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2013

## Mike Miller Press Conference

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Messiah University is a Christian university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. Our mission is to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society.

Despite a heart-breaking loss on Wednesday night to Stevenson University, Messiah College Women's Basketball Coach Mike Miller has high hopes for his team, saying that this is his "most enjoyable" season of his 28 years at the helm. FULL STORY ->

## MORE THAN A GAME

By: Elizabeth Gallo

(Grantham, PA)— Everyone likes to win and Messiah Women's Basketball Coach Mike Miller certainly knows what that feels like. Upon entering the 2013-2014 season, Miller became the 12<sup>th</sup> coach in NCAA Division III women's basketball to reach 500 wins. While most of his coaching success is attributed to winning, Coach Miller knows that there is more to basketball than wins and losses.

### *A tough league*

Despite a 72-70 loss on Wednesday that broke the Falcons' three game win streak, Coach Miller exuded confidence in his team at Thursday's press conference.

"It's the fourth game we lost at the buzzer in the last shot of the game this season."

Four of the Falcons' six losses came at the buzzer. Coach Miller admitted that is what makes basketball a unique sport, especially within Commonwealth Conference play. While the Messiah-Stevenson game was not an upset, there were two upsets in the league that night.

"Anybody can beat anybody on a given night."

Messiah (8-6, 4-3 CC) has a winning record so far this season, but it certainly does not accurately portray the caliber of their opponents. The first eleven games were the toughest game stretch that Miller and the Falcons have ever faced.

"The opponents that we have played are just good and we have not had too many easy games...for the first time I've been here, the league is extremely good from bottom to top."

### *They get it*

One concept that Coach Miller constantly reiterated during Thursday's press conference was that this year's group of players "get it." In his 28 years as head coach, Miller has never enjoyed a season more. Much like their coach, these women understand that there is more to basketball than wins and losses.

While it is easy to come off of a loss frustrated and unhappy, Miller was pleased to see the friendly interaction between his players on the bus ride home.

“To see this group actually get it, it is easy to get it when you are winning, and I am really proud that they get it. This is going to lead to some success here at the end of the season because they realize there is something bigger.”

Win or lose, the Messiah Women’s Basketball team love being around each other. This kind of relationship is important for any team and Coach Miller has recognized that among his own team. Over the years, he has seen many of his players shut down and go inward. Miller admitted that many of his current players mirrored that same attitude.

Until the group’s trip to California.

“To see them actually reach out to other people is just really cool, and that is what life is about.”

### *Leadership is key*

When asked what players will step up next year when the five seniors graduate, Coach Miller admitted that he is worried. The five seniors, Chelsea Danel, Kelsie Hitesman, Taylor Miller, Emily Martz, and Katelyn Vanderhoff, have each stepped up as leaders this season. Leadership is very important, especially for men and women’s basketball.

“We are the only sport that cannot be with our athletes...when they get on campus, I cannot have interaction with them until October 15<sup>th</sup>.”

For eight or nine weeks, Coach Miller must rely on the team’s leaders to run the team. With only two current juniors, one of whom is a nursing major, Coach Miller is uncertain of who next season’s leaders may be. He understands that leadership is very important and it is hard for one person to take charge.

“You need to have really great women to be able to navigate that.”

### *One last word of advice*

Coach Miller and his team love the game of basketball, but they understand the bigger picture. When asked what lesson he wants his players to take away from his program, Coach Miller passionately expressed two ideas: the willingness to keep growing in faith and God as an umbrella over everything.

“Being able to stay in the moment with God over everything. That is the biggest thing. That is what life is all about.”

Coach Miller and his team look to improve their record on January 18<sup>th</sup>, where they will host the Arcadia University Knights (8-6, 1-5 CC) at 3:00 pm in Brubaker Auditorium.