



By Larry Pritchett

Former Activities Director

The Perkins County Plainsmen girls' basketball team opens the 2012 season on the road for the first two games of the regular season. Their first game is Dec. 2 at Maxwell and the next night they will travel to Hershey to do battle with the always strong Hershey Panthers.

It is always tougher to open on the road, but the PCS girls do have the luxury of having four starters back from last year's team that finished 10-13 and fourth in the SPVA tournament. Having four starters back has to be a plus and should help with the early road games.

The opening games are important as they are both SPVA opponents and could have a bearing on how the SPVA tournament is seeded later in January.

The girls' veteran coaching staff is led by Head Coach Chris Mestl who is starting his 17th year of coaching and has a 225-105 career record. His assistant coaches are Deanne Bishop and Mike Mayer.

The seasoned staff of coaches welcomes back a number of veteran players led by 5-foot-11 Tanya and 6-foot-0 Shania Metcalf. The Metcalf sister should be able to provide a very strong inside attack for the Plainsmen girls.

Kristin Beck, a 5-foot-4 senior guard and Shalee Pollard, a 5-foot-8 senior guard should also provide strong outside play for this year's team.

Coach Mestl has indicated that other top prospects for this year's team are 5-foot-9 senior post Tori Osler, 5-foot-9 junior post, Matisyn Humphrey, Jessi Hoffert, 5-foot-5 junior guard, Michi Prante, a 5-foot-6 junior guard, Kim Cook, a 5-foot-4 junior guard and sophomores Carlie Waitley a 5-foot-6 guard and 5-foot-7 guard Courtney McClenhan.

The strength of this year's team certainly would appear to be in their height. This strength could lead to a very successful season and games are usually won or lost on the boards. With their size, offensive and defensive rebounding should be controlled by the Plainsmen.

One of Coach Mestl's concerns is in the area of ball handling. He stated that "We got better in this area as the season went along, but we still need to show improvement against the top teams in the area if we want to accomplish our goals." Another concern is in the area of "depth." "We will need to build depth all season throughout a difficult schedule," said Mestl.

Coach Mestl stated that there are four teams that could very easily win the SPVA tournament. North Platte St. Pats, Sutherland, Hershey and the Plainsmen are all contenders. The SPVA basketball tournament is always a very competitive tournament and this year will be no different. Any team that wants to win it will have to play really well during SPVA week.

Official practices started on Nov. 14. Continued improvement from week to week could make the Plainsmen ladies a force at conference and district time.

