

Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett's Madison Ristovski is 2012 Miss Basketball

By Mick McCabe Mar 12, 2012

Madison Ristovski was in the seventh grade when she met a sports writer and made a prediction.

“I’m going to be Miss Basketball someday,” she said.

The writer was impressed at the precociousness of the youngster. “That’s nice,” he said. “What state are you moving to? Montana?”

“Nope,” she said. “I’m staying here in Michigan.”

Five years have passed since then and she was right: Madison Ristovski is Miss Basketball.

Ristovski, a senior at Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett, is the 31st recipient of the Miss Basketball Award, presented by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan in conjunction with the Detroit Free Press.

The 5-foot-10 guard who signed with Michigan received 214-first-place votes — more than twice as many as anyone else — and accumulated 1,333 points in voting by BCAM members. Detroit Cass Tech’s Brannndais Agee was second with 850 points and was followed by Kelsey Mitchell of Inkster (808), Detroit Pershing’s Caprice Dennis (793) and Aerial Powers of Birmingham Detroit Country Day (698 points).

This season Ristovski is averaging 19.2 points, nine assists, six rebounds and three steals for No. 1 Liggett, which faces Riverview Richard in a Class

C quarterfinal game at Milford at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday.

She has scored 2,335 career points, seventh most in state history.

In looking at the list of former winners, Ristovski noticed the name of St. Ignace great Krista Clement, the 2003 winner who also went on to play at U-M.

“She was my counselor at the first Michigan camp I went to when I was in the fifth grade,” Ristovski said. “She won a state championship, she was Miss Basketball, she was the Gatorade Player of the Year, that’s what I’m trying to do.”

It was at that camp that her father, Loren Ristovski, who played professionally in the former Yugoslavia, made a prediction of his own.

“When we walked out of Crisler Arena he said: ‘That’s where you’re going to play in college,’.” she recalled. “I looked at him and said: ‘Are you crazy, did you see how big those girls are?’ He said: ‘Madison, I promise, this is where you’re going to play.’ ”

Unlike many of the high profile players in the state, Ristovski played almost no AAU basketball. Her father thought he could teach her the game better than AAU coaches.

And he was never worried that his daughter would be overlooked by college coaches.

“If you have talent, you will be found,” he said. “You can try to hide, but you will be found.”

Ristovski worked tirelessly on her game. She is a terrific ball handler and passer and more than a capable scorer, and she was inspired by her father.

“My dad is my role model,” she said. “I look up to him for everything. He is the hardest worker that I know and he really instilled in me his values and his beliefs. When I wanted to sleep in on Saturday morning, he was the one who dragged me to the gym and I can’t thank him enough for it. He’s really my biggest fan, but I’m also his biggest fan.”

In her acceptance speech, Ristovski called her father her Mr. Miyagi, a reference to “The Karate Kid,” her Dr. Frankenstein, her Press Maravich, father of the late Pete Maravich.

“I have been in the gym with my dad since I was nine-months-old,” she said. “We spent years upon years in the gym together and I can’t even begin to tell you the drills he showed me. He’s taught me everything I know about the game and I could never have done it without him. Thank you Paco because I finally understand everything you did and said in the gym was right.”

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Here are the results of the 31st annual Miss Basketball Award, given by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan, in conjunction with the Detroit Free Press. Only actively coaching BCAM members are permitted to vote.

Madison Ristovski, GPW University Liggett -- 1,333

Branndais Agee, Detroit Cass Tech -- 850

Kelsey Mitchell, Inkster -- 808

Caprice Dennis, Detroit Pershing -- 793

Aerial Powers, Birmingham Detroit Country Day -- 698