

The Life

CAMPIN' OUT

Hello Mother, Hello Father:

Greetings from the Fila camp in sunny Long Beach, for guys wanting to show NBA GMs they belong. You're probably worried about your boys being so far from home, but you taught them well: in by midnight, three squares a day, no more than three girls per date (that's a joke, Ma). Here they are gettin' their grub on at Roscoe's House of Chicken & Waffles on Pico Boulevard, the spot they frequent to get a taste of home. A good number of the 400-some guys in summer camp are on the bubble and looking to hold down a full-time gig, but odds are good most of our boys will land those coveted spots, and in some cases, cash in.

Coach Rod (AAU vet Rod Smith) has been taking good care of them, as he's done since they were all freshmen playing in his Say No Basketball Classic. Thankfully, he no longer transports anyone in his blue hoop-tie, the '81 Ford Fairmont station wagon with the busted taillight and all things basketball piled up in the back. Cedric Ceballos, now 30, remembers that car well; he and Chris Mills used to putt around in it back in

the day. Speaking of Ced, he turned vegetarian last year—thus the veggie waffle and a dinner salad order. Coach says if he drops five (pounds), he could drop 25 (points) on the regular—just like he used to.

There's Paul Pierce in the blue shirt. Mr. Celtic Pride pinned 46 on the Sonics last week, but forgot his manners when he put his feet on the seat. Debra, Roscoe's reigning Waffle Cop, checked him with quickness: "Tell him to get them feet off the seat," she shouted. "That's why we gotta get them seats upholstered every week!"

And you remember Mark Sanford? He played with the Heat (for a minute) and the Globetrotters last year. He's at it again, but with the abundance of guys his size (6'9"), it's tough. But Coach Rod believes in him. "He's got skills. He's just got to keep at it." Mark's still as skinny as a rail (can't see the bod—he's hiding behind Pierce), but more waffles might solve that.

Then there are the Brothers Cotton. James played with Seattle last year, and Schea (in the gray T-shirt) is on his way to Alabama.



Diggin' in at Roscoe's (from left): Schea Cotton, Crowle, James Cotton, Pierce and Sanford.

Schea can only practice (NCAA rules), but he's holdin' his own. Folks around camp say he could've gone pro, but all in good time. And we can't forget Jason Crowle, in the blue BALLA cap (Brothers About Love, Life and Attitude—it's a shameless plug for a sports apparel company some of his boys are running back home in New York). He'll be off to Korea to get his game NBA-ready.

So where's Outlaw? He's here—just not in the shot. He got caught in traffic and was late. He's a big-time free agent who'll probably re-sign in Orlando, so he doesn't really have to be here. But he's a gym junkie and figures playing with his peers can't hurt. "Give me a reason why I shouldn't play," he says in that Barry White voice of his.

That's it. Rest easy; the boys are fine. Oh, one more thing: If you call and nobody answers, they're probably looking at game film or doing something constructive like that.

*Later,
Mark W. Wright*

PUERTO LOCO



With some Puerto Rican girls just dyyyyin' to meetcha! Chalk up my geezer-rock Mick moment to the bizarre world here, hanging with the Dream Team, mopping up everybody in the hemisphere, gunning for a ticket to Sydney 2000. The NBA scene is surreal enough, but stick its best players and bigwigs on a tropical island, and the happenin's go truly off the hook.

A sirens-blaring police motorcade escorts the guys to the arena, running all off the road. Games are wild too. The Uruguayans were so thrilled to be drilled, they asked for autographs. One told KG it was an honor to have him swat his shot. Larry Brown sits on the bench, reluctant to get up: His 5-year-oldson is asleep in his lap. Bill Duncan is taking a cue from son Tim's

first NBA Finals appearance by making his first in a casino—and cleaning up. Tim Hardaway is terrorizing the beach with his new move, a WaveRunner crossover. Googs, leery of the local medical help when his face got smashed by an inadvertent Kidd elbow in practice, is asking if anyone's ever heard of a nose cast. No? He takes it off. Must have been weirded out. **-Ric Bucher**

