



2017-18 Lyons Lions basketball team, back row, from left: Mgr. Gia Bryant, Josh Miller, Emmanuel Gonzalez, Ray Alamos, Payten Staples, Israel Rios, and Jerry Orta. Fifth row: Billy Harley, Elijah Payne, Ismael Reyes, Trey McClure, Dalton Procopio, and Aaron Gomez. Fourth row: Carlos Valerio, Johnathan Smith, Alejandro Pena, and Gage Reid. Third row: Hugo Fuentes and Connor Minix. Second row: Wlisses Landeros and Jonathan Gomez. Front: Terek Smith. Not Pictured: Brayden Fundenberger, Seth Clayton and Pedro Pina.

(photo courtesy of Amanda Dawson/LHS)

Lions look to bounce back from 1-20 season

By MIKE COURSON

Last winter the Lyons boys had to wait until the end of January for a Homecoming win against Ellinwood. That proved to be the team's first and last win of a disappointing 1-20 season. Coach Brian Friess, back for an 18th season on the sideline, has a mix of five starters back to enter the 2017-18 campaign with more optimism.

"We look to be more competitive this season," he said. "Last year was a rough year... our biggest problem was, and will continue to be, scoring. We are hopeful some kids put in the time in the off-season shooting that is necessary to be competitive in the CKL."

That scoring problem amounted to about 34 points a night last year for the Lions. Friess loses his top scorer in four-year player Tyler Edwards, who earned an All-CKL honorable mention last year after putting in 10.2 points a game. Also missing this year will be three-year guys Nathan Robl and Riley Kirkhart, who combined for another three points a game.

Leading this year's group will be senior Terek Smith. The quarter-back was second on the team last year in scoring at 8.3 ppg, and his 4.2 rebounds a night were also second best on the team. At 6-2, 200, Smith brings athleticism and experience to the squad. He was also an all-league honorable mention a year ago.

Senior Jonathan Gomez (6-1, 190) was third on the team last year in scoring at 3.5 ppg, and fourth on the squad with two rebounds a night. Junior Brayden Fundenberger picked up some starting experience last year and enters this season as the big man on the roster at 6-3. Sophomores Alejandro Pena (5-7) and Connor Minix (6-0) also saw starts in their first varsity seasons last winter. That duo combined for about five points a game.

Friess will also have back senior Wlisses Landeros (5-10), who missed last season due to a football injury. Junior Gage Reid (5-10), who averaged nearly a point a night last year, also returns

"We look for Smith, Gomez, Fundenberger, Reid, Minix, and Pena to be much stronger than last season," Friess said. "We look forward to Landeros returning after missing his junior year due to a football injury. We think sophomore Aaron Gomez may be a 'sleeper' this year. He has looked really good early season!"

"We may have to bring a couple more freshmen up to the JV/varsity level as we have only six upperclassmen and five who have any experience."

Besides a handful of returners with starting experience, Friess has another reason to be optimistic. In summer league, the team posted an 8-2 record at McPherson College to win its division.

"We hope to build on that," Friess said. "Most of the aforementioned kids were a big part of that summer league team."

The Central Kansas League again looks to be tough each night out. Smoky Valley follows up a successful football season with a No. 7 pre-season ranking in Class 4A, Div. II. Hesston is ranked No. 3 in 3A, and Hillsboro enters the season ranked No. 10 in Class 2A. Pratt played at state last winter, and the Sterling Invite usually features tough competition.



2017-18 Lyons Lady Lions basketball team, front row sitting/squatting from left: Diana Espinoza, Alexis Villanueva, Tayla Link, Julianne Snyder, Kassidy Clarke, Bailey Hollinger, and Emily Michaelis. Back row standing: Kristina Head, Daci Stover, Valeria Montanez, Abril Rodriguez, Ashley Carrera, Rebecca Heath, Carolina Landeros, Ashley Fierro, Kelly Dimitt, Karime Vargas, Brianna Russell, Kaley Carrera, Cinthya Ortiz, Camile Mead, Gabriella Guzman, Anna Stansbury, and Liberty Belote.

(photo courtesy of Amanda Dawson/LHS)

Four starters back for Lady Lions

By MIKE COURSON

Just a few years ago, Lyons had one of the top basketball teams in Central Kansas. Since then, Leanne Hollinger has been building her Lady Lions back to greatness. With four returning starters back this winter, the 2017-18 season could be a giant leap in that direction.

"Going in, I would expect us to be very competitive each and every night we take the floor," Hollinger said. "The girls spent a lot of time playing together this summer and grew a lot from that. Practice has been going well and we are all anxious to put that out there in a game situation and see the hard work pay off."

"Those games will help us to be able to see where we need to focus even more time to better our team for the road ahead. The girls are seeing the court better and working together well."

Gone to graduation is Ruth Pineda, a four-year player in Lyons who earned second-team All-CKL honors after leading the team with 12.5 points a night and grabbing 4.4 rebounds a night.

Back to lead a team that went 7-15 last winter is another four-year player in senior Bailey Hollinger, who earned an All-CKL honorable mention after scoring 10 points and grabbing five boards a night. Hollinger has been a major 3-point threat in her career.

Sophomore Kristina Head established herself



will see each of those teams at least once, with Haven listed twice on the schedule. Larned and Pratt are ranked in Class 4A, Div. II, and the Lady Lions will see a ranked Moundridge team early on in the season.

"Each and every night in the CKL is a tough night," Hollinger said. "The CKL is always loaded with talent. But, those games are the games that help us get ready for postseason play."

Lyons opens the season tonight against Ellsworth, and Hollinger is anxious to see what her team has tonight and beyond.

"I am looking forward to seeing the girls back at it again," she said. "They worked hard this summer and grew through the many games we played. There were some tough ones and some moments that the girls learned a lot from. I am truly ready to see what they learned from the offseason put into action."

Lyons basketball 2017-18

Dec. 1	@Ellsworth
Dec. 5-8	@Moundridge Tourn.
Dec. 12	LARNED
Dec. 15	HAVEN
Dec. 19	@Hoisington
Jan. 5	HESSTON
Jan. 12	NICKERSON
Jan. 15-19	Sterling Invite
Jan. 26	@Ellinwood
Jan. 30	@Halstead
Feb. 2	KINGMAN
Feb. 6	HILLSBORO
Feb. 9	@Haven
Feb. 13	SMOKY VALLEY
Feb. 16	@Pratt
Feb. 20	@Larned
March 1-3	Sub-state TBA
March 7-10	State

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