



Ka Lau

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It's that Time of Year Again!

Varsity basketball coach Clifton Johnson is new to LCPCS this year, but not to basketball. "I come from a place where there is a lot of gang violence," he said recently, "and I could easily have been put on that track." "But," he continued, "basketball saved me; it taught me how to be a person, showed me how to pursue excellence." And building character through the sport is a big part of his mission at LCPCS.

The Big Island Interscholastic Federation (BIIF) has very specific rules regarding the grades each student must maintain in order to be part of a league team. Coach Johnson is following those rules to the letter, with the result that this year's team is pretty small. There are sometimes only five or six team members at a given practice. But Coach Johnson and his two assistant coaches, Joey Martin and Jeff



L to R: Assistant Coach Jeff St. Pierre, Coach Clifton Johnson (back to camera), Royce Baun, Rayson Domingo, Roman Kozinskiy, and Tyrus Aspili-Nactor confer during a game time-out. Not pictured: Jaychelle Nacnac Lawrence, Austin Parel, Austin Gonzalez; managers Kaikala Carlos, Nicolay Kozinskiy and Saige Tabac; and Assistant Coach Joe Martin. Photo by Gabriel Navalta

St. Pierre, have come up with some creative solutions. For one thing, they are cultivating a promising group of eighth graders, designating them as managers, which allows them to practice with the team and to attend games. Furthermore, there is now one female member on the team. Girls have always been allowed to play on the boys' team in schools with no girls' team, but this is the first time that Coach Johnson knows of that LCPCS has included a female on its varsity team. He's impressed with how the students have adjusted. "We've created an environment where everyone feels comfortable," he says of this change.

It can be tough to maintain morale with such a small team, but Coach Johnson says that they are creating individual goals for the players and the team at each game. For example, they might set a goal to get 10 rebounds in a game, and therefore have something real to celebrate, even if the game

itself is lost. But for next year? With the incoming eighth-graders, Coach Johnson feels LCPCS may have a pretty strong team. "I think we'll be able to make some noise," he said.

But as always, the goals involve much more than winning. "It's really a lot more about trying to build self-esteem," says Coach Johnson. First and foremost, the players are students. Assistant Coach Jeff St. Pierre, whose official title is "Academic and Administrative Coordinator," helps the students before and after school with tutoring and other academic assistance. Coach Johnson says that the team members are taking their academics more seriously, and he's also seeing the players learn to resolve differences and work together.

"I went to all but one of their home games," said Director Garcia earlier this week, "and was impressed with their teamwork, perseverance and commitment to having fun. They are great representatives of Seaside pride and determination."

The LAST HOME GAME of the season is this Friday, January 20 at 6:00 pm. Come cheer for the LCPCS team!

Calendar

- Wednesday, January 18 — Save First! Deposit Day
- Friday, January 20, 6:00 pm — LAST HOME GAME, Varsity Basketball
- Monday, January 23 — High school to Koholālele forest in makai Pa‘auilo
- Tuesday, January 24, 5:30 pm — Governing Board Meeting, band room
- Thursday, January 26 — Grades 9 through 12 whale watching
- Friday, January 27 — pre-k and kindergarten to Umauma Botanical Gardens
- Wednesday, February 1 — Save First! Deposit Day
- Wednesday, February 8, 5:30 — Hui Makua (parent group), band room

A Note from Director Garcia



Governor Ige and Director Garcia at a School Empowerment Conference in Honolulu Saturday.

Thank you to LCPCS families and staff for my amazing first week as a resident of Laupāhoehoe/Pāpa‘aloa and Director of the school. I am looking forward to leading the charge as we become the great school we all aspire to be.

I am inspired by the dedication that I have seen to making the educational and social/emotional experience of our students a positive and productive one. Our staff meeting last Monday was emotional, powerful and productive, and the teaching and enthusiasm that followed during the week in the classrooms and around school were indicative of the commitment each of the school staff brings to our work. We covered a lot of personal and professional ground and expressed commitments to making LCPCS the great school it has the potential to be. True to the spirit of Dr. King, we will be judged by "the content of our character" as we stand for our students and for the rest of the students in our community.

This past Saturday, Liana Honda and I attended the School Empowerment Conference in Honolulu. I was delighted for the opportunity to speak with Governor Ige and to discuss with him some of the important things happening on our campus. I am working to get our name out into the community in positive ways, and going after the resources we need to create even greater programs, experiences and opportunities for our students.

Mahalo for your commitment to doing all you can for our school. Let's make this another great week!