

Ex NBA Player With Jamaican Roots Starts Basketball Academy

Irving Thomas, a regional scout for the NBA and a former forward for the Los Angeles Lakers, is the founder of Elite Basketball Academy, a five-day training camp where kids ages 8 to 18 learn basketball techniques at the Betty T. Ferguson Center, 3000 NW 199th St. in Miami Gardens.

Thomas, a Miami Carol City High graduate has a vision to expand Elite Basketball Academy to a county-wide program. "We want to bring the visibility of high school basketball back to South Florida by offering camps and competitive tournaments."

In 1985 Thomas was the first basketball high school senior in South Florida to play for the McDonald's High School All American Team.

Thomas who is of Jamaican heritage was offered 210 basketball scholarships during high school, retired from the Lakers after playing for the 1990-1991 season also played in the European Basketball League in 1994 playing in Italy, France and Spain for seven years.

Elite Basketball Academy was held in Miami Gardens over the summer. Thomas met with Miami Gardens Mayor, Shirley Gibson last year about the camp when "I decided it was time to give back to my community," he said.

"My long-term vision is to have my own facility where students and professional athletes can come and get the help they need for a smooth transition out of sport," says Irvin. "It's our job to take the time to help our young people fulfill their dreams — that help can only come with the right resources and knowledge from a support system."

With the school winter break coming up Irving will be hosting another camp for kids. The Irving Thomas "Elite Basketball Academy" is an educational and basketball skills camp designed to focus on three core areas of athletic and personal development: 1.) Basketball Skills, Drills, and Techniques 2.) NBA Health, Fitness and Sports Nutrition 3.) Social Accountability, Community Awareness and Introduction to Careers In Sports

For more information on The Irving Thomas "Elite Basketball Academy" visit, www.eba.vpweb.com