

SOUTHERN NASH GIRLS BASKETBALL  
BOYKIN'S BUNCH



SOUTHERN NASH'S ALIYAH CROLL BATTLES FOR A BOARD  
(Photos Submitted by Carl Copeland)

Ladybirds enjoying a special campaign

By CHANCE PUCKETT  
Correspondent

STANHOPE -- The most successful season in recent history for the Southern Nash Ladybird girls basketball team kept moving in the right direction last Friday evening as head coach Tevin Boykin's squad topped conference rival Northern Nash, 53-36, at the SNHS Gymnasium.

The win matched Southern's win total from last year's 10-13 campaign, with the Ladybirds improving to 10-6 overall and 4-2 in Big East Conference play. "Since taking over, it has been



NORTHERN NASH'S RAMSEY HARRIS



SOUTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL KEY RETURNEE ISAAH BATTLE

HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL SKEDS

From Staff Reports

NASH COUNTY -- Hard to believe, but the start of the Nash County high school baseball season is a little more than one month away. That's because the campaign will kick off February 25 when Nash Central travels to Rocky Mount. Also on that day, Northern Nash will host the Princeton Bulldogs at the NNHS Baseball Field. and Southern Nash will travel to SouthWest Edgecombe. Here are the schedules for Nash Central, Northern Nash and Southern Nash (home games are listed in CAPS):

- NASH CENTRAL
- February 25 -- at Rocky Mount
  - February 26 -- at North Pitt
  - February 27 -- ROCKY MOUNT
  - March 3 -- NORTHERN NASH
  - March 6 -- at Northern Nash
  - March 10 -- at South Central
  - March 13 -- SOUTH CENTRAL
  - March 17 -- LOUISBURG\*
  - March 19 -- at Louisburg\*
  - March 20 -- at Wilson Fike
  - March 24 -- at Roanoke Rapids\*
  - March 26 -- ROANOKE RAPIDS\*

See SKEDS, Page 2B



NORTHERN NASH'S CHRISTIAN BARNES FLOATS IN THE PAINT FOR TWO POINTS  
(Photos Submitted by Carl Copeland)

RETURN TO FORM  
NNHS nabs bounceback win

By CHANCE PUCKETT  
Correspondent

STANHOPE -- The Northern Nash boys basketball team bounced back into the win column last Friday after first loss of the season just three days earlier, announcing its frustration in a big way by knocking off longtime rival Southern Nash 74-28 in Big East Conference action at the historic SNHS Gymnasium. The Knights outscored the Firebirds by a whopping 45-9 margin over the game's second and third periods, ending the contest with four players in double figures including a game-high 15 from freshman Quantay James. James, currently the team's



NORTHERN NASH'S JAH'MARZEA WILLIAMS

See NN-SN BOYS, Page 2B



NASH CENTRAL'S JAKAYLA GAY IN TRAFFIC  
(Photos Submitted by Meryn Johnson)

Nash Central opens league play with a victory at home

From Staff Reports

ROCKY MOUNT -- Due to a lack of past results to go on, it's hard to determine at this point how the girls basketball standings will eventually play out in the newly formed Quad County Conference. But rest assure of this nugget

-- the Nash Central Lady Bulldogs will certainly be in the mix for one of the top spots in the league, if not the championship. The young-but-emerging Lady Bulldogs added another impressive chapter to

See NC GIRLS, Page 2B



## NN-SN BOYS

continued from page 1B

leading scorer, has been a massive addition in his first year with the Northern Nash program. His 15-point performance on Friday night was his 14th outing of the season that resulted in double figures, maintaining an impressive run of consistency as well.

James' seven-of-eight (88%) mark from the field on Friday night boosted his season-long shooting average to 54%, making him one of three Knights seeing high-volume time on the floor and matching that with high-efficiency at a shooting percentage of 50% or higher.

"Quantay brings a lot of skills for a freshman which makes us that much more effective on offense," said Northern Nash head coach Henry Drake. "He is still growing into the role as a varsity player."

As a team, Northern continued that trend en route to its 15th win of the year, registering a 22-of-42 (52%) mark from inside-the-arc as the Knights started what they hope is a new winning streak.

Aside from James, Jamiere Harris (12), Christian Barnes (11) and Jah'Marzea Williams (10) each reached double figures in scoring as well, righting the ship after dropping a 74-61 decision to Hunt at home on Jan. 13.

"Our message after Tuesday was simple, to play with emergency, effort and excitement for 32 minutes of the game on both sides of the ball," remarked Drake.

As for Southern Nash, the team's fifth straight loss dropped the Firebirds to a 2-15 record in the legendary Sterling Leonard's first season as head coach.

Southern has yet to win a game since the calendar flipped to 2026, now sitting at 0-6 in league play with Jaden Hartsfield, who was anticipated to be the team's best player as a junior, having



SOUTHERN NASH'S DAYSHON SANDERS

recently transferred to Wake Forest High School.

"Coach Leonard understands coaching 14-18 year olds in high school," said Drake of his Southern Nash counterpart. "He will be fine and his program will be okay."

A young team, though, the Firebirds have just one senior on their roster, Zavion Cooke.

Leonard's squad is expected to return its two leading scorers, Dayshon Sanders and Jeremiah Battle in 2026-27, and with another year of Leonard's leadership are primed to have a breakout season a year from now.

This week, though, Southern faced West Johnston on Wednesday and will head to Southern Wayne for the second leg of its home-and-home

against the Saints on Friday.

The Firebirds faced the Saints back on Dec. 12, falling by just three points in their closest game thus far amongst league matchups.

As for Northern Nash, the Knights faced archrival Rocky Mount on Tuesday evening and will now reset for the second half of its Big East Conference schedule on Friday as well, hosting Fike.

Northern faced the Golden Demons for the first time on Dec. 19, erasing a seven-point fourth-quarter deficit in a 70-60 win that opened up the team's conference slate.

Tipoff for both Northern Nash's tilt against Fike as well as Southern Nash's trip to Southern Wayne is slated for 7:30 p.m.

## NN-SN GIRLS

continued from page 1B

my goal to improve in the win column each year," said third-year Southern Nash head coach Tevin Boykin, a former Firebird hoopster in his own right.

"I challenged the girls by setting a goal to win at least 14 this year."

Boykin has helped guide Southern to eight and ten wins, respectively, over his first two seasons leading the Ladybird program, taking the school to new heights in girls basketball. This season's goal of 14 victories would be the most for the program in 20+ years, with its most recent high being 12 during the 2022-23 campaign, Jordan Bass' final year as head coach.

More specifically, Boykin has helped preside over Southern winning eight of its last ten games against Northern, a streak that comes after the Ladybirds went 16 years without a victory over their longtime rivals in the Lady Knights.

The latest meeting in the series between the two county foes saw Southern Nash outscore Northern in each of the game's four quarters, including a 20-9 Ladybird advantage in the final period that turned a six-point, two-possession Southern Nash lead heading into the fourth frame into a commanding 17-point victory.

"In the first half we were very passive offensively," remarked Boykin of his offense, whose second-half effort resulted in the Ladybirds ending the contest with 50 or more points for the seventh time this season.

"The latter part of the third quarter and the first three minutes of the fourth quarter, our aggressiveness paid off."

Boykin's squad was led, as they have been for most of the season, by senior guard Terri Richardson who finished with 18 points on an impressive six-of-12 (50%) from the field, while junior Leila Gonzalez registered 15 points of her own.



SOUTHERN NASH'S LEILA GONZALEZ

Richardson's 18-point mark was the highest for the fourth-year Ladybird in any conference game this season, whereas Gonzalez's 15 matched her previous league high while she also recorded a career-best three bucketed three-pointers from beyond the arc.

Gonzalez also accounted for six steals while passing out a career-high five assists, with her and Richardson's impressive offensive night aided by eight points and nine rebounds from Cassie Sanders, six points from Leighyah "LJ" Hinnant, four more from Aliyah Croll and a two-point bucket from Amaya Harris.

As for Northern Nash, senior Maliyah Johnson led the way for the Lady Knights with a team-best 14 points, with Ramsey Harris following second in line with six.

Northern suffered its sixth-straight loss on Tuesday evening at the hands of league favorite

Rocky Mount, with the Lady Knights falling to 4-12 on the season and 1-5 in Big East play.

Longtime head coach Grover Battle and his squad will look for a reset as they begin the second leg of their conference slate on Tuesday, Jan. 27, with Northern set to host Fike, who the team picked up its lone league win against on Dec. 19.

As for Southern Nash, the Ladybirds took part in the first of four straight scheduled road games on Wednesday evening at West Johnston, the team's final nonconference game of the regular season.

Weather-permitting, Southern is slated for a road trip to Southern Wayne this Friday before a pair of games at C.B. Aycock and Fike next week.

Tipoff of both Northern's home tilt against Fike as well as the Ladybirds' voyage to Southern Wayne is slated for 6 p.m.

## SKEDS

continued from page 1B

- March 31 -- BUNN HIGH SCHOOL \*
  - April 2 -- at Bunn High School\*
  - April 4 -- at First Flight
  - April 6 -- HICKORY HIGH SCHOOL
  - April 7 -- at Manteo High School
  - April 14 -- at WAKE PREP\*
  - April 16 -- WAKE PREP\*
  - April 17 -- WILSON FIKE
  - April 21 -- AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY OF JOHNSTON COUNTY\*
  - April 23 -- at American Leadership Academy of Johnston County\*
  - April 27 -- at Wilson Hunt
  - April 30 -- at Southern Nash
  - -- Denotes Quad County Conference Games
- NORTHERN NASH**
- February 25 -- PRINCETON HIGH SCHOOL
  - February 27 -- at East Wake
  - March 3 -- at Nash Central
  - March 6 -- NASH CENTRAL
  - March 9 -- GREENE CENTRAL
  - March 12 -- at Wilson Fike\*
  - March 13 -- MIDDLE CREEK
  - March 17 -- CB AYCOCK\*
  - March 19 -- at Southern Wayne\*
  - March 24 -- WILSON HUNT\*
  - March 26 -- at South-



NASH CENTRAL'S WILLIE LANGLEY IS A QUALITY HUMAN BEING

- ern Nash\*
- March 31 -- ROCKY MOUNT\*
  - April 4-7 -- at Pitt County Classic (Pairings and Times TBA)
  - April 14 -- WILSON FIKE\*
  - April 16 -- at CB Aycock\*
  - April 21 -- SOUTHERN WAYNE HIGH SCHOOL\*
  - April 23 -- at Wilson Hunt\*
  - April 28 -- SOUTHERN NASH\*
  - April 30 -- at Rocky Mount\*
  - \* -- Denotes Big East Conference Games
- SOUTHERN NASH**
- February 25 -- at SouthWest Edgecombe High School
  - February 26 -- ROLESVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
  - March 3 -- WASHINGTON
  - March 5 -- at Clayton
  - March 10 -- SOUTHERN WAYNE\*
  - March 12 -- at CB Aycock\*
  - March 13 -- at Sanderson
  - March 17 -- WILSON FIKE\*
  - March 19 -- at Wilson Hunt\*
  - March 24 -- at Rocky Mount\*
  - March 26 -- NORTHERN NASH\*
  - March 27 -- at Bunn High School
  - March 31 -- EAST WAKE
  - April 2 -- at Southern Wayne\*
  - April 6 -- at Richmond Senior
  - April 14 -- CB AYCOCK\*
  - April 16 -- at Wilson Fike\*
  - April 21 -- WILSON HUNT\*
  - April 23 -- ROCKY MOUNT\*
  - April 28 -- at Northern Nash\*
  - April 30 -- NASH CENTRAL
  - \* -- Denotes Big East Conference Games

## NC GIRLS

continued from page 1B

their storybook season last Friday when they opened QCC action with a 64-25 home decision over Louisburg at the historic Dawg Pound on the NCHS campus.

These teams aren't necessarily total strangers to each other -- they were former rivals in the Big East Conference for a few years, and they met last season in the opening round of the state playoffs.

Nash Central won that important event, and notched another win over the Lady Warriors last Friday behind a whopping 21 points from frosh phenom A'dia Cash, who also came through with nine assists, five rebounds and four steals.

Cash wasn't the only ninth-grader who was an impact performer as Harmony Dupree was also sharp with 12 points and 16 boards.

Senior veteran JaKayla Gay was another passenger on the double-double train as she collected 15 points and 12 rebounds.

One other Lady Bulldogs notched double figures in scoring-- Jayden Baggett with 16 points as four Central standouts contributed at least 12 points.

Central started quickly as the Lady Bulldogs surged to a 16-6 lead after one quarter -- and thar margin improved to an insurmountable 36-11 at intermission.

"Louisburg did a good job of scouting us, but



NCHS FRESHMAN HARMONY DUPREE

I thought we adjusted well," said NCHS veteran head coach Terri Cash.

Tuesday night, NCHS upped its league mark to 2-0 to go with a convincing 71-17 conquest at Roanoke Rapids.

A'dia Cash led the way once again with 20 points, while teammates Dupree (11), Gay (11) and Malana Richwine (10) also reached double figures in the scoring column.

Central will have an expected challenge today on the road against the Bunn Ladycats -- another familiar foe.

Like NCHS, the Ladycats spent the past four years in the ultra-competitive Big East Conference.

"We hope to finish at the top of the conference," Coach Cash said. "We know this will not be an easy task. Everything ramps up in conference play."