Louisburg boys hopeful as new roles take shape for upcoming season



Louisburg's Owen Marsh is one of three returning seniors this season for the Wildcat boys basketball team.

After a difficult season a year ago, the Louisburg boys basketball team opens tonight with a renewed sense of confidence — and a roster eager to seize larger roles.

The Wildcats finished 3-17 last winter and graduated six seniors who logged heavy minutes, leaving plenty of opportunity for new contributors. But head coach Ben Doll says the growth he saw over the summer has the group feeling energized.

"The guys have been working really hard in practice and they

are excited for the season for sure," Doll said. "We won't be young in age, necessarily, but we will be young experience-wise. We return a few guys from last year, but we will also be relying on a lot of other guys to play bigger roles who really didn't see much varsity time last year. Everyone will have bigger roles to play and I am excited to see what they do with this opportunity."

Louisburg returns three seniors – guards Derek Frederick and Owen Marsh, along with forward Parker Stanfield. Frederick and Marsh started at different points last season and are the team's top returning scorers after each averaged around four points per game.

Doll is counting on both guards to take steps forward offensively.

"Derek had a little bit of down year shooting for him, but I really expect him to bounce back and he has a really good shot," Doll said. "Owen can also shoot from the outside, especially in the mid-range, and is a good ball handler for us as well."



Louisburg senior Derek Frederick is back to help lead the Wildcats for the upcoming season.

Sophomore forward Herschel Strumberger, who played significant varsity minutes as a freshman, returns as a key presence inside alongside Stanfield.

“Parker is a kid who started out on junior varsity, but got a varsity opportunity during the season and got more minutes as the season went along,” Doll said. “Herschel was thrown in there as a freshman, but was a good post player for us last year and has gotten better as well. Those two guys along with some others like Eli Roth and Jack Flaming will play those post spots for us this year.”

On the perimeter, junior Lance Callahan returns after averaging just under four points per game and stands as the Wildcats’ top outside threat. Doll said Callahan could be poised for a bigger breakout.

“Lance is a shooter who works so much on his shot and I think he can take another step forward as well,” he said.

Sophomore guard John Guetterman is expected to log major minutes as well, part of a backcourt group that Doll believes will be the catalyst for Louisburg’s style of play.

“We have a lot of guards that are quick and can shoot the ball,” Doll said. “We don’t necessarily have a true point guard, but we have a lot of guys who can bring the ball up the floor and just push it, which is what we want to do. We want to go fast and play up tempo.”

While the Wildcats struggled last season, Doll believes momentum began shifting this summer.

“We really needed to get some positive experiences after a tough year last year and I thought we did a lot of great things over the summer,” he said. “We won the KAMO tournament and had a winning record in the Baldwin tournament we played in, and we played without Herschel who was injured. Those were great experiences for our guys and it is something we can build on going into the season.”

The challenge now is translating that progress into wins in what may be one of the deepest Frontier League fields in years. Ottawa returns from a state third-place finish with just one loss on the year. Baldwin enters ranked No. 1 in Class 4A, and Bonner Springs reached the Class 5A state tournament last season. Nearly every league opponent brings back veteran talent.

“Our league is very tough this year and there are no easy games,” Doll said. “You can just look at the all-league list from last season and there was maybe one or two seniors on the first and second teams. All of the teams in the league have experienced players coming back and it will be tough. We are an improved team that works hard and gets after it. We know it will be a tough schedule, but I know the guys are looking

forward to the challenge.”

Louisburg opens its season tonight at home against Wellsville. Tip-off is set for 7:30 p.m.