Black and Gold Player Spotlight

By Nick Phillips

The Pine Needle sits down with women’s basketball player T.J. Howell as the season begins.

What are your expectations for yourself and the team as you start the new season?

My expectations for myself would be to continue to get better and adjust to the offensive and defensive styles of the team. There is still a lot to learn and a lot of opportunity to get better. My expectations for the team would be to make the NCAA tournament and at the very least past the first round.

Describe your experience as a UNCP student athlete.

My experience as a student-athlete so far has been challenging. It is a much different atmosphere than high school and the work load is more challenging. Being in the honors college has added to the challenge, but I’m really enjoying myself here at UNCP.

What is your most exciting basketball moment?

My most exciting basketball moment would be from an AAU tournament my team hosted every year in memory of his son. We had never made it to the championship game until we beat a team in double overtime by 2 points. It was just a great feeling knowing we did something none of his other teams were able to do and in memory of his son.

Who are your inspirations, in basketball and in life?

When I was in high school, I had a teammate who I always looked up to. I admired her composure on the court and how dedicated she was to everything she did. I hope to be just as good a teammate as her and be looked up to in a way that she was. In life, my parents were my biggest inspiration. They have always encouraged me in everything I do and were willing to help me in every way they could. They provided positive support and helpful advice whenever I needed it.

What do you do personally before a game?

Before games I have the same routine every time. I always have some form of candy, usually Skittles and an energy drink. I have done this since high school. Call me superstitious, but I have to have them. I listen to the same playlist to pump myself up most every game. After I get dressed, I go out and shoot with the team and get ready to play.

Who made the biggest impact on your college experience?

The men’s team. They were so much fun to be around and they were always so supportive and willing to help me in every way they could. They provided positive support and helpful advice whenever I needed it.

What are your expectations for yourself and the team as you start the new season?

I expect to be a better all around player. I hope to get better at everything I do. Last year I was able to contribute on both ends of the court and I hope to continue to do that.

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