



**Basketball** ▶ The new star signing of Natxo Lezkano's team explains the difficulties he has had

## «To the people who tell me I can't do something, I want to show them that I can»

**JEAN MONTERO** MoraBanc Andorra's new base in the Dominican Republic

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Jean Montero has signed for MoraBanc Andorra this season 23-24. The one who was the best young player of the last campaign in the ACB has had to overcome many difficulties and obstacles during his career, but nothing and no one has stopped the Dominican from continuing to pursue his dreams in the world of basketball, as well as to be able to develop his best game with the tricolor shirt.

**-How is Andorra, since it is so different from the Dominican Republic and Gran Canaria?**

-Well, the weather is very different, life, day to day, living here and more. I understand that, for me or for any athlete, the issue of the city and other aspects does not affect us so much when you already have a mission in mind, that you come to play basketball and to be prepared and focused on the team. The weather has not been so difficult for me. I have been in Spain for some time now and I know more or less the life here in Andorra, which is different. But, I adapt as much as I can.

**-Little by little, right?**  
-Exactly.

**-Do you miss the Dominican Republic? What is your country like?**

- Well, yes, I miss it. I miss my people very much; my family; my father and my mother; I have a child too, a son; my partner. They are there, in the Dominican Republic. I'm working to see if I can take them (to Andorra) very soon so that I don't spend Christmas alone here, so that I can have a nice time. In the Dominican Republic, we take Christmas very seriously and it is very important for us to be with family and loved ones.

**-Is it hard being separated from your**



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**family for so long? how does it feel?**

- Yes, well, for me it has always been a bit hard, since I have been away from home since I was 13 years old, playing outside, in the United States, Mexico and Spain. The first week has always been very hard for me, because I have to go to the Dominican and then wherever I go, and being without my family, leaving customs behind and other things, it's something that at first affects you. But as I

told you, when you have something in mind, a plan, and you want to achieve your personal goals, you know that there are things you have to sacrifice.

**-And as I was saying, you have had this dynamic since you were 13. Are you used to it?**

- Exactly, it's getting a little easier for me. Also, now with the topic of social media, even if we are far away,

we can be close with video calls, text messages and others.

**-Focusing more on the sports field, your exit from Gran Canaria was complicated. Could you tell us your version of what happened?**

-Well, I don't like to give too many details about this topic, since I've left it behind. Personally, I was very hurt by the fact that certain types of news came out that were false, you

know? And at that time they affected me personally. For this kind of thing to come out... All summer we were managing the exit and everything, and in the end, boom! That bomb comes out, just when I was in the Dominican. I remember that I had just woken up (when Gran Canaria published a statement regarding the player). And well, let them say that about me considering that, as I have already said, we had been working throughout the summer and I had already expressed my will and my desire to leave for another team paying the clause, obviously, it hurt me personally, the truth.

**- Did you feel singled out? With too much pressure and maybe things were not as discussed or different aspects were misinterpreted?**

-Exactly. I understand that there is a matter of interest to the club and that they have to defend their image, but where is the personal aspect and professionalism? Let that kind of news come out, even though they themselves know it was fake, you know? When I go on Twitter, for example, many people from Gran Canaria, who don't know things, simply say what they have heard, but without having heard my version or others. They point at me, they tell me that it is not professional and that I am not responsible. For me, it was a bit rough at the time when I was hearing the first news and stuff.

**-But are you calmer now? More rested?**

- Yes, I have now put it behind me, I understand that it is a matter of interest in the business of basketball. When I go there (with MoraBanc Andorra) let's see how they receive me.

**-In your presentation, you explained that you could not find your place in the United States or in the NBA, in the New York Knicks, who in the end re-**

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«I am very fortunate to be here with some Dominican compatriots. I ask them to continue encouraging us»

**jected your signing when you were with them in the summer. What happened there?**

– Practically, I was at the Training Camp with them. I trained very well with the Knicks, they were happy with my work, they offered me a contract, we were negotiating the clause with Gran Canaria; it was not possible in the end and that meant that I was basically out of competition in the Dominican Republic for five or four months. Then there was the FIBA window in November and February, but from August to the end of January I couldn't do anything. Later I was transfer to Real Betis. I was obviously trying to get back to Gran Canaria, they told me there was no place for me anymore and I spent another three months without competing until at the end of December and January I was able to join Betis.

**–You also participated in the World Cup in which you attracted quite a bit of attention despite the elimination against Serbia. It feels like life is throwing obstacles at you and you are overcoming them. How do you see this fact?**

–Since childhood, I have been a very ambitious boy. I like challenges and overcoming them. I'm also very competitive. When there is something that people say «oh, he can't», I want to do it to show them that I can. Everything in life can be achieved with hard work and dedication. For me, these types of obstacles make me want to inspire myself more when it comes to doing things and being able to achieve them. Like I said, I'm very competitive and ambitious too, and to the people who tell me I can't,

I want to prove to them that I can.

**– Last season you were the best young player in the ACB. But this year you signed for MoraBanc Andorra, which has just been descended. How did this move fit in? What vision did you have when signing with the club?**

–With MoraBanc, I remember that last year I already had an offer with them and then the one from Betis came up. Obviously, I wanted to play in the ACB and meet the talent in the league. Later, at the end of the season, the summer negotiations came up, as the previous ones were not productive, but, this was the best option. It is a team that comes from the LEB Or, but Andorra has always been fighting in the ACB and playing good games. And watching the pre-season games, I understood that this option here could fit my type of game very well. Many people are very hesitant about things like «MoraBanc has many players who can score, how would you accept your role?». I accept my role according to my talent. I can do one or both. If I need to score I do. If I need to bring the ball up, I bring it up, you know? With me, there is no problem at all.

**–Do you also have a lot of confidence in the vision of the organization? In other words, does the club give you confidence?**

–Exactly. A lot of confidence. In training, I feel very comfortable, we got along very well with the team and I understand that we will give a lot

of fight here at the ACB this year. I felt very integrated in the dressing room.

**–You also have an old friend here, Tyson Pérez, who although he is now a Unicaja transferred to MoraBanc, was he also a key piece in your signing?**

–Of course, I asked him a lot of questions when the offer arrived. How is life there, so and so? I asked Stan too, when we were in Gran Canaria. They spoke very well to me (of Andorra) and I told them that I will be there and we are going up.

**– The tricolors started the season with irregular sensations, but as the games went on, the team seemed to get used to and adapt to the ACB and that they played better each time. From his point of view, having just arrived after making his debut the other day against Baskonia, how do you see this progression? What factors have driven this evolution?**

–I understand that Andorra comes from the LEB Or, I understand that it is a change of league and must adapt to the new game system. They have a practically complete team with eight players from the previous squad that was in LEB Or and now they are in the ACB and

they have to adapt to the type of game. But I've always bet that, as the games go by, they'll adapt and we'll get better, and well, here we go. We have three wins in a row and hope to continue to get more.

**–What are your short, medium and long term goals?**

–Short term, improve every day, learn something new every day and adapt something new to my type of game. In the mid-term, I understand that we can think about the Copa del Rey in February and be in the Play-Offs at the end of the season, that's very important for me. And in the long term and in the future, I always think about becoming the best player I can be. It doesn't matter how long it takes, I don't know if it will be four years or so. Time and God will tell.

**–Do you want to send a message to the fans? What would you say to the stands?**

–I want to tell them to continue supporting us. We have a lot of beautiful things and we will give a lot of competition. We will compete a lot against the TOP teams from here in the ACB and let them feel part of us and we want to feel part of them.

**–Do you know what part of the Dominicans resident in Andorra plan to attend the match on the 11th of La Bombonera? What message do you send them?**

–Simply, I want to tell you that I am very lucky to be here with some Dominican compatriots, who feel from the farthest point of the world and wherever we are. We are like rice, we are many. The only thing I want to ask is that they continue to encourage Andorra and I send them all a hug. ☺

