

Women's basketball update

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for the SWAC title after having dropped women's basketball last summer, then reviving the program last fall.

The Lady Panthers haven't done too badly defensively. They are No. 3 in the conference in field goal percentage defense (.415). Diana Moore leads the defensive effort as SWAC's top shot blocker with 67 in 19 games. Frederica Burnice is the top performer at 16.7 ppg, 8.7 rpg and 2.1 steals a game.

MEAC

The name of the game for South Carolina State is defense and rebounding.

The Lady Bulldogs are the MEAC's best at field goal percentage defense (.313) and they are second in scoring defense, allowing 59.5 ppg. Shena Brown, Tabitha Barber and Dedrian Steele form the foundation at the defensive end. All three are ranked among the league leaders in shot blocking.

Rebounding-wise, SC State stands head and shoulders above everyone else. They outboard their opponents by a margin of 16.1 a game. But that's not so shocking when you consider that they have four people ranked among the conference's top five rebounders — Keshia Campbell (12.5 rpg) is No. 1, Brown is second (10.2 rpg), Barber third (10 rpg) and Steele fifth (7.9 rpg).

Campbell is the team's offensive leader with a 15.9 ppg average. Wanda Wiggins is their top overall performer — 14.4 ppg, 2.4 steals a game, 2.2 apg.

Coppin State has arrived to wreak havoc on the opposition thanks to a productive offense and a stingy defense. The Lady Eagles are the MEAC's top scoring team (70.8 ppg) and they are equally proficient at the defensive end, allowing just 62.2 ppg and holding opponents to 35 percent field goal shooting.

Regina Nolan (12.4 ppg, 5.8 rpg, 4 apg) is the chief player for Coppin.

North Carolina A&T has made a living out of stopping folks with their denial type of defense. They are the league leaders in scoring defense (55.3 ppg) and are ranked high in field goal percentage defense (.375).

The Aggies get a lot done with their rebounding and foul shooting. They outrebound opponents by a margin of 7.1 and are the MEAC's best at the foul line as a team (67 percent).

Deidra Cheeks and Helena Creamer are the heart and soul of this team. Cheeks is the top field goal shooter in league at 56.2 percent and averages 14.7 points and 6.5 rebounds a game. Creamer, who has a very decent perimeter game, is No. 2 in field goal accuracy (51.4 percent) and contributes 14.3 points and 7.2 boards a game. She is also third among conference players in three-point field goal shooting, hitting 40 percent from long range.

The top scorer in this league is Maryland-Eastern Shore's Angela Fowler

(17.3 ppg). Eastern Shore is one of the better offensive units, averaging 68.7 ppg. Sondra Cockfield is an on-the-court presence as the loop's best in assists (4.8 apg) and steals (3.9 a game).

Delaware State has struggled, but it's not wise to count them out at this juncture. Shervon Hunter continues to be one of the MEAC's top post players. Hunter scores 15.9 points and grabs 7.4 rebounds a night. In addition, she also comes up with 2.5 steals a game. Stephany Nolan helps to open things up on the inside for Hunter with her outside shooting. Nolan leads the conference in number of three-pointers made per game at 2.3.

Howard University is having a down year. The offense has slipped (61.6 ppg, 36.2 percent field goal shooting) and so has the defense (66.4 ppg). However, the Lady Bison have forced poor shooting on the part of the opposition (limiting enemy shooters to 35.2 percent accuracy).

Kim Wright is a major reason for that as the circuit's premier shot blocker. In 19 games, Wright has rejected 50 shots.

Felicia Oliver is the top Lady Bison scorer at 15.9 ppg.

There haven't been a lot of things for Morgan State to smile about this season. The Lady Bears have had problems scoring (51.3 ppg, 29.6 per cent field goal shooting) and limiting people defensively (65.1 ppg).

Theresa Brown has performed admirably, primarily as the team's chief performer on the boards with 8.1 caroms a game.

Bethune-Cookman hasn't had it any easier than Morgan. The Lady Wildcats have never been able to generate any kind of consistency in terms of winning.

They have found themselves out of contention in the majority of their games, losing by an average margin of 18.7 ppg. Stephanie Smith is a major contributor as a floor leader, averaging 4.2 assists and 2.5 steals a game.

SIAC

EAST REGION

Albany State looks very much like the toast of the league thanks to a stifling defense that suffocates enemy offenses.

The Lady Rams are No. 3 nationally in field goal defense, holding opponents to 28.9 percent shooting. They are also the conference's tops in scoring defense, allowing only 51.6 ppg.

Additionally, Albany has been murderous on the boards. One of the reasons why they've won games by an average margin of 15.5 points is that they outrebound their opponents by 11.6 boards a game.

Sherri Reddicks is major reason for that. Reddicks, who scores 21.9 ppg, shoots 53 percent from the field, and has 38 blocks in 14 games, is the nation's top rebounder at 14 caroms per outing. Yolanda Gregory is also a major player, contributing 17.6 ppg and 10.4 rpg. Selina

Bynum has emerged as a top-flight player. Her 9.5 apg is second-best in Division II and tops in the league.

Balance is a prime factor in Savannah State's success this season. In the league stats, the Lady Tigers are el numero uno in offensive field goal percentage (.459) and rebounding margin (+12.8 a game). They are also ranked second in scoring offense (73.4 ppg) and scoring defense (58.6 ppg).

Mabel Sanders is a tower of power for SSC as the circuit's top markswoman, shooting 62.9 percent from the field. Sanders averages 17.8 points and 13.6 boards a night. Sanders has more than ample assistance coming from two Stephanies — Gibson and Jones. Gibson (13.2 ppg) has hit 54.1 per cent of her shots and Johnson chips in with 12.7 ppg and 4.9 apg. Anita Walsh (8.9 rpg) joins Sanders as a top rebounder.

Vernetta Staten's offense has made a big difference for Paine College. Staten leads the Lady Lions attack with 22.1 ppg. Rosalind Underwood provides support with her outside shooting touch. Underwood ranks among league leaders in three-pointers made per game at 2.7.

For Fort Valley State, the game is challenge to light up the scoreboard every time out. They are by far the most productive offensive team in the league (86.5 ppg), but are dead last in scoring defense (75.1 ppg).

Nevertheless, the Lady Wildcats are winning games by an average margin of 11.4 points, making only one of three teams in the league whose average margin of victory is in double figures.

Jackie Givens is the lady that makes things happen for Valley. Givens is Division II's top gun at 37.6 ppg, and she also leads the nation in three-pointers made per game at 4.0. Conference-wise, Givens is No. 1 in steals (4.2 a game) and free throw percentage (.777). And oh yes, she rebounds too — 11.9 rpg.

The rest of the Lady Wildcats aren't to be taken lightly because of Givens' presence. Samantha Jones (12.6 ppg, 9.5 rpg), Bell Powell (12.2 ppg) and Michelle King (10.1 rpg, 37 blocked shots in 20 games) are more than capable performers.

Morris Brown has played very decently at the defensive end, holding foes to 59.3 ppg, third-best in the SIAC. But the major problem for MBC has been in the area of putting points on the board.

The Lady Wolverines are at the bottom of the league list in field goal shooting (31.6 percent) and they average a little over 51 ppg, which isn't enough to win consistently in this league.

Jackie Brown is a steady performer around the basket with 10.8 rpg. Betty Benton is one of the better point guards on the circuit, handing out 4.5 assists per game.

Clark-Atlanta University has experienced some of the same offensive woes. As a team, they're scoring at a clip of 50.3

ppg and shooting a dismal 32.5 percent from the floor.

Kellie Wyatt, however, hasn't been a part of that downswing. Wyatt comes through with 18.2 ppg and is a league leader in three-point shots made (2.2 a game). Sharon Guilford is perhaps the team's most versatile athlete, scoring 10.6 points and hauling in 10.2 rebounds a game. Additionally, she's been mean to opposing shooters, blocking 63 shots in 17 games.

WEST REGION

Alabama A&M has ruled the roost from day one of the season. At presstime, they had yet to lose a conference game.

The Lady Bulldogs have found success by hitting the boards hard and often. As a normal course of court business, A&M outboards the opposition by a margin of 12.2 each time out.

Shaunda Hill keeps things running smooth from her point guard slot. Hill is ranked among the top dish-out folks, averaging 5.1 apg. She's also a skilled jump shooter, making 2.3 three-pointers a game.

Miles College has utilized defense and some steady play on the boards to help them stay afloat. The Lady Bears have limited teams to 59.5 ppg and have an average rebounding margin of a + 11.6.

Defensively, Margaret Robinson and Dionne Johnson are the prime obstacles as two of the conference's best shot blockers. Robinson, ranked second, has 44 blocks in 16 games, while the fifth-ranked Johnson has registered 26 rejections in 14 games.

Aleisha Walden (10.6 ppg) and Rhonda Williams (10.3 ppg) are the top scorers.

Tuskegee University has depended heavily on Cheryl Brown to help carry them this year and she hasn't let anyone down. Brown is the league's third-leading scorer with an average of 24.3 ppg. Brown also gets 8.9 rpg and is a slick defender (3.4 steals a game).

Still, Brown needs more help to balance out the offense, which will keep teams from focusing all of their attention on her. Nicole Welcome provides some offensive help with 10.5 ppg.

Two of the league's top scorers play for LeMoyne Owen, but that hasn't translated into consistent wins.

Toni Peterson has contributed mightily with 25.9 ppg and 3.8 steals a night. Peterson is No. 2 on the SIAC scoring list. Her 3.9 three-pointers made per game is also second-best in the conference.

Gladys Horton comprises the other half of this scoring combo. Hinton (23.1 ppg) is No. 4 in league scoring. But what has really hurt LMO is that they are slaughtered on the boards and give up far too many points. The result is that the Lady Magicians allow 96.4 ppg, while being outrebounded by a 23.3 margin, which comes out to an average losing margin of 24.6 points.

-Lawrence Curry