

Foote switches to boys at Cedar Valley

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 27 November 2015 16:59 - Last Updated Saturday, 28 November 2015 07:42



Craig Foote nursed the Cedar Valley Christian girls basketball program for seven years, taking them from the verge of extinction to having a respectable team with the great Shelby Hembera.

Now he's accepted a new challenge at Cedar Valley with the boys basketball team, taking the reins of a ballclub that won only two games last year.

Foote is not a martyr, however, and was ready to make the switch.

Foote was an assistant coach with the boys basketball teams at Marion, Lisbon and Cedar Valley before becoming the girls coach at Cedar Valley, so he has a strong background in boys basketball.

Secondly, his son Jackson is a freshman on the boys basketball team at Cedar Valley and this gives him a chance to coach his own kid.

Foote welcomes the opportunity of trying to rebuild another program at the small private school in southeast Cedar Rapids.

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"It is a challenge," he remarked, "but it's also an opportunity."

Jeff Pospisil stepped aside as the boys basketball coach at Cedar Valley Christian after the 2014-15 season. He's also the principal at Cedar Valley and performs many other duties at the school, including serving as the volleyball coach.

Foote happily switched from the girls to the boys. Ron Slagle, his top assistant with the girls, succeeded him as head coach.

Foote was very familiar with the boys on the CVC team even before he became the head coach. Cedar Valley plays a lot of girl/boy doubleheaders, so he was in the gym for many of the boys games. In addition, he volunteered his time to help some of the boys with their fundamentals even before he became their coach.

"I was the girls coach at the time, but I would go down and spend my Wednesday afternoons after school and I would help out some of the boys with their skills, just because I wanted to help them, not because I had any plans of being the head coach the next year," he explained.

"With some of these boys, I spent dozens of hours in the gym just working with them on their skills, just because I was a teacher in the building and they needed someone to help."

The Huskies finished with a 2-21 record last season with victories over HLV and Tri-County. They endured an 11-game losing streak and a 10-game losing streak along the way, but hung in there and kept trying.

Travis Geels, an effective shooter, returns after averaging 10.7 points and 4.8 rebounds. "He could be an important part of our offense and defense," Foote said.

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Mike Scroggs (5.0 points), Michael Johnson (5.2) and Kelvin Ridder (2.4) also return after making a dent last season. Colin Heeren, Logan Crittenden, Drew Gustafson and others also got their feet wet last season.

Scroggs is 6-3, Ridder 6-3 and Geels 6-2.

"The guys with size have demonstrated some improved basketball skills," Foote said. "They have as much opportunity as anybody to play a lot of minutes for us."

Foote said he has not set any numerical goals for the Huskies this season.

"I don't want to be too cliché here, but we just want to get better every single day," he declared. "If we get better every day, that's goal Number 1.

"Number 2 is to be competitive and we would like to be in the games we play, meaning the outcome is undecided until the fourth quarter. We'd like to be competitive against the teams in our conference (the Tri-Rivers) and we would like to improve every day.

"We're young and rebuilding," Foote said, "but hopefully we're hungry."

Cedar Valley opens the season Tuesday at Springville.

ROSTER

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Seniors

Michael Johnson (5-7), Colin Heeren (6-0), Drew Gustafson (6-0).

Juniors

Logan Crittenden (5-8), Travis Geels (6-2), Kelvin Ridder (6-3), Mike Scroggs (6-3).

Sophomores

Abe Joyce (5-9), Kyle Gustafson (6-1), Cole Telecky (5-9), Caleb Herr (5-10).

Freshmen

Jackson Foote (5-8).