

New coaches highlight fall sports lineup

By Isabelle DeLong

At the end of the 2020 volleyball season, the Wildcats record was 6-16. New coaches Shannon Telsrow and Peyton Miedema are determined to change that.

Both coaches are Durant alumni and share a lot of passion for the sport of volleyball.

"I decided to come back to Durant and coach because I love the game and this community," said Coach Telsrow. "Coaching isn't just a job, it's something you have to do with passion. I believe I have that [passion] for the game."

Coach Miedema and Coach Telsrow are coming into this season with a completely fresh look on the team. They look forward to working with each player to help them achieve their individual goals and also to achieve their team goals.

"Our expectations for the season are to have the girls put in their max effort," said Coach Miedema. "We are only going to have as good of a season as what is put into every practice. We are going to put 110 percent effort into the season, and we expect the same out of the girls."

In the coaches' minds, that is what will make the Wildcat volleyball season successful.

Senior Ally Happ, who led the team in kills last year with 148 and digs with 192, could be out for the majority of the season due to a knee injury she suffered during an open gym for basketball this summer.

The Wildcats still have a few starters from last season that will be returning this season.

Senior Kylie Schult was second on the team for kills with 84 and was second on the team for digs with 120. Senior Peyton Buesing was second on the team for assists with 130.

Seniors Rylie Rock and Shannon

Head are also returning starters. Head is very determined to have a fun and successful season.

"My goals for this season are to have a near perfect serving record, have chemistry with the team, and have a good winning record," said Head. "I overall want the season to be a fun one especially since it's my last."

Football

The Wildcats won their first playoff game in school history last season against Louisa-Muscataine but fell short to Beckman Catholic in the second round 19-14, finishing with a record of 4-4.

The Cats had a few seniors graduate in key roles last year, but Coach Joel Diederichs isn't worried about it.

"We did lose some key contributors from last year's squad, so it will be put on the returners to fill in their roles, and some of the underclassmen will need to step up," said Coach Diederichs. "I believe we have a strong nucleus back and some promising newcomers, so hopefully it will be a smoother transition into this year."

Coach Diederichs's expectations are even higher this year.

"The goal for this season is to win the district and go deep in a playoff run," he said.

The Cats have a tough schedule ahead of them. In non-district play, the Wildcats face the returning semifinalist in 1A, Sigourney-Keota, and then play a second-round playoff team, Cascade.

It only gets harder in district play as the Wildcats meet Iowa City Regina, the class A state champs. Other opponents include West Branch, Mediapolis, Louisa-Muscataine, and Wilton.

The Wildcats face Sigourney-Keota in the opening game of the season tomorrow at home.

Even though the Cats lost some graduates, there are still a lot of players who are coming back this season.

Nolan DeLong, a junior, rushed for 1,589 yards on 139 carries last season.

He also had 79 receiving yards, 31 solo tackles, four sacks, 55 total tackles, one interception, 72 yards in kick returns, and 19 punts for a total of 736 yards.

"At the start of every season, my main goal is to make it to state," DeLong said. "We have a guaranteed eight games this season. That's not including playoffs, so I want our season to be at least 10 games."

Carter Wichelt, a senior, was third on the team in receiving yards with 112, had 12 solo tackles, and had 148 yards in kick returns.

Ethan Gast, a senior, caught two passes for 64 yards and had 14 solo tackles, one interception, and 38 yards in punt returns.

Senior Ben Orr had 60 receiving yards, six solo tackles, one interception and punted for 167 yards. Brady Meincke, a junior, had 41 rushing yards and one solo tackle.

One question that will be answered by Friday is who will replace graduate Keagen Head at quarterback. Senior Tysen McKinley and sophomore Charlie Huesmann are both vying for the job.

McKinley, who had 15 rushing yards, 11 solo tackles, two sacks, and 37 yards in kick returns last season, likes to be a leader on and off the field.

"I'd like to say that my work ethic is a good example for my teammates," McKinley said.

"I was lifting all summer and was constantly pushing my teammates to get better. Off the field, I like to help people with their grades, especially if they're gonna be ineligible."

Cross Country

Girls' Coach Tracy Tappendorf and boys' Coach Andrew Hermiston are both excited to watch their young teams and their runners better themselves throughout the season.

The coaches have been keeping their runners in good shape this summer with workouts. The runners run a few miles two days a week, so they start the season in good shape and aren't as sore when the season starts.

"I look forward to watching all of the runners develop," said Coach Tappendorf. "We have some runners in junior high who are just starting their cross country running career, and it will be fun to watch them develop and train."

Returning varsity runner junior Carlie Jo Fusco has worked a lot in the off-season with weight lifting and agility work, so she can meet her goals this season. Fusco's personal record for a 5K is 23:28.

"My goals are to break my personal record numerous times and to finish off the season by making it to state," said Fusco.

One young runner on the boys' team is freshman Race Starr.

"My main goal for this season is to get faster and beat a lot of my personal records throughout the season," said Starr.

Starr is also very excited about being able to run against high school competition in order to push himself.

Coach Hermiston is looking forward to seeing the improvement of his runners throughout the season.

"At the start of the season, we will have kids that won't be able to run one mile without walking, and by the end of the season, they will be able to run three with no problem," he said.

"That is the most rewarding part to me."

Wildcats cut short of summer state trips

By Carlie Jo Fusco

The softball and baseball teams went into the playoffs with different expectations, but both of their seasons were cut short by Wilton in one-run games.

The girls lost their third-round game 3-2 against Wilton on July 9. Four days later, the boys lost their second-round game 2-1.

The girls had a chance to tie the game in the top of the seventh against the number one-ranked team in the state but couldn't get the tying run across the plate.

After last year's heartbreak at the state baseball tournament, the boys had high hopes of returning this year but fell short of

making it, finishing the season with a 18-8 record.

"We didn't play to our capability in that game and lost to a team that we shouldn't have," Head Coach Shawn Dierickx said of the playoff loss to Wilton.

In the first meeting of the season, the Wildcats swept the Beavers in a doubleheader.

Senior Ethan Gast said he would do one thing differently about the playoff game.

"I feel like we weren't as prepared as we should've been for the playoffs," he said. "If I were to change anything, it would be to prepare for that game."

Gast played mainly shortstop and

said that even though playoffs didn't pay off like the team had hoped, the regular season went better than planned.

"We didn't end the season as we hoped, but we had a very successful regular season," said Gast, who finished the season with a batting average of .388 and 23 RBI. He was also selected for the River Valley South team as a utility player.

Wildcat catcher, senior Tevin Miller, batted .288 and had a fielding average of .984 with only two errors.

"My biggest goal was to be helpful to the pitchers throughout the year when it got tough," Miller said. "I truly think that I reached that goal this year."



Photo by Dayna Maiers
Ben Orr squares up to bat against Wilton in the July 13th playoff game.

Wilton Cafe's football player of the month



116 W. Fourth St., Wilton, IA 52778
563-732-4115

Senior Kenneth Salemi will play nose tackle for the Wildcats this year as well as long snapper. He is especially looking forward to playing this year because he got injured in the first game against North Cedar last season, tearing the labrum in his shoulder.



Salemi

Apex Ink and Apparel's volleyball player of the month



708 5th St., Durant, IA 52747
563-785-6223

Sophomore Layla Streetter will play middle hitter for the Wildcats this year. She wants to "continue to grow as a player and teammate and to help my team have a winning season." She loves playing on the court with her friends.



Streetter

Iowa 80 Kitchen's cross country runner of the month



755 W. Iowa 80 Road, Walcott, IA 52773
(563) 284-6512

Junior Carlie Jo Fusco will be running varsity for the third straight year. Her goals this season are to "finish the season with no injuries" and to beat her personal record (PR) from last season more than once. Her best time last year was 23:28.



Fusco

Today's
Dentistry
502 9th Ave.
Durant, IA 52747
(563) 785-4541

Today's Dentistry play of the month

Senior Ben Orr takes the play of the month for the summer sports with his grand slam on May 24 against the arch-rival Wilton Beavers at Durant in the opening game of the season. Orr's homer came in the bottom of the second and propelled the Wildcats to a 10-0 victory. The Wildcats also beat the Beavers in the second game of the doubleheader 4-3.



Orr