

5A MVP » MAKENZI MORRISON, ALTA

Composed star pushed Hawks to new heights

By KYLE GOON
The Salt Lake Tribune

Up against the undefeated Syracuse Titans, Alta flat-out came to play. The Hawks zoomed out to a 28-16 first-half lead as they forced turnovers and made seemingly every shot that left their fingers.

Alta had unparalleled composure in the Class 5A title game, and Makenzi Morrison set that tone.

"Kenzi talked to us before the game and said we had nothing to lose — that Syracuse had the target on their backs so let's go get them," senior forward Erin Foster said. "It really pumped us up and made us feel like it was our day."

The Hawks featured a great foursome with Hayli Shurtz, Lexi Garland, Foster and Morrison. The BYU-bound junior led her team not just in scoring, but with a steely

sense of calm that was contagious.

From the first day she wore an Alta uniform, Morrison helped bring a new attitude to a program that had previously underachieved.

"When Kenzi came in, she had been playing competitively for a long time," coach Kristi Jensen said. "She was so self-motivated and pushed herself so hard, it helped Erin and Hayli see how that attitude spreads."

Morrison will say goodbye to the three seniors as she prepares for her final high school campaign. But she says she'll always treasure memories of the team that overachieved its way to a title.

"It felt like we were always underdogs no matter who we played because we had an up-and-down season early," she says. "Everyone set low expectations, which let us set our expectations as high as we wanted. We played like we had nothing to lose."



RICK EGAN | The Salt Lake Tribune

2A MVP » TRESSA LYMAN, ENTERPRISE

Center's game made her team unstoppable

By KYLE GOON
The Salt Lake Tribune

The Class 2A girls' basketball race was all about catching up with Enterprise this year. It turned out no one could touch the Wolves — or their 6-foot-1 center Tressa Lyman.

"She was such a good all-around player, and she did it facing constant double or triple teams all year," coach Brian Phelps said. "Her leadership is the best I ever had from a player, and she was pretty much unstoppable on the court."

Lyman made her impact on the score sheet in points and rebounds. But she also played tough defense inside and on the perimeter — her deflections and steals might have won as many games as her offense.

The senior also stepped up in the season's biggest moment. When Beaver fought back from an

early deficit to tie the championship game, the Wolves fed the ball to Lyman. When Beaver fouled her, she made eight straight free throws to help her team pull away and avenge a long losing history against the Beavers.

"I was thinking 'We're not losing again,'" Lyman said. "I think everyone felt the same way. We were going to leave our guts on the floor to win that game."

As a leader, Lyman was ever the optimist, always picking up her teammates and helping them believe until they had realized their dream of winning state.

"She always kept us positive, even if she sat out — she was the glue that held us together," teammate Shalee Farnsworth says. "She tried to be strong for the team and refused to lose."



CHRIS DETRICK | The Salt Lake Tribune

1A MVP » KANDICE GLEAVE, PIUTE

Gleave embraced role as leader

By KYLE GOON
The Salt Lake Tribune

A year after winning last year's 1A title, Piute found itself with one returning starter: senior forward Kandice Gleave.

It was a lot of turnover, but no one saw it as a rebuilding year. Not with Gleave around.

"She knew she had to play a bigger role to replace all the experience we lost," coach Wade Westwood said. "She knew it was a tough job, but I'd give her an A-plus."

The Thunderbirds rumbled in Region 20 during the regular season and took third place in state.

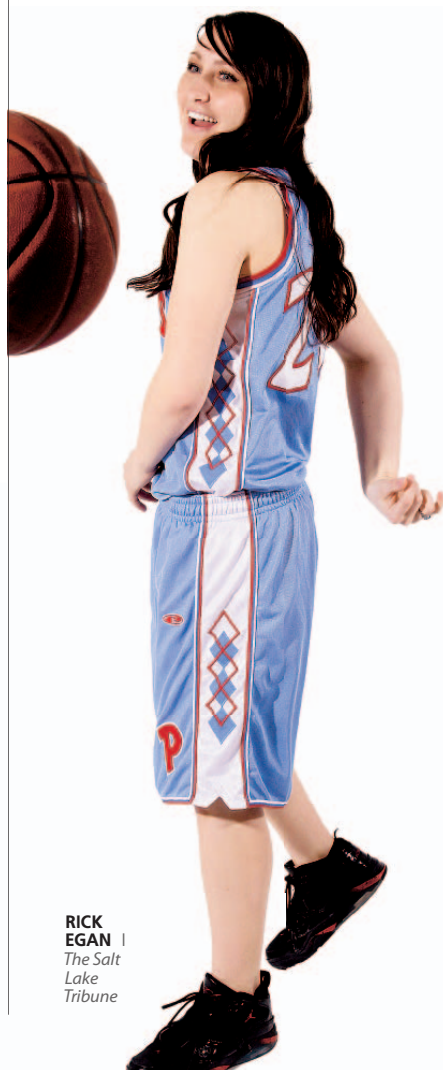
No one on the team was more critical to the T-birds' success than Gleave, who led Class 1A in scoring and was Piute's top defender.

But perhaps Gleave's best role was as a mentor, teaching the younger players both moves and toughness. Her influence helped her teammates improve and amass a 21-5 record.

"It's just my personality. I want to help everyone out however I can," Gleave says. "I knew how to be a winner, and I wanted to help them learn their roles so they could be a part of that, too."

A one-point loss to Rich in the semifinals kept Piute from defending its title, but Gleave's legacy is secure — not just as a great player, but a teammate who put in the extra time to help others.

"Kandice helped me feel like I was awesome, which made me play awesome," says Kierra Gleave, her freshman sister and teammate. "I'm going to help younger girls and try to make them feel like she made me feel."



RICK EGAN | The Salt Lake Tribune

4A MVP » LEXI EATON, SPRINGVILLE

Red Devils' standout dominated on all fronts

By JENNIFER GUSTAVSON
Special to The Tribune

With each passing game, Springville's Lexi Eaton could feel the pressure mounting. Every week, her opponents attacked her with more ferocity, hoping to somehow derail the Red Devils' unshakable star. During the state tournament, she was exhausted, stressed and battling the flu.

And she loved every minute of it. "I took all of it as a challenge. That's what makes it fun for me," Eaton said. "I wouldn't have it any other way."

In her senior year, Eaton led the state in scoring with an average of 29 points a game. But she didn't only score points — she also pulled down rebounds and picked up steals. On the rare occasion she was tied up, she dealt assistance to her teammates. In the end, her efforts helped the Red Devils secure a 17-1 regular-season record and a state title, and it earned her a second Gatorade Player of the Year honor.

It's exactly what everyone came to expect from the senior star — but

that didn't make her dominant career at Springville any less impressive.

"And *dominant* is the perfect word," Springville coach Nancy Warner said. "In every aspect of the game, we could trust and rely on her completely."

Realizing her attitude also dictated her teammates' demeanor, Eaton remained composed.

"I guess I just don't take losing for an answer," Eaton said.



TRENT NELSON | The Salt Lake Tribune

3A MVP » TIA PAPPAS, CARBON

Defense the name of the game for 3A scorer

By JON CLIFFORD
Special to The Tribune

It's her ability to score that makes headlines. Her accuracy from 3-point range, how she deftly maneuvers through a defense and drives to the rim, her too-cool-for-school steadiness from the free-throw line.

Carbon's Tia Pappas can put the ball in the basket, and that's part of the reason she is *The Tribune's* Class 3A MVP this season.

The other part is the senior guard's prowess on the defensive side of the ball. Three times this season she recorded 11 steals to go along with her double-figure scoring total. A season ago, she tallied 19 steals in a victory against North Sanpete.

That's the part of her game in which Pappas takes the most pride. "I just love defense. I would pick

playing defense over offense any day," said Pappas, who led the Dinosaurs to a 20-2 record and a runner-up finish in the state tournament.

Defense is also what coach Cami Carlson is quick to point out when asked to describe Pappas' strengths. "She just has this drive and refusal to lose," Carlson said.

Pappas, who is still weighing her collegiate options, saved her best performances for the postseason. She scored a career-high 33 points in a thrilling one-point victory over Cedar City in the quarterfinals and averaged 21.5 points and four steals in four postseason games.



RICK EGAN | The Salt Lake Tribune

Steady Green led second-year program to semifinals

Coach of the Year » Without seniors or superstars, Maple Mountain still found success.

By KYLE GOON
The Salt Lake Tribune

After an inaugural 6-16 season and a play-in game exit from the state tournament, the Maple Mountain girls' basketball squad wasn't much more than an afterthought coming into its second year.

But coach Cory Green saw

the Golden Eagles' potential — maybe even before the players saw it in themselves.

"I saw the way they worked together and played for each other," Green says. "That is something you can't manufacture, but that all great teams have. Once they played a few games, they started to see it, too."

Maple Mountain was the

biggest surprise in Class 4A, improving by 11 wins in only its second year as a program.

With nary a senior and no superstar-type player, Green led the Golden Eagles on a run into the semifinals. They managed to edge Westlake and dominate Olympus before falling a few points



Cory Green

short against eventual runner-up Mountain Crest.

"It was a big deal, but not a shock," athletic director David Boyack says. "Coach Green was always expecting good things. He always stayed optimistic and even-tempered, even when things weren't going well."

But in general, things did go well for Maple Mountain. The Golden Eagles boasted the second-best defense in Class 4A, and very few teams matched up well with them.

"I think he's really gotten to know every single player's strengths and weaknesses and got the rotation set," guard Aleksa Gappmayer says. "He knew how to use us in certain situations and helped us build confidence."

Green also made sure his players knew their roles perfectly, encouraging them to become students of the game. What they lacked in star power, they made up for with heady play. Although Maple Mountain was a youthful

group, Green made sure the girls didn't play like one.

"I think my part was to keep them focused, to push them to learn and improve," Green says. "I think if anything, the girls didn't know how good they could be early on. I think still now, we haven't scratched the surface."

It's a frightening thought for Class 4A headed into next year: With the entire team returning, it's hard to predict the ceiling for the Golden Eagles in 2012.