

2019 Michigan Miss Basketball: Detroit Edison's Rickea Jackson

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Detroit Edison girls basketball coach Monique Brown dropped by the Jackson home Saturday with birthday balloons and a card for Rickea Jackson.

Jackson opened the card and began to read aloud:

“Congratulations, you are the . . .”

Suddenly, Jackson stopped reading. Her eyes filled with tears and she said: “No, I’m not; no, I’m not; no, I’m not.”

Yes, she is.

The rest of the card read: “2019 Miss Basketball.”

Jackson, 6-feet-3, was the overwhelming winner of the 38th annual Basketball Coaches Association’s Miss Basketball award, the most prestigious award a female athlete in Michigan can receive. The award is named for Mick McCabe, former longtime columnist for the Detroit Free Press.



Detroit Edison's Rickea Jackson (5) dribbles against Chandler Park India Respress (15) during the first half of the district semifinal at Harper Woods High School in Harper Woods, Wednesday, March 6, 2019. (Photo: Junfu Han, Detroit Free Press)

She earned 448 first-place votes of the 940 ballots cast and totaled 2,939 points. Moira Joiner of Saginaw Heritage was second with 1,988 points with Grosse Pointe North's

Julia Ayrault was third (1,826 points) and Muskegon's Alyza Winston fourth (1,707 points).

She is ranked among the top 10 players in the country and has been selected to play in the Jordan Brand Classic as well [as the McDonald's All-America game](#).

Although she has terrific basketball blood lines – her mother, Caryn, was an all-stater at Detroit Murray Wright and played at Kansas; her godmother, Debra Walker, was an all-stater at Detroit Mumford and played at Cheyney State (Pa.); her godfather, Wilbert McCormick, was an all-stater at Detroit Northeastern and played at Detroit Mercy – Jackson was not the least bit interested in basketball as a youngster.



“I absolutely hated basketball,” she said. “Everyone in my family did it and I was around it so much so it kind of got annoying. And I was such a girly-girl so I thought basketball was just a boys sport. You would not catch me touching a basketball. “I would rather walk around dancing and cheerleading and play in tutus than play basketball.”

That all changed a week before her 12th birthday when she and her parents went to watch one of her brothers play ball at the Lasky Recreation Center.

“We were in the car and I used to hate when people say they can do things better than me,” Jackson recalled. “My little brother played and they used to talk stuff about me and say; ‘You can’t play basketball.’ And I was like: ‘Yes, I can.’ ” The director of the rec center was Virginia Lawrence, who had had been the highly-successful girls coach at Murray-Wright.

“I was just sitting there watching my little brother play at his game and I was like: ‘I want to play,’” Jackson said. “I went over and said: ‘Miss Lawrence, did you teach my mom how to play? Can you teach me how to play?’” Her mother’s heart skipped a beat. She had always hoped her daughter would play basketball, but she refused to push her into it. Lawrence asked Jackson when she wanted to begin and she replied: “Right now.” Caryn looked at her older son and said: “Give her your shoes.”

Jackson had never played before, but her mother noticed something about the way she moved.

“Her instincts were just different,” she said. “She could rebound and run up the floor, but she forgot to dribble.”

Jackson proved to be a quick study. She became an impact player as a freshman and each year has shown a dramatic leap in her ability to dominate games.

Brown watched her play in the summer between her freshman and sophomore year and realized she may have a future Miss Basketball candidate on her hands.

Edison is an independent so Brown tailored the schedule so she could be seen in places like Saginaw, Flint, Grand Rapids, Jenison, Pewamo-Westphalia and Michigan Center.



Detroit Edison's Rickea Jackson (5) dribbles against Chandler Park's Anaya Kennedy (5) during the

first half of the district semifinal at Harper Woods High School in Harper Woods, Wednesday, March 6, 2019. (Photo: Junfu Han, Detroit Free Press)

It also helped that Edison voluntarily moved up a classification this season, competing in Division 2.

“My plan was to go play in all different areas in Michigan so people could see her just in case she had a chance to be Miss Basketball,” Brown said. “I know a lot of coaches will say: ‘I heard about the kid, but I’ve never seen her.’ I didn’t want that to be the situation with her.”

It wasn’t. Winning two state championships helps coaches know who they will be voting for the next year.

During her career, Jackson has established herself as one of the best players in state history. She went from being a post player to one capable of playing all five spots.

“She’s by far on an elevated plane,” said Dorene Ingalls, St. Ignace coach and BCAM’s chairperson for Miss Basketball. “She’s just somebody you don’t get and when you do it’s pretty awesome. I think she’s going to do some great things at the next level, but she’s already done some great things at this level.”

Jackson said she first became aware of the award in [2015 when Goodrich’s Tania Davis was Miss Basketball](#), but it never became a priority until midway through this season.

“If no one had brought up Miss Basketball, I probably wouldn’t have thought about it,” she said. “But the way it was out in the media and you have to do a video, that’s when I thought, ‘Hey, I really want this award.’”

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Detroit Edison's Rickea Jackson (5) makes a jump shot against Chandler Park during the first half of the district semifinal at Harper Woods High School in Harper Woods, Wednesday, March 6, 2019. (Photo: Junfu Han, Detroit Free Press)

The voting

Here are the results of the 38th annual Mick McCabe Miss Basketball award, given by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan. Only BCAM members are permitted to vote:

1. Rickea Jackson, Detroit Edison, 2,939 points
2. Moira Joiner, Saginaw Heritage, 1,988 points
3. Julia Ayrault, Grosse Pointe North, 1,826 points
4. Alyza Winston, Muskegon, 1,707 points

Votes are awarded on a 5-3-1 basis