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Happy 10th Anniversary!

The 2012-2013 Cardinal girls got to the state tournament with talent and grit.

By Todd Weber

In 2013, the Earlham Cardinals earned a trip to the girls' state basketball tournament. It was the first time the Cards had ever made it to state in the 5-player era, and the second time overall. We're pleased to celebrate that team's accomplishment with this two-part story!

In late fall of 2012, Kristin Sheffield entered her first year as the Cardinal basketball coach—and it was her first head coaching job on the varsity level. A new coach usually means a lot of changes for everybody—coach and players alike—but that wasn't necessarily the case this time. Coach Sheffield had coached the Cardinal junior high basketball team for several years, and was the assistant softball coach, so most of the kids were familiar with her and her style.

"It was easier because I had coached most of the girls and they already knew what I was about and the way that I wanted to play basketball," she said. "They all seemed on board with it, so it wasn't that daunting."

she wanted was fast and aggressive—with pressing, in-your-face defense and an up-tempo offense that looked for quick, easy baskets when they were available.

"That's the way I played when I was a player and that's the way I think basketball should be played," said the coach. "We weren't going to get beat because we were getting out worked or out hustled. Play defense, with pressure on the ball all the time, and make things happen. Push the ball up the floor and score when you can."

That style isn't easy to play, and not every player even wants to play that way. Being in great shape was imperative, so that meant practices that were physically and mentally demanding, pushing players beyond their comfort zone. But most everyone on the team embraced the work and the philosophy.

"We were lucky to have a solid group of girls that bought into it," said Kristen Weber, who was a sophomore that season. "So it made it even more fun when everyone was willing to put in that extra effort and extra



The Cardinals celebrate their win in the regional final in 2013. (Front row, L-R) Hannah Murphy, Emily Anker, Bri Arnborg. (Back row) Chelsea Hildenbrand, Assistant Coach Dion Braet, Jazlin Sprague, Alexa Apodaca, Abbey Murphy, Addie Herman, Kristen Weber, Morgan Johnson, Sydney Waldron, Raegan Morris, Taelor Williamson, Jessica Igarashi, Head Coach Kristin Sheffield. (All photos by Shannon Payne.)

work." Addie Herman, a junior that season, added, "We thought, 'If we do this and we do what she says, we're going to get this outcome.' A lot of girls thought that way. It was always fun. Yeah, we're going to run at practice, but it's still fun. She

would run with us. Winning is fun."

The Cards had graduated four seniors from the previous season, along with 45% of the team's scoring. Leading scorer Morgan Johnson, a junior, was back in 2012-13. So was junior Abbey Murphy, who was the second leading scorer in 2011-12, but who did not go out her sophomore year. But most of the girls did not have a ton of varsity experience. Still, the team started to gel early. Part of that was due to some pointed messaging from Coach Sheffield to 'leave the drama at home.'

"I think that was something that I tried to emphasize," she said, "Stop the girl crap."

Herman laughed as she said, "I heard that multiple times, which was great." "I had no problem saying that," Coach Sheffield added. "The drama doesn't belong here. Knock it off, that's not what we're doing." It was important to me, and it still is, as a female, to be a good strong role model for other females."

Coach Sheffield didn't stress many typical, measurable goals—like winning so many games or getting to state—but she did set high expectations as to the level of basketball she wanted the team to play every night, focusing on specific on-the-court details.

"It was all about doing the little things well," said Weber.

The Cardinals' season debut was positive, although they lost, 41-39, to an excellent Clarke team. The Cardinals lead by 7 points after 1 quarter, but trailed by 13 after 3. The Cards outscored the Indians 13-2 in the 4th, falling just short. The Cards followed that with non-conference wins over Iowa Christian Academy and I-35.

The West Central Activities Conference was

rugged that season, with four particularly tough opponents: Panorama, Des Moines Christian, Woodward-Granger, and Van Meter. Ogden was decent, while Coon Rapids-Bayard, West Central Valley, Madrid, and Guthrie Center struggled. The regular season for the Cardinals was a roller coaster ride, beating the teams at the bottom of the standings, but losing to the top four teams. Two 1-point losses to Van Meter were especially frustrating. But the Cards hit their stride late in the season when they won 5 straight games to move their record to 12-8.

Their identity was set. They were an aggressive, physical team that opponents hated to play. They weren't deep—6 or 7 girls got most of the playing time—but they still had a good mix of skills.

"Everybody contributed in their own way," said Coach Sheffield. "Everybody had something that worked, and they worked well together. Whether it

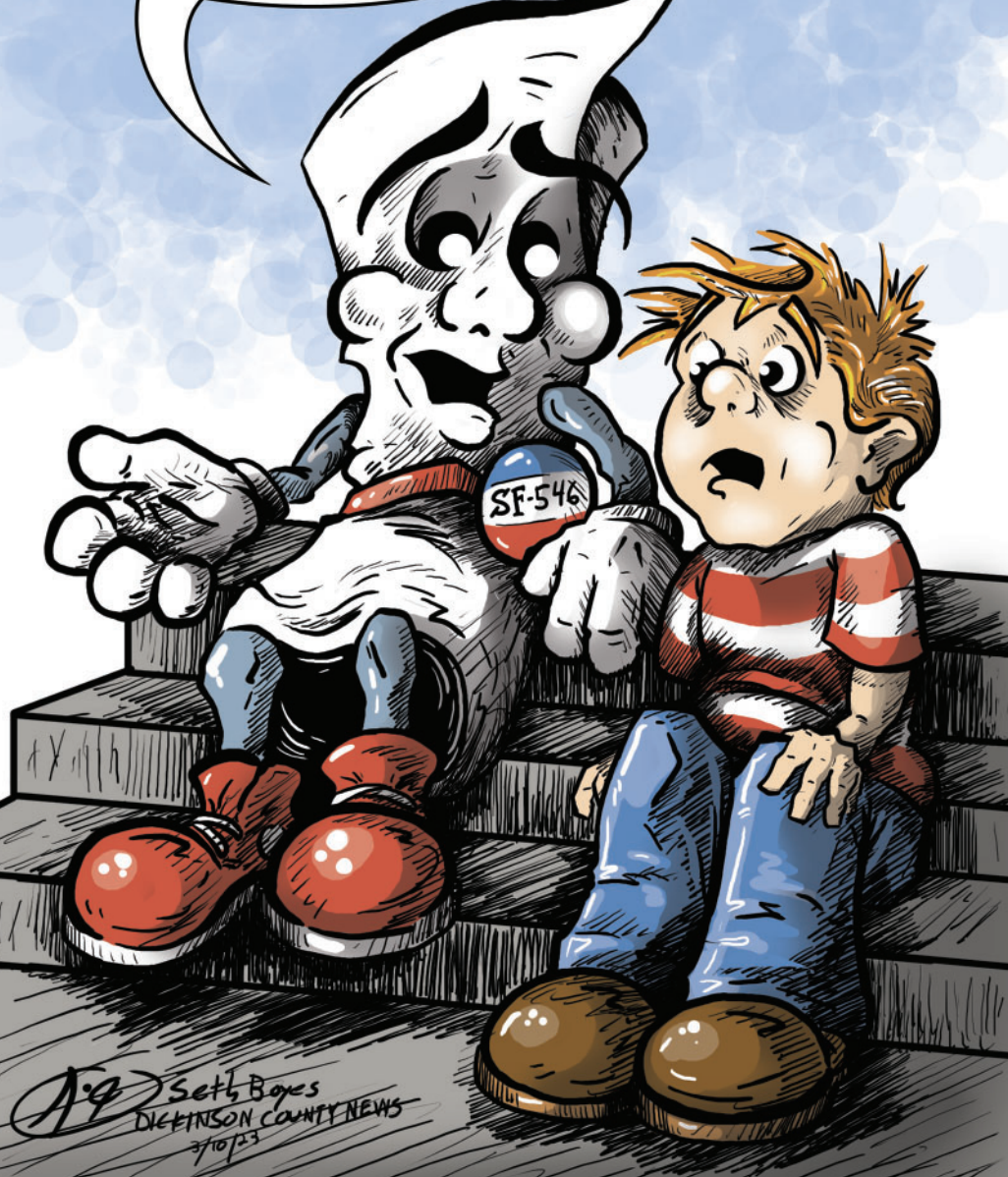
was good defense or being solid in the post. Or being a good contributor off the bench. It just worked. Everybody was clear on what their job was and when they went in, they knew what to do. We were pretty explicit on roles. Everybody knew what their strengths were."

The Cards featured two imposing post players, Johnson and Murphy, who were terrific defensively and could score from the inside and away from the basket. Johnson led the team in scoring (13.6 ppg). Murphy was a rebounding machine. She set the school season record that season with 259 boards, which was 10th in Class 1A. Weber handled point guard duties. She set school season records for assists (113) and 3-pointers made (44).

"She was very coachable," said Coach Sheffield about Weber. "She and I got along very well. So I could tell her, 'Do it this way,' or, 'Knock that crap off,'"

(Continued on Page 6.)

WELL, SURE I'M STILL JUST A BILL. ALL I'M SAYIN' IS, IF I BECOME A LAW YOU'LL HAVE A HARDER TIME SEEING IF ALL THAT OTHER STUFF I MENTIONED KEEPS HAPPENING.



Seth Boes
DICKINSON COUNTY NEWS
2/10/23



Kristen Weber gets the offense set.

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Cards Compete at Indoor Meet at ISU

Several members of the Earlham girls' and boys' track teams competed at the Iowa Track Coaches Indoor Championships on March 9 and 10 at Iowa State University.

The outdoor season officially begins this week—weather permitting—so the annual pre-season indoor meet against mostly 3A and 4A teams was a good way to work out some kinks and get the athletes' minds into competitive mode.

"I think it is valuable to get in whatever live experience you can at any point in the season," said Coach Caskey. "It is an absolute advantage to put yourself in competitive situations as many times as you can. It also gives coaches an opportunity to see where we

are at this point of the season, things we need to work on, and see what runners that are out for the first time can do."

Coach Peterson added, "I like going to this meet, as it is a good test to see where we are at this point and also introduce new athletes to high school competition. We took about half the team this year and for many of them, it was their first high school meet.

Three Cardinal boys got indoor PRs: Evan Maxwell in the shotput (43-03.25 for 5th place), Malakai Hale in the 400 meters (51.71 for 4th place) and Tyler Johnson in the 1600 (5:57.53)

The distance medley relay team of Brody Morrison, Walker Hale, Caleb Smith, Malakai, placed 2nd

in 3:42.91.

Other Cardinals that placed were Carson Maly (3200), Will Frommelt (60m hurdles), the 4x400 team of Malakai, Walker, Smith, and Frommelt), and Brandon Maxwell (shotput), and the boys' shuttle hurdle team of Frommelt, Jeret Petersen, Josh Winey, and Cason Amsden.

The highest finishing team for the Cardinal girls was the 4x800 team of Hannah Frank, Lily Dixon, Mackenzie Harger, and Olivia Spurling, who finished 8th. Amanda Smith was our highest individual finisher taking 17th in the high jump.

For many of the athletes, it was their first time competing at an indoor meet—and track and field inside definitely takes some

getting used to.

"It's always an adjustment running indoors," said Coach Peterson. "The distance kids find that the dry air impacts them quite a bit. The 300m track in Ames is much better than most indoor tracks, which are 200m, but still quite different. It also can be a challenge to find space to warm up and prepare correctly."

Coach Caskey concurred. "Curves are tighter, straightaways are shorter, and you can't see the other side of the track. I also think that it's an adjustment when it comes to the longer races, places you would usually kick are different, and there are more laps on an indoor track."

Girls' Basketball

Hard Working Cardinals Got to State in 2013



Bri Arnborg sets to shoot.

were gaining confidence and making strong scoring contributions. Against the Trailblazers, Hannah Murphy stepped up with 9 points on 4 of 6 shooting.

The Cards went on the road in round 2 and beat Martensdale-St. Marys, 55-46. Johnson paced the Cardinals again with 20 points. Abbey and Bri Arnborg scored 12 apiece.

The Cards were playing well and were just 2 wins away from a berth in the state tournament, but nobody was giving that much thought. Coach Sheffield wasn't putting 'state' out there as a goal—instead, just focusing on improving.

"Going into each game, me, personally, maybe I was just very naïve," said Weber. "It was just like, 'Okay it's just another game. This is the most important game we've played up to this point.' It was just, 'Keep the momentum rolling and win this game.' I never thought while it was going on, 'Oh, we might make it to state.'"

"I don't think anybody did," Herman added. "Since Coach never really mentioned that state was on the line, we never thought of it. We're like, 'We're just here to play another game. And play our game.'"

Part 2 coming next week!



Hannah Murphy looks to pass.

the girls on the team, others were not as receptive all the time.

"(My style) was 'this is what's going to work—this is how we're doing it,'" she said. "But there were plenty of moments in the season that not everyone was happy; if I was too direct, or about how much playing time they got. It wasn't a utopia. But that's kind of the way it works. That's life."

The Cardinals lost their last regular season game to Panora by 40 points. The Panthers did that to a lot of teams that year, so the Cards moved on quickly and set their sights on the post-season. When the district brackets came out, the strength of schedule of the teams in the Cardinals' path stood out. The Cards had certainly taken their lumps playing against good 2A teams all season, but those games had them battle tested for the 1A field that awaited.

"When we got our tournament draws, I looked at our bracket and thought, 'Oh my gosh. Nobody plays the schedule we play,'" said Coach Sheffield.

That's not to say the teams in the bracket weren't tough—the Cards had plenty of roadblocks in the way.

Earlham dispatched Iowa Christian Academy, 49-24, in the first round at home. Johnson led the way with 18 points and Abbey Murphy had 10 points and 12 rebounds. Weber had 8 assists and 6 steals. Throughout most of the season, Johnson, Abbey, and Weber had paced the Cardinal offense, but once the playoffs started, other Cardinals

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The following Earlham School staff members were honored by Partners in Education as February staff members of the month: (from the top) Paige Risetter (Elementary Special Ed), Mackenzie Gentry (Kindergarten), Jeni Flickinger (Elementary Special Ed) and Jason Hammen (Elementary Principal)



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10th Anniversary!

'12-'13 Cardinal Girls Battle Their Way to State (Part 2)



(L-R) Kristen Weber, Bri Arnburg, and Abbey Murphy meet the media after the Cardinals' round 1 game at state in 2013. (Photos by Shannon Payne.)

By Todd Weber

After the Cards beat Martensdale-St. Marys in the 2nd round of the playoffs, they faced Adair-Casey on the road. The Bombers, the number 1 seed in the region, had only lost 1 game and had been ranked in the top 10 all season. They had a well-balanced team and were led by center London Vais, who averaged 17.3 ppg. The small gym was packed—and the fans from both sides were filling the old building with noise. At one point, the Cardinals moved a timeout to the middle of the floor because the fans seated close behind them were so loud.

The Cards were poised during the fast, aggressive, physical game in the intense environment, but trailed, 25-22, at half time. The Bombers extended the lead to 7 points early in the 3rd, but the Cards scored the next 12 points. Raegan Morris made 2 free throws, Hannah hit a 3-pointer, Abbey made a free throw and two field goals in the paint, and Herman scored on a stickback. After an A-C free throw, Weber made a 3, followed by an elbow jumper by Hannah, and the Cards had their biggest lead of the night, 39-30, with under 2 minutes to go in the 3rd. The Bombers answered with 6 straight points, and the Cardinal lead was down to 3 at

the final break.

The game seesawed in the 4th quarter. In the first 6 minutes, there were 5 lead changes and 3 ties. After a Bomber 3-pointer, Herman answered with a 16-foot jumper to give the Cards the lead, 44-43, at 3:45. The Bombers' a made free throw, Vais made a layup, and A-C regained the lead. With just over 2 minutes to go, Weber fed Johnson on an inbound play for a layup to tie the score at 46. Vais scored again to give the Bombers another lead. At 1:20, Weber found Abbey open in the paint. She made a layup, was fouled, and made the and-one free throw to put the Cards on top, 49-48. After a missed Bomber free throw, the Cards raced up court and Weber passed to Herman for an uncontested layup, and the Cards led, 51-48, with 40 seconds to go. Herman got a steal in the front court, was fouled, and made 1 free throw to extend the lead to 4 with 28 seconds left. After a Bomber miss, Hannah sealed the game with a short jumper.

Abbey led all scorers with 21 points. Johnson had 11 and Herman had 9 points on 4 of 6 shooting. Weber had 8 assists and 7 steals.

If the Cards hadn't been thinking about going to state up to that point, perhaps they were now. They were just one win away, with

Twin Cedars (21-3) up next.

"I knew nothing about them," said Coach Sheffield. "Brian Becker went to scout for us. I watched the film that night when he got back—it was like 11:30 at night. I thought, 'We are going to win this ball game. These guys are totally beatable.' I didn't say that to the team, though."

The team figured it out soon enough. After nearly 6 minutes of play, the Cards led the Sabers, 17-2. In the run, Johnson scored twice, Abbey once, Herman once, and the Cards got 3-pointers from Hannah, Weber, and Arnburg. Twin Cedars made a few baskets to steady the ship a little, and the Cards led after 1 quarter, 21-12.

The Cards cooled off a bit in the 2nd, but did a great job on the offensive boards to give themselves second and third chances. After Weber made a 3, Johnson scored the next 6 points for the Cards. Herman made a short jumper, Hannah made a late 3, and the Cards led at halftime, 37-29.

The Cards led, 43-36, near the 6-minute mark of the 3rd, then closed out the quarter with a 17-4 run. Herman connected on a jumper, Weber and Hannah made fast-break layups, Abbey made 2 free throws, Weber sank a 3, and the Cards led, 54-38. Twin Cedars had battled hard, but were getting worn out from the constant defensive pressure. After Emily Anker made 2 free throws, Herman stole the ball in the front court, dribbled coast to coast, and made a Jordan-esque finger roll layup, elevating from near the foul line. Weber knocked down a jumper late in the quarter, and the Cards led, 60-40.

Twin Cedars never gave up and had some offensive success in the 4th, but the Cards always had an answer, and they outscored the Sabers in the quarter, 19-15, and won, 79-55.

Late in the game, it finally

dawned on the girls what they had accomplished.

"We were ahead, and somebody was at the free throw line," said Weber. "And Addie and I were back near half court. We looked at each other, and we're like, 'We're going to state!' And we just laughed."

The Cards had 5 scorers in double figures, led by Johnson with 18. Weber had 17, Abbey, 13, and Hannah and Herman had 12 apiece. Weber dished out 11 assists, which set a school single-game record.

The school and the students embraced the team and the week before state was filled with decorations, a pep rally, and plenty of general hoopla. The team enjoyed the attention.

"It was cool because a lot of the school kids and a lot of people who weren't usually involved in the basketball season got into it," said Weber. "That's how it goes. When you start winning, people get excited. It's cool when everybody's cheering for you. Who doesn't like that? There was a lot of adrenaline."

The Cardinals entered the state tournament as the #8 seed, which meant they would take on #1 Central Lyon in the first round. The Lions had only lost twice that season, both times to MOC-Floyd Valley, who would end up losing in the 3A state semifinals that season. Central Lyon was experienced and athletic and had three players that averaged in double figures.

The Cardinals were not intimidated. They came out aggressive and fearless and grabbed the early lead. Arnburg made a 3-pointer, then a free throw. Abbey and Johnson scored in the lane, then Weber made a steal in the backcourt, was fouled while she made the layup, and added the and-one free throw. The Cards led, 11-6. Herman made a tough jumper in the lane, Johnson scored from inside two more times, and the Cards led, 17-7, near the 3-minute mark. But the Lions ended the quarter on a 10-2 run, and the Cards' lead was down to 2 points, 19-17, after 1.

Central Lyon picked up their defensive intensity in the 2nd, got their running game going, and outscored the Cards, 20-5, in the quarter. The Cards kept battling, but fell further behind in the 3rd, and trailed, 56-35, at the final break. Everybody on the roster eventually got to play in the 4th quarter.

Abbey finished with a double-double, with 10 points and 13 rebounds. Johnson added 9 points and Weber had 8.

There were plenty of tears after the game, but certainly no regrets. This Cardinal team had achieved more than anyone—including themselves, perhaps—thought they could.

"It was the perfect storm," said Coach Sheffield. "We had a great group of girls come in and they bought into playing basketball just to play basketball."

Many of the players also bought in playing mul-



Abbey Murphy drives to the hoop against Central Lyon.

tipple sports, having already been to state tournaments in softball, cross country, and track. Getting to the promised land in basketball, also, felt natural.

"Many of us had a similar mind set," said Weber. "How we got that lucky, I have no idea. We had a group of girls that were so dedicated in that way. We knew the expectations. All the coaches that we had had those expectations. We had no option to be soft. Our coaches didn't really allow it. Having high expectations takes a lot more work. As a coach, you have to put in a lot more work yourself. Our coaches always did it, and luckily, we had a group of

girls that were willing to do that."

Ten years after that momentous basketball season, the girls on the team have moved onto the 'real world,' complete with careers and raising families. Coaches and educators are often judged by statistics like win/loss records and test scores and graduation rates. Upon reflection of that Cardinal team, Coach Sheffield is proud of what they accomplished, but more importantly, is pleased about what they have become.

"They are all doing good things. They are all successful humans," she said. "That's why I coach and why I'm in education."



Morgan Johnson dribbles away from traffic at state.



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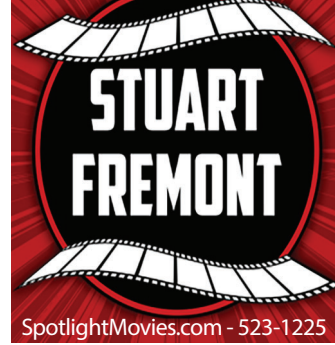
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