

Runners, jumpers and throwers return to action for HHS track and field team

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

With only seven seniors out for track this year, the team is very freshman and sophomore heavy, but with 43 total kids out, the Dragons will have plenty of talent to put to use.

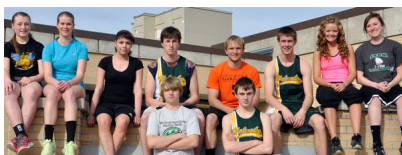
“I think we have great numbers and we do have some solid leadership at the junior and senior level,” head coach Luke Thomas explained. “I think we have a really great coaching staff, too. I would say that that’s a huge strength of our team.”

The team is returning three kids who made it to state last year. T.J. Gertner, Ryan Parker and Matt Golden were all a part of a 4x800 relay team that earned 15th place at the state meet. As a team, HHS finished in fifth.

“I just want to keep everyone healthy. No injuries, that would be ideal,” Thomas said. “I just want to make sure that the kids are successful, that they are achieving their goals and naturally we want to send some kids to state.”

After two years as the assistant coach for the Holyoke Dragon track and field team, Thomas has stepped into the head coaching role.

Thomas, who also is the head coach of the high school swim team and the junior high football team, will be joined by assistant coaches Kia Kassman, Cindi Beavers and volunteer coach Guy Kuntz. Kassman will oversee the shotputters and discus throwers, Beavers will coach the hurdlers, Thomas will focus on runners and Kuntz will work with the jumpers.



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Returning to help Holyoke chase a state title in track and field are last year's letterwinners, pictured from left, front row, A.J. Brandt and Morgan Golden; and back row, Jacinda Krueger, Lindsay Helgoth, Bianca Rodriguez, Matt Golden, T.J. Gertner, Ryan Parker, Brittney Prottsman and Cierra Prella. Not pictured is Javy Rojo. —Enterprise photo

The beginning of the season is always hectic as many athletes only have a handful of practices under their belt before the first meet due to the postseason of winter sports.

This early in the season, Thomas noted that he is pleased with the team's focus, but would like to see them pick up the intensity a little bit.

The Dragons opened the season at the Brush Invitational Saturday, March 16. The girls' varsity team secured a ninth-place finish while the boys ended the day in 10th place.

Returning letterwinners are seniors Golden, Lindsay Helgoth and Cierra Prella; juniors Jacinda Krueger, Parker and Brittney Prottsman; and sophomores A.J. Brandt, Morgan Golden, Bianca Rodriguez, Gertner and Javy Rojo.

Joining them on the HHS track team are seniors Becca Weaver, Gaby Chavez, Chris Pell and José Jaquez; juniors Zuri Lopez, Malena McWilliams, Andrew Kent, Daniel Bencomo, Carlos Diaz and Jacob Vasa; sophomores Rubi Canales, Ana Olivas, Anastasia Conklin, Rosa Ochoa, Logan Gift, Luke Stewart, Jack Gorwitz and Troy Brown; and freshmen Dani Brandt, Lori McWilliams, Monica Montes, Megan Parker, Peyton Dittmer, Roni Beavers, Adi Bencomo, Wendy Payan, Cody Lamm, Eric Rojo, Fernando Rojo, Jesus Martinez, Marques Harvey and Xander Nelson.

Senior Rachel Schneider and freshman Makenna Bishop will work as team managers.

Holyoke will head to the Yuma Early Qualifier meet Saturday, March 23 with competition slated to begin at 10 a.m.

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