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## Black River brainiacs take to the floor

Tuesday, December 09, 2008

By Steve Kaminski  
The Grand Rapids Press

Holland Black River returns only three players from last season, but the Rats are the type of team that should catch on quickly.

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Ask Rats coach Chris Grob what he likes about his squad, and he says the players are a bunch of brainiacs.

"Honestly, it is an extremely bright group of kids academically," Grob said. "You should see their ACT scores. They are quick learners and show a lot of intelligence on the court."

The Rats, who finished 10-10 overall a year ago and 5-5 in the Alliance League, open the season Tuesday when they host their biggest rival, Holland Calvary. Black River will play its first four games at home.

Black River was one of the area's most improved teams last season considering the River Rats went 1-20 in 2006-07. Black River's returning three players from last year are seniors Colby Beachum and John Kraushar, along with junior Tyler Fredrick, who started at guard last year as a sophomore.

Beachum, a 6-foot guard, is one of the academic high achievers Grob is counting on this season. Beachum, who carries a 4.08 grade point average, said Black River really hasn't set major goals.

"We are a pretty young team, and we just want to do as well as we can," Beachum said. "We all know each other pretty well, and I think we can work together pretty well. We can make plays, and we know what each other wants to do. That is probably our biggest strength."

Kraushar, who is 6-1, will play center for the Rats. He and Beachum are the only seniors on the team that also includes seven juniors and one sophomore.

Grob said to keep an eye on Alex Tarnow and Abhay Mathur, a pair of juniors ready to make an impact. Tarnow is a 6-2 forward, while Mathur, 5-10, will see action at guard.

"We only have 12 seniors in the school," Grob said. "We have lots of students everywhere else except for the senior class."

Black River finished fourth in the six-team Alliance League last season. Potter's House is the defending conference champion.

"Our goals this year are to compete for a league title and compete with every team we play," Grob said. "Potter's House wins it just about every time, and they should be the favorite to win it again. After that, it should be wide open."

### Holland Black River

- Class: D
- Coach: Chris Grob, third year
- Conference: Alliance League
- 2007-08: 10-10 overall, 5-5 Alliance League (fourth place)
- Key players: G Colby Beachum (6-foot, Sr.), C John Kraushar (6-1, Sr.), G Tyler Fredrick

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(5-10, Jr.), F Alex Tarrow (6-2, Jr.), G Abhay Mathur (5-10, Jr.)

- Fast fact: The Rats made big strides last season after winning only one game in 2006-07.
- Coach's comment: "Academically, it is an extremely bright group of kids. They are quick learners and show a lot of intelligence on the court."
- Schedule: Dec. 9--Holland Calvary; Dec. 11--Zion Christian; Dec. 19--Algoma Christian; Jan. 6--Fruitport Calvary; Jan. 9--at Potter's House; Jan. 12--at Algoma Christian; Jan. 13--at West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science; Jan. 17--at Centreville; Jan. 22--Lawrence; Jan. 23--at Holland Calvary; Jan. 27--West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science; Jan. 29--at Zion Christian; Feb. 3--at Freedom Baptist; Feb. 6--at Fruitport Calvary; Feb. 9--at Lee; Feb. 10--Potter's House; Feb. 13--at West Michigan Lutheran; Feb. 21--at Lake Leelanau St. Mary's; Feb. 23--West Michigan Lutheran; Feb. 24--at Kent City



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