

Eagles host talented teams

12-13-16

BY JACK BULLOCK

ST. ELMO - The top-seed **St. Elmo-Brownstown** will have its hands full as the 57th annual St. Elmo Holiday Tournament begins on Tuesday night.

A strong field, with the addition of two 2A teams this year, highlight what could be a very good tournament, especially on the final day.

The Eagles and head coach Greg Feezel are the top-seed and will play eighth-seeded Clay City, also a new entrant in the event, on Tuesday night.

Coach Feezel's club enters the tournament with a 5-2 mark, with losses to Patoka and Effingham St. Anthony. The 59-56 loss to Patoka was in the title game of the Mulberry Grove Thanksgiving Tournament. The St. Anthony loss was at Effingham, 68-39 last Friday.

Coach Feezel has a senior starter who has been around for four-seasons and is leading the way once again this year.

Landon Feezel, a 6-foot-5 senior forward, is averaging a double-double in points and rebounds. Feezel has tossed in 21.3 points a contest so far in 2016-17 and is grabbing right at 10-rebounds to lead the Eagles.

Two other players; juniors Isaac Maxey and Lewis Brown, are right at 12-points a night for St. Elmo-Brownstown. Klayton Kroll, a 6-foot-1 senior, adds eight-points and seven-rebounds a contest. Senior guard Dylan Brooks is at four-points and four-assists a game.

The Eagles have wins over Neoga and South Central in the National Trail Conference and wins at the MG Turkey Tournament over Mt. Olive, Sandoval and the host Aces.

St. Elmo-Brownstown will need a supreme effort against this field.

The starters for the **Cumberland Pirates** have produced a "grand start" to the season for head coach Justin Roedl, perhaps an even better beginning than anyone expected and the reserves have played their roles with contributions. The Pirates captured their own Thanksgiving Tournament title to open the campaign, as they topped 3A Charleston 68-66 in the title tilt.

Cumberland will enter the St. Elmo Holiday Tournament with a 6-1 record, with their only loss coming at the hands of 2A power Marshall back on November 29. Six-foot-two junior Tyson Magee is leading the Pirates with 19-points a contest while also grabbing seven rebounds a game.

Zach Wolke, a 6-foot-2 sophomore, also has it going this season as he is adding 11.6 points a game. Six-foot-three senior Mike Wolke leads Cumberland with 8.6 rebounds a night while tossing in 6.8 points per outing so far in 2016-17.

Cole Willenborg, a 6-foot-2 senior, chips in 4.8 points per contest while 6-foot-2 senior Brody Donsbach adds 4.4 points and four rebounds a game. The reserves off the bench give Coach Roedl some depth with sophomores Conner Butler and Gabe Hatfill. Butler is a 5-foot-7 guard and Hatfill is a 6-foot-4 forward.

The Pirates boast wins over Casey-Westfield (2), Neoga and Altamont in their own tournament and a regular season triumph over Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond.

Vandalia makes its first appearance at this event as the Vandals and head coach Brian Buscher has four starters that are averaging over nine-points a night so far in a season that is off to a good start at 4-2. The Vandals have started 2-0 in the South Central Conference with victories over Litchfield and Gillespie along with triumphs over Mulberry Grove and South Central and losses to Carlyle and Altamont.

Richie Well, a 6-foot-1 guard/forward, is popping home 20-points a night for the Vandals. Marcus

Eagles host talented teams

Zimmerman, a 5-foot-11 junior guard, has added 14.3 points a game for Vandalia while Nathan Casey, a 6-foot-3 junior guard, is tossing home 14.0 p.p.g. Six-foot-three Dakota Graham (9.3 p.p.g.) and 5-foot-10 junior guard Garrett McNary (6.3 p.p.g.) have helped out.

Cowden-Herrick-Beecher City is the fourth-seed in the tournament and head coach Marc Bain's club has played just four games heading into this week. The Bobcats, the new mascot of the cooperative, have just wins against Ramsey and Dieterich and two losses to Effingham St. Anthony and Neoga.

Konner Blackerby, a 5-foot-11 senior, is leading the Bobcats with 19-points a game while 5-foot-11 senior Cody Groves adds 15-points each night on average. Six-foot-four senior Aaron Nohren has added 10-points a game so far. Trey Buzzard, a 6-foot-1 junior has averaged 7.5 points and 9.5 rebounds so far this season.

Mulberry Grove enters the tournament as the number five-seed and will play CH-BC in the first round on Tuesday. Coach Mark Bollinger has two players who have stepped up for the Aces this season.

Courtlyn Latham, a 5-foot-7 sophomore, is the top Ace on offense so far this year. Latham is pitching home 16.8 points a game so far for MG along with handing out 2.7 assists a contest. Senior Mike Sloan, a 6-foot-3 forward, has accepted some of those assists and his 14.7 points a night is second on the club. Sloan is the best Ace on the glass at 5.5 rebounds a game. Joey Linnabary, a 5-foot-10 junior guard, adds 10.3 points and 5.1 rebounds.

Senior Jake Linnabary and Chandler Hans are right at five-points a night.

After a pretty good start to the season, the **South Central Cougars** have dropped to a 3-6 record heading into the tournament. They began with a 3-1 showing at the Mulberry Grove Thanksgiving Tournament but they have lost their last five contests, including a 56-43 loss to Altamont at home in its last game.

Coach Jamie VanScyoc is in his first season coaching his Alma mater and he has a pair of players leading the offense. Five-foot-ten senior Trevor Markley is hitting for 15.4 points a night for the Cougars while 5-foot-8 sophomore guard Logan Lotz is scoring 12.1 points a night. The other three starters for South Central are also putting up numbers.

Five-foot-nine junior Trent Geiler is throwing in 9.6 points a game while grabbing 5.4 rebounds. Juniors Ryan Matheny and Ryan McCown are both 5-foot-10 with Matheny adding 6.4 p.p.g. while McCown is at 4.4 p.p.g.

The **Ramsey Rams** have a couple of wins on the season, a 45-32 win over Decatur Christian from this past Saturday. Ramsey sits at 2-4 heading into the event having lost to Patoka, North Clay, South Central and Cowden-Herrick-Beecher City. They topped Sandoval in the seventh place game at the Mulberry Grove Thanksgiving Tournament.

Ramsey and new coach Andrew Beckham rely on senior Brady Black a lot. The 5-foot-8 senior guard has played a lot of minutes in Orange and Black in the past four-seasons and this season he has averaged 10.6 points a game. Kolten Adermann, a 6-foot-1 junior, is adding seven-points a game and junior guard Jalen Roberts has added 6.1 points and five rebounds.

Clay City doesn't bring much of a resume to the tournament, having played just three games without a victory. They have lopsided losses to Oblong (69-25), Patoka (73-28) and Cisne (71-22).

Jack Bullock is the Editor/Web Publisher of A Baseline View.com; southern Illinois' only boy's high school basketball web publication. He has covered boy's high school hoops on the web since 2001-02