AREA SPORTS

Lack of funds may:

Slam Dunk Baltimore AAU Jaguars dreams

By Will Marshall
AFRO Staff Writer

On April 28 the Greater Baltimore Youth Survival Organization Jaguars, captured the Maryland State Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Title in a round robin tournament held at The Community College of Baltimore.

With that victory, they also clenched a spot in the National AAU Championships, 17 and under division, to be held in Jonesboro, Arkansas July 21-28.

Mike Wise, the coach of the Jaguars, is an assistant coach at Southern High School in the varsity basketball and football programs.

Wise feels that he has put together an exceptionally talented group of young men who "have a real legitimate shot at winning a national title."

"With the type of talent we were able to recruit, we can defeat most 19 and under teams. I mean, all the talent is on this team."

As coach, Wise should voice this type of optimism. However much of what he claims about the players on his team is true. All but two of his players were selected for the MSA All Metro Team.

Two players won "High School Player of the Year" awards: Devin Gray (6'6") was selected as the AFRO award winner, and Zeke Marshall (6'6") was selected by a local daily newspaper.

Steven Thomas (6'7") was selected as Public School Tournament MVP, and all of his players participated in the recent NAACP Basketball Tournament which was organized by a former AFRO employee.

"Zeke Marshall is a B student who will be attending Cornell this Fall," said Wise.

"I have a group of good kids, well young men really, who have worked hard to earn the right to make it to the AAU nationals. They worked hard in school and on the basketball court."

"This is my first year to go national," said Wise, and it seems that right now everything I touch turns to gold." But according to Wise, "Our dreams of gold could tarnish and fade real fast if we don't get the money we need to send the kids to the AAU Championships."

Currently the team is working hard to raise the money through grass roots fundraising efforts but Wise is concerned that it may be too little too late.

"I'm not the only team that must raise money for the AAU Championship, Anthony Lewis over at Cecil-Kirk Rec Center is sending two teams down," said Wise. The Cecil-Kirk Recreation Center is fielding a 14 and under and 16 and under team this year.

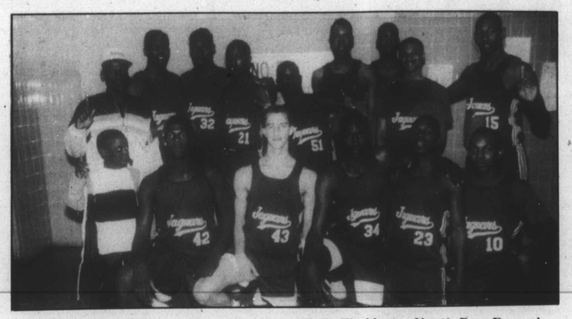
Wise continued, "The other centers have been there before so they had some experience in this area, but I didn't realize we would need to come up with the money (about $12,000) so quickly."

On Saturday June 9, a benefit basketball tournament was played between Baltimore and Washington, D.C. all-stars at Dunbar Senior High.

Proceeds from that tournament were used to assist the Jaguars and Cecil-Kirk Recreation Center teams in their quest to reach the AAU Championships.

Other fundraising events planned include a roller skating trip to Painters Mill skating rink on June 15, and a Fathers Day Basketball Tournament at CCB Liberty Heights Campus on June 17. For information on other events call 962-5326.

According to coach Wise, "Our youth are faced with so many problems today like crime, drugs and teen pregnancy. I am convinced that this and other programs like it, are essential in providing a healthy atmosphere for young kids to use their energies and talents in a positive way."



The Maryland AAU Jaguars. Kneeling: l to r Kevin Washington No. 42, Ross Peacock No. 43, Dontie Bright, No. 34, Derrick Horsey, No. 23, David Cason No. 10. Standing: Marcus Wise, Coach Michael Wise, Zeke Marshall, No. 40, Devin Gray, No. 32, Michael Lloyd, No. 21, John Salley, No. 33, Abdul Brown, No. 55, Rodney Beasley, No. 12, Jermaine Porter, No. 15. Not pictured Steve Thomas No. 51, Darin Jones, no. 39, Emmanuel Holmes, Asst. Coach.

Spotlight on

Forest Park Little League

By Will Marshall
AFRO Staff Writer

The Forest Park Little League is one of Baltimores oldest leagues where young Black children can learn discipline, team spirit and the fine art of playing baseball.

There are four separate divisions of play in this league, according to Bryan Gould a spokesperson and team manager for the league.

"We have the Clinic League (8-9yrs) led by the Orioles, the Minors (10-12yrs) led by the Dodgers and the Yankees, the Giants hold a slight edge in the Majors (13-15yrs) and in the Senior Division (16-17yrs) the Red Sox are on top."

John Blackwell, league President, said, "Our young folk here have had some very competitive games. Also the managers and coaches have done a good job teaching these young kids the skills of the game, and to have a good attitude towards life."

In addition to providing an outlet for young people to release their energies in a positive environment, there is also a family atmosphere to a day out at the Forest Park Little League.

There is a concession stand where parents of the players serve hamburgers and hotdogs fresh off the grill, along with an assortment of soft drinks. And what day at the park would be complete without a visit from the friendly ice-cream man.

Gould said, "The league is sponsoring its Annual Crab Feast on Sunday June 17, at the Forum 4210 Primrose Ave (off Reistertown Road) from 1pm to 6pm, and this would be a good opportunity for the community to come out and meet some of the kids."

For information on having your child participate in this league, or scheduled events, call 664-9429.

Team manager, Alan Kelly gives his players a pep talk before they take the field.

(Photos by Wil Marshall)

Some mothers and sisters of the players enjoy the game while seated in folding chairs.

SPORTS SHORTS

By Will Marshall
AFRO Staff Writer

Wade passed over

Morgan State University announced June 12, the selection of former Florida A & M University coach, Michael Lebron Holmes to head there mens Basketball program.

Bob Wade was one of the three finalist, of 75 applicants, however he was passed over in the final selection.

Youth sports program at Coppin

In cooperation with the National Youth Program, Coppin State College is hosting the National Youth Sports Program (NYSP) from June 25 to July 30.

There will be sports competition, skills instruction, physical fitness testing and drug education offered. There will also be sessions on nutrition, personal health, career opportunities and responsibilities and higher education.

The clinic is open Monday through Friday 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. to students ages 10-16 male and female, and each participant will receive a full medical exam.

Everything (including lunch) is totally free, so for further information call 333-5571 or 333-7427.

Table Tennis Tournament

June 15 and 16 are the last days to attend the Table Tennis Tournament of Champions (TOC), sponsored by the Maryland Table Tennis Association.

The TOC began June 8, and is the largest International sporting event ever conducted in Maryland. Over 2,000 competitors from around the world will participate in this event.

According to the United States Table Tennis Association, and Maryland State Games, co-organizers of the event; "Having the TOC in Baltimore will allow the public a greater opportunity to become more familiar with the sport."

For more information contact Richard McAfee at the Eastern Training Center for Table Tennis, at (301) 549-9368.

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