

Basketball star's stock soaring

David ranked second nationally in age class by North Pole Hoops; plenty of D-1 schools showing interest

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Asked what Christian David's greatest asset on the court is, Tariq Sbiet offers an extended pause.

While not immediately clear, that silence speaks volumes about the just-turned 16-year-old's game... and his potential.

After all, to simply mention one strong suit might imply David relies too heavily on it, or that other areas of his play aren't quite up to par.

So far, there's been absolutely no evidence of either.

"He's so well-rounded," stressed Sbiet, a national scout and director of recruiting with North Pole Hoops (NPH), Canada's most recognized youth basketball development and recruiting organization, with which 6-foot-5 David is currently ranked second nationally for the Class of 2017. "He's the full package."

"His basketball IQ is exceptional and he's got multiple skill sets at different positions," echoed Anthony Cordeiro, who coached the elite-level hoopster to the Halton final — and a top-10 provincial ranking — with the 2012/13 Bishop Reding Royals. "I think that's where his real value is."

Those are no hollow sentiments, given David's efforts at the Father's Day weekend NPH Showcase in Toronto.

With a versatility seen by few players his age, he not only earned a spot in the camp-

ending all-star game but was named its MVP, courtesy of an 18-point, eight-rebound, four-assist performance.

"I was excited (to be named MVP)," said a soft-spoken David, a bonafide candidate for the junior national team in the not-too-distance future. "That was a big confidence boost for me."

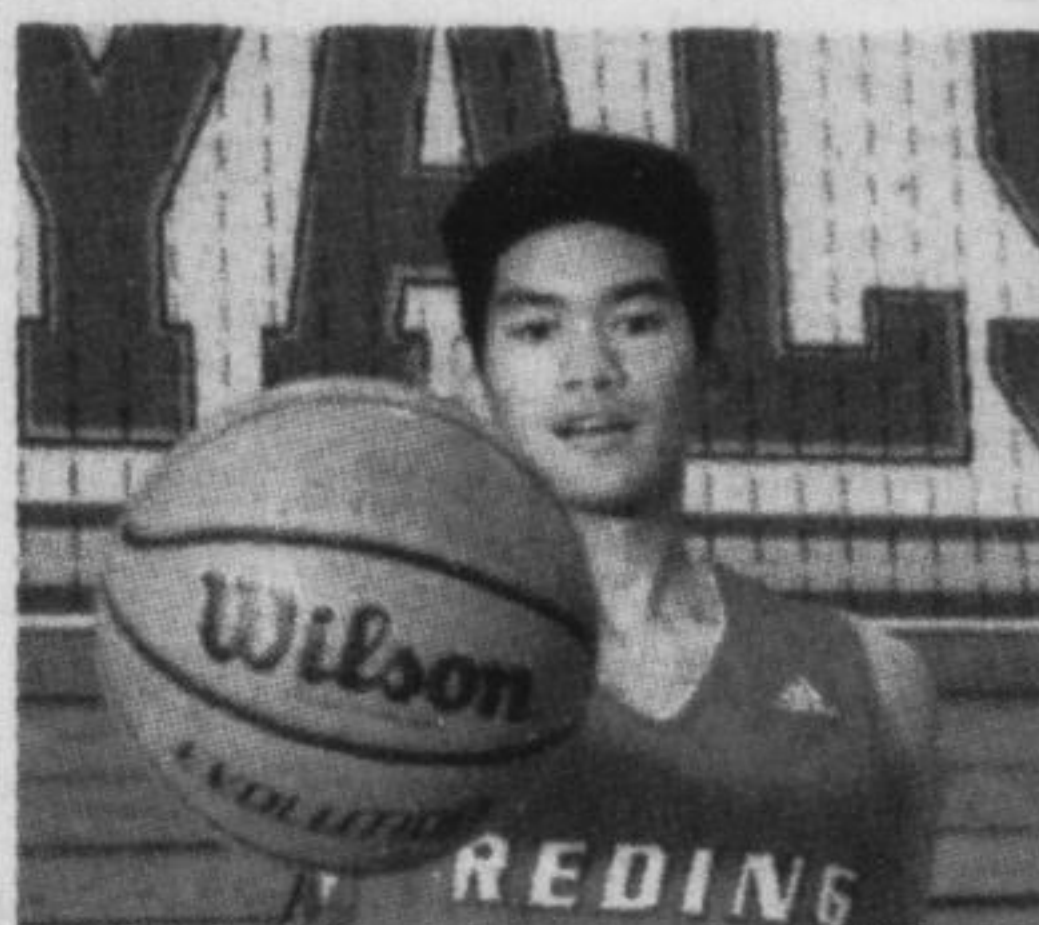
Though not having personally seen David play before the Toronto camp, Sbiet said his reputation certainly proceeded him.

"I'd heard about Christian from colleagues, so we had high expectations for him and he definitely met those."

While seeing himself as a natural two-guard, David took on pretty much every position in the all-star showcase and demonstrated real proficiency in each role.

"I'm definitely willing to play any position," noted the local basketball standout, who began playing competitively a little later than most high-ranked prospects — in Grade 7 — but now has NCAA D-1 schools like Baylor, Illinois and Boston's Stonehill College expressing interest in his services. "I just want to help my team win."

He's done a fair amount of that recently. Along with leading his squad to victory at the NPH Showcase — which followed a strong showing at a camp in Nashville, Tennessee — David helped the 2012/13 Royals to an overall stellar season as a ninth grader and this past year was a key part of the Under-16 Stags' win at the prestigious LeBron James Tournament.



Christian David

Admitting that all the attention he's receiving lately can get a bit overwhelming at times, David says he just tries "not to let it get too much in my head."

That's when the influence of a close-knit family comes into play, helping the talented cager stay grounded and humble.

"I always tell him, 'Before you play, you pray,'" said father Arnel, who's instilled a strong sense of faith and high regard for academics in his NCAA-bound son. "God will lead you."

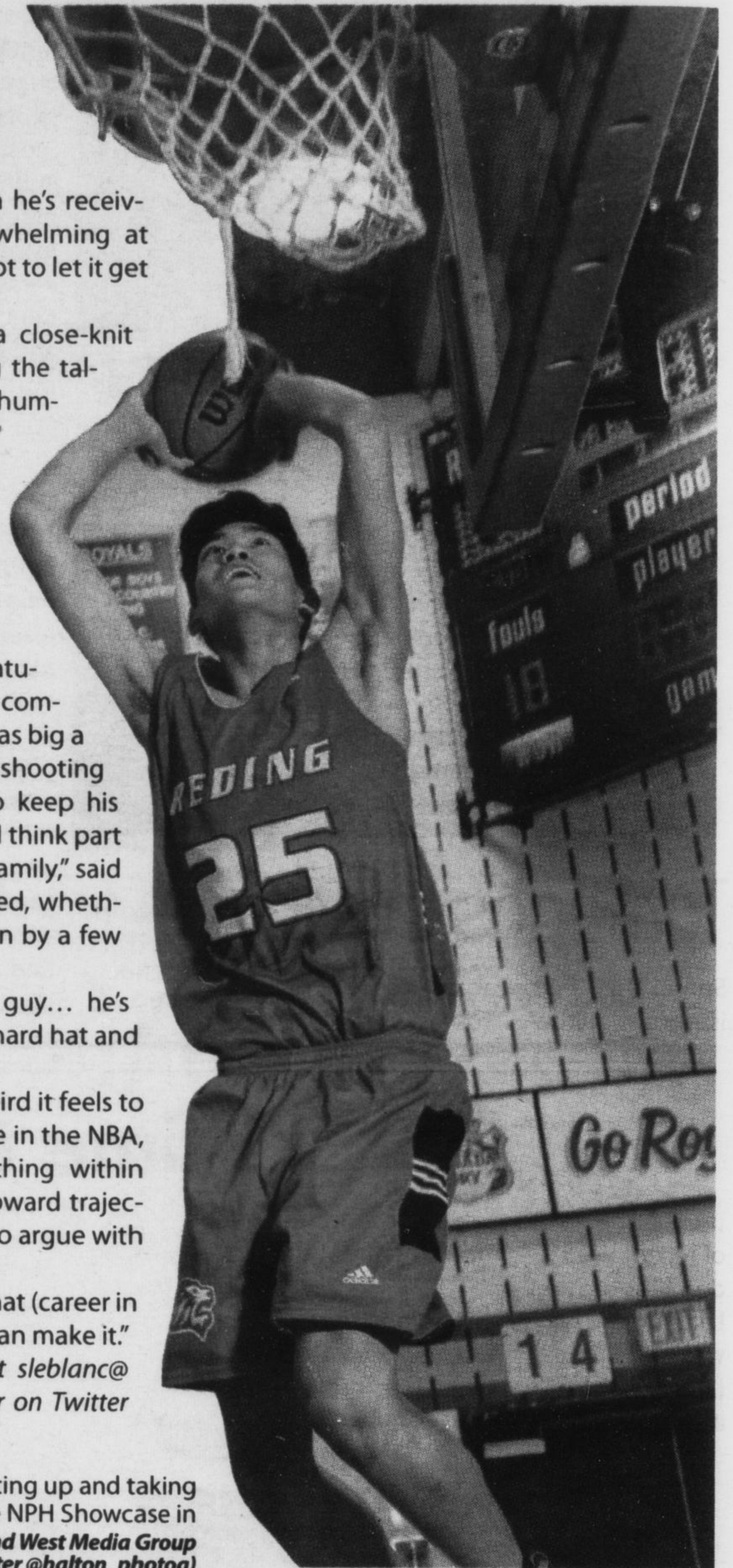
While blessed with size and a natural talent for the game, David's composure on the court may be just as big a weapon as his ball handling and shooting prowess. "Christian manages to keep his emotions in check on the court. I think part of that is coming from a good family," said Cordeiro. "He's pretty even-keeled, whether his team's up by a lot or down by a few points late in the game."

Added Sbiet, "He's not a loud guy... he's methodical. He just puts on his hard hat and goes to work."

Though acknowledging how weird it feels to discuss the possibility of a future in the NBA, David does see that as something within his reach. And with his sharp upward trajectory as of late, it would be hard to argue with that.

"It's kind of odd to think about that (career in pro basketball), but hopefully I can make it." Steve LeBlanc can be reached at sleblanc@miltoncanadianchampion.com or on Twitter @MiltonOnSports.

Christian David had scouts sitting up and taking notice with a stellar effort at the NPH Showcase in Toronto. Franki Ikeman / Metroland West Media Group (Follow on Twitter @halton_photog)



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