

## Rising Fil-Am leads a new generation

Written by Administrator

Monday, 19 September 2016 11:39

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### **PIBNA U-17 Champions: FilAm Sports NJ.**

DISTRICT HEIGHTS, Maryland — During Labor Day Weekend, Philippine Inter-City Basketball of North America (PIBNA) 40th Anniversary welcomed the debut of Ron Harper Jr.

Started in 1976, PIBNA is the original Filipino annual inter-city basketball tournament.

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Now with over 80 teams, Filipinos from America, Canada and beyond travel to be a part of this renowned Labor Day tradition.

These tournaments provide the opportunity for Harper Jr. along with the many Filipinos who play to remain in touch with their roots and represent where they come from.

This year's host was Louie Brill, Commissioner of FABL Maryland.

As someone who appreciates great basketball competition, he invited guest team, FilAm Sports of South Jersey, to play.

Under Coach Bong Ulep, this is the first time Harper Jr. played in the Filipino basketball circuit.

In the 17-Under division, he played alongside Jethro Moll, Carson Francisco, Marc Villa, Jaden Rege, Isaiah Ulep, Josh Tayo and fellow newcomer Paul Garcia.

Accepting of the new environment, Harper Jr.'s humbling personality and adeptness to teamwork set the tone for the team.

With guidance from Coaches Ulep, John Blackgrove and Ivan Lingat, the team played a patient offensive system.

The team's willingness to play together and share the ball led to their offensive dominance.

Backcourt tandem of Villa, Harper Jr. and Garcia created many possibilities.

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Their shooting ability, court vision and ball handling skills caused numerous problems for opponents.

Moll and Francisco excelled at their own roles: snatching offensive rebounds, finishing inside the paint, and knocking down open shots.

The team averaged over 50 points per game (game setup of two halves with 18 minutes).

Most importantly, they were extremely active on the defensive end.

Their commitment to team defense limited the opponents and forced at least 15 turnovers per game.

After hard fought games, FilAm Sports went undefeated to win the championship and Harper Jr. earned the MVP award.

Harper Jr. scored an average of 20 points per game, proving his name isn't just for show.

Additionally, his defensive prowess and ability to play all roles on the court at a staggering 6'4" made him an invaluable part of the team.

He comments, "I enjoyed the experience because I was able to see what the Filipinos were about on the court. It was different, they play smart and have great basketball IQ."

Hailing from a basketball family, his skills know no bounds.

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His father is Ron Harper Sr., former NBA player with five championships rings (Chicago Bulls '96, '97, '98; and Los Angeles Lakers '00, '01).

His mother, Maria Harper, is 100% Filipino.

She is a former Division 1 basketball player and the owner of Ring City, North Jersey's fastest growing Regional and National Level AAU Program.

At the young age of 16 and already featured in FoxSportsPH, PBADraftdotNet, and The Manila Times, this is only the beginning for Ron Harper Jr.

As a member of the new generation of Fil-Ams, Harper Jr.'s work ethic and attitude leads the way for Fil-Ams to excel at the game and elevate Filipino basketball globally.

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