

College-bound Bird girl hoopster will remember where she's been

BY JOHN WALKER

One of L.C. Bird's premier girls' basketball players has committed to play at Pfeiffer University.

Brina Bentley, a 5-9 forward, has shown that hard work pays off over the course of time.

"It feels like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders knowing that I have a home for the next four years," she said.

The Skyhawks senior had interest from many schools, including Barton College, Virginia Wesleyan, and St. Augustine. Bentley chose Pfeiffer because it felt more like home, and it presented a new opportunity to shine at the next level.

"To be honest, I didn't know anything about Pfeiffer until the assistant coach contacted me," said Bentley. "But when I went on the visit, it felt like I was at home. I didn't have any offers at that point."

The talented player was a presence on the court for L.C. Bird, as she had 462 points for her varsity career – 272 of those points coming this year.

L.C. Bird coach Chevette Waller said she was proud of Bentley and her hard work.

"I am extremely proud that Brina gets the opportunity to play at the next level," said Waller. "The type of player Brina is doesn't always get the recognition because she's not the leading scorer and her stats might not always show in the paper, but Pfeiffer University took note."

The four-year player said she would miss a lot about playing for L.C. Bird and for coach Waller.

"I am going to miss the team, a.k.a. my little sisters. They always made me laugh and mad sometimes," Bentley explained. "I'll miss our team outings and always being together. But most of all, I'm going to miss Coach Waller and our lunch dates. The first year I played on her team, we had a team bonding exercise and she told me that she didn't even know who I was. She always pushed me to be my best."

Waller also knows Bentley is where

she is today because she had a nice supporting cast.

"Brina is where she is at today because of the supportive circle she surrounds herself with," Waller said. "Most importantly, it's her determination to excel as a student athlete."

Waller said she is confident Bentley will excel at the next level, and she will be missed as a Skyhawks player.

During her high school career, she transformed her game to be one of Bird's most valuable players. In that time, she was named to All-Conference, All-Region and All-Academic teams. Furthermore, she grew into a leadership role her senior year after losing senior point guard Madison Baum to a season-ending knee injury over the summer.

She was not only the tallest player on the team; she was the only experienced varsity player (70 percent of the team were freshmen and sophomores). Coaches not only expected, her to step up as the leader



BRINA BENTLEY

the team needed, but demanded it.

"She not only expected the challenge," Waller said. "But she exceeded our expectations."

"She welcomed being the momma of our team. She knew her job was to rebound, score, be a vocal leader and encourage her teammates, and get scrappy."

"Even though she gave up 3-4 inches and 30-40 pounds, she always looked at the coaching staff as to 'what more can I do to help.' She knew the importance of her presence on the court and represented our team motto: no excuses... such an unselfish role for her."

And although she will nest as a Pfeiffer Falcon, once a Skyhawk, always a Skyhawk.



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