

Allen stars in the Philippines

By FRANK JUZENAS

Staff Writer

Bobby Allen, who has made a history of lighting up a basketball scoreboard continued to do so during his recent stint in the Philippines.

The 25-year-old, who lives in Heart Lake, was impressive as he played nine games for St. Lucia Realty, a team based in Manila.

The 6-foot-2 guard averaged about 34 points, 11 rebounds and five assists per game. That included 48 points in his first game.

His efforts weren't quite enough as his club finished fifth in the 10-team league and just missed the playoffs.

Allen seemed to impress people during his stay. He hasn't re-signed with his team but has attracted interest from other teams in the league for next season should he choose to return.

Of more immediate interest is the possible opportunity to play in Europe, (possibly Germany), and he is hoping to hear something definite shortly.

Allen said he found the experience in the Philippines, his first time in a professional league, worthwhile. He said he had no idea how good the league was going to be before he left.

"I was really ignorant about the league," he said. One thing he learned quickly was the size and quality of players. While he was expecting there would be mostly smaller players there is a 7-footer and others taller than

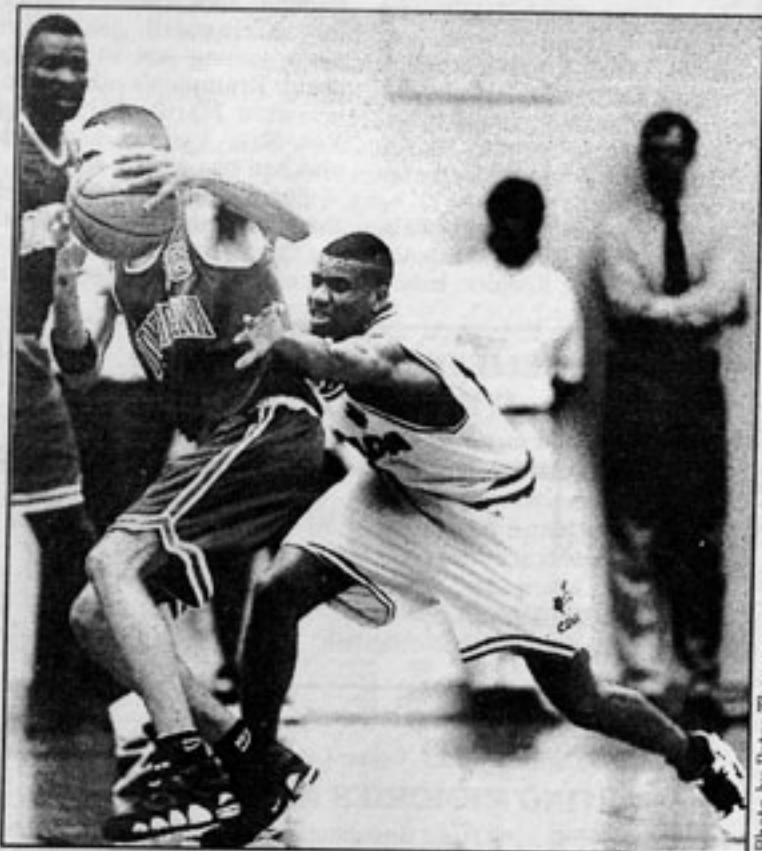


Photo by Peter Thompson

Bobby Allen, seen in action last summer with Canada's national team was a hit during his recent stint with a team in the Philippines.

6-foot-8.

Each team was restricted to one import, who could not be taller than 6-foot-2. The imports included some names familiar to fans of NCAA basketball, like former North Carolina State star Rodney Munro and Stevin Smith, a former all Pac-10 player at Arizona State, both of whom who spent time with NBA clubs.

"I was the first Canadian and

all the other (imports) had NBA experience," said Allen.

It seems the last few months has revived the career of the former Morning Star Secondary School star who had been out of the limelight in recent years.

Allen finished off his NCAA career in 1994 at Texas Pan American averaging an impressive 17 points a game his senior season. Despite that Canadian national team coach Steve

Konchalski admits he knew very little about Allen when the player contacted him about trying out prior to this summer's Olympic qualifying tournament in Argentina.

Not only did Allen make the team but he was the leading scorer as Canada came within one win of qualifying for the Olympics. While preparing for the tournament, Canada played in the LA Summer League where Allen caught the eye of Toronto Raptors west coast scout Jim Kelly, a former coach in the Philippines. He thought Allen had the ability to be successful there and helped him catch on with the St. Lucia team.

Allen was determined to be successful in his first pro experience, deliberately staying clear of distractions in Manila to concentrate on basketball.

"I just stayed in my house," he laughs.

He made the most of the opportunity although he said he would have preferred to have been more consistent in his scoring totals.

At the moment, he is waiting for some more possibilities to pan out. It appears that his pro career is far from over. He is hoping for something definite in Europe. If he does well there the Raptors, who would love to have a Canadian in their line-up, are also keeping their eye on him. Kelly and the team's director of scouting Bob Zuffelato have told him to keep in touch and let them know how he is doing.