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Landry Fields is Draft Material

Stanford's All-Pac-10 First Team selection is gearing up for the NBA.

by [Kyle Stack](#) / @NYSportswriter

Landry Fields isn't your typical collegiate basketball player with NBA aspirations. First of all, he went to Stanford — and is on track to graduate. During a time in which most high-level college players leave school early to turn pro, it's refreshing to see someone like Fields to use all four years of his eligibility to realize his potential.

Fields became an All-Pac-10 First Team selection after averaging a conference-high 22.0 points and 8.8 rebounds per game. So the Long Beach native realized his development enough to turn himself into a NBA prospect. After working out at the Portsmouth Invitational in April, he has his sights set on an invite to the upcoming NBA Pre-Draft camp in Chicago. Players are selected by NBA personnel and Fields' agent, Trennis Jones, thinks Fields deserves a shot at the camp based on his body of work.

While Fields waits to hear about Chicago and his prospects for the NBA Draft in June, SLAMonline spoke to Fields about his collegiate career, coaching aspirations and Draft preparation.

SLAM: Your parents played collegiate basketball. What kind of advice did they have during your career?

Landry Fields: In terms of basketball, not too much. They're the kind of parents that like to watch from a distance. They might point out some things here and there. They trusted me with other people, like coaches, throughout my life and they trusted that I would learn the game on my own and pick it up as I go along.

SLAM: Since you grew up in L.A., did you have aspirations to play for USC or UCLA or did you always have Stanford in mind?

LF: Growing up, I was a UCLA fan. At one point, I wanted to go there. But when I got to high school, I was trying to get a scholarship anywhere. Stanford just came along and it was the right fit for me.

SLAM: Do you talk to ex-Stanford players who are in the NBA?

LF: I talk to the Lopez twins here and there but other than that, not really.

SLAM: Do they have any advice for you for Draft preparation?

LF: Yeah, just to take it day-by-day. The off-season is kind of a grueling schedule and to continue to work hard and play as hard as I can every day.

SLAM: Where are you right now?

LF: I'm in L.A. working out.

SLAM: Okay, so what are you doing to prepare for the Draft?

LF: I'm working out at the Home Depot Center. I work with Athlete's Performance for strength and conditioning and agility stuff. That's four days per week, starting at 8 a.m. and that goes until about 10. At 10:30, I do all the



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court stuff, skill-work and movement, with my trainer, Miles Simon, who played at Arizona. That session lasts about two hours. Then I come back in the afternoon for some shooting and call it a day. Then I wake up and do the same thing the next day.

SLAM: Is there anything in particular you're working on this week?

LF: It changes each day. One day it can be a lot of ball handling, the next it can be shooting form, movements like screening and sometimes playing with guys who come to work out. So, it's a plethora of different stuff.

SLAM: Have you talked to any NBA teams so far?

LF: At Portsmouth, there were some informal interviews with people. Nothing too serious yet. That's kind of all in the works, trying to figure out schedules and workouts.

SLAM: What part of your game do you need to improve the most?

LF: I think knocking down a consistent jumper. At times, my shot can get a little flat but when I get it up, I'm a pretty decent shooter. So just a consistent jumper and knocking it down. And continue to stay low in ball handling. Obviously, my conditioning and agility because that will be key when it comes to traveling and working out for teams.

SLAM: Do you see yourself as a shooting guard or a small forward in the NBA?

LF: I see myself as a small forward.

SLAM: If a team asks you what you can do to help them, what are you going to say?

LF: Well, that can depend on the team. If I knew I was going to go on an interview with somebody, I'd probably take a closer look at a team and get a feel for what they like to do. I'd tell them how I can contribute in their system and even outside of the system, I'm the type of player willing to do anything for a team. Whatever you want me to do, I'll do that. Whatever they ask of me, I'll do that plus take it to the next level. It's the kind of player I am and the kind of character I have.

SLAM: When you watch NBA games, do you see yourself in a certain uniform or on a certain team?

LF: I know that I can play in the League. Right now, it's just doing what I can to get there and worry about all that stuff afterward.

SLAM: The Pac-10 has produced a lot of NBA talent the last several years. What is it about that league that prepares guys for the NBA?

LF: I don't think it's too much different from any other conference. It's more of a grind-it-down type of conference meaning that refs let us play. There aren't many teams that are like 'push it and run' so there are slow-it-down offenses. This year, everybody says it was down and stuff, but I still think this year was a pretty good year for a lot of teams. That's my opinion; other people think otherwise.

SLAM: So you're of the mindset that this past season was as competitive as the previous two or three seasons?

LF: Maybe not previous years. I know that when you lose as much talent as the Pac-10 has to the NBA, you're left with guys with less experience; therefore, you get the kind of year the Pac-10 had. But within that situation we had to play in, I feel like it was pretty competitive. Cal and Washington did pretty well in the NCAA Tournament. I think it's still a good conference.

SLAM: Who was your toughest cover in the Pac-10?

LF: I'd say probably Theo Robertson. He's a tough play. To me, he can do it all which I think almost goes unnoticed. I think he was one of the harder covers for me.

SLAM: Who gave you the toughest time when you were on offense?

LF: Probably Justin Holiday at Washington. He's real long and pretty scrappy. And the kind of style that they play on defense, it allows him to gamble. He's always kind of in you and you have to be sharp with the ball and sharp with your moves if you want to get past him.

SLAM: What was the toughest Pac-10 arena to play in this past season?

LF: This year, Washington was pretty hard. They were better this year than they usually have been. I'd say Oregon but they didn't quite have the year they usually do.

SLAM: Being from Stanford, do you tend to get an earful of jokes making fun of your intelligence?

LF: [Laughs] Yeah, if I mess up on one little thing, I get the 'Ohhh, Stanford, huh?', stuff like that. But not anything too dramatic or harsh. It's all in good fun.

SLAM: What's tougher — studying for finals or competing in the Pac-10 Tournament?

LF: [Laughs] At Stanford, you have different majors that are harder than others. To me, preparing for the journey was more draining than having to study for finals. School came pretty easy to me.

SLAM: What advice would you give to fellow student-athletes who struggle with time management of academics and athletics?

LF: At Stanford, we had all the help we wanted. When you get to college, especially like Stanford, where academics are as important as basketball, the rigors that it has means you have to make sacrifices on what you do. If you're struggling, get all the help you can. There are tons of tutors at every campus. You have to put in the time. There's no easy way of doing it, so that's the way to go about it.

SLAM: I read you're interested in coaching and want to pursue that after your playing career. What is it about it that interests you?

LF: Well, actually working out in L.A. and being around some past coaches and talking about, it's actually a lot

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9

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more work than I thought. I'd still like to coach at one point but the work definitely doesn't appeal to me that much; I heard it's a 24/7 type of deal. But just the chance to work with young players and watch them grow. Eventually, you get to see their development and where they end up, that's what's appealing to me. Even seeing people from L.A. and where they end up, like Russell Westbrook. Watching him since high school and to see where he's at now, that's something that it's pleasurable to me to see that. If I can do something like that coaching, that'd be great.

SLAM: Is it the game planning or the scouting that takes up so much time?

LF: Yeah, it's the scouting. I know based off this year, whichever scout had the coach for that week, he always more tense and under pressure than the other coaches. You see where the nerves come in and that they get frustrated. So that might not be appealing, but it's something you got to do if you want to win.

SLAM: In what ways did [Stanford basketball coach] Johnny Dawkins help you?

LF: He's great on player development. I couldn't even tell you how much I've learned from him in the past two years. His experience, the player he was in college, being able to play in the NBA, the people he's coached and worked with, they've had a great influence on him as a coach. He's translated that into how he coaches us. It's unfortunate I had only one year with him; if I'd have had more, that'd have been great. He's one of the most competitive guys I've ever met and one of the smartest basketball minds I've been around. Just taking away those things from him has been a huge help for me.

SLAM: Any other coaches who've had a big influence on you?

LF: When I was younger, my AAU coach, A.C. Diaz, is the one who got me serious about the competitive nature of basketball. My high school coach, Russell May. Dawkins reminded me of him, just in his competitive nature and basketball mind. I've been blessed to have both coaches. And my old Stanford coach Trent Johnson, before he left [for LSU], just some of the intangibles that he talked to his players about how to approach the game was also a big help.

SLAM: Does your interest in coaching mean you see yourself as a coach on the floor?

LF: With more experience, definitely on the floor. If I had gain more experience playing and observing coaches more, that can translate into my own coaching style and the way I interact with players.

SLAM: Was there a part of the game you were known for helping your teammates with the most?

LF: Coach Dawkins and his staff did great with the basketball aspect. I never had to do too much coaching on the side. With me, it was more of an approach to the game and how at times, it can be frustrating out there. You have academic pressure on you as well, so I was trying to be there as a motivator and somebody who my teammates could talk to when they needed help. Being a senior, I had been through it all.

SLAM: Has your perception of what it means to be an NBA player changed as you've come closer to becoming one?

LF: Definitely. The amount of time and work you have to put in is kind of unfathomable until you actually go through it. I thought I was working hard in college but now, doing this thing every day, it's almost like a 9-to-5 job. A job that's fun but the kind of effort you have to put into it and just growing with your game, the physical game and mentally. You have to be a 'next play' kind of guy. You have to have short-term memory in terms of mistakes on the court. It's definitely changed over the years but I think I'm getting a good grasp of it now.

SLAM: What part of your game are you most confident about right now?

LF: I think my ability to create for myself. It's something I had to do a lot this year. Also, just intangibles, playing hard, having that will to win. I like where my game is at right now. I think I do everything pretty well.

SLAM: You have your Draft Day suit picked out, maybe a Stanford Cardinal-red tie?

LF: [Laughs] If I make it to the Green Room, I'll go with something nice. We'll see, I haven't picked it out yet.

SLAM: Do you have any Draft Day plans if you're not in New York City for the event?

LF: Not yet. I'm waiting until it gets closer and I have a better idea of what's going to happen so that I can plan accordingly. I'm not trying to jump the gun on anything [laughs].

SLAM: Are you going to get your degree in Communications?

LF: Yeah, I'll graduate in June.

SLAM: What does that mean to you, to be able to complete school which is something that not a lot of student-athletes in certain sports can say?

LF: It's great to me. Being able to pursue my hoop dreams and have a degree to back me is something I've always dreamed of. Especially to have a degree from Stanford to fall back on. It's been great. Having to work all those summers in summer school was hard but now it's paying off, so I'm glad I did it. It's been good for me.

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