

Winter Sports Spotlight

November 15, 2018

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT GIRLS' AND BOYS' BASKETBALL IN GREENE COUNTY

GCHS looking to turn heads this season

Cats wants to take next step toward being a championship program in Ricks' second year

By RUSSELL TURNER
Herald Staff

As a former standout at the school and the son of the coach whose name is literally stamped on the court, Greene County head men's basketball coach Phillip Ricks faced some high expectations in his first season leading the program last year. Ricks and his team answered those expectations by producing the school's first winning season in several years.

Ricks' inaugural team posted a 15-13 overall record, claimed the Perry Central Invitational Tournament title in the regular season and advanced to the MHSAA playoffs. Ricks did that with a group of players that were unfamiliar with his system, while he learned on the go what their individual strengths and weaknesses were and how they best fit into that system. This year is setting up to be different and Ricks feels confident the results in his second year will be even better.

"I feel really good about this team and what we can accomplish this season," Ricks said last week as his team prepared

to compete in the Richton Rotary Tournament.

"I really believe we will be a solid team with really good teamwork. We have a lot of experience on the roster and have a lot of flexibility and can operate in a lot of different offenses sets. With that said, I think we will be very competitive and we believe we can compete for a region championship and a playoff spot."

To do that, Ricks will have to find a way to replace a lot of production lost to graduation in May. And, as the season gets into full swing this week, the Cats have just one returning starter and six total returning varsity players with which to do that.

"We lost some good players, but every team is different and I like what I see," Ricks said. "We've had a year together and I understand our players and think they understand what is expected."

"We had a good offseason and good summer practices and

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Photo by Russell Turner / Herald Editor

Shown (Above) is the 2018-19 GCHS basketball team, including junior varsity players (kneeling).



Senior Wildcat Darrell Johnson is shown (Inset) taking the ball past George County defenders in the final game of last week's Perry Central Invitational. Johnson posted a double-double in the loss to the Rebels, finishing with 10 points and a dozen rebounds.

Photo by Makayla Puckett / Herald Contributor

Lady Wilcats hope to continue winning ways

Kimble's team eyeing return to playoffs as coach seeks 600th win



Photos by Russell Turner / Herald Editor

Shown (Above) is the Greene County High School Lady Wilcats for the 2018/19 basketball campaign.

Shown (Right) are sophomore Kat Garrett and freshman CharLee Meadows looking to trap a Richton player during the Perry Central Invitational Tournament last week. Coach Dale Kimble's team looks to make smothering defense signature feature this season.



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The GCHS Lady Wilcats had a great season a year ago, finishing 20-10 on the year and making it to the MHSAA Playoffs for the third year in a row.

Coach Dale Kimble's squad finished the 2017-2018 campaign in second place in Region 7-4A thanks in large part to a big, experienced senior class. Those six seniors accounted for 60 percent of the Lady Cats' scoring and over 50 percent of the team's rebounding. That is a lot of production to replace, but Kimble believes the players he has on this year's roster, including three seniors, has the experience and ability to do that, and maybe more.

"We aren't where we need to be yet, but as the season progresses, I believe this group has a chance to be pretty solid," the veteran coach said. "We have a big roster with really good depth. When we sub players in we really don't lose much in terms of production."

"We have the ability and put a lot of focus on being a really good defensively. We play man-

to-man defense most of the time and I like the way our players get after people. Offensively, we have experimented with some new sets and are trying to be more of a transition team, running the floor and being aggressive going to the basket."

Kimble doesn't have the same luxury this year in terms of seniors as his squad has just three on the roster, including one that did not play as a junior. But, he does have a big junior class and a lot of players with varsity experience returning and the mix seems to be working well.

"I really like our team chemistry," Kimble said. "These girls really seem to enjoy being around each other and do a good job of holding each other accountable, but doing it in the right way, without being negative."

"I give the seniors a lot of credit in that regard. They have led by example with their work ethic and just really good attitudes."

Seniors to keep an eye on this year are Ty'Egypt 'Sha Sha' Winborn, Nykee Bolton and

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