

THE BEE'S HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES OF Both displayed an ability

BRITTANY WOODARD: Reserved demeanor belied tough, determined on-court persona

By Quwan Spears
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Brittany Woodard knows what people generally think of her. They assume she is laid-back and fragile instead of intense and tough.

"Looks can be deceiving," she said. "They think I'm this ... tall, black, skinny girl.

"But I'm a very competitive and self-motivated person. Just because I'm reserved with it doesn't mean I lack passion and a desire to win."

Woodard, a 6-foot Christian Brothers High School senior, has a drive that helped her succeed in volleyball and basketball.

That excellence led to her being named The Bee's Female Athlete of the Year for 2007-2008.

For Woodard, 18, named to The Bee's All-Metro first team in volleyball and its girls basketball Player of the Year, it's more than the accolades. She was recognized for accomplishments, so much so that Nevada offered her a scholarship in both sports, a rarity in an era of specialization.

She accepted the basketball scholarship because it is her favorite sport, the one that got her interested in athletics, and the one she can't live without.

"Seriously, you take basket-
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Brittany Woodard, left, of Christian Brothers and Rocklin's Chris Garrison proved prep athletes don't have to specialize in a single sport.

OVER

Woodard: She eyes a career in either WNBA or overseas

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ball away from me and I would die," Woodard told The Bee last fall.

Her statistics reflect her passion and reputation for being one of the area's most versatile players. She averaged 18.1 points, 8.1 rebounds, 2.6 steals and 2.0 assists per game as a senior.

More importantly, she led the Falcons to a 27-5 record and the Sac-Joaquin Section Division IV girls basketball championship.

In her final three section playoff games, Woodard averaged 22.3 points and 9.3 rebounds. She secured the Falcons' 60-57 triumph over Modesto Christian in the championship game by making two free throws with 8.9 seconds left.

"She is going to be really special," said Sean Chambers, Woodard's Amateur Athletic Union coach. "She has a complete game, which will help her become a very good college (small forward).

"Additionally, she has an incredible work ethic, skill and dedication."

Falcons girls basketball coach Ron Gully agreed. "Day in and day out, her work ethic in practice and in games was unbelievable. She always gave 100 percent."

Credit Falcons coach Diane Heine for helping Woodard find a niche in volleyball.

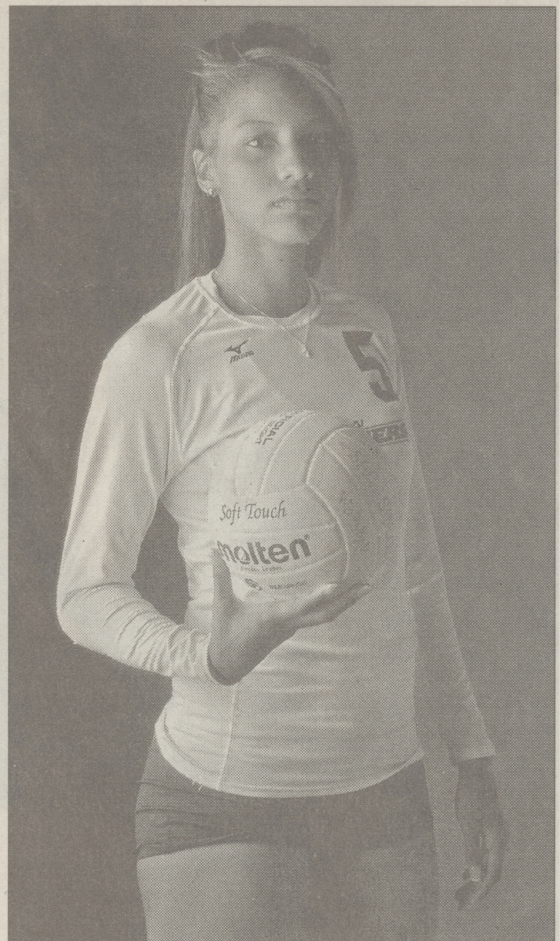
Heine spotted Woodard during a junior high school basketball tournament seven years ago and convinced the then-sixth-grader she could be just as good on another court.

Woodard played volleyball with the same determination she did in basketball, and led her team with 333 kills. She helped guide the Falcons to a 30-11 mark, a Division IV section championship and a berth in the Northern California Regional final, where the Falcons lost 3-1 to Harker of San Jose.

"Brittany is just now coming into her own as a volleyball player," Heine said last October. "She has so much untapped potential, it's scary."

Woodard, however, has put her volleyball career on hold. She wants to focus more on basketball in college because of its potential for a professional career.

"I can see myself going further in that sport," she said. "I think I can at least play overseas if a career in the WNBA is not possible."



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Christian Brothers' Brittany Woodard excelled in volleyball and basketball, but will focus on the latter.

WOODARD AT A GLANCE

Volleyball

► Bee All-Metro first team. Led Christian Brothers to Division IV section title. Led team with 333 kills; also had 51 blocks and 190 digs.

Basketball

► All-Metro Girls Player of the Year. Led the Falcons to a Division IV section championship. Averaged team-high 18.1 points and 8.1 rebounds.

Next

► Will play basketball at Nevada on scholarship.

— Quwan Spears

As her future unfolds, her high school legacy is legendary. The long hours of weight training and running around the Christian Brothers' campus to build stamina have paid off.

It was all part of becoming tough enough, regardless of first impressions.

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