



Friday, November 20, 2009

Strong returning nucleus gives Salukis high hopes

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BRIDGEPORT - With a wealth of talent returning from last year's team that lost in the championship game of the Class A sectional, there's no reason for Red Hill High School's basketball team not to have lofty expectations.

"A lot of the teams in our regional should be good, because a lot of them have the nucleus of their teams returning, too," said Red Hill coach Bryan Havill, who is entering his eighth season at the helm and has a 105-89 record at the school. "But when you have four kids who started (in the sectional championship game) a year ago returning, I don't think you can have any other goal than to get at least that far again."

The Salukis return a quality outside-inside duo in seniors Trevor Albertson, 6-0, and Matt Wirth, 6-3. Abertson played in all 27 games for a team that finished 16-11 last season, and led the team in scoring with an 11.8 average. Wirth, after a slow start, averaged 10.3 points a game and was a solid rebounder.

"It starts with those two," Havill said. "Matt is our best inside presence, and Trevor is our best outside presence. Those two have to be the meat of our offense, and we've got to look to get them the ball."

Robert Young, a 6-2 junior, returns after scoring 8.4 points per game a year ago. Young is currently slowed by a pulled muscle, however, and may not be available for next week's Basketball Capital Classic. Another returning starter is 6-2 senior Eli Latch, a long-shooting threat who was third on the team with 12 3-point baskets a year ago, while averaging three points a game.

The projected fifth starter is 6-2 junior Cameron Lewis, who sat out last season. He'll be the Salukis' primary ball-handler.

"He's a nice addition to our team," Havill said. "He's looked pretty smooth in practice so far."

Dereck Brewer, a 5-11 senior who averaged 2.7 points per game last season and was a key contributor in Red Hill's tournament run, will be counted upon to log plenty of minutes. The Salukis may also rely heavily on juniors Andrew Jones, 6-4, and Logan Blair, 6-0, and sophomore Cameron Peters, 6-2, while 5-8 senior Tony Theriac hopes to earn court time. Mason Akers, a 6-1 junior, is currently slowed by an injury, while 5-10 junior Lucas Hahn and 5-11 sophomore Kale Whittaker round out the varsity roster.

"One of our strengths should be our experience," Havill said. "We have a lot of players who have played in big games, and we're hoping that plays into things. Another strength is that we're pretty athletic. I hope that works to our benefit."

There are also a couple of areas of concern.

"Defense is an area of concern," Havill said. "We've spent a lot of time working on that so far. And our primary point guard from last season (Josh Hawkins) is gone, so that's an issue too."

The Salukis will open the season Nov. 27, in the annual Basketball Capital Classic. Red Hill's first tournament opponent is Olney, in a game scheduled for 12:30 p.m. The Salukis will also play a second game Friday, and once Saturday to complete the tournament.

RHHS schedule

Nov. 27-28 CAPITAL CLASSIC

Dec. 4 Flora, 6:15

Dec. 8 Mount Carmel, 6:15

Dec. 18 MARSHALL, 6:15

Dec. 19 Shiloh Shootout

Dec. 26-28 Dieterich Tourney

Jan. 5 LAWRENCEVILLE

Jan. 8 Hutsonville

Jan. 9 OLNEY

Jan. 12 FAIRFIELD

Jan. 15 OBLONG

Jan. 22-29 LIC Tourney

Feb. 2 Edwards County

Feb. 5 Cumberland

Feb. 6 CISNE

Feb. 9 Lawrenceville

Feb. 12 CASEY

Feb. 16 LOUISVILLE-N. CLAY

Feb. 20 Grayville

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