

LaPoynor Flyers, Lady Flyers face challenging 2022-23 hoop season

LaPoynor is beginning the 2022-2023 basketball season on Tuesday, Nov. 8 with hopes of another successful year, according to Coaches Jim Reid and Jamie Maze.

The two teams have been scrimmaging since late October but the Lady Flyers are eyeing their season opener on Nov. 8 at Elkhart with the junior varsity to start things off at 5 p.m. in this non-district encounter. The varsity game will follow.

The Flyers will begin their non-district play at home on Friday, Nov. 11 at the Pink-Out going against Kemp. The Lady Flyers will also be playing at the Pink-Out against Arp. Action is scheduled to begin at 4:30 p.m. at the Nichols-Corley Gymnasium.

Last season in 2021-2022, the Flyers advanced to the State Semi-finals before losing 69-60 to eventual state champions Clarendon.

The Lady Flyers lost a nail-biter to Douglass 56-55 in the Regional Semi-finals.

Lady Flyers Coach Maze reports that his team will return four starters. They are senior Markayla Hurd, All-Region; senior T'mia Mitchell, All-District; junior Kitty Eldridge, All-Region; and junior Payton Maze, All-District. Returning to start will be Bre Howard, a bench player last year.

"I expect to have a great season, the Lady Flyers coach said.

In his first year as coach of the Flyers, Coach Reid took his team to the State Tournament and gave the eventual state champion a challenge before falling in the semi-finals.

He said the LaPoynor boys varsity is returning all but one player from that State Semi-finals team. That player is Kase Johnston and Coach Reid said "his presence will be missed".

However, the Flyers coach said his team should be a deeper and more complete team for 2022-23.

Projected starters are 6'4" senior Cooper Gracey, 6'2" senior Dijuan Whitehead, 6'0" senior Evan Almeida, 5'10" senior Matthew Driskell and 6'1" sophomore Cort Reid.

The coach said players who will contribute greatly off the bench will be 6'2" junior Jackson Young, 6'0" junior Casey Ruiz, 6'1" junior Daniel Scott and 5'8" sophomore Mann Scott.

Coach Reid said the Flyers will rely upon pressure defense and the ability to score in transition.

"Their experience will allow them to play a more deliberate game, if necessary," he said.

The Flyers coach pointed out that LaPoynor has a Texas Assn. of Basketball Coaches (TABC) and Hoopinsider pre-season ranking of No. 3, along with two highly-talented teams in the district, Martins Mill at No. 9 and Frankston No. 16.

Coach Reid said the region is "extremely difficult" with Timpson No. 6, Martins Mill No. 9, Douglass No. 11, Beckville No. 14, Frankston No. 16, and Tenaha No. 24.

He said the Flyers will also face a challenging pre-district schedule which includes 2A No. 17 North Hopkins, 4A Lindale and 4A Athens. He also pointed to the Central Heights Tournament which includes perennial powers, the Whataburger Tournament in Fort Worth and the Mavs Fall Classic in Frisco which includes all 5A and 6A teams and LaPoynor.

Coach Reid said the Flyers have also been invited to play in the Texarkana Hoopfest against Lakeview High School, out of Louisiana, as well as other Texas schools such as Duncanville, Faith Family, John Paul II and Texas High School. He said each Texas team will play another highly-ranked team from a different state.

"The Flyers recognize the difficulty and challenge of the season but are excited to compete for another trip to San Antonio along with the excellent teams of Region III, Class 2A," Coach Reid said.