



Expert weaver Ashken Binet with two finely woven mats produced at her home village on Arno Atoll recently.

Expert weavers lead Ebeye jaki-ed program

Young women on Majuro and a number of outer islands have been learning the specialized art of weaving jaki-ed style mats over the past several years. Starting this Friday, 10 young women from Ebeye will join the growing ranks of Marshallese who are learning this weaving skill that almost died out.

The University of the South Pa-

cific Majuro Campus is heading the expansion of the weaving program.

USP Coordinator of Continuing and Community Education Tamara Greenstone Alefaio and expert weaver Susan Jieta were scheduled to depart Majuro for Ebeye on Thursday this week for the program's opening ceremony that will take place on Friday this week.

Kwajalein Senator, Iroj Mike Kabua and other local leaders are expected to be at the ceremony to launch the four-month training program.

Alefaio and Jieta have engaged another expert weaver, Tobep Bokin from Ujae Atoll, who has already arrived at Ebeye to be ready for the training. With the start this weekend of Ebeye's weaving training, the Ebeye group will join women on Ailanglaplap, Mejit, Namdrik and Majuro in learning this cultural and marketable skill.

Jieta will work with the young weavers for a month, while Bokin will supervise the training for the entire four months. Alefaio will be there for a week to launch the program.

NBA coach comes to Majuro

Former NBA coach Tom Newell is expected to arrive in Majuro this week for a 10-day visit that will include several days at Ebeye and Kwajalein.

He will be running basketball clinics and speaking to local students about the value of sports. Newell, who was an assistant coach with the Seattle Supersonics, New Jersey Nets and the Dallas Mav-

ericks, will visit the RMI through January 14. He is sponsored by the US State Department's Sports Ambassador program. The US Embassy in Majuro is coordinating the visit together with the National Olympic Committee, the Marshall Islands Basketball Federation, the College of the Marshall Islands, and other basketball-related programs.

Coach Newell is also a represen-

tative of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) and works as one of their Expert Instructors under the International Olympic Committee Solidarity program.

Highlights of the visit will include a morning of basketball clinics for boys and girls at Majuro Middle School next Wednesday, and a three-on-three men's tournament Wednesday afternoon at CMI.

Teams interested to compete in the three-on-three should sign up with the National Olympic Committee at 625-7869. The competition is limited to 16 teams. Newell will run coaching clinics at both Majuro and Ebeye. On his final day in the RMI, January 14, a game between USA-KA and Ebeye teams is scheduled.

Coach Newell brings many years experience to his coaching training

programs. In addition to his experience in the NBA, Coach Newell coached the Japan national basketball team in 2000 and has been active in coaching in China, other parts of Asia and Europe.

Currently, as a State Department Sports Ambassador, he travels around the world teaching coaches and players about the game of basketball.

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