

Nuggets Hoping To Make Some Noise In HOL Conference



Marc Ness
Sports Writer

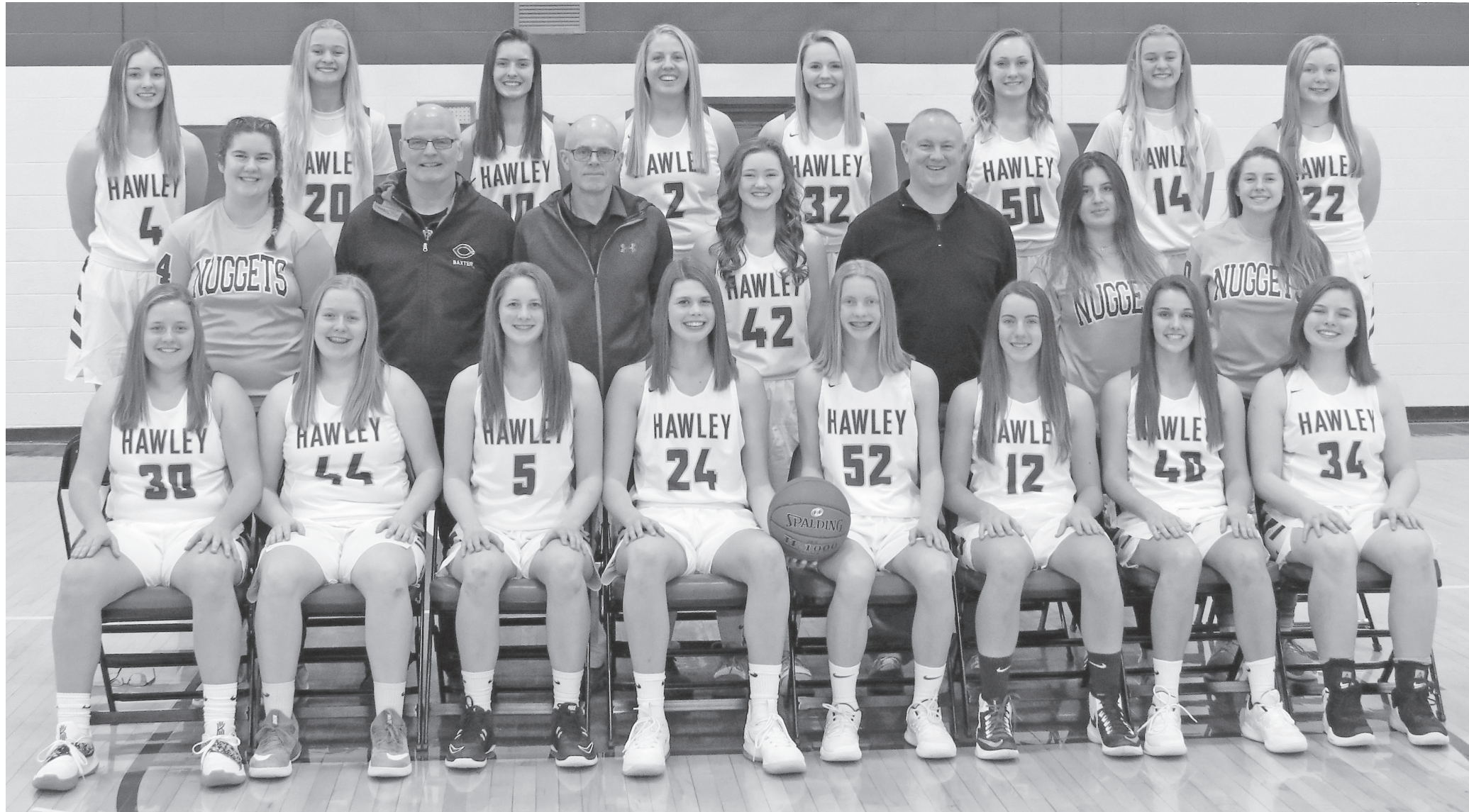
With six returning letter winners, the Hawley Lady Nuggets are looking to make some noise this year in the Heart O' Lakes Conference. Even though the team is young, their scoring efficiency will make them a team to watch as the season rolls on.

Many of the girls are fresh off of excellent softball and volleyball seasons and are poised to keep it rolling in Hawley Hoops. The girls were 15-11 last season and finished fourth in the HOL with a 7-5 record.

The returning letter winners are Rianna Lilleby, McKenzie Koenig, Paige Thompson, Aby Rux and twins Kylie and Kaylie Crabtree. There are oodles of talent in that group and being one year older and more mature, expect to see it on the basketball court.

Rianna is the only senior on the roster, but played well last year and looks to improve on that in 2018-19. She averaged 7.5 points per game and shot well from three-point range at 34 percent en route to nailing 46 treys for the Lady Nuggets. She also shot well from the charity stripe at nearly 80 percent.

"She is a very good spot up shooter for us," Coach Bill Gottenborg said as he enters his 34th year of coaching. "Rianna is working hard to improve her shot off the dribble and on her footwork on defense. Paige is a talented junior that plays hard on both ends of the court. She is fun to watch on how she will wait patiently for the opportunity to block a shot or gobble up just about every rebound for the Lady Nuggets. Last season she scored nearly 10 points a game, pulled down nearly 8 boards per game and added 3.3 assists. She also spent a lot of time at the line and converted 68 percent of her free



The Hawley girls varsity basketball team members are, left to right, front row-Abigail Rux, Kaitlyn Rux, Rudee Hockett, Paige Thompson, Lily Peterson, Maria Vetter, Alex Eilertson, Morgan Ames; middle row-Manager Jada Ford, Coach Chris Baxter, Head Coach Bill Gottenborg, Grace Fleming, Coach Ben Lofgren, Manager Rebecca Faina, Manager Abbi Norris; back row: Haley Reading, Kaylie Crabtree, Addi Dauner, Rianna Lilleby, McKenzie Koenig, Ella Mangel, Kylie Crabtree, and Kendra Peterson.

throws (65-95). Paige is a hard working player on both ends of the court. At 6'2" she can do a lot and she always does.

Fellow junior and returning letter winner McKenzie Koenig is really fun to watch. She has a nose for the ball and seemingly endless amounts of energy. She can give opponents fits because she is always in their face or trying to steal the ball. While she only scored three points per game last season, she is absolutely fearless driving to the bucket and gets fouled a lot. Her confidence in her shots has improved, so look for her to score a lot more this season. She is another girl who is fun to watch play the game.

Sophomore shooter Aby Rux

continues to improve every year. She is a very strong, physical and aggressive on the court. She is working on her defensive positioning and her footwork. She averaged 4.2 points per game and shot 48 percent from the two-point shooting arena.

Freshmen twins Kylie and Kaylie made a good impression last year on the Lady Nuggets basketball team, and they expect to improve this year as well. Kylie averaged 2.6 points per game and shot 50 percent from the field. Her sister Kaylie also shot well and was 7 of 17 from the three-point arch. Both girls are skilled ball handlers and shooters and continue to improve their defensive play.

Also on the squad fighting for playing time are the following:

- Junior: Yun Min
- Sophomores: Morgan Ames, Adi Dauner, Rudee Hockett, Ella Mangel, Kendra Peterson, Haley Reading (out with an ACL injury this season), Kaitlyn Rux, Maria Vetter

Freshmen: Grace Fleming, Alex Eilertson, Lily Peterson, Paige Blakeway, Makenzie Halvorson, Elle Hastings, Jada Mickelberg, Tallyn Ranstrom, Kira Thompson, Madi Walker, Faith Rustad, Kaylee Dagenais (out with an ACL injury this season)

Returning managers are Jada Ford and Abby Norris.

According to Coach Gottenborg, the young Nuggets have a lot to build on this season.

"We are a good shooting team. We are also aggressive and can play very fast. We have good depth at the guard and post positions good team chemistry, an excellent work ethic and kids can play in multiple spots. That is very good for us."

Coach Bill added that the team does not have a lot of experience on the varsity level, but it will continue to get better as the season goes on.

"We are in a new Christmas tourney Dec. 27 and 28 in Fergus Falls with both our varsity and

B team. The Nuggets will be playing Coon Rapids in the first round and either Breckenridge or Fergus Falls the second day," Coach Bill stated.

The team is going to be young, but Gottenborg's teams always seem to get better with experience. There are some

amazing athletes on this team and they will be competitive and win their share of games.

The HOL Conference looks to be pretty wide open this year, with a number of good teams looking for their chance to wear the HOL crown.

Best of Luck this year Nuggets!

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