



Freshman Danisha Cole taught basketball fundamentals to Callie Siruta, fourth grader at Colby Grade School, at the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce Mini-Madness fundraiser on Friday at the middle school gym.

Mini-madness fund-raiser shines spotlight on youth

By Andy Heintz

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The kids, the parents, the organizers and coaches, even the refs had fun Friday at the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce's March Mini-Madness basketball fund raiser.

Thomas County students in second through fifth grades oohed an ahhed as Colby Community College basketball freshmen Shamar Acuay, Marcel Lewis and Ethan Stover and sophomore Erick Peguero competed in a slam-dunk contest at the Colby Middle School gym.

The four showed a lot of creative showmanship and high-

flying theatrics as they attempted to top one another. In one of his dunks, Acuay jumped over Peguero and slammed the ball through the hoop.

The crowd was electric during the contest as the young athletes cheered on the Trojans. The kids showed great compassion during the contest. When one of the athletes would botch a dunk attempt, the youngsters would either chant his name or cheer loudly to encourage him to do better in his next attempt. In the end, Acuay prevailed.

The contest was followed by 30-minute games played in both the middle school and Colby Grade School gyms. The young players were coached by Trojans' basket-

ball players and coaches and community volunteers.

Coaches included Shane Stover, college assistant basketball coach, sophomores Peguero and Anthony Rohr, and freshmen Acuay, Stover, Lewis, Aireus Stephenson, Kory Slaughter, Trevor Siebert, David Dixon and Derrick Thomas; Lady Trojans coach Brady Jasper, freshmen Danisha Cole, Jasmine Gardner, Tasha Wagoner and Jaelyn Marshall, sophomore Jamie Alexander; and from the town, Jeremy Quint, Stacy Lee, T.J. Preston and Jarod Johnson. The games lasted from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Before the dunk contest, the coaches taught the youngsters fundamental basketball skills from 4:30 to 5:30.

Colorado Rockies open season on the road against Arizona

PHOENIX (AP) — For the fourth straight season, Brandon Webb will be the opening day starter for the Arizona Diamondbacks. For once, though, he'll be at home.

The Arizona ace takes the mound against Colorado's Aaron Cook on Monday when the Diamondbacks open their season at home for the first time since 2005.

It's the first of 18 home games — out of 22 overall — in April for Arizona, beginning with a nine-game stand that includes visits by the Los Angeles Dodgers and St. Louis Cardinals.

First, though, it's the Rockies and Cook. He's the unquestioned leader of the Colorado staff with Jeff Francis out because of season-ending shoulder surgery.

It will be the second opening day start for Cook (16-9, 3.96 ERA), who had a career-high in wins last year. His first opening day start was two seasons ago.

"It's part of the maturing process," Cook said before the Rockies worked out at Chase Field on Sunday. "Last year I was able to pitch well enough that Clint (Hurdle) decided to give me opening

day. But I've got to go out there and treat it like every other start. Hopefully I'll get 34, 35 of them this year and there's not one that's going to mean more than the other. I've got to go out there with that sort of attitude."

Cook won't get wrapped up with who's on the mound for the other team.

"Me and Webb have faced each other probably about seven or eight times in our careers," he said. "He's an ace pitcher, Cy Young, last year he pitched great. You've got to go out not worrying about who's on the mound for the other team. I've got to worry about keeping our team in the game."

Webb led the NL in victories last year and was runner-up for the Cy Young Award for the second season in a row. He won it in 2006.

With one of the best 1-2 pitching punches in baseball, Arizona will send Dan Haren to the mound against Colorado on Tuesday night.

"We expect our pitching to be our strength, especially our starting pitching," manager Bob Melvin said. "That is the way it has been around here for a while."

Melvin's opening day lineup will be a bit different than his normal everyday look. He will start Eric Byrnes in right field in place of Justin Upton and shift Chad Tracy from first base to third, with Tony Clark getting the start at first.

Upton and regular third base-

man Mark Reynolds will sit, but only for one day, Melvin said.

"I talked early on this spring about getting some left-handed bats in against some of the tougher right-handed pitchers in the league," Melvin said, "and this guy profiles out as that. Tony's got a couple of homers off him, Byrnes hits over .300 against him. So I talked to Mark and Justin today. Obviously they want to play, but they understand."

Melvin expects Reynolds and Upton to be back in the lineup Tuesday night against Colorado's Ubaldo Jimenez (12-12, 3.99). Melvin said the lineup changes are an example of the team's versatility.

"It's a little coincidental that it's opening day that I get an extra left-handed bat in there," he said, "but Chad's healthy enough to do it at third. We have a left-hander on the third game (Franklin) Morales, you'll see a lot of right-handed bats in there."

The Rockies bolstered their bullpen on Sunday by acquiring right-hander Jason Hammel from Tampa Bay for minor league pitcher Aneurys Rodriguez.

The Diamondbacks could be getting some bullpen assistance in a few weeks, too. Veteran Tom Gordon, bothered by a sore arm the last 2½ seasons, threw 60 pain-free pitches in a bullpen session on Sunday. Melvin said Gordon might have one more bullpen outing before facing hitters.

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