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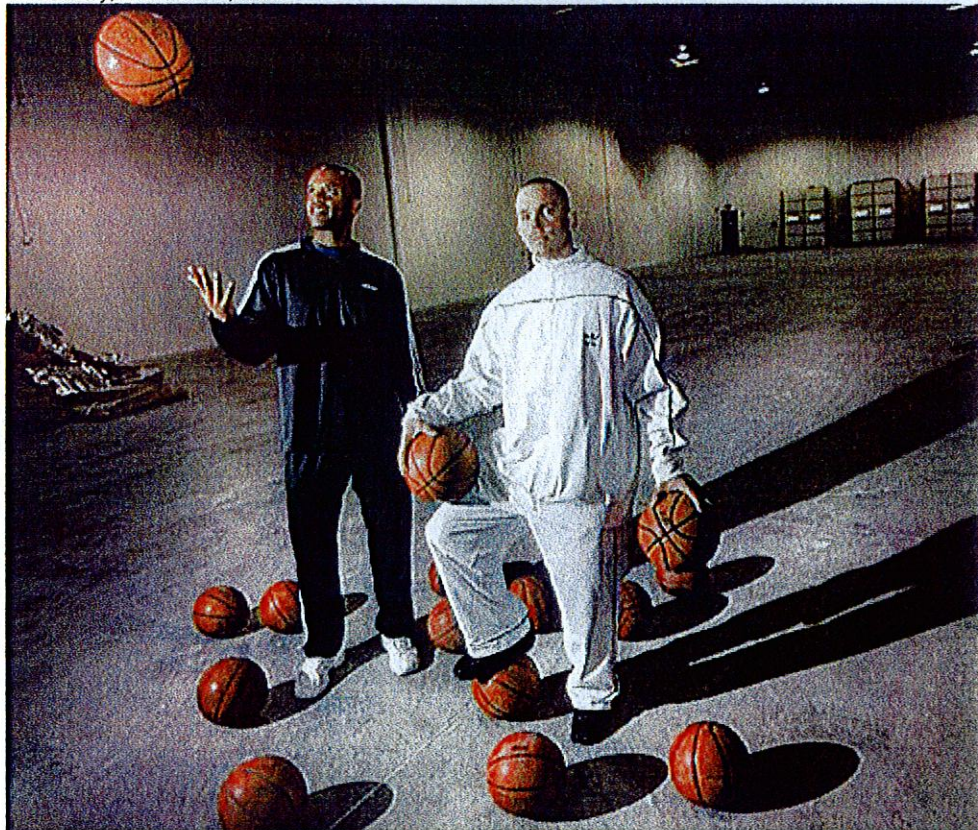
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Wednesday, November 9, 2005



Max Ortiz / The Detroit News

Basketball Planet executives Will Vance (left), and Jamey Petree check progress on construction at the Canton Township location.

Local spotlight

Upscale Canton hoops facility hopes to score

Basketball Planet caters to roundball crowd; opening is expected in 2006.

By Neal Haldane / Special To The Detroit News

CANTON TOWNSHIP -- Michael Cenit hopes to make some hoop dreams come true. The manufacturer's representative has lined up about \$500,000 in financing to open the Basketball Planet, an upscale facility dedicated to everything roundball.

The 47,600-square-foot facility under construction in a former Circuit City repair building will feature four NCAA-sized courts,

Basketball Planet

- **Where:** 7177 N. Haggerty Road, Canton Township.
- **Expected debut:** February.
- **Size:** 47,000 square feet.
- **Features:** four NCAA-sized courts, training facilities, coffee shop, luxury lounge.

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two training courts and even a toddler court to lure members.

"Think very ultra-high scale," Cenit said. "We'll have leather furniture, a luxury lounge. It's like Lifetime, but only for basketball."

Memberships will cost \$40 a month and participants will be able to find pick-up games mornings, afternoons and evenings, said Cenit, who expects to enroll 3,000 diehard hoopsters. One of them could be Mike Lank of Livonia.

"I'd be willing to pay \$40 a month if I'm guaranteed of getting in two or three games a night a few times a week," said Lank, who coaches his daughter's YMCA team.

His only concern would be the time between games.

"Hopefully, he can keep the waiting time down," he said. "I wouldn't want to wait an hour to play a game."

Health club membership continues to grow with 41.3 million Americans signed up in 2004, up from 32.8 million in 2000, according to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association.

Another 25.5 million nonmembers used health clubs last year by paying a daily fee or gaining access through a hotel or other connection.

However, the number of people playing basketball dropped to 34.2 million last year, from 35.4 million in 2003, according to SGMA.

Detroit offers a good market for basketball with a network of pick-up games in the city and suburbs, said Michael Dietz, president of Dietz Trott Sports and Entertainment in Bingham Farms.

A facility could draw players from a 10-mile radius for pick-up games, Dietz said. But the Basketball Planet may have to broaden its athletic reach to retain members and draw new participants, he said.

"The Joe Dumars' Fieldhouse started primarily as a basketball facility and has added in-line roller hockey, gymnastics, workout space and volleyball," he said.

But Cenit believes a basketball-only concept will work and he expects annual revenues to reach between \$3 million and \$4 million with memberships, drop-in visitors at \$7 a day, basketball workshops, team training sessions and apparel and food sales.

The Canton facility is expected to debut in time for Super Bowl XL in early February.

Neal Haldane is a Metro Detroit freelance writer.

Membership dues: \$40 a month.

• **Information:**

www.thebasketballplanet.com

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