

Eagles forced to find new identity

Written by Deb Egenberger
Thursday, 30 August 2012 14:04 -



Volleyball team opens at home with Maxwell on Thursday

It's not exactly a rebuilding year when a volleyball team returns eight letter winners with plenty of varsity court experience.

But when three four-year starters graduate, they leave a gaping hole in the core of a program.

Brady coach Lynne Johnson has been forced to make some drastic changes but she says her Eagles are embracing the challenge.

"We've basically had to re-do the entire right side," Johnson said. "That's probably been our biggest hurdle but the girls are adapting."

Luckily, she said, senior Molly Hannon and sophomore Josie Palmer both spent some time in the middle of the net last season so their new positions won't take too much adjustment.

Girls stepping into the right-side hitter spot are finding their groove, too.

What took the most belaboring, Johnson said, was settling on a setter.

"Carissa (Rayburn) is a darned good setter," the coach said, "but she's also an outstanding libero. She gets to some balls defensively that no one else would ever reach because she reads the game better than anybody on the floor."

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So to keep Rayburn, a junior, as the anchor of the Eagle defense, Johnson moved senior Dakota Terry into the setter spot, with junior Sydney Widick spending some time there as well.

| BHS VOLLEYBALL | |
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| Aug. 30—MAXWELL, 6:30 p.m. | triangular at Curtis, 5 p.m. |
| Sept. 4—PALTON/SMC TRIANGULAR, 5 p.m. | Oct. 4—NORTH PLATTE ST. PAT'S, 7 p.m. |
| Sept. 7—AMHERST, 6:30 p.m. | Oct. 5—at Hayes Center, 6 p.m. |
| Sept. 8—at Callaway Tournament, 9:30 a.m. | Oct. 8—ARTHUR COUNTY, 5:30 p.m. |
| Sept. 11—Medicine Valley/South Loup triangular at Arnold, 5 p.m. | Oct. 16, 20—Sandhills Conference at Stapleton, 2 p.m. |
| Sept. 14—at Summer-Eddyville-Miller, 5 p.m. | Oct. 18—HITCHCOCK COUNTY, 5:30 p.m. |
| Sept. 22—BRADY TOURNAMENT, 9 a.m. | Oct. 25—Ansley-Litchfield/Sandhills-Theftord triangular at Ansley, 5 p.m. |
| Sept. 25—Maywood/Wallace triangular at Wallace, 5 p.m. | Oct. 30—D2-9 sub-district at Gotthemburg |
| Sept. 28—WALLACE, 5:30 p.m. | Nov. 8-10—State tourney at Grand Island |
| Oct. 2—Medicine Valley/Maywood | |

“It’s definitely a challenge,” Johnson said, “but the nice thing is we have such good kids and such smart players that they know what they have to do to be successful.”

Brady opens the season hosting Maxwell on Thursday in a rivalry game that usually brings good action.

Johnson said she expects to face some stiff competition coming off a 27-5 season last year with a third-place finish at state.

“Nothing is going to come easy,” she said, “but these girls are willing to work hard.”

Paxton should be back in prime Paxton form after a couple of down years and Ansley will benefit from a co-op with Litchfield, Johnson said.

The Eagles will also see a tough St. Pat’s team midway through the season and Bertrand will likely be the favorite in the D2-9 sub-district, which also includes Anselmo-Merna and Eustis-Farnam.

“It’s a whole new deal,” Johnson said of the 2012 team, “but I think everyone is excited for the possibilities.”

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Thursday's home game begins with a freshman matchup with the Wildcats at 4 p.m.

Members of the 2012 Brady volleyball team are (*denotes letter winners):

SeniorS—Brittney Christophersen*, Molly Hannon*, Krystan Hood, Dakota Terry*.

Juniors—Taylor Bourge, Madison Elliott*, Lexi Franzen, Alexis Mann*, Valerie Most*, Jamie Norton, Carissa Rayburn*, Dusk Sabin, Sydney Widick.

Sophomores—Mariah Adams, Rachel Hanson, Autumn Hild, Allison Hood, Josie Palmer*.

Freshmen—Stephanee Black, Jenna Lusk, Bailey Maddox, Emilee Shaw.