

Verhines, Gaston named ABV "POY" for 2010-11

Coaches' Mandrell, Weathers earn ABV "COY" honors

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MOUNT VERNON - For the second consecutive season the A Baseline View.com "Player of the Year" awards were a "Slam-Dunk."

It was a "360-tomahawk-rim rattling-dunkeroo."

The two winners excelled for multiple seasons and led their respective teams to a combined 65-5 won-loss mark and blazed a trail to Peoria.

Woodlawn's Dawson Verhines and **Murphysboro's Jerrod Gaston** left little doubt who were the tops in each of their classes.

The Class 1A ABV "Player of the Year" award goes to Verhines. His brother Bronson earned this award in 2008-09 and Dawson and Bronson became the only brothers to earn the ABV POY.

Dawson Verhines - a 6-foot-2 "do-it-all" guard/forward - led his Woodlawn Cardinals to its fourth consecutive regional title; its third straight supersectional appearance and second Final Four in four prep campaigns.

No team since the four-class system was implemented has been more successful than those Cardinals from the west side of Jefferson County.

And Mr. Verhines has been a big part of the success story.

As a starter - Woodlawn went 106-24 (81.5 percent) with Verhines running things.

His numbers haven't been gaudy but they didn't need to be.

He scored 1,287 points in his four seasons - an average of a modest 10.9 p.p.g. But he did so much more on the floor.

Verhines averaged 4.3 rebounds a night while playing mostly in the backcourt. Verhines was a generous floor general as his dished out 394 assists in four campaigns and hit 55 percent of his two-point field goals and 48 percent overall.

Just recently in his team's third place run at Peoria Verhines secured 20-rebounds in his two games at Carver Arena and - after his only "Clunker" game of his career in the Friday semifinal loss to West Central - he responded with a solid performance (19-points, nine rebounds, 6-of-8 shooting from the field) in a 52-37 win over Deer Creek-Mackinaw on Saturday.

His career rebounding total (504) is very impressive considering his position and that he has also played along side some very good board men.

"He (Verhines) does all the little things that make us successful. He is a good leader and the young kids look up to him. He plays well on both ends of the court and he does a little bit of everything." said Woodlawn head coach Shane Witzel as he described Verhines earlier in the season.



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Other coaches had a lot to say about Verhines this season.

"He is a good player and he may not get that first shot but he is going to work hard to get that second or third shot. I tip my hat to that kid because he runs the floor really well and he does not quit working. That's what has gotten him to where he is at right now," said Goreville head coach Todd Tripp after Woodlawn and Verhines topped the Blackcats 68-40 in the title game of the Sesser-Valier Holiday Tournament back in December.

"Let me tell you this right now, Jack. The best two players in southern Illinois are Dawson Verhines and Jerrod Gaston," said Pinckneyville head coach Bob Waggoner back in February. "There is no doubt."

Jerrod Gaston didn't really bloom in a basketball sense until his junior season but oh what a beautiful sight this one flowered into.

The 6-foot-2 senior guard took his Red Devils on his back this season and carried his club nearly to a state championship.

Gaston led Murphysboro with a 15.6 points per game average for the 2010-11 season.

He hit 56 percent of his overall shots as a senior (219-of-393) and hit 67 percent from the free throw line (107-of-159). He shot nearly twice as many free throws as any of his other teammates did individually.

Although his club fell in the state title tilt to Hales Franciscan - this shouldn't ever diminish his importance to this club.

He nearly reached the 1,000-point club falling just short at 983.

Perhaps his best performance of the season came in a make-up game on February 16th against state-ranked and defensively strong Nashville on the Hornets home floor and in front of a Wednesday night crowd of nearly 2,500.

Gaston was unstoppable in the contest - a 63-49 win - as he scorched the Hornets for 30-points.

Jerrod Gaston earned the ABV Class 2A "Player of the Year" award.

When it comes to coaching awards - ABV generally stays with a formula of giving out the award to the coaches who lead their respective programs far into the state tournament.

But since there were some of the same coaches leading the way as previous winners - it was time to look outside of the (coaching) box in 2A.

Coach Brad Weathers of Nashville is a veteran leader

who was successful at Carlyle (1989 Class A State Champions) and then took over for a younger legend (Darin Lee) at Nashville after Lee left after the 2008-09 season.

Coach Weather's led an undersized and scrappy set of Hornets to a 25-5 mark in 2010-11 which was an outstanding effort by everyone in the program against one of the toughest schedules in southern Illinois.

Nashville lost to just three teams (Breese Central three times, Murphysboro and 3A Jerseyville).

Nashville opened the season with wins over Marquette Catholic, Freeburg, Madison and Wesclin to win the

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Lebanon Thanksgiving Tournament.

They tackled a tough Breese Mater Dei Holiday Tournament and finished fifth and they lost a heartbreaking one-point decision to Central in the semifinals of the Nashville Invitational Tournament and eventually finished third.

Loss number three to Breese Central in the title game of the Nashville 2A Regional 42-32 ended the campaign.

Coach Weathers had talent and athletic ability to work with but only had one player (Donovan Holle) who was over 6-foot-2.

His work with this group - and in keeping his philosophy in tact of defense and rebounding to win games - warrants his ABV Class 2A "Coach of the Year" honor.

In Class 1A down in the deep part of southern Illinois there is a hidden gem of a coach who has been the brunt of some criticism in his lack of postseason success.

But when you look at the numbers that his program has produced against the type of schedule this small school program has played against year in and year out - **Coach Jeff Mandrell** deserves some serious recognition.

He gets the big ABV prize this season as 2010-11 ABV Class 1A "Coach of the Year."

While some schools seem to have ups and downs - Coach Mandrell has kept this program humming along.

The Mounds Meridian Bobcats have won 20-wins or more in six-consecutive seasons under Mandrell's teachings.

They play a very tough non-conference slate of games each season with 2A clubs in the rotation.

Meridian went 28-6 this past season - winning the school's first sectional championship since the 1971-72 team finished second in the state in the first season two-class basketball in the State of Illinois.

They beat three 20-game winners (Goreville, Egyptian and Gallatin County) twice each and split four games with four SIRR teams.

They got rolling at the right time and won the Norris City-Omaha-Enfield Sectional with a big 63-58 win over Trico - a 30-3 state-ranked and then top-ranked ABV 1A team.

They ran into a kid named Verhines in the Salem Supersectional but that didn't diminish a splendid season.

Coach Jeff Mandrell is the Class 1A "Coach of the Year."

EDITOR'S NOTE:

As with the previous year's - the ABV lists will be scrutinized. But as always I stand by my selections. Most importantly these awards are about the kids. If you - as a fan - have a comment that is disparaging to the ones chosen then send it to me. Don't post it on some message board and embarrass some young man. If you have a complaint send it here.

Like Harry Truman said - "The Buck Stops Here."

There is always someone left off of this team that I will hear about and you could probably make a case for them to be on the list. I believe 60 players in each class - 1A and 2A - is enough.

This is the setup.

Murphysboro and Woodlawn get three players each on the lists.

Those teams got the job done in the postseason.

No other team got more than two players listed.

Each list consists of a 15-Player First Team; 15-Player Second Team and 30-Player Special Mention.

Names are listed in alphabetical order. I'm sure there will be one or two of them with misspelled names or the wrong heights or class. I can fix those later.

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Player Of The Year

Dawson Verhines - Woodlawn.

Coach Of The Year - Jeff Mandrell - Meridian

ABV First Team

Andrew Drone - Gallatin County - 6-foot-10 So.

Kyle Floyd - Windsor - 6-foot-2 Sr.

Chase Heins - Trico - 6-foot-6 Jr.

Drew Johnson - Crab Orchard - 5-foot-11 Jr.

Jerry Johnson - Meridian - 6-foot-3 Jr.

Joshua Jones - Meridian - 6-foot-4 So.

Ben Kissing - Crab Orchard - 6-foot-5 Jr.

Zach Meritt - Wayne City - 6-foot-3 Sr.

Denton Reed - Galatia - 5-foot-11 Sr.

Bryn Price - Windsor - 6-foot-2 Sr.

Jesse Smith - Trico - 6-foot-1 Sr.

Lee Sopczak - Goreville - 6-foot Sr.

Dawson Verhines - Woodlawn - 6-foot-2 Sr.

Taylor Walton - Okawville - 6-foot-3 Jr.

Josh Wiggs - Woodlawn - 6-foot-8 Sr.

ABV Second Team

Britt Bradley - Madison - 5-foot-10 Jr.

Austin German - Hardin County - 5-foot-10 Sr.

Torian Gregory - Madison - 5-foot-10 Sr.

Dustin Hicks - Sesser-Valier - 6-foot-1 Sr.

Vince Kiefer - New Athens - 6-foot-4 Sr.

Robby Lehr - Cobden - 6-foot-1 Sr.

Cameron Lawson - Red Hill - 6-foot-3 Jr.

Cameron Lewis - Red Hill - 6-foot-2 Sr.

Darnez Nelson - Egyptian - 6-foot Jr.

Tommy Pilackas - Lebanon - 6-foot-2 Jr.

Andrew Pokezywinski - Steeleville - 6-foot-1 Sr.

Gabe Owens - Woodlawn - 6-foot-4 So.

Colin Smith - Steeleville - 6-foot-1 Sr.

Haden Smith - Wayne City - 5-foot-7 Jr.

Jhermarien Terry - Egyptian - 5-foot-9 Sr.

Jeremy Weeke - Okawville - 6-foot-1 So.

Special Mention

Dylan Arvai - Zeigler-Royalton - 6-foot-2 Sr.

Dustin Atteberry - Cisne - 6-foot-1 So.

Connor Beasley - St. Elmo - 6-foot-4 So.

Dylan Burmester - Christ Our Rock Luth. - 5-foot-11 Sr.

Austin Callahan - Hutsonville-Palestine - 6-foot-5 Jr.

Travis Cornell - Neoga - 5-foot-11 Sr.

Steven Dial - Christopher - 6-foot Sr.

Nick Ferris - Stewardson-Strasburg - 6-foot Jr.

Andrew Grahn - North Clay - 6-foot-4 Sr.

Dillan Harrison - Carrier Mills - 5-foot-11 Sr.

Anthony Johnson - Oblong - 6-foot-6 So.

Cody Johnston - Eldorado - 6-foot-5 Sr.

Warren Jones - Sandoval - 5-foot-11 So.

Luke Levitt - Beecher City - 6-foot-2 Sr.

Zach Lochhead - Chester - 6-foot-1 Sr.

Patrick Lowe - Gallatin County - 6-foot-4 So.

Jaton McMechan - Cumberland - 5-foot-11 Sr.

Tyson Minor - Odin - 6-foot-4 Sr.

Luke Moore - Cowden-Herrick - 6-foot-2 So.

Dakota Parker - Joppa - 6-foot-4 Sr.

T.J. Roy - Neoga - 5-foot-7 Jr.

Joey Smith - Marissa-Coulterville - 5-foot-11 Jr.

Tyler Sonsoucie - Lebanon - 6-foot-1 Jr.

Ben Sperry - St. Elmo - 6-foot-4 So.

Kody Sutton - NCOE - 5-foot-11 Sr.

Fischer Tharp - South Central - 6-foot So.

Sam Thoele - Dieterich - 6-foot Sr.

Nathan Webb - Goreville - 6-foot-2 Jr.

Trey Witges - Waltonville - 6-foot-1 So.

Tim Witcher - Sesser-Valier - 6-foot-4 Jr.

Player Of The Year

Jerrold Gaston - Murphysboro.

Coach Of The Year

Brad Weathers - Nashville.

ABV First Team

Corey Ayala - Massac County - 6-foot-2 Sr.

Brandon Book - Breese Central - 6-foot-6 Jr.

Sam Brown - Nashville - 6-foot-2 Sr.

Dylan Craig - Murphysboro - 6-foot-3 Sr.

Jerrold Gaston - Murphysboro - 6-foot-2 Sr.

JoJo Hart - Herrin - 5-foot-11 Sr.

Capel Henshaw - Harrisburg - 6-foot-3 So.

Pierre House - Murphysboro - 6-foot-1 Jr.

James Jansen - Effingham St. Anthony - 5-foot-9 Sr.

Paul Knapp - Flora - 6-foot-1 Jr.

Keaton Scheer - Breese Central - 6-foot-3 Sr.

Nick Schumacher - Teutopolis - 6-foot-6 Sr.

Tyler Smithpeters - Harrisburg - 6-foot-3 So.

Derek Thompson - Teutopolis - 6-foot-3 Sr.

Connor Wheeler - Du Quoin - 6-foot-1 Sr.

ABV Second Team

Bryce Bastien - Columbia - 5-foot-8 Sr.

Steve Brueggemann - Pinckneyville - 6-foot-3 Sr.

J.C. Davis - Du Quoin - 6-foot Sr.

Jacob Duncan - Marshall - 6-foot-1 Jr.

Demarlo Harris - Herrin - 6-foot-4 Jr.

Phil Kunz - Wesclin - 6-foot-7 Sr.

Tyler Meyer - Nashville - 5-foot-10 Sr.

Nick Painter - Flora - 6-foot-6 Jr.

Taylor O'Connor - Columbia - 6-foot-5 Sr.

Hunter Reine - Roxana - 6-foot-9 So.

Sam Scheiter - Marquette Catholic - 6-foot-1 So.

Ryan Schmitt - Effingham St. Anthony - 6-foot-7 Sr.

Clinton Scott - Casey-Westfield - 6-foot-4 Sr.

Caleb Suver - Benton - 6-foot-3 Sr.

Derrick Starrett - Marquette Catholic - 6-foot-4 Jr.

Special Mention

Malcom Amos - Massac County - 6-foot-1 Jr.

Andrew Atteberry - Fairfield - 5-foot-9 Sr.

Daniel Bell - Vandalia - 6-foot-1 Sr.

Mitchell Beyers - Pana - 6-foot-2 Jr.

Ryan Bonifield - Carterville - 6-foot-4 Sr.

Jordan Briggs - Roxana - 5-foot-11 So.

Logan Cannady - Marshall - 6-foot-1 Jr.

Matt DeLuka - Hillsboro - 6-foot-3 Jr.

Tylor Duckworth - Anna-Jonesboro - 6-foot-7 Sr.

Michael Fehrenbacher - East Richland - 6-foot-2 Jr.

Devin Gerdes - Staunton - 6-foot-2 Jr.

Colby Hall - East Alton-Wood River - 6-foot-5 Jr.

Cody Huels - Carlyle - 6-foot So.

Marty Johnson - Vandalia - 6-foot-3 Sr.

Kyle Kleeman - Carlinville - 6-foot-2 So.

Brett Kinder - Staunton - 6-foot-1 Sr.

Kyle Lamb - Pinckneyville - 6-foot-7 Sr.

Tyler Leffler - Benton - 6-foot-3 Jr.

Jared McMillen - Pana - 6-foot-2 Jr.

Brook Pampe - East Richland - 6-foot Jr.

Brad Perry - Greenville - 5-foot-10 Jr.

Justin Rueter - Gibault Catholic - 5-foot-9 Sr.

Aaron Rushing - Sparta - 6-foot-7 So.

Aaron Siler - Robinson - 5-foot-10 So.

Jordan Smith - Carlyle - 5-foot-11 Jr.

Dale Volentine - Litchfield - 6-foot-3 Jr.

Lawson Warren - Carmi-White County - 6-foot-5 Sr.

Alex Wilken - Wesclin - 6-foot-2 Jr.

Michael Williams - Greenville - 5-foot-11 Jr.

Brady Wright - Anna-Jonesboro - 6-foot-4 Jr.