



## Gary Steelheads courting 'Big Dog' for possible return

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PRO BASKETBALL

**GARY** | Don't tell Bulls skipper Jim Boylan about the stockpiling these Steelheads are doing or he might show up with a pen and a bundle of NBA contracts.

As the Steelheads prepare for their 2008 International Basketball League debut, new coach Rob Spon continues working the phones and using his many contacts to mold a championship-caliber team.

"We're loaded. I can't wait to get started," Spon said.

The Steelheads have been practicing for a couple weeks, handing out contracts like Halloween candy and getting commitments from talented players both locally and throughout the country.

There is an IBL Exposure Camp this weekend at the Gary Genesis Center, with most of those participants vying for jobs with other league teams in attendance.

Among those players already locked up by the Steelheads are Ron Howard (Valparaiso University), Hammond native DeAnthony Bowden (Creighton), Royce Parran (Chicago State) and Marlon London (DePaul). Also set to return are former Gary stars Rob Griffin, Gary's Akeem Clark, Marlowe Curry and Kankakee Valley grad Adam Schaper.

Spon's hit parade of talent continues with Benson Collier (Florida State), Thornridge grad Sam Mack, who played eight seasons in the NBA; Bishop Noll grad Keenan Browder, Lew Wallace products Terrence and Torrance Hayes, 2007 CBA scoring champion Shaun Fountain, and the 6-foot-11 threesome of Kenyon Gamble, Walt Waters and Aron Spears.

"I brought most of the guys in last year for the Steelheads," said Spon, who was Cliff Levingston's assistant. "We were very talented last year. I got a bunch of guys (coming in) who are still playing in the CBA and D-League or coming back from overseas.

"Collier hot rods and is a high flyer. He's from my area. LeBron (James) is 35 minutes from where I grew up near Akron. LeBron lost one game in high school (St. Vincent-St. Mary) and that was to Benson Collier's team. Benson dunked on him twice and blocked three of his shots."

Spon said he also contacted West Side grad and former Michigan Wolverine Chris Hunter, without any luck.

Though still a longshot, Steelheads fans may be in for a treat when league play begins March 20.

Former No. 1 NBA draft pick Glenn "Big Dog" Robinson, who hasn't played for three seasons but never officially announced his retirement, may be returning to his hometown.

"I'm not kidding," Spon said. "We'll see. If he's in shape, we're gonna sign him. Or outta shape, c'mon now, an NBA guy like that -- I'll take half of Glenn Robinson in shape.

"Big Dog don't need the money. He just wants to come out and play."

Maybe.