

No ordinary summer job

U of W basketball player interns with WNBA team

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This is no ordinary summer job.

In fact, if he put it all down on paper, Sefu Bernard might be accused of some creative writing when detailing how he spent his summer vacation.

Bernard, a fifth-year student at the University of Windsor and the Lancers' starting point guard, certainly has some incredible stories to tell when he returns to campus this fall.

How about:

- Spearheading a public tribute attended by thousands last Saturday at the Palace of Auburn Hills for Joe Dumars, six-time NBA all-star, member of the two-time NBA-champion Detroit Pistons and now a part of the club's front office.
- Meeting Grant Hill, superstar of the Pistons' team and a four-time league all-star.
- Talking Xs and Os with Nancy Lieberman-Cline, coach of the WNBA's Detroit Shock, enshrined in Basketball's Hall of Fame, key player for the U.S. at the Olympics and World Championships, analyst for ESPN, ABC and NBC.

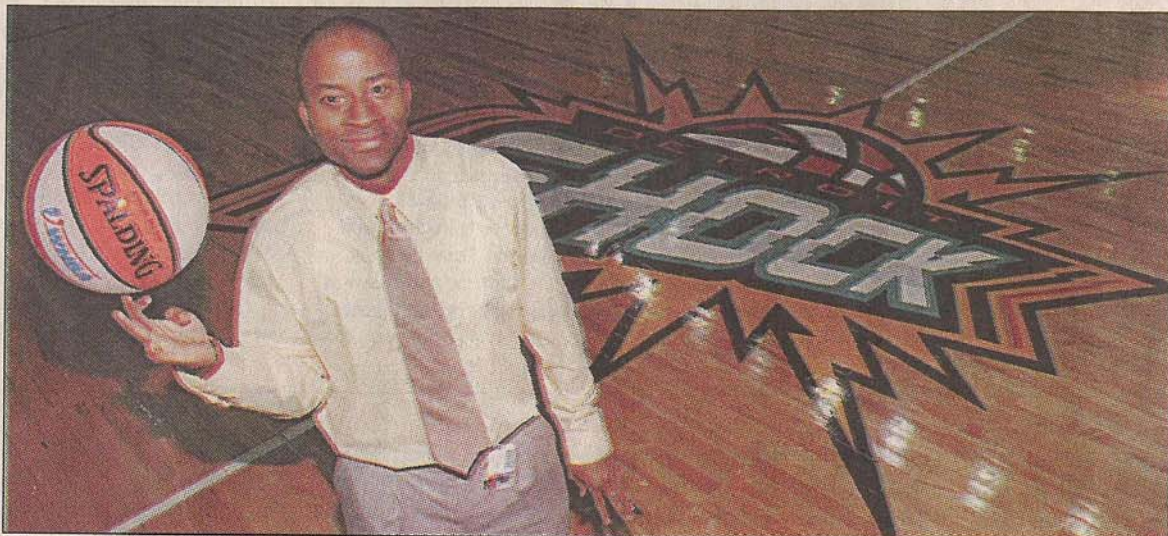
Talking with Peddie

- Trading e-mail with Richard Peddie, CEO of the Toronto Raptors
- Helping Korie Hlede, runner-up for rookie of the year honours in the WNBA in 1998, become a better professional
- Scrimmaging with the best female players on the planet.

With the help of Windsor professor Jim Weese and Peddie, a Windsor alumnus and Lancer benefactor, Bernard was able to land a summer internship with the Shock in their marketing/promotions department.

You can see the credibility issues that might arise when someone in the Lancer locker-room casually asks how Bernard's summer went.

Especially when you consider what his answer would have been the previous seven years when he



University of Windsor student Sefu Bernard works in the marketing department for the Detroit Shock. "If the guys up north ever knew I was wearing a shirt and tie, they'd laugh at me," Bernard said.

Star photo: Mike Weaver

was part of the provincial government's forest ranger program, slogging through the bush of northern Ontario and swatting mosquitoes.

"If the guys up north ever knew I was wearing a shirt and tie, they'd laugh at me," said Bernard recently from a seat high over the Palace court where Lieberman-Cline and the Shock were running through a practice.

The 23-year-old Toronto native is working long hours, enduring a difficult commute on torn up Michigan freeways but having the time of his life.

Scrimmaging against the Shock

Lieberman-Cline found out he played the game and asked him to join the men's practice squad which scrimmages against the Shock.

Bernard had only been on the court a few minutes when his male ego got crushed under the foot of Shock guard Hlede. She put a move on him that left Bernard watching in helpless awe as she drove to the basket for an easy two points.

"I went for her fake and she crossed me over in front of my bench," Bernard said. "That was my wakeup call. You've got to have your 'A' game against these women."

Not many — more likely not any — male players in the CIAU will come back this fall the better for having scrimmaged against women during the off-season.

"They would hate to hear it but they would get schooled," Bernard said of his peers. "Men are bigger, stronger, quicker but they (the Shock) understand the game a lot better. The women are not as fast but they are more skilled. Their execution is better. You turn your head for a second and they're going by you."

It's also a non-paying opportunity which means Bernard is working two other jobs (at a music store and a downtown bar) to pay the bills.

After graduating from human kinetics, he'd like to make a living coaching basketball.

"I'd like to be the first black head coach in the CIAU," he says.

Lancer coach Mike Havey points out he'll have to settle for being second.

"Doc Ryan beat him to the punch on that one," said Havey of former national team player Peter Ryan who once coached the Dalhousie men and now coaches the St. Francis Xavier women out east.

"He might be the second," said Havey of Bernard. "He's got a real bright future."