

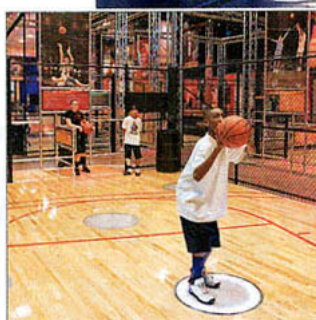


A Moving Experience

Fans can work up a sweat at the new college hoops Hall

I THOUGHT I was going to a museum, so I wore street shoes to the recently opened College Basketball Experience and National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame in Kansas City, Mo. It was a rookie mistake. If I had worn my old Pro Keds, I could have practiced my sky hook or taken my Bob Pettit-style long-range jumper to the 3-on-3 challenge court. Instead I had to settle for a shuffle through a facility echoing with the thud of basketballs and the squeaking of sneakers. Expecting MoMA, I got basketball camp.

"You don't work up a sweat in a museum," said Dick Reinwald, a gray-haired contractor from Bonner Springs, Kans. Reinwald was perspiring because he'd just lost a center-court game of H-O-R-S-E to his 10-year-old grandson, Spencer Mustoe. Not far away, a teenage girl tried to shoot free throws against a video backdrop of howling, arm-waving Cameron crazies. In another cage two car-salesman types



TWO-FER The hoops Experience mixes interaction with a reverential hall of honor.

took turns driving to randomly illuminated disks for buzzer-beater jump shots. (Knock down the shot and an unseen crowd roars.)

It's all part of the College Basketball Experience, a \$20 million, 41,500-square-foot annex to the Sprint Center, Kansas City's new downtown arena. Unlike

traditional sports shrines, where visitors silently tiptoe around glass cases containing faded jerseys, the Experience offers full sensory immersion. Bobby Knight screams at you; the floor shakes from the foot-stomping of thousands of Bruins fans; the cheerleaders from a dozen schools shake tambourines and do backflips. Push a button on a kiosk and a determined Mike Krzyzewski shouts, "We are three stops away from getting back in this game!"

The mood changes when you get to the actual Hall of Fame. A long dark room lined with glowing glass plaques, the Hall is space-age serene. The names of the inductees are etched on frosted glass: Wilton N. Chamberlain . . . Peter "Pistol Pete" Maravich . . . Willis F. Reed . . . Norman E. Stewart. It's as solemn as a war memorial.

The contrast may be jarring, but I'm guessing that the College Basketball Experience, which is run by the National Association of Basketball Coaches, will be a hit. I just hope the curators will follow the example of bowling alleys and offer shoe rentals.

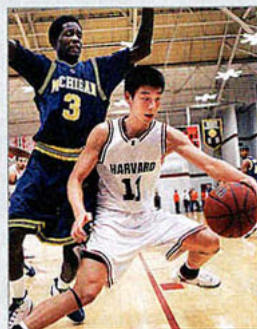
I'm a 13.

—John Garrity

Turning the Crimson Tide

IT WAS almost as rare a sight in Cambridge, Mass., as a pro-Bush rally: a sellout crowd (of 2,050) rushing the court at Harvard's Lavietes Pavilion after a basketball win. "It's amazing," forward Evan Harris said after the 4-4 Crimson upset Michigan 62-51 last Saturday. "We were joking in the locker room that this win will increase our fan base threefold." The victory was especially sweet for Harvard coach Tommy Amaker, who was fired last March after six years at Michigan. Amaker, 42, a former Duke guard, was pilloried in Ann Arbor for failing to reach the NCAA tournament. But at Harvard—the school hasn't been to the tournament in 61 years,

HARVARD EDUCATION Amaker (far right) energized guard Jeremy Lin and his teammates.



the NCAA's longest drought—Amaker has already invigorated the program.

Amaker says he came to Harvard—here, athletic budgets are small and sports scholarships are prohibited—because he likes what he calls the school's "brand," the combination of educational and postgrad employment opportunities for players. (His wife, Dr. Stephanie Pinder-Amaker, a clinical psychologist and former associate dean at Michigan, is expected to join the Harvard faculty.) That sales pitch and Amaker's status—he's easily the biggest name in Ivy League hoops—have sparked a recruiting surge. Amaker's 2008 recruiting class is rated among the top 30 in Division I. (Among the six players is coveted 6' 10" Arlington, Va., center Frank Ben-Eze.) "I think [beating Michigan] was significant," Amaker says. "You hope to get some momentum, and now we're going to try and use it." —Pablo S. Torre

