

Ellinwood tracksters look to ride cross country success

By MIKE COURSON
Expectations are always high for Lyles Lashley's teams. His Lady Eagles brought home a state title on the cross country course earlier this fall. His track team will have a variety of returning state qualifiers as Ellinwood looks to improve on a 10th-place finish at state.

With that cross country title, the Lady Eagle distance runners are again expected to lead the way. The 4x800 team won the state title in 2014. Last year's team finished second to Maranatha Academy, the team with the best time in all of Kansas.

Three of the four runners from last year's team return in senior Abbie Reichuber, and juniors Joanna Strecker and Maddie Hayes. Freshman Sarah Hammeke will likely step into the final spot on that team as a 13th-place finisher at the state cross country meet.

Reichuber will be one of the key Lady Eagle runners in her final season. She ran third in the 3,200m run at state last year and Marantha's champion Lauren Harrell



has graduated. Bennington sophomore Halle Johnson, the reigning runner up, does return. Reichuber ran 10th at the state cross country meet last fall.

Strecker returns as the cross country team's best finisher at state after running fourth. Strecker placed eighth in the mile at state last year, and six of the runners ahead of her in that race have graduated with Johnson being the exception after placing second. Strecker also ran eighth in the 800m run at state last year.



Maddie Hayes and Tate Fisher

Elsewhere on the track, junior Bailey Baird returns as a state qualifier in the 400m dash. She ran 10th in the prelims and just missed out on the finals. Five of the top-eight finishers in that event have graduated.

Freshman Emma Ricker made an immediate splash in the 100m hurdles last year as she qualified for state but finished near the bottom of the field in a loaded preliminary. Lashley expects her to improve in the longer hurdle event this spring.

year in the short hurdles but I'm thinking this year the 300 hurdles will probably better of the two," he said.

Sophomore Anna Fisher was also a hurdler last year. She will likely do more sprinting and relay work this year, especially in the 400m dash and maybe a 200m sprint here and there. Baird may also run in some 200m events.

Ellinwood qualified all of its relays to state last year and Lashley will have some options filling see **EHS Track** page 19

Sjogren, Ewing return to links with new head coach

By MIKE COURSON
Big changes are here for the Ellinwood golf team. Four-time state qualifier Gavin Vink graduated last May, and coach Greg Maxwell handed over the reins to Ryan Alefs. The Eagles should still be in good shape with two key seniors back.

Ellinwood has worked itself into a powerhouse program of sorts. In 2014, the Eagles finished fourth at the Class 2A State Tournament, missing the third-place trophy by a single stroke and the state championship by just five strokes. Last season, the team scrambled to put together a team late in the season and qualified for a 10th-place finish at state.

Back this season are seniors Connor Ewing and Theron Sjogren. Sjogren shot an 84 at state



The Ellinwood golf team is, from left: Connor Ewing, Theron Sjogren, Myles Menges, Bryce Baker, and John Billinger. (courtesy photo)

last year to miss a medal by one shot in 21st. Ewing finished third on the team and 38th overall with an 88. Alefs wants to get his se-

niors back to state. "I have some really high hopes see **EHS Golf** page 18

Ellinwood golf 2016

April 4	@Nickerson
April 7	@Hoisington
April 18	@Sterling
April 19	@Larned
April 21	HOME, 1 p.m.
May 2	@Salina (SES)
May 5	@Ellsworth
May 10	CPL@HOME
May 16	Regional TBA
May 24	State@Salina

Ellinwood tennis 2016

April 2	@Great Bend
April 5	@Ellsworth
April 8	@Hoisington
April 21	HOME
April 26	@Larned
April 28	@Lindsborg
May 7	Regionals TBA
May 13-14	State@Wichita

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spot this season. "Alex has improved a lot since his first day of practice," Fortkamp said. "He is a quiet leader and leads by example. He is a hard worker and it shows in how he practices."

The other half of the squad consists of new players in Keaton Robl, Lake Lyman, and Jacob Kasselman. Kasselman, better known for his running abilities, is getting the hang of the new sport.

"He's going out for tennis for the first time and you wouldn't know that because he's playing like a veteran," said Fortkamp. "He has great form and fundamentals. You can tell he really enjoys playing the sport. He even stays after practice to help with the middle school team."

The sophomore Robl is working on getting his form down prior to varsity competition. "He has improved his mechanics already and is showing signs of growth each practice," Fortkamp said. "Keaton is going to be challenged right from the get-go because he will be playing varsity tennis with many who have played a lot longer. I believe he's up for the challenge."

Finally, Lyman is another newcomer looking to make his mark on the team. "He's a great kid," said Fortkamp. "He has been working hard in practice at developing his technique and strengthening his fundamentals. He has been working hard and I enjoy having him on the team."

A new coach with several first-time players, anything can happen in 2016.

"I don't really know what to expect this year," said Fortkamp. "It will definitely be a learning and growing experience for all of us."

Lady Eagles continued from page 2

Last season, the Lady Eagles opened at 9-0 before a split with TMP in late April. Ellinwood

lost a close 2-1 game to Spearville, then fell to Moundridge in extra winnings in regional play. Duvall again expects some good competition but expects his team to succeed.

"Ellis is a good team," he said. "I think they'll be a good game for us, and Sedgwick will be a good game for us. TMP will be a tough game. They're really good and have everybody coming back. We were able to split with them last year. We'll have to play perfect ball against them. There are some teams in there that are pretty good and we'll have to battle and get ahead and play some defense. It will be a good schedule for us."

Ellinwood will see Ellis four times during the regular season, including the April 8 opener.

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