

COUGARHOOPS ALUMNI UPDATE



Maddy Brown – HFL Class of 2005

- NY State Class "A" Girls Basketball Champions – 2005
- NY State Class "A" Girls Basketball Finalist - 2004
- Section V Champion 2003, 2004, 2005
- Section V All Greater Rochester Player of the Year

▪ **What are some favorites on your iPod?**

I love country music so some of my favorites on my iPod right now are Jason Aldean, Dierks Bentley, Eric Church and the Eli Young Band (I guess going to Texas influenced me a little in this department).

▪ **What was your favorite pre-game meal and favorite junk food?**

My favorite pre-game meal when I was in high school was any kind of pasta dish made by my mom. Now that I think about it I would eat so much before games! I also had to have a chocolate power bar exactly an hour before the game; that is something I did in college all 5 years as well. My favorite junk food would have to be potato chips.

▪ **What is your favorite movie?**

Hoosiers would have to be one of my all time favorite movies, it's a classic.

▪ **Favorite retired and active NBA Players.**



I loved watching Michael Jordan when I was a kid and my favorite active NBA player is probably Steve Nash.

▪ **When did you start playing youth travel basketball at HFL?**

I started playing youth travel basketball at HFL when my family moved to Honeoye Falls in 1999, I was in 7th grade.

▪ **How did you think that the travel basketball program prepared you for your high school career? (and perhaps college career).**

Playing travel basketball through HFL definitely helped with my high school playing career. The same group of girls I played with through middle school ended up together again when we were in



high school and I think this helped our team chemistry in so many ways. After playing together for so long we knew exactly how each of us played and ended up being very successful as a group. It was difficult for me to adjust to playing in college where I hadn't played with the same girls since middle school, but you learn to adjust.

▪ **Do you have a few special memories of playing travel basketball that you would like to share?**

It was my 8th grade year that we won the Finger Lakes Championship over at the Waterloo recreation center in 2000. I think this is when people really realized what a special group we had and how good we could be at the next level (varsity basketball).

▪ **Tell us about the unbelievable accomplishment of winning 3 Section V titles and a NYS Title.**

Winning 3 sectional titles never got old! The first one was so incredible and being able to play at the Blue Cross Arena was a dream come true. And then to win it that year was just icing on the cake. After that first year of winning it we kind of expected it from ourselves each year and we were no longer satisfied with winning sectionals and ending our season there (not that winning sectionals isn't an awesome accomplishment in itself). My junior year we won sectionals and went all the way to the State Finals before losing and of course that left a bitter taste in our mouths. But for those of you that watched what Coach Willoughby said after that game on one of the Rochester news stations, we had everyone back for my senior year. Coming out with a lot of expectations and a major target on our backs that year was what we had all expected and wanted. We had a tough schedule and I feel that this prepared us for the goals we had set at the beginning of the season; anything less than a state championship that year would have been a disappointment. We won sectionals that year and went on to win the 2005 New York State championship game. This is still one of the highlights of my life, right up there with graduating college! Something I will never, ever forget. It still gives me chills to think about and talk about it. The support we had from families, friends, and just people from the community all through that run to the state tournament (including sectionals, regional's, etc.) was just incredible. Winning that state title with the group of girls we did it with (the same group that started out together in HFL travel basketball) was so amazing.



- **What were some other memorable highlights of your high school team and career?**

There are so many memorable highlights of playing high school basketball it would take me forever to write them all! Obviously winning the 3 sectional titles and the state title my senior year, I could not have written a better script for my high school basketball career. After winning the state title my senior year, the town (well each town; Mendon, Lima and Honeoye Falls) held a parade in our honor. This brought the majority of our team to tears as we drove through the respective towns and had hundreds of fans cheering for us. They were so proud and to know we made them feel that way was so incredible and one of the best memories I have of high school basketball. For me personally, none of the accolades or individual awards meant as much to me as the 3 sectional titles and state title we earned. There is no way I would have won the awards and had the recognition I had without having such a solid, unselfish team to play with. Also, having a coach like Mr. Willoughby who allowed all of us to play to our strengths was a huge part of our success throughout that stretch of time.

- **What other sports did you play in high school and how did the other sports help you with your basketball career?**

I played softball in high school for a few years but my main focus was basketball. After my sophomore year I focused on basketball all year round. This is something that is less common today and I encourage young girls to play as many sports as they can for as long as they can!

- **What advice can you provide to the current youth basketball players?**

The best advice I can give to youth basketball players today is to enjoy every moment you are out on that court playing for HFL. It is an honor and a privilege to play for your town and your school and I did not realize at the time how quickly it would go by. Work hard, but still make time for "kid" things and cultivate as many friendships as you can; these will most likely end up being your high school teammates and after playing together for so many years you will have a chance to do special things on the court together.




























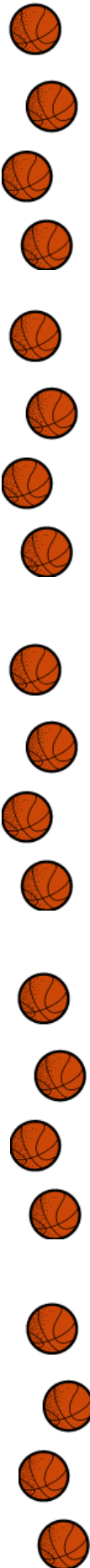
- **Tell us about your biggest rivals and/or most competitive games.**

Our biggest rival in our conference would probably have to be Livonia. They usually gave us the best fight in Livingston County and Coach Schuster always had some good teams. The Livonia game was one we were always pumped up to play. Outside of our conference I feel like we always played with a huge chip on our shoulder. We hated every team we played and felt like we had something to prove (mainly because a lot of people felt like we weren't that good because we came from a weaker division; Livingston County) every time we stepped out on the court. We had some really good battles with Pittsford-Mendon at the Mendon Holliday tournament each year, and those were always fun. I remember one year, I think it was my sophomore year; we played Penfield at the Holiday tournament and ended up winning in overtime. Melissa Howlett came up huge with some big 3's, and I just remember being entirely spent after leaving everything I had on the court. Every sectional game we played was a battle and nothing ever came easy. Playing at the Blue Cross Arena definitely makes everyone play a little harder. And of course we had some great battles with Our Lady of Lourdes from Poughkeepsie. They have won some crazy number of state titles and us public school kids were just looking for our first. After losing to them my junior year in the state finals, we knew it wasn't going to happen again on that stage. We went down to Poughkeepsie for a mid-season tournament my senior year and put up a good fight but ended up losing by I think 3 or 4 points. We were all pretty upset, but Coach Willoughby kept us in check, reminding us we would see them again in the state tournament; and of course we did. We ended up playing them in the state semi-finals and won. That almost felt like the state championship right there because we had gone 0-2 against them. But we finally won when it counted most and were headed to the state finals against Holy Names. We won this game after a hard fought battle and we were the New York State Class A Champions of 2005.










































- **Tell us a little about your college career at Pittsburgh and Texas Tech and what you plan to do after college.**

College basketball was a whole different game! I knew it was going to be difficult to adjust, but I went through a learning process like many college athletes do. I began my career at the University of Pittsburgh and started about half the games there. It was far enough away from home but close enough where my family and





friends could still make it down for some games. We had a relatively good year, but overall I realized it was not the kind of basketball I wanted to play and I decided to transfer after my first year there. I looked around at several schools but ended up landing on Texas Tech University. I had to sit out my first year there due to NCAA transfer rules. I practiced in all practices, but I could not dress for games or travel with the team due to the rules. The following year I was really excited to finally suit up for a game (it had been over a year since I had done so). In October of 2007, just before the season started, I broke my left foot and was forced to have surgery. The doctor said I would be out 6 to 8 weeks (basically all of our non-conference schedule). This was extremely difficult because I had never been injured (aside from minor ankle sprains) prior to this injury. And it came after being forced to sit out for an entire season. I guess the timing of injuries is never good! So I was back on the court by January and played sparingly in the remainder of our games. Coming into my 3rd year at Tech (academically my senior year, on the court my junior year) I was ready to go. My foot was feeling great and I had just gotten back to school when I got some very devastating news. My mom, whom I am very close to, was diagnosed with breast cancer. I was all the way in Texas and she was about to start undergoing chemotherapy in New York. It was difficult, needless to say, to stay focused on school and basketball. Somehow I made it through that year and I am proud to say my mom is now cancer free and very healthy! After graduating that May of 2009 I felt my time at Texas Tech had come to an end. I still had one year of eligibility left, but after facing so much adversity I wanted to come back to New York. However, I ended up getting a call from Krista Gerlich, the head coach at West Texas A&M University (about an hour North of Lubbock, TX, which is where Texas Tech was). She told me about their master's program in Sport Management and their tradition of women's basketball success (she had played at Texas Tech in 1993 when they won a national championship, along with Sheryl Swoops). I talked to my family and they felt this was a great opportunity to continue playing (at the Division II level) and get a year of my master's degree paid for. Playing at the Division II level was a good experience, very humbling. We did not travel on charter planes anymore; it was team vans and occasionally coach busses. But we won! We went 30-4 and won our conference championship for the 3rd consecutive year (obviously only my first year). But it was a great way to end my college basketball career and it definitely benefited me academically as well. (Sorry that was so long!!)



I am currently finishing up my Master's degree in Sport Management by interning with the RIT Athletic Department doing marketing work for them, I will graduate in May. I am also assistant coaching for the women's basketball team at RIT. I hope to continue coaching and working in women's sports for a long time.

▪ **Tell us a little about your Empire State Games experience.**

I played in the Empire State Games the summer after my freshman year of college (in between Pitt and Tech). It was held in Rochester that year and I remember that being a big reason why I wanted to do it. It was a really good experience and one I think I will probably do again!

▪ **Who is the best player that you have ever played against ?**

I think the best player I have played against was Cappie Pondexter from Rutgers when I played in the Big East and from the Big XII conference Andrea Riley of Oklahoma State.

▪ **What are some life lessons that you learned from playing HFL Hoops?**

HFL basketball was where I learned several life lessons. I think sports in general are a great way for kids to learn about competition, working together to achieve a common goal, sacrifice, having a positive attitude, among many other things. These are all things I learned from the game of basketball through HFL travel and then later into Varsity basketball at HFL.

▪ **What AAU team did you play for and how well did AAU help advance your game?**

I played AAU for various teams in the area (Western NY Lakers, New York Panthers, to name a few) before I got invited to play on a Philadelphia based team the summer before my senior year of high school. This team was called the Mid-Atlantic Runnin' Rebels and we were coached by Bill McDonough (Head of Blue Chip Basketball). This was a great experience and really prepared me for college basketball and forced me to be away from home a lot of the summer due to the distance we had to travel just to get to games/practices. I loved the competitiveness of this team and the tournaments we went to were some of the best in the country at that time. I think AAU, along with travel basketball, are pivotal to

the success of any youth player looking to have a great high school career and possibly college career.

- **Tell us about your practice habits. What did you work on and how often did you practice? What practice advice can you provide for the youth players?**

Practice is obviously a hugely important part of becoming a better player. The reason I was able to be successful individually at the high school level was because I had great teammates that were unselfish and just wanted to win. I worked very hard, outside of just practice, to make myself the player I wanted to be. I would shoot after practice, before practice, in the summers; I never really took a lot of time off. It involved a lot of sacrifice on my part, but that is part of becoming a great player and being a part of some great teams.

- **Do you still consider yourself a cougar?**

I will always consider myself a cougar. Once you put on that uniform and realize the history behind it, you will always feel a connection to HFL and consider yourself a cougar forever.



In a regular season game at Texas Tech, Feb. 2008



Winning a state title at HFL – March 2005



Freshman year at Pitt, 2006

