

Bloomers and their players in review

by Bruce Denis

Now that the Red Bloomers' season has ended, it's time to look back and rate each player's performance over the year and predict who will shine in the playoffs. Coach Claire Mitton offers her opinions on these issues and comments on how each player helped vault the Red Bloomers into first place, earning the right to host the AUA championship this weekend.

Veterans - One area where the Bloomers are not lacking is experience. Older players such as Jennifer Hale, Jill Jackson and Kara Palmer, have led the team through the season and helped them crawl out of the three game losing streak which disabled them early this term. Here is a run down of how each girl fared this year:

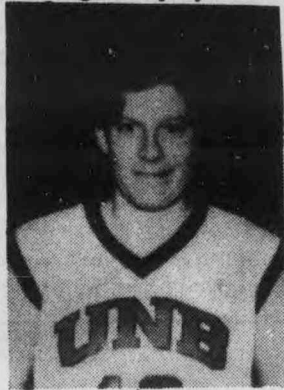
Bonnie Hale: Bonnie may have started slowly but she has been developing each game and should be in top form for the playoffs. Mitton says "Bonnie's having a great second half. I'd like to see her progression continue into the playoffs." Mitton also describes her as a pivotal two way player, "She's playing excellent basketball both offensively and defensively." Bonnie has found her confidence grows with experience and should see a lot of court time in the playoffs.

Jennifer Hale: A leader by nature, Jennifer's experience and talent has been invaluable to the team this season. "She's a leader, an impact player, the heart and soul of the team" says Mitton. "She's played with a lot of intensity and desire. Big things are expected from her come playoff time and this veteran has the ability to deliver. She's strong all the time and we know, come playoff time she'll be strong there too." Her excellent shooting and offensive capabilities make her a force to be reckoned with in the AUA.

Shannon Hickey: In her second year as a Bloomer, Shannon may not have seen a lot of court time but as a crowd favorite, she was able to spark the team and the fans with hard work. "She contributes in many ways with her work ethic and attitude. She's a real team player." Off the court, Shannon holds the team together and lifts them with her infectious positive attitude. During the playoffs

Shannon should help the team remain confident and may even help out offensively.

Jill Jackson: Despite missing the first half of the season to Mono, Jill returned to the program after Christmas with fresh legs and stood tall on guard. Her passing and shooting was among the best in the league, however, she contributed in other ways as well. "She has so much determination and desire. She has great passing ability and a nice three point range. She's a catalyst on offense and defense," says Mitton. Jill can be expected to spark the Bloomers offensively and help lead the team through the playoffs.



Jill Jackson

Tracy Lordon: Tracy has played a tremendous regular season. Though she may not lead the team in scoring or rebounds, according to Claire Mitton she is a necessary and important link on the chain to a championship. "She's an unsung hero. From a coach's perspective, she's one of those players a team needs for success." Tracy will be called upon to dig deep in the playoffs and can be expected to fill any role thanks to her versatility. She does the little things that make the difference, like key offensive rebounds and guarding opposing players. She always hustles."

Kara Palmer: In her fourth season, Kara has showed herself to be a consistent MVP. She was the most dangerous offensive threat this year in the AUA and earned numerous Pepsi Player of the Game awards. Coach Mitton says of Kara, "She has a great work ethic and is very committed to the program. She always rebounds well and leads the team in scoring. This season was one of her best as a Bloomer. Kara is motivated for the playoffs and should amass some impressive statistics. The team will be

looking for big offensive plays and continual leadership from her.



Kara Palmer

Tammy Polchies: Tammy has developed well over the year but hasn't performed to her potential on certain occasions. Her style of play tends to fluctuate with the success of the team. "She has improved her game immensely but she has been inconsistent." Nevertheless, Tammy has played well on forward and can be expected to thrive with the teams recent success. "She has a great three point shot and has cut down her mistakes. When the team is playing well, we get more out of her."

Laura Swift: Laura is another player who took half a term to begin playing up to her potential. However, now that she is on form she has been producing the goods. Laura was awarded player of the game against Dalhousie, two weeks ago and has consistently scored double figures. Says Mitton, "She really stepped up this term and had some great games. Her height makes her a dominating presence on the court and her drive and determination impress any opposition. She's an impact player. She can really help us in the playoffs."

Rookies: With so much experience and talent on the team, the rookies had no trouble stepping in and becoming involved in the game. Though Jackie Flieger saw more court time than Jacklyn Mowat or Krista Foreman, all three can expect to play more important roles next season for the Red Bloomers.

Jackie Flieger: Jackie took some time to adjust to University level basketball yet her immense talent and excellent long range shooting has more than made up for it. Her uncanny ability to hit three pointers at crucial times have motivated the team's offense. Claire Mitton agrees, "She's a good shooter who can light up a game. She's had a hard time adjusting from High School to University play." Though Mitton may look to her veterans for performance in the playoffs, Jackie will provide solid reinforcement.



Jackie Flieger

Krista Foreman: Krista has provided the Bloomers with a solid post. Mitton believes she has strong motivation for the sport. "She has a real thirst for the game and wants to improve.. She has helped add height to the Bloomers front line and offers a

bright future to the Bloomers development. She's a very specific role player. She made the adjustment from High School to University very nicely." She may not see a lot of court time in the playoffs but should contribute with her motivation.

Jacklyn Mowat: Jacklyn has had some trouble stepping into the big league of university ball. She works hard but still needs some time to develop. "She has a good heart and work ethic. She's not really ready to step in and contribute." However, Mitton believes she will come through in the future. "She's just beginning to adjust to the style of play." Jacklyn, as well, may not see a lot of court time in the playoffs but her spirit and heart is necessary for a strong team showing.

Claire Mitton: Claire has had to adjust to the style of her team. She made some incorrect assumptions at the beginning of the season which may have cost them. "I made a commitment at the beginning of the year to allow the more experienced players some freedom but they were still making mistakes. I had to become more involved." The team pulled through when it counted and are looking for their second consecutive AUA championship. Claire's mid-game antics and emotional outburst motivated the team to an 12-4 record. "I'm a very involved and vocal coach and they respond to that." Look for Claire to pull the Bloomers together during the playoffs and direct them towards another championship.

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