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## Tigers Rebuild Line But Look To Stay Competitive On The Grid Iron



Members of the Rothsay Tigers football team are, left to right, front row - Justin Kugler, Trevin Erickson, Sam Danielson, Gage Johansen, Jackson Cuhel, Karter Jensen, Logan Blumer; middle row - Nick Wiezorek, Ethan Curtis, Chris Carrillo, Mason Kadel, Colby Larson, Wylie Brenden; back row - Assistant Coach Kyle Wagers, Tanner Heier, Ethan Bennett, Jett Kulack, Karsyn Zilmer, Noah Fiedler, Head Coach Josh Nordick.

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Sports Writer



When something ends, usually there is a new beginning ready to fill the void. When school completed in May, summer break and freedom for the kids began. When Independence Day ended, school supplies began appearing in all the stores. And as the summer is all-too-quickly concluding, the school year, and with it school athletics, are ramping up.

And as the fall approaches one sport sticks out in the minds of many: football. And the Rothsay Tiger football team is eager to claw its way back onto the gridiron and anxious to turn around last year's 3-7 record.

However, that will have to be done without a few big names due to graduation last spring: Parker Keep, Braden Moen, Tanner Keep, Thomas Webster, and Jacob Christ. Christ continues his football career at NDSCS.

But football is a team sport. Heart, determination, and competitiveness can fill much of the void left by those graduating seniors.

"We are very young having only six upperclassmen but we are athletic," said Coach Josh Nordick. "We will not be the bigger team in most of our games but we may be more disciplined. We will work hard and to compete we will have to do the little things right."

Leading the Tigers on the gridiron and teaching the less experienced players the ropes are seniors Ethan Curtis, Noah Fiedler, and Nick Wiezorek.

Juniors Colby Larson, Kyle Zilmer, and Ethan Bennett also return to Rothsay's football program.

Coach Nordick will look to these athletes to make their mark on the field while paving the way for younger players to gain valuable experience.

"The offense will be led by Colby Larson and Ethan Curtis running and catching the ball," said Nordick. "Sophomore Tanner Heier will be under center for the first year and will bring some balance to a predominately running team. Zilmer, Bennett, and Wiezorek will be the main guys on the line and will be the make or break points of games."

Rothsay's path will not be easy as they are in a very tough conference. Every year there are a few different teams that continually vie for the top spots, but lately Verndale has had the

final say.

"Verndale has been at the top for a few years, so until someone dethrones them, they are the team to beat," said Nordick.

But they are not invincible. Coach Nordick broke it down.

"Brandon-Evansville is bringing back a lot of starters so they might be the ones to knock off Verndale." But he was quick to note that "a big Bertha-Hewitt team or fast Hancock team" may be near the top of the conference by season's end as well.

Rothsay opens their season at the end of August by hosting Brandon-Evansville then sees Bertha-Hewitt in week two. So if the Tigers can hold their own against two strong foes in the first two weeks of the season, it may be a good indicator of the potential that Rothsay has to complete the season.

"We do have some really good

skill players and a few linemen with a lot of promise," Nordick said. "It will be a matter of whether we can put it all together and stay healthy."

Despite having a very tough schedule, Nordick expects the Tiger football team to stay competitive.

"We continue to work on building a program. Even though we are very young, our athletes will compete every game," said Nordick, who is back for his

fourth year at the helm of the Tiger football program.

Also returning to the coaching staff this year is Joel Meyer. Kyle Wagers will bring in a new, fresh voice coming from the sidelines as an assistant coach this season.

The Rothsay Tigers are hoping their fresh look with new athletes side by side with key veterans will rejuvenate that competitive spirit that rests inside each player. Last season has ended and it's time for the 2019 campaign to begin.

**GOOD LUCK TO ALL OF  
THE TEAMS THIS SEASON!**

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