

Clark College gets pair of local standouts

Westbrooks, White will play basketball for the Penguins

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Mike Arnold's plan to recruit local athletes to play men's basketball at Clark College appears to be working.

Orlandor Westbrooks, a Prairie graduate who was the 2005-06 Class 4A Greater St. Helens League player of the year, and Demetrick White, a Columbia River athlete good enough to

receive a Division I football scholarship, have decided to hoop it up for the Penguins.

"I'm really happy they're coming here," said Arnold, Clark's coach. "They bring a positive energy."

Westbrooks, who led Prairie to the Class 4A state basketball tournament and was named The Columbian's All-Region



Orlandor Westbrooks



Demetrick White

player of the year, said he remains committed to someday playing basketball at a four-year school. For now, though, he wants to improve his skills and get a jump-start to college life at Clark.

"I like the players and the coaches, and I'm beginning to bond with them. Plus, they have a really good education program. I like that," said

Westbrooks, who wants to be a teacher and possibly a coach.

White is adjusting to a wild change in his life plans.

In February, White signed with Montana to play football. Now, instead of being a 6-foot-8 lineman, he will be a post at Clark.

White said his SAT scores were just shy of qualifying to play at Montana. He said it was discouraging because officials at Montana told him everything was fine, and then they called him to tell him otherwise just a couple weeks before the end of his senior year at River.

"I was disappointed in how

everything happened, but I've moved on," White said. "I can't be upset about it for the rest of my life. I have to move on and know there is a different path."

White turned down an offer to play football at a junior college in Arizona and instead opted for his first love in sports, basketball.

"Things happen for a reason," White said. "I'm excited to go to Clark and play basketball with Orlandor and all the other kids they have there. I think it's going to be a great opportunity, and it will be fun."

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White said he is not closing the door on football. In two years, he might decide to try the sport again. But his main objective is doing well in school. Remaining in Vancouver to start that process made sense to him.

"This is a chance for me to stay home and make sure I'm doing fine in college with classes," he said. "It's the beginning steps to everything."

Westbrooks, too, wants to use Clark College as a launching pad. He grew up in Alabama before moving in with his aunt and uncle in Brush Prairie prior to his freshman year of high school.

"I want to get back down there," he said. "My goal is to go somewhere in the South after these two years."

For now, though, Westbrooks and White are joining forces.

Not only will they play basketball together, but they are taking summer classes together at Clark, and they both work at the Boys and Girls Club of Southwest Washington.

They also might not be the only local recruits to Clark.

Arnold, Clark's coach, said he expects other players from the region to sign with the Penguins.

All part of his plan.