

NA FALLBALL 2016 WEEK#3 RECAP ACCORDING TO FENNIS DEMBO

Week # 3 was the best week so far this fall. The games were on the most part very competitive and guys really left it on the floor. Parents and Junkies packed the barn and end zone seating was still available on the north side. Coaches' row was standing room only both nights and yes they found their way down to the McDome for the two games at Brooks. League assignor Stormy Napolitano was out of town but the zebras brought their A game to the games this week. Without further delay lets' get to the games in week 3



SJP V METHUEN WAS A BARN BURNER

CHELMSFORD 64 BURLINGTON 62: The Lions came out fast and furious building a double digit lead early in the first half. They would maintain that lead till early second half when the Red Devils began to play with a sense of urgency, made shots and amped up their defense. Chelmsford never relinquished the lead and held on for their first win of the season

NEW MISSION 57 LONDONDERRY 52: The Titans are still the team to beat in this league but they had to flat out earn this win as Londonderry just knows how to play. New Mission had a couple of chances to blow this open but the Lancers don't get down on themselves and just keep battling. **Alex Delarossa** was huge for the Titans and with **Jake Coleman** not having his best game the Lancers got great efforts from junior point guard **Cole Britting** and sophomore **Ethan Garafolo**



Sophomore ETHAN GAROFALO WAS SPECIAL THIS WEEK

PEABODY 53 WACHUSETT 47: In an even matchup the Tanners went over .500 for the first time in their NA Fall Ball career. The Tanners have better chemistry this year and have better talent also. Wachusett played their best basketball late but need to compete from the tip to the final whistle and like their inaugural season they will figure this out as the fall goes along



PEABODY ABOVE .500 FOR 1ST TIME

ST PETER-MARIAN 50 ANDOVER 47: With John Pagnetti back for his second tour of duty on the Andover bench he had the Warriors finally playing tough. Andover still missing major pieces but they battled this week. SPM is one of our three undefeated teams and they defended when they needed and made enough hoops to win. Slight concern is the Guardians uncharacteristically got away from staying together as a team. They need to get back to that if they want to continue their undefeated ways

NORTH ANDOVER 46 HAVERHILL 38. This was all Hillies early as they were the tougher team for the first half but roles reversed in the second half as the Knights became tougher and physically and literally locked up the hillies for a 9 minute stretch. **Connor Rogers** was terrific as the Knights move to 2-1

TEWSKBSURY 57 WESTFORD 41: The first 6 minutes of the game the score was 5-0 as both teams were inept offensively but the Redmen got it together and exploded to a big half time lead. In the second half the Grey Ghosts figured it out and battled back to get it to single digits but Tewksbury rallied back to take the 16 point win

CENTRAL CATHOLIC 72 LOWELL 33: The Raiders sent messages to FALLBALL, THE MVC AND THE MIAA tonight as they completely demolished the Red Raiders. Total team effort as every player contributed. Lowell who has played well the first two games were demoralized and body language was not good. Lowell will figure it out but very impressive outing by CC

SJP 50 METHUEN 48: The eagles are very good but they need to match intensity the entire game. This was a dangerous game as the Rangers never back down, are never out of the game and play every possession. SJP looked like they had this wrapped up with 3 minutes left but Methuen was relentless and was one missed shot from forcing overtime or winning. Good game

SALEM 44 PELHAM 41: Blue Devils had command of game but the Pythons didn't go away and this one ended up being closer than it should have. Teams' two best players didn't disappoint. Griff Curtis of Salem had 22 and Kyle Frank of Pelham had 15

LAWRENCE 65 TRITON 45: The lancers will be a tough out in this league and they move to 2-1 with twenty point win. This is not a great matchup for the Vikings but very helpful in their master plan. Every Lancer contributed tonight



GAME OF THRONES FANS KNOW –

WINTER IS COMING

WEEK 3 RESULTS

LAWRENCE 65 (CHRIS RUIZ 14)

SALEM 44 (GRIFF CURTIS 22)

CHELMSFORD 64 (AUSTIN CHADWICK 29)

NEW MISSION 57 (ALEX DELAROSSA 19)

PEABODY 53 (JUNIOR ESTRELLA 16)

ST PETER-MARIAN 50 (JUAN ZORILLA 13)

NO. ANDOVER 46 (CONNOR ROGERS 14)

TEWKSBURY 57 (ADAM PACHECO 21)

CENTRAL CATHOLIC 72 (COLIN BRADANESE 14)

SJP 50 (TOMMY ONEIL 15)

TRITON 45 (WILL PARSONS 12)

PELHAM 41 (KYLE FRANK 13)

BURLINGTON 62 (MARIANO RODRIGUES 22)

LONDONDERRY 52 (JAKE COLEMAN 18)

WACHUSETT 49 (ERIC BJORN 14)

ANDOVER 47 (TOM CAMPARATO 13)

HAVERHILL 38 (JOEY FENDERSON 17)

WESTFORD 41 (JON GLIDDEN 9)

LOWELL 33 (ALEX RIVERA 14)

METHUEN 48 (EVAN HARDY 17)

NEXT WEEKS SCHEDULE: PLEASE REFER TO WEBSITE WWW.NAFALLBALL.COM

TEAM OF THE WEEK: Team of the week nominees are Central Catholic, Lawrence, No Andover & Tewksbury. All four played well but clear winner was **CENTRAL CATHOLIC**. The Raiders statement game and everyone locked in. Contributions were many and guys were very supportive of each other. Congrats Raiders!



CAN THIS YEARS TEAM DO WHAT THIS TEAM DID?

GAME OF THE WEEK: We had some great games as week 3 was our best week. Chelmsford v Burlington were two teams fighting for respect in this league. New Mission v Londonderry was a battle of two top teams that did not disappoint but the game of the week was **METHUEN V SJP**. Methuen bench was the loudest we have heard this year. Eagles exerted their will length wise but Methuen just flat out plays. Crazy and hectic last few minutes. Bodies on the floor, tough shots made by both teams. A great game to end week 3

DO YOUR JOB WINNER WEEK #2 WINNER: A Number of names that will be on this list every week are **CONNOR ROGERS, GIO CHAMPA & ANDREW MARCELINO**. Besides these three this week nominees are **NAVIN CRUZ, JON GLIDDEN, MARIANO RODRIGUES, KEVIN SWEENEY, MATT MCLAUGHLIN, BOBBY LETOURNEAU** but this week we have co winners. **COLE BRITTING** of Londonderry with 7 points, 13 assists, 8 rebounds and has grown as player. Two years ago as a frosh he was shell shocked playing New Mission. Tonight he was one of the best players on the floor. **VICTOR MWAURAH** of CC will never stuff the stat sheet but tonight he was very good and noticed by the college coaches on coaches' row. He scored 8 points and didn't have an assist but his hockey assists that may have been double digit is what real basketball guys see. His defense and his steady play at the point were also **DO YOUR JOB** worthy. **Congrats COLE AND VICTOR**



Cole Britting along with Victor Mwaurah were our winners of DO YOUR JOB in week 3

PLAYER OF THE WEEK:

The nominees: **GRIFFIN CURTIS (SALEM) AUSTIN CHADWICK (CHELMSFORD) ALEX DELAROSSA (NEW MISSION) BOBBY LETOURNEAU (SPM) COLIN BRADANESE (CC), TOMMY ONEIL (SJP) ADAM PACHECO (TEWSKSBURY), SAM BATISTA (PEABODY)** There were some great performances this week but **ALEX DELAROSA** was the best of the best. I have always been a fan of Alex and when he plays like he did tonight he is special. He had 19 points 10 rebounds, made his free throws and made plays. Only negative a few too many turnovers. **Congrats ALEX DELAROSA OF NEW MISSION WEEK 3 PLAYER OF THE WEEK**



ALEX DELAROSSA WK 3 P.O.W

STANDINGS: PLEASE GET USED TO SEEING THE UPDATED STANDINGS ON THE WEBSITE WWW.NAFALLBALL.COM YES TOTAL TRANSPARENCY TO KNOW WHERE YOU STAND

ZEBRAS: In week #3 we had, James Slattery, Julien Scott, Paul Slattery, Ted Slattery, Kevin Boutilier, Ralph Sully, Ken Pigeon, Tracy Mitchell, Brian Gleason, Eddie Colon. Zebras did a nice job this week. Not everyone is going to agree on every call but folks should be pleased with the caliber officials we have week in and week out

COLLEGES IN THE BARN. WHAT A WEEK ON COACHES ROW!!!! The place was packed on both Monday and Tuesday Night: Thank you **SOUTHERN MAINE CC, ANNA MARIA COLLEGE, GORDON COLLEGE, REGIS COLLEGE, COLBY-SAWYER COLELGE, THOMAS COLLEGE (ME), UMASS DARTMOUTH, CURRY COLLEGE, KEENE STATE, SALEM STATE. LASELL COLLEGE, PINE MANOR COLLEGE, BRIDGEWATER STATE, SUFFOLK UNIVERISTY, UNIVERISTY OF NEW ENGLAND, ST JOSEPHS COLLEGE, ENDICOTT COLLEGE. AFTER 3 WEEKS WE HAVE SEEN 26 DIFFERENT COLLEGES. WE HAVE CONFIRMATION FROM 11 NEW ONES IN NEXT TWO WEEKS**

THE SIGN IN LOBBY WILL ALWAYS LET YOU KNOW WHO IS HERE

Every year NA FALLBALL does more to help players get appropriate and realistic college exposure. When we say coaches are here they are here!!!!

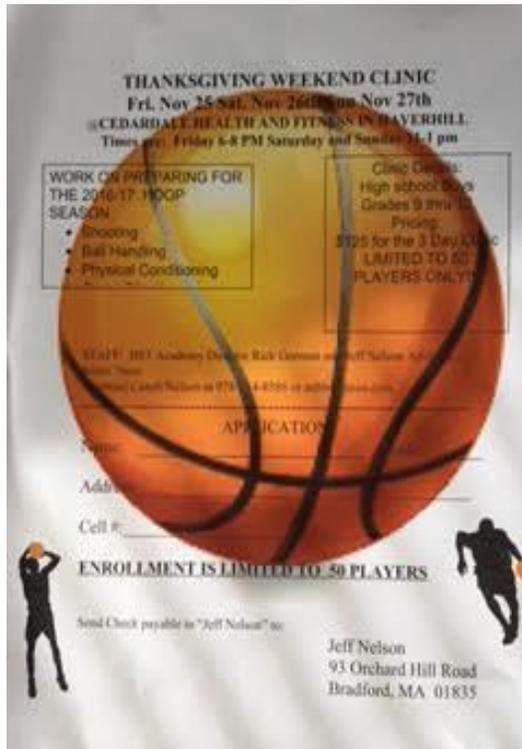


SOME OF THE COACHES THIS WEEK

NUTS AND BOLTS:

- For parents/fans, schedules and fall ball articles are at the front desk. Please sit in designated areas. You cannot sit on coaches row
- College coaches please see Rick for comprehensive college coaches' package as well as rosters package. These are not for the public, only coaches
- PARKING is in the YC Lot or you can park on Johnson or Milk streets
- Teams you do not have access to YC till 5pm and Brooks till 7:45pm
- Players Know the Rule: **NO 2016 LEAGUE REVERISBLE, NO PLAY, NO NEGOTIATIONS**
- Teams please pick up bench area when game is over
- All live tweets and player of game pics posted on **@fennisdembo87**
- Games need to start on time. Teams coming from a distance, please plan accordingly. **THIS WEEK A FEW GAMES STARTED A BIT EARLY.....BE THERE**

- Volunteer coaches please make sure you know the rules of engagement. See Rick if you have any questions **ESPECIALLY PLAYING WITH 5 FOULS RULE**
- Meeting areas for teams is front and back stairwell, first floor game room and outside



ANNUAL FINAL TUNEUP THANKSGIVING WEEKEND. PROGRAM WILL SELL OUT FOR 6TH STRAIGHT YEAR. Clinic held at Cedardale Athletic Club in Haverhill

FACES IN THE CROWD ON WEEK #3

Former UMASS LOWELL star John Pagnetti, Buddy Noble, Mr. Melanson, Phil Conners and Pops Conners, David Brown, Charlie Micol and coach Dave, Dan Halloran, The real life mothers of turkey town, Cory McCarthy, The Brittings of Londonderry, The Garafalos, Mr. Chisolm, Tom Gibbons, The Dions, Tom Coffey, former Merrimack star Ed Colon, Eagle Tribune sports editor Bill Burt, Coach Faz, Alan Hibino, Mr. Kim, The Wittens of Andover, Marcus Watson, Bobby Letourneau #1 fan, Colin Lee Grandfather, The North Andover Mens Guild, Paul Tanglis and Paul Tanglis senior, NA football stars Darren Watson and Jake McElroy, The Fendersons, new Haverhill coach Souleymane Wane. John Warden of NA & WA fame, Mrs. Glidden, Mrs. Almasian, Bill Brinklow, the Redmen coaching staff, Mr. Giuggio, Rick Nault, Big Jim Z, Manny Sanchez Sr. Dr. Chad Downer, former CC coach Sue Downer, the Homseys of Windham, George Yorke and the Smiths of Salem, NH. Loud student fan from Lowell, Bobby Micalzyk, Mr. Nunez, The SJP Padres, Roger Hardy, Ryan Middlemiss, Nick Napps, Mr. Solomon, Mrs. Rivera, Andrew Marcelino uncle, Anthony Faradie, Rob McLaughlin, Dean Colletti, Mike Larson, Father Frank and fans of the snake pit, David Clay, The Parsons, Pepe Lepu, Will Hommonay's father, Justin

Barry, All the polo wearing coaches in coaches' row, Alex Rivera mother, WWE expert Justin Barrasso, Nurse Julia, the Lovely Lindsay Scarpa, Mr. Relihan, John Dullea and yet another SJP assistant, former UMASS Lowell star Matt Welch, a dressed down coach Bouda, IR player Dennis Quinn,

FASHION OF THE WEEK: We had a few nominees: Coach Pags with the very bright orange polo. One Lowell fan wore a very interesting pair of very long white capris' One mother was dressed as nurse and I am sure she was really a nurse. Buddy Noble had the patented white socks and shoes look preferred by the seniors but the clear winner was Westford volunteer coach and former Stonehill star ADAM BRAMANTI with a very impressive casual business look. Adam gets the free slice



Former Stonehill star and present Westford Academy volunteer coach ADAM BRAMANTI, Week 3 Fashion of the Week



Week #3 TOP 5 PET PEEVES: Every week we highlight our pet peeves. Yes we are perfectionists so we expect the game to be played the right way. Effort mistakes are tolerable but many of these throughout the fall will give true basketball people angina

5. **WHEN THINGS DON'T GO YOUR WAY; YOU POUT.** I was a bit disappointed in a few of the better players in this league who pouted, didn't get back on defense and pointed fingers. Boys; like real life you need to deal with adversity on the court. College coaches on the row notice that stuff along with real basketball folks. **GET EMOTIONALLY TOUGHER**

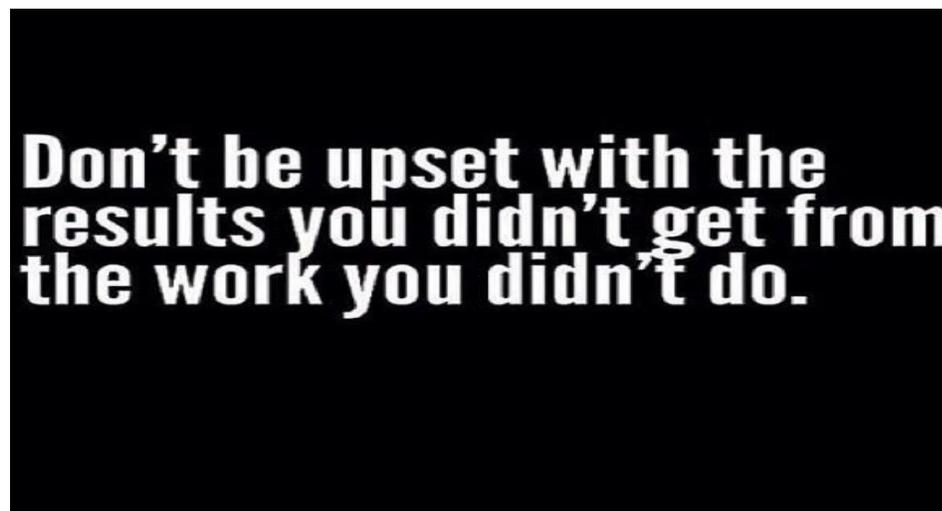
4. **PLAYERS THAT CAN'T or WON'T CONSISTENTLY PLAY HARD.** A real player doesn't turn the switch on and off depending on how you feel, who you are playing or who is watching. A number of kids should take notice of **ANDREW MARCELINO, THE MITCHELL TWINS AND CONNOR ROGERS** along with others. **They never take plays off**

3. **PLAYERS THAT ARE UNSURE WHAT TO DO WHEN THE BALL IS SWUNG TO THEM.** You can't hesitate and panic, be in triple threat and know what you want to do before the defense reacts and makes you look silly. **BE A PLAYER!**

2. **PLAY IN A STANCE.** You will hear this often from me and is a pet peeve of mine 365 days a year. **PLAY IN A STANCE TO BE A PLAYER WHO CAN MAKE PLAYS OFFENSIVELY AND DEFENSIVELY**

1. **PLAYERS WHO ARE NOT STRONG WITH THE BALL.** You can't be fragile, you can't get bumped off the ball when a cool breeze comes in from the barn door, you can't be strong with the ball when your off balance, know how to pivot and protect the ball. **BE BASKETBALL STRONG!**

GET BETTER.....GET BETTER.....GET BETTER



WHO BROUGHT IT IN WEEK # 3

Salem will go as far as **Griffin Curtis** can take them. The senior wing continues his strong fall leading the Blue Devils to their second win with a game high 22 points. **Matt McLaughlin** 8 points and **DJ Colleti** 6 points are good pieces but Salem has got to have more bodies and more contributors. Pelham will not be as strong as the last two years but they will battle. **Kyle Frank** is garnering good college interest as a hard -nosed guard who is tough. Tonight he had a team high 15 points. Freshman **Drew Brown** is not his brother at this age but he is going to have a very nice career for the Pythons. His best scoring output this fall with 9 points. I am intrigued with sophomore guard **Blake Woekel** who is coming along nicely.

Lawrence wins big this week and they have added a nice piece with **Luis Reynoso** who debuted with 9 points. **Chris Ruiz** was very solid with 14 points and two threes. **Juan Felix Rodriguez** is one of the best players in the league. This week his heroics were not needed but still scored 9 points. **Ahian Rodriguez** had 8 points with good board work and **Angel Vazquez** had 8 points. Triton was led once again by **Will Parsons** with 12 and **Jack McCarthy** with 11.

Burlington's **Mariano Rodriguez** had his best fall game with 22 points 7 assists and 7 rebounds. He also had 3 steals. Mariano needs to continue to listen to assistant coach David Brown. **Will Melanson** was solid with 13 points 4 assists and 6 rebounds. Will is very intriguing to coaches' row. **Mike Demartins** is a nice piece to the puzzle for Burlington. Tonight he had 15 points, 3 assists and 4 rebounds. Chelmsford was once again led by their stud **Austin Chadwick** who scored 29 and had 13 rebounds. **Josh Sogade** with his best game of the fall with 15 points and 9 rebounds including 3 threes which was a complete surprise to me. **Kevin Sweeney** does his job with 13 points and 10 rebounds this week.

Alex Delarosa as mentioned earlier was our week 3 POW. **Charlie Mitchell** 9 points and **Charles Mitchell** 12 points and 3 assists were their usual cool customers. **Kevin Nunez** was steady with 8 points and 6 rebounds. **Shaq Murray** was also a big piece of the win with 9 points and 3 rebounds. **Jake Coleman** did not have his best game as the Titans really tried to shut him down but he did will his way to 18 points 2 assists and 6 rebounds. **Cole Britting** was terrific at the point with 7 points 13 assists and 6 rebounds earning co- DO YOUR JOB WINNER this week. Sophomore **Ethan Garafolo** was big. He wasn't afraid of the stage and had 17 points and 3 assists. **Dakota Bertrand** contributed 6 points

Peabody got a great game from **Sammy Batista** who is a real intriguing freshman. This week Sammy scored 16 points had 2 assists and 7 rebounds. The athletic **Junior Estrella** played more under control this week and was very productive scoring 16 and grabbing 9 rebounds. **Chris Canella** has put back to back games together. This week a similar line 14 points 3 assists and 4 rebounds. **Chubkim Onuwuogo** continues to do some damage on the boards with 8 caroms. For Wachusett, senior **Eric Bjorn** continues his consistent play and is garnering good college interest. This week 14 points and 11 rebounds. **Joey Nuttall** is becoming a fall ball favorite with how he plays. This week 8 points, 4 assists and 8 rebounds

St Peter-Marian sophomore captain **Bobby Letoruneau** drives the ship. His stats were not off the charts this week but he just knows how to play the game and how to run a team. **Juan Zorilla** got frustrated tonight and needs to take better care of the ball but did some nice things to the tune of 13 points, 3 assists and 9 rebounds. **Shamar Sims** was very consistent with 10 points and 7 rebounds and **Shemar Dennis** 9 points and 10 rebounds. Nice night for **Andrew B** with 9 points and 6 rebounds. Andover battled tonight after laying down last week against NA. **Tommy Comparato** was a nice surprise with a team high 13 points. **Timmy Kalantzakos** was back to old form with 12 points 2 assists and 2 rebounds. **Brandon Witten** is off to a slow start but we saw the other night things he can do to help this team with 6 points 3 assists and 4 rebounds. **Emmet Kim** contributed 7 points and **Ryan Puglisi** is just a grinder, fighting for 7 rebounds

Connor Rogers was player of the game vs Haverhill. The kid is just a joy to watch 14 points 1 assist 5 rebounds, 3 steals, 1 charge taken and played the whole game. Physically and mentally a tough kid. Jr **Chim Ogwuru** is really buying in and when he made that decision his game has flourished. Tonight 12 points and 4 rebounds and his speed was a factor. **Jack Fowler** has put back to back games together and tonight 8 points and 10 rebounds. Matt Rosenthal had 6 points and 5 assists. **Ben O'Connell** had 4 points and 6 rebounds off the bench. **Joey Fenderson** with a team high 17 points. Hillies need to find ways to get him even more shots. **Navin Cruz** continues his hot fall with 12 points and 12 rebounds. **Avery Ceron** gave the Hillies 7 points and 3 rebounds. Problem tonight for the Hillies is they did not get production from others.

Tewksbury has been a bit of a surprise this year and a lot of it is this team really likes each other. It helps they are getting big production from what will be their big guns this winter. **Gio Champa** gets things done and goes about it in the right fashion. This week had 20 points, 3 assists and 11 rebounds. **David Giuggio** is a different player this year. He was a bit frustrated last fall playing behind some veteran players but this year the body language and the production is very good. This week David had 14 points 5 assists and 8 rebounds. Sophomore **Adam Pacheco** is small but this week he played very big with 21 points and was 5-6 from deep. For the Grey Ghosts the start of this game was painful as they flat out could not score. **Jon Glidden** coming off his best fall ball game last week struggled in the first half but had a productive second half with 9 points, 4 assists and 8 rebounds. **Justin Dulczeski** was good with 5 points and 8 rebounds. **Armen Almasian** rallied for ten points and 5 rebounds.

As stated Central Catholic sent a message this week. Love how the guys were into it and loved the production. **Colin Bradanese** played harder this week and led the team with 14 points. **Sam Lara** was a stat stuffer with 6 points, 4 assists, 6 rebounds, 3 steals. **Matt Downer** came off the bench and played with confidence burying two 3's The heart and soul **Kevin Fernandez** had 7 points, 5 assists and 9 rebounds. **Dom Keegan** is very much improved and can stretch the defense with his outside shot. **Cam Homsey** would always make a team cause how hard he plays and his willingness to mix it up. The guy who impressed the most was senior **Victor Mwaurah** who was co- winner of DO YOUR JOB. Do not overlook this kid; he helps his team win

every week. Lowell needs to forget this game and just move on. The Red Raiders were outplayed in every aspect of the game. They were frustrated, they did not fight through the adversity they will have to this winter. **Alex Rivera** is their best player but tonight it wasn't vintage Alex but he still led the team in scoring with 14. Freshman **Carlos Nunez** continues to impress with his motor and fearlessness. The Red Raiders will respond in week 4.

Our game of the week was SJP vs Methuen. I still need SJP to put the whole game together. They are 3-0 but if they don't a loss is on the horizon and the last few minutes of dysfunction saw Methuen almost put them in the loss column this week. **Tommy O'Neil** continues to show he is a MVP candidate with 15 points and 9 rebounds this week. **Colin Lomasney** had his best game with 7 points and 8 rebounds. **Brett McNiff** intrigues the college coaches with his willingness to do the dirty work. **Matt Relihan** continues to cement his key role for the Eagles. Methuen got a team high 16 points from **Evan Hardy** before he left the game with an ankle injury. **Dante Rivera** is so improved and so important to this team. This week 9 points 4 assists 3 rebounds, 3 steals. **Kashous Solomon** with his best fall ball game with 10 points and 6 rebounds but must cut down on turnovers. The Freshman **Uriel Cerino and Christian Ovalles** are coming along nicely and will be key contributors this winter. The Rangers most important player is **Andrew Marcelino**. He scored 7 points and had 11 rebounds but the most impressive thing was he shot the worst he ever has 1-17 from the field, all good shots but he didn't kick trash cans, pout, point fingers he just played every possession like it was the last time he was going to ever step on the court. Kids could learn a lot about dealing with adversity from Andrew and I don't think he will ever go 1-17 again.

POWER RANKINGS – AFTER WEEK TWO WE ESTABLISH THE WEEKLY POWER RANKINGS. YOU NEED TO BRING IT EVERY WEEK. I REPEAT EVERY WEEK!!!

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
1. NEW MISSION 3-0	1. NEW MISSION 2-0
2. ST JOHNS PREP 3-0	2. SJP 2-0
3. CENTRAL CATHOLIC 2-1	3. ST PETER-MARIAN 2-0
4. LAWRENCE 2-1	4. CENTRAL CATHOLIC 1-1
5. ST PETER-MARIAN 3-0	5. LAWRENCE 1-1

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN: LONDONDERRY 2-1 METHUEN 1-2 NORTH ANDOVER 2-1

THE WEEKLY RANT: FOOD FOR THOUGHT OR FOOD FOR THE DUMPSTER.....YOU DECIDE

Your Most Important Player May Not Be Your Leading Scorer! Valuing Importance in a world that looks at scoring first

When the eagle tribune wants me to report the results of NA Fall Ball they ask for the leading scorers in each game. We are guilty in this recap of doing the same thing. I report the results

and then name the leading scorer. When folks inquire about the league the first question is who was the leading scorer? As we all know it is very important to have guys that can score. We have some guys in this league that can score and do many other things well but we also have scorers that can really only score and lack skill in other aspects of the game.

What is very intriguing to me is that many teams' **most important** player is not their leading scorer. A teams' most important player in my mind is someone who is not one dimensional, they must be able to do a lot of things well, **THEY NEED TO POSSESS THESE AND MORE:**

BASKETBALL IQ: A teams' most important player must have a high basketball IQ and a real feel for the game. Someone who understands "how" to play the game and someone who makes others around him better. He has to be an extension of the coaching staff and many cases a teams' absolute smartest player

STRONG SKILL DEVELOPMENT: A teams' most important player has to be better than average in all areas of the game. They have to be open to be taught and coached hard to be the best player than can be. The most important player does not need to be told to be in the gym they are already there

MENTALLY TOUGH AND BASKETBALL STRONG: Not enough emphasis and credit is given to a player who is mentally tough. They don't pout when things are not going well, they don't panic when the opposition goes on a run. When you look at the player and he is even keeled you have an important player and a winner. Basketball strong is a term we use and Suffolk U HC Jeff Juron used this week. Important players don't have to be physical specimens they need to be basketball strong. They don't get bumped off the ball, they dive for loose balls they have no problem mixing it up

LEAD BY EXAMPLE: Most important players on a team lead on the court and off. They may have different styles but they lead and teammates follow. Important players let their game do the talking not their mouths. They make the team better and they shine when a team is facing adversity. Anybody can lead when you are up 20. Can you lead when your team is getting run out of the barn

KNOW WHAT THEIR TEAM NEEDS AT ANY GIVEN TIME: Most important players know when they need to score more, when they need to distribute more and they are not afraid to take on any challenge that comes their way

THEY PLAY EVERY POSSESSION. Most important players don't play when they feel like it or they don't play when they are playing against certain teams or when certain people are watching them. They love the game and they respect the game

THEY LEAVE THE EGO AT THE DOOR: Most important players don't sound the bugle they know who they are, they are over themselves and the only thing that matters is WE OVER ME. They don't run over to scorers' table, they don't beg to have their picture taken because that is not important to them

THEY CHOOSE TO DEFEND. Why bring up defense because your most important player does not have to be told to play defense. He is probably your best defender or your “smartest” defender

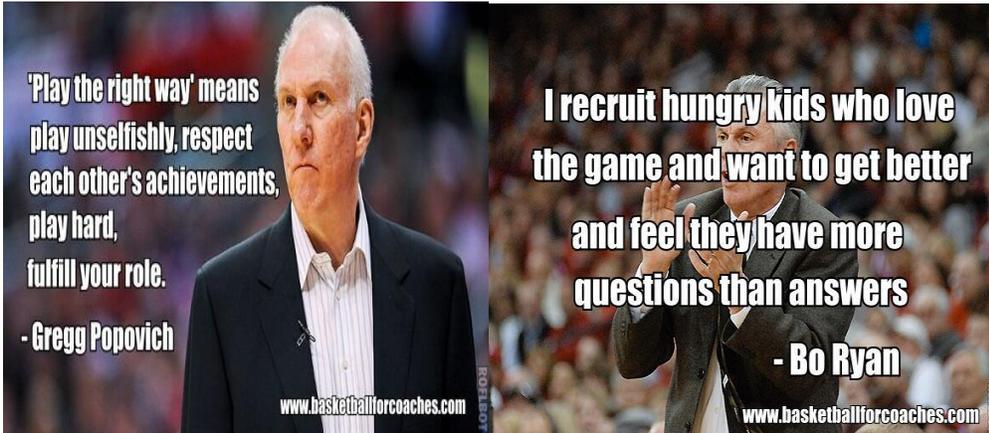
THEY DO THINGS THAT DON'T GET IN THE SCOREBOOK THAT HELP YOU WIN: Taking charges, getting on the floor, hockey assists, defend, communicate etc

THEY ARE NOT SELFISH. They represent your team, school and community the right way. They tend to be the one leading the cheers when the last guy off the bench scores. They are not too cool to get a teammate a water.

THEY HAVE THEIR COACHES BACK: They are the first to ask how their coach is doing after a loss, they hold teammates accountable, and they follow the principles set forth by the staff

We can name a number of other traits but I think you get the gist. This league has a fair amount of guys that fill that bill. Before everyone gets defensive about their own guys, we don't have the time to talk about all of the kids that may fit this bill but there a few that in the first three weeks that have demonstrated this clearly. Tewksbury **Gia Chiampa** does pretty much everything for his team. With the Redmen being small he is covering the other teams 4/ 5 man. He scores when his team needs him to score, he is physically playing at a high level every night. He makes his teammates better, rebounds relentlessly and goes about his business quietly. North Andover **Connor Rogers**, another big guard that does everything Gio does, plays every minute and is always in the right place at the right time doing the right thing. I fully expect Football QB Jake Mcelroy to torch the nets this winter for the Knights but this is Connor Rogers team and he will do everything to help his team win. D3 College coaches need to embrace Connor Rogers whose best playing days are still ahead of him. **Bobby Letourneau** is a sophomore captain and that is not by accident. Like Connor and Gio, he does everything and he is one kid that can be the best player on the floor without scoring a single hoop. I have made the comparison to former Merrimack great Bobby Murgio and don't count out Bobby playing in the NE 10 in the future. I mentioned earlier Methuen's **Andrew Marcelino**. The kid plays with so much passion and commitment and epitomizes what we look for in effort every week. Not many kids could continue to play the way he did this week when he was 1-17 from the floor. It is no wonder D3 coaches love him. Others that fit the bill are **CC Victor Mwaurah, Londonderry Cole Britting, New Mission Mitchell twins, Haverhill Navin Cruz**, to name a few

I challenge players to become more important to their team and I challenge coaches, gymrats, media to value the important players even more and give THEM their due. The reality is these are the type of players that become our favorites, the ones who reputation will grow long after they leave high school and yes they are the types you would like to have your daughters marry. Enjoy watching these guys this fall because I expect all of those mentioned to have very IMPORTANT winters!



NA CONNOR ROGERS, SPM BOBBY LETOURNEAU, POP, BO

DON'T GET TOO HIGH, DON'T GET TOO LOW IT'S FALLBALL