

# Sports

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## Reding maintains edge in hoops rivalry



### Sr. Royals rout Milton District in season-opening showdown

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*The Champion*

When asked what his senior cagers have to work on before their next meeting with cross-town rival Bishop Reding, Milton District head coach Steve Oliver didn't pull any punches.

"Oh everything," he admitted moments after a rather humbling 75-39 season-opening loss to the Royals Tuesday afternoon at BR. "Breaking their press and improving our fitness are the main things."

In a much-anticipated showdown that failed to live up to its hype, the hosts built a 21-0 hammerlock in the first six minutes and put the verdict to rest long before half-time — after which they worked in their entire supporting cast.

While not far behind Reding in terms of either talent or depth, the Mustangs just didn't seem prepared. They were continually beat by BR's speed through the early going and dominated under the boards for lengthy stretches of play.

"We were hoping it would be a little closer, but our intensity really made a difference," said veteran forward Al Alilovic, who led the Royals with 28 points overall — including 13 in the second quarter to essentially seal MD's fate.

Reding enjoyed fairly impressive play from a few of their off-the-bench perform-

ers — most notably Niall Clarke — something that was particularly encouraging to co-coach Mark Freeman. He said that's a testament to recent efforts given at a couple of pre-season tournaments, the most recent of which saw the Royals qualify for February's All-Catholic championship showcase. "These kids are definitely gaining confidence," noted Freeman.

While Tuesday's suspense factor was wiped out quite early — much like it was during last season's 71-45 victory over the Mustangs in Halton AA semifinal play — the Royals know they can't put too much stock in the season-opening blowout.

"They'll definitely bring more next time, so we've got to keep playing hard," said Alilovic.

Reding moved the ball particularly well down low through the initial stages of play and got some big defensive rebounds from Lee Mathé, who along with brother Sean and Lance Codner helped set the tempo right from the opening tip-off. A strong showing from the free throw line factored into the lopsided affair as well.

While the Mustangs showed flashes of what they're capable of as the game wore on, only top gunner Jon Jeysman stood out for any length of time — scoring their first eight points and finishing with a dozen overall.

In a dramatic prelude to senior play, the junior Royals eclipsed MD 38-37 — with a last-minute lay-up deposit by Stephan Gray proving to be the difference in a see-saw battle where the point differential never extended beyond two baskets.

Gray fueled BR's nail-biting victory with 16 points, while leading the Mustangs with 10 apiece were Bradley Hamil and John Russell.

The two schools will square off once again at MD January 10. Before that the Royals are at E.C. Drury Tuesday, when the Mustangs host Acton.

**Bishop Reding's Niall Clarke goes up for a shot while being guarded by Dan Von Cube (behind) and Matt Sandiford of Milton District during senior basketball play Tuesday.**

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE



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