

**By TOMMY BRYAN, *sports editor***

It didn't take long for the rumor mill to get cranked up after Ashley Johnson submitted her resignation Friday morning as girls basketball coach at Lebanon High. For the record, Johnson has accepted a fellowship at Michigan State University and will begin work on her Ph.D in education.

Several coaches with extensive high school and even college coaching experience have expressed serious interest in the position. Johnson, 25, leaves LHS with a record of 29-27 over two seasons and with the admiration of outgoing principal Nancy Ash.

"Ashley was an outstanding teacher, coach and role model for our young ladies," said Ash, "she really wrestled with this decision."

Johnson, the TSSAA Class AAA Miss Basketball at Shelbyville Central High in 2002 and a standout player at Ole Miss, said, "I'm being led in a different direction. Lebanon will always have a special place in my heart. It was extremely tough telling the girls -- but working toward my doctorate is something I've always wanted to do."

Johnson took the Lebanon job in May of 2008, replacing Darian Brown -- who left after two seasons to take an administrative position at Wilson Central.

The job is much better today than it was four years ago when Brown took over, especially with a solid group of ninth graders coming in and the prospect of a new school in two years.

While Ash is tasked with fielding the initial calls and e-mails regarding the position, she has already accepted a position in the Central Office -- leaving the responsibility of actually hiring the new coach in the hands of the incoming principal.

Ash said Tuesday she has named Devilette assistant Erica Bragg as interim head coach.

## Johnson resigns at LHS

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

---