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District 158 to launch dual language program this fall

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY



Students work on literacy activities in Jennifer Shamrylo's bilingual kindergarten classroom at Chesak Elementary School in Lake in the Hills. Huntley Community School District 158 this fall will launch a dual language program for kindergartners and first-graders at the school.

Courtesy of Huntley Community School District 158

Beginning this fall, three Huntley-area elementary schools will offer dual language classes for some kindergartners and first-graders.

Huntley Community School District 158 is adding kindergarten dual language classrooms at three of its five elementary schools -- Chesak in Lake in the Hills, Leggee in Huntley, and Mackeben in Algonquin -- and two first-grade dual language classrooms at Chesak.

Additional grades will be added each year until full implementation of the program through fifth grade, said Rocio Del Castillo, District 158 director of curriculum and instruction.

"The goal for the dual language program is we want our District 158 students to have the opportunity to become bilingual and biliterate," said Castillo, who joined the district this year.

Castillo previously worked as coordinator for second language learning at West Chicago District 33, where she helped implement a districtwide dual language program.

"For our bilingual students, that's the way the district is going to provide bilingual services, and it's also an enrichment program for our English-speaking students," she said. "We are going to have a two-way immersion model."

Classes will be split between native Spanish speakers and English-speaking students. Both groups of students will serve as role models for their native languages, Castillo said.

District 158 will use the 80:20 learning model that **Elgin Area School District U-46** has had for many years. Eighty percent of classroom instruction is in Spanish and 20 percent in English. As students move up in grades, English instruction increases by 10 percentage points per grade until both languages reach parity by third grade.

Officials project having six dual language classrooms this fall with 120 students.

District 158's English Language Learner population is around 10 percent and the number of bilingual students is increasing each year. There also has been tremendous interest among native English speakers for learning Spanish, Castillo said.

"Our English-speaking families have been waiting for this initiative for a long time," she said. "They are receiving dual language with open arms."

Students identified as English Language Learners who qualify for bilingual instruction will be placed in the program automatically, while native English speakers will be selected by lottery for remaining spots. The lottery will take place a week after kindergarten registration the first week of June.

The district will host information nights for families of incoming kindergartners interested in the program from 7 to 8 p.m. March 22 at Mackeben, 800 Academic Drive, and April 12 at Leggee, 13723 Harmony Road. A separate session will be held for families of students entering first grade at 6 p.m. Monday at Chesak, 10910 Reed Road.

For more information about the program and job openings for bilingual teachers, visit district158.org/dual-language.

SPORTS SECTION

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Carter's demand for mental toughness pays dividends for Larkin

BY JERRY FITZPATRICK



Larkin head basketball coach Deryn Carter celebrates with his team after defeating Rockford Jefferson in the Class 4A Jacobs sectional championship boys basketball game in Algonquin Friday.

John Starks | Staff Photographer

The mental toughness Deryn Carter has demanded of Larkin basketball players since the day he returned to coach his alma mater in 2009 translated to a sectional championship in Algonquin Friday night.

The Royals were staggered after Rockford Jefferson drained three straight 3-pointers to slice an 11-point lead to 55-53 with 2:05 left in the game, but they didn't give in to doubt. They relied on their experience and remained focused.

Senior Anthony Lynch smartly drew an offensive foul as the J-Hawks attempted to tie the game with 1:31 left.

At the other end of the floor, he scrambled for a loose rebound under the basket after two Jalen Shaw misses, fought for possession and laid it in with 57 seconds left to stake the Royals to a 4-point lead.

Twenty seconds later Victor Perez corralled a long rebound after a missed 3-pointer and forwarded the ball to Shaw for the most satisfying breakaway dunk by a Larkin player since 2005, when the program won its last sectional title.

"We just said 'keep calm, man,' " Lynch said. "That's the best thing you can do when you're pressed, just relax and take your time. It's just unbelievable. It shows a lot about this team and how hard we work. This isn't easy, man. It isn't easy."

The unshakable Royals were aggressive down the stretch, making Carter equal parts proud and relieved. He questioned the mental fortitude of this group as recently as mid-February following consecutive losses.

"We challenged them about five weeks ago after the Conant and St. Charles North games because we weren't mentally tough enough to go where we wanted to go," Carter said. "Man, have they responded. So tough mentally to just stay the course and keep trying to get stops. (Jefferson) hit tough shots; It wasn't like they were getting open looks. And then to finish the game the way we did, I'm just so proud of them."

The sectional title is Carter's first in nine years as Larkin coach. While he and the Royals (24-8) yearn for more than just trip to Tuesday's Class 4A NIU supersectional against Benet Academy (28-4), he also realizes how far they've come.

The program was in disarray when Carter took over in 2009-10. The Royals had gone 1-25 the previous season. It got worse before it got better. The new coach was forced to forfeit 7 games in his first season because of a certification oversight. Thus, his first team finished 1-26.

Then came the steady climb. The Royals won 4 games the following year and jumped to 16-12 in 2011-12, the first of seven straight winning seasons.

What have Carter and Larkin have accomplished since 1-26?

Fifteen straight wins against rival Elgin.

Four 20-win seasons in six years.

Three Upstate Eight River titles in six years.

Four regional titles in six years.

Consecutive sectional final appearances for the second time in school history.

And now the program's fifth sectional title, its first since 2004-05.

"He's definitely turned it around," said Loyola Rambler Christian Negrón, a 2017 Larkin graduate on hand to support his former teammates. "I'm proud for him that he got his first sectional championship. It's something we've been chasing for awhile and we're not done. We're going to keep going."

Following his first sectional title as a coach, Carter looked back at the journey.

"When I got the job I had people that I trusted a lot that told me I was making a mistake. They told me I was making a professional mistake. I can't even put it into words, to be honest with you. To be a part of taking this program to a place that it's never been is a blessing. It's such a blessing, man. Such a blessing."

The coach's voice began to crack as the weight of the moment caught up with him. His eyes began to well as he watched his players celebrate with the sectional plaque.

Not even the mentally tough are immune to emotion.

"Such great kids," he added. "Such great kids."

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Larkin takes down Jefferson for sectional crown

BY STEVE NICHOLS



Larkin's Jalen Shaw holds the championship plaque for fellow teammates and students to see after the Royals beat Rockford Jefferson in the Class 4A Jacobs sectional championship boys basketball game in Algonquin Friday.

John Starks | Staff Photographer

The Larkin boys basketball team knew at some point during Friday's Class 4A Jacobs sectional championship game it would endure Rockford Jefferson's unnerving ball pressure.

Little did the Royals know it would come during the absolute worst time: the game's final three minutes. And what a test it was for the Royals to punch their ticket to Tuesday's supersectional at NIU.

After the 60-55 win over Jefferson to take home the first sectional hardware since 2005, maybe that frantic, three-3 minute span might've been the best in program history to date.

The Royals (24-8), who led 55-42 with 3:33 left after Victor Perez's corner 3-pointer, showed all the heart they had after the J-Hawks (26-7) turned on the pressure, hit 3-straight 3s during a 48-second span and cut it to 55-53 on an 11-0 run with 2:02 left.

Larkin, though, answered and ended the run with Anthony Lynch's putback off two Jalen Shaw misses with 55 seconds left and Shaw concluded matters off a subsequent J-Hawk 3-point miss with a thunderous one-handed slam with 39 seconds left that sent Royals' fans into a craze and Larkin to its first Elite Eight.

"It feels good, it's crazy. We made it from a long way. It was a long way to go," said Shaw, who had 17 points and 14 rebounds. "We were just patient. This is what we've been waiting for since day one. Ever since the first practice after we played Jefferson."

The Royals, who avenged an 11-point loss to Jefferson on November 25 and last year's sectional final loss to Jacobs at Elgin, did so shooting a 49 percent clip and winning the edge on the boards 33-17. But they received an MVP performance from Lynch, who scored 24 points to go with 3 steals, 3 highlight reel dunks and a big defensive charge with 1:31 to go. He was a key cog in helping the Royals to Tuesday's 7:30 p.m. showdown in DeKalb against Benet, which beat Willowbrook 67-40 Friday.

"It's unbelievable," Lynch said of the win. "It just shows a lot about this team, about how we work. This isn't easy."

It surely wasn't. Although Larkin trailed by as many as 6 in the first quarter, it used a 9-0 run to end to quarter to lead by 3. The Royals took a 1-point lead into the half but exploded in the third outscoring Jefferson 16-9 thanks to Lynch, who dunked Larkin's way to a 44-36 lead after three. Lynch scored 11 points in the quarter and then others got involved in the fourth. Threes from Perez and Pierre Black, not to mention another dunk by Shaw, had it looking like Larkin would blow out Jefferson by double digits. But not so fast. Jefferson, led by Terry Ford's 16 points and MyQuion Garrett's 14, wouldn't let Larkin off that easy.

"You work to build a lead so that if a run like that happens you still have the lead," Royals coach Deryn Carter said. "But the one thing was we handled the ball well down the stretch. Under a minute we got enough stops."

Stops were crucial. They didn't come until the end, and Garrett fired two 3s before Larkin locked up on defense.

"We freaked out a little bit," Lynch said about Jefferson's pressure. "But we got into a huddle and I think those are very important and it got us focused."

Jefferson, which totaled 12 turnovers, shot just 41 percent from the field and struggled at times in the second half, shooting 11 of 29 from the field. The J-Hawks couldn't get play after play Larkin seemed to get, as well as control of the boards or the 50-50 balls that Larkin got all night.

"In a two possession game those were huge," J-Hawks coach Todd Brannan said. "We were down 2 with 1:30 left and all those little bounces went their way. They're a good team, I wish them the best. They play the right way, they play hard."