

Goodrich's Tania Davis wins Miss Basketball

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Tania Davis is an intern in Goodrich's athletic department during fourth hour each day, and on Friday, girls basketball coach Jason Gray alerted her to a potential scheduling problem.

"Hey, listen," Gray said, "I think we've got a conflict with practice on Monday."

"What's up?" she asked.

"Well," Gray said, "you've got to go down to Detroit to receive the Miss Basketball award."

For an instant, Davis had a blank look on her face.

"What? What?" she asked. "So, wait? Are you saying I won?"

That is exactly what Gray was saying.

Davis is the 34th recipient of the Miss Basketball award, presented each year to the state's top senior by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan, in conjunction with the Free Press.

A four-year starter who has signed with Iowa, Davis accumulated 2,591 points in the voting. Presley Hudson of Wayland was second (2,194 points), and Cierra Rice of Grosse Pointe South was third (2,119 points).

Only "actively coaching" BCAM members are permitted to vote, and points are awarded on a 5-3-1 basis.

At 5-feet-3, Davis often is the shortest player on the court, but that has not limited her — except maybe in trying to lift the massive Miss Basketball trophy.

"It means a lot to be able to accomplish what I have at my height," she said. "It is pretty amazing to prove a lot of people wrong who thought I wouldn't be able to do what I've accomplished thus far."

Davis said she became aware of the award when she was in the eighth grade and learned more about it each year. She first believed it was a possibility during her sophomore year, when she teamed with Miss Basketball finalist Taylor Gleason to help Goodrich win a second straight state championship.

"By my sophomore year, I knew I could make that a reality," she said. "Just being able to be behind a leader such as Taylor Gleason, who was nominated for Miss Basketball, and seeing how hard she worked for it, pushed me and showed me that I, too, could be nominated and be a finalist and possibly win it."

Madison Ristovski of Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett was Miss Basketball during Davis' freshman year, and Tori Jankoska of Freeland won it the following year.

"I remember Madison winning it, but I didn't know how exactly she won it," Davis said.

"But Tori, I knew how she won it and what it was about. She won it by playing hard."

Davis is averaging 20.1 points, 4.6 rebounds, 5.7 assists and 2.5 steals this season in leading Goodrich into Tuesday's Class B quarterfinal game against Manistee in Mt. Pleasant.

Two years ago, Gray had an inkling that Miss Basketball could be a viable goal for Davis. In addition to the state championships, Davis is closing in on 100 victories throughout her four years.

"I was thinking she had two state titles, I knew what we had coming back last year, and regardless of whether we could win it or not, I knew we were going to have a good record and a good team," he said. "Typically, the voters reward people who win, and by the time she's done, her record is going to be one of the best ever."

After Gray informed her that she was Miss Basketball, Davis called her mother, Nicky Anderson, at work to share the good news -- but cautioned her that it had to remain a secret until Monday's presentation at the Free Press.

"I told her to keep it quiet," Davis said. "So she started screaming in a little silent voice. She was going crazy, trying not to draw attention to herself."

Davis is convinced that her performances in the state championship games, especially the one her sophomore year, when she scored 20 points, grabbed seven rebounds and had three assists, helped her win the award.

"I truly believe," she said, "playing at the Breslin for two years my freshman and sophomore year showed what I was about to a lot of coaches around the state and showed those coaches who I was."

She is Miss Basketball.

