

'Comeback kings' impress

The Division Two basketball team of Cognitio College (Kowloon) have shown they can compete against the top sides. In the past school year, the San Po Kong school's A-grade players had high hopes of promotion to Division One – only to fail by a whisker.

The overall Division Two school A-grade, B-grade and C-grade team rankings left Cognitio joint second with Buddhist Hung Sean Chau Memorial College and St Joseph's Anglo-Chinese School. As only two schools go up, those with the best C-grade rankings were picked. It meant Cognitio, in sixth, missed out.

Yet Cognitio's A-grade team shrugged off this disappointment.

Captained by Wong Lut-yiu, a member of Hong Kong's under-18 squad last year, they first defended their A-grade Inter-school (Kowloon) title.

Later in December's All Hong Kong Schools Jing Ying Tournament, featuring the top teams, they excelled again. They repeatedly fought back against more fancied rivals before losing in the semi-finals, and finished fourth.

"We were on fire," Lut-yiu says. "As a team, we played much better than in previous years. Our goal, even at the start of the school year, was to reach the last four; we did it."

Vice-captain David Tsui Pak-hong, 18, says: "We felt the draw favoured us because we avoided the

The players impressed me by never giving up. The team kept coming back to win – right at the end

strongest two teams in the early stages. But it still proved very challenging."

After an opening-game victory over POCA Wong Siu Ching Secondary School, Cognitio won a pulsating, last-16 contest against Salesians of Don Bosco Ng Siu Mui Secondary School. The team were

trailing 51-52 with only three seconds left, when small forward Stephen Lee Ho-tin scored a two-pointer to seal a 53-52 victory. "I was worried we'd lose," says Stephen. "Luckily I felt confident when making my crucial shot."

Cognitio had another narrow 50-48 win after fighting back in the quarter-final with Wah Yan College, Hong Kong. The team trailed by more than 10 points and drew level with only 11 seconds left before going on to win.

However, Cognitio's "comeback kings" finally met their match in the semi-final – losing 33-42 to Division One A-grade champions Ying Wa College. They lost to Division One runners-up Diocesan Boys' School 39-55 in the play-off for third place.

Retired chemistry teacher Ho Wing-sum, who coached the team in the past, says: "They impressed me – by never giving up to keep coming back to win right at the end."

Teacher Li Kwok-keung, the current coach, says the school has a chance of finally gaining promotion to Division One next season. "The school's B-grade team didn't get past the group stages, but the C-grade team are in good shape. If they reach the final stages, we've a great chance of promotion."

Yet before then, Lut-yiu and the A-grade team are focusing on the Hong Kong Inter-School Marathon and Panasonic Cup Schools' Championship. "We've set a target of reaching the semi-finals in both competitions," he says.

Cognitio College (Kowloon)'s A-grade team with former coach Ho Wing-sum (far left) and coach Li Kwok-keung (far right). Photo: Kevin Kung

say it

high hopes (n)
高期望

favoured (v)
有利於

pulsating (adj)
令人緊張的

trailing (v)
落後於

comeback (n)
回歸

impressed (v)
銘記

