

Karver Is New Boys Basketball Coach at Walter Johnson

Former B-CC star, Maryland Terp and pro hoopster faces new challenges as a coach.

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 - Mark Karver, a basketball legend at [Bethesda-Chevy Chase](#) in the mid-1980s, is back on the county high school hoops circuit again — this time as head coach at [Walter Johnson](#).
 - Karver, still the all-time leader in points scored and rebounds at B-CC, led the Barons to the state championship at Cole Field House in 1984, then went on to play college ball at Maryland and George Washington before playing 11 years of professional basketball in Israel and Europe.
 - He returned to the United States a few years ago and now is a fourth-grade math and science teacher at [North Chevy Chase Elementary School](#). He had coached the junior varsity at B-CC for five seasons.
 - And Karver has a highly-regarded and veteran coach helping him as an assistant with the Wildcats this season: his former B-CC coach [Bill Wright](#) who enjoyed great success with the Barons through the 1980's and 1990's. He's standing to the left of Mark in the picture.
 - Karver's Wildcats, after suffering tough losses in their first two games, have bounced back smartly to even their record a 2-2 with a big win at Blair on Dec. 12, followed by a 66-53 victory over Quince Orchard on Wednesday night at home.
 - "We have a very talented group of juniors and seniors, and each game we're getting an understanding of how to play together," Karver said in an interview. "I'm pleased with our start, but our goal is to keep getting better until February."
 - Karver's staff includes another B-CC legend: former baseball and basketball coach Bill Wright, who recently came out of retirement to coach at [Montgomery College-Rockville](#).
 - Senior captain Harrison Gilbert has been a top scorer in WJ's early season games, including a 7-for-9 shooting performance for 18 points in the romp over Quince Orchard.
 - "He's been playing a lot of point guard for us and doing a solid job," Karver said. "He's also doing a good job of getting the ball to other scorers," like Ryan Lynch, who had 17 points against QO.
 - "They're starting to trust each other out there on the floor," Karver said.
 - Long-time B-CC hoops fans will never forget the 1983-4 season when Karver led the Barons to a state title, hitting a 40-foot shot at the buzzer in a crucial regional elimination game to upset favored Northwestern High School in Prince George's County.
 - "That one still has to be one of my most memorable shots," Karver said.

- Karver, who graduated from B-CC in 1986, was recruited by legendary Maryland coach Lefty Driesell. When Karver was a freshman, however, Lefty suddenly left Maryland in the aftermath of the shocking death of Len Bias from a drug overdose just days after he was selected by the Boston Celtics as their No. 1 choice in the NBA draft.
- Karver wound up playing college ball under four different coaches in four years, two at Maryland (Driesell and Bob Wade) and two at George Washington University (John Kuenster and Mike Jarvis) where he transferred after his first two years at Maryland.
- But a connection with an assistant coach at GW led to a successful pro career in Israel.
- “He was married to an Israeli and he asked me if I’d be interested in trying out for a team over there,” Karver said.
- In a nutshell, Mark was given a “one-way air ticket” to Israel for a tryout and wound up playing 11 seasons in Israel and five years in the high-caliber European professional league where he became one of that circuit’s most deadly three-point shooters.
- Even though Mark’s in the B-CC basketball record books, he also has strong connections to Walter Johnson.
- “My brother (Kirk) played there in the late 1970s, and I came to every game and hung around the court and locker room over there all the time,” Mark recalled.
- Just a hunch, but watch out for the Walter Johnson Wildcats this season — and in the future.
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