MIAA women's basketball postseason honors announced

MVP Wheeler, Defensive POY Paixao lead first team; ESU, Western mentors share Wilson Coach of the Year

(KANSAS CITY, Mo.) — Missouri Western State College had two players earn first-team recognition as the MIAA handed out its postseason women’s basketball awards at the Purinton, Chance & Mills/MIAA Media Welcome Reception Sunday (March 2) to tipoff Sonic/MIAA Basketball Championships week.

The Griffons had senior G/F Danielle McKinley and junior G Eldra Paixao (pronounced PAY-sho) selected to the first team. McKinley enters the postseason as the conference’s leading scorer at 17.0 ppg, while Paixao is sixth at 14.4 ppg.

Paixao also leads the conference in steals (3.59 spg), is ranked third in assists (5.81 per game) and field goal shooting (45.4 percent).

Besides making the first team, Paixao also was the coaches choice as Defensive Player of the Year.

McKinley also leads the conference in shooting accuracy from the field (54.7 percent) and is second in steals (2.67 spg) behind Paixao.

Meanwhile, last season’s MIAA Freshman of the Year, Southwest Baptist G Amber Wheeler, picked up the Most Valuable Player honors. She’s currently second in the conference scoring race (16.7 ppg) and leads in three-point goals made (2.65 per game). Wheeler also is ranked fourth in free throw accuracy (82.2 percent).

She’s the first sophomore to win with an MIAA MVP award in women’s basketball since Washburn’s Shelley Foster pulled the trick in 1992-93.

Truman junior F Sarah Sommer, who led the conference in scoring a good portion of the season before finishing the regular season ranked second (16.3 ppg), also earned first-team recognition. She also averages 6.9 rebounds (seventh in the MIAA) and 1.44 blocked shots (third in the MIAA).

Northwest Missouri State senior C Sarah Vollertsen rounds out the first team, leading the Bearcats to their first national ranking by the WBCA, and a shot at their first national title.

First Team All-MIAA
Danielle McKinley, MWSC G/F 5-7 Sr. Evanston, Ill.
Eldra Paixao, MWSC G 5-4 Jr. Sao Paulo, Brazil
Sarah Sommer, TSU F 6-1 Jr. Sparland, Ill.
Sarah Vollertsen, NWMSU C 6-2 Sr. Palmyra, Neb.
Amber Wheeler, SBU G 5-8 So. Alton, Mo.

Second Team All-MIAA
Aubrie Hallman, MSSU G 5-8 Jr. Wichita, Kan.
Nicole Patry, ESU G 5-10 Jr. Wichita, Kan.
Kami Scrivner, PSU F 5-10 Jr. Mount Vernon, Mo.
Jena Shackelford, CMSU G 5-9 Sr. Lenexa, Kan.
Carla Sintra, WU C 6-1 Jr. Goiania, Brazil
Lora Westling, WU F 5-10 Jr. Casper, Wyo.

Six players selected due to a tie in voting

Honorable Mention All-MIAA
Jane Chalmers, NWMSU G 5-4 Sr. Echuca, Australia
Andrea Durante, UMR G 5-10 Fr. Bloomington, Ind.
Wyketha Harrell, MSSU F 5-11 Sr. Kansas City, Mo.
Casey Henningsen, ESU F 6-1 Fr. Glen Elder, Kan.
Alicia Mercer, SBU C 6-1 Sr. Kirksville, Mo.
Ashley Millham, CMSU G 5-11 Fr. Jackson, Mo.

Honorable Mention All-MIAA (continued)
Juwanna Rivers, WU G 5-7 Jr. Cleveland, Ohio
Gwyn Smith, SBU F 6-0 Jr. Smithton, Ill.
Miklannet Tenmal, ESU G 5-3 Sr. Centralia, Kan.
Esmary Vargas-Sanchez, ESU C 6-3 Jr. Guaynabo, P.R.

MIAA All-Defensive Team
Erica Hatterman, NWMSU G 5-9 Sr. Lost Springs, Kan.
Eldra Paixao, MWSC G 5-4 Jr. Sao Paulo, Brazil
April Roadhouse, WU G 5-7 So. Osborne, Kan.
†Esmary Vargas-Sanchez, ESU C 6-3 Jr. Guaynabo, P.R.
†=Repeat selection from 2002-03

MIAA Most Valuable Player
Amber Wheeler, SBU

MIAA Defensive Player of the Year
Eldra Paixao, MWSC

MIAA Freshman of the Year
Ashley Millham, CMSU

Wilson/MIAA Co-Coaches of the Year
Brandon Schneider, ESU & David Slifer, MWSC

— more —
tional tournament appearance since 1990. She averaged 12.8 points (ninth in the MIAA), 7.4 rebounds (fifth in the MIAA), and 1.92 blocked shots (second in the MIAA) -- in spite of missing three games after an emergency appendectomy in the non-conference portion of the schedule.

Joining Paixao on the MIAA All-Defensive Team are a pair from ESU – junior G Michelle Brown and sophomore C Esmary Vargas-Sanchez, the MIAA blocked shot leader (3.29 bpg) and only repeat choice from last season.

Rounding out the team are Northwest Missouri State senior G Erica Hatterman and Washburn sophomore G April Roadhouse.

Central Missouri State G Ashley Millham was the choice as MIAA Freshman of the Year. Millham averaged 11.7 points and 4.89 assists (fifth in the MIAA) in her maiden season of collegiate hoop. She also ranks third in the MIAA with 41.8 percent shooting from three-point range.

The Wilson/MIAA Coach of the Year will be shared by two old rivals -- Emporia State's Brandon Schneider and Missouri Western's David Slifer. Schneider is looking to get his Lady Hornets squad into the national tournament for the fifth time in his six seasons as ESU head coach, while Slifer is attempting to have a Griffon squad make the NCAA Division II tournament for an eighth consecutive season.

It is the third time that each has won the award -- Schneider did it in 1998-99 and 2000-01, while Slifer won in 1996-97 and 2001-02.

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