

The Loyola Basketball Brotherhood

Living the Loyola mission on and off the court



A winning strategy: During a timeout late in the Jesuit Cup tournament, **Head Basketball Coach Tom Livatino** talked to the team about the importance of playing together to get defensive stops to finish the game. The team used the strategy to pull ahead of the St. Ignatius Wolfpack in the fourth quarter and capture the Jesuit Cup with a final score of 47-36.

Bringing home the Jesuit Cup. Triumphant over New Trier as IHSA regional champs. Giving back at Misericordia Night and the Danny Did Basketball Shootout. Our 2016-17 basketball season was defined by solidarity, the pursuit of excellence and service to those in need.

ONE OF THE SEASON'S MOST MEMORABLE HIGHLIGHTS was the **Jesuit Cup** game, a friendly rivalry between Loyola and St. Ignatius College Prep that has become an annual tradition. On January 27, thousands of fans packed the stands in the East Gym as our varsity boys' basketball team welcomed the Wolfpack.

"The Jesuit Cup is a real celebration of Jesuit education and our close-knit Loyola community," says Head Basketball Coach Thomas Livatino. "This is the largest

crowd that the team plays in front of all year."

To help his players prepare for the game, Livatino reached out to Loyola's basketball alumni and asked if they had any wisdom to share from their own Jesuit Cup experiences. "Boy, did we get a huge response," he reports. "More than 40 alumni responded with texts and emails." (See *opposite page for excerpts*.)

The Loyola community also welcomed **Cardinal Blase J. Cupich**, Archbishop of Chicago, who watched the first half of the game with Loyola Academy President Rev. Patrick

IHSA regional champs: Loyola Academy's varsity basketball team celebrated after triumphing over New Trier High School with a score of 43-40 at the IHSA regional championship game in March 2017.





Bringing home the Jesuit Cup (left to right): Team captain and senior point guard **Ramar Evans '17** carried the Jesuit Cup back to his teammates after a 47-36 victory over St. Ignatius; Rambler fans joined in the celebration at center court as the team reclaimed the Jesuit Cup for the first time since 2014; **Cardinal Blase J. Cupich**, Archbishop of Chicago, watched the first half of the game in the stands with Loyola Academy President **Rev. Patrick E. McGrath, SJ**, and a spirited contingent of Ramblers; the Cardinal praised the defense of both teams during a halftime interview conducted by **Luke Phillips '18** for the *High School Cube*.

E. McGrath, SJ, and a spirited contingent of Ramblers and then joined fans of the Wolfpack to give both schools equal time.

Although the competition was intense, our Rambler athletes pulled ahead of the Wolfpack as the clock wound down in the fourth quarter and reclaimed the Jesuit Cup with a final score of 47-36.

"When Coach Mahoney gave me the trophy, I almost dropped it because I'd never held it before and I didn't know how heavy it was," says **Ramar Evans '17**. "Walking over to my teammates with that trophy and handing it to them was even better than winning the game, because we all had finally done it, together."

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"This was our last year of playing basket-

ball together, and one of our major goals was to win the Cup back," adds **Dimitri P. "Jimmy" Alexopoulos '17**. "Being able to play in front of the Cardinal and hold up the Jesuit Cup in front of the Loyola community was an experience I'll never forget."

"This has been a spectacular season overall," reflects Livatino. "To watch these athletes grow as leaders and form this team into a brotherhood has been very gratifying. These guys love each other, and they are going to be involved in each others' lives forever. That transcends wins and losses. They have lived out their dream."

"We call ourselves a brotherhood because that's what we are," says **Kevin X. Cunningham '18**. "I know we'll always stay connected to Loyola basketball. Being a part of this program is about so much more than the game: it's about **building relationships and being connected on and off the court.**" ■

Reflections on Being a Part of the Brotherhood

To help prepare our varsity team for the 2017 Jesuit Cup game, more than 40 basketball alumni shared words of wisdom from their days on the court. Some of these reflections are excerpted below.

"To beat St. Ignatius, play to honor Loyola and all of its former players and coaches. But also **play to honor yourselves.**"
— JOHN A. O'LOUGHLIN '59

"No matter how you do on Friday night, make sure you **give everything that you have** in your tank, so you don't look back with any regrets."
— JOSEPH P. FLANAGAN JR. '82

"It means a great deal to us at the Danny Did Foundation to be connected with Loyola basketball. The way that you guys have supported our cause and others like Misericordia is **a big reflection of your character.** As I know Coach has told you, Loyola basketball is something that people look up to. Especially kids, and especially kids who face challenges. We are all part of your basketball family, and we are rooting hard for you this weekend!"
— THOMAS F. STANTON '94

"In these intense games, you want to **keep your focus on effort.** Play with great effort every second of the game, and the results will take care of themselves."
— JOSEPH B. KENNEDY '02

"Take a quick moment to realize how truly blessed you are to be at this unbelievable school that **competes in both the athletic and educational fields at the highest level.** Whether you know it or not, the structure and character that Loyola has engraved in you will only help you as you continue to take on life and its many challenges."
— ALEXANDER R. CECOLA '10

"There's a reason that we wear gold in our rivalry games. Gold is the color of champions. You've put in all the work. Now **trust your instincts.** This is your legacy—and you're the only ones who can write it."
— WILLIAM PLODZEEN '16

Service is a big part of Loyola basketball—and a part of the Loyola mission that is close to Coach Livatino's heart. Following are a few highlights from a season of serving others.

In January 2017, our Rambler athletes participated in the seventh annual **War on the Shore Basketball Shootout** to benefit the Danny Did Foundation, which works to prevent deaths caused by seizures. The event, which pitted North Shore teams against Chicago teams, was coordinated by Livatino and his brother, Evanston High School Athletic Director Chris Livatino.

In February, the team helped lead basketball drills for hundreds of schoolchildren at the seventh annual **Hustle and Heart Charity Basketball Clinic** benefiting the Danny Did Foundation.

In February, our varsity team also welcomed residents from **Misericordia**, a community for individuals with developmental disabilities, to the Loyola vs. St. Rita basketball game. After the game, the team members shared food and friendship with their guests at a lively pizza party. (See photo below.)



HOOPS FOR OTHERS