



NIKI LAZAR
NVHS BOOSTER CLUB FEATURED ATHLETE OF THE WEEK
GIRLS BASKETBALL PROGRAM

The NVHS Athletic Booster Club is proud to present the featured athlete of this week, basketball senior guard NIKI LAZAR. Despite her deceptively small size for a basketball player, she is only 5-7, Niki is a fierce and energetic player who can play offense as well as defense, and often surprises her opponents with her rebounds. Coach Williams nominated Niki because of her consistency and because of the energy she brings to the courts as a player and teammate.

Booster Club Reporter: Since when have you played basketball?

Niki: Since I was very young, I started on a all boys team. Had to learn to be a tough player since the beginning. I've played softball too until my sophomore year, but then I stopped because I wanted to focus on basketball.

Booster Club Reporter: What do you think is the biggest challenge of playing HS sports?

Niki: To manage time. It is extremely stressful at times to balance basketball, school and social life. I struggled with that a lot in my first years on the Neuqua team, but finally learned that when I am not at practice or a game my next priority is getting my homework done.

Booster Club Reporter: Being on a team has taught you to be responsible.

Niki: Yes. In sports as in life, nothing comes easy. You have to work hard for what you want. And when things get difficult and are not going your way, you have to keep your head up and never stop trying. So it is about being responsible, resilient, and also dependable. One time we were playing against Batavia in a tournament and our team was getting into foul trouble. I was the only one of the starters that had 2 fouls so I was playing the whole game. My coach pulled me aside because he could see I was really tired and told me that I needed to keep going because the team needed me since everyone else was in foul trouble. I realized then that when the moment comes that people are depending on you, you must be ready to go work hard and not disappoint them. When you are part of a team you learn things about the sport, your teammates, and most importantly about yourself. Basketball has taught me to overcome adversity and personal struggles. It has also helped me to form bonds with my teammates which will allow me to get along easier with other people when I get older and get a job.

Booster Club Reporter: Speaking of which, what are your likes and dislikes about being on a team?

Niki: With any team there are going to be problems. A lot of times we don't see eye to eye on some things and we get frustrated with one another. But the key is to express what feelings and thoughts you have to the rest of the team so we can all fix the problem together.

Booster Club Reporter: How do you deal with losing?

Niki: Every good team is going to win and lose; that's why it is called a game. I just go into every game with the mentality that we are going to win and I am going to do my best for my team. But when I don't, well, then I think of Michael Jordan's quote: "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." You don't have to win to be a winner. A winner is someone that is always positive and is unselfish. They don't do things that would jeopardize themselves or their team and they are a team player.

Booster Club Reporter: Is Jordan your role model?

Niki: My role model is right at home. My mom does so much for our family and she deals with so many stresses but she still always has a smile on her face. She always encourages and supports me to do well in whatever I'm doing.

Booster Club Reporter: That is sweet! What are your plans for the future?

Niki: In short, I want to have fun and do well in college and hopefully get a good job