



Eli
Pietrowski
CORBIN

Lily
Henize
LYNN
CAMP

Reece
Davidson
NORTH
LAUREL

2025-26 BASKETBALL PREVIEW



Maddy
Hopkins
WHITLEY
COUNTY

Peyton Hamilton
WILLIAMSBURG

Maci
Messer
SOUTH
LAUREL

UNIVERSITY OF THE CUMBERLANDS



PATRIOTS SCHEDULE

Oct 28 (Tue)	7 PM	Hom	Union Commonwealth University
Nov 1 (Sat)	3 PM	Away	Shawnee State University (Ohio)
Nov 6 (Thurs)	11 AM	Home	West Virginia University Institute of KY
Nov 7 (Fri)	5 PM	Home	Indiana University Southeast
Nov 10 (Mon)	7:30 PM	Away	Johnson University - Tennessee
Nov 14 (Fri)	5 PM	Away	Brescia University (KY)
Nov 15 (Sat)	2 PM	Neutral	Truett McConnell University
Nov 16 (Sun)	1 PM	Away	Northern Kentucky University
Nov 18 (Tue)	6 PM	Away	Alice Lloyd College (KY)
Dec 1 (Mon)	6 PM	Away	Indiana University Southeast
Dec 5 (Fri)	6 PM	Home	Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College
Dec 6 (Sat)	12 PM	Home	Midway University (KY)
Dec 12 (Fri)	6 PM	Away	University of Rio Grande (Ohio)
Dec 16 (Tue)	6 PM	Away	University of Pikeville
Dec 30 (Tues)	3 PM	Home	Milligan University
Jan 3 (Sat)	3 PM	Home	Dalton State College
Jan 8 (Thu)	8:30 PM	Away	Bethel University (Tenn.)
Jan 10 (Sat)	4 PM	Away	Freed-Hardeman University (Tenn.)
Jan 15 (Thur)	7:30 PM	Home	Cumberland University (Tenn.)
Jan 22 (Thu)	7:30 PM	Home	Georgetown College (KY)
Jan 24 (Sat)	3 PM	Home	Campbellsville University (KY)
Jan 29 (Thu)	7:30 PM	Home	Bethel University (Tenn.)
Jan 31 (Sat)	3 PM	Home	Freed-Hardeman University (Tenn.)
Feb 5 (Thu)	8:30 PM	Away	Lindsey Wilson College (KY)
Feb 7 (Thu)	3 PM	Away	Georgetown College (KY)
Feb 12 (Thurs)	8:30 PM	Away	Cumberland University (Tenn.)
Feb 19 (Thu)	7:30 PM	Away	Campbellsville University (KY)
Feb 21 (Sat)	3 PM	Home	Lindsey Wilson University (KY)

PATRIOTS ROSTER

#0 Anthony Harris	F	SR.	6'5	Auroa, CO
#1 Kyler McLendon	G	R-Fr.	6'0	Harlan, KY
#2 Julian Miles	G	FR.	6'1	Louisville, KY
#3 Andrew McConnell	G	SR.	6'2	Buford, GA
#4 Tanner Walton	G	R-JR.	6'2	Winchester, KY
#5 Javeckio Thomas	F	R-JR	6'5	Sandersville, GA
#7 Malachi Robinson	F	FR	6'8	Birmingham, AL
#10 Jalan Johnson	G	FR.	6'0	Binghampton, NY
#11 Brant Smithers	G	R-JR.	6'1	Williamstown, KY.
#12 Brady Bell	G	SR.	6'6	Russell, KY
#13 Ikemba Otuonye	F	JR.	6'6	Katy, TX
#23 Kyle Duke	G	SR.	6'2	Toronto, Canada
#24 Shaw Daves	G	FR.	6'2	Chattanooga, TN
#25 Abraham Ibezimakor	F	JR.	6'9	Lome, Togo
#30 Zubin Davidson	F	FR.	6'7	London, England
Student Manager: Andrew Adams		JR.		Murray, KY
Student Manager: Kris Graham-Smith		SR.		Detroit. MI
Head Coach: Matt Daniel • Associate Head Coach: Kyle Bush				
Assistant Coach: Steven Silvers • Volunteer Assistant Coach - Don Daniel				
Graduate Student Assistant Coach - Harris Hawkins				



LADY PATRIOTS SCHEDULE

Oct 30 (Thu)	5 PM	Home	Huntington University (Ind.)
Oct 31 (Fri)	11 AM	Home	Milligan University
Nov 3 (Mon)	7 PM	Away	Tennessee Tech University (Exhibition)
Nov 6 (Thu)	4 PM	Home	Defiance College
Nov 7 (Fri)	11 AM	Home	Goshen College (Ind.)
Nov 11 (Tue)	6 PM	Away	Alice Lloyd College (Ky.)
Nov 15 (Sat)	3 PM	Away	Marian University (Ind.)
Nov 19 (Wed)	7 PM	Home	Oregon Tech
Nov 22 (Sat)	1 PM	Away	Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College
Nov 25 (Tue)	7 PM	Home	Indiana University Southeast
Dec 2 (Tue)	7 PM	Home	Washington Adventist University
Dec 4 (Thu)	6 PM	Away	Shawnee State University (Ohio)
Dec 15 (Mon)	4 PM	Neutral	Brewton-Parker College
Dec 16 (Tue)	12 PM	Neutral	Tennessee Wesleyan University
Dec 30 (Thu)	5 PM	Home	Union College (Ky.)
Jan 3 (Sat)	5 PM	Home	Miami University (Hamilton)
Jan 8 (Thu)	6:30 PM	Away	Bethel University (Tenn.)
Jan 10 (Sat)	2 PM	Away	Freed-Hardeman University (Tenn.)
Jan 15 (Thu)	5:30 PM	Home	Cumberland University (Tenn.)
Jan 22 (Thu)	1 PM	Home	Georgetown College (KY)
Jan 24 (Sat)	1 PM	Home	Campbellsville University (KY)
Jan 29 (Thu)	5:30 PM	Home	Bethel University (Tenn.)
Jan 31 (Sat)	1 PM	Home	Freed-Hardeman University (Tenn.)
Feb 5 (Thu)	6:30 PM	Away	Lindsey Wilson College (Ky.)
Feb 7 (Sat)	1 PM	Away	Georgetown College (KY)
Feb 12 (Thu)	6:30 PM	Away	Cumberland University (Tenn.)
Feb 19 (Thu)	5:30 PM	Away	Campbellsville University (KY)
Feb 21 (Sat)	2 PM	Home	Lindsey Wilson College (KY)

LADY PATRIOTS ROSTER

1 Peyton Mounce	G	Fr.	5-10	Urbana, OH
2 Darcie Anderson	G	R-Fr.	5-7	Corbin, KY
3 Jaiden Carrico	G	Fr.	5-8	Bristal, VA
4 Emily Naranjo	F	R-Sr.	5-11	Dry Ridge, KY
5 Joy Kendrick	G	Sr.	5-10	Albany, GA
7 Noel Smith	G	Fr.	5-9	Louisville, KY
8 Aden Clark	G	Fr.	5-6	Galax, VA
10 Mackenzie Babb	F	R-Jr.	6-3	Knoxville, TN
14 Zaram Fredricks	C	Sr.	6-4	Lagos, Nigeria
20 Lakin Burke	C	Sr.	6-1	Rose Hill, VA
22 Ava Schureman	G	So.	5-11	Georgetown, KY
24 Abby Varney	G	So.	5-8	Glasgow, KY
41 Amy Thompson	F	Jr.	6-0	Louisville, KY
45 Alexia Wilson	C	R-Fr.	6-0	Williamsburg, KY
Head Coach: Rick Reeves				
Associate Head Coach: Krystal Evans				
Assistant Coach: Jerton Evans				
Student Assistant: Dillion Parnell				



ONE BIG
TEAM

CORBIN REDHOUNDS

Corbin Reloads: New roles, new look, same high expectations

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

CORBIN — A new year means new expectations for Tony Pietrowski’s Corbin Redhounds.

After coming off a 19-11 mark that saw them go 13-6 against 13th Region opponents while having a runner-up effort in the 50th District Tournament, and semi-final effort in the 13th Region Tournament, Pietrowski’s squad has hopes of advancing even further this season.

“I think it’s gonna be kind of a work in progress for this year,” he said. “I mean we’re much different compared to what’s we looked heading into the summer.

“Personnel wise, and as usual, you know a bulk of our of our team is still involved with football, so until we kinda get all those guys out and get some time with them, I’m not sure how we will look early on,” Pietrowski added.

With the departure of transfer players such as last year’s leading scorer, Ryder Akins, and Dawson Farmer, Pietrowski said he will lean heavily on Evan Ellis.

“He’s a kid that came in last year, and has done a good job of



“Eli (Pietrowski) is a kid that’s been in my program literally since he was born,” said Tony Pietrowski. “He understands importance of things, and he does anything it takes to win a game. I’m very excited to get him back and get his leadership back in the court.” |FILEPHOTO

being a leader for us so far,” he said. “I expect him to have a big season and then of course, we will depend a lot on Eli (Pietrowski).

“Eli is a kid that’s been in my program literally since he was born,” he added. “He understands importance

of things, and he does anything it takes to win a game. I’m very excited to get him back and get his leadership back in the court.”

Pietrowski feels his team has what it takes to be competitive and be in the thick of things by regular season’s end.

“I know our football kids that will be coming in are competitive, and they’ll be ready to play,” he said. “A couple of things stick out that leads me to believe we will be competitive throughout the season.

“I believe we will be right in the mix of things

in the region to start out,” Pietrowski added. “We might not be given a lot of accolades early in, but before lost some kids to transferring, I feel like we were a top two or three team in the region. Right now, I’d say we are probably in the five, six, seven or

eight range. I’m excited to see what the kids will do this season — I think they’ll will do well.”

Another tough schedule awaits Pietrowski’s squad with another challenging district slate in the 50th awaiting.

“Our schedule is challenging again, and will have us prepared for postseason play,” he said. “When it comes to our district, it’s one of the toughest in the region, and it keeps getting better.

“It’s not like the Souths, and Corbins, are getting worse, it’s that Whitley County and Williamsburg continue to get better. I believe we have very good coaches in this district.

“Whitley County continues to get better. Eric has done a great job, and he’s got his kids really invested, and Jeff (Davis) always does a great job at South,” he continued. “Williamsburg has a new coach, and overall, this is just a very competitive district year in and year out.”

When it comes to the 13th Region outlook, Pietrowski said he’s taking a wait and see approach.

“We will get better as the season progresses,”

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CORBIN LADY REDHOUNDS

Wilson confident in mix of veterans and youth for 2024-25 campaign

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

CORBIN — Coming off a 19-11 season that included an 11-8 mark against 13th Region opponents, Isaac Wilson’s Corbin Lady Redhounds enter the new year looking to build on last season’s postseason run.

Corbin reached the 13th Region Tournament semifinals last season, falling 71-53 to North Laurel, after finishing as the 50th District runner-up with a 44-27 loss to South Laurel.

Combine experienced players with talented youth, Wilson believes this year’s squad has the potential to take a substantial step forward.

“We have a good mix of returning experience along with some talented youth that makes this season promising,” he said. “We had low numbers this summer but still feel as if we had a very successful summer. It gave some of our young kids some valuable experience that we feel helped them coming into the season. We played on nine different days and everyone got to play a ton of minutes that only bodes well for their development this season.”

Corbin returns four core players, each with a chance to play a major role.

• Lydia King — “Junior who is looking to taking the next step in leading this basketball team,” Wilson said. “She has contributed on the varsity level since her freshman year and she is poised for a solid Junior year this season.”

• Izzy Walker — “Senior and probably our most experienced guard who returns,” Wilson said. “Her experience will be needed to help some of our young kids development throughout the season.”

• Addy Wilson (Sr.) – “Senior who is a very solid shooter and her length can affect the game in many different ways,” Wilson said.

• Kalley Stewart (So.) – “Returning sophomore who started at times last season and played some big minutes for our program,” Wilson said. “Her length and athleticism really is a problem and in girls basketball and she rebounds the basketball at a high level for us. The minutes she got as a freshman last season was huge for her growth and I expect to see her make a jump this season.

“We have a pretty good mix of experience along with youth this coming season,” he added. “We will rely on our youth more this season than we have in the past few seasons. It is important for our upperclassmen to lead by example and to guide our young kids in order to continue our recent program success.”

Wilson will also lean on a handful of returning underclassmen and newcomers, several of whom he expects to play varsity minutes:

• Aubree Clemens (Jr., transfer from Whitley Co.) – “Transferred from Whitley County and looks to come in and have a breakout Junior season,” Wilson said. “She is a very skilled player who posses a ton of size and length. Her defensive presence in the lane is definitely felt and something that we expect to help us defensively as well as rebounding this coming season.”

• Cami Price (So., transfer from Whitley Co.) – “Also transferred from Whitley County and will be a sophomore guard for us this coming year,” Wilson said. “She was a starter in the district tournament last year against us and brings

a lot of varsity experience in with her from her Freshman season. She is very quick and really prides herself defensively. She looks to bring a positive impact to our program this season.”

• Paityn Creech (So.) – “Returning Sophomore who looks to find a role this season,” Wilson said. “She is probably our hardest worker and we know that we will always get 100 percent effort out of her on every single possession. He leadership and effort was seen all summer and we expect to continue to see this shine during the season.”

• Lynlee Pietrowski (8th grade) – “Incoming eighth grader who has had a great career at the middle school and is looking to bring that success with her to the next level,” Wilson said. “Her IQ for the game is some of the best we have had here in the program and something that make her special at her size. She is a very unselfish player who has a chance to be very special by the end of her career here at Corbin.”

• Braylen Frederick (8th grade) – “Incoming eighth grader, who shows some promising skills at the point guard position,” Wilson said. “She is one of the truest point guards I have ever had the privilege to coach and who looks to get her teammates the ball in all situations. She has an opportunity to have a break out season for us and help impact this basketball team come the end of the year.”

Wilson believes the Lady Redhounds’ size, athleticism, and depth will give his Lady Redhounds a different look compared to past seasons.

“I believe that we possess some size and length that can be a strength for us during the season,” he

said. “We are much longer and athletic than we have ever been during my time here at Corbin and it will be a different looking basketball team if you will. Along with feeling like we are a deep basketball team, and feel we have many kids who can get in and help us win a basketball game.

If we are able to really buy into the, we greater than me mentality, then we will really be able to use our depth to our advantage during the year.”

Replacing last year’s senior leaders remains another big key for Wilson’s squad.

“It is hard to replace the shoes of kids like Raegan Walker and Kylie Clem in a program,” he said. “We believe that leadership will be an area

of concern for us and something that we will be looking for someone to fill throughout that season.”

Wilson said the keys to success this season could depend upon the development of his young players, along with finding true leadership.

“We have some talented young kids who just don’t possess the experience at the varsity level yet,” Wilson added. “It is important that we find ways to get them experience throughout the year and that we learn from each experience to help improve our basketball team by the end of the year.”

Another challenging schedule awaits Wilson’s squad with hopes of preparing his team for postseason play.

“We have a challenging schedule that has some big games for our team this season,” he said. “Finding games that will push us and challenge us is always something that I look for and this year is no different. I do feel that our schedule will best prepare our basketball team to improve and be the best version of us come tournament time.”

“The 50th District is competitive each and every year. This year I expect it to be much of the same,” Wilson added. “Obviously, you have South Laurel, who always has a say when it comes to district seeding and tournament play. Whitley county will possess a lot of young talent.”

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LYNN CAMP WILDCATS

McKeehan brings fresh mindset, defensive focus to Lynn Camp boys

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

CORBIN — These are exciting times for the Lynn Camp boys’ basketball program. First-year coach Marcus McKeehan has taken over the helm, and ready to lead Lynn Camp to success.

The Wildcats struggled to a 7-22 mark last season while posting a 4-13 record against 13th Region teams. They also went 0-5 against 51st District competition — something McKeehan hopes to change.

“We have a great group of kids that have come in here and worked hard all off-season since I took over in late March,” he said. “Whatever time I tell them to be at the gym, they are there. Our goal is to keep playing through our mistakes and move onto the next play.

“They are hungry and eager to have a successful season,” he added. “Our overall team depth will really help us. We have around 10 kids in the mix for varsity playing time.”

A strong summer has given McKeehan hopes for a much-improved Wildcat squad.

“We had a very good summer season, got some good wins and really competed with teams that put running clocks on us last season,” he said. “As I mentioned earlier, our kids

are hungry and ready to prove teams wrong. We will play hard for 32 minutes each night.”

Lynn Camp returns two starters combined with juniors and sophomores that received quality playing time last season.

“Caleb Woods is our senior veteran leader,” McKeehan said. “He can really shoot the ball and can play all five positions on defense. He knows how to lead our team through a varsity season. Woods missed the first half of the year last season with an injury and he is back to 100 percent now.

Conner Mabe is a sophomore that started last year and is the Wildcats’ “glue guy”, according to McKeehan.

“Mabe has a constant motor. He plays about as hard as any kid I’ve ever seen,” he said. “He does all of the dirty work—rebouncing, defending. He has polished his offensive skills in the off-season as well to really turn into a high level player.

“We lost Ethen Chafin, our leading scorer at 14 points a game,” McKeehan added. “He is doing virtual school work and working a full-time job, so he won’t be with us for his last year of eligibility. We also lost three seniors from last year and two of them started in Caleb Wilburn and Jared King. Ethan Simpson was our

other senior we lost to graduation.”

McKeehan also has many players he will lean on this season.

“Landen Rose, a junior, came over from Corbin in the spring and really looked good this summer,” he said. “He can shoot the ball and can create match-up problems with his length and skill set. “The Mayo brothers return for their junior season,” McKeehan added. “Eisen Mayo is a quick defender and can create a lot of havoc on the defensive end, and like Mabe, he has worked on his offensive game. Elijah Mayo is a strong kid who can score and rebound really well.

“Kayden Powers, a sophomore big man, has really improved his speed and scoring ability to go along with his strength, which is defending and rebounding,” he continued. “Ethan Curry is a steady junior with playing experience and is a great defender. Max Carnes, a junior, moved back to Lynn Camp after moving out of state for a year, and he is a sharp-shooter. Shawn Reyes is another junior who didn’t play on the team last year. He will get in there and scrap. DJ Wren, the star running back, is going to give basketball a shot his senior year and I know he will provide toughness and athleticism. We also have some freshmen in Cason Mills and Gavin Sutherland that played JV as eight graders last year that continue to improve. Braylan Humfleet, another freshman, came this summer and played with us and had a good football season, and we look forward to watching him grow in our basketball program as well. Tucker Neal is a lengthy freshman that we can’t wait to see grow in our program as well.”

McKeehan said he has 22 players overall in the high school program.

“One senior with a ton of experience and another senior who is new to this sport from football,” he said. “The bulk of our kids are in our junior class (six) and freshman class (nine) to go along with those (two) seniors and (five) sophomores. Our kids have worked hard all off-season and we have several with varsity playing experience. They have grown leaps and bounds to help get our program where we strive to be. Not only will we play a full JV schedule, we have enough numbers to play some separate freshman games as well.”

Defensive play will be the Wildcats’ strength along with depth.

“We will have five guys on the floor playing hard the entire

time,” McKeehan said. “We have more depth this season and when they need a break, we can put a fresh body in the game to sustain that energy. We have a couple good shooters, and even though we aren’t blessed with great size, we rebound the ball pretty well from all five positions.

“We really need to focus on ourselves as a team, and not worry about everyone else,” he added. “In our system, we preach playing to our strengths and we try to put our kids in situations where they can run a system that they can have success from. Transition offense and defense has been our number one priority in our practices.”

Lynn Camp will play a competitive schedule that will have them prepared for the 13th Region All ‘A’ Classic and postseason play.

The Wildcats will once again participate in what McKeehan feels like another string 51st District.

“Our district is good,” he said. “A lot of people look at it and see three Class A schools and one big school, but they can all play. Pineville won the district last year and made the semifinals of the region. Knox Central and Barbourville were really good last season as well. Looking at the 51st District this year, a lot of people will say

it will drop off, but that’s just not the case,” McKeehan said. “All three of these teams are still good ball clubs. While they have all lost good players due to graduation or transfers, they all return good young players and have added some other players just like us. We are eager for the opportunity to play our district slate and I believe we will compete better with those teams this season as opposed to last year.”

“I believe the team we put on the floor at Lynn Camp High School this year will play their hearts out every night to make our school, community, and alumni proud of them,” he continued. “This group of kids are hungry and they’ve worked hard all off season, whether it be practices, running youth camps and youth leagues, or just helping out in our communities anyway that they can. These kids do whatever our coaching staff asks of them. If we were to ask them to come in at midnight or 5 a.m. for practices or to help the school do something, they would be here willing to help out. We preach servant leadership in our program and it’s something that they can carry over outside of the gym. We want to represent our school and community with pride on And off the court. Go Cats.”

LYNN CAMP LADY WILDCATS

Fresh start for Lynn Camp under new head coach Janet Jones



Lily Henize is one of several players returning for the Lady Wildcats. |FILE PHOTO

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

CORBIN — A familiar name has taken over the reigns of the Lynn Camp girls’ basketball program with hopes of leading the Lady Wildcats back to their success they had when legendary coach Richard Jones was at the helm.

Former Knox Central star Janet Jones becomes the Lady Wildcats’ seventh coach since 2018, and has hopes of guiding Lynn Camp to success this season.

She’s taking over a team that went 7-16 overall with a 2-9 mark against 13th Region opponents.

The Lady Wildcats haven’t reached the region tournament since the 2018-19 season when former coach Justin Woods guided the Lady Wildcats to a Final Four finish in the 13th Region Tournament.

“I want to continue to

Partin, who averaged 19.2 points per game, and 12.2 rebounds per game.

Also returning are Lily Henize, Madison Weymers, Jayden Petrey, and Aubrey Hollin.

“Being new to the program, I am unaware of the starters from last season,” Jones said. “However, we are starting with a level playing field right now which will give each player the opportunity to earn their position. I have some returning experience, but we are developing new and upcoming players as well — all playing time will be given due hard work, level, and skill.

When it comes to strengths, Jones believes her team will put in the work while counting to improve each day.

“This team and all teams that I have coached, will put in hard work, dedication and willingness to play as a team,” she said. “With any team, improvement is always an ongoing process and we strive to improve daily that will set the foundation for success. I think any team can be successful with dedication, hard work, and working together as a team.”

The Lady Wildcats will be treated early and often again, which will

prepare them for postseason play.

“My schedule was previously made before I accepted the position, yet I feel it is competitive and will set us up for success,” Jones said. “My focus is on getting my team ready for the season, and I feel that we can be competitive in our district.

“My job is to teach, coach, and support these young ladies to strive for post season success,” she added. “My goal at Lynn Camp High School is to develop players and hope I can have a positive impact on these young ladies’ lives on the court, as well as in life.”

Good Luck

to all the area boys and girls teams!

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NORTH LAUREL JAGUARS

North Laurel reloaded and ready for another Sweet 16 push

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

LONDON — Coming off a season that saw this North Laurel Jaguars come up a few points short of reaching the Final Four of the KHSAA Sweet 16, coach Nate Valentine is excited to see just what the upcoming campaign holds for his team.

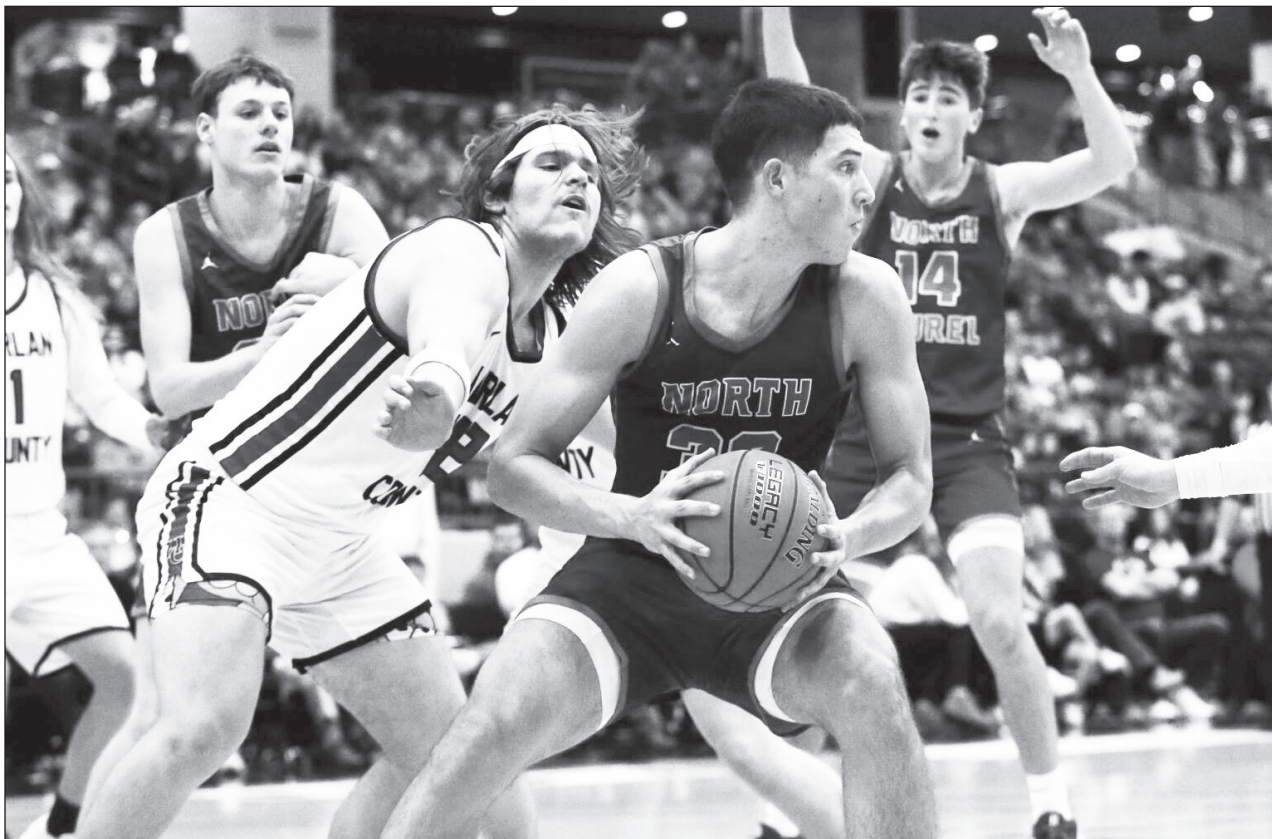
North Laurel captured its third region title in four years while posting a 23-11 mark last season.

This year's Jaguar squad returns nearly all of its firepower and enters the season with both experience and depth along with a No. 4 state ranking.

"We return our core nucleus of guys from last year's team," Valentine said. "Kole Jervis was our leader last year and showed up big in clutch time, so other guys will have to fill his void.

"Our guys are a year older and have worked extremely hard in the offseason," he added. "They have gotten stronger and expanded their game."

North Laurel's top returner is Mr.



North Laurel's top returner is Mr. Basketball frontrunner, senior Reece Davidson, who signed with Liberty University a few weeks ago. | FILE PHOTO

Basketball frontrunner, senior Reece Davidson, who signed with Liberty University a few weeks ago.

Davidson averaged 21.6 points per game last season, and put on a show at the state tournament by scoring 77 points in two games,

including a 41-point scoring effort against Montgomery County.

Sharpshooter Jordan Rawlings returns along with RJ Noble, Cooper Elza, and Corey Cunagin.

Also expected to provide varsity minutes are Kaiden Allen, Evan Sarate, and Cam

Anderson.

"Our guys are a year older and have worked extremely hard in the offseason. They have gotten stronger and expanded their game. We are still working to get everyone healthy in the preseason and we are excited to get our guys

playing football back in the gym," Valentine said. "This summer, we played without Reece and Jordan, so several other guys were able to get great experience."

Another tough slate awaits Valentine's squad, including trips to play in the prestigious

King of the Bluegrass Tournament, and Lexington Catholic's WGM Classic.

"We will once again play a very challenging schedule that will test us early," Valentine said. "We open the season at Lexington Catholic and it will give us a good indication of where we are early in the season. We are excited to return to the King of the Bluegrass for the third time since I've been here as well as the WGM Classic at Lexington Catholic.

"I believe it's important to put our guys on the biggest stage to help them individually as well as help our team get ready for the post-season," he added. "We will be battle-tested by tournament time."

After averaging 62.8 points per game last season, Valentine expects his squad to be even more balanced this season with the depth his team has.

"We will have very good balance this year offensively," he said. "I really like the possibility

SEE JAGUARS, PAGE 9

NORTH LAUREL LADY JAGUARS

Youth movement arrives — but the standard stays the same

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

LONDON — Different faces in different places, but one thing remains the same, until someone in the 13th Region eliminates North Laurel in the 13th Region Tournament, the Lady Jaguars remain the team to beat.

Eddie Mahan's squad has been the dominant team in the 13th Region since the 2017-18 season.

During that time, North Laurel has won four region titles, including the past three while compiling a 13th Region-best 225-47 record, three Elite Eight appearances, seven 13th Region title game appearances, eight consecutive 49th District championships, a 104-13 record against 13th Region teams, and a 54-game win streak against 49th District opponents.

Pretty impressive, huh?

The Lady Jaguars are coming off a 32-3 campaign that saw them win their third region crown in a row before bowing out in the Elite Eight of the KHSAA Sweet 16.

With that said, North Laurel graduated one of, if not the best, girls' player to ever grace the halls of North Laurel High School in Brooke Nicholson.

Nicholson led the Lady Jaguars with a 23.8 scoring average, and an 8.9 rebounding average.

"One thing our teams have consistently carried from year to year is a strong understanding and expectation of winning," Mahan said. "That's what a healthy culture creates — older players naturally pass down our standards and values to the younger ones.

"Last season also revealed areas we need to improve," he added. "The final two minutes of our Elite Eight game were a clear example of poor execution. That group put us in position to win, but our inability to finish offensively ultimately cost us. This year's team has an even

smaller margin for error and must learn from that tough experience."

A solid summer leads many to believe North Laurel could very well win its fourth straight region crown.

"Overall, I was very pleased with our summer," Mahan said. "My goal during that time is always to promote our players, challenge our team, and identify what we need to improve on both individually and collectively. In all those areas, this summer was a success.

"We faced a tough schedule and performed well in most games, but more importantly, it exposed our weaknesses," he added. "With the loss of our seniors, we knew new players would need to step up and score and that wasn't an issue. What limited us were fewer rebounds, steals, and overall possessions. This year's team doesn't have the same length as last season's, so our success in those areas will be important."

One player that is expected to fill Nicholson's void is Mariella Claybrook.

Claybrook is a hot commodity among Division I schools after averaging 10 points and 8.3 rebounds per game last season.

She also joined by a solid nucleus of talent:

- Mariella Claybrook — she has 17 college offers. She is a 6'2 forward and the most versatile player Mahan has had.

- "She can dominate in the post or handle the ball on the perimeter to help break a press," he said. "She continues to improve daily, and her confidence is improving as her skill level does.

- Haley Combs — "She is great point guard, who holds two college offers currently," Mahan said. "She is the prototypical pass first point guard. She will need to look to score more this season to help balance our offense.

- Bella Lewis — "She started nine games before she got hurt," Mahan

said. "She is a 5'4 guard that is extremely quick and is a good player on both sides of the ball. She can shoot the three or utilize her speed to beat you off the dribble. Will be called upon to guard the opposing team's best guard on a nightly basis."

- Bella Mahan — "She started in seven games, and is a 5'4 combo guard, who is very skilled. She is a good shooter who can also help handle the ball and initiate the offense. She was top three in scoring and assists this summer on the team."

Mahan mentioned some possible new starters could be:

- Laylee Phillips — "Laylee was coming off the bench this summer and still was our second leading scorer," Mahan said. "Her skill level is elite, but she will need some time to get used to the level of play. I look forward to seeing what she can develop into as a player this season."

- Paisley Kilburn — "She is a good athlete and has tremendous potential," Mahan said. "Consistency has been the issue for her but she is working hard and is showing much improvement."

- Paisley Robinson — "Is an all-around good player," Mahan said.

- Molly Morgan — She is a promising player, who is one of the team's best defenders and rebounders. As her skills improve, her playing time will as well."

- Ella Hubbard — "She's a 6'1 forward, who is just an eighth grader, but her size and potential may put her in the rotation."

"Allie and Sophie Gray are two very talented guards who just joined us this season," Mahan said. "They have a bright future but may find a way to help us out this season."

"We're a very young team, with eight of our 15 varsity players in eighth grade, and all but three, being sophomores or younger," he added. "Despite our youth,

we're an extremely talented group — we'll just need to grow up fast and mature quickly on the court."

Mahan mentioned having Claybrook is one of his team's biggest strengths but mentioned other strengths as well.

"We have a tremendous player in Mariella Claybrook, who will naturally draw a lot of attention, but our greatest strength lies in our ability to space the floor with multiple shooters and execute in the half court more effectively than we have in recent seasons," he said. "We're a young and undersized team, which means we have some ground to make up. Those areas will be challenges we work through all season, but with the right mindset and effort, they won't keep us from reaching our goals."

"This year's team will have to truly play together," he added. "We can't rely on just one or two players to carry the load, and everyone has to contribute and buy

into their role for us to be successful. That means committing to the little things like executing our offense with precision, communicating on defense, and taking pride in doing the details right every possession. It's not easy to stay that disciplined, but if we do, it will make us a far more complete and unpredictable team and one that's much tougher for opponents to prepare for and play against."

Mahan said another challenging schedule will have his team prepared for the postseason battles his team will face.

"I've always believed that facing tough competition throughout the year is the best way to prepare for what truly matters which is post-season success," he said. "Right out of the gate, we'll face Assumption, one of the most athletic teams in the state, and they'll test us in some of the areas where we know we need to grow. Games like that are exactly what help us improve and they

will expose weaknesses, demand focus, and push us to elevate our level of play. By competing against elite opponents early, we'll be better prepared mentally and physically for the challenges that come later in the season.

"Our goal remains the same every season which is to compete for a district title, contend for a regional championship, and ultimately bring a state championship back to Laurel County," Mahan added. "The pride, tradition, and passion for basketball, especially girls' basketball, in this community is second to none. That tradition sets the standard for what we expect from ourselves every year. Even though this team is young, our goals and expectations won't change. We may have to grow and learn along the way, but our commitment to competing at the highest level and representing Laurel County with pride will never waver."

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WHITLEY COUNTY COLONELS

Hard Schedule, Harder Mindset: Colonels prepare for a breakthrough

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

WILLIAMSBURG — With momentum building and experience on their side, the Whitley County Colonels enter the 2025-26 season hungry to take the next step while attempting to end a drought that has stretched far too long.

The Colonels, who finished 19-11 last season, but were eliminated in the first round of the 50th District Tournament, are chasing their first trip to the 13th Region Tournament since 2011.

Head coach Eric Swords believes his team has the pieces to make that goal a reality this season.

“Last year, we didn’t have many players that had a lot of experience coming into the season,” Swords said. “This year we have six guys who started a game last year (would have been seven but we lost Jase Meadors to injury). I think we can take that experience and



Garrett Sharp is an “excellent shooter as a stretch big, will need him to step up as an inside presence defensively,” Coach Eric Swords said. |FILE PHOTO

build on it although we will still be really young with five of our nine rotational guys being sophomores or below.”

Whitley County made major strides during the

offseason which in turn was a sign to Swords that this year’s group is gaining confidence, toughness, and belief.

“We had an excellent summer,” he said. “We

played a ton of games against good competition and performed well, had success at the live period in Lexington. Our guys continue to get better each day. Garrett Sharp

has been a guy that I believe has improved the most since last year.”

Six players who started games last season for Whitley County return.

While the loss of

Aaron Rowe (graduation) and Jase Meadors (season-ending injury) hurts, the talent Swords’ returns is strong.

• Tootie Mahan — “One of the most explosive guards in the region, lead us in scoring, assists, steals and was 2nd in rebounding last year,” Swords said.

• Henry Bowling — “Smart and steady guard that can do a little of everything. Scored his 1,000th career point last year,” Swords said.

• Levi Jackson — “Had a breakout freshman season, one of the top shooters in the region,” Swords said.

• Riley Fuson — “Has just now been cleared to play after being sidelined since July. Had a tremendous freshman year and is a matchup problem for a lot of teams with his size and skill set,” Swords said.

• Garrett Sharp — “Excellent shooter as a stretch big, will need him

SEE COLONELS, PAGE 9

WHITLEY COUNTY LADY COLONELS

Lady Colonels aim for improvement after district exit

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

WILLIAMSBURG — A new era has arrived for the Whitley County Lady Colonels.

First-year head coach Ronnie Collier takes over a program coming off a 17-10 campaign that included an 8-6 mark against 13th Region opponents and a 3-4 showing in the 50th District.

Whitley County’s season ended with a disappointing first-round exit to Corbin in the district tournament — something Collier hopes his team can use as motivation moving forward.

“Last season, we didn’t maximize our offensive efficiency because of excessive turnovers,” Collier said. “We look to improve in that area this coming season.”

Collier said his team’s summer play gave him an early chance to evaluate his roster and begin implementing his system.

“We had a good summer,” he said. “I feel like we were able to build some team unity, and my players were able to get

familiar with my expectations.”

The Lady Colonels return three starters — juniors Khylea Ray Collier (who is now lost for the season due to an injury), Madisyn Hopkins, and Jonna Rice — giving the new head coach a dependable core to build around.

“We look for Khylea Ray to be an offensive threat and solid defensively,” Collier said. (The interview was done before Khylea Ray Collier suffered a season-ending injury). “Madisyn is our returning leading scorer. We expect her to be an offensive threat and dominate the boards. Jonna Rice will be depended on in every category. She can score, rebound, defend, and pass the basketball.”

Collier looks for several players to compete for starting spots and significant minutes, including Jaylee Cox, Lydia Hale, Aubree Fore, Cristin Siler, and Isabella Smiddy.

“We return three juniors that played a lot of minutes, but we will also be depending on several girls with lit-

tle, to no, varsity experience,” Collier said.

“We expect our defense will be our strength,” added. “This is something that we can control simply with effort. “We need to improve offensively. Our skill set isn’t where it needs to be. Limited preseason practice time due to dual-sport athletes, combined with a new coaching staff, will hinder our offense for a while. We look for it to continually improve throughout the season.”

For the Lady Colonels to take a step forward, Collier said the younger players will have to adjust to varsity action quickly.

“Our key to success will be quickly getting our young girls acclimated to the speed of varsity competition,” he said. “We will be depending on several girls that have limited, to no, varsity experience.”

Whitley County won’t have much time to ease into the season.

The Lady Colonels face a tough slate of games that will challenge them from the get-go.

“We have a very tough schedule this year,” Collier said. “I feel like this will get us ready for

postseason play.”

The schedule is expected to get his team ready for another rough

and tough 50th District play.

SEE WHITLEY, PAGE 9

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SOUTH LAUREL CARDINALS

‘No Promises—Just Work’: South Laurel focused on process

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

LONDON — This year’s version of the South Laurel Cardinals enter the upcoming season facing an unfamiliar but interesting reality — a roster loaded with youth, inexperience, and potential. And, coach Jeff Davis isn’t shying away from that challenge. In fact, he welcomes it. The Cardinals are coming off a 25-6 campaign that saw them go 17-1 against regional opponents while winning another 50th District crown, and advancing to the finals of the 13th Region Tournament. “This season presents an exciting challenge. We will be an extremely young and inexperienced team,” Davis said. “While we are fortunate to return four key veterans who have significant varsity experience, the majority of the roster is new to this level. “Our focus will be solely on the process of daily improvement,” he added. “We are not making any outcome-based promises, other than this — we are committed to working hard, being honest with ourselves, and holding each

other accountable. We will stick to the principles that have always defined our program — Play Hard, Play Together, and Play Physical.” South Laurel took a step forward in improving thanks to a solid summer, according to Davis. “The team continues to improve with a commitment to daily growth,” he said. “Our methodology involves striving for one percent daily improvement, learning directly from our previous work, and correcting errors to build upon our foundation. The offseason was valuable, and the players earned a significant amount of crucial experience.” The Cardinals return starter Kaiden KcQueen and he’ll be joined by talented players that will look to lead South Laurel to success once again this season. “Given how inexperienced and young our roster is, we will be counting on many players this year,” Davis said. “This means the entire team has a shot to contribute. However, opportunity must be earned. Every day in practice, they are given the chance to

show that they can help this team be successful, and that daily consistency is what matters. “Ultimately, there are still a lot of unknowns with this group,” added. “We have been focusing on daily internal improvement, but the true measure will be found when we face outside competition. We will have to wait and see how we handle playing other teams and adapting under pressure. “Beyond the physical skills, our biggest developmental area is the mental curriculum of the game,” Davis continued. “We will be continually challenged to improve how we handle mental preparation—from practices and film study to managing in-game adversity and tuning out outside noise. Developing this collective mental toughness is a primary focus. Our mantra is simple: Improve each day, execute one play at a time.” The Cardinals will be tested again with another tough slate. They’ll open the season on the road against defending region champion North Laurel. “We have a tough district, and hopefully we have provided enough games

that will get ready for those games and the tournament,” Davis said. “I’ll leave it to those people to determine what our schedule looks like. I know there is always that person that says we play a soft schedule, so I’ll let you see what they think about our schedule.” Davis’ schedule will prepare his team throughout the season for his team’s district and postseason battles. “We are in the toughest district year in and out,” he said. “It’s always a battle and if you are not ready, you will get beat and beat badly. The teams and players in this district are tough and battled-tested.” So where does his team fit in when it comes to the top teams in the 13th Region? “We are in the 13th Region and that is all I know,” he said. “I don’t look at rankings or polls. That is for you all to determine and have fun with. I believe it is just rat poison. I know some coaches, players, and fans, lose their minds if they aren’t ranked where they believe they should be. Just rank us 17, 18, 19 or whatever last place is because I could care less.”

SOUTH LAUREL LADY CARDINALS

After reaching region finals, Lady Cardinals want more

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

LONDON — South Laurel didn’t miss a beat under first-year coach Tod Windlan, who helped guide the Lady Cardinals 25-6 record, 50th District championship, and a 13th Region Tournament runner-up finish. South Laurel was disciplined on both ends of the floor, averaging 54 points per game while limiting opponents to only 36 points per game, defensively. The Lady Cardinals were also 17-1 against regional opponents, and posted an 8-0 mark against 50th District foes. Expect more of the same this season with another talented roster returning for Windlan. “We have a very experienced team but also very young team,” he said. “Getting to the region final game was a great experience and we hope to be back and accomplish our goal of going to Rupp.” A solid summer tested Windlan’s squad and gave him a preview of things to come once the season tips off. “We played 12 games, focused more on skill development and speed/agility and weight lifting,” he said. “Went to the Alabama Team Camp, and played good

competition and beat Taylor County here at home during a summer game by 25-plus. We feel we have improved in areas that we needed to.” Once again, Windlan will have a cupboard full of returning starters to depend on. • Skeeter Mabe — “She’s the engine that makes us go,” Windlan said. “She can play point guard, but can also score off post touches and she has a high basketball IQ.” • Maci Messer - “Great athlete, who can score in multiple ways and a great defender,” Windlan said. • Callie Jones - “She is a combo guard, who has grown physically in weight room and has good length and good defender,” Windlan said. • Aubrey Bundy - “She shot 50 percent from 3 last season,” Windlan said. “She is a gritty tough competitor. Windlan said losing Jaime Buenaventura to graduation will hurt, but expects Ryleigh Bretz, who started the first half of season before getting injured, should be able to step in nicely. Other players who could start are Shelby Smith, Emma Adams and Kenzie Fannin. Mia Hibbard, Khloe Osborne, Lexi Messer, and Kenna Andes are also expected



Maci Messer is a “great athlete, who can score in multiple ways and a great defender,” said Coach Tod Windlan. |FILE PHOTO

to contribute. Windlan said experience will be a strength even though he only has one senior returning along with possessing multiple scorers. “We don’t rely on just one or two (players), and having a year under me learning the system, they

will react more instead of thinking,” he said. Windlan also noted some areas of improving are free throw shooting and rebounding. “We need to improve every day, and staying major injury-free.” A tough schedule will have his team prepared

for district and region title runs. “We have a very very difficult schedule and I did that to prepare us for the post season,” Windlan said. “We should contend for a district title, Corbin and Whitley County will be our competition. “I think we are a

top three team in 13th region and feel we can compete to win the 13th region and make a trip to Rupp,” he added. “I love my kids I have here at South, they come in and work hard and think we have a special group. We have goals we want to achieve. Go Cards.”

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WILLIAMSBURG YELLOW JACKETS

Williamsburg begins Bargo Era with high hopes

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

WILLIAMSBURG — The Brandon Bargo era begins at Williamsburg High School with hopes of the Yellow Jackets to continue their winning ways on the hardwood.

The Yellow Jackets are coming off a 17-10 campaign that saw them go 6-10 against 13th Region opponents while turning in an 0-7 mark against 50th District foes.

Bargo said heading into the season, he’s looking to gain experience.

“We have a lot of guys who have minimal game experience so the more we can get them game experience the better,” he said. “We got a late start on the summer. We focused on 100 percent skill development. There’s been visible growth but we have more room to grow.”

Bargo said Reece Hatcher and Peyton Hamilton are Williamsburg’s

most experienced players returning.

Hatcher averaged 6.9 points per game while Hamilton tossed in 2.8 points per game.

“We will lean on them a lot throughout the year,” he said. “Lane Jeffries, TJ Cornett, Mason Rountree, Andy Shelton, Chase Grubb, Holden Clark, and Evan Moses will have roles for us this year too. As we go throughout the year the roles will start defining themselves.

“We have a mix of older and younger players but our game experience is pretty non existent throughout the roster,” Bargo added. “TJ Cornett, Andy Shelton, and Mason Rountree all have limited varsity experience and will be asked to take on a larger role as far as leadership and on the floor.”

Entering the season, Bargo feels his teams’ athleticism is his team’s main strength.

“Our quickness and strength will be

as good as anyone on our schedule. We have to utilize that,” he said. “I worry about our ability to make shots. We can make shots but can we make enough to keep our head above the water? That’s the question I have.

“I think finding an identity is our first goal,” Bargo added. “I don’t know what it is right now. I have an idea of which way I think we’re going to go but with so many new faces we’re all learning together. It’s my job to make the pieces fit together.”

Bargo will find out early on what his team will be capable of when the Yellow Jackets tip off against regional power Bell County.

“We open up with a team that has a good of chance as anyone to be at Rupp Arena,” he said. “They have two of the best players in the region in Burnett and Buell. So we are getting thrown into the fire immediately. It’ll be good for us so we can see where

we are at. What we are doing well and what we can improve on. Our district is loaded obviously so opening up with a game lack that is similar to a district game.”

Bargo said his team will once again battle in one of the toughest districts around.

“Corbin, South, and Whitley are all top five teams in the region,” he said. “All are so well-coached and run programs at such a high level, so all six games will provide a great opportunity for us.

“Region-wise we will be able to guard with anyone,” Bargo added. “Our season will depend on our ability to make shots and our turnover rate. If we can be in a good space with those two things I’ll like where we are. We have a great group of kids who are eager to get better. I’m excited to see them play and learn and grow with them.”

WILLIAMSBURG LADY YELLOW JACKETS

Energy, Effort and Potential: Williamsburg begins its climb

BY LES DIXON
Contributing Reporter

WILLIAMSBURG — Melissia Douglas’ Williamsburg Lady Yellow Jackets started last season’s campaign strong, winning their first four games, but struggled the remainder of the season, posting a 7-19 mark while finishing 3-9 against 13th Region teams, and 0-7 against 50th District competition.

Entering this season, Douglas said her returning players have had the opportunity to learn and improve in several key areas that she expect will help them this season.

“A big focus has been on fundamental skills—things like passing, shooting, and ball handling—especially as we transition several players from volleyball to basketball,” she said. “Another emphasis has been understanding and executing paint points, both offensively and defensively, so our players can be more effective in the key areas of the court. By drilling these fundamentals and reinforcing smart decision-making in the paint, we’re setting up our team to be more confident, consistent, and competitive this season.

“Last summer, even though the season was short and only lasted a few weeks, it was a great opportunity to mix our younger players with our returning players,” Douglas added. “This allowed us to focus on team chemistry and bonding, which is so important for on-court communication and trust. Even in a short period, we were able to start building connections that will carry over into the full season.”

Williamsburg returns experience which will be a plus as three starters are back — juniors Braylee Evans and Abby Moses, and sophomore Ellie Breeding.

“Each of these players brings valuable experience and continues to grow their game,” Douglas said. “Marissa Meadors is also returning and is a standout in her work ethic, constantly pushing to improve.

“We’re also excited to welcome a few new faces who are returning to the sport, including sophomores Sammie Phipps, Bailee Hill, and Taylor Blankenship,” she added. “Additionally, we have several freshmen and eighth-grade players who are showing a lot of promise and could



Williamsburg returns experience which will be a plus as three starters are back — juniors Braylee Evans and Abby Moses, and sophomore Ellie Breeding. | FILEPHOTO

be real game changers as they continue to develop. Our focus is on blending the experience of our returning players with the energy and potential of our younger athletes to build a cohesive, competitive team.

“With a young group and no seniors, it’s crucial that every player knows their role on the team,” Douglas continued. “I really stress that numbers matter, stats matter, and that each player needs to be accountable every minute they’re on the court. By understanding their responsibilities and giving consistent effort, we can maximize our team’s potential and stay competitive every game.”

With the tip-off of the season right around the corner, Douglas said she likes the potential of her team.

“We’re young and still gaining experience, but there’s a lot to be excited about,” she said. “One of our biggest strengths is how hard these girls compete — they play with great energy and never back down. You can see the talent and the chemistry starting to come together.

“Of course, with a young group, there are going to be some learning moments along the way,” Douglas added. “We’re focusing on staying patient, growing with each game, and continuing to build confidence. The best part is that this team shows up every day ready to work and get better. If we keep that attitude, the future looks very bright for this program.”

“One area we’re really focusing on this season is our shooting,” she continued. “We’re creating good opportunities on offense, but we know we have to capitalize and finish those chances more consistently.

We’re also working on offensive spacing and decision-making — making that extra pass, recognizing mismatches, and staying patient within our sets.”

Douglas said as a coach, scheduling is a critical part of preparing any team for the postseason.

This year, her emphasis was on creating a schedule that allows her team to compete against equivalent opponents.

“By doing this, we

challenge our players appropriately, help them grow, and give them the best opportunities

to build confidence and experience as we head toward the postseason,” she said.

Williamsburg will also participate in what many consider the hardest district in the region.

“District play is always a challenge for us, especially since we’re the only single-A school matched up with three larger programs, but we embrace that,” she said. “Competing against bigger schools pushes us to raise our level every night and helps our players grow faster. The size, depth, and experience those teams bring make the district extremely competitive, but our group never backs down.

“We focus on playing disciplined, hard-nosed basketball and using our speed, toughness, and preparation to close the gap,” Douglas added. “Every game is an opportunity to prove we belong, and our players take a lot of pride in representing the smallest school in the district with a big fight.

“Some might say that a high region standing is out of reach for our team this year, and I understand that perspective,” she continued. “But I’ve always believed in a ‘Cinderella story.’ I truly believe that anything is achievable with the right mindset, preparation, and work ethic. Our focus is on controlling what we can — our effort, execution, and teamwork — and letting the results take care of themselves. Go Lady Jackets.”

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Continued from page 3

he said. “I do believe we will be right there in the end with a lot of other teams. North Laurel should be No. 1 with everyone they’re returning, and Brad (Sizemore) has done a fantastic job at Bell County, and they’ll be right up there, too.”

“But you know there is a lot of pride in the other teams in this region, and they’ll have a say, too,” Pietrowski added. “The Clay Countys, Harlan Countys, Corbins, and South Laurels, have their name in the hat, too. I think the 13th Region is one of the best tournaments to watch, and we hope we are a part of that this season.”

COLONELS

Continued from page 6

to step up as an inside presence defensively,” Swords said.

• Dee Parker — “Our team’s top defender, guarded quick guys or 6’6 guys for us last year. Also made great strides in getting guys involved, 2nd on the team in assists,” Swords said.

• Shamal Allen — “Missed all of last year with an ACL injury. Provides size, versatility and athleticism,” Swords said.

• Caleb Cureton — “Was our best JV kid as a freshman last year. One of our best rebounders and will provide toughness we need inside,” Swords said.

• Kayden Centers — “Eighth grader that can provide a big spark. He’s had a great fall for us,” Swords said.

“We have three really good seniors, and a great sophomore core,” he added. “I would consider us experienced as well as young. We started and played a lot of young kids last year. We have about 30 kids in the program and 20 are sophomores and below. But we have six or so guys with a lot of varsity games under their belt.”

Swords also said he has numerous juniors that are also fighting for varsity minutes.

When it comes to strengths, Swords likes the quickness and the ability of his guards to apply pressure.

Whitley County’s guard play will be the engine this season.

“We also can shoot the ball well,” he said. “The pace we play at will benefit our team greatly. The thing I’ve been most impressed with is our ball movement in early season practices.”

“We have to communicate and focus on rebounding,” Swords added. “We are a smaller team, so those two things have been a major emphasis for us this pre-season.”

To get his team ready and prepared for the post-season, Swords admitted he has put together a very tough slate.

“This is the hardest schedule we have played here,” he said. “We will play Harlan

County (twice), Boyle County, Clay County, LCA, Harrison County, Madison Southern, Bell County, Knox Central, North Laurel, Sayre, as well as some out-of-state teams in tournaments. And of course, we have six games in the always competitive 50th District. “I feel the 50th District is wide open,”

Swords added. “Corbin lost three really good players from last year, but still returns a lot of talent. South lost a lot but I think has the biggest and best front court in the region. Williamsburg is in rebuild mode but you can throw talent and records out the window in those matchups. “I feel like the 50th

District is the toughest district in the region,” he continued. “We have been a top five team two out of the three years but we got South and Corbin, who have been ahead of us. We feel we have closed the gap big-time in the regular season the last three years, now we have to make those next steps.”

CORBIN

Continued from page 3

“Williamsburg continues to improve as a program,” he continued. “We understand that nothing is given in the 50th District and we are excited to see where we fit in this year. Each night will be a battle and something that we always look forward to as a program.”

Where does Wilson feel his

team fits in the overall 13th Region picture?

“Each and every year we believe that we can end up making a run for the regional title come the end of the season,” he said. “This year is no different for us as a program. We have some big shoes to fill and we look forward to the challenges that lie ahead of us.”

“This will be one of the youngest teams that I have had while being at Corbin,”

Wilson added. “We have four kids who are Juniors/Seniors, while having 14 kids who are Sophomores and below.”

“With that will bring challenges during the season, but I feel this season could be one of the most fun years I could have coaching as well,” Wilson continued. “The youthfulness and eagerness to learn is contagious and something that makes coaching fun each and every day.”

JAGUARS

Continued from page 5

of the depth we have this year as we can play a lot of different lineups.”

North Laurel enters the season as the top ranked team in the region with teams such as Bell County, South

Laurel, Clay County, Harlan County, Whitley County, and Corbin not far behind.

“The region is extremely balanced again this year with a number of teams capable of winning,” Valentine said. “We’ll continue to test our team and improve all season to prepare for the tournament.”

WHITLEY

Continued from page 6

“South Laurel is clearly the favorite, but Corbin will be good also,” Collier said. “Coach (Melissia) Douglas does a great job at Williamsburg, so I look for them to be improved. Time will tell how good we will be. For now, we just need to concentrate on improving

every day, and control what we are able to control.

“It’s hard to know where we stack up in the region right now,” he added. “We are just trying to get one percent better every day. We believe if we can do that, we will have an opportunity to reach our goals. The girls on my team are awesome to coach. They show up to practice every day with great attitudes and have a desire to improve.”



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UNION COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY



BULLDOGS SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER		
Mon. 3	AT Tennessee-Chattanooga	7:00 PM EST
Sat. 8	AT Cumberland (TN)	4:00 PM EST
Wed. 12	VS Montreat (NC)*	7:30 PM EST
Mon. 17	VS Bryan (TN)	7:00 PM EST
Sat. 22	AT Milligan (TN)*	4:00 PM EST
Tue. 26	AT Pikeville (KY) *	7:30 PM EST
Sat. 29	VS Shawnee State	6:00 PM EST
Sun. 30	VS IU Kokomo	2:30 PM EST
DECEMBER		
Wed. 3	VS Bluefield (VA)*	7:30 PM EST
Sat. 6	AT Truett McConnell *	4:00 PM EST
Wed. 10	VS Reinhardt (GA) *	7:30 PM EST
Sat. 13	AT Johnson (TN)*	4:00 PM EST
Tue. 16	VS Alice Lloyd (KY)	4:00 PM EST
Sat. 20	AT Lindsey Wilson ^	3:00 PM EST
Sun. 28	AT Wofford College	2:00 PM EST
Tue. 30	AT Georgetown	4:00 PM EST
JANUARY		
Sat. 3	AT Montreat (NC) *	4:00 PM EST
Wed. 7	VS Milligan (TN)*	7:30 PM EST
Sat. 10	VS CIU (SC) *	4:00 PM EST
Wed. 14	AT Reinhardt (GA) *	7:30 PM EST
Sat. 17	AT Spartanburg Methodist *	4:00 PM EST
Wed. 21	AT Bluefield (VA)*	7:30 PM EST
Wed. 28	VS Tennessee Wesleyan *	7:30 PM EST
Sat. 31	VS Johnson (TN)*	4:00 PM EST
FEBRUARY		
Wed. 11	AT Bryan (TN)	7:30 PM EST
Sat. 14	AT Columbia (SC) *	4:00 PM EST
Wed. 18	VS Pikeville (KY) *	7:30 PM EST
Sat. 21	VS Truett McConnell *	4:00 PM EST
* Conference ^ Division Home events in bold		

BULLDOGS ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Cl.	Ht.	Hometown
0	Kam O'Connor	G	R-Jr.	6'0	Lebanon, Ohio
1	Kenton Wright	G	Sr.	5'11	Chicago, ILL.
2	Jabari Covington	G	So.	6'1	Covington, KY
3	Dallas Rufus	F	Sr.	6'3	Louisville, KY
4	Kaleb Hedgepeth	F	R-Jr.	6'6	Wake Forest, N.C.
5	Devin Dunn	F	Jr.	6'5	San Diego, Calif.
11	David Galentine	F	Jr.	6'4	Chicago, ILL.
12	John Carreker	G	R-Fr.	6'3	Atlanta, Ga.
13	Jamarion Gaines	F	So.	6'5	Lexington, KY
14	Kaleb McLendon	G	Jr.	6'1	Harlan, KY
21	Drew Rhodes	C	R-Jr.	6'3	Horse Cave, KY
22	Ali Sakho	C	Jr.	6'8	Toronto, Canada
23	Julian Bunton	G	R-Fr.	6'4	Louisville, KY
32	Maduk, Deng	C	Sr.	6'11	Rochester, Minn.
34	Gavin Allen	C	Jr.	6'10	Corbin, KY
	Kaevon Ennis	G	Fr.	6'1	Louisville, KY
	Jeremiah Godfrey	F	Fr.		Georgetown, KY
	Naseem Khaalid	G	Jr.		Sumter, S.C.



LADY BULLDOGS SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER		
Tue. 25	AT Pikeville (KY)*	5:30 PM EST
Wed. 26	AT Georgetown	5:30 PM EST
DECEMBER		
Wed. 3	VS Bluefield (VA)*	5:30 PM EST
Sat. 6	AT Truett McConnell *	2:00 PM EST
Wed. 10	VS Reinhardt (GA) *	5:30 PM EST
Sat. 13	AT Johnson (TN)*	2:00 PM EST
Tue. 30	AT Cumberland (KY)	5:30 PM EST
JANUARY		
Sat. 3	AT Montreat (NC)*	2:00 PM EST
Wed. 7	VS Milligan (TN) *	5:30 PM EST
Sat. 10	VS CIU (SC)*	2:00 PM EST
Wed. 14	AT Reinhardt (GA) *	5:30 PM EST
Sat. 17	AT Spartanburg Methodist*	2:00 PM EST
Wed. 21	AT Bluefield (VA) *	5:30 PM EST
Sat. 24	VS Brenau (GA) *	2:00 PM EST
Wed. 28	VS Tennessee Wesleyan *	5:30 PM EST
Sat. 31	VS Johnson (TN) *	2:00 PM EST
FEBRUARY		
Wed. 11	AT Bryan (TN) *	5:30 PM EST
Sat. 14	AT Columbia (SC) *	2:00 PM EST
Wed. 18	VS Pikeville (KY) *	5:30 PM EST
Sat. 21	VS Truett McConnell *	2:00 PM EST
* Conference Home events in bold		

LADY BULLDOGS ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Cl.	Ht.	Hometown
1	Kylie Noe	F	Fr.	5'10	Evarts, KY
2	Akeeviah Betts	G	Fr.	5'4	Middlesboro, KY
3	Emrey Glover	PG	So.	5'6	Middlesboro, KY
4	Aniyah Carter	G	Fr.	5'2	Erlanger, KY
5	Sarah Smith	PG	So.	5'8	Barbourville, KY
11	Isis Rodgers	G	Sr.	5'6	Berea, KY
12	Kennedy Scott	G	Fr.	5'5	Mt Washington, KY
13	Isabella Smith	G	Fr.	5'5	Argillite, KY
14	Rachel Smith	G	Jr.	5'7	Georgetown, KY
15	Jayla Hall	G	Fr.	5'5	Louisville, KY
21	Ella Coffey	G	So.	5'8	Danville, KY
22	Harper Coffey	F	So.	5'7	Danville, KY
24	Rayna Duzant	F	Sr.	5'10	Utica, Ny
25	Aymanni Wynn	F	Fr.	6'0	Harlan, KY
31	Natalie Johnson	G	Jr.	5'2	Lenior City, Tenn.
32	Lindsey Pirkle	C	So.	6'2	Cumming, GA
33	Jerrika Norris	G	Fr.	5'4	Owingsville, KY
35	Michaela Williams	C	Fr.	6'3	Corbin, KY

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