

J.V. team prepares for varsity step

By Josh Shephard
Of The Courier-Mercury Staff

Faced with the task of rebuilding a senior-dominated varsity team, the pressure for the Junior Varsity Bluejackets to perform is great. But the young team coming through the ranks has shown some past promise. Junior Varsity Head Coach Greg Letcher said.

Basically the strategy for the junior varsity will be to gain experience on court running through a similar play pattern as the Bluejackets. Often times, dur-

ing regular varsity practice, the junior varsity mimic to the best of their ability the type of patterns used by the opposing teams. But to move beyond that, the team needs playing time. But the young team has shown a degree of willingness to work hard and bond in the way a team should.

"They are a very coachable team and they work well together. They try very hard to do what they are asked to, and it has some success over the last year or so."

"But compared with other teams

they play against they are a young team yet. Last year they were about 5000 on the season, but they were playing against older players who had had a year or two on them. This year, they're older, more experienced and they know they're going to be the starting team in just a year or two," Letcher said.

Unfortunately for the junior varsity squad there is no championship or tournament to give the kids the experience of performing under extreme pressure. But it perhaps may be something worth considering doing, Letcher said.

"My concern is that when they get out on the court, each player knows what they're supposed to be doing and they have to get out there and do it to the best of your ability," Letcher said.

The team lacks quickness, an annual problem faced by the Bluejackets. In some cases, there are limits to their grasp of the fundamentals. The team is still learning where their strengths lie.

As far as starters, Letcher plans to jumble the lineup considerably from game to game. The junior varsity is primarily a means for younger players to

showcase their talent, Letcher said, to show what they can do.

"I believe they are a very good team. If they work hard at it, they can be great if they want to. It's all a matter of how much they want to put into developing themselves and their capabilities," Letcher said.

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Greg Letcher



Pictured above is the Nicholas County Blue Jackets Boys' Junior Varsity team. Bottom row left to right are Chris Allison, Jim Compton, Israel Blacy, John Gilbert, John Brown, Kevin Foyback, and Ben Day. Back row left to right are Coach Greg Letcher, Mark Adams, Bradley Brown, Wesley Brodenick, Chris Sexton, Bradley Frostess, Pat Baker and Freshman Coach Bobby Stone.



Pictured above is the Nicholas County Blue Jackets Boys' Freshman team. Bottom row left to right are Shane Kerney, Jeremy Warner, Mike French, Mike Booth, and Duane Kerney. Back row left to right are Coach Greg Letcher, Brian Simpson, John Brown, Jason Ring, Wesley Brodenick, David Tricher, and Freshman Coach Bobby Stone.

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J.V. to continue line of championships

By Josh Shephard
Of The Courier-Mercury Staff

Continuing the line of a championship team is the highly touted Junior Varsity Lady Jacket team, who amassed an impressive winning record last year and seem primed and ready to continue their success.

Junior Varsity Head Coach Penny Bretz said the team has already picked up a wealth of experience on the court since entering the program in the seventh grade.

"They have the same aggressiveness the varsity team has, Bretz said, and the overall defense is well underway to being

very strong. Unlike the conservative lack her colleagues seem to be taking with their team, Bretz has gone with a run and gun offense that seems to suit the style of the young eighth grade, freshman, and sophomore team.

"They have remarkable speed for a young team and they love to take shots. Sometimes, probably due to overeagerness on their part, they move a bit too quickly and lose sight of the ball, but much of that is just learning how to handle the ball a little better. But I've been very pleased with the progress the kids have shown over the years and I can see them moving in

very smoothly into the Varsity spots," Bretz said.

Varsity is one of the high lights of the girls J.V. with a fairly extensive group of players who play well off each other. There is no one player that Bretz envisions as a headlining stand-out, but that absence of a star has been the key to the Lady Jacket's recent string of winning seasons.

"They have learned to function well as a team. There is not hint of selfishness on the part of any of the members. In the next five years I can see the varsity team remaining awfully strong in the district and region," Bretz said.

Their most visible weakness is rebounding and getting in under the basket, due mostly to the absence of varsity starter Kim Denkins.

"It's easy to get in the habit of relying too heavily on one person to do a job. But when that person is gone, there is not many who can fill the place right away," Bretz said.

But despite that one deficiency, the girls play a very tight man-to-man defense. Conditioning for the junior varsity members has been good and their stamina has improved greatly since they began the season.

With 10 eligible players vying for five starting spots all prove capable of handling the starting team. It's more a matter of drawing straws to see what members make it for the front five. But everyone will have her chance on the court, Bretz said.



Pictured above is the Nicholas County Lady Jacket Girls' Team. Bottom row left to right are Jennifer Wiloughy, Tina Fryman, Elizabeth Schanding, Becky McGlothlin, Alicia Sibert, and Tara George. Back row left to right are Danita Livingood, Michella Hopkins, Melanie Jones, Tawyna Livingood, Rebecca Jolly, and Coach Penny Bretz.

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