

Hoops '24-25



MAD MAX: AMADASUN'S JOURNEY TO AUGUSTA

STORY ON PAGE 18

AUGUSTA
BASKETBALL
GUIDE

NO. 2: DEMITRI "MEECH" GARDNER



(photo by Lydia Williams)

AU's preseason all-conference selection;
see his profile on Page 37.

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(photo by Justin Gray)

Editor's note:

Welcome to Augusta Basketball Preview 2024-25. Students in the Sports Media class at Augusta University have created this magazine as a guide to the 2024-25 basketball season in the Augusta area. The magazine includes both college and high school stories, mostly about the players and coaches who play the sport created in America by Dr. James Nesmith more than a century ago. Indeed, the Augusta tradition in basketball at both the high school and college level is rich, including the great Ricky Moore who led UConn to the 1999 national championship, Dip Metress's excellent program that has been to two NCAA Division II national championship games and three Final Fours, and players like AU great Garrett Siler or more recently Grovetown's Derrion Reid, who is now playing at the University of Alabama, and it also includes the NIKE Peach Jam Tournament played each summer in North Augusta, S.C. We hope you enjoy this look at hoops in our area.

David W. Bulla, editor



(photo by Paula Toole)

Augusta Basketball

2024-25

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(photo by Paula Toole)



(photo by Carlos Rodriguez)

Tyshaun Crawford, dunking here against USC Aiken in 2022, is one of several Augusta University men's program alums playing basketball round the world. Crawford played in the country of Georgia in 2023-24 and now is playing in China. Also playing abroad are: Rafael Monteiro plays in Brazil; Deane Williams and Troy Cracknell, in Germany, and Keshun Sherrill, in France.



Dip Metress, men's coach at Augusta University. (photo by Paula Toole)

THE NIL DILEMMA

By Jagger Iovenelli

Implementing Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) rights in college sports has drastically changed the amateur sports market. For years, many college athletes earned millions in revenue for colleges, athletic wear manufacturers and television networks but were paid only in tuition fees and books.

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Name, image and likeness ...

Now that the NCAA permits athletes to capitalize on their NIL, the players are inking endorsement contracts, creating their brands and earning on athleticism and personality. However, as NIL has had a significant impact on NCAA Division I athletics, off and on-field repercussions are not limited to marquee athletic departments and sports—football and men’s and women’s basketball.



Zyere Edwards,
AU guard. (photo
by Paula Toole)

Thus, players and coaches working at the Division II Augusta University deal with a system that usually has little effect on them, yet NIL still gets their attention.

NIL deals have paved the way for college athletes, especially football and basketball players, to achieve exceptional monetary benefits. The top-tier Division I athletes, particularly those associated with high-profile institutions like the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Clemson and South Carolina, benefit from advertising the scholar-athletes attract to these universities.

For instance, Bronny James, son of LeBron James, received seven-figure contracts for his name, image and likeness before playing college basketball at Southern California. Such arrangements cover the court and other aspects of advertising, endorsements, appearance and selling of sports merchandise.

As beneficial as these opportunities may be for players and their confirmation of worth, they have also brought equity issues to college basketball. Many DII and DIII athletes, and typically the bench players in Division I, may need more exposure to have more NIL opportunities coming their way. This unequal environment has led to discussions of equity and whether the NCAA brings that through NIL, which introduces a new bracket in college sports.

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NIL IN DIVISION II ...

At Augusta University, there is a question of direct NIL opportunities for players. AU men's basketball coach Dip Metress said that NIL has created a new paradigm in college athletics that his program has yet to witness fully.

"It's a different world now," Metress says. "For players at those relatively unknown institutions like ours, NIL is not about the lucrative contracts; it is about how they will navigate the world after basketball."

Metress, however, is quick to assure his enthusiasts that his goal is tame and is only aimed at building players on the field and in other facets of life. However, he concedes that NIL deals with larger programs that skew players' impressions.

"Of course, players observe what is going at the Division I level," he noted. "It is not so much envy; it is just recognizing what is reasonable of them."

There have been instances where some of the players who played at Augusta University transferred to Division I teams. In response to whether they enjoyed NIL deals in more prominent high institutions, Metress responded: "To the best of my knowledge, none of them engaged in situations where NIL formed the basis. However, the current landscape changes so quickly that it is challenging to identify what lies ahead." To current players of Augusta University, NIL is a two-faced entity. Basketball player Oliver Lucas, he said he feels a little of both.

"Many times I catch myself when I see guys my age signing deals, thinking, 'That could have been me, if only I were at a bigger school,'" Lucas conceded. "It also discourages me simultaneously, making me strive harder and possibly look for my niche."

Lucas also pointed to social media as filling in for the missing communication between team members and the integration process.

"These days, there is no need to attend Duke University or Kentucky University to gather fans," he said.

In other words, creativity and continuity will help one to make oneself marketable. This mentality is emerging, especially among athletes from non-Power Five colleges who aim to gain attention on social networks such as Instagram and TikTok. However, Lucas admits to the difficulties of combining sports, academics and brand development. (Continued on Page 11)



AU's Oliver Lucas. (photo by Paula Toole)

D2 athletes little envious of NIL at D1 level

“It is quite unbelievable that one can be competing with players who have whole PR teams to work with,” he said. “We are out here just hustling by ourselves.”

AU men’s basketball player Zyere Edwards commented on NIL and its effects on Division II. While Edwards can see these positive aspects of NIL occurring, being a Division II athlete, he lacks the same opportunities a Division I athlete would have.

“I see the big get up for NIL, and I have no problem with that because players should be able to make some bucks from their name and image,” he said. “That’s probably why we are not as active as we used to be; others get all the fun.

“Players experience some level of frustration when they see D1 athletes enjoying NIL deals. Well, maybe some of the guys here are a little jealous. It’s hard not to feel that way when you know that players at more prominent schools are getting paid for doing the same thing we are—just playing basketball.”

However, Edwards also looks at things from a positive angle.

“Most of us don’t have such options, but I’m trying to do all I can to make myself visible with the help of social networks and other means,” he said. “I understand that NIL is still a relatively fresh concept, and I do not know what other chances might be waiting for me in the future as a player.”

One of the major challenges that learners face, and which will be evident for Division II players, is one of visibility. As most of the Augusta University athletes do not have national television exposure or a strong alum base to organize sponsors from, only a few corporations are willing to sponsor athletes. However, NIL is not only a sponsorship agreement with large companies; it is also a business agreement. Players from small college teams have resorted to establishing their businesses, securing sponsorships, and selling merchandise, including organizing youth basketball camps.

This is something that Metress believes may be a blessing in disguise.

“If players are able to think creatively of NIL, then that will prepare them for life after basketball,” he said. “It is about how they can use those things they have been given and not about what they do not have.”

The NIL era introduced changes in college basketball games with equal benefits as well as risks. While athletes at Division I schools enjoy the fruits of lucrative contracts more often than not, the athletes of Augusta University are stranded in a system that appears distant.

However, as the experiences of Metress, Lucas and Edwards show, NIL can be motivating instead of aggravating. In exploring this concept at Augusta University, players are finding that NIL is not only a monetization but a reparation avenue for their connection to the game.

While some may be working to cultivate their persona online, others are turning to partnerships at a local level or using basketball as the foundation for the next step they will take in their careers. As NIL continues to develop and shift on its own, the question that smaller programs must ask themselves is not that they are unable to compete with the big boys but where they can fit into the ever-changing college sports fabric.



AU Coach Dip Metress. (photo by Lydia Williams)

AU's Fullwood: Student, athlete, leader

By Nyla Robinson

Je'Bria Fullwood, a member of the women's basketball team at Augusta University, is motivated to succeed on and off the court through her passion, dedication and career goals.

Fullwood, a senior, played her high school ball at Greensboro Day School in North Carolina, and at AU she has become a standout leader on and off the floor. Over the years, her relentless hard work has transformed her game, making her not only a standout player on the court but also an inspiring leader off the court.

Fullwood is the embodiment of a complete athlete. Her AU coach, Celeste Stewart, describes her as "the most athletic player I've ever coached," highlighting Fullwood's strength, speed and power.

However, it is not just the physical abilities that make her a standout, but the intangibles she brings to the table that set her apart. Fullwood brings energy and intensity that her team feeds off.

"She is the energy giver to our defense, and when she is intense, our entire team feeds off of it," Stewart said.

Fullwood is not only a fierce competitor but an outstanding leader. Her coach calls her a "culture player" who leads by example and is always willing to hold people accountable. Part of her becoming a great leader is her evolution of becoming vocal, stepping into the "role of being the positive and encouraging teammate," Stewart explained.

As a teammate, Fullwood's impact is profound. She takes great pride in her work ethic.

"I've developed a routine of arriving at practice an hour early to get extra shots up," she said.

This type of effort plays a huge role to her teammates that look up to her. Teammate Autumn Phillips says Fullwood's example has helped her develop as a player.

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Augusta University senior Je'Bria Fullwood goes up for two against Newberry. (photo by Paula Toole)

Je'Bria Fullwood ...

“Je'Bria has helped my game improve by showing me what it means to work relentlessly and overcome obstacles,” Phillips said. “She’s inspired me to push myself harder and stay focused on my own growth.”

Fullwood’s character and integrity has created an abundant amount of trust within the team. Her loyalty is something that is never questioned by teammates.

Her ability to embrace challenges is one of her defining traits. While she felt confident in her ability to manage college because she was “already accustomed to a rigorous schedule”, adding collegiate basketball was going to be a “unique challenge” that would come with some hurdles like learning complex plays. What made the transition easier was her willingness to listen and learn.

“She is coachable and responds well to being challenged,” Stewart said.

Fullwood’s influence spreads well beyond the basketball court. As a leader in multiple organizations including her roles as the vice president of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and an ambassador for the Student Government Association (SGA), she embodies what it means to be more than an athlete.

Fullwood also has been doing sociological research with Professor Candace Griffith in criminal justice.



Fullwood leads on and off the court.
(photo by Lydia Williams)

Fullwood has found ways to manage all of her commitments in an effective manner, including, utilizing campus resources such as the academic success center and the library, staying organized by using her planner and a wall calendar. Always prioritizing her education.

At her core, Fullwood is a religious person who is devoted to her family and community. When it comes to her family, she wears many hats: a loving daughter, sister, granddaughter, TiTi (aunt) and loyal friend. She cites her parents as being great influencers and being supportive of her every move.

“My parents have always been a huge support in anything I commit myself to,” she said. “They inspire me to be the woman I am today. Growing up and watching them persist over any challenge at such a young age motivates me to keep going. It aids in my ‘nothing is too hard’ mindset.”

Outside of basketball, Fullwood enjoys reading, traveling and exploring new restaurants with friends and family. She also is doing research on food insecurity, which she hopes to continue even after college. She also aspires to play professional basketball overseas. Ultimately, she plans to pursue a career as a physician assistant, combining her passion for service with her academic and athletic discipline.

“She gives 110 percent all the time, no matter the circumstances,” Stewart said. “She’s such a joy to be around, and a true example of strength and grace.”

Carlos Rodriguez finds his sports home at ESPN

By Ryan Eastman

As a kid growing up in New York, Carlos Rodriguez was always attached to sports. Whether watching games, seeing sports analysts on TV, running track, playing basketball, or reading sports stories, his love for, and interest in, how sports were covered grew more and more throughout his life.

Currently working as a digital video intern with the Indiana Pacers, Rodriguez was always involved with sports in some capacity.

“I've always been into sports since I've played sports all of my life,” Rodriguez said. “I think I've always enjoyed being around sports and I feel like my life would feel like there's something missing if I was completely away from it.”

However, it wasn't until high school when Rodriguez began his sports writing career. Dr. David Bulla, professor and head of the Communication Department at Augusta University, first met Rodriguez in his journalism class at Grovetown High School when Bulla came in to discuss careers in journalism with the students. From there, Rodriguez began laying the foundation for his future endeavors.

“I met Dr. Bulla when I was a junior at Grovetown High when he visited my journalism class and reconnected with him my senior year at Grovetown when I asked him to be my mentor for my senior project,” Rodriguez said. “I think some of the important things he taught me were how to cover sports. I really had no experience, and he gave me the opportunity to write for the Bell Ringer student newspaper when I was still in high school and then promoted me to the sports editor position while I attended AU.”

(Continued on Page 15)

Carlos Rodriguez
was the anchor
of The Sports Squad podcast
while at AU. (Bell Ringer photo)



RODRIGUEZ ESPN-BOUND ...

Bulla became a mentor to Rodriguez, allowing him to become a sportswriter for Augusta University's newspaper, *The Bell Ringer*, while still in high school. After deciding to attend Augusta University, Rodriguez earned the position of sports editor of *The Bell Ringer*, becoming a standout writer who is still held in high regard by Bulla today.

"He's the best young sportswriter I have ever taught," Bulla said. "I taught three at the University of Florida who have had amazing careers, at ESPN, at CNN and running the P.R. office for the Denver Broncos. All of them are great writers, but Carlos was even better. And he has the same thing they have as a quality that makes for a successful sports media professional: He hustles. Always."

Rodriguez showed his capability, passion and standout skills immediately upon writing for Augusta University as the men's basketball beat writer, and it did not go unnoticed by Bulla.

"From day one, he could report, write, take photos and establish relationships with sources," Bulla said. "He also was always willing to try new things--different lead styles, angles on photography and ultimately videography--where he excels."

With writing for the *Bell Ringer* as well as taking Dr. Bulla's Sports Communication class, Rodriguez gained some knowledge that he did not already possess.

"I think taking Dr. Bulla's Sports Comm class helped me become more professional as I separated the fan approach while covering games and it has helped me with the Indiana Pacers when I'm around these professional athletes," Rodriguez said. "While it's cool to be around players I've seen on TV, I know how to keep my professionalism, which some people have a hard time doing."

Rodriguez also found a mentor in Communication Senior Lecturer Amber Routh, who helped guide him and provide her expertise and knowledge both during and after Rodriguez's time at Augusta University.

"Professor Routh was a great professor and someone I would also consider a mentor," Rodriguez said. "She was always there for any question or concern I had and gave me valuable advice when I was looking at my next steps after graduating from AU."

Rodriguez, now working on a master's degree in sports management at the University of Indianapolis, ended up taking Routh's internship course, where he interned with the Peach Belt Conference and AU Athletics.

Professor Routh took notice of all of his Rodriguez's hard work with his internships, crediting him and him alone, for getting where he is currently with his life and career,

"Carlos was driven; he got his internships on his own," Routh said. "I didn't connect him, although I helped advise him on his ESPN application for after graduation. He only got the ESPN internship, which led to a job offer, because of his internships. It was all the work he'd done and the portfolio he developed doing it that led to that offer."

Starting in January Rodriguez will be taking on a new role at ESPN, where he will be a digital video and social content associate for their YouTube channel.

"I'll be editing footage from ESPN shows such as 'First Take,' the 'Pat McAfee Show,' 'NBA Today' and more to produce short and long-form videos for ESPN's various YouTube channels, along with producing game highlights from different college games and professional leagues whether that's the MLB, NBA, English Premier League, etc.," Rodriguez said. "I'll also provide on-site video coverage at various events."



Rodriguez
with SPJ awards

Lakeside's Kobi Barnes

By J. Ben Haynes

As just a junior, Lakeside's Kobi Barnes is quickly making a name for herself and turning the heads of major women's basketball programs throughout the Southeast.

The 6-foot-3 forward is currently ranked the No. 1 forward in Georgia for the 2026 recruiting class, according to her coach Matt Scott.

Barnes has offers from several major universities, including Louisville, Georgia Tech, North Carolina State, Georgia, and Clemson, as well as offers from mid-major NCAA Division I schools Mercer, Elon, Georgia State, and Coastal Carolina.

"She is very high character, and that's one reason I think these colleges are coming after her," said Scott, "Kobi plays hard, her ceiling is really high, and sometimes I don't think she even realizes that."

Barnes' game has grown exponentially from her sophomore season, as she is averaging 18.7 points, 12.3 rebounds and 7.2 blocks per game through her first six games in the 2024-25 season.

This is a vast improvement from a season ago where she averaged 11.7 points, 9.8 rebounds, and 6.5 blocks per game.

Barnes does it all for the Panthers and has expanded her offensive game beyond just playing in the paint.

"Sometimes it's get down low if there's a mismatch, and sometimes we get her out and let her shoot because she can do that as well," said Scott.



Kobi Barnes drives to the hoop for Lakeside. (photo by Chris Martino)

"I don't want to put a seat belt on her and not let her shoot, because those are the type of things she's working really hard on."

There is no doubt that Barnes will continue to garner major attention not only in the CSRA, but throughout the country as she continues her high school career.

Grovetown's MJ Curry

By J. Ben Haynes

Grovetown sophomore guard MJ Curry is gaining considerable traction on the NCAA Division I basketball recruiting trail.

Curry currently holds offers from Georgia State and Presbyterian, but has taken visits to Tennessee, Auburn, Georgia and Clemson this fall.

“He’s a great kid. Never had a missing assignment, never even had a C in the classroom in the two years that I’ve known him,” said Grovetown head coach Darren Douglas, “He works extremely hard and is always in the gym and watching film.”

Curry is averaging 22 points, eight rebounds and five assists per game while shooting 51 percent from the field.

“I just have to stay in the gym and keep my team up. The plan this year is to help lead my team to the state championship and hopefully win it,” said Curry.

With Curry’s contributions, the Warriors are 4-1 on the season, with their only loss coming against Richmond County foe Cross Creek in mid-November.

It is no secret that Curry has a massive impact on any game with his offensive prowess, but Douglas thinks his impact on defense is even more significant.

“I think he’s so special offensively. He’s going to score the ball if he gets his touches,” said Douglas. “But when he’s engaged defensively and has his hands in passing lanes, I think it fuels everybody else and gets us going in transition which is how we want to play.”



Grovetown's MJ Curry slashes to the basket.
(photo by Chris Martino)

On top of Curry’s on-the-court prowess, Douglas raved about the type of person Curry is off the court and as a teammate.

“Even after the game, he was the first guy to go over to the bench and help clean up cups. When that type of kid has that kind of talent, it’s exciting to see how far he can go,” said Douglas, “If he stays on that path, the sky is the limit, and I think he can make money playing basketball one day.”

Curry is following in the footsteps of Derrion Reid, who led the Warriors to a state title in 2022 and now plays collegiately for the University of Alabama.

AMADASUN'S ODYSSEY:

From Dublin to NYC to Pittsburgh to St. Bonaventure to Augusta

By Jaxon Garner

For Maximillian Amadasun, basketball has been more than a sport—it's been a passport to new places, personal growth and cultural discovery. His family roots are in Nigeria, but the Amadasuns would move to Ireland. Growing up in Dublin, Max never imagined where the game could take him, from playing on schoolyard courts in his hometown to competing on the collegiate stage in the United States. Now, as a member of the Augusta University Jaguars, “Big Max” is making his presence felt both on and off the court.



Max Amadasun posts up at Georgia Southern. (photo by Lydia Williams)

Basketball beginnings in Dublin

Every player has a starting point. For Amadasun, it was the streets of Dublin, a city better known for rugby and soccer than basketball.

“Before basketball, I was into other sports—soccer, martial arts, and Gaelic football,” he said. “But in middle school, we started playing basketball during lunch. I was better than everyone because of my size. One of my schoolmates asked me to join his club, and from then on, basketball became my life.”

Playing in a country where basketball isn't the biggest sport might seem like a disadvantage, but Amadasun's drive to succeed helped him stand out and opened doors far beyond Ireland.

Taking the leap across the pond

In 2016, Amadasun left Ireland for Our Saviour Lutheran School in New York City. It was his first time in America, and the transition wasn't easy.

“It was tough,” he admitted. “Not having family here and barely knowing anyone was hard. My parents were worried too. They knew I was good at basketball, but American basketball is another level. I'm forever grateful they believed in me.”

Amadasun's hard work paid off, earning him a scholarship to the University of Pittsburgh, where he played under head coach Jeff Capel.

“Coming out of high school, I was a highly ranked recruit,” he said. “I had a lot of Division I offers and went with the biggest and shiniest one in Pittsburgh.”

After two years of limited playing time, Amadasun decided to transfer to St. Bonaventure University in New York.

“I could've stayed at Pitt and earned my degree, but I wanted more for myself,” he said. “I wanted more minutes, and St. Bonaventure offered me that.”

(Continued on Page 19)

Max getting maximum out of AU

Finding a home at Augusta

The next chapter in Amadasun's journey brought him to Augusta University, drawn by the program's culture and AU coach Dip Metress.

"There was one reason I came to Augusta, and it was Coach Dip," Amadasun said. "He sold me on the future of the program, and he stuck to his word. I appreciate that."

For Metress, the initial draw was obvious

"Max's size stood out right away," Metress said. "He didn't play much at St. Bonaventure or Pitt, but Jeff Capel told me Max was a wonderful human being, and that meant a lot."

The connection between Amadasun and Augusta ran deeper than stats or recommendations. Jason Killeen, his coach back in Ireland, played for Metress from 2007 to 2009.

"Knowing Jason and hearing his stories about Coach Dip made it easier to commit," Amadasun said. "It's crazy how small the basketball world is."

Amadasun's potential and work ethic have blossomed with the Jaguars. His teammate Demetri Gardner remembers being struck by it immediately.

"My first impression of Max was that he was disciplined in everything he does," Gardner said. "He's a hard worker and will always go the extra mile to succeed. Now, Max is like a brother to me, and we've only grown closer over the years."

Life off the court

Off the court, Amadasun has embraced life in Augusta. Cooking has become one of his favorite hobbies, keeping him connected to his Nigerian heritage.

"I'm probably the best cook you know," he said with a laugh. "Being Nigerian, I make a mean jollof rice. Cooking helps me feel at home no matter where I am."

Metress enjoys hearing about Amadasun's kitchen skills but teases him about one habit.

"Max loves to cook, and he's pretty good from what I've heard," Metress said. "But apparently, he never washes the pans, at least according to his roommates."

(Continued on Page 20)



Jag center Max Amadasun has a soft touch for a big man. (photo by Paula Toole)

Jag center is a techie ...

Gaming is another passion of Amadasun's. For him, it's a way to relax and reconnect with friends back home.

"Gaming brings me back to my childhood," said the Cybersecurity major. "It's my escape—it makes the world feel still."

Adjusting to life in the South has come with its perks, too.

"The weather here is so much nicer than up north," he said. "I think it makes people more welcoming too."

Representing Ireland

As one of four international players on the Jaguar roster, Amadasun takes pride in representing Ireland on the court.

"Wearing my country on my back means everything," he said. "I'm one of the pioneers of Irish basketball in America. That motivates me to go harder."

Amadasun is focused on improving both his game and his team's performance.

"I want to cut down my assist-to-turnover ratio," he said. "But for the team, it's simple: win as many games as we can and take it one game at a time. I think we can make a deep run in the tournament. Coach Dip has molded us into an unstoppable force."

Teammates like Gardner are inspired by Amadasun's leadership.

"Max's hard work and discipline set the tone for all of us," Gardner said. "He pushes us to be better every day."

Looking to the future, Amadasun has his sights set on professional basketball or coaching, but his interests don't stop there.

"I've always been into technology," he said. "Even when my parents didn't like it, I'd find a way to get my hands on something tech related."

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Max Amadasun listens to AU Coach Dip Metress during a timeout. (photo by Paula Toole)

No. 17: Max Amadasun



Jaguar center Max Amadasun, a senior from Dublin, Ireland, has a soft touch around the basket. (photo by Paula Toole)

Fun facts about Max Amadasun:

- Pre-game pump-up song: Anything by Gunna or K-Trap
- Top three video games: The Simpsons: Hit and Run, Need for Speed: Most Wanted, and League of Legends
- Favorite teammate accent: Elías Pálsson (Njardvik, Iceland)
- Best spot in Augusta: Georgia Cyber Center
- Favorite American food: New York Pizza
- Dream 3v3 matchup: Kevin Durant, Bam Adebayo, and Pascal Siakam vs. Himself, Hakeem Olajuwon, and Steph Curry



Amadasun had 30 points and 14 rebounds in an early-season win at Emmanuel. (photo by Paula Toole)



Lenny Carlson (L) does color commentary with AU play-by-play announcer Charles McNeil during the AU-Paine game. (photo by David W. Bulla)

Carlson moves to broadcast booth

By Nayla Reese

Former Augusta University assistant coach Lenny Carlson has been involved with the Jaguar program going all the way back to 1968. He's seen a lot of changes over the years, and he helped Marvin Vanover, Clint Bryant and Dip Metress build Augusta into a NCAA Division II powerhouse.

Carlson no longer sits on the bench next to Metress. Instead, he sits next to play-by-play announcer Charles McNeil and does color commentary for AU's home games on the Peach Belt Network.

Throughout his career he has achieved many successes that all start from humble beginnings in Worcester, Mass.

Carlson grew up in a loving, low-income household where his only way to further education was through basketball.

"The only way I could attend college was on an athletic scholarship," said Carlson.

After much hard work performing in both basketball and track his golden ticket to college was found in his jumping ability.

Carlson's biggest asset was his jumping ability. He leaped 22 feet, 6 inches in the long jump, and that put him in the Worcester High School Athletic Hall of Fame.

After high school, Carlson was able to secure an athletic scholarship for basketball to the University of Connecticut as a guard.

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“A measure of a person’s success is not how well they do the things they like, but how well they do the things they must.”

--Lenny Carlson

Lenny Carlson (in red sweater) cuts down the nets after AU won the Peach Belt Tournament in 2022. (photo by Viraj Bulla)

Carlson, ...

“Being only 6-feet tall, if I didn’t possess unusual jumping ability, it would have never happened,” said Carlson of his getting the scholarship to play for UConn.

During his college years he had many successes for the Huskies, including making several NCAA Division I all-American teams in 1962.

After his playing days at the college level, he began to coach. While coaching he earned a master’s degree in physical education from UConn in 1963.

While working on his master’s degree, Carlson became an assistant coach of the freshman team for his alma mater, following the death of Huskie Coach Hugh Greer in 1963.

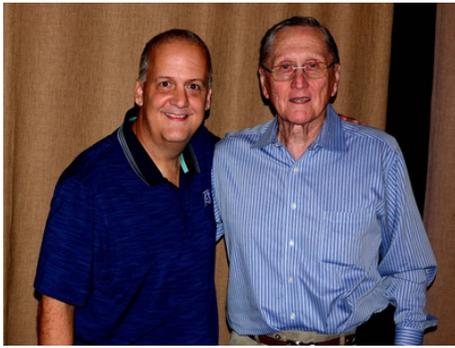
In 1968 Carlson joined Marvin Vanover as an assistant coach at Augusta College but took a short leave during 1975-1976 to coach in Belgium. While in Belgium, Carlson would win the Belgian professional league championship in 1975-1976.

In addition to his international win, he contributed to history by recruiting this first Black players to Augusta and the first foreign players to attend a predominantly white college in Georgia during his time at AU.

Being a native of the Northeast, Carlson was shocked that there were no Black players on the team at Augusta due to segregation in the South.

Carlson made it a point to present Vanover with the idea of potentially recruiting Black players regardless of the repercussions the program might face.

For Carlson, the decision to integrate was not only about the game of basketball but also about racial equality.



Lenny Carlson (R) and AU Coach Dip Metress. (photo from AU Athletics)

Carlson, ...

The two coaches received approval from the university's president, Gerald Robins, to move ahead on the matter, and thus history was made.

Carlson was an assistant coach for the men's basketball at AU off and on for 40 years and retired in 2000 after five knee replacements.

In 2006, Carlson decided to come out of retirement as a volunteer assistant coach to Metress, who brought Lenny alongside as a volunteer assistant coach and felt privileged to work with the veteran assistant.

"Lenny was on and off with me for 15 years," Metress said. "He loves basketball as much as I do and was a great resource to have."

Carlson felt grateful for the opportunity to come home to his coaching roots following retirement.

"I was fortunate to have accumulated enough wealth by the time I was 60 so that I could go back to the school that gave me my first coaching job in the late 1960s and volunteer coach for a number of years," said Carlson.

Metress said Carlson brings several outstanding traits to the table as a coach.

"His greatest qualities are his ability to relate to players, have a passion for the game and willing to adapt and evolve," said Metress.

Carlson's success continued, and he was inducted into the New England Basketball Hall of Fame in 2013.

Carlson feels there is more to life than just the success of his career but also his family. One of his greatest achievements comes from being a father to his three children. He feels that they have "met and exceeded all expectations," said Carlson, who also is an inveterate bike rider who has overcome a major accident from a couple of years back. He is on his bike again, putting away the miles as he stays in great shape.

Carlson has left a legacy at AU that has altered not only the basketball program, but the course of life events that impacted societal norms. Carlson helped to establish a program that shapes players into men.

"A measure of a person's success is not how well they do the things they like, but how well they do the things they must," said Carlson.

Now he shares his knowledge of the game he loves with his TV audience. And just like everything else he's done, Carlson is succeeding again.



(photo by Paula Toole)

Dip Metress

- 29 seasons as a head coach, 21 seasons at Augusta
- 575 career victories
- Two trips to the NCAA Division II championship game
- Three Final Fours

Peach Jam

Augusta's
signature
basketball
tournament



Cooper Flagg: Now at Duke.
(photo by Carlos Rodriguez)

By CARLOS RODRIGUEZ

The Nike Peach Jam has been a major high school basketball event in North Augusta for the past 29 years. The event first started in 1996 with the original name being the Nike Peach Basket Classic, before it was changed to the Peach Jam in 1997.

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PEACH JAM:

THE hoops tournament

It all started in August 1995 when Clint Bryant, who at the time was the head coach of the Augusta University men's basketball team, was contacted by Eddie Meyers, one of Bryant's friends. Meyers, a former Georgetown assistant, had told Bryant about Nike wanting to have a summer travel tournament. Bryant golfs, and Nike wanted an area that can provide that because coaches love to golf.

The locations they had in mind were Myrtle Beach, S.C., and Biloxi, Miss. Bryant didn't think either of those cities would be a good option.

"Myrtle Beach would be no different than Vegas," said Bryant, who retired as AU's director of athletics in 2022. "In the summertime, it's a mad house. It has only two or three high schools."

Those were all the negatives about Myrtle Beach. On Biloxi he stated, "Other than gambling, what is there?" Meyers believed those locations were good for golf because the coaches liked playing.

That's when Bryant proposed the idea of bringing the event to Augusta. Meyers questioned why bring it to Augusta, and Bryant had good reasons.

"Augusta is known for golf; we have some really nice courses," Bryant said.

He also mentioned how Augusta had moved into Christenberry Fieldhouse four to five years previously.

"In a mile and a half radius, I have seven, eight gyms," Bryant told Meyers.

Some of those gyms included Aquinas, Richmond Academy and EDS. Christenberry Fieldhouse would be the central location of the event.

"Within four to five minutes of my gym you can get to any for those places," Bryant said.

Meyers called Bryant back to inform him that Nike was interested in the idea. Two weeks later, Meyers flew down to Augusta to visit the gyms with Bryant. After visiting each gym, none of them had the right feel.

"I wasn't real satisfied yet, and I don't think he was," said Bryant.

After not finding any success, Bryant and Meyers were on the way to the airport for his flight home when Bryant decided there was still one more gym they could visit.

It was a gym in North Augusta called Riverview Park Activities Center (RPAC). Bryant was hosting a basketball camp there in a few weeks but hadn't seen the gym in person. When they arrived, they were speechless.

"We walked in, and we said, 'Oh, my God, this is it,'" Bryant said.

RPAC had four gyms at the time, and Bryant felt coaches would be able to walk around easily and watch one game on one court then another on a different court. Now RPAC has expanded to six courts.

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Peach Jam, ...

Bryant wanted certain things to be implemented into the event every year. He wanted the 100 Black Men of Augusta to be involved, Augusta Sports Council to play a role and for a local team to participate in the event. The 100 Black Men and Augusta Sports Council are still involved, but since about 10 years ago there hasn't been a local team.

Before the first Peach Jam was set to take place, there was one problem. It was 1996, which was the year that Atlanta hosted the Summer Olympics. The Olympic committee had booked every hotel within a two-hour radius of Atlanta from mid-July to early August. Cities like Augusta, Macon, Savannah, Chattanooga, Tenn., and Greenville, S.C. were all booked. Good news came a month before the event was set to take place. The Olympic committee released the hotels.

The first game of the first ever Peach Jam was played between the Augusta Metros and Team Europe. Team Europe had one specific player on the team who would wind up being a 14-time NBA all-star in Dirk Nowitzki. From 1995-1997, the Metros featured local players such as Will Avery (Duke), Ricky Moore (UConn), Tyrone Shine (Seton Hall) and Vontee Cummings (Pitt), who would go on to play NCAA Division I basketball along with other Augusta-area players.

Gerald Daise, Keenan Mann, Tim Daniels, Chad Cook, all of them were coaches for the Augusta Metros," Bryant said.

All of them had played for Augusta University as well and were coached by Bryant.

"We blew out Team Europe, and we didn't think much of it," said former assistant Cook.

The Metros would go on to struggle in pool play that first year and finish with a 2-3 record. Despite not making it out of pool play, the Metros competed with top programs. The win over Team Europe remains sweet, as Nowitzki's team would go on to make it to the final four.

"We had represented the hometown well," Cook said.

Cook mentioned the team didn't know of Nowitzki at the time but realized who he was years later.

(Continued on Page 27)



Lebron James

A mainstay at the Peach Jam. (photo by Carlos Rodriguez)

Peach Jam, ...

“He didn’t stand out at the time, but we all know where he went from there,” Cook said. Cook credits former Jags Buck Harris and Keenan Mann for leading the “golden age of Augusta-area basketball,” which is still talked among residents today.

Other future NBA stars would go on to play at the Peach Jam, including Yao Ming, Chris Paul, Dwyane Wade and Anthony Davis. Bryant mentions enjoying guys like Tyson Chandler, Derrick Rose and Trae Young. In recent years, Cooper Flagg, Bronny James and twin brothers Cameron and Cayden Boozers have dazzled. Flagg is playing at Duke, to which the Boozers have also committed. The Boozers won the 2024 E17 title for Nightrydas. James was taken by his father’s team, the Los Angeles Lakers and is now in the G League.

“The list just goes on and on,” Bryant said.

Back when the event first started and for the first few years, coaches would get in for free but now pay hundreds of dollars for player packets.

Duke’s Mike Krzyzewski, who won five NCAA titles and had 1,202 career wins, was a mainstay at Peach Jam.

“What shocked everybody is that over 500 coaches showed up,” Bryant said. “Everybody’s here, from John Thompson to John Chaney to Bobby Knight to Roy Williams.”

The Peach Jam created something different from any other previous national basketball tournaments for high school aged players.

“It was a centralized effort from a well-funded organization with the purpose of giving college coaches everything they could wish for,” Cook said.

At first the event was only for 17-and-under teams.

(Continued on Page 28)

“What shocked everybody is that about 500 coaches showed up.”
- Clint Bryant, on the first Peach Jam tournament



Former Grovetown High School standout Derrion Reid, who now plays for the University of Alabama. (photo by Carlos Rodriguez)

Peach Jam, ...

“We had games in the morning, then took a break until 5:30 or 6 o’clock,” Bryant said. “With that the coaches can play golf.”

Since then the tournament directors have added 16-and-under and 15-and-under divisions, and now it’s an all-day event. Nike Nationals, the girls’ version of the event that is played a couple weeks after Peach Jam, was also brought to RPAC and spent over 10 years there before moving to Chicago.

In 2010 the Nike Elite Youth Basketball League was created. It consists of 40 teams that are split into four pools during the regular season. Only 24 teams in the 17-and-under division qualify for Peach Jam. The top five seeds in each pool automatically qualify while an additional four at-large bids. Only 16 teams qualify for Peach Jam in both the 16-and-under and 15-and-under divisions.

In Peach Jam 2019, beside the championship games, there were many contests filled with excitement. Georgia’s lone 17-and-under team, AOT, battled Boo Williams of Virginia in a game for the ages that resulted in a 93-91 overtime win for Boo Williams.

“The best Peach Jam basketball game I’ve ever seen,” Cook said of AOT v. Boo Williams. “I believe for people who love basketball, the Peach Jam is every bit as impressive as the Masters.”

Bryant still goes to the event every year. He loves how its known throughout the country and spoken highly of by people.

Bryant is not alone among the hoops coaching fraternity who attend. High school coaches also attend, such as Freddy Johnson, who was won more than 1,200 games at perennial power Greensboro Day School in North Carolina. For a few days, North Augusta becomes a basketball mecca.

“The best travel ball event in the country,” Bryant said. “Hopefully, it’ll be here for years to come.”

(Carlos Rodriguez works for ESPN as a videographer and social media specialist. A 2023 graduate of Augusta University with a degree in communication, Rodriguez also is a master’s degree student in sports management at the University of Indianapolis. He ran cross-country and track at AU.)



Blake Griffin (L) and Russell Westbrook at the Peach Jam. (photo by Carlos Rodriguez)

Hoops schedules

ARC

Dec. 13	Hephzibah	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	Baldwin	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Westside	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 26	Josey (B)	Home	1:30 p.m.
Dec. 26	N. Augusta (G)	Away	TBA
Dec. 27	Xmas Tourney (B)	Home	TBA
Dec. 27	S. Aiken (G)	Away	TBA
Dec. 28	Washington Co. (B)	Away	TBA
Jan. 3	Howard	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	Aquinas	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	West Laurens	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Harlem	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Cross Creek	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Hephzibah	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Baldwin	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Westside	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Howard	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Aquinas	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	West Laurens	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coach: Boys, Steve Nobles. Girls, Warren Washington.

Aiken High

Dec. 13	Airport	Away	6 and 7:30p.m.
Dec. 17	Gilbert	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 19	Fox Creek	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Storm Thurmond	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 27	Georgetown (B)	Home	6 p.m.
Dec. 28	TBH (B)	TBH	TBH
Jan. 7	North Augusta	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	BCHS	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Midland Valley	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	GCA	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	Fountain Inn (G)	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	South Aiken	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Airport	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Gilbert	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	North Augusta	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	BCHS	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Midland Valley	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 10	GCA	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 12	South Aiken	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Robbie Mckenzie. Girls, Aubrey Pompey.

Alleluia Community School

Dec. 13	Faith Baptist	Away	2 and 3:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Brunswick Chr. (B)	Away	4 p.m.
Dec. 14	Memorial Day (G)	Away	10 a.m.
Dec. 16	Briarwood	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 27	Briarwood (B)	Away	noon
Dec. 28	Augusta Prep (B)	Away	3 p.m.
Jan. 4	Coastal Home	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Curtis Baptist	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 13	Faith Christian	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Providence Class.	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	Coastal Home	Home	3 and 4:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Mead Hall	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Faith Christian	Away	6 and 7:00 p.m.
Jan. 28	Briarwood Acad.	Away	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	John Hancock	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 1	Aquinas	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Dennis McBride. Girls, Mary Cummings.

Aquinas

Dec. 13	West Laurens	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	GMC	Away	3:30 and 5p.m.
Dec. 17	Harlem	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	GMC	Home	4 and 5:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	Lake Oconee Aca.	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 3	Cross Creek	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	ARC	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Baldwin	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Westside	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	Harlem	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Howard	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Hephzibah	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	West Laurens	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Westside	Away	6 and 7:00 p.m.
Jan. 31	Cross Creek	Home	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Aquinas (Girls)	Home	6:00 p.m.
Feb. 1	Alleluia	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	ARC	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Baldwin	Home	6:00 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Patrick Green. Girls, Luke Tambon.

Augusta Christian

Dec. 13	Lakeside (B)	Home	7 p.m.
Dec. 13	Wilson Hall (G)	Away	7 p.m.
Dec. 14	Thomson (B)	Home	5 p.m.
Dec. 14	Orange. Prep (G)	Away	TBA
Dec. 20	Silver Bluff (B)	Home	6 p.m.
Dec. 20	S. Florence (G)	Home	4 p.m.
Dec. 27	Waihalia (G)	Home	2:30 p.m.
Dec. 28	Indian Land (G)	Home	10 a.m.
Dec. 30	W. Ashley	Home	12:30, 1:45 p.m.
Jan. 3	Alleluia (G)	Home	6 p.m.
Jan. 4	First Baptist	Home	1 and 2:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	NCA	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 9	Ben Lippen	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Fox Creek	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Hammond	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 16	Heathwood Hall	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	NCA	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Cardinal Newman	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Heathwood Hall	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Hammond	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Ben Lippen	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Cardinal Newman	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coach: Boys, Brian Slade. Girls, Charles Cooper.

Augusta Prep

Dec. 6	Westminster Aug.	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 10	Fox Creek	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 13	Pinewood Christ.	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Thomas Jefferson	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 27	Augusta Eagles	Home	1:30 and 3 p.m.
Dec. 28	Alleluia	Home	1:30 and 3 p.m.
Dec. 28	Laney	Away	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 3	Pinewood Christ.	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	Piedmont Acad.	Home	Noon, 1:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Mons. Donovan	Away	7 p.m.
Jan. 11	Gatewood	Away	1 and 2:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Ed. Burke Acad.	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 16	Westminster Aug.	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	West. Christian	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Briarwood	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Mons. Donovan	Home	7 p.m.
Jan. 25	Heathwood Hall	Away	1:30 and 3 p.m.
Jan. 28	Ed. Burke Acad.	Away	4:30 and 6 p.m.
Jan. 30	Thomas Jeff. Acad.	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	West. Christian	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Briarwood	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coach: Boys, Samuel Gruber. Girls, Myriah Keogh.

Hoops schedules

Burke County

Dec. 14	Jenkins County	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Evans	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	South Aiken (B)	Home	1:30pm
Dec. 21	Greenbrier (G)	Away	2:30pm
Dec. 27	Tattnall Co. (G)	Home	4:00pm
Dec. 27	Paxon (B)	Home	5:30pm
Dec. 28	Vidalia (G)	Away	7:00pm
Dec. 28	Wayne Co. (B)	Home	TBA
Jan. 4	East Jackson	Away	4 and 5:30pm
Jan. 7	Glenn Hills	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Thomson	Home	6 and 7:30pm
Jan. 11	Screven Co.	Away	3 and 4:30pm
Jan. 14	Josey	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Butler	Home	6 and 7:30pm
Jan. 18	Screven Co.	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Laney	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Glenn Hills	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 25	Jenkins Co.	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Thomson	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Josey	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Butler	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Laney	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Purvis Dukes. Girls, Leslie Lawrence.

Butler

Dec. 17	Grovetown	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	Independence	Away	6:30 p.m.
Dec. 26	Campbell	Home	12:30 p.m.
Dec. 27	Dalton	Home	12:30 p.m.
Dec. 28	Cherokee	Home	12:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	Keenan	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Josey	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Glenn Hills	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Laney	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Burke County	Away	7 and 8:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Thomson	Away	7 and 8:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Josey	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Glenn Hills	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Laney	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Burke County	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Thomson	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Chaz Clark. Girls, Eboni Fields.

Cross Creek

Dec. 13	Baldwin	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	Westside	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Howard	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Howard	Away	6:00 p.m.
Dec. 26	Fort Dorchester	Home	6 and 4:00 p.m.
Dec. 27	Gaffney (Girls)	Home	TBA
Dec. 28	Clover (Girls)	Home	5:00 p.m.
Dec. 30	TBA (Girls)	TBA	TBA
Jan. 3	Aquinas	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	West Laurens	Away	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Harlem	Home	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Hepzibah	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	ARC	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Baldwin	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Westside	Away	6 and 7:00 p.m.
Jan. 28	Howard	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Aquinas	Away	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Aquinas (Girls)	Home	6:00 p.m.
Feb. 4	West Laurens	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Harlem (Girls)	Away	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Harlem	Home	6:00 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Lawrence Kelly. Girls, Tracey Flowers.

Evans

Dec. 13	Laney	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Chesterfield (B)	Home	4 p.m.
Dec. 17	Laney	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Burke County	Home	3:30 and 5 p.m.
Dec. 26-28	Xmas Tourn. (G)	TBA	TBA
Dec. 30	Midland Vall. (B)	Away	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Greenbrier	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Lakeside	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Effingham County	Home	5 and 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Greenbrier	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 20	TBA (B)	TBA	TBA
Jan. 21	Lakeside	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Effingham County	Away	5 and 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Greenbrier	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Lakeside	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 04	Effingham County	Home	5 and 6:30 p.m.

Coach: Boys, Kevin Musick. Girls, Kevin Kenny.

Fox Creek

Dec. 13	ALA	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Grovetown	Away	8:00 p.m.
Dec. 17	ALA	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 19	Aiken	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	Saluda (Girls)	Away	1:00 p.m.
Dec. 21	Greenbrier	Home	4:00 p.m.
Dec. 23	TBA (Girls)	TBA	TBA
Dec. 26	Hiram	Home	7:00 p.m.
Dec. 27	TBA	TBA	TBA
Dec. 28	TBA	TBA	TBA
Jan. 4	Harlem	Home	2:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Mid- Carolina	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Augusta Christian	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 13	McCormick	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	WSAHAS	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Newberry	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Keenan	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Swansea	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Silver Bluff	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Newberry	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Keenan	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 11	Swansea	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 13	Silver Bluff	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Tim Butler. Girls, Aaron Ray.

Glenn Hills

Dec. 13	Hancock Central	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	Statesboro (B)	Away	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Burke County	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Butler	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	Hancock Central	Home	2 and 3:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Thomson	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Laney	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Josey	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Burke County	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Butler	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Thomson	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Laney	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Josey	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coach: Girls, George Dukes. Boys, William Cunningham.

Hoops schedules

Greenbrier

Dec. 13	Westside (G)	Home	6 p.m.
Dec. 13	Thomson (Boys)	Home	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Grovetown (G)	Away	6 p.m.
Dec. 20	Brunswick (G)	Home	6:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	South Aiken (B)	Home	8 p.m.
Dec. 21	Burke County (G)	Home	2:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	Fox Creek (B)	Home	4 p.m.
Jan. 3	Silver Buff (G)	Away	6 p.m.
Jan. 4	South Florence (B)	Home	1 p.m.
Jan. 7	Evans	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 8	Grovetown	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	ECHS	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	TBH (B)	TBH	TBH
Jan. 14	Lakeside	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Evans	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	ECHS	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Lakeside	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Evans	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	ECHS	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Lakeside	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Demetrius Howard. Girls, Travis Keels.

Grovetown

Dec. 13	Grayson	Home	4 and 8:00 p.m.
Dec. 14	Greenbrier (Girls)	Home	6:00 p.m.
Dec. 14	Fox Creek	Home	8:00 p.m.
Dec. 17	Butler	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Warner Robins	Away	7:00 p.m.
Dec. 21	Warner Robins (G)	Away	10:00 a.m.
Dec. 30	TBA	TBA	TBA
Jan. 4	TBA	TBA	TBA
Jan. 7	Rockdale	Away	6:00 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 8	Greenbrier	Home	6:00 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Newton	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Archer	Away	5 and 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 20	Calvary Christian	Home	12:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Heritage	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	South Gwinnett	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Grayson	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Rockdale County	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Newton	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Darren Douglas. Girls, Antwann Glover.

Harlem

Dec. 12	Howard	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 16	Lincoln Co. (B)	Home	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	Aquinas	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	West Laurens (B)	Away	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 3	Hephzibah	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	Fox Creek (B)	Home	2:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Cross Creek	Away	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	ARC	Home	6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	Aquinas	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Baldwin	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Westside	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 20	TBA	Home	TBA
Jan. 21	Howard	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	West Laurens	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Hephzibah	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Lincoln Co. (B)	Away	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Cross Creek	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Jeffrey Williams. Girls, Robert Leslie, Leigh Aplin.

Hephzibah

Dec. 13	ARC	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Lincoln Co.	Home	3:30 and 5 p.m.
Dec. 17	West Laurens	Away	5 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Lakeside	Home	5 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Dec. 27	Josey	Home	4:30 p.m.
Jan. 3	Harlem	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	Westside	Home	2 and 3:30 p.m.
Jan. 6	Baldwin	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Howard	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Cross Creek	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Aquinas	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	Laney	Away	3:30 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	ARC	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	West Laurens	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 25	Lincoln Co.	Away	5 and 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Burke County	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Thomson	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Baldwin	Away	6 and 7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Harlem	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Westside	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Billterrence Streetman. Girls, Angela Beard Anderson.

Josey

Dec. 7	Wash. Wilkes	Home	5 p.m.
Dec. 13	Morgan County	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Lakeside	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	Brookland Cayce	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	W. Forsyth (Girls)	McEachern	3:30 p.m.
Dec. 26	Laney Tourney	Laney	TBA
Dec. 27	Laney Tourney	Laney	TBA
Dec. 28	Laney Tourney	Laney	TBA
Jan. 3	Wash. Wilk. (Boys)	Away	TBA
Jan. 4	Border Bash (Girls)	Fox Creek	TBA
Jan. 4	Midland Valley	Home	5 p.m.
Jan. 7	Butler	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Laney	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Burke County	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Thomson	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	Hephzibah	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 20	MLK Tourney	Cross Creek	TBA
Jan. 21	Glenn Hills	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Butler	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Laney	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Burke County	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Thomson	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Glenn Hills	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coach: Boys, Malique Gibbons. Girls, Nichelle Chapman.

Lakeside

Dec. 13	Augusta Christian	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Josey	Home	2 and 3:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Hephzibah	Away	5 and 7 p.m.
Dec. 26	Indian Land	Home	TBA
Dec. 27	Wash. Co.	Home	4:30 and 6 p.m.
Dec. 28	TBA	TBA	TBA
Dec. 29	TBA	TBA	TBA
Jan. 4	Nation Ford (G)	Home	4 p.m.
Jan. 4	N. Augusta (B)	Home	TBA
Jan. 7	Effingham Co.	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Evans	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Greenbrier	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Effingham Co.	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 20	TBA (G)	TBA	TBA
Jan. 21	Evans	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Greenbrier	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Effingham Co.	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Evans	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Greenbrier	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Marcus Diggs. Girls, Matt Scott.

Hoops schedules

Laney

Dec. 7	Hephzibah	Home	5 p.m.
Dec. 10	Putnam County	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 13	Evans	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	Evans	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	Brookland Cayce	Home	5:30, 6, 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Midland Valley	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 26	S. Aiken (Girls)	Home	4:30 p.m.
Dec. 27	Wash. Co.	Home	4:30 and 6 p.m.
Dec. 28	Mid. Valley (Girls)	Home	2 p.m.
Dec. 28	Josey (B)	Home	8 p.m.
Jan. 7	Thomson	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Josey	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Butler	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Glenn Hills	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	Hephzibah	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Burke County	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Thomson	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Josey	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Butler	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Glenn Hills	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Burke County	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Silver Bluff

Dec. 13	Bamberg-Ehrhardt	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	Strom Thurmond	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 18	Horse Creek	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	North (G) / Augusta Chr. (B)	Home	5 and 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	Mauldin (G)	Home	11:30 a.m.
Dec. 26-30	Xmas Tourney (B)	TBA	TBA
Jan. 3	Greenbrier (G)	Home	6:00 p.m.
Jan. 4	Barnwell	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Bamber-Ehrhardt	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Strom Thurmond	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Newberry	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Keenan	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Swansea	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 23	Barnwell	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Fox Creek	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Newberry	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Keenan	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Swansea	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 13	Fox Creek	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coach: Boys, Michael Prandy. Girls, CaraLynn Williams.

Midland Valley

Dec. 6	Strom Thurmond	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 7	Glenn Hills	Away	Noon, 1:30, 3 p.m.
Dec. 10	Greenwood	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 13	Gray Collegiate	Away	6 and 8 p.m.
Dec. 17	Brookland Cayce	Home	5:30, 6, 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 19	Strom Thurmond	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Laney	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 28	Laney	Away	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 30	Evans	Home	5 and 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	Josey	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Airport	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Gilbert	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Aiken	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	South Aiken	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	MLK Event	Rock Hill	TBA
Jan. 21	N. Augusta	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Gray Collegiate	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Brookland Cayce	Away	5, 6, 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Airport	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Gilbert	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Aiken	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 10	South Aiken	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 12	N. Augusta	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coach: Boys, Dave Corder. Girls, Bianca Woodard.

South Aiken

Dec. 13	Brookland-Cayce	Away	6 and 7:30pm
Dec. 17	Airport	Home	6 and 7:30pm
Dec. 20	Greenbrier (B)	Home	8:00pm
Dec. 21	Burke Co. (B)	Home	1:30pm
Dec. 26	Laney (G)	Home	6:00pm
Dec.27	Richland NE (B)	Home	6:00pm
Dec. 27	ARC (G)	Home	TBA
Dec. 28	Westwood	Home	TBA
Dec. 28	Josey	Home	TBA
Jan. 7	Gilbert	Away	6 and 7:30pm
Jan. 10	North Augusta	Away	6 and 7:30pm
Jan. 14	Gray Academy	Home	6 and 7:30pm
Jan. 15	Strom Thurmond	Home	6 and 7:30pm
Jan. 17	Midland Valley (B)	Home	7:30pm
Jan. 21	Aiken	Away	6 and 7:30pm
Jan. 24	Brookland-Cayce	Home	6 and 7:30pm
Jan. 28	Airport	Away	6 and 7:30pm
Jan. 31	Gilbert	Home	6 and 7:30pm
Feb. 4	North Augusta	Home	6 and 7:30pm
Feb. 7	Gray Academy	Away	6 and 7:30pm
Feb. 10	Midland Valley	Away	6 and 7:30pm
Feb. 12	Aiken	Home	6 and 7:30pm

Coaches: Boys, Sam McDowell. Girls, Russell Felton Sr.

North Augusta

Dec. 13	Gilbert	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Powersville	Home	1:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	GCA	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Aiken	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	South Aiken	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Airport	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	BCHS	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Midland Valley	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Gilbert	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	GCA	Away	7 and 8:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Aiken	Home	7 and 8:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	South Aiken	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Airport	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 10	BCHS	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 12	Midland valley	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coach: Boys, Tony Harrell. Girls, Al Young.

Thomson

Dec. 13	Greenbrier	Home	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	ACHS	Home	5:00 p.m.
Dec. 17	Twiggs County	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 27	Chestatee	Home	TBA.
Dec. 28	South Atlanta	Home	1:00 p.m.
Jan. 3	Warren county	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Laney	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Burke County	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Butler	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Laney	Away	7 and 8:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Burke County	Home	7 and 8:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Butler	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Micheal Thomas. Girls, Marquel Gibbons.

Hoops schedules

Westminster of Augusta

Dec. 10	Heathwood Hall	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 13	Mead Hall	Away	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Pace	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	Horse Creek Acad.	Away	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 19	Weber	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 27	Aug. Prep Tourney	Away	TBA
Dec. 28	Aug. Prep Tourney	Away	TBA
Jan. 4	Oviedo (Boys)	Away	4 p.m.
Jan. 7	Pinewood Christ.	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Frederica Acad.	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 16	Augusta Prep	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	St. Andrews	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Pinewood Christ.	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Bulloch Acad.	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 27	Providence	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Frederica Acad.	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Bulloch Acad.	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 6	Providence	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	St. Andrews	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coach: Boys, Keenan Johnson. Girls, Andrew Spurlock.

Westside

Dec. 13	Greenbrier (B)	Away	6 p.m.
Dec. 14	McEachern	Home	3 p.m.
Dec. 17	Cross Creek	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	ARC	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 26	WCHS (Girls)	Home	4:30
Jan. 3	Baldwin	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	Hephzibah	Away	2 and 3:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Howard	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Aquinas	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	West Laurens	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Harlem	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Cross Creek	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	ARC	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Baldwin	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	Hephzibah	Home	6 and 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Howard	Away	6 and 7:30 p.m.

Coaches: Boys, Jerry Hunter. Girls, Courtney Johnson.

College

USC Aiken men

Dec. 14	Fayetteville St.	Home	4 p.m.
Dec. 19	Francis Marion	Away	6 p.m.
Jan. 1	Columbia Intl.	Home	3:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	Georgia College	Home	3:30 p.m.
Jan. 8	Flagler	Away	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	Augusta	Home	3:30 p.m.
Jan. 15	Georgia SW	Home	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	Columbus St.	Away	3:30 p.m.
Jan. 22	USC Beaufort	Home	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 25	Clayton St.	Home	3:30 p.m.
Jan. 29	North Georgia	Away	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 1	Georgia College	Away	3:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	Flagler	Home	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 8	Augusta	Away	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 12	Georgia SW	Away	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 15	Columbus St.	Home	3:30 p.m.
Feb. 19	USC Beaufort	Away	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 22	Clayton St.	Away	3:30 p.m.
Feb. 26	North Georgia	Home	7:30 p.m.
Mar. 1	Lander	Home	7:30 p.m.
Mar. 5	Peach Belt Tourney	TBA	TBA
Mar. 8	PBC Tourney	TBA	TBA
Mar. 9	PBC Tourney	TBA	TBA

Coach: Mark Vanderslice.

USC Aiken women

Dec. 14	Livingstone	Home	2:00 p.m.
Dec. 19	Francis Marion	Home	1:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	Belmont abbey	Away	2:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	Georgia college	Home	1:30 p.m.
Jan. 8	Flagler	Away	3:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	Augusta	Home	1:30 p.m.
Jan. 15	Southwestern	Home	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	Columbus state	Away	1:30 p.m.
Jan. 22	USCB	Home	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 25	Clayton state	Home	1:30 p.m.
Jan. 29	North Georgia	Away	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 1	Georgia college	Away	1:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	Flagler	Home	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 8	Augusta	Away	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 12	Southwestern	Away	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 15	Columbus state	Home	1:30 p.m.
Feb. 19	USCB	Away	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 22	Clayton State	Away	1:30 p.m.
Feb. 26	North Georgia	Home	5:30 p.m.
Mar. 1	Lander	Home	5:30 p.m.

Coach: Mark Miller.

GARRET SILER



(photo by Paula Toole)

On Dec. 5, Augusta University retired the jersey of Jaguar center Garret Siler, who helped lead the Jaguars to the NCAA Division II national championship game in 2008 and would go on to play for the Phoenix Suns in the NBA. He followed that with a stint in China playing professionally before blowing out his knee. Siler is now an assistant coach for AU.

Jaguar ball



Zyere Edwards drives for the Jaguars. (photo by Paula Toole)



AU point guard John St. Germain III does a finger roll against Paine College. (photo by Paula Toole)



Westside junior guard Dontrell Jackson (5) goes in for a layup in an early-season game against Aquinas. (photo by Chris Rickerson)

Westside moves up

By Chris Rickerson

After three consecutive AA Georgia High School Basketball State Championship wins, Westside moved up to 3A this season and looks to continue their winning ways.

Not only did Westside win three straight AA titles, the Patriots dominated their opponents the last few years, winning 81 games and only losing 14 in three seasons. 72 of those 81 wins were by double digits and 48 were by 20 plus points. The Patriots won the 2A Georgia High School Association basketball state championship last season 64-29 over Toombs County.

“The only way to see what you’re made of is to play some top contenders,” said Westside Coach Jerry Hunter. “Whether they are 5A, 6A, 3A or whatever the case may be, you want to play somebody that puts you to the test.”

While there are a lot of similarities no matter what division you play in, you can see some differences, according to Coach Hunter.

“You see a little more size, the toughness is pretty much the same, but a little more size, so we are making that adjustment,” he said.

Westside has hopes to continue their dominance in AAA, but the Patriots do have almost an entirely different roster than last season.

“The ingredients this season for us is definitely different, we had five starters leave as four went to school and another transferred,” said Hunter.

(Continued on Page 35)



Westside's Jerry Hunter knows a four-peat will be tough since the Patriots moved up a classification. (photo by Chris Rickerson)

Westside ,

Demarco Middleton, Lavonta Ivery, Bobby Blackwell and Xavier Goss were four of the key seniors from last season who have graduated. Javan Webb, who was a starting forward last year for Westside, transferred to Gray Collegiate Academy. Webb is also the younger brother of former Boise State star and Brooklyn Nets forward James Webb III.

“A lot of the guys now experienced with the best teacher and you can’t substitute for experience,” Hunter said. “I feel like if we get the necessary experiences whether they are wins or losses, then we can be one of those top 32 teams.”

The Patriots are now led by senior Jarius Adkinson, senior Aldrion Jones, senior Kenaz Henley, senior Zackery McFadden, junior Dontrell Jackson, junior Keori Atwell and others. Jackson has been the leading scorer on the team this season, which includes a 36-point game against Tampa Catholic on Nov. 30.

“The guys who left are irreplaceable, but at the same time we expect a lot out of Keori Atwell, Kenaz Henley, Aldrion Jones, Zachary McFadden, and others. We just pulled up Derek Harris from JV,” Hunter said. “We need to get a little tougher inside. I think this is a pretty competitive region with Cross Creek and Cedar Grove, but I think we will be okay. We just have to adjust.”

Hunter says he does make sure that he reminds his players despite Westside having much success the last few seasons, it is a new season and they have to continue to get better.



Defense and rebounding are keys for Westside.



Westside senior guard Kenaz Henley is a floor leader for Patriot Coach Jerry Hunter. (photos by Chris Rickerson)

Patriot games,

“The program speaks for itself,” Hunter said. “I always tell the guys we have a three-time state championship program, but this is not a three-time state championship team.”

Westside has begun the 2024-25 season without one of their top players in Jarious Adkinson due to an injury, but he is projected to come back after the new year.

“He is a key guy for us. He scores the ball well, defends well, protects the rim and just does so much,” Hunter said. “Right now, he is slated to come back probably early January, but we are not rushing it because he is going to play on somebody’s college team, and that is the most important thing.”

After winning their first two games of the 2024-25 season, the Patriots lost four games straight before ending the losing stretch with a win against Aquinas on Dec. 3.

“We still got so much to learn and losses become lessons and I always tell the guys, the most important thing is getting better,” Hunter said. “We did get better in a few areas tonight and it feels great to get the win, but we still have a long way to go.”

Westside was in the AAA Division nine years ago and made a run before losing in the Elite Eight to Cedar Grove during the 2015-16 playoffs.

Sandy Creek and Cross Creek have been the two dominant AAA teams the last few seasons. Sandy Creek is the reigning AAA state champion as they have won the last two titles. Cross Creek was the titleholder before Sandy Creek, winning the AAA state title during the 20-21 and 21-22 seasons.

Westside’s focus during their previous championship runs was rebounding and limiting second-chance points. Hunter spoke on what the main game plan will be for this season and what they must improve on after the early slow start to begin the year.

“Protecting the paint, rebounding and limiting second chance shots are key,” Hunter said. “One thing we are having a problem with now is perimeter defense, so we are trying to keep teams out of the paint and force them in to lower percentage shots.”

After losing one of the top rebounders in the state in Khalon Hudson two seasons ago, Hunter has emphasized rebounding as a team and whole offense and whole defense each year.

“Rebounding is definitely important, but at the same time playing together with whole offense and whole defense,” he said.

While Westside’s past few seasons have ended in historic title wins, a new journey has begun and it remains to be seen if the Patriots’ success will continue.



Forward Demitri Gardner is AU's top scorer. (photo by Paula Toole))

For Demitri Gardner, patience pays off

By Justin Gray

The Augusta men are led by Demitri Gardner, he has developed into a star, but it wasn't always that way.

Gardner didn't just wake up one day as a top player in the Peach Belt Conference and average 22 points per game, it took a lot of work to get to this place.

When he came in as a freshman in 2021-22, he redshirted on AU's national runner-up team, sitting behind star players such as Miguel Arnold and Troy Cracknell.

In his redshirt freshman season, he started to work his way into the rotation, averaging 11 minutes per game and just 2.6 points per game, but still had to see behind the veterans most of the time.

With a big class graduating, Gardner knew he would have a shot at being a key piece to the team in his sophomore season, but he knew he had to improve to do so.

The AU shooting guard went to work over the summer in his hometown of Winchester, Va., and came back an entirely different player.

There wasn't much buzz about it until he came out against Division I Georgia Southern in an exhibition and led the Jaguars to a 82-77 win with 17 points on 70-percent shooting.

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Demitri Gardner is driven to succeed. (photos by Paula Toole and Lydia Williams)

Gardner, ...

That's when Coach Dip Metress and his staff realized Gardner had become a star. The shooting guard helped Augusta to a 17-12 record and averaged 17.5 points per game as well as a 22 minute increase, averaging 33 per game. He also added a second-team all-PBC accolade to his collection, the only member from the Jags to be named to a team.

Gardner's a humble, soft-spoken guy and if you ask him about his game, he's going to tell you the same thing everytime and it's no secret.

"I stick to a routine, and get in the gym everyday," says Gardner.

Metress will tell you he's one of the hardest working kids he's ever coached and how important it is to have guys who lead by example.

Fast forward now to his Junior season, the entire narrative around him has changed. In their first practice of the season, one of his teammates left him open for a three-pointer and he knocked it down.

Metress then yelled out at his defensive players, "There's one guy in this gym that I wouldn't leave open, Meech, he is a shooter, I never thought I would say that." It's hard to get that kind of praise from one of the best in the game, but that's how good Gardner has gotten his game to.

"Honestly, it definitely feels good, but it's kinda like I appreciate it, but I still have a long way to go to get where I want to be personally, in the game of basketball," said Gardner regarding the compliment from Metress on "The Sports Squad" podcast hosted by AU communication students.

Eight games into the season and he is already topping what he did last season and has already set a career-high in points with 38 against Chowan University. He has also recorded two double-doubles this season, his first two of his career.

Gardner looks poised to make a run at PBC player of the year if he continues at his current pace and will try to lead the Jags back to the postseason. A story like Gardner's needs to be told in this day and age with all of the athletes who transfer elsewhere when things don't go their way. "Meech" had to wait for his day in the sun.



Mardrez McBride (13) playing guard for the Georgia Bulldogs. (photo by Tony Walsh/UGa. Athletics)

Butler's McBride beat the odds

By Denaisha Cain

Many athletes have a dream of playing in the professional world, but the odds remain very low that even an outstanding high school player will make it to the pros. Indeed, less than 2 percent of NCAA athletes go off to play sports professionally.

Mardrez “Drez” McBride’s rise is a story of grit, resilience and a refusal to let circumstances define his potential. His journey—from Augusta’s high school courts to the University of Georgia to the international professional stage—is nothing short of inspiring.

After suffering an injury playing football in middle school, McBride found himself gravitating more toward basketball. While injuries often spell setbacks, for McBride, it was a turning point. During his time playing Amateur Athletic Union basketball, he found himself playing against some of the country’s top players. That’s when he realized he had the potential to play at a higher level.

“I doubted myself a lot throughout my career; coaches weren’t really coming down to Augusta unless it was the Peach Jam,” said McBride.

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Mardrez McBride spent two seasons at North Texas, starting in 60 games. (photo by UNT Athletics)

McBride, ...

After graduating from Butler High School in 2018, where he averaged 18.7 points and 6.1 rebounds per game as a senior, McBride had not yet caught the attention of NCAA Division I programs. Instead of giving up, he took the junior college route, a decision that would shape his career. JUCO programs are known as the ultimate proving grounds, offering athletes who may have been overlooked a second chance to show their worth.

McBride, a 6-foot-2 guard, started his college career at McCook College in western Nebraska—a very long way from Augusta. Adjusting to life far from home and in a vastly different environment was tough, but McBride thrived. In his freshman season, he averaged 14.1 points and 4.3 rebounds per game. Beyond the stats, he displayed leadership and reliability.

From there, he transferred to USC Salkehatchie in Allendale, S.C. It was at Salkehatchie that McBride's game began to evolve. His performances caught the attention of Division I scouts,

In 2020, McBride achieved what many young basketball players dream of: A spot on an NCAA Division I roster. He joined the University of North Texas, where he immediately made an impact. During his first season, he started all 28 games, helping UNT to their first-ever NCAA Tournament win.

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Mardrez McBride played one season at Georgia, 2022-23, and started 20 games for the Bulldogs, hitting five 3-pointers in back-to-back games. (photo by Rob Davis/UGa. Athletics)

McBride,

McBride's journey through the collegiate ranks showcased not just his talent but also his adaptability and mental toughness. It's one thing to play at a high level; it's another to do so consistently in different systems and under different coaches.

The Augusta native played professionally in Finland in 2023-24 for Kipina Aankoski, where he averaged 17 points per game. That was in the top division of Finnish pro hoops. Then he played for the Fujian China Eagles, scoring 32 points in his debut. Now he's looking to play in Europe again or getting a chance in the G League.

No matter where he ends up, McBride's basketball journey reminds us that no dream is too big and no challenge too great for those willing to put in the work.

College schedules

Augusta University men

Dec. 12	Emmanuel	Away	1 p.m.
Dec. 18	USC Beaufort	Home	11 a.m.
Dec. 21	Converse	Away	4 p.m.
Jan. 4	Columbus State	Home	3:30 p.m.
Jan. 8	Clayton State	Away	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	USC Aiken	Away	3:30 p.m.
Jan. 15	Flagler	Home	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	Ga. Southwestern	Home	9 p.m.
Jan. 22	Lander	Away	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 25	North Georgia	Away	3:30 p.m.
Jan. 29	Georgia College	Home	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 1	Columbus State	Away	3:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	Clayton State	Home	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 12	Flagler	Away	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 15	Ga. Southwestern	Away	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 19	Lander	Home	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 22	North Georgia	Home	3:30 p.m.
Feb. 26	Georgia College	Away	7:30 p.m.
March 1	USC Beaufort	Away	3:30 p.m.
March 5-9	Peach Belt Tourney	TBA	TBA

Coach: Dip Metress.

Augusta University women

Dec. 13	Livingstone	Away	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 18	USC Beaufort	Home	11 a.m.
Dec. 22	Benedict College	Away	1 p.m.
Jan. 1	Emmanuel	Home	4 p.m.
Jan. 4	Columbus State	Home	1:30 p.m.
Jan. 8	Clayton State	Away	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	USC Aiken	Away	1:30 p.m.
Jan. 15	Flagler	Home	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	Ga. Southwestern	Home	7 p.m.
Jan. 22	Lander	Away	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 25	North Georgia	Away	1:30 p.m.
Jan. 29	Georgia College	Home	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 1	Columbus State	Away	1:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	Clayton State	Home	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 12	Flagler	Away	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 15	Ga. Southwestern	Away	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 19	Lander	Home	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 22	North Georgia	Home	1:30 p.m.
Feb. 26	Georgia College	Away	5:30 p.m.
March 1	USC Beaufort	Away	1:30 p.m.
March 5-8	Peach Belt Tourney	TBA	TBA

Coach: Celeste Stewart.

College schedules

Paine College men

Dec. 13	Fort Valley State	Away	7 p.m.
Jan. 4	Virginia-Lynchburg	Away	4 p.m.
Jan. 17	Ft. Lauderdale	Away	7 p.m.
Jan. 20	Johnson & Wales	Away	4 p.m.
Jan. 23	Clinton College	Away	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 3	Ft. Lauderdale	Home	7 p.m.
Feb. 8	Virginia-Lynchburg	Home	4 p.m.
Feb.12	Carolina Univ.	Home	7 p.m.
Feb. 15	Trinity Baptist	Home	4 p.m.
Feb. 18	Johnson & Wales	Home	7 p.m.
Feb. 22	North Georgia	Home	3:30 p.m.
Feb. 26	Georgia College	Away	7:30 p.m.
March 1	USC Beaufort	Away	3:30 p.m.

Coach: Melvin Marshall.

Paine College women

Dec. 12	Columbia College	Home	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 16	Clafin	Home	2 p.m.
Dec. 31	Benedict	Home	2 p.m.
Jan. 6	Toccoa Falls	Away	5 p.m.
Jan. 11	Johnson & Wales	Away	6 p.m.
Jan. 23	Clinton College	Away	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 25	Ft. Lauderdale	Home	2 p.m.
Jan. 27	Carolina Univ.	Home	5 p.m.
Jan. 30	Voorhees	Away	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	Toccoa Falls	Home	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 8	Regent Univ.	Home	2 p.m.
Feb.12	Carolina Univ.	Away	5 p.m.
Feb. 15	Trinity Baptist	Home	2 p.m.
Feb. 18	Voorhees	Home	5:30 p.m.

Coach: Kisha Lucette.

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Augusta University freshman guard TJ Baker (12) lets fly a jump shot from the elbow against Paine College. (photo by Lydia Williams)