

Whirlies hope to rebound from disappointing season

By Scott Fischer
Reporter

Rebounding from an incredibly disappointing season will be a difficult task for the Whirlie Basketball team this year. The 5-18 record the team posted last year was definitely not a clear measure of their play during the 1995-96 season. There were four games in which the Whirlies lost by one point. The Whirlies also posted a 48-45 victory over rival Page, greatly rebounding from a 64-45 romp earlier in the season.

The Whirlies will be forced to take that same recovering mind set into the 96-97 season. They will have to deal with the loss of Lamont Michael, one of the most valuable players in the conference. In addition to this, the Whirlies will have to substitute for a lack of height. Last year, Alex Watson and Duane Ridge helped provide the essential size that the Whirlies will be missing this year. "We're already working harder, but we're still not very big. Our biggest player is about 6'5", 230 pounds, and then from there it just drops off, you know, 6'3", 6'2", and that type of thing," said head coach Bill Walton. "I'm trying for the third place spot, which would mean we would get a spot in the state playoffs. We've beaten Page one game every year, and I think we can do it again. We will have to fight and scrap for everything this year." Nonetheless, the players as well as the coaches remain very optimistic about the coming season.

"I'm excited about this season. We have better talent this year than we did last year. We have young players that should provide some size. We also have six or seven experienced kids.



Whirlie basketball players prepare to face off in a scrimmage.

Pendergraft photo

John Graham, Walker Holt, and Tim Leung all showed great leadership skills over the summer," said Coach Walton.

"I feel really good about this year's team," Holt said. "We don't have a lot of height, but hopefully our speed will make up for that. Defense will have to be one of our big strengths this year." Holt started last year as a freshman, and should certainly provide leadership as well as experience. Another leader of this year's squad will be junior, Tim Leung. Leung has worked extremely hard this summer for the coming season. "I think the most demanding requirements for the team are commitment, hard work, and determination. We'll have to be a lot quicker, and run more. I think that if we all work together this year, we can win some games," said Leung. Perhaps the greatest combination of experience and talent will be provided by three year starter, John Graham. In addition to being captain of this year's basketball team, Graham also was captain and starting wide receiver of this season's football team. "John is an incredible player defensively. I can put him on virtually any player in the conference and he can cover him. He's very fast. Offensively Graham serves as an excellent outside jump shooter. He definitely has a future in college basketball," said Coach Walton.

For the coming season, Holt and Coach Walton both said they would like to finish first in the metro conference as well as earn a spot in the state playoffs. To accomplish these things would certainly be an impressive comeback from the disappointing season the Whirlies endured last year.

Antonio Graham contributed to this article.

Swim team makes splash

By Sarah Blackwood
Reporter

Although it may be forty-five degrees outside, there are numerous half-naked wet people running around Grimsley every day. Where can these dedicated Whirlies be found? Why, the Grimsley swimming pool, of course.

Despite the fact that it is still early on, Coach Griffin has high hopes for his teams. He expects that Grimsley will be conference champion even though they lost 13 seniors from last year. The men's team is doing remarkably well, but this year the number of swimmers has dwindled to 11. Some, such as Elizabeth Sheffield, are of the opinion that the women's team is progressing better than it was last year. Coach Griffin is especially enthusiastic about the women, whose team currently has about 30 members.

Why are there so many out swimming this year? Katie Seel, a freshman, says that being on the team "builds self-esteem as a swimmer and introduces you to new people." Many of the athletes, such as Rachel Shockley and Jillian Gibson, enjoy swimming because it helps them stay in shape, learn new

things, and be with friends.

Some people have already set personal goals for the season. Ryan Rubio, a sophomore, says "I want to get my endurance back up and be able to hold my own." Wellsley Wallace, a senior swimming for the first time with the Whirlies, says that she wants this year to be "my best first and last year on GHS's swim team."

The men and women's teams have been greatly aided by the leadership and outstanding performances of swimmers such as Abby Stallworth, Meganne Raines, Kristin Dorko, Greg Osborne, Scott Buscemi, and the captains, Brian Schiller and Sheffield. Many of these swimmers enhance their skills by participating in year-round programs, like GSA and YMCA.

The swim team is working hard and practicing together every day, Monday through Friday, which is more than several other teams. They swim long distances for endurance, as well as various sprints, such as 50 meters. In addition to this they also work on their technique and strokes every day.

Best of luck to our Whirlie swimming team, and hopefully none of those cold, wet half-naked people will catch cold.

Lady Whirlies shoot for playoffs

By Kelly Cirincione
Reporter

Teamwork, dedication, and sportsmanship. This is the framework for this year's women's basketball team at Grimsley. The Whirlies have been working hard towards a strong season, and the players know that by living up to these three words, they will be dribbling straight towards success.

Last year, the Grimsley team saw three seniors graduate, and Kerri Campbell is the only senior player this year. Coach Polk said, "With five freshmen competing for varsity positions and one sophomore, we are a very, very young team." Coach Polk said that this year the young contributors to the team plus the experienced guards are the strength of the team. Kerri Campbell, Cori Stevens, and Monica Mullins are this year's returning guards. In addition, junior Avery Lutz is returning for her third consecutive year playing center and post positions.

The women's basketball team practices every day from 5:30 to 7:30, as well as Saturday mornings. After the players warm-up and stretch, their practice consists of drills,

discussing plays, and a large amount of running. Each practice concludes with a scrimmage.

The Whirlies know that their practices will make them a better team. Melody Fletcher, a 5'6" junior post said, "Practices are tough, but I think in any practice you should go out hard." In addition to giving 100% at practice, the Whirlies know that the key to success is teamwork. Sophomore Tiffany Stewart, a 5'7" shooting guard, said, "The most important role as a basketball player is having a good attitude on the court, working hard, and playing as a team player."

This follows the advice that Coach Polk gives her players. She said that the way to have a successful season is to have team unity. In addition, Coach Polk explains to the athletes that having unity off the court will carry over to success on the court. The team establishes some unity by dressing up on game days and going out to eat together before games.

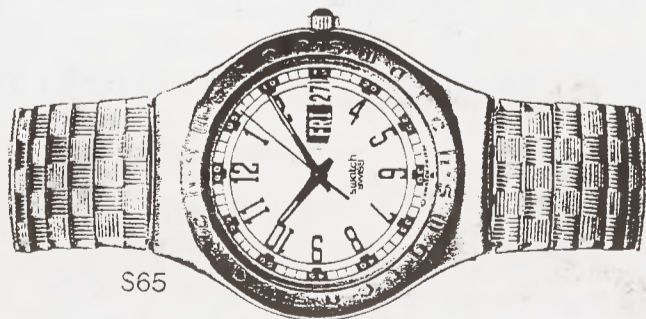
"Sticking together is the most important thing," Coach Polk said. "When we work together, we've done our job, and it doesn't matter whether we win or lose." The players also try to follow their coach's advice and

keep their focus. The women's team believes that it is vital to remember their goals, and this will improve their basketball playing and their school-work.

There are several reasons why the Whirlie players enjoy being a part of the Grimsley team. Monica Mullins, a 5'4" point guard, is a sophomore who enjoys the challenge. Courtney Smith is a 5'7" freshman guard who likes being with her teammates, and Fletcher appreciates the way the team sticks together, even through the tough times.

The goal for the women's team is to finish in one of the top four positions. In addition, Coach Polk and the players hope to see more spectator support this year. The majority of the players agree that women's basketball hasn't received enough attention in the past. This could be even more of a problem this year.

The women's team is worried that spectators will go to see the men's team, especially since last year the majority of spectators came to see the men play. If the Whirlie women did have an audience other than parent support, it was often simply because fans arrived early to see the men play.



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