

SPORTS

Local teams perform well in hoops classic

By M.L. Burwell

Special to Sentinel-Voice

"People always say to me, 'When you get to the NBA, don't forget me.' Well, if I don't get to the NBA, you don't forget me." - Arthur Agee, co-star of the 1994 award-winning documentary film, "Hoop Dreams"

Hoop dreams abounded this weekend in the nation's largest in-season boys' high school basketball tournament. The games were played in the high school gyms at Durango, Foothill, Sierra Vista and Silverado, with the championship games at Green Valley. Participating teams represented 14 states and Canada, with the bulk of entries coming from Nevada. With a record-setting 80 teams, and for the first time, the tournament was played in five separate 16-team tournaments organized by level of competition: the Millennium Cup, Gold Cup, Silver Cup, Bronze Cup and Copper Cup.

Larry McKay, the tournament founder and executive director, felt that by creating the five separate divisions, more schools could participate and would have greater interest in playing against their own level of competition with an opportunity to pick up a championship in the process.

"Our new format has obviously proven incredibly popular and it's really exciting for us to coincidentally have 25 teams from the Silver State help honor the Silver Anniversary of the tournament," said McKay.

Over the past 25 years, the Holiday Prep Classic has turned out a virtual "Who's Who" of NBA talent. Tracy McGrady, Jerry Stackhouse, Baron Davis, Lamar Odom, Rasheed Wallace, Paul Pierce, Ron Mercer, Trajan Langdon, Felipe Lopez and Las Vegas native, Greg Anthony, are all alumni of the tournament.

This year's tournament no doubt showcased a few legitimate prospects for the league. There has been considerable NBA chatter about 6-10 center DeAngelo Collins of Inglewood High School, the USA Today Top

25 player who recently won the MVP of the prestigious ABCD Adidas Senior All-Star Game and collected the MVP of this weekend's Gold Cup competition. With a decent game from the perimeter along with some crafty post moves, if this man-child does not turn pro, Fresno State is most likely to land him, albeit temporarily.

Closer to home, Nevada's top standout guard, 6-2 C. J. Watson from Bishop Gorman High, has firmly committed to the University of Tennessee. Watson has strong family ties to Tennessee and looks forward to being able to immediately contribute to the Volunteers' basketball program next season. Watson also had an impressive showing at the Holiday Prep Classic, leading the Gaels to the Millennium Cup Championship game.

Other tournament players to keep an eye out for are Jason Obazuaye, a 6-3 shooting guard from Andrew Hill in San Jose, California heading for the University of Colorado; Oumar "Sticks" Sylla, 6-6 forward from Our Saviour New American and Millennium Cup MVP; 6-4 shooting guard Vincent Grier from Bonner Academy in North Carolina heading for NC Charlotte; and Grier's equally impressive teammate, 6-4 forward Fabian Davis, who has verbally committed to Virginia Tech.

In the marquee Millennium Cup title game, Our Saviour New American (New York) jumped out to an early lead, outclassing local powerhouse Bishop Gorman 55-39. The Gold Cup saw Inglewood (Calif.) handle Cheyenne (North Las Vegas) 55-46. The Silver Cup winner was Calvary Chapel (Downey, Calif.), which defeated Chugiak (Alaska) 63-56. The Bronze Cup had Upper St. Clair (Penn.) defeating Mojave (North Las Vegas) 61-53, and the Copper Cup featured two local schools facing each other, as Sierra Vista won over Western 64-54.

PowerAde returned for the second year of a three-year agreement to be the title sponsor of the event. The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* and Adidas returned as presenting sponsors.

Lawsuit accuses Hopkins of libel

NEW YORK (AP) - The former adviser to middleweight boxing champion Bernard Hopkins has accused the boxer in a \$6 million libel lawsuit of betraying his trust and confidence.

In the lawsuit, filed Friday in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, Lou DiBella accused Hopkins of ungraciously dumping him as his adviser and matchmaker after winning the title from Felix Trinidad on Sept.

29.

The lawsuit alleged that the firing brought about negative publicity, leading Hopkins to begin "lashing back, publishing scandalous and patently false statements" about DiBella and his company, DiBella Entertainment.

Hopkins alleged this week in published reports and on a boxing Web site that he paid DiBella to arrange fights for him while DiBella still worked for a cable television

network.

"It's a complete, absolute and utter lie," said Judd Burstein, DiBella's lawyer.

In his lawsuit, DiBella said he had nurtured the career of Hopkins for two years, providing financial and other help until the boxer could get his shot at the title.

He said the lawsuit alleging libel and breach of contract arose from "a remarkable betrayal of trust and confidence."

Jackson pushes for black Notre Dame coach

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) - The Rev. Jesse Jackson believes Tony Dungy and Dennis Green have left no doubt that blacks can coach at the highest levels, and it's time Notre Dame let someone else prove it, too.

"If a school like Notre Dame makes that breakthrough, it changes the whole mental construct of the is-

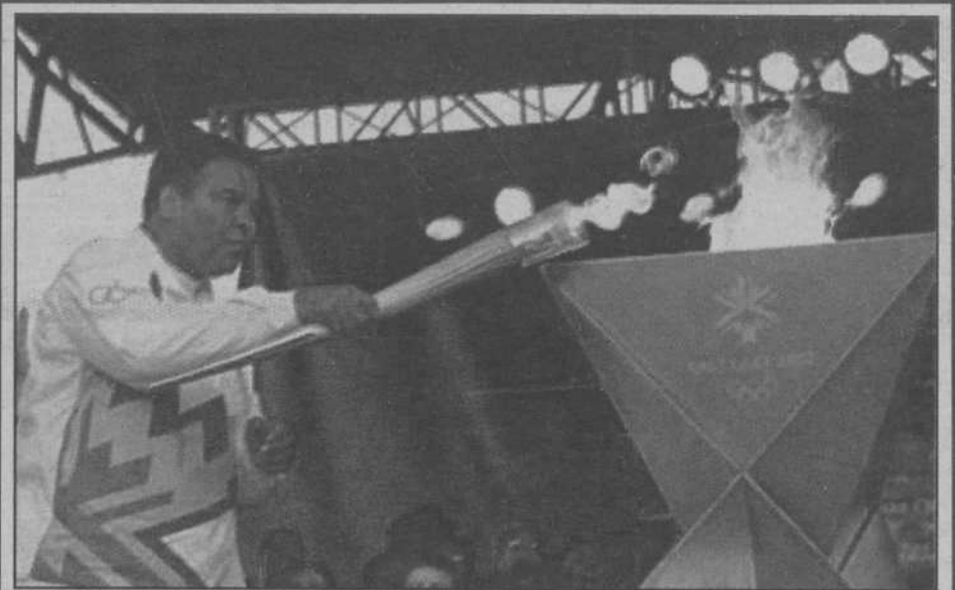
sue," Jackson said Wednesday.

Jackson issued a release urging Notre Dame, which has never had a black head coach in any sport, not even a black offensive or defensive coordinator, to consider black candidates for its head coach's position.

Jackson is working with the Black Coaches Associa-

tion to help promote black candidates for all Division I-A openings. The BCA sent a list of prospective black candidates to all Division I-A athletic directors and university presidents in October.

Jackson first issued a statement asking Notre Dame to hire a black coach on Dec. 10, a day after the school (See Jackson, Page 15)



THE GREATEST TORCH BEARER

Muhammad Ali lit the first torch to start the Olympic Torch Relay at Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta, Georgia earlier this month. The flame arrived from Athens, Greece and will travel through 46 states and arrive in Salt Lake City on Feb. 8 for the Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympic games.

Ali attends Louisville movie premiere

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - Muhammad Ali shook hands with kids and waved to photo-taking fans as he walked up a red carpet and into a theater for a local premiere of "Ali," the new movie that chronicles his life.

Ali was born Cassius Clay in Louisville in 1942. He grew up in the city's predominantly black West End, where Broadway Cinemas is located.

Wearing a gold turtleneck and black pants under a black checkered jacket, he emerged from a limousine to cheers and flashing cameras. The 59-year-old, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, was helped from the car by his wife, Lonnie, and his longtime friend,

Howard Bingham.

He touched dozens of outstretched hands and took a mock punch at a photographer before bending to hug and kiss a 5-year-old boy on the cheek.

"It's good to be back home," Ali said.

Several hundred people attended the event at \$50 per ticket. Proceeds will go to the \$60 million Muhammad Ali Center in downtown Louisville, which will have exhibits focusing on Ali's boxing career and his humanitarian efforts, plus a large lobby and a theater. It's scheduled to be finished in 2004.

"Ali," starring Will Smith, opened nationwide on Christmas Day.

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