

Lady Cardinals rebuilding for 2016-17 basketball season

By MIKE GILMORE

The Hoisington Lady Cardinals are back into a rebuilding mode this season, looking for pre-holiday success as well as league aspirations and tournament play with new players in new roles.

The Lady Cards finished last year with a 14-7 record eliminated in the first round of sub-state by Norton and posted a middle-road CKL finish of 7-4. Heading into their first game Dec. 2 against a strong Central Plains squad in the Hoisington Activity Center, the Lady Cards return two starters, as well as missing leadership and athleticism from leading scorer Rylie Koester over the past three years as well as graduates Karisa Schremmer and Marisa Jonas.

"Our girls will need to step up and play some roles they haven't had to play in the last several years, due

to the depth of guards," said veteran coach Mandy Mason. "Rylie led our team in scoring and rebounding the last three seasons. We will be inexperienced handling pressure, but our guards have shown growth and have played many valuable minutes at the JV level last year. We are still undersized inside, but look for some girls to step up their level of play and contribute valuable minutes. The CKL is a very tough league, with a lot of talented players," coach Mason said. "Our lack of strength was a concern for us at the end of last season."

In the rebuilding process, the Lady Cards will be looking to senior guard Emma Harmon, who provided a perimeter shooting role along with Koester's dribble-drive penetration. "Emma was our second leading scorer, averaging 9.5 points and 2.8 rebounds,"

coach Mason noted. "She will need to help handle the ball more than last year and also need to look to create her own shot. Junior 5-8 post Jocelynn Pedigo returns, bringing 4.7 points and 5.0 rebounds per game. Vikki Donetz, a senior 5-10 forward, is also expected

to contribute to the Lady Cards' offensive production,, as well as Katherine Warnken, a 5-6 junior guard and sophomore Maleigha Schmidt, a 5-6 sophomore.

"We will have a disadvantage in most games with our overall size," coach Mason said. "We will have

to play more physical that in the past to keep opponents off the offensive boards. We're going to be really young this year; the girls will need to progress quickly to get adjusted to varsity basketball. Our goal is to improve every day as individual skills.

After their home season opener, the Lady Cards return as defending champions in the 10th annual Gene Keady Classic Tournament in Larned beginning Dec. 5. "The Keady tournament is always a huge test for us at the beginning of the year," coach Mason said.

Cardinal grapplers making transition from gridiron to matwork

By MIKE GILMORE

Veteran Hoisington head wrestling coach Dan Schmidt doesn't mince words. When he says the Cardinal wrestling team is going to be solid in the 2016-17 season, it probably will be.

Now that he's gotten the balance of his upper weights from off the line of scrimmage in football, the Cards can begin.

"We believe that our team has some outstanding talent," Schmidt said. "Starting with our senior class, we believe that this class has a tone of excellent wrestlers. Some are not as well known as others, but at the end of the day, this class will be rock solid for our program. Our junior class is also loaded with talent, which will show by the end of the year when it matters most. We have two sophomores, but some of our freshman class will likely break into the varsity lineup and contribute in a very positive way."

Let's start with the preseason rankings.

The Cardinals open with assent of Class 3A's wrestling coaches in fourth place, behind – naturally – four-time defending champ Norton in the top spot, followed by Smith Center, who placed fourth at state last year, in second and eighth-place Silver Lake in third.

At the top of the individual list for the Cards is senior Jonathan Ball, back from injury, atop the 152-pound bracket. At 160 – also at No. 1 – is younger brother Christopher, who as a sophomore won it all at Hays with a perfect 41-0 record. Hoisington senior Landen Urban debuts in fifth behind bracket leader Mikel Cottemyer of Republic County. Urban, however, has designs on bettering his last state appearance, which ended in a 40-4 tally.

Not present in the preseason list, but sure to impress, is senior 220-pounder Justin Bradley, who missed last postseason due to injury.

There are others: seniors Ben Schneider at

195 and Brinttain Noah at 160; juniors Sean Urban at 182 and Tanner Cassity at 132 and a host of freshmen in the lower weights, ready to make their mark.

That is, if they can stay away from the training table. "We should be very solid if we can keep away from the injury bug," Schmidt mused. "Last year we lost two outstanding wrestlers before we made it to the regional

tournament.

"Otherwise, the outlook for Cardinal wrestling for this season is very good."

The Cardinals open the season in Pratt for varsity and Thomas More Prep for JV on Saturday. They follow up with a road trip to Ellis on Dec. 9, then host their home opener at the Cardinal Corner Classic at the Hoisington Activity Center on Dec. 16.

Hoisington wrestling 2016-17

Dec. 3	@Pratt Tourn.
Dec. 9	@Ellis
Dec. 16	HOME
Jan. 5	@Larned
Jan. 7	@Ellsworth Tourn.
Jan. 12	HOME
Jan. 20-21	@ Bob Kuhn Class.
Jan. 27	CARD CLASSIC
Feb. 11	CKL @Pratt
Feb. 17-18	Regional TBA
Feb. 24-25	State Tournament

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