

# New coach brings old passion to boys' basketball

Zack Worley

by sports editor

It's not March but it definitely is basketball season and the madness has begun.

With the almost unbeatable Boston Celtics and the record-breaking freshmen at the college level, talk of basketball has started.

At Omaha North High it is more of a question than the talk of something great.

Ryan Mlnarik comes to Omaha North High as the new basketball head coach.

"I love it here. It has felt like the right fit since day one." Coach Mlnarik said.

Coach Mlnarik has taken the place of long time head coach Jeff Gustafson.

Originally from Fremont, Nebraska, coach Mlnarik always had a passion for the game of basketball.

He played college basketball and football at Midlands College in Fremont and then coached basketball for five years as an assistant at the high school level there.

From the assistant job in Fremont, he headed to Blair High School and coached seven years there, including five years as the head coach.

During his tenure as head coach, Blair went to state three of the five years and the semi-finals twice.

"I have had the chance to coach some great players throughout my time coaching," he said.

Coach Mlnarik is an experienced man in the game of basketball, coaching games in the Bob Devaney Sports Center three times and the

Qwest Center of Omaha.

Qwest Center of Omaha is the home of the Creighton Blue Jays one of the best basketball programs at the college level in the state Nebraska.

The Bob Devaney Sports Center is home of the University of Nebraska in Lincoln basketball teams.

But, it is also the home of the Nebraska high school basketball state championship games, which to Mlnarik is a very specially



First year boys' basketball head coach Ryan Mlnarik show some fire as he prepares his team for the Nov. 29th debut.

achievement just to say he has been there.

Basketball plays a solid role in the life of coach Mlnarik.

"I definitely have a passion for the game and a passion of being around it," coach Mlnarik said.

He hopes to bring that passion to North High and already sees some of that fire in his players.

"They are out there getting on the floor, playing together and playing for each other," Mlnarik said.

Mlnarik says the transition from Blair to North High was made a good one by "a solid core of basketball players who are very positive and enthusiastic about the new coaching staff."

That core he talks of is the four returning varsity letter winners Jarrell Williams, DeAndre Harris, LaReil Blackstone, and Tyler Beene.

The coach really enjoys the way his team plays and the bond that these players possess with each other.

"The players are encouraging towards each other, positive and all the time coachable," coach Mlnarik said.

Coach Mlnarik looks to take the solid chemistry from this team and his passion for the game and mesh it for success.

With the success he has already achieved and the drive he has for the game this will be another test he can add to his list.

His debut was the 29<sup>th</sup> of November at Lincoln Northeast. The team won 64-51.

## Girls' Basketball

### York starts young with no end in sight

Grace Rich

by sports editor

Junior Tanesha York started out playing with the boys. When she was in third grade, she didn't have any girls to play basketball with, so she played with the middle school boys.

She played at the YMCA when she was younger, and came to North to play basketball in high school.

York wants this season to be different than her last. "Last year, I was real quiet." She admitted.

Her position on the team is a shooting guard, and her job is to get the ball and make plays to the basket. Becoming a leader is something York is also working on this year.

"I like to be a leader." She explained.

Last season, York considered girls' basketball a young team, with several freshman and few strong leaders.

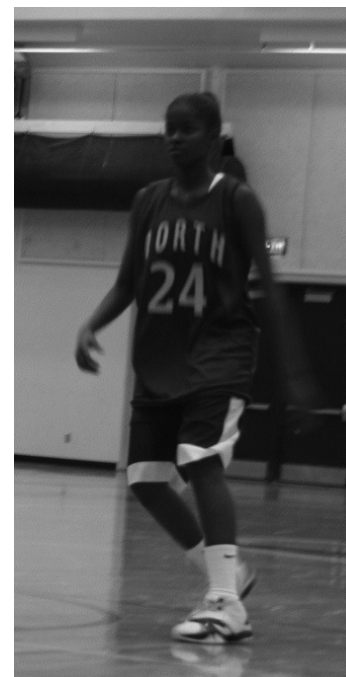
This year, she would like to see her school happy with the girls' basketball team. York also will try to improve the image of her fellow basketball playing females.

"People say, 'North girls weak', I want to change that."

The basketball team this year has a strong understanding of the words 'hard work'. According to sophomore Kylee Posley they have four-hour practices.

York said the team likes to play around, but "as soon as we hit the game, we're serious."

York even plans on making a career out of basketball. In college, she would like to play the game, along with majoring in athletic training. York says it is also a possibility that she would coach the sport.



Junior Tanesha York working during practice.

The Girls' played Lincoln Northeast for their debut game on Thursday, November 29th. They lost 41-30.