

# Dickinson's Jason Wilson leads basketball program 'from nobody to somebody'

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## DICKINSON

Dickinson's Jason Wilson, the 2015-16 Galveston County boys basketball coach of the year, sums up his program's remarkable one-year turnaround pretty succinctly.

"We went from nobody to somebody," Wilson said.

Wilson led a Gators team that went 2-12 (second-to-last) in District 24-6A last season to an 11-3 conference record this season, winning the program's first outright district championship since the 1950s.

Despite the previous season's results, Wilson knew before this year's campaign that he had the solid coaching staff and talented players in place to make him believe that this could be the season to jump-start the program.

Wilson felt this year's group had the right combination of experienced standouts, like Jarian Spells and Damon Williams, who grew stronger from last season's struggles, promising newcomers, like Faite Williams, who had been playing winning basketball from the junior high level to subvarsity, and dedicated role players needed for a successful 2015-16 run.

"We sat down as a staff and said, 'Why not us?'" Wilson said. "We could forecast the talent that we would have this year. They were already winning at the junior high and everything. It was what we called, 'the perfect storm.'"

What unfolded in 2015-16 for the Gators was a season packed with highlights and signature wins.

Some notable victories included taking home the pre-district Hidalgo Pirate Classic tournament championship, opening 24-6A play by defeating defending state finalist Clear Lake and sweeping the season series with district favorite Clear Creek.

Before the season, the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches projected Dickinson to finish fourth in the district standings. That would have meant the Gators' first playoff berth in 11 years — a great



## All County Boys Basketball Coach of the Year

Dickinson Basketball Coach Jason Wilson is the Galveston County Boys Basketball Coach of the Year.

accomplishment in its own right.

“Knowing all that Clear Lake and Clear Creek have accomplished and having so much respect for all of the CCISD schools, we just wanted one of those four spots,” Wilson said. “When we got out to that first district win over Clear Lake, that gave us all the confidence we needed to know that we can win.”

As the district season rolled along, the Gators began to exceed even Wilson's high expectations. Dickinson finished the first half of 24-6A play with a 6-1 record and was the first to reach eight wins.

“We were like, ‘Hey, we might be able to pull off the unthinkable, to win district,’ and it happened,” Wilson said.

In addition to winning the program's first outright district championship since 1955 and making the playoffs for the first time in more than a decade, Dickinson set a school record for single-season wins with a 28-8 mark this year.

“For all that to be accomplished in one year, it's still surreal to us,” Wilson said.

Dickinson's surprise turnaround season ended in the first round of the playoffs, as a red-hot underdog Alief Taylor team — which eventually reached the regional semifinals — edged the Gators, 75-72.

Wilson is in just his second season as head coach after serving the previous four years as an assistant at Dickinson. A native of Houston's south side, Wilson moved to Dickinson in his junior year of high school and graduated a Gator in 2000.

“It's even much more special to me, just because I'm deeply invested in Dickinson,” Wilson said. “My family is from here, and even all of my coaching staff are Dickinson alumni.

“We were just trying to give the city and the school something to be proud about, just trying to give Dickinson basketball a heartbeat again,” Wilson added. “To see everyone excited about the success we had this season, it really does our heart good.”

Going forward, the next challenge in Wilson's young coaching career will be leading a squad with the high expectations and pressure of being the team to beat. He'll have 11 letterman returning and plans to take a positive approach to the new role of district favorite next season, focusing on what the team has accomplished.

“We still want to have a sense of urgency approach,” Wilson said. “We can't forget about what we built. Before, we had nothing to build on, but now we do have something to build on. ... We can't be satisfied, because we have a target on our back. So every night, we're going to be getting everyone's best.”