

Student Athletes Graduate, Earn Scholarships

Success on the court and in the classroom defined this year's sophomore student-athletes at Lee College, as all eight graduated with degrees and earned scholarships to continue their academic and athletic careers at four-year institutions.

The graduating student-athletes include Coryn Bailey (Wiley College), Keira Jones (Wiley College), Brianna White (University of Arkansas at Monticello), McKinley Cole (Our Lady of the Lake University), Takoreyn Lawson (Jackson State University), Shamiere Green (Lindenwood University), Joshua Smith (College of Southern Indiana), and Jayden Thomas (University of North Dakota).

According to coaches, the accomplishments reflect years of discipline, perseverance, and personal growth both on and off the court.

"These student-athletes walk in young and inexperienced, not fully understanding the demands of balancing athletics, academics, and community service," said Nicholas Wade, Lee College Athletic Director and Head Basketball Coach. "But through the ups and downs, they grow tremendously. It really is a caterpillar-to-butterfly story for each of them."

Throughout their time at Lee College, the student-athletes balanced practices, travel, competitions, coursework, and community involvement while competing at a high level. Many worked summer camps, practiced up to 12 hours each week, and navigated the pressure of earning scholarships to continue their athletic careers at four-year institutions.

Despite injuries, illnesses, and personal challenges, the group maintained a standard of excellence that coaches say is helping shape the culture of the program.

"To know every sophomore for two years straight has earned both a degree from Lee College and a scholarship to a four-year institution is truly incredible," Wade said. "What started as a goal has turned into an expectation."

For coaches, however, the greatest reward has been watching the athletes grow beyond the game.

"Watching these athletes grow has been one of the most rewarding parts of coaching," said Kylie Cobb, Lee College Head Volleyball Coach. "Over the last two years, they've faced challenges with grace and resilience. Not only have they grown as student-athletes, but they've become stronger, more independent people. I'm excited to celebrate them as they begin this next chapter, and I have no doubt they will make a lasting impact on their future programs through their leadership and selflessness."