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PENDLETON

## De La Salle boys work hard to play



**By Tammy Malgesini**  
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During just the school's seventh year of existence, the boys basketball team from De La Salle North Catholic qualified for its first OSAA/U.S. Bank/Les Schwab Tires 2A State Basketball Championships.

However, the private Catholic high school in north Portland doesn't revolve around its sports programs.

"I think its safe to say we appreciate the sports teams being successful, but it's not our number one priority," Principal John Huelskamp said.

Faith and academics come first, he said, next is the school's Corporate Internship Program and then athletics.

In the CIP program, students work at more than 50 corporations throughout the Portland area, including banks, law firms and financial institutions.

A four-student team makes up one full-time employee and is assigned to a business. Each student works five full work days each month.

To practice, the team hits the hardwood at 5:15 a.m., said coach Forbes Lapp.

"You should see the way the boys come in - teenagers aren't used to getting up at that time. It's a new concept for me, too, and I've been coaching for 50 years," he said.

After coaching 16 years and winning a pair of Washington state titles at La Center, Lapp took over the Knights when Andy Nichols accepted another job. Nichols' team was eliminated from the preliminary rounds during last year's playoffs.

Lapp continues to teach at La Center, but left the coaching position because of philosophical differences.

After filling out 15 applications, Lapp didn't get any interviews.

"When they saw I was 71 years old, they thought I couldn't coach anymore. I hope to die on the court - at about 90," Lapp said with a laugh.

Tim Hennessy, vice president of institutional advancement, said Lapp sort of fell into the school's lap when Athletic Director Don Emery, a friend of the coach, suggested he consider the small private school.

The no-nonsense coach uses peer pressure to ensure players arrive for practice on time.

Junior Terence Kendrick explained when someone is late they have to sit in the middle of the court, while their teammates run sprints.

"We call each other, we say, 'Call me, text me - call me until I wake up,'" teammate Donta Harris said with a laugh.

Huelskamp and Hennessy said team members aren't excused from work, except for state tournament participation.

"I think it speaks highly of the program's success, that a work program makes it hard for teams to be all together for a practice," Huelskamp said.

Kendrick's aunt, Elise Marshall, said the school has benefited her nephew.

"Our family's a village and we sent Terence there to give him, not only a good college prep experience, but a work experience," she said.

At 16, Kendrick has worked at a law firm, Reed College and New Seasons Market, an organic and health foods store.

"So, he's had corporate, academic and retail experience. And I think that's great," Marshall said.

Kendrick said the jobs have enhanced his people skills.

Harris, 17, also appreciates the value of his work as a courtesy clerk.

"I have experience working in a professional area," he said. "It will give me opportunities when I'm older."

Robert Auger, who works in a United Way office, agreed.

"It's a really good opportunity a lot of people don't get a chance to do," the 16-year-old said.

Hennessy said getting large companies and major corporations to buy into the concept that students could perform entry-level jobs was key for the program's success.

"It was a lot of trust - these are inner-city kids," Hennessy said about the school's initial contacts with businesses.

He and Huelskamp measure success by the number of students who continue in school. Last year every graduate entered college and in the past three years, Hennessy said 97 percent of the students went on to college.

"Something's working and we believe it's these kids taking on the challenge," Hennessy said. "The confidence they gain by doing these work positions goes a long ways to help them mature."

Although the students don't get a paycheck, income from the jobs, approximately \$22,000 for each full-time equivalent, is used for operating expenses at the school.