

As with any new season, Floyd Central's Lady Highlanders are trying to find the right chemistry among the players on the team this year.

On top of that, they also have a new head coach, replacing outgoing coach Joe Voelker. Kirk Hamsley, a guidance counselor at the school, previously coached the boys' varsity team for four years.

So if fans see a familiar face on the sidelines, they'll know why.

Hamsley said that he enjoyed the coaching he has done so far in the boys' and girls' programs, and wanted to continue working with the athletes.

This season, the team will be trying to improve on last season's 8-14 season, though a 14-4 junior varsity team will help bolster the team at the varsity level this year.

Hamsley will also rely on four other players that return from last year's campaign.

Senior Kelsey Mayfield, a 5-8 senior, will play either the guard or forward position, depending on what is needed at the time. She started at small forward last year.

Sophomore Brooke Hinton started last year, as a freshman, and will be counted on to run the offense this year, in the guard spot.

"She's very competitive," said Hamsley of Hinton. "She plays hard, and is a good leader."

Another senior seeing action this year will be 5-7 guard Taylor Pate. She was in and out of the lineup last year, and averaged about two quarters per contest in 2010-11.

Also seeing action this year will be junior center Nikki Bruno, who Hamsley said improved a lot over the course of last year.

As with any season, the Hoosier Hills Conference will be a tough march this year, too.

Hamsley sees Bedford-North Lawrence, Seymour, New Albany, and Jeff as the key teams this time around.

He points out that Seymour has their backcourt returning intact, New Albany has their guards back, along with their post player, and while Jeff lost five of their top seven players from last year's Class 5A state champions, they still have Lakin Roland and Jala McClain returning.

Another local team that should be strong this year is Mid Sothern Conference and Class 3A power Scottsburg.

Hamsley said that finding the right chemistry and players willing to sacrifice for the team and play hard on a consistent basis.

"We're not sure who will step up into those roles," said Hamsley. He said he needs leaders, defensive players, and scorers. "It's kind of like starting from scratch."

"We've got to figure out who we are," he said.