

Notre Dame Academy Takes the Long Road to Success

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With 25 games on the regular season schedule and three titles to chase, Notre Dame Academy plays opponents from three states, the District of Columbia and eight conferences. But thus far the results have been the same.

"We've tested ourselves with not just the quality of our opponents, but the quantity," Coach Rob Horne said. "We feel like we've already played a full season."

At press time, the Dragons were 14-4 and had two players closing in on the school record for points in a season (94), according to Horne. Junior Devin Pinkston (42 goals, 44 assists) and sophomore David Miller (48 goals, 23 assists) are making the most of the Dragons' all-over-the-map schedule.

While the two players admit to being tired, they don't expect to slow down.

"I love it because no team in the nation gets to play that many games," Pinkston said. "Even though we might be fatigued, we just have so much experience now."

Said Miller: "Our first impression was 'Wow, this is a lot of games'. But we've learned everyone on our team's tendencies."

That certainly applies to the relationship between Pinkston and Miller, who have combined for nearly 40 percent of the team's goals this season.

"I wouldn't say it's ESP, but he knows what I'm going to do, and I know what he's doing," Miller said.

The Dragons hope their experience serves them well come playoff time. Among their victories is a 9-6 defeat of Covenant (Charlottesville), the three-time defending Virginia Independent Schools Division II state champion that knocked Notre Dame out of the playoffs last year. Notre Dame handed Covenant its only loss of the season and in the process helped to vault itself to the top of the state rankings.

In Notre Dame's primary league affiliation -- the Maryland Independent Lacrosse League, in which Notre Dame is the only Virginia school -- the team was tied for second before a game with first-place Calverton yesterday, which ended too late to be included in this edition.. Calverton is led by Johns Hopkins-bound attack David Spaulding.

"It's a different breed of lacrosse in Maryland," Pinkston said. "You're playing against some of the best players in the country. It helps us learn how to play at the next level."