



ANOTHER TALENTED TUCKER COUNTY LADY MT. LIONS TEAM SET FOR 2018-2019

By Chris George

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Head Coach Dave Helmick once again has a strong nucleus of talented Lady Mountain Lions at his disposal for the upcoming 2018-2019 season. Many talented seniors have since graduated, especially the school's all-time leading scorer, Sydney Nestor but a talented group returns as well. Led by six seniors, two juniors, one sophomore and six freshman, coach Helmick has the pieces he needs to make a run. However it will be tough and challenging once again.

"We have an even tougher schedule this year than we did last season," Coach Helmick said. "We no longer have Martinsburg or at Wheeling Central on the Schedule but we picked up Parkersburg Catholic, who returns everyone from a year ago and added a tough road trip to Pocahontas County." "We also are in the IOGA Classic in Glenville St in the Class AA Division against a very good Nicholas County team and we will also be in the MLK classic in Fairmont against another AA school."

As we all know, Tucker County in both girls and boys basketball always want to challenge themselves against some of the state's best to prepare for the state tournament each year. Speaking of this year, the team will be led by Terra Kuhn, who is the teams returning leading scorer from a year ago. Kuhn however may miss some time at the start of the season due to a preseason injury she suffered in practice. Six seniors also return. McKinley Murphy started in a few games last year. She will be back at a guard position this year. "Murphy has got a lot better since last year." Said head coach Dave Helmick. "She put in a lot of hard work and played a lot in the summer to help her game." Also back is a key reserve from a year ago, in forward Kelcee James. James has played key minutes in the past and has contributed in varsity since her freshman year. She provides a strong presence in the front court. Also back is Riley Evans who will be depended on for her outside shooting from the guard spot. Aliyah Plum is back and will be counted on for more minutes this year at the forward position. Coach Helmick has been impressed with the senior forward so far, "Plum has really improved and she will have to play a lot of minutes early until Terra recovers and when Terra is back she will still fill a vital role for us down low." Anna Dibacco will be back as well to provide depth at the guard and forward spots and Amber Price will challenge for minutes as well at forward. The other junior for Coach Helmick will be guard, Katie Surguy. She will be needed to handle the offense and her outside shooting is a plus as well. Only one sophomore is out this year and that is forward Gracie Rapp, the daughter of head football coach, AJ Rapp. Coach Helmick has been impressed with Rapp so far. "Gracie has stepped up her game and I think she push for some time at the varsity level this season." "She will also help us on the JV level and will be one of the leaders there." Six talented freshman enter the halls in Hambleton and one of which has a chance to turn some heads this season. Guard London Hood will play both JV and Varsity and has a chance to be in the rotation at guard early on. Coach Helmick says Hood brings some toughness and athletic ability to the backcourt. "London is strong and is tough as a freshman

and Hood also played a lot of basketball this past summer in AAU action,” She has a chance to play some solid minutes for us this year.” Also, Jayden Kuhn, sister of Terra has a chance to play some big girl basketball as well at the guard position. She will be counted on as one of the leaders on the JV squad as well. Four other freshman also will be looked upon in the form of Jessi Daniels, Vivianna Teter, Elora Mowery and Brailey Pennington.

Coach Helmick as always wants to be strong on defense with his talented man to man sets and full court pressure. However this year we may see even more additions to the defense. “I plan on mixing in some half court zone, to go along with our man to man.” Coach Helmick said. “These ladies really play well in zone so we are going to mix that in.”

Also this year, Coach Helmick has a new assistant coach in former player and former Tucker Valley Middle school head coach, Brittany Taylor. She will also serve as the head coach of the junior varsity team this season.

Overall as I sit back and look at it, my opinion remains the same. This once again is a very talented group. The Lady Lions lost a lot of tough and talented seniors a year ago but like every season, there are always losses and its next girl up. I firmly believe that as the season goes on, this team will improve and get better on defense. I also think this team has a chance to be a better outside shooting team in time. Terra Kuhn has a chance to be really good this year if she stays healthy. Coach Helmick Agrees. “Terra was the best player on the floor in many games over the summer.” She is so tough and talented and wants to win every time she steps foot on the floor.” I also believe that it may take some time for the young players to mix in with the more experienced players but once that happens, this team will once again reach that goal and make it a sweet 15th straight trip to Charleston in March.

Tucker County will open there season on December 6 for a varsity only contest at 7:00 PM as they travel to Clarksburg to take on the Notre Dame Lady Irish. They return home for their first home game of the season as they take on Charleston Catholic. This Varsity only contest is set for 1:00 PM. You can catch the Lady Mountain Lions this year on 94.7 WELK and also online at TuckerCountySports.Com. A full broadcast schedule and game schedule can be found on TuckerCountySports.Com.



2018-2019 – Tucker County High School Girls' Basketball Team: Back Row(L-R) – Katie Surguy, Riley Evans, McKinley Murphy, Amber Price, Aliyah Plum, Terra Kuhn, Kelcee James, Anna Dibacco. Front Row(L-R) – Gracie Rapp, London Hood, Elora Mowery, Jayden Kuhn, Jessi Daniels, Vivianna Teter and Brailey Pennington