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Catchings hopes U.S. team calls

She didn't make the trip to either of the Fever's preseason road games, but superstar Tamika Catchings hopes to be en route to Beijing this summer for the Olympics. In 2004, she helped the U.S. win the gold medal in Athens, an experience the 6-1 forward still describes as "surreal."

Catchings, 28, is among the 29 players on the 2007-08 national team roster and is still being considered for the 12-member Olympic team. USA Basketball's Caroline Williams confirmed Friday an initial group of players will be named this month with the rest by the end of June.

Catchings, who averaged 6.9 points, 5.4 rebounds and a team-high 2.8 steals in Athens, doesn't expect to be on that first list. She remains inactive while rehabbing a pair of injuries from 2007 with no target date set for her return.

"Playing in the Olympics -- that's a big deal -- it's not like you just come off an injury and automatically make a team," Catchings said. "Obviously, my hopes to make it are extremely high."

Fever coach Lin Dunn said playing without Catchings really hurt the U.S. squad in last month's Good Luck Beijing Tournament. The U.S. lost to host China 84-81 in the gold medal game and dropped its opener to Australia.

"I really believe that one of the key things for our Olympic team this year is to get Tamika Catchings back on that team," said Dunn, an assistant on the '92 U.S. bronze medalists. "They need her leadership, they need her rebounding, they need her defense. They just need her."

Fever give Selwyn a start at point guard

Recent pick-up Laine Selwyn started at point guard Saturday in the Fever's 75-64 preseason loss at Seattle. The 5-7 Selwyn logged 30 minutes with three points, three assists and five rebounds.

The Jewish Sports Hall of Famer recently finished her third stint in the Israeli League.

"I had a cousin there I didn't even know. I met her this year for the first time," said Selwyn, who has dual citizenship and completed her college eligibility at Pittsburgh in 2003.

Etc.

For Seattle, Ben Davis graduate Shyra Ely had six points and four rebounds and Katie Gearlds, a former Beech Grove and Purdue star, scored 11. . . . The Fever scrimmaged the Storm on Sunday and were to fly home this morning. . . . Rookie Khadijah Whittington missed the trip to Seattle; she was at her North Carolina State graduation.