

Knights trail early but use big second quarter to take control at halftime in big win:

Ontario Christian: 12-27-16-17=72 (9-1 Overall, 1-0 Ambassador League) #2 D4A

Woodcrest Christian: 14-10-6-13=43 (4-4 Overall, 0-1 Ambassador League) Unranked D4A

By: Derryl Trujillo

Inland Sports Senior Writer

Riverside, CA

Ontario Christian boys basketball coach Mike Fischer isn't one for putting a lot of stock in the initial SCIBCA (Southern California Interscholastic Basketball Coaches Association Rankings). That being said if you were to watch his Knights team the ingredients are certainly there for a deep run in postseason play. After taking an early lead the Knights found themselves trailing but used a combined 2nd & 3rd quarter of 43-16 to take control en route to a 72-43 road win Tuesday evening in Riverside. The victory finishes a stretch of ten consecutive road games to begin 2018.

The Knights led 10-0 early before a basket from Woodcrest Christian's Nathan Crowley ended the shut out. Two more field goals from Crowley & one from Jeremy Flye made it 12-8 Ontario Christian with 2:10 left in the opening quarter. With 38.4 seconds left till quarter break the Royals took a lead at 14-12 as Crowley found his way to the rim and converted a three point play. He had seven of his team high fifteen points in the opening eight minutes.

Ontario Christian's lead didn't reach ten points until a breakaway layup from Dylan Haggma ,who had 14 of his game high 22 points in the first half, gave them a 32-22 lead with 3:15 left till halftime. On the next possession William Mouw hit a deep three pointer stretching their lead to 35-22 and he also had a tip in with 25 seconds left making it 39-24 at half.

When trailing by fifteen or more points the key is to get that margin back to ten or less as soon as possible. That didn't happen for the Royals as Ontario Christian was able to turn a 15 point halftime lead into a 25 point margin at 55-30 after winning the third 16-10. Mouw and Julian Alvarez combined for 11 of those 16 points. In the fourth Ontario Christian's lead fluctuated between a 20 & 30 point margin as both sides began to sub late with this game's outcome no longer in doubt.

Ontario Christian's guys will have played their first ten games on the road winning tournaments at Garden Grove (Four City Classic) and Webb along with recording a two point loss at Glendora. Fischer remarked about the nomadic start to their season "We've been kind of road warriors to start the year but credit to our guys for supporting the volleyball team and coach Liebhart during a magical run thru sectional and state postseason play. We're so proud of those girls and want to carry that success and culture into the basketball season."

Fischer and his team attended the Lady Knights state volleyball final against Presentation knowing they'd have to bow out if that match went to a fifth set as they were in a tournament final themselves at Garden Grove (Four City) later on that afternoon. He was very complimentary of how his guys came out and played in that championship game after just witnessing a state title game themselves.

On Tuesday the Knights got off to a 10-0 lead early but found themselves trailing 14-12 after eight minutes. Fischer said about the end of that opening quarter "Give all the credit to Woodcrest Christian's staff and players for executing on both ends late but we also got sloppy late in that quarter. In the second and third quarters we were able to buckle down and get some stops which gave us the opportunity to start running and pushing the ball down court."

Of the early postseason rankings Fischer also went on and said "It's way too early to know if that ranking is justified or not. All I'm telling the guys is to stay humble and hungry."

After defeating Jurupa Valley (#11-4AA) on Saturday in their tournament final Royals coach Eric Strano was hopeful his squad could compete with Ontario Christian. After the loss he said via text message "We definitely did not play our best tonight and there's a lot of room for improvement going forward."