

UM basketball comes out strong this season

—Ashley Rogers—
Staff Writer

The women's and men's basketball teams started this year strong with valiant efforts. The Falcons are hopeful about the remaining games of the season with new coaches and new contributing players. Two Falcon players in particular are very optimistic about this season. They see new changes and are embracing them.

Trena Moore-Smith is a junior on the Lady Falcons basketball team and expects great things from the new additions to their team this year. Though they have struggled at times this season, she is still optimistic about their remaining games. Smith states, "I hope to establish some type of consistency that will benefit me as well as my teammates." The Lady Falcons have had three different coaches during the past three years but are working with new head Cindy Hilbrich to rebuild that chemistry. The expectations for the team are even stronger

this year. Smith states, "Coach Hilbrich expects the team to be very disciplined and focused on learning and adjusting to the new guidelines she has implemented. She is not only a strong believer in our athletic ability, but also in our academic success."

Coach Hilbrich is the 15th head women's basketball coach in UM history. She was the former assistant coach at the University of South Carolina Aiken. During her past coaching experiences, Hilbrich's teams have not only had great game records, but also great academic records. As an assistant coach, her team obtained a maximum average GPA of 3.56. Hilbrich brings to UM a great knowledge of the game of basketball and an expectation of academic success for all of her players. Hilbrich is joined this season by assistant coach Brittany Godsey.

The men's basketball team mirrors the women's team in their efforts this year. So far the men have only lost one game to North Alabama in a hard fought battle. In their first three wins, the men crushed their

opponents, beating them by more than 30 points. Senior Demarcus Catchings is very excited about the games still to come this season. "This season will be great. I think that we are going to do exceptionally well." Catchings is looking forward to facing one school in particular. "I'm looking forward to playing Georgia Southwestern. They are kind of our rival now. They finished first in our conference last year. It's going to be a great match up."

The Falcons men's head coach is Danny Young. He has been a vital part of the UM coaching staff for nine seasons and has very high expectations for the team. Young has led the Falcons to eight consecutive trips to a conference tournament and was recently named the Gulf South Conference East Division Coach of the Decade for 2000-2010. Prior to coaching at UM, he was the head coach for Salem International University. He is joined this year by his assistant coach, Stetson Hairston.

Trena Moore-Smith's and Demarcus

Catchings' personal reflections on why they chose UM to play basketball are very heartfelt. Catchings stated, "Coach Young is the reason I chose to come to Montevallo to play, as well as some of the players I met on my visit here. When I met Coach Young, I knew that he could make me a better player. After meeting Jonas Brown and Antoine Davis, who were already on the team, it was a no-brainer. I knew that we would be great!" Moore-Smith has her own special reason behind her decision. She stated, "Initially, the original coach that recruited me really made me excited about the University. When I came for a visit I established a strong bond with my teammates, and I felt that I was making the right choice for basketball and my education."

The sky is the limit for the players and what they hope to accomplish for the rest of the season. The chemistry, dedication and persistence of each participant are evident. They are confident that these qualities will lead to a great season.