

*Game changer***BSC alum is shining star among state's high school basketball coaches**

BY PAT COLE

*Courtesy of Village Living*

Bucky McMillan III '08 is becoming something of a coaching legend in Alabama and is making a huge impact on basketball in his community.

Now seven years into his stint as head varsity boys' basketball coach at Mountain Brook High School, the 31-year-old has led the school to program gold. For the third year in a row, McMillan coached his team to the state championship game. He has been awarded the Birmingham Tip Off Club or Alabama High School Athletic Association Men's Hoops Coach of the Year for each of the past four seasons.

Over the last five years, the basketball program has won more games than any 6A team in Birmingham.

The Mountain Brook Spartans have won 19 consecutive playoff games over the last three years in the state basketball tournament, and they earned two state titles in 2013 and 2014.

"We were probably not the most talented team Mountain Brook has ever had," McMillan said. "But I rank this year's team among the best we've ever had in terms of their sheer will to win."

The Spartans returned to the televised Final Four in February with the hopes of capturing a state title three-peat. Despite the team losing the championship 43-50 to the Hoover High Buccaneers, McMillan is hugely proud of his players.

"We had a great, great season and it was an amazing final game," said

McMillan. "Our goal was never to win a championship. Our goal was to play the hardest, to play fearlessly, and to play unselfishly."

Before 2001, Mountain Brook had never made it to the final four of the state basketball championship. But McMillan changed that as the star point guard for the 2001 team. After graduating from high school, he came to Birmingham-Southern on a basketball scholarship and played under coach Duane Reboul.

McMillan was an outstanding point guard and two-year starter on BSC's NCAA Division I team from 2003-06. They were co-champions of the Big South Conference in 2004; he was named to the National Association of Basketball Coaches Honors Court in 2006. When the Panthers dropped from D-I to D-III, McMillan sat out a semester and then returned to complete his degree in educational services.

"I learned so much under Coach Reboul about basketball, life, and the value of character," said McMillan, whose father is also an accomplished basketball coach and whose wife is fellow BSC basketball student Britni Ballard McMillan '07. "Reboul, along with many coaches and professors at Birmingham-Southern, really cares about the well-being of students inside and outside of the classroom and court."

McMillan coached for the Over-the-Mountain Basketball League during his senior year at BSC and became the junior varsity coach for the Spartans after graduation, compiling a 36-6 record in his first two seasons. When students ask him about BSC, which he said they often do, he views it as a chance to brag on his alma mater and to share his personal experiences as a student-athlete on the Hilltop.

Would he ever consider coaching at the college level one day?

"It would have to be something unbelievably special to leave the special place that I'm in," McMillan said.