

# Continuing dynasty? Central Plains looks for fourth-straight state championship

By MIKE COURSON

An era is over but the dynasty may well continue in Clafin. Reagan Phelan and Taylor Rolfs lost just four times as high school players, leading the Lady Oilers to three-straight state championships and two perfect seasons. Those girls are gone, but Central Plains will still be on a short list of state contenders come March.

“Success will depend on us continuing to play the Oiler Way: playing hard, and playing together by making the extra pass and sharing the ball, which we have done so well in the past,” said Central Plains Coach Pat Stiles, who has a 97-4 entering his fifth season as a head coach in Clafin. “We have a great group of seniors who are very coachable and love playing with each other.”

Three of those seniors are returning starters in Janae Ryan (5-7), Cassidy Crites (5-11), and Kylee Kasselmann. All three have more than two seasons of varsity experience.

Seniors Chelsey Bieberle

(5-5) and Keeley Hipp (5-5) also have varsity minutes in recent years, as does junior Julie Donecker (5-11) in the middle.

With Phelan and Rolfs gone, players will need to fill key offensive and defensive roles. “Our seniors will have to take on different roles for our team to continue its success,” Stiles said.

Phelan, who was named Miss Kansas Basketball last year before heading off to Washburn, will be an impossible player to replace offensively and defensively. If anyone can begin to fill those shoes, it may be freshman Emily Ryan (5-8), who will make an immediate impact at the guard position.

Central Plains cruised through the Central Prairie League portion of the schedule last year. This season, Kinsley will again be the toughest opponent. Last year, the Lady Coyotes tested the Lady Oilers 51-42 before advancing to state in Class 1A. Elsewhere around the league, Otis-Bison and LaCrosse each had volleyball teams play at state, and



2016-17 Lady Oilers, front row from left: Avery Hurley, Emily Ryan, and Rylee Cunningham. Middle row: Chelsey Bieberle and Cassidy Crites. Back row: Kirsten Gunder, Janae Ryan, Julie Donecker, Emma Williams, Keeley Hipp, and Kylee Kasselmann. (courtesy photo)

players like Otis-Bison’s Taylor Regan and LaCrosse’s Olivia Baus will again be impactful

on the basketball court. Victoria was supposed to be an up-and-coming team this winter but lost

several key players to the likes of Class 3A powerhouse TMP and Russell.

## Oiler boys look to reload after third-place finish

By MIKE COURSON

Losing a core group of starters can be tough. Central Plains Coach Brett Rolfs used a group of three and four-year starters to build one of the best basketball teams in the state over the past three seasons. With the loss of four of those seniors, the Oilers could still be a powerhouse in 2016-17, but the team will have a different look.

“We will no doubt be a different team this year with different strengths and weaknesses,” Rolfs said. “I believe our inside game will be as good as it’s ever been since I began here. Our guard play should be solid as well with several good shooters and ball handlers.”

“Defense is always my first priority, and we definitely have work to



2016-17 Oilers, front row from left: Brett Thompson, Bryce Miller, Lawson Oeser, Collin Schlochtermeyer, and Devin Ryan. Back row: Philip Donecker, Kyle Lewis, Lee Letourneau, Alex Barton, and Brett Liebl. (courtesy photo)

do there. When I think defense, I think discipline and that has a long way to go. Our youthfulness will no doubt show up from

time to time, but ultimately, it will all depend on how fast we mature and how well we can create chemistry with each

other.” Central Plains made see Oilers page 8

## Central Plains basketball 2016-17

Dec. 2	@Hoisington
Dec. 5-10	@Russell Tourn.
Dec. 13	ST. JOHN
Dec. 16	LARNED
Dec. 20	@Sacred Heart
Jan. 6	MACKSVILLE
Jan. 13	@Victoria
Jan. 17-21	@St. John Tourn. (boys)
Jan. 24-27	@BCC Tourn (girls)
Jan. 31	OTIS-BISON
Feb. 3	@St. John
Feb. 4	@Concordia
Feb. 7	PLAINVILLE
Feb. 10	LACROSSE (HC)
Feb. 14	@Ness City
Feb. 17	KINSLEY (Sr. Night)
Feb. 21	@Ellinwood
Feb. 27	Sub-state
March. 7-10	State



Get up to **\$650** when you switch!\*

The lowest rates, flexible plans, exceptional customer service and coverage for everywhere you are ... that is the **Something Different** you can expect from Nex-Tech Wireless.

Get **UNLIMITED** talk, text and data for **\$80 per month** with the Freedom Program!

With over 50 locations to serve you!



www.nex-techwireless.com ■ 877-621-2600

\*Certain Restrictions Apply. With qualified Freedom Program plan. New smartphone activations only. Contract Buyout amount dependent upon length of contract. Customers are subject to taxes and must meet credit requirements. Certain restrictions apply. Visit www.nex-techwireless.com for complete terms and conditions. Offered at \$49.99 after exceeding 20 GB of usage within a bill cycle. tethering is not available with this plan. Nex-Tech Wireless is eligible to receive support from the Federal Universal Service Fund in designated areas. As a result, Nex-Tech Wireless must meet reasonable requests for service in these areas. Questions or complaints concerning service issues may be directed to the Kansas Corporation Commission Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection by calling 1-800-662-0027.