

BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016

Willoughby takes over at Sidney

Staff report

After 30 years at Houston, John Willoughby has taken a giant leap, going from Division 4 to Division 1 Sidney this season.

He replaces Andy Slaughter, who stepped down after leading the Yellow Jackets to a 17-8 record last season.

Willoughby was asked the difference in the two jobs.

"I don't know that I've met up with the biggest difference, and that would be the competition," he said. "But it's all relative. When you're at a big school, you're going to play against other big schools. The skill level should be better at a D-1 school, but the opponents' skill level is too."

Willoughby answered early on the one question that is probably on the minds of most Sidney High fans — how is Andre Gordon?

The six-foot Gordon with amazing leaping ability was the Jackets' main attraction last season, averaging 13.1 points, 4.6 rebounds, six assists and three steals per game — as a freshman.

Everyone was looking forward to watching him first play quarterback in football, but unfortunately his season ended after just one game and he required surgery on a broken wrist. But Willoughby said he's "doing fine."

"He's pretty much full go," said the coach. "He's getting after it at practice so that's a good sign. And he seems to be in good shape."

Having him back makes a successful season for Willoughby and the Jackets much more possible, but the coach is quick to point out that a lot was lost to graduation. And he's right.

Leading scorer Cameron Gallimore graduated and took with him a 14.5 scoring average and 54 made three-pointers. He was a 44 percent field goal shooter, including an impressive 40 percent from three-land, and an ultra-impressive 84 percent from the line.

Also gone from last season is Lorenzo Taborn, who is now playing football at Bowling Green. Taborn was a wide-body and stood at 6-4, so it's no surprise he was the leading rebounder at 7.4 per game. He also scored 10.7 per game.

"We lost quite a bit when you look at it," Willoughby said. "A great shooting guard and a big inside player."

But then there's Gordon.

"With Andre, I really don't know all he can do yet," said the coach. "And I'm looking forward to finding out. One thing, I think he could be a really outstanding defender. I think last year he picked his time to show what he could do as a defender. But he can shut people down. And people have questioned his jump shot, but I think he'll surprise some people."

Gordon has a pretty good supporting cast again this season, too. Willoughby has a host of players inside, including returnees Allec Gordon, a senior, and Devan Rogers, still just a junior. Both are in the 6-foot-2 range, but both possess strength and agility. Rogers averaged 7.2 points and 4.8 rebounds last season and Gordon five points and five rebounds.

In addition, there is 6-4 sophomore Ratez Roberts,



Andre Gordon (20), who dazzled as a freshman last year, is back for the Sidney Yellow Jackets this season.

who played in 10 games last season.

"We'll look to go inside a little more with Allec and Devan," Willoughby said. "And Ratez was really one of our better players over the summer. Devan is a real smart player. He sees the floor and is a good passer, and I think his shooting will surprise some people."

And he's also pleased to have junior Isaiah Bowser back. Bowser just finished a record-setting football season, during which he shattered the single-season rushing record. He played in all 25 games last season and averaged six points, and Willoughby thinks that will increase this year.

"I like finding mismatches with Isaiah inside," Willoughby said. "He's a heck of a player. He has that mentality where he's going to compete all the time and he's very athletic. Hopefully we can take advantage of that."

There are also two other seniors along with Allec Gordon in Devonte Weatherpoon, a 5-9 guard, and Philip McCluskey, a 5-10 guard.

"Devonte and Philip need to find their spots," said Willoughby. "Spoon can be a heck of a defender and is fun to watch in practice. Philip needs to work on what a point guard really is."

The juniors along with Rogers and Bowser include Kelsey Stockton, Ryan Hines and 6-4 Chris Lee, who Willoughby said may find a spot because of his rebounding.

Sophomores along with Roberts are Jace Conrad, Josiah Hudgins and Keith Lee.

"We have plenty of kids that can score and Jace is one of them," the coach said. "Josiah is very athletic and a capable



Sidney's Celena Taborn takes a shot last season. She averaged a double-double for a 24-1 team a year ago and returns this season for the Lady Jackets.

offensive player. And he can be a stopper on defense. Keith is a smart player who can shoot the ball well."

Willoughby said this team should be able to take advantage of its speed by getting the ball down the floor quickly. But he said there will also be times the Jackets will need to execute an offense. "And that's what we need to get better at, getting teammates open, and moving the ball a little more.

And for us to compete with the teams we play, we're going to have to defend very well, rebound and execute on the offensive end."

Willoughby built his Houston teams on defense and that hasn't changed with his move.

"I think this can be a good defensive team, but we'll have to make up for our lack of size," he said. "The kids have great anticipation. They like to play defense but they don't like

to sustain the defensive effort, and that has to change. And I'm not sure we will pick up full court. We will at times, but I don't think that will be our staple."

Girls

Coming off one the best girls basketball seasons ever at Sidney with a 24-1 record last year, this year could prove to be a little more challenging than others, says head coach Megan Mummey.

Back for her sixth season, SHS grad Mummey led the Lady Jackets to the Greater Western Ohio Conference North champs last year with a 10-0 mark in league record. And they had a perfect regular season overall, going 22-0. The only loss came in the sectional final to Springboro.

This year the Jackets look to defend their title, but will face some different competition in Tipp City in the now American North Division. They will also face Xenia, Stebbins, West Carrollton, Fairborn, and Trotwood who are on the other side of the division.

The Lady Jackets will return just three varsity players from last year's team, with one of them being 6-foot-3 Celena Taborn. Taborn will be a key target this season after averaging 16 points and 10 rebounds per game last season. She is being recruited by top schools and should dominate in the post this year because few other teams can match her size.

"She will be solo in the paint without Sylvia Hudson who she had played alongside for three years," said Mummey of her leading scorer from last season. "Celena does a fantastic job in the paint despite being double- and triple-teamed. She will need to be more versatile moving and finding a way to get open in the post. We will also use her more on the outside this year shooting the ball for us. She has one of the better three-point percentages on the team."

Two other key returnees are junior guard Carrie Nuss and sophomore guard Alina Kindle.

"Carrie had a big year for us last year," said Mummey. "She made her way to a starting position by midseason. I look for her to take over the leadership on this team. She is a great role model on and off the court. She will be a big threat for us from the outside. I look for her to double her scoring this year."

"Alina is an all-around athlete," Mummey continued. "She didn't see a lot of minutes last year, but when she was in the game, she made a positive impact. She is only a sophomore who will fill the void of Kaitlyn Davis (who graduated off last year's team). Having a developed point guard throughout the years in Kaitlyn was a huge part of our success, so Kindle will have big shoes to fill. I'm putting pressure on her to handle the ball for us this year."

"Kiara Miller is a senior who was successful on junior varsity last season," Mummey continued. "She will develop into a small forward for us this year. Her hustle on the court makes her a big asset to the team. And joining her in the post will

BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016

Cavs still young, but experienced

Staff report

Tim Gleason begins his second season as head coach of the Lehman boys basketball team, and he's starting it out the same way he did last year — with a positive outlook.

"Coaches tell me all the time, don't be so positive. You set up too many expectations," said Gleason. "But I'm excited about this season. Last year, we were young and inexperienced. This year we're young and experienced."

The Cavaliers were quite young last year, and when you figured in the fact that they all had to learn a new system, their struggles were expected.

"That was huge last year," said Gleason. "That's one of the reasons I'm so optimistic — because the kids know the system now and we were able to get going right from the start. And we got the football players earlier this season."

Last year was a trying one for Gleason and the Cavs, the final record being just 4-19.

"I've never experienced anything like that at any level," Gleason said. "But I just try to remind myself that I was trying to completely rebuild the program. I thought once we got past that first season, things would improve, and I think they will. And I think we'll be really good next year."

"My main expectation for this season is to be competitive in every game," he said. "I'd like to compete for the league title (Northwest Central Conference), but that will be a tall order because Lima Perry is just loaded. But I want at least a .500 record minimum this season. Anything short of that will be disappointing for me because we expect to be vastly improved."

He has three full-time starters back this season and another who started in quite a few, too. And of the four, only one is a senior.

That senior is Dylan Arnold, a versatile athlete who also excels in football and baseball. Though Gleason says basketball is Arnold's "third-favorite sport," he still led the Cavaliers in scoring last season at 10 points per game, in assists with 44, and in steals with 46.

"When you think of Dylan, you think of an athlete," said Gleason. "Basketball is his third-favorite sport, so he



Photos by Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News
Lehman's Dylan Arnold heads down the court at Lehman last season. He returns for the Cavaliers after leading the team in scoring a year ago.

doesn't play it as much in the offseason as others. But he knows the game and is very athletic. He's a tenacious rebounder and defender."

The other three are all juniors in Preston Rodgers, Kam Lee and 6-foot-4 Michael Bunker.

"Preston brings tremendous quickness and basketball IQ," said Gleason. "He's really a student of the game, an excellent leader and an absolute gym rat."

"Bunker brings great size and athleticism," he added. "But he's still learning the game. He's really a football guy and just needs to play more basketball, because right now he only has a year-and-a-half on the court. He's athletic and has the size, and he can dunk about any way you can imagine. He could be a force on the boards, and I would love to see him score around 10 a game."

Lee is the player who started sporadically last season, but he will be a mainstay this year.

"He brings everything," said Gleason. "He has it all. He has the shooting range, he's explosive to the basket and has learned to attack the basket rather than

just being a shooter. In summer camp at Findlay, they invited him back to their elite camp. He's 6-1 or 6-2 and can score."

There are only two seniors on the squad this year, the second being Jared Rourke. "Jared is nothing flashy, just a

steady and smart guard. He's got a solid shot and is a good ball-handler."

Bunker has a battle on his hands for that center starting position because of 6-4 junior Seth Sargent. "He's a wide body and a very smart player who worked hard at it

over the summer. He will be competing for the center spot for sure," Gleason said.

There are two more juniors and they are both guards in Braiden Sherman and Logan Richard, and there are also two sophomores in the mix in Elliot Gilardi, the quarterback in football, and Jared Magoteaux.

"Logan and Braiden are both competing hard for playing time," said Gleason. "Gilardi is a leader, a smart passer and playmaker, and Jared is strong and plays hard. I coached them for three years and they know exactly what I'm looking for."

Girls

Coach Craig Hall guided his team to a 12-11 overall record last season, including 5-1 in the Northwest Central Conference, which was good enough for the runner-up spot in the league.

And even though the Lady Cavs will be young this season, Hall is optimistic and feeling good, especially about the numbers. It wasn't long ago that there weren't enough players for a junior varsity team, but Hall says there are 20 girls in all playing this year.

He has one returnee who is a fourth-year varsity player in senior Hannah Fogt. She averaged 7.5 per game last season as well as 6.6 rebounds.

"I'm looking for big things from her," Hall said. "She was one of our best scorers last season."

He feels he's also set at the guard spot with

returnees Brogan McIver and Alanna O'Leary. Both are still only juniors, and O'Leary was the team's leading scorer last season at 8.0 per game.

"I'm real confident in those two girls," said Hall. "Both have worked real hard on their ball-handling and perimeter shooting and I think they're going to have good seasons. I've seen a lot of positive things not only out of them, but all the girls."

Also back is 5-foot-10 Carly Edwards in the post, and she's only a sophomore. She averaged 3.5 and 3.7 last season.

Grace Monnin is returning at guard and is also only a sophomore. She averaged 4.0 last year as a freshman.

She has two classmates also named Grace in Grace Brandt and Grace Olding, both guards who played varsity last year as freshmen, and are ready for a bigger role.

As for inside, he has 5-10 Emily Fogt and 5-10 freshman Abby Schutt. "Abby has been impressive in scrimmages," he said. "She's got good size and nice moves for a freshman."

He likes his team's chances of bettering last season's mark.

"I see a lot of improvement," he said. "There seems to be a lot of excitement this year and the morale is great. We're not going to be the biggest team, but we have a lot of athletes and a lot of quickness. So I'm real excited about the next two or three years."



Lehman's Alanna O'Leary, left, protects the ball from the defense of Jackson Center's Kennadie Reese last season. O'Leary was Lehman's leading scorer last season and returns this season.

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BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016

Francis returns to coach Wildcats

Staff report

HOUSTON — He spent 18 years as an assistant coach at his alma mater Russia, took some time away, then returned last season as an assistant to Russia grad Eric Rosenbeck at St. Henry.

Now he becomes a head boys basketball coach for the first time, with some big shoes to fill. He takes over for longtime Houston head coach John Willoughby, who left to become the new head coach at Sidney.

"I just wanted to get back in it, so when Eric called me last year and asked me to be his assistant, I took it," said Francis. "I loved every minute of it and wanted to get back in. And it's gone great. It's about what I expected. The kids have done a good job. They've worked hard and I think we'll be a pleasant surprise this season."

He inherits a program that has gone through some tough times the last two seasons, totalling just nine wins in that time. Two years ago, the Wildcats were 1-22, but turned it around and won eight games last season.

However, not a lot returns from that team, so Francis has his work cut out in his first season.

There are just three lettermen back, including senior Cameron Arnold, senior Isaac Beaver and Caleb Sluss, who is still just a junior.

Arnold averaged 6.3 points last season and led the team in assists with 59. He is the leading returning scorer for the Wildcats.

"Cameron has really improved," said Francis. "He will run the one, and he will be a scorer for us. Isaac is a strong kid and does everything you want him to do. And he's a 4.0 student. He's just the kind of kid you want on your team. Caleb is really shooting the ball well, and he realizes he's not a sophomore anymore. I need numbers out of him. And I don't care of those numbers are turnovers and fouls. I just need to know that he's being aggressive. I want to err on the side of being aggressive this season."

There are five seniors in all. Joining Arnold and Beaver are post player Dylan Hensley, 5-8 Sage Bryant and 5-11 Quinton Cox.

"Dylan is one of my best rebounders," Francis said. "He's athletic and jumps well, and he's capable of scoring. Sage has really come on strong and is shooting with a lot of confidence."

There are also five juniors. In addition to Sluss, Francis has 6-1 Cameron Via, 6-2 James DiLullo, 5-10 Noah Shoemaker and 6-1 Josh Douglas.

"Noah has really improved and is very, very quick," said Francis. "James is probably my second-best rebounder and

Josh is the type who will run through a wall for you. He said every day he comes to practice thinking he's the worst player on the team and needs to work to get better."

Francis also has three sophomores who will be in the mix, including 6-1 John Leist, 6-0 Howie Ludwig and 5-8 Tristin Freistuhler.

"Howie is very athletic and can do a lot of everything," said Francis. "Tristin is a very good shooter. He's small, but he's been on varsity since day one and he knows the game. John will likely split time but he's another inside presence."

"With this group, I think we're going to be deeper than people think we're going to be," he added.

He said there are two big keys for his team.

"Defense and rebounding," he said. "We do rebounding drills every single day and we're going to keep doing them. You have to be fundamentally sound. And on defense, it comes from everybody playing hard, and that's what we have to have."

The Wildcats won't be big, so Francis hinted that offensively, he will probably go with an open post, with all five players on the perimeter. "We have to try to take advantage of our quickness," he said.

Girls

Brad Allen's first team at Houston finished with an 11-14 record, but flirted with a much better mark last season.

The Lady Wildcats began finding their way in January, when they came within 17 seconds of upsetting unbeaten Division 1 Sidney, which went on to post a 22-0 regular-season record. And in the very next game, Houston traveled to Fort Loramie and took the



Lady Redskins to overtime.

"I was pleased with our record," said Allen. "I thought we could have positioned ourselves to get a couple more wins, but we made it to the sectional finals and lost to Jackson Center (which made it to state)."

"We had a nice stretch there," he added. "At Sidney,

we had the lead with under a minute to go, and then we took Loramie to overtime. So we had some positive things and we had some good momentum. I thought at the end of the season we were playing our best basketball."

This season will present a challenge, however. Allen said three girls who graduated accounted for 29 of the team's average of 42 points last season.

"But I still think we have the personnel that can get us some points. And I think we'll play hard and can be very competitive," he added.

He has three seniors on the team, and always good place to start is at point guard. And he has his returning in Kara Maier. "Having Kara back to run the point is big," said Allen.

Also back is 5-foot-9 post player Jenna Jarett, who played in all 25 games last season. "She will get ample playing time again and log some good, quality minutes."

The third senior is Brittany Timmerman, who saw action in 15 games last season. Allen expects her playing time to increase this year.

There are also three juniors, led by 5-10 post Sarah Monnier, who is a returning starter. She averaged five points a game and also five rebounds as a sophomore, and Allen is looking for big things from her. "She is pretty versatile," he

said. "She will play in the post but can also move out to the perimeter."

Rebecca New is another junior who is 5-9 and pegged as a starter on the wing. "She has a nice shot and gets to the line," Allen said. "And she can play in the post if we need her to."

Morgan Ely is another junior who Allen said has excellent quickness and a good shot. He's counting on her to back up Maier at the point.

There are two sophomores also, led by Jessie Monnier, the sister of Sarah. Jessie is a six-footer and will likely be the starting center. "She's going to be a good scorer inside and can also get to the line," Allen said. "She will see a lot of playing time."

The second sophomore is Hollie Voisard, who will come off the bench and play at a guard spot. "She adds a lot of quickness and gives us another ball-handler. When she's on, she's on, and she's a very unselfish player."

Allen said the numbers are a bit low this year, but he's more fortunate than some. He said Houston has already been informed that opponents Franklin-Monroe, Mississinawa and Bradford will not have junior varsity teams this year.

"Our biggest concern right now is finding someone to be a consistent scorer," Allen said. "And I think we have some good candidates."



Sarah Monnier shoots last season against Bradford. She is one of the top returning players for Houston this season.

Sidney

From page 1

be sophomore Emma Wiford. Emma is a hard-working kid who will do all the little things a team needs. She will fight hard for rebounds and loose balls."

Filling out the guard

spots will be freshman Carly Dean and sophomore Kyana Johnson. Mummy said Dean has already stepped up big and helped handle the ball for the Lady Jackets. "She is a hard-nosed kid who will fight for her team on the court," Mummy said. "Kyana is an aggressive guard who will look to go to the

basket any chance she has. We look for her to step up and score when they are doubling down inside."

Seniors Hayley Powers and Braxtyn Lee will fill in the remainder of the Jackets roster. "They are disciplined kids who will help us in the scoring column. Most of their scoring will come

from behind the arc," the coach said.

"I am very excited about this year," Mummy concluded. "I want the girls to be confident in their abilities and learn from mistakes. I know we lost a lot last year, but we will continue to work hard and put ourselves in positions to win games."



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BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016

Raiders eye 4th straight County title

Staff report

RUSSIA — Russia's season ended a bit prematurely thanks to an upset in the sectional tournament.

But even that didn't detract from the job Spencer Cordonnier did in his first season as the head coach of the Russia boys.

He had some big shoes to fill in taking over, inheriting a program that had won two straight outright County championships. But when last regular season was over, Cordonnier and the Raiders had made it three in a row.

The Raiders went on to finish with a 21-4 record.

"I thought we'd win quite a few games," said Cordonnier. "Just because of how hard the kids worked and the fact that they were out to prove themselves after waiting in the background a couple years. I'm not sure I thought we would win 21 games though. I thought maybe 15 or 16, but we won a lot of close games, and those kids just knew how to win."

He lost a whole host of seniors from last year, but that's nothing new. However, it's a bit different this year. Last year, he has six juniors ready to step in and they are seniors now. This year, though, there are just four juniors.

"Our numbers have dropped off a little bit," Cordonnier said. "We lost eight to graduation and five of them played a lot of minutes. This year, we only have 17 on varsity and JV."

He has just three players who logged a lot of minutes last year, enough to letter. They include seniors Dylan Cordonnier and Cole Tebbe and junior Jack Dapore.

Tebbe is the leading returning scorer after averaging 8.8 last season. Dapore was at 6.6 and Cordonnier at 5.5.

Cordonnier moved to point guard after just two games last season, and coach Cordonnier expects him to be anchored there again this year. But the coach also has something more in mind for Cordonnier.

"Dylan knows how to control an offense and get things done,"



Russia's Jack Dapore goes up for a rebound between two Botkins players last season. Dapore is one of three players returning for the Raiders this season.

said coach Cordonnier. "But I told him I want to see at least 15 shots a game out of him. He hit 44 percent from three-point range last season, but only took 36 shots. And he was an 82 percent free throw shooter but only had 51 attempts. I told him, if he doesn't shoot it, he's going to be sitting next to me. He's the one we want with the ball, and I'm the only one who can tell him not to shoot."

Tebbe is around 6-foot-2 and will be in the post.

"Cole averaged around 10 and we expect that again this year," said the coach. "He's gotten stronger and worked

on his agility, and it's helped. He will probably be the strongest and hardest-working kid on the floor."

Dapore started out the season on the junior varsity, but it didn't take Cordonnier long to realize he needed to move up.

"He's going to play a little bit of everywhere," said the coach. "He's in for a change this season because people now know what he can do, and he will probably draw the opponent's best defensive player. So he will have to be stronger with the ball."

"Cordonnier has already brought up a sophomore this season in 6-4 Daniel Kearns. "I can't see leaving him on the JV team at this stage," said the coach. "He's a very athletic big kid, and he can help us." Drew Sherman is a six-foot guard and Drew Poling a 6-2 forward, and they both "waited their turn" last year on the JV team.

"All that did was help them," said Cordonnier. "Drew Sherman ran the point for the JVs last year 99 percent of the time and he's ready to move up. He's improved his game tremendously

and will be the backup when Dylan needs a break.

"Drew Poling is our most athletic kid," he added. "He gets to the rim, and he's our best leaper."

There are two more seniors in Ethan Monnier, who is 5-11, and Sam Cook, also 5-11. "They are both very good shooters and capable of taking some of the pressure off our other scorers."

Juniors Hunter Cohee, who is 6-2, and Dion Puthoff are also in the mix for playing time. Cordonnier said Cohee can play anywhere on the floor, and Puthoff is one of the team's top defensive players.

"There is all kinds of competition in practice," said Cordonnier. "I feel like we can go eight or nine deep if we have to."

He said the Raiders did some pressing in spurts last year, and he expects that to increase this season.

"It was new to the guys last year," he said. "And it took a while to get a feel for what we wanted. Having one year under their belts, they know what's



Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News
Maria Herron goes up for a layup in action last season. She is a senior who averaged just under 13 per game for the Russia Lady Raiders last season.

expected now.

"We're still going to push the ball and these kids know how to guard," he added. "We want to run, but we also want to keep the score in the 40s or 50s."

Girls

The Lady Raiders have a new coach this season in Andy Timmerman, who was the freshman boys coach last season.

He also coached boys basketball at New Bremen, but said the transition to coaching the girls hasn't been and won't be a problem.

"I teach so it's not like I've only dealt with boys," Timmerman said. "I've always enjoyed basketball. I didn't think at first I would coach girls, but once the opportunity came and I saw that the position was open, I thought this would be something I wanted to do."

"The transition has been pretty smooth," he added. "It's still teaching the game. Obviously there are some small things that are different, but having a sister (Stacy) a year older than me, who is someone to talk to and someone who also loves the game, helped me transition. And I have great assistant coaches as well. Coach (Bruce) Borchers has been with the program for 10 years, and this year we have Sierra York as an assistant, and she's been great."

The Lady Raiders were 12-11 last season, including 6-6 in the County, and back from that team are the top six players, and also a player that missed last season because of injury.

Timmerman has the top two scorers returning from last season in seniors Maria Herron and Tiffany Hatcher. Herron averaged 12.7 points per game last season and Hatcher was at an even 11 per game.

Hatcher also led the team in assists.

Another senior, Christina Gaerke, is the player who missed last season, and Timmerman is excited about having her back this year.

Juniors returning include guard Whitney Pleiman, who is coming off a record-setting volleyball season, and Cameo Wilson. Wilson was the third-leading rebounder last season and also scored seven points a game.

There are also two sophomores returning in Laurissa Poling and Jenna Cordonnier. Poling was the team's leading rebounder last season with 120, followed by Hatcher with 111 and Wilson with 94.

"Laurissa was young last year and with a year of experience, she has matured and improved a lot," said Timmerman. "Going straight from junior high to varsity last year was a big challenge. And with Christina (Gaerke) back, that will help, too."

"We have shooters in Maria and Tiffany, and both Jenna and Whitney can shoot and will need to more than last year," he added. "So with inside and outside, I think we're pretty balanced on both ends."

"I want to allow the girls to play a little more, not necessarily spot up on the floor all the time," he went on. "They are great athletes and have a lot of experience and I don't want to hold them back. I want to put them in position to make plays where they are comfortable with their strengths."

Katie Heuing is a sophomore who played a little bit of varsity last year, and Shae Borchers is back out this year after not playing last season. He expects both to contribute.

"The biggest thing is learning a new system," he said. "But the girls are picking it up well and learning fast."

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BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016

Redskins look to build on strong finish

Staff report

FORT LORAMIE — There appears to be plenty of reasons to fear the Fort Loramie Redskins this season.

Last year, they finished with just a .500 mark at 13-13. But that record is more impressive when you take into account that they were 6-11 at one point.

They got hot at the right time, winning seven of their final nine games, counting tournament play. And the two losses were both in overtime, the last one in the district championship game against Southeastern.

And the bad news for the rest of the County — coach Corey Britton has four starters returning this season.

“We’re excited about getting back in the gym,” said Britton, beginning his third season as head coach. “Last year ended well for us. We got hot at the right time.

“We’re looking forward to this season,” he added. “We had some flaws last year that we need to correct. Mainly playing consistently for longer stretches. We would go through a stretch of two, three, four minutes, lose focus, lose an assignment, and it would cost us a game. We need to be better at that and it starts at the defensive end. Last year, our defense was just good enough to get by. We’re demanding a little more this season and just getting after it.”

He has leading scorer Dillon Braun returning, and he’s still just a junior. Last year, the 6-foot-1 guard averaged 13.3 points per game and shot an impressive 42 percent from beyond the three-point arc.

Also back is 6-foot-7 Tyler Siegel, also only a junior yet. He averaged 6.8 points and a team-high six rebounds per game last season. He’s

also a good shot-blocker, finishing with 42 during the regular season last year.

There are two seniors on the squad in Cody Gasson and Nate Pleiman. “They will both play big-time minutes,” said Britton. “Nate started in stretches last year and came off the bench, and Cody started 15 games before he got hurt.”

Junior guard Evan Berning started about every game last season and he also returns. He led the Redskins in assists with 61 in addition to scoring six points a game.

There are also three more juniors in Cody Barhorst, Austin Siegel and Jarrett Meyer, and a sophomore in Eli Rosengarten.

Siegel might be a key player for the Redskins this season. He’s 6-2 and the quarterback on the football team, and last season, a football injury sidelined him for basketball.

“Austin probably would have started for us last year, and having him back this season is huge,” Britton said. “He will be in the post, where we have a good rotation with three or four kids.”

Britton agrees that things look promising for the Redskins. But he is cautious.

“It looks good on paper, but that doesn’t get us anything,” he said. “We have to go out and prove it. You never win anything in the newspaper.

“Consistency in general is a big concern,” he went on. “That was the difference in us and the upper echelon in the County last year, and that has to get better. The league is going to be tough and we have to be ready.”

Girls

Before last season, the Fort Loramie girls



Photos by Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

Fort Loramie's Dillon Braun drives to the basket last season against Russia. Braun averaged 13.3 last season as a sophomore and returns this year.

basketball team had qualified for the state tournament three years in a row.

It looked like it would be four straight last season, but the Lady Redskins were upset in the regional tournament. But that didn’t detract much from another marvelous campaign for longtime head coach Carla Siegel (18th year) and her squad. They finished with a final overall record of 23-5, and those 23 wins pushed Siegel to 348 in her career, making her the winningest girls basketball coach in school history. She surpassed the 339 wins the Lady Redskins had under Hall of Fame coach Jane Poeppelman.

Reaching that many wins this season will be a major challenge. Graduation took a lot of quality players, including two-time County Player of the Year Jessica Boerger, who will be playing for Ohio Dominican this season. She averaged 14.9 points a game and 5.1 rebounds, and got to the line 120 times, hitting 76 percent of her throws. She also dished out a team-high 81 assists and had 79 steals, also a team-high.

Also gone is Holly Frey, who is playing at

Edison this season. She was the team’s leading rebounder last year as well as scoring 10 points a game.

“Jess (Boerger) was in a class by herself, but all the seniors were outstanding,” Siegel said. “Jess was phenomenal and Holly had a great career. It was a nice one-two punch for us.

“A lot of people don’t realize what last year’s seniors accomplished,” she added. “We played in our seventh consecutive regional final last year, so those seniors played in four of them.”

There are four seniors on this year’s squad and two of them had extensive playing time last season in guards Kaitlynn Luebke and Reyann Frey. They were both around four points per game last season.

The other two seniors are both post players in 5-10 Sara Stang and 5-11 Hunter Barga. Stang played in 15 games last season, and Barga nine, and they give the Lady Redskins some size inside.

The rest of the roster includes Hattie Meyer, Abby Holthaus, Heather Eilerman, Grace Ruhenkamp and Brooke Raterman.

“Hattie and Abby have

some varsity experience and I look for them to help out,” said Siegel. “Hattie will be our starting point guard and Abby is a post player with a great outside shot. And she has the green light to shoot.

“Heather is a guard and really as the capability of making things happen. Grace is an outside shooting threat and Brooke is 5-10 and will be in the post,” she added.

“Although we don’t have a Jess Boerger or a Darian Rose (who is also at Ohio Dominican), the door is wide open,” the coach said. “I’m so excited because I don’t know which girl is going to come through that door.

It’s a tossup right now.

“The volleyball team went far in the tournament and that was nice because we were practicing with 12 girls and had all of them together,” she continued. “And one of the good things this year is our junior varsity team has been successful and those girls have a great work ethic.”

She says she thinks most have her team pegged as a middle-of-the-pack finisher in the County, which is rare.

“All you need is girls that work hard and listen,” Siegel said. “That’s a fantastic blueprint to have. They play with a lot of heart and understand the Loramie tradition of basketball.”



Fort Loramie's Reyann Frey, left, chases down a ball last season against Jackson Center. She is back for her senior season for the Lady Redskins.

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BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016



2016-17 basketball schedules



SIDNEY

BOYS
December
 6 – at Bellefontaine
 9 – Tipp City
 10 – Wapakoneta
 13 – at Troy
 16 – Piqua
 20 – at Vandalia
 23 – Greenville
 30 – Urbana
January
 6 – at West Carrollton
 10 – Xenia
 17 – at Centerville
 20 – at Fairborn
 21 – Lehman
 24 – at Stebbins
 27 – Trotwood
 31 – at Tipp City
February
 3 – Troy
 4 – at St. Marys
 10 – at Piqua
 14 – Vandalia
 17 – at Greenville

GIRLS

November
 25 – Russia
 26 – Lehman
December
 1 – at Centerville
 7 – at Tipp City
 10 – Troy
 14 – at Piqua
 17 – Vandalia
 21 – at Greenville
 22 – St. Marys
 29 – Tecumseh
January
 4 – West Carrollton
 7 – at Xenia
 9 – at Bellefontaine
 18 – Fairborn
 21 – Stebbins
 25 – at Trotwood
 28 – Tipp City
February
 1 – at Troy
 4 – Piqua
 7 – at Fort Loramie
 8 – at Vandalia
 11 – Greenville

FAIRLAWN

Boys
December
 2 – Botkins
 3 – at Bradford
 9 – at Riverside
 13 – at Fort Loramie
 16 – Houston
 23 – at Jackson Center
January
 6 – at Anna
 7 – at Indian Lake
 10 – Russia
 13 – at Botkins
 17 – Mechanicsburg
 20 – Covington
 21 – at Houston
 24 – Fort Loramie
 27 – at Houston
 28 – at Miami East
February
 3 – Jackson Center
 4 – Waynesfield
 10 – at Russia
 11 – Linciolnview
 17 – Anna
 18 – at Lehman

GIRLS

November
 26 – Covington
 29 – Botkins
December
 1 – at Indian Lake
 6 – Mississinawa
 10 – at Fort Loramie
 17 – Houston
 20 – at Lehman
 22 – at Jackson Center
 29 – Newton
January
 3 – at Ansonia
 5 – Russia
 7 – at Anna
 10 – at Mechanicsburg
 12 – at Botkins
 14 – Riverside
 21 – Fort Loramie
 23 – at Bethel
 26 – at Houston
February
 2 – Jackson Center
 4 – at Russia
 7 – Ridgemont
 9 – Anna

BOTKINS

BOYS
December
 2 – at Fairlawn
 3 – at Parkway
 9 – Fort Loramie
 10 – Ridgemont
 13 – at Houston
 16 – Jackson Center
 17 – at Allen East
 23 – at Russia
 27 – Minster
 30 – Anna
January
 7 – Newton
 10 – at Riverside
 13 – Fairlawn
 20 – at Fort Loramie
 21 – at New Knoxville
 24 – Houston
 27 – at Jackson Center
February
 3 – Russia
 4 – at New Bremen
 10 – at Anna
 11 – Waynesfield
 18 – at Lima Perry

GIRLS

November
 26 – Parkway
 29 – at Fairlawn
December
 1 – at Allen East
 3 – Fort Loramie
 6 – Mechanicsburg
 8 – Riverside
 10 – at Houston
 12 – at Ridgemont
 17 – Jackson Center
 22 – at Russia
January
 5 – Anna
 7 – at New Bremen
 12 – Fairlawn
 19 – at Fort Loramie
 21 – Houston
 23 – Indian Lake
 26 – at Jackson Center
 28 – at New Knoxville
February
 2 – at Anna
 6 – Lima Perry
 9 – Waynesfield

ANNA

BOYS
December
 2 – at Fort Loramie
 9 – Houston
 10 – at New Knoxville
 13 – at Jackson Center
 16 – Russia
 20 – New Bremen
 23 – at Minster
 28 – at Versailles
 30 – at Botkins
January
 6 – Fairlawn
 7 – Marion Local
 13 – Fort Loramie
 14 – at St. Henry
 20 – at Houston
 21 – Miami East
 24 – Jackson Center
 27 – at Russia
 31 – at Lehman
February
 4 – Greeneview
 10 – Botkins
 17 – at Fairlawn
 18 – Covington
GIRLS
November
 26 – New Bremen
 29 – at Fort Loramie
December
 3 – Houston
 6 – Miami East
 10 – at Jackson Center
 15 – at West Liberty-Salem
 17 – Russia
 22 – at Lehman
 28 – at Versailles
January
 3 – Bellefontaine
 5 – at Botkins
 7 – Fairlawn
 12 – Fort Loramie
 17 – Marion Local
 19 – at Houston
 21 – Jackson Center
 26 – at Russia
 28 – at Middletown
 Madison
February
 4 – Botkins
 7 – New Knoxville
 9 – at Fairlawn
 11 – at Minster

NEW BREMEN

BOYS
December
 2 – Kalida
 3 – Troy Christian
 10 – St. Marys
 16 – at Versailles
 17 – Fort Loramie
 20 – at Anna
 30 – at Indian lake
January
 6 – at Marion Local
 7 – Celina
 14 – at Covington
 20 – at Minster
 21 – Wapakoneta
 27 – New Knoxville
 28 – Jackson Center
February
 3 – at Coldwater
 4 – Botkins
 10 – at Parkway
 11 – at Fort Jennings
 17 – Delphos St. John's
 18 – Spencerville
 24 – St. Henry
GIRLS
November
 25 – at Anna
December
 3 – Celina
 6 – at Fort Loramie
 8 – at St. Henry
 15 – Versailles
 17 – at Delphos Jefferson
 22 – Upper Scioto Valley
 27 – at Lehman
 29 – at Jackson Center
January
 3 – at Houston
 5 – Marion Local
 7 – Botkins
 12 – at Fort Recovery
 14 – St. Henry
 17 – St. Marys
 19 – Minster
 26 – at New Knoxville

28 – at Tri-Village
February
 2 – Coldwater
 7 – Spencerville
 9 – Parkway
 16 – at Delphos SJ

NEW KNOXVILLE

BOYS
December
 3 – Fort Loramie
 9 – at Waynesfield
 10 – Anna
 16 – at Parkway
 17 – at Lima Shawnee
 23 – Spencerville
 30 – at St. Marys
January
 6 – Coldwater
 7 – Ada
 13 – at Delphos St. John's
 14 – at Jackson Center
 17 – Wapakoneta
 20 – St. Henry
 21 – at Botkins
 27 – at New Bremen
 28 – Fort Jennings
February
 3 – Versailles
 4 – at Lima Temple
 10 – at Minster
 17 – at Marion Local
 18 – at Crestview
 24 – Fort Recovery
GIRLS
November
 25, 26 – at Lima Bath
 tourney
December
 1 – at St. Marys
 6 – at Houston
 8 – at Fort Recovery
 10 – Lehman
 15 – Parkway
 19 – at Spencerville
 27 – at Fort Loramie
 29 – Russia
January
 3 – Jackson Center
 5 – at Coldwater
 10 – at Waynesfield
 10 – Delphos St. John's
 19 – at St. Henry
 24 – Wapakoneta
 26 – New Bremen
 28 – Botkins
February
 2 – at Versailles
 7 – at Anna
 9 – Minster
 16 – Marion Local

MINSTER

BOYS
December
 3 – Spencerville
 9 – Van Wert
 16 – at Coldwater
 17 – Wapakoneta
 21 – at Lehman
 23 – Anna
 27 – at Botkins
 30 – at Houston
January
 6 – Delphos St. John's
 7 – at Ottoville
 13 – at St. Henry
 14 – Fort Loramie
 20 – New Bremen
 21 – Russia
 27 – at Versailles
 28 – at Franklin-Monroe
February
 3 – Marion Local
 4 – Jackson Center
 10 – New Knoxville
 11 – at St. Marys
 17 – at Fort Recovery
 24 – Parkway
GIRLS
November
 25 – Kalida
 26 – at Jackson Center
December
 1 – Celina
 8 – at Parkway
 15 – Coldwater
 17 – Van Wert
 20 – at St. Marys
 28, 29 – at Lima Bath
 Holiday tourney
January
 5 – at Delphos St. John's

12 – St. Henry
 14 – at Fort Loramie
 19 – at New Bremen
 21 – at Ottoville
 26 – Versailles
 28 – Russia
February
 2 – at Marion Local
 4 – at Arlington
 9 – at New Knoxville
 11 – Anna
 14 – Wapakoneta
 16 – Fort Recovery

FORT LORAMIE

BOYS
December
 2 – Anna
 3 – at New Knoxville
 9 – at Botkins
 13 – Fairlawn
 17 – at New Bremen
 20 – St. Henry
 23 – at Houston
 30 – Jackson Center
January
 6 – at Russia
 10 – Versailles
 13 – at Anna
 14 – at Minster
 20 – Botkins
 24 – at Fairlawn
 27 – Triad
 28 – Fort Recovery
February
 3 – Houston
 4 – at Marion Local
 10 – at Jackson Center
 11 – at Franklin-Monroe
 17 – Russia
 18 – Tri-Village

GIRLS

November
 26 – at West Liberty
 29 – Anna
December
 3 – at Botkins
 6 – New Bremen
 10 – Fairlawn
 12 – at Tipp City
 17 – Versailles
 22 – at Houston
 27 – New Knoxville
January
 2 – St. Henry
 5 – Jackson Center
 7 – at Russia
 12 – at Anna
 14 – Minster
 19 – Botkins
 21 – at Fairlawn
 28 – at Miami East
February
 2 – Houston
 4 – at Jackson Center
 7 – Sidney
 9 – Russia
 14 – at Marion Local

HOUSTON

BOYS
December
 2 – Russia
 3 – Newton
 9 – at Anna
 13 – Botkins
 16 – at Fairlawn
 17 – at Ansonia
 20 – Troy Christian
 23 – Fort Loramie
 30 – Minster
January
 6 – at Jackson Center
 7 – at Lehman
 13 – at Russia
 17 – Covington
 20 – Anna
 21 – at Franklin-Monroe
 24 – at Botkins
 27 – Fairlawn
February
 3 – at Fort Loramie
 7 – at Riverside
 11 – Mississinawa
 14 – Bradford
 17 – Jackson Center
GIRLS
November
 25 – at Covington
 26 – Newton
 29 – Russia
December
 1 – at Riverside

3 – at Anna
 6 – New Knoxville
 10 – Botkins
 12 – at Tri-Village
 17 – at Fairlawn
 22 – Fort Loramie
 29 – Lehman
January
 3 – New Bremen
 7 – at Jackson Center
 9 – Franklin-Monroe
 12 – at Russia
 19 – Anna
 21 – at Botkins
 26 – Fairlawn
 31 – at Bradford
February
 2 – at Fort Loramie
 6 – at Mississinawa
 9 – Jackson Center

RUSSIA

Boys
December
 2 – at Houston
 3 – St. Henry
 6 – at Newton
 9 – Jackson Center
 10 – Arcanum
 16 – at Anna
 23 – Botkins
 29, 30 – at Piqua Holiday
 Tour.
January
 6 – Fort Loramie
 7 – Ansonia
 10 – at Fairlawn
 13 – Houston
 14 – at Triad
 20 – at Jackson Center
 21 – at Minster
 27 – Anna
 28 – at Versailles
February
 3 – at Botkins
 10 – Fairlawn
 17 – at Fort Loramie
 18 – Marion Local
GIRLS
November
 25 – at Sidney
 26 – at Bradford
 29 – at Houston
December
 3 – Jackson Center
 5 – Newton
 10 – Marion Local
 17 – at Anna
 22 – Botkins
 27 – St. Marys
 29 – at New Knoxville
January
 3 – Arcanum
 5 – at Fairlawn
 7 – Fort Loramie
 12 – Houston
 14 – at Versailles
 17 – at Covington
 19 – at Jackson Center
 26 – Anna
 28 – at Minster
February
 2 – at Botkins
 4 – Fairlawn
 9 – at Fort Loramie

JACKSON CENTER

BOYS
December
 2 – Lehman
 3 – at Columbus Grove
 9 – at Russia
 13 – Anna
 16 – at Botkins
 17 – Indian Lake
 23 – Fairlawn
 30 – at Fort Loramie
January
 6 – Houston
 7 – at Waynesfield
 14 – New Knoxville
 20 – Russia
 21 – Marion Local
 24 – at Anna
 27 – Botkins
 28 – at New Bremen
February
 3 – at Fairlawn
 4 – at Minster

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BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016

Elchert now the dean of County boys coaches

What an eventful year last year was for Jackson Center High School basketball. In April the community broke ground for a new building, replacing the 1928 high school building. Both girls and boys basketball teams won regional championships. Although each lost in the state semifinals, it was an exciting two week-ends.

Scott Doseck took over head coaching duties for girls basketball two years ago. Last season, four girls finished the season with 76 to 100 varsity games. (senior Payton Esser 100 games, senior Nicole Fogt 97 games, senior Pauline Meyer 97 games and junior Cassie Meyer 76 games.)

This group came together at tournament time and kept winning crucial games. The biggest game was the regional finals against county rival Fort Loramie.

On Mar. 11, 2006, at Vandalia Butler, the Fort Loramie girls beat Jackson Center in the regional finals. The Lady Redskins reeled off 21 straight victories over the Lady Tigers until Mar. 5, 2016 in that regional final at Vandalia. Once again, the two county rivals battled each other down to the wire with the winner going to Columbus.

With the resignations of Russia boys coach Paul Bremligan last season and Houston boys coach John Willoughby this year, Scott Elchert became the dean of the Shelby County coaches. During his 16 years, he has the most wins for any Jackson Center coach, having passed Jerry Harmon's win total earlier last season. Coach Elchert also had some veteran players back last year, namely senior Drew Sosby, senior Ethan Zorn and junior Brady Wildermuth.

This season, Wildermuth needs 342 points to become Jackson Center's all-time leading scorer. Larry Hughes set the record of 1,478 in 1962. During the ensuing years, 15 players have scored 1,000

points or more at Jackson Center, but none have seriously challenged Hughes' record.

Drew Sosby was a remarkable free throw shooter in high school. During a 10-game stretch in January, he made 38 of 39 free throws. He hit 20 straight, missed one, then made 18 straight. He is the second-best free throw shooter in Jackson Center history at 81.36 percent on 266 of 327, behind Only Andy Jenkins, who was 126 of 153 for 82.35 percent.

The county record for consecutive free throws is held by Fort Loramie's Tom Brandewie. In 1987, the 6-foot-7 sophomore hit 30 consecutive free throws, then four games later started a nine-game consecutive streak of 38, including eight tournament games. He missed one in the state championship game.

Two Tigers each reached 1,000 points last year (Sosby and Wildermuth). Have any other teammates reached 1,000 points in the same season?

Yes, twice before.

In 1994, Botkins' Jason Wendel reached the milestone on Jan. 25 at Jackson Center and six games later, Feb. 18, at Fairlawn, teammate Josh Steinke, hit 1,000 career points.

Houston's Danny Estes reached 1,000 points on Feb. 4, 2008 at home against Botkins and 15 days later teammate Dustin Schwable reached the 1,000 point plateau in the sectional tournament in Piqua against Bradford.

For the record, Sosby reached the 1,000-point plateau on Jan. 23 of last season at home against New Bremen and six games later, Wildermuth scored his 1,000th at Riverside.

This dynamic duo also scored 500-plus points each last year. Have two players from the same team scored 500 points the same year.

Yes, three times.

The first time was in 1963, when Jackson Center finished as state runner-up. Marvin



Bob Wise
Contributing columnist



During his 16 years, Scott Elchert has the most wins for any Jackson Center coach, having passed Jerry Harmon's win total earlier last season.

Foote hit 586 points and Don Ware scored 530.

In 1977, the Fort Loramie Redskins were state champions and Doug Brandewie scored 689 points and Tom Steinke scored 560 points. During the same year, 1977, Anna junior Terry Finkenbine scored 596 points and Dan Anderson hit for 580 points.

A close call came in 1979 when Botkins senior Andy Counts scored 562 points, but teammate Mike Yahl lacked just seven points of joining the 500-point club, with 493.

Although the Fort Loramie girls didn't get to Columbus to defend their state title last season, they did reach several milestones during 2015-16. Head coach Carla Siegel became the winningest coach in Fort Loramie's history with 348. Her coach and mentor, Jane Poepelman had 339 wins. Siegel has an amazing record

of 85 tournament wins with only 14 losses in 17 years.

In 45 years of Lady Redskins basketball, there have been only five head coaches, and two of them only coached one year. The school has played 1,035 games, winning 781 and losing 254.

Jessica Boerger played in 112 varsity games during her four-year career. The previous county record was 111 games by Anna's Erica Huber and Natalie Billing during their multiple trips to Columbus. Boerger played in 98 winning games and only 14 losing games. Others were Hallie Benazer 94-14, Darian Rose 92-17, Courtney Reed 92-12 and Mallory Albers 90-11.

Back in June, a 1957 Jackson Center graduate called asking me whether any Shelby County girl has participated in three different sports and reached the state finals in each sport the same year. I

pleaded no contest to Jerry Ware's inquiry because I only do basketball. He told me Pauline Meyer was a member of the Tigers' state champion volleyball team, a member of the Final Four basketball team and a state qualifier in the 200-meter relay track team. I simply don't know if any other schools' female athletes have accomplished this amazing feat.

Coach Brett Meyer begins his 14th season at Botkins. Bill Elsass coached 13 seasons with a record of 176-116. With four wins coach Meyer will rank second in total wins behind coach Elsass.

Fairlawn Coach Justin Tidwell has built a good team around 1,000-point scorer Nathan Lessing. Lessing set a Fairlawn record last year by scoring 665 points. With his career total of 1,531 points

See ELCHERT | 9

SCHEDULES, continued from page 6

10 — Fort Loramie
11 — at Lima Temple
17 — at Houston
18 — Riverside

GIRLS

December

1 — Lima Perry
3 — at Russia
6 — at Waynesfield
10 — Anna
17 — at Botkins
19 — at Indian Lake
22 — Fairlawn
29 — New Bremen

January

3 — at New Knoxville
5 — at Fort Loramie
7 — Houston
10 — Minster
14 — at Lehman
19 — Russia
21 — at Anna
26 — Botkins
28 — Covington
February
2 — at Fairlawn
4 — Fort Loramie
9 — at Houston
11 — Versailles
14 — at Riverside

LEHMAN

BOYS

December

2 — at Jackson Center
16 — at Hardin Northern
17 — Springfield Catholic
21 — Minster
23 — Marion Elgin
29, 30 — Piqua Hol. Tour.

January

6 — at Waynesfield
7 — Houston
13 — Riverside
14 — at Mississinawa
17 — at Triad
20 — at Lima Perry
21 — at Sidney
24 — at Newton
27 — Upper Scioto Valley
31 — Anna

February

3 — at Lima Temple
4 — at Bradford
10 — Ridgmont
11 — at Miami East
18 — Fairlawn
GIRLS
November
26 — at Sidney
28 — at Xenia Christian
December
1 — Hardin Northern
10 — at New Knoxville
13 — at Springfield Catholic
15 — Waynesfield
20 — Fairlawn
22 — Anna
27 — New Bremen
29 — at Houston
January

5 — at Riverside
7 — at Marion Elgin
12 — Lima Perry
14 — Jackson Center
19 — at Upper Scioto Valley
21 — Mississinawa
28 — St. Henry
30 — at Piqua

February

2 — at Ridgmont
4 — at Arcanum
7 — at Bradford
11 — Troy Christian

VERSAILLES

BOYS

December

3 — at Celina
6 — at Tipp City
9 — at Delphos St. John's
10 — Covington
16 — New Bremen
22 — Dunbar
28 — Anna
30 — at Miami East
January
6 — at Parkway
7 — Franklin Monroe
10 — at Fort Loramie
13 — Marion Local
16 — Tri-Village at Flyin' to the Hoop
20 — at Fort Recovery
21 — Lima Catholic
27 — Minster
28 — Russia
February

3 — at New Knoxville
10 — at Urbana
11 — at Urbana
17 — Coldwater
18 — at Greenville

GIRLS

November

25, 26 — at Greenville Tour.

December

1 — at Coldwater
3 — at Covington
8 — Delphos St. John's
10 — Miami East
13 — Lima Bath
15 — at New Bremen
17 — at Fort Loramie
19 — Arcanum
28 — Anna

January

5 — Parkway
12 — at Marion Local
14 — Russia
16 — at Tipp City
19 — Fort Recovery
21 — at Celina
26 — at Minster
February
2 — New Knoxville
6 — Tri-Village
9 — at St. Henry
11 — at Jackson Center

RIVERSIDE

BOYS

December

2, 3 — at Ben Logan Tip-Off
6 — Bradford

9 — Fairlawn
13 — at Indian Lake
16 — at Lima Temple
27 — at Graham
30 — Marion Elgin

January

6 — at Lima Perry
10 — Botkins
13 — at Lehman
17 — West Liberty-Salem
20 — Waynesfield
24 — at Greenon
27 — at Ridgmont
28 — Southeastern
31 — Triad

February

3 — Hardin Northern
7 — Houston
10 — Upper Scioto Valley
11 — at Ansonia
18 — at Jackson Center
GIRLS
November
28 — at Northeastern

December

1 — Houston
3 — Southeastern
5 — Indian Lake
8 — at Botkins
10 — at Dayton Christian
15 — Lima Perry
20 — at Marion Elgin
29 — Ben Logan

January

5 — Lehman
7 — at Troy Christian
12 — at Waynesfield
14 — at Fairlawn
19 — Ridgmont
21 — Mechanicsburg
23 — at Cedarville
26 — at Hardin Northern
30 — at Urbana

February

2 — at Upper Scioto Valley
6 — Triad
11 — Bradford
14 — Jackson Center



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BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016

Rockets have a lot of talent to replace

Staff report

ANNA — The Anna Rocket boys basketball team improved as the season went along and kicked it into gear at the end, winning six straight and eight out of nine before bowing out in the Division 3 Sectional finals.

Along the way, the Rockets won at Fort Loramie and at Jackson Center late in the year, and the tournament loss was by just five points to the No. 1 seed.

But head coach Nate Barhorst lost a lot of talent and an immense amount of size off that team, so this is definitely going to be a different kind of season.

Gone are 6-foot-6 Cody Flesher, 6-4 Kain Luthman and 6-4 Blake Stephens, all of whom were key players last season. Stephens led the Rockets in scoring, Luthman was second, and Carter Huelskamp third, and he's graduated as well. Luthman also led the team in rebounding, and Flesher was a real presence inside with 28 blocks in addition to scoring and rebounding well.

"We lost a lot of size and athleticism," said Barhorst. "That was a big thing for us last year and it's a big loss because it's hard to replace 6-6, 6-4, 6-4. It's going to be a major rebuild on what we did last season. Defense and rebounding is what we really rode there late in the season and that's what we're trying to focus on this year."

He only has two seniors in 6-1 Nathan Billing and 6-8 Nathan Osborne.

"Nathan Frilling brings a work ethic that just radiates," said the coach. "He will draw the toughest defensive assignment and also be bringing the ball up the floor at times. Nathan Osborne is a very smart player and we need him to step up as a rebounder and a defensive threat. He will do anything he needs to do to help the team, and it's even more important that he step it up because we lost (6-4) Drew Schmitz to a shoulder injury."

Among other juniors is 6-2 Wyatt Bensman,



Anna's Wyatt Bensman tries to keep the ball away from Jackson Center defenders last season. Bensman is back for the Rockets this season.

who was second on the team last season in three-pointers with 19. "He got a lot of playing time last year as a shooter," said Barhorst. "He loves to compete and is always up to the challenge. We will need him to be a vocal leader for us, but he can shoot and play defense."

Joal Cathcart is a 6-3 junior returnee. "He stepped up in some big games for us last year, like at Jackson Center and in the first tournament game," Barhorst said. "We need him to take it to the next level. He's a scorer, but we're looking for improvement on the defensive side."

Austin Fogt is 1 6-1 junior. "He is athletic and will challenge at wing and forward," said Barhorst. "He had a good summer. He can shoot and attack the rim, and

he's a good rebounder."

There are three more juniors in 5-10 Mason Platfoot, 6-1 Dylan Berner and 6-1 Grant Hoehne, a transfer from New Bremen who will have to sit out the first half of the season. "Mason can shoot from anywhere and play some point, and Dylan will probably split time between varsity and JV. Grant works very hard and we're looking forward to him joining us later in the season."

He has a pair of sophomores that will vie for playing time in 6-2 Griffin Doseck and 6-5 Seth Roe. "Griffin has improved in all areas and grown a few more inches," said the coach. "He has great understanding for a sophomore. Seth continues to improve as a big man and when his motor is going, he can do a lot of great things."

Barhorst said it will be tough to match last season.

"It will be tough to duplicate that this year," he said. "We have a tough schedule, but I believe this team has good chemistry and once they figure out their roles, I think they will be fine. If our defense comes along, we'll be okay."

Girls

It was another in a long line of successful seasons in girls basketball for the Anna Lady Rockets, the team finishing with a final 21-4 record, including 10-2 in the County and runner-up to league champion

the bucket is what she brings to the team."

Huelskamp is better this year. Martin knows it because he says she "tends to improve every year." She averaged 10.3 points per game last season and also led the Lady Rockets in rebounding at 8.1 per game. She was also second in assists.

"It's because she works at it," he said. "She's 5-11 or six foot and I can put her at any spot on the floor."

There are two other seniors on the team in Kelsey Meyer and Brooke Gaydosh.

"Kelsey was mainly JV all last season, but she's ready to move up," said Martin. "She's a solid ball-handler and doesn't turn the ball over. Brooke is much improved from last year and really shoots well."

Junior Emily Aufderhaar is a 5-10 post player that Martin said does a good job using her strength to pick up garbage points inside.

Also in the mix are juniors Mackenzie Scully, Emma Freytag and Abby Gaydosh. All three are guards and all three bring something to the table. "Emma is very quick and plays good defense, Mackenzie is another shooting guard and she shoots well, and Abby will probably take over the point for us. She got playing time during the tournament last year and had a real good summer."

There are also two sophomores looking for playing time in Taylor Kauffman and Breah Kuck. "Taylor is another point guard and every bit as good as Abby (Gaydosh). I'm lucky to have two nice point guards. Breah is a great shooter and can be lights out from the outside."

Martin said the Lady Rockets won't change their style.

"We are who we are and we will continue to try to get up and down the floor," he said. "But we might have to do some different things with this group. We're actually pretty big, so we might play a little more zone."

Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

Fort Loramie.

If the trend is to continue this season, however, the Lady Rockets will have to do it with inexperienced players, since only two are back that played varsity last season.

"I wouldn't say it's a rebuilding year," said head coach Doug Martin. "Our kids are pretty athletic. But it will take us a little time to gel together. We have a new girl coming in and a mix of players from last year. So the biggest thing is the inexperience and getting everybody to play together."

There are actually two players returning with varsity experience last year for Anna, but three in all with the addition of

6-foot-2 junior Jada Rowland, who was a varsity player at Sidney the last two years.

"We're still learning a little bit about her, but you can't beat 6-2," said Martin. "She will play underneath but she can pull out and hit the three-pointer. She's still trying to figure out our style."

Also back are Claire Spicer and Macey Huelskamp, a senior and a junior, respectively. Spicer had knee surgery late in the summer and Martin says she is not quite all the way back yet. She's a 6-1 post player.

"She logged quite a few minutes last year," said Martin. "It's going to be a slow process for her, but her rebounding and cleaning up under



Anna's Macey Huelskamp calls time out before Russia's Lauren Monnin can tie her up in action last season. A double-figure scorer last year, Huelskamp is back for the Lady Rockets this season.

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BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016

A rebuilding year for the Trojans

Staff report

BOTKINS — There is no other way to describe it — it's a rebuilding year for Botkins boys basketball.

Head coach Brett Meyer begins his 14th season with the Trojans and needs just four more wins to move into second place on the all-time win list at the school.

Last season ended with an overall record of 8-15, and there were seven seniors on that squad. What Meyer has left is just one player with varsity experience and only about six players he will be counting on to do the majority of the playing, at least early on.

"I would say it's a rebuilding year," said Meyer, uttering the word coaches don't like to use. "We had seven seniors last year and all seven got pretty good playing time. I think it's going to take some time, and our goal is to just get better and better every night out. Things might go slow early in the season because a lot of these guys are going to have to get used to the speed at the varsity level."

A lot will fall on the shoulders of 6-foot-1 senior Luke Bergman, who played in all 23 games last season. He scored six points a game and was third on the team in assists.

"He's a shooting guard," said Meyer. "He will be one of the guys we will look for and will probably be our main outside threat. We will need him to score more this season, but after that, it will be scoring by committee."

There is only one other senior right now in Alex Bergman, Luke's 6-2 cousin. He tore an ACL early last season and played sparingly, and Meyer said he's ready to make up for lost time. He will be a power forward, with the ability to step out and shoot from long range.

There is one other senior in Isaac Oen, but he has yet to practice



Luke Bergman (24) is a senior and the only returning player for the Botkins Trojans this season.

Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

because of injuries and it's not known when he will return. Meyer looks forward to it, though, saying he will definitely be in the mix.

There are just two juniors in 5-10 Ethan Butcher and 6-4 foreign exchange student Victor Arribas.

"Ethan has a great motor in him," said Meyer. "He's one of those types who will run through a wall for you."

"Victor is from Spain and with his size, he will definitely help us," Meyer said. "He has some talent but he's still learning. We're hoping that by Christmas, he will have a good grasp of things."

There are also two sophomores. Spencer Heuker is 6-2 and will likely play outside because of his ball-handling skills. And Bryce Metz is 5-11 and will be in the post, even though he also handles the ball

quite well.

There is also another sophomore, but he's a transfer from Anna and will have to sit out the first 11 games. But he's expected to contribute when he joins the team.

"Luke (Bergman) will get his points and we're hoping that our speed can get us some transition baskets," Meyer said. "We plan to get up and down the floor. And we're stressing defense quite a bit."

Meyer said his young team will be tested early — the Trojans will play ten games in the month of December.

Girls

The Lady Trojans nearly tripled the number of wins last year that head coach Mike Maurer's team had in his first season, finishing with an overall mark of 11-14. And with nine players back from that team, he's looking to improve

again this season.

"We have nine kids back from last year's team and four of them lettered," said Maurer. "We have a couple sophomores who played varsity last year as freshmen. I think it's time we took a step forward this season and move up in the County standings. That's our big goal for this year."

Only one win last season came in County play, so there is ample room for improvement there. And he knows it won't be easy, saying the league will be "highly competitive this season."

There are two seniors in Jenna Pitts and Casey Woodall, both of whom saw a lot of action last season. Pitts averaged 7.4 points per game and Woodall 4.9 along with six rebounds a game.

Two juniors also lettered last season in six-foot Sarah Bergman and

5-6 guard Paige Lane.

"They will be the nucleus of this team," he said of the four letter-winners. "Sarah is stepping up to be a good scorer for us, and outside shooting is definitely better with Paige and Jenna."

Bergman led the team in rebounds and was one of the best in the area at eight per game last season. She is also the leading returning scorer at 9.6 per game last winter.

Maurer will have plenty of size as in addition to Bergman, Woodall is just a shade under 6-2. And another senior, out for the first time since she was an 8th grader, is Paige Okuley, and she's 5-10. "She just decided it was time to play again, and I think she will help us," Maurer said of Okuley.

Aliya Jones and Taira Greve are a pair of 5-5 guards who Maurer says

are both good outside threats, Hannah Bailey is a junior guard back after not playing last season, and two more sophomores are 5-10 Janel Greve and guard Maddie Altherr.

A key spot will be at the point after the graduation of three-year starter Kayla Heuker. "Those are big shoes to fill and right now it's by committee until someone steps up and takes the spot," Maurer said.

"We're going to try to push the ball a little bit, but we have to be able to set up and run an offense, too," he added. "We hope to be a good defensive team. We're trying to figure out how to fit our bigs under the basket and adjust their roles. But we should be a good rebounding team with our size. We have good size. We just have to figure out how to use it."

Elchert

From page 7

he is likely to become Shelby County's all time leading scorer, passing Tom Brandewie's 1,834 point total.

• Houston's new coach Brad Francis faces a major rebuilding project as he replaces long time coach John Willoughby.

• Anna coach Nate Barhorn is becoming known as the giant killer. Two years ago Anna was the only county team to defeat Russia while last year Anna beat state-bound Jackson Center twice.

• Fort Loramie came on strong late in the season and handed Russia a hard fought defeat in the tournament. Coach Cory Britton begins his third year at the Redskin helm and with last year's young team showing they can win the tough games they will be a force to be reckoned with. After defeating Anna on Jan. 29 they won six of the next seven games, including the win over Russia in the sectional finals.

• Spencer Cordonnier, in his first year as Russia's head coach, proceeded to guide the Raiders to their third straight league cham-

pionship. Eleven of his players played in at least 14 games. With eight of those being seniors, can Russia find players to win a fourth straight County title?

• Jackson Center returns several key players from last years Final Four team. They are the 6-6 Wildermuth, juniors Bryce Sosby, Gavin Booser and Chayce Hickman, and sophomore Trent Platfoot, who appeared in 20 games last year as a freshman. Coach Elchert starts his 17th season and has guided his team to Columbus two of the last four years. He demands his players play defense and during the

last eight years his teams allowed 44 or less points each year.

• Anna girls coach Doug Martin begins his third year. He was 21-4 last year, the best record since Anna's 2013 State Championship year.

• A former Anna girls coach, Jeff Reese, begins his tenure as Jackson Center's girls coach. His record at Anna was 89-30 in 119 games from 2004-08. Coach Reese has six players returning from the Final Four team who played in 24 or more games last year.

The season begins and promises to feature many exciting highlights and maybe a few lowlights.



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BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016

1,000-point scorer back for Tigers

Staff report

JACKSON CENTER — The Jackson Center boys basketball team became part of history last year when they earned a spot in the Division 4 state tournament, one week after the girls did the same. That was a first in Shelby County.

But while he has a 1,000-point scorer back who has signed to play for Division 2 Findlay next year, long-time head coach Scott Elchert has some key holes to fill.

“Base a lot of what you do over the summer, we felt pretty good about knowing what we would have on on varsity squad this season,” Elchert said. “But we have holes to fill, and one of them is scoring. Drew Sosby (graduated) was such a big part of that last year, and Ethan Zorn gave us lots of contributions. On paper, we have three returning starters, but what both of those guys did at both ends of the floor, that’s a lot to replace. We’re going to need multiple guys to contribute.”

Sosby led the Tigers in scoring last season at 19.3 and teamed with 6-foot-6 Brady Wildermuth to give the Tigers a lethal one-two punch. Both went over 1,000 points in their careers last season, and Wildermuth returns, needing 342 points to become the school’s all-time leading scorer.

“Brady is just a tremendous piece to build around and a great foundation,” Elchert said of the Findlay commit. “He’s kinda become proto-typical of some of our best players around here. He scores, rebounds, blocks shots and plays defense, and he’s getting better at passing the ball. I think we have to make him multi-dimensional. If we run him down on the block on every possessions, he’ll have three guys hanging on him. He will draw a lot of attention.”

Wildermuth averaged



Jackson Center's Brady Wildermuth (left) returns this season. He surpassed the 1,000-point mark for his career last season and has a chance to become the school's all-time leading scorer this year. Photos by Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

18.2 points per game last season along with 6.0 rebounds and 3.4 blocked shots.

Also returning is junior 5-10 Bryce Sosby, a cousin of Drew.

“He had a really good summer,” said Elchert. “He will start at the point, and I think he will pick up some of the scoring we need. He’s gotten a lot stronger and I think teams will notice. And he has very good quickness.”

The third starter back is Gavin Booser, a 5-11 junior. “He was solid in a lot of areas last year and will run a wing for us,” Elchert said.

There are three more juniors in Jeremy Burch, Braden Heitkamp and James Gambrell. “All athletic kids and very competitive,” Elchert said.

Trent Platfoot is a sophomore who was sixth man last season. “A lot of his time was

because he was a good three-point shooter, but he’s improved on putting the ball on the floor and scoring.”

Fred Bunke is 6-3 and coming off a good summer in which he did a good job on the boards, and sophomore Corbin Murphy is 6-2 and can play inside or out.

Elchert said inexperience is his team’s biggest weakness.

“From a team standpoint, we’re going to be inexperienced,” he said.

“We have three guys back but two of them are in different roles. And the rest have limited experience.

“It’s going to be important that we settle in an adapt to the roles that everybody needs to have around Brady,” he continued. “We need to make sure that teams can put two or three guys on Brady. And we need to be strong defensively. That’s the thing we worked on most early on.”

He expects the league to be competitive from top to bottom. “Fair-lawn is loaded, Loramie finished strong and their main players were sophomores. And the rest will compete hard every night out.”

Girls

Scott Doseck guided the Jackson girls to a regional championship and a surprising berth in the state tournament last season before stepping aside after a 21-8 season. It was quite the accomplishment at a school where volleyball is huge.

Taking over for Doseck this season is Jeff Reese, a former



Olivia Clark shoots last season against Botkins. She returns from Jackson Center's state semifinal team from a year ago.

Jackson basketball player and also a former head coach of the girls team at Anna. While at Anna, he compiled a record of 89 wins and just 30 losses from 2004 to 2008.

“I never really left the game,” said Reese. “Even though I wasn’t on the sideline, I was at most of the games. Once you have that, it’s ingrained. And my kids are to the age where they can come with me and enjoy the game. So I thought the time was right.”

It was right for another reason, too — there are six players

returning from the state semifinal team of a year ago.

The main drawback for Reese so far has been a late start — the volleyball team won its second consecutive state championship, and that didn’t happen until Nov. 12. So he hasn’t had all the girls together for very long.

“It was tough,” he said. “Early on, I only had probably two varsity players in the gym.”

He lost his leading scorer to graduation, but has a lot returning, led by senior Cassie Meyer, who is the leading returning scorer at

7.7 last season. She also averaged 3.7 rebounds and 2.4 assists.

Joining her on the perimeter will be returnees Kamryn Elchert, Kennedie Reese, Vanessa Winner, Miranda Hickey and Camryn Hoehne.

“Kamryn can hit the open shots, and Kennedie is not a big scorer but a real spark and a good defense,” Reese said. “We’re also looking at some younger players that will need to step up for the good of the long term.”

Inside, he has 6-foot-1 Olivia Clark along with senior Christen Ware. Ware was the team’s second-leading rebounder last season.

In addition, 6-2 Alicia Kessler has decided to play basketball her senior season. A stand-out in volleyball, she will team with Clark to, as Reese said “be something to deal with.”

Elizabeth Hickey was a JV player last season, but will move up and is expected to provide some depth inside and on the perimeter.

“I saw a lot of good things over the summer,” said Reese. “We didn’t have out whole team much, but we were about to see some definite strengths and where certain girls can help us out.”

“We worked a lot on fundamentals early,” he added. “We have 23 signed up. Early on, my biggest concern will be conditioning because it’s a different kind from basketball. The girls got a lot thrown at them. I don’t expect them to be perfect, but I do expect them to play hard.”

Good Luck to all our Area Athletes!



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BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016

Lessing closing in on County record

Staff report

One County coach, when talking about the league outlook this season, made the comment "thank God Lessing is a senior."

It was his way of paying respect to the talented Fairlawn standout, 6-foot-1 guard Nathan Lessing, who stands a great chance of surpassing Tom Brandewie and becoming the all-time leading scorer in Shelby County League boys basketball history.

Lessing averaged 28.3 per game in setting a school record last season with 665 points as a junior, and that pushed his career total to 1,531 points. That's just 303 points shy of Brandewie's 1,834 points.

"What can I say?" said head Fairlawn coach Justin Tidwell. "There's nothing I can say that others haven't already. He works at his game all the time, and really wears me out as a coach. He played for an AAU team in Columbus on top of what we do here at the school, like shootouts, open gyms... and on top of that he's here by himself or with his parents, shooting and working on his ball-handling."

"His biggest strength is getting to the line," Tidwell continued about Lessing, who has committed to play for Northwestern Ohio in Lima next season. "And he's a phenomenal offensive rebounder, or just a rebounder in general. For a guard, he's amazing on the boards. So for someone like that, you just kinda get out of his

way. He's our 1-thru-5 guy, meaning he can play all the positions and guard all of them, too. It's certainly a luxury having somebody like that."

What may make Lessing even more dangerous this season is his supporting cast. Tidwell has an excellent nucleus back from a team that won 16 games last season.

Luke Hickman is a 6-4 junior who Tidwell says is going to be a key player. "He will be doing a lot of scoring. He can take it inside or stretch the floor with his shooting range."

Josh Reck is a 6-2 senior who Tidwell says is athletic enough that he should excel in the post game and be able to move outside and beat defenders off the dribble.

In the case of those two, however, they were not at 100 percent the entire preseason.

"The injury bug bit us early," Tidwell said. "Josh sufered a pretty badly twisted ankle in open gym, and Luke pulled a muscle in his back. We've put them on the shelf until they're ready to go."

There are six seniors in all, the other four being 6-1 Nick Brautigam, 5-11 Keshon Johnson, 6-0 Kody Curtner and 5-10 Austin Maddy. Curtner was the team's second-leading scorer last year at 8.1, just ahead of Hickman.

"Kody is a sharpshooter and does a great job of creating and defending," said Tidwell. "Nick does a great job with on-the-ball defense and will run the point, and Keshon is another good defender who uses his speed and strength to get us in tran-



Fairlawn's Nathan Lessing looks to get around a defender in action last season. Lessing averaged over 28 points per game last season and is back for his senior season for the Jets this year.

Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

sition. And he's worked hard on his shot. Austin is the hustle guy. He gives us a lot of energy when he goes in."

Junior Drew Brautigam is a 6-2 post player. "He's a good defender in the post and he's worked hard," Tidwell said. "He had a great offensive summer."

Others in the mix include guard DJ Graves, 6-1 post Derby Corner, 6-1 post Tyler Kelch and guard Stephen Blanford. All are expected to contribute. "DJ is very athletic and last, Derby and Tyler do a good job around the rim, and Stephen gets up and down the court well," said the coach.

Tidwell said his biggest hope is that Lessing does not have to do it all.

"We need other guys to step up," said the coach. "The way Luke and Kody can shoot and the way

Keshon gets to the rim, I think that will take some pressure off him. But ultimately, Nathan will find a way to score."

"I'm concerned about our depth with the injuries," he added. "And rebounding is always a concern. We really need to focus on rebounding and on transition defense."

Girls

New Fairlawn girls head coach Gavin Cathcart was dealt quite a blow on the first day of practice for this season when one player was absent.

Audrey Francis, who scored 401 points last season and attempted a mind-boggling 362 shots, has decided not to risk any further damage to her surgically-repaired knee, so she will not play for the Lady Jets her senior season. She aver-

aged 18.2 points and 5.5 rebounds per game last season, and recently committed to play volleyball at Wheeling Jesuit University in West Virginia.

Cathcart responded about the only way he could when asked about it.

"It is what is is." Despite that bad news, Cathcart is upbeat because there are 15 girls out this season, meaning that Fairlawn will have a junior varsity team. And one of the girls out is a senior who hasn't played since her freshman year.

"Having a JV team this year will be a big plus," Cathcart said. "And we actually got a senior to come out and play and that doesn't happen very often. Kaitlyn Morrison hasn't played since her freshman year, but she's an amazing leader vocally and she shows it on the floor, diving after loose

balls. She'll definitely be a starter."

Cathcart has only one player with varsity experience and she's still just a sophomore in Lauren Dudgeon, who's around six feet tall.

"She will be a key player," Cathcart said. "She's going to get a lot of rebounds and actually has a pretty good touch from the outside."

Sophomore Madison Pierce is a shooter who will be a two-guard, and the point will be run by a freshman, McCalla Huelkamp.

"She's a freshman but she's probably our best player," said Cathcart. "She's about 5-7 and she had a real good junior high career. She'll do anything we ask. She's going to be a scorer and she can play all five positions."

Allison Roush is a 5-8 forward who will be starting. Cathcart said her strengths are rebounding and defense.

Those five will be seeing most of the playing time, with a lot of the remaining girls splitting time between varsity and JV. And despite an obvious lack of depth, Cathcart is sticking to his game plan.

"We're doing things that will be for the future," Cathcart said. "We're going to play man-to-man and try to run. If we get beat, we get beat, but that's how we're doing it for the future."

And there's one other thing he really likes about this team.

"Every kid on our varsity team is on the honor roll," he said. "It's a good group and they're going to stick it out."

2015-16 basketball standings

BOYS		Waynesfield		4-3		5-17		Miami		6-4		9-14		Riverside		3-3		7-16	
Greater Western Ohio Conf.		Riverside		3-4		8-15		Fairborn		3-7		6-17		Waynesfield		3-3		5-18	
League		Ridgemont		2-5		11-13		Xenia		3-7		5-18		Northern		2-4		11-12	
W-L		Lehman		2-5		4-19		West Carrollton		0-10		1-22		Ridgemont		2-4		11-12	
North		Hardin Northern		1-6		8-15		SCL		League		All		Lima Perry		0-6		2-21	
Trotwood		Midwest Athletic Conf.		League		All		Fort Loramie		W-L		W-L		MAC		League		All	
Sidney		Versailles		W-L		W-L		Anna		11-1		23-5		Minster		W-L		W-L	
Piqua		St. Henry		8-1		18-7		Jackson Center		10-2		21-4		Fort Recovery		9-0		21-5	
Greenville		Fort Recovery		7-2		18-7		Russia		8-4		21-8		New Bremen		7-2		19-5	
Troy		Coldwater		6-3		16-7		Houston		6-6		12-11		New Knoxville		7-2		18-6	
Vandalia		Minster		6-3		13-10		Botkins		5-7		11-14		Versailles		7-2		15-9	
Central		Marion Local		5-4		13-10		Fairlawn		1-11		11-14		Delphos SJ		5-4		21-7	
Wayne		New Knoxville		5-4		11-12		NWCC		1-11		11-14		Marion Local		4-5		14-10	
Springfield		New Bremen		18-8		9-15		League		W-L		All		Coldwater		3-6		14-12	
Centerville		Delphos St. John		17-11		4-19		W-L		W-L		W-L		St. Henry		2-7		11-13	
Northmont		Parkway		6-4		2-7		USV		16-0		18-7		Parkway		1-8		5-18	
Fairmont		GIRLS		2-8		2-7		Lehman		5-1		12-11		GWOC		0-9		8-16	
Beavercreek		North		0-10		4-19		League		All		W-L		Sidney		10-0		24-1	
South		League		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Trotwood		7-3		11-12	
Springboro		W-L		All		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Vandalia		6-4		14-9	
Xenia		8-2		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Troy		5-5		9-14	
Fairborn		8-2		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Piqua		2-8		4-19	
Lebanon		4-6		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Greenville		0-10		2-21	
Miami		2-8		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Central		W-L		W-L	
West Carrollton		0-10		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Wayne		10-0		25-2	
Shelby County League		League		All		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Beavercreek		7-3		18-7	
Russia		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Centerville		7-3		16-8	
Jackson Center		10-2		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Northmont		4-6		10-12	
Anna		9-3		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Fairmont		2-8		8-16	
Fairlawn		9-3		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Springfield		0-10		4-19	
Fort Loramie		6-6		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		South		W-L		W-L	
Botkins		5-7		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Springboro		10-0		23-4	
Houston		2-10		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Lebanon		8-2		17-8	
Northwest Central Conf.		League		All		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Lima Perry		7-0		22-4	
Lima Perry		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Upper Scioto		5-2		16-8	
Upper Scioto		7-0		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		Lima Temple		4-3		10-13	
Lima Temple		4-3		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L		W-L							

Good luck to all area teams...
...have a great season!

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BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016

New coaches take over at Minster

Staff report

MINSTER — Two coaching legends stepped down at Minster after last season, and in the case of the boys basketball post, former assistant Mike McClurg has stepped up to replace Mike Lee, who was the head man for 23 years and compiled 314 victories.

The Wildcats finished with a 13-10 record last season, including 5-4 in the Midwest Athletic Conference, and one thing that McClurg will have that Lee didn't for the past few seasons is plenty of size.

The Wildcats didn't have anyone that averaged in double figures last season, but two were close to 10 per game and they have both graduated in Josh Nixon, who will be playing baseball at Dayton, and Peter Falk. Nixon was at 9.4 last season and Falk at an even nine per game. In addition, Jacob Stechschulte averaged 8.1 and he also has graduated.

Stechschulte led the Wildcats in assists and Nixon in steals.

In all, Minster graduated seven seniors.

So McClurg doesn't have any proven scorers returning, with the possible exception Aaron Ernst and Bryce



Minster's Courtney Prenger gets the rebound last season against New Bremen. The 6-foot-2 sophomore returns for the Lady Wildcats this season.

Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

Schmiesing, who were at 7.4 and 6.4, respectively, last season. They are the only two returning lettermen from last season.

But what he does have is a lot of size and a lot of athleticism. Schmiesing has had an outstanding football career at the school, and Jared Huelsman, who was the Offensive Player of the Year in the MAC football, is also being counted on by McClurg.

Junior Max Prenger and sophomore Cody Frericks are both 6-foot-6, and sophomore Jared Schulze towers at 6-8.

McClurg said there will be some things done

differently than under coach Lee, but only to fit the personnel.

"We'll do some things differently," he said. "We're not changing what Mike did. But we're going to adapt to our personnel. We're going to have size we haven't had in a while, so that will change things."

"We don't have any big scorers, someone we can call our go-to guy right now," he added. "I'm hoping our scoring is balanced and I feel like we have a group of five or six kids that can all score."

He says a lot of his players have gotten

stronger, and he likes it.

"Strength is a big thing and these kids have worked on making themselves stronger," McClurg said. "Being physical is going to be important because we play in a very physical league."

He is also putting a lot of emphasis on defense.

"Are we going to be able to guard is a big question," McClurg said. "The strength of last year's team was how well they guarded. But we just couldn't put the ball in the hole. This year I think we will, so we need to be able to play well at the defensive end."

Girls

Mike Wiss was the junior varsity coach at Minster for 19 years and compiled a record at that level of 334 wins and only 47 losses.

But that should come as no surprise — Wiss is also the school's head baseball coach, and has two state championships to his credit in a long and successful career.

He moves up to the varsity girls basketball position this season, and inherits a wealth of talent from Nann Stechschulte, who retired after last season.

Minster only lost two seniors off a team that was 21-5 overall and won the Midwest Athletic Conference championship with a perfect 9-0 record last season.

So returning are seven girls who contributed in a big way to that success, and a group of girls off Wiss's JV team from a season ago that finished with a 19-1 record.

"We return almost 40 points a game," Wiss said. "I hope our experiences from last year prove that we learned how to handle close scores in big games against very good opponents. But combined with our league schedule is a gruelling non-league schedule."

In addition to playing in the always-tough MAC, Minster will play

non-league foes like Lima Bath, St. Marys, Anna, Jackson Center, Wapakoneta and Ottoville.

He has his leading scorer returning from last season in 6-foot-2 forward Courtney Prenger, who is still just a sophomore. She averaged 11 points and seven rebounds a game for the Lady Wildcats last season.

Five-foot-10 senior guard Rosie Westerbeck is also back and was the second-leading scorer last season at 9.8 points per game.

And Lindsay Roetgerman is a 5-10 forward who averaged eight points a game. Both she and Westerbeck also averaged four rebounds.

The other returnees include 5-8 forward Ali Borgerding, 5-9 guard Hayley Baumer, and 5-10 post player Savannah Luthman, all seniors, and 5-7 junior guard Alli Fischer.

In addition, Wiss can turn to girls he knows well, seven of them off last season's one-loss junior varsity team.

They include 5-5 junior guard Grace Butler, 5-8 junior forward Kendra Thien, 6-0 junior forwards Taylor Kogge and Paige Thobe, 5-8 junior guard Regan Wuebker, and a pair of sophomores in 5-9 DeMaris Wolf and 5-8 Jessica Falk, both forwards.

Good Luck
all Shelby County teams.

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