

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026

2025-26 NORTHERN NASH HS BASKETBALL PROVING GROUND



NORTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN QUANTAY JAMES
(Photos Submitted by Carl Copeland)

NN continues to dominate on court



NN'S RAMSEY HARRIS
By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

RED OAK -- The Northern Nash High School Basketball teams split a pair of matchups earlier this week, with the boys defeating both Kinston and C.B. Aycock on Monday and Tuesday while the girls lost to the same opponents.

The Knights traveled to historic Kinston High School on Monday evening for a



NORTHERN NASH FRESHMAN TRINADI WILLIAMS

A SUPERB FINISH Lady 'Dogs take 2nd at tourney

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

CLAYTON -- The Nash Central High School girls basketball team recorded a second-place finish at the John Jacobs Christmas Tournament on the campus of Cleveland High School to close out 2025, finishing the eight-team event with a 2-1 record.

The Lady Bulldogs picked up a first-round victory over West Johnston and followed that up with a second-round win



NC'S JAYDEN BAGGETT
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JOHN JACOBS CHRISTMAS CLASSIC ALL-TOURNEY SELECTIONS
(L TO R) JAYDEN BAGGETT, A'DIA CASH AND HARMONY DUPREE

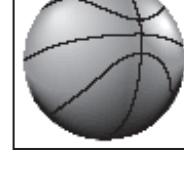


NASH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL'S GERALD DAVIS TOURNEY SPLASH Nash Central goes 1-2 at event

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

CLAYTON -- A young Nash Central Bulldog boys basketball team is continuing to find its way as the calendar turns to 2026, having wrapped up the 2025 portion of its schedule by posting a 1-2 record in the John Jacobs Christmas Tournament.

The Bulldogs registered a 59-53 victory over Cape Fear Christian Academy in the event's second round, a win that was sandwiched between a first-round loss to West Johnston and a third-round defeat issued by county rival Rocky



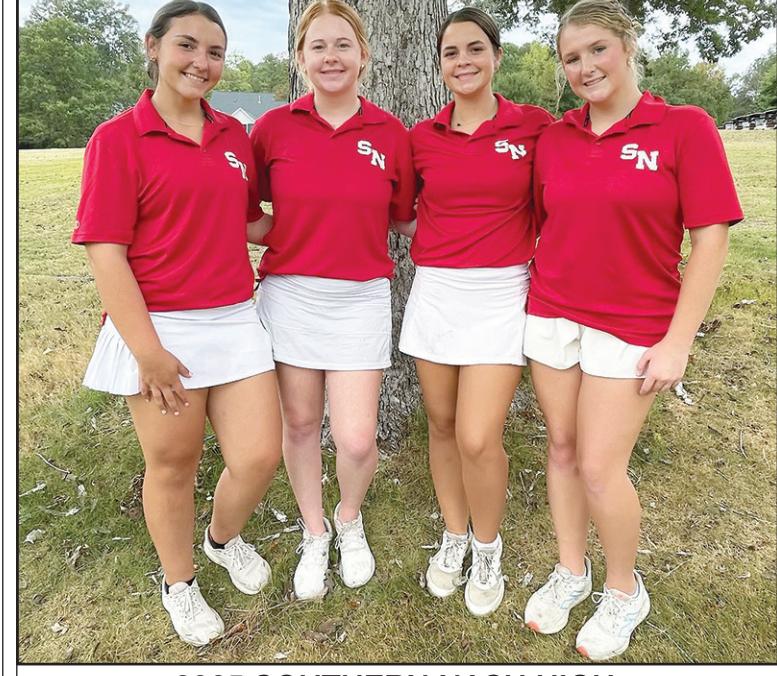
Mount.

Central did leave the tournament with some positives despite the two losses, namely the performances of Markell Jasper and Northern Nash transfer Zaccai Allen.

The three-game event was highlighted by a 23-point outing by Allen against Cape Fear Christian, his fifth time reaching double figures this season and a total that matched his career high.

"He's a great transition player," said third-year Nash Central head coach Brian Thomas of Allen, "He

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2025 SOUTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS GOLF TEAM

Ladybirds were solid on the links in the Big East

From Staff Reports

Ladybirds for the top spot in the competitive conference.

SOUTHERN NASH -- Southern Nash's dynasty atop the girls golf standings in the Big East Conference came to an end this past fall -- but not because the Ladybirds had a down season.

The most recent Big East alignment put long-time powerhouse Wilson Fike in the league, and the Lady Demons were able to dethrone the

Southern Nash, under the direction of legendary head coach Scott Collie, was second overall, followed by CB Aycock, Wilson Hunt, Northern Nash and Southern Wayne.

Fike also featured the Big East Conference Player of the Year in Payton Durham, along

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NORTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL'S JAH'MARZEA WILLIAMS

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doubleheader that was originally scheduled for Saturday, but was postponed due to the flu within Northern's program.

The boys brought home an eyebrow-raising 71-53 victory over 11-time state champion Kinston, whereas the Lady Knights suffered a 58-30 defeat at the hands of the Lady Vikings.

"To get a win in Kinston is a great confidence boost for the program," said Northern Nash boys basketball coach Henry Drake, whose squad issued the Vikings their first loss at home in nearly two years - a streak that stretched back to January 27, 2024.

"We were very proud of them, especially for getting a win in a great atmosphere for high school basketball."

The Knights used extreme efficiency en route to a victory against one of the state's top programs, shooting an impressive 28-of-51 (55%) from the field as five players finished in double figures.

Senior point guard Christian Barnes led the way with a game-high 17 points, while Jah'Marzea Williams registered his third double-double of the season on 11 points and 12 rebounds.

"We got inside the pain and were able to finish through contact," said Drake of the team's strong shooting night, one that consisted of just eight three-pointers taken, six of which were attempted by Barnes, who bucketed half of those.

Kingston Little finished the contest with 14 points on an impressive six-of-eight from the floor, while the team's leading scorer Quantay James added 13 and Chris Silver totaled 11 on a perfect five-of-five shooting.

Just one night later, Northern's boys followed Monday's performance up with a dominant 75-57 victory over C.B. Aycock, the first meeting between the

two schools as league opponents.

The Knights jumped out to an early 23-10 lead after the game's first period, never looking back and stretching their lead to nearly 30 points over the course of the evening. The boys improved to an impressive 13-0 on the season, with two of those wins coming in conference play.

As for head coach Grover Battle's squad on the girls side, Northern Nash has now lost three of its last four after dropping its two outings earlier this week.

The Lady Knights were thumped in decisive fashion by both Kinston and Aycock, falling to the Lady Vikings by 28 and dropping a 42-26 loss to Aycock the next day.

The back-to-back losses dropped the team's season-long record to 4-8 overall and 1-1 in Big East Conference play.

"We're a little behind but I can't be more pleased with the effort that everyone has given," said Battle of his team leading into the Bunn Holiday Tournament, a sentiment that still rings true.

The Lady Knights are not only working with a handful of players that are new to basketball, but also a roster of eight freshmen and some student-athletes that arrived to practice late due to the flag football season.

We're trying to get those kids to understand the game. Once we get that, I think we're gonna be alright," remarked Battle of his young squad.

Both of Northern's teams will be back in action this Friday, traveling to Southern Wayne, whose girls are 2-9 while their boys sit at 3-9.

Tipoff of the girls game is slated for 5:45 p.m. on the campus of Southern Wayne High School in Dudley, with the boys game set to begin immediately afterwards.

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GOLF

with Clint Carter as the Conference Champion Coach of the Year.

One of the most amazing aspects of Fike's title run is that the Demons did not have a single senior on their talented roster.

Three Southern Nash standout performers earned prestigious spots on the All-Big East Conference Team -- Sarah Ewers, Audrey Jones and Makayla Weeks.

All of those SN players are seniors and long-time key contributors, so Collie will have to find a way to reload on the fly this coming fall if the Ladybirds are to keep contending for one of the top spots in the conference.

Northern Nash, coached by Flyin' Brian Taylor, did not have a senior on its roster. The Lady Knights did not have a player qualify for the all-conference squad.

The complete 2025 All-Big East Conference Girls Golf Team is as follows:

2025

All-Big East

Conference

Girls Golf

- Loulie Harrison, Wilson Fike
- Payton Durham, Wilson Fike
- Kensley Hill, Wilson Fike
- Marinah Bryant, CB Aycock
- Addison Barnes, Wilson Fike
- Makayla Weeks, Southern Nash
- Audrey Jones, Southern Nash
- Addison Brinkley, Wilson Fike
- Sarah Ewers, Southern Nash
- Katherine Horton, CB Aycock
- Chloe Sullivan, Southern Wayne

Top Honors

- Big East Conference Player of the Year -- Payton Durham, Wilson

Fike

- Big East Conference Coach of the Year -- Clint Carter, Wilson Fike

Senior Players

- Audrey Jones, Southern Nash
- Makayla Weeks, Southern Nash
- Sarah Ewers, Southern Nash
- Marinah Bryant, CB Aycock
- Chloe Sullivan, Southern Wayne
- Maizi Bunn, Wilson Hunt
- Ellie Khem, Wilson Hunt
- Jacey Creech, Wilson Hunt

Team Standings

1) Wilson Fike
2) Southern Nash
3) CB Aycock
4) Wilson Hunt
5) Northern Nash High School
6) Southern Wayne High School



NASH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL'S MAURICE PARKER

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can create for himself as well as others."

Allen's 23 points came in large part due to an extremely efficient seven-of-nine from the floor, also snatching five rebounds while adding a trio of assists as well.

Jasper was the only other Bulldog to finish in double figures against the Eagles, totaling 15 of his own points as well.

A junior that sits one grade above Allen, Jasper closed out 2025 having reached double figures in four of Nash Central's last five games, peaking at the right time as conference play draws nearer for the Bulldogs.

"I think we're starting to turn a corner in terms of what we're trying to do," said Thomas, not just of this season's roster

-- but of his entire tenure leading the Nash Central program.

The Bulldogs have already swept longtime foe Southern Nash this season, and came the

closest the team has come to beating rival Northern Nash since Central last clipped the Knights in 2016.

Central got another crack at Rocky Mount on Wednesday, one that was much anticipated after dropping their final contest of 2025 to the Gryphons.

"We've got to improve our physicality on the boards," said Thomas after the Bulldogs' Dec. 30 loss to Rocky Mount - a game where Central was outrebounded 37-23 by the traditionally large Gryphons.

"They play to their strengths and they rebound well, they don't lean on the stuff they're not good at," remarked Thomas.

"They've got size and we don't, and they found ways to attack our weaknesses."

Nash Central will face Rocky Mount for a third time a little later this season on January

28, but not before kicking off conference play on Friday, January 16 at home against Louisburg.

This will be Thomas' first year guiding the Bulldogs through the Quad County Conference, with Bunn likely to be the league's favorite. Central will take part in home-and-homes against American Leadership Academy - Johnston, Bunn, Louisburg, Roanoke Rapids and Wake Prep Academy, with nonconference play wrapping up on the 28th against Rocky Mount.

Before kicking off league play the Bulldogs do have one game left outside of its league schedule, with Southeast Collegiate Prep Academy slated to visit the gymnasium at Nash Central today.

Tipoff between the Bulldogs and Trojans is slated for a 7:30 p.m. start time, with the game set to begin just after the conclusion of the girls game.

NC GIRLS

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over host Cleveland before dropping the championship game to Corinth Holders.

"I still think we are finding our identity," said longtime Nash Central head coach Terri Cash.

"The energy they play with has been good, we have taken a few unexpected bumps but have responded well. They do a good job of focusing on the things they can control."

A significant portion of that energy has come from Central's freshman class, most notably the duo of A'dia Cash and Harmony Dupree, both of which are currently averaging double figures in scoring with Cash the team leader at 16 points per outing.

Cash is of course the daughter of Central's head coach and the younger sister of former Bulldog legendary star Montre Cash.

The first-year Lady Bulldog has had an extremely impressive start to her high school career, finishing in double figures in all but one of Nash Central's first nine games, including three performances of 20 points or more.

"It's a blessing to be able to coach A'dia," said her mother and head coach.

"Hands down she is the most competitive person I know."

Cash finished with 21 points -- one point shy of her career high - in the team's first round game against West Johnston High School, following that up with 15-point and nine-point showings in the event's final two rounds.

Outside of Cash and Dupree, Jakayla Gay and Jayden Baggett are each currently averaging double figures as well,

with Baggett posting a team-high 18 against Cleveland while Gay, has finished with double digit scoring margins in seven of the team's nine games.

The combination of Gay and Baggett's experience paired with Cash and Dupree's youth has been a fun one to watch early in the season and was part of the team's success at the John Jacobs event.

"They both play extremely hard and are competitive," said Coach Cash of her two star freshmen. "I think they take pressure off of our returners by being a viable option."

Of course, there's still some growing to be done by the Lady Bulldog squad, as evidenced by the team's 41-27 loss in the event's championship game.

"Nothing that game was easy," said Cash, who was very complimentary of Corinth Holders' performance.

"At the end of the day we still have to put the ball in the hole," which Central inevitably struggled to do.

Despite the title-game loss, the Lady Bulldogs have turned heads around the area and played arguably its biggest game of the year on Wednesday night, a short road trip to county foe Rocky Mount in a matchup of two of the area's top girls teams.

Nash Central returns to action on its home floor today as the Lady Bulldogs play host to Southeast Collegiate Prep Academy.

Tipoff between Central and the Lady Trojans is slated for 6 p.m. in the gymnasium on the campus of Nash Central High School.

