



Saint Viator Girls' Water Polo Takes First Official Training Trip

March 30, 2010



Head Coach Adam Clementi discusses strategy during a time out in their first game against St. Ignatius. Players include, clockwise: Stephanie Nolan, Madeline Wimberly, Emily Benas, Alli Lardner and Kelly Schreuder.

For the first time, the girls' water polo team at Saint Viator High School transformed their spring break into a working vacation.

The Lady Lions left on Saturday, March 20 for a week in the warm confines of Florida, heading to training facilities in Orlando and Ft. Lauderdale. They rounded out the week with a 16-team tournament, hosted by Gulliver Preparatory High School in Coral Gables, eight-time state champions.

While in Florida, the team used the week to get in plenty of conditioning, technical work and practice, says Head Coach Adam Clementi.

"We added the trip to address the challenge of losing an entire week of practice and games during spring break," said Clementi, a 1997 Saint Viator graduate who played water polo at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

"We see this as a great opportunity to learn the 'East Coast' style of play," he adds, "while doing a significant amount of conditioning and technical work."

They also carved out time to have fun. Earlier this month, they participated in the "Give a Day, Get a Day" program launched in January by the Walt Disney Co. to promote volunteerism.

In exchange for one day of volunteering, team members earned a free pass to Walt Disney World. The polo players and their coaches helped sort donated clothing items to a resale shop benefiting the Greater Wheeling Area Youth Organization.

The tutoring and mentoring program originally started under the auspices of the River Trails and Wheeling park districts to help underprivileged youths.

"Volunteering like this makes for great team building, but it also furthers their Viatorian education," says Tim Carlson, athletic director. "Incorporating Christian service is part of the Viatorian identity and the hallmark of a Saint Viator education."

The Lady Lions play in the Metro Catholic Aquatic Conference, with such perennial powerhouses as Fenwick, Loyola, St. Ignatius and Mother McCauley high schools.

The varsity team includes a strong corps of juniors who last year led the freshman/sophomore team to a third place finish in conference.

They include: goalie Stephanie Nolan, and drivers Alli Lardner and Madeline Wimberly, all of Arlington Heights; Melanie Battaglia of Barrington, Megan Shover of Prospect Heights and Kelly Schreuder of Cary.

Senior Emily Benas of Rolling Meadows leads the team as captain and returns as a defensive specialist. Rounding out the varsity are juniors Melanie Wood of Kildeer and Amanda Pacholok of Schaumburg, and sophomore Eileen Mallof of Arlington Heights.