



## One year older, Trojans are looking to add to win total

MENDOTA – To say the 2023 Mendota varsity football team experienced growing pains would be a major understatement. Playing mostly sophomores and juniors, the Trojans struggled through a 1-8 campaign in which they were unable to find any kind of footing on both sides of the ball.

So, with a season of varsity football under their belt, the young Trojans of last year are looking forward to a 2024 season of more consistency and competitiveness.

Head coach Keegan Hill said the players have been anxious to get back on the field and workouts over the summer in preparation for the season are a testament to that.

“Our overall attendance numbers throughout a full

summer of action have been good,” stated Hill. “We have lots of returners and a nice size freshman group that has helped in that regard. Players growing confidence in their game and in their teammates has happened all summer.”

The offense will get a new look at quarterback after Justin Randolph manned the position the last two years and threw for over 2,000 yards in his career. Hill said junior Aden Tillman played a little bit of quarterback in 2023 and is the top candidate for the job this season.

“Tillman took reps at that position last season and we look for him to continue to

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Front row, left to right, Jaxon Cooper, William Musanovic, Payton Gagliardo, Javier Hernandez. Second row, Jayden Lesley, Brennan Northcutt, Rhet Watson, Brandon Leadley, Corbin Furar, Gavin Evans. Third row, Anthony Seablom, Mike Thornhill, Angil Serrano, Gabe Vallejo, Reese Lane, Kodi Price, Austin Welch. Fourth row, Aden Tillman, Braidan Freeman, Josh Shakespeare, Cam Wasmer, Nathan Giberson, Joe Stewart, Wyatt Ossman, Keegan Beetz. Back row, coach Brock Zinke, coach Sean Kaufman, coach Bryson Prusator, head coach Keegan Hill, coach Steve Villegas, coach Cesar Arteaga, coach Cody Zinke.



Front row, left to right, Brody Hartt, Ivan Botello, Maddox Rosales, Kooper Novak, Oliver Turner. Second row, Dell Dennis, Collin Coss, Evan McPheeters, Levi Ossman, Shea Kreiser, Tayven Orozco. Third row, Alex Holland, Ashlynn Rickels, Nick Sheridan, Esten Otero, Kamilah Preciado, Caiden Holiday. Back row, coach David Ross, Brody Kaecker, Jonas Fitzgerald, Dane Doyle, Grady Jones.

## Golfers primed for another competitive season

MENDOTA – Despite only having one senior on the team, the Mendota High School golfers have a solid returning junior class that will no doubt add up to another competitive season on the links for the Trojans.

The top golfers back for their junior campaign are Brody Hartt and Dane Doyle. Hartt and Doyle advanced out of the regional round last year as sophomores and then saw their season end in the sectional tournament.

Hartt and Doyle also earned second-team all-conference honors by finishing 15th and 17th, respectively, in the Three Rivers Conference meet.

“Dane and Brody gained

some great experience and had a lot of success in big meets like the conference meet and the regional,” said Mendota coach David Ross. “I expect for them to compete at that level or higher again this year.”

Hartt had an average score of 43 last year and Doyle averaged 44.

The lone senior on the squad is Evan McPheeters. He had a 47 average a year ago and Ross said he expects McPheeters to compete for a top spot in his final season.

In addition to Hartt and Doyle, other junior squad members include Brody Kaecker, Kooper Novak, Grady Jones, Nick Sheridan, Alex Holland, Jonas Fitzgerald and Tayven Orozco.

The team is made up of three sophomores, Collin Coss, Ivan Botello and Caiden Holiday, while Ross was surprised with a large group of freshmen as the pre-season got underway.

“I have a lot more freshmen than I expected, so it will be interesting to see how they develop over the year,” noted Ross.

Ross added that Orozco made the switch from football to golf and the coach said Orozco has a lot of potential. “I’m excited to see what he can do in competition,” said Ross.

Freshman squad members include Levi Ossman,

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# Veteran coach tasked with turning around the Spikers

MENDOTA—The coaching carousel in the Mendota High School volleyball program has made another stop, this time landing on Demi Salazar. Salazar is a long-time coach of many programs in the Illinois Valley area, with his newest task trying to turn around the Spikers.

The Spikers are coming off of a 12-win season and return only one player that saw significant playing time a year ago. After being named the head coach in the spring, Salazar went to work familiarizing himself with the program, and then he and his son, Chris, who will coach the Mendota freshman squad, got in the gym over the summer to introduce themselves to the girls.

“Both Chris and I have had the entire summer with practices and to watch the kids,” said Demi. “The sophomore coach, Laura McNally, also returned to aid us.

“We run complex formations, but the kids are very good at picking it up. Many things are very different, but they have adapted well.”

Salazar said he has been working with girls’ basketball coach, John Hansen, to create an environment where the girls can transition and grow in both sports.

“This has been extremely important and his help has been very valuable,” said Salazar.

Salazar said philosophies differ from coach to coach, and he said he stresses form over everything else.

“Position on defense

and speed are essential,” noted Salazar. “We will make mistakes on this faster tempo, but our size makes it essential.

“The biggest thing is that the games are to prepare us for post season. Not making a mistake is impossible. So, make them and we can figure out how to minimize the next interaction.

“Last, we want them to jump serve often. We want to strengthen our team and grow.”

Ten seniors have departed to graduation off of the 2023 team. Five seniors return, but none of them saw significant playing time as juniors. The returning player with the most varsity experience is junior Laylie Denault, who was a starter her freshman and sophomore years.

Senior squad members include Ava Eddy, Ella Coss, Ella Martin, Kennedy Knaff and Kirby Bond.

“The kids did well in summer league against non-conference teams, but the conference teams still gave us problems,” said Salazar. “The addition of Erie-Prophetstown added another very strong conference team. So, we just go out and play.”

In addition to Denault, other juniors on the team are Maren Atherton, Talia White, Kate Mikolasek, Addi Jones, Elaina Reddin, Janae Carr and Sydney Tolley. Salazar has also moved sophomores Elaina Koch and Harlow Foltyniewicz up to the varsity squad.

“Our juniors are all doing very well and some of our



Front row, left to right, Kate Mikolasek, Ella Martin, Addi Jones, Ava Eddy, Kirby Bond, Talia White, Maren Atherton. Back row, coach Demi Salazar, Janae Carr, Sydney Tolley, Ella Coss, Elaina Reddin, Harlow Foltyniewicz, Elaina Koch, Kennedy Knaff, Laylie Denault, manager Karly Reel.

***“Our objective is measurable improvement before regionals. Everything from vertical to serve and receive. Everything we can measure we will. Our purpose is to give them ideas about what they can do. The kids have given excellent effort. Learning so much may be hard, but they have exhibited the hunger to do it.”***

—Coach Demi Salazar

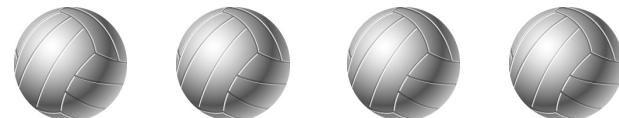
spectacular plays have been by them,” stated Salazar. “Plus, the two sophomores will see action.”

Salazar said he has seen a steady progression in the girls’ game since his first day with them in the gym and that improvement so far has made him smile.

“Our objective is measurable improvement be-

fore regionals,” he said. “Everything from vertical to serve and receive. Everything we can measure we will. Our purpose is to give them ideas about what they can do.

“The kids have given excellent effort. Learning so much may be hard, but they have exhibited the hunger to do it.”



## Varsity Volleyball Roster

No	Player	Pos	Yr
1	Ava Eddy	D	Sr
2	Maren Atherton	D	Jr
3	Harlow Foltyniewicz	S	So
4	Laylie Denault	OH	Jr
5	Janae Carr	D	Jr
6	Sydney Tolley	OH	Jr
7	Kirby Bond	OH	Sr
8	Addi Jones	RS	Jr
10	Talia White	S	Jr
11	Ella Coss	RS	Sr
12	Kennedy Knaff	MH	Sr
13	Ella Martin	S	Sr
14	Kate Mikolasik	D	Jr
15	Elaina Koch	MH	So
16	Elaina Reddin	MH	Jr

Head coach: Demi Salazar

## Spiker Volleyball Rosters

### Sophomore Volleyball Roster

No	Player	Pos	Yr
1	Kate Strouss	S	So
2	Sophia Orozco	L	So
4	Harlow Foltyniewicz	S/RS	So
7	Ava Christmann	OH	So
9	Karissa Freeman	RS	So
10	Jocelynn Figueroa	RS/OH	So
11	Monse Chavez	RS/OH	So
14	Elaina Koch	MB	So
15	Aby Buettner	MB	So
16	Abbie Kreiser	DS	So
17	Addy Perryman	MB/RS	So
18	Ari Figueroa	MB	So
20	Emily Diaz	OH	So
22	Parker Stavropoulos	RS	So

Head coach: Laura McNally

### Freshman Volleyball Roster

No	Player	Pos	Yr
1	Zariah Escatel	L	Fr
3	Hayley Diaz	OH	Fr
4	Klaire Knaff	D	Fr
6	Olivia Corrigan	OH	Fr
7	Alexis Nave	OH	Fr
9	Karlee Organ	S	Fr
10	Mia Barringer	RH	Fr
12	Riley Erlenborn	OH	Fr
14	Karson Doyle	MH	Fr
15	Abby Magallanes	S	Fr
16	Rylee Woods	MH	Fr
18	Leah Schwemlein	OH	Fr
20	Charlee Dankenbring	MH	Fr
21	Lupita Sandoval	OH	Fr

Head coach: Chris Salazar



### Sophomore Football schedule

Sept. 2 – at Riverdale – 5:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 9 – Newman – 5:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 16 – Hall – 5:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 23 – at Monmouth-Roseville – 5:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 30 – at Sherrard – 5:30 p.m.  
 Oct. 7 – Kewanee – 5:30 p.m.  
 Oct. 15 – at Princeton – 5:30 p.m.  
 Oct. 21 – at Erie – 5:30 p.m.  
 Oct. 28 – Aledo Mercer Co. – 5:30 p.m.

### Boys' Soccer schedule

Aug. 31 – at Streator Tourney – 9 a.m.  
 Sept. 2 – JV Body Armor Series at Schaumburg  
 Sept. 3 – Riverdale – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 4 – Rochelle – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 5 – at Orion – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 6 – at Oregon JV Tourney – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 7 – at Oregon JV Tourney – 12:45 p.m.  
 Sept. 9 – at Yorkville – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 11 – Kewanee – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 14-15 – Body Armor Series at Schaumburg  
 Sept. 18 – Bloomington Central Catholic – 7 p.m.  
 Sept. 21 – at Somonauk – 11 a.m.  
 Sept. 21 – at Genoa-K. JV Tourney – 9 a.m.  
 Sept. 23- Streator – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 24 – Princeton – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 26 – at Sterling – 6 p.m.  
 Sept. 28 – at Monmouth-Roseville – 10:30 a.m.  
 Oct. 1 – at Dixon – 4:30 p.m.  
 Oct. 2 – at Somonauk JV – TBA  
 Oct. 5 – Earlville – noon  
 Oct. 12 – Ottawa – noon  
 Oct. 12 – at Princeton JV – 9 a.m.  
 Oct. 15 – Peoria Christian – 6 p.m.  
 Oct. 18-22 – Regional

### Volleyball schedule

Aug. 29 – at Amboy – 5 p.m.  
 Sept. 3 – at Hall – 5 p.m.  
 Sept. 5 – Newman – 5 p.m.  
 Sept. 6 – at Oregon Tourney (V) – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 7 – at Oregon Tourney (V) – 10 a.m.  
 Sept. 7 – at Putnam Co. Tourney (Fr) – 8 a.m.  
 Sept. 9 – Sandwich – 5 p.m.  
 Sept. 10 – at Princeton – 5 p.m.  
 Sept. 11 – Dixon – 5 p.m.  
 Sept. 14 – Mendota Invite (So) – 8 a.m.  
 Sept. 17 – Erie – 5 p.m.  
 Sept. 21 – at Ottawa Invite (Fr) – 8:30 a.m.  
 Sept. 23 – at Indian Creek – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 24 – Kewanee – 5 p.m.  
 Sept. 26 – Bureau Valley – 5 p.m.  
 Sept. 30 – Mercer County – 5 p.m.  
 Oct. 1 – Hall – 5 p.m.  
 Oct. 3 – at Somonauk – 4:30 p.m.  
 Oct. 5 – Mendota Invite (Fr) – 8 a.m.  
 Oct. 8 – at Newman – 5 p.m.  
 Oct. 12 – at Princeton Tourney (V) – 8 a.m.  
 Oct. 12 – at Pecatonica Tourney (So) – 8:30 a.m.  
 Oct. 15 – Princeton – 5 p.m.  
 Oct. 17 – at Erie – 5 p.m.  
 Oct. 19 – Mendota Invite (V) – 8 a.m.  
 Oct. 19 – at Fulton Invite (So) – 8 a.m.  
 Oct. 22 – at Kewanee – 5 p.m.  
 Oct. 24 – at Sterling – 5 p.m.  
 Oct. 26 – at Stillman Valley Invite (V) – 8 a.m.  
 Oct. 28-31 – Regional

## Golf

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Dell Dennis, Maddox Rosales, Corbin Doll, Ashtyn Stamberger, Shea Kreiser, Kamilah Preciado and Ashlynn Martin.

### Golf schedule

Sept. 4 – at Hall – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 5 – at Rock Falls – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 9 – at Orion – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 11 – Newman – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 12 – L-P, Hinckley-BR – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 17 – at Princeton – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 19 – at Kewanee – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 21 – at Princeton Tourney – 8 a.m.  
 Sept. 24 – Conference Meet at Sherrard – 10 a.m.  
 Sept. 25 – at Ottawa JV Invite – 1 p.m.  
 Sept. 26 – Ottawa – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 28 – Mendota Ryder Cup – 8:30 a.m.  
 Oct. 2 – Regional

“We have had players get eliminated in the sectional round the last two years and we hope to make it past that stage this year,” Ross said. “I’m looking forward to another great season.”



### Varsity Soccer Roster

No	Player	Yr
1	Mateo Goy	Jr
2	Angel Orozco	Jr
3	Cameron Kelly	Sr
4	Cole Kleckner	So
5	Mauricio Martinez	Sr
6	Alex Beetz	Jr
7	Isaac Diaz	So
8	Ramiro Palacios	Jr
9	David Casas	Sr
10	Johan Cortez	Jr
11	Cesar Casas	So
12	Gael Garcia	So
13	Sebastian Carlos	Jr
14	Kevin Herrera	Fr
15	Luis Ramirez	Jr
16	Mauricio Salinas	Jr
17	Omar Nanez	Fr
18	Cameron Escatel	Sr
19	Aaden Castle	Jr
20	Sam Matura	Sr
22	Hugo Falcon	Fr
23	Danny Garcia	So
24	Aaron Venegas	So
26	Abel Nanez	Fr

Head coach: Nick Myers  
 Assistant coach: Rey Arteaga

### Junior Varsity Soccer Roster

No	Player	Yr
4	Cole Kleckner	So
4	Berat Imeri	So
5	Favian Romero	So
6	Osvaldo Arteaga	Jr
7	Adan Estrada	So
8	Blake Bute	So
9	Christian Gonzalez	So
10	Emiliano Medina	Jr
11	Benoni Hernandez	So
12	Emiliano Villagomez	Fr
13	Diego Suarez	Fr
14	Kevin Herrera	Fr
14	Anthony Martinez	Fr
15	Christian Colin	Fr
17	Omar Nanez	Fr
18	David Reyes	Fr
20	Danny Correa	Fr
22	Hugo Falcon	Fr
22	Ignacio Ortega	Fr
24	Salvador Hermosillo	Fr
25	Jamal Lesley	So
25	Adan Medina	So
26	Adrian Trejo	Fr
26	Abel Nanez	Fr
33	Gianni Figueroa	So

Head coach: Nick Myers  
 Assistant coach: Rey Arteaga



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# Soccer postseason success not over for Trojans

By **BRANDON LaCHANCE**  
Staff writer

MENDOTA—Let's look at the IHSA history books.

In 2017, the Mendota boys' soccer team lost in the regional semifinals. Since then, they've won a regional every postseason and won the Trojans' first ever sectional championship in 2021.

Why stop the postseason success streak now?

"We've definitely bulked up the schedule. We play Moline (Tuesday, Aug. 27, after press time), a 3A school that only lost one game last year," Mendota soccer coach Nick Myers said. "We play Peoria Christian, who was a 1A state qualifier last year out of the sectional we were in, two days before regionals start.

"We also added teams we've played before but for one reason or another they got off of the schedule. We put Ottawa and Sterling back on the schedule. We just tried to beef up the regular season schedule to have us a little bit more prepared when it comes to deeper in the postseason."

"I always tell the kids, 'I'd rather have a .500 record and have played the best of the best to be ready for the postseason than to run the table and not be challenged until the postseason.'"

The roster doesn't hurt the cause either.

The forwards, juniors Johan Cortez (23 goals and a school record 24 assists a season ago) and Sebastian Carlos and sophomores Isaac Diaz and Cesar Casas com-

**"This season should be another really good year. We're still kind of young to an extent, but we're getting a little older."**

—Coach Nick Myers

bined for 80 goals last year.

Oh, they also helped post a 21-2-2 campaign in 2023, which ended in a 3-2 sectional semifinal loss to Quincy Notre Dame, who has knocked MHS out of the playoffs three times since 2019.

"This season should be another really good year. We're still kind of young to an extent, but we're getting a little older," said Myers, who is going into his fifth year in his second stint with the Trojans. "We have a small senior class again, but four of the five will start, David Casas, Mauricio Martinez, Cameron Escatel, and Cameron Kelly. We're pretty junior heavy on the varsity team.

"We only lost five seniors from last year with only two of them being starters. With the players we have coming back, coach Rey Arteaga and I decided not to bring a freshman up. This will be a first for me as a coach because I have had a freshman either starting or playing heavy varsity minutes.

"We have a talented group. I think from top to bottom, one through 20, all of them could make a



## Varsity soccer

Front row, left to right, manager Ariana Sanchez, Cole Kleckner, Hugo Falcon, Angel Orozco, Kevin Herrera, Mauricio Martinez, manager Kaley Siemer. Middle row, manager Crystal Garcia, Mauricio Salinas, Ramiro Palacios, Sebastian Carlos, Danny Garcia, Mateo Goy, Luis Ramirez, Cameron Escatel, Aaron Venegas, Sam Matura, Aaden Castle. Back row, coach Rey Arteaga, Gael Garcia, David Casas, Omar Nanez, Cameron Kelly, Isaac Diaz, Alex Beetz, Abel Nanez, Cesar Casas, Johan Cortez, head coach Nick Myers.

case they could start for us. It's been a really exciting summer. Last year we went 21-2-2 and I think we can improve our record, even as crazy as it sounds."

David Casas and Cortez are the Trojans' co-captains.

Junior Mateo Goy will be goalkeeper for a second-straight season as Myers likes his work ethic and his quick reflexes.

Junior Ramiro Palacios and David Casas will be used as defensive workhorses. Myers noted they work hard for 80 minutes and will be the guys who never get their name in the paper, unless they score, but are two of the most important pieces on the team.



## Junior Varsity Soccer

Front row, left to right, Favian Romero, Ignacio Ortega, Kevin Herrera, Salvador Hermosillo, Christian Gonzalez, Adrian Trejo, Diego Suarez. Middle row, David Reyes, Berat Imeri, Adan Medina, Gianni Figueroa, Emiliano Villagomez, Benoni Hernandez, Blake Bute, Cole Kleckner. Back row, coach Rey Arteaga, Hugo Falcon, Emiliano Medina, Jamal Lesley, Abel Nanez, Christian Colin, Omar Nanez, Adan Estrada, Anthony Martinez, Danny Correa, coach Nick Myers.



Front row, left to right, Litzy Celis, Payton Stavropoulos, Anthony Kelson, Fernanda Valdes, Anna Valdes. Middle row, Carlos Toribio, Aidan Fisher, Ryder Woods, Hector Gonzalez. Back row, coach Kevin Wohrley, Travis Mumm, Spencer Kain, Emily Banks, Gage Richey.

## Thin numbers, same expectations for cross country team

By **BRANDON LaCHANCE**  
Staff writer

MENDOTA – The 2024 Mendota boys’ cross country team has eight members and the girls’ team has five.

Coach Kevin Wohrley would like to have more, but he is confident in every runner wearing the purple and gold.

“We are a little thinner in the ranks than I wish, but we will be OK. It’s exciting Northbrook has started a cross country program, which should help the high school in the future,” Wohrley said. “That’s going to introduce the sport to athletes at an earlier age. Hopefully, it will bare fruits down the road.

“When you return seasoned runners, they know what the expectation is. Most of the returners met during the summer and got some summer miles in.”

The boys have seven returners in seniors Aidan Fisher, Anthony Kelson, Travis Mumm, juniors Hector Gonzalez and Spencer Kain, and freshmen Carlos Toribio and Ryder Woods, while the girls bring back Emily Banks, Anna Valdes, and Payton Stavropoulos.

Freshman Fernanda Valdes and junior Litzy Celis are new to the girls’ team, and freshman Gage Richey is an

addition to the boys’ squad.

Kelson, a two-time state qualifier, will lead the way once again for MHS.

“He’s just an outstanding person to begin with. He is kind of the heart of the team in terms of going out and doing what he needs to do to improve,” Wohrley said. “Fairly often, the expectations he’s putting on himself exceed what the rest of the group is doing.

“But he shows them what the standards are. Different people try to work up to what he is able to do. He does a great job of encouraging his teammates. We have a nice group where everyone is supportive of each other.”

### Cross Country schedule

- Aug. 29 – at Genoa-Kingston – 5 p.m.
- Sept. 3 – at Ottawa – 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 7 – at Oregon – 9 a.m.
- Sept. 10 – at Winnebago – 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 14 – at Princeton – 9 a.m.
- Sept. 17 – at LaSalle-Peru – 4 p.m.
- Sept. 21 – at Bureau Valley – 9:30 a.m.
- Sept. 25 – Amboy, Hall, Princeton – 4 p.m.
- Sept. 28 – at Kewanee – 9:30 a.m.
- Oct. 1 – Conference Meet at Monmouth-R. – 4:30 p.m.
- Oct. 5 – at Streator – 9 a.m.
- Oct. 9 – DePue, Dixon, Streator – 4 p.m.
- Oct. 14 – at Amboy Columbus Day – 10 a.m.
- Oct. 26 – Regional



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## Football

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do so,” said Hill. “His teammates respect his personality, consistency and ability to stay positive when things are tough. His attendance and growth this summer have been very good.”

A major threat on offense for the Trojans will be senior Braiden Freeman, who is starting his third year of varsity competition. Freeman is mainly a weapon for catching the football, but last year he also rushed the ball at times, and Hill will utilize him in whatever ways to help the team win.

“Braiden has been used in multiple roles throughout his time at MHS,” noted Hill. “Each year he has grown and shown he is willing to help the team in whatever way is needed. We look to maximize his abilities this fall to help us move the ball and score points.”

Last year, Freeman led the squad with 25 catches for 324 yards.

After Randolph, who ran the ball 105 times last season, the next most active running backs in 2023 were sophomores. Corbin Furar carried 61 times and Wyatt Ossman got 25 totes, while Tillman had 14 rush attempts.

“We are looking forward to having all three of those players back,” said Hill. He said others that can contribute in that area of offense are senior Rhett Watson, junior Keegan Beetz and sophomore Jayden Lesley.

“Having multiple options helps maintain bal-

ance and gives players an opportunity to be fresh on defense,” added Hill.

In addition to Freeman, the Trojans have other weapons at the wide receiver position. Ossman (22 catches), Beetz (14 catches) and Watson (10 catches) were all targeted last year, and Hill added that junior Gavin Evans is another player that can be utilized in the passing game.

“We look for all of these guys to help a new quarterback build confidence throughout the season,” said Hill.

The offensive line is the key to making an offense go, and Hill is excited about this year’s group of players that will perform down in the trenches. The line will be anchored by seniors Gabe Vallejo and Angil Serrano, who Hill said had solid summers going into their final season of high school football.

“Each of them has contributed on the varsity level significantly their sophomore and junior seasons, and we look for them to be consistent entities on our line this year,” Hill explained.

**Varsity Football schedule**

Aug. 30 – Riverdale – 7 p.m.  
 Sept. 7 – at Newman – 6 p.m.  
 Sept. 13 – at Hall – 7 p.m.  
 Sept. 20 – Monmouth-Roseville – 7 p.m.  
 Sept. 27 – Sherrard – 7 p.m.  
 Oct. 4 – at Kewanee – 7 p.m.  
 Oct. 11 – Princeton – 7 p.m.  
 Oct. 18 – Erie-Prophetstown – 7 p.m.  
 Oct. 25 – at Aledo Mercer Co. – 7 p.m.

Hill added that juniors Reese Lane and Austin Welch have had very positive summers building their strength and knowledge of the game, and junior Joe Stewart is expected to be a strong component in the team’s blocking scheme after a strong summer.

On defense, Hill said candidates for the line include Serrano, Vallejo, Stewart, Lane, Welch, Mike Thornhill and Payton Gagliardo.

There are numerous players vying for playing time at linebacker including Evans, Furar, Lesley, Gagliardo, Tillman, Ossman, Javi Hernandez, Cam Wasmer and Anthony Seablom.

Cornerback candidates are Watson, Will Musanovic, Brandon Leadley and Brennan Northcutt, while Freeman and Beetz are the safeties.

“With multiple returners on both sides of the ball, we look for collective growth from a group that cares about one another,” said Hill. “Our commitment this summer shows the team wants to take a step forward and compete this fall.”

**Varsity Football Roster**

No	Player	Pos	Yr
1	Javier Hernandez	QB-LB	So
2	Keegan Beetz	WR-DB	Jr
3	Rhett Watson	WR-LB	Sr
6	Corbin Furar	RB-LB	Jr
7	Brennan Northcutt	WR-DB	Jr
8	William Musanovic	WR-DB	Jr
9	Gavin Evans	TE-LB	Jr
11	Aden Tillman	QB-LB	Jr
12	Braiden Freeman	WR-DB	Sr
13	Cam Wasmer	TE-LB	So
15	Brandon Leadley	WR-DB	Sr
20	Wyatt Ossman	TE-LB	Jr
21	Payton Gagliardo	TE-DL	Jr
23	Anthony Seablom	TE-LB	Jr
29	Jayden Lesley	RB-LB	So
55	Reese Lane	OL-DL	Jr
58	Mike Thornhill	OL-DL	Sr
59	Austin Welch	OL-DL	Jr
60	Angil Serrano	OL-DL	Sr
62	Jaxon Cooper	OL-DL	Sr
65	Josh Shakespeare	OL-DL	Jr
75	Gabe Vallejo	OL-DL	Sr
76	Nathan Giberson	OL-DL	Jr
80	Kodi Price	TE-DL	Jr
81	Joe Stewart	TE-DL	Jr

**Head coach:** Keegan Hill

**Assistant coaches:** Brock Zinke, Cody Zinke, Steve Villegas, Bryson Prusator, Sean Kaufman, Cesar Arteaga

**Girls' Tennis schedule**

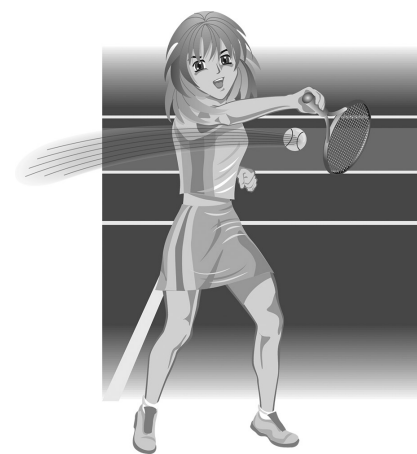
Aug. 31 – at Newman – 9 a.m.  
 Sept. 3 – at Kewanee – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 5 – Sterling – 4:30 p.m.  
 Sept. 7 – at Coal City – 8 a.m.  
 Sept. 10 – Newman – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 12 – Princeton – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 17 – at Dixon – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 19 – at Pontiac – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 24 – R. Lutheran, R. Christian – 4 p.m.  
 Sept. 28 – at L-P Invite – 8:30 a.m.  
 Sept. 30 – at Rochelle – 4 p.m.  
 Oct. 1 – at Coal City – 4 p.m.  
 Oct. 3 – at Morris – 4 p.m.  
 Oct. 8 – Streator – 4 p.m.  
 Oct. 9 – at LaSalle-Peru – 4 p.m.  
 Oct. 12 – Mendota Tournament – 8 a.m.  
 Oct. 15 – Ottawa – 4:30 p.m.  
 Oct. 18-19 – Sectional

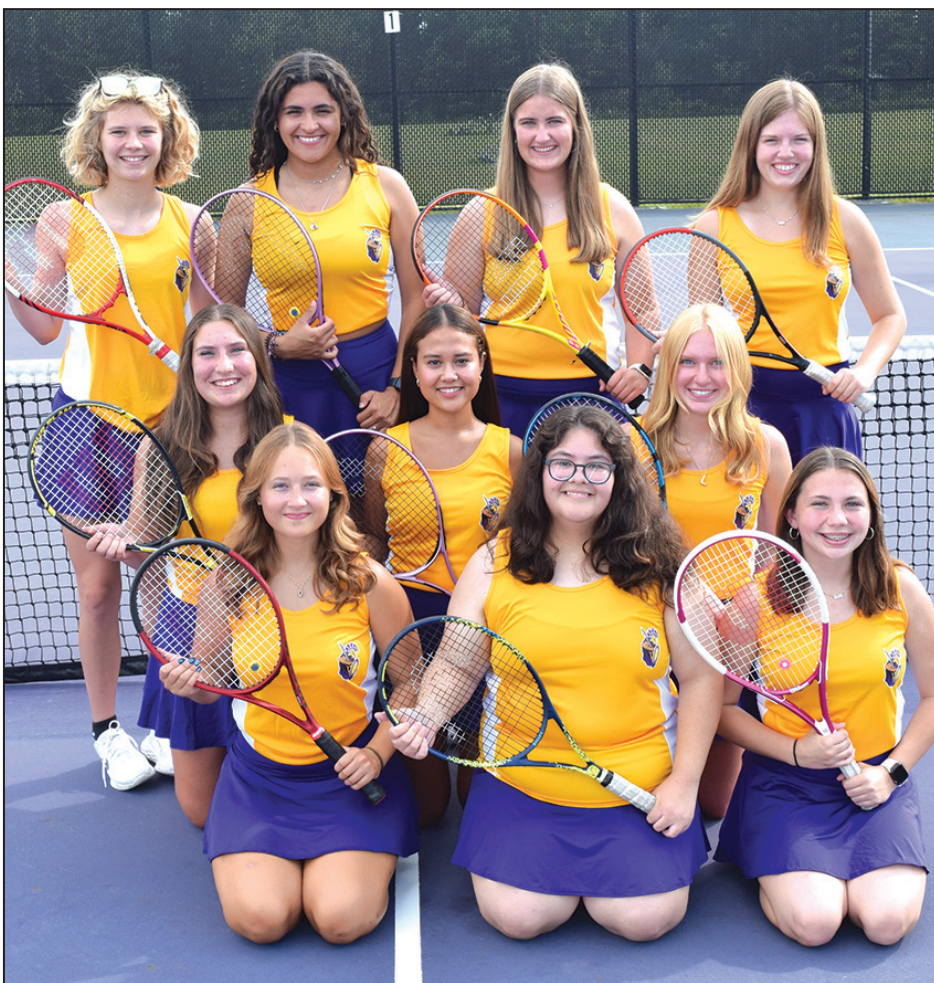
**Frosh/Soph Football Roster**

No	Player	Pos	Yr
4	Gavin Stevenson	RB-LB	So
5	Wyatt Roberson	RB-LB	Fr
7/9	Mariyah Elam	WR-DB	So
10	Cole Tillman	QB-DB	Fr
14	Clayton Tanner	RB-LB	Fr
16	Cayden Taliani	TE-LB	So
17	Adrian Arteaga	WR-DB	So
18	Ross Sondgeroth	QB-LB	Fr
19	TJ LaChance	RB-LB	Fr
22	Tyson Barkman	WR-DB	Fr
24	Diego Diaz	WR-DB	Fr
25	Colton Rodrick	WR-LB	Fr
27	Bailey Ryan	WR-DB	So
28	Viktor Angulo	WR-LB	Fr
30	Oscar Castaneda	TE-LB	Fr
31	Ethan Escatel	RB-DB	Fr
32	Komen Denault	RB-LB	Fr
33	Daniel Pierce	RB-LB	So
50	Zach Schmidt	OL-DL	So
51	Aaron Torres	OL-DL	So
52	Tomas Corrigan	OL-LB	Fr
54	Julian Valencia	OL-DL	Fr
56	Cannon Chaon	OL-DL	Fr
61	Jorge Valdez	OL-DL	Fr
63	Dujuan Porte	OL-DL	So
66	Karson Sundberg	TE-DL	So
70	Devin Cooper	OL-DL	So
72	Cesar Hernandez	OL-DL	Fr
73	Cole Nosalik	OL-DL	So
74	Germain Serrano	OL-DL	Fr
78	Chandler Gambrel	OL-DL	Fr
82	Ryan Gibertini	TE-DL	So
83	Jax Hiner	WR-DB	Fr
88	Kadran Price	RB-LB	Fr

**Head coach:** Steve Villegas

**Assistant coaches:** Bryson Prusator, Sean Kaufman, Cesar Arteaga





Front row, left to right, Lauren Holland, Lisette Sandoval, Chloe Walzer. Middle row, Kylie Goldblatt, Lidia Hernandez, Lily Bokus. Back row, Lucie Brandner, Cassandra Gonzalez, Leah Stamberger, Ella Lewis.

## Bermudez takes over tennis program

By **BRANDON LaCHANCE**  
Staff writer

MENDOTA – After a year break from Mendota High School tennis after a year and a half as varsity assistant and head junior varsity, Miguel Bermudez is returning as the head coach for both boys and girls tennis.

His first experience as the lead man is this fall with the girls.

“I’m honored to take over the program. I’m excited about this year. I coached most of the girls on this team two seasons ago as an assistant under Shawn LaRette,” said Bermudez, who has coached other sports in freshman basketball and junior varsity baseball at Bureau Valley High School. “I’m excited to be back and see them finish out their junior and senior years.”

Junior Ella Lewis has been the No. 1 singles player for the last two years and will be either No. 1 or No. 2 as senior Cas-

sie Gonzalez is competing for one of the

singles spots. The No. 1 and No. 2 doubles teams will either be seniors Lidia Hernandez and Lauren Holland or juniors Leah Stamberger and Kylie Goldblatt.

No. 3 doubles will feature Lily Bokus, who has only played for one year but is a great athlete, and a partner who could be one of quite a few girls from the 17-girl roster.

“I feel like from the top to bottom, we have a real solid team. We’re going to be in the mix at the end of the season when it comes to matches,” Bermudez said. “Sectionals is another beast against seasoned, experienced players. Our goal is to have our team ready for the postseason.”

Also on the roster are Angel Lara, Cailynn Rodrick, Giselle Gonzalez, Karla Ascencio, Mackenzie Mumm, Lucy Brandner, Chloe Walzer, Lisette Sandoval, and Kenzie Sproston. Harlan Gallagher is the team manager.

# We've got you covered!

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



*The Mendota Reporter*

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## Freshman Volleyball

Front row, left to right, manager Savannah Lenert, Abby Magallanes, Karlee Organ, Leah Schwemlein, Zariah Escatel, Alexis Nave, Lupita Sandoval, Klaire Knaff. Back row, coach Chris Salazar, Hayley Diaz, Riley Erlenborn, Rylee Woods, manager Kaeyle Brown, Karson Doyle, Charlee Dankenbring, Olivia Corrigan, Mia Barringer, manager Leah Henkel.



## Sophomore Volleyball

Front row, left to right, Jocelynn Figueroa, Kate Strouss, Karissa Freeman, Sophia Orozco, Parker Stavropoulos, Monse Chavez, Abbie Kreiser. Back row, coach Laura McNally, Emily Diaz, Addison Perryman, Aby Buettner, Harlow Foltyniewicz, Elaina Koch, Arihanna Figueroa, Ava Christmann, manager Kara Miars.



## Cheerleaders

Front row, left to right, Briza Cervantes, Reushawna Durr, Celah Jackson, Christianah Brown, Peri Manning, Hannah Kunz, Eden Pecher. Back row, coach Katrina Flahive, Dessa Komitas, Korinne Miars, Sophie Pappas, Makenzie Bean, Alessandra Enriquez, Ruby Bielema, Claire Hanson, JazLynn Gambrell, coach Anna Weber.



## Freshman-Sophomore Football

Front row, left to right, Jax Hiner, Devin Cooper, Tyson Barkman, Gavin Stevenson. Second row, Cesar Hernandez, Oscar Castaneda, Ethan Escatel, Clayton Tanner, Adrian Arteaga. Third row, Komen Denault, Aaron Torres, Cayden Taliani, Bailey Ryan, Karson Sundberg, Zach Schmidt. Fourth row, Ryan Gibertini, Diego Diaz, Ross Sondgeroth, Mariyah Elam, Daniel Pierce, Cole Nosalik, Wyatt Roberson, Viktor Angulo. Fifth row, Colton Rodrick, Kadrean Price, Tomas Corrigan, Cannon Chaon, Cole Tillman, Germain Serrano, Jorge Valdez, Dajuan Porte. Back row, coach Bryson Prusator, coach Sean Kaufman, coach Steve Villegas, coach Cesar Arteaga.



## Freshman-Sophomore Tennis

Front row, left to right, Angel Lara, Giselle Gonzalez, Karla Ascencio. Back row, Miranda Wheeler, Emily Sondgeroth, Makenzie Mumm, Sam Tunk, Caitlyn Rodrick. Not pictured: McKenzie Sproston.