



1. SHOOTING THE BALL

Cameron Waithe-Cunningham⁰⁹ fights through defenders to try to score at the Liberty vs. Cheyenne Mountain game on Dec 7. "At the beginning of the season it was different playing against 17 and 18 year olds being stronger [than me] physically," 15 year-old Waithe-Cunningham said. "I got used to it once I calmed down after the first few games [and became more relaxed]." Liberty beat CM that Thursday with a score of 67-58. photo by emily robertson.

2. CHEERING FOR THEIR TEAM

Magnus Vanderhule¹¹ and TCA student **Bryce Houser**¹² get loud from the sidelines. "My favorite part is the community and my friends," Vanderhule said.

"It makes it a lot better than any other team." photo by emily robertson .

3. MID AIR

Gavin Franz⁰⁹ shoots the ball scoring a 2-pointer against the Doherty Spartans on Feb 5. Franz reflected on his favorite part of being on varisty. "The opportunities, chances to get better, and bonding with teammates [make basketball fun]," Franz said. photo by emily robertson

4. AFTER A SUCCESSFUL FREE THROW BY

London Praytor¹¹, **Alton Fletcher**¹² and **Bryce Houser**¹² lunge toward the ball to try and grab it before Cheyenne Mountain. The game on Dec 7 came pretty close. "Our best game was [actually] against Vista Ridge," Fletcher said. "This one was a close game but our team came out on top." photo by emily robertson.



5. JUMPING FOR THE BASKET

Steven Mcallister ¹⁰ tries to add 2 more points. "I always feel nervous at first when I'm starting a game," Mcallister said. "But once I get into it, all I think about is playing." photo by emily robertson.

6. FIGHTING THE BLOCK *Peyton*

Moreland ¹¹ tries to get past his Doherty opponent. "I'm always trying to think of the next winning play and what I can do to try to continue to set up my team and get that next step," Moreland said. photo by emily robertson.

7. ON THE COURT *Evan Trinidad* ⁰⁹

tries to get the pass. Trinidad said he really tries to work hard with his team. "I love the team environment and being with different grade levels," Trinidad said. "I enjoy how creative our team is." photo by emily robertson.

8. FRUSTRATED BY THE OUTCOME OF THE GAME *Joshua*

Simbenga Jr. ¹¹, **Gavin Franz** ⁰⁹ and **Cameron Waithe-Cunningham** ⁰⁹ exit the court after a 74-31 loss again the Spartans. Simbenga stated having three freshman and a new coach on Liberty's team will "shock the world next year". photo by emily robertson.



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STARTING OFF *fresh*

FRESHMEN ON VARSITY TAKE A CHANCE

This year's boys basketball team introduced three freshman directly to varsity. The lucky players to jump ahead to the highest performing team at the high school level, were **Cameron Waithe Cunningham** ⁰⁹, **Gavyn Franz** ⁰⁹ and **Evan Trinidad** ⁰⁹. All three rookies came from the same club team and have a strong passion for playing basketball at LHS. This is the first time since 2005 that there has been multiple freshmen on the varsity team.

"My decision to go [to Liberty] was 'cause [of] the coach and [because of] London as well," Cunningham said. "So I felt like we had a good future at Liberty."

Liberty's 2023-2024 basketball team followed through with a full reboot, receiving an almost completely new team on the court this season. With this, the team started to form new bonds as well as forming trust between the teammates working towards their goals.

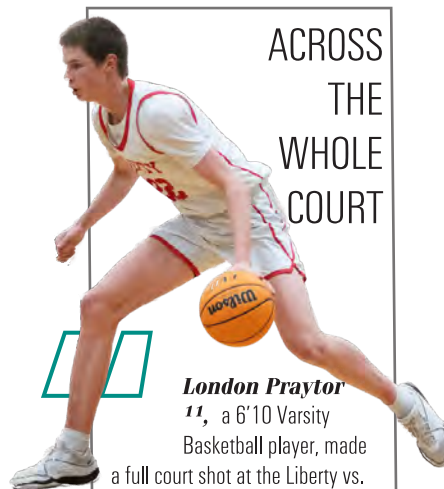
"Basketball feels free," **Gavyn Franz** ⁰⁹ said. "It makes me clear my mind from things

in my personal life."

Believing in the new teams ability to help them bring this season to victory, a new coach was placed within the schools walls as well. **Coach Aaron Thomas** quickly began building the program back up, facing rival opponents such as Pine Creek High School, Rampart High School, Vista Ridge High School, etc.

"I get a lot of hate from other schools and other coaches saying I could have chosen a different team or coach," **Evan Trinidad** ⁰⁹ said. "However, I continue to work hard for my team."

Taking a chance on 3 freshmen players, the team has focused on enhancing their skills, constantly becoming better for the next match. With their passion and enthusiasm, Liberty players are working towards becoming a sports powerhouse in Colorado Springs. Bringing in new players, coaches and administration has brought back the power to the Lancer Nation.



ACROSS THE WHOLE COURT

London Praytor

11, a 6'10 Varsity Basketball player, made a full court shot at the Liberty vs. Vista Ridge home game on Feb 2. "I was like, dang thats pretty cool, pretty hype," Praytor said. The viral full court shot was a complete accident that day. "I was trying to pass it to Cam, and it just slipped and went in," Praytor continued. After he made the shot, he was interviewed by the local news. "It was cool, but I'm not the interview type of guy, so when I watched the interview I thought I looked pretty stupid," the power-forward said. "I didn't know and didn't get a heads up and I wasn't prepared at all." "I've been playing since I was seven, and it's cool cause I get to practice [nonstop] and it's something to do everyday."