



# At the Game



BAILEY MERKLIN (left) and Jenna Hill were involved in basketball action on Nov. 19 at the winter sports open house. Herald photo by Kristi Guthmiller

## Basketball season opens tonight with Benkelman

By Betty Jean Winston  
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Following the winter sports open house on Friday, Nov. 19, both basketball players and fans await the opening of the regular season.

Fortunately it will not be a long wait as the St. Francis opener will be tonight (Thursday). The Dundy County Tigers have been the initial opponent for a number of years and this time the games are being played in Benkelman.

The varsity players then move right into the Sagebrush Classic Tournament in Brewster the week of Dec. 6. The tournament is set to be played on Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday. This is a six-team tournament and this year Brewster and Triplains have an agreement to play together during the basketball season. The six teams include Brewster/Triplains, Cheylin, Christian Family Educators, St. Francis, Stratton, Colo., and Rawlins County/Atwood. The six teams (both boys and girls) will be divided into two pools. The tournament also involves a free-throw shooting contest and a three-point contest.

The Lady Indians will open the tournament by playing Rawlins County at 6 p.m. on Monday night in the south gym. The other team in the Girls' Pool A is Cheylin and the Sainty Ladies will play them on Tuesday night at 6 p.m. in the north gym.

The Sainty boys will play Stratton at 7:30 p.m. on Monday in the north gym and the third member of their pool (Pool A) is Cheylin. Sainty and Cheylin will meet at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday night in the north gym.

St. Francis will not be playing

any games on Friday but on Saturday the winner of pool one will play the winner of pool two as well as the two second place teams meeting and the two third place teams meeting. Games on Saturday will begin at 3 p.m. with the boys third place teams meeting and continue on until the championship boys game which begins at 8 p.m.

Sainty fans can look forward to the week of Dec. 13, as the Indians will host two Northwest Kansas League teams, the Rawlins County Buffaloes and the Decatur Community Red Devils.

With the elimination of Colby and Goodland from the league, St. Francis will be using the two open dates to play a second game with Rawlins County and Decatur Community later in the season. The schedule also shows a game with Greeley County/Tribune being added and the elimination of a game with Hayes Center.

Another change involves tournament action. The third week in January is now scheduled for a Northwest Kansas League Tournament. For many years this was the week of the Oberlin Invitational. The tournament will change sites every year with Oberlin hosting this year.

### Lady Indians

Nine letter winners return to lead the Lady Indians this season. Six of these players have been letter winners more than one year, including Christina Hilt, Jodie Hilt, Shayla Hilt, Aly Marin, Sarah Trembly and Mikaela Grace, all seniors. Three other players received letter last year including Jayln McCauley, who transferred into St. Francis,

and juniors Kaitlin Figgins and Jenna Hill. This group formed the varsity last year as there were no graduating seniors on the squad.

The squad will be under the direction of a new head coach, Susan Dinkel. The coach and players are familiar with each other as Coach Dinkel was the assistant coach for the last two years. She was also an assistant coach six other years, off and on, beginning in 1997.

"I'm excited," Coach Dinkel said. "This is my chance to developing the practice schedule and decide the offense and defense. It does add more pressure though."

Coach David Morrow is new to the girls high school varsity program although he was an assistant boys varsity coach under Greg Wolters and has worked with both the boys and girls junior high teams.

With the nine letter winners, Coach Dinkel is happy with their leadership potential.

"I expect them to be very good leaders and help out the younger players. They have a lot of experience and can help with the very fast style of play we are using this year. This fast break, pressing style can cause foul trouble."

Clarice Neitzel and Laura Brunk, who had a lot of junior varsity experience last year will be moving up to varsity, she said.

"The attitude is very positive," Coach Dinkel said. "The girls are excited and looking forward to playing."

"This is generally a fun group of girls. We need to watch our turnovers and the goal is to 'leave it out on the court' when the game is over.



ZACH ZWEYGARDT (shooting) is being guarded by Garrett Figgins. Zwegardt looks like he might be successful in his shot. Herald photo by Kristi Guthmiller

"I am excited to start the season and get to see our competition and their style of play."

### Roster

Seniors: Jayln McCauley, Mikaela Grace, Jodie Hilt, Sarah Trembly, Shayla Hilt, Christina Hilt, Aly Marin.

Juniors: Jenna Hill, Kaitlin Figgins.

Sophomores: Aubrey Mills, Clarice Neitzel, Jandy Dunn, Laura Brunk, Krissy Harris.

Freshmen: Shelby Cassaw, Bailey Merklin, Aly Schleppe, Rande Grover.

### Indians

Three seniors, five juniors, four sophomores and eight freshmen reported for the first practice of the Indian boys basketball squad. The players will again be under the direction of Jeff Beims, who led the team to a 12-9 winning season last year. This includes winning the first round of substate.

New to the coaching ranks will be Tanner Kinen, former Indian player, who is taking over as assistant coach.

Among the older, more experienced players are Garrett Figgins, who will play center/

post; Brett Lampe, point; Isaac Schiltz, shooting guard; Dylan Peter, power forward; Jonathan Butler and Zach Zwegardt, shooting guards.

"Figgins fights for the rebounds and is a good leader," Coach Beims said. "He pounds away and is working on making the right passes. I have been seeing Lampe helping the younger kids with the new offense."

We have done some changing on our style to a more upbeat tempo, the coach said. "The players will make mistakes with the uptempo but that is expected. As long as they keep the upbeat style and have the pressure on it will work. They need to score early and score often."

Coach Beims feels that the players want to compete.

"The kids have a passion for the game which is good from a coaches perspective."

"Positives include the way they are playing defense and the rebounding. They want to win and will go the extra mile."

The leadership is terrific Coach Beims said. We have had good practices and they are fun practices as the players like the

up-and-run tempo.

"The players have chemistry and the seniors realize the younger kids are good ball players."

The team lost some good players last year but the coach likes their chances and he feels the future is bright.

As the year progresses a number of younger kids may find themselves on the court, said the coach, "It will be baptism by fire."

As for concerns, the coach said depth may be a problem and also a number of players lack experience.

He hopes that each of the players have set some goals for themselves for the season.

Seniors: Brett Lampe, Garrett Figgins, Zach Zwegardt.

Juniors: Jonathan Butler, Gavin Cooper, Martin Hnizdil, Isaac Schiltz, Matt Tygart.

Sophomores: Joey McCormick, Dylan Peter, Keegan Sherlock, Dillion Straub.

Freshmen: Shawn Balla, Jacob Baxter, Jacob Butler, Erik Hart, Wyatt Landenberger, Tyler Lee, Lenin Olivares, Mason Schiltz.

## Young Indians have good night, win all three contests

The St. Francis junior high basketball teams had a very successful outing on Monday, Nov. 22, in St. Francis. The evening ended with three victories for the Indians.

The A-team scored a 38-14 victory, the B-team had an exciting 22-20 win and the C-team game ended St. Francis 16, Rawlins County 4.

### A-team

The A-team game had the Indians earning their first victory by a decisive 38-13 margin just before the Thanksgiving break.

"These guys earned a well-deserved victory over Rawlins County on Monday night" Coach David Morrow said. "They have been fighting all season long and have come up winless so far. But Monday night, everything clicked and these young men cruised to victory over a team who had defeated them earlier in the season. I could not have been happier for these guys."

The first quarter was very slow and stared in a fashion that has been all too familiar with us, said the coach. We had good shots, including several lay-ups that simply wouldn't fall through the basket.

"Thankfully, Rawlins County was having much the same luck," Coach Morrow said. "In the second quarter, the lid came off the basket and we were able to score. Cade Bracelin hit a three-pointer and Garrett Brunk finished a couple of drives to the basket with lay-ups. Kyler Zwegardt had a dominating performance in the post area all night. In the second quarter, he scored his first four points. Defensively, our performance was tough enough to hold the Buffs to a scoreless quarter.

After having seen the B-Team lose a large half-time lead, I was worried that these guys would do the same, said the coach. Instead, they picked up where

they left off and really pulled away from Rawlins County. Ian Schmid contributed his first bucket of the game. Though the Buffs scored 5 points, the guys' defensive pressure stymied any chance for a comeback.

"What was perhaps most impressive about the effort is that it every person who played contributed nicely to the win," Coach Morrow said. "If some guys weren't scoring, they were playing great defense. If they weren't rebounding, they were looking to run the floor. This was one of the most complete team efforts I've seen from a bunch of young guys like this. Hopefully, we'll continue to play relaxed and earn a better seed in the tournament."

Scoring: Zwegardt 14, Bracelin 10, Garrett Brunk, 7; Lane Hobrock, 2; Justin Pacheco, 2; Ian Schmid, 3.

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### B-Team

St. Francis held on for a 22-20 win in the B-team game.

"We got out to an early lead over Rawlins County in the first half but let off the gas pedal in the second half," Coach Morrow said.

"In fact, the fortunes of the two teams seemed to switch entirely after halftime. In the first half, we were able to run the court a little bit and score some easy baskets. Once again, our size was difficult for the Buffaloes to counter. Shakotah Blanka, Nicky Easter, and Lane Hobrock all scored from the post area. Clay Cassaw shot the ball well in the first half.

"In the second half, we didn't play with very much intensity. Rawlins County slowly chipped away at our lead, and by the end of the game, were trying hard to win it. One lesson I hope we took away from this game is that we have to be intense throughout an entire contest. Countless basketball games are lost by

teams who have led big at half time. One of the bright spots of the second half was seeing Jakob Church get to the foul line four times. Each time he attacked the defense and drew the foul. That was fun to watch."

Scoring: Blanka 6, Cassaw, 4; Carl Fabre, 4; Church, 2; Easter, 2. S 08 10 01 03 22  
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### C-team

The C-team had a successful and earned a 16-4 victory.

"In some respects, the C-Team plays better than their counterparts on the other two teams," Coach Morrow said. "Generally, they rebound and box out a little better. We enjoyed a huge size advantage over the Buffaloes in the C-game, and our post players took advantage of that. Jude Faulkender led us in scoring and handled the point guard duties for part of the contest. Payton Beims scored his first basket of the season. All told, we had a great

effort from these guys.

Scoring: Jon Hoard, 4; Faulkender, 6; Easter, 2; Austin Patton, 2; Beims, 2.

