

St. James' Branson, Smith Top FRC Hoops Honorees

By Arron Husted
Missourian Sports Writer

First the St. James Tigers took the Four Rivers Conference title, then they took the conference's top postseason awards.

Following an undefeated 7-0 conference season, St. James senior Andrew Branson was named the league's Player of the Year and Ben Smith received Coach of the Year Honors.

Branson averaged 23.8 points per game this season along with nightly averages of 6.9

rebounds, 2.73 assists and 3.19 steals.

Along with Player of the Year honors, Branson was one of six unanimous first-team all-conference selections.

The other five unanimous first-team picks were:

- Hermann senior Trent Anderson;
 - New Haven senior Luke Gerlemann;
 - Sullivan junior Owen Farrell;
 - St. James senior Mason Parker; and
 - St. Clair senior Dayton Turner.
- New Haven junior John Liggett and St.

James senior Logan Chick rounded out the first team.

Second-team selections include:

- Union senior Caleb Mabe;
- St. Clair senior Calvin Henry;
- St. James senior Austin Ridenhour;
- Sullivan junior Jordan Woodcock;
- New Haven senior Jay Eichelberger;
- St. Clair senior Justin Hoffman; and
- Pacific freshman Quin Blackburn.

Pacific junior Don TA Harris received sixth man honors.

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VanLeer Ends

complishments include six selections as Four Rivers Conference Coach of the Year and one selection as District Coach of the Year.

VanLeer is quick to give credit also to his family for their support, as well as those as the school's administration, parents and staff.

"The administration has absolutely had my back for 27 years," he said. "There were never any serious issues here because they backed me up all the way."

VanLeer led the Indians to 18 winning seasons during his nearly three decades at the helm of the basketball program, but none bigger than the district championship season in 2017-18.

That year saw the Indians knock off their perennial district foil, St. Francis Borgia Regional, in the championship game at Union, VanLeer's home town.

"To win the district was the most special game of my career," VanLeer said. "We played Borgia and won after so many years where they had knocked us out and then went on to some final fours. To look back at those moments, to have my son there on the floor and my other son made it home and was there in the stands just made it more special that night."

The district championship, VanLeer's first, was shared with his youngest son, Cameron, who was a senior guard and team leader that season.

Both of VanLeer's

sons, Cullen and Cameron, were four-year varsity players for the basketball program. The two played together during Cullen's senior and Cameron's freshman year in 2014-15.

Cullen went on to play collegiate ball for the University of Missouri before returning to Pacific to serve as an assistant coach for his father's final season.

"It was awesome to have him on staff," John said. "He had some good ideas and worked for some good people at Mizzou. It was a dream to have him on the same staff."

Cameron is currently a sophomore at Columbia College where he plays for the men's golf team.

John will coach the Pacific boys golf team one final season this spring. After that, he says he expects to do some landscaping part time, play more golf, watch Cameron golf and go hunting.

"When we get to the winter we'll see," he said. "Basketball has been in my life since I was in the 4th grade and somehow, somehow I'll probably still be involved."

As you would expect, VanLeer has earned a bevy of fond memories over his many years with the program.

"The year that I got to coach both my boys at the same time just flew by," he said. "It was a special year and it's something that you look forward to for so long. Pretty much every year though I can go back and there's some-

thing special about each season. The amount of emails and wishes I've received from people in the last week since they found out I was retiring has been unreal."

Whomever Pacific selects to next lead the program will no doubt have big shoes to fill, replacing one of the more heavily respected coaches in the area.

VanLeer's successor will have a sizable group of experienced players eligible to return next winter. The Indians graduate just one starter from this 11-15 season.

Washington Dartball League Playoffs First Round Thursday, Feb. 13

- (1) S&R Convenience def. (16) Town & Country
- (8) Elks Too def. (9) Clover Bottom,
- (5) Krawitz def. (12) Modern Auto
- (4) Muser & Assoc. def. (13) Hummingbird
- (14) American Legion def. (3) Elks
- (6) K of C def. (11) KCLC
- (7) Garrett's Lawn Care def. (10) Legion A
- (2) VFW-A def. (15) Hummingbird B

Quarterfinals Thursday, Feb. 20

- S&R Convenience def. Elks Too
- Krawitz def. Muser & Assoc.
- K of C def. American Legion
- Garrett's Lawn Care def. VFW-A

Semifinals Thursday, Feb. 20

- S&R Convenience def. Krawitz
- Garrett's Lawn Care def. K of C

Championship Thursday, March 5

- S&R Convenience def. Garrett's Lawn Care

Annual Meeting

The Washington Dartball League's annual end-of-season meeting will be held Thursday at the KC Hall starting at 7:30 p.m.

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Falcons

only allowed one hit and one unearned run. We also scored in every inning with 10 different players getting hits. The game is a lot easier when you're not playing from behind."

Second Game

The second game proved to be where East Central released all of the frustrations of the early part of the season, from losses to postponed games.

The Falcons scored three times in the bottom of the first and copied that in the second. In the third, East Central scored nine times.

St. Charles got its lone run in the top of the fourth, but the Falcons continued with another three-run inning in the bottom of the fifth.

Madelyn Webb (Wright City) tossed the win for the Falcons, allowing an unearned run on one hit, a double. She struck out one.

Offensively, Mallory Feldewerth (Bowling Green) led the way with three hits.

Jenna Crider (Washington), Kristyn England (Cuba), Katie Gaus (Canton), Jena Monehan (Washington) and Jordan Owens (Northwest) each had two hits.

Kaylee Abney (Owensville), Kaili Edler (Northwest), Dani Kim-

minau (St. Francis Borgia Regional) and Kaylyn McKee (Bowling Green) each had one hit.

Crider tripled. Abney, Edler, England, Gaus and McKee all doubled.

Abney, Feldewerth, Gaus and Kimminau drew walks. Feldewerth, Gaus, Monehan and Owens each stole a base.

Feldewerth crossed the plate four times. Gaus scored three times. Kimminau, Monehan and Owens each scored twice.

Abney, Crider, Edler and McKee scored once.

Crider drove in three runs. England, Gaus and McKee each had two RBIs. Abney, Edler and Owens drove in one run apiece.

First Game

In the opener, the guests scored three runs in the top of the second and added two more in the fourth.

East Central came back to cut the lead to 5-4 in the bottom of the fourth, but Union High School graduate Amanda Downing smashed a three-run home run over the center field fence in the top of the fifth to extend the St. Charles lead to 8-5.

"Our defense broke down a little but we did a good job of competing until the big blow (three-

run homer) in the top of the fifth," Wallach said. "We tried to answer but came up short."

The Falcons got one final run in the bottom of the seventh. Feldewerth homered to left field with one out.

Sierra Voiles (Crock-er) took the loss for the Falcons, allowing eight runs (four earned) on 12 hits and two walks. She struck out three.

St. Charles had three doubles and one home run.

Offensively, Owens had two hits to lead the way. One of the hits was a double.

Feldewerth homered and McKee also doubled. Gaus, Monehan and Voiles singled.

Gaus, Kimminau, Monehan and Maya Street (Clopton) walked.

England, Feldewerth, Kimminau, McKee and Street scored once.

McKee drove in two runs. Feldewerth, Gaus and Owens each had one RBI.

After visiting Southwestern Illinois College Tuesday, the Falcons return home for a doubleheader Wednesday afternoon against the Central Methodist University JV starting at 2 p.m.

East Central plays on the road in Canton Saturday.



Thanks to Fans

Members of the Sullivan basketball Lady Eagles pose with the Class 4 District 9 championship plaque in front of student supporters Friday in Union. Sullivan won the district title by defeating Rolla in the championship game. Sullivan plays Tuesday in Rolla against Helias in a sectional contest.

Missourian Photo/Bill Battle.

Sullivan

big free throws when we needed them. Overall it was a great game and I am extremely proud of our girls."

Sullivan jumped out to a 13-7 lead after one quarter and was up, 17-13, at the half.

Sullivan held a 24-20 advantage after three quarters and pulled away in the fourth.

Senior Mallory Shetley was the focus of the Sullivan attack. Shetley overcame picking up three fouls in the first quarter to lead all scorers with 23 points. She knocked down two three-point shots and went 9-9 from the free-

throw line.

Shetley didn't pick up any additional fouls after the opening quarter.

Kya Harbour, another senior, was next with 13 points, including two three-point baskets. She went 7-8 from the free-throw line.

Sophomore Rylee Denbow and senior Hanna Johanning scored three points apiece.

Senior Payton Dudley added one point.

Janke, a senior, and sophomore Taniya Corley scored eight points apiece to lead Rolla. Corley went 3-4 from the free-throw line and hit one of Rolla's two

three-point baskets. For the game, Rolla went 4-7 from the stripe.

Pritchett, a senior, netted seven points.

Rodgers, a senior, had three points while Campbell, a sophomore, and sophomore Madison Mace each scored two points.

Sullivan will play Helias (15-12) Tuesday at Missouri S&T in Rolla at 6 p.m.

Helias was the third seed in its district and beat top-seeded Boonville Thursday for the crown, 58-49.

Sullivan already has a win over Helias, 37-34, in the Sullivan Tourney.

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Panthers Edge Blues Monday, 2-1

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Brett Connolly scored early in the third period and Chris Driedger stopped 26 shots, leading the Florida Panthers to a 2-1 victory over the St. Louis Blues on Monday night.

Mike Hoffman also

scored for Florida and Aleksii Saarela assisted on both Panthers goals, the first assists of his career. He has played in nine regular-season games for the Panthers.

Colton Parayko scored for St. Louis. Jordan Binnington record-

ed 32 saves for the Blues and fell to 6-2 in his last eight starts.

Florida moved within one point of the idle Carolina Hurricanes for the final playoff spot in the East.

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ATHLETE

OF THE WEEK PROGRAM



Name: Ryan Hoerstkamp
Sport: Basketball
Grade: Junior
School: Washington HS

Reason for Nomination: Ryan ended the season on a high note, helping the Washington Blue Jays finish 18-9, the first winning record in six years. In his final two games, he had double-doubles in both scoring and rebounds. In the first round of Class 4 District 4 playoffs Ryan had 18 points and 10 rebounds, helping the Blue Jays win 51-36. In the second round Washington fell 48-42 to Priory where Ryan's efforts of 14 points and 11 rebounds just were not enough. He was named to the Borgia and Union All-Tourney teams, helping his team win a championship in each tournament during the season. He has had a great junior season, averaging 9.5 points a game and 8.2 rebounds. For his career he has scored 743 points and has a chance to eclipse 1,000 his senior year.



Name: Justin Hoffman
Sport: Basketball
Grade: Senior
School: St. Clair HS

Reason for Nomination: Justin has been playing at a very high level in recent games. In a three-game span Justin scored in double figures in all three games, including a career-high 27 points versus Windsor. In that game, Justin hit seven three-pointers. Justin also played great on the defensive end of the court, and has taken a team-high 16 charges on the season, which is something he takes a lot of pride in.

NO FEMALE ATHLETES WERE NOMINATED THIS WEEK

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