

"A Change in the Game" by Kevin Mueller: The Cavalier Volume 27 Issue 4 May 2018

After opening the 2017-18 season with a victory in their first game, the Richland Northeast boys basketball team could not build on that early success. The Cavaliers did not win again, finishing the season with a 1-18 record.

"I feel like we were too relaxed after winning our first game and got too ahead of ourselves," said junior Daniel Montgomery.

Head coach Lucas Hargrove—a Richland Northeast graduate and one of the top players in school history—worked very hard to help turn things around for the team, but he was unsuccessful.

In April, the school hired former NBA player and University of South Carolina star JoJo English to replace Hargrove.

English played for the Gamecocks in the early 1990s and later played parts of three seasons with the Chicago Bulls alongside the great Michael Jordan. English was also the head coach at Sumter High for two seasons and led them to the 2015 Class 4A state title. He then served as the associate head coach for Catawba College in North Carolina from 2015-17.

English said he has high hopes for the future of RNE basketball and plans to utilize his past experiences into his coaching career in order to help the team be successful.

"The most important thing is to teach them to play as brothers. They also need to hold each other accountable, be organized, and have good leadership," English said.

English mentioned that he watched them play last season, and saw a mentality in them that looked "defeated." He plans to change that mindset through hard work and tough practices.

"They are definitely a lot better than their record showed," English added.

The returning players have high hopes for next year and expect a lot out of their new coach.

"I feel that Coach English is going to have a good impact on our team because he has played at the highest level and knows the best way to help us," said sophomore Josh Boyd.

Boyd feels that the team needs to create a stronger bond by spending more time together on and off the court.

"We need to work on playing more as a team and less individually, and we need to work on being brothers. This includes holding each other accountable and looking after each other," Boyd said, echoing the words of English.

Both the players and the new coach want to ensure that they have stronger bonds and better leadership.

The upperclassmen want to do everything they can in order to help out their younger teammates.

Montgomery works hard to make sure everybody becomes better as teammates and as basketball players.

"I want to make sure they don't make the same mistakes that I made in the past," Montgomery added.

Although the Cavaliers haven't had a winning season since 2013, both the coaches and the players have high hopes that this trend will change next season.

"My foundation is to ensure that they work hard and together. If we stick to that foundation, I know we will be successful," English said.