

By EARL WATT

• Daily Leader

Seward County fans have come accustomed to high expectations for the Lady Saints basketball program.

Jim Littell built the program into a national contender in the 1990s and won the national championship in 2002.

When Littell moved on to Oklahoma State as the associate head coach with his longtime friend Kurt Budke who built Trinity Valley Community College into a national powerhouse.

Toby Wynn filled the gap and continued the success established by Littell. Wynn is entering his third year at the helm of the Lady Saints program, and although there will be a number of new faces on the team this season, the national attention and spotlight is still shining on the Lady Saints, and with realistic expectations.

Seward will start the season as the No. 17 team in the nation.



“With as many new players as we have, I think that making the top 20 is good,” Seward athletic director Galen McSpadden said.

Seward is picked second in the Jayhawk West behind Cloud County who begins the season as the No. 7 team in the nation.

According to the school’s website, Seward will be entering the season with a top 20 ranking for the 19th consecutive year.

“I would think that our women have been nationally ranked more often than any other program here,” McSpadden said. “That is quite an accomplishment. To be good and get somewhere is one thing. To be good and to stay there over a long period of time shows the consistency and the commitment and the hard work of not only the coaching staff and athletes but the college and community support that has been there for the women’s program.”

Seward will begin the season at 6 p.m. Friday against Friends University at the Greenhouse in the Pepsi Classic followed by the men’s game. Tickets are free courtesy of Pepsi.

“Last year we had a new look coaching staff,” McSpadden said. “This year it is a new look on the floor — a lot of new faces — playing an exciting brand of basketball. We encourage people to come out.”

## **Lady Saints begin season at No. 17 in nation**

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Free tickets are available at First National Bank drive thru and main bank, Express Lane and both Hutch's Convenience Store locations.