

# Welcome back, Warriors!

## Warriors on the hunt for non-conference opponents

By Lenny Sementi

With a new look Central Illinois Conference boasting six teams instead of eight and void of Sullivan and St. Theresa, Tuscola's football team was on the hunt for four non-conference opponents. The Warriors led by a strong senior class that boasts returning QB Jordan Quinn and the leader of the defense Brady Cain will also be hunting a deep playoff run following last year's Elite Eight effort.

Quinn will have the luxury of distributing the ball to another fourth year returning starter in multi offensive threat Austin

Cummings. Cummings donated more than his fair share as a receiver all last season and then came up big out of the backfield in the final few contests. Joining him as another weapon behind the line was then freshman and now sophomore Dylan Graves. The youngster had a breakout game in week nine at Meridian and then in the playoffs. The backup QB can play at just about every skill position for head coach Andy Romine.

"We have a great group of seniors," stated Romine. "They have put in the work, pushed a lot of weights around and are

ready to lead this group. We have twenty-two freshmen out and our seniors are great role models for them to learn from."

Seniors Sam Spencer and Aiden Weaver return to the line leading a group of four returning starters. Following the big boys up front will be classmate and returning starter at running back Nate Thomson. Junior Nathan Klie and sophomore Cameron Jones also started more than a few games in the trenches this year and either CY Winans, a senior that sat out most of last season with an injury and junior Andrew

Spillman will battle it out for the fifth and final spot up front.

The junior class boasts a large contingent of receivers headlined by Parker James. James is a matchup nightmare for opposing defenses thanks to his size and athletic ability. Classmates JJ Reynolds, Zach Rennels, Jayden Connor and Carter Simpson along with sophomore Calvin Cook give Romine a lot of depth and dimension when calling plays.

"Jordan is bigger and stronger this year and his grasp of the offense and what we want to do is off the charts," the

coach commented. "We have a lot of options at all the skill positions giving me some latitude when putting together personnel packages, should be a fun year."

Cain roamed opposing teams backfields from his middle linebacker position a year ago and will once more be the emotional leader of the squad on that side of the ball. Seniors Tavi Neamtu, Reese Davis, Lucas Gonzales and Nate Hudson all will play big roles on defense as well as sophomores Draven Warner, Cooper Lyons, Caden Chenoweth and Caden

Russo. Another second year player in Keller Beachy, who was second team All CIC kicker as a freshman last year has been showing off a stronger leg in the preseason.

"We have a tough non conference schedule," Romine said. "We open up against a perennial playoff team in Peru St. Bede at Illinois Wesleyan this Friday night, they had a senior QB transfer in that is pretty dynamic, I'm excited to get started, our guys had a great summer and it's time to reap the benefits."

## Senior Zoey Thomason collects hardware in Warrior's golf invite

By Lenny Sementi

Senior Zoey Thomason collected the girls golf teams first hardware of the '23' season securing a 4th place finish at the always strong Blue Ridge Invite at a challenging Lake of the Woods Golf Course in Mahomet this past week. The fourth year player went sub fifty on both nines firing matching 49's landing a shot short of third place. She was solid throughout carding just one double-bogey while paring more than a few holes.

"We had a big week starting with an 18-hole invite in Farmer City followed by 9-hole matches at Mahomet and Moweaqua," stated coach Lainey Banta. "The

girls dealt with less than ideal weather and had to learn to adapt to the course conditions. Zoey player very consistent and didn't let how the day started bother her."

The Warriors came out on top of a tri-angular later in the week on Wednesday the 16th with Thomason's senior classmate Addyson Ring coming out on top. Ring collected medalist honors paring two of the final three holes leading the Warriors to the win downing both the host Lady Raiders and the Hawks of Macon-Meridian. Thomson occupied the second scoring spot, while senior Addyson Pettry and Isabelle Sturts

were penciled into the third and fourth spots with matching 54's. Jocelyn Ford and Lanie Yantis toured the course as alternates in all three outings.

"Many good things came from this week and I'm very proud of the girls," Banta commented. "They fought through many challenges and are improving everyday. Looking forward to hosting the Tuscola Invite this Monday (8/21) and another home match on Thursday!" The coach and her crew will have to wait, as the Invite now will be played on Monday, September 5th due to heat constraints.

The Boys teed it up at both

Mahomet and Moweaqua for coach Angela Gough and came away both humbled and excited after a rough outing as a squad at a very tough Lake of the Woods course the boys in black and gold same out firing at Moweaqua Country Club shaving strokes off their team totals from Mahomet.

Senior Brayden Gough had a day as the Warriors landed in the runner up spot carding a 174; they're lowest of the young season. Gough took home Medalist honors penciling in a pair of birdies in the quadrangular meet involving the host Raiders, Windsor Stew-Stras and Meridian.

"I am so proud of the boys," stated coach Gough. "We carded one of our lowest rounds beating Meridian and Central A&M, and narrowly losing to Windsor by 5 strokes. Brayden continues to be our scoring leader. He works to develop his game, and is going to continue to play even better. As his coach, I can't wait to see where he is by the end of the season, but as his mom, I'd like time to slow down. I'm enjoying all these moments along the way."

Classmate Ty Thomson posted his lowest round of the season delivering a 44. Junior Jacob was just one shot back tallying his lowest of the year as well

while Ryker Gough finished off the scoring with a 47. Chris Atwater was sub 50 as well with a 48 as the first alternate.

"Ty, brings such a great positive attitude, he's just fun to be around, always has a smile on his face," commented the coach. "Chris, my other fourth year player, has improved so much over the years. He's a great kid, and has put in the time and work to get better. Chris will have a great season as he continues to post lower scores each week. This is a very fun group of kids to be around, both boys and girls. They cheer each other on, and genuinely want the best for each other."

## Tuscola's cross country team's anticipation and expectations

By Lenny Sementi

Tuscola's cross country teams both boys and girls, have had a lot of success in the past but nothing like the Warriors experienced last season and despite losing a few to graduation almost every scoring runner from last year returns. Coach Neil Garrison's boys squad kicked in the door to the local cross country scene and never looked back, qualifying the entire team for the state meet while placing two runners in the top ten at the end of the season.

Premier distance athletes

Jackson Barrett and Josiah Hortin garnered all state honors in 2022 and are ranked as high as 2nd and 3rd in class 1A by Mile Split Illinois. The duo ended last springs track season with PR's of 9:15 in the 3200 meter and competed in numerous distance events throughout the country during the summer months. Joining them from last year's squad will be Will Foltz a near miss on all state status a year ago as well as a pair of sophomore Blake McLeese and junior Xander Neamtu who were the fourth and fifth scorers a year ago at East Peoria's Detweiller

Park home of the state meet.

Foltz is predicted to secure a spot on the podium as well after turning in a 9:30 in the 3200 at the end of track season. Both McLeese and Neamtu went sub 10-minutes in the 3200 as well as Garrison returns his top five runners, hence the anticipation in town as the Warrior faithful wonder just how good this team can be. Mile Split predictions have both McLeese to be sub 15:30 on the three mile cross course at Detweiller and that is where the expectations come in. Mile Split who ranks the Warriors as the top team in

1A stated if all five go sub 15:30 they could have five all stater when the dust settles posting a team score under 50.

Garrison takes a different approach on summer workouts putting the onus on the runners themselves. "I did not run with them once this summer, with that being said, I am extremely proud of our runners as they are self-disciplined and run on their own," commented the coach. "We have seven runners returning from our roster of nine a year ago. I am very pleased with how much all seven (Barrett, Hortin, Foltz, McLeese, Neamtu, Aaron

Hegarty, and Carson Smith) of them have improved. They are all very invested into building the XC program and making themselves individually stronger runners in order to accomplish that. The new runners to our team have quickly adapted to the physical demands of distance running. Generally new runners improve at an exponential rate which makes it hard to be able to predict how quickly they will progress."

The program now boasts sixteen runners in all, welcoming seniors Eli Hyde and Lucas Coll Rubio, juniors David Hor-

naday and Kade Wilcox and sophomores Boyd Brewer, Kamden Flenner, Braden Smith and James Jonas and freshman Jaxsyn Taylor.

Garrison is always humble when referring to his team and grateful for the runners and coaches that came before him at Tuscola. "As simple as it sounds, our XC program really would like to improve on what they accomplished last year. The program has a good foundation from what the previous XC

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