

Wildcats hope to rebound after tough 2017-18 season



Louisburg's Brayden Gage will be one of four returning seniors to this season's Wildcat basketball team. The Wildcats will host Tonganoxie on Friday in their season opener.

It was rough season for the Louisburg boys basketball team last year, and one that saw the Wildcats in transition mode.

Ty Pfannenstiel was in his first season as head coach and the Wildcats won just two games a year ago. Several players stepped onto the varsity floor for the first time that season and saw a lot of close games slip away.

Although there will be a little more transition this season, with the loss of five seniors from last year, the Wildcats hope to turn some of those close losses into wins.

"I felt like we were competitive last year in most games, but it's going to take greater effort and execution to turn those efforts into wins," Pfannenstiel said. "Our kids really showed a lot of commitment this off-season and I feel like that will have a big impact this season. Practice has been going great so far and there has been great intensity and focus."

Louisburg returns four seniors that each saw minutes last season on varsity and all are expected to start when the Wildcats open their season Friday against Tonganoxie at home.

Guards Brayden Gage, Kohl Vogel and forwards Dylan DeShazer and Noah Hill will all lead the Wildcats this season and Pfannenstiel is looking for big things out of those four players.

“All four are expected to be impact players for us this year,” Pfannenstiel said. “Brayden will be a great leader for us on both ends of the floor. He’s a competitor and I think our team will feed off of his energy. Dylan was a very productive player for us coming off the bench. We will expect him to be a big scorer for us both inside and out.

“Kohl Vogel is going to have to be a good scorer for us this year. He has the potential to be our very best defender as well. Noah is an incredibly competitive and scrappy player. He will have to be a force on the boards and be a great low post defender as well.”



Louisburg senior Dylan DeShazer is one of several Wildcat players returning with varsity experience from last season.

Junior Madden Rutherford, who also saw varsity minutes as a sophomore last season, will join the four seniors in the starting lineup. Junior Michael Waldron and sophomore Weston Guetterman will see significant time off the bench.

Junior Garrett Rolofson and sophomores Ben Guetterman, Connor Koesser, Andy Hupp and Konnor Vohs could all see varsity time as well throughout the year.

In the offseason, Pfannenstiel stressed shooting with his group as the players put up thousands of shots up over the summer to improve in that area. However, as much as his team needs to focus on the offensive end to get better, he knows that defensively is how his team will find success.

"The keys for this team will be to play to our strengths and be ready to compete every game that we step on the court," he said. I think we have a chance to be a very good defensive team that will give teams problems. We will have to play unselfish on the offensive end and we obviously have to shoot the ball better this year. Our kids put in a lot of time this off-season on shooting the ball so I hope that turns into confident shooters on the offensive end."

The Wildcats also realize their schedule got a lot tougher this season with the addition of three new teams to the Frontier League in Tonganoxie, Bonner Springs and Piper.

Louisburg will host Tonganoxie at 7:30 p.m., on Friday in its season opener and Pfannenstiel realizes there will be no easy game throughout the schedule.

"I think the Frontier League will be extremely competitive again this year," he said. "I think Eudora and Bonner Springs

return the most. Spring Hill and Ottawa both return a good core of their team as well. With the addition of Bonner, Tongie and Piper, the league will definitely have a different look. Each night will demand our best effort and execution and we are excited to get things started on Friday.”