

Mary Kate Campbell

Tiffin Women's Basketball Overview

The Tiffin Women's Basketball team seems to not have much of an off season. They are practicing all year through. The preseason conditioning began in September, and went all the way up until October 15th. The special thing about this year's women's basketball team is that they have the exact same team as the prior year. Every player is back, and no one is new. The one difference this year, one coach is gone, and a new grad assistant has added on. Being the only new one to the program, he seems to be catching on quickly. Throughout the many different personalities, backgrounds, and ages, the entire team gets along very well, and all have great relationships with each other.

The team is made up of three coaches, and thirteen players. The head coach is Pam Oswald. This is her fifth season as the head coach at Tiffin. The Assistant coach is Kylene Spiegel. This is her third season being an assistant coach, the past two years she was a graduate student, and the four years before that she was a member of the Tiffin team. Coach Ky played for Coach Oswald for one year. Coach Bell is the graduate assistant coach; this is his first year in the program. Holly Focke is the oldest on our team, a fifth year senior, and a third year captain. She is a vocal leader, and it is evident that the team responds to her criticism very well, and respects her as a player, leader, and a teammate. Mandy Jaeb is a senior and a second year captain. She is another player that the team thinks very highly of as a player, leader, teammate, and person. She shows her leadership by example, and through her determination, she encourages her teammates to be the same way. Jess Harris is a junior and a second year captain. She does not say too much, but when she does, everyone listens. Karli Mast is a junior, and a first year captain. She shows her leadership through her drive to be the best player she can. You can see these captains'

leadership both on and off the court. The closeness and respect that this team has for each other, is a good reflection of the captains and the coaches leadership style. Not one person is looked down upon, and everyone feels accepted.

The coaching staff not only teaches their team basketball skills, they also teach them life skills. At the beginning of every year, each member of the team is given a contract, with all the team rules and expectations on them. Once they sign the contract, they cannot argue what they agreed to. The rules the coach has in place, may seem strict but they teach the players respect, and discipline. They are set in stone, and the players know to follow the rules. Each player holds their teammates accountable for doing the right thing. Some rules for example consist of a no underage drinking policy, along with absolutely no drinking the night before a basketball event, and no one is permitted in Tiffin bars, all year round. This may become difficult for the average college student but it helps bring out the determination and dedication the players have. Coach believes that her players will be at their best if they follow this rule, and if players want to give their best, they follow these rules. Last year a couple members of the team got in trouble for underage drinking. They did not only get in trouble with coach, but also their teammates had a talk with them. It is rare to find too many of the players disregarding the rules, but because they did get caught this one time, they showed they would do what was asked of them to remain on the team. This shows how the players hold each other accountable for wanting to win. This is a program built of players and coaches that put the team and winning before their social life or personal gains.

In the examination of practice, a few things seem to be a common theme from day to day. Every player in in the locker room at least a half hour before practice unless they have class. This gives them plenty time to spare, but every time the team has to be somewhere, they are there at

least fifteen minutes ahead of time. Coach enforces promptness. The coach also puts a practice plan in the locker room, before practice every day. This allows the players to know what is ahead of them. This plan also contains a thought of the day, most often it is a motivational quote that coach will randomly ask the team what the thought is, and they are expected to know what it was, and understand what it is coach is trying to get across with that quote. To begin practice every day, the team will do the same cheer and report to the baseline. This shows unity in the team, and having a consistent routine before practice gets the players in the mindset that they are about to be playing. Throughout the practice, every time coach calls out a drill, or play, everyone repeats what she says. This allows the players to all be sure they heard it, and it gets them to simulate a game like situation. Everywhere a player goes, they are running to. It is unacceptable to walk anywhere because it shows a lack of hustle. Whenever a coach or fellow teammate tells you what you did wrong, what you should do, or how to change something, the player must always respond with “rebound,” while looking into their eyes as they are being spoken to. When a compliment is given the proper response is “slam dunk.” These responses ensure they you heard what was said and acknowledges that you understood, and will do what was asked next time.

As many sports teams do, this basketball team falls into days when they are just not doing well in any aspect of their game, as they also have days when they are hitting on all cylinders. Everything plays into when they are on their game and when they are not. What seems to be a common factor is two players. Mandy Jaeb, one of the senior captains, seems to be a player that is always making the team better. The team she is on in practice, always seems to have an extra high, the whole time. Holly Focke is another player that influences the team’s play quite often. if she or Mandy are having an off day, subconsciously it seems to be that the rest of the team have

a rough day too. Holly is one that is not afraid of yelling at the team and telling them to get their acts together. She is not afraid of people not liking her because she wants all her teammates to have the will to win that she does, and if everyone gives their all, she knows we have potential to be a great team. The team seems to respect Holly, for having the courage to get mad, when no one else will, and they seem to respond well to her yelling as a slap on the wrist, and as motivation to step up their effort level. It is clear throughout practice, when coach has just yelled at the team, and when she got super pumped about something good they did. When the players are continuously being yelled at you almost see in their body language the hurt, but the drive to do better the next time. When coach gets excited about a play, everyone gets excited about the play because it takes a lot to get her pumped. The whole atmosphere is completely different.

To be sure that the players are getting to know their coaches outside of just getting yelled at, at practice, they are required to go up to the coach's office once a day to say hi to them, and talk about things other than just basketball. This keeps the player-coach relationship better than just on the court. The coaches also make sure that the players are staying up on their academics. What is good about this coaching staff, is that they expect everyone's best not only on the floor, but also in the classroom. Each player has an academic meeting every week with a coach to ensure everything is going well in the classroom, and if there is a low grade, the coach makes sure proper actions are taken to make sure the player does better.

Between the strict rules, office visits, high expectations, and everything else, the Tiffin University Women's basketball team is more than just a basketball team. It is a team of thirteen individuals, working together to create a new tradition at Tiffin. They are learning more than just the game of basketball. They are learning determination, dedication, respect, timeliness, and much more to become great people. They are also building great friendships with these girls they

are spending one to four years with, working towards the same goal. To become champions both on and off the court. Through the help of their coaches, teammates, and fans, these players are accomplishing what they joined this team for, and that is to become the best that they can be.