

FBCA Crusaders Win National Title



The Faith Baptist Christian Academy boys' basketball team of Ludowici won the National Association of Christian Athletes Elite Division championship in a tournament Feb. 25-27 in Dayton, Tennessee.

In their first two tourney games, the Crusaders beat Handle It Preparatory School, 78-53, and Combine Black, 62-44. That set up the championship-game

matchup against FBCA North Georgia, in which the Crusaders eked out a 63-62 win for the trophy.

Crusaders coach Keith Graves said the two teams had played each other just days prior, with the Warriors taking the victory.

"We didn't press them," said Graves, adding it led to a lot of turnovers in his team's favor. He said he had his players show the press, which threw off the Warriors.

The Crusaders' Malik Jordan was named tournament and offensive MVP. Teammates Dhyromi Maxwell and Christian Sunda made the all-tournament team, and Graves was voted as coach of the year.

The championship capped a great season for the Crusaders, who went 52-13 overall and 19-0 in the league. They are ranked No. 78 in Georgia.

The Crusaders fielded a young team this season and will have many returning players next season. Graves said he already is setting up the offseason workouts for a repeat performance. He said he felt a little pressure in having a breakout season in his first year as head coach, but his players performed well defensively against many of the top schools in the nation. He added the players not only excelled on the court, but also maintained grade-point averages of 3.0 and above.

"I'm excited," he said about the title win. "Next year, we will be even better."