

## **The Summer of a Camp Trotter**

By Monique S. Lewis, former WBCA Special Projects Intern

After successfully coming off my stint with the WBCA as the Special Projects Intern (coordinating Nike's So You Want To Be A Coach 2006), I could see a world of opportunities waiting to be seized. With women's basketball continuing to grow to new heights, an added benefit is the continuing development of the sports business field. Coaching, administration, events and program development, and marketing/promotions are only a few of the varied areas associated with this profession. Furthermore, the summer is prime time for colleges and universities to give back to those who often times are the biggest supporters at their games. This is often accomplished by hosting youth summer camps. Keeping all things in perspective regarding my somewhat undecided career aspirations, my goal for the summer was to get a behind-the-scenes look at how some of the nation's top programs contribute to the advancement of the game we all love.

### **Rutgers University, June 9-11**

#### **C. Vivian Stinger Elite Position Camp**

While at the WBCA I worked closely with the Director of Basketball Ops for the Scarlet Knights, Josh Reinitz. He assisted me with Coach Stringer's speaking engagement for the "So" workshop. Meeting him and Assistant Coach Michelle Edwards in Boston, as well as holding a few conversations with the legendary Coach Stringer on different occasions afforded me the chance to work as a camp instructor in Piscataway, N.J. This camp was very small in numbers (only 23 campers). The good thing about a group this small is that as a camp instructor I was able to work very closely with campers. Those who attended came from many different states, including New Jersey, Massachusetts, Virginia, and even Arkansas. Rutgers' focus was to give campers an idea of what it takes to get to the "next level." These high school student-athletes had an opportunity to run some of the drills that are actually done in Scarlet Knight practices. Drills were explained by Associate Head Coach Jollette Law and demonstrated by camp coaches and Rutgers athletes. Matee Ajavon, Essence Carson, and Kia Vaughn were players who assisted with camp. I was partnered with RU sophomore Katie Adams to teach ball handling principles during stations work. Also, a notable lecture about relevant NCAA rules and regulations was given by one of the Athletic Academic Advisors. Assistant Coach Michelle Edwards (Camp Director) arranged for the campers to sit in the video room to watch some film - an address to the campers from Coach Stinger who was unable to attend, as well as the 2005 season highlight tape. Along the walls of this theater style video room were the scribbles of some Rutgers plays. There seemed to be a funny story behind all the writings on the wall, though I'm sure not too amusing when each player had to write them out at Coach Stringer's sincere request!

Overall I was impressed with the campers' desire to want to work - even during breaks of camp. I showed a few point guards some of my favorite drills and they were more than appreciative. Hopefully the players enjoyed their time spent with one of the most feared programs in collegiate basketball.

### **University of Kentucky, June 18-22**

#### **Individual Overnight Camp**

Upon arriving in Lexington, I could feel in the air how much the people love and support their Wildcats. It was also evident by registration numbers totaling about 240 campers. And with only one considerably smaller college camp under my belt, I had no idea what to expect. On the other hand, our initial staff meeting made it crystal clear. The UK program is certainly on the rise and it is obvious why. This camp was extremely organized and thoroughly thought out. Attendees were busy at all times, there was no dead time. I enjoyed working this camp due to the expectations that were put on me to teach, instruct, and lead as a camp instructor. Head Coach Mickie DeMoss set the standard from the first day. She emphasized energy and enthusiasm to the 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders. This then was required to be reinforced by all staff. The first night we separated campers by age (SEC, WNBA, and NBA) and constructed teams based on our evaluation of talent after various drills. We were ready for the week, with each coach being responsible for his/her team of 8-10 kids. Every day each coach was assigned to teach a particular skill during camp station work. We also played 5-on-5 games each afternoon and evening, and in between time held 1-on-1, 3-on-3, free throw, and other contests. All of these activities were rewarded at the end of camp. Each individual received a certificate at an awards ceremony too. The special guest of camp was Ruthie Bolton, a former SEC player, Olympian, and WNBA All-Decade Honorable Mention honoree. She did lead the group in some good drills and gave a great motivational presentation. She was very approachable and signed autographs too.

This was an awesome experience for me. Despite having no true ties at the UK, I was challenged as a camp instructor to meet the expectations there. It was imperative to exude professionalism as the Wildcat staff does. I enjoyed myself so much so, that I really began to reconsider if I want to pursue coaching at some level. I must say we coaches became quite competitive on the sidelines! Edwina Johnson, the 2006 WBCA High School All-America Game intern also worked this camp with me. I thought she was going to bite my head off while I was refereeing for not making a call in favor of her team...LOL! It was definitely all in good fun however. We all saw tremendous improvement in all campers by the end of the week. It was truly rewarding!!

## **University of Virginia, June 22-24**

### **Elite Players Camp**

This camp was amazing. As a former player I considered myself a student of the game and therefore could appreciate the style of coaching by the Cavaliers. Basketball was taught almost as a science during position breakdowns. I assisted Coach Jeff House as he described to guards the angles to get open and exaggerated shooting techniques in an effort to show how one should properly shoot. Head Coach Debbie Ryan and other staff members were highly visible and spoke to the camp frequently. One awesome point made by the accomplished head coach was that, "Being great requires more than doing only what you're told." Hopefully this principle resonated with these "elite players." UVA also incorporated their players well. 2006 Virginia graduate and "So" participant Tiffany Sardin, along with teammates Sharnee Zoll, Siedah Williams and others helped with different facets of the camp. One element in the camp I really liked was that there were evaluation forms that each coach had to fill out for his/her players. The idea to do this is genius. I know I still have the first evaluation form I ever received from a camp. I felt a huge responsibility in doing this, yet honored in some sense to possibly leave a lasting impression on someone's basketball career.

Around the prestigious UVA campus it was well-known that the 05-06 season would be the last time anyone would play in the famous University Hall before the opening of a new facility. This was evidenced by the t-shirts reading "Last Ball at UHall" worn by those around Charlottesville. It was awesome assisting with camp and knowing the history of the institution made the experience better too.

### **Old Dominion University, June 26-July 1** **Day Camp/Team Camp**

Here I again teamed up with another 2006 WBCA Betty F. Jaymes Intern. I believe I can conclude that Rene Rice (All Star Challenge intern) and I exceedingly enjoyed working these two camps. Instructing about 150 kids all day for a week was surely demanding. The well organized camp schedule and warm ODU staff made the time spent in the gym more fun than anything. As coaches we were asked to really engage ourselves in educating the youth at the Day Camp. With the full camp schedule, the kids received a great deal of coaching. Head Coach Wendy Larry did an excellent job of coming in to explain a few drills to the campers and also observe their campers. An individual instruction segment for point guards that I did with ODU sophomore point guard Jazzmin Walters was my highlight during this camp. The possibility of me creating some type of training service of my own seemed attainable after putting the camp point guards through an intense workout. Nearly the entire Lady Monarch team was present during both Day and Team Camp. Team Camp saw eight teams competing in tournament style games, then double elimination playoffs to determine a winner. There were great athletes playing in these games, a few of which could clearly be next level collegiate student-athletes if desired. A Coaches Clinic hosted by Coach Larry was also a Team Camp favorite. Teams and coaches were invited to come out and be used as demonstrators (along with camp instructors and ODU players). This elite coach shared some fantastic drills emphasizing ball movement and defense.

Again here at Old Dominion there was a historical theme taking place. One of the facilities being used, the Fieldhouse, was the original place where basketball games were held on campus. In the air you could see pictures and jerseys hanging of legendary ODU alums Nancy Lieberman, Anne Donovan, and Ticha Penicheiro. Of course the many Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) championship banners also hung. Coach Larry this season will be looking for her 16<sup>th</sup> championship and 12<sup>th</sup> in a row. This same Fieldhouse was being demolished and transformed into a new student recreation center soon after the conclusion of camps. Assistant Coach Karen Barefoot made sure the campers were aware of this history and encouraged them to play harder knowing they would be the last to play in there. I am enthused that I had an opportunity to work this camp and interact with the staff. The Lady Monarchs are top-notch people!

I will be ending my camp trotting by working with **MD Sports/Montgomery County, Maryland Recreation Department** in my hometown area of Washington, D.C., I will also gain experience at **Triple Double Skills Camp**, a youth camp in Charlotte, N.C., and partnered with the Charlotte Sting/Bobcats. I have learned much while on my tour. While I was on the court for much of the time, I also took time to observe camp store set-up, the registration process, signage, and other "little things" like how the coaches manuals were distributed (bind combed, three-pronged folders with or without pockets, etc.). I am sure that my time spent this summer traveling will not be in vain. My immediate future includes beginning the marketing graduate

assistantship in athletics at Georgia State University in the Fall. I should be able to draw on some of these experiences and newfound contacts to help guide me in later career choices. Thanks to everyone who helped me accomplish this Basketball Camp Trotting!!