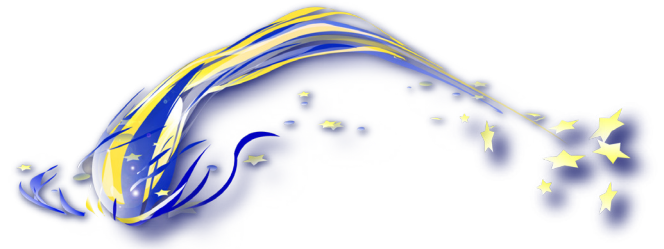




Chamois Pages 3B-5B



Linn Pages 6B-13B



Fatima Pages 14B-23B



2024 SPRING
SPORTS
GUIDE

WEDNESDAY,
MAR. 20, 2024
PAGES 1B-20B

OSAGE COUNTY
Unterrified Democrat

Perspective: *Hectic Winter Gives Way to Uncertain Spring*

Sometimes, life appears vindictive, like an ex who won't accept the fact you've moved on to something else. Not that I've "moved on," but admittedly, there are days when living in a cave sounds appealing.

Many of you know that I needed surgery to repair the rotator cuff in my right shoulder in mid-2022. Aside from a few aches and pains, I'm good to go with that one.

Even then, however, my doctor was aware of the ongoing pain in my left shoulder. I knew it was a matter of time before something went wrong because I take a ton of photos. There's an inherent hazard in that, which I accepted long ago. However, at some point, you reach your body's limit.

After experiencing several incidents through the fall season, I did my best to mitigate — primarily the pain but also preventing large-scale damage — but that only went so far.

At the Harrisburg tournament on Jan. 27, Linn played back-to-back boys and girls games. I like that situation because I can catch both teams during one trip.

In the third quarter of the boys' game, I lifted the camera, and my left arm gave out, accompanied by a bolt of pain from the shoulder to my wrist. It's times like this I wish I was a highly paid athlete with access to the best trainers and equipment.

Instead, I sat down and assessed the situation. Repeating the process would be a mistake; I knew that.

I sat alone, nursing my shoulder and taking photos from a seated position. I'm a big guy, so trying to brace my arm against my gut probably made me look like a weird inverted stork (at least, that's what came to mind) or maybe an iteration of the "Little Teapot" song.

At the time, I knew something was very wrong, but of course, I'm not a medical doctor, though I've pretended to be one in arguments with my kids.

I was covering Fatima girls' soccer when I hurt my right shoulder. During that experience, I felt something pop. In the latter case, while I did not hear it, there was no doubt something was no longer cooperating.

That led me to schedule an appointment with the doctor who repaired the first injury. In the meantime, unlike the first incident, I filed for Workers' Compensation since this happened during my duties. I should have done that the first time, but alas, you live and learn.

However, I hadn't utilized this coverage in my career, so my knowledge of the system was virtually nonexistent.

After seeing my doctor and scheduling an MRI, I went through the insurance process, and it was interesting, if

not downright aggravating.

I learned that Missouri is a direct medical state for such occurrences. That means WC changed my doctor and canceled the MRI. As my grandma liked to say, I changed horses mid-stream.

In relative terms, I lost two weeks between the scheduled MRI and the new terms under Workers' Compensation.

I suppose I was the only guy in my former doctor's office who thought that was odd. Everyone else seemed to accept it as a matter of course.

What annoyed me most was the fact that I was not allowed to take any heavy-duty pain meds because it might distort the MRI results. Ice and Tylenol helped a little, but I would have preferred a morphine drip in my bedroom.

Regardless, the world kept moving; stories and sporting events continued to arise and needed to be covered.

I did what I could with the understanding that I had to take it easy, which has never been my strong suit.

Since joining the media in 1997, I've pushed myself as hard as possible to ensure quality coverage and photos every week. I feel intrinsically guilty if I can't do that, but I'm working hard to accept the situation.

My new doctor is pretty straightforward and confident. He forbade my shooting photos until we reach a resolution, which could be anything from rehab to PT to surgery, depending on the MRI results.

Here's the thing about MRI tubes: they're tiny for a big guy like me. However, several years ago, I developed a strategy for handling not only the pressure of being squeezed like a giant foot into a shoe designed for a little person but also being on my back for an extended period.

How many of you are comfortable lying on your back? For years, I experienced the sensation of falling, so I have never been a fan. Once I learned how to handle it, I found myself utilizing it only when necessary.

The MRI had an element I'd never experienced before: technicians and a doctor injected a dye into the socket to produce a better view of the damage.

I'm a stoic individual and have accepted pain as my constant companion for most of my life. It's amusing sometimes to think that I've been in a relationship with pain longer than any person except my mother.

Staff members were impressed that I lay there like a wet blanket as they dug around and injected me with three needles of varying sizes.

Truthfully, that part wasn't the worst. After being crammed into the tube,

I set my mind on drift mode, letting thoughts flow through meditatively. The last time, I crafted a short story in the tube; this time, probably because of the dye procedure, I had trouble following threads and felt every muscle in my body (yes, I have a few) object.

MRI units are very loud, and I had headphones pumping Metallica directly into my brain, so I'm sure there were elements beyond my sensory capabilities. Still, I found it almost laughable when the technician asked me to stop moving.

I honestly didn't feel anything move and I did my level best to remain still because I know how challenging it can be to record quality images.

When I told her I wasn't moving, only breathing, I think she admonished me to "breathe softer," but I could be mistaken because of the noise and stress of the situation. However, I tried to limit the expansion of my torso to expedite the process.

Before long, I could feel myself starting to panic because I wasn't taking in enough oxygen, or that's how it felt, like sucking air through a straw.

I'm sure the process took less time than it felt, and now I'm armed with a CD containing images my doctor will have to interpret.

For now, the spring season is uncertain in terms of my ability to take photos. I genuinely hope we can quickly address the issue and I can return to doing what I love.

Though I have only taken a few photos with my phone at practices, I have spoken to all the coaches and made a few arrangements for season photos.

At Chamois, Coach John Leach returns with Assistant Coach Ethan Hagenhoff. They once again have the task of preparing athletes for track without facilities, and they do it well. I'm excited to see the up-and-coming athletes

perform this season.

Linn has a new head track coach, Jennifer Bish, who coached JH basketball and is eager to get going. She has a lot of experience and hopes to lead the Wildcats to a successful year with the help of Robyn Baker, Braden Ham, and Adam Maassen.

Golf coach Ryan Rost is back with two state-level seniors, a year removed from a fourth-place team finish at state. Though he has new golfers, Rost is confident the team will be competitive.

Likewise, returning baseball coach Dan Campbell is excited about this spring's late-season prospects. The team is relatively young, but five seniors should help balance things.

Fatima baseball coach Tyler VanGerpen is in a similar situation as a slew of seniors graduated last year. He explains how he plans to approach the season to get everyone experience. Be sure to check it out.

Veteran track coach Marc Bridges has a robust roster and will have help from assistant coach Cassidy Roling (throwers and pole-vaulters) as second-year JH coach James Vignola is eager to see how his kids do. He's being helped by his wife, Tara (jumpers), a Fatima graduate, and his brother, Joey.

On the soccer field, the Lady Comets return under coaches Dustin Cox and Sami Jo Freeman, who believe the sky's the limit this year.

Fatima golf coach Scott Kilgore has one returning senior and a mix of new and experienced players. He looks forward to a solid season.

Spring sports are ready to break open, with games and meets underway. I hope you enjoy the guide to our teams and that you will continue to support Osage County sports.

We'll present a look at the parochial teams in an upcoming issue of the UD.

See you at the game. NAJ

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Leach excited about track possibilities

Veteran Chamois track coach John Leach is pleased with progress from last season and believes his athletes have solid possibilities for a late run.

"I think we'll be much better than last year just because we're a year older and stronger," he said. "I feel that we could push through from districts to sectionals to state. We've got some individuals improving in everything they're doing. It's something that could turn into a great year. Just because we don't go to state doesn't mean it's not a good year; a trip to state would be icing on the cake."

Chamois seniors Madeline Gerloff (jumps, sprints, distance) and Eevie Halbert (sprints, hurdles, javelin) will lead the team.

"Madeline didn't want to run the two-mile event last year but finally decided to start doing it," said Leach. "She's gonna start doing that early so she can get to peak shape by districts. I know she's capable of running a mid-12:00, and I'm excited to watch her get better."

Halbert holds the high school girls' record in the javelin and hopes to break it. "She's a solid thrower and will continue to work on her mechanics," said Leach. "Eevie has a great attitude and tries hard at everything she does."

JUNIORS

Landon Northway (throws) is one of the team's hardest-working athletes. "He gets everything out of his ability," said Leach. "Landon enjoys being part of the team, and I hope he sets a lot of PRs this year."

Caleb Keilholz (mids, distance, throws, 3200m relay) is perhaps the team's strongest athlete. "He's cut to the max because he's been lifting four days a week the entire year," said Leach. "He's a model kid. He may not like what I tell him to do, but he never complains. I've got an excellent rapport with him, and



he's pushing himself as hard as ever. I think he'll have a fantastic season."

Bill Kirsch (sprints, mids, 3200m relay) is on course to succeed in his events. "He's doing well and running distance most of the time to get in shape," said Leach. "He and the other relay runners have a great camaraderie. They push each other to run as hard as possible and have a lot of respect for each other."

Dawson Brandt (1600, disc, 3200m relay alternate) has shown a significant increase in strength. Like Keilholz, he's been lifting weights a lot. "I think he'll do very well all year in the discus," said Leach. "He's a great kid who works hard and doesn't have a negative word to say."

SOPHOMORES

Max McKague (TJ, disc, javelin, 3200m relay) is another year-round weight-conditioning participant with a lot of talent. "Max has already thrown a 93 in disc practice, so I think he's going to have a great season," Leach noted.

See **PIRATES TRACK** on Page 5B

Chamois JH track has mostly eighth-grade athletes

Chamois JH track coach John Leach's squad is comprised of mostly eighth-graders returning with a goal of doing well at the Show-Me Conference meet.

"As a group, there's a lot of talent here," said Leach. "With all our experience, I think we'll score a lot more points individually than people expect. We're not going to win meets with our limited numbers, but individually, I look forward to seeing how well these kids can do at the conference meet."

Eighth-graders are Victor Slack (throws), Raigen Cramer (sprints, 800m relay), Levi Weed (HJ, sprints, mids, 800m relay), Grayson Gerloff (sprints, mids, LJ, 800m relay), Erica Bledsoe (throws, 800m relay), Braden Cotton

(sprints, throws, 800m relay), Ben Ruggie (throws).

Leach noted that Cotton has a realistic opportunity to break the JH discus record of 121 feet, as he's already thrown more than 130 feet in practice. Ruggie, in his first year as a thrower, is nearing 100 feet in practice, so Leach is happy with the progress.

Carly Schollmeyer (mids, 800m relay, TJ) is the lone seventh-grader, and sixth-grader Jaelyn Thoenen (mids, 800m relay, LJ) rounds out the squad.

"I'm very excited to see all these athletes turn their hard work in practice into success during meets," said Leach. "We're looking forward to a great season."

Chamois High School 2024 Boys Track and Field Schedule Varsity



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/19	St. James Open (St James, MO)	Neutral	
3/22	New Bloomfield Wildcat Relays (New Bloomfield, MO)	Neutral	
3/28	2024 Linn HS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
4/2	Eugene HS Track Meet (Eugene, MO)	Neutral	
4/9	Vienna Meet (Vienna, MO)	Away	
4/13	Russellville Meet (Russellville, MO)	Away	
4/15	2024 Linn HS/MS Osage-Maries Challenge (Belle, Chamois, Linn, Vienna) (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
4/17	Guy Rush Memorial Track Meet (California, MO)	Away	
4/22	Hermann Invitational (Hermann, MO)	Neutral	
4/25	Show Me Conference Meet (Mokane, MO)	Away	
5/4	Class 1 District 2 Tournament (New Haven, MO)	Neutral	

Chamois High School 2024 Girls Track and Field Schedule Varsity



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/19	St. James Open (St James, MO)	Neutral	
3/22	New Bloomfield Wildcat Relays (New Bloomfield, MO)	Neutral	
3/28	2024 Linn HS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
4/2	Eugene HS Track Meet (Eugene, MO)	Neutral	
4/6	Fatima Meet (Westphalia, MO)	Away	
4/9	Vienna Meet (Vienna, MO)	Away	
4/13	Russellville Meet (Russellville, MO)	Away	
4/15	2024 Linn HS/MS Osage-Maries Challenge (Belle, Chamois, Linn, Vienna) (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
4/22	Hermann Invitational (Hermann, MO)	Neutral	
4/25	Show Me Conference Meet (Mokane, MO)	Away	
5/4	Class 1 District 2 Tournament (New Haven, MO)	Neutral	

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Chamois JH volleyball has eight players

Chamois Junior High has eight players on the spring volleyball team, which is coached by Sam Mitchem and Erin Gerloff.

Eighth-graders Erica Bledsoe, Raigen Cramer, and Nora Wideman return to lead the team.

Cramer played on the A team last season and brings experience and confidence to her role as a middle hitter and a team captain. Bledsoe led the B team in kills last year and looks to make an impact as an outside hitter again this year. Wideman has converted from an outside hitter to a middle hitter for the season and has done a great job adjusting.

“All three are leading the team well, with great attitudes, hustle, and skills,” said Coach Gerloff.

Seventh-graders are Dixee Powers, Faith Mitchem, and Carly Schollmeyer. Powers is playing libero this year, which is a change from the setter last season. “She’s been doing a great job grasping the concept of a libero,” said Mitchem. “Faith is improving every day, most noticeably in her serves.

Carly is our other team captain and is a great all-around presence. She is a quiet leader and a very consistent player. She is our other setter and also keeps everyone else on track. She has an impressive understanding of our rotations for a seventh grader.”

Sixth-graders Jaelyn Thoenen and Kiera Powers will have an impact this year. “Jaelyn is a starting outside hitter and seems to have natural athletic ability. She has been passing, serving, and hitting consistently for her first year,” said Gerloff. “Kiera has stepped in as our other setter and is getting the hang of the job. Our sixth-graders have fit in nicely with the group, and it’s really a fun team to be around.”

Chamois has a short but intense season — five games and one tournament — packed into two weeks.

“Even though we’re only fielding one team, each player is allowed four sets per night, so we’ve been maximizing playing time as much as possible,” said Mitchem and Gerloff. “We’re excited for a great season!”

Chamois High School 2023 Girls Volleyball Schedule Junior High, 8th Grade, 7th Grade



Date	Opponent	Location	Levels	Time
3/7	Eugene (Eugene, MO)	Away	8th, 7th	5:00 PM
3/8	Eugene (Eugene, MO)	Away	8th, 7th	5:00 PM
3/12	Bland Middle (Bland, MO)	Away	JH	5:30 PM
3/14	Hermann	Home	8th, 7th	5:30 PM
3/16	Bland Middle School A Team Tournament (Bland, MO)	Away	8th	
3/19	New Haven	Home	8th, 7th	5:30 PM
3/21	Eugene	Home	8th, 7th	5:00 PM

Chamois High School 2024 Boys Track and Field Schedule Junior High



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/18	2024 MS Linn Open (Quad) (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
3/23	Fatima Meet (Westphalia, MO)	Away	
3/26	Eugene JH Track Meet (Eugene, MO)	Neutral	
4/1	Vienna Meet (Vienna, MO)	Away	
4/8	St. James Invitational (St James, MO)	Neutral	
4/10	South Callaway MS Invitational (Mokane, MO)	Away	
4/15	2024 Linn HS/MS Osage-Maries Challenge (Belle, Chamois, Linn, Vienna) (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
4/18	2024 Linn MS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
4/26	Show Me Conference Meet (Linn, MO)	Away	
4/30	New Haven Tri-Meet (New Haven, MO)	Neutral	

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Pirates track • from page 3B

Evert Mehmert (sprints, mids, javelin) offers a quiet, reserved exterior, but he's one of the most determined athletes on the team. "I think he's gonna surprise everybody with a lot of PRs this year, and he's working hard," said Leach. "He gives everything he has and will give you honest work."

Jaxon Wuelling (sprints, mids, 3200m relay) is working hard in the distance events because of Keilholz. "He's



changed his attitude about running and is right behind Caleb in practice," said Leach. "He wanted to run distance to get in shape. So I told him if he wanted to run distance to go chase Caleb down; he's busted his butt so far in practice."

Kaden Wuelling (sprints, hurdles, 3200m relay) has come into his own. "He had a good cross-country season, and he's stronger and faster," said Leach. "He may do a little bit of everything by the end of the year to help the team."

Savanah Sieg (throws) is a strong young lady with high aspirations. "She's gained a year of high school experience, and she's starting to understand a little bit more, and the disc is spinning better."

FRESHMEN

Emma Mehmert (sprints, mids) primarily runs shorter distances, but Leach said she may take on longer races. "Her work ethic is outstanding, and she never grumbles about what we do in practice," said Leach. "She's got a ton of potential. Emma was a cross-country runner and ran a 5K last year, so I really believe she could run a two-mile race and be pretty good at it."

Oliver Carter (throws) continually looks for ways to improve. "He works his butt off in practice," said Leach. "He's got a learning curve from eighth to ninth grade to understand how to throw the bigger disc, but he's doing well."

Kayla Wigglesworth (sprints, javelin)

is a first-year track athlete. "She's doing well this year and, I think, has taken track in stride," Leach noted.

Assistant Coach Ethan Hagenhoff returns to work primarily with the throwers. "He's quite a coach," Leach said. "We understand each other and get along well. Even though I'm the head coach and he's my assistant, we are basically co-head coaches because we do everything. I don't know what I would do without him, especially for the throws. I know some about it, but I don't know all about it. He was a great thrower during high school and knows all the ins and outs of it. Ethan does a great job."



Chamois High School

2024 Girls Track and Field Schedule Junior High



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/18	2024 MS Linn Open (Quad) (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
3/23	Fatima Meet (Westphalia, MO)	Away	
3/26	Eugene JH Track Meet (Eugene, MO)	Neutral	
4/1	Vienna Meet (Vienna, MO)	Away	
4/8	St. James Invitational (St. James, MO)	Neutral	
4/10	South Callaway MS Invitational (Mokane, MO)	Away	
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4/18	2024 Linn MS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
4/26	Show Me Conference Meet (Linn, MO)	Away	
4/30	New Haven Tri-Meet (New Haven, MO)	Neutral	

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Campbell confident in Wildcats' success

Second-year Linn baseball coach Dan Campbell believes the Wildcats are capable of making a run this year, and success will depend on daily adjustments and improvements.

"I can see this team just getting better and better and better," said Campbell, who retired from teaching after last year but is now at St. Stanislaus in Wardsville as he returns to the diamond at Linn. "You know, we might take our lumps, at times, because we have some inexperience out there and some guys new to positions, but they have been working hard. That's all I can ask."

Last year, the 'Cats ended the season at 6-20 in the district opener to Vienna, but Campbell said that is in the past and the team continues to develop.

"I think we will be a force to be reckoned with. I'm not saying we're going to get the number one seed or anything like that at districts, but I wouldn't want to play us," said Campbell.

All of Linn's pitchers have returned. "That doesn't always happen," Campbell noted. "We have a solid rotation with a mix of experience and talent."

Senior Arlyn Martin (Pitching Award) went 2-3 last year in 11 games with seven starts, allowing 24 earned runs on 56 hits with 15 strikeouts and 14 walks. When not on the mound, Martin will play on the infield. "He'll play whatever position we need him to fill, depending on who's pitching on a given day," said Coach Campbell. "Arlyn is a versatile player that gives us a lot of options."

Offensively last year, Martin hit .208, going 10-48 with four doubles and eight RBI.

Junior Austin Dudenhoeffer (Leading Hitter, Defensive Award, All-District - first team, All-Conference - second



team) started nine games and went 1-8 with a save. He allowed 25 earned runs on 33 hits with 45 walks and 32 strikeouts. Dudenhoeffer will see time at first base, again, when not pitching, depending on the situation. Last year, he hit .382 (29-76) with 10 doubles, three triples, and 29 RBI.

Junior Bobby Winkelman (1-0) entered five games, giving up 12 earned on 16 hits with nine walks and two strikeouts. Winkelman's primary role will be at second base. "We moved him from left field, and he has to learn the mechanics of playing at second, but he's got great speed

and eye-hand coordination," said Campbell. "He'll give us a solid presence up the middle. We need to be strong there, and I think we'll get it done."

Offensively, Winkelman (Most Improved Player, All-District - honorable mention) went 20-68 (.294) with 12 RBI.

Junior Tryten Reynolds went 0-2 in two starts, giving up 22 earned runs on 28 hits with 14 walks and nine strikeouts in six games. Reynolds will likely play at third base when not throwing strikes. "

Reynolds finished the 2023 campaign with a BA of .208 (16-77) with three doubles, a triple, and 14 RBI.

Sophomore Gus Peters (2-4) threw in 10 games with five starts, surrendering 50 earned runs on 75 hits with 16 walks and 13 strikeouts. Peters will roam shortstop to shore up the middle with Winkelman and rotate to other positions as pitching requirements dictate.

In 57 at-bats last year, Peters hit .140 (8-57) with an RBI.

"All of these guys are improving their mechanics on the mound as they continue to get better in their field positions," said Campbell, noting the group is helping freshman pitcher Carson Kempker break into his role. "Carson's got a nice arm, and he's a lefty, so we're hoping he's going to be a good pitcher for us."

Senior Curtis Deeken has moved to catcher, though he could pitch if necessary. "I really don't want to move him," said Campbell. "I want to lock him in at catcher; he's been doing a fabulous job for us."

Deeken finished with a BA of .196 last year (11-56) with three doubles, a home run, and seven RBI.

See **LINN BASEBALL** on Page 7B

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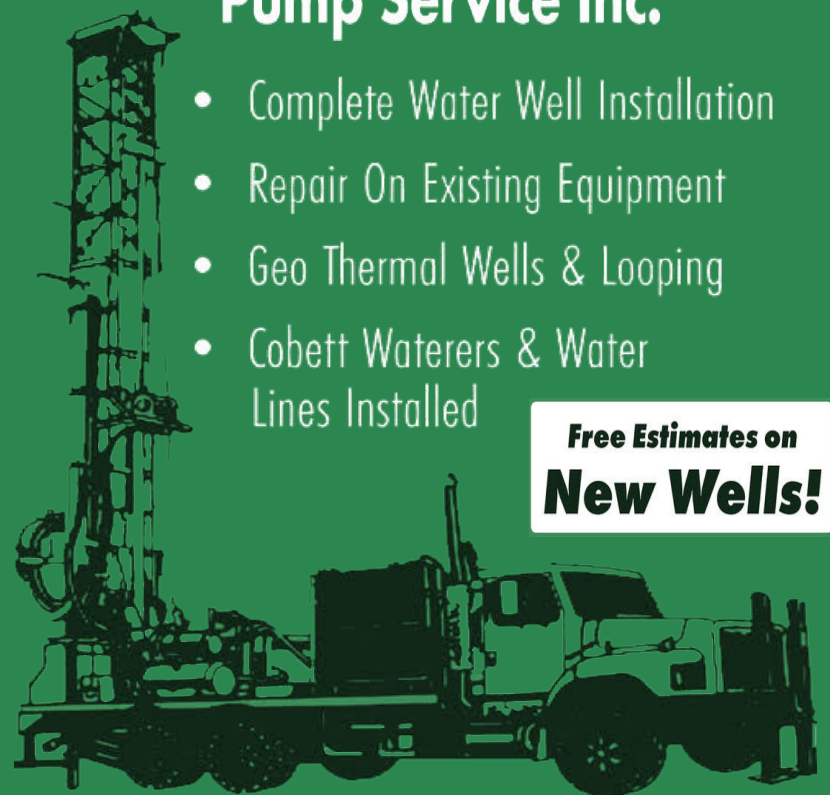
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Linn Baseball • from page 6B

Senior Seth Wolfe joins the team and will play in center field. “I’m excited to have Seth on the team this year,” said Campbell. “He has been sensational in center field. He made a couple of great plays the other night in the jamboree that were just incredible.”

Senior Tanner Hackmann will play in the outfield, likely in right, while juniors Trevor Brandt (Team Award) and Logan Martin will vie for time. “Tanner is a solid outfielder, and Trevor’s got really good speed,” said Campbell. “Logan is a solid up-and-coming player who can provide us some good defense in the outfield.”

Senior Anthony King is slated to serve as the team’s designated hitter, and Craig Laughlin will see time at first base.

“They understand their roles and what we need them to do for us to succeed,” said Campbell.

Rounding out the team are sophomore Joe Brandt (C) and freshmen Miles Kammerich (IF), Hunter Bish (OF), and Lane McKim (C).

“We’d like to have more freshmen, so we’re a little down, number-wise, with only 17 players,” said Campbell. “However, I am very happy with the players we have competing this spring, and I look forward to a great season.”

Campbell is joined again by paid assistant Jason Dudenhoeffer and volunteer coaches Alex McCrary and Dylan Wood.

Dudenhoeffer said he’s pleased with the work ethic and approach to the game Linn players exhibit. “We’re a year older and more experienced,” he said. “They



should grow from that. Hopefully, that was our learning year. We have a lot of starters back from last year, so they should be competitive.”

Dudenhoeffer takes his role seriously and does whatever is necessary to help players improve. “It’s a rotating door,” he said. “We work on whatever needs to be done on any given day.”

McCrary is a second-year State Tech student who enjoys helping the team. Wood is working specifically with pitchers this season.

“I appreciate all three of them,” said Campbell. “I can count on them to do anything — work on the field, get players started on drills or whatever — especially if I’m running late from Jefferson City. It’s nice to see things underway when I get here.”

Bish takes the helm for Linn track

Linn JH teacher Jennifer Bish took over as head coach of the Linn track team this year and hopes her experience will make a difference.

“Last year, I attended the junior high conference meet at Fatima, where I had a great time supporting our track kids and watching my niece compete for St. Elizabeth,” said Bish regarding how she came to coach the Wildcats. “During this event, I connected with (Assistant Coach) Robyn (Baker) about the possibility of becoming a head coach,” said Bish. “Her encouragement and willingness to support me in this role inspired me to pursue the position. I have a deep appreciation for the camaraderie and mentorship I experienced as a track athlete, and I am grateful for the opportunity to now lead the track team at Linn.”

Bish began teaching in 2010 and has been fortunate to work in a few schools over the years. From 2015-19, she took a break to be with her son during his baby years. In 2019, Bish taught PE part-time at Immaculate Conception in Loose Creek, eventually transitioning to a full-time role for the 2019-20 school year.

Bish is now in her second year at Linn R-2, where she teaches English Language Arts to sixth and seventh-graders.

Apart from teaching, Bish is also the head coach for the Junior High girls’



basketball team at Linn. She has previous coaching experience as an assistant girls’ basketball coach at Russellville, Helias, and Jefferson City. Additionally, she volunteered as a track coach at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School for two years. She later got involved with her oldest son’s track team when he was in junior high.

Bish is joined by Baker, Braden Ham, Adam Maassen, and Shaun Brandt. “I can’t even begin to describe how knowledgeable these coaches are, and I am thrilled to be working with them,” said Bish. “They’re doing a great job helping the athletes improve every day.”

Linn High School

2024 Spring Season Baseball Schedule

Varsity, Junior Varsity



Date	Opponent	Location	Levels	Time
3/12	Linn Baseball Jamboree (Linn, MO)	Home	V	4:00 pm
3/15	Harrisburg (Harrisburg, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
3/16	Eldon	Home	V	9:00 AM
3/16	Eugene	Home	V	2:00 PM
3/19	Calvary Lutheran	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
3/21	Montgomery County (Montgomery City, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
3/25	New Haven (New Haven, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
3/26	South Callaway (Mokane, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
3/30	Owensville/Vienna/Linn (Vienna, MO)	Neutral	V	
» 3/30	» Vienna	Neutral	V	
» 3/30	» Owensville	Neutral	V	
4/2	New Bloomfield	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/4	California	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/9	Hermann	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/12-13	25th Annual Linn Wildcat Baseball Tournament (Linn, MO)	Home	V	
4/15	Dixon	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/16	Russellville (Russellville, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/19-20	Versailles/California Turf War (Versailles, MO)	Neutral	V	
4/22	Tuscumbia	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/23	St. Elizabeth	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/26	Fatima	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/29	Owensville	Home	V, JV	
5/2	St. James (St James, MO)	Away	V, JV	4:30 PM
5/6	Eugene (Eugene, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
5/7	Belle (Belle, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM

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Bish is excited to see Linn track athletes' success in first year as head coach

New Linn head track coach Jennifer Bish noted that while several athletes from last season graduated last year, she and her assistant coaches are excited to see many underclassmen join the team this spring.

"This is my first year as the head coach, and I am excited to see what both the boys and girls accomplish this season," said Bish, who is joined by Robyn Baker, Braden Ham, Adam Maassen, and Shaun Brandt.

Bish noted that the girls' team is led by seniors Ramsie Tschappler (mids, distance) and Hope Wolfe (sprints, mids).

Tschappler returns with a lot of experience. Last year, she was part of the third-place sectional 3200m relay squad that qualified for state. Wolfe earned the Wildcat Pride Award after last season.

Juniors are Natasha Jewell (throws), Courtney Wood (throws), and Vidella Loughridge (throws, relays).

Sophomores are Emerson Bower (mids, distance) and Tiauna Friend (sprints).

Freshmen are Paige Loethen (pole vault, distance), Kylie Messenger (mids,

distance), Carley Brandt (jumps, mids), and Zoe Werdehausen (sprints, jumps).

Though the Linn boys' track team is all underclassmen, Coach Bish is excited. "We anticipate the young group to perform well in their events and look forward to seeing their progress through the season," she said of the 11 athletes running track this spring.

Sophomore Carson Kliethermes (sprints, jumps) is coming off knee surgery after football but looks to be able to contribute by the end of the season. Fellow sophomore Reid Baker (pole vault, hurdles, distance) is primed to perform well this season in his events.

Freshmen are Kahne Brandt (pole vault, jumps, sprints), Tommy Scheulen (triple jump, sprints, mids), Preston Keilholz-Scheulen (sprints, mids), Cody Heckman (jumps, sprints, mids), Joseph Brandt (throws, sprints, relays; he also plays baseball), Connor Knoll (throws), Xavier Knoll (throws), Max Jaegers (sprints, mids), and JJ Worley (throws, sprints).

"All of them are working hard to improve their fundamentals every day as we prepare to compete this season," said Bish.

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Linn golf features returning All-State player

Linn's golf team includes returning All-Stater, senior Jett Maasen, and state qualifier Britt Winslow, another senior looking for a return to the state tournament.

"They've kept accelerating and doing well every year," said Coach Ryan Rost. "I think they have even higher expectations for themselves. They both have signed to play college golf, and I think they both recognize this is their last chance to go for it. The last couple of weeks, they've been putting in a lot of work and competing with one another. What helps them so much is that they're really close off the course, but they compete well on the course. I have high expectations, but I know they have that for themselves as well."

Linn earned fourth place as a team last year as Maasen led the Wildcats with a seventh-place 75-83 (158) on the par 72 course to earn All-State honors. He was only nine strokes behind the champion.

"He had a phenomenal first day," said Rost following that performance. "It was incredibly impressive. He finished fourth last year and wanted to win the championship this year. After day one, he was in a great position to battle for the title."

On day two, Maasen pushed himself in the last few holes. "He took some chances that didn't pan out, but overall, he had a great tournament," said Rost. "His deci-

sion-making and plans going into each day were impressive. I know he'll be working for another chance next season."

Winslow posted an 83 on day one and 90 in the second round for a 173 to place 22nd last year.

Rost noted that Winslow had positioned himself in the top 10 by the end of the first round. "He had some bad breaks on the second day," Rost added. "I know it's not the score Britt wanted, but he competed well against good golfers. He'll be back, and I look for him to battle to return to the state. Britt will grow from this experience."

Fast-forward to early practices and Rost said the duo is even stronger than last year. "Not only are they putting in the work and constantly finding ways to improve, they're also helping the younger golfers," he said. "Being the only coach this year, we've had to split up. I can only go with so many players, and whatever group I'm not in, I always make sure one of them is in the other group. They're doing an excellent job helping these new golfers with little tips and tricks to help with their mental aspect. It's been nice to see them step up like that."

Junior Devin Brandt returns from a season in which he was on the verge of claiming the fifth varsity spot. "He competed well enough throughout the season to play at conference, and then he got beat out go-

ing into districts," said Rost. "He didn't get to be a part of that state run, but he's been playing well, and I think he recognizes that. He'll need to step up this year. Devin has been dialed in a lot more and seems to enjoy it. He's gotten much better, so I'm excited to have him this spring."

Seniors Noah Hall and Ashton Keilholz decided to play golf this year. "They've never played competitive golf before, but they put in a lot of work, said Rost. "They

are starting from zero, but the strides they've taken in the last few weeks means they're starting to put some good scores together. They'll compete for varsity spots, and I know they're capable, but golf is one of those things that requires fine-tuning. It's different from other sports, but they've picked it up well."

Juniors Tyler Wolfe and Jacob Bish are

See **LINN GOLF** on Page 11B

Linn High School 2024 Boys Golf Schedule Varsity



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/21	2024 Linn Tri (State Tech Golf Center) (Linn, MO)	Home	4:00 pm
3/27	Russellville Tournament (Russellville, MO)	Neutral	
4/1	Columbia Classic (Columbia, MO)	Neutral	
4/3	Versailles Invitational (Versailles, MO)	Neutral	
4/8	New Bloomfield Invitational (New Bloomfield, MO)	Neutral	
4/10	Southern Boone Tournament (Ashland, MO)	Neutral	
4/11	Osage Tri (Osage Beach, MO)	Neutral	
4/15	Helias Invitational (Jefferson City, MO)	Neutral	
4/17	Show-Me Conference Tournament (Eugene, MO)	Neutral	
4/23	2024 Linn Quad (State Tech Golf Center) (Linn, MO)	Home	4:00 pm
4/24	Harrisburg Tournament (Harrisburg, MO)	Neutral	
4/26	Sullivan Invitational (Sullivan, MO)	Neutral	
5/3	Cinco De Mayo (Columbia, MO)	Neutral	

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Linn has a good mix of JH returners and new athletes

Linn's junior high track team has familiar and new faces as the spring season unfolds under new Linn head track coach, Jennifer Bish.

"We are looking forward to a great season with these young athletes," said Bish.

Eighth-grade girls are Ruby Herndon, one of the strongest runners in sprints and mids who can also handle distance; Ava Franken, whose versatility will be key as she competes in sprints, mids, distance, and jumps; Adrienne Lansford (sprints, relays); and Shayla Burnett, who will compete in sprints and mids.

Eighth-graders new to the team are Colton Bridges (mids, pole vault), Madison Wood (throws, sprints), April Everett (throws), Isaiah Franken (pole vault, distance, hurdles), and Bria Kempker (hurdles, sprints, mids, shot put).

Returning for the boys are Titus Black (sprints, hurdles, jumps), Ian Laughlin (throws and sprints), and Aiden Mebruer (sprints, mids).

Seventh-graders are Jaelyn Callahan and Kamryn Callahan (sprints, relays), Elijah Kliethermes (mids), Emmitt Mehmert and Josh Powers (mids, distance), and Knox Sowders (throws, sprints).

Linn High School

2024 Boys Track and Field Schedule Varsity



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/19	Russellville HS Open Meet (Russellville, MO)	Neutral	
3/21	2024 Linn HS Open (Quad) (Linn, MO)	Home	3:00 pm
3/28	2024 Linn HS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Home	1:00 pm
4/6	Russellville Invitational (Russellville, MO)	Neutral	
4/11	South Callaway HS Invitational (Mokane, MO)	Neutral	
4/15	2024 Linn HS/MS Osage-Maries Challenge (Belle, Chamois, Linn, Vienna) (Linn, MO)	Home	3:00 pm
4/19	Tomahawk Relays (Hallsville, MO)	Neutral	
4/22	Hermann Invitational (Hermann, MO)	Neutral	
4/25	Show Me Conference Meet (Mokane, MO)	Neutral	
5/4	Class 2 District 4 Tournament (Glasgow, MO)	Neutral	



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Linn Golf • from page 9B

likewise brand-new golfers. “In the last few weeks, they went from the basics of swinging the club to different aspects of playing. They’ve started to pick it up well.”

Rounding out the team is freshman Olivia Martin, the only girl on the squad. “It’s always tough being the only female on any team, but the guys have welcomed her and are working with her every day,” said Rost. “She’s got a great swing, and she asks questions. Olivia works hard and has been pushing the boys a little bit. I think Olivia will press some of the boys as she gets more comfortable and stronger with her swing.”

Rost noted the season will look different. “In the last few years, we had an estab-

lished squad,” he explained. “We had our expectations set, but with so many beginners and first-year golfers this year, we’ll have to take it in stride. We’ll have some rough patches, but there will be successful days, too. We’ll start looking at varsity selections more closely toward the middle or end of April. Right now, we want to get their feet wet playing competitive golf and see how they respond.”

“The whole group is competing every day for the last varsity spot I’m going to have, so it’s been pretty fun,” said Rost.

He is grateful for Osage View and the improvements that allow his team to practice at home. “It gives us opportunities to practice even with nasty weather,” said Rost. “I had the simulator at the gym, but we were sharing space all the time and

couldn’t do everything we wanted. Now, if it’s pouring rain, we can hit golf balls for an hour and a half, practice, and be productive. It’s helped us a lot and given us more opportunities. Hopefully, it sparks more

youth wanting to play golf because that’s what’s killing us right now. We don’t have the numbers we used to, but I think it’ll come, especially with all State Tech’s resources out there. It’ll be a positive thing.”

Linn High School

2024 Girls Track and Field Schedule Varsity



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/19	Russellville Open Track Meet (Russellville, MO)	Neutral	
3/21	2024 Linn HS Open/Quad (Linn, MO)	Home	3:00 pm
3/28	2024 Linn HS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Home	1:00 pm
4/6	Russellville Invitational (Russellville, MO)	Neutral	
4/11	South Callaway HS Invitational (Mokane, MO)	Neutral	
4/15	2024 Linn HS/MS Osage-Maries Challenge (Belle, Chamois, Linn, Vienna) (Linn, MO)	Home	3:00 pm
4/19	Tomahawk Relays (Hallsville, MO)	Neutral	
4/22	Hermann Invitational (Hermann, MO)	Neutral	
4/25	Show Me Conference Meet (Mokane, MO)	Neutral	
5/4	Class 2 District 4 Tournament (Glasgow, MO)	Neutral	

Linn High School

2024 Boys Track and Field Schedule Junior High



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/18	2024 MS Linn Open (Quad) (Linn, MO)	Home	3:00 pm
3/22	Blair Oaks Invitational (Jefferson City, MO)	Neutral	
3/23	Fatima Jr High Meet (Westphalia, MO)	Neutral	
4/10	South Callaway MS Invitational (Mokane, MO)	Neutral	
4/15	2024 Linn HS/MS Osage-Maries Challenge (Belle, Chamois, Linn, Vienna) (Linn, MO)	Home	3:00 pm
4/18	2024 Linn MS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Home	3:00 pm
4/22	Russellville Invitational (Russellville, MO)	Neutral	

Linn High School

2024 Girls Track and Field Schedule Junior High



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/18	2024 MS Linn Open (Quad) (Linn, MO)	Home	3:00 pm
3/22	Blair Oaks Invitational (Jefferson City, MO)	Neutral	
3/23	Fatima Jr High Meet (Westphalia, MO)	Neutral	
4/10	South Callaway MS Invitational (Mokane, MO)	Neutral	
4/15	2024 Linn HS/MS Osage-Maries Challenge (Belle, Chamois, Linn, Vienna) (Linn, MO)	Home	3:00 pm
4/18	2024 Linn MS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Home	3:00 pm
4/22	Russellville Invitational (Russellville, MO)	Neutral	



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Lady Comets' track team eager to run with 25 athletes

Fatima's 25-athlete HS girls' team roster is ready to get going.

"This is a pretty standard size for the girls' team over recent years, and our numbers should allow us to field a lot of events," said Coach Marc Bridges.

None of Fatima's returners qualified for state last year, but Bridges is confident the team of four seniors, six juniors, four sophomores, and 11 freshmen will be competitive.

Seniors: Lauren Berhorst (distance and mid-distance), Lucy Crede (sprints, long jump, triple jump), Cheyenne Hicks (triple jump, hurdles), and Kate Kampeter (throws).

At last year's sectional meet, Berhorst had a strong showing in the 3200m run (6, 12:21.68) with a personal best. Bridges said she's in great shape and ready to return to the state meet.

Several athletes that didn't move past last year's district meet had personal-best or season-best performances, including

Crede (5, 31-11.75) and Hicks (6, 31-10.75) in the triple jump, and Hicks in the hurdles (9, 55.66), and Sydney Scheppers (5, 28-02.25) and Meagan Gabelsberger (6, 28-1) in the shot put.

Juniors: Reagan Bock (distance and mid-distance), Gabelsberger (throws), Lily Gregory (high jump, sprints), Leni Hemmel (pole vault), Anna Rakestraw (distance, mid-distance), and Mya Sankey (throws).

Sophomores: Ava Buhr (throws), Reese Dawson (sprints, jumps), Sydney Scheppers (throws), and Heidi Struempf (mid-distance, sprints).

Freshmen: Karly Bock (hurdles, sprints), Addison Bower (high jump, sprints), Cali Kampeter (sprints, jumps), Brie Massman (mid-distance, distance), Carly Nilges (hurdles), Maggie Peters (sprints, jumps, pole vault), and Draven Cole, Brenna Ocheskey, Avery Perry, Abby Rodgers and Melanie Troesser (sprints).

Fatima High School

2024 Boys Track and Field Schedule

Varsity



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/19	St. James Open (St James, MO)	Neutral	
3/21	Blair Oaks (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	
3/28	2024 Linn HS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
4/4	Maroon and Gold Invite (Eldon, MO)	Neutral	
4/6	Fatima Meet (Westphalia, MO)	Home	10:30 am
4/12	Owensville (Owensville, MO)	Away	
4/16	Osage Varsity Invitational (Osage Beach, MO)	Neutral	
4/20	Clinton (Clinton, MO)	Away	
4/25	Show Me Conference Meet (New Bloomfield, MO)	Away	

Fatima High School

2024 Girls Track and Field Schedule

Varsity



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/19	St. James Open (St James, MO)	Neutral	
3/21	Blair Oaks (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	
3/28	2024 Linn HS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
4/4	Maroon and Gold Invite (Eldon, MO)	Neutral	
4/6	Fatima Meet (Westphalia, MO)	Home	10:30 am
4/12	Owensville (Owensville, MO)	Away	
4/16	Osage Varsity Invitational (Osage Beach, MO)	Neutral	
4/20	Clinton (Clinton, MO)	Away	
4/25	Show Me Conference Meet (New Bloomfield, MO)	Away	

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Vignola pleased to coach Fatima JH track with his family

Fatima JH track coach James Vignola is working with his wife Tara, a teacher at R-3, and brother, Joey.

"I'm excited to have family helping me coach these young athletes," James said. "My hope is we have a successful season and that both Tara, Joey, and I gain more knowledge to become better coaches and mentors to the athletes."

This year's roster includes 22 athletes, up from last year's total. One major difference is the number of girls on the team, which outnumber the boys 15-7.

"This is a stark difference from the numbers we saw last year between boys and girls," James noted. "Hopefully, next year we get more boys to show out. The junior high girls have a lot of potential. With returning runners Rose Backes and Jaiden McCann leading the way, our team is primed to have a successful season. On the boys side, with returning runners Tucker Gregory and Mason Huhn taking charge, the boys hope to earn some PRs and potentially win some

medals."

Eighth-graders are Alyssa Carrigan (sprints, high jump, triple jump), Bailee Winkelman (sprints, relays), Bailey Buschjost (shot put, discus), Haley Titus (shot put, discus), Jaidyn McCann (relays, long jump), Journey Markway (relays, 1600m), Lyssa Bax (shot put, discus), Mallory Neuner (relays, sprints, long jump), Rose Backes (relays, mid-distance), Sadi Lehman (relays, sprints, pole vault), Henry Storm (relays, sprints, long jump, triple jump, pole vault), Landon Brown (relays, sprints, shot put, discus), Mason Huhn (mid-distance, pole vault), Tucker Gregory (relays, sprints, long jump, high jump), and Tucker Schroeder (mid-distance, long jump).

Seventh-graders are Aliza Stratman and Chloe Schaben (relays), Josie Schulte (relays, sprints, long jump), Layla Wingrath (relays, sprints, pole vault), Olivia Holland (relays, sprints, long jump, triple jump), Collin Walters (relays, mid-distance), and Raylan Kolb (relays, sprints).

Fatima High School

2024 Boys Track and Field Schedule Junior High



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/18	2024 MS Linn Open (Quad) (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
3/23	Fatima Jr High Meet (Westphalia, MO)	Home	10:30 am
3/26	Hermann Open (Hermann, MO)	Neutral	
4/2	Osage JH Open (Osage Beach, MO)	Neutral	
4/10	South Callaway MS Invitational (Mokane, MO)	Neutral	
4/18	2024 Linn MS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
4/22	Russellville Invitational (Russellville, MO)	Neutral	
4/26	Show Me Conference (Linn, MO)	Away	

Fatima High School

2024 Girls Track and Field Schedule Junior High



Date	Opponent	Location	Time
3/18	2024 MS Linn Open (Quad) (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
3/23	Fatima Jr High Meet (Westphalia, MO)	Home	
3/26	Hermann Open (Hermann, MO)	Neutral	
4/2	Osage JH Open (Osage Beach, MO)	Neutral	
4/10	South Callaway MS Invitational (Mokane, MO)	Neutral	
4/18	2024 Linn MS Invitational (Linn, MO)	Neutral	
4/22	Russellville Invitational (Russellville, MO)	Neutral	
4/26	Show Me Conference (Linn, MO)	Away	



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Fatima baseball rebuilding after losing several seniors to graduation

Fatima baseball coach Tyler VanGerpen hopes for a quick turnaround but admits the coming season is a rebuilding effort after losing several seniors to graduation.

"We only have two seniors on the roster," he explained. "The junior class is going to dominate the field with some sophomores. They all have experience, but this will be the first time they have to take over the team.

"In the past, they've been a great supporting cast but haven't had to bear much weight as far as carrying the team," VanGerpen continued. "Do we have the guys to compete? Yes, it's just a matter of inexperience, but we can grow quickly. It could be a good year."

The most challenging aspect may come on the mound. "It's going to be a trying year because everybody's going to have pretty much to go their pitch count, to maximize the number of innings we get each time they go out," said VanGerpen. "We don't want to burn a lot each night, which will put a lot of stress on the coaching staff managing those pitch counts at all levels."

He anticipates some C-team players will fill JV spots, and the JV guys will have to go down to help the C team. "The varsity guys that don't start are also going to have to play the JV game to fill spots and get extra reps," VanGerpen noted. "It's just gonna be a lot of moving pieces this year, more than it has been in the past."

Fatima seniors are third-year starting catcher Easton Stuckenschneider and utility outfielder Graham Boeckmann.

Stuckenschneider aspires to play at the collegiate level, so he's been working very hard in the off-season to prepare for the spring. "He's getting noticed by a couple of colleges he's interested in attending," said VanGerpen. "Easton has that excitement to help him start the spring. Everything has improved. This year, we have three varsity catchers, so we'll be able to save his knees a bit through the season. He'll have to learn how to be a DH or possibly how to play first base. Easton will have some new wrinkles to figure out, but he knows enough about the game and what we expect of him. It'll be interesting to see how he propels this year. I'm hoping he carries us a little bit offensively. Hopefully, he can be our steady bat this year. It will be fun to watch him compete this spring and see how things roll."

Stuckenschneider was solid at the plate last year, hitting .337 (35-104) with 10 doubles, a triple, two home runs, and 27 RBI, to earn second-team All-District and Conference honors.

Boeckmann was a solid outfielder for the Comets last year, finishing with a BA of .206 (7-34) with two doubles and 10 RBI. "He can play all three outfield positions, and he'll likely play all of them at some point during the season," said VanGerpen. "Our outfield this year is stacked. If a ball is in the air, there's a good chance we're tracking it down and catching it.



That will be exciting to see. Graham will mainly float between right and left because we'll have junior Cody Schwartze, but Graham will get a lot of playing time. He's a quality guy to have in the outfield to catch balls."

Schwartze hit a home run last year as part of his 4-32 effort at the plate, with six RBI.

Fatima doesn't have the pitching depth the team has enjoyed in the last three years. "It's going to stretch everybody thin at all levels," said VanGerpen. "That's good for the younger kids because they'll get a crapload of reps. It should be a good year for freshmen and sophomores, bouncing back and forth with a lot of game reps. Once April hits, many of them probably won't

see a practice field because of the number of times varsity plays and a few times the C team is playing on days varsity and JV are not."

VanGerpen noted that junior Brody Kleffner and sophomore Blake Kliethermes will carry much of the pitching load.

"We don't really have what some schools consider a true ace," said VanGerpen. "Both have stuff they need to work on, but they're good on the mound. It will depend on which guy shows up that night and whether they can consistently do well throughout the season. That would be the biggest question mark with the two of them. Last year, they did well. Brody had a few more innings than Blake."

Some colleges are considering Klef-

ner, so he's got confidence coming into the season. Last year, Kleffner started six games on the rubber and pitched in nine. He allowed 19 earned runs on 32 hits with 32 strikeouts and 23 walks in 28.1 innings to finish 1-2.

Kleffner hit .176 (13-74) last year with a double, a triple, and seven RBI.

Kliethermes pitched in nine varsity games last year, going 1-2 in four starts after allowing 16 earned runs on 24 hits with 21 strikeouts and 25 walks.

"Blake will have a bigger role this year, so it'll be interesting to see how he competes on the mound," said VanGerpen. "We have inconsistencies because they're so young and new at carrying the load. If they can limit those inconsistencies, they can have a great season."

Kliethermes went 4-20 (.200) with a double and two RBI.

VanGerpen noted the pair won't play much in the field. "Because they'll be our top two guys, they won't get a lot of innings in the field to allow their arms to recover," he said. "We will rely on them to go deeper in games than most other guys, so there'll be what I'll call a throw count or a play count. They won't play every day, but when we need them, Brody will see time in the outfield, and Blake will play on

See **FATIMA BASEBALL** on Page 15B

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Fatima's 26 track athletes represent the largest roster in recent years

Fatima has the largest boys' roster in several years, with 26 players. "We are excited about the possibilities that a large roster holds for the upcoming season," said Coach Marc Bridges.

The team includes five seniors, five juniors, six sophomores, and 10 freshmen.

Seniors are Cody Berhorst (distance), Easton Haslag (sprints, javelin), Cody Kampeter (distance), Tyler Kloepfel (sprints and mid-distance), and Christian Stephens (sprints and hurdles).

Last year, Kloepfel earned a state berth and finished third in the 800m run in 1:56.79. Kloepfel shaved 3.1 seconds from his sectional time. "I credit Tyler's success to his sheer determination to succeed," said Bridges after last year's state

See **FATIMA TRACK** on Page 17B



Fatima baseball • from page 14B

the infield. We're not really sure yet. They don't recover quickly after throwing, so they need a day or two to recover from arm soreness and all that. I won't title them as pitchers only, but their main focus in helping us win games will be pitching. We'll get them in when their arms are healthy enough to play the field."

Junior left-fielder Matthew "Munch" Robertson hit .231 last year (18-78) with 10 doubles and eight RBI. "He has some experience that will be helpful both in the outfield and at the plate," said VanGerpen.

Junior Max Stuecken will be the team's utility infielder, floating as needed, depending on the pitching situation. In earning second-team All-District and Conference honors last year, Stuecken hit .329 (28-85) with three doubles, a triple, and 11 RBI.

Junior Logan Kliethermes will pitch when not covering shortstop. Junior Trevor Schulte will probably start at second. Junior Glenn Berhorst will play at first, and junior Landon Bassett will be the team's backup catcher.

Junior Sam Struempf, sophomores Tyler Bexten, Dalton Rademan, Jase Rehagen, Dylan Schwartz, Michael Sesti, Ean Smith, Conner Willis, and Hank Stuckenschneider, and freshmen Jace Crede, Wyatt Dake, Samuel Haller, Thomas Heisler, Tanner Huhn, Liam Morfeld, Bryce Wieberg, and Joseph Hale round out the roster.

"Roles will constantly change this year," said VanGerpen. "The younger players will dominate the field. Sophomores will fill the gaps and have backup holes, depending on who's pitching. Having a C team is good because that allows us some flexibility. We'll know more as the season unfolds."

At last year's district tournament, the Comets finished second behind Fulton in

a 1-0 loss to end the season at 15-16. B. Kliethermes and E. Stuckenschneider each had a single in that game. After a first-round bye, Fatima defeated Blair Oaks 10-3 in the district semis.

Fatima High School 2024 Spring Season Baseball Schedule Varsity, Junior Varsity, Sophomore, Freshman



Date	Opponent	Location	Levels	Time
3/8	Jamboree (Jefferson City, MO)	Neutral	V	
3/16	Capital City (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	V	10:00 AM
3/16	Boonville (Boonville, MO)	Away	V	2:00 PM
3/18	Helias Catholic (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
3/18	Jefferson City (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	So, Fr	5:00 PM
3/19	Father Tolton Regional Catholic (Columbia, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
3/21	Fulton	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
3/22	Fulton (Fulton, MO)	Away	Fr	5:00 PM
3/23	Stockton	Neutral	V	
3/23	Nixa (Nixa, MO)	Away	V	1:30 PM
3/25	Capital City (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	Fr	5:00 PM
3/25	Capital City (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	Fr	7:00 PM
3/26	New Bloomfield	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
3/27	Mexico	Home	Fr	5:00 PM
4/1	St. Elizabeth (St. Elizabeth, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/1	Father Tolton Regional Catholic	Home	Fr	5:00 PM
4/2	Battle (Columbia, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:30 PM
4/4-6	Jays Baseball Classic (Jefferson City, MO)	Neutral	V	
4/4	Smith-Cotton	Home	Fr	5:00 PM
4/8	Russellville	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/8	Rock Bridge (Columbia, MO)	Away	So, Fr	5:00 PM
4/9	Eugene	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/11	Hallsville	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/11	Blair Oaks (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	So, Fr	5:00 PM
4/12	Eldon	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/12-13	Windsor Tournament (Windsor, MO)	Away	So	
4/15	Capital City	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/16	Hickman	Home	So, Fr	5:00 PM
4/18	Blair Oaks (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM

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Fatima golf team again has 15 members

Fatima's golf team this spring has 15 golfers again after graduating four from last year and gaining seven under Coach Scott Kilgore and his assistant, Eric Saak.

Five seniors are led by Simon Stuecken, in his third year with the Comets.

"We expect big things out of Simon this season," said Kilgore of the lone senior returner. "He was just a few strokes away from making the cut for state last season, and I know he is focused on making state this spring."

Stuecken shot a 92 on the par 72 course for 36th place at last year's district match.

Seniors Connor Bax, Kyser Luebbert, Eric Stegeman, and Chase Willis decided to try golf. "I believe these guys are having fun so far and getting better every practice," said Kilgore. "We will be starting our scheduled contests this week, and they are looking forward to the opportunity to continue to show improvement. Coach Saak and I are confident these young men will improve as the season progresses."

Junior Austin Schenewerk and sophomores Cody Bertels, Nick Howe, Ryan Jansen, Toren Orscheln, Alex Reichel, and Xavier Stuecken also return. "All these guys have shown big improvements since last year," said Kilgore. "They worked hard over the off-season and are looking forward to the start of the season

contests."

Freshmen Cooper Berhorst, Eli Massman, and Evan Otto are new to the team but have some experience on the links. "These young golfers are doing a great job improving every day," said Kilgore. "We can tell as coaches that they have played a lot of golf up to this point. They are not your typical freshman; they have shown a good level of comfort on the course during our practices so far. It is apparent that they have been coached well prior to



the start of our spring season."

Kilgore added that he and Coach Saak will work over the next several weeks to find the best five golfers to make up a varsity team. "I foresee this as an ongoing process as the season progresses because we have several golfers who are equal in ability," he said. "These guys may shuffle

around throughout the season a few times between varsity and JV. Our golf program here at Fatima has gained in size over the last few years. We are excited for that as the sport of golf continues to grow in our community."

Fatima is utilizing Osage View for practice.

Fatima High School

2024 Boys Golf Schedule

Varsity, Junior Varsity



Date	Opponent	Location	Levels	Time
3/18	Tolton Catholic Tournament (Columbia, MO)	Away	V	
3/18	Cuba Lakes Classic (Cuba, MO)	Away	JV	
3/19	Boonville/California/Versailles	Away	V	4:00 pm
3/21	2024 Linn Tri (State Tech Golf Center) (Linn, MO)	Neutral	V	
3/25	Montgomery County Open (Montgomery City, MO)	Neutral	V	
3/27	Russellville Tournament (Russellville, MO)	Away	V	
4/1	Osage Tourney (Osage Beach, MO)	Neutral	V	
4/3	Southern Boone Tri: Southern Boone, Fatima, North Callaway (Ashland, MO)	Neutral	V	
4/4	Eugene (Eugene, MO)	Away	V, JV	4:00 PM
4/8	New Bloomfield Invitational (New Bloomfield, MO)	Neutral	V	
4/9	NC Quad (Kingdom City, MO)	Neutral	V	
4/10	Southern Boone Tournament (Ashland, MO)	Neutral	V	
4/11	Centralia (Centralia, MO)	Away	V, JV	4:00 PM
4/17	Show-Me Conference Tournament (Eugene, MO)	Away	V	
4/18	Cuba Golf Invitational (Cuba, MO)	Neutral	JV	
4/22	Jeff City Invitational (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	V	
4/23	California Tri (California, MO)	Away	V	

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Fatima track

from page 15B

meet. "He ran every step of the race with purpose, and we couldn't be more happy with the result."

Kloepfel entered the meet with the third-best qualifying time in the state with his second-place finish at sectionals in 1:59.80, beating his best time of the season to that point by 5.96 seconds. "Tyler ran an amazing 800m to break the 2:00 mark, a longtime goal of his," said Coach Marc Bridges. "This was a huge PR for him."

Kloepfel won the district event in 2:06.

Kloepfel and Haslag return from last year's 400m relay, which finished sixth at the sectional meet after setting a school record (45.12).

"Easton competed well in the throws but came up short; he also ran well in the 200m after a full day of races," said Bridges.

Haslag was eighth in the 200m dash (23.89) at sectionals and the javelin (136-55.75).

Berhorst finished eighth (11:21) in the sectional 3200m run after claiming third (11:09) at districts. "Cody tried a very aggressive approach in the 3200m that ultimately led to a tough run," said Bridges then of the sectional run.

Juniors: Jace Eisterhold (sprints and jumps), Wyatt Gabelsberger (distance), Brady Hager (mid-distance), Tyler Koenigsfeld (sprints and long jump), and Henry Schroeder (throws).

Sophomores: Couper Bryant (jumps), Michael Groene (mid-distance), Zach Kloepfel (mid-distance), Andrew Muenks (sprints, jumps, hurdles), Drew Riegel (pole vault, sprints), and Caden Roentreter (pole vault).

Freshmen: Mason Bock (sprints, pole vault, throws), Zack Eisterhold (jumps), Michael Gabelsberger (distance and mid-distance), Beau Havens (jumps, sprints), Paden Luebbert (throws), Roland Nivens (throws), Trenton Orscheln (mid-distance, distance), Grant Wilbers (sprints, hurdles, jumps), and Ben Stephens and Trace Walters (sprints).



Lady Comets field 16 soccer players this spring

Fatima's girls' soccer program includes 16 players this year, with five two juniors, two sophomores, and seven freshmen.

Head Coach Dustin Cox and Assistant Coach Sami Jo Freeman said the Lady Comets' goal is to be competitive in every game. "Our performance at the JC Jamboree exceeded our initial expectations and, in some ways, the team outperformed where we were a year ago," said Cox. "Looking through our schedule, we'll see our fair share of challenging teams. Traditionally, we play up a class more often than we play schools of our size."

While district and class assignments are still pending, Cox and Freeman think this team has what it takes to compete and ultimately win a district championship.

"Last year, we talked about rebuilding our

offense, and we were extremely proud of where we left off," said Freeman. "The girls put away more than 50 goals in 18 games last year and ended the season with a newfound spark between the midfield and strikers. The chemistry and fluidity of passes this year is much better, and we're excited to see that pay off."

Fatima will be led offensively by seniors Jeana Abbott, Kaitlyn (KP) Plassmeyer, and Hannah Heisler.

Abbott is a dedicated player who had a breakthrough year in 2023 with four goals. "She's dangerously good at creating scoring opportunities in the box and will be helping us serve up set pieces," said Cox. "We love the positive and determined attitude she brings to

See **LADY COMETS SOCCER** on Page 18B



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Lady Comets soccer • from page 17

the team.”

KP is a team captain and one of the team’s fastest players. “KP finds a way to score when we need it most,” Freeman noted. “She emerged as a leader last year with three goals and four assists and was voted a team captain this year. KP is aggressive, scrappy, and fearless when challenging any defender. She fits like a puzzle piece in our offense, bringing that dynamic speed and talent straight at the goal.”

Heisler is another captain forward. “She is incredibly talented and has been a leader on the field from day one,” said Cox. “She has a deep understanding of the game and pushes us as a coaching staff to provide more strategies and set plays. We’re a better team for it.”

Last year, Heisler set the Fatima girl’s goal-scoring record with 29 goals in a single season, adding five assists. “She will dictate the speed and strategy of our offense this year in many ways,” said Cox.

This season will be a little different. “We are focusing on rebuilding our backline after graduating most of our starting lineup from defense,” Freeman said. “Perfecting how our defense adapts and shifts under pressure has been a primary focus the team has learned quickly. They are already taking on and shutting down some of the best players in our area with ease. We are very proud of the newest team members, most of whom found their spot quickly on defense.”

Coaches plan to capitalize on experience and leadership from senior goalkeeper Chloe Adamson and senior defender Maya Libbert.

“Chloe will continue to be a force to reckon with as a goalkeeper,” said Cox. “She’s exactly what coaches look for: commanding and fearless. She also brings a great sense of humor, a down-to-earth personality, and a supportive presence to all her teammates. Last year, her growth as a goalkeeper was almost unbelievable, and she wrapped up the season with 120 saves.”

Libbert has only played with the high school team for two years, but coaches said it feels like she’s been with the squad since freshman year. “She committed over the summer to becoming the best defender she could be, and the progress is evident,” said Freeman. “Maya will be critical in leading our newly-built defensive line, holding down the right fullback position, and placing set pieces for her teammates to score.”

With the seniors’ leadership, Cox noted the first few weeks of practice have flown by, but he and Freeman have been impressed by the team’s development. “We’ve reviewed game footage, taught footwork and new techniques, built strategies for offensive plays, conditioned, bonded as a team, worked on strengthening our defense, and practiced set pieces with a different style,” he added. “We’re very proud of every team member for consistently show-



ing up and putting their best foot forward during practice.”

Junior Kristen Robertson (midfield, offense) is an excellent athlete and found her natural fit as a defensive midfielder last year. “Traditionally, this position carries one of the highest workloads on the field, and she’s up to the challenge,” said Cox. “She works very well with the offense, understanding and running some of our more complex attacking plays. She is very mature in how she approaches all sports and brings a respectful attitude to the field daily.”

Fellow junior Isabella Schaben (offense) is one of the few naturally left-footed players on the team. “We’ll be using those skills along the left wing, which is historically the underused side of the field,” said Freeman. “She is always eager to learn everything we can teach her about soccer. Her skills have skyrocketed from just a year ago, and she’s become much more aggressive on the field. It’s exciting to see that fire in her eyes.”

Sophomores are Alex Berhorst (all positions) and Addy Berhorst (midfield).

“Alex proved last year that she’s one of the best utility players we have,” said Cox. “She finished last season as a striker and midfielder with five goals and seven assists, gaining her the second-highest game points. We’ll be using her speed, skills and endurance all over the field, switching positions between the needs of the team on a game-to-game basis.”

“Addy is very athletic and has grown tremendously,” Freeman noted. “She can cover a lot of ground quickly and has linked

up with our other defensive midfield in a way that makes you think they’re reading each other’s minds. We are excited to see her capitalize on her additional strength this year, leading to more goal-scoring opportunities.”

Freshmen comprise the bulk of Fatima’s roster this year, and coaches are pleased with the skills and approach to learning they have demonstrated.

— Kacie Haller (offense) immediately fit into the team. “She’s very quick and eager to learn from teammates and coaches,” said Freeman. “Because of that curiosity, she’s learned many new skills and has chemistry with senior leaders on the offense. We’re excited to see her as part of this roster for years to come.”

Remaining freshmen are defenders.

— Jentry Allen fights through some of the messiest and most aggressive situations to set her teammates up for success, which makes her a perfect addition to the backline. “In her first year, we expect Jentry to have a tremendous and positive impact on this team,” said Cox.

— Lilly Borgmeyer was one of the first players to raise her hand when the coaches explained the need to build a new defense. “She hasn’t shied away from that responsibility,” said Freeman. “She is well-conditioned and will be a reliable part of the defense. Lilly is essential to this team as we plan for future years and brings great energy to the team.”

See **LADY COMETS SOCCER** on Page 19B

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Lady Comets soccer • from page 18B

— Cameron Reinsch joined the team this year. “We’re thrilled with her defensive performance,” said Cox. “She knows how to reliably anticipate what the offense is doing and effectively shut them down. As such, she’ll be playing defensive roles, including stopper.”

— Cassidy Epps was among the first to show up for conditioning, and coaches are proud of that dedication. “She has been a sponge for information when we introduce new skills and concepts,” said Freeman. “Since joining the team, her footwork, overall skills, and understanding of soccer have grown.”

— Caroline Neubert is an aggressive protector who plays the critical role of a sweeper. “She is talented and takes her job as our last line of defense seriously,” Cox noted. “She will play an important role in shutting down the space and passing lanes to protect our goal.”

— Carmen Falter rounds out Fatima’s defense as a left fullback. “The team is grateful to have her talent on that side, which typically works to counter the best right-footed players from the opposition,” said Freeman. “She is patient and deliberate as she contains plays and waits for attackers to make a mistake that will ultimately allow her to steal the ball for clearance.”

Coaches have been happy to see the team’s chemistry. “Soccer games are rarely won or lost by a single player; it has to be a

team effort,” said Cox. “We believe we’ve built a well-rounded team that’s ready and willing to adapt as opponents show us what they have.”

Coach Cox, his wife Lisa (Boes), and their two kids moved back to Osage County almost five years ago. Shortly after, he became a coach in the Westphalia Soccer Club and made connections within the soccer community and with the families supporting it. Through that experience, he was recommended as a soccer coach for Fatima. Cox was most recently a coach for the Fatima boys’ high school team, and he still coaches his children’s WSC teams and the Fatima girls’ high school team. He currently teaches at Fatima. Dustin graduated high school in southern Indiana and college in Springfield. He played soccer most of his life, but coaching is his true passion.

Freeman played soccer competitively at the local, state, national, and international levels, starting at a young age with Tony Glavin Soccer Club and continuing into high school. While playing, she coached many youth teams alongside her family as an offensive coach and refereed in the St. Louis area. Cox and Freeman became friends through his wife, Lisa. After a connection was made to soccer, Dustin invited Sami Jo to join this year’s Fatima coaching staff. Sami Jo is originally from rural Lincoln County, where she graduated from Troy Buchanan High School before head-

ing to the University of Missouri. She lives on the outskirts of Columbia and works in communications for the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services.

Both are grateful for community support at the field. “We want to thank the Knights of Columbus soccer field managers, Chris Angerer and Glenn Bock,” Cox and Freeman said. “They spend a lot of time helping

us maintain one of the best grass fields in the state — our girls are proud to host home games because of it. They are truly the backbone of our soccer program and have been for many years.”

The Lady Comets are supported by Athletic Director Mike Thompson and team managers Cody Koenigsfeld and Richard Luebbert.

Fatima High School 2024 Girls Soccer Schedule Varsity, Junior Varsity



Date	Opponent	Location	Levels	Time
3/12	Jamboree (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	V	
3/15	Owensville (Owensville, MO)	Away	V	5:00 PM
3/20	Mexico (Mexico, MO)	Away	V	5:00 PM
3/22	Crocker	Home	V	5:00 PM
3/26	Osage	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
3/28	Smithton (Smithton, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/2	Dixon (Dixon, MO)	Away	V	5:00 PM
4/4	Sullivan (Sullivan, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/8	St. James	Home	V	5:00 PM
4/9	Southern Boone (Ashland, MO)	Away	V, JV	5:00 PM
4/11	Boonville (Boonville, MO)	Away	V	5:00 PM
4/15	Fulton	Home	V	5:00 PM
4/16	Blair Oaks (Jefferson City, MO)	Away	V, JV	6:00 PM
4/18	Sacred Heart	Home	V	5:00 PM
4/25	California	Home	V	5:00 PM
4/30	Moberly	Home	V, JV	5:00 PM
5/2	Winfield (Winfield, MO)	Away	V	5:00 PM
5/3	Stover	Home	V	5:00 PM
5/6	Eugene	Home	V	5:00 PM
5/8	Jefferson City	Home	V	5:00 PM

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