2008-2009 SEASON REVIEW

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SEASON REVIEW

The Lady Panthers capped off the 2008-09 season with a trip to the NCAA tournament. Prairie View A&M finished with a 23-11 overall record and won both the SWAC regular season championship and conference tournament, after being picked to finish first in the pre-season.

The team was awarded the #16 seed and played against the University of Oklahoma. The top-seeded Sooners handed them a 76-47 loss in the first round of the Oklahoma City Regional in the 2009 NCAA Women’s Basketball Tournament at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on the campus of the University of Iowa. Dominique Smith and Gaati Werema both paced Prairie View in scoring with 15 points each. Werema also grabbed seven rebounds and Senior Aminata Dieye pulled down six boards in her final game finishing the season ranked 35th nationally with a 2.1 blocks per game average. The loss snapped Prairie View A&M’s 19-game winning streak. The Panthers’ last loss was Jan. 5, 2009 at Southern (58-63). The Lady Panthers are now 0-2 in NCAA Tournament games. Prairie View A&M’s first-ever NCAA tournament berth came in 2007, when the Panthers fell to North Carolina in the first round. Head Coach Cynthia Cooper-Dyke led the team to both NCAA Tournament appearances and the first winning season in school history, capped off with three consecutive regular season conference titles.

The Lady Panthers earned their automatic berth to the NCAA tournament by winning the SWAC conference tournament in Birmingham, Alabama. They played as they conquered Southern 74-49 (championship), UAPB 71-60 (semifinal) and Grambling 64-35 (quarterfinal). Werema was named the SWAC regular season Player of the Year, Tournament MVP and HSRN National Player of the Year. Candice Thomas was named First-Team All-Conference along with Werema, while Dominique Smith and Twila Stokes were selected to the Third-Team. The Lady Panthers breezed through conference play (17-1) and finished with a (3-9) non-conference record. The Lady Panthers played against a host of top teams almost knocking off Rutgers on the road (56-58) and traveled to Honolulu, Hawaii to play in a Thanksgiving tournament.