

Hoops dean Colangelo talks NBA, Olympics



BY KYLE STACK
Special to amNewYork

Jerry Colangelo's recent election as chairman of the Basketball Hall of Fame board underscores his status as one of basketball's most influential figures.

A four-time Executive of the Year with Phoenix, Colangelo became the managing director of USA Basketball in 2005 and built the 2008 gold medal-winning U.S. team. He recently sat down with amNew York at the NBA Store as he signed copies of his new book, "Return of the Gold: The Journey of Jerry Colangelo and the Redeem Team."



Colangelo

The Nets have some promising young talent. What else do they need?
You always have to have continuity in a franchise to go through the ups and downs. In Rod Thorn, they have one of the best [executives] in basketball. They're in a rebuild when you look at the players who left last year and the age of their players now.

Will LeBron James, Dwyane Wade or Chris Bosh sign with the Knicks next summer?
It's important for teams to not put all their eggs in



LeBron James starred on Jerry Colangelo's "Redeem Team" last year. The Knicks may pursue James this summer. (GETTY)

one basket relative to a free agent. When collective bargaining [between the league and the players union] is done with early in the summer, you may find that it's much more advantageous for those players to stay exactly where they are.

How are you recruiting players for London 2012?
We've already established that it's an "in" thing to represent your country. From last year's Olympic team, I'm sure we'll have eight or nine returnees. There should be some turnover because the pipeline is pretty full. I see [Oklahoma City forward Kevin] Durant as a lock; he's already one of the premier players in the league and he wants to play.

Where does the U.S. team need to get better?
We seem to have a lack of length and size. In international play, you run up

against a lot of big teams. That's why we have players we would put in a category we're observing, like [Brook] Lopez with the Nets and [Andrew] Bynum with the Lakers. We need to keep looking at all the young centers because we need to add at least one.

What new initiatives will you advocate at the Basketball Hall of Fame?
I'm not sure if it's been done, but one thing I have a personal interest in is that I think there's always players and individuals who don't get their fair due in terms of consideration. What I'm thinking very seriously of is having a catch-up over two or three years where a number of individuals would have an opportunity to come into the Hall of Fame. I'm thinking about fan participation and the media to have a significant role in the selection process.



Junior forward Maya Moore averages 19.3 points for the undefeated Huskies. (AP)

UConn: 30 weeks at No. 1

It's been almost a decade since Connecticut has had a run this long at No. 1. The top-ranked Huskies remained No. 1 in the AP Top 25 for the 30th straight week, matching the longest run atop the poll in school history. UConn, which received all 40 first-place votes yesterday from the national media panel, tied the mark set from 1999-2001.

The Huskies are still six short of the all-time record of 36 consecutive weeks at No. 1, held by Louisiana Tech from 1980-82. Connecticut (8-0) blew out Hartford by 35 points in its only game this week and has won its games by an average of 45 points. They play Iona on Sunday before a showdown against No. 2 Stanford on Dec. 23. (AP)

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