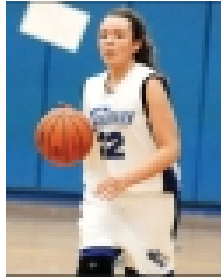


MCC's Women's basketball Team finishes in first place

BY ROBERT COOPER Staff Writer

At the beginning of this year's women's basketball season, Manchester Community College Coach Robert Turner felt his team would be competitive, but by the middle of the season he thought they would go undefeated. The team finished their regular season on Feb. 23, not with an undefeated season, but with a 19-2 record that gave them a first place finish in the Region 21 division. Not bad for a team that was 8-14 the previous year.



Click the thumbnails above to see the full size pictures.

"Our success this year has a lot to do with our recruiting," said Turner, who has been the head coach of the team for the past three seasons. "Our style of recruiting has been to pinpoint all the schools in our area with winning records and to look for a mixture of players who are good on the court as well as in the classroom."

This year's team had only one player returning from last year, and the rest were all freshmen. Tina Pagano, the team's only sophomore said this year's team has what last years didn't, more talent.

"Last year the team worked really hard, this year's team works hard and has so much talent," said Pagano.

Two of the team's players who have really excelled this year are Shanika Hines, who led the league in assists, and Amanda Morales, who led the league in scoring.

"It feels good to be leading the league in scoring, and I attribute it to my playing with older and bigger girls when I was younger," said Morales. "My coaches and players in the past also helped me to be the player I am today."

Despite the team being the best in the league, what coach Turner is most proud of is the success the young ladies have in the classroom.

"Almost every player on the team has over a 2.5 GPA," said Turner. "In the past we have had a problem with eligibility. To have this kind of classroom success is the best surprise of the season," he said.

The players give Coach Turner and assistant coach Peter Harris a lion's share of the credit for their success in the classroom.

"All of the coaches' stay on us about doing our homework," said Morales. "Coach Harris helps with classes and goes over our papers with us. I've never had coaches who helped me like this," she said.

Pagano also praised the coaches for keeping the team focused on what's most important, saying, "The coaches really push education first."

Being that the team finished in first place, they were given the top seed in the upcoming division finals. If the team is successful in winning the championship, they will then move on and battle for the national championship.