



Warrenton ready for another successful season

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

After a historic 11-1 season, the Warrenton football team is anticipating even more success this year.

The Warriors return 17 starters and have about 68 players on their roster. They are currently very junior and senior heavy, which has allowed for many players to take on a leadership role.

“Starting off the summer was a lot different than the past because so many questions were answered and we knew a lot of our positions coming in,” Head Coach Jason Koper said.

Warrenton returned quite a few notable players. Sports Illustrated ranked Kadin Stroer in the top 40 Missouri linebackers. Mason Thompson ranked top 40 for wide receivers. Javon Jones was top 40 for defensive linemen and Austin Haas ranked in the top 50 for running backs.

The team also ranked seventh in preseason small school rankings.

The Warriors will have four senior captains this year: Austin Haas, Kadin Stroer, Peyton Dawson and Brandon Johnson, with Johnson moving into the quarterback position.

Koper noted that Johnson took over this role early in July and has done a great job executing the offense since.

While the off-season has looked a little different due to the amount of returners, Koper also noticed the vast difference in where they are at now skillwise.

Before their jamboree on Aug. 23 Koper said, “Here



Members of the Warrenton football team from front row, from left: Hayden Johnson, Kale Lehmkuhl, Isias Hernandez, Austin Haas, Bradley Tucker, William Ohmes, Austin Schellhase, Calleum Morris, Scott VanPool, Chase Shimer, Noah Molina, Deadrick Forrest and Jack White. Second row, from left: Connor Larkin, Larry Jones, Keegan Lehmkuhl, Peyton Dawson, Eli Schneider, Austin White, Brody Reel, Adrian Stevens, Austin VanPool, Juan Cardenas, Keegan Mellegaard, Owen Wright, Joseph McNeely, Matthew Kutsch, Shamad Henry, Kadin Stroer, Armon Nobles, Jake Mincher, Mason Thompson, Alex Wilson, Cole Meyer and Jay Sanders. Third row, from left: Coach Alex Vogt, Coach Jeremy Bowen, Coach John Jeskey, Jamarion Fulton, Jordan Lopez, Sklyer Thompson, Chance Klasing, Aiden Hockensmith, Hunter Joens, Cooper Cornell, Treyvian Guthrie, Carter Flake, Cody Morris, Markel Greene, Brandon Johnson, Isham Keeper, Marcus Greene, Evan Schenck, Taylor Anderson, Coach Jason Koper, Coach Brandon Molinari, Coach Michael Jaspering and Coach Marvin White. Fourth row, from left: Jeremiah Montgomery, Daniel McChristy, Ty Cook, Kyle Lauck, Antwain Pierce, Joseph Greene, Logan Nichols, Kaleb Lauck, Jake Kinney, William Hammond, Tyler Faerber, Javon Jones, Jack Morris, Brodey Meier, David Duree, Justin Hogan and Drake Brandiff. Kelly Bowen photo

we are not even Week 1 yet and I feel like in a lot of ways we are where we were Week 7 or Week 8 last year.”

Senior wide receiver Mason Thompson added the team’s mindset has shifted.

“In prior years, no one took it as seriously as we do now and no one brought it upon themselves to put in

the work we’ve put in the last couple years,” he said.

Thompson will be entering his third year on the varsity level and is looking to break the program records for career receiving yardage and receiving touchdowns, something he is close to surpassing.

A senior running back, Haas added the team’s bond and their physicality is what has lifted them.

“We look out for each other and we care more about the little stuff,” Haas said. “When we take care of the little stuff, the bigger stuff just comes with it.”

Koper went on to say all of his big playmakers from last year, along with some new additions have had great summers and they “haven’t really missed a beat.”

The Warriors plan on having the same mentality as last year by taking it one game at a time. The goal is to go 1-0 every week and eventually good things will happen.

“We talked about season goals as a team in May and we haven’t talked about them since. We just try to take one team at a time,” Koper said.

The team will start their season on Aug. 30 against Wright City at home. These two teams have never played each other.

“I’ve tried to eliminate that [rivalry] mindset and just focus on getting better as Warrenton Warriors,” Koper said. “It’s going to be a good game and it’s going to be good for our communities and I’m looking forward to establishing that.”

Warriors feeling confident and optimistic

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

The Warrenton softball team is entering their season with some notable differences that have left the team feeling both confident and optimistic.

The Warriors will have 18 players on the roster, which leaves room for more playing time. However, Head Coach Chad Berrey said they will have to focus on remaining healthy.

Berrey noted this is also the first time since 2018 the team has not had a returning all-state pitcher, but they do have a plethora of pitchers ready to step up and take on the role.

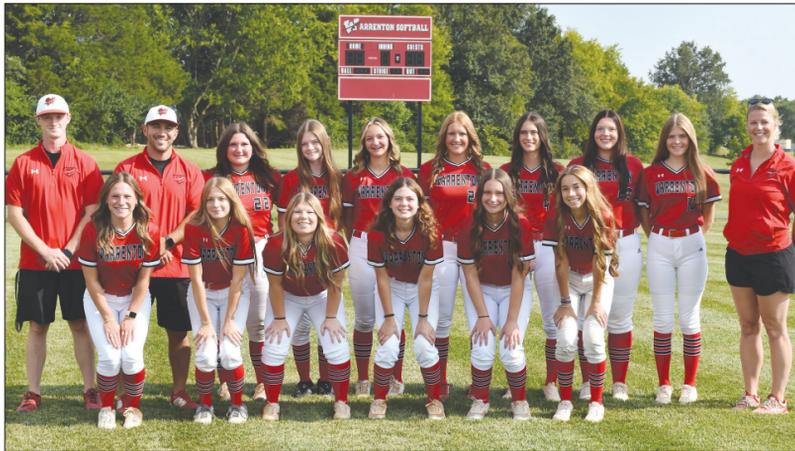
“Whether it’s Hannah Gibson, Austin Williams, Audrey Skillman or Natalie Bledsoe. I believe they’re going to keep us in games, so I have a lot of faith in them,” Berrey said.

On the defensive and offensive side, Berrey said this is probably the best he has ever coached since taking over the program seven years ago.

“We have speed with Kiera Daniel and Morgan Marschel. We have power with Lanzo, Caydence and Makayla Witthaus,” Berrey said. “It’s a very diverse lineup, one through nine.”

The team will be a mixture of freshman and experienced varsity players. Berrey said there will be a learning curve but he’s feeling hopeful.

“As long as the girls are having fun, the competition side of things are going to fall in play,”



Members of the Warrenton softball team are front row, from left: Morgan Marschel, Megan Geurin, Audrey Lanzone, Paige Campbell, Hannah Gibson and Adee Morgan. Back row, from left: Coach Matt Dodge, Coach Chad Berrey, Caydence Haverfield, Austin Williams, Brylen Shoults, Makayla Witthaus, Kiera Daniel, Audrey Skillman, Gracelyn Sittin and Coach Katelyn Berrey. Kelly Bowen photo

Berrey said.

The Warriors only have three seniors — Daniel, Marschel and Adee Morgan — all who are team captains.

The captains noted that they would like to bond with their teammates more outside of the sport and help include the junior varsity team.

All three captains touted their defense and the incoming freshman who have shown talent and progression. They added that their three hour practices might be tough, but it is helping them get better day by day.

With some big changes within the program, the team’s goals remain the same.

“I’ve said in the past, we just have to play the best ball in October and so that first step is to win conference,” Berrey said. “Second step is our dis-

tricts and trying to get a good seed.”

Warrenton is slated to

compete on Aug. 30 and 31 in the Union Softball Tournament.

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Wright City football moving in positive direction

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

After training all summer long, the Wright City football team is feeling confident heading into the season. The Wildcats lost a few key contributors, but also returned some big playmakers and added some freshmen that will contribute for the Wildcats.

Wright City returns both Mason Wendt and Duan McRoberts. Wendt was ranked top 50 for Missouri offensive linemen by Sports Illustrated and McRoberts was placed in the top 50 for running backs.

"We lost some pretty talented seniors last year, but our incoming seniors and juniors have done a really good job of stepping up," Head Coach Tyler Rickard said. "We've been able to fill some of those holes with talented guys that will be able to help us succeed."

One of those seniors was Joey Gendron, their starting quarterback from last season, but Rickard is planning on having both junior Dayton Humphreys and McRoberts alternate.

"We'll utilize both of those guys and play to their strengths and just find ways to get our playmakers a ball on offense," Rickard said.

McRoberts has played some quarterback in past years and feels confident in that spot as well as running back.

He noted the team's run game, offense and screens are areas where the team is excelling in. Wendt, a senior, added the team's leadership and coaching staff have shown to be some of the team's strengths too.

"Leadership is a big thing and we didn't win a lot of games my freshman year because of lack of leadership," Wendt said. "When the seniors stepped up my sophomore year, it carried over when it came to winning games. For me as a senior, we're looking to have that leadership again this year."

Rickard said the team's offense is a step ahead from where they were last year.

The Wildcats will be a predominantly older team, consisting of 59 players. This number has allowed players to get in more reps than past years and create competition that pushes the players to get better every day.

"I think we're doing a great job competition-wise," Rickard said. "We're able to split up in those groups,



Members of the Wright City football team are front row, from left: Dayton Humphreys, Duan McRoberts Jr., Nashaun Bares, Lukas Lee, AJ Serrano and Ben Gomez. Second row, from left: Kayden Spesier, Kayden Allison, TJ Hamel, Xavier Stufflebean, Terrence Love and Kayden McCurdy. Third row, from left: Quincy Rice, Jeremy Corey, Ryan Hanmer, Kris Darling and Omar Ghannoum. Fourth row, from left: Evan Baum, Benjamin Rodriguez, Antonio Cooper, Ayden Dile and Jonathan Cole. Fifth row, from left: Lavarious Green, Mason Hill, Kaiden Pilcher, Quinn Schnarre, Hunter Bohannan and Gavin McCord. Back row, from left: Grant Lehmen, Karsten Uhl, Mason Wendt and ZaMarion Rawlison. Kelly Bowen photo

so that's breeding great competition at each of those levels and pushing us to be a little further ahead than where we've been in years past."

The team will be rallying around the mentality to take it week by week and win each week. Rickard added he wants the team to be efficient, prepared and utilize practice and film time when it comes to each game.

"At the conclusion of the season, our record will be what it is at that point, but we want to focus on each week, one week at a time, and then let the future be what it is," Rickard said.

The Wildcats will play in their season opener against Warrenton on Aug. 30. Rickard said it will be a challenge, but a fun one that the team is preparing for.

New coach sets new expectations

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

The Wright City boys soccer team will be led by first year Head Coach Eric Deal. Last year, the Wildcats went 8-15 and lost in the first round of districts, a pretty common outcome from recent years.

However, after talking with the team, Deal has set new specific goals that he believes they can achieve. The first goal is to have a .63% winning percentage. If achieved, they would end with a 14-8 record.

The second goal is to make it past one round of districts, something that has not been done since the 2020 season.

The third and final goal is to score three goals every game and limit their opponents to one.

"There's games that I feel we should win and there's games that we may tie or lose. Then, there's also games that will be very difficult, but we're going to go out and try our best," Deal said.

Deal currently has 19 players on his varsity squad, with a good combination of forwards, midfielders and defenders.

The team is young with more than half of the players labeled as underclassmen and seven of them being freshman. However, Deal has six seniors that have been helping the younger players.

Deal does not have a concrete formation. Instead, he plans on adjusting their formation based on what other teams are doing.

"We really want to try

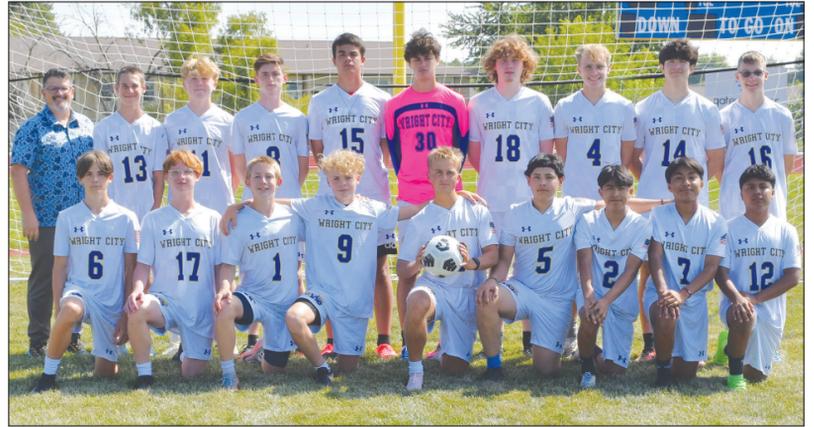
to prevent them from scoring on us and try to have a formation that allows us to score as well," Deal said.

Deal noted the focal point in practice has been team building. Specifically, passing and connecting the ball, knowing where to be on the field and players knowing their responsibilities.

Senior Midfielder Keagan Loeffler added that as the offseason progressed, he started to feel more and more confident with where the team is at.

"I like what Coach Deal is doing. I think it's helping us develop as a team," Loeffler said. "We have better drills and we're doing more on the ball stuff and getting our conditioning with ball touches."

Loeffler went on to



Members of the Wright City boys soccer team are front row, from left: Eddy Valencia, Johnny Salo Perez, Tony Cortes Valencia, Irving Chavira Alexis Munoz, Keagan Loeffler, AJ Wilber, Seth Potter, Brenan Shults and Thomas Wilgus. Back row, from left: Coach Eric Deal, Andrew Staats, Jonathan Windmann, Andrew Hunn, Aaron Simon, Drew Elsenrath, Joseph Hall, Patrick McGowan, Joseph Contreras and Hunter Shoultz. Kelly Bowen photo

say that he would like to make the all-district team as well as achieving those three team goals. However, he ultimately wants to score as much as he can and be a role model for the younger

guys on the team. "We have a lot of senior leadership and we've been playing together since freshman year. That's kind of the core of the team," Loeffler said. The Wildcats will open

up their season at home Sept. 3 at 4 p.m.

"I'm looking forward to the season," Deal said. "I hope we do well and everyone stays healthy on both our team and everyone else's team."



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Wright City relying on senior leadership as strong nucleus is back

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

The Wright City softball team is entering its season with seven seniors on the roster. With 24 girls and six or seven players each all being in the same grade level, seniors Paige Campbell and Sophie Wegrzyn credited the leadership as their biggest strength.

"We expect to have very good leadership which really transitions to helping the new girls and helping the program come up, which is the part that I am very excited about," Head Coach Fred Ross said.

With Ross recovering from a hip replacement, the seniors noted that this has allowed upperclassmen to take on that leadership role.

"When the [underclassmen] have any questions, they ask us and the upperclassmen have also been very helpful and we basically make sure everyone's on task and make sure we're being good role models," Campbell said.

Wegrzyn noted their communication on and off the field has also been an asset, along with the team's chemistry.

"I feel confident and I feel like our varsity team is going to be pretty good this year," Wegrzyn said.

Ross noted that the team has five returning starters. In addition, the Wildcats currently have a few girls that are very versatile and can play multiple different positions. Ross added this is handy since pitcher and third baseman, Lorelai Kelner, is currently out for three to five weeks due to an injury.

"Right now, we're really getting through our drills and fundamentals and we have five or six girls that play club ball and three or four girls that can play multiple positions," Ross said. "I think that's going to make us flexible and fill out some of these other positions."

The team has been focusing on their defense and moving some people around in other areas. Currently, the squad has three open positions.

"I don't know who we're going to play there yet, so we still have some competition until Bloomfield," Ross said.

Ross added that the team is always striving to have a winning record, as well as feeling prepared going into districts. He said that their conference is tough, but he would like to see them finish in the upper third of those rankings.

With many of those seven seniors having been with Ross for four



Members of the Wright City softball team front row, from left: Hailey Swor, Mckenzie Hollaway, Torrie Perry, Cheyenne Mayes, Alana Head, Lydia Clubb and Ava Swaringen. Middle row, from left: Isabela Serrano, Sadie Sehnert, Lillian Wedeiermier, Annalynn Adams, Joshlyn Hawn, Lorelai Kelner, Lillian Brown, Bailey Love and Paige Rees. Back row, from left: Kaedence Teubner, Emma Manner, Allison Thomas, Camille Gardner, Aariah Robertson, Alyvia Mikus, Sophia Wegrzyn and Jolee Lockhart. Kelly Bowen photo

years now, he wants to push them to be better than last year, while also having fun.

In addition, Ross said this group could be the first group where the team has been an all-academic state team for four years in a row. He credited the girls for both excelling in academics and athletics.

"I'm excited and they're excited and hopefully we'll open up with

some good competition," Ross said.

The Wildcats will open up their season with the

Lady Pirate Leadoff Classic on Saturday, Aug. 31.

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Members of the Wright City girls golf team are front row, from left: Bailey Padgett, Zucely Uribe and Trinity Dewitt. Back row, from left: Coach Shannon Wells, Abby Schanuel, Riley Schaefer, Morgan Nute and Alexa Robertson. Kelly Bowen photo



Members of the Warrenton girls golf team from front row, from left: Sierra Foley, Jenna Marschel, Haley Rausch, Charlee Woodside-Richardson and Annabel Kisslinger. Back row, from left: Lily Miles, Adalyn Rader, Paige Palmer, Charlee Kersting, Kaitlyn Schulze and Abigail Williams. Kelly Bowen photo

State qualifier returns for Wildcats

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

The Wright City girls golf team returns with a close-knit team made up of seven golfers. Four girls return to the team and three sophomores are joining the Wildcats as newcomers.

"I got three new girls who have never played before, but they are picking up the game pretty quickly which is phenomenal," Head Coach Shannon Wells said.

One of the returners is sophomore Morgan Nute who accomplished a fourth-place finish at the Class 2 state golf meet as only a freshman. This year, Nute returns and Wells has high hopes for the promising golfer.

"Her goal is to qualify in the top 10 again like she did last year and if she does better than that, that's the cherry on top," Wells said. "[The team] is excited for Morgan and they want to help her out as best they can."

Unlike last year, the team has been able to hold most of their practices outside and get more swings in be-

fore their season starts, which has benefited the team.

The Wildcats have been focusing on a multitude of things during practices. Chipping and putting have been two main focuses due to Wells' belief that a golfer can really minimize strokes off their game when they have a chip shot or they can easily recover if they hit a bad drive.

In addition, the Wildcats, especially the newcomers, are working on ironing out their swings and learning some of the game rules.

Wells noted that much like his previous teams, this team works together seamlessly despite the varying levels of experience.

Wells said the team's strengths are leadership, coachability and working together.

"I really like working with these girls and they get along very well and they're all working with each other to help one another improve," Wells said.

The Wright City golf team is slated to open the season Friday, Aug. 30 at Boonville.

Warrenton doubles in numbers

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

After having six girls on the roster last year, the Warrenton girls golf program is coming into the season with now 11, potentially 12 golfers, nearly doubling their size in just one year.

Head Coach Kelly Anderson and returners from last season spent the summer recruiting new players to join the team. Anderson also taught physical education in summer school and was able to create interest there.

The Warriors return four players from last year. All four are seniors and have been playing with each other since their freshman year.

Senior Haley Rausch said, "It's nice to see the program growing. I like to see that it's expanding and more people are taking interest in the sport."

The team comes with a mixture of experienced golfers and golfers who are currently learning the game.

In practice, the Warriors have been focusing on their short game, such as chipping and putting, to help lower their scores.

Anderson noted that many of the girls are showing improvement around the green and the returners have come back with more confidence.

"The varsity girls are coming back with a lot of confidence," Anderson said. "Instead of worrying about their score, they're worrying about trying to get some swings under their belts."

With Merrick Owens, a key contributor for the team last season, graduated, Anderson will be looking for Rausch and Jenna Marschel to take on that leadership role that Owens filled.

Anderson added that she's seen both of the seniors step up and help the underclassmen with the basics.

"We're a big, strong team and we work well together. Teamwork is definitely a big thing for us this year and something that we're really good at," Rausch said.

Marschel added that this season she wants to "stay focused, help my teammates and go for all-conference."

The Warriors placed in the middle of the conference last season. With some new additions, Anderson is hoping to place a little bit higher this year and have some girls make the all-conference team.

"I think with the seniors and their leadership, we should be able to do that," Anderson said. "It'd be nice to finish in the top three."

The Warrenton girls golf team will play their first game at the Warrenton Golf Course on Friday, Aug. 30 at 2:30 p.m.

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Warriors eager to build on .500 season this fall

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

After having a .500 record last year, the Warrenton boys soccer team is striving for more. The Warriors went 11-11 and lost in their first round of districts.

Despite losing a couple key players, Head Coach John Schulte is feeling confident with his current team.

"When you talk about our goalie and our midfield, they were both tremendous players," Schulte said. "Replacing them is not going to be easy, but there are a bunch of guys that are ready to set up and give it everything they got."

Currently, Schulte has Mark Jaspering in the net replacing graduate Owen Thompson. Jaspering played a couple of games with varsity last season and went 2-0 while playing goalie.

"He's been working hard, so we're looking for good things from him," Schulte said.

Due to a high number of forwards and midfielders, the team is looking to play a 3-4-2-1 formation with one key forward up top. Schulte is hoping the team will play off of that top striker to create more offensive chances.

With this new formation, the team has been focusing on making diagonal runs and hitting through balls to generate more offensive play.

"We've been working on what we need to do with the ball when we get it as far as finding people and not making things too complicated," Schulte said. "We're trying to make things simple and I think they are picking up on it and doing a really great job with it."

In addition to working on simple play on the field, Schulte hopes to instill that same simple mindset when it comes to day by day work.

"We're always about improving every single day. Our win-loss is important but I think if



Members of the Warrenton boys soccer team are front row, from left: Cameron Harris, Evan Donovan, Hudson Kieffer, Nolan Donovan, Brayden Brown and Carson Venneman. Middle row, from left: Riley McGee, Tyler Scruggs, James Street, Ken Le, Gavin Inman, Logan Daehnke and Caleb Hackmann. Back row, from left: Coach Jake Brown, Coach John Schulte, Gavin Thompson, Iain Young, Teegan Williams, Mark Jaspweing, Isaac Wagner, Connor Claspille, Jeremiah Loeffler. Kelly Bowen photo

we come out, play our style and play good soccer, then we're going to get the wins," Schulte said.

Schulte is hoping to see the boys win 13 to 14 games this season, but again, he mostly wants to see them improve.

He noted that last year the team really started to play soccer outside of practices and games which has contributed to their growth and benefited them in games.

"That's what it's all about is having fun with it and learn-

ing new things and trying new moves," Schulte said. "I think it really helped them out just being together as a unit and playing a lot in the offseason," Schulte said.

The Warriors start their season on Aug. 30.

Warrenton cross country enter season with diverse set of runners

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

The Warrenton boys and girls cross country teams feature a mix of returners and newcomers. With 22 runners on the roster, a significant increase from last season, the teams are a combination of upperclassmen and underclassmen and experienced runners from inexperienced runners.

"Some kids are looking pretty good and you know others didn't do anything over the summer, but this is a sport where you just got to be tough and I've seen a lot of toughness," Head Coach Jeremy Collins said.

The Warriors lost quite a few seniors from last season, some of whom were big leaders on the team that helped motivate underclassmen.

Despite losing some experience, Collins noted that many runners have been stepping up and filling that leadership role.

"The seniors that we have this year, they were good friends with [the

seniors from last year] and so they just kind of followed their example," Collins said.

Collins named Noah Cline, Jacob Beckemeyer and Jady Hopper as runners who have been taking on that role.

The Warriors have completed two weeks of practices and are focusing on building a base gain in distance and trying to slowly get into a good race pace.

Collins noted it can be difficult to figure out a good pace when some of the team might not be as experienced as others.

"We have some that have a good feel and know what to do and then we have people that have never ran a 5K," Collins said. "Running and just going out and doing the 5K compared to actually racing is also totally different."

Collins is feeling optimistic with his crew this season and after seeing how tough the individual runners can be and how much effort they put in, he thinks there is potential that both teams can



Members of the Warrenton boys and girls cross country team are front row, from left: Alexis Ruff, Melanie Guerrero, Nova Weekly, Sophie Bennet, Mailia Hopper, Abigail Kackley, Taryn Sharp, Jady Hopper and Madeline Schoppenhorst. Back row, from left: Coach Jeremy Collins, Jonathan Sweitzer, Matt Craven, Dylan Coleman, Noah Cline, Trenton Hummel, Jacob Beckemeyer, Korben Johnson, Ken Le, Noah Joens and Coach Mike Shaw. Kelly Bowen photo

make it to state.

"Obviously, it'll take a lot of hard work, but if you're just tough and willing to put the time and effort, you can make a lot of improvement throughout the season," Collins said.

Collins also has high hopes for sophomore Alexis Ruff, who qualified for state last year.

"She qualified last year as a freshman, so we're

hoping that she has a good season and can make it back to the state meet," Collins said.

Collins expects some additional runners to qualify for the state meet that were close to making it last year as well.

The Warrenton boys and girls cross country team will race in their first meet on Aug. 30 at the Mexico Invitational.

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Warrenton hoping to incorporate new culture

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

With one year as head coach under her belt, Kayla Nelson is building a program that embodies ACE – attitude, communication and effort.

After skill level, Nelson looked for these three components during try-outs to help build that specific team culture.

“I would like to win more than we won last year and with this group, it’s totally doable,” Nelson said. “After that, just building something and continuing to build a culture here with all these girls.”

The Warriors went 9-21-1 last season. However, junior Lila Bartley noted the team lost very few seniors and are mostly the same team, which has allowed them to know early on what they need to fix.

The Warriors currently have 11 players on the varsity roster. There are three players that are new to the team and eight are returners. Six girls are seniors, four are juniors and there



Members of the Warrenton girls volleyball team are front row, from left: Lila Bartley, Erin Klasing, Meredith Donovan, Emma Eskew and Izzy Lombardo. Back row, from left: Avery Shaw, Macey Millie, Zoe Duncan, Chandler Blondin and Micheal Thomas. Kelly Bowen photo

Besides building a team culture and winning some more games, Bartley and senior Chandler Blondin both want to compete for the conference title.

“I think we have a lot of experience from last year and looking at what we have now, it’s definitely doable,” Blondin said.

Blondin credited the front row as one of the team’s strengths and noted that the team has a very good IQ on what to do and when to do it.

Currently, the team has been focusing on fine tuning their service balls and working on their defense. Blondin added the team has been working on faster tempo balls to help run their offense at a different pace.

Nelson is looking forward to seeing this team develop and continuing to incorporate their team values every single day.

“These girls are worth watching,” Nelson said.

The Warriors will open up their first game of the season at home on Friday, Aug. 30 at 6 p.m.

is one freshman.

“They are a close knit group of girls, so they all get along and communicate with each other easily,” Nelson said. “Obviously, they’re high school girls so they get upset with each other, but they always know how to talk it out.”

Nelson added that despite not many changes to the roster, she was plan-

ning on changing some of her coaching tactics.

“My approach to coaching this year is very different. My positivity and being able to talk to the girls is better this year,” Nelson said. “I think we understand each other a bit more and I’m able to get my point across and they understand what I’m saying and vice versa.”



Members of the Wright City boys and girls cross country team are front row, from left: James Guinn, Lindsay Pettus, Ada Ferrell and Cade Hornberger. Back row, from left: Marshall Matz, Jacob Reash, Dennis Novel and Matthew Johnston. Kelly Bowen photo

'Cats low on numbers, but big on family

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

The Wright City boys and girls cross country teams might be a little low on numbers, but their family dynamic would have you thinking otherwise.

With two girls and six boys, interim Head Coach David Schnell said he feels good about entering the season, noting it was a great group of kids who are motivated.

Schnell will be taking over the head coaching position until the end of August due to Head Coach Ryan Heyel being away for obligations to the United States Army.

Just like Heyel, Schnell has been instilling the same mentality in the team that the family aspect comes first and athletics will follow.

“It’s a small group and it’s a very tight-knit group,” Schnell said. “They really enjoy those easy runs together when they can hang out, so that family aspect is really present in this group.”

The Wildcats return some of their top performers, including Lindsay Pettus, Ada Ferrell, Cade Hornberger and Matthew Johnston.

Schnell believes both Pettus and Ferrell have the key components to qualify for the state meet at the end of the year. He also noted that Johnston is their top returner and will set the pace for the team.

Pettus added that she wants to improve her times this year, but also better her mentality.

“I catch myself saying like, ‘oh you can stop, you’ll be fine,’ but I want to get rid of that mentality so I can do my best,” Pettus said.

Johnston, who is only a sophomore, would like to slowly see his progression.

“The top 30 goes to state and last year I got 90, so I’m looking to get top 60 and see that minor improvement,” Johnston said.

Schnell went on to say that Hornberger has shown huge improvement since last year.

“He’s had a fantastic summer and he’s been showing huge strides compared to his times last year, so I think he will do some really exciting things,” Schnell said.

The team has added three freshmen boys to the roster, allowing for a good mixture of upperclassmen and underclassmen.

“We have a lot of talent on the team and some kids that are just really excited to run cross country,” Schnell said.

The team has been honing in on building up their distance and stamina, while also working on leg turnover and speed.

“We want that speed to be sticking around for the whole race rather than just the shorter distance,” Schnell said.

The Wright City boys team will start their season at the Van-Far Invite on Sept. 9. The girls will begin on Sept. 14 at the Linn Invitational.

Wright City enters new era under new coach

By Kelly Bowen
STAFF WRITER

With only three varsity returners, new Head Coach Shannon Brunnett will be looking to build the Wright City girls volleyball program this season.

The team currently rosters 10 girls on varsity, with eight of those players being underclassmen.

Senior Hailie Davis and junior Claire Williams noted the team’s biggest asset is being a young team.

“Everybody is eager to learn and we have good communication and everybody has a good attitude,” Williams said.

Brunnett added the team is very aggressive and they are currently working on controlling that and honing it in.

“I have players that are willing to hurt themselves to get the ball, which maybe isn’t ideal, but it’s going to play out well when it comes to not letting balls drop,” Brunnett said.

Brunnett will be entering her first season as head coach and would like to see the team learn and grow. In addition, since they are a younger squad, she wants the team to be able to listen to her as a coach and take feedback.

The team went 2-20



Members of the Wright City volleyball team front row, from left: Kyndall Fox, Zola Jones, Brook Henson, Josephine Grueneberg and Marli Burkhardt. Back row, from left: Hailie Davis, Kendra Pftzinger, Claire Williams, Hailey Bilham and Jaiden Walch. Kelly Bowen photo

last season, but Davis is feeling confident with what she has seen so far.

Brunnett added that the new additions are very talented and she is looking forward to watching them grow, not only throughout the

season, but through the years as well.

“For me, it’s more so looking at the future and seeing that I have all these girls that are all going to be the same age,” Brunnett said. “There’s going to be a lot of com-

petition going forward to fight for their spots.”

With less than half of the team being varsity returners, the team has been working on adjusting to a faster-paced game and being able to remain consistent.

The team spent the summer preparing for the season by attending open gyms and participating in scrimmages. Davis noted that attendance was good throughout the summer.

From the beginning of summer to now, Brunnett has seen an immense improvement.

“Overall, how they work together has improved so much and that’s what this year is all about is figuring out how we’re going to work together and make cohesive team plays on the court,” Brunnett said.

The Wright City volleyball program is slated to begin on Aug. 31 at the Hillsboro Invitational.

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