

**THE SPORT I CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF IS...**



"The sport I can't get enough of is dance."  
- Isla Carroll (6)



**IT'S EVERYTHING.**  
"Soccer is my sport because it's just really fun."  
- Avi Williams (8)

Since 2014 physical education teacher Jason Berger and the PE department have hosted a fundraising tournament on the day before winter break in which all students, and even some teachers, can choose to participate.

"Originally, it began as a dodgeball tournament, but when the district outlawed dodgeball, it had to be switched to a basketball tournament," Berger said. This year the funds raised went to purchasing more volleyballs and investing in getting the gym's scoreboard functioning again.

Friends created teams and paid a dollar per person to sign up. Every team consisted of five players and one coach, who was the hype man for the group.

"I was the coach for the Pink Flamingos, so I was like their mascot. I dressed in a ton of pink and cheered really loudly for all the players," Gianluca Lombardi (7) said. "It was great because I got super close seats to watch the games."

The day the bracket came out people crowded around, trying to push their way to the front to see when their team would play. "These kids are waiting to be able to showcase their skills to friends and their school," PE teacher Justin Zamora observed. "Since sports programs have been cut from middle school over the years, these athletes don't get a chance

to be recognized for their talents in front of their school."

While many students play on club and travel teams, there is something different about being able to be seen by one's peers. Tucker Rhoades' team, The Hoopers, took first in the tournament, and it was a memorable event for his eighth grade year. "My team and I play together on an AWest feeder team," Rhoades (8) said, "but it was great to play at school in front of your school friends."

The students that didn't play in the tournament were ready to see their friends play. "The crowd was really loud!" said Austin Magnett (7) whose first entrance into the Drake BB Tournament was a success. "We got second against The Hoopers, and they're huge. We only lost by one."

For one day in December, Drake got to share not only a day of fun, but lessons from basketball as well. "My favorite part of the tournament is playing with my friends," Kingston Brooks (8) said, "but basketball has taught me to do your best, try to listen to your coach, and be open to feedback instead of taking offense."

Learning happens everywhere, and the basketball tournament helped showcase skills outside of the classroom.

**SCORE!** Grace Schillie (8) shoots a free throw for her team Renegade Raiders. Having played for eight years, she said, "Keep practicing because then you'll get better and have more fun with it."

**TOUGH D.** Preston Tyus (8) holds the ball away from the opposing team player Alejandro Psaute (8) on defense. Tyus ended up winning the one on one. "I was trying to steal the ball from Preston to trip him up," said Psaute.



**BASKETBALL P.J.S.** Dribbling down the court, Evan Drake (8) plays in a pink onsie. Team costumes and matching outfits are not unusual, but the pink onsie was unique. "I like to play basketball, and it's even more fun when I get to do it with my friends," Drake said.

**PUNK IT.** Kingston Brooks (8) goes in for a hoop playing against a seventh grade team. "I'm thankful for the sport. It's more than just a sport to me. It's how I express my feelings," Kingston said.



**KEEPING THEM HONEST.**

Sitting under the basket, Blakley Erickson (8) keeps score for the Pink Flamingos after her team was knocked out of the tournament. "The scoreboard is broken, so I kept track for the team and the people in the stands," Erickson said. It was a bittersweet event since it's her last year. "I love the social aspect of the tournament. I don't get to watch my friends play outside of school," she said.



**MONKEYS.** Celebrating, Bridger Cope (6) holds up the three pointer sign when team Monkeys score. "I love playing with my team because it's fun," Bridger said.

"It was tournament time, and kids either loved it or hated it. Clayton Lombardi (7) gave us the pros and cons. You get to play with your friends, you get to have a good time before break, and if you win, you get lunch on Mr. Berger." All good reasons.

"But, you can play video games (older grade level), and then you get out first round and you just have to watch the rest of the time."

**the PROS and CONS of the game.**



**ON THEIR FEET!** Ryder Schneck (7) holds back his seventh grade buddies: Eric Le, Wyatt Grieve, Dylan Nguyen, Gianluca Lombardi, Clayton Lombardi, Fritz Hagans, and Evan Morgan during an exciting play.

**Advice to Young Players**

Players tell us what advice they would give a beginner.



EMMA BABBINGTON (7)

"Definitely keep trying, and keep persevering, and always stay confident, especially if you're driving in to make a hoop."



GRETA BRAMLITT (8)

"If you're not seeing results immediately, keep working hard, and eventually you will. Micheal Jordan is better than LeBron James."

-Greta Bramlitt (8)

**Athletes get a chance to showcase their skills in basketball tournament fundraiser.**

Story by Adelyn Wire and Corinne Stratton

