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Rossford High School

August 2019

FALL SPORTS PREVIEW



All welcome!

Jackson-Ferguson Stadium Dedication

The public is invited to
a ceremony at 7 p.m.
Wednesday, August 28
to celebrate the
extensive renovations
to the RHS football stadium
and kick off another exciting
year of Bulldog athletics!

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RHS football team—Jacob Shiffert, Carl Roberts, Carl Fitch, Jamari Croom, Dimitri Smith, Kyle Kromenacker, Dylan Prater, Johnathan Kellermeier, Ben Morrison, Brian Sprinski, Michael Bachmayer Jr., Izayah Gillespie, Zach Sparks, Wyatt Williams, Devin Schumann, Lukas Klotz, Christian Brown, Joey DeBortoli, Nick Perry, Trenton Bachmayer, Derrick Adams, Jackson Murtha, Mark Swan, Michael Nawrocki, Xavier Taylor, Gavin Linkous, Herbie Eckhart, Damon Krohn, Luke Rhue, Hunter Broshious, Noah Fosgate, Gabe Belcher, Zach Royal, Zach Kamenca, Sam Doughten, Keaton Sandmann, Nick Walker, John Sanders, Joe Alejo, Dominic Schular, Teagan Coyle, Gavin DeWese.

Bulldogs set to open stadium, challenge for NBC crown

By Michael Krieger

The Rossford football team enters the new season with high hopes.

The team that finished 2-8 overall, and sixth in the Northern Buckeye Conference will look to reverse its fortunes this fall as they play in a refurbished Jackson-Ferguson Stadium that boasts new seating and artificial turf.

Head Coach Todd Drusback likes the Bulldogs' chances of turning things around.

"We lost five games in the last two minutes last year. Five more wins and we would have been a playoff team."

To prepare for a run at a league title and a playoff berth, Rossford has ramped up its off-season conditioning program.

"Conditioning is paramount to finishing games," Drusback emphasized.

He also wants to utilize the Bulldogs' depth to keep players fresh.

"We want to get as many kids ready to play on Friday as possible."

Drusback believes the team has already made strides in the right direction. In practice alone, their intensity has increased.

Also, the roster has grown in numbers to more than 60 athletes, which according to Assistant Coach Jamie Clay is the most

"Having more players will elevate the competition on the team."

—Coach Todd Drusback

they have had in years.

"Having more players will elevate the competition on the team," Drusback noted.

"We have a lot of players who have game experience. Unfortunately, we had several key injuries last year, which wasn't good; but the other side of that is it gave some young players a chance to get in and get experience."

Of those injured, quarterback **Kyle Kromenacker** returns to lead the Bulldog huddle for the third year. Through five games, he was one of the more prolific signal-callers in the league, amassing more than 1,500 passing yards and 500 yards on the ground.

While Drusback isn't sure how much Kromenacker will run the ball, he confirmed the senior is healthy and throwing the ball as strong as ever.

The team also returns **Jacob Shiffert**, playing at safety and wide receiver along with **Lukas Klotz**, who will also see time as a defensive back.

Running the ball will be sophomore **Trent Bachmayer**. He will run behind a mostly veteran offensive line with **John Sanders**, **Luke Rhue** and **Gavin Linkous** leading the way there.

Linkous, an Honorable Mention All-League recipient last year as a freshman, returns as linebacker on the defensive side of the ball. Senior **Noah Fosgate** returns at defensive end to provide a pass rush.

Again, competition in the NBC will be steep with the top half quite solid.

Eastwood and Genoa are predicted to be the teams to beat, but for now Drusback isn't thinking that far ahead. Instead, he is concentrating on the game against Swanton in the new stadium.

"We haven't won a season opener since 2013. It would be nice to start 1-0," he said.

The team's biggest change is its venue, and Drusback claims the stadium's facelift will contribute to the team's improvement this year.

Because the field is 100 yards and is

clearly marked all the time, the Bulldogs have been able to practice more efficiently.

"Everything we do is based on landmarks, yard markers," Drusback explained.

"It helps us to know where we need to be; it really helps with the quality of our practice."

The Bulldogs will focus on increasing their tempo this year on the new surface, a strategy that should enhance their chances.

"When we go fast, we have been really good," Drusback added.

Varsity football schedule

Aug. 23, at Wauseon (scrimmage)

Aug. 30, vs. Swanton

Sept. 6, at Port Clinton

Sept. 13, vs. Oak Harbor

Sept. 20, at Lake

Sept. 27, vs. Elmwood

Oct. 4, vs. Genoa

Oct. 11, at Fostoria

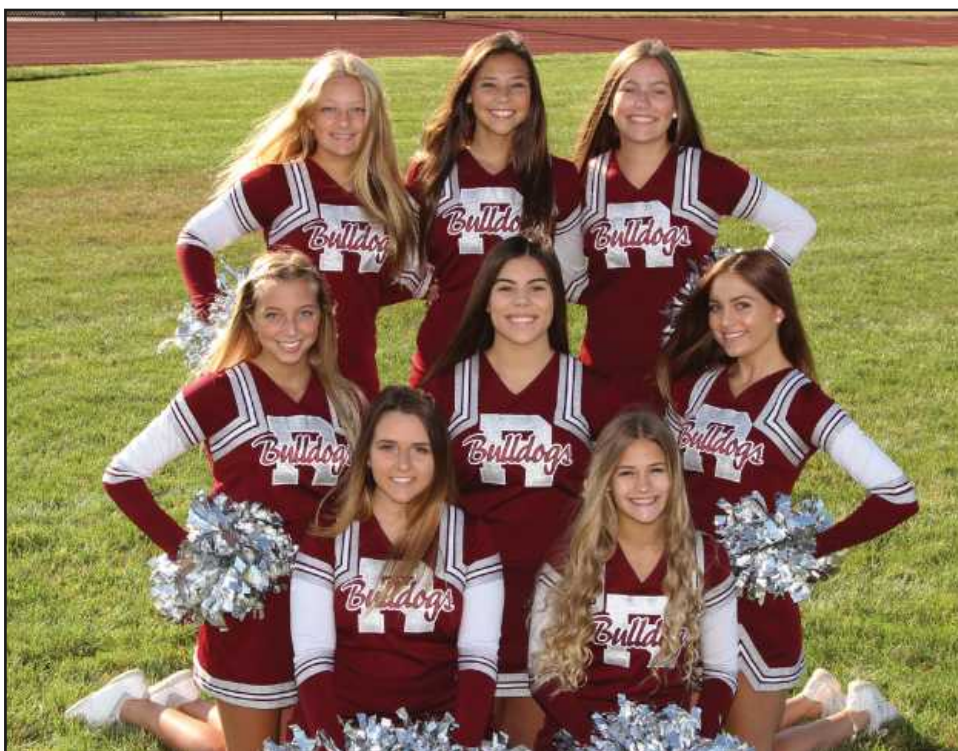
Oct. 18, at Otsego

Oct. 25, vs. Woodmore

Nov. 1, at Eastwood

All games start at 7 p.m.

Varsity cheerleaders



RHS varsity cheerleaders— Ireland Hutchins, Grace Knitz, Madelyn St. Mary, Madison Alford, Jordyn Bohland, Ally Haas, Mia Carusone, Abigail Sanders.



Using balance, volleyball seeks to be competitive in league

By Michael Krieger

The Rossford High School varsity volleyball team finished 13-12 overall last year and finished fourth in the Northern Buckeye Conference.

They then made an impressive tournament run before bowing out in district finals.

Fifth-year **Head Coach Joe Durco** hopes to use last year as a way to change the program's current culture.

"We need to believe that we can win," he said. "We need to believe that we can finish games and that we can win the league."

The team comes into the new season with a mixture of expectations.

"We are looking for a great season, always positive, always building," said Durco, who believes the Bulldogs have what it takes to compete for the NBC title.

"We have good overall balance. We are strong at passing, setting, and hitting— and I feel like we're competitive. We are always in every game. We just need to finish."

Returning for the Bulldogs is senior **Karagyn Durco**, who was Second Team All-NBC and First Team All-District last year. She is expected to lead along with fellow seniors **Ireland Hutchins** and **Alyssa Morris**.

The squad also should receive strong contributions from underclassmen **Paige Kromenacker**, **Nadia MacKinnon**, **Monica Pupik** and **Katie Glowacki**.

While looking to make a push for the upper half of the league standings, they would like to make another tournament run—as well as improve on all facets of their game throughout the season.

Durco realizes that even though his team has talent, they have to learn to believe in themselves, to see themselves as one of the better teams in the NBC.

"We have to learn to work together. We need that continuity, to gel together and play as one," the coach noted.

The Bulldogs' first test was scheduled for August 19 when they were to host a talented Van Buren team in a contest that Durco expected to set the tone for the season.

"The game will be at Owens, so it will be good for the kids to have a chance to play close enough for people to come out and



RHS volleyball team—Shannon Henderly, Ava Rohrs, Karagyn Durco, Monica Pupik, Alyssa Morris, Ireland Hutchins, Paige Kromenacker, Katie Glowacki, Sophie Seckel, Nadia MacKinnon.

"We need to believe that we can win. We need to believe that we can finish games and that we can win the league."

—Coach Joe Durco

support them."

Due to school construction, the volleyball team will spend much of the season on the road again.

Some home games will be played at Owens and a couple at Northwood.

"Constantly playing on the road is hard on the kids," Durco added.

Bulldog varsity volleyball schedule

- Aug. 22, at Oak Harbor, 6 p.m.
- Aug. 27, vs. Elmwood at Northwood auxiliary gym, 7 p.m. (*home game)
- Aug. 29, at Genoa, 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 3, at Otsego, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 4, vs. Ottawa Hills, at Owens gym, 7 p.m. (*home game)
- Sept. 5, vs. Lake at Lake, 7 p.m. (*home game)
- Sept. 9, at Wauseon, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 10, vs. Woodmore, at Northwood auxiliary gym, 7 p.m. (*home game)
- Sept. 12, at Eastwood, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 16, vs. Swanton, at Northwood auxiliary gym, 7 p.m. (*home game)
- Sept. 17, vs. Fostoria, at Lake High School, 7 p.m. (*home game)
- Sept. 19, at Elmwood, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 24, vs. Genoa, at Owens gym, 7 p.m. (*home game)
- Sept. 26, vs. Otsego, at Ostego, 7 p.m. (*home game)
- Sept. 30, at Evergreen, 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 1, at Lake, 7 p.m.
- Oct. 3, at Woodmore, 7 p.m.
- Oct. 5, Tri-match with Archbold and Start, at Archbold, 10 a.m.
- Oct. 8, vs. Eastwood, at Eastwood, 7 p.m. (*home game)
- Oct. 10, at Fostoria, 7:30 p.m.

In the league, he predicts that perennial powers Eastwood and Otsego will again be a tough challenge.

Lake should be a strong contender as well.

"If we believe that we can win, we are going to surprise some of these teams," he said.

Girls tennis team motivated to start season

By Michael Krieger

After the Rossford girls varsity tennis team posted an 0-12 record last year, it might have been difficult to find something positive to say.

But for **Head Coach Bobby Johnson**, optimism is second nature. Not only does he believe in his team, he also predicts they will show significant improvement this season.

"Even though we didn't win any matches as a team last year, we had some competitive individual performances," Johnson said.

He is leaning on those moments to motivate the girls. For Johnson, this season's goals might seem simple. For one, he would like to see his team reach a .500 record, and he wants to encourage more players to come out for the team.

"We will still take girls for the team," said Johnson, who has battled a numbers game with the program for the last few seasons.

Currently, the Bulldogs have just three players, so they will have the pressure on them every match.

A varsity high school tennis match consists of three singles matches and two doubles matches. A point is awarded for each match that is won to determine the team victory. To win the team match, a team needs to score at least three points.

RHS can win matches as long as the three players win at first through third singles. Because the team has to forfeit the doubles spots, they will start each match already down 2-0.

It is fair to say that the three girls on the team bring some experience and work ethic to the court.

Senior **Leah Espen** is a four-year player. Her strong forehand

Bulldog varsity girls tennis schedule

- Aug. 22, at Archbold, 4:30 p.m.
- Aug. 28, at Maumee, 4:30 p.m.
- Aug. 29, vs. Bryan, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 3, vs. Woodward, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 5, vs. at Clay, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 11, at Fostoria, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 16, vs. Central Catholic, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 17, at Wauseon, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 23, vs. Whitmer, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 26, vs. Fostoria, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 30, at Bryan, 4:30 p.m.

and decisive serve will be an asset to the first singles position.

Sophomore **Gabriella Boyd** will play second singles. According to Johnson, she is learning a new serve. She has a strong backhand and covers the court well.

Makaela Ourso, a senior, will bring a consistent serve and quickness to third singles.

"They are good tennis players overall, but they need to be consistent," said Johnson, who added that the Bulldogs have a great outlook and are motivated to improve themselves.

"We have a favorable schedule this year with a lot of home matches, which will help," the coach explained. "I think we especially match up well with Woodward, Maumee and Rogers."



RHS girls tennis team members Leah Espen, left, and Gabrielle Boyd with Coach Bobby Johnson.

"We have a favorable schedule this year with a lot of home matches, which will help."

—Coach Bobby Johnson

Girls golf team takes aim at league title

By Michael Krieger

One of the best assets any team can have is experience, and this year's Rossford High School girls golf team sees its experience as its number one strength.

"We have three girls who have played three years of varsity and four others that have two years of varsity," Head Coach Jim Lorenzen pointed out.

Lorenzen, in his 15th year at the helm of the Bulldogs, returns everyone from a team that finished fourth in the league a year ago.

Juniors Madelyn St. Mary and Alyssa Haynes both earned Second Team All-Northern Buckeye Conference honors last year and should lead the team again.

Fellow junior Sarah Schroeder and lone senior Lucy Hoskins were Honorable Mention last year and should fill significant roles.

Rounding out the line-up are juniors Julie Siewert and Mia Carusone along with sophomore Sydney Doughten.

"Our goal is to win the league, and we believe we have a good chance," Lorenzen noted.

That being said, the coach believes Otsego is possibly the team to beat.

"They have a girl who will average 42 to 45, and three others who will be steady," he explained.

However, he was quick to acknowledge that if Rossford can find four solid scorers every night, the Bulldogs should be competitive.

"We have four girls who can shoot 48, and that should put us right in Otsego's wheelhouse," Lorenzen added.

"If you have four golfers that can be steady, you have a chance to win."

To achieve their goals, Lorenzen emphasized

that the team will need to focus on the short game more.

"We need to reduce our number of putts. We

need to get the ball on the green and two putt," he said. "If we can do that, we will be in decent shape."



RHS girls golf team—Lucy Hoskins, Alyssa Morris, Mia Carusone, Alyssa Haynes, Madelyn St. Mary, Sarah Schroeder, Julie Siewert, Sydney Doughten, Stacie Vliet.

"Our goal is to win the league, and we believe we have a good chance."
—Coach Jim Lorenzen

Bulldog girls golf schedule

- Aug. 26 vs. Wauseon, Cross Winds Golf Course, 4 p.m.
- Aug. 27 vs. TBA, 5:30 p.m.
- Aug. 28 vs. Eastwood, Cross Winds Golf Course, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 3 vs. Elmwood, Birch Run Golf Club, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 9 vs. Genoa, Maumee Bay Golf Course, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 10 vs. Port Clinton, Cross Winds Golf Course, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 11 vs. Eastwood, Cross Winds Golf Course, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 16 NBC Championship, Green Hills Golf Course, 9 a.m.
- Sept. 19 vs. Sylvania Southview, Cross Winds Golf Course, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 23 vs. Gibsonburg, Sycamore Hills Golf Course, 4:30 p.m.

Boys golf leans on fundamentals to improve

By Michael Krieger

According to Head Coach Del Clayton, a 23-year veteran, the Rossford Bulldog boys golf team will get better as the season progresses.

"Right now, we're a team that needs some experience," the coach acknowledged.

From a squad that finished fifth in the Northern Buckeye Conference last year, Clayton returns three letter-winners: Reed Murphree as the lone senior, and juniors Cody Church and Sam Arthur.

"They are our most experienced golfers," Clayton explained. "We'll rely on them the most."

"So far the whole team have been hard workers. They get after it," Clayton said. "And most of all, they have been very coachable," an attribute that the coach feels will allow them to improve throughout

the season.

"They're fun to be around, and they want to keep learning," he added.

The team this year will strive to finish in the top tier of the league standings.

Genoa, last year's champ, is a clear favorite to repeat. Woodmore also should be strong, but Clayton believes the Bulldogs may just be one scorer away from being able to push those teams.

"If we can find a consistent fourth scorer, we will be respectable," he noted.

The emphasis so far has been on practice and fundamentals in order to build the team's experience and general golf knowledge.

"We need to gain experience," the coach said. "We need to recognize how different courses play and how to deal with weather conditions, and all of the other factors that play into the game."



RHS boys golf team—Reed Murphree, Cody Church, Sam Arthur, Nick Roe, Tyler Relf, William Basden, Mason Basden, Kyle Winkle.

Bulldog boys golf schedule

- Aug. 22 vs. Emmanuel Christian, Cross Winds Golf Course, 3:30 p.m.
- Aug. 28 vs. Whitmer, Bedford Hills Golf Club, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 4 vs. Eastwood, Tanglewood Golf Course, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 11 vs. Elmwood, Birch Run Golf Club, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 12 vs. Genoa, Maumee Bay Golf Course, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 17 NBC Championship, Green Hills Golf Course, 9 a.m.
- Sept. 19 vs. Maumee, Heatherdowns Country Club, 3:30 p.m.
- Sept. 23 vs. Gibsonburg, Sycamore Hills Golf Course, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 24 vs. Eastwood, Heatherdowns County Club, 3:30 p.m.

"So far the whole team have been hard workers. They get after it. And most of all, they have been very coachable."
—Coach Del Clayton

Cross country trying to build numbers, welcome new runners



RHS boys cross country team—Austin Cramer, Logan Cramer, Scott Gilbert, Owen Krupp, Wyatt Lang, Colby Lilly, Ethan Neblock, Carter Rodriguez and Malachi Shugert. Girls team—Brie Flores, Lucy Hoskins, Alexia Irvin, Haylee Troutman.

By Michael Krieger

In recent years, the Rossford High School cross country team's biggest challenge has been fielding enough runners to earn a team score.

In Head Coach Jim Hentges' third season leading the Bulldogs, the issue with numbers has improved. With the boys team up to 11 runners, the team can now concentrate on making the necessary strides to compete in the Northern Buckeye Conference.

While the boys team finished just eighth in the league last year, Hentges predicts the Bulldogs are poised to improve on their league standing this season.

"We've had good participation this summer so far," he noted. "That is a real statement about their leadership, and with 11 runners we should have good competition within the team."

A promising returner for the boys will be junior Malachi Shugert, who earned Honorable Mention in the NBC last year and has the athleticism to not only compete again in the league but could place at districts as well.

Additionally, a pair of seniors, Colby Lilly and Wyatt Lang, will provide some team leadership.

The team adds Ethan Neblock, a junior soccer player who gained some success as a

two-miler on the track team last spring. He will compete in both cross country and soccer and should provide another proven athlete to the mix.

For the girls varsity team, Rossford is still battling a numbers game. The Bulldogs have just four runners currently, but senior Lucy Hoskins is a three-year letter-winner and brings a solid work ethic as well as leadership that could translate into success on the course.

After earning Honorable Mention as a sophomore, Hoskins, nagged by an injury, fell just short of recognition last year.

Haylee Troutman, another senior, will join Hoskins in trying to improve the girls effort.

After tying with Lake at the bottom of the league last year, Hentges believes that if he can get a full squad, his girls can compete.

"We would like to improve our numbers for one; but I also think we can get Lucy into the top 21 in the league and then we'll see what she can do at districts. Mostly, we want

"We've had good participation this summer so far. That is a real statement about their leadership."

—Coach Jim Hentges

to get our new girls ready to step up for next year."

This year both teams will participate in two NBC jamboree events that Hentges sees as good measures of what his runners are able to do by the league meet at the end of the season.

In addition to league competition, the team will travel to the renowned Tiffin Carnival and will compete at the Van Buren Invitational, an event that Hentges likes because it gives his runners a chance to preview the district course earlier in the season.

Hentges is positive for the start of the new season.

"We just need to keep working hard," he said. "We need to take practice seriously, and we just need to try to keep getting better."

Bulldog cross country schedule

August 24: Panther Run to Fun Invite, Mills Creek Golf Course, 8:30 a.m.

August 27: Genoa Jamboree, Genoa High School, 4:15 p.m.

August 31: Otsego Invitational, Mary Jane Thurstin Park, 10 a.m.

Sept. 7: Tiffin Carnival, Hedges-Boyer Park, 8 a.m.

Sept. 14: Battle of Turtle Creek, Genoa High School, 9 a.m.

Sept. 17: NBC Jamboree, Rossford Glenwood complex, 4:45 p.m.

Sept. 21: Van Buren Invitational, Owens Community College, 9 a.m.

Sept. 28: Old Fort Invitational, Old Fort High School, 9 a.m.

Oct. 5: Fostoria Athletic Booster Invitational, Fostoria High School, 9 a.m.

Oct. 12: NBC Cross Country Championships, Genoa High School, 10 a.m.

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"RHS Bulldog of the Week"!**



By Tom Cole

It's that time of year again.

The daylight time is getting shorter, and the nights will soon start to get cooler.

Football is here.

High schools are going through double sessions and scrimmages.

Not far away is the chill of the nights, filled with marching bands, cheerleaders, fans, outstanding student athletes and remarkable coaches.

They represent their schools with pride and determination.

Football Fridays are around the corner, with tailgating, bonfires, hot chocolate, and, as the Beach Boys once said in a song, students "being true to their school."

High school football is an iconic American game. Back in 1905, President Teddy Roosevelt saved football from being outlawed. He thought it needed more rules and more refinement.

The President understood the value of the game. The discipline, hard work and team work it takes to play the game was vital for our youth, he believed.

President Roosevelt talked often about people putting themselves in the arena, which he

regarded as a metaphor for life. Indeed, our football stadiums have become a testing ground for young people.

Every Friday night in Ohio, our students step into the arena in a myriad of ways: as players, band members and cheerleaders—and they perform.

Our state has always had a great affinity for football. We are a talent-rich area for this sport.

During the summer of 1913, on the beach at Cedar Point, two University of Notre Dame football players worked as lifeguards and busboys.

Knute Rockne and Gus Dorais worked all summer to perfect the forward pass to take it back to Notre Dame.

They changed the game.

Friday nights across America are like Norman Rockwell's paintings written on canvas 100 yards long and nearly 54 yards wide.

There is no game like it. It is tremendously exciting and just flat out fun.

Make sure on Friday nights this fall, you catch (pun intended) the joy of high school football coming to a stadium near you.

Tom Cole is a community ambassador for Taylor Automotive Family in Perrysburg.

Girls soccer team shoots for winning record this season

By Michael Krieger

For a team that has only experienced a couple of winning records in RHS history, a team goal of a winning season is more than reasonable for this year's Rossford girls soccer team.

Unlike years past, however, this accomplishment is realistic for the squad boasting six seniors.

"With the talent we have returning, a winning record is a very achievable goal," said fifth-year **Head Coach Mike Pierce** about his team's chances this year.

The Bulldogs improved last season by posting an 8-10 overall record and a fourth-place finish in the Northern Buckeye Conference.

Then, they defeated Bowling Green 3-2 in the first round of the sectional tournament—a program first.

Using those accomplishments as a stepping stone, they seem poised to take another positive step in development during the 2019 season.

Hannah Pierce returns at forward. She has led the scoring for three seasons and once again will be counted on to ignite an offense that Coach Pierce estimates can score on anyone.

"We have a lot of offensive speed, which is a real strength for us," he noted.

Joining Pierce will be midfielders **Karinna Sayre, Alexis Bertz** and **Allie Curtis** and defender **Maddie Duvall**.

One of the Bulldogs' top assets should be goal-keeper **Sammi Mikonowicz**. She provides range and athleticism in the net, returning to a position where she excelled a year ago.

"She is so athletic in the goal, it really helps us," Pierce said.

Along with the first winning record in years, the team hopes to complete a deeper run in the post season as well.

"I think we can get as far as district finals if things can go our way," Pierce added.

The NBC schedule provides no real comfort for a Bulldog team on the cusp. They will need to challenge reigning champ Eastwood—a team that was undefeated last year.

"They are very good and they have most of their players back," Pierce said. "And, we have to play them twice."

He also sees Genoa and Lake as squads that Rossford will need to either defeat or at least be competitive with in order to take that coveted next step.

To be successful, Pierce believes the Bulldogs will have to gel as a team.

"It depends on overall teamwork. We have to work together. If we work together, we will be competitive."



RHS girls soccer team—**Sammi Mikonowicz, Abbie Misko, Allison Curtis, Elizabeth Rodriguez, Karinna Sayre, Madalyn Duvall, Arianna Plotner, Hannah Pierce, Isabella Spears, Brooklyn Nusbaum, Alexis Bertz, Kiersten Johnson, Abigail Sanders, Taylor Kwiatkowski, Megan Jarosz, Kylee Kwiatkowski, Skylar Tymiak, Marissa Freeman.**

Bulldog girls soccer schedule

Aug. 22, at Otsego, 5 p.m.	Sept. 23 vs. Fremont, 7 p.m.
Aug. 29 vs Lake, 7 p.m.	Sept. 26 at Lake, 5 p.m.
Sept. 3 at Bowser, 7 p.m.	Sept. 28 at Genoa, 10 a.m.
Sept. 5 vs. Genoa, 5 p.m.	Oct. 3 at Eastwood, 5 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Bowling Green, 5 p.m.	Oct. 5 vs. Maumee, 7 p.m.
Sept. 12 vs. Eastwood, 7 p.m.	Oct. 7 vs. Port Clinton, 5 p.m.
Sept. 14 vs. Woodmore, 5 p.m.	Oct. 10 at Woodmore, 7 p.m.
Sept. 18 vs. Otsego, 7 p.m.	

"With the talent we have returning, a winning record is a very achievable goal."

—Coach Mike Pierce

Strong boys soccer team seeks NBC league title



RHS boys soccer team—**Braden Miller, David Eva, Jackson Murtha, Logan Vargo, Luke Reiter, Hunter Hitchens, Ty Wittenmyer, Ian Teague, Ethan Neblock, Justin Bayer, Michael Nawrocki, Jordan Clark, Blake Pierce, John Rust, Ethan Bihn, Hayden Sabovik.**

By Michael Krieger

The Rossford boys soccer team lost several quality seniors from last year's squad that finished second in the Northern Buckeye Conference and won in the first round of the tournament.

Losing that many good athletes might give most teams in the area pause, but the 2019 edition of the Bulldogs is not rebuilding. Instead, they are taking realistic aim at a league title.

"This group is solid," **Head Coach Pete Wilson** said. "We lost some quality seniors, but every key position this year has already been filled with a quality player. Plus, we've had a lot of sophomores and juniors step up."

Wilson added that not only does the team have talent, but they also have chemistry.

"They are strong and supportive of one another. They believe in what we are doing and they have bought into the style of play and the team philosophy."

Playing in the offseason has been key for the Bulldogs.

"They have played all year-round, which has really helped them develop," said Wilson, who indicated that 12 of the 16 played elite club soccer.

"We believe that we can win the league, and we want to go as deep as possible in the tournament," the coach said about the team's aspirations.

To achieve their goals, the Bulldogs will turn once again to **Ian Teague**. The senior was First Team All-NBC and First Team All-District last year, as well as the Bulldogs'

reigning scorer with 26 goals last season.

Joining Teague at forward will be **Jordan Clark**, a junior, who has already "added a different dimension as an offensive attacker," according to Wilson.

Seniors **Hunter Hitchens** and **Jackson Murtha** will contribute at the midfield position while **Hayden Sabovik** has been solid in goal.

Sophomores **Logan Vargo** and **Luke Reiter** have really stepped up their game and should make significant contributions. Juniors **Ethan Neblock** and **John Rust** have taken on centerbacker roles.

"They are both versatile players that can play almost every position on the field," Wilson explained.

To compete for the NBC crown, the Bulldogs will focus on two games each against league powers Genoa and Eastwood.

Wilson believes that those four games will have NBC implications.

"We have a tough time matching up with Eastwood because they are really athletic, and Genoa has very skillful players."

However, Wilson believes that if the team can stay healthy and unified, the season holds a lot of promise.

"We need to support each other," he said, "especially when things aren't going well."

The Bulldogs play their home opener August 22 against Otsego at 7 p.m. under the lights.

"I want to encourage people in the community to come out and support these kids. I know that they will see some really good soccer," Wilson said.

Bulldog boys soccer schedule

Aug. 22, vs. Otsego, 7 p.m.	Sept. 19 at Otsego, 5 p.m.
Aug. 27 vs. Evergreen, 7 p.m.	Sept. 26 vs. Lake, 7 p.m.
Aug. 29 at Lake, 5 p.m.	Sept. 28 at Genoa, noon
Sept. 3 at Bowser, 5 p.m.	Oct. 3 vs. Eastwood, 7 p.m.
Sept. 5 vs. Genoa, 7 p.m.	Oct. 5 vs. Swanton, 5 p.m.
Sept. 12 at Eastwood, 5 p.m.	Oct. 7 vs. Port Clinton, 7 p.m.
Sept. 14 vs. Woodmore, 7 p.m.	Oct. 10 at Woodmore, 5 p.m.



"Every key position this year has already been filled with a quality player." —Coach Pete Wilson

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