

# WINTER

## Oscoda boys aiming for success with young squad

by Ben Murphy

OSCODA – The Oscoda boys basketball team certainly has less varsity experience than it has had in recent years. The Owls are hoping that this year is more of a reloading than a rebuild though, despite only returning three players from a year ago.

“We are very young this year but field a group of players with a lot of potential,” fourth-year head coach Mike Poland said. “I truly believe that our future is bright, our biggest question will be the amount of time that it will take to get our young team up to varsity speed and how we will match up with teams that field older and more experienced players. I really like this group, we have big goals and have been working hard.”

Returning from last year’s team that went 14-8 overall and won a fourth straight North Star League Big Dipper championship will be senior Damon Burrows (guard), junior Michael Myles (shooting guard) and sophomore Blake

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Photo by Ben Murphy

OWL BOYS HOOPS – Members of the 2022-23 Oscoda boys varsity basketball team are, from left, back row: assistant coach Jean Church, Michael Myles, Drayton Williams, Thad Spragg, Connor McNichol, Jaeden Ullman, Gage Woodward, and head coach Mike Poland; front row: Jamaree Wilkins, Jack LeClair, Blake Mallak, Nick Snyder, Damon Burrows, and Tyler Evitts. Missing from photo is Aaron Ellis.

## Experienced Tawas boys expect a big time season

by Ben Murphy

TAWAS CIT – A tough schedule left the Tawas Area boys’ basketball team with a 13-9 record last season, but it had them more than ready to win a Division 3 district championship. The Braves, who will be guided by longtime head coach Todd Kaems, have six players back from that squad, all of whom played big roles a year ago. That should translate into another solid season.

“It is difficult to say this early in the year, but we have some very skilled players and guys that want to work hard,” Kaems said. “We have identified some weaknesses for sure, and if we can improve on those and keep improving in all areas, it could be a great season.”

Returning to the team will be seniors Vinnie Frank (forward, guard, 11 points per game), Granite Barringer (forward, seven points, seven rebounds), Ethan Hedglin (forward, center, five points, six

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Photo by Ben Murphy

TAWAS BOYS HOOPS – Members of the 2022-23 Tawas Area boys varsity basketball team are, from left, back row: Evan Mochty, Quinn Klenow, Vinnie Frank, Ethan Hedglin, Granite Barringer, Alex Kaems, and Jake Look; front: Ethan Romzek, Robert Jenkins, JT Bond, Kyle Velasco, and Sherman Hayes.

## Hale boys basketball squad full of new players

by Ben Murphy

HALE – The Hale boys basketball team isn’t going to have much experience as far as varsity play is concerned. Second-year head coach Andy Katterman isn’t too worried about that though, as his roster still has plenty to offer.

“We are fairly young but we are made up of players who care about basketball and want to improve and be successful,” he said. “We are quick, athletic and we have some shooting ability. We will look to use these qualities to create scoring in transition and create shots for our teammates.”

Returning from last year’s team the went 4-15 overall will be senior Jeff Guoan (guard) and junior Eddie Lavere (guard). New to the team will be senior Preston Bassi (forward), juniors Brady McCadie (guard), Alex Wanty (guard), Reece Ready (forward), Aidan

See HALE, Page 5



Photo by Ben Murphy

HALE BOYS HOOPS – Members of the 2022-23 Hale varsity boys basketball team are, from left, back row: Eddie Lavere, Preston Bassi, Reece Ready, Brady McCadie, Aidan Egresics, and Lawrence Mullins; front row: Deontae Hence, Alex Wanty, Jeff Guoan, Zander Johnson, and Sam Patton.

## W-P boys ready to roll under new head coach

by Ben Murphy

WHITTEMORE – The Whittemore-Prescott boys basketball team didn’t get a new head coach until late in the off-season. The Cardinals aren’t going to let that slow them down though, as they look to get the program back going again.

“So far, so good,” newly named head coach Ryan Lomason said. “Everything has been going good. It is going to be a work in progress, being that I am new and it is a new system that I am putting in. It is going to take time for the kids to get it under wraps.”

The Cardinals won just a game a season ago, but Lomason feels that this group can definitely make that number bigger.

“They are really eager to learn and to put in the work,” he said. “It is actually really nice, because I wasn’t really sure coming in, hearing they only had one win

See W-P, Page 5



Photo by Ben Murphy

CARDINAL BOYS HOOPS – Members of the 2022-23 Whittemore-Prescott boys basketball team are, from left: head coach Ryan Lomason, Thomas Cronin, Dylan Broughton, Dylan Donaghy, Bransen Bellville, Brady Oliver, Dylan Cockrell, Will LaFranca, Logan Aiello, Landon Aiello, and Cole Schmidt. Missing from photo are Luke Aiello, Ashton Hunt, Sean Richmond, Aiden Massicote, and Donald Jones.

**SPORTS**

# Oscoda wrestling full of new coaches, wrestlers

by Ben Murphy

OSCODA – New is the name of the game when it will come to the Oscoda wrestling team this winter. The Owls are jam-packed with new wrestlers and will also welcome in two new co-head coaches in Ben Guffey and Mikayla Erickson.

“Young, hungry, new to the sport, willing and wanting to learn,” Guffey said of his early thoughts on the team.

Wrestlers returning with varsity experience are seniors John Heisner (215), junior Isaiah Spragg (126, 120), sophomores Jhonas Williams (106, state qualifier) and Ethan Newcomb (126).

New to the team will be senior

See Wrestle, Page 3



**OWL WRESTLING TEAM** – Members of the 2022-23 Oscoda varsity wrestling team are, from left, back row: co-head coach Mikayla Erickson, manager Caliegh Berney, Jayce Foster, Isaiah Spragg, Tyler Sheffer, Ethan Newcomb, Levi Miller, manager Vanessa Moore, and co-head coach Ben Guffey; front row: Kaleigh Newcomb, Jhonas Williams, Mateo Martin, Alan Smead, Michael Vega, and John Heisner.

Photo by Ben Murphy



**OWL GIRLS HOOPS** – Members of the 2022-23 Oscoda varsity girls basketball team are, from left, back row: Kingsley Backstrom, Elle Kellstrom, Mia Whipkey, Ashton Ehle, Kyden Ehle, and Lillian Piotrowski; front row: Allee Goslee, Ava Gooch, Emma Michaud, Luella Whipkey, and Elyse Richards. Missing from photo are Avery Lopez and Emily Smith.

Photo by Ben Murphy

## Owl girls primed for another special season

by Ben Murphy

OSCODA – They may be young, but for the Oscoda girls' basketball team that is really nothing new. What also isn't new is that the Lady Owls expect to be the best squad in this part of the state and hope to prove it with another North Star League Big Dipper championship and district title.

“We are very young, with only two seniors, but our younger ninth and 10th graders are extremely talented,” eighth-year head coach Mark Toppi said. “I feel we can truly improve each game. It is going to take us half the season before we are starting to reach our potential.”

Last year the Owls went 15-7 overall, winning the NSL Big Dipper championship the fourth straight time and they also won their third district crown in the last four years.

They'll welcome back seniors Mia Whipkey, a sharp shooting guard, and Elle Kellstrom, who brings an athletic presence in the post. Sophomore Kingsley Backstrom returns as well and should make a huge impact down low as well.

“All three players will play a big role in our success this sea-

son,” Toppi said. “They all have logged a lot of varsity minutes.”

Joining them will be Luella Whipkey (freshman, guard), Ava Gooch (sophomore, guard), Emma Michaud (freshman), Emily Smith (sophomore), Ashton Ehle (freshman, guard), Elyse Richards (junior) and Kyden Ehle (sophomore, guard, forward). Many of these players will alternate between the JV and varsity teams as a part of the fifth quarter rule.

“We are going to play a fast pace and shoot a ton of threes like we always do,” Toppi said. “We have a lot of players that can play different guard positions. We have two talented post players and we are going to surround them with great outside shooting. We want our older players to set the tone for our younger core.”

Oscoda has loaded up its non-conference schedule with some top-shelf teams. They open the season with Class 'A' schools Alpena, Bay City Central and Midland High. They'll also play other quality squads like Cedarville, Traverse City St. Francis, Flint Hamady and Standish-Sterling as well.

“We ramped up our non-conference schedule even more than last year,” Toppi said. “I believe the only way we can improve is

playing someone as good or better than you. Our players have embraced the idea of playing bigger schools to help prepare us for the end of the season and make a run past districts.”

Oscoda may have won the last four NSL Big Dipper titles, but the other teams could pose a challenge. Alcona returns most of its team from a year ago and Rogers City has high expectations as well, and has one of the best post players in the league in Alivia Freil. Until someone proves otherwise, Oscoda is still the class of the league though.

“I believe we are the team to beat in our conference,” Toppi said. “We split with Alcona last year and they have a solid team and are returning most of their players, but I still feel we are the favorites to win the league.”

Oscoda has already played in four games this season and returns to action on Friday, when it hosts Posen.

“Our season goals are to be challenged by good non-conference competition,” Toppi said. “Our focus is not on our record but on us getting better throughout the season. Our main focus is getting ready for the state tournament.”

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**SPORTS**

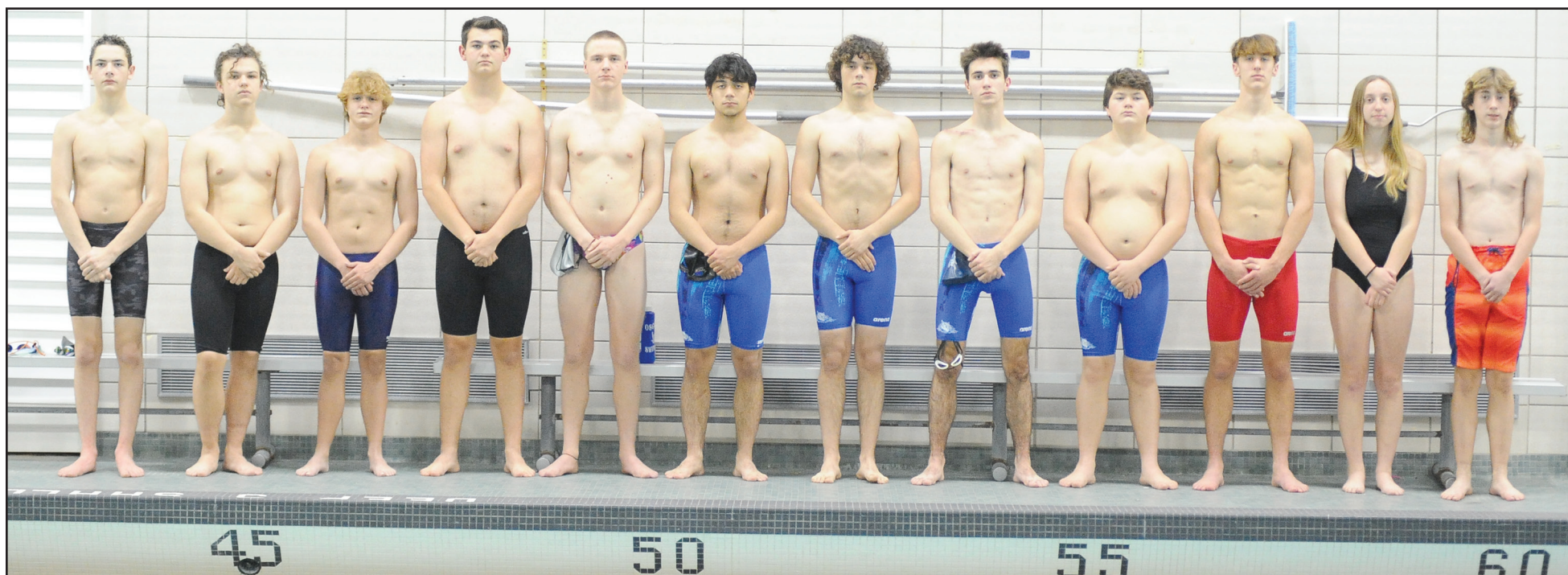


Photo by Ben Murphy

**OSCODA SWIM AND DIVE TEAM** – Members of the 2022-23 Oscoda varsity swim and dive team are, from left, Rob Cook, Kaleb Williams, Ryan Story, Patrick Boje, Axel Raybourn, Julian Gawne, Aidan Taylor, Ben Rudolph, Gabe Martin, Joe Rush, Libby Mongeau, and Jack Garner.

## Eleven seniors strong, Oscoda swim team has sights on ISC championship

by Ben Murphy

OSCODA – The Oscoda boys swim and dive team has been knocking on the door of an Independent Swim Conference championship. With a deep line-up in the pool this winter the Owls are hoping that this is their year to get the job done.

“I think that we have been so close to reaching the top in our (league) over the past two years that it has really lit a fire under these swimmers’ bottoms and made them get it together and get after it and show dedication, show up to practice and do what needs to be done,” fourth-year head coach Elyssa Steward said. “These boys have almost tasted winning the (league) and with 11 seniors, at this point, this is their last shot.”

The Owls have 17 swimmers in all, including two girls who did not participate with the girls swim team this fall, Libby Mongeau and Nichole Leesburg. The rest

of the team includes Rob Cook, Kaleb Williams, Jack Garner (Tawas Area co-op student), Joe Rush, Ryan Story, Patrick Boje, Gabe Martin, Axel Raybourn, Julian Gawane, Aidan Taylor, Ben Rudolph, Carter Nelkie, Stephen Price, Hank Dawson, Zach Ridgewell and John Melendez.

“(Last week) we spent a lot of time preparing for our relay meet (at Swartz Creek), while getting in yardages,” Steward said. “(This week) we are going to work on more distance and short access. We have a team of five coaches that come to practices to help out, so we are much more organized this year. We have two captains in Rush and Raybourn and they are in charge of helping mediate (other swimmers) during workouts as well.”

“Overall, we have a lot more leadership all the way around. We are able to break each workout down into the individual needs of

the swimmer.”

The Owls will have Taylor and Story compete in diving, and have received help from a conference rival to help them hone their skills.

“Ogemaw was nice enough to share their diving coach, they go Fridays to Ogemaw to practice diving with the three divers at Ogemaw,” Steward said. “I think we are competitive, but we show good sportsmanship with other teams.”

The coach pointed to a few athletes that could make a push for a state finals appearance, including Rush.

“We did a time trial at practice the other day and he swam a 57.77 in the 100 freestyle,” Steward said. “He has been hitting the gym and I think he and Raybourn are trying to make it to states. I know some others are as well.”

Oscoda had a relay meet on Friday at Swartz Creek to open the season. On Thursday they swim at

Ogemaw Heights and on Tuesday they host Essexville-Garber. Both Ogemaw and Garber are ISC duals, and could go a long ways in determining the league champion.

“These are two of the teams

that have beaten us in the last two years,” Steward said. “We are racing them earlier in the season and I am looking forward to these meets, I think that this might be our year.”

## WRESTLE

Continued from Page 2

Kaleigh Newcomb (120, female wrestler), juniors Tyler Sheffer (215), Jayce Foster (132) and Thad Spragg (190), sophomore Levi Miller (190) and freshmen Mateo Martin (120), Allen Smead (175), Michael Vega (175).

“Some individual goals are to get student athletes to state, get some wins, and just get wrestling experience,” Guffey said. “(We want) to continue to build the program up and have kids wanting to come back and compete next year. We went back to the basics early on. We want to make sure everyone is doing them correctly and then just progress further with every practice. We have also been working hard on conditioning. If

we aren’t going to be the best, we want to be the best conditioned.”

Oscoda opened its season at Swan Valley on Saturday, heads to Whittemore-Prescott today (Wednesday) and is in Grayling on Saturday.

“Everyone in the conference has a great wrestling program, so we are not quite sure how we

will stack up,” Guffey said. “We have decent numbers this year, so we are looking forward to seeing how it goes. Getting our team some real top level experience (is key early on). Also, we are hoping to get some medals and student athletes who want to keep coming out and giving it their all.”

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**SPORTS**



Photo by Ben Murphy

**TAWAS WRESTLING** – Members of the 2022-23 Tawas Area varsity wrestling team are, from left, back row: assistant coach Lukas Herrick, athletic director Jonathon Mejeur, assistant coach Ryan Prescott, Everett Hanson, Max Herrick, Noah Hopkins, Steven Pace, Hunter Schulz, head coach Chad Herrick, and assistant coach Daryn Shepler. middle row: Kevin Loew, Austin Baker, Michael Tiffany, and James Dixon; front row: Quintyn Allen, Izzy Urban, Andrew Oliver, Trace Reay, Matthew Tiffany, Hunter Olivier, and Luke Martin.

## Tawas Area wrestling team aiming sights at district championship

by Ben Murphy

**TAWAS CITY** – Tawas Area hasn't been known as a powerhouse wrestling program over the years. You wouldn't know that from how things have been going so far this year though, as they've used a vastly improved season last winter into one of promise this winter.

"It is going really good," second-year head coach Chad Herrick said. "We had to have a couple wrestle-offs for position and we haven't seen that in our program in many, many years – to have multiple guys vying for one spot. Iron sharpens iron and it makes guys a little hungry if he knows his position is up for battle every meet."

The Braves were bumped up to Division 3 this year for the post-season, which will make things a little challenging come that portion of the schedule. Grayling and Ogemaw Heights will be in their team district, and the winner of

the district will get to host the ensuing regional round.

"We did go D3 this year, so the competition will be a little tougher," Herrick said. "We are going to see Grayling a few times this year, but we won't really see Ogemaw – it seems like they are avoiding us."

"My goal is for us to host team regionals. I would love nothing better than to have Tawas host team regionals. If we keep all the weight groups filled we will be able to compete with anybody out there now."

Individually, the Braves will hope to make some noise as well, despite the increased level of competition in D3.

"Just overall, I'm excited, just to have the growth that we have had in our wrestling team and the amount of good wrestlers that we have," Herrick said. "It is just exciting to watch this really start to take form. We are going to be a contender. I hope no one takes us lightly, because that would be a

big mistake."

On this year's team will be Kevin Loew (sophomore, 120), Austin Baker (sophomore, 135), James Dixon (junior, 170), Michael Tiffany (sophomore, 160), Luke Martin (senior, 175, state qualifier), Quintyn Allen (sophomore, 106), Izzy Urban (junior, 130, girls' regional qualifier), Hunter Oliver (sophomore, 170), Andrew Oliver (freshman, 138), Trace Reay (sophomore, 135, seventh at states) and Matthew Tiffany (senior, 150, regional qualifier).

"At this point, we are still pushing the kids on the cardio level," Herrick said. "Early in the season, everyone is still typically out of shape. A lot of kids came right out of football, which really helps, they were in shape to begin with, we just have to get them a little better."

"We do have a lot of first-year wrestlers, but we got through the basics pretty good and with the group of kids that we have, they

know the sport and that really helps the kids absorb the information really well. They jump quickly and progress quickly. It doesn't seem like we are working with

any first-year wrestlers."

Tawas had one meet last week, heads to Whittemore-Prescott today (Wednesday) and makes the trip to Grayling on Saturday.



Photo by Ben Murphy

**TAWAS GIRLS HOOPS** – Members of the 2022-23 Tawas Area girls varsity basketball team are, from left, back row: assistant coach Reuben Edwards, head coach Amy Edwards, Lindsay Chatt, Reese Cadorette (holding Nevaeh Edwards), Brooke Binder, Kenna Seyfried, Kori Schaaf, manager Quinn Seyfried and assistant coach Jeff Seyfried; front row: Alex Felske, Alexa Thornton, Madalynn Pearsall, Catie Push, Autumn Edwards, Ellary Warner.

## Tawas girls return five players to the court

by Ben Murphy

**TAWAS CITY** – Last year's record of 9-12 was a bit misleading for the Tawas Area girls' basketball team. Around half their losses were by single digits, and a handful of those were by a possession. Coming off a winless season the year before, head coach Amy Edwards, now entering her second season, called it a success.

"Last year was such a year

of growth and fighting through adversity," she said. "We had injuries, sickness and at least four games we lost by five or less but we also battled it out and won in really close games too. After no wins the year before, this was a great start."

Returning from last year's team will be seniors Reese Cadorette (guard), Alex Felske (guard), Lindsay Chatt (forward, center)

and Kori Schaaf (guard, forward) and junior Catie Push (guard).

Playing their first varsity seasons will be juniors Kenna Seyfried (center), and Alexa Thornton (guard) and sophomores Autumn Edwards (guard), Brooke Binder (guard), Ellary Warner (guard) and Madalynn Pearsall (guard, forward).

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**SPORTS**



Photo by Ben Murphy

**TAWAS BOWLING TEAMS** – Members of the 2022-23 varsity bowling teams are, from left, back row: assistant coach Marcie McClellan, Paul Mendez, Kylee Stroemer, Makayla Ward, and Jesse Hartman; front row: William Collier, Ashley Lier, Brooke McClellan, and boys head coach Allen Miller. Missing from photo are Bethany Sides, assistant coach Kevin Smith, and girls head coach Kim Miller.

**Tawas bowling teams look to start new season**

by Ben Murphy

**TAWAS CITY** – The Tawas Area bowling teams will once again be led by the husband-wife duo of Allen Miller and Kim Miller. This will be their 18th season guiding the Braves’ at the lanes. “This will be a rebuilding year after having five seniors graduating last year,” Allen Miller said. “All the returning bowlers should be our top scorers. It will be a toss up for the boys, as we have a lot to learn.”

The girls finished in the middle of the pack in the Huron Shores Bowling Conference last winter, while the boys’ were near the bot-

tom. Three girls return from that team, being seniors Bethany Sides and Makayla Ward and sophomore Brooke McClellan.

“All three are showing good improvements over last season,” Miller said.

New to the team will be juniors Kylee Stroemer and Jesse Hartman along with sophomore Ashley Lier.

The boys will have entirely new varsity bowlers this season. They are seniors William Collier, Paul Mendez and David Gould. Miller is hoping to add in a few more boy bowlers so they can

have a full squad.

Tawas, like the rest of the Huron Shores Bowling Conference, opens up on Saturday at Village Lanes in Harrisville. Tawas will roll against Charlton Heston Academy.

“Our goal as always is to do our best and have fun while doing it,” Miller said. “Individually it is always nice to see someone bowl a 200 game. As far as the conference goes I think Ogemaw Heights is a good contender most years and they seem to have a lot of players.”

**W-P**

**Continued from Page 1**

last year; I wasn’t sure what I was getting from them. Were they eager to learn or were they just content on where they were at? They all seem eager to learn and have been putting in the work to get better, for sure.”

On this year’s team will be Landon Aiello (freshman), Logan Aiello (junior), Luke Aiello (junior), Bransen Bellville (junior), Dylan Broughton (senior), Dylan Cockrell (junior), Thomas Cronin (senior), Dylan Donaghy (junior), Mark Howie (senior), Ashton Hunt (senior), Will LaFranca (sophomore), Aiden Massicotte (senior), Brady Oliver (senior), Sean Richmond (sophomore) and Cole Schmidt (freshman).

“Short term goals are we are trying to get better every week, get consistent with our play and do better each week,” Lomason said.

“Long term goal I would like to get our system in place and start competing with everyone, and maybe get some wins out of it.”

W-P opened up its season with two games last week, hosted Fairview on Tuesday, makes the trip to Hale on Friday and plays down at the Saginaw Arts and Science Academy on Tuesday.

“We are working on our offense, our defense and our passing,” Lomason said. “All that stuff needs to work in sync to have a shot at doing anything. If we are not playing good defense our offense is not working out the way it should. With passing, If we don’t make good passes, we can’t keep the ball in our hands we are going to have too many turnovers. We are really trying to fine tune that stuff right now and little by little add more to it.”

**HALE**

**Continued from Page 1**

Egresics (forward), Zander Johnson (guard), Lawrence Mullins (guard), and Deontae Hence (guard) and sophomore Sam Patton (guard).

“We will look to our lone returning senior, Jeff, and the voices of our more experienced juniors in Eddie and Brady (to lead the way),” Katterman said.

Hale played two games last week, was at the Charlton Heston

Academy on Monday, hosts Whittemore-Prescott on Friday and hosts Wolverine on Wednesday.

“We will work to be competitive and get better every day,” Katterman said. “We will look to improve with every practice and game, use those lessons along the way, and see where we end up late in the season.”

**HOOPS**

**Continued from Page 4**

“We are not tall with Kenna being our only height but we should be fast and should be able to use that to get points in transition and get to the basket,” Edwards said. “The girls are hard working and willing to learn so that will really help us grow and compete. We will have a ‘never quit’ mentality and will continue to fight which I believe will really help us get wins in those tight games.”

With the amount of close games the Braves had last year, they know just how important some of the little things are.

“I think the biggest thing is to just fight and put everything on the floor,” Edwards said. “The girls are still figuring out what that takes and looks like and we’re not quite there yet, but each day, we get closer. We have to be intense defensively and very aggressive, hitting the floor on every loose ball and jumping everything. Basically just to play with heart each practice and each game.”

And if they can come together the way they think Edwards can?

“Ultimately, I want these ladies to see that when they put their mind to it and give all they got and play together, they can be satisfied with the results and that hard work pays off,” she said. “Life is way bigger than basketball but it’s just another tool that helps us learn how to succeed out there in the big world and I have no doubt everyone of the ladies will be very successful at whatever they do.”

With no conference, the coach pointed to a few games that she was looking forward to most this year.

“We definitely are excited for Ogemaw Heights, especially with losing by only two both games last year,” Edwards said. “We look forward to a rematch there for sure. Alcona is always fun to play as both teams are very competitive with each other too. Playing Alpena at Little Caesars Arena this

year will be exciting and a team bonding experience for sure.”

Tawas has had three games already this season and plays next on Friday, against Alpena down at Detroit at Little Caesars Arena. The Braves will also head up to Alcona on Tuesday.

“I really have the best girls and

parents and coaching staff to be honest,” Edwards said. “I am so blessed to be able to coach them. They already have been so much fun and really are just a joy to coach. They respond well to being pushed and are going to do great this year.”

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**SPORTS**



Photo by Ben Murphy

**CARDINAL GIRLS HOOPS** – Members of the 2022-23 Whittemore-Prescott girls varsity basketball team are, from left, back row: Alivia Sheehan, and Danycca Burns; middle row: Brianne Wanks, Claire Blust, Torrie Zilinsky, Jessicann Tracy, and Gabby Clark; front row: Bella Lehr, Brielle Wanks, Anna Butler, Brooke Saunders.

## Lady Cardinals hoping to learn the ropes quickly

by Ben Murphy

WHITTEMORE – The Whittemore-Prescott girls basketball team had plenty go wrong last winter. The Lady Cardinals still found a way to win five games though, despite having to deal with illness, long gaps between contests and untimely snow days. A new season could be just the fresh start that the Cardinals need to get things going again.

“Pretty much lost the entire starting line-up to graduation, it will be a rebuilding year,” third-year head coach Sarah Gibson said. “This group is scrappy, definitely fighters.”

Senior forward Brielle Wanks is the only player returning from a full-time role on last year’s varsity team.

“She averaged seven rebounds per game and had a couple games as high scorer,” Gibson said. “Hoping to get her consistency rolling this year.”

New to the team will be seniors Anna Butler, Brooke Saunders and Bella Lehr, who all saw some time on varsity last year as well thanks to the fifth quarter rule. Juniors Claire Blust and Torrie Zilinsky and sophomore Brianne Wanks saw some varsity action on that rule as well.

“Brielle will be a leader for obvious reasons, but Anna and Torrie will (lead) as well,” Gibson said. “Anna will be running the

point and Torrie picks up slack all over the court with that game chatter and calling cuts, etc.”

First time varsity players will be junior Jessicann Tracy, sophomore Gabby Clark and freshmen Alivia Sheehan and Danycca Burns.

“In the short term, we need to make sure to rebound, we’re all about fighting for the loose ball, but getting the right position initially is key to not having to battle every possession,” Gibson said. “For the long term, the goal is to just keep that court sense building. We’ve got some really good moves to and under the basket, but we need everyone to be able to see that happening. We need to perfect that timing.”

W-P has already had two games scheduled and took on Fairview at home on Tuesday. The Cardinals head to Hale on Friday and play at the Saginaw Arts and Science Academy on Tuesday. They’ll open up North Star League Big Dipper action on Jan. 6, when they travel north to take on Alcona.

“A lot of teams (in conference) cleaned house and lost key players,” Gibson said. “Alcona lost some, but they had some solid underclassmen. They’ll still be strong. They have a time tested system. I don’t think they are untouchable, but the rest of us will be working out the kinks for a bit.”



Photo by Ben Murphy

**W-P BOYS TEAM** – Members of the 2022-23 Whittemore-Prescott boys varsity wrestling team are, from left, Thomas Saunders, Eli Murphy, Hunter Cicalo, Alex Morgan, Sam Vyner, Logan Jenkins, Dillan Parent, Kameron Johnson, and Sean Richmond. Missing from photo are Adrian McDonald, Anthony Tipton, and Seth Pope.

## Solid crop of female, male wrestlers leave W-P wrestling eager for new season

by Ben Murphy

WHITTEMORE – The championship collecting Whittemore-Prescott wrestling team should be in good shape to keep the good times rolling this winter. Eighth-year head coach Russ Wilson is bursting at the seams with talented girls’ wrestlers, and has some boys’ that will be solid as well for the Cardinals, who are coming off four straight district championships and three straight North Star League titles.

“We have around 13 girls that signed up to wrestle, they really want to compete for a team state title,” Wilson said. “I still have two or three girls on the fence, maybe after the Craig Funsch tournament they will be on the team too. I’m hoping.”

On the girls’ team will be seniors Carley Cowles (state qualifier), Madisin Kennedy (state qualifier), junior Shaelyn Vyner

and sophomores Gabby Murphy (41-12, fifth place at states), Gracie Murphy, Alyssa Burr and Krista Cowles.

“We have eight tournaments for the girls, we are traveling quite a bit,” Wilson said. “The only time they are going to wrestle with the boys will be on Wednesdays. We want to see the matchups, a lot of the schools that we are going to see down south are the girls they will have to see at states. I’m trying to see what weight class is going to be best for the girls at the end of the year.”

To be one of the pioneers in girls’ wrestling is pretty significant for the program too.

“It means a lot,” Wilson said. “(In the season opening matches) I had four girls that went 2-0 against boys. I have a few girls that have never wrestled before, but the Murphy girls, Carly and Serenity have recruited them. The

girls work hard in practice and it is starting to pay off on the mat.”

Boys on the team will be seniors Dillan Parent (44-10, state qualifier), Seth Pope (21-3), Alex Morgan, junior Eli Murphy and sophomores Thomas Saunders, Sam Vyner (43-13, state qualifier).

“I’m excited, I have a bunch of new kids, but they are all working hard in practice,” Wilson said. “It is a long season, so I’m pretty excited to see what happens at the end of the year. I have four quality wrestlers coming back and a bunch of new kids that are new in the lineup. I have to make some stuff work, but they are hardworking in practice. We will be young, but we have a lot of talent.”

W-P competed twice last week and hosts the Craig Funsch assembly meet today (Wednesday) and they also compete at tournaments this weekend.



Photo by Ben Murphy

**W-P GIRLS TEAM** – Members of the 2022-23 Whittemore-Prescott varsity girls wrestling team are, from left, Shaelyn Vyner, Silica Goodman, Gracie Murphy, Serenity Hayes, Carly Cowles, Maddison Kennedy, Carina Harber, London Crossley, Sienna Willingham, and Gabby Murphy. Missing from photo are Alyssa Burr, and Krista Cowles.

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**SPORTS**

# Hale girls welcome back longtime head coach to program

by Ben Murphy

HALE – Longtime coach Joe Kimmerer is no stranger to the basketball programs at Hale; both boys' and girls' basketball. Kimmerer, who recently had a successful stint as the boys' varsity head coach, took over the head gig with the girls' program this off-season; a position he has also held before.

On top of a 10-year stint as the girls' head coach, he was also an assistant coach for last year's team, which is something he hopes he can lean upon as the new season gets underway.

"I've been around these kids, they know me and being an assistant and being at practices and games last year was kind of beneficial," he said. "I was able to kind of just step in and continue on and add the things that I wanted to add for the team this year."

Back from last year's team that finished 7-13 overall will be seniors Dalaney Kimmerer (guard, 10 points per game, four assists), Kaitlyn Hollis (forward, center), Bailey Hewitt (center), juniors Felicity Hicks (guard, forward, four points), Erica Bernard (guard, five points, four rebounds), Laken Caverly (guard) and sophomore



**HALE GIRLS HOOPS** – Members of the 2022-23 Hale girls varsity basketball team are, from left, back row: Ali Beebe, Erica Bernard, Bailey Hewitt, Aurora Brito, Kaitlyn Hollis, and Kayla Wolanin; front row: Callie Hicks, Felicity Hicks, Dalaney Kimmerer, Laken Caverly, and Emily Bain.

Photo by Ben Murphy

Aurora Brito (guard, forward).

New to the team will be ninth graders Ali Beebe (forward, center) and Callie Hicks (point guard, shooting guard).

"We are young and we will have growing pains, but I think we will compete," Kimmerer said. "We are going to try to be up-tempo and we will always work hard."

New for the 2022-23 season is a 22-game regular season, and also a week later start date for practices. It has created some hectic times for area coaches as they

prep their squads for an even busier than usual season.

"(We are) probably not (progressing) as fast as I was hoping, and that is partly because of the loss of the extra week in the pre-season," Kimmerer said. "The MHSAA's wonderful idea of giving us two more games but cutting your pre-season down a week, I don't think is benefiting us. I think we've had to get ready to play games instead of maybe doing enough skill work that we should be doing. We will get there though. Christmas break is coming up and we are hoping to get there and not have too much damage done and really be able to work on some of the things that we wanted and get better."

Hale has already had two weeks of games and hosted the Charlton Heston Academy on Tuesday, hosts Whittemore-Prescott on Friday and returns to action on Jan. 6 at home against NSL Little Dipper foe Atlanta.

"Posen and Hillman will be tough," Kimmerer said of contenders in the NSL Little Dipper. "If we put in the work, we should be able to compete."

**OSCODA**

Continued from Page 1

Mallak (point guard).

"We will lean on our three returning players," Poland said. "Burrows is very athletic. Mallak was our starting point guard last season and has done a tremendous job transitioning to varsity basketball. Myles was our third leading scorer last season and has really improved with his shooting."

New to the team will be juniors Drayton Williams, Thadd Spragg, Connor McNichol, Jamarie Wilkins, Nick Snyder and Aaron Ellis, along with sophomores Jaeden Wullman, Gage Woodward and Jack LeClair.

"We need to prepare as hard as possible to get such a young team ready for varsity basketball," Poland said. "Our first goal is to defend our conference championship, second get back to the district championship game, and third winning the district championship and getting another opportunity at a regional championship."

Oscoda had two games last week, hosted AuGres on Monday, heads to Posen on Friday

and makes the trip to Atlanta on Monday. They open up North Star League Big Dipper play on Jan. 5 in Mio.

"I believe Mio and Alcona return the most experience in the

Big Dipper," Poland said. "We certainly believe we can compete and believe we have enough talent to defend our conference championship."

For the preview on the Owl bowling teams, see this week's sports section

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**SPORTS**

# Bowling squads ready to see action at Whittemore-Prescott

by Ben Murphy

**WHITTEMORE** – The Whittemore-Prescott bowling teams have been practicing in recent weeks and will open up their seasons on Saturday. The Cardinal boys will be coached by Allen Ragels and the girls will be guided by Vicki Barnes.

For the boys' team, returning with varsity experience Cameron Smith (senior), Tim Bunting (senior), Bryson Melrose (junior) and Hunter Bunting (junior).

The lone new bowler on the boys' squad is Emmet Barret (junior).

"We should fare about middle of the pack in conference," Ragels said. "I think the boys I have are pretty evenly matched so it is hard to say which one or two would be top. I would like to finish in the top four for conference and in the top five for regionals."

The Huron Shores Bowling Conference should be tightly contested once again this winter.

"The top team would probably be Ogemaw Heights, but I feel we should be center of the pack," Ragels said. "I have a good group of young men bowling this year. I just wish others would follow their lead because bowling is a very exciting sport if they would just try it. It is something they can do for their entire life."

On the girls' team will be seniors Addison Ludwig, Morgan



Photo by Ben Murphy

**W-P BOYS BOWLING** – Members of the 2022-23 Whittemore-Prescott boys varsity bowling team are, from left, back row: head coach Allen Ragels, Bryson Melrose, Cameron Smith, and Emmet Barret; front row: Tim Bunting, and Hunter Bunting.

Hawks, Sierra Gaudette, Bella Lehr and Cali Pavlik and junior Danielle Riebenack.

"I have high expectations considering we have five returning bowlers," Barnes said. "All of the bowlers have the ability to be competitive, they just need the

confidence in themselves. I would like to finish in the top three at regionals, which would qualify us for states."

W-P opens up the season on Saturday at Village Lanes in Harrisville, competing against Bay City All Saints.



Photo by Ben Murphy

**W-P GIRLS BOWLING** – Members of the 2022-23 Whittemore-Prescott girls varsity bowling team are, from left, back row: assistant coach Becky Elkins-Skaggs, and head coach Vicki Barnes; front row: Danielle Riebenack, Addison Ludwig, Morgan Hawks, and Sierra Gaudette. Missing from photo: Bella Lehr, and Cali Pavlik.

"I would like my girls to set their expectations high," Barnes said. "I had a few girls in the top

15 at regionals, but only the top 10 go to states. My goal is for them to go."

**TAWAS**

**Continued from Page 1**

rebounds), Jake Look (five points), Alex Kaems (guard, seven points) and Evan Mochty (four points).

"We have a lot of experience coming back as all of our seniors played significant minutes as underclassmen, so that will definitely help us coming into the beginning of the season," Kaems said.

New to the team will be juniors Robert Jenkins (guard), JT Bond (guard), Kyle Velasco (guard), Quin Klenow (guard), Sherman Hayes (forward) and Ethan Romzek (forward).

"The junior group has really been coming along during the summer and early part of the season," Kaems said. "As a coach, I am pleased with the direction that these guys are headed."

If you thought last season's schedule was challenging, wait until you get a look at this year's schedule. They played in an early season tournament with Division 1 schools at Petoskey over the weekend and play squads like Elk Rapids, Sault Ste. Marie, Standish-Sterling, Ogemaw Heights, Alpena, Webberville and Bay City Central.

"The schedule this year is a tough as we have ever had and truly a phenomenal one. I can't thank our athletic director enough for putting this together for us," Kaems said. "We have Ogemaw and Standish on the schedule, which our guys have gotten to know over the years really well, with playing against them since they were in grade school."

"We have a home and away against Alpena, Sault Ste. Marie and Bay City Central (both Division 1 schools) are both coming to our place for games. We play traditional powerhouse Beaverton at home. Webberville, who should be a state title contender in Division 4 is a home game. We are planning to play Oscoda again for the cancer awareness game at home. We are playing again at Little Caesars Arena on a Saturday in February against Elk Rapids."

"I feel like this could be one of the best teams that we have ever had in Tawas, and if we go .500 during the regular season, it would be a success. The nice thing about

not being in a conference is that it provides the flexibility of producing a schedule like the one we have this year. It is more work for our athletic director, but it is great for our players."

And even with such a grueling slate of games, that doesn't change the coaches' message.

"The goal is to win every night as the season progresses, but we want to stay healthy and be the best team that we can be in March," Kaems said. "If we can do that, the feeling is that we have a chance to win every night we step on the floor when the tournament starts. The beauty of March Madness is that just about anything can happen, so dream big and chase."

This group of seniors have been a special group to those that have watched them grow up through the years.

"Really, these are all great guys on and off the floor," Kaems said. "Basketball aside, all of them are going to be very successful in life. Great students in the classroom

and incredible players to work with who are driven to succeed. From a basketball standpoint, they have been playing together since the second grade and they love the game and that is really it. I feel blessed as a coach to have the opportunity to work with them."

Tawas had three games schedule last week and plays its first home game on Thursday against Houghton Lake. They also head up to Alcona on Monday.

"I can't be more excited about the opportunity that exists this season," Kaems said. "Great players to work with, and I have an amazing group of coaches as well. I worked with Bill Stoll and Jason Woelke years ago and to have them back on the bench will be a huge asset for the team and program. Reuben Edwards has been with these players for the past few years and knows these guys as well as anyone and will be back helping out when he can as well. A lot of experience from the coaches that will go a long way with helping this team develop."

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