

SPORTS

Crusaders Off To Fast Start- 15 Wins, 4 Losses And Rolling!!!

The Belmont Abbey College Crusaders basketball team is off to one of its fastest starts in recent history. The Crusaders possess a 15-4 record, the best since Coach Bobby Hussey's arrival at Belmont Abbey College.

Following the stunning upset the Crusaders gave to Old Dominion, they won three straight, including their first ever in the WBTV Carolina Classic.

BAC 76, Livingstone 70. David Kershaw poured in 20 points to lead the Crusaders in this one. Lawrence Carter added 18 and Billy Holmgaard added 15.

BAC 86, USC-Spartanburg 76. Five Crusaders were in double figures in this one, led by sophomore Mike Littlejohn with 16 points, Holmgaard with 15, Jack Campbell with 14, Glenn Tambon with 12 and Carter with 11.

BAC 91, Barber-Scotia 75. This was a first round game in the WBTV Carolina Classic, and the first victory for the Crusaders in the short three-year history of the event which they host. Kershaw scored 26 points to lead Belmont Abbey College to victory and for the first time ever, into the tournament's second round.

BAC 75, Lenoir-Rhyne 84. This one went into overtime before the Crusader's rally came to an end. They had battled back, after trailing by nine at half time, 48-39. A last second shot by Carter that fell just short would have eliminated overtime all together. Lenoir Rhyne was the eventual runner-up to Gardner-Webb in the championship game of the Classic. Campbell scored 15 before fouling out to lead the Crusader's scoring attack.

BAC 75, Pfeiffer 72. The Crusaders trailed by ten at half time before buckling down. Two clutch free throws in the last minute of play by Carter and two more by Holmgaard gave the Crusaders third place in the Classic. Desmond Dennis scored 16 points as he returned to action, starting his first game of the season after being hampered by a back injury. The 16 points put him over the 1,000 point mark for his career at the Abbey.

BAC 113, Covenant College 76. All the Crusaders scored in this one. Kershaw scored 24 to lead, followed by Dennis with 21. Six other Crusaders were in double figures.

BAC 73, Gardner-Webb 77, the first game after Christmas break for Belmont Abbey College. The game was tied at 40 at half time. The Crusaders battled back to tie three times after trailing by at least ten in the second half. Dennis had one of the best games of his career with 26 points and 16 rebounds. Kershaw added 18 more points.

BAC 79, Catawba 77. This one went into overtime. Carter led the way for the Crusaders with 18 points; Littlejohn added 15, and Holmgaard and Dennis each scored 14 as Belmont Abbey College beat Catawba for the first time in history.

BAC 121, Castleton State 74. Seven Crusaders scored in double figures in this one, led by Littlejohn and Holmgaard with 18 each. Jimmy Crawford added 17, Glenn Tambon came off the bench to score 16, Kershaw added 14 and Dennis and Bobby Moran each scored 12. Every Crusader scored in the game.

BAC 81, Barber-Scotia 69. Crawford, playing in place of Dennis,



Coach Bobby Hussey gives instructions from the bench as Lawrence Carter and Billy Holmgaard look on.

who injured his thigh in the Castleton game, scored 23 points and hauled in 16 rebounds. Littlejohn also had a hot hand, pouring in 20 points.

BAC 82, USC-Spartanburg 66. Kershaw scored 22 points for Belmont Abbey College, and Littlejohn added 18 more to aid in the winning effort.

BAC 81, Atlantic Christian 60. Crawford scored 18 and hauled in 14 rebounds to lead the Crusaders. Holmgaard and Littlejohn added 14 each.

BAC 86, UNC Asheville 77. Holmgaard scored 25 points to lead the Crusaders. Carter added 19, including a perfect seven out of seven for the charity stripe in the second half.

BAC 97, Pfeiffer 82. Crawford continued his strong play with 22 points. Holmgaard added 19 before fouling out with five minutes remaining.

BAC 72, Augusta 75. This game snapped a seven game winning streak for the Crusaders. Holmgaard pumped in 21 in the losing effort. The Crusaders were previously unbeaten on the road.

The Belmont Abbey Crusaders got back on the win track Thursday night with a 76-68 victory over the Catawba Indians at the Crusader's Wheeler Center. Bill Holmgaard led all scorers with 22 points and hauled down 18 rebounds.

BAC 100 USC-Aiken 59

Victory No. 15 came at the hands of USC-Aiken as the Abbey hit the century mark. Five Crusaders scored in double figures. Mike Littlejohn paced the fast break Crusaders with 22 points. Billy Holmgaard had 19 and junior forward Jimmy Crawford 14.

Team Effort Produces Win

They may have to sit a few more rows back than usual, they may have to wait a few more minutes to get a coke at half-time and get out of the Wheeler Center parking lot after the game, but the Belmont Abbey basketball fans don't seem to mind the larger crowds because the Crusaders are winning! With 15 victories in the first 19 games, the Abbey is off to its best start in years.

Before the season, Coach Bobby Hussey stated it would be an "if" season. If things go the right way we would have a good season. Well, things are going very well and the fans are responding. The old A-B-B-E-Y cheer, missing the last few seasons, has come out of the closet and is part of the students' script of encouragement.

There are several factors which have contributed to the success of the team this year. Coach Hussey got "back to basics" with the team in pre-season practices and junior forward Jimmy Crawford says it has paid off. The former Charlotte Catholic High star feels that those early morning workouts in September has given the team more stamina. "In the fourth quarter we are still running hard and the other team is getting tired" commented Crawford.

With senior Desmond Dennis injured for most of the season, Crawford, sophomore Billy Holmgaard and freshman David Kershaw have picked up the slack in the front court. Junior transfer Lawrence Carter and Mike Littlejohn run the offense from the guard position with senior Bobby Moran ready for action off the bench.

Holmgaard, a Westfield, N.J. native, sees attitude and offensive flexibility as two keys to this year's performance. "Everyone has a good attitude about their role in the team concept. All the players are willing to pass the ball, but take the shot if they are open". Holmgaard also feels not many teams are able to play a fast break game and a slow down offense like the Abbey. "We can run when the situation calls for it or work a pattern offense when necessary."

A number of tough games remain to be played, but the Abbey playoff hopes are alive and well in Belmont.



DESMOND DENNIS

Desmond Dennis now has 1,088 career points. He has been hampered all season by a back injury and missed three recent games due to a groin muscle injury. He returned to action briefly in the game in Augusta and should return to regular action very soon.



The pictures above were taken during the January 4 clash with rival Gardner Webb in the Charlotte Coliseum (Left) Billy Holmgaard (35) fights for a rebound as Bobby Moran (10) looks on.

(Center) Desmond Dennis (53) connects with two of his 26 points as David Kershaw (44) and Mike Littlejohn (40) get into position. (Right) Jimmy Crawford (54) blocks shot by Earl Nesbit (10).