

Timothy Ramsey
Sports Columnist

Former W. Forsyth great now head coach at Meredith College

NBA free agency sets off with a bang

Wow, I knew this NBA free agency period was going to be interesting but I had no idea it would begin so soon. LeBron James, Chris Paul, Paul George and Kevin Durant have all either signed or agreed to deals.

The most shocking for most was the Los Angeles Lakers signing James to a four year \$153.3 million deal. At first I was somewhat shocked that James decided to join the Lakers without the commitment of any other superstar.

After Paul agreed to his four year, \$160 million deal to stay with Houston and George agreed to his four year, \$137 million deal to stay with Oklahoma City, it became clear to me what James' motives really are.

I really believe that James understands that he is the best player in the world and chasing ghosts of basketball past serves no purpose at this point. I feel James is setting himself up for life after basketball while also putting his family in a great situation to maximize their earning potential as well. His eldest son is one of the best young basketball players in the country, so why not put him in the city with the biggest stage.

There have and will be players without championship rings that will want to come and play with James based on the fact he has made it to the Finals eight years in a row. One has to believe that James is banking on players having the need to play in the bright lights of Los Angeles along with having the chance to chase a ring with the King.

For me, I firmly think James is done chasing rings but rather has his eye on bigger and better things. I am not saying winning is not paramount for him, but he knows what his and the Laker name means to other players. The fact that Magic Johnson has landed James so early means he has his centerpiece for a championship squad as well as a young protégé to mold in life off the court. Johnson also has a heck of a pitch when he sells the Lakers to other free agents now that he has the best player in the world.

The Lakers are also pulling out all of the stops to acquire Kawhi Leonard from the San Antonio Spurs. I don't think this would be a good move by Magic and the Lakers. With or without Kawhi, the Lakers can't dethrone the Warriors as presently constituted. Giving up all of their young assets and/or future draft picks seems to be a waste, especially since Leonard will be a free agent after next season.

Leonard has expressed his strong desire to play for the Lakers, so they have the upper hand when it comes to trade talks. Even if another team decides to jump in the mix, Leonard is more than likely a one-

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Quick

Submitted photos
(Left) West Forsyth High graduate and former Tar Heel LaQuanda Barksdale Quick will take over as head coach of the women's basketball team at Meredith College in Raleigh this fall.

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

LaQuanda Barksdale Quick was one of the all time greats that has ever stepped foot on a basketball court for the West Forsyth Titans. The former UNC-Chapel Hill Tar Heel recently accepted the head coaching position for Meredith College in Raleigh.

Quick is a former first-round draft pick of the Portland Fire of the WNBA back in 2001. Quick played a few years in the WNBA and overseas, but found her niche in coaching when she and her husband started a family.

"I got married during my career in the WNBA and I got pregnant with my son my third year, so I stepped away from the

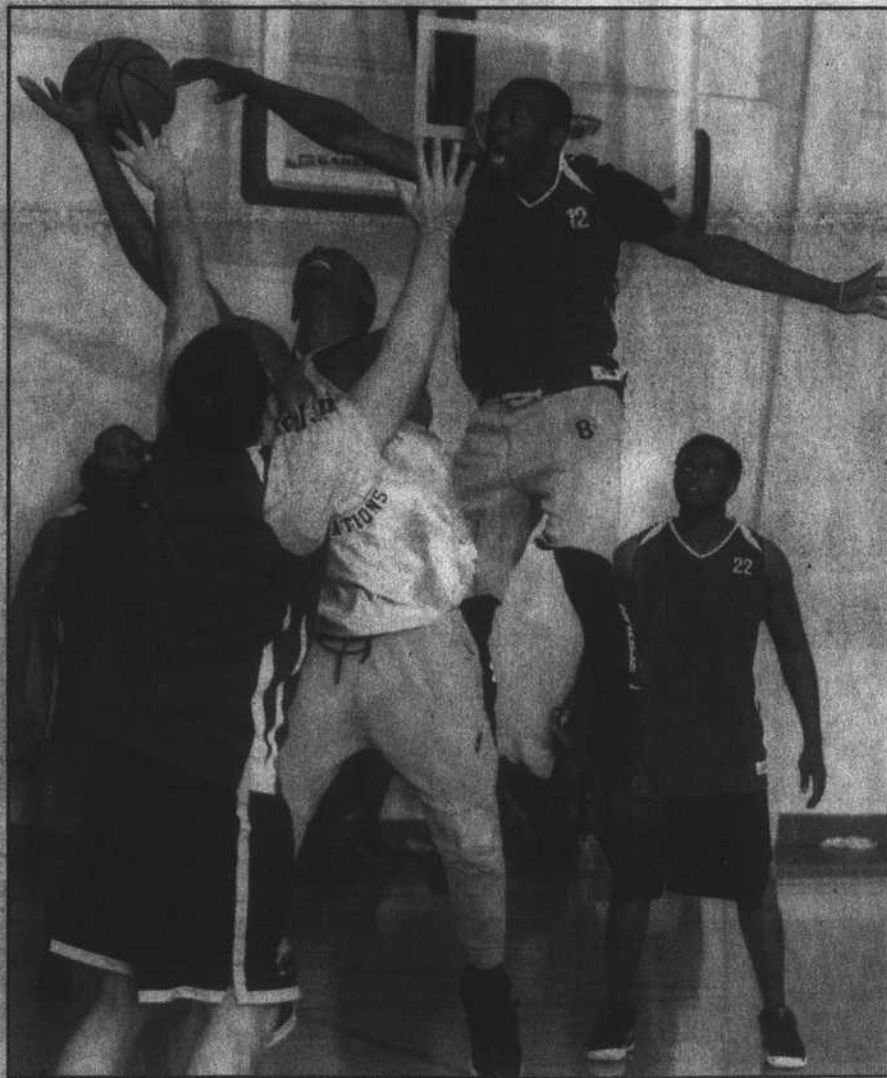
game as a player but I still wanted to be involved in the game some sort of way," said Quick. "I started doing individual skill development and that kind of snowballed into being asked to be an assistant coach and then a head coach."

Quick began her coaching career at West Forsyth as an assistant coach but soon took over the head coaching position for the var-

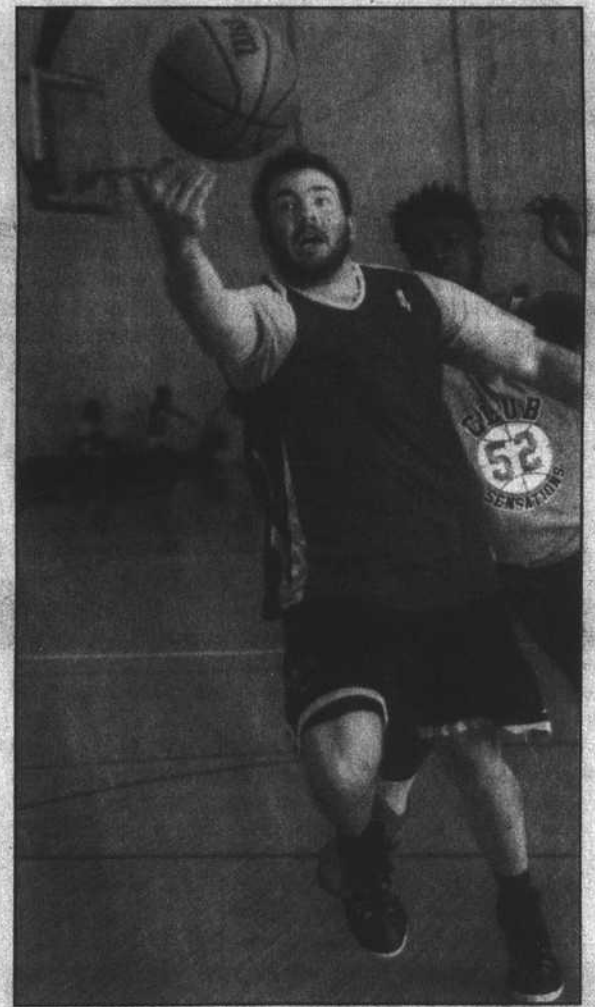
sity girls. She has also coached at Winston-Salem State University and most recently at the University of West Florida. Quick says she was looking for an opportunity to get back to North Carolina to be closer to her family, so this was the perfect opportunity.

"I saw the job posted on differ-

See Coach on B2



"The League" at W.R. Anderson brings together some of the best talent the Triad has to offer.



The young men playing basketball in the center means they are doing something constructive, league officials say.

'The League' turns up heat

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

"The League," sponsored by the Josh Howard Foundation, is in full swing at the W.R. Anderson Community Center. Following a successful spring league, commissioner Steve Nivens says he knows the summer league will be better than it was last year.

Bringing in some of the best talent the Triad has to offer, the summer league displays high quality basketball involving former high school and college basketball players. Some of the teams come as far away as Virginia to play in the league.

Here is a look at some of the action that took place last week in "The League."

Salem Baptist rising senior is turning heads

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

Basketball is a sport predominately dominated by African-Americans from the high school to the professional level. However, Daniel Leal is of Mexican descent and is quite possibly the best unknown player in Forsyth County.

Leal, a rising senior at Salem Baptist Christian School, is a silky smooth point guard who has faced off against some of the best point guards in the city and has held his own or outright got the better of them.

"It's a good feeling to play against some of the big named players in the city because I am just a kid that



Photo by Timothy Ramsey
Daniel Leal is a rising senior at Salem Baptist and one of the best basketball players in the county.

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