

Michael Linklater: Set goals and achieve them

Michael Linklater helped take basketball in Saskatchewan to new heights.

Since January 2011, Linklater has been working as a Dream Broker in Saskatoon. Already, he has achieved many of his own dreams and it makes sense he is helping others achieve theirs. As a Dream Broker, Linklater works out of a Saskatoon elementary school where he helps connect inner city children and youth to sports, culture and recreation activities.

Linklater recalls setting three goals for himself when he was in grade 6, attending the Bedford Road Invitational Tournament (BRIT), a major high school basketball event in Saskatoon. "The three goals I set for myself were to play in that tournament, to play at the college level in the States and to play basketball professionally," he says. "I spent so many hours in the gym, pushing myself to achieve these goals."

Achieve he did. After exceptional play at the high school level, which included 3 appearance in the BRIT, Linklater moved to Bismarck, N.D. to play college ball. His basketball career at the university level saw him play at SAIT in Calgary, Alta., Lakeland College in Lloydminster, Alta. and with the Huskies at the University of Saskatchewan.

It was in his final year of college eligibility, voted captain for the Huskies, Linklater led the team to an unprecedented achievement. In the 2009-2010 season, the Huskies won the CIS National title for the first time in the school's history.

"There are no words to describe it," he says of the victory. "It's already almost two years ago, and I'm still only coming to terms with it and appreciating the significance of that title." The win was important because it was the first time for the U of S, but Linklater adds it was also significant because the team was made up mostly of local players. "We didn't have a bunch of special recruits," he says.

With his last goal ahead of him, Linklater travelled to Edmonton, Alta. where he played a season professionally with the Edmonton Energy. The Edmonton Energy are part of the International Basketball League, which was founded in 2004 and features teams from across Canada and the United States. "After playing that season," he says, "it was kind of like, now what?" As he formulates a new set of goals, Linklater is content helping young people achieve their dreams.

For young people playing sports, or in any other area of life, Linklater has this advice: "Follow your dreams and believe in yourself. When you set a goal, don't let someone tell you that you can't do it. It's up to you to make it a reality, no one is going to do it for you."

He adds that sport has opened doors for him at every turn. He has been able to travel all over North America to meet people and play basketball at an elite level. He has learned valuable life lessons, like pushing himself and working as a team which are applicable to everyday life. "Sport has saved my life," he says.