

2001-2002 Jennies' Basketball Preview

Head Coach Scott Ballard has a solid nucleus of returning players, including four starters, and an exciting group of newcomers he feels will have the Jennies in the hunt for the MIAA title and NCAA postseason duty in 2001-2002. Not that the Jennies haven't been there before, but Ballard feels last season's 19-9 record and fourth-place MIAA finish came up short of the team's expectations.

Coaches love having players in their program for four years and Ballard has four of them who have been playing for him since they were freshmen. Guard **Lori Nichols (5-7)** has been the Jennies' scoring leader each of the last two seasons. She averaged 14.9 points and 3.6 assists last season and earned second-team all-MIAA recognition. Center **Katie Vaske (6-2)** has been the Jennies' top rebounder each of the past two seasons, averaging 6.3 per game last season. Guard **Molly Knobbe (5-5)** and center **Nicole Cassmeyer (6-1)** have given the Jennies quality minutes off the bench the past three seasons. Last year Knobbe averaged 7.8 points and 3.1 assists, while Cassmeyer averaged 7.6 points and 5.4 rebounds. Knobbe and Cassmeyer also have 4.00 grade point averages entering their senior seasons.

The Jennies' other two returning starters made strong impressions in their first season a year ago. Guard **Jena Shackelford (5-9)** was the MIAA's freshman of the year. She averaged 8.2 points and was second on the team with 51 three-pointers. Forward **Ana Benitez (5-10)** gives the Jennies a solid defensive presence. She started 18 games and averaged 3.4 rebounds.

Ballard is excited about the contributions he expects some of his newcomers to make this season. Guard **Isha Kelley (5-9)**, a transfer from Nebraska, will step in at point guard. She brings outstanding quickness and two seasons of experience at one of the nation's top Division I programs. Forward **Bethany Orendorff (6-0)** was one of the best players in the state of Missouri last season, averaging 23.7 points and 7.8 rebounds for 3A state runner-up Doniphan. Guard **Kinsey Lehe (5-8)** was a two-time conference MVP at Frontier High School in Indiana.

For additional depth, Ballard can call on returners **Michelle LaBoube (5-8)** and **Stacy Butterworth (5-10)**, who played in 22 and 24 games, respectively, last season, and **Robin Miller (5-8)**, who was redshirted last season. The Jennies' other newcomers are guard **Jill Oldfield (5-6)**, a freshman from Adrian, and forward **Whitney LaRue (5-10)**, a sophomore from Mineral Area Community College.