

Family First

After taking an amazing ride with my baby brother's high school varsity basketball team this past year, it reminded me just how much I truly love the game. There is nothing more pure than a group of boys/girls who on game day have nothing else to worry about than doing everything in their power to earn a win for themselves and their school. There is a sense of pride that is innately impossible to duplicate. College ball is clouded with agents and egos of players ready to move on to the next level. The NBA is quite literally an ongoing soap opera filled with overpaid divas and underachieving players. High school however, is the last chance for most players to step on the court without added outside distractions. In some cases, these teams have been together for years, often playing in grade school together. As the season progresses, teammates become family and you no longer play just to win, but you play for your family. Playing for each other becomes more important than anything.



The Iona Prep Gaels varsity team showed me just why I still love the game. For two seasons, I watched these young boys turn into young men. They went from fledgling kids just trying to make a name for themselves to New York State champs. How did they go from underdogs to big dogs? Family



They became so close they no longer called each other teammates but brothers. When one person struggled, they all struggled. They won together, lost together, and ultimately overcame every obstacle together. They persevered through it all, from injuries, to horrendous refereeing, to a schedule that tested them throughout the season, to a coach who reminded them just how much they needed each other. Like any good family, when one member isn't at their best, someone else steps in and keeps the ball rolling. That's just what the Gaels did. They had 6 legitimate leading scorers who stepped up when needed. The senior class brought the leadership and played with a sense of urgency that only seniors who don't want to see their seasons and/or careers come to an end can understand. Their underclassmen counterparts played for their seniors, coming into each game knowing that it would be one less game they would play with one another. So here's to everyone who's fallen in love with the game and never looked back. It's great to see the game still being played the right way and for the right reasons. CONGRATS IP Gaels 11-'12!! You guys had an amazing season.

