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Starkville, MS

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SCS looks for growth in summer

Friday, 04 June 2010

(Editor's Note: This is a story in a series dealing with area high school basketball teams as they participate in the summer league at the Starkville Sportsplex gym.)

By DANNY P. SMITH
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Starkville Christian School's basketball program is still relatively in its infant stages. Even though the Cougars have been playing the game for three seasons, they are still trying to find ways to grow. The opportunity to participate in the Starkville Park and Recreation Department's summer high school basketball league helps in that endeavor.

This is the first year Starkville Christian has taken part in the league, which is staged at the Starkville Sportsplex gym just right up the street from the school's campus.

The Cougars believe playing different schools, public and private, will benefit the program. Starkville Christian School girls coach Kate Little just doesn't want her team to become intimidated when it comes to playing against bigger schools.

"Just because the program hasn't been around for very long, they have a reason to be intimidated, but I think we can hang with some of these teams," Little said.

With games against Starkville Academy, Oak Hill Academy, Eupora, West Oktibbeha, East Oktibbeha and West Lowndes on the schedule, Little believes that will help toughen up the Lady Cougars.

"In the summer, most of the time the girls are involved in open gyms, the girls will have other things going and it won't be a priority," Little said. "If it's a game, they make sure they show up."

Little has lost some players from her roster for one reason or another, but also has some girls coming in and is anxious to use the summer to get them used to the program.

"This league will give them a taste of their potential," Little said. "The girls joining the team can come in, find out how we play and have a good entry."

The Cougars of coach Scott Cappleman have to fill the void left by the departure of Chris Koehn. Koehn was the leading scorer (15-20 points per game) and rebounder (15 boards per game) for SCS last season, but Mark Horstemeyer, who has assisted Cappleman the last two seasons, hopes some of the returning players raise their level of play.

"We had other guys average six to eight (points) so if five of those can get eight to 10 a game we're competing" Horstemeyer said. "When we get in the 60-point range (as a team), we're going to win some games. If we live below 50, we're not going to win as many so everyone has to pull their weight."

Horstemeyer said the Cougars will be concentrating on quickening the game both offensively and defensively over the summer.

Emphasis will be placed on applying pressure and running more of a fast-break style to provide space. "We won't be able to provide space if it's a slow-down game," Horstemeyer said. "We'll get our guys some shots because they are quicker and faster so they will get more space."

Horstemeyer believes the program has gotten far enough along to understand the concept of teamwork and how to compete in every game.

He and Cappleman look to the summer to help answer the question of what does SCS need to do to reach the next level.

"When you play people better than you in the summer, these guys will get more competition in an atmosphere that's a little more relaxed," Horstemeyer said.

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