

Another Year, A Few More Baskets:
Fatima's New Basketball Season Begins Again

by AMANDA KERRIVAN

The distant swish of a basketball as it enters the hoop and the dull echo of a dribbling basketball is not unfamiliar sounds for one walking the halls of Fatima Academy. However, for these past couple of months, while class has been dismissed and student's have been soaking up the sun, the only sound found at Fatima Academy was deafening silence. But things are quickly changing as class is back in session and the Fatima Royals get their hands back on the basketballs.

Female Basketball has always been a constant thing at Fatima Academy. Notable players, like Jenine Browne are among the many players that have proudly donned the Royal jersey on Fatima's home court. This year, there are ten females that compose the girl's basketball team, said team is coached by one of the two new teachers introduced to the school, Mr Klark Chaytor. He comments on his introduction to the Fatima community, "I am definitely enjoying my time so far here at Fatima. The entire community is welcoming and supportive, and I am looking forward to both the athletic and academic success that will come to Fatima in the future." Grade 12 player, Brenda Daley says, "Seeing as it is my last year as a Royal, I have high hopes but I'm also proud to be apart of the Fatima Royals. My goal is to win a 2A banner, as it's something that will show our hard work. It's going to be very hard to say goodbye, but I'm always going to encourage the younger girls to go on in years to come."

While Mr Chaytor is new to the game of coaching basketball, he has a lengthy athletic history which highlights include baseball, hockey, and a part of his coaching history was dedicated to coaching an All-Star Baseball team. Mr Chaytor speaks on his role as a coach, "For any team, there must be dedication, communication, and hard work. And all these things must be pulled together in order to play a game."

When he first realized Fatima's Basketball reputation, Mr Chaytor said he was undoubtedly impressed, "I really wanted to follow the tradition of strong basketball, it's an important part of both the school and of the community." The school year of 2009-2010 brings a lower student population for Fatima, one that is under the 100 mark, however, this new development did not disconcert the coach, he was merely excited at the prospect, "With the small student base, I hoped to know the students more and to understand them on a personal level, that's something you cannot do at larger schools."

The female basketball program at Fatima Academy is only one part of basketball culture at the school. The new season for the boys team symbolises a new beginning, but it also means saying a goodbye to what most refer to as their 'golden year', their previous basketball 2008-2009 year. The Provincial 3A banner hangs proudly in the Fatima gymnasium, with the U16 banner glowing right next to it.

With the new season beginning, team members are both lost and gained, "I am extremely excited for the new year," Coach Mr Jeff Ivany begins, "we did lose some key players, but we also have some new players that I think will change up the team." He continues, "I think you can replace players, but not teammates and friends. You also cannot replace that chemistry on the floor, that takes time to develop." The coach also explains that there is no new method for the new season, they are just going to play what he has dubbed "Fatima ball", "We're going to play fast, and aggressive. And along the way, we'll work hard and practice hard, and we'll see where

that gets us.” Working hard is exactly what the team is doing. In accordance to Mr Ivany, the team had their first practice on August 15th. Although the Fatima Royals team have not had their first game yet, they are anxiously awaiting the annual upcoming Bridget Memorial tournament scheduled for November.

Two players that are anxiously awaiting to get back on the court, is co-captains Stephen Nash and Bradley Power. Both players have been wearing a Fatima jersey since a very young age, but unfortunately, as this year is their Grade 12 year, it is their last year as a Fatima Royal. Stephen comments, “We had the ideal year last year, we had great games, good moves, and amazing memories. It’s really hard to top that, but it’s our last year and I want to finish it with a bang.” He continues, “It’s hard to think that this is our last year, so I’m making sure that I’m going to make the best of it. When I come back for my graduation next September, I’m going to think the gym looks too bare if there’s no banner from this year of basketball.” Bradley adds, discussing their hard work, “We don’t really see it as something we have to do, it’s mostly something we want to do. It’s hard to think that we’re not going to be in that gym next September at 2:30, as soon as the bell rings.” He finishes, “I think a lot of that has to do with Mr Ivany, he didn’t have to be there with us everyday practising. If we work hard, he works ten times as hard.”

It seems, that the tradition of basketball, the ultimate culture that those from the Fatima community has created from the sport, is not one that is going to end anytime soon. And neither is that sound of the thrilled, roaring crowd or the final buzzer.