



Former Oregon State stars chasing a championship

Lucas, Nash, Hurd and Johnson help Waves to IBL title series

By Kevin Hampton
Gazette-Times reporter

They were part of the Oregon State men's basketball team's first winning season since 1990 and led the Beavers to a berth in the 2005 National Invitation Tournament.

Now David Lucas, J.S. Nash, Lamar Hurd and Mike Johnson are playing for a championship.

The former OSU men's basketball players are members of the Oregon Waves and are heading to Southern California this weekend for a three-game series against the Los Angeles Lightning — led by former NBA player Lamond Murray — for the International Basketball League championship.

Not bad for a first-year team.

"It means a lot," Lucas said. "You play in games to win and ultimately play in the championship game."

Lucas played for the now-defunct Portland Chinooks for the past two years and led the IBL in scoring both seasons. He averaged 37 points a game in 2008 and 36.5 in 2007.

The Chinooks dissolved when the owner left, but Terrance Dickens stepped in and put together a new IBL team that plays its home games at the Beaverton Hoop.

The IBL is truly an international league with teams in Vancouver, B.C., Edmonton, Holland and Japan.

The Waves include such former area college standouts as Jeremiah Dominguez (Portland State) and David Jackson (University of Oregon) in addition to the ex-OSU players.

"It's a good way keep in shape," Lucas said. "All the guys on the team can play ball. It's fun playing with them at a high level."

Nash decided to join the team because he's good friends with Lucas and Hurd.

Nash has been playing in Europe since his OSU days, having made stops in Russia, Belgium and the Netherlands. He was asked to play for the Waves when he returned to the U.S. in May.

"Right now it's the off season," Nash said. "I came back and me and Lamar and David all hooked up and I decided to get out there and run around a little bit.

"I've just been having a ball for the whole season."

Although he plays against quite a few former NBA players in Europe, Nash said the IBL has some pretty good athletes.

He said the biggest draw was getting back on the court with his former OSU teammates.

"It's fun going with a bunch of guys I have a relationship with," he said. "These are my friends, so this is a blast."

Hurd had not picked up a basketball for a serious game in seven months before joining the Waves. He was busy coaching kids at the Hoop and doing some television work for Fox Sports Northwest.

"I got used to it pretty quick," Hurd said. "I'm the kind of person that I can get out of shape quick and back into shape quick. I was rusty, but in two weeks time I was good to go."

Hurd was instrumental in getting the Hoop and the Waves together. He enjoys playing in front the youngsters he coaches and has been able to play with his old teammates once again.

He said it's a special opportunity to play with Nash and Lucas.

The players didn't get to play together regularly throughout the season. Hurd did not travel with the team and some others joined as the season progressed.

The team is now at full strength.

Oregon finished 15-7 but rolled through the playoffs and defeated Snohomish County 148-135 in the conference final (with Lucas scoring 32) to get to the championship.

Once they got going, Hurd said it felt like old times.

"It felt like we were back in Gill or at Wazzu or Pauley Pavilion," he said. "We all know each other's game and that's what makes us good."