



**Leading scorer of the tournament, Jordan Bartlett of Team Philippines, captured flying high against Team Panama.**

On Saturday, June 18, 2016, the World Basketball Ambassadors Club (WBAC) hosted their inaugural international showcase at St. Raymond's Gym in the Bronx, N.Y.

WBAC serves as a platform to promote global acceptance of cultures through basketball. Six countries — Philippines, Panama, Dominican Republic, China, Puerto Rico and Jamaica — were invited to bring teams (18 y/o and under) to compete for the event.

Team Philippines was set to play against Team Panama.

Event organizers chose representatives for each team, who were given the responsibility to bring promising athletes.

After careful selection, Coach Simeon "Bong" Ulep, co-founder of Fil-Am Sports New Jersey, reached out to various Filipino-American organizations for players to represent Team Philippines.

Looking at Team Philippines vs. Team Panama, one could easily see the height difference.

However, Team Philippines was not intimidated.

Although lacking in height, they made up for the difference with hustle and intensity.

Both teams played an even first half, leaving for halftime tied at 50-50.

Adjusting to the game, the players exhibited versatility by implementing new defensive strategies.

This ultimately helped them gain the offensive momentum leading to an upset victory over Panama, 125-111.

Both teams played a competitive game and displayed great sportsmanship.

The event was a unique opportunity for Filipino-Americans to represent the Philippines and their *kababayan*.

Countless Fil-Am basketball groups across America compete against each other in tournaments.

In the midst of competition, it is easily forgotten we are all united.

By players embracing their nationality, camaraderie is formed without false intentions and individual recognition.

After the game, Jordan Bartlett, leading scorer of the day with 47 points, commented, "The WBAC was one of the best experiences I've had playing Filipino basketball. Not only was I able to compete with players from all over the globe but we were able to bring together a group of selected athletes that have never played together to showcase our talents. The event was well-organized and it was even cooler playing in front of former NBA stars. It's always a great experience when you are blessed enough to represent your country."

With this mindset, the future of Filipino-American youth is looking bright in keeping the Pinoy pride alive here in America.

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