By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

Practice was intensified at varsity practice for the high school girls' team this week after opening the season with an 0-2 start.

While the Chase County girls lost their openers to McCook and Goodland, Kan., Coach Marc Mroczek said seeing his team in two games helped him identify areas that need some work.

The task doesn't get easier this weekend, though, as the Lady Longhorns face two more tough schools, both from Class B.

The Lady Longhorns host Sidney on Friday night, then are on the road to Ogallala Saturday.

Sidney upset top-ranked Alliance the past week, 39-33, and will come into Friday's game at 3-0.

Mroczek said Sidney has a tall, athletic team. "We'll have our hands full with them," he said.

Action begins at 4 p.m. with the JV games. The girls' varsity will follow the JV girls in the Longhorn gym.

On Saturday, the Lady Longhorns will travel to Ogallala to play the Indians, also 0-2 after the first weekend of games. One of their losses was to Minden in overtime. The Lady Indians also sport a tall team, Mroczek said, with three big girls inside that Chase County will have to match up with.

The JV games at Ogallala start the night's action at 4:30 p.m., followed by the varsity games.

Chase County is competing in Class C1 again this season, but are one of the smallest schools in the class by a slim margin of just six students.

McCook game

Ball-handling troubled the Lady Longhorns against McCook last Thursday, Mroczek said, as they lost a 41-54 contest

But, with 38 turnovers, it's hard to win games, he said.

Most of their turnovers came from traveling or "trying to dribble into traffic," Mroczek said.

McCook's half-court press caused them fits, and being outscored 21 to 8 in the second quarter was the difference-maker.

The two teams played evenly the other three quarters. Chase County dominated the first quarter, taking an early 5-0 lead, not letting McCook score the first four minutes and holding a 12-9 lead after eight minutes.

Mroczek said some of the reason for Thursday's outcome had to be first-game jitters, and the fact most of the team hasn't played together much.

With just two seniors back who saw considerable varsity time in 2007, Nichole Dickey and Morgan Strand, combined with two other seniors who didn't play at all last year due to injuries, Molly Strand and Kim Brophy, they are still getting used to each other, Mroczek said.

For the opening game, Chase County's field goal shooting wasn't bad at 46 percent (13 of 28). On free throws, Chase County hit six of 11.

McCook shot 52 percent from the field (18 of 52), and also hit more free throws, 12 of 16.

On treys, Chase County hit three to McCook's two.

Morgan Strand led the scoring for Chase County with 14 points, while Dickey added nine.

Strand also led the team's rebounding with 10 and had five blocked shots. Chase County pulled down 32 rebounds in the game, to McCook's 25.

Dickey had four steals and five assists in the game.

The real downer for Chase County was its 38 turnovers, compared to McCook's 18.

Imperial 41

	2 PT. FG	3 PT. FG	FT/ FTA	F	TP
Chantal Heathers	0	0	0-0	0	0
Jilanne German	0	0	0-0	0	0
Nichole Dickey	1	2	1-4	4	9
Karlee Palmer	2	0	0-0	2	4
Karlee Kunnemann	0	0	0-0	0	0
Kim Brophy	2	1	0-0	0	7
Shannon Liewer	0	0	0-0	0	0
Molly Strand	0	0	0-0	2	0
Morgan Strand	6	0	2-3	4	14
Lexee Reichert	2	0	3-4	1	7
TOTALS	13	3	6-11	13	41

McCook 54

M. Carfield 2, T. Powell 16, J. Bryant 12, H Swanhorst 5, E. Nichols 5, B. Watkins 9, S. Jumps 5.

McCook's totals: 2 pt. FG—18; 3 pt. FG—2; FT/FTA—12-16; Fouls—16; TP—54.

Points by quarters:

Imperial	12	8	9	12—41
McCook	9	21	9	15—54

Goodland game

Some hot, three-point shooting gave Chase County fits against Goodland Friday night, as they dropped a 42-57 game.

In all, Goodland was 9 of 21 on threes, eight of them from Jade Herl, whose 25 points led all scorers in the game. However, they also had another hot shooter, Ashley Archer, who tallied 24 points.

Mroczek said these two girls were on Goodland's team last year, but saw only limited varsity time.

On Chase County's side, however, Nichole Dickey had an impressive night of her own with one of her best nights scoring at 23 points.

Most of her scoring came from beyond the arc, too, hitting five of the team's six treys.

After two quick treys from Goodland, Dickey dropped in her first trey of the contest with less than two minutes gone in the first quarter. That was followed up by a three-pointer about a minute later from Karlee Palmer, tying the game 6-6.

The teams played fairly even, until the fourth when Goodland outscored Chase County 20 to 8.

Mroczek said his team didn't attack enough on offense against Goodland, and failed to score several times after having two or three tries at the shot.

"We didn't box out very well," he said.

The back-to-back games also had its effect of the team's conditioning Friday. Goodland came into the game with fresh legs, that being their first game of the season.

Mroczek said the team did better Friday against the press, though, handling the ball much better than the night before. That showed up in fewer turnovers at 16 compared to Thursday's 38.

Mroczek planned to work more with the team this week on their man-to-man defense, not having a lot of time to work on it leading up to opening weekend.

Looking ahead, Mroczek said it will be important for more of the players to step up and score, especially with two tough games this weekend.

Against Goodland, Chase County shot 23 percent (10 of 44) from the field, while Goodland shot 38 percent (9 of 24).

Besides from three-point range, the other difference showed up at the free throw line, where Goodland hit 12 of 24 to Chase County's 4 of 10.

Morgan Strand grabbed 12 of the team's 29 rebounds, while Dickey had four steals. Brophy led the team on assists with five.

Imperial 42

	2 PT. FG	3 PT. FG	FT/ FTA	F	TP
Chantal Heathers	0	0	0-0	1	0
Jilanne German	0	0	0-0	1	0
Nichole Dickey	4	5	0-0	5	23
Karlee Palmer	0	1	0-0	3	3
Karlee Kunnemann	0	0	0-0	0	0
Kim Brophy	1	0	3-5	2	5
Shannon Liewer	0	0	0-0	0	0
Molly Strand	0	0	0-0	4	0
Morgan Strand	4	0	1-5	5	9
Lexee Reichert	1	0	0-0	1	2
TOTALS	10	6	4-10	21	42

Goodland 57

A. Archer 24, M. Hinger 1, J. Herl 25, C. Gausman 5, W. Shields 2.

Goodland's totals: 2 pt. FG—9; 3 pt. FG—9; FT/FTA—12-24; Fouls—14; TP—57.

Points by quarters:

Imperial	17	7	10	8—41
Goodland	16	11	10	20—57