

Lady Knights complete opening stretch of road games with win at Woodcrest Christian:

Varsity Girls-

Ontario Christian: 10-11-14-4=39 (8-1 Overall, 1-0 Ambassador League) #7-4A

Woodcrest Christian: 0-5-10-7=22 (3-3 Overall, 0-1 Ambassador League) #5-5A

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If you asked all eight Ambassador League girls head basketball coaches whether it felt weird or not to be playing a league opener on December 4th I'm sure every one of them would unanimously answer yes. For Ontario Christian coach Danielle Jorgenson the start of their season meant Lady Knights basketball had to roll with some different practice times and even going off campus to get practice time as the volleyball team made their historic run. An experienced core of returners took their lumps in the Glendora Summer League and has not so far let the nomadic start to their season phase them. That stretch of travel finished Tuesday night with a 39-22 victory to open up Ambassador League play at Woodcrest Christian.

Both teams were cold offensively to get things going in quarter #1. A field goal off a post entry from Hayley Kline was the only scoring until roughly two minutes remaining. Taryn Mouw hit a three pointer from the left wing while Deauna Houston and Mikayla Campbell each also connected on field goal attempts. It was 10-0 after a quarter as the Royals struggled to find any kind of offensive flow.

Nicole Robitzer got Woodcrest Christian scoring going with a three point make which hit every part of the rim at 6:02 remaining till halftime. A putback from Ryleigh Carricaburu made it 10-5 Lady Knights shortly thereafter. Then a three point make from Taryn Mouw plus Mariam Martinez' putback out of a loose ball scrum restored the lead to double digits at 15-5 with two minutes till intermission. Another three pointer from Mouw plus a Maddy Martinez field goal and one free throw from Jordan Mason made it 21-5 Lady Knights at the halftime break. From there Ontario Christian was never seriously threatened over the remaining sixteen minutes as they scored just enough to keep Woodcrest Christian from making a run at them late.

Knights coach Danielle Jorgenson was pleased with the league opening win saying "Wins on the road in Ambassador League play are all great wins. But now we turn to a Linfield Christian squad with a pretty good amount of offensive firepower that we're going to have to figure out how to stop."

One of the toughest things for Jorgenson and her team has been playing the role of nomad between early & late practices (due to volleyball's state tournament run) in addition to being on the road for their first nine games. About the lack of practice time and traveling these last couple

of weeks she remarked “For us the most difficult part of volleyball's run was just everything being in a constant state of flux in terms of where and when we'd be practicing and yet trying to be supportive of their run and what they were trying to accomplish.”

When I asked the third year coach about how weird it was to be playing a league opener in December's first week she remarked “The season crept up on us and I don't feel like we're where we need to be yet because there just hasn't been that opportunity to teach. What's sustaining us right now is having spent the summer at Glendora High School's league. We took our lumps against the Centennial's, Bishop Amat's and Glendora's but knew it would be beneficial to get some kids minutes they sorely needed, especially with practice time as it turned out being so precious.”

Lady Knights standouts Cassandra Gishwiller & Taryn Mouw also chatted about their start to 2018:

Gishwiller remarked “I'd say it's been a bit of a bumpy road having to find different places to practice and running around crazy and having people come later or earlier but when it comes to tip off we work really well together as a team.”

About their loss to Temecula Valley in the Hesperia Christian tournament finals Mouw said “That loss certainly exposed some weaknesses for us early on in the season that we have been working on correcting in practice. We know we'll be better off having played a team like that in the long run.”

When asked about the player's perspective on starting league play in December's first Tuesday and if it at all is odd Gishwiller said “It kind of does feel weird. We were saying how this season feels different because the timing of everything is a bit earlier. Also because our volleyball team went so far and we were involved in supporting them the entire way. It's been an adjustment and their momentum has brought a lot of energy to our team to see what we can accomplish in their footsteps.”

Mouw remarked about the opportunity to play on her birthday “I was definitely excited to see that we got to play on my birthday. It was most definitely a great birthday getting to share this one with my basketball family.”

And about getting to finally play at home Friday the sophomore said “It's going to feel amazing. The home feel is just so nice. All of our friends and family can finally come watch us play without having to drive to all points in Southern California. We're comfortable in there and excited to open the home slate.”

The senior co-captain said about Tuesday's win and their early offensive struggles “We sometimes do have trouble putting the ball in the hole but our defense translates into offense

and that gets things rolling for us. There's a good group here that is determined to build off last year's quarterfinal run and show that we can do it on the basketball side of things too.”