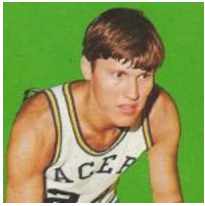


Netolicky starred for Indiana in ABA

Written by Mark Dukes

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In the rich history of Metro area basketball, only eight players have gone on to be drafted at the highest level of professional basketball.

And only one has played in a NBA or WNBA regular season game.

Stacy Frese, Washington product set to be inducted into Iowa State's Hall of Fame in October, played 21 games for the WNBA Utah Starzz in 2000. She was a third-round draft pick of Utah.

That is likely to change in a few weeks, though. Linn-Mar's Kiah Stokes, a first-round pick of the New York Liberty this year, promises to play a significant role with Bill Laimbeer's team. The Liberty open the WNBA season June 5 against the Atlanta Dream, whose roster likely will include first-round draft pick Samantha Logic of Iowa.

The WNBA plays a 34-game regular season schedule. The rookie minimum salary in the league is \$34,500.

Frese and Stokes are two of three Metro area products to be selected in a WNBA draft. Anne O'Neil, the Metro's all-time leading scorer from Kennedy, was a third-rounder in 2005 and the last player cut by the Sacramento Monarchs.

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The American Basketball League, a forerunner of the WNBA, drafted Shelley Sheetz (Kennedy) in the third round in 1998. Sheetz played in the ABL and in Germany before embarking on a coaching career.

Five Metro products have been taken in a NBA draft, but none played in a regular season game. The two most decorated professional players from the Metro are Bob Netolicky (Washington/Drake) and Dean Uthoff (Jefferson/Iowa State).

Netolicky was a second-round pick in the 1967 NBA draft by San Diego, but he elected to go to the ABA Indiana Pacers. A four-time league All-Star and member of two ABA championship teams, "Neto" totaled 9,876 points and 5,518 rebounds in nine seasons.

Netolicky was known as much for his lifestyle as his play on the court. His pets included a lion and an ocelot. He also owned a nightclub called Neto's in the Meadows and would be seen frequently pulling up to the parking lot in his orange Porsche. One sportswriter dubbed him "Broadway Joe Namath of the ABA."

He was the only player in ABA history to make the "All-Flake Team" four years in a row. To which Netolicky once replied: "I wear mod clothes, enjoy good times and I like to party. If that's a flake, then I'm a flake."

Netolicky, 72, was last known to be living in San Francisco.

Uthoff was a sixth-round pick of San Antonio in the 1980 NBA draft after starring at Iowa State, principally as a rebounder. But he instead went to play in Australia, where he carved out a remarkable career in the pro leagues.

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The muscular 6-foot-10 Uthoff earned the nickname "Man Mountain" in Australia. He still holds the National Basketball League record with 34 rebounds in a 1984 game. He had 30 or more rebounds in four games that season. Uthoff played 12 pro seasons and was a three-time league leader in field goal percentage and rebounding. He finished his career with 3,755 points and 3,369 rebounds in 260 games.

The Metro area's other NBA draft picks were:

- * Rick Williams (Washington/Iowa), 14th round, Boston, 1973.
- * Tom Holland (Jefferson/Oklahoma), 8th round, Phoenix, 1974
- * Russ Millard (Washington/Iowa), 2nd round, Phoenix, 1996.

None of the three played a game in the NBA. Millard played professionally several years in Europe and the Continental Basketball Association. Williams was a highly-regarded coach and administrator in Cedar Rapids before his retirement.

Former Metro players taken in the CBA draft include Al Lorenzen (Kennedy/Iowa) and Jacob Jaacks (Jefferson/Iowa).

Lorenzen, Iowa's Mr. Basketball in 1984, was a seventh-round pick of the Cedar Rapids Silver Bullets in 1988 and played for them one season before competing for six years in Europe. Jaacks, known as Jake Crane in high school, went in the seventh round to Sioux Falls in 2000. He played 11 seasons in European leagues.

Other Metro area products went undrafted but still carved out decent professional careers.

Adam Spanich (Regis/Southern Cal), who scored 50 points in a 1994 high school game, competed in the CBA, NBA D-League and in France and Lebanon. John Anderson (Linn-Mar/Ohio State) took his 6-foot-9 frame to

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Italy, Israel, Hong Kong and Australia. Mike Ivester (Jefferson/Saint Louis) played one season with the Cedar Rapids Sharp Shooters of the Global Basketball Association before going overseas.

The fraternity of Metro area professional draft picks could grow next year. All-time Metro career scoring leader Marcus Paige (Linn-Mar/North Carolina) and Jarrod Uthoff (Jefferson/Iowa) both are listed as possible second-round picks in the 2016 NBA mock drafts.