

ISLANDSPORTS

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Lady Indians focus on fundamentals

Girls Basketball

Junior high team working towards season's first win

BY TED HILLS | STAFF REPORTER

Just two games into the season, the girls are beginning to find their groove: "It's starting to click a little bit," said Coach Brian Becker.

Although they're still trying to score their first victory of the season, they've come a long way since they began practicing on January 25. Seven of the 8 girls are in the 8th grade, but in many ways it's still a rookie team. Only four of the girls played last year, and one of those four only sporadically because of an injury.

They've been working on the basics, such as dribbling, passing and basic defensive strategies. They're starting to get a better grasp of floor mechanics, too, including "fundamental boxing out concepts, setting picks, screens and using their teammates to open up the floor a little better," said Coach Becker.

Still, this sort of progress doesn't immediately translate into basketball victories. The girls endured a dismal season opener against East Hampton on February 24. Two girls were absent, leaving little opportunity for substitutions. "It was hard to get into any kind of rhythm," said Coach Becker.

They fared much better in Tuesday's game against Springs, setting up their defense more quickly, dribbling with their heads up and demonstrating a better understanding of basketball concepts. Coach Becker noted strong performances from point guard Olivia Garrison, who controlled the offense, Brianna Rietvelt, who gave a strong showing beneath the boards and Annie Ross-Gates, whose defensive skills have greatly improved.



TED HILLS PHOTO

Coach Brian Becker and Assistant Coach Cara Cass with the junior high girls basketball team: (first row from left) Olivia Garrison, Rebecca Martinez, (second row) Erin Colligan, Mimi Lawrence, Keri Ann Mahoney, Brianna Rietvelt, Sam Cappello, Annie Ross-Gates and scorekeeper Lena Cordts.

Despite the team's clear improvements, their efforts weren't enough to beat Springs, who jumped out to an early lead that grew to 14-4 by half-time. Though the Indians stepped up their offensive charge in the second half, Springs eventually took home the 30-19 win.

Last year's team won about half their games, but Coach Brian Becker is less concerned with the victories at the junior high level: "the biggest goal this season is just to reinforce the

fundamentals that can be built upon when the girls move up to JV."

A large portion of last year's 18-girl squad moved up to junior varsity, leaving the team with not just an inexperienced group but few reserves on the bench. Though this year's squad comes with its challenges, Coach Becker is glad to help them progress: "you begin to notice that the light starts coming on ... I'm always excited to have that, to be part of that learning process to see them developing."

It's his second year coaching junior high, and he's grown to love it: "I coached varsity a couple of years back, and there's a lot different intensity being on the sideline then than there is [with junior high]. Junior high's a lot more laid back ... it's about trying to teach more than anything else."

The girls will try again for their first win today at Montauk at 4:15 p.m. Their next home game is against Southampton at 4 p.m. on Monday.

SHELTER ISLAND SCHOOL MARCH SPORTS ALERT

Thursday, March 4

AWAY JH GIRLS BASKETBALL 4:15 PM
at Montauk

Friday, March 5

HOME JH BOYS VOLLEYBALL 4:00 PM
vs. Springs

Tuesday, March 9

AWAY JH BOYS VOLLEYBALL 4:00 PM
at Montauk

Wednesday, March 10

AWAY JH GIRLS BASKETBALL 4:30 PM
at Pierson/Bridgeton

Thursday, March 11

AWAY JH BOYS VOLLEYBALL 4:00 PM
at East Moriches (Elementary)

Friday, March 12

HOME JH GIRLS BASKETBALL 4:00 PM
vs. East Hampton

Monday, March 15

HOME JH BOYS VOLLEYBALL 4:30 PM
vs. East Hampton/Bridgeton

Tuesday, March 16

AWAY JH GIRLS BASKETBALL 4:00 PM
at Southampton

Wednesday, March 17

HOME JH BOYS VOLLEYBALL 4:00 PM
vs. Westhampton

Thursday, March 18

AWAY JH GIRLS BASKETBALL 4:00 PM
at Ross

Friday, March 19

AWAY JH BOYS VOLLEYBALL 4:30 PM
at Center Moriches

Monday, March 22

HOME JH GIRLS BASKETBALL 4:00 PM
vs. Springs

Tuesday, March 23

HOME JH BOYS VOLLEYBALL 4:00 PM
vs. Ross

Thursday, March 25

HOME JH GIRLS BASKETBALL 4:30 PM
vs. Pierson/Bridgeton

Friday, March 26

AWAY V GIRLS TRACK 4:30 PM
Triangular meet at Hampton Bays HS

Friday, March 26

AWAY JV SOFTBALL 4:30 PM
at Port Jefferson

HOME V SOFTBALL 4:30 PM
at Ross (Holy Trinity) vs. Port Jefferson

Wednesday, March 31

HOME JV SOFTBALL 10:00 AM
at Ross (Holy Trinity) vs. Pierson/Bridgeton

For a complete listing, visit sectionxi.org