

Key losses put Lady Cardinals into rebuilding mode for 2017-18 campaign

By MIKE GILMORE
The Lady Cardinals battled through last season to an 8-12 overall, 4-6 Central Kansas League record on the strength of senior leading scorer Emma Harmon and leading senior rebounder Vikki Donetz. Three starters return, but as Mandy Mason enters her 15th year as head coach

of the Lady Cardinals, she will be looking to younger players willing to step out of their comfort zone and contribute key minutes in the upcoming season. "We will miss the leadership and athleticism from Emma Harmon and Vikki Donetz," Mason noted. "Emma had the ability to shoot the ball from the pe-

rimeter. Vicki gave us great minutes last year with her hustle and determination to rebound the ball. "Since we lost two key areas, one in scoring and the other in rebounding, we will need our girls to step up and play some roles they haven't had to play the last several years."

Harmon led the team in scoring averaging 15.6 points per game, with 53 out of 175 of her shots coming from behind the three-point circle. Donetz averaged 8.9 boards per outing, with 62 of her team-leading 178 caroms from the offensive glass.

"We will be inexperienced handling pressure, but our guards have shown growth and played many valuable minutes at the junior varsity level last year," Mason said. "We are still undersized inside, but will look for some girls to step up their level of play and contribute with valuable minutes. The CKL is a very tough league with a lot of talented players and our lack of strength was a concern for us at the end of last season."

During the season, Mason will be looking to 5-8 senior post Jocelyn Pedigo and 5-6 senior guard



2017-18 Hoisington Lady Cardinal basketball team

Katherine Warnken for point production. Pedigo, a four-year starter, returns 6.3 points and 5.8 rebounds per game, while Warnken contributed 6.3 points, 1.9 rebounds and 1.9 assists last season.

"Jocelyn is a smart defensive player and rebounds the ball very well," Mason said. "Katherine underwent surgery this summer for a torn ACL, but will be back after Christmas. She handles the ball and shoots it well from the perimeter."

Maleigha Schmidt, a 5-6 junior guard, returns 4.7 ppg., 3.2 rpg. and 2.6 assists per game, which Mason hopes will increase during the early season. "Maleigha is an aggressive player on both ends of the floor," Mason said. "She gave us great minutes last year as a sophomore."

Role players Brooke Reif, a 5-6 senior guard and 5-10 sophomore forward Kelsi Dalton played off the bench in multiple games last season. Reif averaged 1.5 points and

1.3 boards, while Dalton contributed an average of one point and one rebound through 10 games played on the varsity court. "They are both going to play a vital role on our team this year," Mason noted.

"We also have a crew of freshmen coming into the program that could be fighting for some playing time this year," Mason said.

"We will have a disadvantage most games with our overall size," Mason said. "We will have to play more physical than in the past to keep opponents off of the offensive boards.

"We are going to be really young this year," Mason said. "The girls will need to progress quickly to get used to varsity basketball. The girls have been very motivated and have put in some extra time to improve their individual skills. Our goal is to improve every day as individuals and as a team.

"Our schedule is very tough this year; we start the year playing a very talented Central Plains team and the Gene Keady preseason tournament (next week in Larned) is always a huge test for us at the beginning of the year."



Senior Jocelynn Pedigo, seen here in a battle against a Haven player last year, returns for a final season as a Lady Cardinal. (photo by Mike Courson)

Cardinal basketball 2017-18

Dec. 1	@Central Plains
Dec. 4-9	@Keady Classic
Dec. 14	PRATT
Dec. 19	LYONS
Jan. 5	KINGMAN
Jan. 9	@Hillsboro
Jan. 15-20	CARD. WINTER JAM
Jan. 23	@Phillipsburg
Jan. 25	CHAPMAN
Jan. 30	SMOKY VALLEY
Feb. 2	NICKERSON
Feb. 6	LARNED
Feb. 9	@Halstead
Feb. 13	HESSTON
Feb. 16	@Haven
Feb. 20	@Pratt
March 1-3	Sub-state TBA
March 7-10	State

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