



AIA FEATURE STORY By: Don Ketchum

PINNACLE'S NUNO MUANDUMBA A SUCCESS ON AND OFF THE BASKETBALL FLOOR

PHOENIX, AZ (December 22, 2008) – Nuno Muandumba is a great Angolan success story.

He is a great American success story.

He is a great success story, no matter how you look at it.

The 5-foot-11 senior at Phoenix Pinnacle has developed into one of the state's top point guards, and is one of the reasons that Pinnacle is a strong contender for the Class 5A Division II boys basketball championship.

Muandumba came to Arizona at age 6 from civil war-stricken Angola, with his mother, three older brothers and a younger sister. His father remained in Angola, working for the government as a youth sports minister. His mother returned to Angola a few years ago.

"It was very hard to see my mother go back because we are a close family, but we help each other," Nuno said. "We are together all the time, watching TV, going to movies, eating dinner."

The children communicate with their parents two or three times a week, Nuno said, and their father is due to fly to Phoenix for a reunion this week.

Nuno played soccer in his birth country, but not long after coming to America, developed an interest in basketball. He has continued to improve since, to the point where he recently signed a letter of intent to play for Lamar University, just outside of Houston.

He showed rare maturity for a freshman when he joined the basketball program at Pinnacle.

Coach Charlie Wilde gave Nuno a chance after another guard injured his knee, and took off from there.

"He used his quickness to do everything," Wilde said. "He can take people off the dribble, gets people involved on offense, and really has improved on defense, much better than people expected."

Pinnacle won seven of its first 10 games and heads into a tournament hosted by Mesa Mountain View later this week with Nuno averaging 18.4 points, 6.5 assists, 4.3 rebounds and 2.9 steals. He also has become a force as a three-point shooter, having made 15 compared to just three all last season.

"He has gone through a lot in his life," Wilde said. "He is with his brothers and sister, but he does a lot by himself.

"He has really become a leader. Even as a sophomore, he talked to a senior-dominated team and told them the way it was going to be. He understands what it takes to be successful. Earlier this year, when the freshmen were ready to play their first game, he went down there and told them what it takes to be an important part of the program. He just took it upon himself."

Nuno doesn't see himself leaving basketball behind any time soon.

“It is so exciting. Every game is different. You never know what is going to happen,” he said.

“I like playing the point. We watch a lot of tape to see what the other team is going to do. I like to make it happen, like to create things.”

He is looking forward to playing at Lamar.

“I like the area (Houston). They give a lot of support there to basketball and the school. I think it is the right fit for me,” he said.

Just as Pinnacle has been the right fit for him the last four years.

Have a Story Idea:

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