



Panther Sports Illustrated

Nativity School, Menlo Park

March 12, 2008

Eagle boys, girls each take 2nd place in PPSL South Division

Panther basketball lovers got their money's worth last weekend. Players and coaches all talked about the fantastic fan support, which included our beloved Principal Carol Trelut and her husband George "I bleed Panther blue" Trelut, several faculty members, and parents of little Panthers who aren't even old enough to play yet. There was one phrase on everybody's lips: "And next year, we'll be in our NEW GYM!"

Our Eagle boys and girls, each their respective division's champion last year, advanced to the championship round and finished the season second in the south. More on them in a minute.

Let's start our recaps with a game that was one of the best many of us had ever seen. Friday night, St. Charles gym, our 2-seed Varsity boys squared off against a motivated and intense 3-seed IHM team. The two teams had split the two games they played during the season. From the tip-off to the last whistle, they traded points in a fast-moving, well-played, clean game that ended up tied at the final buzzer. A two-minute overtime ended with both teams again tied.

Coach Bill picks up the play-by-play: "Nativity controlled the tip-off and drove down the court where we missed a 12-footer. We grabbed the rebound and quickly put back a shot that defied gravity and circled the rim not only once, but twice. Unfortunately, it rolled off the side after the second revolution and IHM was able to grab it, drive the court, and lay in the game-winning basket.

Coaches Gary, Bill, Chris (in spirit) & Bharat

gathered the boys after the game and let them know how proud they were of them and then they all gave one last "PANTHER!" This group has made the play-offs every year and the south finals twice. Good luck in high school!

The 4-seed JV boys drew a tough opponent Saturday morning and gave it their all. Coach Ronnie and Coach Vin report that these guys were proud to represent Nativity in the play-offs and look forward to fighting their way back in next year.

By early afternoon, it was the 4-seed JV girls' turn to suit up and hit the hardwood at Hillsdale. Coaches Mike, Erin, and Bill had the girls well prepared, but a scrappy, fast 1-seed Mt. Carmel team was ready to play hard, too, and

Panther teams make us proud during close, action-packed play-offs

went up 10-2 at one point. Unfazed, the JV fought back. Reports Coach Bill: "Panther forwards Regina Fennie (2 points) and Gretchen Olsen (6 points) slowed Mt Carmel's offense. Center Kathryn Wehbe had her hands full with Mt Carmel's "twin towers", but kept them out of the key. We narrowed Mt. Carmel's lead to 21-18 in the 3rd quarter. Coach Marron's famed "pressure" defense forced numerous steals and Panther fast breaks to the hoop. What appeared to be successful 3-pointers by Catherine Marron (4 points) and Anna Gutsell (2 points) were scored as twos when their toes were just a hair over the 3-point line. With 2 seconds remaining we were down by two; Cassie

Stansberry (7 points) took an in-bound pass and put up a shot that bounced off the iron, but what a great game!"

Meanwhile at St. Greg's, the Lion 6 boys took on a strong St. Matt's team and had a good plan, but just didn't get the bounces. The Lions were led by Bhavik Patel who drove in the paint 3 times for 3 buckets. Josh Gabriel and Max Dobson played great defense and Kenny Avila-Linn and Ronald Trabanino did a fine job pulling down rebounds and playing deny defense. Justin Gonzales did a great job distributing the ball in transition and Gabe McNern, who has been our rock all season, fought hard for every rebound. The Eagles ended up 5-3, and many thanks to Coaches Dan, Kelly, Bharat, and Paul.

Now, for the Eagle action. The 2-seed Eagle boys lined up against a very tough 3-seed St Pius in the first round. The Eagles were in for a game from the start, and did not lead in this one until late in the 3rd qtr. The Eagles wore down St Pius, and pulled away in the 4th. Nathan Thomas did a great job driving and dishing and was able to find Gabriel Robles for 3 beautiful buckets. Marcus Guegler was all over the court, and had many steals in transition to keep us in this one. On to the championships!

The Eagle girls have a special practice cheer. In honor of the play-offs they fired it up before taking on division top seed IHM. When the roar went up, there was no doubt in the gym who was going to win this game. Sierra Sheeper had the hot shooting touch and owned the high post. Olivia executed a great steal and jump shot for two. Sarah Alvarado had an intense and successful defensive game, and Blair Hamilton moved the ball artfully and pumped in the team's first three-point bucket ever! Eagles beat the top seed 20-8 and advance!

The intensity picked up on Sunday when the girls and boys played back-to-back championship games. As spectators packed the stands, the Eagle girls squared off against the #2 seed, St. Greg's. An intense defensive battle was on. Maddie Morgan and Alexis Navat fought St. Greg's big, strong post player for rebounds and came out with the vast majority. But like us, St. Greg's "plays tall" and super-aggressive, and possessions kept reversing based on intercepted passes and fouls. Late arrivals were astounded to see a 4-4 score at half-time. In the second half it was still a one-point game at the end of three after Phyllis Tameilau sunk a nice bucket and Hana Kazarian dished off some good passes. The fourth quarter opened up a little, but St. Greg's got a couple of bounces we didn't and as the clock ticked down the Eagles were on the wrong side of a 17-13 final to end their season #2 in the south.

Next up, the Eagle boys took to the floor to take on the only team that had beaten them in regular season play, St. Charles. We had to overcome constant pressure. It was a physical game and Jonny Montejano fouled out, but not before tenacious defense and constant offensive push. Remy Arnold was up and down the court stopping fast breaks and creating fast breaks of his own. Antonio Porras and Jake Guy, hands flying, played outstanding defense and had a number of steals. Nathan Thomas, who was double-teamed and held most of the game, kept his composure, continued to battle and ended with 20+ points to end a fine season. Although, the Eagles came up a bit short, they left it all on the court and should be proud of a 7-2 season and 2nd place showing. And another fine showing for Coaches Dan, Kelly, and Paul.

MANY THANKS...

...to all who helped make this season terrific. Thanks to Bharat Patel, who spent most of his weekend scoring games and all others who volunteered at the table and in other ways this year.

Parents and players, remember that we are a VOLUNTEER program that runs on the time and dedication of busy people who believe team sports should be fun and can teach important life lessons. When you see your coaches and also AD Bill Morgan, who probably has put 30 hours a week into this program all season, remember that only two words matter: THANK YOU!!! See you in the new gym . . .