

## ASU Women's Basketball Preps For 2012-13 Season

Written by Staff Reports

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Appalachian State University women's basketball began preparations for the upcoming 2012-13 season when the team opened preseason practice on Oct. 1 at the Holmes Center. The Mountaineers, who are coming off back-to-back

Southern Conference titles for the first time in 34 years, return eight players from last year's squad that set a school record with 27 victories.

Appalachian will also add five newcomers to the fold this season as the team looks to become the first Mountaineer squad to qualify for the NCAA Tournament since the 1998-99 season.

Monday's practice focused heavily on the implementation of various offensive and defensive schemes with an emphasis on physical play and rebounding.

The coaching staff, led by fifth-year head coach Darcie Vincent, challenged the players to stay mentally and physically tough during a series of challenging drills on both sides of the ball.

Seniors Anna Freeman, Courtney Freeman, Raven Gary and Kelsey Sharkey all had solid practices while sophomores Katie Mallow and Maryah Sydnor continued to show improved physical strength from last year.

Junior Michelle Taylor showed flashes of brilliance while redshirt-sophomore Jessica Barrios returned to practice for the first time since suffering a season-ending injury prior to last season.

Barrios showed no ill-effects of the injury that sidelined her last year. The crop of freshmen including KeKe Cooper, LaShawna Gatewood, Bria Huffman, Khadejah Wilkerson and Farrahn Wood showed a solid work ethic and tough play throughout their first collegiate practice.

Per NCAA rules, all NCAA Division I women's basketball teams are permitted to begin practice 40 days prior to the regular-season opener. App State opens its 2012-13 campaign at home against Lees-McRae on Nov. 9.

Check GoASU.com throughout the month for continued practice updates leading up to the team's exhibition against Mars Hill on Oct. 27.

Photo Courtesy: Darcie Vincent, ASU Athletics