

February 9, 2021

By Dennis Garcia
SportsTone.net

Expectations can be dangerous.

High School teams that enter a season with high expectations can easily fall into a trap of believing everything that has been said about them. It's only natural that teen-aged athletes may allow that talk to get inside their heads, become overconfident and maybe even cocky.

The Asheboro High School girls varsity basketball team entered this season with high expectations and under the guidance of veteran coach Don Corry, have not allowed those preseason accolades stop them from achieving what is, right now, a very impressive season.



Asheboro senior Janiya Jackson. File photo.

The Blue Comets' win over two-time defending state champion Southeast Guilford Monday night boosted their record to 8-0 on the season, including 7-0 in Mid-Piedmont Conference play. With an incredibly talented trio of Diamond McDowell, Tanaesha Ellison and Janiya Jackson returning for their fourth seasons at the varsity level, there was no doubt this team had the opportunity to excel in a season cut short by the pandemic.

"Until last night, I thought this team was doing a real good job of handling the pressure of being good," said Corry, who rejoined the Blue Comets' basketball program this season. "They have been like 'we are supposed to be good so let's be good.' But last night we were a little tight."

Despite the 53-46 victory over two-time defending state 3-A Southeast Guilford, Cory

and the Blue Comets weren't happy with their performance. Corry even called the game the "worst" performance of the season for his team. The girls, Corry said, weren't thrilled with their performance either despite getting the win over a team AHS has struggled with in recent years.

That bodes well for success. Teams are sometimes happy just to win. These girls aren't happy unless they play up to their potential.

"They are pretty even-keeled, but they were disappointed about last night," Corry said. "They know they can do better."

Corry, a veteran mentor who has experienced all kinds of success on the basketball court, came to AHS after a stint with East Davidson. Corry said he scrimmaged the Blue Comets two years ago and saw the quickness and athleticism of McDowell, Ellison and Jackson. He said he just didn't realize how talented overall they are on the basketball court.

"I knew they were fast and I knew they liked to press, but I didn't know the talent level they had," Corry said. "Diamond McDowell is a diamond in the rough. Some college is really going to come out on the good end. Taneasha is quick and can move to the basket. Janiya settles our team, she controls the ball."

McDowell and Ellison are averaging nearly 20 points per game, while Jackson is chipping in nearly 10 per game. Combined with SWR transfer Ashton Maness and freshman Sion Murrain, the Blue Comets' starting five should be able to compete with anyone. But Corry tries to take pressure off the girls.



Asheboro senior Taneasha Ellison. File photo.



Asheboro senior Diamond McDowell. File photo.

"I like to think because I have been there and had that pressure before, I have been able to shoulder it for them and keep them pretty loose," Corry said. "We know we are going to get everyone's best shot. I've had some girls come back to the bench and look really down and all you do is tell them to take a deep breath, relax and they will fall. Stay positive. Don't get down."

The Blue Comets are in the midst of a very difficult stretch. AHS just beat SEG Monday night and the Blue Comets have a game Friday night with Williams (6-2) before closing out the regular season next week with games against Southwestern Randolph (6-2) and SEG once again.

With strong leadership on and off the court, it's a stretch the Blue Comets certainly have the talent to handle successfully.