

This year's basketball season to me, and my teammates, meant so much. We came into this year not expecting much; we knew that we would be one of the top teams in the conference but we didn't think we could be the best.

This season, we focused a lot on how we would use our speed and ability to run nonstop up and down the court in order to wear other teams down. We tried speeding up the game to play to our strengths. Our team was full of new faces, since we were a young team and not everyone played with each other before. For me, I had been playing basketball with two of the seniors this year, Brooke Mork and my sister Payton. It took some time before our team really clicked, and that wasn't until Cynthia Beavers joined our team. Not only did she add skills to our team, she had a great personality that made us all mesh together.

Our goals this year were to play our hardest every game like we had nothing to lose. We always played for each other, but I chose to play more for my sister and Brooke. Some of the best moments we had as a team would definitely be when we beat SPASH by one point. It was sort of bittersweet because two years ago, we lost the SPASH by one, and that was my freshman year. To be able to beat the leading team in the Valley meant so much to my team, and from that point on it was a full send mentality. We continued to grow closer as a team on and off the court. After that, we received more respect from more well-known teams and started to gain a following of supporters. We single-handedly turned Rhinelander into a girls basketball town versus the boys.

When the season started to wind down, and we were growing more confident in winning the conference, we started to decline a little. We started to not take things seriously and sort of mess around. But as soon as our co-captain, my sister Payton, told us that her season will be over soon, we quickly switched back on to play for her and our seniors.

After beating our rival, Lakeland, I was only 14 points away from getting 1,000 career points during my high school career. I was excited to achieve this goal but was upset it would not be at home, as we were supposed to play in Eagle River on that upcoming Friday. However, the weather was in my favor and our game was canceled, and the next game was at home on a Monday. Since the game got rescheduled, we were supposed to play at the middle school. Again I was upset that it wouldn't be at the high school, but that game was also called. The best game wasn't until Friday in Medford where I passed the milestone. While that story is crazy, looking back I realized that it doesn't matter where I was, it mattered who I was with. That night, I was at 12 points, I tried for a three but missed. The next trip down, I received a pass from Cynthia for an easy back cut basket. That feeling of making that shot made me speechless, and I am never quiet. My coach called a time out and all I could do was smile and cry. That feeling will never leave me.

While that accomplishment is something I am very grateful for, being able to tackle that goal with my sister and Brooke, who I have played with since 5th grade, was so special.

They are some of my best friends and I wouldn't have wanted to be with anyone else in that moment.

The feeling when I got subbed out of our last conference game, double header, huge lead, and the fact that we were about to cut down the nets for the first time ever in RHS girls' basketball history hit me. The feeling of knowing what I helped my team achieve meant so much to me. To be able to help the team in any way was important to me because I was playing for my sister, Brooke and Erika. Our program has been waiting for this for a while, and to be a part of the first team to do it with my sister was something unimaginable. The tears of joy from everyone's eyes when we each got to cut down the net showed me that we accomplished this and no one can ever take that away from us. We were THAT team. In addition to that, the little girls who look up to us have a very special place in my heart. I remember when I was that age, just eager to be a part of a winning team. Since my little sister is friends with most of the basketball kids, I have been blessed to be able to get to know and even help some girls out at camps. I know I play for them and that they look up to me as a leader and a figure to follow.

I am so grateful and blessed that the team I was on this year was able to accomplish something never done before. I am extremely proud of my sister and Brooke but especially my sister. Knowing they achieved a lifelong goal before they are gone means so much to them and to me. I am happy to know that other coaches have recognized my commitment, and I am extremely happy that I received first team again this year and POY my junior year. I am excited to see where the future will take me and my team for the upcoming year.