



Wednesday, March 30, 2022

The Mendota Reporter

Special Sports Edition







- ♦ Girls' Soccer
- **♦** Softball
- ♦ Boys' Tennis
- ◆ Baseball
- ♦ Girls' Track
- ♦ Boys' Track





New baseball coach inherits young and hungry team

MENDOTA – Robert Nunn takes over the head coaching duties of the Mendota varsity baseball team after Aaron Sester held down the post for 10 years.

Nunn is no stranger to the program, having served as an assistant coach the past several seasons, and he believes that familiarity with the players gives him a leg up.

"That allows the team to deal with the growing pains that are connected with a coach meeting a team for the first time as the head coach," said Nunn. "Many of the players know how I communicate information and what the expectations are from them.

"It has allowed the older players a chance to demonstrate their leadership skills in getting the underclassmen on board and on task. Having experience with the gentlemen also allows us to evaluate our strengths and weaknesses from previous years and tailor practices to grow and build from previous success and pitfalls."

Nunn said one of the challenges of taking over as head coach will be the changes that are being implemented in the program to progress the team toward the vision where the program needs to go.

"These changes can take some players time to adjust and learn new ways, but the gentlemen have done a fantastic job at adapting to everything thrown at them," noted Nunn. "We have a group of men who are hungry to learn and

willing to try new things to be successful in what they are doing."

While the Trojan roster boasts 16 players, only three of them are seniors. However, some of the non-seniors have varsity experience, which is a bonus to the first-year head coach.

"We are going to be a young team this year, but luckily many of our young players have already seen time at the varsity level," explained Nunn. "We also have a few seniors who have been seeing varsity time since their freshman year, which gives them a lot of experience that they can bring to the other players in the program."

The three senior squad members are Emilio Perez, Ted Landgraf and Andy Rivera.

Offensively, Nunn said the Trojans are going to be aggressive on the base paths and utilize their speed to hopefully put pressure on the defense.

"Landgraf is a lefty outfielder who has a combination of speed and power that will make him an offensive threat and will be able to turn singles into extra bases," said Nunn. "Perez is an outfielder who is a disciplined hitter that knows how to battle for his pitch in order to put himself in the most opportune position to do damage at the plate."

A bulk of the roster is comprised of juniors. They include Krew Bond, Juan Delao, Drake Dennis, Carlos Escatel, Landon Kreiser, Braden McPheeters, Dominik Stamberger, Ryne Strouss and Jasiel Watson.

"Bond is a shortstop who shows a high-level approach at the plate as well as power and bat speed that allows him to hit with power to all parts of the field," stated Nunn. Bond is entering his third year of varsity competition.

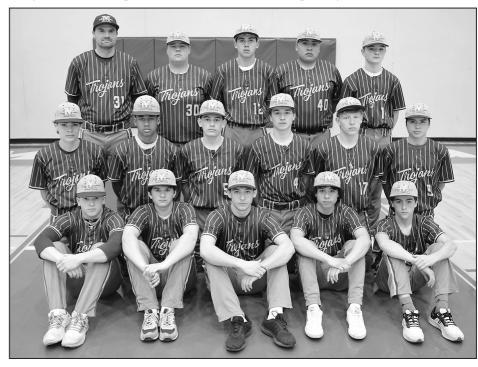
"From top to bottom, we have a lineup that can perform roles to find ways on base, then all players show an ability to attack defenses on the base paths to extend into extra bases."

Sophomores on the team are Justin Randolph, Izaiah Nanez and Cale Strouss, while freshman Braiden Freeman rounds out the roster.

Another important part of a baseball team is its pitching staff and Nunn is excited about the quantity and quality of hurlers he can run out to the mound. He explained that the entire staff returns from last season as well as a combination of other players to add extra support.

The pitching staff consists of Landgraf, Bond, Delao, Dennis, Escatel, Kreiser, Stamberger, Nanez, Randolph and Freeman.

"In my time here at Mendota, this is the strongest pitching staff we have had," Nunn noted. "We plan on attacking teams with first-pitch strikes. We are going to force teams to put the ball in play, then rely on our defense to make the plays behind us. If we can do this, we will keep our pitch count down and put us in situations



Varsity Baseball

Front row, left to right: Krew Bond, Braden McPheeters, Ted Landgraf, Juan Delao, Cale Strouss. Middle row: Emilio Perez, Jasiel Watson, Drake Dennis, Dominik Stamberger, Ryne Strouss, Carlos Escatel. Back row: head coach Robert Nunn, Landon Kreiser, Izaiah Nanez, Andy Rivera, Justin Randolph.

where we are competitive in all games.

"In high school baseball, a pitching staff that can limit teams' offense by not giving free passes, limiting extra bases and is working ahead in the count tend to find themselves in a good position to be winning the game."

Mendota enters its first season in the Three Rivers Conference and Nunn said he is looking forward to building some school rivalries.

"When it comes to who we play, we always want to be playing the best teams we possibly can," said Nunn.

Varsity Baseball Roster				
No	Player	Pos	Yr	
1	Krew Bond	P-IF	Jr	
3	Emilio Perez	OF	Sr	
4	Dominik Stamberger	P-IF	Jr	
5	Drake Dennis	P-IF	Jr	
7	Ted Landgraf	P-OF	Sr	
8	Juan Delao	P-IF	Jr	
9	Carlos Escatel	Р	Jr	
11	Jasiel Watson	OF	Jr	
12	Izaiah Nanez	P-IF-OF	So	
14	Justin Randolph	P-OF-C	So	
15	Cale Strouss	OF-C	So	
17	Rvne Strouss	IF	Jr	

Braden McPheeters

Landon Kreiser

Andy Rivera

Head coach: Robert Nunn

Assistant coach: Cody Zinke

21

30

Member





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OF

Playing time will be plentiful for softball team members

MENDOTA-If you're a member of the 2022 Mendota varsity softball team, getting playing time shouldn't be a problem. With only 12 girls on the roster, head coach Joel Perez won't have a lot of options for strategic moves

"Numbers seem to be down all over – us included with only 12 players on the varsity roster," said Perez. "It is a little concerning because if I need to take anyone from the freshman-sophomore roster, they will be low in numbers too, so hopefully we can all stay healthy."

Four of Mendota's varsity players are seniors, with Paige Manning heading the group, having played on the varsity level her first three years.

"Manning is one of our leaders on both sides," stated Perez. "She has been pitching for us for three years and has been in the middle of our lineup, also. We are looking for her to have another big year.

The other seniors are Zoe Finley, Bailey Baird and Taylor Kelly.

Perez said Finley is a returning outfielder who also has plenty of varsity experience and he will be expecting some big things from her in her final

Perez added that Baird missed most of last season and he is hoping she can fill one of the outfield spots. Kelly returns to the softball diamond after not playing since her freshman year, and Perez noted she will be battling for one of the infield positions.

Junior team members are Emma Schultz, Katie Jenner, Zoe Hanson and Gracie Zinke.

Perez said that Schultz played some outfield and catcher last year and will take on the same roles this year. Jenner had a solid campaign as a sophomore and is being counted on to contribute in a big way, added Perez.

Hanson and Zinke were both utility players last season. Hanson is vying for a spot in the infield, while Zinke can play infield and outfield.

Rounding out the roster are sophomores Ryleigh Sondgeroth and Madelyn Becker. Both played on the varsity level as freshmen. Perez said Sondgeroth can play all over the diamond, including in the circle, while Becker will try to land playing time in the outfield.

Perez said Manning, who will pitch at the University of Dubuque next year, will get a bulk of the pitching time for the Lady Trojans. Others who will be called upon in the circle are Sondgeroth, Baird and freshman Ava Eddy.

Offensively, Perez feels like the Lady Trojans are capable of putting a lot of runs on the board with the success some of the girls have had in the past. "All the girls are working hard in practice and hopefully it carries over to the field,"

"The Three Rivers is without a doubt a very good softball conference with some very good teams. We have a competitive team, so hopefully we can hold our own against the Three Rivers."

—Joel Perez, head coach

he said.

Mendota is used to playing quality opponents having been in the Big Northern Conference the past decade. And while entering the Three Rivers Conference for the first time in 2022, Perez doesn't believe the competition level will get any easier.

"The Three Rivers is without a doubt a very good softball conference with some very good teams," Perez explained. "We played some of those teams in non-conference games while we were in the Big Northern, so we will be familiar with some of them. We have a competitive team, so hopefully we can hold our own against the Three Rivers."



Varsity Softball

Front row, left to right: Ava Eddy, Gracie Zinke, Ryleigh Sondgeroth, Katie Jenner, Zoe Finley, Zoe Hanson. Back row: head coach Joel Perez, Kirby Bond, Emma Schultz, Paige Manning, Bailey Baird, assistant coach Brock Zinke. Not pictured: Taylor Kelly, Madelyn Becker.

Varsity Softball Roster

No	Player	Pos	Yr
1	Katie Jenner	IF-OF	Jr
3	Gracie Zinke	IF-OF	Jr
4	Ava Eddy	P-OF	Fr
6	Madelyn Becker	IF-OF	So
8	Zoe Finley	IF-OF	Sr
9	Taylor Kelly	IF	Sr
10	Bailey Baird	OF	Sr
12	Kirby Bond	IF-OF	Fr
13	Zoe Hanson	IF	Jr
14	Paige Manning	P-OF	Sr
17	Emma Schultz	C-OF	Jr
18	Ryleigh Sondgeroth	IF-OF	So
Hoad coach: Icol Poroz			

Head coach: Joel Perez **Assistant coach:** Steve Gibertini











Boys' Track

Front row, left to right: Kody Chase, Neal Linden, Diego Sandoval, Anthony Kelson. Middle row: Albert Harris, Travis Mumm, Jacob Carr, Logan Wujek, Brandon Leadley. Back row: Gabe Vallejo, assistant coach John McCarthy, assistant coach Steve Villegas, Jose Rocha, Jordan Coney, head coach Keegan Hill. Not pictured: Mason Koch, JP Belmonte.

Despite youth & inexperience, coach optimistic for new boys' track season

MENDOTA – For the second straight season, the Mendota boys' track team does not have any seniors on the squad. Despite that, head coach Keegan Hill is optimistic about the 2022 campaign.

"This is a new season and a new team," noted Hill. "We have a handful of returnees and we look forward to seeing them grow into leadership roles as the season progresses."

With only 14 athletes on the roster, it will be difficult for the Trojans to fill all of the meet events, but Hill is enthusiastic to see maturity with the group he has.

"We have some fresh faces in the distance and throw groups, and seeing them grow and compete to improve will be fun," Hill added.

Juniors on the team include Jordan Coney (throw), Neal Linden (throw), Jose Rocha (throw), Albert Harris (throw), JP Belmonte (sprint), Jacob Carr (distance) and Kody Chase (distance).

Mason Koch (jump) and Logan Wujek (distance) are the only two sophomores, while freshman squad members are Brandon Leadley (sprint), Anthony Kelson (hurdles/middle distance), Travis Mumm (distance) and Gabriel Vallejo (throw).

"There are multiple new faces in the program and we are excited to see their eagerness to improve daily in each of the events they compete in," said Hill. "It is an optimistic group that we can look forward to seeing develop."

Family atmosphere embraced by Mendota girls' track team

By HOLLI RAPP

Sports Correspondent

MENDOTA – While the Mendota High School girls' track team may be small in numbers, head coach Heath Raley believes it's like a family.

It's a family looking to track veterans Grace Wasmer, a sophomore, and Natalie Bodmer, a senior, to provide excellent leadership for the team.

"While we are a very small team this year, the family-type atmosphere helps support and build each other," said Raley of his team.

The team will look for leadership that lost Twila Martinson and Janice Gonzalez along with Abby Kunz.

Raley believes that Bodmer, who missed all of last season with a knee injury, could have success in the 800-meter and 1600-meter. Bodmer's mother, Beth, was a state qualifier for the Lady Trojans team that finished third in state in the 1990s.

He also has high expectations for Wasmer, who is a long jumper that just missed out last year at sectional after a tough call on a great jump. Raley expects her to find some success again this season despite only being a sophomore.

The veteran MHS track coach believes Cadence Thornton (100H, 300H, LJ, 4x400), Dessa Komitas (200, 400, Discus, 4x400),



Girls' Track

Front row, left to right: Dessa Komitas, Ashley Caracheo, Cadence Thornton, Ella Betz. Back row: coach Joe Hughes, Natalie Bodmer, Grace Wasmer, Alexis Finley. Not pictured: head coach Heath Raley.

"While we are a very small team this year, the family-type atmosphere helps support and build each other."

-Heath Raley, head coach

Ashley Caracheo (100,200, LJ), and Ella Betz (200, 400,800) are newcomers who have a bright future for the track team. Alexis Finley (400 and 800) rounds out the MHS girls track team.

"Coach Hughes and I expect the girls to work together to build a collaborative team spirit. It will be difficult winning meets this year and our focus is

going to be on each sprint, jump, throw, etc. to better ourselves from the previous meet," said Raley. "We get the chance to see some different competition now that we have moved into the TRAC (Three Rivers) and that will provide its own series of challenges, but working together, we can accomplish what we intend to."









Varsity Soccer

Front row, left to right: Linnea Escatel, Casandra Hernandez, Kaley Siemer, Alexa DelaTorre, Isabella Tolentino, Yahaira Mandujano, Selina Hernandez. Middle row: Noemi Arteaga, Lupita Maldonado, Abril Diaz, Crystal Garcia, Lauren Holland, Emily Stewart. Back row: Vanessa Escatel, Flor Delao, Marisol Felix, Cassie Gonzalez, Naitzy Garcia, Natalya Salinas, head coach Nick Myers.

Girls' soccer boasts experience, leadership

By HOLLI RAPP

Sports Correspondent

MENDOTA-Despite a lack of playing time last season, veteran Mendota High School girls' soccer coach Nick Myers is excited for the start of the season due to a strong core returning.

Key returners for Mendota include junior Emily Stewart (def), Naitzy Garcia (def), Isabella Tolentino (mid), Marisol Felix (mid/def) and Flor Delao (def), along with some players who did not play last year due to COVID

"This group provides us with much needed experience and leadership," said Myers of his core group. "Stewart, Delao and Garcia along with four others on the team played year-long travel soccer so them gaining that experience and extra time playing/ learning the game is going to help us

"Tolentino provides us with a four-

year starter who is very knowledgeable about the game, knows how to score and set others up to score along with being a great leader. Stewart will lead our defense from the sweeper position as someone we can rely on every game to help us out in the back."

In addition to the veteran players, Myers is looking for midfielder Bianca Valdez, striker Noemi Valencia and striker Crystal Garcia to help the team significantly along with a few upperclassmen who did not go out last year due to COVID who also should help the team out.

"The girls put in time this summer at practices along with seven of our girls playing club soccer, which should help this season," said Myers.

Myers expects early on his team's lack of playing time since last season for most of his team could be a weakness and expects that the team chemistry will be a work in progress.

"We are getting better in both of these areas every day," said Myers.

MHS will face a very tough schedule this season with local area rivals LP and Ottawa along with former Big Northern Schools still on the schedule that are always tough when it comes to girls' soccer. Princeton and Orion will be Lady Trojan opponents from the Three Rivers Conference.

The team will also travel to the Genoa Kingston Tournament mid-season, which will be a fun experience for the team along with the opportunity to play in a tournament this season.

"Princeton is obviously the top team in the conference with a solid squad coming off a trip to the supersectional and some really good players still on that team," said Myers of his team's conference schedule. "Orion is a tough team in the conference as well. The conference should be pretty competitive."

Varsity Girls' Soccer Roster **Player GK/28** Alexa DelaTorre 3 Flor Delao 4 Vanessa Escatel Sr 5 **Emily Stewart** Jr Kaley Siemer 7 Crystal Garcia Fr 8 Linnea Escatel So 9 Casandra Hernandez Sr 10 Sr Selina Hernandez 11 Yahaira Mandujano Sr 12 Marisol Felix 13 Isabella Tolentino Sr 14 Bianca Valdez So 15 Cassie Gonzalez Fr 16 Perla Lopez So 17 Naitzy Garcia Jr 18 Natalya Salinas So 20 Noemi Arteaga 22 Lupita Maldonado 23 Abril Diaz Lauren Holland



Head coach: Nick Myers

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Varsity Tennis

Front row, left to right: Ethan Hanaman, Jacob Ensor, Logan Brandner, Eulysses Preciado, Tyler Valdez, Zach Compell. Back row: head coach Shawn LeRette, Andrew Stamberger, Byron Hampton, Parker Guelde, Clay Buffington, Matt Miller.

Senior-dominated tennis team equates to high hopes for '22

By HOLLI RAPP

Sports Correspondent

MENDOTA – A team dominated by senior leadership welcomed Mendota High School tennis coach Shawn LeRette on its first practice to open the 2022 spring sports season.

Leading the returners are Logan Brandner and Andrew Stamberger, who helped the team to a 6-5 record last season.

"We are very senior dominated," said LeRette. "They have the experience from playing last year. They have a drive to compete."

LeRette will look to those players along with

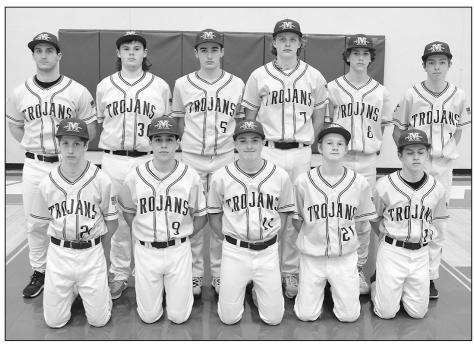
some newcomers including Byron Hampton, Tyler Valdez, Parker Guelde, Jacob Ensor and Zach Compell, along with juniors Matt Miller and Clay Buffington to provide what the team needs to have success.

LeRette didn't have players who are slotted into specific positions but believes that his team will have as much fun as possible.

"I want us to compete as hard as we can," said LeRette. "This group is very self-motivated and have goals for themselves. If they can accomplish all they want, then we can't be anything but happy." One noticeable void for the Trojan tennis team is coach Tom Corrigan, who retired after last season.

"Losing an assistant like Tom Corrigan and all his experience is a huge loss," said LeRette, of the coach who served in various capacities including head coach for many of his 30-plus year career. "I hope I am up to the challenge of coaching this group."

LeRette knows that the perennial powers in the area including Ottawa, LP, Princeton and Streator will continue to provide challenges for his squad but they are looking forward to the matches.



Freshman-Sophomore Baseball

Front row, left to right: Rhett Watson, Diego Raya, Jack Gillespie, Evan McPheeters, Josh Figueroa. Back row: head coach Cody Zinke, Zack Mullins, Braiden Freeman, Dane Hiner, Jace Baird, Owen Aughenbaugh.



Junior Varsity Soccer

Front row, left to right: Juana Hernandez, Bianka Valdez, Kaley Siemer, Linnea Escatel, Alivia Avila, Noemi Valencia. Middle row: Perla Lopez, Lupita Maldonado, Camila Costas, Lauren Holland, Noemi Arteaga. Back row: head coach Nick Myers, Crystal Garcia, Natalya Salinas, Cassie Gonzalez, Jackie Flores, Abril Diaz.











Mendota Spring Sports Schedules

Varsity Softball

March 31 - Bureau Valley - 4:30

April 2 - at Monmouth-Roseville - 10:00

April 4 - St. Bede - 4:30

April 7 - at St. Bede - 4:30

April 9 - Morrison - 10:00

April 12 - at Hall - 4:30

April 14 – Hall – 4:30

April 16 - at Oregon - 10:00

April 18 - at Princeton - 4:30

April 21 - Princeton - 4:30

April 23 - at Riverdale - 10:00 April 25 - Newman - 4:30

April 28 - at Newman - 4:30

April 30 - Orion - 10:00

May 5 - Ottawa - 4:30

May 7 - at Rockridge - 10:00

May 9 - Kewanee - 4:30

May 12 - at Kewanee - 4:30

May 13 - Erie - 4:30

May 16-21 - Regional

Sophomore Softball

March 31 - at Bureau Valley - 4:30

April 2 - Monmouth-Roseville - 10:00

April 4 - at St. Bede - 4:30

April 7 - St. Bede - 4:30

April 9 - at Morrison - 10:00

April 12 - Hall - 4:30

April 14 - at Hall - 4:30

April 16 - at Oregon - 10:00

April 18 - Princeton - 4:30

April 21 - at Princeton - 4:30

April 23 - at Riverdale - noon

April 25 - at Newman - 4:30

April 28 - Newman - 4:30

April 30 - at Orion - 10:00

May 7 - Rockridge - 10:00

May 9 - at Kewanee - 4:30

May 13 - at Erie - 4:30

Varsity Baseball

March 31 - Bureau Valley - 4:30

April 2 - at Monmouth-Roseville - 10:00

April 4 - St. Bede - 4:30

April 7 – at St. Bede – 4:30

April 9 - Morrison - 10:00 April 12 - at Hall - 4:30

April 14 – Hall – 4:30

April 18 - at Princeton - 4:30

April 21 – Princeton – 4:30

April 23 - at Riverdale - 10:00 April 25 - Newman - 4:30

April 28 - at Newman - 4:30

April 30 - Orion - 10:00

May 4 – at Putnam County – 4:30 May 5 - Ottawa - 4:30

May 7 - at Rockridge - 10:00

May 9 - Kewanee - 4:30

May 10 - Rock Falls - 4:30

May 12 - at Kewanee - 4:30

May 13 - Erie - 4:30 May 16-21 - Regional

Sophomore Baseball

March 31 - at Bureau Valley - 4:30 April 2 - Monmouth-Roseville - 10:00

April 4 - at St. Bede - 4:30

April 7 - St. Bede - 4:30

April 9 - at Morrison - 10:00

April 12 - Hall - 4:30

April 14 - at Hall - 4:30

April 18 - Princeton - 4:30 April 21 - at Princeton - 4:30

April 23 - Riverdale - 10:00

April 25 - at Newman - 4:30

April 28 - Newman - 4:30

April 30 - at Orion - 10:00

May 7 - Rockridge - 10:00

May 9 - at Kewanee - 4:30 May 10 – at Rock Falls – 4:30

May 12 - Kewanee - 4:30

May 13 - at Erie - 4:30

Girls' Track

March 31 - at Kewanee - 4:00

April 9 - Mendota Gooden Invite - 10:00

April 14 - at Rock Falls - 4:30

April 16 - at Hall Morris Invite - 10:00

April 18 - at Princeton Ferris Invite - 3:00

April 19 - at St. Bede - 4:30

April 23 - at Rockford Christian - 10:00

April 25 - at Bureau Valley - 4:30

April 29 - Mendota Coed - 4:00

May 5 - TRAC Conference Meet @ Manlius - 4:00

May 9 - IV Meet @ Ottawa - 4:00

May 11, 12 or 13 - Sectional

Boys' Track

March 31 - at Kewanee - 4:00

April 5 - at Amboy - 4:30

April 9 - Mendota Gooden Invite - 10:00

April 11 - at Chillicothe IVC F-S Invite - 4:00

April 14 - at Rock Falls - 4:30

April 16 - at Hall Morris Invite - 10:00

April 18 - at Princeton Ferris Invite - 3:00

April 19 - at St. Bede - 4:30

April 23 - at Rockford Christian - 10:00 April 25 - at Bureau Valley - 4:30

April 29 - Mendota Coed - 4:00

May 6 – at Winnebago – 4:00

May 9 - IV Meet @ Ottawa - 4:00

May 12 - TRAC Conference Meet @ Orion - 4:00

May 18, 19 or 20 - Sectional

Girls' Soccer

April 2 – at Genoa-Kingston Tourney – 9:00

April 7 - DePue - 4:30

April 11 - at Monmouth-Roseville - 4:30

April 12 - Princeton 4:30

April 15 - Genoa-Kingston - 4:30 April 23 - at Oregon - 10:00

April 26 - at Winnebago - 4:30

April 28 – Stillman Valley – 4:30

April 30 - at Orion - 11:00 May 3 - Dixon - 4:30

May 6-14 - Regional

Boys' Tennis

March 31 - at Rochelle - 4:30

April 4 - Morris - 4:00

April 11 - at Sterling - 4:00

April 14 - at Coal City - 4:00

April 16 - at L-P F-S Invite - 8:30 April 19 - Pontiac - 4:00

April 20 - Yorkville - 4:00

April 23 - at Princeton Invite - 8:30

April 25 - St. Bede - 4:00

April 26 - at Dixon - 4:00

April 28 - Princeton - 4:30

April 30 - at Rochelle Invite - 8:30 May 3 - R. Lutheran, R. Christian - 4:00

May 5 - LaSalle-Peru - 4:00

May 7 – at East Aurora Tourney – 8:30

May 9 – at Streator – 4:00

May 12 - Dixon - 4:00

May 14 - Mendota Tournament - 8:30

May 16 - at Ottawa - 4:30

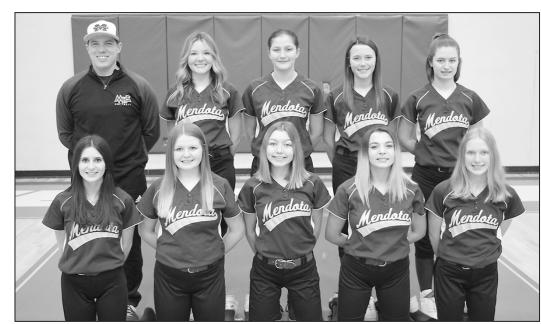
May 17 - at Newman - 4:00

May 20-21 - Sectional



Freshman-Sophomore Tennis

Front row, left to right: Landon Bauer, Jonathan Diaz, Lee Oregon. Back row: head coach Miguel Bermudez, Landon Lee, Dagen Setchell, Trekker Klema.



Freshman-Sophomore Softball

Front row, left to right: Ava Eddy, Claire Hanson, Ella Coss, Loralie Hart, Lily Bokus. Back row: head coach Brock Zinke, Kirby Bond, Lea Turner, Kennedy Knaff, Quinn Sheaves. Not pictured: Madelyn Becker, Ella Martin.







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