

HIGH SCHOOL 2024 FALL SPORTS PREVIEW

FALLS CITY
JOURNAL



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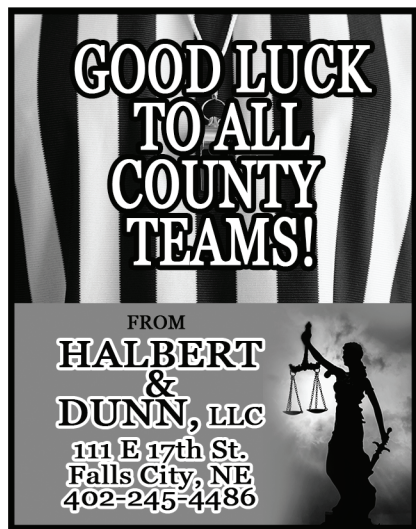
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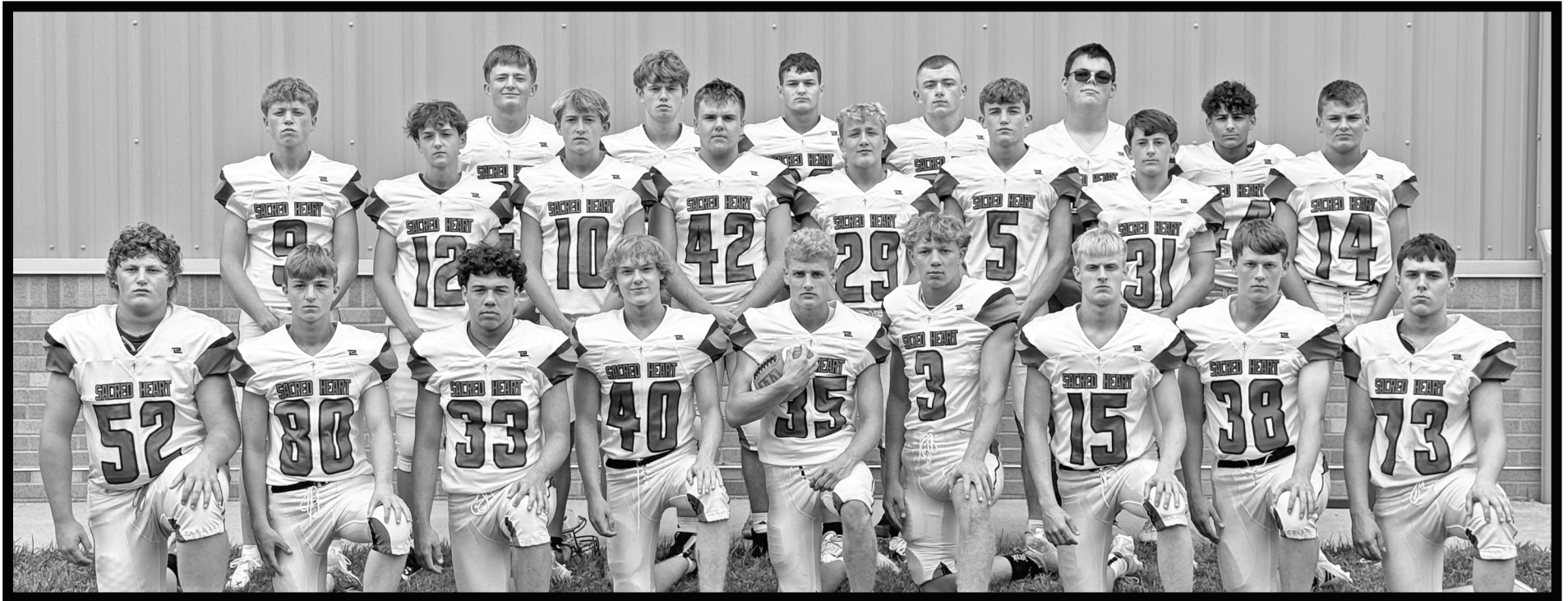
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(L-R) **FRONT ROW:** Evan Bailey, Connor Nelson, Quincy Koelliker, Gavin Clow, Rob Froeschl, Tate Wilcox, Clayton Keithley, Henry Rottinghaus, Caleb Kirkendall **SECOND ROW:** Cole Taft, Hayden Clow, Benden Lemerond, Toby Baxter, Kayden Groth, Kyler Sipple, Henry Rottinghaus, Reid Wustrack **THIRD ROW:** Cooper Knobbe, Alex Madsen, Elijah Canonico, Trayce Stutheit, Cole Schawang, JJ Lancaster.

2024 IRISH FOOTBALL		
W/L • Score		
	08/30/24	vs Lourdes Central Cath....7pm
	09/06/24	vs BDS.....7pm
	09/13/24	@ Johnson Co. Central.....7pm
	09/20/24	@ Weeping Water.....7pm
	09/27/24	vs HTRS.....7pm
	10/04/24	@ Elmwood-Murdock.....7pm
	10/11/24	@ Freeman.....7pm
	10/18/24	vs Cedar Bluffs.....7pm

IRISH FOOTBALL HOPING FOR A RETURN TO POSTSEASON

Story By Brian McKim and Photo By Chelsie Alexander

The Sacred Heart Irish football squad was in unfamiliar territory as the 2023 season wound down. For the first time since the 1986 season, the Irish were left out of the Class D playoff picture.

Last fall, as the season wound down, Coach Goltz had this to say about the year.

“Streaks end, and records are broken. I’ve been part of some great wins. Eighty-seven wins in a row, 19 straight state basketball tournament wins, back-to-back triple crowns and 36 straight years in the football playoffs. Making the playoffs is every team’s goal. We’ll try to get back there again next year. I love the boys on this team, just like the 36 football teams before it.”

However, SH has an ace up its sleeve with coaching legend Doug Goltz. Goltz enters his 38th season as SH's play-caller and has an overall record of 341 wins against just 69 losses. His Irish teams have won eight Class D state titles and several district titles.

Sacred Heart will be looking to improve upon the 2-6 mark from last fall, which saw the Irish pick up wins against Diller-Odell and HTRS.

SH lost four senior letter winners but returned eight for the 2024 season. Vaughn Lenard, Jack Stice, James Froeschl and Joe Simon are gone from last season. Simon led the rushing attack last fall with 578 and five TDs on 76 carries. Stice hauled in 19 catches for 214 yards and three scores, Simon was next with 16 for 319, and Froeschl added 14 for 104 yards. On the defensive side of the ball, Lenard finished his senior season with 28 tackles, 16 unassisted.

Coach Goltz touted the return of QB Tate Wilcox and several linemen who boast experience. Wilcox was lost in the season's final game due to an ACL injury.

Besides Wilcox, Rob Froeschl RB/DB returns, as does Evan Bailey OL/DL and Caleb Kirkendall OL/DL. Bailey at 260 and Kirkendall at 220 should provide protection for the Irish QB. Cooper Knobbe, Clayton Keithley, Henry Rottinghaus, Elijah Canonico, Toby Baxter, and Cole Taft are expected to see action on the turf this fall.

Wilcox carried the ball 87 times for 188 yards and three scores and completed 63/130 pass attempts for 861 yards and 13 TDs. Froeschl carried the ball 44 times for 193 yards and a score at running back. Cole Taft leads the returning receivers, finishing the 2023 season with six catches for 74 yards and two TDS.

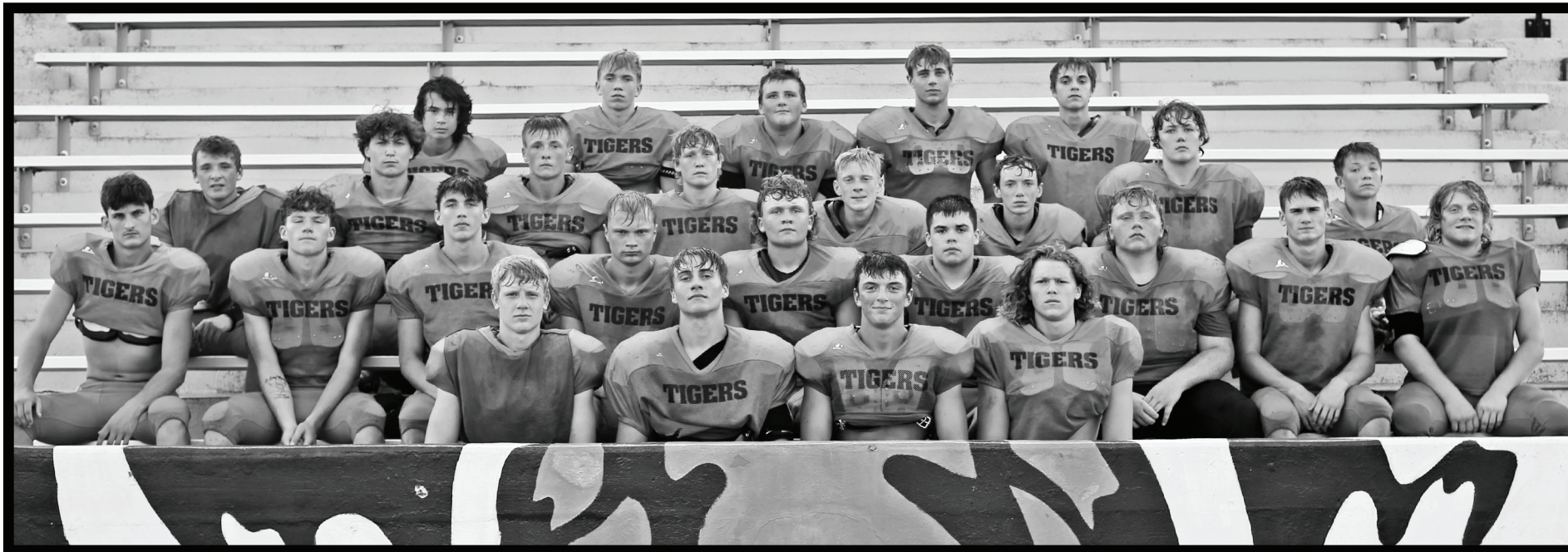
If Wilcox is healthy, he’ll be the starter at quarterback; if not, look for Brenden Lemerond to step in and fill his shoes. Rob Froeschl will get the call at running back and Keithley should hear his number called at wide receiver. Besides Bailey and Kirkendall, Knobbe and Baxter will see action on the line of scrimmage.

continued to page 10

F

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Wishing County Athletes A Successful Season!



(L-R) **FRONT ROW:** Blakely Sells, Derek Helmick, Issac Frederick, Brock Niedfeldt **SECOND ROW:** Tegan Alexander, Mason Collier, Orion Cattrell, Keifer Adams, Vaden Leyden, Ashton Martin, Caleb Zimmerman, Grant Kobza, Thomas Godemann **THIRD ROW:** Jacoby Bangert, Jaxten Jorgensen, Elijah Leyden, Cade Caudle, Tanner Jackson, Callen Furnas, Brandon Feighner, Bowdy Jones **BACK ROW:** Zane Elms, Preston Buckminster, Taylor Donahoo, Gavin Bauer, Kaleb Kaiser

2024 TIGER FOOTBALL		
W/L • Score		
	08/30/24	@ Palmyra.....7pm
	09/06/24	@ Omaha Brownell Talbot...7p
	09/13/24	vs Conestoga.....7pm
	09/20/24	vs Omaha Concordia.....7pm
	09/27/24	@ Nebraska City.....7pm
	10/04/24	vs Auburn.....7pm
	10/11/24	vs Syracuse.....7pm
	10/18/24	@ Wilber-Clatonia.....7pm
	10/25/24	vs Fairbury.....7pm

OPTIMISM HIGH AS FALLS CITY ENTERS YEAR THREE WITH COACHING STAFF

Story By Brian McKim and Photo By Chelsie Alexander

There have been a few growing pains for the Tiger football squad over the last few years. Head Coach Jack Bangert enters year three of a rebuild with a 3-15 mark. The last time FC had a winning record was 2020, when the team finished at 5-4. The last time the Tigers made the postseason was in 2014 when they fell to Norfolk Catholic 6-35 in the first round of the playoffs. The 1960 squad finished a perfect 9-0 season, winning the Twin Rivers Conference title for the fourth consecutive year.

Don't look for the Bengals to finish the year undefeated, but you can count on the squad to show marked improvement. "We improved at all three levels last year," said Head Coach Bangert. "Junior High, Junior Varsity and Varsity. We need to continue that improvement into year three. This is the first year going into camp that we don't have a freshman or sophomore on the starting offensive line or defensive line. That is huge for us."


The Tigers return a wealth of experience, not just from the 18 returning letter winners but also from the coaching staff. Assistant coach Tom Weinert returns for his 32nd season with the orange and black. Ryan Nolte will enter his 14th season with the Bengals, while Nick Kraft will don the headset for a 12th season. Quentin Coatney (6 years) and Brandon Sells (5 years) are also back, while Devin Moore and Jordy Stoller return for year two with FC.

Gone from last year's 2-7 squad are Wyatt Olberding, Zane Ebel, Kaleb Zulkoski, Kadyne Strecker and Daniel Hollens. All five athletes made huge contributions for FC last season, but a strong returning junior and senior class will step in and continue climbing upwards. Three seniors, Isaac Frederick, Derek Helmick and Preston Buckminster, will lead the team on the field this fall. Frederick led the ground attack last fall for FC, rushing for 523 yards and five TDs on 138 carries. Look for a bulked-up Frederick to be a workhorse for Coach Bangert this fall.

Falls City also has the luxury of returning seven juniors who made strong contributions last season. QB Blakely Sells will again assume the role of QB for the Tigers. Playing with a torn ACL for the season's final month, Sells carried the ball 71 times for 469 yards and six touchdowns. Sells completed 91 of 178 attempts for 1180 yards and 12 TDs through the air. Keeping Sells healthy will be a top priority of the offensive line this fall. Also slated for meaningful action will be LT/DE Brock Niedfeldt, TE/LB Gavin Bauer, Rec/LB Mason Collier, RT/DE Vaden Leyden, Rec/DB Orion Cattrell and Center/Nose Chase Simpson.

On the defensive side of the ball, FC will run a 3-5 but will miss many critical components from a year ago. Gone are leading tacklers Zulkoski, Ebel, Robert Gilkerson and Olberding.

Others expected to make key contributions this fall include Tegan Alexander, Quentin Adams, Caleb Zimmerman, Ashton Martin, Jaxten Jorgensen, Cade Caudle, Paxton



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continued on page 10



(L-R) **FRONT ROW:** Julius Wiest, Jacopo Vanni, Brogan Dunlap, Hunter Bohling, River Mc-Neely, Carson Refsdal **SECOND ROW:** Emmett Glathar, Jon Koch **THIRD ROW:** Axton Wamsley, Reed Shupp, Jacob Davis, Colt Leech, Kameon Dettmann **FOURTH ROW:** Alex Dewberry, Ty Dunekacke, Griffin Sikora, Alvin Sikora, Bradyn Bowen, Ava Grimes **FIFTH ROW:** Jack Hilgenfeld, Josh Manning, Cole Hunzeker **NOT PICTURED:** Justin Hoagland, student managers Tate Dunekacke and Preston Mezger

2024 TITAN FOOTBALL		
W/L • Score		
	08/30/24	@ Southern.....7pm
	09/06/24	vs Omaha Christ. Academy....7pm
	09/12/24	@ Deshler.....7pm
	09/20/24	vs Elmwood-Murdock.....7pm
	09/27/24	@ Falls City Sacred Heart.....7pm
	10/04/24	vs Cedar Bluffs.....7pm
	10/11/24	@ Weeping Water.....7pm
	10/17/24	vs Johnson Co. Central.....7pm

TITANS EXPECT TO BE COMPETITIVE THROUGHOUT SEASON

Story By Brian McKim, Photo by Chelsie Alexander

The HTRS Titans are coming off a 3-5 campaign in 2023, In fact, the Titan football squad has finished 3-5 for three consecutive seasons. The Titans will look to break that trend this year and will do so with new head coach Grant Tuttle. Coach Tuttle will be helped on the sidelines by Koalton Taiclet (4th year), Scott Freeman (1st year) and Schuyler Kuhlmann (1st year).

HTRS will need to fill some large holes caused by graduation. Five seniors saw extensive playing time last fall, but none will be more difficult to replace than JJ McQueen. Last fall, McQueen rushed for a team-best 752 yards on 107 attempts, passed for 446 yards and caught nine balls for 106 yards. On the defensive side of the ball, JJ finished with 93 tackles and two interceptions.

The cupboard isn't empty by a long shot for Coach Tuttle and crew. A pair of seniors will lead the team this year and will be vital to the Titan's improvements. Hunter Bohling and Brogan Dunlap will lead the team in most offensive and defensive categories this fall.

Bohling, a second team all-conference selection a year ago, finished with 617 yards rushing and 13 TDs on just 95 tries. He added 76 tackles on defense, including 14 for losses. Dunlap did most of his damage at the receiver position last fall. The senior caught ten passes for 200 yards and four touchdowns. On defense he finished with 43 tackles and a pick.

The coaching staff will also need juniors Emmett Glathar TE/LB and Jon Koch, G/DE, to step into important roles. Sophomores Kameon Dettmann QB/RB/CB, Reed Shupp G/T and Axton Wamsley TE/S will also see meaningful time, as will freshman G/DE Cole Hunzeker.

The Titans open the season on the road at Southern on Friday, August 30. Last fall, the Raiders defeated HTRS 64-26 in Wymore.

"Our goal for this season is to play our best football and to truly improve every day," said Coach Tuttle. "I believe that we can be competitive in every game if we know and execute our responsibilities on every play. We have a young roster, but I am optimistic about our guys."

Gone from last year's schedule are Johnson-Brock, Lourdes Central and BDS. However, the Titans will have tough contests against Elmwood-Murdock, Weeping Water and Johnson County Central. Those three teams had a combined record of 20-8 last fall. The rest of the 2024 schedule finished 7-31.

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Good Luck County Athletes on the Upcoming Season!

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(L-R) FRONT ROW: Emilou Schulenberg and Delaney Godemann
 MIDDLE ROW: Malori Kuker, Brylee Liberty, Jazzy Strecker, Taylah Moore, and Kaydence Rego
 BACK ROW: Taytum Maddox, Bristol Titus, Reagan McNeely, Kenley Alexander, and Olivia Mirelez

TIGER SOFTBALL TEAM YOUNG BUT EAGER TO IMPROVE

Story By Brian and Photo By Chelsie Alexander

The Falls City softball team is eager to hit the field and bounce back from an off-year last fall. The 2023 squad came up short of its goals, finishing the season at 3-14, having dropped ten of the final eleven games.

This year's group will be young and inexperienced, but they are willing to learn and eager to improve on the field. The Tiger squad will compete with two seniors, two juniors, three sophomores and five freshmen.

Head Coach Trista McClure enters her fourth season in charge of the Lady Tigers with a 20-45 overall record. McClure is joined by Tayten Keller (3rd year) and Brooks Ivey (2nd year).

FC will be looking to take a big step in the program this fall. The last time FC made the state tournament was in 2006, and it was also the last time they won a district title. Falls City competed in the district final last in 2022. Overall, the team returns five letter winners from the 2023 team, including ECNC All-Conference first-team selection Emilou Schulenberg and All-Conference Honorable Mention Brylee Liberty.

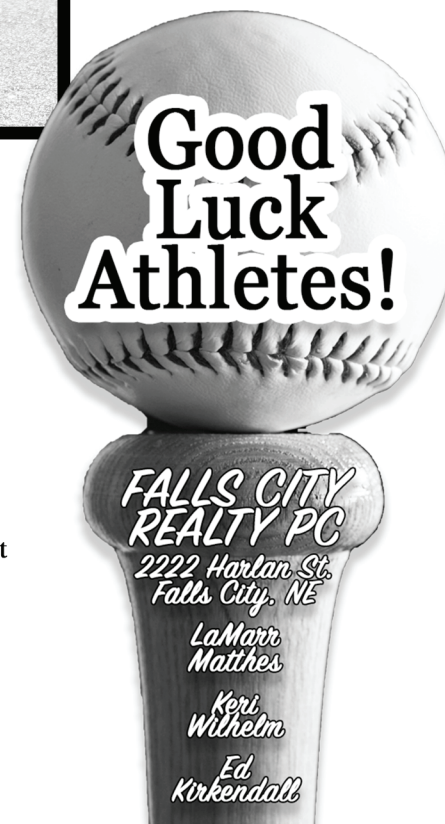
Last fall, Schulenberg batted .518 with 29 hits, nine doubles, one home run, 12 RBI and 23 runs scored. Liberty batted .405 with 17 hits, 10 RBI and 11 runs scored.

Schulenberg will hit for power and have the ability just to put the ball in play. With so much inexperience, FC will have to play "small ball" and look to move runners one base at a time if necessary.

Sophomore Jazzy Strecker will be FC's most seasoned pitcher in the circle. Strecker led the 2023 team with 31 innings pitched. She allowed 86 hits and 81 earned runs, walking 45 and striking out 13. Delaney Godemann, Reagan McNeely, and Liberty will also be looking for action in the circle.

Schulenberg leads the list of returners as she enters her fourth season in the starting nine. Kuker (OF), Liberty (OF/1B) and Strecker (P/2B) all begin their second years in the starting lineup.

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W/L • Score		2024 TIGER SOFTBALL	
08/22/24	vs	Nebraska City	
08/24-08/24	TBD	Freeman Softball Tour.	
08/27/24	@	Auburn Triangular	
08/27/24	@	Wilber-Clatonia Tri (host: Auburn)	
08/29/24	@	Southern/Diller-Odell	
08/31-08/31	TBD	Syracuse Invitational	
09/03/24	vs	Freeman	
09/07-09/07	TBD	Auburn Intivational	
09/10/24	@	Mid-Buchanan, MO	
09/14-09/14	TBD	Falls City Invitational	
09/17/24	vs	Platteview Tri (host: Platteview)	
09/17/24	vs	Schuyler Tri. (host: Platteview)	
09/24/24	@	Fairbury	
09/26/24	@	St. Joe Lafayette, MO	
09/28/24	@	Auburn Tri (host: Freeman)	
09/28/24	@	Freeman Tri (host: Freeman)	
09/30/24	vs	Syracuse	



2024 TIGER CROSS COUNTRY

Aug 30	Auburn Invite	10:00 am
Sept 3	Plattsmouth Invite	4:30 pm
Sept 12	Fairbury Invite	4:00 pm
Sept 19	Hiawatha Invite	4:00 pm
Sept 26	FC Invite	4:30 pm
Sept 30	Rock Port Invite	5:00 pm
Oct 4	Syracuse Invite	10:00 am
Oct 8	ECNC Meet (FC)	4:00 pm
Oct 17	Districts (Branched Oak)	TBA
Oct 25	State Meet (Kearney)	TBA

(L-R) **FRONT ROW:** Josh Anderson, Jennifer Sweeney, Destiny Pierce, Kinsie Riggs, Hana Irizarry, Madalynn Hawley, Peyton Weddle, Audrey Scrivens
BACK ROW: Hayden Findlay, Emmett Daake, Ryker McCullough, Lathan Richey, Dustin Stillen, Matthew Richarts, Martin Irizarry
NOT PICTURED: Alaina Jackson, Ryder Hullman



TIGER CROSS COUNTRY IS NEARING THE START LINE

Story and Photo By Brian McKim

The Falls City XC team has worked all summer and is ready to hit the courses and show what they are capable of accomplishing. In his 25th year, Coach Cody Hawley and assistant coach Amanda Merz (9th season) will lead eight high school boys, six girls, two middle school boys and three junior high girls throughout the season. Alum Raymond Feek will also join the staff this fall as a volunteer assistant coach.

The team will consist of seniors Hayden Findlay, Bailey Thimmes and Dustin Stillen. Juniors include Ryker McCullough and Emmett Daake. Sophomores are Lathan Richey, Matthew Richarts, Jennifer Sweeney, Kinzie Riggs and Hannah Irizarry. Freshmen on the team will consist of Kaden Dougherty, Joah Anderson, Destiny Pierce and Madalynn Hawley. Junior high competitors include Martin Irizarry, Ryder Hullman, Peyton Weddle, Audrey Scrivens and Alaina Jackson.

The boys' team lost a pair of key contributors from the past seasons. Gone are Blake Rolfe and four-year varsity runner Alex McKim. Tallan Zimmerman is also absent from this year's team. Last fall, Zimmerman competed at the NSAA State XC Meet in Kearney, running an 18:47.12 and placing 31st as a sophomore.

Coaches Hawley and Merz will lean on junior Ryker McCullough to lead the boy team through the courses this fall. McCullough finished 21st at districts last fall at Branched Oak State Park. McCullough also placed fifth at the ECNC Meet at the Cass County Fair Grounds, earning All-Conference recognition. The boys placed third at the conference meet a year ago.

"We have lower numbers this year than normal," said Coach Hawley. "We lost a few other members due to not going out and previous injuries from the spring."

Sophomore Jennifer Sweeney will lead the girls. As a freshman, Sweeney placed 16th at the conference meet and 24th at the Class C District Meet at Branched Oak.

"The girls are very young and we are excited to develop a strong team for this year," said Hawley. "The girls' team will be led by Jennifer; she had a strong spring in track and is an incredible leader."

The Tiger XC teams have experienced a prolonged drought since qualifying for the state meet. It was 1984, the last time the Lady Tigers team qualified, and 1995 for the boys. Since taking over the program, Coach Hawley has sent 26 individuals to the NSAA State Meet.

The season kicks off on Friday, August 30, at 10:00 a.m. in Auburn. The Falls City Invite will take place on Thursday, September 26, at 4:30 at the Falls City Golf Course, and the Tigers will host the ECNC Conference Meet on Tuesday, October 8, at the golf course. Districts will be at Branched Oak for a second consecutive year on Thursday, October 17, and the State Meet will be at Kearney on Friday, October 25.

"Self-accountability is going to be a huge factor," said Hawley. "The runners will get out what they put into their training. The Tiger runners will look to become stronger and compete at a higher level each week. We are changing our training schedule a bit this year. The first week was definitely a challenge, and the kids adapted well to the change."

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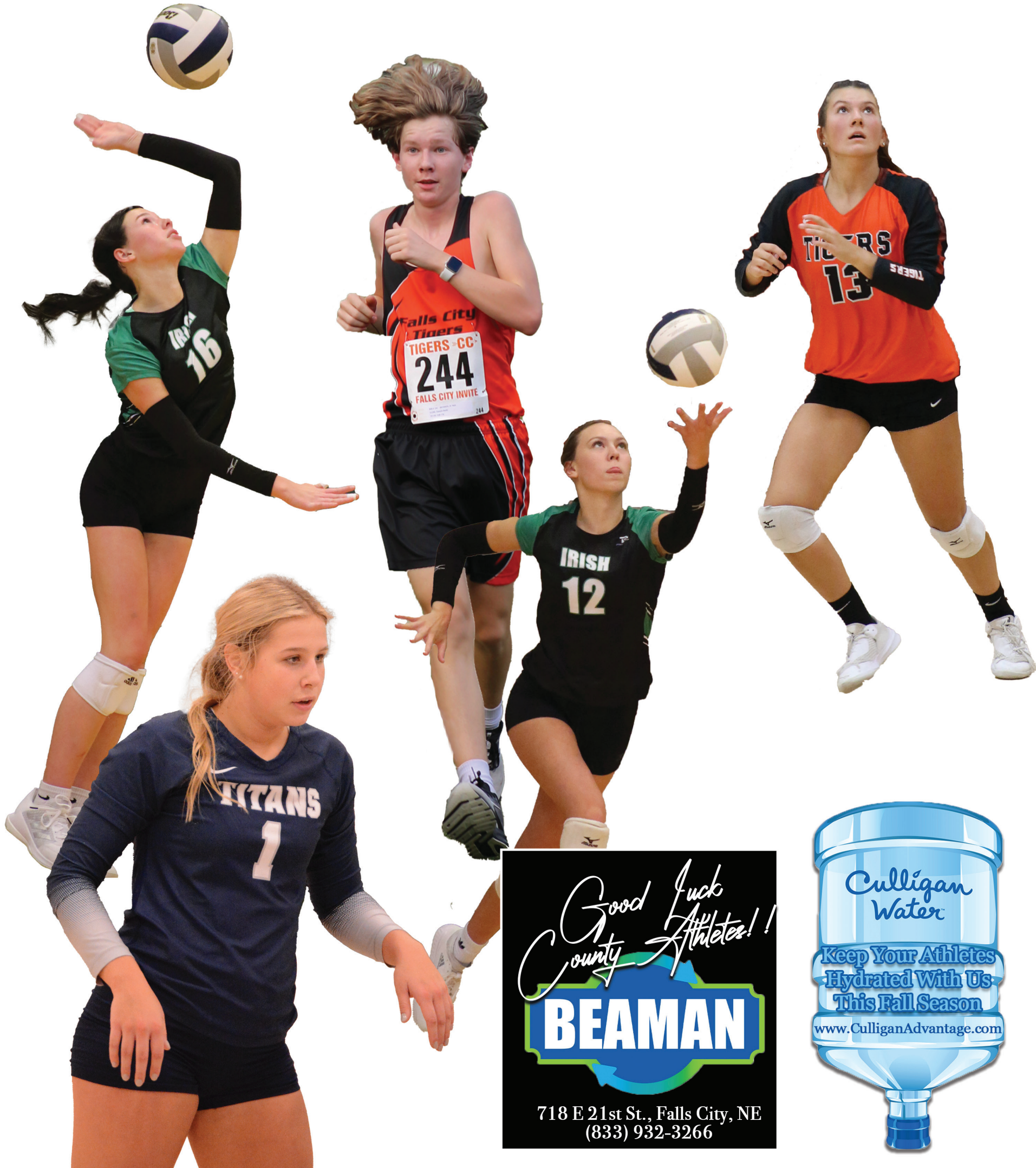
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**WISHING
 ALL OUR
 ATHLETES A
 LEGENDARY
 YEAR!**





*Tiger Football
continued from page 4*



*Irish Football
continued from page 3*

When asked about the 2024 team, Goltz replied, "Lost four seniors who led the team in most categories. Return some experienced linemen and starting QB if healthy. Very tough scheduled, very few weak opponents."

Sacred Heart opens the year against Nebraska City Lourdes on Friday, August 30, in Falls City. Lourdes defeated the Irish 60-16 last year and finished the season at 8-2. SH hosts perennial powerhouse BDS in week two. Last fall, SH fell to the Eagles 18-60. The Irish will host HTRS on Friday, September 27, for homecoming and wrap up the home schedule on Friday, October 18, when they host Cedar Bluffs.

Armbruster, Jacoby Bangert, Grant Kobza and Bowdy Jones.

"For the past two years we have been learning and growing as a team," said Coach Bangert. "These guys have taken some lumps as young kids playing varsity. We are not young anymore.

Falls City opens the season with a road contest against Palmyra. The Panthers have moved from Class D1, where they finished 2-6, to Class C2 this fall. FC will look to get in the win column to begin the season on Friday, August 30. The Tigers will play their first home game of the season when they host Conestoga on Friday, September 13, at Jug Brown Stadium. Other important contests include playing at Nebraska City on September 27, hosting Auburn on October 4, and Syracuse on October 11.

Our goal is to improve each year with the ultimate goal of getting back to the playoffs," said Bangert. "It has been ten years. These guys are hungry and have had the best summer offseason in my three years at Falls City. We are stronger than we have ever been as a team, and even though we are not going to be the biggest or the deepest team in Class C1, we feel really good about where we are headed in 2024."

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Best of Luck To All Richardson County Athletes During Your Season.
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(L-R): Ava Meints, Alyssa Askren, Kendall Freeman

LADY TITAN GOLFERS READY TO HIT THE TEE BOX

Story By Brian McKim and Photo By Chelsie Alexander

The HTRS Lady Titan golf season will begin on August 29, when the golfers head to Syracuse for an Invite at 9:00 a.m. Head Coach Heath Finke will start his first year as head coach of the Lady Titan golf team but will begin his third year at HTRS school. HTRS welcomes back senior Alyssa Askren and junior Kendall Freeman. The Titans will also add freshman Ava Meints to the squad this fall.

“My goal for each girl is for them to see improvement in their golf scores and to have them truly enjoy the game,” said Coach Finke. “I would like to see some placements in meets this year and for the girls to have fun while they compete in meets.”

After opening the season in August, HTRS will compete on September 6 at Hidden Acres in Beatrice. The Titans will host the HTRS Invite on September 23 and play at the Auburn Invite on September 30.

2024 TITAN GIRLS GOLF

August 29	Syracuse Invite	9:00 a.m.
Sept. 6	Tri County Invite	9:00 a.m.
Sept. 16	Fairbury Invite	9:00 a.m.
Sept. 19	JCC Invite	9:00 a.m.
Sept. 23	HTRS Invite	9:00 a.m.
Sept. 26	JCC Invite	9:00 a.m.
Sept. 30	Auburn Invite	9:00 a.m.
Oct. 3	Lincoln Christian	9:00 a.m.
Oct. 7	Districts	TBA
Oct 14-15	State (North Platte)	TBA

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(L-R) **FRONT ROW:** Addison Keller, Annika Reschke, Jentry Lechtenberg, Adisen Fischer, Destry Groth.
MIDDLE ROW: Brookelyn Bebermeyer, Daycee Witt, Alise Reschke, Dorothy Crouse, Isabelle Nussbaum.
BACK ROW: Emersyn Courtney, Hallie Jones, Ryann Westengaard, Jade Romo, Milayna Crofford

LADY IRISH AIMING HIGH

Story By Brian McKim
 Photo By Chelsie Alexander



The Sacred Heart Irish volleyball team is anxious to return to the court this fall. The 2023 season was a bit of a disappointment, at least by the Irish's standards. The year ended with an 18-16 final record, including a loss to Wallace in the district final. After opening the season at 3-7, SH regrouped, rattled off 12 consecutive wins, and improved to 15-7. Unfortunately, SH dropped nine of its final 12 matches.

Head Coach Emma Ebel enters her fifth season at the helm and has an impressive 105 wins against only 34 losses. Abby Shubert (ninth season) and Holly Westengaard (fifth season) will assist Ebel again. Sacred Heart has made the NSAA State Tourney in Lincoln in three of the last four seasons. Twice, the Lady Irish have been crowned district champions. They won the Class D-2 title in 2021 and finished third in 2020.

The Irish will march out with 11 returning letter winners from last season, hoping to capitalize on their experience.

On offense, the Irish will employ a quick tempo. "Tenacious is the mentality that we are going to have on defense," said Ebel. "We want to be the team that never lets a ball drop and is always scrappy."

The 2024 Irish team has the luxury of returning six athletes who started games last fall. That list includes senior Jentry Lechtenberg, junior Daycee Witt, senior Destry Groth, senior Addison Keller and sophomore Hallie Jones. The coaching staff will also look toward Isabelle Nussbaum, Alise Reschke, Annika Reschke, Dorothy Crouse, Emersyn Courtney, Brooklyn Bebermeyer and Ryann Westengaard.

"My expectations are the same year in and year out," said Ebel. "I always expect to be a Pioneer Conference contender, as well as compete at the state tournament. My hope is that we will put in the work to compete at that level."

The Irish lost three seniors from last fall. Makinley Scholl, a second-team All-State selection, led the team with 320 kills. Lexi Brewer was the team leader in digs with 418 digs, and Saylor Hutfles added 123 digs.

Lechtenberg, Witt and Groth were all honorable All-State selections a season ago for the Irish. Lechtenberg finished with 308 kills, 55 ace serves and 64 blocks. Witt added 123 kills and 309 assists, while Groth finished the season with a team-best 322 assists.

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W/L • Score	2024 IRISH VOLLEYBALL		
	Aug. 22	vs Auburn Jamboree (A)	6:30
	Aug. 29	@ Neb City Lourdes (AB)	5:30
	Sept. 3	@ Rock Port (AB)	5:30
	Sept. 5	vs Bishop LeBlond (AB)	5:00
	Sept. 7	@ Weeping Water Tourn (A)	TBA
	Sept. 10	@ Diller-Odeil (AB)	5:30
	Sept. 12	@ Sidney (AB)	5:30
	Sept. 14	@ HTRS Tourney (A)	TBA
	Sept. 16,17,19	@ MUDECAS Tourn. (A) Beatrice	TBA
	Sept. 24	@ Triangular (A-Pawnee City)	5:00
	Sept. 26	vs Lewiston (A) w/JH	6:00
	Sept. 28	@ Axtell, KS Tourney (A)	TBA
	Oct. 1	vs Freeman (AB)	5:30
	Oct. 3	vs Sterling (AB) Parents Night	5:30
	Oct. 8	@ Savannah, MO (AB)	5:30
	Oct. 14,15,19	@ Pioneer Conf.Tourn.(A)-HTRS/NCL	TBA
	Oct. 22	vs Triangular- HTRS & JB (A)	5:00
	Oct. 28, 29	@ D-2 Sub- Districts (A)	TBA
	Nov. 2	@ D-2 Sub-State Final (A)	TBA
	Nov. 6-9	@ State VB-Lincoln (A)	TBA

"The key is not the will to win. Everybody has that. It is the will to prepare to win that is important."

-Bobby Knight

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(L-R) **FRONT ROW:** Kaitlyn Kirkendall, Taylor Kreifels, Paige Young **MIDDLE ROW:** Ella Glathar, Caitlyn McConnell, Addi Miller, Gabi Young, Carlea Dunkhas **BACK ROW:** Alexis Schawang, Bella Johansen, Addison Daniels



LADY TIGERS HOPING TO REBUILD AND RELOAD

Photo submitted and Story By Brian McKim

When they take the court, the Class C-1 Tiger volleyball team will look a little different this fall. Gone will be team leader and a fixture on the court, Ashleigh Kirkendall. Kirkendall wrapped up her illustrious career with 487 assists her senior year and finished with a school record of 2,076 for her career. She added 32 ace serves and 25 blocks.

The Tigers finished the 2023 season with a 13-17 mark, falling to Palmyra in the first round of subdistrict action. Three of the Tiger's opponents last season made the NSAA State Tourney and four others made district finals.

Coach Allison Haines begins her sixth season with FC and has a 66-73 record, including a 19-11 mark in 2022. Terri Hogue (sixth season) and Alyssa Frederick (first year) will join Coach Haines.

The Tigers were the 2014 District runner-up and return honorable mention all-state players Paige Young, Gabi Young, Taylor Kreifels and Katlyn Kirkendall.

Paige Young had 241 digs and 105 kills, Gabi Young added 416 digs, Kreifels finished with 124 kills, 16 blocks and 22 digs, while Kirkendall finished with a team-best 138 kills, 34 ace serves and 25 blocks.

FC has plenty of depth returning with Paige Young (two-year starter), Kreifels (three-year starter), Ella Glathar (one-year starter), Carlea Dunkhas (one-year starter), Gabi Young (one-year starter) and Kirkendall (two-year starter).

"We will look to rebuild after graduating Ashleigh Kirkendall from the setter role," said Coach Haines. "The good news surrounding our offense is that we return five primary hitters who were starters or had significant playing time last season. Leading the way offensively this season, we will rely on our seniors Paige Young, Kaitlyn Kirkendall and Taylor Kreifels. As one of the shortest teams in Class C, we will have to bring our best effort each night we step on the court and continue to grow in the off-season."

On the defensive side of the net, FC will employ the same tactics as in the past, serve and pass.

"If you cannot do these two skills, we cannot win a lot of games," said Haines.

The Lady Tigers return their two best servers from last season, Gabi Young and Kirkendall.

"As long as we can be aggressive at the service line, the rest of our game will fall into place," said Haines. "Last season as a freshman, Gabi Young received all-conference recognition along with adding 416 digs at the Libero position. The Libero position may look different this season, but I still expect our defense to keep us in the game."

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W/L • Score	2024 TIGER VOLLEYBALL
	08/29/24 vs Southern Triangular
	08/29/24 vs Johnson-Brock Triangular
	09/05/24 vs HTRS Triangular
	09/05/24 vs Johnson Co Central Tri
	09/09/24 @ East Atchison, MO
	09/10/24 @ Elmwood-Murdock
	09/12/24 @ Pawnee City Tri. (host: Sterling)
	09/12/24 @ Sterling Tri.
	09/19/24 @ Nebraska City Tri
	09/19/24 @ Auburn Tri. (host: Nebraska City)
	09/24/24 @ Weeping Water Tri.
	09/24/24 @ Freeman Tri. (host: Weeping Water)
	09/26/24 vs Syracuse Tri.
	09/26/24 vs Lourdes Cent. Cath. Tri (host: FC)
	09/28/24 @ Thayer Central Tri. (host: Southern)
	09/28/24 @ Southern Triangular
	10/03/24 @ Lincoln Christian
	10/05-10/05 TBD Johnson Co. Inv
	10/10/24 @ Conestoga
	10/12 TBA Falls City Inv Tourn.
	10/14-10/17 TBD ECNC Tourn.
	10/21/24 @ Platteview





W/L • Score	2024 TITAN VOLLEYBALL
09/03/24	@ Lewiston
09/05/24	@ Falls City Triangular
09/05/24	@ Jo Co Central Tri. (host: Falls City)
09/07-09/07	TBD Weeping Water Tournament
09/10/24	@ Lourdes Central Catholic
09/14-09/14	TBD HTRS Inv.
09/16-09/19	TBD Mudecas -Beatrice
09/24/24	@ Sterling
09/26/24	vs Omaha Brownell Talbot Tri (HTRS)
10/01/24	@ Fairbury
10/05-10/05	TBD Thunderbird Invite
10/10/24	@ Diller-Odell Tri
10/10/24	@ Pawnee City Tri (host: Diller-Odell)
10/14-10/19	TBD Pioneer Conf. Tourn.
10/22/24	@ FCSH Tri
10/22/24	@ Johnson-Brock Tri. (host: FCSH)
10/24/24	@ Meridian

(L-R) **FRONT ROW:** Lily Wamsley, Laramie Glathar, Izzy Hammer
SECOND ROW: Maddie Bredemeier, Elie Bstandig, Lillian Bowen
THIRD ROW: Addi Bitner, Chloe Shupp, Colby Hedden, MaKena Dunlap, Grayson Sherman, Harlee Hardesty
FOURTH ROW: Eden Duryea, PJ Howe, Emerson Bredemeier, Kylee Cooper, Dasha Hunzeker, Eden Stewart, Georgianna Melcher
NOT PICTURED: Macy Vrtiska

LADY TITANS ARE LOCKED IN AND READY TO GO

Story By Brian McKim and Photo By Chelsie Alexander

The 2024 HTRS Lady Titan volleyball team will have a different feel, at least a little bit. Gone is longtime coach Kara Engles, but stepping into the role will be a familiar face. Nic Sikora will be in charge of the program and has spent considerable time with the athletes. Sikora led the Titans to a 3-1 record down the stretch last season and has been an assistant coach in Humboldt for seven seasons. Joining Sikora on the bench will be his wife, Andrea, and longtime assistant Brittany Rogers (14th year).

HTRS had a remarkable season in 2023, finishing with a mark of 22-10, winning their subdistrict and finishing runner-up in the district, falling to Shelton in four sets.

Coach Sikora has his work cut out for him, but he will have plenty of help along the way. The Lady Titans return four letter winners in Macy Vrtiska, Laramie Glathar, Lillian Bowen and Elie Bstandig-Rowland. Last fall, Vrtiska was an All-State and All-Conference Honorable Mention, and Glathar earned All-State Honorable Mention and Second-Team All-Conference.

One player from last year's team who will be greatly missed is Avery Dierberger. All three seniors from last season played significant roles, but none were more critical than Dierberger. The outside hitter finished with 393 kills, 46 ace serves, 238 digs and 281 serves received. In other words, she won't be easily replaced.

Vrtiska will look to step up her role at the net. Last fall, the middle hitter finished with 170 kills, 24 ace serves, 83 blocks and 82 digs. Without Dierberger on the squad, you can expect those numbers to all go way up.

Last season, Glathar finished with 179 digs and a team-best 724 assists. Bowen had a successful sophomore campaign, finishing with 101 kills, 33 ace serves, 12 blocks, 280 digs, and 157 serves received. The final returning starter, Bstandig-Rowland, added 157 kills, 42 blocks and 28 digs.

In addition to the four returning starters, the coaches expect freshman PJ Howe and sophomores McKenna Dunlap and Harlee Hardesty to factor into "extensive playing time."

The HTRS squad hopes to use last season as motivation and continue to trend upwards.

"We want to compete," said Coach Sikora. "Last year we closed the season beating the No. 3 ranked team in D2, then won our subdistrict, before falling in a heartbreaker to another ranked team in Shelton in the District final."

Sikora knows the path will not be easy. Over the years, SE Nebraska has become a hotbed for talent in the volleyball circuit. With schools such as Johnson-Brock, Elmwood-Murdock, Sacred Heart, Diller-Odell, HTRS and Sterling, there aren't many easy games on the schedule.

The Sikoras are the parents of five homeschooled children. They have coached together for many years in Omaha, Milwaukee and Falls City.

"We are excited to be back on the bench together, teaching a sport that we both love," said Coach Sikora.

The season gets underway on Tuesday, September 3, when the Titans hosted Lewiston at HTRS High School. HTRS will play in the Pioneer Conference Tourney from October 14-19. The Class D2-1 subdistricts will occur on October 28 and 29 and include Falls City Sacred Heart, HTRS, Lewiston and Sterling. The district finals will be on November 2, and the NSAA State Tournament in Lincoln will be played from November 6 to 9.

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Good Luck County Teams This Fall

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Good Luck County Athletes During The Coming Season!

Titan Football continued from page 5

“It sounds cheesy, but our first game is the one that I have circled,” said Tuttle. “We went to Wymore Southern last year and got smashed by their physicality. I think we need to send the message to the rest of the district that this is a more confident and more physical team than a season ago.”

The Titans will have a few looks on offense, ranging from a double wing to a spread and primarily focus on a 3-2 on the defensive side of things.

“We are trying a lot of things to see what best fits the unique roster that we have,” said Tuttle. “I believe heavily in creating a system for the team that is given, rather than running an offense or defense that I like or am comfortable with. I have a lot to learn in a short amount of time, but my goal above all else is to create an atmosphere of fun and family. I want our community to be proud of the success that we have on the field, but more than anything, I want them to be proud of the progress that our kids make as human-beings and what they can give back to the community.”

With hard work and a little luck, the Titans could find themselves back in the mix when the Class D-2 playoffs begin on October 24.

Tiger Softball continued from page 6

FC will miss a trio of players who graduated last spring. Emily Vitosh (.278 average) proved to be a great defensive first baseman and team leader. Ava Armbruster batted .373 and possessed great speed on the base paths, and Jordan Wilcox hit a .446 clip, leading the team in runs batted in with 23.

FC will need every ballplayer to step up and fill roles this fall. With only 12 players on the roster, the coaches need each one to be able to impact games positively. Each player has to provide when called upon.

The young Tiger squad will need to fight through adversity and have the self-confidence to be successful.

The season opened for the Lady Tigers on Thursday, August 22, when they hosted Nebraska City. FC will be home again on Tuesday, September 3, when they host Freeman on “Parents Night) and they will host the Falls City Invitational on Saturday, September 14. The final home contest of the season will be on Monday, September 30, when FC hosts Syracuse (Senior Night). Subdistrict action is slated for October 7, the district final is October 11 or 12, and the state tourney will run from October 16-18 in Hastings.

Tiger Volleyball continued from page 13

The coaching staff also expects sophomore Addi Miller, freshman Bella Johansen and freshman Jade Romo to fill roles on the court.

Falls City opens the season by hosting a triangular on August 29, 2024, with Johnson-Brock and Tri County coming to town. FC will play at East Atchison on September 9, host Lincoln Christian on October 3 for Parent’s Night and play the final home game of the regular season on October 21 versus Platteview. The ECNC Tourney will run from October 14-17, and subdistricts will begin on October 28.

“Our goals have not changed,” said Haines. “We want to compete every time we step on the court. This year, we have girls moving into leadership roles and positions that are new to them. One important goal our team will have this year is to build confidence as the season progresses. Going into the beginning of the season we have several athletes competing for positions. As a team, we want to compete with each other and make our team better at both the varsity and junior varsity levels.”


Irish Volleyball continued from page 12

The Irish will have great matchups this fall, including games against Savannah, Diller-Odell and Johnson-Brock. The Irish have also added a match against Rockport and are excited about that opportunity.

The Lady Irish opened the season at Nebraska City Lourdes on August 29, 2024. SH will be at Diller-Odell on September 10 and host Southern on September 24. The Irish will also have a big contest on October 22 when they host the HTRS Titans. Last year the Irish finished 1-3 against the Lady Titans, including a four-set in the subdistrict final. SH lost in three sets to Wallace in the district final. Wallace fell in the first round at the State Tourney to eventual third-place finisher Wynot.



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Good Luck to all county athletes!

Wishing All The County Schools A Great Season!

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Thank you Coaches, Teachers, Student Athletes for making health & safety a priority. See us for all your health and wellness wins!



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