Sports Report











Mt. Abraham | Vergennes | Middlebury | Otter Valley
A Publication of The Addison Independent | Thursday, December 14, 2023



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MUHS sports teams will learn and excel this winter

BY ANDY KIRKALDY

MIDDLEBURY — It won't be a dull winter at Middlebury Union High School, home to seven varsity athletic programs.

The count could be eight if you separate the tandem-coached girls' and boys' Nordic skiing teams, both of which are defending Division II champions.

Then there are two hockey teams with high hopes, and two basketball teams that will look to overcome graduation losses.

Add in wrestling and gymnastic teams getting major boosts in numbers, and last, but by no means least, a dance program that has always been competitive at the state level and earned two silver medals this past winter, but then drew surprisingly few students for this season.

What to expect? MUHS Activities Director

"We've got good

basketball program

is great to. There

returners who've

contributed in the

some kids who've

Activities Director

Sean Farrell

past. We've got

come out."

are not a lot of

interest in our

Sean Farrell offered some insights.

NORDIC SKIING

Coach Keith Wilkerson's Tiger girls' and boys' Nordic teams skied to Division II titles this year, which this past winter in dominant fashion. For the girls' squad it was the program's second straight.

This year, Farrell said the co-coaching trio of Jessie Donavan, Jay Harrington and William Haig is taking over for Wilkerson, and they inherit a team that returns many of the competitors who helped win those titles.

On the girls' side, three of the four athletes who took to the trails in both the freestyle and classic championship races return: junior Beth McIntosh, the freestyle individual champion, and junior Ava Schneider and sophomore Mary Harrington.

All three scored high finishes on both days of last year's state meet, and the team's only question should be, barring injury, who will step up as the fourth scorer in the races and as the final member of the relay teams.

The top candidate is probably junior Lila Cook Yoder, who is coming off a top-20 finish at the state meet this past winter, but others could, of course, emerge to challenge for that spot.

"There are some good athletes in the program, but looking at last year, there is the top three, and then Lila," Farrell said.

On the boys' side, two scorers return. Senior Baxter Harrington scored on both days a year ago, including a third-place result, and sophomore Matias Citarella was strong in the freestyle race.

Again, who fills the ski boots of the departed racers could determine the fate of the boys'

Juniors Matthew Berg, Baker Nelson and Aaron Carr-Perlow have the track records to "step up into those roles," according to Farrell, without ruling out others making an impact.

"We always hope you're a contender again after a state championship, and having dual state championship like we had last year, which was amazing," Farrell said. "I think certainly the girls look more like they can defend. The boys look like they need some

guys to step up."

BOYS' HOCKEY

Probably the biggest news for Coach Jordan Stearns boys' hockey team this winter is a tougher Metro schedule featuring many Division I teams.

The Tigers, coming off a competitive .500 season, will still play in the D-II post-season tournament, and the hope is they'll be battle-hardened when that time comes regardless of their record.

Fellow D-II team Hartford joined MUHS in making the move to accepting a more

challenging regular-season slate, Farrell said.

"The thinking was both of our programs can survive in that division. It's going to be tough. It's great competition. Talking to Jordan, he loves the fact that we're playing at the highest level," Farrell said.

It also helps that the Tigers return a core of talented players, including seniors Iver Anderson, Kellan Bartlett, goalie Casey Calzini (who will probably share time with sophomore TJ Baron), Toby Draper, Eliot Heminway, Gus Hodde, Jake Kadar, Brady McDonough, Gavin McNulty, Jordan Schroeder, Dylan Stowe and Eyon Tembreull. Many younger players will also contribute on what is a deep team, Farrell said.

"We're in pretty good shape. Our numbers are strong," Farrell said. "We've got a very

strong nucleus on our team back, and some good young players who are going to develop." **GIRLS' HOCKEY**

Coach P.J. Lalonde's Tigers this past winter completed a successful 12-10 season that included a decisive Division II quarterfinal victory over No. 4 Hartford before a competitive semifinal setback.

And, Farrell said, not only are almost all the skaters from that team back, but also two former varsity players are returning to the squad after attending other schools: sophomore Lia Calzini and junior McKenna Raymond

Those additions bring the roster up to 20, giving the program almost unprecedented depth. Farrell contrasted that number with the Tigers' 2021 title season.

"We won the championship with nine skaters and three goalies," he said. "We're moving in the right direction. And we've got some youth in the girls' program. It's not laden with seniors."

The team's seniors are Brandy Bishop, Lily Finn and Erin Mulcahy.

Junior Ruby Hubbell returns in the goal after playing most of the time there a year ago, with freshman Heaven Ross available to share the load this season.

Among the younger athletes who saw regular time a year ago were Kenyon Connors. Ila Crowley, Quinn Doria, Ivy Gates, Ireland Hanley, Ellie Wilkinson-Sachs and Sawyer Witscher. Farrell said other young players might well step up and contribute.

"We're really in good shape and excited about our numbers," Farrell said. "And the distribution of grades is great."

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Girls' basketball gets a new coach this winter, Bristol's Eric Carter, who is being assisted by Deborah Holler and Carter's daughter Emma, a former Mount Abraham standout and college player who is volunteering.

Carter's Tigers will be looking to rebuild after a six-win season and the graduation of its leading scorer and its point guard, as well as other members of the regular rotation.

Farrell believes he and his assistants will be up to the task.

"That gives us three people that are working hard to support our girls," he said.

There are 22 athletes in the program, including 8th-graders brought up to support (See MUHS, Page 9)

Coach: Ethan Raymond



WRESTLING



Middlebury Union High School Varsity Wrestling

Name	Grade	Luke Galera	9	Try McTavish	9
Zach Jette	12	Conner Hynes	9	Colton Murray	9
Owen Larrow	12	Wyatt Kennett	9	Ticker Wright	9
Chris White	12	r -			
Aery Carl	11		MIDDI F	BURY UNION HIGH SCH	1001
Jordan Couture	11	į		VARSITY WRESTLING	
Alex Sperry	11				
Kegan Stone	11		Date Opponent/Ev		Time
Jonathan Deering	10	į	12/27 MUHS Tourna 12/28 MUHS Tourna		
Carter Gosselin	10	-		ament	6 n m
Steven Lackard	10		1/27@ Ridgefield		о р
Kameron Raymond	10	į			6 p.m.
Nate Buell	9		2/23&24 State Meet@	Otter Valley	9:30 a.m.
Parker Carl	9	<u> </u>			

MUHS

GIRLS' HOCKEY



10

9

9

9

9

9

MIDDLEBURY UNION HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY GIRLS' HOCKEY

Name Grade Ivy Gates Brandy Bishop 12 Lily Finn 12 Erin Mulcahy

Coaches: PJ Lalonde, Raven Payne

Ireland Hanley 10 Ellie Wilkinson-Sachs 12 10 Sawyer Witscher Michaela Charbonneau 10 11 Sedona Carrara Ruby Hubbell 11 Hayden Dunakin McKenna Raymond 11 Kate Kozak Lia Calzini 10 Julia Morrisey Kenyon Connors 10 Ila Crowley Heaven Ross 10 Isla Weaber Quinn Doria 10

MIDDLEBURY UNION HIGH SCHOOL **GIRLS' VARSITY ICE HOCKEY**

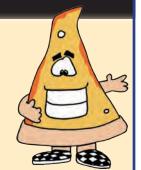
Date Opponen	t/⊑vent	rime
12/2@ Colche	ester	4:45 p.m.
12/13@ Rutlan	d	4 p.m.
	rd	
	oii	
12/27 Burr & Bu	ırton	1 p.m.
12/28 TBD at M	IUHS	1/5 p.m.
1/6@ Stowe		4:15 p.m.
1/10@ Brattle	boro	4:45 p.m.
1/17@ Spauld	ding	5:15 p.m.
1/24@ Harwo	od	5:30 p.m.
1/27 St. Alban	S	5 p.m.
2/3 @ Rice		6:40 p.m.
2/7 TBA		7 p.m.
2/9 S. Burling	gton	5 p.m.
2/14@ Colche	ester	4:30 p.m.

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BOYS' HOCKEY



Coach: Jordan Stear	ne	Evon Tembreull	12
		'	
<u>Name</u>	<u>Grade</u>	Quinton Collins	11
Iver Anderson	12	Caleb Foster	11
Kellen Bartlett	12	Reed Grant	11
Casey Calzini	12	Landon Kean	11
Toby Draper	12	lan Sinclair	11
Eliot Heminway	12	TJ Baron	10
Gus Hodde	12	Jaxson Heffernan	10
Jake Kadar	12	Logan McNulty	10
Brady McDonough	12	Ethan Mulcahy	10
Gavin McNulty	12	Sutton Rubright	10
Jordan Schroeder	12	Gabirel Quesnel	9
Dylan Stowe	12		

MIDDLEBURY UNION HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' VARSITY ICE HOCKEY

Date	Opponent/Event	Time
12/2	@ Hartford	2 p.m.
12/6	@ Mt Mansfield	8 p.m.
12/9	@ U-32	6:30 p.m.
12/16	Rutland	7 p.m.
12/23	@ Colchester	5 p.m.
12/27	Brookline	3 p.m.
12/28	TBD	3/7 p.m.
1/6	Hartford	7 p.m.
1/10	Burr & Burton	7 p.m.
1/13	@ Mt. Mansfield	7:15 p.m.
1/17	@ Spaulding	7:15 p.m.
1/20	Essex	7 p.m.
1/24	@ Burr & Burton	5 p.m.
1/27	St. Albans	7 p.m.
1/31	@ CVU	5:30 p.m.
2/3	@ Hartford	2 p.m.
2/7	@ Rice	7:40 p.m.
2/9	S. Burlington	7 p.m.
2/14	Colchester	7 p.m.
2/17	@ Rutland	11 a.m.
2/21	Mt Mansfield	7 p.m.

MUHS

GIRLS' BASKETBALL



MUHS

(Continued from Page 3)

the JV program, and a few might slide back and forth between varsity and JV, Farrell said.

There are some returning contributors, notably versatile sophomore Solstice Binder, senior post player Kaitlyn Brown, junior forward Kassidy Brown, and junior guard Jazmyn Hurley.

How quickly a half-dozen newcomers — who have ability — adapt to the competitiveness of the varsity level under the tutelage of new leadership will determine how successful the season is, with that success possibly measured as much by improvement and a positive approach as by wins and losses.

"I think we're excited for the new coaching staff," Farrell said. "We're thankful for them in bringing new blood and new energy."

BOYS' BASKETBALL

A year after coaching both the girls' and boys' teams, Coach Chris Altemose, as had been planned, will focus solely on the boys' team this season.

Like the Tiger girls' squad, the boys' team, which won 10 times a year ago, saw an exodus

of seniors that included a 1,000-point scorer, post player Penn Riney, as well as number of other regular contributors.

Farrell acknowledged there are not too many returners who played major roles, but said the team has lured athletes from other sports, such as senior Milo Rees from soccer and junior George Devlin from football and Nordic.

"We've got good interest in our basketball program this year, which is great to see," he said. "There are not a lot of returners who've contributed in the past. We've got some kids who've come out."

There are a handful of athletes who saw time this past winter, notably senior guards Eddie Fallis and Carter Paquette, senior forward Noah Doherty-Konczal, and junior guards Tassilo Luksch and Cam Whitlock.

Farrell said what the group lacks in experience Altemose hopes they can make up in quickness and athleticism, traits he plans to take advantage of at both ends of the court.

"He's got a lot of good athletes that he feels he can exchange pretty equally throughout a game. His tactic is going to be to run, run and run," Farrell said. "We can throw fresh bodies at the other team no matter who we're playing without losing too much as far as the skills go."

WRESTLING

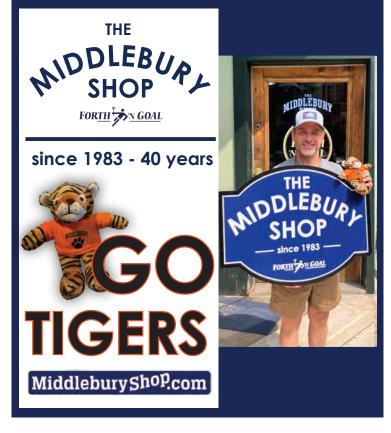
Coach Ethan Raymond saw only four wrestlers healthy enough to compete at the state meet this past winter, one of whom won his weight class, heavyweight Nick Sheldrick, and then graduated. Two others returned after reaching the podium, juniors Avery Carl and Alex Sperry. Their classmate Kegan Stone is also back.

The outlook is a little more hopeful this season, even if a bit of attrition hits: 19 wrestlers, including eight freshmen, graced Raymond's preseason roster, with a reasonable coverage of the weight classes.

Farrell cited senior Owen Larrow and sophomore Kameron Raymond as among possible breakthrough candidates, and said any number of wrestlers could emerge.

"There are a lot of younger kids who are just learning as we go. So we're optimistic," he (See MUHS, Page 11)







BOYS' BASKETBALL



Middlebury Union High School Varsity Boys' Basketball

Coach: Chris Altemose Name Grade Noah Doherty-Konczal 12 Eddie Fallis 12 Dylan Odell 12 12 Carter Paquette Cole Warren 12 Keenan Chicoine 11 George Devlin 11 Christopher Gile 11 Tassilo Luksch 11 Colton Odell 11 Heath Odell 11 Kyle Stearns 11 Cam Whitlock 11 10 Riney Cooke

BOYS' VARSITY BASKETBALL

Date	Opponent/Event	Time
12/5	Colchester	7 p.m.
12/8	St. Albans	7 p.m.
12/11	@ Essex	7:30 p.m.
12/20	@ U-32	7 p.m.
	Mill River	
12/29	@ Harwood	7 p.m.
	@ Fair Haven	
	Otter Valley	
	Rutland	
	Missisquoi	
	Vergennes	
	@ Milton	
	Mt. Abe	
1/31	@ Enosburg	7 p.m.
	@ Missisquoi	
	@ Vergennes	
	Milton	
	@ Mt Abe	
	Enosburg	•
	· · ·	p

MUHS

DANCE

(Continued from Page 9)

said. "I think we'll be able to fill most weight classes."

More help should be on the way, Farrell added, noting there's another big class coming up behind this group of freshmen.

"We knew this 9th-grade class would be a big bump for us," he said. "So hopefully we can keep riding this wave. Ethan does a great job working with the middle school coaches."

The Middlebury Union High School dance squad finished second in both of its disciplines — Hip Hop and Pom — in the state championship competition this past winter.

Those results followed a strong regular season in which the Tiger team swept all of its regular-season Hip Hop competitions except one.

But only a few top performers return to take to the floor this winter, and Farrell said there could be a learning curve if the Tiger dancers are to rank among the state's top teams once again.

"I would say this is our blip year where

we graduated some of our stronger dancers," Farrell said.

The Tigers selected their top seven or eight dancers to compete at the state final. This year, the team has a roster of just seven, with only one junior, Autumn Lowell, and three sophomores, Madelyn Brochu, Madyson Hutchinson and Carowyn Maceno, joined by three ninth-graders.

"We're going to be real young, real green," Farrell said.

The team also has a new head coach. Assistant Coach Ashley Smith, a former Tiger dancer, takes over the top job. Farrell was responsible for much of the program's choreography this past winter, and now will be charged with bringing her entire team up to competition readiness, including the young newcomers.

"We have a lot of confidence in her ability to work with the kids," he said.

GYMNASTICS

vermontsun.com

Coach Natalia Harthman once again returns an enthusiastic, group of gymnasts to her Tiger program, which calls the Middlebury Union Middle School gym home for practice and competitions. Her numbers took a step forward, roughly doubling to nine with the addition of four freshmen.

Barring injury or other attrition, the numbers could continue to grow. The other five team members are all sophomores, including three top scorers from a year ago.

"We have some returners, which is nice," Farrell said, citing Cooper Cannon, Emily Johnson (one of the freshmen is her sister Nataly) and Alixis Williams.

Farrell described his recent drop-in on the MUMS program.

"The strong middle school is certainly why this is working. I was at practice the other night, and I think they've got 25 on the middle school team," he said.

As far as this winter's meets, the Tiger should have fun again and be competitive with the state's other programs that do not benefit from locations near gymnastic centers and large population bases, even if not with Chittenden County powerhouses such as Essex and CVU.



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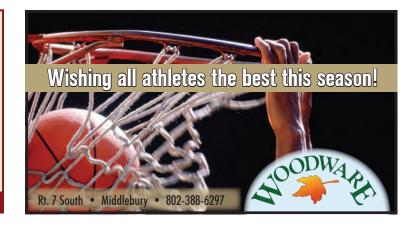
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DANCE



Middlebury Union High School Varsity Dance

Coaches: Ashley Smith

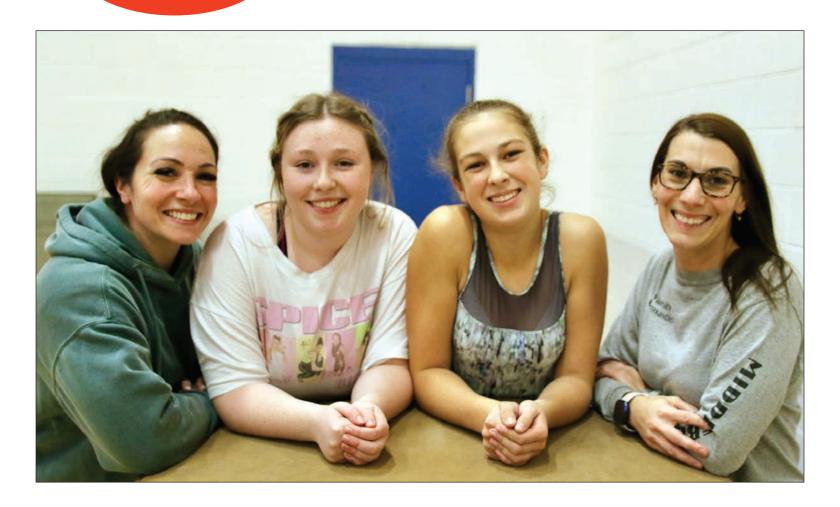
Name	Grade
Autumn Lowell	11
Madelyn Brochu	10
Madyson Hutchinson	10
Carowyn Maceno	10
Cora Blair	9
Kayla Haugan	9
Jordyn Rushton	9

MIDDLEBURY UNION HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY DANCE TEAM

Date	Opponent/Event	Time
1/6	MUHS Hosts	1 p.m.
1/20	@ Richford	1 p.m.
1/27	@ Mt. Mansfield	1 p.m.
2/10	@ Burr & Burton	1 p.m.
	State Competition @ VUHS	



GYMNASTICS



Middlebury Union High School **Varsity Gymnastics** Coaches: Natalia Harthman Name Grade Cara Bougor 10 Cooper Cannon 10 Emily Johnson 10 Mady Richards 10 Mercedes Sheldrick 10 Alixis Williams 10 Isabella Audy 9 Lila Hescock 9 Nataly Johnson 9

MIDDLEBURY UNION HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY GYMNASTICS* Date Opponent/Event Time 12/13 CVU 6 p.m. 12/27 Burr & Burton 6 p.m. 1/4 @Randolph 7 p.m. 1/12 Burlington et al. 6 p.m. 1/18 Harwood 6 p.m. 1/31 Milton 6 p.m. 2/6 @Essex 7 p.m. *Home Meets at MUMS



NORDIC SKIING



MIDDLEBURY UNION HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' AND GIRLS' VARSITY NORDIC SKIING

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Date	Opponent/Event	Time
12/21	Host at Rikert	2 p.m.
1/13	Host at Rikert	10 a.m.
2/27	State Meet at Rikert	
3/1	State Meet at Craftsbury	



NORDIC SKIING



aches: Jessie Donovan, Jay	Harrington & William Haig	Beth McIntosh	11
Name	Grade	Baker Nelson	11
Baxter Harrington	12	Haakon Olsen	11
Sarah Benz	11	Gabe Schmitt	11
Matthew Berg	11	Ava Schneider	11
Aaron Carr-Perlow	11	Jackson Trump	11
Clara Chant	11	Matias Citarella	10
Lila Cook Yoder	11	Owen Flanagan	10
Piper Farnsworth	11	Kaden Hammond	10
Lucas Flinner	11	Mary Harrington	10
Anika Heppell	11	Callan McDowell	10
Subia Khan	11	Emery Richards-Lideke	10
Ella Kozak	11	Violet Anderson	9
Mirabelle Markowski	11	Nate Cook Yoder	9
WII GOOIG WG NOWSKI	11	Henry McDonnell	9

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Mt. Abe will dribble, wrestle, run and shoot to victory

BY ANDY KIRKALDY

BRISTOL — Up in Bristol the Mount Abraham Union High School girls' and boys' basketball teams will both be looking to build on recent successful seasons, while the wrestling squad can find good reason for optimism with an encouraging influx of youth.

While good athletes returned to the indoor track & field team, there was some uncertainty around the status of the program in the preseason. The athletes will definitely compete, but whether they can score as a team this winter was up in the air as the season neared.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

The Eagle girls did not defend their 2022 championship under first-year Coach Koran Cousino this past winter, but earned the No. 6 seed in Division II, won a first-round playoff game, and finished up with a 12-10 record after a slow start.

A couple senior starters who played key ballhandling and scoring roles graduated, but Cousino returns a number of athletes who played significant roles a year ago, including senior guards Morgan Barnard and Piper Guillmette and senior forward Carley Cook, and juniors like post player Mackenzie Griner and guards Louisa Painter, Piper Guillmette and Lauren Cousino.

Others return after playing complementary roles and should be ready to contribute more this season, said Mount Abe Athletic Director Devin Wendel.

"We have a lot of

is great about this

group is we have a

lot of kids who are

— Athletic Director

Devin Wendel

just competitors."

speed, and what

"That's a very rounded out squad. That's going to be a very competitive group this year," Wendel said.

In addition to quickness, Wendel sees the team as being strong in the intangibles department.

"We have a lot of speed, and what is great about this group is we have a lot of kids who are just competitors," Wendel said. "(And) there are good senior

leaders in there. You look at Carley Cook, a great quiet leader ... and you've got Morgan, who we're going to lean on to lead the team both mentally and out on the court."

Wendel expects Coach Cousino will use the Eagles' speed, depth and shooting to good advantage with pressure defense and an uptempo offense.

"It's going to be exciting," he said. "We're



going to get up and down the floor for sure." **BOYS' BASKETBALL**

This past winter, Coach Martin Clark's Eagles boys' hoop team wrapped up its second straight winning season with a 13-9 record and for the second straight winter picked up a home playoff victory.

The roster looks different this winter, however, after key contributors graduated.

There are important players back, including six-foot-five senior Ian Funke, a two-way player, and senior guard Noah Ladeau, a bench contributor a year ago whose quickness will be an asset at both ends of the court. Those two are the team's only seniors.

Junior guard Hayden Lutz, a regular member of the rotation this past season, should start at the point, and Wendel also expects junior lefty Aricin Griffin to contribute in his first year on the varsity, probably in the frontcourt.

Funke will carry a big load, Wendel acknowledged.

"Ian Funke is going to be kind of our pillar this year," Wendel said. "We're going to rely on him big time."

Wendel said Coach Clark will be evaluating which of the newcomers are most ready to compete at the varsity level or grow into roles as the season progresses.

"Beyond those four, I think it's going to be a battle for who's hungry, and who wants the position, who wants to be on the court," Wendel said, with possibly junior Jacob Prouty having the best early shot at the other forward slot.

How the team fares might depend, he said, on how well the rest of the Eagles "fill in and support the top five. What are they going to give when someone needs a rest? What are they going to do when someone gets into foul trouble? How do they step into that role and stay composed and compete?"

WRESTLING

Coach Alex Peterson's Eagle wrestling program battled to a mid-pack 13th-place finish at the state meet this past winter, placing three wrestlers on the podium, including two-time champion Devin Hemingway.

"We're young this year. The exciting part is this is a really dedicated group of young wrestlers," Wendel said.

As well as numbers, Wendel said the weight (See Mt. Abe, Page 22)



GIRLS' BASKETBALL



Mount Abraham Union High School Varsity Girls' Basketball

Coach: Koran Cousino	
Name	Grade
Morgan Barnard	12
Carley Cook	12
Piper Guillmette	12
Siena Stanley	12
Lauren Cousino	11
Nichole Crowe	11
Whitney Dykstra	11
Mackenzie Griner	11
Hazen Guillmette	11
Louisa Painter	11
Abigail Parker	11
Genevieve Forand	10

Date	Opponent/Event	Hille
12/13	U-32	7 p.m.
12/16	BBA	12:30 p.m.
12/19	Montpelier	7 p.m.
12/27	@ Fair Haven Tourney	5:30 p.m.
	@ Fair Haven Tourney	
1/5	@ Otter Valley	7 p.m.
	Fair Haven	
1/13	@ Enosburg	2:30 p.m.
	@ Vergennes	
1/19	@ Colchester	7 p.m.
	@ Middlebury	
	Milton	
1/30	Missisquoi	7 p.m.
2/2	@ Rutland	7 p.m.
	Enosburg	
2/9	VUHS	7 p.m.
	Colchester	
2/15	Middlebury	7 p.m.
2/19	@ Milton	7 p.m.
	@ Missisquoi	
		-

Mt. Abe

BOYS' BASKETBALL



Mount Abraham Union High School Varsity Boys' Basketball

Coach: Martin Clark

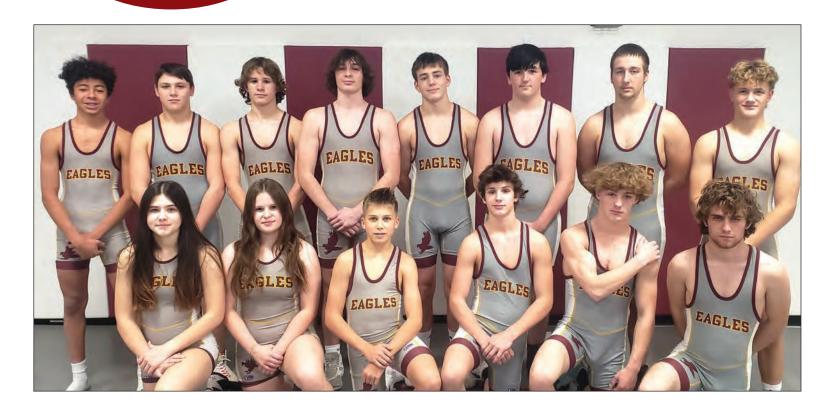
Name	Grade
lan Funke	12
Noah Ladeau	12
Kyle Johnston	10
Chase Atkins	11
Ethan Chasse	11
Aricin Griffin	11
JD Jacobs	11
Hayden Lutz	11
Jacob Prouty	11
Cooper Cook	10

MT. ABE VARSITY BOYS' BASKETBALL

Date	Opponent/Event	Time
12/13	@ Winooski	7:30 p.m.
12/15	Randolph	7 p.m.
	Winooski	
12/22	@ MSJ	7 p.m.
	Mt. Anthony	
12/29	Otter Valley	7 p.m.
	@ Randolph	
1/05	MSJ	7 p.m.
1/9	Fair Haven	7 p.m.
1/13	@ Otter Valley	2:30 p.m.
1/17	@ Enosburg	7 p.m.
	@ Milton	
1/23	Missisquoi	7 p.m.
1/25	@ Middlebury	7 p.m.
1/31	@ Vergennes	7 p.m.
2/3	Enosburg	12:30 p.m.
2/6	Milton	7 p.m.
2/8	@ Missisquoi	7 p.m.
	Middlebury	
2/16	Vergennes	7 p.m.



WRESTLING



Mount Abraham Union High School Varsity Wrestling

Coach: Alex Peterson

Grade
12
12
10
10
10
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9

MOUNT ABRAHAM UNION HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY WRESTLING

Date	Opponent/Event	Time
12/9	@ NAC Tourney	
12/12	@ CVU	7:30 p.m.
12/16	@ St. J Tourney	
12/21	Home Meet	6 p.m.
12/27&28	@ Middlebury Tourney	
1/6	@ Mt. Anthony Tourney	
1/12&12	@ Essex Tourney	
1/17	@ Mt Anthony	6:30 p.m.
1/23	@ Middlebury	6 p.m.
2/1	@ Vergennes	6 p.m.
2/3	@ Mt. Mansfield Tourney	
2/23&24	State Meet at Otter Valley	



INDOOR TRACK & FIELD



TEAM PHOTO WAS NOT AVAILABLE

Indoor Track & Field		
Name	Grade	
Joseph Darling	12	
Ruby Connell	11	
Elliot Senecal	11	
Emily Fritz	10	
Nathan Lester	10	
Isla Underwood	10	
Rhiannon Andrews	9	
Kassondra Garrow	9	
Lucy Lawson	9	
Truman Sawyer	9	

Mount Abraham Union High School

Date	Opponent/Event	Time
	11	•
	@ UVM	
12/23	@ UVM	8:30 a.m.
12/31	@ UVM	8:30 a.m.
1/7	@ UVM	8:30 a.m.
	@ UVM	

Mt. Abe

(Continued from Page 17)

distribution is also breaking in the program's favor.

"We're hoping to fill at least 13 or 14 of the weight classes," the A.D. said.

There will, of course, be a learning curve for the newcomers, as successful as they might have been in middle school.

"There's a big difference between a 14- and

"Senior Wyatt
Allenson is excited
about the season.
He's been raring
to go since the
fall. With another
year of experience,
he's going to be
right there in the
running."

— Athletic Director Devin Wendel

18-yearan old competing February,' in Wendel said. "The cool part is they're really dedicated and working hard and working on a lot of things right now."

The coaches say in the early going among the youngsters to watch could be Mason Atkins, Lincoln

Painter and Isaiah Isham.

As for returners, Hemingway graduated, as did one other senior place-winner, but senior Conner Meacham is back after taking third at 113 pounds a year ago; Wendel said he could bump up to 120 this season. The coaches also have high hopes for senior Wyatt Allenson, who missed the state meet a year ago, but could be a threat at 220 this winter.

"Wyatt is excited about the season. He's been raring to go since the fall," Wendel said. "With another year of experience, he's going to be right there in the running."



INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

The Eagle indoor track and field team is young, with four freshmen and three sophomores among its 10 members, but returns three of its four scorers from the state championship meet this past winter.

What it lacked as the season approached was a coach. Wendel had a backup plan in

place as of the first week of December: He arranged with Vergennes AD Peter Maneen that the athletes could work out with Coach Brad Castillo's Commodore team, as the Eagles did when the sport was a club program at Mount Abe.

"I did confirm with Pete this morning that if I don't find one by the end of the day they can start training with Vergennes," Wendel said on Dec. 1.

It remained to be determined in the preseason if that meant whether the Eagles would be treated as if they are a team, or as if they are — as they had been in the past — a club with members competing as individuals.

"I'm also going to reach out to the Vermont Principals' Association and let them know we still want to be considered a varsity team," Wendel said. "Basically, we shouldn't be shorting our team because we can't find an adult to support them."

Regardless, the Eagle athletes will again compete at a series of meets hosted by the University of Vermont on Saturday mornings.

The returning scorers from a year ago are senior Joseph Darling, who finished third in the D-II boys' long jump and fourth in the triple jump; sophomore Isla Underwood, who was sixth in the girls' 300-meter run; and sophomore Emily Fritz, who joined Underwood on the Eagles' fourth-place four-by-200-meter relay team.

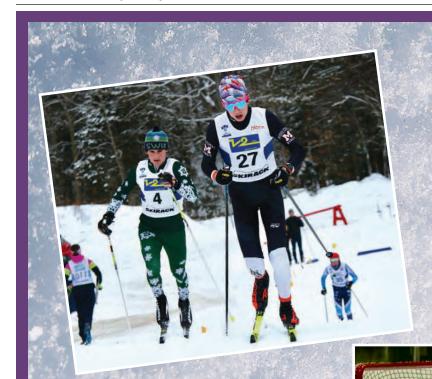
"Joseph and Isla are the ones to keep an eye on," Wendel said, adding he expects others to emerge as the season progresses.

And the track and field athletes will have inhouse coaching when the weather warms up.

"We'll be all set for the spring," Wendel said.









Good Luck to area Athletes!

FILE PHOTOS













VUHS Commodores ready for a strong winter season

BY ANDY KIRKALDY

VERGENNES — Based on their most recent history, the Vergennes Union High School teams most likely to raise banners after this winter wear wrestling singlets and running shoes.

But rebuilding basketball teams shouldn't be counted out, according to VUHS Athletic Director Peter Maneen, while the future of the area's preeminent cheerleading program looks bright.

WRESTLING

The most successful Commodore program a year ago was Coach Eugene Stearns's wrestling team, which placed seven wrestlers on the podium at the state championships, including Most Outstanding Wrestler Eli Brace. VUHS was fourth overall despite fielding a small team.

This winter the squad will try to duplicate that feat with just eight wrestlers, four of whom reached the podium this past season: junior Issac Preston at 182 pounds and senior Jamison Couture at 195, who each finished second; senior Tyerell Lavoie, sixth at 170; and sophomore Payton Lavoie, fifth at 160.

"We're not necessarily flush with quantity, but we are quality," Maneen said.

Some youngsters could also break through, including freshman heavyweight Izaak Wolniewicz, third in New England in a middle school tournament, and a freshman at the lighter end of the weight spectrum, Steven Kittredge. Rounding out the team are junior Ethan Hallock and freshman Kyle Clark, who will compete in the middle weight classes, according to Maneen.

The future appears promising. The program has 10 7th- and 8th-graders signed up, Maneen said, with even more in the pipeline.

"I've already got 34 youth wrestlers registered," he said.

INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

Coach Brad Castillo's indoor track and field team also enjoyed a solid 2022-2023 season. The boys ran to a fourth-place finish out of 19 scoring teams in Division II, and the Commodore girls placed in a couple events for the first time in a while.

And all the boys' scorers are back, including defending D-II 1,000-meter champion Calvin Gramling, who also ran on the Commodores' third-place four-by-400- and 800-meter relay teams with fellow returners Calder Rakowski, Grey Fearon and Riley Gagnon.

Rakowski also took third at 600 meters,



while this fall Fearon took a major step forward during the cross-country season and could challenge in the distance events.

Senior Ryder Messinger, sophomore Chance Koenig and freshman Ryan Johnson round out the boys' team.

Maneen said the veteran boys' team should fare well this season.

"They should be pretty well represented again," he said. "They've definitely put in enough time. They're dedicated."

Jing Williams returns to lead the girls' team, which has grown in numbers to match the boys' side with seven members. Williams was sixth at 600 meters this past season, and joined with returners Torrey Hanna and Quincy Sabick and one other runner to finish fourth in the 4X400 relay.

Joining those three this season are junior Mary Cosgrove, sophomore Faith McCallister (when she is not playing basketball), and freshmen Isabelle Van Voorst and Madeleine Stroup.

"It's nice to see some new faces joining the veterans," Maneen said.

The Mount Abraham team will train with the Commodores because that program could not find a coach before the season opened. But the Eagles will not score for VUHS.

BOYS' HOOP

The Commodore boys are coming off an 11-11 season in which they earned a No. 6 seed in Division III and, in a quarterfinal loss on the road, came within a few points of a trip to Barre. Several seniors graduated, and Coach Josh Carter also decided to step down due to changes in his work and family lives.

Former VUHS and Middlebury AD Eric LeBeau took over the reins after coaching the JV boys' squad a year ago. He had previously coached AAU and elementary school hoop, Maneen said.

The Commodores were hit hard by graduation but do return starting senior forward Oakley Francis, a key cog at both ends a year ago, and a few other players who were members of the rotation, including senior guard Levi Cogger, senior forward Devin Brisson and junior forward Spencer Gebo.

"We've graduated a number of seniors over the last couple of years, but the good thing about boys' basketball is the numbers here are substantial," Maneen said, citing over 30 among the varsity and JV A and B teams.

"Although we lost some talent, there are definitely returning players that are going to be playing substantial roles," he said.

Among younger players who could make an impact are sophomores Ryker Mosehauer and Ryan Wright, Maneen said.

Maneen added he expected LeBeau to emphasize the defensive end of the floor.

"Eric's calling card is definitely the (See VUHS, Page 26)

VUHS

(Continued from Page 25) defense," he said.

It could be a tough ask to reach the state semi-finals in Central Vermont this season given the graduation losses, but Maneen said that would still remain a target.

"Their goal is always to get back to Barre, and it's within reach," he said. "Some things have to come together. The team has to learn to gel. But I think there's enough talent in that program that they're going to be able to surprise some teams. And then with our tough schedule in the Lake Division, when we get into the tournament, and then when we're playing teams our size, generally speaking, that bodes well for us."

GIRLS' HOOP

A year ago Coach Billy Waller's Commodore girls' basketball team had a tough time in the Lake Division, but like the boys romped in a first-round Division III playoff game. They also gave top-seeded Windsor a battle in a quarterfinal setback before finishing with six wins.

Unlike the boys' program, the girls' teams are lighter in numbers, with 17 for two teams. A couple of younger high school players will probably split time between varsity and JV.

A senior point guard and post player and other role players also graduated from last winter's squad, and Waller will have to do some rebuilding. Maneen acknowledged.

The mainstays will be guards: senior Kaelin Sullivan and sophomores Ava Francis and Ashtin Stearns. Senior Alaina LeBeau saw time a year ago, as did junior post player Kendra Jackson, who was slowed in this preseason by injury. The team's only other senior is Kayla Lawrence.

Maneen said Jackson's health and the development of sophomore post players Scout Jacobson and Faith McCallister will go a long way toward defining the Commodores' season.

"It's a rebuilding year I would say, but it's a year of introducing some new post players in with the experienced guard play," he said.

As is also the case with the boys' team, the Commodore girls' Lake Division schedule will also prepare them for the D-III tournament, in which the program has been competitive in recent seasons.

CHEERLEADING

Co-Coaches Lydia Sabourin and Abbey Gendreau again welcome a cheerleading



squad that won't be big in numbers, but should have plenty of enthusiasm.

Four juniors should prove to be the heart of the team and show the way for their younger teammates: Emma Bergmans, Hannah Botala, Claire Clark and Katelyn LaBerge.

Rounding out the squad is one freshman, Peyton Pierce, and three 8th-graders.

As has been the case in recent years, the Commodores will host the state championship cheer competition. They didn't place at the meet last time around, but should be ready to put on another good show for the home crowd

by the end of the season after performing at basketball games throughout the winter.

Meanwhile, the numbers at the high school level might not be overwhelming, but the future of VUHS cheerleading looks promising: Maneen noted the elementary school program drew 58 participants this winter.

"We're excited about the extremely large youth program that is coming up," he said. "We've worked hard over the last couple years to bring that program back."



VUHS

GIRLS' BASKETBALL



Vergennes Union High School Varsity Girls' Basketball Team

Coach: Billy Waller Grade Name Kayla Lawrence 12 Alaina Lebeau Kaelin Sullivan 12 Kendra Jackson 11 Tryphene Miguel 11 Ava Francis 10 Amelia Giroux 10 Scout Jacobsen 10 Faith McAllister 10 Ashtin Stearns 10



BOYS' BASKETBALL



Vergennes Union High School Varsity Boys' Basketball Team

Coach: Eric LeBeau

Juacii. Elic Lebeau		
Name	Grade	
Cyron Bassett	12	
Devin Brisson	12	
Levi Cogger	12	
Oakley Francis	12	
Chase Stokes	12	
Hayden Bassett	11	
Owen Collette	11	
Ethan Croke	11	
Abram Francis	11	
Spencer Gebo	11	
Spencer Grimm	11	
Reese Paquette	11	
Ryker Mosehauer	10	
Ryan Wright	10	

VUID BUTS VARSITT BASKETBALL			
Date	Opponent/Event	Tin	ne
12/8	@ Danville	7 p.:	m.
12/11	@ Colchester	7 p.	m.
12/13	Northfield	7 p.	m.
12/15	Stowe	7 p.:	m.
12/20	Fair Haven	7 p.:	m.
12/18	@ Williamstown	7 p.	m.
12/27	Twinfield	7 p.:	m.
1/3	@ Otter Valley	7 p.:	m.
1/9	Peoples	7 p.:	m.
1/12	Milton	7 p.:	m.
1/17	@ Fair Haven	7 p.i	m.
1/20	@ Middlebury	12:30 p.i	m.
1/23	@ Enosburg	7 p.i	m.
1/26	@ Missisquoi	7 p.:	m.
1/31	Mt Abe	7 p.:	m.
2/3	@ Milton	11:30 a.i	m.
2/6	Middlebury	7 p.i	m.
2/8	Enosburg	7 p.i	m.
2/14	Missisquoi	7 p.i	m.
		7 p.:	



CHEERLEADING



Vergennes Union High School Cheerleading Team

Coaches: Lydia Sabourin & Abbey Gendreau

,	,
Name	Grade
Emma Bergmans	11
Hannah Botala	11
Claire Clark	11
Katelyn LaBerge	11
Peyton Pierce	9
Akirah Lalumiere	8
Hayden Lander	8
Peyton Pierce	8
Caeleigh White	8
-	



INDOOR TRACK & FIELD



Vergennes Union High School Varsity Indoor Track & Field

Coach: Brad Castillo
Name

Name	Grade
Riley Gagnon	12
Calvin Gramling	12
Calder Rakowski	12
Ryder Messinger	12
Marybeth Cosgrove	11
Grey Fearon	11
Torrey Hanna	11
Jing Williams	11
Chance Koenig	10
Faith McAllister	10
Quincy Sabick	10
Ryan Johnson	9
Madeliene Stroup	9
Isabella Van Voorst	9

VERGENNES UNION HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

Date	Opponent/Event	Time
12/17	@ UVM	8:30 a.m.
12/23	@ UVM	8:30 a.m.
12/31	@ UVM	8:30 a.m.
1/7	@ UVM	8:30 a.m.
1/14	@ UVM	8:30 a.m.

VUHS

WRESTLING

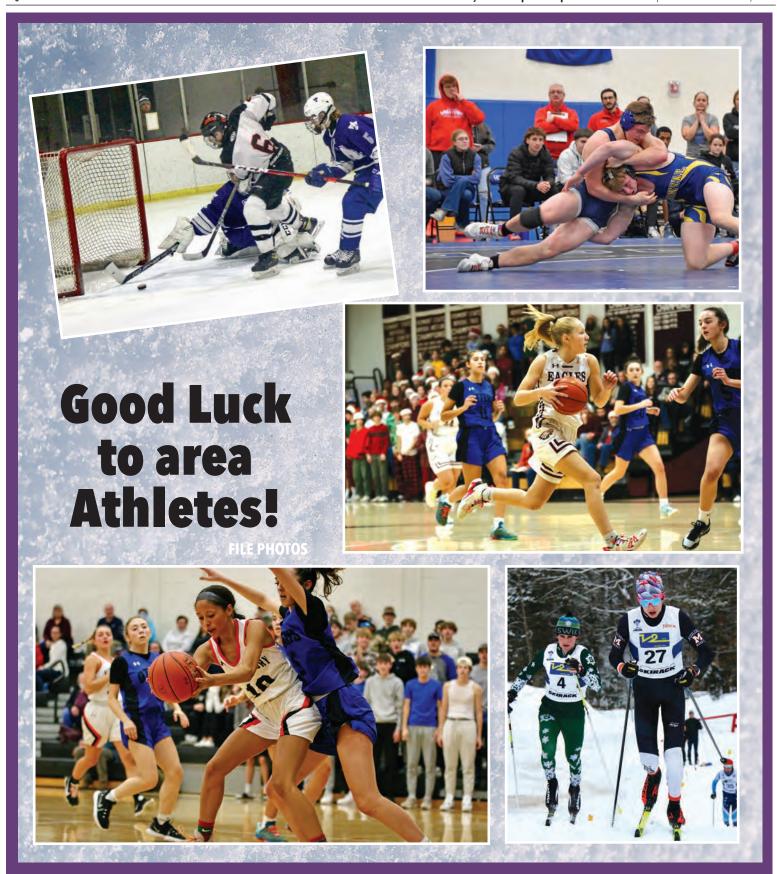


Vergennes Union High School Varsity Wrestling Team

Coach: Eugene Stearns	
Name	Grade
Jamison Couture	12
Tyrell Lavoie	12
Ethan Hallock	11
Isaac Preston	11
Payton Lavoie	9
Kyle Clark	9
Stephen Kittredge	9
Izaak Wolniewicz	9

VERGENNES UNION HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY WRESTLING

Date	Opponent/Event	Time
12/16	. @ St. J Tourney	TBD
12/27&28	. @ Middlebury Tourney	TBD
1/10	. @ Mt. Anthony	6 p.m.
1/12&13	. @ Essex Tourney	TBD
1/17	. @ Mill River	6 p.m.
1/20	. Commodore Invitational	TBD
1/24	. @ Otter Valley Tourney	TBD
2/1	. Mt Abe/Springfield	6 p.m.
2/3	. @ Mt. Mansfield Tourney	TBD
2/10	. @ Springfield	TBD
2/23&24	. State Meet at Otter Valley	TBD



Otters look for success on the courts, mats and trails

BY ANDY KIRKALDY

BRANDON — The program that made the most noise this past winter at Otter Valley Union High School was wrestling, and that squad could be poised to do so again.

On the basketball front, the OV boys bring back an experienced squad, while the Otter girls will be relying more on younger players and newcomers.

The other two official Vermont Principals' Association sports at OV, Nordic and cheerleading, are seeing, at least for this winter, low numbers, according to Athletic Director Steve Keith. While the participants will be keeping busy, they won't compete as teams over the next few months.

WRESTLING

This past winter Coach Cole Mason's Otter wrestling squad finished third at the Vermont championship meet, the best result for a school that doesn't compete in Division I in other sports.

Things look solid for the team again this winter. Five podium finishers return for the Otters — seniors Chase Cram and Derek Li, juniors Lincoln Wilcox and Isaac Whitney, and sophomore Thomas Given. Sophomores Ethan Ross and Drake Felkl are also back after competing in the state meet last winter.

That group and a bunch of talented newcomers from which more contenders should emerge brought the roster count up to 20

In all, the coaches are feeling optimistic for this season, Keith said, and for the future — 18 more students signed up for middle school wrestling.

"I know Cole is pretty excited. He's got really good numbers in the room again," Keith said. "The younger guys who gained some pretty good experience last year can hopefully take a step forward. And he's got some older leaders to fill the weight classes. We're excited to see that many kids are interested in it ... Cole has done a really nice job of building the culture."

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Coach Mike Stark's boys' hoop team was often competitive a year ago against a tough schedule. Still, when the dust settled the results showed the Otters had won just seven times.

But there was a lot of optimism in the preseason that a deep and quick senior-laden team, including a number of athletes who have played together for several years, could make an impact in the Southern Vermont League and





Division II this winter.

"They're very optimistic. A lot of younger kids got a lot of experience the last couple

years," Keith said. "We return a lot of kids, and they've put in a ton of work since November, (See OVUHS, Page 35)



GIRLS' BASKETBALL



Otter Valley Union High School Varsity Girls' Basketball

Head Coach: Ray Counter

•	
Name	Grade
Sierra Cormany	12
Aleksandra Savela	12
Elaina Sheldrick	12
Miley Lape	11
Matelin LaPorte	11
Sara Loyzelle	11
Lauren Palmer	11
Breanna Bovey	10
Hannah Desabrais	10
Marissa Dick	10
Leann Thomas	10
Sophia Parker	9

	OVUHS GIRLS' VA	KSIIY BASKEIBALL
Date	Opponent/Event	Time
		7 p.m.
12/19	. @ Proctor	7 p.m.
12/22	. Middlebury	7 p.m.
12/27	. @ Fair Haven	7 p.m.
12/29	. TBD @ Fair Haven	5:30 p.m.
		7 p.m.
1/9	. @ Burr & Burton	6:30 p.m.
1/13	. Rutland	6:30 p.m.
1/17	. Windsor	7 p.m.
1/19	. @ Middlebury	7 p.m.
1/22	. @ Vergennes	7 p.m.
1/26	. @ Hartford	7 p.m.
1/29	. MSJ	7 p.m.
2/1	. Springfield	7 p.m.
2/5	. @ West Rutland	7 p.m.
2/10	. Hartford	7 p.m.
2/12	. @ Windsor	7 p.m.
2/15	. West Rutland	7 p.m.
2/18	. @ Mill River	7 p.m.
2/22	@ Springfield	7 n m

OVUHS

(Continued from Page 33)

and we're really excited about the depth in the program, the number of kids on each team and the improvements they've all made since last year. I think we have good hopes of taking a step forward this year."

The Otters should offer an extensive rotation and balanced scoring. The senior class includes multi-year starters in guard Owen Thomas and swingman Aiden Decker, supplemented by forwards Luciano Falco and Aiden Wade.

Junior guard Logan Letourneau and junior forwards Drew Pelkey and Lucas Politano were regular contributors a year ago, as was sophomore Conor Denis, and Keith said others should see valuable minutes this year as well.

"Mike's pretty excited," Keith said. "There's a lot of high energy with that group. They love playing the game, and you can see it."

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Coach Ray Counter's Otter Valley girls' basketball team does not have the experience of its counterpart on the boys' side. Sophomore Breanna Bovey is the lone returning starter. Of the team's three seniors only Sierra Cormany saw a significant role a year ago, although her classmates Aleksandra Savela, a post player, and Elaina Sheldrick are expected to play more minutes this winter.

"It's a younger group. There's one freshman. There's four sophomores. They're all going to get some time," Keith said. "For that group the energy has been really good. It's been really positive. The kids all are working pretty hard."

Another player who saw plenty of action this past winter was junior forward Matelin LaPorte, who is joined on the team by three classmates, Miley Lape, Sara Loyzelle and Lauren Palmer.

Keith said in the preseason Counter was working out a playing rotation for a planned



up-tempo approach that would also emphasize ball movement.

"It's going to be a mix. I think there are going to be a lot of kids who are going to play," he said. "They're going to have a lot of kids play a lot of minutes."

Younger players will definitely have a chance to grow this season, he said.

"A lot of kids are going to get good experience. With only three seniors you're getting opportunities for kids who are going to be here for the next few years," Keith said. "That's kind of a good build."

NORDIC SKIING

With only three Nordic skiers signed up, all boys, the OV team, which does not have its own coach, will train with the Rutland squad this winter. The three Otters will compete as independents at meets.

Junior Luke Calvin is the only returner after being the program's top performer at the Division II championship meet this past winter with a 62nd-place finish. Joining him are brothers Isaiah and Elisha Bagley, a senior and junior, respectively.

CHEERLEADING

Numbers are also in a down cycle for OV cheerleading, and Keith said Kassidy Buley's small squad will focus on providing spirit at home basketball games this winter in the House of Noise, and not on competing.

Two middle school students join senior Brookelyn Kimball and freshman Harper Harrison-Burvick on the varsity squad.







WRESTLING



Name	Grade
Chase Cram	12
Derek Li	12
Kingston Cotter	11
Jackson Marks	11
Isaac Whitney	11
Lincoln Wilcox	11
Colin Carroccia	10
Brice Dusablon	10
Drake Felkl	10
Thomas Given	10
Brian Ketcham	10
Austin Mallory	10
Nicholas Prouty	10
Ethan Ross	10
David Bertrand	9
Benjamin Eugair	9
Ayden Laroque	9
Max Potter	9
Keegan Reid	9
Zachary Walker	9
Zacriary Warker	9

OVUHS VARSITY WRESTLING		
Date	Opponent/Event	Time
12/8	Granville, N.Y	6 p.m.
12/9	@ NAC Tourney	9:30 a.m.
12/16	State Duals Tourney	9 a.m.
12/19	@ Mt. Greylock, Mass	6 p.m.
	@ Middlebury Tourney	
	@ Lebanon, N.H	
	@ Keene Tourney	
1/10	@ Mt. Anthony	6 p.m.
1/13	@ Pelham, N.H	6 p.m.
1/16	@ BBA	6 p.m.
1/20	@ Granby, Mass	6 p.m.
	@ Middlebury	
	Otter Valley Invitational	
1/31	Fair Haven/Mill River	6 p.m.
2/3	@ Monument Mt., Mass	9:30 a.m.
2/23&24	State Meet@ Otter Valley	9:30 a.m.



BOYS' BASKETBALL



Otter Valley Union High School Varsity Boys' Basketball Head Coach: Mike Stark Name Grade Aiden Decker 12 Luciano Falco 12 Owen Thomas 12 Aiden Wade 12 Addison Boynton 11 Alexander Frary 11 Mark Jackson 11 Logan Letourneau 11 Drew Pelkey 11 Lucas Politáno 11 Rowen Steen 11 Connor Denis 10 Brody Lathrop 10

Date	Opponent/Event	Tim
12/9	@ MSJ	2:30 p.n
12/13	@ Mill River	7 p.n
12/16	@ Hartford	2:30 p.n
12/19	Mt. Anthony	7 p.n
12/23	@ Springfield	1:30 p.n
12/27	@ Brattleboro	7 p.n
12/29	@ Mt Abe	7 p.n
	Vergennes	
1/6	@ Bellows Falls	1 p.n
1/9	@ Middlebury	7 p.n
	Mt Abe	
1/16	Burr & Burton	7 p.n
1/18	@ Fair Haven	7 p.n
1/26	@ Windsor	7 p.n
	Proctor	
2/2	Bellows Falls	7 p.n
2/6	Windsor	7 p.n
	MSJ V	
2/13	Fair Haven	7 p.n
	Hartford	



CHEERLEADING



TEAM PHOTO WAS NOT AVAILABLE

Otter Valley Union High School Varsity Cheerleading

Coach: Kassidy Buley

NameGradeBrookelyn Kimball12Harper Harrison-Burvick9

OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADING

Date	Opponent/Event
12/9	@ Vergennes
1/28	@ Rutland
2/11	@ MVU
2/18	States @ Vergenne



NORDIC SKIING



Otter Valley Union High School Nordic Skiing

Name	Grade
Isaiah Bagley	12
Elisha Bagley	11
Luke Calvin	11

OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL NORDIC SKIING

Date	Opponent/Event	Time
12/9	@ Prospect	10 a.m.
12/20	@ BBA	2 p.m.
12/27	@ Woodstock	2 p.m.
1/4	@ Mt Top	2 p.m.
1/8	@ Prospect	3 p.m.
1/26	@ Brattleboro	3 p.m.
2/7	@ Prospect	2 p.m.
2/14	@ Prospect	2 p.m.
2/20	SVL Relay at Prospect	
2/27	State Meet at Rikert	
3/1	State Meet at Craftsbury	



Andy Kirkaldy News & Sports Writer



Matt Dickerson Outdoor Columnist

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