

Varsity Basketball

New acquisitions add to the team.

There's an old saying that basketball players and basketball teams are made in the summer. Here at CMA, we don't have that luxury. Our goal at the beginning of each season is to try to mesh our returning players (if we are fortunate enough to have any) with new players as quickly as possible. The result is that we end up experimenting at the beginning of the season to find the best offenses and defenses to run.

The team began the season with a lot of promise. Their potential was evident throughout the season in a series of close games; a six-point loss in the first game of the season at the Governor's School...a two-point overtime loss to Great Falls (a high school league playoff qualifier)...a two-point loss to Heathwood Hall (a SCISA playoff qualifier)...and a close loss to Pinewood Prep (another SCISA playoff qualifier).

Unfortunately, the timing of games after holiday breaks, foul trouble and a lack of depth due to injury and other circumstances were common themes in all the losses. Throughout the losing streak, the coaches were impressed with how well the players got along, and with their "never say die" attitude. A lesser group would have given up, but these players kept saying, "we'll get the next one". They never played with anything less than total heart and effort. Both myself and Coach Darby agreed that they were a good group to be around. Finally, in the last game of the season, we beat the Governor's School to win our first game in two seasons. With the reaction of the Cadet Corps, you would have thought we had won the state championship...it was much appreciated.

I would like to begin by recognizing two people who supported the team...Tyler Dodson who did a great job of keeping our stats and Jamie Burr who ended up being everything you could ask for and more in a manager.

I would next like to recognize the unsung heroes on any team, the reserves who never get enough recognition or playing time, but are important in the development of the team:

Andre Cooper - Known for his three-point shooting, we are looking for him to continue to improve the other areas of his game so that he can be a key contributor next year.
Reece Knutson - A better game player than practice player, he was fun to watch when he got his chance.

Davis McNary - We probably should have beat "old slim" with a stick everyday in practice to get to be meaner and more aggressive. He was our top reserve in the post.

Reginald Singleton - Probably one of the quickest and hardest working players on the team...he had a real enthusiasm for the game. This next group of perseverance reserves and part-time starters:

John Gray - John's forte is aggressive defense. We weren't able to get our man-to-

man defense fully installed until the latter part of the season, and that is when we were really able to take notice of him and he became a starter.

Romani Susewell - "Scoot" played a grand total of 5 games for us...the first game and the last four...the rest of the time he was doing his best. Derek Rose impression and sitting out with injuries. He ended up starting the last two games and left us asking "what if"? We probably could have won those close games if he would have been available. The good news is that he is only a junior.

Randy Yang - Randy has NBA three-point range...which at times wasn't necessarily a good thing...he also developed into a good baseline driver and improved a lot on defense...like John Gray, I wish I could have him for more than one year.

The remainder of the players will be receiving special recognition:

Ian Benton - Won the "Gumby" Award last year for being the most adaptable player on the team; I don't think he appreciated it much, but it was meant as a compliment. He could have won the same award this year, because he ended up playing just about every position on the court. We have a better award...for leading the team in assists at four per game, and for being an extension of the coaching staff on the floor, he is the recipient of the "Floor General" award... in recognition for being the smartest basketball player I have ever had.

Malike McGill - If we had one, Malike would be in the running for the Most Valuable Player Award...no one played with more passion or heart than he did. He was our second leading scorer at 10.7 points per game, and for the second year in a row is receiving the award for being our leading rebounder and shot blocker at 7 and 2 per game respectively...as a side note, he also led the team in fouls.

Nyaun Pate - Nyaun was our "spark plug" all season long...I often wondered where he got the energy to keep up his all-out effort on both the offensive and defensive ends. The shame was that he was constantly driving to the basket and being fouled, but the officials didn't seem to notice. Nyaun would also have been in the running for Most Valuable Player...he is being given an award as our leading scorer at 12.7 points per game and the leader in steals at 3 per game.

Last but not least, **Matt Zimmerman** - Matt started most of the season for us...one day, he came to my classroom and said he would be willing to come off the bench if it would help us get that elusive victory. I ended up taking Matt up on his offer and he continued to play hard and performed as a team player. Because of his perseverance and passion for Spartan Basketball, Matt is receiving the Coaches Award.

Finally, I would like to thank my right hand man and partner, Coach Darby. Most of the time, he is the calm to my storm and the good cop to my bad cop. He spends countless hours supporting the program because he loves the game and loves the players. I am grateful for his assistance and friendship.

