

## Moses excited about Year 2 with Prairie

Written by Jim Ecker

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Every successful team needs a good quarterback. Even basketball teams.

That's why James Moses thinks his second year as the boys basketball coach at Cedar Rapids Prairie will be better than his first. He has a quarterback on the floor now with Jace Hanna, who was also the quarterback for the Prairie football team this year.

Moses likes Hanna's decision-making on the court.

"If think if we had him last year we would have won a lot of those close games that we lost," Moses said. "I think people are going to be surprised at what we can do from top to bottom."

The Hawks finished 3-19 last season under Moses, a former University of Iowa basketball star who accepted the challenge of rebuilding the program at Prairie.

"I'm just looking forward to improving, just trying to build on the foundation and just continuing to grow," he said.

Moses put Hanna, Jacob Aune, Matt MacDougall, Brooks Kehoe and Tom Eilers in the starting lineup when Prairie played in the Jefferson Jamboree last Monday, but he also went deep into his bench for Demetrius Harper, Kentrel Smith, Ty Mouglin, Bryce Meeker and Garrett Rasmussen.

Moses plans to use lots of players, just like the Iowa Hawkeyes did when he played for Tom Davis 20 years ago when he was the team's co-Most Valuable Player.

"We want to keep them fresh," he said. "If we play the style that we're looking to play, which is

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up-tempo and up-and-down, there's going to be some opportunities for the guys that we have on the club.

"As I told them, it (the starting lineup) is not etched in stone. There's opportunity for our players. That's probably the beauty of us having better depth this season."

MacDougall and Aune led Prairie in scoring last season at 10.6 and 8.6 points, respectively. They give the Hawks an experienced 1-2 punch in the boxscore. The next four leading scorers last year were graduated seniors Brandon Lafferty, Jerome Frazier, Matt Jantzen and Chaz Boots.

Kehoe and Eilers played regularly last season, while Rasmussen and Mouglin also gained experience with the varsity. Harper, Smith and Meeker are newcomers to the varsity who could make a difference.

"I think we have better 'basketball IQ' players for our team," Moses said. "Kids that have played a lot more basketball, and it shows."

Harper has already established himself as a top sprinter and football player at Prairie. Smith is a 6-foot-1 sophomore with good quickness, and Meeker is a 6-5 freshman who could help the Hawks inside.

Smith gave Prairie a spark off the bench in the Jefferson Jamboree and can play all three guard positions.

"He's one of those players who's capable of giving us some great minutes," Moses said. "He can play multiple positions for us. If he continues to keep working the way he's been working, people are going to get a chance to see a lot of him."

Meeker gives the Hawks a big guy who might be able to bang with some of the bigger players in

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the Mississippi Valley Conference.

"Bryce has come a long way," Moses said. "He's still growing, he's still improving. The beautiful thing about Bryce is his attitude, and that's what we want to continue to build on. He's a nice big body in the post. We're looking to reward him."

Prairie hosts Davenport West in the season opener Monday night.