

Fordmen Win with Physical Play and Defense

By Ted Kaiser

BELMAR— Now there is no more doubt about the current line-up of Larson Ford in the Verizon Fios Jersey Shore Basketball League. The Fordmen took home the 2009 championship and solidified their status as the latest in a line of great Larson Ford teams. After celebrating their 40th anniversary in the league this summer, Larson played with the kind of passion and character that the franchise has come to represent.

“We had been waiting for this for a while,” says forward Jonathon Greene about the championship his team had just won. “After losing last year, all we thought about was getting back to the championship game again.”

Greene certainly did his part with 21 points and thirteen rebounds in the final. But overall, it was Larson’s

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Jonathon Greene, Larson Ford forward

physical play and defense that defined them and their season. The Fordmen have been known for that over the years and this year’s group embodied that. In a league where players come and go on teams, Larson Ford had a group of regular players who were committed. They included: Kareem Collins, Paul Williams, Marc Brown, Samar Battle, Darren Townes, Alex Mirabel, Devin Davis, Robert Clyburn and Ali Mix. The Fordmen have always been made up of players

from lesser known schools, and in recent years the squad has taken on a distinct New Jersey City University feel. Marc Brown is the interim head coach at the school and Jonathon Greene is an assistant. Both were former players, as were Kareem Collins and Devin Davis among others.

Through the years, fans might remember other Larson Ford players who could have fit right into the current mix of guys. Sharp shooter Herman Alston from Kean, Lakewood’s own Marvin Andrews, big man Jonathon Robert and former Duquesne guard James Hargrove all would have meshed perfectly with this group. It is a testament to the 2009 champions that they proved to embody the same spirit of play as previous Larson Ford Championship teams.



(PHOTOS: FRANCINE ATTARDI)
Forward Jonathon Greene contributed heavily in the finals, with 21 points and 13 rebounds

Flexibility and Muscle Balance Key to Prevention

By David Bertone, PT, OCS

With the upcoming high school football season fast approaching, it probably too late to make pre-season changes to your flexibility and strength training. However, it is never too late, to perform a proper pre-game and mid-week flexibility and warm-up routine to aid in the prevention of lower extremity muscle pulls or strains during the season.

Football, in particular, requires speed, strength and the ability to change direction and absorb impact at precise periods of time. This is where the importance of your off-season and pre-season training programs becomes vitally important. Flexibility is achieved through a combination of slow, sustained stretching and “real world” controlled ballistic type movements that mimic the stress and strain of normal tasks. Previous beliefs have advocated only for slow, sustained stretching to achieve muscle flexibility. But research over the years has proven the benefits of controlled ballistic movements for stretching and the addition of plyometric and agility activities to prepare the body for the rigors of sports.

Muscle balance is achieved through the strengthening of both the front and back muscles of a particular joint. This is referred to as agonist/antagonist muscle

balance. For example, when considering the knee, you must understand the proper balance between the quadriceps (front thigh) and the hamstrings (back thigh) to understand how to prevent injuries to these muscles. Again, it is important to examine the research done in this area when planning your training programs. The proper balance of strength between the quadriceps and the hamstrings is three to two. That means that the quadriceps should be slightly stronger than the hamstrings. If you improperly train and work your quadriceps without balancing in the hamstrings, you may be prone to hamstring or quad strains.

We have also learned through research that the addition of plyometric or jump training is vital for the prevention of leg injuries. These movements train the neuromuscular component or the ability for the muscles/tendons spindles to fire and balance forceful muscle contractions. These movements help train the muscles and supportive structures to contract properly and in balance for the complexity of movement at high speeds. High velocity muscle contractions are what strain the muscles and possibly cause injury. Therefore, you must be properly prepared by training during the off-season, stretching before and after practice and games as well as continuing a plyometric and

balanced strength training program during the season.

If an injury does occur, early recognition is important and proper treatment is essential to ensure return to play and lessen the chance of re-injury. Once a muscle strain is diagnosed, immediate treatment involves the R.I.C.E. mnemonic. This simply means rest, ice, compression and elevation in addition to the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication to control swelling and decrease pain. Within the next 24 hours, the area should be re-assessed and treatment modified to begin the healing phase and prevention of scar tissue. At this point, the program must be customized by a training professional based on the individual findings. Your physical therapist should be consulted and a proper treatment plan determined. Unusual or “red flag” findings should be reported to the team physician or your primary care physician immediately. The bottom line is: prevention and proper training is essential to reduce the likelihood that you will sustain a muscle strain of the lower extremity muscles.



Verizon Fios presents Larson Ford with a trophy commemorating their 40 years in the league. Shown are (l-r) John Szeliga, Sam Delgado, VP of Verizon, Mrs. Larson, her son Paul Larson and Dennis Bono, President of Verizon.

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