

The Boteler Basketball Club Report On Summer Training Camp 2010

Time To Rebuild

Following the wholesale departure of the school team this year, and in the absence of any committed students in year 9 or 10, we were clearly entering a major rebuilding phase in July. The fixtures between schools in Warrington take place from November to March, which did not give us much time to develop a competitive team, so the focus needed to be on players going into years 8 and 9 in September.

Fortunately there is a core of young players at the school who have some experience of organised competition and these were the first names on my invitation list for summer training. Following advice from the PE department, other good sportsmen were added to the list and eventually about 25 pupils were written to outlining my intention to build a team to win the Warrington Schools Competition in 2013, which would be their third year in the league.

Some live close to school and have no trouble getting to the Ball Hall. The fact that a number of others who live some way off regularly play and were are to attend the training camp is a testimony to the support and commitment of their parents and illustrates what can be achieved when we all work together.

A Positive Start

Our first session was on the afternoon of the last day of term. My older experienced players were shocked to see an influx of young, raw talent and watched with some amusement as the new recruits tried impossible shots, lost control of the ball, dribbled excessively and kept returning to the bench every few minutes out of breath to take on fluids. "Were we really as bad as that when we started, sir?" asked one 18 year old.

However, as we got into some organised basic drills, it became clear that not all were novices and that actually, some of the new players were pretty good for their age. Drills gave way to games and as ever over the years, I did not have to spell it out to the experienced players who instinctively knew their job was to help me bring on their successors so that our high standing in the town would remain intact, rather than to show off. For the younger players, there was the thrill of playing alongside the cream of local basketball talent.

The second week was also well-supported as we began to look at the dynamics of a match; where to stand, how to defend, when to pass and how to find space. Mr Lloyd, already experienced in bringing on young players outside school, provided valuable support as did the ever present Josh Woodward, Tom Bate, Mikey Lyon, Ash Latham and Danny Cox. After these initial two weeks we moved from Friday afternoon in the Ball Hall to the intimacy of the Boteler Gym on Friday mornings.

In order to excel at any sport you need to be committed and follow regular routines to embed the basic skills that will bring victory in competition. Fancy moves and loss of concentration do not achieve this. Over the next few weeks training sessions were attended by a regular group of players and took on a familiar routine each week. Cameron Burrows and Dylan Waters got there 20 minutes early every week, Renz Kae Agpoon and Luke Gallimore followed, then Jacob and Matty Lloyd, Josh Woodward, Tom Bate, Danny Cox and Mikey Lyon brought along Andrew Armstrong from Y7. Matthew McCready came in from Runcorn several times as did Suman Rahman-Ali, Nathan and Jack White, Josh Carmichael and Dan Swann from Newman. Several others made a couple of appearances but of course family holidays ate into the programme for many.

There were welcome cameo appearances by Ash Latham, Josh Turner and Daz Cox so that by the end of the two months of training we had averaged 17 players per week, an increase of 2 on last year. Each week we worked on layups, shooting, positional play, passing, fast breaks, foul shooting, defence systems and rebounding, but above all players began to trust each other and play more for the team than for themselves. By the time we went back in the Ball Hall again on September 3rd, it was a totally different group of players.

Hopefully, everyone learned what they were good at and what they need to work on. It is impossible to be good at all aspects of the sport; leaving aside the basics, you must be able to analyse what you are the best at and maximise your contribution in those areas. We can't all dribble like TJ, defend like Mikey, rebound like Ash, shoot like Tom, layup like Declan or pass like Rocky but we can choose one or two of them to copy and play our part in the team.

I congratulate all the players who came in this summer and especially thank my senior players for helping me bring on the next generation. For me, Fridays were as usual the highlight of the week throughout the summer and I look forward to many more as we set our sights on the next victory.

Hugh Chambers, Basketball Coach