

Williamson Set to Visit China

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Following a breakout junior season on the court in 2010-11, Appalachian State University men's basketball player Andre Williamson departs on Thursday for a three-week tour of China with mission group Athletes In Action.

The group will spend a majority of the trip in Beijing with short visits to several other cities and the team of NCAA Division I players will compete in eight exhibition games and conduct clinics around the country, culminating with a contest against China's U22 national team.

"I'm blessed to have this opportunity in front of me for this summer," Williamson said. "This is the direction that I feel like God wants me to go. It's a great opportunity to play with other guys in similar situations and share this experience with them. The opportunity came to me and my mom really encouraged me to get involved and go for it."

Williamson will be joined on the trip by current players from schools around the country, including representation from teams in the ACC, the Big Ten, Conference USA and the Ivy League.

Aside from Beijing, the team will visit Shenyang, Liaoning and Xi'an. In addition to the 22-and-under Chinese national team, Williamson and the AIA squad will face upper-level Chinese Basketball Association teams as they wrap up the preseason.

Athletes In Action is an organization that allows college athletes a unique opportunity to use sports as a way to help others around the world.

The 6-7 forward scored 8.7 points and led the Mountaineers with 6.3 rebounds and 1.5 blocks per game last season and is one of four starters returning for 2011-12.

Williamson follows in the footsteps of former teammate A.J. Highsmith, who spent 16 days in Israel in the summer of 2008 with Athletes In Action.