

Craving to coach is still strong for Ed Nietopski

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — For more than 35 years, Ed Nietopski has thrived on the challenge of polishing young athletes' skills.

Yet it may not have been until he was sidelined in recent weeks that Nietopski became fully aware of how deeply rooted he is to coaching.

The 65-year-old Nietopski, head basketball and baseball coach at Bishop Kearney High School, 125 Kings Highway S., was forced to lay low after having his left hip replaced in early June — "the first surgery I've ever had," he remarked.

Aided by a pair of crutches, however, Nietopski was able to return last Friday, July 23, to oversee his annual summer basketball camp at BK.

"It's great to be here. I was going crazy at home," remarked Nietopski. "You miss the feeling in the gym, where these kids have all this energy. You get in here and you feel a part of it."

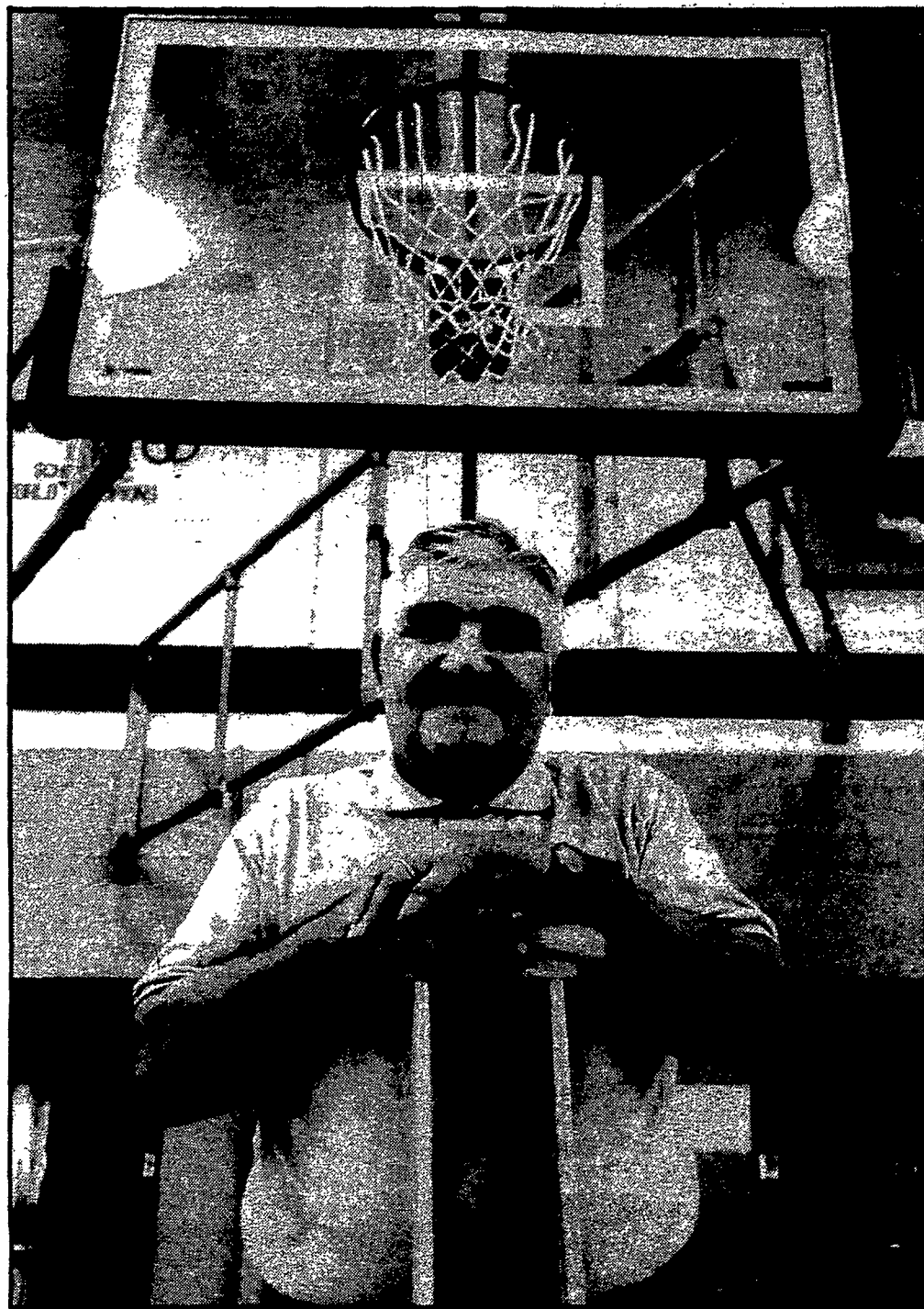
This marks the 29th consecutive year of Nietopski's summer sessions, which began as a basketball and baseball camp during his second year at the former Cardinal Mooney High School in Greece. Only the basketball portion was retained when Nietopski moved to Bishop Kearney in 1989 after Mooney's closing that June.

"It was basically from the time standpoint. With both camps I'd be going six weeks, and before I knew it, it would be time to go back to school again," Nietopski explained.

The three camp sessions (age 9-12 boys, age 13-17 boys and age 10-17 girls), which began July 12 and will continue through Aug. 6, drew a total of 125 children from all over Monroe County.

"Attendance is up this year, but I don't want it to get too crowded because then you have too many kids sitting around," Nietopski commented.

Many of Nietopski's onetime players now assist the youngsters. This year's staff includes notables such as Glenn Hagan, former star guard at Mooney and St. Bonaventure University; Mike McGwin, a high-scoring center who played at Mooney and Nazareth College; and former Kearney players Ke-



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

After a major hip operation only last month, Ed Nietopski returned last week to oversee his annual basketball camp at Bishop Kearney High School.

vin Pawlak, Scott Delgatti and Tom Kennedy.

Nietopski stresses a balance between good education and good fun for his pupils.

"We spend a lot of time on fundamentals. If a kid picks up two or three things from a camp, we feel it's been worth it," he said. "We've also got instructors who know how to let you have a good time."

T-shirts, cookies, candy, ice cream and Nietopski's legendary "Polish cocktails" — his term for cartons of orange drink — are among the list of pleasurable items available for each camper.

"One time we asked a boy what he had liked best about the camp, and we expected him to say that it was the great coaching or something. But instead he said it was the Polish cock-

tails," Nietopski laughingly recalled.

"I've had kids here who have been coming three, four and five years in a row, so we must be doing something right," he added.

The veteran coach, whose storied career at Cardinal Mooney began in 1964 after seven years of coaching at Brockport High School, compiled a 451-115 baseball record and 339-172 basketball mark with the Cardinals. He won Section 5 baseball titles in 1980 and 1982, as well as a sectional basketball championship in 1982.

Nietopski took over basketball duties at Kearney during the 1989-90 school year and became the baseball coach in 1990-91. Although no sectional crowns have yet come his way at BK in either sport, Nietopski is proud to point out that the Kings' basketball team has enjoyed three straight winning seasons for the first time in several years.

And, now that he's on the road to recovery from his hip surgery, Nietopski envisions a lengthy career still ahead as camp director, coach and physical-education teacher at BK.

"I hope to do this for a long time. I feel like I've got 10 more good years left, so whatever the good Lord decides," he said.

McQuaid, AQ graduates selected to Meath roster

ROCHESTER — Five recent graduates of diocesan high schools have been selected to compete in the Eddie Meath All-Star Football Game. The 11th annual contest will take place Sunday, Aug. 3, at 3 p.m. The contest will be played at the University of Rochester's Fauver Stadium.

McQuaid Jesuit will be represented on the East team by Kelly Scanlon, Ben DeLuca and Casey Sanderson. Scanlon is slated as a placekicker, while DeLuca will be at linebacker and Sanderson will play flanker.

Two players from Aquinas Institute, Philip Wegman and Shawn Dillon, have been selected to the opposing West squad. Wegman is a linebacker, while Dillon plays at tackle.


The game is named in honor of the late Eddie Meath, a popular media celebrity from Rochester. This contest brings together several of the top football players from Section 5 who were seniors during the 1992-93 school year.

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