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Winter Park lands ESPN2 home basketball date

Florida's defending Class 6A state champions will host New Jersey juggernaut St. Patrick on Jan. 14

Buddy Collings
INSIDE HIGH SCHOOLS
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Winter Park's boys basketball teams have played on national TV seven times in the past two seasons, a k a the **Austin Rivers** era.

Rivers' senior season will bring a historic chance for passionate Wildcats fans to get some face time.

For the first time, Winter Park coach **David Bailey** said his defending Class 6A state champions will host a made-for-ESPN2 matchup on Jan. 14 against New Jersey juggernaut St. Patrick, which was No. 1 in national polls much of last season..

"This is going to be a whole different feeling," Rivers said. "It's not like last year when we played Pine Crest down in Fort Lauderdale [also on ESPN2]. Our gym is going to be packed with our students this time."

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It's a given that the telecast will focus on the duel between the nation's consensus No. 1 and 2 senior prospects, Rivers and St. Pat's 6-foot-7 small forward, **Michael Gilchrist**.

Gilchrist was tops in his class as a sophomore and junior. But Rivers has risen above the Kentucky commit on the **ESPN** and Rivals.com charts with his development as an almost unstoppable scorer.

"Michael was No. 1 and now I am. People are going to say it's a game of that, but it's really not," Rivers said. "It's my team trying to beat his team."

Winter Park lost to St. Patrick 59-54 two years ago in a semifinal at the City of Palms in Fort Myers. One night later, Rivers poured in 46 points in a third-place game that was Winter Park's national TV debut.

ESPN's 2010 prep football schedule has been heavy on Florida flair, and that trend continues with Thursday's Groveland South Lake (2-1) at Apopka (2-1) game on ESPN2.

Georgia state champ Camden County (3-0) at Florida 5A, No. 1 Fort Lauderdale St. Thomas Aquinas (2-0) is on ESPNU, Oct. 1; Winter Springs (1-2) at Hagerty (2-1) is on ESPNU, Oct. 8; and Miami Columbus (3-0) vs. 6A, No. 1 Miami Northwestern (2-0) is on ESPNU, Oct. 15.

Boone's Blue Devils

Two former Boone big guys, **Kyle Hill** (Class of '07) and **David Harding** ('09), are seeing a lot of action alongside each other at left

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tackle and left guard, respectively, for Duke (1-2).

Hill (6-6/290), a redshirt junior, has made 27 consecutive starts.

Harding (6-4/275), a redshirt freshman, has yet to start but was in on 42 plays in Duke's opener, 37 snaps in a 54-48 loss to Wake Forest and 49 in last week's 62-13 loss to No. 1 **Alabama**.

It's worth noting that Duke's offensive line leads the ACC in fewest sacks allowed per pass attempt (three in three games; one per 42.7 attempts).

Stat stuffers

Word traveled slowly on this one: Leesburg (1-2) sophomore **Undra Mitchem** threw eight TD passes in a 61-34 win over shorthanded Mount Dora (2-1) two weeks ago to tie a state record set in '98 by Colonial's **Mike Mitchell**.

Mitchell and Mount Dora senior **Mitchell Bourne** combined for 847 passing yards, also a state record. Bourne, who got more time with junior starter **Vegas Harley** serving a one-game suspension, had 464 and four TDs. Mitchem threw for 383 against a defense hampered by suspensions.

Extra points

The area's top-ranked girls volleyball team, Bishop Moore (8-1), will test itself against the best at this weekend's Tampa Berkeley Premier Invitational. It has three nationally ranked teams, topped by Berkeley (8-0), which is No. 1 according to ESPN and MaxPreps. . . .

Last week's Pine Ridge cross country invitational was the first in a series of events benefitting the **Junious Leonard** Scholarship Fund, named for the popular Panthers athletic director who died of a **heart attack**. Pine Ridge plans to award annual scholarships to one boy and one girl.

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