

US basketball legend is nurturing Indian talent

Basketball legend Dominique Wilkins has a good news for India when he visits the country next week. The player is nurturing an Indian talent at his New York home who he feels has the potential to make it big in future.

Wilkins' sister Wander Ousley and her husband John adopted an Indian child, Ramesh, four years back and the player says the child is already hooked to basketball.

'My sister adopted a child from Delhi four years back and he is very excited about basketball. Ramesh has picked up the sport well seeing me and others play here. He is the only Indian basketball player I know and he is very talented,' Wilkins said in a tele-conference from New York.

Wilkins, who will visit India next week as part of the National Basketball Association's (NBA) 'Basketball without Borders' programme, said there must be more talents like Ramesh in India, who could be game's future in the sport.

'Basketball is a game that is growing rapidly across the world. India has world's second largest middle-class population. We can bring sponsors and build strong relationship with India so that the game can grow there,' he said.

'You never know, you can find a diamond in the rock. I believe that great talents can be found anywhere across the world,' Wilkins said when asked about Chinese Yao Ming, who plays in NBA and is touted as a major find of basketball in Asia.

Wilkins said there is enough space for basketball in the cricket-mad country.

'I do not follow cricket but I know about the game. Basketball is growing rapidly around the world and we want to put a system in place in India. It will surely be taken up by youngsters.'

Wilkins, who played the game for 14 years and also made a return to the court in 1996-97 and led San Antonio Spurs in scoring with an 18.2 average as the age of 37. He left the NBA ranked seventh in the all-time scoring list and was voted into NBA Hall of Fame in 2006.

Wilkins recalled some of his cherished moments with rivals and legends Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson.

'They were fiercely competitive. I have a lot of good games against them. They were the most competitive players I have seen. We just wanted to win every game.'

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