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## LOCAL FEATURE

### Taking a shot at the big leagues

Lesbian promoters launch local basketball program

By [KATHERINE VOLIN](#)

Friday, January 13, 2006

As much fun as playing one-on-one can be, sometimes it's fun to have a little more competition on the court.

The women who created lesbian event planning business InHertwined Entertainment three years ago decided to meet the challenge by creating a local competitive basketball league for any women who are tough enough to play.

"Hopefully, it will be a very competitive league," says Jay Morrow, InHertwined Entertainment's sports director. "High school, college, professional — we have the whole gamut of players."

Although InHertwined Entertainment markets to lesbians for Merge, its second-Friday happy hour, IE's organizers are reaching out to all women with their new league.

"We anticipate that there probably will be more lesbian women than straight women participating, of course, because that's sort of our target market," says Zekeera Belton, who helps market IE sports. "That's our bread and butter, that's who we market to."

Would-be participants in IE's basketball league should be more concerned about their basketball skills than their race or sexual orientation, Morrow says.

"I do also want to recognize that we're not targeting one demographic [for the league]," Morrow says. "We're not targeting African Americans or anything like that. If you want to play ball and you want to be competitive, come to our league."

InHertwined Entertainment has been characterized in the past as a black lesbian-oriented business, but Morrow says its organizers never intended it as such.

"It's sort of become that way," Morrow says. "We never targeted that. We welcome everyone to our parties. But we advertise everywhere. If you look back on some of the pictures of our parties you see that we do have...diversity."

MORROW SAYS THE idea for the basketball league originated as she and the other owners of IE decided to develop their company.

"We wanted to expand our company in terms of what



**TJ Tolbert (left), Alana Futrell and Jay Morrow**, co-founders and owners of InHertwined Entertainment party at the local lesbian promotion company's three-year anniversary celebration in December. InHertwined Entertainment will introduce a competitive basketball league this month.

#### MORE INFO

##### InHertwined Basketball

League Registration  
P.O. Box 2402  
Washington, DC 20013-2402  
202-498-3804  
[www.inhertwined.com](http://www.inhertwined.com)  
\$83 individual, \$820 team

##### IE Sports Basketball Games

Backus Middle School  
5171 South Dakota Ave., NE  
Thursdays and Sundays, 7 p.m.  
Jan. 19-March

##### Merge Happy Hour

Friday, Jan. 13, 6 p.m.-1 a.m.  
Club Daedalus  
1010 Vermont Ave., NW  
\$6-\$20

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were covering...and we thought another niche would be IE sports," Morrow says. "We are aware that a lot of basketball players live in the area."

Belton was one of those players. After she graduated from Georgetown University, where she played basketball for four years, she was disappointed to discover no competitive women's basketball leagues in the D.C. area.

"It was perturbing to me," she says. "I got into playing flag football and things like that, but nothing was as enriching as playing basketball, because that's what I love to do."

Belton says she and other IE directors questioned women at their Merge events and found that more than 60 percent were interested in playing in a highly competitive basketball league.

"That's not including other women who don't come to Merge events that are interested," Belton says. "We know that there's a large demand there that no one has been able to tap into or no one has answered."

Morrow agrees that a women's basketball league was a necessity.

"Trying to find a rec center or league that has a number of women to play can be difficult at best to find," Morrow says. She says she hopes the league will inspire "camaraderie among women, bringing women of different parts of the community together and good, competitive fun."

The league's games will run from mid-January through March and will initially have a six-team minimum, with 10-12 members on each team.

IE makes it easy to register. Those interested can visit the group's website, [www.inhertwined.com](http://www.inhertwined.com), or call 202-498-3804. Women can register as individuals for \$83 and be placed on a team or can form their own team of 10-12 and pay \$820 together. Games are held Thursdays and Sundays at 7 p.m. at Backus Middle School, 5171 South Dakota Ave., NE.

"If it grows, then of course we would consider doing a summer league as well," Morrow says.

Angel McNamara, a professional boxer, says that she signed up for the league so she could connect with other lesbians and because it will allow her to find the competitive basketball outlet her life currently lacks.

"Basketball was a first love," McNamara says. "I played a little through college and high school, so it's also a way to go back to the good old days."

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