

JIM CLEAMONS

*YSU coach putting in
long hours to succeed*

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ust imagine — YSU men's basketball coach Jim Clemons played on basketball teams that won the Ohio high school state championship, the Big Ten title, the NBA title and was part of the Cleveland Cavaliers' "Miracle in Richfield" team, but it was all put on hold while he was in junior high because he wanted to buy a typewriter.

Clemons said he wanted to learn to type but, in order to pay for a typewriter, he had to deliver newspapers instead of playing basketball.

Why did he want to learn to type?

"Because I knew I wanted to go to college, and I always heard that a typewritten term paper looks more professional," said YSU's Clemons, who wound up playing for a YMCA-sponsored basketball team that year.

Nowadays, typing has taken a backseat to basketball, and for obvious reasons. Basketball is now where Clemons gets his paycheck, but Clemons still tackles his goals today with the same dedication he had as a youth.

Clemons puts in the long hours and is demanding of his players, but it's all due to his will to succeed.

"I don't know what it takes to be good," said Clemons. "So you do what you have to do. I don't worry about the long hours. Right now I'm happy that I'm single. I do put in a lot of hours. But that's the price you pay for success."

And Clemons has been successful in his basketball career — including an NBA championship ring from a 1971-72 Los Angeles Lakers team that won a record 33 games in a row and 69 in one season.

"I wouldn't trade that ring in for the world. I'm very happy for that experience," said Clemons, best remembered as part of the 1976 Cavaliers basketball team that produced the thrilling "Miracle in Richfield." A last second basket by Clemons to win the fifth game over the Washington Bullets is part of that notoriety.

Clemons always had the inner drive to be successful. As he was

See Clemons, page 2

Clemons

Continued from page 1

growing up he would shoot around on the playground, trying not to let the basketball hit the ground. He knew the sound of a bouncing ball would draw a crowd for a pickup game. Clemons wanted time spent by himself so he could improve his game.

At other times Clemons would bring two basketballs with him when he went to shoot around — one for himself to practice with and the other for the kids who showed up to play.

"A lot of people didn't understand it, but I was working on my game. It was nothing personal, but I didn't want you [there]. You're intruding on some of my personal time," said Clemons.

This indicates Clemons, a two-time Big Ten's All-Academic First Team selection while playing at Ohio State, always appears to be thinking ahead.

Now in his second year as YSU basketball coach, he is still thinking ahead. His current goal is to someday to win a NCAA national basketball championship.

But can YSU realistically

compete for a national championship against the other top notch Division I basketball programs?

"When people ask me that, I have to ask them if six years ago would they have thought Temple would be number one in the country for a majority of the basketball season [last year]," said Clemons. "Thirteen years ago, who would have thought Georgetown would win a na-

tional championship? When I get those answers then I say 'Well, why not.'

"I think that, in this day and age of parity that we have, we could compete. Look at Rhode Island. Last year they made it to the final 16. Loyola Marymount made the final 16 and their student population isn't as big as ours. Their gym isn't as big as Beeghly Center."

