



Kayla Brown guards a Lancaster offensive player attempting to move toward the goal.

LADY CAVALIERS BALL UP

Bobby Counts

by ALEX BROOKS

Eyes filled with tears, they came into the locker room one by one. The dimly lit space was quiet, and everyone's hearts were filled with sadness as the coaches filed in.

"Keep your head up," head coach Jabari Deas said. "It's not the outcome we wanted, but I'm still proud of you all."

Almost 80 miles away from home, the sad news of the end of the Lady Cavaliers' season was tweeted out and shared with all of the followers and supporters of the team.

Deas, along with his assistant coaches, had nothing but positive things to say to the team despite the players' sadness.

"I'm proud of every single one of you, and you gave it your all tonight. That's all that matters," Deas said.

Principal Sabrina Suber walked into the locker, hugged each one of the players, and told them all how proud she was of them. The silence of the room was only broken by her voice and sniffles. The hard work, dedication, and long hours of practice were over. For some, it was the last time they would wear their jersey, or play on a court representing Richland Northeast.

Although they fell short of making it to the state championship, the Lady Cavalier girls basketball team's season was a success, even with major changes in coaching staff and all new routines.

After coaching the girls basketball team for three years, Precious Caldwell moved on to Wilson High School in Florence to become an administrator. During her time as coach of the Lady Cavaliers basketball team, she pushed for key components such as change,

communication, a healthy team relationship, and discipline. Although the 2015-2016 season for Caldwell ended with a losing record of 9-10-0, the idea of building a family stuck with the players. For this year's season, the bond of the players added to their collective success.

"Coming to a school with all new players was very exciting, getting to know a new group of young ladies. Any time you get the chance to start something new, you have anticipation and excitement about it," Deas said, reflecting on the team and a season that he described as "historic."

Along with Deas, assistant coaches Lamont Britt, Cicely Jenkins, Cherisha Floyd, and La'Tangela Atkinson helped lead the Lady Cavs to success.

Sophomore Taylor Britt came from Westwood High School, but quickly became close with her new teammates.

"I like that we can argue and pick fights, but we know that when it comes down to the game, we play together and we do everything possible to win," Britt said.

There were times when the team could joke around, but there was also a time for settling down and focusing on the games the team had to play. Practices were intense for the team, especially during the playoff season.

"Coach Britt was key on intensity," senior JaBrie Drakes said. "Leading up to the playoffs, we became a lot more focused on specific teams we were going to play."

The team watched videos of opponents they were going to play during the regular, region, and playoff season. The coaches made sure the team knew who they were facing and what to expect from each player.

A big change this year was preparation and making sure that the basic fundamentals were really emphasized.

If you were to walk into the girls'

locker room during this year's season, you would see big bright signs with words such as "rebound," "box out," and "defense" in the entrance and on the walls.

"We weren't a very tall team and because we weren't a very tall team, we knew that rebounding would be a very big challenge," Deas said about the signs. "I felt like if we could rebound the ball well and box out and play defense, then we could win a large number of games."

After the long nights of games and bus rides, the thing that kept the team together the most was the bond of the players and coaches.

"The highlight of my day was being around my girls on the basketball team," Deas said, "So it was very disappointing knowing that we wouldn't be able to come together as a group every day."

As this year's season ended, there was little time to rest, and Deas quickly turned his attention toward using the team's progress to continue to build the girls basketball program at Northeast for future years.

"This year's team kind of laid the foundation, so with the foundation of our program being set, we want to continue to build on top of that foundation," Deas said. "Next year, we want to go even further and we feel that's possible."

