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FALL SPORTS



With the interior offensive line remaining intact and two experienced running backs, 2016 could be a big year for senior quarterback Zach Scholten and the H-BC football team.

Patriot girls set sight on RRC championship

By John Rittenhouse

Hills-Beaver Creek High School volleyball coach Susan Bork finds herself in an enviable position as the 2016 season approaches.

With a roster loaded with experience and talent, Bork believes the sky is the limit for her Patriots this fall.

"Having all these players coming back makes life pretty simple for me," Bork offered.

"I've been coaching here for three years now, and this is the year we've been waiting for. We have a lot of experienced kids on this team, and I think this will be a good year for them."

Bork has good reason to be very optimistic about H-BC's fate in 2016.

With all of the key members of a 2015 team that finished the year with a winning record returning to the ranks, H-BC will be a formidable opponent for every team on its schedule.

The Patriots earned a share of fourth place in the Red Rock Conference with a 6-4 record during a 13-12 regular season in 2015.

H-BC rolled to a 3-0 victory over Adrian during the opening round of the South Section 3A Tournament before falling by a 3-0 tally to eventual tournament champion Windom in the quarterfinals.

H-BC did lose seniors Tessa Klarenbeek (who received playing time in the back row last fall) and Thea Richards, who received limited playing time in 2015.

The Patriots, however, return a number of battle-tested players who could turn the 2016 campaign into a memorable one.

"We definitely have a great mix of girls on this team," Bork said.

"All of them are very versatile players and we've got big hitters who can hit the ball in all three positions of the front row. These girls give me a lot of options as a coach."

H-BC has seven seniors, seven juniors and five sophomores participating in the program this year.

The list features nine players who logged a lot of court time, two All-RRC selections and one RRC honorable mention performer from the 2015 season.

As all-conference selections,



John Rittenhouse photo/0901 tab hbc vb

Seven seniors grace the roster of the 2016 Hills-Beaver Creek High School volleyball team. They are (from left) Jasmine Lingen, Hunter Harvey, Avery Van Roekel, Courtney Kruger, Ashley Esselink, Mekayla Kolbrek and Emma Baker.

seniors Avery Van Roekel and Jasmine Lingen have to be considered the leaders of the 2016 team.

Van Roekel, a 5-11 middle hitter, is the type of player who rarely leaves the court.

Lingen is a 5-11 middle hitter who makes most of her contributions to the team in the front row.

Sophomore Sidney Fick, a 6-0 left-side hitter, is another all-around player.

Fick drew honorable mention recognition from the RRC coaches as a freshman.

Other players returning to the team with starting experience include seniors Mekayla Kolbrek and Ashley Esselink and juniors Olivia Richards and Avery Wysong.

Kolbrek is a 5-5 setter who sets up H-BC's hitters at the net, while Wysong is a 5-9 right-side hitter/setter.

Esselink and Richards shared a starting position in 2015.

Esselink is a 5-10 right-side

hitter, while Richards is a 5-10 outside hitter.

Along with the starters, two more Patriots gained a lot of varsity experience in 2015.

Courtney Kruger, a 5-3 senior, is a defensive ace in the back row and a setter.

Paige Tilstra, a 5-6 junior, is an outside hitter and a back row defender.

Those nine players are expected to be the nucleus of a team that Bork wants to improve in a couple of areas.

"There always are things we can clean up, and the one thing this group will focus on is getting our serves under control. That's how you can take control of a match," Bork said.

"We also want to improve on our passing and our communication. You can't win games with your mouth shut on the court. We need everyone to talk to each other and play as a team."

Seniors Emma Gehrke, a 5-10

middle hitter, and Hunter Harvey, a 5-6 middle hitter, are potential varsity contributors this fall.

Juniors Megan Gehrke (5-9 all-around player), Halle Hoekstra (5-10 left-side hitter), Grace Holthaus (5-2 setter) and Courtney Rozeboom (6-1 right-side hitter) are varsity prospects.

Sophomores Bailey Swan (5-8 right-side hitter), Madison Spath (5-4 middle hitter), Grace Bundesen (5-8 middle hitter) and Alexia Boltjes (5-4 left-side hitter) are members of the program as well.

Bork lists Red Rock Central and Southwest Christian as the teams H-BC needs to beat in order to accomplish a goal the players are pursuing in 2016.

"The players have a goal, and it has been an ongoing thing, to win the conference championship," Bork said.

"As for myself, I want to see us finish among the top three teams in the conference and see what happens after that."

H-BC Volleyball

Aug 30	Adrian	A
Sept 6	Ellsworth	A
Sept 8	Edgerton	H
Sept 10	CL Tournament	A
Sept 13	Luverne	H
Sept 15	Adrian	H
Sept 20	SW MN Christian	A
Sept 22	Heron Lake-Okabena	A
Sept 26	Edgerton	A
Sept 27	Westbrook-Walnut Grove	H
Oct 4	Mountain Lake	H
Oct 6	MCC	A
Oct 7-8	SMSU Tournament	A
Oct 11	Red Rock Central	A
Oct 13	Fulda	H
Oct 17	Ellsworth	H

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Season of promise awaits H-BC football team

By John Rittenhouse

A promising season is at hand for the 2016 Hills-Beaver Creek High School football team.

With key players returning to crucial positions on both sides of the line of scrimmage, H-BC coach Rex Metzger is extremely optimistic about the upcoming campaign.

"We got a good team," he offered.

"We need to remain healthy and do have some inexperienced players at a couple of positions, but we think this is a team that can do some things this year."

H-BC had a good team in 2015 as well.

The Patriots captured a share of the South District West Division title during a 7-1 regular season that included H-BC earning the No. 1 seed for the Section 3 Nine-Man Playoffs.

H-BC rolled to a 58-28 victory over Heron Lake-Okabena during the opening round of section play, but an 8-2 season came to an end with a stunning, 14-12 loss to Edgerton-Ellsworth in the semifinals.

The loss to E-E left a bad taste in the mouths of the H-BC coaches and players, and Metzger believes his team has the potential to avoid that type of disappointment this fall.

"We always shoot to be one of the top two teams in our district and we think that can happen," Metzger said.

"Then we want to make a run in the playoffs and hopefully make it to Marshall and play for a section championship."

H-BC needs to replace four key players from the 2015 roster to make 2016 a memorable season.

Drew Forshey (defensive end/tight end), Cooper Vaughn (safety/wide receiver) and Stuart Plimpton (fullback/middle linebacker) played as two-way starters during their senior seasons.

Plimpton and Vaughn earned positions on the All-District roster at season's end, and Forshey received honorable mention.

H-BC also has to replace Michael Taubert, who started as a defensive end as a junior before moving out of the H-BC school district over the summer.



John Rittenhouse photo/0901 tab hbc fb

Five seniors are the leaders of the 2016 Hills-Beaver Creek High School football team. They are (front row, from left) Dylan Forshey, Zach Scholten, Isaiah Vis, (back) Logan Leuthold and Jed Burgers.

"All four of those guys could play multiple positions for us, which was nice because we could move them around to where we needed them," Metzger said.

"They were good athletes who were physical guys. They were good leaders and they brought a lot of experience to our team last year."

H-BC did lose some talented players, but by no means is the cupboard bare.

The Patriots will field an offense that features six returning starts, three all-district performers and one honorable mention selection from the 2015 season.

H-BC is extremely experienced

on the offensive line and in the backfield, where the six returning starters will play.

Senior Logan Leuthold, a 175-pound guard who made the all-district squad last fall, spearheads an interior line that includes three returning starters.

Senior Dylan Forshey (205) is back as the starting center, and sophomore Garrett Raymon (230) returns as a starting guard.

"We have three guys with experience one the line, which is a positive thing. It's nice to have experience up front," Metzger offered.

Juniors Jesse Elbers (255) and Jacob Wingert (175) are expected

to gain playing time on the interior line as well.

H-BC also has experience at one of the tight end positions, where senior Jed Burgers (180) received some playing time in 2015.

The other tight end position is up for grabs with inexperienced juniors Dean Fuerstenberg (160), Dylan Taubert (180) and Dylan Tieszen (160) being the leading candidates.

H-BC also will be thin on experience at the fullback and wide receiver positions.

Preston Maassen, a 175-pound

H-BC/continued on page 4

H-BC Football

Sept 1	WWG	H
Sept 9	Cleveland	A
Sept 16	Heron Lake-Okabena	H
Sept 23	Mountain Lake	A
Sept 30	GHEC-TRUMAN	H
Oct 7	Edgerton-Ellsworth	A
Oct 14	Nicollet	A
Oct 19	Fulda	H



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Star Herald file photo

Junior Trenton Bass (28) is a member of an experienced offensive backfield that is expected to be explosive and productive during the upcoming 2016 season.

H-BC/continued from page 3

junior, is the projected fullback.

Juniors Josh Kueter (170) and Dawson Leenderts (150) are challenging each other playing time as wide receivers.

H-BC is loaded with experience in the backfield, with three returning starters, including two three-year starters.

Senior quarterback Zach Scholten (185) and senior tailback Isaiah Vis (165) have been the leaders of H-BC's offense the past two seasons.

Both players were all-district selections in 2015.

Trenton Bass, a 165-junior, is another tailback who drew honorable mention honors from district coaches as a sophomore.

"We're going to be able to do a lot of different things on offense this year," Metzger said.

"We'll be able to have Scholten go under center and pound the ball with our experienced backs, and we can put him in shotgun formation and spread defenses out a little bit. We don't have a

lot of experienced receivers, but I think that's something we can develop in practice."

H-BC also brings experience to the defensive side of the ball.

Forshey and Elbers return as starting tackles, with Raymon expected to gain playing time as a tackle as well.

The Patriots did lose both of their starting defensive ends from the 2015 campaign.

Metzger said Scholten will take over one end position, while Fuerstenberg and Kueter are battling for playing time at the other end position.

Leuthold, who started as an outside linebacker in 2015, is expected to play the middle linebacker position this fall.

Vis returns to the fold as a starting outside linebacker, while Maassen is expected to start as an outside linebacker for the first time.

With Burgers returning as a starting cornerback and Bass, who started as an outside line-

backer in 2015, projected to be the starting safety, H-BC has experience in the secondary.

Leenderts is expected to play as a cornerback in 2016 as well.

"We are fast defensively," Metzger said.

"We are a little undersized on defense so we'll have to rely on getting a lot of guys flying to the football on defense. We do have more experience up front on defense than we've had in a couple of years. We're hoping that experience helps us control the line of scrimmage a little better."

Scholten will take care of the punting and kicking duties for H-BC again this year.

"We have a very strong district with Cleveland, E-E and Mountain Lake Area fighting for the top spots in the conference along with us," Metzger said.

"We're shooting to be one of the top two teams in the district and to make a run in the section playoffs this year."

Line experience should lead to bigger things for LHS football team

By John Rittenhouse

Optimism surrounds the Luverne High School football team heading into the 2016 season.

One year after bowing out of the Section 3AAA Playoffs in the opening round, the Cardinals have the potential to turn things around this fall.

Some of the optimism stems from an outstanding show at the annual summer team camp in Madison, South Dakota, where the Cardinals claimed the team championship.

While summer titles don't translate into fall victories, the late July accomplishment leads Cardinal coach Todd Oye to believe the 2016 team can meet some of his preseason goals.

"Our team goal is to play well enough in the regular season to get a home playoff game," he said.

"We also haven't won the Battle Ax in three years, but we can make those things happen by getting better each day."

Luverne put together a 5-3 regular season that included a 4-3 mark (tie for third place) in the South Central District's White Division.

A 33-19 loss to Sibley East in section play ended a 5-4 campaign for the Cards.

LHS lost 13 seniors and another key contributor to 2015 team.

Erik Tofteland (tailback/defensive end) and Brandon Claussen (linebacker) were selected to the All-District squad at season's end.

Nick Overgaard, who made some starts as a quarterback before moving to the wide receiver position, drew honorable mention from district officials.

Other seniors who filled starting positions in 2015 include Blake Baum (fullback) Jakob Olson (center), Connor Sandbulte (defensive back), Mitchell Muller (linebacker) and Brennan Hart (linebacker).

Kevin Zheng, A.J. Haan and

Luverne Football

Sept 2	Worthington	A
Sept 9	Windom	H
Sept 16	JCC	A
Sept 23	Redwood Valley	H
Sept 30	Pipestone	A
Oct 7	St. James Area	H
Oct 14	Blue Earth Area	A
Oct 19	Martin County West	H

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Brandon Oakley are the other senior members of the 2015 squad.

Along with the seniors, LHS also lost the services of Jaxon Nelson when the hockey standout opted to play with the Sioux Falls Stampede this fall.

Nelson, another All-District selection, ended his sophomore season as the team's starting quarterback and a linebacker on defense.

With seven starters returning to the offensive unit, Cardinal fans have reason to be excited about the upcoming campaign.

Luverne will be thin on experience in the offensive backfield, but the Cards are loaded with experience on the line and at the wide receiver positions.

Five of the returning starters can be found on the offensive line, and seniors Logan Stratton and Chris Jelken lead the list as two-way starters.

Stratton, a 230-pound right tackle, made the All-District

Line/continued on page 5

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Seventeen seniors are participating in the Luverne High School football program this fall. They are (front row, from left) Cyris Halverson, Will Natte, Solomon Nielsen, Andrew Reisch, Matt Hup, Logan Stratton, Matt Schmuck, Jonathan Diaz, (back) Layne Curtis, Knute Oldre, Dylan Thorson, Jeremiah Dooyema, Thomas Wiebe, Chris Jelken, Tanner Wiese and Damian Reese. Missing is Riley Baker. The Cardinals open the season in Worthington Friday night.

Line/continued from page 4

squad as a junior.

Jelken, a 210-pound left guard, drew honorable mention recognition from the District coaches as a junior.

Seniors Dylan Thorson, and Jeremiah Dooyema bring more starting experience to the offensive front.

Thorson is a 250-pound right guard.

Dooyema is a 180-pound tight end, where junior Daniel Tofteland (200) is competing with the upper classman for playing time.

Cade VerSteege, a 240-pound left tackle, rounds out the returning starters on the line.

Luverne is inexperienced at the center position, where senior Matthew Schmuck (200) and sophomore Matthew Ziegler (175) are vying for playing time.

Other potential offensive linemen include seniors Knute Oldre (210) and Jon Diaz (185) and junior Tyler Fick (215).

"With a lot of starters coming

back, we're looking at our offensive line as being one of our obvious strengths going into the season," Oye said.

"We've got good size and a lot of experience, and they are a smart group of kids who work hard. I think it's a flexible line that can run and pass block equally well."

Luverne also returns two wide receivers with starting experience from the 2015 season.

Senior Layne Curtis (190) and junior Kasyn Kruse (165) received extended playing time as receivers last fall.

Seniors Matthew Hup (150) and Damian Reese (155) and junior Tucker Oeltjenbruns (140) are other potential receivers.

Although some Cardinals did receive limited playing time last year, Luverne is largely inexperienced in the offensive backfield.

Jake Haugen, a 170-pound sophomore, did run some plays as a quarterback last year.

Haugen and Ben Serie, a

155-pound sophomore, are expected to take the snaps from center in 2016.

Solomon Nielsen, a 180-pound senior, did get some carries as a fullback last season.

Nielsen is expected to start as a fullback in 2016, with seniors Tanner Wiese (165) and Will Natte (150) being potential fullbacks as well.

Both senior Cyris Halverson (160) and junior Declan Beers (170) received limited playing time as tailbacks in 2015 and they are battling each other for the starting position this year.

"Our biggest concern right now is our inexperience in the offensive backfield. We'll just have to see what our young quarterbacks can do and play to their strengths," Oye said.

"You always want to be balanced offensively, but we'll probably pass the ball a little more this year than we have in the past. That, of course, will be dictated

by game situations."

Six starters return to Luverne's defensive unit this fall, including three on the defensive line.

Jelken returns as a starting defensive end, while VerSteege and Stratton are back as starting tackles.

Dooyema is projected to be the other starting defensive end.

Natte is another potential defensive end, while Thorson and senior Tom Wiebe (375) are potential defensive tackles.

Beers returns as a starting outside linebacker on defense.

Daniel Tofteland is another potential outside linebacker, as is senior Riley Baker (160).

Nielsen and Curtis are projected to be inside linebackers.

Two players bring starting experience to the defensive secondary.

Kruse returns as a starting cornerback, while senior Andrew Reisch (160) is back as the starting safety.

Reese and junior Jayden Renken (160) are competing for the second cornerback position.

When the situation calls for a second safety, Curtis will move back into the secondary from his linebacker position.

"Defensively, I think we have a better group of tacklers than we've had in a while," Oye offered.

"I like our team speed on defense, and I think we are in front of where we have been in terms of adjusting from one defensive alignment to another. My biggest concern about our defense is our depth because we lack numbers in our junior and sophomore classes."

Jelken is expected to handle the kicking and punting duties for the second consecutive season.

Oye lists Jackson County Central as the team to beat in Section 3AAA, but he believes the Huskies could be challenged by LHS, Fairmont and Sibley East.

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John Rittenhouse photo/0901 lhs girls cc

Seven runners and two alternates from Luverne's record-setting 2015 girls' cross country team are back in the ranks this season. They are (from left) Zayna Hustoft, Madison Schandelmeier, Claire Baustian, Regan Feit, Gabrielle Ferrell, Cassie Flanagan, Madison Reisdorfer, Tianna Doppenberg and Autumn Nath.

Janiszekistresses focus after record-setting year

By John Rittenhouse

One year after putting together the most successful season in program history, **Luverne girls'** cross country coach Pete Janiszek isn't dwelling on the past.

He wants his Cardinals to be focused on the upcoming season, which could be equally rewarding if the athletes concentrate on the present.

"Last year is last year. We have to put it all together again this year," Janiszek said.

"On paper, it looks as if we have some opportunities in front of us this year. We still have to try and get better and develop as a team."

In many ways 2015 was a dream season for the Cardinal girls.

LHS won its first Big South Conference Small Division title at the end of the regular season before winning the school's first Section 3A team championship in late October.

As if that wasn't enough for the

Cardinal runners, they solidified their position in LHS history by turning in a program-best fourth-place performance at the state meet in Northfield.

Considering the fact that LHS didn't lose a runner from last year's state and section teams, the Cardinals should be in store for more success in 2016.

With a talented 18-athlete roster consisting of six seniors, one junior, two sophomores, two freshmen, five eighth-graders and two seventh-graders, Janiszek believes his team has the potential to thrive this fall.

"I've been here for 15 years now, and I don't remember a girls' team having as much depth as this one does," he said.

"We basically are 12 deep (in terms of potential varsity runners), and that's a good position to be in. The girls are competitive and they compete at a high level, so it should be fun to see what

Luverne Cross Country

Aug 26	Beresford Invitational	A
Sept 2	Canby Invitational	A
Sept 10	Cardinal Showdown	H
Sept 15	Rochester Mayo	A
Sept 22	JCC Invitational	A
Sept 27	MCC Invitational	A
Oct 6	Luverne Invitational	H
Oct 11	Adrian Invitational	A
Oct 18	Big South Conference	A

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happens this year." All seven runners and both alternates who formed Luverne's

postseason team in 2015 are back in the ranks.

Luverne has one of the top runners in the state in senior Madison Schandelmeier.

Along with winning the BSC and Section 3A individual titles, Schandelmeier made the all-state team by leading LHS with an 18th-place finish at the state meet.

Sophomore Gabrielle Ferrell and eighth-grader Regan Feit form a pair of top-notch runners as well.

Ferrell, who has earned all-state status in the past, earned a spot on the All-BSC roster by placing third at the league meet last fall.

Ferrell placed fifth at the section meet and 40th at the state meet for the Cardinals last year, who are hoping she can overcome some health problems that stem back to last track season.

"My biggest concern right now is not having Gabi at full health,"

Janiszek said.

"She has some muscle deficiencies right now, but we hope to get her on the course by the middle of September."

Feit emerged as one of Luverne's top runners as a seventh-grader last season.

Feit placed second at the conference meet, ninth at the section meet and 44th at the state meet during her first year as a varsity competitor.

Luverne also received some quality performances from sophomore Madison Reisdorfer and eighth-graders Autumn Nath and Cassie Flanagan in 2016.

Flanagan, Nath and Reisdorfer received honorable mention recognition for their efforts during the BSC meet.

Nath placed 22nd at the section meet and 112th at state, Reisdorfer finished 35th at the section meet

Focus/continued on page 7

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Focus/continued from page 6

and 136th at state and Flanagan placed 56th at the section level and 160th at state.

Freshman Claire Baustian also competed in the postseason meets for LHS, finishing 65th at the section event and 147th at state.

The girls who ran in the postseason meets last year can expect to be challenged for their positions in the lineup in 2016.

Seniors Zayna Hustoft and Tianna Doppenberg served as alternates at the state and section meets one year ago, and they are potential varsity runners in 2016.

So is senior Mariah Aukes, who competed at a high level for LHS in the past before being sidelined with injury in 2015.

Senior Bergin Flom also has competed at the varsity level in the past, as has senior Carly Serie.

Rounding out the roster are junior Megan Rogers, freshman Madigan Flom, eighth-graders Solveig Tofteland and Leslie Van Engelenhoven and seventh-graders Brooklyn VerSteeg and Tenley Nelson.

"We definitely have the potential to be a pretty good team this year," Janiszkeski said.

"We would like to duplicate what we accomplished last year and, hopefully improve on where we finished at state last year."

In order to make a return trip to state, the Cardinals need to realize they will be a team their opponents want to beat in 2016.

"Winning the section last year means we'll have a target on our backs, so the girls have to be ready to go right away," Janiszkeski said.

"We are in one of the most competitive sections in the state on the girls' side, so we need to work hard and continue to improve."

The Cardinal boys face a different situation entering the 2016 season.

Unlike the girls, the **LHS boys'** squad lost four seniors, including two section runners from the 2015 season.

"We'll need some boys to step up and help us out this year because we did lose two of our top seven runners from last season," Janiszkeski said.

"We're not a very deep team, but we do have a good group of kids and most of them put in a lot of work over the summer."



John Rittenhouse photo/0901 tab lhs boys cc

Five athletes with section experience from 2015 return to the Luverne boys' cross country team this fall. They are (from left) Hunter Hamann, Austin Winter, Tom Brown, Shane Berning and Dalton DeSollar.

LHS is coming off a 2015 season that included a sixth-place finish at the BSC meet as well as placing eighth out of 21 teams at the section meet.

Seniors Adam Fodness and Erik Wahnoutka were key members of the 2015 team.

Wahnoutka placed 35th and Fodness 45th at the section event, which were the third- and fourth-best efforts turned in by Cardinal runners during the meet.

Derek Krueger and Tanner Baustian were senior members of the 2015 team as well.

Luverne opens the 2016 campaign with a 17-athlete roster consisting of one senior, one junior, seven sophomores, three freshmen, two eighth-graders and three seventh-graders.

The list features five runners who represented Luverne at last season's section meet.

Sophomores Dalton DeSollar and Austin Winter emerged as Luverne's top runners late last season.

DeSollar turned in Luverne's top effort at the section meet by finishing 31st, and Winter wasn't far behind with a 33rd-place effort.

Sophomore Tom Brown made a contribution to the team tally at the section meet by placing 54th as the team's fifth runner.

Sophomores Hunter Hamann and Shane Berning also gained section experience in 2016, placing 63rd and 64th respectively during the race.

Brown is recovering from an injury now, but he's expected to

return to the team sometime in September.

Janiszkeski believes the upperclassmen on the roster could help the team at the varsity level this season.

Senior Carter Riphagen has past varsity experience, and junior Michael Rahm is looking good after putting in a lot of summer work.

LHS could receive some help from the remaining sophomores and the three freshmen on the roster.

Sophomores Carter Baumberger and Jackson Golla are prospects, as are freshmen Jonah Friedrichsen, Jordan Winter and Brayden Tofteland.

Eighth-graders Seno Chantalangsy and John Miller and

seventh-graders Ethan Rahm, Sam Emery and Alex Baumberger round out the roster.

"Our goal for the boys is to improve this year," Janiszkeski said.

"We finished last in the small school division of the conference meet and eighth at the section meet last year. This year we want to place in the top half of the teams at the conference meet. We also want to make it in the top five at the section meet and make a run at becoming one of the top two teams and advance to state. If we can't move on as a team, it would be nice to have a boy qualify for state individually. We didn't have a boy qualify last year, so it would be nice to be represented at the state meet again."

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John Rittenhouse photo/0901 tab lhs vb

Seven seniors are members of the Luverne High School volleyball program in 2016. They are (from left) Ariel DeBeer, Kami Sawtelle, Katie Kracht, Hailey Remme, Hanna Honerman, Madison Crabtree and Hailey Franken. The Cardinals are led by third-year head coach Stacie Busse-Remme.

Returning talent ups expectation for Luverne High School volleyball program

By John Rittenhouse

A Luverne volleyball team that is hungry for success is ready to make a statement in 2016.

After instilling the lessons of what it takes to succeed the past two seasons, third-year LHS coach Stacie Busse-Remme believes this is the fall the Cardinals can take flight.

"I think we're finally gaining respect from our opponents. They come into our matches knowing that we have a different bunch of kids," she said.

"We didn't take many sets two years ago, but last year we took some sets from some teams we haven't beaten in years. Now we have to take the next step and take three sets from those teams. These girls know how to win. They just need to learn how to finish

matches and not settle."

Luverne completed the 2015 season with a 13-14 overall record, nearly securing its first winning campaign in years.

LHS placed fifth in the Big South Conference's Western Division with a 2-4 record during a 13-13 regular season.

The Cards, however, couldn't advance in the South Section 3AA Tournament as they came up on the short end of a 3-0 decision against Pipestone in the quarterfinals.

The good news is most of the players who helped LHS make a run at a winning record in 2015 are back in the ranks.

Busse-Remme does need to replace Nicole Kneip, the lone senior on the 2015 roster.

That won't be an easy task, but

the coach believes it will happen.

"Nicole was an experienced player and a very good blocker at the net. Her strength was her blocking," Busse-Remme said.

"We do have a couple of girls we can move to the middle of our front row right now and I think they will fill in nicely."

Luverne opens the 2016 campaign with a 16-athlete roster consisting of seven seniors and nine juniors.

The list features six returning starters and two other girls who gained some varsity playing time last fall.

Not only will LHS field an experienced squad in 2016. All of the Cardinal players have the will to win.

"We have 16 players on our roster and all of them are very

competitive," Busse-Remme said.

"The competitiveness of this group is amazing. They go after each other and challenge each other during all of the competitive drills we run in practice. I've been coaching here for three years now, but I haven't seen this type of competitiveness the last two years."

The 2016 roster features two players who raked in postseason honors last fall.

Senior Hailey Remme, a 6-0 middle hitter, is a two-year starter who graced the All-BSC roster last year.

Junior Alexis Ferrell, a 6-2 outside hitter with two years of varsity experience as well, received honorable mention recognition

Luverne Volleyball

Aug 30	SW MN Christian	A
Sept 1	St. James	H
Sept 8	Redwood Valley	A
Sept 10	Luverne Tournament	H
Sept 13	Hills-Beaver Creek	A
Sept 15	Marshall	H
Sept 17	JCC	A
Sept 20	Fulda	H
Sept 22	JCC	A
Sept 27	Martin County West	H
Sept 29	Windom	H
Oct 3	Edgerton	H
Oct 6	Worthington	A
Oct 8	Pipestone	A
Oct 13	Pipestone	H
Oct 18	Big South Match	H
Oct 21	Canby	A

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Talent/continued from page 8

from the league's coaches last fall. Seniors Ariel DeBeer, Katie Kracht and Madison Crabtree have three years of varsity experience as well.

The 5-9 DeBeer has been the team's No. 1 setter since her sophomore season.

Crabtree is a 5-11 middle hitter who Busse-Remme lists as one of the possible replacements for Kneip.

Kracht, a 5-8 libero, is a scrappy player who is one of Luverne's best defensive players.

Senior Hailey Franken and junior Sierra Schmuck bring more experience to the team.

Franken is a 5-8 outside hitter who filled a starting position for LHS last season largely due to her jumping ability.

The 5-7 Schmuck came off the bench as a defensive specialist in 2015, and her duties could include some setting this year.

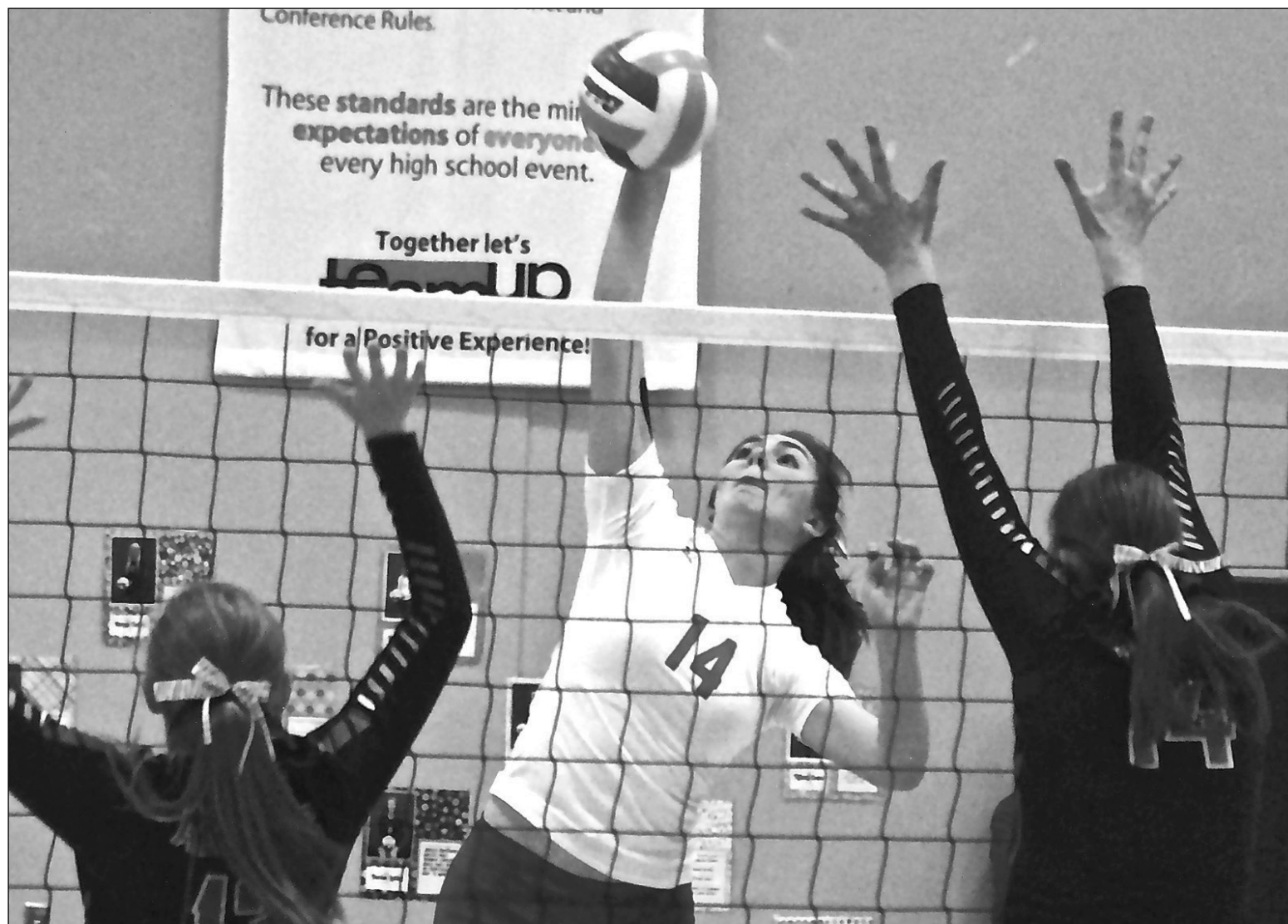
Other players projected to make an impact on the court this season include senior Kami Sawtelle and juniors Rachel Oftedahl and Gracie Bosch.

Sawtelle is a 5-10 outside hitter who missed the entire 2015 season due to a serious knee injury, but she is expected to be on the court once she is cleared to play medically.

Oftedahl, who moved to Luverne from Warroad this summer, is a 6-2 middle hitter who could help replace Kneip in 2016.

Bosch, a 5-6 defensive specialist/libero, is expected to receive playing time in the back row for a team that can fill all of its positions easily.

"We have players with a lot of experience who are very versatile. Most of these girls can play two or more positions, and you



Star Herald file photo

Along with the seven seniors on the roster, Luverne junior Alexis Ferrell is another key player returning to the Cardinal volleyball team this fall. Ferrell drew honorable mention recognition from the Big South Conference coaches as a sophomore.

don't get that every year," Busse-Remme said.

The balance of the roster includes senior Hanna Honerman (5-5 right-side hitter) and juniors Michaela Sandbulte (5-8 defensive specialist), Hannah VerSteeg (5-6 outside hitter), Mckenna

Westphal (5-6 right-side hitter), Maddie Dinger (5-10 middle hitter) and Zoey Sandbulte (5-9 middle hitter).

Both the players and the coach have set lofty goals for the fall.

"My ultimate goal is to make it to state," Busse-Remme said.

"The girls have a goal to host first and second round matches in the section tournament, which is a huge advantage for the first- and second-seeded teams. They also have the goal to make it to state and I think we are playing the type of schedule that can help get us

there. I would like to see our girls get through the first two rounds of the sub-section tournament. There's no reason why we can't go further than that, but I think getting through those first two rounds would make the season successful."

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John Rittenhouse photo/0901 tab lhs tennis

Five girls with section experience from 2015 return to the Luverne High School tennis team this fall. They are (from left) Sierra Wieneke, Samantha Pierce, Kayla Rud, Carissa Cunningham and Riley Severtson.

Tennis team is rebuilding after losing personnel

By John Rittenhouse

A large turnover in personnel will influence the Luverne High School tennis program in 2016.

With seven of the 10 players who represented LHS in the postseason last fall no longer on the roster, Cardinal coach Greg Antoine knows he has his work cut out for him.

"We basically lost all of our doubles teams and one singles player," he admitted.

"I think it could be a tough year for us."

With a pool of six seniors on the top end of the roster, Luverne put together a 6-10 2015 campaign.

The Cardinals placed second in the Big South Conference Western Division with a 4-1 record during a 6-9 regular season.

The campaign ended with a 7-0 loss to Blue Earth Area in the quarterfinal round of the Section 3A Tournament.

The loss to BEA marked the end of the high school careers of six seniors.

Kaitlyn Roberts received limited varsity action during her senior season, but Tatiana Gust, Kennedy Gonnerman, Briana Jonason, Emily Wendland and Susan Thompson were fixtures in Luverne's doubles rotation in 2015.

Gust played at first doubles, Wendland and Gonnerman

competed at No. 2 and Jonason and Thompson formed Luverne's third doubles team during the Section 3A Team Tournament.

"We're going to miss all of those girls," Antoine offered.

"When you have to replace that many kids, there are a lot of holes to fill in the lineup."

LHS also has a productive member of the 2015 team in Joci Oye, who played at second singles for the Cards.

Oye is recovering from a serious knee injury sustained during the basketball season and is doubtful to return to the tennis court this fall.

Luverne opens the 2016 campaign with a 32-player roster consisting of five seniors, two juniors, four sophomores, three freshmen, ten eighth-graders and eight seventh-graders.

Tennis/continued on page 13

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Tennis/continued from page 12

The list includes five players who participated in postseason competition in 2015 and one other letter winner.

“With six returning letter winners, we do have a little experience,” Antoine stated.

“We’re just not a very deep team at this point. We have to find one singles player and a number of doubles players this year, and we’ll be rotating a lot of players in and out of the lineup to find them.”

Seniors Kayla Rud and Sierra Wieneke, junior Samantha Pierce and sophomores Carissa Cunningham and Riley Severtson played in the postseason for LHS in 2015.

Rud teamed up with Gust at No. 1 doubles, while Wieneke competed in the Section 3A Individual Tournament with Wendland.

Pierce returns as Luverne’s No. 1 singles player.

Cunningham and Severtson, who played at third and fourth singles last year, are expected to compete at No. 2 and No. 3 in 2016 due to the absence of Oye.

The fourth singles slot in the lineup is up for grabs.

Junior Emilie Bartels, who returns to the program after a one-year absence, is a singles contender.

Freshman Amelia Jarchow and eighth-graders Ainslie Robinson and Elise Jarchow are possible singles players as well.

Those four singles players also could work into the doubles mix this year.

Antoine believes Rud and Wieneke will form Luverne’s first doubles team in 2016.

Senior Natasha Thone, another returning letter winner, and senior Shelbie Nath could form the second doubles squad.

Who plays at third doubles remains to be determined.

Senior Marisol Hartshorn, sophomores Brianna Jonas and Julia Ferguson, freshmen Bailey Anderson and Kacie Kracht and eighth-graders Brynn Thier, Roz Oye and Lauren VerSteege are other varsity hopefuls.

“We have a bunch of seventh- and eighth-graders who are willing to work hard. If they can continue to get better, they’ll get the chance to play. Those kids

Luverne Girls’ Tennis

Aug 20	Luverne Triangular	H
Aug 24	St. James	A
Aug 27	Worthington	A
Aug 29	Sleepy Eye	A
Sept 1	Luverne Triangular	H
Sept 2	Sioux Falls Lincoln	A
Sept 6	Blue Earth Area	A
Sept 8	Marshall	A
Sept 13	Worthington	A
Sept 15	St. James Area	H
Sept 20	Redwood Valley	H
Sept 22	Pipestone	H
Sept 27	Big South Match	A



“We have a really tough section. There really are no weak teams in our section.”

– Greg Antoine, LHS tennis coach

make the future of our program look good,” Antoine said.

While the future of the program appears to be on a solid foundation, the 2016 campaign will be a challenging one for LHS.

St. James and Worthington are the teams to beat in the conference this year, while St. James and River Valley appear to be the top contenders in Section 3A.

“We have a really tough section. There really are no weak teams in our section,” Antoine said.

Due to the large turnover in personnel, Luverne will be a work-in-progress team in 2016.

“We’ll just have to work hard and get better with every match,” Antoine said.

“Hopefully, we’ll get a decent seed at section time. Our goal is to get to the dome in St. Peter, which means we have to get a win in the section quarterfinals.”



Star Herald file photo

Natasha Thone, one of five senior members of the 2016 Luverne High School tennis team, is expected to compete as a doubles player for the Cardinals this fall.

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Coach seeks better volleyball season in Adrian

By John Rittenhouse

Adrian volleyball coach Briana Reker is looking for a better season during her second year as the mentor of the Dragons.

With a roster full of hungry competitors with volleyball potential, the coach believes the Dragons will display on-court improvement this fall.

"We have competitive kids," Reker offered.

"They have the drive to win and they want to become the best players they can be. With their drive to succeed and their love for volleyball, I think we have a chance to do a lot better than what we did last year."

Adrian posted a 5-15 overall record in 2015.

The Dragons went 5-14 during the regular season that included a 2-8 mark and a 10th-place finish in the Red Rock Conference.

Adrian bowed out of the South Section 3A Tournament with a 3-0 loss to Hills-Beaver Creek in the quarterfinals.

Eight seniors, including seven players who logged courttime during varsity matches, helped the Dragons post five wins during Reker's first season as head coach.

Madisyn Dingmann, a setter, drew honorable mention from the RRC coaches at the end of her senior season.

Jodi Bents (middle hitter) and Mackenzie Wagner (outside hitter) were regulars in Adrian's starting lineup during their final year as members of the program.

Rebecca Sjogren, Morgan Kern, Olivia Weidert and Michaela Kern helped the Dragons during the 2015 campaign, while Anna Haper rounds out the senior members of last year's squad.

"We'll miss the experience those girls gave us," Reker admitted.

"They played a lot of volleyball and filled a lot of positions for us. They also provided great leadership."

Reker plans to open the 2016 campaign with a 13-player roster consisting of three seniors, eight juniors, one sophomore and one freshman.

The list includes three returning starters, four players who gained valuable experience and



John Rittenhouse photo/0901 tab AHS vb

Three seniors are participating in the Adrian High School volleyball program in 2016. They include (from left) Briana Loonan, Jackie Hokeness and Brittney Loonan.

"We have competitive kids. They have the drive to win and they want to become the best players they can be. With their drive to succeed and their love for volleyball, I think we have a chance to do a lot better than what we did last year."

*- Briana Reker,
Adrian High School volleyball coach*

one All-RRC honorable mention selection.

Returning to the fold as starters in 2016 are senior Jackie Hokeness, sophomore Miah Kunkel and freshman Kasie Tweet.

Kunkel, a 5-9 middle hitter, emerged as one of Adrian's top performers in 2015.

She was a fixture on the court and drew honorable mention honors from the RRC coaches at season's end.

Hokeness, a 5-8 left-side hitter, brings extended experience to the program and is considered to be

one of the team's leaders.

Tweet, a 5-6 left-side hitter, earned playing time as an eighth-grader with her aggressiveness on the floor.

Reker has a lot of confidence in the eight junior members participating in the program in 2016. "All of the juniors have played together for a long time," she said.

"They know where the others are on the court and they are very competitive."

Paige Bullerman, Alexia Kemper, Madison Neuenburg and Lexi Slater produced results on

the court for the 2015 team.

Slater, a 5-8 left-side hitter, is considered to be one of the team's leaders along with Hokeness and Kunkel.

Kemper, a 5-5 libero, is one of the team's top defensive players and should improve with the experience she gained last fall.

Paige Bullerman, a 5-10 middle hitter, received a lot of playing time as a sophomore and is expected to play an even bigger role for the 2016 squad.

Madison Neuenburg is a 5-4 defensive specialist Reker can

Adrian Volleyball

Aug 26	Hendricks	A
Aug 30	H-BC	H
Sept 1	Martin Luther-GHEC	A
Sept 8	MCC	H
Sept 10	WWG Tournament	A
Sept 15	H-BC	A
Sept 20	WWG	H
Sept 22	Red Rock Central	A
Sept 27	Heron Lake-Okabena	H
Sept 29	Ellsworth	A
Oct 6	Fulda	A
Oct 11	Southwest Christian	H
Oct 13	Mountain Lake	A
Oct 17	Edgerton	H

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count on to perform well in the back row.

Four other juniors could get the chance to prove themselves as varsity contributors in 2016 as well.

Taylor Loosbrock is a 5-4 setter. Kaitlyn Christians is a 5-8 middle hitter, Rylie Hokeness a 5-8 right-side hitter and Paige Tweet a 5-7 left-side hitter.

Reker looks at Hills-Beaver Creek and Southwest Christian as the teams to beat in the RRC and South Section 3A this season.

In order for the Dragons to compete with the area heavyweights, they need to play aggressive, smart volleyball.

"My goal for this team is to play tough defense," Reker said.

"I want our kids to go after every ball aggressively. I also want to see them communicate better both offensively and defensively. We also have to work on becoming more mentally tough as well. We have some kids who have been playing together a long time now. They have the knowledge and they know what they need to do. Now they just have to execute."

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John Rittenhouse photo/0901 tab aha cc girls

Six members of the 2015 section squad return to the Adrian High School girls' cross country team this fall. They are (from left) Samantha Moulton, Morgan Penning, Moriah Bullerman, Halle Heitkamp, Gracia Elias and Jasmine Kohorst. The Dragons were coached by Erick Kiers.

AHS girls to field experienced cross country team; Dragon boys are shot on numbers in 2016

By John Rittenhouse

Adrian will field an experienced girls' cross country team with talent during the 2016 fall season.

With a number of runners returning from the squad that represented AHS at the Section 3A meet one year ago, the Dragons are looking to display improvement as a team this season.

"We have five runners and one alternate from last year's section team coming back," said AHS coach Erick Kiers.

"With one more year of experience on our side, we will be working on improving on our section performance this year."

AHS is coming off a 2015 campaign that included a fourth-place effort at the Red Rock Conference meet and an 11th-place effort at the 21-team section meet.

The Dragons did lose two runners from the 2015 squad that ran

at the section event, but neither one ran races that contributed to the team tally.

Jada Elias, the lone senior member of the team last fall, turned in Adrian's sixth-best time at the section event.

Hannah Bullerman, an underclassman who is not a member of the team in 2016, was Adrian's seventh runner at the section meet.

The Dragons open the 2016 campaign with a 13-athlete roster consisting of one senior, one junior, one sophomore, three freshmen, four eighth-graders and three seventh-graders.

The list includes two All-RRC runners, one state qualifier, five section entries and a total of seven letter winners.

Freshman Moriah Bullerman and eighth-grader Morgan Penning are considered to be Adrian's top prospects heading into a new

Adrian Cross Country

Aug 31	Mountain Lake Invitational	A
Sept 8	Tracy-Milroy-Balaton	A
Sept 12	Marshall Invitational	A
Sept 15	Worthington Turkey Trot	A
Sept 20	LQPV Invitational	A
Sept 22	Sioux Center Invitational	A
Sept 29	RWV Invitational	A
Oct 6	Luverne Invitational	A
Oct 11	Adrian Invitational	H

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season. Bullerman returns as one of

Southwest Minnesota's top runners, a reputation she earned by turning in an All-RRC performance in the final meet of the regular season and by securing an individual berth in the state meet by placing 10th individually at the section event.

Bullerman went on to place 62nd out of 175 runners at the state meet as an eighth-grader.

Penning didn't advance to state after finishing 43rd at the section meet, but she did make the All-RRC squad in the final race of the regular season.

"I have no doubt that Moriah will return to state this year," Kiers said.

"I think Morgan has a good chance to move on as well."

Kiers believes Bullerman and Penning will compete at a high level this fall, but he needs the balance of his varsity squad to improve in order for the Dragons

to succeed as a team.

As members of last year's section squad, sophomore Halle Heitkamp and eighth-graders Jasmine Kohorst and Gracia Elias are key members of the team as well.

Kohorst (85th), Elias (86th) and Heitkamp (97th) all turned in point-producing efforts for AHS at the section meet last season.

AHS also has two other girls returning to the team as letter winners from 2016.

Junior Courtney Penning and freshman Samantha Moulton, who served as an alternate for the section team, are potential varsity contributors this fall.

Another potential varsity contributor in 2016 is seventh-grader Hiltyn Heitkamp, who has looked good in preseason practice runs.

Khailee Nelson, the team's lone senior, is making the conversion

AHS/continued on page 17

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John Rittenhouse photo/0901 tab ahs fb

Twelve seniors are members of the Adrian High School football program in 2016. They are (front row, from left) Kasey Madtson, Evan Swank, Zach Loosbrock, Frank Serrao, Dylan Gyberg, Tristian White, (back), Zach Bierman, Mitchell Wagner, Mitchell Lonneman, Dylan Werkman and Alex Loosbrock. Missing is Zach Hendel.

Inexperience is obstructing Adrian's progress

By John Rittenhouse

The Adrian High School football team needs to overcome an obstacle to find success on the gridiron in 2016.

With the AHS experiencing a large turnover in personnel, varsity experience is not on the Dragons' side as a new campaign approaches.

"We have a few kids with experience coming back, but we'll be playing a lot of good teams this year," said Dragon coach Randy Strand.

"It will be a challenge for us."

The challenge stems from losing nine seniors from the 2015 season.

Six of last year's seniors were two-way starters for AHS, and another served as a starting linebacker on defense.

With the seniors leading the way, Adrian put together a solid

7-4 campaign last fall.

The Dragons went 4-3 and tied for fourth place in the Southwest District West Sub-District during a 5-3 regular season.

A 5-3 record was good enough to give AHS the second seed for the Section 3A Playoffs, which started with the Dragons securing wins over Sleepy Eye (33-6) and Sleepy Eye St. Mary's (34-24) to earn a berth in the section championship game for the ninth consecutive season.

Adrian, however, dropped a 32-15 decision to Tracy-Milroy-Balaton in the title tilt, ending a 7-2 campaign and keeping the Dragons out of the state playoffs for the fourth consecutive year.

The list of nine seniors who capped their AHS careers against T-M-B includes four All-District performers.

Logan Rogers (quarterback/

Adrian Football

Sept 2	New Ulm Cathedral	A
Sept 9	Lakeview	H
Sept 16	Minneota	H
Sept 23	MCC	A
Sept 30	Canby	H
Oct 7	RTR	A
Oct 14	LQPV	H
Oct 19	Dawson-Boyd	A

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safety), Michael Preuss (tailback/linebacker), Matthew Slater (of-

fensive tackle/linebacker) and Skylar Hieronimus (wing back/linebacker) graced the All-District roster at season's end.

Hunter Heitkamp, a senior who started as a defensive end and a wide receiver, drew honorable mention honors from District officials.

Gavin Engelkes, another 2015 senior, served as a starting offensive tackle and defensive tackle before being sidelined with an injury late in the season.

Logan Nelson started as a linebacker during his senior season, while classmates Jade Swank and Greg Kern were key reserves who made positive contributions to the team.

"The big thing was losing Rogers, who was our starting quarterback for four years. I think he didn't start one game during those four years," Strand offered.

"The other guys played good football over the years for us, too. They played in a lot of (section championship) games on the turf in Marshall, which a lot of teams can't say. We just didn't get over the hump in those championship games."

While Adrian will be thin on experience in the offensive backfield and at the receiver position this year, the Dragons do have battle-tested athletes returning to the offensive line.

Seniors Mitchell Wagner, Zach Bierman and Zach Loosbrock and freshman Lance Luettel have varsity experience on the line.

Wagner, a 205-pound guard, returns as the starting right guard after drawing honorable mention recognition from District officials in 2015.

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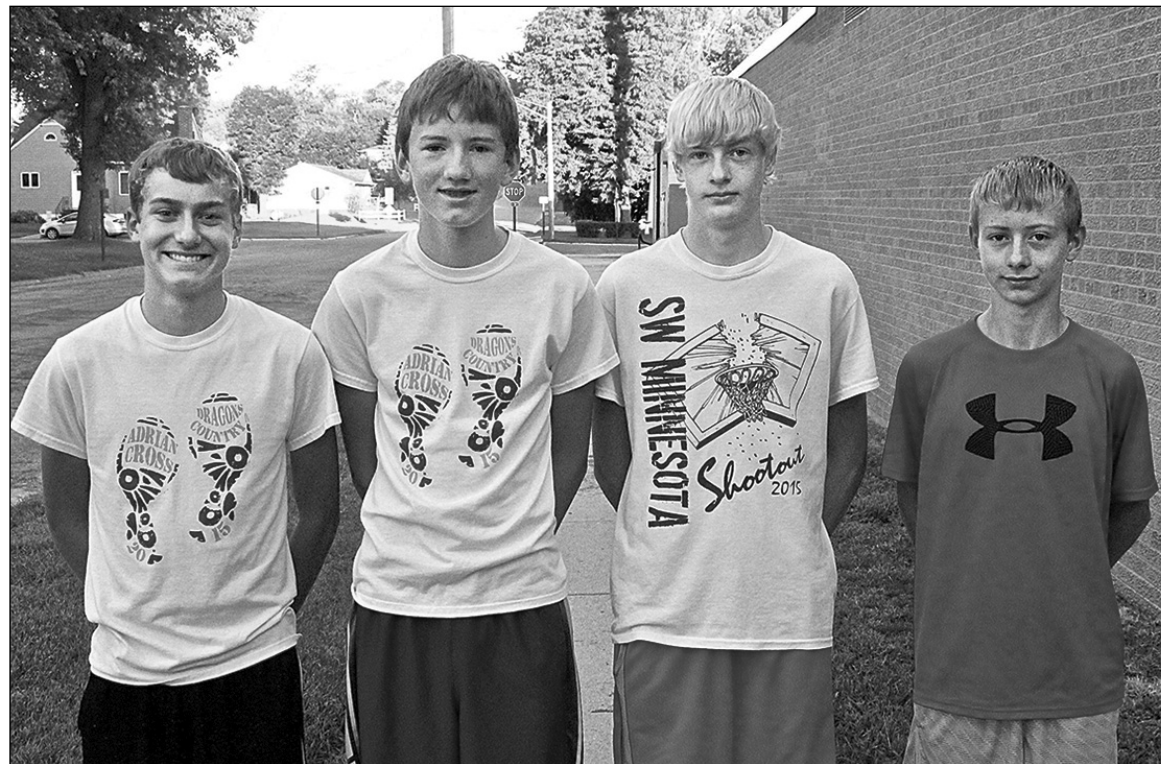
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John Rittenhouse photo/0901 tab ahs boys cc

Four members of Adrian's 2015 section squad return to the boys' cross country program this fall. They are (from left) Brady Henning, Caleb Hornstein, Christian Weidert and Brody Loosbrock.

AHS/continued from page 15

from being Adrian's manager the last two years to being a runner in 2016.

Other members of the program include freshman Annika Elias, eighth-grader Karis Barr and seventh-graders Abbey Leopold and Ashlee Christians.

"Our goals for the year are to place in the top five teams at the section meet and get two individuals to qualify for state," Kiers said.

"Then again, you never know. We might come up with a pleasant surprise as a team or individually and have more kids move on to state."

With a low participation rate, the **Adrian boys** will be hard-pressed to field a complete varsity team in 2016.

A total of five athletes have reported to practice sessions of the preseason, which means all five would need to run at the varsity level in order for AHS to record a team score at meets.

That's not going to happen unless more athletes join the program prior to or during the season.

"It might become more of an individual thing for our boys this year," Kiers said.



"The boys might have to push themselves to become better individually and not worry about the team aspect. I think that could be a good thing."

The AHS boys did compete as a team in 2015, placing fourth at the conference meet and finishing 18th out of 21 teams at the section event.

Unfortunately for AHS, two of the six runners who ran at the section and conference meets last fall opted not to participate in the program in 2015.

Adrian's five-athlete roster at the beginning of the season includes one junior, one sophomore, one freshman, one eighth-grader and one seventh-grader.

The list includes one All-RRC performer and a total of four members of the 2015 section

squad.

Junior Brady Henning is the top returning runner.

Along with making the All-RRC squad last fall, Henning turned in a strong 23rd-place finish at the section meet.

"Brady has run a lot over the summer and he's ready to go right now," Kiers said.

"If I remember right, a lot of seniors finished in front of him at the section meet, so he might have a chance to qualify for state this year. The other three boys who ran at the section meet last year are experienced runners."

Sophomore Christian Weidert, freshman Caleb Hornstein and eighth-grader Brody Loosbrock bring 2015 section experience to the team.

Weidert placed 89th, Loosbrock 110th and Hornstein 133rd at the section event.

Seventh-grader Josh Barr rounds out the roster, but Kiers believes he is a year or two away from making an impact at the varsity level.

"All of the boys have set individual goals for themselves in terms of times. That will help them push themselves," Kiers concluded.

Adrian/continued from page 16

The 175-pound Bierman comes back as the starting right guard, while the 185-pound Loosbrock is switching positions in 2016.

Loosbrock started at center last fall, but he's projected to be the left guard this season.

Luettel, a 270-pound left tackle, gained most of his experience when Engelkes was injured late last season.

Junior Skylar Polzine (250) is expected to be the starting center.

Strand is looking at a pair of seniors to fill out the line as tight ends.

Mitchell Lonneman (210) did gain some experience as a reserve offensive lineman last fall.

Lonneman and Alex Loosbrock (195) are projected to be tight ends for AHS in 2016.

Reserve linemen include seniors Evan Swank (185), Dylan Werkman (215) and Kasey Madtson (200), junior Chance Turner (185) and sophomore Skyler Dingmann (190).

"I think we're a little bigger on the line than we were last year," Strand said.

"The verdict is still out on this group. We'll find out if they can play during the season."

The balance of the offensive unit is less experienced with the exception of seniors Dylan Gyberg, Frank Serrao and Landon Rogers.

Gyberg (200) and Landon Rogers (160) received starts at the fullback position in 2016.

The 170-pound Serrao started at times as halfback.

Some more athletes are pushing for playing time at the fullback, wing back and tail back positions this year.

Strand said junior Nick Harder (195), a transfer student from Luverne, can play in all three of those positions.

Junior Brendyn White (140) is a potential tailback, as is sophomore Dakota John (160).

AHS will be inexperienced at the quarterback and wide receiver positions this fall.

Senior Zach Hendel (170) is expected to be Adrian's top receiver, while junior Ryan Wieneke (195) is the team's quarterback.

"Ryan has a little experience, but not a lot of it at the varsity level," Strand said.

"He's a tall (6-5), lanky kid who throws a good football. I just don't know how much throwing we'll do this year because I'm hoping we can pound the ball this year. We'll line up in different formations, try to overload one side of the line in some instances and try to get our kids in the right places so they can succeed. Hopefully, we'll be able to gain some yardage on the ground."

Unlike the offensive line, experience is something Adrian lacks on the defensive front.

Wagner, a defensive tackle, is the lone returning starter on the line.

Zach Loosbrock is expected to be the other starting defensive tackle, while Lonneman and Luettel are projected to be starting defensive ends.

Other potential defensive linemen include Madtson, Turner, Swank, Polzine and Werkman.

Two of the four projected starting linebackers bring experience to the table.

Gyberg returns as a starting inside linebacker, while Bierman, who started as a defensive end in 2015, is expected to play as an outside linebacker this fall.

Harder is expected to start as an inside linebacker and Logan Rogers as an outside linebacker.

John is another potential linebacker.

Wieneke and Serrao return as starting cornerbacks in Adrian's secondary, while Alex Loosbrock is projected to be the safety.

White and junior Michael Preuss (140) could play in the secondary as well.

"I don't think we're as big as we need to be on defense, but we may be able to make up for it with quickness," Strand said.

"We have a few kids coming back with experience on defense, but we'll be playing with new kids in a lot of positions."

Strand lists Minneota, Canby, Lakeview and Lac qui Parley Valley as being the top teams in a competitive district this fall.

"We'll be playing a lot of good teams in the regular season and it will be a challenge for us," he said.

"I just want to see us get better with every game. When it becomes playoff time, we want to be playing our best football."

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Panthers to play for new head coach

By John Rittenhouse

The 2016 volleyball season brings a coaching change at Ellsworth.

Jessica Albrecht, a Pickwick native who graduated from Luther High School (Onalaska, Wisconsin) in 2009, takes over the reins of the EHS program this fall.

Albrecht replaces Mac McDowell, who stepped down from the position after compiling a 16-87 record as Ellsworth's head coach the past four seasons.

Albrecht moved to Ellsworth the weekend before practice started on Aug. 15 and has enjoyed working with the Panther players as they prepare for the upcoming season.

"I'm really enjoying it. It's been a lot of fun," she said.

"The girls have been working super hard. I've been throwing some new things at them and whatever I tell them to do, they



Submitted photo

Ellsworth athletes

Ellsworth High School athletes (pictured above, from left) Zach Buntjer, Jared Leuthold, Josh Auch, Austen Klein and Samuel Armstrong are participating in the Edgerton-Ellsworth football program this fall. Leuthold, a senior, and Buntjer, a junior, are returning to the program after missing the past couple of seasons. Leuthold could help the varsity team as a wing back/cornerback, while Buntjer is a possible contributor as an offensive guard/defensive tackle. Auch, Klein and Armstrong are freshmen expected to play at the junior varsity level. E-E is coming off a 7-4 2015 season that came to an end with a loss to Madelia in the Section 3 Nine-Man championship game. The Flying Dutchmen open the season in Madelia Friday before playing their home opener against Granada-Huntley-East Chain-Truman Sept. 9. Other home games are against Mountain Lake Area (Sept. 30), Hills-Beaver Creek (Oct. 7) and Cleveland (Oct. 19). Other road games are against Nicollet (Sept. 16), Fulda (Sept. 24) and Westbrook-Walnut Grove (Oct. 14). Pictured on the right are Ellsworth High School eighth-graders Micah Onken (left) and Linkin Bossert (right), who are competing in Ellsworth High School cross country program in 2016. EHS did compete with H-BC in cross country in the past, but this is the first year the school is offering its own program to the students. Onken and Bossert are expected to compete as junior high runners at meets this year. The Panthers are coached by Ethan Van Briesen.



John Rittenhouse photo/0901 tab ehs cc


Coch/continued on page 19

Ellsworth Volleyball

Aug 30	Edgerton	A
Sept 6	H-BC	H
Sept 8	Red Rock Central	H
Sept 10	Central Lyon Tournament	A
Sept 12	Sibley Quadrangular	A
Sept 15	Mountain Lake	A
Sept 20	Heron Lake-Okabena	H
Sept 23	Hendricks	H
Sept 27	Southwest Christian	A
Sept 29	Adrian	H
Oct 4	Fulda	A
Oct 6	WWG	A
Oct 8	H-LP Tournament	A
Oct 11	MCC	H
Oct 13	Edgerton	H
Oct 14	Hendricks	A
Oct 17	H-BC	A



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Coach/continued from page 18



John Rittenhouse photo/0901 tab ehs vb

Two seniors are the leaders of first-year head coach Jessica Albrecht's Ellsworth High School volleyball team in 2016. They are (from left) Hailee Nolte and Hannah Kramer.

do it the right way. I like the way things have been going so far."

Albrecht inherits a team that struggled last season.

The Panthers went 1-25 during the regular season, which includes a 0-10 mark in the Red Rock Conference.

Ellsworth ended the campaign with a 1-26 record after dropping a 3-0 decision to Southwest Christian during the opening round of the South Section 3A Tournament.

Three senior players capped their EHS careers at the end of the 2015 campaign.

Megan Popkes, an all-around player, drew honorable mention honors from the RRC coaches at the end of her senior season.

Maggie Kruse started for the Panthers as well.

Sharlene Heikes is another member of the 2015 squad.

Losing three players will make a big impact on the 2016 team, which is short on numbers this year.

Volleyball is a sport that requires six players to be on the court at all times, and EHS starts the season with an eight-player varsity roster.

The list includes two seniors, two juniors, three sophomores and one freshman.

With Albrecht being a physical education instructor, she wants her players to be well conditioned in order to survive the rigors of a long season with a limited roster.

"We've been working their skills and things like weightlifting and cardio vascular stuff," she said.

"Hopefully it will help the girls jump high, hit the ball harder and get them physically ready for the season. We're also working on things like sportsmanship team building. We want the kids encouraging each other, not getting mad at each other."

As seniors, Albrecht is looking for Hannah Kramer and Hailee Nolte to be the leaders of the squad.

Kramer, a 5-6 left-side hitter, is a returning starter from the 2015 squad.

Nolte is a 5-4 left-side hitter with past experience as well.

Other players with past starting experience returning to the team



Albrecht

include juniors Devin Dreesen and Madyson Domeyer and sophomore Sierra Smith.

Dreesen is a 5-6 middle hitter, while Domeyer is a 5-4 right-side hitter.

Smith is a 5-8 middle hitter.

Albrecht said Nolte has displayed signs of being one of Ellsworth's top defensive players in the preseason practice sessions.

Kramer, Dreesen and Smith have stood out with their abilities to attack the ball at the net.

The remaining three players on the roster will play key roles for the 2016 team as well.

Grace Mulder, a 5-4 sophomore, is expected to be the team's setter this fall.

Sophomore Lizzie Chapa is a 5-5 setter/left-side hitter.

Kallie Chapa, a 5-5 freshman, is a right-side hitter.

"I really like the way all of these kids are willing to work hard," Albrecht said.

"They are receptive to whatever we tell them to do and they do it right away."

There's no doubt Ellsworth will face a number of challenges with a limited roster in 2016, but that doesn't mean the Panthers can't achieve the goals they have set for themselves.

"The kids want to win more matches than they did last year," Albrecht said.

"They have set the goal of winning at least four matches."

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