

Eagle girls aim for even more success



Photo Credit: Danielle DeFalco

By Kevin Gordon

LUCKEY — Eastwood High School's girls track and field team is off to a positive start.

The Eagles are working hard, working as a team and displaying a great attitude during their early practices.

Eastwood is loaded with youth following a COVID-19 canceled season last year. The Eagles have graduated two senior classes since their last meet in 2019. This season's roster of 57 athletes includes 19 freshmen and 16 sophomores. Eastwood also has 10 seniors and 12 juniors.

The team's captains are senior thrower Hannah Friend, junior sprinter/jumper Mikayla Hoelter, senior distance runners Cordelia Howard and Jamie Lahey, and senior sprinter Emily Keiser.

"You see a lot of the athletes helping each other out," said Nikki Sabo, who is in her 11th season as the team's head coach. "It doesn't matter what grade they are. They're trying to help, show, demonstrate, explain what's going on or what a specific drill is. They're really stepping up and helping each other out.

"Through that, they're learning about each other and meeting new people and growing together as a team," Sabo added. "There's a lot of energy. There's a lot of positivity. You can tell some of them are getting more comfortable."

Eastwood's seniors were sophomores in 2019, the juniors were freshmen, the sophomores had only a handful of freshmen practices and the freshmen didn't have an eighth-grade season.

"When you have two classes where this is kind of new, that's over half your team, you can tell they're getting more comfortable and more vocal, more encouraging of their teammates and getting more comfortable around their teammates," Sabo said. "That's good to see."

Eastwood is striving to win its 20th straight conference championship. The Eagles have won all eight NBC titles after earning the final 11 championships in the now-defunct Suburban Lakes League.

The SLL morphed into the NBC, replacing Lakota and Gibsonburg with Fostoria and Rossford. The Eagles host the NBC Championships May 15. In all, Eastwood has won 23 of its last 24 conference championships.

"It would be pretty remarkable," Sabo said of winning 20 straight conference championships.

"It was established way before I came here. There's just an attitude of this is what we're supposed to do. They also understand it's not going to be easy. They're going to have to work for it.

"That's the exciting part, being so young, having to work hard for it and putting those pieces together to score as many points as we're going to need to accomplish that goal," Sabo added.



Photo Credit: Tammy Schmeltz

“When you think back on it, it a pretty remarkable feat. It would be an honor to be a part of something like that.”

Although the Eagles are young, they return 11 athletes who competed in the conference meet in 2019. Among them are junior Ava Kiefer, who was second in the shot put; Hoelter, who tied for second in the high jump; and junior Aubrey Haas, who was third in the 800. The Eagles will use the regular season to figure out each athlete’s best events and in what events each athlete can best help the team. Eastwood’s first meet is March

30 at home against Oak Harbor, and it has its first big invitational two days later at Liberty-Benton.

The Eastwood Relays are April 23. After the NBC meet, the Eagles will compete in the Division II district meet May 20 and 22 at Oak Harbor.

“With a young team, there’s tons of room to grow and improve, and gel together to see what they can accomplish,” Sabo said. “That’ll be fun to watch them as they gain experience.”