

Putting the “Fun” in Fundamentals

Coaches build “complete players” through activities

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Photo/Aliza Israel

The Walt Whitman gym was alive with bouncing basketballs, swooshing hoops and energetic cheers from campers – and it will stay this way throughout July, while coaches Tom Fitzpatrick and Tom Diana run the All Island Basketball Camp.

Campers formed a half-court square and cheered “Ray! Ray!” as All Island coach and Whitman guard Ray Eatmon showed off with slam-dunk skills. Fitzpatrick and Diana encouraged every camper to clap for him and all other coaches demonstrating tough moves, regardless of whether they sunk the basket or not.

Camper Kara Michelino, 13, took a moment from the excitement to express her enthusiasm for the program. “It’s fun and [the coaches] teach you a lot,” she said. “They play on a team and they know how to play.”

Fellow camper Ben Krauz, also 13 shares such sentiments. “You’re doing something,” he added. “You’re moving around, hanging out with your friends.”

This is the fourth year that Fitzpatrick and Diana are offering the All Island Basketball Camp to third through 12th graders – both within and outside the town of Huntington – and they currently have 500 campers signed up for at least one of the four one-week sessions.

“[We] work on basketball skills, for campers to become complete players...we’re big on sportsmanship,” said Fitzpatrick, head coach of Whitman’s boys basketball team. Diana also coaches basketball during the school year, and led his Uniondale High School team through a successful season. “Everybody who works here has either played for Coach Diana or myself,” Fitzpatrick said, adding that others including Whitman girls coach Dan Trebour are vital to the coaching staff.

“We think [that] by adding a mix of veteran coaches with college players, that we get a great blend of experience and enthusiasm,” Diana said.

Danielle Muller, a 2003 Whitman graduate and member of the University of Rochester women’s basketball team is one such college player who seized the opportunity to mold young players at the All Island camp this summer. “It’s nice to give back to the kids.



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They want to learn something. They look up to everybody here,” Muller said, adding that she also attended basketball camps as a child. “[I stress] a lot of offensive moves, ball handling, mostly passing. [I encourage them] to have fun. Basketball is something you should play because you want to play.”

The All Island coaches are now finishing the third session, which began on July 18, and are accepting registration forms for the fourth and last week that will run from July 25 through 29. Tuition is listed at \$265 per camper. All those interested in further information are encouraged to visit the All Island Basketball Camp website at www.allislandbasketballcamp.com or call 631-543-2801.