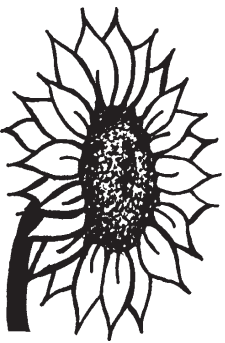


The Saint Francis Herald

At the Game



Sainty prepares for season opener

By Betty Jean Winston

The winter sports season begins tonight (Thursday) when the St. Francis teams travel to Benkelman to take on the Dundy County Tigers and Lady Tigers on the basketball court. The junior varsity boys will start at 6 p.m. but the other games begin at 6:30 as two courts will be used.

St. Francis fans will have to wait until Tuesday, Dec. 14, for home action. A total of three contests will take place in St. Francis before the Christmas break. This includes Cheyenne Wells on Dec. 14, Oberlin on Friday, Dec. 17, and Colby on Tuesday, Dec. 21.

Although December is an extremely busy month, home fans always await the action in the gyms at St. Francis, as this will give many of them the first opportunity to see the home teams potential. Supporting Indians teams has always been important in St. Francis.

During the second week of the season, the two varsity teams are always on the road involved in the Sagebrush Classic at Brewster. The initial contests are played on Tuesday with the semi finals on Friday and the finals on Saturday.

This tournament is composed of eight teams, Brewster, Atwood, Idalia, Stratton, Golden Plains, Oberlin, Cheylin and St. Francis. The Lady Indians are scheduled to play Golden Plains at 3 p.m. on Tuesday in the South gym. The Indians will meet Golden Palms at 4:30 p.m., also in the South gym.

The Idalia Wolves and Lady Wolves are taking the place of Grinnell, who played last year.

Each team will play three games, one each on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday as placings are first through eighth.

The teams go into the Christmas break having played seven games.

One game during February has had a change of date from the school calendar. Atwood will play in St. Francis on Tuesday, Feb. 22, instead of Friday, Feb. 11, as listed.

Lady Indians

The Lady Indians have the largest squad of the three winter sports teams. They are 27 strong with three seniors, 11 juniors, six sophomores and seven freshmen.

Seven seniors graduated from the 2003-04 girls basketball program last spring leaving the team which gathered Nov. 15, the opening day of practice, large in numbers but low in varsity experience.

Senior Amy Grace is a returning letter winner and Coach Devin Dinkel says she will be playing the post position.

"Amy is dedicated to the sport and will be providing a lot of leadership," he said.

She finished last season with the best total (two point plus three point) shooting percentage of players with 20 or more attempts. She also was at the top of the free-throw percentage stats (10 or more attempts), so her accuracy will be important. Defensively her rebounding will also be a factor. She was second high on last year's team.

The other two seniors, Kelsey Dunn and Chelsey Weeden, received provisional letters at the end of the season and will contribute experience.

"Kelsey will play wing/guard and she is not afraid to shoot," Coach Dinkel said. "Chelsey will be at point/guard and she is a good ball handler."

Also returning and receiving provisional letters last spring are Megan Rice and Alecia Zimbelman, who are both sophomores.

"Megan will play wing and is probably the most athletic girl we have while Alecia spent a lot of time this summer becoming a better shooter.

"The attitude of the girls reporting to practice is better this year. They are excited and ready to go. Basically they seem to get along."

This is the second season for Coach Dinkel to be leading the squad and this year he will be assisted by Susan Dinkel, who returns as assistant coach after a season off.

"She is doing a good job," Head Coach Dinkel said.

"Our main goal this year to get better as a team as the season progresses."

Offensively he expects a lot of teams to play zone defense against St. Francis so he feels they will need to be able to shoot from the outside. Kelsey (Dunn) and Lauren Ross are expected to step up in this area.

Defensive the Lady Indians will also be playing a lot of zone.

"We had some success in this area last year," Coach D. Dinkel said. "We will need a 'team defense' with everyone contributing."

Some girls that played junior varsity last year such as Erin Neitzel and Maddie Knodel are being counted on as are athletes, Talisa Voorhies and Ally Reichert, who didn't play last year but are out now.

The head coach feels that the attitude is good and the girls are working hard.

"They seem to understand the game both offensively and defensively. They know where the ball should be.

"We have a little bit of inexperience but we are working on being strong in fundamentals. We are speeding time on areas such as dribbling, passing and shooting."

A number of the girls worked on increasing their skills over the summer.

"We had 25 girls at the St. Francis camp and some of the girls played summer ball or went to other camps. They also spent some time in the weight room gaining strength.

"It will be interesting to see how this group does," he said. "We have a little height in Amy (Grace) and Erin (Neitzel).

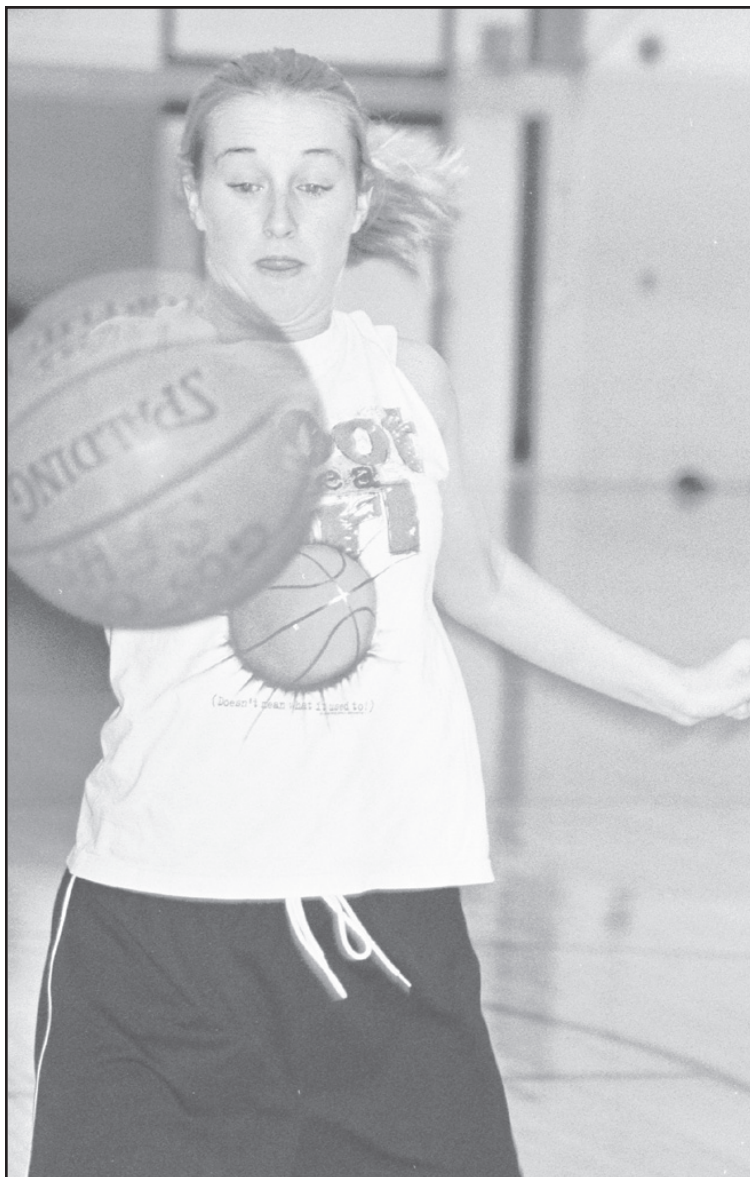
"I think it will be a more enjoyable year for both the kids and myself. We will gain more confidence and hope to have a chance to win a few more games.

"We're excited for the first game and are interested in seeing what will happen.

"St. Francis is in a tough league with a number of teams in State competition last year. Some of them did not lose many players from their teams."

Roster

Seniors: Dunn, A. Grace, Weeden
 Juniors: McKenzie Grace, Voorhies, Ashton Rueb, Jade DeGood, Reichert, Schuyler Coates, Sheryl Miller, Knodel, Katora Sherlock, Neitzel, Sam Marin



ALECIA ZIMBELMAN receives a pass in a recent girls basketball scrimmage while Nick Raile aims for the basket hoping to earn two points when the boys were practicing Friday.

Herald staff photos by Betty Jean Winston

Sophomores: Brittany Lucas, Zimbelman, Danielle Flemming, Ross, Rice, Addie Swihart

Freshmen: Jenice Hartman, Sara Miller, Holly Keller, Dara Loyd, Cassie Dankenbring, Katie Marin, Kattie Ford

Indians

"It's a great bunch of kids," Coach Cassidy said. "They like each other and they are trying real hard.

"We had eight practices the first week and they are picking up on what I am teaching them. They are doing well."

The squad may be small but the 15 boys have a lot of enthusiasm. The

group includes five returning letter winners and two players who received provisional letters following the 2003 season. A break down of the team shows two seniors, two juniors, six sophomores and five freshmen.

Tanner Kinen and Nick Raile are the two seniors. Last year Kinen played six games before an injury put him on the bench the remainder of the season. He had received some varsity playing time during his sophomore year.

"Tanner will be playing forward or center," Coach Cassidy said. "He is the team captain and I expect pretty good things.

"Nick is set to be a forward or guard. He should be our top rebounder. He should play well.

Senior Andrew Feikert, who was a 2003 letter winner was injured during football season and will not be able to play.

"Andrew is going to be my student assistant. He will especially be watching the forwards and center."

Many of the sophomores are among the returning letter winners as they saw time on the court in varsity uniforms last year besides playing well on the junior varsity squad.

They include AJ McAtee, Joel McAtee, Adam Peter and Levi Weeden, who received a provisional letter.

"AJ will be playing point. His main job will be to get the other guys involved. He plays good defense and is working on improving his passing.

"Joel is our most versatile player. He can play in every position from point to center.

"Adam will play center. He is left-handed and can trick people. Adam is a good shooter.

"Levi is a tough defender and rebounder. He is working on his shooting.

"As a whole, the team is inexperienced. They are youthful.

"Besides these players we have Mac Frewen moving up from the junior varsity. He will be playing varsity.

"St. Francis will be playing an up-tempo offense. We want to shot quickly, take the first good shot. They are doing well so far.

Defensively we will be playing man-to-man.

"Our experience in scoring is a concern, something we need to work on."

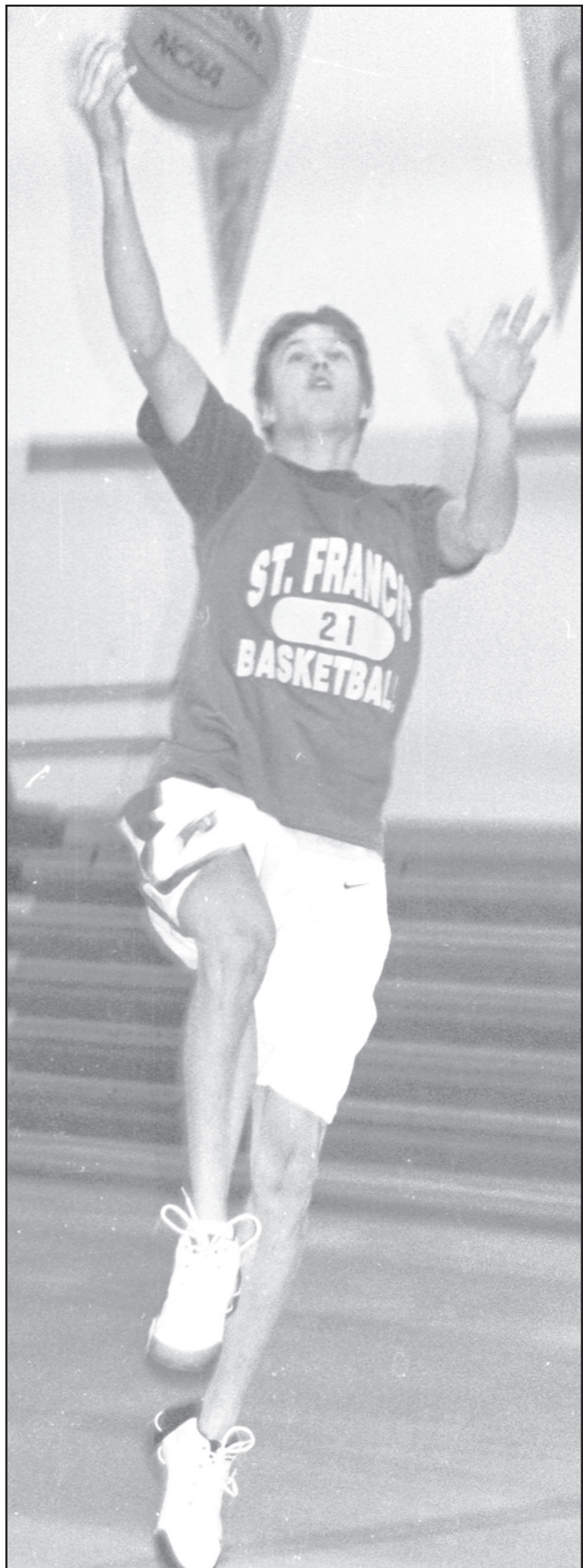
A number of these players were active in the Summer League during the off season including Weeden, AJ McAtee, J. McAtee, Feikert, M. Frewen, BJ Killingsworth, Hawkins and Keaton Frewen.

"We want to do a good job but mainly we want the respect of the people watching and the opposing team. We will come out of the huddle playing hard.

"We want to be a class act on the floor."

The 2003 squad finished the season with a 5-15 record and lost five seniors, Michael Raile, Tyler Voorhies, Jonathan Roelfs, Jon Zweygardt and Dillan Zweygardt, to graduation.

Coach Cassidy has taken over the head coaching job after being an assistant last year. In the past he has held coaching position as both head boys and head girls coach, along with assistant coach.



Roster
 Seniors: Raile, Kinen
 Juniors: Hawkins, Heath Owens
 Sophomores: AJ McAtee, Killingsworth, M. Frewen, J. McAtee, Weeden, Peter
 Freshmen/junior varsity: Ted Crabtree, Keaton Frewen, Chance Hobrock, Corbin Sherlock, RL Walz

Basketball Schedule

Thursday, Dec. 2: Dundy County, there, 6:30 p.m. junior varsity boys 6 p.m.
 Tuesday, Dec. 7: Sagebrush Classic at Brewster
 Friday, Dec. 10: Sagebrush Classic at Brewster
 Saturday, Dec. 11: Sagebrush Classic at Brewster
 Tuesday, Dec. 14: Cheyenne Wells, here, 5 p.m.
 Friday: Dec. 17: Oberlin, here, 6:30
 Tuesday, Dec. 21: Colby, here, 6:30 p.m.
 Tuesday, Jan. 4: Atwood, there, 6:30 p.m.
 Friday, Jan. 7: Hoxie, there, 6:30
 Friday, Jan. 14: Oakley, here, 6:30
 Tuesday, Jan. 18: Oberlin Tournament
 Friday, Jan. 21: Oberlin Tournament
 Saturday, Jan. 22: Oberlin Tournament
 Friday, Jan. 28: Brewster, here, 6:30
 Tuesday, Feb. 1: Cheylin, here, 6:30 p.m.
 Friday, Feb. 4: Goodland, there, 6:30 p.m.
 Tuesday, Feb. 8: Sharon Springs, here, 6:30
 Friday, Feb. 18: Quinter, there, 6:30
 Tuesday, Feb. 22: Atwood, here, 6:30 p.m.
 (note change from school calendar)
 Monday/Saturday, Feb. 28 through March 5: Sub-state
 Wednesday/Saturday, March 9 through 12: State
C-team
 Monday, Jan. 3: Goodland, here
 Monday, Jan. 10: Dundy County, here,
 Monday, Jan. Oberlin, here,



Sports Shorts

Pittsburg wins

The Pittsburg State University football Gorillas defeated Northwest Missouri State 50-36 in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Division II quarter finals on Saturday at Pittsburg.

The Gorillas will now face North Dakota University at Pittsburg in the semi-final game this Saturday. North Dakota defeated Grand Valley State in a quarter final game played in Grand Forks, N.D.

The Pittsburg/North Dakota winner will advance to the championship game which will be played in Florence, Ala., on Dec. 11.

Cole Vap, the son of Jeff and Jan Vap of LaCrosse, and the grandson of Elton and Ella Mae Keller of St. Francis, is a major player on the Gorillas' defensive line.

Smith Center earns championship

The Redmen from Smith Center High School earned the 2A

championship crown in Hays on Saturday by defeating Pittsburg Colgan 36-14. Smith Center completed a 14-0 season, with nine regular season wins plus Bi-District, Regional, Sectional, Sub-State and State.

The Redmen's win also snapped the Pittsburg Colgan Panthers 66-game winning streak. The Smith Center offense rolled up 447 yards and held Pittsburg Colgan to 185 yards for the day.

One of the Smith Center post-season wins was against the Indians from St. Francis in Sectional play.

College Sports

Fort Hays Basketball

Mike Wolters

The Fort Hays State University Tigers played two games over the weekend in the WIBW Radio Holiday Classic at Lee Arena in Topeka as part of the Washburn University Tournament.

In the first game Friday evening the score was tied at 59 when Eastern New Mexico sank two free throws with 1.9 second remaining to take the game 61-59.

The Tigers won the consolation game on Saturday night by coming back in the second half and taking a one-point win 66-65 over Lincoln, Mo.

In this contest Wolters scored 10 points, He was 2-of-5 in three-point shots for 6 points and hit two two-pointers for 4 additional points.

The Tigers will play Central Christian tonight (Thursday). The team has a 2-2 record early in the season.