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Thames thinking Rebels

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Runnin' Rebel fans have witnessed head coach Lon Kruger's affinity for tough, athletic guards who will shoot (and defend) the three, play defense and get their teammates the ball. Another one could be on the horizon.

The UNLV staff already landed one such recruit for the 2009 recruiting class in do-it-all guard Justin Hawkins from Taft high school. While Hawkins appears more suited for the two or three positions, his AAU teammate and Rivals three-star point guard Xavier Thames considers himself a true point man.

"I would definitely say I am a true point guard," Thames said recently. "Don't get me wrong, I can score also but I love running the team. I also feel I can cause a lot of problems for opposing guards on defense because I love to play defense and my size (6-3 180 pounds) helps me against some other point guards."

This past season Thames averaged 23.7 points, 6.0 rebounds, 4.2 assists and 2.3 steals while shooting a stellar 44% from behind the 3-point line, and some of the nation's better programs have taken notice.

Thames stated, "I have offers from UNLV, Iowa State, SDSU, St Mary's and Santa Clara. I am also getting heavily recruited by Washington State and Cal-Berkley.

"Right now, I would say that UNLV, ISU and WSU are my leaders. I really like coach Kruger and coach Gensing because they are both recruiting me pretty hard. I haven't talked to them recently but they are on me."

While Thames has not taken any official visits he has seen the UNLV campus on an unofficial visit and came away impressed.

"I was at UNLV for the Fresno State game this year and I liked it a lot. I definitely plan to come back for an official visit. I just finished my season so I am not in a huge hurry to commit. I just need to learn more about the schools recruiting me."

As mentioned, Thames teams in the backcourt with Hawkins during the AAU season. Does Xavier see that combo working at the college level?

"I think that would be real cool. Justin and I play well together so it could definitely work. I haven't talked to him since he committed to UNLV but we are roommates on the road so we will have a lot of time together."