

Aurora's Nembhard named to Canada basketball roster



By Jake Courtepatte

Andrew Nembhard is temporarily trading in his orange and blue for the red and white.

The up-and-coming superstar was named as one of 29 ballers to attend Team Canada's training camp this summer, in an attempt to whittle down a roster to compete in the FIBA Basketball World Cup and hopefully earn a 2020 Olympic berth.

It's a star-studded lineup of NBA talent that Nembhard, a member of the University of Florida Gators as a sophomore, will be competing against for a spot. The backcourt includes the likes of Nickeil Alexander-Walker, Cory Joseph, Luguentz Dort, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Brady Heslip, Jamal Murray, and others.

Yet Nembhard, who has worn the maple leaf crest before, said he feels good about heading into camp after getting some positive vibes from the Team Canada staff.

"They're up on me," said Nembhard. "They see how I compete."

The Aurora native was the only NCAA prospect deemed worthy enough by Canada Basketball to receive the call.

Should he accept the invitation to camp, Nembhard will find himself in Toronto for a mini-camp from August 4-6, before a pair of exhibition games versus Nigeria. Exhibitions against Australia, New Zealand, and the United States will follow before the roster is complete.

If he makes the team, a trip to China in early September will be in the works for the World Cup.

Nick Nurse was recently named as the head coach for the team heading into the World Cup, fresh off an NBA Championship with the Toronto Raptors. He has high hopes for all the young Canadian talent.

"It's a talented group of guys. If these guys can gel, we can go as far as we want to go," said Nurse in a press release. "But there's some work to do. We've got to get together, we're going to have to develop a really tough mentality defensively, we're going to have to develop a selfless, hit-the-open-man offensive mentality.

"When you start doing those things who knows where you can go. But my objective is to win."

The offseason has been anything but off for the young future phenom, who on Monday also learned he was selected as one of the Gators' 'Moments of the Year.'

His shot with four seconds to go against the LSU Tigers in early March will go down in Florida fan lore, with a berth in the March Madness tournament on the line.

He started all 36 games for the Gators in his freshman season, averaging eight points per game.