

# Gus Macker jazzes up Alpena with basketball excitement

BY JEREMY WILLIAMS  
STAFF WRITER

In the first year that the Gus Macker was played in Alpena there were as many upsets as fantastic finishes. The team "Bobby's Back" featuring former ACC star Bobby Allen was upset in the open division championship game by "Break ya ankles."

The biggest surprise of the tournament was that of "Air Currier." Current Lumberjacks Marcus "Smoke" Johnson, Richard Jenkins, Travis Smith, and Javon Basknight made up the team. "Air Currier" was the overall favorite coming into the tournament.

"Air Currier" started out impressing everybody but mental lapses and frustration stood in their way of becoming champs.

Johnson stated, "On the first day everything went our way. On the second day we didn't have our act together. We let the referees get to our head."

Jenkins commented, "Being as favorites, the refs thought all calls should go to the underdogs. After we let those calls get to our head, we started playing nonchalantly."

Johnson also added, "We will be back next year to win it all!"

"Air Currier" was eliminated on Sunday morning and with them out of the way, the tournament was up for grabs.

"Bobby's Back" raced to the finals without losing a game, while "Break ya ankles" had to claw their way from the losers bracket to play seven games on Sunday. When the two teams met late Sunday afternoon, there was a wealthy gathering of people awaiting to see who would reign as champions.

"Break ya ankles" carried only three players to the four players "Bobby's Back" had. Those three players are former Lumberjack Andy McGarry and current ACC hoops Ron Thompson and Jeremy "Oost" Williams, all from the Flint area. "Bobby's Back" was paced by Bobby Allen and new assistant coach for ACC, Mike Kollien.

"Break ya ankles" had to defeat "Bobby's Back" twice in this double-elimination tournament to win the hardware.

In the first game "Break ya ankles" jumped out in front

early and never looked back as they won 20 to 16. In the second game, it wasn't going to be that easy.

The game seasawed back and forth with the score staying close all the way. "Break ya ankles" was up 19 to 17 when Bobby Allen picked up his fifth foul. He was forced to sit on the sidelines and "Break ya ankles" had the ball and a chance to win the game. The ball was inbounded to Williams and he shot a layup that appeared to have won the game, but he was called for an offensive charge and the basket was taken away.

Williams' miscue gave him his fifth foul and he had to sit out. "Break ya ankles" had two men to the three of "Bobby's Back".

"Bobby's Back" took the advantage and scored to bring them within one point of the lead, 19 to 18. McGarry then took the ball and drove it to the hole, where he was fouled.

McGarry had the opportunity to hit a free throw to win it all. He stood at the charity stripe concentrating, while the crowd on Washington Avenue waited with anticipation.

McGarry stroked the shot and it went in bringing "Break ya ankles" the championship. "Break ya ankles'" Ron Thompson, who showcased one of his best performances ever, said, "I told everybody we weren't going to lose. Everyone said we would, but look what happened."

The Gus Macker tournament has been around for years. There has been a lot of excitement that has filled the streets of cities all across the nation. If the close-knit games on Sunday won't put you in a frenzy maybe the Saturday night festivities will.

The slam dunk contest and the three-point competition were both won by Flint natives. Eugene McBride, a past ACC player, electrified the audience with his aerial tactics. Omar Nicholson, a freshman on the current Lumberjack squad, hit nine three-pointers in thirty seconds, including seven in a row.

Nicholson replied, "I was filling it up all day. My shot felt nice and when I hit the final shot, I knew I had won."

The Gus Macker was very successful in its first year in Alpena. If you missed all the hoopla in this year's tournament, don't worry because it will be back next year!



"Air Currier's" Richard Jenkins floats up a jumper.

Photo by Linda Simpson

## Polemic writer experiences the MACK ATTACK

BY JIM BALLMER  
STAFF WRITER

When you tell someone your Gus Macker team won the toilet bowl award, most will say, "Hey, better than nothin'." I agree.

At least we won this year. In 1991, Roger Griffin, Steve Worm, and I got shut out of the Gaylord Macker. We had a lot going against us the whole way. Our main problem was that our fourth member's statistics put us in a competition bracket that seemed like it was for 65" sucker punching, bird hand pros. The fact that we were nervous, out-of-town Macker virgins didn't help much either.

But this year we got our act together. We got rid of our unwanted fourth teammate and picked up my brother Keith (who already had a toilet bowl) and first place Macker honors from previous years). We had home court advantage in Alpena and

we even picked up a clever team name: Four Play (which had to be changed to Four Play Two, because another team had the same name).

This year was different from 1991. In the Gaylord Macker we went all out. We got little black jerseys with our name, number, and team name on it. We hit the town the night before and got wild. And before the games we pumped ourselves up. The entire weekend was one big adrenaline rush and when it was over I wondered what happened.

This year in Alpena there was little hype. We didn't buy into the rah-rah, all-praise-Macker, talk in the news although we thought it was cool that the tournament would pump millions into this repressed community. We knew we had a job to do and we would have fun doing it.

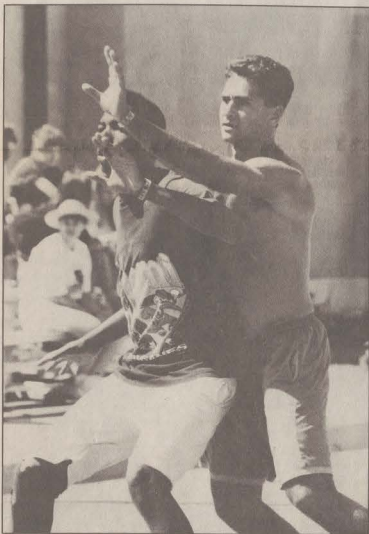
Our first game was the most explosive basketball game that any of us had ever participated in. We played this team from Sault Ste. Marie called

Ratz Azz. These guys were young hot heads and trash was being talked the entire time. This game was like a basketball in an oven ready to burst, and it did.

One member of Ratz Azz had a major problem with a call concerning a take-back. Our court side buster, Eric Bellmore, called in the super buster, Al Kanuski who attempted to talk it out. It was futile trying to come to an understanding and after Al heard him mutter "uck that" he tore his registration bracelet and made sure he was suspended for a year from all Macker tournaments. Gus might be a congenial smiling basketball, but he doesn't take attitude from anybody.

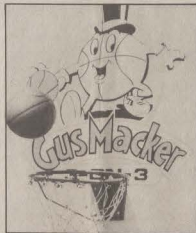
After that, our games were relatively smooth going as we dropped our next one and won the next two, taking out U R Overrated to win the toilet bowl.

All in all, it was a good time. Look for us next year, Macker Backers!



Darrin Morgan is posting up his defender in an attempt to get the ball.

Photo by Linda Simpson



## Macker influences Alpena economy

BY SARAH EDWARDS  
STAFF WRITER

The Gus Macker 3 on 3 tournament bounced into Alpena the weekend of August 21 and 22. Though it was a first for Alpena, it won't be the last.

According to Rodney Hart Vice President of the "Macker Backers," the planning began about a year before the tournament.

With the approval and signing of a three year contract by the founders, the ball started to roll and the Macker helped to mark Alpena on Michigan's map as one of the 17 tournament sites in the state. Hart also commented that "the Macker could not have gone better."

The influx of 7000 - 10000 people just at the Macker site meant a

lot to Alpena's economy. The impact was noted by Terry Denmark owner of the restaurant Some Place in Alpena. Denmark stated that "Sunday they felt the effects of the Macker with the increase of business."

President of Alpena's Macker Backers R.B. Phillips hopes "the Macker will be an example of what people can do when they put their minds together to make things a reality." People will remember Alpena and hopefully return as a tourist and even to future Macker tournaments.

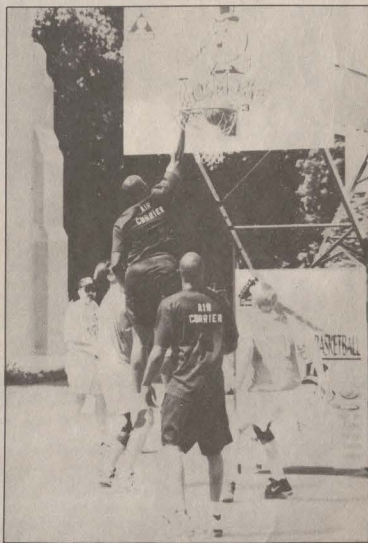
The idea of returning players or teams was strengthened by former ACC basketball player Lisa Wekwert and Macker teammate Jennifer Pouttu who traveled from St. Clair Shores for the Macker tourney. Pouttu and Wekwert's team advanced to win the

toilet bowl trophy for their division.

There are only minor improvements, to make for next year, such as making the "wheelchair accessible porta potties more obvious" says Lyn Ashley, who helped in registration and parking.

As for parking, there were no real problems, as golf carts were used to shuttle the residents to and from designated parking lots.

All in all, Mitch McNeal President and co-founder of the Macker stated, "there were very few problems and it went really well." This was later reinforced by Alpena's Mayor Bill LaHaie who commented, "The Macker seemed to be well organized and that everyone downtown was enjoying the tournament and having a good time."



Javon Basknight slaps the backboard after scoring. Photo by Linda Simpson