

# A-State Women's Hoops hopeful for '23-'24 success with a revamped defense

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Second-year head coach Destinee Rogers will be looking for improvement this year that is as hard hitting as her team's play.

The Red Wolves women's basketball season ended play last season with a 13-19 record. Since then, the team has worked hard to better their play, especially on the defensive side of the ball.

"Our defense is a lot better," said Rogers. "We're a lot bigger. We're focusing on our rebounding while also trying to make our pace a lot better offensively. I really think this team can do some special things"

This season, the Red Wolves want to clean up some bad marks from last season, including an eight game conference losing streak in the middle of the season.

Despite a slow start, the Red Wolves finished strong, winning seven of their last eleven games, including two games in the Sun Belt tournament.

Rogers said the main focus of the off-season practices has been defense including more defensive stops and creating more turnovers.

"I didn't think our defense was very good last year," said Rogers. "We allowed a lot of paint points. So we created a new defense to try and stop that."

Meanwhile, the roster was bolstered by several transfer players in junior guard Bre Sutton from UL-Monroe, redshirt sophomore guard Wynter Rogers from West Virginia, junior forward Emma Imevbore from Lamar University, junior forward Kendra Gillispie from Baylor and senior forward/center Cheyenne Forney from Denver University. "We knew that with having



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Lauryn Pendleton, Gaurd, #24.

our returners come back we needed to add pieces that could elevate us to another level."

Pendleton, a Little Rock native majoring in creative media production, said

**"We're looking to build off the success we saw last season and carry that over into this season, and win a bunch of games in non-conference. Hopefully we carry that over into the Sun Belt tournament and win a championship,"**

**Izzy Higginbottom said.**

said Rogers. "We did just that. I'm really impressed with what they bring to the table."

The team roster has also seen several key returning players, most notably junior guards Lauryn Pendleton and Izzy Higginbottom. Both led the Red Wolves in scoring last year, and this year Higginbottom was named a preseason All-SBC First Team member.

confidence is up this season. "The confidence is pretty high, especially among the returners, because we saw a lot of success at the end (of the season)." Pendleton also said that this offseason has been trying, but rewarding. "I've put in more work this offseason than I ever have before in my career. I've been trying to become more of a threat from the three."

Higginbottom, a psychology major from Batesville, said the momentum from the end of last season is something she'd like to see carry into this season. "We're just looking to build off the success we saw last season and carry that over into this season, and win a bunch of games in non-conference. And hopefully carry that over into the Sun Belt tournament and win a championship."

The Lady Wolves begin the season November 6th with a road game against the South Dakota State Jackrabbits in Brookings. The first home game of the season is November 9th against Northern Illinois. Conference play begins December 30th, where the Red Wolves are slated to play at home against Coastal Carolina.

**For a men's basketball preview check next weeks paper.**

## SPORTS ROUNDUP



PHOTO AND STORY COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

For the first time since the 2019-20 season, the Arkansas State women's golf team won the Lady Red Wolves Classic played at Sage Meadows Country Club.

Following the third-lowest 36-hole total in program history on Monday, A-State totaled 5-over par 293 Tuesday to finish up at 4-over par 868 to top ULM (+16) by 12 strokes. At 4-over for the tournament, A-State set the fourth-lowest 54-hole total in program history. Samford (+19), Little Rock (+24) and Troy (+27) rounded out the top five in the 16-team field. The tournament title is the first since 2019 and the ninth time overall. It is the 15th tournament title under 14th-year head coach M.J. Desbiens Shaw.

A final round 3-under par 69 helped Olivia Coit finish fourth individually at a career-low 2-under 214 (72-73-69). It is the second career top-five finish for Coit. Ashley Kim tied for sixth at 1-over 217 (70-73-74) and Anne-Lea Lavoie tied for 15th at 5-over 221 (70-76-75). Charlotte Menager (+12) and Morgan Beualieu (+12) tied for 47th. Playing as an individual, Madison Tenore finished even-par 72 in the final round and tied for 28th overall while Shannon Berry (+13) tied for 53rd. Elise Schultz completed her second round since returning from injury at 4-over 76.

A-State closes out the fall portion of its schedule next week at the Diamante Intercollegiate at Diamante Country Club in Hot Springs, Ark.



PHOTO AND STORY COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

A pair of Arkansas State men's basketball players earned preseason recognition on Monday, as the Sun Belt Conference unveiled its 2023-24 preseason awards and coaches poll.

Terrance Ford Jr. and newcomer Freddy Hicks garnered spots on the Preseason All-Sun Belt Conference Third Team ahead of the season, while the league's coaches voted the Red Wolves to finish ninth in the preseason poll.

Ford is looking to build off of a standout rookie campaign in which he averaged 10.8 points, 2.8 assists and a team-best 1.3 steals per game. The sophomore guard shot 43.3 percent (120-277) from the floor, including 40.6 percent (41-101) from 3-point range. He also was strong at the foul line, shooting at a 79.5-percent clip, and recorded 18 games with 10 or more points.

Hicks transferred to A-State in the offseason after a stellar three seasons at Tarleton State. The Searcy, Ark., native was an All-WAC Second Team pick in 2022-23, averaging a team-high 16.2 points and 6.0 rebounds. In 2021-22, Hicks started all 31 games for the Texans and averaged 12.8 points and 5.3 boards in 31.1 minutes per game, but upped his scoring output in WAC play with 16.3 points per contest. He earned WAC Freshman of the Year honors in 2020-21 after averaging 8.2 points and 5.4 rebounds.

The Red Wolves return six players from last season to accompany 10 newcomers in Bryan Hodgson's first season as head coach. A-State hosts Trevecca Nazarene on Oct. 25 in exhibition action before hosting Central Arkansas on Oct. 30 in a charity exhibition benefiting Wynne Relief and Recovery. The regular season begins Nov. 6 at Wisconsin.

## Changes in progress to the student section

Photo by Rachel Rudd | Editor-in-Chief

Changes are in progress to the student section in the Centennial Bank Stadium that will debut at homecoming. Construction began Tuesday Oct. 17.

Homecoming will take place Saturday with kick off at 6 p.m.

The football team will be playing against Coastal Carolina. Both teams are current 3-3 this season.

