

Defense is the Key "Red-Red"

Todd Thomas



Donte Dangerfield puts defensive pressure on DeLasalle. Photo by Bo Hill.

The game of basketball has always thrived on offensive excitement. High flyers and long-range shooters rule the highlight films and pack gymnasiums, but in the long run it's often defense that is the deciding factor in wins and losses. North Lawndale College Prep takes this reality to heart, and it shows in the defensive effort they put out, and the wins they pile up.

All of North Lawndale's players make defensive contributions, but two senior guards, Donte Dangerfield, and "Z" Jones really step up to the plate and clamp down on the opposition.

"To the best of my ability I try to bring as much energy to defense that I can", said Dangerfield, who is known for his timely steals that often lead to fast break points. "The team feeds off me, I'm the energy guy." And the steals for Dangerfield don't come by chance. Just as many players have a goal to score a certain amount of points, he has a goal to get a certain number of steals.

"I have a goal each game to try and get ten steals," said Dangerfield.

His teammates have big respect for Dangerfield's defensive prowess, and fellow guard Terry Johnson, no defensive slouch himself, offers this assessment.

"Donte is an animal on the defensive side. He's one of the greatest defenders I've ever went against," Johnson said. "He really works hard on

defense - he's relentless."

For the Phoenix, defensive pressure starts with the opening tip. But when the action on the court heats up, as it usually does in Public League basketball games, there is a signal that prompts North Lawndale to become even more aggressive. The signal is the chant of "Red-Red," that comes from the bench, and the fans.

"Z" Jones says that the true origins of "Red" are a team secret, but he does explain the general concept. "Basically it just lets us

know to intensify our defense. Get pumped up - get hard and try to deny the other team a scoring possession," Jones said.

Miles Mayfield is also a defensive stopper, and the long-limbed six-foot-four-inch forward gets truly psyched up when the Chants of "Red-Red" start to fill the gym.

"When we hear "Red" we know it's time to lock somebody up. It builds up our energy and intensity and helps carry us through the game. Defense is the key, that's what we're based on, and that's what we like to do," said Mayfield.

To the casual fan the swarming Phoenix defense usually seems to be clicking on all cylinders as they create turnovers and general disarray for their opponents. But Head Coach Lewis Thorpe has a more discerning eye, and sees room for improvement in his team.

"No, I'm not satisfied with our defensive effort," said Thorpe. "We've always predicated ourselves on defense. They stepped up today [speaking of the effort in a quarterfinal win against Brooks], but we have to be more consistent. There is room for improvement, and I think we're going to do that."

The Phoenix are going to need to play their best as they go further into the Public League Playoffs. They've been impressive in winning the first three games, but lost a tough one to De LaSalle in a non-conference matchup.

"We need to start sticking better defense," said Johnson. "We're really going to need that, because as they say - 'defense wins games.'

NLEN from front page

that supports the Greyston Foundation and hires men and women whose backgrounds include incarceration, substance abuse, domestic violence, and illiteracy. Based out of Yonkers, New York, the Greyston Foundation provides a number of services to its community. These include a community garden, a technology center, low-income housing, and services for individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Walls spoke on the importance of entrepreneurs like Palms Barber. Their work in social enterprise betters their communities.

Sweet Beginnings honored Scott Baskin, owner of Mark Shale, a Magnificent Mile clothing store, and Cheryl Jackson, president and CEO of the Chicago Urban League. Mark Shale has carried beeline® products since 2008. Mark Shale customers have responded well to the honey products; Sweet Beginnings has enjoyed a number of sales there.

Cheryl Jackson was honored because of her economic empowerment initiative at the Chicago Urban League. Ms. Jackson joined the Chicago Urban League in 2006 and instituted Project Next, described as "a new agenda focused exclusively on economic empowerment as the key driver for social change." This year, nextTV (hosted by Ms. Jackson) featured Sweet Beginnings and its operations as an exemplar of businesses creating social change in their communities. At the tea, Ms. Jackson iterated nextTV's sentiment, "There are so many challenges - some seem almost insurmountable. It's companies like Sweet Beginnings that give these people a break."

Other speakers at the Tea included Zoraida Sambolin, Anchor/Reporter for NBC 5 Chicago, Angela Rudolph, member of the Sweet Beginnings Tea Committee, Iris Kreig, member of the Sweet Beginnings Tea Committee, Cerathel Burnett, President of the North Lawndale Employment Network Board of Directors, Carol Kennedy, member of the Sweet Beginnings Tea Committee, Yollanda Thames,



Sweet Beginnings Team



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former North Lawndale Employment Network participant and current CTA employee, Don Campbell, current Sweet Beginnings Team Leader, and Jennifer Henderson, Chair of Sweet Beginnings LLC Management Committee and Immediate Past Chair of Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream.

For more information on the North Lawndale Employment Network and their transitional jobs services please visit www.nlen.org or call (773) 638-1825.

Start back.

- Our weekend-only classes begin Friday, March 13 and Saturday, March 14 at the West Side Learning Center, 4624 West Madison Street.
- We are testing and registering students now through March 12, Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.
- All GED and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are free.



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