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## **Local ‘Macker’ Team Continues Decade of Dominance**

There’s an old adage in sports; and usually, it holds true: father time is undefeated. Regardless of one’s preparation, it’s impossible for any high-caliber athlete to avoid the abominable drop-off that comes along with age. However, in Maceo Wofford’s case, the 35-year-old former Jamestown High School basketball star and his talented supporting cast of Gus Macker teammates are doing a pretty good job of postponing it.

“Mace has never been better,” said Steve Breth, a fundamentally sound big man who’s been playing alongside Wofford and Dusty Carlson for nearly a decade. “I have a front row seat to every game; this might be the best he’s ever played.”

Surely, opponents from any of the five Gus Macker basketball tournaments (Warren, Hornell, Syracuse, Olean, Grand Island/Buffalo) Wofford’s team has played against this summer would agree. As one player said, “He’s the best Macker player I’ve ever seen.”

Last weekend, the former Iona College guard joined forces with Breth and Dave Bucheit, a former player at Roberts Weleyan College, with one goal in mind: Make it to Sunday and three-peat, as tournament champions, at the Grand Island/Buffalo Gus Macker.

Two overtime games and three nail-biters later, the veteran team was successful, adding yet another championship to its already impressive resume. This tournament win marks the team’s fifth in the past three months.

For nearly a decade, Wofford and his teams have been recognized for their stellar play on the court. Needless to say, the former Western New York player of the year has been a major piece of that puzzle.

“The guy is 5-10 and is the most dominant player I’ve ever seen,” said Breth, as he reflected on how Wofford carried his team to a 5-0 record in the Grand Island/Buffalo tournament. “Every tournament, I can think of one shot he hit that caused us to push onward and get us where we wanted to go.”

For his teammates, there’s no question who to turn to when things get rough on the court, “It’s always Mace.”

Sitting comfortably atop the record books at Jamestown High School as the school’s all time leading scorer, and arguably, as one of the greatest players to ever put on a Red Raider uniform, it’s clear that Wofford has been blessed with a lot of God-given ability. But, as voiced by his teammate, “He’s worked for everything he has.”

Years ago, the guys ventured down to the local gymnasium on a routine basis with something to prove. Nowadays, they get together a tad bit less frequently, for a love of the game.

“I don’t care about going down to the Y and beating everybody,” said Breth, as he spoke on his motivation to keep playing. “Mace is one of my best friends, Dusty and I are great friends...Dave and I played together early on....so for it to come together full circle toward the end of our careers, and for us to play together, it couldn’t be any better.”

For Wofford, the feeling is mutual.

“We have a great friendship; what makes it even better is I can ask either of them for anything I need and they are there...Steve even gave me a reference for my current job; he put his name on the line for me...Friends are there for you when you need them the most.”

As has been put on display for Chautauqua County and surrounding areas for quite some time, that friendship translates to the basketball court.

“At the end of the day, we want to win,” said Wofford, commenting on the role experience has on the game of basketball. “Steve needs my help and I need his help; we are all on the court playing together. Experience and wit outdoes youth any day, that’s what makes us so dominant – we’ve learned how to play.”

For Wofford, Breth and crew, it’s not all about the individual. It’s about sacrificing for the collective goal. That little bit of extra sacrifice makes for the betterment of all.

“I want everyone to succeed; I want everyone to push themselves to the max and maximize their potential: white, black, rich, poor, it doesn’t make a difference to me,” said Wofford. “If I can move one person to do something they love to do, then I succeeded.”

With an enormous collection of trophies gathering dust in the closet, the hardware speaks for itself. The team doesn’t plan on stopping anytime soon.