



BY ROB VANSTONE

Delaney Gibb of the Raymond Comets is experiencing a meteoric rise in basketball circles.

A standout with Canada's bronze-medal-winning team at last summer's FIBA under-19 women's World Cup, Gibb has committed to play NCAA basketball at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Her immediate priority, however, is to enjoy the remaining few weeks of her graduating season with the Comets, who are seeking to win their second successive title at the Luther Invitational Tournament in Regina.

Last year, Gibb scored the winning basket with eight seconds remaining to give Raymond a 64-62 victory over the Winnipeg Dakota Lancers in the LIT senior girls final at Luther College High School. She returned to LIT on Thursday and helped Raymond defeat the Luther Lions 109-38. After the post-game handshakes and fist-bumps, she posed near centre court with a fan who had made a sign in honour of the Comets' No. 11.

Outside the Semple Gymnasium, Gibb was stopped by some students who asked if they could take a photo. A few minutes later, after the team's post-game meeting, she stopped to sign an autograph. Understand that this is not what typically happens at a high school basketball tournament, even one as prestigious and steeped in tradition as LIT.

"Coming to Saskatchewan or Regina, it's definitely a little different, just because I'm not here all the time," said Gibb, whose team is based in the southern Alberta sporting hotbed of Raymond.

“I don’t usually have this many kids coming up to me but, if I go different places, there tends to be more people who come up, just because it’s their first time seeing me or meeting me.” Gibb is delighted to oblige.

“I think it’s really cool,” she said. “I enjoy playing basketball and I enjoy having people watching me and being fans and looking up to me. I really enjoy it and I love when they come and talk to me.”

Does it take some getting used to? “I would say it definitely does,” she said. “I’m more used to it now. It can be a little awkward at times, but it’s fun.”

The enjoyment is shared by Saskatchewan fans who have the rare opportunity to watch someone who was ranked among the top 50 recruits in North America by no less of an authority than ESPN. However, it has become common over the years to watch a member of the Gibb family at LIT.

Delaney’s father, Alan, is the Comets’ current senior girls head coach and someone who also played in the tournament when it was solely a male event. Alan has emulated his father, Bob, who also coached at Raymond. As well, Delaney’s sister (Sage) played at LIT.

“I think this is a great tournament,” Gibb said. “The fact that my dad also played in it makes it even funner. It’s exciting getting to do something that he also enjoyed and loved playing in.” Raymond is among the most decorated participants in the history of LIT, which dates back to 1953. The Comets have won an unmatched 12 senior boys titles at LIT. Last year, Raymond won its first senior girls championship. The eight-team female component was introduced at LIT in 2016.

“I’ve always been told about Luther,” Gibb said. “I’ve had people talk about it — my grandpa and my dad before — and about how well-put-on it is. It’s such a great tournament, so I was super-excited to come here, and last year did not disappoint. It was so much fun and I think this year has been equally as fun. I love coming here. Everyone is really welcoming and super-supportive.”

Gibb is accustomed to a supportive environment, such as the one that exists at Raymond High School. “Raymond loves basketball and all sports,” she said. “We have so much support. Especially for rival games, the gym will be packed — sold out. For all our games, we have so many fans. Everyone and their family is coming out to support and watch, so it’s really, really cool.”

Gibb’s next basketball home will be on a considerably larger scale but, even so, she expects the environment at BYU to be relatable. “It’s honestly a dream come true,” she said. “The recruiting process was definitely different, especially coming from a town where not too many people are familiar with it, but I found that BYU is the best fit for me.

“I already have a relationship with the coach and some of the players, so that helped a ton. I think it’s a place where I’m going to be able to thrive and become my best self, so I’m super-excited.”

