

Brookdale CC undefeated in five games

By Walter J. O'Neill, Jr.

The 2011-2012 Brookdale Community College men's basketball team has started the season red hot and undefeated in their first five games. The Jersey Blues have outscored their opponents 441-290 so far, and are only getting stronger.

Community college coaches have arguably one of the toughest jobs. High School coaches and those working at four year colleges or universities normally have three or four years to work with players. On the community college level, the players are only on the team for two years.

Brookdale Community College (BCC) has one steady and consistent reason for the success of the team. That reason is Paul Cisek, who has been head coach for the past 20 years.

Watching Cisek interact with his players, coaching staff, and fans at BCC, you would think he is a rookie coach. Under his watch, BCC won the national championships in 2003 for community college level play. What has Cisek so enthusiastic this season is that he feels this team is much better than his champi-

onship squad.

Cisek grew up in Amsterdam, New York and was a three sport all star his high school. He was awarded a football scholarship to the University of Maryland, but a serious injury stopped him from becoming a Terrapin.

Over the last few decades, Cisek has been developing his own unique technique and cultivated a personalized coaching style. He took his first head coaching job in 1984 at Paul Smith Junior College. When he took over that program it had a history of losing. It was his first success and made the players believe they could win and then led them to victory.

Wayne Szoke was the head coach at Monmouth College in 1987, when he asked Cisek to join his staff. That was when Cisek moved to the Jersey Shore and has never looked back. He gained valuable experience under Szoke, who highly recommended Cisek for the head coach position at BCC when it opened up in 1992.

When basketball pundits talk about Cisek they all agree he is very knowledgeable and skilled,

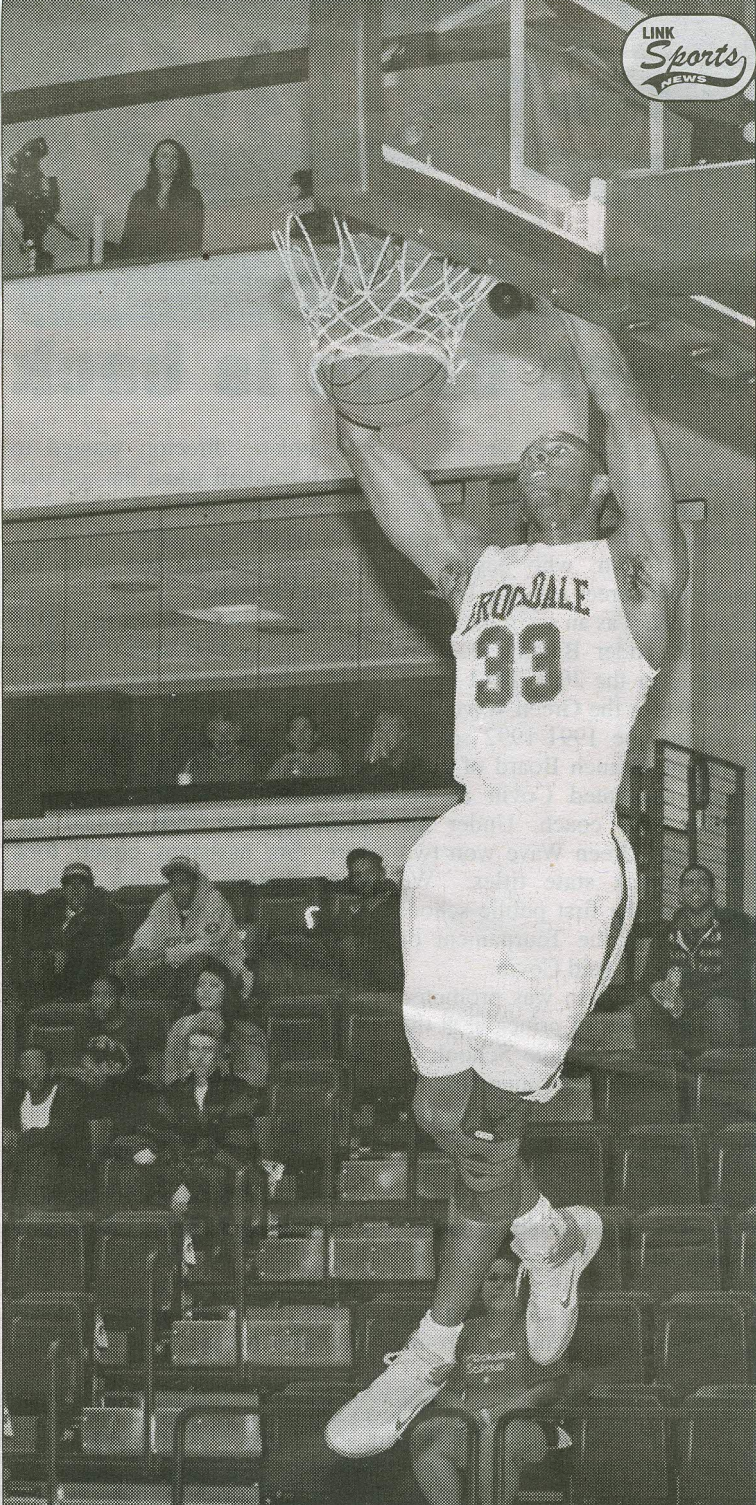
but one of his greatest attributes as a coach is he has strict academic standards for his players. When the 2003 team won the national championships, eight of those players received All-American academic honors.

This year BCC has a bench deep in talent, giving Cisek tremendous flexibility as a coach. He can rotate players and positions keeping his opponents off guard.

The season started with a 110-52 win over Atlantic Cape. The Jersey Blues won game two with a 71-53 victory over Del Tech Stanton. The third opponent to fall to Brookdale was Sussex with a 91-42 loss to the Jersey Blues. Bergen County lost 86-73 giving BCC a perfect 4-0 record.

Last week Camden traveled to the Collins Area in Lincroft. It was a tight game going back and forth, until the last five minutes when BCC pulled away 83-70 remaining undefeated.

Leading BCC was Kahill Bennett with 16-points. Long Branch High School alumni Tunell Polk had 8-points and 5-rebounds.



Getting a slam dunk for Brookdale Community College is Josh Vital (33,) a freshman from Keansburg.

