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By Ed O'Leary
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Brantford's Kayla Santilli says she is "excited and pumped" about playing in the All Canada Classic girls basketball game Tuesday at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto.

Santilli, a Grade 12 student at St. John's College, will suit up for the East in a 3:55 p.m. game against the West which features many of the best Canadian high school players.

There also will be an All Canada Classic boys game played at 5:55 p.m. that will feature many Canadian players who have been playing their high school basketball in the United States.

Santilli, a daughter of Rob and Lori Santilli and a member of the Ontario Under-17s last year, is familiar with many of her teammates.

*"You just go and play. You get to know the chemistry of everyone."
Kayla Santilli*

"When you go (for workouts), it's not like you're practising," Santilli said. "You just go and play. You get to know the chemistry of everyone."

Santilli admits that Tuesday's game will be serious business for some players.

"You just go and show off but some of them will be trying to impress national scouts and coaches for Team Canada," she said.

"For me, it's friends and family, to show them that I'm capable of playing at that level. The biggest thing for me is to show that all the hard work pays off at the end."

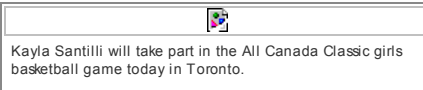
In the fall, Santilli will attend Brock University, where she'll major in child and youth studies.

She also plans to play for the Badgers basketball team, joining former St. John's stars Jessica DelSignore and Andrea Polischuk.

In fact, the 2011-12 Badgers have scheduled their first training camp for this weekend under head coach Si Khouviseth.

"I'm excited but nervous," Santilli said. "Once the first training camp is over I'm sure the nerves won't be as bad."

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