

Wingate's Antonio, Young headed to Haskell in Kansas

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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Antonio was three-time All-State player for Lady Bears

Ashanti Antonio and Nizhoni Young of the Wingate High School volleyball team are headed to Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan. The two signed individual letters-of-intent June 24 to attend the school.

"I'm excited and ready to learn a new system and meet new friends," Antonio said. "It will be a challenge, but I'm ready."

Antonio is a highlight film waiting to happen on the volleyball court. She possesses a 15-inch vertical leap and emerged over the past three years as one of the most dominant volleyball players at the net in New Mexico. Antonio and Young also played basketball for the Lady Bears.

"I'm happy for them both," Wingate Head Coach Karen Malone said. "I know they will both do very well. Both are very smart and very hard-working. I plan to follow their progress while they are there."

Young played outside hitter and libero for the Lady Bears and Antonio played middle hitter. The two and fellow graduating senior Keziah Pine formed a hitting trio that was simply lethal for opponents.

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Young was consistently the player who kept balls alive so that Antonio and Pine could score kills or spikes at the net. Young, who hails from Bread Springs, said she and Antonio will spend the next month working out together and getting themselves mentally and physically ready for Haskell. Both girls have been friends for years and said they plan to support one another while away at school.

"I'm looking forward to meeting people from different tribes," Young said. "I'm ready for the school part of things, too."

Antonio, who is from Low Mountain, Ariz., wants to study dentistry at Haskell, and ultimately hopes to pursue a career as an orthodontist. Young said she'd like to study nursing. Neither graduate was sure if she'd play other sports for the university, but both said they'd make that decision when they get there.

"I'll think about it," Antonio said of possibly playing other sports. "I'd probably play basketball or run track. It's something that I'll think about."

Wingate went 20-5, 8-2 in District 1-4A last year and lost to Silver 3-0 in the state playoffs. Under Malone, the Lady Bears have made the state playoffs the past several years, and Antonio was often the go-to player in close and exciting games.

Haskell is a federally operated tribal university. The school name is the *Fighting Indians* and their team colors are purple, gold, and white. The school is a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and competes as an independent in all sports.

By Bernie Dotson
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