NEW FACES BRING NEW CHALLENGES FOR MEN’S VOLLEYBALL

Last year, the men’s volleyball team was flying high on the wings of their triumphant season, placing 9th in the nation and advancing to the final four in the Molten National semi-finals. This season tells a different story, having lost four of their best players, the team now struggles to defend their title. Right now, the men are 6-9 overall, with a 5-4 CUNY record.

“This team is totally different and less skilled, but we get along better,” says Head Coach Junior Garcia. Among the new faces on the team are freshmen Rafael Vargas, from John Adams High School in Queens, Miguel Jorge, from the Dominican Republic, and Javier Rodriguez, from Norman Thomas High School. Also joining the team is men’s basketball sensation Luis Chavez. Unfortunately for the team, they’ve already lost a promising new outside hitter, Phal It, a Corporal in the Marines. It, who grew up in the Parkchester section of the Bronx with his family, says he’s always wanted to serve in the military. His father was a soldier in the Cambodian army during the Vietnam conflict. “I wanted to do something different and challenging,” he said.

After graduating from Lehman High School in 1998, he joined the Marines, specializing in infantry combat. Shortly after the September 11 attacks, his unit was one of the first sent to Afghanistan and worked in conjunction with the northern alliance in the successful campaign to seize Khandahar.

In 2002, when his time with the corp. ended, he turned his attentions to pursuing his degree. In fall 2002, he enrolled at Lehman with plans to major in Nutrition. While disappointed about the need to interrupt his studies, he looks forward to being with his fellow Marines and supports any mission that would help to eliminate terrorism and Iraq’s ability to make nuclear weapons.

Despite the setbacks, coach Garcia has faith his team will make it to the CUNY conference and the NECVA playoffs.

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