

Cowboys up to new season

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Daily News

With winter inching closer and winter sports upon us, the Goodland Cowboy basketball team is working hard preparing for the season ahead.

Needing to get into shape physically and to learn the finer skills and strategies of the game, the coach says time is crucial for the team.

The Cowboys will make their first appearance at a "Soap Scrimmage," about 6:45 p.m. Tuesday at the Max Jones Fieldhouse. Their scrimmage will follow the Cowgirls, who begin at 6 p.m.

And the teams will have their first games beginning at 5:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 30, in Imperial, Neb.

Coach Jon McLean thinks the Cowboys are up to the challenge.

"I'm optimistic that we will be a better team this year," he said, "than we were last year."

Last year, the Cowboys made it all the way to the semifinals of substate play, he said, and lost by only one point to Scott City. But the team finished the regular season with a 9-12 record, leaving this year's Cowboys something to improve on.

No coach would be disappointed to see his team play at state, and this year's Cowboy team is more experi-

enced than last year's.

"We finally have players that have been in the program three years," the coach said, "and that helps."

Those players are seniors Andrew Melia, Bryan Mai and Jordan Reibel.

McLean expects them, along with juniors Donald Raymer, Aaron Gittinger, Chris Rubio, Alan Cebula and Kevin Schulte, and sophomore Lance Tedford to round out his varsity.

The Cowboys really need Melia and Raymer to have big years, the coach said, offensively, defensively and on rebounding.

A big factor in how the team will do, he said, depends on how well the perimeter people handle the basketball.

And another key factor, he said, is how well the kids get along—the team chemistry. That's tough to coach, he said.

So far, practice has gone well, the coach said, and he's really pleased with the number of boys out for basketball. With 27 guys on the team, McLean said, he has a good number for the three teams: freshman, junior varsity and varsity.

One of the main things he has to do is get the boys in shape, the coach said, and he has been pleased with the effort that they have put forth.

But high school basketball has a



Donald Raymer searched for someone to pass the ball to in practice Monday as the white-shirt Cowboys had him in a tight spot. The Cowboys are preparing to improve on last year's 9-12 record.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Daily News

downside, the coach said, a short period of time between the end of football playoffs and the first basketball game. That means not only do they not have much time to get in shape, but

also, that they have to learn a lot of things quickly.

"I've thrown a lot of things at them," McLean said, "but they are doing well learning."

Quarterback skips press conference

DENVER (AP) — Denver Broncos quarterback Brian Griese skipped his weekly press conference on Tuesday, one day after coach Mike Shanahan gently chided him for finger-pointing about the team's offensive problems.

Shanahan said Tuesday he felt Griese's comments were made mostly out of frustration, and insisted that any differences among the players and coaches would be resolved.

After Sunday's 17-10 loss to Washington, Griese said the Broncos "can't make a play" with wide receiver Rod Smith injured. A week earlier, Griese said the Broncos didn't have a lot of talent on offense.

Asked to assess Griese's performance in Sunday's game, Shanahan on Monday said the quarterback had not played a perfect game.

"Everybody has got to look at themselves and be very critical," Shanahan said. "There were some open guys, and sometimes it's a breakdown in the line. Sometimes it's a misread. Other times it's guys not getting open."

While not saying his remarks were aimed directly at Griese, Shanahan added, "The only way you get good at anything is by looking at yourself and worrying about what you can do and not worrying about the other guy."

If Griese felt chastened, he wasn't saying.

The quarterback sent word through a Broncos spokesman that he wouldn't be doing his weekly press conference because he was too busy studying the game plan during a short week of preparation for Thursday's game in Dallas.

Vermeil understands K.C. fans' frustrations

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — If fans boo the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday at Arrowhead Stadium — where they haven't won all year — coach Dick Vermeil insists he won't let that distract him.

"I only stay concerned with what I have control of," said Vermeil, whose team is coming off a bye week headed into Sunday's home game against Seattle. "I can't control the fans' frame of mind."

"I don't allow things that aren't critical to winning and losing to distract me," he said. "That's all there is to it. I'm old enough to have established that discipline."

At the same time, however, Vermeil understands fans' frustration with the Chiefs' 0-4 home mark and 2-7 overall record.

"I think the emotion and the fan participation have been excellent, when we've given them something to be excited about," Vermeil said Tuesday, during his weekly news conference and media luncheon. "That'll be one of our goals this week, to bring the fans into the game early and keep them there for four quarters."

"We're certainly capable of that, but it's going to take a very clean, very error-free football game."

The Chiefs haven't had many of those this season.

Their offense ranks sixth at 345.6 yards per game, their 341 penalty yards are fourth-lowest in the league, and they have lost only three fumbles, fewest in the NFL.

But overshadowing all of that are Trent Green's 16 interceptions, the most given up by any quarterback this year, and Kansas City's minus-5 turnover margin.

Given the negative attention that comes with being the NFL's lowest-rated quarterback, Vermeil said, a week out of the public eye might have done Green some good.

"I think a break from that scrutiny, and the evaluation process, and some of the disappointment is good," Vermeil said. "It may be more meaningful to him than to a right guard, a left tackle or a defensive end — because of that evaluation process. I know he was in good spirits Monday."

The Chiefs' depth chart at wide receiver is less than encouraging, though, after Marvin Minnis injured his ankle in last week's 27-7 loss to the New York Jets.

Chris Thomas and Derrick Alexander will start on Sunday, Vermeil said, with Larry Parker — a starter for two weeks while Alexander was out with torn rib cartilage — and kick returner Dante Hall also in the rotation.

Jayhawks victorious in Hawaii heat

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP) — Kansas didn't let an upset loss and sweltering conditions cramp its style at the Maui Invitational.

The fourth-ranked Jayhawks bounced back from their loss a day earlier with a 95-78 victory over Houston on Tuesday in the eight-team tournament's consolation bracket.

In the 93-91 loss to Ball State on

Monday, the Jayhawks didn't play the defense that has become such a staple of the program under coach Roy Williams. A number of players were hampered severely by cramps because of the heat inside the Lahaina Civic Center.

That wasn't the case Tuesday as Nick Collison had 22 points and Drew Gooden added 19 for the Jayhawks (1-1).

"I was concerned because when some-

thing like that happens to you, you think it will again," said Collison, who was most affected by the cramping on Monday. "I drank a lot of Gatorade since yesterday and put a lot of salt on my food and put salt in the Gatorade. I know that sounds gross, but it worked."

The Jayhawks will play Seton Hall for fifth place on Wednesday. Seton Hall lost 80-79 to No. 1 Duke in the open-

ing round.

"Needless to say we feel a lot better than we did yesterday after such a disappointing loss," Williams said. "In a way it was helpful to get right back out there to get the bad taste out but I was concerned as well with our health problems."

"We were very businesslike in the locker room and we went out and played well right away."

Despite win, Wildcats need to play tougher

MANHATTAN (AP) — Kansas State coach Jim Wooldridge has already perfected his halftime speech, but he would much rather save the inspirational talk.

Despite a 15-0 second half run and a 68-55 win over Wisconsin-Green Bay

Tuesday, the second-year coach was concerned with his team's attitude and predicted trouble in the future if his young team didn't start playing tougher.

The Wildcats committed nine turnovers in the first half against the Phoe-

nix and couldn't shake a nine-point deficit until midway through the second half. Travis Reynolds' lay-up with 9:02 left ignited the run, but it still wasn't enough to erase Wooldridge's frustration.

"We're not a very good basketball

team right now," Wooldridge said. "I like these kids, but I don't think they fully understand what we're up against. People pat them on the back too much, they have to realize they are underdogs, our personality has got to change fast."

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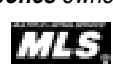
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