

Crean Lutheran boys basketball team trying to prove it is worthy of Top-10 ranking



Crean Lutheran Saints' Isaiah Johnson's pass keeps the ball away from Woodbridge High at Crean on Mon., Nov. 17. The Lutheran school won 77-71 in Irvine. (Photo by Cindy Yamanaka, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By **TIM BURT** | tiburt@scng.com | Orange County Register
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Crean Lutheran's boys basketball squad received a pretty big accolade before it even took the floor this season.

The Saints, with some talented players coming back, were ranked No. 9 in the Register's pre-season poll.

Crean Lutheran is off to a 3-0 start and looked very impressive at times Monday in a tournament game against Woodbridge. But the season is young and some tough challenges are ahead.

"I don't know, that's pretty high," Coach Josh Beaty said when asked about the early ranking. "It's very generous. It's cool to see the name, but we have a very young team and we will have to see how good we're going to be over the long haul. We'll see."

Crean Lutheran hosts Beckman Wednesday, Nov. 29 at 6 p.m. and faces La Salle Friday at 8 p.m.

WARRIORS TRY TO BOUNCE BACK

Woodbridge's boys basketball team was off to an 0-2 start after dropping its first two games at the Crean Lutheran Tournament, which is officially called the AutoNation Toyota Irvine Invitational.

It may be a little early to judge the Warriors, who have battled some early season injuries and are using a couple players who are rounding into basketball shape after playing for the Warriors football team.

"We better figure it out real quick, otherwise it's going to be a long year the way I've scheduled," Woodbridge Coach John Halagan said after his team's 77-71 loss to Crean Lutheran. "I'm just an old coach who hates losing.

"I don't like being 0-2. We made strides tonight from Saturday, I will give our guys that, but I'm not into moral victories. We want victories. We need to really toughen up and made those critical plays down the stretch if we want to beat quality teams and Crean Lutheran certainly qualifies as a quality team as No. 9 in the county. They're No. 9 in the county for a reason; they got guys who can play."

Woodbridge faces La Serna on Wednesday, Nov. 29, at 4:30 p.m. at Crean Lutheran.