



Young Hawks still growing

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Marvin Williams was walking back to the court after a timeout when coach Mike Woodson yelled to get his attention. The coach had a simple message for Williams: Rebound the basketball.

Looking back at his coach, Williams pounded his chest with his fist, acknowledging the directive.

You've got to have pieces that, when guys aren't scoring, somebody's got to fill in and rebound and defend," Woodson said. "I'm telling [Williams], if you're struggling scoring, rebound, play defense, block shots, take charges, get loose balls. All that plays a role in winning basketball games."

Williams finished that game, a win over Chicago on Wednesday, with eight rebounds and three assists along with 12 points. Four nights earlier, while scoring just three points, he grabbed a career-high 15 rebounds with three steals in the Hawks' win over Dallas.

Williams isn't the only one having to hear the message. After the Hawks' 114-107 loss to New York last week, Woodson said he showed the team 36 different video clips from the game where the team "did nothing right defensively."

We're still learning how to win at a high level," Woodson said. "You don't have to tell that Celtic team that Orlando, who's in the finals last year, or the Lakers. They already know that, and we're trying to get to that point."

Giving back

Monday, guard Joe Johnson treated about 100 members of metro Atlanta Boys & Girls Clubs to go-karting, dinner, games and gifts. It's the fifth year that Johnson has done such an event for the Boys & Girls Clubs, an organization dear to Johnson. As a boy in Little Rock, Johnson was a member of the William E. Thrasher Boys & Girls Club.

I used to go to the Boys Club all the time after school and play ball," he said. "They had tryouts for the basketball team and I tried out for my first team and made it, and it took off from there."

Winning respect

Perhaps no one on the roster appreciates the Hawks' winning record more than guard Jamal Crawford. In his 10th season, Crawford has never been on a playoff team or even on a team with a winning record. He is the NBA's most tenured active player never to have appeared in a playoff game.

On being on a winner, he said: "Everything is better. You can do the same things you were doing with a losing team and nobody notices. It's like, as an individual or as a team, you'll never get the respect that you deserve until you win. Because everybody in the league can play. But you don't get that respect until you win."

Net Gaines

Former Georgia guard Sundiata Gaines is making his case for the NBA in the D-League. In the Idaho Stampede's first four games of the season, Gaines averaged a league-leading 27.0 points to go with 8.3 assists despite not even starting. Last season, his first out of Georgia, Gaines played in Italy.

The Stampede drafted Gaines in November after he returned from Italy and participated in a handful of NBA mini-camps, including the Hawks' in July.

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