New basketball team takes young players to competitive edge

Story and photo by Ben Avey, CFAY Public Affairs

Cross cultural sporting events are nothing new to the Navy. Ships and shore commands alike have built teams to take on host nation athletes in friendly competitions during port visits or in forward-deployed locations for generations. Now the kids of those Sailors have a similar option with the recently formed Yokohama Blue Devils Basketball team.

(Left) Yokohama Blue Devils basketball team Coach Lawrence Rogers goes over a revised game plan during a time out in a game against the Kamakura Breakers Feb. 20. The Blue Devils are a privately organized competitive basketball team formed to help players develop high level basketball skills.

The Blue Devils, in existence for about a year, is a privately organized and operated team that was formed by two local Americans with ties to Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Negishi Housing Detachment who were interested in helping players develop their skills and play in a more competitive environment while overseas.

"The most important thing for my boys is getting them ready to play competitive basketball for when they go back to the United States," said Fleet and Industrial Supply Center Logistics Specialist 3rd Class Lawrence Rogers, who is the team's coach and co-founder. "We wanted to emphasize making sure that each and every player was fundamentally sound to play at a high level."

The team is made up of 10-12 year-old Americans who play along side peers who hail from around the world, but call the Yokohama area home.

"It's great because I have a multicultural team, I have Japanese nationals, I have French nationals, I even have a Malaysian national to go along with my American players," said Rogers. "So, not only do they get to play basketball, but they learn from one another and interact as a team."

Eager for competition, the Blue Devils play basketball clubs from around Japan. On a recent Saturday, they hosted two games against the Kamakura Breakers at their home court located at the Yokohama Country and Athletic Club, which is just a few minutes drive from the Negishi Housing complex.

Team Co-Captain Koki Wiley epitomizes the attitude of the team by working hard, striving to improve the team's game while ensuring that his team enjoys their time on the court.

"We're pretty good, but we need to get better," said Wiley. "It's really fun, it's awesome!"

Players and parents have been quick to jump on board the Blue Devil bandwagon with an active roster of 18 players and counting.

"Our program is in its infancy stage and we welcome more involvement," said Rogers.

Rogers notes that being a part of the team involves more than just dropping a child off at practice once a week; it takes a little dedication from parents and kids.

"Parents play a huge role in making the Blue Devils successful and it does take a high level of commitment from them as well," said Rogers.

For more information about the Blue Devils, contact Rogers by e-mail to laworog1029@yahoo.com or call 090-9108-9545.

Taking care of our own: NMCRS Yokosuka annual fund drive begins

Story and photo by MC3 Charles Oki, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

The Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) Yokosuka began preparing for its annual active duty fund drive at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) March 3.

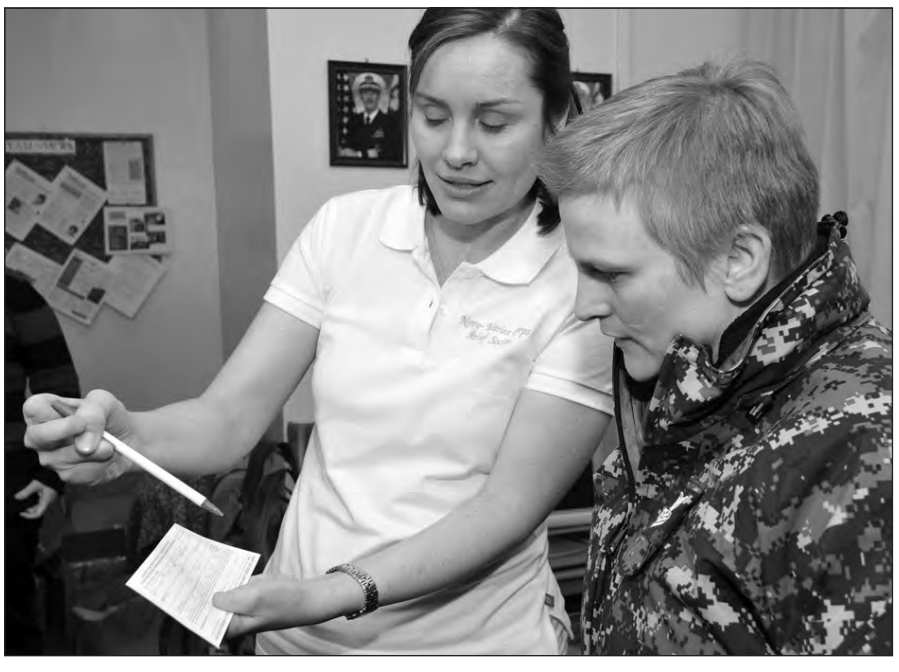
The annual fund drive offers active duty and retired service members a chance to help NMCRS, a non-profit organization, improve the lives of Sailors, Marines and their families. This year's fund drive, which started March 10, will continue on until April 23.

With a variety of services such as financial loans and grants, education programs and food lockers provided by the NMCRS, the fund drive is an important part of maintaining the ability to aid Sailors and Marines in their time of need.

"All of our services are funded through the fund drive," said Amy Lacaria, NMCRS Yokosuka director. "Without the fund drive we wouldn't be able to provide loans or flights home for emergencies."

In the event that a Sailor or Marine doesn't have enough money for whatever they need, the NMCRS is able to provide them with a source of emergency money as an alternative to a payday lender or bank loan said Chief Master-at-Arms Tina Taylor, CFAY NMCRS fund drive area coordinator.

"A lot of payday lenders have extremely high interest rates and can do more harm than good if the person requesting the loan doesn't know what's going on," Taylor said. "The society can provide a quick-assist loan, which gives the Sailor or Marine $300 no questions asked, or a no-interest loan for Sailors or Marines who might need it to stay afloat till their next paycheck."



NMCRS Yokosuka Director Amy Lacaria, shows ET1 Mary Williams, how to fill out a fund drive donation form March 3. The fund drive, which started March 10, will continue until April 23.

According to Lacaria, the goal of the 2010 fund drive is to have more Sailors and Marines donate small amounts rather than a small amount of Sailors and Marines donating more money.

"According to our numbers from the past year, the NMCRS received about 10.1 million dollars through the fund drive," said Lacaria. "However, most people don't realize how big the Navy really is, so if we had every Sailor and Marine donate just $5 a month we would have received almost 64 million dollars."

In a message sent to all Navy and Marine Corps commands worldwide, Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Ray Mabus, encouraged every Sailor and Marine to embrace a fundamental part of being part of the nation's volunteer force.

"Please continue the tradition of taking care of our own by helping make this year's campaign the most successful ever," Mabus said in the message.

Annual road tax, 2010 decal issuance

Annual road tax for your vehicle is paid every spring. Payments, which must be made in yen, can be made at the Kanagawa Tax Office for regular sized cars and trucks. Payments for motorcycles and mini-cars can be made at the local city office, starting April 1.

Road tax will be collected at the Fleet Theater, March 23- 26 from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 2:30 p.m. and April 12 and 13 from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 2:30 p.m. This service on board Yokosuka is also intended for Ikego residents. Road tax collection for vehicles registered in Negishi will be at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation classroom, Bldg. 19045, in Negishi Housing April 15 from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

The amount of road tax to be paid depends on the type of vehicle, which can be determined by the number shown on the top of the license plate and is as follows:

• 44Y, 400Y, and 56Y, 57Y, 58Y, 500Y, 529Y plates	7,500 yen
• 33Y, 300Y, 329Y plates 4.5L and below	19,000 yen
4.6L and above	22,000 yen
• 11Y, 100Y plates	32,000 yen

Base decals must be affixed to the top center of the front windshield, next to the Japanese inspection sticker. The current Japanese inspection sticker, current base decal, installation sticker and rank decals (if applicable) should be the only decals affixed to the windshield. All other decals and inspection stickers from the previous years must be removed. Contact the Vehicle Registration office at 243-5011/5896 for more information.