

# Liberty's Lady Panthers capture second consecutive state championship title

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** – Back-to-back State Champions.

The title, esteemed for only the best of the best, is now bestowed upon the **Liberty Middle School Lady Panthers seventh-grade basketball team** after **Thursday** night's **28-23** victory against the **Parkside Junior High SchoolPythons in Normal, Ill.**

Head coach **Char Bond** was immensely proud of her team's accomplishments throughout the season, especially with the packed house at their opponents' school.

"It's pretty awesome," Bond said. "We have a great group of kids. Since we were playing at Normal Parkside, they had an amazing crowd. We had a smaller group, but we certainly overcame that obstacle to stand out."

The key to the team's overall success is not the frequency of scoring, nor the defense that the girls can hold up against their tough competitors; their unselfishness stands above all aspects of their team characteristics.

"We have unselfish play and kids who work really hard on defense," Bond said. "Yesterday's game was great as far as the girls coming together and really show them working together as a team."

Bond credits **Macy Silvey** and **Sydney Harris** for their consistent productivity on offense with Harris leading in scoring all season. **Kate Conner**, the team's defensive specialist, took to her opponent's strongest player and kept her at bay for the Lady Panthers. On the inside, **Ariana Bennett** and **Elle Evans** came up big on rebounding and defending the post.

**Kennedy Fox, Kaitlyn Conway, Ashlyn Hauk, Grace Daech, Violet McNece, Alexis Bond, Claire Dunivan, Madi Trimm and Lexi Trimm** closed out the team's roster and also contributed to the team's success all season long.

"Coaching middle school is a different aspect," Bond said. "You have to build upon those fundamentals early, but you have to encourage them to be the best they can be and to believe in themselves."