



THE NEWS-DISPATCH



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Hoops Away For The United Way

Michael Gluskin
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MICHIGAN CITY - After barely losing out on the dunk contest, La Lumiere's De'Andre Haskins was determined to continue wowing the fans at Hoops Away for the United Way: The 2008 News-Dispatch Charity Basketball All-Star Game.

So Haskins scored 24 points, including several high-flying dunks, during the all-star game to earn MVP honors. His squad, Team News-Dispatch, coached by 1984 Indiana Mr. Basketball Delray Brooks, won the game Saturday night at the Michigan City Wolves Den, 91-75, over Team United Way, which was led by 1981 Indiana Mr. Basketball Dan Palombizio.

"I should've won the dunk contest," said Haskins as he clutched his MVP plaque. "I wanted to go home with something."

The game was entertaining throughout, as players from 10 different area schools competed. Haskins' teammate at La Lumiere, Luka Mirkovic, also finished with 24 points. Brooks was not only their coach Saturday night, but throughout the season for La Lumiere.

"We wanted to come out and have a good time," Brooks said. "They showed fundamentals, got everyone involved. It's a fun game because there's no pressure."

Jones, also a member of Team News-Dispatch, scored 17 points while fellow City player Chance Nelson had nine. New Prairie's Austin Kubit - who went to the school's prom at halftime - scored seven points in the first half, Matt Dunfee chipped in six while Marquette's John Leonard scored three and Jack Bobillo had one.

Team News-Dispatch led by eight points at halftime and stretched its lead to 20 early in the third quarter. Although Team United Way rallied to get within single digits, they were never able to entirely close the gap. Young led that team in scoring, with 21 points, including five 3-pointers.

"I'm really excited about what happened tonight being the first event," Palombizio said. "... We have good basketball players here. We're trying to get the enthusiasm back to Michigan City."

Other scorers for Team United Way were New Buffalo's Matt Parker, who finished with 16. City's Stephen Ward had 15 and Marquette's Sean Crepeau finished with 13, both making several shots from behind the arc. South Central's Ethan Kitchell and Westville's Joe Yagelski each scored four points while River Valley's Nate Swords had two.

Prior to the all-star game, Haskins, Jones, Parker and Marquette's Kyle Hausoul drew ooohs and ahhs from the crowd during the dunk contest. Haskins had an impressive first round, with one dunk where he caught the ball off the backboard from a classmate, who was seated on a chair.

Jones and Parker also showed off their hops in the first round, as did Hausoul, who grabbed a spinning basketball off the tip of a friend's finger and slammed it home for his last dunk. Jones edged Parker to advance to the finals, where Haskins awaited.

Although Haskins had several perfect dunks (scores of 50) during the contest, he couldn't complete his final slam, which allowed Jones to win by seven points. Jones jumped over teammate Chance Nelson during the final round.

The event's judges were Brooks, Palombizio, former NBA player Winston Garland, former Marquette player Dion Campbell and News-Dispatch Sports Editor Adam Parkhouse.

Along with the dunk contest, a 3-point contest was held before the game. City's Ward and Nelson both couldn't make enough treys to get to the second round. There, Young beat out Dunfee for the title, as the lefty displayed his long-range skills in both the first and final rounds.

During halftime, the Michigan City Soul Steppers impressed the crowd with an exciting performance. Between the third and fourth quarters, Mike Hosna attempted a shot from just beyond halfcourt for a chance at \$10,000; the shot fell short.

The event raised more than \$3,500 for the United Way of La Porte County as an estimated 1,500 people attended.

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