



Trojans have return trip to playoffs on their mind

MENDOTA – After getting a taste of the playoffs last season for the first time since 2014, the Mendota Trojans are looking to make it two straight post-season appearances as the 2022 football season gets underway.

The playoff appearance gave the program a renewed jolt of energy and the players responded with vigorous off-season preparations leading up to the start of official practice the second week of August.

“We had a very positive summer session of workouts and football skill work/installation,” said Keegan Hill, who enters his fifth year as head coach of the Trojans. “The senior group is growing into their roles and are taking the culture of the team seriously. Multiple players are showing what they are capable of and we are excited to put the pieces

together this fall.”

After going through a period of struggling on offense, the Trojans broke through last season by averaging 26 points per game, which helped them to put five wins on the board. Hill said that success in moving the football and getting into the end zone gave the squad a new mindset.

“We gained a bunch of confidence in our 10-game season last year,” noted Hill. “The expectations on offense are higher now after seeing what we accomplished last year.”

The Trojans will have to build on that momentum with a new quarterback at the helm. Three-year starter Ted Landgraf has graduated and Hill said junior Justin Randolph is likely his successor.

[See Football, Page 6](#)



Front row, left to right, JP Belmonte, Dmitri Rodriguez, Garret Zinke, Jake Saylor, Rhett Watson, Diego Sandoval. Second row, Charles Heiting, Albert Harris, Logan Muller, Braydon Boelk, Neal Linden, Anthony Childs. Third row, Braiden Freeman, Landon Kreiser, Gabe Vallejo, Isaac Smith, Brandon Leadley, Ryne Strouss, Angil Serrano. Fourth row, Daniel Hanson, Dean Gilbert, Jacob Carr, Jose Rocha, Dane Hiner, Jordan Coney, Logan Wujek, Justin Randolph. Back row, assistant coach Brock Zinke, assistant coach Dan Beck, assistant coach Steve Villegas, head coach Keegan Hill, assistant coach Cesar Arteaga, assistant coach Cody Zinke, assistant coach Sean Kaufman.



Front row, left to right, Alex Holland, Caleb Ensor, Braden McPheeters, Grady Jones, Haden Shakespeare. Middle row, assistant coach Brian Blumhorst, Kooper Novak, Cale Strouss, Owen Aughenbaugh, Evan McPheeters, Nick Sheridan, Brody Hartt. Back row, Jace Baird, Drake Dennis, Dane Doyle, Clay Buffington, Jack Mikolasek, Brody Kaecker, Cayden Escatel. Not pictured: Dominik Stamberger.

Golfers need production from upperclassmen

MENDOTA – The Mendota Trojan golf team boasts a roster of 19 players as it begins the 2022 season.

Four-year varsity member Ethan Hanaman has graduated and is playing golf on the collegiate level at Missouri Baptist University, while Logan Brandner was another dependable leader from last fall’s team that has graduated.

With that said, head coach David Ross indicated he will need a few upperclassmen to step up and fill those spots in 2022.

Ross noted that junior Owen Aughenbaugh returns after a successful sopho-

more season in which he advanced to the sectional and is looking to surpass that this year.

Leading a group of six seniors is Clay Buffington, who has been a varsity performer the last two seasons.

“We will need Clay to step into that senior leader position and be a model of consistency on and off the course,” said Ross.

Ross said seniors Dominik Stamberger and Braden McPheeters were fringe varsity players last year, spending most of the season bouncing back and forth from top junior varsity players to bottom varsity

spots.

“I fully expect them to compete for higher varsity positions this season,” said Ross. “So far they have shown that they are ready to do that.”

Ross added that the freshman class has the most players on the team with eight, and they have been playing a lot of golf preparing for their first year of high school competition.

“I expect good things out of them and hope that they can crack into the top 12,” stated Ross.

[See Golf, Page 3](#)

Off-season preparations play vital role for inexperienced Spikers

MENDOTA – The Mendota Spikers will have a different look this 2022 season after its senior-dominated roster from last fall. With that in mind, off-season preparations were an important aspect of the program leading into the start of the new campaign.

“I am pleased with the progress the girls have made,” said head coach Nicci Gibson. “They are all working extremely hard and adapting to new skills and situations.

“Our motto has been ‘learn and grow’ – learn from your mistakes and learn new things and grow as a player and a person. Volleyball is not only about the game, but I like to teach the girls about life through the game of volleyball.”

The 2021 roster boasted eight seniors that saw significant playing time throughout their varsity careers. And while that is a huge turnover on the roster, Gibson is excited to see how the hard work done by the current team members will pay off once the ball goes in the air.

“It will be a change and we are working through some things, but players are stepping up to their new roles on varsity and the speed of the varsity level,” noted Gibson. “We have a great group of girls on this team and four seniors that have been leading the team this summer and pre-season.”

Two of the most experienced players back

in 2022 are senior Katie Jenner and junior Reanna Brant. Gibson is looking for Jenner to jump-start the offense from the setter position and for Brant to be a force at the net from the middle blocker spot.

“These two young ladies are hard workers and the heart of the team,” said Gibson. “They know what the team expectations are and they push the other girls every day at practice.

“They are both high-character girls that other girls look up to. I hope to continue to see leadership, great character and a lot of set/hit connections between the two of them.”

There are three other seniors on this year’s roster – Naitzy Garcia, Karsyn Klatt and Emma Schultz. Gibson said Garcia will see time on the right side and has worked hard on her hitting, blocking and team leadership. Klatt and Schultz will both play on the outside and right side. Both saw some court time as juniors and Gibson said they will be great additions to the front row this year.

In addition to Brant, other juniors on the roster are Lily Leifheit, Ana Ramirez, Bria Frey, Madelyn Becker, Ava Jones, Ryleigh Sondgeroth, Emma Pierce, Grace Wasmer and Kiara Johnson. Freshman Laylie Denault completes the 15-player roster.

Gibson said Wasmer and Pierce are middle blockers, Frey, Johnson



Front row, left to right, Katie Jenner, Madelyn Becker, Ava Jones, Lily Leifheit, Emma Pierce, Ryleigh Sondgeroth, Ana Ramirez. Back row, Bria Frey, Kiara Johnson, Emma Schultz, Grace Wasmer, Reanna Brant, Karsyn Klatt, Naitzy Garcia, Laylie Denault.

and Jones are right side hitters, and Denault plays an outside hitter position. Sondgeroth, Leifheit and Ramirez are defensive specialists and serve receivers, while Becker will be in the setter’s role along with Jenner.

Gibson, a lifelong volleyball player and coach, said she always looks forward to getting back in the gym and coaching the sport she loves.

“I am excited about the new season and seeing how these girls can grow

as a team,” added Gibson. “This is the best time of year – volleyball season.”

The Spikers will begin their second season as members of the Three Rivers Conference along with Princeton, Hall, St. Bede, Bureau Valley, Kewanee and Sterling Newman. Mendota will also play several non-conference matches as well as tournaments at Oregon, Reed-Custer and Princeton. The Spikers will also host their own tournament in the middle of October.

Varsity Volleyball Roster

No	Player	Pos	Yr
2	Lily Leifheit	L/DS	Jr
3	Ana Ramirez	DS	Jr
4	Laylie Denault	OH	Fr
5	Bria Frey	RH	Jr
6	Madelyn Becker	S	Jr
7	Katie Jenner	S	Sr
8	Ava Jones	RH	Jr
10	Karsyn Klatt	OH/RH	Sr
11	Emma Schultz	OH/RH	Sr
12	Ryleigh Sondgeroth	S/DS	Jr
13	Emma Pierce	RH	Jr
14	Grace Wasmer	MB	Jr
20	Kiara Johnson	RH	Jr
21	Naitzy Garcia	RH	Sr
22	Reanna Brant	MB	Jr

Head coach: Nicci Gibson



WE SUPPORT
MENDOTA HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS



Spiker Volleyball Rosters

Sophomore Volleyball Roster

No	Player	Pos	Yr
1	Ava Eddy	L/DS	So
2	Lily Bokus	OH/DS	So
4	Kaitlyn Neville	OH/RS	So
5	Jasmin Escatel	DS	So
6	Kaley Siemer	DS	So
7	Ashley Caracheo	OH/RS	So
8	Noemi Arteaga	OH/RS	So
9	Kirby Bond	OH	So
11	Ella Coss	S	So
13	Ella Martin	S	So
14	Kennedy Knaff	MB	So
15	Lupita Maldonado	DS	So
16	Claire Hanson	MS	So
18	Lisette Sandoval	DS	So

Head coach: Taylor Gibson

Freshman Volleyball Roster

No	Player	Pos	Yr
4	Maren Atherton	DS	Fr
5	Katelyn Mikolasek	DS	Fr
6	Sydney Tolley	OH/RH	Fr
7	Litzy Celis	DS	Fr
8	Milianna Castaneda	DS	Fr
9	Sofia Gomez	OH/RH	Fr
10	Talia White	S/RH	Fr
11	Addisyn Jones	MB	Fr
14	Addyson Allensworth	MB	Fr
15	Peri Manning	OH/RH	Fr
16	Elaina Reddin	MB	Fr
20	Airam Cuevas	DS	Fr
21	Ally Denault	OH	Fr
22	Jessica Reel	S	Fr
23	Janae Carr	DS	Fr

Head coach: Laura McNally



Volleyball schedule

Aug. 25 – at Amboy – 5 p.m.
 Aug. 30 – at Bureau Valley – 5 p.m.
 Sept. 2 – at Oregon Tourney (v) – 4 p.m.
 Sept. 3 – at Oregon Tourney (v) – 8 a.m.
 Sept. 6 – at Hall – 5 p.m.
 Sept. 8 – at Princeton – 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 – Mendota Rally Invite (so) – 8 a.m.
 Sept. 13 – Newman – 5 p.m.
 Sept. 14 – Sandwich – 5 p.m.
 Sept. 17 – at Ottawa Tourney (fr) – 8 a.m.
 Sept. 20 – Bureau Valley – 5 p.m.
 Sept. 22 – Kewanee – 5 p.m.
 Sept. 24 – at Reed-Custer Tourney (v) – 9 a.m.
 Sept. 24 – at Byron Tourney (fr) – 9 a.m.
 Sept. 27 – Hall – 5 p.m.
 Sept. 29 – at St. Bede – 5 p.m.
 Oct. 1 – at Byron Tourney (so) – 9 a.m.
 Oct. 1 – Mendota Rally Invite (fr) – 8 a.m.
 Oct. 4 – at Newman – 5 p.m.
 Oct. 6 – Princeton – 5 p.m.
 Oct. 8 – at Princeton Invite (v) – 8 a.m.
 Oct. 8 – at Pecatonica Tourney (so) – 8:30 a.m.
 Oct. 11 – at Kewanee – 5 p.m.
 Oct. 15 – Mendota Rally Invite (v) – 8 a.m.
 Oct. 15 – at Fulton Tourney (so) – 8 a.m.
 Oct. 18 – St. Bede – 5 p.m.
 Oct. 24-28 – Regional



Boys' Soccer schedule

Aug. 24 – at Somonauk – 4:30 p.m.
 Aug. 26 – at Oregon Tourney – 4:30 p.m.
 Aug. 27 – at Oregon Tourney – 10 a.m.
 Aug. 29 – at DePue – 4:30 p.m.
 Aug. 30 – Riverdale – 4:30 p.m.
 Sept. 3 – Orion – 11 a.m.
 Sept. 7 – Kewanee – 4:30 p.m.
 Sept. 12 – at Yorkville – 4:30 p.m.
 Sept. 14 – Bloomington Central Catholic – 6 p.m.
 Sept. 19 – Streator – 4:30 p.m.
 Sept. 20 – Princeton – 4:30 p.m.
 Sept. 22 – LaSalle-Peru – 4:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 – at Monmouth-Roseville – 10:30 a.m.
 Sept. 27 – at Dixon – 4:30 p.m.
 Sept. 30 & Oct. 1 – Great River Classic @ Burlington, Iowa
 Oct. 5 – at Stillman Valley – 4:30 p.m.
 Oct. 6 – Rochelle – 4:30 p.m.
 Oct. 8-16 – Regional

Golf

Continued from Page 1

Members of the 2022 golf team are:

Seniors – Clay Buffington, Drake Dennis, Cayden Escatel, Jack Mikolasek, Braden McPheeters, Dominik Stamberger.

Juniors – Owen Aughen-

baugh, Jace Baird, Haden Shakespeare, Cale Strouss
 Sophomores – Evan McPheeters

Freshmen – Dane Doyle, Caleb Ensor, Brody Hartt, Alex Holland, Grady Jones, Brody Kaecker, Kooper Novak, Nick Sheridan

Golf schedule

Aug. 25 – at Rochelle – 4:30 p.m.
 Aug. 29 – at Erie – 4 p.m.
 Aug. 31 – at Rock Falls – 4 p.m.
 Sept. 1 – at Orion – 4 p.m.
 Sept. 6 – Princeton, Hall – 4 p.m.
 Sept. 8 – at Morrison (Deer Valley) – 4 p.m.
 Sept. 13 – at Monmouth-Roseville – 4 p.m.
 Sept. 14 – at Bureau Valley (Hidden Lake) – 4 p.m.
 Sept. 15 – LaSalle-Peru – 4 p.m.
 Sept. 17 – at Princeton – 8 a.m.
 Sept. 19 – at St. Bede – 4 p.m.
 Sept. 20 – TRAC Conference Meet @ Rock Island – 10 a.m.
 Sept. 22 – Ottawa – 4 p.m.
 Sept. 24 – Mendota Modified Ryder Cup – 8:30 a.m.
 Sept. 28 – Regional

Varsity Soccer Roster

No	Player	Yr
GK	Martin Murillo	Sr
GK	Mateo Goy	Fr
2/8	Isaac Guzman	Sr
3	Rafael Romero	Sr
4	David Garcia	Sr
5	Iker Landeros	Sr
6	Edgar Arteaga	Sr
7	Izaiah Nanez	Jr
8	Kaleb Kleckner	Jr
9	Ricky Orozco	Sr
10	Jasiel Watson	Sr
11	Eli Arjes	Sr
12	Fredy Mandujano	Jr
13	Sebastian Carlos	Fr
14	Logan Dewey	Jr
15	Johnathan Cortez	Sr
16	Ramiro Palacios	Fr
17	Mauricio Martinez	So
18	Cameron Kelly	So
20	Johan Cortez	Fr
23	David Casas	So

Head coach: Nick Myers
 Assistant coach: Rey Arteaga

Junior Varsity Soccer Roster

No	Player	Yr
GK/1	Mateo Goy	Fr
2	Ramiro Palacios	Fr
3	Alex Beetz	Fr
5	Oswaldo Arteaga	Fr
7	Mauricio Salinas	Fr
9	Luis Ramirez	Fr
10	Emiliano Medina	Fr
11	Samuel Matura	So
12	Fredy Mandujano	Jr
13	Johnny Diaz	So
14	Jose Hernandez	So
15	Aaden Castle	Fr
16	Cameron Escatel	So
17	Angel Orozco	Fr
18	Diego Raya	So
22	Hector Gonzalez	Fr
23	David Casas	So
25	Cameron Kelly	So
26	Emmanuel Medina	Fr

Head coach: Nick Myers
 Assistant coach: Rey Arteaga



WE SUPPORT MENDOTA HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS



Boys' soccer hopes to accomplish task list in '22

By **BRANDON LaCHANCE**
Staff writer

MENDOTA – Mendota boys' soccer coach Nick Myers has a difficult task ahead of him.

Last season, the Trojans had their greatest season ever as they finished 23-1 and won the school's first ever sectional championship.

The team lost Yahir Diaz (MHS leader in all-time goals, 113, and season goals, 46), Manny Trejo, Josue Arteaga, Jose Ruiz, Luis Garcia, and Alex Mandujano to graduation.

Now, Myers' task is to combine his five returning starters, bench players who played heavy minutes who will start this season, and an impressive freshman class, into a team ready for a long IHSA playoff run.

"We lost six key guys and we've talked about how they were security blankets for us because you were extremely confident as a player and I was as a coach with them on the field," said Myers, who is beginning year four of his second campaign with the team. "But we have experience since we're returning five players from the starting 11. We have a lot of guys who gave us heavy minutes off of the bench.

"We also have a lot of youth injected into us. There are three freshmen who are going to dress varsity and two of them are going to start. We have a couple juniors and sophomores who are going to play heavy minutes," stated

Myers.

"I think it's just continuing it. We don't want to look back. Obviously, 23-1, we've talked and realistically know it's not going to happen again. That's OK. All the teams that went to state last year had three, four, five, six loses throughout the season. For us, the key thing is, how do we learn from that? It's been over a year since we've lost a regular season game, so how do we react when that happens? We're trying to get ourselves ready for those moments."

Seniors Rafael Romero, Johnathan Cortez, Ricki Orozco, Jasiel Watson and David Garcia are the five returners who will be asked to play their best soccer yet. Romero, Cortez, and Orozco are all four-year players and will be the team captains.

Romero is the defensive anchor who Myers calls a coach on the field. Cortez has been a starter since his freshman year and is a big wing presence. Orozco is a center attacking mid who leads by example.

Watson is taking over the striker position left open by Diaz and Garcia is a center back. Myers said Watson has the ability to beat Diaz's single season scoring record and called Garcia the best defender on the team last year.

"I give credit to the boys because they've been working hard," Myers said. "We are entering the season 0-0 just like everyone else. It's my job to let them know



Front row, left to right, Martin Murillo, Johan Cortez, Johnathan Cortez, Mauricio Martinez, Mateo Goy. Middle row, Sebastian Carlos, Ramiro Palacios, Kaleb Kleckner, Cameron Kelly, David Casas, Ricky Orozco, Iker Landeros, Edgar Arteaga. Back row, manager Emily Stewart, head coach Nick Myers, Jasiel Watson, Eli Arjes, Izaiah Nanez, Rafael Romero, Logan Dewey, Isaac Guzman, Fredy Mandujano, assistant coach Rey Arteaga, manager Krystal Garcia, manager Flor Delao.

last season doesn't matter anymore. I have to keep their mindset hungry and not let them get comfortable because of last year's overall record or how we did against an individual team. They've changed as well."

Another task for Myers is challenging the freshman class.

The coach knows he has the talent to keep Mendota a top team in the state, but they can't get complacent.

"The freshmen we have are very talented. The two years they played at Northbrook School, they have not lost nor allowed a goal," said Myers.

"They've played together since they were little in the DeKalb winter indoor league and they play on the same summer travel club.

"It's a good group and a big group of 12 players. Three of them are going to be on the varsity team, but the other nine are all super talented, too. Our freshman/sophomore team scrimmaged Dixon during the summer and we won 14-0."

Freshman Sebastian Carlos, who won the 400-meter IESA State Track Championship in eighth grade, and Johan Cortez (Johnathan's younger brother) will start for Myers, while Ramiro

Palacios will dress varsity.

Carlos and Cortez will play at right and left mid-field in order for Mendota to use their speed.

"I know there is going to be growing pains with them during the first few games as they're getting used to the physicality of the high school play and getting the trust of the rest of the team," Myers said. "I think as the season goes on, there are not going to be a lot of teams that can keep up with those two on the wings. They're going to be very fast and they handle the ball well."

Myers will find out how

well he's fulfilling his tasks or what he needs to change to accomplish them very quickly as Mendota starts the season playing nine games in eight days with matches against Sandwich, Somonauk, five games in the Oregon tournament, DePue, and Riverdale.

Also on the schedule in 2022 is a rematch with Bloomington Central Catholic, which knocked the Trojans out of the post season last year, on Sept. 14 at the MHS athletic field, and a spot in the highly-competitive Great River Classic in Burlington, Iowa, on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1.



WE SUPPORT MENDOTA HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS



Trojan harriers running into season with supportive group

By **BRANDON LaCHANCE**
Staff writer

MENDOTA – Mendota cross country coach Kevin Wohrley has been proud of his team the last couple of seasons as they have run well and accomplished many goals against all competition, even COVID-19.

The 2022 season will be no different.

“I have a group of kids that are really supportive of each other,” said Wohrley. “They’re really excited about the sport and the season. We had a pretty successful season last year. I think they want to at least maintain or move up this year.”

“Our big races, we want to show well in the Three Rivers Conference Meet. We want to show well in the La Salle County Meet in Streator. And obviously we want to do well in the IHSA state series as well. We want to represent Mendota as best as we can throughout the season.”

Boys

For the last four years, Andrew Stamberger and Alex Hermosillo were top five runners for the Trojans.

With the dynamic duo graduated, others are going to be asked to step up.

Junior Dagen Setchell was the No. 3 runner last season and has the most cross country experience on the team.

Sophomore Anthony Kelson, who is a distance runner for the track and field team, had a strong finish to his freshman campaign as he was the No. 1 runner for



Front row, left to right, Anthony Kelson, Carlos Olivas, Kody Chase. Middle row, Yulianna Valdes, Valerie Valdes, Anna Valdes. Back row, coach Kevin Wohrley, Travis Mumm, Spencer Kain, Dagen Setchell, Harlan Gallagher.

MHS down the stretch and was one of the best freshman finishers at last year’s sectional.

“Dagen has been running really hard and I’m going to look at him as a leader this season,” Wohrley said. “Anthony is going to build on what he did last year. He had a good charge to end the season and it was really impressive.”

Sophomore Travis Mumm returns after being the Trojans’ No. 5 runner last season. Senior Kody Chase is out for cross country for the first time, but he does have distance track running on his resume.

Northbrook alumni Spencer Kain and Harlan Gallagher, both 400-meter and 800-meter track runners, are going to be key pieces for MHS in their freshman year.

“It’s all about getting conditioning and a base,” Wohrley said. “It’s tough to establish a base once the season begins. You work with what you have and run the hardest you can.”

Team members are:
Seniors – Carlos Olivas, Kody Chase
Juniors – Dagen Setchell
Sophomores – Anthony Kelson, Travis Mumm
Freshman – Harlan Gallagher, Spencer Kain

the future. Last year, I only had one runner, so we’re just trying to keep drawing people into the team.”

Team members are:
Juniors – Val Valdes
Freshmen – Anna Valdes, Yulianna Valdes



Cross Country schedule

Aug. 25 – at Genoa-Kingston – 5:30 p.m.
Sept. 3 – at Oregon – 9 a.m.
Sept. 6 – at Winnebago – 4:30 p.m.
Sept. 10 – at Princeton Invite – 9 a.m.
Sept. 13 – at LaSalle-Peru – 4:30 p.m.
Sept. 17 – at Bureau Valley Invite – 9 a.m.
Sept. 20 – Amboy, Hall, Princeton, Putnam County, St. Bede – 4 p.m.
Sept. 24 – at Kewanee Invite – 9:30 a.m.
Sept. 27 – TRAC Meet at Erie – 4 p.m.
Oct. 1 – at Streator – 9 a.m.
Oct. 5 – Dixon, Hall, Marquette, Oregon, Streator – 4 p.m.
Oct. 10 – at Amboy Columbus Day Invite – 9 a.m.
Oct. 22 – Regional

SCHOOL & SPORTS PHYSICALS

We Do Sports Physicals!

Davis Family Health LLC

1201 Meriden St.
Mendota, IL
(Across from Sullivan’s)
815-538-1800



The office takes Medicaid, Medicare and almost all commercial insurances

Call for appointments, blood draws and injections

Our clinic hours are:

Monday: 8:30-12 & 1 - 4

Tuesday: 8 - 12 & 1 - 4

*with Dr. Kelly in office

Wednesday: 8:30 - 12 & 1 - 4

Thursday: 8:30 - 12 & 1 - 4

Friday: 8 - 12 & 1 - 4

**with Dr. Kelly in office for provider appts.

Closed Sat./Sun.

Dr. Kelly is also in the Rochelle office (1212 Currency Ct.) on M, W and Th.
Call 815-561-8500.



WE SUPPORT MENDOTA HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS



Football

Continued from Page 1

“Ted contributed a lot as a runner and as a consistent competitor,” stated Hill. “Justin Randolph has taken most of the reps in preparation for this season. His confidence and belief in what we ask him to do has grown due to his commitment this summer.”

Last year’s leading rusher, Uzi Angulo (732 yards), has also departed, so a bulk of the running load will land on the shoulders of senior Anthony Childs. He gained 465 yards in 2021, and Hill is looking for Childs to contribute in all facets of the game.

“We look forward to Anthony contributing in all three sides of the game,” said Hill. “He will be a consistent contributor in the backfield, at linebacker and on special teams.”

Hill said seniors JP Belmonte and Isaac Smith will also be called upon to rush the football.

When the Trojans opt to put the ball in the air, there are ample receivers to target. They include Smith, fellow seniors Ryne Strouss and Garret Zinke, and sophomore Braiden Freeman.

The success of the offense starts with the guys down in the trenches, and the Trojans have an experienced group coming back.

“We have four returning seniors that saw significant time on the offensive line last fall, so we’re excited about them bringing experience and leadership to that area of the team,” said Hill.

Those seniors include Jordan Coney, Neal Linden, Jose Rocha Jr. and Landon Kreiser. Hill added that sophomores Gabe Vallejo and Angil Serrano had positive summer camps and are candidates for playing time on the offensive line.

On the defensive side of the ball, the Trojans will look for contributions from seniors Zinke, Belmonte, Strouss, Charles Heiting and Albert Harris, juniors Jake Saylor, Diego Sandoval and Dean Gilbert, and sophomores Domenic Richey, Rhett Watson and Dane Hiner.

“The whole roster will look to contribute in each phase of the game,” added Hill. “Their commitment this summer has put us in

a position to use their skills effectively.”

Mendota is entering its second year in the Three Rivers Conference, having finished with a 2-4 record during its inaugural campaign. Princeton looks to be the class of the Three Rivers East Division after making a run to the Class 3A playoff quarterfinals last fall. The Tigers are one of five playoff teams from a year ago on the Trojan schedule. Others are Erie-Prophetstown, St. Bede, Kewanee and Sterling Newman.

Unfortunately for Mendota, it will have only three home games as one of the four scheduled games at the MHS athletic field was canceled due to Port Byron Riverdale not fielding a varsity team this season.



Varsity Football schedule

Aug. 26 – at Erie-Prophetstown* – 7 p.m.

Sept. 2 – OPEN

Sept. 9 – at Bureau Valley – 7 p.m.

Sept. 16 – Princeton – 7 p.m.

Sept. 23 – at Hall – 7 p.m.

Oct. 1 – at Sherrard – 1 p.m.

Oct. 7 – Kewanee – 7 p.m.

Oct. 14 – at Sterling Newman – 7 p.m.

Oct. 21 – St. Bede – 7 p.m.

(* game is at Prophetstown H.S.)

Freshman-Sophomore Football schedule

Aug. 29 – Erie-Prophetstown – 5 p.m.

Sept. 5 – at Riverdale – 5:30 p.m.

Sept. 12 – Bureau Valley – 5:30 p.m.

Sept. 19 – at Princeton – 5:30 p.m.

Sept. 26 – Hall – 5:30 p.m.

Oct. 3 – Sherrard – 5:30 p.m.

Oct. 10 – at Kewanee – 5:30 p.m.

Oct. 17 – Sterling Newman – 5:30 p.m.

Oct. 24 – at St. Bede – 5:30 p.m.

Varsity Football Roster

No	Player	Pos	Yr
1	Justin Randolph	QB-DB	Jr
2	Isaac Smith	WR-DB	Sr
3	Rhett Watson	QB-DB	So
4	Jacob Carr	WR-DB	Sr
5	Anthony Childs	RB-LB	Sr
6	Daniel Hanson	WR-DB	Sr
7	Dean Gilbert	WR-DB	Jr
8	Domenic Richey	WR-DB	So
9	Garret Zinke	WR-DB	Sr
10	Dane Hiner	WR-LB	So
12	Braiden Freeman	WR-DB	So
13	Ryne Strouss	WR-DB	Sr
14	Braydon Boelk	WR-DB	Sr
15	Brandon Leadley	WR-DB	So
20	Charles Heiting	TE-LB	Sr
21	JP Belmonte	RB-DL	Sr
23	Logan Muller	TE-LB	Sr
25	Diego Sandoval	OL-DL	Jr
50	Logan Wujek	OL-DL	Jr
55	Neal Linden	OL-LB	Sr
56	Dmitri Rodriguez	OL-DL	Jr
59	Albert Harris	OL-DL	Sr
60	Angil Serrano	OL-DL	So
63	Jake Saylor	OL-DL	Jr
70	Landon Kreiser	OL-DL	Sr
75	Gabe Vallejo	OL-DL	So
76	Jordan Coney	OL-DL	Sr
79	Jose Rocha	OL-DL	Sr

Head coach: Keegan Hill

Assistant coaches: Brock Zinke, Dan Beck, Cesar Arteaga, Steve Villegas, Sean Kaufman, Cody Zinke, Jason Weber

Frosh/Soph Football Roster

No	Player	Pos	Yr
1	Keegan Beetz	QB-DB	Fr
2	Giovanni McIntosh	WR-DB	Fr
5	Domenic Richey	WR-DB	So
6	Corbin Furar	RB-LB	Fr
9	Gavin Evans	RB-DB	Fr
12	Will Musanovic	RB-DB	Fr
13	Keegen Stewart	RB-DB	Fr
15	Brandon Leadley	WR-DB	So
20	Wyatt Ossman	TE-LB	Fr
21	Brennan Northcutt	RB-DB	Fr
22	Lucas Castillo	RB-DB	Fr
30	Dane Hiner	TE-LB	So
33	Devin DeSoto	TE-DL	Fr
34	Payton Gagliardo	RB-LB	Fr
44	Tayven Orozco	RB-LB	Fr
45	Rhett Watson	WR-DB	So
51	Brady Schultz	OL-LB	Fr
52	Santiago Lemos	OL-DL	Fr
54	Austin Welch	OL-LB	Fr
55	Reese Lane	OL-DL	Fr
56	Joe Stewart	OL-DL	Fr
57	Josh Shakespeare	OL-DL	Fr
59	Gabe Vallejo	OL-DL	So
60	Mike Thornhill	OL-DL	So
74	Angil Serrano	OL-DL	So
77	Jonas Fitzgerald	OL-DL	Fr
78	Nate Giberson	OL-DL	Fr
80	Aden Tillman	QB-DB	Fr

Head coach: Steve Villegas

Assistant coaches: Cesar Arteaga, Sean Kaufman, Cody Zinke

Girls' Tennis schedule

Aug. 25 – at LaSalle-Peru – 4 p.m.

Aug. 27 – at Newman – 9 a.m.

Aug. 30 – at Kewanee – 4:30 p.m.

Sept. 1 – Sterling – 4:30 p.m.

Sept. 3 – at Coal City Tourney – 8 a.m.

Sept. 6 – Newman – 4 p.m.

Sept. 8 – Princeton – 4:30 p.m.

Sept. 12 – at Coal City – 4:30 p.m.

Sept. 13 – at Dixon – 4 p.m.

Sept. 20 – Mendota Triangular – 4 p.m.

Sept. 22 – Ottawa – 4 p.m.

Sept. 24 – at LaSalle-Peru Invite – 8:30 a.m.

Sept. 26 – at Rochelle – 4 p.m.

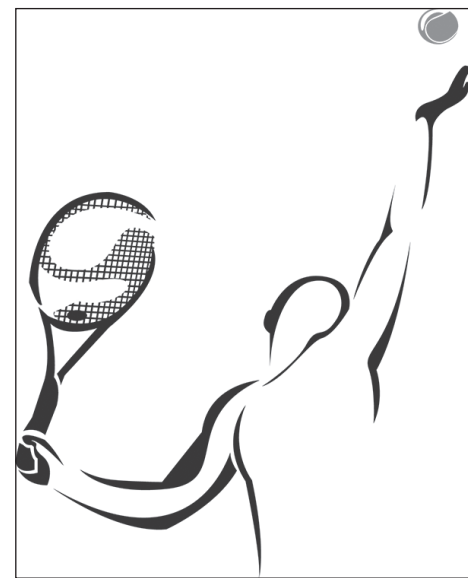
Sept. 29 – at Morris – 4 p.m.

Oct. 3 – Geneseo – 4 p.m.

Oct. 4 – Streator – 4:30 p.m.

Oct. 8 – Mendota Varsity Tourney – 8 a.m.

Oct. 14-15 – Sectional



WE SUPPORT
MENDOTA HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS





Freshman-Sophomore Football
 Front row, left to right, Will Musanovic, Brennan Northcutt, Brady Schultz, Payton Gagliardo, Lucas Castillo. Second row, Rhett Watson, Corbin Furr, Santiago Lemos, Gavin Evans, Keegan Stewart, Tayven Orozco. Third row, Wyatt Ossman, Josh Shakespeare, Reese Lane, Angil Serrano, Giovanni McIntosh, Gabe Vallejo, Mike Thornhill, Austin Welch. Fourth row, Joe Stewart, Brandon Leadley, Aden Tillman, Jonas Fitzgerald, Dane Hiner, Nate Giberson, Devin DeSoto, Keegan Beetz. Back row, assistant coach Cody Zinke, head coach Steve Villegas, assistant coach Cesar Arteaga, assistant coach Sean Kaufman.



Freshman-Sophomore Tennis
 Front row, left to right, Stephanie Medina, Amaya Morales, Lauren Holland, Hannah Kunz, Kylie Goldblatt, Janelle Rodriguez. Back row, Lidia Hernandez, Ella Lewis, Lucie Brandner, Cassandra Gonzalez, Leah Stamberger, Hannah Mann, Jacqueline Flores, coach Miguel Bermudez.



Cheerleaders
 Front row, left to right, Alivia Avila, Riley Cocanour, Abby Kunz, Kendall Biers, Alayna Nosalik, Navaeh Orozco. Back row, coach Ali Eddy, JazLynn Gambrell, Dessa Komitas, Makenzie Bean, Ruby Bielema, Alessandra Enriquez, Sienna Gonzalez, Sophia Pappas, Korinne Miars.



Freshman Volleyball
 Front row, left to right, Katelyn Mikolasek, Litzy Celis, Ally Denault, Miliana Castaneda, Jessica Reel, Maren Atherton, Airam Cuevas. Back row, Sofia Gomez, Talia White, Sydney Tolley, Elaina Reddin, Addisyn Jones, Peri Manning, Addyson Allensworth, Janae Carr.



Sophomore Volleyball
 Front row, left to right, Lupita Maldonado, Jasmin Escatel, Noemi Arteaga, Ava Eddy, Kaley Siemer, Lisette Sandoval. Back row, Ashley Caracheo, Lily Bokus, Claire Hanson, Kennedy Knaff, Kirby Bond, Ella Coss, Ella Martin, Kaitlyn Neville.



Junior Varsity Soccer
 Front row, left to right, Cameron Escatel, Johnny Diaz, Mateo Goy, Mauricio Salinas, Diego Raya, Aaden Castle. Middle row, Alex Beetz, Luis Ramirez, Angel Orozco, Osvaldo Arteaga, Hector Gonzalez, Emiliano Medina. Back row, Emmanuel Medina, David Casas, Cameron Kelly, Fredy Mandujano, Ramiro Palacios, Samuel Matura, Jose Hernandez, coach Rey Arteaga.

Go Mendota!!

Netters show potential through inexperience

By **BRANDON LaCHANCE**
Staff writer

MENDOTA – A year ago, Mendota girls’ tennis coach Shawn LeRette didn’t have much to worry about when he was filling out a starting lineup because he had five veteran seniors.

This season, he has a little more work ahead of him as he constructs his starting singles players and double teams.

“It’s going to be a little bit of a work-in-progress at the beginning, and we’re going to be switching things around,” LeRette said. “The lineup will probably switch three or four times compared to last year when I had five returners and all I had to do was fill in a couple spots.

“I see us improving during practice and we’re making strides. They’re not huge strides, but we’re making strides. Like I told the girls, ‘We’re not going to be playing our best tennis at the beginning of the year. We want to play our best tennis at the end when sectionals come around. That’s when we need to be playing our best tennis.’”

LeRette, who has been with the MHS tennis program for 18 years and the girls’ head coach for the last 10, may have to plug and play but he does have a nucleus to start with.

“We’re pretty inexperienced to be quite honest,” LeRette said. “I only have two returners who played significant time for me in Alexis Finley and Talya Schwaegerman. Other than that, I’ve got a junior in Mariah Figueroa, who played a lot of singles on the freshman/sophomore team last year. Whether that transfers to varsity or not, we’ll see. It’s a brand-new year and we’re just trying to figure it out.”

The Lady Trojans are



Front row, left to right, Makayla Lara, Mariah Figueroa, Natalia Salinas, Isabelle Escatel, Alex Medina. Back row, Angela Sandoval, Alexis Finley, Julia Krueger, Talya Schwaegerman, Karli Miars, coach Shawn LeRette.

going to do their best to stay to the traditional varsity and freshman/sophomore team format.

LeRette knows he has talent with the underclassmen but he wants them to use their first couple of years to learn the high school game and grow organically instead of being forced into tougher competition.

If there is success at the lower levels, he knows it’ll transfer to varsity.

When they get to varsity, it’s his job to put them in the best position to succeed, which he plans to do during this campaign.

“It’s really a trial and error type thing. You have an idea when you see them come along as a freshman and sophomore in terms of what they like to do on the court,” LeRette said. “Some of them want to play singles. That can be good if you have an open spot.

“Sometimes you have players that want to play singles, but it isn’t the best spot for them. They need to be in doubles where they could really shine. Some kids don’t see that initially and will become reluctant to that.

“But if they’re coachable – and we’ve had very coachable kids here – they transition into it very quickly.”

Mendota, as a school, is in the Three Rivers Conference but tennis is not a sport in the conference. The Lady Trojans will stick to their traditional, tough schedule against teams such as La Salle-Peru, Ottawa, Princeton, Sterling, Dixon, a few Rockford teams, and more.

MHS started its season Aug. 23 at Pontiac and have their first triangular Aug. 25 at La Salle-Peru against La Salle-Peru and St. Bede.

Members of the 2022 tennis team are:

Seniors – Alexis Finley, Talya Schwaegerman, Angela Sandoval, Makayla Lara, Alex Medina, Karli Miars, Isabelle Escatel, Julia Krueger

Juniors – Mariah Figueroa, Natalia Salinas

Sophomores – Jacqueline Flores, Ava Beetz, Cassandra Gonzalez, Lauren Holland, Lidia Hernandez

Freshmen – Lucie Brandner, Kylie Goldblatt, Hannah Kunz, Ella Lewis, Hannah Mann, Stephanie Medina, Amaya Morales, Leah Stamberger, Janelle Rodriguez

We've got you covered!

*From the first goal to the final serve,
The Mendota Reporter has all the details!*



**Follow the local sports scene in The Reporter!
For subscription information, call 815-539-9396.**



703 Illinois Ave.
PO Box 300
Mendota, IL 61342
815-539-9396
www.mendotareporter.com