



Back to nationals

LMC women to play Chesapeake in opening round

By **AUSTIN BORNHEIM**
HP Sports Writer

The Lake Michigan College women's basketball team feels more prepared this time.

Back in the National Junior College Athletic Association Division 2 national championship tournament for a fifth time in the last six years, the RedHawks have more experience than they did last season when they finished in seventh place.

"Last year we were pretty freshmen-laden," LMC coach Jason Cooper said. "I think we are a little more prepared with how this group of sophomores handles pressure and the experience they have."

The emergence of Shalay Stevens as a viable scoring threat over the course of the season has given the RedHawks (24-8) another option along with shooters Sabrina Trujillo and Nicole Decker.

Stevens, a sophomore, was named the NJCAA District G MVP for her play during LMC's run to the national tournament.

Freshmen Christy Gonzalez and Lexi Cano have stepped up to add depth to the roster.

LMC has four sophomores on the roster, all of who saw meaningful minutes during last season. Cooper has leaned on their



Don Campbell / HP staff

Lake Michigan College's Jasmine Love drives past Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Malory Sewell during the second half of a Feb. 18 game. LMC will again take part in the NJCAA Division 2 national championship tournament this week.

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experience over the past week to get the team's freshmen prepared.

"I had our sophomore tell them how you have to control the situation and not let it control you," he said. "I think the mentoring factor has helped them get an understanding."

The eighth-seeded RedHawks will be tested in their first game against No. 9 seed Chesapeake Community College (Maryland).

The game will start at 9 p.m. Tuesday at Johnson County Community Col-

lege in Overland Park, Kansas.

Chesapeake (19-4) presents a size problem for the RedHawks, but Cooper is confident if his team executes the gameplan they should be fine.

"They (Chesapeake) are very athletic, very big," he said. "They are top 10 in the country in rebounds, and are very good at getting to the (free throw) line."

"We need to limit them to one shot, not give them second shot opportunities. We need to be very consistent running the offense and stick to our defensive principles."

Guard Daria Simmons and post Donae Moguel

give the Shipjacks a strong inside-out game.

Simmons averaged 16.6 points per game during the season while Moguel averages 14.3 points and 12.2 rebounds per game to lead the Shipjacks, who rank sixth in the nation in scoring with 80.3 points per game.

"She is a force inside," Cooper said of Moguel. "And their guards really get to the basket well and draw a lot of fouls."

This is the Shipjacks' fourth consecutive trip to the national tournament. Their highest finish was sixth in 2014.

Contact: abornheim@TheHP.com; 932-0371; @HPBornheim