The Post's All-City boys basketball Coach of the Year

By ZACH BRAZILLER

All-City boys basketball Coach of the Year: Ruth Lovelace, Boys & Girls

When Ruth Lovelace was finally a champion, 17 years after taking over the boys basketball program at Boys & Girls, her eyes welled up with tears.

They were for all she had accomplished — as the first women to lead a boys basketball team to a city championship in the PSAL’s highest qualification and for getting The High its first crown in 31 years — but also in remembrance of Frank Mickens, the man who hired her in the first place.

“The guy deserves all the credit,” she said of Mickens, who passed away in his sleep July 9 at the age of 63. “No one would’ve ever hired a female back in that time. I was young, I was 23, but he had a vision for me I couldn’t see for myself.”

Dubbed the “Chancellor of Fulton St,” Mickens was responsible for turning around the once-troubled school as its principal. He hired Lovelace prior to the 1994 season because “she is part of this school, part of us. She’s our blood,” he said in an appearance in “A Woman Among Boys,” ESPN’s 2008 documentary about Lovelace.

She’s become the face of the basketball program there, a woman in a man’s world, taking Boys & Girls to the semifinals five of the last seven years.

Lovelace was at her best this year. She was without starters Mike Taylor, Antione Slaughter, and Leroy Fludd at times, but got the most out of her bench, be it Jerry White, Jamal Mapp, Brandon Williams, or Anthony Hemingway.

In the season’s seminal moment, the Kangaroos trailing Cardozo by 10 points in the city championship game, her poise and confidence carried over to her players. The result was a rousing comeback and long-awaited city crown.

“She should not be considered a novelty anymore,” longtime assistant Elmer Anderson said. “The woman can coach, and coaching is about dealing with personalities as the season progresses, and she did a magnificent job.”

zbraziller@nypost.com