

# More Than Just a Game

## *Kennedy King Youth Basketball League Teaches Youths About Life*

By Eric Long  
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It looks like a slam dunk.

The Kennedy King Youth Basketball League is wrapping up its first season with its championship game this week, but officials say all the players who participated are winners.

According to Loni Gamble, program coordinator at the Williamsport Housing Authority, a total of 60 youths between the ages of 11 and 14 signed up for and participated in the league, which just concluded its regular season and part of the playoffs.

Gamble said participants came from all over Williamsport.

"We're covering the entire community, but we're based at Kennedy King (Housing Center)," he said. "We had people coming in from Loyalsock, Newberry, from all over the area."

### More Than Basketball

But the program is about more than just basketball.

"This is the type of project where we wanted to take those idle young minds and get them focused on something," Gamble explained. "There's nothing worse than going through a summer with nothing to do. We wanted each team to work within the community to do something for the community,



MARK NANCE/Sun-Gazette

**THE KENNEDY KING YOUTH BASKETBALL LEAGUE** depends on volunteers to coach teams and referees to work with minimal pay. From front left are referees Rodney Wilson, Fadu Muhammadali and Greg Ousley Sr. Standing, from left, are coaches Dion Young Team, Stan Johnson, Bruce White, also league coordinator, Andre Evans and organizer James Tindal Sr. In photo at left, Victor Strickland of the Port Ballers drives to the basket during Sunday's game against the Wizards in the Kennedy King Youth Basketball League.

between the youths and their coaches will continue. He said the basketball program will likely grow next year.

"I think next year will be really exciting. I think we'll have probably eight teams and 20 more kids. They didn't have

nothing to do and now they do shooting, things like that. I learned to conduct my attitude while playing because you're not allowed to argue with the referees or use foul language."

He said players even cleaned up after the crowd following the games.

Eric Guther, Andre Evans Sr.

lessons to the children were clear. "We wanted to give back to the community, to work with the kids and teach them about respecting their community and others," he said. "This was our first year, but we want to make this an annual thing. It was a real success for the first