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GREENSBORO - Dominic Payne had just finished a shootaround at Longwood University last week when he received a call from former Trinity High School coach Tim Kelly, who had been Payne's coach for the past four seasons. It was a very special call as Kelly informed Payne he was wanted for the NCCA annual East-West All-Star Basketball Game, but the game would take place in Greensboro in just five days from when that call was made.

"I remember calling my coach (Griff Aldrich) and asking if I could play and he said, yes, you can play, and I was in the locker room jumping up and down," Payne said. "Everyone was asking what I was jumping for and I said I'm playing in the East-West Basketball Game. Then everyone started congratulating me."

Five nights later, Payne was one of the 10 members on the West squad that captured a 108-92 victory over the East squad at the Novant Fieldhouse at the Greensboro Coliseum complex.

Payne, who started the game Monday night, scored four points with one field goal and two free throws as the West, which was led by Southern Guilford's Jamias Ferere, jumped into a 10-point halftime lead and stretched that to as many as 27 in the second half. Ferere, who is undecided on his college choice, was named the game's most outstanding player with 30 points, five rebounds and two assists.

Payne scored early on a driving layup, giving his team a 4-2 lead less than one minute into the game.

"It was real fun playing with players who are on the same level as you," said Payne, who for the last month has been working out at Longwood University in Farmville, Va., as a preferred walk-on. "I thought every time I went down the floor I could pass it to anyone."





Payne in the post-game show following a Trinity win during his senior season.

Payne was the first THS boys basketball player to participate in the East-West Basketball Game since Josh Pittman in 2009.

"The opportunity presented itself and like I have always told him, you work hard and good things will happen and he put himself in a position to play," said former THS head coach Tim Kelly, who resigned after 35 years at the helm. "I can't put into words (how much Payne has meant to the program.) He had to play at a high level for us to be successful."

Asheboro High School's Jerquarius Stanback was selected to play in the contest but he was still battling a wrist injury sustained during the high school playoff season. Stanback was one of four players from the West to opt out of the game and

Payne was one of the replacements named to participate less than a week before the game.

"I knew there would be a lot of people here, but I'm used to playing good in big stages," said Payne, an incredibly gifted athletic player who has won numerous awards at the conference, district and state levels. "It wasn't that hard to get mentally ready. I knew I was physically ready. Coming in, I felt great. It was great to represent Randolph County and the Randolph County community."

Payne said things are going well for him at Longwood.

"It's been good, I wasn't there the first week, but the second week I came in and they brought me in and treated me like I should be there," Payne said. "That's good for me. We've been hanging out. Everything is good so far."

Things have been going well for the West as well in the All-Star event as they took a 39-36 lead after its third straight win.