

“NOAH WAS RIGHT, I WAS WRONG,”

SAYS WETHERSFIELD COACH AND WE HAVE AN EXPERT III SHOOTER AS PROOF

The 100-year-old Blish Building houses the students of Wethersfield School District. Inside the old brick building, 700 students, ranging from pre-K to 12th grade, go to the same attendance center, making it easy for everyone to know everyone.

One person many of the students, especially the basketball players, know is Jeff Armsworth. He is the girls assistant coach and special education teacher, and the one who brought the Noah Basketball to Wethersfield High School.

“I watched some Rick Torbett shooting instruction videos and saw an ad for Noah,” Armsworth said. “I went to the Web site and then brought it up to Coach Jeff Parsons. He was impressed so we shared the information with a few other people. We agreed to have Rick Turk come do a clinic.”

Turk, a Noah representative, met players, coaches and other members of the basketball program in the gym on a beautiful spring day. And according to Armsworth, the kids of Wethersfield latched on to Noah instantly. A week later, there was an athletic boosters meeting, and it was decided right then and there that Noah had to become a part of the basketball program.

“My initial impression of Noah after watching Rick’s clinic was ‘wow, if these kids buy into this, Noah will really help us improve,’” Armsworth said.

The reason being is that the Flying Geese, at all levels, struggled with their foul shooting, no pun intended.

“Our girls team lost six or seven games by 5 or 6 points,” Armsworth said. “I know we missed 10 or more free throws in those games. I felt Noah could make up the difference.”

When Noah arrived at Wethersfield the day after Easter, one of the first students to devote his time on the machine was a senior guard. Armsworth said the senior was already a good shooter and a fantastic scorer who once totaled 47 points in a game.

“He reminds me a lot of Hersey Hawkins, only three inches shorter,” Armsworth said of the senior, who can’t be identified because he plays college basketball and did not receive permission to be named in the article.

The senior shot 80 sessions during his final few months at Wethersfield and improved his free throw shooting from 80-85 percent to 94-98 percent. He also reached Master I level by the end of summer, which is achieved by only 1 of every 500 basketball players.

“We would play horse from the free-throw line and you also had to guess your arc,” Armsworth said. “He would make the shot and guess his arc almost every time. He beat me so many times that I once asked him, ‘do you have a girlfriend or any hobbies other than shooting on Noah?’”

From the day after Easter to July 19, the student-athletes from Wethersfield used Noah for 1,258 sessions, which equates to more than 30,000 shots. Armsworth knows this because he checked on July 19 when the gym floor was being stripped and rewaxed.

Kyle Blair was another player who showed improvement from Noah. The 5-10 Blair had a natural arc of 55 degrees and had a tough time adjusting to the Noah system.

“Kyle is a kid who shoots a lot of threes,” Armsworth said. “He didn’t like Noah at the beginning because he didn’t understand that he



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needed to tighten his arc. But he stuck with it and he slowly saw his shooting improve.”

The junior made 40 percent of his 57 three-point attempts last year, which included a game with six made threes.

“It was hard for me to believe that Noah was right and I was wrong,” Blair said.

The first time he used the system, he made 14 of 25 three pointers. Noah kept telling him to lower his arc. Blair said he finally relented after five sessions and when he did, that’s when he started to improve.

Now after 30 sessions, Blair has an Expert III rating. In his last session, Blair made 22 of 25 three pointers.

“I guess Noah was right and I was wrong,” he said.

The Flying Geese have not seen Noah’s benefits during a season yet. That’s one aspect of Noah that intrigues Armsworth and Blair the most.

“I hope all our teams come out and shoot the lights out,” Armsworth said. “We’ve certainly put in the work. We have seven or eight girls who have shot 200 times a day on Noah. I can’t wait to see the product of that hard work.”

