

# SPORTS

## League Niche For Alternative Schools

**Basketball program brings opportunity**

Alternative high school students don't always get the same opportunities offered at public high schools, especially when it comes to sports. But several alternative schools within the metro area are able to identify with their classmates and schools through basketball, and that's something the institutions' administrators call an opportunity for success.

The nine-team alternative basketball league was established in 1999 when Michael Cruse and JJ Lincoln created a school within the Urban League of Portland. They lost their grant a few years later, meaning the school could no longer operate, but the league has lived on since Jamie Stasi of Self Enhancement, Inc. took over,



High school students from northeast Portland's McCoy Academy get a shot at sportsmanship in a championship game for alternative schools.



The Helensview High School Phoenixes celebrate a league championship April 19 by scoring a 51-49 victory over the Gladys McCoy Academy Panthers.

overseeing the teams, referees and gymnasium sites since 2003.

The eight-game season and playoff games initially took place at Peninsula Park, but in recent seasons Tony Hopson of Self Enhancement, Inc. has donated his

facility's gym.

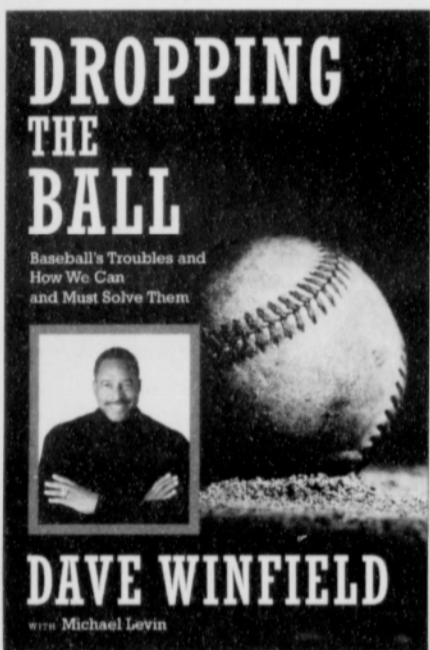
Stasi said the small size of alternative high schools can hinder their ability to have extracurricular activities (enrollment is anywhere from 20 to 100 for the Portland metro schools).

That's the main difference, she said, between alternative schools and other types. But this has helped give them an opportunity to build their pride.

"I've received multiple comments from parents of all differ-

ent schools, about being able to root them on and be positive," she said. "They haven't been successful in regular schools for various reasons, and this gives them an opportunity for success."

The nine schools in the league are Pioneer High School, McCoy Academy, Helensview High School, Youth Employment Institute, Open Meadow, Cascade, Fir Ridge Campus, Portland Youth Builders and PACE Academy at Parkrose.



**Hall of Famer tackles decline in participation**

BY DAVE WINFIELD

How many times did your parents tell you to never give up when you were young? Did they tell you that if you took your eye off the ball, you would drop it? Well, apparently Major League Baseball

## Urban Focus for Baseball Urged

has done just that and it has hurt its overall business and standing as our "national pastime."

After witnessing the effects of millions of young African Americans passing up baseball diamonds for basketball courts and football fields, I know that baseball organizations from tee-ball to Major League Baseball need to refocus and be more proactive in developing urban black talent and promoting the game in the inner-cities of America.

As I discuss in my new book "Dropping The Ball: Baseball's Troubles and How We Can and Must Solve Them," I believe that all levels of organized baseball have lost sight of America's black youths and fans. Over the last three decades, the transformation of the sport has not kept pace with the cultural shifts in America. As a result our youngsters have left the game for sports that actively market to the young black demographic.

Many experts say that baseball is on the decline in general, and does not hold the premiere stance among American

sports as it once did. Among African Americans, any poll would tell you that football and basketball - at both the college and professional levels - have surpassed baseball as the sports to play.

Spokespeople for Major League Baseball might disagree, citing record-breaking attendance in both Major League and Minor League Baseball in 2006, but they would have to also con-

cede the fact that the marketing efforts for the NBA and NFL have been far more successful than that of baseball. By positioning basketball and football as faster and much more hip in presentation, their leagues seem to resonate better with the current young, black, urban, hip-hop generation.

During the mid-1970s, black participation in Major League Baseball rose to a high of 28 percent, but has since declined to the current 8 percent of all major leaguers. There are numerous reasons for this trend.

First, in a chicken-and-egg situation, young African Americans don't have the same number of role models to look up to in MLB. Whereas I grew into the game

their skills, either. When you're a kid in the inner city, it is much easier to buy a \$20 basketball and find a blacktop court to practice on than to buy a glove and bat and find a baseball diamond or even a sandlot, not to mention the other kids you'd need to play a decent game of ball.

For the kids who are lucky enough to live near a field and can participate in an organized league, they often find their teams under-funded and relying on the support of family, friends and the community for upkeep fees, travel costs and coaches to help develop their talents.

At the same time, the sport usually doesn't focus on black players within sight of their own stadiums. Major League Baseball and its teams spend millions in international talent scouting, training camps, signing bonuses and salaries. The huge international influx into the sport over the past 20 years - as great as it is for development of the game in Caribbean, Asian and South American countries - has drastically reduced the participation of young African Americans.

Dave Winfield is a veteran of 22 Major League seasons and a 12-time Major League All Star.



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— Dave Winfield

# The Portland Observer

## 2nd Annual Basketball High School Classic

*In memory of Cory Neal Washington, 1965-1991*

Come see the best of Portland high school basketball play!  
Includes members of Portland Public high schools' Men's and Women's Teams!  
Be there to support your school!

# P.I.L.

(Portland Interscholastic League)

2007 Girls Team "A"  
Head Coach: Floyd Hall

Players:	High School:
Janita Bodan	Jefferson
Nyasha Sims	Jefferson
Caitlin Grimm	Wilson
Jessica Musgrave	Grant
Aliyah Green	Lincoln
Michaela Pin	Franklin
Kara Kasch	Franklin
Amanda Anderson	Marshall
Shawndez Santiago	Marshall
Melessa Patten	Benson

2007 Girls Team B  
Head Coach: Michael Harper

Players:	High School:
Tara Cook	Grant
Josephine Young	Grant
Laquay Kennedy	Jefferson
Tryisha Blake	Jefferson
Nam-Phuong Hoang	Benson
Shardai Smith	Benson
Mariah Ladd	St. Mary's
Claire Groth	Cleveland
Lissie Parr	Cleveland
Jessica Gilmore	Wilson

New this year:  
PIL Boys Allstar  
Game roster  
to be announced.

Saturday, May 26, 2007 at SEI (3920 N. Kerby, Portland OR)

Doors open at 2:30 p.m. • Men's Tournament at 3 p.m. • Women's Tournament at 4 p.m.

Proceeds raised go to the Joyce Washington Memorial Scholarship Fund and to our at-risk Portland youth to attend summer camp, athletic and journalism programs and other after-school programs.

For information call Mark Washington at 503-288-0033