

Sierra Kids Foundation

WILD WEST SHOOTOUT

BISHOP MANOGUE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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LIFE'S LESSONS

By Paul George

Members of Bishop Manogue High School's boys basketball team gather in the school's hallway, just outside of the basketball court for Thursday practice. Pockets of players gather, sitting or standing next to the school's trophy case and artwork displays, talking about a variety of subjects such as sports, school, home life, and entertainment. The mood is jovial, with plenty of joking and laughing.

And then Coach Moe Golshani opens the gym door. The talking and laughing stop as the players organize into a single file. Their expressions say it all, it is time for business, not fun. They enter the gym and immediately begin practice. Golshani has the same determined look on his face.

"I treat this like a personal business," Golshani says.

Established in 1948, Bishop Manogue became, at the time, the only Catholic high school in the state of Nevada. It serves the Reno-Sparks area along with Carson Valley, Fernley, Minden-Gardnerville, Incline Village, South Tahoe and Truckee.

An assistant coach has the players running to the end of the gym and back to warm them up, the sound of sneakers pounding the gym floor echoes through the room. Afterwards, the players practice lay-ups and free throws.

Aside from three sophomores and two seniors, Golshani says, the team is made up of freshmen. As a coach, he says, this gives him at least two years with the same kids, allowing the players to develop into a fine-tuned team.

The Bishop Manogue team made it to the playoffs for its 2016-2017 season, ultimately beaten by Reno High School. Coach Golshani, naturally, wants his team to take the championship this season.

Basketball, Golshani says, helps young men develop not just a winning attitude, but also helps them deal with adversity, team building, leadership skills, and working with team leaders. Not everyone can be the top leader of a team or the highest scorer, and it's important for less experienced or skilled players to follow the directions of these leads.

As the team continues its practice, a freshman leaves the court, approaching Sarah Smith, Head Athletic Trainer for Bishop Manogue's athletic programs. His ankle hurts, and he explains the nature of his pain. Smith suggests an ice pack. Sensing the freshman's concern, she tells him that it is normal for some pain since, as a freshman, his body is new to the rigors of team practice. As the season continues, she says, his body will adapt.

While winning is always a good thing, Golshani says it is the effort his players put into the game that he values. A player, he says, never makes every shot. And not every play goes as planned. However, successful or not, Golshani expects his players to give 100 percent.

"Never compromise your effort and your toughness. Because the ball isn't going to bounce your way every time and you're not always going to make the shot," Golshani says. If the team gives 100 percent, he adds, the opposing team won't walk all over it.

While the team continues its practice session, spectators might think they are seeing double. Dan and Gabe Bansuelo are twin brothers, juniors on the Bishop Manogue team. Gabe says basketball has helped him develop a good work ethic. "And it's fun," he adds.

"I've been playing since I was a little kid. I've learned to work hard and that translates into my life," Dan adds.

The Bansuelo brothers say that balancing academics and athletics is a challenge. But both add that the support from their family is a major positive.

Kolton Frugoli, another junior, developed an interest in basketball at age three, after his father introduced him to the sport. He says basketball has taught him lessons in all aspects of life.

As the boys team's practice session kicks into high gear, Bishop Manogue's girls' basketball team is heading out the door, having finished the night's practice.

Kenna Holt, a 5-foot-6-inch sophomore, is a member of the girls team. As a freshman, she averaged 12.4 points per game. Like many other players, she has been playing basketball as long as she can remember.

"I like the competitiveness and playing together as a team," Holt says about her love of the sport.

Coach Golshani, who became head boys basketball coach in 2016, says he finds great satisfaction in mentoring the young men as they develop the skills needed for adulthood. "I want to make a difference in their lives."

As practice ends, the players file out of the gym. The business of becoming their best comes to an end, at least temporarily, and the smiles return to the boys' faces along with sound of chit-chat and laughing. They leave, carrying their gear in sports bags, and head home. However, tomorrow they will return, putting on their serious faces, as another evening of practice begins.

