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John writing his own remarkable story

By PETE NEVINS

For the Pocono Record

He could be the subject for a movie. Dana John is 26 years old, never played sports before last year, works full time and is now one of the top Division III basketball players in the East.

John attended Pocono Mountain High School, but he never played basketball in his four years there before graduating in 1998. Now eight years later, he is the leading scorer at Jersey City State University.

The 6-2 sophomore is averaging 18.8 points per game for a 4-2 team. He has made a team-high 20 three-pointers and has grabbed 20 rebounds. Last week, he was named the New Jersey Athletic Conference Player of the Week for his average of 26.5 points and 7.0 rebounds in two victories.

COLLEGE CORNER

How did it happen that John became a star although he had no previous high school or college basketball experience?

"In high school, I did love the game, but I didn't have the aspiration or the time to play organized basketball since I was working at a grocery store in Tannersville and helping around my house at that time," John explains. "I did play intramural basketball with Coach (Brad) Pensyl's players and I played summer ball in Reeders where we won a title twice."

John went on to continue to play basketball after his graduation, but never on a college team. He competed on club teams and in outside leagues through

the state of New Jersey to which he moved. He had a full-time job which he still has in the post office in Newark. That's how a movie about a new and suddenly unexpected star usually starts. A kid just hangs around, plays the sport part-time, but never earns any honors until he gets chance to compete in college. Now get the music going; it's like a 'Rocky' basketball story.

"I had a good friend (Kreem Collins) who was going to New Jersey State and playing basketball," John said. "I saw how much fun he was having playing



Dana John

for Coach (Charles) Brown. Last year, I decided it was time for me to go to college, get a Special Education degree and to play ball."

Upon meeting John, Brown decided to add him to his team.

"Dana was just a real recreation player, but with the ability he had, I thought he could learn what we were trying to teach him," Brown said.

John joined the Gothic Knights last season. Despite his lack of experience, he earned a starting position, averaging 11.2 points per game for a 20-9 team which won the ECAC Division III Metro title.

"I didn't have any idea I was going to play last year because I never played organized ball before and I had a lot to learn," John said. "I had the natural talent my father (Galbert John) had

taught me as a kid, but I didn't have knowledge of the game that I needed to have and which Coach Brown instilled in me.

"It took me a long time to learn the plays; the team would go right and I would go left. I didn't know how to do a three-man weave. It was funny at first, but the coaches taught me, were patient with me and it worked out pretty well."

Unlike most college players, John is not just playing basketball and taking classes. He also works five nights a week at the post office, midnight to 8:30 a.m. Monday through Friday.

And on the weekends, he takes and plays with his three-year-old son, Dana, Jr., and often brings him to the

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Blakeslee home of his father, mother Lynn, brother, Desmond, and sisters, Desiree and Deidre, a student at Pocono Mountain West.

"My schedule is pretty hectic," John said. "I work all night and then I go home to my apartment in Elizabeth (N.J.) and take a shower. Then I go and take my classes and study. After that, it's practice and right after that at around 6 p.m., I go home and go straight to sleep before I head to work again."

Brown, who has coached NJCU for 24 years with a 468-210 record, has been thrilled with the play of his new wing man who plays both guard and

wonderful young man. His attitude is tremendous; he's dependable and he's always there working hard.

"We're really proud of him. He does well in the classroom and he's going to get his degree. I think over the next several years, he's going to be one of the best we've had for a while. I think he didn't have any high school experience coming here, but he can be an All-America by the time he is finished."

Other College Notes

Freshman guard **Colby Greenlee** (Pocono Mountain East) of Kean was named the New Jersey Athletic Conference Rookie of the Week after averaging nine points and three assists in a 2-0 week. She scored 10 points and had five assists against Arcadia and had eight points and

been honored on the National Soccer Coaches' Association of America/Adidas NCAA Division III All Mid-Atlantic Region team. The two-time All-Freedom Conference first team player finished his career with 14 assists, among the top 10 in the school's history, and four goals.

Sophomore **Lauren Hosko** (Stroudsburg) and her brother **Matt Hosko** (Stroudsburg) helped Scranton to a pair of swimming victories over FDU Florham. Lauren won the 400 IM in 4:57.26 and the 100 freestyle in 58.50 while Matt took the 200 butterfly in 57.76.

Senior guard **Crystal Schneck** (Pocono Mountain East) of Susquehanna tallied 11 points, making five straight field goal attempts including one-three pointer in a 57-42 win over Moravian. She also made five

ant Valley) led the now 2-1 Wilkes basketball team to a win over 65-48 Lycoming Saturday. Gould scored 14 points and had four assists, while Kresge tallied 20 points and leads the team with a 17.7 scoring average.

Senior guard **Prince Blacknall** (Stroudsburg) of red-hot Marywood scored 16 points in a 74-66 victory over Cabrini and 22 points in a first-in-seven years win over Gwynedd-Mercy, 80-77. Junior center **Terry Ryan** (Notre Dame) contributed 15 points and six rebounds against Cabrini.

Sophomore forward **Shane Connor** (Pocono Mountain East) of the University of the Sciences came off the bench and scored 13 points on 5-for-7 shooting including two 3's in a 75-67 loss to Nyack. He had six points and five rebounds in a 55-53 defeat