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Cougs offer rising point guard



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OFFSEASON TOURNAMENTS are huge in basketball recruiting. A point guard out of Elk Grove, Calif., had already caught the eye of the Cougar staff previously but after tournaments the past few weeks in Houston and Las Vegas and seeing him go against highly rated competition, Washington State has offered.

EARNs WSU OFFER

Less than three weeks ago, [Xavier Thames](#) told CF.C that Washington State had told him they wanted to see him play against top flight competition before deciding if they would offer.

Consider his performances in Houston and Vegas a success.

Thames and his dad both talked to Tony Bennett on the phone when the offer was made.

"I talked with the (WSU) coach after the Vegas tournament and they offered so it went pretty well," said Thames. "My coach told me he would probably offer me after Houston but he wanted to wait and talk to me. So I wasn't really surprised but I was kind of excited about it.

"He talked about how I can help the program and we talked about if I could probably come in and play right away, not start, but just play a lot and help the team. He talked about pushing me really hard and making me a good player. It was a good conversation."

THAMES AVERAGED 23.7 ppg and 4.3 assists this past season. He also racked up 61 steals over his junior year. But in college basketball recruiting, it is the AAU tournaments that are the catalyst.

Other schools are suddenly showing heightened interest following the tourney play of the last few weeks, and Thames said his plans for making a verbal commitment has changed. He had previously been pointing towards a mid-May verbal.

None in the new group of suitors -- Marquette, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Gonzaga -- have offered, but Thames said Marquette and Oklahoma have shown indications that they could be close.

"Those three (MU, UT, UO) play in a big conference and play on national TV almost every day. I like those three, and I like Gonzaga too," said Thames. "WSU is in my top still but with Marquette, Tennessee and Oklahoma coming in asking, I'm going to push it back, probably until June or so, to take a look at these schools."

Intriguing to Thames in the group, he said, is the style of play.

"They get up and down and that's what I want to play for, a team that plays up and down and has a good coaching staff," said Thames.

Thames now holds four offers -- Washington State, UNLV, San Diego State and Iowa State.

Thames took last weekend off from the AAU circuit to take his SATs.

"It went pretty good, I think I did really good, I hope so," said Thames.

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