

**FORT WAYNE, Ind.** - Purdue Fort Wayne women's basketball head coach Maria Marchesano has announced that SylareStarks (Fort Wayne, Ind. / Homestead / Detroit Mercy), Arieonna Ware (Battle Creek, Mich. / Battle Creek Central) and Shianne Johnson (Killeen, Texas / Killeen / Weber State) will be joining the Mastodon program for the 2021-22 season.

**Sylare Starks** is a 5-foot-9 guard that started in 42 of her 44 games in her two seasons at Detroit Mercy. In her first season, she was named to the Horizon League All-Freshman Team after averaging 10.1 points per game and grabbing 2.6 rebounds per game. She upped her boards to 3.0 per game as a sophomore. In 2020-21, she recorded double-digit points three times, including a season-high 18 at Michigan State.

A graduate of Homestead High School in 2019, Starks played two years at Concordia Lutheran and two at Homestead. She was a three-time First Team All-Conference player and a two-time Indiana Coaches of Girls' Sports Association All-State Second Team honoree. Starks set Concordia Lutheran records as a sophomore by recording the most 3-pointers made and the highest 3-point shooting percentage. She led Homestead to a Summit Athletic Conference regular season title as a junior, then followed it up with a 25-5 campaign and a regional championship berth in her senior season. She was one of six players ever in Indiana to be named All-Area at two different schools.

"Sylare gives us some size and strength at the guard position with a natural ability to score the ball in a multitude of ways," Marchesano said. "She clearly has had some success in the Horizon League and we are excited to watch her grow even more as a Mastodon."

**Arieonna Ware**, a 5-foot-10 guard, comes to Purdue Fort Wayne after setting Battle Creek Central's career, single-season and single-game scoring records. After leading the Bearcats to the district title in her junior season, she was named to the All-State First Team. Ware also picked up All-State Second Team honors as a sophomore and was All-Conference First Team as a freshman. In addition to her play at Battle Creek Central, she also played club ball for West Michigan Drive.

"I am very excited to add Arieonna to our family," Marchesano said. "She brings a lot of versatility to both ends of the floor and clearly knows how to score both inside and out. She is one of the best players ever to come out of Battle Creek and will have a great opportunity to have an immediate impact here in Fort Wayne."

**Shianne Johnson**, a 5-foot-8 guard, spent three years at Division I Big Sky member Weber State. She started her career in 2017-18, in which she was a key reserve for the Wildcat squad that went 21-11. The Wildcats earned a berth to the Women's Basketball Invitational and defeated Texas Southern in the opening round. As a sophomore at Weber State, she moved into a starting role, with 24 starts in 27 games, and averaged 23 minutes and 6.3 points per game.

At Killeen High School, she averaged 11.1 points and 4.1 rebounds per game. She was named the Offensive MVP and picked up All-Region and All-District honors. She played club ball for the Austin Elite.

"Shianne brings a lot of experience to our young squad," Marchesano said. "She is a versatile guard that is going to increase our athleticism on the perimeter. We are excited she is joining our family."

Starks, Ware and Johnson will be joining the Purdue Fort Wayne program for the team's first season under the direction of head coach Marchesano in 2021-22.