

## **Basketball: Liberty boys, girls chasing Fort Worth Christian in TAPPS 1-5A**

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By Ethan B. Szatmary / Staff Writer

The Liberty Christian boys and girls have something in common as they start the short TAPPS 1-5A run -- they're both chasing Fort Worth Christian.

Even though the rest of the four-team district has played at least one game, Liberty gets underway today against Midland Christian, with the Lady Warriors (17-8) taking on the Lady Mustangs (14-8) at 1 p.m., and the Warriors (17-6) following against the Mustangs (5-11) at 2:30 p.m.

The Fort Worth Christian Lady Cardinals (20-7, 1-0) have won three of the last four state championships, finishing runner-up in their "off year" in 2002-03, and are currently ranked No. 2 among large private schools by the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches. Only 4A Lubbock Trinity Christian owns a higher ranking.

The Lady Cardinals feature junior post Rachel Rentschler, who averaged 21.9 points and 6.9 rebounds last year and has already committed to the University of Texas, as well as a strong core of players including senior guard Kat Kundmueller, who has signed with Abilene Christian and 6-1 Latvian foreign import post Dita Liepkalne, who's headed for the University of Hawaii next year.

Still, Liberty head coach Renee Roberts says that the Lady Warriors shouldn't be counted out even if the Lady Cards appear to have the deck stacked in their favor.

"I think of course Fort Worth Christian is the team to beat -- they've won state three out of the last four years," Roberts said. "But, we do have a chance. The score is 0-0 at the beginning of district. Mentally, if we go in and think we can win, then we can. Especially in our gym."

Sophomore post Kristin Goodspeed and junior guard Lauren Jackson lead the Lady Warriors. Goodspeed is turning in 13.9 points per game, while Jackson is right behind her with 13.7. The Lady Warriors have a deep nine-girl rotation backing them up.

The Fort Worth Christian boys, ranked No. 9 by the TABC, aren't nearly as dominant as their female counterparts, but the Cardinals (18-7, 1-0) are the defending district champions. The Cards have an established big man in 6-8 senior Michael Goff, a long athletic wing in 6-5 Josh Dennis and a quick point guard in 5-10 senior Eric Tisby.

"I think at this point in time, Fort Worth Christian has to be considered the favorite," Liberty head coach Richard Scofield said. "Their ranking is up there in top 10."

The Warriors have flown under the ranking radar, but they've quietly put together their strongest team in years. Senior forward Michael Schilleci leads the way with 21 points and 7.5 rebounds per game, but four other Liberty boys average between nine and 10 points.

Senior guard Davis Page averages 10 points per game, senior small forward Tyler Redman scores 9.1 per game, and junior and sophomore guards Walt Shaffer and Wil Scofield are right behind with 9 per game. Those five make up Liberty's starters with 6-8 post Andrew Myles rotating in for starts against bigger squads.

As a team, the Warriors are shooting 56 percent from the field on the season, and Scofield thinks they have a strong

chance to challenge for the TAPPS 1-5A title along with Arlington Grace Prep (15-8, 0-1).

“It’s going to be a dogfight,” Scofield said. “We’d like to think we could maybe sneak up on Fort Worth Christian. Grace Prep and us will be a battle also.”

For both the Warriors and Lady Warriors, starting off district with a win is crucial today. With only a six-game district schedule and three teams making the playoffs, every home game must be won -- not only to have a chance at the district championship, but also to make the postseason and potentially snag a higher seed -- whether it’s the Lady Warriors taking on the 14th-ranked Lady Mustangs or the Warriors facing the 5-11 Midland boys.

“Home games are must wins,” Roberts said.

“It’s critical, you can’t afford to fall on your face in the first game of district at home,” Scofield added.

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## **TAPPS 1-5A**

### **Boys**

#### **Arlington Grace Prep Lions**

**Coach:** Chris Hall

**Record:** 15-8, 0-1

**Last year’s record:** n/a (2-4, tied for second in TAPPS 1-II)

**Players to watch:** P Wes Oglesby (6-7, Sr.), F Yogi Gallegos (6-0, So.), G Mac JuVette (6-3, Sr.)

#### **Fort Worth Christian Cardinals**

**Coach:** Scott Thannum

**Record:** 18-7, 1-0

**Last year’s record:** 26-8 (6-0, first in TAPPS 1-II)

**Players to watch:** P Michael Goff (6-8, Sr.), G Josh Dennis (6-5, Sr.), G Eric Tisby (5-10, Sr.)

#### **Liberty Christian Warriors**

**Coach:** Richard Scofield

**Record:** 17-6

**Last year’s record:** 14-17 (2-4, tied for second in TAPPS 1-II)

**Players to watch:** F Michael Schilleci (6-4, Sr.), G Walt Shaffer (6-0, Sr.), F Tyler Redman (6-4, Sr.)

### **Midland Christian Mustangs**

Fort Worth Christian Cardinals

**Coach:** Kenneth Smith

**Record:** 5-11

**Last year's record:** 18-10 (2-4, tied for second in TAPPS 1-II)

**Players to watch:** G Clint Elliott (5-10, Sr.), G Alex Martinez (5-10, Sr.), F Darby O'Donnell (6-1, Sr.).

### **Girls**

#### **Arlington Grace Prep Lady Lions**

**Coach:** Julie White

**Record:** 5-6, 0-1

**Last year's record:** n/a (0-5, fourth in TAPPS 1-II)

**Players to watch:** P Trinity Ojo (6-0, Jr.), G Kaylan Fagley (5-7, Sr.)

#### **Fort Worth Christian Lady Cardinals**

**Coach:** John Anderson

**Record:** 20-7, 1-0

**Last year's record:** 29-15 (6-0, 1st in TAPPS 1-5A)

**Players to watch:** F Rachel Rentschler (6-1, Jr.), G Kat Kundmueller (5-5, Sr.), G Heather Wright (5-6, Sr.).

#### **Liberty Christian Lady Warriors**

**Coach:** Renee Roberts

**Record:** 17-8

**Last year's record:** 14-17 (4-2, 2nd in TAPPS 1-5A)

**Players to watch:** P Kristin Goodspeed (6-1, So.), G Lauren Jackson (5-8, Jr.), G Megan Pulley (5-6, Jr.).

### **Midland Christian Lady Mustangs**

**Coach:** Dub Huckabee

**Record:** 14-8

**Last year's record:** 16-12 (3-3 third place in TAPPS 1-II)

**Players to watch:** F Kresha Adams (5-8. Sr.), P Candice Kohn (5-11, Jr.), G Courtney Ryburn (5-3, Sr.).

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