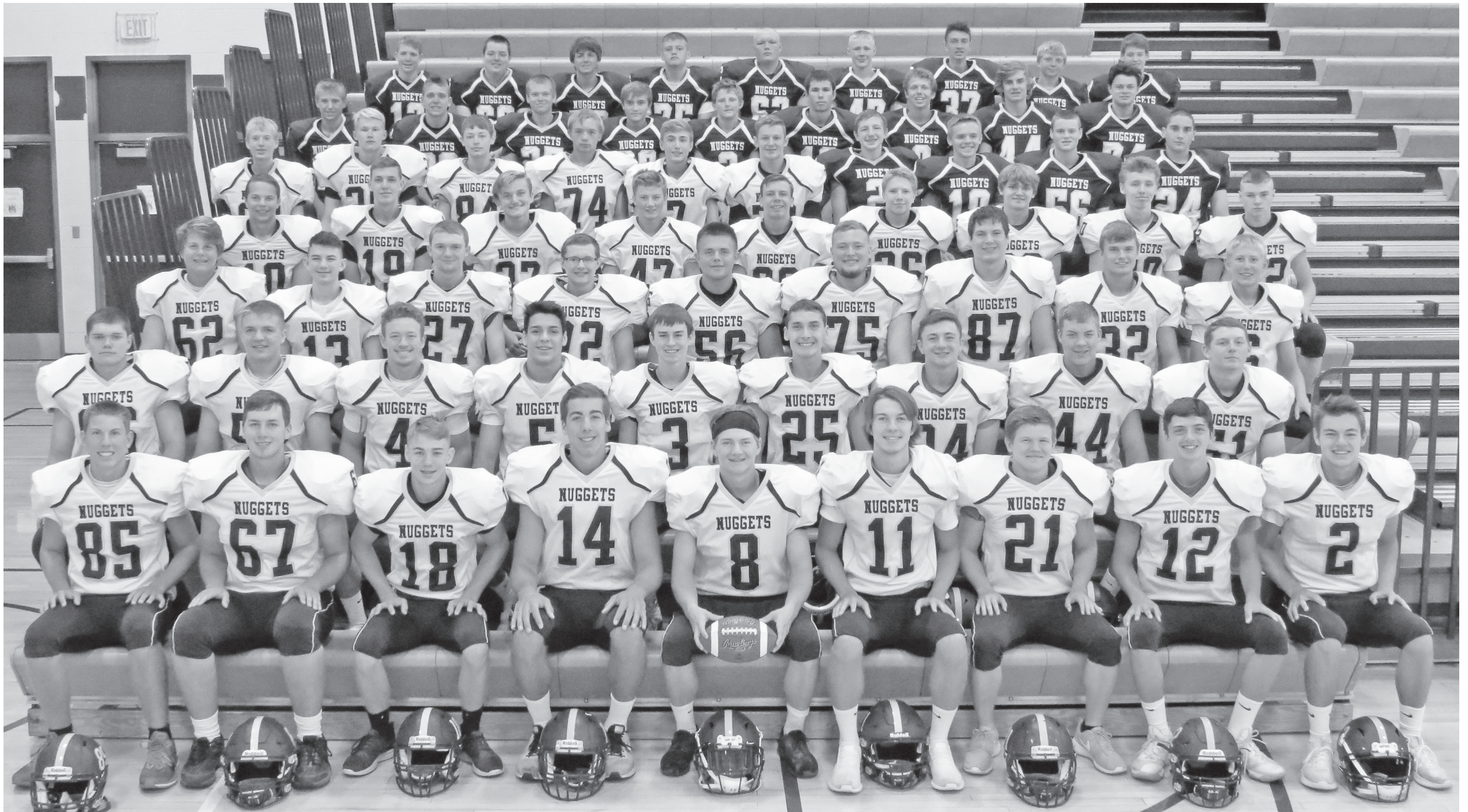




Nuggets Look To Captains For Repeat Successful Season



The Hawley Nuggets football team members are, left to right, front row-Ian Lilleby, Cameron Lunde, Garrett Peterson, Jacob Vetter, Trayton Cossette, Chase Libak, Ben Burkel, Karter Kopacek, Jayden Carlisle; row two-J.J. Nies, Justin Bentley, Gunnar Lawson, Noah Glad, Mason Klevgaard, Hunter Magnusson, Brendon Flores, Brady Boe, Scott Kluck; row three-Marcus Rosing, Cole Matson, Derian Gerdes, Riley Burnside, Gavin Mickelberg, Logan Reiland, Matt Thompson, Carter Langer, Nathan Sperr; row four-Cody Wolbeck, Keenan Syverson, Blake Manthe, Sam Helgeson, Kaden Murphy, Justin Koski, Jesse Fox, Zakary Perala, Shane Todd; row five-Matthew Nelson, Brodan Jensen, Nicholas Groth, Braeden Hager, Cole Sunde, Tanner Leister, Bryant Carlisle, Ethan Anderson, Joey Aakre, Ethan Magnusson; row six-Sam Burkel, Hayden Grani, Darin Kroshus, Carson Braur, Bailey Thomson, Lance Weiss, Andrew Dahl, Evan Vetter, Caidin Larson; row seven-Gage Matson, Gavin Rodke, Alex Schenck, Connor Reiland, Wyatt Dunham, Jacob Hegna, Brady Gratton, Dalton Flaten and Brett Daggett.

Kelli Froslic
Sports Writer



The goal of any team starting a new season is to improve and do better than the previous. But how do you improve a perfect regular season?

"We have a very determined group of young men that feel as though they have some unfinished business," said Nugget Head Coach Peder Naatz. "They seem to be on a mission to be successful and don't intend to let anyone on the team take the easy way out. They really are

looking forward to the season and just want to start playing games."

Hawley's only loss was to the Barnesville Trojans in the section title game.

"The Trojans are a very good team," Naatz said, and considers them to be the team to beat this year.

Looking to lead the team into a successful season are team captains and seniors Jacob Vetter, Chase Libak, Noah Glad and Gunnar Lawson.

All four were All-District last season so looking to them as leaders for the 2018 season is a given.

The Nuggets lost a big group of seniors to graduation last spring, but Naatz isn't worried.

"We lost a great group of seniors. The biggest losses will be felt by the

vacancies left behind by Garner Moe on the offensive line and Donnie Loegering in the backfield," said Naatz.

Senior Trayton Cossette is expected to step into the lead running back role.

"We have a great bunch of younger guys vying for playing time in both of those spots. Trayton looks to be our main running back at this time," Naatz said.

"Trayton definitely brings a different element to our team," commented senior Jacob Vetter. "He is really fast and he works really hard. I think he is going to have a breakout year."

The Nuggets are also trying to fill the quarterback position. After tearing his ACL and meniscus in last season's section title game, Jacob Vetter is still working his way back to 100 percent. The Nuggets have a temporary solution, which Coach Naatz found in Chase Libak.

For the first few games of the 2018 season, Libak will transition from wide receiver to quarterback.

"I just do what I need to do and not mess up," said Libak. "I just have to keep it good until Jake can come back."

"Everybody has a role on the team and they just have to buy into that and do whatever they need to do in their role to help the team as a whole," said Naatz. "It's just a matter of giving them an opportunity to be themselves and make a name for themselves."

Returning to the lineup are 26 lettermen and 17 seniors.

Along with the team captains, the remaining 13 seniors are leaders for the younger team members. "They bring a great positive attitude, willingness to share their knowledge

and a team first attitude. That is what builds a successful team," Naatz said. "Each week we look to improve. We want to win our district, the section championship and eventually become state champions."

A positive attitude and being an incredibly tight-knit group will help the Nuggets achieve that goal.

That, mixed with their past successes, experience and leadership roles, have the Nuggets on the right path.

Naatz is in his 19th year in the role of head coach. He said the most rewarding part of being the Nuggets football coach is spending time with the kids in a fun atmosphere, outside of the classroom.

Assistant coaches are Brett Schmidt, Jon Hinrichs, Tim Pederson, Nick Birchem, Aaron Haugen, Carter Thiel, David Ames, Keith Hanson, Kyle Kopacek, Ben Lofgren and Peter Wollin.

2018 Season Nugget Roster

2	Jayden Carlisle	12	WR/DB
3	Mason Klevgaard	12	K
4	Gunnar Lawson	12	FB/LB
5	Noah Glad	12	TE/LB
6	Nathan Sperr	11	QB/DB
7	Cole Sunde	10	QB/DB
8	Trayton Cossette	12	RB/DB
9	Blake Tuckner	11	RB/DB
10	Cody Wolbeck	11	W/LB
11	Chase Libak	12	WR/DB
12	Karter Kopacek	12	WR/DB
13	Cole Matson	11	WR/LB
14	Jacob Vetter	12	QB/LB
18	Garrett Peterson	12	W/DB
19	Keenan Syverson	11	TE/LB
20	Zak Perala	10	WR/DB
21	Ben Burkel	12	FB/LB
22	Shane Todd	10	RB/LB
24	Brendon Flores	12	RB/DB
25	Hunter Magnusson	12	TE/LB
26	Justin Koski	10	RB/DB
27	Derian Gerdes	11	RB/LB

32	Carter Langer	11	TE/LB
35	Brodan Jensen	10	FB/LB
37	Blake Manthe	10	TE/LB
44	Brady Boe	12	W/LB
47	Sam Helgeson	10	FB/LB
51	Scott Kluck	12	OL/DL
52	Justin Bentley	11	OL/DL
56	Gavin Mickelberg	11	OL/DL
62	Marcus Rosing	11	OL/DL
64	Wyatt Dunham	9	OL/DL
66	Jeremiah Nies	11	OL/DL
67	Cameron Lunde	12	OL/DL
70	Tanner Leister	10	OL/DL
72	Riley Burnside	11	OL/DL
74	Braeden Hager	10	OL/DL
75	Logan Reiland	11	OL/DL
78	T.J. Hines	12	OL/DL
82	Jesse Fox	10	TE/LB
84	Nicholas Groth	10	TE/LB
85	Ian Lilleby	12	TE/LB
87	Matt Thompson	11	TE/DL

88	Matthew Nelson	10	WR/DB
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"We have had good preseason practices and have the bulk of our offense and defense installed at this time," said Naatz. "We have a very determined group of young men who feel as though they have some unfinished business. They seem to be on a mission to be successful and don't intend to let anyone on the team take the easy way out. They really are looking forward to the season and just want to start playing games."

The Nuggets opened the 2018 season with a match-up against the newly formed Mahanomen/Waubun team on August 30.



Good Luck, Nuggets!
... and all other area sports teams.

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