

SVCC Repeats as National Champions

After losing four starters from the 2015 USA National Post Grad championship team, this year's Southside Virginia Community College basketball team on paper looked to be one in a rebuilding phase.

The inexperienced team struggled early playing a grueling schedule that included five road games against nationally ranked NJCAA programs. But the young SVCC team also showed some early potential, topping last year's NJCAA national champion, Richard Bland College, in an early season scrimmage and then shocking eighth-ranked and undefeated Bryant & Stratton College in December.

Only three players returned from last season, but that didn't stop any of them from believing that 2016 could also be a special year. "We wanted to repeat," said SVCC point guard Reggie Dennis, a former Highland-Springs HS speedster, who has drawn interest from several four-year colleges and will graduate with an Associate's Degree in General Studies in May. "I knew no one on any team could stop me and my guys because we are quick and strong. We played as a team and had confidence in each other that we would all play hard and play our roles to get another ring this season."

Anthony Harris, a former standout at Dinwiddie HS, who plans to continue his basketball career at Claflin University in the fall, said the three returners and mix of newcomers gave the team confidence that they could win it all again this season. "Through all of the ups and downs, we came together as the season went on," said Harris. "The players and coaches gave their all to repeat as national champions this year."

The confidence and resolve of these young men helped SVCC repeat as national champions after topping Faith Baptist (GA) 86-83 in the 2016 USA National Post-Grad title game in North Myrtle Beach, SC on March 5. SVCC went 4-0 in the national tournament, posting wins over Combine, Port City and Mt. Zion to reach the title game in the 24-team field.

Kiamonne Douglas, a former Petersburg HS standout and transfer from North Carolina Wesleyan, led SVCC with 27 points in the championship game while Harris scored 18 points and Dennis added 12.

"Winning the national championship means a lot to me because I was one of the team captains and leaders this year," said Harris. "I love my coaches and teammates and I am thankful for so many great memories that I will never forget."