



Mattamuskeet Lady Lakers



Columbia Lady Wildcats

TBC Girls Get Grid Experience

With no nonsense football coaches taking the helms at four lower division Tobacco Belt Conference girls' basketball teams, things should be interesting as the season goes on.

Chocowinity, the defending regular-season and tournament champion, returns almost intact from last year while Belhaven and Bear Grass present young squads with playoff potential.

The grid mentors having to adjust from earthy sideline manners on the football field to a more sedate manner are Jerry Godley at Jamesville, Jim Bennington at Mattamuskeet, Kevin Wilson at Columbia and Wayne Rodgers at Creswell.

LADY INDIANS

At Chocowinity, head coach Larry Knox begins his 11th season just six wins away from a milestone 200th triumph.

With three starters among eight lettermen returning from last year's Class 1-A North Carolina High School Athletic Association Eastern Regional finalist, Knox begins the season with a 194-55 record at Chocowinity.

He goes into the season with the basic philosophy that "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

He says he's not going to tinker with what has been successful so far.

That means the Lady Indians will press their opponents from the moment they get off the bus and will use the defense to feed the offense.

Drusilla Crawford, a first team all-area performer last season, returns for her senior season. The third-leading scorer in the conference last season, Crawford (5-10) averaged 18 points a game last year. She is joined by guard Chrylene Myers, a second-team all-area performer who averaged 13.3 points a game and was the 10th leading scorer in the TBC.

However, the Lady Indians will be without the services of junior China Grice, the seventh leading scorer in the conference last year. Grice, a second-team all-area player, has opted not to play this season.

She will be replaced by Vanessa Myers, a sophomore who is slated for the point guard position.

The Lady Indian stars will be boosted by a strong blue-collar supporting cast led by senior Kim Coffey, Wendy Dixon, junior Jill McRoy and sophomore Elsie Coffey.

Knox says Crawford will be more physical inside this season while Dixon will provide leadership.

"We have what we need to be a great team," Knox said. "We're looking forward to the season."

LADY BULLDOGS

BELHAVEN — Youth prevails on the lineup at John A. Wilkinson. Head coach Norma Jean Respass has no seniors, two juniors, five sophomores and six freshmen to mold into a unit in attempting to better last year's playoff squad.

Returning starter Michelle Leathers, a 5-7 junior, will lead the Lady Bulldogs which finished second in the conference last year with a 16-2 record and a 19-4 overall worksheet after a loss in the second round of the playoffs.

Leathers, a second-team all-area performer, was the No. 4 scorer in the conference last year, averaging 17.7 points a game.

She will join Waconda O'Neal, Felicia Smith, Tiffany Williams Cynthia Bowen and Anita Cahoon, the tallest Bulldog at 5-11, in forming the nucleus of the squad.

Depth will be limited, Respass says, by the number of freshmen on the bench.

"We'll have to work a lot harder due to a lack of experience," she says.

And, she adds, the Lady Bull-

dogs will try to rely on quickness on offense and defense — looking to fast break on offense and pressure on defense.

LADY BEARS

BEAR GRASS — The question for 1987-1988 TBC Coach of the Year Jerry Rogerson is: will Janet Rodgerson, the TBC's leading scorer last season, get some help?

"That's the big question," Rogerson says. "I hope Janet doesn't have to do it all. If she gets some help, it will open our offense up some more and get her away from double teams."

Rodgerson, a 6-1 junior who emerged the TBC's leading scorer last year with a 19.2 points-per-game scoring average, did it all for the Lady Bears. She rebounded, blocked shots and brought the ball up the floor against the press.

But, this season, Rogerson feels 5-8 senior Christie Peele can contribute offensively and take the load off first-team all-area performer Rodgerson and help the Lady Bears earn the playoffs for the first time in over five years.

Rodgerson joins returning starters Marsha Lilley, Tameka Little, Cathy Taylor and Melissa Rawls in addition to letterwinners Dana Mobley and Shelby

Leary as the core of the Lady Bears squad. Two juniors, two sophomores and two freshmen round out the roster, giving Rogerson some depth to work with.

"We're going to play a lot more man-to-man defense this year because of our depth," Rogerson says. "We're going to run 'em in and out and we're going to pick up full court. It's going to be hard for them to do but they'll have to sustain their intensity."

LADY WARRIORS

LEGGETT — Shonika Hill, a 4-foot-11, was a dynamo on and off the court last year for the North Edgecombe Lady Warriors.

After playing taking to the hardwoods for 32 minutes, Hill would rush off the floor, fresh up and jump into her cheerleader's outfit and cheer on the boys' team.

She averaged 13 points a game and joined Tonya Lee (10 ppg) as the Lady Warrior scoring leaders. Those two join Mary Avent as North Edgecombe's returning starters. Karen Tillery and Nicky Carter are the returning letterwinners from a squad that finished 12-10 after advancing to

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