

Sectional contenders



Quinn Faulkner

Faulkner leads baseball team that returns almost everyone, Brewster and girls tennis squad aim to repeat as champs



Grace Brewster

2022 Jay County Spring Sports Preview

Patriots hoping to keep up power surge

By **CHRIS SCHANZ**

The Commercial Review

The Patriots had a power surge last season, blasting 35 home runs.

But more than half of them were lost to graduation.

Trisha Green is hopeful a trio of freshmen can help continue the recent trend of being able to trot around the bases rather frequently.

"I think they're going to have a big year offensively," Green, Jay County High School's second-year softball coach, said of her team. "They've put in a lot of work. They've put in a lot of core work in the off-season."

The Patriots lost Rieley Brewster's 12 home runs to graduation as well as three each from Aubrey Schwieterman and Haley Gillette. The former two also held down the left side of the infield.

But Green will be looking to freshmen Mallory Winner, Jozey Shimp and Jaelynn Lykins as pieces to make up for what graduated.

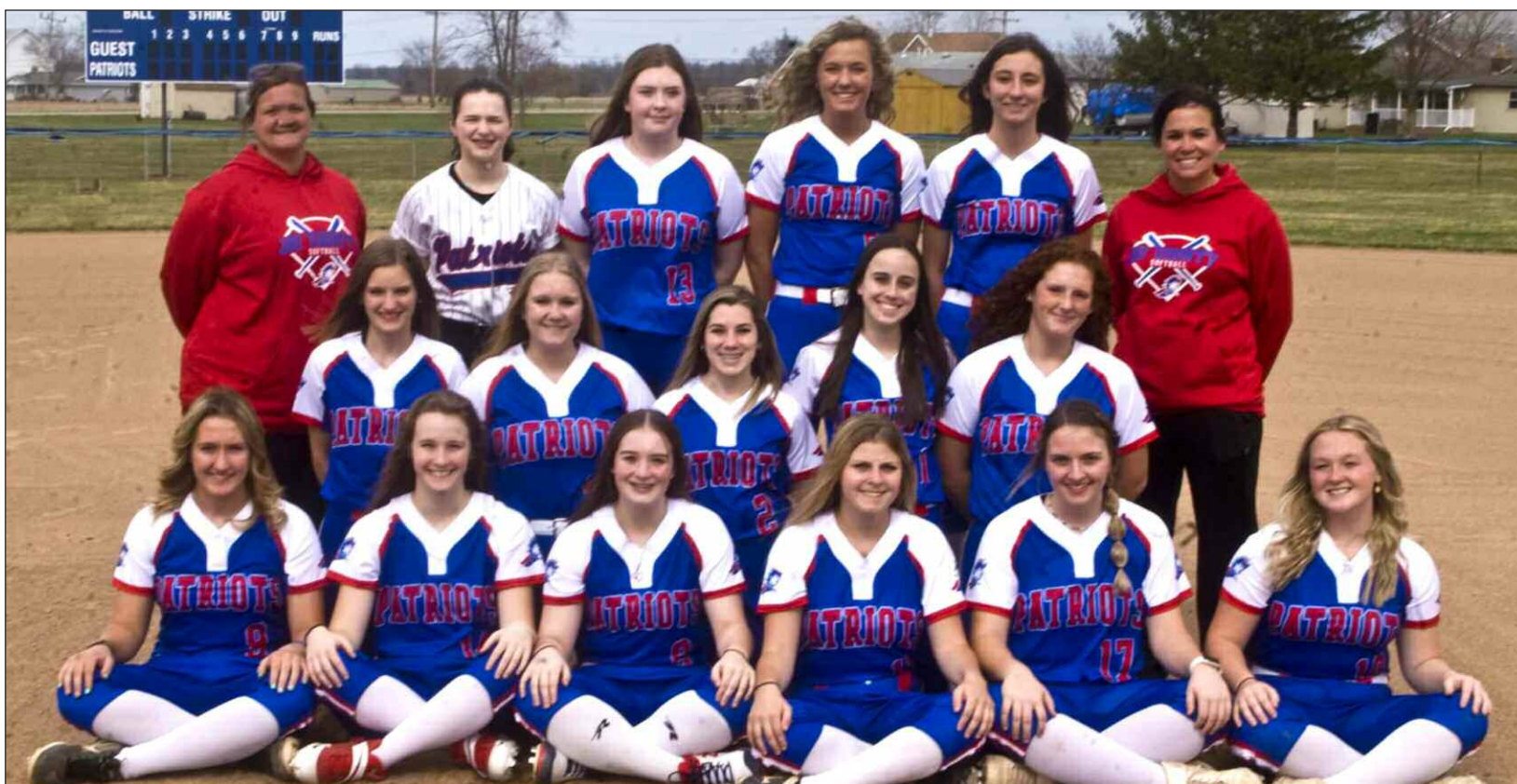
"We have three power freshmen coming in and I think it's going to be a big year for the home run, hopefully."

Renna Schwieterman, who batted .415 with eight home runs as a sophomore, will move from first base to shortstop this year, with senior Olivia Bright (.438 AVG) sliding from second to third base. Green said Winner, who is also a strong pitcher, will play second with Shimp at first.

Lykins will be behind the plate as catcher to fill the hole from the graduation of Maddy Rinker.

Mady Fraley, who belted five home runs last year as a freshman, returns as the team's center fielder.

"She's a solid all-around player," Green said of the short, yet



Pictured is the 2022 Jay County High School softball team. Front row from left are Mallory Winner, Janae Jacobs, Jaelynn Lykins, Brianna Zorn, Jozey Shimp and Riah Champ. Middle row are Haleigh Clayton, Tricia Ison, Mady Fraley, Mattie Ardizzone and Olivia Bright. Back row are assistant coach Kendra Lyons, manager Cami Paxson, Taylor Brown, Renna Schwieterman, Abbie Fields and coach Trisha Green.

speedy Fraley. "She's so fun to watch. I think she surprises everybody when she hits it over the fence."

Green said junior Janae Jacobs will be in left field, while a rotation of Mattie Ardizzone, Abbie Fields and Riah Champ will handle right field duties. She said Champ could also slide in at second base along with senior Tricia Ison, who spent most of her junior season at the junior varsity level.

The Patriots, who were 17-8 last year and lost 8-0 in the Class 3A sectional tournament, return all but nine of the 156 2/3 innings their pitchers totaled a year ago.

Haleigh Clayton handled most of the work, compiling a 2.94 ERA with 76 strikeouts and 22 walks in 121 1/3 innings. The Lincoln Trail Community College signee

posted an 11-5 record in 20 appearances with 19 starts.

"I'm expecting a big year for her pitching," Green said. "She's very accurate. She never makes me nervous. She's very consistent. She stays focused the whole game."

"She's very easy to coach (and) has a great attitude. She's been working pretty hard in the off-season. I think she's throwing harder than she was last year."

Junior Taylor Brown tossed 26 1/3 innings last year, striking out eight and walking two with a 3.46 ERA. Having Brown returning as well as Winner's ability to pitch gives Green the ability to rest Clayton if needed.

Jay County finished in a three-way tie with Woodlan and Adams Central for the Allen County Athletic Conference championship

in 2021. Woodlan handed Jay County a 4-3 setback for its only blemish against ACAC rivals.

Green is hopeful the Patriots can win it outright this year.

"I think we have a great team," she said. "I'm a little biased, but these girls work hard. They all have great attitudes. They're putting the work in. I hope we're going to win conference this year; no three-way tie."

Jay County can avenge that loss to Woodlan when it opens ACAC play at home April 21. The Patriots also host conference rivals South Adams (May 3) and Southern Wells (May 10) while traveling for road ACAC contests against Adams Central (April 28), Bluffton (May 5) and Heritage (May 12).

JCHS softball

<u>Date</u>	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Time</u>
Monday, April 4	Blackford	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 5	Bellmont	5:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 7	Delta	5 p.m.
Monday, April 11	Huntington North	5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 12	Eastbrook	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 14	Fort Recovery	5 p.m.
Friday, April 15	Norwell	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 16	Richmond Invite	10 a.m.
Monday, April 18	St. Henry	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 21	Woodlan	6 p.m.
Monday, April 25	Wapahani	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 28	Adams Central	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 3	South Adams	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 5	Bluffton	5 p.m.
Friday, May 6	Muncie Central	5 p.m.
Saturday, May 7	Elwood	11 a.m.
Monday, May 9	New Castle	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 10	Southern Wells	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 12	Heritage	6 p.m.
Saturday, May 14	Hagerstown (DH)	10 a.m.
Monday, May 16	Marion	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 19	Northeastern	5 p.m.
Friday, May 20	Richmond	5:30 p.m.
Home games in bold		



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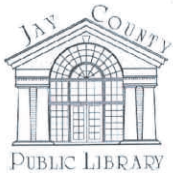


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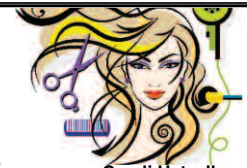
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Pictured is the 2022 Jay County High School girls track team. Front row from left are Cash Hollowell, Adriene Denney, Natalie Wehrly, Alexa Bravo, Emma Ransom and Maria Sanchez. Second row are Itziar Lopez De Arcaute Martinez, Jordyn Hutzler, Morgan DeHoff, Beyza Emen, Makinsey Murphy and Lindy Wood. Third row are Sydea Aneesa, Adonai Temirbekova, Jenna Dues, Molly Muhlenkamp, Gabi Bilbrey, Sophia Shumaker, Monica Cristofari, Ieva Busa and Brianne Siegreist. Back row are coach Joe Imel, assistant coach Brian Miles, Carla Heferkamp, Kylie Klopfenstein, Willow Hardy, Mackenzie Weesner, Lotta Birkert, Chelsea Frontz, Kenzie Huey and assistant coaches Sydney Noble and Erika Hess.

Throwing group leads girls track

By **RAY COONEY**

The Commercial Review

After having the previous season canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic, Jay County High School's girls track team returned with some special tournament performances in 2021.

Last season marked the first time in school history that the program sent two athletes to the state finals.

If there is tournament magic to be had again, it will have to come from different athletes.

The Patriots' roster this year is without both state qualifiers — Elisa Parazzi, who returned to Italy the day after earning a

medal with a seventh-place finish in the high jump, and 2021 graduate Kinsey Shannon. Also lost to graduation is Abby Benter, who placed fifth in the regional in the 100-meter hurdles. (The top three regional athletes in each event advance to the state finals.)

As Jay County looks to make an impact on the state tournament series again this season, it looks as if the strength is in its throwing duo of senior Kylie Klopfenstein and junior Gabi Bilbrey.

"Both have thrown over 35 feet in the shot put on the indoor season," said JCHS

coach Joe Imel. "Here in practice, Gabi has been consistent over 110 in the discus. ...

"So we're looking for good things for them."

Both earned sectional runner-up finishes last season, with Klopfenstein posting a distance of 36 feet, 5 inches, in the shot put and Bilbrey reaching 100 feet, 3.5 inches in the discus.

Bilbrey is the top returning individual regional athlete for the Patriots after placing seventh in the discus at 102 feet, 1 inch. (The third-place finisher was at 121 feet, 4 inches.)

Klopfenstein was 11th in the

regional in the shot put, where it took a toss of 39 feet, 4 inches to advance to state.

That pairing will be joined by Chelsea Frontz, with Imel saying he expects the opportunity to sweep the throwing events often.

Senior Lindy Wood will pace Jay County's distance group following the graduation of Sophia Fugiett, who placed fourth in the sectional last season in the 800-meter run. Wood placed fifth in the 3,200-run and was also part of the regional-qualifying 4x800 relay team along with Molly Muhlenkamp, Samantha Brunetti and Fugiett. She's

also coming off of a cross country season that saw her surge in the postseason as she placed sixth in both the Allen County Athletic Conference and sectional, finishing her career as a semi-state qualifier.

"She's just someone who is going to be dependable," said Imel of the senior who plans to continue her running career at the University of St. Francis. "She'll be our 2-miler primarily and 4x800. Every once in a while we might give her a break and put her in a mile or an open 800.

"She did extremely well at the end of the cross country

Boys track features big senior group

By **RAY COONEY**
The Commercial Review

Joe Imel feels a special connection with the Class of 2022.

Their freshman year was his rookie campaign leading the Patriot boys track program.

“This group I’m really excited about,” Imel said. “Now, I don’t think we’re going to be world-beaters, but my first year coaching we had like 12 freshman boys. And we have 10 senior boys. ... The vast majority of the boys who are seniors have been running track all four years. ... It’s that first group you have ...”

Leading that first group he has coached throughout their high school careers is Aaron

JCHS track

Date	Opponent	Time
Tuesday, April 5	Blackford	5:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 7	Adams Central	5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 12	Adams Central	5:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 14	Delta & Yorktown	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 19	Bluffton	5:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 23	Muncie Relays (boys)	10 a.m.
Tuesday, April 26	Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Friday, April 29	New Castle (boys)	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 30	Muncie Relays (girls)	10 a.m.
Friday, May 6	ACAC @ Bluffton	5:30 p.m.
Home meets in bold		

Funkhouser. The sprinter scored a dozen of the Jay County High School boys track team’s 34 points in last year’s sectional meet at Muncie Central by himself. He did it with a run-

ner-up finish in the 400-meter dash — he will be the top returning athlete in that event as 2021 champion Cole Whitehead of Yorktown has graduated — and a fifth-

place finish in the 200 dash.

Funkhouser is the Patriots’ only returning regional qualifier — the top three finishers in each event at the sectional advance to the next level — having placed eighth in the 400 dash at Lawrence Central last season.

“Aaron’s just a phenomenal kid, a great athlete,” said Imel. “He’s getting pulled every which way ... because he’s involved in so many things. But he still has a good attitude. He’s just a phenomenal athlete.

“I’m trying to do more of a rotation so we’re not beating him to death on 400s every Tuesday/Thursday, Tuesday/Thursday.”

The sprint rotation will also include Dylan Knapschafer and Christian Marentes, and Imel said he expects the 4x400 relay group to be one of the fastest for JCHS in the last quarter-century.

Knapschafer, a senior, will also be involved in the jumps as he and Isaac Kunkler were the only JCHS individuals other than Funkhouser to score points at the 2021 sectional meet, where the Patriots finished fifth as a team.

“We’re hoping to get him in the 20-foot range by the end of the season,” said Imel of Knapschafer in the long jump, where he is coming off of a seventh-place sectional

finish with a leap of 18 feet, 6.75 inches.

Kunkler cleared the bar at 5 feet, 6 inches, in the high jump for eighth in the sectional last season.

A junior, Kunkler is also slated to run middle distance for the Patriots this season after placing fifth in the 110 hurdles in the sectional a year ago.

Meanwhile, freshman Adam Alig is trying his hand at the hurdles.

“He’s one of those guys where he’s the best freshman shot putter, he’s the best freshman high jumper, he’s the best freshman sprinter,” said Imel. “He’s one of those kids who’s just a really good athlete and you can put him in different places.”

See **Boys track** page 10



Pictured is the 2022 Jay County High School boys track team. Front row from left are Gabe Pinkerton, Juan Wiggins, Aaron Funkhouser and Dylan Chalfant. Second row are Flint Schmiesing, Ben Nichols, Darren Fisher, Cristian Marentes and Dustin Harris. Third row are Trey Nichols, Dylan Knapschafer, Adrek Pogue, Isaac Kunkler, Sean Guntle, Joseph Kunk, Bryce Collins, Skyler Bee and Sebastian Solis. Fourth row are coach Joe Imel, assistant coach Brian Miles, Joseph Dow, Adnan Efe Akinci, Adam Alig, Austyn LeMaster, Brayden Collins, Dylan Marentes, Owen Ransom and assistant coaches Sydney Noble and Erika Hess.



Pictured is the 2022 Jay County High School girls tennis team. Front row from left are Kayla Hurt, Rihanna Hartman, Kiersten Blunk and Chloe Ruiz. Middle row are Melana Zimmerman, Courtney Harris, Lilly Hedges, Madison Dirksen, Holly Hemmelgarn, Heaven Hambrock, Maggie Dillon and Zion Beiswanger. Back row are coach Dave Cramer, Kaylee Zimmerman, Brenna Bailey, Gretchen Link, Audrey Muhlenkamp, Lucy Raines, Grace Brewster and Brenna Haines.

Returnees reaching for racket repeat

By RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review

Lyric Garringer was unaware of where the team results stood.

She was just trying to do her job.

When she did, it made the Patriots champions.

Garringer served out the ninth game of the second set of her No. 2 singles sectional championship match at love, locking up the Jay County High School girls tennis team's win over Union City last season for its first title since 2015.

Garringer is the only player lost to graduation as the 2022 Patriot girls tennis team prepares for a season it hopes will result in a sectional repeat.

The roster is full of familiar faces, with Grace Brewster, Madison Dirksen,

JCHS girls tennis		
Date	Opponent	Time
Monday, April 4	Blackford	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 7	Bellmont	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 9	Hagerstown	10 a.m.
Thursday, April 14	Bluffton	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 16	E. Hancock Invite	9 a.m.
Monday, April 18	Winchester	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 19	Frankton	5 p.m.
Monday, April 25	South Adams	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 26	Union City	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 3	Muncie Central	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 5	Adams Central	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 10	Randolph Southern	5 p.m.
Friday, May 13	Richmond	5 p.m.
Saturday, May 14	Lapel Invitational	9 a.m.
Monday, May 16	Alexandria	5 p.m.
Home matches in bold		

Holly Hemmelgarn, Lily Hedges and Kristen Blunk all returning to the fold, though some will be in different places.

"We've got seven sen-

iors. They're a really, really good nucleus," said JCHS coach Dave Cramer.

"They're going to be tough to replace next year.

"They're all really hard

working. They're getting better and better and better.

"It's amazing how hard they're hitting the ball. That helps a lot. They've spent a lot of time in the weight room ... and that makes a big difference. They're a lot stronger."

Leading that strong senior core on the singles side is Brewster.

After playing junior varsity during her freshman season in 2019, Brewster emerged as the top singles player last season. (The 2020 campaign was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.) In her first varsity match, she cruised past Sissy McNeal of Blackford 6-2, 6-4 at No. 1 singles. She added wins against Bluffton, Winchester, Union City, Richmond,

Muncie Central and Randolph Southern.

And then she knocked off Kaylan McIntire of defending champion Winchester again in the sectional semifinal, putting the Patriots up 2-1. That allowed the No. 2 doubles duo of Hemmelgarn and Hedges to secure a spot for the team in the sectional finals when they finished their 6-3, 7-5 win.

"Grace is just an amazing girl. She's just so natural," Cramer said. "She just understands the game so well. ... She knows how to place the ball. She has power. She'll be a tough, tough match for everybody."

Like Brewster, Rachel Muhlenkamp and Dirksen had a strong start to their varsity careers last season when they beat Blackford's

Alli Clamme and Ammee Uggen 6-0, 6-0 at No. 1 doubles en route to opening with three straight victories. After a hiccup in the sectional semifinal, they rolled to a 6-2, 6-3 win to help the Patriots to their sectional title.

Dirksen and Muhlenkamp also earned Jay County's only win (6-3, 6-4) in their 4-1 regional loss to host Marion.

Last season's No. 2 doubles pairing of Hedges and Hemmelgarn was perfect in the sectional, fighting off a Winchester duo in the semifinal round before rolling over Union City 6-0, 6-0 in the championship match.

This year, Cramer is planning on pairing Dirksen and Hemmelgarn at the No. 1 spot.

See **Repeat** page 10

Baseball returns nearly entire squad

By **CHRIS SCHANZ**

The Commercial Review

The Patriots lost their best hitter. The top pitcher graduated, too.

But just about everyone else is back, and Jay County High School baseball coach Lea Selvey has his eyes on a couple players who can immediately replace Blake Caldwell and Austin Curts.

“So far we have really been pleased with the effort that we’re getting from the kids,” said Selvey, whose team was 13-11 last season and ended with a 6-4, no-hit loss to Guerin Catholic in the sectional opener. “We think we’re further along right now than we were last year at this time.”

Caldwell, who now plays for Wabash College, led the team with his .408 batting average and three home runs. He was third in RBIs (17), fifth in runs (10) and fifth in walks (seven).

Selvey said senior Crosby Heniser will move from the outfield to first base, and sophomore Ryne Goldsworthy will be at first when Heniser is on the mound.

Heniser, a left who committed to play baseball for Manchester University, threw 27 2/3 innings last year. He was 2-4 with one save in nine appearances, including six starts. He had a 4.80 ERA with 36 strikeouts and 26 walks. At the plate, Heniser had a .355 average — second on the team — with a team-high 19 RBIs, 18 runs, one double, one triple and one home run.

Sam Dunlavy, a senior, returns with the most pitching experience, having gone 2-1 in 30 2/3 innings. He ended with a 3.20 ERA with 35 strikeouts and 10 walks. Also back as pitcher is Dusty Pearson (2.89 ERA, 30



Pictured is the 2022 Jay County High School baseball team. Front row from left are Jackson Edwards, Cody Rowles, Josh Dowlen, Masahiro Matsuishi, Parker Nichols and A.J. Myers. Middle row are Kess McBride, Christian Runkle, Ryne Goldsworthy, Bryce Wenk, Quinn Faulkner, Crosby Heniser and Sam Dunlavy. Back row are trainer Spencer Tonner, assistant coach Todd Farr, coach Lea Selvey, Sam Myers, Dusty Pearson, Gavin Myers and assistant coaches Drew Wood and Kyle Selvey.

strikeouts and nine walks in 26 2/3 innings).

Sam Myers threw just 1 2/3 innings, but Selvey said he will complete a four-man rotation on the mound, noting sophomore Bryce Wenk and freshman A.J. Myers could also see some innings.

Senior Quinn Faulkner, who will join Heniser at Manchester and also play football for the Spartans, will anchor the infield at shortstop, and Selvey will rely on his experience to be the leader for the team.

“If he just plays and becomes the leader like he should be at this point, that would be big,” he said. Faulkner batted .351 with a team-high 19 runs to go with 13 RBIs, two doubles, one triple and one home run. Faulkner and Heniser shared the team high of 13 walks.

Sophomore Parker

Nichols will reprise his role as Faulkner’s double-play mate. Myers, also a sophomore, will be to Faulkner’s other side at third.

Selvey has seniors Kess McBride and Gavin Myers will return in a two-man rotation behind the plate. The outfield consists of junior Josh Dowlen in center, Dunlavy in left and Pearson in right.

Selvey is hoping with a full year of varsity experience under their belts, the Patriots who return will have a better record than they did a year ago.

“Some of those guys, their first year was last year,” Selvey said, referencing the 2020 season that was lost to the coronavirus pandemic. “They should be able to do some damage.

Jackson Edwards, Cody Rowles, Christian

Runkle and Japanese exchange student Masahiro Matsuishi will also see some time as utility players.

Jay County, which opens its season Thursday at Elwood, hosts three doubleheaders this season. It entertains Centerville (April 16), Hagerstown (May 7) and Fort Wayne South Side (May 14).

The Patriots, who were 4-2 in Allen County Athletic Conference play last year to finish tied for second with Adams Central, open league play at home April 21 against Woodlan. They also host defending conference champion South Adams (May 3) and Southern Wells (May 10). Jay County hits the road to meet ACAC rivals Adams Central (April 28), Bluffton (May 5) and Heritage (May 12).

JCHS baseball

Date	Opponent	Time
Thursday, April 7	Elwood	5:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 9	Mississinewa	10 a.m.
Monday, April 11	Coldwater	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 12	Eastbrook	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 14	Yorktown	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 16	Centerville (DH)	10 a.m.
Tuesday, April 19	Norwell	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 21	Woodlan	6 p.m.
Friday, April 22	Shenandoah	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 23	Randolph Southern	10 a.m.
Monday, April 25	Monroe Central	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 28	Adams Central	5 p.m.
Saturday, April 30	Wapahani Invitational	9:30
Tuesday, May 3	South Adams	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 5	Bluffton	5 p.m.
Saturday, May 7	Hagerstown (DH)	10 a.m.
Monday, May 9	Muncie Central	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 10	Southern Wells	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 12	Heritage	6 p.m.
Sunday, May 14	FW South Side (DH)	10 a.m.
Monday, May 16	Delta	5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 17	Blackford	5 p.m.
Thursday, May 19	Bellmont	5 p.m.
Home games in bold		



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Senior, sophomore lead boys golfers

By **CHRIS SCHANZ**

The Commercial Review

Caleb DeRome made history as a freshman.

He, along with then-senior and now Hanover College freshman Griffin Mann, qualified for regional.

It was the first time since 2014 the Patriots had individuals make it past sectional.

Following Mann's departure, DeRome is now the top player for the Jay County High School boys golf team while senior Kyle Sanders brings more experience to a Patriot team that lost two of its sectional golfers from last season.

DeHoff made his impact to the Patriots almost immediately as a freshman, often battling Mann for the team's low score each match.

He was third overall in the Allen County Athletic Conference tournament with his round of 85 to earn first team All-ACAC.

(The Patriots were runners-up to Heritage by two strokes.)

A week later at sectional, DeRome shot 87, and he was three strokes better at regional.

Sanders was second team All-ACAC as he shot 94 to place 13th, and at sectional he lowered his score by five strokes.

As a sophomore, Brock DeHoff competed in both the ACAC tournament (98 – 18th overall) and sectional (104), the latter of which did not factor into the Patriots' fourth-place score of 349.

That leaves second-year coach Dave Haines needing to fill two spots on his varsity roster.

(Haines could not be reached for comment regarding this story.)

Haines has three other golfers who return for an-



Pictured is the 2022 Jay County High School boys golf team. Front row from left are Matt Hall, Griffin Byrum, Austin Dirksen, Caleb DeRome and Isaac Holman. Back row are coach Dave Haines, Luke Fugiett, Liam Garringer, Brock DeHoff, Kyle Sanders, Gage Sims and assistant coach Marvin Buckner.

other year. Senior Matt Hall spent most of his junior season on the junior varsity level. He, along with sophomores Liam Garringer and Gage Sims, have a year of high school golf under their belts.

Also vying for varsity playing time will be Griffin Byrum, Austin Dirksen, Isaac Holman and Luke Fugiett.

Jay County opens its season at the Yorktown Invitational on April 9, and travels to Richmond two days later. The Patriots then have three consecutive home matches at Portland Golf Club against Wapahani (April 14), Delta (April 18) and a three-way match with Allen County Athletic

Conference rivals Bluffton and Southern Wells (April 19).

They will also host both Heritage and Woodlan on May 3, Union City May 24 and Adams Central May 26.

In addition to the Yorktown Invitational, Jay County will play 18-hole tournaments at South Adams on April 23, Winchester a week later and the ACAC Tournament on May 21 at Celina Lynx.

DeRome, Sanders lead Patriot team that opens season Saturday at the Yorktown Invitational

(The Patriots will get an earlier look at the Celina Lynx course during a three-team match with Adams Central and South Adams on April 26.)

Last season, Jay County placed 13th in the Yorktown Invitational by scoring 374. The Patriots were third (364) in the South Adams Invitational and fourth (352) in the Winchester Invitational.

JCHS boys golf

Date	Opponent	Time
Saturday, April 9	Yorktown Invite	10 a.m.
Monday, April 11	Richmond	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 14	Wapahani	4:30 p.m.
Monday, April 18	Delta	5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 19	Bluffton & SW	4:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 23	South Adams Invite	9 a.m.
Monday, April 24	Monroe Central	4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 26	AC & SA @ Celina	5 p.m.
Thursday, April 28	Blackford	4:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 30	Winchester Invite	8 a.m.
Tuesday, May 3	Heritage & Woodlan	5:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 5	Bellmont	4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, May 10	Southern Wells	4:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 12	South Adams	4:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 21	ACAC @ Celina Lynx	9 a.m.
Tuesday, May 24	Union City	4:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 26	Adams Central	4:30 p.m.
Friday, May 27	Wes-Del	9 a.m.
Tuesday, May 31	Daleville	4:30 p.m.
Home matches in bold		

Boys track ...

Continued from page 5

Dylan Marentes is slated to be part of the middle distance group as well, with Sebastian Solis, Flint Schmiesing and Brayden Collins leading the distance runners.

In the throwing events, Jay County will go with the senior duo of Joseph Kunk and Bryce Collins, who is out for track for the first time.

"We haven't had a 40-foot shot put thrower in my four years of coaching and I know a couple years before that as well," Imel said. "And in the indoor (Collins) threw 42 and a half feet, so I was very encouraged by that. So we're looking for some good things for him."

The Patriots have struggled to keep up with the top teams in the conference and sectional meets in recent years.

In the Allen County Athletic Conference, they were fourth in 2019 and again last season. (The 2020 season was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.)

In the sectional, they placed fourth in 2019. They were fifth last season, a full 70 points behind fourth-place Muncie Central.

The hope is to improve on those results this season, even if the top dogs in both the conference and sectional are going to be difficult to contend with.

"We're just going to compete," said Imel.

'We haven't had a 40-foot shot put thrower in my four years of coaching and I know a couple years before that as well. And in the indoor (Collins) threw 42 and a half feet, so I was very encouraged by that. So we're looking for some good things for him.'

—Joe Imel,
JCHS track coach

"Our sprinters are going to ... be very competitive in the ACAC.

"In our sectional, Delta's got a lot of beasts, distance and sprints. They're going to be the team to beat in our sectional.

"If we could get second or third in that sectional that would be pretty good."

Girls track ...

Continued from page 4

And after not competing in the sectional as an individual last season, Muhlenkamp will be expected to handle the 800 run as a sophomore.

Natalie Wehrly is slated as the Patriots' top sprinter. The fifth-place finisher in the 200 dash at the 2021 sectional, she exploded during the indoor season last month to set new school records in the 400 dash and 60 dash.

"Natalie is doing really well," said Imel. "I'm hoping we can get her sub-13s, get her into the 12s. ... She's much stronger this year."

Sophomores Makinsey Murphy and Cash Hollowell return to lead the hurdle group after each scoring points in the sectional for the Patriots last season. Freshman Brianna Siegrest will join them, and all three will also be in rotation for the 400 dash.

And while experience is the name of the game with the team's top throwers, the Patriots will turn to youth in the jumps. Imel projects freshman Jenna Dues as the top high jumper following Parazzi's departure and her classmate Morgan DeHoff as the lead long jumper. (Parazzi also led JCHS in the long jump

last season with a seventh-place sectional finish.)

Jay County was the ACAC runner-up to South Adams last season and finished third in the sectional behind Yorktown and Delta.

Imel said he hopes to at least match those finishes this year as he expects those teams to be front-runners again.

"The goal is just to get better as you move forward," said Imel. "The goal is to start strong (against Blackford) and then the

'The goal is just to get better as you move forward. The goal is to start strong (against Blackford) and then the following meet try to stay where we were. And then that next week we want to start seeing times get better, distances getting farther ... and just keep working from there.'

—Joe Imel,
JCHS track coach

following meet try to stay where we were. And then that next week we want to start seeing times get better, distances getting farther ... and just keep working from there.

"The conference is going to be difficult ... South Adams is the best in the conference with their sprinters that are coming back and the distance runners that they always seem to have. ... They're the ones that you've got to knock off.

"Delta with the Southerland girl and their distance group is going

Repeat ...

Continued from page 6

"Madison is just special," he said. "Holly ... I think she's going to be really, really strong. They're going to be hard to handle."

He added that he plans to use twins Melana and Haylee Zimmerman at No. 2 doubles, bringing them up from last year's junior varsity squad.

Behind Brewster, the rest of the singles lineup was in flux as Jay County prepared for its season opener Monday against Blackford.

While Hemmelgarn

'Madison (Dirksen) is just special. Holly (Hemmelgarn) ... I think she's going to be really, really strong. They're going to be hard to handle.'

—Dave Cramer,
Jay County girls tennis coach

moves up to No. 1 doubles, Hedges will shift to singles. She's in the mix for the No. 2 and No. 3 singles positions along with Blunk, who played at the No. 3 spot a year

ago, and Brenna Haines, who was in the junior varsity lineup in 2021.

"We're still trying to decide," said Cramer. "Still challenging."

Asked about goals for

the season, his answer was simple and straightforward.

"Sectional," he said.

The Patriots' win last season ended a six-year drought and marked the sixth title in school history. JCHS won three in a row in 2013, '14 and '15, and is hoping to go back-to-back again this year.

"We won the Eastern Hancock Invitational last year. That would be nice (to win again)," Cramer added. "With our nucleus, we should be pretty competitive there too."



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Good luck during the spring season



Girls track

*Opening date: April 4
District: May 17*

Girls tennis

*Opening date: April 4
Sectional: May 18-21*

Boys track

*Opening date: April 4
District: May 19*

Softball

*Opening date: April 4
Sectional: May 23-28*

Baseball

*Opening date: April 7
Sectional: May 25-30*

Boys golf

*Opening date: April 9
Sectional: June 3-6*