

## Interview: Wayne Dawkins, Phase 1 Basketball Founder

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I got a chance to speak with Phase 1 basketball founder [Wayne Dawkins](#), who also created the All Canadian Classic event. He tells us more about his vision for Phase 1 and what to expect for this year's All Canada Classic.

1) So you're the founder of phase 1 basketball, what motivated you to start this organization?

I started several organizations including Grassroots which Tristan Thompson and Cory Joseph came out of, and before that I had an organization called Prep Stars. When I started Grassroots with Ro Russell, after a couple years I saw what my niche was and my own vision was starting to form, so then I branched off in 2001 and started Phase 1. The vision for Phase 1 was to really develop Canadian athletes, and develop really good Canadian programs for amateur athletes. With phase 1 the focus was how do we as a company make sure our children are getting the best opportunities to advance their careers in their own backyard (Canada).

2) This year will be the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Canadian classic, how did you go about starting this event, was it for the same reason; getting a way to show the talent of Canadian players?

Absolutely, the second reason was the challenge we still have to this day, which is fundraising. We were doing all the little things to try and raise money such as washing cars and it just wasn't covering, so we needed to find a way of getting corporations and businesses to invest in our kids. At that time a lot of our kids were inner city kids, our program started up and down that Jane and Finch pipeline. So the event was meant to provide some exposure for our talented athletes that people didn't know about, and secondly give corporations a reason to invest in our athletes and in our organization.

3) Have you guys selected the players yet? And how does the selection process work?

The athletes have been selected, and that should be up and out soon. We're just trying to make

sure that everything is 100 percent. There's always been sort of an informal voting committee now it's more of a formal committee, that's responsible for collecting information on all the athletes. Once that's done it comes down to voting. We try to keep it as national as possible.

4) I went to last year's event and it was quite a show, what can we look forward to seeing at this year's event?

It would be the same in terms of talent on the floor; we have a lot of talented Canadian athletes. The games itself will be very entertaining. We incorporated a few other components; this year we have a partnership with Wheelchair Canada. Earlier in the day we'll be doing our Junior Men's Wheelchair Canada basketball team playing against a group of celebrity guests, and then we'll have a group of Junior National's play against each other. People will get to see two groups of wheelchair athletes go against each other. We'll also have our Women's semi-pro team playing against the men of Hoops for Hope. Then we'll have a group of grade 8 girls from Winnipeg coming to play a group of grade 8 girls from here in Toronto.

5) Lastly, where can we keep up with yourself and what Phase 1 basketball is up to?

Right now the website is the best way possible, I'm trying to get more writers to write about what Phase 1 is doing. There's also a newsletter where people can sign up for. [www.phase1basketball.com](http://www.phase1basketball.com)

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