



ISLAND MATTERS *Mufi Hannemann*

For Aloha, It's A Slam Dunk

Team Aloha, the all-star girls basketball squad that I've organized and sponsored for 13 years now, earned its second consecutive championship title at the Elite Is Earned Spring Invitational girls basketball tournament, held in late April in Walnut Creek, California. We posted a perfect 4-0 record during the three-day event. Last year, the squad had a 5-0 record in capturing the crown.

The highly competitive tournament, which included another team from Hawai'i — Proformance, which is coached by former 'Iolani basketball stars Derrick Low and Kyle Pape — was sanctioned by the NCAA, meaning nearly 100 college coaches and scouts were in attendance.

This was Team Aloha's fourth overall championship; the girls were runners-up on four other occasions. Overall, our athletes have won nearly 80 percent of their contests.

Team Aloha 2019 consisted of nine underclassmen: three juniors, four sophomores and two freshmen. In qualifying for the title matchup, the Hawai'i girls posted preliminary round victories against Salt Lake Metro Black of Utah, 58-22; Portland's Northwest Stars Navy, 64-52; and 90TEN Team Black of Washington, 52-25.

In the championship game against a talented Washington Swarm squad, Team Aloha earned a 53-48 come-from-behind win. Caiyle Kaupu of Konawaena led the team by scoring 16 points and grabbing eight rebounds. 'Iolani's Lily Wahinekapu, her freshman sister Jovi, and Jaylen



(Far left) Chris Hansen, director of Elite Is Earned Basketball, congratulates the author and Team Aloha for capturing another basketball championship at the Elite Is Earned Spring Invitational. PHOTO COURTESY MAEA LEFOTU

Tanuvasa of Maryknoll combined for 26 points and coolly handled the Swarm's pressure defense, which resulted in open looks and assists.

Overall scoring leaders for Team Aloha were Lily and Caiyle, who averaged 12 and 11 points per game, respectively, scoring from all over the court. Kelsie Imai of Waiākea and Kahuku's Leah Naeata anchored the defense with their tenacious and gritty performances, while Lagi Su'a-Godinet of Kamehameha and Punahou's Tatiana Burciaga-Reyes contributed timely minutes off the bench with their head's-up play, and freshman Lishae Scanlan of Hanalani picked up valuable experience.

It speaks to the talent of our girls that they had very limited practice time (a little over two months every other weekend) as a team because they came from many different schools and islands — but they were nevertheless able to beat club squads that practice together throughout the season.

I've said time and time again that our girls can compete against the best in the nation, and our continued

competitiveness shows the caliber of homegrown talent we have. It also bears mention that our participation in these sanctioned mainland tournaments has led to a number of our players coming to the attention of college recruiters. That's been the case in past years, and this year as well.

Last year, Kamehameha's Kalina Obrey and Kamali Kamakawiwo'ole of Kalani caught the attention of coaches from San Jose State and Utah State at Walnut Creek, respectively, and led to their eventual signing with the two major college programs.

Previous Team Aloha members who were recruited by major Division I programs include Chanelle, Cherilyn and Celena Molina, and Lia Galdeira and Dawnielle Awa of Konawaena. Galdeira holds the distinction of being the first and only individual from Hawai'i drafted by the WNBA.

Other Division I prize recruits include Shawna and Shaena Kuehu of Punahou, Jamie Smith and Kylie Maeda of 'Iolani, Iwalani Rodrigues and Valarie Alama of Kalani, Kalei Adolpho of Moloka'i,

Maiki Viela and Malika Taufu of Lahainaluna, Tia Kanoa and Alohi Robins-Hardy of Kamehameha, Keisha Kaneo of Honoka'a, Bella Cravens and Chayse Milne of Maryknoll, and Kiki Robertson of Mid-Pacific Institute.

Chris Hansen, managing editor of ProspectsNation.com and director of Elite Is Earned Basketball, told us, "For the second straight year, Team Aloha came to the Elite Is Earned Spring Invitational and proved how good the basketball is in Hawai'i. Competing in a field with teams from eight states and two countries, coach Mufi and his staff have the team playing at a very high level in front of nearly 100 college coaches this weekend.

"Team Aloha plays a tough and fun style of basketball that fans and coaches loved to watch. In the championship game, they gritted out a tough win against the Washington Swarm, who have multiple players being recruited by Division I schools. It was an impressive showing."

Assisting me were veteran girls prep basketball coaches Sherice Ajifu, Rodney Cavaco and Rodney Veary, who deserve kudos for the time they devoted to this endeavor.

Mahalo also to former Moanalua and UH Wāhine coach Dana Takahara-Dias, and Fran Villarmia-Kahawai and Mona Fa'asoa, who captured championships at 'Aiea and Kaimukī, respectively. These women also helped immensely in developing Team Aloha into a quality sports experience for our local wāhine.

mufi@mufihannemann.com

LAW OFFICES OF NEIL T. NAKAMURA & ASSOC.



PACIFIC LEGAL PLAN

- Free Initial Consultation
- Reduced Fee - Living Trust
- MEDICAID PLANNING
- PLP Participating Attorney
- PLP Standards of Experience & Customer Service



47 Years Experience

Ala Moana
945-7645

Aiea
488-1719

Low Rates on HOME LOANS

3.750%

30-Year Fixed Interest Rate*

Annual Percentage Rate

3.913% APR

- Purchase your dream home
- Refinance your current loan at lower rates
- Tap home equity with a cash-out refinance



FINANCE FACTORS
SAVINGS • CDS • MORTGAGES

CALL 548-3300 • TOLL-FREE AT 1-800-648-7136
VISIT FINANCEFACTORS.COM

THE MODERN WAY TO MORTGAGE

*A \$200,000 mortgage loan secured by an owner-occupied dwelling, with 20% down payment, will result in 360 principal and interest monthly payments of \$926.24 based on a 30-Year Fixed Rate at 3.750% with 1.375 points and 3.913% APR. The payments shown above do not include taxes and insurance premiums, actual payment obligations will be greater. Offer only available to owner-occupied residential real estate located in the State of Hawaii. Maximum loan amount is \$726,525. Rates effective 05/08/2019 and are subject to change without notice. Other restrictions may apply. Additional rates and terms available.

