

## Slow start for defending champs

Written by News Desk

Friday, 06 December 2013 15:29 -

---



**Malik Pettus (3) drives in for a bucket against Tuscaloosa Academy. Pettus leads EMCA in scoring for the season.**

**Photo: Todd Self**

**By ART PARKER**

It's a different year and a different scenario for East Memorial Christian Academy (EMCA) this basketball season. The defending AISA Class AA state boys champions are off to a sluggish start and are currently 1-4 after a handful of games. Last year EMCA had a sterling record of 28-3 when the team accepted the state championship trophy.

The Wildcats have lost to three Class AAA teams; Lee-Scott 64-63, Glenwood 77-45 and Tuscaloosa 57-46. In their two games against Class AA teams the first was a loss to Evangel Christian 77-73 in overtime and the other was their lone win with a 63-36 final over Eastwood Academy.

## Slow start for defending champs

Written by News Desk

Friday, 06 December 2013 15:29 -

---

The Wildcats are basically trying to figure out themselves; they are almost a totally new team that has yet to play together very well. "We are trying to take the time to mix up the lineup and mix up the activity," assistant coach Greg Parker said. "Things are just totally different than last year. Most basketball teams have a couple of 'go to' guys and we don't know who those are. That's just something that will eventually come to us." Parker said he fully expected to see the team under the much improved category by the time the playoffs roll around. He also said the situation was similar to a couple of years ago, which was a time the team turned things around the second half of the season.

It is fair to expect an improvement. After all, the toughest part of the EMCA schedule is in the first few weeks of the season especially considering the fact that the Wildcats are playing much larger schools as part of the early schedule. "The most of the important games, region and area games, are after the holidays. While things may not look all that well right now, it is the best time to find yourself and develop your team, so we feel good about the next couple of months," Parker said.

EMCA's offense is led by point guard Malik Pettus, who is averaging 15.4 points per game and forward Claud Gilder, who is averaging 14.2 points per game.

EMCA will host its annual tournament on Dec 13-14. In addition to the Wildcats Lee-Scott, Evangel Christian and Crenshaw Academy will participate.