

# SPORTS

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BRING IT ON: AAE's Melissa Owour drives around Hesperia Christian's Olivia Hough during Thursday's game.

## AAE earns signature win against Pats Knights beat HCS for first time since 2008

By KYLE GLASER STAFF WRITER

**APPLE VALLEY** • It took a little while, but the Academy for Academic Excellence girls basketball team finally got the win it was waiting for.

The Knights used a balance offense and an aggressive defense to defeat perennial Agape League power Hesperia Christian 51-25 on Tuesday evening, their first win over the Patriots since 2008 and only the second in school history.

"We've been waiting for this for a long time," Knights forward Melissa Owour said. "I was just excited for this game. I'd been waiting for this game for a while and I just wanted to go out and win."

AAE didn't allow HCS to reach double-digits or hit more than three field goals in any quarter. The Knights (10-5, 3-0 AL) blocked eight shots, forced 28 turnovers and held the Patriots (5-9, 2-1 AL) to 17.3 percent (9 of 52) shooting from the field.

“They played awesome,” Knights coach Ashley Simpson said. “They played four quarters of good solid basketball. They worked hard, they worked together and they played five girls as one. We’ve really tried to focus on teamwork and communication and it showed tonight.”

Owuor and Nikki Gruver combined to take control of the inside for the Knights. Owuor scored a game-high 17 points and had six blocks and four rebounds while Gruver had 10 points and pulled down 13 rebounds. Freshman guard Carolina Phillips contributed 16 points — 12 in the second half — six rebounds and three steals as well.

“I would say (we were) super nervous (before the game) because there were high expectations,” Phillips said. “But before the game we always pump ourselves up and we talked and said we need to shake off our nerves and take it like it was any other game.”

The win also holds special meaning for Simpson. She is the daughter of legendary HCS boys coach Lester Simpson, who compiled over 200 wins as the Patriots boys basketball coach, and is an HCS graduate. This is the second-year coach’s first-ever win over her alma mater.

“It shows me that we’re doing it right at AAE,” Simpson said. “HCS has such an awesome basketball program and it’s my dream... to have a competitive basketball program at AAE and it just shows that we’re growing.”

Patriots coach Sally Orlando was disappointed in her team’s effort in the loss.

“They brought it and we didn’t,” she said. “You’ve got to shoot to score ... I don’t know why we played intimidated. Our normal shooters just came out and looked intimidated to me.”

AAE will look to follow up its big win Friday when it heads to Victor Valley Christian. Hesperia Christian travels to Excelsior on the same day.



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AAE’s Nikki Gruver works around  
Hesperia Christian’s Addie Woods.

HESPERIA CHRISTIAN (25)

Arreola 6, Hays 6, Hough 4, MacDonald 3, Woods 3, Helm 2, Dobyys 1.

AAE (51)

Owuor 17, Phillips 16, N. Gruver 10, E. Gruver 4, Sutton 2, Perea 2.

HCS 4 7 5 9 — 25 AAE 8 14 12 17 — 51

3-point field goals — Hesperia Christian 1 (Hays); Academy for Academic Excellence none.

Fouled out — Sutton (A).

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