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MOUNT MERCY BASKETBALL LOOKS TO CONTINUE ITS MAGIC

Last year the Mount Mercy basketball team made it to the Monsignor Martin League Class A basketball final game before falling to Cardinal O'Hara. Trying to repeat that finish is a daunting task, but this year's varsity team is not one to back away from any challenge.

The team opened its season with a convincing 38-26 victory over Springville-Griffith in the Fourth Annual Wounded Warrior game. The team struggled a bit offensively but displayed a tenacious defense.

Coach John Glose, who is in his eighth year with Mount Mercy basketball, including the last four as the head varsity coach, feels that defense will be his team's hallmark. "The strength of this team is our team's defense. We know that defense wins championships!" Glose commented. The team utilizes a variety of presses, zones and man to man defenses.

The team will play a twenty-four game schedule, including four tournaments; Frontier, Colpoys, Pioneer and Wilson and a ten game Monsignor Martin League slate. Included in those games are matchups with perennial powers Sacred Heart and O'Hara.

Glose feels that the keys to a successful season will be the ability of his team to improve every single day, both offensively and defensively. "My expectation is that we will continue to develop all season long and peak in time to play our best basketball during the playoffs. I expect great leadership and toughness from each and every team member," Glose remarked. "I also expect the team to play selfless basketball and have ten players who will do anything that they can to help this team."

Four players return from last year's squad; senior guard Olivia Balys (Orchard Park) and junior forwards Mallory Ashe (Buffalo), Beth Hughes (Orchard Park) and Clare McKeone (Hamburg). Balys is a four year member of the varsity team. Senior guard Leah McQuiller (Lackawanna) returns to Mercy basketball after a year's absence and five juniors have moved up from the junior varsity. Forwards Abby Krug (Buffalo) and Grace O'Neil (Buffalo) and guards Anne Bamrick (Buffalo), Brigid Lempko (West Seneca) and Marisa May (Buffalo) are making their varsity debuts this season.

The playmaking and scoring of Balys and McQuiller, along with Ashe's scoring abilities from both the outside and inside will be the team's offensive strengths according to Glose. He is also counting on strong contributions from Bamrick and Krug. These five players are currently starting, with key minutes provided off the bench from McKeone and Hughes.

"If we accomplish as much this year as in the past years, it will be because of the work ethic of all the girls. Our team chemistry and leadership will need to continue to be outstanding. It will be a complete team effort!" Glose added. "We stress TEAMWORK every day and that it takes everyone to be successful."

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