

# Explosion rocks Mountaineers

**Six of the 15 players on the Everett Explosion's roster played for the IBL's Seattle Mountaineers last season.**

*By Scott M. Johnson  
Herald Writer*

---

As another International Basketball League season creeps up on him, Seattle Mountaineers owner/general manager/coach Don Sims looks at his roster and sees a lot of fresh faces.

His leading scorer is gone. So is his most recognizable player. An important big man and three others also have moved on, leaving Sims with a young roster filled with unproven talent.

For this, Sims has every reason in the world to be mad at the Everett Explosion, an IBL expansion team that raided him of almost half his players.

But Sims isn't angry at all.

"That's just the way things happen," Sims said in a telephone interview amid preparations for another season with the overhauled Mountaineers.

While Sims scoffs at the notion of hurt feelings between franchises, Explosion general manager Nathan Mumm is more forthright.

"There's been some light friction between the Seattle organization and the Everett organization," said Mumm, who was an assistant coach under Sims in Seattle last season before purchasing the rights to a franchise in Snohomish County. "But you expect that to happen with the proximity of the two teams and the recruiting that goes on."

Rashaad Powell, who was the leading scorer for Seattle's second-place IBL team last season, is now playing for Everett. So is University of Washington product Donald Watts, one of the league's few household names - at least in this part of the country.

Another probable starter in Seattle, forward A.J. Stallworth, is also on the Explosion's roster, along with ex-Mountaineers Justin Murray, Antwon Jones and Justin Vandenbosch. That's six of the 15 players currently on Everett's roster.

Sims, who compared his franchise to a "non-profit" company in that the only compensation players receive is gas and food money, simply shrugs it all off.

"It's just a situation where Everett was able to give them higher compensation," Sims said, using Washington State's basketball program as another metaphor because that program does not have the amenities of some of the other Pac-10 schools. "And the way our schedule works, with 22 of our 25 games on the road, it doesn't accommodate some of the local guys because they have full-time jobs."

Both Mumm and Powell said that the player's salary is not that different than it was last season in Seattle.

Powell has nothing against Sims or the Mountaineers - "He gave me an opportunity, and that's something I'll never forget," he said - but he added that "there's a little tension" between the organizations.

Explosion coach Randy Redwine, who also worked under Sims in Seattle last season, said the Powell signing didn't seem to go over well with the Mountaineers, adding: "But there wasn't any nastiness."

Powell said his decision to sign with Everett was not entirely a financial one, saying that the opportunity to help start a franchise and play in a larger arena were a big part of the draw. Mumm had several offseason discussions with him, during which he sold Powell on the Explosion.

Mumm said that any tension could make for a memorable rivalry.

"I think there will be a lot of intensity when we tip it off (at the end of April in Seattle and again) on May 1 at the Events Center," Mumm said. "I just hope our guys and their guys can ride that emotion but still be able to settle down and play basketball.

"It'll definitely be an emotional game. ... They're going to make sure they can win by as many points as possible, and Randy (Redwine) will be doing everything in his power to do the same."

Sims, the coach of the overhauled Mountaineers, isn't expecting anything all that special.

"It's just another game," he said. "We play one of the toughest schedules in the IBL.

"We respect Everett, and we certainly know all their players. But when it comes down to it, it'll just be another tough game for us."