

SU's Jim Boeheim to unveil basketball courts for kids

Published: Tuesday, October 12, 2010, 9:43 AM Updated: Tuesday, October 12, 2010, 9:58 AM



Mike Waters / The Post-Standard

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[View full size](#)File photoIn partnership with former Syracuse star Carmelo Anthony, coach Jim Boeheim is helping to rebuild basketball courts in the city.

Jim Boeheim knows how important it is for kids to have a place to play.

In his case, it was a neighborhood basketball court back in his hometown of Lyons. Boeheim, who went on to play at Syracuse University where he's been the basketball coach for the past 34 years, spent hours at the court.

"I went to our neighborhood court every day and if I hadn't, I never would have played here," Boeheim said last week. "It was the only place to play."

In partnership with former Syracuse star Carmelo Anthony, Boeheim is trying to provide the same opportunity to kids in the city of Syracuse through Courts 4 Kids.

Courts 4 Kids refurbishes and builds basketball courts on city playgrounds.

On Friday, Boeheim will dedicate the second Courts 4 Kids court in the city of Syracuse.

The ceremony will take place on Friday after at Schiller Park. Wesley Johnson and Jonny Flynn, two former SU players who will be in town for that night's NBA preseason game between their Minnesota Timberwolves and the Detroit Pistons, also will be on hand.

"Hopefully, this will be a place for kids to play and go on to other things," Boeheim said. "With our foundation, we're going to be doing some more grants in the city. This will be the

kickoff for the fall part.”

Fans are invited to attend the opening ceremony on Friday at 2:30 p.m.

The **Carmelo Anthony Foundation** and the **Jim and Juli Boeheim Foundation**, along with a major sponsorship from Time Warner, have provided the financial backing for the Courts 4 Kids effort.

Last year, Boeheim and Anthony unveiled brand new courts at Wilson Park, just a few blocks from the Carrier Dome.

Boeheim said he gets some satisfaction when he drives past Wilson Park on his way to or from the Dome.

“It’s a small step,” Boeheim said, “but it’s still a positive step for kids.”

The Melo Foundation recently sponsored a new basketball court at a playground in Puerto Rico, according to Mike Bristol, the project manager and fund raiser for the Melo Foundation.

“I’m so excited to be a part of this project,” said Anthony, through a spokesperson. “You know, we started this last year with Coach Boeheim, attempting to give kids the healthy option to play outside. Refurbishing this court gives these kids the opportunity to escape from everyday life, and just be kids. And basketball helped me do that when I was growing up. I hope that this court makes a difference in the lives of this community.”

The Schiller Park court got a complete makeover with new basketball goals, bleachers, benches and backboards that can be wiped free of graffiti in the case of vandalism.

Boeheim said his and Anthony’s foundations will be working on another court — and maybe two — in the coming year with a formal announcement within the next couple of months. One location will be at Skiddy Park.

“This second court is just another step,” Boeheim said. “We’re going to do a lot more. I’m hoping by November and continuing on next year. Our foundation’s just getting to the end of our first year. We’ve raised some money and we’re hoping to get more backing to kids in the area.”

Mike Waters can be reached at 470-3086 or mwaters@syracuse.com.