

FEATURES

WSSU Grad Lady Rams Assistant Coach

By TAKESHA PATTERSON
Feature Writer

"Anybody can achieve anything if they set their mind to it," says Tracey Bobbitt, a 1993 graduate of Winston-Salem State University where she is the assistant coach of the Lady Rams Basketball Team and the head coach of the Women's Volleyball Team.

Bobbitt, a 25-year-old native of Durham, North Carolina, feels that phrase has kept her motivated. "If you know what you want to do you have to put your priorities together," she said. "I know what I want to do and I'm doing it, it's all about getting your priorities straight."

For Bobbitt, getting her priorities straight was not an easy task. She's known that she wanted to be basketball coach since her sophomore year in college but the transition from Tracey Bobbitt the student to Tracey Bobbitt the coach has not been easy.

"You don't see me at the parties anymore. It took a lot of growing up. Certain things that I want to do I don't do because I want to be respected," said Bobbitt with sincerity.

The respect of Bobbitt's former basketball coach, Stenson Conely is what got her where she is today. Two years ago Bobbitt was a student assistant Basketball coach with hopes of becoming head coach. "I always had ideas and tried to figure out what I would do in certain situations," said Bobbitt. "Coach Conely knew that I was serious about coaching. He saw good things in me so after I graduated he offered me a job as assistant basketball coach and I accepted."

Coach Conely was not the only person who saw good things in Bobbitt. Albert

Roseboro, the athletic director at WSSU, also saw good things in Bobbitt.

"Tracey Bobbitt is a very talented, dependable and structured young lady," said Roseboro. "I first noticed her athletic talent in my advanced tennis class. She has

the ability to communicate with young people and that's what it takes to be a good coach. I am certain that she will become one of the outstanding coaches in our conference."

Bobbitt's promotion to assistant basketball coach may have placed her on her goal achieving ladder but her position as head volleyball coach came as a surprise. "I saw something available so I took the opportunity," said Bobbitt. "I hadn't played

volleyball since the eighth grade and it was a real challenge coaching a sport that I had no experience with," she said.

The Women's Volleyball Team finished 8-12 this year and many of Bobbitt's players have very positive things to say about the coach who took them under her wings. "Tracey Bobbitt is a diverse and unique person," said volleyball captain, Joelle Davis. "Tracey took on a lot of responsibility as volleyball coach and accomplished a lot of goals. She wasn't familiar with the sport but she took the time to learn about it and made a commitment to it."

Bobbitt is optimistic about both the volleyball team and the basketball team. she sees a lot of great things happening under the new Head Basketball Coach Debbie Clark. "I believe a woman can coach a woman's team better," said Bobbitt. "We know our limits. Some men just don't understand women."

Coach Clark definitely believes that Tracey understands her players. "Tracey is a hard and dedicated worker," said Clark. "She loves basketball, she's willing to learn and she has a good rapport with the girls."

Most of her players feel the same way, they appreciate the relationship that they have with Bobbitt. "Tracey is not only a coach, she's a friend," said Diya Wilson, a senior WSSU basketball player. "She really knows how to motivate the team."

Motivation and one's ability to accomplish goals has always been an inspiration for Bobbitt. As a child she admired the late Wilma Rudolph, a woman who in Bobbitt's opinion, performed miracles on the track. "Wilma Rudolph had polio and still managed to win three gold medals," said Bobbitt. "As a child that was something for me to see. Someone with goals and the ability to achieve those goals. That's why I say anybody can do anything if they set their mind to it....anybody."

One of Bobbitt's favorite pastimes is a good old fashioned game of basketball she also enjoys spending time with her friends. Bobbitt has plans to someday become head coach, hopefully on a Division II level but for now she is satisfied with her job at Winston-Salem State University.

"Right now I'm not ready to move on," said Bobbitt. "I don't know as much as I thought I did, I still have a lot to learn but if I keep reaching for my goals I'll get there," she said with a smile.

Gadsden Has Four Great Seasons

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Gadsden is indescribable. He possesses a smooth fluid motion when running his pattern. "It's like he has a magnet in his hand that draws the ball to him," said Jeffery Cuthbertson of Salisbury. It does seem like he has a magnet drawing the ball to him, one great catch after another. This year, as a senior, Gadsden has for more yards than any other time during his career (56 catches, 1,111 yds. and 16 touchdowns).

Gadsden a native of Charleston, South Carolina, is majoring in Sports Management with a concentration in Marketing and Promotions. In January 1995, he will intern in Dallas, Texas with former Dallas Cowboy receiver Drew Pearson. During his internship he hopes to gain experience in the field of Marketing.

When asked about his NFL Draft status Gadsden says, " If the opportunity is there, sure I'll take it but if not, my life will still go on without football because I have my degree."

The Rams sputtered early in the season causing many fans to write them off. The Rams are young with no experience at the quarterback spot and the Rams depended on Gadsden as a "crutch". The Rams put together a four game winning streak, leaving the Ram fans thinking about playoffs. The Rams lost their last game against Virginia State

University 38-35, ending Gadsden career and a playoff berth.

When Gadsden looks back over his career, Homecoming 1993 is a game he will remember. "I had 6 catches for 208 yards and 5 touchdowns, but the only disappointment was the game ended in a tie," he chuckles and smiles. "No, my most memorable game was this year going back home to Charleston. Playing in front of my family, friends and peers. It was a lot of pressure on me because I had to prove that I made the correct decision to play football instead of basketball," said Gadsden. In that game, Gadsden had 6 catches for 112 yards and a touchdown.

Gadsden is a preseason pick for All-CIAA first team, preseason 1st team Street & Smith's All-American, 1994 preseason C.M Frank All-American, 1994 preseason Black College All-American and a candidate for the Harlon Hill Trophy, which is awarded to the best college football player in the NCAA Division II.

"The biggest compliment I have ever received was when Assistant Football Coach Gary Harper, who coached against Jerry Rice said, " I compare Oronde Gadsden to Jerry Rice coming out of Mississippi Valley State. He has similar hands to Jerry."

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