



2024 Ledger Fall Sports Preview

See the faces and names of area athletes for this fall sports season and look for season preview stories for teams that weren't in last week's edition. Mexico, Community R-6, Van-Far, North Callaway and Missouri Military Academy coverage included.



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The 2024 Mexico football team includes, front row from left, Montrez Johnson, Jayden Hodge, Jacob Palmer, Marshall Ball, Kael Smith, Damarion Williams, Rashad Alvarez, Kelvin Watson and Colton Dickey; second row from left, Tyler Benne, Mac Haag, Christopher Lott, Evin Ford, Dalton Arndt, Joseph Haefling, Chace Tuggle, Gavin Gruer, Connor Fisher and Korbyn Dosey; third row from left, Gavin James, Drew DeMint, Brysen Hammers, Marquis Henton, Ahmad Alvarez, Jaylin Merriman, Blake Hogan, Karson Rowe, Tyrice Byrd, David Richards and Davontae Frame; and fourth row from left, Stephen Kerr, Xavier Gould, John Kelly, Wyler Broeker, Cooper Bledsoe, Levi Iman, Matthew Prater, Charlie Fisher, Ethan Freyer, James Donaldson, Kaiden O' Connor and Anthony McDaniel; fifth row from left, Ayden Geers, Peyton Hoover, Carter Ford, Jacob Stephens, Leighton Hilderman, Houston Fowler, Dylan Akeman, Kaden Benne, Tyson Carr, Presley Goff, Kale Leverett, Hunter Cuno and Greyden Sewell; and back row from left, Coach Kevin Krietemeyer, Coach Hunter Engle, Head Coach Steve Haag, Coach Michael White, Ben Eckwood, Wyatt Troesser, Daunte Cline, Landon Johannaber, Hunter Love, Travis Shramek, Zack Kruetz, Coach Travis Simmons, Coach Adam Barnett and Coach Andy Baker.

[Submitted]



The 2024 Van-Far football team includes, front row from left, Davon Main, Jackson Saleh, Layne Varner, Gaven Gaston, Corbin Roed, Easton Sharp, Ty Evans and Kasen Christian; second row from left, Malik Douglas, Tyson Douglas, Gibson Condie, Bryce Reading, Ronnie Stanich, Kashton Rhodes, Carson Huff and Evan Utterback; third row from left, Jackson Fischer, Dalton Dameron, Cayden Douglas, Gabe Freie, Taniel Little, Pacey Reading and Landon Flowers, fourth row from left, Brandon Kurz, Issac Wardlow, Reece Culwell and Dalton Hays; and not pictured, Georgia Foster and Hayden Lynn.

[Submitted]



The 2024 North Callaway football team includes, front row from left, Levi Moore, John Higgins, Brandon Biggers, Coltyn O'Neal, Jaiden Galbreath, Tyler Speight, Leland Barnes, David Sapp, Clayton Moore, Hayden Fansler, Zylar Schuster and Waylon Books; second row from left, Caden Teel, Nick Threlkeld, Wyatt Haden, Cade Miller, Collin Moore, Blake Boulware, Ben Haubner, Christian Moore, Cooper Safranski, Donovan Seiling, Cody Kemp, Bryce Haden and Carver Safranski; and back row from left, Evan Cundiff, Gabe Durlin, Jayden Fasching, Carter Moore, Tristan Petty, Malikai Lang, Casper Safranski, Gunnar Wenneker, Zac Craghead, Gabe Timmerman, Mason Anderson, Tyler Brunk, Justice Moore and Aiden Wimmer.

[Submitted]

Have a great season!





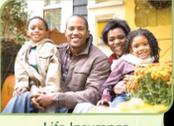
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Circling the bases another season



The 2024 Mexico softball team includes, front row from left, Payton Shaw, Kaylee Fish, Kenley Jones, Matty Tolbert, Tayla Bruns and Isabelle Friedrich; second row crouching from left, Jalin Davis, Payton Sells, Lydionna Cranston, Caycee Archer, Maddy Feger, Hannah Loyd, MaKayla Burnett, Keerstan Ewing and Emma Terry; third row from left, Jordyn Gibson, Sara Jenkins, Isabella Cumming, Autumn Paschsang, Kayleigh Samuelson and Kaitlyn Krietemeyer; fourth row from left, Landri Teel, Alyssa Miller, Scottie Smith and Aleigha Henderson; and not pictured is Claire Valenzuela.

[Submitted]



The 2024 Community R-6 softball team includes, back row from left, Chloe Johnson, Aaliyah Welch, Jocelyn Curtis, Amy McCurdy, Rylee Rafferty and Peyton Schafer. In the front row, from left, Sophie Fennewald, Rosalina Contreras-Mendez, Kooper Schafer, Myla Carroll, Braelyn Kuda and Lydia Hoyt.

[Submitted]



The 2024 Van-Far softball team includes, front row from left, Kayla Heaton, Reeve Woodall, Dalana Gay, Kylie Miller and Kaelyn Hutcheson; second row from left, Bryanna Stanich, Emily Smith, Mariah Maggard, Mylee Keller, Faith Griffith, Elaina Brogden and Taelyn Ward; third row from left, Ashlyn Marshall, Elliott Utterback, Ryann Noel, Maddie Shelton, Makayla McCurdy and Kylie Dameron; back row from left, Carly Hunn, Kenya Jones, Ashlynn Grammer, Chloe Zumwalt, Trinity Skwitz, Adrianna Craven and Addyson Wheeler.

[Submitted]



The 2024 North Callaway softball team includes, front row from left, Faith Cash, Ella Neal, Abigail Schmidt, Kendra Pennell, Addison Bedsworth, Lauren Speight, Ella Slater, Violet Martin and Megan Schmidt; and back row from left, Elie Long, Jocelyn Siegle, Sophia Olsson, Chloe Holtkamp, Madysen Gordon, Lexi Angeles, Kymorie Myers, Lia Bonduant, Olivia Knoepflein and Katie Birge.

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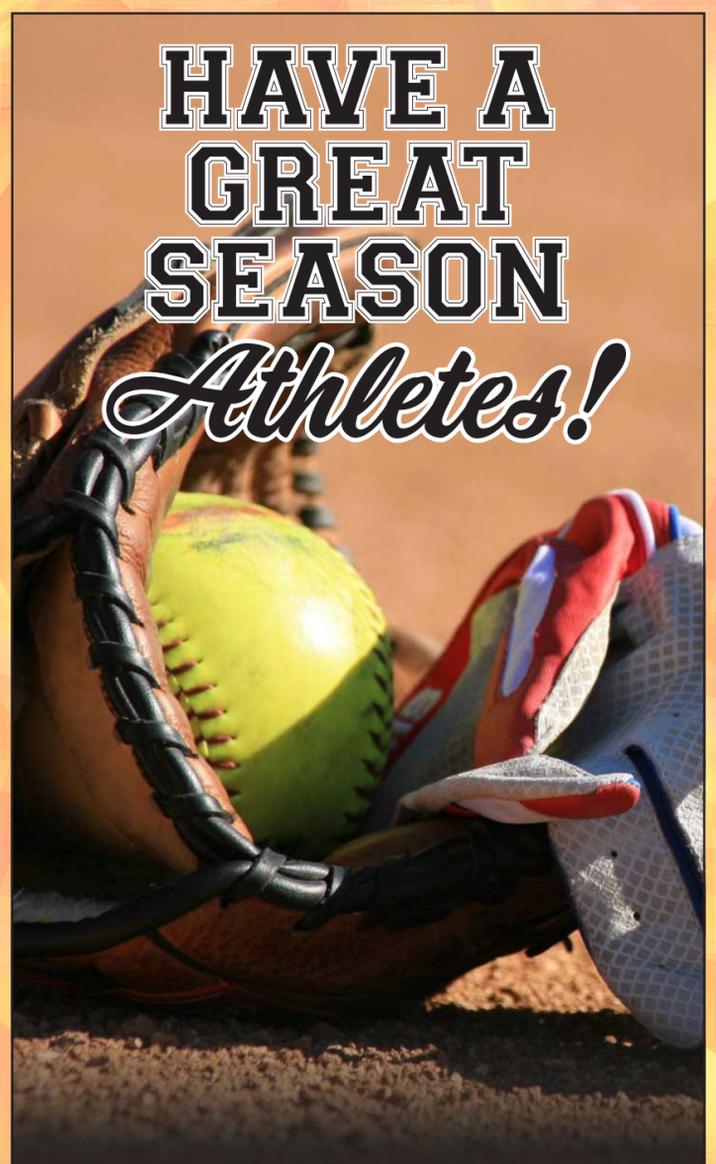
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Coverage of the volleyball court



The 2024 Mexico volleyball team includes, front row from left, Sherlyn Mena-Lopez, Zoey Schutte, Emily Moppin, Addison Paden, Skyler Arnold and Karsyn Hiedemann; second row from left, Makenzie Logan, Parker Howell, Camilla Smith, Cara Murdock, Heaven Seabolt, Elisabeth Borchering, Brooke Smith and Claire Isgrig; third row from left, Savannah Murray, Kambria Furlong, Natalia Fierro, Layla Belcher, Sophia Reams, Ava Herron, Dominique Carter and Camy Blackburn; and back row from left, Erica Pech-Cordova, Mallory Lavender, Charley Jackson, Jaclynn Cline, Neveah Long, Averee Hampton, J'Zaira Fountain and Haylee Campbell.

[Submitted]

The 2024 North Callaway volleyball team includes, front row from left, Lauren Pezold Peyton Boulware and Kayden Sorell; second row from left, Lakyn Hartley, Carlie Clark, Jaden Smithee and Lydia Smithee; back row from left, Coach Nicole Emmons, Rylee Horstman, Natalie Shryock, Bailey Hill, Alex Craighead, Avis Endres and Head Coach Andrew Klein. Preview story on B8.

[Submitted]



Mexico kicks off soccer season



The 2024 Mexico boys soccer team includes, kneeling from left, Isaac Jarquin, William Hernandez, Alex Rodriguez, Andy Cifuentas, Sebastian Matuz, Jesus Garcia, Gage Walker and Alfredo Yahir; and standing from left, Isai Hernandez, Nate Galloway, Titus Grubb, Marcos Matuz, Brixton Goerne, Alex Matuz, Angel Muralles, Oscar Alvarez, Antonio Mendez, Israel Hernandez, Brandon Ballard, Kalvin Smith, Wyatt Wilson, Jonny Hernandez, Grant Walker, Uriel Jarquin, Carlos Rodriguez and Nathan Rodriguez.

[Submitted]



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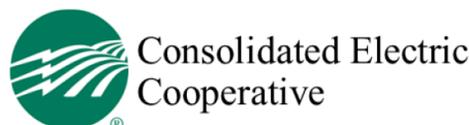
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Mexico girls ready for first serve



The 2024 Mexico girls tennis team includes, front row from left, Abby Ryan, Melanie Jarquin, Lucy Gleeson, Claire Hudson, Reiley Walker, Jyllian Whitworth and Baylea Porter; back row from left, Kayden Higbee, Marali Herrera-Amaya, Lea Hernandez-Sanchez, Yolitza Rodriguez-Rios, Elise Galloway and Bailey Christianson; and not pictured is Jackie Lucas. Preview story on B8

[Submitted]

Lady Bulldogs driving into season



The 2024 Mexico girls golf team includes, from left, Cassandra Young, Ella Connell, Alexis Henderson, Reagan Hays, Jordaii Cooks, Khloe Bohl, Reagan Craig, Brenda Matuz and Bentley McCarty. Preview story on B8.

[Submitted]

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The 2024 Community R-6 cross country team includes, front row from left, Evelyn Scott, Gabby Knipfel, Layton Wright and Grace McCoskey; and back row from left, Clayton Crum, Rett Curtis, KaTavyn Wheeler and Nicholas Henke. Preview story on B8.

[Submitted]



The 2024 Van-Far cross country team includes, from left, Khloe Wallace, Erin Childs, Slade Keller and Garrett Hopke. Preview story on B8.

[Submitted]

Going distance



The 2024 Mexico cross country team includes, front row from left, Alexandra Terry, Emma Seibert, Lucas McHatton, Madison Bickell, Brenda Matuz and Maggie Ramsey; middle row from left, Carter Nading, Brady McCoy, Andrew Peuster, Skylar Shaw, Kyle Lewis, Riley Gordon and Josh Stanford; back row from left, Landon Higgins, Tyler Grimes, Aaron Ortiz and Hunter Bickell; and coaches Lucas Breneman and Izaq DaVolt. Preview story on B8.

[Submitted]



The 2024 North Callaway cross country team includes, from left, Calla Tripp, Emerson Reinhard, Grace Rasmussen and Hunter Jansen. Not pictured are Georgia Bell and Alicia Lang. Preview story on B8.

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MMA soccer goes in with high expectations

BY JEREMY JACOB
Sports Editor

The Missouri Military Academy soccer program knows what to expect from its cadets.

The Colonels won 22 games over the past two years and had their biggest win total of 13 since winning 15 games back in 2018. They also advanced to their first district championship game since that same year.

MMA didn't win the title this time after losing 4-0 to Father Tolton, but head coach Elliott Goodwin said he believes the team can make it back there again this year. Of the around 30 players on the roster, Goodwin said there is a "sizable number" of seniors that know what MMA soccer is all about.

"We will rely on our returning players' leadership skills, as well as their knowledge of my expectations as a coach, to push this team as far as possible this year," Goodwin said.

Among the key returners for MMA is Alexander McBride and Eric Shellabarger that will provide valuable leadership along with senior Avin Hernandez. Last year, Hernandez earned all-district honors along with seven other cadets, being named to the first team. McBride and Shellabarger were named as honorable mentions.

Goodwin said these cadets can push the new talent MMA has this year in the right direction and help them adjust to a new environment.

He said he is excited to see what newcomers like Fernando Puebla and Ethan Medina can do for the team.

"I expect there to be a lot of new faces in the team this year so it will take some time for us to bond and find our strengths," Goodwin said. "Our immediate goal should be to connect as a group and form an identity as a hardworking, determined team. We have to be able to recognize our strengths early as a team and build on them but also recognize our weaknesses and focus on them to improve throughout the season."

Last year's Colonels won the Moberly Tournament for the second straight season and collected various other good moments. To achieve good moments this year, Goodwin said MMA needs to be good in various situations, which he believes will be possible with this roster.

"We have versatile players this year and it's nice to know that I can give our players specific jobs and roles depending on the needs of the game situation," Goodwin said. "I'll be able to see some players in their favored positions as well as being able to put them in positions to test them so having those options will allow us to change our approaches to games when needed."

It takes effort to make it at least as far as the district championship game, but Goodwin believes MMA has what it takes.



Missouri Military Academy senior Alexander McBride pursues a ball during a practice last week at MMA in Mexico. McBride is one of the Colonels' returning players that will be counted upon to lead along with several other cadets.

[Jeremy Jacob]

"As a coach, you always have to expect some form of adversity during the season," Goodwin said. "Based on the last week or so being around

this year's group, they will fight for each other to overcome those tough moments and get things back on track."



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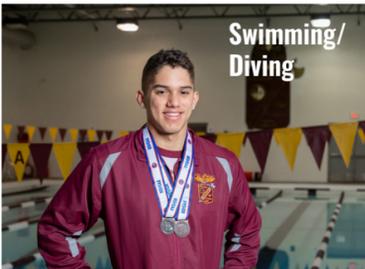
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Mexico girls tennis players rising in team ranks this year

BY JEREMY JACOB
Sports Editor

The Mexico girls tennis roster will have a much different look this season.

The Lady Bulldogs bring back three all-conference and all-district players but lost 10 players – nine seniors to graduation and one to relocation – from last year’s roster.

Head coach Kim Costley said her award-winning returners Jyllian Whitworth, Lucy Gleeson and Claire Hudson will have a big effect on the team. Costley said they each have added to their skillset after playing in the summer.

“Everyone will be moving up this year and some girls will be moving up a significant number of positions,” Costley said. “Our varsity returners will move up and possibly hold those top positions which will in turn help

the new players to the varsity lineup.”

The roster consists of seven seniors, six juniors and one freshman. It won’t include three all-conference and three all-district players from a year ago plus a state qualifier.

On top of filling out the singles varsity lineup, Costley said the Lady Bulldogs will have to find the right combinations for Mexico’s varsity doubles pairings.

“We are going to have to be mentally strong as there will be some growing pains early,” Costley said. “We lost a portion of all of our varsity doubles teams so finding complementary partners early will help.”

No matter the season or the roster, Costley said the team’s goals never change.

“Get better everyday, focus on what you can change. Compete at every level!” Costley said. “Our goals never change, but sometimes our positions and roles do.”

Mexico girls golf triples size to hopefully go further

BY JEREMY JACOB
Sports Editor

The Mexico girls golf program made a big jump this season.

That isn’t just referring to the girls’ skill in driving the ball, but that there are more girls driving the ball. The Lady Bulldogs went from three girls last year to nine this year.

“I expect all the girls to improve their scores this year,” head coach Layne Meyers said. “I also expect them to go out and give it their all, but ultimately have fun with it. Golf is a lifelong sport that many do not pick up till later in life. It’s good to have this skill as a young adult. You can only go so far in

other sports.”

Mexico has seniors Alexis Henderson, Reagan Craig and Jordaii Cooks; junior Ella Connell; sophomore Brenda Matuz; and four freshmen Bentley McCarty, Reagan Hays, Khloe Bohl and Cassandra Young.

Craig’s potential has stuck out to Meyers and could take her as far as the state tournament. The six newcomers have all stood out to Meyers as well.

“The girls can really drive the ball,” Meyers said. “They’ve got the strength and distance down. They have been hitting some bombs. I am most excited about this because a drive can really make or break a hole during match play.”

North Callaway volleyball upfront in desire for progress

North Callaway senior Bailey Hill prepares to bump a ball to her teammate during a summer practice. Hill is back after sitting out last season due to injury.

[Jeremy Jacob]



BY JEREMY JACOB
Sports Editor

North Callaway volleyball recorded the highest winning percentage in program history last season.

The Ladybirds tied their school-record win total of 12 from the previous year and don’t intend to stop.

Head coach Andrew Klein has coached the program through this resurgence and this senior class will be the first he guided all through high school with this being his fourth season. Klein was proud of what the program accomplished last season, namely the total victories and by placing in all three tournaments the team participated in last year, and thinks more could be in store.

“Our goal is to compete at the highest level that we can,” Klein said. “We expect to continue to improve our season record from years past and keep building the North Callaway volleyball program.”

Having three all-conference players was also on that list of accomplishments. Senior Natalie Shryock and junior Rylee Horstman were two of three and return this season as valuable hitters in the front row.

College-bound Riley Blevins was the other all-conference player and will be missing from North Callaway’s back row.

“Experience in the front row will be a strength of our team,” Klein said. “Our lack of experience in the back row will be something we have to work on.”

Klein said Shryock is an “awesome leader” and is one of the team captains because of that. The “great all-around player” and senior Lakyn Hartley and “vocal leader” and senior Avis Endres will be the other Ladybird captains. Senior Jaden Smithee is a returning setter, and senior Bailey Hill bolsters that front row after recovering from a knee injury that kept her out all last year.

Three key newcomers are sophomores Peyton Boulware, Kayden Sorell and Lydia Smithee, Klein said. Sorrell transfers in from district champion Fulton and should help North Callaway’s defense like the other two.

North Callaway has 22 on the roster this season, including six seniors, three juniors, eight sophomores and five freshmen.

2024 cross country season at start line

BY JEREMY JACOB
Sports Editor

Mexico cross country focused on what’s important now

The 61st team in Mexico cross country history wants to WIN.

WIN follows the mantra What’s Important Now as the Bulldogs and Lady Bulldogs try to follow a season that the boys won North Central Missouri Conference and Mexico sent three runners to state.

As long as we stay in the moment and trust the process, I think we will be successful,” head coach Lucas Breneman said.

Mexico only loses one boy from last year’s team for a roster in the range of 17-20 for the boys and girls team. A majority of the team will be juniors, including two-time state qualifier Maggie Ramsey leading the girls.

The boys team will be led by seniors and returning state qualifiers Andrew Peuster and Hunter Bickell. Breneman said Mexico’s upperclassmen should be the team’s strength because of how hard they work.

“We had seven runners really put in big summer miles and that should pay off come late October and early November,” Breneman said.

Breneman said the boys will be looking to repeat as conference champions, and Mexico hopes to qualify a team for state. He said the five girls he has need to stay healthy so the Lady Bulldogs can score as a team, which he believes puts them in position to be competitive in the NCMC.

“I always ask them ‘What does team 61 want to be remembered for?’” Breneman said. “Team 60 Boys won the NCMC, we had seven all-NCMC runners and three all-district runners. Can Team

61 top that? Well, I guess we will know the answer in 12 weeks.”

Community R-6 cross country bigger this season

The Community R-6 cross country program is showing signs of growth.

With seven runners expected this season, Community has its biggest roster ever under head coach Josie Hess after returning four sophomores and welcoming three freshmen. The district also has a junior high team for the first time ever that has four sixth-graders and three eighth-graders.

“Last year, we had a brand new team of all freshmen, and it was really a building year,” Hess said. “This year, we’ve talked about becoming mentally tougher and pushing ourselves to cut time. As far as junior high, we are now in our building year for that team, and I’m hoping to build a love and respect for distance running. I had all of those kids in elementary running club and/or junior high track over the past few years, and I’m excited to see them continue with the sport.”

Grace McCoskey, Evelyn Scott, Nicholas Henke, and Rett Curtis are Hess’ returning sophomore runners as they each have personal goals in mind after logging one high school season in their careers.

Layton Wright, Clayton Crum, and Gabby Knipfel join the team after being coached by Hess in junior high last season. Hess said Crum ran the mile, and Wright has worked hard to build himself up after running shorter distances.

“Some strengths of our team are their ability to motivate each other and work together,” Hess said. “Of course, I’d love to see some state qualifiers, but my biggest goal is to see them set

their own personal goals and work hard for them. If they keep growth mindsets and strong work ethics all season, I will consider it a success.”

Van-Far cross country small squad has state potential

There aren’t many runners in the Van-Far cross country program, but that doesn’t mean state is off the table.

Last year, Van-Far sent two kids to state for the first time in five years and believes multiple state runners are possible out of the group of four kids this year.

Head coach Kris Cross said sophomore Garrett Hopke will be back after running at state and almost breaking the school record as a freshman. Other than him, senior Erin Childs and sophomore Khloe Wallace are motivated for the girls.

“All the kids are hard workers and are willing to put in the extra effort to succeed,” Cross said. “I think the keys to having a successful season this year will be just keeping everyone healthy and mentally prepared for the end of the season.”

Childs and Wallace placed in some meets last season and want to qualify for state after Childs missed out the rest of her career and after Wallace missed out on the rest of last year due to injury. Cross said newcoming sophomore Slade Keller shouldn’t be overlooked as he has a lot of potential.

Cross said Van-Far could “send two again, if not more” to state this year, and there seems to be plenty of optimism from her runners too.

“Our goals for the season are just to see the athletes improve the whole season and hopefully meet the goals that they have for themselves,” Cross said. “I be-

lieve it is going to be a great season. The kids are very excited and optimistic about the year, which makes for a lot of fun in practice and hopefully this will transfer to meets too.”

North Callaway cross country has team mindset

There might not be enough kids for team competition this year for North Callaway cross country, but it still has a team mindset.

North Callaway has six on the roster – one junior, three sophomores and two freshmen – with several that have run since middle school. Head coach Brooke Fischer said the word perseverance describes the program well this season.

“We don’t have a boy or a girls team, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t pushing each-other to work harder,” Fischer said. “They find someone and they run together. To be successful, the kids need to have a strong bond together. They cheer for each other, help each other push harder, and be there for each other. Cross country isn’t an easy sport, so having people to lean on is key.”

Fischer said Grace Rasmussen and Emerson Reinhard are the leaders returning with years of cross country experience between them. Fischer said they are both “determined and strong-willed.”

“Grace Rasmussen and Emerson Reinhard are great team leaders,” Fischer said. “They know the expectations and set goals for themselves that push them during training.”

Fischer said North Callaway adjusted to new coaches last year but should be ready to build some progress for the program this year while hope-

fully avoiding injury.

Missouri Military Academy cross country has numbers for better year

Missouri Military Academy has quite a bit of runners going for cross country this season.

There are about 40 cadets – eight seniors, 13 juniors, eight sophomores and 11 freshmen – who will be on the course for the Colonels this year and head coach Jeff Gifford believes that depth will be a strength.

MMA will have only two returners from last year’s varsity squad – Malachi Imrie and Jacob Stallone – but they and many others have talent, Gifford said. Imrie will be doing double duty again with cross country and swimming, but he, Stallone and Jesus Robinson have stuck out to Gifford.

“Despite our talent turnover, we expect to improve on our depth and for our team leaders to score fewer points at each meet,” Gifford said.

Gifford said MMA might be a couple years out from contending for a district championship but has two achievable goals for this year that will get the team on the right track. The frontrunners should aim to finish in the top 20 percent in the field for all of the meets, and junior varsity defeating similar schools one or two classes bigger.

Khas-Erdene Sod-Erdene, from Mongolia, has been named a co-captain for his leadership, and Matthias Koester and Christopher Song are among the best newcomers on the team. Gifford said Song is even in the running for the top spot on the team.

“These results will show that we are improving from both ends as we are individually more competitive and that we are continuing to strengthen our already deep bench,” Gifford said.

GOOD LUCK ATHLETES!

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