

Osage County Fall Sports Section 2022



Chamois pages 3B-5B, Linn pages 6B-13B, Fatima pages 14B-22B

Chamois volleyball team will be competitive

CHAMOIS — Chamois volleyball coach Samantha Mitchem is confident this year's team will be competitive and is looking forward to the season to begin.

"I'm optimistic about our season," said Mitchem, who will be joined by Assistant Coach Erin Gerloff. "The players are bonding as a team, and we're working on strategy instead of basic skills. It's been fun working with the girls on specific plays and what to do on offense and defense."

Nine of the 10 players on this year's roster are returning from last year, which offers Mitchem hope for the coming season.

"I believe the experience they had last year made them better, and I'm hoping we can use that to win more matches," she said. "We have a good shot to be competitive and hang with most of the teams we'll play."

Alex McKague is the lone senior on the squad, and she will be the primary setter. "She's grown a lot in four years," said Mitchem. "Alex is an awesome player who leads by example. She was good last year; she's even better now. Alex sees the floor very well and knows where to put the ball. As a tough hustler, I expect her to be the driving force of our team."

Juniors are backup setter Elsie Wuelling and hitters Eevie Halbert, Devin Slusser, Cheyenne Abrams, and Becca Tharp.

Wuelling is solid at the service line. "She's a great server and always finds the right place to position herself on the floor," said Mitchem. "When she is setting, she has good awareness."

Halbert is described as a hustler that never quits on a play. "She gets to the ball no matter where it is, and she's a good server as well," said Mitchem.



CHAMOIS SENIOR Alex McKague returns as the team's primary setter.

PHOTOS BY NEAL A JOHNSON

Slusser is much improved from last year. "She's bringing it every practice," said Mitchem. "She's better and stronger, and most of all, she's more consistent. I'm looking for a good season out of her."

Abrams and Tharp have improved their passing, and Mitchem said both would do a good job in their hitting positions.

Sophomore Kendall Mitchem will be a middle hitter, and her serving has improved. "She'll be strong at the net, and I believe she will continue to get better," Coach Mitchem said. "She's working to improve her confidence on every play."

Rylee Davis, another sophomore, will be a hitter and setter. "She was out last year

with an injury, but she's back in the swing of things and looks good," said Mitchem. "She's a good setter and will perform well when we need her to take up that role."

Rounding out the team is Savannah Sieg, the tallest player on the squad. "Her blocking is tremendous, and her serves and passing are getting there," Mitchem said. "She'll be

an amazing player as she develops and gets more confidence."

Chamois hopes to improve on last year's first-round district loss and will open the season on Aug. 26 with a home match against Belle, starting at 5:30 p.m.



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CHAMOIS SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
★ Aug. 26	Varsity	Belle	5:30 PM
★ Aug. 29	Varsity	Bourbon	5:00 PM
Aug. 30	Var./J.V.	Dixon	5:30 PM
★ Sept. 1	Varsity	Fatima	5:00 PM
Sept. 8	Var./J.V.	Russellville	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 9	Varsity	Christian Fellowship Sr.	6:00 PM
★ Sept. 19	Var./J.V.	Linn	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 20	J.V.	North Callaway HS	6:00 PM
★ Sept. 23	Var./J.V.	Dixon	5:30 PM
Sept. 24	Var.	Bourbon Tournament	TBA
Sept. 26	Varsity	Calvary Lutheran	6:00 PM
Sept. 27	Varsity	Columbia Independent HS	6:00 PM
★ Sept. 29	Var./J.V.	Russellville	5:00 PM
Sept. 30	Varsity	Columbia Independent HS	6:00 PM
★ Oct. 3	Varsity	Eugene	TBA
Oct. 4	Varsity	New Bloomfield	5:00 PM
Oct. 6	Varsity	Missouri School for the Deaf	5:00 PM
Oct. 7	Varsity	Bunceton	6:00 PM
Oct. 10	Varsity	Christian Fellowship Sr.	6:00 PM
Oct. 13	Var./J.V.	North Callaway HS	5:00 PM
Oct. 14	Varsity	Wright City Tournament	TBA
★ Oct. 17	Varsity	Bunceton	6:00 PM
★ Oct. 18	Varsity	Columbia Independent	6:00 PM

CHAMOIS CROSS COUNTRY

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Sept. 3	-	New Haven Invitational	TBA
Sept. 9	-	Vienna Invitational	3:45 PM
Sept. 10	-	Linn	9:00 AM
Sept. 22	-	Belle Invitational	4:00 PM
Sept. 28	-	Show Me Conference (Mokane)	4:00 PM
Oct. 1	-	Calvary Lutheran Invitational	TBA
Oct. 4	-	Herman Invitational	4:00 PM
Oct. 8	-	Harrisburg Invitational	9:00 AM
Oct. 17	-	Vienna CC Meet	4:00 PM
Oct. 22	-	Fatima Invitational	TBA

★ - Denotes Home Game

Leach says the “sky’s the limit” for Chamois boys cross country

CHAMOIS — Longtime Chamois coach John Leach is excited about the potential of his cross country runners to excel this year.

“The sky’s the limit for these boys,” he said. “We have a full team, which gives us a chance to earn plaques and maybe get out of districts as a group. It’ll come down to being in shape and what they put on the line when it comes to the district meet.”

Sophomore Caleb Keilholz leads the boys’ team, coming off a year when as a freshman, he just missed a state berth, finishing 43rd in 20:32.

“He did not make state, but he ran this best time of the year,” said Leach after last year’s district meet. “I’m very proud of his effort this year as a freshman. It is very hard to get through to state.”

However, Leach said he’s considering how things are going this year and marking progress from one practice to the next. “The past is the past, and I don’t want to compare too much to how these kids did last year,” said Leach. “It’s a starting point, but my philosophy this season is to focus on the

present and to get better each week.”

Keilholz spends most practices running well ahead of his teammates. “It’s hard to see his full potential because no one is pushing him,” said Leach. “I know, though, that he has the potential to hit the time he needs to qualify for state, and we’re doing everything we can to make it happen.”

Sophomore Bill Kirsch decided to go out for cross country this year. “It’s his first time, so he’s learning how to run, and he has a great attitude,” said Leach. “Bill won’t quit, and he’s very coachable. He could be a dark horse at the district meet. I know he’s going to do his best.”

Three freshmen also join the ranks.

Jaxon Wuelling and his cousin, Kaden Wuelling, are very similar runners. “Jaxon is very athletic, and last year in junior high set the 400m record in track,” said Leach. “He wants to match Caleb this year, and I

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Sports help kids learn the value of teamwork, the importance of building good character and reaching goals.



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Two Lady Pirates return with state XC experience



ELSEY WUELLING gained a lot of experience last year, which culminated with a berth at the state meet.

PHOTOS BY NEAL A JOHNSON

CHAMOIS — As Chamois prepares for the cross country season, Coach John Leach is pleased to have two Lady Pirates returning with state experience.

“I wish we had a full team, but I’m confident these girls will have a great season,” he said. “I know they will do their best to improve every meet.”

Elsey Wuelling and Madeline Gerloff finished the season well at the 2021 Class 1 state cross country meet and are primed to return to the championships.

Wuelling finished 70th in a field of 155 runners with a time of 23:28, the fastest time of her high school career.

Now a junior, Wuelling looks to improve on that time. “She was satisfied with her performance at state,” said Leach. “She has a lot of potential to run even faster, and she’s working hard to do that.”

Gerloff finished 110th in

24:35 at the state meet, and Leach said she is very athletic. “There’s no pressure to compare this year to last season,” he added. “We’re focusing on one meet at a time and working hard to make improvements. Madeline is doing a great job, and I think she has a golden opportunity to return to state.”

Also running this year are juniors Eevie Halbert and Cheyenne Abrams.

“Eevie is a steady runner with a great attitude,” said Leach. “I’m hoping her hard work pays off with a trip to state this year.”

Abrams is running cross country for the first time. “I’m excited to see her develop,” said Leach. “She’s surprised me since joining the team, and she’s improving at every practice. She’s going to get there.”

Chamois opens the season at New Haven on Sept. 3.



EMMA MEHMERT has a year of experience and will lead the JH team this year.

Chamois JH cross country team has four runners

CHAMOIS — Chamois hopes to gain experience this year as four junior high cross country runners are set to begin the season.

“We’re a very young team, but there’s a lot of talent,” said Coach John Leach. “They have the ability to do well, and I’m optimistic that they will do something remarkable even if no one expects it.”

Eighth-grader Emma Mehmert returns to anchor the team, a year removed from earning All-Conference honors.

“Emma has worked hard in everything she’s taken on, from track to archery to cross country,” said Leach. “She has a real opportunity to finish high in the conference again.”

She is joined by seventh-graders Grayson Gerloff and Levi Weed and sixth-grader Carly Schollmeyer.

“Grayson is tall and has some talent,” said Leach. “He’s learning how to use his size to run cross country properly, and I think he can make some things happen this year.”

Weed is athletic and determined to do well. “He’s going to battle and maybe surprise some folks this year,” said Leach.

Schollmeyer faces a challenge, but Leach has a lot of confidence. “At her age, it’s going to be tough running against older kids, but she has a lot of potential,” he said. “I believe she will be competitive even as a sixth-grader. She’s eager to get out and run.”

Chamois opens the season at New Haven on Sept. 3.



CALEB KEILHOLZ just missed a chance to compete at state last year and is working hard for an opportunity this season.

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believe he’s got what it takes to get to state.”

Leach added that Kaden also has the potential to do well. “If he can hit his times by district, he has a shot at a top finish,” Leach added. “Anything can happen at districts, and I’m sure he’ll be ready.”

Evert Mehmert is turning in good times during practice. “He’s putting in the work and could flirt with a state berth,” said Leach. “He’s taller, and his legs are longer, so his stride will benefit him this year.”

Leach also has an eye on the future, as all his runners — on both the boys and girls squads — are underclassmen.

“This will allow us to build the program on both sides,” Leach said.

Chamois opens the season at New Haven on Sept. 3.

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AUSHARA HOSTETLER will again take on pitching duties for the Lady Wildcats but will also be able to play other positions as Linn has more pitchers this year.

PHOTO BY NEAL A JOHNSON

Rost pleased with players' growth, experience

LINN — Linn softball coach Ryan Rost is pleased to have 17 players out this fall, including five seniors and several other returners who gained valuable experience last year. "It's always tough going into a season without any senior leadership and asking juniors who have never been in that role before to step up and do things that normally you wouldn't ask juniors and freshmen and sophomores to do," said Rost of last year's campaign. "There were some struggles and learning curves along the way, but by the end of the year, I felt that our leadership, attitude, and the way we were playing were where I was hoping we would be at the beginning of the year. I'm excited about having everybody back and adding a talented group of freshmen. Practices have been more consistent and focused, and I think that's how games will be. Energy and confidence are high. These girls are ready to

win; they're hungry to win. I'm excited to see what we bring to the table to start the season."

Returning seniors are Aushara Hostetler, Autumn Baker, Alli Klebba, Annaliese Bowser, and Delaney Schmidt.

Hostetler returns as a pitcher, but she's versatile and will have an opportunity to play wherever she's needed.

At the plate last year, Hostetler led the team with a BA of .357 (25-70), with 11 doubles, a triple, and 13 RBI.

Her leadership will be crucial. "She's had to be a leader the last two years in both basketball and softball, so coming into this year, it's nothing different to her," said Rost. "She does a great job working with the young kids and keeps them motivated. She's the perfect kid you want to have on your team."

Hostetler earned first-team All-District and All-Conference honors in 2021.

On the rubber, Hostetler pitched an overwhelming majority of games last year, going 1-5 in 22 outings. In 116 IP, she allowed 84 earned runs on 175 hits, with 49 walks and 66 strikeouts.

Rost said he's happy to give Hostetler time in other positions, meaning she'll be in the outfield or filling a utility role when she's not on the hill.

"I finally get to give her a little bit of a break," he said. "She'll get to expand out and play new positions and not pitch four games a week, so I'm curious to see what we can do with the extra energy she's gonna have. It's the first time in a while that we've had more than just a couple of pitchers to cycle through and play with different defenses. So, it's gonna be fun. I haven't got to do this yet. I'm happy to be able

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to give her a break to where she knows that she doesn't have to be perfect."

Baker returns to cover center field and is expected to have a good season.

"She put in a ton of extra work this summer," said Rost. "She's a phenomenal leader too, and Autumn will be effective at the plate." En route to earning first-team All-District and All-Conference honors last year, Baker hit .319 (22-69), with four doubles, a triple, and 13 RBI.

Klebba found a rhythm and came into her own and established herself as a solid first baseman," said Rost. "Where she's come, between her freshman year and now, I couldn't be more proud. She's worked hard, and she's also one of those kids that's a perfect example of work ethic for the younger girls. Alli shows what you need to do to get better and earn a spot on the field. You know, from where she started to where she is now is solely due to the amount of work she put in. I have high hopes for her, not only in the field but to continue what she did at the plate. She'll be a great asset if she can hit as well as last year."

Annalise Bowser comes into practice every day and works incredibly hard," said Rost. "She's always laughing, but then showing when it's time to dig in, get serious, and go to work. She also had a great junior year last year, especially at the plate, and I'm looking forward to seeing where that carries over into this year."

Bowser recorded 14 hits in 51 at-bats (.275), with two doubles and 10 RBI. She also had a team-high 11 walks. She will play in the outfield or at first base.

Schmidt has gained experience in the fall and spring, having played baseball with the boys. She spent a lot of time at second base last year, and Rost said she has improved quite a bit. "I'm eager to see how that carries into the season," he said. "Delaney has been great working with the younger girls in certain aspects, whether it's with hitting, fielding, or drills," said Rost. "If I'm working with somebody, I can always count on Delaney being somewhere else helping somebody correct footwork or whatever. She's just a phenomenal team player."

Junior Kaitlyn Starke is a two-year

starter and will see time behind the plate and in the outfield. "I've been very proud of the strides she has made in the last three years, not only with getting stronger but with her decision-making and control on the field," said Rost. "She was pretty quiet, and that's not how Kaitlyn is now. She's a very vocal part of our team. She picks us up every practice and every game; she's always in a great mindset. Kaitlyn is a great kid for any program to have."

Starke hit .338 last year (22-65) with two doubles, two triples, and nine RBI.

Lily Strobe pitched in some key games last year and stepped up very well. In 8.2 innings, she gave up 11 earned runs on 19 hits, with eight walks and four strikeouts.

"Lily can contribute to the team and help us whenever we need it," said Rost. "I'm very proud of how she stepped up and continues to work on her skills and improve to help the team."

Sophomores Kiana Hostetler (OF), Hannah Hackmann (IF), Emma Monnette (IF), and Kylie Peters (C) were called upon to play at the varsity level as freshmen and came through stronger with the experience.

"They came in and immediately had to contribute," said Rost. "They didn't have that grace period of getting to grow into varsity. They just got thrown to the wolves and did a great job of stepping up. There were some rough points last year and growing pains that we had to overcome. But by the end of the year, I was impressed with how they composed themselves and how they were playing."

Rost noted that carried over to summer in the weight room. "They don't view themselves as underclassmen," he added. "They consider themselves leaders and equal parts of the team, trying to pick everybody up, and they are a phenomenal group of girls. I'm impressed with how each of them has improved over the summer. You know, the sky's the limit for these four and how far they want to go because they have a great work ethic. They have everything that it takes to be phenomenal players."

At the plate last year, K. Hostetler went 13-54 (.241) with three doubles and eight RBI. Hackmann hit .292 (19-65) with 10 doubles and 15 RBI. Monnette posted a



HANNAH HACKMANN had a solid year, hitting .292 in 2021, with 10 doubles and 15 RBI.

PHOTOS BY NEAL A JOHNSON

double and three RBI in her 15-64 performance (.234), while Peters finished at .237 (14-59) with a double, two triples, and nine RBI.

This year's freshmen are Ava Warren (P/IF), Sophie Voss (P/IF/OF), Elizabeth Sprenger (P/IF/OF), Mara Mitchell (IF/OF), Madaleigh Wilson (IF/OF), and Emerson Bowser (IF/OF).

"We're still trying to figure out where each of them will play, but I will say this is a very talented freshman group," said Rost. "Some of these girls have come into the first couple of weeks of practice and impressed coach (Mike) Nolting and me. It's a big transition for a 14-year-old kid to come into a varsity practice when they've never been part of that. Most of

those freshmen have really stepped up and proved that they belong there and that they're going to be competing for varsity positions."

Having three pitchers in the group will allow A. Hostetler the opportunity to play different positions. "It's nice to have a little depth to our pitching," said Rost.

As the season begins, Rost is happy to have Nolting by his side for the third year. "We work very well together and share the same approach to softball," he said. "We've survived the whole COVID thing, and I'm looking forward to a normal season."

Linn will play at 5 p.m. on Aug. 29 at Vienna in the season opener.

LINN HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Aug. 29	Varsity	Vienna	5:00 PM
★ Aug. 30	Var./J.V.	Capital City	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 1	Var./J.V.	Owensville	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 6	Var./J.V.	Cuba	4:30 PM
Sept. 8	Var./J.V.	Belle	5:00 PM
Sept. 9	Var./J.V.	Eugene	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 12	Var./J.V.	Southern Boone	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 13	Var./J.V.	New Bloomfield	5:00 PM
Sept. 16	Var./J.V.	Tuscumbia	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 19	Var./J.V.	St. Elizabeth	5:00 PM
Sept. 20	Var./J.V.	South Callaway	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 23	Var./J.V.	Fatima	TBA
★ Sept. 26	Var./J.V.	Eldon	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 27	Var./J.V.	Russellville	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 30-10/1	Varsity	Linn Tournament	TBA
★ Oct. 3	Var./J.V.	Pacific	5:00 PM
Oct. 4	Var./J.V.	Versailles	5:00 PM
Oct. 10	Varsity	New Haven	5:00 PM

★ - Denotes Home Game



ALLI KLEBBA, left, secured her spot at first base last year and will again defend that position. Above, Emma Monnette earned her stripes at third base.

Wildcats preparing for rough but valuable opening JV football season

LINN —Linn coach Steve Samson is no stranger to football, and he's versed in not only playing but winning. However, this year the focus is on putting a team on the field, with 24 players on the roster.

"With limited numbers, we're not worried about anyone getting playing time," said Samson. "Our goal is to get players on the field and let them get experience and a feel for football."

Four Wildcats have played football previously, and Samson said all his players have to understand that football is not like other sports.

"We're trying to create a culture around here, and it's hard work, but it's gonna pay off, eventually," said Samson. "Football is just different. You got 11 guys that have to do the job every time because if they miss their job, it's going to affect the other 10. Football is the only sport that ever does that. It's a culture where we can't rely on one or two kids. We have to rely on all players to do their job and do it as best they can. And as hard as they can."

As the season unfolds, Samson is confident there will be improvement, and he firmly believes his players will put up a fight. "I think we'll score, and we might hold some teams, but basically, I want the community to know that these kids are going to work hard," he said. "They're going to work hard during practice, and they're going to play harder in the games. We're not going to give up. We might be behind, but we're gonna play four quarters of football, no matter what the scoreboard reads. That's what we're trying to teach them right now. Just play hard. You know, play smart, do what you can, and do it every down."

This is Samson's first head-coach role.

"Everything I've ever coached has been an established program," said Samson. "This is my first time starting a program, and the coaches and I have taken the approach that we're starting this like we would a junior high program. We're starting from scratch."

Samson is a 1985 graduate of Jefferson City High School, where he excelled as an All-State running back in his senior year. "I was on a state championship team and was lucky enough to get a full-ride scholarship to Missouri Western," he said. "I played there for four years and then came back to Jeff City and started coaching in 1991-92 at Jeff City at the eighth-grade level."

After the 1992 season, Samson stepped away for about 10 years and went to work for the state. He returned to coach seventh-grade football in the 2005-06 school year for Jefferson City. After two seasons, Samson went to Southern Boone for seven years.



LINN FOOTBALL players line up for drills and are excited to take the field.

PHOTO BY CHRISTINA LAUGHLIN

He returned to Jeff City for one year, and in 2017 he was the offensive coordinator at Blair Oaks. In 2018 and 2019, Samson coached at Jefferson City again.

Now, he's at Linn, with 22 years of coaching experience.

This year, Samson will focus on linebackers and running backs. At the same time, Assistant Coach Grant Hopkins, who coached at Jefferson City with Samson, is the team's defensive coordinator and is also responsible for secondary, running back, and slot players.

Assistant Coach Cody Fulkerson, who coached at the Missouri University of Science & Technology, will work with the offensive and defensive lines.

Assistant Coach Braden Ham will help receivers and secondary defenders.

During the first week of summer camp, or summer contact days in July, the team went five days in a row without even touching a football. "All we worked on was blocking, tackling, stances, and starts, you know, step in with the right foot when you're supposed to step with the right foot and step in with the left foot when you need to," said Samson. "We've broken things down to the very beginning of football. We stressed disciplined and fundamentals. From the last day of summer camp to the first week of practice, we did a lot of fundamentals. So

we've got a few plays in, but most of our plays are very basic right now because that's what we know. You can have the greatest offense and defense in the world, but if you can't block and tackle, it's not going to help you."

Samson is an offensive-minded coach. "I was a defensive coordinator for one year at Southern Boone, but my primary focus is offense," he said. "I've also coached defensive positions because we coached both sides of the ball on most of the teams I was on. So you know I've coached linebackers; I've coached secondary and D-line for one year. So I've coached each position. So I know a little bit about everything."

Samson stressed the importance of physical conditioning.

"You're gonna have kids playing multiple positions on offense and defense," he said. "They're gonna have to play special teams. They will have to play a bit of everything. Everybody's expected to play as hard as they can when they're out there. That's kind of what we're preaching right now."

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LINN PLAYERS run through blocking drills (left) and work on foot skills (right) at a recent practice.

PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA LAUGHLIN

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Samson is still evaluating players to determine their positions, but a few are likely.

Junior Christopher Brandt will probably be the starting quarterback and middle linebacker.

“He works hard every day, and he’s still learning because he has no experience,” said Samson. “Connor Vaughn will probably start at fullback and play middle linebacker.”

Vaughn has taken some snaps at quarterback, and Samson noted that many players are trying different positions.

Joe Brandt is working hard for the starting center’s job, and Arlyn Martin and Logan Martin will play at guard while Jason Greer and Vincent Biggs will be the starting tackles.

Jaylen Jones, Trevor Brant, and William Logan are taking turns in the slot, and Arturo Mendez-Martinez, Maison Nelson, and Zachary Dodson are vying for starting roles as receivers and backs, along with Devin Brandt, who Samson said will probably get time at the fullback position.

The roster also includes Jake Bish, Joseph Brandt, Hunter Haslag, Carson Kliethermes, Craig Laughlin, William Logan, Angel Mendez-Martinez, Carson Shaw, and Tyler Wagner.

Laughlin will probably play on the offensive line, and he might also play tight end if we put in a tight end. “He’s one of the guys that might have to switch jerseys during a game,” said Samson, noting these positions will likely change, and nothing has been set in stone. “Hunter Haslag is

probably going to play fullback, he might play some guard, he might play defensive line, and he might play linebacker. He’s a pretty versatile kid. He has size and decent speed. So we’re gonna try and use him in different different areas, you know, because like I said, if you don’t have that many kids, you’re gonna have to play multiple positions. We’ve talked about, you know, he might play fullback for two series, and then all of a sudden, my guard needs to rest. One of the Martin boys needs to rest, so another player has to throw on an eligible number.”

Depending on the game situation, things will change from one series to the next. “We’ll know more after the first game,” said Samson. “We don’t have enough players to scrimmage, so we’re trying to scrimmage individual positions. You know, we’re trying to go live as much as we can now that we’re in full pads. We’re trying to do individual, one-on-one drills. It’s not like we can line up and just run at each other.”

Samson is pleased with the players’ response to his approach. “They’ve done everything we’ve asked them to do,” he said. “Most of our stuff is a three-on-three drill, maybe a half-line drill, where we’re running to the right side, and we block the left side of our line. And everything’s run to the right, and we flip it over, run everything to the left, and then try to get a sub in there now and then. So I mean, that’s kind of how our practices go. Once we get our numbers up, we’ll be able to see more. I’m still hoping that

when school starts, we might have one or two kids come out that really don’t know about it or are maybe new to the district and didn’t know about football until they started. So I mean, they won’t be ready for the first game, but after 14 practices, they can play.”

Samson is excited to play on the refurbished field and very grateful for the work that went into preparing everything.

“There has been huge support from this community,” said Samson. “We’ve also had people lay sod, help put the goalposts and paint them, and put up the scoreboard. All those people have volunteered their time come out, and the team appreciates it; I appreciate it. We’re thankful for that because it couldn’t have been done without people to step up and take the opportunity

to do it.”

Linn opens the season against Thayer at 7 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 26, at home, in what Samson hopes will be a big celebration.

“Thayer is a good team, so we’ll be tested right off the bat,” he said. “We’ll see what we do. I mean, all we can do is line up and play.”

After that, Linn’s games will be played on Mondays, except for the Sept. 6 contest against St. James, which will be on Tuesday because of Labor Day.

The first five games on the schedule will be played at home, and the remaining contests will be road games.

“I can’t wait to get going,” said Samson. “These kids are the best. They’re eager to hit the field and get started.”

Linn Football Roster

Player	Grade	Offensive	Defensive
Zach Dodson	12	Running Back, QB	Safety
Maison Nelson	12	Running Back	Safety
Chris Brandt	11	QB, FB	Linebacker
Arlyn Martin	11	O-Line	D-Line
Hunter Haslag	11	Full Back, Guard	Linebacker, D-Line
Jaylen Jones	11	Split End, Running Back	Comer, Safety
Connor Vaughn	11	Full Back, Qb	Linebacker
Vincent Biggs	11	O-Line	D-Line
Logan Martin	10	O-Line	D-Line
Arturo Martinez	10	Running Back	Safety
Devin Brandt	10	FB, RB	Comer
Trevor Brandt	10	Split End, Running Back	Safety, Comer
Angel Mendez	10	Split End, Running Back	Comer
Jake Bish	9	Guard	End
Joe Brandt	9	Center, Guard	Linebacker, D-Line
Jason Greer	9	O-Line	D-Line
Carson Kliethermes	9	Split End, Running Back	Comer, Safety
Craig Laughlin	9	O-Line	D-Line
William Logan	9	Split End, Running Back	Comer
Carson Shaw	9	Running Back, Full Back	Safety
Tyler Wagner	9	Split End, QB	Safety

LINN FOOTBALL

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
★ Aug. 26	JV	Thayer	7:00 PM
★ Sept. 6	JV	St. James	5:30 PM
★ Sept. 12	JV	California	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 12	FR	California	TBA
★ Sept. 19	JV	Cuba	5:30 PM
Sept. 26	JV	North County	5:00 PM
Oct. 3	JV	Centralia	6:00 PM
Oct. 10	JV	Russellville	TBA
Oct. 20	JV	California	TBA
Oct. 20	FR	California	TBA

★ - Denotes Home Game

Peterson continues culture of positivity with Linn volleyball team

LINN — This year's Linn volleyball team is driven to succeed by showing unity, positivity, and teamwork, according to Coach Kayla Peterson, who is in her second year at the helm.

"We started our season with a team lock-in that allowed us to work on getting to know each other," she said. "We have spent time working on the whole athlete. This includes nutrition, mental and physical health."

Coach Peterson and her mother, Assistant Coach Sharlet Peterson, believe that with leadership, 24 strong athletes, and the desire to win, the Lady Wildcats will be a strong force this season.

"We are looking forward to a great year," said Kayla Peterson.

Her philosophy remains the same. "I feel like is varsity is there to win, and JV is there to learn," Peterson said. "We won the first round of districts last year, went to the second round, and got knocked out by Hermann. "I think part of the problem last year was that we were so divided and didn't have that whole athlete in mind. I said we're going to win more than three games this year. But I think rebuilding is our big goal this year. We know the athletes now versus last year. We were still learning how far we could push them and getting to know them. And we told them, we know you now and how far we can push you. And we're going to push you to be your best, not just in volleyball, but all the way around."

Peterson added that there will be difficult times this year, and taking a break — even during a match — is not only okay but preferred. "If they need to come off the court, vent to us, and then let us know when they're ready to go back in — that's what we want to see. We don't want them to fear coming off the court and then being frustrated and mad. We don't want to see it and have to pull them."

Maintaining a positive attitude is key for Peterson. "I would rather them be able

to vent and de-escalate quickly than bring the whole team down," she said. "A bad mental state leads to mistakes, which can cost us matches."

She is also concerned about mental health in general, which led her and the older players to schedule a mental health awareness match in September.

"We're going to do a neon night, but we're not sure exactly what match yet," said Peterson. "They've already made t-shirts with the saying, 'New Year, New Me.' It's designed to break the stigma. They want to raise money to donate to a facility here in town that works with mental health awareness, suicide prevention, and those kinds of things. That's something that the seniors decided on their own."

Peterson said there is a growing bond among the players as she encourages them to spend time together away from practice and games. "It's important that they know each other as individuals, not just as teammates," she said. "Our goal is to get these girls to the point where they know and trust each other completely because that will lead to better teamwork."

Peterson is also interested in a holistic approach to physical readiness. "We're really focusing on whole student-athlete versus just you know, okay, we're here to play volleyball," she said. "We want them

to recognize that a healthy lifestyle and healthy mental health and healthy relationships are just as important as playing ball."

Leading the team this year are seniors Marlee Houston and Rylee Jaegers.

Houston is a utility player with four years of varsity experience. "She's a great hitter and defensive specialist, but she can set the ball well and play wherever we need her," said Peters.

Jaegers transferred last year from Helias and played back row. This year, she will move to the outside hitter position and be a setter. "She wasn't a starter last year, but she did play most of the season," Peterson noted. "She stepped up, and she was an excellent setter."

Juniors are Saylie Schaefer, Kendyl Peters, Natalie Ramsey, Faith Hines, and Katrina Mueller.

Schaefer will step into the second setter's role and play outside this year. "She played middle last year and was solid," said Peterson. "She's quiet but moving to a leadership role and helping the younger players."

Peters is a good all-around player and



MARLEE HOUSTON returns as one of the team's leaders. **PHOTO BY NEAL A JOHNSON**

See Linn volleyball
Page 11B



KENDYL PETERS has good experience at the net and will be important to Linn's success.

Good Luck

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Linn volleyball • from page 10B

will use her strong hitting to help in whatever capacity is required. "She's consistently all over the floor and takes direction well," said Peterson.

Ramsey (libero) played a lot of club ball last year. "She has a more serious tone but works well with others, and always looks

for ways to improve," Peterson noted.

Hines was a manager last year but has developed into a good libero on the JV squad. "She's big into the team aspect of things," said Peterson. "She is the epitome of dedication."

Mueller will play wherever the coach

needs her. "She's very coachable, listens to critiques, and strives to get better all the time," said Peterson.

Sophomores are Harlee Klebba, Lizzie Wingrath, Lydia Kleffner, Bren Hamil, Madison Mengwasser, Vidella Loughridge, Lauren Jacquin, Gracie Schaefer, Courtney Woods, Raylee Simpson, Natasha Jewell, Rylie Cooper, and manager Andrew Ely. Freshmen are Karley Frank, Fayth Davis,

Kylie Blackford, and Miranda Berry.

"I expect this younger group to continue developing their skills as they work their way up the ranks," said Peterson. "They're all putting in the work, and I am pleased with their progress."

Linn opens the season at Owensville on Aug. 29. The Lady Wildcats will play a varsity, JV-A and JV-B schedule.



SAYLIE SCHAEFER will be Linn's second setter and an outside hitter.

LINN VOLLEYBALL

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Aug. 29	Var./J.V./Fr.	Owensville	TBA
★ Sept. 2	Var./J.V.	Eugene	TBA
★ Sept. 6	Var./J.V./Fr.	Fatima	5:00 AM
★ Sept. 9	Var./J.V.	New Bloomfield	TBA
★ Sept. 12	Var./J.V./Fr.	Fulton	5:00 PM
Sept. 13	Var./J.V.	Dixon	5:30 PM
★ Sept. 15	Var./J.V./Fr.	Centralia	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 16	J.V.	J.V. Linn Tournament	TBA
Sept. 19	Var./J.V.	Chamois	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 20	Var./J.V.	Belle	5:00 PM
Sept. 23	Var./J.V.	Calvary Lutheran	5:00 PM
Sept. 24	V.	Bourbon Varsity Tournament	TBA
Sept. 24	J.V.	Russellville Junior Varsity Tournament	TBA
Sept. 29	Var./J.V./Fr.	Southern Boone	5:00 PM
★ Oct. 3	Var./J.V./Fr.	St. James	5:00 PM
Oct. 6	Var./J.V.	Versailles	5:00 PM
Oct. 8	V.	Belle Volleyball Tournament	TBA
Oct. 10	Var./J.V./Fr.	New Haven	4:30 PM
★ Oct. 11	Var./J.V.	Cuba	5:00 PM
★ Oct. 13	Var./J.V./Fr.	Eldon	5:00 PM
Oct. 15	V.	Versailles Invitational	TBA
Oct. 18	Var./J.V.	Russellville	5:00 PM

★ - Denotes Home Game

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Wildcats XC team includes two returning state qualifiers



JASON POWERS, above, and John Schmidt return to lead the Wildcats after going to the state meet last year.

PHOTOS BY NEAL A JOHNSON



LINN — Linn’s cross country program is starting the season a little low on high school numbers, but participants are giving it all they have.

“I am happy to have them running as Wildcats,” said Coach Robyn Baker. “We ended the season last year with a first-place district finish for the boys’ team and two from our girls’ team making it to the state meet. I hope we see several running at the state meet this year. Our seniors from last year have left a bit of a hole, but this next class is stepping up and trying to lead our team.”

This year’s boys’ team has three seniors: Jason Powers, Rhett Robinson, and John Schmidt.

Powers has been a part of the Linn XC team since middle school. “He has always been a hard worker, and I feel like this will be his year to shine,” said Baker. “He put in miles over the summer and has a strong desire to be one of our top runners and have a successful senior year. Unfortunately, last year he was an alternate for the state meet, and I know this year he would love to be able to run at state.”

Robinson is a returning varsity runner who had his best race of the season, turning in a time of 19:26 for 126th place at state

last year.

“I am depending on him to help lead this team,” said Baker. “He has worked incredibly hard this summer, lifting on his own and becoming much stronger overall. Now we are figuring out how to run well with this new strength. I am excited to see how he performs and look forward to seeing him back at the state meet.”

Schmidt ended last year with an improved time to finish 87th in 18:35 and looks ready to take it to the championship meet again. “I have loved watching him grow and become more of a leader for our cross country team,” Baker said. “He started as a very quiet guy in middle school, and we are learning to love his humor and hard work. He has great potential, and I feel confident he can make it back to the state meet if he continues to push and work hard at practice.”

Sophomore Cole Franken is a new addition to the team. “We are excited to have him,” said Baker. “He was a jumper in track last spring and also ran a bit. I am excited the running bug got him, and he is going to try cross country. He is working hard, and it will be nice to see him in a Wildcat uniform running.”

Rounding out the boys’ team are fresh-

men Reid Baker and Koen Caldwell.

Baker had some success in middle school, and Coach Baker is happy to see him out for the high school cross country season. “He was able to get some work in the weight room this summer, as well as some summer running,” said Coach Baker. “We are working on the added mileage of the high school competition, and he seems to be handling it well. It will be fun to see how he fits into our team and competes with the big boys.”

Caldwell ran in seventh grade but took a break from cross country last year. “We’re glad to have him back as a freshman,” said Baker. “He has already impressed me with his work ethic and is a good push for the older runners. I am excited to see how he does this year and hope to watch him over his entire high school career.”

Members of the JH team are Carson Kempker, Titus Black, Alex Carnes, Cody Platt, and Colten Bridges.

Baker praised their work ethic and said she is excited to see how the season unfolds.

Linn travels to New Haven on Sept. 3 for the opening meet.

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Good Luck

Wildcats, Comets and
Pirates on a Great Season!

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RAMSIETSCHAPPLER is the lone returning Lady Wildcat with state experience. She's earned two berths and is looking for a third.

Lady Cats have one XC returner with state experience

LINN — Linn takes the field with six girls on the cross country team, and one has state-level experience.

Junior Ramsie Tschappler has gone to the state meet the last two years, and last year turned in a time of 22:17 for 67th place. "I am counting on her to get back there this year and hopefully with a few other Wildcat runners," said Coach Robyn Baker. "Ramsie is always working hard and has the drive to make it to the state meet each year in high school. I am confident she can do that, and I look forward to seeing her work toward that goal."

Seniors this year are Annaliese Bowser, Marissa Gehlert, and Erika Platt.

Bowser is again competing in cross country and softball. "I am so proud of how hard she works in both," said Baker. "She has put in a lot of work in the weight room this summer and done quite a bit of running. I am excited about her first race because I think she is going to surprise even herself. I am hopeful for a great senior running season."

Gehlert also ran quite a bit this summer and is becoming a much stronger runner. "I honestly think Marissa has it in her to be a marathon runner, but we'll get her



MARISSA GEHLERT and Annaliese Bowser are back to compete on the cross country course.



through the cross country season first," said Baker. "She is so consistent and seems to run effortlessly. I appreciate her leadership, and she is able to push the younger runners, which is wonderful for a coach to see."

Platt is a runner that kind of sneaks up on you. "She has always run well and is so strong," said Baker. "I am excited to see how she will do this year and anticipate great things. She has run since middle school, and I am going to miss not having her around next year. I think this could be a good season for her and will be excited to celebrate her success."

Junior Reagan Klouzek didn't have the season she wanted last year, but she is back this year and ready to run. "She got some miles in this summer and has been working hard to get her running legs back under her," Baker noted. "I also appreciate how she is trying to encourage the younger runners; that is great to see. If she keeps working

hard, she will have a successful year."

Joining the high school team this year is freshman Emerson Bowser, who is following in her sister's footsteps and competing in cross country and softball this fall. "She is also following in her work ethic, which is essential when doing two sports," said Baker. "She was really starting to get some success in eighth grade last year, so I am excited to see how she will compete at the high school level."

Jorja Kempker, Shayla Burnett, and Ava Franken will compete at the middle school level.

"These kids have been working hard and are trying their best and seem to want to be successful," said Baker. "I am looking forward to a great middle school running season."

Linn travels to New Haven on Sept. 3 for the opening meet.



CARSON KEMPKER and Jorja Kempker return to lead their respective JH cross country teams.



PHOTOS BY NEAL A JOHNSON



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LINN CROSS COUNTRY

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Sept. 3	-	New Haven Invitational	TBA
★ Sept. 10	-	Fulton	TBA
★ Sept. 10	-	Linn Invitational	9:00 AM
★ Sept. 10	-	Eldon	9:00 AM
★ Sept. 10	-	Belle	10:00 AM
Sept. 28	-	Show Me Conference Meet	TBA
Oct. 22	-	Fatima Invitational	TBA

★ - Denotes Home Game



TYLER KLOEPEL will help guide the Comets this year in cross country.

Fatima boys' cross country team has nine runners

WESTPHALIA — Fatima has nine runners out for the cross country season, with four juniors, three sophomores, and two freshmen.

Last year, the lone Comet to compete at the state meet was Wyatt Gabelsberger, who, as a freshman, ran his second-fastest time at the Class 3 state meet at Gans Creek on his way to a 96th-place finish. His time of 18:21 came just one week after running his fastest time of the season at the district meet.

“Wyatt has a lot of ability, and as he gets into shape, he will be capable of pushing anyone,” said Coach Marc Bridges.

Gabelsberger earned All-Conference and All-District honors last year.

Juniors are Cody Berhorst, Tyler Kloepfel, Cody Kampeter, and Harrison Stratman.

“Berhorst returns as our top runner from a year ago and is looking good early in the season,” said Bridges.

Berhorst gave a gutsy performance, struggling with a calf injury to hang on for Fatima's fourth spot at the district meet last year as he finished in a time of 18:53 for 42nd place.

Kloepfel (35, 18:36) and Cody Kampeter (41, 18:53) also had a solid district race, turning in some of their best times of the year.

See **Fatima boys XC**
Page 15B

Lady Comets cross country fields five seniors

WESTPHALIA — Five of the 12 Lady Comets running cross country are seniors this season.

Emma Bower, Sarah Groene, and Corinn Karst have run for the Lady Comets since their freshman year and have been the core of the team the last two seasons; they will fill that role again in their final campaign.

“We will be counting on these three veteran runners to be leaders and show the younger girls how we do things in our program,” said Coach Marc Bridges.

Junior Lauren Berhorst returns as Fatima's top runner from last season as she earned All-State honors with a 12th-place run

of 19:32.

“Lauren will look to recapture the success she enjoyed last year as an All-State runner,” said Bridges.

Bower had her second-fastest race of the year at last year's state championship, knocking off almost a minute from the previous year's state meet to finish 48th in a time of 21:05. She

See **Lady Comet cross country**
Page 15B



BREANNA RADEMAN, left, and Addyson Wilbers, want another trip to the state meet.



PHOTOS BY NEAL A JOHNSON

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Fatima boys XC volleyball • from page 14B

“Tyler probably has the best raw speed of any of our boys and will use a strong finish to keep him near the top of our lineup,” said Bridges. “Cody is one of the hardest working boys we’ve had come through our program in a while, and I am excited to see how much he has improved.”

Stratman begins his second season in better shape. “With a lot more experience than he had last year, he should do well,” said Bridges.

Sophomore Brady Hager has come into his own this summer. “Brady has been incredibly motivated this summer and has shown maybe the most improvement of any of our boys,” Bridges said. “I can’t wait to see Brady race.”

Sophomore Ben Luebbert has also seen some improvement in the off-season and is showing more toughness in his workouts, Bridges added.

Freshman Michael Groene is looking good after a slow start to his summer conditioning due to injury. “I look for Michael to push his way to the varsity level and continue to improve every week,” said Bridges, adding that freshman Zach Kloepfel has also been a great addition to the squad and worked hard this summer to get into shape. “Zach has really improved in the last couple of weeks, and I would bet that when we see him race, he will exceed his own expectations.”

Fatima has six junior high boys this season. “I can honestly say I’ve never had a group of junior high kids put in as much work in the off-season as these boys have,” said Bridges.

Eighth-grader Michael Gabelsberger leads the team after a great cross country season and an even better track season in which he ran the mile in a blistering

5:07. “Michael is in great shape and more confident in his ability, which will put him at the top of any race,” said Bridges.

After a strong track season, eighth-graders Zach Eisterhold and Cameron Woehr decided to run this fall and worked hard all summer to prepare. “I am looking forward to seeing what Zach and Cameron can do,” Bridges added.

Seventh-graders Mason Huhn, Tucker Gregory, and Paul Welschmeyer came in and ran a lot this summer in preparation for the season. “We are very excited to see where they are and where they will get to this season,” said Bridges.

Fatima opens the cross country season at New Haven on Sept. 3.



LAST YEAR, Wyatt Gabelsberger was the lone Comet to compete at the state meet and he hopes to improve on his time this year. **PHOTOS BY NEAL A JOHNSON**

Lady Comet cross county • from page 14B



LAUREN BERHORST earned All-State last year and is primed for a return.

earned All-Conference and All-District and medaled in five regular-season meets last year.

Next to cross was Groene, who ran an almost identical time from the Gans Creek Invitational on the same course earlier in the year, finishing the state race in 22:13 for 97th place. She earned All-conference, All-District, and medaled in five regular-season meets.

Corinn Karst had a solid race, running her second-fastest time of the year (23:11) for 124th place.

Senior Megan Borgmeyer is starting her

third season with the team. Bridges said she did a good job of managing some nagging injuries early in the season to make her way into the varsity lineup at the end of the year and posted her season-best time by nearly 30 seconds (25:35).

“Megan is a tough kid and has an impact on the team every season,” said Bridges.

Senior Rachel Woehr is making her cross country debut, although she has a lot of running experience on the track. “Rachel is an incredibly tough competitor and has added depth to the team, not to mention a winning attitude,” Bridges noted.

Juniors Addyson Wilbers and Breanna Rademan also return to the team. “I think it’s fair to say that Breanna and Addyson have worked harder than anyone this summer, and I am very eager to see them race,” said Bridges. “I expect big things from both of them.”

Wilbers had one of her best races at last year’s state meet, finishing in 137th place in a time of 23:46. She also earned All-Conference honors last season.

Sophomores Reagan Bock and Lily Gregory put in a lot of work over the summer. “It’s obvious to us that they are in a much better place at the start of this season,” said Bridges.

Sophomore Payton Wieberg is joining the team for her first season after a successful freshman campaign in track. Freshmen Heidi Struempf also joins the team. “This is Heidi’s first experience with cross country, and as a track standout in junior high,

along with the guidance of the more veteran members of the team, we are very excited to watch her progress this season.”

At the JH level, Fatima has two girls out this season, seventh-graders Rose Berhorst and Jaidyn McCann.

“It’s early, and the girls are still getting in shape, but so far, I’ve been impressed with their efforts and attitudes,” said Bridges.

Fatima opens the cross country season at New Haven on Sept. 3.

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FATIMA CROSS COUNTRY

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Sept. 3	-	New Haven Invitational	TBA
Sept. 10	-	Father Tolton Regional Catholic	TBA
Sept. 17	-	Fulton	TBA
Sept. 24	-	Gans Creek	TBA
Sept. 28	-	Show Me Conference Meet	TBA
Oct. 1	-	Camdenton Invitational at HaHa Tonka	TBA
Oct. 15	-	Hancock	TBA
★ Oct. 10	-	Fatima Invitational	9:00 AM

★ - Denotes Home Game

Fatima boys' soccer team heavily loaded with eight returning starters



RYAN KESEL is a returning All-State midfielder who will battle for every ball.

WESTPHALIA — Fatima boys' soccer players are in very high spirits coming off an incredible district performance from last season, with eight returning starters and 12 seniors.

"We have a great group of players on the field," said Coach Clint Dobry. "I anticipate that we could start slow but should hit our stride sooner than in previous years, and hopefully, injuries will not impact our rise with our super-deep bench. This team may be one of the toughest, fastest, and most determined groups to come through Fatima in many years."

The Comets will be led by All-Staters Blake Gentges and Ryan Kesel.

Gentges is a four-year starter, and as a team captain, Dobry believes he will help Fatima reach its potential.

"A natural leader, he will play many games at forward and should have a career year," said Dobry. "His attitude is infectious, as he continues to inspire the team to victory through his incredible play and character."

Kesel is Fatima's other team captain and will play most games in midfield. "He is also a four-year starter and has matured very well," said Dobry. "I have high aspirations

for him, and hopefully, his abilities are on full display this year. He wants to end his career at Fatima with another district title and state honors."

Chase Kremer will be a great midfield asset. "Chase has a solid work ethic and will play many minutes this year," said Dobry. "His role will expand as he will be called upon to make more scoring opportunities possible. I am confident he will be very successful."

Jackson Schenewerk moved up to varsity last year and is expected to contribute goals and assist in the midfield," said Dobry. "He has improved tremendously and should have a solid year."

Ray Laughlin is very talented, and Dobry believes this will be a breakout year for the senior. "He has incredible soccer skills and will be a difference-maker on the field again," said Dobry. "He has been working nonstop on his game, which will benefit the program as he laces up for his last season again."

Senior forward Victor Struempf is one of Fatima's leading scorers and will again be a threat in that role. "His tenacity is unmatched on the field, and he uses this drive to wrestle

the ball away from defenders," said Dobry. "He will cause many problems for opposing defenses. I would not be surprised if he also has a career year up top."

Jackson Logan is another greatly improved player who will get some time at forward this year. "He scored a fantastic goal at Sacred Heart last year, and I expect he will put more in the back of the net this year," said Dobry.

Michael Kloepfel is a two-year defensive starter and even faster than last year. "He is a great competitor and has performed well in his defensive duties," said Dobry of the senior. "His soccer skills improve every year, and his main job will be to stop counterattacks."

Jacob Rolwes is a solid role player capable of playing anywhere on the field. "He will get some time at forward and some midfield time," said Dobry.

JP Schulte will be starting in goal this year. "A natural athlete, he is capable of also

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Fatima soccer • from page 14B

playing anywhere, and we will rely on his talents to keep pesky goals out of our net,” Dobry said. “His goal-stopping abilities are already good, so hopefully, he makes the transition from good to great.”

Patrick Holterman will play left-side defender, a position he has maintained for the last three years.

“He is a solid, tough, and intelligent defender who is always improving and making strides in his game,” said Dobry. “We will rely on his toughness this year as we hope to improve on defense.”

Garrett Mantle is the team’s backup goalie this year in his second year as a keeper. “Moving up from JV this year, we hope to get him in as many contests as we can,” said Dobry. “He’s greatly improved from last season and will continue to get more touches and gain more confidence in his position.”

Junior Cody Koenigsfeld is one of the most talented players on the team. “His work ethic is top-notch, and he can score from anywhere on the field,” Dobry noted. “As a three-year starter, he keeps making plays that determine the outcome of close games. He has played most of his minutes as a defender; however, this year, we may call on him to be a play-maker in the midfield.”

Chase Buddemeyer is another up-and-coming junior who has incredible potential and started to get good minutes at forward last year. “His speed and resilience are just awesome,” said Dobry. “I look forward to his unveiling this year when he gets more opportunities in his role.”

Junior Jacob Bax is another three-year defensive starter. “Like Cody, he has All-State potential and will create many problems for other offenses,” said Dobry. “His speed and quickness are the best on the team.”

Christian Stephens was the most improved player from last season. “He began last year as a JV player and was a varsity starter at the end of last season,” said Dobry of the junior. “As he matures, his game will continue to improve, and I expect many goals and assist from him as a forward.”

Rounding out the junior class is Owen Scheulen, who returns from an injury that hampered him most of last year. “I expect

to use him up top, and his scoring abilities are among the best on the team,” said Dobry. “He should get lots of opportunities to score goals, and he will make us much more formidable.”

Three sophomores fill out the varsity roster.

Tyler Koenigsfeld is a newcomer to the varsity squad and is expected to play defense. “His game has evolved greatly from last year, and he should help the defensive squad reach its potential,” said Dobry.

Trevor Schulte is another newcomer that won a varsity slot. “To put it plainly, Trevor is just a tough kid,” Dobry offered. “He will need that toughness in his new role as a varsity midfielder. I am confident he will continue to rise as he learns the game.”

Richard Luebbert will split time between varsity and JV this year. “He plays well in most positions and has great potential,” said Dobry. “Richard will probably be assigned midfield duties. He is eager to get his game to the next level and will get a chance to prove it.”

Overall, Dobry said that while Fatima’s schedule is demanding, it’s manageable and will help the Comets prepare for districts again this year.

“A district title is always the goal and this season is no different,” the coach added. “Another strong finish is very much on the minds of our team, and I’m excited to see what these boys can do. They want to be one of the great ones. I would love to see them accomplish that.”

Last season, Fatima played to a 2-1 overtime loss to Fr. Tolton after knocking off Calvary Lutheran 8-0 in the opener. They finished the year 8-15-1.

This year’s JV squad looks very talented, with a good mix of sophomores and freshmen.

“They have a challenging schedule and will learn to get tough early against Rolla and Fulton. The team is led by new coach Dustin Cox.

“He will have them playing solid soccer soon,” said Coach Dobry. “They have a lot to learn but are very teachable and eager to excel. We also have very high hopes for the new JV team.”



RETURNING ALL-STATE forward Blake Gentges celebrates after scoring the winning goal in last year’s final home game. He will again be a driving force for the Comets.

PHOTOS BY NEAL A JOHNSON

Team members are sophomores Jonathan Block (MF), Richard Luebbert (D), Austin Schenewerk (D), Ethan Troesser (MF), Evan Troesser (MF), Phillip Welschmeyer (D), and freshmen are Jace Eisterhold (MF), Eli Koenigsfeld (D), Andrew Muenks (D), Jase

Rehagen (D), Kaedyn Rehagen (O), Drew Riegel (D), Colton Scheulen (O), Michael Sesti (D), and Peter Schwartz (MF).

Fatima opens the season with a home game on Sept. 29 against Stover, beginning at 4:30 p.m.

FATIMA SOCCER

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
★ Aug. 22	Varsity	Fatima Jamboree	4:30 PM
★ Aug. 29	Var./J.V.	Stover	5:00 PM
Aug. 30	Var./J.V.	Fulton	5:00 AM
Sept. 1	Var./J.V.	Rolla	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 6	Var./J.V.	Crocker	5:00 PM
Sept. 8	Varsity	Dixon	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 12	Varsity	Cole Camp	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 13	Var./J.V.	Sullivan	5:00 PM
Sept. 19	Var./J.V.	Missouri Military Academy	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 20	Var./J.V.	Camdenton	5:00 PM
Sept. 22	Var./J.V.	Boonville	5:00 PM
Sept. 26	Var./J.V.	Mexico	5:00 PM
Sept. 30-Oct. 1	Varsity	Laker Shootout	TBA
★ Oct. 3	Var./J.V.	Helias Catholic	5:00 PM
★ Oct. 6	Var./J.V.	Southern Boone	5:00 PM
Oct. 10	Varsity	Laquey	5:00 PM
Oct. 14-15	Varsity	Stover Classic	TBA
★ Oct. 18	Var./J.V.	Moberly	5:00 PM
Oct. 20	Var./J.V.	Osage	5:00 PM
★ Oct. 24	Var./J.V.	Union	5:00 PM
★ Oct. 25	Var./J.V.	Sacred Heart	5:00 PM

★ - Denotes Home Game

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SHOW-ME CONFERENCE MVP Kinzey Woody, left, fires a shot for an out in last year's district title game as third baseman Allison Schwartz looks on. Above right is Faith Jaegers, who hit two homers in that game and looks for another strong season.

PHOTOS BY NEAL A JOHNSON

Three seniors, Show-Me MVP, return to Fatima softball team

WESTPHALIA — Second-year Fatima softball coach Ashlee Schnieders has a lot to work with this year as three seniors and last year's Show-Me Conference MVP return to the diamond.

"We lost three seniors last year, but the three we have back are going to be strong," said Schnieders of Ellie Brune, Allison Schwartz, and Caleigh Huot, noting that sophomore Kinzey Woody, who earned the SMC MVP title as a freshman, will be a force for the Lady Comets. "It's nice to have her back, and I'm excited to see how her season plays out."

Brune is a high-caliber returning starter in the outfield who earned second-team Show-Me Conference honors last year. "She had a great glove last year with many timely hits," said Schnieders as Brune hit .289, going 26-90, with four doubles and two HR to drive in 14. "She certainly is looked at as a leader of this team."

Schwartz returns as a starter to the infield this year. "Alison provides leadership with her actions," Schnieders noted. "She has a great bat and glove and works very hard at her game."

Schwartz was 24-86 last year (.279), with six doubles, two home runs, and 18 RBI.

Huot hit .225 (9-40) last year with a double and eight

RBI. "Caleigh had many key hits for us in the box last year and is one of our fastest players," said Schnieders. "She's a candidate to play one of the corner outfield spots. We're hoping for a great senior year."

Woody also earned first-team All-District honors as she finished the 2021 campaign with a BA of .433 (39-90), with seven doubles, a triple, and a team-high nine HR and 40 RBI.

"Kinzey is a very dedicated and coachable player," said Schnieders. "She always shows up competitive and ready to put in the work. Kenzie is a strong shortstop, and we look for her to help lead the team this year. She will be a vital player for us, defensively and offensively."

Several juniors add experience to the roster.

Taylor Baumhoer had a great season on the mound last year. "She looks to have improved," said Schnieders. "Taylor worked hard on her pitching this summer. She will have a leading role on this team this year. Taylor provides vocal leadership and hopes to learn from her experiences last year to help the program as much as she can."

Baumhoer was a workhorse on the mound, pitching in 83 innings over 23 games to go 10-2 with a save. She allowed 24 earned runs on 67 hits (a team-best 2.024 ERA), with 29 walks and a team-high 104 strikeouts.

Baumhoer collected eight hits in 25 at-bats, with three

RBI to her credit.

Faith Jaegers will likely be the main catcher this year. "She's strong and has a fast arm and hands with a good head on her shoulders," Schnieders said. "We look to her to lead behind the plate and be strong in the box."

Jaegers hit two of her five home runs last year off the eventual state champion pitcher as she went 32-88 (.364) with seven doubles and 13 RBI and earned second-team All-District and Show-Me Conference honors.

Hannah Heisler is the varsity team's center-fielder and returns having earned Show-Me Conference (HM) recognition following a season in which she hit .297 (19-64) with three doubles and three HRs as she drove in 10 runs.

"Hannah is hardworking and dedicated," said Schnieders. "She is always willing to put in extra work and better herself. She is very knowledgeable of the game and works to be a leader. Hannah has a strong bat and is speedy for us on defense and offense."

Kaitlyn Plassmeyer didn't have a lot of at-bats last year,

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CALEIGH HUOT, left, and **ELLIE BRUNE** will be a big part of Fatima's game plan this year.

Lady Comet softball • from page 14B

posting five hits in 26 ABs with five RBI. She has taken on a new look in the batters' box, now from the left side.

"She has been working very hard and has shown herself to be very dedicated and hardworking," said Schnieders. "She has great instincts on the base paths. Kaitlyn did a great job at second base for us last year, and I can't wait to see her play this year."

Emerson Williams did a great job of base-running for the varsity team last year, scoring nine runs. "We expect that to continue this year," said Schnieders. "She is very aggressive and works hard for us offensively. She will also compete for some playing time in the outfield."

Ella Massman (RHP) and Avery Brandt (LHP) will likely earn some varsity innings on the mound this year. "Both work very hard on their pitching, and Ella's hitting has improved from last year as well," said Schnieders. "Avery has been working hard in the box for us as well. She is also a great teammate in the dugout."

OTHER SOPHOMORES

Kristen Robertson is coming off a great freshman year, hitting .211 (8-38) with two doubles and three RBI. "She shows the ability to play both infield and outfield very well and has put in tons of hard work at the plate," said Schnieders. "Kristin is an athletic and competitive player who is an asset to the team in multiple ways."

Mia Kliethermes is predicted to get some significant varsity mound time. "She is a talented player who also has the ability to play both infield and outfield," Schnieders said.

In five games last year, Kliethermes pitched 4.2 innings, allowing three earned runs on two hits with four walks and six strikeouts.

Madelyn Backes plays a solid outfield. "She has a great upside at the plate and displays good speed," said Schnieders.

Lilly Cunningham is vying for varsity time as a first baseman and catcher this year. "She has improved greatly as a hitter and defensive player this off-season," Schnieders noted. "We look forward to seeing her growth and competitiveness this season."

Lily Warren provides a strong bat and

played solid at second base last year.

Schnieders noted that Megan Gabelberger is an extremely hardworking player. "She never complains and will work hard at any position we put her in," the coach added. "She is quick on defense and offense. We look to her for a great season on and off the field."

Eva Wildhaber had a good summer, showing improved hitting and defense. "She shows versatility by being able to play outfield, infield, and pitch," Schnieders said.

FRESHMEN

Sydney Scheppers is a strong defensive infielder at third with a powerful bat. "She works hard and is very coachable," said Schnieders.

Mindy Buscher will be a second baseman and pitcher this year. "She has a good bat and puts in the work," Schnieders noted.

Miley Buscher is a strong lefty determined to be a tough first baseman and outfielder.

Elise Dickneite is a dedicated player who is always willing to do what's best for the team. "She has great ability to play any position we ask and works hard in the box," said Schnieders. "We're looking to see her in the outfield and behind the plate."

Schnieders is happy to welcome back her assistant coaches, Kenny Bonnot (varsity) and Makayla (Buscher) Broeker (JV), as Steve Schnieders joins the team as a volunteer coach.

"I'm glad to have my coaches back," said Ashlee Schnieders. "We work very well together. It's an easy job when we're on the same page. Having coaches sharing your philosophy and vision makes it much more fun."

Fatima finished 21-7 last year and ended the year in the Class 3, District 5 tournament to Blair Oaks. "We are using it as motivation," said Schnieders. "In my first year, we built a culture, and the girls understand what we're working toward."

Ranked No. 7 in Class 3, the Lady Comets won nine of 14 games against state-ranked teams last year, and Schnieders expects that level of play to continue. "We picked up after last season, and we're trucking along," she

said. "We're ready for competition."

Summer ball went very well. "Many girls showed up and worked hard," said Schnieders. "They were in the weight room, and I'm hopeful that will be a game-changer for us this year."

Defensively, Schnieders said the Lady Comets are looking really strong. "I think we can match that offensively," she added. "Everything looks good on paper, and I'm

excited to see how that translates to games."

Fatima added the "Take the Lake" Invitational at Lake of the Ozarks and the Kewpie Classic at Hickman to its schedule. "We're trying to get as many games as possible on the schedule to see new competition as we prepare for districts and beyond," said Schnieders.

Fatima opens the season at home on Aug. 26 against St. Elizabeth, starting at 5 p.m.

FATIMA SOFTBALL

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Aug. 22	Varsity	Jefferson City Jamboree	TBA
★ Aug. 26	Var./J.V.	St. Elizabeth	5:00 PM
Aug. 27	J.V.	Blair Oaks	TBA
Aug. 29	Var./J.V.	Helias Catholic	5:00 PM
★ Aug. 30	Var./J.V.	Southern Boone	5:00 PM
Sept. 1	Var./J.V.	Osage	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 2	Var./J.V.	Capital City	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 6	Var./J.V.	Jefferson City	5:00 PM
Sept. 8	Var./J.V.	Hallsville	5:00 PM
Sept. 9-10	Varsity	Take the Lake Invitational	TBA
Sept. 12	Var./J.V.	Father Tolton Regional Catholic	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 13	Var./J.V.	Tuscumbia	5:00 PM
Sept. 14	J.V.	Vienna	5:00 PM
Sept. 16-17	Varsity	Jefferson City Jays Tournament	TBA
Sept. 20	Var./J.V.	New Bloomfield	5:00 PM
Sept. 22	Var./J.V.	Centrailla	5:00 PM
Sept. 23	Var./J.V.	Linn	5:00 PM
Sept. 26	Var./J.V.	Owensville	4:30 PM
★ Sept. 27	Var./J.V.	Iberia	5:00 PM
Sept. 29	Var./J.V.	Blair Oaks	5:00 PM
Sept. 30 - Oct. 1	Varsity	Kewpie Classic Tournament	TBA
★ Oct. 10	Var./J.V.	Eugene	5:00 PM
★ Oct. 6	Var./J.V.	Russellville	5:00 PM
★ Oct. 7	Var./J.V.	South Callaway	5:00 PM

★ - Denotes Home Game

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LUCY CREDE will compete at the varsity level this year. **PHOTOS BY NEAL A JOHNSON**

Brandt expects an exciting volleyball season

WESTPHALIA — Fatima volleyball coach Curtis Brandt said he expects an exciting season.

“We have smaller rosters this season than previous years, which can make it difficult to have competitive scrimmages during practice but allows for more quality touches and consistency within the team,” he said. “We are very fortunate to have players with a lot of experience playing volleyball, either with club teams or PAL, and they bring a lot to the court already, so our focus

doesn't necessarily have to be on skill development. We can spend more time identifying specific roles and working on team chemistry.”

With this experience, Brandt said he and assistant coaches Tracy Quinn and Haley Luebbering have the opportunity to move players up and down

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ADDISYN PETERS will hold down Fatima's middle hitting position.

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the levels of teams.

“There will be some freshmen that can potentially find roster spots on all three teams, and this will be extremely beneficial as we build this program for future seasons,” said Brandt. “This squad also possesses a huge love for the game and can’t get enough court time. They volunteer to come in for additional practice time on Saturdays and want to continue to play after their scheduled practice times have expired. These energetic attitudes and commitment to the sport make it exciting not only this season but also assures that future seasons will be just as strong.”

The varsity squad will rely heavily on a fast-tempo style of play, with a roster full of well-rounded, competitive, and athletic players that can cover the court well. “Even though they are small in size, they make up for it with aggressive performance,” said Brandt. “Each player also offers a unique style of play, and I will work hard to capitalize on their strengths while keeping the team working together as one unit.”

The majority of the team comprises six rotation players, which Brandt said means they are just as valuable in the backcourt as they are at the net with attacks and blocks.

Senior Eliza Nilges, junior Carly Mengwasser, and sophomore Vivian Bax will share setting duties and offensive leadership.

“These players will also serve valuable as right-side hitters and provide a second set of hands-on out-of-system plays,” said Brandt.

Senior Olivia Kleffner and juniors Lucy Crede

and Jacey Hoskins will share outside hitting duties. “These three offer their own unique hitting style, which makes the trio tough to defend,” said Brandt. “They are also extremely valuable on defensive coverage and serve/receive passing.”

Holding down the middle position will be seniors Addisyn Peters and Samantha Bax. “They are unique, and while Addisyn offers a traditional middle attacking style with her powerful hits off tight, quick sets, Samantha will be running less conventional offensive plays from the center of the net and is very dynamic in all aspects of the game.”

Rounding out the roster is defensive specialist/libero, junior Nevin Wilde. “She has one of the smoothest passes on the team and will be very useful in getting us out of a jam from the backcourt,” Brandt said. “It’s great to have a player with her qualities that can be used as a substitute for anyone in any backcourt position.”

Fatima has a very competitive schedule again this season, but Brandt said the Lady Comets are looking forward to facing strong teams because it will help the team achieve success in the postseason.

“I am anxious to get the season started, and the team and I are excited to get on the competitive court against opposing teams to truly assess our value, what things still need work, and what areas we excel in,” said Brandt.

Coach Quinn returns to lead the JV team, which includes a mix of sophomores and freshmen.

Sophomore middle hitter Reesa Kempker had some experience last year, playing up on the JV team and being a prominent leader on the freshman



SAMANTHA BAX is described as a dynamic player who will help the Lady Comets in the MH position.

team. Sophomore outside hitters Anna Rakestraw and Sydney Muenks were also on the freshman team last year.

Fatima has four freshmen — Addisyn Nilges

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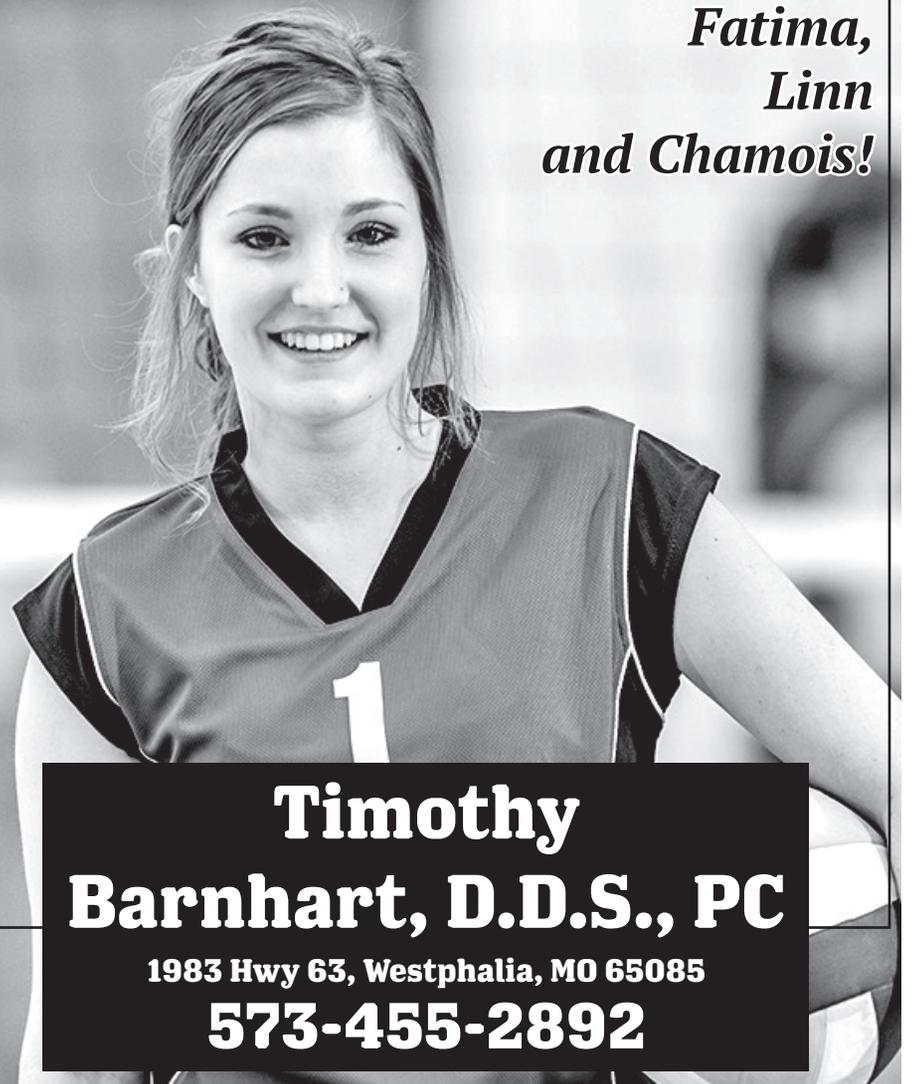
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(setter), Alayna Backes (outside), Annabelle Horton (libero/defensive specialist), and Lily Kempker (setter) competing at the JV level. “All these players have been working all summer to prepare for the upcoming season and have made great improvements in all of their skills and abilities,” said Brandt.

Brandt noted that Fatima’s offense will be led by Muenks and Backes, who are solid outside hitters and offer accomplished defensive skills.

“Reesa and Anna run the middle very well and are continuing to improve their offensive and blocking skills,” Brandt added. “Annabelle played all positions this summer, but we feel that defense is her strongest asset. She reads the court well and is not afraid to hit the ground to keep the plays alive.”

Nilges is new to setting but is making great strides to get her skills up to the JV level and coaches are seeing improvements every day. “Lily will add to our offense as an accomplished setter and has a great attack on

either side,” said Brandt. “We are very fortunate that the four freshmen are good friends and get along really well. Also, all of these girls have been active in club volleyball for many years. With the leadership of our older girls, we look for this team to develop

into a powerhouse at the JV level.”

Since the team has so few players, Fatima plans to include some of the other players from the C

team. “There is a lot of talent on that team, and we hope to utilize some of those girls as the season progresses,” Brandt said.

This year’s C team, coached by Luebbering, is comprised of both freshman and sophomores. Members of this team are sophomores Maggie Dickneite, Tessa Markway, Jaiden Wieberg, Taylor Bax, and Rory MacLellan, and freshmen Ava Kremer, Azlyn Luebbert, Alayna Backes, Annabelle Horton, Addisyn Nilges, and Lily Kempker.

“This group of girls has shown a lot of potential this summer, and I am excited to work with them on improving their skills,” said Brandt. “They will be asked to fill different roles on the court throughout the season to let us find the one that will best help the program. This year, the focus of the C team will be skills development and pushing the girls to earn a spot at the JV and varsity levels. “I am ready to start this season and see how these girls develop as individuals and as teammates,” Brandt said.

FATIMA VOLLEYBALL

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Aug. 22	Varsity	Battle Jamboree	5:00 PM
Aug. 26	Var./J.V./Fr	Hickman	5:30 PM
★ Aug. 30	Var./J.V./Fr	Helias Catholic	5:00 PM
Sept. 1	J.V.	Chamois	5:00 PM
Sept. 2	Var./J.V./Fr	New Haven	4:30 PM
Sept. 6	Var./J.V./Fr	Linn	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 8	Var./J.V./Fr	Hermann	5:00 PM
Sept. 10	Varsity	Hickman Varsity Tournament	TBA
Sept. 10	Fr	Helias 9th Tournament	TBA
Sept. 12	Var./J.V./Fr	Southern Boone	5:00 PM
Sept. 13	Var./J.V./Fr	Eugene	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 15	Var./J.V./Fr	Owensville	5:00 PM
Sept. 19	Var./J.V./Fr	Rock Bridge	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 20	Var./J.V./Fr	Boonville	5:00 PM
★ Sept. 22	Var./J.V./Fr	Jefferson City	5:00 PM
Sept. 24	J.V.	Jefferson City JV Tournament	TBA
★ Sept. 27	Var./J.V./Fr	Capital City	TBA
Sept. 29	Var./J.V./Fr	Blair Oaks	5:00 PM
Oct. 1	Varsity	Rolla Invitational	TBA
Oct. 1	JV	Waynesville Volleyball JV Smackdown	TBA
★ Oct. 4	Var./J.V./Fr	Osage	5:00 PM
Oct. 6	Var./J.V./Fr	Battle	5:00 PM
Oct. 8	Varsity	Lebanon Pinkfest	5:00 PM
Oct. 8	J.V.	Lebanon JV Pinkfest	5:00 PM
Oct. 11	Var./J.V./Fr	California	5:00 PM
Oct. 13	Var./J.V.	Russellville	5:00 PM
★ Oct. 17	Var./J.V.	New Bloomfield	5:00 PM

★ - Denotes Home Game

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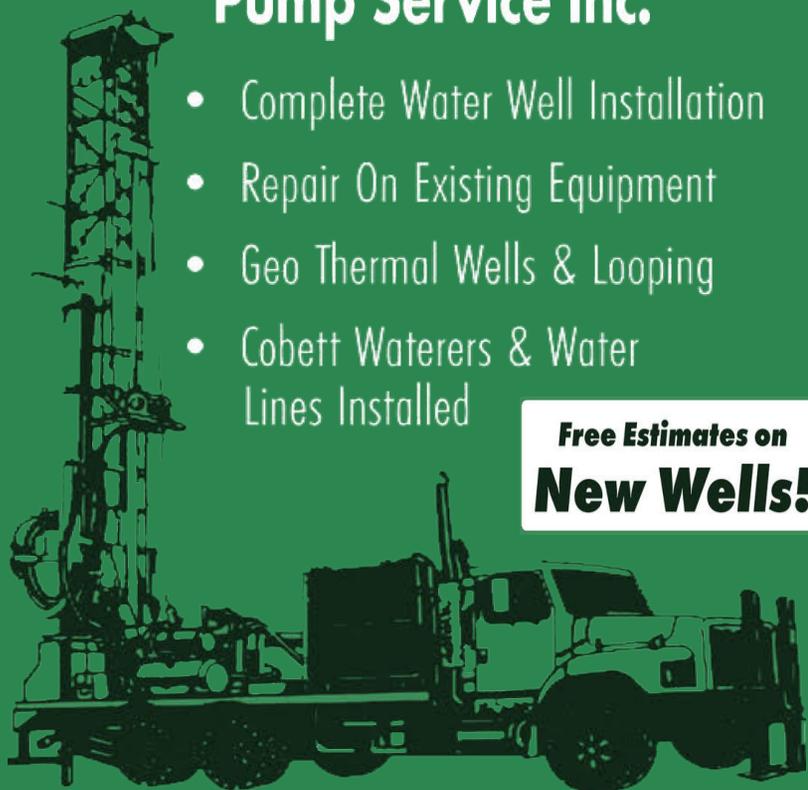
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