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The Scottsdale Chaparral (Ariz.) Firebirds came up short in the 5AII state championship when a last second shot attempt was blocked that could have won the game. It was their first year in 5AII after moving up from 4AII, and they almost pulled off what the football team had done earlier in the school year when they won the state title. Now, Chaparral's basketball team already has a target painted on them as they are one of the favorites heading into the next school year. Although Chaparral coach **Aaron Windler** is not sure that being the hunted team is always a good thing, Windler says he really likes the group he has for the 2010/2011 season.



Luke Roh

This summer the group is working hard together. Like many teams, the Firebirds must attend some events here and there while missing a few key players. However, there are plenty of events to be a part of over the summer, and Windler says, "You make due and give other kids the opportunity to play and hopefully contribute."

Chaparral started its summer tournament schedule with the Laveen Shootout at the end of May at Cesar Chavez High School, which the team has attended the last four years due to the quality format that coach **Gary Lee** of Chavez provides. At the event, Chaparral had quality wins over Hamilton and Mesa, and came up short with close losses to Chavez and Brophy.

The second tournament, the Desert Classic at Hamilton, ended with an undefeated record. The Firebirds were victorious in their six games against Gilbert, Desert Edge, Mountain Pointe, Red Mountain, Hamilton, and Perry.

The third tournament had similar results. At the first session of the ASU Team Camp, Chaparral finished with an 8-0 record. Their first six wins came against Pinnacle, Catalina Foothills, Burbank (CA), Millennium, Rancho (CA), and Mountain Ridge. They then went on to face and defeat Corona del Sol in the semi-finals, as well as St. Thomas More from South Dakota in the finals.

Chaparral added a third undefeated tournament to their resume this past weekend at the Skyline Summer Shootout that took place at Skyline. The Firebirds went 4-0 against Skyline, Liberty, Desert Ridge, and Mesa.

Since June 1, the Firebirds have been using their home gym to develop as they put on the Chaparral Camp. The camp hosts junior-high players in the morning and grade schoolers in the afternoon. The Chaparral high school players have also been coming out in the afternoons for a combination of skill training and weight lifting.

In order to take skill development a step further, only the junior varsity and incoming freshman are taking part in the Paradise Valley summer league put on by coach **Mark MacGowan** of Paradise Valley. Instead, Coach Windler replaced it with individual skill work on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursday nights with himself and his associate head coach **Ben Buchanan**. Windler thinks it is paying off, saying that "In a very short amount of time, [they] are seeing tremendous dividends."

Chaparral is currently starting three seniors and two sophomores. **Zeke Chapman**, **Luke Roh**, and **Alex Pyper** are the three senior starters and are all receiving interest from college teams. They also each have a GPA of 3.5 or higher. Chaparral's two big guys, **Joe Boyd** and **Eric Conklin**, are both sophomores and are both 6-foot-6 or taller. Coach Windler says he is also "expecting big things from senior **Justin Cole**, junior **Evan Gelzayd**, and sophomores **Jake Roh** and **Hayden Bishop**."

Looking ahead, Chaparral will have to continue to work hard and prepare for the challenging season to come. They will be working towards getting back to the title game where they hope they can avenge last year's loss. Until then they will be looking forward to two winter tournaments. The Firebirds are excited about competing in the King of the Bluegrass this December in Louisville, KY. They will also be in the much anticipated VisitMesa.com event after Christmas.



Coach Windler