

# Sports

## Women's basketball looks to improve on last season

by Richard Bush  
Sports Editor

"We deserve to win" is the theme for the Lady Tornados this season. Head Coach Shannon Reid along with assistant Terrence Baxter has installed into the tornados head to play every game as if they deserve to win.

Lady Tornados finished the season 6-21 last year and 0-16 in the South Atlantic Conference. With the five freshmen Katelynne Poole, Alyssa Cutshaw, Aheley Watkins, Tempestt Mack and Alexis Atkins adding more depth to the bench and Division 1 transfer Brianna Worley making her presence known in the post, the Tornados look to make a big improvement this season.

Lead by Pre-Season 2nd team all conference Senior Samantha Winn, who averaged 16 points and 8 rebounds per game last year. She has proven to be a respected leader and expected to put the team on her back with her aggressive style of play.

Along with Junior captain Amanda Whitaker averaging 10 points and 7 rebounds a game last year is looking to be more of a scorer this season.

With the improvement of the "Sophomore Tri-Pod" Anna Schlobohm, Holli Flippo and Lindsay Brendle, the Tornados push forward to making the team goals of being at least .500 and making the SAC tournament.

With this years team having only 2 seniors, Sam Winn and Millie Wharton. Coach Reid made it clear that this season is very meaningful to the players and for the future of the program.

"This program has had frequent changes in coach's and players. It is important that the seniors leave on a good note and feel positive about what they have done for the

program."

With that being said by Coach Reid, it shows not only the importance of winning and changing the program, but the type of relationship her along with her coaching staff have with the players.

One thing Reid is stoked about is returning 80 percent of last year's team. "With the growth and maturity of the team, practice has become less stressful for my coaching staff and I. It's also easier for the players now, because the older girls our able to help the younger ones get through it," Reid stated.

Having probably the youngest coaching staff in the SAC, the player/coach relationship is real good and they like to consider themselves as a family.

"We have a great group of girls. They make the job so much fun and they are just a joy to be around. I really consider them along with my staff as my family," Reid went on to say.

Elite assistant coach Terrence Baxter, who went to Pfeiffer University with Coach Reid, made the transaction from coaching men's basketball over to women's basketball.

In charge of recruiting and considered the "Defensive Coordinator" of the team, Baxter has done a great job building trustworthy relationships with the players and is a major asset to the program.

Jessica Blanford, a former All-Conference player at Mars Hill just a year ago, adds a familiar face to the players and the knowledge of what it takes to be successful in this league.

Last season being Reid's first year with the Lady Tornados, she didn't really know what to expect and very aware that it would be a big difference from NAIA to Division to while playing in one of the toughest leagues, the SAC.



photo courtesy BC SID

"I knew that it would take hard work from the coaching staff to try to rebuild a program filled with younger players. With the players buying into our coaching system and constantly working hard, it makes the job that much easier." Reid went on to say that, "There are three things I often tell them. If we learn to work hard, and learn to compete then we will win."

Last season the ladies played every game with effort just to hang in the game and to keep up with the other teams. With the effort of the players and the great schemes and strategies of the coach's, the players will be competing to win this season.

Going 0-16 last season in the conference, they continue to work hard and display great effort. That just shows a lot about the character of the players on the team.

Among all that, the team is hungry for their first win in the SAC, that makes the dangerous to a lot of their opponents.

Reid added, "It is actually kind of sad that all people worry about is the win and lose column. This is a great group of girls that work hard everyday at practice, but those on the outside don't get to see that type of stuff."

"In the past we may have lost on the court, but the heart and effort the girls put out in practice and during off season is a moral victory for us."

When asked, "What is your ultimate plan for this program?" With an ocean of confidence in her eyes, she replied, "SAC

championship and having winning seasons year after year."

"Finishing top 5 in this conference is always good.

I want us to be able to compete with the best. If we leave this program better than how it was when found, then it all will be considered a success."

People say it takes 1000 days to rebuild a program, which is four years. With the dedication and hard work of Reid and her coaching staff, there is no doubt in my mind that it will happen before then.

I want us to be able to compete with the best. If we leave this program better than how it was when found, then it all will be considered a success.