

## Turnovers no problem for Summit Academy

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By Mike White, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

From one year to the next, Summit Academy has a new team. Completely new.

Summit Academy is a school for court-adjudicated youth in Herman, Butler County. The students come one year, and are usually gone the next. Summit leads the WPIAL in turnovers, and we're not talking about bad passes or traveling calls on the basketball court.

But this season's new team has given Summit Academy something totally new — an outright section championship.

Summit Academy has clinched the WPIAL Class AA Section 2 title, one year after tying for the section crown. Since the school joined the WPIAL in the 1998-99 season, the Knights had never won a section title outright.

You could say the winning is an “Art” form. **Art McCray** is in his second season as the Knights’ coach and in his 11th year working at the school. He was a teacher for a while and is now an assistant to the principal. He has molded this collection of players into one of the top teams in Class AA of the WPIAL. One of his starters never played organized basketball before this season.

“Unfortunately, the kids had to go through some things in the past to get here to this school,” McCray said. “Now they’re doing something right and that’s the most important thing. We want to enhance the things they’re doing right and help them along.

“This is a huge deal because these students ... let me put it this way: They are sometimes so blinded by what they feel has been taken away from them that they can’t see the opportunities that are given to them. When they finally open their eyes and are able to see what they can do, in the classroom and everywhere else, they start to believe.”

Summit Academy has excelled, despite losing three starters in the middle of the season. The starters were allowed to return home after “positive completion of our program,” McCray said.

Summit Academy still has plenty of talent — and size. The Knights start 6-foot-8 sophomore **Elijah Minnie**, 6-8 senior **Omar Johnson**, 6-5 senior **Tyrelle Wyche**, 6-2 senior **Rashon Boone** and 5-7 senior **Rakim Reedy**. Minnie showed promise last year as a freshman at Monessen.

McCray, 35, says he learned a lot about coaching from his playing days. He was on **Tim McConnell’s** first team at Chartiers Valley High School in the 1993-94 season. He then played at Penn State-New Kensington and was coached by **Paul Holzshu** (now at Shaler Area) and **Lance Maha** (now at West Mifflin).

“Come on, where do you think I get all this stuff from?” McCray said with a laugh. “I was blessed to play for [McConnell]. When you look at all three of those guys I played for, they are pretty successful coaches. That’s where I’ve taken a lot of my stuff from.”

