

Windham Senior Declares For NBA Draft

Millerd Feels Prepared for Jump

Ben DeAngelis

The following article is a commentary satirizing the recent increase in High School athletes entering the NBA draft.

Yesterday, Windham High senior Paul Millerd officially declared for the 2003 NBA draft. Millerd, a small forward, left the door open for himself to attend college next year by refusing to sign with an agent. Under NCAA rules, a player that employs the services of an agent is not eligible to play for a collegiate team should he withdraw from the draft.

Millerd made the announcement during a press conference at the Millerd residence in Columbia. "I feel confident that I will be drafted," he told the room full of friends, family, and reporters, "Well, with my inner drive, I will be able to work hard at the professional level and hopefully turn into a professional product." Millerd is currently preparing for pre-draft camps in Chicago and Atlanta in early June. He is trying to put on some weight to give him a more NBA type body. "I just want to test the field and the waters out there and see what I'm going to do."

The NBA draft will take place on June 26. A player must withdraw a week before the draft to maintain NCAA eligibility. Should Millerd remain a candidate by June 19, he says he will hire an agent.

Some have questioned Millerd's decision to opt for early entry, since he has participated in only Rec. basketball for the last four years. Millerd feels that despite this, his stock is high. "I feel that with the talent on the college circuit diminishing," says Millerd, "I will declare for the NBA and face top talent night in and night out."

With a three point shot like Jake Voskuhl and a free throw average reminiscent of Shaquille O'Neal, Millerd seemed to slip under the radar of most college scouts. But the NBA has shown interest. Recently Millerd reports that he received a call from the Cleveland Cavaliers, who told him "in the event that the coveted LeBron James goes to another club, we are highly interested in your abilities."

Programs are also interested in his uncanny ability to draw fouls. Millerd lead his Rec. team with 63 foul shots attempted this season. This talent was the focus of his autobiographical book, *Trip* (\$29.99, Simon

and Schuster), which includes a foreword by none other than the author of this article.

Millerd is also known for his ability to find open teammates. He holds the Open Gym career record for assists in the Porter Dome with 143. In one game this season in his Team Sports class, Millerd assisted on 8 of 17 field goals.

Despite his youth, Millerd feels ready for the jump to the professional level. He eluded the strict NCAA rules that have helped influence his decision. "I feel that the shadow of innocence I would need to walk with, in respect to NCAA codes, would hamper my play and only put added pressure on me."

However, Millerd has not ruled out attending college. He has officially visited the University of Connecticut, and the University of Maryland, citing their recent national championships and reasons for his interest. Whatever Millerd decides to do, his peers back him 100 percent.