

McCormick, Dietz bringing inaugural Elite 25 camp to UD-Mercy

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DETROIT — The inaugural Michigan Elite 25 program, an expansive series of prestigious high school basketball and life-skills training camps and clinics, will tip-off Tuesday with the Michigan Elite 25 Coaches Academy at the University of Detroit-Mercy's Calihan Hall.

Free of charge and open to the general public, the academy will run from 6 to 10 p.m. and feature talks from both Michigan State head coach Tom Izzo and Michigan head coach John Beilein, as well as other Division I men's college coaches from within the state, such as U-D Mercy's Ray McCallum Sr., Oakland University's Greg Kampe, Central Michigan's Keno Davis and Western Michigan's Steve Hawkins.

Tuesday's slate of events is a precursor to the first-annual Michigan Elite 25 Showcase Camp on Aug. 17 and 18 at Detroit Cass Tech, where the top 25 players from each class in the state (grades 9-12) have been invited to participate.

Parents are encouraged to attend the coaching academy Tuesday night, as some of the topics set to be addressed relate directly to player-parent relationships. Unfortunately, players themselves will not be allowed to attend, due to NCAA recruiting restrictions.

The Michigan Elite 25, which will consist of three separate two-day camp sessions and one coaching academy each year, was created by childhood friends and Oakland County residents Tim McCormick and Mike Dietz.

McCormick was a terror in the post as high school and college player, prepping at Clarkston and then starring in the Big 10 at Michigan. Drafted in the first round of the 1984 NBA Draft, he logged eight years in the league as a hard-working center (8 points, 5 rebounds career average), earning a reputation as a true gentleman of the game.

Currently a well-respected television and radio sports broadcast-analyst and a motivational speaker, McCormick has stayed active with the NBA Players' Association since his retirement in the early 1990s. In that capacity, exactly 20 years ago this summer he helped create the NBPA's Top 100 Classic, an annual gathering of the nation's best 100 college recruits for a week of training and learning and the model for the Elite 25.

Dietz starred in high school on the hardwood at Birmingham Brother Rice and then played in college at Western Michigan. His sports marketing, management and entertainment firm out of Farmington Hills (Dietz Trott), is the Elite 25's official sponsor.

The coaching academy is integral when it comes to promoting the ultimate goal of the Elite 25, being the continual pursuit of knowledge on and off the court, according to McCormick

“A lot of what we’re going to be stressing with the players, starts with the coaches,” McCormick said. “This academy just has a wealth of information to share. There are so many great coaches on hand to give presentations and they all have a unique angle to teach. The idea is to develop these young men as players and people. I know it will be a very fulfilling experience for everyone that gets the chance to be a part of it, coaches and parents, both.”

The Rochester College men’s squad, the defending USCCA National Champions, will be there Tuesday to help speakers with their demonstrations.

The presentation topics that will be discussed Tuesday are building college-ready student athletes, player and team skill development, offensive and defensive coaching-principles, tips on how to increase a youngster’s college recruiting profile, the benefits of social networking, creating a winning culture within a team and general parental concerns and advice.

Although there is no fee to attend, donations for the Gleaners Food Bank, will be taken at the door.