

2021 Spring Sports Preview



Kinsey Shannon



***Jay County seniors
Abby Benter and
Kinsey Shannon aim
to defend individual sectional ti-
tles while Patriot girls hope for
another championship***



Abby Benter

Sprinters key for girls to repeat as champs

It had been a long time since the Patriot girls last won a sectional championship.

They had to watch as the Yorktown Tigers ran off four straight titles.

But the Jay County High School girls track team returned to glory in 2019.

Unfortunately, they had to wait to defend that title as the 2020 season was canceled because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

To make earn back-to-back championships, the JCHS girls will have to rely heavily on their sprinters.

“I believe that we have all the pieces from 800 (meters) down,” said Joe Imel, who takes over the girls program from long-time coach Brian McEvoy.

Imel is the sole track coach this year, and he’s got former standouts Amber (Huelskamp) Houck, a 2014 Patriot graduate, Malarie (Houck) Krieg, 2015 grad, and Brian Miles, a 2004 graduate, as assistants.

Senior Kinsey Shannon, a sectional champion in the 100- and 400-meter dash races as a sophomore, is expected to lead the Patriots’ three-headed monster sprinters. Along with Shea Bailey, who helped the 4x100 relay win a title in 2019, and sophomore Natalie Wehrly, Imel said any of them could be the fastest on any given day.

“I would expect their finishing times to be less than two-tenths apart from each other,” he said. “And I think anybody would be happy to have them on their track team.”

Jay County also returns Abby Benter, the defending sectional champion in the 100 hurdles.

“She’s gotten a lot faster,” Imel said. “That



Pictured is the 2021 Jay County High School girls track team. Front row from left are Agnesa Guiffreida, Natalie Wehrly, Stefanie Dietrich, Mackinsey Murphy, Lindy Wood and Mona Dunkelmann. Second row are Sophia Fugiett, Willow Hardy, Kinsey Shannon, Kylie Klopfenstein, Kyle Carreno, Chelsea Frontz, Shea Bailey and Bralee VanSkyock. Third row are manager Mackenzie Weesner, Cash Hollowell, Abby Benter, Natalie Miles, Olivia Kunkler, Gabi Bilbrey, Molly Muhlenkamp, Elisa Parazza and manager Leah Wenning. Back row are assistant coach Malarie Krieg, coach Joe Imel, assistant coach Brian Miles and assistant coach Amber Houck.

only gives me a lot of good hope for the hurdling events.”

Imel also said he hopes to have Benter run a leg of the 4x400 relay, which won sectional in 2019 but only returns Shannon from that quartet.

Jay County also gets back half of its sectional champion 4x800 relay in Sophia Fugiett and Lindy Wood, who are also distance runners. Imel said the 1,600 and 3,200 events will have the least amount of depth mainly because the cross country team lacked depth as well.

Alana Kunkler is joining track, and the standout volleyball player will be

Patriot girls track team returns sectional champions Kensey Shannon (100-meter dash and 400 dash) as well as Abby Benter (100 hurdles)

learning high jump as well as how to be a mid-distance runner. Natalie Miles, another volleyball player, will help with the middle distances (400 dash and 800 run) while also competing as part of the 4x400 relay.

“She’s very motivated,” Imel said.

Imel also noted the ability of foreign exchange student Elisa Parazza, who had been competing as a high jumper and hurdler in her native country of Italy, where there are no high school sports but instead club sports.

“If I’m not mistaken she

JCHS track		
Date	Opponent	Time
Thursday, April 8	Bellmont	5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 13	A. Central/S. Adams	5:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 15	Delta	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 20	Bluffton	5:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 24	Muncie Relays (boys)	10 a.m.
Tuesday, April 27	Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Friday, April 30	New Castle (boys)	5:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 1	Muncie Relays (girls)	10 a.m.
Friday, May 7	Hagerstown	5:15 p.m.
Tuesday, May 11	ACAC @ Bluffton	5:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 15	Huntington North	11 a.m.
Home meets in bold		

could probably compete right now for (Allen County Athletic Conference) championships in high jump,” he said.

Imel’s biggest chal-

lenge will be with the boys team, which returns only three athletes who have competed in high school meets.

See **Key** page 10



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Haines to lead Mann, Patriot boys golfers

Dave Haines put two boys through the Jay County High School golf program.

His oldest son, Graham, graduated in 2016. Two years later, Collin went finished up his fourth year on the team.

The eldest Haines is making his return to the golf course with the Patriot boys golf team, this time as its coach.

“Having Graham and Collin both play, I had an interest in doing it because of my interest in the sport and teaching with the (Indiana) state police,” Dave Haines said. “They had been looking (for a coach).”

Haines noted at a JCHS boys basketball game one day, current senior Griffin Mann nonchalantly said he should coach the team, which had a vacancy when Ryan Steinbrunner was named middle school principal at Fort Recovery.

So he went through the steps of applying for the position.

Haines inherits a team that returns four golfers from the 2019 squad, including the team’s only senior — Mann — and three who competed in the sectional meet.

Mann missed the 2019 sectional tournament with a finger injury that had to be surgically repaired.

“I have super high expectations of myself and this team,” Mann said. “I haven’t played in a high school match since halfway through my sophomore season so I am very eager to get started. I’m very excited about the young talent we have and the success these guys will have in years to come. There’s a lot of potential there.”

Mann is the hands down leader of the team, despite missing so much of his sophomore season. As a freshman in 2018, he shot 93 at sectional for



Pictured is the 2021 Jay County High School boys golf team. Front row from left are Patrick Hemmelgarn, Liam Garringer, Kyle Sanders, Griffin Mann, Brock DeHoff and Zander Hudson. Middle row are coach Dave Haines, Ricky Nava, Tyler Manor, Seth Wilson, Isaac Miller, Gage Sims and manager Raquel Wehrly. Back row are Matthew Hall, Caleb DeRome and Simon Pryor.

the team’s second-best score.

“It’s tough to know how much expectation to put on him,” Haines said. “He’s got the ability to go to regional for sure.”

Mann is aiming higher. “As an individual, the ultimate goal is to be a top finisher at sectional and to advance to regional, which I would prefer to do with the rest of my teammates,” he said. “It’d be pretty nice to play some good golf at (the Allen County Athletic Conference tournament) and be first team all-conference as well.”

Kyle Sanders, a junior, was the team’s top golfer in Mann’s absence in 2019, and led the Patriots

‘As an individual, the ultimate goal is to be a top finisher at sectional and to advance to regional, which I would prefer to do with the rest of my teammates.’

—Griffin Mann, Jay County senior

with a 96 during the sectional tournament.

He also earned second-team All-ACAC honors, leading the team with a 47 in the tournament that was reduced to 9 holes because of weather.

Haines also said soph-

omore Brock DeHoff will make a strong push to be the team’s No. 3 golfer, with returning sectional players Seth Wilson and Matthew Hall in the mix to round out the top five positions.

See **Lead** page 14

JCHS boys golf

Date	Opponent	Time
Saturday, April 10	Yorktown Invite	10 a.m.
Monday, April 12	Richmond	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 15	Wapahani	4:30 p.m.
Monday, April 19	Delta	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 20	Bluffton	4:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 24	South Adams Invite	9 a.m.
Monday, April 26	Winchester	4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 27	AC/SA @ Celina Lynx	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 29	Blackford	4:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 1	Winchester Invite	8 a.m.
Tuesday, May 4	Woodlan	5:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 6	Bellmont/Bluffton	4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, May 11	Southern Wells	4:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 13	South Adams	4:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 22	ACAC @ Celina Lynx	9 a.m.
Tuesday, May 25	Union City	4:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 27	Adams Central	4:30 p.m.
Friday, May 28	Wes-Del	9 a.m.
Tuesday, June 1	Daleville	4:30 p.m.
Home matches in bold		

Jay County baseball full of youth, inexperience

Lea Selvey expected his team to be young a year ago.

They were going to be without a group of seniors that had won back-to-back sectional championships, and were part of the regional title team in 2018.

But the 2020 Jay County High School baseball squad never got to play.

So this year's team returns just one player with varsity experience from 2019.

"We were going to be young last year," said Selvey, Jay County's coach. "So this year we're even younger because now my freshmen and sophomores don't have any varsity experience.

"I have one kid out here that has varsity experience."

Quinn Faulkner is the one. As a freshman he started at third base. He finished with a .324 average, which was seventh on the team, while also hitting two doubles, scoring 16 times and finishing with 13 RBIs.

Because he's the most experienced, Selvey moved Faulkner over to shortstop to help command the field defensively.

Blake Caldwell, a senior who signed to play for Wabash College despite not having any varsity experience, will play first base, with freshman Sam Myers in line to start at second base. Peyton James will handle most of the action at third, but he could also be relied upon to pitch as well.

Gavin Myers, Kess McBride and Austin Curts are in a three-man rotation behind the plate, and Selvey noted Myers could play third on days James pitches.

As for the three positions with the most



Pictured is the 2021 Jay County High School baseball team. Front row from left are manager Yarexi Ortiz, Parker Nichols, Josh Dowlen, Kess McBride, Quinn Faulkner and manager Maebry Ninde. Second row are Dusty Pearson, Lane Chapman, Jesse Basham, Logan McGinnis, Blake Caldwell, Austin Curts and Bennett Weitzel. Back row are coach Lea Selvey, athletic trainer Spencer Tonner, Sam Dunlavy, Sam Myers, Gavin Myers, Payton James, Blake Bogenschutz, Crosby Heniser and assistant coach Todd Farr.

'We were going to be young last year. So this year we're even younger because now my freshmen and sophomores don't have any varsity experience. I have one kid out here that has varsity experience.'

—Lea Selvey, Jay County baseball coach

ground to cover?

"This outfield could be as good as any outfield we've ever had," Selvey said. "They're fairly quick. I've got some really good arms out there."

Sophomore Josh Dowlen, who used to play catcher, was moved to center field because Selvey said "He dives for

everything. We had to get him to stop diving in practice."

Dusty Pearson and Bennett Weitzel, both of whom are sophomores, and junior Crosby Heniser will be utilized in the outfield as well.

"He just does everything right," Selvey said of Weitzel. "Nothing flashy;

just does everything right."

Sam Dunlavy, Sam Myers, Pearson and Heniser are in line to also be among the team's top starting pitchers. Heniser is the only lefty, and his fundamentals on the mound rival that of players much older.

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JCHS baseball

Date	Opponent	Time
Thursday, April 8	Elwood	5:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 10	Mississinewa	10 a.m.
Monday, April 12	Coldwater	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 13	Eastbrook	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 17	Centerville	10 a.m.
Tuesday, April 20	Norwell	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 22	Woodlan	6 p.m.
Friday, April 23	Shenandoah	5 p.m.
Monday, April 26	Monroe Central	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 29	Adams Central	5 p.m.
Friday, April 30	Yorktown	5 p.m.
Saturday, May 1	Muncie Central	11 a.m.
Tuesday, May 4	South Adams	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 6	Bluffton	5 p.m.
Saturday, May 8	Hagerstown	10 a.m.
Tuesday, May 11	Southern Wells	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 13	Heritage	6 p.m.
Saturday, May 15	FW South	10 a.m.
Monday, May 17	Delta	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 18	Blackford	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 20	Bellmont	5 p.m.
Friday, May 21	Richmond Invite	TBD
Saturday, May 22	Richmond Invite	TBD
Home games in bold		



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Green, Patriot softball to rely on seniors

Trisha Green is back on the Patriot softball diamond.

This time, the 2008 Jay County High School graduate will be coaching her alma mater, and she's got a handful of players to help during her first year as coach.

"I think we've got some strong players," said Green, whose team opened the season Monday at home against Blackford and played at Belmont on Tuesday. "The seniors, I think, are going to step up ... I think they're ready. They sat out a season so they're ready to go."

Like every other team across the state, the Patriots didn't get to play in 2020 because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, Jay County returns only four players who saw game action for the 2019 squad that went 9-13.

First is senior Aubrie Schwieterman, who led the 2019 team in batting average (.492), hits (32), runs (24), RBIs (16) doubles (six) and triples (four). She started at third base for Jay County, and is in line to hold that spot once again.

Next to her at shortstop will be classmate Rieley Brewster, who was just 1-for-4 in limited action as a sophomore.

"I'm expecting them to lead the team pretty much the whole season," Green said of the senior duo. "I could switch them. Aubrie is really quick; she can get to the bunt (and) she was the fastest on the team."

"Brewster, she's a solid shortstop. She is smart. She knows the plays and where to go."

Olivia Bright, a junior, is the only other Patriot with varsity experience. During her freshman season she batted .280 with two doubles, a triple and nine RBIs while scoring 13 times.

Sophomore Renna Schi-



Pictured is the 2021 Jay County High School softball team. Front row from left are Maddy Fraley, Rieley Brewster, Olivia Bright, Mattie Ardizzone, Abbie Fields, Renna Schwieterman, Aubrie Schwieterman, Paige Mumbower, Riah Champ, Janae Jacobs and Tricia Ison. Back row are manager Paityn Chapman, assistant coach Vikki Taylor, assistant coach Kendra Lyons, Lita Chowning, Maddy Rinker, Haleigh Clayton, Taylor Brown, Kristen Wendel, Haley Gillette, manager Mallory Winner and coach Trisha Green.

weterman is in line to play first base to round out the infield, with senior Maddy Rinker handling duties behind the plate.

Green said there will be a rotation of players in the outfield, including Haley Gillette, Mattie Ardizzone, Maddy Fraley and Abbie Fields. In 25 plate appearances as a sophomore, Gillette batted .360 while driving in five runs and scoring nine times.

Lita Chowning and Jenae Jacobs are also in the mix to roam the outfield.

Green expects Haleigh Clayton and Taylor Brown to be the team's pitchers to start the season.

"Haleigh Clayton is going to throw strikes," she said. "We can count on her to throw strikes. She can hit inside, outside. She's consistent. She's going to be able to throw strikes."

"Taylor Brown, she's the same way; she's consistent. Between the two of them I honestly can't tell you which one is faster."

Green said the team has set a lofty goal of winning the program's first sectional championship. The Class 3A tournament will be at Hamilton Heights this year, and includes Delta, Guerin Catholic, New Castle and Yorktown.

"That's a huge goal," she said. "Obviously going into every season that's the end goal. Especially the seniors, they want to win sectional (and) we want to improve overall as a team."

As for what it'll take to reach that goal?

"Offensively they're going to have to hit the ball (and) string some hits together," she said. "We're hoping to be a high-scor-

ing team. A lot of them are busting it over the fence in practice. We hope that goes into the games."

Jay County was 1-5 in Allen County Athletic Conference play in 2019, with its only conference win a 14-2 triumph over Southern Wells. The Patriots open its ACAC schedule on the road April 22 at Woodlan, while also meeting conference rivals South Adams (May 4) and Southern Wells (May 11) on the road. They host Adams Central April 29, Bluffton May 6 and Heritage May 13.

Jay County hosts sectional rivals Delta on Thursday and New Castle on May 10.

"Everybody is excited," Green said. "We're ready to get out there and play. We've been practicing in the offseason and we're ready to get going."

JCHS softball

Date	Opponent	Time
Monday, April 8	Delta	5 p.m.
Monday, April 12	Huntington North	5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 13	Eastbrook	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 15	Fort Recovery	5 p.m.
Friday, April 16	Norwell	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 17	Richmond	10 a.m.
Monday, April 19	St. Henry	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 22	Woodlan	6 p.m.
Monday, April 26	Wapahani	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 29	Adams Central	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 4	South Adams	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 6	Bluffton	5 p.m.
Friday, May 7	Muncie Central	5 p.m.
Saturday, May 8	Elwood	11 a.m.
Monday, May 10	New Castle	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 11	Southern Wells	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 13	Heritage	6 p.m.
Friday, May 14	Wes-Del	5 p.m.
Saturday, May 15	Hagerstown	10 a.m.
Monday, May 17	Marion	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 20	Northeastern	5 p.m.
Friday, May 21	Richmond	5:30 p.m.
Home games in bold		

Cramer hopes depth carries JC girls tennis

The Patriot girls tennis team doesn't have a ton of experience.

It returns just one player from the 2019 team.

But what it lacks in experience, the Jay County High School girls tennis team makes up for it in depth.

And the sheer numbers has JCHS coach Dave Cramer eager to get the season underway.

"We're pretty excited," he said. "We have a lot of talent. This is the most depth we've ever had. We have five or six girls going to battle it out for varsity singles, and we've got four or five doubles teams that are going to battle it out.

"We've never had that kind of competition before, which is great."

Jay County, which opens its season tonight at Blackford, has just one returning player with experience at the varsity level.

Lyric Garringer, a senior, was on the sectional lineup for the 2019 Patriots who fell to eventual champion Winchester by a 5-0 margin in the semifinal.

Playing at No. 3 singles, Garringer forced a third-set tiebreaker in her sectional match. She was the only Patriot to not lose in straight sets.

"Experience," Cramer said of what Garringer brings for her senior season. "She's got a lot of good experience and she's going to help us a lot."

Garringer is slated to slide up one spot to No. 2 singles, with junior Grace Brewster projected as the No. 1 singles player.

Junior Kierston Blunk, sophomore Courtney Benter and freshman Brenna Haines are all slated to compete for the third and final singles position.

"Much above most freshmen," Cramer said of Haines, while noting Benter could also have an impact at the varsity level this year."

Madison Dirksen and



Pictured is the 2021 Jay County High School girls tennis team. Front row from left are Kayla Hurt, Brenna Haines, Grace Brewster, Paulina Esquivel, Cassidy Upp, Kierston Blunk and Chloe Ruiz. Middle row are Courtney Benter, Lilly Hedges, Chelsea Blankenship, Holly Hemmelgarn, Madison Dirksen, Heaven Hambrock, Regina Muhlenkamp, Rachel Muhlenkamp and Lyric Garringer. Back row are coach Dave Cramer, Joske Herndon, Zion Beiswanger, Kaylee Zimmerman, Melana Zimmerman, Maggie Dillon, Alison Byrum and assistant coach Sydney Haines.

Rachel Muhlenkamp are set to make their varsity debut at No. 1 doubles, while Lilly Hedges and Holly Hemmelgarn will likely team up for No. 2 doubles.

"We have Madison Dirksen coming off the basketball team," Cramer said. "She's an exceptional athlete. She took to tennis like she's been doing it her whole life.

"She's very, very good at it."

As for the doubles teams, while they lack varsity experience, Cramer said the frontrunners for the top two spots are just about even in terms of their abilities.

"They are both very, very equal," he said.

With his 22-member squad, Cramer said the biggest challenge will be to translate the effort from practices into matches.

"Just understanding about a match," he said. "It

'We have a lot of talent. This is the most depth we've ever had ... We've never had that kind of competition before, which is great.'

—Dave Cramer, Jay County girls tennis coach

is a lot different than practice. You're going to have to compete.

"They pound the heck out of the ball all over the court. They're really aggressive. I've got to find a way to put that into the match and then we'll be really good. They hit the ball really hard, it's just getting the experience competing."

Jay County starts its season with five consecutive road matches, includ-

ing a tournament Saturday at Hagerstown and the Eastern Hancock Invitational on April 17. The Patriots' first home match is against four-time defending sectional champion Winchester on April 19. They also host Allen County Athletic Conference rivals South Adams (April 26) and Adams Central (May 6).

Sectional rivals Union City (April 27) and Randolph Southern (May 11)

JCHS girls tennis		
Date	Opponent	Time
Wednesday, April 7	Blackford	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 8	Bellmont	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 10	Hagerstown	9 a.m.
Thursday, April 15	Bluffton	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 17	Eastern Hancock	9 a.m.
Monday, April 19	Winchester	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 20	Frankton	5 p.m.
Monday, April 26	South Adams	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 27	Union City	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 30	Richmond	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 4	Muncie Central	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 6	Adams Central	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 11	Randolph Southern	5 p.m.
Monday, May 17	Alexandria	5 p.m.
Home matches in bold		

also come to Portland, while the Patriots have other road matches against Bluffton (April 15), Frankton (April 20), Richmond (April 30) and Muncie Central (May 4).

Cramer's goal for the season?

"The sectional (champi-

onship)," he said. "Very simple. We want to win sectional."

The Patriots once won sectional titles from 2013 to '15, but it's been all Winchester since then.

"A lot of hard work," Cramer said of what it'll take to reclaim the trophy.

Key ...

Continued from page 2

“We have a lot of boys who are coming in new in their senior and junior years,” Imel said. “I’m excited about it. I think we do have some pieces that’ll be good. We’ll get better as the year goes on and I told them we need to get better as the year goes on.”

“I told them if they run their fastest times in the first meet it’s not going to help anybody. We need to get better when we get to those big meets (conference and sectional).”

Aaron Funkhouser, a junior, was the runner-up at sectional in the 400 dash as one of seven Patriot athletes to qualify for regional that year.

“He has a pretty lofty goal,” Imel said. “He’s another competitor that you can’t stop him. He’s always working hard. I’m really looking forward to seeing what he can do.”

Mitchell Winner, now a senior, took 15th in the 3,200 run at sectional. Junior Cristian Marentes did not compete in sectional but did run during the 2019 season.

Imel said he’ll look to Adrek Pogue as a sprinter, comparing him to Caleb Webster. The 2019 graduate did not run track until he was a senior, learned the tech-



Pictured is the 2021 Jay County High School boys track team. Front row from left are manager Mackenzie Weesner, Sebastian Solis, Joseph Dow, Kaleb Meadows, Darren Fisher, Aldon McCrosson, Matias Perod, Dustin Harris and manager Leah Wenning. Second row are Carson Davis, Griffin Lennartz, Gavin Farmer, Aaron Funkhouser, Cristian Marentes, Dorane Beiswanger, Flint Schmiesing, Adrek Pogue and Dylan Knapshafer. Third row are Jacob Hart, Mitchell Winner, Owen Ransom, Skyler Bee, Joseph Kunk, Isaac Kunkler, Trey Nichols, William Steed and Jean Pieterse. Back row are assistant coach Malarie Krieg, coach Joe Imel, assistant coach Brian Miles and assistant coach Amber Houck.

nique of sprinting and was an ACAC champion in the 100 dash. Imel said he expects Gavin Farmer to be a sprinter as well.

Dylan Knapshafer is also a first-time track athlete. The junior will fill holes in long jump and middle distances.

Imel noted the jumping ability of Isaac Kunkler, who also ran cross coun-

try so he can handle the mile and 2-mile events. Kunkler was an ACAC champion in high jump as an eighth grader, and has already added 6 inches to his personal best.

“I’m hoping this year he can get to that 6-foot mark,” Imel said.

In 2019, Jay County’s boys were fourth at sectional, an improvement

of five spots from the previous year. Although they’re inexperienced, Imel is hopeful for a good season.

“I am happy that we’re having a season for missing the season last year,” he said. “We were young last year. We’re still young this year in the sense that we don’t have a lot of experience.”

‘I’m excited about it. I think we do have some pieces that’ll be good. We’ll get better as the year goes on and I told them we need to get better as the year goes on.’

—Joe Imel, Jay County track coach

Full ...

Continued from page 6

“We have more pitching depth than we’ve had in a while,” Selvey said.

Jay County was 20-6 in 2019, and is still defending those sectional championships despite not playing in 2020. The Patriots went up to Bellmont for its sectional tournament in 2018 and ’19, but this year they were moved back to Yorktown with the likes of New

Castle, Delta, Guerin Catholic, Hamilton Heights and, of course, the host Tigers, who beat Jay County on a walk off in the 2019 regional final.

“I really want to win sectional,” Caldwell said. “I really want to get coach Selvey another sectional.”

Jay County hosts Yorktown on April 30 and Delta May 17. It doesn’t play any other potential sectional opponents.

The Patriots were runners-up in the Allen County Athletic Conference to South Adams, which defeated JCHS 4-0.

“We just have to get better and better and stay hungry,” Selvey said of what it’ll take to knock off the Starfires, who were also 5-1 in league play but won the tiebreaker by topping the Patriots. “They’ve got to learn to stay with it. Stay involved (and) stay focused.”

On Monday, Jay County hosts Coldwater, which was the 2019 OHSAA Division III state champion. The Patriots also have home games against ACAC rivals Adams Central (April 29), Bluffton (May 6) and Heritage (May 13). However, they don’t have a single home doubleheader.

Despite the Patriots’ relative youth this season,

Selvey is still high on the squad’s potential.

“There are some kids out here that are pretty good,” he said. “After not seeing them for a bit and (then) coming back, there’s possibilities for us. A lot of it is going to depend on young pitching.

“They’re going to make mistakes. They’re going to mess up a play big time ... it’s going to happen.”

Five seniors to guide Indian baseball

The Indians are going to have to grow up quickly.

Fort Recovery High School baseball coach Jerry Kaup said so himself. With five seniors, only one has considerable playing time at the varsity level. But a few others have solidified themselves as permanent pieces in the lineup.

“We have some good baseball players,” said FRHS coach Jerry Kaup, whose team split its first two games of the season and had another one on Monday. “We have a lot of athleticism, just not a lot of experience from the fact we don’t have a lot of experience playing baseball at the high school level.”

As a sophomore, Ryne Post played in all 25 games for the 2019 Indians that finished 12-13. He led the team with a .392 batting average, the only player to hit above .300. He also had the most hits (32) and doubles (seven). He shared the team lead of 16 RBIs as well as 23 runs.

“He has to be our leader,” Kaup said. “He’s got to show us how to get it done.”

In his first varsity start back on March 28, senior Dillan Evers struck out six, allowed just one hit and walked one in more than five innings of work on the mound.

“Dillan has blossomed into a real ace on the mound,” Kaup said. “Last summer he started filling those shoes. He does a great job of coming over the top. He’s matured into a true athlete.”

Seniors Cobe Wendel (left field), Derek Lochtefeld (right field) and Riley Will (center) are starters in the outfield. Wendel and Lochtefeld can pitch as well, too.

Junior Brock Dues will be at third base, and



Pictured is the 2021 Fort Recovery High School baseball team. Front row from left are Brock Dues, Riggs Tobe, Landon Post, Cade Wendel and Christian Jones. Middle row are Ryne Post, Bo Thien, Riley Will, Derek Lochtefeld and Kendrick Wendel. Back row are assistant coach Tom Galdeen, assistant coach Brian Patch, Daneil Patch, Dillan Evers, coach Jerry Kaup and assistant coach Ben Homan.

‘We have some good baseball players. We have a lot of athleticism, just not a lot of experience from the fact we don’t have a lot of experience playing baseball at the high school level.’

—Jerry Kaup, Fort Recovery baseball coach

classmate Kendrick Wendel will be across the diamond at first. With Post at shortstop, sophomore Landon Post gets the nod up the middle next to Ryne.

“Landon played a lot for

us last summer and Landon can cover a lot of ground,” Kaup said. “He rises to the occasion, plays bigger than the moment.”

Riggs Tobe has been the team’s catcher so far to start the season.

Bo Thien and Daniel Patch are in the mix to play as well. Thien started the year as the DH, while Patch missed opening day recovering from a foot injury.

See **Guide** page 15

FRHS baseball

Date	Opponent	Time
Thursday, April 8	Delphos St. John's	5 p.m.
Friday, April 9	Houston @ Dayton	5 p.m.
Monday, April 12	Lincolnview	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 13	Parkway	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 15	New Knoxville	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 17	South Adams (DH)	11 a.m.
Monday, April 19	Lima Shawnee	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 20	Marion Local	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 22	St. Henry	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 27	Coldwater	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 29	Minster	5 p.m.
Saturday, May 1	Russia (DH)	11 a.m.
Monday, May 3	Arcanum	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 4	Versailles	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 6	New Bremen	5 p.m.
Monday, May 10	Ansonia	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 11	St. Marys	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 13	Wapakoneta	5 p.m.
Friday, May 14	Franklin Monroe	5 p.m.
Home games in bold		

Tribe softball hopes to continue trend

The Indians had been trending upward.

In 2019, they finished with a winning record for the first time since 2005, and they had as many Midwest Athletic Conference wins (four) as they did in the previous eight seasons combined.

The Fort Recovery High School softball team combined for 22 wins in 2018 and '19, nearly as many as the seven previous years.

Then the ongoing coronavirus pandemic wiped out the 2020 season.

But the Tribe was still on the upward climb

"We're definitely going to try to keep that momentum," said first-year coach Ryan Thien, whose team was 3-2 through its first five games this year. "We lost five seniors from (the 2020 team) who would have definitely produced for us. We need to replace them five with some production out of some younger girls, but I want us to continue to trend up, especially in our own league."

That pressure of keeping the momentum will hinge on two seniors, Brenna Homan and Jackie Homan, who were first team All-MAC selections as sophomores. They'll be joined by fellow seniors Chloey Grisez — she was all-MAC honorable mention — and Macy Shinabery in terms of shouldering the load to lead the team.

"They bring a lot of experience," Thien said, adding Grisez is the starting shortstop while Shinabery will be used as an outfielder. "They've all played since they were freshmen. Most of them play travel ball. They have leadership qualities, but most people know that Brenna knows she's a true leader.



Pictured is the 2021 Fort Recovery High School softball team. Front row from left are manager Ella Schoen, manager Ella Will, Arianna LaBarge, Brenna Homan, Ava Schoen, manager Olivia Knapke and manager Jenna Homan. Middle row are Chloey Grisez, Macy Shinabery, Cali Wendel, Kensey Gaerke, Allison Knapke and Sophie Pearson. Back row are coach Ryan Thien, Abby Knapke, Maddy Guggenbiller, Brittney Tebbe, Jackie Homan, assistant coach Renee Evers and assistant coach Carrie Schoen.

"They can hit the ball. That's the main thing I'm looking forward to this year is returning their production at the plate."

Through five games so far this year, Brenna Homan is leading the team with a .714 average. In 14 at bats, she's only gotten out four times. Out of her 10 hits, seven of them have been doubles, and she's got five RBIs.

Jackie Homan is batting .316 with six doubles and seven RBIs. She's also got a 1.31 ERA in pitching 10 2/3 innings so far with 15 strikeouts to just one walk, and plays first base when she's not hurling the ball.

See **Hopes** page 16

'We're definitely going to try to keep that momentum. We lost five seniors from (the 2020 team) who would have definitely produced for us. We need to replace them five with some production out of some younger girls, but I want us to continue to trend up, especially in our own league.'

—Ryan Thien,
Fort Recovery softball coach

FRHS softball

Date	Opponent	Time
Friday, April 9	Fort Loramie	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 10	Franklin Monroe (DH)	11 a.m.
Monday, April 12	St. Marys	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 13	Parkway	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 15	Jay County	5 p.m.
Friday, April 16	Anna	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 17	Celina quad	noon
Monday, April 19	Wapakoneta	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 20	Marion Local	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 22	St. Henry	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 26	South Adams	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 27	Coldwater	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 29	Minster	5 p.m.
Friday, April 30	Arcanum	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 4	Versailles	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 6	New Bremen	5 p.m.
Saturday, May 8	Lehman Catholic	11 a.m.
Tuesday, May 11	Russia	5 p.m.
Home games in bold		

Boys rebuilding, girls aim to keep climbing

The stars aligned for the Tribe in 2019.

They won the program's first conference championship, then backed it up with a district title.

Fort Recovery High School's boys track team was primed for a special 2020 as well, but the ongoing coronavirus pandemic halted those plans.

This year, the Indians are back to the drawing board.

"Definitely looking like a rebuilding year," said FRHS track coach Christy Diller. "Lot of freshmen and sophomores. It'll take a little bit to get them up to speed. Some of them are new to track."

"We are super lucky to have Owen (Moorman) as a leader. Luke Keller, another senior, ran four years."

Moorman is the lone holdover from a contingent of Fort Recovery boys who won the team's first Midwest Athletic Conference championship in 2019 and two weeks later earned the squad's first district title. Then, the Indians placed seventh in the Division III state championships, their highest finish as a team.

Moorman started the 4x400-meter relay team that was fourth in the state, but no one else remains.

For his final year on the oval, Moorman asked if he could become a hurdler.

"I thought it was an excellent idea," Diller said, noting he was pleased with his third-place finish in the season-opening Versailles Invitational on Saturday. "I thought he had a pretty solid run if he figures out the technique."

Diller also noted she expects Moorman to run the 200 dash.

Trevor Heitkamp, a freshman who led the cross country team in the fall, is set to anchor the Indians' distance group.



Pictured is the 2021 Fort Recovery High School boys track team. Front row from left are Michael Laux, Riley Hiser, Christian Marchal, Austin Steinbrunner and Evan Keller. Second row are Drew Langenkamp, Reece Guggenbiller, Connor Kaikala, Owen Moorman, Trevor Heitkamp and Cole Muhlenkamp. Third row are assistant coach Charlie Vasey, Derek Jutte, Ross Pearson, Isaac Knapke, Caleb Rammel and Henry Knapke. Back row are assistant coach Shane Stein, Kenny Jutte, Luke Keller, Gavin Thobe, Colin Knapke and assistant coach Holly Gann. Not pictured is coach Christy Diller.

"I thought he had a real solid run," Diller said of the first 3,200 run of his career Saturday. "He's just a super smart kid."

Seniors Gavin Thobe and Derek Jutte are joining track this year, and it is Diller's plan to have them compete in field events. They both cleared 17 feet in long jump, and Thobe wants to compete in the high jump as well.

Diller said she plans to use them in the 4x100 and 4x200 relays as well.

"Kinda raw," she said of their technique. "They've never done handoffs. It wasn't pretty but they did it."

According to Diller, jun-

'Definitely looking like a rebuilding year. Lot of freshmen and sophomores. It'll take a little bit to get them up to speed. Some of them are new to track.'

—Christy Diller, Fort Recovery track coach

ior Riley Hiser is a utility-type runner in that he can handle a wide range of distances depending on where she needs him for a particular meet.

"He's awesome to

have," she said. "Great starter. He's done relays. It's awesome to have for the relay teams."

Diller also mentioned she was pleased with Reece Guggenbiller's

FRHS track		
Date	Opponent	Time
Friday, April 9	Celina Invite	4:45 p.m.
Tuesday, April 13	New Bremen Tri	4:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 15	Home Quad	4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 20	Home Quad	4:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 22	St. Henry Quad	4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 27	Anna Quad	4:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 29	South Adams	4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, May 4	Mercer Co. @ CW	4 p.m.
Thursday, May 6	Mercer Co. @ CW	4 p.m.
Tuesday, May 11	MAC Meet	4 p.m.
Friday, May 14	MAC Meet	4 p.m.
Home games in bold		

performance in his first experience running the 400 dash and 4x200

relay in a high school meet.

See Aim page 14

Aim ...

Continued from page 13

“Wasn’t a knock-it-out-of-the-park effort, but he got super good experience,” she said. “He’s got some wheels, so it’ll be nice to see what he can do.”

Fort Recovery’s girls continued their climb up the MAC standings in 2019, finishing sixth.

Kierra Wendel, then a sophomore, was the only FRHS girl to reach the finals at the state meet and she narrowly missed the podium as she placed ninth in the 800 run.

“She’s hungry to get back there,” Diller said. “The girl definitely wants to get back there. For her, coming from basketball and volleyball we have to give her more of a base. She has a base but she needs that endurance. That’s what we’re working on.”

Wendel is slated to be the first leg in both the 4x800 and 4x400 relays as well as competing in the 800 run again. Along with Ava Bubp, the Indians have half of their 4x800 relay that went to state in 2019. Wendel and current junior Abbie Francis were part of the state-qualifying 4x400 relay team.

Whitley Rammel, now a junior, was a district champion in shot put and placed fifth at regional (the top four reach state). Diller said Rammel just needs to shore up her technique to have a chance at advancing



Pictured is the 2021 Fort Recovery High School track team. Front row from left are Marie Nachtcheim, Ellie Will, Hanna Metzger, Abby Francis, Brynn Stammen and Jenna Hart. Second row are Natalie Brunswick, Ashlyn Bechtol, Kiana Garland, Joscie LeFevre, Aurdra Bubp, Kierra Wendel and Olivia Smith. Third row are Autumn Jutte, Emma Fullenkamp, Mara Pearson, Megan Diller, Elena Evers, Anna Wendel, Alyssa Rammel and Ava Bubp. Back row are assistant coach Holly Gann, Whitley Rammel, Sarah Siefiring, Paige Guggenbiller, Allysen Fullenkamp, assistant coach Charlie Vasey and assistant coach Shane Stein. Not pictured is coach Christy Diller.

ing further in the postseason this year.

Francis has been the team’s top sprinter, and she’ll be on the 4x100 and 4x200 relays as well.

“She’s got really good experience sprint-wise, we just need to let that spread a little,” said Diller, adding she expects sophomores Allysen Fullenkamp and

Audra Bubp as well as freshman Mara Pearson to be in those sprint relays as well.

Diller noted the strength of her girls’s distance group, which includes the cross country team that made the state finals for the first time in program history. Ellie Will emerged on the cross country

course as the team’s top distance runner, but seniors Hannah Metzger and Anna Wendel have proven to be leaders in both sports.

“They bring that experience and the younger girls feed off that,” Diller said. “They’re great leaders.”

Freshman Natalie Brunswick, Diller said, is in

line to be one of the team’s top 800 and 1,600 runners.

Although Coldwater won the MAC last year for the girls, Minster is still the team to beat in the conference. The Wildcats finished fifth in the Division III state meet in 2019 after winning the championship the previous year.

“We should always be the underdog,” Diller said. “I don’t know if were there yet. I think we’ve got pieces to be much closer than we have in the past.”

“It’s exciting to see them progress and get better. They have the desire to get better. I like they’re not afraid to put that goal out there and go for it.”

Lead ...

Continued from page 5

“All of them, I think, have a lot of potential,” Haines said. “Some need a little more work. Some are more natural and they have fun.”

“I think they all exhibit the desire to become better and be teachable. If that continues to be true we have a lot of potential for next year as well.”

Haines said he hopes to focus more on the mental aspect of the game, and that his two main

goals he set when he first met with the squad is for them to love the game more at the end of the season than they do now, and for them to be a better person when the year ends as well.

“I want to make it something where they don’t feel like I’m expecting things too much that make the game not fun,” he said. “At the same time I want them to work through challenges and obstacles and take what they learn with dealing

with pressure and the mental aspect of it into the next part of their lives.”

The Patriots open the season Saturday in the Yorktown Invitational before hosting Richmond on Monday. They hit the road for almost the rest of the month, with only one more home match — April 29 against Blackford — before May.

The Allen County Athletic Conference tournament is set for May 22 at Celina Lynx. The

Patriots also play in the South Adams Invitational on April 24 and the Winchester Invitational the following week.

Haines benefits from a team made up of 14 members, half of them freshmen, for one of the largest JCHS boys golf teams in recent memory.

“I think we’ve got a solid team now,” he said. “Real good potential for continuing to have a good team for the next several years.”

Jay County baseball and boys golf team photos courtesy of Crabtree Photography. All other photos and stories by Chris Schanz.

Guide ...

Continued from page 11
 He pitched in a 5-4 loss to Crestview on Saturday, and his towering presence on the mound could be an intimidating factor for opposing hitters.
 "He is an experienced pitcher," Kaup said. "Not in high school, but he's an experienced pitcher in some of the summer leagues he's played in."
 "We expect him to be very competitive and then to play first

base and DH on the days he's not pitching."
 Fort Recovery was 4-5 in Midwest Athletic Conference play in 2019, finishing in a four-way tie for fifth place. Coldwater, which went on to win the Division III state championship, won its league record 31st conference title and third in four seasons.
 "As far as the league is concerned, Coldwater is back," Kaup said. "Minster feels they

have a very good and very deep ball club. Versailles thinks their junior class is state-bound material. New Bremen has athletes right now and they don't think they should ever lose. But the best pitching staff is in St. Henry.
 "Where does that leave Fort Recovery? We think we're capable of winning some ball games. We have to be. I'm hoping we're in the middle some-

where with the chance to get to that top rung.
 "I think the MAC is going to be quite competitive. I'm hoping we're part of that, but we have to mature quickly."
 Fort Recovery begins MAC play Thursday on the road at St. Johns. They also travel for league games against New Knoxville (April 15), St. Henry (April 22) and Versailles (May 4). They host Parkway (April

13), Marion Local (April 20), Coldwater (April 27), Minster (April 29) and New Bremen (May 6).
 "We are going to try to get better every day and we're going to focus on our league games and we're going to take it one pitch at a time," Kaup said. "We're going to continue to improve."
 "Our goal is to be really good come May."





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Jackie Homan



Kierra Wendel

Hopes ...

Continued from page 12
Maddy Guggenbiller has emerged as a threat with a bat. She's batting .375 so far with three home runs and nine RBIs, both of which lead the team. She's also hit a double. Brenna Homan and Guggenbiller will rotate duties at catcher and third.

Sophie Pearson and Britney Tebbe are pitchers along with Jackie Homan. Pearson so far

has 11 2/3 innings pitched with 12 strikeouts. She's 1-1 with a 6.00 ERA.

"Sophie is also going to be a utility player," Thien said. "When she's not pitching she'll play just about anywhere we need her for that day."

Cali Wendel has been playing second base, while sisters Allison and Abby Knapke can be used just about anywhere.

"What we have special about this team, we have a young group of girls but we have athletes who can play multiple positions," Thien said. "We don't have a lot of numbers [there are just 13 in the program] but it gives us a lot of flexibility of being able to put girls in different positions."

Fort Recovery opens MAC play April 13 at Parkway be-

fore hosting state-line rival Jay County two days later. The Tribe hosts conference rivals St. Henry on April 22 and Versailles on May 4. Other road conference games are slated for April 20 (Marion Local), April 27 (Coldwater), April 29 (defending champion Minster) and May 6 (New Bremen).

Fort Recovery's last MAC championship was in 2005 when it won back-to-back ti-

tles. The Indians have only had a winning record in league games twice since then, going 4-3 both in 2010 and 2019. They were also winless in the MAC seven times, including five straight seasons from 2012 to '2016.

"I want to compete with every team in our league," he said. "Not just three or four teams. We're definitely planning on doing that."