

Boys tennis promises a district title season

by Andy Shah

Spring sports are here, and with that, students will be extending their stay at school everyday a couple extra hours into the afternoon, hitting and kicking balls and (probably the most likely) running. In general, the spring season has typically given the high school winning district records from most of its teams.

Though Parkland's boys tennis team has always been a leader and a strong arm of the district, winning five of the past seven district titles, the last two years have marked a turn of events for the worse. After being upset by Southern Lehigh in the district finals during the 2009 season, the team lost a huge mass of top seeded seniors. Indeed, the 2010 season marked virtually a different roster, as well as a new coach. Coach Julian Taibi led the team to another district finals, though this time Southern Lehigh swept them with a score of 0-5. Yet, their fortunes for this year forecast a return to the familiar number one position. With a steady roster returning this year, and Southern Lehigh's loss through graduation of the majority of their finals team, the team has an excellent opportunity to make their way past districts and into states.

"We have had a disappointing past two seasons. Our team has always been talented, perhaps more so than all the other teams in the district, but we just were not able to commit at those crucial points. On the other hand, we were a young team with a new young coach. Even with that, we were still able to make it all the way to the finals. This year, with more experience, we will definitely be able to make it into states," said senior and doubles player Salil Ketkar.

Certainly this year's tennis season does bode well for Parkland; after a successful rookie debut, Coach Taibi will be returning with a roster that has been with him not only last season, but also years before.

Senior and doubles

player Bret Lesavoy said, "A lot of us have known Coach Taibi through various camps and tennis programs that he also participated in when he was in high school. Due to the relatively small age gap, we can easily get along with him and follow his advice – hence our team chemistry has really built. This is also really advantageous for us because he can help us improve our game. With most of us returning and improved for the season (we only lost two seniors last year), and with a lot of practice and dedication we can emerge as strong contenders for the district title."

Besides being a rookie himself, Taibi also led virtually a rookie team. The singles positions, filled consecutively by then freshman Egor Ivanov, senior Sean Devine, and sophomore Richard Lichtenwalner, were still able to win the mass majority of their matches and even gaining two spots in district singles. Of those three, only Devine will not be returning to the team.

Doubles this year face a lot more speculation, especially with the probability that one player from last year's doubles line up would be moving up into a singles position. Even more, the team lost four-time varsity member Guy Lesavoy to graduation at the vital seasonal number two doubles position, leaving partner and brother alone. Yet with the surplus

of talented players that line up the latter Varsity and JV squads.

"Our support and JV team members have always been amazing. A lot of them have been on par, or sometimes even better than some seeded varsity members. In fact, our JV team in itself, could probably beat most of the varsity teams that we play throughout the season. After a summer and winter of improvement, we only have even better players to fill those spots," said senior David Miller.

The team still has some stiff competition facing them in the upcoming season. In general, skilled tennis players in this area are concentrated around a few dominant schools. Though they may have lost a core group of skilled seniors, Southern Lehigh retains their number one singles player Eric Perez as well as a few other top varsity players. Emmaus, Parkland's long time rival, usually has the bulk of the other skilled tennis players that go to Westend and all the other fitness and country clubs in the area; this year is no exception. Led by four-time number one singles player Akshay Damani, a player that is arguably rated as the best in the district, Emmaus will also prove a threat to Parkland's goals of a district title. Other teams such as Easton and Central Catholic have proved to be slightly difficult and long to beat, but otherwise Parkland has emerged 7-0 versus them.



photo courtesy of phoenixvilleneews.com

Coach Julian Taibi, alongside varsity members Bret Lesavoy, Alec Lucente and Egor Ivanov, accepts the prestigious Phoenixville Tournament Champion's Trophy. The team went undefeated 15-0 last year.

Boys volleyball prepares to rebuild and win

by Andy Shah

For the past four seasons, the boys volleyball team has exploded into one of the top contenders of the league, growing from a 5-9 losing record to a 17-2 winning record. Indeed, in the past two years, the team has reached the level of state contenders, qualifying and reaching the top ten in the state. Yet, after losing a large number of varsity starters to graduation, the team is not of the same make up of those past two years.

"Though we may have lost a lot of experience, we still have enough talent and remaining experience to take us all the way again this year," said Senior Anthony Khoury.

While they may lack some experience, the team will be lead by a senior duo of Khoury and Joseph Guliano, both of which have been on the team since their freshman year. Moreover, though the season and even practice has yet to begin, the team has been playing with one another (though not totally altogether) through club in the winter and fall seasons.

"There are a total of four seniors that will be returning, but otherwise, we pretty much are dependent on are juniors. While we want to make this a winning season and go all the way, this will definitely be a rebuilding process," said Khoury.

With a new starting line up, the boys will also hap to reconfigure who plays what at which position. Returning senior and three-time member of the team Shaan Negandhi said, "Though I have been on the team for a while now, I honestly am not sure what position I will be playing this year. Since so many seniors left us, we have to use our individual skills to fill up those spots. This will be hard to do as many of us can play at more than one position."

Yet again, the team shows an optimistic approach to this rebuilding process. "While the reconfiguration may take a while, we have been playing together through the school and club throughout the year. Hence, we know each other's strengths and weaknesses," Said Khoury.

This year's team will face strong competition from Whitehall, Nazareth, Bethlehem Central Catholic, and of course,

Emmaus. Whitehall and Nazareth being the strongest of competitors this year, both of which are returning with a set ti, while Bethlehem Central Catholic may not prove as hard as the previous seasons due to their loss of a few seniors.

Hence it is necessary for the team to be able to reform into something that is parallel to the last two seasons. While the team may be entering a stage of rebuilding, it still does have the potential to win into districts and even into states again.

As Negandhi said, "We really need to get our team chemistry down and then we will be unstoppable. Once we condition and practice together we will be able to reach and pass the huge milestones from last year. As I said last year to the paper, I do not care at what position I play at and how much playing time I get just as long as the team is doing well. We have been playing together for what seems like an eternity and we have become something akin to a unit that is similar to a family. We have the potential to do great things this season, and just as long as we achieve those things, nothing else really matters to me."



The Scoreboard

by Sam Wolf

Now you all know me well enough to classify me as a solution guy more than a complaint guy. And even if I do let out a few sour cries, I always have a cure to accompany it. However, recently I have reached my boiling point. This is why this column's theme is: I am sick and tired of...

Alright kids, lets begin with the NFL draft. First off, the job position's held by Todd McShay and Mel Kiper need to be eliminated from this world. If you think these gentlemen may seem important this time of the year, that is because they really only appear to have an importance this time of the year. I tried to find Mel Kiper's columns on ESPN.com last June while I was surfing the internet. Looks like someone's taking an extended Summer vacation.

I am able to get past these guys' job positions, however I can no longer take the garbage which exits their mouths. Stop talking about quarterbacks. I realize that we are in an era of the QB. ESPN even made a documentary about how much your team will stink if you do not have a good quarterback. However, they need to focus more of their time on the "non-skilled positions" than the "skilled positions", two terms which I am also sick and tired of. Over the last six years, of the 1,530 players that were drafted, there have been only four quarterbacks drafted that have lead their teams to a winning season.

My final statement on the matter is a rather bold one. If Cam Newton plays in the NFL next season and does one of the following, I will personally write a heart-felt retraction and send it to next year's sports editor to be published in *The Trumpet*. The two conditions are this: If Newton averages a completion percentage of 55% or better, or if he is a member of a winning team (above .500)

Now on to some hoops. I would have liked to talk a little bit more about basketball than football, but as you can see, I am quickly running out of real estate, so this will be brief. Thank the Lord, praise Oprah, and tell your mother I said hello; Carmello Anthony finally signed with the Knicks! This, I am happy about. However, what was making me sick and tired, was how Anthony denied any rumors of trade talk throughout this entire process. It is not just 'Mello who does this, but he just happens to be the most recent and most convenient.

Mikhail Prokhorov, the owner of the NJ Nets, told his franchise to stop negotiations with Anthony his demands were too high. Even after this statement was released to the press, Carmello still denied trade rumors. The accepted theory is that a player on the brink of leaving an organization denies everything, he is doing the right thing. Personally, I am sick and tired of the lack of transparency. It just makes everybody involved seem less credible and the fans frustrated. Which by the way, one thing athletes seem to be forgetting is that the fans are paying their multi-million dollar pay checks along with buying into their shoe deals and buying their 'fatheads'. One of my angered and ranting ideas is that whenever an athlete decides he or she would like to leave a franchise, they should hold a vote amongst the fans to decide where they go. Let me tell you, I am sick and tired of being sick and tired.