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Flannigan: All-State 'A Great Achievement'

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Flannigan: All-State 'A Great Achievement'

*By Annabeth Miller,
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Editor's Note: This is the first of a three-part series featuring the Stoddard County basketball players named to Missouri All-State Basketball teams.

One of the first things you notice about Alan Flannigan is how tall he is. At least to someone who is 5-foot-4, Alan is tall!

But one of the other impressions just might have to be how humble and unassuming the Dexter High School senior is. Somewhat soft yet extremely articulate, intelligent, grounded, focused, and (and here's that word again) - humble.

Flannigan has led the Dexter Bearcats on the basketball court during the 2010-2011 season and was named recently to the Missouri Boys' All-State Basketball Team for Class 4. During his senior year, Flannigan had an average of 24.6 points per game and over 12 rebounds.

It's a finale in a high school career that has included a number of top honors and plenty of big games for the young Dexter man.

"It's something (being named All-State) that I've worked hard for and been hoping I

would get. It's a great achievement," Flannigan said while sitting on a bench in the lobby by the high school gym. "I give a lot of credit to the guys I played with and the coaches, and my parents."

Early Start To The Game

For those who have known him, it would almost seem as though there has not been a time when Alan Flannigan was not playing basketball. The assumption wouldn't be far off the mark. Flannigan started playing basketball when he was a kindergarten student – for his older brother's fourth grade team!

"It was the first time that I scored," he recalled. "I was in kindergarten playing with the big guys. I used to get to go to practice and go through drills and stuff. I would only get to play if we were up by a ton. I got in a couple of games and it was a lot of fun."

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He was hooked on the game, and the basketball hasn't stopped. It's something he works at – hard and diligently. He practices, practices, practices. He is still – in the off-season – putting in about four hours of conditioning and shooting every day.

Flannigan admits he likes the game's competitive nature.

"It's a high paced game. For me, it just fills that competitive urge more than any other. It's just what I love to do. It's what I put all my time, energy and effort into," he said.

But Flannigan also still finds time for his studies and maintains the same level of excellence with academics that he does with athletics.

'You Work Hard'

"You just have to get it done," he said. "You work hard while you're at school so that way you don't have as much homework at home. Any free time and you can't waste it; you gotta be doing something at all times. Sleep's at a premium."

Flannigan says his dad, Charlie Flannigan, is his hero.

"He really works hard and has taught me a lot of good life lessons. He's taught me everything I know about basketball," the young Flannigan says of his father. "He's taught

me to be a competitor and never give up and always to be a fighter when it comes to sports. That's what has really given me an edge – my competitiveness and will to do the work – to do what has to be done to win.”

His greatest cheerleaders are his parents – Jana and Charlie Flannigan. He comments that they have always been right there for every game.

“My parents are up there at every game – sitting up there whether I'm playing well or playing poorly. They're always yelling and screaming for me,” he said. Sometimes, he admits, he thinks they might “take it a little too far” but he appreciates and values their support. “I know it's just ‘cause they care.”

The All-State title is not the only award the Dexter senior has received recently. Last month Flannigan was named SEMO Conference Player of the Year and received the John Gibbs Award – the first time a Bearcat has received the recognition in basketball.

“It's a great honor to receive the SEMO Conference Player of the year,” he said. “The last 8 or 9 guys or have won it are all Division I players and have had successful careers in college.”

Flannigan noted that recent recipients include the Hansborough brothers – Tyler and Ben – from Poplar Bluff.

“It's a great conference and tons of great teams. For me to win this is humbling and a great honor,” he said.

The Next Adventure

Flannigan signed a National Letter of Intent early in the school year – before the start of the basketball season – to play ball next season at Lafayette College in Easton, Penn.

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“The balance of athletics and academics is second-to-none; it's a great fit,” he said of

Lafayette.

One of America's oldest colleges, Lafayette has roughly 2,400 students and more than 200 full-time faculty. Lafayette is a Division I school in the Patriot League.

Flannigan has visited the college said he feels the school plays a style of basketball that will be a solid fit. In addition, Flannigan will join fellow Southeast Missouri native Ryan Willan on the Leopards' squad. Willan will be a senior next year and played high school ball for Notre Dame Regional High School in Cape Girardeau.

The coaches at Lafayette seem to care a lot about the players, Flannigan said, and "want the players to be great people as well as great basketball players."

"It's kinda like an adventure – to go out and be far away from home and on your own. It's something exciting that I look forward to," he said. "It'd be really nice if, after college, I could go overseas and play somewhere. I haven't set my mind on anything yet. Hopefully, that's what the next four years is about."

A year of memories – All-Tournament Teams for Christmas Tournament and County Tournament, SEMO Conference Player of the Year, and finally being named to the Missouri All-State Team.

"Dexter's a special place," he reflected. "Tons of memories of growing up; I made friends and connections here. It's going to hold a special place in my heart forever. Someday I'll be back and maybe my kids will go to school here!"

Favorite Basketball Memory: Winning the Stoddard County Tournament as a sophomore and again as a senior

Least Favorite Basketball Memory: Loosing any game

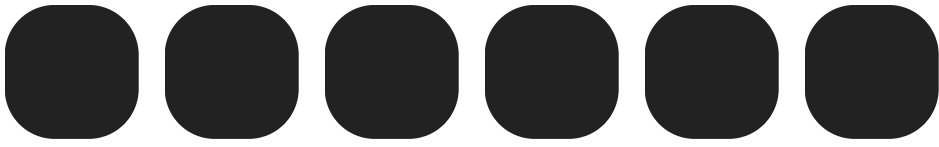
Basketball Hero: Blake Griffin (power forward with the Los Angeles Clippers) "He's unbelievable."

Favorite Word: "Swish"

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