

Marion looks to replace 8 seniors

Written by Jim Ecker

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All basketball coaches like to have a big senior class on their team for the experience and expertise, but there's a flip side to the equation.

Once they graduate, they leave big holes to fill.

That's the case at Marion High School, where Coach Mike Manderscheid is trying to replace eight seniors who helped them fashion a 14-8 record last season.

So how do things look in practice without the eight seniors?

"It looks like we lost eight seniors," Manderscheid replied quickly, laughing.

It's not like the Indians are bumping into each other while they learn how to dribble and chew gum at the same time, but there have been a few growing pains at Marion. The first task is trying to replace all-star guard Craig Engle, who is now starting at Cornell College as a freshman.

"You know what, we don't replace him," Manderscheid said. "We have to go with what we've got."

"Craig was a great player. He did a lot of things for us," the coach said. "He was able to create a lot of shots. We kind of miss that."

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"We've got some new guys who have a steep learning curve."

Engle averaged 16.1 points, 3.3 assists and 2.7 rebounds last season. The Indians also lost such prominent seniors as Devin Quinn, Derek Smith, Deshaun Quinn, Terrence Williams and Cody Alberts, who averaged 20.5 points among them.

Marion returns two key players in Jacob Manderscheid and Baylor Fish, a pair of coaches' sons who have grown up at Marion High School. Manderscheid is the basketball coach's son and Fish is the baseball coach's son.

Sons and daughters of coaching families sometimes catch on a little faster than the other players, having absorbed lessons in their own household. Manderscheid thinks it holds true for his son and Steve Fish's kid, too.

"They both understand what we're trying to do and where we're trying to go," he remarked. "Both of them are now being asked to play more significant roles."

Manderscheid, a 6-foot senior, averaged 7.8 points last season. Fish, a 5-10 guard who plays shortstop on the baseball team, averaged 3.6 points last season as a sophomore.

Noah Walter, a 6-1 senior, and Ryan Whalen, a 6-0 senior, played in about half the games last season and have a chance to play significant roles in the post for Marion this year, despite not being real tall for the job.

"I think they're both looking forward to the challenge to see what they can do," Manderscheid said.

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Matthew Pflughaupt and Daniel Holt also got their feet wet for the varsity last season and hope to contribute more as seniors. Isaak Hahn and Owen Carstensen have enjoyed success in other sports at Marion and are looking to help as well.

Manderscheid said he's "fairly close" to picking a starting lineup for Tuesday's opener at Maquoketa. He thinks his club might have to rely on its defense until the offense rolls into shape.

"I think defense will be a definite strength," he said. "We're going to have to find some other strengths.

"They'll play hard, they'll defend," he said. "That's the one positive thing we have going right now."

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Seniors

Daniel Holt (5-8), Noah Walter (6-1), Jacob Manderscheid (6-0), Ryan Whalen (6-0), Matthew Pflughaupt (6-0), CJ Wade (6-0), Noah Hansen (5-11).

Juniors

Baylor Fish (5-10), Isaak Hahn (5-9), Clayton Mohwinkle (5-8), Owen Carstensen (5-10), Mitch Wiese (6-4), Trent Kuethe (6-0).

Sophomores

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Chase Zielke (6-0), Chris Mohwinkle (5-10).