

# 2022-23 SOUTHWEST ARKANSAS REGIONAL BASKETBALL PREVIEW



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# BLEVINS HORNETS

The Blevins Hornets and Lady Hornets say their competition should be prepared before stirring up this nest of charged and determined players. Both Coach Kelton and Coach Spencer Kizer say that all four teams have been working hard and are prepared to meet their opponents on the court.

### Senior Boys

Coach Kelton says the Hornets' biggest strength is their dedication and diligence to go all the way. "This team may not have much experience, but they do work hard," Kelton says. "They get along really well and put in a lot of effort. I think by the end of the season, they will come together to make a pretty good team." Both team captains, Evan Rodriguez and Rylee Powell, support that statement. "We have great team chemistry and our strength is working together," Rodriguez says. "Before the end of the season, we will prove to the fans that we will bring a new energy to the Blevins' games." Powell says, "The fans can look forward to watching us hustle up and down the floor and purring on a show. We work hard. The main key for us is to build up and play defense and transition that to offense."

### Senior Girls

Coach Kizer says the Lady Hornets' most favorable asset is how well these athletes work together as a team. "We've got a good mix of guards and post players," Kizer says. "The girls know their roles, whether they are a scorer or defender, what they're good at and what they're not. They get really well and work hard together to fight for every victory." Captains Marcasja Glenn and Ta'keyla Williamson say the fans will be in

for a treat. "This season they should be looking forward to us working hard, especially defense," Glenn says. "We put a lot of work into defense, even putting in some new defenses, and we have some very good team chemistry this year." Williamson elaborated further by saying, "We never give up. We've got good communication and we are always there for each other."

### Junior Boys

Kelton says the Junior Boys Team may not have been together very long, but with each game these players will continue to grow strong. "Many of them are experienced, they just haven't had experience together as a team yet," Kelton says. "This is a pretty good group though. We're in a tough conference, but I feel they will be able to compete at a pretty high level. The more they play together, the better they are gonna be." Kelton says he is eager to see how this dynamic plays out on the court against opponents.

### Junior Girls

Kizer says the Junior Girls Team is much like the Senior Girls, a pretty good mix of post players and guards. "We've got seventh graders that are really helping in those guard spots," Kizer says. "They are young and coming along well in learning what's expected of them, and they have a good mix of eighth and ninth graders to help them figure out those roles. We do a pretty good job of playing both offense and defense." Kizer says of both girls teams together, "Senior and Junior High both probably have one the better mix of guards and posts that I've had in a while. I'm looking forward to what the season brings."



|              |        | * = CONFERENCE GAME                  | HC = HOMECOMING |                      |
|--------------|--------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| TUE          | OCT 4  | RED / WHITE                          | 5:00            | HOME JG, JB, SG, SB  |
| MON          | OCT 17 | BLEVINS JR. HIGH JAMBOREE            |                 | HOME JG, JB          |
| TUE          | OCT 18 | EMERSON                              | 5:00            | HOME JG, SG, SB      |
| TUE          | OCT 25 | LEGACY ACADEMY                       | 5:00            | HOME JG, JB, SG, SB  |
| THUR         | OCT 27 | CADDO HILLS                          | 4:30            | AWAY BJB, JG, SG, SB |
| TUE          | NOV 1  | NEVADA                               | 5:00            | AWAY JG, SG, SB      |
| THUR         | NOV 3  | UMPIRE                               | 5:00            | HOME JG, JB          |
| SAT          | NOV 5  | COUGAR CLASSIC                       | 4:00            | AWAY SG, SB          |
| TUE          | NOV 8  | COSSATOT RIVER                       | 5:30            | HOME SG, SB          |
| THUR         | NOV 10 | FOREMAN                              | 4:30            | HOME JG, JB, SG, SB  |
| TUE          | NOV 15 | CADDO HILLS                          | 4:30            | HOME BJB, JB, SG, SB |
| THUR         | NOV 17 | * BRADLEY (HC)                       | 5:00            | HOME JG, SG, SB      |
| TUE          | NOV 29 | FOUKE                                | 4:30            | HOME JG, JB, SG, SB  |
| NOV 28-DEC 3 |        | PAUL NOESSER JUNIOR TOURN.           |                 | HOME JG, JB          |
| MON          | DEC 5  | SOUTH PIKE COUNTY                    | 5:30            | HOME JG, SG, SB      |
| TUE          | DEC 6  | * TAYLOR                             | 5:00            | HOME JB, SG, SB      |
| THUR         | DEC 8  | * ODEN                               | 5:30            | AWAY JG, SG, SB      |
| TUE          | DEC 13 | * KIRBY                              | 5:30            | AWAY JB, SG, SB      |
| THUR         | DEC 15 | * MT IDA                             | 5:00            | AWAY JG, SG, SB      |
| TUE          | JAN 3  | * MINERAL SPRINGS                    | 5:00            | HOME JB, SG, SB      |
| THUR         | JAN 5  | * LAFAYETTE COUNTY                   | 5:00            | AWAY JG, SG, SB      |
| TUE          | JAN 10 | * BRADLEY                            | 5:00            | AWAY JB, SG, SB      |
| JAN 9-14     |        | SW ARKANSAS SENIOR TOURN AT BRADLEY  |                 | SG, SB               |
| THUR         | JAN 12 | * TAYLOR                             | 5:00            | AWAY JG, SG, SB      |
| TUE          | JAN 17 | * ODEN                               | 5:00            | HOME JB, SG, SB      |
| THUR         | JAN 19 | * KIRBY                              | 5:30            | HOME JG, SG, SB      |
| FRI          | JAN 20 | UMPIRE                               | 5:00            | AWAY JG, JB          |
| TUE          | JAN 24 | * MT IDA                             | 5:00            | HOME JB, SG, SB      |
| THUR         | JAN 26 | * MINERAL SPRINGS                    | 5:00            | AWAY JG, SG, SB      |
| TUE          | JAN 31 | * LAFAYETTE COUNTY                   | 5:00            | HOME JB, SG, SB      |
| THUR         | FEB 2  | GURDON                               | 4:30            | HOME JG, JB, SG, SB  |
| TUE          | FEB 7  | LEGACY ACADEMY                       | 5:00            | AWAY SG, SB          |
| FEB 6-11     |        | 1-A7 JUNIOR HIGH DISTRICT TOURNAMENT |                 |                      |
| FRI          | FEB 10 | POYEN                                | 5:00            | HOME SG, SB          |
| FEB 13-18    |        | 1-A7 SENIOR HIGH DISTRICT TOURNAMENT |                 |                      |
| FEB 22-25    |        | SENIOR HIGH REGIONAL TOURNAMENT      |                 |                      |
| FEB 28-MAR 4 |        | CLASS A STATE TOURNAMENT             |                 |                      |

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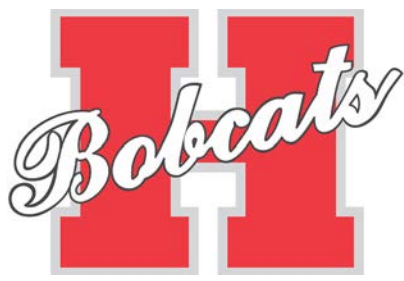
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# HOPE BOBCATS

## BOYS

Hope Bobcats Coach and Dean of Students Sam Bradford may not know who his stars will be yet when basketball season starts, but he knows they will work hard, and he has no doubt who he would rather take into a game.

"At the end of the day, win, lose or draw," Bradford said, "I wouldn't trade our kids for any other kids. I will go to battle with the ones that we've got, five-foot, six-foot, seven-foot. We'll take the ones that we've got. We're going to go to work with them."

Bradford said all of Hope's teams, from junior high to junior varsity to varsity, will take their identity from what the town is known for. "The thing that impressed me is they show up. They're hard-working regardless of what the score is. They always represent the community as being blue-collar, hard-working people."

Right now, Bradford says he has a couple players returning from last year, but he is in something of a holding pattern in practice as he awaits the arrival of most of his players from the Bobcats football teams. That means practices for the first couple weeks could include as few as four players, but he expects a possible 20 more as the football season winds down and from that point, the race will be on to have his teams catch up on offensive skills to match their ability on defense, which he refers to as "our basic trademark."

Bradford refers to offensive practice as "a timing situation,"

and adds, "you have to get a group together, and they have to get your timing down. Offense is going to come, but we can be good on defense right now."

On offense, Bradford said, "We're going to run a lot of flex offense. And we like to run what I call a control break. We try to run a five-man control break. We want to utilize quickness in order to run a fast-paced game."

A flex offense is defined by ESPN basketball analyst and former college coach Fran Fraschilla as "a continuity (or pattern) man-to-man offense where all five players are interchangeable. It involves constant reversal of the ball from one side of the court to the other. It can also be described as a structured form of 'motion offense.' And, with patient ball movement and good screening, it can keep a defense on its toes for the entire 35-second shot clock."

The control-break offense is a variety of offense most associated with longtime pro and college coach Paul Westhead, whose teams took very few seconds to get their shots off after a change in possession. It's no wonder that with regard to the new 35-second shot clock instituted in Arkansas high school basketball this year, Bradford said it shouldn't affect his teams because they would certainly get a shot off before it expires.

"If we could play it on paper," Bradford said. "We probably would lead the nation, but we're going to have to get on the floor and play, and they're going to have to prove themselves,

and that's what I'm looking forward to."

The key will be transitioning his players from football to basketball. "It's going to take a little time to be good, obviously," Bradford said.

Hovering over all the other uncertainty, the refurbishment of Jones Field House is a question mark. "We're still in the process of renovating. That process has been going on since March. Right now it doesn't look promising that we will be finished with it by what we have scheduled as our first ball game," Bradford said, and cautioned that the schedule may still be changed to move venues for some early games.

When asked whether his team had any standouts yet, Bradford said, "We will all learn it together. I don't know who it's going to be. It's going to be a quick learning process." And toward that end, he has scheduled pre-conference season tournaments for his varsity team in New Boston December 8-10 and in Paris, Texas December 27-30.

As for the junior varsity team, Bradford says there is no division between it and the varsity team. "Whether you play varsity or play junior varsity is going to be determined by what I need to know. There's just so much you can do in the course of a game. And we have 25 players. [Junior varsity] gives us a chance to do a constant evaluation of players as to where they fit in. We don't really create that divide. We practice together, and we work together," Bradford said.

## GIRLS

Lady Bobcats Coach Kelly Muldrew is a Renaissance woman, carrying three masters degrees and working on a doctorate. She has taught a wide spectrum of subjects. To history, biology, civics and economics she has added basketball, going from Assistant to Associate Head Coach under former Coach Susan Powers and then to Head Coach this year.

"I enjoy it," Muldrew, who is also a Hope High graduate, said of her position. "My coaching part of my teaching career is probably the best part. I have a good group of young ladies. I love spending time with them. From our time together, it's not just about basketball. We learn life lessons. We learn how to grow together, how to happily coexist, how to support each other, how to encourage each other, and how to be patient and teach others."

An example of the latter trait soaking in is the team's welcoming of its exchange student members. "For the past two years, we've had foreign exchange students that have wanted to play. And they don't really know the game. But we have such a nurturing team, they enjoy being a part, they enjoy learning, and they just come in and are part of the family," Muldrew said.

While her varsity team may be good teammate teachers, they are also a forward-laden, offensively daring unit with a good bench and seven seniors on the roster. Muldrew says this unit will improve on last year's team, which she believes did not perform to its potential, tending to lose games by "not staying aggressive the whole game."

Small in numbers the team may be, acknowledges Muldrew, but not in height as the team boasts guard/forward Khalaya Randle, a tenth grader who "can attack the basket, has a quick first step and can also shoot the mid-range jumper, so I think she's going to be pretty hard to handle. I'm going to have to rely on her a lot."

Senior Camron Robinson, at forward and center, also earns the approving moniker from Muldrew of "aggressive" in that "she knows how to get the ball. She's going to be a big rebounder for me," she said. "And I look for her to play an extensive number of minutes. She did so for me last year, and she led the team in rebounding." This year, she will be counted on for more scoring, Muldrew added.

Handling the ball will be the seniors Mariana Turcios ("A big threat because she can shoot the three as well as attack the basket," Muldrew said.) and Janiyah Nash. Turcios, who sustained a severe ankle sprain with a bruised ligament is expected to be back in time for the second week of November.

As for the varsity team's bench, Muldrew said that since the team's numbers are small, with only 13 on its roster, "everybody will have to play." As part of this unit, she is glad to have back senior power forward Quan Bradley who sat out her junior year because of a torn ACL. Muldrew said, "She's back and aggressive and ready to play."

A potential area of difficulty for the team, at least at first, could be in its lack of an experienced point guard, with both Turcios and Nash new to playing the position full time. "The main thing we're going to struggle with is the ball-handling," Muldrew said.

Another obstacle has had to do with the readiness of the facilities. While Muldrew is making do with a portable shot clock during practices as Jones Field House remains under construction, she has had to cut short a session at least once. "It's a struggle practicing because of all the dust and debris everywhere, and the court is almost uninhabitable. It's slick. I had to end practice yesterday, because I was afraid of someone getting injured," she told us on October 6. On November 3, she told us the Field House was still not ready and the new

completion date she has been told would be the first of December.

Muldrew said she would be adopting a motion ball movement offense, similar to what teams like the San Antonio Spurs and the Golden State Warriors run. "It gets everybody moving," she said. "The more you move, the better chances you have at getting the defense out of position."

On defense, she said, "Man[-to-man] defense is the basis of all defense. You have to learn how to shift. You have to learn what position you're in, and you have to learn how to watch your man and the ball at all times. So I mix it up a bit, but my defense is always going to be a man defense."

Regarding the junior varsity team, which at Hope is composed of ninth graders, Muldrew said, "We're going to be pretty small. Small in size. We have a lot of guards that will be coming up to varsity next year. That's a feisty bunch. They work hard, and they go get it. They like to trap and they like to steal the ball."

To parents and supporters, Muldrew says, "Come out to support the young ladies. Encourage them and let them know that we appreciate their hard work and their effort. These young ladies have worked all summer long. They only had about a month off during the summer. And the rest of the time, we were here lifting weights training and going through drills."

The first game for ninth-grade girls is scheduled to take place at Jones Field House at Hope High Thursday November 17 with the Lady Bobcats hosting Texarkana with tipoff at 5:00 p.m. But this game may change venues due to the state of Jones Field House.

The first game for the varsity girls is at New Boston High, Friday November 18 at 5:00 p.m.



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# HOPE BOBCATS BASKETBALL

## NOVEMBER

|         |               |           |       |       |
|---------|---------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| NOV. 12 | TEXARKANA     | 7G-7B A-B | 10:00 | THERE |
| NOV. 17 | TEXARKANA     | 7G-8G-9G  | 5:00  | HERE  |
| NOV. 17 | TEXARKANA     | 7B-8B-9B  | 5:00  | THERE |
| Nov. 18 | NEW BOSTON    | BG-SG-SB  | 5:00  | THERE |
| NOV. 29 | ARKANSAS HIGH | BB-SG-SB  | 5:00  | THERE |

## DECEMBER

|           |                       |             |       |            |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------------|-------|------------|
| DEC. 3    | ASHDOWN               | 7G-7B-8G-8B | 10:00 | HERE       |
| DEC. 6    | NEW BOSTON            | BB-SG-SB    | 5:00  | HERE       |
| DEC. 8-10 | NEW BOSTON TOURNAMENT | SG -SB      | TBA   | NEW BOSTON |
| DEC. 12   | NASHVILLE             | 7B-8G-9G9B  | 5:00  | HERE       |
| DEC.15    | ARKADELPHIA           | 8G-9G-9B    | 5:00  | THERE      |
| Dec.27-30 | Genoa Tournament      | SG          | TBA   | Genoa      |
| Dec.27-30 | Paris Tournament      | SB          | TBA   | PARIS, TX  |

## JANUARY

|         |                        |             |      |             |
|---------|------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|
| JAN. 2  | ASHDOWN                | 8B-9G-9B    | 5:00 | THERE       |
| JAN. 3  | ASHDOWN                | BG-SG-SB    | 5:00 | HERE        |
| JAN. 5  | MALVERN                | 8G-9G-9B    | 5:00 | HERE        |
| JAN. 6  | MALVERN                | BB-SG-SB    | 5:00 | THERE       |
| JAN. 9  | DE QUEEN               | 8G-9G-9B    | 5:00 | HERE        |
| JAN. 10 | DE QUEEN               | BG-SG-SB    | 5:00 | THERE       |
| JAN. 12 | ARKADELPHIA            | 8B-9G-9B    | 5:00 | HERE        |
| JAN. 13 | ARKADELPHIA            | BB-SG-SB    | 5:00 | THERE       |
| JAN. 14 | Arkadelphia Tournament | 7G-7B       | TBA  | Arkadelphia |
| JAN.16  | NASHVILLE              | 7G-8G-9G-9B | 5:00 | THERE       |
| JAN.17  | NASHVILLE              | BG-SG-SB    | 5:00 | HERE        |
| JAN.20  | MAGNOLIA               | BG-SG-SB    | 5:00 | HERE        |
| JAN. 24 | CAMDEN                 | BB-SG-SB    | 5:00 | THERE       |
| JAN. 26 | ASHDOWN                | 8G-9G-9B    | 5:00 | HERE        |
| JAN.27  | ASHDOWN                | BG-SG-SB    | 5:00 | THERE       |
| JAN.30  | MALVERN                | 8B-9G-9B    | 5:00 | THERE       |
| JAN. 31 | MALVERN                | BB-SG-SB    | 5:00 | HERE        |

## FEBRUARY

|           |             |                         |      |       |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------------|------|-------|
| FEB.. 2   | DE QUEEN    | 8B-9G-9B                | 5:00 | THERE |
| FEB.3     | DEQUEEN     | BG-SG-SB                | 5:00 | HERE  |
| FEB.4-6-9 | HOPE        | Junior Girlsjunior Boys | TBA  | HOPE  |
| FEB. 7    | ARKADELPHIA | BB-SG-SB                | 5:00 | HERE  |
| FEB.10    | NASHVILLE   | BG-SG-SB                | 5:00 | THERE |
| FEB. 14   | MAGNOLIA    | BB-SG-SB                | 5:00 | THERE |
| FEB.17    | CAMDEN      | BG-SG-SB                | 5:00 | HERE  |

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# GARRETT SAINTS

## BOYS

The Garrett Memorial Christian School boys' varsity Saints basketball team will improve on their previous season's two win season, said fourth-year Saints boys head coach Stan Nix. "I can tell you we're looking quite a bit better than we did last year. And I really feel like we'll win five to ten games maybe this year."

The GMCS Saints teams play in the Heartland Christian Athletic Association, which is made up of other Christian schools in the states of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. They also play several public schools in the area, with matches this year against Ouachita, Nevada, Dierks and Fouke.

To face these and the Heartland Association teams, the Saints' boy's varsity team will be more experienced and taller than last year. "I've got some boys that are on the senior team that will give us some size that we haven't had," Nix said. "I'm going to have two seniors that will probably start. I'll have a junior that will start. I will have a sophomore starter. And I'll have an eighth grader. Right now, we only have the one eighth grader."

Nix says a player many should come watch is junior Tre Alexander, who scored 25 points a game last year: "He's one of the best in southwest Arkansas. He's a good shooter. He's a good rebounder. He's good with defense. I mean, he's just an all-around talent. And he's a really good kid."

As for the junior varsity boys team, Nix said he will have eight players eligible, but some of those will have to play on the varsity team. As for game play, this team's identity is an unknown quantity. "We are very young with very little game experience. We will not know [what we have] until we play some games," Nix said.

But for Nix and for the Garrett Memorial Christian School athletic program there is a purpose beyond the winning of games. "I really enjoy being with the kids," he said. "And I just believe, just like I tell the kids all the time, Almighty God wants to be your friend. He loves you and He wants you to listen to him and ask him, 'What do you want me to do with the rest of my life? And if you're serious he's going to guide you.'"

## GIRLS

The Garrett Memorial Christian School Lady Saints won a Heartland Christian Athletic Association 1A state title last year with their coach Rachel Foster. With Foster's departure from basketball to Gainesville, Texas, the Lady Saints will have co-coaches this season, with James Tyson, whose day job is his dental practice, calling the shots during games and first-year Coach and GMCS' director of girls' athletics Courtney Rook assisting Tyson for now but likely to be head girls' basketball coach soon.

While Foster may not be the team's coach anymore, her legacy will remain, Tyson said. "She left us with a good foundation. We'll run a lot of her same plays with a little twist on them."

The Varsity team has three seniors, five juniors, one sophomore and one freshman, Tyson said, and the experienced players are used to success, having won two out of three state tournaments in the Heartland Christian School Association.

In describing his varsity team, Tyson sees two advantages it will have over most of its opposition: the Lady Saints have played a lot of basketball and they tend to enjoy a higher vantage point on the action. "We're a big team. My daughter [Sophy Tyson] is six feet [tall]. We've got a couple of girls that are 5-9 and 5-10 and height is one thing, but I think experience is going to be one of our assets and two of our juniors were starters last year."

Rook, a GMCS and Arkansas State University graduate fresh from leading the Lady Saints volleyball teams to the semifinals (junior varsity) and the playoffs (varsity) yet still young enough to have played with the varsity team's seniors, named senior Sophy Tyson as a standout player as well as junior Katie Beth Alexander and junior Mikayla Fields. She acknowledged that when it comes to great players, "We've got quite a few."

Coach Tyson agrees. "We've got our starting lineup minus one from last year. We lost our leading rebounder. She graduated last year, but I would say the bulk of our scoring is back. About 80 percent of our minutes are back," he said.

Rook added that the team's years of experience playing together will be to its advantage, and adds that it will also capitalize on its superior backcourt.

"Most of them have played together since the seventh grade," she said. "We have good guards, specifically good point guards who are good ball handlers. She also said this year's team may even be as good as last year's championship team."

Tyson notes that though the school is small in enrollment, its Lady Saints varsity lineup more than holds its own against public school competition.

A key to the Lady Saints' success has been the integration of the junior varsity's practices and play with that of the varsity. "We kind of do them both together," Rook said, referring to practices. "So they know the same plays, defense. So when they get up to varsity, they'll already understand."

Tyson sees possibilities, meanwhile, that the junior varsity team's players can live up to the varsity team's achievements. "Junior varsity has a lot of potential, a lot of new faces. We've got several girls that have never played that are playing, but they're very aggressive. There's a lot of work to do with the JV but I mean, it's they have they have the intangibles to make good basketball players," he said.

Given the strength of this year's Varsity team as a draw to its gym, Rook advised those thinking of attending the home games to "Come early and stay till it's all over."



| GMCS Basketball 2022-23 |                                       |             |      |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| 18-Oct                  | Red/White Game                        | All         | 5:30 |
| 24-Oct                  | Ouachita - Away                       | All         | 5:00 |
| 1-Nov                   | Legacy - Home                         | All         | 4:30 |
| 3-Nov                   | Nevada - Home                         | JHG/SHG     | 5:00 |
| 4-Nov                   | Claiborne Academy - Away              | All         | 4:00 |
| 8-Nov                   | Stephens Christian                    | JVB         | 5:00 |
| 11-Nov                  | Claiborne Academy - Home (Homecoming) | All         | 5:00 |
| 14-Nov                  | Ambassador - Home                     | JVB/VB      | 5:00 |
| 15-Nov                  | Dierks - Home                         | JHG/JHB/SHG | 4:30 |
| 11/17-11/19             | Tourn @ CCS                           | All         | TBA  |
| 28-Nov                  | Fouke - Away                          | JHG/SHG/SHB | 5:00 |
| 29-Nov                  | SCA - Home                            | All         | 4:30 |
| 2-Dec                   | New Life                              | All         | 5:00 |
| 6-Dec                   | Ambassador - Away                     | JVB/VB      | 5:00 |
| 8-Dec                   | CCS - Home                            | JHG/SHG/SHB | 4:30 |
| 9-Dec                   | Valley - Away                         | JHG/JHB/SHB | 4:30 |
| 12-Dec                  | ACA - Away                            | JHB/SHG/SHB | 4:30 |
| 15-Dec                  | Cornerstone - Home                    | TBD         | 4:30 |
| 16-Dec                  | ALCA - Home                           | JHG/SHG/SHB | 4:30 |
| 12/28-12/30             | TOURN @ Lafayette Co.                 | SHG         | TBA  |
| 6-Jan                   | Valley - Home                         | JHG/JHB/SHB | 4:30 |
| 10-Jan                  | ALCA - Away                           | JHB/SHG/SHB | 4:30 |
| 12-Jan                  | SCA - Away                            | All         | 4:30 |
| 13-Jan                  | Westside - Away                       | All         | 4:30 |
| 17-Jan                  | Legacy Academy - Away                 | All         | 4:30 |
| 19-Jan                  | Nevada - Away                         | JHG/SHG     | 5:00 |
| 20-Jan                  | Cornerstone - Away                    | TBD         | 4:30 |
| 24-Jan                  | ACA - Home                            | JHG/SHG/SHB | 4:30 |
| 26-Jan                  | CCS - Away                            | JHB/SHG/SHB | 4:30 |
| 27-Jan                  | Dierks - Away                         | All         | 5:00 |
|                         | JH STATE                              |             | TBD  |
|                         | SH STATE                              |             | TBD  |

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# SPRING HILL BEARS

## GIRLS

Spring Hill Girls' Basketball Coach Austin Kidd said he has finally gotten to the point that all the players on the program's senior girls' team were taught by him about the game from the point he arrived three years ago. So now he expects big things from a squad that knows what he wants and knows how to bring it about.

Last season's team, he said, was young, having only one senior. But now he has four seniors who he can see have stepped up from how they played last year and have so far set a good example for the younger players. Kidd hopes this translates into an ability to string together strong performances this season. "We were really inconsistent last year. We were really good one game and would be really, really sloppy the next. This year, they've been way more consistent every day, which I hope goes into games," he said.

He called his four seniors "outstanding." They are Camryn Dickson, Libby Flowers, Erin McMaster and Shelby Perry. Forward Dickson, Kidd said, is "one of the best three-point shooters in the state. And opposing coaches will tell you that, too. She's one they have to game plan with, because she can take a game over with her outside shooting. But where she's really developed this summer is some of her inside game and some of her driving and really focused on a complete game."

The Spring Hill Lady Bears' core of guards, which includes Flowers, Blakelee Adams, Raeli Putnam, Livi Tyree and Andrea Zacharias, gives Kidd "a lot of depth," he said. He likes that he can trust them with the ball, and that they know what he expects.

About forward Erin McMasters, Kidd said, "She can get inside and play. She can bang a little bit, and then she can get outside, and she can knock down the outside shot. She can handle the ball." Another forward of distinction for Kidd is Ava Purifoy, a junior, about whom Kidd said, "She has really developed and grown a lot, and she's going to open some eyes this season. She can shoot it and drive it. She's got the best court vision in the program. She can play one through four if I need her to. She's kind of a Swiss army knife."

To play center, the Spring Hill Lady Bears will have two sisters. Kelsie Thompson as a junior is a returning all-conference player. Her sophomore sister, Kenzie Thompson, will also play at center with Aubrey Anderson, another sophomore.

Kidd said that the offense should be different this year in one important way. The team will take its time to develop open shots as opposed to what he calls, "settling for the first shot." Starting in summer play, Kidd began seeing the team's offense become less predictable. "Our ball movement has improved. We're more balanced offensively. Whereas last year, it was a lot of depending on the three-ball, so far this summer and this fall, we've done much better about attacking, getting the ball inside to our post player. That's been good to see."

For defense, Kidd said the players he has this year will allow the Lady Bears to apply more pressure to ball handlers. "We've got decent length. So we're going throw a little bit of our zone presses on there. And I'll have a three-quarters-of-the-court zone to make teams throw it over the top." Kidd said he'll use this to generate steals for his team.

In terms of what the program's move to the 2A Region 7 conference will mean, Kidd said the burden of travel will not be as heavy, and that there will be more opponents seen more than once. He foresees that the toughest games will be against Horatio and Acorn (near Mena). The conference, he said, is well-balanced, with good teams from top to bottom, "We've got some really good coaches and some really good teams in our conference, and we've got to be ready every night."

The Lady Bears junior team will mainly play on the same days and in the same venues as the senior team, but there will be a few exceptions, as seen on the master schedule SWARK. Today was provided. Kidd called this team "hard-working" and said it is led by a post player named Eva McBryer along with "three really scrappy shooters that can shoot the outside shot and can also get to the basket and finish." These are ninth graders Carly Foster, Anna Flowers and Layla Cantwell.

Of the four eighth graders, Laney Flowers, Kayla Ford, Zoey Myers and Alyssa Porters, Kidd said they "have really stepped up and developed their game."

Referring to his teams' overall identity, Kidd says, "I want them to be able to represent our community as blue-collar, hard-working, down on the floor, just hard-nosed. That's what I want them to be, the team that works hard and that their community can rally behind, being good people in the community. I don't care if we never win a game as long. As long as they're doing that, I'll be happy."

## BOYS

Spring Hill's new boys' basketball coach, Drew Hamilton, said his senior high basketball team is the beneficiary of last year's players being so young. "A lot of them played quite a few minutes. So we're going to be bringing a lot of experience, and I feel like we're set to have a pretty fair year this year."

Hamilton, who had been a coach in Queen City, Texas before arriving at Spring Hill, said "Where I was in Queen City, they had a lot of high energy kids who work hard. I feel like I have changed schools but not personnel. They work hard during the gym time that's open. I don't feel like there's any more a coach could ask for than that."

The Bears' movement to a new region within its conference, 2A Region 7, this year will be a benefit, Hamilton said. "This year I think it's going to fit our style a lot better ... We're going to have some good challenges there." Among the conference competitors this year will be Dierks, Acorn (Mena) and Lafayette County (Stamps).

Hamilton said his senior team is guard-heavy but light in post players. "We have no true fives [centers] at all." But he points to three key players from last year who will bring their experience to bear (no pun intended): Andrew Wylie, Levin McGuire and Jacob Perry.

Andrew Wylie was a starter last year. Levin McGuire, the Bears' magician quarterback, is also on the team. Of him, Hamilton says that when the football season ends and he begins his winter sport, McGuire will "definitely give us a spark, just like he does on the football field. He's a big energy guy." Jacob Perry, Hamilton said, is "a late move-in who will play some big minutes for us" and will play both at the guard and forward positions.

Bo Revels is a player with some experience as a small forward and a stretch four; that is a power forward who frequently plays on the perimeter and can shoot for distance. Blaine Tuttle, one of Levin McGuire's favorite targets on the football field, will "bring a huge impact to our team" and will assume the power forward and center positions, though primarily the Bears senior team will be three guards and two stretch fours.

Spring Hill, Hamilton said, will run a motion offense with a few set plays. On defense, fans can expect a lot of variety. Hamilton described himself as a "defense-sided guy," and said "We're going to run a multitude of different defenses. We're going to throw everything we've got at people. I think with a team that's so guard heavy we're going to give some people some trouble." Indeed, Hamilton said he generally prefers a lower scoring game.

To sum the team up, Hamilton said, "We've got some guys that didn't get a lot of recognition last year, but they've got a chance to really show something this year, and I'm hoping they do."

The junior varsity team, called the junior high team at Spring Hill, will be "pretty athletic," Hamilton said, but, like the varsity team, guard heavy and lacking in size. "As far as I can look, I don't see any big bodies coming in. They're going to be mainly guards and stretch fours. They're going to have the same kind of impact [as the varsity team]. They're going to get up into people, play a high energy [game] and give people trouble."

When the season starts for both teams, Hamilton said he is not the type to circle particular games on the schedule. For him they are all important. "They're all circled for me. The senior boys start with Taylor this year. I keep telling them you have to go into every game that it's got to be a statement."

| Date          | Location      | Opponent                      | Teams          | Time |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------|------|
| Nov. 5        | Away          | Genoa Jamboree                | 7G, 7B, 8G     | TBD  |
| Nov. 8        | Away          | Taylor                        | JG, SG, SB     | 5:00 |
| Nov. 10       | Home          | Arkansas High                 | 7G, JG, SG     | 5:00 |
| Nov. 12       | Marmaduke     | Fight Like a Girl Classic     | JVSG, SG       | TBD  |
| Nov. 15       | Away          | Emerson                       | JG, JB, SG, SB | 4:30 |
| Nov. 14-19    | Nashville     | Nashville Jr. High Tournament | JG, JB         | TBA  |
| Nov. 17       | Home          | Ouachita                      | JG, JB, SG, SB | 4:30 |
| Nov. 28-12/4  | Blevins       | Blevins Jr. High Tourn.       | JG, JB         | TBD  |
| Nov. 29       | Home          | Gurdon                        | 7G, JG, SG     | 5:00 |
| Dec. 2        | Away          | Acorn*                        | JB, SG, SB     | 5:00 |
| Dec. 6        | Home          | Horatio*                      | JG, SG, SB     | 5:30 |
| Dec. 8        | Home          | Caddo Hills*                  | JB, SG, SB     | 5:30 |
| Dec. 10       | Emerson       | Emerson 7th grade Jamboree    | 7G, 7B         | TBD  |
| Dec. 12       | Away          | Lafayette County              | JG, JB, SG, SB | 4:30 |
| Dec. 13       | Home          | Murfreesboro*                 | JB, SG, SB     | 5:30 |
| Dec. 16       | Home          | Foreman*                      | 7G, JG, SG, SB | 4:30 |
| Dec. 17       | Murfreesboro  | Murfreesboro 7th gd Jamboree  | 7G, 7B         | TBD  |
| Dec. 20       | Away          | Fouke                         | 7B, JB, SB     | 5:00 |
| Dec. 27-29    | Genoa         | Genoa Christmas Classic       | SG, SB         | TBD  |
| Jan. 7        | Fouke         | Fouke 7th grade Jamboree      | 7G, 7B         | TBD  |
| Jan. 9        | Home          | Kirby                         | JB, SG, SB     | 5:00 |
| Jan. 10       | Home          | Dierks*^                      | JB, SG, SB     | 5:00 |
| Jan. 11-14    | ParkersChapel | Parker's Chapel Invitational  | JG, JB         | TBD  |
| Jan. 10-14    | Bradley       | Southwest Shootout            | SG, SB         | TBD  |
| Jan. 17       | Away          | Caddo Hills*                  | JG, SG, SB     | 5:30 |
| Jan. 19       | Away          | Horatio                       | JB, SG, SB     | 5:30 |
| Jan. 20       | Away          | Murfreesboro*                 | JG, SG, SB     | 5:30 |
| Jan. 24       | Away          | Foreman*                      | 7B, JB, SG, SB | 5:30 |
| Jan. 27       | Home          | Acorn*                        | JG, SG, SB     | 4:30 |
| Feb. 2        | Away          | Dierks*                       | JG, SG, SB     | 5:00 |
| Feb. 7        | Away          | Nevada                        | SG, SB         | 6:00 |
| Feb. 10       | Home          | Bradley                       | SG, SB         | 6:00 |
| Feb. 4-9      | Spring Hill   | Jr. High District Tournament  | JG, JB         | TBD  |
| Feb. 11-18    | Dierks        | Sr. High District Tournament  | SG, SB         | TBD  |
| Feb. 20-24    | TBD           | Regional Tournament           | SG, SB         | TBD  |
| Feb. 27-Mar 3 | TBD           | State Tournament              | SG, SB         | TBD  |

\* Conference Games ^ Senior Night

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# NEVADA BLUE JAYS

## BOYS

In his 20th year as a coach, Bobby Mullins is in charge of a Nevada High School varsity team with 14 players eager to do better this year than a loss in the regional round of the state playoffs. Though this year's team lost six seniors, Mullins believes the 2022 Nevada Blue Jays can win with its three current seniors if they can improve on last year's performance late in the season.

As Mullins describes it, last year "we had a Bear jump on our back last January and early February" when his team lost three in a row for the first time in recent memory and "just kind of coasted to the end."

That included the first round playoff game against Mineral Springs in Mineral Springs, which the Blue Jays dropped 60-55. The whole thing, said Mullins, "leaves a bad taste in your mouth."

But it has to taste sweet right now that his team is 5-1, having won against nonconference foes Acorn (Mena), Ouachita (Donaldson), Caddo Hills (Norman), Blevins and, on Friday, November 4, having claimed a 70-45 victory against last year's 1A champion, Bradley, on the road. Their only loss has been to Guy-Perkins (Guy), which last year was a regional semi-finalist on October 28 by a single point.

When we spoke to him in early October, Mullins said his varsity team, or the senior team as it is called at Nevada, will have the advantage in guard play. "That's our bread and butter, right there," he said. Nevada's point guard is Laqualion Christopher, who built his strength up over the summer and impressed Mullins with his work ethic and intelligence.

Christopher, Mullins said, took the loss to Mineral Springs "as hard as anybody" and is motivated to get Nevada back into

contention for the state title. "It lit a fire under him," Mullins said.

Another senior, Jalen Lowe, will be a post player, though not a tall one, but certainly a hard worker who practices his shot any time he can.

Chad Drake, Mullins said, a two-time triple jump state champion, who can go left or right to the basket, will play sometimes in the post and sometimes at guard. "He's kind of a tweener. He'll be playing in the post or in between according to what I need," Mullins said.

With two juniors also starting, Mullins said he could see his team would be decent, but also said it's often hard to tell from practices how a team would fare under the lights and with spectators in the bleachers. (The interview was done in early October before his team began its season.)

In terms of offensive preference, Mullins said he favors uptempo play, but that his experienced guards will be able to slow things down when it's needed. The shot clock, new to Arkansas high school basketball this year, may pose occasional challenges as Mullins manages his team from the bench, he admits: "We played a couple games with the shot clock last year. And I learned a lot, made some mistakes ... I'm not the only one in the state with that problem. It's an adjustment. It really is."

Mullins admitted the team would find itself at a disadvantage under the basket because of lack of height among its post players. The tallest player on the team is 6-4, but will not start.

A look at Nevada's schedule reveals that one of the teams Mullins has called "a big thorn in our side, as we've been a

thorn in their side" will be played twice not three times, since Bradley has moved to 1A Region 7.

Considering other teams, Dermott, Mullins said, "has a good young coach" and has "kids playing the right way." Emerson, he said, "is always Emerson. They're always competitive." Hampton is another team Mullins has heard will be competitive this year. He believes the division will be a "toss-up" in that rather than two teams usually racing well ahead from start to finish, the battle for the top will be more suspenseful.

Leading the junior varsity, or what is called the junior high team at Nevada, will be returning starters Keyonte Wingfield and Justin Myrick who "has developed into a pretty good little shooter." Mullins said his junior high team will be like the varsity team in that it will be good on the athletic side but not blessed with size. Three starters from the conference-winning junior Blue Jays were lost to the varsity team. The team has five ninth graders, two eighth graders and two seventh graders, with 13 seventh and eighth graders on the developmental roster.

Asked what it was like to work with his teams, Mullins said, "It's a joy. This year's group, they're a bought-in team. I don't have to gripe about them not working hard. Sometimes I have to back them off. They just work so hard." He said he can even tell his players are honing their shooting even outside their practices.

The Nevada gym and offices are nearly overrun with championship banners and trophies. With enough fan support his teams this year will contribute to what is already an impressive collection.

## GIRLS

Ebony Walker, new coach of the Nevada High Lady Blue Jays, has a way of telling her teams when it's time to bear down on defense. "I say 'Eat it up.' And when I say 'Eat it up,' that's a lot of really scrapping for that ball. No easy baskets is what I say."

Walker said her varsity team, having come off a 12-13 season last year and lost its one playoff game to Emerson, 27-42, is on a mission to improve on that performance, beginning with a change in mindset. "It's really going to be more of the dedication that they brought to the table so far ... they have a different attitude, a different approach."

Walker said there will be fewer senior players than she expected this year, but she's more interested in qualities of leadership in her players than in what classification they may be. Speaking to her senior players, she says, "You may dominate in some way, but [you're] also going to show the characteristics of a leader, being able to control that team. And I have that same thing when it comes to my junior girls."

The varsity Lady Blue Jay guards, in practice, are showing a pattern of adding more skills on a day-to-day basis. "I'm expecting great guard play. I have players who are developing more of seeing the floor, so every day they set a new goal to accomplish that I can expect some good guard play once they sync in with another player. I can see a two-man game really going strong," Walker said.

From her forwards and post players, Walker said, "it's going to be some power play. I'm expecting my power play to be able to go inside and outside, from the paint to outside the paint." In general, she favors using a variety of players underneath rather than players always staying with consistent roles.

When it comes to offense, Walker says she does not impose one particular kind. "I prefer to read off my players," she said.

In describing her junior varsity team, Walker acknowledges that team will be joined by newcomers to the game, but "they have really shown me that they are also dedicated. They're very committed. If they're not really getting something, I'm pretty sure about them getting it next week. They have to develop their skills. My junior high team may struggle, but all in all, I think they're going to be all right."

Asked what she would say to parents and fans of the team, Walker is clear. "To come and support. The thing that motivates kids is for them to see that support."

That support is especially needed, as the varsity team has begun their season at 1-6, but three of those games were close enough that more fan support might have helped decide things in the Lady Blue Jays' favor.



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## NEVADA BLUE JAYS BASKETBALL

| Date     | Opponent                      | Team            | Time        |
|----------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 10/13    | <b>Blue &amp; Gray Game</b>   | <b>Srs, Jrs</b> | <b>5:00</b> |
| 10/17    | @ Blevins Jr. Jamboree        | Jrs             | TBA         |
| 10/21    | <b>Acorn</b>                  | <b>Srs</b>      | <b>5:30</b> |
| 10/24    | <b>Caddo Hills</b>            | <b>Srs, JrB</b> | <b>5:00</b> |
| 10/25    | <b>Ouachita</b>               | <b>Srs, Jrs</b> | <b>4:00</b> |
| 10/28    | @ Guy Perkins                 | Srs             | 5:00        |
| 11/1     | <b>Blevins</b>                | <b>Srs, JrG</b> | <b>5:00</b> |
| 11/4     | @ Bradley                     | Srs, JrB        | 5:00        |
| 11/7-12  | @ Hampton Jr. Tourney         | Jrs             | TBA         |
| 11/8     | @ Kirby                       | Srs, JrG        | 5:00        |
| 11/15    | <b>Bradley</b>                | <b>Srs, JrG</b> | <b>5:00</b> |
| 11/14-19 | @ Nashville Jr. Tourney       | Jrs             | TBA         |
| 11/29    | <b>Hermitage</b>              | <b>Srs, JrB</b> | <b>5:00</b> |
| 12/2     | @ Emerson                     | Srs, JrG        | 5:00        |
| 12/6     | @ Bearden                     | Srs, JrB        | 5:00        |
| 12/9     | @ Dermott                     | Srs, JrG        | 5:00        |
| 12/26-29 | Genoa Central Sr Tourney      | SrG             | TBA         |
| 12/27-29 | Camden Fairview Sr Tourney    | SrB             | TBA         |
| 1/5      | @ Strong                      | Srs, JrB        | 5:00        |
| 1/6      | <b>Friendship Aspire</b>      | <b>Srs, JrB</b> | <b>5:00</b> |
| 1/9-14   | @ Bradley Sr. Tourney         | Srs             | TBA         |
| 1/10     | <b>Hampton</b>                | <b>Srs, JrB</b> | <b>5:00</b> |
| 1/13     | <b>Dermott</b>                | <b>Srs, JrB</b> | <b>5:00</b> |
| 1/17     | <b>Bearden</b>                | <b>Srs, JrG</b> | <b>5:00</b> |
| 1/20     | @ Hermitage                   | Srs, JrG        | 5:00        |
| 1/24     | <b>Strong</b>                 | <b>Srs, JrG</b> | <b>5:00</b> |
| 1/27     | @ Friendship Aspire           | Srs, JrG        | 5:00        |
| 1/31     | <b>Emerson</b>                | <b>Srs, JrB</b> | <b>5:00</b> |
| 2/3      | @ Hampton                     | Srs, JrG        | 5:00        |
| 2/7      | <b>Springhill</b>             | <b>Srs</b>      | <b>TBA</b>  |
| 2/6-11   | Jr District Tourney @ Emerson | Jrs             | TBA         |
| 2/14-17  | Sr District Tourney @ Strong  | Srs             | TBA         |
| 2/22-25  | Sr. Regional Tourney          | -               | TBA         |
| 2/28-3/4 | State Tourney                 | -               | TBA         |
| 3/9-11   | State Finals                  | -               | TBA         |

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# P PRESCOTT CURLEY WOLVES

## BOYS

Coach Tony Price looks for his varsity Curley Wolves basketball team's players to continue in their winning ways from the gridiron to the gym once they finish their playoff run. He calls the team "the most talented team since I've been here" He acknowledges the team's relative youth, but says, "they're players."

Young though his team may be overall, Price will enjoy the services of three seniors in Carston Poole ("He plays everything. He's a team leader, my leading rebounder from last year. He's kind of my anchor."), Eric Grigsby ("He came in from Nashville ... struggled through some injuries last year ... hoping he will step up this year.") and Jaylen Young ("He was a quiet starter last year ... I look for him to kind of push forward and be a leader.")

The two juniors are Pierce Yates, who Price calls "the best shooter on campus," who shot from three for a high percentage and "spot-played a lot last year and during zone [defenses played by opponents], I played him a lot." Rashid Mohammed, Price describes as "6-5 and a learner." Mohammed did not start playing basketball until relatively recently but was "a very good junior high player."

About his sophomores, Price is definite. "I have a chance when they get older, junior senior year, to make a run at a state championship." He names Jacari Prater, already known for spectacular catches for long yardage for the football Curley Wolves. "He's a 6-4 point guard who plays for a high-level AAU team in the summer. He's a very very good basketball player who probably has a better chance of playing basketball in college than football, but he's a great football player," Price says.

After helping win the away football game against Homer a few weeks ago, Prater was seen playing with a basketball

in that school's field house. "He had a pair of flip-flops on and dunked it in their gym," Price says. Another exploit Price finds astonishing is the great stride taken by Marketric Mixon, a 6-4 sophomore with a 6-9 reach who agreed to practice four times a week over the summer. "I can't believe what he has done for his body, and how much he has worked and really stepped it up. I'm super proud of him," Price said.

About Charles Hackett, another sophomore, who at 6-5, 190 pounds, transferred from Blevins, Price says, "He was a dominant player at that level. He'll be right in the mix to get playing time. To put him in with that group of sophomores—the future of Prescott basketball looks good."

While Price anticipates big things out of the basketball team this year as well, he only has three players available now to practice with, including one player who won't play this season, Hackett, and Mixon. "I projected us to play in the finals in football. And so we play on Saturday. And then Tuesday, I start conference play. I get no preseason games. And that's been like that the last two years. So traditionally, what happens is I start slow and finish strong," Price says.

Looking at the other teams in the conference, Price says his team will be helped by Ashdown leaving for another conference and being replaced by Jessieville, who he says has an outstanding scorer but matches up unfavorably with the Curley Wolves in height. The toughest rival will be Fouke, which returns practically its whole team from last season and has 16 players who do not play football. "They'll get 12 games under their belt before [my team] picks up a basketball," Price says.

Yet when his varsity team gets past its first weeks of adjusting, Price says the achievements will mount. "I've looked

at the schedule ... I just don't see how I can't win the conference. And then when you go into regionals [in the playoffs], you know how that works. It's just kind of who you match up with, but I've got to get these guys to the state tournament this year. That's my main goal."

As for the introduction of a 35-second shot clock this year, Price says it will provide his team with an advantage so that it does not get stalled out against teams like Harmony Grove, which play Pete Carril's Princeton offense: "They spread the floor and like to keep scores in the 30s. They can't do that anymore with the shot clock."

At Prescott, the junior varsity team is referred to as the junior high team. About them, Price says he does not yet know what he has in terms of a team identity because so many good players from last season's 17-2 campaign move on to varsity play. "So those guys are natural basketball players playing football, but now it's the opposite. I have football players playing basketball." He adds, "I know I have some athletes, but I don't know if I have any basketball players." Most recently, 13 players have tried out to play on the junior high team, and Price will offer ten spots. Mario Brownley is the only returnee from last year's team.

Coach Price has seen the junior high group practice, though. "They are just going a million miles an hour," he says. "They never complain. And they work super hard. And they help each other out. It's a great group to work with."

The first tip off for the Prescott Curley Wolves varsity team is scheduled against Gurdon in Gurdon—tentatively, because if the football team is still in the playoffs, the game will be canceled (Gurdon has agreed not to press for a forfeit)—in a conference matchup December 1 at 4:30 p.m.

## GIRLS

Playing in 3A Region 7, the Lady Wolves varsity team's strengths will be its senior leadership and its shooting this year. But the team is still quite young and may struggle with teams that have size in the post.

With three seniors starting, two players coming off a productive summer of AAU games and many attending summer camps, Coach Chuck Lowery looks for the senior Lady Wolves to improve on last season. Back will be Mary Munoz, a two-year starting junior who Lowery said is the team's leading scorer. "We're counting on her to fill that role," he said.

Joining Munoz in the backcourt will be Leightyn Hillery, who Lowery said, "had a real good summer, as far as her shooting" and will also play at forward, and Mahogany Tidwell, a senior. Sophomore Emari Britton will also play guard, having started "coming on in junior high as a good shooter" playing point guard for that team. Emily Banda is a junior returning guard, and Caytlee Poole will be playing guard as a sophomore. Kyla Joseph, who moved from Lafayette County, will add to the roster of guards.

In the frontcourt will be Chloe Grimes, a senior, and Jade Sharp who played AAU ball this summer and will be a prominent part of the rotation under the basket. "We've got people to put in that position," Lowery said, speaking of the center post. "And we're going to try to float it around to keep us from being too mismatched there."

With regard to this year's introduction of a 35-second shot clock to basketball in the state, Lowery doesn't anticipate much effect on his offensive strategy, although he said he does foresee more teams they meet bringing in press defenses. Despite that, "we're going to maximize our time," he said.

On defense, he said "We're going to mix in a variety of different zones and make them have to use clock." He also said the team may try some presses early in the season to test whether that has a different effect on opposing teams' use of the clock.

Looking at the schedule, Lowery says that Fouke is perhaps the team's toughest nemesis, with games coming against them January 17 in Fouke and February 10 at home. Because of changes in the makeup of Region 7, Ashdown is gone but Jessieville takes its place. Lowery expects Fouke and Jessieville to fight over first place in the conference, while last year's champion, Centerpoint, like most of the senior teams in the conference other than Fouke, lost its best players to graduation. He says for this reason the conference is mostly wide open, and his improved Lady Wolves, who competed quite well for three quarters last season and "improved a ton as the year went," could find themselves one of the 14 teams in the playoff regional.

For the 15-player junior Lady Wolves, Lowery said he also has high expectations: "We had a pretty good summer with them. We're pretty athletic. We've got some girls that have really come on." But the team, which combines grades from seventh to ninth, will only have four ninth graders and a slew of seventh and eighth graders, with the seventh graders being a particularly impressive bunch.

With more players on the roster, the junior high team will be able to take some advantage on defense. "We're going to try to put a little pressure on in junior high. We've got more bodies. We've got a little bit more depth in junior high than we did in senior high," Lowery said, adding that he expects to push the ball faster up the court, too, with his junior high group.

New assistant coach Jordan Lancaster will be with Lowery on the sidelines and helping to coordinate practices. She played herself for Bismarck High before obtaining her degree at Henderson State and was with Prescott during summer play. She is also head coach of the school's Cross Country team.

Asked about how supportive the school and the community has been, Lowery said, "Our superintendent and athletic director give us anything we need. They understand the situation that we've been in, and everybody wants you to win, but they understand ... they've got our back, parents have been great."

He also said he has no concerns about the level of commitment he's seeing in the players. "We've been real proud of the efforts they've been putting in, and we just want everybody to just keep supporting them. They're getting better every day. Sometimes you can't fix things overnight, but they're putting the time in to get it fixed."



# P PRESCOTT CURLEY WOLVES

## BASKETBALL SCHEDULE


### 2022-2023

|                |                                 |                |           |
|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| NOV. 7         | CAMDEN HARMONY GROVE (BENEFIT)  | JG, SG         | AWAY 4:30 |
| NOV. 8         | MOUNTAIN PINE                   | JG, SG         | HOME 5:00 |
| NOV. 10        | MINERAL SPRINGS                 | JG, JB, SG     | AWAY 5:00 |
| NOV. 12        | CAMDEN HARMONY GROVE (JAMBOREE) | 7G, 7B         | AWAY TBA  |
| NOV. 14-19     | NASHVILLE JR TOURNAMENT         | JB             | TBA       |
| NOV. 28        | ARKANSAS HIGH                   | 7G, JG, JB, SG | HOME 4:30 |
| DEC. 1         | GURDON                          | JG, JB, SG, SB | AWAY 4:30 |
| DEC. 5         | TRINITY CHRISTIAN               | JG, SG         | AWAY 4:30 |
| DEC. 13        | GLENROSE                        | JG, SG, SB     | HOME 5:00 |
| DEC. 16        | HASKELL HARMONY GROVE           | JB, SG, SB     | AWAY 5:00 |
| DEC. 27-29     | LAFAYETTE COUNTY TOURNAMENT     | SR. BOYS       | TBA       |
| DEC. 28-30     | OUACHITA CHRISTMAS TOURNAMENT   | SR. GIRLS      | TBA       |
| JAN. 3         | JESSIEVILLE                     | JG, SG, SB     | HOME 5:00 |
| JAN. 6         | GENOA CENTRAL                   | JB, SG, SB     | HOME 5:00 |
| JAN. 10        | CENTERPOINT                     | JG, SG, SB     | HOME 5:00 |
| JAN. 13        | BISMARCK                        | JG, JB, SG, SB | AWAY 4:30 |
| JAN. 17        | FOUKE                           | JG, JB, SG, SB | AWAY 4:30 |
| JAN. 20        | GLENROSE                        | JB, SG, SB     | AWAY 5:00 |
| JAN. 21        | PRESCOTT (7TH GRADE JAMBOREE)   | 7G, 7B         | TBA       |
| JAN. 24        | HASKELL HARMONY GROVE           | JG, SG, SB     | HOME 5:00 |
| JAN. 27        | JESSIEVILLE                     | JB, SG, SB     | AWAY 5:00 |
| JAN. 28        | CAMDEN HARMONY GROVE            | 7G, 7B         | AWAY TBA  |
| JAN. 31        | GENOA CENTRAL                   | JG, SG, SB     | HOME 5:00 |
| FEB. 3         | CENTERPOINT                     | JB, SG, SB     | AWAY 5:00 |
| FEB. 7         | BISMARCK                        | SG, SB         | HOME 5:00 |
| FEB. 10        | FOUKE                           | SG, SB         | HOME 5:00 |
| FEB. 6-11      | JR DISTRICT TOURNAMENT          | JESSIEVILLE    |           |
| FEB. 13-18     | DISTRICT TOURNAMENT             | FOUKE          |           |
| FEB. 22-25     | REGIONAL TOURNAMENT             | TBA            |           |
| FEB. 28-MAR. 4 | STATE TOURNAMENT                | TBA            |           |



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