



VOLUME VI ISSUE XX

December 27, 2024

## Farewell and a Weekly Warrior Hiatus

As I write my 20<sup>th</sup> and final Weekly Warrior of the school year, I find myself reflecting with gratitude, as my time at JP II is drawing to a close. I began this newsletter in 2019, shortly after joining the school, and now, with almost 200 issues published and a sixth edition in hand, it's clear how much we've grown together as a community. I trust that the Weekly Warrior has served as a helpful and consistent communication tool throughout this journey. The Weekly Warrior will take a break until the new president arrives and determines the best means of communication that fits their leadership style.

As I take this opportunity to express my deepest thanks, I want to acknowledge the extraordinary staff, families, and, most importantly, students who have made these past five and a half years truly unforgettable. Those of you who have been part of JP II for a while can truly appreciate the incredible transformation that has taken place. What was once a small school facing challenges has now grown into the undisputed best school in the Lowcountry. Navigating change is never easy, but the changes we've embraced were essential in ensuring the school's future. The journey from financial uncertainty to stability has been nothing short of remarkable.

I feel incredibly blessed to have held leadership roles at some of the finest schools and districts in Massachusetts and Vermont, but JP II will always hold a special place in my heart. Nowhere else have I faced such significant challenges or witnessed such an inspiring transformation. Leadership is important, but none of this would have been possible without our amazing and dedicated faculty and staff, the unwavering support of our parent community, our generous donors, and the exceptional young people who make JP II such a joy to serve. When all of these pieces come together, there is no limit to what this school can achieve.

As the Diocese of Charleston prepares to announce my successor in the coming weeks, I am grateful to have been asked to remain involved during the transition, ensuring a smooth handover. While I may no longer be physically present at JP II come January 1, please know that I will continue to be engaged in areas such as enrollment management, school finances, governance, the capital campaign, and campus expansion. Though I am stepping away from my more public role, JP II will forever be a part of me. Thank you!

## From the Sports Desk

**Varsity Boys Basketball** received 16 points from Nicholai Atkinson and Sean Phalen along, with a dominating rebounding action, to lead the Golden Warriors to a hard-fought 49-43 victory Monday night in Savannah versus the Blazers of Bethesda Academy. JPII struggled shooting the ball, amassing 15 missed free-throws and 15 missed 3-pointers on the night, but defense was the name of the game as we made critical stops in the last frame to ice the victory and raise our record to 6-2 heading into the winter break.

Senior co-captain Nicholai Atkinson led the way with 15 points and was supported by 11 from Daniel Godsun, as the Golden Warriors sustained a hot shooting start and never relinquished the lead Friday night, ultimately vanquishing the previously undefeated Buccaneers of Bridges Prep 52-43. The first road win of the season elevated our record to 5-2.

**JV Boys Basketball** traveled to Savannah to battle Bethesda Academy in their final game of 2024. It was a sloppy game with a ton of missed layups and free throws, with the Warriors falling 28-23. It was a defensive, low-scoring game, but the boys battled until the end. Chase Cotter led the scoring with eight points and Deuce Kerschbaum chipped in with six points. The Warriors suffered their first loss of the season and end the 2024 calendar year 7-1. JV Basketball heads into the Christmas break with a tough loss but looks to bounce back on the road on January 9th at Patrick Henry.

**Middle School Boys Basketball** came up a little short in their game against Bethesda in Savannah. The Warriors fell to 6 - 2 on the season after a 35 to 32 loss. We appreciate everybody's support and look forward to getting back after it!

**Varsity Girls Basketball** played an amazing second half after a very sluggish start against Bridges Prep. We ended the half up by 7 and finished the game in a rout 62-25. All girls contributed in big ways. Hollis Melnick had her best game with 12 points, 7 boards, and aggressive defense. Savannah Trott added 13 points, Lily Termini had 9 boards, and Lauren Majorkiewicz had 6 steals.

**JV Girls Basketball** came upon a buzz saw in Savannah, losing to St. Vincent 43-19. Our girls played hard, but it was just a tough night offensively and defensively. The Warriors were led by Elizabeth Smith with 6 points, Grace Buckland with 3 points, and Millie Cornejo, Sofie Hannigan, Gia Sakowicz, Alivia Ogden and Ellie Morris each scored 2 points.

**Middle School Girls Basketball** put on a show with a relentless defense and an offense that was on full display as they cruised to a commanding victory over St. Francis by a final score of 28-9. What else can be said about this stifling defensive squad that held their opponent to less than double digit points for the 4th time in 8 games. This time they added an offensive outburst by Destiny Godsun with 14 total points. What a way to end the year 2024 with their 6th win a row to bring their record to 7-1. Awesome job yet again ladies!!

**Wrestling** competed in the 16-team Northwood Academy Tournament last weekend and came back home as team champions, edging out team runner-up Timberland High School by a score of 161.5 to 159.5! The Warriors came out on fire and never let up the entire tournament. ALL 11 of the John Paul II wrestlers who competed in the tournament finished in the top 4 individually at their weight classes. Individually, the JPII wrestlers won 36 of the 48 contested matches (a 75%-win percentage). Statistically, the Warriors also had a bonus point victory percentage of 78% in their 36 wins with 24 pin falls, 3 technical falls (15+ point differential

over opponent) and 1 major decision (8 to 14 point differential over opponent). Bringing home individual championships were Jack Duncan & Jase Reynolds. Duncan finished with a 3-0 record with 2 technical falls & a pin fall while Reynolds went 4-0 with 4 pins including a come from behind dynamic pin in his finals match. Finishing as runners-up in their weight classes were Brody Farris, Daniel Snyder, Jack Hannagan, and Taylor Murphy. Farris went 2-1 with 2 pins, Snyder was 3-1 with a major decision, injury default win, and a 9 second pin, Hannagan went 2-1 with a decision and a pin while Murphy went 3-1 with 3 pins, including a big throw to secure his spot in the finals. Finishing in 3rd place were Jude Witkowski, Brian Orta, and James Del Mazo. Witkowski was 4-1 on the day with 4 pins, Orta was 4-1 with 2 falls, a technical fall and an injury default victory while Del Mazo picked up a pin. Finishing in 4th place were Bailey Homer and Chase LaFountain. Homer went 3-2 with 3 pins under 45 seconds each while LaFountain was 2-2 with 2 pins each on the day. The Warrior wrestling team is back on the mats at Whale Branch Warrior Duals Tourney on January 4th.

## What's New at JP II

We are fortunate to announce that Deacon Brent Heathcott will be rejoining JP II as a theology teacher starting January 6. Deacon will be taking over for Mr. Jernigan and will be primarily teaching 10<sup>th</sup> grade theology with one section of 9<sup>th</sup> grade. He is an experienced teacher having taught both at JP II and St. Vincent in Savannah and had been involved in coaching as well. Welcome back Deacon Heathcott!

## Admissions Update and Reminder

My final reminder that the deadline for reenrollment and tuition assistance applications is January 31. On February 1 we will begin accepting new students until the school has reached capacity. Current students have priority as long as they apply prior to February 1. As for tuition assistance, you must apply each year through FACTS. Do not hesitate to reach out to Anne McClure or Jill Heathcott if you have any questions.

As of today, 111 current students have reenrolled. That's 31%. Thank you to all who have completed this in a timely manner. Also, we have 56 new applications in process. That's 15 ahead of where we were last year at this time. As I've said before, we expect to be at capacity next year in most grades. Once we reach 420 total, there will be waiting lists for several grades. Don't delay, enroll today,

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for your support, trust, and friendship over the years. God bless each and every one of you. Have a JOYful Christmas.

Sincerely in His Purpose,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John C. McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned on a light yellow rectangular background.