



COURTESY OF KEITH WALLACE

Bishop Timon – St. Jude High School Athletic Director Joe Licata tosses in the tip-off at a wheelchair basketball game during a recent Physical Education class.

Wheelchair basketball at Bishop Timon - St. Jude

Over the last couple of weeks, students at Bishop Timon – St. Jude High School have been taking a seat in gym class to learn, practice, and play wheelchair basketball. It's different, it's fun, but it also helps create a better understanding of what students might take for granted in their own lives. More importantly, it fosters respect for people who have challenges to overcome in athletics and in life. "Everybody's tired. Your upper body hurts, your shoulders hurt," says Bishop Timon – St. Jude Athletic Director and Phys Ed teacher Joe Licata, who first experienced the sport as a participant in a graduate class at UB. "You get an appreciation

for what people go through." The rules are a lot like any other basketball game, but to move the ball, you're allowed two pushes of the wheels before you have to dribble, shoot, or pass. It sounds easier than it feels when you're on the court, and you start to realize just how much you do with your legs, which for the purposes of the game are strapped in and immobile. Having worked unified games and the Special Olympics, Licata watched and learned what these athletes brought to their sports. He hopes this basketball hoops experience inspires not only appreciation, but a call to service in the boys in his classes.