



Former Jets star Jerron Jamerson will play for Mackay in the NBL1 North competition this year. Picture: Che Chorley

## JERRON AIMS FOR STARS WITH METEORS

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**JOSH SPASARO**

"OH man, I can't even put into words how excited I am."

This was star swingman Jerron Jamerson's response when asked how excited he was to be playing for Mackay in this year's NBL1 North competition.

For someone who was the 2020 Darwin Basketball Championship MVP, a two-time DBA winner with Ansett and Razzle and, before that, represented Moncton Miracles in the NBL of Canada and led the scoring for Goshen College in the US Mid-West at Division II level, it's a big statement.

But it's an insight into just how confident the 30-year-old is that he can still achieve his dream of playing in the NBL.

"I'm happy but I'm also ready for this opportunity and I want to keep pushing forward," Jamerson told the NT News.

"I'm looking to take that next step and this move will give me a chance to

fully showcase my abilities."

Jamerson said linking up with Meteors coach Joel Khalu would present him with the perfect opportunity to showcase his all-round court skills which saw him finish the highest average points scorer (28.16 per game) for the runner-up Jets in last year's Championship campaign.

"The No.1 reason why I chose Mackay is my relationship with the coach," said Jamerson, who entertained Top End crowds every week and relishes the responsibility of being a go-to scorer.

"Joel believes in my ability and he's going to play me without a leash.

"I feel like if I can play that way and with freedom I'll be in the best position to help out the team."

Jamerson said it was a bittersweet feeling not being able to go back home to South Bend Indiana to see his supportive family due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

But with quality American imports like himself now in demand due to travel restrictions, he now has a better

opportunity than ever to become a fulltime professional player.

"When I left the US, I signed up for the unknown. So my mum and dad understand why I can't go back home and I can't explain how grateful I am for that, as well as my grandmother and sister," Jamerson said.

"At the end of the day they just want me to do what's best for me."

Jamerson said he was looking forward to the prospect of linking up with Freddy Webb at Mackay, the two combining to win the 2016 Championship with Ansett in the early stages of Webb's senior career.

Like Jamerson, the 21-year-old guard has progressed to now be in the elite top bracket of players in the Top End.

"Freddy was one of the first people I met when I arrived in Darwin, and we won my first championship DBA together," Jamerson said.

"He's been like a little brother to me. He always brings a high intensity and is so competitive.

"He went to the US to play (with

Central Maine Community College in 2017-18) and learned a lot over there, and now he's an absolute professional.

"When I first met him he barely had any muscles, but he changed his mindset and now he leads by example."

If Jamerson has played his last DBA game, he leaves Darwin with plenty of great memories.

"Winning two championships are standouts for me, and getting the competition MVP last season was really big because there were a couple of times previously I missed out on it," he said.

"So that was really good for me.

"I feel like I've definitely maxed out my potential playing in Darwin."

Jamerson's Top End legacy is to work hard on the court and be a good person off it. "I always tell the young kids it doesn't matter how good you are - if you're a bad person you won't go anywhere in sport," he said. "If you don't choose to be humble the universe will react to that."



Phil Cole.

## Cole delighted with Salty's form, twilight racing

**JOSH SPASARO**

EVERGREEN eight-year-old Salty will become a victim of his own success if the favourite takes out the \$20,500 Filly Fridays Handicap (1100m) in today's twilight meeting at Fannie Bay

The gelding has won four of his five starts since arriving at Phil Cole's Darwin stables.

"The St Paddy's Day Cup is

our intention for Salty, but if he wins (today) he becomes ineligible for that race," Cole told the NT News.

"But we'll still be happy if he does win and we collect the prize-money on offer."

Cole - currently in second place behind champion mentor Gary Clarke in the NT Trainers Premiership standings - used his astute judgment to acquire Salty.

"I got him off (two-time Darwin Cup winning trainer) Rob Gulberti and people were saying 'he's eight years old' but I knew he could go OK," Cole said.

"He thinks he's a two-year-old." Cole is also confident in fellow eight-year-old gelding Torchbearer's chances in the race-four feature.

"He's got barrier one with Wayne Davis on him and a good

weight (56kg)," Cole said.

Cole said Bella Rubino should be competitive in the race-one \$17,500 Carnival Tickets on Sale Now Handicap (1300m) at 3.16pm. The consistent Darwin trainer is a fan of twilight racing.

"I enjoyed it last week, and we got a better crowd than expected at that time of day after work," he said. "It'll be a tough day with five even races (on the schedule)."

## U18 sides full of NT promise

**NATHANIEL CHAMBERS**

BASKETBALL NT has announced a strong group of Top End juniors for its boys and girls teams set to contest the under-18 Australian Championships in Werribee from April 10-17.

The boys' side will be headlined by 2020 league stars Joel De Barros, Thomas Malseed, Mixon Laurel and Anthony Rowse, who each showed plenty of ability through the DBA Championship. De Barros and Malseed had strong league seasons for Ansett and Tracy Village respectively, playing pivotal roles in their sides making the final four.

The pair both featured in the under-16s NT side in 2019 with De Barros, who now plays with Woodville, making the top five in points average, total points and average number of rebounds in that competition.

The girls' side will be coached by Tania Dhu, who coached both the Tracy Village men and women to a DBA Championship final in 2020.

The side will feature Sophie Palmer, who secured the MVP award in the Eltham Dandenong Junior Basketball Tournament in 2019-20 season, having led her Hawthorn Magic under-18 side to victory.

Palmer also played a pivotal role in Ansett's climb into the 2020 DBA Championship finals, while under-18s teammate Laleeta Das featured for Tracy Village.

Basketball NT high performance and basketball development manager Rod Tremlett was excited to see the players showcase Territory talent to the rest of the country.

"The national championships are the best place to showcase our talent to the rest of Australia while playing against the best in the country," Tremlett told the NT News. "I'm looking forward to taking the male and female under-18s teams away."

**U18 NT boys team:** Anthony Rowse, Clayton Jewell, Hayden Brauer, Joel De Barros, Maverick Falzon, Matteo Materazzo, Mixon Laurel, Thomas Malseed, Tristyn Ambrose-Pearce, Zacary Ilic Reserves: Cameron Pevely, Jason Ramsamy, Ambrose Maclean, Matthew Hammer Coaches: Brett Maksimovic, Adam Marjoram.

**U18 NT girls team:** Alyssa Perkins, Amy List, Cecily Rankin, Emily Smyth, Julia Pollon, Kiarna Collinson, Laleeta Das, Olivia Dean, Sophie Palmer, Tsharni Graham. Reserves: Sidni Finch, Bella Perkins Coaches: Tania Dhu, Erin Geer, Jaki Adams.