

All-East Bay boys basketball Coach of the Year: Frank Allocco, De La Salle

By Jimmy Durkin

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FRANK ALLOCCO, DE LA SALLE

The season began with some big question marks for the De La Salle basketball team. John McArthur, the 2010 East Bay Player of the Year and the school's all-time leading scorer, graduated. Of the six returning varsity players, three were injured.

A 2-2 record just before New Year's on a trip to the Oaks Christian Holiday Invitational left De La Salle looking for answers.

"We made our New Year's resolution of things we had to address," coach Frank Allocco said.

"Things related to being better people. Be a better friend, a better student, a better community member. We really got serious about trying to embrace that."

The steady guidance of Allocco, who has earned recognition as the Bay Area News Group-East Bay boys basketball Coach of the Year, helped lead the Spartans to an East Bay Athletic League title and trip to the North Coast Section Division I championship game, where they lost to Castro Valley 60-42.

That loss didn't derail the team, as it bounced back to force a rematch with the Trojans in the California Interscholastic Federation Northern regional final.

This time, an 18-0 run by De La Salle sealed a 49-43 win to advance to the state title game. The Spartans couldn't close out a win over Mater Dei-Santa Ana in the state final, but still delivered a season to remember.

"I don't know that any team we've had has gotten as much out of their ability as this team did," Allocco said. "We've had state championship teams and teams that got to the state finals, but I'm not sure any of those teams had the challenges this team had."

-- Jimmy Durkin