

## NA FALLBALL 2016 WEEK#7 RECAP ACCORDING TO FENNIS DEMBO

Week 7 is now in the rear view mirror. We had a bit of a cold spell this week as temperatures dipped into the 40's on game nights and shooting % were well below freezing. The playoff picture continues to be very cloudy. With one week to go only two seeds are locked up with 18 still jockeying for positions. St. John's Prep locks up the #1 seed with a win next week or a St Peter-Marian loss and St. Peter Marian is a #2 seed unless Prep loses and they win. We will explain the playoff format later in the recap. We had some barn burners and quite frankly a couple of surprises. We also had some basketball royalty in the barn this week. Now on to this weeks' results:

**WESTFORD 55 CHELMSFORD 53.** The border war between the Grey Ghosts and Lions was entertaining as both teams had their moments and both teams also had their share of brain cramps. In the end Westford gets their second win of season behind a great performance by Jon Glidden. Kevin Sweeney of Chelmsford continues to make his case for most improved player of the year

**BURLINGTON 79 TRITON 53.** I may sound like a broken record but I am excited to see this team once Phil Conners and David Brown get their hands on this crew every day of the week. The Red Devils could be pretty good. This was a close affair till Burlington broke it open at the end of the first half. Mariano Rodrigues was key for the Red Devils and one man wrecking crew Will Parsons scored 38 for Triton

**ANDOVER 59 CENTRAL CATHOLIC 44.** CC was the #1 team in the power rankings and Andover came in at 2-4 but this was all Andover. They played small ball and exposed Central by attacking the glass and then making buckets from outside. CC's bigs could not take advantage of their length and height and struggled to cover the Warriors defensively. CC just needs to make some adjustments but for Andover this was a huge mental win

**TEWKSBURY 61 PELHAM 55:** This was an entertaining one as both teams played hard on both sides of the ball. Gio Ciampa and David Giuggio were the big two for the Redmen and senior Kyle Frank and talented freshman Drew Brown were special for the Pythons

**METHUEN 56 WACHUSETT 48:** A good one down at the McDome as the Rangers outlasted the Mountaineers. Andrew Marcelino with his back to back player of the games' was very good and Wachusett was led by Joey Nuttal and Eric Bjorn

**LONDONDERRY 48 HAVERHILL 36:** In the second game at the McDome a bit of a slugfest as the Lancers grinded out a nice win to move to the crowded 5-2 spot. Jake Coleman with 5 threes and 22 points and appears to be the front runner for MVP

**NORTH ANDOVER 80 SALEM 58:** The Knights offensively were clicking on all cylinders and senior Matt Rosenthal has been lethal the last three weeks. Salem is just not playing well as a team right now. They need to regroup heading into the final week of regular season

**ST PETER-MARIAN 48 LOWELL 43:** The Guardians had more than five players this week and that may have been the difference as Lowell pushed them this week. In the end SPM grinds out another win to remain undefeated. Star guard Bobby Letourneau is back from concussion but not at 100%. Freshman Nate Siow of Lowell with his best game of the fall

**LAWRENCE 61 PEABODY 31:** This was a close one for the first half but the Lancers went on a huge run early in the second half and the Tanners did not respond. Juan Felix Rodrigues was 0-8 from three but 14-15 from two point land to lead the Lancers

**ST JOHNS PREP 58 NEW MISSION 51.** The Titans made a number of runs in this game but the eagles would not relinquish the lead. Tommy O'Neil altered many shots tonight. The Eagles have got to be smarter at the end of the half and game as they almost let the Titans back in the game. The Titans suffer their second straight loss



GAME OF THRONES FANS KNOW –

WINTER IS COMING

## WEEK 7 RESULTS

WESTFORD 55 (JON GLIDDEN 23)

CHELMSFORD 53 (KEVIN SWEENEY 23)

BURLINGTON 79 (MARIANO RODRIGUES 24)

TRITON 53 (WILL PARSONS 38)

ANDOVER 59 (MIKE MAKIEJ 11)

CENTRAL CATHOLIC 44 (COLIN BRADANESE 11)

TEWKSBURY 61 (GIO CIAMPA 32)

PELHAM 55 (KYLE FRANK 25)

METHUEN 56 (ANDREW MARCELINO 20)

WACHUSETT 48 (ERIC BJORN 14)

LONDONDERRY 48 (JAKE COLEMAN 22)

HAVERHILL 36 (JOEY FENDERSON 14)

NORTH ANDOVER 80 (MATT ROSENTHAL 27)

SALEM 58 (GRIFFIN CURTIS 21)

ST PETER-MARIAN 48 (JUAN ZORILLA 21)

LOWELL 43 (NATE SIOW 12)

LAWRENCE 61 (JUAN FELIX RODRIGUES 30)

PEABODY 31 (JUNIOR ESTRELLA)

ST JOHN'S PREP 58 (BRETT MCNIFF 13)

NEW MISSION 51 (ALEX DELAROSSA 17)

**NEXT WEEKS SCHEDULE: PLEASE REFER TO WEBSITE [WWW.NAFALLBALL.COM](http://WWW.NAFALLBALL.COM)**

**Games to watch in week 8: ANDOVER V NEW MISSION/ ST JOHNS VS LONDONDERRY**

### PLAYOFF FORMAT:

**NIGHT #1 11/7 -SEEDS 13 THRU 20 PLAY TO DETERMINE SEEDS 13-16**

**NIGHT #2 11/8- FIRST NIGHT OF ROUND OF 16**

**NIGHT #3 11/14- SECOND NIGHT OF ROUNDS OF 16**

**NIGHT #4 11/15 -QUARTER FINALS**

**NIGHT #5 11/21 -SEMI FINALS AND FINAL**

**TEAM OF THE WEEK:** Sorry folks a few teams played well this week but the winner this week hands down were the **ANDOVER GOLDEN WARRIORS:** A toughness and commitment that was impressive. All 8 players contributed to the win. They also had 4 double digit scorers! Pags was coaching hard and kids wanted to be coached hard. Congrats Andover!



**ANDOVER GOLDEN WARRIORS**

**GAME OF THE WEEK:**

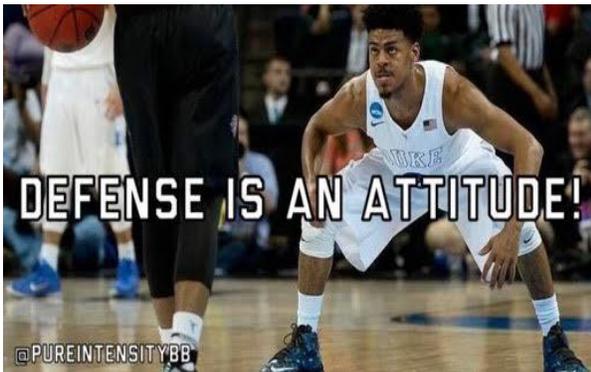
**Westford v Chelmsford, Tewksbury v Pelham, St. Johns v New Mission and CC v Andover** are our nominees. Always easy to pick one of the big dog games but this week I really enjoyed watching two teams with hungry and humble kids looking for some respect. Big guns did not disappoint and this was an entertaining game. CONGRATS: **TEWKSBURY V PELHAM**

**DO YOUR JOB WINNER WEEK #7 WINNER:**

The nominees are **CONNOR ROGERS, COLE BRITTING, JOEY NUTTALL, ROBBIE HUDSON, KEVIN SWEENEY, WILL PARSONS, BRANDON WITTEN, GIO CIAMPA, TREVOR DIMINICO, SHAMAR SIMMS, LUIS REYNOSO, TOMMY O'NEIL**, We will once again go with two guys this week. Triton Regional's **WILL PARSONS** does his job every week. His team is offensively challenged right now and every week Will has to score and rebound for his team to have a chance. This week he had 38 points and double digit rebounds. **BRANDON WITTEN** of Andover has struggled in the box score this fall but he does so many things outside of the box score. He plays tough, usually defends bigger players, moves the ball and rebounds. I thought this week we saw some of the stats we expected to see but it was the things not in the box score that once again impressed me. **CONGRATS WILL AND BRANDON**



TRITON WILL PARSONS ANDOVER BRANDON WITTEN



**BREAK OUT PERFORMERS OF THE WEEK:** **Nick Martin** of North Andover with his best game of the fall with 11 points 7 rebounds and altering a number of shots. **Drew Brown** of Pelham was special with 20 points and five threes and Lowell **Nate Siow** with an impressive 12 points and overall game. **Congrats Nate, Drew and Nick**



**Nick Martin (far left) Drew Brown – Breakout performers**

**WEEK 7 PLAYER OF THE WEEK:** The nominees this week are **MARIANO RODRIGUES** of Burlington, **MATT ROSENTHAL** of North Andover, **JAKE COLEMAN** of Londonderry, **GIO CIAMPA** of Tewksbury, **JUAN FELIX RODRIGUES** of Lawrence, **TOMMY O'NEIL** of SJP, **JUAN ZORILLA** of SPM, **JON GLIDDEN** of Westford and **ANDREW MARCELINO** of Methuen. This is the third week in a row we have to go with co-players. **MATT ROSENTHAL** is on a tear last three weeks and this week he had 27 points and was 6-7 from deep. **JUAN FELIX RODRIGUES** was 14-15 from two point land leading to 30 points. Juan has the sweetest stroke in Fall Ball. **Congrats MATT & JUAN**



**Lawrence Juan Felix Rodrigues, NA**

**Matt Rosenthal CO PLAYERS OF THE WEEK #7**

**WEEK #1 ALEX RIVERA – LOWELL**

**WEEK #2 TOMMY ONEIL –SJP**

**WEEK #3 ALEX DELAROSSA – NEW MISSION**

**WEEK #4 JAKE COLEMAN – LONDONDERRY**

**WEEK #5 JAKE COLEMAN – LONDONDERRY, KEVIN NUNEZ – NEW MISSION**

**WEEK #6 SAM LARA – CENTRAL CATHOLIC, DAVID GIUGGIO – TEWKSBURY**

**WEEK #7 MATT ROSENTHAL – NA, JUAN FELIX RODRIGUES - LAWRENCE**

**STANDINGS:** PLEASE GET USED TO SEEING THE UPDATED STANDINGS ON THE WEBSITE  
[WWW.NAFALLBALL.COM](http://WWW.NAFALLBALL.COM) YES TOTAL TRANSPARENCY TO KNOW WHERE YOU STAND

**WE TRY TO GET THIS UPDATED BY NOON ON WEDNESDAY**

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**ZEBRAS:** In week #7 we had, James Slattery, Paul Slattery, Kevin Boutilier, Julian Scott, Ralph Sully, Brian Schaufenbil, Tracy Mitchell, Ken Pigeon, Chris Bennet, Brian Gleason. Not everyone is going to agree with the calls but a solid job this week once again

**COLLEGES IN THE BARN.** This week we saw **ANN MARIA, ST JOSEPHS, UMASS-BOSTON, EMMANUEL, BRIDGEWATER, NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE, & NECC.** We have now seen **34 different colleges.** AS WE STATED LAST WEEK WITH THE COLLEGE SEASON STARTING OUR OVERALL LARGE NUMBERS MAY BE DOWN BUT THEY WILL BE STILL HERE

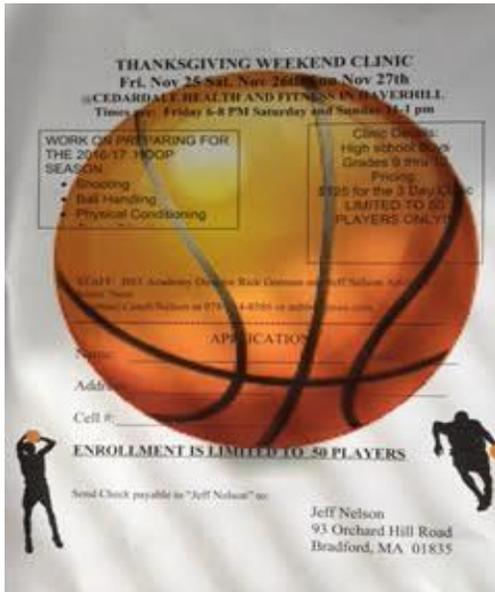
**THE SIGN IN LOBBY WILL ALWAYS LET YOU KNOW WHO IS HERE**

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



**NUTS AND BOLTS:**

- **Next week is the final week of regular season. The playoff schedule for prelim round (seeds 13-20) will be out next Thursday**
- For parents/fans, 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 , RESPECT THE LEAGUE!!**
- 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.  
**YOU CAN NOT GO ON SECOND FLOOR**

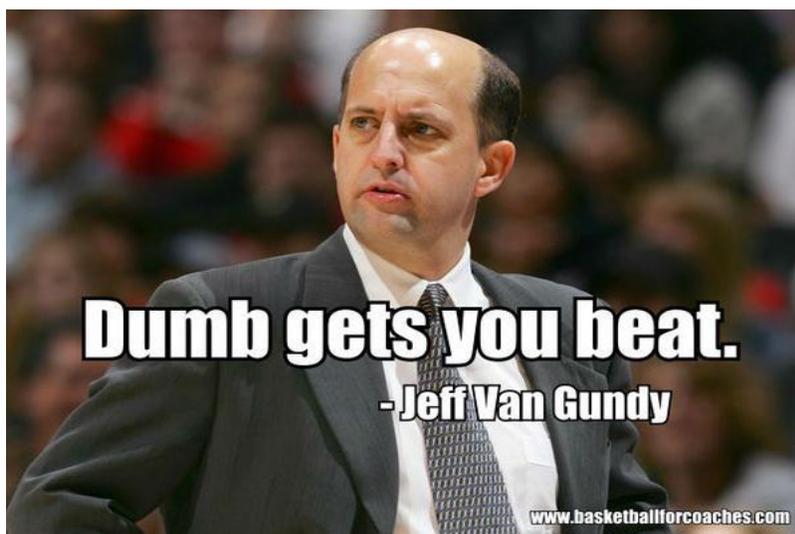


**ANNUAL FINAL TUNEUP THANKSGIVING WEEKEND. PROGRAM WILL SELL OUT FOR 6<sup>TH</sup> STRAIGHT YEAR. Clinic held at Cedardale Athletic Club in Haverhill (ONLY 20 SPOTS REMAIN)**

## **FACES IN THE CROWD ON WEEK #7**

Former Salem star and Wentworth player Matt Vartanian, Dave Nelsen from the great state of Minnesota, Jim Testa Builders, Johnny Bag of Donuts Mcelroy, Mr. Homonnay, well -travelled High School coach Bob Melillo, LOX basketball, Jersey Jim, Tribune's Bill Burt, The Prep Pops, Corey McCarthy, Steve Grace, Raymond Nunenz, Thad Broughton, Justin Barrasso, Bobby Micalyzyk and children, Marcus Watson, Mrs. Letourneau, Tewksbury coaching staff, Bill Brinklow, The Melansens, Mrs Rob McLaughlin, Mr. Curtis, Dean Colleti, Detective Rogers, Julie Whipple and parents, Anthony Faradie, Andrew Marcelino uncle, former Assumption star Jimmy Zenevitich, the urban legend Stevie Martinez, The Turkey Town Mothers Club, The Becky Hammon of the Valley Amy Kenneally, Colin Lee mom and grandfather, Carlos Nunez Sr. Coach Dilone, Eagles sisters and mothers, John Dullea and trusty assistant, Former Westford coach Ed Scollan, John Warden, Charlie Micol, Vin Deisal, Mrs. Glidden, Mrs. Almasian, Mr. Silva, Lynne Parsons, David Brown, Phil Connors and children, Paul Tanglis Sr, Paul Tanglis and daughter, the legend Scotty Gambale, The Wittens, Mr. Kim, Pags, Faz, Alan Hibino, Dennis Quinn, Manny Sanchez 1, George Yorke, Chad and Sue Downer, Mr. Giuggio, The Franks, Mrs and Mr. Brown, The Crowleys, Will the Thrill, Pepe Lepu, White T Justin Barry, Houston Texan Kenneally,

**FASHION OF THE WEEK #7:** This week some very nice looks. The young and talented Triton volunteer coach had the student teacher look down to a science. Salem volunteer Bengie was sporting colors this week with an unidentified piece of clothing in his hair. Mr. Homonnay very dapper with the casual business meeting look. The light colored pink shirt was on point. Easy Ed Scollan always a dapper dresser and nothing has changed with the impressive recently retired look. Mrs. Witten continues to be one of the best style fans of fall ball but this week we are going with Mrs. Frank with an impressive outfit highlighted by the black and white fall shawl. Only drawback was that she had to sit down next to Father Frank. Congrats Mrs. Frank



**Week #7 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: **ANTICIPATION CALLS BY ZEBRA:** I am not going to win a population contest with my zebras but a bit of frustration with the absolute anticipation calls on potential tie ups. I would like to see the chance to rip the ball before a whistle. Second I think we are seeing an anticipation call on a couple of very quick players on travelling. Are they travels or only the appearance of travelling? Stormy inquiring minds would like to know.

4. **TIME AND SCORE:** have to revisit this again. Some teams are just absolutely clueless on time and score even with the coaches screaming it from the sidelines. If you don't understand time and score you might not be on the floor in crunch time.

3. **WHAT DO I DO WHEN THE BALL IS NOT IN MY HANDS:** So many guys standing around this week. My major concern is so many kid do not know how to play or what to do when the ball is not in their hands

2. **EFFICIENCY:** On one hand very excited with the players who have been taught to play efficiently. The bad news is it's a clear minority and coaches have some work to do when the season starts. Off season coaches, gurus, trainers, handlers need to be spending more time teaching efficiency and if they can't get some one that can.

1. **BIGS WHO HAVE LIMITED PERIMETER SKILLS WHO REFUSE TO EMBRACE PLAYING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE:** First get better from the perimeter so your actually a threat there and two learn to play inside facing hoop/back to the basket/flashing etc. Not only limited to bigs but the glaring issue this week is the bigs. Get Better

**GET BETTER.....GET BETTER.....GET BETTER**



**Don't be upset with the results you didn't get from the work you didn't do.**

**WHO BROUGHT IT IN WEEK #7: - THESE GUYS DID!**





Wachusett lost a tough one to Methuen. **Eric Bjorn** continues his fine fall with 14 points and double digit boards. **Joey Nuttall** continues to be productive in many aspects of the game. Tonight he had 7 points in first half and 7 points in the second half. **Sam Dion** rounds out the big three and is a smart player who gets better every week. Tonight he had 5 points. **James Coffey** continues to be the consummate team player always contributing in a number of ways. Methuen goes above .500 with their third straight win. **Andrew Marcelino** was tough with 20 points, a high motor and a very nice flush. Andrew with his third player of the game nod. **Evan Hardy** appears to be fully healthy and can knock down shots. This week Evan had 10 points. **Dante Rivera** only had five points this week but he really knows how to run a team. Freshman **Christian Ovalles** is going to be a good one. Tonight he contributed 8 points.

Haverhill dropped to 2-5 but it was nice to see a bit more assistance for **Navin Cruz**. **Joey Fenderson** is an intriguing prospect who in the right system can knock down shots. This week he had 14 points with 4 three pointers. **Navin Cruz** is a tough kid who continues to play hard. His game is not always textbook but he does produce. Londonderry is fun to watch. After dropping a tough one to North Andover last week they came back for a grind it out win over Haverhill. **Jake Coleman** continues to be Jake Coleman. This week he had 22 points with five three pointers. **Cole Britting** is a prototypical point guard who continues to have a fine fall. This week he had 9 points and some very nice dimes. **Ethan Garafolo** is knocking down shots this fall. He had two very big threes in the second half Monday. **Ethan May** does all the little things that don't show up in a box score but help a team win. Freshman **Jack Anderson** has a very bright future.

Westford **Jon Glidden** is another candidate for most improved player. This week he had 23 points 8 assists and 4 rebounds. **Robbie Hudson** continues to get better every week and this week had 10 points and 13 rebounds. **Armen Almasian** had 9 points 2 assists and 4 rebounds. I liked **Erik Bibbo** this week with 9 points and 5 rebounds and **Connor Pandisco** with a first mention had 7 rebounds. Chelmsford got a fine game from **Kevin Sweeney** with 23 points and

12 rebounds. **Trey Johnson** had 9 points and 5 rebounds and **Austin Chadwick** numbers were down but still so active. This week he had 9 points and 5 rebounds

Triton's **Will Parsons** had another terrific performance in week #7. He scored 38 points on 42% shooting. He grabbed 15 rebounds and had 2 assists. **Francis Shakleton** with a first mention had 4 points and 8 rebounds. **Will Melansen** of Burlington is having a strong fall which has seen his recruitment rise. This week Will had 21 points. The story for Burlington this week was **Mariano Rodrigues** with 24 points 6 assists and 8 rebounds. One assist was one of the best we have seen all fall. Freshman **Justin Fitzpatrick** is very intriguing with all that length. I did not love some of the quick shots but that will come. This week he had 7 points and 9 rebounds. I like the energy of Alex Wong who had six points, two assists and five rebounds.

Andover was our landslide team of the week. The Warriors were locked in and controlled the game from gate to wire. **Mike Makeij** was good with 11 points 6 assists and 9 rebounds and has proven he is a varsity player. **Emmet Kim** rose to the occasion with 11 timely points. **Evan Cristopoulas** continues a solid fall with 10 points. **Timmy Kalantzakos** was solid on the boards with 9 rebounds. **Brandan Witten** did his job tonight. He got in the scoring column with 10 points and corralled 9 rebounds. Love **Ryan Puglisi**, he knows who he is and is a tough kid. Tonight against the much bigger CC forwards he was the one folks were talking about 6 points 3 assists and 8 rebounds. **Kyle Rocker** another solid frosh was not fazed by the moment and contributed 7 points. CC did not take advantage of their superior size and it actually became part of this performance Achilles heel. **Manny Sanchez** had a few moments and probably earned a few more minutes. **Sam Lara** had 8 points 2 assists and 8 rebounds. **Kevin Constant** is learning on the go and did contribute 8 points. **Colin Bradanese** had a game high 15 rebounds. **Dom Keegan** has to be on the floor as he is a potent threat from outside and he does have some much needed toughness. CC will have to figure how they are going to defend small ball and Andover needs to explore this game plan more.

Tewksbury moves to 5-2 behind big nights from **Gio Ciampa** with 32 points and 11 rebounds and **David Giuggio** with 17 points and 3 assists. **Connor Brinklow** had 2 points 5 assists and 4 rebounds. Pelham got great performances from another Most Improved candidate **Kyle Frank** with 25 points 7 assists and 9 rebounds. Freshman **Drew Brown** is legit. Tonight he had 20 points and 5 three pointers to go along with 6 rebounds. **Dylan Andrews** had 6 points and 6 rebounds and **Matt Crowley** contributed some toughness.

**Jack Fowler** of NA is coming along nicely as he scored 6 had 3 assists but most importantly is his work on the boards. This week he had nine more. **Matt Rosenthal** is co -player of the week and is he getting it done the last three weeks. Matt had 27 points 2 assists and 5 rebounds. **Connor Rogers** continues to make believers out of people. 12 points 7 assists and 7 rebounds this week and just does most things right. **Nick Martin** with a breakout performance with 11 points and 7 rebounds. **Chim Oguwru** is starting to play more efficiently which will get him on the floor this winter but most impressive tonight was 10 rebounds. First mention for **Sean Kenneally**, he is working hard to get a uniform this winter and this week made the best of his minutes with solid

play and 5 points. Salem was led by their best player **Griffin Curtis** who had 21 points 3 assists and 12 rebounds. **DJ Colleti** with back to back strong games contributed 16 points. I love how the freshman **Trevor Diminico** is playing. This week he had 11 points 4 assists and 4 rebounds.

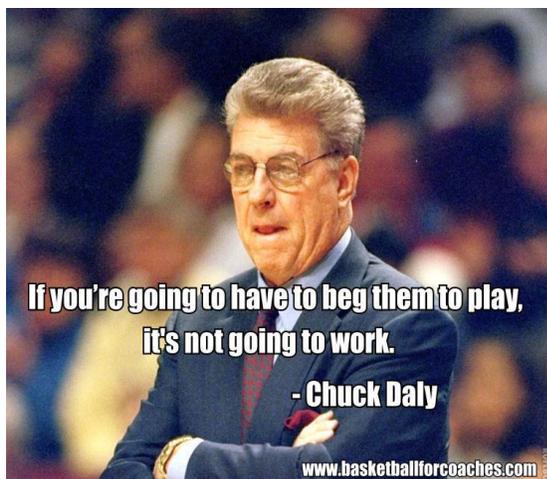
Lowell played better but dropped another one to undefeated St Peter-Marian. **Christian McWinnie** was productive with 7 points and 5 rebounds. Freshman **Carlos Nunez** is going to have a good career in Lowell. This week he had 9 points. Another Freshman **Nate Siow** who had a breakout performance with 12 points 5 assists and 3 rebounds. **Tyson King** is playing well with 4 points 2 assists and 9 rebounds. SPM was led by **Juan Zorilla** with 21 points and 6 rebounds and **Shammar Simms** with 16 rebounds. **Jeone Sneed** had 14 points and 5 rebounds and it was good to see **Bobby Letrouneau** back from a concussion injury.

Lawrence made light work of Peabody this week. Game was close for the first ten minutes then it was all Lancers. **Juan Felix Rodrigues** was co-player of the week with 30 points 4 assists and 5 rebounds. I thought **Luis Reynoso** was toying with the opposition tonight he got others involved and made things look easy. He had 8 points 8 assists and 9 rebounds. **Sebastian Dilone** had 8 points and 6 rebounds and **Jaden Castillo** was strong with 4 points 5 assists and 8 rebounds. For Peabody **Chris Canella** had 9 rebounds. **Junior Estrella** had 9 points and 5 rebounds. **Sammy Batista** and **Jake Irvine** also contributed tonight.

St. Johns Prep got a nice night from **Brett McNiff** with a team high 13 points. **Tommy O'Neil** altered shots and scored 10 points and corralled 10 rebounds. **Nate Hobbs** did most of his damage in the first half and finished with 11 points and 4 rebounds. Big night for **Janelle** who had a season high 11 points and 5 assists. **Matt Relihan** contributed 7 points and 5 rebounds.

New Mission has dropped two in a row now. Titans were led by **Alex Delarossa** with 17 points 3 assists and 3 rebounds. **Charles Mitchell** scored 15 and had 6 rebounds. **Charlie Mitchell** continues to be the consummate teammate with 8 points 4 assists and 4 rebounds. **Trahe Qualls** is back and he was effective tonight

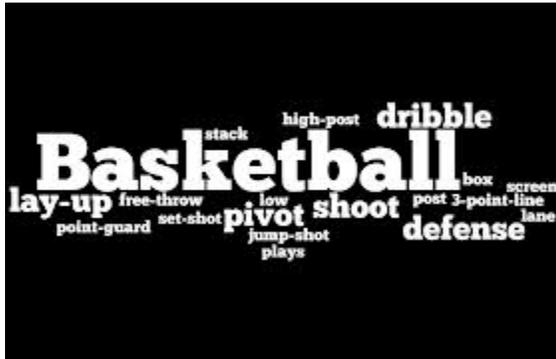
**YOU WANT YOUR NAME INCLUDED; BRING IT AND BRING IT EVERY WEEK**



**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. ST JOHNS PREP 7-0	1. CENTRAL CATHOLIC 5-1
2. ST PETER-MARIAN 7-0	2. SJP 6-0
3. NEW MISSION 5-2	3. NEW MISSION 5-2
4. CENTRAL CATHOLIC 5-2	4. ST PETER –MARIAN 6-0
5. NORTH ANDOVER 5-2	5. NORTH ANDOVER 4-2

**OUTSIDE LOOKING IN: LAWRENCE 5-2, LONDONDERRY 5-2, TEWKSBURY 5-2, ANDOVER 3-4**



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

**CULTURE AND CHEMISTRY!**

We are now through 7 weeks of Fall Ball and we have seen chemistry and culture resemble a bit of a rollercoaster for a majority of teams. We have 20 teams in this league and it very intriguing to watch what teams have a culture, which teams are trying to build a culture and what teams are without a culture. Off season is not necessarily the barometer for program culture but it does give us a snippet of what it is and what it may be. The league has teams that will have brand new coaches this winter and I am excited to see how fast a culture is built there. I have had the pleasure of working with and following Phil Connors and David Brown and I have seen the culture that Phil built at Tewksbury and the culture David was building with Anthony Faradie at Methuen so I think we are going to see a nice culture switch in Burlington. This is also exciting times for our other three programs that have a new coach and an excitement to build a program and a new culture. We also have some nice programs that have seen a culture evolving. As we know Rome was not built in a day but things are coming along very nicely for a number of programs that saw coaching changings in the last four years. I love observing the development of culture from its infancy all the way up to its full creation. It's also interesting to see a program develop a culture both influenced by the Head Coach himself but also the community they are based in. The third group are those programs that have had long standing culture built by coaches that have been in the position for a long time as well as long standing basketball traditions that have passed on despite a change in coaches.

This fall some culture observations are exciting to see and then there are some observations that point to a “present” lack of culture. Which teams’ benches are into the game from the tip to the final horn? The two best right now are Central Catholic and Methuen. It is not fake, its real but there could be a chink in the armor in that I sat and watched a quiet bench in both their darkest moments this fall. Love the culture where the teams deal with adversity and “stay together”. Unfortunately we have a few squads that need some training in this period and fast. You can’t just be a good teammate when things are going well, you need to be a good teammate when things are going bad. Love watching which teams have a pre-game meeting and which teams actually warm up like it’s a state tourney game. You can tell the culture is emphasized and expectations are clear. Then there are the teams warming up like the over 50 league at Cedardale. Love the culture when the volunteer coach points something out and the player is all eyes and instead of making excuses they say “Yes Coach”. (By the way we have some outstanding volunteer coaches in this league who know how to coach and motivate) We have teams that stand when a player comes out of the game and everyone slaps his hand. As a lifelong tarheel fan I feel like standing too. We have teammates that build each other up and hold teammates appropriately accountable and that is refreshing to see.

MIAA forbids coaches working with their players during the off season so it’s great to see captains organizing workouts and pick up runs. Love when some of the leaders actually get the squad together to do something outside the basketball court where team chemistry can be built. Love when new players hear the history of the program long before they were playing and I am a big fan of alums coming back and talking to present teams on what it means to be a Golden Warrior or Titan or any other program nickname. Love to see the squads having parent assistance with things like pasta dinners or local business offering to do a team dinner.

Culture is seen in other ways. Maybe they take on the persona of their fearless leader, maybe they are known as defensive team that sets the tone. Maybe they play a style of offense that is just flat out fun to watch. I love seeing the student sections that become rabid fans and promoters of the culture and yes lets’ get more student bands. A big shout out to the flat out best North Andover Knights band.

The exciting thing for our head coaches and their assistants is in five weeks they can establish that culture, enhance that culture and promote that culture. If you can’t or don’t want to establish the culture it might be time for a change. Our game needs culture

**DON’T GET TOO HIGH, DON’T GET TOO  
LOW.... IT’S FALLBALL**