

Girls varsity basketball aims to rebound in upcoming season after graduation of two pivotal Mustangs

By **Brenna Cohoon**,
Online Sports Editor

The sun still hasn't risen as the Lady Mustangs sprint up and down the basketball court in one of their early morning, pre-season open gym practices. Despite losing two of its best players Holly Lueken and Maggie Greco, the team is concentrating on conditioning to prepare them for what the girls hope to be a rewarding winter season.

After guiding the team to a conference record of 10-2 last season, head girls basketball coach Lyndsie Long believes that last year's seniors left a positive impact on their teammates. Now, there is an opportunity for all members of this year's team to step into their crucial leadership roles.

"[This team's dynamic] is a lot different. We lost our captains and two four-year varsity players, so we're just trying to, as a coaching staff, keep encouraging seniors, juniors, sophomores -- doesn't really

matter -- to step up and be a leader. To be as successful as we want to be, people have to step out of their comfort zone a little bit," Long said.

Last season, senior Brianna Andresen especially looked up to former captain Holly Lueken as a role model on the team. She believes that this season's leaders should follow Lueken's ways.

"[Lueken] was a really good team captain. She really pushed everybody so much, and she kind of set the best example for everybody now for this year," Andresen said.

Junior Meghan Stapleton has been a member of the girls varsity basketball team throughout her entire high school career. As one of the key returners in this group, she projects a positive outlook on how the team is transitioning from last season to this year's team.

"People are getting along

and encouraging each other, and it's really fun to see people take new responsibilities [with the team]," Stapleton said.

Now that preseason practices have concluded and tryouts have been held, the focus of the season has been entirely placed upon making final

preparations before games take full-flight. One of the main goals of the season is to develop through rigorous training.

"I think the big thing that we're going to strive for is being the most conditioned team that we face," Long said.

The girls will have the

opportunity to prove their skills to their opponents over the course of the next few months, displaying growth from last season. Developing a solid defense will open up opportunities to score on offense and allow this team to remain competitive within the conference and beyond.



The girls varsity basketball team is preparing for their upcoming season with intense workouts, such as working on their core and endurance. The rigorous training will hopefully help them recover from losing two of their key players.

Photo by **Brenna Cohoon**

New marley flooring sends dancers spinning



The Fillies Dance finds the installation of the new marley floor to be better for practicing routines and being prepared for their upcoming competitions. "I think [the new floor] will help us be more confident when we compete," Senior Marisa Spano said.

Photo by **Madeline O'neil**

By **Jovana Kuzmanovic**,
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Fillies and Pintos twirl and kick as they hit their moves in perfect syncopation with the music. The girls are moving effortlessly, a magnificent sensation that came as a result of the September 2019 installation of a new marley floor in the dance studio.

Senior Fillies co-captain Marisa Spano is one of

many dancers who spend numerous hours every week in the dance studio. She explained how the installation of the new floor has assisted the team.

"For the team it is really good because this is the same type of floor that is at most of our competitions, so being able to practice on it beforehand helps us rehearse what an actual competition is going to be like. Since it won't be such a surprise once

we get to the competitions because we have practiced on the floors. I think [the new floor] will help us be more confident when we compete," Spano said.

The marley flooring has also aided the dancers when practicing their dance techniques.

Sophomore Pinto Shania Szutowicz feels that the quality of the new floor has helped her with improving her dance skills and technique.

were busy worrying about their safety.

Physical education teacher and Orchesis dance coach Stephanie Henrikson uses the dance studio every day from teaching the dance techniques class to directing orchesis, she is well aware of the problems the old floor presented.

"I still wanted to teach the units of the [dance techniques] curriculum. For instance, [in] tap we

"It's easier to turn and do more skills on, and it's softer so when you do fall, it's better... [I am] able to hit the skills now instead of worrying about the cracks in the floor and hitting them and stubbing [my] toe," Szutowicz said.

The old floor was slippery and of harder material. This made dancing on it difficult and restricted many dancers because they

[would] slip and slide around quite a bit. I would have the dancers put masking tape on the bottom of their tap shoes to provide some friction because the floor was so slick that dancers were falling," Henrikson said.

Henrikson greatly appreciates the new floor. She has found that it has solved many problems that occurred in the past.

"It is a dance floor. We were dancing on [a] floor that was not made for dancers for a long time so to have a floor that is appropriate for all dance styles whether we are doing ballet, jazz, tap or hip hop it's a floor that is made for dancers to dance on, so it's safer for them. It allows [the students] to do skills more effortlessly, and it's just better for their learning overall," Henrikson said.

Not only do the individuals involved in dance benefit from the improved floor, but many gym classes teach up in the studio. As a bonus, the floor is only semi-permanent, so it can be moved to numerous locations like the auditorium for other clubs and school functions.