

King to rule at Spartans

Southern Districts sign Basketball Queensland Coach Of The Year



The Southern Districts Basketball Association today announced that they had signed Leonard King to coach the Arrow Caravan & Towbar Spartans for the next two years.

No stone had been left unturned as the Southern Districts Spartans had been searching for a new Head Coach to head the South East Australian Basketball League 2011 and 2012 campaign after the resignation of Rodger Smith.

"We were really sorry to let Rodger go but after we after talked to Coach King we are positive we are headed into the new era with a great, on and off court, leader" offered general manager, Allan Ladewig.

Originally, from Cleveland Heights Ohio; Leonard attended Cleveland Heights High School and then accepted a four year athletic scholarship at Florida A&M University. At Florida A&M he was named to the all conference team twice. His senior year he was a pre season All American

honourable mention and finished the year ranked 20th in scoring in the nation with 22 points per game.

After completing his Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Physical Education he decided to play professional basketball abroad. He played professionally overseas from 1990 – 1997 Portugal, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and New Zealand.

2004 – 2007 Leonard worked for Basketball New Zealand as the National High Performance Head Coach where he was charged with the identification, recruitment and development of the elite junior players aged from 14 – 20 years old. The High Performance program was to ensure that New Zealand had talented junior players coming through the development pathways which lead through to The New Zealand Senior Men's and Women's National team. A large part of this role was placing their most talented players in US colleges after they completed High School. Leonard was instrumental in starting a large developmental camp called the All New Zealand Camp, which targeted the top 90 junior athletes in the country and invited them to a weeklong camp. In which he was the director of this camp for the first 2 years.

He was also an Assistant Coach with the Men's Senior National team "The Tall Blacks" and his duties included video analysis, scouting, on court coaching and player development. During his time with the Tall Blacks the team won Gold at the Stankovic Cup held in China in 2005, and they finished second in the 2005 Oceania championship qualifiers.

From 2007 – 2010 Coach King helped turn the Mackay Meteors in the Queensland Basketball League (QBL) team around leading them to 2 consecutive finals appearances for the first time in the clubs 25 year history. The Meteors went undefeated at home during the 2010 QBL season and finished runner up in the Grand Final game. Coach King has been awarded the prestigious QBL Coach of the Year award for the past 2 season, (2009, 2010).

The Spartans finished fourth last year and have the highest win lose ratio in the South East Australian basketball league, despite never actually winning the championship.

President, Charles Ellis, in signing King stated "We wanted someone that was willing to build from the bottom. We have some great players in Cannan, Vanderjagt and Edmonds and some real talent coming through. Coach King proved he is about setting goals and working towards them and we see his objectives very much in line with ours".

King who will move to Brisbane in December has his work cut out as the Spartans look to start a four year plan to win the National championship by 2014.

"I will be talking to the current team members and also some others players as we set our sights on building a basketball program in Brisbane that will be able to support and enhance the new Brisbane Bullets and also the Gold Coast Blaze NBL teams. I am also very keen to work with the many talented juniors that the club has. The likes of Josh Derksen, Cade Towers and James Griffin are just three I know can play at the highest level if they apply themselves" stated Coach King. "I will be implementing an up-tempo style offense with full court pressure defence, The Spartans are renowned for their strong work ethic and family atmosphere and I look forward to joining a club with a rich and proud history".

Anyone interested in becoming involved in 2011 should contact the office via email on sdbal@bigpond.net.au

ENDS Phone 3398 2790 www.sdspartans.basketball.net.au