



The Mustang Press is a monthly newsletter covering the experiences, progress, and events of the Putnam Science Academy Men's Prep Basketball program

# Big O wants to “be a legend,” chooses Friars

Oswin Erhunmwunse is from Benin City, Nigeria. But when the Putnam Science 6-foot-9 defensive wiz announced last week that he was committing to Providence College, a major factor was that he wanted to stay “home.” “Putnam has made me who I am, on and off the court,” said the freakishly athletic Erhunmwunse, who chose Kim English’s Friars over Creighton, Oklahoma, and Georgia

Tech. “I’m one of the top prospects, in a New England prep school. So if I can do it at the prep school level, I can do it at the college level. I want to be a guy other commits look up to, like ‘Oh yes, he stayed in New England.’ I want to be a legend here. I want to hopefully make it to the NBA and know I did everything in New England.”



“New England accepted me. The whole time I’ve been in America, I’ve been in New England. New England has taken me as its own. I go to PC games and everyone is like ‘We want you here!’ Not that I didn’t get that from the other schools too, but I felt like I was loved at Providence. I’m not going to miss that opportunity. I feel like I can go there, play through my mistakes, get better, and know that I have the alumni and fans backing me up.”

The 6-foot-9 Erhunmwunse, who came to the U.S. in May 2022 and plays his AAU ball with Team New England, is in his second season with PSA. He averaged 7.8 points, 6.0 rebounds, and 2.3 blocks in 27 games (he joined the Mustangs in mid-December). PSA took on an entirely new identity with him patrolling the paint and went on to win a fourth national title last year. His block in the final seconds of the championship game helped seal that win.

“When I got here last year, I struggled a little bit because I was the man (at my previous school) and when I got here there were a lot of good players,” he said. “I wasn’t that guy. I had to buy in and do something that other people don’t do. Every day, Coach Espo tells us to do something different. I looked at the team and looked at what they didn’t have, which was a shotblocker and a rim runner. That’s what I decided to do. That’s what got me my minutes. I started playing 10 minutes, then 20 minutes, sometimes the whole game.”

Erhunmwunse injured his shoulder last season but opted to put surgery off until this past summer. His rehab was long but has finally come to an end, and he suited up for the first time this season on January 13, PSA’s 20th game. He averaged 8 points, 6 rebounds, and 4 blocks in his first seven games as the Mustangs went 6-1.

“Hopefully now that I’m back, I can be a guy who makes a difference,” he said. “I think we can still make a run and win it. We have guys who want to win, guys who buy in to the team.”



## Big week sends message: “Still the champs”

“In Justin We Trust.”

That was heard more than once in the celebratory PSA locker room January 27, after Justin Johnson scored 25 of his 32 points in the second half, including six in a 13-second span late in the game, to rally the Prep basketball team to a rousing comeback 76-72 win over Bradford Christian Academy.

PSA trailed 68-67 when **Johnson** (pictured, below left) hit a 3-pointer from the right corner with 1:16 remaining, giving the Mustangs their first lead since 5-2. After Bradford missed a quick shot in transition, Moustapha Loum rebounded the miss and outletted to **Imahri Wooten** (pictured, below center) at center court. Wooten found a streaking Johnson along the left wing, and he used one dribble to beat the defender before taking a hard foul as he laid the ball in at the rim. Johnson converted the free throw and PSA led 73-68 with 1:03 to play.

“It was all of us,” Johnson said. “We won that game as a team.”

PSA trailed by 14 points at halftime and by 19 just 90 seconds into the second half before mounting the comeback. The win backed up two much different but equally impressive wins earlier in the week when PSA took down No. 5 South Kent January 23 with a wire-to-wire 109-79 victory and a 98-72 dismantling of Brimmer & May two days later, wins that sent a clear message to the rest of the prep basketball world. They won six in a row heading into their final January game by an average of 23.5 points.

“We’re still the defending back-to-back national champions,” Espinosa said after the South Kent game. “That’s the message. We’re playing hard, we’ve got our rhythm. And I think we have some of our swagger back.”

Tuesday, Johnson continued his strong all-around play with 17 points, five rebounds, three assists, and a steal. Tony Williams had 12 points and five assists, Que Duncan had 12 points and five rebounds, and Ben Ahmed finished with 14 points and eight boards. **Grant Randall** (pictured, below right) added 10 points, nine rebounds, four assists, and three steals, and Wooten chipped in with 10 points.

It was the Ben Ahmed show vs. Brimmer, as the big man dominated play inside by scoring a career-high 34 points and pulling down 15 rebounds. Fallou Gueye finished with 13 points, six rebounds, six assists, and just one turnover. Williams added nine points, six assists, and four steals, and Johnson scored 15 points.

