By Pastor Vince Carrig
Sports Writer

The 2012-13 Lady Plainsmen hope that a big change pays big dividends.

After 10 years as an assistant, Deanne Bishop replaces Chris Mestl as the team's head coach this season.

"When the opportunity presented itself, I thought it would be something I would like to try," Coach Bishop said. "I'm looking forward to working with the girls, and treat them as I would like my children treated."

She inherits a team that earned a 15-8 record last year and missed a trip to Lincoln by just one win.

The Perkins County girls will start four seniors this year, with Jessi Hoffert and Michi Prante up top along with Matisyn Humphrey and 6-foot-1 center Shania Metcalf stationed at the posts.

Juniors Courtney McClenahan, Carlie Waitley and Courtney Lyon will round out the rotation. Ten players on the roster logged varsity minutes, depth that will help the Lady Plainsmen battle through some tough competition.

Not only do 2012 state qualifiers North Platte St. Pat's hang out in their sub-district, but the always-tough Hershey girls as well. Conference opponent Sutherland and the teams of bigger schools like Sidney, Gothenburg and Chase County line up for a parade of challenging games. St. Pat's received former Maxwell guard Brooke Boucher as a transfer to bolster their squad.

"We have a very tough regular season, but I hope that we will get better by playing great competition," Coach Bishop said. "The more often you play the same team, the more difficult it is to beat them."

In order to prepare for this season, the coaching staff challenged the girls to work a repetitive shooting program. Taking 15 different shots in a 200-shot session 20 times over the summer equated to 4,000 shots. Ten girls earned the "4,000-shot-club" t-shirts offered as a reward.

“Offensively, can we get the ball down and get into our offense? And who will be our clutch person we go to–we need to answer that,” Head Coach Bishop said of this year’s version of the Lady Plainsmen. “Defensively, we have a tenacious group of young ladies who can get after it.”

The team voted Prante and Jessi Hoffert as their captains; coaches Bishop, Mike Mayer and Greg Vest will combine to choose a (different) third captain for each game.

First Action

The Lady Plainsmen roll down Highway 385 to confront the Wray Lady Eagles on Friday and Coach Jeremy Thomas’ Hershey Lady Panthers visit Grant on Friday to begin the season.