

UNIBE Sit-Down Interview With Nitin Dhiman

1. When did you first start to play basketball?

I first started playing basketball at 13 years old. Before that I was really into baseball, but somehow basketball caught my attention right before I started the eighth grade and never looked back.

2. Tell us about your experience with UNIBE Basketball?

I remember I visited the school the summer before I started the fall semester, and the athletic director told me that the basketball program was new and that they were looking to hire a new basketball coach because UNIBE had some good international recruits. That fall, we had developed good team chemistry but just came up short in the games, and ended the season 8-18. That summer we all worked on our games and got better as a team which translated to a 16-8 record the next season. We started to gain respect from the other universities that had dominated UNIBE in years past. From them on we bonded tightly and came together as a team permanently, and we won two tournaments including the Caribbean University Games. After my first year, we always had finished with a winning record, and became a championship contending team.



Dhiman at the free throw line during training camp with IGK in the Superior League of the Dominican Republic

3. What is your best memory from UNIBE? About 50 people showed up to our first game in 1999 and in 2002 we played in front of a jammed – packed Olympic Center of 12,000 against University of Santo Domingo in the national tournament. What stood out was that we were down the entire game, but we just kept clawing our way back into the game. Everybody was playing well, Pedro was a beast on the

Dhiman enjoying a laugh with 2003 USA Men's Basketball Pan American Games and Michigan State head coach, Tom Izzo. The Games took place from August 2, 2003 to August 6, 2003 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.



glass, Robert was single-headedly breaking their press, and nobody could stop Shannon from getting to the rim. The only lead we had was when I hit a three pointer in the corner at the buzzer to win the game. After the ball went through, the arena just got silent, to the point you could hear a pin drop. Personally, that game got the attention of some professional teams and some months later I was invited to play on a select team to compete in two exhibition games against the National teams of the Dominican Republic and Uruguay in preparation of the 2003 Pan American Games.

4. What are the strong points to your game?

Shooting and Scoring. Plus I think I am the most competitive person I know. So when I am on the floor, nothing matters except doing whatever it takes to win the game.

5. You came from a good prep background and played against some tough competition while you were young. But who is the toughest player you went up against?

I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri and went to high school with JaRon (UCLA) and Kareem Rush (Los Angeles Laker). JaRon was probably the best talent I had ever seen. I mean he was talented and skilled like LeBron or Kobe, but some personal issues held him back. Kareem was a great shooter, you couldn't give him any space and if I overplayed him, he was athletic enough to go right by you and finished at the rim. Those guys taught me how to play. When Corey Maggette joined our AAU team, he too was one of the top players in the country. He was tough to guard because he was super athletic and strong.

In the Dominican Republic, I had played against Jack Michael Martinez who was the county's most dominant post player. But Francisco Garcia was the toughest to guard and go up against. He was quick, tall, and had long arms so it was tough to get a shot off against him. Offensively, he could score from

outside as well as put the ball on the floor. It's no surprise to me that he had such a successful NBA career.

6. Where have you played after UNIBE?

Well during UNIBE, I accepted an invitation to play the final few games with Villa Francisca. But in 2004, I signed my first contract with IGK in the Dominican Republic. In 2006, I played in the ABA with San Diego Wildcats, and later that year, I went back to IGK and was named to the All-League second team. I also played with BTG Express at the Southern California Summer Pro League in 2005, 2007 and 2012.

7. Are you still involved with the game?

Absolutely. In 2013, I was invited to go on a Pro Exhibition Tour to Puerto Rico with Sports ministry, Athletes in Action. In 2014, 2015, I played with Brooklyn Select at the Nike Pro City Summer League in New York.

8. What are your currently doing now?

I live with my wife and am I am a practicing Internal Medicine physician in New York. We thoroughly enjoy our life but thoroughly dislike the cold.

9. Do you still keep up with UNIBE and the Dominican Republic?

Honestly, I have not been back to the D.R. since my last game in 2006. However, I am in preliminary talks with the university and administration on advising to current students about medicine residencies and life after UNIBE.