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Barnesville Softball Looking To Improve In 2026



The Trojans softball team members are, left to right, front row-Kennedy Gross, Isabella LeNoue, Jayla Amundson, Libby Haj, Campbell Berg, Emmalyn Bergman, Addilyn Bontjes, Finley Gross, Allie Moen; middle row-Riley Rickford, Macie Blilie, Brooke Nord, Ellis Haus, Brynn Stokka, Madison Nord, Erica Field, Lexi Bontjes; back row- manager Siri Paulson, Volunteer Asst. Coach Jaida Bontjes, Volunteer Asst. Coach Kraig Archambeau, Piper Thompson, Laney Shirek, Head Coach Aaron Schindler, Asst. Coach Tori Pahl, Manager Aubryn Hinsz, and Manager Brynn Zander.

By Tracy Hinsz

The Barnesville Lady Trojans softball season opened up practice with a group of eager athletes looking to redeem themselves after a sub-.500 season last year.

Coach Aaron Schindler is back for his 10th season as leader of the Lady Trojans softball team. Schindler has an overall record of 84-85, including last year's team that finished 7-13

overall. He will be assisted by Tori Pahl this season, with Jaida Bontjes, Kraig Archambeau, Alison Willers and Lexi Bolgrean joining the squad as volunteer assistants.

"Last season did not end the way we had hoped," said Coach Schindler. "We competed in the always tough Heart O' Lakes Conference where the margin for error is razor thin. We finished 8th

with a record of 5-11.

But, we were in several games that could have swung our way. Hopefully, we learned how to finish and capitalize on opportunities when they present themselves.

We graduated a strong senior class that meant a lot to our program both on and off the field. Replacing that production and leadership won't happen overnight, but it opens up the door for other players to step up and make a mark of their own. This group understands what is required. We are excited to see who rises to the challenge."

Back for their senior season are shortstop Lexi Bontjes, who batted .241 with 8 RBI's last year; centerfielder Macie Blilie who sat out the year due to an injury and first basemen Erica Field who tallied a

.974 fielding percentage.

Juniors include catcher Jayla Amundson who tallied a .400 batting average with 17 stolen bases; pitcher/third basemen Emmalyn Bergman who tallied seven wins and 65 strikeouts; third basemen Piper Thompson who will start the year on the injured list; infielder Kennedy Gross who batted .286 and turned four double plays and outfielder Riley Rickford who batted .215 at the plate.

"With four spots to fill in our lineup, this group will be tested early but our expectations remain high," stated Schindler. "Our team is very connected. It's one of the closest groups I have ever had the opportunity to coach. Hopefully that chemistry will be a major strength as we continue to grow and learn to

play together."

Other players looking to help out the varsity squad this year include Brooke Nord-outfield; Laney Shirek-third base, outfield; Brynn Stokka-outfield; Ellie Haus-second base; Madison Nord- catcher, outfield; Libby Haj- pitcher, outfield and Bella LeNoue- catcher.

The Lady Trojans will once again compete in Section 8AA and the HOL Conference. Schindler believes that the conference, section and state favorites will come from DGF, Hawley or Park Rapids.

Schindler had these final comments about his team's upcoming season. "Our juniors and seniors bring valuable experience having spent the last few spring and summer seasons competing alongside each other.

Our team will miss the services of Piper Thompson who is currently battling an elbow injury and her return this season is uncertain. Regardless, her leadership and presence will continue to have a strong impact on our team.

On the field, we will need to do the little things if we want to be successful. We need to capitalize on opportunities with runners in scoring position and making the routine plays defensively. If we can do that, we will put ourselves in a great position to compete every time we take the field."

Captains for the 2026 season will be Lexi Bontjes, Macie Blilie and Jayla Amundson. Student Managers will be Aubryn Hinsz and Siri Paulson.


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