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Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

Jackson Center's Alicia Kessler, left, and Cassie Meyer go up for a block in tournament play at Wright State last season. Both return for the defending state champions.

Lady Tigers ready for title defense

JACKSON CENTER — The Lady Tigers and longtime head coach Kim Metz will never forget last season.

It was the year the volleyball team ascended to the top of the heap, winning the Division IV state championship and finishing with an impressive 29-1 record.

And with one of the best players in County history returning this season, the Lady Tigers will likely be up to the challenge of defending that championship.

County Player of the Year and outside hitter Cassie Meyer pounded down 292 kills during the regular season and led the area in aces with 57 on the strength of a nasty jump serve. She also had 236 digs.

Last year in the state championship game against Tuscarawas Central Catholic, the Lady Tigers coasted to an easy 25-14, 25-15, 25-9 victory. Meyer had 21 kills, setting a new state tournament record for a three-set match. And a day earlier, she had 27 kills in the semifinal win over Monroeville.

And even though the Lady Tigers lost some outstanding seniors, there are still seven letter-winners returning this year, and all of them are in their senior years.

One of them is Kamryn Elchert, who set up Meyer and the other hitters at the net and finished with 335 assists during the regular campaign. She went on to hand out 19 assists in the state championship game.

Also returning are middle blocker/outside hitter Christen Ware, outside hitter Vanessa Winner, setter/outside hitter Camryn Hoehne, middle blocker Alicia Kessler and middle blocker Miranda Hickey.

Kessler gives the Lady Tigers a lot of size at the net. She finished with 26 solo blocks last season and also had 110 kills



Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News
Jackson Center's Camryn Hoehne hugs Jackson Center head coach Kim Metz after the Lady Tigers captured the Division IV state championship last season. And Metz has some key players back from that team.

during the regular campaign.

"This year's team is spending time on the basics," said Metz, in her 29th year as the head coach. "We're taking time to focus on the little things and that has taken up a good portion of our preseason. We have some holes to fill and have welcomed some new faces to help fill those voids, yet we bring back quite a few returning letter-winners to lead us into the new season.

"Offensively and defensively, we have made some adjustments," she added. "Same faces, but different roles. The work ethic and the attention to detail is helping them understand those roles better each time on the court."

The newcomers are junior defensive specialists Connor Pipke and Madilyn Platfoot, sophomore outside hitter Taquel Kessler and sophomore defensive specialist Katie Sosby.

Soccer

Jackson Center will be playing in the Western Ohio Soccer League for the first time this season, which is the third year of the program and the second with a full varsity schedule.

Coach Kylan Booser has been in charge of the program since day one and is 8-10-1 so far. He is assisted by Mark Hilbun.

"Being our third year in the program, we are looking to improve and get stronger," Booser said. "We have some talent coming back and are excited about the incoming freshman class. We have good leadership on this team and we're excited about entering the WOSL, and we look to be competitive and make the league stronger. We think we will continue to make strides in the program."

The returnees for the Tigers this season include junior midfielders Trevor Elliott, Maisen Akers, Bryce Sosby and Parker Morris, junior striker Gavin Booser, junior fullbacks Braden Heitkamp and Kennadie Reese, sophomore mids Sean March and Olivia Welly and sophomore goalie Corbin Murphy.

The top newcomers are expected to be freshman striker Clay Akers and freshman fullback Garrett Heitkamp.

Girls cross country

Steve Hoover has been the cross country coach at Jackson Center for 22 years, and he has reason to smile this year — a girls team.

"We're happy to field a girls team this year," he said. "Our main goals will be to

gain stamina and endurance and develop confidence in our running."

There are five girls out, led by the only returning letter-winner in junior Gwen Giesemann. She is joined by three sophomores in Deanna Lowry, Courtney Meyer and Mandie Yarkosky, and a freshman, Lexi Schmiesing.

Boys cross country

The boys team has three runners back from last year's sixth-place team in the County meet, including junior Parker Morris and sophomores TJ Esser and Sean March.

They will be joined by junior Jeremy Burch, sophomore Corbin Murphy and freshman Christopher Elchert.

"Parker was a regional qualifier last year and will lead this year's team," said Hoover. "The team will work on pack running and developing our young talent. We hope to be competitive in the County meet and improve our league standing."

Golf

Dave King is in his ninth year as the head golf coach at Jackson Center and is looking for improvement over the fifth-place finish in the County last season. The Tigers were 10-5 in dual matches overall.

He has five golfers back from last season in senior Brady Wildermuth, juniors Fred Bunke, Colton Rose and Bryce Sosby, and sophomore Trent Platfoot.

Three freshman add depth in Christopher Elchert, Garrett Prenger and Jordan Rizzo.

"We lost our top scorer in Drew Sosby and he will be missed," said King. "But I feel we have the players that will step up and fill that void. We're working on being consistent in all phases of the game."



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Jackets hope to build on 6-4 mark

SIDNEY — Sidney High's football team took a big step forward last season, finishing 6-4 for the school's first winning season in the sport since 2003, and only the 11th in the last 42 years.

Adam Doenges brings his enthusiasm back for his sixth year as the head coach and he hopes to build on that record of a season ago.

"Using the momentum of last year's successful season, this year's offseason was tremendous," Doenges said. "The players are aware of how hard winning is and realize extra work was needed to take the next step."

There were plenty of highlights from last season. Sidney's total defense ranked second in the Greater Western Ohio Conference North and fifth in the conference overall. The Jackets' total offense from last year was also second in the North and fifth overall. For both, that was the highest ranking for Sidney since joining the GWOC.

Offensively, Sidney amassed over 1,000 more total yards of offense than in the previous 10 seasons, and the 30.9 points per game the Jackets averaged was fourth-most in school history.

On defense, Sidney allowed the least amount of points since joining the league, and the least amount of yards since 2009.

Two school records were set as well. Kicker Danny Dean set the record for point-after kicks with 35, and Devin Santos broke the school record for the longest fumble return for a touchdown, 85 yards against West Carrollton.

This season, Doenges has a lot of holes to fill, but has a lot of experience returning as well. There are 16 lettermen back, including six starters on both sides of the ball. And even though he has to replace three starters on the O-line, the Jackets should have a lot of firepower.

The biggest holes might be on special teams. Dean graduated, as did Santos, who handled the punting. In addition, Doenges also lost his long-snapper and the holder on point-after kicks.

On the plus side, the entire coaching staff returns intact, and that's the first time that's happened in the last 10 years. And Doenges says that team speed and strength has "improved tremendously over the last six years."

"With Trotwood moving to another division this season, our division will have a new champion this year and we want to be a part of that race," Doenges said.

Heading the list of returnees is quarterback Andre Gordon, who moved into the starting lineup last year as a freshman and really opened some eyes. He finished with 1,373 yards passing and completed 65 percent of his passes (93 for 143). In addition, his scrambling ability led to 868 yards rushing. And despite being only a sophomore, he's already received a scholarship offer for football from Iowa State. He was second-team All-North last season.

Those rushing yards were second on the team to another returning starter for the Jackets, running back Isaiah Bowser, who is 6-foot-1, 195 pounds. Bowser rushed for 910 yards against a strong Sidney schedule, and scored 11 touchdowns. He was also second-team All-North a year ago, and has received a scholarship offer from Cincinnati.

Conor Beer is a 5-9, 166 pound wide receiver/running back who is a three-year letterman and one of the best kick returners in the conference. He was another second-team All-North pick last season.

Up front, Doenges returns 6-2, 285-pound offensive and defensive tackle Devan Rogers, who was a first-team pick in the North last season. He's already received an offer from Bowling Green.

And Javon Purk is a 6-2, 205-pound senior defensive end and a two-year letterman. He was second team All-North last season, and has been offered by Morehead State.

The schedule got tougher this season and includes three new opponents. The Jackets will play Xenia and Dayton Carroll in non-division games, and play Tipp City in the new GWOC American North Division.

In addition, as was announced a while back, Sidney's annual tussle with rival Piqua, which will be in Sidney this season, will be played on a Thursday night and be the "Thursday Night Lights" game on Fox 45.

"With that game, the graduation of two seniors who secured college scholarships (Lorenzo Taborn, Bowling Green; Darryl McNeal, Cincinnati Christian), and a handful of underclassmen who have been offered already, people are starting to find Sidney, and we hope to continue that success."

The coaching staff that remains intact includes defensive coordinator Kyle Coleman, offensive coordinator Greg Snyder, and Wes Branscum, Frank Guillozet, Joey Stockton, Shane Kelly, Mike Ward and Terry Ward.

Volleyball

Coach Lauren Morrow returns for her second season as head coach of the Lady Jackets, and is hoping to build on a good first season that saw her team finish 10-14 overall, including 2-3 in the Greater Western Ohio Conference North Division.

"Our goal is to play to our potential every game and compete for a GWOC North title," said Morrow. "Our seniors have helped to rebuild over the last few years and been extremely committed in the offseason. We have nine letter-winners back and added two new seniors who will definitely be able to contribute. Last season, we showed we were not a team to underestimate and now we want to be a force to be reckoned with."

With so much experience returning, there's plenty of reason for optimism this season.

Back are senior middle blocker Amanda Thomas, senior libero Kiana Calvert, senior outside/right side hitter Alexis Doyle, senior outside/right side Grace Shell, senior defensive specialist Hannah Wiford, junior setter Carrie Nuss, junior outside hitter Emily Tolbert, junior middle/outside Ally Spangler and sophomore defensive specialist/outside hitter Alina Kindle.

Thomas led the Lady Jackets in kills last season with 180 and also led in blocks and was fourth in the GWOC North with 54. Tolbert had 88 kills, Shell 75 and Spangler 72, so the Lady Jackets return a lot of firepower. And the setter who set them up, Nuss, brings back 357 assists.

Morrow also welcomed two new seniors to the team, including 6-foot-3 Celena Taborn, who will be a force at the net. Hope Collins is another senior who is an outside/right side hitter.

Sidney lost to graduation its top defensive player in McKenzie Lambdin, but Shell had 155 digs last season,



Steve Egbert | Sidney Daily News
Sidney's Isaiah Bowser rushed for 910 yards last season and is back for his senior year.

Calvert 145, Nuss 118 and Wiford 102.

Calvert also led the team in ace serves with 34, and Nuss was right behind with 32.

Morrow said Troy and Vandalia will both be strong in the American North this season, and the newcomer, Tipp City, will also make the division more challenging. "I look for a close race in the North this season," Morrow said.

Boys soccer

Daniel Wicks had an outstanding first year at Sidney as the head coach of the boys soccer team, guiding the Yellow Jackets to a 13-3-2 final record and a runner-up finish in the GWOC North Division.

And with a whole host of starters and lettermen returning this year, he's excited about what the season holds.

"I am very excited to get my second season as Sidney's coach underway," he said. "We are returning a lot of starters from last season and we have plenty of guys competing for some positions that were left by last year's seniors. Most of these guys have played with each other for a long time and they are hungry to pick up where we left off from last season."

Of the returnees, six are seniors, and that's always a good place to start. The list is headed by Luke Rees, a 2015 GWOC North second-team selection, and the captain of the team. He had five goals and nine assists last season.

Elliot Wilson is a returning defensive starter, Riley Kittle returns at winger, Ian Humphrey at goalie, and Phillip Bertsch and Andy Lee on defense.

There are two juniors who are returning starters in defenders Mason Page and Evan Burden, and one returning sophomore starter in midfielder Damien Jones.

Also back are junior midfielders Nathan Miu, Gage Fridley and Thomas Atwood, junior defender Gavin Miller, sophomore midfielder John Holloway and sophomore goalie Noah Houts.

There are also two freshmen in the mix in forward Jalen Hudgins and goalie Trey Wernitz.

"Our goal this year is to finish at the top of the North," said Wicks. "We came up just shy last season, but we feel we should be right up there again this season."

Golf

Thomas Goffena enters his second season as the school's golf coach and has five players back who lettered last season.

They include four juniors in Jared Lindsey, Spencer Karn, Thomas Atwood and Ian Knasel, and a sophomore in Gambit Hand.

The top newcomers are led by Fairlawn transfer Kyle Noble, a junior, and he's joined by hopefuls Will Kleppinger, a sophomore, and four freshmen in Ben Spangler, Mitch Larger, Brandon Rose and Solei Drennen.

"This year we will have to rely on our top four golfers to play very well," said Goffena. "We are going to be very inexperienced at the fifth and sixth spots on the varsity roster. The good news is we do not have any seniors so we can grow over the next couple years. The fifth and sixth spot on the varsity squad could be somebody different every match until someone steps up to be the solid player. We also have a girl in Solei Drennen on the team. Our goal as a golf program is to attract more girls to golf so we can start a girls team. The good news for her is she will have to play from the men's tee all year, but at the end of the year will be in the girls tournament as an individual."

"Vandalia is still by far the team to beat in the league but Troy is closing in on them," he added. "Vandalia has four of the six back from the team that went a long way in the tournament."

Girls cross country

Coach Ken Kellner has just a single senior on the team in Alexis Hobbs and she will be running for the first time in a Sidney uniform.

She is joined by five freshmen in Ana Adams, Mariana Kellner, Savannah Garber, Meredith Martin and Mikayla Smedley.

"Alexis is a welcome addition to the team because of her strong work ethic, positive attitude and great leadership," said Kellner. "She's looking forward to a great senior season. And joining her are five freshmen looking forward to making their mark. This will be a great season, with so much young talent on a quest to establish a strong team both for this season and a few more seasons afterward."

Boys cross country

The boys have a deep roster, led by seven returning runners from a year ago.

The returnees include seniors Ian Bowman and Ben Musser, junior Spencer Karn, and sophomores Gavin Bockrath, Reece Fannon, Aidan Smith and Eli Straman.

"This season promises to have even more individuals taking top ten spots on Sidney's all-time leaderboard as has been the case for the last few seasons," Kellner said. "We have extremely young teams in both the boys and girls. For the boys team, we have three seniors, two juniors and the rest of the team consists of four sophomores and four freshmen. Ian Bowman is a returning regional qualifier, and he is joined by several young talents who brought home a top ten placement in nearly all of their races in middle school."

The returning runners are joined by senior Logan Johnson, junior Logan Searcy and freshmen Ian Bonifas,



Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News
Sidney's Luke Rees (left) was all-conference last season and is back for the Yellow Jackets this season.

Patrick McClain, Noah Schwepe and Elijah Douglas.

Girls soccer

Kevin Veroneau has some big shoes to fill, taking over for ultra-successful coach Stacey Goffena, who stepped down after last season.

The team Veroneaux inherits has eight girls that lettered last year on a team that finished the season 12-5-1 and was 3-2 in the GWOC North. But a lot of talent was lost also.

"After losing nine seniors to graduation, this year's team is fairly balanced with eight returning players and 10 new players," he said. "Our goals this year are to win our conference and make it deep into tournament play."

Heading the list of returning players is senior Emily Wiesenmayer, who led the Lady Jackets in scoring last season with 13 goals and three assists and 29 points. That was tied for fourth-best in the North.

She and Jenna Foster, a senior defender/midfielder, will serve as the co-captains of this year's squad.

Also returning are senior midfielder Erin Ivey, senior mid/forward Keaton Eilert, junior defender Emma Dahlinghaus, sophomore midfielder Baily Sherman, sophomore mid/forward Elaine Wiesenmayer and sophomore defender Macie Ivey.

The younger Wiesenmayer had five goals and three assists last season, and Ivey three goals and two assists. Eilert also scored three goals last season.

Veroneaux will be looking at three freshmen to see a lot of playing time, and two of them can play goalkeeper, which could be key with the graduation of Sylvia Hudson (151 saves).

The freshman hopefuls are goalie Carly Dean, defender/mid Katelyn Burden and defender/goalie Hallie Truesdale.

"With the addition of Tipp City into the league, the American North has become much stronger," said the coach. "Look for a very competitive race between Vandalia, Tipp, Troy and Sidney for the conference title."

Girls tennis

Emily Scheu is back for her second season as the head coach of the girls tennis team at Sidney, and two things bother her a little at this point.

One, last year's record — 5-13. Improving on that is high on her list. And two, only 12 players out, which she says is a low number. So increasing that is also high on the list.

But on the plus side, her team got the season off to a great start with a 5-0 shutout win.

She has eight players back from last year's team, so it's easy to see why she's hoping to better the record. The returnees are Madison Frank, Naomi Riegel, Auanna Edens, Caroline Gallimore, Kathryn Saunders, Janae Drees and Zoe Crist.

And add to that a promising freshman player, Hailey New, who will find herself at first singles at times this year.

Frank was 10-9 at third singles last year and started the year at first singles.

"Madison and Hailey are close and I might switch them up," said the coach. "I'm looking for good things from Hailey this season."

Riegel and Edens had an excellent year at doubles last year, but Riegel started out the year at third singles and Scheu said she may stay there. Edens will likely team up with Gallimore, and Saunders and Drees will play the other doubles spot.

"I just want to stay competitive in all our matches and want the girls to bring a positive attitude and use good body language," said Scheu. "The record last year was 5-13 and I think we have a good chance of doing better than that."

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Goals remain the same for Cavaliers

Player of the Year Chapman returns in volleyball

Staff report

When you play football at Lehman, you understand the goals going into the season.

Coming off a 7-5 season last year and a third straight trip to the post-season, the Cavaliers' goals remain the same under coach Dick Roll. The Cavaliers have advanced to the playoffs in eight of his 10 seasons.

"The goals remain the same," Roll said. "Win the league and make it to the playoffs."

And there is no reason to think they won't with a lot of depth on both sides of the ball.

Roll has three options to replace Stephen Monnin at quarterback. They include sophomore Elliott Gilardi (5-11, 150), junior Kameron Lee (6-3, 190) and senior Dylan Arnold (5-10, 155). Regardless of who the quarterback is, all three are likely to be on the field somewhere.

"Things are starting to shake out at quarterback, Roll said. "All of them are athletic enough, they will be playing somewhere."

Arnold is in the mix at running back, along with senior Jacob Earhart (5-10, 185), and with juniors Owen Smith (5-11, 165), Brandon Barhorst (5-10, 155), Aldo Barrera (5-6, 155) and Alvaro Barrera (5-6, 145).

Earhart led the team in rushing a year ago with 1,122 yards on 177 carries and 12 touchdowns. Arnold was the leading receiver with 45 catches for 604 yards and 11 touchdowns. Barhorst caught 38 passes for 498 yards last year and will also see action at tight end.

The receivers include Lee, seniors Seth Brown (6-3, 175), Ethan Neu (6-1, 155) and Jared Rourke (5-10, 150) and junior Braiden Sherman (5-11, 145).

"It is a good problem to have," Roll said about the depth at the skill positions. "We have to find a way to rotate people and keep people fresh."

Along with Barhorst at tight end, will be junior Michael Bunker (6-5, 215).

"We definitely have the ability to create matchup problems with our receivers," Roll said. "I like having a 6-5 tight end or a 6-3 receiver."

The offensive line will be anchored by junior Collin Haller (6-0, 195) at center. The guards will include senior Wyatt Long (6-0, 200) and junior Seth Sargent (6-4, 240). The tackles will be junior Michael Wesner (5-9, 180) and sophomore Logan Bunker (5-11, 175). Also seeing action on the line will be junior Logan Richard (5-11, 160) and senior Joe Schemmel (6-1, 155).

"We like what we have — and only one of them is a senior," Roll said about the starters up front. "There isn't a lot of depth, but we feel good about who we have playing there. We have some young guys who could be ready by week eight or nine."

On defense, the Cavaliers will be switching back to a 4-4.

"We did that because of our personnel," Roll said. "We never totally abandoned it, so it has been an easy transition for the players."

Seeing action on the line will be Brown, sophomore Jared Magoteaux (6-1, 190), senior Chris Shepherd (6-4, 350), Michale Bunker and Logan Bunker. Michael Bunker had nine sacks and 51 tackles a year ago. At inside linebacker Earhart and Long return and will be joined by Richard and sophomore Nicholas Largent (5-10, 155). Earhart had 79 tackles a year ago, while Long had 69.

The outside linebackers will include Barhorst, Smith, Sherman, Aldo and Alvaro Barrera. Smith had 114 tackles a year ago, while Barhorst added 76.

The secondary will include Lee, Rourke and Gilardi at cornerbacks, with Arnold and Neu at safety.

Lehman will be challenged right out of the gate, hosting Fort Recovery before traveling to Minster. The Indians knocked the Cavaliers out of the playoffs last year enroute to winning the state title.

Roll sees the NWCC as a four-team battle.

"I hear Fort Loramie has a real strong team," Roll said. "I expect Riverside and Upper Scioto Valley to be

good as well. There are four strong teams in the conference. I expect us to be right in there."

Volleyball

Longtime Lehman head coach Greg Snipes kept his amazing success going last season with the Lady Cavaliers, finishing with a 19-8 record and a championship of the league they dominate, the Northwest Central Conference.

Lehman still has not lost a league match in three seasons in the conference.

The Lady Cavs also captured a district title.

It likely will be much of the same this season, especially since Snipes has the NWCC Player of the Year returning in senior Sidney Chapman, a devastating hitter who will be back at her outside position.

In addition, Snipes has six other girls back who lettered and saw playing time last season. They include senior defensive specialist Madison Hussey, junior outside hitters Ellie Scott and Maddy McFarland, junior defensive specialist Hailey Wick, junior middle blocker Lauren Larger, and sophomore setter Alexis Snipes.

They are joined by six newcomers who are looking to break in, including senior defensive specialists Camille Odle and Lindsey Elsner, sophomore outside hitter Lauren Riley, sophomore middle blocker Malorie Hussey, freshman middle blocker Abby Schutt and freshman setter Lauren McFarland.

Chapman led the area in kills last season with 419, and that was before postseason play began. She also served 49 aces and had 284 digs.

Her classmate Madison Hussey led the defense with 322 digs last season, and is another valuable returnee for Snipes.

"We're looking forward to a successful year," said Snipes. "We bring back a mix of starters from last year's district championship team and newcomers seeing their first action at varsity. The girls have meshed well together early on and should be able to make big strides as the year goes on. Some goals will be to win another league championship and to make a big run during tournament time. Four-year starter Sidney Chapman will be back at outside hitter along with junior Maddy McFarland. Alexis Snipes and Lauren McFarland will take over setting duties. Lauren Larger and Abby Schutt will be middle blockers. Ellie Scott returns as opposite hitter. Madison Hussey and Camille Odle will be defensive specialists, and Hailey Wick and Lindsey Elsner will also see action there. Malorie Hussey will be at middle and Lauren Riley at opposite hitter."

Snipes thinks Riverside and Hardin Northern will be the biggest challenges to Lehman's reign as league champs.

Girls soccer

The Lehman girls soccer program has proven to be one of the best small-school programs in the state, and with a long list of returning players, head coach Jeremy Lorenzo expects that to continue this season.

The Lady Cavaliers were 13-5-1 last season, and captured the Western Ohio Soccer League title with a perfect 6-0-0 record. They went on to reach the district finals before falling.

"I am really excited about our potential this season," said Lorenzo, beginning his third year as head coach with a record so far of 29-7-3. "Talent wise, this is the deepest that I have seen here at Lehman and we have a lot of veteran leadership, similar to our 2013 regional final team. We return 15 varsity players from last year's district finalist squad, and lost only one starter to graduation. We also have a very talented freshman class that came in, as well as junior varsity players from last year's team that have been waiting for their opportunity as well. Unfortunately, the starter that graduated was an all-Ohio striker (Sara Fuller) and was our leading scorer last year. Therefore, despite the talent, we know that we still have some "unknowns" coming into the season."

The returning players include seven



Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

Dylan Arnold (left) was Lehman's leading receiver last season and returns for the Cavaliers this year.

seniors, midfielder Katie Edwards, defender Hannah Fogt, forward Kaitrin O'Leary, defender Moriah Pauley, defender Kate Hemm, forward Liz Pax and defender Lexi Caulfield.

There are four juniors who lettered in midfielder Abby Jones, forward Molly Safreed, defender Amanda Titterington, and goalie Camille Brown.

Also back are four sophomores, midfielder Grace Monnin, forwards Samantha Edwards and Grace Olding, and midfielder Carly Edwards.

There are also two freshmen in the mix in Ava Behr and Olivia Monnin.

"Our seniors lead the charge," Lorenzo said. "Juniors Molly Safreed, Abby Jones, and Amanda Titterington are all two year varsity players and are battle tested. Camille Brown missed half of the season last year but will come in with varsity experience at the goalkeeper position. Last year's standout class of Grace Monnin, Grace Olding, Carly Edwards, and Samantha Edwards, now sophomores, all have a year of varsity high school experience and will look to again have another standout year. Newcomers, freshman Ava Behr and Olivia Monnin, will join the varsity team this season and will look to get major minutes. Freshman Lyndsey Jones and Rylie McIver, sophomores Hannah Giguere and Allison Bornhorst, and junior Grace Dexter will all see varsity action this this season.

"This will be our third year in the WOSL," he added. "I think this year's league play will be very competitive. We will again play an extremely tough out-of-conference schedule in order to prepare us for the state tournament. We have had a very good preseason and are looking forward to the regular season."

Golf

Eric Harlamert, the longtime Sidney boys soccer coach, is back for his second season as the head golf coach at Lehman, being joined by assistant coaches Calvin Milligan and Jason Varney.

The Cavaliers were 9-3 in dual matches last season, and did well in three invitationals, finishing seventh out of 13, fifth out of 12 and sixth out of 18 teams.

In addition, his team was first in the NWCC last season, making it three conference championships in a row, and one of the players, returnee Tyler Lachey, qualified for the district tournament.

"We have three golfers who are the core of our team," said Harlamert. "And we have a number of others who seriously battled for the top six spots. And they are continuing to battle."

The three returning are Lachey and Ryan Schmidt, who are both juniors, and sophomore Cole Gilardi.

The top newcomers include senior Parker Riley, juniors Griffin West,

Preston Rogers and Zach Bopp, sophomore Athan Whitney, and freshmen Mikey Rossman, Brandyn Sever, Seth Dooley and Nathan Rocke.

Harlamert expects Lima Temple Christian to be the toughest league opponent this season. "We hope to compete for our fourth straight league title," he said.

Boys soccer

Tom Wiseman returns for his second season as coach.

The Cavaliers finished 6-11 overall last year and 4-3 in the WOSL.

Graduating off that team were Alex Wiseman, Ian Smith and Connor Thobe.

"We bring an experienced group of seniors and maturing group of juniors," Wiseman said.

The four senior captains are John Henry Frantz, Trey Kerrigan, Jacob Schmiesing and Joshua Armstrong. Frantz, a defender, was All-WOSL and second team All-Miami Valley, while Kerrigan was a third-team All-Miami Valley forward.

The juniors are led by third team All-Miami Valley selection Jake Emrick.

Key sophomores will include co-rotaries of the year a year ago in Michael Denning and Dahilton Black, and other returning lettermen include Max Hamlin, Tim Buechter, Ryan Goettemoeller, Conor O'Leary, Joe Ritze and Ye Chen.

"The team is also blessed with a soccer-experienced, athletic band of incoming freshman, with many of them to be called upon for quality minutes in our contests," Wiseman said.

He said the challenge will be to shore up a defense that struggled last year, as well as providing the team with skilled, well-conditioned players on the bench.

"The players have worked extremely hard on conditioning and a more aggressive, possession style of play," Wiseman said.

He is hoping for a top three finish in the WOSL.

Girls tennis

Tim Ungericht is back for his second year as the head coach of the Lady Cavaliers, looking to improve on last season's 3-15 mark.

He has five letter-winners returning from that squad in senior Allison Briggs, juniors Melanie Brunner and Alex Read, and sophomores Sarah Gibson and Ann Pennaparra.

Claire Larger, a sophomore, leads the newcomers to the varsity.

"We have 11 girls this season, the most we've had in three years," said Ungericht. "Claire Larger is a sophomore transfer who is very talented and will be a big addition at the top of our lineup the second half of our season. Our goals are to win more matches than last season and qualify girls to the district."



Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

Fairlawn's Chelsie Brautigam (left) and Lauren Dudgeon return in volleyball at Fairlawn this season. The Lady Jets won 18 games last fall.

Six return from 18-win volleyball team

Staff report

SIDNEY — Kelly Tobie begins her second season as the head coach of the Lady Jets' volleyball team, and has six players back from a team that finished fourth in the County and posted an 18-7 record overall.

"I am excited to start another great season of volleyball," Tobie said. "With a strong core group of returning varsity players and hard-working newcomers I look forward to a competitive season, just as we had last year. Our team chemistry is good and our girls are getting better every day in the roles they will be asked to play for me this season. My team captains are pushing us to become better athletes each day at practice and the results have started to show already with our scrimmages."

Heading the list of returnees is senior Audrey Francis, a first-team All-County selection last season as an outside hitter. She was second in the area in kills last season with over 300, and led the area in digs with over 400.

Also back are seniors Chelsie Brautigam and Jeanee Branscum. Brautigam will be a setter/outside hitter and Branscum libero/defensive specialist.

Lauren Weinschenk is a junior defensive specialist/libero, Regan DeMotte a junior right side hitter, and Lauren Dudgeon a sophomore middle blocker.

The top newcomers will be defensive specialist Kenedee Gallimore and middle blocker Madison Huelskamp.

"Our focus in the league will be on the top three from last season," said Tobie. "If we want to be the best, we have to beat the best. We ended up fourth last year, taking two of the top three to four sets each time. And I know we will be just as competitive this season."

Golf

The Jet boys golf team has already shown itself to be a challenger for the County title this season, with a good start to the campaign.

Coach Todd Heckman has his top five players back from last season, and all five of them are three-year letterwinners.

They include seniors Mason Jones, Nathan Lessing, Kody Curtner, Jacob Caldwell, and Ben Brautigam.

Heckman is also looking for big things from junior Luke Hickman.

"After a season in which we placed fourth in the league and qualified for the district golf tournament, we return our top five players from last season including Mason Jones and Nathan Lessing, who were second-team all-league selections," Heckman said. "We have a very veteran team with five seniors and a junior this year, which should help in our league and postseason play. The kids have been working extremely hard this summer playing in tournaments and also practicing every day at the course. I look for big things from Mason, Nathan, and Jacob Caldwell this year with Kody Curtner, Ben Brautigam, and Luke Hickman (top JV player from last year) to provide steady rounds and leadership."

Hickman looks for a competitive league season.

"The league should be very competitive this year across the board," he

said. "Russia, Fort Loramie, Anna and Fairlawn should be fighting it out at the top and Jackson Center, Botkins, and Houston will be very competitive as well. Night in and night out it will be a dogfight across the league. Shelby County golf should have an excellent season as a whole."

Soccer

The co-ed soccer team has a new coach this season in Jamie Fridley. It's his first year as a high school soccer coach, but he has six years of coaching club soccer.

His assistant will be Luciano Tacuri, who is coaching for the first time at any level. But Fridley says Tacuri has played soccer his whole life and expects him to be a great asset.

The Jets were 5-7-2 last season, including 3-2-2 in the Western Ohio Soccer League.

Back from that team are senior midfielders Kaitlynn Morrison and Bryce Landy, senior forward Nick Brautigam and senior defender Brendan McKnight. Junior returnees include defender Stephen Blanford, forward DJ Graves and center back Drew Brautigam.

"I realize this is my first year as the head soccer coach but I expect us to play very competitively," said Fridley. "We lost some seniors from last season but the core of the team is still here. This group of seniors is showing me a lot of leadership and the juniors are also stepping up when they are asked. Our team goal for this season is to send the seniors out with a winning record and a victory during the tournament. And I would like to improve our league record from last season."

Cross country

Christopher North is in his third season as the head coach of the Fairlawn cross country team, and he has two lettermen back for the boys in senior Nick Brautigam and junior Stephen Blanford.

The top newcomers will be five freshmen in Cade Allison, Jordan Henman, Matt Brautigam, Austin Lavins and Isaac Ambos.

"Our freshmen will carry our team this year," North said. "Four of them have been running cross country since the 7th grade and with most of our veteran runners also playing soccer our freshmen are going to step up and lead the team. This is the first time in the three years I have been here that we have a full varsity boys team. We are very excited to have a full roster this year. We are still a growing team but every season I have been here we have added more and more student athletes to our roster."

"We plan to keep building the program through our 'Little Jets Running Program' that allows students from graded 3 through 6 to come out and learn more about running, staying active and being healthy," he added. "And it will be kicking its second season off later this school year. With the help of Sidney's head coach Ken Kellner I was able to get our program up and running and I am very thankful to have his wealth of knowledge to help get us started. This should be a great season for the Fairlawn Jets and I am very excited to still have the opportunity to coach these kids here."



Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

Kody Curtner is back for his senior season on a Fairlawn golf team expected to challenge for the County title.



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Anna coach changing culture

Staff report

ANNA — Anna football coach Nick Marino accepts the fact that last season was one of change for the Rockets, after he became only the second head coach in program history.

But what he says is not acceptable was the final record — 3-7. That's the most losses in a single season in the short history of the program.

"I wasn't pleased with last season. That's never going to be acceptable," Marino said. "Bringing in a new coach and a new system was part of it, but it still wasn't what we'd hoped for. But we've had a good offseason, a good camp and two-a-days. So I'm very pleased so far. We've really improved in the weight room and in the changing of our culture. We're starting to hang our hats on hard work."

Marino reports 64 players out for the team this season, and they were greeted with a couple new assistant coaches this year. They are familiar names, though, in Kristian Althaus, who has coached at the junior high level and has coached the Anna baseball team to some outstanding seasons of late, and Steve Hunsucker, a coach who took both Lehman and Troy Christian to postseason play when he was head man at those schools.

Althaus will coach the running backs and defensive line, and Hunsucker the O-line, linebackers and will also be the running game coordinator.

They are joined by Jake Circle, who will be the defensive coordinator and who Marino said has done a good job of changing the culture in the weight room.

Casey Wical will coach wide receivers and outside linebackers, Dan Christman will coach the D-line, Chris Duncan will coach linebackers, O-line and special teams, and Wes Hunsucker will be the passing game coordinator.

Marino has some key players returning from last season.

Colin Wuebker is a senior who had an excellent season last year, leading the Midwest Athletic Conference in interceptions and also being second on the team in receiving.

Travis Meyer returns behind center after throwing for 600 yards a year ago, and Marino says Aiden Endsley, still just a junior, has come a long way as a running back. "He's shifty and strong and has really developed," the coach said.

Ethan Byrd is a junior who played at nose guard last season and was honorable mention all-MAC. He will shift to linebacker this season. And Wyatt Bensman returns at cornerback.

Trey Cates, 6-3, 215, will be a tight end or H-back, and up front, Marino said the line will be anchored by Abe Wildermuth, who is 6-4, 245.

"I think depth has been created through competition," Marino said. "There was a lot more competition this offseason. People have had to fight a little more for spots."

"I think we can make a big improvement," he added. "But we're not looking any further than week one. We're worried about Arlington and ourselves, and improving."

Volleyball

Kelli Zumberger is back for her fifth year as head coach of the Lady Rocket spikers, and hopes to continue the success that has resulted in nearly 16 wins per season in her first four years.

To do that, she will have to replace a lot of seniors, losing seven off last year's 21-6 squad that finished runner-up in the County standings.

She has three seniors returning, however, led by outside hitter Krista Gehret, who was a second-team All-County selection last season and led the team in kills with 222 during the regular season.

Also back are middle blocker Kennedy Glover and



Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News
Krista Gehret led the Anna Lady Rockets in kills last season and is back again for her senior season.

defensive specialist Kelsey Meyer.

"Our three seniors have really stepped up as far as being leaders for this group of girls and have done a fine job of helping our younger players in the right direction," said Zumberger. "Krista leads our team this year in our offensive unit, playing mostly outside for us. She led our team in kills last season, so I only expect even greater things from her. She has such a natural athletic ability, with extreme hops, and is definitely an offensive threat to other teams."

There is one junior returning in libero Carly Landis.

The newcomers include junior Ashley Landis, three sophomores in Emma Meyer, Lexi Wells and Lindsey Barhorst, and a freshman, Mika McIntyre.

Meyer will join Glover in giving Gehret help at the net. Wells will be the setter and Barhorst a defensive specialist.

"We will get to see another offensive threat on the court this year with middles Kennedy and Meyer," said the coach. "Emma missed a lot last season dealing with back injuries, but has made great strides in these last few months. She has improved with being able to see around the block for the open shots in the back court and has a scary swing when she connects just right. She is the energizer of this team and has filled in that leadership role after losing so many players last season."

"Carly Becker will lead our defense this year as libero," she continued. "She has gained an incredible amount of knowledge from last season and from her club season and is seeing the game at a whole new level. She definitely has taken charge of our back row and has done a great job of helping our younger players."

"She will have help with sophomore Lindsey Barhorst and senior Kelsey Meyer playing alongside her," Zumberger went on. "We will also see a new setter on the court for us this year in Lexi Wells. She is very quick with her movements and is able to play several

different positions because of that ability. Her setting ability has come a long way since last season, but her setting choices have made even greater strides.

"Overall, our team is going to be entertaining to watch with new faces on the court this year," she summed up. "I love being able to compete in the County and can't wait for my players to show the damage that they are capable of doing this year."

Zumberger thinks Anna will challenge in the County this season and be on the hunt for the title along with Jackson Center and Fort Loramie, the last two small-school state champions.

Girls soccer

Anna has a new girls soccer coach for the first time in a long while after longtime coach Jim Hague stepped down after last season and a great career.

Taking over is Mike Noll and he will be assisted by Sarah Albers and Greg VanGorden. Noll has been a state coach in the Buckeye League for the past seven years and he hopes to continue the success of the program.

"This will be a very exciting team to watch," said Noll. "We will be led by a strong junior class and our bench will be deep with talent. And we have a lot of new talent. I think we'll have a successful season with hard work and determination."

The letter-winners returning include junior midfielders Abby Gaydosh, Emily Albers and Ashley Heitkamp, junior wing Savanna Manger and junior striker Rylie Edwards, sophomore strikers Kelsie McKinney and Breah Kuck, sophomore wing Mackenzie Cummings and sophomore defender Claire Bensman.

The top newcomers include sophomore defender Brooke Hensworth, freshmen defenders Michaela Ambos and Adriana Ashford, freshman striker Taylor Noll and freshman goalie Savanna Hostetler.

Golf

Brandon Cobb begins his third season as head golf coach for the Rockets, and the team is already off to a good start to this season after finishing 11-1 in County play last year and capturing a co-championship.

He has three lettermen returning in senior Zach Watren and juniors Mason Platfoot and Eli Kuck.

"I feel pretty good about our top three from last year, but that fourth spot is a big question mark for us," Cobb said. "I think the league should be interesting. Many of the top players from last year return so the battle for the league title should be fun. Zach Watren and Brad Gottemoeller (Fort Loramie) have battled the last two seasons and that should be close again. And Mason Jones (Fairlawn) has played well this summer and could be right in that battle too."

Boys cross country

Dean Stewart, in his 32nd year, has seven lettermen and five of his top seven runners back from a team that won district and regional championships and finished sixth in the state meet last season. And those returnees have some unfinished business.

"We have a very experienced team returning, with three of them having run at the state meet the last three years," Stewart said. "This is a good group of kids, led by five seniors that have seen a lot of success. I know they feel they have a good chance of placing very high at the state meet. They have never won the league title and after losing by only two points at last year's league meet, they are really motivated."

The returnees include five seniors in Bradley Axe, Matthew Burden, Kyle Christman, Joel Gaier and Lucas Huber, junior Patrick Toller and sophomore Cameron Bowersock.

They are joined by hopefuls like junior Dylan Berner and freshman Caleb Gaier.

Huber was 23rd at the state meet last year.

Stewart thinks the league will be loaded this fall.

"Last year we had three league teams qualify for the state meet and this year's league will again be loaded," he said. "Fort Loramie should be the preseason favorite to win the state as they return everyone from their team that finished fifth in 2015. Russia had what was an off year for them last year but should return to form this year. Botkins has qualified to the state meet the last two years and Houston should be very strong this year. Starting with the league meet, the last four weeks of the 2016 cross-country season should be a County battle each week."

Girls cross country

The girls cross country team is a much different story than the boys, with only one letter-winner returning in junior Gracen Rogers.

"We have two first-year runners but they have not run cross country before so I have no real handle on what they may be able to do," Stewart said. "We return only two runners from last year's team. We lost a lot of seniors and only one returning runner has experience in Gracen Rogers. I really just want the team to develop an appreciation for distance running. We will have all of them back next year, so this is a year I want them to learn what distance running is about and learn to appreciate the sport. I have already seen a lot of them find that satisfaction from completing a run and going farther on a run than they thought they could."



Jason Allig | Sidney Daily News
Colin Wuebker looks for some running room in action last season. He is back for the Rockets this year.

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Six return for Botkins volleyball

Staff report

BOTKINS — The Lady Trojan volleyball team will be trying to improve on last year's 6-16 record, and head coach Bryan Trego, in his 12th year as head coach, has six returning letter-winners to help him do just that.

"We bring back a lot of experience from last year and with six seniors, we are looking to them for leadership," said Trego. "This team has the talent to be very successful. I believe they have the work ethic, attitude and desire to surprise a lot of teams this year."

Jenna Pitts, Kayla Kohler, Alexis Jones and Paige Oakley are three-year letter-winners that are back for the Lady Trojans this fall.

Pitts set the digs record at Botkins last season, with 510 during the regular campaign. She won't be doing that this year, however, as she's been moved to setter. "Jenna is very talented and we look for her to help lead the offense this year," Trego said.

Kohler will be the other half of the setter combination. "Kayla is a vocal leader and really keeps the energy up when we need it," said the coach.

Jones is a senior libero who moves to that spot from her defensive specialist position a year ago. "This summer she really worked hard on her passing," said Trego. "And she has embraced being our libero. She has a great attitude and really wants to learn."

Oakley is also on the move, going from right side to middle blocker. "She is working hard on making the transition and is looking to have a great year," said the coach.

Casey Woodall is a senior letter-winner who is also moving, from right side to middle blocker this season. "Casey has been a dominant blocker for us and this year she has really stepped up her hitting," said Trego. "She will be a force at the net."

There are two juniors returning, both outside hitters in Danielle Schwartz and Sarah Bergman. Schwartz is in her third year of varsity play and Bergman her second, and Bergman moves from middle blocker to outside.

"Danielle has really become a leader and matured as a player," said Trego. "We're very excited to see what she can do. Sarah played only front row for us last year but we look for her to be an all-around player this year. She's worked hard in the offseason to become a seasoned volleyball player."

Add to that list three other girls looking to break into the lineup in senior defensive specialist Maddi Okuley, junior right side Alexis Vehorn and sophomore right side Janelle Greve.

"Maddi took a year off and we are happy to have her back," said Trego. "Alexis will be seeing varsity time on our right side, and Janelle has really matured as a player since last season. She is very coachable and is improving every day."

Boys cross country

Coach Ryan Gutman lost a lot of talent off boys cross country teams that qualified for the state meet the past two years, the first time that's happened since the '92 and '93 seasons.

"We lost some very successful seniors, but don't tell these guys that," said Gutman. "They have trained as hard as anyone in the county this summer and we will be ready to roll."

There are four runners back in senior Konnor Burmeister, senior Jonathan Yenser, who was the alternate on the state team, and juniors Austin Fullenkamp and Mathew Prout.

The top newcomers are expected to be senior Alex Jutte, who ran half the season last year, and freshmen Tristen Burns and Elliot Goubeaux.

"Without a doubt, our league is one of the toughest in the state and the past two seasons, we've sent three teams from our county to compete at state. That's a testament to the coaching, athletes and quality of cross country programs in Shelby County. This year, we have five quality teams that will place high at the regional. It should be a fun season."

Girls cross country

Gutmann has five runners back in girls cross country, but one of them is not Chloe Flora, one of the best ever in Shelby County who will be running for the University of Dayton this fall.

Back are juniors Cassie McGowan, Hannah Bailey, Payton Amstutz and Brooklyn Flora, and sophomore Adrianna Jutte.

"This is an exciting year for us," said Gutman. "Despite losing some successful seniors, we have a strong core of runners returning. I'm really looking forward to seeing which of them will take on a leadership role. We need to establish that early and then the sky is the limit for this group."

Golf

Coach Brett Meyer said this year's golf team will continue the rebuilding process, and he has some good players to help.

"We're looking to continue our rebuilding process and are looking for solid scores to finish off the three and four spots," he said.

He said senior Josh Miller, a three-year letterman, and Nick Fischio, a sophomore who has been the leading scorer so far this season for the Trojans, will be the leaders.

"Josh is a three-year letterman and was second-team all-County as a sophomore and first team last year," said Meyer. "And he was a district qualifier. Nick had a really productive summer and will be much improved."

Justin Williamson and Anthony Opperman, both sophomores, return, and the newcomers are Ethan Homan, Zane Egbert and Joshua Brown.

Girls soccer

Kendra Berryman and Caitlin Lane have taken over the Botkins girls soccer program as co-coaches this season, and will have to contend with a small team. But they do have experience returning.

"We have a small team, and a very young team, but a lot of skill," said Berryman. "We are looking forward to having a great season with a lot of growth as a team. We have no seniors, which is not necessarily a bad thing. Our juniors are doing very



Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

Botkins' Jenna Pitts (right) is a three-year letter-winner and is back for her senior season.

well filling those leadership positions on the field and off the field, and the best part is we know we get to keep them around for another year. They have been working very hard as a team and on an individual level, but most importantly they all have a heart for the game. We have been very blessed with community support as well, and can't wait to see what the season has in store for us."

Juniors returning from last season include forward/striker Jenna Free, center and midfielders Paige Lane and center and wing Claire Peterman.

There are also five sophomores back. Maddie Egbert and Taira Greve are both defenders, Katie Egbert is a midfielder and a defender, Grace Homan is back in goal and Lindsey Okuley is a midfielder.

The top newcomers will be five freshmen in midfielder Madison Gerstner, defenders Olivia Jones and Kinley Topp, defensive/midfielders Hannah Ott and striker/forward Courtney Sutton.

Boys soccer

The Trojans finished 9-7-1 last season and won the Western Ohio Soccer League championship under longtime coach Kevin Lynch.

Lynch has been the head coach for 11 years and has an impressive overall record of 111 wins, 52 losses and 26 ties in his career.

"We are looking for another successful winning season," said Lynch. "We have quite a bit of experience coming back from last year, but we did lose three key seniors from last year that we will need to replace. We have a hard-working group of freshmen competing to fill these positions along with a couple of sophomores looking to step up and take a bigger role on the team. As always, the main thing for us is to stay healthy throughout the season, which is difficult to do with playing 16 games in eight weeks. Therefore, we will need to develop a the freshman class to be prepared to step up and be prepared in case an injury happens."

Returnees include senior midfielders Kaleb Hanby and Tanner Russell, senior forward Joe Shuga, and senior defenders Trent Egbert, Micah Smock and Bryce Swank, junior goalie Ethan Butcher, and sophomore mids Isaac Frey and Cody Meyer.

The freshman class is a good one and Lynch looks for contributions from defenders Andrew Monnin, Joshua Johnson and Dean Butcher, midfielders Colton Harshbarger, Clayton Harshbarger, Travis Barhorst, Alex Bajwa and Cole Miller, and forward Marcus Lee.

"We are looking to compete for another league title," Lynch said. "We realize that this is not going to be an easy task, but we are willing to accept the challenge. The WOSL is a young league, but it is getting more competitive year after year. We are proud to be a part of the league and represent the league in non-league contests and in the tournament."



Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

Casel Woodall of Botkins goes up for a block in action last season. She returns for the Lady Trojans this season.

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Expectations high for Redskin football

2-time state qualifier Knouff back in girls golf

Staff report

FORT LORAMIE — In head coach Whit Parks' first season as the head coach of the Fort Loramie Redskins, he must have wondered which end was up in the early going.

His Redskins went into week 5 with an 0-4 record, but he masterfully turned things around. And from that difficult beginning, his team rallied with six straight wins and earned a spot in the postseason playoffs. When it was all over, the Redskins were a final 6-5.

"Based on how we started out, I was very pleased with it," said Parks when asked about his first season at the school. "We finished strong and really improved as we went along. And the big thing is, after those first four losses, the attitude remained great and nobody hung their heads."

Fort Loramie is heading into its final season in the Northwest Central Conference, heading to the Cross County Conference for the 2017 season.

Parks goes into the campaign with a lot of optimism and high expectations thanks to a lot of returning players. He has nine back on the defensive side, including six of the seven players who made up the D-line and linebackers. And on the other side of the ball, there are six back, with many of the names being the same as on defense.

But perhaps the biggest boost is at quarterback. Austin Siegel started the season, but went down midway through with a knee injury that required surgery. But Parks reports he's completely healed from it and is ready to go.

"He's not a pure runner but he can run the ball," the coach said. "And he has a real strong arm. Missing half the year last year was tough, and his biggest thing right now is decision-making. But we see improvement in that all the time."

Up front he has players like junior Sam Puthoff, who started all 11 games at tackle, returning. He's 6-foot-3, 240. "Had a great summer. Lot of improvement," Parks said.

Nolan Holthaus is another junior returning on the line, along with senior Tate Sholtis at center and senior Frank Meyer at guard. And senior Nate Pleiman is back at tight end. "He had a lot of big catches for us last year," said Parks.

Carter Mescher started the last four games in the backfield last year as a



David Pence | Sidney Daily News

Fort Loramie's Carter Mescher runs for yards last year. Mescher started the last four games as a freshman last season, so he's back for the Redskins this season.

freshman, so he's being counted on this season. Jake Ward will see action there and Cody Gasson, who played mostly defense last year, will be a wingback.

On defense, Pleiman and Meyer will be the ends and Puthoff and Holthaus the tackles, with Sholtis rotating in. Sophomore Colin Detrick is 6-2, 290 and will also be used up front.

The linebacking corp is led by a couple of veterans in Daniel Berning, a senior and the leading tackler last year, and junior Mike Hoying. And the defensive backfield is experienced with Gasson and senior Darrin Turner at the corners, Mescher at safety and Ward at strong safety.

"I like our team speed," said Parks. "I think that might be one of our strengths this season. But the key thing will be to keep the kids healthy."

Volleyball

Coach John Rodgers has won 175 games in his 10 years as the head coach of the Lady Redskin spikers, and he looks to add to that number this season.

The Lady Redskins were one year removed from a Division IV state championship when they finished with a 19-9 record last season.

Only four players return from that team, however, and all are seniors in outside hitter Caleigh Barhorst, outside hitter Sara Stang, libero Taylor Ernst and middle hitter Maeve Hilgefert.

Barhorst led the Lady Redskins in kills last season with 278 and ace serves with 43 during the regular season, and Stang added 112, so Rodgers has his top two hitters back. And Ernst had 150

digs last season, second only to Barhorst's 160. Hilgefert, meanwhile, led in solo blocks with 14 and total blocks with 47.

"I'm very excited about this team," he said, "They have worked extremely hard this summer, not just with volleyball, but physically to prepare for what will be a long, tough season."

He has five juniors on the team in middle blockers Brook Raterman and Morgan Holscher, right sides Sophia Albers and Abby Holthaus and setter Hattie Meyer. There are also three sophomores in defensive specialist Emily Austin, setter Aleah Frilling and outside/middle blocker Chloe Stang.

Rodgers looks for a good battle in the County race.

"Of course, Jackson Center is the favorite but the SCL is tough," he said. "Just look at what the teams do in the tournament. As I always say, 'on any given night'."

Boys golf

Coach Brad Turner has his golf team off to a good start so far, with an overall 30-5 record.

The Redskins went into the season with three lettermen returning, led by first-team All-County and sectional co-medalist Brad Gottemoeller, who is a senior. He had a 39.2 average last year and just barely missed qualifying to state, losing on the third hole of a playoff at the district.

Also back are Craig Eilerman and Shea Swick, both juniors, while the newcomers this season are seniors Ethan Broerman and Alex Wilt, sophomores Mitchell Puthoff, Eli Rosengarten and Jared Middendorf, and freshman Zach Pleiman.

"We had a very good summer with the guys getting out and playing as a team, on their own, and in tournaments," said Turner. "Brad Gottemoeller has been a great leader as he has led by example and helped in getting some of the younger golfers to take advantage of some opportunities out there. As one of the best high school golfers in the area, we will rely on him every match to put up a good score for us. We've got two other letter winners back in Craig Eilerman and Shea Swick and they bring some good experience to the team. A lot of the success of our team this season hinges on what the newcomers bring to the table. Luckily we've got guys battling it out for the three spots available. That competition has been good so far this summer and I think it will make all of them better golfers in the short term for this season and beyond as all of them are freshmen or sophomores."

"The league was very strong last year and I think it will continue to be strong," he added. "Fort Loramie, Russia and Fairlawn all qualified for the district and both Fairlawn and Russia will be good again this year. Fairlawn returns pretty much everyone so I look for them to very much be in the mix. Anna will be at the top as well with some good golfers returning. The dual matches will be interesting and should make for a very fun day at the league tournament at the end of the season."

Girls golf

Mike Anthony's team finished 14-4 in dual matches last year and is off to a

good start again this season behind the sensational play of senior Emily Knouff, who was the medalist in every tournament early in the season and is a two-time state qualifier.

She is one of five players returning this season, the others being seniors Kayla Rosengarten and Megan Koppin, and sophomores Amy Eilerman and Rylee Poeppelman.

Two freshmen are also on the squad in Savannah Henning and Maddison Lessing.

"We are looking forward to a very successful year," said Anthony, in his 20th year. "We have the entire team returning, led by seniors Emily Knouff, Kayla Rosengarten and Megan Koppin. We will be attempting to qualify to the district tournament for the 10th consecutive year and our ultimate goal is going to the state tournament. All the girls have been working hard and should improve their scores from last year."

Boys cross country

One County coach already called the Loramie boys cross country team the favorite to win the state this season, and it's easy to see why.

Coach Dennis Prenger has nine lettermen returning this season from a team that qualified for the state meet and went on to finish fifth in Division 3.

The returnees include seniors Tom Ballas, Alan Holdheide and Nick Pleiman, juniors Jay Kacin, Collin Luthman and Noah Siegel, and sophomores Joe Ballas, Jake Rethman and Gavin Schulze.

The rest of the team includes senior Luke Stager, sophomore Charles Wray and freshmen Jordan Drees, Nathan Hess, Evan Luthman and Kaden Mescher.

"We have the bulk of our team returning so we have high expectations going into this year, 'Our seniors will be counted on to provide leadership and score well for us. Tom Ballas is extremely talented and motivated. After the team's performance last season and again qualifying for the state track meet in June, he is brimming with confidence. He has worked extremely hard this summer and is poised to have another great season."

"Alan Holdheide will be a key for us and if he can improve on last year's times that will bode well for us," he continued. "Nick and Luke are great leaders but I know they want to be significant contributors on race day, and that competitive approach will benefit the squad this season. Juniors Jay Kacin, Collin Luthman and Noah Siegel had great sophomore seasons and with a year of physical maturing and racing experience they should be even better."

"The sophomore class is as talented as any and is led by Jake Rethman and Joe Ballas. Jake was All-State last year at the state meet, and both he and Joe had phenomenal spring track seasons. Gavin Schulze had a great freshman season and but he is definitely a runner that I have high expectations for. Charles Wray will be looked to for additional team depth. We add a couple freshmen this year that will be counted on to compete and make us a better team."

Girls cross country

There are four runners back for the girls at Loramie, including senior Kaitlyn Luebke, juniors Avory Smith and Jenna Thomas and sophomore Erin Chaney.

The rest of the team is senior Marissa Rethman and freshmen Danielle Berning, Kennedy Gephart, Paige Rethman and Hannah Siegel.

"Our high school girls' team graduated a lot of athletes, but we are excited about the future as the freshman class will add a core of talented runners that we can build around this season and beyond," Prenger said. "Kaitlyn Luebke is the only senior with varsity experience so we will lean heavily on her leadership to guide this team. Jenna Thomas, Avory Smith and Erin Chaney are our only other returning lettermen so we will need those girls and the freshmen to mix it up early for us to compete with the area's best. I think the league is shaping up to be very competitive but it appears all the league teams have important runners to replace."



File photo

Emily Knouff has been the top girls golfer in the area for a long while now, and the two-time state qualifier is back for her senior season.

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New Russia coach inherits veteran team

Staff report

RUSSIA — The Russia Lady Raiders have a new coach in volleyball this season, with Aaron Watkins taking over the program with a wealth of returning talent.

Watkins inherits players that were on a 14-10 team last season, including 4-8 in County play. Most of the players are returning from that team, so Watkins is optimistic.

“We have tons of talent returning from last year and I’ve been eager to get the season started,” said Watkins. “We have had a strong summer and are ready to build on that. I will be looking for some of our underclassmen to step up along with all of our returning talent to make for a successful season. I’m very excited to be coaching at the varsity level in the SCL, where you and your team need to be ready night in and night out.”

The list of returnees is a long one and includes senior defensive specialists Faith Magoto and Chloe Sherman, senior setter Katie Swartz and senior middle blocker/right side Chris Gaerke.

Also back are four juniors in outside hitters Cameo Wilson and Claudia Counts, defensive specialist Lexi Monnin, and libero Whitney Pleiman.

The sophomore letter-winners are middle/right side Samantha Gaerke, outside hitter Faith Apple and setter Jenna Cordonnier.

The top newcomers to the varsity will be senior middle/right side Rachel York senior right side/defensive specialist Julia Monnin and sophomore outside hitter Morgan Wenrick.

Boys cross country

Coach Doug Foster returns for the Raiders, who are looking to rebound from a rare year when they didn’t qualify for the Division III state meet. They finished fourth in the County and fifth in the district and regional.

Graduating off that team were Caleb Ball (Ohio University) and Andrew Ball.

Returning lettermen include seniors Alex Seger and Ethan Monnier, junior Zach Bell and sophomores Jordan Busse and Gavin George.

“We are looking to bounce back after not qualifying for state for the first time in 10 years,” Foster said. “We have four solid runners returning in Alex Seger, Ethan Monnier, Zach Bell and Gavin George. Our fifth through seven runners will determine how good of a team we can be at the end of the season.”

Fighting for those spots with Busse will be sophomores Noah Magoto and Henry Tumbush and freshman Ajay Seger, Will Magoto Andrew DeLoye, Mason Dapore and Dawson Luthman.

“We want to finish as high as we can at the invitationals, win the Shelby County Preview, the Shelby County League meet, the Dayton Districts and either win the Southwest Regional or place in the top four to get to state. Placing in the top ten at the state meet would cap off a fantastic year. If we stay healthy and injury free, our goals for the campaign are very reachable.”

Foster sees Fort Loramie and Anna as the teams to beat in the SCAL, with his team close behind. He also expects Houston to be a much improved team.

Girls cross country

Foster also coaches the girls. The Lady Raiders finished 166-12 last year and won the County, district and regional meets, placing sixth at the state meet.

Graduating off that team were Lauren Heaton (Navy) and Molly Kearns (Ohio University).

Returning letter-winners include seniors Shae Goubeaux and Audrey Gariety, juniors Megan Frazier and Becky Pinchot, and sophomores Anna Fiessinger and Claire Meyer.

“This year’s team possesses a mixture of youth and experience going into the season,” Foster said. “Six of our top eight runners are back from last year’s squad and all six girls have tremendous ability and I feel all six will have outstanding seasons.”



Maddie Borchers is back for her senior season with the Russia girls golf team.

Also returning are sophomores Emma Delaet, Kaylee Hiatt and Hannah Vallandingham, along with freshman Clare Caldwell, Jessica Colby, Natalie Klosterman, Andrea Monnin and Sarah Pinchot.

“Our team goals are to place as high as we can at the big invitationals, win the Shelby County Preview, the Shelby County League meet, the Dayton Districts, the Southwest Regional and qualify for the state meet and finish in the top five (in Division III). If we can stay healthy and injury free, our goals this season are all very obtainable.”

Foster sees his team as the favorite in the County, because of the Lady Raiders’ experience and being defending champs. He expects a challenge from Fort Loramie and Botkins.

Girls golf

The girls golf team is coached by Terry Daugherty again and he has two players back in senior Maddie Borchers and sophomore Shae Borchers.

Also playing for the Lady Raiders are sophomore Raven Boerger and freshmen Hayley Supinger and Klaryssa O’Reilly.

“We lost four senior letter-winners from last year,” said Daugherty. “And two of our girls are new to the sport.”

Boys golf

The boys also have just two lettermen back in senior Dylan Cordonnier and junior Jack Dapore from a team that tied for the County title last year with an 11-1 record and was 106-20 overall.

The top newcomers will be senior Clay George, junior Brandon Koverman and sophomores Will Sherman and Tyler Scott.

“We lost four senior letter-winners from last year and we’re hoping five or six from last year and four players from last year’s JV team continue to improve,” Daugherty said.



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Gibson takes over Houston volleyball

HOUSTON — Misty Gibson takes over as Houston volleyball coach.

This is her third year at the school, and she ascends to the head coaching spot after being the junior varsity coach the past two seasons. She has also coached JV at both Fort Loramie and Versailles.

The Lady Wildcats are coming off an 11-14 season and finished 2-10 in the County.

Graduating off that team were Jenna Mounts, Jenna Winner and Katherine Everett.

Returning letter-winners include senior defensive specialist Allie Voisard, senior outside/right side hitter Jenna Green, junior outside hitter Sarah Monnier and sophomore middle blocker Jessica Monnier.

They will be joined by sophomore setter Alyssa Kemp, sophomore middle Hayden Riesenbeck, sophomore outside hitter/defensive specialist Olivia Bowser, sophomore libero Hannah Bixler, sophomore defensive specialist Cassidy Mayse and freshman outside/right side hitter Rockelle Anderson.

"This season, our team will be made up of two seniors, one junior and seven sophomores. We will be a very young team," Gibson said. "With the majority of our players being first-year letter-winners, the focus for this season will not be our record, but building our young team for the future."

Boys cross country

Ron Boeke, Bill McKinney and Tyler Roeth are back to coach the Wildcats. Boeke is a long-time coach, while McKinney and Roeth were D-I runners in college.

Houston finished fifth in the County last season.

Graduating off that team were Troy Riley, Azen Reier and Malachi Wissman.

Returning lettermen included senior Devyn Ostrander, juniors Parker Cox and Dakota Francis, and sophomores Ethan Knouff, Tristin Freistuhler, Jacob Slater and Dominic Beaver.

"We have several letter winners returning from last year's regional qualifying team and a good incoming freshman class," the coaches said. "We lost some very good senior leadership from last year so we will need some of the underclassmen to become leaders on this team along with our lone senior Devyn Ostrander."

"We will still be young but have some good talent in our sophomore and freshman classes. Our returning lettermen Dakota Francis, Parker Cox, Ethan Knouff, Tristin Freistuhler, and Jacob Slater have regional meet experience from last year and have worked hard this summer. Freshmen Blake Jacobs, Joseph Earl, Wesley Jester and Patrick Meiring had good track seasons last spring so they will be expected to step into varsity and contribute right away. Expectations will be set high based upon the success of last year. As long as we develop and can stay healthy as a team we expect to compete well in our regular season meets and run well in the league and post season meets."

Girls cross country

Boeke, McKinney and Roeth will coach the girls as well. The Lady Wildcats were fourth in the SCAL last year.

Returning letter-winners include seniors Emma Mertz and Kaitlyn Ellison, junior Morgan Ely, and sophomores Hollie Voisard and Addie White. Senior Allie Voisard is also out for the squad.

"The girls team returns regional qualifiers Emma Mertz and Morgan Ely from the past two years, so we will look for them to be the front runners and team leaders," the coaches said. "Senior Allie Voisard is running



Houston's Morgan Ely was a regional qualifier in cross country and returns for the Lady Wildcats this season.



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Just four starters back for Wildcats

MINSTER — After winning a state Division 6 championship in Geron Stokes' first year as the head football coach at Minster, the Wildcats finished 6-4 the following season and just missed a return trip to the playoffs.

But last season, Stokes guided the Wildcats to an 8-2 record and made another run deep into the post-season to finish at 10-3 overall.

But if the Wildcats are going to make it three play-off berths in Stokes' four years, it will have to be with an inexperienced squad as most of the starters from last season were lost to graduation.

Heading that list is quarterback Josh Nixon, who will play baseball at Dayton next year. He left Minster as far and away the all-time leader in passing yards and pass completions. He threw for an amazing 8,415 yards in his four years, and to put that into perspective, No. 2 on the list threw for 4,917 yards. Nixon also completed a school-record 566 passes in his four years, and that is 162 more than the runner-up all-time.

"We lost 19 seniors so we have a ton of holes to fill," said Stokes. "And we have to replace some great players. We don't have a Josh Nixon. Those players are few and far between. So our identity will be different and we're going to need kids to step up and fill in."

"But our kids have learned how to do things the right way and we feel good about how our kids approach practices," he added. "They are getting better all the time."

He has just eight seniors on this year's team. Among the few players he has returning is three-year letterman Bryce Schmiesing. Even though he caught 67 passes for over 1,000 yards last season, Schmiesing will play some running back for the Wildcats this season, as well as playing linebacker on defense, Stokes said.

Jonny Niemeyer is another returning player at wide receiver and cornerback. "He's a great athlete and competes well," said Stokes.

Up front on the line on both sides of the ball is Isaac Dorsten, but he's the only returnee there. And at outside linebacker, Jared Huelsman is expected to lead the defense. He's still just a junior. "He did a great job as a sophomore," Stokes said. Huelsman was third on the team in tackles last season and first

in tackles-for-loss.

Beyond those four, however, there will be new faces in the lineup. When asked about the top newcomers, Stokes replied "There's about 17 of them that will have to start."

"We love this, and it's fun," Stokes continued. "It's easy to coach a Josh Nixon or an Eli Wolf. We have great kids and we coach to see if we can maximize their abilities. We've never chased a result. It's about how you can get the best out of every single kid."

"We're expecting everybody to compete, and we have great kids that have learned how to approach practice and the season from the class ahead of them."

Volleyball

Cami Garman returns as the head coach of the Minster Lady Wildcat spikers and her team is coming off a 14-10 mark last year, including 4-5 in the tough Midwest Athletic Conference.

She has four starters returning off that team, including setter Hayley Baumer, who had 517 assists during the regular season last year.

Also back is outside hitter Jordyn Heitbrink, like Baumer a senior. Heitbrink led the Lady Wildcats in kills last season with 201 and also had 248 digs, second on the team. Her 44 ace serves also led the team.

Another returning starter is junior middle blocker Paige Thobe, who finished the season with 150 kills.

The fourth returning starter is senior outside hitter Rosie Westerbeck, who had 162 kills last season, second on the team, and 121 digs.

Heitbrink and Westerbeck were both second-team all-conference last season.

Key additions this season include senior libero/defensive specialist Paige Purdy, senior opposite hitter Sara Ripplloh, senior middle Carly Barhorst and freshman defensive specialist Emily Stubbs.

Rounding out the team for coach Garman are junior defensive specialist Jenna Nixon, junior middle blocker Taylor Kogge, junior outside hitter Regan Wuebker, junior setter Emma Goodwin, junior outside hitter Taylor Hoying and junior outside hitter Remy Francis.

"Our strengths will be team chemistry, a quick multi-faceted offense and aggressiveness," said Garman. "And as always we will continue to focus on consistency and passing."

Boys cross country

The Minster boys won the district and qualified for the state meet last season in cross country, and with some of the top runners returning from that squad, it should be another good year for coach Larry Topp, his 31st with the program.

Among the returnees are all-Midwest Athletic Conference runners Carter Pohl, a junior, and Jon Albers, a sophomore. They were fifth and ninth, respectively, in the meet, leading Minster to the team championship.

Also back are two-year letter-winners Andrew Broering and Ryan Cavanaugh, both juniors.

Looking to fill that fifth spot are sophomore Aaron Huwer and freshmen Austin Felice and Luke Barga.

"The athletes are working very hard and are looking to find their spot on the team," said Topp. "We are very young again this year, with no seniors in the top seven at this time. The young athletes are going to have to mature and fill the open varsity spots. We're in unfamiliar territory without any seniors in the top seven. We are looking to young freshmen and sophomores to be a big part of the solution to the open slots on our team. They are taking the bull by the horns and working to be the answer and we hope to be ready this season."

There are two seniors on the team in Alex Blanco and Kyle Prenger. The juniors are the three lettermen, and there are four sophomores in Jon Albers, Aaron Huwer, Jack Pleiman and Jacob Yeager. The freshmen are Felice, Barga, Kayden Baker, Isaac Heid, Luke Jacobs and Forrest Kitzmiller.

He said St. Henry is the early favorite in the league this season, and hopes his Wildcats are in the mix by the end of the season.

Girls cross country

Minster had another outstanding season in girls cross country, running to a second-place finish in the Division 3 state meet.

Of the seven girls who ran in the state meet for the Lady Wildcats, four of them are returning, led by Morgan Pohl, a senior who was 13th in the state meet last year.

Madeline Magoto, a sophomore this year, was 36th at state last year, and Cassie Francis, now a junior, finished 48th.

In addition, Kaitlynn Albers was 62nd last year at state as a freshman.

Schroer returns to lead Lady Rangers

Staff report

NEW KNOXVILLE — Kay Webb starts her second year as head volleyball coach of the New Knoxville Lady Rangers, and if her team improves on last year, it's going to be an outstanding campaign.

The Lady Rangers finished with a 16-10 record, including 4-5 in the tough Midwest Athletic Conference. And with an all-league player returning as well as six other letter-winners, optimism is running high for this season.

"This year we will have a mixture of experience and inexperience," Webb said. "We had to replace some key positions and will be young in a few of those. We're going to take the games one at a time and hope to achieve even more success than last year. Playing in the MAC means challenges each week and we're working to have the chance

to play for a title in the end."

Heading the list of returning players is senior setter/outside hitter Kenzie Schroer, who was all-conference last season after handing out over 600 assists during the regular season. She was also second on the team in digs with 216.

Also back are senior right side Jenna Schwieterman, senior setter/outside hitter Shayna Bierlein, senior defensive specialist Ashlyn Miller, senior right side Brianna Jurosic, senior defensive specialist Renee Schrolucke and junior right side Caitlin Lammers.

Bierlein was the team's third-highest in kills with 116 last season, and Lammers was the team's leader in blocks, with 54 total and 23 solo.

Also looking for playing time are senior setter Kayla Jones, senior outside/right side Jadyn Lauth, junior defensive specialists Faith Homan and

Johanna Frankenberg, and sophomore middle blockers Tasia Lauth and Taylor Doty.

Golf

The New Knoxville golf team started its season a few weeks back, with coach Terry Halko having seven lettermen returning from a year ago, when the Rangers were 4-15 in dual matches.

Returning are seniors Robert Egbert, Nick Thobe, Corey Kuck and Ben Menke, juniors Nathan Tinnerman and Jack Bartholomew and sophomore Ray Newton.

The top newcomers are juniors Ben Lammers and Isaiah Smith and sophomore Ray Newton.

We have a lot of experience, with four seniors that have played all through high school," said Halko. "We have a strong group of underclassmen who are supporting them. I really anticipate this

team taking their games to the next level and competing night in and night out all season. And I expect them to be playing their best golf by the end of the season."

Cross country

Coach Samantha Fledderjohann moves up from the junior high program to the high school this season and has just one letterman returning in Sean Quigley.

"After several years of very low numbers, we are growing," said the coach. "I look for big things from our returning senior Sean Quigley. Incoming freshman Dylan Koenig will also be a very competitive runner at the meets this fall."

The girls will have a full roster this year for the first time in a while.

Abby Maggi and Jacklyn Leffel will lead the team, and senior Ashley Scott is new to the team this season.

15 lettermen back for Bremen

Staff report

NEW BREMEN — New Bremen is hoping to improve on last season's 1-9 record in football this season under coach Chris Schmidt.

"We are very eager to build on the progress we made last year," said Schmidt. "We like the direction of the program and are excited about the future. Our next step is learning how to compete against the other schools in our league."

He has 15 lettermen returning from last season.

The list includes senior lineman Max Messick (6-1, 230), senior fullback/linebacker Garrett Doherty, senior running back/defensive back Avery Powers, junior wide receiver/DB Caleb Alig, junior lineman Cale Brackman (5-10, 186), junior running back/DB Levi Clem, junior fullback/linebacker Zach

Flaute, junior quarterback/DB Avery Powers, junior tight end/linebacker Wyatt Puthoff, sophomore tight end/D-lineman Brandon Heitkamp, sophomore lineman Jacob Rindler (6-3, 208), and sophomore running back/linebacker Nicholas Wells.

Coach Schmidt also looks for contributions from sophomore lineman Casey Parker (6-0, 210), sophomore running back/DB Grant Selby and freshman quarterback Nolan Barhorst.

"We are young, enthusiastic and eager to turn the program around," said Schmidt. "Clem, Powers and Hemmelgarn should provide speed offensively, and Bornhorst may start at quarterback as a freshman. Doherty and Messick provide senior leadership and are battle-tested. Dicke, Rindler and Heitkamp have great potential as well. Our biggest concern is self-inflicted errors that prove costly against good competition."



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Tough schedule for inexperienced V-Tigers

Staff report

VERSAILLES – On the schedule for the 2016 Versailles football team are four programs that have won state championships in the past two seasons.

The Tigers will have to play all four in a one-month span from Sept. 23 through Oct. 21, beginning with 2014 Division 7 state champion Marion Local and culminating with 2014 Division 6 state champion Minster. Along with those two powerhouses is 2015 Division 7 state champion Fort Recovery on Sept. 30 and four-time defending Division 5 state champion Coldwater on Oct. 14.

“That’s why we take it one week at a time,” Versailles coach Adam Miller said. “Try not to look at the season as a whole.”

Versailles’ schedule would be a daunting task for any team but could be very treacherous for a Tiger squad that has a lot of holes to fill from last year’s team, which went 4-6 following a playoff appearance in 2014.

Miller likes the potential of his team but concedes that most of his players haven’t yet proven themselves in varsity games.

“Coming into this year I think we have a lot of potential to do some good things,” he said. “The biggest thing up in the air is we don’t have a whole lot of experience coming back. We do have some returning starters.”

Perhaps the biggest hole to fill is left by running back Collin Peters, who earned first team all-Midwest Athletic Conference last year after running for almost 1,200 yards as a senior.

Instead of trying to replace Peters with a single player, Versailles is changing to a Wing-T offense with a host of backs sharing the running back duties.

“Instead of showcasing one running back, we felt like we have several good running backs,” Miller said. “We want to try to get more running backs on the field.”

Versailles also has to replace quarterback Jared Niekamp, who threw for more than 1,300 yards as a

senior last year. Alex Wendel, who caught 32 passes as a receiver in 2015, is leading the quarterback competition for Versailles despite not having played the position since his freshman year.

The Tigers expect big things from AJ Ahrens as their starting tight end.

Versailles has a veteran group on the offensive line with five seniors currently slated for starting spots.

Jacob Heitkamp will start at left tackle for a third consecutive season. Eric Knapke has moved from center to left guard, and Bo Bey is moving into the starting center spot. Cole Schlater is slated to be the starting right guard while Grant Keller returns as the starting right tackle. Jeffery Ware and Ben Albers also are pushing for playing time along the line.

On defense Versailles will continue to employ a 4-3 scheme.

Levi Sherman and Loudon Keihl are leading the way for playing time at defensive tackle. At end, the Tigers will rotate in a number of players, most of whom also are playing offensive line, to keep them fresh.

Jonny Moorman and Kurtis Rutschilling, who each had 90 tackles last season, return to lead the Versailles defense from the linebacker position.

In the defensive backfield Versailles has a pair of three-year starters in Sam Barga and Mitchell Paulus. They’ll be joined by George Grow and Tanner Bey to form an athletic group.

Miller would like to see his team contend for a playoff spot in 2016 after a disappointing 2015 season.

Boys golf

VERSAILLES — Pete DiSalvo returns as coach for his 36th season.

Versailles finished 10-2 overall last year and 7-2 in the MAC, sharing the MAC title.

Graduating were first team All-MAC selection Jacob Watren, second team All-MAC selection Griffen Riegle and honorable mention All-MAC selection Michael Hemmelgarn.

Returns include seniors Nicholas Litten Stonebraker (first team All-MAC, team captain) and Kyle

Cotner (second team All-MAC). Also returning are junior Alex Ahrens and sophomore Alex Kesler.

“We will be inexperienced starting this year,” DiSalvo said. “I believe as the season progresses, we will become a much improved team. With a little luck, I feel we can compete again for a MAC title.”

DiSalvo sees St. Henry as the favorite in the MAC.

“They were co-champs last year and return the majority of their players,” DiSalvo said. “I feel, if they falter, Versailles, Delphos St. Johns or Parkway will challenge for the title. We have the MAC tournament at home this year, so that is an advantage for us.”

DiSalvo said the MAC will again be deep.

“I don’t want to slight any of the other teams in the league. They are all capable of making a run for the title. Our Division II Southwest sectional is very competitive and we will have to play our best to qualify for the district tournament.”

DiSalvo said the key will be how the team progresses as the season goes on.

Volleyball

The Lady Tigers have a new coach this season and Kenzie Bruggema, and she will have a tall and talented team to work with in her first year.

There are four seniors on the squad, led by captain and outside hitter Kami Ording. Also from that class are defensive specialist Lindsey Didier, setter Bailey Huffman and right side Taylor Tyo.

The juniors are led by 6-foot-1 middle blocker Danielle Winner and defensive specialist Kami McEl-downey, who are also captains.

The junior class is seven strong on the varsity. The other five include defensive specialists Kate Stammen, Cassie Peters and Adia Brooks, setter Ellen Peters and outside hitter Mallory Marshall.

There is one sophomore in 5-11 right side Mallory Marshal and a freshman in 6-1 middle blocker Lindsey Winner.

Versailles did not make it to the Division 3 state tournament last season, breaking a string of two straight appearances, including a state championship in 2013.

2015 fall sports league standings

Final 2015 fall standings

FOOTBALL

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League All

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North

Vandalia 4-1 7-4
Trotwood 3-2 10-4
Piqua 3-2 6-5
Sidney 2-3 6-4
Greenville 2-3 4-6
Troy 1-4 2-8

Central

Wayne 5-0 14-1
Centerville 4-1 6-4
Beavercreek 3-2 7-3
Northmont 2-3 3-7
Springfield 1-4 3-7
Fairmont 0-5 2-8

South

Miamisburg 5-0 9-2
Springboro 4-1 9-3
Xenia 3-2 5-5
Lebanon 2-3 4-6
Fairborn 1-4 2-8
West Carrollton 0-5 2-8

Northwest Central Conference

Riverside 6-1 10-2
Fort Loramie 6-1 6-5
Upper Scioto 5-2 6-4
Lehman 5-2s 7-5
Lima Perry 2-5 2-8
Ridgemont 2-5 3-7
Hardin Northern 2-5 4-6
Waynesfield 0-7 0-10

Midwest Athletic Conference

*Coldwater 8-0 15-0
Marion Local 7-1 13-2
*Fort Recovery 6-2 13-2
Minster 6-2 10-3
St. Henry 4-4 6-4
Anna 3-5 3-7
Versailles 3-5 4-6
Parkway 2-6 2-8
Delphos St. John's 1-7 1-9
New Bremen 0-8 1-8
* state champions

VOLLEYBALL

Shelby County League

League All

W-L W-L

*Jackson Center 11-1 29-1

Anna 10-2 21-6
Loramie 9-3 19-9
Fairlawn 6-6 18-7
Russia 4-8 14-10
Houston 2-10 11-14
Botkins 0-12 6-16
* D-4 state champs

Greater Western Ohio Conf. (Tourney games not included)

North

Troy 5-0 24-0
Vandalia 4-1 11-13
Piqua 3-2 12-10
Sidney 2-3 10-14
Greenville 1-4 2-21
Trotwood 0-5 1-18

Central

Beavercreek 5-0 17-7
Centerville 4-1 16-8
Fairmont 3-2 10-10
Northmont 2-3 7-15
Wayne 1-4 11-13
Springfield 0-5 6-17

South

Lebanon 5-0 16-8
Springboro 4-1 14-10
Miamisburg 3-2 12-12
Fairborn 1-4 11-11
Xenia 1-4 11-12
West Carrollton 1-4 10-14

Northwest Central Conference

Lehman 7-0 19-7
Hardin Northern 6-1 17-7
Riverside 5-2 15-9
Lima Perry 3-4 9-13
Upper Scioto 3-4 11-10
Ridgemont 3-4 8-15
Lima Temple 1-6 2-21
Waynesfield 0-7 3-19

Midwest Athletic Conference

St. Henry 9-0 28-1
Coldwater 8-1 23-3
New Bremen 7-2 17-9
Marion Local 6-3 13-6
Minster 4-5 13-8
New Knoxville 4-5 16-10
Versailles 4-5 14-10
Delphos SJ 2-7 14-9
Parkway 1-8 8-13
Fort Recovery 0-9 6-13

BOYS SOCCER

Western Ohio Soccer League

BOYS

League

W-L-T

Botkins 6-1-0
Lima Temple 5-1-1
Lehman 4-3-0
Lima Catholic 3-1-3
Fairlawn 3-2-2
Lincolnvew 2-3-2
Spencerville 1-6-0
New Knoxville 0-7-0

GIRLS

Lehman 6-0-0
Lima Catholic 4-1-1
Coldwater 3-3-0
Botkins 2-2-2
Anna 2-3-1
Lincolnvew 2-4-0
Delphos St. John's 0-6-0

Greater Western Ohio Conference

BOYS

League All

W-L-T W-L-T

North

Vandalia 5-0-0 16-2-0
Sidney 4-1-0 13-3-2
Troy 3-2-0 12-5-0
Greenville 1-3-1 7-9-1

Piqua 1-3-1 6-9-2

Trotwood 0-5-0 0-15-0

Central

Beavercreek 4-1-0 15-2-4
Centerville 4-1-0 13-4-3
Fairmont 4-1-0 11-6-2
Wayne 2-3-0 9-8-2
Northmont 0-4-1 5-11-2
Springfield 0-4-1 2-14-1

South

Lebanon 4-0-1 12-3-3
Springboro 4-0-1 12-5-3
Xenia 3-2-0 11-6-1
Fairborn 1-3-1 6-8-3
Miamisburg 1-3-1 4-11-2
West Carrollton 0-5-0 4-13-0

GIRLS

North

Vandalia 4-0-1 14-2-1
Troy 3-0-2 8-8-2
Sidney 3-2-0 12-5-1
Piqua 2-3-0 4-13-0
Trotwood 1-3-1 8-7-2
Greenville 0-5-0 1-15-0

Central

Centerville 4-0-1 12-4-4
Beavercreek 3-0-2 12-4-4
Northmont 3-1-1 9-7-3
Wayne 2-3-0 12-7-0
Fairmont 1-4-0 3-14-0
Springfield 0-5-0 4-11-2

South

Springboro 4-0-1 18-2-2
Lebanon 4-0-1 12-2-3
Miamisburg 3-2-0 9-7-1
Xenia 2-3-0 4-8-5
Fairborn 0-4-1 4-12-1
West Carrollton 0-4-1 2-13-2

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