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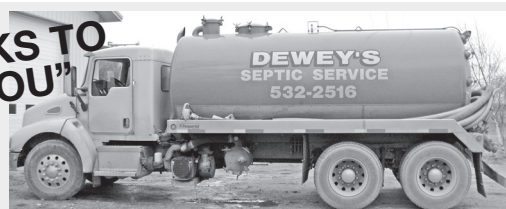
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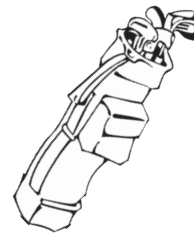
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# Hawley Softball Returns Experience And Potential

**Marc Ness**  
Sports Writer



New Lady Nugget Softball Coach Jackson Lyngaas is excited by what he sees early in Nugget Camp. "We have a talented group of players with a very good amount of experience," Lyngaas said.

Jackson takes over the helm of a very successful Hawley Nugget program. The team has always been one of the teams to beat in the Heart O' Lakes Conference, and Coach Lyngaas now gets his chance to help lead the team to victory.

Sports and coaching is not new to Lyngaas. Basketball and baseball were his two favorite sports while growing up in Detroit Lakes. He played both sports through his senior year at DL, and started coaching his sophomore year at Concordia.

"I was a varsity assistant coach for the Moorhead boys basketball team for three seasons and just finished my first year as an assistant coach for the men's basketball team at Concordia College," Lyngaas said. "I spent one summer coaching Babe Ruth baseball and speed and strength in Hawley."

"Everything I did growing up involved sports and competition. I love being a part of a team that is unselfish, sets high goals, works hard to achieve them, and loves to compete every day in practice and games. As a coach in Hawley, I feel fortunate to get to know so many high character student-athletes and help them achieve their goals."

The Lady Nuggets have three seniors this year, Addi Dauner, Abby Rux, and Andreanna Sander. Addi and Abby have been playing varsity softball consistently since they were in 8th grade. The two are tremendous leaders and work hard all year around to improve in all areas of the game.

"Abby will be our ace this year in the pitcher's circle," Lyngaas said. "The lefty can throw multiple pitches for strikes and overpower hitters with her speed. Addi will do the majority of the catching for Abby and junior Elle Hastings. Addi's experience behind the plate is extremely valuable. She's a great athlete



The Hawley Nuggets softball team members are, left to right, front row-Makena Iverson, Rudee Hockett, Kaylee Dagenais; middle row-Kylie Crabtree, Elle Hastings, Madi Walker, Paige Blakeway, Kaylie Crabtree, Andreanna Sander; back row-Maki Halvorson, Izzy Steer, Claudia Bassi, Grace Fleming, Abby Rux and Addi Dauner.

and works hard to keep pitches in front of her. In 2019, both Rux and Dauner batted .350 or higher and each scored at least 24 runs. Abby led the team with 7 home runs and 33 runs batted in."

To start the year, the team got two full weeks of practice before their first game. This has given Coach Lyngaas the ability to evaluate his players.

"As new coaches, it's been nice to have the extra practice time to evaluate players and move them around to different

positions. We feel like we have a pretty athletic and versatile group," Lyngaas said.

Some of the Nuggets regular infielders will be Rux at first base, Dauner, Hastings at third base, and Maki Halvorson at 2nd base. Returning juniors Grace Fleming, Paige Blakeway, and eighth grader Izzy Steer will all see innings in the infield and outfield. Kylie and Kaylie Crabtree, who have both played before, will add depth and speed to the lineup and have potential to play numerous positions as well. Others in the mix for playing time at the corner outfield positions are Sander, and juniors Madi Walker and Claudia Bassi.

The Lady Nuggets did play summer ball last summer and had a successful season.

"We were able to have a shortened summer season and saw some success finishing 7-1, with our only loss coming to DGF," Lyngaas said. "Rux,

Dauner, Hastings, and Fleming led us in hitting. Rux and Hastings threw the majority of the innings and both had an ERA around 1.00. The players and coaches appreciated the opportunity to be together as a team and compete against other towns."

When asked what it will take for the Nuggets to be a force in the HOL again this season, Coach Lyngaas said, "With the experience we return this season, I think our team has a lot of potential and I believe we can compete in every game. We have to be willing to come to practice everyday with the mindset that we need to improve, challenge each other, and hold each other accountable. We return a lot of players in our program that are ready to take the next step as leaders and softball players. Our biggest area to improve in is hitting consistently. We need contributions from everyone in our lineup if we want to compete in our section. If we can have

multiple players throughout the lineup able to get on base and advance runners, I think we can be tough to play against."

In the HOL this season, the Nuggets will be a team to beat as well as the team from DGF, which gave the Nuggets their only loss from the summer of 2020.

"Our players are really excited to actually have their season this year," Lyngaas concluded. "We

have a lot of experience returning, so the players are excited to work hard and compete at practice each day. With Covid and the weather, games and practices are going to be postponed/canceled throughout the spring. We're going to be grateful for every practice and game that we have. We were fortunate that Mother Nature cooperated, except for the recent rain and snow, and allowed us to have our first practice of the season outside."



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