

Mount Marty's Amundson, Gross Earn Post-Season Recognition

BY JUSTIN RUST
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The post-season awards keep coming in for the Mount Marty women's basketball team.

Both senior Michelle Amundson and sophomore Kylie Gross received special honors, but not just for their on the court abilities.

Amundson was named as a finalist for the NAIA All-American Team, but also received the Dr. LeRoy Walker Championship of Character award.

Gross was honored with the Emil S. Liston award, which is presented annually to a junior basketball player who has shown athletic and scholastic achievement in the Great Plains Athletic



Amundson

Conference, and nominees must maintain at least a 3.5 GPA.

Gross is a junior academically and is a biology major.

Gross said she was surprised when she heard she received the award. "I didn't think I had a chance, so it was a nice thing to win it," she said.

Gross, a graduate of Yankton High School, is a junior because she already took some college courses before graduating from high school.

Gross gave credit to Mount Marty for helping her earn the award. "I have a pretty tough major and it really helps that the classes are smaller



Gross

and you get more individual attention," she said. "It really helps my grades and I am not afraid to talk to professors. It's tough work, but it helps to have that aid."

Mount Marty head coach Tom Schlingens said the award just shows how much effort Gross puts in on the court and off it.

"She is very worthy and is a great kid," he said. "She is a hard worker, not only on the floor, but also as a student. It's a nice award."

Amundson's Champion of Character award is given to a GPAC athlete who best represents its five core values: integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship and

servant leadership.

"These type of awards indicate what kind of person she is; that's more important than the other side," said Schlingens of Amundson. "The five core characteristics is really fitting of her and is a great honor for her. It just makes it double tough to see her leave, and she will be great in the nursing field."

Amundson said it's great to just be able to represent the school.

"It's always good to not just be looked at for your talents on the court, but also as a role model and a good teammate," she said. "Hopefully you can pass that on to the younger kids that you see play on your teammates, and hope it rubs off on them too."

Amundson earned a spot on the All-American Finalist squad after scoring 17.2

points per game, hitting 176 three's (47.1 percent from beyond the arc), dishing out 111 assists and getting 68 steals.

"That's a privilege too, because there are a lot of good players in the GPAC," said Amundson on her selection on the list. "It's just good to be recognized, and I don't have any control over who is picked for an All-American. It would be nice, but whatever happens, happens."

However, Schlingens said he would be shocked if Amundson isn't named an All-American.

"I would be disappointed if she is not named an All-American," he said. "She is deserving in every category, and down the road, she will be a Mount Marty Hall of Famer."

Viborg's Lee Headed To MMC



P&D FILE PHOTO

Viborg post Jessie Lee, left, will attend Mount Marty and play women's basketball for the Lancers. The senior, who will be making her state tournament debut today, signed her commitment Tuesday.

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Both Jessie Lee's current coach and future coach both agree that her best basketball is in front of her, which is saying a lot considering Lee is averaging almost a double-double on a state tournament team.

But it was Mount Marty's small school feel which drew Viborg's six foot standout to commit to the Lancers' program.

"I'm excited to go to Mount Marty because it's a small school that's close to home," Lee said. "I feel I can get to know the professors and coaches, and that's what I want. I feel you are more than just a number there."

Lee plans on majoring in radiology and was also considering Briar Cliff College, where former teammate Alyssa Kranning is at.

But Lee and Sioux City just didn't seem to mesh well.

"I felt a bit lost in Sioux City, and I didn't like the campus being that big," she said.

The Lancers will be more than glad to have Lee, who is averaging 17 and almost 10 rebounds a game.

Mount Marty head coach Tom Schlingens said he has been looking at Lee for a while now.

"We kind of had our eye on her last year, and it was a couple year procedure," he said. "We like her skill set, the way she runs the floors and we are glad to bring her on board."

Viborg head coach Patrick Kranning has worked with Lee since she was in fourth grade and is delighted she picked Mount Marty.

"Mount Marty's program is exactly the place she needs to be; I think she is a really good fit," he said. "Tom (Schlingens) is one of the best in the business. I think the sky can be the limit for her"

"In a couple of years, people are going to wonder how under-coached she was in high school," Kranning added with a laugh.

Kranning was joking, but Lee credits him for her development.

"I can trust him with what we are doing and to get me to improve," she said. "He knows how I want to be coached, along with every player. He pushes us hard in

practice, and that's what I like."

In fact, Kranning's coaching style is one of the things Lee saw in her future head coach.

"Coach Kranning said the two coaches have similar techniques and that I could trust him," she said. "I saw that in coach Schlingens as well and that the players who I talked to and said they really like him."

Schlingens also said that Kranning's coaching will help prepare Lee for the college level.

"With his daughter and son both being post players, and also Pat (Kranning) played some basketball, he has experience in the post," he said. "He has spent a lot of time with her, and I think her footwork is good and that she is a solid player."

Lee will join a program that is coming off its first back-to-back 20 win seasons, and she hopes she can contribute to another successful season next year.

"I am hoping to come in right away and feel like I am ready to contribute," she said. "From what coach Kranning has taught me, it will be an easy transition with coach Schlingens."

The Lancers do have two of their top post players back next year.

Junior Cassie Neth (11.5 points per game and 6.8 rebounds per game) and sophomore Kylie Gross (8.5 ppg and 6.8 rpg) were Mount Marty's two starting post players, but senior Kelly Schilling will be gone, allowing the back-up roles to be open.

Schlingens said he does see Lee having an impact on the team as the season goes on.

"We tell all of our kids that it's hard to get right into this level of basketball right away," he said. "We think she has enough upside that she can help us out as the season progresses, and we think she will be a player for us down the road."

Kranning said he thinks Lee is definitely ready for the college level.

"She has always played within an offense, so she knows how to fit in and I think that will just continue to improve," he said. "Tom will get a college ready player."

Lancers Score 34 In Sweep Of Calumet

ORLANDO, Fla. — The Mount Marty College baseball team rolled up 34 runs in a doubleheader sweep of Calumet College Wednesday.

The Lancers, 9-5 overall and 5-1 on its current Florida swing, plays Calumet again today (Thursday) at 9 a.m. Eastern, then plays Madonna at 2:30 p.m. MMC will also play a junior varsity game today, beginning at 11:30 a.m.

MMC 13, CALUMET 3: Josh Damedwood went the distance in the five-inning game for his second victory of the season. He also helped his cause at the plate, going 3-4 with a double and a run scored.

Josh Wenande had a powerful game at the plate, recording a home run and two doubles,

driving in four. Jason Schmidt went 3-3 with a home run, a double, three RBI and three runs scored. Zach Lambrechts went 2-4 with a homer and four RBI. Trey Krier had a hit, two walks and two runs scored. Logan Kortan added a hit and two runs scored in the win.

MMC 20, CALUMET 14: Damedwood and Andy Turbak each had three hits and four RBI in a high-scoring nightcap.

Turbak went 3-3 on the day. Damedwood had a double and four runs scored in his 3-5 effort.

Also for MMC, Krier went 2-3 with two walks and three runs scored. Dillon Lambley went 2-2 with a double and three RBI. Lambrechts scored five runs and drove in two. Schmidt had three walks and four runs scored. Wenande reached base three times, scoring twice. Dave Ogden had a hit and a run scored in the win.

CEDAR

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ppg), Everett Arens (1.4 ppg, 1.0 rpg), Todd Bottolfsen (0.7 ppg, 0.8 rpg) and Aaron Steffen (0.5 ppg, 0.9 rpg).

After losing a first-round game to Freeman last year, the Trojans appear more prepared to stay past Thursday this season.

"It's definitely a different feel. Last year we had a tough sub-district, and we had more of a 'happy to be there' feeling," Coach Steffen said. "This year, we're a little more focused, more confident that we can make some noise."

Cedar Catholic opens with Archbishop Bergan (20-3) of Fremont, a team making its fourth consecutive state tournament appearance. The Knights average outscoring opponents by over 20 points a contest.

"They're a team similar to us. They play fast, in-your-face defense. They're similar in size to us," Coach Steffen noted. "It should be a good game, but if we play defense the way we want to and shoot the ball well, we have a really good chance."

Bergan is led by seniors Nick Jensen (12.6 ppg, 5.0 rpg) and Derek White (12.3 ppg, 5.8 rpg). Pat Rasmussen (7.2 ppg), John Spellerberg (7.0 ppg) and Tanner Werth (6.3 ppg) give the Knights a well-rounded attack.

With the effort and preparation the Trojans have put into getting to this point, Coach Steffen expects that Cedar Catholic will be well-represented, no matter the outcome.

"This group of seniors has worked extra hard, has been playing together for years," he said. "If we don't win, I want us to be sure we've given it all we had."

Bergan and Cedar Catholic play at 3:45 p.m. at Lincoln Southeast High School, the second of four games in the C2 Tournament today. Play begins at 2 p.m. with top-seeded Axtell (22-1) against Dundy County-Stratton (16-7). The evening session begins at 7 p.m., with Ravenna (22-3) against Sutton (14-8), followed by Johnson County (22-3) against Burwell (22-1) at 8:45 p.m.

Semifinals will be played at Pershing Auditorium Friday, with play beginning at 7 p.m. The championship is set for Saturday at 9 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, with the third place game set for 2 p.m. at Lincoln Northeast High School.

VIBORG

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Christian, and Kranning knows the first game will be hard fought opener.

"It's a tough draw with James Valley, but it should be entertaining because we feel we match up well with them and play a similar game," he said. "We know we are going to have to play really good basketball, but I feel we have been doing that the last couple of weeks."

Senior forward Jessie Lee also knows it will be a hard first game.

"I know James Valley will be tough to beat, but we have a lot of similarities," she said. "If we get past them, we have a good shot. I think our team could pull through and hopefully go all the way."

One of the main reasons Viborg is in the state tournament is because of its defense.

"Our nuts and bolts have been on the defensive end and we lock people up," Kranning said. "A big reason for that is our three seniors."

Besides Lee, the other two seniors are guards Sage Knudson and Chelsey Larson.

Knudson has lettered for the Vikings since she was in eighth grade and Kranning considers her one of the best point guards in the state.

"She makes me a lot smarter coach with her decision making," Kranning said with a laugh. "She finds so many ways to contribute, which makes her an important player for us. The biggest difference for her this year is her defense and rebounding."

With Viborg's main point of emphasis being on the defensive aspect, the team has been lead on that end by Larson, who Kranning said has been the team's defensive MVP.

"Chelsey can tell you what she is doing and what everyone else

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will be doing, which is a great quality," he said. "She is a smart girl in the classroom and that carries over to the court. She has gone from being an unsung role player to someone who can score, handle the ball more and rebound."

Lee is Viborg's force down low and is averaging close to double-double this year with 17 points per game and almost 10 rebounds a game.

"In my mind, when the all-state teams are announced, she will be on it," said Kranning on Lee's play this year. "Jessie has played with some good players throughout her career, so this has been her year to step up. She worked hard to make herself a top-level basketball player."

Kranning said the difference for this team in years past is the teams depth.

"Our sophomore guards are good and they can provide a burst off the bench," Kranning said. "We legitimately have eight girls who can score in double-figures any given night."

Lee said the team is looking forward to finally being in the state tournament.

"It felt really good to get past regions this year, especially as a senior," she said. "We worked really hard and everyone has contributed well."

CARDS

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Jacob Backer and Matt Graham have also seen action in over half the games for Randolph.

"Grant's been a main contributor off the bench, especially with his rebounding and passing," Coach Anderson noted. "He's also played good defense, and he's filled three or four different spots on our 1-3-1 zone at one time or another."

The Cardinals open with second-seeded Overton (19-3), a team with a strong trio of leaders.

"They're a pretty athletic team," Coach Anderson noted. "Jared Shafer (15.6 ppg, 10.4 rpg) is a pretty good kid at 6-2. The Olmstead brothers, Jacob (17.8 ppg, 7.4 rpg) and Zachary (9.5 ppg, 6.1 rpg) are pretty tough. Jake drives to the basket more."

"Any time you win that many games in a season, you're going to have a good ball club."

While Randolph's offensive surge may have helped propel it to state, it will be the defense that keeps them there, according to

Coach Anderson.

"That's what we've hung our hat on. We play great in our 1-3-1 matchup," he said. "We also need to rebound well and be efficient offensively."

Coach Anderson feels the team's challenging schedule — 10 of their 21 games have been against Class C1 or C2 teams — has prepared them for what lies ahead.

"I think our schedule has set us up well for success in the post-season," he said.

Randolph and Overton play in Lincoln Northeast High School at 2 p.m. today, the third of four D1 games at Northeast today. Play begins at 9 a.m. with Freeman (23-2) against Sandhills-Thedford (18-6), followed by Humphrey (20-3) against Emreson-Hubbard (20-6) at 10:45 a.m. The final D1 game of the day pits Humphrey-St. Francis (16-6) against Exeter-Milligan (18-6), a 3:45 p.m. start.

Semifinal play will be held Friday at Pershing Auditorium, beginning at 9 a.m. The championship game will be a 9:30 a.m. start at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, with the third place game scheduled for noon at Lincoln Northeast.

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