



## Three starters back in Little River

**By MIKE COURSON**  
 Little River coach Chad Lafferty had a busy fall as first-year head coach. He led his Redskins to the playoffs and will working with many of those same athletes to improve upon last year's 13-10 record and fifth-place finish in the Wheat State League. Lafferty will have back three starters to lead the season. Seniors Levi Swenson (5-10) and Peyton Harvey (5-9)

lead that trio, and junior Jace Garrison (6-0) also returns. "Levi and Peyton will be our most experienced players on the court this season," Lafferty said. "They both do a great job of leading through example with their on-court play and effort. Jace will be our other returning top player who did a lot of maturing last year both offensively and defensively." "Dillinger Page, who was also a starter, is out due to an injury suffered during football and he may not return due to that injury." Garrison averaged nearly nine points a night and grabbed 3.2 rebounds per game last season. Swenson added 6.6 points and 4.5 rebounds a night, and Harvey scored just over three points a night. Lafferty expects the athleticism of his returners to result in good defense, and that defense will be necessary as he looks to find more athletes to step into varsity roles. "Defensively we will have the tools to put pressure on the ball and use our quickness to turn some teams over and hopefully get some

easy baskets," he said. "Offensively we will need to depend on our defense getting us some run-outs in transition as we will need to replace a double-digit scorer from last year in Clay Zeller. "We will need some young guys to do some growing up pretty quickly as our schedule early on is very tough and we will need some inexperienced players to step up." The Redskins will have two meetings with Central Christian before Christmas break. The Cougars enter the season ranked No. 1 in Class 1A, Div. II. Little River will also see Elyria Christian twice in December. The Eagles won 15 games a year ago and return all five starters. Elsewhere on the schedule, Solomon returns as league champs with one of the best players in the league in junior Braden Nelson, one of the top scorers and rebounders in the WSL. The Gorillas lose three other key starters. Rural Vista enters the season ranked at No. 4 in 1A, Div. I, but the Heat lost nine players from last year's 16-7 to graduation.

## Four starters back for Little River girls

**By MIKE COURSON**  
 Three years ago Trey Look took over a Little River program in need of a turnaround. Since then, his Lady Redskins have posted a 12-30 record. The good news is eight of those wins came last season. The even better news is four starters from that team are back in 2017-18. "This season should be an exciting one as we only lost one starter from last season," Look said. "Bringing back our entire roster will make practice and the season much smoother as they know what us coaches expect. "We have had trouble with being consistent during games and that will be a key for us. We have to lower our turnovers and take and keep control of the game. We do have a young team but we have great leaders in our upperclassmen. Melanie Renken is our lone senior on the team and we'll look for her to lead." Allie Peters is the lone graduate from last year. She finished third on the team with 4.9 ppg. At 5-11, the senior Renken is

one of the biggest girls on the squad and the most experienced with three years of varsity play under her belt. Last season she led the team with 12 points and eight rebounds a night. Sophomore Emma McBride (5-8) was second on the team in scoring at 7.1 ppg. She also brings three rebounds and two steals a night to the table. Junior Madison Loder (5-8) averaged four points a game, and sophomore Emma Wright (5-6) averaged two points a night as starters. Look has another group of juniors and sophomores in the wings, including juniors Jacie Porter (5-6) and Michelle Loder (5-8), and sophomores Isabell Eberle (5-11), Morgan Konen (5-10), and Jaylie Bergkamp (5-7). Last year, Little River won those eight games despite scoring just 36 points a night and turning the ball over 20 times a game. This year, Look would like to see that year of experience make a difference on the court. "I believe our strength this year

will be our team chemistry and work ethic," he said. "The girls have worked hard over the summer and have learned what it takes to compete and have success. Bringing back almost our entire team this year and having girls that had to step up last year as freshman and sophomores will help transition us into the season much easier. "My main concern is that we are still a young team, and with that come ups and downs. We will have to stay focused throughout each game and not let little mistakes affect us. It will be very important to keep our turnovers down and limit our mental mistakes." The Lady Redskins will see some tough teams throughout the season. Perennial-power Goessel enters the year ranked at No. 6 in a tough Class 2A. The Bluebirds lost just two seniors and return two of the top players in the league in Eden and Brittney Hiebert. Rural Vista sits at just No. 6 in the Class 1A, Div. I polls despite winning 18 games a year ago and returning four starters.



2017-18 Little River Lady Redskin basketball team, from left: Bella DeBaere, Michelle Loder, Emma McBride, MacKenzie Barta, Isabelle Eberle, Riley Bruce, Morgan Konen, Melanie Renken, Emma Wright, Madison Loder, Danielle Gadberry, Anna Birdsong, Jaylie Bergkamp, and Jacie Porter. (photo courtesy of Coach Look/LRHS)

## Redskin basketball 2017-18

Dec. 1	@Eli-Saline
Dec. 4-9	@Goessel Tourn.
Dec. 12	CENT. CHRISTIAN
Dec. 15	PEABODY-BURNS
Dec. 19	@Elyria Christian
Jan. 5	CANTON-GALVA
Jan. 9	CENTRE
Jan. 12	@Herington
Jan. 23-26	@Hilltop Classic (G)
Jan. 30	GOESSEL
Feb. 2	WAKEFIELD
Feb. 6	@Solomon
Feb. 9	@Rural Vista
Feb. 13	@Goessel
Feb. 16	INMAN
Feb. 20	@Canton-Galva
March 1-3	Sub-state TBA
March 7-10	State

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