



Oh brother!

Twins Carlton, Corey Epps team up to play pro basketball

By [LEE LAMBERTS](#)

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DOUBLE TROUBLE: Twin brothers Corey Epps, left, and Carlson Epps, right, both are playing for the Holland Blast professional basketball team this season. The Blast ignite their inaugural season Friday at the Civic Center against Lansing.

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Yes, two Holland Blast players are homegrown, but head coach Mike Ahrens said he is pleased with his entire team, no matter where the players come from.

The leading scorer in Saturday's exhibition game and the likely team leader for the first-year team from Holland was Carlton Epps, a Benton Harbor High School graduate.

Epps just last year finished his collegiate career at NCAA Division II Ferris State University in Big Rapids.

But Epps and his twin brother, Corey, should be familiar to area basketball fans, especially those who have followed Holland High School over the years.

It was Carlton Epps who almost single-handedly ended the season for the Dutch on March 10 at 21-1 after Holland had breezed to 21 consecutive wins.

In a Class A district final, Epps scored 28 points on 10 of 14 shooting, including five 3-pointers as the Tigers rolled past the Dutch 83-57.

Twin brother Corey Epps added 13 points for Benton Harbor.

Now, both brothers are playing for the Blast.

"I never would have thought that I would have been playing against that team in Holland, then coming back and playing for a team from Holland," Carlton Epps said. "But from what I've heard growing up, I know that this is a good basketball town."

Blast coach Mike Ahrens gladly invited both Epps brothers to a tryout last month and signed them both.

He believes both can contribute.

"They both are excellent defensive players," Ahrens said. "They have speed and quickness. They work very hard. They both can shoot. They have range, too."

A two-time All-GLIAC North Division first-team honoree, Carlton Epps finished his college career ranked high among the school's all-time leaders.

He scored 1,544 points, grabbed 454 rebounds, accumulated 270 steals and 250 assists and knocked down 240 3-pointers.

He also had season records for 3-pointers with 102 in his senior season while collecting 95 steals.

Carlton Epps became only the sixth player in Ferris State history to score over 600 points in a season when he finished the 2004-05 year with 602 points.

Corey Epps, meanwhile, ranks fourth all-time at Ferris in steals and 3-point field goal percentage.

Now back in Holland, the Epps hope that local basketball fans will take him and the Blast for a ride now that the high-school and college seasons have ended.

"I'm glad I'm on this team," Carlton said. "Holland should provide a lot of good support for this team and I think it's real cool that I get to play with guys (at least one, Holland High grad Chad Carlson) who remember that game."

Both Epps brothers are glad to be playing pro basketball.

They barely missed out last year, coming close to making the Grand Rapids Flight roster during their inaugural season.

The Flight went on to finish third in the IBL's East Conference. The Flight and Blast are run by the same group of owners.

"Coach (Mike) Ahrens was an assistant coach for the Flight last year and I tried out but didn't make it," Carlton said. "But he remembered me and Corey. He called and said he was interested and gave us another chance to try out and we made it.

Holland's first regular-season game is scheduled for Friday at 7:15 p.m. at The Holland Civic Center.

In addition to Carlton Epps, those who attend will get to see the following players:

* Duane Bosma (6-9, 230 pounds) is a Hope College grad who finished as the second all-time leading scorer in Hope history with 1,937 points.

* Carlson (6-3, 175) is a another Hope grad who scored 1,034 points in his collegiate career (24th overall) and played for the Grand Rapids Flight last year.

* Dennis Springs (5-6, 160), another Ferris State player, averaged 15.6 points a game for the Bulldogs this season.

* James "Boo" Jackson (6-9, 230) hails from Eastern Michigan University and is the fifth all-time leading rebounder in school history. He had 23 rebounds in a 2005 game against Central Michigan.

* Anthony Parker (6-5, 210), out of Saginaw Valley State, is the third all-time leading scorer in school history with 1,699 points.

* Jared Bledsoe (6-2, 205) comes from Tennessee-Martin. Last year with the Flight, he averaged 16 points a game.

* Kendrick Cornelius (6-2, 175), out of Indiana Tech, averaged 29.5 points a game during the NAIA tournament in his senior season.

* Dominick Melton (6-6, 200), from Wisconsin-Parkside, averaged 20 points and 15 rebounds a game a year ago for the IBL's Akron Lightning.

* Willie Burrell (6-5, 195) was a starter in 2005 at Ferris State.

* Jonathan Steven (6-5, 200), is from Wheaton (Ill.) College, He was the Ireland Superleague scoring leader a year ago (31.5 ppg).

Carlton Epps didn't start in Saturday's exhibition game, but with his 28 points and ability to create a lot of things, he'll get his share of minutes.

"I'm not in the best of shape right now, but just playing some type of ball will

keep me where I need to be," he said. "I'm just trying to do whatever I can to help the team."

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