



AIA FEATURE STORY By: Don Ketchum

BEAVER DAM BOYS EARN THEIR WAY INTO BASKETBALL TITLE CONSIDERATION

PHOENIX, AZ (February 12, 2009) – The dream of winning a championship does not reside solely in the minds of players from Arizona’s big cities.

Athletes in smaller communities have dreams, too.

A good example is the boys basketball team from Beaver Dam High, a Class 1A school located along a stretch of Interstate 15 that connects Las Vegas with St. George, Utah.

The team was 24-5 in the regular season entering the 1A North Region tournament in Flagstaff starting Friday night (Feb. 13). The top four finishers in the tournament will qualify for the state tournament that begins Feb. 18.

Beaver Dam had some talented athletes but could never quite seem to put things together. Until Pat Jenkins showed up.

He is the fourth head coach in as many seasons. He had a lengthy coaching career in Tuba City, Ariz., Colorado and a few stops in his native Idaho.

“Early on, I felt that we had the ability to do something, to have success,” Jenkins said.

The team went back to basics, and began to show progress from there.

“They were able to adapt,” Jenkins said. “Some of them are still trying to adapt from the free-wheeling style they used to play, but they have come a long way. Each game, we have shown progress.”

The team’s leader is 6-foot-5 ½ senior Jovi Briedel, who is averaging 20.6 points, 13.3 rebounds and 3.9 assists per game. Another key player is 5-11 senior Cody Lemieux, the point guard.

Jenkins said Briedel is a good athlete, a good student and a good individual.

“He’s the ringleader. He does everything, but within the framework of a team effort,” Jenkins said.

“And Cody . . . controls the team on the floor. He is a hustler. He also does everything. On defense, we use a box-and-one a lot of the time and we put him on the team’s best (offensive) player.”

Briedel said the team has the same five starters as it did a year ago, “but now we have come together so much better as a team. Mr. Jenkins seemed to know our talent from the start, and put it all on the line. He has taught us a lot. He expects a lot out of us.”

Briedel said he was caught up in the wide-open style of the past, but added that he has done a lot better under Jenkins’ disciplined guidance.

“He taught me some things I can do underneath the basket. But it isn’t restricted to that. I have learned to shoot better from the outside,” Briedel said.

Jenkins said the team likes to pass and likes to run.

“We can turn the ball over a lot, but we also steal the ball a lot,” he said.

Said Briedel: “He runs us to death in practice, but that’s because he knows what an explosive team we can be. In the past, it seemed like we saved ourselves for the last two quarters, but now we’re jumping on teams in the first quarter, trying to get control early.”

Travel also is a factor for the team. Other than a trip to Fredonia, most of its road trips are six or seven hours, one way.

“When you’re on a little yellow bus for all that time, you can sometimes come out and have to spot the other team eight or 10 points. But the same can be true for teams coming here. Most times, we try to do two games, one on Friday and another somewhere else on Saturday. I guess you kind of have to get used to it,” Jenkins said.

A player has to be in the right frame of mind, and that’s where some of the senior leadership comes in, such as Briedel and Lemieux provide.

“I try to get it into their (teammates’) heads that winning is the hard part, how you handle that and try to keep having success,” Briedel said. “You have to dedicate yourself, have the idea that, hey, we’re going to win no matter what. I just try to give it my all.”

In the region tournament, Briedel hopes to avoid what happened to the team when he was a sophomore.

“We lost in the first round. It was a heartbreaker,” he recalled. “That’s why winning the first game in the regional is important. If we can get that one, we have a chance to do well at state.”

The dream lives on.

Have a Story Idea:

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