

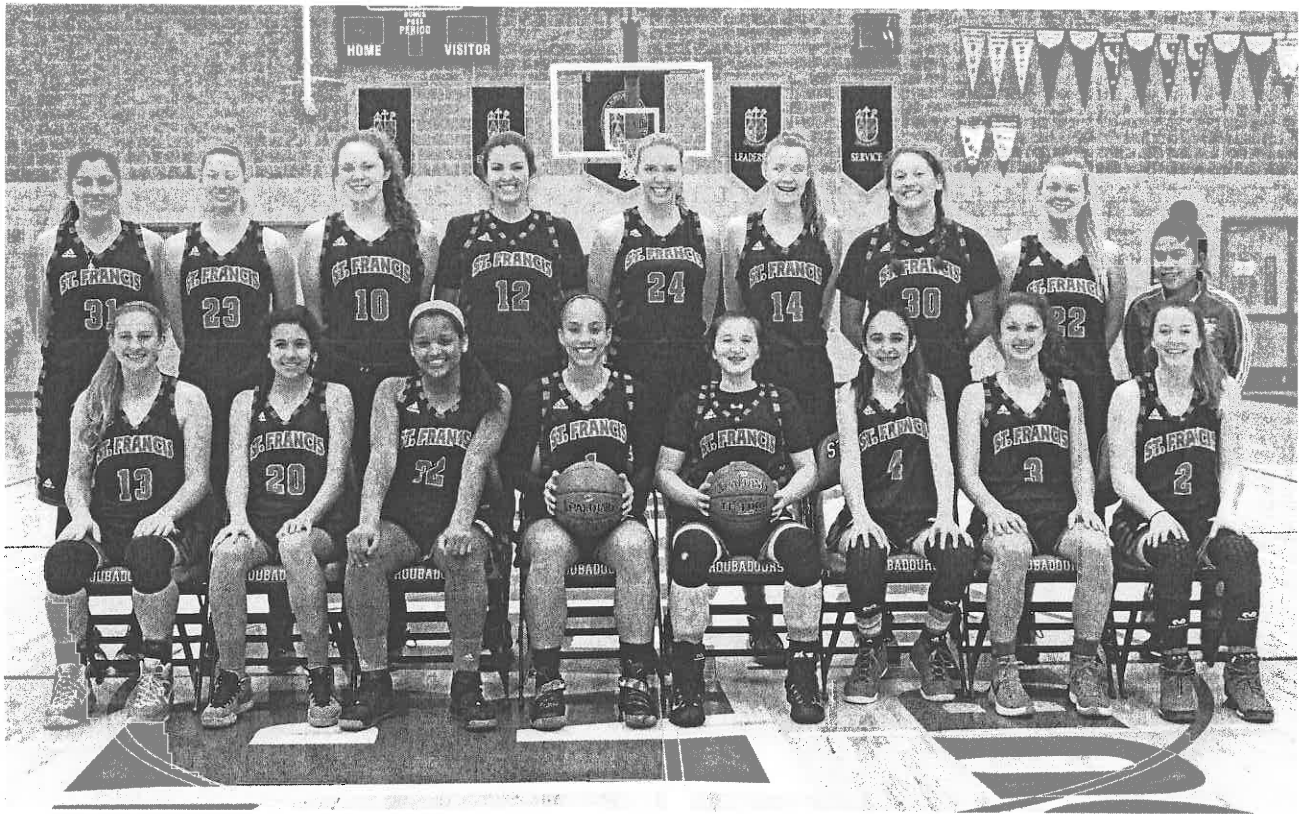
# ST. FRANCIS BASKETBALL



St. Francis vs.  
Brea Olinda



# STATE CHAMPIONSHIP MEDIA GUIDE



**2015-16 St. Francis Varsity Basketball Team** -- Back Row (L to R): Angie Ortiz, Kyra Huffman, Carlie Deterding, Clare Brennan, Lauren Craig, Jackie Koerwitz, Julia Razo, Logan Kelly. Manager Rica Baccay. **Front Row (L to R):** Marlee Nicolos, Kelly Kraeger, Aliyah Williams, Tia Hay, Janae Fairbrook, Nika Bagatelos, Megan Austin, Lauren Pank.

## 2015-16 St. Francis Varsity Basketball Roster



**RECORD**  
27-5,  
14-0 DL

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Class	Hometown
1	Tia Hay	G	5-7	Senior	Melbourne, Australia
2	Lauren Pank*	G	5-4	Freshman	East Sacramento
3	Megan Austin*	G/F	5-8	Freshman	Sacramento
4	Nika Bagatelos*	G	5-6	Freshman	East Sacramento
5	Janae Fairbrook	G/PG	5-5	Junior	Carmichael
10	Carlie Deterding	P	6-1	Freshman	Carmichael
12	Clare Brennan	P	6-2	Junior	Folsom
13	Marlee Nicolos	F	5-7	Soph.	Elk Grove
14	Jackie Koerwitz	W	6-0	Freshman	Carmichael
20	Kelly Kraeger	W	5-9	Soph.	El Dorado Hills
22	Logan Kelly	F	5-10	Soph.	Rio Linda
23	Kyra Huffman	F/PG	5-11	Senior	Sacramento
24	Lauren Craig	P/W	6-2	Senior	Sacramento
30	Julia Razo	W/PG	6-0	Junior	Woodland
31	Angie Ortiz	P/W	5-9	Senior	Sacramento
32	Aliyah Williams	P/PF	5-9	Senior	Antelope

**Head Coach:** Vic Pitton

**Assistant Coaches:** Sole Montemayor '01, Ron Blanchette, Maren Christie '00, Bobby Williams. **Manager:** Rica Baccay.

**St. Francis Catholic Troubadours (29-5) vs. Brea Olinda Wildcats (28-4)**  
**2016 NorCal Division I Champions**  
**2016 Sac-Joaquin Section Division I Runner-up**  
**2016 Delta League Champs**

**Road to State:** St. Francis was the No. 1 seed in the NorCal Regional and posted wins over Lincoln of San Francisco (81-36), Menlo-Atherton (74-51) and Castro Valley (66-52) to reach the championship game. The Troubadours were the No. 2 seed in the Sac-Joaquin Section playoffs, posting wins over Woodcreek (81-39) and Lincoln of Stockton (67-62) to qualify for the NorCals. They defeated Oak Ridge at the Spanos Center in Stockton in the semifinals (88-61) and lost to No. 1 seed St. Mary's (94-58) in the section finals.

**NorCal Division I Recap:** St. Francis won the CIF NorCal Division I Championship Saturday with a 66-52 come-from-behind victory over Castro Valley. The Troubadours trailed by as many as 15 points in the first half after Castro Valley went on an 11-0 run to take a 26-11 lead. Senior Tia Hay had 12 of her team-high 17 points in the half but the team made just 7-of-38 from the field and was 1-of-14 beyond the arc. Junior Janae Fairbrook hit three triples in the third quarter with the final one giving St. Francis its first lead at 45-44 to end the quarter. The Troubadours outscored Castro Valley 27-14 in the third quarter overall after scoring just 18 points in the first half and took their first lead at 45-44 entering the fourth.

**Head Coach Vic Pitton:** Vic Pitton is in his 14th season at St. Francis High School as the varsity basketball coach. He has led teams to eight league and three section titles during his tenure and his Troubadours have earned 289 victories under Coach Vic. The Nor Cal Championship in 2016 is his first in his career.

**Players to Know:** Lauren Craig (6-2, Senior, 17.1 ppg., 13.7 rpg.) Kyra Huffman (6-0, Senior, 13.0 ppg., 7.2 rpg.), Tia Hay (Senior, 16.2 ppg, 7.2 apg., 5.5 rpg.), Janae Fairbrook (Junior, 11.5 ppg., 4.7 apg.), Julia Razo (Junior, 6.3 ppg., 3.6 rpg.).

**State Championship History:** St. Francis has won one CIF State Championship in school history in Division III in 1993. Overall, the school has won three state titles including the sports of volleyball and cross country. Nika Bagatelos's aunt, Melinda, was on the 1993 state championship team.

**NorCal Champions:** The win over Castro Valley on March 19 gave St. Francis its second NorCal Championship in school history (1993) and 14th overall for the school.

**Delta League Champs:** St. Francis won the Delta League Championship with a perfect 14-0 record including two wins over Division II finalist Elk Grove. It is the first league title since 2011 and 13th in school history. Vic Pitton was named the Delta League Coach of the Year and Lauren Craig was named the Player of the Year. Senior Kyra Huffman and junior Janae Fairbrook joined Craig on the All-Delta League First Team. St. Francis was represented by five players on the second team, including Marlee Nicolos, Jackie Koerwitz, Angie Ortiz, Aliyah Williams and Julia Razo.

**Fairbrook for Three:** Junior guard Janae Fairbrook has played a vital role in the run to the state championship game. She averaged 17.3 points in the three NorCal regional playoff games, hitting a combined 15 three-pointers. She scored 17 against Lincoln, 20 versus Menlo-Atherton including a career-high six triples and 14 in the NorCal final with four three-pointers all of which came in the second-half comeback that erased a 12-point halftime deficit.

**Double-Double Machine:** Senior Lauren Craig has recorded 29 double-doubles on the season in 34 games. She has also eclipsed the 1,000-point and 1,000-rebounds marks for her career with 1,251 points and 1,140 rebounds entering the state final.

**Hay to Play at Colorado State:** Hay, who is from Melbourne, signed with Colorado State during the early signing period. She was ranked as the No. 14 recruit in the Class of 2016 by NorCalPreps.com and was listed as a three-star recruit by ESPN. Hay has averaged 17 points, 9.5 rebounds and 10 assists over the last two games, nearly posting a triple double in each game – Menlo-Atherton (17 points, 8 rebounds and 11 assists) and Castro Valley (17 points, 11 rebounds and 9 assists).

**Three Dot Data:** St. Francis had won 13 straight games entering the Sac-Joaquin Section final loss against St. Mary's and has won 16 of 17 overall entering the championship game...St. Francis has played three games at Sleep Train Arena this season – a regular season game against Davis, the Sac-Joaquin Section final versus St. Mary's and the NorCal final versus Castro Valley...Coach Pitton is going for his 290<sup>th</sup> of his career today.

**Tale of the Tape:** St. Francis and Brea Olinda had one common opponent during the 2015-16 season. They both played Fairmont Prep out of Anaheim. Brea Olinda posted a 63-46 win on Dec. 12. Nine days later, Fairmont beat St. Francis 68-42 in the championship game of a bracket at the Phoenix Tournament of Champions. Senior guard Tia Hay did not play in the game for St. Francis.

**Thumper Influence:** The Troubadour roster includes five freshmen highlighted 6-0 standout Jackie Koerwitz (4.4 ppg, 4.3 rpg), who made the team out of tryouts along with Carlie Deterding. Megan Austin, Nika Bagatelos and Lauren Pank were called up midway into the season after standout performances with the JV unit. The class mascot for the Class of 2019 is Thumper.

**Giving Back:** St. Francis Alumnae Sole Montemayor '00 and Maren (Martinelli) Christie '01 are both assistants on the basketball staff. Montemayor played two seasons at Sacramento City College. After taking a year off, she finished her playing career at Alderson Broaddus University in Philippi, West Virginia and earned a degree in nursing. Christie graduated from UC-Berkeley and currently part of the corporate counsel at VSP.

**What is a Troubadour?** A Troubadour is a French medieval lyric poet composing and singing in Provençal in the 11th to 13th centuries, especially on the theme of courtly love. St. Francis was referred to as God's Troubadour.

**The Zoo:** The St. Francis student section is affectionately known as the “The Zoo” because St. Francis is the patron saint of animals.

**About St. Francis High School:** St. Francis High School is a four-year, all-female college preparatory high school. It is the only Catholic high school in Sacramento affiliated with the Diocese of Sacramento and serves young women hailing from more than sixty private and public feeder schools in the California counties of Sacramento, Yolo, El Dorado, and Placer. St. Francis is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Western Catholic Education Association (WCEA). Established as a school for young women in 1940, St. Francis High School encourages the education of the whole person by providing high academic standards, a Christian environment for spiritual development, a full range of athletics, fine and performing arts, numerous on-campus clubs, and a variety of social activities. Now, with an enrollment of over 1,000 and alumnae numbering over 8,000, St. Francis is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this academic year.

**Pro-nun-see-a-tion Guide**

10	Carlie Deterding	Debt-er-ding
13	Marlee Nicolos	Like Nic-oh-less
14	Jackie Koerwitz	Core-witz
23	Kyra Huffman	Kere-ra
30	Julia Razo	who-lee-ah Rah-zo





## America's Source for High School Sports

### St. Francis Basketball Team Season Stats (2015-16)

**Mascot** Troubadours **Team** Varsity 2015-16 **Colors** Red, Gold

**Coach** Victor Pitton **Address** 5900 Elvas Ave, Sacramento, CA 95819

**Overall** 29-5 **League** 14-0 **National Rank** 128 **State (CA) Rank** 30

**League** Delta **Section** Sac-Joaquin Section **Division** Sac-Joaquin Section Division I



### Game Stats

#	Athlete Name	GP	MPG	PPG	DEFR	OFFR	RPG	APG	SPG	BPG	TPG	PFPG
24	L. Craig (Sr)	34		17.1	7.7	5.7	13.4	1.7	1.1	2.7	2.9	2.2
1	T. Hay (Sr)	11		16.2	4.8	0.6	5.5	7.2	4.3	0.6	5.9	2.3
23	K. Huffman (Sr)	34		13.0	3.9	3.4	7.2	1.9	1.9	0.9	2.7	1.7
5	J. Fairbrook (Jr)	31		11.5	3.2	0.7	3.9	4.7	3.0	0.8	2.6	1.5
30	J. Razo (Jr)	33		6.3	2.7	0.9	3.6	1.0	0.9	0.3	1.7	1.1
14	J. Koerwitz (Fr)	33		4.4	3.4	0.9	4.3	2.2	1.3	1.0	2.4	0.9
13	M. Nicolos (So)	29		4.0	3.1	0.9	3.9	3.7	0.6	0.2	3.4	1.3
31	A. Ortiz (Sr)	34		3.8	2.0	1.1	3.1	1.0	1.3	0.6	1.7	1.4
32	A. Williams (Sr)	32		3.3	1.5	2.0	3.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.2
4	N. Bagatelos (Fr)	14		1.6	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.1
20	K. Kraeger (So)	29		1.0	0.5	0.1	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.8	0.7
2	L. Pank (Fr)	8		1.0	0.4	0.1	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.1	0.8	0.8
10	C. Deterding (Fr)	13		0.8	0.5	0.2	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2
22	L. Kelly (So)	27		0.8	1.1	0.6	1.7	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.6
12	C. Brennan (Jr)	8		0.6	0.3	0.6	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.6
3	M. Austin (Fr)	11		0.3	1.2	0.2	1.4	0.5	0.2	0.5	1.1	0.2
	Season Totals	34		69.5	30.0	16.4	46.4	19.0	11.9	7.2	21.2	13.3

### Shooting

#	Athlete Name	GP	Min	Pts	FGM	FGA	FG%	PPS	AFG%
10	C. Deterding (Fr)	13		11	5	7	71	1.6	71
23	K. Huffman (Sr)	34		442	181	337	54	1.3	54
24	L. Craig (Sr)	34		580	234	468	50	1.2	51
1	T. Hay (Sr)	11		178	65	136	48	1.3	51
5	J. Fairbrook (Jr)	31		355	117	277	42	1.3	57
14	J. Koerwitz (Fr)	33		146	60	147	41	1.0	41
32	A. Williams (Sr)	32		106	36	91	40	1.2	40
30	J. Razo (Jr)	33		209	78	208	38	1.0	44

13	M. Nicolos (So)	29	117	45	123	37	1.0	39
4	N. Bagatelos (Fr)	14	22	8	22	36	1.0	50
22	L. Kelly (So)	27	21	9	26	35	0.8	37
31	A. Ortiz (Sr)	34	129	43	130	33	1.0	35
20	K. Kraeger (So)	29	30	13	41	32	0.7	37
2	L. Pank (Fr)	8	8	3	11	27	0.7	36
12	C. Brennan (Jr)	8	5	2	11	18	0.5	18
3	M. Austin (Fr)	11	3	1	9	11	0.3	11
Season Totals		34	2362	900	2044	44	1.2	48

## Shooting Cont.

#	Athlete Name	GP	Min	Pts	3PM	3PA	3P%	FTM	FTA	FT%	2FGM	2FGA	2FG%
1	T. Hay (Sr)	11		178	9	33	27	39	48	81	56	103	54
2	L. Pank (Fr)	8		8	2	10	20	0	0	0	1	1	100
3	M. Austin (Fr)	11		3	0	1	0	1	2	50	1	8	13
4	N. Bagatelos (Fr)	14		22	6	17	35	0	0	0	2	5	40
5	J. Fairbrook (Jr)	31		355	82	192	43	39	58	67	35	85	41
10	C. Deterding (Fr)	13		11	0	0	0	1	4	25	5	7	71
12	C. Brennan (Jr)	8		5	0	0	0	1	2	50	2	11	18
13	M. Nicolos (So)	29		117	6	24	25	21	50	42	39	99	39
14	J. Koerwitz (Fr)	33		146	2	22	9	24	43	56	58	125	46
20	K. Kraeger (So)	29		30	4	15	27	0	4	0	9	26	35
22	L. Kelly (So)	27		21	1	5	20	2	6	33	8	21	38
23	K. Huffman (Sr)	34		442	1	5	20	79	135	59	180	332	54
24	L. Craig (Sr)	34		580	6	32	19	106	175	61	228	436	52
30	J. Razo (Jr)	33		209	26	82	32	27	57	47	52	126	41
31	A. Ortiz (Sr)	34		129	4	21	19	39	68	57	39	109	36
32	A. Williams (Sr)	32		106	0	2	0	34	67	51	36	89	40
Season Totals		34		2362	149	461	32	413	719	57	751	1583	47

## Totals

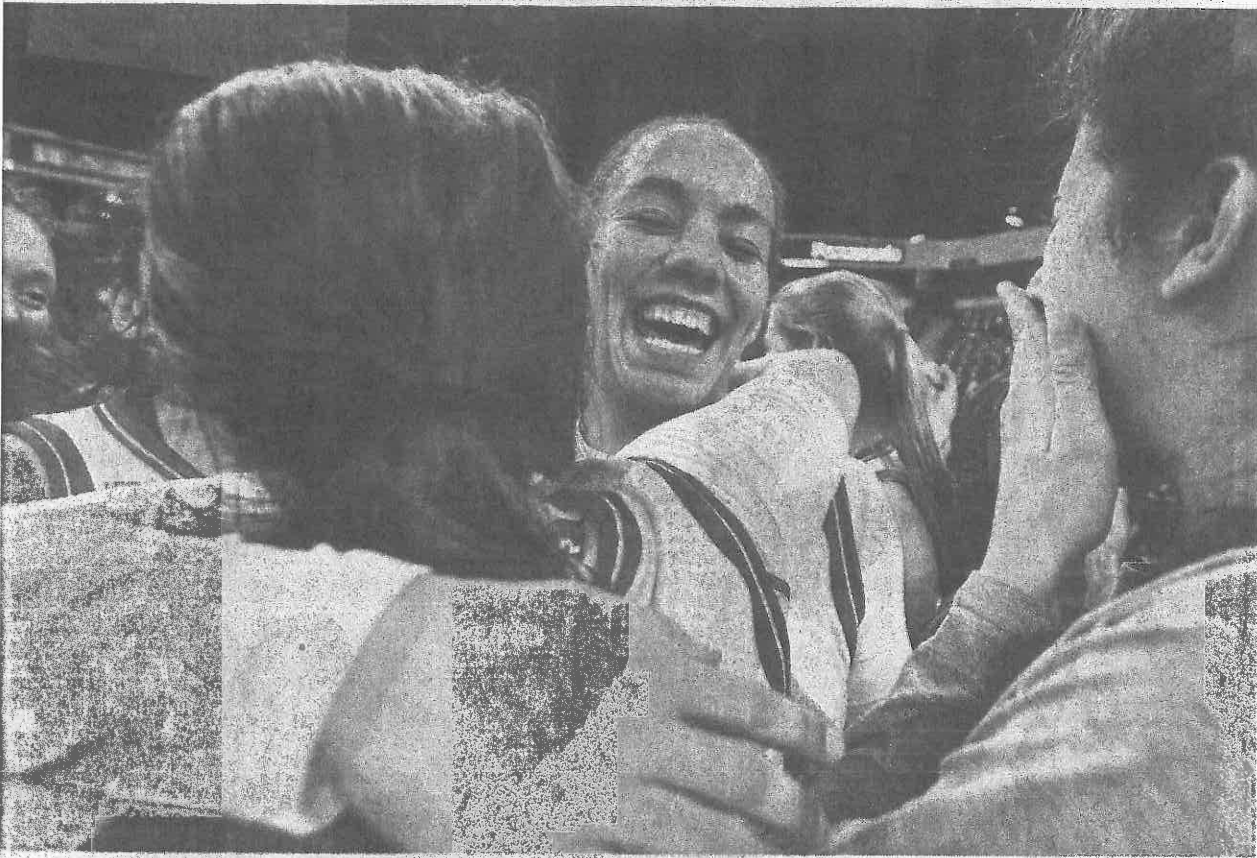
#	Athlete Name	GP	Min	Pts	OReb	DReb	Reb	Ast	Stl	Blk	TO	PF
24	L. Craig (Sr)	34		580	194	262	456	57	37	93	97	75
23	K. Huffman (Sr)	34		442	114	131	245	65	64	31	91	57
5	J. Fairbrook (Jr)	31		355	22	100	122	145	94	24	81	48
30	J. Razo (Jr)	33		209	31	88	119	34	30	9	56	36
1	T. Hay (Sr)	11		178	7	53	60	79	47	7	65	25
14	J. Koerwitz (Fr)	33		146	29	112	141	71	42	34	79	31
31	A. Ortiz (Sr)	34		129	37	68	105	35	43	21	59	49
13	M. Nicolos (So)	29		117	25	89	114	108	17	5	100	39
32	A. Williams (Sr)	32		106	65	47	112	12	10	11	31	38

20	K. Kraeger (So)	29	30	4	15	19	16	11	4	23	20
4	N. Bagatelos (Fr)	14	22	4	1	5	5	4	0	2	2
22	L. Kelly (So)	27	21	15	30	45	7	2	1	14	16
10	C. Deterding (Fr)	13	11	3	7	10	0	0	0	2	3
2	L. Pank (Fr)	8	8	1	3	4	8	4	1	6	6
12	C. Brennan (Jr)	8	5	5	2	7	0	0	0	4	5
3	M. Austin (Fr)	11	3	2	13	15	5	2	5	12	2
Season Totals		34	2362	558	1021	1579	647	406	246	722	452

## Misc Totals

#	Athlete Name	GP	Ast:TO	Stl:TO	Stl:F	Blk:PF	Chr	Defl	TF	DD	TD
1	T. Hay (Sr)	11	1.22	0.72	1.88	0.28	1	69	0	3	
2	L. Pank (Fr)	8	1.33	0.67	0.67	0.17	0	5	0		
3	M. Austin (Fr)	11	0.42	0.17	1.00	2.50	0	4	0		
4	N. Bagatelos (Fr)	14	2.50	2.00	2.00	0.00	0	1	0		
5	J. Fairbrook (Jr)	31	1.79	1.16	1.96	0.50	0	152	0	1	
10	C. Deterding (Fr)	13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	1	0		
12	C. Brennan (Jr)	8	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	1	0		
13	M. Nicolos (So)	29	1.08	0.17	0.44	0.13	9	36	0	1	
14	J. Koerwitz (Fr)	33	0.90	0.53	1.36	1.10	0	51	0		
20	K. Kraeger (So)	29	0.70	0.48	0.55	0.20	0	19	0		
22	L. Kelly (So)	27	0.50	0.14	0.13	0.06	0	13	0		
23	K. Huffman (Sr)	34	0.71	0.70	1.12	0.54	0	118	0	7	
24	L. Craig (Sr)	34	0.59	0.38	0.49	1.24	0	66	0	29	
30	J. Razo (Jr)	33	0.61	0.54	0.83	0.25	0	71	0		
31	A. Ortiz (Sr)	34	0.59	0.73	0.88	0.43	2	64	0		
32	A. Williams (Sr)	32	0.39	0.32	0.26	0.29	2	23	0	1	
Season Totals		34	0.90	0.56	0.90	0.54	14	694	0	42	





BRIAN BAER Special to The Bee

St. Francis star guard Tia Hay celebrates with teammates after the Troubadours' 66-52 victory over Castro Valley.

NORCAL DIVISION I GIRLS CHAMPIONSHIP

# St. Francis finally hits the right notes for title

BY JOE DAVIDSON  
joe.davidson@sacbee.com

It started with the national anthem, polished and pretty. Then the game started. The early going Saturday afternoon in this CIF Northern California regional championship game at Sleep Train Arena was anything but polished and pretty.

St. Francis High School basketball student manager Rica Baccay, wearing a walking boot, strummed a moving version of the national anthem with her violin, which normally inspires the Troubadours. Once it overcame first-half jitters, St. Francis settled down. Then it turned ferocious and opportunistic, using second-half runs of 17-0 and 8-0 to race past Castro Valley 66-52 and win the Divi-

sion I title, the program's first since taking D-III honors in 1993. St. Francis trailed 30-18 at halftime as it made just 8 of 37 shots in a venue known to make shooting percentages plummet. The Troubadours upped the tempo, running the break, hitting jumpers and seizing momentum. They made 10 of 19 shots in the third quarter and 8 of 10 in the fourth against an increasingly tired Trojans

bunch from the North Coast Section that came in 33-2. "We needed to have more patience," St. Francis coach Vic Pitton said. "They showed great character, great heart. They believed in each other, kept a positive outlook, stayed composed." More composed than, say, the frantic coach who worked the sideline and the referees? "That's usually the

case," Pitton joked. St. Francis (30-5) has a star player surrounded by terrific role players, and everyone competes to the point of exhaustion, a staple of Pitton teams over the years. Tia Hay, a senior guard from Australia headed to Colorado State on scholarship, had 17 points, 11 rebounds, nine assists and six steals. Lauren Craig, a four-year varsity player, had 16 points and 11 rebounds. The center has improved her game tremendously over the seasons, a far cry Pitton said, from "when it was a 50-50 chance if she'd fall down after rebounds, but she worked hard, worked on her balance. Neat to see." Janae Fairbrook, a junior guard, had 14 points and eight rebounds. Her four three-pointers helped spark those second-half rallies.

And senior forward Kyra Huffman muscled inside for 11 points and 10 rebounds, looking active and fierce months after enduring 15 days in the intensive-care unit of a local hospital. Huffman underwent several spinal taps to ward off viral meningitis. Huffman was so out of it during that hospital stay, she didn't recognize her parents. Pitton said he recognized not an ounce of fear in his team this postseason. "There's a lot of pressure being here put on by the game itself," the veteran coach said. "Pressure of success, pressure to do well for family and friends, pressure to be the face of the school. We handle it together, with a lot of prayer." Joe Davidson: 916-321-1280, @SacBee\_JoeD





## Senior Kyra Huffman's Comeback Keys Special Season

By Steve Shaff, St. Francis Assistant AD

For senior Kyra Huffman, the CIF State Championship run by the St. Francis basketball team over the past three weeks has been memorable. But back in July, playing basketball was a faraway dream when her life became a scary nightmare.

"In the beginning we thought it was just a cold and I could play through it," said Huffman of the illness that knocked her down in more ways than one. "It got progressively worse. I had never been in the hospital before. To spend 15 days in the ICU was probably the scariest thing I have ever been through."

Huffman was diagnosed with viral meningitis and endured several spinal taps to drain the excess fluid to allow her body a chance to fight off what was infecting it.

"Having my parents look in my face and not knowing who they were was probably the scariest part," said Huffman.

Entering her senior season in the best shape of her life, basketball was everything to her and she wanted to use the summer to get ready for her final season.

"We did not know what the situation was," said Head Coach Vic Pitton. "Especially when she readmitted and spent so much time in the ICU, it was so devastating because she was in such good shape. To be debilitated by a disease like that is something I never had one of my players go through."

With the support of her family and prayers from the St. Francis community, Huffman finally got better and had to start over.

"I was so tired and upset that everything I had worked for crumbled in my hands and I had to start over," recalled Huffman after practice on Monday. "It was really difficult but I did it. I lost a lot of weight in the hospital and all the muscle I had worked on the past four years. Having to (build myself back up) in the first months of school and conditioning was really difficult."

Photos by Phil Roina



*“Having my parents look in my face and not knowing who they were was probably the scariest part.”*

**- Kyra Huffman**

Huffman got to work in the same fashion she had before she was sidelined, determined to be ready for the start of the season in December.

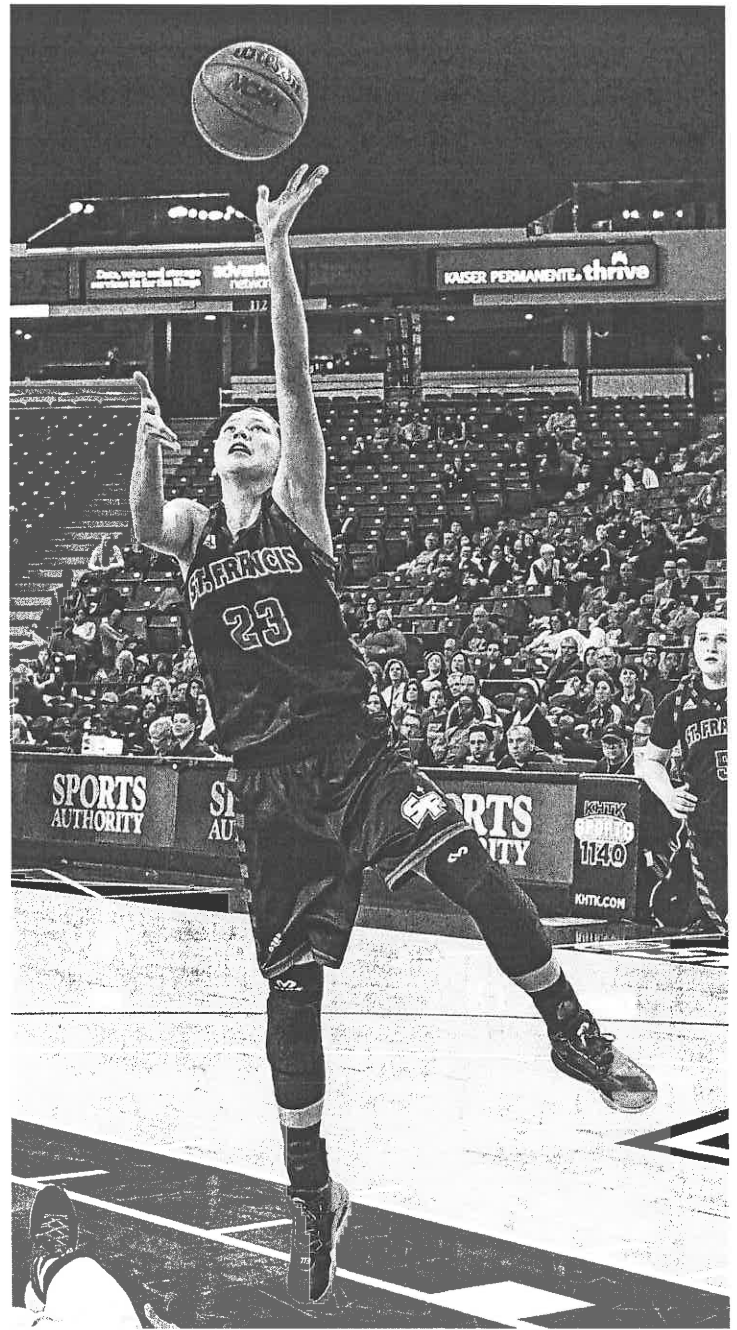
“It took her a while and we had to wean her into it,” said Pitton. “She has such a big heart and determination. She did not want to back off at all and she wanted to push herself. It was the right formula but it was a matter of holding the reins a little on her. She was able to recover very well. By the beginning of the season she was ready to go.”

Huffman, who also is a standout goalie on the soccer pitch, was back for St. Francis when the season tipped off. She scored two points in the opener but still grabbed 12 boards. In the championship game of the Vista-Folsom Tipoff, she recorded a double-double with 18 points and hauled in a season-high tying 13 boards. She was back.

“She showed a great deal of character,” said Pitton. “She has rebounded back. It is a great testament to her family and the love and support they gave her. Her teammates were very supporting as well. We are very thankful and blessed she was able to recover. It was a very scary time.”

Huffman runs the floor with great enthusiasm, fueling a Troubadour transition game along with Lauren Craig that is fed by the SF guards that has pushed the team to within two wins of playing for the state championship.

“One of things I teach them is the team that makes more easy baskets typically wins the game,” said Pitton. “If we can run the floor with our bigs and get easy baskets, it makes the game easier. She has tremendous energy. She starts off the game that way and in the third quarter she is really amped to get on the court and has been fantastic in establishing our transition game.”



Huffman has averaged a career-high 13.2 points per game this season, scoring in double figures in 27 games, including 22 straight at one point. She had a season-high 23 points against Liberty and tallied 20 in a win over Davis at Sleep Train Arena.

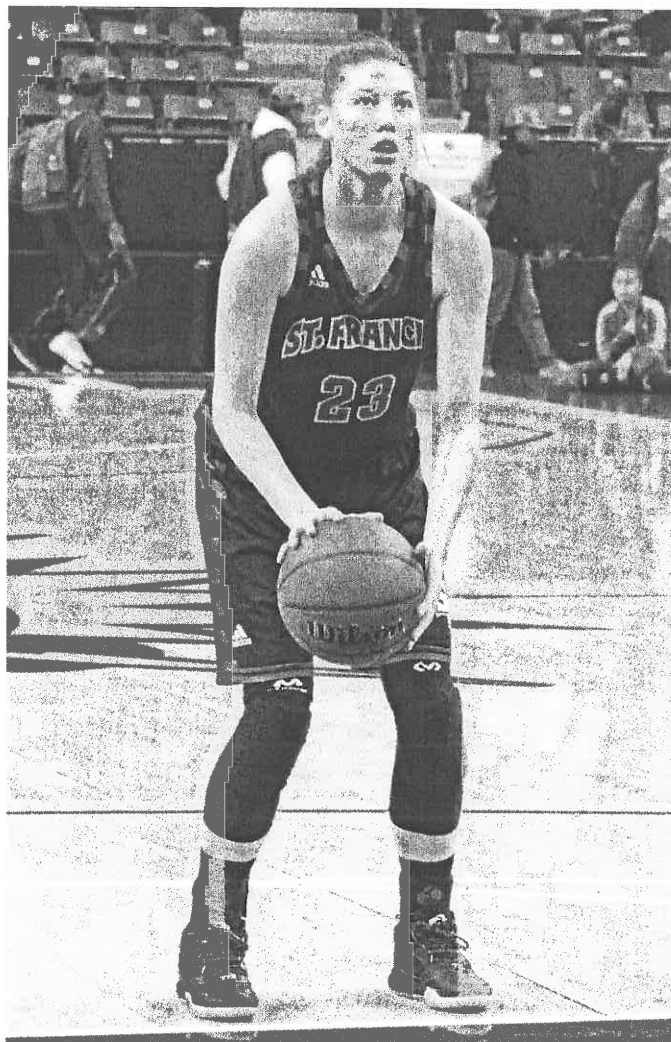
She hopes to get another shot on the Kings floor, the site of the next two potential games for the team.

"This is pretty special," said Huffman, who plans to play either basketball or soccer in college. "This is a special team and I am really glad I could be part of it."

St. Francis takes on Menlo-Atherton on Tuesday with a berth in the Nor Cal finals on the line.

"We have to keep up our fast pace and our intensity and it can push us over the edge," said Huffman.

For someone who has been to the edge, Huffman is ready for the final climb.





## Senior Lauren Craig Standing Tall for the Troubadours

*By Steve Shaff, St. Francis Assistant AD*



**2016 Delta League  
Player of the Year**

**Three-Time Delta  
League First-Team**

**Folsom-Vista Tipoff  
MVP**

Senior Lauren Craig has developed into one of the best players in the area and has her team in line for a chance to win a CIF Division I State title. The Troubadours host No. 8 Lincoln on Saturday at 5 p.m. and stand just three wins away from playing for the title.

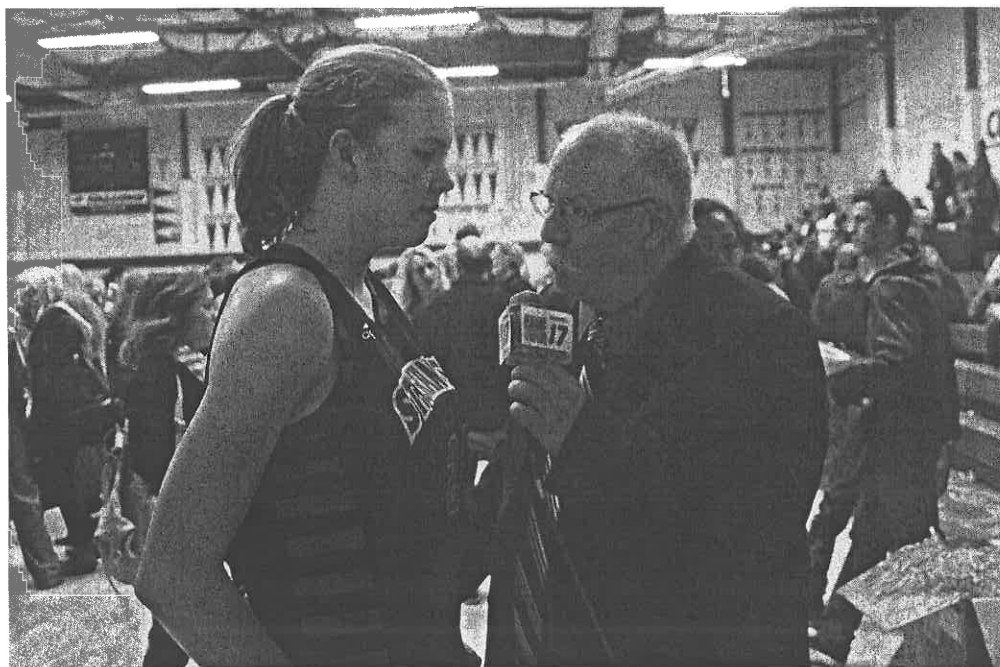
"We are really confident but we do not want to get over confident," said Craig. "We still want to play our own game, play hard and keep our composure."

St. Francis is the No. 1 seed in the Division I bracket with a 26-5 record behind the play of Craig, who has posted 28 double-doubles this season while leading the team in scoring and rebounding. She has stepped up her game in every facet this season, becoming a dominant offensive and defensive player who can decide a game with her play.

"She has been the cornerstone of our success," said Head Coach Vic Pitton. "With Kyra (Huffman), they have been doing this for the last three years together. She is a wonderful young lady and has a spirit now that she knows she can put a team on her back."

But Craig has not become the player she is today overnight. She has had to work at it and pick herself up many times along the way. She got her first taste of the varsity during her freshmen season, earning a late season call up and playing in two games.

"I remember it was really overwhelming at first," recalls Craig. "I had a great time and great experience. I am really glad I got pulled up."





During her sophomore season, Craig showed the potential of becoming a dominant player for St. Francis. She scored 10.3 points per game and grabbed 11.4 rebounds, averaging a double-double while recording 11 such statistical games during the season. She was named all-league for the first time and it sparked her desire.

“I have seen marked improvement in her athletic ability and her basketball skill development. It is a tribute to how much time she has put in not only in our practices but in her own personal training.”

**- Head Coach Vic Pitton**

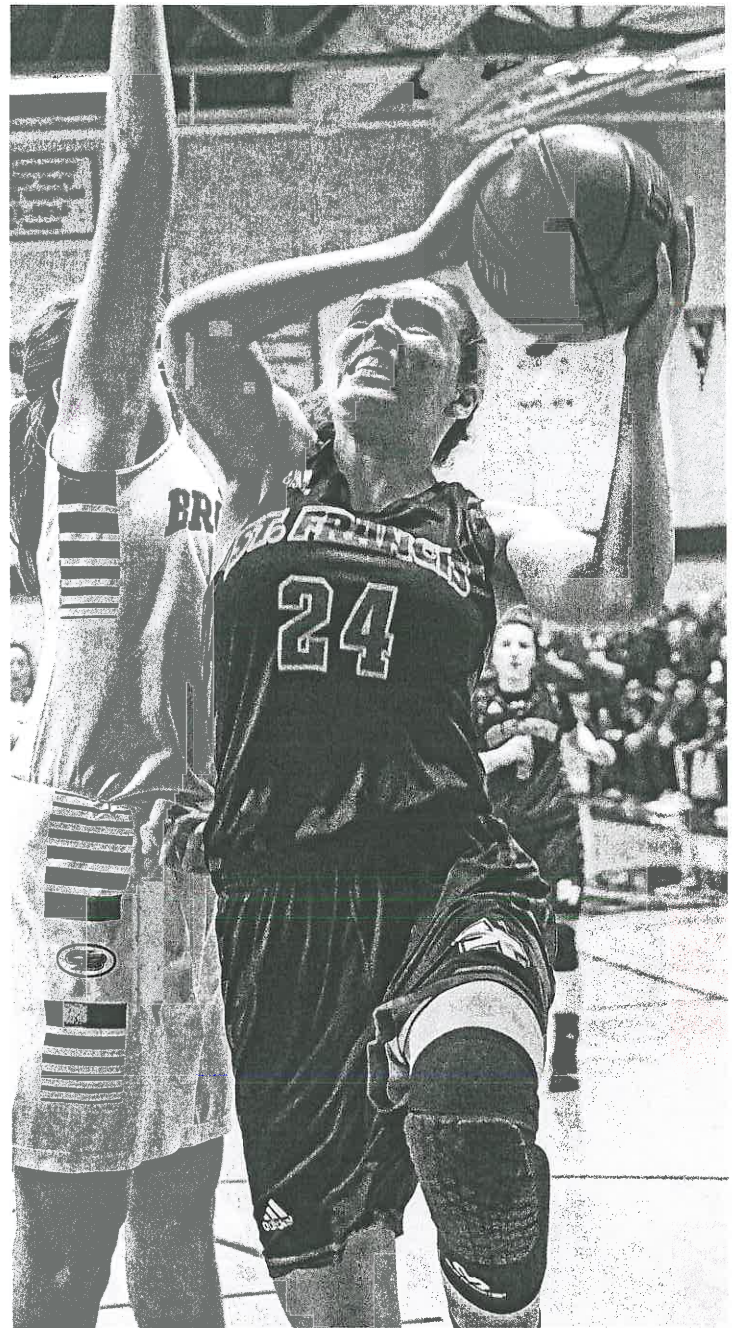
“I started feeling confident my sophomore year,” said Craig. “I was starting almost every game and got first-team all-league. It pushed me to work hard in the off season because I knew I could reach that potential.”

Craig continued to work on her game each season, showing improvement with her play and statistics. She averaged 12.9 points per game and 12.3 boards in her junior season as St. Francis lost in the second round of the section playoffs. While improved, even last year she would often fall to the floor with contact. Both coach and student saw an area to focus on that could lead to big improvement.

“It was a conscious effort and I think I have gotten stronger,” said Craig of her effort to stay on her feet. “I also didn’t want to be constantly on the ground.”

After spending much of her time each game on the floor, Craig has stabilized her play by staying upright.

She worked with former WNBA standout Danielle Vilgione of the Sacramento Skills Academy in the offseason and Pitton credits her for helping Craig. Now she can finish plays more consistently and kick start others, resulting in the biggest jump in her play this season.



"I have seen marked improvement in her athletic ability and her basketball skill development," said Pitton. "It is a tribute to how much time she has put in not only in our practices but in her own personal training."

While her scoring is an important aspect of her impact, Pitton says her overall improvement across her game has been the most impactful.

"She scores a lot and is a big part of our offense but the biggest improvement is in her rebounding," said Pitton. "She has gained strength in her hands, has the ability to rip the ball and bust out creating offense. She has also developed a three-point shot and has good range. She has developed into an all-around basketball player."

During the season, she has eclipsed the 1000-point and rebound mark for her career, totals that indicate the success of her prep career. No St. Francis player has reached the milestones under Pitton.

With her per game averages up to 17.1 and 13.8, the improved play did not go unnoticed as Craig will officially be named the Delta League Player of the Year after the season. She will also be a candidate for Sacramento Bee Metro Player of the Year honors.

"She was the best player on the best team and with us going 14-0 it is a tribute to her," said Pitton. "No one has had the impact on their team winning as much as Lauren. It is a well-deserved honor."

Craig, who is as humble off the court as she can be intimidating on it, is proud of her development and honors.

"It was a great accomplishment," said Craig. "I could not have done it without my teammates, my coaches and everyone that has supported me."

On Saturday, Craig and the Troubadours will look to extend their season and keep their title dreams alive. With Craig leading the charge, anything is possible.



## Hay and St. Francis Basketball Playing for Nor Cal

By Steve Shaff, St. Francis Assistant AD

St. Francis will play for the Nor Cal Championship for the fourth time in school history on Saturday with a berth in the CIF State Championships at stake. Senior guard Tia Hay has helped lead the postseason run that has seen the Troubadours reach the Sac-Joaquin Section final and now the Nor Cal final.

"It feels really good being able to contribute to the team and bring something different," said Hay. "It is pretty cool to bring in my basketball (background from Australia) and work with all the other players. We are playing well together and going far."

Hay has had a big postseason. She came within two rebounds of a triple double in the semifinal win over Menlo-Atherton with 17 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds. She has averaged 16.7 points over the six-game St. Francis postseason run.

"She is a very good basketball player," said Head Coach Vic Pitton. "She understands the game extremely well. She has the ability to set up her teammates and see the floor – one of the best I have ever had as far as court vision – and one of most creative players I have had. Sometimes she defers a bit too much as she is a very unselfish player."

Hay and the Troubadours will benefit from not having to travel and their familiarity with Sleep Train Arena. St. Francis is 1-1 on the Kings floor this season, posting a league win over Davis in January and the section final loss to St. Mary's on March 5, a game in which Hay scored 13 points.

"It is good because we feel more comfortable there," said Hay. "I don't think Castro Valley has played there so it gives us an advantage to know how the rims are more bouncy, the (feeling of) the floor and how spacious it is. Playing at Sleep Train before gives us a bit of advantage."

Hay is in her first season in the United States after moving from Australia. She enrolled in St. Francis prior to her senior season and has been a welcome addition.

"She has been a joy to coach this year," said Pitton.

After playing the opening two weeks, Hay was sidelined by a lengthy transfer review that kept her off the court for the good part of the season. She watched from the bench as her team went undefeated in the Delta League and win the title.

"It was really hard to only be able to train," said Hay. "The positive side is I was able to sit on the bench and



see things that we needed to work on. It is very different between being on the bench and court so I was able to see what worked or needed to be fixed. I love playing basketball so not playing was a negative."

While not playing, she continued to practice. But the time off took its toll mentally as she ached to get back on the court.

"She showed a great deal of maturity and the longer she was off the more it hurt," said Pitton. "There was a time when she was about to give up. But she didn't and she showed great character by staying with it."

Hay, who has signed to play at Colorado State next season, is taking advantage of every opportunity she has on the court now. She will get the chance to extend her season with a win Saturday in the Nor Cal final against Castro Valley.

"It would mean a lot," said Hay of winning and advancing to the state title game. "To come all this way and achieve something I never thought we could achieve, it would be an amazing thing."

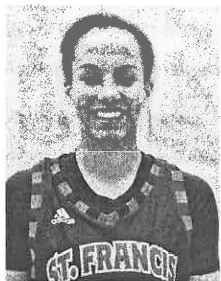
Pitton is excited for the opportunity for his team. There is only one Nor Cal Championship banner for basketball (13 overall) hanging in the gym on campus. The 2015-16 Troubadours have a chance to add another and leave a lasting legacy at the school.

"It is all about the team," said Pitton. "To have these ladies work so hard and overcome obstacles to proceed on this journey together, it is an honor to play for a Nor Cal Championship. It is something that will be with them the rest of their lives. Hopefully, we get enough opportunities out there to be successful."



# ST. FRANCIS

## TROUBADOURS



**1**

**Tia Hay**  
G, 5-7, Senior



**2**

**Lauren Pank**  
F, 5-4, Fresh.



**3**

**Megan Austin**  
G/F, 5-8, Fresh.



**4**

**N. Bagatelos**  
G, 5-6, Fresh



**5**

**Janae Fairbrook**  
G, 5-5, Junior



**10**

**Carlie Deterding**  
P, 6-1, Freshman



**12**

**Clare Brennan**  
F, 6-2, Junior



**13**

**Marlee Nicolos**  
F, 5-7, Soph.



**14**

**Jackie Koerwitz**  
F 6-0, Freshman



**20**

**Kelly Kraeger**  
W, 5-9, Soph.



**22**

**Logan Kelly**  
F, 5-10, Soph.



**23**

**Krya Huffman**  
F/G, 5-11, Senior



**24**

**Lauren Craig**  
F, 6-2, Senior



**30**

**Julia Razo**  
W, 6-0, Junior



**31**

**Angie Ortiz**  
P/W, 5-9, Senior



**32**

**Aliyah Williams**  
F, 5-9, Senior