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A photograph of a volleyball game in progress. A player in a red jersey is jumping high to hit a ball over a net. Another player in a black jersey is also jumping. A coach in a white shirt is visible in the background. The background is a brick wall with a banner that says "implement.com".

Luverne senior Alexis Ferrell and the Cardinal volleyball team will take the court under the guidance of first-year head coach Susan Bork in 2017.

H-BC graduate takes over volleyball program

By John Rittenhouse

A lot of things have changed since the Hills-Beaver Creek volleyball team put together one of the best seasons in program history in 2016.

Not only did H-BC lose seven seniors from a squad that went 10-0 to win the first Red Rock Conference volleyball title in school history, it also lost the head coach who served as the leader of the team over the past three years.

Susan Bork, who guided H-BC to a 48-29 record between 2014-16, is now the head volleyball coach in Luverne.

Taking over for Bork as the Patriots' mentor is Meghan Zylstra, a 2013 H-BC graduate who has been a varsity assistant at the school for the past four years.

Since she worked under Bork during last year's magical 21-3 campaign that came to an end with a loss to Windom in the semifinal round of the South Section 3A Tournament, Zylstra knows what last year's seniors gave to the team.

Hunter Harvey and Emma Baker played sparingly during their senior seasons, but classmates Jasmine Lingen, Avery Van Roekel, Mekayla Kolbrek, Ashley



H-BC/continued on page 4

H-BC Volleyball

Aug 29	Adrian	H
Sept 5	Ellsworth	H
Sept 7	Adrian	A
Sept 9	CL Tournament	A
Sept 12	Luverne	A
Sept 14	Southwest Christian	H
Sept 19	Heron Lake-Okabena	H
Sept 21	Westbrook-Walnut Grove	A
Sept 23	Elkton-Lake Benton Tourny	A
Sept 25	Edgerton	A
Sept 28	Mountain Lake	A
Oct 3	Red Rock Central	H
Oct 5	MCC	H
Oct 6-7	SMSU Tournament	A
Oct 10	Fulda	A
Oct 12	Ellsworth	A
Oct 16	Edgerton	H



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John Rittenhouse photo/0831 tab hbc vb

Seven seniors are the leaders of the 2017 Hills-Beaver Creek volleyball team. They are (front row, from left) Paige Tilstra, Grace Holthaus, (back) Megan Gehrke, Halle Hoekstra, Kourtney Rozeboom, Avery Wysong and Olivia Richards.

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Patriots shooting for return trip to title game

By John Rittenhouse

One year after leading Hills-Beaver Creek High School through its longest season in more than a decade, Patriot football coach Rex Metzger is hoping for a repeat performance in 2017.

After going 6-2 and placing third in the South District Western Division during the regular season last fall, the Patriots posted a pair of wins over Granada-Huntley-East Chain-Martin Luther-Truman (54-6) and Mountain Lake Area (47-14) in the opening round of the playoffs to reach the Section 3 championship game for the first time since 2003.

H-BC's 8-3 season came to an end with a 30-12 loss to Edgerton-Ellsworth in the title tilt, but the setback didn't tarnish what was the longest season in Metzger's tenure as head coach.

Although H-BC did lose five seniors who played as two-way starters for the 2016 squad, the Patriot mentor isn't ruling out another successful run this season.

"After losing five good seniors, I'm sure there are a lot of people out there thinking this will be a down year for us," Metzger said.

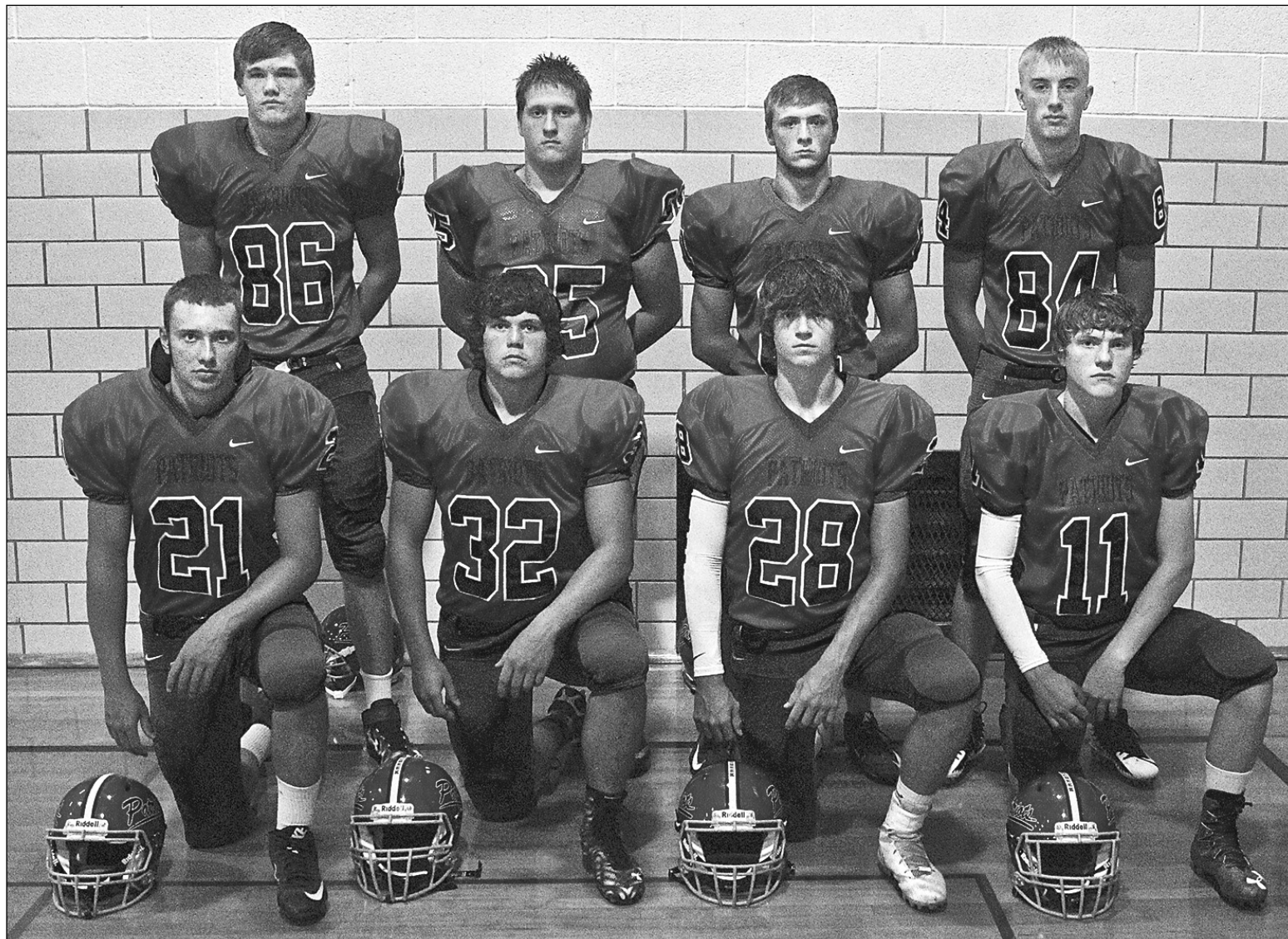
"We have more size this year and good team speed. We don't have a lot of experience, but I think we can make a run to the section championship game just like we did last year."

In order for that to happen, H-BC needs to fill some holes on both sides of the ball left by the departed seniors.

Isaiah Vis (tailback/linebacker) was named the District's Back of the Year at the end of his senior season, while Zach Scholten (quarterback/defensive end) made the All-District squad.

Jed Burgers (wide receiver/safety) and Logan Leuthold (offensive guard/middlelinebacker) drew honorable mention recognition from District officials, while Dylan Forshey started as a defensive tackle/center to cap his career.

"We only lost five seniors from last year's team, but they were guys that played as two-way starters for us. Some of them were playing varsity football since they were freshmen, so they were guys who were on the field a long time



Eight seniors are members of the Hills-Beaver Creek High School football program in 2017. They are (front row, from left) Dean Fuerstenberg, Preston Maassen, Trenton Bass, Dawson Leenderts, (back) Dylon Taubert, Jesse Elbers, Dylan Tieszen and Josh Kueter.

John Rittenhouse photo/0831 tab hbc fb

for us," Metzger said.

Replacing last year's seniors is a tall order, but Metzger believes he has the type of athletes to get the job done on the field.

"We have a great group of guys," he said.

"Our team speed is pretty good, and we'll be one of the bigger teams we've had in a while. There's a lot of competition going on for positions and the kids have been going at it hard in practice and that will only make us better by the end of the year. We also will be a youthful team. We just don't have a lot of guys with experience."

Offensively H-BC will field a revamped interior line in 2017.

Garrett Raymon, a 265-pound

junior right guard who made the All-District squad as a sophomore, is the lone returning starter in the middle of the line.

Competition is underway for the other two interior line positions.

Senior Dylan Tieszen (180), junior George Merson (250) and sophomore Kyle Kueter (185) are battling for the starting job at center.

Seniors Jesse Elbers (265) and Dylon Taubert (195) and junior Noah Hellerud (205) are in the mix for the left guard position.

Metzger plans to use two tight ends on the line during most situations, and the candidates bring experience to the table.

Senior Dean Fuerstenberg

(170) returns as a starter, while senior Josh Kueter (185), junior Luke LaRock (190) and sophomore Jax Wysong (195) did log some varsity playing time in 2016.

"We're going to be a bigger team up front this year. We had some kids put on some bulk since last year," Metzger said.

"I like our physicality these guys play with. With our size, I'm hoping we'll be more of a ground and pound team this year."

Metzger has a bevy of talented running backs to carry the ball this year, so he's planning to feature a lot of three-back formations.

Senior Trenton Bass, who is

H-BC Football

Aug 31	Heron Lake-Okabena	H
Sept 8	Mountain Lake	A
Sept 15	Red Rock Central	H
Sept 22	Westbrook-Walnut Gove	H
Sept 29	Fulda	A
Oct 6	Edgerton-Ellsworth	H
Oct 13	Renville County West	A
Oct 18	RTR	A

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Title/continued on page 4

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Star Herald file photo

H-BC's Josh Kueter protects the ball after hauling in a pass during last year's section title game.

Title/continued from page 3

listed as the team's No. 2 quarterback, returns as the starting tailback.

The 170-pound Bass made the All-District squad as a junior.

Other potential ball-carriers include seniors Preston Maassen (190) and Dawson Leenderts (160), juniors Bailey Susie (190) and Hunter Bork (155) and freshmen Gavin Wysong (165) and Tyson Bork (151).

"We have more depth at running back this year than we've ever had before," Metzger said.

"I would be fine with any one of those guys carrying the ball for us."

The wild card in the offensive scheme is how sophomore Easton Harnack (145) handles the responsibilities of playing the quarterback position at the varsity level.

Scholten served as the team's No. 1 quarterback for three-plus seasons, and Harnack only received spot playing time last year.

"We don't have a lot of experience at the quarterback position,

which is one of the reasons why I hope we can run the ball successfully," Metzger said.

H-BC's front seven on defense does feature a lot of experienced players.

Elbers and Raymon return as starting defensive tackles, and Jax Wysong did receive some starts as a defensive end late last season.

Kueter, Taubert and Tieszen are other potential defensive ends.

Merson, Hellerud and sophomore Jaxon Steensma (225) are potential defensive tackles.

Two of H-BC's three linebackers drew starts during the course of the 2016 campaign.

Fuerstenberg, who played as an outside linebacker one year ago, is projected to replace Leuthold as the middle linebacker this fall.

Bass, who also received some starts in the secondary, and Maassen are possible starting outside linebackers in 2017.

LaRock and Susie are potential linebackers as well.

The coach is unsure which players will be starting in the defensive

secondary this year.

Leenderts, Harnack, Gavin Wysong, and Hunter and Tyson Bork are potential candidates.

"I think our defense will be just as physical, if not more physical, than another defense we've had in the past," Metzger stated.

"I like what these guys bring to the table in terms of size and athletic ability. What they need is experience."

Metzger predicts the District to be very competitive in 2017, with E-E, MLA and Red Rock Central being some of the top squads.

If H-BC can overcome its inexperience at some positions, the Patriots can be a top contender as well.

"Our district will be better than it has been the past couple of years. There are at least five good teams out there that could challenge for the title. Hopefully we'll be playing better football at the end of the year and be one of those teams."

H-BC/continued from page 2

Esselink and Courtney Kruger were key contributors.

Van Roekel, Kolbrek and Lingen made the All-RRC squad, while Esselink drew honorable mention.

"We lost two of our biggest hitters in Avery and Jasmine, and Mekayla was a smart setter with two or three years of experience," Zylstra offered.

"Ashley was a good blocker and Courtney was very quick in the back row and wasn't afraid to dive on the floor to keep a ball in play. We do have some big shoes to fill."

Fortunately for Zylstra, H-BC has enough returning talent to field a competitive team in 2017.

H-BC opens the year with a 13-athlete roster consisting of seven seniors and six juniors.

The list includes three returning starters, two all-conference selections and three other athletes who received at least some match experience last fall.

"What I like about these girls is they all get along very well," Zylstra said.

"We have talked about being one big family, and I think this group of girls has really embraced it. You can hear them supporting and encouraging each other in practice, and they all are willing to work hard and get better."

As returning all-conference selections, senior Avery Wysong and junior Sidney Fick are expected to play key roles for the 2017 team.

The 5-9 Wysong played as a left-side hitter and shared some of the setting duties with Kolbrek last year, but she is expected to be the No. 1 setter this season.

The 6-0 Fick is a middle hitter who blocks well at the net and registers kills in bundles.

Another player returning with starting experience is senior Olivia Richards.

The 5-9 Richards is a left-side hitter who emerged as a top-notch attacker in 2016.

Seniors Kourtney Rozeboom, Paige Tilstra and Megan Gehrke gained some varsity playing time last year and are expected to log even more court time in 2017.

Tilstra is a 5-6 libero, Gehrke a 5-0 left-side hitter and Rozeboom a 6-1 middle hitter.

Add junior Grace Bundesen (5-9 middle hitter) to the mix,



Zylstra

and H-BC has a strong nucleus in place.

"Having won the conference last year has given these girls the hunger to succeed again this year, and I think we can become a very good team," Zylstra said.

Other seniors who could emerge as varsity contributors this fall include Halle Hoekstra (5-10 left-side hitter) and Grace Holthaus (5-3 middle hitter).

Other potential contributors include juniors Alexia Boltjes (5-3 right-side hitter), Amber Bos (5-7 right-side hitter), Madison Spath (5-5 middle hitter) and Bailey Swan (5-10 left-side hitter).

Zylstra believes H-BC has the athletic ability to compete this fall, but she does have a concern with how the athletes will react to certain mental aspects of the sport.

"Our biggest weakness — and I have not seen it yet — is moving on from all the things our seniors gave us last year," she said.

"These girls could always count on what Avery, Jasmine and Ashley did in the front row for us and the smart setting of Mekayla. I just don't know how these girls will react when things get tough, but I think we have holes last year's seniors left in our lineup filled pretty well."

Zylstra believes in her players, and she wants them to believe in her as a first-year head coach.

If they all get on the same page, the coach believes the team can meet its goals in 2017.

"I would like to aim high and see us put up another conference championship banner in the gym this year. At the least, I would like to see us place as one of the top three teams in our conference," she concluded.

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John Rittenhouse photo/0831 lhs volleyball

Ten seniors are members of the 2017 Luverne High School volleyball team. They are (from left) Hannah Ver Steeg, Zoey Sandbulte, Sierra Schmuck, Alexis Ferrell, Michaela Sandbulte, Rachel Oftedahl, McKenna Westphal, Maddie Dinger and Pernille Kjorum. Missing is Gracie Bosch.

Cards to take direction from new coach

By John Rittenhouse

There is a new leader of the Luverne High School volleyball program in 2017.

Susan Bork, a 2002 graduate of LHS, is Luverne's first-year head coach.

Bork replaces Stacie Busse-Remme, who compiled a 30-45-1 record over the past three seasons.

Luverne's new leader does have past head coaching experience.

Bork served as H-BC's volleyball mentor the past three seasons, posting a 48-29 overall record and leading the Patriots to a program-first Red Rock Conference title last fall.

During the first few weeks of preseason practice, Bork has had the chance to get to know her new personnel.

So far, Bork has liked what she has witnessed.

"I think we have a good group of girls who are willing to work hard and together," she said.

"My first impression was these girls all are willing to learn, but a lot of them have not seen court time. So we basically have had to restart teaching them the basics and keep going from there."

Bork inherits a team that relied heavily on its seven seniors in 2016.

With the upperclassmen leading the way, LHS went 1-5 in Big South Conference Western Division play during the course of a 13-12 regular season.

LHS posted a 3-1 victory over Martin County West to open the South Section 3AA Tournament before a 14-13 campaign came to an end with a 3-0 loss to Jackson County Central in the semifinals.

Six of Luverne's seniors logged an abundance of playing time last fall.

Hailey Remme emerged as the leader of the team and earned a position on the All-BSC squad.

Ariel DeBeer, Kami Sawtelle, Katie Kracht, Madison Crabtree

and Hailey Franken played key roles for the team during their senior seasons, while Hanna Honerman received limited playing time.

For her part, Bork is more concerned with the players on the team this year than the athletes who left the program last fall.

By preaching the basics to the athletes, she believes it will make the Cardinals better volleyball players.

"Once they learn the little things about the sport, I think they will see success they haven't seen before," Bork said.

"The girls have grabbed a hold of what we're trying to do in practice really well. We had a scrimmage in Minnesota and I think it went well for us. They don't have a lot of experience, but once they get some I think they will show progression and start going in the direction we all want go."

Since she is unfamiliar with a lot of the Cardinal players, Bork

is not in a position to say which athletes will log a lot of playing time this fall.

LHS does have an abundance of players to build a 15-player team out of for the postseason with 10 seniors, nine juniors and potentially two sophomores vying for court time.

Senior Alexis Ferrell brings the most varsity experience to the 2017 team.

Ferrell, a 6-1 middle hitter, is a top-notch attacker who was a regular in Luverne's player rotation last season.

Seniors Sierra Schmuck, Rachel Oftedahl and Hannah Ver Steeg gained some varsity experience in 2016.

The 5-7 Schmuck is expected to be one of two setters Bork plans to play a lot this fall, and the 6-0 Oftedahl should help the Cardinals in the front row as a right-side hitter.

Luverne Volleyball

Aug 26	Fairmont	A
Aug 29	Southwest Christian	H
Aug 31	St. James Area	A
Sept 7	Redwood Valley	H
Sept 9	Luverne Tournament	H
Sept 12	H-BC	H
Sept 14	Marshall	A
Sept 16	JCC Tournament	A
Sept 21	JCC	H
Sept 25	Fulda	A
Sept 28	Windom	A
Oct 2	Edgerton	A
Oct 5	Worthington	H
Oct 7	Pipstone Tournament	A
Oct 12	Pipstone	A
Oct 16	Martin County West	A
Oct 17	Adrian	A



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John Rittenhouse photo/0831 tab lhs tennis

Six section competitors from the 2016 season return to the Luverne High School tennis program this fall. They are (from left) Samantha Pierce, Ainslie Robinson, Emilie Bartels, Riley Severtson, Elise Jarchow and Carissa Cunningham. The Cardinals are coached by veteran LHS mentor Greg Antoine.

Tennis team seeks modest improvement on court

By John Rittenhouse

Luverne High School girls' tennis coach Greg Antoine is hoping his 2017 team can take a small step forward this fall.

After putting together a 7-9 campaign in 2016, Antoine is seeking modest improvement during a new season.

"I would say a .500 record would be a good season for us," he said.

"Basically all we would need to do is beat one of the teams that beat us last year. Our goal is to have a .500 record, but maybe these kids will surprise me by the end of the season."

Luverne placed third in the Big South Conference Western Division with a 3-2 record last season and bowed out of the Section 3A Team Tournament with a 7-0 loss to River Valley in

the quarterfinals.

Six of the 10 players who represented Luverne in postseason play return to the court in 2017, but LHS did bid farewell to five seniors when the 2016 campaign was complete.

"We basically lost our first and third doubles teams," Antoine said.

"It's nice to have all of our singles players coming back. Losing four starters is always tough, but we've lost more seniors than that before."

Natasha Thone and Kayla Rud formed Luverne's No. 1 doubles team in 2016 and performed well enough to draw honorable mention recognition from BSC officials at the end of their senior seasons

Sierra Wieneke and Shelbie

Nath played at third doubles as seniors, while classmate Marisol Hartshorn was another member of the program.

A total of 36 athletes are participating in the program this fall, but Antoine believes he can form his varsity team out of the three seniors, four juniors, six sophomores and nine freshmen listed on the roster.

"I think we're going to be fine in singles," Antoine offered.

"We're going to have a mad scramble for our doubles positions. We'll be young and largely inexperienced in doubles, so we'll be doing a lot of messing around with our lineup this year. We have a lot of freshmen, sophomores and juniors playing and I think a lot of them can be pretty good."

Antoine is comfortable with

the singles players he is planning to put on the court to start the season.

Senior Samantha Pierce and junior Carissa Cunningham played at first and second singles respectively for LHS last year, and both girls made the All-BSC squad at season's end.

Senior Joci Oye, who missed the 2016 season due to a knee injury, played singles for LHS as a sophomore and could make a push to play at second singles in 2017.

Antoine said freshman Ainslie Robinson is emerging as one of the top prospects to play fourth singles this fall.

Robinson played at second doubles last year.

Nothing is set in terms of Luverne's doubles combinations

this season.

Antoine believes senior Emilie Bartels, who played third singles in the postseason in 2016, will play at first doubles this fall.

With past varsity experience, junior Riley Severtson and freshman Elise Jarchow could figure into the doubles mix as well.

Severtson played second doubles with Robinson in the postseason last year, while Jarchow competed at fourth singles.

It remains to be seen which other program members will assume positions in the doubles combinations in 2017.

Juniors Julia Ferguson and Brianna Jonas could be in the mix, but he said some sophomores and freshmen have looked good

Seek/continued on page 7

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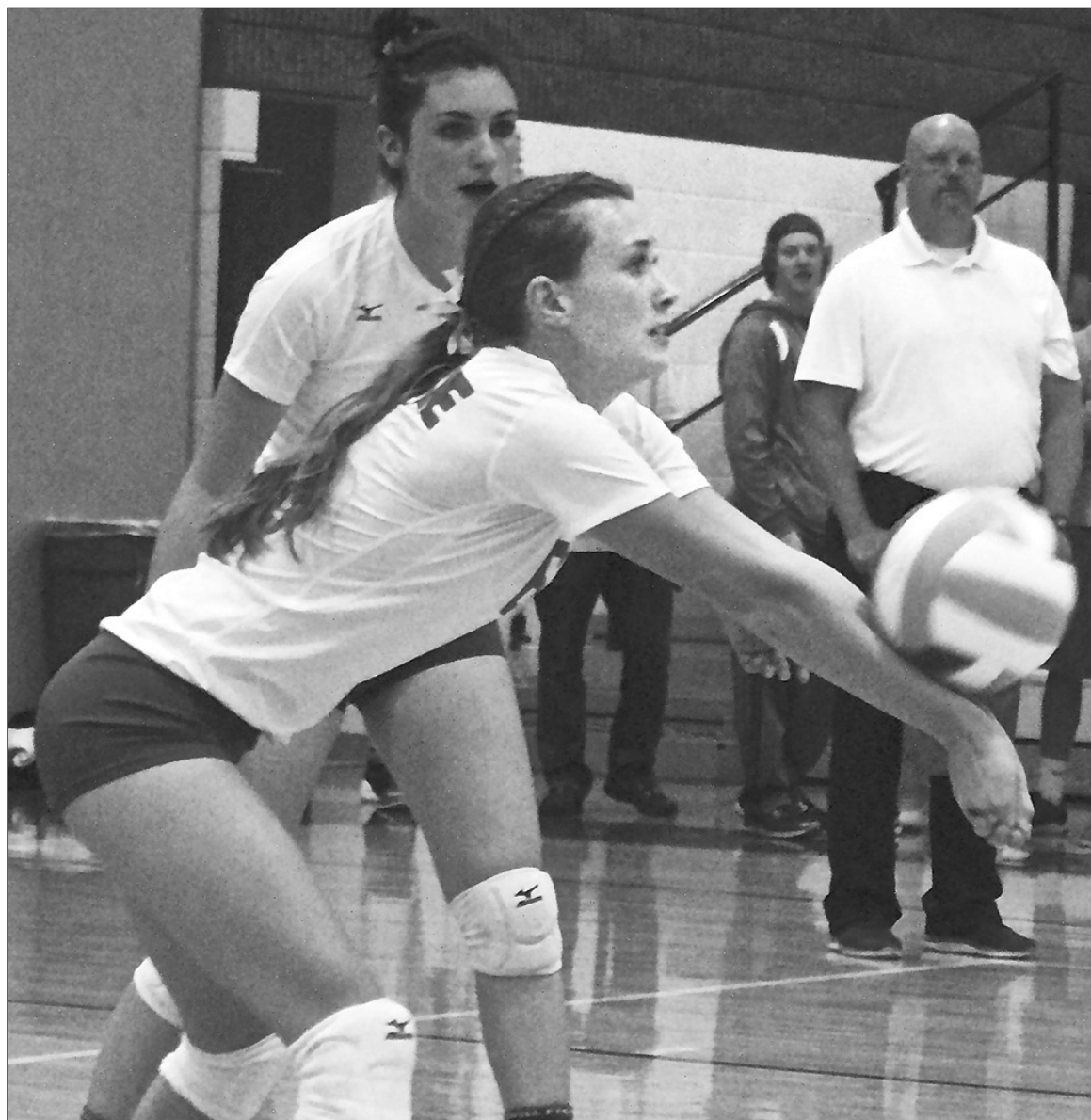
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Star Herald file photo

LHS senior Sierra Schmuck is expected to play an expanded role as a setter this fall.

Cards/continued from page 5

Ver Steeg is a 5-6 left-side hitter who has not been cleared to play yet after sustaining a knee injury during the basketball season.

Other seniors who could help the team at the net in 2017 include left-side hitters McKenna Westphal (5-5), Michaela Sandbulte (5-8), Maddie Dinger (5-10) and exchange student Pernille Kjørsum (5-8), and right-side hitter Zoey Sandbulte (5-0).

Senior Gracie Bosch is a 5-4 specialist in the back row.

Junior Greta Ahrendt, a 5-9 middle hitter, has captured Bork's attention in practice and could gain her first varsity exposure this fall.

Other juniors include setter Jady Anderson (5-7), middle hitters Mackenzie Petersen (5-



Bork

7), McCall Stegenga (5-7) and Justyce Ripka (5-6), right-side hitter Jenna Zewiske (5-6) and left-side hitter Courtney Nath (5-5).

The two sophomores listed on the roster are potential varsity

contributors.

Tacey Baustian is a 5-6 setter, while Mallory Thorson is a 5-8 left-side hitter.

As a former LHS player, Bork knows the rigors of playing against teams from bigger schools on a consistent basis.

She knows beating top-tier squads will not be easy, but that will be the ultimate goal in the future.

"Since we have a lot of inexperienced players, I think our goal for the year is to learn the game, learn how to have success and work hard. We don't have a specific team goal right now. We're just going to concentrate on doing the little things so we can find some success in games," Bork concluded.

Seek/continued from page 6

in practice as well.

Sophomores Mela Jarchow, Alexa Chesley, Hannah Ehlers and Kacie Kracht have made a positive impression on the coach in the preseason, as have freshmen Liz Kelm, Rozilyn Oye, Brynn Thier, Solveig Tofteland and Lauren Ver Steeg.

Sophomores Bailey Anderson and Kynzie Hamann and freshmen Rachel Den Herder and Destiny Matthiesen are potential prospects as well.

Antoine lists St. James as the team to beat in the BSC Western Division this year, with Pipestone being another contender.

St. James, Pipestone, Fairmont and River Valley are the teams that could contend for the Section 3A title at season's end.

The Cardinals might be hard-pressed to challenge for a section title this fall, but they could meet their goal of advancing past the quarterfinal round of the postseason

Luverne Girls' Tennis

Aug 19	Lac Qui Parle Valley	H
Aug 23	St. James	A
Aug 25	Sioux Falls Lincoln	H
Aug 26	Worthington	A
Aug 28	Sleepy Eye	H
Aug 29	Fairmont	H
Sept 5	Blue Earth Area	A
Sept 7	Marshall	H
Sept 12	Worthington	H
Sept 14	Pipestone	H
Sept 19	St. James Area	A
Sept 21	Redwood Valley	A
Sept 26	BSC Match	A

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tourney.

"Our goal is to play in St. Peter (where the final two rounds of the section tournament are played), but we'll have to play a pretty good match to get there," Antoine concluded.



Star Herald file photo

Senior Samantha Pierce returns as Luverne's No. 1 singles player to the Cardinal tennis team in 2017.



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John Rittenhouse photo/0831 tab lhs football

Seven seniors are participating in the Luverne High School football program this fall. They are (from left) Pradana Arviano, Tyler Fick, Tucker Oeltjenbruns, Tyler Reisdorfer, Cade Ver Steeg and Kasyn Kruse. Missing is Declan Beers. This is the smallest group of seniors in coach Todd Oye's tenure.

Small class of seniors raises concerns in 2017

By John Rittenhouse

Veteran Luverne High School football coach Todd Oye finds himself in an unfamiliar position heading into the 2017 season.

After years of leading teams with 12 or more seniors into battle, Oye will field a squad that has six seniors on the roster, which includes one foreign exchange student.

Oye had an idea this might be a situation he would face for a couple of years now, but that doesn't change the reality of the matter.

"It's the combination of a couple of things," Oye said, when summing up the situation.

"This particular senior class never did have a lot of athletes over the years. Another factor is the trend of kids becoming one-sport athletes. It's been happening in many sports, and now we're starting to see the effects of

specialization in football."

That wasn't the case last season, when a squad led by 15 seniors turned in a 6-4 record at LHS.

The Cardinals placed fourth in the South Central District's White Division with a 4-3 record during a 5-3 regular season.

LHS posted a 42-20 win over St. Peter to open the Section 3AAA playoffs before ending the year with a 20-6 loss to Fairmont in the semifinals.

Five of Luverne's seniors last fall played as two-way starters.

Solomon Nielsen (fullback/linebacker), Logan Stratton (offensive line/defensive line), Jeremiah Dooyema (tight end/defensive end) and Chris Jelken (offensive line/defensive line) played key roles for the 2016 squad on both sides of the ball.

Stratton was named the District's Offensive Lineman of the Year at season's end, Nielsen and

Luverne Football

Sept 1	Maple River	H
Sept 8	JCC	H
Sept 15	Redwood Valley	A
Sept 22	Pipestone	H
Sept 29	St. James Area	A
Oct 6	Blue Earth Area	H
Oct 13	Martin County West	A
Oct 18	Windom	A

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Jelken made the All-District team and Dooyema drew honorable

mention at the District level.

Along with the two-way players, Andrew Reisch played as a starting safety and Dylan Thorson as an offensive lineman during their senior seasons.

Other senior members of the team last fall include Will Natte, Matt Hup, Matt Schmuck, Jonathan Diaz, Knute Oldre, Tanner Wiese, Riley Baker and Damian Reese.

"We had six two-way starters and guys like Logan and Dylan had been playing varsity ball for us since they were sophomores," Oye said.

"We really took a hit on the offensive line, where we lost four of our six starters."

Rebuilding the offensive line is one of Oye's top priorities heading into the 2017 season.

LHS does have two starters returning to the offensive front, but the balance of the line lacks

varsity experience.

"We are young on the line without much varsity experience," Oye stated.

Returning as starters to the front wall include senior Cade Ver Steeg and junior Matt Ziegler.

Ver Steeg is a 220-pound tackle, while Ziegler is a 200-pound center.

Complicating the situation is the fact that Ziegler is being hampered by a leg injury.

If Ziegler can't play, look for sophomore Isaiah Bartels (185) to take over the center position.

Three underclassmen are battling for the two guard positions.

Junior Eric Thorson (230) and sophomores Cole Stoltenberg (190) and Nathan Nekali (230) are involved in the guard competition.

Other potential tackles include

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Class/continued from page 8

senior Tyler Fick (240) and junior Max Skattum (250).

Charlie Reisch, a 165-pound junior, is a potential replacement for Dooyema at tight end.

Sophomore Matt Sehr (160) is another candidate.

Another situation that could influence the offensive unit evolves around junior Jake Haugen.

Haugen started at quarterback every game last season, but he basically shared time with current junior Ben Serie (175).

A pair of knee surgeries kept Haugen off the wrestling mat late last winter, and he is still experiencing some knee problems even though he pitched some baseball games this summer.

"Getting Jake on the field one way or another would be a huge plus for our team, but we don't know if it will happen. He is a tough kid. He is an old-fashioned football player/athlete," Oye said.

"Ben did get some varsity experience last year," Oye continued.

"He throws the ball well. He had some really good junior varsity games early last year and did a good job of handling our passing game at varsity level late last season."

Luverne also has some experience at the tailback and fullback positions.

Kasyn Kruse, a 180-pound senior, is returning as the starting tailback after making the All-District squad as a junior.

Jed Dooyema, a 150-pound junior, is another potential tailback.

Both senior Declan Beers (185) and junior Mark Sterrett (140) received carries last fall and are potential fullbacks in 2017.

Senior Tucker Oeltjenbruns (170) returns as a starting wide receiver, and classmate Tyler Reisdorfer (170) also caught some balls for LHS last season.

They are potential wide receivers again this season, as are juniors Keegan Weston (135) and Brayden Jacobsma (160) and sophomore Colby Crabtree (160).

Depending on how things play out with Haugen, Crabtree could be the team's No. 2 quarterback.

"Position-wise, I think we are fairly balanced across the board on offense," Oye said.

"We traditionally have been a



Star Herald file photo

Luverne's Kasyn Kruse, pictured during last season's section semifinals in Fairmont, returns as a starting tailback in 2017.

running team in the past, but I think we'll be trying to throw the ball a little more with this group of kids."

Just like on offense, Luverne lacks experience on the defensive line this year.

Ver Steeg returns as a starting defensive end, but the balance of the line is largely inexperienced.

Beers did play some downs as a defensive tackle last year and is expected to start at that position

in 2017.

Skattum, Thorson, Fick and Nekali are other potential tackles.

Payne Bonnett, a 180-pound junior, is projected to be a starting defensive end.

Oye hopes Ziegler can assume the starting middle linebacker position again this season and Haugen can play as an outside linebacker.

If that don't happen, Sterrett, Reisch and Dooyema are other

potential linebackers.

Kruse and Reisdorfer bring starting experience to the defensive secondary.

Kruse is a cornerback, while Reisdorfer plays safety.

Other potential cornerbacks include Oeltjenbruns, junior James Chanthalangsy (145) and Jacobsma.

Serie and Crabtree are other potential safeties.

"We have a quick group of kids

on defense," Oye offered.

The coach lists Jackson County Central and Redwood Valley as being the teams to beat in the District this season.

Fairmont, JCC and an improved Worthington squad are top contenders in Section 3AAA.

"Our No. 1 goal this year is to have fun," Oye said.

"We also would like to finish the year with a .500 record and get to the section championship game."

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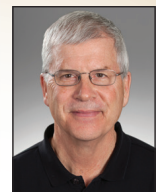
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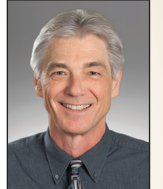
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John Rittenhouse photo/0831 tab lhs girls cross country

Eight of the nine members of last season's Section 3A squad return to the Luverne girls' cross country team in 2017. They are (from left) Autumn Nath, Madison Reisdorfer, Tenley Nelson, Gabrielle Ferrell, Brooklynn Ver Steeg, Claire Baustian, Cassie Flanagan and Regan Feit.

Cardinals need collective effort to replace leader

By John Rittenhouse

The time has come for the members of the Luverne High School girls' cross country program to circle the wagons.

Luverne has enough returning talent to challenge for a third consecutive Section 3A championship, but the Cardinals have some obstacles to overcome before that can happen.

Not only does LHS have to replace possibly the best runner in program history in Madison Schandelmeier, the Cards have to do so with one of their smaller rosters in recent years.

"Depth will be a crucial factor for us this year," said Cardinal coach Pete Janiszski, who is the leader of a team that bid farewell to six seniors from its 2016 roster.

"We have to keep everyone healthy. I've always said we are one injury away from being an average team, and staying healthy will be a key for us this year," Janiszski said.

Depth wasn't an issue for LHS last season, when the team led by Schandelmeier and five other seniors turned in an impressive campaign.

The Cardinals won the Big South Conference Small School Division and Section 3A titles for the second straight year, and LHS went on to place fourth at the state meet for the second consecutive season.

Schandelmeier played key roles in Luverne's success by winning the conference and section individual titles.

She also earned a position on the all-state squad by turning in a 12th-place finish at the state classic.

Janiszski knows Schandelmeier was a special talent, but he gives equal credit to her classmates for the team's exploits in 2016.

Zayna Hustoft, Tianna Doppenberg, Mariah Aukes, Bergin Flom and Carly Serie may not have been on the course for the team championships, but they made their presence known in other ways.

"Our seniors were an awesome group of leaders last year," Janiszski said.

"They were members of our team for a long time and were good representatives of the type

of character we want our program to be about."

Luverne opens the 2017 season with a 14-athlete roster consisting of one senior, two juniors, two sophomores, four freshmen, two eighth-graders and three seventh-graders.

The list includes six members of last year's state squad, two all-conference runners and two runners who earned all-conference honorable mention honors.

"We do have a lot of experience," Janiszski said.

"We have six of our top seven and seven of our top nine runners from last year coming back. We're going to need all of them to improve because you just don't

Effort/continued on page 13

Luverne Cross Country

Aug 25	Beresford	A
Aug 30	Mountain Lake	A
Sept 9	Bruce Gluf Classic	H
Sept 14	Rochester Mayo	A
Sept 19	Lac Qui Parle Valley	A
Sept 26	MCC	A
Oct 5	Luverne Invitational	H
Oct 10	Adrian	A
Oct 17	Big South Conference	A

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Effort/continued from page 12

replace a runner like Madi Schandelmeier with one individual. It will take a team effort to do that."

Luverne does have some top-notch runners returning to the fold.

Freshmen Regan Feit and Autumn Nath and eighth-graders Tenley Nelson and Brooklynn Ver Steeg lead the list.

Feit, who placed second to Schandelmeier during the section meet, made the all-state squad as an eighth-grader by placing 23rd in Northfield.

Nelson, another all-conference performer last season, and Ver Steeg, who drew honorable mention recognition, exceeded expectations as first-year members of the program last year.

Nelson placed 10th in the section field and 65th at state, while Ver Steeg placed 11th at the section level and 79th at state.

Nath, another runner to draw BSC honorable recognition, is another key returnee after placing 28th at the section meet and 132nd at state.

Nath, however, is nursing an injury sustained during the spring track season and probably won't be able to compete until the middle of September at best.

Other key members of the 2016 team returning to the program include junior Gabrielle Ferrell and freshman Cassie Flanagan.

Ferrell, who placed 35th at the section meet and 125th at state, was hampered by injury most of last season after being Luverne's second-ranked runner in 2015.

Flanagan has run well for LHS the last two seasons and placed 19th at the section meet and 121st at state in 2016.

"We had five girls finish in the top 11 at the section meet and five in the top 20 last year," Janiszkeski said.

"If these girls continue to improve and keep on working hard, I think we can make a run at winning another section title."

With Schandelmeier out of the picture and Nath sidelined to start the season, LHS needs to fill two positions in its varsity lineup early in the year.

Senior Megan Rogers is one candidate, and so are junior Madison Reisdorfer, sophomores Claire Baustian and Madigan

Flom and freshman Leslie Van Engelenhoven.

Seventh-graders Elizabeth Wagner, Tiana Lais and Grace Ingrebretson are other members of the team.

Janiszkeski lists Lac qui Parle Valley, Canby and Pipestone as teams LHS needs to slip past in order to capture a third section title this season.

"There are some good teams out there and I'm sure there will be a couple more that really improve this year," he said.

"We can't worry about that. We're just worried about the runners we have wearing the red and white. We'll just try to do our best, improve each week and see what happens at the end of the season."

Depth will not be an issue for the LHS boys in 2017.

With a 24-athlete roster consisting of one senior, seven juniors, three sophomores, two freshmen, five eighth-graders and six seventh-graders, LHS has a deep talent pool.

"If it isn't our biggest boys' team we've had, its right up there," Janiszkeski said.

"It's nice to have a big group of younger boys on the team. If they stay together and stick with it, they'll have a chance to be a pretty good team when they are juniors and seniors. That's usually the way cross country works."

Luverne is coming off a solid 2016 season that featured a fifth-place finish at the conference meet and an eighth-place effort at the section event.

Luverne did lose one senior from the 2016 roster in Carter Riphagen, but he wasn't a member of the seven-runner squad that competed in the section meet.

"We have a lot of kids who have been around a while," Janiszkeski said.

"Now that they are getting older and more experienced, I'm hoping we can take the next step forward and become a top-five team in our section this year."

Five of the seven runners who ran at the section meet in 2016 are upperclassmen this fall.

Michael Rahm is the team's lone senior, while Dalton DeSollar, Austin Winter, Hunter Hamann and Shane Berning are



Star Herald file photo

Cassie Flanagan is one of six Luverne athletes who ran at the state meet in Northfield last November returning to the girls' cross country team in 2017.

proven juniors.

As runners who earned honorable mention recognition at last

year's conference meet, DeSollar and Winter have to be considered Luverne's top returnees.

DeSollar placed 15th at the sec-


Effort/continued on page 14

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John Rittenhouse photo/0831 tab lhs boys cross country

Eight runners and alternates from last year's section squad return to the Luverne boys' cross country team in 2017. They are (from left) Michael Rahm, Brayden Tofteland, Jackson Golla, Seno Chanthalangsy, Dalton DeSollar and Hunter Hamann. Missing are Austin Winter and Shane Berning.

Effort/continued from page 13

tion meet, while Winter placed 25th.

Berning and Hunter Hamann made contributions to Luverne's team tally at the section meet by finishing 41st and 59th respectively.

Rahm didn't contribute to Luverne's team score after placing 78th at the section meet, but Seno Chanthalangsy did.

Chanthalangsy, a freshman, turned in Luverne's fifth-best effort at the section event by

placing 73rd.

Sophomore Brayden Tofteland also ran at the section meet last fall, finishing 89th overall.

Tofteland, however, emerged as one of Luverne's top distance runners during the track season last spring and Janiszkeski believes he could emerge as one of the cross country team's best performers in 2017.

"I could see Brayden becoming our No. 2 runner this year," Janiszkeski said.

"Dalton will be the guy in front, but we're going to need two or three other guys to get closer to him in order to improve team-wise. If we are going to be a top-five team at the section meet, will have to do it by running as a pack. That means everyone will have to improve and stay close to their teammates in front of them."

Five other upper classmen participating in the program this fall include juniors Jackson Golla, Tim Brown and Abraham Her-

nandez, and sophomores Jonah Friedrichsen and Nick Rogers.

John Miller is a freshman, while Ethan Rahm, Sam Emery, Alex Baumberger, Griffin Jarchow and Burke Johnson are eighth-graders.

Seventh-graders Brady Bork, Carson Tofteland, Camden Janiszkeski, Henry Ramstorf, Camden Hoven and Ashton Eitreim are first-year program members.

Coach Janiszkeski lists LQPV to be the team to beat in the section

this season, with Windom, Murray County Central and Redwood Valley being possible contenders.

If the Cardinal runners focus their attention on improving throughout the season, LHS could emerge as a surprise team in 2017.

"In order to improve, we have to put in our time and work. Hopefully that will pay off for us at the end of the season," Janiszkeski concluded.



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John Rittenhouse photo/0817 tab ahs vb

Six seniors are the leaders of the 2017 Adrian High School volleyball team. They are (from left) Lexi Slater, Alexia Kemper, Paige Bullerman, Taylor Loosbrock, Paige Tweet and Rylie Hokeness. After turning in a four-win season in 2016, the Dragons are shooting for a .500 campaign this fall.

Expectations rise for Adrian volleyball team

By John Rittenhouse

The Adrian High School volleyball team is approaching the 2017 season with optimism.

With a battle-tested roster featuring six returning starters and three other athletes with past varsity experience, expectations are high at AHS this fall.

"We have a lot of experienced players and we hope to have a strong team with all the girls we have returning," said Adrian coach Briana Reker.

"We have high hopes. Our goal is to have a winning season and I think we are going to make it happen."

An above .500 season would be a huge improvement for a team that went 4-15 in 2016.

The Dragons went 2-8 in Red Rock Conference play during the course of a 4-14 regular season last fall, which was followed by a 3-2 loss to Heron Lake-Okabena in the opening round of the South Section 3A Tournament.

Adrian did lose three seniors from its 2016 roster.

Hitter Jackie Hokeness was a starter before a knee injury ended her final campaign early, while

twins Briana and Brittney Loonan logged playing time as defensive specialists.

All three of last season's seniors received praise from Reker for the way they approached the sport.

"They all had positive attitudes," she said.

"They really supported the team and their teammates and they had great work ethics."

Although last season's seniors will be missed, Reker is excited about Adrian's prospects in 2017.

The coach plans to open the season with a nine-player squad consisting of six seniors, two juniors and one sophomore.

All nine of the players logged court time in 2016, and the list includes one All-RRC performer and one honorable mention selection from last fall.

"What I like about these girls is they have learned how to play smart volleyball," Reker said.

"They are learning the game and the strategy behind it. They also work together well as a team. They realize the team is more important than individuals, and I'm really happy they accept that."

Although the top end of the ros-

Adrian Volleyball

Aug 25	Hendricks	H
Aug 29	H-BC	A
Aug 31	Martin Luther-GHEC	H
Sept 7	H-BC	H
Sept 9	WWG Tournament	A
Sept 11	Sibley-Ocheyedan	A
Sept 14	WWG	A
Sept 19	Red Rock Central	H
Sept 21	Heron Lake-Okabena	A
Sept 26	Ellsworth	H
Oct 3	Southwest Christian	A
Oct 5	Fulda	H
Oct 6	SMSU Tournament	A
Oct 10	Mountain Lake	H
Oct 12	Edgerton	A
Oct 16	MCC	A
Oct 17	Luverne	H

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ter is loaded with seniors, three underclassmen have played key

roles for the team in the past and will do so again in 2017.

Sophomore Kasie Tweet, a 5-6 outside hitter/setter, impressed area coaches well enough last fall to earn a spot on the All-RRC roster.

Junior Miah Kunkel, a 5-9 middle hitter, led the Dragons in kills last season and drew honorable mention from the league's coaches.

Junior Avery Balster, a 5-7 middle hitter, played as a starter for the 2016 Dragons as well.

The six seniors on the roster are expected to provide leadership and play key roles for the team in 2017.

Seniors Lexi Slater, Paige Bullerman and Taylor Loosbrock return as starters from the 2016 campaign.

Bullerman is a 5-10 middle hitter, while Slater is a 5-8 outside hitter.

The 5-8 Loosbrock will do some setting and play as a right-side hitter for the Dragons.

Seniors Alexia Kemper, Paige Tweet and Rylie Hokeness made contributions to the team last fall and will do so again in 2017.

Kemper is a 5-5 defensive specialist.

Hokeness (5-8) and Tweet (5-7) are outside hitters.

"What I like about this group of girls is how they play well together," Reker said.

"They know where everyone else is when they are on the court. They are team players and they are very supportive of each other."

Reker lists Hills-Beaver Creek and Southwest Christian as the teams to beat in the conference and at the sub-section level this fall.

If the Dragons continue to progress and develop as expected, they could have a say in who wins the team championships in 2017.

"I would say the key to our season is to improve our mental game," Reker offered.

"We need to keep our confidence and our consistency during matches. We basically just need to make good plays more often. Other than that, we just need to continue to work together, support each other and keep on getting better throughout the season."



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New era of football begins at AHS in 2017

By John Rittenhouse

The 2017 fall sports season brings a changing of the guard within the Adrian High School football program.

After posting a 236-104 record in 32 years of service starting in 1985, Randy Strand resigned as head coach of the Dragons last spring.

Replacing Strand is Randy Schettler, who coached 10 years of junior high football in Adrian before serving as a varsity assistant the past five seasons.

Schettler inherits a team that lost 12 seniors at the end of a successful 2016 season.

The Dragons placed third in Southwest District West Sub-District with a 4-3 record during the course of a 5-3 regular season.

Adrian opened the Section 3A Playoffs with consecutive wins over Springfield (44-6) and Sleepy Eye St. Mary's (20-0) to reach the title game for the 10th straight season, where the Dragons fell 27-26 in overtime to Murray County Central to end a 7-4 campaign.

AHS received on-field contributions from 10 of the 12 seniors on the roster last year.

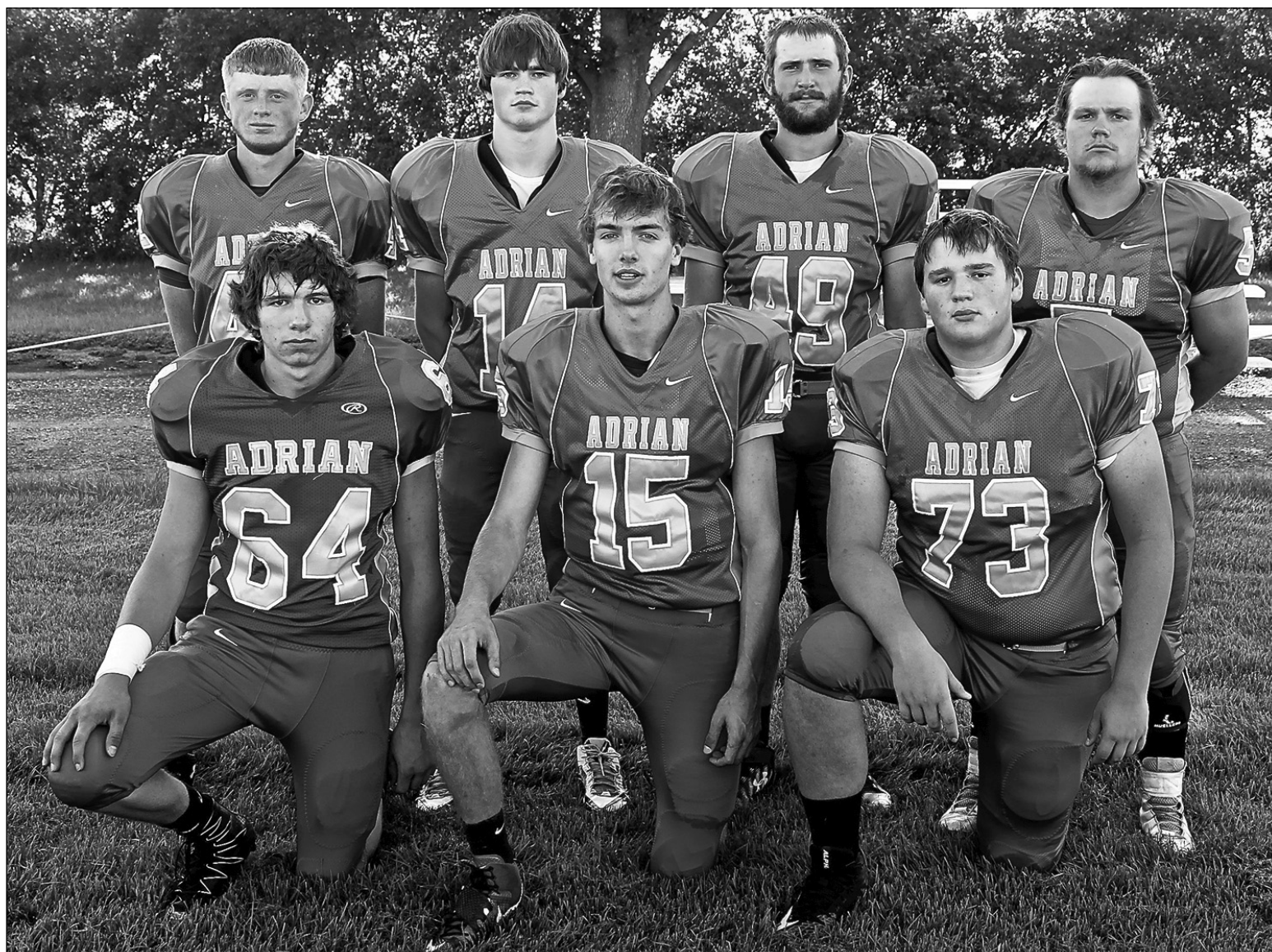
Zach Bierman (offensive guard/outside linebacker), Zach Loosbrock (offensive guard/defensive end), Frank Serrao (tailback/defensive back) and Mitchell Wagner (offensive tackle/defensive tackle) made the All-District team at season's end, while Dylan Gyberg (fullback/middle linebacker) drew honorable mention recognition.

Alex Loosbrock (quarterback/wide receiver/defensive back) and Zach Hendel (wide receiver/defensive back) played as two-way starters during their senior seasons as well.

Tristian White drew some starts in the defensive secondary in 2016, while Mitchell Lonneman was the team's long snapper and filled in on both lines during his final year in the program.

Evan Swank and Dylan Werkman received some playing time as well last fall.

"We lost a lot of good seniors, but always do a nice job of rotating players in and out of the game so we do have some experience coming back," Schettler said.



John Rittenhouse photo/0831 tab ahs football

Seven seniors are member of the Adrian High School football team, which will be led into battle by first-year head coach Randy Schettler in 2017. They are (from left) Chance Turner, Ryan Wieneke, Skylar Polzine, (back) Brendyn White, Michael Preuss, Landon Rogers and Nick Harder. Schettler served as an AHS varsity assistant since 2012.

Adrian has four returning starters and some other players who logged some playing time in 2016 returning to the offensive unit this fall.

Skylar Polzine, a 280-pound senior, returns as the starting center. Lance Luettel, a 250-pound sophomore, played as a starting offensive tackle as a freshman.

Luettel and Polzine are the anchors of a big and physical line that should be one of the team's greatest strengths in 2017.

Skylar Dingmann, a 190-pound junior, is projected to start as an offensive guard.

Senior Chance Turner (175) and junior Tucker Wieneke

(245) are battling for the starting nod at the other offensive guard position.

Scot Edwards, a 255-pound sophomore, will start as an offensive tackle as well.

"I like our size on the line," Schettler said.

"We average about 230 pounds per person on the line, which is pretty big for Class A football. I also like our experience on the line. We have two returning starters and three other guys who played for us last year."

AHS also returns some starters in the offensive backfield.

Nick Harder, a 200-pound fullback, started as a wing back

in 2015 and drew honorable mention recognition from the district coaches.

Ryan Wieneke, a 6-5, 175-pound senior also opened the 2016 season as the starting quarterback.

An injury two games into the season sidelined Wieneke until the playoffs, when he reassumed the starting quarterback responsibilities.

The balance of Adrian's offensive unit lacks experience.

Senior Landon Rogers (180), Dakota John (150) and sophomore Brandon Schnoor (190) are expected to see action as tailbacks

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Adrian Football

Aug 31	Dawson-Boyd	H
Sept 8	Tracy-Milroy-Balaton	A
Sept 15	Springfield	H
Sept 22	Sleepy Eye	A
Sept 29	New Ulm Cathedral	H
Oct 6	MCC	A
Oct 12	Canby	A
Oct 18	Wabasso	H

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John Rittenhouse photo/0831 tab ahs girls cc

Five runners who competed at the Section 3A meet last fall return to the Adrian High School girls' cross country team in 2017. They are (from left) Halle Heitkamp, Gracia Elias, Annika Elias, Hiltyn Heitkamp and Moriah Bullerman.

Dragon running squads face different situations

By John Rittenhouse

The Adrian High School cross country squads face different situations heading into the 2017 season.

The Dragon girls have the numbers to compete as a complete varsity team this fall.

Unfortunately the AHS boys do not.

With a total of 10 runners and two managers participating in the **AHS girls'** program, the Dragons are not exactly loaded with depth.

The girls, however, will feature an experienced squad as five of the seven runners who competed at the Section 3A meet last season are returning to the ranks.

Along with managers Madison

Leopold (junior) and Morgan Penning (sophomore), Adrian opens the season with a roster consisting of one senior, one junior, three sophomores, two freshmen and three eighth-graders.

The list features five returning letter winners and one All-Red Rock Conference performer.

Adrian did lose one senior member of the program in Kahilee Nelson last year as well as two underclassmen (Jasmine Kohorst and Karis Barr).

Kohorst opted not to participate in cross country this year, while Barr moved away from Adrian.

Sophomore Moriah Bullerman

is the leader of a girls' squad that placed fourth in the RRC and 16th at the section meet in 2016.

Bullerman turned in Adrian's top effort by placing 21st at the section meet and made the all-conference meet last fall.

"I think Moriah will be challenging for a state position again," said Erick Kiers, Adrian's head coach.

Along with Bullerman, junior Halle Heitkamp, sophomore Annika Elias, freshman Gracia Elias and eighth-grader Hiltyn Heitkamp represented Adrian at the section meet in 2016.

Gracia Elias turned in the second-best effort at the section event by placing 85th.

Halle and Hiltyn Heitkamp finished 95th and 100th respectively, while Annika Elias finished 130th.

At this point, Kiers has a pretty good idea who will be the team's top four runners this fall.

After the top four runners, he is unsure who will step up to fill out the varsity lineup.

"Along with Moriah, I see Gracia, Hiltyn and Halle filling in the top four spots in our lineup," Kiers said.

"It will be interesting to see who our fifth runner will be."

Annika Elias is one of the contenders to be Adrian's fifth runner, as is senior Courtney

**Adrian
Cross Country**

Aug 30	Mountain Lake Area	A
Sept 7	Tracy-Milroy-Balaton	A
Sept 11	Marshall Invitational	A
Sept 14	Worthington	A
Sept 18	Windom Area	A
Sept 23	Milaca	A
Sept 28	RWV Invitational	A
Oct 5	Luverne Invitational	A
Oct 10	Adrian Invitational	H
Oct 16	RCC Meet	A

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Penning. Sophomore Kaitlin Nelson and Alysha Wieneke are first-year program members who could push for varsity positions.

Eighth-graders Abbey Leopold and Ashlee Christians are varsity prospects as well.

"It will be fun to see who becomes our fifth runner," Kiers said.

"Will it be Annika or Courtney, or will it be one of our new runners. I do know our girls have high aspirations for the season. One of their goals is to break into the top 10 teams at the section meet.

The Adrian boys will need additional help to form a varsity team this fall.

With four runners attending the preseason practice sessions, the Dragons are one runner short of being able to field a complete team.

"We may need to compete as an incomplete team again this year," said Kiers, who experienced the same fate in 2016.

Adrian may lack numbers overall, but the Dragons do have three boys returning to the team with past varsity experience.

Leading the list is senior Brady Henning, an all-conference performer who placed 22nd at the section meet as a junior.

"Brady showed he is worthy of being in state-qualifying discussions last year," Kiers said.

Christian Weidert and Caleb Hornstein are experienced runners as well.



John Rittenhouse photo/0831 tab ahs boys cc

Three athletes with past section experience return to the Adrian boys' cross country team in 2017. They are (from left) Caleb Hornstein, Brady Henning and Christian Weidert. With four team members, AHS has to compete as an incomplete team.

Weidert placed 86th and Hornstein 106th at the section level last fall.

"Christian has been keeping up with Brady so far this year, which is promising," Kiers said. "It will be interesting to see if

Caleb will grow into the type of runner Christian was for us last year." Rounding out the roster is

eighth-grader William White-McEliece, a first-year member of the program.

Era/continued from page 16

this year. Seniors Michael Preuss (150) and Brendyn White (145) are expected to start as wide receivers, while sophomore Ian Stamer (125) is expected to play as a receiver as well.

Devin Frodermann, a 160-pound junior, is expected to take over the tight end position.

"We're going to be a running team offensively," Schettler said.

"We're big up front and we have multiple guys who can carry the ball in the backfield. Wieneke can throw the ball, but we'll be a run, run, pass and punt team that tries to avoid the last two scenarios."

The bigger guys forming Adrian's five-man front will be the

backbone of the defensive unit in 2015.

Rogers is back as a starting nose tackle, while Leuttel returns as a starting defensive tackle.

Harder started as a linebacker early last season, but he moved to the defensive line as the year progressed and is expected to be a starting defensive end this fall.

Polzine will start as a defensive tackle, while Turner could see some playing time as a defensive end.

"I like our front five on defense because they are big. We have good size on the defensive line," Schettler said.

With the exception of John, who returns as a starting outside line-



Schettler

backer, Adrian lacks experience behind the defensive linemen.

Edwards is projected to start at middlelinebacker, while Schnoor is another outside linebacker.

Brendyn White and Trace Kremin, a 140-pound junior, are first-year starting cornerbacks.

Preuss and Wieneke are expected to share the safety position.

"We don't have a lot of experience at linebacker, and we have a completely fresh secondary," Schettler stated.

"All of those kids are working hard trying to do what they need to do to be successful at those positions."

Schettler lists Wabasso, Minnesota and Dawson-Boyd as the teams to beat at the district level in 2017.

Wabasso and MCC are his picks to be top contenders in Section 3A.


If AHS remains healthy on the line and the inexperienced players progress as expected, the Dragons could meet their No. 1 goal this fall.

"I would like to see us play in the section finals again this year. Whether we can make it there again, I just don't know yet," Schettler said.

"What we need to do is play together as a team. It can't be about one guy. It has to be about accepting roles and playing together as a team."

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Panthers hope to rebound from winless season

By John Rittenhouse

With a rough 2016 campaign in her rearview mirror, Ellsworth second-year volleyball coach Jessica Albrecht is looking for better results this fall.

Now that Albrecht has more knowledge about her players and the type of competition Ellsworth is up against in southwest Minnesota, the optimistic mentor believes good things can happen for the Panthers in 2017.

"Knowing my players and feeling more comfortable with them will help," Albrecht said.

"I can already see some improvement over where we were last year, so I'm pretty excited about this year."

The 2016 campaign was a chal-

Rebound/continued on page 20

Ellsworth Volleyball

Aug 29	Edgerton	H
Sept 5	H-BC	A
Sept 7	Mountain Lake	H
Sept 9	Central Lyon Tournament	A
Sept 11	Sibley-Ocheyedan	A
Sept 14	Heron Lake-Okabena	A
Sept 21	Southwest Christian	H
Sept 22	Hendricks	A
Sept 26	Adrian	A
Sept 28	Fulda	H
Oct 3	MCC	A
Oct 5	WWG	H
Oct 7	H-LP Tournament	A
Oct 10	Edgerton	A
Oct 12	H-BC	H
Oct 13	Hendricks	H
Oct 16	Red Rock Central	A



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John Rittenhouse photo/0831 tab ehs cc

EHS fall athletics

Eight Ellsworth High School boys are participating in fall activities in different venues. Five athletes are members of the Ellsworth High School cross country program, while three others are members of the Edgerton-Ellsworth football program. Ethan Van Briesen, the head coach of the cross country squad, is proud to have five athletes competing this fall after having two program members during the initial season in 2016. The coach says Ellsworth will participate in junior varsity races early in the season and could enter varsity races by the end of the campaign. In the photo above are program members (from left) Sean Boltjes, Micah Onken, Carter Boyenga, Linkin Bossert and Kade Boltjes. The Panthers have meets scheduled at Sibley-Ocheyedan (Sept. 5), Tracy (Sept. 7), West Lyon (Sept. 11), Windom (Sept. 18), George-Little Rock-Central Lyon (Oct. 5), Adrian (Oct. 10), the Red Rock Conference meet in Mountain Lake (Oct. 16) and the Section 3A meet in Madison (Oct. 26). The E-E football team, which captured the Section 3 Nine-Man Championship in 2016, attempts to defend the title with three Ellsworth athletes on the roster. In the picture on the right are (from left) senior Zach Buntjer, sophomore Robby Armstrong and freshman Simon Boyenga. Buntjer is an offensive lineman/defensive lineman, Armstrong a wing back/cornerback and Boyenga a fullback/linebacker. E-E plays home games against Red Rock Central (Aug. 31), Mountain Lake Area (Sept. 15), Heron Lake-Okabena (Sept. 22) and Russell-Tyler-Ruthton (Oct. 13). The team's road slate includes games against Renville County West (Sept. 8), Westbrook-Walnut Grove (Sept. 29), Hills-Beaver Creek (Oct. 6) and MACCRAY (Oct. 18).



Photo courtesy Dean Wieck



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John Rittenhouse photo/0831 tab ehs vb

Four seniors are members of the Ellsworth High School volleyball program. They are (from left) McKenna Hinrichs, Kristi Kooiker, Madyson Domeyer and Devin Dreesen.

Rebound/continued from page 19

lenging season for everyone involved.

Ellsworth went through a 27-match slate without producing a victory, which includes a 0-10 mark in the Red Rock Conference.

The season ended with a 3-0 loss to Red Rock Central in the opening round of the South Section 3A Tournament, which marked the end of the playing careers of seniors Hannah Kramer and Hailee Nolte.

Kramer, who drew honorable mention honors, and Nolte played as starters for the 2016 squad.

EHS may not have won a match last year, but the effort always was there largely due to the senior leaders.

"They were very good role models," Albrecht said.

"Hannah kept everyone calm

and was a good leader everyone looked up to. Hailee was the one who got everyone excited. She always was a good encourager for everyone on the team."

One factor already working in Ellsworth's favor in 2017 is the Panthers have twice as many seniors on the preseason roster. Two of the upperclassmen did not play volleyball last season, but the other two were regulars in the starting lineup.

"I'm really excited to see how our seniors play this year," Albrecht said.

"Two of them did not play last year so I don't know a lot about them. Hopefully they'll bring something good to the team."

Devin Dreesen and Madyson Domeyer did play for EHS in 2016, and their experience makes them team leaders this fall.

Dreesen is a 5-7 middle hitter and Domeyer a 5-7 right-side hitter.

"Devin always has been a good leader. Madyson is a level-headed person. All of the younger girls look up to both of them."

McKenna Hinrichs and Kristi Kooiker are seniors who didn't participate in the program in 2016.

The 5-5 Hinrichs has the potential to be a specialist in the back row.

The 5-5 Kooiker may contribute as a middle hitter or a left-side hitter.

Along with the seniors, Ellsworth returns two players who gained starting assignments during the course of the 2016 season and four other athletes who received varsity experience.

Juniors Sierra Smith and Grace Mulder return to the fold

as starters from 2016.

Smith is a 5-8 middle hitter, while Mulder is a 5-4 setter.

Junior Lizzie Chapa and sophomores Morgan Dreesen, Ashlyn Meester and Kallie Chapa bring more experience to the team.

Lizzie Chapa is a 5-6 libero. Dreesen is a 5-4 setter, Meester a 5-6 left-side hitter and Kallie Chapa a 5-6 middle hitter.

Add the six underclassmen into the mix with the four seniors, and EHS has its nucleus in place.

"I think this can be a pretty good year for us," Albrecht said.

"I know the girls have been playing a lot of volleyball over the summer. I know they have skills, we just have to get them to increase their skills."

Rounding out the roster are sophomores Kaitlyn Carlson

and Mady Bixby and freshman Kandra DeBeer.

Carlson and DeBeer are 5-7 middle hitters, while Bixby is a 5-3 specialist in the back row.

According to Albrecht, EHS has a chance to improve dramatically this year if the players make a commitment to make it happen.

"The most important thing we need is dedication to the sport. If the girls push themselves to better themselves and the team, our skill level should increase," she said.

The coach lists Hills-Beaver Creek and RRC as the teams to beat in the sub-section and the conference this fall, but knocking off the area powers is not Ellsworth's main objective.

"Our biggest goals this year are to have some fun playing volleyball and win a few games," Albrecht concluded.

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