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Young Westlake Academy girls basketball team surprises, takes state title

HIGHLIGHTS

Team led by freshman and 2 eighth-graders

Has won four state titles since 2010

Head coach wasn't expecting one this year given youth of team

BY JOHN ENGLISH
Special to the Star-Telegram

One of the state's strongest basketball programs comes from the Alliance region and is in the state tournament almost every season, but gets hardly any recognition for the remarkable feats it's accomplished.

On Feb. 26, the Lady Blacksmiths of Westlake Academy defeated Poetry Community Christian School of Terrell by a score of 37-30 to win the TCAF girls state championship.

The Westlake girls have won a state championship four times since 2010 and played in a total of five, and coach Nick Barrows said that he was thoroughly impressed with how his very young team held up to the pressures of playoff basketball.

"We had played them before twice, and we beat them once and they beat us once," Barrows said. "Just not knowing what we were going to get and being that we are so, so young, and I mean we started two eighth graders in that game, I was not sure how they were going to perform from a consistency standpoint was always a big question.

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"We kind of knew what to expect from them, and we kind of changed a few things to have a better look against the things they did that hurt us, and the girls did a great job of adapting and playing through."

Barrows said that he wasn't expecting this kind of success this season.

"I didn't really have that high of an expectation for this team," Barrows said. "I knew that we would be good, but being so young, I was not sure how it would all gel. We lost a lot of games that we should have won in November and December, and when January rolled around and district started up, we were 6-0 before I knew it. And then I was like, 'well ... maybe we can get on a run and do something.'"

The Lady Blacksmiths were led by the District Freshman of the Year and first team all-state selection Rina Mitchell, second team all-state selection Sydney McQuieter and District Newcomer of the Year, first team all -tate selection and State Tournament MVP Lauren Cortinas.

McQuieter and Cortinas are both eighth graders.



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