

SAC basketball takes winning streaks into the New Year



By Jake Courtepatte

The future is bright for St. Andrew's College basketball, as both the senior and under-16 squads bring a championship title on home court into 2016.

Two well-fought championship games last month earned SAC some serious hardware to add to their ever-growing athletic collection.

The U16 Saints basketball team won only their second home tournament title in fourteen years, followed by a repeat gold medal performance by the senior squad that same day for their third-straight title.

After steamrolling both Sir William Mulock and Centre Dufferin by more than 20-point victories to open round robin play in the annual tournament, the younger Saints met their first serious opponent in Brooklin High School in the semifinal. The Saints gave up 35 points in the first half to trail by eight at the break.

A new man-to-man take on defence shut down Brooklin's top scorers in the second half, with SAC able to climb back for a 65 ? 60 win and book their spot in the final.

They took the same mentality into the championship game with Holy Cross, who had also gone undefeated until that point. A back-and-forth first quarter had the game tied at twelve after one, thanks to a last-minute three to give the Saints the momentum.

Back-to-back threes made it 20 ? 13 Saints in the second, but a quick slump had them trailing 23 ? 22 at halftime.

Both teams seemed to shut down in the third, before Mario Vasquez sparked the Saints with a three to end the quarter. Game 2 MVP Amar Patel added to the lead with a three of his own in the fourth quarter, with the Saints holding on for a 38 ? 35 victory. MVP honours went to Bilal Mahmood.

In the senior championship, his brother Sulaiman Mahmood was a key factor in the paint, picking up rebounds and dishing to Jonathan Filipopolous a number of times in the first to give the Saints an early lead against Sir William Mulock. Defensively, however, they seemed to fail late in the quarter, allowing two late Mulock threes to tie it at fifteen after one.

Despite some successful fast breaks by Brendan Rush and James Michaelis in the second, Mulock kept pace with the Saints, who held on to a slim two-point advantage at half.

They opened up a seven-point lead in the third, with Mahmood knocking down a three and Brandon Haryott with two of his own.

With a ten-point lead dwindled to three late in the game, Haryott was the late-game hero with his sixth and seventh threes of the day to give the Saints a 53 ? 48 win.

Both squads continued their on-court success into the break. The U16's have rattled off three more wins since their home title, including two hard-fought CISAA victories over Ridley College and Hillfield Strathallan, a close 55 ? 54 win for the Saints in which they led by ten at the half.

The seniors earned a 73 ? 58 win over Newmarket High School and return to action on Wednesday against Ridley College.