

LAMORINDA SPORTS

SMC Basketball Improving on Strong Start

By Michael Sakoda



Brad Waldow is central to the Gaels' success, averaging over 20 points per game. Photos Tod Fierner

The Saint Mary's men's basketball team (16-4, 8-1 WCC) is off to an unexpectedly hot start this year, despite some big changes in the roster.

This past week, the team bounced back from a 68-47 loss at No. 3 Gonzaga on Jan. 21 by beating Portland 74-64 on Jan. 23, notching their eighth conference win of the season.

"The reason we're in this position is our seniors have been great," said head coach Randy Bennett. "Garrett Jackson's turned himself into a player, and then Brad (Waldow) and Kerry (Carter) were ready to go."

Rounding out this year's starting five are senior transfers Aaron Bright (Stanford) and Desmond Simmons (Washington).

"Aaron and Des had to get adjusted," said Bennett. "But those five have been able to give us the confidence, the toughness, the leadership, the experience to be where we're at."

Saint Mary's opened the season winning five straight before losing to Boise State on Dec. 6. They squeaked

by Creighton 71-67 in overtime and then lost two straight to Northern Arizona and No. 20 St. John's. The team then rattled off nine straight wins before losing to Gonzaga.

No one's as surprised by the team's success as Bennett.

"Going into the season, I just didn't know," he said. "I knew we had some good talent, but I didn't know how it was all going to fit together, and we're not done yet."

After being named to the All-WCC Pre-Season team, Brad Waldow has earned WCC Player of the Week honors and emerged as one of the front runners for the Lou Henson Player of the Year Award, given to the nation's top player from a mid-major school.

The 6-foot-10-inch 270-pound forward is averaging 20.2 points per game (second in the WCC) and 9.9 rebounds per game (first in the WCC).

"What no one talks about is [Brad's] two and a half assists a game," said Bennett. "That's where I think he really stands out. The ball

goes through his hands and he makes a lot of decisions."

But for all the good, there's always room to improve, and Bennett knows his team's weaknesses as well as he knows its strengths.

"Defense," he said. "This team needs to improve that. We've gotten better, but we have another jump to go. We're a pretty good rebounding team, pretty good scoring team, but our shot selection is still something we're working through. The number one thing is to get that field goal percentage defense number down."

With nine games left in conference play, the Gaels sit in firm control of the No. 2 spot in the WCC, but it's a tough conference and the tides can turn at any moment.

"It will depend on these last games," said Bennett. "The big thing is if we keep improving through January and February. If we do, we're going to be a good team. If we stay the same, we'll be okay, but this team has room to improve."

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Mondays 5-6:30 PM

MATCH SCHEDULE

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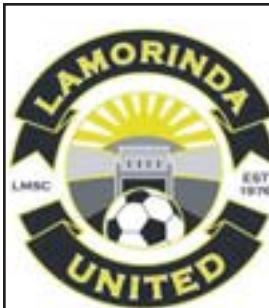
REGISTRATION

Details and form available at www.lafayettetennis.com

(Form is under 2015 Junior Team Tennis)

Questions?

Contact Sheena at 925-360-7051 or Hunter at 925-368-8882



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Lamorinda Soccer Club, one of the Top Clubs in Northern California, competing in the Elite NORCAL League, announces its try-out Schedule for ALL NEW & RETURNING PLAYERS.

NEW PLAYERS:

AGES	DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
U6-U8 Boys & Girls	1/9/2015	FRIDAY	4-5:30PM	WILDER 2
	1/10/2015	SATURDAY	10:45-12PM	
	2/7/2015	SATURDAY	10:45-12PM	
U9-U10 Boys & Girls	1/11/2015	SUNDAY	5-6:30PM	WILDER 2
	2/8/2015	SUNDAY	5-6:30PM	WILDER 2
U11- u12 Girls & Boys	1/10/2015	SATURDAY	9:15-10:45AM	WILDER 2
	2/8/2015	SUNDAY	6:30-8PM	WILDER 2

NEW & RETURNING PLAYERS:

AGES	DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
U13 Girls	2/16/2015	MONDAY	4-6PM	WILDER 2
U13 Girls	2/19/2015	THURSDAY	5:30-7PM	WILDER 2
U13 Boys	2/17/2015	TUESDAY	4-6PM	WILDER 1
U13 Boys	2/19/2015	THURSDAY	4-5:30PM	WILDER 1
U14 Girls	2/17/2015	TUESDAY	6-8PM	WILDER 2
U14 Girls	2/19/2015	THURSDAY	5:30-7PM	WILDER 2
U14 Boys	2/17/2015	TUESDAY	6-7:30PM	WILDER 2
U14 Boys	2/19/2015	THURSDAY	5:30-7PM	WILDER 2

Please visit www.Lamorindasc.com for more information



Senior Kerry Carter is a leader for the Gaels.

There will be a celebration of Bob Wilson on Jan. 28 from 7:30-8:30 p.m. in the Campolindo High School big gym. Bob Wilson, longtime Campolindo PE teacher, coach and athletic director, passed away on Dec.17.

See related story at: www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0822/Longtime-Athletic-Director-Remembered.html

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