



Slam Dunk To The Beach Day One, Session Two Recap

The opening day of the return of Slam Dunk to the Beach is in the books. The second session began on Saturday with Saints Neumann And Goretti beating Gill St. Bernard's 59-50, then continued when Sunrise Christian (KS) routed Mount St. Joseph (MD), 64-39, and wrapped up with Sanford (DE) running away from Salesianum (DE) 64-44.

Neumann-Goretti rebounded from a rough opening period in game one. The Saints were down 20-12 after eight minutes and saw their deficit grow as large as 12 two minutes into the second quarter. But **Carl Arrigale's** team kept working, pulling to within one by the break. Then after an even third period, Neumann-Goretti's guard depth began to pay off.

The Saints out-scored Gill St. Bernard's 19-9 over the final eight minutes, with all of the points coming from the back court.

" We've got good guards, and good guards win in high school," Arrigale said. "Our guards did all play last year so they've got some experience. And so, I expect us to be good. We have a culture of being good, but it's a process, and these guys are surprising me right now at this stage of the season."

Young **Quade Green** was the best of the bunch on Saturday. The sophomore had seven of his game-high 27 points in the fourth quarter. He connected from inside (four layups), outside (2-of-3 from long range) and at the foul line (7-of-8). Green also made his presence felt defensively, where he added four steals and even on the glass as he pulled down six boards.

"He's not your typical sophomore," Arrigale said. "He's a really good player. He played last year as a freshman for me – got into some important games. The sky is the limit for him. He's got a great work ethic. He's in great shape. He really can shoot. I mean if you are that size, you've got to be able to shoot the ball, you know, and he can shoot, and go to the foul line, makes his fouls. He's got everything you need in a package to be a good player."

Conversely, Gill St. Bernard's was playing without its best player. **Tyus Battle** missed his fourth consecutive game with an ailing foot. Battle is the 14th-ranked junior in the country according to ESPN, with offers already from Kentucky, Duke, Connecticut, Louisville and others. **Jonas Stakilunas** tried to fill the crater-sized void with 15 points and nine rebounds, but Battle's absence was simply too much to overcome.

"It changes the dynamic obviously," said Knights head coach **Mergin Sina**. "He draws a lot of attention. So, when that happens it opens things up for the rest of the players. So obviously it's very difficult that we're playing without him, but we have to play with what we have.

The second game featured another bounce back from a subpar first quarter.

Sunrise Christian gave its entire team a week off for Christmas. Since the players hail from all over the country they were a tad late reconvening for this tournament. Head coach **Kyle Lindsted** said the Buffaloes did not reach their team hotel until 3:30 a.m. Saturday morning.

"We got up this morning and had a shoot around, so we were a little bit worried about this game, and the first half wasn't very good," Lindsted admitted. "We missed 12 free throws in the first half—two of which were the front end of one-and-ones—so anytime you miss that many free throws in a half of basketball you're going to be struggling to be ahead."

And struggle they did, as Mount St. Joseph led 15-9 after one quarter. The Gaels maintained the advantage until the final minute of the second period, when Sunrise Christian finally found their bearings. And what impressive bearings they were, as the Buffaloes unleashed a 32-2 run that spanned the final 3:11 of the first half and the initial 6:52 of the third quarter.

"When we play with energy and keep people from getting comfortable we're going to be as good as anybody honestly," Lindsted said. "I think we can be as good as anybody in the country when we bring the energy we did in the second half. We don't have five-star guys, but we've got a bunch of three-star guys running around out there, and if they play together and hang their hat on defense and rebounding, we can be pretty tough."

Roman Young was the catalyst on Saturday. The first-year starter at point guard looked in total command on his way to 10 points, five assists and only one turnover.

"I think he controlled pace really well tonight," Lindsted said. "There were times where he hit the gas and was hard to guard at the rim. You know he has played for us since he was a freshman, which is hard to do in our program, and he's not gotten a lot taller, he's not gotten a lot bigger, but he has gotten smarter, and I think he's starting to feel really comfortable with having the ball in his hand, and making plays, and getting us into our stuff, and kind of know what we want. I am starting to feel like we've got a general, we've got a leader, so I'm really happy with him and how he played, and, like I said, controlled pace."

Roosevelt Smart led all scorers with 15 points, while **Dainan Swoope** and **C.J. Keyser** added 12 points each. Mount St. Joseph did not have a single player score in double figures and made just one of its 10 three-point tries collectively.

The nightcap was close for a half, but a big third quarter and an even bigger start to the fourth period turned this rivalry game into a laughter for Sanford. The Warriors held **Donte DiVincenzo**, who has committed to play at Villanova next season, to just **11** points on 3-of-17 shooting. Sanford head coach **Stan Waterman** was pleased with how his defense attacked the best player in the state of Delaware.

"We tried to rotate fresh guys on [DiVincenzo] and we've got a number of little guards who get after it defensively and they did a nice job of pressuring him," Waterman said. "I think we were able to wear him down a little bit. He's so athletic and with his size I was a little bit worried because our guards are small. But they did a nice job of really pressuring him, contesting every shot and making him work for everything he got today."

Sallies head coach **Brendan Haley** conceded it was a rough night for his star player, but said it was far from all DiVincenzo's fault.

"I think Dante was sensing that we were having trouble with some of the stuff we want to do offensively and there were too many times tonight where he tried to do a little bit too much," Haley said. "This is a good team that's not going to back off and they're going to keep bringing extra bodies. He's got to give those other guys a chance, but they've got to make plays too. It's on both ends. It's on Dante a little bit to find his teammates when he draws that much attention, but then guys have to make shots when he does find them."

Sanford used its athleticism on offense to wear down the Sals, out-scoring Salesianum by **12** points after the break.

"We haven't played a game in **21** days so I figured there might be some rust we would have to shake off. And I was pleased with the way we came out and played in the second half. I thought the intensity was good. We thought that one of the advantages we had against that team was our speed and quickness and that we could beat them up and down the floor. We wanted to try and pick the pace up and keep the tempo up."

Slam Dunk to the Beach continues on Sunday with six more games, split up into two sessions. The first session begins at **12** p.m. St. George's (DE) takes on Mount St. Joseph (MD). Two teams make their tournament debut at **1:30** p.m. when The Haverford School (PA) battles Roselle Catholic (NJ). The opening session concludes at **3** p.m. when Saints Neumann And Goretti (PA) battles Sanford (DE).

THEY SAID IT:

Saints Neumann And Goretti Head Coach Carl Arrigale

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being good, but it's a process, and these guys are surprising me right now at this stage of the season."

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Gill St. Bernard's Head Coach Mergin Sina

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"Well this is our fourth game, so we have been playing pretty good basketball up until this point. Obviously we haven't played anybody up to Neumann-Goretti's ability, so this just kind of threw us in a loop, but it shows you that obviously Tyus is a big part of our offense."

"The kids have to realize they have to bounce back from a loss. I mean, I thought we had some opportunities in the fourth quarter, but you know we just missed some free throws, turned the ball over, but tomorrow is, you know, a game we have to regroup, and hopefully win."

Sunrise Christian Head Coach Kyle Lindsted

"It's crazy. It's not fun. You know, we had a week off. We had kids all over the country, and a matter of fact our last guy got into the Philadelphia airport last night at midnight, so we didn't get to our hotel until three in the morning."

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Sanford Head Coach Stan Waterman

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[Jake Walsh] is a difference maker for us. I told people before the season that I thought he was one of our most improved players and if he continues to improve the way he has over the last year, he has a chance to be special and certainly help our team.'

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Salesianum Head Coach Brendan Haley

"I think we didn't match their compete level tonight. From a toughness standpoint they just took balls off of us, they played tougher and the rebounding issue was very telling tonight. That's compete and desire and just pride. Whether the game's going your way or not there's got to be something inside of you that just kicks in and we didn't have it tonight."

"I think Dante was sensing that we were having trouble with some of the stuff we want to do offensively and there were too many times tonight where he tried to do a little bit too much and this is a good team that's not going to back off and they're going to keep bringing extra bodies. He's got to give those other guys a chance, but they've got to make plays too. It's on both ends. It's on Dante a little bit to find his teammates when he draws that much attention, but then guys have to make shots when he does find them."