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### If They Build it, Kids Will Come

*Community raises fund for playground*

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PHOTO BY JEFF HINDS

Adidas International Elite 16U is an amateur youth basketball team lead by Nate Bowie, who spent eight years as an international professional basketball player. He takes his knowledge of the ins and outs of the game to provide more opportunities for kids in the younger 8th-10th grades, and giving them more exposure to college recruiters than would normally be possible.

## Coach offers kids opportunity for success

BY DANNY PETERSON  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A basketball team for youth is changing the game when it comes to giving kids opportunities to college scholarships and putting them on track to a professional athletic career.

Adidas International Elite 16U team was started by three African-American men late last year looking to give back: Mt. Hood Community College coach and former professional basketball player Nate Bowie; Allan Brown, a coach at Lower Columbia Community College; and Qayi Steplight, an Olympia, Wash. resident working for college bas-

# More Than a Game

ketball recruitment resource Prep Hoops.

Together, head coach Bowie and assistant coach Brown worked to recruit Portland, Tacoma, and Seattle area hopefuls from the 8th to 10th grades to compete in circuits in the mid-west, the south, and Canada over the spring and

summer Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) season, as well as special tournaments sponsored by big name athletic wear companies like Nike, Adidas, and Under Armour.

Normally AAU teams expose mostly older high school juniors and seniors to tournaments where there are college scouts, Bowie

said, whereas his approach has already resulted in his younger freshman and sophomore players getting looks and offers from NCAA Division I recruiters. He also said other amateur teams in the U.S. rarely, if at all, compete internationally, which also sets them apart.

"I think it's a little more conducive for a kid to get a full-ride scholarship if he gets seen four years in a row instead of getting seen one or two years," Bowie said.

Using his eight years of experience as an international professional basketball player for several teams, including Canada, Morocco, Greece, Kosovo, and many others, Bowie said he's trying to pass down his knowledge of doing business on a global scale to up and comers. The team is sponsored by Adidas with added support from some of his friends and business associates, including active professional basketball players, from different countries.

"If I had that type of exposure when I was younger I would've done even better internationally.

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