



WINTER SPORTS PREVIEW

2025-2026

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DECEMBER 4, 2025





Burlington Wildcats

Wildcats to field younger team in 2025

Katie McMurray
Reporter

BURLINGTON — After a 2024-25 season in which they were undefeated Pioneer League Champions and made an appearance at the Class 3A State tournament, the Burlington Wildcats are back on the floor but will play with a much younger team.

Justin Logan, who was a finalist for Class 3A Coach of the Year last season, returns for his sixth season as the Wildcats' head coach and will be assisted by Lisa Mautz and Damon Schmidt.

On the court, the team returns only one starter from the 2024-25 team, Maddux Cheever. Cheever, a senior forward, averaged 10.2 points, 5.6 rebounds, 3.6 assists and 1.2 steals per game and was a Pioneer League All-League Second Team and an All-State Honorable Mention selection a year ago.

"Maddux has been an integral part of our team since his sophomore year," Logan said. "He is an unselfish player and another unprecedented three-year captain for us. He has led the team in minutes played the last two seasons because of all the 'little things' he contributes to our team. He is also a tremendous kid off the court and in the classroom, a kid that truly defines representing himself, his school and his community."

Also returning for his senior season is guard Alex Mautz. He averaged 3.1 points, 1.3 rebounds, 1.2 assists and 1.1 steals per game last season.

"Alex is another kid that repre-

sents himself, his school and his community at a high level," Logan said. "He is one of those players every coach dreams of having the opportunity to coach because of his heart, tenacity and willingness to do anything for the team mentality. He doesn't typically show up with huge numbers on the stat sheet but he affects winning."

Looking to make an impact are junior guards Troy Over and Mason Collins, junior forward Tegan Smith, sophomore guards Shawn Mautz and Caleb Birk and sophomore forwards Gaige Navarro and Talis Sharpe. Over tallied 7.8 points, 2.3 rebounds, 1.7 assists and 1.2 steals and Collins tallied 7.6 points, 4.7 rebounds, 1.1 assists and

1.2 steals per game last season, when both brought great production off the bench.

"Troy shot 40 percent from three-point range, handled the ball and took some massive steps forward as the season progressed," Logan said. "He's

See Wildcats, Page 13



Kramer Photography

Back row - Bodey Cheever, Brecken Pedersen, Caleb Birk, Shawn Mautz, Case Birk, Lane Warkentine, Miller Allen, Caleb Welsh; Middle row - Greyson Payer, Max Ecton, Mason Collins, Gaige Navarro, Talis Sharpe, Tegan Smith, Jackson Nuessen, Troy Over, Zaidyn Vest; Seated row - Coach Lisa Mautz, Kolten Robinson, Maddux Cheever, Coach Justin Logan, Alex Mautz, Thomas Hudson, Coach Damon Schmidt; Bottom row - Cayden Turner, Jace Reppert, Brayzdn Spring, Brant Hazen, Marshall Wright, Oliver Hazen.

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Burlington Wildcats

Experienced Ladycats excited for new season

Katie McMurray
Reporter

BURLINGTON — The Burlington Ladycat basketball team is enthusiastic about the 2025-26 season, with four experienced starters returning to lead the way.

Erin McGown enters her fourth season as the team’s head coach and will be assisted by new assistant coach Sarah Rice.

Leading the returners are seniors Hattie Burgio, Jaycee Belcher and Arringtyn Sleezer. Burgio, a forward, averaged 5.0 rebounds, 8.7 rebounds and 2.0 steals per game and has Burlington’s first 200-rebound season her junior year. Belcher, a guard, averaged 3.3 points, 3.6 rebounds and 2.3 steals per game.

“Hattie is our glue girl with a do whatever is needed to help the team win attitude. Will be looking for more offense from her this year,” McGown said. “Jaycee is a high energy player and a lock down perimeter defender. Capable of knocking down the open three. She is a natural leader on and off the court. We expect her to step up and become a key role player for us this season. Arringtyn, a forward, gives us length down low and provides a post presence. She did not play basketball until high school but quickly became a player we wanted to help develop due to her size and athletic ability.”

Also returning to the starting lineup are junior guards Mac Medlock and Al-



Kramer Photography

Members of the 2025-26 Burlington High School girls’ basketball team are, from left, front row – Raelynn Majors, Alexa Splechter, Bianca Bortolotti, Hattie Burgio, Jaycee Belcher, Arringtyn Sleezer, Mac Medlock, Karlee Docman; back row – Ane Madarieta Jaio, Aiyanna Dwight, Carlie Schlotterbeck, Bristol Brooks, Lila Beyer, Brinley Belcher, Ava Sleezer, Kenna Hernandez, Sophia Matney, Bailey Docman, Mya King and Katey Hazen.

exa Splechter. Medlock averaged 14.8 points, 6.6 rebounds and 2.0 steals per game and made 57 three-pointers last season, while Splechter, the team’s point guard, averaged 10.9 points, 3.2 steals and 4.1 assists per game and was a 75 percent free throw shooter as a sophomore. Both were Pioneer League All-League First Team and Class 3A All-State Honorable Mention selections.

“Mac is a lengthy guard and a three

point sharp shooter,” McGown said. “Her offensive game continues to expand and evolve every year, and she is learning to use her length and size to exploit mismatches and score down low around the basket. Alexa is a true floor general and impacts the game at both ends of the floor. She’s a disruptive perimeter defender who has a high defensive IQ, and offensively, she pushes the ball, feeds her teammates at the right

time, can consistently knock down the three ball and get it to the paint.”

Also returning as a junior is guard Karlee Docman, who averaged 4.8 points, 2.8 rebounds and 1.7 steals per game.

Karlee is a perimeter threat who has a knack for scoring and a much-improved defender with quick hands,”

See Ladycats, Page 13

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Burlington Wildcats

Wildcats bring a desire to improve in 2025-26

Katie McMurray
Reporter

BURLINGTON — The Burlington Wildcats are back on the mats for a new season of high school boys' wrestling and bring with them a desire to improve.

Jason Bates is back for a second season as the team's head coach. He will be assisted by Sam Lingenfelter, Wes Fleming and Noah Nordgren.

Returning for the Wildcats are junior Chris Murphy at 120 pounds, sophomore Lukas Harred at 150 pounds, senior Bowen McIntosh at 157 pounds, senior Kyzer Lehmann at 165 pounds and sophomore Dalton Vanover at 175 pounds. Lehmann is also a returning team captain, and both he and McIntosh bring senior leadership to the team.

"The returning wrestlers are bringing leadership to our team," Bates said. "They are encouraging and demonstrating the proper work ethic that our team needs to improve daily."

Other wrestlers projected to be in the varsity lineup include freshman Levi Hazen at 113 pounds, freshman Brett Hinman at 126 pounds, freshman Tate Stahl at 132 pounds, senior Owen McCarty at 138 pounds, freshman Bo Thomsen at 144 pounds, freshman Jace Allen at 190 pounds, junior Kaden Hawkins at 215 pounds and freshman Landy Shinn at 285 pounds.

The team's goals for this season include building culture and work ethic.

"Our team would like to start re-



Kramer Photography

Members of the 2025-26 Burlington High School boys' wrestling team are, from left, front row – Levi Hazen, Carter Turner, Bo Thomsen, Ryan Hoyt, Trystan Palmer, Brett Hinman; middle row – Chris Murphy, Bowen McIntosh, Lukas Harred, Tate Stahl, Kaden Hawkins; back row – manager Emlyn Monasmith, Jace Allen, Dalton Vanover, Owen McCarty, Malakide Murphy, Landyn Shinn, Kyzer Lehmann and manager Emma Cunningham.

building our Family of one culture and bring back the work ethic needed to be successful on and off the mat," Bates said.

There are several attributes that will be important in determining the team's level of success in reaching those goals.

"The keys to success include atti-

tude, work ethic, goal setting, responsibility, citizenship, commitment to excellence and integrity," Bates said.

Bates sees potential in his team, as well.

"Our team's strength this year is our desire to get better and willingness to do what it takes to improve," Bates said. "Our team's weakness is

that we are a young team, but we have a lot of room to grow."

Some of the biggest events on the schedule for the Wildcats include regionals and state.

The Wildcats will open their season when they host and compete in the Wildcat Duals 3:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 5.

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Burlington Wildcats

Ladycat wrestlers are focused, committed to their team

Katie McMurray
Reporter

BURLINGTON — The Burlington Ladycat girls' wrestling team is one that has focus and commitment in 2025-26.

Jason Bates enters his second season as the team's head coach, and he will be assisted by Wes Fleming, Sam Lingenfelter and Noah Nordgren.

The projected lineup for the Ladycats includes senior returning state qualifier Bella Matney at 100 pounds, junior returning state qualifier and preseason Class 4A No. 6-ranked Nevaeh Myers at 105 pounds, sophomore returner Kitana Pease at 115 pounds, senior returner Jaylin Reppert at 120 pounds, freshmen to watch Ivy Becker at 125 pounds and Alaina Mason at 130 pounds, freshman Connie Moore at 135 pounds, sophomore returner Bella Combs at 140 pounds, freshman to watch Abby Kelley at 155 pounds, junior



Kramer Photography

Members of the 2025-26 Burlington High School girls' wrestling team are, from left, front row – manager Emlyn Monasmith, Nevaeh Myers, Kitana Pease, Ivy Becker, Emma Combs, Alaina Mason, manager Emma Cunningham; back row - Alanah Solano, Jaylin Reppert, Paige Ferrara, Tarryn Stultz, Kaitlynnne Charlton, Abby Kelley and Brynn Sowder. Aubrey Freerksen and Bella Matney are also part of the team but were unavailable for the photo.

See Lady Wrestlers, Page 13

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Hartford Jaguars

Jaguars able to have more balanced offensive attack in 2025-26

Katie McMurray
Reporter

HARTFORD — The Hartford Jaguars are entering the new season of high school basketball with a more experienced team that has improved its offense.

Colten Barrett enters his eighth year as the team's head coach. He will be assisted by Tanner Shank.

The Jaguars will be led by four returning starters, senior center Keenan Renfrow junior guards Landen Schultz, Coy Wilkinson and Tyce Ndegwa.

"Coy was our leading scorer from last season; we are looking for him to take another step for us this season," Barrett said. "Keenan has developed into a three-level scorer; we will look for him to be one of the team's leading scorers this year. Landen will look to increase his scoring production from last year. He does a great job at running the point for us and will be taking on a bigger leadership role this season. Tyce will be looking to take the next step for us in the scoring department, is a good defender and will play a big role this season."

Joining the returning starters are senior guard Daden Wilson and sophomore guard Carson Menke.

"Daden will be competing for a starter role this season; he is a very good defender, handles the



Annabelle Payton/The Republican

Members of the 2025-26 Hartford High School boys' basketball team are, from left, front row – Bentlee Schultz, Daden Wilson, Tyce Ndegwa, Coy Wilkinson, Keenan Renfrow, Landen Schultz, Dakota Olson; back row – Adin Giesken-Mears, Brady Kelley, Brysyn Jacobs, Carson Menke, Parker Engel, Connor Trester and Colt Heckathorn.

ball well and does well attacking the basket," Barrett said. "Carson will also be competing for that last starting spot; he is a really good rebounder and can score from all three levels."

The Jaguars' goals this year are to improve on their fourth-place finish in the LCL a year ago and to continue to improve their pace of play.

Defense will a key to success.

"We need to keep improving defensively to reach our goals," Barrett said. "We also need to improve our three-point shooting."

This year's Jaguar team will be able to have a more balanced attack this year.

"Our depth offensively has improved, overall shooting will improve this year and we are going

to be able to play faster with the depth at the guard position this season," Barrett said. "Our overall team speed should be one of our strengths, as well. One of our weaknesses will be rebounding."

The Jaguars hosted Altoona-Midway for their season and home opener Tuesday, Dec. 2, and will next take on Marmaton Valley at Moran 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4.

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Hartford Jaguars

Sophomore point guard to lead Lady Jaguars

Katie McMurray
Reporter

HARTFORD — The Hartford Lady Jaguar girls’ basketball team is returning to the court for the 2025-26 season with a small team that will be led by a sophomore returning starter.

Ryan Thomas enters his 13th season as the Lady Jaguars’ head coach. He will be assisted by Morgan Bolen.

Leading the team on the court will be Lauryn Finnerty, the Lady Jaguars’ only returning starter. A sophomore, she is the team’s point guard and averaged 13.5 points, 6.7 rebounds, 3.6 steals and two assists per game as a freshman.

“Lauryn is an all-around player, and she can defend anyone on

the floor,” Thomas said. “She’s a high IQ player, the leader on the floor and we will rely on her on both ends of the court.”

Joining Finnerty are senior Aubrey Finnerty, a forward, and freshman Kinzie Fowler, a guard.

“Aubrey will be our force inside,” Thomas said. “She provides good size and posts hard. She will need to be good on both ends of the floor for us to have success.

I’m hoping as the season goes on, Kinzie can really develop and be someone to help on the perimeter. She’s a pretty hard worker.”

While coach and team have not talked about goals for the season just yet, they are aware their experience, speed and depth are potential weaknesses and are working to accommodate those.

The Lady Jaguars will have several tough opponents against

whom they can put their skills to the test. They include non-league opponent Cherryvale and Lyon County League foes Marais des Cygnes Valley, Lebo, Olpe and Madison.

The Lady Jaguars opened the season with a home game against Altoona Midway Tuesday, Dec. 2, and will next play Marmaton Valley at Moran 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4.



Annabelle Payton/The Republican

Members of the 2025-26 Hartford High School girls’ basketball team are, from left, Aubrey Finnerty, Lauryn Finnerty, Maricela Munoz-Gardner, Kinzie Fowler, Addisyn Williams and Emmalie Bess.





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Burlington Basketball

12/4	vs. Neodesha	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
12/5	at Holton	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
12/12	vs. Baldwin	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
12/16	vs. Iola	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
12/19	vs. Wellsville	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
1/5	at Paola	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
1/9	at Santa Fe Trail	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
1/12	at Chanute	C	6:30 p.m.
1/13	vs. Osawatomie	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
1/15	at Parsons	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
1/16	vs. Eureka	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
1/17	at Anderson Co.	C	9 a.m.
1/20-24	Burlington Invite	V	TBD
1/26	at Chanute	C	6:30 p.m.
1/27	at Prairie View	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
1/30	at Iola	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
2/3	vs. Anderson Co.	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
2/6	at Osage City	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
2/10	at Wellsville	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
2/13	vs. Prairie View	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
2/17	vs. Santa Fe Trail	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
2/20	at Osawatomie	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
2/23	at Council Grove	V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
2/26-3/7	Substate	V	TBD
3/11-14	State	V	TBD

Burlington Wrestling

12/5	Wildcat Duals	VB	3:30 p.m.
12/5	Ladycat Duals	VG	3:30 p.m.
12/6	Emporia Tourn.	JVB, V/JV G	9 a.m.
12/11	vs. Fredonia	All	6 p.m.
12/13	Baldwin Duals	VG	9 a.m.
12/19	Marion Co. Duals	VB	3 p.m.
12/19	Columbus Duals	VG	3 p.m.
1/8	vs. Council Grove	All	6 p.m.
1/10	Burlington Invite	VG, VB	9:30 a.m.
1/13	at Eudora	VG, VB	5:30 p.m.
1/15	Wellsville Tourn.	VG, VB	1 p.m.
1/20	Rossville Quad	V/JV B	3 p.m.
1/21	Louisburg Mixer	VG, JVB	4:30 p.m.
1/23	Eureka JV Mixer	JVG, JVB	4:30 p.m.
1/24	Eureka Invite	VG, VB	9:30 a.m.
1/29	Anderson Co. Mixer	VG	4 p.m.
1/30	Baldwin Invite	VG	4 p.m.
1/31	Baldwin Invite	VB	9 a.m.
2/5	Pioneer League at BHS	VG, VB	3:30
2/7	SFT JV Tourn	JVG, JVB	8:30 a.m.
2/7	Silver Lake Tourn.	All	8 a.m.
2/13-14	Girls' Regional	VG	TBA
2/20-21	Boys' Regional	VG	TBA
2/27-28	State Championships	VG, VB	TBA

Waverly Basketball

12/4-6	Pre-Season Tourney @Waverly	TBA
12/9	@ Cornerstone	5 p.m.
12/12	vs Maranatha	5 p.m.
12/15	vs Olpe	5 p.m.
12/19	vs Madison	5 p.m.
1/6	@ Lebo	5 p.m.
1/9	@ Northern Heights	5 p.m.
1/13	vs MdCV	5 p.m.

1/16	vs Hartford	5 p.m.
1/20	@ Burlingame	5 p.m.
1/26-31	LCL Tournament	TBA
2/2	vs SCC	5 p.m.
2/3	@ West Franklin	5 p.m.
2/6	@ Uniontown	5 p.m.
2/10	@ Central Heights	5 p.m.
2/12	@ Crest	5 p.m.
2/13	vs Chase County	5 p.m.
2/17	vs Lyndon	5 p.m.
2/20	@ Mission Valley	5 p.m.
2/23-24	Sub State Quarterfinal	TBA
2/28-3/2	Sub State	TBA
3/11-14	State	TBA

SCC Basketball

12/5	vs. Erie	6 p.m.
12/9-12	Valley Tip-Off Classic @ Melvern	5 p.m.
12/16	vs. St. Paul	6 p.m.
12/19	@ Oswego	6 p.m.
1/6	vs. Marmaton Valley	6 p.m.
1/9	@ Altoona Midway	6 p.m.
1/12	@ Central Heights	6 p.m.
1/13	vs. Uniontown	6 p.m.
1/16	@ Pleasanton	6 p.m.
1/19-23	Altoona Tourney	TBA
1/30	vs. Chetopa	6 p.m.
2/2	@ Waverly	6 p.m.
2/6	@ Colony-Crest	6 p.m.
2/10	vs. Jayhawk Linn	6 p.m.
2/13	vs. Madison	6 p.m.
2/17	vs. Yates Center	6 p.m.
2/19	@ Northeast Arma	6 p.m.
2/20	@ SE Cherokee	6 p.m.
2/23-24	Substate Quarterfinal	TBA
2/28-3/2	Substate	TBA
3/11-14	State	TBA

Lebo Basketball

12/5	@ Flinthills	5 p.m.
12/9	Central Hts Tourney	3 p.m.
12/11	Central Hts Tourney	3:30 p.m.
12/13	Central Hts Tourney	4 p.m.
12/16	@ Madison	5 p.m.
12/19	vs. Olpe	5 p.m.
1/6	vs. Waverly	5 p.m.
1/9	@ Hartford	5 p.m.
1/13	vs. Burlingame	5 p.m.
1/16	@ N. Heights	5 p.m.
1/20	@ MdCV	5 p.m.
1/26-31	LCL Tourn. at Emporia	TBA
2/3	@ Jayhawk Linn	5 p.m.
2/6	vs. West Franklin	5 p.m.
2/10	vs. Lyndon	5 p.m.
2/12	vs. Marmaton Valley	5 p.m.
2/13	at Mission Valley	5 p.m.
2/17	at Eureka	5 p.m.
2/19	vs. Osage City	5 p.m.
2/20	vs. Liberty Home School	5 p.m.
2/23-24	Substate Quarterfinal	TBA
2/28-3/2	Sub State	TBA
3/11-14	State	TBA

Lebo Wrestling

12/6	Emporia Tourn.	VG, JVB	9 a.m.
12/11	Chase Co. Mixer	All	4 p.m.
12/13	@ Anderson County	VB	9 a.m.
12/18	Rossville Mixer	All	4 p.m.
12/19	Abilene Tourn.	VG	1 p.m.
12/20	Abilene Tourn.	VB	9 a.m.
1/9	@ Topeka-Seaman	JVB	4 p.m.
1/10	Burlington Invite	VG, VB	9:30 a.m.
1/17	St. Mary's Tourn.	VG, VB	8:30 a.m.
1/23	Council Grove Tourn.	VB	2 p.m.
1/24	Council Grove Tourn.	VG	9 a.m.
1/29	St. Mary's Mixer	All	4 p.m.
1/31	Atchison Tourn.	VG, VB	9 a.m.
2/3	Flint Hills League @ CG	VG	4 p.m.
2/5	@ Osage City	All	5 p.m.
2/7	Santa Fe Trail Tourn.	JVG, JVB	8:30 a.m.
2/10	Flint Hills League @ MV	VB	4 p.m.
2/13-14	Girls' Regional	VG	TBA
2/20-21	Boys' Regional	VB	TBA
2/27-28	State Championships	VG,VB	TBA

Hartford

12/4	@ Marmaton Valley	5 p.m.
12/9-12	Valley Tip-Off Classic @ Melvern	5 p.m.
12/16	@ Burlingame	5 p.m.
12/19	vs. MdCV	5 p.m.
1/6	at N. Heights	5 p.m.
1/9	vs. Lebo	5 p.m.
1/13	vs. Olpe	5 p.m.
1/16	at Waverly	4:45 p.m.
1/20	at Madison	5 p.m.
1/26-31	LCL Tourn. at Emporia	TBA
2/3	vs. Douglass	5 p.m.
2/6	vs. St. Xavier	5 p.m.
2/10	vs. Liberty Homeschool	5 p.m.
2/12	at Cherryvale	5 p.m.
2/17	at Centre-Lost Springs	5 p.m.
2/20	vs. Goessel	5 p.m.
2/23-24	Substate Quarterfinals	TBA
2/28-3/2	Substate	TBA
3/11-14	State	TBA

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Lebo Wolves

One returning starter to lead Wolves

Katie McMurray
Reporter

LEBO — The Lebo Wolves boys’ basketball team will have several new faces on the floor in the 2025-26 season.

Dennis Becker enters his third year as the Wolves’ head coach. He will be assisted by Scott Jones and Duncan Fort.

On the court, the Wolves have one returning starter, sophomore

guard Gerek Reber. He averaged 4.8 points per game last season.

“Gerek is a strong offensive player with a great work ethic,” Becker said. “He’s always in the gym working on his game and will lead others to make them better, as well.”

Joining Reber are several players competing for starting spots. They include Brock Hadley, Colby Fehr, Jesse Durst, Ayden Ferguson and Jayden Blount.

Coach and team have set a couple of goals for this season.

“We want to get better every day and build our defense and offensive abilities,” Becker said.

Becker has identified some strengths and potential weaknesses of his team, as well.

“Our strengths this year will be our team IQ and overall basketball knowledge,” Becker said. “We will also rely heavily on our defense. On offense, we have a

multitude of guys that can have an impact on any given game and step up wise.”

Among the toughest games for the Wolves will be those against Lyon County League rival Olpe and against non-league opponent Osage City.

The Wolves opened their season Tuesday, Dec. 2, with a home game against Erie. They will next play Flinthills at Rosalia 5 p.m. Dec. 5.



Photo submitted

Members of the 2025-26 Lebo High School boys’ basketball team are, from left, front row – Kohlton Shoemaker, Jesse Durst, Cooper Fehr, Jae’Mykel Hall, Ayden Ferguson, Reid Gausman, Brock Hadley, Kaden Balding, Sabin Lindblade; back row – Jayden Blount, Gerek Reber, Garrison Knight, Mateo Plummer, Eli Konrade, Colby Fehr, Rayden Risner, Daniel Rausch, Matthew Criqui, Jett Edwards and Will Edwards.

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Lebo Wolves

Lady Wolves aim to defend league titles

Katie McMurray
Reporter

LEBO — The Lebo Lady Wolves are back for another season of high school basketball and are looking to defend their Lyon County League regular-season and tournament titles and make another trip to the state tournament.

Patrick Gardner returns for his seventh season as the team's head coach. He will be assisted by Jamie Moore.

The team has two returning starters, senior guards Ally Peek and Allison Konrade.

Konrade averaged seven points per game and received all-league and all-state honors as a junior. Peek averaged 3.6 points per game.

"I expect the returning starters and upperclassmen to bring a high standard of dedication and discipline to set the tone for the entire team," Gardner said. "Work ethic and communication will be crucial in establishing a strong, focused environment."

Other upperclassmen looking to make an impact include senior guards Cira Plummer and Aubriana Vannocker, junior guards Ellie Grimmert and Maya Wilson and junior forwards Brooklyn Hutchison and Rachael Barnhardt.

A strength for the team this season will be the ability to defend the basketball in the half-court, while a potential weakness is scoring the

basketball. Coach and team have also set goals for this year.

"Our goal is to compete for another LCL league and tournament championship, along with making another trip to the state tournament," Gardner said.

Trust, believing in oneself and unity will be important.

"The keys to success will be

trusting our teammates to make plays, individual players believing in themselves when given the opportunity and playing as a single unit on defense," Gardner said.

Consistency will also be vital.

"We need consistency from every player on both ends of the floor," Gardner said. "Offensively, it's going to take a collective effort

to find ways to score the basketball."

Among the toughest opponents for the Lady Wolves will be league rival Olpe and non-league opponent Osage City.

The Lady Wolves hosted Erie for their home and season opener Tuesday, Dec. 2, and will next play Flint Hills at Rosalia 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 5.



Photo submitted

Members of the 2025-26 Lebo High School girls' basketball team are, from left, front row – Maya Wilson, Aubriana Vannocker, Ally Peek, Allison Konrade, Cassidy Potter, Cira Plummer, Chrissy Rivas, Grace Patton; back row – Maggie Shoemaker, Lexi Hutchison, Ellie Grimmert, Brooklyn Hutchison, Rachael Barnhardt, Aslan Rosine, Rya Plummer and Haley Gorton.

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SCCTitans

Young Titans must be aggressive to reach goals this season

Katie McMurray
Reporter

LeROY — As they enter the 2025-26 season, the Southern Coffey County Titan boys' basketball team is finding that focus and physical condition will be important in determining their level of success.

Brian Rand is beginning his fourth season as the Titans' head coach. He has four returning starters to work with this year.

Returning to the starting lineup are seniors Trey Winn and Kaden Boling, junior Cyrus Nickel and sophomore Charley Nickel.

"Trey, Kaiden, Charley and Cyrus bring some great leadership and work ethic," Rand said. "We will have to run multiple offenses and defenses because we are not, overall, a really tall team."

Joining the returning starters and looking to make an impact this season are seniors John Rolf and Colton Summers and junior Josh Snyder.

"Josh and Colton will be back to come give us defensive support off of the bench," Rand said. "John will return from an injury in football, so we expect lots of excitement from him with his pressure and enthusiasm."

The Titans are working to meet



Photo submitted

Members of the 2025-26 Southern Coffey County High School boys' basketball team are, from left, front row – Lane Morrison Branton Bussell, Braxton Stone, Kaiden Boling, Brantlee Jones; back row – Trey Winn, Cyrus Nickel, Charley Nickel, Tyler Rolf and John Rolf. Josh Snyder and Colton Summers are also part of the team but were unavailable for the photo.

See Titans, Page 16



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SCC Titans

2025-26 Lady Titans a group that will always give 100 percent

Katie McMurray
Reporter

LeROY — The Southern Coffey County Lady Titan girls' basketball team is one that will give the game their all every time they're on the court in 2025-26.

Veteran coach Jeff True is beginning his 23rd season as SCC's head coach and his 36th year as a head coach overall. He will be assisted by Christina Morray.

Two starters return to lead the Lady Titans on the court, junior post Layla Decker and sophomore guard Cheyenne Dyke.

"Cheyenne is a five-foot-four point guard who got a lot of varsity

experience last season," True said. "She has a good work ethic and will be looked to for more scoring this year. Layla is a five-foot-six post player that returns and will provide a lot of leadership."

Joining them are sophomore Lexi Riedinger, seniors Hailey Honn and Melissa Edwards and freshmen Brooke Marlow and Madalynn Garretson.

"Lexi is a five-foot-six guard joined the team last season," True said. "We will look to her to help score some points, and she should be a good defender. Hailey and Melissa are our only seniors. Last season was their first season playing basketball. They will both provide some leadership for us both on and off the court. Brooke and Madalynn will both play a major role on the court on both ends of the floor."

The Lady Titans'

goals for this year are to improve each day, become more competitive and have positive attitudes and a great work ethic.

"Staying healthy and working hard each day will be the keys to

success," True said.

True has already identified some strengths and potential weaknesses in his team.

See Lady Titans, Page 16



Photo submitted

Members of the 2025-26 Southern Coffey County High School girls' basketball team are, from left, front row – Cheyenne Dyke, Alexis Riedinger, Hailey Honn, Melissa Edwards, Layla Decker, Emma Kent; back row – Lilian Raker, Madalynn Garretson, Brooke Marlow and Riley Schemm.



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Wildcats

Continued from Page 2

a kid who has a high passion for the game. We will look to him to take an even bigger step in production this season. Seemed every time Mason entered the game, his passion and energy would just inject into the team and the game. He has a great ability to get to the rim but also be a knock down shooter when they play off. He was our third leading rebounder last season. He plays with a high motor and a knack for getting to the right spots for the board."

Smith is one of those kids who "empties the tank" when he's on the floor.

"Tegan plays with a high engine," Logan said. "He is a physical post presence with a great slashing element to his game but also able to hit from outside."

Birk and Shawn Mautz both have a high love for the game, while Navarro and Sharpe bring versatility on both ends of the floor. All four look to compete for more minutes this season.

"Shawn plays with a ton of humility and brings the ability to be a knock down shooter, handle the ball with high poise and be a facilitator within our offense," Logan said. "Caleb has the ability and mentality to be a lock-down perimeter defender but also a versatile player on the offensive end with his ability to handle the ball and knock down the three.

"Gaige can stretch the floor with his shooting ability, handle the ball for a bigger player and be a shot disruptor on the defensive end with his length," Logan said. "Talis is a lengthy kid and has the ability to be a knock down shooter but also get to the rim offensively and contest the rim on defense."

While the Wildcats will have some new, young faces stepping into roles, expectations and standards remain the same, which comes with having four returning lettermen who are hungry and competitive and two senior leaders.

"We want to strive to be better each day, stack those days so we can be the best we can come March, and win the Pioneer League, Burlington Invitational and substate and compete at state," Logan said. "We want to improve mentally and physically as players each and every opportunity we are afforded. We want to enjoy the process of the season and not take a single step

for granted, to live and compete to the standards we have created for ourselves and this program and let the results take care of themselves."

Strengths for this season will include leadership, especially from the seniors. The depth of the roster, with many kids ready to scrap and fight for minutes, will help the team push to higher levels. The group also brings the ability to play with solid effort on defense.

"We have a group with a high ability to shoot the ball, high IQ and basketball background underneath them," Logan said. "Our weakness will be the growing pains that tend to come with a young roster. You expect some youthful mistakes to take place and there is no fast forward button on experience. Being younger, you tend to be on the smaller physical side as well. A quote we tend to ride on though is 'the smart take from the strong' so we will look to win between the ears when facing more physical opponents."

Basketball can be a long season with ups and downs, especially with a younger team, but the Wildcats hope to learn and become better from any "experience builder" moments that come their way.

"We hope to see many improvements throughout the season," Logan said. "This will be a fun group of boys to watch from start to finish this season. There will for sure be some learning moments as we go, but we have a group of kids that will get better from those moments and a couple of great senior leaders to move us through those moments."

For the Wildcats, the biggest game is the next game. They faced a tough rough test right out of the gates against league opponent Anderson County on Tuesday and play three games opening week, hosting Neodesha Thursday and traveling to Holton Friday.

"We will have to be ready to compete right out of the blocks because it doesn't get any easier the next week with a great Class 4A team in Baldwin coming to town, followed by league opponents Iola and Wellsville," Logan said. "Our home invitational tournament is always difficult as well. It's one of the best weeks of the year!"

The Wildcats played Anderson County at Garnett Tuesday, Dec. 2, and will host Neodesha for their home opener 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4.

Ladycats

Continued from Page 3

McGown said. "Looking for more consistent production from Karlee this year. We expect her to become another key role player for this team."

Representing the sophomore class are guard/forward Brinley Belcher and guard Lila Beyer. Both will see increased playing time and bigger roles this year.

Brinley is a versatile high-energy player," McGown said. "Lila is a smart basketball player who can knock down open threes."

The Ladycats' goals for 2025-26 are repeating as Pioneer League Champions and making a trip to Hutchinson for state. McGown said the team made big strides last season and, this season, are a committed group motivated to take that next step.

"A big key to our success this year will be developing our bench, as we had a six-player rotation last year and lost one to graduation, but I have a lot of confidence in the girls we have to fill those roles and be contributors for the team," McGown said.

The Ladycats are looking forward to defending their league title. Wellsville will be very tough as, like Burlington, they return two first team all-league players and lost one starter to graduation, and both games with them will be huge in determining the league champion. Anderson County and Santa Fe Trail also return most of their

line-ups, while Prairie View graduated a big senior class but always plays and competes hard.

Other quality opponents include an early matchup with Neodesha, who went to state last year and return some quality players in spite of losing two to graduation, and Osage City, who should be one of the top teams in Class 3A having gone to state last season and returning all of their key players and who the Ladycats will play in early February at a time when both teams should really be coming into form for postseason play and, with good health, should have a fun battle. Additionally, the Burlington Invitational will feature multiple high-quality teams with great players including Silver Lake, Girard and Ottawa and a great chance to measure where the team stands.

"I think fans should expect a lot of the same they saw last year - a team that truly prides itself in its defense and works hard on that end," McGown said. "Offensively, I expect us to continue to be a huge threat behind the three-point line and foresee a couple of new role players stepping up to complement our more consistent scorers. Hopefully, as a team, we can be more consistent on the offensive end throughout the season and even within games. It should be a fun year with a lot to look forward to!"

The Ladycats tipped off their season against Anderson County at Garnett Tuesday, Dec. 2, and will host Neodesha for their home opener 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4.

Lady Wrestlers

Continued from Page 5

returning state qualifier Paige Ferrara at 170 pounds and junior returner Kaitlynn Charlton at 190 pounds.

"The girls really came together at the end of last season," Bates said. "We have seven returning girls that wrestled either junior varsity or varsity, and they want to build on that feeling of togetherness, that family of one. These girls support each other, encourage each other and push each other to be their best."

The Ladycats have set a couple of goals for this season.

"Team goals are to fill as many weight classes as possible, compete as a team and identify where

our weaknesses are and improve in those areas," Bates said.

The keys to success in reaching those goals include attitude, citizenship, commitment to excellence, goal setting, integrity, responsibility and work ethic.

Bates has identified some strengths and a potential weakness of his team.

"Everyone is focused and committed to the team," Bates said. "However, we are a young team getting used to the speed and intensity of practice."

The toughest events on the Ladycats' schedule include regionals and state.

The Ladycats will wrestle their first matches Friday, Dec. 5, when they host and compete in the Ladycat Duals. Matches will begin at 3:30 p.m.



Waverly Bulldogs

Bulldogs to field a more experienced team

Katie McMurray
Reporter

WAVERLY — The Waverly Bulldog boys' basketball team will be a more experienced team in the

2025-26 season, with six players returning with varsity experience.

Tyler Williams enters his seventh season as the team's head coach, and he will be assisted by Nick Fraenza.

On the floor, the Bulldogs will be led by six returning varsity players, senior forwards Carter Ohl and Ty Glissman, junior guards Dustin Foster and Rylan Rasmussen and sophomore guards Max-

well McNabb and Kaiser Fraenza. Foster is the top returning scorer having averaged 13 points per game last season, as well as two steals per game, and he was a Lyon County League All-League Honorable Mention selection as a sophomore. Glissman is returning as a solid scorer and rebounder, having averaged 11 points and six rebounds per game last season. Ohl tallied five points and 2.5 steals per game a year ago. McNabb and Fraenza each averaged five points per game as freshman, and Rasmussen tallied two points per game a year ago.

"The boys have been together for a long time and struggled last season, being a youth movement," Williams said. "At the end of the season, we were in nearly every game and lost many by within three points because we just did not know how to win, whether that was struggling closing games out for another reason. I think that last year was a learning experience for them, and I think with all the experiences they had, along



Photo submitted

Members of the 2025-26 Waverly High School boys' basketball team are, from left, Ty Glissman, Dustin Foster, Kaiser Fraenza, Tatum Williams, Colt Marsh, Hayden Ohl, Rylan Rasmussen, Alec Stice, Cale Woodson, Clayton Bartlett, Carter Ohl, Erik Quitter and Maxwell McNabb.

See Waverly, Page 16

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Waverly Bulldogs

Lady Bulldogs have high expectations for 2025-26

Katie McMurray
Reporter

WAVERLY — The Waverly High School Lady Bulldog girls' basketball team is entering the 2025-26 team with high expectations.

Ty Piper returns for his 11th season as the team's head coach and will be assisted by Olivia Fleming.

The Lady Bulldogs return three starters, senior guard Allie Stukey and junior guards Zoey Hirt and Lydia Foltz. Stukey averaged seven points per game a season ago, while Hirt averaged nine points, five steals and three rebounds and Foltz averaged four points, two steals and three rebounds. Lost to graduation were four-year starters Josie Romig, who was the team's leading scorer, rebounder and defender, and Morgan Vogts.

Other returners include senior Kate Wagner and junior guard Macy Seems. Wagner is a forward who averaged four points and four rebounds per game last year. Seems is a guard.

A top newcomer is sophomore Jasmynn Bathory. She will play as a guard.

"We are very excited for this season at Waverly," Piper said. "Expectations remain high after our first winning season since 2022."

This year's team has a good balance of experience and youth, according to Piper.

"We hope to be more effective



Photo submitted

Members of the 2025-26 Waverly High School girls' basketball team are, from left, front row – Lydia Foltz, Anabel Risch, Macy Seems, Kate Wagner, Allie Stukey, Evelyn McMillen and Zoey Hirt; back row – Kacie Combes, Taryn Vogts, Rhyllie Giffin, Jasmynn Bathory, Evalyn Reynolds, Heidi Foltz, Abby Risch, Kinley Rasmussen and Lily Hirt.

and efficient offensively than we have been in the past couple of years," Piper said. "Last season, we only gave up 50+ point three times, so improving our offensive production is a priority. We return a lot of experience from last year and hope that experience leads to success on the court."

The Lady Bulldogs' schedule

looks to feature plenty of tough competition.

"As with most years, the Lyon County League looks to be very strong, especially in its depth," Piper said. "Lebo returns many key players from last year's state third-place team. Marais des Cygnes Valley, Olpe and Madison return many of their top players

from a year ago, and all are capable of making a run for the league title. We are certainly looking forward to the challenge of playing in such a strong league."

The Lady Bulldogs will open their season by hosting and competing in a preseason tournament Thursday, Dec. 4, through Saturday, Dec. 6.

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Titans

Continued from Page 11

goals centered on their play.

"We want to be competitive night in and night out on both ends of the floor," Rand said. "We want to cause havoc on the defensive side and get out and run on the offensive end."

There will be a couple of keys to success in reaching those goals.

"We will have to focus on the court and be in top physical condition," Rand said.

Rand already sees potential in his team.

"Our experience is our strength," Rand said. "We also should be strong on the defensive side because we have more numbers this year, so we can sub."

The Titans' schedule, especially within the Three Rivers League, will provide them several tough opponents against whom they can test their skills.

"Our league will be very tough for us because we are the smallest school in this league," Rand said. "But, Jayhawk-Linn, Southeast-Cherokee and

Northeast-Arma are powerhouses on the large school side. Colony-Crest, Marmaton Valley and Uniontown will be strong on the smaller school side."

The Titans will tip off the season with a home game against Erie 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 5.

Lady Titans

Continued from Page 12

"These girls will always give 100 percent on both ends of the floor," True said. "Ball handling and being able to score are two things at which we have to get more consistent."

Opportunities to test skills, learn and grow abound, as True said the team does not really have any easy games on the schedule. Among their toughest opponents will be Three Rivers League opponents Jayhawk-Linn, Erie and Oswego.

The Lady Titans will tip off their season 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 5, when they host Erie.

Waverly

Continued from Page 14

with some up and comers from the freshman class, we should have plenty of competition for playing time and should be fun to watch."

Joining the returning players are four freshmen who are looking to make an impact this season, Alec Stice, Clayton Bartlett, Tatum Williams and Hayden Ohl. Stice, a guard, is athletic and aggressive, according to Williams. Williams, who is able to play as a guard or post, brings size and headiness. Ohl, a forward, is fast and a great defender. Bartlett, a guard, is undersized but knows how to play.

The Bulldogs' goals this season are to record a winning season, finish in the top half of the Lyon County League and earn a state berth.

"The thing I keep saying to the kids and I have said a lot around town is, 'Iron sharpens iron,'" Williams said.

"We have not had the players to scrimmage the past couple seasons, and our lineups have not been very competitive to get into. This year, I feel like we have multiple kids who could play and make us better so there is finally competition for some roles, and that need to compete every day in practice is already making us a ton better."

The team will have a few strengths, including being scrappy, having experience together and their team concept, while a potential weakness is youth.

"Young kids are expected to be thrown into the fire and compete, which is always difficult," Williams said.

Among the toughest opponents for Waverly will be non-league opponent Northeast Kansas and league rivals Olpe, Lebo and Hartford.

The Bulldogs will start their season by hosting and competing in a preseason tournament Thursday, Dec. 4, through Saturday, Dec. 6.



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(620) 955-4255



Danielle L. Birk
Broker
(620) 364-6812