



SUMMERS STRONG

THE STORY OF THE MONEYBALL PRO-AM

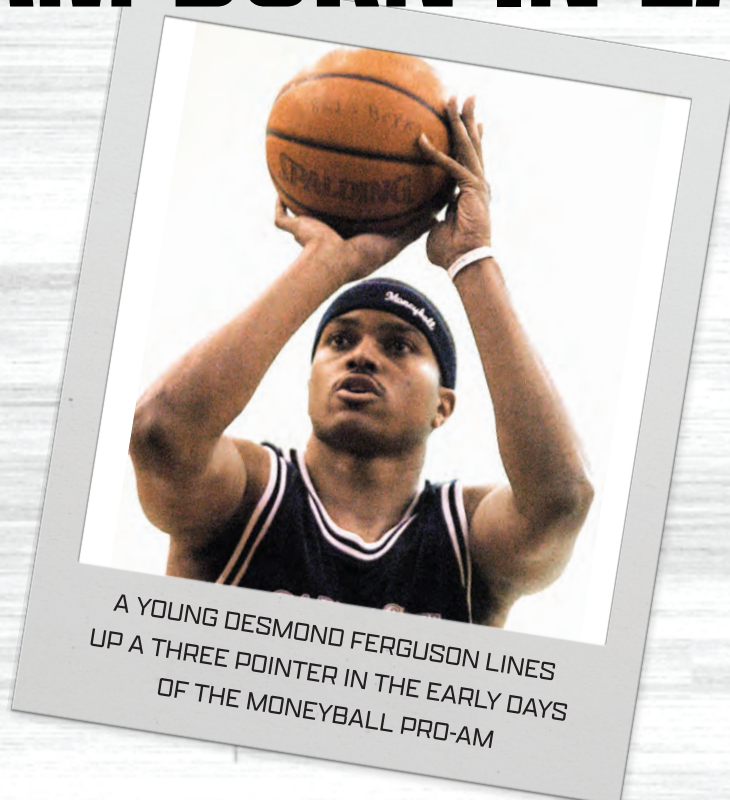
BY

A white, stylized signature of Desmond Ferguson, featuring a large, looping 'D' and 'F' that extends across the page.

DESMOND
FERGUSON



A DREAM BORN IN LANSING



TWENTY YEARS AGO, THE IDEA FOR A SUMMER BASKETBALL LEAGUE IN LANSING WASN'T ABOUT MONEY, HYPE, OR EVEN BUSINESS. IT WAS ABOUT COMMUNITY. I WANTED TO CREATE SOMETHING MY BASKETBALL COMMUNITY DIDN'T HAVE GROWING UP. WE HAD TO DRIVE TO DETROIT TO PLAY AT ST. CECILIA, OR CHECK OUT THE FLINT PRO-AM, JUST TO GET THAT SUMMER RUN. I CARRIED THAT EXPERIENCE WITH ME.

SO I SAID: WHY NOT BUILD SOMETHING RIGHT HERE IN LANSING?

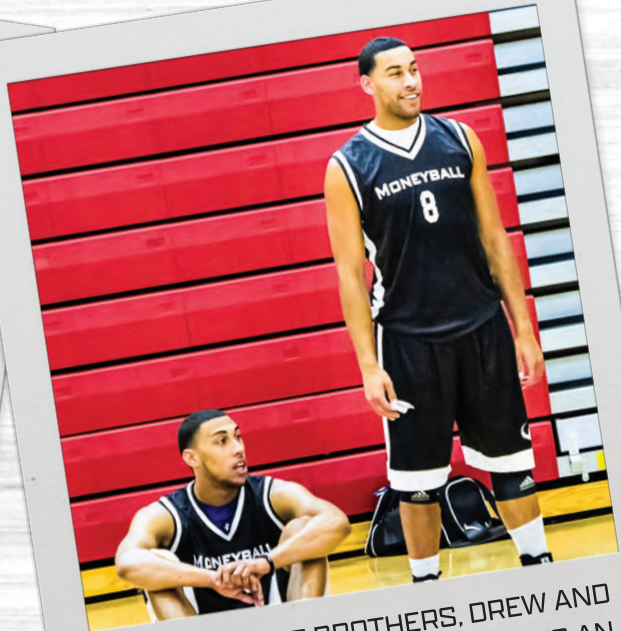
WITH THE HELP OF MY GUY GLOVER EARNEST "GLOVE", WHO RAN THE LEGENDARY ST. CECILIA PRO-AM, I GOT THE BLUEPRINT. WHAT STARTED AS AN IDEA HAS NOW BECOME A SUMMER STAPLE.



THE EARLY GRIND



FORMER MICHIGAN STATE GUARD
DREW NEITZEL DRIBBLES PAST A
DEFENDER IN THE EARLY DAYS



THE VALENTINE BROTHERS, DREW AND
DENZEL, TAKE A BREATHER DURING AN
EARLY MONEYBALL PRO-AM GAME

WE DIDN'T START OFF WITH SOLD-OUT CROWDS OR HIGHLIGHT REELS PLAYING ON TV AND GOING VIRAL. THOSE EARLY YEARS WERE ROUGH. PLAYERS DIDN'T ALWAYS SHOW UP CONSISTENTLY. SOME WEEKENDS FELT LIKE PICKUP RUNS. WE BOUNCED AROUND TO DIFFERENT GYMS, DIFFERENT SPOTS, EVERY SUMMER. THERE WAS NO RHYTHM, NO ANCHOR.

BUT WE KEPT AT IT.

THEN CAME THE PIVOT: I MOVED THE GAMES TO TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS AND LOCKED IN A PERMANENT LOCATION. THAT ONE CHANGE CHANGED EVERYTHING FOR THE PRO-AM.



FINDING OUR RHYTHM



FORMER MICHIGAN STATE PLAYER
ERON HARRIS WITH THE REVERSE LAYUP
IN THE AIM HIGH YEARS



CURRENT NBA STAR AND FORMER MSU
BIG-MAN XAVIER TILLMAN PUSHES THE
PACE FOR HIS TEAM AT AIM HIGH

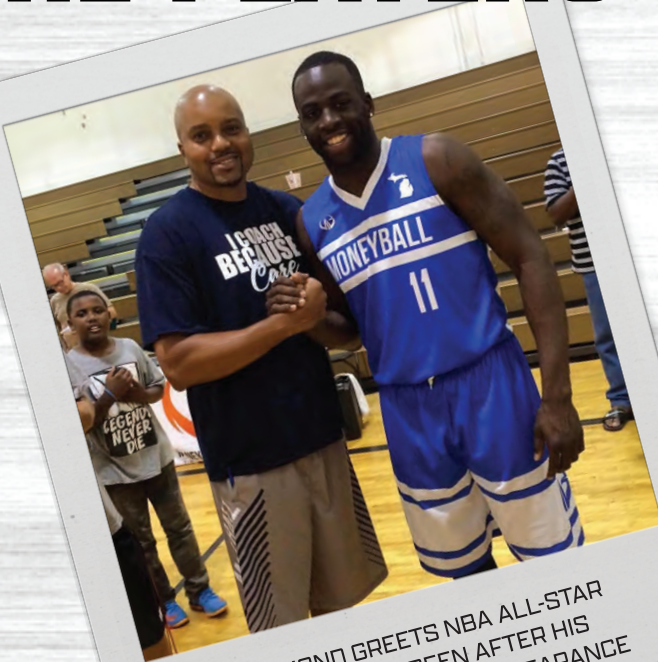
ONCE WE HAD A HOME AT AIM HIGH AND ESTABLISHED A CONSISTENT SCHEDULE, THINGS CLICKED FOR THE PRO-AM. THE PLAYERS STARTED SHOWING UP: COLLEGE STARS, PROS, AND LOCAL LEGENDS. SOON THE FANS FOLLOWED. FOR FAMILIES AND KIDS, IT BECAME THE PLACE TO BE ON SUMMER NIGHTS IN MID-MICHIGAN.

NOW, FOR SIX WEEKS DURING THE SUMMER, LANSING SHOWS UP. WE RUN THREE GAMES A NIGHT EVERY TUESDAY AND THURSDAY NIGHT. ALL SIX TEAMS WEAR CUSTOM UNIFORMS THAT SHOW OFF WHAT WE AT MONEYBALL SPORTSWEAR CAN DO ON THE DESIGN SIDE OF OUR BUSINESS.

IT'S FREE. IT'S FAMILY-FRIENDLY. IT'S ELECTRIC.



THE PLAYERS-THE MOMENTS



DESMOND GREETED NBA ALL-STAR
DRAYMOND GREEN AFTER HIS
MONEYBALL PRO-AM APPEARANCE



MICHIGAN STATE STAR COEN CARR
ELECTRIFIES THE CROWD WITH
ONE OF HIS SIGNATURE DUNKS

MONEYBALL PRO-AM PLAYERS COME TO US WITH A WIDE ARRAY OF EXPERIENCES. WE'VE HAD NBA GUYS SWING BY AND SUIT UP. PLENTY OF OVERSEAS PROFESSIONALS PLAY TO STAY FRESH IN THEIR OFF-SEASON. BIG TIME COLLEGE STANDOUTS COME TO SHOW OFF THEIR SKILLS, WHILE THE UNSUNG LOCAL HEROES LEAVE IT ALL ON THE COURT.

SOME PLAYERS COME TO GET BETTER. OTHERS ARE MOTIVATED TO REMIND PEOPLE WHAT THEY CAN DO. AND SOME JUST WANT ANOTHER CHANCE TO HOOP IN FRONT OF THEIR COMMUNITY.

THE PRO-AM BECAME A STAGE. A PROVING GROUND.

A CELEBRATION OF THE GAME IN ITS PUREST FORM.



WHAT IT MEANS TO THE CITY



FORMER MICHIGAN STATE PLAYER
FRANKIE FIDLER INTERACTS WITH
FANS AT THE 2024 PRO-AM

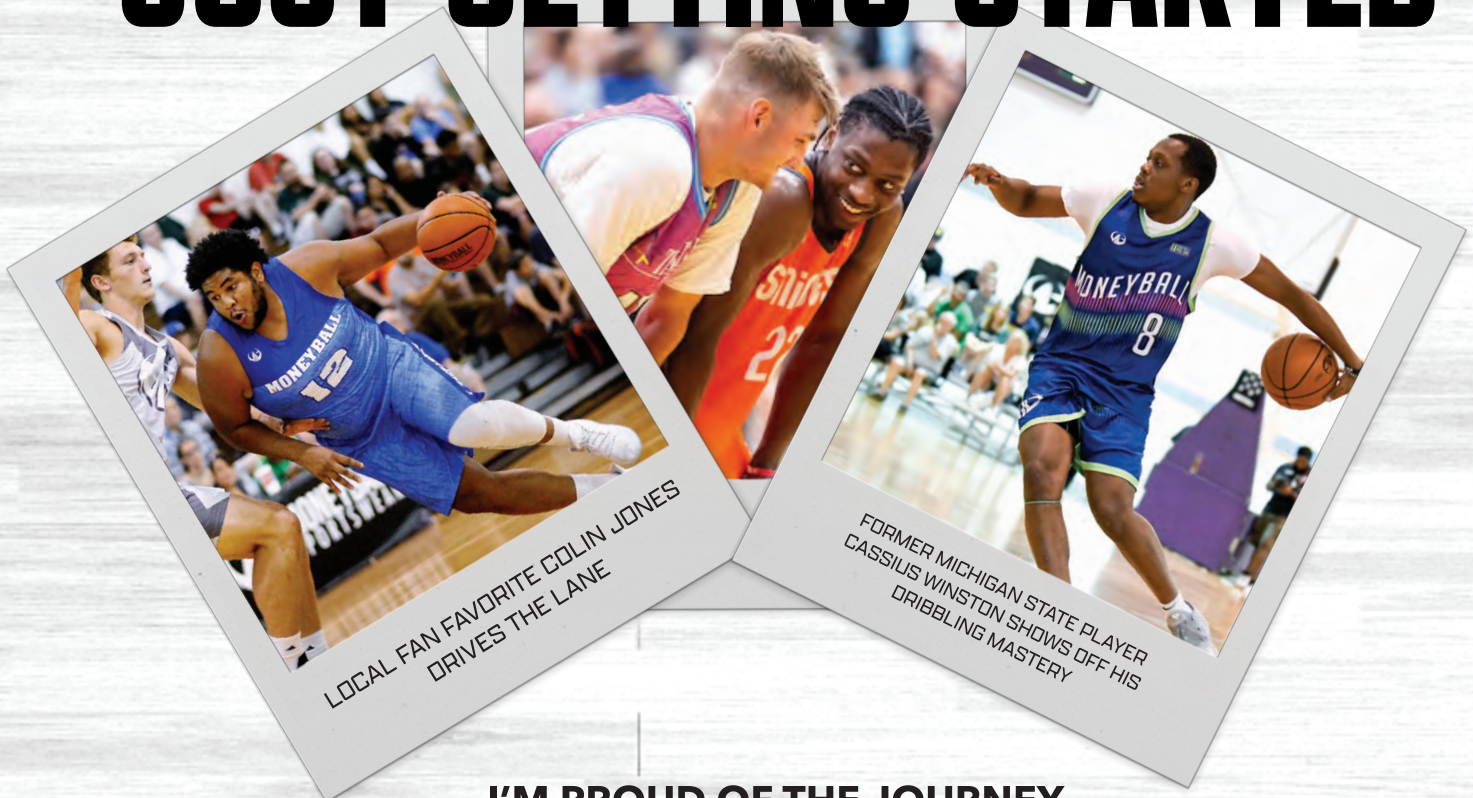
THE MONEYBALL PRO-AM ISN'T JUST BASKETBALL.

IT'S A COMMUNITY EVENT. IT'S WHERE KIDS GET INSPIRED, WHERE FAMILIES COME TOGETHER, AND WHERE BUDDIES WILL ASK EACH OTHER "REMEMBER HIM." BUT MOST OF ALL, THE PRO-AM IS WHERE LANSING SHOWS THE BEST OF ITSELF.

WE HEAR OFTEN FROM PEOPLE WHO DRIVE FROM ACROSS THE STATE, AND EVEN FROM OUT OF STATE, JUST TO SEE GAMES FOR THEMSELVES. THE MONEYBALL PRO-AM IS NOW ONE OF THE BEST SUMMER PRO-AM LEAGUES IN THE MIDWEST. BUT THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT. IT CAME WITH CONSISTENCY, BELIEF, THAT CLASSIC MONEYBALL GRIND, AND THE COMMUNITY WE LOVE.



20 YEARS LATER... JUST GETTING STARTED



LOCAL FAN FAVORITE COLIN JONES
DRIVES THE LANE

FORMER MICHIGAN STATE PLAYER
CASSIUS WINSTON SHOWS OFF HIS
DRIBBLING MASTERY

I'M PROUD OF THE JOURNEY.

WE'VE BUILT SOMETHING THAT IS REAL AND SOMETHING THAT IS SUSTAINABLE. NONE OF THIS CAME EASY, AND IN A WAY, THAT IS WHAT MAKES IT EVEN MORE SPECIAL TO ME.

AS WE CELEBRATE 20 YEARS THIS SUMMER, I'M REMINDED WHY WE STARTED: TO CREATE SOMETHING FOR THE CITY. SOMETHING FOR THE HOOPERS. SOMETHING FOR THE CULTURE. I BELIEVE WE'VE DONE JUST THAT.

HERE'S TO THE FIRST 20 YEARS OF THE MONEYBALL PRO-AM, THE NEXT 20, AND MANY MORE TO COME!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



DESMOND WATCHING PLAYERS
WARMING UP DURING THE
2025 MONEYBALL PRO-AM

DESMOND FERGUSON IS THE FOUNDER OF MONEYBALL SPORTSWEAR AND THE VISIONARY BEHIND THE MONEYBALL PRO-AM. A LANSING NATIVE, FORMER PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL PLAYER, AND ENTREPRENEUR, DESMOND BUILT THE PRO-AM TO GIVE BACK TO HIS COMMUNITY AND CREATE A PLATFORM FOR ATHLETES TO SHINE. THROUGH MONEYBALL, HE CONTINUES TO FUEL THE CULTURE OF BASKETBALL AND GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITIES THAT RAISED HIM.