# Nathan Oh: Basketball player’s dedication strengthens over the years

*DECK: After playing basketball for nearly 10 years, Nathan Oh has learned that he’s at his best when he relies on his intuition.*

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**Caption: TK**

## Linked to spreadsheet? Yes

When Nathan Oh is on the court, he isn’t thinking about how to get around his opponent or what play to run next. He’s played basketball for over 10 years, and now his modus operandi in the sport is what he calls his blank mind.

Oh has learned to play calmly by using his instincts, a product of countless hours of practice and commitment.

Oh started practicing the sport regularly in third grade. He played for National Junior Basketball (NJB) in elementary school and joined the Top Flight Elite Basketball program during middle school, when he went to the BASIS Independent Silicon Valley private school.

Although he was already experienced with basketball by his freshman year, Oh felt like a lost fish in the sea and was unable to make varsity and had to settle for JV. His feelings of hopelessness made him lose his aggressiveness.

During games, Oh kept passing open shots to upperclassmen instead of shooting or taking the ball to the hoop.

“I never really played for myself,” Oh said. “I was a complete shell of myself and I really suffered.”

Ever since Oh didn’t make varsity in his freshman year, he dedicated more time to training, averaging about two hours daily.

During many of these sessions he was coached by Thomas Marlen, who advised him to be more assertive and play to his own strengths instead of worrying about making mistakes. Currently, Oh and Marlen still keep working after hours of regular practicing to further sharpen Oh’s dribbling and shooting skills.

He made it into varsity as a sophomore, although barely getting any playing time. During his junior year, he was able to play more minutes during games before becoming a main offensive threat and part of the starting lineup as a senior.

He participates in tournaments with the school team and his Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) team.

Over Oh’s years in high school, he’s increased his practice hours. Preseason, he regularly practices on the courts and during the season, the team practices average two to three hours long.

Although he doesn’t plan on pursuing basketball in college, Oh currently practices four and a half hours a day, occasionally testing his skills by playing pickup basketball on outdoor courts.

“His playstyle is all about playing aggressively,” senior Justin Guo said. “He’s a shifty driver, above average shooter and so ridiculously quick.”

Even after his freshman year, Oh’s competitiveness and skills kept his love of basketball strong, and motivated him throughout high school. As a senior, he’s learned to enjoy playing by focusing his thoughts solely on the game at hand, living in the moment.

“Basketball taught me life lessons like to always work hard, be selfless and how nothing always goes your way,” Oh said. “It can be a teacher to anyone and it really reveals your character and where you need to improve. It shaped my character and without basketball, I wouldn’t know who I would be today.”