

Gallup High's McIntosh to attend NMJC

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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Girl baller was part of epic 28-game Lady Bengals win streak

Ni'Asia McIntosh, a member of the girls basketball team at Gallup High School and one of best basketball players — girls or boys — to ever don a Bengals uniform, will be taking her talents to New Mexico Junior College come fall, officials confirmed.

Gallup High girls basketball coach Kamau Turner said McIntosh, a scoring and rebounding machine who stands 6-feet-tall and who played center for the Lady Bengals, signed a letter-of-intent to play for the Lady Thunderbirds last month at Gallup High School.

"We're excited for her," Turner said. "She is a very good and proven player."

The very quick and agile McIntosh led the Lady Bengals to state playoff appearances the past two years, where they lost to different teams. Turner said McIntosh received "looks" from several Division I and II schools, among them the University of Texas at Arlington.

"We're losing one of the best players and best people that I've ever been around," Turner said.

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"She has the intelligence and leadership to do a lot of good things at (NMJC)."

McIntosh said she visited the Hobbs-based school and liked what she saw academically and athletically. She said the school, which has an enrollment of around 3,300 students, is just the right size for her to succeed on and off the court. She said she believed she'll probably start at forward for the Lady Thunderbirds, who lost three games last year and made it to the national junior college semi-finals.

"I'm happy with my decision," McIntosh said. "I'm ready to get going."

McIntosh, 17, said she wants to study pre-law and upon graduating from the two-year institution, would like to continue her education at a four-year school. She said her strengths on the court are scoring, rebounding and passing.

"Right now I'm looking forward to getting down there in Hobbs and meeting new people and friends and performing on the basketball court," McIntosh said. "I'm very excited about school and the upcoming basketball season. I'm going to miss the fans and all of my teammates, teachers and friends at Gallup High."

Over a four-year career, McIntosh averaged 23 points and 19 rebounds per game as a Lady Bengal, despite being double and triple teamed by opponents. The Fort Defiance, Arizona, native became a household name around the Four Corners with respect to high school sports.

"She is not only a prolific scorer, but she is a very good rebounder," Turner said, noting that McIntosh was the go-to player for Gallup in close games and against superior competition. "You don't really replace players like her. She was one of my favorite players and she will definitely be missed."

NMJC fields athletic teams in a variety of sports, among them men's and women's rodeo and women's track and field. McIntosh said she's not interested in going out for other sports at the school.

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