

Mr. Spence becomes girls basketball coach

by Lauren Ranzino

The new head coach for girls' varsity basketball is none other than Parkland's tenth grade history teacher, Mr. Wes Spence.

Mr. Spence has always had a passion for coaching. He played basketball for all four years during high school and helped coach youth league teams.

"I have always known that I wanted to coach. I love teaching the game and making the players successful," he said.

Mr. Spence was given the opportunity to once again coach here at Parkland in May. He had coached at Parkland for four years. For two of those years, he was Head Coach for Junior Varsity and for the other two years as Assistant coach for Varsity of the boys' basketball teams.

Last year, Mr. Spence coached at Emmaus before he had the opportunity to return to Parkland to coach.

"It was a little weird coaching for the other team," said Mr. Spence. "But I am glad to be back at Parkland!"

Over the last five months, the girls varsity team has worked closely with Mr. Spence during practices, summer tournaments and leagues. The team won the Catasauqua Summer League, finished as semi-finalists in the Holy Family Tournament, and was runner-up for the Patti Heffner Summer Classic.

"My goals for the year are simple," said Mr. Spence. "As a team, we can accomplish anything and I want our players to have fun, grow and improve as a team, experience success and positively represent Parkland."

The varsity team exuded appreciation and respect towards their new coach with a warm welcome.

"Coach Spence has brought a whole new meaning to Parkland girls' basketball that no other coaches have. He inspires me and helps me to become the best basketball player I can be," said Tara Huber, senior.

Mr. Spence continues to bring new ideas to the table to strengthen the players and their game.

"Coach Spence has implemented new offensive and defensive ideas this season. This, along with lifting for the first year, had made us a more well-rounded team," said Melissa Lawson, senior.

With such a fabulous new coach, Parkland is sure to have many victories in the upcoming season.



The Scoreboard

by Sam Wolf

With the bowl season for the NCAA coming up, the topic of the BCS, the Bowl Championship Series is destined to be somewhere on the "Coors Light six pack of questions" or "Outside the Lines" with Bob Lee. Usually, the BCS will receive anything but approval from journalists.

The purpose of the BCS is to determine who will play in the BCS bowl games, which are the Fiesta Bowl, Orange Bowl, Sugar Bowl, Roses Bowl and the National Championship Game. The current system is operated mostly by a computer which evaluates all of the NCAA Division-I teams.

The different aspects of a team which are evaluated are wins and losses, strength of schedule, points scored, points allowed and the BCS committee is allowed to give teams "style points," which can be considered to be corrupted by some.

Personally, I think the NCAA could not have adopted a worse type of system, with regards to ratings and fairness. The irony in this situation is that fairness affects the ratings, which means less money, but when did that ever matter to anybody?

It seems as though the NCAA is a set of unfair parents who give basketball everything it wants, while football just gets hand-me-downs. The NCAA gets the highest ratings for an entire month with the conference tournament and the NCAA tournament while football's fan base is reduced because very few people on this planet care about the winner of the Music City bowl, except for Elvis of course because he is still alive.

Come on NCAA; say it with me now, "Puh, puh lay, playoffs." That's right, the system that nearly every kind of sports league in America uses from the little league all the way up the NFL. They can still use their precious little computer in order to give teams ratings, which are not even whole numbers by the way. They can determine the top 16 or 32 teams in the nation and have a playoff with them. Perhaps, there can even be a championship game with two teams that have not only proved themselves throughout the regular season, but also were able to persevere in clutch situations.

Also, whatever happened to the excitement of a home field advantage? There is no need to have a game between Pittsburgh and USC in Miami, FL. The reason college sports has somewhat of an edge over professional sports is because Dad and little Johnny get a kick out of watching six fat college guys spelling out "Go Team" on their chests in 20 degree weather. Not only are more viewers going to be interested, but a non-neutral home field creates higher ticket sales, which means more money. But as previously stated, when did that ever matter to anybody?

This season brings about another embarrassing situation for the BCS and the NCAA. They have more than one undefeated team. It is not Boise St.'s fault, or TCU's fault or Cincinnati's fault that they are not in "strong" conferences. They did what they had to do. They won every single game. Personally, I love this kind of situation because I get to bash the BCS even more.

Winter track prepares athletes for the Spring

by Aaron Spikol

There is no better way of finding how valuable anything is to anyone than to see what price they are willing to pay for it. In the case of how much Parkland values its sports, the school district spends roughly \$1,348,967 a year on Student Activities, according to the published school budget, which includes all sports expenditures as well as the money allocated for clubs and a few other miscellaneous expenses. To put this figure in perspective, it is roughly one percent of the entire school budget. As small a percentage as that is, slightly more than one-million dollars remains a significant sum, one to which all manner of students, coaches and advisors have staked a claim.

In the case of sports, determining the amount coaches should receive to purchase necessary equipment is essentially based on how much money they received the year before. "The football team in Parkland was founded in 1953," said Athletic Director Mr. Geisel,

emphasizing how far back one would need to go to find how the initial sum was determined. If the school board sees a trend in rising or decreasing student involvement in a sport, then the money allocated to them is changed accordingly. Mr. Geisel described the process as one in which he gives the coaches of a specific sport a requisition form that informs them of the amount of money they are authorized to spend. Sports with higher equipment needs are accorded a larger budget. The coaches then record their equipment, transportation and other expenditures and send the form back to Mr. Geisel, who then forwards it to the school board. So long as the sport is within its allocated budget, it is accorded the appropriate funds. According to Mr. Geisel, no athlete in Parkland is cut from a sports team due to cost. The school has several teams, including cross country and football, that except every student that tries out, putting those who do not make varsity on a junior varsity team. Selective varsity sports, such as basketball

and soccer, are selective because of the nature of the sport. Constraints in these sports that lead to their selective nature mainly stem from the lack of an ability to provide playing time for extra students.

Parkland has no difficulty meeting the requirements of Title 9, a national law that requires schools to provide equal opportunity for girls as well as boys sports. High participation rates in a wide variety of girls sports ensures the district does not need to worry about balancing funds between the sexes.

A wide variety of other activities also receive funds from the athletic department. The chess team, debate team, Model UN, Science Olympiad, Scholastic Scrimmage and Power Lifting all fall under the umbrella of the athletic department, which helps provide venues and funds. "The costs [for the activities] are minimal," said Mr. Geisel. Though these activities are not sports, their classification as interscholastic activities requires that a department, the athletic department, be responsible for them.

Allen Iverson returns home to Seventy Sixers

by Andrew Feldman

To start off the holiday season, a present was put on Philadelphia's front porch. It was an oddly familiar package, one that appears to have been regifted. The gift could not have come at a more interesting time. At a time of the year filled with hope and joy, the Sixers seem to be missing theirs. Under the Christmas tree, there are no presents. The Philadelphia Sixers are 5-13. They are contemplating just playing for the future. Furthermore, they are desperate.

For those who have not figured it out yet, that gift was Allen Iverson. He is the 6-foot-tall electrifying guy that many people never knew left the Sixers. He was the face of the franchise during his ten-year tenure. He is also the guy who left Philly on a rather negative note.

No one expected to see him back. Only Terrell Owens could have left on worse terms, but this was a similar departure. Most fans threw out his jersey. Now he is back, with tickets and Iverson jersey sales expecting to go through the roof.

Before he left, everyone loved the guy. There was no reason not to. Looking back at his career accomplishments until now may raise an eyebrow or two. He was rookie of the year in the 1996-97 season with the Sixers. He has had 10 All Star selections, 2 All Star game MVPs, 4 scoring titles and the MVP in the 2001-02 season where he brought the Sixers to the finals. His career average scoring, 27 points a game, ranks him fifth all time in

that category.

His last game on the Sixers was December 6, 2006. Frustrated with the team, he refused to play the fourth quarter. Later in the week, he forced the team to trade him. On December 19, he was traded to the Nuggets for Andre Miller, Joe Smith and two first-round picks and never expected to return. There were other memorable moments of his 10-year career here. He publicly fought with his coach Larry Brown. He missed practice and then gave a famous rant about how he was the franchise player, and he was not missing a game, just practice.

But without a team, and not wanting to stay retired, he had limited options. He could not have picked a more desperate team to come home to. Elton Brand has not been playing at the level of his salary. Starting point guard, Lou Williams, is out for eight weeks. They have the second lowest attendance in the league, and before they signed Iverson, they were in the midst of an 8-game losing streak. "It's sad to see that the Sixers are so desperate that they have invited an old problem just to sell tickets," said junior Dan Stinebaugh.

The Sixers are not gambling much. They are giving him the lowest possible money that a veteran can receive, \$650,000 and the money is not guaranteed. Iverson says he wants to play and more importantly, he wants to play in Philly. There are still numerous questions surrounding the return of "The Answer." Was he picked up because of nostalgia,



photo courtesy by Yahoo Sports
Allen Iverson cries during his interview

desperation or something more?

More importantly, after being let go by the Memphis Grizzlies, can he still play and will he cause problems if he does not start? The Sixers still find themselves looking up at most of the league. As AI proved so many times in the past, he can take on bigger opponents and still score. The only guaranteed answer is that this regifted present is going to be a mystery to unwrap.

Iverson began his season with the Sixers on December 7 against Denver the Nuggets and December 9 against the Detroit Pistons, his two former teams.