

Bellaire talent extends to hardwood

•Despite late start, Big Reds will be among valley's best

By **JEFF HARRISON**
Times Leader Sports Editor

Most coaches would be more than a little concerned with the season at hand and virtually no practice time to get ready.

Gene Ammirante's take on the whole thing — "Don't worry, be happy."

Not because his son is a member of the Bellaire High's highly-successful football team and not because he's a teacher/coach in the system, but because he knows that the athletic ability possessed by this group will undoubtedly spill over onto the basketball court.

"We're fortunate we have a veteran team," stated Ammirante, who's about to begin his 15th year as head coach at Bellaire with a sparkling 221-91 record.

"The fact that they're in the state playoffs indicates we have some pretty good athletes to work with.

"Obviously, it limits our practice time," Coach A admitted, "but we'll adjust. We've got two four-year players and some other who played a lot last year and, after all, we played 40-some games in AAU ball and summer tournaments so we pretty much know what to expect."

Ammirante's chief concern when hoops takes center stage is regaining the shooter's touch.

"That's such a fine-tuned thing," he commented. "We may have to take out some extra insurance on our backboards because we expect some boulders early on."

Getting production from his "role play-

ers" is also an area Ammirante feels is necessary.

"There are a lot of good players out there, but great players can make their teammates better by creating opportunities for them," he said.

The Redmen will look to push the ball offensively, according to their coach.

"Hopefully we can push the ball up the floor because we've got some guys who can deliver it long distance," he said. "This is the 'year of the guard' in the Ohio Valley and we have to be careful we defend the other team's guards safely and conservatively, however.

"We have a chance to be a pretty good team defensively," he added. "We've got guys who play under control and are pretty intelligent."

Bellaire is coming off a fine 17-4 campaign, one which saw the Reds capture their third straight OVAC title (seventh in eight years). A surprise 52-49 upset loss to Steubenville in the opening game of the Division II Sectional spoiled all of that, however.

The Reds feature possibly the valley's best one-two punch in seniors Jose Davis and Jerry Ammirante, both of whom will be seeking their fourth varsity letters.

Davis, a multi-dimensional 6 ft. 1 former, will direct the attack at point guard but he can also be a factor on the inside. He averaged 21 points per game last season and has been the team's leading rebounder the last two years.

Davis' all-star accolades following last

season included all-Ohio Division II special mention, all-Eastern District Division II first team, all-OVAC Class 3-A first team, all-District 12 first team and all-Valley first team.

Young Ammirante returns as one of the area's premier "dead-eye" long-range shooters. The 6 ft. 3 guard poured in 18 points per game and popped in a total of 59 three-pointers.

He was all-Ohio Division II honorable mention, all-Eastern District Division II second team, all-OVAC first team, all-District 12 first team and all-Valley first team.

Two solid performers will handle the post play for the Redmen — 6 ft. 3 senior letterman Dusty Kinder and 6 ft. 2 junior letterman Ben Taylor. Both have excellent hands as evident by their pass-catching ability in football. Kinder averaged 4.7 points per game in a supporting role last year.

Senior Bobby Roth, a 5 ft. 11 letterman, rounds out the starting lineup as a guard/forward.

Juniors contending for "PT" include 5 ft. 11 guard Grant Allen, 5 ft. 11 post Chas Call and 6 ft. guard Derek Sochor while other junior candidates are 6 ft. guard Chris Muir, 5 ft. 9 guard Brian Porter and 5 ft. 10 guard Josh Boone.

Ty Masciarelli, a 5 ft. 11 point guard, heads the sophomore class which also includes 6 ft. post Richie Materkoski; 6 ft. guard Clint Lekanudos; 6 ft. 3 post J.J. Schmidli; 5 ft. 10 guard Tommy Dyer; 5 ft. 9 guard Ryan Thoburn; 5 ft. 10 post Jimmy Preston; 5 ft. 10 post Matt Kazmirski; and 5 ft. 9 guard Tony Amo.

The Reds lost four players to graduation headed by three-year regular Scott Pitts, who earned all-Eastern District Division II special mention, all-OVAC Class 3-A second team all-District 12 honorable mention and who played in both the OVAC and District 12 all-star games.

Also gone are Keith Pitts, Jeremiah Johnson and Ryan Clark.

Ammirante's staff features the return of Mark Spigarelli to his alma mater as varsity assistant; Kevin Roseberry as reserve coach Brent Kidder with the freshmen; Dave Ice; the eighth grade level; and Tube Davis handling the seventh graders.

Some readjustments are in order on the Reds' slate due to the football success, including the cancellation of early-season game with Edison (rescheduled for Jan. 13) and Buckeye Local and a game against Ather High in the first annual Hoops Invitational; the Ohio University Convocation Center in Athens. The likely opener now is the Dec. 1 game at River.

Meadowbrook replaces Linsly on the Bellaire slate while also gone is Toronto.

Here's the 1995-96 Bellaire Big Red boys basketball schedule:

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Bellaire girls are strong at guard

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by JEFF HARRISON
Times Leader Sports Editor

If hard work means anything at all, look for Bellaire High's girls to return to court prominence this season.

Veteran coach Gregg Bonar begins his 11th year at the helm of the Lady Reds with a battle-tested squad featuring solid guard play which will be attempting to improve on last year's 12-9 record.

"This is the hardest working team I've had as far as working together," related Bonar. "We expect a lot of players to really come of age this year."

"We had a couple of big wins last year," related the BHS coach, "but we were very inconsistent and hopefully that won't be the case this year."

Guard play holds the key to Bellaire's chances this winter.

"We're very much guard-oriented," Bonar related. "We don't have many big players, so we'll have to be more aggressive on the offensive boards."

"We should be able to run with it and do some pressing on defense, however," added Bonar.

Better overall shooting and help

on the inside are keys, according to Bonar.

"We can score at a decent clip with our guards," he said, "but we need some contributions inside. We were a poor shooting team last year, but I feel we'll be improved in that area."

Bellaire's three senior tri-captains figure to wreak havoc all season. Three-year letter-winner Amy Magistro will run the point for the Lady Reds. A 5 ft. 6 senior, Magistro scored 14.3 points and averaged 5.5 rebounds per game last season.

"She's extremely quick and is our defensive stopper," said Bonar. "She's an excellent ball-handler and she has really dedicated herself to basketball."

Magistro's all-star honors included all-Ohio Division II honorable mention; all-OVAC Class 3-A first team; all-Eastern District Division II second team; all-District 12 first team; and all-Valley second team.

Another three-year letter-winner returns in 5 ft. 9 Katie Bohus. As a junior, she tallied 12.6 points and grabbed six boards per contest. She also led the valley in free throw shooting with a 77.9 percent accu-

racy.

"She's an unbelievably-hard worker," the Bellaire coach said of Bohus. "She's an excellent outside shooter and is one of the best dribblers I've seen."

Bohus earned all-Eastern District, all-OVAC and all-Valley special mention and all-District 12 honorable mention laurels. Two-year letter-winner Emily Fetters is a key to the Reds' inside play. At 5 ft. 10, she averaged 3.2 points and 8.6 rebounds per game last year while earning all-Eastern District and all-OVAC special mention.

"She's a really great rebounder," Bonar said. "She had a couple of 'monster' games with 17 rebounds and we look for her to pick up her scoring this year."

Joining Magistro and Bohus in the Reds' three-pronged backcourt will be 5 ft. 8 sophomore letter-winner Amanda Whitecotton.

As a freshman, she stepped into the starting lineup early-on and averaged 9.5 points and 6.1 rebounds per game.

"She's probably the best pure player we've ever had," praised Bonar. "She drives to the bucket very well, is an excellent ball-hand-

game at River.

Meadowbrook replaces Linsly on the Bellaire slate while also gone is Toronto.

Here's the 1995-96 Bellaire Big Reds' boys basketball schedule:

Dec. 1 — at Edison (ppd); Dec. 2 — at Athens (ppd); Dec. 5 — Buckeye Local (ppd); Dec. 12 — at River; Dec. 15 — Union Local; Dec. 22 — St. Clairsville; Dec. 29 — Steubenville Central; Jan. 2 — at Toronto; Jan. 5 — Martins Ferry; Jan. 9 — at Cambridge; Jan. 13 — at Edison; Jan. 16 — at Wheeling Park; Jan. 23 — at Steubenville Central; Jan. 26 — at Buckeye Local; Jan. 31 — Wheeling Park; Feb. 2 — Edison; Feb. 6 — at Martins Ferry; Feb. 9 — at Meadowbrook; Feb. 13 — Cambridge; Feb. 16 — St. Clairsville.

Bellaire girls are strong at guard

Hard-working Lady Reds feature up-tempo style

dler and has worked hard on improving her (shooting) range."

Two juniors expected to split time at the fifth spot are Bri Frazier and Karlie Scott. Both returning letterwinners, Frazier is 5 ft. 9 while Scott is 5 ft. 7.

"They're both real hustlers," commented Bonar. "They're good rebounders and hopefully they'll supply us with some 'garbage' points inside."

Senior Melissa Kaldor, who did not play as a junior, could also contribute significantly. She's a 5 ft. 7 guard.

Sophomore Deborah Yonyon, a 5 ft. 10 forward, also figures into the mix. An aggressive player, she missed last year with a broken finger.

Players expected to see primary duty with the junior varsity squad include 5 ft. 5 junior guard Dawn Steele; 5 ft. 8 sophomore forward Nicole Dentz; 5 ft. 9 sophomore forward Jenifer Thornton; and eight freshmen — 5 ft. guard Jaela Thoburn; 5 ft. 9 forward Erica Vavrek; 5 ft. 7 forward Amber Vavrek; 5 ft. 6 guard Kasie Muir; 5 ft. 6 guard Bobbi Petros; 5 ft. 5 guard Loric Althair; 5 ft. 7 forward Amber Bressinger; and 5 ft. 7 for-

ward Emily Taylor.

The Reds lost four players to graduation — Jahnel Ostrander, Lisa Tatis, Michele Materkoski and Cauxa Gonzales.

Bonar's staff includes Jim Miller, a former head coach at Buckeye Trail, with the reserve squad; Charlie Bohus at the eighth grade level; and Tracie Balsei as the seventh grade coach.

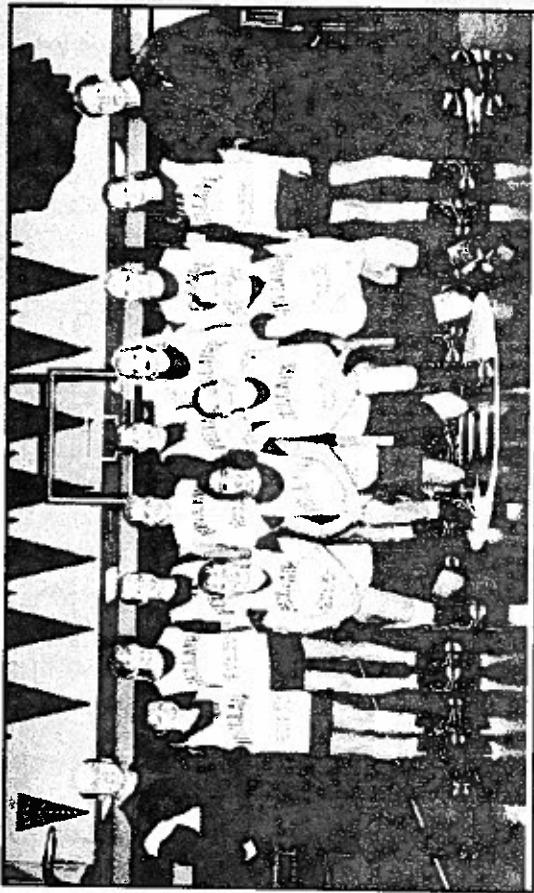
The Lady Reds opened the season Monday against rival Martins Ferry, but tonight's game with River and Saturday's game at St. Clairsville have been postponed. The St. C. game will be played Jan. 6.

Two games with Brooke replace a pair with Shadyside on the BHS slate.

Here's the 1995-96 Bellaire High girls' basketball schedule:

Nov. 27 — at Martins Ferry; Nov. 30 — at River (ppd); Dec. 7 — at Edison; Dec. 14 — Brooke; Dec. 16 — at Meadowbrook; Dec. 18 — River; Dec. 21 — Bridgeport; Dec. 27 — at Union Local; Jan. 4 — Buckeye Local; Jan. 6 — St. Clairsville; Jan. 8 — Martins Ferry; Jan. 11 — at Brooke; Jan. 15 — St. Clairsville; Jan. 20 — Cambridge; Jan. 25 — at Steubenville; Jan. 27 — at Bridgeport; Jan. 29 — Union Local; Feb. 1 — Steubenville; Feb. 5 — at Buckeye Local; Feb. 8 — at Buckeye Trail.

Bellaire Big Reds



T-L Photo/DAVE MCFARLAND
 BELLAIRE HIGH'S 1995-96 girls basketball squad. Front row, from left: Melissa Kaldor, Amy Magistro, Katie Bohus, Emily Fetters. Second row: head coach Gregg Bonar, Jaela Thoburn, Amber Vavrek, Dawn Steele, Karlie Scott, Amanda Whitecotton, Bri Farrier, Deborah Yonyon, Erica Vavrek, assistant coach Jim Miller.

Editor's Note:
 Due To The Football Playoffs,
 The Boys Team Photo Was Not
 Available To Be Taken. It Will Be
 Published In A Later Edition.

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 Buckeye Trail.

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Ammirante has most wins among local boys' coaches

By RICK DeLUCA
Times Leader Sports Writer

Gene Ammirante may have been forced to wait for his basketball squad to get to the gym after an elongated football season, but rival coaches certainly don't mind the wait. As long as Ammirante and his teams are on the floor, opposing coaches are finding it hard to catch up with the veteran Bellaire coach's career win mark.

Set to start his 15th season as the Big Reds court boss, Ammirante holds a 15-win lead over Monroe Central's Mark Huffman and is the owner of one of the best won-loss percentages in the Ohio Valley.

Ammirante's charges have had a lock on the OVAC Class 3-A title for much of the '90s. After guiding his cagers to a 17-4 record, the Big Reds' boss has boosted his career mark to a sparkling 221-91 plateau.

Huffman, who put some of the top small school teams on the floor while coaching at Skyvue High prior to the Monroe Central consolidation with Woodsfield, is the holder of a 206-140 career mark. His Seminoles posted a 16-5 mark last season.

Nearing the 200-win mark and third on the list of winningest active East Ohio coaches in The Times Leader coverage area is Bridgeport coach Rich Saffield. A former court coach at Union Local and Meadowbrook, Saffield owns a 195-248 career mark and could get his 200th win early this season. His Bulldogs were 7-15 last season.

Kim Clifford, who started at Cadiz before going to St. Clairsville five years ago, owns an impressive 139-84 career mark in his short time on the courts.

Lou Tolzda, back at Beallsville after a short stint at neighboring River, is the only other local coach with more than 100 career wins. Tolzda, in his 10th season overall, takes a 101-96 record into the 1995-96 cam-

paign.

Lakeland's Scott Doak has his sights set on the 100-win mark as he starts the season at 96-82 and Buckeye Trail's Kim Cunningham is within reach at 82-71.

The local coaching fraternity includes a pair of new coaches as Jeff Durbin, a long-time assistant to highly-successful former coaches, Henry Lasasz and Tom O'Connell, replaces the latter at Buckeye Local. Mark Romick, another coach filling his first head coaching post, is taking over at River for the departed Tolzda.

Two of the Ohio Valley's all-time winningest coaches return to continue their bid to surpass the late Richard Potts of River at the top of the all-time list. Bob Burton, getting closer to the 500-win mark, returns at Paden City, and Sam Andy, with over 400 wins, is back at Wheeling Park.

Local High School Boys' Coaches Records

Coach, school, years at present school (including 1995-96), team's '94-95 record, coach's career record:

Gene Ammirante, Bellaire (15) (17-4)	221	91
Mark Huffman, Monroe Central (16) (16-5)	206	140
Rich Saffield, Bridgeport (2) (7-15)	195	248
Kim Clifford, St. Clairsville (5) (13-10)	139	84
Lou Tolzda, Beallsville (10) (0-21)	101	96
Scott Doak, Lakeland (9) (10-11)	96	82
Kim Cunningham, Buckeye Trail (4) (19-6)	82	71
Mark Cook, Barnesville (8) (8-13)	69	82
Ray Smith, Linsly (6) (8-12)	62	39
Jeff Sabatino, Martins Ferry (4) (17-7)	49	41
Dan Angalich, St. John Central (5) (3-18)	42	45
John Kapolka, Shadyside (4) (17-6)	42	23
Tab LaFollette, Jewett-Scio (4) (2-19)	24	39
Kevin Lucas, Union Local (2) (5-16)	5	16
Don Madzia, Cadiz (2) (4-17)	4	17
Jeff Durbin, Buckeye Local (1) (3-18)	0	0
Mark Romick, River (1) (9-13)	0	0