

with your teammates because of how much time you spend on the road and in gyms together. Some of my best friends to this day are the people I grew up playing basketball with. Tell us about the unbelievable accomplishment of winning 2 Section V titles and a NYS Title. Our state title run junior year, especially our Semifinal game vs. Lourdes was probably the highlight of my high school playing career. We were able to accomplish something we had been denied the previous year, with hundreds of devoted fans who had traveled the four hours to the game. Add to the fact that I was moving out of state, and it was one of the best highlights of my life. I'll never forget that game and each and every person who was part of us winning the championship. It was an honor to be able to play with such an amazing group of girls and definitely helped develop my passion that I still have for the game of basketball. What were some other memorable highlights of your high school team and career? I'll never forget our rivalry with Livonia, especially our 2003 game at Livonia, all of our games against Naz, how much I disliked playing Lourdes, and the pregame meals or pasta parties our team would have. I think because of how close our team was both on and off the court, it made high school basketball so much more fun. What advice can you provide to the current youth basketball players? Play as much as you can, with as many different people as you can. Play with the boys, play with the girls. Play with people that will make you better personally, but also don't forget to help make others better. It's also important to get in the gym on your own and work on your individual skill set. Ballhandling, finishing near the basket, post moves, whatever it may be, shape your individual workouts so that you will become a better player because of them. Work on something you aren't good at. Develop a new asset to your arsenal of moves you never had. The offseason, while you are playing most of your youth basketball, is the best opportunity to get better. Never forget that!

 Tell us about your biggest rivals and/or most competitive games.

Our biggest rivals were probably Nazareth when they had Meg Dhalman and Nikki Lockhart, Livonia, or Our Lady of Lourdes from Poughkeepsie, who we lost to in the state finals in 2004, only to beat them again in our state run in 2005.

 Tell us how difficult it was moving for your senior year of high school.

Moving was probably one of the hardest things I've had to do. When I moved I was at the height of my playing career at HFL, had become incredibly close with all of my teammates and friends, and moved to a state hundreds of miles away. Fortunately though, basketball was there to save the day, as I had 12 automatic friends in my new teammates. I was also able to play on a highly competitive AAU team, which allowed Notre Dame to see my play, which changed the rest of my life, so although it was hard for me to move, it kind of made it all worth it.

 Tell us a little about your college career at Notre Dame and what you plan to do after college.

I was blessed to attend an outstanding University like Notre Dame, where I was able to excel in both the classroom and on the court. I majored in Film, Television, and Theater, and graduated a semester early in January 2010. I hope to pursue a career in sports broadcasting when my playing days end. Our team went to 4 NCAA tournaments, made two Sweet Sixteens, and traveled throughout the country every year playing games. Having 20+ win seasons was not a luxury at ND, it was expected year in and year out. The high levels of expectations made college basketball a bit stressful, but it also made you play to your full potential day in and day out. But most importantly, playing basketball in college, especially at a school like Notre Dame, gave me opportunities I never would have dreamed of otherwise. I was able to go to school for free (full scholarship) and had to opportunity to dedicate myself to something I was passionate about, day in and day out. Although there were some bad days, as anyone can have, I don't think I could have gone to any other school nor had a better all around experience than at Notre Dame.

- Who is the best player that you have ever played against? This past season we played UConn 3 times, and playing in the Big East, we've probably played UConn a total of 10 times, which I actually loved, but because of that, I was able to face Tina Charles and Maya Moore countless times. Tina in my opinion is one of the best post players to come out of the college game in years. Maya Moore is probably one of the best players I have ever seen to play the game, both in the professional and collegiate ranks.
- What can you tell us about playing against arguably the best women's college basketball team (UCONN) in NCAA history? UConn is a great team. While I want to hate them because of how good they are and how much they've beaten us by in my 4 years, I really can't. They are highly competitive, work hard on nearly every single possession, and their coach knows how to get the best out of them each and every day. It also shows what a tight knit group of girls they are, and how much they enjoy being around each other regardless of the fact that they are teammates. I've found that one key ingredient to success which can't be equated by statistics or basic skill on the court is the chemistry that a team has. Chemistry is huge in relation to success. Without it, ordinary teams will suffer, but with it, ordinary teams can excel and accomplish things they never thought they would be able to. I think that was one of the keys to HFLs success while I played there. We weren't just teammates, we were best friends, and it showed in the chemistry we all had with each other both on and off the court.

- Playing professionally has been an absolute blast, but it's also forced me to be a different player than I was at ND. Here, because we are the Americans, and are usually the best players on the team, we are forced into leadership roles and relied upon more heavily to win. I'm being forced to be more aggressive on offense. In college, and also in high school with the lineup we had, even though I was a good player, I was always a role player. I set the screens, got the rebounds, did the dirty work, so to speak, and turning around and playing a new role as a leader on offense has been a big (but welcomed) change. Play at this level has made me a better player and more well rounded.
- What are some life lessons that you learned from playing HFL Hoops?
  Always work hard, never give up, teamwork and communication are vital to any team's success (both in sports and in real life), and the

relationships you build with the people around you can shape your life in whatever direction you want it to. Surround yourself with a great group of people that motivate you to be better and you will have no choice but to succeed. What AAU team did you play for and how well did AAU help advance your game? I played for a lot of AAU teams during high school. Livingston Athletics Lightning, HFL travel basketball, Rochester Warriors, NY Panthers, Carolina Classics, and Team North Carolina. I would not be the person or player I am today if it weren't for AAU. AAU is vital if you want to succeed as a basketball player. If you want to play college basketball, as I did, you need to put in the extra work in the spring, summers, and falls, mostly through work with AAU. Tell us about your practice habits. What did you work on and how often did you practice? What practice advice can you provide for the youth players? In college we worked out 3 times a day- a lifting/conditioning session in the morning, an hour (or so) individual session in the middle of the day, and playing pickup in the afternoon. This past summer I would work out twice a day, with lifting, conditioning, and basketball combining to be one workout, and playing pickup for 2 hours to be the other. Now, as a professional, we practice 2x a day and lift and get extra conditioning 2x a week on top of that. As far as what to practice, make your individual basketball workouts skill and position specific. Ask one of your coaches some of the things you need to improve. Take the criticism some people might give you, and use it to make you better. The goal is to be the best all around player. If you're a guard, sometimes you are going to be near the basket posting up and knowing post moves will be good for you. If you're a post player, work on your ballhandling and your game facing up to the basket. Even though you might not use them all the time in games, having a better all-around skill set will make you a better player and harder to guard! What other sports did you play in high school and how did the other sports help you with your basketball career? I played soccer and softball in high school. Playing both sports made me a better basketball player. Not only improving my hand eye coordination and athleticism, but high school sports allowed me to stay active doing something other than basketball. Even though I love basketball and have made a career out of it, sometimes it is

