's mark of 14.04 meters left her just shy of placing in the top eight and qualifying for the event finals.

She became the second UMES athlete in as many years to represent the university in the USA National Championships. Sophomore Dana Lendor competed in the 400 meters in the 2008 meet.

A&T basketball signs four

With the announced signings of four players June 24, A&T Men's Head Basketball Coach Jerry Eaves announced the completion of his 2009-10 class.

Austin Witter, DaMetrius Upchurch, Lawrence Smith



Coach Jerry Eaves

and R.J. Buck will join the Aggies basketball team this winter and look to make their mark over the next four seasons.

"We will have tremendous athleticism this season," said Eaves, who is entering his seventh season as the Aggies head coach. "We will be able to really get after people with our pressure because we can come at people in waves with long, athletic players."

Witter (6-8, 190 pounds, Princeton Junction, N.J.) can play as a shooting guard or a small forward. He averaged 14.9 points, 11.6 rebounds, 6.6 blocks, 3.8 assists, and shot 47 percent from the field in and from 3-point range.

The only in-state signee in Eaves' class is Upchurch (6-7,

208, Garner). Upchurch will likely play the power forward position at A&T. Upchurch averaged 19.1 points, 8.9 rebounds and 4.2 blocks per game for the Garner Trojans last season.

Smith comes from the talent pool at Bishop McNamara in Bowie, Md. He averaged 7.7 points, 5.0 rebounds and 1.1 assists per game for the Bishop McNamara team.

Buck (6-2, 175, Lusby, Md.) averaged 11.0 points, 8.0 rebounds and 4.0 steals per game at St. Mary's Ryken. As a junior, he led his team in rebounding.

Golf

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ters went from sponsors in 2008 to players in 2009.

Kia said she and Kim, both self-proclaimed golf novices, were playing in another charity tournament recently when they were spotted by a friend of the family.

"We kinda got caught at the tournament," Kia said. "Nobody knew we were trying to play golf."

Word of the sisters' excursion soon reached the ears of Linwood, Jonathan Skinner's brother. Linwood told his mother, and his mother told Kia and Kim's mom. And their mom told them that they would play in Saturday's tournament.

The sisters were paired with Nathaniel Holiday and "Eagle Eye" Richard Thomas.

The foursome started the day on par-4 at hole 13.

Thomas handled the driving, Holiday did the mid-range work and they both coached the women on putting.

Their combined efforts led to success on No. 13.

"We didn't lose nothing," Holiday said after the group made par on the hole.

"We keep playing with y'all, we might have a golf game by the end of this tournament," Kim Peoples-Jones said.

The group finished the day around 6 p.m. with a 68, two strokes under the par 70



Photo by Chad Roberts

Claudia Skinner, Linwood Skinner Jr., Jerry Tilley, Isaiah Black, C.T. Sams, Tom Ratledge and Linwood Skinner.

course.

None of the teams were able to take advantage of the hole-in-one prize at hole 4.

Charles Burns came closest, getting the ball within five or six feet of the hole and the \$5,000 in prize money.

"My only hole-in-one was at a golf challenge in Mebane from about 170 yards. That's still my only hole-in-one," Burns said after his team finished the hole.

While Burns was coming up roughly five feet short of a payday, Chris McCoy and his foursome were fighting to make par on hole No. 7. McCoy said his team had been up-and-down all day.

"We're leaving a lot of birdies out there. We've been playing four-stroke golf," McCoy said.

The team went on to birdie at No. 7. After starting the day at hole No. 17, McCoy's team was two-over par and heading to hole No. 8.

"I expected some more birdies, since our team's name is 'Stroking for Birdies,'" McCoy said.

The first team back at the clubhouse was led by Braxton "Snooky" Hairston. His crew shot a 62.

"We did about as well as we could," Hairston said after his team finished one-under on the front nine and seven-under on the back nine.

Mike Asbury, a student at Winston-Salem State and a member of Hairston's foursome, did the long driving for the team. He, too, was unable to conquer the hole-in-one and cash in on the prize.

"I hit it on the green, but not close enough to the hole," Asbury said.

Hairston's team and other golfers waited around the clubhouse as results trickled in.

Eventually, the threesome of C.T. Sams, Tom Ratledge and Jerry Tilley was announced as champions.

Their score of 57 was just enough to squeak by the foursome of Lawrence Shackelford, Milton Lee, Harry Benton and Sam Caldwell, who combined for a 58.

Sams said the drama unfolded right up until the group's last hole at 17.

"We had to make a 35- to 40-foot putt for birdie, and our last man (Tilley) knocked it in," Sams said.

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