

Teamwork

By Dr. Al Roberts

Southside Virginia is home to some great athletes, and sports participation is one important way young people can prepare for education opportunities and future employment. By participating at their personal best levels and learning to work with others on and off the court, athletes gain valuable experience. As men's basketball coach Dennis Smith, explains "Playing on a sports team is really about how people work together to meet a goal. Teamwork is the foundation of everything we do."

The Southside Virginia Community College basketball team joined the Virginia Community College System club league during the 2003–04 season and has earned rising acclaim. The team won three straight VCCS division titles from 2006 to 2008 and captured the VCCS state championship title in 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2014. For the last two years, SVCC's basketball team captured the USA National Post-Grad Championship title, a competition for teams beyond the high school level. In guiding the team, Coach Smith is assisted by Coach Vincent Brown.

During its regular season the SVCC club basketball team plays against other two-year colleges in Virginia and North Carolina, prep schools, and some independent college teams. In addition to about 20 regular season games, the team participates in two showcase events where coaches from four-year colleges scout for talent. This provides an important benefit to SVCC students because most of the college's athletes are in transfer programs and have plans to continue their education after graduation.

Student athletes have to preserve a minimum grade point average of 2.0, but coaches push them to achieve more. According to Coach Smith, "Our goal for student athletes is 3.5. We don't always meet it, but that's our goal because four-year college coaches are looking for athletes they know will also be successful in the classroom."

SVCC holds an open tryout in September. Coach Smith says, "I've been coaching the team for fourteen years, and we've had students come to open try-outs and make the team every year." The current team began practicing in September, and regular season games started at the end of October.

The SVCC club sports roster will expand this coming spring to include a women's fastpitch softball program under the leadership of Coach Debra Hood. Practices will be held on both campuses, and games will be held on the John H. Daniel Campus beginning in March 2017.

For more information on where you fit into the SVCC team—whether your interests are focused on sports, activities, clubs, workforce training, or academics—call an admissions advisor on the Christanna Campus in Alberta (434-949-1000) or the Daniel Campus in Keysville (434-736-2000), or visit SVCC's website at www.southside.edu.

Dr. Al Roberts is president of Southside Virginia Community College, an institution of higher learning that provides a wide variety of education opportunities to a diverse student population within a service area that spans ten counties and the city of Emporia. He can be reached via email at al.roberts@southside.edu.