

ST. PAUL'S BASKETBALL PRESEASON

As the Wolves begin their first week of official practice, there were several weeks of the unofficial preseason that prepared them for this moment starting early in August. While teams usually do not do anything until the season starts, the Wolves overcame nine weeks of strength, conditioning, and skill training all in preparation for October 9th, the beginning of the 2017-18 season. Each player made a commitment to sacrifice this nine weeks which could have been used for leisure, and used it to develop and better themselves in several different aspects of the game.

Each day of those nine weeks was strategically planned by the coaches in order to work on different aspects that would help the Wolves come practice and game time. Some days focused on different skills and other days involved progressive conditioning sessions. Outside of these skill/conditioning days, players also upheld having to lift weights three times a week. Typically, a day of workouts would start off with a team based drill that emphasized on a different key to the SPS Basketball Program including things like rebounding and many vital defensive concepts. This was a great time for the players to learn and enhance their techniques and fundamentals. The players would then be split into groups respective to the position that they play (Handling Guards, Shooting Guards, Forwards/Centers). These skill specific groups each had a coach assigned to run them through drills to better develop them as it pertains to what they would be doing in their roles in practices and games.

To supplement the skills learned, the last weeks incorporated conditioning to prepare for official practices. Conditioning days were the toughest challenges the players endured, but at the end of the day, they were the best days. While the Wolves had to fight through extreme fatigue and frustration, conditioning brought out several instances of leadership and brotherhood that brought the team together when times were tough. Conditioning took place in a few forms: the infamous Syracuse drill, Free-Throw Shooting, and Road-Games. Syracuse involved a series of timed sprints that were divided into "4 quarters." Syracuse days showed the heart the Wolves have when it comes to getting better in that sometimes players were desperately diving across the finish line to beat the time. Free throw shooting was an "under pressure while fatigued" drill that involved each player being pressured to make a free throw while his teammates were waiting along the baseline. The consequence for a miss was a sprint, and the shooter did not rotate until he made a free throw. Finally, road-games were random "surprise" days because players never knew what they had waiting for them. They could consist of running on the track to obstacle course station drills. These were accomplished in groups, which again showed how everyone was willing to push their teammates and not let anyone give up when pain and fatigue set in.

Although nine weeks seems like a bit of time, it flew by. Looking back though, you can see a clear difference physically and mentally in these guys. The Wolves were able to improve their game, fine-tune techniques and fundamentals, and also physically become more conditioned and stronger. But, if anything should stick out the most out from everything that was done, it would have to be the leadership and comradery these guys displayed to get through every obstacle presented whether it be fatigue or frustration. The Wolves now look forward to taking this to the next level and continuing to

improve with the start of the season Monday October 9. Expect great things from this group this season.
Go Wolves!

Marc Robertson '12