

Mount St. Mary's basketball chaplain knows the game

By Paul McMullen

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As chaplain of the Mount St. Mary's University men's basketball team, seminarian Bob Garrow helps the Mountaineers maintain an even spiritual keel.

In a pinch, he could also provide advice to coach Jamion Christian in how to attack full-court pressure or defend a hot shooter.

Garrow is the 38-year-old in the clerical collar at the end of the bench for the Mount, the champion of the Northeast Conference, which meets Albany in the first round of the NCAA tournament March 18 at the University of Dayton in Ohio.

Before he entered Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg in 2010, Garrow taught and coached basketball at the high school and college levels in Indiana, where the importance of the game at the prep level was best depicted in the film, "Hoosiers."



Seminarian Bob Garrow

How does Garrow, who did his undergraduate work at Indiana University, historically one of the nation's top college basketball programs, explain to Marylanders the game's stature in his home state?

"There is great pride in the sport in Indiana," he said. "Communities rally around their teams. Of the 13 largest high school gyms in the country, 12 are in the state of Indiana. My teams played in four of them, and I've had the privilege of being at games where over 7,000 were in attendance."

Garrow answered questions via email at the end of a weekend in which he was on a silent retreat with other Mount seminarians. He is on track to be ordained a priest for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in 2016.

He went to Marian High in Mishawaka, Ind., a Catholic high school just east of South Bend, home to the University of Notre Dame. He holds a bachelor's degree in education, with a concentration in U.S. history, government and world history.

In addition to his prep alma mater, Garrow coached at Michigan City Marquette High, South Central High, New Prairie High and South Bend Clay High, and helped all four to sectional championships in Indiana. It was the first time in the state's final

16 for both Michigan City Marquette and New Prairie.

Wherever he went in Indiana, Garrow encountered boys determined to improve.

“The players in Indiana are generally very technically sound,” Garrow said. “It is not uncommon to see a basketball hoop in the front yard or attached to the garage.”

He also coached for two years at Indiana University South Bend, an NAIA school.

What role does a chaplain serve with student-athletes?

“I try to bring the presence of Christ to them,” he said. “I care for them not only as a member of the team, but as a whole person. I also talk about the gifts that God has given them so that they may appreciate his generosity. ... “(While) athletics are great and can enable individuals to reach their dreams, it is essential to understand that at some point basketball will come to an end and they must be able to rely on their education.”

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