

Marquette Catholic boys basketball reloads and prime for a season to remember

by John Hough, Sports Writer
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ALTON - It's not very often a basketball team returns most of their production from a year ago. Marquette Catholic boys basketball head coach Steve Medford hasn't ever had a luxury like this coming into his eighth season with the Explorers.

“We got a lot of guys back, we played pretty hard, but we have some things to work on obviously. We got some talent on this team, but it’s a matter of do we execute really well and do we pass up a good shot to make the great shot? If we do that we’re going to be a tough out,” Medford said. “I’m excited about this group.”

He has every reason to be.

The Explorers have arguably the best team on paper in the Riverbender area because they return six of their seven top scorers that produced a 26-4 season and finished in the Super Sectionals in 2016-2017.

“We have pretty much all of our scoring back, and on top of that, we got a couple of kids come back out that we think can help us a little bit. We’re going to be deep,” Medford said. “It’s just a matter of getting the kids to play hard every single day and every single practice.”

The likes of Sammy Green, Isaiah Ervin, Regan Snider, and Jake Hall return.

Green was one of the better point guards in the state for in Class 2 as he averaged 11.3 points, 5.4 assists, and 2.4 steals per game.

“Sammy’s an extremely good ball-handler and a really passer. He’s our floor-leader,” Medford said. “He’s the kid we expect a lot out of, and he gets us going on offense, and makes some plays that no other kid in high school can make. His ability to pass the ball is above and beyond anybody I’ve ever seen.”

Ervin averaged 10.7 points per game and shot 43 percent from the field as a sophomore last season.

“He’s really good. He’s grown up a lot,” Medford said. “Isaiah’s potential is amazing, and you’re going to see a lot of his name this year.”



Snider has been heavily involved since his freshman year, and he'll enter this season as a three-year starter. He averaged 9.8 points and 2.2 assists per game a year ago.

Hall, a six-foot, seven-inch center averaged 11.4 points and 6.7 rebounds per game and adds to the all-important height advantage that the Explorers will have once again.

The big four in Hall, Green, Ervin, and Snider each scored over 300 points last season.

Medford points out that juniors Nick Hemann and Chris Hartrich will be key contributors as well. Hemann, a six-foot, four-inch forward averaged 4.7 points and 3.4 rebounds per game while shooting 63 percent from the field. Hartrich, fresh off winning

a state soccer championship will look to replicate that in basketball. He scored 52 points coming off the bench but was fourth on the team in assists with 49.



The Explorers should have a big bench and look to go nine-to-ten deep.

In the preseason, the IHSA slated Marquette back into Class 3A, instead of Class 2A. Had the Explorers stayed in 2A then they would surely be an early season final four candidates, the team doesn't mind, and they welcome the challenges they'll face come playoff time.

"That doesn't bother us a bit. We were 3A one other time when Deion was a senior, and we won a regional. This group can do as much in 3A as they did in 2A last year, but it'll be difficult. Medford said. "There are a lot less errors you can do in 3A than you can in 2A, and you're going to have to make shots and have a little luck go your way."

