

## SPORTS

# Hield in group of favorite young players in the NBA

## Bahamian picked for Skills Challenge Contest and Rising Stars competition



BUDDY HIELD

Second-year NBA player Buddy Hield is not putting up startling numbers, but he has the kind of pure presence that is attractive. Certainly, the NBA has him classified as one of the prime young faces of the world's most established, competitive and revered basketball organization.

Although he was not an initial selection for the Skills Challenge attraction during All-Star Weekend (February 16-18) at the Verizon Up Arena in Los Angeles, when the first opportunity came, the NBA pointed to the Bahamian shooting guard. Donovan Mitchell of the Utah Jazz replaced Aaron Gordon in the Slam Dunk Contest and Hield filled his (Donovan's) Skills Challenge slot.

So, along with being in the Skills Challenge field, Hield will also be showcased in the Rising Stars event.

Hield is one of the few bright spots on a lowly Sacramento Kings team. He is averaging 12.5 points per game and scoring at a solid 44 percent from the field and a really fine 43 percent from beyond the arch in three-point territory. The Grand

Bahama native is rebounding at a 3.5 clip and dishing out 1.6 assists per game.

With those figures, he is not lighting up his opponents in the NBA, but it proves he definitely belongs at the highest level of the game and he seems poised to become a star. The NBA folks believe this as well. Hield has the kind of charisma the NBA wants for its branding. He is seen as a clean-living representative of the game, focused primarily on improving his craft.

The All-Star Weekend will be an ideal opportunity for him to heighten his market value. If he leads his Rising Stars' foreign colleagues to victory and captures the skills challenge, Hield will bring much more attention his way. If he simply performs well in both instances, there still would be dividends.

The NBA likes him but there is the expectation for him to rise to stardom, in order to enhance the relationship.

How far away is Hield from stardom?

The New Orleans Pelicans who drafted Hield at the No. 6 overall selection traded him to the Kings last season. He

showed a lot of promise during the latter part of the season with the Kings and his supporters looked forward to a continuance this season.

He has dropped a bit in scoring and the Kings are in the door mat section of the NBA West, sitting in 14th position with only 17 wins against 36 defeats, (as of Tuesday night). Only the Dallas Mavericks had more defeats, one more while with the same amount of wins.

I don't know that Sacramento is a good fit for Hield. The team needs to make some major adjustments and determine whether to leave Hield as a starter or let him settle in, on coming off the bench.

Perhaps another trade is in the near future. If he finds his niche, Hield would be an NBA star for sure.

For now though, he is playing steady ball and his attitude is just great.

Best wishes to him for a quality All-Star weekend.

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## SPORTS SCOPE

By Fred Sturup



TIME FOR CHANGE — Pictured is the high jump bed currently used for practices at the Grand Bahama Sports Complex. Illustrated are the erected makeshift beams and pole laying on the ground used by high jumpers during practices in the afternoon. (PHOTO: SHAYNE STUBBS)

## Local parent laments condition of high jump bed at Complex

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It has been said for some time now that there has been a lack of attention, in certain areas, with regards to the Grand Bahama Sports Complex.

While the government and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture has done its best to accommodate and ratify any concerns the public has lamented in the past, some persons still feel more can be done to enhance the local sporting facility.

The Freeport News was contacted by a deeply concerned father last week. Louis Missick, father of National Un-

der 17 High Jump champion and record holder Tyler Missick, was the latest to express his outrage at some of the conditions at the Complex.

In particular, the father of the Tabernacle Falcons' jumper is not pleased with the condition of the high jump bed that his son and other athletes, must use in their daily practices.

"It is a health risk and it's just not safe.

Psychologically it impairs his ability, because he knows when he lands, the microscopic fibers are going to go up over his head and into his nostrils. Inhaling it becomes a high possibility of contamination," Missick expressed.

Upon the illustration of landing on the bed and seeing the particles disperse as a result, Missick does not feel this is something his son, a National High

Jump champion, or any athlete here on Grand Bahama must have to settle with.

It was also Missick's belief that the current beds at the Complex were "reject" beds sent from New Providence.

"I've brought it to the attention of the powers that be. They've said the matter has been fixed, but they sent another reject bed. This is the one they sent from

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