

## **Q&A with UAlbany basketball's David Nichols**

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**Q:** You a stubborn guy?

**A:** A little bit. But I've been working on it. Maybe I think I'm right too much, when I should listen.

**Q:** Is a lot of that because you are so competitive?

**A:** I always want to win, and I always want to do the right thing and make the right play. I have never liked to lose, ever since I started playing.

**Q:** You are from Chicago. How competitive is basketball there?

**A:** Very. Everyone is there looking for the best players. We had a good streak when I was in high school (Mount Carmel) where we had a couple guys in the top five nationally in back-to-back-to-back years. We have had a lot of top teams (in Chicago). You are playing against those guys night in and night out. Everyone wants to prove they are as good as a Jabari Parker (second pick in the 2014 NBA draft), who played at Simeon or a Jahlil Okafor (third pick in 2015) from the Whitney Young team.

**Q:** Ever play against any of those guys?

**A:** Yeah. I played against Jabari Parker my junior year in the playoffs. They eliminated us. I played against Jahlil Okafor in a summer league. Also played against Tyler Ulis (a guard for the Phoenix Suns, who went to Marian Catholic). I've played a lot of guys who are in Division I now.

**Q:** Best player you ever played against?

**A:** Jahlil Okafor was pretty good. Pretty unstoppable in high school. Best guard I played against ... we had open gyms and I was a freshman ... I played against Tracy Abrams (who also went to Mount Carmel), who is the starting point guard for Illinois right now. He was pretty unstoppable, maybe because I was a freshman and he was a senior. It might be different now.

**Q:** You would probably say playground basketball in Chicago is tougher than it is anywhere else.

**A:** Yeah. Maybe it's because when I go home this summer, I'll be playing with 10 or 15 guys who play Division I basketball. You can find guys everywhere. Every gym you go into.

**Q:** Is there a reason you wear the number (13) you wear?

**A:** It was one of the first numbers I had. I switched between 21 and 13. I wore 21 for my sister (Brittani). That is what she wore when she played at Yale. She was good. Good shooter. She is in California now. She writes for some TV shows. I wish I could remember the name of it.

**Q:** Is she going to get you a part?

**A:** Hopefully. When I'm done with basketball. (Laughs.)

**Q:** Describe your game.

**A:** I am a scoring point guard who can also facilitate and find open teammates when the defense adjusts to my scoring mind-set. I like to think I have pretty good mid-range game. I score the majority of my points on the mid-range or on the fast break. I'm not looking to take a lot of 3s, but if it's open, I'll shoot it.

**Q:** Most points you have scored in a game at any level?

**A:** In a rec-league game, I scored 46 points.

**Q:** What gives you more pleasure, scoring or distributing?

**A:** Scoring is great, but anytime you can get your teammate a wide-open shot, it feels pretty good. Anytime I hit Dallas (Ennema, his teammate) for a 3, I get pretty excited. That gets me pumped up, seeing other guys hit shots off your passes.

**Q:** Do you have a nickname?

**A:** Not really. They call me Dave sometimes, but that's about as far as it goes. I have a Twitter handle, but no one really calls me that.

**Q:** What is that?

**A:** Davey Ballout. That was more of just trying to be funny. Not a serious nickname.

**Q:** If you could have one super power, what would it be?

**A:** Probably the ability not to age. Or, if I was 80, make myself look 20.

**Q:** You have a fear of aging?

**A:** I don't have a fear of it. But that would be pretty cool to be able to do.

**Q:** If there were a movie made about your life, and you could pick the actor to play you, who would you pick?

**A:** That's a tough one. I will go with Will Smith. Can't go wrong with him.

**Q:** If you could have dinner with three people, living for dead, who would they be?

**A:** Let's go Michael Jordan, Martin Luther King and Alexander the Great. I like history.

**Q:** Your dad (Donald) is a coach. Did he coach you?

**A:** Yes. In AAU.

**Q:** Has he seen you play live with Albany yet?

**A:** Yes. He was at the Penn State game and the Cincinnati game.

**Q:** Is he your biggest critic?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** What did he say to you after the game when you didn't start here?

**A:** He said what any coach would say: The coach is right 100 percent of the time. Just have to do better. Stay focused and be a good teammate. Keep doing what got you in a position to start in the first place.

**Q:** Favorite holiday?

**A:** Christmas. Big family. Everyone is back together.

**Q:** Favorite sport other than basketball?

**A:** To watch? Probably football.

**Q:** Did you play any other sports in high school?

**A:** I played soccer my freshman year for half the season. I got sick, so I had to stop. I got pneumonia and lost a lot of weight. That got me into lifting weights.

**Q:** How much can you bench?

**A:** I maxed out at 265.

**Q:** When will we see you throw one down in a game?

**A:** (Laughs.) If we are in a game and you try to dunk and miss, you are probably going to be sitting on the bench. If we have a pretty big lead in the future and I have a fast break, maybe we'll see it. In the layup line I am pretty creative.