



LANCERS BRING HOME THE BRONZE!



by N. Reed Alexander ('12)

Since the beginning of the school year, both the boys and girls basketball and soccer teams and the cheerleaders practiced for the Big 8 Tournament that took place during the third week of November at the NR2 camp near Campos do Jordão. The Big 8 is composed of teams from eight different American schools, seven from Brazil and one from Paraguay: Graded, EAC, PACA, and Chapel are from São Paulo, ASA is from Paraguay, and EARJ and OLM are from Rio. Athletes from all schools dedicate their time before the tournament to regularly attend practice and make good grades in order to travel, thus becoming well rounded student athletes.

All the teams travel to camp by their tour bus and are welcomed by a regular staff of monitors that show them the way to the rooms they will call home for the next week. Once everyone is settled in and have unpacked their bags, the teams meet at one of the camp's large basketball courts for the opening ceremony. This year, since OLM was the host school; our very own Kátia Valente gave the opening speech. The sports tournament officially started on Monday with the soccer games played in the morning and the basketball games at night. The schedule is set up in such a way as to allow for student athletes to "double up" if they play both sports. During all of the games, our dedicated cheerleaders were present to stir the Lancer spirit and help all the players on the field or court do their best. When games weren't being played, the cheerleaders were busy practicing for their presentations that took place on Wednesday and Thursday showcasing each team's unique acrobatic skills.



While the Big 8 is represented as a sports tournament, it is also more than that. The spirit of camaraderie that envelopes every participating athlete is almost overwhelming; one of the main focuses outside of games is making friends and getting to know student athletes from other schools. Meeting friends from all across Brazil who share international experiences or a love for the same sport is a huge highlight of the event.

Every OLM Lancer brought their all to the tournament. This was displayed on the soccer field and basketball court as well as in both cheerleading presentations. While neither the boys nor girls soccer team made it to the finals, they fought hard to place the highest they could. The girls' soccer team ended up in 7th place after a victory over EAB with penalties. The boys' soccer team lost their last game to Chapel in an intense penalty shootout, but held their heads high knowing they had played their best for the whole tournament.



Carolina La Cerda ('13) & Nicholas Reed ('12)

Both OLM basketball teams suffered losses during the first round, but made it to the semifinals. In an intense final round for both teams, they won their final games attaining 3rd place and the bronze medal. The final score for the boys' basketball game was 40-38 against EARJ; it was a fist clenching game right up to the final seconds. With mere seconds left in the game, the score was tied 38-38. EARJ had the ball and were coming down the court into OLM's full court pressure. Matheus Scuta, OLM's starting point guard and the lead scorer of the entire tournament, stole the ball and quickly made the lay-up. The game wasn't over yet, however. EARJ took a time out and came back into the game with a special play looking to tie with less than forty seconds on the clock. Nicholas Figueiredo then stole the ball back from EARJ on one of their final drives and quickly threw the ball forward hoping for Scuta to put more points on the board, but Nicholas Chama from EARJ intercepted the pass. With sixteen seconds on the clock, EARJ had the ball with a chance to tie up the game and go into overtime or even score a three pointer and take home the bronze themselves. Fortunately, EARJ had two three-point shots bounce off the rim. Figueiredo frantically grabbed the last rebound and held on to the ball to secure the victory for the Lancers. The crowd rushed the court after the buzzer, as tears of joy crossed their faces.



The girls basketball team also played their final game against EARJ, final score 29-20. The games involved several cheer wars between the OLM and EARJ fans and became known around the camp as some of the most passionate games played. The girls were ahead the whole time due to the calm, cool and reserved manner most of the team exhibited. Plays were executed flawlessly and in the end, it was obvious that the OLM girls dominated!



When the tournament was over, the Lancers came home with their heads held high knowing that they had done their best in everything they did that week. The two, third place finishes were brought home to be shared as a collective team effort made up of all the OLM students, family, and staff. Everyone was proud of the work they did throughout the competition. A large, warm crowd of parents, alumni, and students welcomed the athletes back to school, congratulating each individual team member with a broad smile and a typical Brazilian handshake and hug. It was a tournament no one will forget.

GO LANCERS!!!

