

Senior Knights hoops stay perfect on the season

By Jake Courtepatte

It's a different look for this year's incarnation of the Villanova Knights senior boys' basketball team, with the remnants of last season long in the past.

After an early end to last season, the Knights have now started the year on a 4-0 tear, having recently taken down Royal St. George's College last Wednesday.

The Knights were down by as much as eight points in the third quarter, mounting a comeback that capped off at a seven-point cushion of their own in the fourth.

A three-pointer by the Georgians at the final buzzer left the Knights with a 54-50 win to preserve their perfect season.

“They stayed composed in the third, especially playing in an away gym,” said head coach Derek Alexander. “It was good to see.”

The Knights have also taken down Greenwood College School, Hillfield Strathallan College, and De La Salle so far this season.

One of two undefeated teams in the CISAA, the Knights are a young team with a ton of promise.

In fact, leading the way are two juniors – Stefano Spagnuolo and Matthew Basista – averaging around 24.5 PPG and 16 PPG respectively.

“Between those two kids, they carry a good portion of the offensive load,” said Alexander. “They’re good leaders for the team.”

While the two Grade 11s may have one more year of CISAA basketball ahead of them, they’re far from the only ones. There are only two seniors on the ten-man roster, meaning eight returnees for the squad.

And that’s good news for Alexander, whose 2013-2014 senior squad was the first to not make playoffs in four years.

“We’re trying to get back on track this year. We’re used to being first or second in our division, so this pace is more towards what we’re accustomed to.”

The team was back in action on Tuesday after press time, taking on Trinity College School in their first meeting of the season.

With another game not scheduled until mid-January in a rematch with Royal St. George's, coach Alexander isn't sweating. He believes his team's conditioning to be top notch.

“I believe that we work harder than everyone else, and we’re in better physical condition than everyone else. When it comes to the end of the game, mentally we’re not fatigued. We’re in the game.”

The senior boys will also get a warmup to get back into CISAA action the weekend before, heading to St. Catharine's for Ridley College's annual Carl Dorland Classic Tournament.

The true first test of the season will come one week later, as the Knights host Appleby College – both teams yet to be defeated so far.