

2024-2025

WINTER SPORTS

Estherville Lincoln Central

North Union

Graettinger-Terril/Ruthven-Ayrshire

Girls Basketball
Boys Basketball
Boys Wrestling

Girls Wrestling
Boys Bowling





The 2024-25 Estherville Lincoln Central Girls Basketball Team includes, front from left, Kyleigh Schneider, Helen Lavender, Lyndsay Towell, Jocelyn Richard, Rebecca Rodriguez; second row: Zoey DeRuyter, Morgan Clabaugh, Arianna Beekman, Grace Nath, Emelia Tarnowski; third row: Aracely Astello (Mgr), Saharia White (Mgr) Cara Schiltz, Haylee Stokes, Rylee Yager, Hillary Ruschy, Julissa Smith, Alivia Chalsma (Mgr) Kailynn Strube (Mgr); back row: Assistant Coach Scott Stokes, Head Coach Don Martindale, and Assistant Coach Mitch Krein.

Photo by David Swartz

Midgets prepared to make another run at State

Stokes and fellow seniors ready for final season

By DAVID SWARTZ

DSWARTZ@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET

Can Estherville Lincoln Central get back to state one more time?

With the returning Class 3A Girls Basketball Player of the Year in senior Haylee Stokes, the Midgets will give it their best shot.

Stokes, a 5-6 point guard, led ELC to the Class 3A State title as a freshman in 2022, helped the Midgets return to state in 2023, and then led ELC to a runner-up finish in 2024.

Four other seniors—Rylee Yager, Hillary Ruschy, Cara Schiltz, and Julissa Smith—will be heavily relied on to help achieve the goal of getting back to state.

“I did the math recently and most of them have played 80 varsity games going into this season, so we have a wealth of experience coming back,” said ELC coach Don Martindale. “Through their work in the offseason, they’ve certainly become better players and they’re all just outstanding leaders for our program.”

Early this season ELC briefly found out what the court was like without Stokes in the lineup in a season-opening loss to Class 3A No. 8 Roland-Story. Stokes had injured her ankle in a scrimmage against Sioux Center just two days prior and was unable to play that first game.

Stokes returned for ELC’s second game and the Midgets dominated Western Christian 66-22.

Stokes already owns the school scoring, assist, and steals records for a game, a season, and a career.

In 2024, she averaged 24.6 points, 6.6 assists, 5.3 steals and 4.5 rebounds per game.

Yager and Ruschy provided key scoring help to last year’s squad. Yager averaged 14.9 points, 9.2 rebounds and 3.1 steals per game while Ruschy averaged 9.0 points and 4.0 rebounds.

Schiltz was the first player off the bench last season. She averaged 3.7 points per game.

ELC lost two key players two graduation—a four-year starter in Jasey Anderson and another starter in Tatum Dunlavy.

Smith will be stepping into a starting role this season, having been with the program the past four years. Juniors Morgan Clabaugh and Zoey DeRuyter also will be called on.

“Julissa has been doing just an outstanding job of filling her role and Zoey and Morgan are coming along nicely,” said Martindale.

Rounding out the roster are junior Emelia Tarnowski, and sophomores Arianna Beekman and Grace Nath.

“The goals are the same every year,” said Martindale. “It’s always just to be better after each practice and each game and hopefully be playing the best basketball

2024-25 SCHEDULE

Nov. 21	Roland-Story
Nov. 26	Western Christian
Nov. 30	Mount Vernon @Kirkwood CC
Dec. 2	@Algona
Dec. 3	Sioux Central
Dec. 9	@North Union
Dec. 10	@Jackson County Central
Dec. 14	Okoboji
Dec. 17	Newell-Fonda
Dec. 20	@Storm Lake
Jan. 4	@Central Lyon

Jan. 7	Emmetsburg
Jan. 10	Cherokee
Jan. 14	Spencer
Jan. 17	Spirit Lake
Jan. 20	@Newell-Fonda
Jan. 24	Storm Lake
Jan. 27	Spencer
Jan. 31	@Cherokee
Feb. 7	@Spirit Lake
Feb. 11	@Emmetsburg

come February when the tournament season starts.”

While ELC hasn’t lost a Lakes Conference game in the past three years, Martindale expects a tougher road this season.

“Storm Lake is going to be very good,” the coach said. “They are a lot like us—senior dominated. They’re going to feature a very big strong, physical team. Spirit Lake, of course, has the a number of their kids back and Spencer will be much improved. So it’s going to be a very, very a competitive conference once again.”

Martindale said ELC will be playing one of the toughest schedules in the state with the non-conference teams lined up.

In the first two weeks, the Midgets’ schedule includes preseason Class 3A No. 8 Roland Story, Class 3A No. 2 Mount

Vernon, and Class 3A No. 6 Algona.

ELC faced Mount Vernon in a 2024 state semifinal and held off a late rally to win that contest by eight, 45-37.

ELC will play perennial power Newell-Fonda twice and the Midgets also take on Central Lyon.

“It’s going to be a real competitive schedule,” said Martindale. “But we’ve done that with this group of kids to make sure we’re always playing good competition. We want to be better at the end of the year.

While ELC has been known for its pressing defense, the squad still has areas to work on.

“Without a doubt our half court defense and our offense and defensive rebounding need to improve,” the coach said. “Those are going to be the telltale signs of how well this team finishes.”

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ESTHERVILLE LINCOLN CENTRAL MIDGETS



The 2024-25 Estherville Lincoln Central Boys Basketball Team includes, front from left, Jacob Juhl, Samson Mitrucker, Ezekiel Funston, Osiel Castro, Jaleel Velasquez, Marcus Velasquez, Blaize Ahrens, Cooper Deim; second row: Keegen Lundgren, Emerson Martinez, Kaden Fechter, Blake Arends, Tate White, Max Brown, Lake Rezac, Orlando Alonso, Wyatt Martin, Elisha Hovinga; third row: Jayke Stokes, William Rosfjord, Beckam Welch, Jackson Struve, Krayton Kalous, Jose Escobedo Pimentel; back row: Grady Frideres, Troy Edwards, Amari Armstrong, Noah Danner, Brady Ingvall, Preston Crees, Gavin Heifner, Sincere McMurrin, Cayson Yager, Marcus Finn. Not pictured is Cayson Yager.

Photo by David Swartz

Several new faces will take the court for ELC in 2024-25

McMurrin is team's lone returning starter

By DAVID SWARTZ

DSWARTZ@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET

The Estherville Lincoln Central Boys Basketball Team has its work cut out for it this season.

The Midgets lost 81 percent of their scoring to graduation from last year's team that went 19-4—the best record by an Estherville/ELC team in over 30 years.

ELC does return one key player in returning senior starter Sincere McMurrin. McMurrin averaged 11.1 points and 4.2 rebounds per game a year ago.

"I would imagine Sincere will be our top scoring threat this year," said ELC coach Nick Gruhlke. "He was capable of doing that last year so you know we expect him to take a lot of shots."

Beyond that, the Midgets don't return a lot of varsity experience. Fellow senior Tate White played in 19 games last season, junior Gavin Heifner played in 18 games, and sophomore Amari Armstrong played in 17 games. However, they combined to score 33 points.

"Amari and Gavin both have varsity experience last year—Gavin a little more than Amari," said Gruhlke. "Amari doesn't have a lot experience, but he's going to have to take a big step for us. Tate was one of the

first guys off the bench last year, but more of a defender."

Another sophomore who may step into a key role is Kaden Fechter.

"Kaden is a go-getter and he's feisty defensively," said Gruhlke. "He's very active offensively, so he's someone who's gonna definitely find some time on the court."

Others vying for a spot are Brady Ingvall, Lake Rezac and Noah Danner.

"Brady's grown a lot this past year and he blocks a lot of shots in practice," said Gruhlke. "Lake is another guard who will be battling for some time. Noah is a really good shooter. He's just got to step up and be confident."

Gruhlke said the starting lineup could change from night to night depending on the scouting a report and what's needed—size, quickness, etc.

Preston Crees is another senior who brings size to the court. However, he is splitting his time this season with the bowling team. Other seniors are Orlando Alonso and Max Brown.

Gruhlke said he met with the seniors and talked about the expectations for the season.

"We're just gonna go compete every night," the coach said. "It's hard to put a number every year on how many games you're going to win. The thing I'm most excited about these guys is they listen real well and they work hard. Then you just try

2024-25 SCHEDULE

Dec. 2	@Algona	Jan. 14	Spencer
Dec. 3	Sioux Central	Jan. 17	Spirit Lake
Dec. 9	@North Union	Jan. 20	@Newell-Fonda
Dec. 10	@Jackson County Central	Jan. 24	Storm Lake
Dec. 14	Okoboji	Jan. 27	Spencer
Dec. 17	Newell-Fonda	Jan. 31	@Cherokee
Dec. 20	@Storm Lake	Feb. 3	Sheldon
Jan. 4	@Central Lyon	Feb. 4	Garner-Hayfield-Ventura
Jan. 7	Emmetsburg	Feb. 7	@Spirit Lake
Jan. 10	Cherokee	Feb. 11	@Emmetsburg
Jan. 11	Clarion-Goldfield-Dows		

to go from there."

Both the Lakes Conference and the rest of ELC's schedule will not be easy.

"Fifteen of our games will feature teams that return 70-99 percent of their scoring from last year," said Gruhlke. "Storm Lake returns pretty much everybody. They've got one of the top recruits in the nation and a couple move-ins so they should be really good. Spirit Lake returns pretty much their whole lineup, so I would expect a pretty good battle from those two to be at the top of the conference and then us, Spencer and Cherokee fighting for the third through fifth spots."

ELC plays Emmetsburg twice and Gruhlke

said they will be tough.

"I think they did lose a kid to an injury but they'll be really good again," said the coach. "This year Jackson (Minnesota) will be really good, too."

ELC has a couple new opponents with Clarion-Goldfield-Dows and Garner-Hayfield-Ventura both coming to Estherville.

"We've played Garner the last couple years, so we're familiar with them," said Gruhlke. "Clarion, I think started three freshmen last year.

"Storm Lake, Spirit Lake and Jackson will be the toughest opponents," he concluded.

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The 2024-25 Estherville Lincoln Central Wrestling Team includes, front from left, Kyle Danner, JP Weston, Kellan Rasmussen, Nicholas Kazmerzak, Wyatt Petersen; middle row: Cesar Tzoc, Gustavo Chitic-Aguilar, Breidyn Coulter, Xander Fridolfson, Clayton Burton, Braxton Johnson, Austin Bradley, Brody Olson, Aiden White, Dalton Lutat; back row: Bennett Duitsman, Layton Yager, Andy Ramirez-Hernandez, Aiden Deim, Dylan Peta, Wes Martin, Rafael Diaz, James Richard, and Warren Duitsman. Photo submitted

Midgets enter 2024-25 season with high expectations

Nate Dunlavy takes over as head coach

By DAVID SWARTZ

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With several experienced wrestlers returning this season, the Estherville Lincoln Central Wrestling Team will try to improve on its 15-6 dual record of a year ago.

Nate Dunlavy steps up from his role as assistant coach to head coach this season to lead the Midgets. His assistants this year are Trevor Olson, Dan Burton, Billy Snyder and Jess Christensen.

“The main difference between last year to this year so far has got to be the upper-classmen maturing into leaders mixed in with a lot of fresh faces,” said Dunlavy. “We haven’t had this many wrestlers in the room at one time for quite a while. This gives our kids a chance to really compete against new wrestlers each day so that they see different styles of wrestling. This will help us prepare for what we will see when we get into the competition phase of our season.”

ELC returns one state qualifier in junior Layton Yager. Yager finished the season with a 37-8 record after losing two tough matches at the state tournament. Yager will look to stay in the 144-pound weight bracket that he wrestled at last year.

Senior Wes Martin also has state experience after qualifying as a sophomore. He posted a 35-10 record last season at 132 pounds and is expected to move up to 157 pounds this season.

The team’s other seniors will fill out the upper weights with Dylan Peta at 190 pounds, Aiden Deim at 215 pounds, Rafael Diaz at 285 pounds and Andy Ramirez-Hernandez competing at either 215 or 285 pounds.

Coach Dunlavy talked about this year’s team strengths.

“Hands down veteran leadership is our strength this year,” the coach said. “The entire team is motivated to achieve their team and individual goals for the year. Our job as coaches has been fairly easy the first week due to the aggressive and motivated nature of our kids.”

Other wrestlers with returning varsity experience include Clayton Burton, Austin Bradley, Brody Olson, Braxton Johnson, Bennett Duitsman and Warren Duitsman.

Warren Duitsman, a junior, finished 35-10 last season at 157 pounds. Richard, a junior, was 15-7 at 165 pounds. Johnson, another junior, was 17-9 last season. Olson, a junior, finished 22-12, Bennett Duitsman, a junior, finished 27-17. Burton, a junior, was 13-14. Bradley, a sophomore was 7-13.

Coach Dunlavy talked about this year’s leaders.

“It is hard to point out one leader for our team,” he said. “We have had several kids stepping up into the leadership role so far with open mats and the first week of practice. Our juniors and seniors do the right things in the classroom, in the practice room, and overall have good decision making. These qualities help with making them good leaders.”

2024-25 SCHEDULE

Dec. 7	@MOC-FV Tourney
Dec. 10	w/Ridge View, SC Calhoun @East Sac
Dec. 14	@Emmetsburg Tourney
Dec. 19	w/Storm Lake, Sibley-O @MOC-Floyd Valley
Dec. 21	@Roland-Story Tourney
Jan. 2	w/C. Lyon, Akron-W, @Sibley-Ocheyedan
Jan. 4	@Emmetsburg
Jan. 9	w/Cherokee @Spencer
Jan. 11	@GT/RA Tourney, Graettinger

Jan. 14	w/Okoboji @ Algona
Jan. 16	w/BHRV, Sioux Falls, Rock Valley @ CLGLR
Jan. 25	@ Bishop Heelan Tourney
Jan. 28	Emmetsburg, Spirit Lake
Jan. 30	w/Spencer @ Spirit Lake
Feb. 1	@Roland-Story Tourney
Feb. 6	Western Christian
Feb. 15	@District (Sioux Center)
Feb. 19-22	@State, Des Moines

The coach talked about other wrestlers who may find a role on the team.

“I look forward to a lot of our guys to take a huge step forward this year,” he said. “I look for Aiden White to step into the lineup at 113 pounds and add some positives to our team. Aiden has the fight and determination to win a lot of matches for us. Rafael Diaz will be back in the lineup this year after missing all of last year with an injury. He will help solidify our lineup at 285 pounds.”

ELC finished 3-1 in the conference last year and the Midgets have several other good teams on the schedule.

“Within our conference Spencer has consistently finished at the top of our conference seemingly year in and year out,” said Dunlavy. “Storm Lake always has a full lineup with wrestlers that fight from whistle to whistle. Spirit Lake always gives us a run with the natural rivalry with them. Cherokee will always show up and wrestle hard every

year as well.”

ELC will travel to the Class 2A District Meet hosted by Sioux Center on Feb. 15. Teams at that meet will be Algona, Boyden-Hull/Rock Valley, Central Lyon/George-Little Rock, MOC-Floyd Valley, Okoboji/Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn, Sioux Center, and Spirit Lake Park. The Midgets will see all those teams at some point during the regular season.

“Algona is ranked in the top five teams in Class 2A so they will be the top team for the district,” said Dunlavy. “They have a lot of veteran wrestlers with multiple returning state qualifiers. BHRV, Central Lyon, MOC, Okoboji, and Sioux Center always have quality wrestlers up and down their lineups that compete at a high level. It will be a challenge for our team that we will be looking forward to when we wrap up our season.”

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Estherville Lincoln Central Boys Bowling Team includes, front from left, Jacob Cooklin, Dustin Baddeley, Andrew Norgaard; back row: Braxton Myers, Evan Weedebrand Preston Crees, and Easton Weedebrand. Not pictured is Gabriel Rose.

Photo by David Swartz

ELC takes reins of own boys bowling program

Haag is team's first coach

By DAVID SWARTZ

DSWARTZ@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET

After sharing a boys' bowling program with Emmetsburg the past two seasons, Estherville Lincoln Central is stepping away from the E'Hawks this year and will have their own team.

Peter Haag will coach the squad that features eight members including seniors Preston Crees and Evan Wedebrand, juniors Easton Wedebrand and Braxton Myers, and freshmen Dustin Baddeley, Andrew Norgaard, Jacob Cooklin, and Gabriel Rose.

The Wedebrand brothers were on last year's team. Crees bowled in the first year of the shared program and qualified for state along with Easton Wedebrand. Crees

finished fourth in Class 2A and Wedebrand placed 30th in 2022.

No one qualified for state last year.

"While our team consists of several new bowlers, we are confident that we can lean on the experience of our upperclassmen as we set out to establish a program that will be recognized as one of the best in the state of Iowa," said coach Haag. "We expect to be highly competitive at each of our competitions, and ultimately have set a goal to win our district event, progress to the state team tournament, and compete for a state championship. Along the way, this should allow for several of our individuals to advance to state, as well."

"These may seem to be quite lofty goals for a first year program, but we are focused on establishing a standard of excellence that will allow our first year to be a solid

Dec. 3	@Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn
Dec. 10	vs. Sioux Central @Spencer
Dec. 13:	@Fort Dodge
Dec. 20	Forest City
Jan. 3	@Forest City
Jan. 7	@Pocahontas Area
Jan. 14	Kuemper Catholic, Carroll

Jan. 16	Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn
Jan. 20	vs Sergeat Bluff-Luton @ Sioux City
Jan. 21	@Carroll
Jan. 23	Sioux Central
Feb. 4	Pocahontas Area
Feb. 18	@ 2A District

2024-25 SCHEDULE

foundation for our program and its growth into the future," the coach said. "Ultimately, our success will be measured by our display of sportsmanship and competitiveness throughout the season, culminating in building a reputation driven by the respect of our peers."

ELC's home meets will be at AllStar

Lanes in Estherville. The first home meet is Dec. 20 against Forest City. Other home meets are against Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn on Jan. 16, Sioux Central on Jan. 23, and Pocahontas Area on Feb. 4.

Iowa has three classes for bowling—1A, 2A, and 3A. ELC is in Class 2A. State-qualifying meets are a one-day tournament.

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The 2024-25 North Union Girls Basketball Team includes, front from left, Ava Steinberger, Hannah Nielsen; middle row: Alexis Cummins, Shallice Walders, Alyssa Welbig, Ainsley Ulrich, Maisey Bierstedt, Avery Walstead; standing: Danika Morphew, Marissa Nielsen, Ally Bruhn, Samantha Hoye and Taylor Parsons.

Photo by Kim Meyer. Bancroft Register/Swea City Herald

Young Warriors team will be put to the test

2024-25 SCHEDULE

By DAVID SWARTZ

DSWARTZ@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET

ARMSTRONG — The North Union Girls Basketball Team will look for several new faces to step up this year.

Last year, the Warriors graduated three seniors that accounted for 76 percent of the team's offense.

"We'll push the ball this year and we'll be a good defensive team, but we're not there yet," said North Union coach Merle Tigges. "Our biggest goal is to improve every night out."

North Union does return its leading scorer in Ainsley Ulrich, a 5-5 sophomore guard. A year ago, she averaged 14.6 points a game.

The Warriors return one other starter in 6-foot senior Ava Steinberger, who was third on the team in rebounds with 76. Another sophomore returner, Shallice Walders, played in all 23 games last year.

Hannah Nielsen is the team's other

returning senior and she played in 17 games last season.

North Union has no juniors this season. Besides Ulrich and Walders, other sophomores on the squad are Maisey Bierstedt, Alexis Cummins, Alyssa Welbig, and Avery Walstead.

Tigges said with both seniors being inside players, Ulrich and the other sophomores will be relied on for the ball handling.

A preliminary starting lineup includes Steinberger, Nielsen, Ulrich, Walders and Bierstedt. Cummins, Welbig and Walstead will see time off the bench.

In the season opening loss to West Bend-Mallard, 43-39, Tigges said his team was getting open layups and 3-pointers.

"We just need to make a few more shots and learn how to finish games," the coach said. "That will come as the girls get some time under their belts."

The roster is bolstered by five freshmen—Samantha Hoye, Ally Bruhn, Taylor

Nov. 26	West Bend-Mallard
Dec. 6	@Clear Lake
Dec. 9	Estherville Lincoln Central
Dec. 10	Forest City
Dec. 13	@West Hancock
Dec. 17	@Belmond-Klemme
Dec. 19	@Bishop Garrigan
Jan. 3	Lake Mills
Jan. 6	Central Springs
Jan. 7	@Eagle Grove
Jan. 10	Garner-Hayfield-Ventura

Jan. 14	@GT/RA
Jan. 17	North Iowa
Jan. 21	@Forest City
Jan. 23	Northwood-Kensett
Jan. 24	West Hancock
Jan. 28	Belmond-Klemme
Jan. 31	Bishop Garrigan
Feb. 4	Eagle Grove
Feb. 7	@Garner-Hayfield-Ventura
Feb. 11	@Lake Mills

Parsons, Marissa Nielsen, and Danika Morphew.

The Top of Iowa West Conference won't give North Union any easy nights. Tigges said his team was affected most by graduation while other teams return key players.

Bishop Garrigan, the preseason No. 1 team in Class 1A, along with Forest City are expected to vie for the top spot in the conference.

"The rest of us with battling for the next spots and I hope we're in there," Tigges said.

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The 2024-25 Graettinger-Terril/Ruthven-Ayrshire Girls Basketball Team includes, from left, Isabella Anderson, Olivia Anderson, Caitlyn Hough, Lindsey Conlon, Myah Wise, Addison Hansen, Kamryn Hough, Jenna Conlon, and Shaylee Wise. Not pictured is Taylor Fay.

Photo by Jay Schoning, Ruthven Zipcode

Titans look to young players to step up in 2024-25

By DAVID SWARTZ

DSWARTZ@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET

The Graettinger-Terril/Ruthven-Ayrshire Girls Basketball Team became even younger this season. The Titans graduated three starting seniors from a year ago and have just one senior for the upcoming 2024-25 season.

Lost to graduation were Madisen Fay, Josie Reiman, and Olivia Sorenson.

The teams' two returning starters are senior Shaylee Wise and sophomore Addison Hansen. Both averaged around seven points per game a year ago.

Coach Lucas Hough, assisted by Brent Dyhrkopp, has just 10 players reporting to practice. Hough talked about the differences between this year's team and last year's team.

"This year we will be small and young, but it will be an aggressive group that is fun to watch," the coach aid.

The rest of the Titan roster returning from a year ago include juniors Olivia Anderson and Isabella Anderson, and sophomores Jenna Conlon, Lindsey Conlon, and Taylor Fay.

The group is joined by three freshmen—Myah Wise, Caitlyn Hough, and Kamryn Hough.

"All three of the freshmen will have to help contribute this year," Coach Hough said.

The coach said this team's strengths is, "our willingness to fly around and be scrappy."

That also leaves plenty of areas to improve. "We are going to have to take care of the ball and create lots of turnovers," Coach Hough said.

A year ago, GT/RA posted an 8-15 record overall and was tied for sixth place with four other teams in the Twin Lakes Conference at 4-7.

Coach Hough points to Emmetsburg,

2024-25 SCHEDULE

Nov. 26	@Harris-Lake Park	Jan. 14	North Union
Dec. 3	West Bend-Mallard	Jan. 17	Pocahontas Area
Dec. 6	@Emmetsburg	Jan. 21	Alta-Aurelia
Dec. 10	St. Mary's, Storm Lake	Jan. 24	@West Bend-Mallard
Dec. 13	@South Central Calhoun	Jan. 28	@St. Mary's, Storm Lake
Dec. 16	@Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn	Jan. 31	Southeast Valley
Dec. 20	East Sac County	Feb. 1	@East Sac County
Dec. 21	@Okoboji	Feb. 4	Newell-Fonda
Jan. 3	Sioux Central	Feb. 7	@Sioux Central
Jan. 9	@North Iowa	Feb. 10	MMCRU
Jan. 10	@Manson-Northwest Webster		

Newell-Fonda, and Pocahontas Area as the teams to watch this season.

How will the coach define success this season?

"We will have a successful season if we

can show up and compete every night. If we do this we will have a chance to win every night we play," Hough said.

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The 2024-25 North Union Boys Basketball Team includes, front from left, Donnie Stevens, Drew Henderson, Grady Madden, Caden Walders, Emmit Bierstedt, Nick Mitchell; middle row: Khael Jones, Richard Smith, Landon Manwarren, Carson Crouch, Drake Nelsen, Liam Eischen, Emory Potts; back row: Lane Bruhn, Jayden Hagedorn, Cole Nicoson, Greyson Colegrove, Dyson Wikert, Kael Vaske and Hunter Geitzenauer. Not pictured is Colin Kruse.

Photo by Kim Meyer. Bancroft Register/Swea City Herald

Warriors will need to gain experience quickly

2024-25 SCHEDULE

By DAVID SWARTZ

DSWARTZ@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET

ARMSTRONG — Coming off its first-ever state appearance, the North Union Boys Basketball Team has some work to do this season.

All five of its starters from a year ago graduated. Of three underclassmen who played significant varsity minutes last season—Khael Jones, Grady Madden, and Drew Henderson—two were injured during the football season.

“So we lack varsity experience but have really started to gel together,” said North Union coach Alex Fisher. “We had a great summer, just unfortunately we are not at full strength to start the season during this valuable prep time to get ready for the upcoming season. Optimistically thinking - the starting five will get valuable experience and will be forced to carry the load until Madden and Henderson get back. We’re hoping to be at full strength come January and really be hitting our stride come

February.”

Madden and Caden Walters are the team’s lone seniors.

Coach Fisher will look to them for leadership.

“Grady has a ton of experience,” said Fisher. “He’s a glue guy who keeps everyone up and has made plenty of big plays in big moments. He has a positive demeanor and understands the importance of team work and unity. Caden is a senior who has waited his turn beyond talented class of 2024. He has played a lot of ball with those guys and has bought into our system. He works hard and is always encouraging his teammates.”

Madden averaged 7.0 points per game last season while Henderson averaged 3.2, and Jones had 2.6.

The coach said this year’s team strengths is having good shooters.

“They’re learning fast,” Fisher said.

The coach said picking a starting lineup to start the season will likely be Jones,

Dec. 2	West Bend-Mallard
Dec. 9	Estherville Lincoln Central
Dec. 10	Forest City
Dec. 13	@West Hancock
Dec. 17	@Belmond-Klemme
Dec. 19	@Bishop Garrigan
Jan. 3	Lake Mills
Jan. 6	Central Springs
Jan. 7	@Eagle Grove
Jan. 10	Garner-Hayfield-Ventura

Jan. 14	@GT/RA
Jan. 17	North Iowa
Jan. 21	@Forest City
Jan. 23	Northwood-Kensett
Jan. 24	West Hancock
Jan. 28	Belmond-Klemme
Jan. 31	Bishop Garrigan
Feb. 4	Eagle Grove
Feb. 7	@Garner-Hayfield-Ventura
Feb. 11	@Lake Mills

Walders, juniors Cole Nicoson and Lane Bruhn and sophomore Greyson Colegrove.

“Greyson will be a good all around player for us on both ends of the court,” said Fisher. “He can score at every level and defend multiple positions.”

Fisher is hopeful of having Madden within the first 2-3 weeks of the season. He doesn’t expect Henderson to be available until after

the Christmas break.

A year ago, North Union finished second in the Top of Iowa West Conference with a 14-2 record behind Lake Mills.

Fisher said Lake Mills will be a tough team to beat again this year as well as Forest City.

“Overall, the conference should be pretty tough top to bottom,” the coach said.

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GRAETTINGER-TERRIL/RUTHVEN-AYRSHIRE TITANS



The 2024-25 Graettinger-Terril/Ruthven-Ayrshire Boys Basketball Team includes, front from left, Ryan Girres, Teagan Hanson, Lucas Girres, Jackson Utesch, Will Darr, Hunter Manwarren, Kaleb Borchers, Armando Mora; back row: Landen Price, Jaxson Schnell, Kasey Hough, Cayden Wilson, Sullivan Hall, Shane Moran, Landen Dietrich, Carter DeJong, and Zac Sorenson. Not pictured are Michael Valen and Braden Koenck.

Photo by Jay Schoning, Ruthven Zipcode

Titans return loads of experience for 2024-25

By DAVID SWARTZ
DSWARTZ@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET

GRAETTINGER — With a number of returning starters back this season, the Graettinger-Terril/Ruthven-Ayrshire Boys Basketball Team should make some waves in the Twin Lakes Conference.

The Titans return 86 percent of their scoring from a year ago including senior Kasey Hough's 17.7 points per game.

That varsity experience is what Coach Randy Hough said is the difference between last year and this year.

Hough begins his 48th year of coaching and is assisted by Matt Masters.

GT/RA finished 11-11 overall last year and finished tied for seventh in the Twin Lakes Conference with a 5-6 record.

While Kasey Hough is the team's lone senior, several underclassmen received

plenty of varsity time including returning starters Sullivan Hall and Teagan Hanson, both juniors this year, along with sophomore Landon Dietrich, who started 14 of 21 games a year ago.

Hall averaged 12.0 points and 8.86 rebounds last season while Hanson averaged 9.0 points, 5.1 assists and 4.2 rebounds.

Coach Hough said that having a more experienced team returning is this squad's strength. He wants to see his team to improve its rebounding.

"Kasey will be our leader because he has started for three years," said Coach Hough.

Other returning players from last year's varsity roster are juniors Jaxson Schnell, Lucas Girres, Will Darr, and Shane Moran.

A year ago, Emmetsburg and South Central Calhoun finished at the top of the Twin Lakes Conference with identical 10-1

2024-25 SCHEDULE

Dec. 3	West Bend-Mallard	Jan. 17	Pocahontas Area
Dec. 6	@Emmetsburg	Jan. 21	Alta-Aurelia
Dec. 10	St. Mary's, Storm Lake	Jan. 24	@West Bend-Mallard
Dec. 13	@South Central Calhoun	Jan. 28	@St. Mary's, Storm Lake
Dec. 16	@Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn	Jan. 31	Southeast Valley
Dec. 20	East Sac County	Feb. 1	@East Sac County
Dec. 21	@Okoboji	Feb. 4	Newell-Fonda
Jan. 3	Sioux Central	Feb. 7	@Sioux Central
Jan. 9	@North Iowa	Feb. 10	MMCRU
Jan. 10	@Manson-Northwest Webster	Feb. 14	@Harris-Lake Park
Jan. 14	North Union		

records. Coach Hough says those are teams to watch this season along with Manson-Northwest Webster.

How does Coach Hough define success

for his team this year?

"Playing together as a team and winning games," he said.

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Find results from all the area high school sports teams in the ESTHERVILLE NEWS!



The 2024-25 North Union Boys Wrestling Team includes, front from left, Jackson Hutchinson, Ethan Preston, Josh Harmon, Lucas Dreyer, Brennan Bollinger, Hunter Clendenan; middle row: Gabe Whaley, Michael Tobin, Kade Madden, Samuel Kirkegaard, Kyan Walter; back row: Henry Moore, Liam Kollasch, Kaden Grimm and Max Merrill. Missing from photo is Noah Hersleff.

Photo by Kim Meyer, Bancroft Register/Swea City Herald

Four seniors to lead young Warrior squad

By DAVID SWARTZ

DSWARTZ@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET

SWEA CITY — After posting a 13-10 dual record a year ago and sending one wrestler to the state tournament, the North Union Boys Wrestling Team is ready for another year.

Coach Joe Johnson, who has coached the Warrior wrestling squad since its inception, returns at the helm. Logan Johnson is his assistant coach.

The squad features 15 wrestlers with four seniors—Brennan Bollinger, Lucas Dreyer, Ethan Preston, and Josh Harmon.

“We are very young this year,” said Johnson. “Ten of 15 wrestlers are freshmen and sophomores.”

While North Union is unable to fill the two lowest weights, the top three weights will be tough for other teams to contend with.

“We are pretty strong in our upper three weights, and this group of guys may be the most coachable group I’ve had,” said Johnson. “They are hungry to find ways to get better every day, and enjoy working hard together with their teammates.”

The top three weights are sophomore Max

Merrill at 190, Dreyer at 215, and Bollinger at 285.

Bollinger had the best record of the returning wrestlers, as he posted a 31-9 record last season. Dreyer went 20-20 at 175 last year and Merrill was 19-20 as a freshman at 190 pounds.

Preston also had a strong year at 113 pounds a year ago with 24-17 record. He moves up to 132 pounds this year.

Other returning wrestlers are junior Kade Madden (150), and sophomores Michael Tobin (126), Jackson Hutchinson (138), Gabe Whaley (144), and Henry Moore (285).

Coach Johnson talked about this year’s leaders.

“Seniors are our leaders on and off the mat, and our captains,” the coach said. “This group is very reliable and coachable, and I’m excited for the growth that they make.”

The team is bolstered by five freshmen—Samuel Kirkegaard (120), Hunter Clendenan (144), Castor Kollasch (157), Kyan Walter (175), and Kaden Grimm (215)

“Having low numbers, I expect all 15 of

2024-25 SCHEDULE

Dec. 5	@N-K w/North Butler, Osage	Jan. 9	Quad @ West Hancock
Dec. 7	@Okoboji Tourney	Jan. 11	@GTRA Tourney
Dec. 10	w/Pocahontas, Sx Central, WB-M	Jan. 16	@Newman Catholic
Dec. 12	w/Central Springs, Lake Mills, St. Ansgar	Jan. 18	@Ackley Tourney
Dec. 14	@Sibley-Ocheyedan Tourney	Jan. 25	@St.Ansgar(Conference)
Dec. 19	@Eagle Grove w/Manson NW, West Bend-M	Jan. 28	Quad @Garner
Dec. 21	@Cherokee Tourney	Feb. 4	@GTRA
Jan. 2	@ Forest City w/Nashua-Plainfield, Rockford	Feb. 15	@District, Emmetsburg
Jan. 4	@Emmetsburg Tourney	Feb. 19-22	@State, Des Moines

our guys to wrestle varsity at some point this year,” said Johnson. “I’m looking for immediate impact from all of them.”

Johnson said the Warriors’ schedule won’t be easy, especially wrestling in the Top of Iowa Conference.

“The conference will be tough like every year,” he said. “Four of the 16 teams are ranked in the top 15 in the state. We’re looking to have our first conference

individual champion this year.”

North Union will compete at the Class 1A District hosted by Emmetsburg on Feb. 15. Johnson said it will be a very tough district with teams like Emmetsburg, Lake Mills, Graettinger-Terril/Ruthven-Ayrshire and West Lyon all there.

Other teams at the district will be East Sac County, Ridge View, Sibley-Ocheyedan, Sioux Central, and West Bend-Mallard.

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GRAETTINGER-TERRIL/RUTHVEN-AYRSHIRE TITANS



The 2024-25 Graettinger-Terril/Ruthven-Ayrshire Wrestling Team includes, front from left, Alex Anders, Aaron Wilson, Kenny Ness, Landon Price, Caleb Swedin, Hayden Gilmore, Koda Saul, Adrien Charles-Nicolas; middle row: manager Korbyn Dietrich, Karen Pourmoradkhan Malal, Gage Moore, Evan Jensen, Isaiah Malm, Wyatt Haffner, Brady Harris; back row: Coach Doug Hoffman, Coach Paul Williams, Luke Malm, Wyatt Rose, Caleb Manwarren, Donovan Young, Kinnick Peton, Owen DeMoss, Cael Currans, Head Coach Alex Helmich, and Coach David Greenwald.

Photo by Jay Schoning, Ruthven Zipcode

Strong line-up will lead to more success for Titans

Swedin, Malm, Price return with state experience

By DAVID SWARTZ

DSWARTZ@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET

With a host of talent returning for the 2024-25 Graettinger-Terril/Ruthven-Ayrshire Boys Wrestling Coach Alex Helmich will expect more success in his 10th season at the helm of the Titans.

“We return our starting lineup from a year ago so everybody is back another year stronger, and we have some very solid newcomers,” said Helmich.

GT/RA finished 17-7 in duals and sent two wrestlers to state—Caleb Swedin and Isaiah Malm. Swedin returned home with a fifth-place medal and finished his season with a 42-6 record. Malm returns for his senior season after a 34-14 junior campaign.

Another senior, Landon Price, also has state experience after placing eighth at another school.

Besides Malm and Price, other returning seniors are Owen DeMoss, Wyatt Haffner, Donovan Young, Adrien Charles-Nicolas, and Karen Pourmoradkhan Malal.

Young and Haffner both posted more than 30 wins a year ago. Young was 36-10

at heavyweight while Haffner went 30-12 after 190 pounds.

“We have good senior leadership which helps the team,” said Helmich. “We had great captains last year and I look for those guys to continue to lead. We named captains the first week in practice. Those are voted on by their teammates. In addition to the captains, I look for some others to step up and elevate the performance of others around them. A good leader does just that; encourages others, builds others up, holds others accountable, sets a good example in action and words, and in doing so elevates the entire team’s performance.”

The coach also discussed the team’s strengths and weaknesses.

“We need to be ready to go right away this season with duals,” said Helmich. “Last year we got off to a slow start. The end goal is still the same; be at our best when it comes to post-season. Every individual needs to improve every single day to become the best version of themselves.”

There are also some young wrestlers ready to make an impact.

“We have a good group of newcomers in the freshman class,” said Helmich. “Caleb Manwarren and Evan Jensen have some AAU state wrestling experience. We have

2024-25 SCHEDULE

Dec. 5	w/Spencer, Okoboji	Jan. 16	Alta-Aurelia, East Sac, Kingsley-Pierson
Dec. 7	@Okoboji Tourney	Jan. 18	@Twin Lakes Tourney, Gowrie
Dec. 10	w/Sibley-Ocheyedan @Emmetsburg	Jan. 24-25	@OABCIG Tourney
Dec. 12	@Pocahontas Invite	Jan. 30	GTRA/MMCRU/MNW/ @MVAOCO
Dec. 14	@Emmetsburg Tourney	Feb. 1	@Pocahontas Tourney
Dec. 19	w/ Sioux Central @Alta-Aurelia	Feb. 4	w/North Union, N-K, WBM
Dec. 21	@Northwood-Kensett	Feb. 15	@District, Emmetsburg
Jan. 11	GT/RA Tournament	Feb. 19-22	@State, Des Moines
Jan. 14	w/Sioux Central @Spirit Lake		

a couple foreign exchange wrestlers joining the team in Adrien and Karen. We also have a very accomplished wrestler in Landon Price joining the team, who was 8th place last year in the state wrestling tournament.”

The Twin Lakes Conference will provide plenty of challenges for the Titans.


“The conference will really be up for grabs for many teams this year,” said Helmich. “There are several pretty solid teams, and not one is the clear favorite. We will be in that discussion for Twin Lakes Conference dual and tournament champions.”

Also, GT/RA will be at the Class 1A District Meet hosted by Emmetsburg on Feb. 15. Other teams there include the

host E’Hawks, East Sac County, Lake Mills, North Union, Ridge View, Sibley-Ocheyedan, Sioux Central, West Bend-Mallard, and West Lyon.

How will the coach define success this season?

“When we look back on the season, we want to know that we reached our full potential as individuals and as a team,” said Helmich. “When everyone focuses on doing their job to the best of their ability, success happens. The goal is to be as good as we can possibly be. We have to work at that daily. It doesn’t just happen by chance. Coach (Doug) Hoffman wants to have them in the best shape of their life.”



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The 2024-25 Graettinger-Terril/Ruthven-Ayrshire Girls Wrestling Team includes front, from left, are Bonita Jordan, Moriah Reineke, Myla Fisher, Katherine Scott, Terra Swedin, Amy Gomez-Ramirez; back row: Coach Skyler Bonestroo, Manager Corinne Cook, Magnolia Malm, Trista Guinn, Isabelle Harris, Leah Ness, Braelyn Henaman, Jazmin Sanchez, and Coach Max Bergo. Not pictured is Grace Griffin.

Photo by Jay Schoning, Ruthven Zipcode

Guinn, Harris are returning state qualifiers for GTRA/ELC

By DAVID SWARTZ

DSWARTZ@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET

GRAETTINGER — While Graettinger-Terril/Ruthven-Ayrshire is starting its third season of girls' wrestling, the Titans are in their second year of sharing the program with Estherville Lincoln Central.

Max Bergo has been the team's coach since its inception in the 2022-23 season and has 12 wrestlers reporting to practice this season. He is assisted by Skyler Bonestroo.

None of this year's wrestlers are seniors, but the Titans do return two state qualifiers from a year ago.

Junior Trista Guinn placed sixth as a freshman at 110 pounds and finished seventh last season at 115 pounds. She finished her sophomore campaign with a 37-6 record.

Fellow junior Isabelle Harris also qualified for state at 135 pounds last year and finished with a 26-13 record.

The coach said the difference between this year's team and last year's team is "getting more of a filled out lineup."

"We have a lot of returning wrestlers and a solid outlook on the season," he said.

The coach said he'd like to schedule more

team duals and get closer to a full line-up.

As to who will serve as leaders, Bergo said he is uncertain.

"Good leaders will help teammates and encourage a positive culture on the squad," he said.

Bergo said the entire freshman class looks promising.

The following is a list of wrestlers by their weight class.

- Grace Griffin - 100
- Terra Swedin - 105
- Katherine Scott - 105
- Trista Guinn - 110
- Myla Fisher - 115
- Bonita Jordan - 120
- Amy Gomez-Ramirez - 120
- Moriah Reineke - 130
- Isabelle Harris - 135
- Braelyn Henaman - 140
- Maggie Malm - 155
- Jazmin Sanchez - 235

Of the returning wrestlers, Fisher, Reineke, Grace Griffin, and Katherine Scott took part in the Super Regional last season. Myla Fisher wrestled at 125 pounds and posted a 13-10 record. Reineke posted a 17-18

2024-25 SCHEDULE

Nov. 22	@Sioux Central	Jan. 9	Sx Central, Manson NW, SC Calhoun
Nov. 23	@Emmetsburg	Jan. 11	@Ogden
Dec. 2	@Manson	Jan. 14	@Spirit Lake
Dec. 5	w/Okoboji/HMS, Spencer	Jan. 18	@Twin Lakes Conference
Dec. 7	@Okoboji	Jan. 25	@Sergeant Bluff-Luton
Dec. 10	@Eagle Grove	Jan. 28	Triangular in Estherville
Dec. 14	@Spencer	Jan. 31	@Regional
Jan. 4	@St. James, Minn.	Feb. 6-7	@State, Coralville

record at 130 pounds. Griffin posted a 10-20 record last season while Scott was 13-17.

Coach Bergo was asked to assess some of the teams GTRA/ELC will face this season.

"Individually there will be a number of schools with solid wrestlers at different weight classes," he said. "Without a lot of set team duals, it is hard to judge tough teams in the conference."

The coach also was asked how he will define success this year.

"Success to our program is having a tough team that has a positive attitude and the determination to work hard throughout the

season," he said.

The Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union has set up 14 weight classes for girls wrestling. Weight classes are 100, 105, 110, 115, 120, 125, 130, 135, 140, 145, 155, 170, 190, and 235.

This year, one wrestling triangular will be held in Estherville on Jan. 28.

The postseason regional qualifier will be held Friday, Jan. 31. The state tournament will be held Thursday and Friday, Feb. 6-7, 2025.

Also, the girls' teams have been divided into two classes instead of one.

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