

# Rockingham Royals Set Sights on Another Golden Finish

by Chris Moody, VA Contributor

The gold medal ceremony for the 15U boys basketball division of last year's Commonwealth Games was a perfect way to end the season for the Rockingham Royals.

They're hoping to do it again this year.

A thrilling one-point win in the finals capped a perfect tournament in the team's second visit to the Games, a year after they failed to win a game on their first trip.

Head coach Wandile Maseko leads the Royals, now 16U, a team composed of players from various schools in the Harrisonburg area, including Spotswood High School—the reigning state champions—as well as Turner Ashby, Rocktown, and East Rock high schools. Playing AAU tournaments, the travel team goes all over the eastern part of the United States, but the Commonwealth Games is the team's favorite tournament

“I can't stress how much we enjoy playing the Commonwealth Games,” Maseko said. “We typically play about eight tournaments in a season, but I will say this is one that we circle. We like to wind up our season by playing the Commonwealth Games. It's just great to see that level of competition and how well-organized it is. Playing at Liberty just adds to it.”

The Games mark the last travel tournament of the year. The Royals also consider it a state tournament, giving the winner a claim to a pseudo-state championship.

“When you win this, it's a big deal,” Maseko said, “We consider ourselves the best in our age group in the state of Virginia.”

Take note of these players. They will be making waves in the hoops world for years to come. The six who get the most minutes are: point guard Keyon Benton, shooting guard Demetrius Arrington; the forwards are Anthony Perez, Ayden Groden, Jayden Lacey and Phillip Peachey.

Looking forward to the Royals' third straight trip to the Games, Maseko said the team made a big jump from the first year to the second.



“The first year we did not win a game. Not one,” he said. “Last year we won a nail-biter in the finals over a really good team from Culpeper.”

The field for this year’s tournament will return to its 130-team format after a year when it was trimmed to 100 teams due to court renovations.

**The Commonwealth Games basketball tournaments for all age levels will be July 18-20 on courts at Liberty University and E.C. Glass High School.**