

SPORTS



COACH YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN
...Ole Miss Women's Basketball Head Coach

Excitement throughout Ole Miss campus with GB Coach Yo's compelling presence

2018-2019 season begins November 6

Recently, I had a chat with the University of Mississippi's Communications Specialist Ty Wooten, and the euphoria surrounding the presence of Grand Bahama's Coach Yolett McPhee-McCuin on campus, in the capacity of chief of the women's basketball program was emphasized.

"We are really happy to have her here. We are all looking forward to the new season and our hopes are high," said Wooten, as we spoke about the upcoming schedule, during which the high expectation is that Coach Yo will lead the Lady Rebels out of the doldrums, a period of bottom of the ladder performances, to Southeastern Conference prominence.

Last season, the Rebels finished just 1-15 (.063 winning percentage) in the prestigious conference and just 13-19 (.387 winning percentage) overall last season. The SEC has 14 members inclusive of the following schools outside of Ole Miss: Alabama, Arkansas, Auburn Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana State University, Mississippi State, Missouri, South Carolina (the defending conference championship team), Tennessee, Texas A&M, and Vanderbilt.

The power teams in the SEC, at this time, based particularly on last season, are Mississippi State (16-0 SEC and 37-2 overall), South Carolina (12-4 SEC and 29-7 overall), Georgia (12-4 SEC and 26-7 overall),

Tennessee (11-5 SEC and 25-8 overall), Missouri (11-5 SEC and 24-8 overall), Texas A&M (11-5 SEC and 26-10 overall), LSU (11-5 SEC and 19-10 overall).

The aforementioned, collectively, is what Coach Yo and her Lady Rebels force will be up against as they seek to recapture the Ole Miss brilliance of the past. The Ole Miss Lady Rebels achieved National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournament status consecutively from the 1980-81 season to 1991-92; and six more times in subsequent years with the last appearance being following the 2006-07 season.

It is from this backdrop that Coach Yo is confronted with her greatest challenge as a coach at the highest level (NCAA Division I).

Coach Yo embarked on a furious campaign immediately after she signed on to become, historically for The Bahamas, the first head coach at a major NCAA institution. She not only sought out key basketball players. Indeed, the exuberant and detailed basketball mentor also put together an assistant team around her.

By her demeanor when we talked and based on Coach Yo's comments otherwise, Ole Miss

is now fortified and poised for the women's basketball program to be enhanced dramatically. Her infectious nature has spilled over onto her school associates and in general, the Ole Miss campus.

Thus, it is anticipated that a breakthrough season is about to unfold for the Ole Miss Lady Rebels.

I'm of the view that Ty Wooten and his communications colleagues at Ole Miss will have a lot of good reports to produce. Coach Yo has been a success story thus far. Most recently, she turned around the program at Jacksonville University. In five years, the young lady who came out of the HOYTES Development Program, operated for the last three decades-plus by her father Coach Gladstone "Moon" McPhee, guided Jacksonville to three consecutive 20-plus win seasons, an Atlantic Sun Conference championship and an NCAA berth.

Now, her success background is on the line as Ole Miss gets ready for the 2018-2019 season. Following an exhibition game on Friday, November 2 against LeMoyne-Owen, the main schedule will begin on November 6 against Norfolk State. The first SEC match of the new season for Ole Miss will be at Mis-



TYLER WOOTEN
...Ole Miss Communications Specialist

souri on January 3.

Let's support this daughter of the soil as she endeavors to boost the Bahamas Sports Brand through her efforts at Ole Miss.

Go Coach Yo!

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SPORTS SCOPE

BY FRED STURRUP



within her ministry some needed exposure to foreign coaches. As a result Gillespie agreed to visit Grand Bahama, and not only took a look at Basden's players but also other up-and-coming baseball players on the island.

While all the players left a lasting impression on Gillespie, since that visit it was announced that outfielder O'Neil Pritchard had exceeded his expectations from what I had told him," she shared, "And they were very pleased and they made a decision that they want him to be a part of their program and they are very interested in having

him and helping him pursue his goal of going to college.

"I got the phone call on Monday telling us to make the final plans to send O'Neil. They had all of his accommodations and arrangements sorted out."

It had been a long journey for Pritchard up to this point and now he is just grateful he got the opportunity that he worked hard toward.

"I'm just thankful and grateful for the opportunity. I was trying from when I was 15 years old but things just didn't work out

for me. I just want to go over there and take advantage of the facilities and resources that we don't have in The Bahamas. I just want to better my skills.

"I just want to take advantage of this and go to college, get a degree. Even if things don't work out in terms of going to the Major's I'd have a degree and something to fall back on. I just wanted to be the first person in my family to even say they have the opportunity to go to college. So this is a blessing for me."

Ever since Pritchard picked up an interest in baseball at five years old the passion for the game was evident. Having been seen by previous coaches, the Abaco native felt even more confident when Gillespie showed strong interest in his abilities.

"To hear stuff like that, especially where I come from, it's just a blessing. I'm just thankful for coach Shawn because like he said he doesn't normally answer calls but I feel God just had it so

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Pritchard earns shot with Ontario Nationals Baseball Club

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Earlier this month it was reported that the House of Hoops and Dreams (HHD) had forged a partnership with Canadian baseball team, the Ontario Nationals Baseball Club.

That partnership was formed when HHD founder Bonnie Basden reached out to coach Shawn Gillespie in an effort to get some of the baseball players