

Little River track squad doubles in numbers

By MIKE COURSON

Some of the regulars are back for the Little River track team this year, but so are some new faces. Betsy Lafferty is the new head coach in town and her track team has nearly doubled in size from last year.

"This year our first focus was to get athletes out for track," Lafferty said. "We will start the season with 22 athletes, which doubles last year's squad. Our top priorities will be to increase the speed and athleticism of all

our track and field athletes, work to improve our individual events, begin to focus on the team aspect of the sport to compete for team wins, to get kids PRing at the end of the year and qualifying athletes for the state meet.

"One of our main goals is to bring excitement back to the track program by working hard and having fun. Everything else will fall into place."

Jumpers have led the way in Little River the last couple seasons and will again be the strong point of the 2018 squad.

Junior Roylin Brillhart has been one of the top triple jumpers in the area in her

first two prep seasons. Last spring she had the No. 7 mark in Class 1A at 34-5 during the regular season but fell off to 32-3.25 to place 16th at state. Two of the top-three triple jumpers at state have graduated or moved up to 2A.

Brillhart will also compete in the long jump.

Junior Bronson Rains also returns as a state qualifier in the triple jump. He topped out at 40 feet during the regular season and finished 14th at state with a mark of 38-5.5. Seven of the top-12 competitors at state have graduated, leaving plenty of room to move up in the 1A ranks this spring.

Other key returners for Little River include junior Hunter Thomas in the 400m dash, sophomore Abbie Hudson in the long and triple jumps, sophomore Morgan Konen in the long jump and 200m dash, and senior Simon Gadberry in the short sprints. Thirteen new athletes are out for this year's track team.

"While we have some top performers back, we lack big meet experience," Lafferty said. "I'm looking forward to building the program and taking kids back to the state meet."



courtesy photo

2018 Little River Redskins track teams

Core group of seniors to lead Redskins

By MIKE COURSON

Since a state runner-up finish in 2014, the Little River baseball team has failed to make the state tournament. Last year's 5-14 season was a bit of a backslide. The good news is coach Terry Renken has five returning starters and a handful of newcomers to improve upon that record.

Renken said his four seniors are one of the team's big strengths for 2018 as they have four years of varsity experience. Levi Swenson leads that group on the mound and at the plate. Swenson pitched to a 5-1 record last season and allowed just three earned runs in 29 innings of work. At the dish, Swenson batted at a .354 clip.

Senior Peyton Harvey returns to center field after hitting .375 as a junior. Senior Bryce Sears returns to first base, and senior Jordan Moffett will share the outfield with Harvey.

Junior Jace Garrison also returns as a starter. He



should fill out the outfield and he and Moffett will get time on the mound.

Freshman Jayden Garrison is coming off a big basketball season. He will play the infield and pitch for Renken. Freshman Graham Stephens will stay in the infield, pitch, and play catcher. Freshman Keeton Richardson will be a utility man in his first season. Sophomore Tyler Dingman and junior Wyatt Goering will see time in the outfield.

The 2017 Redskins won just five games but came up just short in several of those games. Renkens expects that

experience to payoff this spring. He also said team speed on the basis will be a plus for Little River in 2018.



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