

## **Bellingham Slam announce change in league affiliation**

### **Slam withdraw from ABA, join International Basketball League**

**BELLINGHAM, Wash.** – The Bellingham Slam have announced that the team has withdrawn its affiliation with the American Basketball Association and has received approval to join the International Basketball League, effective immediately. The Slam originally joined the ABA as an expansion team in the fall of 2005, playing two seasons in the league. The team reached the quarterfinals of the ABA Playoffs both seasons.

While both leagues feature similar professional caliber players, the most significant change for the Slam will be the timing of the team's season. The IBL is a spring league, with its season running from mid-March to early July. By contrast, the ABA plays a more traditional season from November to March. The IBL's season is also considerably shorter, with 20 regular season games scheduled compared to the ABA's 36 game schedule.

Bellingham is the eighth team in the last three seasons to withdraw from the ABA in order to compete in a different league, but the first to make the switch to the IBL. Four teams left this spring to join the upstart Premier Basketball League, while two teams withdrew in 2006 to join the Continental Basketball Association and one team departed for the National Basketball Developmental League.

The most exciting aspect of the change to the IBL is that it will allow the Slam to develop regional rivalries with nearby teams. In contrast to the ABA, in which there was only one other team located in the Pacific Northwest, there are nine other teams in Washington and Oregon, including teams in Everett, Seattle, and Tacoma.

The addition of the Bellingham franchise will increase the total number of teams in the IBL to 25. The IBL was started in 2005 with 17 teams and has seen steady growth in each of its first three seasons. The league boasts a fast-paced style of play, with a 22-second shot clock, a "quick throw-in" rule for inbounds passes, and a limitation of only one time-out per quarter.

While the Slam will be facing new opponents for the 2008 season, the team will have at least one familiar face on the bench as head coach Rob Ridnour will return to lead the team in the IBL. Ridnour has compiled a 43-26 record in two seasons with the Slam, and helped guide the team to first place in the ABA's Western Conference during the 2006-07 regular season.

The Slam expect to receive their 2008 IBL schedule from the league this fall.

For more information on the Bellingham Slam, please call the team at (360) 734-SLAM or visit their website at [www.bellinghamslam.com](http://www.bellinghamslam.com). Additional information on the International Basketball League can be found on their website at [www.iblhoopsonline.com](http://www.iblhoopsonline.com).