WINTER SPORTS PREVIEW

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Pirates hope to build on last year

By Rob Hamilton
MCSSports@civitasmedia.com

After finishing 13-11 last year, the Cardington boys will attempt to improve on that mark behind six returning letter winners.

Junior Devin Pearl was a second-team pick by the Mid-Ohio Athletic Conference and District 11 and also was given honorable mention recognition by the Central District for averaging 12.2 points and 5.5 rebounds per game.

Also, Trey Williams was named to the second team in District 11 and earned honorable mention recognition from the MOAC and Central District. The senior picked up 9.6 points and 7.7 boards per contest.

Dalton Snider, Skyler Bowling, Garrett Wagner and Daniel Kill also earned letters last year for coach Rod Brown, who is entering his fifth year as head coach of the team.

The team will have some big shoes to fill, though, as five players graduated from last year's squad. Both Mac Thompson and Cole Hess were three-year letter winners. Thompson (13.2 points) was a first-team pick in the MOAC and DIstrict 11 and was named honorable mention in the Central District, while Hess added 11.9 points per game. Clayton Fister, Mikey Taha and Tyson Blackwell also graduated.

New to the varsity squad will be Derek Goodman, Luke McCarrell, Clayton Clark, Scotty Osborne and Nate Craig.

"We are very guard-oriented with not a lot of height once again, but we will look to apply a lot of pressure on defense and play a high-paced up-tempo and aggressive style," said Brown.

The coach noted that his team's goals will be to improve on last year's record, finishing in the top half of the Blue Division and to win their games at home.

In the conference, Brown feels that Centerburg, Northmor and Mount Gilead will be the teams they'll have to contend with in order to achieve those goals.

Rob Hamilton can be reached at 419-946-3010, ext. 1807. Connect with him on Twitter at @SportsMCS

Cardington girls want to defend league title

By Rob Hamilton
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New coach Jamie Edwards will try to keep the momentum of the Cardington Lady Pirates rolling after the team finished 17-6 last year and was co-champions of the Mid-Ohio Athletic Conference's Blue Division.

The Pirates did suffer some losses from that squad, though. Kaitlyn Kavanaugh, who was named an honorable mention All-Ohioan, as well as a first-team MOAC player, graduated after averaging 10.6 points and 10.1 rebounds per game. She now is playing for Division II Lourdes University. Also graduated is Jane Perry, who picked up 5.6 points per contest. Junior guard Nadia Kerman will also miss the year after suffering an injury during an open gym, giving Edwards an extra hole in her line-up to fill.

Cardington still has four letter winners returning, though. Sophomore forward Kyndall Spires picked up 7.7 points and 6.7 rebounds per game on her way to being named to the District 11 first team and the MOAC's second team. Junior forward Allyson Adams tallied five points and four boards, while senior guard Summer Morgan added 1.7 points and sophomore point guard Sage Brannon picked up five points per game.

"We return two key contributors from last season in our junior class, although we recently lost Nadia Kerman for the season due to an ACL/meniscus tear in our last open gym," said Edwards. "We will look to our lone senior and three-year letter winner, Summer Morgan, as our emotional leader."

Edwards is expecting contributions from sophomore Makayla Conrad and freshman Kynlee Edwards, who averaged 17 points and nine steals per game in middle school. While the coach is going to field a young team this year, she notes that her girls put in a lot of off-season work.

"We look to compete for the Blue Division title," she said. "We may be the youngest team in the Blue Division, but we are very experience. We have three underclassmen that play high-level AAU and I look for that to translate over to help fuel our success."

In the conference, Edwards looks at Elgin and Northmor to be the top competition for a league title.

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Pictured above is the Northmor bowling team.

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Highland boys have young squad this year

By Rob Hamilton
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For Highland to improve on last season's 8-15 mark, they will have to get strong production from a young team missing one of its all-time greats.

The Scots graduated Jett Swetland from last year's team after a career which saw him become the school's all-time top scorer and rebounder. He was also a two-time Mid-Ohio Athletic Conference player of the year. The team also graduated starters Byron Belcher and Nathan Hilborn.

Head coach Matt Bradley, entering his third year with Highland, does have five letter winners returning, though. Seniors Shane Carney, Trent Mason and Thomas Wheeler are back for the Scots, as are junior Quin Winkelfoos and
Dylan Tuggle.

"We have some experience returning, but overall are very young," said Bradley. "We look to improve every day. Our goals are to compete for the MOAC title and host a first-round tournament game."

"We have some experience returning, but overall are very young. We look to improve every day. Our goals are to compete for the MOAC title and host a first-round tournament game."

— Matt Bradley
Head coach

Bradley added that his team will be depending on a number of varsity newcomers this year. Juniors Alex Mason, Max Schreiber and Colten Liszkai; sophomore Caleb Dodds and freshmen Mack Anglin and Andrew Wheeler will all be expected to contribute.

Bradley noted that the MOAC could be a very competitive conference this year, citing Centerburg, Mount Gilead, Fredericktown and Cardington as potential contenders.

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The Highland varsity boys' basketball team is pictured above.

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Lady Scots return many letter winners

By Rob Hamilton
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First-year Highland girls' basketball coach Whitney Levering will have a lot of experience when her team takes the court this season.

The Scots return nine letter winners from last year's squad, as Taylor Belcher, Kelsey Walters, Harlee Steck, McKenzie Fuller, Brianna Dado, Krista Walters, Riley Denes, Erica Sardinha and Parker Steck. Fuller was a second-team pick by the Mid-Ohio Athletic Conference, while Belcher was named honorable mention.

While the team did graduate Bethany Porter, Hailey Moore and Madison Bradford, Levering has a few newcomers she expects to compete for time in Paige Cole, Elora Stiltner, Becca Jones and Allie LaFever.

After finishing 4-19 last year, the new coach noted that the big key to the new season is simply to improve.

"We want to improve our defensive fundamentals, rebounding and communication out on the floor," she said. "We want to be a team that comes to work hard and improve on the fundamentals of basketball every day, as well as push one another to be our best. We are working together as 'one team, one body'."

When it comes to the MOAC, Levering notes that, much like last year, there could be a close race for the Blue Division title.

"Any team in the conference this year can come out on top," she said. "Last year's conference race was pretty close. I believe that the same thing can happen again this year. We can't assume that any team is going to be a win."

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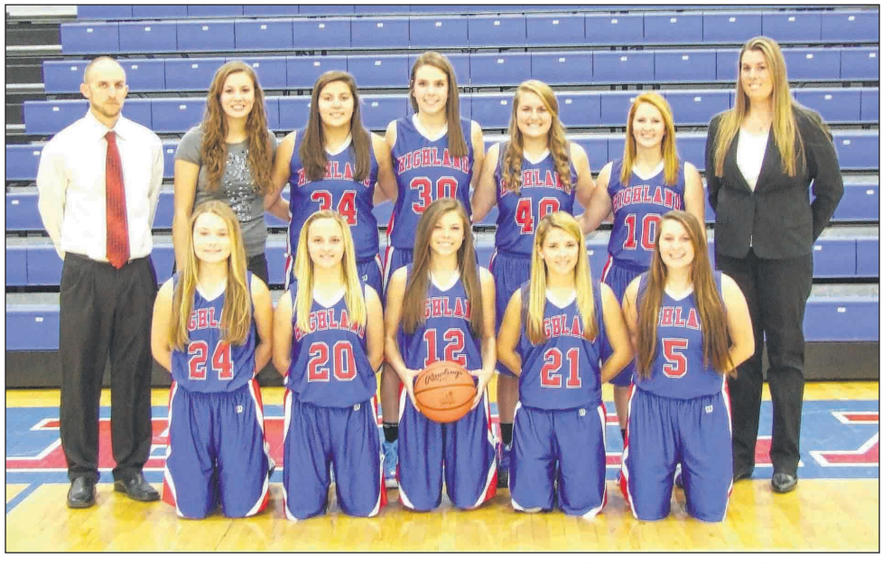

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The Highland girls' basketball team is pictured above.

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Knights return state qualifier

By Rob Hamilton
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With five letter winners with a good deal of post-season success returning, the Northmor wrestling team will be looking to defend their Mid-Ohio Athletic Conference championship from last year.

Jake Neer finished 36-14 last year, was a league champion and advanced to the state meet to highlight the team's returnees. Griffin Jenkins, Jake Farley and Conan Becker all were one match away from making the state meet, placing fifth at districts to be alternates. Farley also claimed league and sectional titles, while Becker was tops in his sectional, as well. Also back is district qualifier Aaron Kitts.

The Knights will have to replace a trio of decorated graduates. Kyle Johnson was a two-time state qualifier who won both the MOAC and sectional last year, while Lane Foster was a league champ who advanced to the state meet and Sam Neer was a state alternate who won 100 matches during his career.

Head coach Scott Carr noted that freshman lightweight Kyle Price is one newcomer he is expecting to help contribute points during meets.

The coach has high hopes for this year's team, noting he is hoping to get a fourth straight Blue Division title, win a sectional championship and make it to the state duals after falling short of the final eight in the past two years.

In the MOAC, Carr feels that several teams in both divisions could provide tough challenges to his squad.

"Highland was second in the Blue Division last year and returns five district qualifiers," he said. "In the Red, River Valley was second overall (last year) and are always solid. Pleasant was young last year, but will be a real contender this season."

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Jake Neer — Northmor

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MOAC Standings for 2014-15

BOYS' BASKETBALL
Blue Division
Mount Gilead 13-1, 21-3
Fredericktown 12-2, 17-6
Cardington 9-5, 13-10
Elgin 7-7, 9-14
Highland 7-7, 8-15
Centerburg 6-8, 10-14
East Knox 1-13, 4-17
Northmor 1-13, 4-19
Red Division
Buckeye Valley 11-3, 15-8
Marion Harding 10-4, 12-11
Pleasant 9-5, 18-8
River Valley 7-7, 13-10
North Union 6-8, 11-12
Jonathan Alder 6-8, 11-13
Galion 6-8, 10-14
Fairbanks 1-13, 5-18

GIRLS' BASKETBALL
Blue Division
Cardington 11-3, 16-7
Elgin 11-3, 12-11
Centerburg 10-4, 11-10
Fredericktown 9-4, 9-12
Northmor 5-9, 8-15
Mount Gilead 3-11, 6-17
East Knox 2-11, 3-18
Red Division
North Union 14-0, 26-2
Pleasant 10-4, 18-7
River Valley 8-6, 15-9
Marion Harding 8-6, 13-10
Buckeye Valley 6-8, 13-11
Jonathan Alder 5-8, 10-11
Fairbanks 4-10, 7-17
Galion 0-13, 3-19

WRESTLING
Blue Division
Northmor 210
Highland 155.5
Mount Gilead 44
Centerburg 37
Cardington 35
Red Division
River Valley 182
Pleasant 154
Buckeye Valley 142
Jonathan Alder 106
Galion 96
North Union 75
Marion Harding 19

GIRLS' BOWLING
Blue Division
Cardington 8-0, 13-1
Elgin 6-2, 11-9
Highland 4-4, 4-7
Northmor 2-6, 10-10
Mount Gilead 0-8, 0-12
Red Division
Marion Harding 10-0, 18-2
Buckeye Valley 6-3, 14-4
Jonathan Alder 6-4, 9-8
North Union 5-5, 8-9
Pleasant 1-8, 2-14
Fairbanks 1-9, 2-11

BOYS' BOWLING
Blue Division
Elgin 7-1, 18-2
Cardington 6-2, 13-4
Highland 5-3, 5-8
Northmor 2-6, 4-16
Mount Gilead 0-8, 0-12
Red Division
Jonathan Alder 10-0, 18-0
Marion Harding 6-4, 10-8
Buckeye Valley 5-4, 9-9
North Union 5-5, 7-12
Pleasant 3-6, 4-13
Fairbanks 1-9, 5-9

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NORTHMOR ATHLETES

Rob Hamilton | Morrow County Sentinel

Northmor's varsity boys' basketball team is in the above picture.

Rob Hamilton | Morrow County Sentinel

Pictured above is the Northmor Lady Knights basketball team.

HIGHLAND ATHLETES

Rob Hamilton | Morrow County Sentinel

Highland's wrestling team is in the above picture.

Rob Hamilton | Morrow County Sentinel

Highland's winter bowlers are pictured above.

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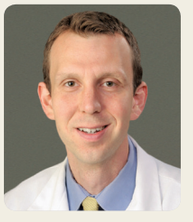
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