



(L-R) Cameron Dale, Cody Fryman, Dalton Hampton, Zack Lemons, Kyle Campbell, Kalep Brierly, Harry Fagen



(L-R) Petrea Mitchell, Shelby Sosby, Lauren Harrison, Megan Hunter

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Deming boys gunning for banners this season

By Brad Loux
Sports Writer

Simply put, Coach Jamey Johnson and the Deming Black Devil basketball team has had enough of second-place finishes. This year they want to hang some banners in their gym.

And they have the personnel to do it.

Led by junior guards Kyle and Luke King, and Jonathan Caldwell, the Black Devils are poised to challenge for the 38th District and the 10th Region All "A" titles.

"We want to show people that Deming can compete and the kids need to believe that," Johnson said.

"Our offense is changing drastically from last year. We will be a guard-oriented offense and play facing the basket," Johnson said. "Our height is gone, so the system has changed. We are going with a run-jump offense with some sets, but mostly we are going to turn the players loose."

Deming is climbing the ladder toward that end. The

Black Devils went 19-11 last year, 14-13 the season before and 13-16 in Johnson's first campaign as the team's head coach.

With three starters returning, the guard-heavy Black Devils appear ready to race into the winner's circle.

If they do it, they literally will have to run to those titles. "We live and breathe off making other teams hectic," Johnson said. "We are an up-tempo team that loves causing chaos."

Deming graduated its top post player and virtually all of its height from last season, so the Black Devils are strictly going with an outside game.

"Our offense is changing drastically from last year. We will be a guard-oriented offense and play facing the basket," Johnson said. "Our height is gone, so the system has changed. We are going with a run-jump offense with some sets, but mostly we are going to turn the players loose."

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"We are experienced on

the perimeter, inexperienced in the post, so we are not going to try to use much post play," he added. "We are going to play four to five guards at a time and focus on beating teams off the dribble and with our quickness."

Leading the way will be a pair of three-year starters, twins Kyle and Luke King. Kyle averaged 19.7 points and 4.1 rebounds per game last season, while hitting 36.3 percent and making 80 percent of his free throws. Luke added 13.7 ppg and 5.8 rpg.

"Kyle is a better scorer, but he has had the ball in his hand more than Luke has in the past. Luke will add more scoring this year. He is more athletic. He will face the basket more," Johnson said. "They are pretty interchangeable and can score from anywhere."

Caldwell returns to his starting point guard position for the third year. Last season he averaged 6.3 points, 3.5 rebounds, 2.0 assists and 2.2 steals per game.

"Jonathan pesters people on defense," Johnson said. "He is quick with the ball, passes and penetrates well."

Junior Larry Collins, and sophomores Calvin Schach and Johnathan Plosky will spell the trio on the perimeter.

"Larry is deceptively quick. He makes things happen on defense," Johnson said. "Johnathan can take it to the rim and is a great shooter. He is lanky and handles the ball well. His length creates opportunities. Calvin is the hardest worker of the three. He is quick, strong, can shoot and handle (the ball), and sees the floor well."

Seniors Ethan Earlywine, Austin Spivey and Matt Durham will make up the rotation in the post, although only one will likely play at a time.

"Ethan and Austin won't have the ball in their hands. They will get their points in the offense through ('garbage') opportunities," Johnson said. "Ethan has a long range shot, is stronger and directs traffic. Austin

has better post moves and has quicker moves inside. Both stay within their limits. Matt is a first-year post with size (6-foot-3). He is long, a good rebounder and blocks out."

Travis Miller and Nathan Massey are sophomore forwards that have the intangible qualities coaches love.

"Travis is the smartest kid. He always finds the open spot. He has a high basketball IQ and knows what to do every time. We need more players like that," Johnson said. "Nathan makes everyone better. He is the quickest on the team and it's hard to get around him as a defender."

Defensively, Deming plans on employing both pressure in the full court and man-to-man in the half court.

"Our strengths are quickness, athleticism and versatility. We play fast to react, not think first," Johnson said. "We have chemistry and are team-oriented. We live and die with chaos. What you see is what you get."

The key to the Black Devils

being successful as an up-tempo team is following the game plan.

"The coaches know the players well and the players know their roles," Johnson said. "Not everyone is a scorer or rebounder."

The team's goals are simple.

"We want to win the games that we should win," Johnson said. "And win some we are not expected to. That would be a goal."

They know what they need to do to accomplish those goals and collect those much-wanted banners.

"We want to hold teams to 50 points or fewer and create a tempo to score 70 points. We want to get some second-chance points and create 16-17 turnovers per game," Johnson said. "We have to be able to run our offense when we need to in the half-court set. Our defensive rotations need to be there. We have to have the 'stack mindset' in games and in practice and we have to play as a team."

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