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PRINCE AND DESIGNATION



elcome to the 2025-2026 Vermont high school basketball season. As Sports Editor of the Rutland Herald, I'm excited to bring you the third incarnation of our Rutland Herald basketball magazine.

We are excited to get into the heart of high school games this winter. Watching preseason practices, early-season games and talking to many coaches, it's clear the excitement that everyone is feeling for the season ahead.

Last year was a great season for basketball teams we cover closely here at the Herald. The West Rutland girls basketball team captured its fourth straight Division IV state championship and the Fair Haven girls won it all in Division II for the second straight year.

Teams like the Otter Valley boys basketball and West Rutland boys basketball teams both made a trip to the Barre Auditorium.

There were many other contending teams that wanted to reach that stage, but came up a little short.

All of the teams we cover at the Herald are motivated to build off the triumphs and tribulations of last season.

A few of those teams are going at it with new coaches leading the way on the sidelines, all trying to put their fingerprints on the future of their respective programs.

There is one of two destinations in the GPS for every high school basketball team in the state, either Patrick Gymnasium or the Barre Auditorium. Teams are putting in the work now to make sure they can make that trip.

We can't wait to see the bleachers packed, as classmates, parents and fans alike, cheer on their favorite teams.

Basketball is a way of life around these parts.

We want to thank the 11 schools included in this book for their cooperation, giving us some insight into what to expect this year.

Good luck to all players and coaches as you begin the journey to a potential state championship. Time for tip-off!

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FAIR HAVEN UNION HIGH SCHOOL

Slaters

SEASON PREVIEW

By Adam Aucoin

FAIR HAVEN — The Barre Auditorium is a second home for Fair Haven basketball teams.

The Slater girls have been to that stage three years in a row and 11 times in the last 12 seasons. The boys had their own run of five Barre trips in a seven-year run through 2023, but have missed out on that opportunity two years in a row.

The word 'Barre' is plastered on the back of the Fair Haven boys' warmups as it has been for many years. It's a place both Slaters hoops team want to reach again.

BOYS

The Fair Haven boys basketball team was a half way from fulfilling the goal on the back of its shirt last winter, but it couldn't hold on against Otter Valley in the Division II quarterfinals.

That loss has put well in the rear view mirror as the Slaters believe they have a team that has all the potential in the world to snap the two-year Barre-less skid.

Fair Haven graduated 1,000 point scorer and four-year standout Phil Bean, along with fellow starters Jack Almeida and Max Kyhill and some key bench guys, but the Slaters have a core that should keep them in contention in Division II.

It all starts with senior Andrew Barker and junior Sam Kyhill. Both guys have loads of varsity experience under their belt, especially Kyhill in his third season as FHU's starting point guard.

"Sam Kyhill and Andrew Barker have played a ton of minutes for us," said Fair Haven coach Luke Vadnais. "We went up to CVU (on Thursday) and they looked pretty comfortable. They've played a lot. It's nice when your best players are your best kids and I can say that about Sam and Andrew."

Fair Haven has great depth around those two leaders with guys that will step into bigger roles this year. Senior guard Jon Roberts is one of those guys and figures to start for the Slaters.

Senior Cody Adams is a captain along with Kyhill and Barker and will play a big role in the post, coming off a standout football campaign as the Slaters' quarterback on a state runner-up.

Adam Harper is Fair Haven's fourth senior and will also see minutes.

Fair Haven's juniors are Kyhill, Rowan Lincoln, Derek Webb, Hunter Adams, Max Carrabino and Luca Carrabino, Adams is new to the program, but is a great soccer player, like the Carrabino twins.

The lone underclassman is sophomore Easton Adams, Cody's younger brother.

GIRLS

The Fair Haven girls basketball team has hopes of a Division II 3-peat, but to accomplish that feat, the Slaters will need a different mix of girls to make it happen.

The graduation of multi-year standouts

Kate Hadwen, Izzy Cole, Maddy Perry and Elizabeth Love leaves a hole, but the mix of talent returning is hoping to make sure there isn't a drop off.

"They are highly-motivated and they've put in a ton of work this summer," said Fair Haven coach Kyle Wilson. "They showed up every day during the summer and they're eager to try and match the standard."

Fair Haven will be able to lean on the starting experience it has in senior post player Tori Kelly and junior guard Audrey Perry, who played very key roles in last year's state championship run.

Fair Haven is much more than that elite guard-post duo with some quality depth around them.

Junior Orianna Kerr makes up for her lack of size with an endless motor in the post, while sophomore Quinn Murphy shined in a complementary role last year as a freshman and has potential to make a big jump.

Kerr had a knee injury that derailed her field hockey season, but is back in action in basketball.

Sophomore Ari Pelerin, sophomore Ryleigh Murray, sophomore Callie LaRock and junior Madi Hayes are others that could take on bigger roles this season.

Rounding out the squad are sophomore Bella Workman, sophomore Alyza Hall, freshman Evelyn Stevens, freshman Emily Jackson and freshman Meraya Haley.



FAIR HAVEN UNION HIGH SCHOOL CFT BASE BASE COLORS



























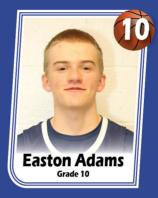
Head Coach: Kyle Wilson Assistant Coaches: Jay Wilson, Leo Hutchins, Chad Wilson Assistant Coach/JV Coach Henry Daley Manager Rose Ouimet

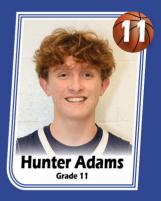


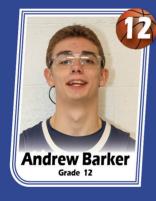
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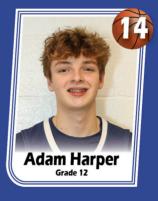


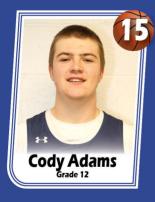


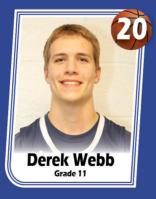
























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GREEN MOUNTAIN UNION HIGH SCHOOL

SEASON PREVIEW

By Tom Haley

CHESTER — The basketball season is tipped off for Green Mountain Union High School.

The Grizzlies opened the boys basketball season on the road at Arlington. The night before that the West Rutland Golden Horde came to Chester for the girls season opener.

GIRLS

The Green Mountain girls basketball team has three starters returning with Colie Roby, Kaylee Debartolo and Sophia Cherubini.

Not only that, but injuries last season gave others plenty of floor time so this is a group that boasts some experience.

The seniors are Roby, Sadie Sheehan, Cherubini, Leah Cassin and Brianna Rushford. Juniors are Debartolo,

and Honore Hazen.

Hadley Cenate and Kenzie Koch are sophomores and twins Jordyn and Kaitlin Farrar and Moriah Ewens are freshmen. Jordyn will be a starter and Katelyn the first player off the bench. The twins played a lot of summer hoop in a league in Ludlow.

Coach Brian Rapanotti expects a lineup that can hold its own on the boards. He will likely play three bigs at the same time.

They easily defeated Leland & Gray in a scrimmage but are expecting a much tougher test against a Fall Mountain team that made it to the state championship game in New Hampshire.

Chemistry has been a pleasant observation of the preseason for Rapanotti.

"They are really together as a group," Rapanotti said.

A highlight of the season each year is the Grizzlies' own Green Mountain Holiday Tournament.

The Grizzlies will also meet neighboring rival Bellows Falls twice, Jan. 22 at home and Feb. 19 at Bellows Falls.

That game is not only a rivalry game but the GM girls

have a little extra motivation for that one this year. It was Bellows Falls that ended Green Mountain's 2024-25 season, dealing the Grizz a 43-32 loss in the Division III playoffs.

BOYS

The Green Mountain boys basketball team is rebuilding this season and new coach Todd Parah will be constructing the squad block by block.

Wyatt Koch is the only returning varsity player.
Koch and Sawyer Sheppard are the only seniors and Evan Farrar and Liam Heybyrne the only juniors.

"We are very young," Parah said.

Logan Knight is a sophomore and Cooper Garvey, Jackson Groner and Carter Spaulding are freshmen.

Garvey has played a lot of travel ball.

"We will be relying a lot on him," Parah said.

The Grizzlies will be leaning on Farrar and Heybyrne for rebounds.



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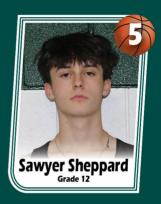
Coach Brian Rapanotti



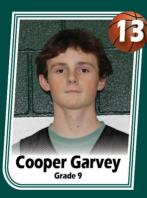
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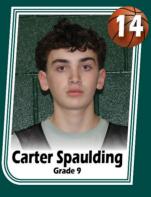




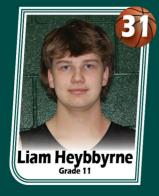














Coach Todd Parah Assistant Coach Mike Groner



MIDDLEBURY HIGH SCHOOL

SEASON PREVIEW



MIDDLEBURY — Last year was a historic one for the Middlebury girls basketball team.

Not only was it the first winning season for MUHS since 2017. For just the sixth time in program history and the first time in 14 years, the Tigers earned a trip to the Division II state semifinals at the Barre Auditorium.

GIRLS

Middlebury's 16 wins last winter were the most for the Tigers since winning 18 games in 2005, where they made the Division I state championship game.

Eric Carter is back coaching the Middlebury girls again this season.

Carter's team will a lot younger this go around. Key pieces of that run, Kassidy Brown and Lexi Whitney, graduated, while do-it-all standout Solstice Binder, a senior this season, is out with an injury.

That leaves a much less experienced team that will take the floor this year. Junior Isabel Quinn and sophomore Louis Orten are two girls that will be relied upon to lead the charge for Middlebury.

"We're trying to find the girls that

will step up around them," Carter said.

Sophomore Sophie Simpson saw solid minutes last year and figures to find a key role. Sophomore Willow Heywood is a player that could provide some size. Sophomore Lillian Paquette was the point guard on the JV team last year and could bring those talents to the varsity level this season.

Similar to years past, Carter is hoping to have his team play fast, so fitness has been a focus in the early practices.

The Tigers have dealt with some tough injury luck early in the preseason, so the hope if that they continue to get healthy as the season goes on.

Replicating last year's success could be tough, but Carter has liked the dedication he's seen from the girls in early going.

BOYS

Middlebury captured state championship hardware on the football field in the fall and there a handful of athletes from that team that are hoping to make some noise on the basketball court too.

Chris Altemose is back coaching the Middlebury boys again this season.
The Tigers graduated eight

players from last year's team, but the cupboard isn't bare.

It starts in the middle with senior big man Cooke Riney, who is a dominant presence is one of the state's top rebounders. Riney will be playing college football at Yale University next fall.

Jonathan Kafumbe is another returning senior. Middlebury boasts a strong junior class of returning players which includes Ryan Brouillard, Taylor Altemose and Brady Lloyd. Lloyd was a key piece of the Tigers' football state championship as well.

Also on the roster is Adam LaRose, Arthur Calvi, Colin Chicoine, Conner Gordan, Connor Swan, Daniel Power, Judah Matovu, Landon Hunt and Tim Laframboise.

Middlebury will be hoping to get off to a better start this season. Last season, the Tigers lost seven of their first nine games, before turning it on on the back half of the schedule with 11 wins in a 12-game span before getting knocked out in a close loss to Harwood in the Division II playoffs.

It was the second straight season where Middlebury struggled early on, but found its groove as the season progressed.



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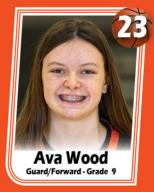












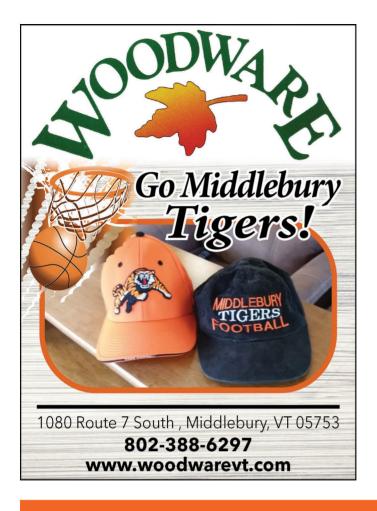








Head Coach Eric Carter Assistant Coaches Deborah Holler Emma Carter





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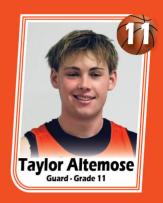
MIDDLEBURY TIGERS

MIDDLEBURY HIGH SCHOOL BOOKS BASKETT

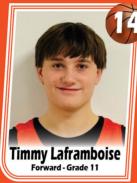




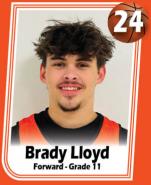








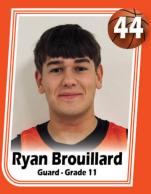


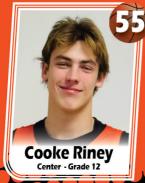














Head Coach Chris Altemose Assistant Coaches Cindy Atkins Kyle Lussier



MOUNT ST. JOSEPH ACADEMY

Green Wave

By Adam Aucoin

RUTLAND — The Mount St. Joseph boys basketball team took its share of lumps over the last two seasons playing in the Southern Vermont League's A Division against schools that were well above its size.

The hopes is that those lumps will have made the Mounties stronger. MSJ finds itself on a much more even playing field this year with its move to Division IV, playing schools that are its size.

"We're playing schools our size and kids our size," said MSJ coach Nick Davis. "Having played that schedule, it 100% made these guys better For a lot of them, they played them in their freshman or sophomore year.

"Now, they get a chance to compete at our level. Hopefully, the battling-testing will show."

BOYS

The Rutland County Division IV boys hoops triangle of West Rutland, Proctor and Poultney is now a square with MSJ in Division IV, carrying over rivalries from other sports to the hardwood.

The Mounties know they have a very good chance to compete in their new division. They have a team brimming with returning talent.

Dayshawn Reed was the lone senior on last year's team, meaning there is a ton of players on the team

SEASON PREVIEW

that are coming into the season with loads of varsity experience.

Brandon Therriault, Artie Treanor, Vinny Cavalieri and James Williams are returning seniors. Evan Ferguson, Gavin Treanor and Phil Welch are returning juniors, while Simon Kiraly is a returning sophomore.

MSJ also got a big addition with the transfer of Jake Lambert from Mill River to MSJ this year. Lambert was an impact piece for the Minutemen over the last few seasons.

Like last year, the Mounties strength will be in their guards with guys like the Treanor brothers and Therriault, among others.

MSJ doesn't have a ton of prototypical size, but has guys who can put in work on the block like Williams, Ferguson and Lambert. Davis lauded the added maturity from Williams coming from soccer season.

MSJ opens the season at rival West Rutland on Saturday afternoon.

GIRLS

The MSJ girls basketball team has a little more turnover than its male counterparts with a trio of seniors turning their tassel and two other players not returning this year, but has a great core coming back.

The Mounties are coming off a winning campaign last

year and were one step away from making it to the Barre Auditorium, falling to Arlington in the Division IV quarterfinals.

With the talent coming back, MSJ feels like it has as good a chance as any to make another jump.

"We had nice participation in open gyms this year, so that was encouraging," said Mounties coach Bill Bruso. "They were excited to get back in the gym. They're a year older and a little bit stronger. Their basketball IQ has increased a little bit as well. They know the system that we have are willing to adapt to the changes we want to make.

"We should be right in the mix of things."

Similar to the MSJ boys, the strength of the Mountie girls comes in their guard play. Seniors Riley Collins and Gabby Boudreau, juniors Abi Fullam and Destyni Foster and sophomores Jada Hughes, Dylan Collins and Izzy Smith can all play the guard spot.

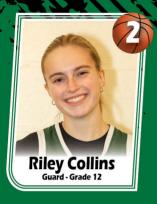
Foster also plays down low for MSJ.

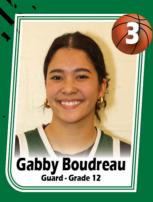
Another intriguing addition to the fold is freshman Alice Charron, who has impressed during the summer and in open gyms. There are a handful of other girls that are battling for varsity spots as well.

Given MSJ's lack of size, form and tenacity in the rebounding game will be paramount to avoid second chance opportunities for opponents.

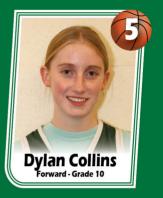


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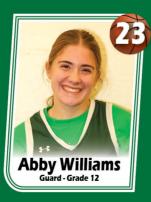


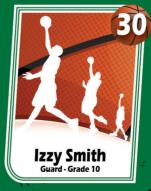












Head Coach
Bill Bruso
Assitant
Coaches
Liz Yaddow
Manager
Ella Fredette



MOUNT ST. JOSEPH ACADEMY

BOYS BASTOTAL

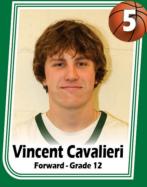


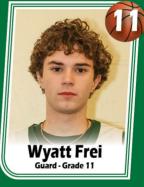


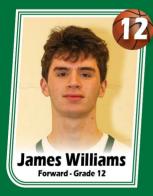


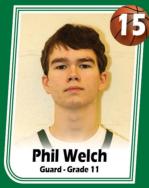


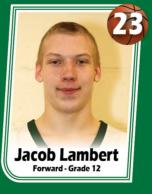


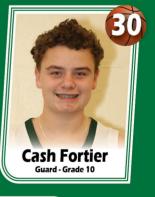
















Head Coach Nick Davis Assitant Coach Anthony Cavalieri



MILL RIVER UNION HIGH SCHOOL MILL RIVER UNION HIGH SCHOOL MILL RIVER UNION HIGH SCHOOL

SEASON PREVIEW

By Adam Aucoin

North Clarendon — The Mill River boys and girls basketball teams have taken their share of lumps over the last handful of the seasons, but the teams are turning the corner.

Not only do the teams have exciting varsity squads, but the next wave of athletes just add to that excitement.

The Mill River boys have enough athletes to field a junior varsity team this year with a squad that is all freshmen and the MRU girls have loads of girls at the middle school level that will be ready for the varsity rigors in the coming years.

Both Minutemen varsity hoops teams are hoping to take a step forward this season.

GIRLS

The Mill River girls had a goose egg in the senior column last year and have nearly all of its team returning this season, with some exciting additions.

The seniors are Chloe Kennedy, Makayla Maciel and Casey Orzechowski. The juniors are Rylee Roundy, Lillian Lethbridge, Stella Miglorie and Grace St. Pierre. The lone sophomore is Bella St. Pierre, the lone freshman is Lindsey Graham and the lone eighth-grader is Reegan Perron.

Bella St. Pierre is a big addition,

returning to the team after not playing last year. Lethbridge had an ACL injury that she has returned from this season as well.

The biggest thing for Darren Badgley's club was getting reps together over the offseason.

"We played summer ball, so I think they've improved," Badgley said. "Practices have been really good. I think we're going to be alright."

Badgley noted the improved guard depth the team will have. Kennedy was the team's lone experienced guard last year and now there will be more pieces around her at that position.

Miglorie and Maciel provide experience for Mill River on the block.

Mill River is coming off a threewin season and is hoping that some of the tough experiences from that season make them better heading into the new campaign.

BOYS

Mill River boys coach Tim Gallipo is very encouraged with high school roster numbers this season with 10 guys on the varsity and 10 guys on the JV team this winter.

Even better news for Gallipo, he'll have this varsity group for more than just this season as the squad has zero seniors.

"We have a bright future," Gallipo said.

The juniors are Dave Radican,

Dallin Cote, Logan Harris, Forrest Whitman and Jack Boulger. The sophomores are Beckett Burke, Jameson Yeaman and Logan Turin and the freshmen are Aiden Harris and Matthew Boulger.

Jack Boulger and Logan Harris bring the most varsity experience to the table for MRU. Boulger is a talented guard, while Harris is a strong presence down low. The two freshmen are their younger brothers, so that quality play figures to rub off.

"Jack is a great defender and he had a great day the other day scoring," Gallipo said. "Logan is going to be tough under the boards."

Burke is a player that showed flashes of greatness last year that Gallipo is looking to find consistent strong play this year.

Radican transferred in last year from Burr and Burton Academy and could be a key piece as well.

Gallipo has some new assistant coaches this season with Jaheim Hughes, Cam Coloutti and Kerry Valente making for a basketball-knowledgeable coaching staff.

Mill River is hoping to build off of its four-win season from a year ago.

A handful of the guys on the team were part of the MRU boys soccer team that made a run to the Division IV semifinals, so the hope is that some of that winning culture comes into the hoops season as well.



MILL RIVER UNION HIGH SCHOOL GTTS Basical Color GTTS Basical Col

















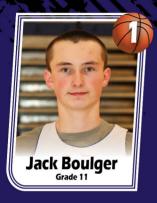




Head Coach Darren Badgley Assitant Coach Cassidy Dunne



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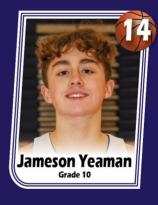




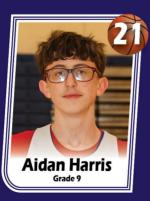














Head Coach Tim Gallipo Assitant Coaches Cam Coloutti, Jahiem Hughes, Kerry Valente

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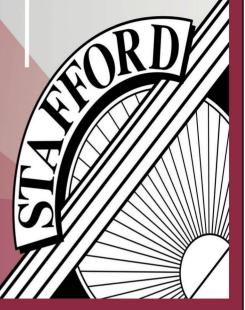
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OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL

Officers

SEASON PREVIEW



BRANDON — Otter Valley has one of the great home venues in high school basketball. Opposing coaches often remark on what a tough place The House of Noise is to play in.

The student section stands from the opening tip to the end and gets into the game with gusto.

The Otter Valley girls basketball team's first game was in the House of Noise and it came against Mount Anthony on Tuesday, Dec. 16.

The Otters boys basketball team has a long wait before trying to ambush an opponent in the House of Noise. The Otters played their first five games on the road.

The Otters finally get to play at home on Jan. 9 when Mount Abraham visits Brandon.

GIRLS

The Otter Valley girls basketball team got to measure themselves against Division I South Burlington in a recent scrimmage at South Burlington.

"I think we did well. They were bigger than us but it is only going to help us down the road," Otter Valley coach Ray Counter said.

Counter has loved the leadership he has received in the preseason from

his five seniors — Breanna Bovey, Hannah Desabrais, Marissa Dick, Jazalynn Madrigal and Leann Thomas.

"I think it went well," Desabrais said of the session in South Burlington. "I liked the pace and the effort and I think we worked together well.

"I think the biggest thing will be our defense because we should get our offense from that."

Counter sees balance as a big part of that offense.

"I don't think anyone is going to dominate for us." he said.

Allie Charbonneau is the lone junior on the squad.

Bella Bovey, Tegan Boynton and Shavla Frain are the sophomores.

The freshmen are Lucy Howe, Lydia Keith and Georgia LaPorte.

Keith stood out on the JV team as an eighth grader. Her skill and court sense left no doubt that she was going to be a key ingredient on the varsity level.

A December highlight for the OV girls team is always the Mary Canfield Holiday Tournament hosted by Fair Haven. It is there that the Otters met Fair Haven and Burr and Burton Academy.

Last year, the Otters got bounced from the playoffs by Lamoille in the first round. This time, they just might have the goods for a deeper playoff run.

BOYS

This Otter Valley boys basketball team has a whopping eight seniors — Riley Connaughton, Logan Denis, Connor Denis, Zachary Dragon, Jackson Howe, Brody Lathrop, Brayden Meza and Jacob Warrell.

Lathrop and Connor Denis are returning starters and others in the class have some appreciable varsity experience.

Still, graduation took a lot of points and coach Mike Stark knows that players like Dragon, Howe, and Logan Denis must step into expanded roles.

Warrell is back playing this winter after being away from the game last season.

Marek Heitmann and Jonathan Johnson are sophomores and Ayden Wingfield the lone freshman. Heitman and Johnson will float between the JV and varsity squads.

The Otters gave their fans a great season in 2024-25, fashioning a 16-4 record in the regular season and then winning playoff games against Milton and Fair Haven before having its season ended by eventual state champion Montpelier in the semifinals.

The Otters got a taste of Barre Auditorium the last two years at the Final Four. They'd love a little more of that meal in the brick building on the hill.

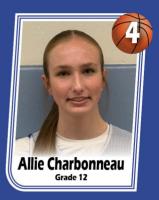


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Head Coach Ray Counter Assitant Coaches Sam Cormany, DJ Keith



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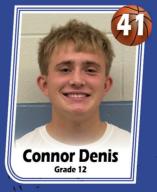












Head Coach Michael Stark Assitant Coaches Jordan Tolar, Ben Gaboriault, Rick Hudson





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POULTNEY HIGH SCHOOL CHIS BASSESSAN

SEASON PREVIEW

By Tom Haley

POULTNEY — It was a cold, crazy late fall day that Poultney fans will never forget. Their Blue Devils defeated Winooski 1-0 to capture the Division IV girls soccer state championship.

Can that success carry over to the girls basketball season?

"A lot of our girls were on that state championship soccer team and we are hoping to piggy back on that," Poultney girls basketball coach Todd Hayes said.

Juniors Jade Lupien and Olivia Despres believe there will be some transfer from the state championship to basketball.

"We showed up and really played as a team," Lupien said. "The championship gives us the confidence."

"It definitely gave us a lot of confidence," Despres said. "It gives us confidence as a team and it gives the community confidence in us."

There are no seniors on this year's Blue Devil girls hoop squad, yet Hayes would say experience is a key ingredient.

"The girls were so young last year. We have got the experience now," Hayes said.

"We want to see toughness from them. The bright lights scared them a little bit last year."

That experience comes in the form of seven juniors — Khloey Lesperance, Lupien, Despres, Amelia Dupell, Bailey Hier, Emma Fleury and Isabelle Taylor.

"One who has made a huge

jump this year is Bailey Hier. She is moving faster now and the game is more natural to her," Hayes said.

Hier gives the Blue Devils some good height and should help in the rebounding battles. The Devils lost some good height and rebounding last year. That includes Jacquelyn Oberg is a freshman center at Vermont State University Johnson where she has started all six games for the Badgers pulling down 4.8 rebounds per game.

"On paper it looks like we have lost a lot of rebounding but I think by midseason we can be an even better rebounding team," Hayes said.

Lupien and Despres are the returning starters but Dupell also saw some appreciable varsity minutes last year.

Taylor is another who could contribute in the area of rebounding.

"She has unbelievable strength," Hayes said.

Rowan Trigg and Bethany Deppert are sophomores and the freshmen are Elise Davio, Abby Rose and Brooke Despres.

"All the young kids struggle with defense. Once that clicks we will be better," Haves said.

Offensively, look for a faster pace this year.

"We are going to open things up a little more, push it a little more," Hayes said.

The Blue Devils had a good summer, playing in a basketball league with Middlebury, Mount Abraham and Vergennes. They also made their annual pilgrimage to a team camp at St. Joseph's College of Maine.

BOYS

Like the Blue Devil girls, the boys team opened the season on Dec 12 against Proctor. But the Poultney boys had to go into the Phantoms' Almo Buggiani Gym to open the campaign in the Bob Abrahamson Tournament.

Three seniors are on the squad — Eric Kendall, Mikey Celik and Gabe Casey.

Talan Chalmers, Noah Gillett and Will DeBonis are juniors.

The Iron Six is not ideal but there are JV players like Liam Hier, Hayden Rice, Ari Lupien, Jack Illinski, Ryan Patterson, Amyn Saviano and Dax Rydeski who can come up to complete the bench during the varsity contest.

Many of Hier's players were members of the very small football roster this year.

"They know what low numbers mean and they know that they have to work extra hard. I am very proud of them," Hier said.

Kendall, Celik and Chalmers are returning starters.

Gabe Casey also logged varsity minutes and will be in the post.

"He is going to be a beast in the paint," Hier said.

Also adding a presence down low as a starter will be Gillett.

DeBonis brings plenty of energy to every practice.



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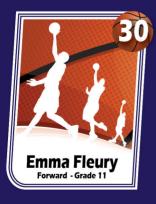














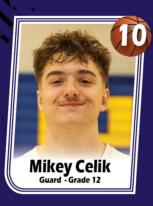


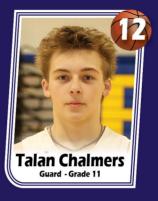
Head Coach Todd Hayes



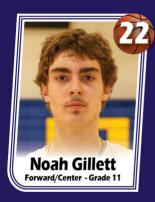
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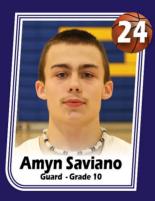








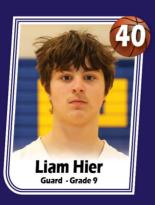














Coaches Justin Hier Grant Schreiber Matthew Cole Keith Williams

PROCTOR HIGH SCHOOL Thantoms Plantoms Plantoms Phantoms Plantoms Phantoms Phantoms

SEASON PREVIEW

By Tom Haley

PROCTOR — You can feel a different vibe this year in Proctor's Almo Buggiani Gym. It doesn't take long to pick up on that during preseason basketball practices.

The Proctor girls did not win a game last season, but just watching a trip or two down the floor at a practice this week tells you that they intend to break through this year. There is more talent and athleticism to accomplish that.

"I think we are more talented. I want to get that first win under our belt," second-year coach Joe Ruby said.

That elusive win would be nice but Ruby leaves no doubt that he believes the Phantoms can accomplish so much more.

The excitement is just as great on the boys side where a robust turnout of 27 shows that basketball is alive and well in Proctor.

There are no banners on the wall right now that proclaim Proctor's proud spots history. They were all taken down for a complete paint job of the facility.

This Proctor boys team appreciates all of the history, but they are more interested in the banner that has not been hung up yet and they have intentions of doing all they can to make it happen this year.

BOYS

Coach Jeremy Cole has

told his eight seniors that the days are over where seniors will play on the JV team.

"I want the young guys to get the playing time on the JV team," Cole said.

The eight seniors on the varsity squad are Isaiah Fernandez, Aaron Brock, Noah Johnson, Jayce Sheldrick, Kaden Dean, Scooby Kimball, Ari Camp and Griffin Pomeroy.

Fernandez and Brock have shown that they can catch fire from beyond the 3-point line.

Camp is an athletic playmaker and defender who can also score.

"Ari has a state title on his mind this senior year," Cole said.

Mason Brothers returns as a junior after starting last year before being derailed by an injury.

Another junior figuring to be a contributor is Lucas Cole.

Cole points to sophomore Braden Sheehe as another to watch. His athleticism showed through on the soccer field where he was the Phantoms' leading scorer.

Sawyer Crossmon is a sophomore who will be strictly varsity while his classmate Jordan Wiese will be the only swing player between the varsity and JV squads.

Wiese has length and is wiry. Coach Cole and assistant coach Bill Crossmon are honing his mechanics with high hopes for his progression.

The Phantoms open the season with the Bob Abrahamson

Tournament on Dec. 13. Lat season, they fell in the championship game to Twinfield in this event.

"We want to get that trophy this year," Cole said.

"We want to play Phantom Basketball and make teams work hard for every points."

GIRLS

Ruby loves the difference he can already detect from the 2024-25 season.

The youth is evident. The Phantoms have two freshmen and three eighth graders on the 10-player roster.

The two seniors are Emma Palmer and Alana Smith.

Jasimine Mcfadden is the lone junior and Michelle Pope and Ashlynn Carr are sophomores.

Janelle Garrow and Annie Nop are the freshmen.

Garrow was a starter on the varsity squad as an eighth grader and is a good long-range shooter.

Annie Nop had her choice of playing on the varsity as an eighth grader or playing on the middle school team.

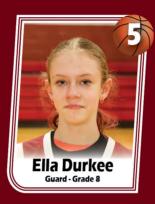
Ruby has an assistant this year in Emilee Bose, a 1,000-point scorer at Enosburg who also played at Vermont State University Castleton.

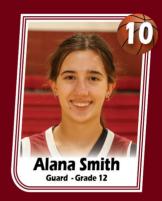
Lauren Palmer, a player on last year's squad, is also helping out.

There is little question that the Phantoms are more athletic, talented and deeper than they were last year.

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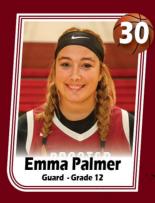








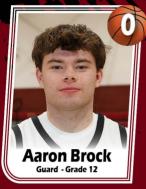




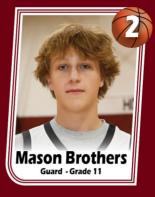
Head Coach Joe Ruby **Assistant Coach Emilee Bose**



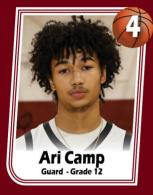
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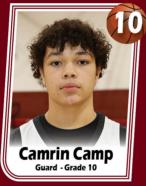


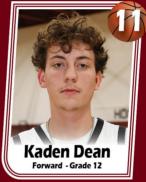






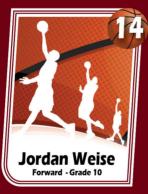


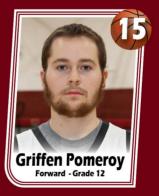


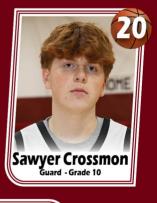


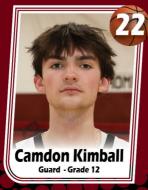














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SEASON PREVIEW

By Adam Aucoin

RUTLAND —There is a dash of newness on the Rutland High School basketball scene with Jake Eaton taking over the girls team.

What is less new is the collection of talent on the floor. Both the Rutland boys and girls basketball teams have experienced cores that know the rigors of a varsity season.

The hope is that veteran talent makes for a successful winter in Keefe Gymnasium. The talent is certainly there to make it happen.

GIRLS

There is bound to be an adjustment when a new coach takes over. Even if some of the concepts are similar, the voice is different and the style could differ.

There has been some of that adjustment with Eaton taking over for longtime coach Nate Bellomo, but the girls have worked hard to make that transition a smooth one.

Eaton was a 1,000-point scorer at Rutland High and had a dynastic run of championship success as the Proctor boys hoops coach, where he was also the athletic director for many years.

Rutland graduated a trio of players from last year's 13-win team, but has loads of talent returning.

It all starts with top-scorer Brinley Gandin, a junior who really broke out last year as the team's go-to option. Gandin is a lefty shooter with one of the best 3-point strokes in the state.

Sophomore Lola Sparks is another returning guard with a lot of potential. Senior Alannah Rooney, senior Lily Blanchard, senior Emma Grimes and sophomore Ellie Whalen are all girls that have had significant roles that are back as well.

Others that could find roles are senior Sydney Gile, junior Sammy Cacace and sophomore Savanna Shelton, along with some younger girls that could swing from varsity and and JV.

Eaton noted how impressed he's been with Shelton's toughness in early practices.

Eaton said that his team's length could be a major advantage against opponents. Even guards like Sparks have imposing size for the position.

Rutland's early-season schedule is usually a gauntlet of tough northern teams and that is the case again this year. Eaton's first game as Rutland coach was against perennial title contender CVU.

BOYS

A trip to Patrick Gymnasium is always the goal for a team like the Rutland boys which is so steeped in tradition.

RHS came up just short of that goal last year, bowing out in the Division I quarterfinals.

With a ton of returning talent, there

is hope that Rutland can get back to the stage once again this year.

"We have a good nucleus coming back, so with a very short window before that first game, I feel like we're further ahead than if we had a completely new group of players," said Rutland coach Mike Wood. "We're progressing in the right direction and I think we have some pretty good leadership."

Rutland has a trio of starters back this season with guard senior guard Cellan Wood, senior wing Ethan Whalen and senior big man Cooper Sparks returning.

There is a good core of players also returning that will take on bigger roles this season. Senior guard Michael Bove, senior guard Gavin Hughes, senior forward Brody Austin, senior guard lan Cornell, senior guard Kyle Blanchard and sophomore forward Adrian Krakowka are all in the fold.

Some newer faces to the varsity level will be Gradyn Bellomo. Braiden Jensen, Cole Erickson, Lucas Hughes, Gio Spallieri and Noah Delance.

Krakowka is a player with big potential for Rutalnd.

Sparks had a big breakout campaign last year and could build on that this year. There will definitely be more eyes directed to him than there was last year when he was more of an unknown for opponents.

Cellan Wood boasts the most experience in Rutland's roster, having been on varsity since he was a freshman.

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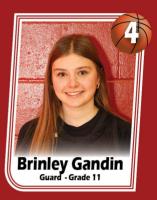
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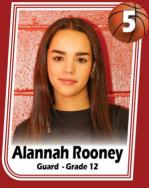
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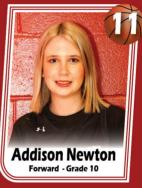




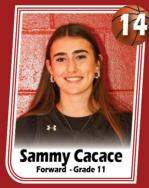




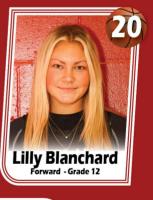




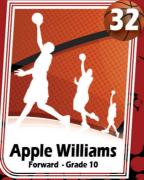












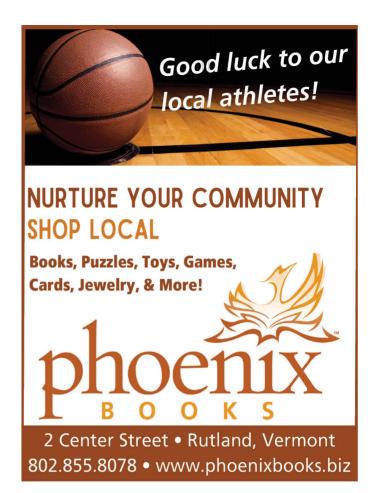
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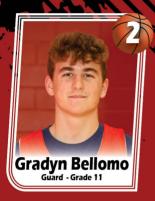
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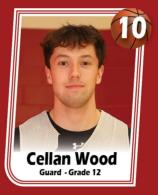


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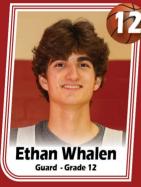
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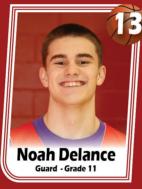


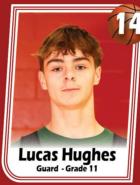


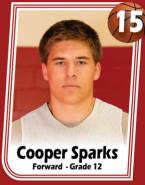


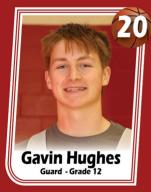


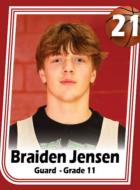








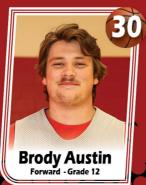


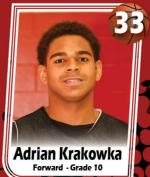












Head Coach Mike Wood

PERFORMANCE POINTERS

that can help student athletes avoid injury

rofessional sports teams often note that injuries are part of the game. That notion is never too far from professional athletes' minds, but it can be a harsh reality for student athletes to confront, especially if they have never before been sidelined by injury. Though there's no foolproof way for athletes to avoid injury, student athletes and their families can consider these preventive measures to reduce their risk of being sidelined.

- Use diet to athletes' advantage. A healthy diet benefits people from all walks of life, and it can be especially beneficial for student athletes. Precisely what defines a healthy diet depends on variables specific to the athletes, such as age and gender, but Nemours Childrens Health notes that balance is vital for teenage athletes. Avoid cutting back on carbohydrates, which provide fuel for young athletes. When choosing carbs, opt for fruits, vegetables and whole grains instead of sugar-laden options like candy bars. The latter can provide a quick energy burst but then cause an energy crash that makes
- athletes feel fatigued. In-game fatigue can increase risk of injury. In addition, calcium and iron can be vital to young athletes looking to avoid injury. Calcium helps strengthen bones while iron carries much-needed oxygen to athletes' muscles. Protein is important for athletes, but Nemours notes that most teenage athletes who eat healthy diets already get ample protein. As a result, protein powders and shakes are not necessary for teenage muscle growth.
- Make a good night's rest part of athletes' routine. A good night's rest is vital for student athletes, as it ensures they aren't playing tired. Tired athletes have slower reaction times and that can increase injury risk. Adequate sleep also benefits athletes' performance. A 2015 study published in the journal Physiology & Behavior found that athletes who increased their nightly sleep from seven to nine hours experienced significantly improved performance after doing so.
- Emphasize the rules of the game. The rules of the game aren't in place solely to

- encourage fair play. Rules also are designed to keep athletes safe. For example, student athletes who play contact sports, including football and soccer, should be taught proper ways to tackle so they can avoid injuring themselves and others. Coaches can reinforce these lessons during practices and even games if the need arises.
- · Prioritize offseason conditioning. Rest and recovery is vital for any athlete, but especially student athletes whose bodies are still growing and changing. Offseasons have largely fallen by the wayside, but parents can protect their student athletes by encouraging them to avoid year-round competition. During periods when student athletes aren't competing, they can forgo in-season workout routines to reduce their risk for overuse injuries while also improving their conditioning through cardiovascular workouts. Running on a treadmill, using an elliptical machine and/ or swimming are great activities that make it easy for student athletes to keep their bodies in shape as their muscles and joints recover from the season.

PROMPT APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE

for orthopaedic or sports medicine needs



David L. Muller, MD



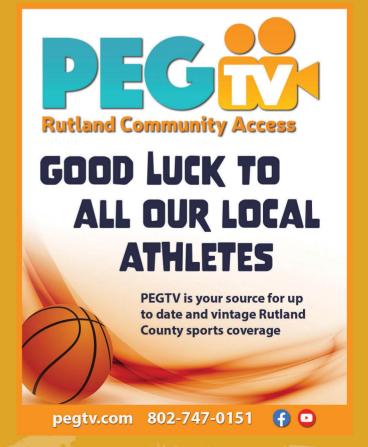


Timothy J. Mello, PA-C

Katherine A. Silta, PA-C



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SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

GOSMOS

SEASON PREVIEW

By Tom Haley

SPRINGFIELD — When Macie Stagner turned her tassel, the Springfield High School girls basketball program lost one of Vermont's top-10 scorers of all time.

The scoring will be more evenly distributed as the Cosmos try to pick up the slack.

"We are very young," Springfield coach Pete Peck said, noting that his roster of 14 includes 11 players who are either freshmen or sophomores.

The Cosmos were to have scrimmaged Fall Mountain, a team that made it to the state championship game in New Hampshire last year, but a snow day changed those plans. The Cosmos would have had the scrimmage with only two practice days under their belt while New Hampshire teams begin practices before Thanksgiving.

The Cosmos did have a scrimmage against Stevens and Monadnock on Saturday.

The Springfield boys basketball team made the trip to Proctor on Saturday and coach Jay Clapperton had plenty to be excited about from the play of his Cosmos, mainly the defense.

"We are pretty athletic," Clapperton said.

He believes that athleticism will make defense a strength of the team.

Peck is hopeful the Cosmos will be able to hold their own on the boards. Sophomore Peyton Austin has reached the 6-foot mark and will be counted on in that department.

BOYS

Baltimore Colts quarterback Johnny Unitas made the No. 19 famous.

Clapperton thought the No. 19 yielded a lot of promise for his Cosmos on Saturday. The defense amassed 19 deflected balls in the scrimmage.

"Definitely one of our goals this year is to be sound as a defensive unit. There were a lot of active hands," Clapperton said.

The team returns three starters with Nick Weise, Bradley Gallant and Oliver Kelley. The other two seniors are Blake Bachinski and Hayden Fratini.

The juniors are Mateo Fuentes, Josiah Martinez and Jayden Paul.

Martinez returns after missing last season and figures to play a key role on defense.

Jameer Cosby, J.P. Stagner, Drew Squire and Metin Gultekin are the sophomores.

"I coached all these players on the JV team and to have them now on the varsity is pretty cool," Clapperton said.

Clapperton is a 2000 Springfield High graduate who played his basketball for Mike Hatt's Cosmos. He believes the fact he played the game with the same name across the Jersey means something to the players. He feels they have more trust in him from knowing that he played for their school.

The Cosmos will be road warriors early. The home opener is not until Jan. 3 when Otter Valley comes to town.

He feels this team has the goods to have success and that it will also be a treat to watch because of the athleticism.

GIRLS

Peck sent his girls through a recent tri-scrimmage in Claremont, New Hampshire against Stevens and Monadnock and there was a lot to like.

Annika Emery is the lone senior on the team.

Harper Palmer and Sophia Lihatsh are the only juniors so it is a very young team with seven sophomores and four freshmen.

The sophomores are Addelyn Snide, Madison Streeter, Austin, Claire Gomez, Erlianyss Aviles, Piper Conway and Taylor Tomberg, Jailynne Stebbins, Haleigh

Goodrich, Tate Simoneau and Reese McCarthy are the freshmen.

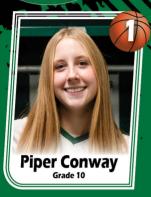
Stebbins assumes the role of point guard vacated by Stagner.

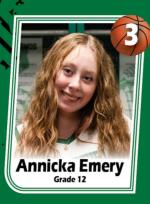
"She is very talented in different ways," Peck said of his new quarterback for the offense.

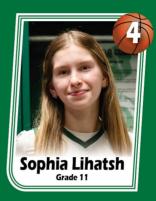
"Payton Austin played very well inside against Stevens. "We saw a lot of good things."

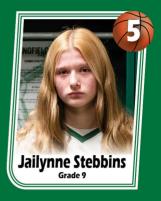


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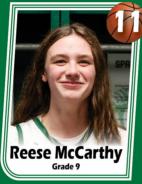


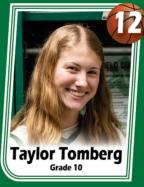








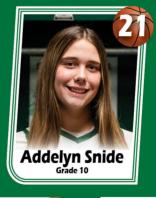


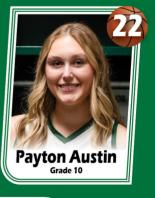












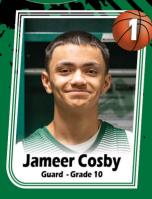




Head Coach
Lester
"Pete" Peck
Assistant
Coaches
Scott Farr
Joel Gomez

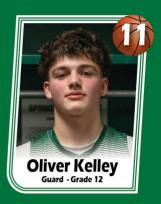


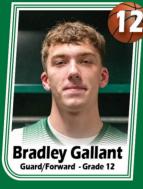
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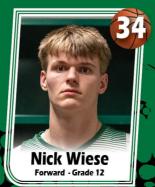




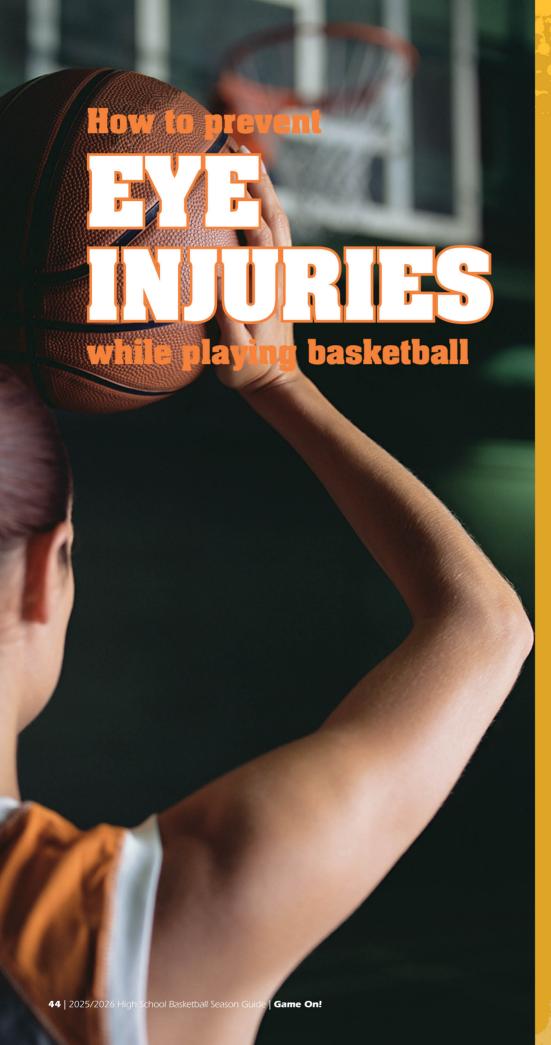








Head Coach
Jay Clapperton
Assistant
Coaches
Noah Cosby
Gabe Buskey



illions of students return to classrooms each fall. They also will be returning to the courts, fields, pitches, and courses to participate in their favorite sports.

Basketball is a popular sport played in high schools and colleges each winter. The High School Athletics Participation Survey from the National Federation of State High School Associations points out that basketball is the most widely played sport on high school campuses.

And basketball thrives off campus as well. The sports information site Sports Rec says that more than 300 million people worldwide enjoy basketball.

Like all sports, basketball can pose certain safety risks. According to Prevent Blindness America, more eye injuries occur while playing basketball than any other sport. Eye injuries on the basketball court usually result from being hit with fingers or elbows. Adequate eye protection can safeguard athletes from such injuries. Sports safety goggles and glasses can protect the eyes when scrambling for loose balls or when fighting for a rebound in the paint.

- Blunt trauma injury: This is a sudden impact to the eye or area around the eye. It's often caused by a projectile, like a ball, hitting the area. Depending on the force, bruising, laceration or even an orbital fracture may occur.
- Penetrating eye injury: This occurs when something or someone cuts the eye. A finger or an outside object, including glasses breaking, can cause a penetrating cut.
- Corneal abrasion: The cornea is the outer layer of the eye. An abrasion can occur on its own or in conjunction with one of the other injuries. Fingernails or objects can scratch the cornea. When that occurs, debris and bacteria may enter the eye, which could lead to infection.

Basketball players should receive guidance about eye protection from their coaches and athletic directors. Athletes also can speak to an eye professional about which options are available.

More information about sports eye health is available at www.prevent-blindness.org.



WEST RUTLAND SCHOOL

Golden Horde



SEASON PREVIEW



By Adam Aucoin

WEST RUTLAND — Green and gold were colors that filled up the Barre Auditorium last winter.

The West Rutland boys and girls basketball teams both earned a pair of contests at the venerable building on the hill with the Golden Horde girls coming out of with hardware in hand.

Expectations remain Barre-filled for both clubs again this year.

GIRLS

The West Rutland girls basketball team had about 4,500 points turn its tassel last spring. For most schools, that could be a killer and signal a rebuild is in store.

West Rutland isn't most schools.

The Golden Horde girls hoops team is still well-stocked to contend this year and be one of the best Division IV has to offer.

Hayley Raiche, Emma Haley, Myra Rocke, Bradee Traverse, Brianna Gallipo and Izzy Griffith are girls with varsity experience that return to the fold.

Raiche is the lone returning starter, with Kennah Wright-Chapman, Aubrey Beaulieu, Bella Coombs and the state's all-time leading girls basketball scorer Peyton Guay having graduated. along with fellow class of 2025ers Cam Williams and Maggie Therrian.

"I'm leaning on my seniors to lead heavily," said West Rutland coach Carl Serrani, of Raiche, Traverse, Rocke and Griffith. West Rutland has won four straight Division IV state championships and the expectation remains at that high level.

"They want everybody to know that it wasn't just those four. It was them too," Serrani said. "I think there is a lot more pressure on us now.

Given it is still very early in the preseason, there are still roster spots to be won, but juniors Larissa Syvertson and Olivia Orr are others that could find varsity roles, along with a bunch of other girls battling for spots.

West Rutland has made it to at least the semifinal round for 14 straight seasons. Serrani feels the team has the talent to continue that run for many more years.

West Rutland scrimmages Mill River on Saturday and Middlebury on Tuesday, before opening at Division III Green Mountain on Dec. 12.

BOYS

The West Rutland boys basketball team has been on the ascent over the last handful of seasons.

Two years ago, it resulted in a Division IV state semifinals appearance and last year, it was a runner-up finish in D-IV.

Now, Westside is determined to finish the job.

"What we have done has been great, but we have not reached the ultimate goal," said Golden Horde coach Ali Mitchell.

West Rutland returns three starters from last year's team with junior Peter

Guay, senior Brayden Schutt and junior Ryan Coolidge back in the fold.

Guay reached 1,000 points as a sophomore and if healthy has a very good chance to tackle 2,000 by high school career's end.

Mitchell pointed to a moment in Guay's 8th grade season where he took the last shot in a near-upset of Danville in the playoffs and how much it showed the player he had the potential to be. It was potential he has more than lived up to the last two seasons.

Hogan is a great scoring threat to complement Guay and Coolidge began his breakout last year as well. The graduations of Andrew Bailey and Clayton Kessop leave a hole, but there is a lot of talent coming back.

"We lost a lot of heart and some solid minutes," Mitchell said. "We really have to find that guy that will get those big rebounds for us."

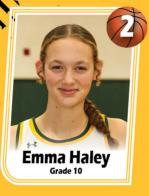
Kaylon Carvey, Jayden Kelley, Michael Harte and Brayden Schutt are other returning players for the Golden Horde. Carvey and Schutt are both guys that saw solid minutes last year. Joey McKirryher is coming up from the JV team and could fill a role as well.

A massive addition to the picture is Chase Razanouski, who transferred from rival Proctor. Razanouski has been one of the Phantoms' stars throughout his high school career and figures to bring that same tenacity 10 minutes down the road.

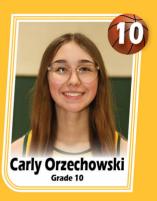


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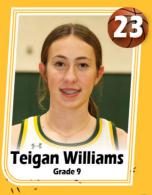












Head Coach Carl Serrani Assistant Coaches Matt Serrani Managers Jaquira Earley, Sadie McGee



WEST RUTLAND SCHOOL

Boys Basketball



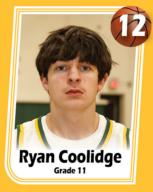


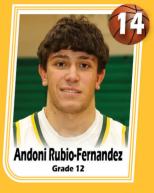




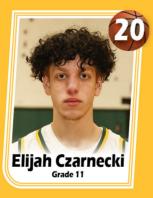


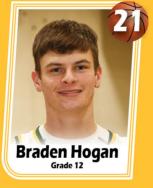


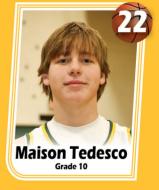








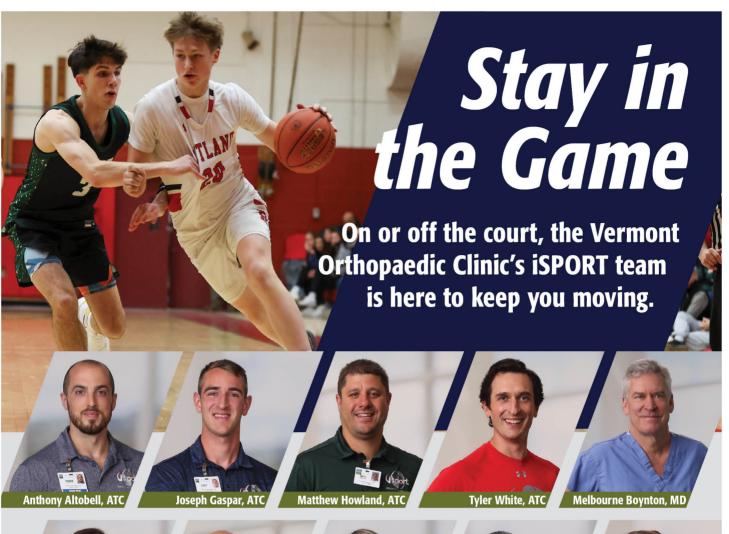








Head Coach Ali Mitchell Assistant Coaches Allen White Manager Oliver Shanholtzer



























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