

Camp teaches more than basketball 09/09/2004

**BY ANDREW MILLER**

Jermel President knows what it's like to have to put your dreams on hold. As a senior at Burke High School, President had everything a college basketball coach looks for in a recruit. President was one of the best pure shooters in the state his senior season. He averaged more than 24 points a game for the Bulldogs and drew plenty of scholarship offers. But college would have to wait for the slender shooting guard. While President excelled on the basketball court, he had trouble in the classroom and did not fully qualify academically for college. "I think when you're in high school you don't see the big picture," President said. "You're not looking to the future. You don't realize how some decisions you make will affect you later on. I found that out the hard way." President was forced to go to prep school and eventually qualified, signing with the College of Charleston. It was President's academics struggles that led him to launch Triple Threat (3ripple 3hreat) basketball camp, which will be held this weekend at the Salvation Army. This isn't your ordinary basketball camp. President wants to offer his campers more than just basketball fundamentals. He wants them to learn some life lessons. Besides learning the basics of basketball, Triple Threat will offer classes on academics, including preparation for the ACT and SAT college entrance exams and offer solutions for conflict resolution. "I wanted to give the kids a vision of what it takes to succeed not only in basketball, but in life and in school," President said. "I don't think kids in junior high school or even high school realize what is involved in being a college athlete. What kind of commitment it takes and what's expected of you. I know I didn't know. "This isn't just a basketball camp or a class on taking the SAT or the ACT. We deal with conflict resolution, time management -- whole life issues that affects not only student-athletes, but just kids in general who are trying to make that transition from high school to college." President said he didn't want area kids making the same mistakes he made growing up. "I don't want them to go through the same things I went through when I was in high school," President said. "I didn't qualify coming out of Burke and I had to go to prep school to get my scores. Had I known earlier what was expected of me, I think I could have done a better job preparing academically. "I don't want anyone to miss an opportunity. An athlete could have the perfect opportunity to go to College of Charleston or another school, but he can't get in because he lacks the academics to get into school. To me, that's a tragedy." President said he was inspired to put on Triple Threat after going through midnight basketball -- a local youth program that was held during the summers. "Midnight basketball really helped me and I wanted to do something similar," President said. "I think that's what kind of triggered the idea for me. I came through that program and I know what it did for me and I wanted to give something like that back to the community. "I feel like I should give something back to the community. I have sisters and brothers and cousins in the community. If I can get some of these kids interested in basketball and academics then that's one less person my family has to worry about." President, who graduated from the College of Charleston last year with a degree in elementary education, has his own clothing line and hopes to continue his professional basketball career. President has played in the NDBL, the American Basketball Association, but thinks that camps like Triple Threat could be his future. "This is my mission, it's my calling because of what happened to me," President said. "I've been there. I've done that. I know what it takes to be successful and I'm just trying to pass that down to the next generation. I don't want them to be surprised like I was."

# President active in basketball, business

BY RICK NELSON

Of The Post and Courier Staff

A normal day for Jermel President meant leaving his house at 7 a.m. and returning after midnight. In between, President's schedule included turns as a basketball player, college student and entrepreneur.

"It was real difficult," he said. "I called those things my three ducks, and I swore that one day I was going to knock them down."

The former College of Charleston guard nailed one of them in May when he graduated with a bachelor's degree in elementary education, four years after playing his final game as a Cougar.

That leaves two more targets, and President continues to chase those as well.

He is pursuing his hoop dreams in the minor leagues, tearing up the Carolinas Basketball League with the appropriately named Salisbury Steaks.

He also organizes basketball tournaments and camps, such as the Shooting Camp he is holding July 14-18 at the James Island Recreation Center.

In addition, he designs and sells his own line of athletic apparel through his company, President Productions.

It's a dizzying pace, but hard work is nothing new to President, who earned his reputation as a tough-as-nails competitor at Burke High School and the College of Charleston. He scored 1,175 points as a four-year starter for a Cougar team that went 106-16, made three trips to the NCAA Tournament and had one appearance in the National Invitation Tournament during his career.

President said part of his drive to succeed comes from his modest upbringing in downtown Charleston.

"We weren't dirt poor when I was a kid, but you could say we weren't as fortunate as some other people," he said.

"Since elementary school, I always had to go out and make things happen for myself," President said. "It's just in me now. If I don't go out and do it, I know that no one else is going to do it for me."

More inspiration comes from his 10-year-old daughter, Jernique, and Nichole Porter, a former South Carolina State homecoming queen who is supportive of his various ventures.

"It's also all those guys I played with (at Charleston)," he said, noting Anthony Johnson, Sedric Webber and Danny Johnson, in particular. "Everyone is doing so well it's another driving force for me to do well."

President's pro basketball journey began with the New Jersey Shorecats of the United States Basketball League, a summer league full of ex-college guys deemed too short or too anything to make it in the NBA. It was a good start, especially learning from head coach Rick Barry, who was named one of the 50 greatest players in NBA history.

But the summer league lasted less than three months, and then it was off to Kansas where President joined Webber with the Salina Rattlers of the International Basketball Association. He came home after the season, took care of his business, and left again for tryouts with another league in Ohio. He was released, tried out in another league and was released again.

President came home and tried out for the North Charleston Lowgators of the NBA's fledgling National Basketball Development League. While he impressed the coaches, he didn't make the cut and ended up spending the season on the team's practice squad. He also went to classes at the college and expanded his business interests.

President was one of four players allocated by the NBDL to the Lowgators last season, but he was cut during training camp. He did manage to finish his degree, though, and recently hitched on with the Salisbury team of the CBL.

President raised his scoring average to 25 points after putting up 39 and 36 points in two recent games. The 6-foot-tall combo guard starts at the point and moves over to shooting guard in most games. His teammates are former players from colleges in the region, he said, but most people wouldn't recognize the names.

President is trying to rack up big numbers, hoping to catch the attention of scouts from larger leagues or from European teams. But as that window closes a little more every day, the college degree he earned in May grows in importance.

"When I was in the USBL the first time out, I saw how difficult it is to make a living in basketball," he said.

"With me bouncing around from city to city, I didn't have anything set in stone. Everyone told me that if I got hurt, I would need something to fall back on. That's why I finished school."

President still dreams of making it past the minor leagues to Europe or maybe even the NBA. In the meantime, he continues to design sports apparel under his private label, PSG -- President Sports Gear. The Sportsman's Shop on King Street sells his T-shirts, and he's trying to get other retail stores to carry his shirts and the rest of his clothing line.

He also has his camps. His Shooting Camp at the James Island Recreation Center will emphasize fundamentals because that's what coaches and scouts are looking for, he said.

Contact President at 478-9370 or log on to his Web site at [psg20.com](http://psg20.com) for more information.

# President teaches youths about basketball and life

By Tony Bartelme  
The Post and Courier  
Sunday, April 20, 2008



Tyrone Walker  
The Post and Courier

Jefferson Award nominee Jermel President is executive director of the DAE Foundation, a nonprofit organization that educates and train student-athletes to be skilled, effective and responsible citizens.

Jermel President knows the taste of glory, how it can empower and blind. He knows what it's like to hear the cheers of a packed high school gym. He's felt the adrenaline charge of bringing the basketball down in front of thousands in a college arena. He was regional player of the year at Burke High School, after all, and with the College of Charleston Cougars he went to three NCAA tournaments.

The NBA? After college President thought he had a shot. And he came closer than most, playing with the New Jersey Shorecats of the U.S. Basketball League under Hall of Famer Rick Berry. But playing basketball in the minors is no glory ride. "You might get \$400 a week, and you had to live out of a bag. And it was a revolving door; one bad game and you're out."

One day the owner of three minor league teams stopped by, and President began thinking about all the money the owners made, about how every new year brings a fresh crop of kids from college with the same NBA dreams. President realized he needed something more solid in his life. He quit and headed back to Charleston, hoping for a sign.

It appeared in the form of a flyer for a three-on-three tournament to help kids in downtown Charleston. He remembered growing up there, how 11 people lived in his home sometimes, how he didn't have a father figure in his life, how the now-defunct Midnight Basketball program had changed everything. Maybe he could do the same for others. That was nine years ago.

President is 33 now and runs a nonprofit called the DAE Foundation, named for the two women who raised him, his mother Delores and his grandmother Estelle. The foundation works with student athletes to improve their basketball and life skills.

He organizes seminars and clinics that teach children a wide variety of skills including basketball basics and college eligibility requirements. With a grant from the Medical University of South Carolina, he's teaching students at poverty-stricken schools about nutrition and exercise. One of his goals is to build a gym that offers the public programs 24 hours a day, a haven for kids tempted by the street.

Mark Cumins, owner of T-Bonz restaurants, has known President for years and watched his evolution from athlete to mentor. "Jermel represents the ideal person who finds his or her way out of less-than-optimum life circumstances, creates and achieves personal and professional goals, and then commits to giving back to the community," Cumins said.

Reach *Tony Bartelme* at  
[tbartelme@postandcourier.com](mailto:tbartelme@postandcourier.com)  
[com](http://www.postandcourier.com) or 937-5554.

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