



2026
**COFFEY COUNTY AREA
FALL SPORTS
PREVIEW**



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Republican
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BURLINGTON | HARTFORD | LEBO | SCC | WAVERLY





Burlington Wildcats

Wildcats aim to establish identity early, improve consistently

Katie McMurray
Reporter

BURLINGTON — After fielding a young team in 2025, the Burlington Wildcats are returning to the gridiron for the 2026 season and are working hard to find their identity and make improvements.

Cody Carlson returns for a fourth season as the team's head coach. He will be assisted by Jon Mariani, Dylan Wonser, Damon Schmidt and Dawson Burton.

On the field, the Wildcats return eight starters on offense and five on defense. Returning starters on offense include seniors Logan Turner, Aydan Winters and Kaden Hawkins, juniors Shawn Mautz, Talis Sharpe and Case Birk and sophomore Jackson Nuessen. Mautz returns to the quarterback position, where last season he tallied 245 passing yards and two touchdowns on 33 of 67 passing and 61 yards and two touchdowns rushing. Sharpe returns as a wide receiver after an injury ended his sophomore season in week two and the coaches are expecting big things from him. Winters also returns as a wide receiver have tallied 72 yards and a touchdown on 10 catches a year ago. Logan Turner returns at running back. Birk, a two-year starter, returns at left tackle; Nuessen, a projected four-year starter, returns at right guard; and Hawkins, a three-year starter, returns at right tackle.

"Our offensive line is returning

three guys from last year's starting group, along with freshmen J.J. Prock and Gavin Stice, who I'm extremely excited about," Carlson said. "I feel very confident in this group continuing to get better each and every week.

"Last year, we were very run-heavy based on the strength of our team being our running back by committee," Carlson continued. "This year we are going to spread it back out. A focus will be on our two returning wide receivers, Talis

and Aydan, who we will look to as we stretch the ball down the field."

Returning defensive starters include Turner and senior Zane White-

See Football, Page 5



Kramer Photography

Members of the 2026 Burlington High School football team are, from left, front row - Aydan Winters, Landon Bober, Miller Allen, Dillan Skillman, Logan Turner, Tegan Smith, Grant Guptill, Zane Whiteaker, Kaden Hawkins, manager Patricia Schlotterbeck; second row - Max Ecton, Grayson Payer, Alec Stice, Shawn Mautz, Braydn Spring, Eli Thomsen, Ryder Winters, Talis Sharpe, Maddox Maycumber; third row - Tom Vu, Levi Hazen, Tate Stahl, Caleb Birk, Lane Frey, Brant Hazen, Donaven Crutchfield, Dexter Birk, Gavin Belcher, Brayden Dill; fourth row - Keegan Hoelting, Jake Young, Elijah Glaze, Easton Rich, Colt Jasper, Case Birk, J.J. Prock, Asa Crutchfield, Dalton Vanover; fifth row - Colton Davis, Thomas Austin, Colton Cooley, Jackson Nuessen, Joseph Gifford, Gavin Stice, Jonah Furse, Logan Harris, Riley Hoelting, Dyllan Stewart; sixth row - assistant coach Jon Mariani, assistant coach Dylan Wonser, head coach Cody Carlson, assistant coach Damon Schmidt and assistant coach Dawson Burton.

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Burlington Wildcats

Pair of senior starters to lead Ladycats

Katie McMurray
Reporter

BURLINGTON — The Burlington Ladycat volleyball team is returning to the court for a new season and will be led by two returning starters.

Cierra Harrison returns for her third season as the team’s head coach. She will be assisted by Trenna Whitmore and Nicki Kelley.

On the court, the Ladycats have a pair of returning starters to lead the way, seniors Alexa Splechter and Mac Medlock. Splechter is the team’s setter, has 1,628 career assists, as well as 107 ace serves and 628 digs. She was a Pioneer League All-League Honorable Mention selection a year ago. Medlock, a middle hitter and blocker, has 57 blocks, 42 aces in one season and 172 kills.

“Alexa is the quarterback of our team, a great teammate and always wants to grow,” Harrison said. “Mac encourages everyone, is a great overall athlete and her work ethic is amazing.”

Joining them are seniors Karlee Docman, Addison Fischer, Costa Calicchio and Paige Ferrara and freshman Myla Carlson. Docman, Fischer and Carlson are all outside hitters, while Calicchio is a defensive specialist and Ferrara is the team’s manager.

“Karlee will work really hard for the team,” Harrison said. “Addi is a great teammate. Myla brings lots of club experience and wants to learn more. Costa is a foreign exchange student with great spirit. Paige is a great



Kramer Photography

Members of the 2026 Burlington High School volleyball team are, from left, front row - Hadlie Hoch, Kenna Hernandez, Kya Strawder, Ashlyn Breeze, Grace Redding, Shayna Rodgers; second row - Addison Fischer, Costanza Calicchio, Karlee Docman, Alexa Splechter, Mac Medlock, Paige Ferrara; third row - assistant coach Nicki Kelley, Xeria Bueno, Jemma Cole, Brynn Sowder, Chloe Ferrara, Myla Carlson, Abby Kelley, Mya King, Jaylee Wilson, Carlie Schlotterbeck, head coach Cierra Harrison, assistant coach Trenna Whitmore; fourth row - Jocelyn Withers, Aiyanna Dwight, Lila Beyer, Brinley Belcher, Alaina Akins, Paizley Spring, Zoey McIntire and Arnes Williams.

help on the bench for our team.”

The team’s goal for 2026 is to build a legacy for BHS volleyball.

“We have a very young team that are very excited to keep learning,” Harrison said. “We also have a senior

class that has amazing leadership skills that will encourage the team.”

There is one vital key to success in reaching that goal.

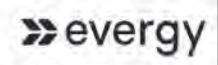
“The key to success is listening to each other,” Harrison said. “We are

all a team. That doesn’t only include the athletes, it is also the managers, coaches, teachers, administrators and the community. We all build the

See Volleyball, Page 7



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Burlington Wildcats

Wildcats fielding larger team, working to grow program

Katie McMurray
Reporter

BURLINGTON — The Burlington Wildcat cross country team has returned to the course for the 2026 season and is continuing work to build their program.

Leah Pedersen is back for a second season as the team's head coach. She will be assisted by Maddie Wilson and Taylor Wilson.

The varsity boys' team will be led by returning runners Brecken Pedersen, now a junior, and Isaac Miller, now a sophomore. Also projected to run at the varsity level are senior Zach Matney, juniors Sawyer Dunaway and Ian Dekat, and sophomores Cayden Turner and Kaden Marquardt.

Leading the varsity girls' team will be returning runner Sophia Matney, now a sophomore. Joining her on the varsity team are junior Alexa Bober, sophomore Bailee Docman and freshman Lindsey Dunaway.

Coach and team have a few goals for the 2026 season.

"Goals are to work hard and consistently in order to see progress at the end of the season," Pedersen said. "We also hope to see some state qualifiers, places in the top three at league and continue to grow our program."

Keys to success in reaching these goals include positive attitudes, consistency, effort, team support and belief in self, teammates and coaches.

Pedersen also has some expectations, especially for the boys' team.

"I am expecting to see my boys' team compete well and hopefully place



Kramer Photography

Members of the 2026 Burlington High School cross country team are, from left, front row - Nevaeh Myers, Lindsey Dunaway, Sophia Matney, Alexa Bober, Bailee Docman, Charlotte Dekat, Kitana Pease, Mially Castle; middle row - assistant coach Taylor Wilson, Logan Phillips, Kagan Blackman, Ian Dekat, Brecken Pedersen, Isaac Miller, Sawyer Dunaway, Oliver Hazen, head coach Leah Pedersen, assistant coach Maddie Wilson; back row - Kaden Marquardt, Jullian Hendershot, Ryker Williams, Greyson Kirchner, Archer Akins, Zach Matney, Cayden Turner, Ethan Tenorio, Greyson Riggs, Deveri Hernandez and Jase Finlayson.

toward the top at some meets," Pedersen said.

However, she is excited for the whole team and sees lots of potential.

"Our team as a whole has grown exponentially in size since last year, and we are excited to see what they all can

do individually and as a team, both girls and boys."

The Wildcats will attend more than one competitive meet that will challenge them and help them test skills and make improvements. Among the toughest will be the Emporia, Rim

Rock Farm Classic and Louisburg meets.

The Wildcats will start off the season with competition in their home meet, the Wildcat Classic, at John Redmond Reservoir Saturday, Sept. 5. Races will begin at 8 a.m.

Good luck this year!

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Burlington Wildcats

Football

Continued from Page 2

aker, juniors Caleb Birk and Landon Bober and sophomore Tate Stahl. Turner returns to the middle linebacker position after finishing the 2025 season with 37 tackles, including 22 solo and 15 assisted; one sack; six tackles for a loss of yards (TFL); and two forced fumbles. Whiteaker returns as a defensive tackle having tallied 20 tackles, seven of them solo and 13 assisted and two TFL in 2025.

“Logan is a four-year starter at linebacker for us and led the team in tackles his freshman and sophomore years,” Carlson said. “Knock on wood, he battled an injured back all year so hopefully he can stay healthy. He will also carry the football this year. Zane is a three-year starter after having never played football before and has improved each year. He is just a solid defensive tackle who takes on double teams and helps plug the middle. His impact on the field is way more than what his numbers show.”

Bober returns as a free safety. He recorded 40 tackles, 17 of them solo and 23 assisted; one TFL and one forced fumble in 2025. Stahl returns as a strong safety. He finished last season with 32 tackles, 25 of them solo and seven assisted; two TFL and one forced fumble.

“Landon is a three-year starter and is moving to more of a hybrid linebacker/safety role in our new 4-2-5 defense,” Carlson said. “We are looking for a breakout sophomore season from Tate. He was a state qualifier in wrestling and worked extremely hard this

year to get bigger, faster and stronger.”

The Wildcats have four sophomore players who will join Nuessen and Stahl as starters this year. They include Grayson Payer at corner; Max Ecton as a wide receiver; Brayzdn Spring at free safety and Maddox Maycumber as a back. Seven to nine sophomores are slotted to start from day one, along with one or two freshmen.

“Grayson has gained confidence from his athletic growth his freshman year,” Carlson said. “Max has good ball skills and length, and we can move him all over the field. Brayzdn got a broken wrist day two of the season but would have been a freshman starter had he been healthy. He was the starting centerfielder for the state third-place baseball team as a freshman. Maddox has great size for an inside backer and is a tough kid who will help fill in run support.”

Carlson said the Wildcats had a great first week of practice.

“Last year we were extremely young, starting a bunch of freshman and sophomores for their first experience of Friday nights,” Carlson said. “Now we are a year older - more athletic - understanding what it takes to play on Friday nights. This growth showed up in the first week, and we look to continue to raise our level throughout the season.”

With the growth and experience from 2025, the Wildcats are looking to make a fast start this season. Roster numbers have also improved to the point where Carlson said the team is looking to platoon, creating great competition for starting roles. High expectations abound both for returners and for some newcomers.

“We have high expectations for a

few new faces, alongside several underclassmen who have put in massive work in the weight room this past year,” Carlson said. “Ultimately, we will look to our multi-year returning starters to lead the way. It is their responsibility to set the tone, not just on Friday nights but by upholding out standards every single day.”

The main focus for the team, Carlson said, is to establish their identity early and consistently improve each week so they are playing their best football come playoff time.

The Wildcats will kick off their season with a game against Central Heights at Richmond 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 4.



Kramer Photography

Burlington High School cheerleaders for the fall 2026 season are, from left, front row - Ella Ervin, Jule Rolf, Kynslie Noonan, Elizabeth Miller; middle row - Kassidy Martin, Ally DiPaolo, Natalee Menard; back row - Xenia Bueno, Kaydence Faircloth, Emma Cunningham, Avery Zimmerman, Cassidee Shetler and Cami Gosney.

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Hartford Jaguars

Jaguars to field balanced team in 2026

Katie McMurray
Reporter

HARTFORD — The Hartford Jaguars are taking to the gridiron for the 2026 season and will be fielding a balanced team.

Dalen Kistner returns for his second season as the team's head coach and will have six returning starters to work with on both sides of the ball. Top players graduated include Simon Blankley and Daden Wilson.

On offense, returning starters include senior quarterback Tyce Ndegwa, senior wide receiver Coy Wilkinson, junior tight end Carson Menke, junior offensive lineman Connor Trester, sophomore offensive lineman Kolt Stein and sophomore running back and wide receiver Colt Heckathorn. Highlighting the group are Heckathorn and Ndegwa. Heckathorn was a Lyon County League All-League Second Team selection as a wide receiver last season, while Ndegwa was a LCL All-League Honorable Mention as a flex player.

Projected to join the offensive starting lineup are senior Landen Schultz, junior Parker Engle and sophomore Tatum Williams. Schultz is a wide receiver, Engle a running back and Williams an offensive guard.

Defensive returning starters include Wilkinson and Heckathorn at defensive back, Menke and Engle at linebacker and Trester and Ndegwa at defensive end. Menke highlights the group and was a LCL All-League Honorable Mention selection at linebacker a year ago.

Projected to join the starting lineup on defense are Williams at defensive end, Stein at defensive tackle and Schultz at strong safety.

"We are very balanced across the board and believe we can take a big

step forward this year," Kistner said.

Two strengths for the team are the versatility and experience returning on both sides of the ball.

"We bring back a lot of versatility and experience both on offense and de-

fense," Kistner said.

Among the toughest opponents the Jaguars will face is league and district rival Lebo, while the toughest in Class 8-Man Division II include Hanover and Axtell.



Annabelle Payton/The Republican

Members of the 2026 Hartford High School football team are, from left, front row - Parker Engle, Bentlee Schultz, Kendrick Bam, Colt Heckathorn, Brysyn Jacobs, Jett Turner, Jaedyn Jacobs; back row - Landen Schultz, Dakota Olson, Coy Wilkinson, Kolt Stein, Tyce Ndegwa, Tatum Williams, Connor Trester and Carson Menke.

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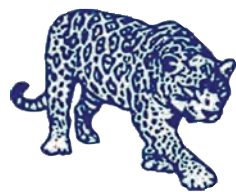
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Hartford Jaguars

New coach to lead Lady Jaguars

Katie McMurray
Reporter

HARTFORD — The Hartford Lady Jaguars are preparing for the 2026 season and will have a new head coach leading the way.

Sydney Hegwald steps into the role of head coach for the Lady Jaguars. This is her first season as a head coach. She will be assisted by Maddie Williams.

On the court, the team returns three starters, juniors Mylee Giesken-Mears and Emmalie Bess and sophomore Addisyn Williams. Giesken-Mears is an outside hitter, Bess is a defensive specialist and Williams is a middle hitter.

"These three all bring leadership and a strong work ethic," Hegwald said. "Mylee and Addisyn will help build our front row hitting. Emmalie is strong in our back-row defense and is also a strong setter up front."

Joining them are a pair of athletes who are expected to make an impact on the team, Dakota Keighley and Riley Nichols.

"I believe Dakota and Riley both will bring a big impact to this year's team," Hegwald said. "Riley, being a sophomore, has grown into a strong setter and can work in each area on the court. Dakota is a freshman coming in and has shown her strengths in defensive plays."

Coach and team have one main goal for the 2026 season.

"Our big goal is to go further than we previously have," Hegwald said. "We want the girls to push themselves to know they can reach past that first round and beyond."

There are a trio of keys that will be important in determining the team's success.

"We have been communicating our three Cs, which are communication,

coverage and celebration," Hegwald said. "Being able to communicate is the strongest skill in volleyball, which leads to full coverage of the court and makes sure we know where transitions fall."

The Lady Jaguars aren't looking past any opponents.

"Our biggest game will be the Peabody Tournament, as this is the first game to show the girls what they will expect this season and what changes need to be made," Hegwald said. "The next is the triangular at Olpe with Burlingame, as these two teams are in our league. This will show us what to expect before we face the Lyon County League Tournament."

The Lady Jaguars competed in the Peabody Tournament Saturday, Aug. 29, and hosted Northern Heights and Madison for their home opener Tuesday, Sept. 1. They will next compete in a triangular with Madison and the Manhattan Chiefs 5 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 8.

Volleyball

Continued from Page 3

legacy together."

A likely strength for the Ladycats this season is their team chemistry in the gym. A potential weakness is the team is very young, but they are willing to learn.

Among the toughest matches for the team will be those against Pioneer League rival Wellsville, as well as new non-league opponent St. Mary's Colgan.

"Wellsville will be great competition," Harrison said. "We added St. Mary's Colgan, which is a great program to compete against."

The Ladycats opened the season with competition in a preseason tournament at Wellsville Saturday, Aug. 29. They will next host Jayhawk Linn and Flinthills for their home opener 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 8.



Annabelle Payton/The Republican

Members of the 2026 Hartford High School volleyball team are, from left, Addisyn Williams, Dakota Keighley, Jade Wilson, Riley Nichols, Breahna Rooney, Emmalie Bess, Kaylee Roach, Mylee Mears and Natalee Hopper.



Lebo Wolves

Wolves' excitement high for 2026

Katie McMurray
Reporter

LEBO — The Lebo Wolves, coming off a 6-4 season led by one senior and one junior starter, are entering the 2026 season with high levels of excitement.

Brian Hadley enters his ninth year as the team's head coach. He will be assisted by Dennis Becker and Derek Van-nocker.

"Lebo was definitely one of the youngest teams in eight-man football last year but found a way to have a winning record," Hadley said. "Our starters consisted of mainly freshmen and sophomores with a few upperclassmen sprinkled in. We competed very well against six of our opponents but struggled against senior-heavy teams last season.

"With that said, our youth gained a lot of varsity experience, which gives us great confidence coming into the 2026 season," Hadley continued.

This year's team will be led by senior Ayden Ferguson. He played at tight end and linebacker last season and was the second leading receiver with 12 catches for 272 yards and seven touchdowns. He also finished with 48 tackles and seven tackles for a loss of yards (TFL) from his linebacker position. He was a Lyon County League All-League Second Team selection at both tight end and linebacker as a junior.

A huge plus for Lebo this season is the return of the entire offensive and defensive lines.

"Juniors Rayden Risner and Colby Fehr and sophomore Brycen Hopkins helped pave the way up front last season on offense and defense," Hadley said.

Hopkins was a LCL All-League First Team selection at offensive lineman and Honorable Mention selection at defensive tackle/nose guard. Risner was a LCL All-League Second Team selection at both offensive lineman and defensive tackle/nose guard. Fehr was a LCL All-League Honorable Mention selection at offensive lineman.

Returning at quarterback is Brock Hadley, who was a LCL All-League Second Team selection at the position a year ago. In his first year as varsity quarterback, he led the team in passing with 1,269 yards and 19 touchdowns and also added three rushing touchdowns.

"We will look to Brock for leadership in our offense," Hadley said. "In the backfield, we return a stable of running backs led by junior Jaxon Grimmert, who as a sophomore led the team with 675 yards rushing and 14 touchdowns."

Grimmett was a LCL All-League Second Team selection at running back in 2025.

"Jaxon is a weight room junkie who can bench over 300 pounds and squat 475 pounds," Hadley said. "We are looking for big things from him this season."

Behind Grimmert are junior Mateo Plummer and sophomores Jett Edwards and Eli Konrade. Plummer was a LCL

All-League Second Team selection at linebacker, while Edwards was a LCL All-League Honorable Mention selection at both flex player and defensive end and Konrade was a LCL All-League Honorable Mention selection at defensive back.

"These three guys combined for 470 yards rushing, 450 yards receiving and nine touchdowns," Hadley said. "Both Jett and Eli have the ability to run or catch the football, which makes them a tough match-up for defenses as we move them around. Mateo also led our

See Wolves, Page 13



Photo submitted

Members of the 2026 Lebo High School football team are, from left, front row - Brady Magana, Kolin Godfrey, Jett Hileman, Bryson Pope, Chris Edwards; middle row - Jaxon Grimmert, Dayton Graybeal, Reid Gausman, Brycen Hopkins, Eli Konrade, Zayne Arrington, Garrison Knight, Ayden Ferguson; back row - Aiden McFaul, William Edwards, Mateo Plummer, Rayden Risner, Colby Fehr, Jett Edwards, Cooper Fehr, Matthew Ferguson and Brock Hadley.

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Maximizing intellect, improving ball control are focal points for Lady Wolves

Katie McMurray
Reporter

LEBO — After a 2025 season in which they went 18-23 and placed third in the Lyon County League, the Lebo Lady Wolves are entering a new season and are focusing on maximizing intellect and improving their ball control in order to build up from 2025.

Gina Peek enters her 15th season as the team’s head coach. She will be assisted by Tiffany Tastove-Rosine.

Three starters return from the 2025 team, seniors Maya Wilson and Rachael Barnhardt and sophomore Maggie Shoemaker. Wilson is the team’s libero and was a Lyon County League All-League First Team selection at that position in 2025. Barnhardt is an outside hitter and middle blocker and was a LCL All-League Second Team selection a year ago.

“Maya has grown so much in her role in just the short time I have had to coach her,” Peek said. “She has taken what she learned last year and now is someone who we can have lead us defensively. Rachael has the potential to be the ‘go to’ for us this year. We will be looking to her to be effective offensively in and out of system.”

Shoemaker is a middle blocker and is newer to the varsity level.

“Maggie will see some time at middle hitter and opposite side hitter,” Peek said. “She developed her block throughout her freshman year and does a really nice job of getting where she needs to be and slowing down attacks from our opponents.”

Other newcomers to the varsity team are senior Lexi Hutchinson, juniors Kaylee Zumbrunn and Lauryn Finnerty, sophomores Aslan Rosine,



Photo submitted

Members of the 2026 Lebo High School volleyball team are, from left, front row - Grace Patton, Lauryn Finnerty, Maya Wilson, Rachael Barnhardt, Alexis Hutchinson, Kaylee Zumbrunn, Haley Gorton, Nellie Knight; back row - Delilah Onnen, Jenna Ferguson, Jacksyn Barrett, Maggie Shoemaker, Aslan Rosine, Ariya Wilkerson, Rebecca Barnhardt, Kiley Schroeder and Rya Plummer.

Grace Patton and Rya Plummer and freshmen Nellie Knight and Ariya Wilkerson. Hutchinson is an opposite side hitter and middle blocker, while Zumbrunn is a setter and Finnerty is a setter and outside hitter.

“Lexi will help us out a lot at the net,” Peek said. “Her block is her best skill. Kaylee will see some time at the setter position, and her defense has

really stepped up this last year, which will also be helpful. Lauryn is new to Lebo, and I am excited to see her develop in our system of development. She brings size to the net, can attack from a variety of places at the net and will run at least a few rotations of the offense.”

Among the underclassmen, there is potential in many aspects of the game,

including setting, serving, attacking and defense.

“Aslan will set and attack,” Peek said. “Her serve continues to be an excellent offensive weapon. Grace and Nellie are nice additions to our defense. Grace has the ability to make difficult plays look easy, and Nellie

See Lady Wolves, Page 16



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Lebo-Waverly Wolfdogs

Lebo-Waverly cross country team a mix of experienced runners, newcomers

Katie McMurray
Reporter

LEBO — The Lebo-Waverly cross country team is getting ready to run in the 2026 season and will feature both experienced athletes and newcomers.

Amanda Durst enters her fifth season as the team's head coach. She will be assisted by Nathan Nance.

The girls' team returns four members of the 2025 team that earned 10th place at state, seniors Ellie Grimmer, Chloe Whalen and Chrissy Rivas and junior Adelynn Harvey. Completing the 2026 girls' team are senior Brooklyn Hutchinson and freshmen Linden Meek and Merideth Roberts.

Returners for the boys' team are juniors Sam Bailey and Eli Seaman. Junior Jesse Durst and freshman Mason Turner will join the team for their first year in high school cross country.

"Our team goals for the 2026 season haven't changed from previous years," Durst said. "Our program continues to grow in numbers. One goal is for each athlete is to have fun, encourage each other and show progress throughout the season. We have enough girls to make a team, so qualifying for state is also a season goal."

There are a few keys to success in reaching the goals.

"It is important for our team members to be patient and remain focused on improvement over the course of the season," Durst said. "Encouraging each other and keeping a positive attitude will also contribute to accomplishing team goals."

Durst hopes to see improvement among all runners but especially the newcomers.

"We added five new high school athletes to our team this year," Durst said. "Racing a 5K can be intimidating at first, but I expect these



Amanda Hopkins/The Republican

Members of the 2026 Lebo-Waverly cross country team are, from left, Merideth Roberts, Chrissy Rivas, Chloe Whalen, Brooklyn Hutchinson, Sam Bailey, Eli Seaman, Jesse Durst, Mason Turner, Ellie Grimmer, Linden Meek and Adelynn Harvey.

athletes to experience improvement as the season continues."

This year's team already has multiple strengths.

"The girls' team returns experienced runners who demonstrated last year that they can successfully run as a pack," Durst said. "They train at similar paces and can use this to their advantage to encourage one another during competition. Another strength is the camaraderie that exists between all athletes on our team. They genuinely enjoy practicing together and provide a great support system for each other."

Among the toughest meets on the schedule will be Wamego Sept. 12 and the Rim Rock Farm Classic Sept. 26.

Lebo-Waverly will open the season 8 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 5, in the Wildcat Classic at John Redmond Reservoir in New Strawn.



Photo submitted

Lebo High School cheerleaders for the fall 2026 season are, from left, front row - Chrissy Rivas (Howler the Wolf mascot), Chloe Whalen, Brooklyn Hutchinson, Elayna Charboneau; back row - Addisynn Scheer, Jacksyn Barrett, Grace Patton, Kiley Schroeder and Delilah Onnen.



SCCTitans

Titans return nearly all of 2025 team

Katie McMurray
Reporter

LeROY — The Southern Coffey County High School football team is back for a new season and returns nearly their entire lineup from 2025.

Zach Mason returns for his second season as the team’s head coach. This will be his fifth year overall as a head coach.

On the field, the Titans are returning all but two members of their 2025 team.

“I believe our season looks promising,” Mason said. “We are returning all but our two seniors. While they gave us good leadership and good examples of how it looks to be dedicated to the team, I believe we have a guy that can step into that role, Cyrus Nickel.”

Nickel has played as a running back and linebacker in previous seasons with the Titans and returns for his senior season. Other returners include senior Josh Snyder, juniors Syrus Koder and Nate Winn and sophomores Tyler Rolf, Brandon Bussell, Brantlee Jones, Treyton Houston, Jacob Snyder and Lane Morrison. Additional players include junior Landon Beddo and freshmen Bentley Hatch, Aiden Peer, Jesse Cole, Clayton Marlow and Bentley Griffith.

“Everyone on the team got a lot of game experience so we should not be lacking in that,” Mason said. “If we can keep building on being available for the team and going out and competing at our best, I feel we will be more competitive.”

Offensively, Mason believes the Titans can spread the ball around a little bit.



Photo submitted

Members of the 2026 Southern Coffey County High School football team are, from left, front row - Thomas Dyke, Aiden Peer, Jesse Cole, Landon Beddo, Brantlee Jones, Brandon Bussell, Chevy Nickel; back row - Joshua Snyder, Bentley Griffith, Syrus Koder, Bentley Hatch, Cyrus Nickel, Tyler Rolf, Gage Nickel and Nathan Winn. Colton Jewell, Braxson Stone and Lane Morrison are also part of the team but were unavailable for the photo.

“We have two decent sized backs in Cyrus Nickel and Josh Snyder,” Mason said. “They should be a load for defenses to handle. Some other options could be Brandon Bussell and Tyler Rolf, who both have the ability to run and catch the ball to help open things up.”

On defense, the Titans have to keep their aggressiveness Mason said they found later in the season last year and then finish plays out.

“Having our leading tackler in Cyrus helps,” Mason said. “Nate Winn and Syrus Koder did a good job for us across the front, as well.”

The Titans’ strength this year will

be having game experience throughout the roster and a good blend of players. A concern is player availability, as Mason said there were 12 players on the roster last season but the team never had all 12 suited up for a game due to injuries and other issues.

The Titans will face plenty of challenging opponents, including a competitive district line-up.

“Our district will be tough,” Mason said. “Marais des Cygnes Valley and Peabody-Burns are both senior-heavy teams that are very good. Lost Springs-Centre dropped down from eight-man last year, so it will depend on how quickly they can adjust to

six-man. A wild card would be Elyria Christian, this being their first year in six-man. Chetopa got better as the season went on last year, so they should be solid. Altoona Midway lost a couple kids, but they have a bunch of kids with experience, so it’ll be who steps up for them.”

SCC will travel to Melvern to face Marais des Cygnes Valley in their season opener 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 4.

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SCC Titans

Lady Titans bring great work ethic, passion

Katie McMurray
Reporter

LeROY — The Southern Coffey County Lady Titans are returning to the court for the 2026 season with a team that brings to the floor a solid work ethic and love for the game.

Jeff True enters his 16th year as the team's head coach. He will be assisted by Olivia Barr. The two coaches had four returning starters to work with this season.

Returning starters for the Lady Titans include senior Layla Decker,

junior Alexis Reidinger and sophomores Brooke Marlow and Madalynn Garretson. Decker is an outside hitter, Reidinger is a setter and outside hitter and Marlow and Garretson are both middle hitters. Also returning to the team is senior Delilah Dornes.

"Layla and Delilah are our two returning seniors," True said. "Alexis is our only junior. All three of these girls should provide us with good leadership on and off of the court. We will be really young this season with four freshmen getting a lot of playing time."

Joining the returners are freshmen

Austin Morray, Reagan Houston, Addison Watts and Kaylee Isch, all of whom True said should see a lot of court time. Morray is a setter and outside hitter, while Houston is a middle hitter, Watts a defensive specialist and setter and Isch a defensive specialist.

The team's goals for this season are to compete each day and show improvement.

"A big key to success will be staying healthy," True said. "Several of our girls have been battling knee issues."

Another important key to success, according to True, will be becoming more consistent in all phases of the game.

The team's

strength will be their work ethic and passion.

"The girls have a great work ethic and love the game of volleyball," True said.

The Lady Titans will face several competitive teams, some of the toughest of which will be in Three Rivers League play.

"Jayhawk Linn, Northeast-Arma, Uniontown and Southeast-Cherokee will be tough," True said. "Yates Center should be pretty strong also."

The Lady Titans traveled to Uniontown to play Pleasanton and Uniontown in their season opener Tuesday, Sept. 1, and will next face Madison and Liberty Homeschool in a triangular at Iola 5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 10.



Photo submitted

Members of the 2026 Southern Coffey County High School volleyball team are, from left, front row - Addison Watts, Layla Decker, Delilah Dornes, Jacie Bishop; back row - Alexis Reidinger, Austin Morray, Reagan Houston, Madalynn Garretson, Brooke Marlow and Kaylee Isch.



Photo submitted

Southern Coffey County cheerleaders for the fall 2026 season are, from left, front row - Emma Kent, Kaylee Isch, Addy Watts; back row - Austin Morray, Mady Garretson and Layla Decker.

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Sports Schedule



Burlington Cross Country

9/5	Burlington Invitational	8 a.m.
9/12	@ Emporia	8 a.m.
9/17	@ Wellsville	4 p.m.
9/26	@ Rim Rock Farm	10 a.m.
10/1	@ Council Grove	4 p.m.
10/6	JV @ Eureka	3:30 p.m.
10/8	@ Louisburg	4 p.m.
10/15	League @ Garnett	
10/24	Regional @ TBD	TBD
10/31	State @ Rim Rock Farm	TBD

Burlington Football

9/4	@ Central Heights	7 p.m.
9/7	JV vs. Central Heights	6 p.m.
9/11	@ Iola	7 p.m.
9/14	JV vs. Iola	6 p.m.
9/18	@ Osage City	7 p.m.
9/21	JV vs. Osage City	6 p.m.
9/25	vs. Maranatha Christian	7 p.m.
9/28	JV at Olpe	5 p.m.
10/2	vs. Anderson County	7 p.m.
10/5	JV at Anderson County	4:30 p.m.
10/9	@ Osawatomie	7 p.m.
10/12	JV vs. Osawatomie	6 p.m.
10/16	vs. Wellsville	7 p.m.
10/19	JV @ Wellsville	7 p.m.
10/23	vs. Prairie View	7 p.m.
10/26	JV @ Prairie View	4:30 p.m.
10/30	Week 9 @ TBD	TBD

Burlington Volleyball

8/29	Preseason Tourney @ Wellsville V	8:30 a.m.
8/29	Preseason Tourney @ Iola JV	8:30 a.m.
9/8	vs. Jayhawk Linn, Flinthills V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
9/10	vs. Lebo @ BHS V/JV	5 p.m.
9/10	vs. Washburn Rural, Olpe @ BMS C	4:30 p.m.
9/12	@ Iola V	8:30 a.m.
9/12	@ Anderson County C	8:30 a.m.
9/15	League Quad @ Anderson Co. V/JV/C	4 p.m.
9/19	@ Sabetha JV	8:30 a.m.
9/22	vs. Osawatomie, Iola V/JV/C	4 p.m.
9/24	vs. Anderson Co., Osawatomie C	4 p.m.
9/26	Burlington Invitational V	8:30 a.m.
9/28	Quad @ Olpe C	5 p.m.
9/29	League Quad @ SF Trail V/JV/C	4 p.m.
10/1	@ Pittsburg V/JV/C	4:30 p.m.
10/6	vs. PV, Anderson Co. V/JV/C	4 p.m.
10/8	League Tri @ Osawatomie V/JV/C	4 p.m.
10/10	@ Anderson County V	9 a.m.
10/10	Burlington JV Invitational JV	8:30 a.m.
10/13	League Quad @ Wellsville V/JV/C	4 p.m.
10/19	Regional Quad @ TBD V	TBD
10/24	Substate @ TBD V	TBD
10/29-31	State @ TBD V	TBD

Hartford Football

9/4	vs. Cornerstone (Mo.)	7 p.m.
9/11	vs. Lebo	7 p.m.

9/18	vs. Goessel	
9/25	@ Waverly	
10/2	@ Rural Vista	
10/9	@ Pretty Prairie	
10/16	vs. Burlingame	
10/23	@ Wakefield	
10/29	Week 9 @ TBD	

Hartford Volleyball

8/29	Preseason Tourney @ Peabody	
9/1	vs. Northern Heights, Madison	
9/8	Tri @ Madison	
9/12	@ Marais des Cygnes Valley	
9/14	Tri @ Kansas School for the Deaf	
9/15	Tri @ Marais des Cygnes Valley	
9/19	Jaguar Invitational	
9/22	Tri @ Olpe	
9/29	vs. Madison	
10/6	Tri @ Waverly	
10/10	LCL Tournament @ Emporia	
10/13	Dual @ Northern Heights	
10/20	Regional Quad @ TBD	
10/24	Substate 2 TBD	
10/29-31	State @ TBD	

Lebo-Waverly Cross Country

9/5	@ John Redmond Reservoir	
9/10	@ Lyndon	
9/12	@ Wamego	
9/17	@ The Orchard	
9/24	@ West Franklin	
9/26	@ Rim Rock Farm	
10/1	@ Council Grove	
10/8	@ Osage City	
10/15	League @ The Orchard	
10/24	Regional @ TBD	
10/31	State @ Wamego	

Lebo Football

9/4	@ Madison	
9/7	JV vs. Madison	
9/11	@ Hartford	
9/18	vs. Burlingame	
9/21	JV @ Burlingame	
9/25	@ Wakefield	
9/28	JV vs. Northern Heights	
10/2	vs. Yates Center	
10/5	JV @ Yates Center	
10/9	vs. Goessel	
10/12	JV vs. Waverly	
10/16	@ Waverly	
10/19	JV @ Rural Vista	
10/23	vs. Rural Vista	
10/29	Week 9 @ TBD	

Lebo Volleyball

8/31	Tri @ Marais des Cygnes Valley	5 p.m.
9/1	Quad @ Herington	4 p.m.
9/12	@ Lyndon	8:30 a.m.

7 p.m.	9/15	Tri @ Olpe	
7 p.m.	9/17	@ Burlington	
7 p.m.	9/19	@ Erie	
7 p.m.	9/22	vs. Marais des Cygnes Valley	
7 p.m.	9/26	@ West Franklin	
7 p.m.	9/29	Tri @ Burlingame	
TBA	10/3	JV Tournament @ Lebo	
	10/6	Tri @ Waverly	
8 a.m.	10/10	LCL Tournament @ Emporia	
5 p.m.	10/15	vs. Hillsboro	
5 p.m.	10/20	Regional Quad @ TBD	
9 a.m.	10/24	Substate @ TBD	
5 p.m.	10/29-31	State	

Southern Coffey County Football

9 a.m.	9/4	@ Marais des Cygnes Valley	
5 p.m.	9/11	vs. Centre-Lost Springs	
5 p.m.	9/18	vs. Chetopa	
5 p.m.	9/25	@ McPherson-Elyria Christian	
8 a.m.	10/2	@ Peabody-Burns	
5 p.m.	10/9	@ Otis-Bison	
TBD	10/16	vs. Altoona-Midway	
TBD	10/23	vs. Marais des Cygnes Valley	
TBD	10/30	Week 9 @ TBD	

Southern Coffey County Volleyball

8 a.m.	9/1	Tri @ Uniontown	
4 p.m.	9/10	Tri @ Iola	
8:30 a.m.	9/12	@ Marais des Cygnes Valley	
4 p.m.	9/15	Tri @ Southeast-Cherokee	
4 p.m.	9/19	@ Humboldt	
8 a.m.	9/21	vs. Crest, Jayhawk Linn	
4 p.m.	9/22	Tri @ Yates Center	
4 p.m.	9/26	@ Whitewater-Remington	
4 p.m.	9/29	Tri @ Central Heights	

5 p.m.	10/6	vs. Oswego, Northeast-Arma	5 p.m.
5 p.m.	10/13	Tri @ Chetopa	5 p.m.
8:30 a.m.	10/20	Regional Quad @ TBD	TBD
5 p.m.	10/24	Substate @ TBD	TBD
8:30 a.m.	10/29-31	State	TBD

Waverly Football

9 a.m.	9/4	@ Southeast-Cherokee	7 p.m.
5 p.m.	9/11	vs. Madison	7 p.m.
8 a.m.	9/18	@ Rural Vista	7 p.m.
5 p.m.	9/25	vs. Hartford	7 p.m.
TBD	10/2	vs. Burlingame	7 p.m.
TBD	10/9	@ Wakefield	7 p.m.
TBD	10/16	vs. Lebo	7 p.m.
	10/23	@ Goessel	7 p.m.
	10/29	Week 9 @ TBD	TBD

Waverly Volleyball

8 a.m.	8/29	Preseason Tourney @ Wellsville	8 a.m.
5 p.m.	9/1	vs. Burlingame	5 p.m.
4:30 p.m.	9/3	@ West Elk	4:30 p.m.
5 p.m.	9/8	@ Humboldt	5 p.m.
8:30 a.m.	9/12	JV @ Humboldt	8:30 a.m.
5 p.m.	9/15	@ Burlingame	5 p.m.
8:30 a.m.	9/19	@ Humboldt	8:30 a.m.
5 p.m.	9/22	@ Northern Heights	5 p.m.
8 a.m.	9/26	@ Cherryvale	8 a.m.
5 p.m.	9/29	vs. Marais des Cygnes Valley/Olpe	5 p.m.
8 a.m.	10/3	JV @ Madison	8 a.m.
5 p.m.	10/6	vs. Hartford, Lebo	5 p.m.
8 a.m.	10/10	LCL Tournament @ Emporia	8 a.m.
5 p.m.	10/13	@ Olpe	5 p.m.
TBD	10/20	Regional Quad @ TBD	TBD
TBD	10/24	Substate @ TBD	TBD
TBD	10/29-31	State	TBD

Wolves

Continued from Page 8

team in tackles on defense with 79, and Eli led our team in interceptions with three.”

Additional players with the potential to make an impact this season include seniors Garrison Knight, Aiden McFaul and Kaden Balding, junior Reid Gausman and sophomores Dayton Graybeal, Cooper Fehr, William Edwards and Matthew Ferguson. Of note, McFaul was a LCL All-League First Team selection at punter a year ago.

“This is a team that has made gains and continues to work hard in the weight room,” Hadley said. “This has given us confidence heading into the 2026 season.”

The return of the entire offensive and defensive lines is only one strength Hadley has identified in his team.

“We have a lot of team size, speed and playmakers,” Hadley said. “We have been able to make the second or third round of the playoffs the last five years and have gained much-needed experience in big games.”

Potential weaknesses include some tough road games early in the season and a lack of varsity experience, particularly next to senior-heavy teams. Additionally, Hadley said the Wolves need to be more aggressive on both sides of the ball and are still developing some depth with the young team from last season.

The Wolves will open their season 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 4, with a game on the road at Lyon County League rival Madison.



Waverly Bulldogs

Six returning starters to lead Bulldogs

Katie McMurray
Reporter

WAVERLY — The Waverly Bulldogs are back for a new season of high school football and have a group of six returning starters who will lead the team on the field.

Nick Fraenza enters his eighth season as the team's head coach. He has five returning starters on each side of the ball to work with. Key losses to graduation were linebacker and running back Carter Ohl, who was hurt most of the season in 2025 but made a difference when he was able to play, and defensive end Ty Glissman.

Players returning with starting experience are seniors Dustin Foster and Rylan Rasmussen, juniors Maxwell McNabb and Ben Wagner and sophomores Michael Lee and Hayden Ohl. Foster is the team's quarterback and is a linebacker on defense. He finished last season with 1,200 yards and 20 touchdowns rushing and was a Lyon County League All-League and an all-district first team selection and an all-state honorable mention selection on offense and tallied 90 tackles, 14 tackles for a loss of yards (TFL) and three fumble recoveries on defense. Rasmussen was a guard on offense last year and will play at tight end this season. He is a linebacker on defense and recorded 40 tackles in 2025. McNabb is a running back and linebacker who finished 2025 with 300 rushing yards and 40 tackles, despite missing three games. Lee is an offensive lineman and nose guard who tallied 56 tackles



Photo submitted

Members of the 2026 Waverly High School football team are, from left, front row - Murphy Willingham, Holden Fraenza, Blake Stukey, Tucker Cochran, Clayton Bartlett, manager Carter Gilbert, Jaxson Bradley; back row - Michael Lee, Hayden Ohl, Colt Marsh, Rylan Rasmussen, Dustin Foster, Kaiser Fraenza, Lucas Llorente and Ben Wagner. Maxwell McNabb is also part of the team but was unavailable for the photo.

and 13 TFL last season. Wagner is the team's center on offense. Ohl is a defensive end who logged 45 tackles and five TFL in 2025.

Projected to join the starting lineup are, on offense, Ohl and juniors Kaiser Fraenza and Colt Marsh, and on defense, Marsh and Fraenza. Ohl will play at tight end. Fraenza, who missed last season due to an injury,

will play at running back and strong safety, and Marsh will play as an offensive lineman and defensive end. The starting free safety position remains open.

Fraenza sees potential in his team but has also identified a potential weakness.

See Waverly, Page 16



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Waverly Bulldogs

Lady Bulldogs welcome new head coach

Katie McMurray
Reporter

WAVERLY — The Waverly Lady Bulldogs are taking the court for a new season of high school volleyball and will have a new head coach leading the way.

The Lady Bulldogs welcome Erin Patrick as their new head coach. While this is his first season at Waverly, he has been coaching volleyball 24 years and holds a 594-236-1 record. He will be assisted by Sheryl Patrick.

On the court, the Lady Bulldogs return four starters. They include seniors Zoey Hirt, Macy Seems and Lydia Foltz and junior Jasmynn Bathory. Hirt, a middle hitter, highlights the group. She finished her junior season with 372 kills, 307 digs and 47 ace serves and was a Lyon County League All-League First Team selection. Seems, an outside hitter, finished last season with 112 kills, 402 digs and 31 aces. Foltz, a middle hitter, finished the 2025 season with 129 kills and 94 digs. Bathory, a setter, tallied 257 assists, 62 kills and 21 ace serves during her sophomore season.

“This is an athletic and experienced group that are strong servers, good passers and very good attackers,” Patrick said. “They work hard in practice and have the potential to be a very good group of volleyball players.”

Joining them are four players who will look to make an impact this season, Anabel Risch, Heidi Foltz, Taryn Vogts and Bella Glover.

“This group will fit in really well as hard workers and add to our athleticism,” Patrick said.

Team goals for the 2026 season are to improve each and every day in practice and in competition on our fundamentals and our competitiveness.

“We want to continue to build team chemistry and become the best serve receive team possible,” Patrick said. “We also aim to repeat as regional champions and work hard to have a chance to go to the state tournament and to compete at a very high level at our tournament and in the Lyon County League.”

The keys to success will be be-

See Lady Bulldogs, Page 16



Photo submitted

Waverly High School cheerleaders for the fall 2026 season are, from left, front row - Emali Detwiler, Addison Drumm, Piper Bathory, Kaylee Cantrell, Adalynn Glover, Gentry Hermreck, Rhylie Giffin; back row - Heidi Foltz, Macy Seems, Isabella Glover, Jasmynn Bathory, Sophia Thornbrugh and LaMaya Miller.



Kristi Vogts/The Republican

Members of the 2026 Waverly High School volleyball team are, from left, front row - Abigail Risch, Jasmynn Bathory, Macy Seems, Zoey Hirt, Anabel Risch, Lydia Foltz, Evelyn McMillen, Bella Glover, Heidi Foltz; back row - head coach Erin Patrick, Piper Bathory, Dusty Frankenburg, Taryn Vogts, Gentry Hermreck, Adalynn Glover, Emali Detwiler, Peyton Turner, Addison Drumm, Spencer Yeager and assistant coach Sheryl Patrick. Rhylie Giffin is also part of the team but was unavailable for the photo.

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Waverly

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"Our top eight to 10 kids are great athletes and players, but we have very little depth," Fraenza said.

With the lack of depth, health becomes a vital key to success for the Bulldogs.

"We need to stay away from the injury bug," Fraenza said. "If we stay healthy, we should be very competitive in most games. We should have a chance to have a winning record and win some playoff games."

The team's schedule will provide more than one tough opponent against whom the Bulldogs will be able to test their skills and work to learn and grow in order to help them utilize skills to the best of their abilities. Perhaps the toughest opponent will be in-district rival Lebo, who is also in the Lyon County League and the same playoff district as Waverly. Fraenza believes the best teams in Class 8-Man Division II will be Hanover, Axtell and Victoria.

The Bulldogs will open the season with a road game against Southeast High School at Cherokee. Kick-off is scheduled for 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 4.

Lady Bulldogs

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coming both the best serve receive and passing team possible, building teamwork and chemistry and becoming a very consistent serving and attacking team.

Patrick sees a lot of potential in his team.

"We are potentially a very good passing team and are seeing improvement in our setters," Patrick said. "We are also a consistent serving team and a very good attacking

team."

The Lady Bulldogs' schedule promises plenty of opportunities to test skills and learn and grow.

"All of our tournaments will be competitive," Patrick said. "Marais des Cygnes Valley, Lebo, Olpe and Burlingame in the Lyon County League will be tough, as will the bigger schools on our schedule."

The Lady Bulldogs will start off their season with competition in a preseason tournament at Wellsville Saturday, Aug. 29, and hosted Burlingame for their home opener Tuesday, Sept. 1. They will next play at West Elk 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 3.

Lady Wolves

Continued from Page 9

has shown steady confidence in her abilities early in practice. Rya and Ariya have shown great competitiveness early in practice and have the potential to help us offensively."

The Lady Wolves already have some goals in place for the season.

"My goal for the team every year is to play the best volleyball that we can every time we step on the court, do what we do and let the wins and

losses take care of themselves," Peek said. "Specifically, I would hope we maximize our intellect, have ball control and out serve and out pass our opponents. As long as we continue to get better every day and every week, I think they can expect to continue the success of previous years."

There will be a couple of factors in particular that will determine match outcomes.

"Controlling our unforced errors is going to be a key factor in winning games," Peek said. "Having better ball control and decision making will be a

key factor in winning and losing any close matches."

The 2026 schedule, Peek hopes, will be helpful to the team's efforts to improve and grow.

"We always play a tough non-league and tournament schedule, so hopefully that will provide opportunities to learn what we need," Peek said.

The Lady Wolves opened their season with matches against Marais des Cygnes Valley and Yates Center Tuesday, Aug. 31, and took on Herington, Central Christian and Goessel at Herington Thursday, Sept. 1. They

will next face Burlington at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 10, in Burlington.



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