

# **U.S. Central Girls Repeat As Jr. NBA Global Champions; Hot Shooting U.S. West Boys Claim Title by Defeating Africa at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Disney**

Just moments after leading the U.S. Central Girls to their second consecutive Jr. NBA Global Championship title at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex, head coach Nick Bradford found himself standing off to the side of his euphoric team, taking in all they had accomplished over the past six days.

Central's 72-35 win over Team Canada at Walt Disney World Resort was the direct result of everything Bradford preaches on the basketball court — relentless effort at all times and suffocating pressure defense.

"I'm a firm believer that your defense gets your offense started," Bradford said. "What you saw tonight is the way we've played all season."

In the boys' championship game, the U.S. West boys nailed five three-point shots in the final period to knock off previously unbeaten Team Africa, 70-61 to claim the 2019 Jr. NBA Global Championship. The U.S. West boys team finished the tournament 6-1.

With his shiny new Jr. NBA Global Championship medal dangling from his 6-foot-7-inch frame, Bradford, who played collegiately at Kansas before spending 11 years playing professionally overseas, described how his team raced to a 12-2 lead — only to find themselves clinging to a slim 16-12 advantage at the end of the first quarter.

During the break in the action between the first and second quarters, Bradford could be seen talking calmly to his team.

When asked post game what he said to his team during the break, Bradford flashed a sheepish smile and said: "Absolutely nothing."

"We've done that all year long," Bradford continued. "We entered the game knowing that we were going to be in a dog fight and we were. But our girls have shown a remarkable ability of ratcheting up their intensity levels when our opponent makes a run. We always respond. We have responded all year. I knew we would pick it up in the second quarter."

The Americans did a little more than pick it up, outscoring their northern neighbors 18-3 in the second quarter to take a commanding 34-15 halftime lead that was never challenged for the remainder of the game.

Central, which finished the game shooting 44 percent from the field, was led by forward Kiara Smith's 15

points while guard Jada Williams added 11 points. Central (4-0) finished the game outscoring Team Canada 40-24 inside the paint and scored 38 points off of 26 Team Canada turnovers.

“Our philosophy is all about pressure on the ball all over the court,” Bradford said. “When we play like we played tonight, we can beat anybody.”

Team Canada was led by guard Tene Smith and center Jada Bediako, who each finished with 10 points.

In the boys’ championship game, the U.S West boys out of Los Angeles, Calif., found themselves deadlocked at 44 entering the final period of play against previously unbeaten Team Africa (6-1).

After finishing the first half having made only one of eight field goal attempts from the three-point line, Team West heated up.

Guard Taj DeGourville, who finished with 15 points, connected three times beyond the arc during the final period; forward Issac Martinez, who made two three’s in the final period, finished with 13 points.

U.S. West point guard Tyler Rolison led all scorers with 21 points while forward Quinton Webb, who on Thursday, jumped over three people and threw down the slam to win the Jr. NBA Global Championship Dunk Exhibition, added 11. The quartet of DeGourville, Martinez, Rolison and Webb combined for 60 points in Sunday afternoon’s championship game.

Team Africa forward Khadim Rassoul Diongue led his team with 17 points, center Seydina Limamoulaye Faye had 16 points and guard Babacar Djiby Ly added 14.

A total of 32 teams and more than 350 players representing 40 countries participated in the event that ran Aug. 6-11 at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort. The six-day global, youth basketball tournament showcased the top 14U boys’ and girls’ teams from the United States and around the world, including countries such as India, Australia, China and Mexico.

Teams were divided into U.S. and international brackets before competing for Sunday’s world championships. A total of 92 games were played during the week.

The Jr. NBA Global Championship is one of several marquee events hosted annually at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort. Other events include NFL Pro Bowl Week, the AAU Girls & Boys Jr. National Volleyball Championships, the Pop Warner Super Bowl, the Disney Soccer Showcase and the Orlando Invitational – one of the top college basketball tournaments in the nation played each year at Disney during the Thanksgiving holidays.

The sports complex plays host to more than 100 entertainment and sporting events annually and has accommodated 70 different sports featuring athletes from 70 different countries since opening in 1997.