



PRESS-REGISTER

Mobile Police Department beats Mobile Fire-Rescue in charity basketball game

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The charity basketball match-up between the Mobile Police Department and Mobile Fire-Rescue didn't go quite as firefighter Michael Chastang predicted.

Before tip-off, Chastang, a 36-year-old player-coach, said the Fire-Rescue Department would "blow out" the Police Department.

But only seven of Chastang's teammates had shown up to play, one of whom had to leave before the game ended because he was on duty. They wore red and white jerseys, some with mismatched shorts.

It was the second annual charity basketball game organized by the Police Department, said Sgt. Michael Smith, a 41-year-old police veteran.

Each department raised \$250 and, when the game was over, presented an oversized \$500 check to the Volunteers of America Southeast.

"It's just something to help out and say we appreciate you," police Sgt. Michael Smith said. "We'll do everything we can to help you on and off the court."

Lynn Miller, with the Volunteers of America Southeast, said the money raised would help buy fitness equipment at a Mobile health center for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

"Officially, the Volunteers of America are cheering for the Police Department," she said with a coy smile. "But personally, I like the firemen."

Chastang had expected his squad to play well together.

He knew the court well, having played basketball at LeFlore High School on the team that went 31 and 1 in 1989.

He walked into the gym Saturday and thought, "It still smells the same. ... I ran around this gym many a day."

Smith, also a player-coach, declined to make any predictions before the game.

"I do mine out there," Smith said.

His team had 10 players, all dressed in matching black-and-orange uniforms, got the lead early and never relinquished it.

Smith and Chastang agreed that not much of a rivalry had been established between the departments, but each team certainly wanted to win.

"It's somewhat about bragging rights, but we don't care," Chastang said. "We just get out here to run around. It doesn't get competitive till the fourth quarter."

The Police Department was up 28 points at the half.

With about 3:15 left in the third quarter, Smith nailed a three-pointer with Chastang's hand in his face.

The police took a 30-point lead.

"He was talking that stuff," Smith said. "He brought me out of retirement."

The referees, both certified with the Alabama High School Athletics Association, didn't seem to be favoring one side or the other.

But a couple of players on the Fire-Rescue Department's team thought differently, claiming more fouls were called against them.

Another pointed out that one of the officials, Horace Jackson, is a police detective in Mobile.

The final score: Police Department 86, Fire-Rescue Department 59.

The firefighters conceded they could have hit a few more jump shots.

"It wasn't falling today," Chastang said. "Some days it will go, some days it won't. Today was one of those days."

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