

## Prep school tournament brings out elite players from around the province



The Athlete Institute Academy and a team from Alma, Quebec play in the first round at the Canadian Prep School championships. Photo by Brian Lockhart

By Brian Lockhart

If you're a person of around average height, you probably would have found yourself feeling rather short if you attended the Canadian Prep Championship held on the basketball court in the gym at ACTS Fitness recently.

Twelve high-level teams from around Ontario and one squad from Quebec turned out for the tournament representing different prep schools including the regionally focused team from the Athlete Institute Academy on Highway 9.

In total, around 150 basketball players took part in the event.

"We have teams from around Ontario and Quebec," said Jesse Tipping, director of athletics at ACTS.

"We have a lot of local players," he said of the ACTS team. "We play by FIBA International rules."

While it is somewhat of a stereotype to assume all good basketball players must be tall, the reality is most of these guys stood at least a head taller than the average person. But just being tall doesn't mean you have talent. These players have earned the right to be on their respective teams.

Just watching the pre-game workout was a display of some natural athletic ability.

"I've been playing for this team since September," said local high school athlete Marcus Jones, who has given up collegiate level basketball to play for the ACT team. "I was at basketball camp and was scouted out. It's my main sport now that I'm here."

The 18 year old is focused on the game and appreciates the high level of competition the prep schools bring to the sport.

"It's good competition, it's a physical game," he said. "I'm hoping to be on the team to win the national championship."

The ACTS squad's first game was up against a team from Alma, Quebec.

While basketball, at least at the pro level, is a sport known for its fair share of show-boating, this tournament didn't disappoint those fans who love to see a full-on layout and dunk completed by athletes that are tops in their sport.

The tournament was held over two days - March 23 and 24.

In the final result the Alma, Quebec team left with an 85-81 win over Bill Crothers School from Markham, to claim the championship.

The Athlete Institute Academy lost in the semi-final round to the eventual champions from Quebec.