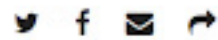


## Coach stresses team theme as St. Francis tops Sheldon to stay unbeaten in Delta League

BY NATHAN UEBELHOER

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St. Francis players celebrate after clinching the Delta League championship with a 63-25 victory over Sheldon on Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023. NATHAN UEBELHOER

Coach Brittany Woodard heavily emphasized the theme of togetherness after her St. Francis High School girls basketball team defeated Sheldon 63-25 on Wednesday night.

St. Francis has no one star player, the coach said. It was a collective effort that led the Troubadours to an unbeaten run in the Delta League, a No. 9 ranking by The Bee this week and a likely home game or two in the Sac-Joaquin Section playoffs beginning Tuesday. Woodard has provided structure, discipline and a big message.

“We can definitely win the section title this year,” Woodard said. “I mean, we really have a good shot.”

She added, “But this year, our focus was on getting the Delta title and then building on that to eventually win sections.”

Woodard is in her first year as the team’s head coach. She is no stranger to Sacramento-area basketball, having graduated from Christian Brothers in 2008 as a Bee All-Metro player before playing at Nevada and Cal Poly. Two ACL injuries, though, ended her playing career.

Woodard previously coached Christian Brothers’ junior varsity team. Following the retirement of coach David Carmichael, Woodard took over as varsity coach with a plan. She credited her immediate success to the team’s ability to play cohesively.

“I trust that whenever we play as a team, we can beat anyone,” she said. “I think that’s our biggest strength is playing as a team. When we are together, nothing can stop this group.”

Key Troubadours players Jadyne Weaver and Sydney Teoh also placed an emphasis on teamwork.

“We just bonded at the beginning of the season and that’s why we have really good chemistry,” Weaver, a senior, said. “We just play well together and aren’t afraid to share the ball.”

Teoh, a sophomore and the team’s top scorer, said: “Being friends helped us win so many games.”

Weaver also discussed the immense influence that coach Woodard provided.

“She’s in 100%,” she said. “It’s her first year, and she wants to come out with a bang. We’re out here giving our all, and she’s giving us her all, so I think that helps.”

St. Francis is 21-4 and seeks a 12-0 Delta record when it hosts Davis on Friday in a regular-season finale. St. Francis was a powerhouse in the past. The Troubadours won four consecutive section Division III championships in the early 1990s, punctuated by the CIF state Division III title team in 1993 under coach Dave Parsh. Under coach Vic Pitton, the Troubadours won section Division II championships in 2007 and 2008 and then in Division I in 2011.

The Troubadours lost in the first round of the Division I playoffs last season. They expect to last longer this time.