



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SEABURY HALL

Seabury Hall is a co-educational college preparatory school for grades six through 12, and is located in Maui's upcountry in the village of Makawao, Hawaii.

A Miracle on Maui Beaches, basketball and a Barrington legend

MARCH AND APRIL ARE WHEN WINTER FINALLY RELEASES ITS GRIP, FLOWERS BEGIN TO EMERGE, AND BOTH HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE BASKETBALL EXPLODE INTO THE PLAYOFFS. FOR SPORTS FANS, THIS IS AN EXCITING SEASON. FOR ME, SPRING IS A REMINDER OF ONE OF THE WORST HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS TO EVER PLAY THE GAME OF BASKETBALL. I REMEMBER THE PLAYERS WELL BECAUSE I WAS THEIR COACH.

This edition of *Quintessential Barrington* spotlights a true legend in collegiate athletics. Wayne Duke's accomplishments are featured on other pages, so I will not delve into them here. Wayne is enshrined in the College Basketball Hall of Fame alongside icons such as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, John Wooden, Larry Bird and Magic Johnson. I met Wayne through the Barrington Breakfast Rotary, where we are both members.

Wayne and I share a peculiar fact: he brought one of the world's best-known men's college basketball tournaments to Hawaii – The Maui Invitational. On the other hand, I coached one of the strangest basketball games ever played on that same island. No, I did not coach North Carolina, the Illini or even Kansas in Wayne's tournament. But I did coach the high school varsity girls' basketball team from Seabury Hall located in upcountry Maui.

When I briefly taught on Maui many years ago, Seabury Hall was a co-educational college preparatory school with approximately 120 students in grades 6 through 12. Such a small enrollment meant there were only about 60 girls across six grade levels. That translated to roughly 40 young women in the high school, many of whom had no interest in basketball, resulting in a roster of only seven players, five of whom had never played the game. Unfortunately, the schools we competed against were typically quite large and very competitive. When I assumed leadership of the team, I was well aware our school had a winless history. We were 0 – and a lot.

The first day of practice, I immediately recognized our problem. Of my seven players, two could not make a basket to save their lives. Another was so thin she would take three steps backward to absorb the impact when catching a pass



PHOTO: THOMAS BALSAMO

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and to avoid falling over. Naturally, her stumbling tendencies led to numerous traveling calls by the referees. Another girl had so much trouble making a layup that, for the first four weeks of practice, our goal was for her to throw the ball...to hit the wall...that supported the backboard...that held the basket. Eventually, she advanced to trying to hit the backboard, then the rim via the backboard. Needless to say it was a long process. When she finally did make a basket, we stopped practice to celebrate the event by going to the beach.

Even though we were really bad at basketball, we did have fun. They were great kids who loved what co-curricular activities are all about: forming relationships with other students, exploring interests and learning new skills. At that time, athletics at Seabury Hall definitely took a backseat to academics. The only sport everyone seemed really good at was surfing. In fact, when the school day ended, students would scan the coast and, if the surf was up, we coaches would have to cancel practices because all our players would race to the ocean.

So you may be wondering, with so little talent, tough competition and not much devotion, how did I ever coach this team to its first win in school history? Good referees and a lot of luck certainly helped. Here's how it played out. With about seven minutes left in a game we were down by 16 points. There was no way we could make that up; however, all but three of the other team's 12 players had fouled out of the game. Then at the six-minute mark, another player on the opposing team fouled out, leaving only two of their players on the floor. This was our chance.

The opposing coach called a time out to ask that I allow some of his fouled-out players back into the game so his two girls wouldn't have to play against my five. "No way," I said, "this may be our only shot at a victory." The game continued.

With 60 seconds left, we trailed by just three points when one of the opponent's two remaining eligible players fouled out. Now we had five girls on the court to their one. While that wasn't exactly fair, after your school has lost 280 consecutive games, you only have one goal: to win. The final score was Seabury 34, Baldwin High School, 33. You could have heard my girls cheer 70 miles away on the Island of Oahu.

So Wayne and I both share fond memories of the weather, beaches and basketball on the island of Maui. Congratulations, Wayne. Now that my coaching feats are known, perhaps a hall of fame somewhere will someday induct me, too. That would be a pupule moe'uhane or, crazy dream, as they say on Maui. U

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