

# Thompson, new-look Warriors aim for growth, success on links

By Jim Faasen  
CORRESPONDENT

Owen Thompson is ready for the challenge of a new season.

With the 2024 campaign marking his fourth season as a member of the Warrenton boys golf team and as one of just two returning starters, the senior knows his time is now.

"I've been practicing a lot in the off-season with a big personal goal of making it to the state tournament this year," Thompson said. "I also would like to be in the running for (GAC North) Conference Player of the Year. I know that a lot of work has got to go into the mental work required to play the game. I've had guys on this team come before me and teach me important things. This is a young team and I need to do my part to pass things on to them."

Thompson will be at the forefront of a team that finished the 2023 season with a 5-2 dual record and several strong tournament finishes.

Thompson said he knows there is something of a clean slate for the team this season.

That's the case because just he and junior Ethan Leavitt return to the links for the squad.

Warrenton coach Aaron Jinkerson said that, even though the calendar may have changed to a new season, the team's goals remain largely unchanged.

"Last year, we had a very successful season," Jinkerson said. "We compet-

ed well at the conference level and in tournaments. I think we can be just as successful as we were last season. Other than our top two guys, we're going to be pretty inexperienced on the varsity level. We could be playing anywhere from three freshmen to a couple of juniors who are new to the team this year."

Jinkerson pointed to freshmen Gavin Thompson, Gavin Solari, and Ty Cook as solid contributors while junior Lucas Eskew will compete for a line-up spot throughout the season.

The coach said that he plans on having everyone on the roster being in a position to hit the ground running as the season begins.

"I don't have a coaching philosophy, per se, but I think it's better to throw the young guys out there early on and let them face tougher competition," Jinkerson said. "(That way) they can understand what it will be like as the season progresses and as they progress through their years of high school, for sure."

Warrenton opened the season on March 25 at the Bogey Hills Invitational, a 20-team tournament. The Warriors open up the dual portion of the team's schedule on March 27 against St. Charles.

Jinkerson said that he's liked what he's seen in the team's preseason workouts and that he's excited for what's to come.

"So far the kids have really been working hard in practice," Jinkerson said. "I'm looking forward to seeing how they've progressed."

# New coach to lead Warrenton soccer

By Kelly Bowen  
CORRESPONDENT

After a devastating ending to the 2022-23 season, the Warrenton girls soccer team are back with a distinct mindset and a mixture of new and old faces.

The team has started the beginning of their season with a record of 1-3 led by their new head coach, Courtney Nenninger.

Nenninger was an assistant coach for the past two seasons at Warrenton, which has helped in terms of knowing the girls.

Despite the rocky start, the girls remain positive throughout games and practices. They also continue to uplift each other and keep a strong mindset.

"When we hit some rough patches, they still kept their heads up and that's unlike anything I have seen before here," Nenninger said.

Before the start of the season, Nenninger alongside Assistant Coach Jake Brown, were looking for commitment from potential players. Even though the squad is small in numbers, Nenninger notes that the girls are showing up and continue to show up.

Now that the season has started, Nenninger is looking to focus on the fundamentals of the game in order to grow into

bigger picture things.

"If we can't have the basics down, then it's hard to move onto bigger picture things," Nenninger said. "Now that we have had a couple games, we are able to focus on game play and formation."

While Nenninger has completed her goal of receiving commitment from the girls, one of the biggest challenges has been with the players who swing between track and field and soccer. Three out of the four girls also have track as their primary sport.

"We do have girls that are really good at track," Nenninger said. "Sometimes we are missing them for games and that does make a pretty big impact so trying to manage that is a big part of the season."

Regardless of the challenges this team has faced, Nenninger notes that some of the new players have come in with a lot of skill, while some of the upperclassmen have grown tremendously throughout the years.

With the great atmosphere and the positive attitudes, Nenninger is hopeful for this season and sees the potential in this team.

"We have a really good air about the team," Nenninger said. "The girls aren't so hard on each other and really lift each other up."

# Black tops Gold in Tigers' spring game

Under sunny skies, University of Missouri football welcomed fans back to Memorial Stadium for the Black & Gold Spring Game on Saturday, March 16.

Black prevailed over gold by a 10-9 margin. Defensive back Caleb Flagg picked up defensive MVP honors after hauling in his seventh interception of the spring among other big plays while Joshua Manning earned MVP honors for the offense. He had a TD reception down the far sideline before halftime.

Tigers fans had a strong showing, packing the north concourse and lower east side stands for the event. Mizzou recognized its incoming recruiting class, 2024 NFL Combine participants and handed out its 2023 team awards at halftime.

Some other highlights included a Toriano Pride Jr. interception, field goals from kickers Blake Craig and Nick Quadrini and a double pass for a TD from Brett Brown to Theo Wease to Mookie Cooper.

Mizzou, coming off an 11-2 season with a Top 10 postseason ranking and win in the 88th Goodyear

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## Player of the Week



**BEN PETH**

Warrenton High School Senior

**Boys Baseball**

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# ATHLETE OF THE MONTH



## ELIZABETH RIGGS

**Year:** Senior.

**High School Activities:** Track, wrestling, FCA, NHS, Student Council and HOSA.

**Favorite Food:** Sushi.

**Favorite Music:** Folk music.

**Favorite Pro Sports Team:** Houston Texans.

**What is your favorite sports memory?**

For wrestling, it was when we won our first tournament. That was my junior year. I think it was the first team trophy in Wright City wrestling history.

My favorite individual memory was my first year placing at state in track, my sophomore year when I placed third. That was one of my best memories. It was my first time placing all-state in any sport.

**What is your pregame ritual?**

It's different between track and wrestling. For wrestling, I have my different things. I usually warm up and have a few bible verses I say to myself. I always pray before my match as I put on my band to wrestle. I kind of visualize my matches before I go up there and repeat a few things.

**What is your favorite part about sports?**

How challenging they are and how fulfilling it is to push your body and mind so much. Specifically in my two sports, it is about how much you put in is how much you will get out of it.

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**What is a motto you follow?**

I have a lot of little ones. One of them is a bible verse as well, I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me. Every day in practice when I'm tired and need motivation I think of that.

**What will you miss the most about high school?**

The sports. I have been able to be a team captain and a leader. I really enjoy leading the team, mentoring the younger girls, helping the underclassmen do things. I will miss that aspect.

**What has influence you the most and why?**

Probably my parents. My dad has always showed me how important it is to work hard. My mom has been someone I looked up to. She was a collegiate athlete. She set times I try to beat. She has pushed me in my athletics. Both of them show me how important it is to dedicate yourself to whatever you are doing. They are definitely my biggest role models.

**What are your career goals?**

I plan to attend Missouri Valley and plan to run track and field. I will be signing there shortly. I will have completed my associate's degree from St. Charles Community College. I will have my exercise science degree in two years. I potentially want to finish a masters in nutrition and would like to coach back at Wright City. I want to be a certified dietitian and nutritionist and work one-on-one with clients.

**Hobbies:** Sports, work out, lift weights, exercise. I like hanging out with my siblings and friends.

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# Loaded Warrenton baseball squad aims to get over conference hump

By Jim Faasen  
CORRESPONDENT

Over the past couple of seasons, there has been one prevailing constant for the Warrenton baseball team – coming close to but ultimately falling short of a GAC North Conference championship.

As senior Ben Peth sees it, that has to change this year.

"I think one of our goals is a conference championship, especially after losing it by one game the past (two) years," Peth said. "I think it would be good to finally get over the hump. I'm just going to go out there and throw the ball and keep my teammates' energy up so we can accomplish a few

things this year."

One year removed from a 15-14 overall finish and a 7-3 conference record, which fell short of a title by that one game to St. Charles West for the second straight season, Peth and the Warriors are aiming for more.

Warrenton coach Eric Burle said that, with a core of 10 players who are returning to the fold, in some form, from previous varsity action, it's not just the team's 5-1 start as of Record press time that has the coach excited.

The fact that in the early going Warrenton has averaged 10.3 runs per game while giving up 3.3 should provide the coach comfort.

"Every position in the field

should be fielded by someone who has at least one year of varsity experience from a group that fielded it well last year," Burle said. "Defense should be a strength of this team. Offensively, we are coming off a season where we averaged a little more than seven runs per game."

The overwhelmingly solid core for Warrenton includes junior catcher Austin Haas, senior second baseman Caleb Clark, senior pitcher/first baseman Tyler Oliver, junior shortstop Colin Disilvester, senior centerfielder Joe Goldsmith, senior third baseman/pitcher Troy Anderson, junior outfielder Mason Thompson, Peth, a pitcher/outfielder, sophomore

outfielder Keegan Mellegaard, and junior utility/pitcher Bryce Phillips.

Clark leads the offense so far this season, hitting .625 while Anderson's nine RBI pace the Warriors. On the mound, Goldsmith, Oliver, and Peth have already earned victories. Goldsmith's 2.33 earned run average is the lowest on the team to date. These numbers reflect the Warriors' games prior to victories over Wright City and Hannibal last weekend.

Burle said that he's excited to have such a talented and experience-laden group. The coach added that he feels not only should a conference title hunt be at the forefront for the Warriors, but the chance to be in

position for postseason success should be high on the team's 2024 checklist.

"We have a good number of returning players and guys that have played a lot of baseball, so (I'm) trusting them to make the right decisions for the team," Burle said. "Keeping things simple and playing extremely hard is vital for this team to maximize potential. We want to play our best baseball heading into districts and hopefully put ourselves in a position to gain a favorable district seed."

Warrenton began its chase for a GAC North title this week with conference games against Orchard Farm after Record press time on Tuesday and Wednesday.

# Warrenton girls on track for success while boys aim to build this spring

By Jim Faasen  
CORRESPONDENT

Even though there may be a large group of freshmen and, conversely, not an overabundance of upper-class leaders for the Warrenton girls' track team this season, there is plenty of depth and a talented junior class which should help those around the program have lofty expectations.

After all, among the 10 returning letter winners from a season ago are juniors Avery Shaw and Morgan Marschel, both of whom made it to the state meet in 2023, with Shaw qualifying in the shot put and Marschel in the 400.

"I think we have a strong team in a lot of areas with a chance to compete for a conference title," Shaw said.

Marschel took expectations a step further.

"I think we could have multiple sectional qualifiers from our sprinters and relays this year," she said.

The duo should do well to lead the way this season, as well, as Shaw (shot put, discus, javelin) and Marschel (400 meters, 4x100 relay) return in search of personal and team glory.

For third-year coach John Jeskey, the glory would start with a first-place GAC North Conference finish and extend to multiple Warriors earning spots in the Class 4 state meet.

"I would like to see our young team, we have a lot of freshmen, learn from our solid core of upperclassmen and develop throughout the season to be ready to contribute at the varsity level for conference and districts," Jeskey said. "During my tenure as head coach, we have had multiple state qualifiers each year. This year we will be looking towards our upperclassmen leaders to help continue that trend and bring home a state medal for the first time since 2016."

The Warriors opened the season on March 19 at the

Montgomery County Early Invitational before competing on March 22 at the North Point Invite.

The team will next run on April 1 at Fort Zumwalt East.

On the boys' side, senior distance runner Wyatt Claiborne said that, much like the girls, the boys are a young team that aims to make continual strides under new coach Mark Thomas.

Those strides, the distance runner said, are ones that he hopes will allow him to run all the way to the state meet in Jefferson City as he did as a sophomore in finishing 15th in the state in the 1600 meters.

"I feel that the team as a whole has shaped up to perform pretty well this season," Claiborne said. "Personally, I would like to return to the state meet like I did my sophomore year and break some school records, particularly in the 1600 and 800."

Thomas said that he's excited to see just what several

key returning athletes can do across several respective disciplines.

The coach mentioned Claiborne and senior Phillip Kackley (also a distance runner in the 800 and 1600) as those with rather large expectations.

"We hope that they can see individual improvements from last year and show continued growth toward districts," Thomas said. "We graduated two state qualifiers and have had some injuries on the boys' side that were a major part of our relay teams so we are working to find the right group to move into those roles."

The coach said that several younger faces could well play

significant roles as the season progresses.

"We have several underclassmen that we are hoping will be able to contribute throughout the season," Thomas said. "Our goal is to see improvement in all of our competitors throughout the spring. We hope to represent Warrenton well each time we go out and compete like all of our athletic and activities do."

Just like the girls' team, the Warriors opened the season on March 19 at the Montgomery County Early Invitational before competing on March 22 at the North Point Invite.

The team will next run on April 1 at Fort Zumwalt East.

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# Optimism is high for Wright City track

By Jeff Stahlhut  
CORRESPONDENT

With a good number of returners from last season, the Wright City track team has reason for optimism heading into the spring season.

Co-head coach Fred Ross (Ryan Heyel is the other co-head coach), believes that if the large group of those coming back can continue to improve, the Wildcats will put out a strong team.

"We have a lot of athletes with varsity experience from last year," he said. "We are just looking for some of them to step up and improve from last year. We have added 12 athletes to the team who did not participate last year. These are some of the unknowns for this year."

Among those returning for the boys are Kaden Allison and Caden Cross, who compete in the 100 meter (m), 200m, 4x100m, and 4x200m, Keagen Loeffler (1600m and 3200m), Noak Boekman (400m and 4x400m), Mason Wendt (shot put), Henry Pohl (pole vault and javelin), and Patrick McGowen (hurdles).

On the girls side, returning are Lydia Clubb and Teagen Riley (100m, 200m, 4 x100m, and 4x200m), Elizabeth Riggs (100m and 300m hurdles, 400m, and 4x400m), Emma Staats (javelin), Kaedyn Johnson (pole vault), Lindsay Pettus (400m and 800m), Bailey Love (triple jump and long jump), Sadie Sehnert (shot put, discus, and javelin), Sara Sehnert (shot put and javelin), and Jahnyia Palmer (discus).

"Hopefully as the year goes along we can get everyone at a high competitive level," added Ross. "We have three practice meets to move people around in different events."

# Eagles ready to defend title

By Jeff Stahlhut  
CORRESPONDENT

Liberty Christian Eagles girls soccer coach Ken Dildine believes that he has a strong team this season, and as of March 25 the girls are off to a 2-1 start with wins over Crosspoint (8-1) and Christian Academy of Greater St. Louis (9-0).

"We have several players returning," said Dildine. "We did lose four key players due to graduation but the returning players and the new players coming in look to make another great run this year."

This season, Dildine believes the team can reach the same level of success as they did in 2023. "We did win the state tournament last year," he said. "And with the team we have there is a great chance we can do it again."

A good measuring stick for the Eagles is Christian Fellowship School, noted the Liberty Christian coach. "They won the Division I state championship last year. On March 21, we lost to them 3-2 with a penalty shot with about 30 seconds left to go in the game," said Dildine. "Though it was a disappointing loss for us we played them very well and look forward to playing them again in the next couple weeks."

The Eagles will next face Christian Fellowship School on Tuesday, April 16.

# Wright City ready to combat new challenges

By Jeff Stahlhut  
CORRESPONDENT

Coming off of a 2023 season in which Wright City baseball finished 15-8, coach Cody Bair expects the 2024 season to bring new challenges with a lot of new faces.

"My expectations of the returners is that they exhibit leadership and show resilience during tough times," said Bair. "With many new contributors to the team we will need them to maintain their composure and help the team grow and mature through the season so that we are playing our best at the end of the year."

Among the key returning players for the Wildcats are catcher Bryce Williams, first baseman Jake Orf, shortstop Zach Rodriguez, pitcher and utility player Micah Boeckman, and outfielder Duan McRoberts. Each of these returning players offers something positive to the team with high expectations, noted Bair. "Bryce is an All State catcher

that plays great defense and is a consistent hitter. Bryce also demonstrates excellent leadership qualities," he said. "My expectations of him are to keep the running game in check and support the pitching staff."

Orf, meanwhile, is a first-team all conference player that is a threat both offensively and defensively.

"For a junior, Jake shows great command in the batter's box and also plays at a high level defensively," said Bair. "My expectations are that Jake will produce at the plate and his defense will provide confidence to the infield to play loose."

Rodriguez will also be looked at as a valuable player and leader.

"My expectations are that Zach provides quality at bats and leads the team on the field," said Bair.

The Wildcats coach is hopeful that Boeckman can be a valuable asset in multiple ways.

"My expectations are that Micah will give us a chance to beat anyone whenever he takes the

mound as he is very competitive," said Bair. "He provides us with flexibility in the field as he is a versatile player. Micah also takes high quality at bats and puts a lot of pressure on defenses with his speed."

McRoberts, also an All-State player, can provide both speed and some power to the offense.

"Duan is an All-State outfielder who is an elite athlete that tracks down everything in the outfield," noted Bair. "He has a little bit of pop in his bat, and uses his legs to create chaos on the basepaths."

Bair added that there are no days off this season, and he expects his team to improve as the season progresses.

"The expectations for the team in general is to improve every day. They need to compete in every game by executing fundamentals," he said. "Every game for us is important as each team we face will present a unique challenge and we can not afford to overlook any of our opponents."

# Wright City soccer to rely on youth this spring

By Kelly Bowen  
CORRESPONDENT

The Wright City Wildcats girls soccer team are officially back on the field, but they might look a little bit different this year after adding several new players to their squad.

"We are a pretty young and raw team, so it will be fun as we go along here to see what we can do," Head Coach Jacob Wallace said.

Wallace is entering his second season as head coach, alongside assistant coach Alex Kohlfeld. Wallace notes that Kohlfeld has played a big role when it comes to the improvement the girls have accomplished through the years.

The team lost their first game 2-1 in extra time to St. Louis Christian, but Wallace is very expectant that their performance from the first game will lead to better success than last season.

In the 2022-23 season, the Wildcats had a record of 4-15, but Wallace states that this is a very different team with lots of new faces.

"I told the girls after their [first] game, based on the place that we are starting at, I am very optimistic that we will definitely improve on our win-loss record," Wallace said. "This is a new team, so we also can't look to compare ourselves to past seasons and each game will be a progression."

Wallace mentions they did lose a key defender from last season that helped direct and control the defense, so their focus will be on the defense.

"We knew this was going to be a focus and that proved to be true," Wallace said.

However, Wallace is confident with the class of freshmen that have joined the team and is looking forward to seeing their contributions.

"They are already contributing and I am very excited to see how they grow," Wallace said.

Before the beginning of the season, the Wildcats focused a lot of their time towards summer and preseason workouts in order to prepare. Now, their practices are a

little more refined and intentional with a key focus on the details.

"I've seen a lot more effort, intensity and drive and that's honestly one of the big reasons I'm excited about this year and to see where they go."

Of course, like any coach, Wallace would like to see an improvement in their record this year, but says that it is not the most important thing.

"I believe that the outcome is not always something you can control," Wallace said. "I believe what you can control is the process and trying to play your best game, trying to be the best version of yourself."

Despite entering their first game of the season with a loss, Wallace sees the potential and drive in this young team.

"I want us to feel like where we are at the end of the season is night and day compared to the beginning of the season," Wallace said. "I want us to constantly improve, constantly get better and to fight and let the wins and losses fall where they may."

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