

Community Sports



Blue Devils baseball squad looks to a strong season

By Tony Hooker
 The Blue Devils Baseball squad returns a solid nucleus of experienced players to Coach Heath Wilson's outfit. Luke Zimmerman, Parker Stevens, Jake Gilles and Sam Bender are some of the first players the coach mentioned when talking about that experience. The Blue Devils will also be depending on Brady Clodfelder, Gavin Kiser, Pey-

ton Smith, Parker Knierem and Sophomore Cooper Clark as they try to improve on last season's 9-4 squad. The coach is pleased with the numbers in 2023, as 21 players reported to the first practice. "All of our new players bring something different to the table," Wilson said. "With 21 players out this year, we have good balance among classes, and that's what you

want to produce a solid program," Wilson added. The team lost two players, Tyler Wilson and Liam Barr, to graduation from last season's team, but it hasn't dampened the coaching staff's expectations. "We bring a lot of experience from last year's team," Wilson exclaimed. "I think this team can compete for a conference title and we're hoping for a deep post season run."



BRAYDON DOWLER jumps over the hurdles Saturday, March 11 during the track and field meet at the Armory in Champaign-Urbana. Photo by Dan Chamness.



MIKAILAH EHMEN sprints down the track in relay race during the March 11 track and field meet at the Armory in Champaign-Urbana. Submitted photo.



LAYNE RUND runs the relay during the Saturday, March 11 track and field meet in Champaign-Urbana at the Armory. Photo by Dan Chamness.

Expectations high for softball

By Tony Hooker
 As always, expectations are high for the Villa Grove softball squad, who tends to rebuild rather than rebuild. This year's edition expects to be led by Lake Land College signee Maci Clodfelder who holds the school single-season record for home runs. She'll be looking to cover first and third base. Alex Brown, who recently committed to continue her career at Danville Area Community College, will also be a key contributor on the mound and at third. Other key veterans include pitcher/first baseman Logan Lillard, utility player Alison Pangburn, who might show up on a lineup card in the outfield, at shortstop or behind the plate,

and longtime starting catcher Chloe Reardon. The team will also look to incorporate four freshmen into the lineup, including Piper Kiser, who expects to see time at short, and in the outfield as well as on the mound. "Piper has an impressive bat," Coach Jeana Block said. Hayden Thomas will look to use her wheels, both in the outfield and as a leadoff hitter in the Blue Devil lineup. "Hayden has a tremendous amount of speed," Block stated. "making her a tough outfielder and great leadoff option." Another freshman who is expected to contribute is Izzy Dodd. "Izzy has shown she can play middle infield, either short or second, strong bat I expect her to find

herself in the lineup soon, if not initially," Block enthused. Finally, lefty Ella Schweighart can play second base or in the outfield. "She's learning the art of the slap," Block said, "but she's coming along." Even though the team lost Lincoln Land CC signee Kaylee Arbuckle from last year's team, the team expects to better last season's 19-14 record. "We are returning a strong group of juniors and paired with a strong freshmen class, we have high expectations," Block commented. "Last season, we were plagued with injuries, but we were able to get our bench some invaluable experience that should pay off this season. If we stay healthy, we will be a tough contender."

HOW THEY'RE DOING

Proud Supporter of Villa Grove Sports

Villa Grove State Bank

Your Hometown Community Bank Since 1919

- Go
- Fight
- Win

Villa Grove sports wrapup

By Tony Hooker Boy's Track and Field

Braydon Dowler finished 12th and set an indoor school record in the 200m and 22nd in the 60m hurdles to lead Villa Grove at the Rantoul Invitational, held on March 11 at the UIUC Armory. Tyler Williams finished 10th in the Triple jump, the 4x800m relay quartet of Luke Zimmerman, Kurt Zimmerman, Layne Rund and Logan Turner finished 14th while setting a new indoor school



record. The 4x200m relay squad of Mason Carter, Gunner Cline, Braydon Dowler and Luke Zimmerman finished 18th and Chase White finished 31st in the 3200m.

Girls Track and Field

Emma Buesing finished 14th in the 3200m, setting a new indoor school record in the process, to lead the Blue Devils at the Rantoul Invitational, held on March 11 at the UIUC Armory. Carly Eads finished 20th in the shot put to help out Villa Grove.

Baseball	Softball
Wed. 3/15 @ Monticello 4:30 p.m.	Wed. 3/15 @ Monticello
Thur. 3/16 vs Westville 4:30 p.m.	Sat. 3/18 @ Casey-Westfield Tourney TBA
Fri. 3/17 vs Paris 4:30 p.m.	Mon. 3/20 @ Tuscola 4:30 pm
Mon. 3/20 vs Ranroul 4:30 p.m.	Tue. 3/21 @ Unity
Wed. 3/22 @ Tuscola 4:30 p.m.	Wed. 3/22 vs Urbana
Thur. 3/23 vs Armstrong-Potomac 4:30 p.m.	3/23-25 Tennessee TBA
Mon. 3/27 @ Mahomet 4:30 p.m.	Mon. 3/27 @ Salt Fork 4:30 pm
Wed. 3/29 @ Georgetown 4:30 p.m.	Tue. 3/28 vs Georgetown 4:30 pm
Thur. 3/30 vs Urbana 4:30 p.m.	Wed. 3/29 @ Casey-Westfield 4:30 pm
Fri. 3/31 @ Casey-Westfield 4:30 p.m.	Thur. 3/30 vs Windsor 4:30 pm
Mon. 4/3 @ CGB 4:30 p.m.	Mon. 4/3 @ Cumberland 4:30 pm
Thur. 4/6 vs Salt Fork 4:30 p.m.	Tue. 4/4 @ St. Joe 4:30 pm
Mon. 4/10 @ Tri-County 4:30 p.m.	Wed. 4/5 @ Paris 4:30 pm
Wed. 4/12 vs St. Joe 4:30 p.m.	Fri. 4/7 @ Arcola 4:30 pm
Mon. 4/17 vs ALAH 4:30 p.m.	Mon. 4/10 @ Tri-County 4:30 pm
Tue. 4/18 @ Fisher 4:30 p.m.	Tue. 4/11 vs Champaign Centennial 4:30 pm
Fri. 4/21 vs Blue Ridge 4:30 p.m.	Wed. 4/12 @ Sullivan 4:30 pm
Mon. 4/24 @ Cumberland 4:30 p.m.	Fri. 4/14 vs Blue Ridge 4:30 pm
Wed. 4/26 vs LSA 4:30 p.m.	Mon. 4/17 vs ALAH 4:30 pm
Fri. 4/28 @ Arcola 4:30 p.m.	Tue. 4/18 vs GCMS 4:30pm
Mon. 5/1 vs Okaw Valley 4:30 p.m.	Wed. 4/19 @ Heritage 4:30 pm
Fri. 5/5 @ Heritage 4:30 p.m.	Mon. 4/24 vs Cerro Gordo 4:30 pm
Mon. 5/8 vs Argenta-Oreana 4:30 p.m.	Wed. 4/26 @ Fisher 4:30 pm
Sat. 5/13 @ Unity 4:30 p.m.	Fri. 4/28 @ Okaw Valley 4:30 pm
	Mon. 5/1 vs Argenta Oreana 4:30 pm
	Thur. 5/4 vs Armstrong-Potomac 4:30 pm
	Thur. 5/11 vs Rantoul 4:30 pm
	Fri 5/12 @ PBL 4:30 pm
	5/15-17 IHSA Regionals TBA

102 N Sycamore St, Villa Grove
 (217) 832-2361

Join These Great Businesses in Supporting VG Sports!
 please contact Jamie at
advertising@thetuscolajournal.com