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## **AFTER MUCH DELAY TCHS BOYS' BASKETBALL SEASON GETS STARTED**

By Dave Helmick

TuckerCountySports.Com

The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the start of the season for WV High School Basketball. After the delays, the Boys' Basketball Season will start this week. The Mt. Lions Boys' Basketball team will open the season on the road against Gilmer County on Saturday March 6th at 2pm.

Head Coach Daniel Helmick returns for his 2nd season as the Tucker County Boys' coach. This year he has a total of 21 players out. When asked about practice Helmick stated, "Practice has been great, there have been a lot of positives, we just need to get in shape." It seems every Coach in the state is trying to adjust to this fast-paced season. Practice started for the Boys' on February 15th and they have had just 19 days to prepare for the first contest of the season. Helmick talked a little about this quick schedule, "We are just trying not to rush through things in practice, as far as offense and defense we need to get things right before we move on." Helmick also added, "The total goal is to be ready by the end of the year."

Coach Helmick will return several players who gained Varsity experience from last year. Wyatt Betler, Gus Mullenex, Zack Colebank, Zach Long and Trey Key are players that got playing time for the Mt. Lions last season. There are a number of other players that will also look to make an impact for this year's Tucker County team. These players are as follows: Trenton Wilfong, Levi Bennett, Dom Mullenax, Harper Russell, Brian Quattro and Ashton Lycliter. When asked about the young group of players that Coach Helmick has on this team he had this to say, "They are going to be nice High School players, we just need to get them in the weight room and get them stronger."

The next two seasons for High School Basketball in West Virginia will have a 4 class system. Tucker County will remain in Class "A" with the road to Charleston a little different. The Mt. Lions will be in the same Section with East Hardy, Union and Paw Paw. The other side of the Region will feature Pendleton County, Pocahontas County, Harman and Tygarts Valley. Coach Helmick likes the setup and when asked about this new 4 class arrangement he had this to say, "We feel we have a chance to make it to Charleston, we just need to take care of the ball and not commit as many turnovers." The State Tournament will also be a little different as there will be an extra day of games to accommodate the 4 classes. The WV State Tournament games will now begin on Tuesday morning instead of the traditional Wednesday morning.

The WVSSAC limited every team in the state to just 18 regular season games because of the condensed season. This forced teams to adjust their schedule accordingly because of the 4 game reduction compared to a normal season. Helmick touched briefly on this situation, “We had a nice schedule originally, we were planning on traveling to Tug Valley for a game, but we had to adjust. “The schedule is still good as we still have some bigger schools on the schedule such as Preston and Elkins, so we are happy with what we have.” The Mt. Lions will look to improve on a disappointing 4-20 season from a year ago. Tucker County will have home and away games with Gilmer County, Pocahontas County, Pendleton County, East Hardy, Moorefield, Tygarts Valley, Petersburg and Keyser. Then the Mt. Lions will have single games with Preston and Elkins to round out the 18 game regular season schedule. The challenge ahead is playing these 18 games in span of 7 weeks before Sectional play begins the week of April 19th.

For a full season schedule go to [TuckerCountySports.Com](http://TuckerCountySports.Com). A number of TCHS Boys’ Basketball games will be broadcast by Chris George on online also at [TuckerCountySports.Com](http://TuckerCountySports.Com).



**2021 Tucker County Boys’ Varsity & JV Basketball Team(not pictured Wyatt Betler and Blake Anderson).  
Photo by Dave Helmick**