

SPORTS

Spring



Photo by Ben Murphy

OSCODA SOFTBALL – Members of the 2026 Oscoda varsity softball team are, from left, back row: Kennedy Ruby, co-head coach Mark Whitley, assistant coach Sam Michaud, Ava Taylor, Darby Malone, Gracie Martin, Landyn Moran, Maryna Curley, Lindy Kenyon, co-head coach Tucker Whitley and Riley Barrios; front row: Liz Brooks, Emma Michaud, Luella Whipkey, Lillian Piotrowski and Alissa O'Dell.

Toughness defines Oscoda Owl softball team

by Ben Murphy
OSCODA – There might not be many teams built like Oscoda softball. They see themselves as one tough group to take out. Tucker Whitley, who is co-head coach of the Lady

Owls along with his father Mark Whitley, really likes that about his squad, as they get going on the 2026 season.
 “This is a team forged in toughness,” Whitley said. “We will take a pitch

off the shoulder and smile while we take our base. Every girl on this team has earned their spot, and every spot is just as crucial as the next. We have a young group this year, and almost everyone gained varsity ex-

perience last year.”
 The Lady Owls went 24-8 last year, winning the North Star League Big Dipper, before falling to Standish-Sterling in the Di-

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Hale softball team has mixed bag of experience

by Ben Murphy
HALE – When it comes to experience on the softball field, Hale has quite the vast wide range of players. Some have many years of experience while others are brand new to the game.

The Lady Eagles are hoping all that can lead to some positive things this spring though, as they look to compete well in the North Star League.

“Quite a blend from grizzled veterans to the roukiest of roukies,” fourth year head coach Jeremy Beebe said. “They are a hard working group who give their best effort every day. Fundamentals are always the key.

“With so many non-experienced, and light-experienced players, we’re spending a lot of time learning the game. Always good for the returning players to brush up on their

skills, too. Have been able to practice outside a couple times which is very beneficial.”

Returning to the team this year will be seniors Ali Beebe (pitcher, shortstop, third base, all-conference), Brooke Sheldon (catcher, shortstop), Callie Hicks (catcher, pitcher, third base), Lexi Cook (second base, outfield), CC Kesler (first base, outfield), Brooke Fournier (outfield) and Kennedy Walsh (catcher, outfield); sophomore Aleese Kimmerer (shortstop, pitcher, outfield); and freshmen Payton Kesler (second base, outfield) and Trinity Shick (outfield).

New to the team will be seniors Elena Camacho (outfield) and Kaleah Longstreet (outfield, infield); juniors Mara Cabelo (outfield), Haley Carpen-

See Hale, Page 6

Youth dominates talented Cardinal softball roster

by Ben Murphy
WHITTEMORE – Six of their 12 players are freshmen. So, it’s safe to say that the Whittemore-Prescott softball team will be on the young side. The Lady Cardinals feel they’ll still be where they want to be this year though, even if the weather outside is slowing them down.

“We’ve been inside (before our first game), we were outside four times,” head coach Mike Blust said. “Mother nature, what she dealt us, we’ve tried to teach skills in the gym to the best of our ability, but you are limited, you are only able to do so much.”

The Cards were swept in their season opener by Atlanta on Thursday, but the Lady Huskies are expected to be one of the best teams they’ll face all year.

“That was a learning thing, we realized what we

have to work on and the girls realized it too,” Blust said of their season opener. “They are all working well. They are working well together and helping the freshmen.”

On the team this year will be seniors Cadence Smith (pitcher, infield), Taylor Lomason (shortstop, pitcher), Silicia Goodman (outfield) and Alivia Sheehan (first base); sophomores Isla Smith (center field, pitcher, catcher) and Arianna Heska (catcher); and freshmen Brynn Wanks (catcher), Reese Lomason (third base, pitcher), Scarlett Smalley (outfield), Lillian Dietzel (second base, utility), Kara Burr (outfield) and Josie Smith (outfield).

“I have six returning and the six freshmen,” Blust said. “It is nice to

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Tawas softball looks for more good things

by Ben Murphy
TAWAS CITY – The Tawas Area softball team enjoyed year one of being in the North Star League Big Dipper. The Lady Braves, who went 22-14 overall, shared the league title with Oscoda.

“Being in the North Star League Big Dipper was a fun experience last year,” eighth year head coach Marcus Doan said. “Every league game matters and there are going to be a few upsets this year. My goal is to have the team in a position to compete for another championship.”

Back from last year’s team will be seniors Kelsey Look (pitcher, utility, all-district) and Mackenzie Kinney (catcher, infield, outfield, .324 average); juniors Eryn Hayes (catcher, infield) and Quinn Seyfried (outfield, .386 average, 26

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Photo by Ben Murphy

TAWAS SOFTBALL – Members of the 2026 Tawas Area varsity softball team are, from left, back row: Giselle Selman, Michaela Kulwicki, Quinn Seyfried, Rowan Davis, Vivian Malewska and Brooke Herrick; front row: manager Alyssa King, Kelsey Look, Eryn Hayes and Taylor Winchell. Missing from photo are Mackenzie Kinney and manager Soleil Guillotel.

SPORTS

Oscoda baseball team looks to defend NSL Big Dipper title

by Ben Murphy

OSCODA – When looking at their 11-15 record, last season might not have seemed like a particularly strong one for the Oscoda baseball team. The Owls were definitely a success last spring though, as they got better and better as the year went on, winning the North Star League Big Dipper and they even nearly knocked off heavily favored Pinconning in districts, before falling in a tough battle in extra innings.

“We had a tough start to the season and finished strong,” fourth year head coach Luke Williams said of the 2025 campaign.

Returning to the team will be seniors Tyler Kretchman and Garrett Smith; juniors Zayne Altz and Preston Nash; and sophomores Reed Curley and Matt Richards.

New to the team will be senior Riley Wilson; and juniors Landin Good, Alex Burns, Emmett Huhn, Gene Smith, Brett Travis and Zach Martin.



OSCODA BASEBALL – Members of the 2026 Oscoda varsity baseball team are, from left, back row: Gabe Lake, Liam Peace, Ethen Young, Gunnar Lanski, Ryan Opperman, Wyatt Clute, Jack Williams, Zayne Altz, Emmett Huhn, Gene Smith and Alex Burns; front row: Harley Kenyon, Jaxen Ruckman, Kellen Williams, Matt Richards, Preston Nash, Tyler Kretchman, Reed Curley and manager Evan Franklin.

Photo by Ben Murphy

Oscoda opened the season at Beaverton on Friday, they hosted AuGres on Monday, they were at Houghton Lake on Tuesday, they head for Hillman on Thursday and they'll hit the

road for Atlanta again on Monday, April 20.

“I think this season will start off like last year, a little rough at the beginning and we will get better as we go,” Williams said.

“We haven't had a lot of practice due to spring break so it will be nice to settle into a routine now that everyone is back.

“Our team goals this year will be to win the North Star

League and go into districts with a well-oiled machine like every year.”

Oscoda golf team continues to take big strides for 2026 season

by Ben Murphy

OSCODA – The Oscoda boys golf team certainly doesn't look like a program entering just three years of existence. Instead, the Owls look as if they'll be trending up rapidly, and they have a whole lot of goals they're swinging after.

“This year's team has a big future in front of them,” third year head coach Dean Caldwell said. “We return eight of our top nine golfers from last season. We also add an incredible freshmen class led by Jack Poland, who will be a factor immediately. He is the most skilled freshman we've had.

“A league title is definitely a possibility for this group and a top-three finish in regionals and becoming a state qualifier also is within reach.”

On the team this year will be seniors Shane Ellis, Randey Eschenburg and Seth Gutierrez; juniors Cole Gerow, Alex Clarke and Colton Hasty; sophomores Aiden Hutchings and Michael Peace; along with freshmen Jack Poland, Rylan Block, Caleb Clare, Liam Peace and Ty Lumbardo.

Last year the Owls finished second in the North Star League and were seventh in regionals. They also had Jack LeClair, who has since graduated, finish 11th at the state meet.

“The boys have been working on their game indoors since Jan. 1,” Caldwell said. “We've been grinding on Sundays all winter. Since practice started up, we've been focusing on 100 yards and in. Most of our top guys are incredible off the tee and (our) short game is our biggest focus.

Our number one team goal is to win the NSL title. Oscoda golf has not won a league title since 1977. We have all the talent and experience needed to achieve this goal. We just have to go to work. Individual goals are for each player to improve. We have a couple guys that may play well enough to qualify for states as individuals but we are way more focused on getting the whole team there.”

Oscoda had two meets last week, they head to Fairview today (Wednesday) for a NSL meet and they'll head to Red Hawk Golf Club on Friday and Huron Breeze on Saturday for the Tawas Invitational.

“Our key for this year is to win the mental game,” Caldwell said. “We have the experience and we need to keep level heads



OSCODA GOLF – Members of the 2026 Oscoda varsity golf team are, from left, assistant coach Sean Clarke, assistant coach Todd Ellis, Colton Hasty, Rylan Block, Shane Ellis, Jack Poland, Randey Eschenberg, Michael Peace, Aiden Hutchings, Ty Lumbardo, Alex Clarke, manager Max Michaud, Caleb Clare, manager Otis Merdzinski, Liam Peace, Drew Gallahar, assistant coach Mike Poland and head coach Dean Caldwell. Missing from photo are Cole Gerow and Seth Gutierrez.

Photo by Ben Murphy

and grind when we don't have our A game. We can't have any mental blowups. The conference is going to be a ton of fun.

“There are legitimately at least four teams that can compete for a league title with us, Tawas, Alcona and Hillman. Tawas won the league last year but graduated a lot of talent. Alcona has their entire team back and we narrowly held them off for second place last year. Hill-

man also returns their whole team and competed well last year.

“Our hope is to start fast which we have always done,” he added. “We do a great job of preparing in the offseason and getting after it early in the year. Lakewood Shores allows us to get outside while other teams are stuck inside. It should be an exciting year. Our program has a lot of momentum right now.”

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SPORTS

Oscoda Owl track teams see increase in numbers for new season

by Ben Murphy

OSCODA – There were definite signs of progress for the Oscoda track and field teams last spring. Numbers were up. They were placing much higher as individuals and as a team. Now, looking at the 2026 season, things could be even better.

“Last year we felt that we really started to thrive as a program,” coach Melissa Winters said. “Our numbers continued to grow and we really saw a pride for the team in the athletes. We had many athletes place at our league and larger meets, and all of the athletes really strived for

their best and the team’s best.”

Winters is head coach of the boys’ team while Kristy Moore is head coach of the girls’ team. Nate Vincenty-Cole is also an assistant coach for the program.

“We have a lot of new faces this year, however, that does not mean that we are inexpe-

rienced,” Winters said. “Our middle school program has also taken off in the last few years and we are starting to see the benefits from that at the high school level.”

The Owls haven’t let the spring weather slow them down either. Inclement early season weather just comes with the territory around here.

“So far, we are working on our strength and conditioning,” Winters said. “The weather has made it difficult to do a lot of practicing outside. We do try to get out, as we know during spring sports we are very likely to run a meet in this weather. However, we feel there is a fine line between preparing for a cold weather meet, and doing everything we can to avoid in-

juries.”

Returning to the team will be seniors Kaitlyne Stephan, Michael Vega, Randy Eschenburg and Tanner Yats; juniors Hunter Vincenty-Cole, Rylan Wilkins, Malaiah Miller and Allie Schimmer; and sophomores Aydria Kubik, Blake Roy, Ciara Arthur, Dalton Negro, Hailey Russo and Robyn Morris.

“(Team goals are) to win some meets, to make progress and challenge our competitors and the teams in our conference,” Winters said. “(We want) to challenge ourselves and grow individually and as a team.”

New to the team will be senior Luz Galvez; junior Can-

See Track, Page 6



Photo by Ben Murphy

OSCODA GIRLS TRACK – Members of the 2026 Oscoda girls varsity track team are, from left, back row: Ashley Rowden, Allie Schimmer, Ciara Arthur, Bri Voraritskul, Lindsie Moeller and Hailey Russo; front row: Lani Truemmer, Alazay Cabrera, Kaitlyne Stephan, Kylie Davis, Maci McDougall and Aydria Kubik. Missing from photo are Avah Crisafi, Candace Rodabaugh, Mackenzie Vahlbusch, Malaiah Miller and Robyn Morris.



Photo by Ben Murphy

OSCODA SOCCER – Members of the 2026 Oscoda soccer team are, from left, back row: Lavender Duby, Isabelle Schimmer, Emily Birkenbach, Bailey McCrea, Anastasia Jurgens, Maria Fulco, Evelyn Ruemenapp, Nathaly Sevilla, Riley Deller, Alexis Byrne and Cara Bray; front row: Clara Pavlak, Ella Grates, Marianna Figueroa, Jaidalyn Kotula and Elexia Martin. Missing from photo are Isabel Checks, Kylie Gallahar, Brooke Swales, Mariana Figueroa, Chloe Elka, Chloe Martin, Lynniah Dolliver, Hannah Thornton and Bailei Lee.

Oscoda Owls girls soccer team sees huge increase in numbers

by Ben Murphy

OSCODA – Just a few years ago, the Oscoda girls soccer team was just barely getting enough players out to be able to play. Now, the Lady Owls are brimming with 24 girls on the team. Doubling a roster size in just a few years is certainly a huge positive factor.

“(Bigger numbers) always help,” second year head coach Ray Ruemenapp said. “It shows we are going in the right direction. When I first started assisting with the team, we had 12 girls and then had two injuries, so for the first month of the season we played (with 10 on the field).

“Seeing the number of girls is good for the program and next year if we keep going at this rate, we might have to add a JV team, which is good for the program, it gets more time for our younger girls to get out there.”

The Lady Owls lost their season opener to Houghton

Lake last week, 2-1. There were still plenty of positives for the coach to take away, though.

“The first half went really well, the second half we looked a little tired and things got out of hand,” Ruemenapp said. “I’m not 100-percent happy with the outcome of the game but it went well and we will get more time outside and I think we will have a really good season. Our returning players are stronger and I have some new girls that I’m excited about as well. I’m looking forward to it.”

On the team this year will be Mariana Figueroa, Evelyn Ruemenapp, Bailei Lee, Ella Grates, Izzy Schimmer, Kylie Gallahar, Alexis Byrne, Isabel Checks, Lavender Duby, Chloe Elka, Chloe Martin, Lynniah Dolliver, Nathaly Sevilla, Cara Bray, Jaidalyn Kotula, Ana Jurgens, Clara Pavlak, Brooke Swales, Riley Dellar, Bailey McCrea, Maria Fulco, Hannah Thornton, Elexia Martin and Emily Birkenbach.

“I’m just looking at the growth of our girls individual and hope we get better as a team,” Ruemenapp said. “I haven’t gotten to the point yet where I’m worrying about other teams, I’m just worried about what we have going on.”

The Owls went 1-15-1 last year, but all early signs are that things could go much, much better this year.

“Good weather would help,” Ruemenapp said. “You always want to do better than last year. Last year, we had four goals total, and I know that we had two goals called back (in the first game) from offsides, but they’re moving better and having fun. That’s what I’m worried about, if they are having fun they will get better and better.”

Oscoda had one game last week and they were at Tawas Area on Tuesday, they host McBain Northern Michigan Christian on Thursday and they’ll host Roscommon on Monday.

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SPORTS

Tawas Area girls soccer team aiming for district title this season

by Ben Murphy

TAWAS CITY – While the end of the season is a couple months away, the Tawas Area girls soccer team knows exactly where they want to be once they get to that point; and it's pretty good.

"We know what we want to see as our final outcome of the season, first goal is district champs, and these girls have been giving what they've got to try to improve each day and have a competitive season that just might get them there," eighth year head coach Adrienne Dittenbir said.

Last year the Braves had a 6-8-3 overall record, something they believe they can improve on this spring.

"This year's team is looking great and I think we are going to have a really fun and rewarding season," Dittenbir said.

Returning to the team will be seniors Ava Briggs (defense, forward), Emmy Buchanan (forward, midfield), Hailey Felske (forward, midfield) and Hannah Potts (forward, midfield); juniors Danielle Hurst (midfield) and Payton Perrot (midfield, defense); and sophomores Amy



Photo by Ben Murphy

TAWAS SOCCER – Members of the 2026 Tawas varsity soccer team are, from left, back row: assistant coach Elliott Buchanan, head coach Adrienne Dittenbir, Daniel Hurst, June Walter, Kaylee Meyers, Payton Perrot, Amelia Herbolsheimer, Gia Lesneski, Liliana Wiese, Kaydence Kendall, Hailey Felske, Emmy Buchanan, assistant coach Doug Conrad and assistant coach Jeff Moeller; front row: Layla Thoryk, Ava Briggs, Natalya Hurley, Kayleigh Caldwell, Marabella Trippi and Hannah Potts.

Herbolsheimer (defense, midfield), June Walter (defense), Kaylee Meyers (forward, midfield), Liliana Wiese (defense), Natalya Hurley (forward, goalkeeper) and Kayleigh Caldwell (goalkeeper).

New to the team will be freshmen Gia Lesneski (forward, midfield), Kaydence Kendall (forward, midfield), Layla

Thoryk (defense, midfield) and Marabella Trippi (defense).

"Our captains have been chosen by the team for the season and I think they made some great picks," Dittenbir said. "They base their picks off of who they find to be helpful, strong and a leader all around on and off the field. This year they have chosen Ava Briggs,

Emmy Buchanan, and Hannah Potts, though I will say that any of our juniors or seniors would be great choices to represent the Lady Braves as captains this year."

Tawas opened its season

at home on Tuesday against Oscoda, they head for Roscommon on Thursday and they'll head for Houghton Lake on Monday.



Photo by Ben Murphy

TAWAS GOLF – Members of the 2026 Tawas Area golf team are, from left, back row: head coach Paul Vainer, Parker Eling, Caleb Conrad, Liam Pestrue, Adam Billingham, Briggs Baker, Nick Theaker, Gunner Selman and assistant coach Jim Boerger; front row: Ethan Daniels, Josgar Mendez, James Forbush, Vance Spencer, Cody Johnson, Jakob Kaderle and Jaxon Ulman. Missing from photo are Zack Miller, Jeff Roulo and Keegan Couturier.

Tawas golf reloads for another season

by Ben Murphy

TAWAS CITY – The Tawas Area golf team has been on a roll in recent years. Last year's 11th place finish at the state finals was certainly a highlight

from last spring. The bad news is, they'll have to replace a bunch of that group.

"Last year all five of my regional starters were seniors," sixth year head coach Paul

Vainer said. "One of the most talented teams in the state. We put up numbers at some of the biggest tournaments in the state

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W-P

Continued from Page 1

have Taylor Lomason back, she was out last year. Some of the freshmen are learning positions they've never played so they are learning. In the gym it is hard to teach an outfielder to play outfield until they get outside. The girls, the young ones, they listen to the seniors and they kind of help out there and all the girls

talk and communicate. I can't ask for much else. They are a good bunch of ladies there."

W-P hosted Atlanta on Thursday, they were at home against Rogers City on Monday, they were home against Burt Lake Northern Michigan Christian on Tuesday and they'll head to Hillman on Monday,

April 20.

"We are young, we are learning," Blust said. "The girls have come a long ways from the first day of practice and the freshmen are learning. We are hoping to get outside some more and work on some more skills. We will learn from game to game."



Photo by Ben Murphy

CARDINAL SOFTBALL – Members of the 2026 Whittemore-Prescott varsity softball team are, from left, Taylor Lomason, Alivia Sheehan, Cadence Smith, Isla Smith, Kara Burr, Josie Smith, Scarlett Smalley, Lillian Dietzel and Reese Lomason. Missing from photo are Taylor Lomason, Arianna Heska and Silicia Goodman.

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SPORTS

Tawas Area baseball team welcomes back 10 players to 2026 roster

by Ben Murphy

TAWAS CITY – The Tawas Area baseball team will certainly not be lacking in experience this year. The Braves, who finished 11-23-1 overall a season ago, have 10 players back from a year ago, and that experience to tap into leaves fourth year head coach Shane Plank more than ready to get things going.

“I’m excited, we have a lot of returning players this year,” he said. “If they perform as they have at practices, we could do well this season.”

Returning to the team are seniors Marshall Turner (pitcher, infield), Andy Oliver (infield, outfield, pitcher), Evan Papas (first base, pitcher) and Jack Garner (outfield, pitcher); juniors Aidan Smith (infield, pitcher), Carson Selman (catcher, infield, pitcher), Mason Michalski (outfield, infield, pitcher), Preston Muckenthaler (outfield, infield, pitcher) and Jack Jensen (outfield, infield, pitcher); and sophomore Leif Guillotel (outfield, pitcher, infield).

New to the team will be juniors Camryn Schalm (infield, outfield), Pablo Valdes (infield, pitcher), Jared Lorenz (first



Photo by Ben Murphy

TAWAS BASEBALL – Members of the 2026 Tawas Area varsity baseball team are, from left, back row: assistant coach Rich Duvernois, Tyler Pace, Camryn Schalm, Jared Lorenz, Evan Papas, Carson Selman, Aidan Smith, Pablo Valdes, assistant coach Patrick Ryan, head coach Shane Plank and manager Wilson Plank; front row: Easton Plank, Jack Jensen, Preston Muckenthaler, Leif Guillotel, Andy Oliver and Jack Garner. Missing from photo are Mason Michalski, Marshall Turner, assistant coach Matt Torez and assistant coach Dru Carson.

base, pitcher) and Tyler Pace (infield, pitcher, outfield); and freshman Easton Plank (infield, outfield, pitcher, catcher).

“The weather has been brutal, we’ve only been outside four times for practice,” Plank

said. “(We have) focused on defense and pitching. We want to win our conference championship and our district this year.”

Tawas opened its season last week with two doubleheaders and they also hosted Hillman

on Tuesday, they host Rogers City on Thursday, they’ll be home against Pinconning on Friday and they head for Hale on Monday.

“(We want to) play good defense and throw strikes,” Plank

said. “I feel like this is the most depth in pitching we’ve had in a long time. I want to see how we hit. It’s hard when you see live pitching for the first time after being inside for so long. I’m just excited for the season.”

GOLF

Continued from Page 4

and had as experienced of a team as you can possibly have in high school golf.”

The good news is that Tawas golf is to the point where it doesn’t really rebuild, it just reloads. They’ve built up another group ready to shine this season, as they look to battle it out in what expects to be a tight North Star League championship race and go after another state finals appearance.

“(What we can do) is really tough to say this year because of so many unknowns. Certainly our goal is to win the conference and make it back to the state finals and there is absolutely a chance of that happening with the talent that we have on this team,” Vainer said. “There are four teams that will be log-jammed at the top of the North Star League; us, Oscoda, Alcona and Hillman. Should be an extremely exciting and competitive conference this year. I would not be surprised if we finish anywhere one through four.”

On the team this year will be Ethan Daniels (sophomore), Adam Billingham (senior), Vance Spencer (sophomore), Parker Eling (senior), Zack Miller (senior), Briggs Baker (junior), Jakob Kaderle (freshman), Gunner Selman (sophomore), James Forbush (sophomore), Nick Theaker (junior), Jeff Roulo (freshman), Caleb Conrad (sophomore), Liam Pestrue (junior), Cody Johnson (freshman), Jaxon Uiman (junior), Josgar Mendez (junior) and Keegan Couturier (sophomore).

“We have (a) few seniors this year who will be important contributors on varsity, and then the bulk of our team is made up of underclassman,” Vainer said. “We’re certainly not as experienced as we were last year, we do have some really solid guys at the top of our team that I think we can rely on this year.”

“Billinghurst is our captain and one of the anchors of our team. Miller has not been golfing very long, but is extremely athletic and coachable which has resulted in his skills improving quickly and scores dropping. Daniels performed

very well down the stretch last year, including a first team all conference performance shooting a 77 and coming in third place in the conference championship last year.

“Spencer also really just picked the game up last year, who has shown tremendous

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SPORTS

HALE

Continued from Page 1

(third base, outfield) and Payton Hendrickson (second base, outfield); sophomore Jasmine McGwire (outfield); and freshmen Maddie Shick (first base, outfield) and Sophie Cole (pitcher, infield, outfield).

"Ali, Callie and Brooke are my core, all five-year varsity starters," Beebe said. "Aleese joins them as a sophomore three-year varsity starter. Ali is a workhorse of a pitcher, solid bat, as charismatic as they come, on and off the field. Brooke Sheldon is an underrated catcher, knows the game, I think her bat is going to explode this year. Callie is a solid all-around player, quietly gets the job done. Aleese is fundamentally sound, been making big plays since eighth grade, only going to get better."

The team had a 3-16 overall record last year, something the coach believes they can really improve on.

"(We want to) win more games," Beebe said. "Fell short of that goal last year. (We want

to) win districts. Get everyone some innings, which will be a challenge with so many team members. We want to improve every day, every game and contribute to the team's success."

The North Star League Little Dipper will be loaded with some good teams this year, but there still should be plenty of chances for the team to rack up some wins.

"Hillman will be at the top, and Atlanta is right there with them," Beebe said. "AuGres will continue to be tough, but certainly beatable. Posen is going to be much-improved over last year. I think we are capable of being right behind Atlanta. The first game against the Charlton Heston Academy will be a learning experience which I look forward to everyone getting some innings in."

Hale was at Charlton Heston on Monday, they head for Alcona on Thursday, they have their first home game on Monday with Tawas Area and they'll welcome in Boyne Falls on



Photo by Ben Murphy

HALE SOFTBALL – Members of the 2026 Hale varsity softball team are, from left, back row: Kaleah Longstreet, Mara Cabelo, Elena Camacho, Trinity Shick, Maddie Shick, Brooke Sheldon, Aleese Kimmerer, Ali Beebe and CC Kesler; front row: Brooke Fournier, Payton Hendrickson, Payton Kesler, Lexi Cook, Callie Hicks, Jasmine McGwire and Sophie Cole. Missing from photo are Haley Carpenter and Kenady Walsh.

Wednesday, April 22.

"I'm very excited to have Morgan Vance as my assistant coach," Beebe said. "She and

I have worked together in the past, and she is the Hale JV volleyball coach. She was a four-year starting catcher for Hale

from 2018-2021. She brings a wealth of knowledge and ability of the game to our team."

TAWAS

Continued from Page 1

RBI, all-district); and sophomores Rowan Davis (pitcher, utility, 476 average, 47 RBI, all-district) and Brooke Herrick (catcher, infield).

"There have been a few girls taking on a leadership role, one that stands out to me is Kelsey Look," Doan said. "She not only has been a vocal leader, but leads by example very well. The work ethic and team dedication of this kid is second to none. She has been part of this program for six years, two as a student manager in middle school, and this will be her fourth year with varsity experience."

New to the team will be juniors Michaela Kulwicki (infield, outfield) and Vivian Malewska (infield); sophomore Giselle Selman (pitcher, infield); and freshman Taylor Winchell (catcher, infield, outfield).

"Early thoughts on the team this year are very positive, we lost five seniors last year, but have a good core of girls that have produced at the varsity level," Doan said. "I have been very pleased with the reps we have been taking in the gym."

"If the swings we are taking in the gym transfer over to live

pitching, there will be a tough out at every position in our lineup. For the first two weeks of practice indoors, we have really focused on back to the basics. Every ground ball, every throw, every flip, everything we do must be done with a purpose and 100-percent confident decision making."

Tawas opened the season at home against Hillman on Monday, they host Rogers City on Thursday, they are at home once again on Friday against Pinconning while on Monday they head for Hale.

"We open the season against

three very good programs, Hillman, Rogers City and Pinconning," Doan said. "Luckily for us all three doubleheaders are home, but these will be a great test to see how we stack up against quality opponents."

"We have one team goal this year and it is simple, to be playing our best softball at the end of the season. Anything else that happens along the way is a bonus."

Doan also took time to note the improved softball facilities at Bolen Park on Newman Street; something that has given a major boost to the program.

"I would just like to take a moment to thank everyone involved with Tawas Area softball," he said. "We have a unique circumstance with our home field being played at East Tawas City Park. With the help from East Tawas Parks and Recreation, Tawas Area Board of Education, our athletic director and a handful of volunteers, community members, and local businesses, we have transformed the softball field at Bolen Park into a superior and memorable field that student athletes take pride in calling it home."

OSCODA

Continued from Page 1

vision 3 district championship game.

Returning to the team will be seniors Luella Whipkey (outfield, all-district), Lillian Piotrowski (catcher, all-conference) and Emma Michaud (shortstop, all-conference); junior Liz Brooks; and sophomore Maryna Curley (pitcher, all-district).

New to the team will be senior Gabby Lamere; junior Darby Malone; and sophomores

Lindy Kenyon and Ava Taylor.

"Northern Michigan softball is tough in the beginning weeks, it's difficult to develop a rhythm at times when you are forced back inside after being able to practice outside, but our girls have taken this challenge in stride, and I believe we have got the most out of every practice," Whitley said. "We look to get one-percent better every single day."

"I have already seen our

three returning seniors (Michaud, Piotrowski, Whipkey) step into leadership roles. It's always interesting to see which one will really step up. Luckily for us, all three have done so. The girls hear them, they listen to them, and they stand together. We added a fourth senior this year in Gabby Lemere, and she has made some noise in the early spring with her bat and arm."

Oscoda opened the season at

Beaverton on Friday, they were at home with AuGres on Monday, they were over at Houghton Lake on Tuesday, they hit the road for Hillman on Thursday and they'll make the journey to Atlanta on Monday, April 20.

"We would like to repeat as conference champions, and bring home a district trophy," Whitley said. "The North Star League has some quality softball teams, and it really depends on who shows up any given day.

We believe we have the tools to repeat as conference champions, and that remains our primary goal.

"I want to see us grow with every pitch. I want to see us become comfortable, not complacent. I want to see the girls trust each other, and I want to see them compete. If they can do all of these things, success will follow."

TRACK

Continued from Page 3

dance Rodabaugh, sophomores Alazay Cabrera, Eduardo Gonzalez, Isaac Olvera, Jon Sexton and Keegan Harper; and freshmen Wallace Ricks, Avah Crisafi, Alexis Velazquez Cruz, Ashley Rowden, Austin Kellogg, Bentley Taylor, Bri Voraritskul, Elijah Pinote, Joshua Troutt, Kylie Davis, Lani Truemner, Leon Farver, Liam Piotrowski, Lindsie Moeller and Mackenzie Vahlbusch.

"Since we have so many new athletes, we are hoping for them to come out and try as many new things as possible, to really figure out their strengths and gain some experience," Winters said. "For our more experienced athletes, we are hoping that our early practices and their off-season training have prepared them to come out strong and make improvements as the season continues."

Oscoda competed in two meets last week, they were at Fairview on Tuesday for a North Star League meet, they head down to the Frankenmuth Invitational on Friday and they'll host another league meet on Tuesday, April 21.



Photo by Ben Murphy

OSCODA BOYS TRACK – Members of the 2026 Oscoda boys varsity track team are, from left, back row: Rylan Wilkins, Dalton Negro, Jon Sexton, Michael Vega, Tanner Yats, Blake Roy, Leon Farver, Zeke Sutton and Hunter Vincenty-Cole; front row: Keegan Harper, Isaac Olvera, Caleb Clare, Austin Kellogg, Liam Piotrowski, Wallace Ricks, Elijah Pinote and Randy Eschenburg. Not pictured are Alexis Velazquez Cruz, Bentley Taylor, Eduardo Gonzalez and Joshua Troutt.

SPORTS

Hale baseball team looking to cash in on experience for 2026

by Ben Murphy

HALE – The Hale baseball team had to go through some growing pains the last couple of seasons, playing with a rather youthful roster. The Eagles are ready to hit the field in 2026, and the good news is they'll have a bunch of returning players, ready to help get things going in the right direction and finding the win column along the way.

"Practice has been good, we are starting to fill in spots, we are getting positions locked down and they are learning their place on the team," head coach Jerud Kimmerer said. "We are starting to get the jitters out from when we never played baseball before to where we are feeling more comfortable and starting to work a lot better as a team. The goals are we just want to be more competitive every game, to be in every game and not be mercies, that's our biggest goal, just be competitive."

Playing for the Eagles this year will be Wyatt Irwin, Elliot Prince, Connor Runyan, Jacob Shick, Hudson Riley Smith Wren, Vince Hitsman, Cooper Irwin, Blake Chrivia, Carson Smith, Daniel Almenares, Logan Nichols, Silas Patten, Jason Kimmerer, Cody Pritchard and

Jayden Timlick.

"The one thing we will do well, is all of our players are pretty much able to pitch, so we are doing well with that," Kimmerer said. "Our catching, our batting has been looking good and our outfield, we have been doing really good in the outfield and we are communicating. We need to work more on our communication and our batting, we just aren't as confident at the plate as we probably should be."

Hale opened the season at Charlton Heston Academy on Monday, they head for Alcona on Thursday, they host Tawas Area on Monday and they are at home against Boyne Falls on Wednesday, April 22.

"We drew a pretty hard schedule this year, we start with Charlton Heston, and they are going to be good and we get Tawas early," Kimmerer said. "It's a pretty hard schedule, but I am hoping that coming into districts we have some wins and hopefully we can get through districts, that's every coaches'



Photo by Ben Murphy

HALE BASEBALL – Members of the 2026 Hale varsity baseball team are, from left, back row: Blake Chrivia, Cooper Irwin, Vince Hitsman, Hudson Riley Smith Wren, Jacob Shick, Connor Runyan, Elliot Prince and Wyatt Irwin; front row: Carson Smith, Silas Patten, Jason Kimmerer, Cody Pritchard, Jayden Timlick and Logan Nichols. Missing from photo is Daniel Almenares.

dream, but the main thing is I would like to get some wins during the regular season and build up some confidence."

FORE

Continued from Page 5

progress over the off-season and early this year. His scores were fairly average for a JV golfer last year but (he) really developed a passion for the game and I expect him to be on varsity all year and put up some great numbers.

"I'm also very excited for freshman Jakob Kaderle. I've been working with him as a junior golfer for about four years now. Him and his little brother have done all the junior golf camps I've hosted over the years and have been regulars at my simulator business Bogey's Indoor Golf since we opened over four years ago. He is as prepared to hit the ground running on day one as any freshman I've ever coached."

There's a bunch of other golfers hoping to climb up the ranks and make an impact too, which is an exciting notion for the coach.

"There's a large variability in where this team could end up," Vainer said. "This team is loaded with young talent, but young talent is not always consistent, and doesn't always score well at first. I expect early on for us to have some inconsistency in our scoring, however as the year goes on, I have high expectations for some of our higher performing younger players to settle in by the end of the year."

Tawas hosted the first NSL meet last week, they were at Pinconning on Friday, they head to Fairview today (Wednesday) for another league meet and on Friday and Saturday they host the Tawas Invitational, with day one taking place at Red Hawk Golf Club and day two being held at Huron Breeze.

"I'm very excited about this year and the future of this program. The coaches, administration, and community have really invested in this program," Vainer said. "I wholeheartedly expect us to continue the success that we've had. We have been a top 11 team in the state of Michigan 10 of the last 16 years. We have a tremendous legacy that I believe in this iteration of the Tawas Area varsity Braves will continue to honor."

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SPORTS

Twenty players strong, W-P baseball looks to make some noise

by Ben Murphy

WHITTEMORE – They have 20 players. Some good experience. Some solid newcomers. The Whittemore-Prescott baseball team feels like they have plenty of positive signs ahead of the 2026 season, as they get ready to take on the competition.

In fact, they feel like they could be a pretty good squad when things get going.

“Last year we got to the district finals and (I) am looking forward to expanding on that experience,” coach Dave Mervyn said. “We also want to be in competitive games all year. I think that if we can throw enough strikes we will be a pretty competitive team.”

“I really feel that we will catch the ball and I feel as if we can score runs. Last year we lost four or five games that if we would have thrown eight-to-10 strikes more in each game we would have won.”

The Cardinals hope that they’ll be able to be in the race for the North Star league Big Dipper as well, but there will obviously be some tough challenges.

“I think that Tawas Area and Oscoda will be competitive, but I also feel that we can be in the race as well,” Mervyn said.



Photo by Ben Murphy

CARDINAL BASEBALL – Members of the 2026 Whittemore-Prescott varsity baseball team are, from left, back row: coach Dave Mervyn, Colton Gilbert, Ethan Gratopp, Bow Lauria, Blake Miller, Kamryn Zilinski, Logan Jenkins, Scout Holshoue, coach Ed Mervyn and coach Craig Mervyn; front row: Brenden Miller, Brian Schliep, Aiden Bell, Lucas Schliep, Carson Vohwinkle and Seth Daniels. Missing from photo are Emerson Sheehan, Blaine Zunick, Owen Switzer, Bodie Lintz, Cooper Nimeth, Calob Shimmons and Logan Burr.

The Cards finished last year 9-16 overall. They have returning seniors Bodie Lintz (pitcher), Blake Miller (pitcher, outfield) and Kameron Zileinski (first base); juniors Blaine Zuchnik (outfield), Aiden Bell (second base, pitcher), Emerson Sheehan (infield) and Brian Schliep; and sophomore Cooper

Nimeth (utility).

New to the team will be senior Owen Switzer; sophomores, Calob Shimmons, Ethan Gratopp and Colton Gilbert; and freshmen Bow Lauria, Carson Vohwinkle, Scout Holshoe, Brenden Miller, Logan Burr, Seth Daniels and Lucas Schliep.

W-P hosted Atlanta on

Thursday, they host Rogers City on Monday, they’ll take on visiting Burt Lake Northern Michigan Christian Academy on Tuesday and they’ll head to a tournament in Houghton Lake on Saturday, April 18.

“I hope to see what our pitchers do, we have six or seven that have looked good in the gym

but have not seen live batters,” Mervyn said. “Pitchers have been focusing on controlling the strike zone. We have also spent a lot of time on the fundamentals of getting the body in position to field.”



Photo by Ben Murphy

CARDINAL TRACK – Members of the 2026 Whittemore-Prescott varsity teams are, from left, back row: Corey Vollmer, Ivan Green, Scout Holshoe, Hunter Clayton, Tyler Page and coach Nolan Stern; middle row: Yvonne Laski, Allen Green, Brady Donaghy, Anthony Green, RJ Schaffner and Austin Hickcox; front row: Summer Reminder, Nevaeh Bieri, Kylie LaFreniere, Kylee Mead, Ella Green, Miley Crain, Hannah Stillion and Chloe Waterman. Missing from photo are Alonna Lambert, Andrea Barr, Dorothy Jarrell, Katie Burr, Silica Goodman, coach Virginia Dewell and coach Casey Zuchnik.

W-P track teams set for new season

by Ben Murphy

WHITTEMORE – The Whittemore-Prescott track and field teams have been hard at work in recent weeks. The Cardinals hope that hard work pays off in a big way as they are set to get their first few meets of the season in; assuming weather cooperates with things.

“The weather has been crazy,” coach Virginia Dewell said. “(We have) focused on field events and starts along with endurance training.”

One of the best moments last season was Kylie LaFreniere taking eighth place in the 100 meter dash, and breaking a 40-year-old school record along the way. LaFreniere should be a great competitor for the squad again this year, and the rest of the group aims to accomplish their goals as well.

Filling out the line-up for the girls’ team will be seniors Silica Goodman, Katie Burr, Hanna Stillion, Ella Green and Chloe Waterman; juniors Miley Crain, Kylie LaFreniere, Kylee Mead and Dorothy Jarrell; sophomore Alonna Lambert; and freshmen Summer Reminder, Nevaeh Bieri and Andrea Barr.

The boys team will feature senior Austin Hickcox; sophomores RJ Shaffner, Hunter Clayton, Ivan Green and Corey Vollmer; and freshmen Tyler Page, Nathan Cloum, Logan Burr, Brady Donaghy, Anthony Green and Allen Green.

Dewell is the girls’ head coach

while Casey Zuchnik is the boys’ head coach. Longtime assistant coach Nolan Stern returns as well, and they also welcome in new assistant coach, Hope Wasoski.

“Attendance at practice and being coachable (are keys),” Dewell said. “We are a bit short on numbers (to compete in the North Star League Big Dipper). Probably (finish) in the middle for conference.”

W-P opened the season at Standish-Sterling on Friday, they were at a NSL meet at Fairview on Tuesday, they head back to Standish this Friday and they’ll be at Tawas Area on Tuesday, April 21.

“(I want to) see the (team) hopefully start where they were at end of the season or better,” Dewell said of the first few meets.

Go Cardinals!

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