

Basket hounds

At these summer tournaments, the players will do whatever it takes to please the crowd—even jump over a Hyundai **By Jennifer Lisle**

If you take your basketball neat—meaning indoors, with players who follow the rules and don't hassle the refs—then you'll probably be satisfied by the Nike tournament at Hunter College or the Pro Am at Riverbank State Park. But if you like your basketball in the form of an upside down shot on the bar, with players such as Basic Instinct, Best Kept Secret, Ala Mo and Will Power wreaking havoc on the court, passing from behind their necks, showboating for girls in the crowd and, well, getting a motherfucking swerve on, then go to

a summer street ball tournament.

The best known tournament, and definitely the biggest spectacle, is the Rucker, held at Holcombe Rucker Park in Harlem. "It's completely unpredictable," says Danielle Gardner, director of *Soul in the Hole*, a street ball documentary airing on HBO this summer. "You never know what's going to happen, but it will always be a show."

The Rucker's roots as a showcase of talent go back to the '60s, when it was run by Bob Cullough. Julius Irving, Fly Williams, Herman Helicopter and World B. Free used to go up and make it showtime. One day in 1981, on Mr. Magic's Hot 97 show, Crash Crew bragged that it could beat Disco 4 in a basketball matchup. Disco 4 took up the challenge, and when the two teams showed up at Marcus Garvey Park, more than 1,000 people were waiting. That competition soon moved to Rucker Park. Now officially known as the Entertainer's Basketball Classic, the tournament draws big-name players (Rod Strickland, Mario Ely and Kevin Garnet) as well as rap stars (L.L. Cool J, Biggie Smalls, or whoever else Puff Daddy from Bad Boy Records decides to bring). "Deep down, all sports figures want to be singers and all singers want to be sports figures," says Greg Marius, original Disco 4 member and Entertainer's Classic founder.

Now, more than ever, a player can't show up with just a basic game. He has to be a crowd pleaser—someone who shakes and bakes, and can talk mad trash—or the crowd will boo him out. In order to escape that fate, players push themselves and taunt each other in the most out-

rageous ways. Last year, one player tried to jump over a Hyundai in a slam-dunk contest. "He missed the shot, and his foot went through the windshield, but the crowd loved it," says Marius.

Once a player wins over the spectators, they're with him forever. "I once made a three-point shot to win the game, and the crowd came down and ripped off my uniform," remembers "Master Rob" Hockett, a 13-year Rucker veteran. "All I had on in the end was my jock strap and my Nikes."

Other tournaments, such as Soul in the Hole in Brooklyn, are more of a local scene. Everyone in the neighborhood comes out to watch their favorite players, and vendors sell everything from juice to haircuts-while-you-watch. Soul in the Hole's reputation is for harder, more no-nonsense playing than the Rucker, but the tournament is rooted so locally that any team from outside the neighborhood will be put through the ringer by the refs and the crowd.

In downtown Manhattan, the big scene is still at West 4th Street. Since this tournament is played on a small court, it's also famous for tougher, more balls-to-the-wall (or, in this case, balls-to-the-fence) playing. The easy-access location, outside the West 4th Street subway stop, also draws a random mix of spectators, including devoted locals and Euro-trash tourists.

Following is a list of some of the best tournaments in the city. For more information, contact the tournament commissioners.

MANHATTAN

West 4th Street

W 4th St at Sixth Ave. Jun 17–Aug 13, Mon–Fri 6pm; Sat, Sun noon.

Commissioner Ken Graham (718-875-2947).

Divisions Pro Am, as well as several youth and women's divisions.

The Entertainer's Basketball Classic

Holcombe Rucker Park, 155th St at Eighth Ave. Subway: D to 155th St. Jun 17–Aug 13. Mon–Thu 6pm; Sat, Sun noon.

Fouls not to call

Don't say we didn't warn you

Three seconds

A high school player sucker call.

Backcourt

There is no backcourt.

Illegal defense

Go back to that Dr. J computer game.

Charge

Not unless there's blood on the pavement.

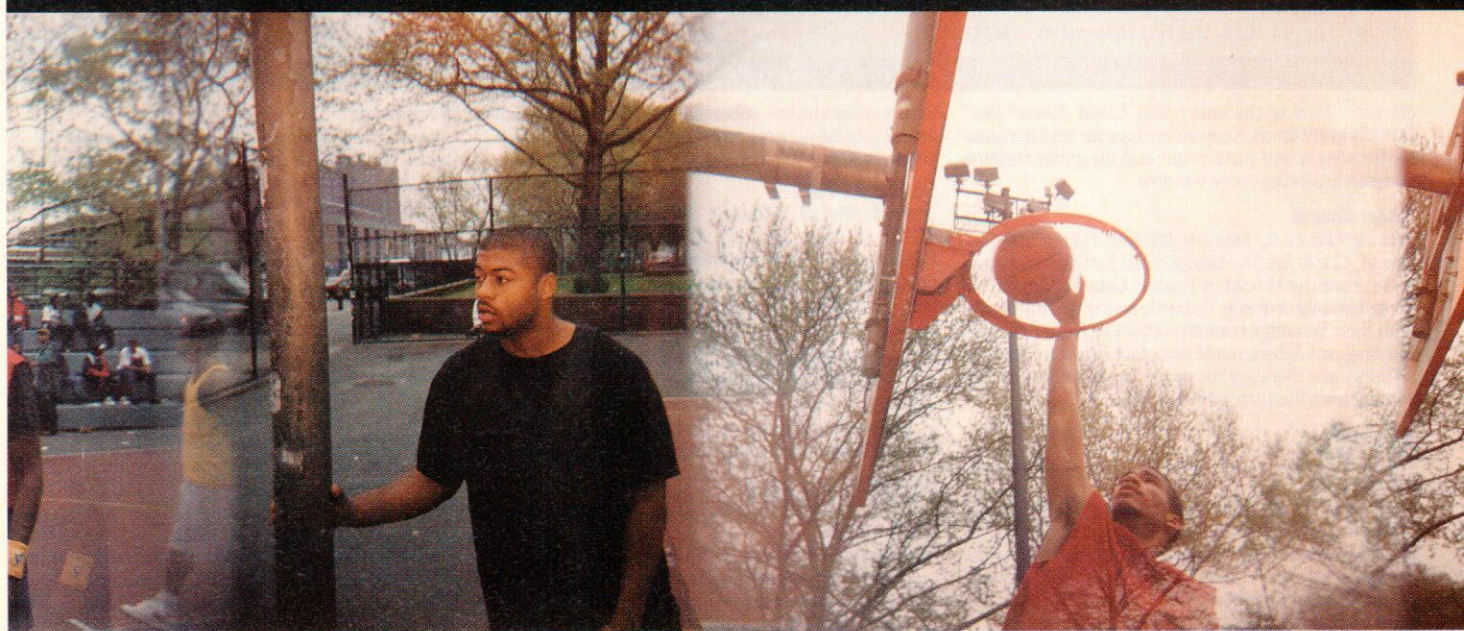
Carry

Only if the ball is above the shoulder. Otherwise, keep quiet.

Out of bounds

Ignore the baselines; it's the fences that count.

—Philip Lindenbaum



"That dish was butt!" Words to dunk by: a streetball glossary

Blow up the spot Dominate the game

Butter Soft, weak, as in "That brother's butter."

Butt Bad

The bomb Awesome

Brick Ugly shot

Burn Playing time, as in "I gotta get some burn."

Cash Good shot

Call "next" Reserve the next game

Dish Pass

Dope-fiended As in "That brother dope-fiended me" (meaning he dribbled so long, he put me in a trance).

Facial Shot made despite in-your-face defense

Got one I've been fouled

Gun's not loaded Shooting blanks (see below)

Handle Ability to dribble

Hops Jumping ability, ups

House The key, as in "Get that shit out of my house"

Ice cream Soft, weak

J Jump shot; you either got one, or you don't.

Lightin' it up Dominating the game

Money Good shot

Pill Ball

Pinned Stuffed

Rainin' When long distance J's drop continuously

Ripped Stolen

Rock Ball

Run Game

Shook to the ground Got past a

defender

Shooting blanks Bad shots from the outside

Slidin' & glidin' Faking out the defender

Swing it Pass around the perimeter

Take him to the butter Take him to the basket

Tap that ass Teach someone a lesson

Throw it down Dunk with power

Water Smooth shot

You suck You suck

Commissioner Greg Marius (246-6299).

Division Unlimited. NCAA-sanctioned.

Nike

Hunter College, 68th St at Lexington Ave. Subway: 6 to 68th St. Jun 16–Aug 18. Tue, Thu 6:30, 8:30pm.

Commissioner Gerry Erasme (505-9494).

Division Pro Am.

Pro Am

Riverbank State Park, 145th St at Riverside Dr. Subway: 1, 9 to 145th St. Jun 17–Aug 5. Mon, Wed 6:30, 8:30pm.

Commissioner Jessie Williams (636-5020).

Division Pro Am.

BROOKLYN

Soul in the Hole

Israel Putnam Playground, Marcus Garvey Blvd between Monroe and Madison Sts, Bedford-Stuyvesant. Subway: A, C to Kingston–Throop Aves. Tue, Wed, Thu 5:30pm, Sun noon.

Commissioners Nate Smith, Shawn Stewart, William Dillard, Charles Foreman (718-919-3797).

Division Unlimited.

Hands On

Kingston Park, St. Andrew's Playground, Herkimer

St between Kingston and Atlantic Aves, Bedford-Stuyvesant. Subway: A, C to Kingston–Throop Aves. Jun 1–Aug 11. Tue, Wed 5pm; Sat, Sun noon.

Commissioners Dwayne "DJ" Johnson (no phone). Contact Buddy Keaton (718-965-8940).

Division Unlimited.

The X Classic

Jackie Robinson Park, Reid St between Chauncey and Marion Sts, Bedford-Stuyvesant. Subway: A, C to Utica Ave. June 22–Aug 17. Tue–Thu 5pm, Sat, Sun noon.

Commissioners Dennis Miller, Ronald "Fila" Francois (718-771-2787).

Divisions Unlimited, with multiple youth divisions.

Fellas

St. John's Recreation Center, Troy Ave between Prospect Pl and Schenectady Ave, Bedford-Stuyvesant. Subway: A, C to Utica Ave. Jun 15–Sept 2. Sat, Sun 10am.

Commissioner Kelly Brown (beeper 917-729-3168).

Divisions Unlimited, as well as 30 and over.

Mecca

Callahan and Kelly Park, Fulton and Truxton Sts between Van Sinderen Ave and Eastern Pkwy, East New York. Subway: A, C to Broadway–East New York. Jun 3–Aug 27. Wed–Fri 5pm, Sun 4pm.

Commissioners Calvin Kizer, Ali Adbul Aziz (718-453-1267).

Divisions Unlimited, with multiple youth and women's divisions.

Selvyn Smith Memorial Tournament

Lafayette Houses Playground, Lafayette and Franklin Aves, Bedford-Stuyvesant. Subway: G to Classon Ave. Jul 13–Aug 25. Mon–Thu 5pm; Sat, Sun noon.

Commissioner Mike Senior (718-638-5904).

Divisions Multiple youth divisions.

Brownsville Old Timers Week

Brownsville Recreation Center Park, 1555 Linden Blvd between Hegeman and Christopher Aves, Brownsville. Subway: L to New Lots Ave. July 19–27. Daily 5pm.

Commissioner Greg "Jocko" Jackson (718-345-2706).

Divisions Unlimited, 30 and over, with multiple youth and women's divisions.

QUEENS

I.S. 8

108-35 167th St between 108th and 107th Sts, Jamaica. Subway: E, J, Z to Jamaica Center. Jul 4–Aug 18. Schedule varies.

Commissioner Pete Edwards (212-876-6900).

Divisions Unlimited, college and high school; NCAA-sanctioned. ■



Ball busting: TCI and Kenny's Kings throw it down at Rucker Park.