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Pearl River Community College freshman guard Laterrica Booth (24) of Bassfield works her way around this East Mississippi Community College player in a recent game. Booth is one of 10 freshmen players for the Lady Wildcats this season. Basketball photos by Mitch Deaver.



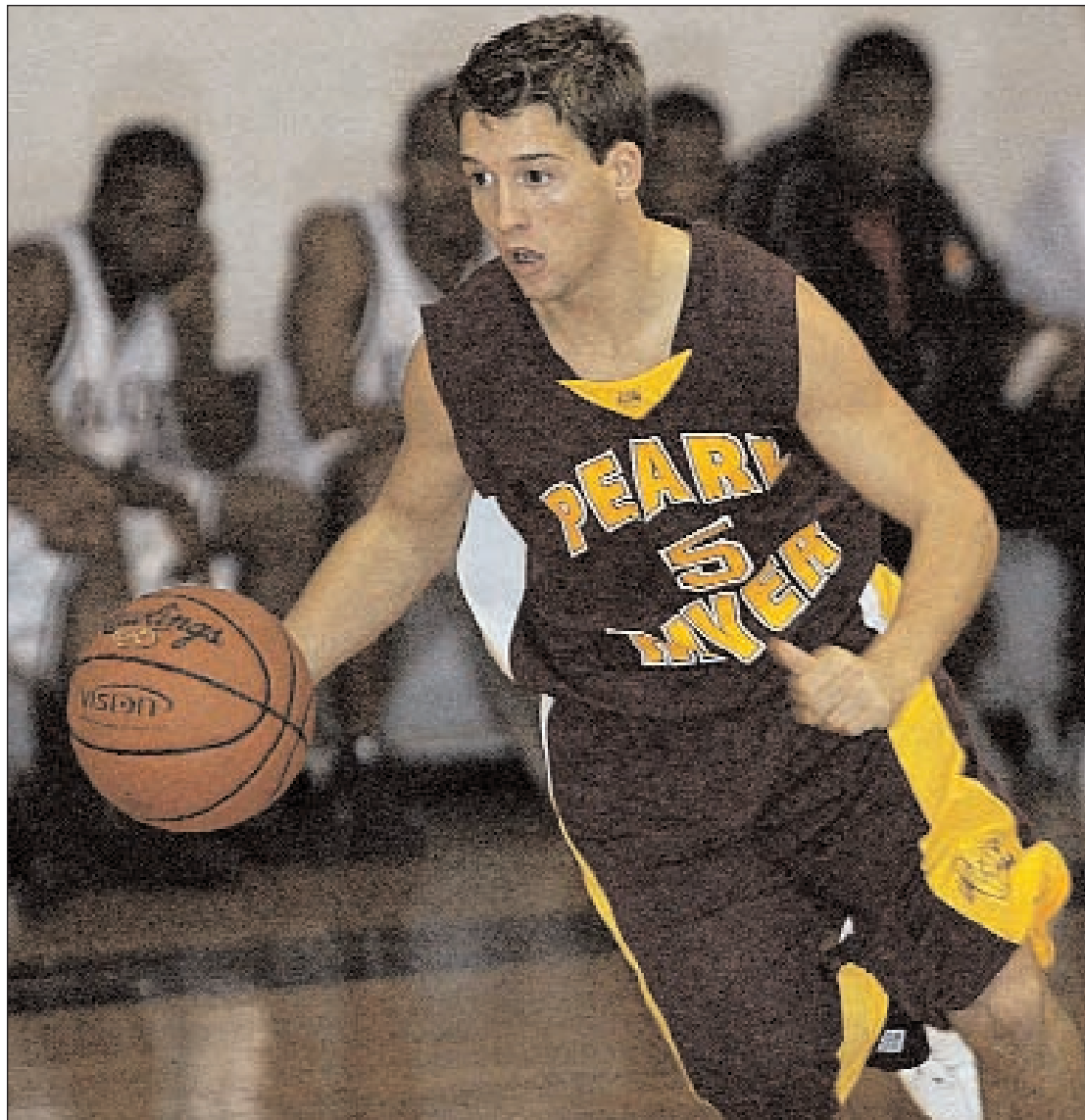
Pearl River Community College freshman forward Jamar Flowers (12) of White Castle, La., drives to the basket against East Mississippi Community College in an earlier game this year. Flowers is one of eight freshmen on the Wildcat basketball team.

Wildcats break for holidays

POPLARVILLE - Pearl River Community College's men's and women's basketball teams have wrapped up their pre-Christmas Holiday schedule for 2005. The Pearl River men dropped a 77-49 decision to Northeast Community College in Booneville Saturday. Alton Robinson and Wesley Jones each had 10 points to lead the Wildcats, who finished the 2005 portion of their schedule with a 5-5 record. The Pearl River women dropped an 82-50 decision to Northeast. The Lady Wildcats, behind 42-25 at the half, were led by LaTerrica Booth with 15 points and Shannon Primos with 10. The Lady Wildcats finished the 2005 portion of their schedule with a 1-9 record.

Earlier last week, the Wildcats demolished Itawamba's Indians 71-50 in the Poplarville High gymnasium, avenging their first loss of the season at the hands of ICC. The Lady Wildcats, on the other hand, picked up their only win thus far in the 2005 hoops season against Itawamba; but stumbled to a 56-46 loss to the Lady Indians. ICC defeated the Wildcats 74-64 in Fulton, while PRCC's women took a 58-52 victory over the Lady Indians Nov. 10. Jones, of Beatrice, La., scored 13 of his game-high 26 points in the first 10 minutes of the second half. His bucket at the 10:10 mark capped a 20-7 run by the Wildcats to open the second half action. Four minutes later, forward

Alton Robinson, a Colorado State signee, made good on a three-point play to put PRCC up by 20, 59-39. In women's action, the two teams battled to a 26-26 stalemate at the intermission, but Pearl River's paltry 26.7 percent (eight of 30) shooting percentage in the second half doomed the Lady Wildcats. PRCC shot 57.1 percent (12 of 21) from the field in the first half. Booth led PRCC with 12 points (seven rebounds, four assists), while Dee Robertson of North Forrest scored 11 and hauled in a team-high 11 boards. The basketball season will resume on Thursday, Jan. 5, when the Wildcats hosts Mississippi Delta.



Pearl River Community College freshman Patton Stanley (5) moves the basketball down the floor against East Mississippi Community College earlier this season. Stanley played his high school basketball at Wayne Academy in Waynesboro.

Hayes voted coach of the year

POPLARVILLE - Pearl River Community College Head Soccer Coach Patrick Hayes was voted the Mississippi Association of Community & Junior College's Women's Soccer Coach of the Year recently by fellow coaches from throughout the state. Hayes, who has been coaching soccer since 1996, is in his second year as the men's and women's head soccer coach at PRCC. The 2005 Lady Wildcats, a young team with 15 freshmen, were the first-ever PRCC women's soccer team to win the MACJC State Soccer Championship with a 2-1 victory over Mississippi Gulf Coast College this October. Last season, the Lady Wildcats finished 8-4-2, and three Wildcats were named to the 2004 NJCAA Academic all-American team.

"I am proud to receive this recognition from my fellow coaches," said Hayes. "Assistant Coach Chad Hampton and I have worked hard to bring in quality freshmen. We coach students to play quality soccer through organization and by developing strategies to move the ball down the field. Each player knows what their roll is on the field." This summer, Hayes received a National "B" coaching license through a course conducted by the United States Federations Coaching School in Deerfield Massachusetts. Hayes is a member of the Mississippi Olympic Development soccer staff

and head coach in the Mississippi Gulf Coast Men's Soccer League. Hayes resides in Poplarville with his wife Nikki Hayes, and they are expecting their first child in December. ■ Meanwhile, sophomore Erin Holder of Oak Grove, a center-midfielder for the Lady Wildcats, was named second-team All-American. Said Hayes, "Erin was the glue that held all the pieces together for us." ■ Five PRCC soccer players made the All-Region 23 first team. Joining Holder from the Lady Wildcats were Nikki Shows of Forrest County AHS and Haadi Likely of Gautier. Named to the men's team from Pearl River Community College were Zach Crawford and Hagen Napier, both of Oak Grove High School.



Hayes



Holder

PRCC baseball coach pleased with fall workouts

POPLARVILLE - Following six weeks of workouts and several exhibition games this fall, new Pearl River Community College head baseball coach Jamie McMahon says Wildcat fans have something exciting to look forward to next spring. "I like our team because we are very athletic; something you can't really teach," said McMahon. "We are young (22 new faces). We won't have as much power as we had last year, but we will have speed. Our first seven guys in the lineup run seven flat in the 60-yard dash." The Wildcats will be trying to improve on last year's school record 46-12 mark and No. 1 ranking in the final NJCAA Division II poll. McMahon, an assistant under previous head coach Jay Artigues for three years, and his new coaching staff spent fall drills evaluating the players and putting them in the right places. "We wanted to teach them our system and paid attention to the little things in the game," said McMahon. "I was pleased. As we got near the end of the fall, they all started clicking. Come spring, they will pick it up a little more and I think we will be a good club." Matching last year's success won't be easy. Only four starters return from a team that hit .340, including the entire outfield. The pitching staff returns only



McMahon

one starter in sophomore P.J. Treadway of Picayune, who has already signed with Southeastern Louisiana, where Artigues is now the head coach. Sophomore transfer Baron Short, a 6-foot-5 righthander who pitched at Alcorn State University last season, headlines the pitching newcomers. Short has signed with Southern-Baton Rouge. McMahon also expects freshman Heath Stevens of Picayune, Chris Hartfield of Biloxi and Brandon Hodge of Poplarville to be starters, as well as southpaw Wayne Smith of Oak Grove, who is recovering from an elbow injury. McMahon says sophomore Jody Lee of Picayune and freshman Kyle Lindsey of Purvis will provide bullpen depth. "In the past, we have had four pitchers who have dominated, but this year, we have eight or nine guys who will pitch a lot for us," said McMahon. Grenada freshman Johnny Allen tops the list of catchers, although he must recover from an ankle injury. Freshman Edward Joe of Ridgeland provides depth there. McMahon has penciled in sophomore Chris Stewart of Picayune as the third baseman. Stevens and Petal freshman Zac Tisdale are competing at shortstop, sophomore Dustin Thibodeaux of Picayune and freshman Jeremy Green of Purvis are at second base, and freshman Brock White of Columbia and Lindsey are at first. The returning outfield features

sophomores J.P. Moreaux of Picayune (hit .355 last year) in left, Grant Hogue of Oak Grove (.301) in center and Rene Ritchie of Thibidoux, La. (.276) in right. "With the speed we will have, I expect us to play a lot of small ball, creating some things, maybe apply some pressure on the defense with our speed," said McMahon. "When you pitch well and play good defense, you always have a chance to win. And those will be our strong points." As a result of Hurricane Katrina, the PRCC baseball stadium will have some changes. The first-base dugout, destroyed by the storm, is being renovated to be underground, like the third-base dugout. The grandstand cover tin is due in this month. New lights are expected to be installed in time for the season opener (Feb. 10-11 vs. Bossier (La.) Parrish. The Wildcats play a 50-game schedule. The MACJC State Tournament will be played at the home of the Central Division champion. The 46 wins in 2005 was a new single season record for wins at PRCC. The previous record was 42 (2002 & 2005). Pearl River won its second consecutive conference championship and its third in the last four seasons. The Wildcats also advanced to the state playoffs for the fourth consecutive season and is the only team in the MACJC to qualify for the state tournament for 4 straight seasons. Assisting McMahon this season are Reggie Richardson, Nate Murray and Justin Byrd.

Softball coach feels good about Lady Wildcats

POPLARVILLE - Pearl River Community College women's softball coach Leigh White feels confident about her 2006 team following five weeks of fall workouts and exhibition games. White, beginning her third season at PRCC, believes her team will be a contender when the spring season gets here. "We are young, but very, very talented and scrappy," said White. "Because of Hurricane Katrina, we only had one week of practice before playing some exhibition games. We got some things accomplished, but we also see how much work is ahead of us before next season." Last year's PRCC team finished with a 19-14 overall record and 10-7 mark in the South Division. The Lady Wildcats failed to qualify for the state playoffs. "We are focusing a lot on conditioning right now to get mentally and physically prepared," said White. "We had a lot of growing up to do this fall as far as learning our system. They have come a long way since the first day of school." Hurricane Katrina had an impact on the PRCC team, both from a player standpoint and facilities. "Out of 15 players on the team, five of them had problems, and two of them lost everything they

had," said White. Two other players also chose not to return to school due to the storm. As for the softball facilities, Katrina destroyed both dugouts, blew down a portion of the outfield fence and half of the stadium roof is gone. The fence is back up, and work has begun on two new underground dugouts, similar to the underground dugouts at the adjacent baseball field. The stadium roof will be repaired, and new lights may be up in time for a high school tournament Feb. 17-18. "When the work is all finished, it will look better than it did before the storm," said White. "If the lights are up and ready to go, we will play our games at 3 and 5 o'clock so more fans can come watch us play." As for the team itself, White lost nine starters off last year's team, including pitcher Whitney Vamos. White says look for sophomore Jennifer Sims of Pascagoula (11-6 record last season) and freshman Lainie Anderson of Port Sulphur, La., to be the top pitchers. "Jennifer has about five pitches and Lainie has two or three pitches," said White. "Both of them will pitch a good bit for us. Big thing now is to get them in shape and ready to go by February."

Traci Breland of Poplarville and Kim Kelly of Hattiesburg are a couple of returning sophomores who will have to step up this year. Breland is an infielder and Kelly a catcher, along with freshman Jessica Scallan of Metairie, La. Players who will be counted on for power at the are Scallan, freshman infielder Morgan Necaize of Hancock, freshmen Jesse Stockstill of Poplarville, Krystal Penton of Picayune and sophomore Amber Gray of Meridian. Other players on the team include sophomore Brittney Pigott of Poplarville, and freshmen Sasha Franklin and Sunny Grabert of Foxworth, Carley Lowe of Sandy Hook, Kaci Williams of Hurley, and Courtney Vincent of Hancock. "We are going to have to have a lot of freshmen step up and play well for us," said White. "Hitting wise, we will be okay. Some of them can take charge in the batting box. Pitching wise, we will be okay if we stay healthy." White's assistant coach again this year is Felicia Gonzales, a former pitcher for the University of Southern Mississippi. PRCC will compete in the South Division against Gulf Coast, Southwest, Cophiah-Lincoln and Jones Junior College. The first-place team in the South Division will host the state tournament. The Lady Wildcats will open the season Feb. 21 at East Central.



White