



AIA FEATURE STORY By: Don Ketchum

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## **TOLLESON'S WOODBERRY IS VERY, VERY GOOD ON THE BASKETBALL FLOOR**

PHOENIX, AZ (January 28, 2009) – If Tolleson High goes on to win its second Class 5A Division II girls basketball championship in the last three years, Becca Woodberry is expected to play a significant role.

The 5-foot-10 junior averaged nearly 23 points per game as the Wolverines won 18 of their first 21 games, putting them in position to make a run at the title.

“We’ve been doing really well, working hard. There are a lot of other good teams out there, like (Phoenix) Pinnacle,” Woodberry said.

Woodberry played in Tolleson’s elementary school feeder system and then moved on to play for Glendale Deer Valley for two years. She transferred back to the Tolleson area this year, approved by the Arizona Interscholastic Association.

Tolleson coach Todd Nelson had seen Woodberry play briefly for Deer Valley and knew of her, but didn’t know much about her until she showed up on the school’s doorstep and began to work with him on a regular basis.

“She is the best combination of a basketball player, student and person that I’ve ever had,” Nelson said. “She has done everything she has been asked. She even led the preseason voluntary workouts.”

Woodberry has played the “3,” or wing spot, in anticipation of that being the position she likely will play in college.

“I can play just about any position, but that is the main one I have been working on,” she said.

Nelson said Woodberry has developed an outside shot and has worked on her outside game, “but she can play down low (under the basket). She is a tenacious offensive rebounder. She is relentless.”

Woodberry agreed that her shot has improved, and said her ball-handling skills have improved and her ability to finish shots off the fast break. A lot of that came as the result of an increase in conditioning.

“I ran about three miles a day every day to get ready, and it really helped me,” she said.

She is hopeful that she can grow some more.

“My doctor has said that I might be as tall as 6-1, so that would help if I play in college,” she said.

Woodberry already is catching the eye of colleges with great academic reputations such as Princeton.

She also has developed into a strong leader.

“I am very vocal, but I keep it at a good level,” she said. “You have to be able to set an example, motivate people. You have to be a role model, help people out.”

Although one might think there would not be enough time to participate in other school activities, Woodberry does.

She is in the athletic leadership club and is president of the photo club.

“I am very interested in photography. It helps keep me going on that, and we are able to raise money through community service,” she said.

And she wants to continue to leave an imprint on the court.

“We need to stay focused, not be lazy, not be content with what we’ve done so far,” she said. “We have to continue to work hard. We want to try to be undefeated in the region (Desert West), so we can be ready for the state playoffs.”

**Have a Story Idea:**

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