



Winter Sports Preview



Special Sports Section

Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022

The Mendota Reporter



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Mendota Wrestling Roster 2022-23

Name	Year
Brooke Bailey	Senior
Julian Jordan	Senior
JP Belmonte	Senior
Albert Harris	Senior
Dean Gilbert	Junior
Sam Christmann	Junior
Cadance Thornton	Sophomore
Lea Turner	Sophomore
Angil Serrano	Sophomore
Rhett Watson	Sophomore
Gabriel Vallejo	Sophomore
Jose Herмосillo	Sophomore
Reyli Sandoval	Sophomore
Corbin Furar	Freshman
Wyatt Ossman	Freshman
Gavin Evans	Freshman
Osvaldo Arteaga	Freshman
Nathan Giberson	Freshman
Payton Gagliardo	Freshman
Reese Lane	Freshman

Head coach: Dale Meyers

Assistant coaches: Arty Serrano, Charles Watson



Front row, left to right, Lea Turner, Corbin Furar, Payton Gagliardo, Gavin Evans, Osvaldo Arteaga, Brooke Bailey, Cadance Thornton, manager Alessandra Enriquez. Middle row, Wyatt Ossman, Albert Harris, Reese Lane, Julian Jordan, Rhett Watson, Jose Herмосillo, Sam Christmann, Reyli Sandoval. Back row, head coach Dale Meyers, Dean Gilbert, Nathan Giberson, Gabriel Vallejo, Angil Serrano, assistant coach Arty Serrano, assistant coach Charles Watson. Not pictured: JP Belmonte.

Despite being a young squad, Mendota wrestlers boast experience and knowledge of the sport

MENDOTA—A group large in numbers and knowledgeable about the sport greeted Mendota High School wrestling coach Dale Meyers when the team opened practice in mid-November.

A total of 20 wrestlers are out for this year's team and Meyers said a majority of them were either already adept at the nuances of the sport or are fast learners.

"The kids are picking things up very quickly," said Meyers. "It's a very good thing when most of them know the basics of wrestling right from the start. It makes the practices go much more smoothly when we don't have to teach them new things and we can just get right into it."

One downside is that of the 20 on

the roster, only six are upperclassmen. There are four seniors, two juniors, seven sophomores and seven freshmen.

"We're a young group, but most of the 14 freshmen and sophomores have wrestling experience," noted Meyers. "A lot of them have participated in the youth program and that's a huge plus when they reach the high school level."

Senior squad members include JP Belmonte and Albert Harris. Belmonte brings experience to the squad but will not be available to take the mat until December after recovering from a leg injury incurred during the football season. The other seniors are Brooke Bailey and Julian Jordan, who are out for the team for the first time.

The junior wrestlers are Dean Gil-

bert and Sam Christmann, also new to the squad.

Sophomores who gained varsity experience a year ago include Cadance Thornton, Lea Turner, Angil Serrano, Rhett Watson and Jose Herмосillo. Also from the sophomore class on the roster are Gabriel Vallejo and Reyli Sandoval.

Freshmen on the team are Corbin Furar, Wyatt Ossman, Gavin Evans, Osvaldo Arteaga, Nathan Giberson, Payton Gagliardo and Reese Lane. A majority of the freshmen come out of the youth wrestling program.

"It's nice to have a big group of freshmen and sophomores because those are some numbers we can hopefully build on in the future," added Meyers.

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*Dr. Kelly in office from 1-4

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Lady Trojans confident in improving on win total

MENDOTA—With only four wins on the slate last season, the mindset with this year’s Mendota girls’ basketball team is there is only one way to go, and that’s up. And with two returning starters and several other players that have varsity experience, head coach John Hansen is confident on upping the win total this year.

“We’re returning two everyday starters from last year in Katie Jenner and Reanna Brant, and our projected starting five all had at least two years of varsity experience,” said Hansen. “This means we know each other’s strengths/weaknesses and tendencies.

“We know what to expect as far as game speed and the main difficulties and obstacles that come with the long season. And they know what we want to accomplish as a program and how we want to compete at all aspects of a basketball program. I expect that to help continue our strong player leadership tendencies. They push each other and hold each other accountable every day.”

Brant, a junior, led the Lady Trojans in scoring (9.6 ppg) and rebounding (10.7 rpg) last season, while Jenner will be the main ball handler in her senior season. Returning senior Naitzy Garcia hauled down 7.5 rebounds per game a year ago, while senior Gracie Zinke also returns, and juniors Grace Wasmer and Karly Reel both saw

varsity playing time as sophomores.

“I’m expecting a big step overall from our returning players as a whole. Jenner has really stepped up as our main ball handler and leader, and Brant has continued to grow as an extremely strong post presence,” stated Hansen.

“I’m expecting the biggest jump from Garcia, Zinke, Reel and Wasmer. They’ve all had the athleticism and some of the right skills. They just haven’t always quite had it all put together for the speed and intensity of the varsity level yet.

“They’re continuing to show that they’ve begun to make that step. I’m excited to see how it all comes together for them as the season progresses. I’m a huge ‘know your role and do your job’ guy. And I think this group is going to work hard at doing those jobs.”

Hansen said Jenner has always jokingly called herself a fourth coach, and she asks question after question trying to understand the game and her role on the team. He added that she’s a lead-by-example type player who knows how to take it to that higher level when it matters the most.

“Players feed off of that,” noted Hansen. “And as our main ball handler/outside shooter, I truly believe she will surprise some people and help us immensely offensively.”

With height being a strength of the team, Han-



Front row, left to right, Ryleigh Sondgeroth, Katie Jenner, Gracie Zinke, Bria Frey, Karly Reel. Back row, head coach John Hansen, Grace Wasmer, Emma Schultz, Reanna Brant, Cassie Gonzalez, Naitzy Garcia, Alysa Sharp, assistant coach Matt Gehm.

sen said he has tweaked the offense a bit, less relying on drives and more relying on the post, high-low, mid-range shots and kick-outs.

“When I became the girls’ coach, I reached out to several former and current coaches for advice,” said Hansen. “One big thing that has stuck with me was any look from inside/around the paint is a successful possession. That means a lot of somethings are going right offensively, whether it be drives, cuts, offensive boards.

“We will continue to

live by that. We need some three-pointers, no doubt, but they’ll come along with the higher percentage looks we can get that lead to open looks outside.”

New additions to the team that are first-time high school players are senior Emma Schultz and juniors Ryleigh Sondgeroth and Bria Frey. Another newcomer is junior Alysa Sharp.

“They’ve already learned so much this year and I expect them to develop into their roles nicely as the season goes on,” added Hansen.

Mendota Varsity Girls' Basketball Roster 2022-23

No	Player	Ht	Pos	Yr
1	Katie Jenner	5-3	PG	Sr
2	Gracie Zinke	5-4	SG	Sr
5	Bria Frey	5-6	SG	Jr
10	Alysa Sharp	5-7	G	Jr
12	Ryleigh Sondgeroth	5-3	G	Jr
14	Emma Schultz	5-8	F	Sr
15	Grace Wasmer	5-9	F	Jr
20	Reanna Brant	6-0	C	Jr
21	Karly Reel	5-7	SG	Jr
23	Cassie Gonzalez	5-9	F	So
24	Naitzy Garcia	5-8	F	Sr

Head coach: John Hansen
Assistant coach: Matt Gehm



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Solid core of returning seniors has new Trojan coach optimistic

MENDOTA – Another head coach will call the shots for the Mendota Trojans when the 2022-23 basketball season begins. After a year serving as an assistant under Steve Hanson, MHS graduate Steve Wasmer will take over the heading coaching reigns.

Wasmer feels his year as an assistant helped him gain familiarity with the players and his comfort level with the program in general.

“I feel comfortable in my role this year,” Wasmer said. “It helped a ton learning from Steve (Hanson) last year, and also having an experienced assistant like Coach (Nick) Ganz helps. We will make some mistakes coaching just like the players will make mistakes on the floor, but that’s part of it. Hopefully by the end of the year we will have everything ironed out when it counts.”

The Trojans have a solid group of seniors returning that bring varsity experience to the floor. They include Rafael Romero, Isaac Guzman, Dom Stamberger, Ryne Strouss and Jose Rocha.

“This will be Rafael’s third year as a varsity starter,” stated Wasmer. “He’s a tremendous rebounder and defender, and a great leader. I hope this year the other coaches can see how valuable of a player he is. He should be a first-team all-conference performer and make every all-tournament team. That’s how good he is.”

Wasmer noted that Strouss and Guzman started a lot of games last year, and they know the system and what is expected of them.

“Strouss is everywhere on the floor – I think he probably led the conference in charges taken last year in limited minutes,” said Wasmer. “Guzman is going to get the first shot at point guard, and our hope is that he gets us organized on offense.

“Stamberger has put a ton of work in during the off-season as well. He can definitely help us this year with his scoring ability.”

The top returning junior is Izaiah Nanez, who was full time on the varsity squad as a sophomore and also got some minutes as a freshman.

“We expect big things from Izaiah this year,” explained Wasmer. “This will be his third season playing varsity and his second season as a starter. He’s put on muscle and grown a couple of inches.

“He’s very clever and has the tools to become an excellent scorer. His shot started falling more at the end of last year and we expect more consistency from him this year.”

Other junior squad members include Cale Strouss, Mason Koch, Logan Dewey, Kaleb Kleckner, Luca Siebert, Ryan Stevenson, Owen Aughenbaugh and Jace Baird. Wasmer also indicated that sophomore Cameron Kelly could be



Front row, left to right, Ryan Stevenson, Isaac Guzman, Owen Aughenbaugh, Cale Strouss, Cam Kelly, Dominik Stamberger, Ryne Strouss. Back row, Izaiah Nanez, Mason Koch, Luca Siebert, Jose Rocha Jr., Rafael Romero, Logan Dewey, Jace Baird.

up on the varsity squad this season.

“We have a very good collection of juniors that will battle for playing time,” Wasmer said. “We would like to play an 8- to 10-man rotation, which means there are minutes to be had.”

Wasmer indicated that Cale Strouss and Baird will be called on to handle the ball and score, while the other squad members all bring good things to the table, which is a nice luxury for a coach to have.

Wasmer said most coaches like to play an up-tempo style with

high-scoring games, but added that it’s not always the best game plan for winning.

“Our strength had better be our defense and effort,” Wasmer noted. “Those are the things that you can control when the shots aren’t falling.

“We have guys returning that know they better be flying around on the defensive end and diving on the floor. Whoever does that will be the first to get minutes. That being said, we do have the depth to get out in transition and enough shooters to compete in that type of game.”

Mendota Varsity Boys' Basketball Roster 2022-23

No	Player	Ht	Pos	Yr
1	Cale Strouss	5-8	G	Jr
2	Isaac Guzman	5-11	G	Sr
3	Rafael Romero	6-4	F	Sr
4	Dominik Stamberger	6-0	F	Sr
5	Jace Baird	6-0	G	Jr
10	Owen Aughenbaugh	5-10	G	Jr
11	Izaiah Nanez	6-2	G-F	Jr
12	Logan Dewey	6-1	F	Jr
13	Ryne Strouss	6-0	F	Sr
22	Ryan Stevenson	5-10	F	Jr
23	Cam Kelly	5-10	G	So
24	Mason Koch	6-0	F	Jr
32	Luca Siebert	6-5	F	Jr
44	Jose Rocha Jr.	6-6	C	Sr

Head coach: Steve Wasmer
Assistant coach: Nick Ganz

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Front row, left to right, Paxton Bauer, Nick Sheridan, Kooper Novak, Landon Bauer. Middle row, Alex Holland, Aiden Kent Tucker, Wyatt Sondgeroth, BJ Bresley, Josh Sondgeroth. Back row, Caeleb Ensor, Trekker Klema, Clay Buffington, Logan Wujek, Landon Lee, Luis Nunez. Not pictured: Zach Giberson.



Front row, left to right, Talya Schwaegerman, Lauren Holland, Isabelle Escatel, Makayla Lara. Back row, Karli Miars, Mia Raya, Peri Manning, Brisa Nunez. Not pictured: Alex Casas.

Bowlers have solid returnees, newcomers

MENDOTA—The Mendota Trojan bowling team has four returning squad members for the 2022-23 season. This year's head coach is Matt Bauer, assisted by Mandi Bauer, John Holland and Jennifer Holland.

The returning bowlers include senior Clay Buffington, junior Landon Bauer and sophomores BJ Bresley and Aiden Kent Tucker. The varsity squad is completed with three freshmen – Alex Holland, Kooper Novak and Paxton Bauer.

The varsity is a young squad but boasts plenty of bowling experience. Holland and Novak were members of the Holy Cross bowling team that won the state IESA title last year.

Paxton Bauer also has plenty of bowling experience to closely mirror older brother Landon. Both have had success in Wisconsin and Illinois youth tournaments. Paxton finished third overall in points last season in the Wisconsin Youth Bowlers Tour and had one championship title, while the year before Landon earned top points winner and was crowned Player of the Year.

"Holland, Novak, Kent Tucker and the Bauer brothers all have been bowling together in regular youth leagues for a while, so they have gelled very well and help motivate the newcomers to the program," commented Coach Bauer. "Already there has been improvements on both varsity and JV in averages. Clay (Buffington) is great with

motivation and leads the underclassmen very well at meets and practices."

Coach Bauer said there is great potential on the junior varsity team with juniors Logan Wujek and Trekker Klema, sophomores Josh Sondgeroth and Wyatt Sondgeroth, and freshmen Caeleb Ensor and Nick Sheridan.

"With having a talented yet young core, we will probably see more contests being very close, but win or lose, all the boys have heart, determination, and love for the game," added Coach Bauer. "When the younger core starts becoming more consistent with bowling to their highest potential, they will be a very dangerous group. The support they give one another is tremendous."

Goals that the team has set is to at least get past regionals as a team and go from there, but Coach Bauer said the future looks


bright as they get older and gain more experience. "Even if we cannot advance as a team there is great potential to have a few of them advance as individuals, and if some keep on the pace they are currently going, some could be state-bound for sure."

There are nine bowlers on the girls' team, including six returning bowlers from last year's squad.


The returnees include seniors Karli Miars, Isabelle Escatel, Talya Schwaegerman, Makayla Lara and Alex Casas, and sophomore Lauren Holland.

The other team members include senior Mia Raya, sophomore Brisa Nunez and freshman Peri Manning.

The girls' season starts several weeks after the boys. Coach Bauer indicated that lineup spots are still being determined based on averages from practices.



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Sophomore Girls' Basketball

Front row, left to right, Sofia Duarte, Ava Eddy, Crystal Garcia, Lily Bokus, Ella Martin. Back row, head coach Joe Hughes, Kennedy Knaff, Ella Coss, Cassie Gonzalez, Jackie Flores, Madison Sproston.



Sophomore Boys' Basketball

Front row, left to right, Cam Kelly, Cam Escatel, Evan McPheeters, Logan Martin, Domenic Richey. Back row, Aden Tillman, David Casas, Dane Hiner, Braiden Freeman, Dane Doyle.

Mendota Sophomore Girls' Basketball Roster 2022-23

No	Player	Ht	Pos	Yr
4	Crystal Garica	5-5	SG	So
5	Ava Eddy	5-4	PG	So
10	Kennedy Knaff	5-7	F	So
12	Talia White	5-5	SG	Fr
13	Ella Martin	5-5	SG	So
14	Sofia Duarte	5-4	G	So
15	Cassie Gonzalez	5-9	F	So
20	Jackie Flores	5-4	G	So
21	Ella Coss	5-6	F	So
22	Lily Bokus	5-5	SG	So
24	Laylie Denault	5-5	F	Fr
34	Madison Sproston	5-6	F	So

Head coach: Joe Hughes

Mendota Sophomore Boys' Basketball Roster 2022-23

No	Player	Ht	Pos	Yr
1	Cam Escatel	5-9	G	So
2	Cam Kelly	5-10	G	So
3	Domenic Richey	5-10	G	So
4	Evan McPheeters	5-7	G	So
5	Logan Martin	5-9	F	Fr
11	Aden Tillman	6-0	G	Fr
12	Braiden Freeman	6-0	G-F	So
13	David Casas	5-10	F	So
15	Dane Doyle	6-2	G-F	Fr
24	Dane Hiner	6-3	F	So

Head coach: Evan Carroll

Mendota Freshman Boys' Basketball Roster 2022-23

No	Player	Ht	Pos	Yr
1	Alex Beetz	5-10	G	Fr
3	Keegan Beetz	5-10	G-F	Fr
5	Dane Doyle	6-2	G-F	Fr
10	Johan Cortez	5-7	G	Fr
11	Aden Tillman	6-0	G	Fr
12	Angel Orozco	5-5	G	Fr
13	Ramiro Palacios	5-7	G	Fr
14	Edward Bautista	5-6	G	Fr
21	Tayven Orozco	5-6	G	Fr
23	Jonas Fitzgerald	6-4	C	Fr
31	Grady Jones	5-10	F	Fr
51	Brody Hartt	5-2	G	Fr

Head coach: Drake O'Donnell



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MHS Schedules

Boys' Bowling

Dec. 5 – at Geneseo – 4:00
 Dec. 6 – at Rockford L. – 4:00
 Dec. 10 – at L-P Invite – 9:00
 Jan. 4 – Streator – 4:00
 Jan. 5 – LaSalle-Peru – 4:00
 Jan. 9 – at St. Bede – 4:00
 Jan. 12 – at Dixon – 4:00
 Jan. 14 – Regional

Girls' Bowling

Dec. 3 – at Kewanee – 9:00
 Dec. 10 – at L-P Invite – 9:00
 Dec. 13 – Hall – 4:00
 Jan. 3 – Geneseo – 4:00
 Jan. 5 – LaSalle-Peru – 4:00
 Jan. 9 – Streator – 4:00
 Jan. 10 – Dixon – 4:00
 Jan. 17 – at LaSalle-Peru – 4:00
 Jan. 18 – Hall – 4:00
 Jan. 19 – Streator – 4:00
 Jan. 23 – at St. Bede – 4:00
 Jan. 26 – Ottawa – 4:00
 Jan. 28 – at Dixon Invite – 9:00
 Jan. 30 – at Streator – 4:00
 Jan. 31 – at Kewanee – 4:00
 Feb. 1 – at Hall – 4:00
 Feb. 2 – Oregon – 4:00
 Feb. 4 – Regional

Girls' Basketball

Dec. 1 – at St. Bede – 5:30
 Dec. 3 – at Putnam Co. – 10:00
 Dec. 5 – Hall – 5:30
 Dec. 8 – Princeton – 5:30
 Dec. 10 – at Streator – 10:00
 Dec. 12 – at Newman – 5:30
 Dec. 17 – Earlville – noon
 Dec. 21 – at Riverdale – 11:30
 Dec. 27-30 – at Amboy Tour.(V)
 Jan. 5 – at LaSalle-Peru – 5:30
 Jan. 9 – at Bureau Valley – 5:30
 Jan. 11 – at Kewanee – 5:30
 Jan. 14 – at Rock Falls – 1:00
 Jan. 19 – at Hall – 5:30
 Jan. 21 – at Stillman Valley – 12:30
 Jan. 23 – St. Bede – 5:30
 Jan. 26 – Newman – 5:30
 Jan. 28 – Amboy – 1:00
 Jan. 30 – at Princeton – 5:30
 Feb. 2 – Kewanee – 5:30
 Feb. 9 – Newark – 5:30
 Feb. 11-17 – Regional

Boys' Basketball

Dec. 1 – at Byron – 5:30
 Dec. 3-10 – at Colmone Classic (V)
 Dec. 16 – at Bureau Valley – 5:30
 Dec. 17 – Earlville – 1:30
 Dec. 21 – Riverdale – 11:30
 Dec. 27-30 – at Plano Classic (V&S)
 Jan. 3 – at Hall – 5:30
 Jan. 6 – Princeton – 5:30
 Jan. 7 – LaSalle-Peru – 3:00
 Jan. 10 – Newman – 5:30
 Jan. 13 – Rock Falls – 5:30
 Jan. 14 – at Ottawa – 4:30
 Jan. 17 – Bureau Valley – 5:30
 Jan. 20 – Kewanee – 5:30
 Jan. 21 – at Stillman Valley – 2:00
 Jan. 24 – Hall – 5:30
 Jan. 27 – at St. Bede – 5:30
 Jan. 31 – at Newman – 5:30
 Feb. 3 – at Princeton – 5:30
 Feb. 7 – at Kewanee – 5:30
 Feb. 14 – St. Bede – 5:30
 Feb. 18-24 – Regional

Boys' Freshman Basketball

Dec. 1 – at Byron – 5:30
 Dec. 16-17 – at Oregon Tour.
 Dec. 27-28 – at L-P Tourney
 Jan. 3 – at Hall – 5:30
 Jan. 6 – Princeton – 5:30
 Jan. 10 – Newman – 5:30
 Jan. 13 – Rock Falls – 5:30
 Jan. 17 – Bureau Valley – 5:30
 Jan. 20 – Kewanee – 5:30
 Jan. 21 – at Stillman Valley – 11:00
 Jan. 24 – Hall – 5:30
 Jan. 31 – at Newman – 5:30
 Feb. 3 – at Princeton – 5:30
 Feb. 7 – at Kewanee – 5:30
 Feb. 14 – St. Bede – 5:30
 Feb. 18 – at Princeton Tour. – 9:00

Wrestling

Dec. 3 – at Seneca – 9:00
 Dec. 9 – at Kewanee – 5:00
 Dec. 17 – at Stillman Valley – 9:00
 Jan. 5 – Rockridge – 5:30
 Jan. 10 – at Newman – 5:30
 Jan. 12 – at Erie – 5:30
 Jan. 14 – at Kewanee – 9:00
 Jan. 17 – at Riverdale – 5:30
 Jan. 25 – Marquette, Somonauk,
 St. Bede, Streator – 5:30
 Feb. 4 – Regional



Freshman Boys' Basketball

Front row, left to right, Ramiro Palacios, Edward Bautista, Brody Hartt, Angel Orozco, Johan Cortez, Tayven Orozco. Back row, Keegan Beetz, Aden Tillman, Jonas Fitzgerald, Dane Doyle, Grady Jones, Alex Beetz.



Freshman Girls' Basketball

Front row, left to right, Addy Allensworth, Addi Jones, Laylie Denault, Ally Denault. Back row, coach Joe Hughes, Talia White, Elaina Reddin, Samara Hernandez.

Mendota Freshman Girls' Basketball Roster 2022-23				
No	Player	Ht	Pos	Yr
10	Addi Jones	5-5	SG	Fr
11	Ally Denault	5-3	PG	Fr
12	Talia White	5-5	SG	Fr
13	Addy Allensworth	5-5	SG	Fr
23	Samara Hernandez	5-4	SG	Fr
32	Elaina Reddin	5-10	C	Fr



Cheerleaders

Front row, left to right, Abby Kunz, Kate Mikolasek, Airam Cuevas, Jazlynn Gambrell. Middle row, Sienna Gonzalez, Janae Carr, Sophia Pappas, Korinne Miars, Dessa Komitas. Back row, Sofia Gomez, Alayna Nosalik, Ruby Bielema, Riley Cocanour, Makenzie Bean, Claire Hanson. Not pictured: Sydney Tolley.

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Have a great season!!



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The Mendota Reporter

A detailed black and white illustration of an eagle with its wings spread, perched on a branch with leaves. The eagle is positioned behind the word 'Mendota' in the title.