

# Cherry, Lady Eagles looking to improve on three wins from last season

By MIKE COURSON

Andrew Cherry had a rough go in his first year as head coach of the Lady Eagle basketball team. Ellinwood had a historic season in 2014-15, but lost much of that team to graduation before Cherry took over the program. The result was a disappointing 3-18 finish. With his top-three scorers back for the 2016-17 campaign, Cherry is hopeful his squad turn the tables.

"I think last year we had a reputation of playing pretty hard all the way through the game," he said. "I really think I would like to build on that. With my second year, I would love to carry that over into my program. I really think that having a second year with this group, we will be able to make another step. I think we will be better de-

fensively then we were last year, and hopefully, good defense carries over into really easy offense. I hope the girls are really going to come back and be ready to compete in every practice and every game."

Senior Brittney Beck returns after leading the Lady eagles with 8.2 points a game last year. She also averaged 3.7 rebounds a night, and accounted for 26 of the team's 31 3-point shots made last season.

Senior Maddie Hayes played in all 21 games last year, averaging 3.5 points and 3.5 rebounds a game. Sophomore Maddie Ward also played in all 21 games last year, averaging 6.2 points and a team-high 5.5 rebounds a night. Senior Hunter Miller played in 17 varsity games, averaging 1.3 points a night.



Brittney Beck

Cherry will be without some key players from last year. Macy Menges provided a throat low, and Kylene Drell and Anna Clawson had multiple years of

varsity experience. The trio combined for eight points a game on a team that averaged just fewer than 32 points a night.

"We are going to have a few more girls that didn't go out last year that are interested in playing this year," Cherry said. "I really think that adding those girls will help us athletically, and I think it will allow our returners to feel like they have some help to make us better."

The Central Prairie League will again offer plenty of competition this season. Central Plains is looking for a fourth-straight Class 2A title, and Kinsley, La-Crosse, St. John, and Otis-Bison could make a push for the other top spots in the league.

"I think every game on the schedule will be important for us," Cherry said. "I think there

will be a lot of teams that don't think much about us because of our lack of success from last year, and we are going to be going into every game as an underdog. I think that will help us play like there is nothing to lose and play as hard as we can."

Cherry got his feet wet with the basketball program last year, and coached the Lady Eagle cross country team to a regional title this fall. With some more experience under his belt, he's just ready to get back into the action.

"I am looking forward to use just competing," he said. "I am ready to get back into the gym just to see what happens. I am excited for a chance to coach a little different than I did last year, and I really think you will be able to see the difference in our play."

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2016-17 Lady Eagle basketball team, front row from left: Kimberly Ruhbach, Sarah Hammeke, Lauren Petz, Maddie Hayes, Kaitlyn Panning, and Alicia Mitchell. Middle row: Cassie Robinson (Mgr.), Satis Kroulik, Emilie Wagner, Emma Ricker, Taryn Robl, Kennedy Harrington, Marie Maestas, Eline Hansen, and Hunter Smyth (Mgr.). Back row: Coach Andrew Cherry, Karoline Madsen, Maddie Ward, Jordan Hathcock, Allison Panning, Hunter Miller, Brittney Beck, and Asst. Coach Tyson Revell. (photo by Mike Courson)

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