

Stampley Finding Success Playing Back Home - Is An Auto Butler Car Wash Athlete Of The Month For Alton

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ALTON - Sophomore Semaj Stampley has had to make some tough decisions.

Go and play his freshman year at Alton High with his older brother, for a program that hadn't been showing much promise the last handful of seasons, or go the private school route.

He chose the latter, and doesn't regret it.

"It was a big decision between me and my family," Semaj said. "I went there, had a good experience, played a lot of St. Louis teams, different teams across the country. It was a good experience for me."

Semaj was playing key varsity minutes for one of the most prized schools in St. Louis, Christian Brothers College High School, better known as just CBC.

In his single season as a Cadet, he played in 26 games and scored 152 points. He was a 50-percent three-point shooter, putting down 28 threes which was second on the team.

He took on other St. Louis basketball powerhouses like Chaminade, SLUH, De Smet, and Vianney.

Semaj says he chose CBC because he had good relationships with the coaches, and when they left the program, he came back home.

"The thing about Semaj is, he was born and raised here," Alton boys basketball head coach Dylan Dudley said. "He went to middle school with all these kids. It means something for him to play here. He's got a lot of family members out there on the Wall in the Hall of Fame. It means a lot to him."

For his efforts so far with the Redbirds, Semaj Stampley is an Auto Butler Car Wash Athlete of the Month.

Semaj still missed out on his only opportunity to play high school basketball with his older brother Byron.

Byron was a full-time varsity player during his run with Alton and now plays at Lewis and Clark Community College.

"It was a real tough decision," Semaj said. "He respected my decision, kept me humble."

Dudley said that him and Semaj have a good relationship, and that was even the case while he was at CBC. Dudley holds nothing against Semaj for the decision.

"One of the things I would always tell people, don't fault him for going over there," Dudley said.

"Don't fault his family for sending him over there. I was the third coach in four years. I understand why he went over there, I got it. I wasn't upset about it. Sure, we'd love to

have him, but I think looking back on it, it was probably the best for him and it was probably the best for us. And now, we're fortunate to have him, and have his family in our program."

Now, Semaj is doing his part in trying to help turn the Redbirds around.

According to Dudley, Semaj, and the rest of his team, have bought into the program.

"The thing about him, he is, along with several of our guys, not just him, but he's the epitome of the culture and the philosophy of our program when we say be the same dude every day," Dudley said.

"He comes to school everyday on time, he's a 4.0 student. When he comes to practice, he's the same dude. He's trying to be the hardest worker, he's trying to be the best teammate. Guys like him, he doesn't worry about himself, he's about the team."

In his first two games back for his home team, Semaj scored 21 points against Waterloo in the season-opener and then 16 points in the following game against Lift for Life Academy's JV.

The Redbirds currently sit with a 4-1 record and take on Southwestern Conference rivals Edwardsville on Friday, Dec. 1, 2023.

"I'm looking forward to a good sophomore year, being home with the guys that I grew up with," Semaj said. "We've got a good relationship this year."

Dudley is glad to have Semaj back home.

"For me, as his coach, to be a small part of his life and a small part of his success, he means the world to me."