

Q&A with Basketball's Bryce Dulin '18

Wave Tops - USNA Alumni Association

Name: Bryce Dulin

Sport: Men's Basketball

Hometown: Nixa, Missouri

Class: 2018

Major: Quantitative Economics

Service Assignment: Navy Pilot

What drew you to attending the USNA?

I was recruited for basketball and I knew about the Army-Navy football game, but I had to do some more research. I talked to some family friends who knew about the Academy. I started to see what a great opportunity it would be to come here.

How did you first become interested in basketball?

I played a lot of sports growing up, and as far back as I can remember I always had a ball in my hand. I would play basketball with my dad and my older brother. I remember being outside shooting with my brother when I was about five years old.

What is something about the sport that most people don't know or understand?

The speed of the game. When you watch the game on TV or see it from the stands, it looks like you are moving slowly. But when you are out there playing, the speed of the game is so much quicker than you would expect.

What is the best part about your hometown?

The Chinese food is great, especially compared to around here.

Name three artists on your music play list.

Lecrae, Aha Gazelle, Andy Mineo.

If you could play another sport, what would it be and why?

Football used to be my favorite sport. But I stopped playing in high school and focused on basketball. I'd love to play college football. It would be a lot of fun. I played running back growing up but I would probably be a wide receiver if I kept playing.

How has athletics shaped your Academy experience?

Playing basketball at the Academy has definitely made my time here very enjoyable. It's been great to be a part of a team, having teammates around you every day and being able to travel and go different places. We have a goal this year to win the Patriot League Championship. I'm a competitor at heart and have always enjoyed playing for a certain goal.

What is your favorite place you have visited in your life and why?

We played Oregon at Pearl Harbor in Hawai'i my sophomore year on the Pearl Harbor base. It was really special. My family got to come out. I got to meet a bunch of coaches like Jay Wright from Villanova.

Knowing what you do now, what would you tell yourself on Induction Day?

Just keep going. There will be a lot of highs and a lot of lows. Don't get too down on the lows or too high on the highs. Just keep persevering through everything.

What advice do you have for younger athletes who are interested in the Academy?

Take the opportunity. It's hard, but you get to be a Division I athlete, you get a great education and you get a guaranteed job after school. Those are all reasons that I came here. It's about more than just playing basketball. You will become a better leader and a better person overall.

My hidden talent is ...

I can play the drums.

Semper Fi Slama Jama: Marine Corps-bound Navy senior hoping for shot in dunk contest

Scott Allen | Washington Post | February 16, 2018

Navy senior forward Tom Lacey will graduate on May 26 — “not that I’m counting down or anything,” the political science major said Friday — before commissioning into the Marine Corps and heading to The Basic School (TBS) at Quantico in late June. Between now and then, he’d like to get the chance to throw down a few sick dunks in San Antonio ahead of the Final Four.

Lacey is one of 16 college seniors in the Dark Horse Dunker contest, which will determine the final entrant in next month’s College Slam Dunk & 3-Point Championships. The winner, to be decided by a fan vote over four week-long rounds, will receive a trip to San Antonio to compete against seven other college seniors in the March 29 contest that will air live on ESPN2. Navy has never had a participant in the dunk portion of the contest, which began in 1989, though Courtney Davidson and Kara Pollinger competed in the women’s three-point contest in 2004 and 2014, respectively. Former Georgetown forward Rodney Pryor won last year’s dunk contest.

The 6-foot-7 Lacey, who first dunked during the summer before his sophomore year at Seton Hall Prep in West Orange, N.J., is matched up against Iona’s TK Edogi in the first round, which runs through Tuesday at 12:59 p.m. ET. If Lacey advances, he will face off with the winner of the fan vote between Oklahoma City University’s Walter Rickett and the University of West Florida’s Darryl Tucker. The semifinals run from March 1-8, and the final round of voting will begin on March 9, with the winner announced on March 16. Fans may vote once per day, per device. As of Friday afternoon, Lacey had a 60 percent to 40 percent advantage over Edogi.

Lacey is averaging 8.9 points and 6.6 rebounds for the Midshipmen (18-10, 9-6 Patriot League), who have won five of six entering Saturday’s game at Boston University. Lacey has 12 in-game dunks this season and 37 dunks in his career, the best of which are featured in a video on the Dark Horse Dunker site.

“Last year against Lafayette I had a good one over top of two kids, and then I had a windmill in the same game and that was pretty cool,” Lacey said, recalling some of his better moments above the rim. He said his best dunk came in Dunk City of all places, during Navy’s loss at Florida Gulf Coast in November.

“Shawn [Anderson] passed it to me and I just

jumped and was above the rim and above the guy and I put it down,” Lacey said. “I was ready for that to be a momentum swing for us, but we ended up losing the game. That one, I did it and I kind of surprised myself. I was running back and was like, ‘Did I just do that?’”

Lacey is a Knicks fan, but compares his dunking style to Nuggets forward and fellow New Jersey product Kenneth “The Manimal” Faried.

“I love him,” Lacey said. “He’s just a bouncy guy and doesn’t really do anything too flashy, but he’s just really explosive and he plays hard, with a chip on his shoulder. His dunks are nothing really special, but he just gets up to the rim quick and puts it down. I can definitely do some flashy stuff, and I think if I got a chance to go to San Antonio I could put up a good fight against some of these guys, but I’m more of a blue-collar type of guy.”

With three games remaining in the regular season, Lacey and the Midshipmen have a good chance to eclipse 20 wins for the first time since 2000. A Patriot League tournament title would give Navy its first NCAA tournament bid since 1998.

“Twenty-one wins would be great and it would be a nice check to put in the box, but our focus is really just to be playing our best basketball going into the Patriot League tournament,” Lacey said.

Anderson scores 28 as Navy holds off Lafayette, 71-69, to snap home losing streak

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | February 15, 2018

Navy continued one impressive streak, and in the process snapped a rather disappointing one.

Senior swingman Shawn Anderson took the ball strong to the basket throughout in scoring a season-high 28 points as Navy held off Lafayette, 71-69, Wednesday night in a matchup of teams battling for a first-round bye and home-court advantage in the quarterfinals of the Patriot League Tournament.

Senior guard Bryce Dulin was also aggressive going to the basket in adding 14 points for the Midshipmen, who have now won seven straight meetings with the Leopards.

"I'm proud of our guys. We didn't do a lot of good things, but we found a way to win," said Navy head coach Ed DeChellis, bemoaning the fact his squad made just 2 of 12 3-point attempts and finished 11-for-22 from the free throw line.

Anderson was one of the culprits at the charity stripe, missing 4 of 8 including two that would have sealed the win with six seconds left. That was the only negative for the 6-foot-4, 215-pounder, who made 11 of 14 field goals and also grabbed seven rebounds.

"I thought Shawn was really good, very aggressive. I thought he played a very, very good basketball game tonight," DeChellis said.

Anderson got most of his points by going hard to the rim and also drained a pair of important 3-pointers, the only ones the Mids made all night. Anderson said the game-plan going into the game was to assert itself around the basket.

"It was more of a team thing. We understood that we had to establish ourselves as the tougher team. That's our identity," he said. "So I wouldn't say it was just me personally, it was everyone. It was definitely a team effort to get the ball inside."

Navy has won five consecutive contests on the road, but had somehow lost four straight at home. Anderson swore that oddity was not on anyone's mind.

"You try not to worry about. We didn't come into the game thinking about the losing streak," he said. "We were just trying to get the next one, trying to position ourselves well based on what's going on with the league."

DeChellis was concerned because Navy was coming off a Star game victory over archrival Army. The Midshipmen returned to Annapolis after being on the road for an entire week and immediately faced exams.

"This was a tough game. I've been here seven years now and when you play Army, whether you win or lose, the next one is really, really challenging. Because it's such an emotional game," DeChellis said.

"Anytime you're playing during six-week exams it's challenging. I've got guys all worried about a big chemistry exam at 7 tomorrow morning," DeChellis added. "That's just life here at the Naval Academy."

DeChellis said the varying exam schedules of players meant the Mids could practice for just one hour on both Monday and Tuesday of this week.

Senior forward Tom Lacey had a solid outing with 11 points and eight rebounds for Navy (18-10, 9-6), which was relieved to put an end to a frustrating four-game losing skid at Alumni Hall.

Junior point guard Hasan Abdullah came up with a clutch steal in the final seconds to seal the win for the Midshipmen, who moved into a tie for second place in the Patriot League standings.

Navy now faces an important matchup with Boston University (12-13, 8-7), which fell to third place after getting upset by American on Wednesday night.

"I feel good about it," DeChellis said when asked about being 9-6 in the league with three games remaining in the regular season. "This is going to be a crazy race down the stretch. We have three to play and we have to continue to take care of our business then see what happens."

DeChellis said prior to Monday's practice that Navy was as healthy as it has been in quite a while, then added the obligatory "knock on wood" comment. The seventh-year head coach may have spoken too soon as top reserve George Kiernan had his chronic shoulder injury act up again on Wednesday night.

Kiernan's shoulder popped out of place when he was attempting to take a charge and he was unable to play the final 15:23 of the game.

"We've had a lot of injuries, a lot of illnesses. George's shoulder popped out and I don't know what's going to happen with him. We just can't seem to get over the hump," DeChellis bemoaned afterward.

Freshman guard Alex Petrie scored 21 points to lead Lafayette (8-18, 6-9), which came into the contest in a four-way tie for sixth. Freshman guard Justin Jaworski added 15 points for the Leopards, who have been swept by the Mids for three straight seasons.

"Obviously, this was a big game for us," Lafayette head coach Fran O'Hanlon said. "We're now running out of opportunities now to get that first-round bye. The season is winding down and we want to avoid a play-in game."

Seldom-used reserve forward Mo Lewis gave Navy a big lift off the bench, totaling four points and four rebounds in 10 minutes of action. DeChellis went with the rugged 6-foot-6, 240-pound junior because skinny freshman Tyler Riemersma was getting pushed around.

"Great minutes out of Mo. Quite frankly, I didn't think our bench was very good tonight. I didn't think we had great energy off the bench and Mo bailed us out," DeChellis said.

"Physically, they were getting into Tyler a little bit and I thought Mo would be a better choice down there. He came through and made a nice basket, made his free throws. When called upon he did his job, which was nice to see."

Petrie scored seven points as Lafayette rallied from an early double-digit deficit to take a 33-31 halftime lead. Jaworski chipped in six points for the Leopards, who shot 50 percent from the field during the first half.

Anderson scored 10 points for Navy, which raced out to a 12-2 lead less than 3 ½ minutes into the contest. Dulin added eight points for the Midshipmen, who went cold and let the Leopards back in it.

Petrie made the last of three straight easy layups as Lafayette took its largest lead of the first half, 31-23 with 3:09 remaining. Anderson scored on a post-up move in the lane and a runner at the buzzer as Navy cut the deficit down to two at intermission.

It was back-and-forth until almost the midway mark of the second half when Navy finally

Anderson scores 28 as Navy holds off Lafayette, 71-69, to snap home losing streak (cont...)

made its move, taking the lead for the first time since 11:55 mark of the first half. A Lacey layup put the Mids ahead 47-46 with 10:40 remaining and that sparked a 9-0 spurt that included a 3-pointer by Anderson and a driving layup by Dulin that made it 52-46.

Lafayette would not go away and got back within one (56-55) following a three-point play by Jaworski with 5:29 to go. However, Navy responded with a 9-2 run to grab a 65-58 advantage at 3:28. The Leopards resorted to fouling to extend the game and the Mids made just enough free throws down the stretch to hold on.

Petrie raced downcourt and made an uncontested layup that cut the deficit to 71-69 with 6.9 seconds left. Anderson was fouled immediately after catching the baseline inbound pass and proceeded to give the Leopards life by missing both foul shots.

Petrie pushed the ball quickly into the frontcourt and appeared poised to get off a game-tying pullup jumper, but Anderson swiped the ball right out of his hands and headed the other way as the final horn sounded.

"We just didn't make free throws or otherwise we win the game by 10 and everyone is happier," DeChellis said. "We opened the door for them to have a chance to win the game."

Navy men's basketball looks to improve position for postseason

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | February 13, 2018

It's crunch time in college basketball, that time when teams must position themselves for the postseason.

Only four regular season games remain in the Patriot League and there is a logjam of schools fighting for first-round byes and home-court advantage in the tournament.

Navy made a strong move by winning a pair of road games last week — routing Holy Cross 69-34 in Worcester then beating Army 68-59 in a thriller at West Point. The Midshipmen (17-10, 8-6) moved into a tie for third place in the standings.

Six of the 10 schools earn a first-round bye for the Patriot League Tournament with the top four get to host the quarterfinals.

Navy has now won five consecutive conference contests on the road. On the down side, the Midshipmen have lost four straight at home.

"Any time you can go on the road and win some games that is something special. I thought we were really good defensively against both Holy Cross and Army. We were very active and aggressive, which was encouraging," Navy head coach Ed DeChellis said. "I'm proud of our guys. It's hard winning on the road and they've shown a lot of tenacity and toughness in doing so lately. Now we need to figure out this home thing."

Navy hosts Lafayette on Wednesday night at Alumni Hall then closes out the home schedule versus Loyola on Feb. 24, which will be Senior Day.

"I don't know what it is, for some reason we just love playing on the road," Navy senior swingman Shawn Anderson said. "We need to figure out how to bring that same energy and intensity here at home. We definitely cannot afford to keep losing at home."

Navy's next road game at Boston University this Saturday is crucial as those two teams are tied in the standings. The Terriers won the first meeting in Annapolis on Jan. 20. Navy must also play at first place Bucknell on Feb. 21.

"With four games left you have to get as many wins as you can. You'd like to get to double digit wins in the league and control your own destiny and put yourself in good position for the Patriot League Tournament," DeChellis said.

Navy sits in pretty good shape with regard to the schools sitting directly behind in the standings, having already swept fifth place Lehigh (7-7) and sixth place Holy Cross (6-8). A victory on Wednesday night would give Navy a sweep of seventh place Lafayette (6-8).

"It's really, really important to get the bye and some extra rest before the postseason starts," DeChellis said. "Even though we haven't played particularly well at home, you would rather be hosting in the tournament. If you don't have to travel, that's a bonus."

Anderson is looking forward to the stretch run and the fact Navy could finish as high as second in the final standings. That would guarantee the Midshipmen a home game in the semifinals if they get that far.

"We were just talking in the locker room about the possibilities of finishing second or third and what we need to do. It's an exciting time and I know everyone is ready to get after it," Anderson said. "We talked as seniors after the Army game and decided we really needed to be focused from here on out because we want to win a championship."

Navy has battled injuries and illness for much of the conference campaign with Anderson (hip and thigh), senior forward Tom Lacey (ankle) and senior guard Bryce Dulin (back) all improving. Anderson missed the Holy Cross contest with the flu while junior point guard Hasan Abdullah was also sick last week.

"Knock on wood, I think this is probably the healthiest we've been in several weeks," DeChellis said.

This week brought another potential distraction as the Midshipmen are going through six-week examinations. "It's challenging for the players. They're staying up late and getting up early. That's hard on them," DeChellis said.

Navy stayed on the road last week as it made no sense to return to Annapolis between trips to central Massachusetts and upstate New York. DeChellis felt the extended time away was good for team bonding as the Mids ate all meals together, had fun hanging out in the hotel and even went bowling one night.

It actually works out well that Wednesday night's game is here in Annapolis given the demands of exams.

"Yes, this is a difficult week, a stressful week, but what we want to accomplish as a team outweighs whatever any one individual is going through. Everybody has to just buckle down and get the job done," Anderson said.

Speaking prior to practice on Monday afternoon, DeChellis said he would consider altering the regular routine for a home game if the players felt it would help snap the four-game losing streak at Alumni Hall.

"I'm going to talk to the guys again today about what we're doing on game day. If we need to change things around, we will," DeChellis said. "We usually come in here for a half hour or 45 minutes of shooting practice at lunch time. If that's not been beneficial then we won't do that. It's my job to figure out why we're not playing better at home."

Navy is led by four seniors — Anderson, Dulin, Lacey and backup point guard Nourse Fox.

"We've got four seniors that are coming down to the wire. I told them in December that this 18-game schedule would go very, very quickly and it has," DeChellis said. "Somewhere along the way it probably clicks for these seniors that 'Holy smokes, this thing really is coming to an end.' And they don't want it to come to an end. They want to continue to practice and play games. So now is the time to put ourselves in position to do something special."

Anderson and his classmates came into the program with visions of capturing Patriot League Tournament championships and earning automatic berths in the NCAA Tournament. Navy lost in the quarterfinals their freshman and sophomore seasons before bowing out in the semifinals last season.

"What more could you ask for than to have an opportunity to make a postseason run with the people that you started the journey with and try to put your mark on Naval Academy basketball?" Anderson said. "We're young guys playing the game we love in a big-time environment so just soak in every moment and enjoy it."

Lacey did not start and played only eight minutes against Holy Cross, punishment for drawing technical fouls in back-to-back games against American and Colgate. The 6-foot-7, 235-pound power forward responded with a strong outing versus Army, scoring 10 points and grabbing nine rebounds.

Navy men's basketball looks to improve position for postseason (cont...)

"Tom is a very emotional young man. Unfortunately, there are moments when you can let emotions get the best of you," DeChellis said. "Hopefully, we've put all that behind us. Sometimes you need a little bit of a timeout."

Sophomore forward Evan Wieck also came up big against the archrival, scoring 12 points on 6-for-10 field goal shooting. DeChellis said the coaching staff made a conscious effort to get the ball inside to the 6-foot-8, 235-pounder and was pleased with the way Wieck caught some tough entry passes and finished around the basket.

Navy also got important contributions from its two freshmen with guard Cam Davis making his first start of the season and scoring a career-high 18 points at Holy Cross. Meanwhile, forward Tyler Riemersma delivered a huge blocked shot in the final minutes at Army.

"Those two young guys have poked their head up a bit. They are coming along and gaining some confidence," DeChellis said. "They're in the rotation so we need them to play well. They make us better."

Navy men defeat Army West Point in Star Game, 68-59

Ken McMillan | Annapolis Capital | February 11, 2018

WEST POINT, N.Y. — The schedule makers didn't do Navy any favors by plotting road games with Holy Cross and Army back-to-back in early February. Rather than making two long round trips, the Midshipmen decided to make it an extended visit and hunkered down in a hotel near West Point.

The trip was part team bonding, part recovery as coaches and players battled illness. The players studied, got in some practice time and even got away for a fun night of bowling.

The end result was two crucial road wins and much-needed momentum headed into the stretch run of Patriot League play.

Navy ran its road win streak to five games with a 68-59 Star Game win over Army before 5,181 fans and a national television audience. The victory at Christl Arena was Navy's sixth in a row, and returned the Alumni Trophy back into the hands of the Midshipmen (17-10, 8-6 Patriot).

"I am just happy we came out with the 'W' at the end of the day," said senior guard Hasan Abdullah, who had 11 points and five rebounds. "It's been marked on our calendar since last year when they got (the trophy) from our home. It feels great."

"It was just an incredible team win," said senior Tom Lacey, who posted 10 points and nine rebounds. "We really embodied the attitude of playing for each other, playing for the guy next to you. When you are feeling tired, it's a matter of digging deep and digging through it and pushing through for team and for the bigger picture."

Navy nearly ran away with the game early, jumping out to a 25-11 advantage through 12 minutes of action. The Midshipmen were dominating in all of the specialty scoring categories: in the paint, off turnovers, off second-chances, off the fast break and off the bench. The only thing that dragged down the Midshipmen were 11 first-half turnovers (and 18 for the game).

"Offensively, we were very good," said Navy coach Ed DeChellis, who could only stomach ginger ale and crackers the day before. "We were flying around in our zone and challenging every shot. I thought offensively we shared the basketball."

The Midshipmen talked about how Army would charge back in the second half, and that's ex-

actly what the Black Knights did. Luke Morrison hit three of his four 3-pointers after the break and Army managed to close within six points on four occasions but couldn't draw any closer.

"We talked about ... there is going to be a critical point of the game where they (Army) are going to push at us with everything that they have and that's where we need to stay together," Lacey said. "Our seniority (came through). We're a seasoned team and we finish the game like we're a seasoned team."

Nine Midshipmen factored in the scoring (and all within the first 16 minutes). Shawn Anderson hit 11 of 13 free throws to lead Navy with 13 points and Evan Wieck scored 12. Navy shot 28-for-33 from the foul line – in contrast, Army was just 12-for-23.

Morrison finished with 16 points and guard Jordan Fox scored 13 of his 19 points in the second half for Army (13-12, 6-8 Patriot).

Navy has a home game with Lafayette on Wednesday before two road contests with Boston University (Feb. 17) and Bucknell (Feb. 21). Navy closes the regular season at home with Loyola (Md.) on Feb. 24.

DeChellis said he likes the way his team is playing defense and he likes the communication on the floor but he said the turnovers have to be trimmed.

"You have to be playing well as you enter the postseason tournament," DeChellis said. "We have a chance to be in that top four, I think. You got to keep winning. We're playing well enough but there's a whole other gear I have to get them to in the next two-and-a-half weeks."

Army's inexperience shows in men's hoops loss to Navy

Ken McMillan | Times Herald-Record | February 11, 2018

WEST POINT — In a basketball matchup as emotionally charged as Army vs. Navy, it's often the team with poise and experience that comes out on top.

This season Navy relies on a lineup that is top-heavy in juniors and seniors while Army is trying to build its depth with sophomores and freshmen.

"There's a big difference in the two teams," said Army coach Jimmy Allen.

It was his team that got down 14 points inside of 12 minutes, and then didn't have the experience to hit clutch shots and make free throws in a 68-59 Patriot League setback before 5,181 fans at Christl Arena on Saturday.

Navy used four seniors for a total of 84 playing minutes, compared to Army's lone senior, Luke Morrison, with 19. The respective junior classes negated one another, but Army's six freshmen and sophomores totaled 118 playing minutes to Navy's 50 from the similar classes.

"That makes a big difference in college basketball," Allen said. "We played like a team where a lot of times we had four freshmen on the floor and maybe three freshmen and two sophomores.

"They (Navy) are fortunate they have some seniors who stepped up today and played like seniors. That flat out was the difference in the game. Their guys knocked down free throws when they needed to, they came up with big rebounds when they needed to."

Navy shot 28-for-33 from the foul stripe. Army was 12-for-23.

"I was very proud of our players," Allen said. "I thought we battled the entire time. We got down a little bit earlier, we played a little bit tentative, and Navy kind of got control of the basketball game but I thought after that we really came back and fought and scrapped. The difference ended up was us not able to knock down free throws when we needed to. We made a bunch of plays where we got to the line and didn't knock the shots down, and that ultimately was the difference in the game."

The Alumni Trophy, which goes to the winner of the annual Star Game, returns to Annapolis with the Navy victory.

"It never feels good to lose, especially given a game like this," said Morrison, who hit four 3-pointers and scored 16. "But from everything you can take something positive away. I think this is probably the most resilient team I've been on since I've been here. Guys never stopped fighting and giving everything they have."

Army managed to trim the deficit to six points on four occasions in the second half but never drew closer.

"We're a seasoned team and we finish the game like we're a seasoned team," said Navy's Tom Lacey, who scored 10 points.

Shawn Anderson scored 13, Evan Wieck 12 and Hasan Abdullah 11 for Navy (17-10, 8-6 Patriot).

Jordan Fox led Army with 19 points. The Black Knights (13-12, 6-8 Patriot) are actually in decent position for this stage of the season, only a game out of fifth place.

Navy women seek repeat, men hope for turnaround in rematch with Army

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | February 9, 2018

Head coach Stefanie Pemper would love to see the Navy women's basketball team provide a repeat performance of its previous meeting with Army West Point when the archrivals meet for a second time on Saturday.

The Midshipmen put together almost a perfect game in pounding the Black Knights, 70-44, on Jan. 14 at Alumni Hall.

Sophomore forward Kaila Clark led the way with a career-high 21 points as Navy shot a sizzling 48 percent from the field. Senior guards Taylor Dunham and Hannah Fenske combined for five steals as the Mids limited the Black Knights to 22 percent (14-for-63) field goal shooting and forced 14 turnovers.

"It was one of those games when things really went our way," Pemper admitted. "I don't know if it was schemes as much as personnel and effort. Army was missing one of its top players and just didn't seem to have a lot of energy that day."

This is the Star game for Army-Navy with the winner taking home a perpetual trophy and players earning a star to pin on their letter sweaters. Navy won the Star game a year ago after having lost four in a row.

"Our players are wearing their letter sweaters this week. The Star game is definitely a big deal, for sure. Our players are into it and are really excited," said Pemper, who is 3-6 in Star games during her 10-year tenure at Navy.

Navy (19-4, 9-3) has won eight of its last nine games to surge into a tie for second place in the Patriot League with Bucknell (15-8, 9-3). The Bison beat the Midshipmen on Jan. 24 in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania so the rematch on Feb. 21 looms large. American, which defeated Navy on Jan. 5 in D.C, tops the standings with a perfect 12-0 record.

Dunham and Fenske have provided a superb one-two punch for the Mids, averaging 15.0 and 12.7 points, respectively. Fenske has been the primary playmaker and has dished off 94 assists while Dunham has added 64 helpers.

Sophomore forward Laurel Jaunich has been playing very well for Navy of late and is coming off arguably her best outing of the season with a double-double (10 points, 10 rebounds) in a victory over Holy Cross on Wednesday.

"Laurel is playing great. Against Holy Cross,

she played 36 minutes and did a lot of good things," Pemper said. "Laurel is playing so smart defensively and has been opportunistic offensively and is just really exceeding what we might have thought she could do."

Jaunich defended Army's standout post player Madison Hovren in the first meeting and held her to only five points on 2-for-13 field goal shooting. Hovren leads the Black Knights in both scoring (14.9 points) and rebounding (9.9 average).

By contrast, head coach Ed DeChellis can only hope the Navy men's basketball team can turn things around against Army after suffering a heartbreaking 64-62 loss in the first meeting. The Midshipmen started slow and fell behind by 12 points at halftime then had a couple second-half rallies rebuffed in falling 64-62 in Annapolis.

"There isn't any one thing I can pinpoint that we need to improve because we played so poorly overall," DeChellis said when asked what Navy must do differently against Army. "We didn't take care of the ball, we didn't shoot it well and we made a lot of mistakes defensively."

Freshman forward Alex King scored 17 points on the strength of 7-for-10 field goal shooting to spark Army, which pretty much led from start to finish. King was left open on the perimeter and drained three shots from beyond the arc.

DeChellis noted that King's jump shots were created by Army's standout senior backcourt combination of Jordan Fox and Tommy Funk, latter of whom dished off five assists. Funk and Fox added 12 and 11 points for Army, which shot 52.3 percent from the field for the game.

"That's their offense – they do a good job of penetrating and pitching it out," DeChellis said. "Fox and Funk are both capable of taking you off the dribble and getting into the lane. We need to do a better job of containing the ball. We can't allow as much penetration. We also need to guard the 3-point line better this time around."

Senior swingman Shawn Anderson scored 24 points for Navy, which fell behind by as much as 15 points and trailed by double digits most of the way. George Kiernan added 13 points for the Mids, who went on a 10-2 run over the final 29 seconds to put a scare into the Black Knights.

"I think the frustrating thing is that no one really played well for us in that first game against Army," DeChellis said. "We need to get guys to play better individually so our team can play better."

Navy is coming off an impressive 69-34 rout of Holy Cross on Wednesday and has now won three of four. The Midshipmen currently sit in sole possession of fourth place in the Patriot League standings. Meanwhile, Army has lost four of its last five to fall into a three-way tie for fifth place.

Navy did not return to Annapolis after playing Holy Cross on Wednesday in Worcester, Massachusetts. The Midshipmen traveled to upstate New York and practiced at Christl Arena on Thursday and Friday.

"We're by ourselves up here and can focus on the task at hand. I like the atmosphere and the fact we can keep the team together," DeChellis said. "I like having all our guys together eating dinner and breakfast. I think that togetherness and team bonding is important." Anderson, Navy's leading scorer (13.2 points) and second-leading rebounder (5.3) did not play against Holy Cross due to illness. DeChellis is unsure if the senior captain, who did not practice on Thursday, would be able to play against Army.

Starting point guard Hasan Abdullah has also been sick, but was able to fight through the stomach flu to play at Holy Cross.

Navy has won five straight games at Christl Arena, a real oddity in this series. The Midshipmen have also won six of the last nine meetings in the series, but the Black Knights currently have possession of the Alumni Trophy after winning last year's Star game.

Local Men's Basketball Teams Vying For NCAA Tournament Bids

Scott Lowe | PressBox Baltimore | February 9, 2018

With local mid-major Division I men's basketball programs getting ready for the NCAA Tournament, the only thing certain is that nothing is certain

While none of the seven area teams are leading its conference, several have a legitimate chance to make a run to an NCAA Tournament berth.

Mount St. Mary's and UMBC are hovering near the top of their respective conferences in second place, and no local team is more than one game under .500 in league play. The final three weeks of the regular season should provide a glimpse of the excitement that lies ahead in March.

Here's a look at where each team stands:

Towson (17-9 overall; 7-6 in the Colonial Athletic Association)

After a four-game losing skid, Towson has won seven of its last 11 games. The Tigers are fifth in the conference, two games behind second-place Northeastern and a game behind William & Mary and Hofstra. Towson gets two cracks at Northeastern, Feb. 10 and 22, as well as a shot at third-place Hofstra Feb. 24.

"Our league is extremely competitive," said Towson head coach Pat Skerry. "Seven or eight teams are legitimately capable of winning it. Charleston was picked first in the preseason, and we split with them. William & Mary was just in second place and we swept them, but we lost a couple of others that were close and we could have won. There are no easy ones. You can't take anyone lightly, because they're all good enough to beat you."

With sophomore guards Zane Martin (19.8 points per game) and Justin Gorham (9.0) leading the way -- and senior guard Mike Morsell (13.4, 4.0) providing scoring and leadership -- the Tigers should be a tough out in the postseason.

Mount St. Mary's (15-11; 9-4 in the Northeast Conference)

Defending NEC champion and 2017 NCAA participant Mount St. Mary's is sitting in second place in the conference.

Led by 5-foot-5 senior guard Junior Robinson, the NEC scoring leader, the Mount has won five straight and nine of its last 11. The young-

est team in Division I basketball with 12 freshmen, the Mountaineers prepped for the stretch run with a difficult nonconference schedule. The opportunity for younger players to garner key minutes during the first 26 games has Mount St. Mary's right on schedule, according to head coach Jamion Christian.

"We have [three great] seniors who were carrying us early," Christian said. "And if you look at historical data, analytically, our freshmen are about to figure it out. We are expecting a peak in their performance over the next few weeks because it's happened in past years for guys with about as much experience."

Mount St. Mary's is two games behind first-place Wagner (11-2), which it hosts Feb. 24 in the regular-season finale. If the Mountaineers stumble, St. Francis University, Robert Morris, LIU Brooklyn and Saint Francis Brooklyn are within two games. The Mount, which is 5-2 against those teams, hosts Robert Morris Feb. 22.

UMBC (17-9; 8-3 in the American East)

UMBC has won four of its last five and seven of nine to take over second place in the American East -- a half-game ahead of Hartford. The Retrievers have lost twice to first-place Vermont (10-0) but still get to play at fifth-place New Hampshire (6-5) Feb. 11 before hosting fourth-place Albany (6-5) Feb. 18 and concluding the season at third-place Hartford Feb. 27.

"Our league is very strong," UMBC head coach Ryan Odom said. "There isn't a night off, which is what you really want in terms of a competitive balance. I don't think we've played our best basketball yet and hope that the best is still ahead for us."

Senior guard Jairus Lyles leads a potent Retriever offense that features three players who shoot better than 41 percent from 3-point range. Lyles, who leads America East in scoring, averages 21.0 points, 5.7 rebounds and 3.5 assists per game as one of four players scoring more than 10 points per outing.

Morgan State (9-14; 5-5 in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference)

The season hasn't gone quite as planned for Morgan state, but the preseason MEAC favorites are dangerous thanks to the senior one-two punch of MEAC Preseason Player of the Year Phillip Carr (14.1) and all-conference

guard Tiwian Kendley (26.1).

Morgan finds itself in the midst of a three-game losing streak, but despite their struggles, the Bears are 1.5 games out of third place with six regular-season contests remaining.

Coppin State (5-21; 5-6 in the MEAC)

After an 0-15, Coppin State has won four of its last six. The Eagles and Bears meet again at Morgan Feb. 26. Coppin won the earlier meeting, 80-73, Jan. 20.

Navy (16-10; 7-6 in the Patriot League)

A balanced and experienced Navy team has won three of its last four to move into fourth place in the Patriot League. The Midshipmen are led by senior guard Shawn Anderson (13.2) and have five players -- three seniors and two juniors -- averaging 8.8 or more points per game.

Two games out of second place, Navy has road games against third-place Boston University (8-5) Feb. 17 and first-place Bucknell (11-2) Feb. 21.

Navy head coach Ed DeChellis said it's important for his team to finish in at least fourth place.

"One thing about the Patriot League Tournament is that each round is held at campus sites, so you want to get a top-four seed to get a home game in the quarterfinals," DeChellis said. "With the bottom-four teams having to play in the play-in round, if you get in the top six, you only need to win three to win it all."

Loyola (8-16; 6-7 in the Patriot League)

Loyola has recovered from injuries and a difficult start and is right behind Navy in the conference. The Midshipmen host the Greyhounds to close out the regular season Feb. 24.

3 Holy Cross basketball players suspended before historic loss to Navy

Jennifer Toland | Worcester Telegram | February 8, 2018

WORCESTER — It was a terrible night for the Holy Cross men's basketball team Wednesday.

The Crusaders never got going at the offensive end, and it resulted in the worst loss in Hart Center history, a 69-34 setback to Navy.

"We just started out slowly, let the lead get out of hand and couldn't get out of the hole," HC junior center Jehyve Floyd said.

The 34 points were the fewest scored in a game by the Crusaders in program history. The previous mark was 36 against Boston University on Dec. 17, 1946.

HC's previous worst loss at the Hart Center was an 81-49 defeat, also to Navy, in 2000.

The Crusaders (8-16, 5-8 Patriot League) were without three players, junior Karl Charles, and sophomores Jack Stevens and Will Powers.

Holy Cross coach Bill Carmody confirmed after the game that Charles, Stevens and Powers were suspended from the team.

When asked for a reason why the three players were suspended, Carmody said, "You probably got the statement from the school, so I'll just leave it at that."

Wednesday morning, the college issued a written statement that said, "This weekend Holy Cross Athletics was made aware of potential NCAA violations involving current student-athletes. Those athletes have been placed on interim suspension from team activity pending a full investigation."

The statement did not say what the potential violations were, or how many student-athletes have been placed on interim suspension.

Carmody declined comment when asked if Charles, Stevens and Powers were suspended for the remainder of the season.

Charles is a starting forward and the second-leading scorer on the team. Stevens and Powers have played limited minutes off the bench this year.

Carmody thought his team lacked energy against Navy. Much of that usually comes from Charles, who had scored in double figures in HC's previous three games.

"It's next guy up," Carmody said. "This is what we had. This is what we worked with."

The Midshipmen (16-10, 7-6) rebounded from a loss to Colgate last weekend. Navy has won four straight against Holy Cross, including a 61-56 overtime victory in Annapolis last month.

Holy Cross had won three of its last four and was coming off a 73-57 win at Loyola last Saturday.

"As much energy as we had against Loyola," Carmody said, "it seemed like we didn't have any of that. We ran our offense pretty well the first couple minutes, and missed open shot, open shot, and then that doesn't usually continue. You get something. You're at home, if you get a 10-0 run, and you're down 14, you get back into the play.

"That just wasn't the situation tonight. Give them credit; we didn't shoot well, and they had something to do with it."

The Crusaders made just 12 of 43 attempts for their lowest shooting percentage (28 percent) of the season.

HC missed its first seven attempts from the field. Floyd's layup at the 13-minute mark of the first was the Crusaders' first make.

Navy started strong (10 of 18, 5 of 8 from 3-point territory) and used a 15-0 run to jump to a 31-9 lead with 6:10 left.

The Crusaders only made three field goals (3 of 15) in the first half and the last one, a jumper by freshman Jacob Grandison, came with 11:33 left. After that, HC's only other first-half points were two free throws by junior Matt Zignorski with 2:44 to play.

Navy led, 40-11, at the break.

The 11 points were the fewest scored by HC in a half this year.

Holy Cross started the second half OK with back-to-back baskets by Floyd and a 3-pointer from freshman Caleb Green, but, as Carmody mentioned, the Crusaders couldn't sustain a run to cut into Navy's lead.

"We just never found a rhythm on offense," Floyd said Floyd, who scored a team-high nine points.

With 18 points, freshman guard Cam Davis led three Navy players in double figures. Junior forward George Kiernan added 14 and senior guard Bryce Dulin 12.

The Mids outrebounded HC, 39-23, and scored 16 points off HC's 13 turnovers.

Lacey technical is crucial as Navy self-destructs down stretch in loss to Colgate

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | February 5, 2018

Tom Lacey plays with a lot of intensity and emotion, which is normally a good thing for the Navy men's basketball team.

However, Lacey's on-court demeanor has hurt the team of late.

On Sunday against Colgate, the senior forward picked up a technical foul that proved damaging.

Navy was leading and controlling the game when Lacey was teed up for saying something to members of the visiting bench. The Raiders responded with a 10-2 run to retake the lead for good.

"I'm a senior and I should know better than to even give the refs a chance to get me on something like that," Lacey said afterward. "I'm a pretty passionate kid. I play pretty hard and emotional. Coach talks about the difference between playing with emotion and being emotional and I think I crossed over that today."

Senior forward Jordan Swopshire made a clutch 3-pointer with 29 seconds left and finished with 16 points as Colgate came back to beat Navy, 69-64, in front of 1,053 fans at Alumni Hall.

Senior guard Sean O'Brien and junior guard Francisco Amiel scored 12 points apiece for Colgate (13-10, 8-4), which moved into a tie for second place in the Patriot League along with Boston University.

Lacey just missed a double-double with 13 points and nine rebounds for Navy (15-10, 6-6), which fell into a tie for fourth place along with Army West Point. Senior guard Bryce Dulin totaled 12 points and five rebounds for the Midshipmen, who held an eight-point lead midway through the second half then were outscored 28-16 the rest of the way.

"We took turns making crucial mistakes that you just can't make in a possession game with four or five minutes to go," Navy head coach Ed DeChellis said. "We found a way to lose the game. We found a way to hand the game over to them. It's very disappointing."

Lacey had just made a great play, beating a box out to grab an offensive rebound off a missed free throw. The rugged 6-foot-7, 235-pound senior converted the offensive board into a layup that gave Navy a 49-41 lead with 10 minutes left.

Moments later, Lacey leaped at the baseline and crashed into the Colgate bench while attempting to save a loose ball from going out of bounds. He crashed into a pair of Raiders seated on the bench and that play may have prompted the exchange that led to the technical.

Navy had just rebounded a missed shot and was bringing the ball upcourt when the official suddenly put his hands in the shape of a T and pointed at Lacey.

"Their bench muttered something and I muttered something back. I deserved it. It's inexcusable on my end as a senior and leader on this team," Lacey said. "I've just got to be smarter than that. I've been doing this too long to get caught up in something like that. It's starting to become a pattern and I need to look at myself now."

It was the second straight game that Lacey drew a technical foul. He was cited during Wednesday's American game after telling an official he thought he had been fouled while making a layup.

"We just had the same thing happen at American and he didn't play the rest of the game," DeChellis said of Lacey. "You can't continue to do things to call attention to yourself and hurt our team. I guess I've got to have another conversation with him. Things like that are very, very frustrating."

Colgate coach Matt Langel did not hear what was said between Lacey and members of his bench, but noted that the veteran officiating crew comprised of Earl Walton, Clarence Armstrong and Jeffrey Anderson was not going to tolerate such behavior.

"We had a very strong officiating crew on the game, guys with a lot of high level experience," Langel said. "You know when you have a crew like that they are going to be fair, but they aren't going to take any nonsense. They work big games all the time so you know they're going to keep control of the game."

Sophomore forward Evan Wieck had a solid game with 10 points and seven rebounds for Navy, which shot 49 percent (24 for 49) and actually finished with four more field goals than Colgate. However, the Midshipmen committed 15 turnovers and saw the Raiders convert those into 24 points.

Senior swingman Shawn Anderson was responsible for five turnovers, somewhat offsetting the nine assists he dished out.

"We took the ball out of our own hands way too much," DeChellis said. "We self-destructed in terms of turning the ball over. You can't make all those mistakes at the end of a possession game and expect to win."

Swopshire and Amiel made consecutive threes as Colgate went on a 10-2 run shortly after the Lacey technical. That helped transform an eight-point deficit into a six-point lead (63-57) with 3:47 left. Amiel made three free throws during the spurt after being fouled on a shot attempt from beyond the arc.

Fouling a 3-point shooter was one of the foolish plays DeChellis referenced. Another occurred on the previous possession when Wieck was whistled for running over a defender during an inbounds play, resulting in a Navy turnover.

Point guard Hasan Abdullah tried to make a lazy pass over 6-foot-8 Will Rayman after being trapped and it was picked off with 2:55 to go. Anderson dribbled into traffic and fumbled the ball away at the 1:32 mark.

Abdullah drained a 3-pointer with 57 seconds remaining to get Navy within two at 66-64. Colgate called timeout to set up a play and Langel said it was executed exactly the way it was drawn up with Swopshire swishing the 3-pointer that proved to be the dagger.

"We had a matchup we thought we could get and the play happened to work to perfection," Langel said. "O'Brien did a great job of delivering the pass and Swopshire is a really good 3-point shooter when he can get his feet set."

DeChellis said the Midshipmen made one last critical mistake on that possession, failing to switch the right way and leaving Swopshire open as a result.

Navy has now lost four straight conference games at Alumni Hall. The Midshipmen were coming off two straight road wins.

"I don't have an answer for why we've lost four straight at home. It's just ridiculous," DeChellis said. "I don't know why we play better on the road. Maybe we're more relaxed."

Playing through the pain: Navy basketball players deal with nagging injuries

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | February 3, 2018

George Kiernan had to get his ankle taped at halftime of Wednesday night's game against American. The 6-foot-7, 225-pound forward had leaped to grab a rebound and landed awkwardly.

"Just my luck, for about the fourth time this season I came down and landed on someone's foot and rolled my ankle," Kiernan said.

Kiernan joined a Navy men's basketball injury report that includes four of five starters. Senior forward Tom Lacey has been nursing a sore ankle since late December while senior swingman Shawn Anderson has been bothered by a bad hip almost all season.

Junior point guard Hasan Abdullah has missed the last two games with head and hip injuries incurred while diving for a loose ball against Bucknell while senior guard Bryce Dulin has an ailing back.

"I don't think there is any team in the country that is operating at 100 percent at this point in the season," Lacey said. "Injuries are just something all teams deal with in college basketball."

That proclamation is commonly made by football coaches in November, but fans probably don't realize that a basketball season can be just as grueling. Preseason practice began on Oct. 1 and four months later the wear and tear of 24 games begins to take its toll.

"It really is a grind and is very hard on the kids. We play a lot of games and have a lot of practices," Navy head coach Ed DeChellis said. "By the time you get to February everyone is tired and beat up. Injuries are a major part of college basketball. You suffer some significant injuries and it can spoil your season."

Football players have seven days between games to recover and occasional bye weeks also provide a respite. Basketball plays twice a week and there was a stretch during the early portion of the Patriot League schedule when there were three games in the span of seven days.

"In college basketball the games just keep coming," DeChellis said. "I feel badly for the kids because they have to try to fight through all the aches and pains. They are constantly rehabbing with the training staff. Our players have shown a lot of toughness."

There have been numerous times this season when Navy's had three or four members of the regular rotation sitting out practice. DeChellis consults with the training staff and team physician about when he should rest players with various ailments.

"You've got to manage their practice minutes. That's challenging because you've got to prepare for the next game," he said. "We've had that situation where multiple starters are watching practice and we're not getting anything done."

Erin Variano serves as head athletic trainer for Navy men's basketball and is keenly aware of when a particular player could use some rest. With more serious injuries, Dr. Lance LeClere makes the call about whether or not someone should be playing.

"When Dr. Lance LeClere says a guy can or cannot go that's what we abide by," DeChellis said.

Anderson's hip problem is not going away and there are days when the pain can be excruciating. The 6-foot-4, 215-pound senior is deeply religious and begins each day by praying he can participate in practice or get through another game.

"I thank God that he's given me the strength to be able to keep playing," Anderson said. "There were times this season when I didn't really know what was going to happen. My hip has been a constant concern. God has given me the strength to push through."

Some observers may scoff at the notion of basketball being as tough as football in terms of injuries and the overall impact on the bodies of participants.

"I don't think people understand how physical Division I college basketball is. I think they underestimate how much banging goes on," Anderson said. "You are constantly running, jumping and diving on the floor. We get after it every day because how you practice is how you play in the game."

DeChellis, who has been coaching college basketball since 1982, seconded that assessment and noted that basketball players don't wear pads.

"It is a contact sport with no protection. There are elbows being thrown, knees knocking

around, guys get hit all the time," he said. "There is all sorts of physical contact on every possession. Guys are setting and running into picks. Guys are fighting for rebounds and bodies are banging. Guys get beat up over the course of a game."

Anderson required nine stitches after taking an elbow to the nose in a recent contest. He suffered a dislocated thumb during a shootaround prior to the American game. Trainers popped the joint back in and taped it up.

Lacey's ankle is not going to heal this season and is easily re-injured by the routine jumping and cutting that occurs daily. Both players live in the training room, getting treatment early in the morning before classes, at lunch time and surrounding practice.

"If you go into the training room before or after practice, they're all in there on the tables," DeChellis said. "They're in the cold tubs getting ice or wearing these special boots that help with lower body recovery."

Adam Pecina served as head athletic trainer for Navy men's basketball for many years, but left the program three weeks ago to take a similar position at Texas. Variano was transferred from the football program and works with intern Byron Fairley to provide recovery and rehabilitation treatments for those players in need.

"I've been jumping a lot better lately, which kind of speaks to the great work Erin and Byron have been doing," Lacey said.

Lacey aggravated the ankle injury during the final non-conference contest against Lipscomb and was unable to play in the Patriot League opener at Loyola-Maryland. The 6-foot-7, 235-pound power forward has needed to wear an air cast to support the ankle for a while, but now gets by with it heavily taped.

"Erin pretty much wraps me up in a boot before games," said Lacey, who would rather play through the pain than miss a game.

"I've got eight games guaranteed in my career then I'm not playing organized basketball again," Lacey said. "Not to call my ankle expendable, but at this point it means more to me to be there for my team. There are a finite number of minutes left in my career and I don't want to look back and wonder if I could have played more in this or that game."

Playing through the pain: Navy basketball players deal with nagging injuries (cont...)

Kiernan has dealt with a torn labrum problem since high school and gets his left shoulder wrapped for every game to reduce the chance of it popping out. He's rolled the ankle several times this season and credits the training staff with keeping him on the court.

"I've mitigated the amount of time I could be sitting out by doing a lot of rehab. We have a great training staff here that is very committed to making sure we're well taken care of going from game to game," Kiernan said. "It's a very quick turnaround between games so you really don't have time to rest."

Kiernan obeys all instructions from team trainers and appreciates that DeChellis listens to them as well.

"We have a lot of confidence and trust in the training staff. They know our limits and are not afraid to tell the coaching staff that we should sit out a practice today so we are healthier tomorrow," Kiernan said. "We all want to compete and be out on the floor. It's no fun missing practice. It's important to understand whether you're just hurt or truly injured. Those decisions are based off the recommendations of the training staff."

Illness has also been an issue for the Navy basketball team this season with the cold and flu bugs easily sweeping through the locker room. Four different players were throwing up at halftime of the Colgate game held Jan. 8 in Hamilton, New York.

Anderson leads second half charge as Navy earns second straight road win

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | February 1, 2018

Washington, D.C. -- Head coach Ed DeChellis was disappointed that Navy men's basketball suffered three home losses during the first half of Patriot League play. The Midshipmen played six of nine games in the friendly confines of Alumni Hall and failed to take advantage of that favorable schedule.

DeChellis took a positive approach after Navy was beaten by Bucknell to close out the first half of conference action.

"We haven't played well at home so let's go play on the road. That's really all we can do," DeChellis said.

The Midshipmen must have taken those words to heart as they responded to the challenge.

Senior swingman Shawn Anderson scored 16 of his 20 points in the second half as Navy rallied from a big early deficit to defeat last place American, 61-44, before a sparse crowd at Bender Arena. Junior forward George Kiernan posted his third double-double of the season with 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Midshipmen, who have won two straight on the road to start the second half of the Patriot League schedule.

"Great road win for us. That's two in a row now, which is really exciting," DeChellis said. "It's hard going on the road to win and this team has shown it has some fight, has some grit, to it. We've been battered and bruised and found a way to win at Lehigh, found a way to win here. So I'm proud of my team."

Freshman point guard Cam Davis came off the bench to contribute 11 points for Navy (15-9, 6-5), which took sole possession of fourth place in the Patriot League standings. Navy will be playing for third place when it hosts Colgate on Sunday (noon) at Alumni Hall. That is the only home game over the span of two weeks for the Mids, who are in the midst of playing four of five on the road.

"Now we got Colgate at home on Sunday, which will obviously be a very important game for us," DeChellis said. "We've got seven games left and anything can happen. We're just trying to position ourselves the best we possibly can to try and get a good seed (in the Patriot League Tournament). There's a lot of basketball still to be played."

Freshman forward Tyler Riemersma had a solid outing in a reserve role, totaling eight points

and four rebounds for the Mids, who stopped settling for perimeter jump shots and started taking the ball strong to the basket during a dominant second half performance.

"I thought in the first half we were, as I call it, playing in a mushroom. We were going side-to-side and I was getting dizzy," DeChellis said. "We started playing more north-south in the second half, driving the ball down the lane and trying to get to the basket. We got Anderson driving the ball to the basket. We also had guys cutting and were able to get some easy baskets."

Freshman forward Sam Iorio scored 16 points to lead American (5-17, 2-9), which endured a miserable second half offensively and was outscored 40-21. Sophomore guard Sa'eed Nelson totaled nine points, six rebounds and four assists for the struggling Eagles, who shot 24 percent (5-for-21) from the field in the second half.

"I thought defensively we were pretty good tonight. We were pretty active in our zone," said DeChellis, whose squad limited American to 31.1 percent shooting for the game and forced 22 turnovers.

Navy played its second straight game without starting point guard Hasan Abdullah, who suffered head and hip injuries during the loss to Bucknell. Senior Nourse Fox started in place of Abdullah, but Davis wound up getting the majority of minutes at point guard and performed extremely well.

"I thought Cam Davis was very good. He was really solid with the basketball, didn't turn it over. I thought he was aggressive on offense and got to the free throw line," DeChellis said. "I thought Tyler Riemersma came in during the second half and did a really nice job for us."

Navy missed six shots and committed five turnovers in falling behind 13-0 early. Anderson finally put the Midshipmen on the scoreboard with a driving layup at the 14:09 mark.

"We played really, really poorly in the first half. We were still on the bus sleeping," DeChellis said. "We turned the ball over way too much and didn't play with any pop or vigor."

DeChellis switched to a 2-3 zone and that threw off American, which managed just one basket on 10 possessions in allowing the visitors to get back into the game.

Davis entered the contest and quickly hit a pull-up jumper followed by two free throws during a 13-2 run that cut the deficit down to four with 8:56 left in the first half. Kiernan was fouled on a 3-point attempt and made all three foul shots then converted a three-point play after being fouled while scoring off a driving layup as the Mids finished strong and trailed 23-21 at intermission.

Anderson admitted that DeChellis was livid in the locker room at halftime and chastised Anderson and fellow senior Bryce Dulin with committing five of the 11 turnovers during the first half.

"Coach D came in and jumped us, told the seniors that we have to be better," Anderson said. "In the second half, we just picked it up. We realized that we have to go get it."

Kiernan scored 10 points to lead Navy, which shot just 24 percent (6-for-25) from the field and committed 11 turnovers in the first half. Nelson and Motuzis notched seven points apiece for American, which wasn't much better offensively with 9-for-24 (37.5 percent) field goal shooting and 11 turnovers.

Anderson got Navy off to a good start in the second half, finding a wide-open path to the basket and driving the lane for a powerful one-handed dunk that sparked a 14-2 run. Anderson also hit a pullup jumper while Davis drew fouls with strong moves to the basket and made all four free throws during the decisive run, which put the Mids ahead to stay.

"My dad's been all over me about finding ways to inspire the guys. That was a great play and definitely hyped me up a little bit. I hope it hyped up the guys, too," Anderson said of the dunk he threw down with authority.

"They were fronting the big guys so that was opening some driving lanes. We just tried to take advantage of that, get them to switch and get a big guy on a guard and look to take the ball to the rim," Anderson added.

Iorio made a 3-pointer to briefly halt the onslaught, but Navy followed with a 13-3 run to increase its advantage to 16 points with 6:58 remaining in the game. Anderson sparked that run as well by scoring four points and dishing off two assists.

Brown pours in 27 points as first-place Bucknell blows out Navy, 87-67

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | January 25, 2018

Head coach Ed DeChellis was hopeful this would be the season Navy men's basketball could contend for a Patriot League championship. DeChellis said in preseason this was the best team he's had in seven seasons at the helm.

The Midshipmen discovered on Wednesday night that they've still got work to do in order to compete with the class of the conference.

Senior point guard Stephen Brown led a balanced attack as defending champion Bucknell took a big first-half lead and never looked back in soundly beating Navy, 87-67, before an announced crowd of 1,634 at Alumni Hall.

"Bucknell played really well. They were just a better team tonight," DeChellis said. "Stephen Brown was outstanding and he was really the difference in the game."

Brown drained seven shots from beyond the arc in scoring a game-high 27 points for Bucknell, which led by double digits from the 13:14 mark of the first half until the finish. Senior forward Zach Thomas had a solid all-around game with 16 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists for the Bison (14-8, 8-1), who maintained sole possession of first place in the Patriot League.

"We play our best when Stephen is going full speed and putting pressure on the defense. We go as Stephen goes and he was very aggressive tonight," Bucknell head coach Nathan Davis said.

As good as Brown was on offense, he was equally tough on defense – primarily covering Navy point guard Hasan Abdullah and holding him to five points on 2-for-9 field goal shooting. Davis said shutting down Abdullah was a key part of the game-plan.

"We did a good job of forcing (Abdullah) where we wanted him to go and making him take tough shots," said Davis, a former Navy assistant under head coach Don DeVoe.

Added DeChellis: "Stephen Brown is a really good player and he got into Hasan."

Senior center Nana Foulland totaled 14 points and eight rebounds for Bucknell, which has won seven consecutive contests and 10 of its last 11. The Bison, who have won six straight road games, led by as much as 22 points late in the second half before clearing the bench.

"I thought we played with great purpose tonight and put together a pretty complete game. We made it tough for them to score and we did a great job of working to get good shots," Davis said. "I thought we played with good pace and really shared the ball. We were getting good looks and guys were stepping up and knocking down shots."

Senior guard Bryce Dulin scored 14 points to lead Navy (13-9, 4-5), which has dropped four of its last six. Senior swingman Shawn Anderson added 13 points for the Midshipmen, who lost three of their six home games during the first half of Patriot League play and are now tied with Loyola-Maryland for fifth place.

"We know where we're at. I'm hoping we'll catch fire and play well at the end," DeChellis said. "We've got to get our guys playing a little better. One night it's offense and the next night it's defense. I've got to get this squad to play a little better."

George Kiernan notched a double-double with 10 points and 11 rebounds for Navy, which begins the second half of the conference schedule on Saturday at Lehigh and plays six of its final nine games on the road. "We got ourselves into this and now we've got to get ourselves out of it. We haven't played well at home so let's go play on the road. That's really all we can do," DeChellis said.

Bucknell returned all five starters from last season's squad that captured both the Patriot League regular season and tournament crowns. The Bison developed their depth even further this season while playing without two of those returning starters – junior guard Kimbal Mackenzie and sophomore guard Avi Toomer, who missed 10 and 16 games, respectively with injuries.

Bucknell boasts three 1,000-point scorers in Foulland (1,557), Thomas (1,467) and Brown (1,058). Davis has the luxury of going 10-deep with little drop off in performance.

The Midshipmen were thoroughly outclassed throughout and showed their frustration a few times as senior forward Tom Lacey and sophomore forward Evan Wieck were both whistled for flagrant fouls.

"We can't give a team 87 points and win. We're just not that explosive offensively," DeChellis said. "We need to keep this into the low 70s to give ourselves an opportunity."

Brown scored 17 points and drained a 3-pointer with 37 seconds left as Bucknell took a 47-33 halftime lead. Brown made 5 of 6 from beyond the arc as the Bison shot a sizzling 68 percent from the field during the opening 20 minutes.

Two of Brown's threes came during a 19-2 run that transformed a two-point deficit into a 15-point lead – 26-11 at the 11:02 mark. Bucknell built that advantage to 20 points on yet another 3-pointer by Brown with 6:23 to go.

"Brown really got them going. It was (9-7) and all of a sudden he just exploded. We really had a hard time keeping him under control," DeChellis said. "In the first half we just couldn't guard them. They were very fluid offensively and made every shot they took. When you get a big lead like that I think the basket starts to look bigger."

Dulin made 4 of 6 shots in scoring 10 points for Navy, which cut the deficit down to 12 on a 3-pointer by Abdullah with 1:30 remaining. That was as close as the Mids would get the rest of the way.

"They shot the ball extremely well, but it was really on us in the first half. We kind of let them get going," Dulin said. "It's always tough when you give a team a 20-point lead in the first half. When you dig yourself that kind of hole it's just tough."

Cold Shooting Dooms Mids Against Terriers

Mike James | The Mid Report | January 21, 2018

Navy's win over Lafayette on Wednesday night demonstrated why the team was expected to be a contender in the Patriot League at the beginning of the season. The Mids got 45 points from their starting backcourt, including Bryce Dulin's game-winner at the buzzer. It was the kind of performance that head coach Ed DeChellis expected from his veteran team.

It's not the performance that he got on Saturday afternoon. George Kiernan scored 22 points, and Tom Lacey recorded a double-double, but the rest of the team shot a combined 14-41 from the floor as Navy (13-8, 4-4 Patriot) fell to Boston University, 75-68, in Alumni Hall. Javante McCoy had 16 points for the visiting Terriers (10-9, 6-2), who maintained their hold on second place in the conference.

"I was proud of our guys," said BU head coach Joe Jones. "We came off one of our worst performances the other night against American after we had played well. I was just concerned about our guys not losing confidence, not losing their focus. I was pleased with what I saw tonight. It was a focused team from start to finish."

Jones had good reason to be excited, getting the win despite limited playing time from his two leading scorers. Cedric Hankerson, who came into the game averaging 14.4 ppg, went down with a hamstring injury only five minutes into the first half and did not return. Sophomore forward Max Mahoney was limited to just 16 minutes, but still scored nine points.

"That shows you the depth of our team," said Jones. "You're going to have injuries. You're going to have some guys not play well. You're going to need some other guys to step up. The good thing for us is that I feel like whoever I put on the floor, when they're focused, can help us."

It was a different story for the home team, whose erratic play left their head coach visibly frustrated.

"We have so much inconsistency in our guys. I've got to try to get them to play more consistent, and that's been very challenging," said DeChellis.

"It's very tough," said Kiernan. "Now we're sitting at .500 in the Patriot League and lost two games at home. It's certainly not the way you want to start the first wave of Patriot League games."

Navy is a team that likes to drive to the basket, something that is more challenging against the Terriers' 2-3 zone. DeChellis prepared his team for BU's defensive approach, and it appeared to work. Navy was able to get good ball movement around the perimeter to set up cutters for open shots in the paint, but those shots didn't fall. The first half was especially discouraging for the Mids, who at one point missed ten straight shots from the floor.

"We worked on it for two days," said DeChellis. "We put in a new zone offense for it. We had open shots; we just couldn't make them. We got the ball inside some. We missed a lot of one-foot shots."

"I think we got good shots in the first half," said Kiernan. "We got good looks from where we should be able to score. We're struggling shooting the ball right now."

"We just tried to keep them in front of us, tried to make sure we were doing a good job along the baseline," said Jones. "That's where they look to hurt you. They like to throw it to the baseline and cut guys through, which is a little unique from what other people do against zone. You've got to be ready for that."

Navy took a 4-2 lead in the game's opening minutes after Lacey and Evan Wieck each scored underneath the basket after grabbing offensive rebounds. BU then switched to their zone, and Navy went cold. The Terriers went on an 11-0 run, taking a 13-4 lead after Eric Johnson's three-pointer with 12:05 remaining in the half. A pair of Kiernan free throws ended Navy's drought, but the Terriers scored six of the next eight points to open an 11-point lead.

After struggling to hit outside shots for most of the half, the Mids finally got a few to fall. Kiernan hit a jumper at the 7:30 mark, then Cam Davis and Hasan Abdullah made back-to-back three-pointers to cut the lead to four at 22-18. Navy's defense seemed to feed off of that momentum, and after BU committed four turnovers in their last ten possessions in the half, Navy went into halftime trailing by only two, 29-27.

Navy came out of the locker room and scored three quick points. Wieck scored on a layup on the Mids' opening possession, then Lacey made one of two free throws on their next trip down the court to give Navy a 30-29 lead. The lead would be short-lived, as BU's Tyler Scan-

lon scored 28 seconds later to retake the lead for the Terriers. Those would be the first points of a 9-2 run over the next 3:09 to open the lead to six, at 38-32.

BU briefly switched back to a man-to-man defense after Kiernan made his second three-pointer of the half with 13:09 to play, and Navy immediately took advantage by driving to the basket. Shawn Anderson brought the Mids back to within one with 7:23 to play, but the Mids couldn't complete the comeback. McCoy drained a three-pointer on the next BU possession. Navy turned the ball over on their next two trips down the court after the Terriers switched back to the 2-3 zone. The second of those turnovers led to a fast-break dunk by McCoy to give BU a 57-51 lead with 5:19 to play. The Terriers were able to keep Navy at arm's length the rest of the way.

"Overall I was pleased with our play," said Jones. "We got a lot of guys that contributed in different ways. Obviously, Javante McCoy scored it really well today. We had three guys in double figures. We played without Ced [Hankerson] for a good portion of the game. We played without Max [Mahoney], our two leading scorers, for good portions of the game, and were able to win the game on the road. I think that's a nice sign for us."

DeChellis, on the other hand, hoped that the loss would create a sense of urgency in his seniors.

"Time's wasting on these seniors. I've tried to say to them, it's going to go just like this," he said, snapping his fingers. "You're going to be down to a few games. You'd better understand that."

Navy struggles against zone defense in 75-68 loss to Boston University

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | January 21, 2018

Sophomore forward Evan Wieck made a layup to give Navy an early 4-2 lead less than two minutes into the game on Saturday afternoon. Boston University head coach Joe Jones went to a 2-3 matchup zone on the next possession and it completely changed the game in favor of the visitors.

Freshman guard Javante McCoy went 5-for-5 from the field in scoring 16 points as Boston University led for almost 35 of 40 minutes in beating Navy, 75-68, in front of 1,942 fans at Alumni Hall.

Sophomore forward Tyler Scanlon and senior guard Will Goff added 10 points apiece for the Terriers, who have now won five straight meetings with the Midshipmen in Annapolis.

Coach Jones said BU has played zone about 90 percent of the time during conference contests. Navy head coach Ed DeChellis said he installed a new offense specifically for this particular defense and was disappointed it did not produce more points.

"We worked on it for two days. We shot the heck out of it yesterday. I felt really good leaving practice," DeChellis said. "We had wide open shots against the zone and couldn't make a shot. We had open shot after open shot. It's frustrating."

Junior forward George Kiernan came off the bench to score 22 points on the strength of four 3-pointers to lead Navy, which just could not execute against the zone in shooting 42 percent (26-for-62) from the field for the game. Senior forward Tom Lacey scored 12 points and grabbed a season-high 16 rebounds for the Midshipmen (13-8, 4-4), who fell to fifth place in the Patriot League.

Navy's top three perimeter players struggled mightily on offense with starting guards Hasan Abdullah, Bryce Dulin and Shawn Anderson going 8-for-30 from the field among them. The Midshipmen were a miserable 8-for-27 from 3-point range with Abdullah and Dulin combining to shoot 2-for-12.

"We did a decent job of contesting all the shots they were taking and did a good job of defensive rebounding," Jones said. "We just tried to keep them in front of us, tried to do a good job along the baseline because that's where they like to hurt you. They like to throw it to the baseline then cut guys through."

Power forwards Max Mahoney and Nick

Havener both contributed nine points to a balanced attack for Boston (10-9, 6-2), which maintained sole possession of second place in the Patriot League. The Terriers earned a tough road victory even though leading scorer Cedric Hankerson played just five minutes after aggravating a hamstring injury.

"We were coming off one of our worst performances of the season so I was concerned about our players not losing confidence," said Jones, whose squad suffered a double digit loss to struggling American on Wednesday. "I was happy and pleased with what I saw today. It was a focused team from start to finish."

Navy went 10 straight possessions without scoring a single point after Boston went to the matchup zone with just under 18 minutes remaining in the first half. The Midshipmen missed 10 shots and committed three turnovers in going almost 11 minutes without a field goal.

"I think we got good shots in the first half. We got good looks from where we should be able to score. We're just not shooting the ball very well right now," Kiernan said. "We should be getting in the paint more and trying to get to the foul line."

Navy shot 34.5 percent from the field in the first half and fell behind by 11 points before rallying down the stretch. Freshman guard Cam Davis and Abdullah made back-to-back 3-pointers to spark a 15-7 run over the final 7:04 that pulled the Mids within two (29-27) at intermission.

The Midshipmen started strong in the second half with Wieck getting an uncontested layup on the opening possession. Lacey registered a steal on the other end and wound up making one of two free throws to give Navy its first lead (30-29) since 4-2.

It was short-lived as senior guard Eric Johnson drained a 3-pointer to cap a lightning-quick 9-2 run that put Boston back ahead to stay. The Midshipmen pretty much traded baskets with the Terriers the rest of the way, which displeased DeChellis.

"It wasn't our finest hour defensively in the second half," said DeChellis, noting that Boston shot a sizzling 67 percent (14-21) from the field over the final 20 minutes. "First half was offense, second half was defense. For me, that's the story of the game."

Boston has not been a good free throw shoot-

ing team this season, coming in at 60 percent. However, the Terriers were much improved in that department on this day – making 12 of 15 from the charity stripe after the Mids started fouling with 2:06 to go.

DeChellis bemoaned that Navy did not force the zone to collapse by getting penetration and missed several short shots on the occasions it was able to pass the ball to cutters in the paint. The Midshipmen shot just 11 free throws while the Terriers got 24.

"We didn't get to the free throw line and they did. One of the goals today was to play hard without fouling," DeChellis said. "We've got to get to the free throw line when we play against zones. We didn't do that at all today."

Navy has played eight of its 18 Patriot League games and will hit the halfway mark on Wednesday when it hosts first place Bucknell (13-8, 7-1). The Midshipmen play six of their final nine conference contests on the road.

"Now we're sitting at .500 in the Patriot League and we've lost two games at home. It's definitely not the way you want to start the first wave of Patriot League games," Kiernan said. "Now we've got to start stealing some away games."

DeChellis seconded that assessment: "We've got Bucknell, which has played the best out of everybody so far, coming here on Wednesday. Then you go on the road for four of the next five," he said.

Anderson, Dulin and Lacey headline a four-man senior class that is guaranteed just 11 more games.

"Time is wasting on these seniors. I've tried to tell them it's going to go like this and you're going to be down to just a few games," said DeChellis, snapping his fingers. "I've got to get our guys to play more consistent, and that's been very, very challenging."

After milestone victory, it's back to work for Navy's DeChellis

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | January 20, 2018

Ed DeChellis had planned to be a high school history teacher and coach after graduating from Penn State, where he played basketball and earned a degree in secondary education.

Penn State head coach Dick Harter, for whom DeChellis had played throughout his college career, had other ideas. Harter thought DeChellis had the mindset and aptitude to become a coach and convinced the 1982 graduate to stay in State College as a graduate assistant.

"I was 22 years old and didn't know what I was doing. Coach Harter told me I needed to be his graduate assistant so I did what my coach told me to do," DeChellis said.

More than three decades later, DeChellis has reached a major milestone -- earning his 300th career victory when Navy beat Lafayette, 75-72, on a buzzer beating 3-pointer by Bryce Dulin.

"Winning on a last-second shot is very, very exciting. I credit the players for executing very well in that situation. Bryce was able to come off a screen clean and get a wide-open shot," said DeChellis, who was unaware he had reached No. 300 until being informed afterward by Navy men's basketball publicist Matt Muzza.

"I think maybe down the road it will hit me. After the game, I was just excited for the players and thinking that we now need to get ready for Boston."

Navy's players knew this was a historic victory for DeChellis, who owns a 300-357 overall record in 22 seasons as a Division I head coach. The Midshipmen were chanting "300, 300, 300" when their 59-year-old mentor walked into the visiting locker room in Easton.

Dulin's 3-pointer lifts Navy over Lafayette "It's an incredible accomplishment. Coach D tried to play it down, but we went crazy in the locker room afterward because it's a really big deal," Navy senior captain Shawn Anderson said. "We just wanted to celebrate Coach D because there are so many times that he has celebrated us."

During the bus ride back to Annapolis, Navy assistant Jon Perry figured out that he has been part of 256 of the 300 wins. Perry played for DeChellis at East Tennessee State and has been part of his staff in some capacity for a total of 11 years.

"Ed is a pretty humble man and didn't want to

talk about winning his 300th game. He was already worried about beating Boston," said Perry, a member of the first recruiting class DeChellis landed at ETSU. "It is a big deal and largely the result of Coach DeChellis being an outstanding leader. I've been with Ed for 17 years now and he has constantly evolved as a head coach. He is always growing, learning and getting better as a coach."

BREAKING INTO THE BUSINESS

DeChellis was wondering if he made the right decision to turn down an opportunity to teach and coach at a high school in the Pittsburgh area after Harter was fired following the 1983-84 season. Bruce Parkhill took over as head coach and decided to retain the young graduate assistant, allowing DeChellis to complete a Master's degree in higher education.

DeChellis got his first full-time job in the business as an assistant at Salem College, an NAIA school located in West Virginia. He spent less than two years there before being summoned back to Happy Valley to serve as an assistant to Parkhill at Penn State.

All three of his children were born in State College during the decade that DeChellis spent assisting Parkhill, helping Penn State make the transition from the Atlantic 10 Conference to the Big Ten Conference. During that time, DeChellis said he never so much as applied for another job.

Needless to say, DeChellis was somewhat surprised when East Tennessee State athletic director Keener Fry called and asked if he would interview for the head coaching vacancy at the Southern Conference school. Dan Shoemaker, an ESPN television commentator who had gotten to know DeChellis through working Penn State games, had recommended the now veteran assistant.

DeChellis wound up being hired over a group of finalists that included former N.C. State star Derek Whittenburg, South Carolina assistant Jeff Lebo and Dave Hanners, a longtime assistant at North Carolina under legendary head coach Dean Smith.

In 1996, DeChellis took over an East Tennessee State squad that endured a 7-20 record the season before. Only one returning player was eligible so the rookie head coach basically was starting from scratch. He led the Buccaneers to a winning record (17-11) in year three then a Southern Conference championship and

automatic berth into the NCAA Tournament in 2003.

DeChellis, a two-time Southern Conference Coach of the Year, was inducted into the East Tennessee State University Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013. In an interesting twist, one of the key players that helped turn around ETSU under DeChellis was Greg Stephens, a talented transfer from the Naval Academy who became a two-time, first team All-Conference selection.

That ability to turn around a downtrodden program and put it on solid footing caught the attention of administrators at Penn State, who lured DeChellis back to his alma mater following a seven-year run at East Tennessee State.

REBUILDER OF PROGRAMS

Penn State was coming off consecutive seven-win seasons when DeChellis succeeded Jerry Dunn, with whom he had been an assistant under Parkhill. It was another complete rebuild for DeChellis, who was named the 11th head coach in program history in April, 2003.

DeChellis led the Nittany Lions to their first postseason appearance in five years during his third season at the helm. Penn State set a school record with 27 wins and captured the National Invitational Tournament championship in 2009 and DeChellis was named Big Ten Coach of the Year.

In 2010-2011, Penn State made its first appearance in the Big Ten Tournament championship game and earned the first trip to the NCAA Tournament in program history. Having spent eight years putting the Nittany Lions on sound footing, DeChellis was ready for a new challenge and surprised many by pursuing the Navy opening in 2011.

"I left Penn State with three years remaining on my contract and people thought I was crazy," DeChellis said. "I just wanted to see if I could build a program at a service academy. I knew it would be hard work, but I just thought it was something I would regret if I didn't try. So we took a leap of faith to come here."

DeChellis has further solidified his reputation as a program builder since arriving in Annapolis, snapping a streak of six straight losing seasons by leading the Midshipmen to a 19-14 mark in 2015-2016. Navy has increased its victory total in the Patriot League every season under DeChellis.

After milestone victory, it's back to work for Navy's DeChellis (Cont...)

"I've really enjoyed this experience at the Naval Academy and we're a lot better now than we were when I got here," DeChellis said. "I'm very enthusiastic because I know there is so much more we can get done. I wanted to see if I could lead a third program into the NCAA Tournament and I definitely think that can happen here at Navy."

Harter was a former Marine that DeChellis described as "very tough, very demanding." During five years under Harter as a player and graduate assistant, DeChellis learned a lot about organization and leadership.

Parkhill was 34 years old when he left William & Mary to replace Harter at Penn State. DeChellis was impressed by the thorough and meticulous nature of the former Lock Haven University three-sport standout.

Over the course of 12 years on the Penn State staff, DeChellis worked with numerous knowledgeable assistants. Brian Hill would become head coach of the Orland Magic while Jeff Bower is currently general manager of the Detroit Pistons.

"In Dick Harter and Bruce Parkhill I worked for two men who had their morals and values in the right place," DeChellis said. "I was also fortunate to be around some great assistant coaches who took me under their wing and helped me grow as a young coach."

Considering the state of the programs he inherited, it is rather remarkable that DeChellis has reached 300 wins. If you subtract the first three seasons at each of his three stops, DeChellis boasts a record of 214-183 (.539).

"I didn't start off saying I wanted to be a rebuild of programs. I just sort of fell into that niche and that's kind of what I've been known for doing," he said. "I've always embraced challenges. My goal has been to get programs to where they are very healthy and vibrant."

BLUE COLLAR BACKGROUND

That willingness to travel the hard road and take on jobs that were difficult is a testament to the upbringing DeChellis had in Monaca, a town located on the Ohio River some 25 miles northwest of Pittsburgh.

"Where I grew up in Western Pennsylvania wasn't easy. It was a hard life. My father and all my uncles were steelworkers. I worked in a

steel mill during the summers," said DeChellis, whose father died when he was 21. "Hard work was one of the values instilled by my parents and relatives. My father always told me that nothing worthwhile came easy."

Anderson was a junior at New Castle High when he heard that Navy lost to Division II Slippery Rock. Fast forward six years later and Anderson helped lead Navy to a season-opening upset of Pittsburgh from the Atlantic Coast Conference.

"This program has definitely come a long way under Coach DeChellis," Anderson said. "Coach D does a great job of recruiting guys that are blue collar and will fit into his system. He sets a great example by working tremendously hard. You won't find someone who watches more film than Coach D."

Perry, who served as video coordinator and Director of Basketball Operations at Penn State before being hired as a full-time assistant at Navy, believes the core coaching philosophies of DeChellis go back to his roots.

"Ed is a hard-nosed, hard-working guy. He was raised in a blue-collar part of the country and that will always be part of him. He is a real hard hat and lunch pail type of guy," Perry said. "Ed is a man of high integrity, someone I've looked up to as a role model as both a player and now a colleague. He has great loyalty to his players and assistants, which is a big reason why he's been so successful."

Perry believes players grow to respect DeChellis because he is a straight shooter that always tells it like it is.

"Ed's main focus is to help kids grow and he creates a great learning environment," Perry said. "I've been part of three programs with Coach DeChellis and he's always done a great job of developing a culture of trust. Family is a huge word for Coach D and it has been since I played for him at East Tennessee State. He's constantly pushing the players, but to be able to do that you need to have a great relationship. They have to trust you and believe in you."

For DeChellis, there has been one constant throughout 34 years of coaching college basketball. Kim DeChellis has been a devoted partner and unrelenting supporter of her husband, who certainly appreciates the sacrifices she has made. The couple has three grown children – 35-year-old Casey, 28-year-old Erin

and 26-year-old Lauren.

"Kim has been absolutely tremendous. This profession is really hard on wives because you're on the road so much and a lot of times when you're home, you're not really at home because your mind is elsewhere during season," DeChellis said. "My wife has been the glue that held the family together. There is a lot that I missed – dance recitals, birthdays, youth basketball games. My wife has been the rock in our family and I love her dearly for that."

DeChellis might be six years shy of being able to collect full Social Security benefits, but is a long way from wanting to retire. There is still much to accomplish at Navy and he will not rest until leading the program to a Patriot League championship and a berth in the NCAA Tournament.

"I'd say the days are longer, the bus rides are a bit harder and it takes three cups of coffee to get started in the morning," DeChellis said of coaching at his age. "I still enjoy developing relationships with players. I still enjoy watching film and coming up with a gameplan. I still enjoy the camaraderie with the staff. I still enjoy running a practice and preparing for games."

Former players and colleagues called or texted DeChellis on Thursday upon learning he had picked up his 300th career victory.

"I just feel very fortunate and blessed to have gotten the opportunity to build programs at three different places. It's been very, very gratifying and very, very worthwhile. I wouldn't trade the experiences I've had for anything," he said. "I cherish the relationships I've developed with the players at all three schools I've been."

Navy's Comeback Falls Short Against Army

Mike James | The Mid Report | January 15, 2018

By any measure, the Sunday's basketball game between Army and Navy shouldn't have been close. Navy shot 32% from the floor and was 4 of 22 from three-point range, while Army sank 52% of their field goals.

Navy (12-7, 3-3 Patriot League) made more of a game of it than they probably should have, but it wasn't enough as Army prevailed, 64-62, before a sellout crowd of 5,710 in Alumni Hall. Shawn Anderson led all players with 24 points, while Army's star freshman Alex King had 17 to lead the Black Knights (11-6, 4-2).

"Offensively, we didn't play well," said Navy head coach Ed DeChellis. "Defensively, we weren't horrible. You hold them to 62 points, you think you have a chance to win. They shot a high percentage, though."

"I was really pleased with our performance overall," said Army head coach Jimmy Allen. "I thought we did a lot of really good things.

"Especially in the first half, I thought that was a pretty solid effort by our guys executing what we want to do offensively, getting good shots, knocking them down, and just staying composed."

Army led by ten with 36 seconds remaining, but Navy mounted a furious comeback attempt. Anderson hit a jump shot with 29 seconds remaining to cut the lead to eight. The Mids quickly fouled Army's Jordan Fox, but the junior guard missed both of his foul shots. Anderson then made a three-pointer to pull Navy within five with 19 seconds left, and again Navy committed a foul to stop the clock. After Army's Tucker Blackwell converted his free throws to push the lead back to seven, George Kiernan was fouled after grabbing an offensive rebound. He sank his free throws, and Navy quickly committed another foul with seven seconds left. After King missed both free throws, Cam Davis hit a three-pointer to make it a two-point game with two seconds left. Navy appeared to foul Army again on the ensuing inbounds pass with less than a second remaining, but the officials ruled that time had run out, and the game ended.

Navy trailed by as many as 14 in the second half, but slowly crawled back into the game by converting 16 of their last 17 free throw attempts. DeChellis made a point to get to the free throw line after it became apparent that Navy was having a bad afternoon shooting the ball.

"We tried to get him [Anderson] to the line and have him drive the ball a little more," he said. "I thought George [Kiernan] just rebounded the darn ball hard and got fouled. That was important. That's kind of who we are. We're a rhythm three-point shooting team. When we drive and pitch we can step in and shoot, but we're not a knock-down, just run-sets-and shoot-threes team."

Navy scored the first six points of the second half, capped by a pick-and-roll from Dulin to Lacey with 18:45 remaining that cut the Army lead to six at 35-29. Jordan Fox ended Navy's run with his third three-pointer of the game, the first of eight straight points for Army that opened their lead back to 14.

"They really got after us," said Allen. "We knew that coming in. Coming out of the half, they're very aggressive. We were able to knock down some shots to stay in the lead."

Army had gone into halftime with a 35-23 lead. King scored seven of Army's first nine points to help the Black Knights open a 12-4 advantage in the game's opening minutes. A 7-0 run by the Midshipmen pulled them within three with 5:37 remaining, but Army answered with a 10-0 run of their own to push their lead to 15. A pair of Hasan Abdullah free throws cut Army's lead to 12 before the teams headed to the locker room.

King scored 15 of his 17 points in the first half, including three three-pointers. Allen praised the freshman's performance.

"Alex is a very talented basketball player; he's got a really high basketball IQ," he said. "He picks stuff up quickly. That's why he's been able to progress over the course of the year."

"He was on the scouting report, trust me," said DeChellis. "He led them in scoring. We talked about him for a day and a half, that he was a very good player that can shoot the ball."

The Black Knights' effectiveness from beyond the arc made it difficult for DeChellis to break Army's rhythm by switching from man-to-man to a zone defense.

"We wanted to mix defenses, but we got down," he said. "I didn't want to give them open threes."

It was Army's defense that set the tone early on, forcing five turnovers in the first 4:25 of the game. Navy made matters worse by missing five layups over the same span.

"We let them get their confidence going in the first half," said DeChellis. "We had a chance to make some easy shots, and we didn't."

"They do a great job of feeding their post guys," said Allen. "They do a great job of driving the ball into the paint. That was a big concern of ours, and a big emphasis going into the game. We've got to be able to keep these guys in front of us. We've got to keep these guys out of the paint."

DeChellis praised the effort of Anderson, who had received nine stitches in his nose after accidentally butting heads with an Army player. Anderson, though, felt that it was his responsibility as a senior to push the team to perform better.

"You're going to have nights where you don't shoot it well. But as a team, from me to the last guy on the bench, we just have to play harder. We have to increase our intensity.

"We have a really high ceiling, but we're not playing to our potential."

Freshman forward leads Army to wire-to-wire victory over Navy

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | January 15, 2018

And a child shall lead them.

That passage from the Old Testament seemed appropriate on a Sunday afternoon when a baby-faced freshman was the difference-maker in the Army-Navy men's basketball game.

Rookie forward Alex King caught fire in the first half and sparked the Black Knights to a lead they would never relinquish in handing the Midshipmen a humbling defeat on their home court.

King scored 15 of his 17 points in the first half and Army pretty much led wire-to-wire in beating Navy, 64-62, before a sellout crowd of 5,710 at Alumni Hall. The skinny 6-foot-8 Indiana native showed no nerves in his debut against the archrival, making 7 of 10 field goals with most coming on smooth jumpers from the perimeter.

"Alex is a very talented basketball player. He has a really high basketball IQ, picks stuff up very quickly, and I think that's why he's been able to progress over the course of the year," Army head coach Jimmy Allen said. "He came out and was pretty comfortable shooting the basketball. He got into the zone and gave us a huge lift."

King, who comes off the bench, entered the game tied for third on the team in scoring with 11.2 points per game. Navy head coach Ed DeChellis said his squad knew all about the Columbus North High graduate, who wore No. 32 on Sunday even though he normally wears No. 35.

"Trust me, (King) was on the scouting report. We talked about him for a day and a half, that he was a very good player and could score the ball," DeChellis said. "We let him get it going. King is a very good player."

Sophomore guard Tommy Funk scored 12 points to lead a balanced attack for Army, which never trailed. Junior guard Jordan Fox added 11 points for the Black Knights (11-6, 4-2), who shot 52.3 percent from the field for the game and led for a 38 ½ of the 40 minutes.

"I was really pleased with our performance overall. I thought we did a lot of really good things," Allen said. "In the first half we did a solid job of executing what we wanted to do. We were getting good shots and knocking them down. We also did a good job of just staying composed."

Senior swingman Shawn Anderson overcame a blow to the face to score 24 points for Navy, which fell behind by 15 points in the first half and trailed by double digits for much of the game. Anderson, who needed nine stitches to close a wound on his nose, went 10-for-10 from the free throw line in the second half.

Anderson, who has been bothered by nagging hip and knee ailments, also grabbed eight rebounds and snatched three steals.

"I'm really, really proud of Shawn considering what he's been through," DeChellis said. "It's been very hard on him because he hasn't been able to practice much, but I thought he played a whale of a game today and really kept us in it during the second half."

Junior forward George Kiernan came off the bench to total 13 points and nine rebounds for Navy (12-7, 3-3), which shot just 32 percent (19-for-59) and committed 18 turnovers. Senior forward Tom Lacey contributed nine points and nine rebounds for the Midshipmen, who were a woeful 4 of 22 from 3-point range.

"Offensively, we didn't play well. It's hard shooting 32 percent from the floor and 18 percent from three. We just couldn't score, couldn't make a basket," DeChellis said. "We had guys that play a lot of minutes shooting 1-for-7 and 1-for-8. It's amazing to me that we lost by two. Those numbers say you shouldn't even be in the game. So our kids did something right and I'm proud of them for that."

Niumatalolo announces that he will remain at Navy, passing on Arizona offer. Because of their shooting struggles, the Midshipmen did make a concerted effort get the ball inside – either by throwing it into the post players or taking it strong to the rim. Navy finished 20 for 22 from the foul line with Anderson and Kiernan (7-8) doing most of the damage.

"In the second half, I thought Shawn did a great job of driving to the basket and getting fouled," DeChellis said. "George just rebounded the ball really hard and got fouled."

Army forced a fast pace at times, but ultimately Allen thought Navy controlled the tempo. The Black Knights were held 10 points below their season scoring average and the final result was in the range the Midshipmen had hoped it would be.

"Defensively, we weren't horrible. You hold them to 64 points you think you have a chance

to win," DeChellis said. "They shot a high percentage though. Give credit to Army. They shared the ball, made open shots and beat us."

Navy made up for its poor shooting by attacking the offensive backboards. The Midshipmen finished with 19 offensive rebounds, which they turned into 13 second-chance points.

"As the game wore on, they were able to get the ball inside more and they really hurt us on the glass," Allen said. "They're a phenomenal offensive rebounding team – as good as I've seen – and gave us some major problems."

It was the first home loss in Patriot League play for Navy, which fell into a three-way tie for fifth place in the standings. The Midshipmen have been limited to 63 points or less in all three of their conference setbacks.

"As a team, from me to the last guy on the bench, we just have to play harder. I think we have to increase our intensity and it starts with the seniors," Anderson said. "I think the seniors need to start setting the tempo for what this team can do because we have a very high ceiling, but we're not playing to our potential."

King made 6 of 8 field goals, including three 3-pointers, in scoring 15 points to stake Army to a 35-23 halftime advantage. King's third basket from beyond the arc gave Army its largest lead (33-18) with 1:18 remaining in the half.

Lacey turned an offensive rebound into a follow basket, drew a foul and converted the three-point play to spark a 7-2 run that cut the deficit to 12 at intermission. Allen was pleased with Army's defensive effort in the first half, saying his players did a good job of not allowing Navy's guards to drive the ball into the lane.

"That was a big concern of ours and a big emphasis going into the game – that we had to keep their guys in front of us and keep them out of the paint," he said.

Navy came out strong to start the second half, using a quick 6-0 run to cut the deficit to six (35-29) at the 18:45 mark. Lacey had a steal and dunk then scored inside off a nice pick-and-roll with Dulin.

Fox responded with a 3-pointer to spark an 8-0 run that restored the Army lead to 14 points just over two minutes later. Navy answered with a 10-2 run in which all the points came from the foul line. Anderson went 8-for-8 from the charity stripe during the sequence as the

Freshman forward leads Army to wire-to-wire victory over Navy (Cont...)

Midshipmen got back within six at 50-44 with 6:22 to go.

However, Navy could not put more of a dent in the deficit over the next 5 ½ minutes amid a flurry of missed shots. The Midshipmen did mount a furious rally in the final minute and got within two with two seconds left after freshman Cam Davis drained a 3-pointer.

"I love my team's grit down the stretch. We keep fighting and keep fighting," DeChellis said.

Following a timeout, Army inbounded the ball to Fox and he appeared to be fouled with time still remaining on the clock, but the officials declared the game was over. DeChellis was miffed the officials did not look at the replay monitor to determine how much time was on the clock when Navy committed the foul in order to stop the clock.

"I didn't know what that was at the end of the game. They (referees) just ran off the floor and didn't say anything to anybody. So I have no idea what happened," DeChellis said. "I'd like to have an explanation of what it was. There was time left and somebody just blew the whistle and said the game was over."

Contrasting styles on display in Army-Navy men's basketball matchup

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | January 13, 2018

Sitting in the interview room of Alumni Hall on Thursday night, Ed DeChellis did not look or sound like a coach whose team had just won a hard-fought game.

Navy needed overtime to put away Holy Cross, a struggling team that has lost 12 of its last 14 contests. The Midshipmen had a second-half meltdown on offense, making just 5 of 22 field goals and scoring only 19 points.

It was an uneven performance that left DeChellis with numerous concerns. The seventh-year head coach had two days to get his ballclub ready for one of the biggest games of the season.

"We just have to improve and figure out a way to start playing better," he said.

Speaking after practice on Friday afternoon, DeChellis still seemed worried in advance of Sunday's showdown with archrival Army. Senior starters Shawn Anderson and Tom Lacey sat out practice with nagging injuries and DeChellis chose to keep the workout to just over an hour.

"It's hard to have a productive practice when key guys can't go," DeChellis bemoaned. "We're just not at full strength right now. We've got to get some guys healthy."

Lacey has been hampered by an ankle problem while Anderson has been slowed by a hip issue. DeChellis has carefully managed their minutes of late in hopes of speeding their recovery.

Meanwhile, Army comes to Annapolis with some confidence after posting a phenomenal second half performance during an 81-71 defeat of Lafayette on Thursday night. The Black Knights rallied from a 19-point deficit by outscoring the Leopards 55-28 after intermission.

"We just started executing the gameplan we had from the outset," Army head coach Jimmy Allen said of the big comeback. "It was great to see the team pull together and find a way to play solid basketball."

Struggling Army looks to gain revenge on Navy, which won all three meetings last season. However, Allen claims Army has its own issues caused by a lengthy layoff following the non-conference portion of the schedule. The Black Knights did not play a game for 12 days, taking five days off for exams then four days off

for Christmas.

"I don't know that we've played great since we came back from break," Allen said. "We've had to struggle and battle in league games to get where we are now."

Army (10-6, 3-2) and Navy (12-6, 3-2) are both in the thick of the Patriot League race, currently part of a three-way tie for third place. This marks the first time since 2010 the Black Knights and Midshipmen have entered one of their annual matchups with a winning record in the conference.

"It's definitely a big game in terms of standings. That being said, I don't think the records have ever mattered going into this game," DeChellis said. "There's a lot of anticipation, a lot of excitement on campus. We're expecting a tough, competitive game. This will be a slugfest."

This figures to be a battle of contrasting styles as Army prefers to press and run while Navy wants to turn it into a halfcourt grinder. The Black Knights are averaging almost 80 points per game, 10 more than the Midshipmen.

"Army is very talented offensively and can really score the ball. They want to press you and make you play faster," DeChellis said. "We have to take care of the ball. We can't turn the ball over against their pressure. We definitely cannot have turnovers that lead directly to baskets."

Allen, in his second season as Army head coach after previously serving as an assistant under predecessor Zach Spiker, agreed the pace of play will go a long way toward determining the outcome.

"It's been the same story since Ed has been there. Navy likes to slow the tempo and has done a good job of making this a low possession game," said Allen, a former Navy assistant under head coach Don DeVoe. "I do think that's a big key for us. We want to get the game going at a faster pace. There is no doubt the number of possessions will be important."

DeChellis owns an 8-6 record against Army since taking over as Navy head coach prior to the 2011-2012 campaign. However, the Midshipmen have lost the last two meetings with the Black Knights at Alumni Hall.

"We need to protect the home court. We haven't done that the last couple years against Army. For some reason, the visiting team has

been able to win in this series," said DeChellis, who will be seeking his 300th career coaching victory on Sunday.

Army is led offensively by junior guard Jordan Fox, who is scoring 14.9 points per game and shooting 48 percent from 3-point range. Fox teams with sophomore Tommy Funk to form a solid backcourt combination that has distributed a total of 172 assists.

"Jordan Fox is a premier guard in the league. He can really shoot the ball and does a good of creating for others," DeChellis said. "Together, Fox and Funk have an unbelievable assist-to-turnover ratio."

The Black Knights boast a solid big man in Matt Wilson, who leads the team in rebounding (6.1) and stands second in scoring (12.5). The 6-foot-9, 235-pound sophomore is shooting a sizzling 59 percent from the floor. Funk (10.1) and freshman forward Alex King (10.4) are also averaging double digits for points.

"Army has a lot of weapons and can score in a variety of ways. They are very balanced," DeChellis said. "They scored 55 points in the second half against Lafayette. We're not built that way right now. We don't want to be in the high 70s. A game in the 60s would be better for us."

Anderson leads Navy in scoring with 12.6 points per game and his ability to go full speed will be a crucial factor. Senior wing guard Bryce Dulin (11.3) and junior point guard Hasan Abdullah (10.7) are the only other Midshipmen averaging double figures.

"Navy has three very talented guards in Anderson, Dulin and Abdullah. We have seen on tape that they have all taken over games at times this season," Allen said.

Allen said Army cannot allow Navy to turn this game into a fist fight. He praised the Midshipmen for forcing opponents to earn every basket.

"Navy is just so tough, physical and aggressive on defense," he said. "We will have to run really good offense in the halfcourt set in order to get open looks."

Kiernan scores 13 as Navy knocks off Holy Cross, 61-56, in overtime

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | January 12, 2018

Navy's offense went into the tank during the second half of Thursday night's matchup with Holy Cross. The Midshipmen made just 5 of 22 field goals after intermission and that enabled the visitors to come back and tie the game.

Fortunately for the Mids, the offense came to live just in the nick of time.

Junior forward George Kiernan scored 13 points and sparked an impressive start to overtime as Navy knocked off Holy Cross, 61-56, in Patriot League men's basketball action before an announced crowd of 1,464 at Alumni Hall.

Junior point guard Hasan Abdullah and senior guard Bryce Dulin added 10 points each for Navy, which outscored Holy Cross 13-8 in the extra session. Senior forward Tom Lacey scored seven points and grabbed 12 rebounds for the Midshipmen (12-6, 3-2), who remained unbeaten at home in conference play.

"I'm very happy and feel very, very fortunate that we were able to win this game," Navy head coach Ed DeChellis said. "I thought we were okay in the first half – we shared the ball and made some shots. Second half, we didn't score. We just couldn't make a basket. It's hard to win when that happens."

Navy scored 13 points in overtime after managing only 19 in the second half. The Midshipmen made just 6 of 24 shots from beyond the arc and ultimately saved themselves by going 19-for-25 from the charity stripe.

"We just have no rhythm offensively right now," DeChellis said. "I don't have an answer offensively, but it's my responsibility to figure it out."

Kiernan opened overtime with a three-point play – scoring on a short shot in the paint, drawing the foul and making the free throw. That started a 7-0 run to start the extra session and put the Midshipmen in control.

"I was able to get the ball in the lane, kind of had the defender on my back, gave him a head fake, got the foul and was able to put it in," Kiernan said. "It was a good way to start the overtime. It was very important to get off to a good start in overtime and get a little cushion."

Holy Cross turned the ball over on the subsequent possession as freshman forward Matt Faw was called for a charging foul.

Dulin increased the home team's lead to five points by slicing into the teeth of the defense

and hitting a floater in the lane. A missed shot on the other end enabled Navy to add to the advantage with freshman guard Cam Davis driving past his defender and banking a left-handed shot into the basket to make it 55-48 with 2:22 left in overtime.

"In overtime we made some baskets, which was fun to see," DeChellis said.

Holy Cross would not go away with Charles and Copeland both hitting 3-pointers to keep the outcome in doubt. However, Navy made 6 of 8 free throws over the final minute to put the game away.

Junior forward Karl Charles scored 10 points to lead Holy Cross (4-12, 1-4), which has lost 12 of its last 14 contests. Austin Butler, Kyle Copeland and Jacob Grandison all had nine points for the Crusaders, who shot just 38 percent (19-for-50) from the floor and also committed 16 turnovers.

The Midshipmen shot 50 percent (10-20) from the field in the first half, but fell apart after intermission. Holy Cross is known for its effective 1-3-1 matchup zone and it bothered Navy in the second half.

"Well we missed a million shots. We had wide-open looks and couldn't get the ball in the basket," DeChellis said. "When you play against zone you have to make perimeter shots. You can't get the ball inside. We had open shots and couldn't make them."

Senior swingman Shawn Anderson's, Navy's leading scorer, scored eight points in just 24 minutes of action. Anderson played just nine minutes in the first half as DeChellis tried to preserve him for crunch time.

"Shawn Anderson is really hurting. His hip is really bothering him," DeChellis said. "I got him out of the game because he was just dragging his leg everywhere."

DeChellis thought Lacey, who has been hampered by a nagging ankle injury, looked comfortable for the first time in two weeks. The 6-foot-7, 235-pounder was more active on the court and had a couple huge offensive rebounds down the stretch.

"What I keep telling the guys is that the exciting thing about this team is that we haven't played our best. We have a high ceiling," DeChellis said. "We just have to improve and find a way to play better. Our seniors have to carry us

through."

Dulin scored seven points as Navy took a 29-23 halftime lead. Abdullah, Anderson and Kiernan had six points apiece for the Midshipmen, who led for just over 16 of the 20 minutes.

Abdullah made a pair of 3-pointers to spark a 10-0 run that gave Navy its largest lead of nine points, 29-20, with 1:03 remaining. Copeland made a three with 37 seconds left to send the Crusaders into intermission with some momentum.

Holy Cross started the second half strong, outscoring Navy 8-0 to take a 31-29 lead at the first media timeout (15:32). Davis hit a pullup jumper to tie the score 31-31 at the 13:00 mark and the two teams then went on an extended drought.

A back-and-forth flurry of missed shots and turnovers led to 3 ½ scoreless minutes before Butler nailed a 3-pointer from the top of the key to put the Crusaders back ahead by three. Nourse Fox scored on a driving layup and Anderson followed with a breakaway layup off a turnover as the Midshipmen briefly regained the lead, 35-34 at the 8:04 mark.

There would be two ties and six lead changes through the remainder of regulation. Junior guard Patrick Benzan forced the overtime by scoring his only points of the game to that point, driving strong to the basket for a short bank shot and drawing a foul. Benzan calmly made the free throw to tie the score at 48 with 50.3 seconds to go.

Holy Cross had an opportunity to win it in regulation, but Abdullah stole the ball from Benzan as he tried to drive the lane. Navy quickly called timeout with three seconds left to set up a final play of its own.

Fox threw a long inbounds pass that Lacey somehow ripped away from two defenders. Lacey tried to get off a 3-pointer under heavy pressure, but it fell way short of the basket as time expired.

"We wanted to keep the game under 70. We thought that would be to our advantage, and it was. We weren't able to finish the deal," Holy Cross head coach Bill Carmody said. "We had the ball with 13 seconds left and we turned it over. The guy's supposed to pass the ball and he kept driving it for some reason."

Dulin, Wieck lead way as Navy basketball completes 2-0 week at home

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | January 6, 2018

Head coach Ed DeChellis pointed out this week that Navy men's basketball plays the bulk of its home games during the first half of the Patriot League schedule. The Midshipmen are within the friendly confines of Alumni Hall for six of the initial nine conference contests.

It's a different story during the second half of the 18-game league slate with Navy on the road for six dates. Needless to say, the Midshipmen need to get some things done while the schedule is favorable, DeChellis said.

Thanks to a bounce-back game by Bryce Dulin and a superb shooting night from Evan Wieck, the Mids are off to a good start with regard to protecting the home court.

Dulin established a career-high with seven 3-pointers in scoring a game-high 23 points as Navy pretty much led from start to finish in beating struggling American, 70-64, on Friday night before an announced 1,178 at Alumni Hall.

"Tonight I was able to get open and spot up. Shawn (Anderson) and Hasan (Abdullah) were drawing defenders and finding me. I just had to knock the shots down," Dulin said. "Tonight, I just happened to be open and was feeling it."

Maryland guards' performances no solace after blowout loss to No. 1 Michigan State Dulin was coming off a subpar outing against Lehigh on Tuesday night when he was held scoreless on 0-for-3 shooting. The senior guard came out firing on Friday night and wound up doing almost all his damage from beyond the arc as the only other points came from the foul line.

"I'm a senior starter and I just need to give this team more. I talked to Coach (Kendrick) Saunders and he told me I need to do more and figure out ways to score," Dulin said. "Shawn and Hasan are creating opportunities and I've got to get open for them. I didn't do that last game and that's on me."

Dulin is Navy's second-leading scorer with 12 points per game, but has been limited to three points or less in four contests.

3-point shots: Observations and opinions from Maryland's 91-61 loss at Michigan State "As a senior, I can't put up three shots in a game. I need to come out and be more aggressive and more consistent," he said. "I can't keep having these up and down games. I've

got to be consistent throughout the season."

Wieck made 6 of 7 field goals in adding 13 points for Navy (11-5, 2-1), which won both its home games this week. The 6-foot-8 sophomore forward also grabbed five rebounds for the Mids, who took the lead 23 seconds into the contest and never relinquished it.

"I thought Evan was very good tonight. He's starting to come into his own a little bit," DeChellis said.

Senior point guard Hasan Abdullah scored 11 points and dished off six assists for Navy, which travels to Colgate on Monday before returning to Annapolis to host Holy Cross on Thursday and Army West Point the following Sunday.

"During the Patriot League season you've got to win your home games then try to steal some on the road," Dulin said. "We got stung at Loyola. We honestly did not play well, but still should have won that game. We had to use that as motivation and take care of our home court."

Senior swingman Shawn Anderson had a solid floor game with seven points, seven rebounds, four assists and three steals for Navy, which recorded assists on 19 of 25 field goals.

The Midshipmen continue to hurt themselves with poor free throw shooting – making just 9 of 18 attempts on Friday night. DeChellis bemoaned that a pair of seniors – Anderson and Dulin – were a combined 5 of 12 from the charity stripe. The seventh-year head coach was also not happy with the team's ball-handling in the second half.

"I thought we got sloppy with the ball in the second half. I thought our point guard play was not good," DeChellis said. We have 11 turnovers in the second half and most of them were unforced. We were just throwing the ball away."

Sophomore guard Sa'eed Nelson scored 18 points and distributed eight assists to lead American (3-11, 0-3), which suffered its fifth straight loss. Freshman forward Sam Iorio and junior guard Larry Motuzis contributed 14 and 13 points for the Eagles, who shot just seven free throws for the game.

Dulin scored all 15 of his points on threes as Navy took a 43-34 halftime lead. Dulin, who

only missed one shot, equalled a career-high for 3-pointers in a game during the first half.

Wieck went 4-for-4 from the field in netting nine points for Navy, which shot a sizzling 64 percent (16-25) prior to intermission. The Midshipmen had assists on 13 of 16 baskets with Abdullah and Dulin combining for nine dimes.

Dulin's fifth 3-pointer gave Navy its largest lead, 41-24, with 3:20 remaining. However, the Midshipmen were outscored 10-3 down the stretch as the Eagles got within single digits at the break.

American continued its comeback during the opening 10 minutes of the second half as the Navy offense suddenly went stagnant. Nelson was the catalyst with seven points as the Eagles used a 14-8 run to cut the deficit down to three – 51-48 with 10:53 remaining.

George Kiernan scored off a driving bank shot and Abdullah followed with a 3-pointer as Navy briefly repelled the rally, but the lead dwindled to three again a few minutes later.

Dulin drained his seventh 3-pointer and Tom Lacey converted a three-point play on the next possession as Navy rebuilt the lead to nine points with 3:48 to go. Lacey aggressively attacked the offensive glass to follow a missed shot by Kiernan then powered through a defender for a tough layup and drew a foul in the process.

American was held scoreless for five straight possessions and a pull-up jumper in the lane by Abdullah restored the advantage to double figures (66-55) with two minutes to go. However, Navy almost squandered that 11-point lead by missing some free throws, committing a couple turnovers and allowing American to make three 3-pointers down the stretch.

"We were sloppy with the ball and that bothers me. The last three minutes of the game bothers me. We didn't execute. Didn't take the ball out of bounds the way we're supposed to, didn't match up defensively," DeChellis said. "So I've got to get these seniors dialed in a bit more in terms of finishing the game. It's my fault. We need to work on late-game scenarios more in practice."

Freshman Davis playing like he belongs with Navy basketball team

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | January 5, 2018

Shawn Anderson performed a reverse pivot and drove to the basket left-handed. Navy's standout senior swingman, who had just scored seven points in the span of three possessions, was quickly swarmed by multiple defenders.

Anderson spotted freshman guard Cam Davis open in the corner and instinctively dished the basketball. It was crunch time during Tuesday night's game against Lehigh and the youngster could be forgiven if he did not want to shoot in that situation.

However, Davis did not hesitate, firing a 3-pointer that singed the nylon and gave Navy a 70-64 lead with 3:06 remaining. After the 78-66 victory, head coach Ed DeChellis called that clutch three "a dagger" and described Davis a "gutty freshman who plays like he belongs."

Davis certainly looked like a veteran during Tuesday night's victory, also making several pull-up jumpers in scoring a career-high 14 points. Speaking after practice the following day, the precocious plebe deflected credit for the breakout performance.

"I'm going to give credit to my teammates on this game. They told me I need to be more aggressive on offense. All the older guys always tell me that when you're open you have to let it fly," Davis said. "Whatever confidence and poise I have springs from my teammates, who have shown so much faith in me. Also, the coaching staff is making me feel like I belong by giving me a good amount of minutes."

Anderson takes over at crunch time, leads Navy to first Patriot League win
Davis saw a season-high 27 minutes of action on Tuesday night and helped offset a poor outing by starting wing guard Bryce Dulin, who went scoreless on 0-for-3 shooting. DeChellis was not surprised to see Davis deliver offensively the way he did in just his second Patriot League game.

"I was sitting in a staff meeting on Sunday saying we need to get Cam some more shots. He's a very skilled perimeter player who can shoot the basketball," DeChellis said. "We have seen in practice that Cam is always ready to catch-and-shoot. Confidence is a part of this kid's DNA."

Davis had reached double figures for scoring in just one previous game this season, netting 10 points in a rout of Division III Washington

College. The 6-foot-1, 185-pounder has scored nine points on two occasions and is averaging 4.7 per game.

DeChellis noted that after Tuesday night's display, Davis will now become more prominent on the scouting report prepared by upcoming Patriot League opponents.

"Teams in the league are going to know who Cam is now and will account for him in the defensive game-plan," DeChellis said.

Navy's coaching staff discovered Davis while recruiting another player from the same high school. Tyson Batiste wasn't interested in the Naval Academy, but thought his younger Kickapoo High teammate would be an ideal candidate.

Davis, a member of the National Honor Society and an Academic All-State selection, did some research and was impressed by what he learned about the service academy in Annapolis.

"Tyson asked if he could pass my name and number along to the Navy coaching staff and I'm so glad he did," Davis said of Batiste, who now plays at Central Connecticut State.

Assistant coach Emmett Davis called Davis the following week and convinced him to take a closer look by attending Navy's Elite Camp the following summer.

"Being here on campus was an eye-opening experience and I realized this was a great opportunity," said Davis, who was also recruited by Army West Point, Missouri State and Drake.

Adrian and Christina Davis both played college basketball at Missouri Science and Technology, a Division II school located in Rolla. Cam Davis said his parents provided tremendous support for sports and school, encouraging his love of basketball while stressing academics.

"I can remember countless times that my parents were in the gym late at night rebounding for me when I shot and teaching me little things about the game," he said. "I know their hope was that I could use basketball to get a great education so they were really excited when I committed to Navy."

DeChellis and Davis loved the pedigree of Davis, who led Kickapoo High to the Missouri Class 5 state championship game as a junior

and played for a powerful Amateur Athletic Union program in Mokane Elite.

Davis scored a team-high 17 points as Kickapoo lost to Chaminade in the state final, finishing with a 30-3 record for the 2015-2016 campaign. Chaminade got 40 points from 6-foot-9 forward Jayson Tatum, who is a rookie with the Boston Celtics after playing one season at Duke.

Kickapoo reached the state semifinals when Davis was a senior, falling to Webster Groves in a 58-57 thriller. That contest matched the two top-ranked teams in the Missouri Basketball Coaches Association Class 5 poll. Webster Groves was led by a pair of Division I recruits in guard Courtney Ramey (Louisville) and forward Carte'Are Gordon (St. Louis).

"Cam played very high level basketball. Kickapoo is one of the top high school teams in Missouri while his AAU program is probably one of the best in the country," DeChellis said. "You want guys that have been part of successful teams and played in championships because they know how to win."

Despite that impressive background, DeChellis was not sure what Davis could provide as a plebe. Toward the end of preseason practice, the seventh-year head coach had seen enough to insert Davis into the rotation from the outset.

"You never know what you're going to get out of a freshman at the Naval Academy. We saw pretty quickly that Cam was a very savvy player who could shoot and handle the basketball. We thought he was a young man that would go out and compete," DeChellis said. "Cam was very well-coached in high school so he had a very good base. He's pretty good defensively for a freshman, really understands the basic concepts and is usually in the right spot. Offensively, he plays within himself and at a really nice pace."

Davis has averaged almost 14 minutes per game and impressed the staff with his basketball smarts. He makes good decisions with the ball, evidenced by the fact he has committed just six turnovers in 15 games.

When Davis took his official visit to the Naval Academy he was hosted by another Missouri native in Bryce Dulin. Davis grew up in Springfield and remembers watching Dulin play for Nixa High, the namesake of a town located a half hour away.

Freshman Davis playing like he belongs with Navy basketball team (Cont...)

"I remember watching Bryce play when I was growing up because Nixa is big-time rivals with my high school," Davis said. "Bryce has become a big brother figure to me. He is a person that I really look up to on a lot of levels – just a tremendous individual with a lot of character."

Dulin has taken Davis under his wing and provided sage advice about how to succeed in Division I basketball and make it through the academy. Davis said going against Dulin in practice every day provided a "good barometer of how my game stacked up at this level."

"I came in optimistic that I could contribute, but did not have any expectations. I wanted to earn my minutes," he said. "If given an opportunity, I felt confident I could do things to help this team win."

Davis is far from a finished product and lists dribbling under pressure and off-ball defense as areas to address. He has played both point guard and wing guard so far this season and is still adjusting to the pace of play in the Patriot League, which features a lot of half-court grinders.

"I'm not trying to do too much. I just want to play my role and do whatever I can to help the team win. If that means diving on the floor for loose balls or just moving the ball on offense that is fine," Davis said. "Hopefully, I can improve in practice every day and strengthen my overall game. I want to work on my handle and get more consistent on defense."

Navy Basketball's Shawn Anderson Making a Difference On and Off the Court

Scott Lowe | Press Box Baltimore | January 4, 2018

Navy men's basketball head coach Ed DeChellis often cautions his team captain Shawn Anderson about trying to take on too much.

DeChellis advises Anderson to be certain that he isn't stretched too thin and can always perform at his highest level no matter what he pursues in life.

Anderson understands his coach's concerns but somehow he manages to juggle the strenuous requirements of the United States Naval Academy with the commitment of being an NCAA Division I student-athlete and his desire to make a difference in the community.

And he does it all very well.

"That's just his personality," said DeChellis, now in his seventh season at Navy. "He is a young man who tries to do it all. He does very well in school and for us on the basketball court, and now he strives to do well helping others. It's a credit to his parents and is part of his DNA and upbringing. He is a very giving young man who wants to help everybody. Sometimes the hardest thing is to just say no. There's only so much tread on the tire, so I just tell him that whatever he does to make sure he's able to do it well."

At one point a few weeks ago, Anderson, a 6-foot-4 senior guard from New Castle, Pa., was the only player in the Patriot League to lead his team in points, rebounds and assists.

That was before final exams and a bout with bronchitis that might have slowed him a bit, but through 15 games Anderson still led the Midshipmen in scoring at 12.7 points per game and assists (3.3) while ranking second in rebounding (5.7). Voted captain by his teammates last spring and a preseason All-Patriot League selection, Anderson led Navy to an impressive 9-4 nonconference record before the Midshipmen split their first two conference games against Loyola and Lehigh.

In addition to his basketball exploits, Anderson will receive his commission as an ensign in the Navy upon graduation. He also recently received his service assignment, Surface Warfare Officer, and will get to choose his ship in a few weeks.

"I'm hoping to be able to choose either a destroyer or some other type of amphibious ship, hopefully stationed in San Diego, so I can get out of the cold weather a little bit," Anderson

said. "I truly enjoy people. People can be exhausting to work with, but it can be tremendously rewarding if you stick with it. I'm going to be in charge of a division of people and get to know them and grow with them and go on deployments with them. Then, hopefully, I can find my way back to the Academy maybe as a teacher and to get my master's degree."

Working with people, teaching and giving back are themes that continue to surface in Anderson's life. A graduate of New Castle High School, Anderson and classmate Michael Geramita co-founded a nonprofit organization called Forever Red Hurricanes while still attending the school.

They initially launched a program called Canes Coats for Kids, which solicits donations from the community to provide warm coats for children in need. That was just the beginning, though as the foundation since has created a mentoring program called Transitioning for Success, which helps sixth-grade students with the often-difficult transition from elementary to junior high school, and is now developing a program to work with kindergartners in the New Castle area.

While Anderson has been away at college for the coat drive since graduating, he has assembled a group of younger volunteers to take leadership roles in the organization and continue its efforts.

Most college students look forward to a little relaxation during the summer, but Anderson requests leave after his classes conclude in May so he can return home to continue his work in the community, meeting with volunteers and speaking to the kids the foundation touches.

"We want the kids of New Castle to see what we are doing and aspire to do more," Anderson said. "Whatever they want to do, we want to help them get to the next level and encourage them to be strong and always strive to do better. A lot of kids didn't have role models when we were growing up. We had a father and mother who always encouraged us to do great things, but not every kid in New Castle has that. That was huge and meant the world to us. We want to be that person in their lives."

As Anderson's career at Navy winds down, he believes his success on the court might come as a surprise to many back home. Anderson was the tallest player on his team in high school and was used as an undersized center.

"When you look at where I came from in New Castle to what my role is here, I don't think anyone in New Castle would have thought I'd be in the position," Anderson said. "I'm blessed to be here, and I just try to play as hard as I can night in and night out and do what the coaches ask me to do and what the team needs me to do to win."

His coach recognizes and appreciates the hard work it has taken for Anderson to be an impact player at the Division I level.

"He was a 6-3 or 6-4 center when we first saw him," DeChellis said. "It was obvious that he had a great work ethic and was really well-coached. He worked really hard and could catch and pass. Really we just had to work on his perimeter skills. He's definitely made a huge transformation at both ends of the court and become a very good player for us."

That work ethic has made Anderson an impact player both on and off the court.

Anderson takes over at crunch time, leads Navy to first Patriot League win

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | January 2, 2018

Shawn Anderson was having a miserable outing through 32-plus minutes. Navy's standout swingman was scoreless on 0-for-9 field goal shooting with just under eight minutes remaining in the game.

However, Anderson was undeterred by those struggles and did what a senior captain should when the outcome hangs in the balance.

Anderson took over and scored seven points on three straight possessions to give Navy the lead for good in a back-and-forth battle with visiting Lehigh.

Anderson scored all 11 of his points down the stretch as Navy broke open a close game and pulled away to a 78-66 win before an announced audience of 632 on Tuesday night at Alumni Hall.

Junior forward George Kiernan scored a career-high 27 points to lead Navy (10-5), which evened its record in the Patriot League at 1-1. Junior point guard Hasan Abdullah scored all 17 of his points in the second half for the Midshipmen, who made 20 of 23 free throws in the contest.

"Down the stretch they started to key in on George and Hasan because they were having great games. So it kind of opened up some areas for me, and my teammates kept encouraging me to be aggressive and look to create," Anderson said.

In years past, Anderson might have stopped shooting after starting a game with nine straight missed field goals. As a senior leader and the team's top scorer, the 6-foot-4 guard knows he cannot simply disappear.

"You have to be resilient and you have to keep pushing. You just have to stay patient. There's no reason to get down on yourself. Everyone has bad games and you just have to keep plugging away."

Anderson also grabbed seven rebounds and dished off a five assists. Head coach Ed DeChellis was pleased his captain found other ways to help the team.

"Some nights you don't have it shooting the basketball so you have to do other things," said DeChellis, who credited assistant coach Jon Perry with making sure Anderson got more touches down the stretch.

"Shawn came up big at the end. He took defenders off the dribble and hit a few baby jump shots. I was happy to see him step up like that," DeChellis said.

Freshman guard Cam Davis hit some big shots in the second half in adding 14 points for Navy, which outscored Lehigh 25-10 over the final 7:51 after Anderson got going. Davis sank a 3-pointer from the corner with 3:03 remaining to spark the game-ending run.

"Cam hit that one three in the corner, which was the dagger," DeChellis said. "He's a tough kid who doesn't flinch. He's a gummy little freshman who plays like he belongs."

Cohen finished with 17 points to lead Lehigh (6-7, 1-1), which failed to score on its final seven possessions. Sophomore forward Pat Andree made four 3-pointers in netting 12 points for the Mountain Hawks, who shot just 33 percent (11-for-33) from the field in the second half.

"Defensively, I thought the zone was very good for us tonight. I thought we really defended well in the second half," DeChellis said. "In the first half they were really taking us off the dribble. We didn't do a good job of containing the ball. So we went to the zone to try to keep them somewhat off-balance."

Lehigh head coach Brett Reed was disappointed to see his squad allow Navy to score 47 points on 57 percent shooting in the second half.

"In the second half we did a poor job of containing the dribble penetration by Navy's guards, particularly Abdullah," Reed said. "When you give up 47 points in a half that puts a lot of pressure on your offense. Unfortunately, our offense hit a cold spell at a critical time."

Navy was in danger of enduring its first three-game losing streak of the season and starting 0-2 in the Patriot League. Considering the circumstances, it was somewhat of a must-win for the Mids.

"It was a really, really important game for us. We couldn't go down 0-2 if we have plans on hosting the tournament here," Kiernan said. "That's our goal. We want the Patriot League championship to go through Alumni Hall."

Kiernan certainly did his part, making four 3-pointers and finishing 11-for-14 from the free

throw line. The 6-foot-7, 225-pounder easily surpassed his previous career-best of 18 points.

"Honestly, shooting the ball is pretty easy when you are getting great looks and are in great rhythm thanks to the guys who were creating," Kiernan said. "We knew they were going to key in on Shawn and Bryce. They were really holding them tight on the ball screens, which allowed me to get free."

Kiernan's 11 made foul shots were also a career-high and he matched Anderson with seven rebounds for good measure.

"Trying to get to the free throw line more is something the coaches have challenged me with," Kiernan said. "I want to be one of the best free throw shooters on the team. I'm kind of bummed that I missed three."

Senior guard Bryce Dulin, Navy's second-leading scorer, missed all three shots he took in being held without a point. It ultimately did not matter as Kiernan and Davis helped the Mids score 43 bench points.

"We had tremendous play off the bench from George Kiernan and Cam Davis. That's why we're a team," DeChellis said. "Bryce Dulin didn't play very well tonight. Shawn Anderson didn't have one of his better nights. Other guys stepped up and we found a way to win the game."

Navy received good news on two fronts prior to its Patriot League home opener.

First, the Midshipmen learned that starting power forward Tom Lacey would be able to play. Lacey, who sat out Friday night's loss at Loyola with a recurring ankle injury, had been a game-time decision.

Navy then found out that Lance Tejada, one of Lehigh's starters, would not play due to an ankle injury. The East Carolina transfer is the Mountain Hawks' leading scorer with 14.3 points per game.

DeChellis knew Lacey's availability would help Navy in the defense and rebounding departments. However, the 6-foot-7, 235-pound senior provided an early lift on offense by scoring five quick points, knocking down the first 3-pointer of his career.

Neither of those apparent advantages bene-

Anderson takes over at crunch time, leads Navy to first Patriot League win (Cont...)

fitted Navy during the first half. Jordan Cohen, who started in place of Tejada, caught fire in the first half and carried Lehigh. Meanwhile, Lacey, who was wearing a bulky brace on his ankle, played limited minutes and did not do much after that initial outburst.

Cohen scored 15 of his points in the first half as Lehigh took a 35-31 lead into intermission. Cohen made 5 of 7 field goals, including a pair of 3-pointers, for the Mountain Hawks, who led by seven on a couple occasions.

Kiernan achieved his career-high by halftime with 21 points on the strength of 8-for-10 free throw shooting.

Abdullah, who was held scoreless in the first half, came out much more aggressive to start the second half and scored seven points in the opening minute and a half. Abdullah drained a trey from the wing then made consecutive driving bank shots as the Mids regained the lead, 38-37 at the 18:21 mark.

"Hasan didn't do much in the first half at all. He was just kind of out there," DeChellis said. "He's a good basketball player and needs to play like a good basketball player. He's a point guard that can score and showed that in the second half."

Lehigh responded immediately, converting consecutive three-point plays to reclaim a five-point lead. Caleb Bennett's strong drive and subsequent free throw made it 43-38 with 15:50 remaining.

However, Navy quickly answered with a 13-3 run to take a five-point lead of its own. Davis hit three pull-up jumpers to key the run, which Kiernan closed out with a 3-pointer that gave the Mids their largest lead of the game at 51-46 with 11:02 to go.

It didn't take Navy long to give up that advantage as Andree swished back-to-back 3-pointers from the left corner to put the Mountain Hawks back ahead by three. There would be two more ties before the Midshipmen took the lead for good, 65-61 at 4:42, courtesy of Anderson's personal 7-0 run.

"I didn't think we started very well, but we surely finished well. We really made some nice basketball plays over the last four or five minutes," DeChellis said. "It was a very important game. There was pressure because kids know you can't go down 0-2 in the league."

Navy seeks to shore up defense going into Patriot League home opener

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | January 1, 2018

Ed DeChellis has preached defense as the foundation of Navy men's basketball since taking over as head coach in 2011.

It seems the Midshipmen have forgotten that mandate over the last month or so.

Defense has become an issue for Navy, which plays its Patriot League home opener on Tuesday night against Lehigh. DeChellis has devoted considerable practice time to improving the defense in the wake of Friday night's 72-63 loss at Loyola.

The Midshipmen allowed the Greyhounds to shoot 60 percent from the field and gave up 38 points in the paint. DeChellis was particularly displeased with the team's perimeter defense that allowed Loyola guards Andre Walker, Chuck Champion and Isaiah Hart to combine for 51 points.

Walker leads way as Loyola snaps six-game losing streak to Navy

"I thought our ball screen defense was not very good. That is why the Loyola guards had a field day," DeChellis said following Monday's practice. "I don't think we contained the ball very well. We allowed them to penetrate and get to the basket. I was really disappointed in that. We went back to work today on how to stop the ball."

Navy needs to get better in that department in a hurry as Lehigh also employs considerable ball screens as part of its offense. Senior point guard Kahron Ross is similar to Walker in terms of having the speed and quickness to turn the corner and take the ball to the basket.

"Kahron Ross is just like Andre Walker in driving the basketball and Lehigh uses a lot of ball screen action to get him going north-south," DeChellis said.

Junior guard Kyle Leufroy is another dangerous penetrator for Lehigh, which has a pair of outstanding spot-up shooters in junior guard Lance Tejada and sophomore forward Pat Andree.

Navy's coaching staff went back to the basics with regard to teaching ball screen defense during the three practice sessions held since Friday's defeat. There are several key factors involved whenever the opponent uses a post player to set a pick for a teammate dribbling the ball.

"Whoever is covering the screener has to hedge out so the guard cannot get downhill," DeChellis said.

In other words, Navy's big men have to step forward and effectively cut off the man with the ball to prevent penetration. There is a certain art to hedging because the defender must also maintain contact with the man setting the screen.

On Friday night, Navy post players such as sophomore Evan Wieck, freshman Tyler Riemersma and junior Mo Lewis did not step out strongly enough to stop the ball-handler.

"We did it wrong about four or five times out of a dozen. Unfortunately, most of those mistakes came at crunch time," DeChellis said.

DeChellis put some of the blame on Navy's perimeter defenders that were covering Loyola's guards that were using the ball screens. Lack of communication also played a role as the Midshipmen were sometimes not made aware of the impending pick.

"The first thing we teach our guys is that when you are getting screened you need to know it's coming and increase your effort," DeChellis said. "It's important for our perimeter defenders to have the awareness to go under those screens and get back in front of the ball. Also, our posts need to do a better job of calling the screen earlier."

For the most part, Loyola's screen action was designed to get Walker, Champion and Hart into the lane or all the way to the basket. Meanwhile, Lehigh has numerous plays designed to get the ball to the player who set the screen for the dribbler.

"You have to be able to cover the screen-and-roll or the pick-and-pop," DeChellis said. "Whoever sets the screen is either going to cut to the basket or step outside looking for a pass."

Navy's ball screen defense on Friday night was hampered by the absence of senior forward Tom Lacey, who is very adept at hedging and communicating. Lacey missed the Patriot League opener with an ankle injury and is questionable for Lehigh on Tuesday night.

DeChellis said Lacey will be a game-time decision after the coaching staff evaluates his mobility during warmups at Alumni Hall.

Navy (9-5) is giving up almost 68 points per game and allowing opponents to shoot nearly 45 percent from the field. Neither of those figures is acceptable to DeChellis, who noted the team's defensive woes initially surfaced in late November.

"This isn't something that has just crept on us. I've been after this team for a few weeks about playing better defense," the seventh-year head coach said. "Our players need to put the lunch pail in their hands again and go to work. We have to get back to playing five versus the ball. I'm very anxious to see how we defend Lehigh because that is going to be a challenge."

Navy also must do a better job of executing the defensive game-plan. DeChellis pointed out that stopping Loyola's three guards – Walker, Champion and Hart – was at the top of the scouting report.

"You've got to be able to defend the players that score for a particular team," he said. "We've been letting the key scorers get their average or better."

On Tuesday night, that means stopping Tejada (14.3 points per game), Ross (13.3) and Leufroy (11.4).

Walker leads way as Loyola snaps six-game losing streak to Navy

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | December 29, 2017

BALTIMORE - Cam Gregory's two-handed slam in the waning seconds symbolically ended three years worth of frustration for Loyola men's basketball against conference rival Navy.

The Midshipmen swept the two-game series with the Greyhounds for three straight seasons.

Senior guard Andre Walker scored 18 points to lead three players in double figures as Loyola snapped a six-game losing streak to Navy with a 72-63 victory in the Patriot League opener for both schools on Friday night at Reitz Arena.

"Yea, we haven't beaten Navy since my first year as head coach. That was kind of a mental roadblock for us," Loyola head coach G.G. Smith said. "They've had our number the last three years. We finally beat Navy and it feels good."

Sophomore guard Chuck Champion scored 17 points for Loyola (3-9), which earned just its second win against a Division I opponent this season. Freshman guard Isaiah Hart added 16 points for the Greyhounds, who shot a sizzling 60 percent (27-45) from the field for the game.

"I thought defensively we were really poor tonight. We couldn't guard the ball and we didn't execute ball screen defense at all," Navy head coach Ed DeChellis said. "I thought we had to control Walker, Hart and Champion and we didn't do that. Our perimeter guys didn't do a good job of guarding."

Gregory's emphatic slam with 18 seconds remaining put the game away and gave him eight points and four rebounds on the night. The Greyhounds made their free throws down the stretch and finished 13-for-19 from the charity stripe.

"They punched us midway through the second half and we punched back. We showed some toughness and some poise," Smith said. "I thought the guys grew up tonight and really showed some character with the way they fought back and finished."

Walker, a first team All-Patriot League pick a year ago, has struggled somewhat this season. The 6-foot, 173-pound New York native scored 12 of his points in the second half while making 8 of 10 free throws and delivering three assists.

"Andre has been up and down so far this season. This is Patriot League time and he's an all-league player for a reason," Smith said. "I thought Andre really took over in the second half. He made some big shots, got to the free throw line and showed a lot of leadership."

Junior point guard Hasan Abdullah scored 16 points and dished off three assists for Navy (9-5), which has lost two straight after having a five-game winning streak snapped. Senior swingman Shawn Anderson scored 14 points for the Midshipmen, who hurt themselves by making just 9 of 17 shots from the foul line.

"We couldn't hit our free throws again and we made so many silly mistakes. We just don't make the easy basketball plays," DeChellis bemoaned.

There were four ties and eight lead changes during the second half before Loyola took control. A rare taunting call on Anderson turned the tide in favor of the home team. Anderson had made a bank shot in the lane and was fouled, but was whistled for getting in the face of a Loyola player.

Walker made two free throws on the other end before Anderson completed the three-point play and the result was that Loyola took the lead for good, 60-59 with 4:08 remaining.

"It's a big play. Shawn is a senior and should know better," DeChellis said. "He made a good move, scored the ball and got fouled, but then says something to one of their kids. That's the silly stuff I'm talking about and Shawn was made aware of that afterward."

Walker made a driving layup, was fouled and converted a three-point play of his own to put the Greyhounds ahead by four, 63-59, with 3:03 to go. Junior forward George Kiernan took an ill-advised 3-pointer on Navy's next possession and that proved costly.

Freshman Sam Norton scored off a driving layup on the ensuing possession to increase the advantage to six and the Greyhounds made three of four free throws in the final minute to put the game away.

Norton, a walk-on from the Hill School in Collegeville, Pennsylvania, provided a big lift with career-highs of nine points and five rebounds. Loyola put the 6-foot-4, 161-pound youngster in the middle of Navy's 2-3 zone and he promptly went to work.

"Sam, even though he's a walk-on, is one of our smarter players. He's really good at the four spot in the zone. He gets the ball moving and makes good plays," Smith said. "Sam can finish at the rim, shoot a mid-range jumper and make good decisions with the ball. He's a guy that is going to help us win because he makes the right plays out there."

Sophomore forward Evan Wieck totaled nine points and seven rebounds for Navy, which was without senior starter Tom Lacey. The 6-foot-7, 235-pound power forward, who leads the team in rebounding, sat out the contest with an ankle injury.

Navy clearly could have used Lacey on the backboards, getting out-rebounded 25-21. DeChellis felt his presence was also missed on the defensive end.

"Tom would have helped with ball-screen defense because he's a guy that really talks and communicates," DeChellis said.

Cam Gregory scored off an offensive rebound to give Loyola an 18-10 lead at the 11:20 mark of the first half. Abdullah scored on consecutive driving moves while Wieck made a pair of layups off nice assists from Riemersma as Navy used a 12-5 run to get back within one with 7:41 to go.

"I didn't think we played with a whole lot of energy to start the game. They were able to get very comfortable and banged six out of their first seven shots," DeChellis said.

Navy cut the deficit to one on three more occasions before finally taking its first lead of 31-29 on an Abdullah 3-pointer with 1:37 remaining. Walker swished two free throws with 32.1 seconds on the clock to tie the score at 31 going into halftime.

Champion scored nine points while Hart had eight to lead Loyola, which led for almost 18 of 20 minutes in the first half. Abdullah netted nine points while Dulin added seven for Navy, which scored 20 points in the paint.

Navy came out and knocked down a pair of 3-pointers early in the second half, taking a 37-33 lead and sending Smith into a tirade. Loyola's fourth-year head coach called timeout and angrily got after his squad for its defensive breakdowns.

The Greyhounds responded to the admonishment, outscoring the Mids 7-2 to retake the lead (40-39) at the 14:57 mark. It was back-and-forth the rest of the way with neither team able to build more than a three-point lead for the next 12 minutes.

"We do a good job of fighting our way back and getting a four-point lead in the second half and we just make mistake after mistake after mistake," DeChellis said. "We're a team that has to play great defense and rebound the ball. We didn't do either and that is how you get beat."

Navy basketball teams open Patriot League play on Friday night

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | December 28, 2017

Navy's basketball programs open Patriot League play on Friday night with the men traveling to Loyola Maryland and the women hosting the Baltimore school.

Both ballclubs are coming off successful non-conference campaigns with the women compiling a stellar 10-1 record and the men checking in at 9-4.

Navy men's basketball closed the non-conference schedule on a disappointing note, losing to visiting Lipscomb on Dec. 21. The Midshipmen had three players foul out and watched the Bison make 19 of 26 free throws with many of those coming down the stretch.

"We didn't play very well and didn't do the things we talked about doing, which is frustrating," Navy head coach Ed DeChellis said. "We had way too many fouls and did not execute at crunch time. So we have a lot of work to do."

Navy may be without starting power forward Tom Lacey on Friday night. The 6-foot-7, 235-pound senior, who is averaging 9.9 points and a team-high 5.8 rebounds, suffered a sprained ankle against Lipscomb and was unable to practice on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"Tom plays with a lot of physicality and is a real factor defensively and on the board so that would be a real loss if he can't go," DeChellis said.

DeChellis said junior George Kiernan would likely start in Lacey's place while classmate Mo Lewis and freshman Tyler Riemersma would see more playing time off the bench.

Navy posted the best record of any Patriot League member during non-conference play with Army West Point (7-4) the only other program with a winning record. Loyola, under the direction of fourth-year head coach GG Smith, went 2-9 against a challenging schedule.

"I don't get caught up in records. I think the team we're playing a pretty good team on Friday night. I think Bucknell, Boston and Army are all very good. I think this league is going to be one heck of a battle," DeChellis said. "The Patriot League season is upon us and we have to find a way to start playing our best basketball. This is the second season and every game counts."

Loyola has been beset by injuries and only two members of the projected rotation have played

in all 11 games. Standout forward Bernard Chancellor has yet to appear in a game while three starters – sophomore swingman Chuck Champion, sophomore shooting guard Andrew Kostecka and senior point guard Andre Walker — have all missed multiple contests.

"Loyola has not been at full strength for most of the season. They got everyone back against Drexel and won that game then went toe-to-toe with a very good Memphis squad," DeChellis said. "Loyola is a very talented team with tremendous athleticism on the perimeter."

Navy time off for the holiday break before resuming practice on Tuesday of this week. The Midshipmen do not resume class until Jan. 9.

"We have no class for the next 10 days so we can put all our energy and effort into basketball for a while," DeChellis said.

Navy has won three straight games on Loyola's home court of Reitz Arena, a trend DeChellis is hoping continues.

"We like the shooting atmosphere there because it's a lot like our practice facility. It's a similar backdrop with the walls close to the basket," he said.

Champion leads Loyola in scoring with an average of 17.7 points in six games. Senior forward Cam Gregory, one of the two Greyhounds who have played in all 11 contests, is second in scoring (14.3) and tops the team in rebounding (10.1). Kostecka (12.1), Walker (11.4) and freshman guard Isaiah Hart (10.5) are also averaging double digits in scoring.

Senior swingman Shawn Anderson leads Navy in scoring with 12.8 points per game and is tied with Lacy for the rebounding lead (5.8). Senior guard Bryce Dulin (12.2 ppg) is the only other player scoring in double figures for the Midshipmen, who are averaging almost 15 turnovers per game.

"We need to take better care of the ball. We're making too many careless passes," DeChellis said. "We also need to shore up our defense. We have to find a way to play hard without fouling."

Navy closes non-conference schedule with hard-fought loss to tough Lipscomb squad

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | December 22, 2017

Navy men's basketball could not have asked for a better test to close out the non-conference portion of the schedule.

Head coach Ed DeChellis picked up a tough opponent in Lipscomb, the preseason pick to finish as runner-up in the Atlantic Sun Conference. The Bison came to Annapolis seeking the best start in program history during the NCAA era.

The Midshipmen received just the type of challenge they were expecting, falling behind early and having to play catch-up most of the way.

Junior guard Garrison Mathews and junior forward Rob Marberry led the way as Lipscomb took it to Navy from start to finish to earn a hard-fought 73-64 win on Thursday night at Alumni Hall.

"It was a tough and gutty effort, and it has to be if you're going to beat Navy," Lipscomb head coach Casey Alexander said. "That's a good team that is playing with a lot of confidence. I thought our guys were well prepared and played really hard. We're really pleased to get out of here with a win."

Mathews made 8 of 11 field goals and 8 of 9 free throws in scoring a game-high 27 points for Lipscomb (9-4). Marberry, a rugged 6-foot-7 left-hander, did most of his damage down low in draining 8 of 11 field goals and netting 19 points. Junior forward Matt Rose added 12 points for the Bison, who made 19 of 26 shots from the charity stripe.

"Lipscomb, as I tried to portray to our players, is a very good basketball team. I really believe that would be an upper level Patriot League team," DeChellis said of the visitors, who lost to Alabama and Tennessee when both were ranked and also fell at Texas. "I'm proud of our team. I thought we fought hard. We just didn't play very smart basketball, very crisp basketball."

Senior guard Bryce Dulin drove the ball strong to the basket in scoring 15 points for Navy (9-4), which was trying to match its best start since the 1998-99 season. Senior forward Tom Lacey notched his second double-double of the season with 12 points and 11 rebounds for the Midshipmen, who had a five-game winning streak snapped. Senior swingman Shawn Anderson, Navy's leading scorer, was limited to nine points on 3 of 12 field goal shooting. Starting point guard Hasan Abdullah also

managed only nine points on 2-for-11 field goal shooting for the Midshipmen, who committed 17 turnovers in the contest.

"If you look at the numbers, we had some of our better players not play very well tonight," DeChellis said. "In order to be successful and beat a team like Lipscomb, we need everybody playing pretty good."

Anderson went 1-for-10 in the first half, missing all five of his 3-point attempts. Navy had an 11-day layoff between games as the players focused on exams and DeChellis thought the overall lack of practice time showed.

"Shawn looked exhausted. That is what happens when you don't practice for several days," he said. "Shawn hasn't taken five threes in a game all year and all of a sudden he's going to take a bunch of threes. We just did some things out of character and weren't very sharp."

Mathews scored on consecutive breakaway layups early in the second half to stake Lipscomb to its largest lead of the game, 45-32, at the 17:15 mark. Backup forward George Kiernan responded with a 3-pointer from the corner and a baseline jumper to spark a 20-5 run that enabled Navy to take a 52-50 lead with 9:46 remaining.

Lipscomb had held the lead for almost 20 minutes to that point, but it would be back-and-forth the rest of the way. The Bison regained the advantage on consecutive 3-pointers by Mathews and the Midshipmen responded with a 6-0 run capped by a Dulin layup that made it 58-56 with 7:33 to go.

Mathews drained 2 of 3 free throws after getting fouled on a 3-point attempt and that put Lipscomb ahead to stay, 60-58 with 4:56 left. Lacey got an inside shot blocked by Marberry while Anderson committed a charging foul as Navy come up empty on two crucial possessions in the final five minutes.

"Honestly, I think they just had a little more umph than us," Dulin said. "This will definitely prepare us for the Patriot League. We're going to have a lot of close games in the conference, that's just how it goes."

Mathews made a bank shot from the low block and the Bison drained 11 of 12 free throws down the stretch to preserve the victory. Mathews, who went 6-for-6 from the foul line in the final 3:12, scored 22 of his 27 points in the

second half.

"Garrison is our best player and may be the player of the year in our league," Alexander said. "When we needed scoring down the stretch, he wanted the ball and delivered. He was big for us all night."

Navy had three players – Anderson, Kiernan starting forward Evan Wieck – foul out. The Midshipmen had not had a single player foul out of a game this season. Making matters worse was the fact Lacey had to leave the game with an ankle injury with 1:48 remaining.

"It's really hard to finish the last four minutes of the game without Tom, without Shawn, without Evan and without George. It's just really, really challenging," said DeChellis, adding that Lacey has battled a recurring ankle injury of late.

"Quite honestly, there's five minutes to go in the game and we're right there and I'm thinking 'If we can somehow get out of this thing it would be amazing.' All of a sudden people start fouling out and we're playing the last three minutes with guys that aren't used to being in that situation," DeChellis added.

Marberry made 6 of 7 field goals in scoring 13 points as Lipscomb took a 37-29 halftime lead. Rose came off the bench to drain 3-points on three consecutive possessions as the Bisons took an eight-point lead at the 13:16 mark. Lacey scored eight points and it was his tap-in that capped a 14-4 run and gave Navy a 27-25 lead with 4:46 remaining. Marberry and Cooper scored four points apiece as Lipscomb closed the half on a 12-2 run to restore its eight-point lead.

"We pride ourselves on defense and we didn't get the job done on defense in the first half," Dulin said. "I think the good thing about tonight is that we showed a lot of fight. They got up and we fought back, which is huge. At the same time, we can't keep digging ourselves holes in the first half. We have to learn how to come out and play a 40-minute game."

Navy will take four days off for the holidays before resuming practice next Tuesday in preparation for the Dec. 29 Patriot League opener at Loyola.

"I'm proud of our kids. I think they need some time off. We'll look forward to getting back to work after Christmas," DeChellis said.

These 12 college basketball teams could be next to snap NCAA tournament droughts

Patrick Stevens | Washington Post | December 21, 2017

When it comes to long NCAA tournament droughts, no one tops Army, St. Francis of Brooklyn, The Citadel and William & Mary. They are the Forgotten Four, the only programs that have never made it to the NCAA men's basketball tournament despite being part of Division I since its inception.

The club lost a member last year when Northwestern finally broke through for its first NCAA appearance. And if any of the remaining teams could earn a place in the field of 68, it would be one of the most noteworthy developments of championship week.

Whether it can happen this year is questionable. Army (7-4) is off to a decent start and could emerge as a Patriot League dark horse, while forward Nathan Knight and William & Mary (7-3) figure to be in the mix in a deep Colonial Athletic Association.

Even if they can't make their NCAA tournament debuts, there are other programs setting themselves up to snap droughts. None of the following 12 teams other than Texas Christian have the look of a top-20 team this season, but all of them have shown the potential to contend for NCAA berths once March arrives.

St. Bonaventure (Last NCAA bid: 2012)
The Bonnies (9-2) played their first six games without star senior Jaylen Adams, and it proved costly with an opening-night loss to Niagara. But Adams is healthy again and Mark Schmidt's teams heads into Friday's trip to Syracuse on a six-game winning streak.

St. Bonaventure already owns defeats of Maryland and America East favorite Vermont, but its chances of bagging an at-large bid are going to hinge on dominating an Atlantic 10 that has not acquitted itself well before league play. Still, Adams joins with Matt Mobley to create the kind of backcourt that can carry a team in a conference tournament, and the Bonnies are going to be dangerous the second weekend of March in Washington.

Clemson (Last NCAA bid: 2011)
Clemson (10-1) is off to its best start since 2008-09, Oliver Purnell's heyday in Tigertown. It looked like a make-or-break year for eighth-year Coach Brad Brownell, and a tested, veteran backcourt featuring Gabe DeVoe, Shelton Mitchell and especially Marcquise Reed has thrived in the early going.

The Tigers have already defeated Florida, Ohio

State and South Carolina, and there's nothing wrong with a neutral-court loss to Temple. There are plenty of opportunities for quality victories in ACC play, and it's best to remember Clemson wasn't that far away last year; it went 4-12 in games decided by six points or less. Thanks to substantial defensive improvement, the Tigers will be more than simply a nuisance in the coming months.

Penn State (Last NCAA bid: 2011)
Coach Patrick Chambers invested a lot of last season getting experience for a promising crop of freshmen, a group that includes point guard Tony Carr, forward Lamar Stevens and center Mike Watkins. With that group now sophomores, the Nittany Lions (10-3) are poised to push into the top half of the Big Ten.

Penn State's improvement is evident at both ends of the floor, but it boasts a top-20 defense according to KenPom.com. If the Nittany Lions are to make their first NCAA trip in Chambers's tenure, they'll need to remain stingy when league play resumes Jan. 2 at Maryland.

Houston (Last NCAA bid: 2010)
Kelvin Sampson already cranked out consecutive 20-win seasons with the Cougars, and he's well on his way to another. Houston (10-2) has defeated Arkansas, Providence and Wake Forest, and gets home-and-homes against Cincinnati, Southern Methodist, Temple and Wichita State in conference play.

The Cougars don't have the benefit of any on-campus games (they're playing at Texas Southern while Hofheinz Pavilion is renovated into the Fertitta Center), but they're defending better than they have in nearly a decade and do most things well. They're not unbeatable — Drexel and Louisiana State have dealt Houston a couple unexpected setbacks — but it generally takes a good showing to knock them out.

Penn (Last NCAA bid: 2007)
Yes, it's really been a decade since the Quakers last won the Ivy League. While they slid backward under Glen Miller and never got much traction under Jerome Allen, Harvard established itself as an Ivy power, Yale became a regular contender and Princeton remained Princeton.

Those three looked like the top tier in the Ancient Eight entering this season, but strong play from sophomores Ryan Betley and A.J. Brodeur has helped Penn to an 8-4 start with defeats of Navy, Monmouth and Dayton. May-

be this Quaker team doesn't end the program's decade-long drought, but third-year Coach Steve Donahue has the pieces in place to halt it in the next few years.

Central Florida (Last NCAA bid: 2005)
So much of the Knights' hopes hinge on the healthy return of guard B.J. Taylor, who left the season opener with a foot injury and hasn't played since. Central Florida (8-3) has acquitted itself well in his absence, beating Alabama and Nebraska while avoiding any silly losses. The Knights' setbacks have come against Missouri, St. John's and West Virginia.

Unlike some teams on this list, UCF harbors some at-large hopes, though it will need to beat some of the top teams in the American (notably Cincinnati and/or Wichita State) while avoiding inexplicable missteps against the bottom of the league. But between Taylor, 7-foot-6 center Tacko Fall and an elite defense, the Knights will be heard from in the AAC.

Auburn (Last NCAA bid: 2003)
Matt Norlander of CBSSports.com took a deep dive into the Tigers that covers all the bases on a program long consigned to the bottom of the Southeastern Conference — and at the center of a bombshell FBI corruption investigation. Know this: The Tigers (10-1) are off to their best start since 1999-2000 and have played all season without suspended sophomores Danjel Purifoy and Austin Wiley.

Auburn doesn't own a bunch of high-end victories, though beating Conference USA favorite Middle Tennessee was a more-than-credible triumph. While the Tigers are still pushing the pace like they have throughout fourth-year Coach Bruce Pearl's tenure, they're also playing some semblance of defense. They'll be a curious team to follow once SEC play begins.

Navy (Last NCAA bid: 1998)
The Midshipmen (9-3) have the luxury of experience, starting with senior captain Shawn Anderson, and they've already bagged a victory over a power conference team (granted, it was Pittsburgh). Navy enters Thursday's nonconference finale against Lipscomb on a five-game winning streak and could be a contender in the Patriot League.

The caveats are clear enough: Bucknell is the favorite in the Patriot until proven otherwise, and Navy needs to commit fewer turnovers (305th nationally in turnover percentage, according to KenPom.com) and defend the pe-

These 12 college basketball teams could be next to snap NCAA tourney droughts (Cont...)

rimeter better. Still, this is coach Ed DeChellis's best chance since arriving in Annapolis to win three conference tournament games.

Texas Christian (Last NCAA bid: 1998)

The Horned Frogs (11-0) are one of four undefeated teams left in Division I, though they won 13 in a row three years ago before getting splattered by the realities of Big 12 play. This team will take some lumps, but it also has a decent set of victories (Nevada, Southern Methodist and St. Bonaventure) and returned five starters from a team that won the NIT last year.

TCU does the things you expect from a Jamie Dixon team: It runs an efficient scheme and crashes the offensive glass, but it also pushed the pace much more than his Pittsburgh teams. With a veteran team and a tested coach, the Horned Frogs should hold their own in the deep Big 12. Simply getting a split of the league schedule probably books them passage to their first NCAA tournament in two decades.

Georgia Southern (Last NCAA bid: 1992)

The Sun Belt looks like it could have an entertaining three- or four-team race, with Georgia State possibly joining the Eagles, Louisiana-Lafayette and Texas-Arlington at the top of the standings. Georgia Southern built steadily around a junior class that includes smooth the smooth Tookie Brown (17.3 points per game, 5.4 assists per game), as well as center Montae Glenn and wing Ike Smith.

The Eagles (9-3) have upended Missouri State and Wake Forest and last week dealt George Mason its most lopsided home nonconference loss in 20 years. They have some flaws (not a great outside shooting team, and vulnerable to opponents' offensive rebounding), but Brown's the sort of guard who can effortlessly take over a game and will a team to an upset in March.

Towson (Last NCAA bid: 1991)

The Tigers' 10-game winning streak came to an end Wednesday with a loss at Oakland, which might turn out to be the best team Towson faces all season. The strong start illustrated much of what Coach Pat Skerry has aimed for since taking over a laughingstock in 2011.

Towson (10-2) usually excels at offensive rebounding and getting to the foul line, though it hasn't done either quite as well this year. But it enjoys a plethora of depth, and a rotation often extending to 10 players is especially valuable

in a one-bid league tournament where a team must win three games in three days. Wings Zane Martin and Mike Morsell will help give the Tigers a shot at the Colonial title.

Loyola-Chicago (Last NCAA bid: 1985)

From Southern Illinois (2007) to Bradley (2006) to Evansville and Missouri State (both 1999), there is no shortage of potential Missouri Valley contenders with long NCAA tournament absences. But the Ramblers (10-2), who boast a six-point win at Florida, are worth highlighting even after a loss to Wisconsin-Milwaukee over the weekend.

Loyola ranks eighth in the country in three-point shooting at 42.5 percent, and senior forward Aundre Jackson (13.2 points per game, 63.8 percent from the floor) is a handful at the offensive end. It's also gone from being a subpar Horizon League team to the bottom of the Valley when it switched leagues in 2011-12. This is Porter Moser's best Ramblers team yet and should be in the mix in what should be a wide-open league race.

Anderson, Dulin have led Navy basketball to 9-3 non-conference record

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | December 20, 2017

Ed DeChellis could have been signing the old Johnny Cash song "I've Been Everywhere" last week. Navy's seventh-year men's basketball coach went out on the road recruiting while his players took time off to focus on final exams.

DeChellis conducted a telephone interview from San Antonio and mentioned that he had also been in Atlanta, Birmingham, Fort Lauderdale, Indianapolis, Minneapolis and Meridian, Mississippi in recent days.

Fortunately, DeChellis was able to spread some good news during his travels as Navy is on a real roll to start this season, compiling a 9-3 record to date. Seniors Shawn Anderson and Bryce Dulin have led the way as the Midshipmen have won five straight and eight of their last nine.

"I think we have the makings of a pretty good basketball team," DeChellis said. "What's surprising is that we haven't had all our guys play well yet. We've had contributions from some people, but not the consistency we look for. We're 9-3 and haven't had everyone play as well as they can play."

Navy returned four of five starters and that veteran leadership has been crucial to the early season success. Junior point guard Hasan Abdullah and senior power forward Tom Lacey have joined Anderson and Dulin as catalysts for the Midshipmen.

"I think maturity has played a big part. We have a lot of experience and that has shown through so far," Dulin said. "We've all been in all sorts of game situations over the years and know how to respond. As a team, I don't think we get rattled by anything."

Dulin used Navy's most recent contest at Columbia as an example. Playing in New York City the day after the Army-Navy football game, the Midshipmen struggled mightily early on and fell behind by 18 points in the first half.

Anderson and Abdullah sparked an impressive second-half comeback as Navy escaped Levens Gymnasium with a 73-68 win. What could have been a demoralizing defeat at the hands of a 1-9 team turned into an uplifting victory that showed the Midshipmen's toughness and tenacity.

"Things didn't start off real well at Columbia and we dug ourselves a big hole, but nobody

panicked. We knew what needed to be done to turn things around," Dulin said. "We've been down before and come back to win so we were confident. We just pulled together and started playing Navy basketball."

Navy earned an equally hard-fought road triumph at Bryant, holding on 79-71 three days after playing arguably its worst game of the season in a blowout loss to Pennsylvania at the fabled Palestra. DeChellis said the Midshipmen showed "resiliency" by rebounding from a disappointing performance and withstanding a furious rally by the Bulldogs.

"We've been able to find ways to win games. That shows mental toughness," DeChellis said. "Some teams just have a knack for figuring out how to win a game and this team has shown those traits."

DeChellis routinely talks about the three pillars of the Navy program — defense, rebounding and ball security. The Midshipmen have excelled in two of those three categories during the non-conference portion of the schedule, limiting teams to 67 points per game on 44 percent field goal shooting while out-rebounding opponents by almost six per game.

"We're the No. 1 offensive rebounding team in the Patriot League. That is something we like to hang our hat on," DeChellis said. "We've won the rebounding battle in all nine of our wins, which speaks to the importance of that department."

DeChellis believes the Mids can defend much better over the course of a 40-minute game, but likes that his troops have shown an ability to turn up the intensity on that end of the court. Navy's comeback against Columbia was fueled by ferocious defense as the home team was held scoreless for almost five minutes.

"We take pride in playing tough defense. That is where it all has to start," Dulin said. "There are certain times in a game when you just have to lock down and make it hard for the other team to score. I think we've done that a lot this season."

Dulin has evolved as Navy's defensive stopper, accepting the challenge of covering the opponent's leading scorer. The 6-foot-4, 210-pounder has quick feet, long arms and an aggressive mentality.

"Bryce is a really good on-ball defender. We're

putting him on team's best perimeter player and, for the most part, he is shutting them down," DeChellis said.

Anderson and Lacey have provided solid rebounding, averaging 5.8 and 5.4, respectively. Evan Wieck, a 6-foot-8 sophomore forward, leads the Midshipmen with 19 offensive rebounds, three more than Anderson and Lacey.

Navy is shooting 74 percent from the foul line, with many of those coming at crunch time of close games. The Midshipmen have made almost as many free throws (182) than their opponents have taken (193).

"We've been good about making free throws down the stretch, which is encouraging," DeChellis said.

One negative so far has been the ball-handling as the Mids are averaging almost 15 turnovers per game. Anderson and Abdullah have been the biggest culprits with 38 and 30 turnovers, respectively. As a team, the Midshipmen have more turnovers (177) than assists (175).

"We need all the perimeter players to make better decisions. We've talked to them about making the simple pass, the easy play," DeChellis said. "We should have an assist-to-turnover ratio of at least two to one."

Anderson leads Navy in scoring with 13.1 points per game on 46 percent field goal shooting. The 6-foot-4, 215-pound swingman has done a tremendous job of drawing defenders then dishing.

"I think Shawn has been pretty consistent overall on offense. He's putting the ball in the basket and also creating for others," DeChellis said.

Interestingly, Anderson has been the higher scorer for Navy in just three games, which shows balance. Dulin (five), Abdullah (three), Lacey, Wieck and backup forward George Kiernan (one apiece) have also led the team in scoring.

Dulin exploded for 30 points in an 82-76 defeat of Delaware and has netted 18 or more in three other contests. However, there have been times when the Missouri native has disappeared on the offensive end.

"We would like to see more consistency out of Bryce," DeChellis said. "He'll have a big game

Anderson, Dulin have led Navy basketball to 9-3 non-conference record (Cont...)

one night then not do much the next night.”

Abdullah and Lacey are both averaging just shy of 10 points per game with the point guard leading Navy in 3-pointers made (20) and the power forward doing most of his damage in the paint.

“We’ve been making outside shots so that’s opened things up a bit more inside. Tom has always scored off offensive rebounds and we’re trying to get him to catch the ball and face the basket a bit more,” DeChellis said.

Navy returns to action following an 11-day lay-off when it hosts Lipscomb on Thursday night at Alumni Hall. That contest against the Atlantic Sun school from Nashville, Tennessee, closes out the non-conference slate for Navy, which opens Patriot League play on Friday, Dec. 29 at Loyola-Maryland.

Navy takes big lead, squelches Coppin State's comeback bid, 70-53, in Dixon's home debut

Peter Schmuk | Baltimore Sun | December 6, 2017

Navy took a huge first-half lead and held on to spoil Juan Dixon's home coaching debut with a 70-53 victory over winless Coppin State on Wednesday night at the Physical Education Complex.

Midshipmen junior forward George Kiernan scored from all over the court on the way to a team-high 17 points as Navy took a 35-14 lead into halftime and rebuffed a second-half comeback attempt by the Eagles, who fell to 0-9 with the loss.

Dixon was coaching his first game in Baltimore after taking the Eagles on the road for the first four weeks of the season. He grew up in the city and spent his early childhood years just minutes away from the site of Wednesday's game.

The Mids improved their record to 8-3 with a solid shooting night that also featured double-digit performances by forward Tom Lacey (13 points), guard Bryce Dulin (13 points) and guard Hassan Abdullah (10 points). Navy hit 27 shots from the field on 52 attempts for a 51.9 percent field-goal percentage.

It took awhile for the Eagles to feel at home. They could not find the basket in the first half, shooting just 21 percent from the field and 14 percent from the arc. When they finally started to make some shots, they pulled to within 14 points midway through the second half before the Mids scored a series of fast-break baskets to regain control.

Once the Eagles settled down after halftime, they would go on to outscore the Mids in the second half 39-35. Guard Karonn Davis led all scorers with 18 points, hitting on six of 13 shots and three of seven from 3-point range.

Abdullah's Double-Double Leads Navy Past Morgan State

Mike James | The Mid Report | December 4, 2017

After Friday night's game against Delaware, Navy head coach Ed DeChellis challenged Hasan Abdullah to play better. The junior point guard struggled against the Blue Hens, shooting 1-7 from the field, turning the ball over four times, and just generally looking uncomfortable all night. DeChellis knew that if Navy was going to have success this season, he needed Abdullah to improve.

It's safe to say that the message was received. Abdullah registered his first career double-double, with 15 points and 10 rebounds to lead Navy to a 66-59 win over visiting Morgan State on Sunday. Shawn Anderson chipped in 11 points for Navy (7-3), which has won six of their last seven games. Phillip Carr had 15 points to lead the Bears (4-4).

Abdullah credited his coach's advice for his improved play.

"I feel like, just being receptive with everything that coach was saying," he said. "The assistant coaches and my teammates, we all have confidence in each other, so my teammates were picking me up, the coaching staff was picking me up. They were just telling me to play my game and play relaxed and play hard on defense, and everything else will take care of itself."

DeChellis felt that Abdullah was putting too much pressure on himself on Friday, and wanted to take some of that pressure off of him. He wrote up a checklist of a few concrete things that he wanted Abdullah to focus on, centered around playing smart basketball.

"Things that you can hang your hat on," he said. "Not, 'play better.' Not, 'hey you've got to make shots.' Focus on taking care of the ball and making your teammates better. Focus on getting defensive rebounds, be a better rebounder. Make your free throws. Because he was really pressing. He was really, really pressing. I thought he played really well tonight, and very relaxed. He did a nice job."

Abdullah connected on 4 of 6 from beyond the arc, but DeChellis was more pleased with his rebounding, as well as the fact that he had 6 assists and only 1 turnover. He also added 3 steals, further cementing himself atop the Patriot League leaderboard in that category.

Abdullah's big night came at a perfect time. After Bryce Dulin scored 30 points against Delaware, Morgan State head coach Todd Boz-

eman wanted to make sure that the talented Navy senior didn't have a repeat performance. His game plan focused on shutting down the talented senior.

"We just wanted to not give him clear looks at the basket," said Bozeman. "He does a good job posting. We talked a lot about not letting him. They do this little step-over post, and we just came out of a game with GW where they did the same thing. We were looking for that. We just didn't do a good enough job. The point guard got loose on us, got his rebounds."

While his team lost the game, Bozeman's strategy of shutting down Navy's wings was effective. Both Dulin and Anderson struggled for much of the night, with the former being held to only three points. He and Anderson combined for ten turnovers as well, something that didn't escape the notice of DeChellis.

"That'll be in the conversation tomorrow," he said. "I mean, you've got to be kidding me. Two senior wings? You've got to take care of the ball."

With Dulin and Anderson being contained, the rest of the Navy team was able to pick up the slack. Ten different Midshipmen scored, including freshman Cam Davis, who went 3-4 from three-point range. George Kiernan, who also received a checklist from his coach after Friday's game, had 9 points and 5 rebounds.

"How about being a better defensive rebounder? How about being a better offensive rebounder? Quit worrying about making and missing shots," said DeChellis of the things he wanted Kiernan to work on. "You can't hang your hat on that. Hang your hat on running the floor on both ends of the floor. How about being a better defensive rebounder? Offensive rebounder? How about being a better screener? Things that don't put pressure on guys. It's not like, 'you've got to make threes if you're going to play.' Just play hard."

Both teams got off to a slow start. Morgan State's strategy of limiting Dulin and Anderson led to early turnovers by the Midshipmen, who ended up with 18 of them on the afternoon. Much to their coach's chagrin, though, the Bears were unable to capitalize, scoring only 16 points off of those turnovers. Bozeman felt that those missed chances were a significant factor in the outcome of the game.

"I thought we had a lot of fast break opportuni-

ties in the first half that we didn't convert," he said. "I thought those came back to haunt us."

After a sloppy and somewhat frantic pace in the opening minutes, both teams settled into the game. Morgan State went on a 6-0 run to open a 10-5 lead in the game's first five minutes, thanks to 6 points from Carr.

A key play occurred with 12:05 left in the half. Navy's Tom Lacey picked up his second foul, and DeChellis took him out of the game. It was Lacey who had been tasked with guarding Carr, so the job then fell to his replacement, Tyler Riemersma. With a freshman now tasked with guarding their star forward, Morgan State took advantage, turning right to Carr for a quick jumper. DeChellis decided to help Riemersma by moving to a zone defense. Because Morgan State doesn't rely on the three-pointer as much as some teams, he felt comfortable making the switch.

"We wanted to contain the ball," he said. "We were getting in foul trouble, and they are a team that's got a pretty good percentage shooting from three. I think they were coming into the game at about 40 percent, which is pretty good, but they don't take a lot of them, so I thought let's just go ahead and stay with the zone, try to see if we can get them standing around."

"We had a hard time containing them, and that's why we went to the zone. Hopefully, they would pass it a little more and shoot threes rather than drive."

Morgan State had moved to a zone themselves earlier, which prompted DeChellis to replace center Evan Wieck with a better outside shooter in Kiernan. The change worked; Kiernan and Cam Davis took advantage of being left open outside to combine for 11 points. Morgan State switched back to man to man defense, and Navy had trouble adjusting, which allowed the Bears to go on a 7-0 run and take a 23-19 lead with 5:46 remaining in the half. DeChellis put Wieck back in the game, and the sophomore center responded with 5 points, a steal, and two offensive rebounds. Navy closed the half on a 13-5 run and a 32-28 lead.

Navy's run continued after the two teams came out of the locker room. Navy went on a 9-1 run to give the Mids their largest lead of the game at 41-29. A crucial play came less than a minute into the half, when Carr picked up his fourth foul. Bozeman was forced to take him

Abdullah's Double-Double Leads Navy Past Morgan State (Cont...)

out of the game, which made it difficult for his team to close the gap.

"We played eight or nine minutes without him [Carr] on the floor, and we're just a totally different team without him on the floor because he can score the ball, rebound," Bozeman said. "I thought that hurt us, that he was out so long."

Morgan State's defense kept them in the game, and they were able to shrink Navy's advantage to as little as three points. Without their star player, though, they weren't able to keep Navy from opening the lead back up. Playing with a lead also seemed to have a calming effect on Shawn Anderson, who did a much better job of driving to the basket, scoring 9 of his 11 points in the second half.

"Me and coach talked, and he felt that I was definitely forcing it in the first half," said Anderson. "A couple of us were. We weren't swinging the ball as much and letting the offense flow. When you have a guy like Hasan and then Cam Davis, when he gets hot from the outside, they [the defense] have to start pushing away, so that opens up the inside for guys like me, Bryce, and Tom. Much of it was a credit to what they were doing on the outside which helped to open things inside for us."

Abdullah's third steal of the game with 21 seconds remaining sealed the victory for the Midshipmen.

"I think this was a very challenging game," said DeChellis. "I think Morgan's very good. I think Todd's [Bozeman] doing a very good job with this program. I watched them on three or four games on tape. They went down to South Florida and won on the road. They played GW nose to nose for 35 minutes and had a chance to win, then they win at Mount St. Mary's. They've had a tough schedule."

Mirror image

This was a game of strength vs. strength, with Navy and Morgan State sharing a lot of similarities. Both squads have several returning starters from last season. Both coaches stress rebounding. Both are also known for their defense, with Morgan State entering the game with the #2 defense in the MEAC.

The emphasis on defense by both teams made this an entertaining game from a Xs & Os perspective, as both coaches constantly changed tactics and personnel to try to find an edge. Dealing with constant changes in personnel

and switching back and forth between man to man and zone defenses can be mentally taxing on players, and Anderson said that it helps to have veteran leadership in that situation.

"We had a team captain a few years ago, Kevin "Pookie" Alter, and he used to always tell us that basketball was 80 percent mental, and most of life is," he said. "And as you saw tonight, that's what it was. Being able to adjust to things on the fly. Yeah, we did have 18 turnovers, but we responded well even though we had some mental lapses. That's growth on this team; a veteran group that can adjust to different game strategies on the fly."

For Abdullah, the key to handling that kind of game is not to overthink things.

"Just play basketball. At the end of the day, don't worry too much, try not to think too much, and just play relaxed and play ball. We've all been playing this game for a while, so just trust in our instincts, trust in what the coaching staff sees out there, and just go on from there."

"Our goal was to keep them under 60 points," said DeChellis. "It's amazing, yesterday I said if you can keep them under 60, we've got a chance to win this thing, because I thought that we could get over that number. They had been averaging about 66 points. I thought that if we could keep them at 60, we would have a chance."

Anderson believes that the Mids will see more games like this going forward.

"Basketball is a game of runs, so we expect teams to come out and at some point to come at us," he said. "It's our job to withstand their runs and then make sure that we flip the momentum and start making some shots and bearing down on defense. This is what we can expect from the Patriot League night in and night out, so this is great preparation for that."

Rebounding is key

Coach DeChellis wasn't pleased with his team's rebounding effort when they played zone defense, but he was happy with the final rebounding margin, with the Mids owning a 37-24 advantage.

Rebounding is fundamental to both teams' success. Navy is now 7-1 on the year when out-rebounding their opponents. Morgan State, meanwhile, is 4-0 when they have a rebounding edge, and 0-4 when they don't.

"I can't tell you the last time I had a team with 24 rebounds in a game," Bozeman said. "Normally we're a great rebounding team."

Finding consistency

After some shaky performances at the start of the season, Navy appears to be seeing some consistency. The Mids have won six out of their last seven and three in a row. While the team's 7-3 record is encouraging, Abdullah wants to keep looking forward.

"We approach every game like we're 3-7," he said. "Every game we press the restart button, so it really doesn't matter what our record is."

After a hectic schedule to open the year, DeChellis hopes that the routine of the season will help his team to maintain their run of steady performances.

"We got a little practice time last week, which is good. We'll have a little practice time before the game on Wednesday. We get to practice a bit tomorrow.

"Things start to get a little spread out, where we can get into a little rhythm where we're playing a couple of games per week, but we get practice time for those games."

Road warriors

It's a fact of life in the MEAC that a lot of the non-conference schedule will come on the road, and Morgan State is no exception. The Bears are in the middle of a run of eight consecutive road games. When asked if that wears on his team, Bozeman was quick to answer.

"No. I live ten minutes from here. We had fans here. I don't really look at it that way. I really don't. Since I've been a coach, I don't make a difference between whether we're on the road or at home. It's two baskets and a ball. It doesn't really matter.

"Sometimes it can give you more energy, but we had some people here. They're sleeping in their own beds. It's not like we've been on the road for eight games. I'm not that guy. Either we're going to win the game, or we're not. Either we're going to play hard, or we're not."

Up next

Navy travels to Coppin State on Wednesday.

Abdullah breaks out, leads Navy basketball win

John Evans | Annapolis Capital | December 4, 2017

When challenged by his coach to improve his play, slumping Navy point guard Hasan Abdullah responded.

Abdullah scored 12 of his 15 points during crucial moments of the second half to lead Navy to a 66-59 victory over Morgan State at Alumni Hall.

The win was Navy's sixth in seven games as the Mids improved to 7-3 overall and 4-0 at home.

Abdullah, a junior, also added a career-best 10 rebounds for his first career double-double, and contributed six assists, as Navy had to rally for the second game in a row.

"I gave Hasan a sheet of paper yesterday with four things on it and said, 'You have to concentrate on these four things ... take care of the ball ... be a better defensive rebounder, contain the ball on defense and play hard without fouling.' If you do those things, it creates activity and if you have activity, it is amazing how the ball will find kids and they will make open shots," explained Navy head coach Ed DeChellis. "He had a great game and I thought he did a very nice job."

Morgan State led 10-5 early and still led by 23-19 before Navy closed the half with a 13-5 run to grab a four-point lead. The Mids opened the second half on an 10-1 run that put them ahead 41-29 with 15 minutes to play.

Morgan State battled back to within striking distance on a number of occasions after that, but each time either missed a shot or could not prevent Navy from scoring. The Bears closed to within 47-44, but Abdullah hit a 3-pointer and Davis followed with another to make it 53-46. After a free throw, Abdullah hit another 3-pointer and Tyler Riemersma added a basket to make it 58-47.

In the final two minutes, Morgan closed the deficit to 63-59, but Abdullah drove for a basket and added a free throw seconds later to ice the victory.

Abdullah said he felt confident he could produce when he was called on.

"Just staying relaxed (was the key) and just taking what the defense gave me, letting the shots come to me," said Abdullah, who had

scored just 13 points and made just one of 10 3-pointers in the last three games. "My teammates did a good job of finding me. My part is just putting it in; they did the hard part."

Abdullah said he took his talk with DeChellis to heart.

"I feel like (tonight is) just being receptive to everything the coach said and with my teammates were picking me up," he said. "Just play basketball and play well. If you (make a mistake) you can't let it bother you for the rest of the game."

Shawn Anderson added 11 points for the Mids, who used a 23-6 run spanning both halves to catch up and pass the Bears (4-4). Cam Davis and George Kiernan each added nine points.

"Basketball is a game of runs, so we expect teams to come out and at some point ... to come out and make a run at us," said Anderson. "It's our job to withstand their runs and to gain the momentum."

"This is what we expect from the Patriot League night after night, so this is great preparation for that," he added. "We definitely knew they were going to be athletic and they were going to be play hard. They came out and gave us everything they could handle."

DeChellis said the team accomplished many of the things he wanted it to against a team he really respects. But he was disappointed in the 18 turnovers the Mids committed, six by Anderson and four by Bryce Dulin.

"Tonight, I felt if we could hold them to under 60 points, we could win," said DeChellis. "I didn't realize we were going to turn the ball over 18 times, though. We turned the ball over way too much, and took too many threes at the start of the game. We were out of whack, but to our kids credit they continued to fight and made some good plays."

"This was a very challenging game to us. Morgan is very good," DeChellis added. "I give some credit to them. They have several good players and some good talent. They have good guys. They play at a good pace and under control."

Morgan State was led by Phillip Carr with 15 points, though he sat out eight minutes of the

second half in foul trouble. Martez Cameron had 14 points, six assists and four steals, but also had six turnovers. LaPri McCray-Pace had 11 points.

Navy dominated the boards by a 37-24 margin, Carr getting only three – well below his season average – and no other Bear grabbing more than four. Navy outscored Morgan State in the paint, 28-16.

The hosts were playing their second game in 48 hours and appeared fatigued to start the game, they made only three of their first 14 shots, one of 12 from beyond the arc, but made five of their final seven shots for the half.

Seniors Shine as Navy Tops Delaware

Mike James | The Mid Report | December 2, 2017

Before the Navy basketball team tipped off against Delaware on Friday night, Shawn Anderson was presented with a basketball in a short ceremony to mark the occasion of his reaching the 1,000-point plateau for his career last weekend. It was a nice honor for the senior, who became only the 24th Navy player to reach that milestone. It also highlighted why there is so much optimism about this Navy basketball team; Anderson is one of several veteran players that should give Navy the kind of experience it takes to navigate their way through any type of game.

That theory was put to the test on Friday night, as Navy lost a 15-point second-half lead before coming back to take down Delaware (4-4), 82-76, in Alumni Hall. Anderson had 20 points and matched a career-best six assists for the Midshipmen (6-3), while fellow senior Bryce Dulin scored 30 points in a career night of his own.

"I thought these two guys, these two seniors played really well in the first half," said Navy coach Ed DeChellis. "Shawn was driving the basketball and getting to the paint. Bryce made shots. When you get 50 points out of your two wings, that's a pretty good night for us."

"Everyone was just getting me open," said Dulin of his performance. "Just in the flow of the game, people were able to find me. I was just hitting today."

"They're a really good basketball team, extremely well coached," said Delaware coach Martin Ingelsby. "They're old and experienced. They've got three seniors and two juniors against a little of our youth. I thought they did a good job running their stuff and taking advantage of some matchups. They got to the foul line a lot and capitalized."

Navy went into the locker room at halftime with a 35-27 lead, playing tight defense that held Delaware to only 37.5% shooting from the floor. Navy, meanwhile, shot 54.5% in the half, thanks to excellent penetration from Anderson. Against the man-to-man defense of Delaware that was missing injured 6'9" junior Eric Carter, Anderson was able to drive to the basket five times to pick up 11 first-half points.

The start of the second half was more of the same. Navy scored a quick five points after Hasan Abdullah found Anderson on a backdoor

cut underneath the basket, while Dulin hit one of his four three-pointers on the Mids' next trip down the court. That prompted Ingelsby to call a timeout to regroup and change his strategy.

"I think I got into some guys and just said we've got to play harder," Ingelsby said. "We went smaller, which really helped us offensively. We were struggling to score."

"They're a disciplined team. They run good gap coverages, and they're really good with guarding the ball screen. We weren't able to take advantage of that with our big guys in there, so I said we've got nothing to lose, we're going to go small, we're going to switch everything."

The move to a smaller lineup paid off, sparking a 17-0 run that took only 2:40 and gave Delaware a 47-43 lead with 12:45 to play. DeChellis took center Evan Wieck out of the game after the sophomore picked up his fourth foul early in the half, which allowed the Blue Hens to spread the floor and drive to the basket. Navy tried switching to a zone defense to compensate, but Delaware, which has struggled to make three-pointers this season, started to hit from outside.

"I was just trying to break their rhythm, really, and then they found their rhythm in the zone," said DeChellis. "They just made shots, and it wasn't just one guy. They spread it all around. We tried to break their rhythm, but the zone didn't really do much for us either, so we went back to just guarding the way we think we could guard and played man on man to do a better job of guarding the three-point line."

"I thought we did a good job keeping guys in front in that segment to get back in it," said Ingelsby. "It's amazing what happened when we got some stops. We got down the floor, and guys got some confidence on the offensive end. We really changed the momentum of the game by going small, but then we had some key guys get into some foul trouble. I had two of our perimeter players with four fouls with eight minutes to go. Then I had to make some decisions."

Freshman Cam Davis stopped the bleeding with a three-pointer to pull the Mids back within one at 47-46 with 12:15 to play. From there, Navy's experience began to shine as the Mids were able to regroup and regain the lead. Delaware did a better job of keeping Anderson

from driving to the basket in the second half, but the senior was able to find teammates for open jumpers.

"Like any good team, they made adjustments," Anderson said. "In the second half, they started to collapse and close the lanes that we had in the first half. I just stayed poised, stayed under control, and trusted my teammates to make the shot."

"We've been through it all. We've seen it before," Dulin said. "We've been down 25 and come back and won, and been up 25 and someone's come back and beat us. We've been there before. For us, it's just staying calm. We've got an older group this year, and that's great for us. It's a big help, staying calm in the moment."

Tyler Riemersma's free throw with 7:51 remaining gave Navy the lead for good. The Mids shot 74% from the line to keep Delaware from regaining the lead; 18 of the 31 points that Navy scored over the last ten minutes were on free throws.

"They took the lead, and we were able to take the lead back," said DeChellis. "That shows some toughness, both mentally and physically with our squad. I'm really proud of these guys. They found a way to win the game."

Foul trouble

Both coaches expressed frustration over the number of fouls called, although it probably hurt Delaware more. A young team with a short bench that that was already missing the injured Carter, Ingelsby's squad had three players foul out by the end of the game.

"It was hard," he said. "I thought a couple ones were close, but that's a veteran officiating crew. Those guys are good guys. We've just got to do a better job playing without fouling."

DeChellis also felt that his players needed to play smarter.

"Wieck's got four [fouls], and we didn't really get much out of him," he said. "George Kieran, who usually comes off the bench and gives us some stuff, he played eight minutes and had four fouls, so now we've got to get deeper into our bench and play our freshmen. Tyler Riemersma stepped up and played big,

Seniors Shine as Navy Tops Delaware (Cont...)

made some free throws, and did a really good job for us. That's how deep we had to go. Those guys off the bench did a good job.

"We've got to get some other guys playing better if we want to continue to win some games and be the kind of team we want to be. Hasan [Abdullah] can play better. George can play better, and those are two important pieces for us."

Team effort

While Navy's seniors played a big part in the game's outcome, they weren't alone. Riemersma was 3-4 from the line and pulled down five rebounds in 11 minutes. Fellow freshman Cam Davis was 3-4 from three-point range. DeChellis felt good about the effort of his younger players.

"Cam's hit some big shots for us. Ryan Pearson's the same way. He made a big shot in the first half. I couldn't get them more time in the game because Bryce and Shawn were just playing so well. You just can't get those two guys out of the game when they're scoring the way they're scoring, but we've got confidence in our bench. Cam came in and did a nice job. Ryan came in and took a charge and made a basket in the first half as well. Tyler came in and did some good things for us."

Home sweet home?

Navy came into Friday night's matchup having played eight games over the first three weeks of the season. Six of those games were away from home, and the players were happy to be back in Alumni Hall.

"It's huge to come back in front of your home crowd," said Anderson. "It was a great atmosphere tonight, and just a great collective win for the program. Now we've got to move on and get another one on Sunday."

Dulin agreed.

"We always want to protect home court. It's big for us. It's a long season. We just have to keep grinding it out, sticking with what we do."

DeChellis, though, was a bit more reserved in his excitement.

"I didn't think we had great pop at shooting

practice today though, to be honest with you," he said. "Our strength coach is warming up the guys; it's a little different. You get back home, you think you're excited to be back home, and I think the guys are, but it's a little different atmosphere. You've got to get back in the swing of things.

"It's December 1st, and we've only played two home games. The Pitt game we knew we'd be ready to play, Washington College ten days ago really didn't give us a great, great fight, so we knew this was going to be a hard one. And the game on Sunday is going to be a really, really hard one. We know we've got our work cut out for us here on Sunday afternoon. But it's fun to be home. At least the guys can sleep in their own beds."

Up next

Navy will be back in action on Sunday afternoon against Morgan State (4-3) in Alumni Hall.

Navy blows lead but recovers to beat Delaware

John Evans | Annapolis Capital | December 2, 2017

Playing only its third home game of the season, Navy battled ferociously to defend its home court Friday, coming from behind after blowing a 15-point lead to hold off Delaware, 82-76, at Alumni Hall.

After playing red hot in the first half to lead 42-27, Navy suddenly turned cold as Delaware ran off an 17-0 run to take a 47-43 lead with 12:45 to play.

Navy retook the lead, but Delaware took it back and still held the lead at 58-57 with 12:45 to play, but Navy's offense awoke from its slumber and rallied back for the win.

"We thought it was going to be hard, just because the way they play," said Navy head coach Ed DeChellis. "They came back on us and took the lead, but we came back and took it back. That showed some toughness, both mentally and physically, from our guys. I'm proud of our guys."

Bryce Dulin, who scored a career-high 30 points, made several key free throws down the stretch to lead the comeback. Shawn Anderson had a season-high 20 points, including 11 in the first half as the Mids built a 35-27 halftime lead that they extended with seven straight points to start the half.

Between them, Dulin and Anderson combined to make 15 of 23 shots from the floor, with Dulin making four of his five 3-point tries. They also combined to make 16 of 19 free throws, including 11 of 13 in the second half.

"I thought Shawn and Bryce played really well," said DeChellis. "Shawn drove the basketball and got in the paint and Bryce made shots. Anytime you get 50 points from your two wings, that's a pretty good night."

Tom Lacey added nine points and a game-high eight rebounds and led the Mids to a 33-26 rebound advantage, the entire difference coming in the second half. Cam Davis had three 3-pointers, the last two spurring the Mids' final comeback.

The Mids wound up shooting 51.1 percent (23 for 45) from the floor, 10- of 21 on three-pointers, and 26 for 35 from the free throw line.

Delaware, which was without injured starter Eric Carter for a fourth straight game, was led

by Ryan Daly with 23 points, 14 in the second half, and also got double-figure games from Kevin Anderson with 15 points, Anthony Mosley with 14 points, Ryan Allen with 11 points and Darian Bryant with 10 points. Allen and Bryant both hail from Bowie.

After opening the game by making 4 of 17 shots, the Blue Hens improved to a 54.8 shooting percentage in the second half, including one stretch where they made 10 of 12 shots while taking and holding the lead. After making just 1 of 6 three-pointers before the half, Delaware made 9 of 14 in the second half.

After going back in front on free throws by Tyler Riemersma and a three by Dulin, Navy ran its lead to 72-63. Delaware closed to 74-70 with 33 seconds left, but Dulin scored on a layup, made the foul shot after the basket and added two more free throws after an intentional foul to ice the win.

Navy (6-3) and Delaware (4-4) were meeting for the first time since January 1993.

The best and the brightest: Navy captain Shawn Anderson is all about service

Dana O'Neil | The Athletic - The Fieldhouse | December 1, 2017

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Shawn Anderson is a quantitative economics major on schedule to graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy in May and later become a surface warfare officer, where he'll help maintain and operate Navy ships. He's also the captain of the basketball team, and he leads the Midshipmen in scoring, minutes played, assists and 3-point percentage.

In his spare time he runs a not-for-profit for kids in his hometown of New Castle, Pa.

Yes, Shawn Anderson is that kid, the one you'd love to loathe for being so damned perfect, except he's so stinking nice and selfless on top of being so damned perfect you can't possibly hate him. Rather you wish you could clone him.

"He is the exceptional of the exceptional," Navy coach Ed DeChellis says.

Naturally, Anderson doesn't see himself that way. He believes he just got lucky. Raised by great parents, taught early on to work hard and consider others before himself, he is merely a byproduct of all that nurturing. Certainly there's some truth to that. It's not easy to grow up in New Castle. Fifty miles northwest of Pittsburgh near the Ohio border, the town was decimated by the demise of the steel mills, leaving a population that knows more about hard times than hope. More than three-quarters of the students at New Castle High School qualify for reduced-price lunches, and 28 percent of the residents live below the poverty line.

So just by offering a stable home, discipline and direction, Shawn and Angelique Anderson did give their son an advantage others didn't have. But it's what he did with the edge that makes the kid extraordinary. He didn't use it to merely escape his hometown for a bigger and brighter future. Instead he has tethered himself to New Castle, even as he prepares to travel the world.

"I had aspirations at a young age, but a lot of my friends didn't have that. They had sadness," Anderson says. "It's not my job to save anybody, but we are meant to help each other in this thing called life. And I believed I could help."

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Michael Geramita doesn't remember when

he met Shawn Anderson. Like most longtime friends, the two just sort of acquired one another, connecting sometime during middle school. They would seem an unlikely pair. In high school, Geramita was, as he calls himself, a "normal student," while Anderson was a star athlete. Today, as Anderson preps for work aboard Navy ships, Geramita is a resident intern at a funeral parlor, having just graduated from the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science.

But the two bonded over their innate urge to do good, coupled with a crippling frustration that so few others in their realm felt the same. "Everyone always talks about how they want to help, but no one ever follows up," Geramita says. "We wanted to be different."

Together they hatched their plan — Forever Red Hurricanes, a non-profit named for the high school mascot that would serve as an outreach program for kids in the area. One problem: They were just kids themselves, only juniors in high school. They had no idea how to run a foundation, no clue how to even get it off the ground. Fortunately they also had the gift of ignorance, blissfully unaware that two 17-year-olds weren't equipped to pull off such a lofty endeavor. Guided by optimism more than pragmatism, they barreled ahead. "Rebels without a cause," Anderson jokingly calls the early days, as he and Geramitas tried to figure out exactly what it is they were trying to do.

Anderson's stature helped. As is so often the case in towns reeling from economic depression, sports in New Castle serve as the great elixir, and Anderson already was a star. He grew up as most Western Pennsylvania kids do, praying to the altar of football, and until the ninth grade was a pretty good quarterback. But he fractured a vertebra when he was on the receiving end of a freak tackle, ending his football career. In the abyss, Anderson discovered basketball. As a sophomore, he led New Castle to a sectional title and a 20-8 finish, and in his last two seasons the Red Hurricanes went 57-2 and won back-to-back league titles.

Kids gravitated to him and invariably respected him, so when Anderson and Geramita settled on a simple plan, launching a peer mentorship program they called Moving Forward, they got immediate buy-in from their classmates. Buoyed by the early success, they added Transitioning To Success, designed to help

kids make the tricky switch from middle school to high school. Then they sponsored their first real initiative — Canes Coats for Kids, asking businesses for donations so youth in the area could have winter coats.

Impressed with the pair's efforts, a lawyer did the adult work pro bono — filing the paperwork, among other things — and Forever Red Hurricanes was born.

"We just wanted to open kids' eyes to opportunities, to what they have outside of New Castle," Anderson says. "We also wanted them to understand you can be nice to people. You don't have to live in this culture you see every day. This became an easy way to show we care and we're going to continue to care about you."

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The recruiting pitch generally goes the same way.

"First time you call, they hang up on you," DeChellis says. "Second time you start out by saying, 'Wait don't hang up,' and they listen a little. Third is a little easier, and then you get Mom and Dad. Get them on campus and generally you got them."

Because of the off-field demands and post-graduate commitments, recruiting to the service academies is different. Anderson's followed form. He didn't know much about the Naval Academy growing up, only had a vague idea of what the Army-Navy football game even was. He figured he'd stay close to home to play college ball, hopefully land at a place like Duquesne in Pittsburgh. But DeChellis persisted, even though he knew Anderson would have work to do. In high school, Anderson was a 6-foot-4 center. That wasn't going to fly in Division I hoops, but DeChellis liked how hard he played and how tough he was. With some coaching, he figured he could convert him into a perimeter player.

Eventually the coach lured the Anderson family to Annapolis, and the conversion was completed. The on-court conversion soon followed, and over four seasons, Anderson has grown more comfortable in his new guard shoes, emerging this season as a preseason All-Patriot League pick. This week, he joined the 1,000-point club.

The best and the brightest: Navy captain Shawn Anderson is all about service (Cont...)

But he and the Midshipmen also are grappling with a strange new foe — expectations. Coming off of a league tourney semifinal appearance a year ago and with a veteran lineup returning, Navy was picked to finish third in the Patriot this season, its highest preseason ranking since the 2001-02 season.

“I rely on him a lot,” DeChellis says of Anderson. “He’s the captain, and as I explained to him, his best trait can be his most damaging. The hardest thing he has to do as a captain is say no. That’s hard, but you only have so much tread on your tire. Somewhere along the way, you want to have enough tread to finish what you’ve got going basketball-wise, what you’ve done academically, leadership-wise. It’s not being selfish. You can only do a good job at so many things.”

Heeding his coach’s advice, Anderson has tried to limit his commitments to basketball, graduation and Forever Red Hurricanes. His appointment to the academy only enhanced his status back home and in turn, boosted his and Geramita’s efforts for their organization. That the two managed to keep the thing afloat while away at college is no small accomplishment, but they wisely connected with and encouraged the kids at New Castle High to follow in their philanthropic footsteps. These days student council members are as likely to lead the coat drive as the founders were. The endeavor is taking root with an entirely new generation. With more people on board and additional funding coming in, the two have dared to dream even bigger, with plans to offer a scholarship to at least one deserving student.

But first there is the business of basketball. Anderson talks a lot like a player with his eyes on the end of his road, passionately explaining how he tells his teammates how lucky they are.

“Obviously I want to win a Patriot League championship, but along the way I want to enjoy all of this, to soak it all in,” he says. “Whether you’re a guy on the end of the bench or a starter, you don’t get moments like this back — to enjoy each other and all the chances we have. At the end of the day, the outcome has been determined. All we can do is play our part and appreciate how incredibly lucky we are.”

Full-time strength coach gives Navy men's basketball a lift

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | December 1, 2017

Head coach Ed DeChellis got creative and went in a different direction when filling a vacancy on the Navy men's basketball staff.

After veteran assistant Ernie Nestor retired, DeChellis replaced him with a strength and conditioning coach. DeChellis felt the Midshipmen needed someone in that area of expertise more than a fifth basketball assistant.

Joe Fondale had previously worked with the men's basketball program, but he was part of the Navy athletics strength and conditioning staff and had several other sports to oversee. Fondale was reassigned to another position with the military and that was what prompted DeChellis to hire a person to work exclusively with men's basketball.

"I just felt it would really help the program if we had our own strength coach that could work consistently with the players. Someone who could really be invested in our program – attend every practice, travel to road games," DeChellis said.

Brandon Spayd became the first full-time strength and conditioning coordinator in Navy basketball history and has already made a major impact. Spayd worked with the Midshipmen during the spring, summer and fall – handing the coaching staff a group of players that were in far better condition to start this season.

"I think we're a much stronger team physically. We're in the best shape we've ever been during my time here," DeChellis said during preseason. "We brought in Brandon Spayd in May and he's been tremendous. I think our lifting program is second-to-none now. I think that will help us mentally and physically. We're going to be a better conditioned team, a stronger team."

Spayd worked with DeChellis when the latter was head coach at Penn State. Spayd spent six years in State College, going from volunteer graduate assistant to Performance Enhancement Coordinator working primarily with men's and women's basketball.

Spayd left Penn State to become Director of Performance in the strength and conditioning department at the Alabama University at Birmingham during the 2016-17 season. He also worked closely with the men's basketball program at UAB.

"When Coach DeChellis gave me the call I was extremely excited. I knew what this place entailed and the type of people that are here," Spayd said. "I feel honored to be working with very unique individuals. There is more stress and pressure put on these midshipmen on a day-to-day basis than anyone else I've worked with. They handle it with class and dignity and will give you everything they have."

Spayd played football at Juniata College, a Division III school located in his hometown of Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. He developed great respect for Juniata strength and conditioning coordinator Doug Smith, who is a nationally renowned figure in the field.

"Coach Smith was extremely impactful and influential in me deciding to get into the field," said Spayd, who obtained a Master's degree in exercise science. "I fell in love with strength and conditioning. I enjoy working behind the scenes to help an athletics program."

Spayd is also certified as a U.S. Weightlifting Level I Sports Performance Coach and holds certifications from the National Association of Speed and Explosion. He is also certified by the Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association.

"It was exciting to be able to take all my time and energy and dedicate it to one sport," Spayd said. "I wanted to get my hands dirty with these guys and really try to mold them."

At this point in his career, Spayd has a proven system in place for training college basketball players. He has studied the sport closely and learned what is important in terms of on-court performance.

"When I got here the biggest thing I wanted to do was show the guys how much harder they needed to work in order to go to the places we wanted to go," said Spayd, who has very specific parameters for what needs to be accomplished during a 60- or 90-minute workout.

"They needed to learn what a training session looks like in my eyes. I'm very big on pace and tempo, on giving maximum effort and intensity," Spayd added. "I tried to get the guys to understand how that pace and tempo translates to the games."

Navy's players learned quickly during the offseason that training under the tutelage of Spayd was far more grueling than they were accustomed to in the past.

"It's high intensity, which was a big change for our guys. That first week they were like 'Whoa.' Brandon made it clear from the get-go that he was going to push them to a high level," DeChellis said.

Spayd acknowledged that his indoctrination period with the players was not easy.

"I had to push them to a point that they had never been pushed. Getting these guys to really dig deep and go to places they didn't think they could," he said. "I think the players have responded very well."

Sophomore forward Evan Wieck was one of the players that really needed to improve his strength and conditioning. As a freshman, the Texas native sometimes struggled with the rugged interior play of the Patriot League and wore down a bit as the season went along.

When it came to working in the weight room, Wieck admitted he was "lagging behind a little bit" in relation to the other players. Spayd was not about to allow that under his watch, making Wieck one of his special projects.

"I've made a lot of advances with Coach Spayd," said Wieck, who added almost 20 pounds of muscle during the summer. "My goal was to put on 10 pounds. When I put on 20 I was like 'Man, this guy knows what he's doing.' I was very impressed."

Wieck now carries 232 pounds on his 6-foot-8 frame and lifting weights is not the only reason. Spayd also took charge of making sure the youngster was putting the right nutrients into his body.

"One of the big things about Coach Spayd is that he's also a hard-core nutritionist," said Wieck, who wants to be 245 pounds by this time next year. "He wants to know what we're eating and makes recommendations such as drinking a lot of protein shakes. For me, that's been as big as the lifting."

DeChellis recalls Spayd telling him that an elephant is really strong, but is not real good at playing basketball. In other words, there is a lot

Full-time strength coach gives Navy men's basketball a lift (Cont...)

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | December 1, 2017

more factors that go into success in the sport. "We want to make sure our guys are strong, but aren't losing their speed, quickness, explosiveness or agility," DeChellis said. "Brandon is very cognizant of that. He weighs the players every day and does testing over the course of the season to make sure guys aren't losing agility or quickness."

"Brandon is a very motivational person. He knows how to push the players in a good way," DeChellis said. "I put him in the middle of the bench because I want him to be vocal and challenge guys when necessary."

Spayd's handiwork has already paid dividends, according to DeChellis. Navy played three games in three days during the Homewood Suites Shootout and held up well. Navy lost to host Florida Gulf Coast on Saturday night then turned around and defeated Denver on Sunday afternoon.

"We played on Saturday night and after the game Brandon was pumping drinks into the guys, making sure they drank Gatorade or a protein shake," DeChellis said. "Players got up the next morning and he had them getting ice baths and massages. I thought it showed in the second half of the Denver game as our players were able to push through."

DeChellis said Spayd put the Midshipmen through a "challenge day" in which teams of players would battle against each other in various competitions.

"I told Brandon when I hired him that we have to find an edge so he has been doing things to improve our overall toughness," DeChellis said. "I'm hoping this will help us win some games that we otherwise wouldn't."

Spayd has created a very detailed schedule for the entire season that lays out when weight training or other conditioning sessions will be held. That organizational acumen is an asset to Spayd in the other aspect of his job, which involves basketball operations. He handles all the administrative work related to team travel such as booking flights, hotels and rental vehicles.

Spayd is different from a typical strength coach in that he participates in all staff meetings, attends practice every day and sits on the bench during games. DeChellis credited the rookie coach with "getting after the players" during the second half of the season opening victory over Pittsburgh.

Navy routs Washington College in tune-up for weekend

John Evans | Annapolis Capital | November 23, 2017

With a stretch of three games within 48 hours just two days away, Navy's men had to look forward to a contest on Wednesday against Division III program Washington College.

Though the game counted for the Mids (3-2), it was considered an exhibition for Washington – and the two teams respectively played like it. Though the Shoremen scored the first basket of the game, little else went their way as Navy rolled to a record-setting 110-45 victory on Wednesday at Alumni Hall.

In blowing out the Shoremen, coached by former Navy assistant Aaron Goodman, the Mids set an Alumni Hall scoring record that had stood since February 1997, scored the fourth most points in school history dating back to 1983, and won by the second largest margin ever.

Navy also set a school record with 33 assists and had 14 three-pointers, the sixth best total in program history.

"What I was happiest about was that they really shared the ball. Offensively, we passed up shots and let other guys take shots. We did a decent job taking care of the ball which was nice to see," said head coach Ed DeChellis. "Sometimes in these games, guys can play out of character. Everybody did a good job of staying in character tonight."

It was also the first time Navy had scored 100 points under DeChellis. The last time the program had scored 100 points was on Jan. 30, 2010 against Colgate

Navy played 21 players, every man suited up by DeChellis for this Thanksgiving Eve contest. Fifteen scored as the bench outscored the starters 60-50.

Even though the Shoremen (1-3) scored the first basket for its only lead of the game, Navy put the game away early, running off stretches of 10 and 11 unanswered points to lead 28-11 midway through the first half. Shooting 54.5 percent (18 for 33) in the first half, Navy led by 51-20 at the break and quickly ran the lead to 86-30 with a quick start in the second half, running off 15 unanswered points.

"I challenged the team at halftime like it was 0-0. I wanted to see how they would come out and play in the first four minutes. It was nice to

see they made a run at it. That showed maturity and growth," DeChellis said.

Washington head coach Aaron Goodman was an assistant at Navy from 2007-2015 before taking the head coaching job for the Shoremen.

"Every time we step on the floor, we're always looking to compete and win the game, so we didn't think of it any differently and prepared for it like we always would," said Goodman, of the exhibition status of the game for his team. "Our guys were excited to play a team as formidable as Navy, which will be a force to be reckoned with in the Patriot League.

"It only helps us to play them. I would say it helps us to execute against a Division I opponent. It isn't so much about the score

as it is our ability to execute shots and have guys who don't play as much get as little more time in an atmosphere like this."

For DeChellis, the game, however one-sided, was an opportunity to give his team a pressure-less workout before it takes on St. Francis Brooklyn, Florida Gulf Coast and Denver over this coming weekend in the Homewood Suites Shootout in Fort Myers, Fla.

"We have three games in three days coming up so it was good to get a game in this afternoon before Thanksgiving," added DeChellis. "I was pleased with the way we played.

Navy dominated the game in every facet, outrebounding the Shoremen 47-21 (30-9 in the second half), making 14 three-pointers on 27 tries to Washington's four threes on 18 tries, and shot 58.8 percent (40 for 68) for the game, shooting 62.9 in the second half. Navy also forced Washington into 24 turnovers. Navy scored 48 points in the paint, 41 off turnovers and 20 off the fast break. The bench outscored Washington's subs, 60-25.

Navy got double-figure scoring from starters and subs, and had some strong showings from some of its lesser-known subs. Starters Evan Wieck and Shawn Anderson had 14 points each and subs George Kiernan and Cam Davis had 11 and 10 points, respectively. And it was a player from deep off the bench, Connor Mannion, who put the Mids at 100 with a pair of free throws, the first points of his career,

with 3:55 to play. Another sub from deep off the bench, Matt Cullen, then followed with eight straight points, the first points of his career.

"This was huge. Not only to help us build toward the weekend in building our confidence, but it showed we were focused and prepared," said Anderson. "We have to take this game and build on it."

All in all, it was a pretty good tune-up for whatever future awaits them, now or later.

"They (the team) did a good job of preparing yesterday which led for a nice outing for us," DeChellis added. "We had 21 guys dressed, so we played them. Some of these guys are the future of our program, so it was good that they could get a taste of the action."

Anderson said it was nice to sit back and watch the others play.

"It was nice to see the character of some of the guys who don't normally get a chance to play," he said.

As for the programs meeting again, they are scheduled to play again next season.

"It's always special to come back here. It was a great experience to come back here," said Goodman. "We have a lot of kids who come from around here as well, so it's nice for them."

Navy celebrates Thanksgiving holiday with basketball doubleheader, promotion

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | November 21, 2017

Navy's athletic department is dishing up a festive atmosphere for Wednesday's basketball doubleheader at Alumni Hall.

Marketing wizards with the Naval Academy Athletic Association have created a "Stuffing Alumni Hall" promotion since the event is being held on the eve of Thanksgiving. Free bread stuffing provided by Main and Market will be given away to the first 500 fans through the doors while Navy-themed bibs specially approved by Bill the Goat will be handed out to the first 250 fans to arrive.

There will be a pie-eating contest between games, an indoor sprint football game at halftime of the opener and a Thanksgiving Day parade at halftime of the nightcap. Also, any person participating in the 11th annual Turkey Trot 5K Fun Run will receive discounted tickets with proof of entry.

So the stage is set for the Navy basketball teams to complete the party atmosphere with impressive victories.

Navy's men will get the action started with a game against Division III Washington College that tips off at 3 p.m. This is just the second home game for the Midshipmen, who haven't been back to Alumni Hall since beating Pittsburgh in the Veterans Classic on Nov. 10.

Coach Ed DeChellis took his troops on an extended road trip that produced lopsided losses at Miami and Pennsylvania and an uplifting win at Bryant. Navy hits the road again later this week when it travels to Fort Myers, Florida, for the Homewood Suites Shootout at Florida Gulf Coast University.

"As a coach, you're never really satisfied," DeChellis said. "However, 2-2 is where I would have hoped we would be at this point in time. We've been on the road and it's hard to win on the road."

Beating Pittsburgh was a real confidence boost to begin the season, but Navy turned around two days later and was routed by another Atlantic Coast Conference opponent. Navy was overmatched against No. 11 Miami (3-0), falling 89-55 to a talented team with Final Four aspirations.

Navy traveled to Pennsylvania three days after that and lost by 21 points to a Pennsylvania

squad that was 0-2 at the time. DeChellis was disappointed with the performance of his club that night at the fabled Palestra as the Midshipmen shot 28 percent from the field and committed 17 turnovers.

"I was not happy with how we played at Penn. We didn't do anything well. We couldn't catch, shoot, dribble or score," DeChellis said. "Penn was hungry for a win and played very well and we didn't respond."

The Midshipmen completed their tour of the East Coast by beating Bryant, 79-71, in Smithfield, Rhode Island. Senior guard Bryce Dulin scored 21 points while senior forward Tom Lacey posted a double-double as the Mids withstood a gutsy comeback attempt by the Bulldogs.

"It was very positive that we bounced back on Saturday and found a way to win on the road," DeChellis said. "I liked the resiliency and determination we showed."

Junior point guard Hasan Abdullah leads Navy in scoring with 11.3 points per game, but has committed 11 turnovers. Dulin and senior swingman Shawn Anderson are averaging 10 points apiece, but are shooting just 28 and 35 percent from the floor, respectively.

"We're not playing the type of offense we need to be successful. What really jumps out at me is the turnovers," DeChellis said. "We are turning the ball over way too much and different guys are taking turns. We've had a bunch of live ball turnovers that are leading to points for the other team. That is the most glaring thing we need to address. We have to protect the ball better."

DeChellis said Abdullah, a second-year starter who has more turnovers than assists at the moment, must settle down and become more comfortable directing the offense. Anderson and Dulin must find a way to contribute even when their shots aren't falling.

"Shawn and Bryce had two bad games in a row on offense and it is very challenging for this team to win when those two guys don't have much production," DeChellis said.

Lacey is having a solid season, leading Navy in rebounding with 6.8 per game while averaging 9.3 points. Sophomore forward Evan Wieck,

the team's fifth starter, is contributing only 4.0 points and 1.3 rebounds.

Navy has five players averaging double digit minutes off the bench with freshman forward Tyler Riemersma and senior point guard Nourse Fox leading the way at just under 13 each. Junior forwards George Kiernan and Mo Lewis along with freshman guard Cam Davis round out the rotation.

Kiernan is the leading scorer among the reserves with 6.3 points per game while Lewis is averaging 4.3 points and 2.8 rebounds.

"We have to get some more guys going off the bench. We're still not there yet with our rotation," DeChellis said.

Navy leaves on Thanksgiving Day to travel to the west coast of Florida for the Homewood Suites Shootout. The Midshipmen will play three games in three days against St. Francis-Brooklyn, host Florida Gulf Coast and Denver.

"It's a nice thing to do around Thanksgiving. It's an opportunity to get away from the academy, spend some quality time together and bond as a team," DeChellis said.

Navy will give fans free stuffing and bibs at pre-Thanksgiving basketball doubleheader

Dan Steinberg | Washington Post | November 20, 2017

The Redskins aren't the only local sports outfit running Thanksgiving-themed promotions this week. Navy's basketball teams are also feeling the holiday spirit, in the form of free stuffing and free bibs.

The Navy athletic department, see, is attempting to "stuff" its Alumni Hall gym during a pre-Thanksgiving basketball doubleheader: The men play Washington College at 3 on Wednesday, followed by the women's game against Air Force. The first 500 fans will get free stuffing from Annapolis's Main and Market, while the first 125 fans at each game will receive a free Bill's Bib, modeled here by Navy mascot Bill.

(If you do the math, you'll realize that several hundred people will have receive stuffing but no bib, which promises to leave the ugliest stain in a college basketball gymnasium since Rick Pitino left Louisville.)

There's more! There will be a pie-eating contest between the two games, a sprint football scrimmage on the basketball court during halftime of the men's game, a Thanksgiving parade during halftime of the women's game, and (canned) music by the Cranberries being featured throughout the afternoon.

Tickets to the doubleheader cost \$5 for anyone who shows proof of running in the next day's Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot. For non-trotting humans, it's \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids, expenses which theoretically could be offset by free stuffing.

Sadly, there will not be any turkeys at the game. College basketball already has plenty of those, though.

New Castle grad Anderson makes city proud

Larry Kelly | New Castle News | November 13, 2017

“When I die, I want to leave a footprint. I want kids to say that I want to be like that guy. He lived a life that was impactful.”

— Shawn Anderson

The city of New Castle isn't what it used to be. The population is less than half of what it once was in the 1960s and '70s.

The steel industry that provided so many jobs and put bread on the table for so many families is long gone.

Opportunities for young people to live and work at home are few and far between.

But notwithstanding the rust belt diminution of our community there remains a pride and determination among its citizenry. A determination to stand out; to be the best and to make a difference in their world.

When a young man or woman surfaces as a shining star — a difference maker — the whole community stands up with pride. The whole community stands a little taller.

Well, City of New Castle, you can stand tall and stick your chest out with pride because of the accomplishments of your native son — Shawn Anderson.

Anderson is not only an outstanding basketball player at the United States Naval Academy, but he also is an outstanding person.

Anderson, a senior, led the Midshipmen in scoring last season. He received second-team all-Patriot League honors last season and was selected to the Patriot League preseason first team this year.

His accolades also included being named Patriot League Player of the week, twice; Naval Academy Athletic Association Athlete of the week, four times; and Spartan Showcase Most Outstanding Player.

His coach Ed DeChellis says of Anderson, “He has a big heart. He is a quality young man and will be a great Naval Officer.”

It's that last compliment — “A great Naval Officer” — that led to Anderson's selection as the captain of the Navy team this season.

Of all the accolades one can receive, there isn't a higher distinction than being named a captain of an athletic team of the U.S Naval Academy.

It recognizes that of all the great leaders that are part of the team, you are the one that the others look to for leadership. And they do.

During Navy's season opening 71-62 victory over Pitt in the Veterans Classic held at Navy, it was clear that Anderson was the one that the Middies looked to for guidance. He was a coach on the floor. He was the commander encouraging his team.

His leadership was palpable. His presence was obvious.

He scored 15 points, had nine rebounds and five assists in the victory. He made clutch free throws down the stretch and often times guarded Pitt's best player.

In short, he lead his team in all facets of the game. He was the captain.

But it isn't just his basketball ability that makes him special.

His major is quantitative economics. His coach calls him “an outstanding student.”

He is not only making an impact at the Naval Academy, but also at home. He is a co-founder of Forever Red Hurricane, an organization that mentors sixth-grade students who are part of the New Castle Area school system.

The organization also runs the “Coats for Kids” program that solicits donation from the community to provide warm coats for children in need.

Anderson lives by the creed that “This life is not lived for only us. There is a purpose bigger than self.”

This young Midshipman is special. If he became President of the United States one day, we shouldn't be surprised.

He's certainly living a life that is impactful. His footprint in New Castle will be well defined before he's done. Kids all over this town should be saying, “I want to be like Shawn.”

Stand up, New Castle, and stick your chest out. You have a right to be proud. Shawn Anderson is on his way to special places.

Vasiljevic leads No. 12 Miami to 89-55 victory over Navy

Associated Press | November 12, 2017

CORAL GABLES, Fla. (AP) — With Bruce Brown struggling, D.J. Vasiljevic picked up the offensive slack for Miami.

Vasiljevic scored 16 points to lead five players in double figures as the No. 12 Hurricanes beat Navy 89-55 on Sunday.

The sophomore guard shook off a sub-par shooting performance in Friday's opener against Gardner Webb when he missed 10 of his 12 attempts in the opener. He made half of his 10 shots on Sunday.

"I approached it the same way I did Friday," Vasiljevic said. "My routine doesn't change. I missed a few shots on Friday that I should have made. I stayed afterwards and this morning, went through the routine. The shots dropped today."

Vasiljevic's performance helped offset Brown's limited scoring output. Brown, projected to enter the NBA draft after the season, finished with three points on 1-of-10 shooting. Brown averaged 11 points per game as a freshman.

Dulin, Anderson lead way as Navy defeats Pittsburgh, 71-62, in Veterans Classic
"He missed some shots but he's such a good player," Miami coach Jim Larranaga said. "For him to go 1-for-10, 0-for-3 (3-pointers) is so uncharacteristic. He just missed some shots right at the rim. Some nights you miss."

The Hurricanes (2-0) never trailed and opened the game with a 9-0 run in the first 4:27. Ja'Quan Newton's two layups and Vasiljevic's 3-pointer keyed Miami's early surge.

"I was proud of how hard we played all 48 minutes," Larranaga said. "Our defense was very good but our effort was outstanding."

Newton finished with 14 points on 6-of-10 shooting. Dewan Huell had his first career double 14 points and 10 rebounds for Miami.

Navy women get off to quick start, whip Rider
"The first of many," Huell said.

The Hurricanes wore down the Midshipmen (1-1) in transition. Miami scored 29 points on fast break opportunities.

"They have really good speed," Navy coach Ed DeChellis said. "They get really get down the

floor. It takes them three steps; it takes us five or six steps to get to the same spot."

Hasan Abdullah scored 13 points to lead Navy. The Midshipmen split their two season-opening games against Atlantic Coast Conference opponents after their win over Pittsburgh Friday night.

NO BLAME ON TURNAROUND FATIGUE:
DeChellis didn't attribute the team's late Friday game against Pittsburgh in Annapolis as a factor in Sunday's performance. The Midshipmen arrived in Miami Saturday afternoon and had a shoot-around session at the Watsco Center shortly thereafter.

"Tough turnaround but there's no excuse," DeChellis said. "We didn't handle the ball we didn't do the things we needed to do to be successful."

BIG PICTURE: Miami had five double figure scorers for the second game in a row. In addition to Vasiljevic, Newton and Huell, Ebuka Izundu scored 12 and Anthony Lawrence finished with 10 points. The Hurricanes only had three games last season in which five players scored in double figures.

"For us to have five guys in doubles and (Brown) not be one of them it says we've got good balance," Larranaga said.

UP NEXT: The Hurricanes conclude their season-starting three game homestand against Florida A&M on Thursday.

The Midshipmen play their second of a four-game road trip through different states Wednesday at Penn.

Dulin, Anderson lead way as Navy defeats Pitt, 71-62, in Veterans Classic

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | November 11, 2017

Navy entered the 2017-2018 basketball season with a veteran squad featuring eight returning lettermen, including four starters. The Midshipmen welcomed back their top five scorers from a year ago.

Same could not be said for Pittsburgh, which underwent a complete roster overhaul. The Panthers had four players graduate, five transfer and another dismissed from its 2016-2017 squad that finished .500 (16-16).

Head coach Kevin Stallings brought in 11 new scholarship players, most of any NCAA school. Pitt is one of only six programs with no returning starters and featured nine players (seven freshmen, two transfers) that had never played in a Division I game.

So it stood to reason that Navy would have an advantage over Pittsburgh in terms of chemistry and cohesion when the teams met in Friday night's season opener. That proved the case over the long haul as the Midshipmen used their experience and teamwork to notch a rare victory over an Atlantic Coast Conference opponent.

Senior guard Bryce Dulin led a balanced attack with 18 points as Navy maintained a comfortable lead most of the way in beating Pittsburgh, 71-62, in the nightcap of the Veterans Classic before an announced crowd of 3,238. Senior swingman Shawn Anderson had a solid all-around game with 15 points, nine rebounds and five assists for the Midshipmen, who won for the first time in four tries in their own season-opening tournament.

Junior point guard Hasan Abdullah added eight points and five assists for Navy, which built a 15-point lead just past the midway mark of the second half and answered several runs by Pitt. It was Navy's first win over an ACC school since it beat Wake Forest in 1971.

"I'm really, really proud of our team. I thought we played hard and I thought we executed offensively. We made timely shots and we made our free throws down the stretch, which was critical," Navy head coach Ed DeChellis said. "Defensively, I thought we were pretty good all night. They shot 41 percent so overall it was a pretty decent defensive effort."

Navy had previously lost to college basketball heavyweights Michigan State, Florida and Ohio

State in the Veterans Classic. DeChellis admitted it was meaningful for the Midshipmen to knock off a Power Five Conference opponent and get into the win column for this event.

"It's important. I'm not going downplay that. This is our fourth year and we wanted to win one," he said. "I'm really happy for our players. They've worked very hard. Our seniors are really close and this was their last go-round for the Veterans Classic. So it meant a lot to them."

Anderson agreed with that assessment: "It's huge. A win like this shows that the effort we put in during the off-season meant something and that we have the potential to be a very good team," he said.

Dulin was named to the Patriot League All-Defensive team last season. DeChellis believes the 6-foot-4, 210-pounder can become an all-conference performer by showing more consistency on the offensive end. The Missouri native was asked if he's looking to be more of a scorer as a senior.

"Honestly, not really. I'm just trying to do whatever I can to help the team. Hopefully, that's scoring. Hopefully, that's continuing to be a good defender," he said. "I pride myself on guarding the other team's best player. If scoring comes with that, it does."

Anderson said Dulin naturally has a defensive mindset and joked that his alter ego, which teammates call Bruce, wants to score points.

"You didn't see Bryce Dulin tonight, you saw Bruce. He was aggressive and had a swagger about him. It was incredible," Anderson said. "We need guys to have that kind of mentality, night in and night out. If (Dulin) can do that and still be the defensive player he is, the sky's the limit."

Junior forward Jared Wilson-Frame scored 20 points to lead Pittsburgh, which led the contest for just 3 ½ minutes. Wilson-Frame is a transfer from Northwest Florida State, where he tallied almost 1,000 points in 56 games. Senior forward Ryan Luther, one of only two returning lettermen, totaled 14 points and eight rebounds for the Panthers.

"That was a good, solid, veteran team we played tonight. They did what they do better

than we did what we want to do," Pittsburgh head coach Kevin Stallings said. "We got out-physicaled and we got out-toughed."

Pittsburgh was doomed by a woeful offensive performance to start the second half. The Panthers missed 14 straight field goals and also committed three turnovers over the opening 10:17 in falling behind by 15 points.

Pitt's lone point during that decisive stretch came off a free throw. The Panthers did not make their first field goal of the second half until Shamiel Stevenson followed his own miss at the 9:43 mark.

"We have to be better than a team that scores one point in 10 minutes," Stallings said. "That was really the game right there."

Anderson canned a 3-pointer and also scored off a driving layup as Navy outscored the visitors 17-3 to take its largest lead of the game. Lacey followed a missed free throw with a tap-in to give the Mids a commanding 56-41 advantage with 9:15 to go.

Pitt showed some signs of life with Wilson-Frame capping an 8-0 run with a layup that cut the deficit to seven and forced Navy to call a timeout with 7:03 remaining. A steal that led to a follow dunk by Luther got the Panthers within five at 56-51, but the Mids quickly regained control.

Dulin scored off a driving layup and drew a foul in the process for a three-point play then swished a 3-pointer on the following possession as Navy pushed the lead back to 11 with 4:35 remaining. Dulin was proud to see the Mids display some mental toughness down the stretch.

"That's huge for us right now, knowing that we have a veteran team and knowing we have a lot of seniors and juniors on the floor. That really helps," he said.

Anderson and senior forward Tom Lacey both made both ends of one-and-one free throws in the final 1:21. DeChellis was pleased with the way responded when Pitt made a couple runs toward the end.

"I just think we had a little more experience at the end and we made some plays. We made some shots and some free throws," DeChellis

Dulin, Anderson lead way as Navy defeats Pitt, 71-62, in Veterans Classic (Cont...)

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | November 11, 2017

said. "I thought our seniors really came through and did a nice job and that's very important."

Navy does not have time to celebrate as it plays at 13th-ranked Miami on Sunday afternoon. DeChellis has convened a Saturday morning practice to install a game-plan for the Hurricanes, who routed Gardner-Webb, 77-45, on Friday night.

"We have to move on tomorrow and start preparing to play Miami on Sunday. Now we'll get Miami's attention and I'm sure we'll get their best effort," DeChellis said.

Navy out-rebounded Miami 39-30 with Dulin and Lacey grabbing eight apiece. Junior forward Mo Lewis, who played a total of 16 minutes in five games last season, came off the bench to give the Mids a lift by making 3 of 4 field goals and grabbing four rebounds.

Dulin knocked down a pair of 3-pointers in scoring 11 points as Navy took a 39-38 halftime lead. Anderson and junior Kiernan contributed six points apiece for the Midshipmen, who led for almost 15 of the 20 minutes.

Wilson-Frame drained three shots from beyond the arc in netting 13 points for Pittsburgh, which committed nine turnovers. Carr went 3-for-3 on 3-pointers in adding 12 points as the Panthers rallied from an early deficit to tie the score five times and take the lead once.

Chemistry was the difference early on as the Midshipmen had five different players reach the scoring column in taking an eight-point lead with just over seven minutes elapsed.

Stallings insists he has recruited quality ACC talent and that showed soon enough as the Panthers responded with an 11-2 run to move ahead. It was back-and-forth the rest of the first half with Navy taking another seven point lead on a 3-pointer by Dulin with 2:12 remaining. Wilson-Frame swished a three of his own in the final seconds to cut the deficit to one at intermission.

Navy tops cold-shooting Pittsburgh 71-62 in Veterans Classic

David Ginsburg | Associated Press | November 11, 2017

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — It didn't matter to Navy that Pittsburgh is coming off a losing season and woefully lacking in experience.

Any win over an Atlantic Coast Conference team is something to savor, especially when it comes at home in the season opener.

Bryce Dulin scored 18 points, Shawn Anderson added 15 and Navy topped the cold-shooting Panthers 71-62 Friday night in the season-opening Veterans Classic.

"It was huge. A win like this shows we have the potential to be a very good team," said Anderson, who had nine rebounds and five assists in a team-high 33 minutes.

The Midshipmen opened the second half with a 13-1 run to take a 52-39 lead and held off a late run by the Panthers in the closing minutes.

Pittsburgh missed its first 14 field goal attempts after halftime. Over the first 13 minutes of the second half, the Panthers were 5 for 20 from the floor and 0 for 9 from 3-point range.

"We have a slew of things to work on," coach Kevin Stallings said.

Navy finished with a 39-30 rebounding advantage.

In their defense, the Panthers are extremely inexperienced. They lost all five starters from last season's team and their only two returning scholarship letterwinners — Ryan Luther and Jonathan Milligan — had three starts between them.

Pitt closed to 66-62 with 1:31 left but didn't have enough poise to complete the comeback.

Jared Wilson-Frame was at the free throw line with a chance to get the Panthers within a basket, but he missed both shots. Anderson subsequently made two free throws on the other end, and three more Navy foul shots sealed it.

"We might not be able to get the ball in the basket," Stallings said, "but they will continue to play hard."

Wilson-Frame led Pittsburgh with 20 points and Luther had 14.

After Dulin scored 11 in the first half to help Navy take a 39-38 halftime lead, Hasan Abdullah began the second half by hitting successive 3s for a seven-point cushion.

Shamuel Stevenson sank a free throw for the Panthers before Anderson connected from beyond the arc and Mo Lewis added a jumper to make it 50-39.

BIG PICTURE

Pittsburgh: It could be a rough run for the Panthers in the ACC. Their inexperience was painfully evident against Navy, and the Midshipmen are not to be confused with the Tar Heels or even the Demon Deacons.

Navy: Games like this serve as a confidence-boost for a team that last season reached the Patriot League semifinals for the first time since 2001.

HARD TIMES

The Panthers figured there would be tough times this season. They weren't counting on it happening so soon.

"We were hoping adversity would come a little later," Stallings said. "But it came tonight."

UP NEXT

Pittsburgh: The Panthers host Montana on Monday night in the Legends Classic.

Navy: The Midshipmen face another ACC foe, Miami, on the road Sunday afternoon.

Navy men's basketball adjusts to new-found respect

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | November 10, 2017

Navy men's basketball finds itself in an unusual position going into this season.

Throughout the seven-year tenure of head coach Ed DeChellis, the Midshipmen have played with a chip on their shoulder after being predicted to finish at the bottom of the Patriot League.

Things have changed going into the 2017-2018 campaign as Navy has been picked third in the Patriot League preseason poll. That is the program's highest position since being tabbed to place second prior to the 2001-2002 season.

"I think it's different for this program in terms of the Patriot League. The target is on our back a little bit and we're going to get everyone's best shot," DeChellis said. "It's a unique position in the sense we're going to be the hunted now. We spoke to our players about that in terms of mindset. We're not sneaking up on anyone anymore. That's a different kind of pressure for our players."

Indeed, there is new-found respect for Navy after it finished in sole possession of fourth place in the Patriot League last season. The Midshipmen also advanced to the semifinals of the Patriot League Tournament for the first time since 2001.

Navy has increased its win total within the Patriot League every year under DeChellis, who owns a 68-119 overall record in Annapolis. The Midshipmen posted a 10-8 conference record last season.

"It's nice to finally get some respect and be appreciated. That being said, preseason rankings in this league don't really mean much," Navy senior captain Shawn Anderson said. "We've definitely put the program out there to the point that people know what Navy basketball is all about. We hope to keep moving forward. I think we have the pieces to be a 20-win team this season. It just comes down to sticking to the process and doing the little things every day."

Navy returns four starters from last season's team that finished 16-16 overall with center Edward Alade the lone loss to graduation. The Midshipmen bring back eight lettermen overall, including their top five scorers.

"I think we have a talented group, a pretty veteran group and a very competitive group,"

DeChellis said. "I think we have the pieces to be a pretty good basketball team. We've got some veterans, some leadership. We have some young guys that I think will mold into our squad pretty nicely. Now we just have to put those pieces together."

Anderson was a second team All-Patriot League selection last season after leading Navy in scoring with 12.2 points per game while ranking second in rebounding (4.4 average), assists (88) and steals (37).

"Shawn Anderson has shown he's one of the best players in this league. He's a tough kid that comes to work every day, has a great attitude and is an outstanding leader," DeChellis said. "We need Shawn to show great consistency. He has the ability to step up his game on both ends of the floor."

DeChellis wants Anderson to be assertive on the offensive end without feeling he needs to be a volume scorer. He believes the 6-foot-4, 215-pounder can become more of a lockdown defender.

Anderson is the team captain, a role that brings additional responsibilities around the academy and within the Brigade of Midshipmen.

"On the court, I think it's important for me to understand where the team is at. Sometimes you need to push the guys more, other times you need to back off. Sometimes you need to challenge guys, other times you need to pull them aside for a pep talk," Anderson said. "That's been the biggest challenge. Having the pulse of the team. I'm trying to go back to when I was a freshman and sophomore and remember what people are going through. My job is to help all my teammates get through the season."

Navy's other returning starters are senior power forward Tom Lacey, senior wing forward Bryce Dulin and junior point guard Hasan Abdullah. Dulin enjoyed a breakout campaign a year ago, averaging 9.3 points and 4.1 rebounds while being named to the Patriot League All-Defensive team.

DeChellis believes Dulin can become an All-Patriot League performer by developing into a more dangerous scorer and creator.

"I think Bryce Dulin has really stepped up and

become more of a vocal leader," DeChellis said. "Bryce is our best perimeter defender, but I think he has the ability to do more on the offensive end."

Lacey led Navy and ranked third in the Patriot League in rebounding with 7.1 per game. The rugged 6-foot-7, 235-pounder grabbed 100 offensive rebounds, the second-highest total in program history since the statistic was first tracked in 1987.

"We need Tom Lacey to expand his offensive game, to get on the low box and score a little more," DeChellis said. "Tom brings a lot of energy and emotion, which is infectious for the whole team. He plays with a lot of physicality, whether it's rebounding, defending or setting picks."

Abdullah took over as the starting point guard as a sophomore and got better as the season went along, winding up with averages of 8.8 points, 3.3 assists and 1.9 steals. The 6-foot, 195-pounder led the Mids in assists, steals, 3-pointers made (48) and minutes played (28.4).

"Hasan is more mature, more comfortable in a leadership role. He has become a more vocal leader and is telling the younger guys what to do," DeChellis said. "Hasan can break down defenses and get to the basket. He can shoot the ball from the perimeter and really pressure the ball on the defensive end. He has great quickness and gets his hands on a lot of balls."

Abdullah has been bothered by a hip flexor that forced him to miss eight days of practice recently. The Alabama native returned to the court this week, but his status for Friday's opener against Pittsburgh in the Veterans Classic is questionable.

Nurse Fox, a steady and reliable senior, would likely start at point guard if Abdullah cannot go. That would put pressure on sophomore Matt Cullen and freshman Cam Davis to perform in a backup role. Cullen did not see varsity action last season while Davis is a direct-entry recruit from Battlefield, Missouri.

As of Tuesday, DeChellis was still undecided about the fifth starter with sophomore Evan Wieck and junior George Kiernan the most likely candidates to replace Alade in the front-court. The 6-foot-8, 235-pound Wieck is a more

Navy men's basketball adjusts to new-found respect (Cont...)

traditional post player while Kiernan (6-7, 225) prefers to face the basket and is one of Navy's best jump shooters.

"Evan Wieck has made a lot of improvement. He's doing a better job of catching the ball in the post and scoring," DeChellis said. "George Kiernan showed last season that he can really shoot the basketball. He had some big scoring games."

DeChellis indicated the style of game along with matchups could determine whether Kiernan or Wieck gets the most minutes as they are vastly different players.

"Evan is a defensive center, a rebounder, a physical kid who hedges ball screens well. Kiernan can play on the perimeter and stretch the floor offensively," he said. "So it all depends on what type of game is being played and what we need at that point in time."

Navy needs to develop a bench and DeChellis is eager to see which players step up. Junior Ryan Pearson has flashed some offensive talent in terms of shooting, but needs to improve as a defender. Junior Mo Lewis (6-6, 240) has looked like the program's most improved player during preseason and provides a physical presence in terms of rebounding and setting screens. Junior Dom Antonelli (6-1, 190) has shown he can make some outside shots.

Navy has brought in 10 freshmen, most of whom will spend this season developing on the junior varsity. DeChellis thinks Davis and forward Tyler Riemersma (6-8, 215) could be ready to contribute right away.

"We're looking for that second wave off the bench. As a staff, we're trying to figure out who is going to help this team in a reserve role," he said.

Navy has only enjoyed one winning season (19-14 in 2015-2016) under DeChellis, who left Penn State in May, 2011 to take over the struggling program. That is why the coaching staff is cautioning the players to not get too confident about being picked third in the Patriot League.

"That's always a concern, but my feedback to the players is 'What have we done?' We haven't done anything. We really haven't accomplished our goals at all," DeChellis said. "Some days I think we've put this thing together well

enough to have a chance to get something done. This is the first year that I can say we have a team that is capable of capturing the championship. I think we do have a chance if things fall into place."

Veterans Classic teams soak up visit to the Naval Academy

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | November 10, 2017

Tubby Smith grew up in Lexington Park, Maryland, and remembers taking school field trips to Annapolis to see the State House and other historic sites in the capital city. However, Smith had never stepped foot on the campus of the Naval Academy until Thursday.

Smith, a legendary college basketball coach, was just as awestruck as his Memphis players while touring the Naval Academy on Thursday.

"Wow! What a great place this truly is," said Smith, who was born in the St. Mary's County town of Scotland. "Obviously, I've heard so much about the Naval Academy over the years. To be able to spend this morning walking around and seeing it up close and personal was really special."

Memphis is one of three visiting teams participating in the fourth annual Veterans Classic, being held on Friday night at Alumni Hall on the Naval Academy campus. Memphis will take on No. 25 Alabama in the first game at 6:30.

Smith and the Tigers were joined on Thursday's tour by players, coaches and support personnel from Alabama and Pittsburgh.

It was an eye-opening experience for the basketball players, most of whom had never visited a service academy and had little understanding of what such an institution was all about. Smith, like every other head coach that has brought a team to the Veterans Classic, said the three-hour morning tour was the highlight of the trip to Annapolis.

"When you come to a place like the Naval Academy you learn about the discipline these midshipmen must display every day as part of the mental, moral and physical training they go through," said Smith, in his 38th year as a college basketball coach. "We are trying to get our players to understand that nothing good happens without discipline, in any aspect of life."

Smith has a valid excuse for having never visited the Naval Academy until now, noting that he left Maryland at the age of 17 to attend High Point College. The 1969 graduate of Great Mills High was a standout basketball player and originally signed with the University of Maryland.

However, Maryland fired head coach Frank

Fellows and his successor did not think Smith was good enough to play there. That coach who rescinded the scholarship offer to Smith was none other than Charles "Lefty" Driesell.

At the time, High Point had a fairly new head coach in Bob Vaughn, who had led Surrattsville High in Clinton, Maryland to a state championship. Vaughn recruited the greater Washington, D.C. area hard after getting hired at High Point and landed such standouts as Smith, Gene Littles and Joe Colbert.

Smith wound up earning a degree in health and physical education at High Point and also met his wife Donna at the North Carolina school.

Orlando Smith was the sixth of 17 children born to Guffrie and Parthenia Smith, who were sharecroppers in southern Maryland. His father was a World War II veteran who was wounded in combat. Several uncles and brothers also served in the armed forces, which is the route Smith was planning to follow.

"I signed up to join the Air Force out of college and was all set to report to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, North Carolina," Smith said. "I was home for the summer after graduating college and that is when I heard the basketball head coaching position was open at Great Mills."

Smith, who had his teaching certificate in hand, was in the right place at the right time to get a full-time job at the age of 21.

"I tell that story to my players because it speaks to the importance of preparation," Smith said. "I was prepared to take advantage of that opportunity that was presented. Now, 44 years later, I'm still doing what I love doing – coaching and teaching."

Smith spent four years at Great Mills, teaching physical education while coaching football, basketball and baseball. In order to make ends meet, he worked at the Harry Lundeberg Seaman's School during the summer months.

"Being back here in Maryland brings back a lot of memories for me," Smith admitted.

Smith still has a slew of relatives living in southern Maryland and many will be in attendance at Alumni Hall when Memphis meets

Alabama in the opener of the Veterans Classic. Cecil Short, Smith's ninth grade coach at George Washington Carver School, is coming to the game.

Integration finally reached St. Mary's County when Smith was a sophomore and he finished high school at Great Mills – playing basketball there for Coach Gene Woods. Smith also personally invited Woods to the Veterans Classic.

Smith got into college basketball coaching as an assistant at Virginia Commonwealth University for J.D. Barnett, who was his second head coach at High Point. Smith became a head coach at Tulsa in 1991 and has also directed the programs at Georgia (1995-97), Kentucky (1997-2007), Minnesota (2007-2013) and Texas Tech (2013-2016).

The 66-year-old reached the pinnacle of the profession when he led Kentucky to the 1998 NCAA Division I national championship.

Smith has criss-crossed the country during his Hall of Fame career and seemed genuinely honored to add the Naval Academy to the long list of college campuses he has visited. Memphis players climbed aboard a Yard Patrol boat, sat in the cockpit of a Navy helicopter and checked out a dormitory room in Bancroft Hall among various other stops during the academy tour.

"This has to be one of the greatest teaching tools I've ever experienced. I think this will really resonate with our players and help them appreciate the commitment and dedication these midshipmen show in their daily lives," Smith said. "We talk about values such as honor, loyalty and respect – those are the basic tenets of an institution such as this."

At Veterans Classic, Paul Evans' loyalties lie with Navy

John McNamara | Annapolis Capital | November 9, 2017

As a basketball coach, Paul Evans won at Navy then won at Pittsburgh, too. In fact, he made multiple trips to the NCAA Tournament with both schools.

But when those two teams meet Friday night in the second game of the fourth annual Veterans Classic at Alumni Hall, Evans made it clear where his loyalties lie.

When asked which team he'd be rooting for, he replied, "Navy, for sure."

The Navy-Pittsburgh game is slated to tip off at about 9 p.m. The first game of the doubleheader, which will pit Alabama against Memphis, is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m.

It was during Evans' six-year tenure (1980-86) at Navy that he made his coaching reputation. Even though his time at Pitt (1986-94) was technically longer, he retains a special fondness for the academy and the city of Annapolis.

"It was a great six years," said Evans, 72, who now spends most of his time in western Florida, near St. Petersburg. "I had some good players in the program and we seemed to get better every year."

Evans went 119-60 at Navy, including a three-year span during which the Mids went 80-19, the best such stretch in school history. Evans and the Mids also ended a 25-year NCAA Tournament drought in 1985 and advanced to the Elite Eight of the NCAA Tournament in 1986.

Evans will return to the academy this week for a series of events honoring him and some of the players who helped him create that success.

Evans and former players Kylor Whitaker, Cliff Rees and Carl Liebert will be among the guests of Naval Academy Superintendent Vice Admiral Ted Carter at a Veterans Classic reception Thursday. They also will be introduced at a timeout during Friday night's basketball game and again at Saturday's football game. In between, a meeting room in Halsey Field House (where Navy played basketball in Evans' day) will be named in the ex-coach's honor.

Evans' success at Navy made him a hot commodity for higher-profile, higher-paying jobs and he ultimately left Annapolis to take over the program at Pitt, where he guided the Panthers

to a 147-98 record and five NCAA Tournament appearances from 1986-1994.

"Everyone at some point wants to branch out and try that," he said. "It was fun. I enjoyed it in Pitt as well. But it was a tough situation to leave (at Navy). It was such a quality campus and such a quality group of guys."

Evans recruited and coached five of Navy's top 20 scorers, including All-American center and future NBA Hall of Famer David Robinson (No. 1), forward Vernon Butler (No. 2), guard Rob Romaine (No. 10), Whitaker (No. 16) and Rees (No. 19).

Navy's fortunes were fortified when Robinson morphed from a 6-foot-7 fringe player into a dominant seven-foot center. Robinson went from playing 13 minutes a game and averaging 7.6 points and 4.0 rebounds as a freshman to averaging 23.6 points and 11.6 rebounds as a full-time starter.

"David was a great find," Evans said. "He hadn't played much basketball in high school. He came in at 6-foot-7 and we thought he'd be (a small forward). The next thing you knew, he was five inches taller and he was center."

With Robinson and the rugged 6-foot-8 Butler up front, Navy could compete with anyone. In the 1985 NCAA Tournament, the Mids beat an LSU team that featured future NBA players John Williams and Jerry Reynolds before throwing a serious scare into a Len Bias-led Maryland squad. The next year, Navy beat Syracuse – in the Carrier Dome – before losing the regional final to Mike Krzyzewski's first Duke team to reach the Final Four.

"I had great players," Evans said. "Everybody talks about David, but there were an awful lot of other players who had a part in the program succeeding. You don't get many honors as a coach if it isn't for the players."

But it was Evans who recruited those players and molded them into a cohesive unit.

The fiery Evans cut his players little slack – even though they had to deal with the rigors of service academy life that their competitors didn't.

"I remember him really demanding excellence from us and pushing us beyond our limited

capabilities," recalled Butler. "He pushed us to levels we didn't even know we had in us."

Butler said he was pleased to see his old coach being recognized.

"I only knew winning underneath him," Butler said. "It's unique in the (academy) environment today to see that kind of success. No other service academy has come close to that."

Navy's Shawn Anderson, a New Castle alum, to play against Pitt

Stephen Nesbitt | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette | October 27, 2017

When the Brooklyn Nets arrived in Annapolis, Md., last month for their training camp at the U.S. Naval Academy, forward Rondae Hollis-Jefferson was approached by the captain of the Navy men's basketball team. The player, Navy's top scorer the past two seasons, introduced himself as Shawn Anderson, from New Castle. Hollis-Jefferson smiled. He knew New Castle.

"You really think y'all boys could have beat us?" Hollis-Jefferson asked.

Anderson laughed and replied, "Yeah." In 2013, his senior year at New Castle High School, the Red Hurricanes' dream of an undefeated season died with a 67-63 loss to Lower Merion in the PIAA Class AAAA state semifinal. Awaiting Lower Merion in the championship game was two-time defending champion Chester, led by Hollis-Jefferson, a consensus five-star recruit.

"Weren't y'all undersized?" Hollis-Jefferson asked Anderson.

"We were," Anderson said, "but there was something about that team."

Even now, four years later and 300 miles from New Castle, Anderson can't help but reminisce about his Red Hurricane days. Playing for coach Ralph Blundo, Anderson paired with Malik Hooker, now a safety for the Indianapolis Colts, to secure back-to-back WPIAL basketball titles. Both times, in 2012 and 2013, they defeated rival Hampton in the league final.

So imagine Anderson's intrigue this spring when he discovered who led off Navy's 2017-18 schedule. The news came via a text message from a Navy assistant coach: The Midshipmen would open Anderson's senior season Nov. 10 by hosting Pitt in the Veterans Classic. For Anderson, it meant one last tilt against Pitt's Ryan Luther, his high-school friend and Hampton rival. Anderson relayed the message to his father, Shawn Sr., and said, "Here we go again!"

"What more could I ask for than to open up my last first college game against Ryan Luther?" Anderson said in a phone interview last week. "It's cool because it's Pitt, but this goes back to our New Castle and Hampton days. This is going to be a cool experience. ..."

"What more could you ask for as a hometown

guy? I didn't have the opportunity to go [to Pitt], but I'm at another program, we're doing well, starting to build up to potentially bringing a championship here, and we're opening up against a team I've watched since I was a little kid. It should be a good time."

Anderson, named to the five-player preseason All-Patriot League team earlier this month, said he has fielded many ticket requests the past few weeks, and he expects a large New Castle contingent at Alumni Hall when Pitt comes to the academy. Navy has another WPIAL product on the roster — sophomore guard Matt Cullen, a Latrobe graduate.

Anderson was a Pitt fan growing up and dreamed of playing Division I basketball. Not there, necessarily, but anywhere. Navy wasn't on his radar until they began recruiting him. Anderson went on a campus visit, and thankfully, he said, his father "had the foresight that 17-year-old Shawn Anderson, Jr., didn't have." Shawn Sr. encouraged his son to seriously consider Navy.

Back in New Castle, Anderson said, peoples' eyes widened when they heard he had an offer to attend the U.S. Naval Academy. Anderson said the reactions helped him recognize the prestige of the place. After a year at the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, R.I., Anderson relocated to Annapolis and started working toward a degree in quantitative economics. He will graduate next spring and intends to serve on a ship somewhere as a Surface Warfare Officer.

Still, New Castle remains close to Anderson's heart and mind. Three of his four siblings live there, as does his father. His mother, Angeli-que, lives nearby, over the Ohio border.

"You can never replace home," Anderson said. "You can't replace those friendships, those memories."

Anderson and New Castle classmate Mike Geramita started a nonprofit organization called "Forever Red Hurricanes" to benefit the local community. Anderson currently is planning their fifth annual coat drive. Another initiative is a "Transitioning to Success" program where college students mentor middle schoolers, showing show them their options for the future. The Forever Red Hurricanes founders hope to soon start funding a few college

scholarships each year.

Whenever Anderson returns home, he said, one of his first destinations is the gym at New Castle High School. He flips on the lights, scans the familiar surroundings and picks up a ball.

"I go into the field house by myself and just shoot," Anderson said. "I'll never be able to replace that. I'll never put on that uniform again, with the crowd there, but whether you think New Castle is a good place or a bad place, that's home. That's family. That's love."

Maryland-Navy to resume men's basketball series at 2018 Veterans Classic

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | October 17, 2017

Len Bias and David Robinson were the star players the last time Maryland and Navy met in men's basketball.

Bias led the way with 20 points and eight rebounds as the Terrapins beat the Midshipmen, 64-59, in the second round of the 1985 NCAA Tournament at Dayton Arena in Ohio. Bias did a solid job of defending Robinson, who totaled 22 points and eight rebounds in the loss.

It marked the 58th meeting between the intra-state rivals. The Terps and Mids have not shared the same basketball court ever since.

Naval Academy athletic director Chet Gladchuk revealed on Saturday that the series will resume following a 33-year hiatus. Maryland has agreed to play in the 2018 Veterans Classic and will face the host team in the nightcap of a doubleheader.

"We are very fortunate because the Veterans Classic has been an outstanding event that has drawn a lot of attention and interest," Navy head coach Ed DeChellis told The Capital during the Baltimore Basketball Media Day at Towson University. "We are very excited to be able to secure Maryland for 2018. I really have to thank Mark Turgeon for that."

Such heavyweight programs as North Carolina and Michigan State have appeared in the Veterans Classic since it was established in 2014. This year's edition, slated for Friday, Nov. 10, will feature Alabama versus Memphis and Navy against Pittsburgh.

DeChellis said he's had several conversations with Turgeon about getting the Terrapins to participate and the timing worked out for next year.

"Mark Turgeon thought it would be great for Maryland to come down to Annapolis and participate in the tournament. He didn't have to do that and the Maryland administration didn't," DeChellis said. "Mark made the decision that he wanted to play the game and I'm really appreciative of his willingness to come over and compete with us."

Navy and Maryland played almost annually from 1924 through 1980, meeting 55 times during that span. There were only three seasons (1940, 1971, 1978) during that time frame the Midshipmen and Terrapins did not play. The

last regular season game between the schools came on Jan. 31, 1983.

Paul Evans and Charles "Lefty" Driesell were the respective head coaches when Navy and Maryland ceased playing during the regular season in 1984.

DeChellis has committed to playing in-state opponents since becoming head coach at Navy in 2011. Navy has played Mount St. Mary's, Towson, Loyola, UMBC and Maryland-Eastern Shore over the previous six seasons and will face Coppin State for the first time ever this season.

"Maryland is the one local school we haven't been able to play so I'm glad that is finally going to happen," DeChellis said. "I know it's good for Navy and I hope it will be good for Maryland. I know Mark is looking forward to the military experience and I think his players will enjoy that."

As part of the Veterans Classic, participating teams tour the Naval Academy and observe the midshipmen in their daily regimen.

Could a Baltimore-area college basketball showcase be close? Coaches hope so

Jonas Shaffer | Baltimore Sun | October 17, 2017

In the 1960s and '70s, it was called the Baltimore Metro, a three-day, season-opening tournament of games between seven local men's basketball programs. One of the schools, the University of Baltimore, no longer has a team; another, Johns Hopkins, competes in Division III.

From 1998 to 2003, it returned as the Battle of Baltimore Classic, a four-team, two-round competition sponsored and televised by Channel 2. UMBC won three titles, Loyola Maryland two, and Towson, Coppin State and Morgan State none.

On Tuesday, as head coaches from the five Division I programs within 10 miles of downtown Baltimore gathered at Towson's SECU Arena for the first Greater Baltimore Basketball Media Day, there was pride in the renewed state of Baltimore basketball but a longing to be more like Philadelphia, to bring back the old days. Up Interstate 95, the city's "Big 5" — Pennsylvania, La Salle, Saint Joseph's, Temple and Villanova — play every year.

In Baltimore, there's no consensus on what it might be called the next time the local schools play under the same banner. Only that it needs to happen sooner than later.

"I would hope that we could come up with a more creative name than the Big 6 or 7," Morgan State coach Todd Bozeman said, alluding to the possible inclusion of Navy and Mount St. Mary's. "I just think it's time."

There would have been no better time than this season.

Towson has what coach Pat Skerry calls his deepest roster of his Tigers tenure, well positioned to improve on last season's third-place finish in the Colonial Athletic Association.

UMBC returns four starters from a surprising team that led the America East Conference in points per game and 3-point shooting.

Loyola senior Andre Walker became the first Greyhound to earn first-team All-Patriot League honors since the school joined the conference before the 2013-2014 season.

Morgan State, which finished tied for third in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference in 2017, counts two first-team all-conference performers

among its 10 veterans.

And Coppin State — well, the Eagles have Juan Dixon as coach and all the new hope that that promises.

"A lot of the programs are on strong upticks right now," Skerry said, "and it'd be good timing to get that going again."

Not that the schools are avoiding one another. In fact, the opposite: Each Baltimore-area team will meet at least one other this season. Coppin State and Morgan State will face off twice, as they regularly do in MEAC play.

But there is no showcase for the area's intercollegiate battles. Coaches said Philadelphia's Big 5 model, a round-robin tournament to determine a champion, would impose too much on their scheduling needs. ("Guarantee games," early-season matchups between a high-major team and a lower-level foe earning a significant paycheck to hit the road, are important to a program's bottom line. And money talks, often more loudly than civic pride.)

Restoring the early-season tournaments of yore, though — something like that would be more palatable. Coaches suggested a tripleheader, maybe around Thanksgiving or the winter holidays, the venue rotating among the participating schools.

"We'd have a day of college basketball, and you get all the teams here represented and maybe you play a different team each year," UMBC coach Ryan Odom said. "It would require some sacrifice in terms of not having it at your arena. ... But I think, all in all, it would definitely be a positive."

"It would give us an opportunity to keep some of our prospective student-athletes here at home," Dixon said. "If they can witness Towson and UMBC and Morgan and Coppin and Loyola, these schools here, on the same floor, competing, it's going to bring out all the local talent. Bring out AAU teams, the coaches, the high school coaches. And they get to witness high-level basketball right here at home."

"Any type of exposure that has us going against each other, no matter if you win or lose, people are going to know about it," Loyola coach G.G. Smith said. "Well, did Coppin beat Morgan today? Did Loyola beat Towson?

Did Towson beat whoever?" Just that type of discussion is going to be great for all of our programs. It's great for branding."

Smith has heard these calls to action before. When he was an assistant under Jimmy Patsos, the former Greyhounds head coach worked with Bozeman to create an annual Baltimore basketball competition, something that would minimize travel costs and bolster media and fan interest. It never came together. "It's just so hard," Smith acknowledged. Coaches have their own interests; athletic directors have theirs as well.

If area teams are ever to come together again, Smith said, they have to start planning now — even if they're for games held after the next presidential election. Baltimore's Big 5 sounds good in theory, but practically, there are issues that need sorting out. Who would host, and when? Which Maryland team would be the sixth in a tripleheader? How would tickets be allocated?

And just what it would be called?

"It's something that is going to be unique," Smith said, "if we can get it done."

Previewing the 2017 Veterans Classic Field

NavySports.com | October 10, 2017

College basketball practices are in full swing and the annual Veterans Classic doubleheader is set for one month from today on November 10. Alabama will play Memphis in the opener at Alumni Hall at 6:30 PM and Navy will host Pittsburgh at 9:00 PM. Both games will be televised on CBS Sports Network.

Tickets for the Veterans Classic are available and the Navy ticket office is currently running a special that features four games for \$40. The four games are the two Veterans Classic games and the Army-Navy men's and women's basketball games on January 14. Click here to buy tickets.

Prior to the 2014-15 college basketball season, CBS Sports Network and the Naval Academy partnered to create a new college basketball event, the Veterans Classic, an annual showcase bringing together top teams from across the country in celebration of Veterans Day. The Veterans Classic enters its fourth edition in 2017-18.

The inaugural event was Friday, Nov. 14, 2014 with No. 15 VCU playing Tennessee and Navy hosting No. 18 Michigan State. CBS Sports televised the doubleheader and had on-site pre-game, halftime and post-game studio coverage, live from Alumni Hall in Annapolis. The second edition featured No. 1 North Carolina, Temple, Florida and Navy, while the 2016 event consisted of Marquette, Vanderbilt, Ohio State and Navy. Alabama will play Memphis and Navy will host Pitt in 2017.

Each year, the three visiting schools receive a glimpse of what life is like as a midshipman at the Naval Academy. The teams tour the 'Yard,' watch noon meal formation and eat lunch with the Brigade at King Hall. The teams board a yard patrol ship, go into a ship simulator, tour a MH-60S helicopter and a Marine Corps humvee.

The teams are immersed in the culture and tradition of the Naval Academy as the event includes a number of other unique experiences, including military demonstrations, receptions and guest speakers.

CBS Sports produced a 30-minute 'Hoops Confidential' documentary on each of the first three events and will do so again in 2017.

• Alabama was 19-15 in 2016-17 and 10-8 in

the SEC. The Crimson Tide participated in the NIT, falling to Richmond in the first round. Head coach Avery Johnson is 37-30 in two seasons at Alabama. Johnson played in the NBA for 16 years and won an NBA Championship with the San Antonio Spurs along with Naval Academy graduate David Robinson in 1999. Johnson also coached in the NBA and led the Dallas Mavericks to an appearance in the NBA Finals in 2006. Alabama is the fourth SEC team to compete in the Veterans Classic, following Vanderbilt (2016), Florida (2015) and Tennessee (2014).

Alabama Head Coach Avery Johnson: "The Alabama basketball program is honored to be a part of the 2017 Veterans Classic. As a program, we have great respect for all members of our armed forces and how they dedicate their lives to protecting our country. We look forward to being involved in every aspect of this great event. Not only will we have the opportunity to see the Naval Academy in person, but it also gives us the chance to personally thank the men and women of Annapolis for their daily efforts to keep our country safe. Most importantly, this will serve as a tremendous educational experience for our student-athletes and one they will remember for the rest of their lives."

• Memphis was 19-13 in 2016-17 and 8-9 in the American Athletic Conference in head coach Tubby Smith's first season at the school. Smith served as the head coach at Kentucky for 10 seasons and led the program to a national championship in 1998. Smith has also been the head coach at Tulsa, Georgia, Minnesota and Texas Tech. Memphis will be the second AAC team to compete in the Veterans Classic after Temple in 2015.

Memphis Head Coach Tubby Smith: "It is an honor to be participating in the Veterans Classic to be held at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, and I want to thank CBS Sports Network for inviting us to play in this event. I grew up in Southern Maryland, and am quite familiar with the rich traditions of the Naval Academy. I'm excited to be a part of this event -- it is a wonderful opportunity for our players to show their appreciation and to learn more about the young men and women that serve our country, and the great tradition of the Naval Academy."

• Navy had an overall record of 16-16 in 2016-

17 and was 10-8 in Patriot League play. Under sixth-year head coach Ed DeChellis, Navy increased its conference win total for the fifth straight season and finished in fourth place in the Patriot League. Navy advanced to the Patriot League Tournament Semifinals for the first time since 2001, where the team lost to eventual league champion Bucknell, 70-65. Shawn Anderson was named to the All-Patriot League Second Team and Bryce Dulin was named to the Patriot League All-Defensive Team.

Navy Head Coach Ed DeChellis: "We are very proud to once again host the Veterans Classic. We have a great group of teams joining us this year with the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Alabama and the University of Memphis. The Veterans Classic will be held the night before Veterans Day and once again, we will honor our nation's veterans with this event. As part of the Veterans Classic experience, we will give the visiting teams an in-depth look of the life of a midshipman and immerse them in our culture here at the U.S. Naval Academy. We thank CBS Sports Network for their continued support of the Veterans Classic, as both games will be televised nationally."

• Pittsburgh was 16-17 overall and 4-14 in the ACC in head coach Kevin Stallings' first season at the school. Senior forward Michael Young was named the All-ACC Third Team and senior guard Jamel Artis received All-ACC honorable mention recognition. Stallings arrived at Pitt after spending 17 seasons at Vanderbilt, where he became the program's leader in coaching wins (332) and took the school to the NCAA Tournament seven times. Pittsburgh is the second ACC team to compete in the Veterans Classic after North Carolina in 2015.

Pittsburgh Head Coach Kevin Stallings: "We are honored to compete against Navy in the 2017 Veterans Classic. The opportunity to interact with and observe the dedication and drive of the men and women in the United States Naval Academy will have a lasting impact on our young team. We have an unbelievable level of respect for those who protect our country and it will be invaluable for our guys to witness their selfless service."

DeChellis pleased with 2017 Veterans Classic lineup

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | April 26, 2017

Navy head coach Ed DeChellis is quite pleased with the lineup for the 2017 Veterans Classic, which will once again kick off the college basketball season on Friday, Nov. 10 at Alumni Hall.

DeChellis, who does a lot of the organizational legwork for the event himself, has landed Alabama, Memphis and Pittsburgh for the fourth annual installment.

"I think it's a really good field. We're going to have good exciting basketball featuring high-level athletes," DeChellis said in a telephone interview last week.

Alabama will meet Memphis in the opening game (6:30 p.m.) while Navy will take on Pittsburgh in the nightcap (9 p.m.). There is an interesting theme with this year's Veterans Classic as all three visiting programs are rebuilding under high-profile coaches.

Avery Johnson is entering his third season at the helm of Alabama, which placed sixth in the ultra-competitive Southeastern Conference in 2016-2017. The Crimson Tide finished 19-15 overall after losing in the first round of the National Invitational Tournament.

Alabama is expected to be much improved next season as Johnson has signed a five-man recruiting class that is ranked fourth nationally by Rivals.com and sixth by ESPN.com. Guard John Petty, a five-star prospect and Alabama's Mr. Basketball, is the jewel of the class. Collin Sexton, another guard, played in the McDonald's All-American game.

Martin leads the way for Navy offensive line Alabama is hoping to retain Braxton Key, an SEC All-Freshman team selection who has declared for the NBA Draft, but has not hired an agent. The 6-foot-8, 225-pound forward led the Crimson Tide in scoring last season.

Johnson played 16 seasons in the NBA and was the starting point guard for San Antonio when it captured the 1999 championship. He spent three seasons as head coach of the Dallas Mavericks and directed the first Western Conference championship club in franchise history.

Tubby Smith is beginning his second year as head coach at Memphis, which went 19-13 and did not play in the postseason in 2016-2017. The Tigers recently suffered a blow when brothers Dedric and K.J. Lawson transferred to Kansas.

The Lawson brothers had originally committed to Memphis during the tenure of head coach

Josh Pastner, who had hired their father as an assistant coach. Smith demoted Keelon Lawson to director of player development, a move that directly led to the his sons' decision to transfer.

Dedric Lawson was a first team All-American Athletic Conference selection while K.J. Lawson made the All-Rookie squad. Memphis also lost junior guard Markel Crawford, who has transferred to Mississippi.

Memphis also has a strong recruiting class led by Kareem Brewton and Kyvon Davenport, both of whom were named first team All-Americans by the National Junior College Athletic Association. Davenport, a 6-foot-8 forward, is a transfer from Georgia Highlands College while Brewton, a 6-4 guard, comes in from Eastern Florida State College.

Smith is also bringing in three true freshmen with combination guard Jamal Johnson the highest-touted. He is the son of former NBA standout Buck Johnson.

Smith is an iconic figure in college basketball, having compiled a 595-302 record in 27 seasons as a head coach. Smith guided Kentucky to the 1998 NCAA championship and is a three-time National Coach of the Year. He is the sixth of 17 children who grew up in the town of Scotland in Southern Maryland.

Kevin Stallings is another second-year head coach, having replaced Jamie Dixon (Texas Christian) at Pittsburgh. Stallings enjoyed tremendous success during a 17-year run at Vanderbilt and boasts a 496-300 career record.

Pitt struggled to a 16-17 record in its first season under Stallings, who dismissed one player (Justice Kithcart) from the team and had three others (Corey Manigault, Crisshawn Clark and Cameron Johnson) transfer at season's end.

Those departures cleared room for a talented four-man recruiting class that is anchored by 6-foot-10 center Peace Ilegomah.

"You are talking about three veteran coaches that have a great understanding of how to put programs together," DeChellis said of Johnson, Smith and Stallings.

In developing the 2017 Veterans Classic, DeChellis initially contacted Stallings to gauge Pittsburgh's interest in participating. Stallings was responsible for Vanderbilt playing in the 2016 edition, but departed for Pitt and did not attend himself.

"Kevin originally signed the contract when he

was at Vanderbilt so I knew he had an interest in the event," DeChellis said. "So I went back to Kevin and he agreed to come and play."

Navy athletic officials are hopeful the Pittsburgh basketball fans will make the roughly four-hour trek to Annapolis to attend the Veterans Classic. "We think the Pittsburgh people will travel and generate some excitement for the event," DeChellis said.

DeChellis then approached Alabama through assistant coach John Pelfrey, who is a close friend. DeChellis had Jerry Pelfrey as an assistant while at East Tennessee State and has known his younger brother for years.

"Avery Johnson has built a really good program at Alabama. They are getting close to having an NCAA Tournament team," DeChellis said. "Avery has some outstanding freshmen coming in so we thought Alabama would be an exciting addition."

CBS Television, which partners with Navy on the Veterans Classic, helped lure Memphis. CBS broadcasts American Athletic Conference basketball and that is the connection there.

"We were able to get Memphis through CBS and that worked out pretty well because Tubby is originally from Maryland so this will be sort of a homecoming for him. He is excited to come back to the area," DeChellis said.

DeChellis has been a college basketball coach for more than three decades and has developed a slew of friendships. His ability to pick up the phone and call a prominent head coach or athletic director has been crucial to creating quality matchups for the Veterans Classic. A pair of legendary head coaches — Tom Izzo and Roy Williams — brought Michigan State and North Carolina to the 2014 and 2015 Veterans Classic, respectively.

"You get the ball rolling with relationships. If you can call a friend in the business and get an opportunity to explain what the Veterans Classic is all about, that's the starting point," DeChellis said. "I sell this event as a unique 48-hour experience. I tell the head coaches that their players are going to experience things they can't experience anywhere else."

Every coach who has participated in the Veterans Classic has raved about the day spent touring the Naval Academy. Players from the three visiting schools get an inside look at the institution while getting an opportunity to climb aboard a Yard Patrol vessel, operate a ship simulator and walk through Bancroft Hall.

Pitt basketball to open 2017-18 season at Navy

Craig Meyer | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette | April 10, 2017

Pitt's 2017-18 men's basketball season will set sail Nov. 10 with a game at Navy in Annapolis, Md., as part of the 2017 Veterans Classic, the school announced Monday.

The event, which is in its fourth year, will also feature Alabama and Memphis, who will play at 6:30 p.m., with Pitt and Navy following with a 9 p.m. tipoff. Because it's not a tournament, Pitt will match up only against the Midshipmen and neither of the two other participating programs.

"We are honored to compete against Navy in the 2017 Veterans Classic," Pitt coach Kevin Stallings said in a statement. "The opportunity to interact with and observe the dedication and drive of the men and women in the United States Naval Academy will have a lasting impact on our young team. We have an unbelievable level of respect for those who protect our country and it will be invaluable for our guys to witness their selfless service."

Both games will air on CBS Sports Network, which will also broadcast a half-hour feature on the schools' visit to the Naval Academy.

The Midshipmen just completed their sixth season under former Penn State coach Ed DeChellis, who has compiled a 68-119 record in that time. His teams have gone 35-30 the past two seasons, including a 16-16 mark last season, one in which it went 10-8 in the Patriot League and finished fourth in the 10-team conference.

New Castle graduate Shawn Anderson, a former Post-Gazette Fab Five honoree, led Navy in scoring last season as a junior, averaging 12.2 points per game. The Midshipmen have a second WPIAL product in Latrobe graduate Matt Cullen, a freshman guard who competed on the school's development team last season.

The game will be the first taste of Division I action for many members of the Panthers, who will feature at least seven freshmen or junior-college transfers next season. Following the news last week of guard Cameron Johnson's decision to transfer, Pitt returns no starters and just four players, a quartet that averaged a combined 9.3 points per game last season.

Tickets for the event are \$75 for the lower level of 5,710-seat Alumni Hall and \$50 for the upper level. They can be purchased online.

NOTE: Former Pitt guard Jamel Artis will participate in the Portsmouth Invitational, an annual tournament in Portsmouth, Va., for college seniors looking to showcase themselves to NBA and European scouts.

As a senior last season, Artis averaged 18.2 points per game while shooting 47.5 percent from the field and 39.2 percent from 3-point range, all while making the move to point guard from small forward, where he played his first three years at the school. Fellow senior Michael Young, who finished second in the ACC in scoring at 19.6 points per game, was not listed among the players competing in the tournament.

Memphis to face Alabama in 2017 Veterans Classic

Tom Schad | Memphis Commercial Appeal | April 10, 2017

The University of Memphis men's basketball team will play Alabama in this year's Veterans Classic in Annapolis, Maryland, the school announced in a press release Monday morning.

The Tigers and Crimson Tide will face off in the first game of the event's doubleheader on Friday, Nov. 10, with a scheduled tip-off time of 5:30 p.m. CST. Navy and Pittsburgh, the other two teams participating, will play one another at 8 p.m. Both games will be broadcast by CBS Sports Network.

"It is an honor to be participating in the Veterans Classic to be held at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, and I want to thank CBS Sports Network for inviting us to play in this event," Tigers coach Tubby Smith said in a statement. "I grew up in Southern Maryland, and am quite familiar with the rich traditions of the Naval Academy. I'm excited to be a part of this event — it is a wonderful opportunity for our players to show their appreciation and to learn more about the young men and women that serve our country, and the great tradition of the Naval Academy."

As part of the event, players from Memphis and the other two participating schools will be invited to tour the campus at the U.S. Naval Academy and eat lunch with the Brigade, among other experiences that will give them a sense of life at the academy.

Tide will open season in Veterans Classic vs. Memphis

Chandler Rome | Montgomery Advertiser | April 10, 2017

TUSCALOOSA — The most anticipated Alabama basketball season in nearly a decade will open in patriotic fashion.

The Crimson Tide will open its season against Memphis at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 10 – college basketball's opening day – as part of the 2017 Veterans Classic at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Pittsburgh and Navy will play the second game of the four-team event.

“The Alabama basketball program is honored to be a part of the 2017 Veterans Classic,” said Crimson Tide coach Avery Johnson in a news release. “As a program, we have great respect for all members of our armed forces and how they dedicate their lives to protecting our country. We look forward to being involved in every aspect of this great event.”

As part of the event, all four teams will be “immersed in the culture and tradition of the Naval Academy,” including touring the campus and observing military demonstrations.

“Not only will we have the opportunity to see the Naval Academy in person, but it also gives us the chance to personally thank the men and women of Annapolis for their daily efforts to keep our country safe,” Johnson said. “Most importantly, this will serve as a tremendous educational experience for our student-athletes and one they will remember for the rest of their lives.”

Buoyed by the best recruiting class in program history and the return of its three leading scorers, the Crimson Tide is a trendy offseason pick to return to prominence in 2017.

It ranked no lower than No. 23 in five preseason polls released shortly after the national championship game and ESPN bracketologist Joe Lunardi pegged Alabama as a No. 10 seed in his first bracket projection.

Headlined by McDonald's All-American Collin Sexton and two-time Alabama Mr. Basketball John Petty, the Tide's top-10 recruiting class will join rising sophomores Braxton Key and Dazon Ingram on a team primed to take the next step in Johnson's third season.

Tide basketball to take part in four-team Veterans Classic

Charlie Potter | Bama Online | April 10, 2017

The Alabama men's basketball will officially participate in the 2017 Veterans Classic, it was announced Monday.

The Crimson Tide will join Memphis, Pittsburgh and host Navy in the annual college basketball showcase that brings together teams from across the country in celebration of Veterans Day. The fourth annual event at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., tips-off Friday, Nov. 10 -- the opening day of the 2017-18 college basketball season.

Alabama will play Memphis at 5:30 p.m. CT, followed by Pittsburgh-Navy at 8 p.m. CT on the CBS Sports Network. Tickets are \$75 for lower level reserved, \$50 for upper level general admission and \$40 for group tickets in the upper level.

"The Alabama basketball program is honored to be a part of the 2017 Veterans Classic," head coach Avery Johnson said in a release. "As a program, we have great respect for all members of our armed forces and how they dedicate their lives to protecting our country. We look forward to being involved in every aspect of this great event.

"Not only will we have the opportunity to see the Naval Academy in person, but it also gives us the chance to personally thank the men and women of Annapolis for their daily efforts to keep our country safe. Most importantly, this will serve as a tremendous educational experience for our student-athletes and one they will remember for the rest of their lives."

Word of the matchup with Memphis on the hardwood was leaked last month by Tigers' head coach Tubby Smith.

Alabama is also poised to face Texas in its non-conference slate for the upcoming season, one that carries an immense amount of promise with the Tide's latest recruiting haul.

The Crimson Tide currently boasts the No. 4 class in the nation with five signees, including five-star point guard Collin Sexton. and four-star shooting guard John Petty. The duo will compete in the 2017 Jordan Brand Classic on Friday, April 14, in Brooklyn.

Alabama, Memphis and Pittsburgh Join Navy for Fourth Annual Veterans Classic

NavySports.com | April 10, 2017

ANNAPOLIS, Md. - Alabama, Memphis and Pittsburgh will join host Navy in the 2017 Veterans Classic on CBS Sports Network, an annual college basketball showcase that brings together teams from across the country in celebration of Veterans Day. The fourth annual event at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. tips-off on Friday, Nov. 10, the opening day of the 2017-18 college basketball season. Alabama will play Memphis at 6:30 PM, ET, followed by Pittsburgh vs. Navy at 9:00 PM, ET.

The three participating schools will also have the unique opportunity to get a glimpse of life as a midshipman at the Naval Academy. The visiting teams will be immersed in the culture and tradition of the Naval Academy, including touring the 'Yard,' watching noon meal formation, eating lunch with the Brigade at King Hall, as well as a number of other special experiences, including military demonstrations and receptions. CBS Sports Network will also televise a 30-minute all-access show that provides a look at the schools' visit to the Naval Academy on HOOPS CONFIDENTIAL: VETERANS CLASSIC.

CBS Sports Network is available across the country through local cable, video and telco providers and via satellite on DirecTV Channel 221 and Dish Network Channel 158. For more information, and to access the CBS Sports Network channel finder, go to www.cbssports-network.com.

Tickets are \$75 for lower level reserved, \$50 for upper level general admission and \$40 for group tickets in the upper level.

The 2016 Veterans Classic presented by Northwestern Mutual featured Navy, Ohio State, Vanderbilt and Marquette. Navy, Florida, North Carolina and Temple participated in the event in 2015 and the inaugural event in 2014 featured Navy, Michigan State, Tennessee and VCU.

(ON PARTICIPATING IN THE 2017 VETERANS CLASSIC):

Navy Head Coach Ed DeChellis:

"We are very proud to once again host the Veterans Classic. We have a great group of teams joining us this year with the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Alabama and the University of Memphis. The Veterans Classic will be held the night before Veterans Day and once again, we will honor our nation's veterans

with this event. As part of the Veterans Classic experience, we will give the visiting teams an in-depth look of the life of a midshipman and immerse them in our culture here at the U.S. Naval Academy. We thank CBS Sports Network for their continued support of the Veterans Classic, as both games will be televised nationally."

Pittsburgh Head Coach Kevin Stallings:

"We are honored to compete against Navy in the 2017 Veterans Classic. The opportunity to interact with and observe the dedication and drive of the men and women in the United States Naval Academy will have a lasting impact on our young team. We have an unbelievable level of respect for those who protect our country and it will be invaluable for our guys to witness their selfless service."

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Team Capsules

• Navy had an overall record of 16-16 in 2016-17 and was 10-8 in Patriot League play. Under sixth-year head coach Ed DeChellis, Navy increased its conference win total for the fifth straight season and finished in fourth

place in the Patriot League. Navy advanced to the Patriot League Tournament Semifinals for the first time since 2001, where the team lost to eventual league champion Bucknell, 70-65. Junior Shawn Anderson was named to the All-Patriot League Second Team and junior Bryce Dulin was named to the Patriot League All-Defensive Team.

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• Alabama was 19-15 in 2016-17 and 10-8 in the SEC. The Crimson Tide participated in the NIT, falling to Richmond in the first round. Head coach Avery Johnson is 37-30 in two seasons at Alabama. Johnson played in the NBA for 16 years and won an NBA Championship with the San Antonio Spurs along with Naval Academy graduate David Robinson in 1999. Johnson also coached in the NBA and led the Dallas Mavericks to an appearance in the NBA Finals in 2006. Alabama is the fourth SEC team to compete in the Veterans Classic, following Vanderbilt (2016), Florida (2015) and Tennessee (2014).

• Memphis was 19-13 in 2016-17 and 8-9 in the American Athletic Conference in head coach Tubby Smith's first season at the school. Smith served as the head coach at Kentucky for 10 seasons and led the program to a national championship in 1998. Smith has also been the head coach at Tulsa, Georgia, Minnesota and Texas Tech. Memphis will be the second AAC team to compete in the Veterans Classic after Temple in 2015.



Brooklyn Nets Hold 2017-18 Training Camp at the United States Naval Academy

Brooklyn Nets bring training camp to Naval Academy

Bill Wagner | Annapolis Capital | September 25, 2017

Jeremy Lin was the hottest commodity in the National Basketball Association in 2012.

Lin, the first American of Chinese or Taiwanese descent to play in the NBA, was thrust into the starting lineup due to injury and unexpectedly led the New York Knicks to a dramatic turnaround. The 6-foot-3 guard sparked a global craze known as "Linsanity."

Basketball fans might spot Lin around Annapolis this week as he will be in town with his current NBA team, the Brooklyn Nets. In what has been a very well kept secret, the Nets will conduct their training camp at the Naval Academy this week.

Lin, the starting point guard, is the most recognizable member of the Nets. Wing guard D'Angelo Russell, the second overall pick in the 2015 NBA Draft by the Los Angeles Lakers, is the team's other star player.

"It will be neat for our players to have a chance to rub elbows with Jeremy Lin and D'Angelo Russell," Navy men's basketball coach Ed DeChellis said.

Fans hoping to get a glimpse of the Nets will be disappointed if they go to the Naval Academy. All practices are closed and there will be security to ensure no one wanders into the Halsey Field House gym.

Jordan Ott, an assistant coach with the Nets, served as the video coordinator for Penn State men's basketball when DeChellis was head coach there. Ott reached out to DeChellis and asked about the possibility of Brooklyn holding training camp at the academy.

DeChellis obtained permission from Athletic Director Chet Gladchuk and other Naval Academy administrators. Having gotten the green light to proceed, the Nets sent two staff members — Director of Player Performance Zach Weatherford and Director of Player Personnel Ryan Gisriel — to the Naval Academy to inspect the basketball facilities.

Weatherford had previously worked as human performance manager at the Naval Special Warfare Command. DeChellis believes it was that military experience that prompted Weatherford to suggest to superiors the idea of moving training camp to the Naval Academy. Apparently, Head Coach Kenny Atkinson was

gung-ho about the idea.

"I think Coach Atkinson is trying to bring a military flavor to training camp," DeChellis said. "Weatherford has a military background and spearheaded things on Nets end. They were looking get away and do something different and felt coming to the academy would be unique and a good bonding opportunity for the team."

Brooklyn is following the lead of its crosstown rival, the New York Knicks, in conducting training camp at a service academy. The Knicks spent three years having their training camp at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

The Naval Academy Athletic Association recently renovated the basketball practice facility at Halsey Field House. In addition to upgrading the gymnasium, NAAA also improved the weight room, training room and film room the men's and women's basketball teams use.

"Zach and Ryan were impressed with our facilities and felt they were up to par for an NBA team's needs," DeChellis said.

DeChellis believes Brooklyn executives made the final decision to take training camp to the Naval Academy sometime in June. However, there was no formal announcement by either the NBA franchise or the Naval Academy.

NBA rules preclude the Nets from publicizing or promoting the fact they are having training camp in Annapolis because it is within the marketing territory of the Washington Wizards. Neither the Nets nor Navy were allowed to solicit media coverage of the training camp, which will be held Tuesday through Saturday.

Gladchuk said the Nets will only be paying for expenses incurred while visiting the Naval Academy, including janitorial services, meals and similar items. Allowing the Nets to use Halsey Field House does not result in any extra cost to the academy, Gladchuk said.

DeChellis said the Nets do want their players to experience the Naval Academy as much as possible. Academy officials have set up lunch at King Hall and time at ship simulators in Luce Hall. Additionally, the players and coaches will attend Navy football practice on Wednesday at the invitation of Head Coach Ken Niumatalolo.

The Nets' entourage traveled from Brooklyn by train and was scheduled to arrive in Annapolis Monday. Cmdr. Henry Gourdine, deputy director of athletics at the Naval Academy, was scheduled to speak to the team during dinner Monday.

DeChellis said the Nets would practice at Halsey Field House during the morning hours, which would not interfere with the activities of Navy men's and women's basketball. He was hopeful the Navy basketball players would have an opportunity to stop by Halsey Field House during lunch time to watch an NBA practice.

"Hopefully, the Nets have a great experience here. We're going to do everything we can to make them feel welcome and at home," DeChellis said. "I thought this was another neat thing we could do to help enhance our program. It's a great opportunity to bring an NBA franchise to your campus. I think it's a win-win for both the Brooklyn Nets and Navy basketball."

Nets coach wants team to see what Navy experience 'is all about'

Brian Lewis | New York Post | September 27, 2017

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The Nets don't leave the state of New York during the preseason, but they opted to hold training camp at the U.S. Naval Academy. And they're hoping to get more out of the experience than just basketball.

"I really want the guys to get out of here not just with the basketball experience, but what is this all about," said coach Kenny Atkinson, who faced Navy when he played for Richmond, and whose uncle died in a ship fire on the USS Saratoga. "We're going to go to formation and see that, hopefully mingle. We're not going to just do basketball. The coaches, we're going to mingle with their football coaches and see what's going on there. Who knows? Maybe we'll pick up some things.

"Above all, their self-discipline, just how difficult it is, time management. It's a lot of habits, a lot of the same stuff we talk about. But to be in that environment, and on top of that in a beautiful little city, and close to New York — it wasn't a 10-hour ride — I'm thrilled. It's the first day, but this was a home run."

The Knicks held training camp at West Point during the Phil Jackson regime, while the Spurs held camp at the Air Force Academy while Nets general manager Sean Marks was with San Antonio. With eight new faces, Marks felt getting away to bond would be helpful.

The Nets scrimmaged four or five times Tuesday, but mixed and matched personnel, and likely will scrimmage more than in last year's camp.

Timofey Mozgov didn't scrimmage due to how much work he got this summer playing for Russia.

Caris LeVert has shot better in practice, and Mozgov looked surprisingly smooth from the stripe and on mid-range jumpers, encouraging Atkinson that he — and perhaps Tyler Zeller, who hit a couple of corner 3s in open gym recently — can extend beyond the arc.

For the second straight year, Jeremy Lin bought suits for all his teammates.

"It's just something that, especially the rookies, 'Let's get them a nice, fresh suit going into the season so they can have one,'" said Lin, using a tailor he knew from Houston. "He can custom

the inside with pictures, so if you want pictures of your family, significant dates, you can create the inside of your jacket however you want.

That's what some of the players are doing. It's a fun little thing, making sure everyone starts off the season looking good."

Spencer Dinwiddie will auction off game-worn signed items to raise money for a four-year scholarship program.

"To my knowledge it'd be the first to its kind. I'm hoping to actually have my teammates buy into that as well," Dinwiddie said.

Nets get a lesson from 'big-time' Navy admiral

Brian Lewis | New York Post | September 27, 2017

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — With the Nets holding training camp at the United States Naval Academy, a visitor stopped by practice — Vice Adm. Walter E. Carter Jr., superintendent of the academy.

Carter joined the Nets at practice to talk about the academy, and in turn coach Kenny Atkinson presented him with a custom Nets jersey with No. 81 on it. Carter Jr. graduated from the Naval Academy in 1981.

"The admiral of the Naval Academy, that's pretty big time," Atkinson said. "It was great for our guys to listen to him. The guy's had more than 2,000 aircraft landings — I think he has the record for the history of the military. That's pretty impressive.

"Talking about all the things the Naval Academy is about, the moral fiber, sacrificing for each other. It's very similar to what we're trying to preach here in our team mentality. That was really special. And the athletic director also came, said hello. That means something."

Carter safely accompanied pilots in 2,016 carrier-arrested landings, which is the mark among all U.S. Naval Aviation designators, active or retired. Thursday the Nets are expected to watch formation at the academy.

"We have a saying, there's no tenure in naval aviation," Carter said. "No matter how senior you are that deck can reach up and kill you. So you're only as good as your last pass, I imagine the same is true for you here. You have to be at your very best every day."

Sweet-shooting swingman Allen Crabbe has a sprained left ankle after rolling it late in practice. The 25-year-old underwent X-rays, which were negative. There was no grade of severity given nor was there a timetable for his return.

Crabbe had foot surgery in May to repair a stress reaction of the fifth metatarsal in his left foot.

The Nets actually signed Crabbe to a four-year, \$75 million offer sheet in the summer of 2016 that Portland matched. Brooklyn traded for him this summer, taking on the last three years of that deal.

Wednesday's practice was both long and grueling, even for the players familiar with Atkinson.

"[The theme was] compete. This is a high-intensity day," Atkinson said. "We competed in a lot of drills. Between teaching, fundamentals and live play, we broke it down 3-on-3 stuff and finished up full-court. It was hard. DeMarre [Carroll] came up to me and said that was one of the hardest practices. That was the plan."

Kenny Atkinson hoping Naval Academy rubs off on his Nets

Greg Logan | Newsday | September 26, 2017

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Nothing is more important to Nets general manager Sean Marks and coach Kenny Atkinson than growing a positive organizational culture, which explains why training camp is being held at the U.S. Naval Academy. In effect, Marks said on Tuesday that he was taking a page out of his old playbook with the Spurs, who trained at the Air Force Academy.

Last season, the Nets held training camp at their Hospital for Special Service practice facility when it opened in Brooklyn, but with five new veterans on the roster Marks thought it would be good to get away from home. “It was the right time,” Marks said. “It’s a chance to build trust and camaraderie. They can’t go home and have dinner with the wife. We’re all here. This is a special place.”

The GM and Atkinson said the team has planned activities to allow the players a chance to meet the midshipmen and to sample Academy life. Atkinson said he felt a connection to the Navy after playing against them in college and because he had an uncle who died in a fire on the USS Saratoga.

“Great respect for what goes on here is what it’s all about,” Atkinson said. “I thought it was a great thing. I really want the guys to get out of here not just with the basketball experience, but what is this all about. I think we’re going to go to formation and see that, hopefully mingle. We’re not going to just do basketball.”

Clearly, the Nets are hoping the sense of discipline and dedication to mission at the Naval Academy will rub off on their organization.

“Their self-discipline and time management, it’s a lot of habits, a lot of the same stuff we talk about,” Atkinson said. “To be in that environment, and on top of that, in a beautiful little city, I’m thrilled. It’s the first day, but this was a home run.”