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FALL

SPORTS PREVIEW

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Goal for Oxford football: Win some games

By Patrick Newell
Evening Sun Contributing Writer

As a pre-teen, Mitch Cluff lived the life of a passionate Oxford Blackhawks football fan.

In high school, he lived that passion as a standout player for Hall of Fame coach Tony Abbott. And in the years following his 1995 graduation from Oxford, has lived that passion again as a lifetime member of the Blackhawks football alumni.

In the 10 years following his graduation, Oxford made the Section IV playoffs multiple times, and won three Section IV titles. But over the last 15 years, those playoff appearances have mostly dried up.

In recent years, Oxford's once proud football program didn't even finish a complete season.

So, when the opportunity to coach his alma mater presented itself last year, Cluff leapt at the opportunity.

He admittedly overestimated how quickly Oxford would return to its past glory, but he did accomplish one goal: The Blackhawks competed their season.

"I was a rookie coach," Cluff said, while also saying his early goals and aspirations may have been delusional. "I definitely thought we would have more success. We had some big kids, and we thought we could

coach them up."

Cluff didn't have the benefit of a full offseason to prepare for a new season, and roster numbers were consistently teetering on the brink of not field a team.

But the Blackhawks survived the bumps, bruises, and tough losses, and have significantly more personnel available, along with nearly a full year of off-season workouts and skill development.

"We just refused to quit (last year)," Cluff said. "This year, it's a night-and-day difference. We have 21 kids out this year, and they've bought in to the off-season programs."

So, with that, Cluff doesn't merely have big kids; he has kids that are stronger, faster, quicker, and more technically sound at their respective positions.

That said, the overall approach to the offense will be much more versatile and balanced. A year ago, the known commodity Cluff had on offense was returning senior David Tucker.

The speedy Tucker was the one mismatch Cluff had in his pocket against virtually any defense he faced. So, the offense fed Tucker running plays and pass plays as much as possible.

With Tucker now playing at Alfred State, the returning skill position players and newcomers will all be seeing their first significant offensive touches.



The 2023 Oxford Blackhawks Football team, coached by Mitch Cluff. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

Jake Gallo is back at quarterback and is coming off a season where he threw for around 1,000 yards. Mixing in at running back and receiver are Richard Hunter and Chance Reynolds. David Dunkel is also expected to contribute heavily in the backfield.

As for Gallo, the jump to varsity last year as a freshman was a big one, but he showed resilience and perseverance, and is better for it.

"Last year, we saw on film that (Gallo) had no time to throw," Cluff said. "He made mistakes, but he's made great improvement this year. With the (improved) line and better

blocking, he should have more time to throw (this year)."

Speaking of that offensive line, Aiden Mellem moves to the center position. The Blackhawks' quarterback does not typically operate directly behind the center, so a good snap to the quarterback is imperative. Cluff summed up Mellem's snaps as "money."

Last year's center, Brent Hamilton, moves to guard, and new starter, Urijah Dibble, is slated to start at the other guard.

Adding additional blocking and pass-catching is returning tight end, Ryan Humphreys.

"Humphreys has great

hands and sees everything," Cluff said. "He's a leader and one of our captains."

Because the team roster numbers are up – and there is so much team balance talent-wise – Cluff has the type of depth that he can sit many offensive players.

Last year, with limited numbers to work with, most of his lineup was playing offense and defense.

Figuring into the mix as primary defensive starters are returnees Aidan Lamphere and Colten Button. Brayden Hamilton is back to play on the defensive line, while Dominick Battista and Dominick Howe are likely to man starting roles on defense.

So, with a huge percentage of returning players back off a winless team, the expectations are much more reasonable than a season ago, and Cluff is not expecting to barnstorm through the league undefeated.

"I just want us to win games – we need to win games," Cluff said. "We've saved the program, it's growing, and it's going in the right direction. Now we need to put up Ws. The numbers where they are now and having a full off-season, we need to prove we're doing the right things."

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Oxford Boys Soccer: A Goal to be more than just competitive

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

Throughout the last few seasons, the Oxford Blackhawks boys soccer team's focus was to be more competitive during its rebuilding period.

The 2022 season was the second year back to having a full team, where everyone returned. At the end of the season, Oxford only lost one senior starter with John Rovente graduating, which only meant experience and talent remains, slightly shifting the main focus.

The main focus is to still be competitive in every game, but to win more games, which is achievable with many key attributes returning.

As a young team, the Blackhawks finished 3-12-1 in 2022 and were led by Jerry Hornbeck, who returns for his final season. Coach Corey Endress looks to depend on Hornbeck and Aiden Amin, who are the team's two seniors in 2023.



The 2023 Oxford Blackhawks Boys Soccer team, coached by Corey Endress, Danny Woodford, and Dustin Hendricks. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

"We will lean on Jerry at forward and Aiden to anchor the defense, as well as our core of juniors that are the heart of this program," Endress said. "Jerry will get some help from Donovan Rickard and Sam Hendricks at midfield while Isaac Utter will join Aiden as a main contributor on defense."

Eighth grade Gordon Smith, who gained varsity experience last year, will be helpful up top as well for the Blackhawks offense. Oxford also welcomes freshmen Ben Sheridan and Degan Endress. Coach Endress said everyone is valuable and will play a part this year.

Blackhawks' goalkeeper

Kayden Renfrow returns after earning first-team MAC honors in 2022. Endress expects another solid year for his star goalkeeper who made 176 saves last season.

Oxford began its 2023 season in the Sherburne-Earlville kick-off tournament over the weekend of September 1 and 2. Endress

said its always great to be back in Sherburne and that it is very special to be asked to play in the tournament every year so far.

"It's a fun way to end the preseason and an exciting start to the season," Endress said. "It was also great that we have our first game against league opponent Unadilla Valley."

Unfortunately, Endress' team fell short to their tough MAC league opponent 2-1 in the first game on Friday. Landen Olinski scored the lone goal for the Blackhawks with six minutes remaining in the first half on the first touch after a corner kick.

Olinski scored another goal in the 2-1 double overtime win against S-E in the boys consolation game on Saturday. He outran the Marauders defense to take a pass from Sam Hendricks to tie the game with seven minutes remaining in regulation. It was Donovan Rickard's goal off a pass from Jerry Hornbeck on a corner kick that helped Oxford come out on top.

Oxford resumes play on the road against non-league opponent DeRuyter on September 13 before the next MAC league game scheduled on September 18 against Bainbridge-Guilford.

Oxford Golf: Young and improved

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Oxford Blackhawks Golf team returns for the 2023 season as an experienced group. The team of young, determined players pushed through and fought there way to make sectionals last year with an overall 2022 record of 6-5. Coach Lance Thorne appreciated seeing many of his golfers contribute throughout the season last year, proving their varsity readiness. Thorne said this early on experience will only help the team going forward.

Thorne has nine returning golfers from last season with five of the nine being a part of last year's top six. Thorne has seen great improvement from his group so far in practices and is confident that his team will hold true to this

improvement throughout the season

"With so much depth on our team, we should be in contention for a league championship this season," Thorne said. Our top eight or nine golfers spent a significant amount of time over the summer at the course working on their game, so competition during practice has been very solid."

Thorne has a total of 13 players on his team with at least eight or nine kids competing for the top six spots.

Thorne also looks up to top returner Bennett Paden making a bigger impression this season.

"He (Paden) has grown quite a bit physically as he enters his sophomore season and his game continues to improve," Thorne said. "I'm expecting Bennett to be a top three individual in

the MAC this season."

Aside from Paden, Kyle Benjamin, Sylas Emerson, Degan Endress, Nick Richette, Ethan Hodge, Nicos Spyrtos, Blake Barrows, and Bodie Barrows also return to make a big statement for Oxford this season. The Blackhawks also welcome two seventh graders this season, proving how the future could be bright for this young group.

Still carrying a much young team, Thorne's main focus this year is to see improvement in averages from last year to this year and see to growth throughout the season.

"We are fairly young, but experienced," Thorne said. "I'm hoping that we are in contention for a league title at the end of the season."

Oxford began its 2023 season against Delhi on Wednesday, August 30



The 2023 Oxford Blackhawks Golf team, coached by Lance Thorne and Tim Paden. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

with a 258-315 win. Bennett Paden led the team and all golfers on the day with a 47 on the par-36 course with Kyle Benjamin finishing a stroke above with a

48. The following morning, Oxford fell to Sidney, the defending MAC league champions, 230-246 with Paden shooting a team-low of a 42.

The Blackhawks resume league play on Wednesday, September 6 against Hancock before finishing the week against Afton on Friday the eighth.



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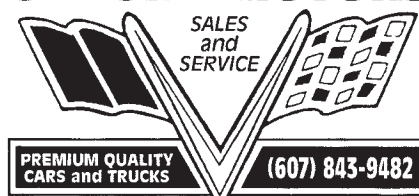


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Oxford Girls Soccer: Communication leads to success



The 2023 Oxford Blackhawks girls soccer team, coached by Rachel Seiler. Oxford participated in the S-E tournament over the weekend of September 1 and 2 to begin the 2023 season. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Oxford Blackhawks girls soccer team is regrouping for the 2023 season after losing a large senior class. Losing a large contribution to the team is always hard, but a lot of talent still remains.

Oxford is also fortunate to move back into Class C this season, where they will be competing with local county schools after its small enrollment in 2022 placed them in Class D. Oxford fell to Charlotte Valley in the first round of

Class D sectionals in a 2-1 heart-breaking loss. With the move back up to Class C, they hope to find similar success after finishing even at 8-8 in 2022.

Oxford made a significant coaching change prior to the start of the season with Rachel Seiler moving from Assistant and JV coach to taking a prominent role on varsity. Seiler is very familiar already with many of her players and is thankful to get back into coaching at Oxford, which has been a long term goal for her. Seiler even hosted an offseason workout every Tuesday and Wednesday over the summer to help

with strength and conditioning as well as working on basic skills, which she hopes to get down this year.

Seiler's main focus is to continue working on communicating well as a team while also learning and having fun.

"We have been improving our communication and it's really sunk in," Seiler said. "Communication is always a big factor in success as well as learning to keep building success. I also want the girls to have fun and enjoy it to keep coming back."

With losing a big group of seniors, Oxford is thank-

ful to have a great group of key returners with Jocie Finch leading the team as a senior this year. The Blackhawks also welcomes back Kayla Figary, who made a big impression as only an eighth grader last year as the team's second leading goal scorer with five goals and two assists in 2022.

Aside from Finch and Figary, Jayne Fleury, who stepped up as a utility player, returns along with Taegan Manwarren and Abby Denz, who have been motivational leaders in their time at Oxford.

After losing starting goalkeeper Madison Long,

Raya Warner and Christine Seiler will split time in goal. Both have seen significant time in goal last season with Raya on JV and Seiler as the back-up for Long on varsity.

Oxford participated in the Sherburne-Earlville kick-off tournament over the weekend of Sept 1 and 2, where they lost to Hamilton 9-1 in the first game and defeated S-E 5-0 in the consolation game.

In the first game, Kayla Figary-Knapp scored the lone goal and Christine Seiler and Delilah Hendricks split halves in goal in the loss. Figary-Knapp also scored a goal

in the win against S-E on Saturday along with Taegan Manwarren, Abby Denz, and Paige Rickard. Sofia Ferreira contributed with an assist on Denz's goal. Seiler and Raya Warner split time in goal in the two halves.

Oxford moves ahead to the Greene tournament on Thursday, September 6 and continue on Saturday, September 9. Oxford plays tournament host Greene on Thursday at 7 p.m., which will also be the first MAC league game between both teams.

Oxford Volleyball: Back together to defend the MAC title

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After shocking everyone by pulling up the big upset against Unadilla Valley in the MAC championship game, the Oxford Blackhawks volleyball team is back and will prove to be the same competitive team in 2023. Despite losing six seniors at the end of the season, the Blackhawks have six seniors, who went to the championship as juniors last year, who want to see another big run in their last season.

Oxford finished 10-1 in the 2022 season with the only loss against UV in the battle of unbeaten on October 6 before the MAC

championship came on the 24th. The Blackhawks moved on to sectionals, defeating Candor before falling to UV again to end the season.

Seniors Ava Benjamin, Lizzy Knapp, Brianna Fowlston, Quinnlin LaMonica, Leah Oliver, and Mya-Rae Roys are confident to see another successful season. The rest of the team features junior Liliona Baxter while the remaining five are sophomores, providing a bright future in the years ahead under head coach Kim Martin.

"I believe this team will prove to be just as competitive," Martin said. "The group of girls have played many years on the same

court as each other, so they were able to grow together. This year's seniors are a strong group of individuals that each have their own strengths and when pooled together, they make some amazing plays and only want the MAC title even more."

While maintaining as a strong group, the team's main focus is to stay injury free and healthy. The team had one key player taken out of play late in the pre-season and are anxiously awaiting her return Martin said.

Oxford will hold a scrimmage against Sidney on Friday, September 8 before its official season opener on September 13 at Bainbridge-Guilford.



The 2023 Oxford Blackhawks Volleyball team, coached by Kim Martin. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

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OV Girls Soccer: Maintaining momentum

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After an even 2022 season, the Otselic Valley Vikings girls soccer team is looking to keep the momentum going in 2023 under new direction. Summer Lyon and Jordan Klein are stepping in as coaches this season and are excited to join the group. Lyon and Klein are looking forward to helping OV make sectionals again this season after their run ended in the loss to Hamilton in 2022.

While losing a big group of seniors at the end of last season, the Vikings are another senior heavy team

for 2023.

Among its senior class is Rachel Loomis, who was the team's leading goal scorer with 11 goals last season, Paige Will, Alexandria Marsala, Susanna Lyon, and Kali Waltz.

"This year, we have a strong group of seniors, who have been working deliberately to present strong leadership skills to support the team," the coaches said. "The team has been working well together and are motivated for this season. The entire team has a variety of members that not only collaborate well on the field, but also socially."

After losing the team's



starting goalkeeper to graduation, Lyon and Klein are excited for Carlie Golden and MacKenzie Reanadeau to make a big impression

this season.

"Carlie has been working hard and developing her skills," the coaches said. "She is not scared of the

ball, has passion for the position, and pushes herself to be her best. We also have Reandeu as a backup goalie who also has love for the position. We are excited to see the determination mentality work in a game against an opponent."

Lyon and Klein are impressed with how the preseason has went so far with everyone participating in indoor and club soccer over the offseason and are prepared to focus on accomplishing this year's team goals.

"The main focus this year is control and communication," the coaches said. "We need to dominate the

games. The ultimate goal is to work together, have fun, and continue to have a love for the sport. Of course, there is a goal to win, but there's something special about being a part of a team and we hope all the girls feel that this season.

"We as coaches have continuously worked on making sure that the girls not only improve their skills for the sport but develop experiences and knowledge that aid them in their lifelong journeys."

OV kicks off their 2023 season against Stockbridge Valley on Tuesday, September 5 before hosting Cincinnatus on the following Friday.

OV Boys Soccer: A team ready to take the next step

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After losing one senior at the end of the 2022 season, the Otselic Valley Vikings are bringing back an experienced team, who are ready to work hard in 2023.

As a young team in 2022, OV just missed sectionals by one game after finishing 5-11 and pushing through in the second half of the

season.

With a senior heavy team this year, OV is ready to bring their whole group of starters and defensive group back. Among the key returners, the team's leading goal scorer, Braeden Davis returns as a senior. Davis led the team with 16 goals and three assists last season and looks to repeat himself in his final year. Owen Davis also returns as a sophomore, where he stepped up and finished

behind Braeden with seven goals in 2022.

OV also looks to lean on its starting goalkeeper Caleb Loomis, who made 181 saves last season. Loomis is among four returning sophomores along with Lukas Schieferstein. Coach Jacob Preston is confident that Schieferstein will prove himself this season as he is shown to be very quick and athletic and looks for him to be more visible in the

game each time. Preston is also looking up to his underclassmen to make a bigger statement this year with experience under their belt.

While the team's overall goal is to make sectionals this season, they know they cannot look back and settle for less.

"We have to step up our game and know that we cannot settle for what we did last year," Preston said. "We have to take the next

step and compete. We did some extra offseason work, so we're ready to play and will give it our best shot."

Preston also hopes to see improvement defensively. With the key group returning, he looks for them to take action immediately.

"Our defense has to work harder and sooner," Preston said. "We have to put pressure on immediately and get the ball back, so we have to be aggressive and persistent."

OV will have one scrimmage at Cortland prior to the start of the season with their first game at Cincinnatus on Wednesday, September 6.

Preston said he only expects 12 players in his lineup for this game and knows this game will be a good challenge. However, he said that by the following game at Madison on September 11, his team will be in full strength and ready to play.



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UV Football: Looking to run through opponents this season under a new offensive style

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Unadilla Valley Storm football team is looking into a new 2023 season a little smaller than normal, but still as the same eight man team under head coach Bruce Curtis. Curtis joined the Storm last season, where he helped UV pick up two wins against Oxford in a rather challenging year against other opponents.

Curtis also lost a big class of seniors at the end of the 2022 season, which included losing his starting quarterback Blake Wright and key wide receiver Kaden Butts. Losing key players is always hard on the team in the year ahead, but every team goes through a regrouping stage during the offseason and in the preseason.

Among the list of key returners from 2022 include seniors Dalton Allen, Shane McMahon, Billy Barrett, and Camren Cummings. Curtis is pleased to also have leading running back Jacob Prentice back as a junior, along with Isaiah Solimbanon, who will be relied on to be the team's



The 2023 Unadilla Valley Storm Football team, coached by Bruce Curtis and Josh Prentice. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

starting quarterback with Wyatt Meade, who saw some reps at back-up for Wright last season, filling in when needed as well. Linemen Landen Drake, Caleb Wildenstein also return as sophomores while the rest of the team consists of five freshmen

and one eighth grader.

"We are looking young," Curtis said. "We are taking it one day at a time. We spent a lot of time with certain plays and formations that we've ran continuously, so the more reps we went over, the better they looked."

Curtis also spent a lot of time in the offseason studying up more on eight-man football, especially a particular offensive style, where he expects to be a quick hitting offense with a strong run game.

"We will be a running team this year," Curtis said. "Our offense is designed for both Isaiah and Wyatt Meade. Isaiah is a quick slant runner while Meade is more of a strong and powerful runner."

Isaiah, Meade, Jacob Prentice, and Dalton Allen will all help contribute to the success on offense.

Allen will hold the responsibilities as Butts had last season, but because of the change in offense, he will fill in at a different capacity than usual.

Curtis stresses clock management this season and would rather have his small team of 15 take their time with everything rather than be quick.

As for the defense, Curtis doesn't want to change too much, but would like to improve on tackling.

"Our tackling was a bother for us last year, so this year, we looked at the film and worked on drills

in camp," Curtis said. "We have to play more containment defense and continue to be aggressive and we'll be fine."

UV played a "week zero" game against Section III's Sauquoit Valley on September 2, where they fell 36-8. The Storm's lone touchdown came from a 50 yard pass. Shane McMahon filled in at Quarterback and threw the pass to Billy Barrett. UV starts league play against Trumansburg on Saturday, September 9 at 7 p.m.

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UV/GMU Cross Country: Seeking to be more competitive across the leaderboards

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Unadilla Valley/GMU cross country team is optimistic this 2023 season with the goal of striving for competitiveness across each meets leaderboards. Coach Lee Schaeffer's team lost three of their top five scorers to graduation, but are hopeful to fill their shoes among the range of young and experienced runners.

Schaeffer welcomes back Noah Pain and Alex Kemnah on the boys side. Pain was the team's top male runner during the 2022 season with Alex Kemnah having a great chance this year to be the team's second top scorer. Both runners return for their junior season. Pain finished 10th overall in Class D last season as

the team took fifth behind tough competition.

The UV/GMU girls were led by Andrea Favinger, who returns for only her sophomore season. Schaeffer was impressed to see her as a freshman take ninth in sectionals last year and only hopes she will do the same or even better this season.

Aside from those three key returners, the team

will have Lucas Donato back for his final year with Angel Porter and Michael Gorden also representing the senior class. Dominic Berthel, Ben Kemnah, Zach Wilson, and Aiden James represent the underclassmen.

UV/GMU will be start the season at Fortin Park against Oneonta for the first meet of the 2023 fall season on September 9.



UV/GMU Boys Soccer: Finding consistency

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After achieving all anticipated goals in 2022 with making it to sectionals, the Unadilla Valley/GMU boys soccer team is looking to repeat and also be strong contenders in the MAC again the season. The Storm were a senior heavy team last season, finishing 6-9-1 overall. This group, coming into a new year, remains an upperclassmen leading team with adding several players from the modified team as well.

Last year's seniors were a big part of the contribution in 2022, but the remaining players come in with optimism to do the same. Out of the key starters, Haywood Edwards, who made an impact offensively with seven goals last season, returns as a junior along with starting goalkeeper Tucker Cattanach, who made 95 saves and earned four shutouts in the team's 16 games last year.

Coach Josh Burchill, who earned MAC Coach of the year honors in 2022, is counting on the good balance of experience and to



The 2023 UV/GMU Boys Soccer team, coached by Josh Burchill. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

fill some vacancies in the starting lineup alongside Edwards and Cattanach.

"Cattanach doesn't get a whole lot of recognition because of the position he plays, but he's been our rock," Burchill said. "He is a vocal leader. He was named captain this year by his peers and we are really going to lean on him to control the defense."

Burchill is also pleased to have Connor Edgett, Trevor Smith, Nate

Rumovicz, and Devon Hartwell back for their final soccer season.

Burchill on Edgett: "Connor is rather a quiet leader who was under the shadow of Trent Marinelli last year and who always finds himself in the right position with his speed," Burchill said.

Burchill on Smith: "Trevor was more of our utility sub last season and this year, he will see a lot more playing time again,"

Burchill said. "We will lean on him to fill in and keep the offense rolling."

Burchill on Rumovicz: "Nate played a lot of minutes for us over the last few years and this year, he will be stepping into the midfield position," Burchill said. "As a captain, I'm hoping he will help bring the sophomores along."

Burchill on Hartwell: "Devon doesn't really score goals, but facili-

tates among the top of the league as a leader in assists," Burchill said. "He knows how to put the ball in the right places."

The rest of the UV/GMU team consists of sophomores who will also see a lot of playing time, even off the bench to help allow everyone to get their hands on experience.

Burchill is focused on finding consistency this season to be strong league contenders.

"It's going to take consistency to be among the top portion of the MAC program and we need to show up and be competitive in every game," Burchill said. "We need to come out and play the full length of the game and take every opponent seriously."

UV/GMU opened its 2023 season with an invite to the Sherburne-Earlville soccer tournament for the first time in quite a while. This was the first year in Burchill's two-year stint with the team on getting the nod to go, but said the team had participated in the tournament in the past.

The Storm finished in second place after defeating MAC league opponent Oxford in the first game 2-1, but fell 5-1 against non-league opponent Vernon-Verona Sherrill in Saturday's championship game. Devon Hartwell scored two goals against Oxford while Steven Johnson scored the lone goal off an assist from Hartwell in the loss.

UV/GMU resumes play on Thursday, September 7 on the road against Morris.

UV Volleyball: Looking to maintain success under a new coach

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Unadilla Valley Volleyball team is back after a strong 2022 season. This time, they welcome new head coach Sierra Schrag.

In 2022, the Storm went 9-0 in the regular season and finished 11-2 with two hard losses to Oxford in the MAC title game and to Tioga in the sectional championship.

UV has found success on the volleyball court for at least the past two seasons, only looking to match potential in Schrag's first year with the program.

Schrag brings a vast knowledge of volleyball from her time playing on UV herself as well as playing intramural and club volleyball at the college level. She received a warm welcome in the first week of practices and has already seen much hard work and determination from her team. She understands that she's working with a young set of girls, but is looking forward to an exciting and fierce year.



Schrag also brings a competitive mindset in relation to what she's seen from teams she's been apart of.

"I've always had the 'outwork, outplay, outlast' mindset," she said. "On every team I've been on or coached, my primary focus is on breaking down the ceilings you set for yourself. Win or lose, if nothing else, I want anyone who sees our team to think 'they wanted it.'"

While this season will be tough, Schrag knows her team will do whatever it takes to put in the hard work and learn effectively.

"I tell the team every day, the only competition you have is yourself," she said. "We want to win, but my goal for the season is for every athlete to walk away feeling proud of

themselves. I want them to look back and say, 'I gave it everything I had.' As a coach, you cannot ask for anything more."

UV lost 10 seniors at the end of last season.

Schrag also shares advice she received and has passed along to this year's team, encouraging them to give it their all.

"Year to year, game by game, work harder," she said. "Work hard than you did yesterday, work harder than anyone else. Every practice, every drill, every pass, set, hit. Show everyone that you are working harder, that you want it more, and that you will do whatever it takes. That's the best advice I could ever hand to someone no matter what they want to accomplish."

Schrag and the UV Storm kick off the 2023 season on September 12 at home against Harpursville/Afton before two back-to-back road matches.

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UV Girls Soccer: Continuing success as a strong bond

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After finishing in second place in the MAC League, the Unadilla Valley Storm girls soccer team is ready to approach another season in the same manner while always striving for better. Last season, the Storm accomplished many goals including finishing better than the previous year, moving from sixth to second. They also had a powerful defense that led the MAC in the least amount of goals scored against them with 11. Offensively, UV saw three girls, including key returner Jaiden Schrag, in the top 10 for total points scored in the league as well.

While falling short in the first round of sectionals, UV also said goodbye to four valuable seniors, but looked ahead at what was to come the next year. This year features a vastly group of experienced and talented players while welcoming four new players from last year's modified level.

"We are going to miss the key scorers that graduated last year, but are looking for our five new



The 2023 Unadilla Valley Girls Soccer Team. UV kicks off its 2023 season on September 8 and 9 with its annual NY Pizzeria Tournament. (Photo by Coach Potter)

seniors to be the impact players on the pitch, supported by their underclassmen," Jeanine Potter, UV's head coach, said.

The returning seniors include Jaiden Schrag on offense with Bella Potter and Phalen Hill leading the defense and Kalie Fernandez-Naughton and Brynn Grant standing

their ground in goal.

Other returning players include familiar names such as Gracie Gorrell, Shelby Rose, Natalie Crandall, Adrienne Hodge, Emmalyn Montgomery, Avery Hill, Natalya Schrag, Lyla Taylor, Myriah Taylor, Kora Johnson, and Emma Bonacci. The Storm welcomes Madison Anderson,

Annie Rogers, Addison Marinelli, and Madison Dix to the team this year.

"Each athlete plays an important role in the team dynamic whether it's at practice, on the sideline, during the game, or in the hallways and classrooms of UV," Potter said. "Many of our girls have stayed active in the offseason through travel soccer, so

we will be looking for that experience on the field from them."

While the team's overall goal is to make sectionals and win a championship as everyone else, they are looking to improve on learning some new moves and plays while also having fun in practice. While being together as team this season, it is

also important to develop a strong bond.

"Team bonding has always been important and a few of these girls have been with me on varsity for five years," Potter said. "Being able to coach these players that I have known since they began school is special. I want them all to know that while each role or impact may look a bit different, every single athlete on this team has something valuable to share with the rest of the team."

As a team, there are always memories to be made and other ways to spend time together outside of practice and games to only help the bond last.

"We have been a part of each other's lives for birthday parties, youth soccer, school dances, etc. Sharing these experiences helps the girls play together more cohesively and we are looking forward to making some more memories on the field this year," Potter said.

UV will prepare for the season with a scrimmage before officially kicking off their annual NY Pizzeria Tournament on September 8 and 9.



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Greene Golf: Maintaining Success



The 2023 Greene Trojans Golf team, coached by Pete Flanagan. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Greene Trojans golf team anticipates another successful season after winning the 2022 MAC League golf tournament with four of its six key returners back. Greene fell short of winning the overall MAC title, falling behind to Sidney, who had the best record. Greene finished 10-2 with the two tough losses to Sidney.

Greene also finished second in Section IV behind a strong Chenango Forks team. Golf sectionals occur in the spring season and consists of teams who have won 50 percent or more of their league matches and aside from dropping two to Sidney, Greene was definitely in.

The Trojans return their top two golfers from the MAC tournament with juniors Parker Flanagan and Lincoln Youngs. Flanagan was the lone

golfer to reach individual sectionals for the first time as a sophomore, where he missed qualifying for states by about four strokes. Youngs missed making sectionals by about a half of a stroke. Coach Pete Flanagan anticipates both Flanagan and Youngs will both be in contention to make sectionals this time around.

Other returners include the team's two seniors, Noah Symons and Austin Dehaan. Dehaan had been

consistent as the team's sixth golfer last season behind two seniors and Flanagan and Youngs. Trent Drew, who also returns, as a sophomore this year, saw some playing time as a freshman last season.

Nick Holt, Logan Roth, and Hunter Becker are also returning this season with three new players, Max Drazen, Ben Newvine, and eighth grader Liam Clark, ready to learn and make a statement in the years to come.

Coach Flanagan and the team have been focusing on course management within their open, flat home Genegantslet golf course. Flanagan also gives his team a mindset that they

have to focus on their own game as they are in control and are only beating themselves. Also, Flanagan wants them to go in to every match scoring what he and they themselves know they're capable of.

Greene kicked off their 2023 season opener on Tuesday, August 29, where they earned the 221-259 victory against Harpursville/Afton. Lincoln Youngs led the Trojans with a 35 with Flanagan behind him with a 38. The two seniors also received playing time, where Austin Dehaan had a 43, which Coach Flanagan said it was his lowest score of his career, and Noah Symons scored a 49.

"It was nice to get the first win of the season under

our belt," Coach Flanagan said. "Lincoln did really well and Parker recovered from a shaky start to the match. Along with Sidney, we should be contenders again this season."

The Trojans also faced Bainbridge-Guilford on Friday, September 1, where they picked up the 214-238 win. Parker Flanagan shot a 33 for the team's lowest. Coach Flanagan said he just missed a 32.

"Parker birdied on holes five and six and missed a six foot putt on nine to shoot a 32," Coach Flanagan said.

Greene is off to another good start and will face a tough Sidney on September 8.



The 2023 Greene Trojans Girls Soccer team, coached by Shannon Livingston. (Photo from Coach Livingston)

Greene Girls Soccer: Striving for another successful season

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After losing key leading scorers to graduation, the Greene Trojans girls soccer team regroups with the remaining talent for another bright outlook on the 2023 season.

Shannon Livingston's, who went from assistant to head coach in 2022, team had an exciting 2022 soccer season, filled with many "peaks and valleys" throughout the fall, which was a great learning experience. The team finished with a 9-6-1 record and made it to the sectional semi-finals before falling to Trumansburg 2-1.

Livingston hopes to reach the same potential this year with a mix of new and experienced players.

"With a new group of girls joining the team, it creates a possibility of a new everything, which is

exciting," she said. "We have strong returning players that are ready to become the new leaders of our team. We will be striving to have a winning record and of course we always have fun."

Some of the team's key returners include starting goalkeeper Molly Cornell, who leads the team as a senior this season. Cornell made 108 saves last season for the Trojans. Justina Parsons, Billie Kinney, Emily Keen-Stanton, and Amber Simpson also hope to be big contributors in their final season.

Aside from another senior heavy team, Audra Doll, Cali Knapp, Nora Fey, and Liesl Ludolph looks to lead the junior class. Juniors Zabelle Staneiro and Caden Gregware also join in on the action this season.

The underclass is lead by returning sophomores Johanna Trepa, Lyndsay Specht, and Kenzie Soto.

Caitlin Walls, who started on varsity last year as an eighth grader, leads the freshman class, who welcomed two new members with Lexi Cloyd and Melana Gregware.

With a mixed group, Livingston hopes to make improvements while unifying everyone as well.

"Our main focus as a team is to work together, improve our defense, and mesh as a team the best we can," Livingston said. "Communication is key and we will be working on improving in that area as well and also playing hard in each game."

Greene kicks off its 2023 season on Tuesday, September 5 at home against non-league opponent Sidney before hosting MAC opponent Oxford on Thursday. Greene is excited to start the season with three straight home contests.

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Greene Boys Soccer: Carrying on a Tradition

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Greene Trojans boys soccer team has had their share of success over the past few seasons. The team, coached by Rick Tallman, is thankful to continue carrying on a tradition and legacy for alumni to look back on. Greene did have a great chance at another sectional title, which they won in 2021, but fell last year to Afton/Harpursville 4-2 in the quarterfinals.

Despite the loss, Greene still did very well in the MAC with four shutout wins in a row before the season ended, finishing 11-6-1 overall. Greene was carried by senior Liam Flanagan last season, who finished as the team's leading goal scorer with 21. The team was saddened to lose Flanagan and other senior Ben Kehl on defense, but still have plenty of talent returning.

The Trojans return Kloden Rapp, who was another power house on the offense and lead the team with 11 assists last year. Jon Westcott, Trevor Ketcham, Kenny Baucas, Seth Symons, Alex Boel, and Shane Rideout also return as playmakers for the offense. Jonah Browning leads the defense



The 2023 Greene Trojans Boys Soccer team, coached by Rick Tallman and Chris Rice. The team poses in their new uniforms. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

as a senior this season, along with fellow senior Colin Colgan and sophomore Aidan Roth.

Tallman is fortunate to look up to several of his key returners this season, especially with Jonah and Kloden to fill Liam and Ben's shoes. He has seen great work from them in the offseason. Tallman also looks for Jon Westcott to stand out this season.

Other than key returners, Greene welcomes a young group of future talent, who could very well make a big impression this season. With no JV team,

there are five freshmen and one eighth grader learning what their role is and gaining varsity experience that will only help them in years to come.

Aside from those young players, Greene was fortunate to pick up a few new upperclassmen who have either switched from another team and/or have found an interest in playing soccer in their final high school years.

Greene was unfortunate to lose their starting goalkeeper, Tony Sergi in the offseason. This situation brings light to the young

players who want to prove themselves. Tallman will look up to Eli Sepulveda-Kiefer as the primary start-

er in goal. Eli saw some action as a back-up for Sergi before a late season injury. As a sophomore,

Greene is hopeful for Eli to reach potential for this season and beyond. The Trojans could also see some of the new freshman in goal when time allows.

Tallman looks for his young team to focus on being cohesive this season with getting everyone to be on the same page and to understand goals as well as giving the younger players experience. Tallman also wants his players to understand that they'll have to work and play hard to continue carrying on the Greene Trojans tradition and success.

Greene will participate in a few scrimmages prior to the beginning of the season and will officially kick off their 2023 season on Thursday, September 7 at Sidney.

Greene Volleyball: Continuing to have fun while being good sports and striving to win

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After a hard season, the Greene Trojans Volleyball team returns to the court with a fresh start. While the team did not win a game last season, they were proud to win the MAC league Sportsmanship award under new head coach Deb Krupp in 2022.

Krupp thanks the league coaches, officials, and scorekeepers for all their patience and help during her first year as varsity coach. Krupp also expresses gratitude to Shelbe Furman and Jessica Fish for their help as well. Furman and Fish were the previous Greene volleyball coaches.

Krupp also learned a lot while stepping into the new prominent role last season. "Last year's team taught

me the need for a team to be unified and focused on playing together," she said. "Communication on the court is so important to make that happen."

This year's team is already focused on building a strong unified team with the help of the team's lone returning senior, Camric Williams. Krupp praises Williams for being a great asset to the team.

"Camric is a strong leader," she said. "He motivates his teammates, works with everyone, and exudes contagious enthusiasm. Cam is 100 percent invested in building this team up and creating a unified team."

Greene also welcomes senior Izan Romero Requeno, an exchange student from Spain.

"He is a skilled player who enjoys being part of our team and we are happy to be a part of his American

experience," Krupp said.

Out of the remaining players, three of the team's five juniors return from last year's team, including Shanna Krupp, Morgan Quarella, and Bella Begley. Serenity Douglas and Holly Pierce join the junior class with modified level experience.

The rest of the team features two sophomores and two freshmen who also played modified. Krupp credits Gina Anasagasti, the modified coach, for helping create strong, skilled players that benefit the varsity squad.

Greene is excited for a new season and prepares to face Sidney for the season opener on Friday, September 8 before starting MAC league play on Monday, September 11 against Delhi.

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Another winning season for Greene football? Almost a sure thing

By Patrick Newell
Evening Sun Contributing Writer

Has there been a more under-the-radar, consistently good football program in Section IV than the Greene Trojans?

Programs such as Maine-Endwell, Chenango Forks, and Tioga have won multiple state championships, and rightly take their place as the marquee football programs in the Southern Tier.

But if you look at Greene's long track record of success, you can make a case that the Trojans belong in that next tier of great football programs in Section IV.

Since 2005, the Trojans have had just two losing seasons, have made the playoffs most of those years, and since moving to 8-man football six years ago, has made the Section IV playoffs every season excluding the 2020 season that was shortened due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Clearly, that is an enviable record that nearly any school would aspire to.

"We've had a lot of good players come into the program," said 11th-year head coach Dave Gorton. "When you have sophomores, they are sometimes unsure what it means to be on the team. And by the end of their careers, they are repeating the same mantras about



The 2023 Greene Trojans Football team, coached by Dave Gorton. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

building the program (and continuing the tradition). The seniors want to leave the program in good condition and are doing job delivering that message to the underclassmen."

Last season, the Trojans were the cream of the crop in their division and had the division title wrapped up by week five. Unfortunately, they ran into a slew of outstanding programs down the stretch – including a semifinals playoff loss – to finish with a 4-4 mark.

"We had a lot of inexperienced players stepping into unfamiliar positions, but they did a great job," Gorton said. "We lost our late-season games to highly state-ranked teams... we got overmatched physical-

ly in a couple spots, and that's a big thing in 8-man football.

"But I was proud of the team. We played to our capabilities. All things considered, the goal was to win the division and set the foundation for this year, and we did that."

What will return for the Trojans from last season's playoff team are a quartet of skill position weapons.

Bill Dunlap, Derek Renfer, and Joel Vielandi are interchangeable parts playing either in the backfield or at receiver, and Jaden Eroshevich is a third-year quarterback who will take the reins as a full-time starter behind center.

"Bill, Derek and Joel are very fast and capable

of scoring on any play – even on a harmless play," Gorton said. "They all have good hands (in the passing game) and have scored for us in the past."

Eroshevich is no stranger to important snaps at quarterback but was sharing time at the position the first two years of his varsity career.

"Jaden is more than ready to take over and run the offense," Gorton said. "He's another dynamic runner, and we now have four kids that can score on any play. It's pretty exciting, and that can mask other inconsistencies."

The other inconsistencies aren't necessarily an overt deficiency. As athletic as Greene is in the backfield, it is undersized

on the line.

In fact, Gorton said he won't start a 200-plus-pound offensive lineman this year. Conversely, that absence of size is offset by quickness off the ball and relentless tenacity.

"We've put in more things on offense this year to take advantage of that athleticism," Gorton said. "So far, they've all been healthy and are ready to go."

All that skill position quickness will be fronted by returning three-year starting center Ryan Milk. Gorton complimented Milk's overall knowledge on the line.

"(Ryan) knows everyone's assignments," Gorton said. "He's a senior, directs things for the other kids,

and is very reliable."

Flanking Milk at guard will be Isaiah Sexton and Jaiden Wagner. Sexton, Gorton said, is likely the strongest player on the team, and both young men belie their size. "We're hopeful they can get their hands (on the defensive linemen)," Gorton said of his two guards.

Many of the previously mentioned players will also spend time on the defensive side of the ball. Gorton did point out a trio of players who will start on the defensive of the ball.

Taylor Taggart, Aidan Marson, and football newcomer Keegan Evans will all see big minutes at linebacker. Gorton said he is counting on that trio to give his 20-man roster much-needed versatility.

Surveying the promise of a potentially explosive offense, the end-of-season goals remain the same, and by all accounts, relevance when the postseason arrives is a high probability.

"If we can avoid injuries and have a chance to play for the division title, that's all we want to do," Gorton said. "We just want to have a chance. We're really excited about the season. This group really likes football. That may sound obvious if you play the game, but some teams love it more than others."

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Greene Field Hockey: Ready to defend MAC title

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After winning the Section IV, Class A last season, the Greene Trojans field hockey team is back to defend the title in 2023.

Greene lost six seniors from 2022 and finished with an overall record of 13-5, falling in the regional game to Cicero-North Syracuse to end the season. The Trojans still remain hopeful with many key returners and new players stepping up to play at the varsity level.

Coach Heather Rapp knows her team plays with a lot of grit and heart each time they step onto the field. Those characteristics are two key elements the

team strives to accomplish everyday.

Key returners this year include Rhea Malmquist, Claire Flanagan, Nadia Brown, Abby Yahner, and Josie Dutcher. These ladies, along with last year's seniors, were driving forces throughout last season, along with goalkeeper Tatianna Wells, who returns as a senior this year.

"I expect these girls to lead by example both on and off the field while focusing on building a positive team culture, which supports all players," Rapp said. "Team chemistry and sportsmanship are a main focus for Greene field hockey."

While Rapp puts a lot of trust into her experienced players, she also hopes



The 2023 Greene Trojans Field Hockey team, coached by Heather Rapp and Kelly Erickson. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

everyone, even the younger girls, to appreciate and love the sport of field hockey.

"We hope to teach the

love of the game while also being competitive in every game," Rapp said. "We will

strive to never give up and

always maintain a positive atmosphere both on and off the field.

Greene opened the 2023

season against Maine-Endwell on Thursday, August 31 with a 2-1 double overtime win. Both teams played fiercely for the first game of the season, but it was the defending champions on top. Claire Flanagan scored the first goal after a scoreless first half of play, but Maine-Endwell tied the game to force the first overtime with nine minutes left. With 37 seconds left in double overtime, Josie Dutcher found a big breakaway and scored the game-winner to give Greene its first win of the season in front of the home crowd of dedicated fans and alumni.

The Trojans face a tough Whitney Point team on Tuesday, September 5 before taking on Sidney on the following Thursday.

Greene Girls Swimming: Building endurance and striving to improve times

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After losing two key seniors who represented them in sectionals last season, the Greene Trojans girls swim team returns as a smaller group for the 2023 season. While the team's size is small, don't count these ladies out as everyone is already working hard in the preseason.

Coach Mary Kelly is motivated to help her team improve individually to reach personal and team goals.

"The girls worked hard all season to improve and drop times by the end of the 2022 season," MK said. "Our focus this year is to improve on kicking, building endurance and extending the underwater portion of the races. Improving these will help my girls reach their goals of best

times."

MK has four returners back from last season while welcoming two new freshmen.

"With having a small team, all of my returners will be important this year," MK said. "Senior Mallory Jeffrey will provide competition in the Individual Medley (IM) and the breaststroke with junior Savannah Nowalk providing competition in the sprint freestyle events."

MK looks for Juniors Keeli Roe and Lexi Clark to step up in their respective events as well.

"Roe is our returning distance freestyler and Clark will help provide depth in our sprint freestyle events along with some competition in the backstroke," she said.

Greene welcomes two new freshman, Lousie Mandolin and Corrine Diconzo to the team this season, who MK said are

brand new, but have been working hard and already improving since day one of practice.

MK and the Trojans are looking forward to competing with Norwich and Sus Valley this season as they have in the past.

"Meets against Norwich & SV have been fun and competitive the past few years. Two meets that we are looking forward to once again this season," MK said. "They've been similar

in roster size and speed, which have made for some close meets the past few seasons. Knowing that a meet will be close provides extra motivation!"

Greene will be at Norwich on October 3 and at Sus Valley on Oct 17.

The Trojans open the 2023 season home against Waverly on Tuesday, September 5.

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Purple Tornado won't back down from challenging schedule

By Patrick Newell
Evening Sun Contributing Writer

Every season, Norwich football enters with the goal of making the playoffs and playing for a championship.

Those aspirations didn't look good through three weeks a season ago losing two of the first three games, which included a four-touchdown loss to eventual state champion Maine-Endwell.

But it was in one of those two early losses that head coach Mike Chrystie knew he had something potentially special amongst his 2022 roster.

Playing Section III's Westhill, Norwich was down multiple touchdowns in the second half, but climbed back to within a possession of the lead and had a chance to win it late.

"That game showed a lot about our team chemistry," Chrystie said. "I knew we would win games. The way we fought to the end, I felt we could potentially make a run, and we ended up doing it."

Chrystie's premonition after that loss and the week three loss to the Spartans preceded a five-game winning streak, and six of seven victories before losing to M-E in the Class B sectional championship game.

Outside of the loss to Westhill early on, the only other teams to beat Norwich were Section IV champions: Maine-Endwell and Waverly.

"We pride ourselves on our competitiveness, building on the tradition before us, and making sure that



Norwich's Steven Dowdall (#14) and the Purple Tornado offense line up against Batavia on Saturday, Sept 2. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

tradition lasts beyond this year," Chrystie said. "We are a consistent playoff team, and we're looking to make that next step."

That "next step" has proven quite difficult during Chrystie's decade-long tenure. He's found himself contending for championships against multi-time state champion Maine-Endwell, while also squaring off multiple times against fellow state champions Susquehanna Valley and Chenango Forks.

"In my opinion, we've had some really good teams since I've been here, and every really good team we've had, we've lost to an eventual state champion," Chrystie said. "We haven't lost too many games we were supposed to win, and that's the sign of a good program."

Last year's 7-4 season was brought overall team success, but it also yielded

two of the best individual seasons in program history.

Senior Holden Ryan, who previously was primarily a receiver, rushed for over 1,800 yards breaking John Loiselle's single-season rushing record set in 1999.

And while the individual passing yards record is not officially documented, it is more likely than not that quarterback Steven Dowdall's 1,300 yards through the air were also a new team record.

According to records since the early 1990s, Chris Maynard was the last Norwich quarterback to throw for over 1,000 yards doing so almost 30 years ago.

That prolific balance running and passing the ball, Chrystie said, was perhaps the best realization of his idyllic offense since he took over the head coach-

ing duties.

"I don't know if we had the ability to throw and run at the level we did last year since I've been here," Chrystie said. "To do both equally well, as a playcaller, it's special to have that."

It's also special to know you have nearly all key skill position players back from a season ago.

Ryan is back to lead the running game, and if he approaches last year's numbers, will challenge the school's all-time rushing mark.

Dowdall returns at quarterback, as do receivers Braden Hagenbuch, Richard Fuller, and Mitch Collins.

"These guys have a lot of varsity experience," Chrystie said. "We're not starting from square one with our concepts in the passing and running game."

Returning on the line

is all-state selection Gabe Blenis, and Dakota Andrial, who is the biggest of Norwich's projected starters on the line.

Patrick White returns from last year and will have a much more prominent role at guard. Jack Barnes, a skill position player in previous years, is expected to start at center. Zakkery Myers, meanwhile, is the lone entry up from the junior varsity, and is expected to start at center.

Unlike the previous season where the line was filled almost entirely with incumbents, Chrystie has a little bit of uncertainty with three-fifths of the likely starters new to starting varsity roles.

"Even having so many skill position players back, the success of good teams starts up front," Chrystie said. "They (the linemen) know how important they are to the team."

The next wave of young Norwich players expected to impact this year's team will find themselves mostly on the defensive side of the ball.

Tiernan Lindsay, Zach Turner, Zack Parker, and Kaden Downey – all sophomores – will see a lot of starting defensive snaps, and with just a 25-man roster this year, those snaps will prove valuable due to the overall lack of team depth.

"These younger guys filling positions, that allows us to not have nine guys going both ways," Chrystie said. "It's a long season, and we're hoping playing no more than five or six guys both ways, it will be easier to deal with."

Norwich already has a pre-Labor Day game under its belt. In lieu of the traditional scrimmage, the Purple Tornado again played a "week zero" game on Sept. 2.

That game, against 2022 Class B state semifinalist Batavia, showed Norwich still has offensive firepower, and the Blue Devils didn't sew up the win over Norwich until midway through the fourth quarter (a 46-30 win).

That game set the tone for what Chrystie characterized as one of the most challenging schedules in his 11 seasons. That said, the mindset for Norwich won't change.

"The goals and expectations are to still win a championship," the NHS coach said. "There are no easy outs this season, and every game will be a grind. We're fine with it, and we won't back down."

NHS Cheer: Still small, but proud

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After struggling to recruit last season, the Norwich Purple Tornado cheer team remains small, but welcomed a few more loud and proud girls for 2023. Coach Nancy Swertfager joins the team this year in hopes of keeping the spirit alive. Swertfager brings a lot of cheer knowledge and passion from coaching all levels of cheer from pop warner to college in her tenure and has judged cheer competitions in the past as well.

Swertfager's overall goal is to rebuild the cheerleading program. She also has noticed that participation numbers have hit many other area schools throughout the county as well. This year, Norwich created a modified level cheer program to shorten the gap between the pop warner and varsity levels.

"I realize this rebuild isn't going to happen overnight, but I've seen all the Cyclone Cheerleaders who are down at the field every night, not to mention the

cheerleaders who cheer through the Norwich City Youth Bureau, and the future is bright if we can give these athletes a place to go after they age out," she said. "The addition of their modified program is KEY to accomplishing this. Their modified program is not only continuing to develop the skills that are needed at the varsity level, but bridges that gap where, in the past, we lost cheerleaders to other sports. If I can keep the varsity program alive until the next batch of athletes are ready for varsity level, I've achieved this goal."

Swertfager, who has been familiar with the Norwich cheer team for a long time, would love to also bring back past traditions.

"Another goal I have is to bring back some of the traditions that have gone by the wayside. Who doesn't remember having the stands packed and hearing the band play the "fight song," she said. "The fans are cheering on the team, the cheerleaders are doing a dance and the energy is explosive. The Alumni weekend recently held help

ignite this passion."

Swertfager hopes to start bring back some traditions this season with her eight dedicated cheerleaders leading the way.

"These eight cheerleaders are super dedicated," she said. "We are a young team with two juniors, three sophomores, and three freshmen, who have never cheered before. They are working hard to learn everything about the sport of cheerleading as well as the sport (football) they are leading cheers for. Because we are so young, it excites me even more for the next few years- Norwich Cheerleading is making a comeback!"

Swertfager also said if anyone is still interested in joining this fall, they can contact her or any of the cheerleaders. Norwich Tornado Cheerleading also has a Facebook page dedicated to all team news and updates.

Lastly, Swertfager reminds us how important cheerleading still is today and how much time and effort is put into the sport on and off the track.

"I feel that it's important for everyone to give



The 2023 Norwich Purple Tornado cheer team, coached by Nancy Swertfager. The small, but dedicated group of girls traveled to Colgate University on September 2 for the Norwich-Batavia game. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

these Cheerleaders the respect that they deserve. Not only is Cheerleading a sport – it's so much more," Swertfager said. "This team is putting in just as many hours in the gym as other student athletes in Norwich. On top of that, you will see this team not only on the side line for football games, boys' and

girls' basketball games, but also giving back to the community.

"They will be volunteering at local churches and organizations, at soup kitchens, appearing at the Halloween parade as well as the parade of lights. These girls will be doing all these things while keeping on top of their school

work, oh – I forgot to mention fundraising! With the help of the Norwich Cheerleading Booster Club, every concession stands at JV and Varsity Football games benefit the cheerleaders. The commitment is there to rebuilding this team and all that it stands for."

NHS Girls Soccer: Rebuilding and working together

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After losing nine seniors at the end of the 2022 season, the Norwich Purple Tornado girls soccer team is looking to regroup and depend on the experienced players to help their new and younger teammates. Coming off a tough season, Norwich needed to refocus on preparation for the brand new season ahead.

Coach Heather McShane is excited for this season, where the key focus has been to have a strong pre-season and unite as a team.

“Our team unity and overall deco took to the sport last year and was lacking in a few players and it brought our moral down,” McShane said. “This year, we have really focused on bringing us all together as a team and working together. We just hope we can start off strong this year and keep our focus on soccer!”

The team has also been working on passing and



The 2023 Norwich Purple Tornado Girls Soccer team, coached by Heather McShane and Doug Coggins. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

shooting skills while also using space to their benefit to improve their strength offensively and making sure to help each other out as a team. McShane said the pre-season had been

a learning process to figure out where each girl fit best, especially with filling the holes of the previous seniors.

Norwich lost their leading goal scorer, Sarah

Davis, who graduated, but are grateful to have Bella Dilorio, this year's captain, and Maya Adoff.

“I'm expecting Isabella and Maya to both step up as our key forwards,”

McShane said. “The rest of our team is pretty much coming up and starting fresh on varsity this year. I am very excited for the next few years of Norwich Soccer with girls coming

up that I have been coaching for a long time.”

Before participating in this year's Sherburne-Earlville soccer tournament, Norwich started its 2023 season at Waverly, falling 3-0. The Purple Tornado picked up the pace fairly quick with five goals scored against S-E in the first game of the tournament, where Caroline Richardson, another key returner, led the team with two goals. Maya Adoff, Josey Ryan, and Bella Dilorio also scored one goal each in the win while Daphney Frank, who will step up big this year as goalkeeper, was perfect through both halves.

In Saturday's tournament championship, Norwich suffered a hard 12-0 loss to a tough Section III Hamilton team.

Norwich begins league play with back-to-back games on September 6 and 7. Wednesday the sixth, the Purple Tornado will be on the road against Chenango Forks before hosting Chenango Valley on Thursday.

NHS Girls Tennis: Motivated to improve as a younger team

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After finishing third

in Section IV, Class B last season with a heavy senior class, the Norwich Girls tennis team looks to regroup with nine players

entering 2023. Norwich was led by seniors Emma Brooks and Willow Swingle in sectionals as the team's leading doubles, who went



The 2023 Norwich Purple Tornado Girls Tennis team, coached by Nikki Brooks. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

on to states, and left some big holes to fill after graduation.

However, Coach Nikki Brooks is feeling positive about the 2023 season with a handful of experienced returners and also a few new freshmen, who are brand new to tennis. This impact could help lead to a bright future for the Norwich girls tennis program.

While it took some time to build this year's team with a majority of new girls joining late within the first week of practice, Brooks said this group came in with positive attitudes and got right to work. The young group consists of many of its singles returners with Addison Jackson, Leona Tyler, Isabelle Voss, and Erin Presnell all back this season. Brooks has one freshman with modified experience and the rest are brand new to the sport.

Finley Farrow, Skylr Newman, Alexys Strozier,

Maci Boughton, and Rori Gates all look to make good impressions in their first year.

“The younger kids are excited to have the opportunity to play and are ready to be new leaders for the team,” Brooks said. “Everyone is motivated to improve and all have a pretty good attitude and are focused on their skills.”

Brooks also pointed out that her key returners showed more self assurance with their surroundings and have become more confident. Brooks expects her returners, especially at the singles level, to reach a .500 record as they hold a lot of experience and are the team's stronger players. Brooks understands that her team is younger than most league competitors, but feels like Norwich holds a good chance against comfortable sized opponents like Owego and Windsor this season.

Norwich held its first

match of the 2023 season on Wednesday, August 30 at home against Owego. Owego came with a small group, where both teams at least played one doubles match before Norwich came away with the victory by an overall forfeit. Brooks said this match felt like a scrimmage for her team, but was happy to come out with the win and extra prep work leading up to the upcoming match against Sus Valley.

“We know that we have to work at a quicker pace to prepare for Sus Valley,” Brooks said. “For the doubles, we have to avoid hitting to the net because they will punish any weak ball. We also have to work on our readiness and be predicting on what they're going to do, so we'll be in the right place other than just responding.”

Norwich has a few practices to get ready for the next match on September 6 on their home court.

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Norwich Girls Swimming: Smaller, but faster

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

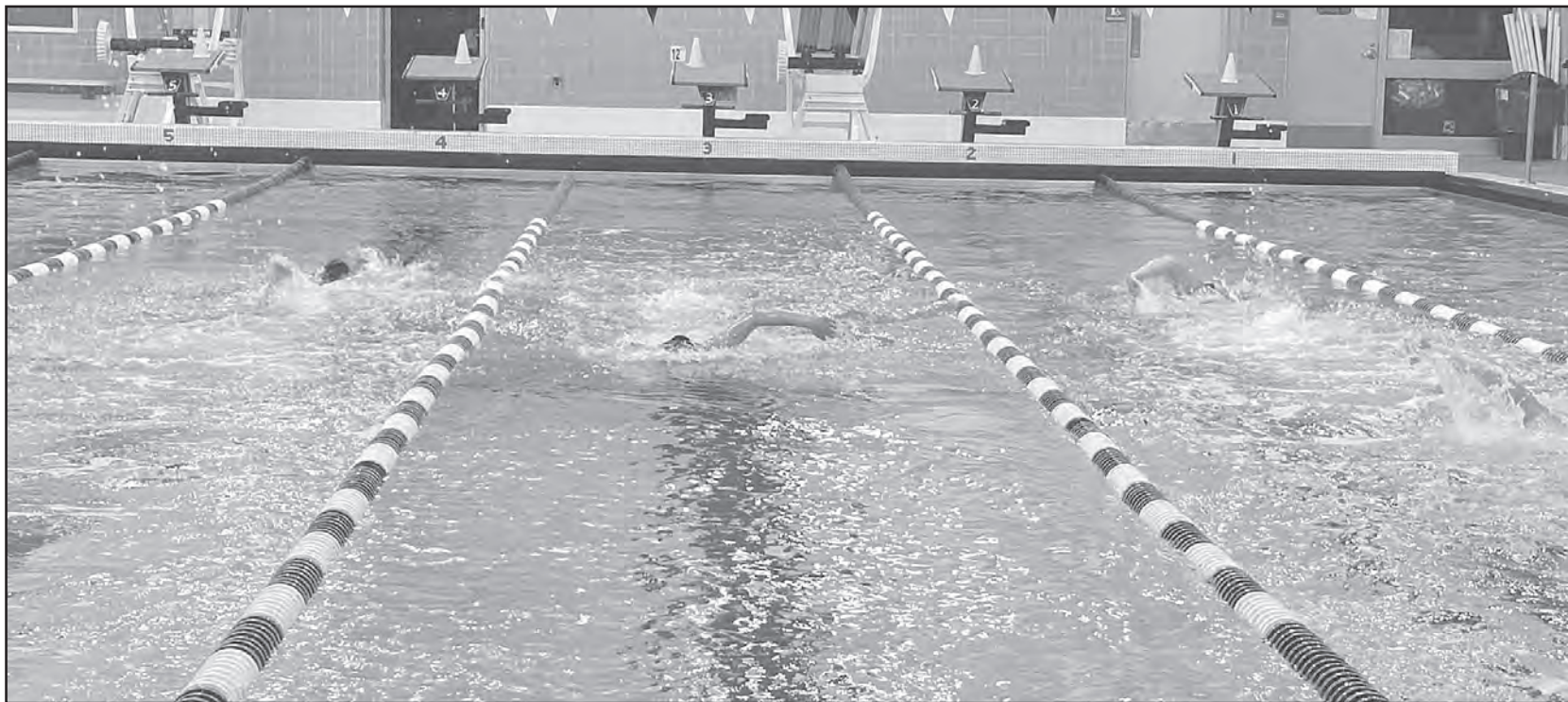
After finishing fourth in Section IV, Class B last season for the second year in a row, the Norwich Purple Tornado girls swim team looks to repeat its efforts in 2023. Last season, the team saw nine swimmers compared to 14 in the previous season. This year, the team dropped down to six, including losing two swimmers who are studying abroad.

Coach Sandra Gantt is confident she will bring all six to the finals this season.

“We are a different group this year. We are cohesive this season even as a small team and the girls have really bought into the program, so I’m very happy with the start so far,” Gantt said.

Gantt remains disappointed with the lack of a feeder program to drive the future of Norwich swimming. There was the return of the YMCA Dolphins, but this group is too young to advance to the varsity level. Gantt was able to at least bring up a seventh grader this season, Alex Shtrauch.

Diving is also a big part



The Norwich Girls Swim team working hard at practice. (Photo from Norwich Purple Tornado Swimming & Diving Facebook)

of the program that has been missing. Gantt is always looking for a diving coach to help rebuild that portion of the program as well as finding more interested swimmers who want to dive. Gantt said that if anyone is interested to please reach out to her at any point.

While Gantt and the team want to repeat at sectionals, they know what they have to work on to only get stronger.

“We are learning how

to pace and swim faster this year as well as striving to achieve personal best times,” Gantt said. “Teams will look at us being small and think that we are amateur, slower, and newer, but when we walk in, we’re going to be fast, be good competition, and there will be great races.”

Amongst the key returning swimmers is Nina Kman, who returns as a junior. She achieved first place in both the

100 freestyle and the 500 freestyle events for the last two years. Gantt said Kman also took second place overall in Class B as a high-point winner with those two events.

While these honors were great accomplishments, Gantt said Kman still hasn’t reached her full potential quite yet.

“She still hasn’t seen her top speed yet, so she’s working on gaining strength and size,” Gantt said. “She knows they’re

coming for her this year, but she’s having fun.”

While Kman is expected to be a big contribution to this year’s team, Gantt said it’s a whole team effort, even with six girls this season, and Gantt would love to bring all six girls to states.

Mikayla Sastri, Julia Llewellyn, Olivia Palmer, and Aurora Strauch, who all made a big impact for the girls relay team as well as in their own individual events last season, return

and look forward to having another strong season.

Norwich will have one meet against Sus Valley prior to the first day of school on Tuesday, September 5. Gantt knows that Sus Valley will also be a young team, but this meet is more as a prep for the invitational to follow. Gantt said the girls have been working on building endurance and getting in shape to prepare for the upcoming meets.

NHS Cross Country: Refocusing and remaining confident as a small, young team

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After saying goodbye to four seniors last season, the Norwich Purple Tornado Cross Country team is confident with its 2023 season, even as a much smaller group. Coach Shaun Horan currently has three boys returning with an addition of one experienced runner, stepping up from the modified level, and is excited to have a full girls team with five dedicated ladies looking to produce a fast team score. Cross Country runs about seven players to a team on both the girls and the boys side with five runners able to produce a team score.

Horan is confident that within the first week of school, he will be able to recruit at least one more boy or possibly even more boys and girls. Horan also understands it is very hard to find new athletes year after year. Horan, a physical education teacher at Norwich High School, is looking forward to spreading the word and seeking

out potential runners.

“There is no exposure of cross country, so not many know about the sport,” Horan said. “Not a lot of kids realize there is cross country, which makes the sport so unique. You don’t notice the sport unless you’re actually a member of a team.”

For the Norwich boys, Anthony Bourn, Gabe Decker, and Caden Sutton all return from last season with the addition of Nic Sutton as a freshman.

“I’m looking at Caden Sutton to be our number one runner this season with Nic at number two,” Horan said. “Caden’s goal is to try and make states and he’s been working really hard and is in good shape to start the season. Nic did really well at the modified level and ran some varsity meets for us last year.”

Annie Boland and Kyra Brunick-Davis are in great shape as well for the Norwich girls with a few new members joining. Horan is grateful to have a full girls team as this does not happen very often for Norwich in the past.

Boland and Brunick-Davis are the most experienced runners as juniors this year and will look to make a bigger statement.

While the team is very young and comfortable in the smaller size, Horan appreciates the ability to focus on individual performances and improvement for each member of his cross country team as a whole.

“We’ll see a lot more individual attention as a smaller team, where we can cater to individual workouts and everyone can develop their own individual goals,” Horan said. “They all have the same goal of being faster than last year.”

While Horan is optimistic about recruiting more runners during the first week of school, Norwich prepares for their first meet of the season on Saturday, September 9 at the Dave Flash Forbes Invitational in Oneonta. Norwich will also host their lone home meet, the Tornado 5000, on October 7.

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Norwich Golf: Looking to defend STAC East title

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

Coach Dave Branham and the Norwich Purple Tornado golf team are back for the 2023 season and ready to defend their STAC East championship title.

Last season, the team finished STAC play 6-0 and 9-2 overall. Their only two losses came to Union-Endicott and Chenango Forks, who were both non-league opponents.

Norwich returns, after losing just two seniors last year, a lot of talented players this year with much experience under their belt. Jackson Sastri, Aidan Stafford, Braden Reid return for the senior class with senior Collin Scheuer also joining the team. The junior class consists of the team's two leaders from last season with Julian Smith and Jacob Dowdall. Smith, as a Sophomore last year, lead the team with the lowest stroke average of a nine and hopes to continue to improve as an upperclassmen.

The underclassmen shows solid returners as well with Matthew Brunick (freshman), Michael Brunick (sophomore), Troy Schack (sophomore), Carmine Pastore (freshman), and Brayden Adoff

(freshman), who all made their mark last year, even at the JV level. Matthew was the team's rookie of the year for his noble efforts last season.

The team welcomes eighth grader Charlie Smith, freshman Jacob Lobdell, and freshman Ethan Willis and hopes they will be the future of this talented team in years to come.

While there are a variety of young talent on this year's team, Branham said there is always something to teach, whether you're a new or experienced player.

"My job is to teach them how to play golf," Branham said. "They are so young and unknowing and I'm here to help them make the right choices on clubs and to teach the process of golf and limiting mistakes to score better."

Branham also encourages his team to watch the PGA tour on TV and pay attention to every golfer's stance and their pre-routine before each shot. Branham said each golfer on every hole and every stroke follows the same routine and helps them concentrate and not think about hitting the ball so hard and so far.

Branham held qualifying rounds on the first few days of practice to determine his top eight this



The 2023 Norwich Purple Tornado Golf team, coached by David Branham. (Photo by Coach Branham)

season. There's no doubt that the top eight consists of the key returners from last year. Julian Smith, Jacob Dowdall, Braden Reid, Aidan Stafford, Jackson Sastri, Matthew Brunick, Carmine Pastore, and Jacob Morris will represent the varsity level. Branham is confident that all eight could be medalists and shoot similar scores.

Branham also knows that U-E and Chenango Forks will return the same teams, making them tough competitors again. Norwich will face both early on in

the season, getting the hard part out of the way. Branham said about every match is crucial to home course advantage. Norwich hosted Forks last season, but lost in a close 234-247 match. Norwich will face U-E in late September. U-E returns their top golfer and NY State Champion, Dante Berton. Branham said it'll be a treat for his team to play against him.

Norwich kicked off their 2023 season opener against Forks on the road, where they came out on top in a nail biter. Both

teams tied at 206 and used the final sixth golfer's score. Aidan Stafford was the key factor in the match and shot a 45 to win it for Norwich. Branham and his team felt great to win on their opponent's home course. Branham knows how important it is for teams to win on their home course during golf season.

Norwich picked up two more wins following against STAC opponents Windsor and Oneonta to start the season 3-0. In the win against Windsor, Jacob Dowdall was the

leading medalist with a 42 while Matthew Brunick had a team-low of a 44 vs Oneonta. Jacob Morris led the team with a 38 to start the season against Chenango Forks.

Branham was impressed that his team is showing depth so far in the season with three different medalists starting strong for Norwich.

Norwich looks to keep things rolling on Wednesday, September 6 against Sus Valley.

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B-G Football: Regrouping under new coach

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

Coming off a hard season, the Bainbridge-Guilford Bobcats Football look to regroup under a new coach for 2023. Art Rigas steps in this year with a vast range of coaching experience and is ready to take on the challenge of one of the hardest divisions in Section IV football.

Rigas joins the team after some recent time at Hartwick college, amongst other experience at Unatego and Unadilla Valley.

"I was very pleased and lucky to step in at the right time," Rigas said about taking the head coach position. "The school and the administration has been great and the players all have great attitudes and have been hard at work during the first week of practice."

Rigas also got to know his team in the offseason with various summer training camps. Rigas describes his coaching style as unique with a combination of different characteristics in common with coaches he's worked alongside in the past. He also has a vision of taking small goals and turning them into big goals along the way. He is very excited to be stepping into this new role and hopes to be an asset to his 31 players.

B-G lost a lot of talented seniors at the end of



The Bainbridge-Guilford Bobcats line up against Sherburne-Earlville at Colgate University on September 2. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

the 2022 season, but still has many key returners prepared to fill in those empty holes. After losing starting Quarterback Nolan Hawkins, the young Conner Davy, a sophomore this year, will be depended on. Rigas has seen what Davy can do and said he is "one heck of an athlete." Rigas is also lucky to have James Hogroian back at the tight end position as well as Gavin Gifford snapping the ball at center.

According to MaxPreps, a site the team uses for sta-

tistics, Davy played in four games, where he threw four of five attempts for 86 yards with one touchdown pass in his freshman year and finished with a Quarterback rating of 160.4. B-G proved to be a rushing team last season with 140 carries for 604 yards with Ethan Beames and Nolan Hawkins, two leading seniors carrying their weight.

With Beames and Hawkins both graduated, the Bobcats expect junior Kaiden Seymour and senior

Damon Seymour to continue to power through on the rush game. Damon was the team's leading rusher with 28 carries for 174 yards.

Other than those key returners, Rigas was impressed with the growing numbers on his team this year. As one of the three 11-man teams in Chenango County, B-G

has 31 on the active roster, who are committed players ready to play. Rigas also said there are still battles within some starting positions, making the game against Sherburne-Earlville on September 2nd a "test" to see who makes a good impression.

The Bobcats gave S-E a run, but fell 26-20 in over-

time. While this game does not hurt them in their own division, it still counted on their official record. Junior Declyn Marshfield saw many touches throughout the game. Marshfield is the team's go-to at any offensive position, labeled "ATH" or athlete on B-G's roster because he is talented at running, receiving the ball, and at 158 pounds, he makes a great block.

Marshfield led the Bobcats with two rushing touchdowns while Parker Buttice caught one touchdown pass from Quarterback Connor Davy in the loss.

B-G was confident that they wanted to ball to start overtime, but the S-E defense put the pressure on Davy and Marshfield to gain possession and win the game.

The rest of the 2023 football schedule is still as brutal as ever for Section IV, Class D with tough competitors in Tioga, Walton, and Delhi. While these games will be a challenge for B-G, Rigas wants to focus on one game at a time and allow his team to match in competitiveness.

B-G heads home to face Sidney on Friday, September 8th in a non-league contest before finishing off the season against their heavy league.

B-G Cheer



The 2023 Bainbridge-Guilford Bobcats Cheerleading team, coached by Danielle Suda. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

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B-G Girls Soccer: Developing strong, versatile athletes

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After losing just two seniors last season, the Bainbridge-Guilford Bobcats girls soccer team returns to action with its two leading goal scorers and as an experienced team. The Bobcats finished 5-9-1 last season and are looking to be contenders among the MAC and class C for 2023.

After leading the team in goals last season, Johnna Henderson and Gabriella Cuzzo return as the two contributors on offense that Coach Sarah Nezelek looks to count on. Henderson leads the senior class with Cuzzo on top for the juniors. Henderson, a three-year captain for the Bobcats, led the team with nine goals in 2022 while Cuzzo finished second with seven.

Nezelek is expecting both girls to step up this year with Henderson being another strong standout.

"Johnna is a strong, fundamentally, and tactically sound senior who the B-G soccer fan base is expecting a lot from this season," she said. "Specifically putting the ball in the back of the net and feeding her teammates who are open."

All-around, Nezelek is looking at her upperclass-

men to put in the work to help drive the team as well.

"I am counting on my senior class and my junior captains (Chandler Benjamin and Clare Sullivan) to lead a very versatile group of girls," Nezelek said. "I expect Johnna and Gabriella to lead our offense, and Annika Armstrong and Olivia Nichols to lead the defense and the junior captain to lead the midfield."

Other standouts among the vast experienced players include some of the underclassmen, who contributed to the team in 2022. Sophomores Jayslin Henderson and Breanna Casey are expected to step up again this year.

Nezelek on Casey: "Breanna Casey is an athlete with both precise ball control and the confidence to take on her opponents one on one," she said. "Her ability to both distribute and finish the ball will make her a key target this season."

Nezelek on Henderson: "Jayslin is one of the hardest working plays on the pitch," she said. "Her ability to get up and down the field, get her head up and find the open player, and ability to shoot the long ball will make her a player to watch."

While Nezelek has many talented players, she also



The Bainbridge-Guilford Bobcats girls soccer team kicked off its 2023 season in the McGraw tournament, where they won both games, including the championship. The Bobcats are coached by Sarah Nezelek. (Submitted Photo)

hopes to develop the team to its full potential.

"Looking to this season, we are hoping to focus more on capitalizing on our goal scoring opportunities and continuing to develop our players into strong, confident, and versatile athletes," she said.

B-G kicked off its 2023 season in the McGraw tournament, where they

blew teams away to win it all. For the first game on Wednesday, August 30, B-G defeated Whitney Point 14-0 as Johnna Henderson led the team with four goals and three assists. While Henderson is off to a triumphant start, eighth grader Keelan Ammon scored two goals and Annika Armstrong and Jayslin Henderson both

scored one goal and tacked on one assist each.

B-G achieved another large margin victory on Friday, September 1 against host McGraw 11-0 in the tournament championship game. Johnna Henderson was named to the all-tournament team and added on with three more goals and one assist following the win. Breanna Casey and

Jayslin Henderson both contributed with two goals each while Jayslin also had two assists.

B-G, with a strong start to the season, will continue the season in a round robin tournament on Tuesday, September 5 on the road against Liberty before hosting Sullivan West on Thursday.

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B-G Golf: Improving the game under new direction

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Bainbridge-Guilford Bobcats golf team is back in action under a new coach for the 2023 season. B-G alum Tom Palmatier steps in, fresh off his time playing on both the Bobcats, up until 2019, as well as the SUNY Cortland Golf team last year. Palmatier is also excited about his new position as the physical education teacher at the B-G Elementary School.

“Returning to my alma mater is something I always wanted an opportunity to do,” he said. “I always wanted to return one day with the hope to teach and coach and for it to happen my first year out of college, I consider myself lucky.”

Palmatier is looking forward to bringing his deeper knowledge of the game of golf as well as his passion for the game to this talented Bobcats team, who returns its top golfer Michael Lipani. Lipani, a junior this year, finished fourth individually in the MAC League Golf Tournament behind tough competition with Greene and Oxford. Lipani also made 1st team MAC all-star honors.



The 2023 Bainbridge-Guilford Golf team, coached by Tom Palmatier. (Photo from Coach Palmatier)

Teammates Julian Pruskowski, Easton Porter, and Brock Porter also competed in the MAC tournament and are among the key returners this season. Senior Collin Dicks also returns amongst a heavy

upperclassmen team. 16 talented players will suit up for Palmatier this season, who range from highly skilled athletes to beginners. Palmatier has been pleased to see these players showing up every-

day ready to learn and also have fun.

“Outside of winning a championship, my goals are to become unified as team,” Palmatier said. “With having students varying from grades 7-12

and having a mix of males and females, I wondered how the cohesion would be. Already, I have seen great leadership by my older players in helping the younger and less skilled players out.”

Palmatier also would like the team to learn and appreciate the game as he does himself.

“Unlike many other scholastic sports, golf is a game that can be played across a life span and I hope that all my players leave the program here at B-G with the ability to play and enjoy the game for a long time,” he said.

Palmatier is also thankful of the help he’s received thus far in his first year.

“With this being my first head coaching position, I definitely needed some help to get started,” Palmatier said. “Sundown Golf & Country Club with owner Ian Rood has been nothing but a huge help for the program and myself. He continues to do anything he can to help the kids and provides a beautiful course for us to play on.”

B-G kicked off its 2023 season on Friday, September 1 against Greene. B-G fell in a close match with the Trojans 214-238. Easton Porter led the Bobcats with a 42.

Palmatier and the team are looking forward to the upcoming matches ahead throughout this fall.

B-G Volleyball: Working together cohesively as a young team

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Bainbridge-Guilford Bobcats Volleyball team returns for the 2023 season after making it to the second round of sectionals last year. Coach Tracy Kutz and her fairly young team would love to return to sectionals again this year, but have to work together.

“Goals for this season are to work together as a cohesive team,” Kutz said. “We have a fairly young team and we are looking to build their relationship on the court to work together to have a successful season.”

The Bobcats defeated Walton 3-1 in the first round of sectionals before falling to Tioga, who went on to win the Section IV, class D title, 3-0.

B-G, who reigns in the MAC league along with powerhouses Oxford and UV, are looking to be contenders again this season and they can certainly do that with five returners on board. Senior Alyssa



Finch, juniors Kaydence Brimmer and Emma Beames, along with sophomores Peyton Umbra and Kaylynn Crandall all return. The Bobcats also welcome another junior, sophomore, and two new freshman to the talented team.

Brimmer and Crandall both stood out effectively last season and look to

be big factors again this year. Crandall stacked up assists while Brimmer helped kill and block shots throughout the 2022 season.

B-G opens its 2023 season on Tuesday, September 5 on the road against Johnson City before starting league play on the following Thursday against Deposit-Hancock.

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THE EVENING SUN

Afton/Harpursville Boys Soccer: Ready to defend MAC title

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Afton/Harpursville boys soccer is back for the 2023 and have been hard at work in the offseason, ready to defend their 2022 MAC title. The Crimson Knights took a heart-breaking loss to Trumansburg in the Section IV, Class C semi-finals after defeating MAC competitor Greene in the game prior. The big finish in 2022 came one year after Afton/Harpursville

qualified for sectionals for the first time in school history. So, going all the way in the MAC League last time around was a big accomplishment for the soccer program.

Coach Joe Bunzey's team has stayed active in the off-season with many players involved in club soccer, where they've had experience against larger schools such as in the Binghamton area. The team also won the Varsity/U19 indoor soccer league this past May that helped the players stay

in shape.

Bunzey knows his team has a target on their back for winning the MAC title last season and it'll be challenging to defend that title this year, but the team is ready.

"We have the same core of players coming back, so we are expected to be better than last year," Bunzey said. "We have seven of 11 starters returning and our key bench players will also be stepping up to start."

The Crimson Knights lost two key seniors, Elijah

Baciuska and Hunter Baciuska, due to graduation, so they knew they had to make changes in formation to fill the holes left behind. Afton is confident in key returners Bobby Mercillott and Ryan Dawson. Mercillott was the leading goal scorer in 2022 and will be back as the team's main striker up front along with three-time first-team all-star Ryan Dawson at the Mid position.

Afton also looks to depend on its senior heavy team with 10 seniors ready to take on leadership roles and make one final statement. Bunzey knows after this season that the future will be unknown, but he's confident in what's to come out of the present leaders.

While Bunzey was very impressed with his team's outcome in 2022, there are a few things the Crimson Knights are focusing on prior to the start of a new season.

"We have to work on possession of the ball and stringing together a series of passes instead of playing a through ball and running on," he said. "If we keep possession of the ball, it'll be easier to break down defenses."

Bunzey sees his team, along with Bainbridge-

Guilford, Greene, and UV/GMU in the top four of the MAC this season. Bunzey also always "keeps an ear to the ground" on league teams and pays attention to every senior class and on who will return next season.

He is confident in what's in store for his Afton/Harpursville team in 2023.

"It's hard for teams to prepare for us when we have seven guys ready to score at any time," Bunzey said.

The defending MAC champions opened the

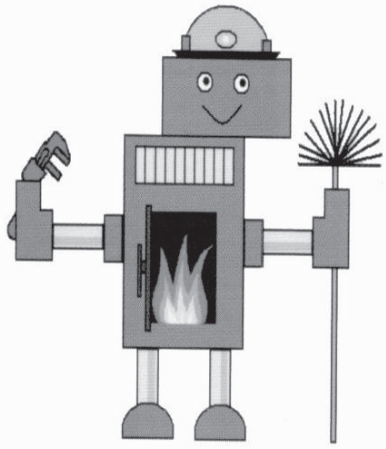
2023 season with a 9-1 win against non-league opponent Charlotte Valley on Thursday, August 31. Bobby Mercillott contributed with a team-high three goals in the victory. Ryan Dawson, Equan Patterson, and Toni Obeada each scored two goals each.

Obeada also led the Crimson Knights with three assists on the day while Dawson and Patterson each had two.

Afton/Harpursville prepares to face MAC opponent Bainbridge-Guilford on Tuesday, September 5.



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S-E Girls Soccer: Focused on getting better and stronger under new direction

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After a hard 2022 season, the Sherburne-Earlville Marauders girls soccer team is hopeful for a clean slate for 2023 under a new head coach.

Emma Mead, who served as the assistant coach last year, steps into the new role with a really positive but realistic mindset to only help improve the team.

“I know what our strengths are and what I want to focus on to make us better,” Mead said. “This year, the main focus is on fitness. My goal is that we will be able to comfortably be able to work hard for an entire game. Although this may sound like a simple goal, this is by no means an easy task and any athletes will be able to tell you that.”

S-E brings back many returners from last season after only losing just two seniors at the end of 2022. While last year’s team did not produce a win, most of the roster remains the same for 2023. Jalyn McCarthy,



The 2023 Sherburne-Earlville Girls Soccer team, coached by Emma Mead and Kayleigh Olive. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

S-E’s leading goal scorer with two goals, returns to led the senior class along with Chesnee Miller, Daina Donovan, and Alex Grzymkowski. Goalkeeper Savanna Born, who made 101 saves last year, leads the junior class with Opal Amann-Burns, Claire

Barth, Trinity Damren, and Lydia Larchar all returning as well. The rest of the team features returning sophomores and a few new freshmen.

Mead knows it looks like she has a group of experienced players, but said there’s a lot of work

to still be done to improve everyone’s skills.

“Although we have an “experienced” team on paper, we are not,” Mead said. “Most of our team has only played one other year of varsity soccer before this year. I also don’t think we currently

have anyone that plays on a travel team in the off-season.”

Due to these conclusions, Mead is heavily focused on getting everyone up to speed and in shape.

“Due to the lack of experience, we are focusing on

fitness this season and not necessarily focused on winning games,” Mead said. “If we can get in good enough shape to run circles around our opponents, I believe the other skills needed to win will come.”

Mead is very excited to be a bigger part of the S-E Girls soccer program and is looking forward to the season.

“I have a lot of hope for this season and the coming years,” she said. “Our program seems to finally slowly be building in numbers after getting hit hard by the COVID pandemic and I’m loving being involved in it.”

The S-E boys and girls soccer teams hosted their annual kick-off tournament over the weekend of September 1 and 2. The girls were shutout in both games to local county opponents Norwich and Oxford. S-E looks to bounce back against Unadilla Valley in the NY Pizzeria Tournament, starting the weekend of September 8 and 9.

S-E Cross Country : Seeing growth throughout the program

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Sherburne-Earlville cross country team is excited for the 2023 season with seeing an increase in roster numbers.

Last year, the team welcomed new coach Wendy Edwards and hadn’t had a full roster until late in the season, ending with 12 athletes on modified through varsity.

This season, the Marauders have a full boys team with seven runners while the girls have four and need at least one more player to produce a team score. While it’s still early, Edwards is thrilled with the growing numbers, which includes four boys and four girls on the modified level, bringing the total to 19 athletes as a program. Edwards hopes to have all teams reach five athletes, which may come within the first week of school or at least at a good point in the season.

Edwards got to know a small portion of the team from last year and is fortunate to have Sean O’ Connor, Amon Van Alst, and Braden Lewis back for the boys. Parker McCracken, Michael Fetzdo, Aaron Romanowki,



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and Ryan Solloway round out the rest of the S-E boys varsity team.

Alana Brady, Ava Flanagan, Marlie Thompson, and Avery Solloway hope to welcome at least one more girl to the small squad.

With the small numbers, the team is ready to chase their goals and make solid improvements throughout the season.

In her first year with the Marauders, Edwards definitely learned to never trust the weather forecast in Central NY.

“A cross country race is a short part of the day and we often had very different weather than the overall forecast called for,” Edwards said. “Often, on meet day, the weather was

much better than the forecast. I don’t think we could ask for that again!”

She also remains focused on pushing the athletes to follow set individual goals.

“Last year, we were focused on individual goals and our athletes showed significant improvements in their times throughout the season,” Edwards said. “This year, a lot of that will stay the same. At the boys varsity level, we have a full roster to start the season. That will enable us to build on our successes from last year and compete as a team as well as individuals.”

S-E begins their 2023 season on September 13 at Poland against the home team (Poland), Herkimer, NY Mills, and Hamilton.

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S-E Boys Soccer: Young and experienced

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

The Sherburne-Earville boys soccer team looks for a fresh start to this 2023 season. After struggling as a young team during a rebuilding 2022, Coach Michael Rodriguez is pleased to welcome back several experienced players after having no seniors last year.

Rodriguez said although the team is more experienced than last season, nine of the 20 total players are made up of underclassmen, which could indicate a bright future ahead.

In 2022, Rodriguez's team was led by five starting freshmen, who noticed a big jump from modified to varsity with no JV team in between. Rodriguez said it was a bit of a struggle just for them to adjust to the speed of play from the varsity level.

Rodriguez was pleased to have his players take advantage of the weight room this summer and staying active on travel soccer teams.

"After last season, it was clear that we needed more time in the weight room to only get a bit bigger, faster, and stronger to better compete," Rodriguez said. "The experience of



The 2023 Sherburne-Earville Marauders boys soccer team, coached by Michael Rodriguez and Ken Buehner. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

last year's struggles has galvanized this group of players to get better and to build on the chemistry they began to establish as a young group. I am confident that the experience gained last year will focus this team to do the right things in order to experience the success they desire."

Among the key returners for this young, S-E team is the team's leading goal scorer, Michael Behret

who scored two goals last season. He returns for his Sophomore year along with fellow sophomores Robert Schaefer, Aidan Parsons, James O'Connor, and William Leinbach. Paving the way for the upperclassmen is senior goalkeeper Avery Parsons. Avery made 81 saves in goal for S-E in 2022. Owen Brown, the team's back-up goalkeeper, returns for his junior year after making 104 saves in

goal last season.

Aside from Avery, the senior class also consists of Adam Paliana, Balin Olsen, and Aidan Camenga who all return from last year. Junior Parker Goedel also returns along with Colton Camenga, Lucas Scholl, and Sophomore Jacob Sulton. The Marauders also welcome freshmen Chadwick Nower and Kyler Buschor, and juniors Jacob Dean, Jackson Moore, and Tristan Cox.

Rodriguez is hopeful to find success with his young team going forward.

"The focus this season is to improve the quality of play both defensively and offensively and develop a style of soccer hallmarked by hard work, effort, and

team unity," Rodriguez said. "I want a team that desires to play with each other and for each other. We look to minimize defensively the goals against and look to score more as we only produced four offensive goals last year."

S-E also bumps up from a Section III Class C team to a B this season, after the new NYSPHSAA classification change. This change puts them back into the same division as rivals Canastota, who they'll face twice this season on September 20 and October 10.

S-E started the 2023 season with their annual kick-off tournament, where they played a tough Vernon-Verona Sherill

team and duked it out against local Oxford. The Marauders fell 4-0 to V-VS, but allowed no goals in the second half of play, showing some improvement against a fierce Tri-Valley League opponent.

S-E played Oxford on Saturday, September 2 in the boys consolation game, where they fell in double overtime 2-1. The Marauders held a 1-0 lead until late in the second half. Michael Behret, 2022's leading goal scorer, scored S-E's only goal.

The Marauders officially dive into their schedule on Thursday, September 7 in a non-league matchup against Camden.



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Sherburne-Earlville Football: Looking to improve in a new class, new division

By Morgan Golliver
Sun Sports Editor

After finishing seventh in Section III, Class D in 2022, the Sherburne-Earlville Marauders football team is looking for a bright, new start in 2023. This time, they move up to Class C and join the C2 division after NYS Athletic classifications were changed prior to the fall season.

Coach Steve Franklin said the C2/D2 divisions were created to give teams the opportunity to be more competitive within their size. There will still be sectionals within the new division, but only the top teams in Class C and D division I will make it to states.

Franklin is looking forward to being in the new division, where his Marauders will see a change in scheduling then in the past. The Marauders will be playing two cross-over games against Holland Patent and Jamesville-Dewitt to hopefully help them with seeding points.

S-E will also see new teams with playing Phoenix, Southern Hills (home opener on Sept 15), Utica- Notre



The 2023 Sherburne-Earlville Marauders football team, coached by Steve Franklin. S-E faced off against Bainbridge-Guilford at Colgate University on September 2, picking up their first win of the season 26-20 in overtime. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)

Dame, Altmar-Parish-Williamstown (APW), along with Holland Patent and Jamesville-Dewitt.

After taking on Bainbridge-Guilford in the Chenango County Classic at Colgate, S-E dives in to face Port Byron on a game scheduled for Thursday, September 7. Franklin was

fortunate to set up and play an evenly match competitor in B-G to start the season and hopes this match-up will continue to happen throughout the next few seasons.

Franklin has 32 committed players this season, where he says the S-E football program overall has

seen phenomenal numbers all-around. Franklin also has been impressed by his team in showing up and getting better everyday.

S-E looks to the four seniors starting on the offensive line, along with four-year starting Quarterback Darren Miles, Nick Hull and Ethan

Shaw as the three major play makers on offense. Franklin said teams know that Hull and Shaw will be a key factor in the play making for S-E and didn't want to run major plays in case other coaches were observing during the brief scrimmage held at Sherburne High School

every year before the first game.

Franklin's main focus has been too discipline and be more efficient offensively. He also understands that the team has been learning two new systems on offense and on defense. The defense has been working well with new defensive coordinator Matt Hull, who helped as an assistant coach last season.

S-E and B-G evenly matched up at the "week zero" game held at Colgate University on Sept 2, where the Marauders pulled through 26-20 in overtime. The game-winning play was a Nick Hull hand-off pass to Ethan Shaw for the score. Hull led S-E with 18 carries for 120 yards while Shaw had 15 carries for 65 yards with two touchdowns. Wide receiver Aaron Key came up big as well with two reception touchdowns, totaling 53 yards. Key also made a crucial interception on defense to give S-E the ball back to tie the game late in regulation.

S-E, feeling confident after the non-league contest win, begins their new league schedule on Thursday, September 7 at Port Byron.



The 2023 Sherburne-Earlville Marauders Cheer team, coached by Tracy Thornton. The cheer squad made the trip to Colgate to cheer proudly for the Marauders. (Photo by Morgan Golliver)



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from the news team at The Evening Sun



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Norwich Varsity Football

DATE	WEEKDAY	OPPONENTS	START TIME	LOCATION
Sept. 2	Saturday	Batavia	5:30 p.m.	Colgate University
Sept. 8	Friday	@ Oneonta	7:00 p.m.	Oneonta HS
Sept. 15	Friday	vs Johnson City	7:00 p.m.	NHS Turf Field
Sept. 22	Friday	vs Horseheads	7:00 p.m.	NHS Turf Field
Sept. 29	Friday	@ Vestal	7:00 p.m.	Vestal Dick Hoover Stadium
Oct. 6	Friday	Owego Apalachin	7:00 p.m.	NHS Turf Field
Oct. 14	Saturday	@ Chenango Valley	6:30 p.m.	CV-HS Warrior Stadium
Oct. 20	Friday	@ Windsor	7:00 p.m.	Windsor Multi-Purpose Field
Oct. 27	Friday	vs Maine-Endwell	7:00 p.m.	NHS Turf Field

Oxford Varsity Football

DATE	WEEKDAY	OPPONENTS	START TIME	LOCATION
Sept. 9	Saturday	@ Elmira Heights	1:30 p.m.	Northrop Field
Sept. 16	Saturday	@ Moravia	1:00 p.m.	Scarry Athletic Complex Field
Sept. 22	Friday	vs Groton	7:00 p.m.	Blackhawks Stadium Field
Sept. 29	Friday	vs Sauquoit Valley	7:00 p.m.	Blackhawks Stadium Field
Oct. 6	Friday	@ Unadilla Valley	7:00 p.m.	Stadium Field
Oct. 13	Friday	vs Unatego/Franklin	7:00 p.m.	Blackhawks Stadium Field
Oct. 20	Friday	vs Trumansburg	7:00 p.m.	Blackhawks Stadium Field
Oct. 27	Friday	@ Greene	7:00 p.m.	George G. Raymond Turf Field

Sherburne-Earlville Varsity Football

DATE	WEEKDAY	OPPONENTS	START TIME	LOCATION
Sept. 2	Saturday	Bainbridge-Guilford	8:00 p.m.	Colgate University
Sept. 7	Thursday	@ Port Byron	6:30 p.m.	Port Byron Turf Stadium
Sept. 15	Friday	vs Southern Hills	7:00 p.m.	Stadium
Sept. 22	Friday	vs Atmar-Parish-Williamstown	7:00 p.m.	Stadium
Sept. 29	Friday	@ Jamesville-Dewitt	6:30 p.m.	JD HS Stadium
Oct. 6	Friday	vs Utica-Notre Dame	7:00 p.m.	Stadium
Oct. 14	Saturday	@ Holland Patent	6:00 p.m.	HS Stadium/Track
Oct. 20	Friday	vs Phoenix	7:00 p.m.	Stadium

Greene Varsity Football

DATE	WEEKDAY	OPPONENTS	START TIME	LOCATION
Sept. 9	Saturday	@ Newfield	NOON	Cancro Field
Sept. 15	Friday	vs Groton	7:00 p.m.	George G. Raymond Turf Field
Sept. 22	Friday	vs Waterville	7:00 p.m.	George G. Raymond Turf Field
Sept. 29	Friday	@ Unadilla Valley	7:00 p.m.	Stadium Field
Oct. 6	Friday	@ Unatego	7:00 p.m.	Unatego Football/Track
Oct. 13	Friday	@ Trumansburg	7:00 p.m.	Stadium Field
Oct. 20	Friday	vs South Lewis	7:00 p.m.	George G. Raymond Turf Field
Oct. 27	Friday	vs Oxford	7:00 p.m.	George G. Raymond Turf Field

Bainbridge-Guilford Varsity Football

DATE	WEEKDAY	OPPONENTS	START TIME	LOCATION
Sept. 2	Saturday	Sherburne-Earlville	8:00 p.m.	Colgate University
Sept. 8	Friday	vs. Sidney	7:00 p.m.	B-G Track & Field Complex
Sept. 15	Friday	vs Delhi	7:00 p.m.	B-G Track & Field Complex
Sept. 23	Saturday	@ Walton	1:30 p.m.	Jim Hoover Field
Sept. 30	Saturday	@ Harpursville/Afton	2:00 p.m.	Harpursville Alumni Football Stadium
Oct. 6	Friday	@ Hancock/Deposit	7:00 p.m.	Hancock Football Field
Oct. 13	Friday	vs Newark Valley	7:00 p.m.	B-G Track & Field Complex
Oct. 20	Friday	@ Tioga	7:00 p.m.	Haggerty Field/Track
Oct. 27	Friday	vs Spencer-Van Etten	7:00 p.m.	B-G Track & Field Complex

Unadilla Valley Varsity Football

DATE	WEEKDAY	OPPONENTS	START TIME	LOCATION
Sept. 2	Saturday	vs Sauquoit Valley	1:00 p.m.	Stadium Field
Sept. 9	Saturday	vs. Trumansburg	7:00 p.m.	Stadium Field
Sept. 16	Saturday	@ NY Mills	NOON	Ben Ross Field
Sept. 23	Saturday	@ Moravia	1:00 p.m.	Scarry Athletic Complex Field
Sept. 29	Friday	vs Greene	7:00 p.m.	Stadium Field
Oct. 6	Friday	vs Oxford	7:00 p.m.	Stadium Field
Oct. 14	Saturday	@ Cooperstown	2:00 p.m.	Lambert Field
Oct. 20	Friday	vs Unatego	7:00 p.m.	Stadium Field
Oct. 28	Friday	@ Newfield	NOON	Cancro Field

Hometown Sales - Service - Collision



175 E. Main St. Norwich
 Across from Chenango County Fairgrounds
 HOURS: Monday to Friday 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM
 Saturday 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

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