

IN

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Peters Township

STATE CHAMPS!



**PT Girls
Basketball
Caps Perfect
Season with
1st PIAA Title**



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Perfect Season!



The PT Girls Basketball Team holds their gold medals with pride, after returning to their home gymnasium from Hershey as State Champs.

PHOTO BY PRIMETIME SHOTS

Peters Township Girls Basketball Team captures first-ever State Championship.

BY JENNIFER BROZAK

The Peters Township Girls Basketball team has made history.

With a 62-49 win over Garnet Valley, the girls captured the school's first PIAA Class 6A Championship title in Hershey on March 22, ending a perfect 30-0 season. The win also marks the first girls basketball team from Washington County to clinch a state championship, and only the fourth WPIAL team to win the title with a perfect season.

"This team has made history with its accomplishments this year," says head coach Bert Kendall. "I'm happy for the players, managers and coaches who truly earned the section, WPIAL and state championships with a perfect 30-0 record. These girls were great representatives of Peters Township High School and our community. They have shown us all that determination and a commitment to the team can have amazing results. I'm so proud of them!"

The road to the PIAA championship came after a nail-biter of a win at the WPIAL competition, where the Indians defeated two-time defending champions North Allegheny 43-40—with less than 2 minutes on the clock—to clinch their first-ever WPIAL Class 6A title on March 2 at Pitt's Petersen Events Center.

To Kendall, the team's success is not surprising.

"Team sports require a team mentality—caring for each other, doing what's right for the team," he says. "This year's squad exemplified the team concept from day one. While we have some very talented basketball players on our team, we would not have had the success that we did without the team culture that was present all season long."

One of those star players is 5'11" senior Isabella Mills, who led scoring for the undefeated Indians throughout the entire season. At WPIALs, Mills racked up double-digit points, including making a pair of free throws that gave her team a three-point lead with less than 30 seconds left in overtime. At the PIAA final, she put up 14 points and had seven assists.

"It is such an amazing feeling finishing my senior year with a 30-0 perfect season and setting all kinds of records," says Mills of the PIAA win. "I knew we were very good, but it is hard to imagine a perfect season and being the 6A state champions."

Mills agrees with her coach that the team's close bond as a key to its success.

"Our team is like a family and to share this historic season was incredible. We are so close on and off the court, so I believe that transfers to how we play with each other," she says.

In addition to its unique bond as teammates, Kendall also credits the team's myriad of strengths as a motivating factor.

"Our strength can be attributed to many things—skilled players, team culture, and a willingness to get better every day, which means putting in the extra time on the tasks necessary to improve," he says.

He also says that assistant coaches Katie Kendall and Samantha Loadman play a pivotal role in the team's achievements.

"I can't thank them enough," he says. "They bring a winning desire and strong work ethic to practice every day. Their example certainly rubs off on our team."

Kendall says that the team's focus on a collection of statistics that they branded "the standard" motivates the team to excel. The girls review their statistics following each game, and then celebrate when they achieve the standard.

"We focus on achieving the standard, more than the score. During the games, our coaching staff is always reminding the team to play to the standard, not to the scoreboard," he explains. "I think that the pursuit of the standard, instead of the pursuit of an undefeated season, has kept us motivated."

During the season, the girls also took time off the court to donate to charity by sewing dresses for girls in third-world countries. For some of the girls, it was the first time they'd ever used a sewing machine—or even a clothes iron.

"Living in Peters Township, we are quite fortunate," says Kendall. "It was heartwarming to see the girls take time out of their busy lives to learn a new skill and apply it for the good of less fortunate girls around the world. They made me very proud, and the girls got to see firsthand what a group of people can accomplish when they set out to do good things."

Mills, who will attend Case Western Reserve University next year, said she was thankful that her team had the opportunity for redemption, after losing to North Allegheny in last year's WPIAL game.

"I am so happy we were able to get there [to WPIALs] again," she says. "We had unfinished business and I believe we were much more prepared and eager for the win this year."

The girls forged their way to the PIAA Championship final by defeating Upper Dublin 51-46 in overtime in the semi-finals, after besting Norwin High School, Bethel Park High School and Harrisburg High School earlier in the competition.

"Going all the way through the regular season and this tournament undefeated is a result of everyone playing together as a team and not being concerned with individual performance," says Kendall. "Our players are great teammates that truly care for each other. For this reason, I couldn't be more proud of their championship accomplishment." ■



The team arrives back home to a crowd of proud PT fans.

PHOTO BY PRIMETIME SHOTS