Brady girls earn first-ever trip to state.

Sometimes dreams come true.

Shawn Scarrow had three dreams about high school girls basketball before last week's D1-6 district final game.

The plot was different for each dream, said the father of Brady senior Shaunna Scarrow, but the outcome was always the same.

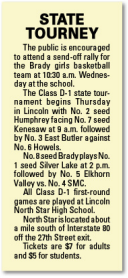
As dad watched his daughter cut down the nets following Brady's 36-30 win over Stapleton-McPherson County, he stood dazed amid the excitement.

"It's just a little weird," he said.

The Brady girls earned their first-ever trip to the state basketball tournament by upsetting the state-ranked 20-2 SMC Cyclones.

“Each one of us walked into that gym believing we could win,” coach Darren Tobey said of his underdog Eagles. “I can’t even put into words how I feel. To see those girls get up on that ladder and cut down the nets, it’s just incredible.”

Brady’s road to state wasn’t necessarily a smooth one. Midway through the season when the Eagles lost in the first round of the Sandhills Conference tournament, Tobey said frustration had hit an all-time high with both the coaching staff and the girls.



STATE TOURNEY

The public is encouraged to attend a send-off rally for the Brady girls basketball team at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday at the school.

The Class D-1 state tournament begins Thursday in Lincoln with No. 2 seed Humphrey facing No. 7 seed Kenesaw at 9 a.m. followed by No. 3 East Butler against No. 6 Howels.

No. 8 seed Brady plays No. 1 seed Silver Lake at 2 p.m. followed by No. 5 Elkhorn Valley vs. No. 4 SMC.

All Class D-1 first-round games are played at Lincoln North Star High School.

North Star is located about a mile south of Interstate 80 off the 27th Street exit.

Tickets are $7 for adults and $5 for students.

“We spent three days at practice without a basketball,” he said.

Instead of shooting drills and scrimmages, the Eagle players learned communication skills and the principles of teamwork. They also set team goals and wrote out a plan to achieve them.

“I’m a firm believer in setting a goal and mapping out how you’re going to get there,” Tobey said.

From that point on, everyone on the team was on the same page.

“We became more cohesive as a group, like a family away from family,” Tobey said, “and it helped us play more as a unit.”

The Eagles have lost only one game since then.

“We know we are not going to shoot the best and probably not make the most free throws,”

Tobey said. “But no one is going to work harder than we do, especially on defense.”

Going into Friday’s district final game, Tobey knew defense would be the key.

“We’ve said all along that if we go out and play solid defense, the rest will take care of itself.”

That concept worked against SMC.

Brady clamped down on the Cyclones defensively allowing only two points in roughly 12 minutes of the second half.

Brady led 10-6 at the end of the first quarter and was up 16-15 at halftime.

SMC’s Julia Hauser hit a bucket to open the third quarter and the Cyclones didn’t score again until just over three minutes to play in the game.

“It all starts with defense,” Tobey said. “If you can hold a team to 30 points or less, there’s a good chance you can win.”

Brady was up 25-17 heading into the final period and held on through a Cyclone rally at the end.

“We never really talked about Lincoln until last week,” Tobey said. “This is totally new for all of

us but it's fun to see the excitement in the school."

The Eagles travel into uncharted territory for the Brady girls basketball program which started in 1976.

Their first trip to state as a team and for the coaches means they're writing their own chapter of school history.

The Eagles will face undefeated and top-ranked Silver Lake in the first round at 2 p.m. Thursday at North Star High School.

Second-round games are at Pershing Auditorium with championships at Bob Devaney Sports Center and conolations at Lincoln High.

"The biggest thing Silver Lake has in their favor is they've been there before," Tobey said of the Mustangs, which are making their fourth appearance at state. "We can't change that. All we can do is play our game, play solid defense and take care of the ball."

Silver Lake is quick and athletic, he said, and they shoot well from the perimeter.

"We want to go to Lincoln and play well," Tobey said, "but right now winning and losing is not what it's all about. It's about getting the full experience and sharing it with a community which has supported all along."

Tobey expects a big crowd in Lincoln.

"Last one out, turn off the lights."

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