Falcons, Lady Falcons look to new season with new coaches

By Joani Hartin
Staff Writer

Turner's Lady Falcons will be on the floor for the first time in a long time without several familiar faces.

Last year the Lady Falcons team, comprised of a tight-knit group who'd played together for years, made a deep run, losing a close game in the semi-finals of the state tournament with longtime coach Bruce Keatts.

That tough Lady Falcon team was comprised of a herd of seniors who were tough competitors. Three of them hit the 1,000-point career scoring mark and one surpassed 1,500 points.

This year, the team will be replacing those warriors, along with their leader, as Keatts retired at the end of the season.



Photo provided

Turner Falcon Jake Taylor goes up for a short jumper as Graham Eakins looks on. The Falcons faced Silo in a scrimmage recently. The Falcons and Lady Falcons are set to host their home and season opener this Friday, November 6 against Coleman.

Turner Lady Falcons

However, taking his place is a man who needs no introduction at Turner, because E.J. Forsythe took that same group of kids to the softball field and won state titles with them.

"Coach Keatts didn't leave the well dry at Turner," said Forsythe. "We've got some talent, but it's young and inexperienced. We're going to be a lot like the softball team was. I don't think people expected a lot from us, but these girls took that as a challenge. They were district champs and showed up and played at regionals, too. I think they'll do the same in basketball."

Forsythe expects team leadership from the players who did play quite a bit last year – Jacee Gordon, Kaylee Hancock, and Peyton Harmon.

According to Forsythe, the girls have been hard at it in the gym preparing for the season.

"They've bought in, they're showing up and practicing hard, and they may be inexperienced, but there's only one way to get that, and that's to play," explained Forsythe.

"We could start four sophomores and a freshman. There's not too many schools who can say that and expect to be good, so I think the future is bright for us."

Forsythe's squad is only 11 members strong, so depth may be a concern. Because of that number, this year's squad will play a different style of ball.

"We will be a half-court team," Forsythe stated. "We'll need to slow it down, and maybe not play as aggressively as they did last year. But we will be just as tough and gritty as they've been in the past.

"These girls show up every day and they get after it. But if they come out as a team and have a little success, I think they could be really good. And our expectations are going to be the same as they always are – to win."

Turner Falcons

The Falcons will soon be hitting the basketball court for their season opener, and they'll be doing it with coach Chris Zike, in his first season with Turner.

Basketball practice began October 1, and except for a short hiatus when the gym floor was redone, the team has been in the gym getting ready for their new season. Zike took his team to Silo last week for their first scrimmage.

"We saw some good things and some bad things," Zike said, "just like you do with any first scrimmage. We're trying to figure out several things, but mostly how hard we're willing to play. We are making steps in the right direction, and going to Silo was a good learning curve for us."

Zike's expectations are high for the season, and he looks to see big playing time for several of his student athletes.

Junior Cleat Zike, who stands six feet, three inches after a four-inch growing spurt, averaged 20 points per game as a sophomore last year at Tushka, and the team will look to him to get them going offensively.

Aiden Hudson, also a junior, will also be playing guard.

"Aiden was the team's leading scorer last year," explained Zike, "and he's starting to understand how hard he's going to have to play for us to be successful. But he brings a lot of athleticism and leadership to the table. I think that Cleat and Aiden could be the best one-two combo in small school basketball this year."

But Zike's squad doesn't stop there. He'll also lean on four more guards: sophomore Jake Taylor, junior Isaac Higle, senior Nathan Whitmore, and senior Landon Pratt, all of whom will play a lot of valuable minutes.

"I think Jake will step up and play well for us. He will be leaned on to score, and I think if he buys into the role, he and a couple of other players could lead our team in assists," Zike stated.

"Nathan shoots the ball well, and I think Isaac Higle is defensively one of the best players we have. He could be in the top five of defensive players I've ever coached."

This year's Falcons will be a guard-oriented team, obviously.

"We will play fast defensively, will press a lot, and will play a high-paced game," Zike admitted. "If we can get it all together, I think we'll be a lot of fun to watch."

In addition to his gaggle of guards, Zike will depend on three players at the post position – seniors Graham Eakins and Jacoby Wolfe and sophomore Knox Phipps.

"All three have different talents, and we will rely on all three of them," Zike said.

To sum up, Zike has nine kids who can be depended on to play quality ball for quality minutes – something any coach worth his salt can appreciate, and Zike is no exception.

"I'm pretty excited about this team," he said. "We have a little depth, which is great. This year, our fans are going to see a lot of three-point shots, they're going to see us put pressure on people offensively and defensively. We're going to be very aggressive on both ends of the court, and I hope they get to see us win a lot of games."

The season opener for both teams is at home November 6 against Coleman.

Turner Falcons and Lady Falcons 2026-27 H.S. Basketball Schedule

November 6	Coleman	6:30
November 17	@ Calera	6:00
December 1	@ Caddo	6:00
Deceber 3	@ Waurika	6:30
December 8	Marietta	6:30
December 17-19	@ Coleman Christmas Classic	TBA
January 5	@ Chattanooga	6:00
January 7-9	@ Central High Tournament	TBA
January 14	Springer	6:00
January 16	Allen	1:00
January 19	@ Maysville	6:30
January 21-23	@ Healdton Bulldog Bash	TBA
January 26	Thackerville	6:00
February 1	Wilson	6:00
February 4	@ Tushka	6:00
February 8	Healdton	6:00
February 9	Ringling	6:00
February 11-13	District Tournament	TBA
February 18-20	Regional Tournament	TBA
February 25-27	Area Tournament	TBA

Turner Falcons Basketball 2026-27 Roster

00	Isaac Higle	Junior
1	Case Doggett	Freshman
2	Jake Taylor	Sophomore
3	Corbin Hassel	Freshman
4	Trace Burge	Freshman
5	Cooper Perryman	Freshman
10	Phoenix Perezsilerio	Senior
11	Cleat Zike	Junior
15	Mason Mosley	Freshman
20	Nate Whitmore	Senior
21	Landon Pratt	Senior
23	Aiden Hudson	Junior
24	Jacoby Wolfe	Senior
31	Graham Eakins	Senior
32	Elan Eads	Freshman
33	Brazden Taylor	Senior
34	Knox Phipps	Sophomore
44	Wade Whitson	Sophomore

Head Coach Chris Zike

Turner Lady Falcons Basketball 2026-27 Roster

2	Daisie Reed	Sophomore
3	Kali Dunnagan	Freshman
5	Kaylee Hancock	Sophomore
10	Rylan Eakins	Sophomore
11	Peyton Harmon	Sophomore
12	Skylar Pooler	Senior
15	Bella Gilcrease	Freshman
20	Maizi Willis	Sophomore
23	Ava Gilcrease	Junior
24	Hadley Kingston	Sophomore
32	Jacee Gordon	Sophomore

Head Coach E.J. Forsythe

Public Notice

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF LOVE COUNTY STATE OF OKLAHOMA

In the Matter of the Estate of LESLIE FLOYD SPEER, Deceased.) **Case No. PB-2026-40**

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All creditors having claims against Leslie Floyd Speer, Deceased, are required to present the same, with a description of all security interests and other collateral (if any) held by each creditor with respect to such claim, to the named Administrator of the Estate: Charles Speer, c/o Kristen L. Speer, LITTLE LAW FIRM, PLLC, P.O. Box 618, Madill, Oklahoma 73446, on or before the following presentment date**: December 28, 2026,** or the same will be forever barred.

DATED this 27th day of October, 2026.

/s/ Charles Speer
Charles Speer, Administrator

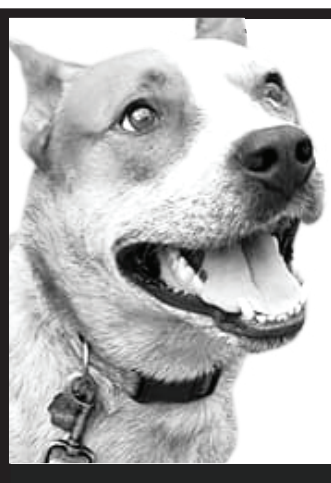
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