

Times Press
2022-23 High School
Basketball
Preview



De Pere features three Division I college recruits (l-r) Zach Kinziger, Will Hornseth and John Kinziger.

Greg Bates Photo

Ashwaubenon
Bay Port
De Pere

Green Bay East
Green Bay Preble
Green Bay Southwest

Green Bay West
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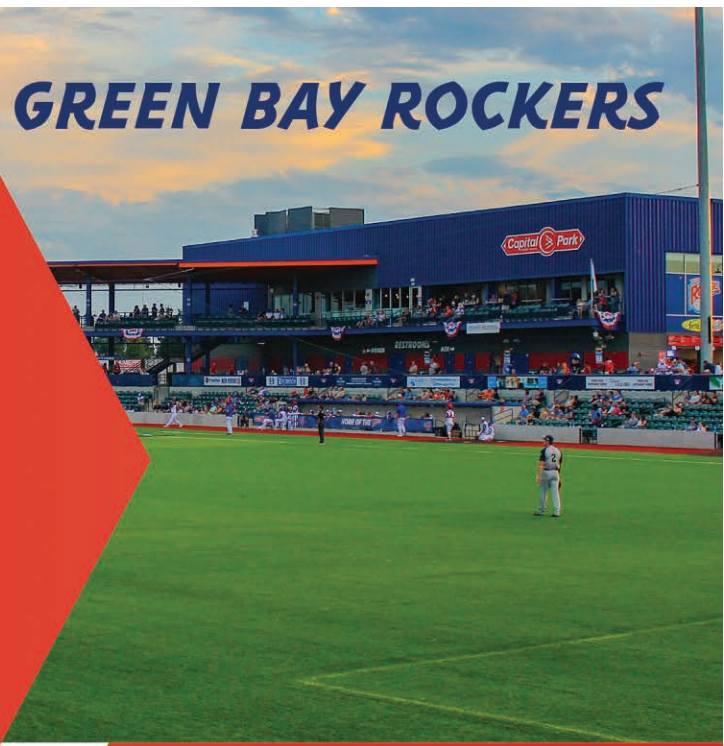
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ASHWAUBENON



Jags have to replace top two players after state run

BY RICH PALZEWIC
CORRESPONDENT

ASHWAUBENON – The Ashwaubenon boys' basketball team made a magical run to the WIAA Division 2 state tournament last season at the Kohl Center in Madison before eventually losing to Pewaukee 60-49 loss to Pewaukee in the semifinals, 60-49.

"Last year was something a lot of parents and kids hoped would happen when the kids grew up — make the state tournament," coach Mark Tomashek said. "It was a special year, no doubt. Coming into the season, we thought we could do it. We had two really good players in Marcus (Tomashek) and Matt (Imig) and a bunch of guys around them who bought into the season."

Losing Marcus (26.1 points, 6.1 rebounds per game), an All-State pick, and Imig (15.8 ppg), a first-team all-conference guard to graduation, Ashwaubenon will have to replace 42 points combined between those two alone.

"When I hear (42 points combined lost), I think to myself, 'They were really good players,'" coach Tomashek said. "But now this year, it gives a lot of new kids opportunities and a fresh start. I think a lot of guys are looking forward to that."



Ashwaubenon will need to find scoring in different ways this season after its top two scorers from a season ago — who combined for 42 points per game — both graduated. **Rich Palzewic Photo**

Marcus, now playing at Division II Michigan Tech, was the Fox River Classic Conference (FRCC) Player of the Year, while Imig is now playing at Division III University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

"Marcus put up 21 points (for Tech) against Green Bay in an exhibition game (Nov. 3)," Mark Tomashek said. "It was a great start —

he had a lot of family and friends in the stands (at the Kress Center). Matt isn't getting a lot of playing time (at Oshkosh) yet, but his team is ranked No. 3 in the nation in Division III and they have quite a few upperclassmen guards — his time will come."

Both players eclipsed the 1,000-career point barrier last season.

The cupboard isn't completely bare for the Jaguars, who finished 24-5 overall and 14-4 in the FRCC in 2021-22.

Zach Kelly, a returning senior who averaged 5.5 points per game last season, said this year's squad wants to prove they are capable of producing a good year.

"Last season is last sea-

son," he said. "Marcus and Matt were great players and carried us, but this year's team has a lot to offer. I think we're all excited to prove ourselves. I think we're good enough to pick up a lot of that scoring that is no longer here."

Besides Kelly, juniors Jayden Schoen (6.3 ppg) and Drew Tomashek (5.1) saw plenty of playing time

as sophomores.

Drew is the younger brother of Marcus and has been on the varsity since his freshman year.

"Drew isn't afraid to shoot it," coach Tomashek laughed. "He has to put a little weight on, but he grew — he's now 6-foot-2."

Another player, Eli Zollar, returns after missing his junior year because of a knee injury.

"Eli's basketball IQ is off the charts," coach Tomashek said. "He's a good shooter and passer. That's a huge bonus to have him back. His rehab from the injury was hard — he deserves to be back."

Another player to watch could be 6-foot-6 junior AJ Uhl.

"AJ is very athletic, but he's raw," Mark Tomashek said. "He will need some time to develop."

Tomashek said his team might not be considered a favorite in the FRCC, but his team will play hard.

"We will compete — these kids want to create their own paths," he said. "In theory, we plan to compete with everyone in the conference. We have the same mentality every year — work hard, do things right and let the chips fall where they may. The kids know other teams might be sleeping on them (to do well), so maybe that will provide motivation."

Nice mix of upperclassmen, underclassmen fuel girls' squad

BY RICH PALZEWIC
CORRESPONDENT

ASHWAUBENON – If the Ashwaubenon girls' basketball team is to build upon its success from last season, coach Nicky Van Laanen's team will have to mix the styles of the upperclassmen and the underclassmen into one cohesive unit.

"My upperclassmen are used to a slow-down pace, and my younger kids fly up and down the floor," Van Laanen said. "I'm trying to get the older players to speed up and get the younger players to still understand shot selection. It might take a bit to mesh, but I think we'll be fun to watch. They're all amazing kids."

Van Laanen said her team's depth is a strength.

"I can play nine or 10 girls and we won't miss a beat," she said. "We're going to play fast, press and play full-court defense. Hopefully, we'll make opposing teams play a little faster than they want to. It might be a bit more chaotic compared to years past, but it's the right style for these kids."

Van Laanen, who played basketball and softball at Green Bay Preble, also coached basketball at St. Norbert.

"When I coached (at St. Norbert), you could pick the kids you wanted to fit your style as a coach — you can't do that in high school," she said. "You coach to the style of your kids. You have to be flexible with what works for your team."

The 2021-22 Jaguars finished 13-12 overall and 8-10 in the Fox River Classic Conference.

Ashwaubenon started 3-0 but then dropped its next three games before winning six straight. From there, the Jaguars went 4-9 the rest of the way.

"We won some games we shouldn't have and lost some games we shouldn't have," Van Laanen said. "We would

have done even better, but we lost our point guard Bri Lambrecht against Bay Port (at the end of January). She dove for a ball — and the nail came off and embedded into her finger. She had surgery and missed the rest of the season. We had to regroup as a team."

In 13 games played, Lambrecht averaged 7.3 points per game as a senior.

Last season, Ashwaubenon had two freshmen starters (Gianna Guarascio and Addy Phipps), another



There is a nice mix of upperclassmen and underclassmen on this year's Ashwaubenon girls' basketball team. **Rich Palzewic Photo**

freshman (Bella Daul) who came off the bench and three sophomores (Lauren Mader, Ella Senger and Sophia Zabel) who were consistently in the rotation.

Van Laanen said Guarascio is ranked No. 25 in the state from the class of 2025 and Phipps is coming off a labrum tear in her shoulder.

"Addy has burned through her rehab," she said. "I was told December or January, but she's been

doing awesome.

"Both Gianna and Addy are super athletic."

That inexperience and youth should serve the Jaguars well this season, and into the future.

"In some people's minds, we overachieved — I don't think many expected us to be over .500," Van Laanen said.

The only all-conference player returning this season is senior Hannah Hutto. She averaged 8.5 points

per game in garnering honorable mention honors.

"With quite a few returning players, I think our cohesiveness will be even better than last season," said Hutto, a co-captain with fellow senior Avery Amenson. "Our goal is to be in the top three of the conference. It's nice to have some experience with us seniors and a fresh mindset from the underclassmen."

The main cog lost to graduation was 6-foot-1

Nyia Marohl, who averaged 9.3 points per game as a senior.

"We aren't the tallest team, so that will be the challenge — we can't run (in transition) if we don't rebound," Van Laanen said. "I do have some taller guards who find the basketball, but we're going to be different this season. The last few years we've pounded the ball inside to Nyia, but we don't have her anymore."

BAY PORT



Two all-conference players return to pace Pirates

BY RICH PALZEWIC
CORRESPONDENT

SUAMICO – With two all-conference players returning this season, the Bay Port girls' basketball could make some noise.

"I expect us to be right there competing with other teams in the FRCC," Bay Port coach Dennis Gladwell said. "We're not quite as tall this season, so we'll have to rely more on our shooting and quickness. I don't want to give too much away, but I'm excited about the season."

The Pirates finished 14-11 overall and 12-6 in the Fox River Classic Conference last year — slotted fourth in the conference behind Notre Dame Academy, De Pere and Sheboygan North.

"I thought we adjusted well from my first year on the sideline to last season," Gladwell said. "We were competitive in most games, and overall, we did some pretty good things."

The Pirates began the 2021-22 season 0-2, then won four straight, proceeding to lose four in a row and then won four consecutive.

The up-and-down pattern is something Gladwell said his team has to fix.

"I realize that was the pattern," he said. "I think we got complacent in some games, and I also think it was how our schedule was set up. When we lost

a bunch in a row, it might have been because of the teams we were playing — the same for when we won a bunch straight."

Bay Port will have to replace several key players lost to graduation — Maggie Luedtke (8.6 points, 7.2 rebounds per game), Jacki Szelagowski (5.6, 2.8) and Kaitlyn Fischer.

"Maggie was essentially a 6-foot guard," Gladwell said. "She could bring the ball up the court and was a solid player."

Among others, Bay Port returns 6-foot-3 junior post Ellie McDermid and senior guard Kyla Hendricks.

McDermid averaged 11.9 points and 8 rebounds per game as a sophomore in garnering second-team all-conference honors for the Pirates.

Hendricks, who recently signed her national letter of intent to continue her athletic and academic career at Division II St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, averaged 10.9 points per game as a junior.

She shot 32% (49 of 153) from beyond the 3-point arc.

"Ellie will be the tallest player in the conference and Kyla is an exceptional athlete," Gladwell said. "Things start with those two, but we have other nice pieces to the puzzle."

Hendricks was a vital



Ellie McDermid and Kyla Hendricks, both all-conference recipients a season ago, will pace the Pirates. Younger players, shown above, will play key roles in the team's success. **Rich Palzewic Photo**

cog on Bay Port's volleyball team and is a state qualifier in track and field. McDermid has grabbed a couple of Division I offers already.

"Kyla had a great summer and is shooting the ball well," Gladwell said. "She's ready to go and is also a good defender for us. Ellie has improved her outside game, so we plan to utilize that."

McDermid said she'll most likely make her college decision late next summer or early fall — after the AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) season.

"The team is excited," she said. "We worked hard in the offseason. Even though we're young, we've been playing together for a long time. I'm hoping for

big things this season."

McDermid has Division I offers from Evansville and Bradley and a Division II offer from Michigan Tech.

Gladwell also expects production from juniors Kyla Simpkins and Brooke Steffen and freshmen Melia Lemorande and Payton Dudra.

"In my mind, Melia could

be one of the best freshmen in the state," Gladwell said. "She's a gym rat, a great shooter and enjoys the game. Payton is a good shooter and will get some playing time at the point guard position. I wouldn't bring a freshman player up to varsity and have them sit on the bench — they'll contribute and get minutes."

'Disappointed' after last season, Bay Port looks to rebound

BY RICH PALZEWIC
CORRESPONDENT

SUAMICO – The Bay Port boys' basketball team doesn't rebuild, it simply reloads.

That's the motto of this year's team with two all-conference players returning mixed in with some younger talent.

The Pirates finished 14-12 overall and 11-7 in the Fox River Classic Conference (FRCC) last season — alone in fourth place behind De Pere, Notre Dame Academy and Ashwaubenon.

"That's who we were last season — we had a team that didn't play consistent defense," Bay Port coach Nate Rykal said. "We had a few games we could have won — like against Ashwaubenon and Green Bay Preble — and a few games we could have lost but won — like against De Pere."

The Pirates lost seven games by six points or less.

"We could have also won 20 games if we did some things differently down the stretch when it mattered," Rykal said. "We have a fair number of seniors who have a lot of experience. There are no more excuses about not being in it — you've been in it. It's time for the upperclassmen to step up and get the job done. We understand how to play the game and understand situations better — that should show this year."

With seniors AJ Lieuwen (17.1 points per game),



Bay Port has some good talent back this season. After being "disappointed" with a fourth-place conference finish a year ago, the Pirates will shoot for the top in 2022-23. **Rich Palzewic Photo**

Vince Vandervest (14.6), Jayden Hackett (8.8), Jackson Yanda (6.1) and 6-foot-5 Mason Cornette (3.5) returning, Bay Port has plenty of offensive firepower.

"Last year, we didn't finish how we wanted to — we were disappointed," said Lieuwen, who has been get-

ting some looks from Division II colleges. "This year, I think our attitude is better — I'm excited. We have a talented group, and I think if we put it all together, we can make a run at a conference title."

Lieuwen was a first-team selection in the FRCC,

while Vandervest was an honorable mention pick.

"It's not a matter of scoring enough points, it's a matter of us playing defense," Rykal said. "You can't solely rely on outscoring teams, so other guys have to step up, too. We have a great nucleus com-

ing back — they played well together this summer. The guys enjoy each other and will work together."

Rykal mentioned 6-foot-6 sophomore Maddox Cornette and junior Blake Buchinger — who rushed for 1,144 yards for the football team this season — as play-

ers to watch.

"Maddox had a great summer. He was on the junior varsity squad last season, but I think he'll step up and have a great year for us," Rykal said. "Blake is athletic, so I'm also expecting bigger things from him."

Bay Port lost 6-foot-7 post player Nate Forystek (13.2 points, 6.8 rebounds per game), an honorable mention selection, to graduation.

"Nate was big and presented problems with his athletic ability," Rykal said. "We'll have to work around that and do a few things differently. Maybe a few guys will have to play out of position when we face taller teams."

Rykal thinks his team is fairly deep — at least at the top of the lineup.

"We are for sure seven deep, and we're looking for that eighth guy," he said. "A lot of it depends on how the guys progress as the season goes on. If you keep a good attitude and work hard on defense, you have a chance to get into the rotation."

Rykal said De Pere — with three Division I recruits (John Kinziger, Zach Kinziger and Will Horns-eth) will be considered the conference favorite.

"I think we can contend with De Pere, but we have to make sure we take care of business and grind every day with defense — we have to bust it," he said. "We may not like defense as much as offense, but we have to learn to — it will help us win games."

DE PERE



With De Pere coach Brian Winchester looking on, brothers John (with ball) and Zach Kinziger battle during early-season drills. The duo will be key in the top-ranked Redbirds' success this season. **Greg Bates Photo**

Top-ranked De Pere shooting for state title

Redbirds stacked with three Division I players

BY GREG BATES
SPORTS EDITOR

DE PERE — John Kinziger has played in two sectional finals in his De Pere basketball career. His teams have lost both games.

Kinziger, a star guard for the Redbirds and Illinois State signee, has one final shot this year as a senior to win a sectional final and advance to the state tournament.

“We want to get over that hump,” Kinziger said. “We know what we have to do now to get to state and everyone in practice knows that we’re all in. We’re buying all in every day. We put our chips in and we know we all have to be in every day to get there.”

De Pere — which finished 25-3 last season and won the Fox River Classic Conference title at 16-2 — certainly has the talent to make it to state and win the WIAA Division 1 title.

For the second straight season, the Redbirds enter as the top-ranked team in their division in the state.

Last year, Menomonee Falls knocked off De Pere in the sectional final, 74-70.

The Redbirds lost two starters off that team — Jack Jorgensen and Cal Matzke — but return a loaded lineup.

Along with Kinziger, De Pere features two more Division I recruits in junior forward Will Hornseth and sophomore guard Zach Kinziger, John’s brother.

“You realize the uniqueness of this team, the talent level is very high,” longtime De Pere coach Brian Winchester said. “We have a lot of depth. And they’re great kids. They work hard in practice, so you look forward to coming to practice and

working with them every day.”

Point guard John Kinziger is coming off a phenomenal junior season in which he led his team in points (21.0) and assists (3.9) and was second in rebounds (4.2).

“Continuing to work on the fine details of how he reads things on the court,” Winchester said. “He’s continuing to get better from a skill development standpoint. He just kind of keeps adding to what he already has. He’s gotten considerably stronger over the spring, summer and fall. He’s added strength, he’s added a little bit of weight and he’s added some pop to his vertical. He’s gotten better.”

Hornseth, at 6-foot-8, put in 17.7 points per game and averaged 6.3 rebounds as a sophomore. He’s become extremely versatile from the outside as well as the inside.

“He’s much more comfortable,” Winchester said. “If you look where he came into the season last year, first year on varsity and we’re coming out of the COVID season and all that kind of stuff. It took him until about midway through the year I think to really find himself and realize how good he is and how significantly he could impact games.”

Zach Kinziger came off the bench as a freshman and scored 8.2 points per contest. He will step into the starting lineup this season and be one of the go-to offensive threats.

According to his dad, assistant coach Jeff Kinziger added 15-20 pounds in the offseason and is filling out.

“He’s really good. You look at him, he doesn’t look like a sophomore; he doesn’t play like a sophomore,” Win-

chester said. “I’m excited about him.”

Along with the Big Three, Gabe Herman is back in the starting lineup as the defensive stopper. He averaged 7.0 points last year. Coming off an ACL and MCL injury in football, Winchester is hoping Herman is playing by around Christmas time.

Junior Ben Willihnganz will be the fifth starter. He scored 2.9 points a season ago. Willihnganz, 6-foot-7, is also coming off an injury, a dislocated knee cap, and could miss the first couple weeks of regular-season games.

The Redbirds are extremely deep this season. Senior guard Hogan Demovsky (4.0 points) should be first off the bench, followed by sophomore guard Pryce Gregoire and senior forward Ethan Ramos.

“He’s going to be a really special player,” said Winchester about Gregoire. “Pryce is one of the best shooters we have.”

Senior guard Caleb Dietsche and junior guards James Dorchester and Colin Wicker will also be competing for playing time this season.

De Pere has lofty goals and expectations. That starts with the coach and trickles down the players.

“We have the talent level to contend for a state championship, and we acknowledge that,” Winchester said. “That’s not something we shy away from. But at the same time, we have to — it’s cliché — but we’re focused on getting better today. We’re going to focus on the process. ... I want to make sure we enjoy it, because it’s going to be a really fun season.”

Redbirds youthful after state run last season

BY GREG BATES
SPORTS EDITOR

DE PERE — Last season was a dream run for the De Pere girls’ basketball team.

The Redbirds went 24-5 and advanced to the Division 1 state semifinals — riding the 1-2 punch of senior Jordan Meulemans and sophomore Claire Bjorge.

De Pere graduated six valuable seniors. With Bjorge going down with a torn ACL and MCL this summer and is going to miss this season, the Redbirds will have to replace all five of their starters. That means 89.3% of the team’s scoring is gone from a season ago.

Coach Jeremy Boileau isn’t going to feel sorry for himself and his program that they have to replace so much this season. He embraces the challenge of getting his young, inexperienced group ready for the grind of the Fox River Classic Conference schedule.

“You’ve got to approach it the same way, there’s no excuses,” Boileau said. “We’ve set a standard here at our high school for how we need to go about things. Every year players change and it just so happens that we lost six seniors — all five starters because Claire Bjorge is unable to play this year — so that puts into a team that’s got a lot of youth, a lot of inexperience. It’s probably spending a little bit more time explaining and understanding what we’re doing, where we could get away with a little bit more when we had the experience with six seniors and they got it. A lot of these girls have been in the youth program running our stuff and kind of that transition made it easy.”

Sophie Hafeman was the team’s fifth leading scorer a year ago at 5.7 points per game. Now a junior, she will be relied on to pick up her offensive game.

Alli Wettstein appeared in just nine games last season after returning from an ACL injury. She experienced the state run and averaged 3.2 points.

“As a senior, I definitely have to be more of a leader, definitely communicate with the younger ones who haven’t had as much experience as me,” Wettstein said. “That’s something I need to work on and will work to do.”

Jaden Ciesielczyk played in 14 games as a freshman and put in 2.3 points. Kaylei Anderson, a junior point guard, and senior Alaina Tripp also both appeared in games last season.

Junior Annika Dugenske hasn’t played varsity, but Boileau is expecting her to step into the starting lineup.

Boileau is hoping junior Maddi Kohanski and sophomores Addie Chapman and Egan Bierowski can come off the bench and add depth.

De Pere’s roster has two freshmen — Keira Washington and Abby Tassoul



De Pere coach Jeremy Boileau has to replace 89.3% of his scoring from last year’s team that made it all the way to the Division 1 state semifinals. The Redbirds will have a young squad, which includes Abby Tassoul (with ball) and Kaylei Anderson (defending). **Greg Bates Photo**

— three sophomores, six juniors and two seniors.

“There’s ton of learning. The girls are coachable,” Boileau said. “That’s why I’m extremely excited about the group. I know we’ve all got to be patient and learn, because there’s a lot that goes into it. Obviously, we’ve won a lot of games here at De Pere the last couple years.”

De Pere will need to keep with its tradition and play solid defense to stay in games. Scoring could be an issue, at least early on in the season until players get acclimated to the varsity level.

“When you’ve got kids like Jordan and Claire that kind of take over things offensively, you kind of get used to that and finding niches here and there to score,” Boileau said. “Now, we’re asking girls to take those risks, take those drives, take those shots, be confident in what you’re doing. That’s the part we need to grow on is finding

that. Alli Wettstein’s a senior, good scorer inside and out and she can bring some good senior leadership with in that. Jaden Ciesielczyk was a freshman last year, she came in and had some good spurts, but we’re going to need her to step up and score. Kaylei Anderson was another girl, small girl, but she’s tough, and can kind of initiate the offense and look to get people involved. Sophie Hafeman is a big. We’re going to have to rely on her to be a presence inside.”

Even though it is a young squad, Wettstein is confident it will play well this season.

“We definitely have high expectations for ourselves, knowing that we can step up to the challenge and face adversity,” Wettstein said. “Other teams probably think we’re a little young and inexperienced, but we can use that to our benefit to be super coachable and work to be better.”

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GREEN BAY EAST



With main scorer graduated, East looks for production

BY JORDON LAWRENZ
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

GREEN BAY – Things didn't come easy for the Green Bay East girls' basketball team last season.

However, a regional win at the end of the season was the morale booster the Red Devils needed coming into the 2022-23 season.

Green Bay East defeated intracity rival Green Bay West in a thriller, 56-52. It then took down Milwaukee Marshall/Young Cogs in its first regional playoff opener. The Red Devils' season came to an end at the hands of Germantown, a team that made it all the way to the sectional final before falling to De Pere.

Fourth-year Green Bay East coach Dwight Hancock mentioned that regional win being, "very rewarding for the team."

"It's rewarding because they work so hard all season long and reap the rewards of their work."

Judit Munoz-Lopez was one of the players arguably that worked the hardest. She was the lone player that averaged more than 10 points per game, finishing the season at 11.4 points per game.

Munoz-Lopez was a 2022 graduate, and Hancock knows adjustments need to be made with the team losing its leading scorer.

"We're looking to put the players in the right position

to succeed and to trust each other," Hancock said.

Ultimately, it's not about one person stepping up to fill that void, noted Hancock.

"We're looking for the entire team to step up," he said. "We as a program and myself as a coach."

Selena Gaytan and Madison Amraen are the lone seniors on the squad this season.

"Having youth is a good thing," Hancock said. "They will have a chance to grow with each other and as they grow they build chemistry."

It takes teams time to find their identity and specific roles for everyone, and that'll certainly be the case for Green Bay East as it begins the season with three of its first four games on the road.

Nov. 28 was Green Bay East's first time being able to play at home.

Hancock isn't afraid of that early-season road schedule.

"I think it is a great opportunity for the team to come together and become closer," Hancock said. "When you go on the road, you have to depend on each other more."

The road schedule also includes a stop at West De Pere on Dec. 2. West De Pere finished with a 9-3 record in the Bay Conference last season, only behind Xavier, which sat at 10-2.

Ultimately, five of Green



East coach Dwight Hancock will need to have some players step up their scoring this season.

Greg Bates Photo

Bay East's first seven games are on the road. It's a tough start to the season, and Hancock speaks highly of West De Pere,

"They're a great program," Hancock said. "They are in the top tier in our conference and are very well coached."

Once Green Bay East starts, it will enjoy a ton of time at home. From Dec. 15 to Jan. 30, 10 out of 12 games

will be at home. The only road matchups include Green Bay West and Xavier, the top and bottom teams from the Bay Conference a season ago.

Red Devils have task of replacing coach, all five starters

BY JORDON LAWRENZ
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

GREEN BAY – With a new head coach in town, the Green Bay East boys' basketball team is looking to make another trip to sectionals.

This is a team coming off a fantastic 19-8 season where it was one of three teams that went 8-6 in the Bay Conference.

The problem? Their top five scorers all graduated. It was Ryan Sweeney who led the way with an astonishing 23.7 points per game. However, Bill Felix and Jalen Flowers also averaged double digits. Vance Alexander and Oliver Killian round out the

top five scorers, all of whom are no longer in the program.

Coach J.D. DeVault acknowledged last season was special.

"That was the best season I've ever been part of, either as a player or coach."

Green Bay East's season came to an end on March 10 at the hands of Menomonee Falls.

While last season was one to behold, this season is going to be quite different. DeVault is confident his team can compete.

"Only one guy has real court experience out of our eight returners," DeVault said. "These past few years

we've had a really strong top five, even top six. Even though we have a lot of upperclassmen this season, there's a lot of inexperience to go along with it."

East's first three games this season will be at home, but DeVault knows that isn't necessarily the best thing in the world.

"It's certainly a gift and a curse," he said. "Guys can get jitters playing at home, but once we get past those first few games, we'll be settled in."

"No one should feel complacent or comfortable in their spot. The starting lineup will definitely change a few times at the beginning of

the season until we figure out what works best."

Green Bay East doesn't have all the time in the world, though — its first conference

Dec. 6 is when Bay Conference play begins. West De Pere is the opponent, and it's a matchup DeVault has highlighted,

"West De Pere has always been solid, and while they aren't as good as they once were, they're still a respectable program," DeVault said. "This is a game I've got marked up on my calendar as they've been our Achilles' heel these past few years. Out of all the teams in our conference, they seem to be that hump we can't get over."

Ultimately, DeVault still sees Xavier and West De Pere as the top teams in the conference.

One of the highlights this season is Green Bay East's involvement in the Oostburg tournament. The dates for that are Dec. 27 and 28. East will play Denmark on the first day with its opponent to be determined on the last day.

DeVault is excited about changing things up.

"We've never been in the Oostburg tournament," he said. "This is also the first time we've been in a holiday tournament in a long, long time."

Former East coach Rick Rosinski scheduled the

tournament before DeVault took over as coach, DeVault is thankful Rosinski is still helping behind the scenes.

"I've been the assistant for the past four seasons, so the transition was flawless," DeVault said. "Coach Rosinski is still helping out with some things, which is great because there's a lot more going on behind the scenes than you'd expect."

DeVault is hoping his team is in the mix this season in the Bay.

"I don't see why we couldn't be middle of the pack to the top half," he said.

It won't be easy down the stretch though as five of East's last six games are on the road. DeVault believes that road schedule will be an advantage to the team, especially if it is competing for a conference title or is going to make a run in the playoffs.



DeVault

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GREEN BAY PREBLE



Preble wants to shed 'underdog' tag, move up FRCC standings

BY RICH PALZEWIC
CORRESPONDENT

GREEN BAY — The Green Bay Preble boys' basketball team lost some scoring, height and talent from the 2021-22 team, but coach Andy Bobholz doesn't want his team to be considered an underdog moving forward.

"We'd rather not be the underdog," he said. "We want to be a better team, but right now, we haven't proven ourselves. Until we do that, we'll have to play the underdog role. The goal is to get to that point."

The Hornets finished 7-18 overall and 6-12 in the Fox River Classic Conference last season.

Preble showed some signs of progression as indicated by its 83-80 victory over Bay Port late in the year.

The Hornets had lost to the Pirates earlier in the season by 25 points.

"That was the first time in program history — to my knowledge — we ever beat Bay Port," Bobholz said. "When we shot the ball well, we won some games. We also beat a good

Sheboygan North squad. We just weren't consistent enough with our game."

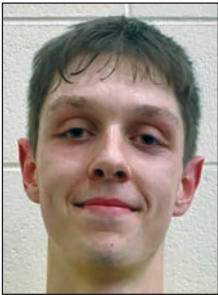
Bobholz said if the early season is any indication, his team will shoot better and be more competitive.

"For sure," he said. "Our guys have worked hard in the offseason on their shooting — they knew that was our Achilles' heel. (The better shooting has) been here in practice and open gyms, but we'll see if it translates to a real game. I also think our work ethic and effort have been good."

The only all-conference returnee is 6-foot-5 Thomas Michaels, who after averaging 14.4 points and 7.8 rebounds per game, made the honorable mention list.

"I think we'll be a bit quicker this season," Bobholz said. "The main thing is, we're bringing back some experience — they didn't have a lot of that last year. Just being in the system for an extra year will pay dividends."

Also returning are seniors Sheldon Jean-Baptiste (4.6 points per game), Anthony Cortes-Buenrostro (4.4), Jackson



Krajnik



Michaels



Green Bay Preble knocked off Bay Port late last season and hopes to pull off other big wins this year.

Rich Palzewic Photo

Racine (3.6) and Preston Krajnik.

"Preston is a guy who worked really hard in the offseason," Bobholz said. "He's in the gym all the time. He's gotten bigger and stronger, has worked on his shot and is more confident."

Bobholz said a player to watch could be 6-foot-2 sophomore Ty Gerard.

"He's varsity ready and will do some things for us," he said. "He'll definitely get some minutes."

Preble lost some size and scoring in 6-foot-7 Austin Renard (9.1 ppg, 9.5 rpg), Sam Hummel (10.1), Reese Berg (8.1) and Adrian Heinemeyer (6.3).

Combined, those four players brought about 33 points per game to the floor.

"They'll be missed," Bobholz said. "They played well together — they were a great group of kids."

Michaels may be the focus of opposing defenses, opening the door for other players to step up.

"That might happen," Michaels said. "This year's team is all here for each other — we're just trying to win games."

Krajnik said the FRCC is a grind, but his team looks forward to the tough competition.

"It's competitive from top to bottom," he said. "With all that talent, I do

think we're looked over a bit. But we're ready to take a step forward — we put in a lot of work this offseason. I think hard work will take us somewhere. Besides De Pere, I think Bay Port will be a team to watch — they're always up there."

Michaels said based on the summer league his team took part in, he thinks Manitowoc Lincoln could also be a team that surprises some people.

Senior-laden Hornets squad ready for success

BY RICH PALZEWIC
CORRESPONDENT

GREEN BAY — Among the local girls' basketball teams in the Fox River Classic Conference (FRCC), it's not a stretch to say Green Bay Preble lost the least and returns the most.

"We only lost one senior — Maggie Nicholson — who had true varsity basketball experience," second-year Preble coach Lyndsey Seela said. "We had another senior — Ava DeBaker — come out for her senior year after playing softball. It's exciting to think we lost so little and have so much coming back. Maggie was a starter, and we'll miss Ava's energy."

Seela said with a year under her coaching belt at Preble, it's going much smoother.

"It feels so much better," she laughed. "At the end of last year, we said, 'Let's not stop and just keep going.' It feels like we never stopped. We are bringing back knowledge, skills and were running offensive sets from Day 1. The camarade-

rie and culture are in place, but now what's the next step — winning."

The Hornets finished 5-19 overall and 4-14 in the FRCC in 2021-22.

They started 1-6, ended 0-6 and didn't win consecutive games all season.

"It's an understatement to say we need to be more consistent," Seela said. "We had those moments of greatness where we beat Ashwaubenton and (Green Bay) Southwest the second time we played them after losing to them the first time by 20. I don't think we

knew how to win. We have some hungry seniors who want to win this year."

Preble returns its top six scorers, who combined pumped in about 33 points per game last season.

The Hornets showed good balance, with four of those players each scoring six points or more per game.

"Four of our five starters return — that's pretty exciting," Seela said.

Sophomore Mia Racine (6.9 points per game), junior Helena Paphlam (6.2) and



Schradie



Green Bay Preble returns all but one starter from last year's team. The senior class is big, experienced and ready to succeed on the court.

Rich Palzewic Photo

seniors Aleah Butterbrodt (6.1), Andrea Butterbrodt (6), Elise Smith (4.1) and Abby Schradie (4) should all see their offensive numbers improve.

The Butterbrodt twins, Racine and Paphlam, each grabbed more than four rebounds per game last year.

"We're not the tallest team," Seela said. "Even looking at my future's teams, we don't have much height right now. We're always probably going to

be a quicker, run-and-gun type of team. You will see a few different looks from us in transition on defense this year. Hopefully, as the season progresses, we can add more. This season, I'm much more comfortable implementing more IQ stuff."

Seela said the toughness of the FRCC — especially from Notre Dame Academy, the two-time WIAA Division 2 state champion — is a privilege to play against.

"(NDA coach) Sara (Ro-

hde) has set standards for me — that's what I want for Preble," she said. "If you don't have that from your opposition, then you never see what you can get. I have no envy toward NDA — I have great respect for them. I think we can compete with the rest of the conference."

Schradie said for the seniors on the team, this is their last shot — and they intend to make the most of it.

"I'm looking forward to

this season because we've all been playing together for a good amount of time — many since the third grade," she said. "I hope to be more of a leader this year. It's a challenge to play against the better teams in the conference, so if things don't go our way the first time we play them, I have confidence we can get better the next time we play them. We are more comfortable, confident and consistent so far this year."

GREEN BAY SOUTHWEST



Seniors to pace Southwest boys on court

BY RICH PALZEWIC
CORRESPONDENT

GREEN BAY – On paper, it appears the Green Bay Southwest boys' basketball team might be set for another down year, but "not so fast," said coach John Polkowski.

Despite finishing the 2021-22 season 7-19 overall and 5-13 in the Fox River Classic Conference (FRCC) and losing three starters, optimism is high for the Trojans.

"I like this group a lot — they have a good team feel to them," Polkowski said.

"We lost some quality players, but we have another big, solid senior class. I'm confident guys are going to fill different roles."

Lost to graduation are David Danforth (11.4 points per game), Brayden Schoonover-Vivians (8.6) and Cole Bzdawka (6.4). Another senior, Jaicee Foster (4.8), also added good depth.

The Trojans started 0-5, had another 0-5 stretch during the middle of the season and then finished 1-5.

"That speaks to the level of our competition," Polkowski said. "The FRCC

is solid and so was our non-conference schedule. Unfortunately, we ended up on the losing end in quite a few games, but it shows we can compete — records can be deceiving."

Southwest lost six games by four points or less.

"Losing close games changes morale, but those are also good teaching and learning moments for the kids," Polkowski said. "There are still values you take from a loss."

A big piece of Southwest's cog returns in the form of senior Connor Pytleski, a 6-foot-3, first-team all-conference selection last year.

Pytleski, also an all-conference wide receiver, averaged 17.1 points and 5.7 rebounds per game as a junior.

"He's a great athlete and brings a lot to the table," Polkowski said. "A lot of what we do as a team, the opposition will prepare to shut down Connor. It will allow other guys to fill different roles and contribute. Connor has some humility and realizes it's not about him. It's more about what's on the front of the jersey. Points and individual accolades aside,

he wants to win and do it the right way."

Polkowski said senior Miles Rauschenbach, a starter last year, will play a bigger role this season.

"He has that game-time experience and will be an enforcer on the floor," he said.

A bigger piece of the puzzle this year could be 6-foot-10 senior Austin Terrell.

A transfer student from Florida before last season, Terrell averaged 2.5 points per game.

"Like many seniors, Austin put in a lot of time this summer," Polkowski said. "I can't speak to the type of year he'll have, I just know it will be better than last year. That will be seen immediately — he's not the same player he was last season."

Pytleski, who said he's looking to play college football at the Division II or III levels, echoed his coach's sentiments about Terrell.

"Austin is one of our 10 seniors — he's much improved," Pytleski said. "In our summer league, he was dunking and looked much better."

Pytleski, whose older brother Will also played at Southwest, said he's excited about the new season.

"We lost on three buzzer-beaters last season — it was a rough go-around," he said. "We didn't finish those games like we need-



Austin Terrell, far right, is one player that could step up in a big way for the Green Bay Southwest boys' basketball team this season.
Rich Palzewic Photo

ed to. I have confidence we'll be much more competitive this year."

Polkowski prefers his team fly under the radar a bit — something he feels

will happen this year.

"We can be a team who can challenge the top teams in the conference and pull off a few upsets," he said. "It's hard to speak

where we will fall in the conference, but I think we'll be highly competitive, especially with the number of seniors we have."

Some stability in place after rollercoaster ride for Trojans

BY RICH PALZEWIC
CORRESPONDENT

GREEN BAY – The Green Bay Southwest girls' basketball players have probably felt like they have been riding on a rollercoaster the last eight months.

After finishing 12-13 overall and 8-10 in the Fox River Classic Conference (FRCC) last season, then-head coach Berri West resigned.

A few months later, Southwest athletic director Amy Hogan hired Upper Peninsula of Michigan native Jacob Polfus to run the program.

Shortly after accepting the job, Polfus resigned to stay in the U.P.

After another search, Tony Lee was hired.

Lee, a 1992 Southwest graduate, was an assistant coach in the district for several years before accepting the varsity job.

"The transition has been great," he said. "We have a great group of ladies who play hard and are coming together as a team. I had to get to know them, and they had to learn about me. It's been a change, but we did some team bonding

events in the summer to help. Everyone knows the situation the girls went through — now it's time for basketball."

Lee said the FRCC is a big challenge, but he and the girls like playing against tough competition.

"You have to be locked in and ready to play every night," he said. "We talk

about overcoming hurdles and how to do that. I consider every team in our conference a hurdle. The difficulty of the schedule will help us in the postseason."

With good size and offensive firepower returning, the Trojans can play a half-court game but also get out and run in transition with some of their quickness.

"The goal is to get out in transition for some easy baskets but also work the post when the fastbreak is not there," Lee said. "I also like to press and be physical and aggressive. That's one thing we're working on — becoming more physical. That will be a key for us with our inside game."

Along with the stress of going through three different coaches in eight



Margie Stevens goes up for a layup during an early-season practice at Green Bay Southwest. New girls' basketball coach Tony Lee looks on.
Rich Palzewic Photo

months, Lee said the team was dealt another blow on the day he accepted the job.

"The starting guard from last year, Chloe Bynum, tore her ACL this

summer," he said. "That's a hurdle we must overcome."

Southwest returns a good chunk of its scoring from 2021-22 in the form

of senior Margie Stevens (14 points, 7.2 rebounds per game), junior Addison Pytleski (12.8, 6.2), senior Taliah DeGroot (6.5, 5.1), junior Alex Siudzinski

(5.2, 2.7) and senior Eajah Danforth (4.5).

Combined, those five players averaged 43 points and more than 21 rebounds per game.

Stevens and DeGroot, who are both around 6 feet, will also give the Trojans good size in the middle. Both Stevens and Pytleski earned second-team all-conference honors last season.

"If you look at what we have coming back, it's impressive," Lee said. "More than the points per game, their chemistry is good because they've been playing together for so long."

DeGroot has been impressed with the transition to Lee and how the girls have come together.

"It's been a rollercoaster, but after getting some work in with coach Lee this summer, it's going much better," DeGroot said. "Our core group is back this season, but we have a lot of other girls who are going to contribute. I'm not sure we fed the post the last few years as much as we should

have, so it's nice to see we will do more of that this season."

Bay Port coach Dennis Gladwell told The Press Times that Southwest "might be a team to watch" this season.

GREEN BAY WEST



Wildcat boys hoping to improve on one-win season

BY TORI WITTENBROCK
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

GREEN BAY – The boys' basketball team at Green Bay West is looking forward to an exciting 2022-2023 season in the Bay Conference.

Coach Jerry Overstreet is confident in his team's abilities this year and is excited to see them take the court.

The boys' team opened practice on Nov. 14, and the coaching staff believes there is a lot of promise in this new team.

According to Over-

street, the team is looking good.

"The first practice was really good. A lot of new faces," Overstreet said. "We are still a young team, but this year I think we are going to have a little bit of depth."

West has a few new strengths this year as well, said Overstreet.

"I'm really excited about our ability to play with a little bit of pace," he said. "Our quickness and our defensive presence are going to be huge for us this year."

Despite a rough sea-

son last year — placing eighth in the Bay Conference with a record of 1-22 — West is looking to turn things around this year.

"We just have really good overall basketball IQ, and our ability to compete will be a lot better with the guys that are older this year," Overstreet said.

Overstreet is hoping that the experience of some of the returning players will help the team develop and give them the confidence they need on the court.

"The Bay Conference is

going to be tough. Xavier's always up there, and I wouldn't be surprised to see Seymour bounce back. But I definitely think that Xavier and West De Pere are going to be the toughest, but we hope to be in the mix somehow," said Overstreet. "It will be exciting to take a couple of steps forward this year."

The boys' team has a lot to offer this year, according to sophomore point guard Sam Hemery.

Hemery started last year on the varsity team at West as a freshman and said that he and the rest

of the team are more than ready to take the court this season.

"The team is still getting better since we are really young," Hemery said. "Practices so far this year have looked a lot better than last year already."

According to Hemery, the team is expecting a big turnaround this year.

"There is way more effort and hustle in practices, and personally I want a change from last year," Hemery said. "We've been working harder than ever."

West has developed a

lot in the offseason, noted Hemery.

"Our guards and back-court have gotten a lot deeper, with a few new guards playing this year," Hemery said. "We have lots of wing players that can shoot the rock. I think that this year it will be all about hustle and how hard we play, even though we may be looked at as the underdog in most games."

West kicks off its season on Tuesday, Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. against New London at home.

West again won't field a varsity squad, playing JV schedule instead

BY TORI WITTENBROCK
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

GREEN BAY – The Green Bay West girls' basketball team is ready to take the court this year, according to interim coach Jon Tomaszewski, who is also the school's athletic director.

West competes in the Bay Conference and is currently preparing for some tough competitions this year.

The girls' team did not

field a varsity team last year due to a lack of players and will not have one this year either. However, Tomaszewski said that their current junior varsity team holds a lot of promise and talent.

"We have a lot of girls that are trying basketball for the first time, which is exciting because we get to see them go through this new opportunity," said Tomaszewski.

Despite not having a

varsity team last year, the girls' team did play intracity rival Green Bay East in a close game that ended in a 56-52 loss, placing them eighth in the Bay Conference since they were not able to play a full season of games.

The team opened practice the week of Nov. 7, and Tomaszewski said that it is looking good this year.

"I think we are just a young team this year and

we are going to have to learn as we go," Tomaszewski said. "Hopefully this gives them a good opportunity to continue to grow the program as well."

Shawnte Jiles, heading into her second season on the West squad, is also hopeful for a good year.

"I see it as a new chapter for the girls' basketball team at West," Jiles said. "We have new people who are trying the sport for the first time and the

positive energy and determination that I see in the new players is extremely uplifting and I cannot wait to see the growth that I know is going to happen throughout the season."

According to Jiles, the team will use its strengths to persevere throughout the season.

"I believe our biggest strength right now is the chemistry we've built — just in our first few weeks of practice with players

and coaches," said Jiles.

Despite the turnover in coaching staff, Jiles said that the team has been able to maintain a good rhythm and perseverance.

"I really appreciate our coaches for helping us build this new family within the Green Bay West girls' basketball team."

The team will kick off its season against New London at home on Friday, Dec. 2 at 7 p.m.

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N.E.W. LUTHERAN



Senior scoring duo looks to lead N.E.W. Lutheran boys

BY WILLIAM SOQUET
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

GREEN BAY – A potent pair of seniors will provide plenty of scoring for the N.E.W. Lutheran Blazers boys' basketball team this season.

Tristan Lynch enters the season with 917 career points, and Elijah Meerstein comes in with 729 points. Both players have drawn collegiate interest.

Lynch, with his imposing 6-foot-6 frame, has also amassed 413 rebounds and 108 blocks in his first three seasons of high school. He was offered by Ripon College in August.

Meerstein is also a well-rounded player, accumulating 478 assists and 194 steals. He garnered a roster spot offer from Concordia University Wisconsin in September.

Blazers coach Mark Meerstein had nothing but praise for both star players.

"We have a good 1-2 punch," he said.

Aside from those two, Lutheran is looking for some other players to step up and fill the holes left by graduating seniors.

"We have a couple other guys who are coming in and are now in the starting lineup that played significant minutes for us last year," coach Meerstein said. "Now we have to fill in some more pieces and see what happens."

The players in question are senior guard Jack Henschel, senior forward Joey Servais and junior guard Griffin Steffel.

The new starters will have to mesh with the two returners. Among the losses are Lucas Dhein, who was the team's second-leading scorer, and Caleb Gosse, who tallied the second-most rebounds in 2021-22.



With the solid duo returning of Elijah Meerstein (with ball) and Tristan Lynch (far right), N.E.W. Lutheran should be strong again this season. **Greg Bates Photo**

"We have to replace a lot from last year," coach Meerstein said. "We had a very talented team and had a lot of guys that graduated that were very complimentary to each other. We're really looking for this group to find that groove as well, buy in, and be complimentary to each other."

Last year, the Blazers started the season strong and faltered near the end, finishing third in the Packerland Conference.

"We started off 8-0 in

conference and then we had a hiccup and then we lost a couple in a row," coach Meerstein said. "After going 8-0, we went 4-4 to end it. It was really ours to take. We beat everybody and then we also lost to everybody."

Lutheran started its season with a nonconference game against Bonduel before it began conference play on Dec. 1 against Sturgeon Bay.

"We're fortunate to have a game before, many years we've gone into

conference with no non-conference games," coach Meerstein said. "We always have a great scrimmage that we go to, so that really prepares us. We get a lot of different looks, a lot of different teams that we don't usually get to see. After that scrimmage, we feel like we're pretty battle-tested."

One of the keys for the team this year will be to not get ahead of themselves.

"You can always say it's great to win confer-

ence and get to state and all that, but we really focus on, hey, we got a game next Saturday. Hey, we got a game the Thursday after that," coach Meerstein said. "And we try to prepare for that, try to get to where we want to be. We want our young men to be great role models on the floor."

In the playoffs last year, the Blazers dispatched Eastbrook Academy of Milwaukee before falling to Hustisford — which won the 2021 state cham-

pionship — in the second round.

Despite that, there won't be any major changes at a program that made it to the state semifinals two years ago in the 2020-21 season.

"We're looking to play hard," coach Meerstein said. "I think we run a pretty good brand of basketball around here and we're trying to keep that going. Our goals don't change much from year to year."

Blazer girls return experience, look for scoring options

BY WILLIAM SOQUET
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

GREEN BAY – A year can make a big difference, and that's what the N.E.W. Lutheran/Providence Academy girls' basketball team is betting on this season.

After playing some freshmen during a 7-17 season a year ago, those players now return to the court prepared to take on varsity basketball.

Coach Nicki Natzke said that it's a noticeable improvement.

"You can already see the improvement on when we went over our press and when we went over our offense," Natzke said. "Our offense didn't click

as well as we hoped it to last year, but this year I feel that it's clicking. And I think our sophomores are a little bit calmer and not so bright-eyed and nervous about playing at the varsity level."

The offense also lost its two leading scorers from a year ago, Leah Schmidt and Brynn Rice. The two seniors combined for 21 points a game.

Natzke also believes that an unbalanced offense contributed to a lack of production during the 2021-22 season.

"We were pretty young and we had three seniors last year that did most of our scoring," Natzke said. "We didn't have a lot of guards last year, so

we had to bring up some freshmen. Now, a couple of those freshmen have a year under their belt, so I'll be looking to some of those for some scoring." Who that scorer will be has not been determined.

"We just need to find a scorer and we can score some points," Natzke said. I'd really like to get up the floor a little bit more than we have in the past."

One option would be Ingrid Beaumont, who scored a shade under six points per game during her freshman season last year.

Lutheran will be looking for improvements on both sides of the ball this year, utilizing a physical

defense.

"I would really like to be a good pressing team and get better at our half-court man-to-man defense," Natzke said.

With practices starting the second week of November, the Blazers did not waste any time.

"I thought we worked really hard," Natzke said. "I think I overwhelmed them at times and we were probably a little bit sore by the end of the week, but I thought they caught on well."

Sam Rusch is the lone expected senior starter with junior Haily Atkinson and sophomores Beaumont, Lexie Meerstein and Ebony Sinclair rounding out the lineup.

Being a small program, there is always the possibility of a midseason shakeup to the roster.

"Our numbers are low, so depending on sickness and injury, some of these girls might have to play some JV," Natzke said. "Hopefully we don't have sickness or injury and we can stay at a full squad."

The nonconference schedule will serve as a proving grounds for the team.

"I think they're ready and anxious to get going and get some games under their belt," Natzke said. "We don't start off really easy with Manitowoc Lutheran, Kohler and Crivitz. So we'll be challenged right off the

bat, we will see what this young team is made of, and we will go from there."

Settled into their identity, the Blazers will then look to be competitive in the always-tough Packerland Conference.

Despite a long season ahead, Natzke believes her team has what it takes to make it through.

"I'm excited for this group because they're young and they're willing to work," Natzke said. "This whole group has been very positive about things. I want to see them having fun because basketball is a long season and it gets grinding sometimes."

NOTRE DAME ACADEMY



Tritons look to three-peat as state champions

BY RICH PALZEWIC
CORRESPONDENT

GREEN BAY – Winners of two consecutive WIAA Division 2 state championships, the Notre Dame Academy girls' basketball team has the talent returning to make another state run.

"On paper, we have the makings of another great season," said Notre Dame coach Sara Rohde, the reigning Fox River Classic Conference Coach of the Year. "But nothing is guaranteed — there are so many things that can happen during a season. I say this every year, but the stars need to align to win a state title — whether that's avoiding injury or team chemistry."

The Tritons, who have gone a combined 57-2 over the last two seasons, have as much talent on their roster as any team in the state.

Division I verbal commits Gracie Grzesk (Wisconsin) and Trista Fayta (Illinois State), both juniors, were All-State selections last season.

Sophomore Peyton Musial is also drawing Division I interest, while junior Sydney Whitehouse is garnering Division II looks.

Senior Hope Barington has committed to Division III University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

"The girls know we have a target on our back," Rohde said. "We know teams are preparing for us, and we need to prepare for them — that's our focus. Though we have a lot returning, we also have new pieces to the puzzle. We're fortunate to have girls who really love basketball."

Grzesk averaged 15.3 points, 4.7 rebounds, 3.1 assists and 2.5 steals per

game, while Fayta averaged 12 points, 4.8 rebounds, 6.5 assists and 3.6 steals per contest.

Fayta (37%) and Grzesk (31%) are also threats from beyond the 3-point arc.

In last season's state title victory over Pewaukee, Fayta poured in 27 points — including going 11 of 11 from the free-throw line — and nailed a trio of 3-pointers in as many trips down the floor during the second half.

Barington (11 points per game), Musial (8.6) and Whitehouse (8.2) will add offensive firepower. Rohde said with opposing defenses focusing more on shutting down Grzesk and Fayta, that will give her other players more opportunities.

"I think Peyton is going to have a strong year, Sydney will surprise some people and Hope has been around for a long time and is the veteran," Rohde said. "We have a few young kids who will crack the rotation as well, and (junior) Hannah Greisen should give us good minutes."

Notre Dame will have to replace All-State player Sarah Hardwick, who is



The Notre Dame Academy girls' basketball team is stacked again. The two-time Division 3 state champions have two Division I college commits in Gracie Grzesk and Trista Fayta. Players such as Hannah Greisen, far right, will play a key role.
Rich Palzewic Photo

now playing at UW-Oshkosh.

Hardwick averaged 11.9 points and 6.7 rebounds per game as a senior last year.

Whitehouse, an honorable mention selection in the FRCC last season, said the talent on the team goes beyond scoring points.

"It's not just that," she said. "We get after it on defense and have great chemistry on the court. With Gracie and Trista committing to Division I,

that will open opportunities for others."

With 568 career points, Barington, on the varsity since her freshman year, could crack the 1,000-point barrier this season with a strong campaign.

"That will give us looks maybe we haven't gotten in years past," Barington said. "Defensively, we really get after it, and that opens up opportunities for fast breaks."

Barington, a second-team pick in the FRCC in

2021-22, said coach Rohde makes sure the team stays focused.

"She definitely doesn't let off the gas, but we need that," Barington said. "We have our end goal in mind and know we have a lot of talent. We are capable of another title, but we have to stay focused."

Whitehouse doesn't feel any added pressure this season.

"The past two seasons are done, this is a new season," she said.

Notre Dame to build around returners Lawton, Wall-Atim

BY RICH PALZEWIC
CORRESPONDENT

GREEN BAY – The Notre Dame Academy boys' basketball team had a banner 2021-22 season — a school record 20 wins, a second-place finish in the Fox River Classic Conference (FRCC) and three players on the all-conference list.

Will the Tritons make an encore performance this year?

"That remains to be seen," second-year coach Brian Bobinski said. "It was a special year because we had a special group of kids. It's cliché to talk about chemistry and culture, but it matters — we had a group 1 through 15 who

wanted to see the team successful. They cared more about that compared to their individual success. We had guys who never got into games, but they'd come to practice every day and sell themselves out for the betterment of the team."

The Tritons finished 20-6 overall and 15-3 in the FRCC last season.

They started 0-2 and then reeled off eight straight wins.

"Being a first-year coach, you never know how the players will accept you as a coach," Bobinski said. "That can be back strong to help us. Keegan was our tough guy on the floor — an undersized inside player who found a way to score."

The Tritons finished 20-6 overall and 15-3 in the FRCC last season.

They started 0-2 and then reeled off eight straight wins.

"That can be back strong to help us. Keegan was our tough guy on the floor — an undersized inside player who found a way to score."



Role players around Emmett Lawton and Ethan Wall-Atim will be key to Notre Dame Academy's success this season. The Tritons are coming off a school-record 20-win season.
Rich Palzewic Photo

a tough transition — especially for the seniors during their last year. I felt welcomed, and that made it an enjoyable season."

Two main seniors return for Notre Dame — second-team selection Emmett Lawton (13.9 ppg) and Ethan Wall-Atim (7.5 ppg, 6.5 rpg). Lawton also excelled

on the soccer field for the Tritons, who recently finished runner-up in the WIAA Division 3 state tournament.

"Emmett is a smooth basketball player who had a great summer," Bobinski said. "He has a chance to play Division II or III college basketball — he has some offers, both for

athletics and academics. Being a soccer player, he has great endurance — he'd probably be able to play the whole game if I needed him to. He has long arms and is a good defender."

Lawton said it's fine if other teams focus on him. "We lost some college athletes from last year's

team," he said. "Most programs would look at this season as a rebuilding year, but we don't look at it that way. We all had great summers — I'm excited."

Bobinski said because opposing teams will most likely focus on Lawton, that will open the door for Wall-Atim and others.

"Ethan thought of himself as a rebounder and a defender his first couple of years here, but I think this season he'll take a big step forward offensively," he said. "He loves to rebound, so he'll get some garbage points. He's also pretty good around the rim."

Wall-Atim said it's not just about scoring points.

"We'll maybe have some points taken off the board offensively, but we're also looking to take points off the board defensively," he said. "We've been focusing on our defense, so I think we'll flourish there."

Bobinski also mentioned seniors Henry Weber and Max Augustine as being players to watch.

Notre Dame was dealt a blow in June with an injury to 6-foot-9 sophomore Andrew Rader.

"Andrew should be back at some point this season," Bobinski said. "He's coming off a stress fracture in his foot. He missed all of the July AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) basketball season and football this fall. He's a legitimate college scholarship prospect."

PULASKI



Red Raiders look to rise behind strong junior class

BY WILLIAM SOQUET
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

PULASKI – One year after a 6-12 record and a seventh-place finish in the Fox River Classic Conference, the Pulaski Red Raiders girls' basketball team is ready to improve.

Coach Doug McElrone returns for his fourth season at the helm of the program, which lost four seniors from a year ago.

One of those seniors was Olivia Kubiak, who garnered all-conference honorable mention honors on the strength of 5.9 points per game and 2.0 rebounds per game.

"Last year, we had a rough go of it in comparison to my first two years," McElrone said. "Injuries and things like that have a lot to do with that. The kids were put into positions that they weren't ready for quite yet."

However, McElrone feels encouraged by an extremely large junior class that numbers 10 players. The group has made a good first impression on the coaching staff.

"Our incoming junior class has had a really nice summer and done a nice job," McElrone said. "I expect a lot of things out of our junior class. We're really excited with what we have."

The offseason was a busy time for the team with athletes constantly looking towards the upcoming season.

"Kids have put in a lot of time all summer and we've

had a full gym all summer, so it's exciting to finally be able to get started," McElrone said. "You're hoping that they're working on things and doing things, but it's exciting to actually get going."

McElrone also noted that Pulaski will not be a team searching for cohesion this season.

"[The girls] get along well and they play well together," he said. "The chemistry isn't the worry, it's just the understanding of what it takes at the varsity level. That's some of the hardest things for kids to understand. There's that jump from junior varsity to you're playing the best kids in the conference."

Time is the only way to gain experience at the varsity level, and that will be crucial for the Red Raiders this year.

"We're going to be learning for a little bit here," McElrone said. "But I feel like once we get going here and the kids get into the flow of the season, we're going to be able to string some wins together and have a nice second half of the season."

The first half of the season comes in hot and heavy, with the team only afforded seven practices before it had its season opener. Pulaski starts conference play on Friday, Dec. 2, against De Pere at home.

The second half of the season will feature a large dose of conference play and a look towards the postseason. In the 2021-22 season, Pulaski fell 46-41 to



Pulaski's Ella Wiese, pulling up for a shot during her team's season opener, is the leading scorer back for the Red Raiders.

Rich Palzewicz Photo

Luxemburg-Casco in a tight WIAA Division 2 regional matchup.

"Only getting seven practices in before our first game (is) going to be the biggest hurdle to overcome," McElrone said.

"That Tuesday was the

first available date that we could play. We maybe needed a little bit more extra time, but that's one of those things that it is what it is."

One of the seniors that McElrone will count on for leadership is guard/forward Ella Wiese, who was

an all-Fox River Classic Conference honorable mention selection last season. Her accolades included 9.1 points per game and 4.0 rebounds per game.

"She's our returning leading scorer that we have, so that's one of our main

keys," McElrone said.

Besides Wiese, other starters are expected to include seniors Madeline Christenson and Taylor Olsen as well as juniors Maggie Lardinois and Morgan Vertz.

Returning core, hard play will lead Red Raiders boys on court

BY WILLIAM SOQUET
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

PULASKI - Last year was, by all accounts, not the greatest season for Pulaski boys' basketball.

Despite that, the past is the past and the emphasis for the program is the future.

"We didn't have a very successful season last year, and we're looking on building on that to be competitive and we're hoping that we can rely on some experience," coach Dave Shaw said.

The Red Raiders went 6-19 on the season, and four of those wins came in nonconference action. Its lone Fox River Classic Conference (FRCC) wins came against Green Bay Preble and Manitowoc Lincoln. In the playoffs, it took home a first-round win against Green Bay West before falling to Notre Dame Academy in a Division 2 regional contest.

While many regard change as a positive, Pulaski's strength this year will be its continuity.

"We lost one starter, so we have some experience," Shaw said.

One of the bright spots for Pulaski last year was Derek Shaw, who led the team with 18.8 points per game and was also second on the team in assists and rebounds. He was



Derek Shaw, an all-conference honorable mention recipient last season, led Pulaski at 18.8 points per game. The senior feels he has some good weapons around him this year.

Greg Bates Photo

an honorable mention all-FRCC selection last year and has a collegiate offer from Lakeland University.

Coach Shaw said that the Red Raiders will look for smart point guard play from Derek.

"We'll be looking to him to run the show, get other people opportunities," coach Shaw said. "With four starters coming back, they're all

going to be important cogs for how we handle ourselves on offense and defense."

One of the other returning seniors is guard Brady Wotruba, who recently committed to Ripon College as a middle infielder on the baseball diamond. On the basketball court, he was Pulaski's second-leading scorer and dished out 72 assists last season.

The team also returns starting forwards Dylan Dorn and Gatlin Robaidek from its squad a year ago.

An overarching theme for the Red Raiders is to put effort in. When asked to describe the first week of practice, Shaw focused on the input, not the output.

"We're laying a foundation the first week of practice of playing hard and working to-

gether," he said.

The effort will go a long way in fixing one of the largest problems from a year ago.

"Last season, we dropped a few and maybe we were out of the game by halftime," coach Shaw said. "This year, we're looking to be competitive in every game and give ourselves a chance in the last four minutes."

A chance still needs to be

converted into a win, and last season's group went 1-6 in games decided by 10 points or fewer.

Three nonconference games lead off the season for Pulaski, something that the team is not taking for granted.

"We hope that by playing three nonconference games before we get started, we can be our best for the first conference game," coach Shaw said.

That will lead into a stretch of conference games that will not come easy for the team.

"It's a great conference night in and night out," coach Shaw said. "We've got some very talented teams in the FRCC and to be able to be around and be within striking distance at halftime with all the teams that you play is going to be an important mini-goal each game."

In recent years, Pulaski has been known for a distinctive play style characterized by a slower-paced offense. Staying true to that will be one of the keys to being competitive in conference games, according to the coaching staff.

"Being able to find ways to dictate your style and your tempo early in the game is going to be important," coach Shaw said.

SEYMOUR



Seymour builds its foundation on three returners

BY GREG BATES
SPORTS EDITOR

SEYMOUR – Seymour boys' basketball coach Bobby Kuchta found a blueprint last year that worked pretty well.

His team's offense would slow down in the half court, utilize the best available shot and limit possessions for the opponents. That kept the Thunder in a lot of games and even helped them knock off co-Bay Conference champions West De Pere and Xavier.

Kuchta, in his third season as boys coach after coaching girls for nine years, is used to a fast-paced offense. However, he will have to slow it down again this season as Seymour is inexperienced at the varsity level, returning just three players after graduating nine seniors.

"We're pretty young, so we've got a lot of guys that are competing for starting spots and six, seven, eight, nine, 10, all the way through," Kuchta said. "What I like in practice is good competition. We have 18 guys that are fighting right now and really from four to 18, it's a battle. We're liking that."

It all starts with the three returners for Seymour: junior Tru Cornell and seniors Pace Jefferson and Nate Krull.

Cornell has the most experience coming back, starting last season. He finished third in scoring (7.0), fourth in rebounds (3.0) and first in assists (2.5) per game.

Cornell will be the team's go-to player at point guard.

"He's just overall a really skilled kid," Kuchta said. "Tru is going to be expected to up his points and assists and minutes. He looks strong. He looks physically strong, mentally strong and he looks like he's ready to go."

Jefferson was sixth in scoring (3.8) and tied for second in assists (1.7) a season ago. Krull came off the bench to score 2.6 points per game.

Seymour, which finished 13-12 overall and tied for third in the Bay at 8-6, will have to replace 15.3 points and 5.4 rebounds per game from Gunar Weyer, 5.1 points from Sam Daugherty and 4.9 points and 5.9 rebounds from Daniel Inman.

"I'll definitely have to pick up my game," Jefferson said. "We're pretty small, but we have some good post players. Shooting, spot up, knocking things down. We're going to have to have a better 3-point percentage than last year."

As a team, the Thunder shot 31.9% from 3-point range a season ago.

Seymour will have to rely on its defense to stay in games. In victories last season over the top three teams in the Bay — West De Pere, Xavier and Green Bay East — the Thunder allowed just 42.3 points per game.

"The past two years we've been the best defensive team in the conference, and hopefully we can bring that into this year," Jefferson said.



Junior Tru Cornell has the most experience coming back for Seymour. He finished third in scoring (7.0), fourth in rebounds (3.0) and first in assists (2.5) per game. **Greg Bates Photo**

son said.

Seymour, which is a man-to-man defensive team, only played six possessions in zone all last season.

"We pack it in and we make teams beat us from the outside," Kuchta said. "Contested 3-point shots is the way that we live and die by, so we can't turn it over. We have limited possessions, less than most games, most teams, so we've got to

take care of the basketball and really make the other team work."

Kuchta brought up freshman Kyler Marks to the team. He's the biggest kid on the roster at 6-foot-3 and is a skilled player who can shoot it and pull down rebounds.

"He had a great summer for us," Kuchta said. "As a freshman, he's got a lot to learn. He's been great.

Making eye contact, nodding and communicating. In five practices, he's come a long way already."

Other guys who will get plenty of minutes this season include Keanu Chinana, Ethan Volz, Braden DeBruin and Chase Kuske. Seniors Carter Caliaro and Noah Leisgang along with junior Carson Dorn have been playing well in practice to earn playing time.

"Those guys understand their roles — they're spot shooters, and they've got to come in and give us a spark off the bench," Kuchta said.

Jefferson is hoping his team can get off to a quick start to the season and make it a memorable senior run.

"I'm excited to surprise some people, because I think we can and I think we will," Jefferson said.

Youth to lead Thunder girls this season

BY GREG BATES
SPORTS EDITOR

SEYMOUR – A youth movement is sweeping through the Seymour girls' basketball program.

After graduating its top four scorers from a season ago, the Thunder will look to some experienced younger players that will need to step up this year.

"I think if we really buy in and get after it on defense, that could be a huge strength of ours," Seymour coach Ryan Goltz said. "Maybe some early issues with scoring, figuring out what our roles are on the offensive end. Defense is going to be key for us."

Goltz, who enters his second season at the helm, is hoping good defense will lead to some easy opportunities on the offensive end.

"I think we have a really good man-to-man defense right now," junior Heather Krause said. "I think if we pressure and get a lot of steals and push the ball, we can get a lot of fastbreak points."

Krause is the lone starter back. As a sophomore, she was fifth on the team in scoring at 6.3 points per game to go with 3.2 rebounds.



Heather Krause, middle, leads a dribbling drill during an early-season practice. Krause is Seymour's lone starter back. As a sophomore, she was fifth on the team in scoring at 6.3 points per game. **Greg Bates Photo**

Goltz is relying on Krause to be one of the team leaders.

"I think she's definitely ready for that," he said. "She showed good signs of that last year and just another year of maturing and growing. She'll be great at being a leader."

Krause, who can play both guard positions,

knows she needs to step up her game, especially as a leader.

"I just think that I need to reassure a lot of the younger teammates, make sure that they know they belong on this team and they're an important aspect of it," Krause said.

Sophomores Keira Vandehi and Salem Boyd both

were productive mainly off the bench last season. Vandehi had 5.6 points and 3.0 rebounds per game, while Boyd was seventh on the team in scoring at 4.3 points to go with 3.9 rebounds, which was second.

"That core of Heather, Keira and Salem, after that there's five or six that could play a lot of minutes," Goltz

said.

Corinne Setliff, a sophomore, got some varsity minutes last season and averaged 3.0 points. Senior Kaya Danforth (2.3 points) and junior Morgan Miller (1.9 points) both got some valuable time on the court.

"After that that's where we get into the mix of we'll see who's doing what dur-

ing practice and who can fill their role well and play minutes," Goltz said.

Seymour finished last season 11-14, winning four out of five games late before falling in a regional to West De Pere. The Thunder placed fifth in the Bay Conference at 5-7.

Last season in games decided by eight points or fewer, Seymour went 3-4. That's an emphasis this year, to play better down the stretch to pull off victories.

"It's a lot of the little things that we did wrong that lost us those games last year, so this year we're going to focus on doing the little things right to get us back in those games," Krause said.

The Seymour players come into the season with confidence they can win now as a young squad.

"We've had a couple of meetings already and a lot of the girls, their minds are set on wanting to battle for conference, and that's always a good thing when you come in with that mindset right away, because then you have something to reach for," Goltz said. "I think that this is a group that in the years to come can get there."

WEST DE PERE



Phantoms look to carry over success

BY GREG BATES
SPORTS EDITOR

DE PERE – When West De Pere girls' basketball coach Chris Abaray sat down prior to last season to discuss his team, he knew it was young with a lot of uncertainty.

How the season played out surprised some of the Phantom faithful around Northeastern Wisconsin. West De Pere went 17-9 and placed second in the Bay Conference at 9-3.

"Honestly, if you would have told me we would have finished 17-9 last year, I wouldn't have been shocked, but I also would have been like, Wow. OK. I could have seen it going another way where we were more .500," Abaray said. "So, we over-achieved at times. We beat teams I think we were supposed to, but we had some struggles along the way. I think when we ran into better teams, that was the challenge. We had a chance to win the conference title at Xavier, and we weren't able to do that, because of defense and rebounding.

"I think with this group coming back, they're hungry and they want to get back to the way we were years prior."

The Phantoms lost just one girl from last year's starting lineup, Imani Ninham. Expectations are high this season with a strong core of players back.

"Last year, we had a bunch of new freshmen — we had Em, Faith and Ella



West De Pere senior Tori Karchinski (with ball) scored 6.0 points and a team-leading 5.8 rebounds per game last season.

Rich Palzewicz Photo

who all started and Ava. Since we got all that time last year to kind of like prepare and mesh as a team last year and get all the bad stuff out of the way, this year we're expecting to be even better than last year, because basically it's the same team," Phantoms senior Tori Karchinski said. "I just think it's going to be really good. It's really nice to

know everyone's strengths and weaknesses and who does good together."

West De Pere returns its top scorer, Katie Waukau. As a junior, the guard put in 11.6 points, 3.3 rebounds and 1.8 assists per game.

Madisyn Berggren came off the bench last season and scored 9.0 points per game to go with 2.7 rebounds. She'll jump into the starting

lineup this season with Ninham gone.

"Madisyn will come in to kind of take her spot on the wing, so she brings shooting and that's of no surprise," Abaray said. "Her and Katie Waukau were actually our two leading 3-point shooters last year — they both had 50-plus makes from 3. I think from a scoring standpoint, it's about balance. We have

five, six, even seven girls on some nights that could lead us in scoring. We had a lot of games last year where we had three or four girls in double figures. It's about finding the hot hand and we're trying to celebrate that a lot more. When somebody's playing well, we have to get them the basketball in spaces where they can make plays."

Faith Walder scored 8.5 points and a team-high 3.5 assists last season as a freshman.

Ella Francois, a sophomore, was fifth on the team in scoring at 7.8 points. Karchinski had 6.0 points and a team-leading 5.8 rebounds per game.

One major key to West De Pere's solid shooting last season was it produced good, open looks.

"I think we do a really good job of finding the open player on the court and seeing the court well," Walder said. "I think this year we're going to be a great shooting team as well as we were last year."

When West De Pere was beaten last season, it was by teams that were bigger and outrebounded them. Getting better on the glass and defense is a big focus this year.

"Our girls are a year older, a little more mature," Abaray said. "I think they're up for a little bit more in that area as well. We want to compete for a conference title. We believe we can win a conference title and we feel like we can make a run in the playoffs."

"We really hope to get after it," Karchinski said. "It's something that's our first major goal to do is conference and we want to fight to get that back. We're playing with a chip on our shoulder because we think we should have won that. We think that we deserve it this year."

WDP shooting to repeat as Bay Conference champs

BY GREG BATES
SPORTS EDITOR

DE PERE – Last season, the West De Pere boys' basketball team won a conference title for the first time since 2012-13.

The Phantoms will attempt to go back-to-back in the Bay Conference this year.

The team has to replace starters Nate Heikkila, Danny Campbell and Kaden Hannula. A pair of starters are back in senior Ethan Heck and junior Andrew Baumgart.

"We have to use that energy that we finished the season with last year," Heck said. "We all bought in. The seniors last year, they really helped push that family culture within the team. It's just having us older guys who were on the team last year and had that experience, just bringing that down through the program and building that environment that you want everybody to compete at practice, everybody to push each other, so at the end of the year you can see yourself on top or close in that situation to come out with the championship."

Heck — who is in his fourth season on varsity and signed to play college basketball at Michigan Tech — was an all-conference recipient last year. The 6-foot-5 versatile

guard/forward was second on the team in scoring at 14.5 points per game, tied a team high with 47 made 3-pointers and was tops in rebounds at 5.8.

"We have expectations for him to score more and be a leader that way for us," third-year West De Pere coach Todd Deschane said. "We're going to look to get him the ball a little bit more differently than we did last year. Last year, we were a little bit more guard orientated, dribble, get to the basket, maybe kick out for open looks. I think we're slightly different and we're going to readjust it this year to get him more involved differently for us."

Baumgart is coming off a solid sophomore campaign in which he was named all-conference honorable mention. He scored 10.2 points and pulled down 5.4 rebounds per contest.

"Andrew is a fearless competitor, a phenomenal athlete, so we're going to take all those intangibles that he has and put them out on the court and just let him go," Deschane said. "He's just a beast that just needs to kind of be uncaged and given a little bit of guidance and he'll go."

West De Pere — which finished 17-9 overall and tied with Xavier atop the Bay at 11-3 — has a few good pieces



Ethan Heck, left, was second for the West De Pere boys' basketball team in scoring at 14.5 points per game last season. He tied a team high with 47 made 3-pointers and was tops in rebounds at 5.8.

Greg Bates Photo

to plug into the starting lineup.

Senior Thomas Walder was the primary backup guard last season. He averaged 2.8 points per game.

"He's good when we get him open shots," Deschane said. "He can knock down shots and get to the basket."

Langdon Nordgaard was a key piece off the bench a year ago, averaging 3.2 points and 2.8 rebounds.

The 6-foot-4 forward had a nice summer playing hoops before he suffered a lacerated kidney in football.

"We're excited about what we saw from him coming back," Deschane said. "He's going to be along the lines of Ethan, similarly looking for him to get shots coming off different actions we're going to run for him."

The fifth starter spot was still up for grabs during ear-

ly-season practices.

Two of coach Deschane's boys, sophomore Easton and senior Sutter, will be in contention for the starter job. Both got minutes last season at the varsity level.

Deschane is excited to see how Preston Heim fits into the lineup. The junior is lanky with a lot of athleticism.

Some sophomores — Riley Kraft, Bryce Borowicz and

Collin Jindra — will be vying for time this season after playing junior varsity a year ago.

"I know that we've got guys coming up that didn't necessarily get as much playing time last year because of those seniors, but I know that they will have a huge role this year and they can help fill that spot for that scoring position and just the overall leadership, really," Heck said.

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