

Central basketball star heads to Indiana

By Dan Nilsen

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Hardly anyone noticed Chelsey Jackson a year ago on Central High's senior-studded basketball roster.

They couldn't miss her this season.

Jackson went from obscure role player to the dominant force on the Phoenix team this year, leading the entire Flint area in scoring at 21.3 points per game.

Her play caught the eye of several Division I colleges, and Jackson has selected Indiana-Purdue-Fort Wayne to continue her athletic and academic career.

"This year proved to me that everybody will get their chance to shine if you work hard," said Jackson. "Hard work does pay off."

Jackson picked IPFW from among a final list that included Detroit-Mercy and Central Connecticut. She also drew interest from Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

"I want to become a better player and develop with a program, and I felt I could do that by going there," she said.

Jackson averaged 8.9 points a game as a junior behind Central stars Nicole

Holmes and Brittany Brown. This year she blossomed into a first-team All-Saginaw Valley Conference pick and a special mention choice on the Class A All-State team.

"She's such an unselfish player that last year she deferred a lot of the offensive stuff to Brittany and Nicole, knowing she had another year left," said Central coach Thomas Tucker. "I put the burden on her back this year and she led us."

Jackson also averaged eight rebounds, five assists and five steals this year. She'll play point guard in college.

"Chelsey is a very quick point guard and a tremendous athlete," IPFW coach Chris Paul said in a release. "She has the ability to get to the basket and shoot the 3, but probably her best attribute is her ability to defend. She brings a lot of energy every time she's on the floor."

IPFW went 7-21 last season. The Mastodons next year will join the Mid-Continent Conference, which includes Oakland University.

Jackson, a 3.5 student, plans to be an anesthesiologist.