





By Amanda Murphy

LAKE WALES — Trey Boone, a shooting guard on the Vanguard School varsity boys' basketball team, has made remarkable moves on the court this season for someone who has only played competitively for two years.

He averages 16.3 points, 3 assists and 1.5 steals per game. He has made 99 3-pointers out of 199 attempts, making him one of the best 3-point shooters in the nation, averaging 50 percent. In fact, as of Feb. 7, he was No. 1 in Florida for 3-point field goals made in Class 2A high school basketball.

Golf is actually Boone's main sport - he has played since he was 6 - but he took interest in basketball four years ago when his family moved to the Immokalee Reservation. He started going to the gym and playing with his older cousins, later joining the Immokalee community team to gain more experience and playing in NAYO and other reservation tournaments.

Boone started his high school career at Immokalee High School, where he played both basketball and golf, but transferred to the Vanguard boarding school during his sophomore year when his grades began to suffer.

Boone said balancing school work and sports at Vanguard is easier than he thought because of the smaller classrooms, time designated for studying and tutors.

"To be honest when I first interviewed Trey, he had struggled in school. He was going to have to work very hard to get his GPA up," said basketball coach Dan Sheppard. "[Now] he's a model student, one of those kids that people can talk to; he appreciates things in life that others don't."

Boone said his biggest challenge is being away from home.

"You learn how important school is and how it is to live without your family and your parents taking care of you," he said.

But with cousins who attend Vanguard and parents who make the two-hour drive to attend most of his games, Boone has transitioned more easily to the change in schools.

"At first we didn't want to send him away, but I look at it now as God's plan," said Boone's mother, Gale Boone. "Maybe he didn't make the grades in Immokalee High School because this is his plan."

The plan has led him to excel as captain of both the basketball and golf teams, and to be the sole Vanguard golfer to qualify for regionals - he missed states by only 10 strokes. He also joined the anti-bullying committee, was baptized and competed in golf and basketball in the Jim Thorpe Games last year.

Boone said he is surrounded by role models - from his father, Johnny Boone, whom he looks to for advice, to coach Sheppard, who helped him gain his confidence when he was struggling academically, to his grandmother Louise Motlow, who he loves dearly and who keeps him rooted in his culture by teaching him his native language.

Boone has big dreams of playing his two favorite sports at a Division 1 college, possibly studying biology and eventually playing professionally in both. The future of the Tribe is also important to him and he plans to give back in some way, potentially through Tribal government or teaching his little niece about sports.

“I think he is a great example for kids that don’t see a light at the end of the tunnel and then are able to find a school that works for them,” Sheppard said. “Whether it’s golf or basketball, I think you’re going to hear about him one day.”

Please follow and like us:



Originally Printed by The Seminole Tribune