



By Russ Pankonin
The Imperial Republican

Head boys' basketball coach Carl Zuege can hardly believe how fast the preseason has gone. Zuege and his Longhorns began preparing for their season opener nearly three weeks ago.

The first gauge of those preparations comes tonight (Thursday) when the Longhorns play host to Cozad, and again on Friday when they travel to McCook.

Zuege got to see his team in game conditions before the Thanksgiving break in an exhibition game here with Hitchcock County.

The Longhorns won the game 42-31 but didn't shoot exceptionally well, Zuege noted.

That will come, he said, noting this could be the best shooting team he's had as a head coach. What Zuege liked the most in the exhibition game was the Longhorns' defensive pressure during the night.

He said his squad will base their defense on their man-to-man principles, even when using a 1-3-1 zone.



Working hard

Zuege said he's been especially pleased at how hard his kids have been working in the preseason.

He said the intensity and competitiveness in practice will only help make them better.

Right now, Zuege said he's planning an eight-man rotation in a varsity lineup this week but can also go several more players deep. This depth will give him some options, he said.

Those eight include senior Kale Gockley, juniors Dan Sullivan, Justus Wallin and Trey Milner; and sophomores Kelton Fisher, Jeff Dickey, Isaac Sorensen and Travis Luhrs.

Cozad, McCook first up

The boys will open the season up against Cozad tonight and McCook Friday.

Zuege said Cozad returns most of last year's squad, including a pair of 6-5 posts.

He expects them to be much better than they were last year when the Longhorns won what Zuege called a "sloppy game."

In addition, he said they are a team loaded with pure athletes.

McCook comes in ranked 4th in the preseason Class B polls.

Zuege said McCook won some big games last year, including a regular season win over Scottsbluff, the eventual Class B champion.

This will be a good test on the road early in the season, the coach noted.

Zuege knows his team will be ready to compete against anyone they walk on the floor with.

“They won’t back down.”

Tonight’s game against Cozad begins with boys’ and girls’ jayvee games at 4 p.m. MT, followed by the girls’ and boys’ varsity games.

On Friday, the jayvee teams both open play at 3:30 p.m. MT, followed by the girls’ and boys’ varsity games.

Members of the 2012-13 Longhorn basketball team include:

Seniors—Kale Gockley, Brian Bell, Hunter Spady.

Juniors—Kevin German, Dan Sullivan, Justus Wallin, Trey Milner, Calen Griffin.

Sophomores—Travis Luhrs, Ryan Moline, Freddie Kasselmann, Jeff Dickey, Kelton Fisher, Isaac Sorensen, Holden Dreiling, Darrin Knobbe, Kevin Chavira.

Freshmen—Indy Smith, Carlos Chavez, Destyn Milner, Michael Musgrove, Jared Sharp, Eli Engbrecht.