# PRACTICE WITH NOAH MAKES PERFECT

It was near the end of the Lafayette (Ind.) City Championship game when Patrick Tharp called timeout. His Central Catholic middle school girls team was up by three points with a chance to put the game out of reach from the free-throw line.

He huddled the players and then looked directly at the shooter, eighth-grader Alanna Roswarski.

"I told her, 'you should have all the confidence in the world to make a free throw,'" Tharp said. "Because you've been working on Noah." True to form, Roswarski sank her first free throw to cap off a 19-0 season and a city championship.

"Noah is such a great tool, especially at the middle school level when players are learning how to shoot," Tharp said. "It's a good time to teach them the proper way when they haven't formed many bad habits."

Central Catholic is one of several schools in basketball-rich Indiana to enjoy the benefits of a Noah Select Shooting System.

Central Catholic middle school boys coach Mike DeBoy was skeptical the first time he heard of Noah.

"I'm very much an old-school coach so it was hard for me to believe a machine could make a difference," said DeBoy, whose team finished 13-2 and won its conference. "Once the kids started shooting on Noah and learning how to use it and tracking their shots, we saw tremendous improvement in everyone's shooting technique. From best to worse, everyone's technique improved. What that translated to was we became a darn good free-throw shooting team."

Tharp and DeBoy incorporated Noah into their practices as soon as the season started. Both set up Noah to the side and made sure one assistant coach knew every aspect of the unique shooting system.

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"Sometimes when you send a player to the side or wait until the end of practice to work on free throws, the kids think it's goof off time," DeBoy said. "But not with Noah."

DeBoy said his players loved how Noah tracked their progress and kept their scores. He added that the assistant coach would help the players on minor things like ball rotation and placement of the elbow.

"Whenever we worked on set plays, we usually had one or two guys sitting on the sidelines," DeBoy said. "With Noah, those players not working on set plays can go and shoot their 25 free throws."

Tharp used Noah three times per week and rotated the players by alphabetical order.

"The players would stretch, warmup and go right over to using Noah," Tharp said. The coach stressed that Noah was never a distraction in practice. Instead, it helped simulate real game conditions.

"When you wait until the end of practice to shoot free throws, players get a chance to rest a bit and catch their breath," Tharp said. "But with Noah, players used it after they ran drills or worked on our offense and defense. They were a little winded and that's what it's like during a game when they go to the line."

"Working with Noah really does register with the players," Tharp said. "It brings diversity to your practice. Sometimes, there's only so much a player can listen to coaches. Sometimes it takes the kind of feedback that Noah gives for players to learn."

As for DeBoy, who was skeptical at first, the old-school coach said he's convinced now.

"I am sold," DeBoy said. "Yes I am."