Eagles open at Paxton Friday.

The Brady girls basketball team ended a record-setting season last winter in the district final against Paxton, one game away from the Eagles' first-ever state tournament berth.

Coach Darren Tobey believes it's only fitting that the girls will open the 2009-10 campaign on Friday against the same team.

"I see it as a benefit for us," Tobey said of playing the Tigers first. "If we win the game, we will know we can compete with anyone this year. If we happen to lose, we will know right away what we need to work on to get better."

The Eagles graduated only one player from last year's 15-6 team that garnered the best girls basketball win-loss record in school history. That means Tobey brings back a group of experienced girls with a winning attitude who understand that expectations will be high.

"And the only way to get better each and every night is to continue to expect more," he said.

With the nucleus returning, it might seem like the team will have the same look as last year but Tobey said that's not necessarily the case.

"The scary thing is we scrapped a lot offensively," he said. "We're going to look to run the floor more than we ever have. We don't have the height to battle the tall girls night after night so we're going to force the tempo more."

Relying heavily on the transition game doesn't mean the Eagles won't pull up in a half-court offense. Tobey said despite an overall low team shot percentage, the girls are hitting three-pointers better than ever.

"I think our quickness both offensively and defensively will be our strength this year," he said. "We have a lot of athletic girls but our weakness will be our lack of height. If there's one area that worries me, it's rebounding."

Tobey said his Eagles will have to out hustle their opponents on the boards to be successful.

After entering the Sandhills Conference for the first time last school year, Tobey said rearranging to add conference schools to the schedule has been a challenge. That's why the Eagles have had to wait until the second week of the season to play games.

It's a one-year change, he said.

The Eagles travel to Paxton on Friday before hosting Cody-Kilgore on Saturday. Tip-off for the varsity game against the Cowboys is set for approximately 5 p.m.

Tobey said he expects the Eagles to battle for the Sandhills Conference title with two state-ranked teams in Mullen and Stapleton/McPherson County.

Things won't get any easier for the Eagles in the post-season as the team moves up to Class D1 this year, playing against Callaway, Eustis-Farnam, Maxwell and Wauneta-Palisade in the D1-11 sub-district.

"We're going to walk into the season with high expectations from everyone," Tobey said. "We might as well learn to play with them."

Members of the 2009-10 Brady girls basketball team are (*denotes letter winner):

SENIORS—Danielle Gutherless*, Megan Pfeifer*, Shaunna Scarrow*, Shelby Widick*.

JUNIORS— Kaiti Black*, Amanda Lunkwitz*, Jessica Schrad*.

SOPHOMORES— Megan Polt*, Courtney Widick*.

FRESHMEN—Brittney Christophersen, Mikaela Eckholt, Molly Hannon, Krystan Hood, Dakota Terry.

EAGLE GIRLS SCHEDULE

Dec.11—at Paxton, 6:15 p.m.
Dec. 12—CODY-KILGORE, 5 p.m.
Dec. 17—at Hitchcock County, 6:15 p.m.
Dec. 19—LOOMIS, 6 p.m.
Dec. 21-22—at Maxwell Booster Tournament, TBA
Dec. 28-29—BRADY HOLIDAY TOURNAMENT, TBA
Jan. 2—MULLEN, 6 p.m.
Jan. 5—at Maxwell, 6:15 p.m.
Jan. 9—at Arthur County, 5:30 p.m.
Jan. 15—at Hayes Center, 6 p.m.
Jan. 16—CALLAWAY, 4:30 p.m.
Jan. 22—at Stapleton, 6 p.m.
Jan. 23—at Arnold, 6 p.m.
Jan. 25, 26, 28—Sandhills Conference Tournament, TBA
Feb. 2—at Wallace, 6 p.m.
Feb. 5—at Hyannis, 6 p.m.
Feb. 12—MEDICINE VALLEY, 6 p.m.
Feb. 15-18—D1-11 Sub-district at North Platte, TBA