

PRESS RELEASE

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WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PRE-SEASON REPORT

By Khayla Gladney

The West Los Angeles College women's basketball team is on their way into the pre-season, they have been practicing nonstop and recently finished their "Hell Week" which consists of intense training pushing the girls to their limits. Head Coach Colleen Matsuhara and Assistant Coach Twan Herron are very pleased to see the team unity that has developed. When conditioning drills caused some of the players to want to give up, their teammates did not allow it and helped them push on. Coach Matsuhara is happy to see the team chemistry that has developed on and off the court. A few of the team leaders are Tatiana Maimot, sophomore from Redondo Union High School who transferred from New Mexico; Angie McDaniel, sophomore from Fairfax High School; and freshman Kayli Schwenke, guard, from Narbonne High School. Maimot and McDaniel are both very vocal on the court encouraging their team to keep work hard and keep improving. Schwenke is also showing great leadership.

Returning players include Zhane Carter, the lead scoring freshman last year in the State of California and All Conference, who has been working on more ways to keep up her legacy. Carter, a guard and sophomore from Inglewood High school, has come back hungry and ready for the season to start. Also returning is forward Kayla Clark, a sophomore from Gardena High school, who spent the summer expanding her game to bring more heat this season. Clark is the leading rebounder from last year. Tabitha Theard, a forward from Hamilton High school, has also been making great strides in footwork and conditioning. Her dedication and improvement has made Coach Matsuhara very proud and even more excited for the season to begin.

New players include guard Ashley Flemming, a sophomore who transferred from Glendale College. She is eager to play, athletic, and is great at defensive stops, and transition offense. Forward Bryanna Simmons and guard Lelani Martin are freshmen from West Adams High School. Coach Matsuhara describes both as great players, very coachable, eager to learn and hard workers who are absorbing the system of play with great attitudes.

In summary, said Coach Matsuhara, there aren't just a few hard working impactful players, everyone can bring it! Her focus this season is on finishing plays, breaking the press, remaining injury free, playing up tempo transition and, of course, for all her athletes to keep up their good grades. She added, "We are looking to find ourselves in the pre-season and be successful during conference." Not fouling is another important focus. There are new rules of play this year. Instead of two 20-minute halves, now play is four ten-minute quarters. After the fifth foul of each quarter, the other team gets to shoot two free throws.

The team has a very tough pre-season schedule, they will be traveling to Sacramento for the first time since Coach Matsuhara has been coaching the Wildcats. They will be playing teams they will not see during the regular season. They are excited and looking forward to getting more experience against teams with tough reputations. Also for the first time, West will host their own basketball tournament with eight teams competing including the very competitive Ventura College.

The Wildcats should be well prepared for the regular season in their Western State Conference South Division, the largest conference in the State. The first conference game is January 6, against LA Valley College at West at 5:00pm.

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