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WOMEN >> U18 NATIONAL TEAM

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Women's Teams...

U18 NATIONAL TEAM

MEN >>

Next Event:

Jun 14, 00:00 (ET)
USA U18 Trials/Training Camp
San Antonio, Texas

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Colorado Springs, Colo. • June 8, 2010

The gym was still quiet and the racks of basketballs fully stocked when **Brittany Boyd** (Berkeley H.S./Berkeley, Calif.) and **Alyssa Thomas** (Central Dauphin H.S./Harrisburg, Pa.) walked in.

More than an hour before their first orientation and nearly two hours before their initial trials session, Boyd and Thomas, two of the 27 elite high school players trying out for the USA Basketball Women's U18 National Team, laced up and started to dribble and shoot.

"You gotta be in the gym," Boyd said. "Gotta be working hard."

Given the talent that will join Boyd and Thomas on the floor throughout the week, Boyd's

Brittany Boyd, a 16-year old guard from Berkeley High School in Berkeley, Calif., is the youngest player on the trials roster.

words aren't mere hyperbole. Out of the 27 players attending this week's trials at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, 14 were 2010 McDonald's All-Americans, 16 were named to one of *Parade Magazine's* 2010 All-America Teams and 18 have signed National Letters of Intent to attend and play for high-level Division I schools next season.

Before the field of 27 is eventually whittled down to the 12 who will represent the United States in the 2010 FIBA Americas U18 Championship For Women at the U.S. Olympic Training Center June 23-27, each player will have five trials sessions from June 8-11 to prove that they deserve one of those coveted roster spots.

For Boyd, the youngest of the nine members of the Class of 2011 attending trials, making the 12-person team, especially ahead of an older player, begins with strenuous effort. It seems fitting, because a sign above one of the gym's sets of doors displays a quote. "If you're going to be in the gym, be in the gym," it reads.

Or, in this case, be in the gym early.

“You gotta work hard – don’t take plays off,” said Boyd, a guard at Berkeley High School in Berkeley, Calif. “I know the competition is going to be hard, so I just have to stick to what I do. If not, then I’m not going to play as well. So I just have to stick to what I do and know that I’m here for a reason.”

Chosen to the 2010 *ESPN Rise* Underclass All-America team, Boyd averaged 17.8 points and 6.7 assists per game for Berkeley as a junior during the 2009-10 season, leading Berkeley to the Northern California championship game. In a state packed with talent, Boyd earned a spot on the *San Francisco Chronicle’s* All-Metro first team and was named to *Cal-Hi Sports’* 2010 All-State second team.

So it should come as no shock that Boyd was among a select group of underclassmen invited to the USA Women’s U18 National Team Trials. And it’s certainly no surprise to hear where Boyd was when she first heard she was invited.

“Actually, I was working out when I found out,” Boyd said. “I was actually really excited, because this is one of my goals that I wanted to accomplish.”

For Thomas, a 2010 graduate from Central Dauphin High School in Harrisburg, Pa., getting the trials invitation was a similar experience for the player who finished her high school career as Central Dauphin’s all-time leading scorer with 2,289 points and who’ll play at Maryland next season.

“I remember getting the letter in the mail – they dropped it off at school,” Thomas said. “I read it and all, and I was like, ‘Really?!’ I was so excited for it, and I couldn’t wait to accept it.”

Their flights got them to Colorado Springs nearly at the same time Tuesday morning, Boyd connecting through Salt Lake City and Thomas through Chicago. After the long day of traveling, each player was eager to get to the gym and stretch her legs before their first trials session.

“We were on flights all day and just wanted to loosen up,” said Thomas, a 6-1, 170-pound forward. “I’m ready to play.”

Even as the youngest player at trials, Boyd says one of her strong points, besides her ability to both pass and drive to the hoop, is her leadership, and that being among elite players a year ahead of her isn’t at all intimidating.

“It actually doesn’t really affect me,” Boyd said. “We’re both here for the same reasons.”

So, how does either player stand out?

Being the first in the gym can’t hurt.

“We both came over together this morning – the first two here,” Thomas said. “I’m just ready to go.”

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