Lehman Coach Develops More Than Just Players

Bronx, NY- Practice makes perfect, that’s a common adage in sports and is no exception for the Lehman College Men’s Basketball team. As seventh-year head coach Steven Schulman enters this season, practice continues to be a pivotal factor in the winning tradition he has brought to the Bronx campus. Coach Schulman has been the instrumental piece to the Lightning’s success, but a magnificent array of assistant coaches throughout his seven-year span, has assisted in the continued success of Lehman basketball.

As well as developing student-athletes into top notch basketball players, coach Schulman has begun to be recognized as a developer of talented assistant coaches. In just the past two seasons, four of Schulman’s former assistants have moved on to land head coaching positions in the high school ranks.

Elliot Crump, a New York Teaching Fellow from Montana, volunteered for Schulman last year. After one year on the sidelines as a volunteer for Lehman, he became the Junior Varsity Boys Basketball Coach at Taft High School in the Bronx. Crump is looking forward to demonstrating his knowledge of the transition game that he gained under Schulman, noting that this style of play contrasts to the half-court emphasis in Montana.

“Coaching at Lehman refined my view of a beneficial practice,” Crump said. “The drills, timing and preparation that I learned from Schulman will certainly help me organize the style of practice I intend to implement.”

Chris Ballerini is the head boys basketball coach at the High School of American Studies. Ballerini was Schulman’s first assistant when the Lightning won the CUNY Championship in 2004. Ballerini, a former player at Binghamton University, credits Schulman’s “tools” – defense, discipline, and develop character – as the foundation of a program that is consistently in contention to win another championship.

“They say imitation is the best form of flattery and this type of program is exactly what I’m trying to build at the High School of American Studies,” Ballerini said.

Preparation both on and off the court is an asset Schulman instilled in all of his assistant coaches. John-Manuel Sanchez, a Schulman assistant from 2000-2003, is in his second year as an assistant coach at arch-rival John Jay College. David Bartolacci, another former assistant of Schulman, is currently the head coach at Manhattan’s Calhoun School and led them to a B Division private school championship last year.

“I think I have been lucky to work with such outstanding individuals,” said Schulman. “Our coaches work just as hard as the players, which enable them to be prepared for an opportunity to lead their own programs.”

Schulman continues to maintain a diverse staff of assistant coaches, allowing each to play a unique role. This year’s staff includes Wolfgang Lucena, Phil Terry, and former Lightning players Chris Bowman, Vantroi Chapman, and Gary Greaves. Each coach is prepared to do their part in continued success of the Lightning, and know that with dedication they could be the next in line to further their coaching careers.