

# Gwinnett Daily Post

## Shooting lab mixes technology, basketball

By Tyler Estep, Staff Correspondent

*SUWANEE — Video games aren't always bad for you.*

In an age in which video games are often pointed to as a cause of childhood inactivity and obesity, the same technology and ideology that entrances youngsters around the world can be used to promote physical activity. Specifically, at least at Suwanee Sports Academy, to promote proper basketball shooting fundamentals and mechanics. At the Mark Price Shooting Lab, new-fangled technology is utilized in everyday drills and activities to create and reinforce proper shooting form.



Daniel Searl, Suwanee Sports Academy's director of basketball operations, goes over the results of Durk Stanton's shooting.

"Mark Price, who works with us on a daily basis, gave us all his input on shooting philosophy, what it takes to become a great shooter," said Dan Searl, SSA's director of basketball operations. "We took all of his knowledge and packaged it into a shooting lab and added the technology to it."

Dartfish and NOAH may sound like your run-of-the-mill, couch potato video games, but the shooting lab named after the NBA's all-time free throw percentage leader makes sure they are anything, but Dartfish consists of two video cameras, one catching a profile of the shooter's motions and the other shooting from behind the backboard. It enables players to see themselves shooting, and flaws that general instruction may not get across can be visualized onscreen.

"One of the key things is for the shooters to see themselves," Searl said. "We can film them on

the cameras and two angles can really analyze a person's shot and break it down. Video helps with instant feedback. The goal here is consistency.”

At the shooting lab, video captured by Dartfish cameras can be instantly relayed to shooters on a large flat screen TV. When coupled with NOAH — a combination of radar, video and speaker — Dartfish helps bring what Searl called a “video game feel” to training.

NOAH tracks the arc of a player's shot in order to track consistency and the ability to take advantage of the entire rim. The system charts a player's shots, “shouting” out each shot's arc within seconds of the ball leaving a shooter's hands.

“The NOAH shooting system is a radar system that measures your arc, enabling us to follow the shot from its release point,” said Bruce Kreutzer, a player development instructor at SSA. “It's a nine-inch ball going into an 18-inch rim, and you want to be able to use all of the rim.”

A shot with an arc consistently within a few degrees of 45 lets a shooter maximize the size of the rim and gives shots that may otherwise be too short or too long a better chance at finding the bottom of the net.

Following a series of free throws, jump shots or three-pointers, NOAH provides a detailed analysis. Bands color-coded in degrees of “too short” and “too long” illustrate the arc and distance of each shot in a series, and still images captured by NOAH show release point and form. All of this is stored in NOAH's database for later review.

While learning proper technique and developing a consistently arced shot, players also feel as if they are undertaking a challenge not unlike that in any other video game. Branden Jovaag, an upcoming junior at Chestatee High School, has been working at Suwanee Sports Academy since February.

“The NOAH is pretty fun,” he said. “And if you do bad, it definitely makes you want to do it again.”

Durk Stanton, a recent graduate of Providence Christian Academy, is on his way to Division III Washington & Lee this fall and says his favorite part of the shooting lab is NOAH and “trying to be consistent and get the same score every time.”

“The biggest thing for me is it cuts down all the flashy stuff and it’s all technical,” he said. “It becomes natural because you’re up here so much. It gets stuck in your brain, and it’s the right stuff. It got me a \$30,000-a-year scholarship.”

But beyond the video game feel of expensive technology (a NOAH system will cost you about \$5,000), the Mark Price Shooting Lab continues to place a premium on hard work and individual practice.

“It’s ‘Here’s where you are, here’s what you need to adjust, here’s how to do it and we’ll do it a few times,’” Searl said. “But then you have to go home and do it a hundred, a thousand times.”

“The philosophy here is making small adjustments for big improvement,” Kreutzer said.

“And that’s what it takes.”