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2024 SEMO Conference Girls Basketball Tournament Seeds Announced

NOVEMBER 30TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

2024 SEMO Conference Girls Basketball Tournament Seeds Announced

The highly anticipated 2024 SEMO Conference Girls Basketball Tournament will be held at Notre Dame High School beginning Monday, December 2, 2024.

Jackson Lady Indians earned the #1 seed followed by #2 Notre Dame, #3 Kennett, #4 Sikeston, #5 Saxony Lutheran, #6 Dexter, #7 Cape Central, #8 New Madrid County Central, and #9 Poplar Bluff. This a double elimination tournament, so each team will play at least two times.

Further details and match outcomes will influence subsequent game schedules at time of publication. Watch for bracket updates if available.

Monday Schedule

5 p.m. NMCC vs Poplar Bluff - Play In Game

6:30 p.m. Kennett vs Dexter

8:00 p.m. Notre Dame vs Cape Central

Tuesday Schedule

5:00 p.m. Jackson vs #9 Winner of the Play In Game

6:30 p.m. Sikeston vs Saxony Lutheran

Wednesday Schedule

6:00 p.m. and 8 p.m. games

Thursday Schedule

5:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m., 8:00 p.m. games

Friday Schedule

Consolation at 5:00 p.m.

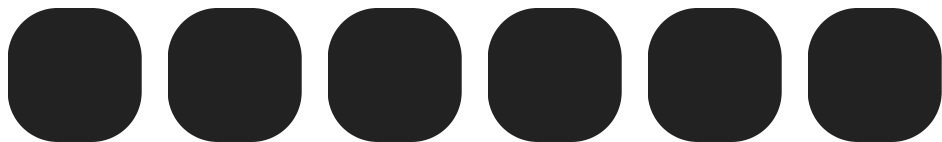
3rd Place Game at 6:30 p.m.

Championship at 8:00 p.m.

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Lift for Life Academy Triumphs Over Bearcats, End the Season 11-1

NOVEMBER 24TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Lift for Life Academy Triumphs Over Bearcats, End the Season 11-1

The Bearcats concluded their 2024 football season with a tough loss to Lift for Life Academy by a final score of 50 - 12. Despite the competitive start, Lift for Life took command in the third quarter, leading to a decisive victory over the Dexter.

“Oh, man, it's been a great year,” noted Head Coach Chad Jamerson. “I'm so proud of all that these kids have accomplished this year. It's just, you know, sooner or later the magic, I guess, runs out.”

Lift for Life elected to kickoff to the Bearcats to begin the game. Unfortunately on the first series of downs, LLA's defensive back Cameron Hurst stepped in front of a Jackson Howard (D) pass and returned it 33 yards for the first score of the game. This gave the Hawks a 6-0 lead as the 2-point conversion failed.

The Bearcats battled back with a strong running game moving the football down the field. At the 1:05 mark in the first Quarter, Devin Turnbo was able to respond with a 5-yard touchdown run to tie the score. The PAT kick by Parker King was wide left and failed, ending the first quarter tied at 6-6.

“I thought the offensive line did a really good job of creating space for (Turnbo) and creating lanes and I thought he ran hard,” commented Coach Jamerson. “He ran into a bunch of walls at that second level and that was kind of the story of the day. On offense, we had trouble getting down to the second level with their linebackers.”

The speed on the Lift for Life defense was notable from the beginning of the game. The Bearcats saw some offensive holes open up and those holes would close really quickly.

Jamerson added, “We saw gaps and, before you knew it, you could blink and the gap closed. And that's kind of the story, especially the second half in what was typically a 7 to 10 yard run for us turned into two, three, and five yard runs.”

Lift for Life came storming back quickly in the second quarter as they got the ball on their own 42 yard line and moved it down the field. Then the Hawks, Marco Jackson took a handoff from his quarterback and ran for a 31-yard touchdown. The Bearcat defense stood strong and denied the Hawks the 2-point conversion, holding the lead to 12-6 with 11:05 remaining in the first half.

The Bearcats continued to move the football on the ground with powerful running of Grams and Turnbo. Jett Grams' 4 yard touchdown run tied the game 12-12 with 4:03 remaining in the half.

At that point, many fans may have felt that two prize fighters were exchanging blows offensively on the football field. However, Lift for Life was not finished. They began a 10 play, 65 yard drive that ended with a QB Mikey Gerdine 37-yard pass completion to Aireon Jones to recapture the lead at halftime 18-12.

The Bearcats have been known all season for the halftime adjustments. But the 2nd half started with each team unable to move the football. Defense appeared to have been a strong adjustment for both teams.

The Bearcats struggled and really couldn't get outside on the Lift for Life Defense. The Hawks had a strong game plan and executed that plan very well.

"They are simply athletes. They were able to make adjustments and they took away our perimeter game and gave us a lot of the interior stuff. We weren't able to get the interior stuff going like we have in the past," said Jamerson.

But with 6 minutes left in the third quarter, Mikey Gerdine delivered a pass over the Bearcat defensive backfield and completed a 55-yard touchdown pass to Daishawn Houston to increase their lead. A 3-yard PAT was good by Phoenix Isaiah and the Hawks lead by a score of 26-12.

With 4:27 remaining in the third quarter, the Hawks Cameron Hurst found his second pick-six of the day and again for a Live for Life tem. The PAT pass from Phoenix Isaiah to Mickell Burden was good making the score 34-12.

Lift for Life continued their dominance throughout the remainder of the contest adding two additional rushing scores by Karnym Johnson and Jayveon Scott making the final score of 50-12.

"Defensively I think they had a really good game plan to take Lee-Michael away from us, and they did," Jamerson noted. "They took away our sweep game and he was able to get a couple counters, but he wasn't able to just do the things that Lee-Michael does."

"They made good defensive adjustments and credit to Life for Life ... They had guys in the right position today." Jamerson continued.

The Bearcats had a total offense of 105 yards compared to 279 yards for the Hawks. Jett Grams was the leading rusher for the 'Cats with 16 carries for 54 yards. Grams suffered a strained hamstring last week and was felt to be only at about 70% strength for today's contest.

The end of the Bearcats' remarkable 11-1 season was marked with many highlights including the leadership and play of their 19 senior players. These young men have given a community a 2024 Fall filled with exciting Friday Nights and a record performance only achieved by 3 previous teams at Dexter High School.

Seniors Include: #2 Jett Grams, #7 Lee Michael McDonald, #12 Nolan Alford, #16 Jackson Howard, #20 Rylee Cochran, #21 Joseph Passley, #22 Logan Pullum, #26 Christaan Wirz, #53

Caleb Gott, #54 Zach Billingsley, #56 Caden Lee, #66 Peyton Hartline, #73 Sawyer Rascher, #74 Ethan Glaus, #75 Tyler Spence, #78 Parker King, and #79 Donovan Micheal.

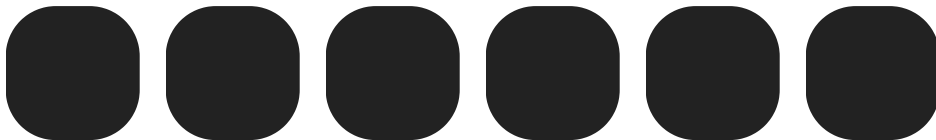
“You could talk all day about the effort and the hard work and the heart of this senior class and everything they did to get this program back on track”, stated Coach Jamerson. “Without those seniors, we don't have 11 wins. We don't win a district championship without their dedication and their hard work. We're not where we are today. So all that credit goes to those guys for trusting the plan and trusting the process and coming out and executing the things that we do.”

The game emphasized the support from the community and the impressive resilience of the team throughout the season. The game served as a poignant conclusion for the 19 seniors playing their final game, with many notable contributors leaving a lasting legacy. In all they scored a total of 500 points this season in twelve games ending with 11 wins and 1 loss. The defense held strong allowing only 146 points all season with 50 of those points from LFL in the last game of the season. The 2024 season will go down in the history books for sure and these young men will have memories for years to come.

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Kealea Powell Commits to Play Volleyball at Crowley's Ridge College

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Kealea Powell Commits to Play Volleyball at Crowley's Ridge College

Bernie High School senior, Kealea Powell signed to play volleyball at Crowley's Ridge College in Paragould, Arkansas.

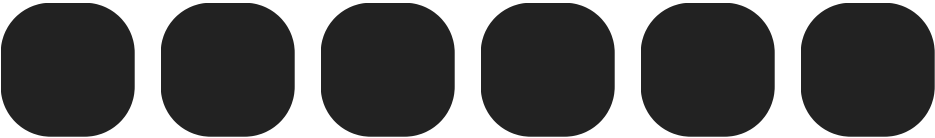
"We are so proud of you, Kealea, and can't wait to see all the amazing things you'll accomplish at the collegiate level," commented head volleyball coach Rachel Vernon, "Way to represent!"

Crowley's Ridge College is a private four year church affiliated, but autonomous co-educational liberal arts college designed to help students grow closer to God while pursuing a college degree with our talented and caring faculty and staff who promote career readiness, lifelong friendships, and a rewarding life.

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Bearcats Rally from Behind to Win First District Title Since 2011

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Bearcats Rally from Behind to Win First District Title Since 2011

The Dexter Bearcats rallied back from the 13-0 deficit to defeat the Ste. Genevieve Dragons 28-13 earning their first District Championship since 2011 at Charles Bland Stadium.

The Ste. Gen Dragons quickly got on the scoreboard taking an early lead with a 60-yard touchdown with only 11:03 left in the first quarter. The extra point was successful.

Dexter's Christiaan Wirz made a crucial tackle to stop the Dragons at the one-yard line preventing another score. Ste. Gen added another touchdown ,but missed their opportunity to score the point after and led the Bearcats 13-0 at the half.

The Bearcats struggled throughout the first half.

"It was definitely a tale of two halves," stated head coach Chad Jamerson. "We faced challenges in the first half, a little impatience and a few missteps in the offensive play calling."

The momentum shifted with the 'Cats showing more enthusiasm in the second half.

Devin Turnbo's interception stalled a Dragons' drive, leading to even more important moment for the Bearcats. Lee-Michael McDonald scored a 58-yard rushing touchdown, cutting the lead to 13-7. Parker King's point after was good. McDonald followed with another 34-yard run, bringing the Bearcats ahead 14-13.

"We made adjustments at halftime particularly by the defensive staff. They were instrumental in overcoming these challenges," continued Jamerson. "This allowed our team to become more physical and ultimately win the game for us. We had some key plays and big runs by Lee-Michael McDonald, which highly contributed to our victory over our opponent."

Turnbo had yet another touchdown on a 5-yard run with a successful extra point by Parker King bringing the lead to 21-13.

The crowd, the fans and the 'Cats really got excited with the touchdowns and the momentum revealed that of a District win in the sights. Nolan Alford scored a 13-yard touchdown, finalizing the score 28-13 after another successful point after by Parker King.

"We really focused on wearing them down which proved to be successful," stated Jamerson. "Their hard work and perseverance proved us right."

Donovan McNeil and Jaxson Miller contributed in big ways making key defensive plays and tackles.

The Dexter Bearcats improved to 11-0 marching deeper into the playoffs and for the first time in Dexter School history went 11-0 heading into the Missouri State play-offs.

"We have a lot of work to get done this week. Lift for Life has some speed about them, athletic and a strong defensive line," continued Jamerson.

While the upcoming game poses challenges, such as facing a large and strong opposition. There are opportunities in the opponent's defense that could be capitalized on by executing a strong running game combined with strategic passing. The Bearcats are hungry for a win and a state title run.

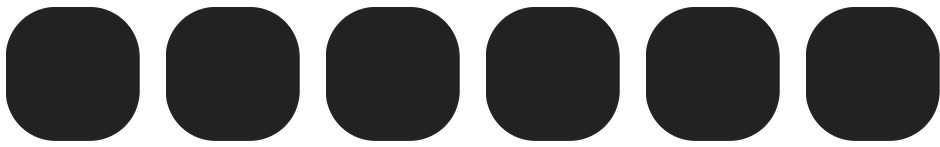
"We are so thankful for the community's support and dedication to our team," Jamerson commented. "With our work ethic and influence to provide positive experiences we are making real progress in our program."

The Dexter Bearcats will travel to Mehlville on Saturday, November 23rd with a kick-off time of 1 p.m.

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MDC Reports 68,312 Deer Harvested During Firearms Opening Weekend, 20,000 Less than 2023 Season

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Top harvest counties were Franklin, Texas, and Pike.

Preliminary data from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) shows deer hunters in Missouri harvested 68,312 deer during opening weekend of the November portion of firearms deer season Nov. 16 and 17. Of the 68,312 deer harvested, 42,283 were antlered bucks, 5,105 were button bucks, and 20,924 were does.

Top harvest counties for opening weekend were Franklin with 1,627 deer harvested, Texas with 1,305, and Pike with 1,161.

Last year, hunters checked 90,253 deer during opening weekend of the November portion of firearms deer season.

According to MDC Cervid Program Supervisor Jason Isabelle, the drop in harvest this year was due to a combination of factors.

“The calendar shift this year put the November portion a week later than last year, which results in lower deer harvest,” said Isabelle. “The peak of the rut in Missouri occurs around Nov. 10. When the calendar shifts, it puts the opener about a week past peak rut when deer movement isn’t as high as it is earlier in the month.”

Another factor that Isabelle believes significantly affected this year’s harvest total is an abundant acorn crop.

“Throughout much of Missouri, there are a lot of acorns in the woods this year,” said Isabelle. “When that happens, deer don’t need to move as much to find food and they frequent fields and other open areas less often, making them less visible to hunters.”

Isabelle noted that the counties with the largest decline in harvest were in the more heavily forested portions of the state where acorn abundance has a more significant effect on deer movement.

Warm temperatures were another factor that contributed to this year’s lower opening weekend harvest total according to Isabelle.

“Although the warm temperatures this weekend made it comfortable for hunters to be in the woods, it likely had an adverse effect on deer movement,” said Isabelle.

Isabelle noted that the unseasonably mild temperatures probably also affected the desire of some hunters to harvest deer given the necessity for rapid processing.

“Fortunately, there are cooler temperatures in the forecast for the latter half of the November portion, which should result in better hunting conditions,” said Isabelle.

Pictured above: Avery Hart killed a 6 pointer with her grandpa age 8 during the youth portion of the 2024 season.

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