

FREEPORT'S ANNA MCLEAN SHOOT FOR THE PROS

BY JOSHUA CASPER

When game time arrives, Freeport's Anna McLean prefers traveling by air. And she always has a clear destination in mind—the big time.

If her 6-foot-3 stature and All-Gould performance last year didn't distinguish her, McLean, a center for the Freeport Lady Devils, certainly made an impression the moment she stepped on the court this season. She began her junior campaign with 24 points, 30 rebounds and 10 blocks, the first of three consecutive triple-doubles to start the year, opening the eyes of scouts and opponents, who have yet to find a way to stop her.

"I have to keep my game up constantly. I have to earn it. No one is giving me freebies now that my name is out there," McLean says. "It's all about how [opponents] are going to stop me—they put two and three people on me. I can live with it. When a team is double- and triple-teaming me, it helps out our offense."

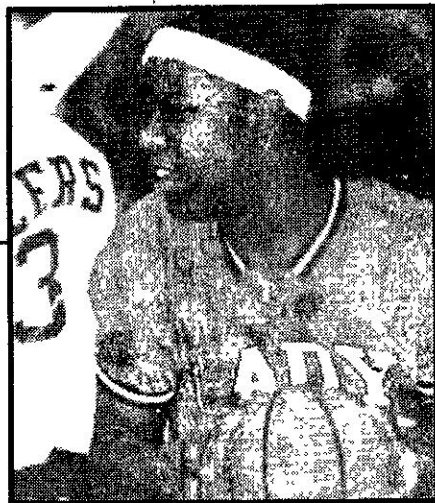
McLean has led the second-ranked Lady

Devils to a 7-1 record, 2-1 in Conference I. Mostly an inside scorer, she's working on a short jump shot and honing her passing skills before reaching the college level. McLean is committed to becoming a complete player and maximizing her physical prowess.

"Anna knows the work that is needed to be a good player, which involves playing in the parks. She is one of the last to leave the gym, and often plays against the boys," explains Freeport coach Ernie Kight. "She alters the game and comes to play, and beats many of them. The boys respect that. They like the challenge. Her potential is unlimited."

McLean has garnered attention from elite college programs, including Rutgers and Kentucky. She has been so dominant that her teammates have often compared her to WNBA star Lisa Leslie and even dubbed her "Shaq." She was quick to give teammates the nickname "Kobe" instead.

"Anna's a captain. She has leadership skills



and she's a great player," says teammate Erica Jones. "She can do even better though. If she steps it up she'll go all the way to the WNBA."

McLean has also starred in the AAU, honing her skills with the Long Island Scholar Athletes, which includes All-Long Island players Brittany Messina (Massapequa) and Nicole Emery (Holy Trinity). College ball is the next step for McLean, but beyond that she has even loftier goals.

"I want to play in the [WNBA]. If I keep working I will be able to make it. It's a hard road, but I have the drive and passion for it," she says. "That's where I see myself." ●