



Magic Basketball Squads Celebrate 20 Win Mark

Timing was everything to both the men's and women's STLCC-Meramec basketball teams on Saturday (Feb. 12) when they swept visiting North Central. The wins, just two hours apart, helped each of the Magic squads reach the prestigious 20 win plateau for the season.

For the women's squad the accomplishment reflects a remarkable turnaround under second year head coach **Shelly Ethridge**. The Magic are 20-2 and ranked 14th nationally but are all but certain to move up in the next poll after their upset win over national power Jefferson College earlier in the week. It is just the fourth 20 win season for the team in 20 seasons.

Victory #20 did not come easy for the Magic. The usually strong offense sleepwalked through much of the first half against Region XVI rival North Central. The team did not score its first point until a free throw by sophomore center **Kasei Evans** (Hazelwood Central broke the ice at the 14:16 mark.

Surprisingly, Meramec's first field goal was still a few minutes away. Evans converted a lay up to give the Magic a whopping 3 total points at 10:53 of the first half. North Central was no scoring juggernaut early either, with just 10 points for a 10-3 lead. The relative scoring stalemate dragged into halftime with a 23-23 tie.

The Magic offense finally awoke late in the second half when the team went on a 12-0 run in over just a two minute span. With six minutes remaining and Meramec now leading 51-39, frustration boiled over as North Central head coach Jennifer Croy was slapped with a technical foul. Meramec coasted home to a 67-53 win.

Sophomore forward **T.T. Johnson** (Hazelwood Central) was the high scorer with 21 points followed by forward **Courtney Panus** (Pattonville) with 12 points and 10 rebounds. Evans scored 11 points and recorded 11 rebounds.

The team also stands a strong chance at shattering the program record for fewest losses in a season. With just two defeats for the current squad, the record of seven losses set in the 1976-'77 and tied in the 1977-'78 seasons seems well within reach.

Meanwhile, in the men's game, the 11th ranked Magic took control early and never looked back, blowing out North Central 83-59. Coach **Randy Albrecht**, wrapping up career win number 714, avenged an earlier season loss at North Central.

The 20 wins for the men's team (20-6) marks their fifth consecutive 20 win season and their eighth in the last nine years. In Albrecht's 34 seasons as Meramec head coach, he has recorded 18 separate 20 win seasons.

Both teams stand atop the Region XVI post season standings for the number one tournament seed. The women's team is 7-0 with three regional games remaining (STLCC-Forest Park, STLCC-Florissant Valley, and Cottey) while the men's team is 5-1 with a pair of regional games left (Forest Park and Florissant Valley.)