Aurora?s Nembhard leads Canada past Argentina in FIBA Championship

By Jake Courtepatte

The future of Canadian basketball is bright, with Aurora's own Andrew Nembhard at the helm.

The 17-year old future Florida Gator posted 28 points and seven rebounds for his home country when they defeated Argentina in the opening matchup of the FIBA under-18 Americas Championship, in front of a hometown crowd in St. Catherines, Ontario.

?Playing at home may add some extra pressure to other guys, but personally I just see it as a great opportunity to play in front of our fans and show them how much Canada Basketball has improved over the last few years,? said Nembhard, who is stepping onto the international stage at the under-18 level for the first time.

Moving to the prestigious Montverde Academy in Florida two years ago after starting his high school education at Vaughan Secondary School, Nembhard led Montverde to a 35 ? 0 record this season.

?Going to Montverde and playing against elite high school competition these last couple of years definitely boosted my confidence and prepared me to play for the U18 team this summer and take on a bigger stage. It's something I look forward to now,? Nembhard told FIBA.com.

After receiving offers from Ohio State, University of South Carolina, and Gonzaga, he officially committed to playing for the Florida Gators next season in October.

Widely considered as one of the top point guards in the 2018 class, Nembhard is hoping to take his size and athleticism to the pro ranks as early as possible.

?My favourite thing to do is probably pass,? said Nembhard in a media scrum at April's Nike Hoops Summit showcase. ?A nice assist for a dunk. I'd rather have a no-look bounce pass than a dunk?unless it's a dunk on somebody.?

Canada continues in the group stage on Tuesday in a game against Chile, before the quarterfinals set for Thursday evening.

The top four teams from the tournament earn a trip to next summer's World Cup. Canada is the defending U-19 World Cup champion.