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OTN does the 2011 All-Canada Classic

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This photo of a smiley Negus Webster-Chan was taken by OTN's John Bennett. So were all the other photos in this post.

On Tuesday night, the 2011 All-Canada Classic took place at the Air Canada Centre. The ACC at the ACC! [John](#) and I were there to see the top Canadian high school players and we had a conversation about it.

James Herbert: So, ummm, NEGUS! MVP! MVP!

John Bennett: Yes, NEGUUUUUUUSSS!!!! I was excited to see him play and he completely exceeded my expectations.

JH: You mean your expectations were lower than a 23-point first half? His name is Negus Webster-Chan, you should have seen this coming.

JB: If my expectations were based on just a player's name, then I think we both know who should have had a 100 point game.

JH: Kenny Fred Cherry?

JB: HELL YES!



JH: Back to Negus, though. Dude was hitting pull-up threes and yapping afterward. SO MUCH YAPPING. You heard him talking to Sonny Weems, right?

JB: Yeah from what I saw/heard it all seemed to start with Sonny. He was talking before that but once the trash talk with Sonny started, he went off. Every time he hit one of those pull-ups he was pointing at Sonny and just egging him on.

JH: My favorite part of the Sonny thing is that Negus asked Sonny to follow him on Twitter after the game. [It worked!]

JB: HA! That's amazing. I'm guessing that he and Xavier aren't friends on Twitter.

JH: Xavier Rathan-Mayes? What makes you say that?

JB: Well as soon as he came on, Negus started to talk. I had a front row seat for their trash talk. The exchange went something like this (edited for the safety of children) — Negus: "I'm going to light you up." Xavier: "Not while I'm guarding you."



JH: Since when do you care about the safety of children?

JB: Since your guy Myck Kabongo lit up Kevin Pangos last year. I've been concerned for Kevin's ankles ever since.

JH: Yeah, Pangos didn't have a huge game last year or this year... and he's one of the best players in the country. What's up with him – is he just not an all-star game guy?

JB: It's tough. He's the top rated Canadian player in this class that still plays IN CANADA. I can't really fault him for staying, but I think it's had a serious impact on his development. Playing for Dr. Denison, he is one of the biggest guys on the floor. So he comes into these games and all of a sudden has to try and pick up other guard full-court rather and he's just not used to it.

JH: You saw a pretty special Pangos performance a couple of months back, yeah?

JB: Yeah, I took the subway up to the St. Mike's Invitational to see Vaughan play Denison and he was unbelievable. Scored 48 in the loss against the eventual winners of AAAA OFSSA and the #1 rated 2014 draft prospect in Andrew Wiggins... Offensively, I have no problems with his game – floaters, pullups, contested threes, and layups with contact. It was amazing to see him still get off threes with Wiggins' long arms in his face.

Defensively though, Denison plays a 2-3 zone, and it makes sense for them. THEY ARE NOT A BASKETBALL SCHOOL. But because of this, Pangos needs to play defensive center! Right in the middle of the paint. He didn't get to defend a guard that whole game.



JH: That's crazy. But in *this* game, he didn't do a hell of a lot offensively. Threw a couple oops to Anthony Bennett, though... and you know what? I kind of expected more from Bennett.

JB: Yeah you're right. Effective in the open floor but really faded into the background with all the athleticism from everyone else in the game. Anthony was just, ugh, a little weird to watch for me considering he's supposed to be the best Canadian prospect next year.

JH: You can see why, though. He's crazy-athletic and he has perimeter skills. I think I just wanted him to go inside more. He did a ridiculous left-handed windmill at the end of the game and it looked SO EASY. Made me wish I saw more aggression from him earlier on. Excited to see him play again.

JB: Agreed, he's freakishly athletic. Especially when you look at how 'thick' he is. The guy is just massive. I understand that he would make a huge impact on the inside, but that's also the knock on this guy. People think he can only be an undersized power forward if he makes the NBA, and with all the 3 point attempts, he clearly wants to prove everyone wrong.

JH: He was handling the ball in transition, too. As was the 6'10" Mr. Stefan Jankovic.

JB: Oh man, don't get me started on this guy. First time seeing him play and I'm fully sold. Right off the opening tip, he's guarded by the complete monster that is 7'5 Sim Bhullar. Instead of trying to show everyone a little toughness, he made Bhullar play to his strengths. He stayed on the outside and drilled a three to start the game. Great game from him, probably didn't want to let his Huntington Prep teammate Negus have all the fun.

JH: If I remember nothing else from this game, I'll remember Jankovic hitting a three-pointer from near halfcourt at the end of the first half. Off the glass. While getting fouled.

JB: Unreal.



JH: Anyway, you sat on the baseline taking pictures. Did you almost break anyone's ankle? If so, I'll have to kill you.

JB: There was a moment where I really did think I had ruined Kevin Thomas. He sort of got tangled up in the air and his momentum carried him towards my spot on the floor, where he tiptoed around my feet. That happened a few times but the Thomas moment, I thought, "Holy crap, what if he messed up an ankle or knee or whatever and he's done because he stepped on me?" I'd never thought I would be scared about someone else's health when I'm the one being stepped on, but it happened.

JH: Best picture you took?

JB: Well, that's sort of up in the air. Of the 400 plus pics there were a few I was really happy with.

JH: PICK ONE!

JB: It's probably this shot of Thomas up at the rim. I know he missed the dunk but it looks damn good.



WAIT! no maybe the one where Xavier had just said, "You won't score on me" to Negus before he inbounded the ball.



JH: Ugh, fine. You get to have two favorites.

JB: Six! The four pics from the girls' game when there was a loose ball and a ton of them ended up on the floor fighting for it. Great stuff James, great stuff.

JH: We should take this opportunity to congratulate the MVP of the girls' game, Lindsay Shotbolt. Wait, it's just now sinking in that the MVP's of these games were Negus Webster-Chan and Lindsay Shotbolt. Canada has the best-named basketball players.

JB: Clearly! That girls' game was great, most of the guys showed some support by watching a lot of it before they had to prep for their game. The ball movement was solid, and the defensive effort was off the charts. No easy baskets at all in half court sets.

JH: Physical game, too. Back to the dudes – who else stood out to you? I really liked Martin Dixon-Green, mostly because I enjoy the three-monocle when deployed directly in somebody's face and I enjoy reverse 360 dunks.

JB: Yeah, he was exciting to watch. I REALLY liked Naz Long. Same sort of winning mentality as his Findlay Prep teammate Myck Kabongo. After the McDonald's All-American game, Kabongo was visibly upset. As this game was closing in, Long took a HUGE charge and the West bench was chirping him for it because their teammate could have gotten hurt. But Naz just turned to them and said, "HEY, I want to WIN!"

JH: Scale of 1-10, how seriously did DeMar DeRozan and Sonny Weems take their roles as slam dunk contest judges?

JB: 2.

JH: Sounds about right.

JB: Although I did like Jamar Ergas. Still don't know why he was in the contest, though... since he wasn't part of the game.



JH: When you can involve a ninth grade dunking phenom, you do it. FINAL QUESTION: What do you want to see at next year's All-Canada Classic?

JB: More fans! People need to get out and support basketball in Canada!

JH: Good answer. It was a fun time, hope this event gets bigger and bigger. Like, Sim Bhullar big.



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