

Order in the Court

New crew, same goals for Boys

JOANNA DAU
STAFF WRITER

Everybody fasten their seatbelts and enjoy the ride because it is that time of year again, as the Varsity Boys' Basketball team prepares to take us on another suspenseful journey. The Vikings are currently getting ready for their first season without long-time Head Coach Roy Condotti, and will be lead by former Assistant Coach, Jim McLaughlin.

With the ever-famous Julian Wright starting his career at Kansas, and with most of last year's starters off at college as well, the Vikings have only one returning player this season: Senior Andre Walker.

Walker is in his final year of play at H-F and will spread his wings to act as a role model for the incoming players. "Our goal this year is to make it to State," said Walker. "I do not really feel any pressure because we all played together in summer league, so I got used to it."

McLaughlin comments on what he will do to prepare his team for the upcoming season. "There are three main areas

we are going to work on. The first one is our strength. We will be in the weight room a lot. The second one is our stamina and speed, and we will probably be running on the outdoor track. The third one is our skill work, we need to work to get better offensively, and work a lot with passing," said McLaughlin.

The Vikings hope to be as successful as the teams from the last couple of years, and follow in the footsteps of Wright, Freddie Barnes, DJ Posely, Dominic Baker, and all of the other successful alumni.

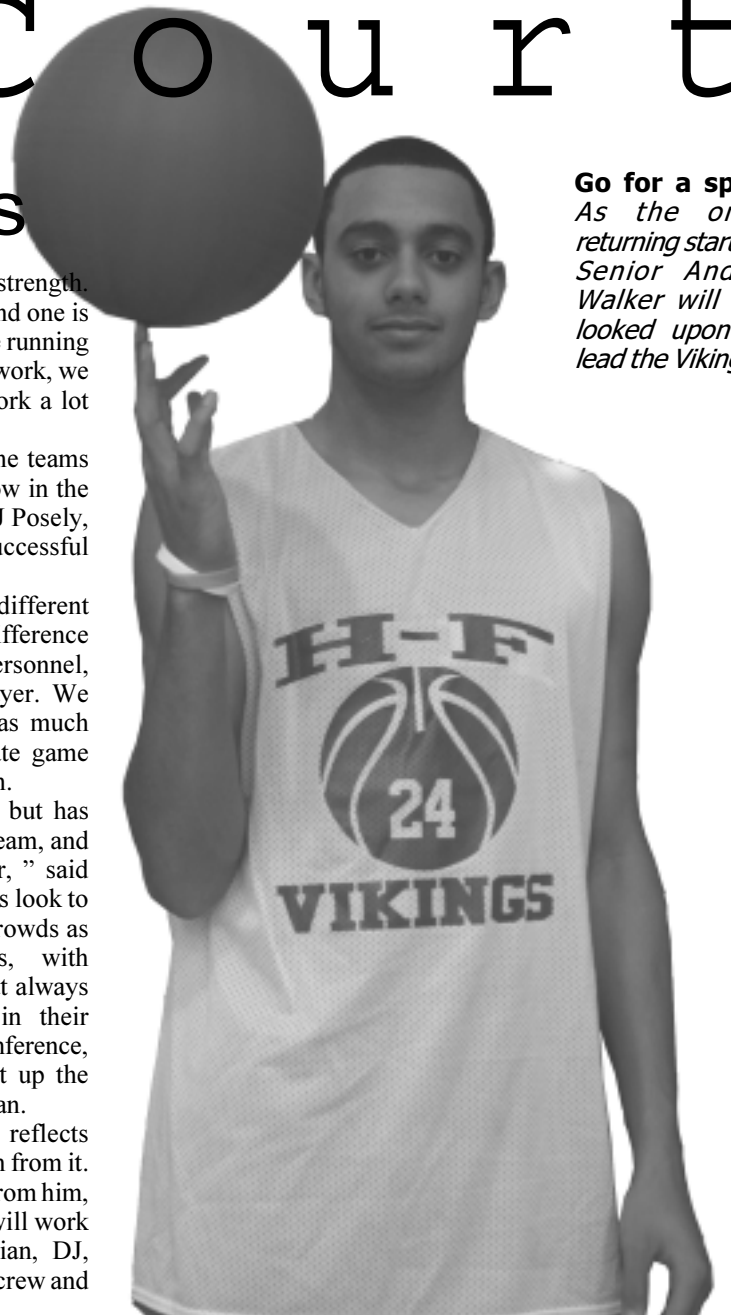
"Hopefully we will not do anything different than the past years. The biggest difference between this year and last will be the personnel, since we only have one returning player. We have many players that do not have as much experience, and we will try to simulate game situations in practice as much as we can.

The team has lost a lot of height, but has gained much speed. "We are a more fast rate team, and are a lot quicker," said Walker. The boys look to draw the same crowds as the past years, with almost every seat always filled. Playing in their newly formed conference, they hope to put up the best fight they can.

McLaughlin reflects on what Condotti left behind, and hopes to learn from it. "With Condotti gone, hopefully I learned a lot from him, and from my years of playing basketball. We will work hard and be as competitive as we can. Julian, DJ, Dominic, and Freddie are gone, we have a new crew and we hope to pick up where they left off."

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-Jim McLaughlin
Boys' Basketball Head Coach



Go for a spin
As the only returning starter, Senior Andre Walker will be looked upon to lead the Vikings.

'A-Buggs' Life
Junior Aliah Buggs will try to lead this year's Vikings deep into the postseason.



Girls reach new heights with teamwork

LAUREN WEBER
STAFF WRITER

In a sport where height is usually essential for success, the Varsity Girls' Basketball team will have to rely on quickness and defense to win games due to a lack of tall players.

After finishing last season with an overall 16-11 record and a 7-2 record in their conference, the Vikings find themselves in a new conference this year, the Southwest Suburban Conference, and are looking to improve on last year's record.

According to Head Coach Ryan Sheriff, the team will have similar strengths and weaknesses this season. "Last season, we shot the ball well, and team quickness was a definite strength. However, we did not rebound very well because we were undersized," he said.

The team is not any taller overall this year, but the girls hope that their quickness and strong defense will balance the lack of height. "We are probably the shortest team in the state," said Sheriff. Senior Reghann Covert is the tallest player at five feet eleven inches, but Sheriff estimates that the other members of the team average approximately five feet six inches in height.

The team captains, Seniors Covert and Tasia Wellons, and Junior Aliah Buggs, believe that teamwork will be crucial

this season, in addition to making improvements in endurance. "We need to play hard, work together, and just be a team," said Wellons.

Sheriff also wants to stress improvement along with a strong work ethic. "I expect every game to be a battle, but I want to have the girls improving every day in practice," he said.

Competing in a new conference gives the girls plenty of motivation to work hard and prove their talent. "I'm excited for our conference because it's different and new," said Buggs. The Vikings have never played most of the teams in their new conference and do not know what to expect.

This season, the team will also rely on good shooting to outpace their opponents. They lost last year's leading scorer, Deserae Brown, to graduation, but return their second leading scorer, Buggs, who will be a major force for the Vikings this season.

Buggs is quick to downplay her leading role and would rather focus on the team aspect of basketball. "Our defense and our speed are strengths, but we need to improve on working together as a team. When everyone knows where they should be on the court, we will win more games," said Buggs.

If the Vikings can work cohesively as a team, they will be hard to beat this year. "We want to show teams that if you play together and play hard, size doesn't matter on the basketball court," said Sheriff.

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-Ryan Sheriff
Girls' Basketball Head Coach

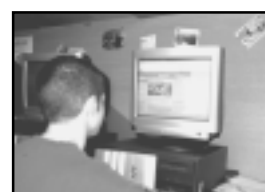
sports *on the inside...*



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