

INDUCTEE PROFILE

At all levels, Williams was a champion

Scoring leader at BG, Saint Francis and Luxembourg

By Cory Giger

Alli Williams lit up scoreboards for nearly 4,000 points in high school and college, but all those points don't really define her amazing basketball career.

A better definition for Williams?

Champion.

She was a superstar player who cared far more about team success than anything she did individually, and Williams certainly led her teams to a great deal of success.

"The team success is everything," Williams said. "It doesn't matter if I scored 25 points a game if we weren't having a good season. That wouldn't matter to me. The team is everything."

When Mark Moschella was told Williams said that, he wasn't the least bit surprised.

"That's her," said Moschella, who coached Williams at Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School. "She was just a very giving person, and the teammates always felt that. The team always came first to her. Sometimes it's a cliché, but with Alli it wasn't. It was always real."

Williams and Moschella enjoyed phenomenal success together at BG, winning three PIAA state championships in four years (2007, '09, '10). It's only fitting, then, that they're being inducted into the Blair County Sports Hall of Fame in the same class.

"My dad kind of like has mentioned it before," Williams said of getting selected for the Hall of Fame. "I was like, 'Ah, maybe, Dad, I don't know.' So, whenever I got the call, I was actually in shock. And I think it's really, really cool this year that I'm being inducted with Coach Moschella. The timing of that couldn't be any better."

Williams enjoyed a sensational career at BG and became the school's all-time leader in points (1,756), rebounds (907) and assists (421). Her point total has since been surpassed by Lili Benzel.

"Winning three state titles, looking back, that's pretty remarkable," Williams said. "I don't think I recognized how big a deal that

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For three seasons, Alli Williams played pro ball in Europe, where she won a league title.

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was until I graduated.”

Moschella called Williams a “dominant player” and noted how hard it was for opposing teams to game plan against her.

“The first thing that comes to mind with Alli is she was a player that was respected by her teammates, respected by the players she competed against and a great example of what the goals were of the Lady Marauder team,” Moschella said.

He added that the other BG players “leaned on Alli.”

“She was just so supportive and so unselfish,” Moschella said. “All those intangibles are just needed, especially whenever you walk through the doors at a state championship game.”

“I hold those times so near and dear to my heart,” Williams said of her BG days. “I’m just so appreciative of all the support I’ve received back in Blair County. I’ve never met any community like that. Everybody got behind our team.”

Williams decided to stay close to home and play college ball at Saint Francis.

“It was a big moment for us at SFU when Alli decided to stay home to be a Red Flash,” then-coach Susan Robinson-Fruchtl said. “With all she had accomplished, her talent and her drive for excellence, we believed she could have an immediate impact and take us to an even higher level. Alli did just that and more.”

As a freshman, Williams helped the Red Flash reach the NCAA Tournament in 2011.

“Winning a conference championship was pretty out of this world,” she said. “We got to go play Maryland in the first round, and it was an unbelievable experience to play in the NCAA Tournament.”

Williams played very well her first three years at Saint Francis, then had a monstrous senior season playing in then-coach Joe Haigh’s ultra-fast-paced system. She had total freedom in an offense that tried to score a ton, and Williams wound up finishing fifth in the country at 25.3 points per game.

“Every coach has a system and style of play that they would like their teams to compete with,” Haigh said. “I’d always loved the Paul Westhead, Loyola-Marymount teams of the early 1990s -- how relentless they played and how they were able to beat teams from bigger leagues. But you need a special type of athlete to compete that way.

“Alli had a very unique skill set. As great a scorer and rebounder as she was, Alli was even more special as a defender. She could defend every player in the conference. Alli wasn’t just a perfect fit for the system I wanted to play. Alli was the foundation for my Red Flash program. Alli made the system possible.”



Alli left Saint Francis as its third all-time leading scorer with more than 2,000 points.



Williams bio

Sport: Basketball

High school: Bishop Guilfoyle

College: Saint Francis

Hall of Fame achievement: Became the 11th Division I player to record 2,000 points, 1000 rebounds and 300 steals. Graduated as Saint Francis’ third-leading career scorer (2,178). Set SFU single-game record (47) and as a senior, finished fifth in nation (25.3). Played professionally in Greece, Germany and Luxembourg. Led Lady Marauders to three PIAA Class A titles and graduated as BG’s all-time scoring leader (1,756).



Alli led Bishop Guilfoyle to three PIAA titles and was twice voted the Pennsylvania Class A player of the year by the Associated Press.

That incredible senior season enabled Williams to finish her college career with 2,178 points, which ranks third all-time at Saint Francis.

"I loved it," Williams said of her remarkable senior year. "I was in the best shape of my life. I can't even imagine going back and being able to run as much as I was running that year.

"But that's the way I operate, and I loved having the freedom to shoot an open 3 if I was a few feet back. If I shot and airballed it, I never got yelled at, and for me that meant everything because I

performed so much better when there was no pressure, there was no expectation or you're not punished for making a mistake. Because (Haigh) realized that with that one or two mistakes, the payoff was high.

"So, I absolutely loved it, like more than anything. That was the funnest basketball I've ever had."

Williams went on to play three seasons of professional basketball in Europe. And sure enough, she won a championship there, too -- in Luxembourg of all places.

"I absolutely loved that experience,"

she said of her pro career. "I got to travel to pretty much every country in Europe. It was probably the best experience of my life getting to do all that.

"I also won in Europe, and that one was the best almost because of the celebration. In Luxembourg, we had a community like we did in Loretto and Altoona. They were diehard fans, so when we won, we partied. The men's team also won, so we had a huge party with the whole community in the gym. So I think that was the funnest win of all of them."