



RYAN HUTTON/ staff photos

Lawrence's Julio Vicenta passes the ball underneath the reach of a New Mission defender during Monday's North Andover Fall League title game at North Andover.

GIANT STEP

Trimmed-down Reyes carries Lawrence to fall title

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NORTH ANDOVER — Big man. Bigger goal.

Huge in fact.

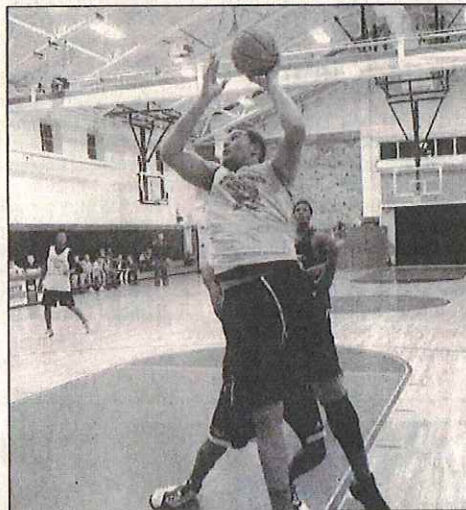
But after the performance of Franziel Reyes and his Lawrence High boys hoop teammates, who's going to counter when he notes:

"The goal is a state championship, our only goal. It's been our only goal since we finished last year. And right now, I feel like we are the best team in the state."

Reyes and the Lancers finished the off-season double last night at the Hermann Youth Center. The Hoops for Hope Summer League champs showed no let-up with the change of seasons, knocking off Londonderry, 70-42, and then New Mission High of Boston, 55-45, to claim the North Andover Fall League title.

Immense in both the semis and finals, Reyes took home the Fall League MVP, a much-deserved award according to his coach.

"He dominated on both the defensive and offensive



Lawrence's Franziel Reyes goes up to the hoop during Monday's North Andover Fall League title game against New Mission, won by the Lancers 55-45.

ends with his size," said coach Ray Nunez of his 6-foot-9 center. "I think he's finally beginning to realize his potential, and his teammates are showing an awful lot of trust in him."

Reyes couldn't be stopped early. Showing his usual

soft touch and a quick first step that is clearly the product of the 17-year-old dropping 52 pounds from 307 to 255, he dropped in 31 against Londonderry.

His improved conditioning clearly presented itself in the final — game 2 of the

night for Lawrence and New Mission. It was more like a track meet, but Reyes played nearly the whole game, leading the Lancers with 22 points.

"I'm working out more, playing a lot and I'm getting better every day," said Reyes. "I'm still a work in progress, both physically and mentally and I've got a long way to go."

Reyes' goal is to get down to about 240 pounds by January at the time that the Merrimack Valley Conference schedule hits its full stride.

"Now we just have to win the one season that really matters," said the Lancers' coach Nunez wryly.

The Lancers-New Mission battle was an up and down affair. The visitors from Boston got a look at how the Lancers can be in a frenetic defensive game.

Julio Vicente had 11 Lancer points, while Dantae Neal added 10 and Kenny Castro nine.

In the semifinal, Londonderry was led by Cody Ball, who had 22 points.