

Next level

Farmington Hills Mercy hoops player, Jones, has signed at Oakland University

BY MARK VEST

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Farmington Hills Mercy basketball player Taylor Jones has earned the opportunity to take her game to the next level, as she has signed on to play with NCAA Division I program Oakland University.

Jones will be a part of the Golden Grizzlies' 2015-16 roster, which, according to her, will make her the first person in her family to play a collegiate sport.

Jones indicated that she has wanted to play in the NCAA since she was in third grade.

"Very excited," said Jones, who acknowledged support she has received from her mother, Mercy coach Gary Morris, and her AAU coach, Robert Brown. "Something I've been looking forward to for a long time."

Jones' accomplishments at Mercy have included being named honorable mention All-State, and CHSL All-League. Last season, she averaged 13.2 points per game for the Marlins.

Head coach Jeff Tungate is in his second year on the job at Oakland. Having a chance to meet him and future teammates helped convince Jones that Oakland was where she wanted to go.

"I wanted to go to a school where I liked the coaching staff, as well as the players," said Jones, who

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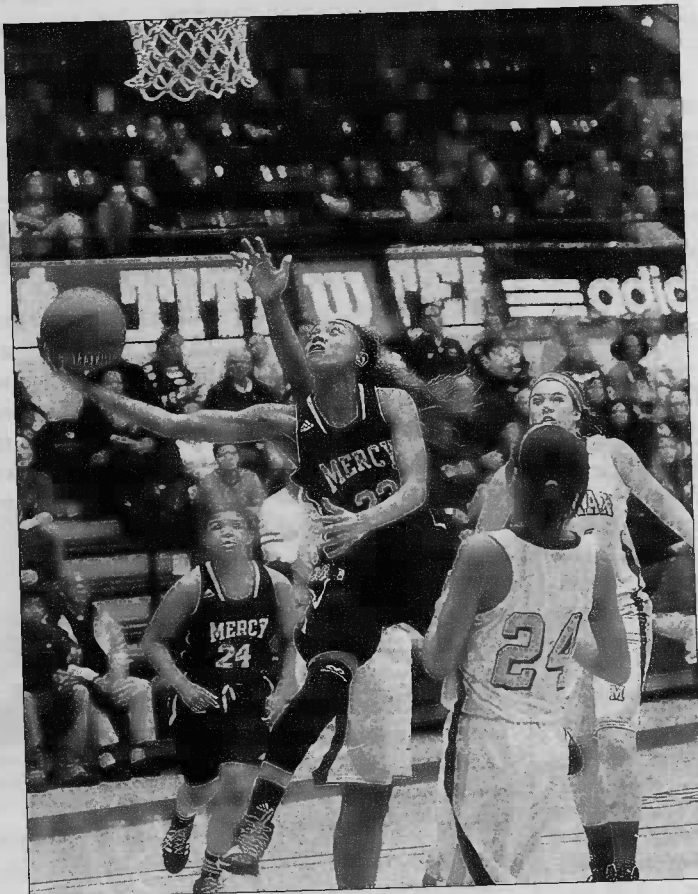


Photo by Doña Agusti

Farmington Hills Mercy senior Taylor Jones, pictured with the ball, has earned the opportunity to play NCAA Division I basketball at Oakland University.

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cited leadership as a lesson she has learned via athletics. "Everything felt right when I made the decision. I liked the team a lot — made me feel part of their own without even knowing me really well. And I could tell Coach Tungate — he's trying to make a difference in the organization. That's something I wanted to be a part of."

Jones has already given some thought as to what it is that she would like for her and her teammates to accomplish after she arrives on campus.

"To make a difference in their program," Jones said. "I wanted to

go to a school where I knew I could help make a difference. Maybe not my first year, but as time goes on. Look to make the NCAA Tournament and go places where no team has gone before."

Jones said she will be on a full-ride scholarship at Oakland. While she still has some work to do at Mercy, she has also thought about her collegiate opportunity.

"Nervous, but ready," said Jones, who cited hard work and dedication as being key factors for her chance to play college basketball. "And I'm excited, as well. I'm glad I have the opportunity to play against bigger and better competition. I'm ready for that."

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