

Lash MVP Jeralds goes One-on-One

I remember the first time that I saw West Forsyth junior varsity guard Darion Jeralds play basketball. It was only a year ago, during last year's Lash/Chronicle Tournament. I still remember looking onto the court and thinking to myself, "This squad (West JV) looks like a miniature version of the varsity Titan team."

Darion played the part of Chris Paul. I'm not the only person who instantly thinks of Paul and the Titan squads he was a part of after watching Darion on the court with his teammates. He plays the part well, and he embraces the comparisons to Paul. In certain ways he's just like Chris. Darion's constantly setting up teammates with great passes in scoring position. He also does a good job with helping his teammates get better. That's all Jeralds seems to care about: helping his teammates.

Darion doesn't have to put up big numbers to feel good after a game. He said that he'd be just as happy if a couple of his teammates got the numbers, and they all left the gym with the "W."

He'll also light up the scoreboard when he needs to. With Reynolds making a run on the Titans late in the championship game of the Lash/Chronicle Tournament last week, Jeralds put the team on his back and helped ice the win with some great ball handling through the Demon press and a couple timely free throws.

Darion and I sat down earlier this week to talk about his play in the tournament, basketball, his hobbies and Chris Paul. Darion handled his first interview well. He was well aware of the fact that he was the first nonvarsity, non-college or nonprofessional athlete to go One-on-One. Just like any other test in his life, Darion passed and handled the pressure with ease.

Anthony: What's going on, Darion?

Darion: Nothing much. I'm fine. How are you doing?

Anthony: (Smiles.) I'm good. I am just trying to enjoy this holiday season.

Darion: (Smiles.) OK.

Anthony: Now you got the MVP honors for the Lash/Chronicle Tournament last week. How special was that for you to take



Darion Jeralds, sophomore point guard for West Forsyth, was named MVP for the Lash/Chronicle Tournament.

home that award?
Darion: (Smiles.) That was very special. It really felt good to win that award, you know. All the hours in the gym paid off. It let me know that I was doing the right thing by going to the gym and not to parties. I'm usually in the gym on Friday and Saturday nights, when my friends are out hanging out. That lets me know that I'm on the right track.

Anthony: So, you don't hang out that much?
Darion: No, not much.
Anthony: What do you do when you do find yourself out somewhere?
Darion: I like to go to the movies sometimes, and I go to the mall and hang out with my friends. But most of the time I'm at home watching basketball games or some kind of sports.
Anthony: Do you have a girl right now?
Darion: (Smiles.) Not really. I have a friend. (Both laugh.) Not a girlfriend.
Anthony: All right. I know

that you hear the comparisons of you and Chris (Paul). How does that make you feel to hear people compare you to him? Is it a lot of pressure, or do you use that as a tool to make you better.
Darion: You have to like it

I can't shot (both laugh), but I like to take it to the basket. I'm not a pure shooter, but if I have the open shot, I will knock it down. (Smiles.) Trust me on that.

Anthony: All right. Now you and I spoke before the tournament, and I must admit that you were the most confident guy to play. (Both laugh.) Needless to say that you pretty much expected to win the Lash/Chronicle tourney.
Darion: Yes, sir. We were a very confident team. A couple teams made us struggle a little bit, but I think that helped my team come through. It also helped the team bond and come together. I'm happy that we came out with those wins.
Anthony: The varsity guys represented in the Frank Spencer. Are you guys trying to put your stamp of excellence in Winston-Salem for basketball?
Darion: I hope so. Our varsity is very special even though they've had a couple of tough games this year. I think they'll finish the season strong. Chris (Paul)

One-on-One with Anthony Hill

when people compare you to a player who is as great as Chris. It does make me want to work harder when I hear the comparisons. I'd like to be better than Chris, if that's possible.

Anthony: What's the best part of your game?
Darion: I think our games are similar. I think we both have great leadership skills, and that's probably the best part of my game. I do a good job, leading the team and encouraging them to play harder.
Anthony: What about shooting? Are you a good shooter?
Darion: Most people say that

definitely put us on the map, but coach David Laton runs a great program all the way down to coach (Tommy) Witt. West is a very special school, and I'm happy to be a part of the program here.

Anthony: Tell me what a day with Darion is usually like?
Darion: (Smiles.) I like to play video games sometimes, but I'm not really that type of person. My friends always tell me that I should buy this or get a PS2. I still have a DreamCast. (Both laugh.) I don't play video games that much. I don't find them that interesting. I like to draw. I consider myself an artist.

Anthony: Oh yeah?
Darion: Yes, sir. I have some artwork around the school. I've also been in competition around the county.

Anthony: Do you like to sketch more than playing basketball?
Darion: (Smiles.) No, not by a long shot, but it definitely eases my mind sometimes.

Anthony: Let's move on to something else. (Pause.) Who's the best point guard in the NBA?
Darion: I really feel that Baron Davis is. I love to watch him play. I think he's a special talent. He's got the all-around game. He worked on his 3-point shot during the off-season. If I was putting together an All-NBA team, Baron Davis would be my point guard.

Anthony: Over Jason Kidd?
Darion: Yes, over Jason Kidd.

Anthony: OK. Who's the best point guard in college?
Darion: I like to watch Raymond Felton. I like the way he pushes the ball up the court. He pushes the ball like no other. It's like candy for my eyes. To see a point guard run the court like he does. He's in a battle with Chris right now. Wake beat Carolina, and Chris has court vision like no other. So it's between Raymond and Chris.

Anthony: Has it surprised you to see Chris play as well as he has so early for Wake?
Darion: I'd have said that it has. I expected him to be an all-star, but not this quick. The best part about Chris is the way he

Warthogs will have tryouts next month for female dancers

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The Winston-Salem Warthogs are ready to add a little more pep in their step for the new season.

The organization announced it will have a Lady Warthogs Pep Squad during the 2004 season. The squad will perform during every home game Thursday through Saturday (31 games total) April 15 through Sept. 3. The squad will perform dance routines during the games, distribute sling-shot T-shirts and other items into the stands, accompany players and Wally the Warthog on community appearances, and much more.

"This all came from squad coordinator Sarcanda Bellissimo," said Alan York, director of broadcasting for the Warthogs. "We think that it will be a lot of fun to watch. Of course, it will be in good taste. A lot of kids come to the Warthog games, but it will still be entertaining. This is the first time we've ever had something like this."

Tryouts for the squad will be held Jan. 24 from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Hitting Zone, 1612 S. Stratford Road, across from Hanes Mall. Females must be at least 18 years old to try out, and there is a \$10 registration fee.

"We really feel good about this," York said. "Right now it's still in its infant stages, but things are coming along quite nicely. I think the fans will love to watch the girls perform. It might even bring more fans to the games."

For more information on the Pep Squad, contact Sarcanda Bellissimo at (336) 759-2233 ext. 106. Winston-Salem will play its first home game April 12 at 7 p.m. against Myrtle Beach.

See One-on-One on B6

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