

2022 Winter Sports Guide



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OSAGE COUNTY
Unterrified Democrat

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 23, 2022 ■ PAGES 1B-24B

From Discombobulated to well, Combobulated

Before any English teachers get in a tizzy, let me note that while the word discombobulated appears to have been around for more than a century, it doesn't mean the opposite of combobulated. However, combobulated is an actual word, according to definition-of.com, though collinsdictionary.com, as of 2013, was still investigating its legitimacy.

Having explained all that, let me add that I don't care if it's in a dictionary. I believe if a word has a negative, there should be a positive.

For example, you can be disgruntled and grunted; did you know that? Couth is also a legitimate word, the opposite of uncouth, but I've never heard anyone say it.

At any rate, I'm using discombobulated to describe how I felt this fall after undergoing surgery to repair my rotator cuff. I've never been in that situation before, and I never want to go through it again, but the truth is, my other shoulder is on the way out, so who knows?

I've loved photography and sports for a very long time, and I absolutely hated not being able to shoot games.

Being in a sling that secured my arm to my side was a new lesson in torture, of which I'm usually a huge fan. In this case, it resembled half of a straight jacket, which I know is the point.

Doctors didn't want me to move my arm too much (or at all for the first six weeks or so) because of the possibility of pulling out the hooks and other materials used to secure the tendon.

Fine, I get that. However, the unconscious mind is a funny and often strange place; at least, mine is, for sure.

I drifted off to doze while sleeping on my back, which is not suitable for me as I have always experienced a falling sensation after a few minutes.

On no less than four occasions, I rolled over on my recently-repaired shoulder, and it felt like my cousin had me in a grip like he did when we were kids. Except, he never yanked it up like he was trying to rip my arm completely from the socket.

I believe I let out a yell and fought to sit up, but I was kind of out of it, thanks to painkillers that were ill-designed for this kind of thing. I honestly believed someone had grabbed me with a fishing net or something on the first occasion, and I struggled to clear myself. By the time Kari responded, I pretty well had control of my faculties and managed to calm down.

As the fall season progressed, I was able to get out some here and there, but not nearly as much as I have done in the past — or as much as I wanted.

Instead, I did my best to nurse the shoulder, careful not to make it worse.

Through it all, the coaches understood and ensured I had the correct information so we could promote the kids and their accomplishments. I appreciate that very much.

As the winter season unfolds, I have recovered enough to be involved with everything in person, from practice photos to interviews.

That's not to say I'm 100%, but I'm

getting there. I've been told the recuperation time for this surgery is 3-6 months, but realistically, I think it will take longer because of the nature of my job.

Suffice it to say, I'm pushing through one day at a time.

After the high of Fatima's state softball championship, I'm looking forward to seeing how our Osage County teams do this year.

Sadly, Chamois does not have a girls' basketball team this year, but Coach John Leach is hopeful that will change in the next year or two.

Coach Robbie Bates is back for his third season, and while the team is young, they have been with him through junior high and a year of high school and have learned a lot. I wouldn't count the Pirates out of anything.

At Linn, Braden Ham returns for his second year as the head coach, and his philosophy is positive and encouraging. I won't spoil it for you; check out the boys' story.

Ryan Rost, who played basketball and graduated from Linn, has coached softball and golf but now turns his talents to the basketball court for the girls' season.

For those who don't remember, he was the recipient of the UD Sports Above & Beyond Award, which I hope to bring back this year. Ryan always impressed me with his even-handed nature, and one of the best things about this year is that several softball players are on his roster for hoops. In many cases, a first-year coach needs time to develop a relationship with their players, but he has that already, so I'm excited to see the Lady Wildcats as they bring a fast-paced approach to the hardwood.

Linn cheerleading has a new coach in Maddie Stephan. I met her a couple of years ago at Chamois Day as she and her husband, Caelob, offered their honey. A feature story on his efforts appeared earlier this year. She has a full squad, including four seniors, and

they should provide some enthusiasm at games this year.

At Fatima, long-time teacher Stephanie Hoffman will head the cheerleading team with help from 2020 Fatima graduate Hunter Anderson. They have a small group, but I'm sure they will be as positive as ever.

Alicia Massman returns to lead the Fatima dance team, with several performances scheduled during games into February. Be sure to check them out.

Fatima graduate and long-term wrestling coach Kurt Strobe is back, but his faithful assistant, Les Rosenborough, has retired. I always enjoyed watching him interact with the wrestlers, and his smile was contagious.

Pete Falotico has also returned to coach the junior high wrestling team, which has 10 members, including three returners. The future of Comets wrestling looks pretty solid, but the current squad has several state-qualifying returners that have a real chance to finish high on the podium at the state meet.

That brings us to basketball, and my two compatriots, Matt Baker and Ryan Robertson.

When Baker began coaching at Fatima, I wasn't sure how long he'd last because he had been accustomed to coaching boys and made a move to girls. However, he has repeatedly proven himself to be a great coach, bringing the best out of his players. With four seniors to help lead on the floor,

I'm looking for the Lady Comets to battle to a better finish in the district tournament.

If you missed it, Baker and Ellie Brune are on a billboard in Westphalia. They look pretty good in the message for the Osage County Anti-Drug Community Action Team (OC-ADCA). Check it out before it's taken down.

The highly capable coach John Fick will assist Baker. John has always impressed me. Of course, he has like 12 siblings, and I interact with most of them. The whole family is good people, and John's efforts on the basketball court are helping to keep the program going.

On the boys' side, Robertson is like a brother. Well, maybe a stepbrother or even an adopted sibling. Ethan Williams is akin to a cousin or perhaps a nephew; I don't know.

The bottom line is that these guys have been with Fatima basketball for a long time and always go out of their way to help me promote the kids. That's what it's all about.

Also, we share the same sense of humor, so if you see us laughing on the sideline, just know it's probably some stupid thing that no one else would enjoy.

They are joined by Fatima graduate Tim Brunnert, who will coach the C team. I wish him the best in this new venture.

I hope everyone has a healthy season.

See you at the game. NAJ

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guide is a
publication of
the
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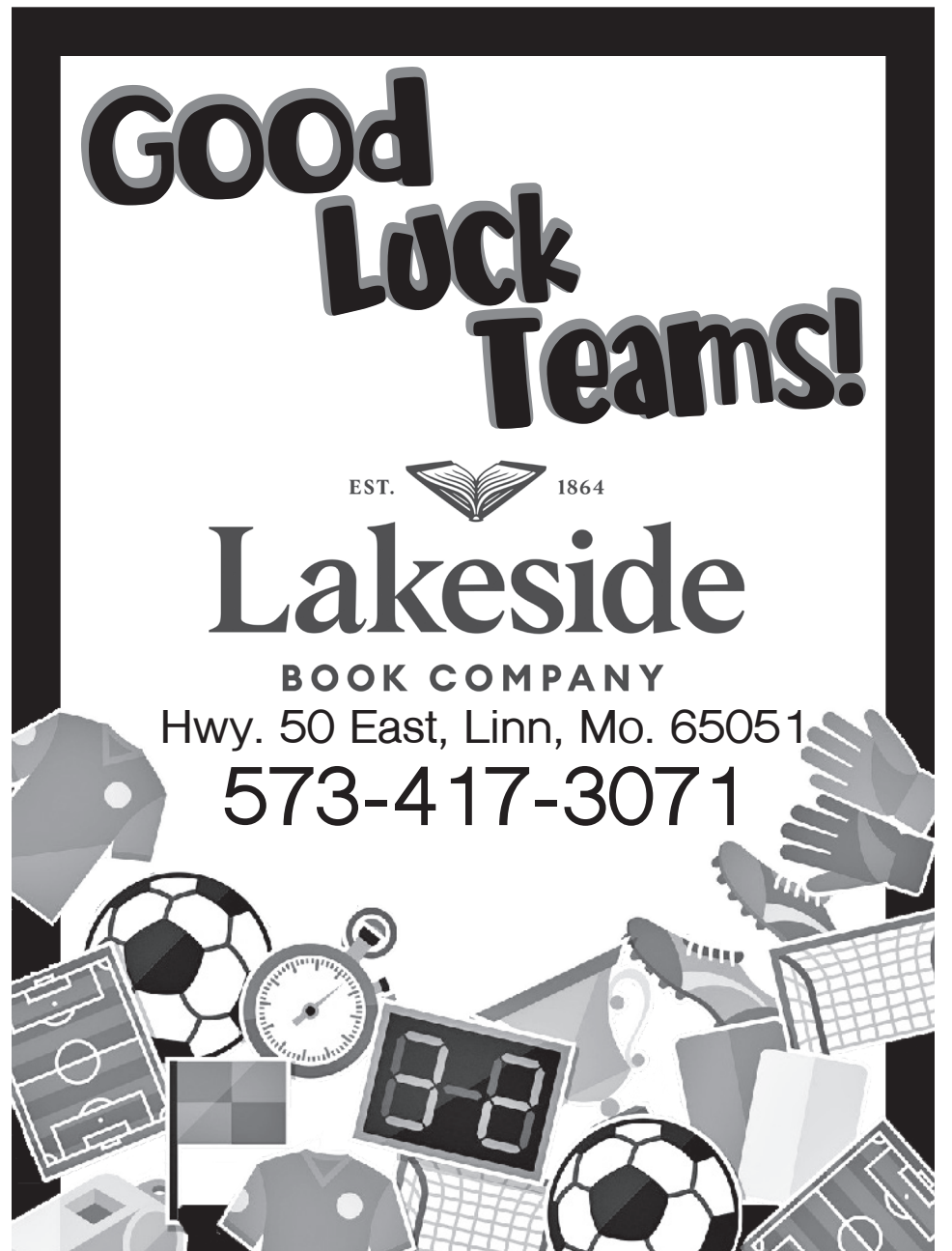
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Coach Bates says Chamois boys will be competitive

Chamois boys' basketball coach Robbie Bates, in his third year at the helm, said that while the boys are young this year, they have the potential to be very competitive.

"I believe we will challenge teams and surprise some folks," he said. "These kids have played for me the last two years and know what I expect. They know what it was like to come to practice every day for me and compete. So it's not like these freshmen kids are coming in totally unaware of what's going to be high-school level; they know. It's just a matter of them adjusting to life in high school. Some of the things that you could get away with in middle and junior high games you can't get away with at the next level."

The eight-man roster includes four sophomores and four freshmen, so this year will be challenging.

One of the more difficult aspects was a change to the schedule. "We were not invited to play in the Tipton tournament," said Bates. "Chamois has played in that to open the year for a long time, but we won't be there this year."

Bates explained that the bracket includes some heavy hitters. Despite a late offer to play, he chose to move on, scheduling games against Columbia Independent, Lighthouse Prep, and Otterville instead.

"Those teams are closer to our size and will give us competitive games that will help us," said Bates. "I had no interest in going to a tournament as a seventh seed and getting beat up. There's no long-term value in that."

Preparing for districts is the most important goal, Bates noted, and with a tough tournament on the way, he wants to utilize everything in his power to get the boys ready.

This year's schedule includes games against eight Class 1 teams, seven in Class 2, seven in Class 3, and one in Class 4.

"We have a good variety of teams on the schedule, so we'll get to see a lot of different sets and plays," said Bates. "We will make mistakes, but learning from them, how to correct them, and fighting every day to improve is what matters to me. Nobody will feel sorry for you because your team is all freshmen and sophomores."

Bates added that if teams underestimate us and look at us as just a bunch of young kids, and we execute our game plan, we'll have a chance to surprise some people," he said. "We're only going to get better as the season continues."

At last week's Linn Jamboree, Chamois



SKYLER BOTTOMS makes a move to get around Evert Mehmert at a recent Chamois practice. Below, Max McKague brings the ball up the floor against Caleb Keilholz in a drill at a recent practice.

played well in the first quarter and outscored the Wildcats. "They made adjustments," said Bates. "We didn't make the adjustments, which is one of the things we're working on every day. How do we handle adversity? That will be a big thing for us this year when adversity hits us. Do we do we fight? Or do we fall?"

Bates is confident that his players will fight.

Sophomores are guard Caleb Keilholz (6-0) and forwards Skyler Bottoms (6-2), Landen Northway (6-0), and Bill Kirsch (5-11).

"Caleb is the rock of the team," said Bates. "He is the one person I know every day I'm going to get 100 percent effort. He's going to compete every day, and he's not going to waver. He kind of leads by example."

Keilholz has improved his ability to attack the basket, and he's been working with the new Doctor Dish machine on his perimeter shooting.

"We had a lot of kids in the gym this summer, and they worked on their shots," said Bates. "We got a lot of shots in over the summer. With that, and the shooting we do in practice, I challenged them this summer to say, 'hey, if you're not shooting a certain percentage on here, then you're not going to be probably shooting from the perimeter,'

but they've stepped up and really worked at it. They made themselves better shooters, which plays well for us because we're not a big team, so we'll have to make shots from the perimeter and take our chances around the bucket."

Keilholz will be the team's point guard and hopes to improve on his 5.3 points and

2.2 rebounds per game average from last year.


Bottoms is an inside-out threat who can score around the basket. "He's another one that has really worked on his perimeter skills and

See Chamois basketball on Page 4B



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Chamois basketball • from page 3B

can knock down shots,” said Bates. “He can also put the ball on the floor and make things happen. The biggest challenge for Skyler will be bringing that energy all the time.”

Northway is working on getting stronger. “He’s getting more physical and understanding what has to be done every day to help us be successful,” said Bates.

Kirsch, meanwhile, is a jack of all trades. “He can play inside and outside. He brings energy to practice every day and does the little things, like diving on the floor. He’ll guard whoever you need him to; he’s that utility guy that can play inside, but he can play on the perimeter if need be.”

Kirsch is coming off a broken foot from last year and appears healthy. “He only played in one game last year and hit one shot, but it was a three-pointer on Homecoming,” said Bates.

Freshmen are guards Jaxon Wuelling (5-11) and Max McKague (5-9), and forwards Kaden Wuelling (6-0) and Evert Mehmert (6-0).

“Jaxon has great potential,” said Bates. “He is starting to understand how hard you have to go every day. Practice can be hard at the high school level, but he’s making the adjustment from junior high to high school. Jaxon is getting more consistent with his effort and his solid play.”

McKague has a chance to be a solid guard. “Like the others, he’s learning the intensity

level and the physicality involved in being a high school player,” said Bates. “In the two-and-a-half years I’ve been here, he learns, listens, and applies what the coaches are asking him to do.”

K. Wuelling has the athleticism to help Chamois. “The more experience these freshmen get, the better, and Kaden is working hard,” said Bates. “As the season goes on, he will improve.”

Mehmert will be a backup post-player. “He played a lot last year in junior high, and as he adjusts and improves, he’ll see time on the floor this year,” said Bates.

Coach Bates will take advantage of this team’s athleticism as the season unfolds. “We’re going to mix things up and try to make teams play our tempo,” he said. “Some of them will be full-court variety, some of them will be half-court. We’re going to see some teams this year that have size, and we’ll have to do what we can to counter that. We will play teams with good guards, but we’ll challenge them to see how well they handle pressure. I feel like we can. We still have enough depth to use fresher people to create some tempo. Hopefully, we can get easy baskets and deflections in whatever defensive scheme we choose.”

Chamois opened against Vienna on Tuesday and will play at Columbia Independent on Dec. 1.

CHAMOIS BOYS BASKETBALL

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Nov. 22	Varsity	Vienna	6:00 PM
Dec. 1	Varsity	Columbia Independent HS	6:00 PM
Dec. 5	Varsity	South Callaway	6:00 PM
★ Dec. 6	Varsity	Wellsville-Middletown	6:00 PM
Dec. 9	Varsity	Otterville	6:00 PM
★ Dec. 10	Varsity	Belle	2:00 PM
Dec. 13	Varsity	Fatima	6:00 PM
Dec. 15	Varsity	New Bloomfield	6:00 PM
★ Dec. 19	V/JV	Hermann	6:00 PM
★ Dec. 29	Varsity	Calvary Lutheran	2:00 PM
★ Jan. 3	Varsity	Lighthouse Sr.	6:00 PM
★ Jan. 9	Varsity	Community	6:00 PM
Jan. 10	Varsity	Eugene	6:00 PM
Jan. 13	Varsity	Tuscumbia	6:00 PM
Jan. 16-21	Varsity	Belle Tournament	TBA
Jan. 23	V/JV	St. Elizabeth	6:00 PM
Jan. 27	V/JV	Missouri Military Academy	6:00 PM
★ Jan. 30	Varsity	Columbia Independent HS	TBA
★ Jan. 31	Varsity	New Haven	7:30 PM
★ Feb. 2	Varsity	Richland	6:00 PM
★ Feb. 7	Varsity	Jamestown	6:00 PM
★ Feb. 10	V/JV	Linn	6:00 PM
★ Feb. 13	V/JV	Missouri Military Academy	6:00 PM
★ Feb. 16	Varsity	Russellville	6:00 PM

Lady Pirates will not play basketball this year

Chamois will not field a girls basketball team this year due to a lack of players. Coach John Leach said he’s disappointed but hopes the team will return to action in the future. Follow the UD for all the boys’ action this season.

Sports help kids learn the value of teamwork, the importance of building good character and reaching goals.



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Lady Cats young but experienced

Linn girls' basketball coach Ryan Rost has been a staple for many years, both as a player and a coach, but this is his first foray into girls' basketball, and he's excited that his nine-player roster has some experience despite being young.

"One thing that I have liked so far, and I knew this, having coached a lot of them in softball, is that this group listens, and they want to learn and get better," said Rost. "They're easy to coach, and it's a cliché coaching line, but I'm learning with them. We feed off each other. I'll bring in stuff, and we'll try it out, see what works and what doesn't, and then they'll help me out with what they see. So it's been a great first group to coach just because I think we mesh well. It's been a lot of fun, and I think this season's gonna be a lot of fun too."

All of Rost's players are considered guards, led by three seniors: Aushara Hostetler (5-9), Autumn Baker (5-7), and Marly Houston (5-3).

Hostetler is an all-around player who earned first-team All-District honors last year (Central Missouri Sportswriters & Sportscasters Association and MBCA) after scoring 21.2 points and grabbing 7.4 rounds per contest.

"Aushara can do it all, and we're looking at her to keep improving her skills and to be a leader for this team," said Rost. "She sees the floor well and is a smart player. With our offensive options this year, I'm excited to see her play in different spots and keep broadening her skills. I have high expectations for her senior year, and I'm excited for her to keep building on her already impressive resume."

Baker was also named first-team All-District by the media; she scored 7.9 points and collected 6.2 rebounds a game.

"Autumn is a great kid who works hard," said Rost. "She



VIVIEN BAKER and Emma Monnette will be solid rebounders for the Lady Wildcats this year.

sets the tempo for every game and practice, especially on the defensive end. She reads the ball incredibly well, and her hands are usually in the correct spot, so she gets a lot of tips and steals. Autumn is a phenomenal pacesetter for what I'm trying to accomplish this year by speeding things up a little bit. I'm excited for her; she will get more opportunities with our offense this year to be more involved with scoring opportunities, and she will help lead our defensive pressure."

Houston is returning to play basketball after a two-year break. "We're excited to have Marly back on the team," said Rost. "She's also one of those kids that sets a great, fast-paced tempo and brings a ton of energy. I've been very impressed with her work ethic, desire, and willingness to learn what I'm trying to do."

Sophomore Kiana Hostetler (5-10) will be the team's point guard most of the time. "She's a returning starter with a lot of experience," said Rost. "Kiana has grown as a point guard, with better decision-making and knowing when to push and when to pass. I've been impressed at practice and our scrimmages. Defensively, I'm happy with her development, and teams will have to be careful because she won't let anyone come up the court without pressure. I think teams will have to work hard to avoid steals between her and Autumn's pressure."

See Lady Cats
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Dodson to lead Wildcats as lone senior

Linn basketball this year will feature senior Zach Dodson, who Coach Braden Ham believes is ready to lead the Wildcats.

"Zach is a genuine team-first kid," said Ham of the 6-2 forward. "He's pretty much got it all. Zach can jump, and he's got great speed. Athletically, he's solid, and we need him to let things develop and then go because many players, whether in the full-court, front-court, half-court, whatever, assume they're going before they catch the ball. Just wait one second; that's what I'm telling him. Zach has a super soft touch around the rim and can do a lot for us on offense and defense."

As a leader, Dodson will be expected to rally the team vocally in games as he has in practice. "He genuinely wants everybody to be successful, along with the team being successful," said Ham. "That's just who he is as a person."

Last year, Dodson scored 8.3 points and grabbed 5.4 rebounds per contest.

Second-year varsity starting point guard Noah Hall, a 5-10 junior, is quiet but very effective. "He's very good at subtle communication," said Ham. "He's not loud, but his leadership has grown. Noah is a smart player and does a good job of helping others."

Hall averaged 10 points and about three rebounds a game last year.

Junior guard Ashton Keilholz (5-11) has been working on his foot skills, especially when shooting. "I've been working with him on his feet because he's got a soft touch on his shot," said

Ham. "He was shooting on his own and finally got it. The light bulb clicked on with his feet, and I think he's starting to come into his own. Ashton is a high-energy teammate, especially in practice."

Another junior, guard Zach Hatfield (6-1), spends a lot of time watching basketball and puts what he learns into practice. "He can flat shoot the ball," said Ham. "He needs to trust his instincts. Defensively, Zach has long arms and will be a handful for opponents."

Junior forward Seth Wolfe (6-1) has been committed to the weight room in the off-season, and it's showing. "He's strong, but he can move," said Ham. "Seth is very athletic and did a great job at our jamboree, especially in rebounding, and he has tremendous communication in practice."

Guard Hank Klouzek (5-9) will be joining the varsity team. "When he's fully engaged, mentally and physically, he's a solid player," said Ham. "He is super quick, and he has pretty good instincts. He's getting his feet wet with the speed with which you have to practice and then the speed at which a varsity game happens, but once he gets that under his belt, he should be able to do some pretty good things for us because he's fast and has a very soft touch and a very quick first step."

Two sophomores join the varsity ranks.

Forward Austin Dudenhoeffer (5-10) will see considerable time on the floor. "He's emotionally mature, strong, and smart," said Ham. "He's a serious

kid and a tough player who can shoot the ball. Off the ball, Austin plays very well, and I think he'll be a nice fit at the varsity level."

Sophomore guard Bobby Winkelman (5-10) brings a lot of hustle to the court. "When he goes, he's gone," said Ham. "His 'want-to' is very high. Defensively, he hustles, and he's conscientious about his teammates. Bobby will get his time at varsity; he's earned it."

Rounding out the varsity squad is freshman guard Gus Peters (5-6), who will dress out and may see minutes early on. "He's very mature for his age, and he's a quick study," said Ham. "He elevates the confidence level of everyone around him, and he's always smiling. He's one of those kids who loves what he's doing."

Members of the JV/C team are Craig Laughlin (5-11), Trevor Brandt (5-9), Keyair Hunt (6-4), Tyler Wagner (5-10), Mac Klouzek (5-7), Tony Peters (6-2), Sam Dudenhoeffer (5-9), and Joe Brandt (5-10).

"These guys have been working very hard in practice, and I'm pleased with their progress," said Coach Ham. "They understand my philosophy and what we expect, and the culture of teamwork is amazing. This group is fun, and they're starting to understand what it means to invest in each other."

See Wildcats
Page 9B



LINN PLAYERS battle each other during a preseason scrimmage. In his second year as the head coach, Braden Ham has encouraged a sense of teamwork in an effort to help players reach their potential. He said he was excited by what he saw at the scrimmage and believes his players will step up and be competitive this year.





Cortney Nichols



Faith McKim



Leighann Horan



Nikki Senevey

Linn cheer senior spotlight

Seniors were asked these six questions.

- 1) What are you looking forward to most as a senior this year?
- 2) What is your personal goal this season?
- 3) What is your goal for the team?
- 4) Who is your role model and why?

5) What does sportsmanship mean to you?

6) What are your plans after graduation?

Faith McKim

1. I'm excited to see our team grow with our new coach. I'm also excited to do stunts this year.
2. Be loud and be there for the younger classmen.
3. Doing big stunts.
4. My role model for cheerleading is my dad he has always been able to do the splits and he loves to do it with me.
5. Sportsmanship to me means being

respectful to your teammates and other opponents. If someone gets hurt to take a knee to be respectful or if they need a hand getting up you offer your hand out to help.

Leighann Horan

1. I am looking forward to it being my last year and making this one count in cheer. I am really happy with my team and making a difference in our school. I need to make this one count because i have lost some people and I am doing it for them.

2. Get my scorpion down and possibly cheer for Southwest Baptist College.

3. To be the best we have ever been and get way more stunts down and have fun!

4. My mom, because she has been through a lot and she has still supported me through my cheer journey.

5. It means coming to practice ready to go and being there for our teammates when they have a bad day.

6. I will be going to East Central College and getting my Associate' Degree in Para-

**See Cheer spotlight
Page 11B**

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AUSHARA HOSTETLER pulls up for a long three-point attempt during last week's preseason scrimmage against the JV boys. At right, Hannah Hackmann sets herself for a shot.

Lady Cats • from page 6B

Vivien Bax, a 5-9 sophomore, is another returner with improved toughness, especially around the basket. "She does a great job of setting up other players for success with her screens and passing. I'm excited for what she will bring to the table for us offensively and defensively," said Rost.

Sophomore Hannah Hackmann (5-7) has done well picking up all the new things Coach Rost has thrown at the team. "Her tempo is great, and defensively, she's doing a tremendous job," said Rost. "She plays the angles well and has a high basketball IQ. Hannah can hit the open shot, and I'm excited to see her continue to develop."

Another sophomore, Emma Monnette (5-4), has looked good in scrimmages. "She's improved a ton defensively and ball-handling between this summer and now," said Rost. "She's grown as a player and can play any spot for me. Emma's also looked good in these first few weeks of practice shooting the ball."

Natasha Jewell (5-10) is the final sophomore on the team. "She comes to practice every day and works incredibly hard," said Rost. "She's a phenomenal teammate, always talking everybody up."

Rounding out the team is freshman Ava Warren (5-2). "Ava got to play with us this summer when I first started, so we're both brand-new to everything," said Rost. "She has worked hard and impressed us, not only with her defense but she's also shown that she can shoot the ball and attack off the dribble very well. Despite being a little smaller than most girls she goes against, she's not afraid of anybody."

Ava will take it right to them and has great court vision, knowing where to go with the ball and when to score. I think she can contribute to the team this year."

Moving forward, the Lady Wildcats intend to play fast. "If we can play fast and put pressure on teams and get out in transition a lot, I think we're going to be pretty successful," said Rost. "We're going to make teams work. I want to utilize the strengths of the girls I have. We're not the biggest team, but we can run. I like our odds. We still have to make shots, and we still have to be in great defensive rotations. But, as far as a relay race, we can pressure teams into that kind of pace."

Additionally, Rost said weight training has been better. "Our weightlifting program has been a huge bonus for the girls," he said. "I saw it in softball, and when I got these girls for basketball, we were much more ready for the season to start than I've heard in years past. These first few weeks of practice have been very fast-paced. Instead of having slower practices and then asking the girls to go 100 miles an hour, I want to practice at 100 miles an hour. So when we get out here, other teams feel rushed while we feel like we're going at a normal pace."

Joining Rost this year is Assistant Coach Steve Samson. "Steve is a great addition to the team. He has been great all summer working with the girls and our weightlifting program. He brings a ton of energy every day and has been great helping me prepare for the season. We work very well together," said Rost. "I'm looking forward to a great season."

Wildcats • from page 6B

While in college, Ham was introduced to "212 The Extra Degree."

"At 211 degrees, water is hot, but when you get that extra degree to 212, water starts boiling, and changes start to happen, particularly the mindset and motivation of feeling what you're doing," said Ham. "When you're investing so much into it that you feel it, it's like that getting that degree for the boiling water; you start to get better as a person. As individuals get better, the team starts to improve. It's a mindset of 'it's good that you're here.' If you're here and giving, investing everything you have into this team to get better, that's the fight for that extra degree. And when you do that consistently, life is going to be fun. You're going to have more success in whatever you do."

As for the upcoming season, Ham said he's excited to see how well the Wildcats can do.

"I like the mix of guys we have because they can play multiple positions," said Ham. "What gives me a lot of excitement is the growth and the fact they're injecting more energy into practice. We're not where I want to be yet, but more communication with teammates and pushing them forward is excellent. When we're doing a drill as a team, and a freshman doesn't know what they're doing, older players step up to help. I'm not going to stop the drill and tell them to help their teammate; they're doing it on their own, and that gives me a lot of confidence for how the season will go because they're starting to get to know each other."

"My dad said, 'you plan for the worst and hope for the best,' and that's what we've tried to focus on because said basketball is the easy part," Ham continued. "It's everything else that you have to have — leadership and camaraderie — that you have to fight for every day because we're not planning for whenever we're up by 20. We're trying to get the guys to understand what they should do when they're down at the start of a game. Are you going to start blaming your teammates, or are you going to come together and say, 'okay, let's find a way to fight back?' and that's the process we're in right now. We're definitely going in the right direction. Records and wins? I have no idea, but I am extremely confident because they are working to improve in those areas. And if you look at the roster, we were young last year. We're young this year, but this young group has experience."

Ham will be joined by Assistant Coach Clint Finke-meier.

LINN BOYS BASKETBALL

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Nov. 18	J.V./Fr.	Belle	5:00 PM
★ Nov. 21	Var./J.V./Fr.	Eldon	5:00 PM
Nov. 28-Dec.3	Varsity	Eugene Tournament	TBA
Dec. 6	Var./J.V.	Hermann	6:00 PM
Dec. 8	J.V.	Helias Catholic	5:30 PM
Dec. 12	Var./J.V./Fr.	Owensville	5:00 PM
★ Dec. 12-17	Varsity	Linn Holiday Tournament	TBA
★ Dec. 20	Var./J.V./Fr.	Southern Boone	5:00 PM
★ Dec. 22	Var./J.V./Fr.	California	5:00 PM
★ Jan. 1	Var./J.V.	Blair Oaks	6:00 PM
Jan. 5	J.V.	Fatima	7:30 PM
Jan. 6	Varsity	Fatima	7:30 PM
★ Jan. 10	Var./J.V.	Iberia	6:00 PM
★ Jan. 11	J.V./Fr.	South Callaway	5:30 PM
Jan. 16	Var./J.V./Fr.	Tipton	TBA
★ Jan. 20	Var./J.V.	New Bloomfield	TBA
Jan. 23-28	Varsity	Harrisburg Tournament	TBA
Jan. 31	Var./J.V.	Eugene	5:00 PM
★ Feb. 3	Var./J.V.	South Callaway	5:00 PM
★ Feb. 6-11	J.V.	South Callaway JV Tournament	TBA
Feb. 7	Var./J.V.	Russellville	6:00 PM
Feb. 9	Var./J.V./Fr.	St. Elizabeth	5:00 PM
Feb. 10	Var./J.V.	Chamois	6:00 PM
Feb. 13	Var./J.V.	Tuscumbia	5:00 PM

★ - Denotes Home Game

LINN GIRLS BASKETBALL

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
★ Nov. 222	Var./J.V.	Vienna	6:00 PM
Nov. 29-Dec. 3	Varsity	Eugene Tournament	TBA
Dec. 5	Var./J.V.	Iberia	7:00 PM
Dec. 8	Var./J.V.	Belle	7:00 PM
★ Dec. 9	Varsity	Owensville	6:00 PM
★ Dec. 12-17	Varsity	Linn Holiday Tournament	TBA
Dec. 23	Var./J.V.	Blair Oaks	6:00 PM
Jan. 3	Var./J.V.	Osage	7:00 PM
Jan. 5	J.V.	Fatima	6:00 PM
Jan. 6	Varsity	Fatima	6:00 PM
Jan. 9-14	Varsity	South Callaway Tournament	TBA
★ Jan. 17	Var./J.V.	New Haven	6:00 PM
Jan. 23-28	Varsity	Harrisburg Tournament	TBA
Jan. 31	Varsity	Eugene	6:00 PM
★ Feb. 2	Var./J.V.	New Bloomfield	TBA
★ Feb. 3	Var./J.V.	South Callaway	6:00 PM
★ Feb. 7	Var./J.V.	Russellville	6:00 PM
Feb. 13	Var./J.V.	Tuscumbia	6:00 PM

★ - Denotes Home Game



Zach Dodson

Linn boys basketball senior spotlight

Seniors were asked these six questions.

- 1) What are you looking forward to most as a senior this year?
- 2) What is your personal goal this season?
- 3) What is your goal for the team?
- 4) Who is your role model and why?
- 5) What does sportsmanship mean to you?
- 6) What are your plans after graduation?

Zach Dodson

1. I am looking forward to showing how much I have improved as a player and how much the team has improved because we have come so far as a team and we deserve to win and be recognized for it.

2. My personal goal is to be the best I can be for the team and myself. A personal goal of mine is to be first-team all district, conference, and tournaments we are in.

3. My goal for the team is to win districts and go all the way. I have high hopes for this season. A big team goal is to compete even if we are down

4. My biggest role models would be my dad and my brother. They showed me how to stay strong and keep a positive outlook in life even during tough times.

5. Sportsmanships means everything to me, it shows that you care for the game.

6. After high school, I will continue my education and athletics at the collegiate level I will be majoring in Criminal Justice and Marketing, and I will be committing in March.



Aushara Hostetler

Linn girls basketball senior spotlight

Seniors were asked these six questions.

- 1) What are you looking forward to most as a senior this year?
- 2) What is your personal goal this season?
- 3) What is your goal for the team?



Autum Baker

- 4) Who is your role model and why?
- 5) What does sportsmanship mean to you?
- 6) What are your plans after graduation?

Aushara Hostetler

1. I am looking forward to our team as a whole this season. It feels as if all of the pieces from the past three years have finally come together and I honestly believe we are going to be a problem this season.

2. My personal goal is to just get better every day. I have great teammates and coaches that are pushing me and allowing me to grow. I want to be the best opponent and teammate to everyone I come in contact with.

3. The past two seasons we have made



Marly Houston


it to district championship and that's where our season has ended; I just want us to get past that point. I want to go into that district week with confidence that we will advance and get to that state level.

4. My answer is super classic and cliché, but it truly is my parents. They were the people who listened to little thirteen year old me come home from a Mizzou game and say I wanted to play college basketball, even though we all thought it was just a phase. They got me with some of the greatest coaches in the state and trainers that allowed

See Senior spotlight
Page 11B

Good Luck

Osage County Sports Teams on your Seasons!



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Cheer spotlight • from page 10B

me to get better as an athlete, and they always have been my calm in the chaos. They're my biggest fans and my biggest motivation, and they have sacrificed so much for me to accomplish my dreams.

5. Sportsmanship to me is putting others before yourself, no matter what emotions you are going through. You can be extremely frustrated at another player or teammate, but it means that you put that aside and you help them off the floor, or give a teammate a high five after a rough play. Just putting someone else before yourself and being a good opponent and teammate.

6. After graduation I plan on attending a four year college and continuing my basketball career at the collegiate level. I will be getting a degree in Elementary Education and possibly get a minor in sports management.

Autumn Baker

1. Our team is very excited about this basketball season and the round of districts. Since it is my final year playing basketball, I would love to win districts.

2. My personal goal for this season is to develop better hand-eye coordination.

3. My overall goal for the team is to win districts but to also represent our school with a show of good sportsmanship on and off the court.

4. My parents and sisters are my role models. My parents are highly supportive of my choices, but they also encourage me to improve. My sisters and I have always had a special bond. We encourage one another and share knowledge of various methods and abilities that may benefit us in the competition.

5. Sportsmanship to me means having self-control, patience, respectfulness, and perseverance. Someone's attitude affects their game, but also the whole team. Having good sportsmanship demonstrates the attitude of an athlete and whether or not they respect the game's regulations and the other players.

6. My plans after graduation are to go to a four-year institution and pursue a career in nursing.

Marly Houston

1. Playing with Autumn and Aushara again because we have been playing together since we were in elementary school and its our last chance to play together.

2. To keep a positive attitude and give 110% all the time, and to always keep my head up and prove myself in my last year of high school.

3. To make it the best season yet and hope these girls go far.

4. My role model has always been my parents, my mom specifically. They have shown me the right path. They push me under all circumstances and always tell me I can do anything imaginable in life. I owe my success to them for the money, time, driving, and for reaching out to others so I had multiple opportunities. They are most definitely the reason I am the person I am today.

5. Sportsmanship to me is pushing through all your emotions to be with your team and hold yourself up for your team, even in a rough game. You shake the players' hand, thank the refs and carry on.

6. I plan to study dental at college.

Cheer spotlight • from page 8B

medic Technology, then continuing my career with Osage Ambulance District.

Cortney Nichols

1. Being able to graduate with my friends and to do cheer with them again this year.

2. To become a better and more confident base.

3. To be more confident in ourselves and show that we can do good things.

4. Jules LeBlanc. That might sound silly but she was the reason I started doing gymnastics and she was also the reason I started cheerleading when I was younger. I also looked up to her when I was younger and I still do.

5. Being able to work together as a team and teach/ learn each other things.

6. I plan to go to college. I'm looking at going into dental assistant but I'm also looking at being a first-grade teacher.

Nikki Senevey

1. I am looking forward to being a role model to underclassmen because everyone needs someone to look up to and get motivation from.

2. A personal goal that I have for this season is to try my hardest and not let anything or anyone get in my head and bring me down.

3. My goal for the team is to have everyone get a long and be a strong team that is capable of doing anything together.

4. My role model is Ms. Peterson because she is understanding, kind, always willing to help, and she takes the time to help you learn and understand things.

5. To me it means always being there for your teammates, staying positive towards each other and avoiding everything that would bring them down and not want to be apart of the team.

6. After graduation, I plan to attend State Tech to become a paraprofessional then to Lincoln University to get a teaching degree.



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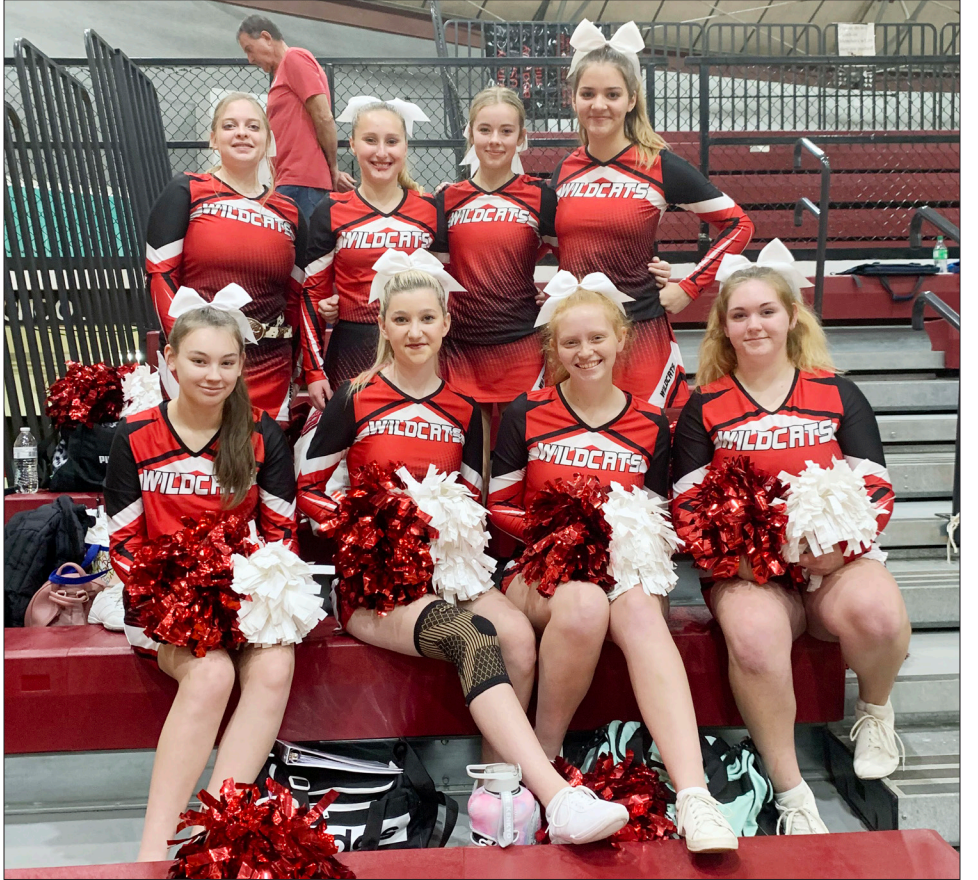
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Linn Cheerleaders

Linn cheerleaders are, from left to right, front row, Cortney Nichols, Faith McKim, Leighann Horan, and Nikki Senevey; and in the back row, Reece Griffith, Aleksa Baker, Kadi Robinson, and Jaiden Scheiner. Not pictured are Vanessa Bischoff and Kylie Blackford.

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Good Luck

Wildcats, Comets and
Pirates on a Great Season!

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JUNIOR CODY Strope (above) is a returning finalist and was the runner-up the last two seasons. At right is Alek Tune, posted a first-round pin at the state wrestling tournament and returns with hopes of advancing to the podium.



Fatima wrestling has four state-qualifying returners

Fatima will have no seniors this coming season, but the Comets have four state qualifiers looking to return to the state tournament.

Junior Cody Strope is a returning finalist and was the runner-up the last two seasons. “He looks to find a way to make it atop the podium this season,” said Coach Kurt Strope. “He has trained hard in the off-season and looks to take it to the competition.”

Fatima’s other returning state qualifiers are Tyler Kloepfel, a junior who is looking strong in the practice room, Alek Tune, a sophomore who has packed on some muscle and is looking faster and better, and Trevor Herzing, a sophomore who is coming in leaner, stronger and hitting his moves a little more crisply.

“All three are looking to improve this season,” said Strope. “I don’t think it out of the equation to see them win some at state

and find their way onto the podium, if not high up on the podium.”

The team is rounded out by freshmen Caden Rosentreter, Tucker Tune, Nolan Laux, Zachery Kloepfel, Jesse Schroeder, and Conner Willis, who are looking to surprise some people.

“This group brings a lot of experience

from kids club and junior high wrestling, and it will be interesting to see how this group grows through the year and develops,” said Strope.

Fatima’s girls’ team is comprised of junior Skyla Schroeder, who was one match away from going to state last year, and freshman Heidi Struempfler, who is new to the sport.

“Skyla has put a lot of time in getting better to take that next step in getting to state this season,” said Strope. “I think she is very capable, and I look forward to seeing her do it. I’m very excited to see what Heidi can do this season. I have enjoyed seeing her learn in the room and get better each day.”

Fatima JH wrestling features 10 grapplers

Fatima’s JH wrestling team is looking for another great season under the direction of Coach Pete Falotico.

“With 10 team members, the kids are focused on having a big year,” he said.

Returners Ryan Herzing, Mason Bock, Liam Morfield, and Thomas Kremer lead the charge, joined by newcomers Logan Laux, Tucker Gregory, Tucker Schroeder, Henry Storm, Shaydn Bacon, and Cameron Woehr.

With seven events scheduled this year, the team began on Monday at Lewis & Clark and will host the Fatima quad on Dec. 7.

The season ends on Dec. 15 at Owensville.

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Lady Comets have several returners, four seniors

Fatima has 19 players out this year, with several returning Lady Comets, including four seniors, who will be tasked with leading the team.

"Experience matters and we have a great group of seniors this year," said Baker. "We lost Morgan (Luebbering) and Anna (Eichholz). We won 17 games, and we didn't graduate a huge class. We lost a couple of kids, and all the kids back were our starting five. I think outside looking in, everybody will have the same expectations for us."

Fatima went 17-10 last year with a loss to Helias in the district semifinals.

"We held them to 10 points in the first half, and it got away from us," said Baker. "They went to the state championship game."

Since then, the Lady Comets worked hard during the off-season and played well over the summer, losing just one game.

"I think everybody wants to put some expectations on this team, but it will come down to playing well every night," said Baker. "We have a tough schedule to prepare for districts, and we're in some stacked tournaments."

Fatima will play in the Great 8 Classic in Jefferson City, opening against Hickman. "They're going to be a top-five team, without a doubt. They're loaded, and win or lose, we



have a rough path in that tournament. It's a brutal event."

After Thanksgiving, the Lady Comets (3) will host their annual tournament, beginning Dec. 3 against Cuba (6). This is a pool play/bracket hybrid tourney that includes perennial tough teams Helias (1), St. James (2), Moberly (4), Blair Oaks (5), and Smith-Cotton (7).

"It will be another brutal stretch of games for us," said Baker. "So, it's one of those things; last year, we did an excellent job navigating tough stretches; the girls did a good job of compartmentalizing, and I'm hoping that continues with this group."

Fatima's seniors are guards Claire Bexten (5-6) and Emma Bower (6-0) and forwards Lydia Brunnert (5-9) and Ellie Brune (5-11).

"Bexten is a good leader and does the right things on the floor," said Baker. "She's a good shooter, and hopefully, we can get her to take high-quality shots. Claire had some big games last year and has a knack for stepping up in big situations."

Bexten finished the 2021-22 season averaging 3.6 points and about two rebounds per contest.

Brunnert has put a lot of work into her jump shot. "She put up a lot of threes over the summer," said Baker. "She plays against Alli (Robertson) every day, and that should pay off once we start playing, and she's

undoubtedly the best rebounder I've ever coached."

Brunnert scored 2.3 points and grabbed 3.3 rebounds a game.

See Lady Comets
on Page 18B

Fick pleased with Fatima JV's progress

Fatima JV coach John Fick understands how tough it is to move from junior high to high school, especially in girls' basketball.

"Every year, most freshmen come in, and without an understanding of what's really going on with drills and terminology, they're worried about making mistakes, and they get stressed out," said Fick. "From the first practice until now, you can see the confidence and improvement from every individual since they started. The girls are asking more questions and getting a better understanding of what we're trying to do."

Fatima has four sophomores and five freshmen in the mix this year.

"Our returning sophomores have been a good influence and great leaders for the freshmen," said Fick.

Sophomores are guards Jaiden Wieberg (5-4) and Carly MacLellan (5-2), and forwards Madelyn Backes (5-9) and Payton Wieberg (5-9), and freshmen are guards Elise Dickneite (5-8) and Alex Berhorst (5-8) and forwards Grace Borgmeyer (5-6) and Adalyn Berhorst (5-11).

"It's seemed like since basketball was over for them in early February, the girls have been anxious to get back out there, so that's got me excited to see what the girls have to prove this season," said Fick. "I'm not sure what I would say our goal is this year; yes, winning is always nice. Being able to improve and learn from every game is something I look forward to. It's always nice to see some girls get outside of their comfort zone and not be afraid to try something different."

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Fatima sports schedules

FATIMA GIRLS BASKETBALL

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
★ Nov. 21	Var./J.V.	Osage	6:00 PM
★ Nov. 28-Dec. 3	Varsity	Comet Classic	TBA
Dec. 6	Var./J.V.	Eldon	6:00 PM
Dec. 8	Varsity	New Bloomfield	6:00 PM
Dec. 10-17	J.V.	St. James JV Tournament	6:00 PM
★ Dec. 15	Var./J.V.	Hermann	6:00 PM
Dec. 19	J.V.	Blair Oaks	6:00 PM
Dec. 20	Varsity	Blair Oaks	6:00 PM
Dec. 28-30	Varsity	Great 8 Classic	TBA
★ Jan. 2	Var./J.V.	California	6:00 PM
★ Jan. 6	Varsity	Linn	6:00 PM
Jan. 9-14	Varsity	South Callaway Tournament	TBA
Jan. 10-12	J.V.	Montgomery Tournament	TBA
★ Jan. 17	Varsity	Owensville	6:00 PM
★ Jan. 24	Var./J.V.	St. Elizabeth	6:00 PM
Jan. 26	Var./J.V.	Boonville	6:00 PM
Jan. 31	J.V.	Tuscumbia	6:00 PM
★ Feb. 7	Varsity	Eugene	6:30 PM
★ Feb. 9	Var./J.V.	South Callaway	6:00 PM
Feb. 13	Var./J.V.	Russellville	6:00 PM
★ Feb. 16	Var./J.V.	Jefferson City	6:00 PM
★ Feb. 21	Var./J.V.	Southern Boone	4:30 PM

★ - Denotes Home Game

FATIMA BOYS WRESTLING

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Nov. 21	JH	Lewis and Clark	5:00 PM
Nov. 29	Varsity	Boonville Quad	5:30 PM
Nov. 29	JH	Osage Tri	5:30 PM
Dec. 1	JH	Fulton/Versailles/California	5:00 PM
Dec. 2	Var./J.V.	Osage	5:30 PM
Dec. 3	J.V.	JCHS JV Tournament	TBA
Dec. 3	JH	Capital City Tournament	TBA
Dec. 6	Varsity	Rock Bridge Quad	5:30 PM
★ Dec. 7	JH	Fatima Quad	5:00 PM
Dec. 10	JH	Trojan Invitational	TBA
Dec. 10	Varsity	Union Tournament	TBA
Dec. 13	Varsity	Blair Oaks Quad	5:30 PM
Dec. 14	J.V.	Blair Oaks	TBA
Dec. 15	JH	Owensville Tri with Pacific	5:00 PM
Dec. 16-17	Varsity	Battle on the Katy Trail	TBA
Dec. 28	Varsity	Hallsville Holiday Tournament	TBA
★ Jan. 4	Varsity	Fatima Quad	5:30 PM
Jan. 7	Varsity	Capital City Tournament	TBA
★ Jan. 10	Varsity	Fatima/Centraillia/North Callaway	5:30 PM
Jan. 14	Varsity	Owensville Tournament	TBA
Jan. 17	Varsity	Tolton Quad	6:00 PM
Jan. 21	Varsity	St. Clair Tournament	TBA
Jan. 24	Varsity	Moverly Tri	TBA
Feb. 2	Varsity	South Callaway Tri	TBA
Feb. 22-25	Varsity	State Tournament	TBA

★ - Denotes Home Game

FATIMA BOYS BASKETBALL

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Nov. 18	Var./J.V./Fr.	Eldon	5:00 PM
Nov. 21	Var./J.V.	New Bloomfield	6:00 PM
★ Nov. 22	Var./J.V.	Mexico	6:00 PM
★ Nov. 29	Var./J.V.	Harrisburg	6:00 PM
Dec. 2	Var./J.V.	South Callaway	6:00 PM
Dec. 6	Var./J.V./Fr.	Father Tolton Catholic	5:00 PM
★ Dec. 9	Varsity	Republic	6:00 PM
★ Dec. 13	J.V.	Chamois	6:00 PM
Dec. 19	J.V.	Blair Oaks	7:30 PM
Dec. 20	Varsity	Blair Oaks	7:30 PM
Dec. 28-30	Varsity	Great 8 Classic	TBA
★ Jan. 5	J.V./Fr.	Linn	6:00 PM
★ Jan. 6	Varsity	Linn	7:30 PM
Jan. 9	Var./J.V./Fr.	St. James	4:30 PM
★ Jan. 12	Var./J.V.	Helias Catholic	6:00 PM
Jan. 16-21	Varsity	St. James Invitational	TBA
Jan. 18-21	J.V.	Rolla JV Tournay	TBA
Jan. 13-28	Varsity	Eldon Tournament	TBA
Jan. 31	J.V.	Tuscumbia	7:15 PM
Feb. 3-4	Varsity	Mid Missouri Invitational	TBA
★ Feb. 3	Var./J.V.	St. Elizabeth	6:00 PM
Feb. 6-11	J.V.	South Callaway Tournament	TBA
Feb. 7	Var./J.V.	Eugene	5:00 PM
★ Feb. 10	Var./J.V.	Russellville	6:00 PM
★ Feb. 14	Var./J.V./Fr.	Bettle	5:00 PM
★ Feb. 21	Var./J.V.	Southern Boone	5:45 PM

★ - Denotes Home Game

FATIMA GIRLS WRESTLING

DATE	LEVEL	OPPONENT	TIME
Nov. 29	Varsity	Boonville Quad	TBA
Dec. 2	Var./J.V.	Osage	5:30 PM
Dec. 6	Varsity	Rock Bridge Quad	TBA
Dec. 9	Varsity	Union Girls Tournament	TBA
Dec. 13	Varsity	Blair Oaks Quad	5:30 PM
Dec. 16-17	Varsity	Battle on the Katy Trail	TBA
Dec. 29-30	Varsity	Wonderwomann Tournament	TBA
Jan. 6	Varsity	Capital City Girls Tournament	TBA
Jan. 13	Varsity	Cole Camp Tournament	TBA
Jan. 17	Varsity	Tolton Quad	TBA
Jan. 20	Varsity	St. Clair Tournament	TBA
Jan. 24	Varsity	Moverly Tri	TBA
Feb. 2	Varsity	South Callaway Tri	TBA
Feb. 22-25	Varsity	State Tournament	TBA

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**Photos in this edition by Neal A. Johnson,
Will Johnson, Christina Laughlin**

**Good Luck to all the
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Neal Johnson: Thank you for all your coverage of local high school athletics

Fatima boys hope to improve on last year

Fatima will be similar to last year's team in many ways, but Coach Ryan Robertson is looking to improve on the team's 21-5 record.

"We will be a very similar team on both ends of the floor," he said. "We will primarily play man defense. We won't press much, but we will utilize it at times. We're going to play more half-court and try to lock people down."

Offensively, Robertson has high hopes. "We feel this is one of our better shooting teams that we've ever had since Coach (Ethan) Williams and I have been coaching here. We feel like every guy we put on the floor could shoot it, and we think we have

several fantastic shooters, so we will not be shy about shooting the three, but then again, we won't take bad shots. If it's there, we will take it; on the flip side, we like our strength in the post. We want to play inside out a little bit, but if we shoot it well, we could be a handful, so we've got to find ways to compete if our shots aren't falling."

This year's district tournament will be tough. "It's stacked again," Robertson said. "We're doing what we can to prepare with one of the toughest schedules we've ever had."

Fatima will compete in the Jefferson City holiday shootout, playing a team from

Mississippi in the first round. The Comets have also added Republic and Mexico to the regular schedule, along with Webster Groves.

"Hopefully, it'll prepare us for districts," Robertson said.

Four seniors will lead the way for the Comets.

Guard Nate Brandt (6-2) is one of the area's premier shooters with more than 1,200 career points through three seasons.

See Comets
on Page 18B



JACK ROBERTSON, left, and Cooper Kleffner return with enthusiasm to the Comets' lineup this year. Above right, Nate Brandt looks to lead Fatima to a district championship. He averaged 19.6 points a game last year as has scored more than 1,200 career points.

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ALLI ROBERTSON will be the centerpiece of this year's offense for Fatima as she moves from point guard to play other positions. At right is Kaitlyn Plassmeyer, whose toughness will be on display as a starting guard.

Lady Comets • from page 15B

Bower is a four-year varsity starter that continues to find ways to improve. "She's more confident off the dribble, and her length adds to our zone and creates problems for other teams," Baker noted. "She should have a good year."

Last year, Bower posted 5.6 points and 1.3 rebounds per game.

Brune has had perhaps the best opening to the season. "She's shooting better than ever, and she's a vocal leader," said Baker. "Ellie is very talented, and we hope she can string together a pile of games with high scoring. She's coming off the softball championship, and Ellie is very competitive, so I expect her to be a big part of the team's success."

Brune scored 5.6 points and recorded three rebounds on average.

Junior forward Alli Robertson (6-0) will be the centerpiece of the offense, returning from a year in which she averaged 12 points and 5.1 rebounds a game. "She played all over the country this summer and brings a lot to the table," said Baker. "Last year, Alli brought the ball down for us, and we're moving her this year. She went from being the point guard to more of a forward for us, which is more natural for her, so we're going to run the offense through her. She will play right in the middle of everything. Alli will get at-

tention defensively. She's what makes us so hard to guard. She's one of the better players in the area, but do you guard shooters? Or do you keep her off the glass and out of the paint? I think most teams are going to try to keep her out of the paint, and they're going to let us shoot, and I think that's dangerous."

Junior guard Luce Crede (5-8) is what Baker calls a volume scorer. "She provides instant offense," he added. "I hope she keeps that going this year. Defensively, she's working on getting up to speed, but I have no concerns because she is very athletic and gives us great depth at the guard position."

Kaitlyn Plassmeyer (5-2) is another junior guard on a softball championship high as the season opens. "KP is a great defender, and she's tough," said Baker. "She's a good rebounder and does a lot that makes us better."

Sophomores on the varsity squad are guards Kristen Robertson (5-6) and Vivian Bax (5-5), both of whom will be effective.

"Kristen is the Swiss army knife of the team," said Baker. "Her heart and passion are as big as anyone. On any given night, she can play anywhere and help us. With a high basketball IQ, she makes few mistakes. She'll be

right there in the mix."

Bax, meanwhile, is a talented starting point guard. "She has a beautiful jump shot, she's super smooth, and guards pretty well," said Baker. "She's going to get the opportunity to finally step in and start and play a ton of minutes for us. I think what's hard for young kids playing point guard is that it's such a learning curve. It's hard to know the game situations, understand personnel, listen to me, and run the show all at the same time. I don't think people have an appreciation for that. It's like playing quarterback; it seems simple, but it's like doing calculus on the floor while playing."

Rounding out the team is freshman guard Alex Berhorst (5-8). "She's an unbelievable athlete," Baker said. "I think she could run for days. Alex is lengthy and probably the fastest kid I've had here in my nine years; she handles a ball well. She was a kid that surprised us when we came into the summer. We didn't think we had any incoming freshmen capable of playing varsity, and after a couple of days, we knew she would fit. She plays with her heart on her sleeve and plays hard."

Berhorst will back up Bax at point guard.

Fatima opened the season on Monday against Osage.



SKYLA SCHROEDER was one match away from a state berth last year and has worked hard to improve her position this season. At right, Tyler Kloepfel has great position in this match at the state tournament. He looks to return to the championship meet in Columbia this year.



LONG-TIME COACHES Ethan Williams and Ryan Robertson show their excitement during the waning moments of last year's district game against Fr. Tolton. They return hungry for a district title and more. Above right, Easton Haslag is explosive in transition and will be a treat to watch this year.

Fatima JV/C teams ready for the season

Fatima's JV/C teams are ready to go under the leadership of coaches Ethan Williams and Tim Brunnert.

"We are excited to get the season underway," said Williams. "The kids have shown up every day ready to work. Like many other Fatima groups before them, this group plays incredibly hard."

With only 12 kids between the JV and C teams, everyone will get plenty of playing time. Williams noted that six would play both C and JV, and many of the JV members would also see some varsity time.

Fatima looks to play up-tempo, as usual. "We want to run in transition, but if we don't have a good look, we will look to run our motion offense," said Williams. "Defensively, we will look to pressure the ball and hopefully create turnovers that will lead to easy buckets in transition. We are a little undersized, so rebounding will be a point of emphasis, but with the kids' effort, hopefully, we will be good in that facet of the game."

JV players are junior Nolan Jaegers (5-11), sophomores Jace Eisterhold (6-0), Logan Kliethermes (5-8), Max Stuecken (5-10), Sam Struempfler (5-10), Brody Troesser (5-7), and freshman Blake Kliethermes (6-0).

Members of the C team are Eisterhold, and freshmen Xavier Stuecken (6-3), Colton Scheulen (5-8), Nate Jaegers (5-5), Toren Orscheln (6-1), Cole Jaegers (5-5), and Kliethermes.

"I'm excited to get to coach this group," said Brunnert, a first-year coach who graduated from Fatima in 2018. "These guys are willing to accept any challenge thrown at them, and we are ready for the season to start."

Comets from page 17B

"We're asking him to do more," said Robertson. "He'll be a key player with an exceptional shooting range. Nate will be a matchup problem for a lot of teams."

Brandt has committed to play basketball at Columbia College and comes into the year having earned All-District honors after averaging 19.6 points and 6.5 rebounds per game while hitting 31% from three-point range.

Cooper Kleffner, a 6-2 guard, had an outstanding 2021-22 campaign, scoring eight points and collecting 3.2 rebounds a game. "He's a pure shooter who spent tireless hours in the gym,"

said Robertson. "His skill level is more finely tuned, and his leadership has come a long way."

Jack Robertson (6-2) can do it all at the guard position. "He's a great shooter, and his defense is outstanding," said Coach Robertson. "He's got a high basketball IQ, so he's like a coach on the floor, and he's the glue for this team. Jack does all the little things, and his attitude is second to none."

Kayden Struempfler (6-1) will be a strong forward in the paint off the bench. "He's an excellent rebounder and unselfish player," said Robertson. "In the last two off-seasons, he's worked hard to improve, and he'll be

a concern for other teams because he can hit from the outside."

Junior forward Levi Robinson (6-6) poured it on during the second half of last season, and Coach Robertson said he's going to be fun to watch. "We feel he's a difficult matchup for conference and district opponents. He takes guys to the block and can also score from three-point range. I'm excited to see him blossom. He has sky's-the-limit talent."

Robinson averaged 6.6 points and 3.4 rebounds per contest last year.

Easton Haslag, a 6-0 guard, had what Robertson considers the best

See Comets
on Page 21B

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Cooper Kleffner



Jack Robertson



Kayden Struempff



Nate Brandt

Fatima boys senior spotlight

Seniors were asked these six questions.

- 1) What are you looking forward to most as a senior this year?
- 2) What is your personal goal this season?
- 3) What is your goal for the team?
- 4) Who is your role model and why?
- 5) What does sportsmanship mean to you?
- 6) What are your plans after graduation?

Nate Brandt

1. Just being a leader on the team and bringing positive energy because it's my last year at Fatima and I want to make the best of it.
2. To average 10 assists and lead the team in rebounds.
3. To reach the Final Four and win state.
4. My dad because he is a hard worker and has taught me everything I know about life.
5. It means being a good person and doing the right thing.
6. I will attend Columbia College, playing basketball and majoring in Business.

Jack Robertson

1. I am looking forward to having a bigger role on the

team and finishing my career on a strong note.

2. To use my experience to help our younger guys be a bigger part of the team and help them understand that you don't have to be the number one to have an impact.
3. My big goal for the season is to win the district title and keep it going to the state tournament.
4. My Grandpa Robertson because he has taught me from a young age how important hard work is and that you must earn everything.
5. I think it's important to respect the game and your op-

Fatima boys senior spotlight
From Page 21B



Claire Bexten



Ellie Brune



Emma Bower



Lydia Brunnert

Fatima girls senior spotlight

Seniors were asked these six questions.

- 1) What are you looking forward to most as a senior this year?
- 2) What is your personal goal this season?
- 3) What is your goal for the team?
- 4) Who is your role model and why?
- 5) What does sportsmanship mean to you?
- 6) What are your plans after graduation?

Lydia Brunnert

1. As a senior, I am looking forward to graduating and getting a job, so I have some cash to go shopping.
2. My personal goal this season is to never get yelled at

by Coach Baker for not shooting the ball, no matter what 6-foot giant is most likely going to block my shot.

3. I have the same goal for the team I had my freshman year, and that is to win districts and maybe even put a state banner up on the wall.
4. My role model is my sister Christine Brunnert because she is a very independent person and has already been to Africa with the Peace Corps.
5. Sportsmanship to me is encouraging and cheering on others no matter how you are personally performing. I think that everyone has bad games and practices so I will continue to rebound all their misses in these games and support them.
6. After graduation, I plan to attend Maryville University and study to become a nurse practitioner. I plan on just seeing where this takes me. I would really like to study abroad and eventually work for Doctors Without Borders.

Emma Bower

1. I am looking forward to spending time with my friends before we all leave for college and have fun in the sports I am in.
2. My personal goal for this year is to do what I can for the team each and every game no matter if I score points or not.
3. My goal for the team this year is to win the tournaments we are in and even win a district championship.
4. My role model would be my dad; he shows me what hard work is and helps me to make my season the best.
5. Sportsmanship means to always help people when they need help, say words bearing people up, not putting them down.
6. My plan after graduation is to attend State Fair Community College and earn a degree in ultrasound technology.

Fatima girls senior spotlight
From Page 21B

Fatima girls senior spotlight • from page 20B

Claire Bexten

1. Winning many games against our rivals because we have battled with them for many years and I think this year would be the year to do so.
2. Winning a district championship.
3. Putting a lot of effort into each game and trying and go far this year to make it past districts.
4. My dad, Romeo (Dennis), because I want my hair to still look good at 56 just like his.
5. Sportsmanship means being fair, exhibiting good behavior, and showing good output towards other teams and teammates.
6. I plan on either going to State Tech and transferring to Lincoln University or going to Lincoln full time and going into elementary education.

Ellie Brune

1. Wearing our new gray jerseys; look good, play good.
2. Winning a district championship. I want to go out with a bang and I know it would mean a lot to everyone, including myself.
3. To work together to reach our goal as a group.
4. John Fick. He's a true inspiration. He picks me up when I'm feeling down with his "amazing" jokes.
5. It means to respect the other team, be respectful about calls that may not go our way, and take responsibility for what I can do.
6. Be successful. I'm not really sure how I'm going to do that yet, but that's the goal.

Comets • from page 19B

off-season of anyone in the program. "He's as athletic as anyone and has explosive speed in the transition game," said Robertson. "He'll be a treat to watch, and his three-point shooting ability will make him hard to guard."

Nolan Jaegers (5-11), a defensive specialist, has good strength and foot speed. "His work ethic is impressive," Robertson said. "He's a nightmare for whoever he

is guarding; he pesters the ball." Sophomore Matthew Robertson (6-0) will be the starting point guard. "People will be shocked at his strength and defensive play," said Coach Robertson. "He's done well at the point-guard position. Matthew is excellent at bringing the ball up the floor and finding our guys. He can also attack the rim and finishes well. I'm excited to see him get even better with experience."

Other players who will see some varsity time are sophomore guards Logan Kliethermes (5-8), Max Stuecken (5-10), Sam Struempf (5-10), Brody Troesser (5-7), Jace Eisterhold (6-0), and freshman guard Blake Kliethermes (6-0).

"These guys will be important for us off the bench," said Robertson. "They're all working hard to improve and will see minutes on the floor as we move forward."

Fatima boys senior spotlight • from page 20B

ponent, and to know when you're on the court that it's a competition from start to end, but when it's over, to shake hands and move on.

6. I'm looking to pursue a degree in engineering.

Cooper Kleffner

1. I look forward to working hard and our team becoming a family and making great memories, on and off the court.
2. To help lead our team to a district championship and hopefully, games after that.
3. To win a state title because we have the talent and playmaking ability. That might sound like a stretch to some people but we won't sell ourselves short.
4. My dad, because he puts his head down and never complains. He will do anything for anyone.
5. It means competing and never wanting to lose but also recognizing the time and effort that all my competitors have put in.
6. I plan to go to college and study prosthetics.

Kayden Struempf

1. To competing with this team one last year and playing our hardest to go as far as we can.
2. To strengthen my bond with my teammates on and off the court. I also want to play with 100% effort so I can contribute to the team and help us win games.
3. To grow together and be more than just a team, and to win state.
4. My Grandpa Stuecken; he is one of the kindest and hardest-working men I know.
5. It means helping an opponent off the court, or not arguing with the ref. I think we should all treat one another as family.
6. I plan to attend State Tech in the Precision Machining Program.

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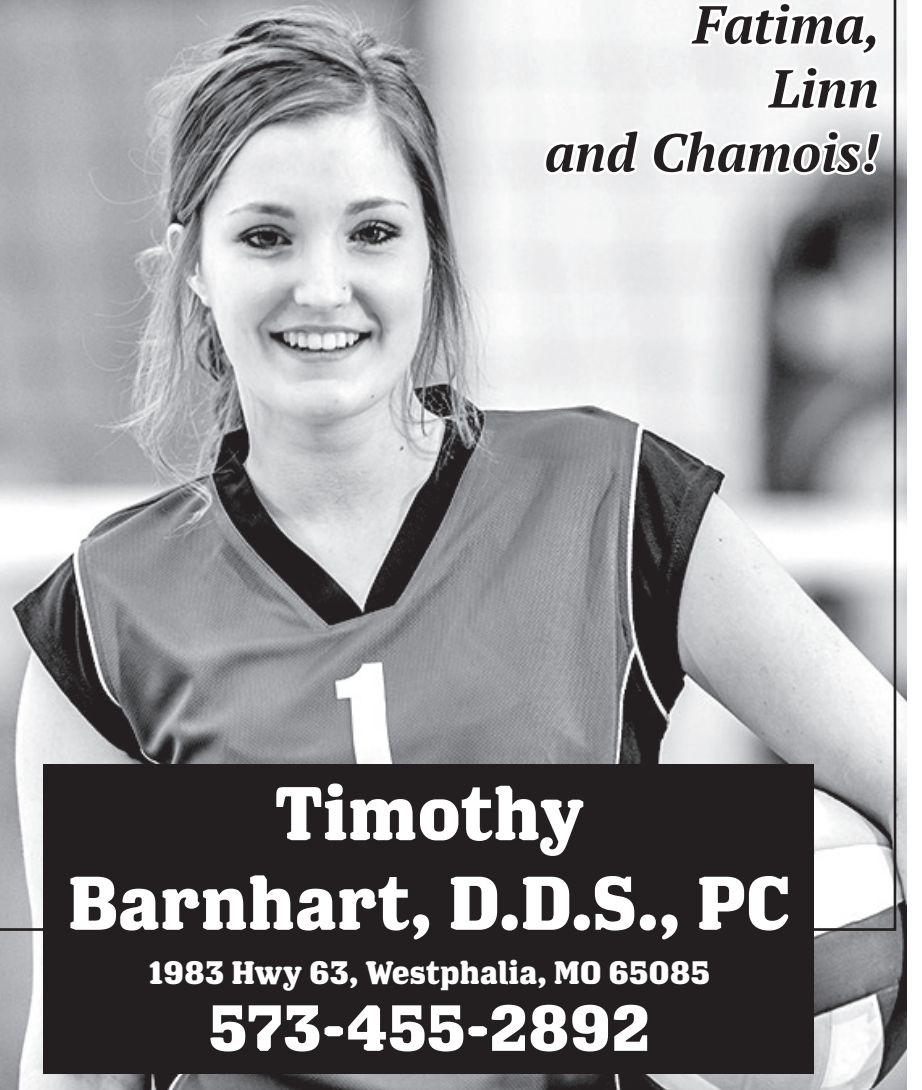
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Fatima,

Linn

and Chamois!



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Hoffman excited to coach Fatima cheer

Fatima cheerleading coach Stephanie Hoffman said she is excited to coach the girls this year.

"I have always loved cheerleading," said Hoffman. "This is the first opportunity I have had to coach. I will admit that it makes me nervous when they fly in the air; however, I think I am beginning to get used to it."

Hoffman has taught Special Education for 22 years at Fatima, from which she graduated in 1996.

She is joined by Assistant Coach Hunter Anderson, who was a cheerleader at Fatima, graduating in 2020.

Cheerleaders are juniors Alyssa Hoeller and Malayna Anderson (co-captains) and Lauren Otto and freshmen Ava Buhr and Aubrey Wieberg.

"We expect the girls to continue to expand their knowledge of the various cheers out there to incorporate into their routine," said Hoffman. "This will also give them the opportunity to introduce new cheers to the students. The most important thing we want is for the girls to have fun and continue to involve the students and boost school spirit."



Fatima dance team has six performances this winter

Fatima's dance team, under the direction of Coach Alicia Massman, will perform six times this winter, beginning with the Dec. 9 boys' game against Republic.

"We are really excited about this dance season," said Massman. "We have a Christmas-themed routine, which is a first for the dance team. We also have been working on a second routine that we will perform after the new year."

Co-captains junior Ava Laughlin and sophomore Reese Heckemeyer will lead the team and are joined by junior Brynn Cremer and sophomores Carissa Mushi, Claire Baumhoer, and Lily Gregory.

Fatima will also perform on Dec. 15, Jan. 6 and 17, and Feb. 3 and 21.

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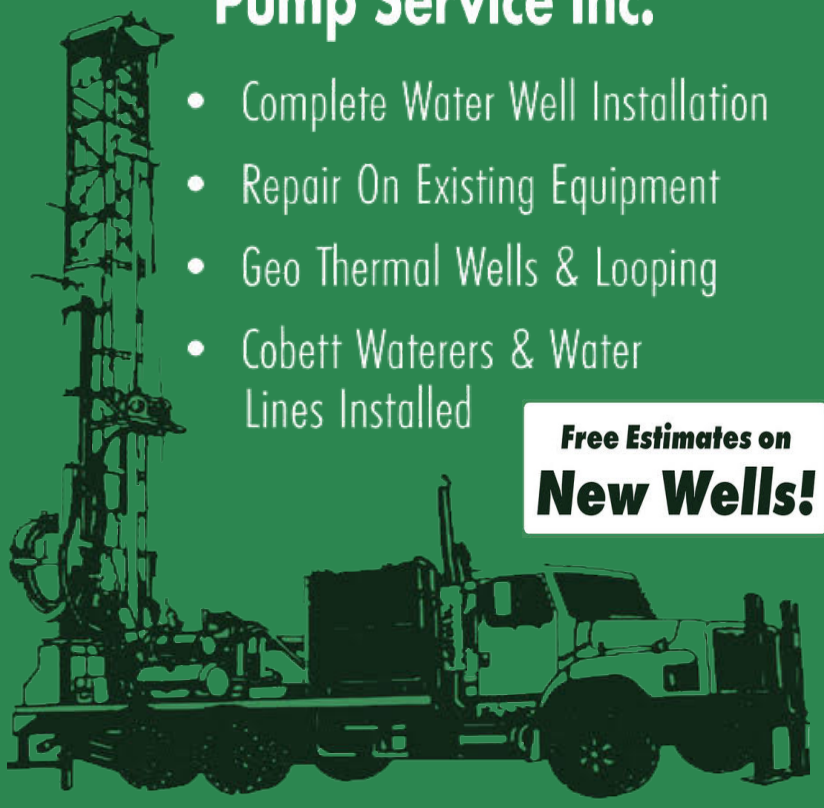


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Fatima Cheerleaders

Fatima cheerleaders are, from left to right, Head Coach Stephanie Hoffman, Ava Buhr, Aubrey Wieberg, Alyssa Hoeller, Lauren Otto, Malayna Anderson, and Assistant Coach Hunter Anderson.



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