Blue Raiders ink pair in spring signing period

Johnson, Porter join women's basketball program for 2012-13

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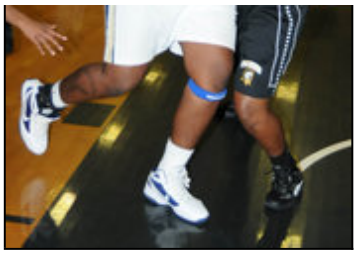
MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – The Middle Tennessee women's basketball team, coming off its 15th NCAA Tournament appearance, and head coach Rick Insell have announced the addition of two student-athletes to its program starting with the 2012-13 campaign. Both players, Jeniece Johnson (Washington, D.C.) and TiAnna Porter (Paris, Tenn.) provide depth to the front court positions as the Blue Raiders graduate just one player from a year ago, senior Molly McFadden.

Johnson will enter the program as the tallest player in school history at 6-6 and have two years of eligibility remaining after playing at Chipola College (Marianna, Fla.) for head coach David Lane. She is coming off a season in which she averaged 10 points and nine rebounds, while connecting on 57 percent of her field goals. As a freshman for the Lady Indians in 2010-11, she earned All-Panhandle Conference Second Team honors.



Originally from Washington, D.C., and Howard D. Woodson High School, Johnson signed with NC State and Kentucky out of high school before attending Chipola. She was rated as the No. 46 player nationally by Hoopgurlz.com after her prep career and led Woodson to three D.C. Interscholastic Athletic Association championships. She also was tabbed MVP of the 2008 City Title game after a 14-point, 12-rebound and four-block performance.

“Jeneice gives us some size at the post, along with Stephanie Myers,” Insell noted. “By signing Jeneice, it will help Stephanie become a lot better player in her last three years. It gives us two players at the post position with a lot of size and strength.

“Jeneice comes in with great touch and vision. Those are some of the things she can help Stephanie with. Some of that stuff you are born with and in this situation, she’ll be able to help teach Stephanie that. We are excited about having her, not only for games, but also for practices.”

Porter joins Middle Tennessee after a one-year stint at Pittsburgh, out of the Big East. A Paris, Tenn., native and Henry County High School product, the 6-2 sophomore forward will have three years of eligibility remaining after sitting out the 2012-13 campaign due to NCAA transfer rules and regulations.

She garnered three starts among the 21 games in which she played for the Panthers, averaging 2.9 points and 1.3 rebounds in 11.4 minutes. Two of her three starts came in conference action against at Villanova and Syracuse, while netting a career-best eight points versus Michigan State and six rebounds at Villanova.

In high school, she was a McDonald’s All-American nominee and ranked as the 18th best position player by Dan Olson’s Collegiate Girls Basketball Report. As a senior, she served as the team

captain and earned MVP accolades, while joining the school's 1,000-point club. A two-time District 10 3A Girls Team honoree, she participated in the East-West All-Star game.

"I see a lot of (former MT standout) Brandi Brown in Porter. She catches the ball, can turn and score, shoot the three, run the floor and is real aggressive on the post. I'm looking to play her more at the 3 and 4 positions."

Insell and the Blue Raiders return all five starters and 11 letterwinners from last year's squad that posted a 26-7 record, captured the Sun Belt East Division title outright for the fourth-straight season and competed in the NCAA Tournament for the eighth time in the last nine years.

Johnson and Porter join Caya Williams (Mt. Juliet, Tenn.), who signed during the initial eligibility period in November, as incoming players to the roster for next season. In addition, last year's signee MacKenzie Sells (Livingston, Tenn.), will return to the squad and have all four years of eligibility remaining.

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