In addition to a day of great basketball, the main goal of the day was to educate the eight competing schools’ athletes, coaches and fans. Cliffside Park, Rutherford, Riverdell, Northern Highlands, Emerson, Indian Hills, Wyckoff, and Park Ridge all participated on Saturday, January 8th.

The Cliffside Park Girls Basketball Team, coaches and fans received a variety of breast cancer awareness/educational items courtesy of the American Cancer Society and Leigh Hurst. A breast cancer survivor and founder of ‘The Feel Your Boobies Foundation,’ Leigh’s educational efforts have been covered by the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, The New York Post, E! Entertainment News, Fitness Magazine, Women’s Fitness Magazine and US Weekly Magazine. While the foundation’s name does draw attention (and a giggle), it is an ideal sponsor because; 1) the focus is on education and 2) their awareness campaign is geared to young women and the information is presented in an energizing way.

The highlight of the day was speaker, Kim Tanis. A breast cancer survivor and Head Coach of the Indian Hills Regional High School Girls’ Varsity Basketball Team, Coach Tanis was in attendance for a second consecutive year as the guest of honor to speak with each team during the post-game reception about her diagnosis and battle with the disease to date. Coach Tanis offered her story and responded to questions after each of the four games played.

On the court the Lady Raiders fell to the Bulldogs of Rutherford 45-34. The Bulldogs opened a 22-7 lead. The Lady Raiders regrouped and cut the lead to two points with four minutes to go, but Rutherford proved to be too strong. Three consecutive turnovers by Cliffside Park and strong free throw shooting on Rutherford’s part did in Cliffside Park.

Although disappointed about the loss in the Breast Cancer Challenge, Saturday was much more than about wins and loses. The day was about educating high school athletes and their parents about the disease, a win for all who participated.

Submitted by Larry Pinto, Varsity Basketball Coach