

Redcoats Girls Basketball Poised for Championship Run

Girl's basketball season preview: 2022

By: Cyrus Bunyan, Max Kramer, Aidan Lyle
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In 2021, the Governor Simcoe girl's varsity basketball team had a season to remember. They fought hard every game, put countless hours into practice, and eventually all their hard work paid off in a league championship victory. So on Tuesday, Sep 13, it was exciting to see the zone champs practicing hard as they geared up for the 2022 campaign. When asked how her team was feeling ahead of a new season, Coach Jill Stiefelmeyer said they all have big aspirations.

"I think they're a bit nervous, but they're also expecting big things after the success we had last year. Though we also have a young team, most of our kids are grade 10s and 11s, with one veteran, Jamie Addy, who's in grade 12." This year's team may be young, but with a lot of them returning after last year's league championship, they are not untested. Though to them, it was more than just 1 victory. Most teams would be content to have reached the top of their league and relax, but not this year's team. To them it was a building block, one step in laying the foundation for an even more dominant program.



Guard Jamie Addy, lays in the ball during practice.

"We've got 4 coming back in grade 10, so they've gotten some really good experience and that will definitely add a lot, really help us out. Plus we've got Jamie Addy, who's been playing high level basketball for basically her whole life." The impact of having veteran players on the court is seen in all levels of basketball. But it's even more impactful when they bring elite play to the court as well as an exceptional mindset off it. Senior guard, Jamie Addy, is a player who does both at a very high level.

"She's our main girl on the court, she brings up the ball, she shoots the ball, she hustles back after the ball and she brings leadership on and off the court. She's great with the young kids who lack some experience, the girls absolutely love her, and we can always count on her because she's really committed to the program." The team will get its first chance to really kick into second gear, when they play in the inaugural tournament of the season, September 30th.

"We're going out to Orillia. We've gone there several years, but with covid and not being able to travel, it's just made things more difficult."

This trip comes at a perfect time for the girls. The league is deeper now, and that means they'll need to play great team basketball, and be perfectly in sync if they want to repeat last season's success.

"We finished off really strong. We finished first in our league last year, but this year Sir Winston has dropped down to our division and they're tough. Though we definitely have what it takes to win this season."



Guard Keira Teske, lays up the ball during practice.

Another valuable component to the team, up and coming sophomore (grade 10) guard Keira Teske shared her coach's opinion.

"I think we're capable of going to SOSSA (Southern Ontario Secondary School Association championships) again this year, I think we're going to come together as a really good team. We've got a couple new players, but I think we're gonna do good." Every single year the Redcoats girls basketball program sacrifices a lot of time and energy to commit to winning, and more importantly to helping the girls grow. No one is more aware of this than Teske herself, who spoke about the basketball setup glowingly:

"I think it's great, because the coaches are so supportive and it's just a good team overall" She was also quick to add, just how much being on the team with her friend and mentor Addy has helped her as well.

"She's taught me to be a leader just like her, and she definitely pushes me to do my best at practices and to help the team improve."

Redcoats basketball truly values the significance of having a leader like Addy. Though what makes her such a special basketball player, is that she cherishes the opportunity to guide her teammates.

"I love teaching everyone, because it makes me feel connected to them. When I see the team bonding and everyone's having a good time it just makes me feel really happy."

So it was no surprise that when asked how her teammates could improve, she was already full of ideas. "Our team can always improve on having energy and wanting to win basketball games. In the end, we want to just push ourselves to the limit and see what we can do. My goal is to at least go to SOSSA."

Addy knows just how much tougher it will be to achieve that goal this season, with a familiar foe the Sir Winston Churchill Bulldogs, standing in their way, however, it is an added challenge that Addy and the Redcoats won't back down from.

"I'm excited to play Sir Winston. 3 people from my travel team play there, so it's really good competition."

Yes, the league is deeper this year. But despite the challenge playing a new, stronger team creates, fear should not be on the minds of any supporters. This team has been built on their ability to push themselves past their limits and just look at it objectively, they've gotten stronger since last year. New, young, exciting talent has joined the ranks. Rising star Keira Teske has another year of experience under her belt and other key pieces have grown more accustomed to the Redcoats system. Not to mention, senior guard and leader Addy is doubly motivated to have her last swansong end in a championship. Big things are happening in "Our House" this year, with the only limits to what these girls can achieve, being the ones they put on themselves.



Redcoats March Past Spartans in Season Opener

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The crowd grew quiet Friday, Sept. 23, at Westlane Secondary, as the Redcoat boys varsity football team clinched a resounding 30-0 victory in their first game of the season. The Redcoats started hot right out of the gate, with an early sack on the Westlane quarterback to force a third down. They followed that up with a solid kick return, then a nice catch on the outside by Rahiem Mclean for a first down. Soon after, Carter Smalls was in the end zone for his first touchdown of the season. The extra point attempt was blocked by the Spartans. Then, timely tackles from Amari Watson and the D-line, as well as a fumble recovery by Mclean meant that Simcoe's defense held firm. They had an early 6-0 lead heading into the second quarter. It was a back and forth 2nd, with the Spartans making some costly mistakes down the stretch. A bad offside by Westlane left Simcoe in pole position to take a larger lead into halftime, Smalls made full use of the opportunity. He took it in the endzone for the second time on the night, doubling Simcoe's advantage. The Redcoats then put their foot down on the Spartans, by attempting a two point conversion at a somewhat risky point in the game. Yet, the risk only reaped reward, with Watson converting for his first score of the season. Afterwards, some more great defense from the Redcoats, and mistake riddled play from Westlane, meant the score was 14-0 at half time. Halftime served little to no purpose for the team from Niagara Falls, as their lackluster defense on the day stood no chance against Simcoe's dynamic, multidimensional, offensive schemes. Under two minutes into the 2nd quarter, Sam Wilson was in the endzone as he continued his big game. Asked about what it meant to him to score his first touchdown of the season, Wilson was ecstatic:

"It brought a lot of joy and excitement, but at the end of the day I was just focused on the rest of the game." And focus on the game Simcoe did, as shortly after, Kian Finn converted on their second two point attempt of the game to bring the score to 22-0. Although, shortly after there was a bleak spot, as Codari King went down with an untimely injury midway through the 3rd. King, a very talented player and upstanding student within the school, is on everyone's mind. Wilson specifically, was very distraught, but wishes his teammate a successful recovery

"It was very hard, especially seeing one of our first year players get injured. With the ambulance coming and it being his first ever game of Football, it just wasn't easy. We all just hope he gets better soon"

For the first time all day the crowd's spirits were high, as right after the injury break, the Spartans intercepted quarterback Noah Budgell's throw and made their way upfield. For what felt like the first time in ages, there was life in the home crowd. This was snuffed out however, as Simcoes defense held firm once more. With spirits renewed after losing King, the Redcoats held their lead into the fourth. Which is when we got a taste of just how next level their defense is. They shutdown the Spartans thoroughly, with Marshall Sumbler getting an interception for Simcoe at the 7:04 mark. This was when things started to get tense. A couple rough hits after the whistle from a defeated Westlane team, provided the opportunity for Simcoe's player's to lose their heads. Though that was not to be, as Simcoe's squad maintained their professionalism as well as held their advantage. Soon after, with under 3 minutes on the clock, Sam Wilson returned an interception for a touchdown to put the icing on the cake and top off Simcoe's rugged defensive performance. Wilson, a key cog in their plans on the offensive and defensive side of the ball talked about what the opportunity means to him.

"I just love playing for this team, no matter what has happened I've always loved playing here. The environment, the energy, even just seeing the competitive spirit from people on the bench is really fun. It's a special place"

It's never a good idea to get too excited after one game, but it was clear on the night just what your Redcoats are capable of achieving. Questions were asked about the state of the O-line and D-line due to the departure of veteran players, But players like Joey Moore, Bobby Murr and Matthew Moxon answered those questions definitively.

Girls Field Hockey Season Preview: 2022

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One of Governor's Simcoe's more under the radar sports kicked off recently, with Girls varsity field hockey making its return. There has been a lot of change in the girls field hockey program over the past 10 months. This leaves fans with a lot of questions over the state of the team. However, veteran player Gillian Archer believes that the focus shouldn't be so heavily on the win column, but instead on the development of the players coming up through the system. "This season, I just want everyone to form some relationships and gain friends on and off the field. It's really nice to be able to do extracurriculars again after COVID."

Archer believes that success on the field can only be achieved through trust and a strong foundation off the field. A foundation that the team will achieve through deeper understanding of the game.

"Field hockey isn't a widely popular sport yet, so picking up on the rules might be a challenge. Our knowledge certainly isn't extensive but we're working as a team and that's all that matters."

Archer was full of praise for new Head coach Megan Angelone, who throughout all the turmoil, has stepped forward as a stabilizing figure for the team.



Gillian Archer (28), marks her opponent during Monday's game against Laura Secord Secondary School

"It is a change for sure, but Coach Angelone is great. A lot of the girls on the team are new and we're working as a team to build strong relationships."

Archer is in her final season as a Redcoat, which will be a massive loss for the program next year. It will be up to new younger players to step up and take the mantle of leader, if the program is to achieve the same success it has in the past. This season serves as a step in a new direction for Redcoats girls field hockey. A new coach and fresh recruits may lead to a steep learning curve. Though tearing it all down and starting from square one may be just what the team needs. With it being the most plausible solution to overcoming their biggest hurdle from the past, Eden High School, and making it back to SOSSA. Archer knows the challenge Eden pose, but her and the team more than willing to compete against anyone.

"They have a very large program just due to numbers, and their coaches have a lot of experience. It'll be a tough battle, but we're up for the challenge."

The field hockey program means a lot to Governor Simcoe, throughout the years it has provided prosperity on and off the field. So it's reassuring to see that the team has big plans for the future. With the program in the safe hands of coach Angelone and Archer, it will be exciting to see just what they can do this season.

Scores:

**Redcoats 30, Westlane 0,
(Boys varsity football)**

**Redcoats 35, West Niagara
51, (Girls varsity basketball)**

**Redcoats 1 (17,25,10)
T.S.S. 2 (25,23,15)
(Junior boys volleyball)**

