

## Kats want to get over hump in 2016-17

By Mike Courson

The Kats nearly turned the corner last winter. After winning nine games two years ago, Chase finished last year at 10-11 and missed the state tournament by just one game. Coach Mitch Light, back for a 10th season, expects another solid season with three of his starters back on the squad.

"I expect us to be very competitive this year," Light said. "I believe we can win most of our games."

Six Kats graduated in May, including Brendon Clark and Kyle Kizzar. Clark ran the point and led the team with 15.5 points, 8.1 rebounds, 3.1 steals, and 2.3 assists per game.

Light will need someone to step in and fill that ball-handling role.

Kizzar was third on the team with 3.9 points a night and second on the team with 2.3 steals a game.

Light does return two key seniors and junior Brayden Moore. Senior Justin Oberle earned an all-league honorable mention last year after putting up 14.1 points, 2.4 rebounds, and 2.1 steals a night. He's joined by classmate Kaylor Millar, who averaged five points a game last season.

The Kats have been undersized in the past. Moore brings a little size to the floor. As a sophomore last season, Moore was third

on the team with seven points a night, and third on the team with 5.4 rebounds a game.

Last year, Chase entered sub-state as a No. 2 seed. Central Christian had only lost four games all year but nearly fell in its sub-state opener. Instead, the Cougars downed Chase 58-46 and advanced to state, losing in overtime to a Hartford team that missed the Div. II state title by just two points.

This winter, Light is anxious to see if his team can get over that hump. "I'm looking forward to seeing how this team matures," he said. "I really think we can challenge for a sub-state championship."



2016-17 Chase Kats, back row from left, Logan White Lance Hinderliter, Conner Hill, Brayden Moore, Kaylor Millar, and Dylan Miller. Front row: Jeff Hathcock, Hunter Cavender, Sergio Lambert, Justin Oberle, and Johnathon Kloxin. Not pictured: Dalton Rose and Jason Joyner. (photo by Ryan Carlson)

## Lady Kats hope to capitalize on numbers

By Mike Courson

Brent Clark has struggled with numbers in his tenure at Chase. Back for a sixth season, Clark will finally have some experience back. He's still down a handful of players, including two potential returns, but will have three starters back from last year's team that posted a 3-18 record.

The Lady Kats will have much of their scoring back from a year ago. Senior Taytem Patton (5-4) has been a motor on the team for several years. Last season, she averaged 11.5 points, 4.0 rebounds, 2.8 steals, and 2.8 assists per game.

Junior Mackenzie Oberle (4-11) was second on the team last year with 6.5 points a game. Despite her size, Oberle also averaged 3.2 rebounds a night, and just under two steals and assists a game. Senior Kyla Calhoun (5-3) is the other returning starter. Last year, she averaged 3.9 points and 2.7 rebounds a night.

Clark will finally have a little depth. Sophomore Jasmine Weatherman (5-4) will have an increased role this winter after

averaging five points and 4.7 rebounds a game. Senior Andrea Aguilera (5-7) and sophomore Maggie Schneider (5-3) each played in 20 varsity games last year. Schneider hit 11 3-pointers last season and averaged 2.7 points a game.

Sophomore Rachel Janda (5-6) played in 15 varsity games last year, and junior Audrey Clark (5-8) and freshman Taylor Lattimore (5-3) look to make an impact this season.

At 5-8, Clark is the team's biggest player. In that regard, the Lady Kats will again be one of the smaller teams to hit the court each night. "Our team will lack size, but we will play with a lot of heart," said Coach Clark. "We should be able to pressure the ball more this year with more depth."

That defense will be a key to Chase's success this season with so much quickness, especially at the guard positions. "Keys to our success this year will be our ability to pressure the ball," Clark said. "Our defense will decide how successful we are."



2016-17 Chase Lady Kats, front row from left: Jasmin Savage, Mackenzie Oberle, Jayden Harrington and Taylor Lattimer. Back row: Audry Clark, Adison Miller, Kyla Calhoun, and Jasmine Weatherman. Not pictured: Taytem Patton and Rachel Janda. (photo by Ryan Carlson)

## Ryans

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another big year. "We're a really good, balanced team this year," she said. "Everyone is able to do their part and I think that's what will make us successful."

Like Michael, it all boils down to work ethic for Janae. Last year at state tennis, Hipp and Ryan never dropped a set and won the state championship in a

comfortable 6-1, 6-4 match. This year, the girls did play in competitive sets but still cruised in the finals 6-2, 6-2. Those two state titles are a direct result of work ethic.

"We played during the summer with Coach Bittner," Janae said. "Once it's tennis season, we have practice, come home for a while, then we go out to the courts and hit some more.

We just want to be successful so we have to put the time in."

Janae has visited Sterling and Tabor Colleges, and will soon visit Kansas Wesleyan. She will likely play tennis or basketball at one of the schools but remains undecided. She does plan to study secondary education.

**Devin,**  
Sophomore at CPHS

Few athletes around Kansas made a bigger splash than Devin did last year. As a freshman, Devin saw varsity minutes on a football team that finished 9-2 with both losses coming to eventual state champions. He played a key role on the basketball team that ended St. John's giant run and climbed all the way to No. 1 in Class 2A. In the spring, he and Rujan finished second at the state tennis tournament.

How has he followed up that act? This fall, he quarterbacked the Oiler football team to a 10-0 start. All he did was throw for 32 touchdowns and just three interceptions, completing 103 of 152 passes for 1,650 yards.

"They didn't make me do too much," Devin said. "They just let me play within the system, basically."

Devin got the starting quarterback job over fellow sophomore Alex Hickel, who took some snaps late in the season. Devin doubled as a defensive back, but wherever he was on the field, he just wanted to help the team.

"Devin just wants to win ball games," Steiner said. "He's happy to help coach. That's what he would do. Whenever he got pulled out of the game, he was coaching Alex. He's just a great kid and wants to win. He has a lot of heart and plays super smart. Those kids spend a lot of time in film. They know everything that's going on in a game before it happens."

The Central Plains/St. John basketball rivalry has been one of the best in Kansas over the last three seasons. That did not stop Rolfs from using the freshman Ryan in late-game situations against the Tigers last year.

Devin started for much

of the season last year, but with a big senior class gone, his role will increase for the upcoming season.

"After having Devin as a freshman last season, I see many of those same features (his brother has)," Rolfs said. "He, too, will be asked to assume the point-guard position for us going forward. Having the opportunity to start on varsity in the shooting-guard position last year gave him a front-row seat to learn a bunch from Michael.

"I believe that will pay dividends going into this season. Devin reminds me a lot of Michael, but at the same time, he is his own person and player. I look forward to watching him mature into the role on the court this season. My expectations are high for him and our team, but I know they are for him as well."

As the new point guard, Ryan can use some of his gridiron skills to make the transition easier. "As a quarterback, you have to be a leader in the huddle," he said. "It will help going into basketball."

When he's not playing sports, Devin enjoys watching them. One of his favorite players is Oklahoma City Thunder's Russell Westbrook. "He just does it all on the court," Devin said. "He's just not a scorer. He gets everybody involved and he does all the little things."

**Emily,**  
Freshman at CPHS

Even with all the success of her three siblings, there has been an underlying buzz about Emily: she could be the best of the bunch. She made an impact right away with a fifth-place finish at the state tennis tournament.

"I'm just hoping I can

fall in their footsteps," Emily said. "If I don't, they've done great. I just want to do half as well as them."

This winter, she will try to help the Lady Oiler basketball team to a fourth-straight state championship.

"Emily is a good player, and like her sister, has a great work ethic, plays the right way, and will help our team be successful. This summer they worked well, playing together and having a good feel for where each other was on the court.

"But more importantly, they are both great kids off the court. The girls are polite and respectful of others and have a blue-collar work ethic on the court and in the classroom they have gotten from their parents. I'm very blessed to have the opportunity to coach both of them."

Phelan will be an impossible player to replace, but early indications are that Ryan can at least partially fill those big shoes. "I don't think it's replacing at all," she said. "I'm just going to try to do my best because she left her own legacy."

Emily ran the 4x100, 800, and competed in the long jump and high jump in middle school, and she plans to go out for the Oiler track team in the spring. When she's not competing, she enjoys spending time with family and friends.

The success of Michael, Janae, Devin, and Emily is setting up one final sibling for great things: Peyton is a fifth-grader who has to compete with those big brothers and sisters on a daily basis.

"He always gets picked on by us," Michael said. "He never gets to win so it makes him compete in a different way we never did having older siblings like that."

Big thanks to Sterling Medical Center for letting us use a wheelchair and lab coat for the photograph on the front of this edition!

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