

PANTHER ATHLETICS



Star Eagle

SPRING SPORTS

PREVIEW



For track teams, it's quality, not quantity

Overall numbers down, but boys, girls to feature some outstanding individuals

By **DALE KUGATH**
Sportswriter

NEW RICHLAND – The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva track and field teams will feature quality rather than quantity this spring.

The Panther numbers are down from where coach Duey Ferber would like them, but both the boys and girls will feature some outstanding individuals.

Ferber begins his 24th season in charge of the Panther thin-clads.

He will be assisted by Jay Crabtree, Chuck Crabtree, Corrine Schuller and Geoff Stieglebauer.

Boys

NRHEG has finished in the middle of the pack in the Gopher Conference and Sub-section meets each of the last three years. Ferber is hoping the Panthers have enough quality athletes to move up in the standings.

NRHEG graduated just two members of last year's squad. Gone are Hans Frank (middle distances, high jump) and

Nathan Wallin (jumps).

Six seniors head a list of 15 returning lettermen for the Panthers.

State tournament qualifier T.J. Schiltz and Ross Chester lead that group. Schiltz will wrap up his career as an outstanding distance runner and Chester competes in the sprints and long jump.

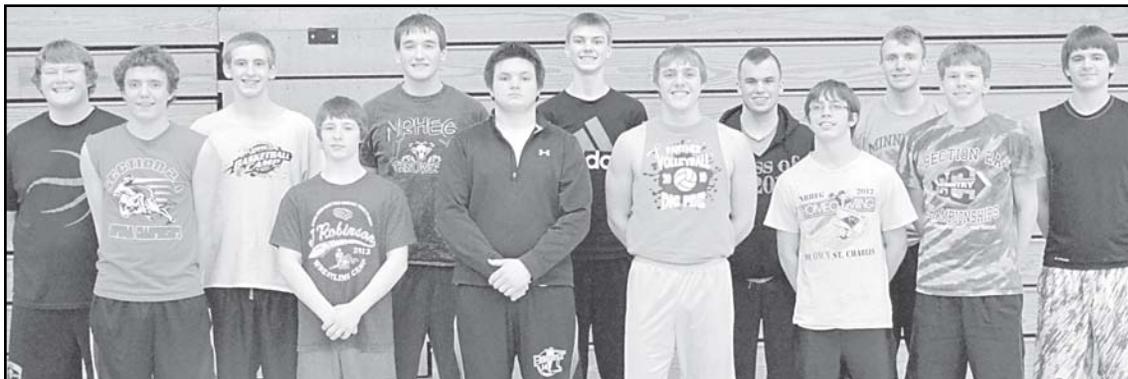
The other seniors are Nick Goette (throws), Adam Anderson (middle distances), Raece Johnson (middle distances) and Ed Peden (pole vault).

Three throwers are back from the junior class in Todd Erickson, Keith Maxon and Kevin Kalis.

The remaining returnees are sophomores. This group includes John Cole (middle distances), Aaron Seath (sprint relays), Ethan Borwege (sprints), Zach Mely (sprint relays), Cordell Peterson (pole vault) and Tyler Schlaak ((middle distances, high jump).

"We should score a lot of

Track continued on 2



BOYS' TRACK AND FIELD – Returning letterwinners for NRHEG boys' track and field include, from left, Nick Goette, Ethan Borwege, Tyler Schlaak, Cordell Peterson, Kevin Kalis, Todd Erickson, John Cole, Keith Maxon, Ross Chester, Aaron Seath, T.J. Schiltz, Adam Anderson and Raece Johnson.
Star Eagle photo by Chris Schlaak

2014 Panther Track and Field

Conference: Gopher.

Section: Section 2A, Sub-section 5A.

Coaches: Head coach Duey Ferber (24th year) Asst. Coaches Jay Crabtree, Chuck Crabtree, Corrine Schuller, Geoff Stieglebauer.

Last year: (Boys) 0-8, 15-32 overall. (Girls) 3-5, 57-11 overall, 2nd in Gopher.

Key losses: (Boys) Hans Frank, Nathan Wallin. (Girls) Katie Cole, Abby Crabtree, Emmy Hobbs, Kayla Lindell, Raelin Schue, Crystal Olson, Destinee Meyer.

Key returnees (Boys) TJ Schiltz, Ross Chester. (Girls) Carlie Wagner, Katherine Lewer.

Key dates: Gopher Conference (May 15) and sub-section (May 27 at Wells).

ON THE COVER – All signs point to a strong senior season for NRHEG's T.J. Schiltz, who placed in two events in last year's state track and field meet. Schiltz holds virtually every boys' distance running record for the Panthers. (Star Eagle photo by Chris Schlaak)

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Track

from Page 2

points in the distances, the long and high jump and the throws,” said Ferber. “We are lacking depth, but hope to finish many of our meets near the top.”

Ferber feels that United South Central is the Gopher Conference favorite and Waseca is the team to beat in the section.

“We don’t have great numbers,” said Ferber. “But, we have a lot of good athletes who will work hard to succeed and perform well.”

Girls

Ferber is sick of the runner-up position. The Panther girls have finished second in the Gopher Conference the last three years.

To challenge for the top spot, NRHEG will have to overcome the outstanding depth of USC.

“We hope to compete for both the conference and sub-section titles,” said Ferber.

The Panthers will have to replace seven graduation losses from its 2013 squad. Gone are Katie Cole (throws), Raelin Schue (sprints), Abby Crabtree and Emmy Hobbs in the pole vault, Kayla Lindell (throws) and Destinee Meyer and Crystal Olson in the distance races.

However, NRHEG returns many letter winners from a year ago.

Heading the list is senior Carlie Wagner. She earned all-conference honors in four

events last season.

Wagner won the state high jump in 2012. She qualified for state a year ago but withdrew due to an injury.

Wagner will run the 100,200 and 400 in addition to the high jump.

The juniors back are Sandra Quezada (distances), Shanna Stencel (sprints, high jump) and Shauntaya Olson (distances).

Six sophomores return from a year ago. They include Abby Wacholz (jumps, relays), Hailey Schuller (hurdles, sprints), Katherine Lewer (distances), Taylor Tieskotter (sprints, relays) and Emily Eder (throws).

The freshmen letter winners are Gretchen Ramaker (sprints, relays), Maddie Wagner (sprints, relays), Marnie Wagner (sprints, relays) and Aubrey Schlinger (sprints, relays).

Rounding out the letter winners are eighth grade middle distance runners Emily Prigge, Katie Crabtree and Kelly Harden.

Schuller, Maddie Wagner, Marnie Wagner and Tieskotter won the conference championship in the 4 x 200 relay last season.

“We should be strong in the high jump, long jump, sprints and distances,” said Ferber. “Our throws could be down from previous years.”

Ferber feels that USC is the Gopher favorite and Waseca is his section pick.

“We don’t have great numbers, but a number of very good athletes,” said Ferber.

NRHEG’s season was scheduled to open Tuesday by hosting the Panther Relays.



GIRLS’ TRACK — Returning letterwinners for the 2014 squad include, front from left: Maddie Wagner, Katie Crabtree, Kelly Harden and Emily Prigge. Back: Shauntaya Olson, Carlie Wagner, Sandra Quezada, Abby Wacholz, Gretchen Ramaker and Marnie Wagner.

Star Eagle photo by Chris Schlaak

Wells will host the Gopher Conference Meet on May 15.	April 15 Wells	A	4:30
The sub-section meet is also at Wells May 27.	April 22 Maple River	A	4:30
Mankato West will host the section meet on May 31.	April 25 Blue Earth	A	4:30
	April 29 Blooming Prairie	A	4:30
	May 6 MR True Team	A	3:00
	May 13 Conference	Wells	4:00
	May 22 Sub-Section	Wells	4:00
	May 31 Section	Kato	9:00
	June 6-7 State	Hamline	TBD

2014 NRHEG Track

April 8 Panther Relays H 4:30

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Baseball Panthers look to ride comeback trail

Pitching, contact are keys for NRHEG nine

By **DALE KUGATH**
Sportswriter

NEW RICHLAND – Question marks about a pitching staff, plus a new coach, will make the comeback trail a tough one for the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva baseball team in 2014.

Long time Panther coach Jeff Reese is taking a year off for personal reasons. He has been the head man for 35 years, guiding Panther baseball teams to a 458-258 record during that time.

Reese saw an 18-win season and conference championship team drop to sixth place in the Gopher Conference last year.

Pat Churchill will continue the rebuilding process this spring. Churchill, who is the head boys' basketball coach at NRHEG, has been the freshmen baseball coach for two years but this will be his first stint as the head man.

Shawn Larson and Sam Lundberg will serve as Churchill's assistant coaches. Lundberg was the Panther MVP and an all-conference player on the 2012 team.

NRHEG could only finish ahead of Randolph and Medford last season, going 4-6 in the conference. The Panthers had an overall mark of 5-10.

NRHEG lost five players from a year ago.

Nic Mangskau, who pitched 40 innings last spring, was an all-conference selection.

Brad Claycomb had an outstanding senior campaign. The outfielder hit .410 for the season.

Also gone are John White, Casey Rosacker and Kevin Minter.

Churchill will have four returning letter winners to mold the 2014 Panthers around.

The top returnee is senior Dillon Parpart, an honorable-mention all-conference pick a year ago. The versatile Parpart can pitch, catch or play outfield.

Senior catcher Noah Krell and senior first sacker Zach Haberman are back for their final seasons.

The lone returning junior letterman is

second baseman Dakota Thiele.

Churchill is looking for eight other players to all vie for playing time this spring.

Carson Field is the lone senior in that group. He will pitch and play third base or shortstop.

The junior class has six prospects, including Matt Jensen (P/3B), Dillon Kubiawicz (OF/2B), Jet Wayne (1B), Andy Wright (OF), Grant Kylo (IF/OF) and Forrest Wright (IF).

Sophomore Dempsey Tucker (P/OF) should also see considerable playing time.

"We have some key players returning from a young team," said Churchill. "We hope to work hard and improve as the season goes on."

Churchill found out he would be coaching baseball just two weeks before the season started, and has been trying to get ready for the season ever since.

"With all that has happened, it's unrealistic to put any expectations on this team," said Churchill.

Churchill looks for USC, Faribault Academies and newcomer Maple River to be among the favorites in the Gopher Conference. WEM is the defending conference champ.

He thinks Tri-City United will be a tough out at tournament time.

"The guys we have returning should provide us with some good experience," said Churchill. "We have to get better pitching and keep from striking out so much."

The Panthers struck out 30 percent of their at-bats last year.

"We need to make contact at the plate and put the ball in play much more this season," said Churchill. "We relied on Nic for much of our pitching a year ago. We need our younger arms to step up and get the job done."

NRHEG has a 20-game schedule lined up, including 11 road games. The season and home opener was scheduled for April 7 against Faribault Academies.

NRHEG's first road games are at WEM



VARSITY HOPEFULS — Baseball varsity hopefuls for 2014 include, front from left: Grant Kylo, Forrest Wright, Trevor Tracy and Carson Field. Back: Matt Jensen, Noah Krell, Dillon Parpart, Dempsey Tucker and Dakota Thiele.

Star Eagle photo by Chris Schlaak

2014 Panther Baseball

Conference: Gopher.

Section: 2AA.

Coaches: Head coach Pat Churchill (1st year). Asst. coaches Sam Lundberg and Shawn Larson.

Last year: 4-6 Gopher (6th), 5-10 overall.

Key losses: Nic Mangskau (all-conf. pitcher), Brad Claycomb (.410), John White, Casey Rosacker, Kevin Minter.

Key returnees: Dillon Parpart (HM all-conf.), Noah Krell, Zach Haberman (1B), Dakota Thiele (2B).

Key games: April 29 at Faribault Academies, May 1 at USC, May 9 at Mankato Loyola.

(April. 14), at Blue Earth (April 15) and at Maple River (April 17).	Apr. 17	at Maple River	5:00
The Panthers will host their annual tournament on April 26.	Apr. 21	Medford	5:00
Albert Lea, Blue Earth and Mankato Loyola are the NRHEG non-conference opponents this season.	Apr. 22	Randolph	5:00
	Apr. 24	Blooming Pr.	5:00
	Apr. 26	NR Tourney	10:00
	Apr. 28	at JWP	4:30
	Apr. 29	at Faribault Acad.	5:00
	May 1	at USC	5:00
	May 5	WEM	5:00
	May 6	at Randolph	5:00
	May 8	Maple River	5:00
	May 9	at Loyola	5:00
	May 12	at Medford	5:00
	May 15	at Blooming Pr.	5:00

2014 NRHEG Baseball

Apr. 1	at Albert Lea	4:30
Apr. 7	Faribault Acad.	5:00
Apr. 10	USC	5:00
Apr. 14	at WEM	5:00
Apr. 15	at Blue Earth	4:30

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Softball Panthers again look to compete

By DALE KUGATH
Sportswriter

NEW RICHLAND – In softball, if you have your pitcher and catcher returning from the previous year, you will be in a lot of games. The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva softball team will have that luxury in 2014.

Wendy Schultz is back for her 17th season as the Panther head coach. She has guided the Panthers to a 184-118 record during that time.

Jamie Radtke returns as the NRHEG B-squad coach.

NRHEG compiled a 9-5 record a year ago. The Panthers finished third in the Gopher Conference with a 7-3 mark.

Graduating from the 2013 team were MVP third baseman Tara Simon and outfielder Makenna Thiele. Simon made the all-conference and all-section teams.

Simon batted .535 and drove in 20 runs. Thiele hit .267 for NRHEG.

The Panthers were also hurt when second baseman Stormi Hagen and outfielder Hailey Deml elected not to play softball this season. Both hit under .200 a year ago.

But, the cupboard is far from bare. Seven letter winners return this season.

Senior Jade Schultz returns after missing all of last season with an injury. She was all-conference and team MVP in 2012.

Schultz, who racked up some impressive numbers on the mound in the three years before her injury, will be relegated to a position player this spring due to reinjuring her knee.

Senior Hannah Lundberg returns behind the plate. She batted .375, stole 15 bases and was a solid defensive catcher.

Four juniors return from last season, including all-conference performers Anna Stork and Kelli Harrington.

Stork, a first baseman, batted .432 with



SOFTBALL LEADERS — Returning letterwinners for the NRHEG softball team include, from left, Alyssa Esplan, Jade Schultz, Anna Lundberg, Hannah Lundberg, Kayley Camerer and Kelli Harrington. Not pictured: Anna Stork, Ryann Hagen and Remi Wayne.
Star Eagle photo by Chris Schlaak

nine RBI. She made just one error the entire season. She also stole 13 bases for the Panthers.

Harrington played errorless ball in centerfield. She hit .378 and knocked in nine runs.

Outfielder Ryann Hagen and shortstop Alyssa Esplan also return from the junior class.

Hagen was a .200 hitter and is the back-up hurler for NRHEG. Esplan batted .273, but must improve on her team-high 19 errors.

Sophomore pitcher Anna Lundberg and freshman outfielder Kayley Camerer round out the letter winners.

Lundberg will carry the pitching load, having pitched all but three innings last season. She gave up 91 hits, walked 41 and fanned 64 batters in 87 innings on the mound. Lundberg compiled a 2.74 earned run average for the season.

Lundberg should also improve on her .135 batting average in 2013.

Camerer batted .231 for the Panthers a year ago.

Juniors Remi Wayne (infielder) and Jade Peterson (catcher) will also be vying for playing time.

Schultz will also be looking to bringing up some of her younger players after she has had more time to analyze them.

“We will be looking to improve throughout the season,” said Schultz. “We want to be playing our best softball during the playoffs.”

Schultz feels that Maple River,

2014 Panther Softball

Conference: Gopher.

Section: South 2AA.

Coach: Head coach Wendy Schultz (17th season). B-squad Jamie Radtke.

Last year: 7-3 conference (3rd), 9-5 overall.

Key losses: Tara Simon (all-conference, MVP) and outfielder Makenna Thiele.

Key returnees: Senior Jade Schultz, senior Hannah Lundberg (catcher), sophomore Anna Stork (all-conf. first baseman), sophomore Kelli Harrington (all-conf. outfielder), sophomore Anna Lundberg (pitcher).

Opener: April 10 vs. USC.

Key dates: April 17 at Maple River, April 24 vs. Blooming Prairie, May 1 at USC, May 8 vs. Maple River, May 15 at Blooming Prairie

Blooming Prairie and Randolph will be the best in the conference. The Blossoms were state champs last year.

Maple River, which is new to the conference this year, will also be a section favorite, according to Schultz.

“Our strength should be our speed. We have a great work ethic and good team unity,” said Schultz. “We may start slowly as we will have a number of people playing different positions from last year.”

NRHEG batted .315 as a team in 2013, averaging over six runs per game.

The Panthers had a team ERA of 2.80, giving up less than five runs per game.

NRHEG will host its annual tournament April 26.

The Panthers will also play in a tournament at Hayfield May 10.

NRHEG will play 11 home games and nine on the road.

2014 NRHEG Softball

Apr. 7	Faribault Acad.	5:00
Apr. 8	Blue Earth	5:00
Apr. 10	USC	4:30
Apr. 11	Waseca	4:30
April 15	at WEM	4:30
Apr. 17	at Maple River	5:00
Apr. 22	Randolph	5:00
Apr. 24	Blooming Prairie	4:30
Apr. 26	NR Tourney	10:00
Apr. 29	at Faribault Acad.	5:00
May 1	at USC	4:30
May 5	WEM	4:30
May 8	Maple River	5:00
May 9	Mankato Loyola	5:00
May 10	Hayfield Tourney	8:30
May 12	at Medford	5:00
May 15	at Blooming Pr.	4:30
May 16	at JWP	5:00

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NRHEG clay target team has high expectations

The NRHEG clay target team is coming off a second-place finish in their conference last year.

But, like every other year in the fastest growing high school sport in Minnesota, teams never find themselves in the same conference twice. This year, the league has grown to over 6,100 competitors from 185 schools. The NRHEG team has grown to 35 shooters with students representing NRHEG, Waseca, and Albert Lea.

Due to the size of the league, a couple significant changes have been made. First, this year the Minnesota State High School Clay Target League will be split into classes. Before this year, everyone was in the same class but different conferences. NRHEG will be in Class 3A.

"The classes are set up based on team size, not school size" commented Panthers coach Dan Sorum. "It has always been the goal of the league to pair similar sized teams rather than using student population."

The second big change is the expansion of the state championship on Alexandria from three to five days. Each day will fea-



SPRING SHOOTERS — Members of the 2014 NRHEG clay target team, from left: Carter Suchanek, Tyler Logan, Alex Buckmeier, Todd Erickson, Marshall Pederson, Noah Lund, Sam Bartz, Collin Christensen, Zach Eustice, Tyler Jacobson. Note: Not all team members are pictured as the season had not started when this picture was taken. Submitted photo

ture a class rather than a level of skill as in the past. Everyone is still eligible to attend so it is expected that 4,000-plus high school shooters will compete and that over 10,000 visitors will travel to Alexandria. The final big change is that for the first time, the MSHSL will sponsor a state tournament for the top 100 shooters in each class as well as the top teams. This will be the first and only state high school league-sponsored trap shoot in the nation. For the NRHEG team, it means more opportunities to make their mark in the history of this young league. Aside from their second-place conference finish last year, the team had a top 20 shooter at the state championship in Zachary Eustice from Waseca as well as two top 25 female shooters in the league in Larissa Peterson and Haylie Mosher. Both Haylie and Zach

are returning this year along with four other letterwinners.

"We were pretty young last year," said Sorum. "We are still young with 21 out of our 35 shooters in ninth grade or lower and we have just one senior in Tyler Logan."

Yet expectations are high for this team given the number of kids who could post scores of 45, 50 or better each week.

"It's always exciting to be part of this league each year and I see this year being the same," concluded Sorum.

The team will compete on Monday nights at the Owatonna Gun Club south of Hope starting at 4 p.m. The season started the week of March 31 and goes into the first week in June. More information about the league can be found at www.mnclay-target.com.

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Golfers hope to challenge conference foes

By **DALE KUGATH**
Sportswriter

NEW RICHLAND – New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva girls' and boys' golf coach Brad Root hopes a year of experience will help his 2014 golf teams to challenge Gopher Conference foes. All his squads need are some playing experience.

Root is hoping that bad weather which has forced a slow start will not keep his golfers from getting that playing experience.

The Panther boys have seven returning letter winners and the girls return eight players from last season.

Root is completing his 26th year at NRHEG, his fourth as the head golf coach.

Andy Peterson will serve as Root's assistant coach, while Park Paulson takes care of the Junior High program.

Boys

The Panther boys are looking for plenty of improvement from a year ago.

NRHEG was 5-7 in regular season meets, fifth in the conference tournament and seventh in the sub-section.

Colton Ryg was the only player lost from a year ago.

The Panthers do not have a senior on this year's team.

The team will be built around four juniors who played last season. They are Jake Langlie, Cole Lenort, Kelson Titus and Macoy Schwierjohann.

Sophomore returnees include Mike

Alterman and Lucas Herrmann.

Freshman Spencer Enger rounds out the list of returning lettermen.

"These guys got a lot of experience last year so we are pretty well set on our varsity spots," said Root. "These guys were responsible for a good season a year ago."

Other varsity candidates include junior Hudson Mrotz, sophomores Nick Shultz and Will Rudau and freshman Kolton Koziolk.

"We have good numbers so someone could emerge as a surprise to help us," said Root. "We have pretty good golf skills, but need to work on the mental side of the game."

Root feels USC is the conference favorite and Waseca will be a strong team in the section.

"We need to move from being good practice players to good tournament players," said Root.

NRHEG has four matches scheduled at home, including its season opener against Faribault BA today.

The Panthers will play eight regular season matches on the road, starting with Maple River Monday.

The Gopher Conference Tourney will be held at Faribault May 15.

North Links in Mankato will host the South Sub-Section 2AA Tournament May 27.

The section tourney is June 2 at New Prague.

2014 Panther Golf

Conference: Gopher.

Section: South 2AA.

Coaches: Head coach Brad Root (4th year), asst. Coach Andy Peterson.

Last year: (Boys) 5-7, 5th in Gopher, 7th in sub-section. (Girls) 12-8, 3rd in Gopher, 7th in sub-section.

Key losses: (Boys) Colton Ryg. (Girls) Maddy Reed, Maddy Schwierjohann, Brenna Hagen, Brina Bergland, Liz Eder.

Key returnees: (Boys) Juniors Macoy Schwierjohann, Cole Lenort, Jake Langlie, Kelson Titus. (Girls) Senior Lizzy Stohl and sophomores Jessica Nafe and Riley Koziolk.

Opener: Today at home vs. Faribault BA

Girls

Despite losing five players from a year ago, the NRHEG girls have plenty of optimism for the 2014 season because of a number of players with experience. But, all of the experience is young.

NRHEG will have just one senior vying for a spot on this year's squad.

The Panthers compiled a 12-8 record a year ago, finishing third in the Gopher Conference and seventh in the sub-section.

Gone from a year ago are Maddy Reed, Maddy Schwierjohann, Brenna Hagen, Brina Bergland and Liz Eder.

Lizzy Stohl is the lone senior on this year's squad.

Golf continued on 8



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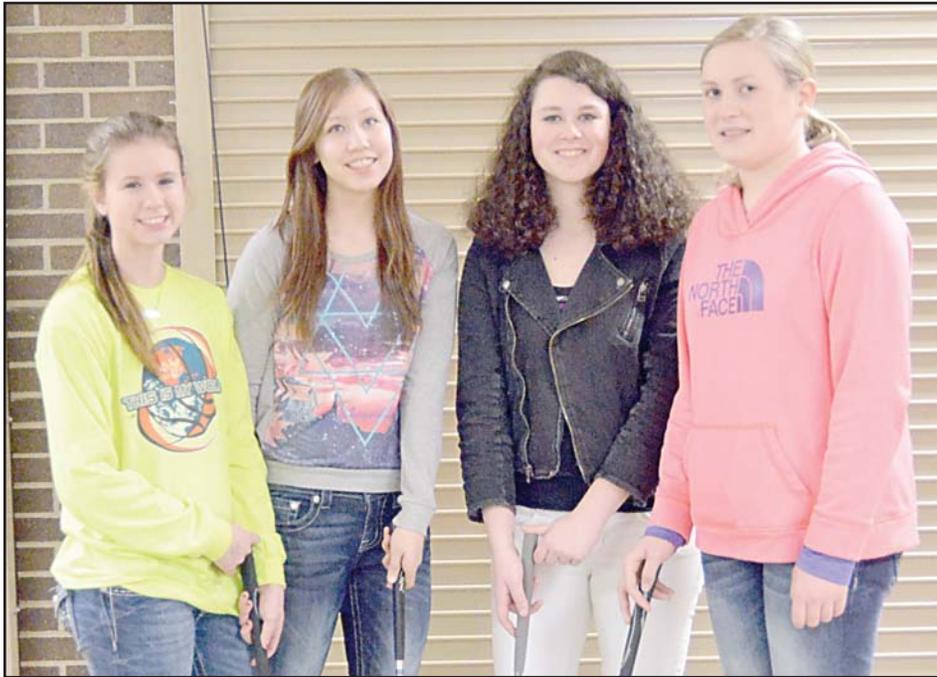
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GIRLS' GOLF — NRHEG girls' golf letterwinners for 2014 include, from left, Kyra Possin, Tali Wayne, Jill Jongbloedt and Lauren Herrmann. Not pictured: Lizzy Stohl, Jessica Nafe and Bayli Possin.

Star Eagle photo by Chris Schlaak



BOYS' GOLF — NRHEG boys' golf letterwinners for 2014 include, from left, Lucas Herrmann, Nicholas Shultz, Kelson Titus, Spencer Enger and Macey Schwierjohann. Not pictured: Cole Lenort and Jake Langlie.

Star Eagle photo by Chris Schlaak

Golf

from Page 7

After Stohl, the Panthers go to the sophomore class for Jessica Nafe, Riley Koziolek and Bayli Possin.

Jill Jongbloedt is the lone varsity member from the freshman class.

Eighth-grade candidates include Tali Wayne, Lauren Herrmann and Kyra Possin.

Root thinks the Panthers girls could finish second in the conference and second in the sub-section. He tabs USC as the Gopher favorite and Waseca is his choice in the sub-section.

"We have good team chemistry and a great work ethic," said Root. "We want to play aggressively and be risk takers on the course."

"Our girls have to be improved from a year ago," said Root. "We have to be prepared for whatever weather conditions exist."

The Panther girls have just three matches at Riverview Golf Course. The first is

the season opener today against Faribault BA.

Monday's match at Maple River is the first of five road matches.

The Gopher Conference Tournament will be held at Faribault May 15.

The girls' South Sub-Section 2AA Tourney is May 27th at North Links in Mankato.

New Prague will host the section tournament on June 2.

2014 NRHEG Golf

April 7	Faribault BA (B/G) H	4:30
April 14	Maple River (B/G) A	4:30
April 17	USC (B/G) Freeborn	4:30
April 19	Blooming Prairie (B) A	9:00
April 22	St. Peter (B) A	10:00
April 24	Blooming Prairie (B/G)H	4:30
April 28	Faribault BA (B/G)A	4:30
April 29	Dodge Center (B) A	1:30
May 1	Maple River (B/G) H	4:30
May 5	Dodge Center (G) A	1:30
May 12	Belle Plaine (B) A	1:00
May 13	Blooming Prairie (B/G) A	4:30
May 15	Conf. (B/G) Faribault	10:00
May 27	Sub-section (B/G)Kato	10:00
June 2	Section (B/G)N. Prague	10:00

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