

HALL OF FAME TEAM AWARD



Team members celebrate the Lady Lions' 1988 PIAA title - their second in three years.

Best in state, USA

Unbeaten '88 Lady Lions left their mark

By JIM LANE

The 1988 Altoona Lady Lions were arguably the finest high school girls' basketball team ever to come out of this area.

Their accomplishments were many:

- Undefeated in 30 games.
- Mid-Alleghenies Conference champions.
- District 6 Quad-A champions.
- PIAA state Quad-A champions.
- USA Today mythical national champions.

Those achievements have earned them induction into the Blair County Sports Hall of Fame with the class of 2006.

"That team really got started as 7th graders at Keith and Roosevelt," then coach Art Taneyhill recalled recently. "Between the two junior highs, I think they lost a total of about three games or so in three years - all to each other.

"Even then, we knew those kids would be good," he said, "but not that good."

Over a three-year span in high school (1986-88), the Lady Lions won more than 90 games and lost

1987-88 LADY LION SCHEDULE (30-0) OPPONENT SCORE

*St. Elizabeth's of Delaware	57-37
*Downingtown	60-31
Punxsutawney	74-17
Seton-LaSalle	48-43
Peabody	82-36
#Sacred Heart	58-44
#Louisville (Ky). Southern	56-53
Columbus South	75-42
Erie McDowell	63-48
Johnstown	100-19
State College	62-42
University City	97-48
Bishop McCort	44-43
Elizabeth-Forward	61-42
Bishop Guilfoyle	57-38
Williamsport	61-24

Carrick	60-39
Hollidaysburg	47-38
Johnstown	73-35
State College	34-32
Bishop McCort	50-36
Williamsport	55-35
Hollidaysburg	52-49
Bishop Guilfoyle	72-56

DISTRICT 6 PLAYOFFS

State College	50-30
---------------	-------

PIAA PLAYOFFS

McKeesport	68-38
Elizabeth-Forward	46-42
DuBois	48-40
Penn Hills	50-49
Wissahickon	39-36

*Strath Haven Tournament
#Rotary Tournament

only three. They were unbeaten and won Altoona's first state championship in '86, then were state runners-up in '87, and state champs again in '88.

"After they lost the state title as juniors, they were bound and determined to get back as seniors," Taneyhill noted.

Eight seniors formed the nucleus of the '88 team, which also scored a victory over Louisville Southern in the Rotary Tournament. All five senior starters earned Division I college scholarships - Sandy Baker (Pitt),



Team members of the 1987-88 Lady Lions included, first row (from left): Amy Baughman, Angela Grohol, Kris Council, Debbie Taneyhill, Margaret Leberfinger, Sherry DeAgostino, Susie Adams, Lisa Miller, Jennifer Dorfmeister. Back row: Dawn Focht, Michelle Andrews, Jenny Moran, Coach Art Taneyhill, Amy Fochler, Sandy Baker, Michele Rehm, Gina Creighton. Absent from photo: Katina Curry, Jackie Berryman and assistant coach Miriam Heidler.

Jennifer Dorfmeister (Penn), Jenny Moran (UMass), Michele Rehm (St. Francis) and Debbie Taneyhill (George Mason).

The five starters were a perfect blend on the court. Dorfmeister was the leading scorer, Baker was the top rebounder, Taneyhill was the playmaker, while Moran (inside) and Rehm (back court) were good complements.

When Moran suffered a broken elbow and missed the last 10 games of the regular season, seniors Lisa Miller and Amy Fochler helped pick up the slack inside, while Sherry DeAgostino, another senior, was a valuable contributor in the backcourt.

"Things could have gone awry a couple of times," coach Taneyhill said, "but they didn't want to lose. They could have lost a couple of times, but they didn't."

One of their closest games was a three-point win over Wissahickon in the PIAA state title game at Hershey in a contest that wasn't sealed until Rehm made two fouls with just seven seconds left.

Plus, from January on, the Lady Lions had the added pres-

1987-88 LADY LION ROSTER



Seniors: Sandy Baker, Jennifer Dorfmeister, Sherry DeAgostino, Amy Fochler, Lisa Miller, Jenny Moran, Michelle Rehm, Debbie Taneyhill.

Juniors: Susie Adams, Amy Baughman,

Jackie Berryman, Kris Counsel, Gina Creighton, Angela Grohol, Margaret Leberfinger.

Sophomores: Michele Andrews, Katina Curry.

Coaches: Art Taneyhill, Miriam Heidler.

Managers: Dawn Focht, Shawn Focht.

sure of being ranked No.1 in USA Today's national poll. They maintained that ranking throughout the remainder of the season and were crowned mythical national champions by the publication soon after the win in Hershey. In addition, Taneyhill was named USA Today's National High School Coach of the Year.

Moran is now Jenny Wilson. She's the mother of two children and a teacher at Keith Junior High School. She has fond memo-

ries of her AAHS experience, which later included three years as an assistant coach to Taneyhill.

"I remember like it was yesterday," Moran-Wilson said. "I remember the days of the (AAHS) Fieldhouse being packed and how the crowds waited in line (for the playoffs) at St. Francis.

"I remember our devoted fans who followed us, and I remember how devoted we players were to the game," she said. "We had a real love for the game, and I remember what a wonderful job Art did coaching us."

The '88 Lady Lions are the second team to be inducted into the Blair County Hall. The Cobras, a three-time national championship softball team, were inducted in 2004.

"They were a great bunch of kids," Taneyhill said of his team. "They had leadership, determination and were fun to be around. I'm really looking forward to it."

So is Moran-Wilson.

"It's a great honor," she said. "It's hard to believe it's been 18 years. I'm really looking forward to seeing everybody and doing some reminiscing."