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Herbranson, McIntyre Lead Barnesville Softball



The Barnesville Lady Trojans are back at practice, preparing to improve on their successful 2017 softball season in which they finished second in the Heart O' Lakes Conference and were in the final four of the section, while gaining 17 wins, most in school history.

The Lady Trojans lost five very talented softball players to graduation last year. Ace pitcher Peyton Boom, catcher Maddie Spilde and infielders Ann Halverson, Grace Drewicke and Elizabeth Ellefson are no longer with the team. That leaves some big holes to fill, but opportunity for new players to make their own mark.

Head Coach Aaron Schindler returns for his second season after a very successful inaugural year which saw him win the Heart O' Lakes Conference Coach of the Year Award. Schindler led the Lady Trojans to a 17-7 overall record, going 9-3 in the HOL Conference in 2017. He will be assisted by Brandi Holleman (Cresap), who will lead the junior varsity for her sixth straight season. Alison Willers comes back after a year hiatus to lead the junior varsity program. Both Maddie Spilde and Ann Halverson will help out the team in a volunteer role this season.

"We had a fantastic season last year," said Schindler. "We won 17 games, the most in our program's history, took second in our conference, which was our highest finish, and made it to the final four teams of our section."

We lost some great talent, but also return a core group of our players. This should make our team competitive from the start and hopefully we can find some new players that are ready to step in, taking over the roles we lost to player graduations. They are a hard working group that love to compete. I am excited for the season to get under way."

Returning to the team for their last go-around the softball diamond are Nicole Herbranson, Andria McIntyre, Allison Peterson, Grace Mulcahy and Cassidy Rood.

Herbranson will take over as the top pitcher in 2018 after posting a five win, one loss campaign last season. She has been around the program for many years as the understudy to ace pitcher Peyton Boom. Now it will be her time to lead the Lady Trojans for the majority of the games this season. Herbranson is also potent with the bat as she tallied a .333 batting average, while constantly getting on base and raising havoc on the base paths. She forms an outstanding one-two punch with center fielder, Andria McIntyre who is also venomous to opposing pitchers when she is at the plate. McIntyre finished with a batting average of .412 while netting 29 stolen bases last season.

Both McIntyre and Herbranson are great at getting on base with hits, walks, errors or being hit by a pitch. Once on the bases, they are ready to roll with their aggressiveness running the base paths. This tenacity makes it difficult for opposing pitchers to get comfortable on the mound, as they force mistakes and score runs.

Grace Mulcahy will patrol third base and bring another potent bat into the lineup. She



Members of the Barnesville Lady Trojans softball team are, left to right, back row - Shelby Berg, Cassidy Rood, Allison Peterson, Lauren Halverson, Kaitlyn Thompson, Wylie Lewis, Samantha Passa; middle row - Kaitlyn Maesse, Shayla Rambow, Grace Hagen, Caroline Redding, Lexi Bolgreaan, Emma Nielsen; front row - Grace Mulcahy, Trinity Gregg, Natalie Votava and Andria McIntyre.

had a very good junior season and will be looked upon to improve on those statistics in the new year. Shortstop/outfielder Allison Peterson and outfielder Cassidy Rood return as well. They bring a ton of potential to the lineup, picking up where they left off last year.

Senior Emma Nielsen has decided to give softball a try in her senior season and will bring an upbeat, aggressive mentality that will push the team and players to perform to their fullest. Also returning with some

experience from the 2017 season are infielder/outfielder Shelby Berg and first basemen Grace Hagen. Both players received some playing time last year and will be looked at to fill in the holes vacated by graduation.

Other players trying to make the squad in 2018 include Natalie Votava, Caroline Redding, Kaitlyn Maesse, Wylie Lewis,

Mariah Lewis, Jaycie George and Mersadez Burnside.

"We expect to be competitive in every game we play this season," said Schindler. "We need to work hard and improve every day. The players have to be sound defensively, not giving away outs and runs, as those two areas defeat teams quickly. We will be aggressive on the

bases and at the plate, but sound defensively. Ultimately, we want to compete for the Heart O' Lakes conference championship and section title."

Schindler expects Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton, Hawley and Perham to be favored in the HOL Conference with DGF, Hawley, Park Rapids and East Grand Forks favored in Section 8AA.

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Good Luck Trojans!