

Five boys basketball players to watch this season

Two weeks ago, the High Five looked at five area girls basketball players to watch this season.

In this edition, we're focusing on the boys.

Palatine and Aurora Christian were the lone area teams to reach the state finals last season in Champaign. But with decent draws and some really solid players returning, the area might be better represented in March.

Let's jump right in and look at five area boys basketball players to watch.

5. A.J. Demirov, Crystal Lake South

A four-year starter for the Gators, Demirov last season averaged more than 21 points. But his all-around game — he also averaged 5 assists and 3 steals — is what makes the 6-foot senior point guard so intriguing.

He's picked up where he left off as a consistent 20-point scorer, and he's becoming a more consistent double-double threat with his passing talents.

Still uncommitted, Demirov is going to make a college very happy when he decides where to play at the next level.

4. Tyreek Coleman, Waubonsie Valley

Committed to Illinois State, Coleman is leading a resurgence for the Warriors, who last season won their first regional title since 2019.

Coleman, at 6-2, adds some size to the point guard position. Lightning quick with brilliant vision, he impacts the game in so many ways.

The senior averaged a modest 15 points last season. While that number likely will jump a bit this season, keep an eye on his rebounds, assists and steals.

With talented wing Moses Wilson, Waubonsie Valley is eyeing its first trip to the state tournament in March.

3. Daniel Pauliukonis, Benet

Once the Redwings get their legs under them, they'll be able to play with anyone.

And because of the team depth — with key returners such as Jayden



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Wright, Blake Fagbemi and 7-footer Colin Stack — the stats for Pauliukonis probably won't be spectacular.

But don't let the stats sway your opinion. The 6-9 senior is the real deal.

Pauliukonis received a slew of scholarship offers before signing with Southern Illinois University. He can knock down 3s, obviously shooting over defenders, while also holding his own in the post despite a slender frame.

2. Ian Miletic, Rolling Meadows

The 6-7 senior had offers from Illinois, DePaul, Loyola and others but signed last month with Marquette.

Miletic, a four-year varsity player, was a consistent 20-and-10 performer last season as his game blossomed. A better outside shot and a stronger ability to get to the basket highlight his improvement.

Leading a core of five senior returners, Miletic could be the spark that sends the Mustangs beyond the sectional round for the first time since 1989.

1. Jaxson Davis, Warren

Even though he's still just a sophomore, it seems like we've been talking about Davis for years.

The 6-1 guard averaged nearly 20 points and more than 5 assists as a freshman. He was a first-team IBCA All-State honoree and the Daily Herald Lake County All-Area Captain.

Warren already has lost games to Waukegan and Kenwood, but a tough schedule should pay off in March with Davis leading the charge. The Blue Devils aim to battle for the program's first state title.

Davis' offers include Illinois, DePaul, Arizona State, Indiana and Northwestern.