

Chapter 9 - Kristen Rasmussen Tarr



Kristen Rasmussen

Personal

Kristen Rasmussen was born November 1, 1978, the daughter of Gaylan and Carolyn Rasmussen. She played Division I basketball (Michigan State University), professional basketball on several WNBA teams, and professionally in Europe. She also has coached at the college level and currently is the head coach of the Okemos girls' varsity basketball team.

Okemos High School

1992-93

Rasmussen began contributing to Chieftain basketball as early as during her freshman year.



Freshman Photo

Regular Season

On September 1, the Chieftains opened their season with a 77-40 win over **Eastern**.

Okemos freshman Kristen Rasmussen has yet to reach her 16th birthday. But she learned Tuesday how sweet that number can be. Rasmussen came off the bench to spark a 16-0 second quarter rally to break the game open as Okemos rolled to a 77-40 season opening victory. ... "I thought my team needed some help out there, so I went out and did my job," the 12-year-old said after Eastern rallied from a 11-3 deficit to tie the game at the end of the first quarter ([Source](#)).

By game's end, Rasmussen had scored 20 points on nine field goals and 2-2 from the free throw line.

On September 22, the Chieftains defeated **Adrian**, 42-31. "Rasmussen led Okemos (5-2) with 10 points and 10 rebounds" ([Source](#)).

On October 8, at **Mason**, "6-foot-1 freshman center Rasmussen came off the bench in the second quarter and scored 22 points, 16 in the second half, to rally the Chieftains to a 62-60 win ([Source](#)). Leading all scorers, Kristen's points came on ten field goals and 2-2 on free throws.

On October 10, Okemos downed **Jackson County Western**, 59-39, with Rasmussen and teammate Annie DeLind scoring ten points each ([Source](#)).

On October 15, the Chieftains fell to **Charlotte**, 67-61, in spite of Okemos holding a 31-27 lead at the half. Rasmussen was the second highest Okemos scorer with 15 points on seven baskets and 1-2 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

On November 3, Okemos ran over **Northville**, 60-32, with Rasmussen scoring 11 points ([Source](#)).

On November 7, "Okemos freshman center...Rasmussen scored nine points in the fourth quarter Friday to rally the Chieftains to a 48-42 Capital Circuit girls' basketball victory over **Eaton Rapids**" ([Source](#)), giving Okemos a 5-4 Circuit record and 13-5 overall record. Rasmussen led all scorers with 17 points on six baskets and 5-6 from the free throw line.



Kristen Rasmussen Going for Rebound

Districts

On November 20, Okemos fell, 63-50, to **St Johns** in the girls' Class A district finals. Rasmussen notched eight points on four baskets ([Source](#)).



1993 Okemos Yearbook

Laurels

At season's end Rasmussen was selected to the Capital Circuit All-Conference Second Team ([Source](#)).

1993-94





Sophomore Photo

Regular Season

On August 31, Okemos rolled to a 35-17 halftime lead on their way to a 67-33 nonconference victory over **Eastern**. Rasmussen had 10 rebounds and led all scorers with 18 points on eight baskets and 2-2 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On September 2, Okemos upped its record to 2-0 with a 56-41 victory over **Grand Ledge**, with Rasmussen pulling in 12 rebounds and scoring 14 points on seven baskets ([Source](#)).

On September 7, Okemos defeated **Waverly**, 59-47, with Rasmussen leading all scorers with 19 points on nine baskets and 1-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On September 9, Okemos lost in overtime, 53-48, to **Charlotte**. Rasmussen scored 16 points on seven baskets and 2-2 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).



Lansing State Journal/ROD SANFORD

Charlotte's Audra Sparks (right) tries to steal the ball from Okemos' Kristen Rasmussen on Thursday. Rasmussen had 16 points but Okemos lost in overtime, 53-48.

On September 16, Okemos defeated **Lansing Catholic**, 48-37. Rasmussen had 15 rebounds and led all scorers with 22 points on nine baskets and perfect 4-4 shooting from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On September 21, Okemos surged out to a 21-0 lead in the first quarter to defeat **Jackson County Western**, 76-32. Rasmussen had eight blocked shots, 12 rebounds, and 11 points on five baskets and 0-1 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On September 23, Okemos downed **Lakewood**, 60-43, with Rasmussen chalking up ten rebounds and 18 points on nine baskets (and 0-1 on free throws), upping the Chieftains to a 6-1 overall record and 2-1 in the Capital Circuit ([Source](#)).

On September 30, Okemos trounced **Eaton Rapids**, 71-34, with Rasmussen scoring 14 points on six baskets and 2-3 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On October 1, Okemos topped **Everett**, 55-50, with Rasmussen blocking eight shots and netting 22 points on ten baskets and 2-5 on free throws ([Source](#)).



Kristen Rasmussen Jumping Ball against Everett Player

On October 5, Okemos, the ninth-ranked Class A team in the state, downed **Haslett**, 68-43, upping Okemos' overall record to 10-1. Rasmussen scored 13 points on five baskets and 3-4 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On October 7, Rasmussen led all scorers with 16 points on eight baskets and 0-1 from the free throw line, and also grabbed 12 rebound and blocked several shots, to spark Okemos to a 51-35 win over **Mason** ([Source](#)).

On October 19, Okemos beat **Holt**, 47-46, with Rasmussen leading all scorers with 23 points (on six baskets and 0-1 from the stripe), eight rebounds, and five steals. Her “putback off a missed free throw with 15 seconds to go helped Okemo edge **Holt** in this non-conference showdown” ([Source](#)).

On October 21, Okemos downed **Lansing Catholic**, 54-51, to keep the Chieftains tied with *Charlotte* for first place the Capital Circuit. Rasmussen pulled in 11 rebounds and scored 16 points on eight baskets ([Source](#)).

On October 28, “Rasmussen scored 14 points in the first quarter to spark” ([Source](#)) the Chieftains to 70-38 Capital Circuit win over **Lakewood**. While Rasmussen went 0-3 on free throw attempts, she led all scorers with 20 points.

On November 5, Okemos kept pace with **Charlotte** for the Capital Circuit lead as the Chieftains defeated **Eaton Rapids**, 56-44, upping the Circuit record to 8-1 and the season record to 16-2. Rasmussen scored 13 points on five baskets and 3-4 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On November 12, at **Mason**, the Chieftains clinched a share of the Capital Circuit title, downing Mason, 57-33. Rasmussen led all scorers with 17 points on seven baskets and 4-8 on free throws ([Source](#)).

Districts

On November 15, Okemos’s season came to an end (17-3) as the Chieftains fell, 54-52, to **Sexton** in the first round of the Class A state district tournament. For the game Rasmussen scored ten points on five baskets and 0-2 from the free throw line ([Source](#))

MAROON & WHITE		
Okemos	Opponent	
67	Lansing Eastern	33
56	Grand Ledge	41
59	Waverly	47
48	Charlotte	53
48	L.C.C.	37
76	Jackson County Western	32
60	Lakewood	43
71	Eaton Rapids	34
68	Haslett	43
51	Mason	35
62	Charlotte	53
47	Holt	46
54	L.C.C.	51
55	Everett	50
70	Lakewood	38
59	St. Johns	62
51	Northville	38
56	Eaton Rapids	44
57	Mason	33
52	Sexton	54

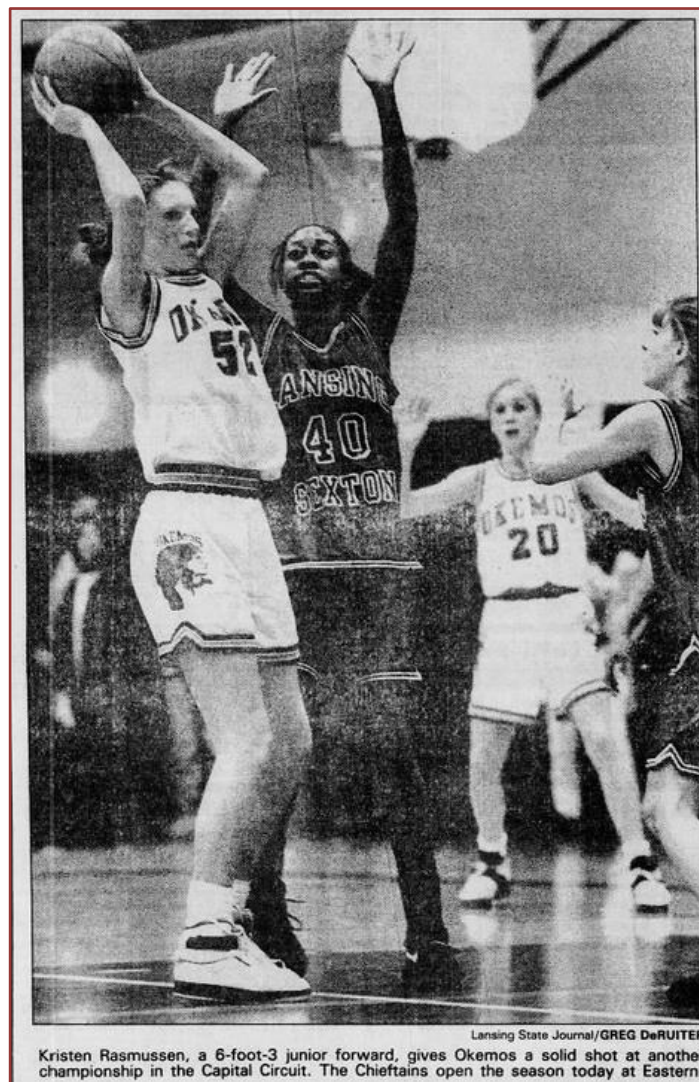
Laurels

On December 4, Rasmussen was named to the “Honorable Mention squad” for the Class A All-State team” ([Source](#)). She also received all-area and all-conference honors ([Source](#)).

1994-95

Regular Season

On August 30, Okemos defeated **Eastern**, 48-37. Rasmussen led all scorers with 21 points on nine baskets and 3-4 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).



On September 1, Okemos scored a non-conference 55-54 win over **Grand Ledge**, with Rasmussen leading all scorers with 29 points on 14 baskets and 1-2 from the stripe ([Source](#)).

On September 8, Kristen dished out six assists and led all scorers with 16 points on eight baskets as the Chieftains romped to a 75-29 win over **Lakewood** ([Source](#)).

On September 15, the Chieftains fell to **Lansing Catholic**, 59-45. By halftime, with **Catholic** holding a 19-17 lead, “Rasmussen had already blocked six shots and ripped away eight rebounds. She helped keep the Cougars scoreless for nearly five minutes in the second quarter that enabled the Chieftains to move into a 17-15 lead” ([Source](#)). While the lead changed several times, Rasmussen “picked up her fourth foul in the last minute of the third quarter and had to be less aggressive on defense. The Cougars took advantage and answered with [a] 12-4 run that sealed the win” ([Source](#)). Rasmussen led the Chieftains in scoring with 15 points on seven baskets and 0-1 from the free throw line.

On September 20, Okemos defeated **Jackson County Western**, 74-73, in a non-league victory. Rasmussen blocked five shots, grabbed 10 rebounds, and scored 12 points on six baskets (0-2 from the stripe) ([Source](#)).

On September 22, Okemos downed **Mason**, 48-40, with Rasmussen leading all scorers with 17 points on five baskets and 7-12 on free throws ([Source](#)).



Kristen Rasmussen Fights for a Rebound

On September 29, Rasmussen had a game-high 15 points (on seven baskets and 1-1 from the free throw line), as Okemos beat **Eaton Rapids**, 42-23 ([Source](#)).

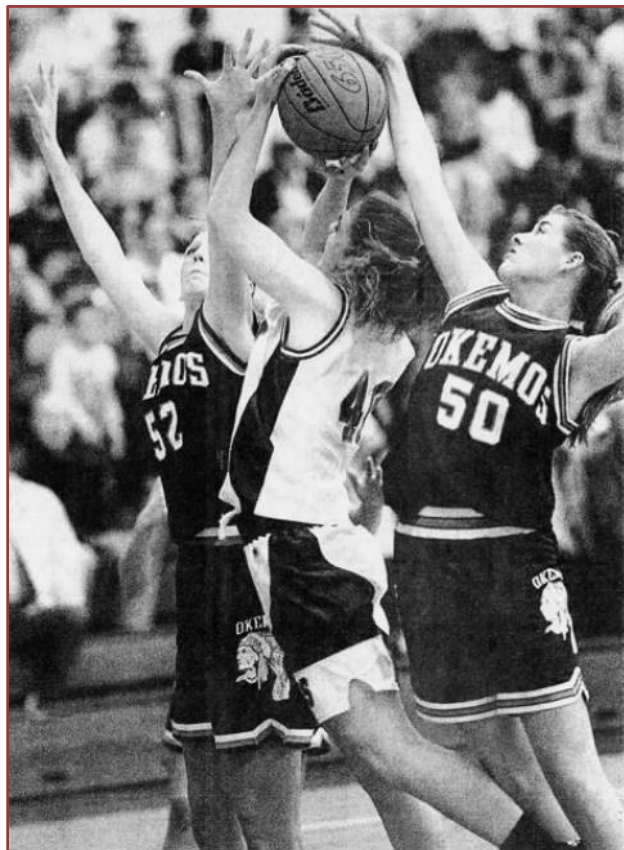
On October 7, Rasmussen again was the game-high scorer with 18 points (on seven baskets and 2-2 on free throws), leading Okemos to a 63-49 win over **Haslett** ([Source](#)).

On October 13, Okemos downed **Lakewood**, 77-48. Rasmussen led all scorers with 25 points on nine baskets and 7-10 from the stripe, upping the Chieftains' season record to 8-3 and 4-2 in the Capital Circuit ([Source](#)).

On October 18, Okemos defeated **East Lansing**, 61-49, with Rasmussen grabbing ten rebounds, dishing out seven assists, and leading all scorers with 20 points on ten baskets (0-2 from the free throw line) ([Source](#)).

On October 20, Okemos lost narrowly to **Lansing Catholic Central**, 50-49. Rasmussen had 13 rebounds and scored nine points on four baskets and 1-3 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On October 27, Okemos fell to **Mason**, 55-49, with Rasmussen leading the Chieftains with 17 pints on eight baskets and 1-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).



Okemos' Rasmussen (52) & Kasey Hulteen (50) Reject Mason's Shot Attempt

On October 29, Okemos downed the **St. Johns**, 63-56. Rasmussen led the Chieftains with 12 rebounds and 15 points on six baskets and 3-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On November 8, Okemos downed **Holt**, 67-50, in a non-league game in which Rasmussen had five assists, 11 rebounds, and a game-high 20 points on nine baskets and 2-2 from the stripe ([Source](#)).

On November 10, the Chieftains pulled into a second-place tie in the Capital Circuit, downing **Charlotte**, 52-41, and moving into a tie with **Charlotte** for second place in the Capital Circuit.

Kristen Rasmussen...created problems for Charlotte. The Okemos center was a dominant force as she scored 12 points [on four baskets and 4-5 on free throws], had seven blocks and five assists. She didn't allow the Orioles to sustain any kind of an inside game and she had two key steals down the stretch to seal the win.

"Kristen came ready to play tonight," [Chieftain Coach Ron] Mott said. "She used her height advantage and really was a factor in the outcome of the game" ([Source](#)).



Rasmussen Heads Upcourt after Pulling Down a Rebound

Districts

On November 15, after six lead changes in the fourth quarter, Okemos came up on the short end of a 49-46 overtime loss to **Everett** in Class A district play ([Source](#)). However, Rasmussen had six blocked shots, 14 rebounds, and led all scorers with 24 points on nine baskets and 6-8 from the free throw line.

Laurels

For the 1994-95 season, Rasmussen earned first team all-conference honors and came in eighth in *Lansing State Journal's* top ten mid-Michigan basketball players, playing in 18 game, scoring 284 points, and averaging 16.0 points per game. On December 7, the *Lansing State Journal* named Rasmussen to its "Fabulous Five" mid-Michigan basketball team ([Source](#)).

FABULOUS FIVE

Sarah Sinke, Okemos, G, 5-8, Senior

Karin Husbeck, Haslett, C, 6-0, Junior

Havilah Cunningham, Lans. Cath., C, 5-11, Junior

Kristen Rasmussen, Okemos, C, 6-2, Junior

Heather Oesterle, Mason, F, 5-11, Freshman

Kristen Rasmussen

She can play several positions and did for the Chieftains. A first-team All-Capital Circuit pick, her scoring average was 17 and rebounding average 11.8 with 101 blocked shots. When opponents used the press, Rasmussen helped out with her ball-handling skills.

She said: "I felt I had a good season. Being named to this honor was something special and will make me work all that much harder next season."

1995-96



Kristen Rasmussen (Senior Yearbook Photo)

Regular Season

On August 28, in the season opener, **Eastern** came back from an eight-point deficit after three quarters to defeat Okemos, 50-47. Rasmussen led the Chieftains with 18 points on eight baskets and 2-3 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On August 31, Okemos fell to **Grand Ledge**, 64-60. Rasmussen scored on four baskets and 2-3 from the free throw line for a total of 10 points ([Source](#)).

On September 5, Okemos downed **Waverly**, 50-39. Sinking five baskets and 4-7 from the free throw line, Rasmussen “had 14 points, five blocks and five assists” ([Score](#)).

On September 7, Okemos romped to a 78-44 victory over **Lake Odessa Lakewood**. Rasmussen tossed in 20 first half points on her way to a game-high of 26 points on 13 baskets, “most of those coming off power moves in the paint” ([Source](#)).

On September 12, Okemos secured a non-conference victory over **Portland**, 60-47. Rasmussen scored 15 points in the first half, helping Okemos (3-2) to build a 10-point halftime lead. She blocked four shots, grabbed 11 rebounds, dished out seven assists, and scored a game-high 26 points on 11 baskets and 4-7 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On September 14, while **Lansing Catholic** defeated the Chieftains, 65-55, never trailing on Okemos’ court, Rasmussen “made life tough inside for...the Cougars with 22 points [on nine baskets and 1-2 on free throws], 13 rebounds, six blocked shots and five assists” ([Source](#)).

On September 18, the Chieftains got it together, trouncing non-conference opponent **Everett**, 84-20. Rasmussen had five assists and netted 12 points on four baskets and 4-5 from the stripe, with eight other Chieftains also scoring ([Source](#)).

On September 21, Okemos fell to **Mason**, 60-58, after a **Mason** player scored a driving layup with 17 seconds remaining, resulting in the Chieftains' season record going to 4-4 and their Capital Circuit record to 1-2. Rasmussen led the Chieftain scorers with 15 points on seven baskets and 1-2 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

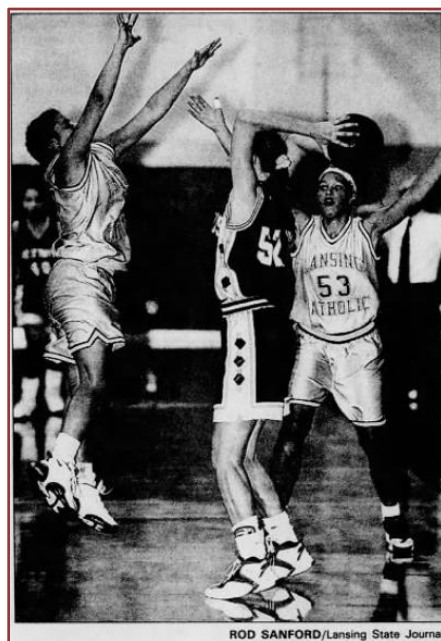
On September 28, the Chieftains built up a 17-point half-time lead on their way to downing **Eaton Rapids**, 66-42. Rasmussen contributed 12 rebounds, six assists, and 13 points on six baskets and 1-1 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On October 3, Okemos' overall team height led to a 33-19 rebounding advantage and a 64-49 non-league victory over **Haslett**. "Rasmussen did it all for the Chieftains recording a triple double with 18 points [on eight baskets and 2-2 from the free throw line], 12 rebounds and ten assists. Rasmussen also added five blocks" ([Source](#)).

On October 5, Okemos defeated **Charlotte**, 65-45. "Rasmussen scored 15...points in the third quarter to lead Okemos [7-4, 3-2] to the Capital Circuit victory" ([Source](#)). Her 26 points came on 11 baskets and a perfect 4-4 from the free throw line.

On October 13, Okemos topped **Lake Odessa Lakewood**, 62-52, with Rasmussen grabbing 11 rebounds, dishing out eight assists, and scoring 12 points on four baskets and 4-8 from the stripe ([Source](#)).

On October 19, **Lansing Catholic Central** beat Okemos, 51-47, leaving the chieftains with an 8-6 record overall and 4-3 in the Capital Circuit ([Source](#)). Rasmussen's 13 points came on six baskets and 1-3 from the free throw line.



Lansing Catholic Cougar Defenders Pressure Rasmussen (October 19)

On November 8, in a non-conference game, Okemos downed **Holt**, 55-55, with Rasmussen scoring 13 points on five baskets and 3-5 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On November 10, Okemos topped **Charlotte**, 65-42. Rasmussen's 11 points (on four baskets and 3-4 from the free throwline) upped the Chieftains' Capital Circuit record to 7-3 and season record to 13-6 ([Source](#)).

Districts

On November 13, Okemos and **East Lansing** met in a Class A district tournament game. The headlines read:

Okemos advances

Kristen Rasmussen leads Chieftains past East Lansing in district.

K.R. Killer Rebounder. Kristen Rasmussen. The two go hand-in-hand.

Rasmussen, a forward-guard-center for the Okemos girls basketball team, had 17 rebounds as the Chieftains defeated East Lansing, 68-34, in [a] Class A district tournament game Monday at Everett. ...

The 6-foot-3 Rasmussen was more than a rebounding specialist Monday.

She...was an offensive leader with 20 points. Then defensively, she blocked nine shots. And as a playmaker and the leader all season in assists, she dished off five.

"I love it," Rasmussen said. "We've been kind of up and down but we've put our heads together and we're more aggressive now."

Rasmussen played the post and at times ran the offense and helped break the press.

"I like it," Rasmussen said about playing guard. "Sometimes I dribble the ball a little too high, but it's fun." ([Source](#))

Rasmussen's 20 points came on nine baskets and 2-5 from the free throw line.

On November 16, Okemos' 39-21 rebounding edge prevailed over **St. Johns**, 70-64. "Rasmussen led Okemos with 21 points [on nine baskets and 3-3 on free throws]. She also had 12 rebounds and five blocked shots" ([Source](#)).

Regionals

On November 20, in a Class A girls' regional basketball game at **Charlotte**, Okemos "used a 46-19 rebounding edge to defeat Grand Ledge 50-42" ([Source](#)). Rasmussen grabbed 18 rebounds and scored 16 points on seven baskets and 2-5 from the free throw line.

On November 22, Okemos won the Class A regional championship game with a 47-42 win over **Howell**, upping the Chieftains' season record to 18-6. "Rasmussen, 6-foot-3, anchored a front line that out-rebounded the Highlanders 45-21" ([Source](#)). Rasmussen scored 14 points on six baskets and 2-6 from the free throw line.



Kristen Rasmussen (52) in Okemos vs. Howell (November 22, 1995)

Quarterfinals

On November 28, Okemos rallied to beat **Ann Arbor Huron**, 52-50, with Rasmussen dominating in the final quarter, scoring "eight points in the fourth to keep Okemos alive against the River Rats" ([Source](#)).

In fact, Rasmussen carried the team throughout the game, showing her versatility with 21 points [on seven baskets and 7-9 on free throws], 14 rebounds and seven assists.

"I think it's that everybody just has to have the spirit," said Rasmussen, who denies being a 'one woman team.'

"They pump me up and I pump them up." . . .

"We just knew we had to go out and do it," said Rasmussen. "We finally just played our game." ([Source](#))



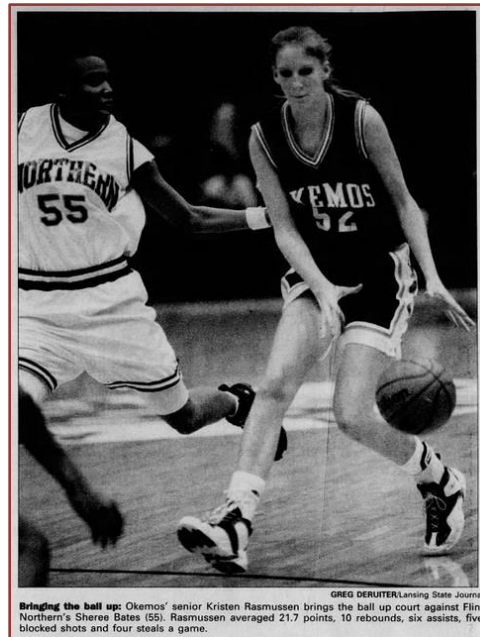
ROD SANFORD/Lansing State Journal
Leading Chieftain: Kristen Rasmussen (52) of Okemos shoots over Ann Arbor Huron's Kristine Bilbie. Rasmussen had 21 points, 14 rebounds and seven assists in the Chieftains' 52-50 victory.



Kristen Rasmussen (#52) against Ann Arbor Huron (1995)

Semifinals

On November 30, Okemos (19-7 on the season) lost in the Class A girls' basketball tournament, 59-49, to No. 1 **Flint Northern**, after having led 41-33 with seven minutes to play. Rasmussen's 12 points came on five baskets and 2-4 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).



Laurels

Rasmussen was one of 12 girls named to the Class A All-State basketball team, as selected by a panel of sports writers, with per game averages of 21.7 points, 10 rebounds, six assists, five blocks, and four steals per game ([Source](#)). On December 14, Rasmussen was honored as the first recipient of the *State Journal's* 1995 Girls' Basketball Greater Lansing Player of the Year, chosen by a panel of 12 coaches who also select the Super Six and All-Area Class A, B, C and D teams. Rasmussen is also one of the Super Six.

She set a school-record with 400 career blocked shots, averaging five per game this season. She shot 55 percent from the field and 62 percent from the free throw line. But perhaps the biggest compliment to...Rasmussen came from Flint Northern coach Leteia Hughley, after the Class A state tournament semifinals two weeks ago in Battle Creek. "We had never run up against a player with her stature who handled the ball any better than she did," Hughley said. "We like to press and I thought we put a lot of pressure on the ball, but she was just that good. She is an outstanding player" ([Source](#)).

Also, Rasmussen finished fifth in the Miss Basketball of Michigan balloting that was conducted by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Greater Lansing Player of the Year

KRISTEN RASMUSSEN

Versatile Chieftain saluted

Rasmussen did it all in her brilliant career at Okemos

By Bob Gross
Lansing State Journal

Call her the intimidator. She set a school-record with 400 career blocked shots, averaging five a game this season. She shot 55 percent from the field and 62 percent from the free throw line.



Rasmussen

But perhaps the biggest compliment to Okemos senior basketball standout Kristen Rasmussen came from Flint Northern coach Leteia Hughley, after the Class A state tournament semifinals two weeks ago in Battle Creek.

"We had never run up against a player with her stature who handled the ball any better than she did," Hughley said. "We like to press and I thought we put a lot of pressure on the ball, but she was just that good. She is an outstanding player."

Northern beat Okemos, 59-49, and went on to capture its second straight state title.

Rasmussen, 6-foot-3 forward and a three-year starter, today becomes the first recipient of the State Journal's Greater Lansing Basketball Player of the Year Award, chosen by a panel of 12 coaches who also selected the Super Six and All-Area Class A, B, C and D teams. Rasmussen is also one of the Super Six.

The State Journal will present the award to Rasmussen at a school assembly.

The award will be given annually to the top girls and boys basketball players in the area.

Rasmussen had 83 points in the voting and received six first-place votes. Haslett's Kristin Husbeck was second with 71 points and four first-place votes. Heather Osterle of Mason finished third with 62 points and one first-place vote.

Others receiving votes were Theresa Dinn of Lansing Catholic, 35 points; Havilah Cunningham of Lansing Catholic, 33 points and one first-place vote; Mary Randall, Grand Ledge, 33 points and one first-place vote; Christie Pung of Pewamo-Westphalia, 4 points; and Shari Rehmann of St. Johns and Nikki Walter of Ionia, each one point.

The Super Six selection panel was comprised of Deb Traxinger (Grand Ledge), Sheryl Mox (Pottsville), Paul Cook (Lansing Catholic), Patty Terres (Haslett), Beth Sumner (St. Johns), Don Mott (Okemos).



Lansing State Journal

Future not set: Okemos' Kristen Rasmussen, a 6-3 forward who averaged 14.9 points a game, says her college plans won't be finalized until the spring.

During Rasmussen's high school career, her team was 67-22 and she scored 1,300 points, grabbed 600 rebounds, and had 350 assists, 253 steals, and 400 blocked shots ([Source](#)). During her senior year, she established a school record of 115 blocked shots (averaging five a game), scored 374 points, grabbed 250 rebounds, dished off 125 assists, and stole the ball 80 times. Her Chieftains team was ranked third for the 1995 season. Academically, during her senior year Rasmussen maintained a 3.78 grade-point average ([Source](#)).



Kristen Rasmussen

***State Journal* 1995 Area Basketball Player of the Year**

Rasmussen was a three-time All-Capital Circuit selection, two-time MVP, and as a senior was named to the *Detroit News* All-Class A Dream Team as well as by the AP and UPI, while also receiving preseason *Smith & Street* Honorable Mention recognition ([Source](#)). She was chosen to play in the BCAM All-Star Game.

On June 27, as part of the Senior All-Star Weekend, Rasmussen scored nine points, grabbed nine rebounds, blocked six shots, made six assists, and was the MVP for the **West** team that beat the **East** team, 69-50, in the All-Star girls' basketball game ([Source](#)).

During her senior year Rasmussen was captain on both the basketball and track teams. She also lettered in track, competing in high jump, shot put, discus, and the 400 and mile relays – and was named all-league three times in track. Academically, she was maintaining a 3.78 grade-point average ([Source](#)).



Athletic Hall of Fame

Kristen (Rasmussen) Tarr

Basketball

Standout Basketball Student-Athlete at OHS

Held the Record for Blocked Shots (194)
for 10 Years at MSU

Named First Team All-Big Ten, Led the League
in Rebounds (9.8 per game), Blocks (1.84 per game)
and Double-Doubles (16)

First Michigan State Player to Play in the WNBA

Played 9 Seasons in the WNBA

Inducted as a Member of the Okemos High School
Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2015

Rasmussen was offered four-year full-ride scholarships to attend and play basketball at many universities, including Brigham Young, Purdue, and **Michigan State**. On April 4, 1996, Rasmussen announced she would play for the **Spartans** ([Source](#)).

Star picks MSU

Okemos standout
Rasmussen will play
basketball for Spartans

By Bob Gross

Lansing State Journal

OKEMOS — Two weeks ago, the Michigan State University men's basketball program got a much-needed shot-in-the-arm when Flint Northern's Mateen Cleaves picked the Spartans over the University of Michigan and Cincinnati.

Wednesday, the women's program also hit the jackpot.

Okemos High all-state standout

Inside

Spartan Relays advance.
Preview of prep soccer season.
Page 4C

Kristen Rasmussen said she would play for the Spartans, her final choice after strongly considering Brigham Young and Purdue.

"I'm just so happy to get this decision out of the way so I can concentrate on the spring track season," Rasmussen said Thursday. "All of the phone calls are over now. But really, I was still undecided which school was the best for Kristen Rasmussen. One day I'd say I wanted to go to this school, then the

next day to that school."

That school turned out to be a Spartan program on the rise.

Coach Karen Langeland's team, with only one senior on the roster, reached the NCAA's Mideast Regional last month, losing in the second round to No. 1 ranked and defending national champion Connecticut, 88-68. The Spartans (18-11) won the opening-round game against UMass in overtime, 60-57.

Rasmussen, 6-foot-3 forward/center, was impressed with the NCAA appearance, but even more so, wanted to part of a team with a promising future.

"I've had the opportunity to meet all

Please see **RASMUSSEN, 3C**



GREG DERUITER
State Journal
Going to MSU:
Kristen Rasmussen of Okemos High announced Thursday she would be attending Michigan State next fall to play basketball. She holds the State Journal's Greater Lansing Player of the Year trophy presented in February.

Continued **FROM 1C**

of the players at State and they're very talented and I know how dedicated they are and how hard all of them have worked," she said. "I probably attended 10 or 12 games at the Breslin Center this season. During my official visit, I attended a practice session and the kind of work ethic they had reminded me of our practices."

By NCAA rules, Langeland is prohibited from commenting on recruits until Wednesday, the first official day of national signings.

Last December, Maxann Reese of Redford Bishop Borgess, winner of this year's Miss Basketball of Michigan Award, announced she was attending Michigan State.

"I'm going to sign with MSU Wednesday," Rasmussen said. "I'm happy and very excited. It's going to be a great day in my life and also for my family. I'm going to be a Spartan. I plan to major in education and I'd like to coach, too. And I want to help the basketball team win the Big Ten and get back to the NCAA tournament."

Rasmussen said she visited Brigham Young University in Utah,

but decided it was too far away from home. She ruled out Purdue even before the university fired head coach Lin Dunn a month ago.

"It was really beautiful at Brigham Young," Rasmussen said. "But I would be the key player next season with a team built around me and I didn't need that kind of pressure. They told me to go to the school where I felt the most comfortable. At Michigan State, I just want to contribute any way I can and mix in with everybody."

Rasmussen said her parents, Carolyn and Gaylan, did not influence her decision.

"We sat down and would talk about the options," Rasmussen said. "But the final decision was mine."

Gaylan Rasmussen is a professor in parks and recreation at MSU and Carolyn an elementary school teacher in Haslett. There are four other family members — Jeanene, Linnette, Cheryl and David, who all played basketball at Okemos. Linnette went on to play at Grand Valley State and David started two seasons at Wake Forest.

Kristen said her family was another reason she wanted to stay close to home.

"They've given me so much support and that has been tremendous boost," she said.

Her boyfriend, Andy Busch, is a senior at Okemos and next fall will enroll at Michigan State.

"That probably had something to do with my choice, too," Kristin said smiling.

At Okemos last fall, Rasmussen was the sparkplug on a team that came from second place in the Capital Circuit behind state Class C champion Lansing Catholic to a trip to the Class A semifinals at Battle Creek where the Chieftains lost to Flint Northern, the defending state champion.

"Kristen kept improving from year to year and I honestly feel at the end of this past season she was the best all-around player in the state," Okemos coach Ron Mott said. "She is going to fit in very nicely at Michigan State. She is not only a scorer and rebounder, but she can run the floor, bring the ball and is an excellent passer. I'm so happy for her that she's going to be a Spartan. We can all continue to enjoy watching her play."

Mott also coached Sue Tucker in

1982, the only other Okemos girl to wear the Spartan green and white. Tucker was named Miss Basketball of Michigan her senior season. Rasmussen finished fifth in the balloting this season.

Rasmussen averaged 16 points and 11 rebounds during the season and was a unanimous all-conference selection. Since her freshman year, she has been a starter and all-conference three times.

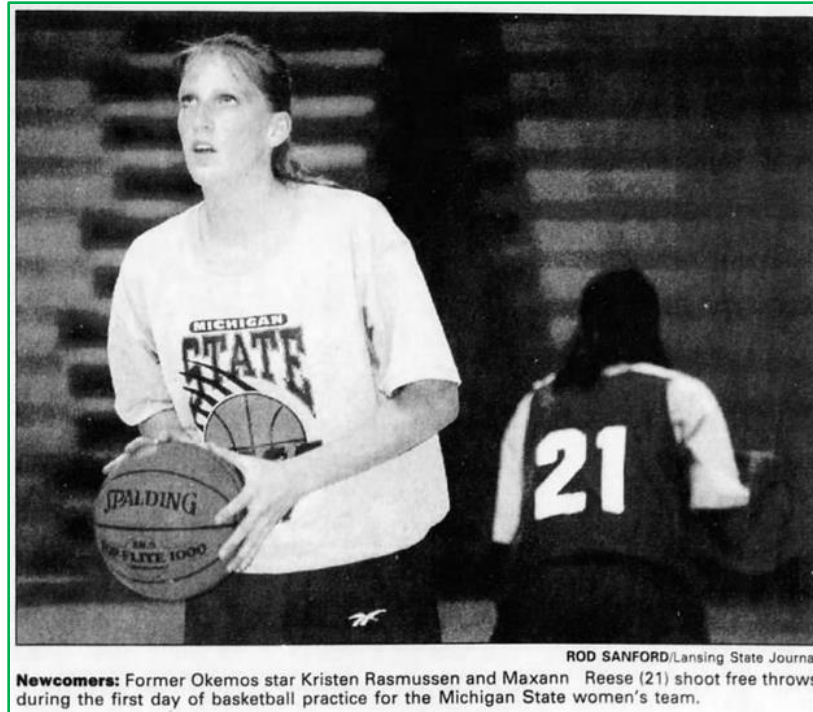
When the State Journal initiated its own Greater Lansing Player of the Year Award this season, Rasmussen was the winner. She also was selected to the Journal's Super Six team.

"Those are honors I'll always cherish," said Rasmussen, who also excels in the classroom with a 3.3 grade-point average. "Getting to the semifinals of the state tournament was so special because nobody expected us to get there. And now jumping from the Capital Circuit conference to the Big Ten Conference is an awesome feeling. I can't believe it's really happening to me. I keep pinching myself to see if I'm for real."

The Spartans know how real she is.

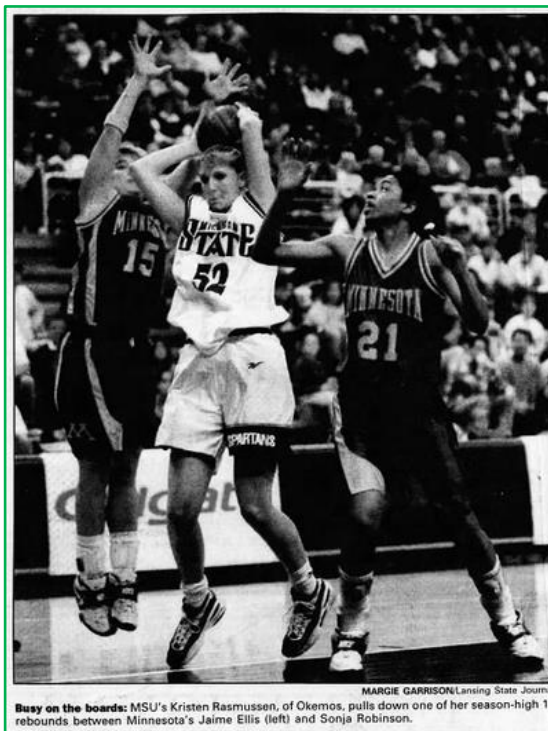
Michigan State University

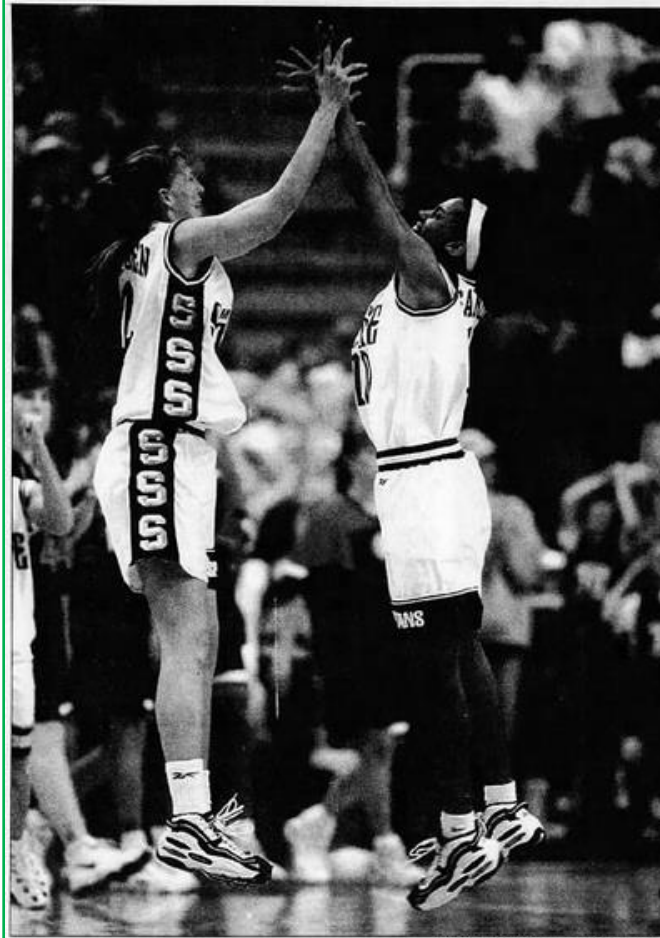
As a 6'4" Center for the Spartans, Rasmussen averaged 12.7 points and 8.2 rebounds per game and set the school record for blocked shots with 194. She earned a Varsity Letter four years in a row. She graduated from MSU in 2000 with a B.S. in kinesiology. While at MSU, Kristen was a four-year starter and three-year captain for the Spartans, leading her team to several NCAA and NIT Championship appearances. The following provides season-by-season highlights ([Source](#)).



1996-97

During her freshman season, Rasmussen was recognized as the Team's Most Improved Player. Of the team's 30 games, she played in 29, only missing the game against **Purdue** (1/5) because of a sprained ankle.





MARGIE GARRISON/Lansing State Journal

High high-fives: Kristen Rasmussen (left) and Paula Sanders are two happy Spartans moments after defeating Illinois to climb into a three-way for first place in the Big Ten.



KAREN TAM/Lansing State Journal

Rasmussen sparks Spartans: MSU's Kristen Rasmussen passes the ball between Portland's Wendy Toonan (13) and Kim Green Friday. Rasmussen scored 23 points and grabbed 11 rebounds.

For the season she averaged 8.4 points per game and 9.5 points per game in the Big Ten. She was second on the team with an average of 5.4 rebounds. Kristen started 11 contests, including the final 10 of the season, averaging 11.7 points as a starter. She was the team's leading scorer four times and top rebounder three times, scoring a total of 243 points, good for sixth place among Spartan freshmen. She scored in double figures 10 times and posted double-digit rebounds three times, garnering a total of three double-doubles, plus 39 blocked shots, placing her third in the Big Ten with an average of 1.34 blocks per game. She scored 22 points against **Penn State** (2/21); and scored 10 points, pulled down a season-high 15 rebounds, and had three blocks in the home win over **Ohio State** (2/9). Overall she shot 52 percent from the field and topped the 50 percent mark 19 times overall. She rejected a season-high four shots in the win over **Bowling Green** (12/4) and scored nine points and pulled down five rebounds in her first game as a Spartan (vs. **Texas** - 11/23).



The Spartans finished the season with an overall record of 22-8 and a tie for 1st (Tri-Champions) in the Big Ten with a 12-4 record. With a No. 8 seed in the East Region, the Spartans had a 1-1 record, defeating No. 9 **Portland** (75-70 in OT) and losing to No. 1 **North Carolina** (81-71 in OT). Rasmussen scored a season-high 23 points, on 11-of-14 shooting from the field, in MSU's NCAA Tournament win over **Portland** (3/14). She tallied 11 rebounds against the Pilots for her third double-double of the season.

The Spartans final national ranking was #24 by the AP and #21 by USA Today.



Following the season, Rasmussen traveled with the Big Ten All-Star Team to Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, averaging 3.8 points and 2.7 rebounds per game in six games.

1997-98

During her sophomore season, Rasmussen was a Team co-captain. She was an Honorable Mention All-Big Ten selection by the media, honored as the MVP of the Felpausch/MSU Holiday Classic, and named to the Ala Moana Hotel Paradise Classic All-Tournament team. Kristen was co-recipient of the team's Captain Award, started all 27 games, and was third on the team with an average of 11.9 points per game (18th in the Big Ten).



ELIZABETH CONLEY/Lansing State Journal
Jumper: Kristen Rasmussen shoots over three defenders.

Lansing State Journal (November 21, 1997)

Rasmussen led the team and was 4th in the Big Ten with an 8.0 rebounds per game average, ranked 8th in the Big Ten in free throw percentage (.813), shot .506 from the field, and scored in double figures in 20-of-27 games, including nine of the last 13 games of the year. She pulled down double-figure rebounds nine times and had eight double-doubles (4th in the league), achieving a career-high 20 rebounds against **Penn State** (12/30), good for 6th on the MSU single-game chart and the fourth-highest game total in Spartan history. She shot 50 percent or better from the field in 15-of-27 games, was 4th in the Big Ten in blocks per game with a 1.67 average, and broke her own seasonal record with 45 blocks. Kirsten was the team's leading scorer seven times and leading rebounder 13 times, scoring a season-high 23 points against **Bowling Green** (12/6), a season-high five blocks against **Ohio State** (2/27) in the final game of the season, and grabbed 15 rebounds against **Hawai'i** (12/20).

The Spartans ended the season with an overall record of 11-16 and placing 9th in the Big Ten with a 5-11 record, losing to **Ohio State** in the Big Ten Tournament.

1998-99

During her junior season, Kristen was Team tri-captain as well as a Second-Team All-Big Ten selection by the league coaches and media. She started all 31 games, was the team's second-leading scorer, averaging 15.2 points per game (9th in the Big Ten), and was second in the league and 36th nationally averaging 9.2 rebounds per game. Kristen led the Big Ten and was 27th in the NCAA averaging 1.84 blocks per game; seventh in the Big Ten in field goal percentage (.518), and sixth in free throw percentage (.798).

Rasmussen was the team's leading scorer 14 times and led or shared top rebounding honors in 22-of-31 contests, including 11 of the last 14 games. She scored in double figures 26 times, including a career-high 29 against **Michigan** (1/20), Kristen topped the 20-point mark eight times. She scored 28 points, on 13-of-15 shooting from the field, and pulled down a season-high 17 rebounds against **Northwestern** (2/12); and scored 21 points, on 9-of-9 shooting from the field, against **Wisconsin** (1/9/99). She connected on a career-high 7-of-21 (.333) three-pointers, pulled down double-digit rebounds 14 times, and recorded 12 double-doubles, good for third in the Big Ten. She tied the MSU single-game record for free throw percentage with a 10-for-10 performance from the line against **Detroit** (12/1); and connected on 27-straight free throws before missing her final attempt of the season, the second-longest streak in Spartan history. Against **Detroit** (12/1) Kristen had five blocks to become MSU's all-time leader in that category. She became the first player in Spartan history to top 100 career blocks (141), recording a career-high six blocks in the win over **Indiana** (2/26) in the first round of the Big Ten Tournament.

On January 18, 1999, going into the Spartans game against **Michigan**, MSU Women's Basketball reported:

BIG BLOCK

Kristen Rasmussen is among the Big Ten leaders in blocked shots per game with a 1.50 average and 24 blocks. Rasmussen's 24 blocks tie Sue Forsyth (1986-87) for ninth on the MSU single-season chart.

The East Lansing became MSU's all-time leader in blocked shots after tying her career high with five blocks against Detroit on Dec. 1.

Rasmussen rejected four shots against the Buckeyes to become the first Spartan to reach 100 career blocks. She currently has 108 and has the opportunity to finish among the top 10 all-time in the Big Ten before she concludes her career.

MORE ON RAS

Kristen Rasmussen is second on the team and among the league leaders with a 15.1 points per game average. She has been MSU's leading scorer seven times this season and has led or shared rebounding honors 11 times.

The Spartan tri-captain, who has started 53-straight games for MSU, ranks among the Big Ten leaders in rebounds (8.4), blocks per game (1.50), field goal percentage (.511) and free throw percentage (.757).

Overall, Rasmussen has played in 72 career games and is averaging 11.2 points and 7.1 rebounds per contest.

She has scored in double figures in 12 of 16 games this season and a total of 42 in her career. Rasmussen has three double-doubles this season and a total of 14 in her three-year career.



KATHY KIELISZEWSKI/Lansing State Journal

Standing strong: Michigan State's Kristen Rasmussen tries to pass the ball while between two defenders during Wednesday's overtime loss at Michigan.



MICHAEL CONROY/Associated Press

The Spartans overall record for the season was 17-14, tying for 6th place in the Big Ten with an 8-8 record. In the Big Ten Tournament, the Spartans beat **Indiana**, 88-69, before losing to **Penn State** (74-79). In the WNIT, the Spartans beat **Akron**, 76-65, in the 1st Round and beat **Michigan**, 69-58, in the 2nd Round but then lost to **Wisconsin** (69-70 in OT) in the Quarterfinals.

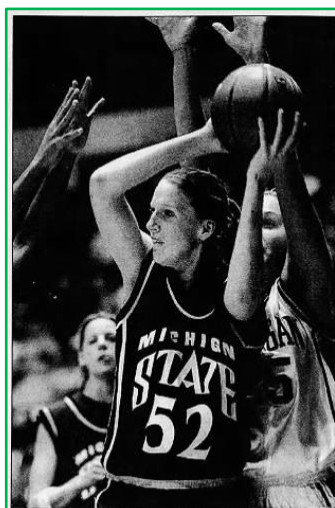
1999-2000

Going into her senior season, Kristen was the Big Ten's leading returning rebounder (9.2 rpg) and shot blocker (1.84 bpg). She had started 69 games during her 87-game career. She scored 14 points against **Akron** (3/11/99) to become just the 11th player in MSU history to score 1,000 points, ranking 9th on the all-time chart with 1,035 points. Also, she became the career leader in blocked shots with 141, with a career average of 11.9 points and 7.6 rebounds per game. Kristen had scored in double figures in 56 games, with 23 career double-doubles to her credit.



Rasmussen at Michigan State

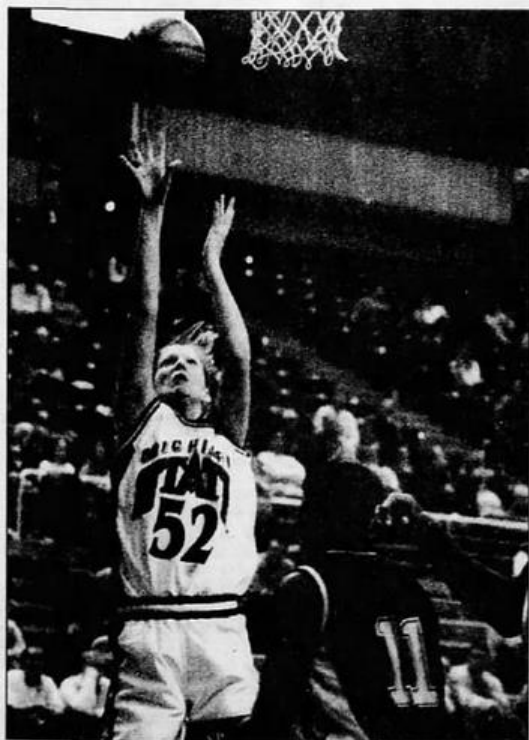
As of 2015, Rasmussen still ranked second on the program's career blocked shot list and was the Spartans eighth-leading all-time scorer with 1035 points. For ten years she held the record for blocked shots (194) until it was broken in 2010. As a senior, she was named First Team All-Big Ten conference after leading the league in rebounding (9.8 rpg), blocked shots (1.8 rpg), and double-doubles (16). Her senior year was capped by being nominated for the NCAA Outstanding Sportsperson of the Year award and voted as her team's Most Valuable Player. In 2009 Kristen was inducted into the Greater Lansing Area Athletic Hall of Fame.



Looking for help: MSU senior Kristen Rasmussen looks for a teammate to pass to while being double-teamed in a game against Michigan last season.

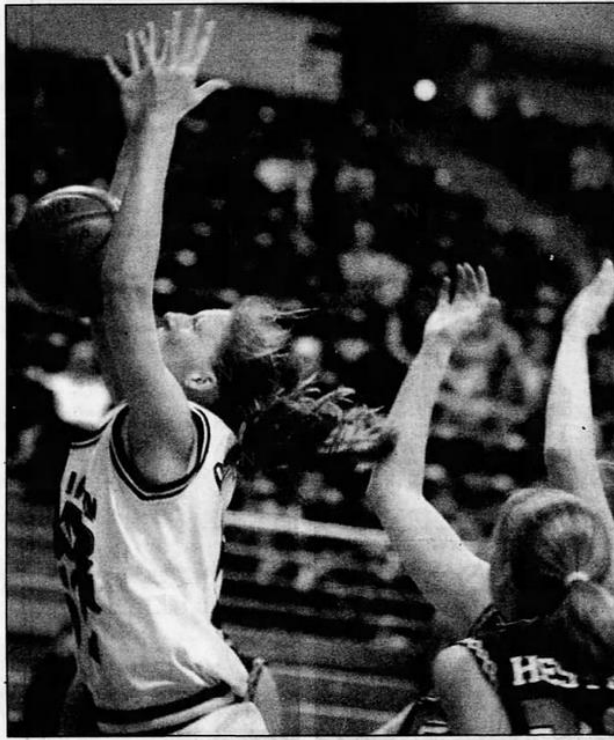


On the boards: Kristen Rasmussen of Michigan State grabs a rebound from two Purdue players. Rasmussen is the Big Ten's leading returning rebounder.



DAVID McCREERY/For the Lansing State Journal

On target: Kristen Rasmussen of Michigan State shoots over Appalachian State's Natasha Lettsome on Friday.



DAVID McCREERY/For the Lansing State Journal

Knocked loose: Michigan State forward Kristen Rasmussen (left) has the ball slapped away as she goes up for a shot during the Spartans' 83-68 win over Dayton Friday at the Breslin Center. Rasmussen finished with 17 points and 15 rebounds.



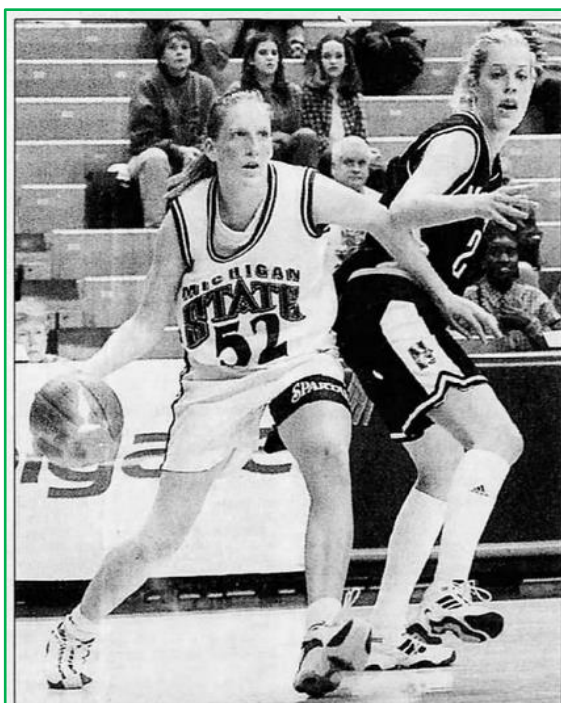
ROD SANFORD/Lansing State Journal

Big presence: MSU's Kristen Rasmussen had a game-high 12 rebounds.

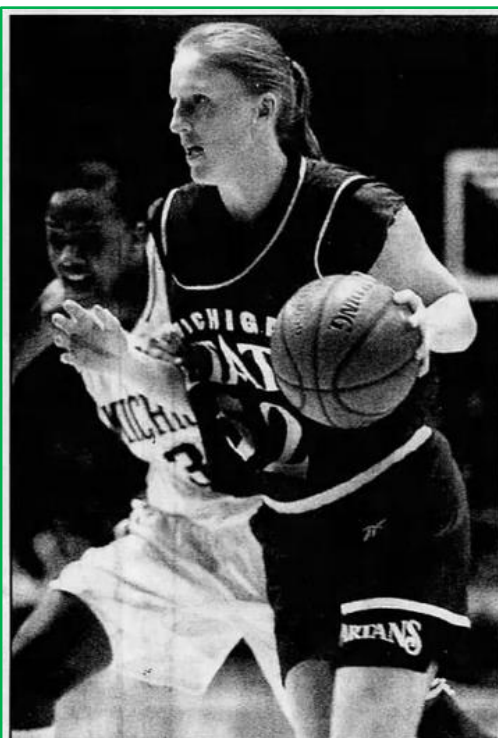


ROBERT KILLIPS/Lansing State Journal

Driving: Kristen Rasmussen dribbles around OSU's Courtney Bale on Sunday.



Around the defender: MSU's Kristen Rasmussen (52) battles to get around Northwestern's Leslie Schock (25) on Thursday night.



ROD SANFORD/Lansing State Journal

For the season the Spartans were 19-12 overall, tying for 5th place in the Big Ten with a 8-8 record. In the Big Ten Tournament, the Spartans lost to Illinois. In the first round of the WNIT, the Spartans defeated Villanova (74-62) and Cincinnati (88-83) before losing to Wisconsin (45-77) in the Quarterfinals.

Career Statistics as a Spartan

The table below summarizes Rasmussen's statistics, per game and totals, over the four seasons (1996-00) she played for the Spartans.

9. Kristen Rasmussen - 1,493 points																
YEAR	GP-GS	FG-A	FG%	3FG-A	FG%	FT-A	FT%	REB	AVG	HG	A	BL	ST	PTS	AVG	HG
1996-97	29-11	98-190	.516	1-1	1.000	46-67	.687	157	5.4	15	23	39	21	243	8.4	23
1997-98	27-27	124-245	.506	0-2	.000	74-91	.813	217	8.0	20	45	45	26	322	11.9	23
1998-99	31-31	188-363	.518	7-21	.333	87-109	.798	286	9.2	17	96	57	42	470	15.2	29
1999-00	31-31	185-347	.533	7-15	.467	81-101	.802	304	9.8	18	85	53	53	458	14.8	26
Career	118-100	595-1145	.520	15-39	.385	288-368	.783	964	8.2	20	249	194	142	1493	12.7	29

All-Time #9 on MSU 1000-Point Club

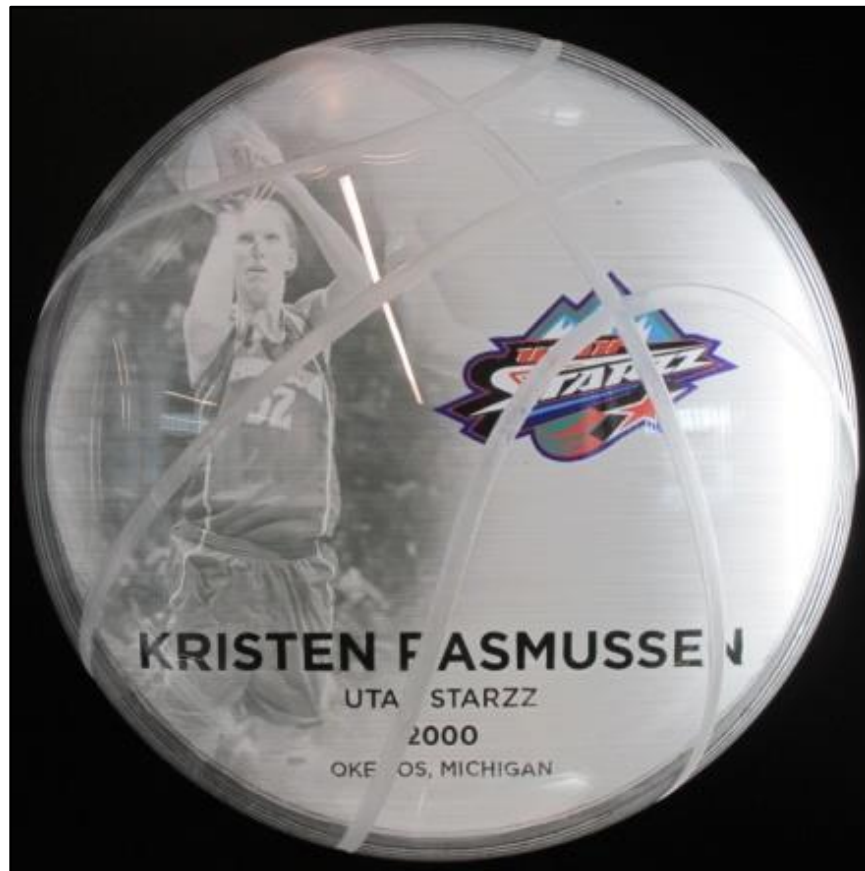
Note that the WNCAA adopted the 3-point field goal experimentally in 1986-87 and officially in 1987-88. As the above table reflects, Kristen scored her first 3-pointer during her first season (1996-97) as a Spartan, thus becoming the first female Chieftain to hit a 3-pointer on the MSU women's team.

While only 0-2 on 3-point attempts the next year, during her junior (1998-99) and senior seasons (1999-00) she shot .333 (7-21) and .467 (7-15), respectively, on 3-point FGAs for a career average of .385. Although While Sue Tucker potentially could have been the first female Chieftain to score a 3-pointer on the MSU women's team during her Junior (1986-87) and Senior (1987-88) seasons, she did not make any 3-point field goal attempts during either season.

After Michigan State

Professional Basketball - WNBA

Following her Spartan basketball career, Rasmussen became the first player from Michigan State to play in the WNBA, drafted in the 4th round (51st Overall) by the [Utah Starzz](#) in the [2000 WNBA Draft](#). However, **Utah** waived Kristen who was then picked up by the [Miami Sol](#) for three seasons where she led her team in free throw percentage.



Rasmussen Honored in a Breslin Center Display at MSU

Over the next five seasons, basketball's winding road took Rasmussen to play for four other women's professional teams in **Indiana**, **Houston**, **Charlotte**, **Phoenix**, and **Connecticut**. Wikipedia provides this summary of Kristen's WNBA career:

She appeared in just 1 game with Utah before being released and signed by the [Miami Sol](#), where she remained through the 2002 season. ...

Rasmussen suited up for the [Indiana Fever](#) from 2003–2004 and the [Houston Comets](#) in 2005. She was traded to the [Charlotte Sting](#) on August 1, 2005. ...

Rasmussen joined the [Phoenix Mercury](#) for the 2006 season and signed as a free agent with the [Connecticut Sun](#) in 2007. On March 14, 2008, the [Minnesota] Lynx acquired her. ([Source](#))



Phoenix Mercury forward Penny Taylor, center, drives to the basket between Connecticut Sun defenders Kristen Rasmussen, left, and Jamie Carey, right, during 3rd quarter of a WNBA basketball game Friday, July 6, 2007, in Phoenix.



Kristen Rasmussen with Minnesota Lynx



Kristen Rasmussen

Rasmussen played nine WNBA seasons, split between eight teams. She appeared in 276 games, posting career averages of 4.4 points and 3.6 rebounds.



WNBA Forward, Miami signed her as a free agent on June 13, 2000. Holds Michigan State career blocks record (194). Named All-Big 10 First Team (2000). Led the Big Ten in rebounding (9.8 rpg) and double-doubles (16) in 2000.

Professional Basketball – European Basketball

In 2008 Rasmussen moved to Greece where she played for Athens' [Panathinaikos](#) (2008–090). She also played for [CSS LMK BC Seps](#) of [Sfântu Gheorghe](#), Romania. ([Source](#)) Her professional basketball tour overseas included Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Romania and Australia. 2009 saw Kristen retire from the WNBA, her final position being with **Detroit**. Interestingly, she was extended the opportunity to play for the Australia and Great Britain teams for the 2008 Olympics but was unable to accept due to international visa limitations.



College Coaching

After professional basketball, Rasmussen moved into coaching, first as an assistant coach for NCAA Division II **Western State Colorado University**. In 2012 Rasmussen accepted the head coach position at NCAA Division III **Simmons College** (an all-girls school in Boston) where she coached for five years.



Kristen at Simmons College



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBq8BgUIEhM>

Kristen Rasmussen Interview (while at Simmons College)

High School Coaching

In 2015, Rasmussen was one of the original inductees to the Okemos Athletic Hall of Fame. A year later [Rasmussen](#) returned to Okemos to begin her new job as head coach of the girls' basketball program.



Click on Above Image for Video



Kristen Rasmussen – Okemos High School Girls' Basketball Head Coach



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzpSpj5TEpo&t=6s>

Brian Calloway, in a *Lansing State Journal* [article](#) (November 26, 2016) reported on the start of Okemos' 2016-17 girls' basketball season and Okemos' high hopes that the girls' program will be in good hands under its new coach, Kristen Rasmussen, who commented:

"It's fun to be back, and it's exciting. ... I like the idea of being back at the school where my career started.... I'm just looking forward to helping the players develop this program and put our program as something that kids in the Okemos school district want to be a part of. It's exciting, and it's new" ([Source](#)).



Rasmussen coaches the Chieftains basketball team (Nov. 21, 2016)

Players on the girls' basketball squad "who each aspire to continue their basketball careers beyond Okemos" find it appealing that Rasmussen "was once in their shoes" ([Source](#)). "I think it's very cool because not a lot of other schools have a coach that has done that. We're very lucky to have her," said Jasmine Clerkley. It's "really awesome," noted Bergin Robinson, "that Rasmussen has played at MSU and in the WNBA." "For us, it's going to be a great learning opportunity, and she can share her knowledge. She's really good at coaching. I think good things are going to happen this year and throughout the rest of my high school career" ([Source](#)).



Rasmussen coaches the Chieftains basketball team (Nov. 21, 2016)

The opportunity to coach the girls' basketball program at Okemos High opens the door for Rasmussen to give back to the school that was a launching pad for Kristen's career in basketball.

"I'm not sure how many places around the country have that opportunity, but I know that, for some of the players that I've played with that are in the college and high school rankings, it's a huge thing for players to be able to give back to the community that they thrived in. I'm just excited to be back at Okemos. This is where everything started for me. Being able to come back with the knowledge and experience that I have and being able to build up the girls, not only in the Okemos community, but in the mid-Michigan area (is great)" ([Source](#)).



Kristen Rasmussen coaches the Chieftains basketball team (Nov. 21, 2016)



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZO6B_vHRBE

Okemos Girls Basketball Gets New Head Coach: Kristen Rasmussen

In 2009 Rasmussen was inducted into the Greater Lansing Area Sports Hall of Fame ([Source](#)).



Kristen Rasmussen – 2009

☆ Inducted: 2009

Okemos High School
Basketball.
Two-time Most Valuable Player.
Three-time Lansing State Journal Dream Team.
Lansing State Journal Player of the Year.
First player named Girls Mid-Michigan Basketball Player of the Year.
Detroit Free Press First Team All-State.
Associated Press First Team All-State.

Michigan State University
Team Captain, Three Years.
Averaged 12.7 points per game and 8.2 rebounds per game in her career.
Set MSU career record for blocked shots – 194.

Professional Basketball
Drafted in the 4th round (51st) overall in the 2000 WNBA Draft by the Utah Stars.
Played for eight WNBA teams during her nine year career from 2000-2008.
Continued playing in the European Basketball League in five different countries.

Coaching
Western University, Colorado.

Kristen Rasmussen – 2009 Inductee to Greater Lansing Area Sports Hall of Fame

Looking Back

Recently, during a visit to Okemos High, I had the opportunity for a meet and greet with Kristen. With a busy schedule, taking care of her three children and also (it would seem) nearly year-round activities as the coach of the Chieftains girls basketball team, summer camps, etc., Kristen shared via email some “looking back” responses to eight questions I had sent to her about her basketball career. Her responses are shared below.

Which parts of your OHS and MSU academic careers (i.e., courses, teachers, non-sports extracurricular activities) do you feel contributed the most to your personal and professional development?

At Okemos, one teacher that made a difference in my life was actually a middle school (8th grade) teacher, Mr. Schouty. He taught "shop" class and I signed up and was the only girl in his shop class. I wish I could remember specific examples, but I remember he made me feel important, smart and confident. He made sure I wasn't treated any different than the guys in class.

He was amazing and I only hope that my kids find a teacher like him along their scholastic journey. He taught me to be fearless, confident and not to worry what others think. As a young girl, these lessons validated all the things my parents taught me. He simply was amazing! A true blessing in my life.

At MSU, I know there were a lot of influential people, on the academic side. From tutors to teammates to classmates, I never felt like failure was an option.

In what ways did your former OHS and MSU coaches help you improve your skills and IQ as a basketball player?

Coach Mott nicknamed me "the human eraser" in high school. That gave me confidence in my ability to block shots, but also the fact my teammates knew if they got beat, I had their back!

My basketball IQ, in all honesty, is straight from my parents teaching/explaining the game to me as I watched my older siblings play ball. (I am the youngest of 5 and all my siblings played basketball at OHS.)

Actually my AAU coach, Patty Terres, was one of the most influential people in my life. We had a very talented team and she allowed me to play every position. She taught me to see the game from every position. She was a fantastic coach, teaching us all [that] there are so many things we can learn from the game. Also, she was my first female coach. I try to be like her, now that I have exchanged my basketball shoes for coaching shoes.

MSU coaches all had a part in my growing as a basketball player. They always challenged me to be my best and never settle for anything else. Most importantly, I remember my teammates, and how influential they all were in my life. Being selected as a captain my sophomore year, [said] a lot about the trust and confidence my coaches and teammates had in me.

What were the most exciting moments of your basketball career at (a) OHS; (b) MSU; and (c) in the WNBA?

***Okemos** - being on the team with my older sister for 2 years. Having the local news station call me after I had 20 rebounds and 20+ points vs. Charlotte my freshmen year and [being asked] how old I was. My reply was "13 years old" and the line went silent. Also, playing in the finals at Eastern Field House. I can remember the feeling of playing in front of a crowd that almost sold out, the tough team we beat (can't remember the name) but we were the underdog.*

***MSU** - winning the big ten my freshmen year. We just beat Illinois and we were sitting on the plane, on the tarmac, waiting to hear the scores of the other big ten teams. This is the first one that comes to mind. There are so many great ones, so many funny ones and tearful ones that made me better!*

WNBA - Being cut from Utah my first year and three days later getting a call from Ron Rothstein, of the Miami Sol, asking me to come play for them. He saw something in me. He was one of the BEST coaches I have ever had.

Playing in [Madison Square] Garden vs. New York Liberty and just going off. I hit 3's, I had steals for lay-ups, hit jumpers in faces, it was an amazing game. One of those games where I hit everything I took! Again, so many amazing, wonderful experiences. Also more memories of all the years playing overseas. The game has truly blessed my life!

At what point (or how early) during your basketball career did you begin to think you could play basketball in the WNBA?

I was going to be the first girl in the NBA, I wrote in 3rd grade. I always wanted to play pro ball. Overseas was my only choice until the league formed my sophomore year. I knew from that point I was going to do whatever it took to be a WNBA player!

What were the biggest challenges for you personally during your basketball career in transitioning from high school-level competition to university-level competition; and from university-level competition to WNBA competition?

Biggest challenge for me was at every level, every player got better. In HS, you have about 2-3 players that are really good, in college 7-8 are really good, and in the Pro's every single player is really really good! Staying on top of my game was how I did it.

When, during your years as a basketball player, did you begin to think about someday coaching basketball – and was it a long-held dream to someday return to OHS to coach basketball?

I knew when I couldn't give the game 100% [and] needed to step away. Once I was finished, coaching was a way I could give back to the game that gave me so much. I enjoy coaching, helping, teaching other players the game. No, it wasn't my dream to come back to OHS, but that is where my path has brought me and I am thrilled about it.

How would you describe your approach to or philosophy on coaching basketball – and what part of your life experience do you feel had the greatest influence on your basketball coaching approach/philosophy?

My approach is similar to what coach Terres taught me, learn the game from every position. The game is fun when you know what everyone on your team is and can do. As far as life experiences, I loved the game because it was fun. My parents never forced me to play, they never forced me to practice or go to practice, they just encouraged me to do my best. As the youngest of five, it wasn't in our family budget to go to all these camps and clinics in the summer. I played AAU and high school basketball, did Okemos Team Camp and that was it. We had a basket in our driveway. I had competitive siblings, and an inner drive to be the best I could be.

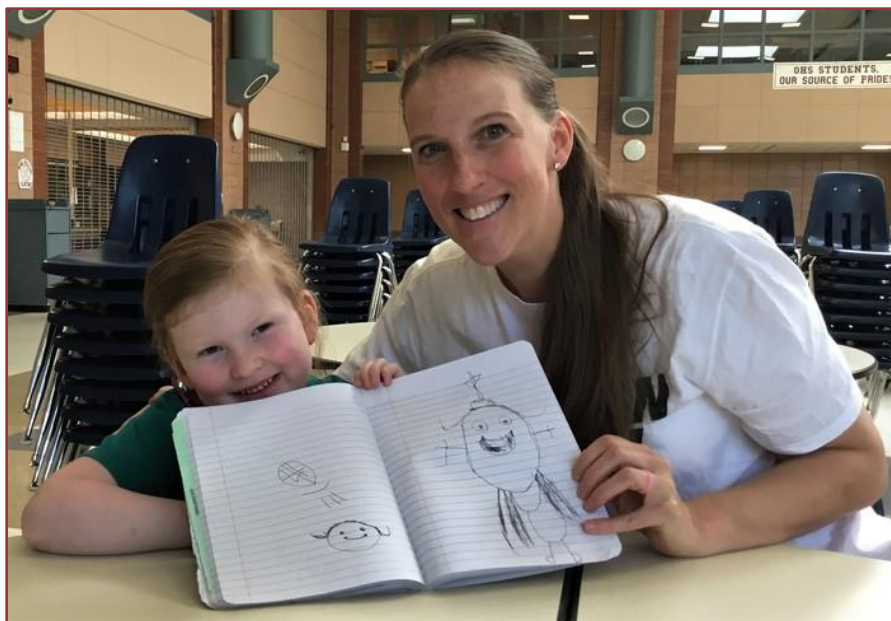
At this point, what other memories do you feel are significant as you “look back” on your career as a basketball player?

As stated above, I have countless memories, so many that I think they should all be written out! LOL! I am so very fortunate to have had a great support during my career, I really couldn't have asked for anything better!



Kristen and teammates reunite at the Breslin Center to celebrate the 20th anniversary of winning the 1996-97 Big Ten Championship (November 2017)





Daughter Aria's rendering of Mommie Kristen with Tiara

After three seasons (2016-19) coaching the OHS girls team, Kristen answered a new opportunity, accepting an offer, along with several other former WNBA players, to join Nike in Portland, Oregon where she will be working on developing Nike's product line for girls and women. While coaching at OHS, Kristen's teams tallied a combined 36-33 record ([based on a search of the MHSAA web site](#)) as follows:

2016-17 – 17 wins – 6 losses

2017-18 – 11 wins – 13 losses

2018-19 – 8 wins – 14 losses

Over the three seasons, in post-season District tournaments, Kristen's teams were 3-0 (2017), 2-2 (2018), and 0-1 (2019), winning the District championship in 2017. Looking back on her three years coaching the OHS girls team, Kristen shared the following:

It was exciting to be back home coaching at the school where my basketball journey started. Throughout the three years, I have to say our coaching staff was one of the top in the state! My assistant coach Megan Williams, also an Okemos alumni, and I were able to build a program that instilled the players with leadership building, goal setting and achieving, teamwork and hard work. There were tough moments, exciting times and a lot of fun had in the last three years. I'm grateful to have had this opportunity to come back to OHS!