

# Grizz girls have high hopes this year

Early team success  
fuels Copper Hills  
toward its goals

By Bruce Smith  
Matchup

We are three years into Ben Morley's career as a girls basketball coach, and he knows the program is ripe for a change.

"I'm hoping we will be more competitive," he said. "We haven't quite learned to win yet ... that's the next step. But I'm expecting us to be more competitive than any team here in years."

This isn't the same Grizzly basketball team that struggled to score 30 points a game back in the 2007-08 season. The groundwork has been paved, and the talent is there, he said. The team's goals include making the 5A state tournament for the first time in eight years, and to be the best defensive squad in the region.

"We've had to scratch and claw to get to where we are," Morley said. "If we can just keep everybody committed, we'll have good things to come."

Success often results in commitment and, by midseason, the Grizzlies had accomplished that. Morley said Copper Hills is led by a strong group of seniors, led by Kehana Grayer, Desirae Cruse and Halley Dornseif. Those players have already come a long way,



**Kehana Grayer** celebrates being introduced during a game last season. Grayer is a three-year starter and is expected to play a key role in the team's success this year. Copper Hills to a four-game win streak at one point.

and it has resulted in a complete turnaround of the program that has already won more games than the last three seasons combined.

There is also a combination of talent among the underclassmen. Sophomore Savannah Sandberg came on strong early and led a balanced-scoring effort by midseason. Sarah Midgley, Rebecca Lefler and Yarima Gutierrez also showed potential, and helped

To put that into perspective, it had been 10 years since the Grizzlies had won that many consecutive games.

"Our seniors need to play well and they need to be our leaders for us to have success," Morley said. "We have a group of hard-working

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players to compliment them.”

Those players also have interesting backgrounds.

Grayer is a three-year starter, for example, but Cruse, a 5-foot-11 post, only is showing her basketball talent due to a little bit of luck.

“Cruse is our center and she’s a very athletic girl,” Morley noted. “She’s still learning the game because she’s only been playing a couple of years. She was a manager on the football team. When I first saw her, I could tell she was athletic and asked her to give basketball a try.

“She fell in love with the game and it has been amazing to see her progress. She has become one of the best girls in the region in two years.”

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## 2011-12 schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Opponent</u>
Nov. 22	TAYLORSVILLE	Jan. 10	at Cottonwood*
Dec. 2	at Hillcrest	Jan. 12	at Alta*
Dec. 6	MURRAY	Jan. 17	WEST JORDAN*
Dec. 7	at Grantsville	Jan. 20	at Brighton*
Dec. 9	VIEWMONT	Jan. 24	JORDAN*
Dec. 14	FREMONT	Jan. 26	COTTONWOOD*
Dec. 16	at Granger	Feb. 2	ALTA*
Dec. 20	DAVIS	Feb. 7	at West Jordan*
Dec. 22	at Juan Diego	Feb. 9	BRIGHTON*
Dec. 30	at West	Feb. 14	at Jordan*
Jan. 3	LAYTON		

\* - Region 3 games. Home games in CAPS

Senior **Desirae Cruse** is one of several players who have already shown improvement this season.

“If we can just keep everybody committed, we’ll have good things to come.”

- **Coach Ben Morley**

She’s not alone. Other players have shown growth and, as the Grizzlies continue to win games, Morley believes their confidence will grow, too.

In order for Copper Hills to reach its main goal – the postseason – it must finish among the top four teams in Region 3. The Grizzlies get to avoid powerhouses Bingham, Riverton and Taylorsville, but now must battle defending state champ Alta, as well as Brighton, Cottonwood, Jordan and West Jordan.

“Overall, we come out ‘sixes,’” Morley said. “It’s 5A basketball. Any region you’re going to be in there’s going to be good teams.”

Except now, Copper Hills may be mentioned among them. Time will tell.

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