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Three goals in sight

Coach sees current team as his best chance yet to do something special

By Mike Moore
 C & G Sports Writer

MADISON HEIGHTS — Dave Joseph has been the head coach of the Madison Heights Bishop Foley girls basketball team since 2005.

He's had some very talented squads — ones that made noise during the regular season before thundering into the playoffs and playing executioner to any team in their way.

But now, as he looked over his team during a Jan. 18 practice at the school, he spoke freely about his girls and just what the rest of this season may have to offer.

“This group, more than any I've had, has the chance to do some very special things,” he said.

“We begin every year with three main goals,” Joseph added. “We want to win our division, win the Catholic League playoffs and win our district. I've never had a team do all three, but this group is more than capable.”

At press time, the Ventures were a very modest 5-5 overall and 2-2 in the Catholic League A-West Division. Two of those five losses, however, came in games where Foley had a fourth-quarter lead.

The improvement and talent is more than evident, considering this year's squad is just two wins shy of equaling last season's 7-14 mark.

“We've used last year's finish as a sort of motivation,” said senior Kari Hoepner, a Madison Heights resident. “We didn't play as well as we wanted to, or as well as we could have. We're using that to push ourselves now.”

Hoepner, a three-year varsity player, is no stranger to success. She was a member of the 2007-08 team that won a district title, the third since 2005 for the program. The Ventures also made it to the regional final in 2006.

Even with the success in the postseason, Joseph has yet to reach Calihan Hall for the Catholic League finals.

So what's different about this year's team — a collection of girls from surrounding communities, namely Sterling Heights and Madison Heights — and last year's squad, which was the first of Joseph's not to win a district?

“You're not going to see too many teams with the chemistry we have that goes perfectly with our talent,” said senior Kam Haifleigh, a Walled Lake resident and third-year



Photos by Tracy Dreslinski
 Sophomore Colleen Szakaes looks to score off an offensive rebound against Center Line earlier this season. Foley was 5-5 at press time and still in the thick of things in the Catholic League.

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varsity player. “The experience is also key for us. We only graduated three seniors from last season, so everybody understands their role.”

“I know the girls are motivated by last season, and I am, too,” Joseph said. “There’s been some extra commitment, some extra work, a lot of little things that have gone into this season to get us back on track. ... I like where we are right now. We got through a difficult part of the schedule, and now we have a chance to really make a move.”

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