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Vikings lose in regional semifinals, but finish in top 10

Team falls short of expectations in first year of bigger division

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The past three years, the Varsity basketball team has made the state tournament with two final appearances and one final four appearance. But that was TAPPS 2A. This season, after moving up to 3A and facing tougher competition, the Vikings found themselves in an unfamiliar situation: For the first time in three years, the team did not make it to the state tournament.

Even with the leadership of two former Division 1 basketball coaches, the competition was just too tough to beat. After winning their first round game, the Vikings then ended their season, losing in the regional playoff game and falling short of the state tournament.

"Making it to the second round of playoffs was a good accomplishment, but not our goal," said head coach Mark Morefield. "We wanted to make it to state."

The Vikings played their first round of the 2015 3A playoffs on Friday, February 20 against Dallas First Baptist. The team fought hard the whole game and finished with a 51-46 win. The team's defense was solid throughout the game, and Ty Sadler stepped on the offensive side with 19 points.

"After the win, everyone was really pumped and we felt really close as a team," said sophomore guard Hudson

Bradley. "We felt very motivated to win." Coming off the win and



Sophomore guard Hudson Bradley drives the court against Dallas First Baptist. *George Eichenberg/Review staff*

week off, due to icy weather conditions that prevented travel, the team headed to Abilene to play Lubbock Christian in the regional playoff match up. Tyler Sawyer and Ben Martinsen

concussion, respectively. Ty Sadler dominated the offensive side with 24 points with help from Davis Boehm who had 14 points. But the team fell short 61-74, ending their playoff run.

"Our game against Lubbock Christian was the first time since mid-January we had our whole team. From about mid-January to the end of the season, it seemed we always had a key injury or other key personnel out and we lost a little bit of continuity," Morefield said.

The team suffered six injuries from key players throughout the season.

Jacob Frisch sat the bench early in the season due to a broken ankle and Case McReynolds suffered from a season ending torn ACL and meniscus.

"It was a great experience playing for the new coaching staff with my teammates," McReynolds said. "Even though I couldn't play for the second half of the season, it was still a great experience."

The Vikings finished 26-5 in their first year in 3A TAPPS. Davis Boehm, Tyler Sawyer, and Ty Sadler were all named 1st Team All-District. Two other players were named 2nd team All-State and three received All-District Honorable Mention. Tyler Sawyer, despite his injury, was also named 2nd Team All-State.

"I was happy to have another successful year as a Viking and I am glad to be a part of team with such great people," said Sawyer. "Although we didn't achieve our overall goal of a state championship, I am still proud of our achievements this season."

Senior forward Cooper Anderton agrees.

"I definitely think of this year as a success," Anderton said. "Twenty-six wins in a new division is something to be proud of, taking into account all of the obstacles we faced throughout the year."

Morefield agrees that the season can only be considered a success.

"We had a 16 game winning streak, a great road win at Grace Prep and finished top 10 in the state," he said.

Morefield already is looking to the future, as spring workouts began the first week of April.

"The returning varsity players are hungry to get better this off-season," he said. "I'm looking forward to finishing our goal we [had] this season: winning a state championship."