

Lebron James blinded by fame's 'bling bling'

By Marvin Wamble
Special to Sentinel-Voice

LeBron James, like an increasing number of super-talented high school basketball players, is not waiting to attend college before turning pro. Nor is he waiting on the payoff that can accompany instant stardom.

LeBron is the basketball phemon from St. Vincent-St. Mary High School in Akron, Ohio. He will bypass the dreaded university recruiting wars and head directly to the fame, fortune and flow of the National Basketball Association. Unless he suffers a season-ending McGahee (named after injured Miami running back Willis McGahee), he will be the No. 1 selection when the NBA holds its draft on June 26, 2003.

When Cleveland, Toronto or Denver selects LeBron, he will become an instant millionaire able to take care of Momma, Cousin Pokey and all his boys. Apparently somebody can't wait until the first check clears.

The word in Akron is that LeBron, currently a senior, is cruising the streets in a Hummer H2. That's cool, except he's still competing in high school hoops. There are rules about high school athletes receiving money or gifts while playing, which can end one's amateur status. The "Cleveland Plain Dealer" is reporting that LeBron got the \$50,000-plus vehicle, complete with three televisions and video game connects, as a gift from his mother for his 18th birthday. Yeah, right.

I'm not doubting that Mom probably has her name on the title, but it will be very interesting when investigators start tracking how she got the money. There is no secret that shoe manufacturers Adidas and Nike have been knocking on LeBron's door for years. And you can bet that more than a few agents have had conversations with Gloria James. This young man is a 6-foot-8 dollar sign and there is a long line of smooth talking, unscrupulous sharks ready to write a four, five or six figure check for a just a piece of his future fortune.

The question here is why Gloria James didn't just wait. Would it have been too difficult to put the Hummer on hold until after LeBron finished the season? How about giving him the car as a high school graduation present? And why a Hummer? You don't cruise under the radar screen in a vehicle that weights 6,400 pounds and measures 15-feet long and 10-feet wide. Plus, he was already driving a Ford Explorer.

Now, the Ohio High School Athletic Association is conducting an investigation, which may end with LeBron being stripped of his high school eligibility. His school, ranked No. 1 in the country, may have to forfeit a number of games. This is a classic case of being blinded by the bling bling. Money can make you rich, but it can also make you stupid (given to unintelligent decisions or acts: acting in an unintelligent or careless manner).

What Ms. James failed to realize is that everyone in Ohio does not love her son. Despite all the headlines, the accolades, national television appearances and his picture on the cover of every sports magazine, some folks don't like an African-American youngster flaunting the flow. Instead of searching for Hummers, Rolex watches, gold jewelry furs and big houses, what the Jameses need to be searching for is good advice during a period in which they will be under the most intense media attention and scrutiny any high school athlete has ever received.

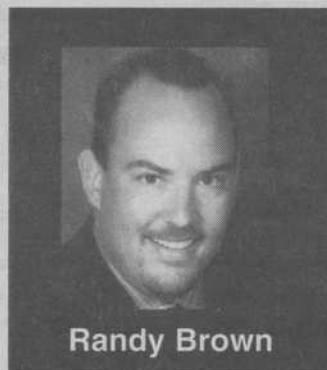
And please buy a good pair of sunglasses so as not to be blinded by the bling bling.

Marvin Wamble has covered sports in California, Texas and Washington, D.C., and he has hosted several Dallas sports radio talk shows.



THE KING AND FIRST LADY

First Lady Laura Bush shares a light moment with Major League Baseball hall of famer Hank Aaron at the 19th Annual Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) Ambassadorial Reception and Awards Dinner in New York on Monday. The First Lady made the keynote address and Aaron received a lifetime achievement award at the dinner which honored the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday.



Randy Brown

Nevadans Have Another Reason to Celebrate: SBC Long Distance Service Coming Soon

It's time for Nevadans to experience what consumers in 35 states are already enjoying – more choices, better services, increased convenience and lower prices for their telecommunications needs.

SBC has been working with state and federal regulators to ensure that we have met all of the requirements necessary to provide long distance service. The ability to transport calls across northern and southern Nevada, the country, and around the world is critical to our customers and to all Nevada consumers.

Last month, the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada (PUCN) unanimously endorsed SBC's application to enter the long distance market. Now, SBC's application is in the hands of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which has three months to consider and rule on it.

Business, civic, labor and consumer organizations, as well as numerous elected officials throughout the state, have expressed support for SBC's entry into Nevada's long distance market and are looking forward to the benefits of increased competition.

The time is near for Nevadans to benefit from an open and competitive telecommunications market. SBC looks forward to offering customers the convenience and value of one-stop-shopping for all telecommunications services.

The time is near
for Nevadans to
benefit from
an open and
competitive
telecommunications
market.

For more information on this
and other telecommunications issues, visit
www.connectnevada.org



Randy Brown

Area Manager, External Affairs

CANYON LAKE MORTGAGE, INC.

Morse Arberry Jr.
CEO

2551 S. Fort Apache Rd., Suite 102
Las Vegas, NV 89117
(702) 562-2323 • Fax (702) 562-1805
www.canyonlakemortgage.com