

SPORTS



FRANCO MILLER JR.

“Over the next few days, after conversations with family members, mentors and perhaps an agent, Miller Jr. might well opt for a university other than Mississippi. However, Ole Miss seems to fit the bill. At Ole Miss, Miller Jr. will not have the pressure of going into a program that is on top. The expectations this coming season at Ole Miss will be modest, although there will understandably be high hopes for the Rebels to have some glorious moments once again.”

Ole Miss looks to be likely choice for Franco Miller

Next Thursday, young Franco Miller Jr., who recently was the toast of Crestwood Preparatory College in Ontario, Canada, will announce the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I institution of his choice.

Miller Jr. has been highly touted for several years now and seems to be the real deal on a basketball court. Apparently there is great interest in the basketball skills of Miller Jr. According to reports, the University of Minnesota, the University of Oklahoma, the University of Oregon and the University of Mississippi are strongly in the running.

Inside sources have informed that Minnesota, Oklahoma and Mississippi are at the top of Miller's list. If he goes to Min-

nesota and becomes a Gopher, he would become linked with legendary collegiate performers and fellow Bahamians Mychal “Bells” Thompson and Osborne “Goose” Lockhart.

Thompson was the No.1 NBA draftee in 1978. He went on to have a 12-year-career in the NBA, and captured two championships with the Los Angeles Lakers. Lockhart went on after his days at Minnesota, to have a distinguished career with the Globetrotters.

Oklahoma of course, is the campus where Buddy Hield became a national star before moving on to the NBA two years ago. I've been told that Miller, while acknowledging the merit of attending any of the two (Minnesota and Oklaho-

SPORTS SCOPE

BY FRED STURRUP



ma), wants to go where he will be a Bahamian pioneer collegiate player.

The University of Mississippi seems likely.

Over the next few days, after conversations with family members, mentors and perhaps an agent, Miller Jr. might well opt for a university other than

Mississippi. However, Ole Miss seems to fit the bill. At Ole Miss, Miller Jr. will not have the pressure of going into a program that is on top. The expectations this coming season at Ole Miss will be modest, although there will understandably be high hopes for the Rebels to have some glorious moments once again.

It's a building program, Ole Miss having won just five conference (SEC) games last season and finishing 12-20, overall.

Miller Jr., would, I believe, fit right in at Ole Miss. However, whatever choice is made, Miller Jr. is talented enough to do well. Judging by the comments of his father Franco Miller Sr., in a *Freeport News* report, the youngster is no stranger to making adjustments.

“I am very proud. Going off to Canada. He had to go up there alone and put himself out there. I can honestly say he did an awesome job. What he did in one year, I'm still in shock, because I can't believe he accomplished so much in one year,” Miller Sr. was quoted.

Miller Jr. starred at Crestwood, and was invited to the Allen Iverson Round Ball Classic.

Whether he ends up at Ole Miss or one of the other options, Miller Jr. should be just fine.

Go Franco!

• To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturup at sturup1504@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at 727-6363.

Potential for expansion shown during Darrell Sears Showcase

SHAYNE STUBBS
FN Sports Reporter
shayne@nasguard.com

The 2018 Darrell Sears Showcase still did the job it set out to do, which is to give athletes an opportunity to further their development and education abroad.

During the three-day event, April 27-29, two athletes received official offers with the potential of more offers pending. Troy Trembley and Nathaniel Bastian received offers, while a host of other athletes received interest from colleges and high schools.

The Freeport News spoke with Sears at the conclusion of the Showcase, April 29, to discuss some of the highlights and lowlights from the weekend long exhibition in front of a handful of coaches from the United States.

While the Showcase has been a staple in rewarding the most talented basketball players scholarships over the years, Sears noted that an expansion could be on the horizon, based on a few observations from the visiting coaches.

“The Showcase started off a little rocky, but as always the coaches enjoyed it,” Sears noted. “Like I said, we had two official offers yesterday (April 28). We had a lot of kids get opportunities to even look at playing football now.”

“So we're branching off. The Showcase could be moving into some football to try and give kids a better opportunity.”

Most high school players fall under the “under sized” category at certain positions, in particular, power forward and center. Sears elaborated that their development at that position on the next level may not carry over.



SHOWCASE EVOLVING - The 2018 Darrell Sears Basketball Showcase was in full swing this past weekend at the St. George's Gymnasium. 79 players were on full display in front of a number of coaches out of the United States. Pictured above, the athletes participated in a passing and shoot clinic during Saturday's action at the St. George's Gymnasium. (PHOTO: SHAYNE STUBBS)

“We have a lot of kids who are undersized. Here, they could be 6 foot four inches (6'4”) and play power forward: they may not progress to be a guard (in college), because the skill set is not there. But they can go and play football, because they are so athletic and can get a scholarship in football.”

“So we're branching off and we're going to start with girls

again next year, boys and then football.”

The Showcase also featured players from Grades 7-9. While Sears spoke with the coaches as the Showcase went on, there was a healthy buzz that surrounded the junior athletes.

“The younger group is what the coaches were excited about. That's why we wanted them to come in so we could make those

coaches come back. You had so many of these kids who are younger; even someone who is out of school, never played high school, picked up and offered a scholarship.

“This is a kid who is playing night league, we decided at the last minute to give him a chance because that's what the Showcase is about, giving them an opportunity.”

In the past, Sears discussed with the elevation in coaching on the island and around the country, the style of play by players has seen an uptick (improvement). Now that the junior players were raved about by the visiting coaches, Sears said, it continued to prove that point true.

“We have some of the most naturally gifted players in the world. I've said the coaching

has gotten better over the years; I've seen it. The coaches are getting better so they're teaching their kids better. So the skill set is starting to get better. But what we're excited about is that it will bring these coaches back to see just how much they have improved since then.

“The more coaches we can get in the better it is for our programme and our kids.”