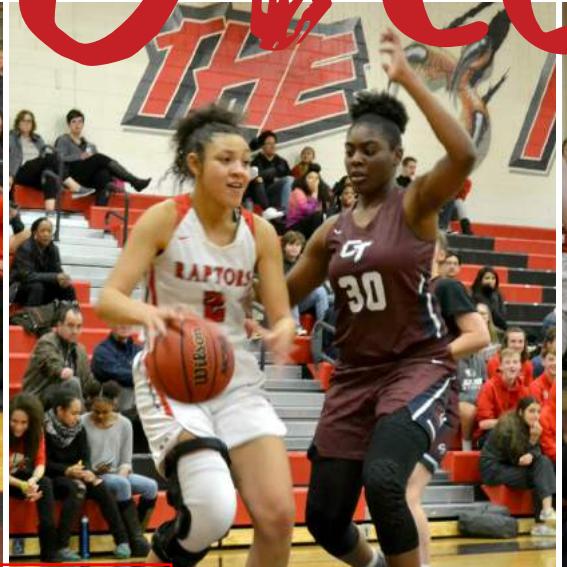


# DRIVE & DESIRE



## Basketball program transforms under newer coaching staff

Getting a new coach can often be stressful and can definitely cause some nerves in longtime players, but when **Coach Robby Gabrielli** was hired in the fall of 2016, the girls on the team had a “shift in perspective,” **Hidaya Thornton ‘19** said. Thornton expressed her gratefulness by saying, “he’s put the

drive and desire for young female athletes to put forth their best efforts and to do it with pride and honor. Coach G has not only done this for myself, but for every team at every level. And that’s something I’m grateful for.”

**“The past three years with Coach G have been nothing but amazing, and I wouldn’t want to play for anyone but him.”**

**—Hidaya Thornton  
‘19**

Thornton reflects on the time before Gabrielli was head coach saying, “We had a bunch of talent, but nobody was willing to work, nor did we have any team chemistry. Coach G made us work together and work hard on and off the court. He also made sure we were good people to each other on and off the court.”

Because of all the hard work Gabrielli put in, the team now has “great chemistry and a strong team bond,” Thornton said. “At the end of the day, I know I ride for everyone on the team, and I know they ride for me too.”

Coverage by Ashlyn Turmenne, photos by Emmerson Hagan and Dylan Fleming



**FAST AND FURIOUS**  
Hidaya Thornton ‘19 moves quickly towards home basket, coming up with a win against Smoky Hill.

WINTER • DESIGNED BY: ASHLYN TURMENNE

## More than a POSITION

**Coach Gabrielli reveals how coaching has impacted his life**

“I started coaching girls basketball because I have a daughter at home and our school had a need for a girls basketball coach and if my daughter ever wanted to play basketball, I wanted to know that we have good coaches dedicated to girls sports. Being a coach has had a really big impact on my life, it has allowed me to better understand how to get my message across in different way and how your message can greatly impact someone. It’s made me happy and its made me frustrated, but overall, its had a positive impact on my life. It makes me feel like I am building and reestablishing something at our school. Being a coach, to me means, being more than just a coach. It’s being a mentor, being a friend when you need to be, its being someone who helps people learn life lessons through sports, and it’s something that carries so much more weight to me, than what you can just teach someone on the floor. I think the bottom line is you guys, as viewers of our sport, only see games. And what you don’t see is all the moments in practice, you don’t see the moments outside of basketball. What I really try to do is create a relationship with the girls and that allows me to push them and that allows me to yell when I need to yell. My interesting coaching style allows me to push the girls. You don’t see all the build up, you just see the maniac Italian guy on the sidelines.” —**Robby Gabrielli, Head Coach**

Coverage by Louis Ray, photos by Emmerson Hagan and Dylan Fleming



## BALLIN' in the 480

**Players travel to Phoenix, Arizona to participate in a tournament**

“Swinging is fun because you get to play and watch two games a night. I manage both by making sure I get enough sleep and eat a good meal because after that, I won’t eat or sleep till 10 pm. It’s hard because sometimes I don’t have much energy from playing in the JV game.”

—Tylia Martinez ‘20



“It’s pretty exciting, although swingers are not put in many games, but its good experience for if you ever play varsity. My main team this season was JV, but it’s like a thrill every game knowing that you get to have that close up of an experience. You see things differently.”

—Sadie Runia ‘21



“It’s definitely different, swinging on varsity. Its a lot more intense because the games matter more. It’s a little bit less about fun and more about winning. I wish it was a little more about fun, but I still have a good time.”

—Hailey Esser ‘22



“I thought it was very beneficial for us as a team, because we got to play other teams that were also successful in their states. We played a team from Virginia, so we were able to branch out and not keep playing the same competition. I loved being with my teammates, they’re all my best friends.”

—Jessica Blethen ‘19

“Team bonding was my favorite part of the trip. Seeing how the other teams plays that aren’t from Colorado was really interesting too. It’s really beneficial to see how the other teams play so we could maybe try some things out and switch it up.”

—Jada Lewis ‘22

“Seeing a shower head that tall had me shocked. Like I know I’m short, but that just really brought it into perspective. I think the most beneficial part of the trip was the exposure and experience and the bonding the team had.”

—Hidaya Thornton ‘19

Coverage by: Ashlyn Turmenne, photos by Karen Slusher