

Cardinal cagers counting on collective contributions in 2016-2017

By MIKE GILMORE
 The Hoisington Cardinals head into the 2016-17 cage season missing a driving force, but are banking on a collective effort.

Graduated senior Steffan Dolechek led last year's Cardinals averaging 16.0 points per game. The all-Central Kansas League first-team guard also paced the Cards on the floor with 6.2 rebounds and three assists per contest.

Last year, the Cardinals got off to a slow start but then won seven of their last nine games, including their season-ending 81-56 loss to Beloit in the first round of their Class 3A sub-state.

The Cardinals finished with an 8-13 record in 2016, but the wins did include a 39-38 championship victory over the Minneapolis Lions in the Hoisington Activity Center. Dolechek led the team with 10 points,

but it was two clutch free throws from senior Corbin Crawford that sealed the deal on Hoisington's first Winter Jam Tournament title since 2013.

Graduation notwithstanding, the Cards are back in building mode. The current Cardinal lineup is being structured around four seniors that started in over 18 games last year, led by 6-2 senior guard/forward Cameron Davis. Davis returns 7.0 ppg., 7.0 rpg., 2 assists and 1.5 steals per game that the rest of the squad can build around.

"We will definitely miss Steffan Dolechek's presence on the court as a scorer and distributor, but we do have the potential to be stronger on both sides of the court this year if we focus on playing as one unit," noted eight-year head boys' coach Kyle Haxton.

Also in the mix is 6-1 senior guard Brenner Donovan (5.5 ppg., 2/0 rpg.); 6-0 senior Grant Dolechek (4.0 ppg., 4.0 rpg) and 5-11 senior guard Tyler Specht (3.5 ppg., 2.0 rpg). Senior Kyle Lang, a 6-2 guard, adds 2.5 ppg. And 1.5 rpg.

"This group will pose many different threats with Tyler, Cameron and Brenner's ability to get to the basket; Grant and Cameron's ability to do the dirty work around the basket and Brenner, Kyle and Tanner's ability to shoot from the perimeter.

"Our athleticism and desire to compete will play a huge factor into how solid we are on the defensive end."

Haxton noted that the senior-dominated lineup could present a strong leadership model for the rest of the players coming up.

"If our seniors, along

with some of our young players making strides, work together and use their athleticism, then it could be a very successful year for us. We have a junior in Isaac Prosser and two sophomores, Xavier Robinson and Braxton Donovan, that got some experience at the varsity level a year ago. We also have freshman point guard Alex Schremmer that had a great summer and will be expected to step in and play an important role on this team."

The Cardinals face their first test at home in the HAC in their season-opener tonight against a Class 2A state defending, but rebuilding, Central Plains squad. The next test comes

next week in Larned, as Hoisington squares off against an also-rebuilding Larned team in the first round of the Keady Classic; St. John, Spearville and a hungry

Macksville team are also in that mix.

The Central Kansas League will have its share of challenges as well, as both CKL opponents 4A-DII Pratt and Class 3A Hesston are strong picks among coaches in the preseason. "Our team played a

lot of basketball over the summer and has continued to work on passing, shooting and execution," Haxton noted. "This, along with our ability to defend, has improved and will continue to improve. We hope to see their hard work transfer to the court this season."

Hoisington basketball 2016-17

Dec. 2	CENTRAL PLAINS
Dec. 5-10	@Keady Classic
Dec. 15	@Pratt
Jan. 3	@Lyons
Jan. 6	@Kingman
Jan. 10	HILLSBORO
Jan. 15	@Nickerson
Jan. 16-21	WINTER JAM
Jan. 24	@Russell
Jan. 27	@Chapman
Jan. 31	@Smoky Valley
Feb. 3	NICKERSON
Feb. 7	@Larned
Feb. 10	HALSTEAD
Feb. 14	@Hesston
Feb. 17	HAVEN
Feb. 21	PRATT
2-28/3-3	Sub-state
March 6-11	State



2016-17 Cardinal basketball team, front row from left: Cameron Davis, Grant Dolechek, Kyle Lang, Tyler Specht, Brenner Donovan, and Cameron Knapp. Back row: Eric Barrett, Isaac Prosser, Alex Schremmer, Xavier Robinson, Nash Stambaugh, and Braxton Donovan. (courtesy photo)

Like the Hoisington Dispatch on Facebook!



Barnard Tire & Automotive LLC

Tires - Lube-Alignment - Brakes - A/C-Computer Diagnostics
 620-653-7709

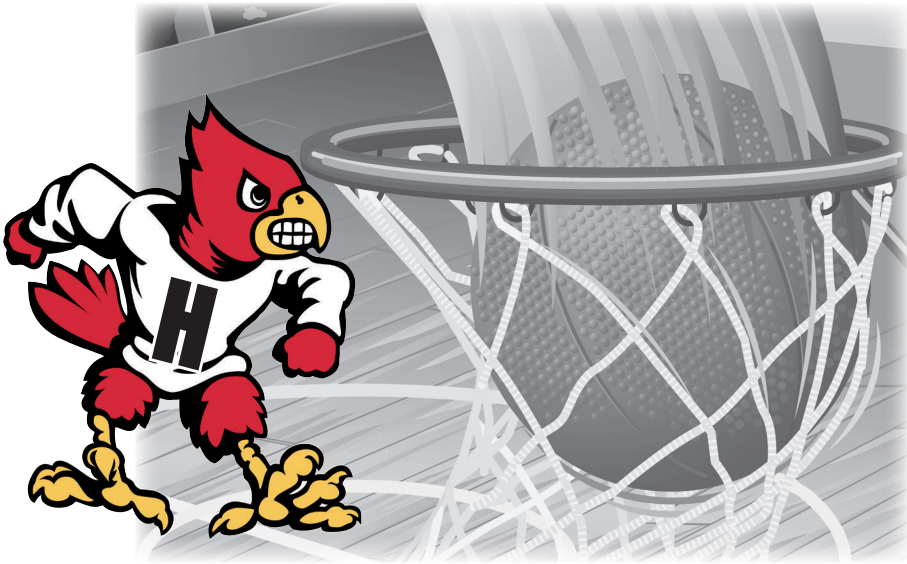
Bradley Barnard & Brance Barnard | 202 N. Main
 Owners | Hoisington, KS USA

ASE Certified

service@barnardtire.com



Good Luck Cardinals!



261 S MAIN • HOISINGTON, KS.
 620.653.4226 or 620.653.4227

1070 NE 130 Ave, Claflin,
 620.587.3326

Visit Your Hometown Market to Feed Your Athlete!



Town & Country SUPER MARKET

818 N. Elm
 Hoisington, KS
 620.653.2330

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
 Mon. - Sat. 8am to 9pm
 Sunday 9am to 7pm

View the weekly ads, specials & more on our website!
www.heartlandfoodstores.com



BRYANT Funeral Home
 1425 Patton Road, Great Bend
 (620) 793-3525

NICHOLSON-RICKE Funeral Home
 415 North Main, P.O. Box 146, Hoisington
 (620) 653-4165

CELEBRATING LIFE



GO
 CARDINALS!
 HAVE A
 GREAT
 SEASON!