



NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: International Basketball League

Email: media@ibl.com

Phone: 360.975.4924

IBL Officials and Reign roster coming together following tryout camp

March 20, 2012 – Olympia, Wash. – The team that will take the court for the Olympia Reign when they make their debut at the Skookum Creek Events Center this spring is beginning to take shape following an open tryout held this past weekend.

The tryout drew a number of quality players from around the country. One newcomer that impressed was 6-foot-8 center Issac Jones, a native of Roswell, Ga., whose decision to follow his hoop dreams has brought him to Washington state and the International Basketball League. He played collegiately for Charleston Southern and Southern Poly and most recently appeared with the World Basketball Association's Marietta Storm in 2011.



"Jones is a great athlete with a tremendous upside," Reign head coach Steve Smothers shared. "He runs the court very well, which will make him a great fit in the IBL."

The Reign's 2012 roster will have a number of familiar faces, with former Evergreen State College guards Mike Ward, Marcus Whittaker and Marcus Wright attending camp and returning to the team. The trio has provided a strong backcourt presence for the past three seasons with the Reign and all three figure to play important roles for the team again this spring. Ward is a two-time IBL All-Star and is coming off a superb 2011 season in which he averaged 18 points, six rebounds and six assists per game. Wright was also a key member of last season's squad, scoring in double figures eight times, while Whittaker scored twenty-plus points five times last season and put up a season high of 36 points in a game last May.

"We have some veterans including Ward who knows the game at this level and is eager to go overseas. Whitaker is a spot-up shooter and a strong defender and has improved his ball handling in the off-season. Wright is an all-around player, a strong guard who plays great defense and does what you tell him to do. You can tell him to guard anyone and he will get the job done," Coach Smothers boasted.

Joining Smothers on the sidelines will be assistant coaches Travis Van Marter and Todd Franklin. Van Marter, who also serves as the Athletic Director Community Christian Academy in Lacey, is in his second year as a Reign assistant. Franklin, who played his college basketball at Gonzaga in the late eighties and professionally in Australia, is new to the staff after coaching the Black Hills High School girls team for two seasons.

The roster for the Reign is far from complete, explained Smothers: "If we can create the right combination, our roster will include veteran leadership with new talent. We are still looking for a solid point guard to get Ward to his natural two position. We also need a big guy to rebound and take care of the ball in traffic."

"We have the talent and are putting together a good combination of guys to protect our new home court and go after a championship," the coach concluded.

The Reign open the 2012 IBL season at home on April 20 against the Bellingham Slam. Tip-off is set for 7 p.m. at the Skookum Creek Event Center at the Little Creek Casino and Resort. Tickets cost \$7 with children 12 and under admitted free.

Also as part of the weekend's activities was a tryout camp for prospective officials, held by IBL Director of Officials Ike Durham.

Camp activities saw upwards of 50 officials from around the west coast convene to train, tryout and review new league rules in both classroom and on-the-court sessions.



Asked what he was looking for in prospective officials, Durham explained, "A good official has great anticipation of plays. We look at how well they communicate with coaches, the scorer's table and other team members, also we focus on their mechanics. The young officials are learning that to build your credibility on the floor takes time. These are grown men out here playing an elevated game you have to learn how to communicate and work with them."

"Being involved with the IBL since it was started, we now have a new perception of professionalism," commented Durham. "Before many thought it was just another recreation league, but after they found out about it they now realize the IBL is a professional, competitive league and want to be a part of it."

About International Basketball League (IBL)

The International Basketball League (IBL) is a professional sports association based in Vancouver, Wash., that engages high level basketball talent. The league is dedicated to fostering international basketball talent and focuses on providing family friendly events as well as helping players find positions in international leagues such as the BJ League, Basketball Bundesliga (BBL), and the Portuguese Basketball League (LCB). The IBL is in its eighth year of operation with teams across the United States and Canada. To learn more about the International Basketball League visit: www.ibl.com.

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