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New grid season dawns this Friday night

KENDALLVILLE — Any football fan at any level of the game can tell you the four seasons: The preseason, the regular season, the postseason and the offseason.

For northeast Indiana prep football teams, the offseason has officially ended, the preseason is in full swing and the regular season kicks off this Friday night all over the area.

The Boys of Fall are ready to return to the stage (Apologies to Kenny Chesney wherever he is, probably on a beach somewhere with a drink in his hand and his toes in the sand as he inherits the late Jimmy Buffett's legacy of boats, beaches, bars and ballads).

For area prep football players, a busy summer of the grunt work that makes the dream work finally gets

its payoff as the Friday night lights come on, the uniforms go on, and it's time to get after it on the gridiron.



DAVID VANTRESS

I was one of those guys who actually enjoyed the summer work. Odd-numbered years I spent in Portland, Oregon with my dad, which meant I was on my own and had to self-motivate to get my workouts in. Lifting weights at a Rose City gym Mondays, Wednesdays and

Fridays, alternated with early morning road work Tuesdays and Thursdays — documenting everything dutifully in a journal I was required to turn in to our Castle Park High School coaches upon my return home to San Diego in early August.

And all this shoehorned into long days working alongside my Uncle Steve,

a Portland firefighter, in his side-hustle construction business on his off days.

Even-numbered summers, I stayed home in San Diego, worked and attended off-season workouts, lifted, and participated in 7-on-7 passing leagues.

I loved my summers and squeezed beach time into my days as often as possible. But when the calendar rolled into August, it was time to go to work.

As our area teams get tolling, the storylines are plentiful. East Noble head coach Alex Stewart, fresh off taking the Knights to the Class 4A state finals in his first season, must adapt to staff changes as 2025 loom. Defensive coordinator Ryan Robertson left to take the DeKalb job and took some other assistants along with him.

At Lakeland, longtime

SEE VANTRESS, Page A30



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ANGOLA HORNETS

Hornets look to be a factor in the NECC Big

BY KEN FILLMORE
kfillmore@kpcmedia.com

ANGOLA — Angola will look to grow and compete in a tough Northeast Corner Conference Big School Division after going 4-6 overall last season (1-3 NECC Big).

“I’ve seen these seniors for seven or eight years. It’s been fun to see these guys grow,” 12th-year Hornet coach Andy Thomas said at the Northeast Indiana High School Media Day on July 15 at Parkview’s Mirro Center for Research & Innovation in Fort Wayne. “They all improved in the offseason. The next step is to see them step up.”

One of those seniors is the coach’s son Alex Thomas, who plays tight end

and inside linebacker. He was a big target on offense last season for quarterback Hawkins Hasselman.

Hasselman is one of the area’s top running quarterbacks and enters his senior campaign healthy after sitting out of the track and field season last spring.

Senior Dallas Davidson, a state-qualifying wrestler at 150 pounds last winter, will give Angola another strong running option in its speed option offense, and will also play linebacker.

Other key seniors returning are lineman Lucas Lentz and running back-linebacker Andrew Morvilus.

“We’ve had guys work

SEE ANGOLA, Page A5



MARK MURDOCK

Angola quarterback Hawk Hasselman, right, heads up field with DeKalb defender Eli Schwab in pursuit during a season-opening game last season. Hasselman will lead the Hornets in his senior season this fall.



ANGOLA HIGH SCHOOL
755 S. 100E, Angola
Colors: Purple and Gold
Class: 3A

SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	A	DeKalb	7 p.m.	Sept. 26	A	Fairfield	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	Leo	7 p.m.	Oct. 3	H	Andrean	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	H	Fremont	7 p.m.	Oct. 10	H	Garrett	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	A	West Noble	7 p.m.	Oct. 17	A	Eastside	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	H	Lakeland	7 p.m.				

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JEFF JONES

Angola's Alex Thomas looks the ball into his hands for a first-quarter touchdown at Garrett last season. Thomas will be a key player for the Hornets in his senior season.

ANGOLA

FROM PAGE A4

awfully hard in our strength and conditioning program," Andy Thomas said.

Angola added a big challenge to its schedule in

Week 7 when it hosts Class 2A state power Andean on Oct. 3. It will be the Fightin' 59ers' first game in northeast Indiana since winning at Eastside in the 2A North Semi-State in 2021. That Andean team was led by current Notre

Dame linebacker Drayk Bowen.

Andean went 9-5 last year and lost to Adams Central 20-13 in the 2A North Semi-State. The Flying Jets went on to win the Class 2A state championship.



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CENTRAL NOBLE COUGARS



MARK MURDOCK

Top returning players for Central Noble this season include, from left, Steven Lawson, Conner Fish, Damyan Duncan, Jonathon Van Halst, Keaton Weber and coach Zach Baber.



**CENTRAL NOBLE
HIGH SCHOOL**
302 Cougar Court, Albion
Colors: Maroon and White
Class: 2A

SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	H	West Noble	7 p.m.	Sept. 26	A	Lakeland	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	Woodlan	7 p.m.	Oct. 3	H	Churubusco	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	A	LaVille	7 p.m.	Oct. 10	A	Eastside	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	H	Prairie Heights	7 p.m.	Oct. 17	H	Garrett	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	A	Fremont	7 p.m.				

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Young Cougars look to grow in 2025

BY MARK MURDOCK

mmurdock@kpcmedia.com

ALBION — A young group of athletes is charged with helping turn fortunes around for the Central Noble football team this season.

The Cougars will be counting on newcomers as they try to bounce back from an 0-10 finish a year ago.

"We have a lot of young guys who I believe are more than capable of filling the role, guys who are super-excited about getting to play at the next level but maybe don't have that experience yet," third-year Cougar coach Zach Baber said.

The Cougars tried to bring everything together as much as they could in the offseason.

"That's what we were hoping for this summer. Get people out, get people used to each other," Baber said. "We have a lot of good freshmen. The middle school did well last year.

"We have a lot of young guys. The more we can get people around each other and start jelling, timing and all that, that's what we're looking for."

A winless season can shake the belief of a football program. The Cougars are looking to get it back.

"We're human, the kids are human and they're not



JEFF JONES

Central Noble's Damyan Duncan (21) brings the ball upfield during in a game at Garrett last season. Duncan will be a leading player for a young Cougar team this season.

going to forget a season where we were 0-10," Baber said. "(It affects) their confidence level and that's what we're trying to get back."

The Cougars lack experience in some spots. They lost their entire offensive

line from last year. They'll try to build experience on their own leading up to the season.

"The more these kids are around each other, the more confidence they get," Baber said. "It's just repetition and that's what creates

confidence. If they can do these things a hundred times they're going to have the confidence to do them on Friday night under the lights.

"If we can get to one hundred, two hundred reps on one simple play, that's

what we need. We need these guys as a group doing all these reps so when we get to Friday they'll know what to do."

Getting people to the football is going to be the key on defense, Baber believes.

"Defense is more fluid throughout the season," he said. "You have your base and then you game-plan depending on the opponent.

"We're going to be smaller. We're going to rely on speed and effort. No teams excel when one or two guys are making every tackle. The teams excel when there are three or four guys making every tackle. We understand that, which is good."

Baber said he looks for Churubusco and Eastside to be the favorites in the Northeast Corner Conference Small School Division.

The Cougars are determined to be a bigger part of the conversation this time around.

"They have a chip on their shoulders. They're very focused and very excited," Baber said.

"Practices are different this year, a little more upbeat, a little more up-tempo. Guys are feeling that pressure, especially the seniors, they're ready to go."

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CHURUBUSCO EAGLES



DAVID VANTRESS

Churubusco 2025 football seniors, from left, Grant Sievers, Weston Ott, Cam Lattimore, Brody Lawrence and Bryce Lawrence gather for a photo at Media Day Tuesday, July 15 at Northeast Indiana High School Football Media Day at Parkview’s Mirro Center for Research and Innovation. For a preview of the Eagles see the Wednesday, Aug. 20 edition of the Churubusco News and the Post and Mail.



**CHURUBUSCO
HIGH SCHOOL**

1 Eagle Dr, Churubusco

Colors: Old Gold and Black

Class: 2A

SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	H	Bremen	7:30 p.m.	Sept. 26	H	Fremont	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	Lakeland	7 p.m.	Oct. 3	A	Central Noble	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	A	Garrett	7 p.m.	Oct. 10	H	West Noble	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	H	Eastside	7 p.m.	Oct. 17	A	Fairfield	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	A	Prairie Heights	7 p.m.				

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Experienced Churubusco ready to challenge in NECC again

BY DAVID VANTRESS
dvantress@kpcmedia.com

CHURUBUSCO — You can usually figure on the Churubusco High School football team being in the thick of things in the Northeast Corner Conference Small School Division.

Churubusco head coach Paul Sade hopes that's the case again in 2025, and the Eagles appear to have the experience back to make that happen.

Sade is in his 13th season guiding the Eagles and has a record of 80-46.

Sade said a good offseason has the Eagles ready to roll as the 2025 season dawns.

Churubusco returns nine starters on offense and seven

on defense, so experience will be an Eagle hallmark this season.

The Eagles run the Wing-T offense, but they throw more out of it than many teams.

Sade said a talented, senior group — many of which have started since they were sophomores and in a few cases, freshmen — will key the Eagles in 2025.

"They've played a lot of varsity football, and taken a lot of lumps," Sade said. "They're a good group of kids, they get along, and they're ready to lead."

Senior quarterback Brody Lawrence returns to shepherd that Wing-T offense. Lawrence completed 28-of-71 passes for 396 yards and three touchdowns



DAVID VANTRESS

Churubusco quarterback Cameron Lattimore looks for running room during a game against West Noble last season. Blocking for Lattimore is offensive lineman Cullim Geiger.

a year ago. His twin brother Bryce was his leading receiver with seven catches

for 74 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

Senior Grant Sievers is

the Eagles' top returning rusher. He had 67 carries for 359 yards in 2024. The Eagles lost Angelo Ianucilli to graduation. Ianucilli ran for 967 yards and 20 TDs in 2024.

Defensively, the Eagles run a 5-2 formation. Churubusco gave up 267.6 yards per contest a year ago.

Bryce Lawrence said there's much to prove for he and his Eagle brethren in 2025. "We have a lot of experience, and we're ready to mentor the younger guys," Lawrence said. "We have a reputation for playing hard, and we come with that attitude every day."

As always, beating Eastside is near the top of

SEE BUSCO, Page A30

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DEKALB BARONS



MARK MURDOCK

Top returning players for DeKalb this season include, from left, Eli McCormick, Bo Minehart, Noah Spears, Connor Schmidt and Xavier Bell.



DEKALB HIGH SCHOOL
C.R. 427, Waterloo
Colors: Red, Black and White
Class: 4A

SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	H	Angola	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	Garrett	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	A	New Haven	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	H	East Noble	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	A	Columbia City	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	A	Huntington North	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	H	Norwell	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	A	Bellmont	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	H	Leo	7 p.m.

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New coach Robertson looks to lift Barons

BY MARK MURDOCK

mmurdock@kpcmedia.com

WATERLOO — DeKalb wants to be part of the conversation.

New football coach Ryan Robertson is doing all he can to put the Barons into the mix at the top of the Northeast 8 Conference with East Noble, Leo and Columbia City. DeKalb has been straining to hear what they're saying for too long.

Ultimately, it's not up to the former East Noble defensive coordinator who took over the Barons this season.

"The kids have to do it," he said. "The kids have to make the decision and believe. That's one of the hardest things for high school kids or college kids to do, win whatever the next level is.

"We're trying to compete with the top of the NE8. Our kids are going to have to make the decision that they're good enough, they're strong enough and well-coached enough to be able to compete with those teams."

With so many years of lopsided games against the NE8's power clubs, the Barons face underlying doubts about going against the league's best.

"I don't know in previous years if they felt they belonged on the field with some of the upper echelon," Richardson said. "That's our job to instill in them.

"We have to instill that you do belong here, you are good enough, you can compete, you have the tools, you have the coaches, you have the facilities. Now go do it."

Robertson started by increasing numbers, both on the team roster and coaching staff. DeKalb will have 16 coaches.

"Trying to get as many people in front of our kids as humanly possible, trying to get out a few more kids that maybe didn't play

football but are excellent athletes in our school," Richardson said. "Just get some of those athletes back on the football field and use them at a high level."

A strong group of seniors and several returning players will form the core of the Barons.

"This is a good senior class, there are 17 of them," Robertson said. "They've been together a long time. We added a few more. Those kids are excited and ready to play football."

Eli McCormick, who saw limited varsity action last season, figures to be the starter at quarterback.

"It's the first time he's going in knowing he's the starter," Robertson said. "Can you put kids around Eli to succeed, to help pick him up. Put a good running back with him, things like that. We're excited for that opportunity."

Big play threat Xavier Bell is back to start for a third year. Connor Schmidt and Noah Spears both saw plenty of action last season. Tight end Bo Minehart missed last season with a knee injury, but is now back to contribute.

"A lot of those guys are coming off a lot of experience," Robertson said. "Can you build around them and can you put people around them that are going to be able to fill the gaps? Get more people who if they do their job at a high level, those guys who have had a ton of reps can carry them.

"We have to fill gaps with new kids who have had no varsity reps before, but if you put them in an area where their job is manageable, then the guys who do have varsity reps can work around them and love them up and make sure things are going in the right direction."

Robertson hopes the right direction will lead to



MARK MURDOCK

DeKalb's Xavier Bell, right, heads upfield escorted by Tayden Getts in last season's game with New Haven. Bell will be a key player for new coach Ryan Robertson and the Barons this season.

increased confidence.

"How do you prepare the kids' mental toughness well enough that they have confidence going into the game?" he said. "A lot of that is preparation during the week. How do you watch film, are you coaching them up, how are

you communicating with them?"

Indeed, everyone focuses on the result of Friday night, but games can be won or lost on all the other days of the week.

"How do we make sure they're healthy enough, fresh enough and they're mentally willing enough to want to come to practice and want to get better?" Richardson said.

"Everybody wants to play on Friday. If we can get those kids to want to come in Monday through Thursday, and come in Saturday morning to watch film, Friday will take care of itself."

Robertson knows anybody in the NE8 still has to answer to East Noble, Leo and Columbia City. Norwell has been part of that group at times. Huntington North won a sectional championship last year.

"Until somebody steps up and starts tangling with them, you've got to expect they're going to be in that same spot. They've got

great programs," Robertson said. "They've got 80, 90, 100 kids in their programs. They've got good coaches, they've got good programs, they're going to always be up there.

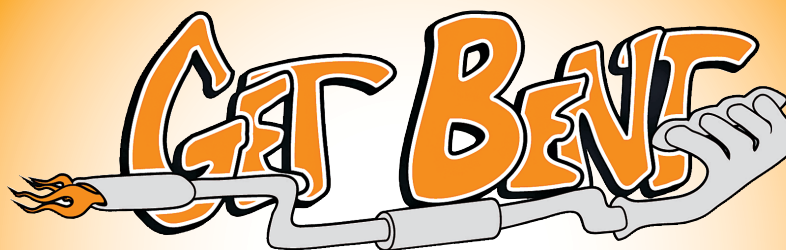
"Can you do enough to put yourself in that conversation? That's the goal. The kids have to believe they can put themselves in that conversation. They're going to have to make that decision."

Robertson is looking for the belief in his team.

"Essentially it will come down to loving up the kids and building confidence in them so they can go out on a Friday night and they're not hesitant," he said. "We want them to go attack and whatever they can do they do at the highest level that they can.

"There's great athletes at DeKalb. They're good kids, they're smart kids, they're good football players. They've got to figure a way to tie it all together. Hopefully I can help do that. We'll find out."

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EAST NOBLE KNIGHTS



Among the top returning players for East Noble this season included, from left, Hunter Smithson, Andrew Oakes, Ayden Ley, Hunter Shire and Rylee Biddle.

MARK MURDOCK



**EAST NOBLE
HIGH SCHOOL**
901 S. Garden St., Kendallville
Colors: Royal Blue and Gold
Class: 4A

SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	A	Fort Wayne Wayne	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	H	Fort Wayne Snider	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	H	Huntington North	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	A	DeKalb	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	H	Leo	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	A	Norwell	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	A	Columbia City	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	H	New Haven	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	H	Bellmont	7 p.m.

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EN looks to reload after 4A final appearance

BY MARK MURDOCK

mmurdock@kpcmedia.com

KENDALLVILLE — A new group of East Noble Knights will take aim at the high bar the school's football program has set.

Last year's team ended the season at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis and finished 13-2 after a loss to New Palestine in the Class 4A championship game.

Nine starters on defense and six on offense are gone from that team, however. East Noble will try for more success with a very different lineup.

"We've got to reload," second-year coach Alex Stewart said. "We've got a good group of core guys coming back. We've got some young guys that are hungry that saw our senior class last year work really hard. Those guys have bought in and worked really hard in the offseason."

"It's a matter of trying to re-establish ourselves."

East Noble has a strong program from top to bottom. Players coming up from the lower levels are ready for their chance to play under the bright lights.

"We've got some good, young classes," Stewart said. "We've got about 30 freshmen coming in. We're really excited."

"We also lost a very large

senior class. We've got a lot to replace but we've got a lot of good guys back as well."

With strong numbers, East Noble is hoping to put together a roster with enough depth.

"Some of our new guys stepping into starting roles for the first time, they've got to grow up pretty quickly," Stewart said. "It's a lot different playing a JV game versus playing a varsity game."

"We also need to build depth. That's one thing we worked on this summer, trying to get a lot of guys reps and build depth at all positions. We're trying to make sure we've got guys who can play at multiple positions and make sure we've got a key backup at each spot."

Stewart has been satisfied with preparation.

"We had a good offseason," he said. "Our kids have shown up, worked hard and been where they're supposed to be. The progress we've made this summer is good."

"When you're building a team, some years you jell a little quicker than others. Last year offensively we started a little bit slow and as the season went on got better and better. We hit midseason and really hit our stride."

Stewart liked what he saw when the Knights took part in a 7-on-7 tournament over the summer.



DAVID VANTRESS

East Noble quarterback Rylee Biddle scans the field for a receiver during the first quarter of the Knights' 42-6 season-opening win over Bremen in the 2024 season opener. Biddle will lead the Knights in his senior season in 2025.

"We good a lot of good reps," he said. "You could see the kids getting more comfortable as the day went on and communicating better as the day went on. We made a lot of progress that day."

"From where we started in June to where we are today, we've made a lot of progress,

but we've still got a long way to go to be where we need to be."

More of the same physical East Noble defense is expected.

"It's been instilled in our kids since youth league that we're going to play hard-nosed, tough defense,"

Stewart said. "Our defensive coaches are doing a good job of getting our kids to fly around and get to the football, and be physical up front."

"We've had a good summer and I'm excited to see what that group can do."

East Noble is again shooting to be among the top contenders in the Northeast 8 Conference after running the table a year ago.

"The NE8's really tough," Stewart said. "Leo's always got a good team, always got good athletes. Norwell played a lot of young guys last year. They're very physical and they're a well-coached program. I look for them to be on the upswing."

"Our defensive coordinator (Ryan Robertson) went over to DeKalb and he'll get things going. Huntington North was our regional opponent last year. Columbia City had a great year last year. The NE8 is stacked with a lot of good teams and we've got to bring it every single week."

Being their best when it counts is the key for the Knights.

"Our goal is not to be the best team in June or July, it's to be the best team in November," Stewart said.

"We need to keep that on our mind and make progress and try to get better every single week."

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EASTSIDE BLAZERS



The Eastside Blazers were represented at northeast Indiana football media day by, from the left, Kaison Hewitt, Jake Warstler, Sam Pittman and head coach Alyx Brandewie.



EASTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL
603 E. Green St., Butler
Colors: Kelly Green and White
Class: 2A

SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	A	Woodlan	7 p.m.	Sept. 26	A	Prairie Heights	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	H	Adams Central	7 p.m.	Oct. 3	A	Fremont	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	H	West Noble	7 p.m.	Oct. 10	H	Central Noble	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	A	Churubusco	7 p.m.	Oct. 17	H	Angola	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	H	Garrett	7 p.m.				

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JEFF JONES

Eastside's Nolan Baker tries to make a catch during a 2024 sectional game with Whitko.



JEFF JONES

Eastside's Ty Sebert wraps up Fremont quarterback Jaret Laughlin during a 2024 game. Devin Czaja (62) and Jake Warstler, right, are ready to help.

Blazers confident 2024 experience will help

BY JEFF JONES

jjones@kpcmedia.com

FORT WAYNE — If there was a story to come out of the 2024 Eastside football season, it was adversity.

Injuries knocked out several starters at different points in the season, resulting in many new faces being put into important roles.

While the Blazers took their lumps at times, they also managed to finish the season with a 6-6 record. Not bad, especially considering all of the injuries.

That year is in the rearview mirror, however, and head coach Alyx Brandewie is confident his players will only benefit from that experience.

"We're excited. We had

a really good summer, a summer where I felt like we had a lot of guys step up and develop some skills that are going to be big-time pieces for us this season," Brandewie said at the northeast Indiana football media day in July.

"We dealt with some injuries and stuff off and on throughout the course of the year that makes it tough," he said. "So far, we've been pretty healthy through the summer."

"A lot of those young guys who had to step up and had to play because of those injuries a year ago are a year older and we're seeing the continuation of their development."

The 2024 Blazers used three different players at quarterback and more than

that at running back because all of the injuries.

Players such as Noah Dove, Gavin Franklin and Ty Sebert were among those who saw significant varsity action as freshmen and have those valuable varsity game reps under their belts.

"You add in the fact that this group of seniors, I've had them since they were sophomores," Brandewie said. "We have a good relationship. We get along and we know and trust each other."

"I really like this group a lot; they show up and work every single day. You know what you're getting from them. It's not a mystery," the Blazer coach said.

As juniors, Jake Warstler and Kaison Hewitt were

the top tacklers in the 2024 season. Warstler made 36 solo tackles and assisted on 40 others. Hewitt had 19 solo tackles and assisted on 32 more.

As a freshman, Sebert was third in tackles with 48.

On the offensive side of the ball, Dove ran for 769 yards and nine touchdowns. Returning to call the signals is junior Job Richman. Richman finished with 603 yards and six scores. He completed 16 of 38 passes for 224 yards.

Senior Sam Pittman is the top returning receiver, having caught seven passes for 103 yards and three scores. Another senior, Nolan Baker, caught six passes and Warstler made five catches.

Senior Ethan Barnes converted 28 of 31 extra-point kicks and made a pair of field goals to finish third in total points a year ago.

Brandewie said Richman has grown in stature, maturity and mental preparation. Pittman and Warstler, at tight end, will give him good, reliable targets to throw to and can make things happen after the catch.

Sophomore Bo Martin and senior Johnny Buss will be counted upon to contribute, joining Dove and Colten Crothers in the defensive backfield.

"I'm fired up. This is a group that's fun to coach," Brandewie said. "We're pretty excited for this year."

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LEO @ EAST NOBLE SEPT. 19	WEST NOBLE @ GARRETT SEPT. 26

OCTOBER

LAKELAND @ WEST NOBLE OCT. 3	FREMONT @ PRAIRIE HEIGHTS OCT. 10
ANGOLA @ EASTSIDE OCT. 17	CHURUBUSCO @ FAIRFIELD OCT. 17

FREMONT EAGLES



Fremont head football coach Trevor Thomas, left, works with a receiver during practice on Aug. 5. The Eagles open their season at home on Friday at Max Mitchell Sports Complex against Blackhawk Christian.

Eagles not frazzled by losses up front

BY KEN FILLMORE

kfillmore@kpcmedia.com

FREMONT — Fremont is not shaken by major graduation losses on its offensive and defensive lines.

“I can’t see why we can’t compete,” fifth-year Eagles coach Trevor Thomas said. “There’s a lot of excitement. Confidence is growing.”

Fremont (4-7 last season, including 1-3 in the Northeast Corner Conference Small School Division) graduated a few players along the offensive and defensive fronts who had three or four years of varsity experience, including a couple of guys who committed to playing college football in Nevin Bloom at Trine and Jonah Pentecost at Taylor.

The Eagles also graduated arguably their best player last season in receiver-defensive back Cayden Hufnagle.

Fremont has most of its experienced players in the skilled positions as it is working to put things together in the trenches.

Juniors Talon Rowe and Jacob Foster saw some significant playing time on the offensive line last season in place of some injured guys. That experience will be helpful in 2025.

Junior Brant Bressler will take his physicality from fullback to the offensive line. Junior Caiden Grimm and sophomore Jose Sanchez will also see action up front on both sides of the ball. Grimm battled injuries last

SEE **FREMONT**, Page **A19**



FREMONT HIGH SCHOOL

701 W. Toledo St., Fremont

Colors: Red, Black and White

Class: 1A

SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	H	Fort Wayne Blackhawk	7 p.m.	Sept. 26	A	Churubusco	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	Blackford	7 p.m.	Oct. 3	H	Eastside	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	A	Angola	7 p.m.	Oct. 10	A	Prairie Heights	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	H	Osceola Grace	7 p.m.	Oct. 17	A	Toledo Christian (Ohio)	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	H	Central Noble	7 p.m.				

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FREMONT

FROM PAGE A18

season while Sanchez played more on special teams.

Senior Trace Handshoe and junior Jaret Laughlin will again compete for the starting quarterback job. The loser of that battle will join the receiving corps.

"Jaret finished strong last season. But Trace is also working his butt off," Thomas said. "They are studying the offense better, and we've had a new install. They are seeing problems quicker and the game is slowing down for them."

Senior Carmyne Moreno and sophomore Kolton Armstrong is a seasoned 1-2 punch at running back for Fremont. Armstrong gave the Eagles a lift as a freshman in place of an injured Moreno last last season. Armstrong ran for 81 yards and three touchdowns in the Eagles' 35-21 first-round Class 1A sectional win at Northfield. That was the first time Fremont won a sectional football game since 2018.

Moreno ran for 407 yards and five touchdowns in the Eagles' 47-29 victory at Indianapolis Park Tudor



KEN FILLMORE

Fremont linemen shoot out during a drill in practice led by assistant coach Brandan Cross on Aug. 5.

on Sept. 13 during Week 4. That was nine yards short of Fremont's single-game rushing record, which was 416 by Trevor Wirick on 41 carries with six touchdowns against Central Noble on Sept. 16, 2011.

Junior Taylor Rodriguez and Alex King return at receiver. Senior Ashton Elder will also contribute on the outside.

"We want to scheme to the talent we have," Thomas said. "Taylor's confidence has risen through the roof after the baseball season he had in the spring."

Senior linebacker Hayden McNeeley is back after leading the Eagles in tackles in 2024.

Thomas started seeing some positive impact for the football team

in the spring with assistant coach Brandan Cross leading the Eagle track & field teams.

“We have experience in different spots, and we have a lot of new guys,” Thomas said. “We put in a lot of time. We showed some bright spots in the summer... We just want to do the best job we can.”

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Offensive linemen Owen Baldwin, left, and Aiden Hunt, right, clear the way for a Garrett running back during last season's 42-14 win over Angola. Hunt will a leading player for the Railroaders on both sides of the ball as a senior this season.

JEFF JONES

Cupboard not bare for new Garrett coach Albertin

BY MARK MURDOCK
mmurdock@kpcmedia.com

GARRETT — An encore would be a pretty tall order at Garrett.

Last year's Railroaders were the winningest football team in the school's long and storied sports history. They won the Northeast Corner Conference Big School Division along with Class 3A sectional and regional championships.

Even with a talented senior group gone, however, Garrett is still reaching high under new head coach Chris Albertin, who was the defensive

coordinator last season.

"Expectations are pretty high," Albertin said. "We expect to be able to compete in our conference again."

"We lost a lot of production but we have a lot of our offensive and defensive lines back which really helps. That will help mitigate some of the loss. We should be pretty physical on both sides of the ball. That's definitely going to be our strength."

Albertin has an advantage not coming in cold as the head coach and having familiarity with the

SEE GARRETT, Page A21



GARRETT HIGH SCHOOL
801 E. Houston St., Garrett
Colors: Maroon and Navy Blue
Class: 3A

SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	A	Adams Central	7 p.m.	Sept. 26	H	West Noble	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	H	DeKalb	7 p.m.	Oct. 3	H	Fairfield	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	H	Churubusco	7 p.m.	Oct. 10	A	Angola	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	A	Lakeland	7 p.m.	Oct. 17	A	Central Noble	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	A	Eastside	7 p.m.				

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GARRETT

FROM PAGE A20

team after last season. He believes the same will hold true for the players.

"The cohesiveness, they know each other, they've grown up together," Albertin said. "Now they've had their chance to play in some big games. I don't think there's going to be a moment that's too big for

them at any point in time."

Garrett will be replacing players at many of the skill positions offensively. Albertin feels summer activities, including a 7-on-7 tournament, have helped the Railroaders move in the right direction.

"We're just trying to find the right balance," he said. "We've got some pretty fast kids. Some of them haven't played a lot."

"We're trying to go

through and figure out who's the best for those positions."

Garrett expects to field another defensive unit that plays hard and physical.

"Last year we were pretty physical on defense," Albertin said. "I don't see that changing. Our defense likes to fly around and get to the ball. That's something we've done all summer and that's a nice trait to have."

"That comes from the personality of the kids around the building wanting to do that."

Blending the team's experience with the

newcomers who earn big roles will be a key.

"Putting together the pieces we need to replace from last year and coming together as a team (will be keys). The older guys on the offensive and defensive lines continue to build that trust with the new guys coming in."

"You've got to have everybody working together. When people are working together as a team things are going to go better."

Albertin expects a wide open race in the Big School Division.

"Any year can be a

tossup. It will probably be the same thing this year," Albertin said. "It's going to be pretty competitive and pretty fun. We had some fun games last year."

The Railroaders naturally will rely heavily on a group of 17 seniors.

"A lot of those guys have played a lot," Albertin said. "They've been around a lot of football. A lot of them have played since their sophomore year."

"It's their team now. Last year's senior class obviously did some great things, but it's (this year's seniors') turn to take over and continue what we started last year."



JEFF JONES

Garrett's Brayden Nusbaum picks up several yards during a first-quarter play in the Railroaders' 37-7 victory over Eastside last season. Nusbaum will be a key player for the Railroaders on offense and defense this season as a senior.



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LAKELAND LAKERS



KEN FILLMORE

Lakeland quarterback Brayden Holbrook begins to run against Prairie Heights in the first half of last season’s game at Miller Field in LaGrange. Holbrook, the Lakers’ all-time leading passer, will help lead Lakeland this season in Tom Wogomon’s first season as coach.

Wogomon returns to sidelines at Lakeland

BY KEN FILLMORE

kfillmore@kpcmedia.com

LAGRANGE — After a year off, Tom Wogomon will return to the sidelines near where he lives at Lakeland.

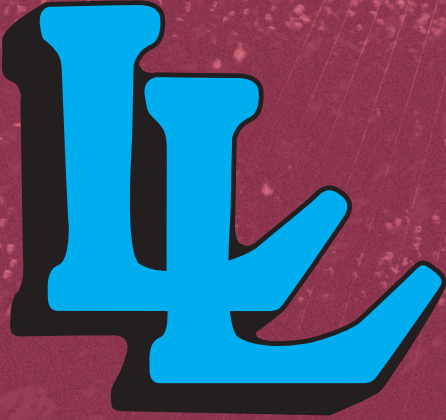
Wogomon, a former East Noble assistant coach, has been a head coach for 16 seasons at Northern Lakes Conference schools: two at Goshen in 2022 and 2023, eight at Northridge from 2013 to 2020, and six at Wawasee from 2007 to 2012. He built the Warriors into a winner in the early 2010s, then led the Raiders to a Class 4A regional championship in 2014.

Wogomon is excited about his latest opportunity with the Lakers (5-5 overall last year, including 1-3 in the Northeast Corner Conference Big School Division) and believes you can’t sleep on the Northeast Corner Conference.

“I’m more impressed with how Lakeland operates as a small school,” Wogomon said. “The superintendent (Traci Blaize) and athletic director (Ryan Yoder) do an outstanding job.”

Wogomon has a solid core of seniors to work with from a football standpoint,

SEE LAKELAND, Page A23



LAKELAND HIGH SCHOOL
805 E. C.R. 75N, LaGrange
Colors: Columbia Blue, Red and White
Class: 3A

SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	A	South Bend St. Joseph	7 p.m.	Sept. 19	A	Angola	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	H	Churubusco	7 p.m.	Sept. 26	H	Central Noble	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	A	Prairie Heights	7 p.m.	Oct. 3	A	West Noble	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	H	Garrett	7 p.m.	Oct. 10	H	Fairfield	7 p.m.
				Oct. 17	A	Jimtown	7 p.m.

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LAKELAND

FROM PAGE A22

including quarterback Brayden Holbrook, offensive lineman-mike linebacker Thatcher Cowley, defensive end-tight end Keegan Merrifield and skilled guys Levi Cook, Keyan Arroyo and Dylan Bateman. A lot has been expected from this group going back to when they were underclassmen.

“This is a group that likes being together and cares for one another,” Wogomon said. “They’ve had success in other sports and success breeds success. They know what it takes to be successful.”

Bateman will move from center to running back on offense. Holbrook is already Lakeland’s all-time leading passer.

“I’m really impressed with

how he carries himself,” Wogomon said of Holbrook. “He understands the position and he has high expectations for himself.

“Cook is extremely gifted. We need to put him in space.”

The Lakers have been a distant third in the NECC Big School Division and have not won a sectional game since 2017. Lakeland is going to have to be better defensively and better in the trenches to compete with Garrett and West Noble at the top of the division. Wogomon is fully aware of it.

“Ninety-five percent of the time, the most physical team and the team that turns the ball over the least will win,” Wogomon said. “From day one, we’ve strived to become a more physical football team. That’s part of the process of success.”



KEN FILLMORE
Lakeland junior Levi Cook (8) looks to turn it upfield against Prairie Heights last season in LaGrange with Laker teammate Carson Mickem as a lead blocker. Cook will once again be a skilled two-way player for the Lakers in his senior season.



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PRAIRIE HEIGHTS PANTHERS

Young Panthers eager to grow, compete

BY DEAN JACKSON

BRUSHY PRAIRIE — Sixteen seniors gone. One returning letterman. A quarterback competition led by sophomore Joel Graber. The Prairie Heights Panthers aren't just rebuilding — they're reimagining.

Coach Pat McCrea knows what he's facing.

"We're going to be young, but we're going to compete," he said.

Heavy graduation losses significantly impacted the roster. McCrea didn't sugarcoat it.

"We graduated heavily," he said. "We had 16 seniors last year. We don't have a big senior class this year. I think I have five seniors; only one of them is the returning letterman."

Last year's depth allowed the Panthers (5-6 last season, including 2-2 in the Northeast Corner Conference Small School Division) to plug in upperclassmen when injuries hit. This year, the margin is thinner. Two offensive line starters from

2024 are out with knee injuries, and the quarterback room is undergoing a reset.

Mac Armstrong, who started at quarterback for the Panthers for the past three years, transferred to a prep school in Pennsylvania for his senior year.

The Panthers will turn to Graber (5-foot-9, 140 pounds) to open the season at quarterback. Graber appeared in six games last season, completing 4-of-9 passes for 65 yards and one touchdown.

"We're going to start with Joel," McCrea said. "He's a tremendous athlete. He was an (KPC Media) All-Area baseball player as a freshman."

Junior Weston Rasler (5-11, 145) is recovering from an injury and will compete for the job once he is cleared. He played in nine games, rushing 10 times for 118 yards and catching one pass for 15 yards. He completed 1-of-3 passes for 10 yards and had one interception.

As of press time, Rasler is either back at practice or will return to practice shortly, according to McCrea earlier this month just after official practices started.

"It's still going to be an open competition once Weston gets back in the mix," McCrea said.

Adapting the offense to younger personnel, McCrea emphasized simplicity and execution.

"Hopefully, we can do a good job of running the ball, take some pressure off our quarterback, get first downs, and sustain drives," he said

Graber's athleticism and baseball background give McCrea confidence in zone-read concepts and quarterback-designed runs.

"I think those two (Graber and Rasler) are both going to be a little more willing," McCrea said. "A lot of zone read stuff; I think those guys are going to do well at that."

The Panthers will rely heavily on underclassmen. At wide receiver, look for

junior Connor Sizemore (6-4, 185). In the backfield, sophomore David Mason will be the primary running back. The offensive line will feature sophomores Traydon Penrod and Hunter Reade (5-10, 280), with junior Brody Kurtz (6-0, 160) at tight end. Only one senior — Damion Harter — is listed as a projected starter, likely at offensive guard on the offensive line.

Defensively, junior Austin Abbott (5-11, 230) will anchor the defensive line. Juniors Mason Brandeberry (5-10, 175) and Huckleberry Brandeberry (Jr., 5-10, 175 lbs) will lead the linebacker corps.

The defensive backfield will include Graber. Last season, he recorded 51 tackles (including 29 solos), two sacks, and one interception. He also returned one kickoff for 15 yards. Rasler will also be in the secondary once he returns from injury.

Players who could surprise this season are apparent to McCrea.

"I think, defensively, it could be a big year for Brody Kurtz and Weston Rasler," the coach said. "And offensively, it could be a big year for Connor Sizemore."

Kurtz, known for his athleticism at tight end, is also expected to make a significant impact on defense this season. Sizemore caught 18 passes for 205 yards and two touchdowns last season. With Jordan Klumpp graduated, Sizemore will be the go-to target. Klumpp committed to playing football at nearby Trine University.

"Connor is going to do a good job of filling the hole," McCrea said.

Freshmen are adjusting to varsity speed. McCrea sees the opportunity along with the challenge.

"We're probably going to have a lot of guys playing both ways this year," he said. "I have a lot of freshmen, a lot of sophomores, and a lot of juniors."

SEE PRAIRIE HEIGHTS, Page A25



**PRAIRIE HEIGHTS
HIGH SCHOOL**

305 S. C.R. 1150E, LaGrange

Colors: Red, White and Black

Class: 2A

SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	H	Whitko	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	Bronson (MI)	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	H	Lakeland	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	A	Central Noble	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	H	Churubusco	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	H	Eastside	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	A	Woodlan	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	H	Fremont	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	A	West Noble	7 p.m.

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KEN FILLMORE

Prairie Heights linebacker **Brody Kurtz (80)** puts a hit on **Central Noble** running back **Michael Slone** last season in a regular season game in **Brushy Prairie**. **Panther** sophomore **Weston Rasler (7)** also pursues. **Kurtz and Rasler** will be leading players for **Prairie Heights** this season.

PRAIRIE HEIGHTS

FROM PAGE A24

The senior class has historically had low participation in football and other sports, which has sped up the youth movement.

"Our wrestling team's not going to have hardly any seniors this year either, which is kind of weird for them, too," McCrea added.

The program's trajectory shows improvement. McCrea reflected on the numbers.

The team's reliance on underclassmen is a direct result of low participation in previous senior classes, accelerating the need for younger players to step into key roles.

"We started with 50 last year at the beginning of the season and ended with about 47 kids," McCrea said.

This year, he expects around 42 players — still above historical norms.

"We only had three juniors last year who played. Now that class is seniors," McCrea said. "We have five

seniors, and only one of them was on the roster last year.

Despite the turnover, McCrea sees growth.

"Numbers have improved," he said. "Fifty kids last year was mind-blowing for us."

For the team to meet expectations, certain things must happen. McCrea didn't talk about wins, but about health and effort.

Number one is staying healthy. Try each week to get better, individually and as a team.

That's the Prairie Heights way: no shortcuts, no excuses, just steady work.

"Our kids are hard workers. They're just blue-collar kids," McCrea said.

Leadership emerges in a young locker room. McCrea pointed to consistency and care.

"I think the biggest thing is consistency, trying to build relationships with the kids. They know that the rest of the coaching staff and I believe in Prairie Heights and that they will not leave

when the going gets tough."

That consistency has helped the program navigate transitions effectively. McCrea took over last-minute in his first year and saw players bail. Now he sees buy-in.

McCrea will begin his 10th season as head football coach at his alma mater Friday when the Panthers host Whitko.

"We've built trust with them over the years through being consistent and just showing them we care about them," he said.



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WEST NOBLE CHARGERS



DAVID VANTRESS

Team leaders for West Noble High School football in 2025 include, front row from left: Trey Shisler, Xavier Yates and Gavin Keene. Back from from left: McKale Bottles, Lucas Conway and Trevor Steele.

West Noble reloads for another NECC title run

BY DAVID VANTRESS
dvantress@kpcmedia.com

LIGONIER — The West Noble Chargers have been one of the most successful prep football programs in northeast Indiana in recent years. And despite losing several key players from a team that has cracked the 10-win plateau the past two years, longtime head coach Monte Mawhorter has much to be bullish about as the 2025 season looms large on the horizon.

The Chargers went 10-2 a year ago and battled Northeast Corner Conference rival Garrett in the Class 3A Sectional 26 final, dropping a 21-20 decision

to the Railroaders.

Mawhorter enters his 27th year as a head coach in 2025 — all at West Noble. He's 127-138 overall.

The Chargers have some pretty big holes to fill in their lineup in 2025 — the biggest of those linemen Brooks Ruisard and Noah Eash, who are both slated to play at Trine University this fall.

Ruissard and Eash were instrumental in opening big holes up front for another key loss to graduation, running back Seth Pruitt, who gashed area defenses for 1,804 yards on 231 carries

SEE WEST NOBLE, Page A27



**WEST NOBLE
HIGH SCHOOL**
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Class: 3A

SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	A	Central Noble	7 p.m.	Sept. 26	A	Garrett	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	H	Wawasee	7 p.m.	Oct. 3	H	Lakeland	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	A	Eastside	7 p.m.	Oct. 10	A	Churubusco	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	H	Angola	7 p.m.	Oct. 17	H	Prairie Heights	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	A	Fairfield	7 p.m.				

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WEST NOBLE

FROM PAGE A26

with 33 touchdowns.

Eash put an exclamation point on a special high school career with an appearance in the Indiana Football Coaches Association North-South Shrine Bowl game in early July.

But as the Chargers' retool for 2025, they have a good mix of youth and experience.

Trey Shisler returns to run the Charger offense for his senior campaign. Shisler rushed for 124 yards and a pair of touchdowns in 2024 and completed 61-of-95 passes for 1,005 yards with 10 TDs against just two interceptions.

Shisler and his boys are ready for more in 2025 — especially a rematch with the Railroaders. The two teams are the favorites in the NECC Big School Division and are slated to meet on Sept. 26 in Garrett.

At Northeast Indiana High School Football Media Day July 15 in Fort Wayne, Shisler

said expectations remain sky-high for the Chargers in 2025. Great turnout and effort in offseason workouts has laid a strong foundation for another special season, Shisler added.

"We only lost a couple of people, so I think we're still going to be really good," Shisler said.

Shisler will have most of his weapons back from 2024. Xavier Yates was the third-leading receiver for West Noble last season behind McKale Bottles and the graduated Jaylun Shaffer. Yates had 20 catches for 251 yards with two TDs.

Bottles hauled in 17 balls for 279 yards and three scores.

The Charger backfield will be entrusted to a pair of sophomores this season. Xymire Barnes-Bridges goes about 5-foot-10 and 170 pounds and is more of a quick, slashing-type back. He saw a little action as a freshman in 2024. Brogan Parks, meanwhile, will be the hard runner who could remind West Noble fans of

Pruitt. Parks is about 6-0 and around 200 pounds.

Mawhorter said after Week 1 of practice, he's pleased.

"The kids have really stepped up," Mawhorter said. "They enjoy each other, and they work hard."

With seven starters back on each side of the ball, experience will be a hallmark West Noble football in 2025.

"The kids we lost were pretty big, key people," Mawhorter said. "You don't just replace those kids overnight, but new kids step in and step up."

Even at a larger Class 3A school like West Noble, there are often opportunities for kids to step in and get that valuable varsity playing experience as freshmen, and Mawhorter said the current senior group has several guys who have done just that.

West Noble opens the 2025 season this Friday night, headed just down the road to Albion to take on Central Noble and get the NECC slate kicked off right out of the gate.



DAVID VANTRESS

West Noble's Xavier Yates looks for running room after taking a handoff from quarterback Trey Shisler during a game against Churubusco last season in Ligonier. Both Yates and Shisler return for their senior seasons in 2025 to help the Chargers defend their NECC Big School Division title.

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OTHER AREA SCHEDULES



BELLMONT BRAVES
1000 E N Adams Dr, Decatur
Colors: Blue and Red
Class: 3A

Aug. 22	H	Heritage	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	South Adams	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	H	Columbia City	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	A	Norwell	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	H	Huntington North	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	A	Leo	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	H	New Haven	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	H	DeKalb	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	A	East Noble	7 p.m.



CARROLL CHARGERS
3701 Carroll Rd, Fort Wayne
Colors: Blue and Gray
Class: 6A

Aug. 22	A	Hamilton Southeastern	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	H	Center Grove	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 5	A	Fort Wayne Concordia	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	H	Fort Wayne Dwenger	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	A	Fort Wayne Snider	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	H	Fort Wayne South	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	H	Homestead	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	A	Fort Wayne Northrop	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	H	Fort Wayne Luers	7 p.m.



COLUMBIA CITY EAGLES
1600 IN-9, Columbia City
Color: Maroon and Gold
Class: 4A

Aug. 22	A	NorthWood	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	H	Plymouth	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	A	Bellmont	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	A	Huntington North	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	H	DeKalb	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	A	New Haven	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	H	East Noble	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	A	Leo	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	H	Norwell	7 p.m.



FAIRFIELD FALCONS
67530 US-33, Goshen
Colors: Navy Blue and Gold
Class: 3A

Aug. 20	H	Goshen	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	John Glenn	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	A	Jimtown	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	A	Culver Academy	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	H	West Noble	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	H	Angola	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	A	Garrett	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	A	Lakeland	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	H	Churubusco	7 p.m.

FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

OTHER AREA SCHEDULES



HUNTINGTON NORTH VIKINGS

450 Macgahan St, Huntington
Colors: Red, White & Black
Class: 4A

Aug. 22	H	Eastbrook	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	Fort Wayne Northrop	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	A	East Noble	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	H	Columbia City	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	A	Bellmont	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	H	DeKalb	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	H	Leo	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	A	Norwell	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	A	New Haven	7 p.m.



LEO LIONS

14600 Amstutz Rd, Leo
Colors: Purple
Class: 4A

Aug. 22	H	Fort Wayne Luers	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	H	Angola	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	A	Norwell	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	H	New Haven	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	A	East Noble	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	H	Bellmont	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	A	Huntington North	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	H	Columbia City	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	A	DeKalb	7 p.m.



NEW HAVEN BULLDOGS

1300 Green Rd, New Haven
Colors: Purple and Gold
Class: 4A

Aug. 22	H	Fort Wayne Northrop	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	Fort Wayne North	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	H	DeKalb	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	A	Leo	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	H	Norwell	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	H	Columbia City	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	A	Bellmont	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	A	East Noble	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	H	Huntington North	7 p.m.



NORWELL KNIGHTS

1100 US-224, Ossian
Colors: Old Gold and Navy
Class: 3A

Aug. 22	H	Mississinewa	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	Oak Hill	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	H	Leo	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	H	Bellmont	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	A	New Haven	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	H	East Noble	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	A	DeKalb	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	H	Huntington North	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	A	Columbia City	7 p.m.



WHITKO WILDCATS

450 Macgahan St, Huntington
Colors: Red, White & Blue
Class: 4A

Aug. 22	A	Prairie Heights	7 p.m.
Aug. 29	A	Peru	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	H	Rochester	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	A	Maconaquah	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	H	Northwestern	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	A	Lewis Cass	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	H	Manchester	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	A	Southwood	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	H	Wabash	7 p.m.



BUSCO

FROM PAGE A9

the to-do list for Churubusco, Lawrence added.

Sievers said the key to success for the Eagles this season will be maintaining the momentum built up in the offseason, especially the hard work the guys put in the weight room and 7-on-7 drills in the summer.

"Leadership will be huge for us," Sievers said. "We have to set the tone for the younger guys."

"We're there for them, showing them what to do," Sievers said.

Sievers said he likes the Eagle offense — which he is obviously a huge part of — as the season approaches. "It's all about working together," he said.

The Eagles open the 2025 season Friday night at home against Bremen. The Lions were 7-5 a year ago, making it to the Class 2A Sectional 33 final before falling to Andean 35-0.

VANTRESS

FROM PAGE A3

Michiana coach Tom Wogomon, a former East Noble assistant, has taken over the Laker program. We'll see what Wogomon's steady leadership and long history in northern Indiana prep football can bring to the table. Wogomon has stops on his resume at Wawasee, Northridge and Goshen.

In Garrett, Chris Albertin takes over for Chris DePew, who is still the Railroaders' athletic director and has also taken on the reins of the new girls flag football team — an emerging sport here in Indiana that has the backing of the Indianapolis Colts in both spirit and the purse.

West Noble and Garrett should battle it out in the NECC Big School Division again, while Eastside and Churubusco should stand head and shoulders atop the Small School Division.

Carroll, meanwhile, will look to defend its 2024 Summit Athletic Conference title while breaking in

a new quarterback to replace the graduated Jimmy Sullivan, who is now at the University of Iowa.

Columbia City will also be in a state of change after losing several key players to graduation, including standout receiver Stratton Fuller, who is now at Army. The Eagles are typically in the top tier of the NE8 and should be right there again in 2025.

Whatever the 2025 season brings, the KPC Media sports staff will be out there chasing the Friday Night Lights each week to bring you the best in-depth local coverage in the area.

See you at the game!

Contact KPC Media sports reporter David Vantress at dvantress@kpcmedia.com. Follow him on X (formerly Twitter) @journodave1984.



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