Chavez and Santiago Make Mark on Basketball Programs

This year, Lightning sensations Luis Chavez and Kathy Santiago sparked a string of exciting and memorable games for their respective basketball teams, placing them in a class of their own.

The return of one-time CUNY Rookie of the Year Kathy Santiago comes at a critical time for the lady Lightning. Earlier in the year, a key player suffered a season ending injury and another was out for six weeks after breaking her ankle. With Santiago on the team, the women have regained their footing, taking them from their initial 0-3 conference record to a promising 6-4.

Santiago is originally from the Dominican Republic but grew up in the Washington Heights area. She attended Norman Thomas High School, where she was a top player on her team.

Her first season with the Lightning was highlighted by being named CUNY Rookie of the Year, New York State Rookie of the Year and Hudson Valley Player of the Year. She led the team to an 18-9 overall record with an appearance in the CUNY conference semifinals and she impressed the division III basketball world when she accomplished a quadruple double (28 points, 13 rebounds, 12 assists and 12 steals) in a game against SUNY Purchase. She returns to the team after taking a three-year leave to concentrate on her studies.

This season, Santiago has stepped up with 15.3 points and 3.4 assists. According to head coach Eric Harrison, Santiago is still rusty but he expects that soon she’ll return to all-star form. “Kathy is a special player and I knew she would be back eventually,” says Coach Harrison.

The women will play John Jay College at Lehman’s APEX arena on February 7 at 5:30 PM.

On the men’s team, Chavez, a starting guard, has consistently demonstrated his command of the ball, averaging 20 points a game. “He is very athletic and has the ability to take the ball to the basket,” says head coach Steve Schulman. And, to coach Schulman’s pleasant surprise, Chavez’s talent appears to be rubbing off on other players.

“Before Chavez joined, Mogul Jorge was averaging 5.0 points a game, now, with Chavez playing, Jorge is averaging over 10 points a game,” says the coach.

Chavez, who was last year’s CUNY Rookie of the Year, returned to the game after a brief hiatus, playing his first game of the season on January 4. He has since helped his team win 10 out of the 12 games played thus far. On February 1, the Lightning men, now on a nine game winning streak, were able to knock off an undefeated Baruch College (60-57).

In addition to excelling on the court, Chavez is a serious academic who has shown interest in Mathematics and Engineering. Like Santiago, Chavez was born in the Dominican Republic but now lives in Queens with his family.

Next on the men’s schedule — John Jay College at the APEX arena on February 7 at 7:30 PM.

In other news, on Saturday, February 22, Lehman College financial aid advisors will offer a free workshop, explaining the ins and outs of various government programs that help students pay for the cost of attending college. The program will begin at 1 P.M. in the Music Building and is open to all students and family members, regardless of school affiliation. Students do not have to be enrolled in The City University of New York in order to attend the session or to benefit from the information.

Simultaneous workshops will be conducted in English (Rm. 330) and in Spanish (Rm. 306). To reserve space at either session, call (718) 960-5126 before February 14.