Lehman College Women’s Basketball Season Preview

Lehman College women’s basketball coach Eric Harrison is entering his eighth season as the orchestrator of the Lightning program. The 2005 CUNY Conference Coach of the Year has endured some outstanding moments, and has coached some spectacular players, but never before has the excitement about one team been so overwhelming. With four starters returning, an outstanding freshman class, and an experienced coaching staff, the Lightning are looking to challenge for the school’s first-ever women’s championship.

The excitement begins with 2005 CUNY Conference Rookie of the Year, Maria Loor. Loor, a 6’0” sophomore center averaged 12.1 points, to go along with 10.5 rebounds. Loor was second in the conference in blocks with a 2.2 average, and in the off-season was selected to be a member of the New York City team, in the Empire State Games in Poughkeepsie, New York.

The emergence of sophomore guards Tiara Carroll, and Kristy Faust have revitalized the back court position, and has enabled Lehman to feature two of the premiere guards in the CUNY conference. Faust, a 2005 second-team CUNY All-star, averaged 12.0 points, while Carroll, a 5’10” point guard, averaged 10.1 points and dished out 2.73 assists.

“Tiara and Kristy enable us to match-up with any team in the conference,” said Harrison. “The two of them have worked hard this off-season and I believe they are ready to lead us in the right direction.”

The other returning starter for Lehman is sophomore Kimberly Kelly. Kelly averaged a modest 5.4 points per game, but her role on the team as a defensive stopper was priceless in last year’s tournament run.

During Harrison’s tenure on the Bronx campus, the Lightning have produced five CUNY Conference Rookie of the Year award winners, and they hope to continue the trend with 5’11” freshman sensation Sally Nnamani. Nnamani is expected to start the season at the small forward position, even though her abilities give her the potential to play all five positions on the court. The Warwick High School graduate has an inside/outside game, which will create nightmares for the opposition.

“Sally is a very special player,” said Harrison when asked about his rising star. “She is a tremendous worker, and she has all the tools to be a successful player here at Lehman.”

Lehman was dealt a crushing blow in the off-season, as heralded freshman Monique Sampson suffered a tear of the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). Sampson, a 5’10” slasher out of Cathedral High School is slated to return to the Lightning in late December.

Freshman Sheila Harris and Toneifah Taylor will look to contribute, while Medgar Evers College transfer Tracy Austin should help the Lightning long distance shooting.

As usual, the Lightning will face a very challenging schedule. Outside of the very competitive CUNY conference slate, the Lightning will begin the season at the Utica tip-off tournament, and will also challenge non-conference foes, Stevens Tech, Rutgers Newark, Drew University Western Connecticut, and SUNY Farmingdale. The CUNYAC tournament this year will be held at the College of Staten Island, with the winner receiving an automatic bid to the NCAA Division III national tournament.

“We are a very young team which is starting to come together,” said Harrison. “Our hard work and our intensity is going to elevate us to elite status.”