

VOLLEYBALL

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Casey also finished with 11 kills.

The Ladycats will face Amarillo - the defending state champions - and their legendary head coach Jan Barker, who has won 10 state championships in 30 years as the Sandies head coach. Barker, who has won more than 1,000 matches, was inducted into the Texas Girls Coaches Association Hall of Fame in July.

Amarillo also eliminated the Ladycats from the playoffs last year in the regional final.

"At this point of the season we are only going to face good teams," Gay said. "I think the Amarillo match will come down to which team makes less errors."

"Amarillo works hard for Jan, but my girls work hard for me. Again, it will come down to who makes less errors. I feel like our team has been underrated all season, but I think they believe in themselves and believe in each other and I think that they have been more of a team as the season has gone on."

"I think that is really important that they have come together as a team and gotten this far as a team. It is hard to lose seven seniors, including some big guns, from last year, but this team has stepped up and done a good job overall."

AMS Ladycats sweep Granbury Middle School

The 7th and 8th grade Ladycats swept Granbury Middle School on Nov. 2 as all six volleyball teams won in their respective finales.

RIGHT: Aledo Middle School eighth-grade A team coach Sheryl Bradford talks strategy with her team during an early-season match. All six AMS volleyball teams defeated Granbury Middle School on Nov. 3 in the final matches of the season.

TONY EIERDAM/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

AMS VOLLEYBALL RESULTS

7A - 25-12, 25-14
7B - 25-4, 25 - 13
7C - 25-17, 25-4
8A - 25 - 12, 25-8
8B - 25 - 7, 25 - 10
8C - 25-5, 25 - 7



Impact Athletic Training Center announces North State Champ results

Impact Athletic Training Center's level 4 gymnastics team competed at the North State Championships Oct. 27-28 in Allen where the team was named North State Champions. Individual awards went to:

- Sophie Cohen of Aledo placed first on floor, second on beam, fourth on bars,

- and second all-around
- Reese Church of Aledo placed third on bars, fourth on floor and vault, and third all-around
- Whitley Eppes of Aledo placed second on beam, third on floor, fourth on bars, and third all-around
- Reagan Moberley of Weatherford placed third on bars, fourth on beam,

and fifth all-around

All four gymnasts qualified to advance to the Level 4 State Championships to be held Nov. 18-19 in Rockwall.

RIGHT: From left: Sophie Cohen, Reese Church, Reagan Moberley, Whitley Eppes
SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS



BASKETBALL

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"And that is a credit to the kids and the work they have put in. I think this year people will get to see the hard work the kids have put in, as well as feeling good about what they are doing out there."

Manning the point during the off-season was Cameron Yates, a senior who will be entering his third year on varsity.

"Cameron will be a three-year varsity player and will bring a ton of experience," Jones said. "Cam will be our primary ball handler. He had a very good fall, he is scoring well, and he makes good decisions."

"He is a super smart kid, and it is finally clicking with him as he understands his potential and how good he can actually be. Right now, we have three captains and he is one of them. He will start at the point guard spot, he knows our system, and he has the ability to make a difference."

Another returning starter, Noah Arrington, is a senior also entering his third year on varsity. Arrington, primarily known for his "in-your-shirt" defense, has added an offensive repertoire as well.

"Noah Arrington is our other captain," Jones said. "Noah was a kid who stood out to me when I first got here three years ago. He understands the game so well, and no one will outwork him. Noah can also score the ball, and in the past, he was asked to be the fire starter, he was the energy."

"He will always bring that. But what I noticed in the spring, summer and fall is he is scoring consistently. I think he will surprise some people with his development as a player."

Two other returning guards are currently in football, junior Tre Owens and sophomore Jake Bishop, who started at point guard last year as a freshman. However, both are not expected to join the squad until late December.

"Jake and Tre - and you can see this on the football field - are winners," Jones said. "Jake is a great ball handler, but beyond that he is a great leader. He is vocal, he will make sure everyone is in the right position, and he does a great job of making his teammates better. That's what I love about Jake."

"Tre just loves basketball. Tre played all summer with these guys, and he learned our system. He can shoot the ball, but his best asset is his ability to rebound."

"He was our second-leading scorer last year. We will be excited to get these guys, but since they are in football we probably won't get them until after our second district game."

Other second-year varsity players are senior post Smith and senior guard Hunter Vela.

"Ayden got a ton of experience last year," Jones said. "He is 6-5 but can shoot the ball. He is another kid - but this kind of goes for everybody on this team - who is a character kid. He and the others stand for the right thing not only on the court but in the classroom. He is also one of our captains."

Jones continued: "I love Hunter Vela. He is kind of like our sixth man, but he can start. He is that good. Again, he is another kid who understands the game at the varsity level, and he can shoot the three and he can play down low. He will be our top guy off the bench."

Blending in with the six returners are six players entering their first year on varsity including senior Leo Bell, juniors JW Comiskey, Caiden Coufal and Truen Johnson, and sophomores Reid Dietrich and Max Newell.

"Leo Bell is a high IQ kid," Jones said. "He is a 6-2 guard who understands the game very well, and he can also play the point guard spot. He is our secondary ball handler and he brings two strengths to the team - he is a great ball handler and he can rebound."

"Comiskey is a player who is always in the right spot and always doing the right thing. This will be his first year to play at the varsity level, but he has already shown he is a leader."

Jones said Johnson, a post, is one of the team's hardest workers.

"Truen is always the first one in the gym and the last one to leave," Jones said. "He has worked his way into a starting position, and I don't think anyone plays harder than Truen. He gets after it. He is an undersized post, but he makes up the difference with his effort."

Coufal actually played on varsity at the beginning of the season before Bishop and Owens returned from football. He spent the rest of the season sharpening his skills on the junior varsity.

"Caiden Coufal started on varsity last year before we got some football guys, and we sent him down to the junior varsity to develop," Jones said. "He is extremely athletic, a lefty, and he can score the ball. He can shoot it; he can drive it; and he is continuing to learn the system. We like his athleticism and his ability to put the ball in the basket."

Jones is also excited about what Dietrich and Newell will bring to the team.

"Reid is new to varsity and another good ball handler," he said. "He is similar to Jake Bishop - he can get in and out of defenses - and we feel he can help us. He is very athletic and a good defender."

"Max Newell has a high IQ, and he is tall and can dunk the ball. He is also one of our best shooters. His length will be an asset for us, and he continues to adjust to the speed of the game at the varsity level. We definitely feel he can help us."

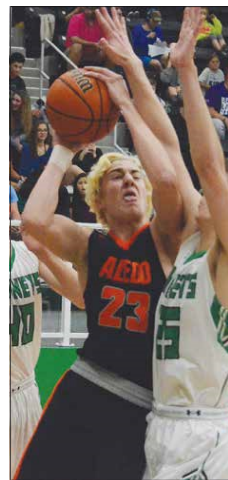
With his program taking positive steps his first two years, Jones is ready to coach this team past district play.

"The goal is always to win state, but you can't talk about that until you get to the playoffs," Jones, who played in the NCAA Sweet 16, said. "Last year, we were a play-in game from getting in, and I think it left a taste in our kids' mouths that they got a chance to experience a play-off-type atmosphere."

"We had unbelievable support from the community, and a lot of people came out for that (tie-breaker) game. When we lost that game the kids realized how close we were, so this year the first goal is to be in the playoffs."

"I would love to say we will go three (rounds) deep or whatever, but the reality is that we just have to get in and anything can happen. But you don't get a chance until you get in."

With his team trending upward, Jones is poised to take this team where it has not ventured in four years - late-February basketball.



TONY EIERDAM/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Returning at post is 6-5 senior Ayden Smith, who will be playing in his second year on varsity. Smith was also selected as a captain.

BEARCATS FIRST 5

Tuesday: at Granbury, 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 17 - Burleson Centennial, 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 20 - Peaster, 3 p.m.
Nov. 28 - at Birdville, 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 30-Dec. 2 - at Kennedale tournament, TBA

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