

Eagles peaking at right time

By GARY JOHNSON

Every coach wants their team to be playing their best basketball at the end of the season. Such is the case for the Golden

No one is prouder than Shelbyville Central first-year head coach Kody

Howard and the team has worked extremely throughout the season, showing patience and perseverance. That work has paid dividends after defeating the District 6-AAAA regular season and tournament top seed Franklin County in the openinground the district tournament before settling for an overtime loss to Coffee County in the district championship game.

It took a while for this team to gel as one unit but now that seems to have happened and it shows in their effort and play on the court.

"One of the first things that I knew I had to do was find out what made the guys tick. Every group of kids has a different method to the madness. I've never claimed to be the smartest guy in the world but it took a little longer than expected. I'm just glad we found a way to figure it out by tournament time," Howard said.

"I just think our guys finally figured out what work ethic it takes day in and day out to get better and come together. We never really changed what we were doing in practice, they just adjusted to the day-to-day grind. I'm just glad they finally figured it out."

On most nights, the Eagles start five seniors; Jayshon Jones, Zay Reese, Tim Parsons, Devan Heath and Jason Ragland. This group has helped change the



Tim Parsons has been a consistent leader for the Eagles this season.



Senior Zay Reese was key for Shelbyville's surge to the second-place finish in the District 6-AAAA tournament.

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face of the program by buying into what was being coached.

To make it even more of a challenge, Howard has not even put in his offense or defense he would prefer to run.

"Our current players really didn't fit the offense and defense I want to run, so we as coaches came up with a system that fit the skill set of our current team," Howard.

"We as a team have improved in a number of ways since the first of the season. We are playing better defense, going to the boards and getting more rebounds. We are making more shots and taking better shots."

The Eagles seem to have more depth than they did at the start of the season.

"We have had some internal suspensions throughout the year but that's one reason I think we gelling at the right time," Howard said.

"The guys know that I hold them accountable and in the future that's going to pay off for them and nit finally paying off on the court as well.

With an upset win in the opening round of the district, Shelbyville Central will host its opening round game of the region tournament on Saturday night.

Saturday, February 26, 2022 Times-Gazette

Champs poised for deep postseason run

By CHRIS SIERS

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Last season, the Cascade Champions caught fire in January and blazed through the District 8-A slate to a regular season

Despite falling in the tournament semifinals, Cascade rallied and pushed through the postseason until falling in the Class A state sectional at eventual state champion Clay County.

Fast forward a year and the Champions have continued their upward trend and not only captured the regular season District 7-AA title, but also followed up with a 7-AA tournament championship.

All season long, Cascade has been at its best when able to execute the defensive game plan and get key production up and down the lineup.

In Year 2 under coach Chris Lawson, the Champions have established themselves as one of the top Class AA teams in the area.

In the 2021-2022 season, Cascade rode a wave of momentum to both a regular season and district tournament championship.

Following the District 7-AA championship, Lawson was pleased with the effort the deep roster put forth.

"I felt like tonight, one of the differences of us playing really well and not playing well is we had some guys come in off the bench that brought a little bit of scoring and rebounding," he said.

Throughout the season, Cascade has relied on the stellar guard play of Jackson Davis and Lucas Clanton, along with the interior play of senior Justis Carter.

For his efforts in the regular season, Carter earned Co-MVP honors, while Clanton took home the top award for the District 7-AA tournament.

Cascade posted a 5-1 district record in the regular season, with the lone blemish coming in a 54-52 defeat at Community on January 20.

The Champions closed the regular season by winning seven of their last eight

While the tournament championship was the first by Cascade with Lawson at the helm, the Champions are plenty experienced in postseason play after forging a path to the Class A state sectional a season

This season, Cascade locked up the No. 1 7-AA seed and with the tournament championship in hand, has secured a No. 1 seed in the Region 4-AA tournament as well.

While Cascade's big three of Carter, Clanton and Davis have been the cogs that make the machine work, it's been the depth off the bench that's been the glue for the

Cascade has also hung its hat on being a defensive force.

In 22 victories this season, Cascade has allowed opponents an average of 47 points per game, with six games over the last month, holding opponents under 50 points per game.

"That's what I'm most happy with at this time of the year, everybody is engaged and we're able to execute, especially on the defensive end," Lawson said.

After locking up the No. 1 seed in the District 7-AA tournament, the Champions took a 65-46 win over No. 4 seed Grundy County to advance to the championship game to face No. 2 seed Community.

During their previous meeting in Unionville, the Vikings downed the Champs on a last-second 3-pointer to hand Cascade its only District 7-AA loss of the season.

Cascade returned to Unionville with a vengeance and defeated the Vikings 76-45 in the 7-AA championship.

Along the route to a 22-7 overall record, Cascade also saw Carter score his 1,000th point in a 60-38 win on January 24 at Watertown.

"His work ethic—he's the first one every day in sprints or when it's time to get to a drill, he's a leader by example. I don't think there's anyone more deserving than a guy like Justis to be able to get that," Lawson

The top teams Cascade could face with a deep run in the Region 4-AA tournament are East Nashville and Pearl Cohn.

Cascade opens the Region 4-AA tournament in the quarterfinal round on Saturday evening at home.



T-G Photos by Chris Siers

Cascade coach Chris Lawson and senior Justis Carter spend a few moments on the sideline during the District 7-AA championship game.



Jackson Davis has been a spark plug for Cascade this season.



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Viqueens ride hot January into postseason

By RICKEY CLARDY

Sports Writer

Just after the start of the year, the Community Viqueens lost their first two games and were sporting a 10-7 record as the District 7-AA schedule began.

But the Viqueens were able to put their game into another gear and finished the regular season with 10-straight wins, including a perfect 6-0 mark in the district.

Community built on its regular season success with two wins in the District 7-AA tournament, including a victory over Forrest in the finals to claim its first district championship since 2018.

"We've played well late this season," Coach Cody Pierce of the Viqueens said.

"We've shot the ball well, we've played good defense, we've rebounded well. We've done a lot of little things really well."

"We still have a lot of basketball to play and everybody we play from here on out wants to beat us," Pierce added.

In the first 10 wins of the season, the Viqueens average win margin was eight points. During the current 12-game winning streak, the Community margin of victory has increased to 19 points.

Included in the winning streak was an end-of-season 15-point road win over Central Magnet, a AAA team that was undefeated in its district.

"The players committed to fixing the small things that got us beat a few times," Pierce said. "A couple of rebounds here and there, a couple of missed shots, free throws."

"They just really focused and we've fixed a lot of things that really mattered," Pierce added.

The Viqueens have several players that can fill the basket as the team continues with postseason play.

M.J. Simmons has been steady around the basket while Haley Mitchell has been a threat from 3-point land.

Breanna Whitaker, the lone senior on the squad, can reach double figures while Zoey Dixon and Addison Brothers have added support at the guard positions.

Shelby Cawthon has provided some important minutes off the bench at the post position while Jacey Collier has provided a punch with her outside shooting.

Freshman Izzy Martinez has logged more minutes in recent games at the guard spot

"Everybody on the court has been able to knock down a big shot," Pierce said.

"Haley has shot the ball well and the other guards have shot the ball well and it's made it really hard for other teams to



 $\mbox{M.J.}$ Simmons earned regular season MVP honors for her efforts during the 2021-2022 season.

defend us."

"It's fun to play offense when everybody on the court can score," Pierce added.

"The ball moves well on offense with everything we run," Pierce said.

"The timing is good, the shots are going in, the shot selection is good."

"A lot of that has to do with experience," Pierce added. "These kids have played together for awhile now and they play with a lot of confidence."

A staple that has been a positive part of the team is the Viqueen defense.

Community has given up a season average of 41 points per game, which has improved to only allowing 37 points during the 12-game winning streak.

"I've been real happy with the defense.

Our goal every night is to hold everybody to under 35," Pierce said.

"Most nights that's about where teams score, and we normally score around the 50-mark"

"It's fun when we do everything well that we want to," Pierce added.

As the postseason moves to the region tournament, Pierce knows it is important for his team to continue the momentum and not rest on its laurels.

"During this winning streak, I've told them to stay hungry and just realize you're going to get everybody's best shot every night," Pierce said. "They've done a real good job of doing that."

Community is playing in its first season in the new TSAAA four-classification for-



T-G Photos by Rickey Clar

Senior Breanna Whitaker has given the Viqueens key leadership, both on and off the court, this season.

mat at the 2A level.

Last season, the Viqueens played at 2A in the three-classification system and finished third in their district. After a win in the first round of the region, the Viqueens finished their season with a close loss in the semifinal round of the region tournament.

"Seeding is important," Pierce said.

"We obviously wanted to win the district tournament and get that home game in the first round of the region."

"Last year, they were a little upset when Forrest beat us here in the district tournament," Pierce added.

"They really wanted to win the district tournament."

Forrest, Cascade, and Grundy County are the other teams that comprise District 7-AA.

All four teams will advance to the Region 4-AA tournament, with first round games played at the higher seed.

Community will host either Stratford or Whites Creek in an opening round game.

Semifinal and final games of the region will be held at Whites Creek High School.

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Lucas Clanton has been a key source of offense from the perimeter for Cascade.



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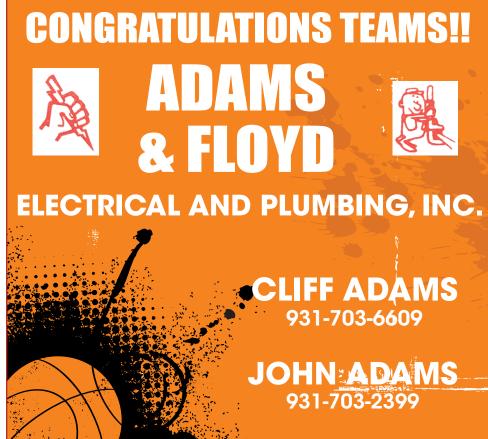


M.J. Simmons became the ninth Viqueen to reach the 1,000-point club when she hit the milestone in a victory over Shelbyville this season.



Haley Mitchell has come on strong in the second half of the season and has been a key leader for the Viqueens.





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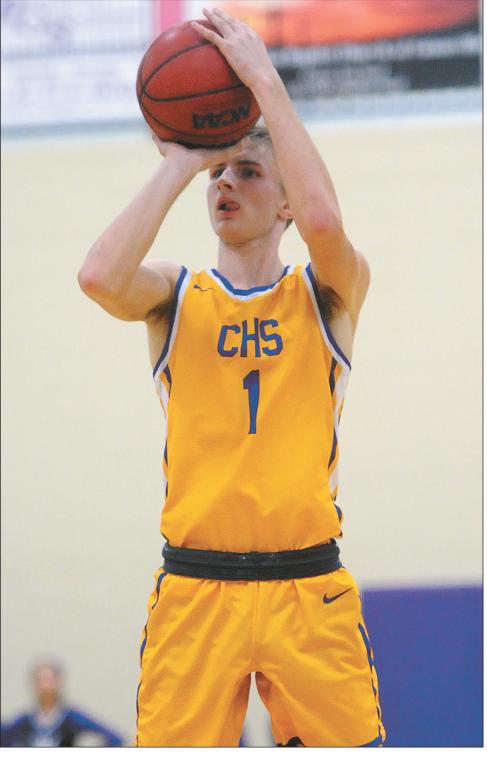
Vikings hope to continue late-season success

By RICKEY CLARDY

Sports Writer

After losing four senior starters from last season's team that made an appearance

in the TSSAA Class AA state tournament, the 2021-22 season has seen some growing pains for Coach Robbie Davis and the Community Vikings.



T-G Photos by Chris Siers

Senior Stratton Lovvorn has been a steady source of offense for the Purple and Gold this season. He scored his 1,000th point for Community earlier this season against Forrest.

Trying to piece together a lineup each night and develop a chemistry has been a challenge, but Davis said it has not been because of a lack of effort.

"The season has been up and down for sure, but the effort and attitude of the guys we have has always been great," Davis said. "Win or lose, they come in ready to go to work to be better as a team."

"We've had nights against very good competition that we have made shots at home and on the road," Davis added. "The nights we struggle on offense, our defense has kept us competitive in games."

In recent games, Davis has used the same combination of starters, including two freshmen

Stratton Lovvorn is the lone returning starter from last season's squad.

Lovvorn has been the catalyst of the team, and recently reached the 1,000-plateau for points scored in his career.

"Stratton for sure is the engine of the team," Davis said. "His presence on the floor on both ends has been great."

"He's had nights where teams focus on stopping him on the offensive end, and he will get 30," Davis added. "Some nights when shots aren't falling, he will get 15 rebounds and block three or four shots for us"

Maki Fleming, who saw time last season as a freshman, has become a floor leader for the Vikings.

"Maki is the other guy that can really score and defend," Davis said.

"He is our voice on the court and is really starting to understand the game and use his talents to become a great high school player."

"Any night, we have some kids that can go out and get double digits for us, but they all do it within the offense and what we are wanting to do that night depending on the opponent," Davis added.

Trace Broiles is the other senior on the team and has knocked down some big shots while providing a steady influence on the defensive end with his quickness.

Joining Stratton Lovvorn, Fleming, and Broiles in the starting lineup of late are freshmen Jason Cullum and Landon Lovvorn.

"The two freshmen have really stepped up and played some big minutes for us," Davis said.

"Jason Cullum has played a lot of varsity basketball and has done a great job at the point all season," Davis added.

"Now that Landon Lovvorn is close to 100% health-wise, he has given us a much-needed boost on the offensive end."

Logging playing time off the bench have been guards Corey Paterick and Ramon Hernandez, while Emery Smith, Cole Crockett, and Jacob Flannagan have logged minutes around the paint.

"I think we have finally found a role that everyone is comfortable with," Davis said.

In several of the Community losses, the team has led, but has not been able to close the deal.

A late-season win on the road at Central Magnet was a confidence booster for the Vikings.

"The win over Central Magnet was a great sign that you want to see going into tournament play," Davis said. "To win a game in a hostile environment against a very well-coached and talented team says a lot about the character of the kids on the team."

After finishing second in the District 7-AA tournament, Davis hopes the late-

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Vikings

(Continued from Page 7)

son success continues in the region tournament.

"Every coach when we start the year hopes their team doesn't peak too soon or run out of steam at the wrong time," Davis said.

"This group has continued to work every day to be a competitive high school team and you can see it slowly starting to come together," Davis added.

"These things take time when you lose kids to graduation every year and new ones must step in and fill roles."

After participating in Class 2A of the three-classification basketball format the last four years, Community is now a part of Class 2A, District 7 in the new four-classification format.

The change has resulted in the Vikings landing in a district with just four teams, but has created district matchups with Forrest and intra-county rival Cascade. Grundy County is the other District 7-AA team.

"It has been different for sure in a 4-team district," Davis said.

"Playing this many non-district games this late sometimes is a mental letdown because players understand at this point which of these games carry more weight than others."

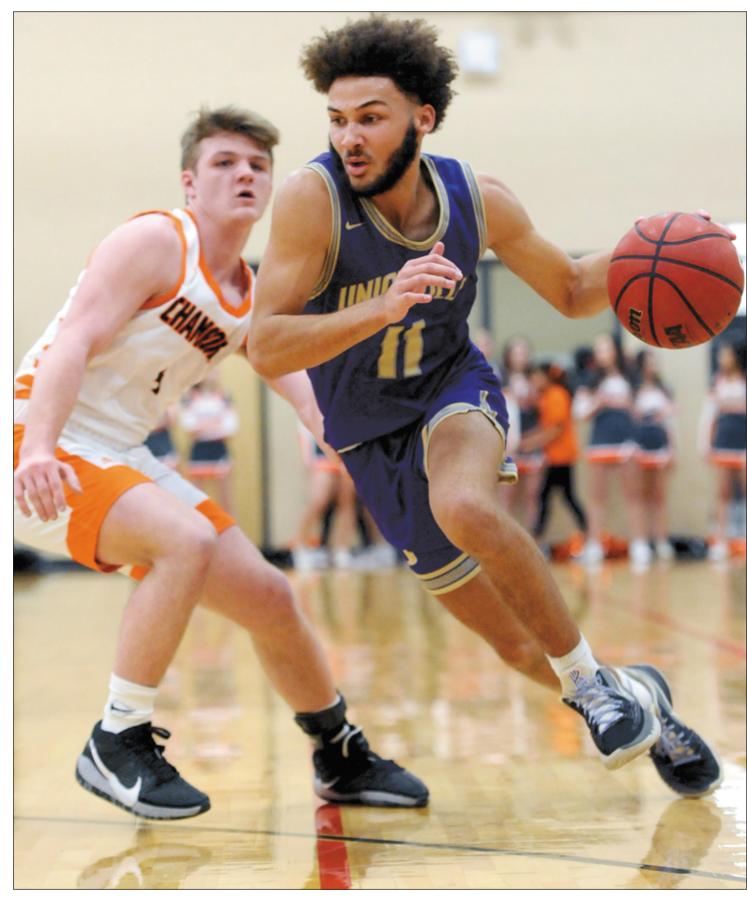
The Vikings entered the District 7-AA tournament with a 4-2 mark in district play, good enough for the number 2 seed. Included in Community's wins were a victory over top-seeded Cascade, and two wins over Fairview, who has been a top 5 team in the AP Class 2A state poll.

"Seeding for sure is important when it comes to the region tournament," Davis said.

"Being able to give the seniors another home game by being the 1 or 2 seed coming out of the district tournament is always nice and puts you in a great spot to be able to make a sub-state game if you can get one of those games at home."

Community, with an overall record of 14-15, will host an opening round game in the Region 4-AA tournament.

The semifinals and finals of the region will be held at Whites Creek High School.



Maki Fleming has given the Vikings a jolt of offense with his ability to get to the rim.

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Senior Jordan Green has been a key piece of the Lady Champions' roster with her work in the paint.



G Photos by Chris Sier

Lani Jones has provided Cascade leadership from the point guard role this season.

Lady Champs showing growth in postseason

By CHRIS SIERS

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It's been a season of growth for the Cascade Lady Champions.

Even though the wins haven't always been there, Cascade is playing its best basketball of the season.

After battling a roster plagued with injuries and sickness throughout the season, Cascade finished fourth in the District 7-AA standings, but upset No. 3 Grundy County in the tournament consolation game with a 66-55 win over the Lady Yellow Jackets.

Cascade's roster of six seniors consist of Kylie Calvert, Jordan Green, Caroline Stone, Abby Littrell, Makenna Lamb and Lani Jones and each of the senior Lady Champs bring a different element to the game

Green and Stone have been forces in

the paint, playing much bigger than their size, to give Cascade the needed inside presence.

Littrell and Jones have delivered the perimeter threat for the Lady Champs, while Lamb is the first off the bench to give Cascade the needed effort off the boards and on the defensive end of the court.

Calvert suffered an injury during soccer season that unfortunately cut her senior season short before it even began, but has been the heart and soul of the team on the bench.

While it was a season of injuries and illness Lady Champion coach Kendall Hampton had to navigate through, the silver lining was the roster chalked full of underclassmen saw plenty of time on the court, which has proved fruitful as Cascade locked up the No. 3 seed in the

Region 4-AA tournament.

"We dealt with a lot of injuries and illness early on this season. It gave a lot of our freshmen and sophomores time to step on the court. They got comfortable with it and don't play like freshmen do," Hampton said.

Sophie Ray has been a consistent effort player for Cascade, bringing a scrappy presence to Cascade's rebounding and defensive scheme.

Kaydence Miller has come on strong as of late and earned a starting role in the District 7-AA consolation game, where she scored 11 points and knocked down three 3-pointers.

The confidence by the younger Lady Champions has pushed the group of seniors to better their game even more.

"I know that confidence has come from playing earlier this season. We've been

able to take some of those back steps that some people would consider with injuries and illness and really start to develop and build the program up. Those freshmen and sophomores have really committed to it. It takes everybody on our team to give us what we've got," Hampton said.

Cascade opened the District 7-AA tournament with a tough loss to cross-county rival Community, but rebounded for its best effort of the season in taking down No. 3 Grundy County.

In the upset victory, Cascade put seven players in the scoring column and saw Green go for a season-best 20 points. Jones joined Miller and scored 11 points in the victory as well.

Cascade opened the Region 4-AA tournament on the road.

Lady Feet cruise through regular season

By WILL CARTER

Sports Writer

Last season, the Webb Lady Feet raised the TSSAA Division II Class-A State Championship trophy for the first time in program history after defeating Providence Christian 54-38 in the championship game to go along with their district and region tournament titles.

Heading into this season, the Lady Feet set their sights on doing the same and improving to a higher level.

To do so, they scheduled games against the No. 1 and No. 4 teams in Division II Class-A, Ensworth and Brentwood

The Lady Feet lost to Ensworth by a three-point margin, but defeated Brentwood Academy 51-39.

On a national level, they hosted Montverde Academy who is the No. 12 ranked team in the country, but the Lady Feet fell 41-33.

They also played in out-of-state tournaments where they faced more nationally ranked competition.

"We've played against eight or nine nationally ranked teams and we've been competitive in those," Lady Feet coach Matthew Shewmake said. "We beat the No. 15 team in the nation, and were in a onepoint game with the No. 4 team in the nation for a while."

In the regular season, the Lady Feet compiled a 22-6 record, and completely dominated their Division II, Class-A District 3 slate with an undefeated, 11-0 record in the regular season.

Much of their success, in large part, is due to how much depth their roster has.

Shewmake emphasized the talent across the board on his team.

"We have around five girls averaging right at double-figures and they all contribute in their own way," Shewmake said. "We have seven or eight that contribute."

Of the most notable are Summer Bostock and Bree Robinson who both compete internationally for Team Canada's Youth team.

Bostock committed to Maryland University in November to continue her basketball career at the next level.

Last week, the Lady Feet made easy work of the district and region tournaments on their way to both championship titles.

In the district championship, they beat Providence Christian 54-37 before dominating Davidson Academy by 50 points in the region quarterfinal.

A 10-point victory over Middle Tennessee Christain School placed the Lady Feet in the



T-G Photo by Will Carter

Junior guard Angelica Velez brings the ball across half-court during a game earlier this season.

region championship game against a familiar foe, Providence Christian, who they defeated 71-32 to land them a spot in the state quarterfinals.

It isn't only offense or only defense that the Lady Feet rely on as they pride themselves on their abilities at both ends of the

"We have a lot of firepower and scoring threats.," Shewmake said. "It's nice to be

able to score at all levels whether it's inside or outside. Defensively, we're really good as well."

While another state championship is on their radar, Shewmake just wants his team to continue improving.

"Playing our best and getting better each game is what I care about the most," Shewmake said. "Our schedule has so many ups-and-downs with playing elite teams, and then playing some teams that aren't as

"We just have to continue to push ourselves every day to be better."

The Lady Feet played against the winner of Lakeview Christian and Harding Academy on Friday but the final results were unavailable by press time.

The winner advanced to the state Final

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Feet riding all-around effort through postseason

By WILL CARTER

Sports Writer

The Webb Feet boys basketball program has been a force in Division II-A for the last five seasons, securing three district titles, two region titles, two Final Four appearances, and a state quarterfinal appearance.

In his first year as the Feet's head coach, Micah Williams led his team to a 16-8 regular season record and a district runner-up honor.

An all-around attack from the Feet squad, and some key contributors has landed them in the first-round of the Division II Class-A state tournament after an 82-58 victory over the University School of Nashville in the region consolation game.

"All year, it's been a team effort," Williams said. "We had a couple guys that made the regular season All-District team. Evan Eursher was one and was also named the District MVP."

"Stephen Olowoniyi and Arnett Hayes were also All-District. It's been an all-around effort, but those three have helped the most."

All three Feet players were deserving of their honors as they were the biggest contributors for the Feet offensively.

In his senior year for Webb, Eursher is averaging 18.3 points, seven rebounds, and five assists per game.

Hayes, on the other hand, is a freshman averaging 10 points, four rebounds, and two assists per game.

Olowoniyi is the big man in the middle for the Feet and their best shot blocker.

He is averaging 13.5 points per game, nine rebounds and two blocks per game.

Offensively, the Feet can score from inside and outside, but Williams emphasizes the importance of defense.

"Offensively, we've been able to score the ball pretty well," Williams said. "Defensively, we've progressed throughout the year, and it's helped us win some games lately"

"At this point in the year defense wins you games, and that's what we need to rely on."

In Division II Class-A, District 3, Webb finished with a 11-3 record and a share of first place in the regular season with University School of Nashville.

The Feet defeated Middle Tennessee Christian School 83-45 in the first-round of



T-G Photo by Will Cart

Stephen Olowoniyi earned all-district honors and has been a key part of the Webb roster this season.

the district tournament.

After a 23-point win in the semifinals over Columbia Academy, Webb fell to University School of Nashville in the championship, 65-61.

The loss landed them in the region quarterfinal against Friendship Christian where they walked away with a 61-58 victory.

Clarksville Academy got the best of the Feet in the semifinals by a score of 61-58.

Playing in DII-A basketball provides a level of competition that most teams don't see on a night-to-night basis.

The Feet have played 11 different teams ranked in the state for Division II and compiled an 11-9 record against those teams.

That experience will help as they're bound to meet the same caliber of teams in the state tournament and Williams wants his team to continue to play as one.

"The main thing is to make sure that we stay together," Williams said. "We need to share the ball offensively and continue to grind it out on the defensive end."

The Feet played Lakeway Christian on Wednesday in the first round of the state tournament, but the results were unavailable by press time.

The winner advanced to play in the quarterfinals on Saturday.

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T-G Photo by Rickey Clardy

Stratton Lovvorn became the 19th player in Community history to score his 1,000th point, which came in a win against Forrest on February 4.





Cascade's Justis Carter hit his milestone by scoring his 1,000th point in a 60-38 win at Watertown on January 24.