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2024

FALL

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES



PRESS PHOTO BY MIKE HAINES

This year's Salisbury High School football team has the largest roster the program has seen in recent years, with over 60 players out for the team.

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Falcons have new energy

BY CJ HEMERLY
Special to the press

The Salisbury High School football team has a lot of energy and excitement surrounding the program entering the 2024 regular season.

There is a new head coach in Kevin DiZenzo and a lot of interest in suiting up and being a Falcon.

According to DiZenzo, participation has doubled within the last

year, and that is important for a sport like football that requires roster depth.

"I'm really excited to be a part of this program," said DiZenzo. "I've been here now a little over a year and work at the school during the day and am around the kids. I'm really starting to build a great bond with the guys and the numbers in the program are tremendous right

now.”

That is a huge turning point for Salisbury, which recently has had trouble with participation numbers for football. DiZenzo has 65 student-athletes compared to 32 last season.

Some of the departures to graduation last season are running back/linebacker George Spann, quarterback/linebacker Jacob Buchin and wide receiver/

defensive back Gavin Cerco.

Top returning players this season include linemen Andrew Nemeh, Sam Krauss, Elijah Garriga, Griffin Lakics, Tyshuwn Claudio and Angel Ortega, running back/linebackers Jason St Leger, Jordan Tocchi-Wachter and Derek Trinidad, quarterback/linebacker Andrew Lucas, wide receiver/de-

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PRESS PHOTO BY MIKE HAINES

Salisbury boys soccer head coach Barry Frick is in his first year at the helm of the program, but in his 32nd year as part of the team's staff.

Boys soccer must replace 10 grads

BY CHUCK HIXSON
special to the press

Barry Frick served as an assistant coach for boys soccer at Salisbury for 31 years. This fall will be Frick's first season as head coach this season as he takes over for Mark Allinson.

Frick takes over a team that went 5-7 in the Colonial League and is looking to make

strides toward reaching the postseason in 2024, but has to work its way through the loss of 10 seniors from last year's roster.

The losses left Frick with holes to fill on offense and left him looking for a starting goalie to replace Blaine Berger.

Frick wound up turning to the basketball roster where he found

Julian Makhoul, who measures his soccer experience in days and not years. When Salisbury plays its first game of the season, Makhoul will have put together almost two weeks of time on the soccer field, but Frick likes what he has seen.

"He's had a few sessions out there and we had a scrimmage, and he

played very well," said Frick. "He's an athletic kid and he is working really hard to learn the ins and outs of being a soccer goalie and I think he's going to be OK out there."

Senior Josh Hudak was among the leading scorers for Salisbury last season, and he will lead the Falcon offense and provide leadership

for the younger players on the squad. Alejandro Zuniga also returns to the team with Hudak on the attack and provides more leadership for Frick's young team.

Hudak also serves as the kicker for Salisbury's football team. He had 14 goals last season for the soccer team.

"He hustles a lot and he is very aggressive,"

said Frick. "We've had a couple of scrimmages and have done some nice things, and the guys are working really hard, and we see that in practice, so they're coming in with the right attitude."

"These guys are really hungry, and we need that. If we continue to work hard and do the

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PRESS PHOTO BY MIKE HAINES

The Salisbury field hockey team is looking to make it's third straight trip to the District 11 playoffs.

Field hockey looks to contend in postseason

BY CHUCK HIXSON
Special to the Press

The Salisbury field hockey team fought its way to a 6-6-2 season in the Colonial League last fall, narrowly missing a spot in the league playoffs.

The combination of a low number of seniors lost to graduation and higher numbers than usual coming out for

the team this season has the level of optimism around the program running pretty high.

"We're excited, we really are," said Falcon head coach Jane Brennan, who enters her eighth season at the helm. "We're biting at the bit to get out there and play some games and get things going. We had a great showing

at summer league and the girls won an award at Kutztown University when they went to camp there together. For the first time since I've been coaching here, we had an entire team that attended that camp together and that really helped us to come together."

In addition to sending a team to Kutztown, Brennan saw an in-

crease in the number of players attending the open turf sessions over the summer to work on skills.

"Things like that show commitment and across the board, from our seniors to our freshmen, we are seeing better commitment," she said.

While there weren't many losses to gradua-

tion, the defense took the brunt of the hit. Bailey Neitz and Riley Knecht were both key players defensively and Brennan needs to fill those holes for the season.

Freshman Ella Morgans has earned a look on the defense. Morgans is attending Allentown Central Catholic, which has a cooperative agreement with Salisbury in

field hockey and some other sports allowing athletes at either school to participate in sports their home school doesn't sponsor.

"Even though she's a little green, we're looking for some good things from her because she has a great passion for the game and that's always important," said See **HOCKEY** on Page 11

Tennis team has three players, more sought

BY MIKE HAINES
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This year's Salisbury girls tennis team will once again be a bit too short on players to field a full line up for matches.

While head coach Gregg Laub would like to have more players and is actively seeking new recruits, the long-time mentor couldn't be more proud of the two players he has returning from last year's team.

Junior Jaylene Vazquez and sophomore Ariana Cachio played in matches last year when the Falcons fielded a three-player team. Both are back for another season and one of them is balancing a two-sport

fall schedule.

"Jaylene comes to every single practice," said Laub. "I'm so proud of her."

"Kacie can't because she's playing soccer. The fact that she is doing [both sports] is phenomenal and proves how much she wants to play [tennis]."

Also returning from last season is sophomore Kacie Kaugh, who didn't play in a lot of matches last year but will see plenty of playing time in 2024.

The team graduated senior Mia Kezenga, who was the No. 1 player last season.

This year Vazquez moves into the No. 1 position, with Cachia

remaining at No. 2 and Kaugh playing the third singles position.

Laub said 12 players signed up in spring, but when practice began in summer very few showed up. He's hoping with the end of summer jobs and vacations, more student-athletes will find the desire to join his team.

He wants all interested players to know it's not too late.

"Reach out to me," he said. "There will always be room. Even if it's second or third week in, it's not too late. I'll make it work."

Laub can be reached at glaub@salisburysd.org.



PRESS PHOTO BY MIKE HAINES

The Falcon tennis team has three players this season, but head coach Gregg Laub is open to adding new players during the season in order to get closer to filling a full line up.



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Falcons will have full girls XC team

BY MIKE HAINES
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For the first time in several years, Salisbury will have two full cross country teams in 2024.

While the Falcons have had a full boys team the past few years, their girls team has been a few runners short of the five needed to score as a team in meets.

Heading into this season, first-year head coach Annie Purtell will have five girls and six boys on her high school team.

While the girls team won't have two-time state qualifier Emily Batten back out for the team this year, junior Soldad Lausch returns for her third season. Joining her on this year's girls roster will be junior Sam Conrad, sophomores Lydia Fogel and Shelby Tenzer, and freshman Rachel Mack-

ensie.

"During practices all the girls are running together," she said. "They're all doing it for fun. I'm happy to have a full team."

The boys team returns all but one runner from last year's team. Leading the way will be junior Emerson Juhasz and senior Cameron Kubinsky.

Juhasz finished in the top 40 in both the league and district championships last fall and had an impressive track season that saw him break personal records.

The rest of the roster includes seniors Greg Tenzer and Josh Orach and juniors Rafael Carpo and Riley Nemitz.

Purtell, a Lehigh University student and former girls lacrosse player at Emmaus High School, takes over the team after serving as an assistant



PRESS PHOTO BY MIKE HAINES

Salisbury's boys cross country team returns nearly all of last year's line up, while the girls team will have a full line up for the first time in a few seasons.

with the Falcon track, swimming and cross country teams the past few seasons.

She's pleased with her team so far and eager to get the season underway.

"They've been doing very excited. I see us really during in practices the past couple weeks," she said. "I'm having a great season this year."



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PRESS PHOTO BY MIKE HAINES

The Salisbury girls soccer team has a mix of experienced players and younger players on this year's roster.

Girls soccer team sees increased numbers

BY CHUCK HIXSON
special to the press

Coaches love to have balance on their team when it comes to a mix of young players coming in to join more experienced players on the field.

The Salisbury girls soccer team has that combination and head coach Rick Babyak is excited about the potential that the mixture brings

to his team for what will be his 13th season leading the girls program.

"We've had some good practices with a lot of good positive energy that I haven't seen in a long time, and it was really nice to see," he said. "I'm happy with the way the girls were coming together as a team and our older players are showing a lot of maturity and passing that along to the

younger girls."

Salisbury was not hit too hard by graduation and returns a good number of players from last season's team.

Senior Gabby Pena is somewhat of an all-purpose player who can play both offensively and defensively and also saw some time in goal last season. Babyak is hoping she is not needed in that capacity.

Ellyana Belle-tieri-Bieber handles one of the center-mid positions and is noted for her team leadership on and off the field. Scarlet Lang and Izzy Munoz are also seniors who are counted on for leadership with the Falcons.

"That group is kind of making sure that everybody stays together on and off the field," said Babyak of the seniors. "I

really credit them for the way things have gone so far and for keeping the energy of the team high and keeping everything positive."

Salisbury saw an increase in the number of players coming out for the team this season and among the group are some talented young players who will be playing a role either in the starting lineup or

coming off the bench to gain more varsity experience.

Both Raya Jones and Lauren Ciala are freshmen who have worked well together on the field and could contribute to the Falcons throughout the season.

"A lot of the young players have come in and are ready to go," said Babyak. "They

See **GIRLS** on Page 11



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BOYS

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right things we can get to where we want to be. Basically, it's going to depend on them and how they come together on the field, but we have some talented kids."

While Frick believes the team can be competitive this season, all eyes are on the juniors and sophomores. The level of experience among the two classes varies, but Frick sees players who are capable of stepping into larger roles with the team this season to provide growth for the team now and in the future.

"We have a lot of sophomores and juniors, and they are going to have to play up this season and fill holes for us," said Frick. "They don't all have a lot of experience, but they are working well together and fitting into what their role with the team will be and I think that as the season goes on, they will be im-

proving and provide us with some excitement."

One of the key juniors is Christian Marinos, a striker, who joins Hudak and Zuniga to provide offensive punch up front. Jeandy Lantigua Batista will see increased time on the field this season for Frick, who has been impressed with what he has seen from the sophomore in the early going.

Pablo Reyes is a three-year starter on defense and anchors the back line for Salisbury. The senior serves as a center marking back and gives the Falcons leadership on defense.

"We've stressed that everybody has to kick it up this season and play hard for us to be successful," said Frick. "We have been working on moving quickly because I don't think we're going to be able to do a slow build up. We're going to have to win possession, get a couple combinations and strike quick."



PRESS PHOTO BY MIKE HAINES

The Salisbury golf team returns two of its top three players from last year's team.

Salisbury golf team battled tough early-season schedule

BY MIKE HAINES
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While most fall high school sports just got underway over the weekend, golf teams from schools around the state have been competing since mid-August.

Salisbury's golfers opened the season with a tough schedule, facing five the Colonial League's top teams over the first two weeks of the season.

After dropping matches to Saucon Valley (442-462), Palmerton (428-469), Notre Dame (415-498) and North-western (432-456), the Falcons expect to have come closer matches

and maybe pick up some wins over their finals six contests.

"We played all the big guns," said Falcon head coach Mike Pennella, who has all but two players back from last year's team that went 3-10.

Jake Zellin and Ava Smarch graduated from last year's team. Zellin, one of four Falcons to compete in the Colonial League Championship Tournament last year, leaves a hole near the top of the line up.

Returning seniors Own Fogel and Josh Holler will likely be the team's top two players this season. Fogel led Salisbury with an 89

for eighth place at last year's league tournament.

Other players expected to be among the top five in most matches are juniors Steven Lozada and Aidan Smarch and sophomore Jackson Skeens, who all return from last year's team, along with senior Connor Leavy, who is also playing soccer in spring but will boost the line up when he's able to compete in golf matches.

Some other players could emerge from the team's large roster that includes 18 players. The rest of the team includes seniors James Scialla, Austin Spisszak and Na-

than Staack; junior Aidan Bonser; sophomores Markus Jones, Hunter Kotarski and Michael Segata; and freshmen Mohmma Bader, Pierson Campbell, Logan Kao, Andrew Stuppung and Casey Wells.

With several players who are just learning the game, Pennella could have some newcomers to the team crack the line up and help score in matches.

"I have a lot of new guys that have never played before," he said. "They're coming around. They're hitting the ball pretty good."



PRESS PHOTO BY NANCY SCHOLZ

Three-year starting defender Pablo Reyes will anchor Salisbury's backfield this season.

The Salisbury High School band will perform at football games and other events during the 2024-25 school year.

PRESS PHOTO BY
MIKE HAINES



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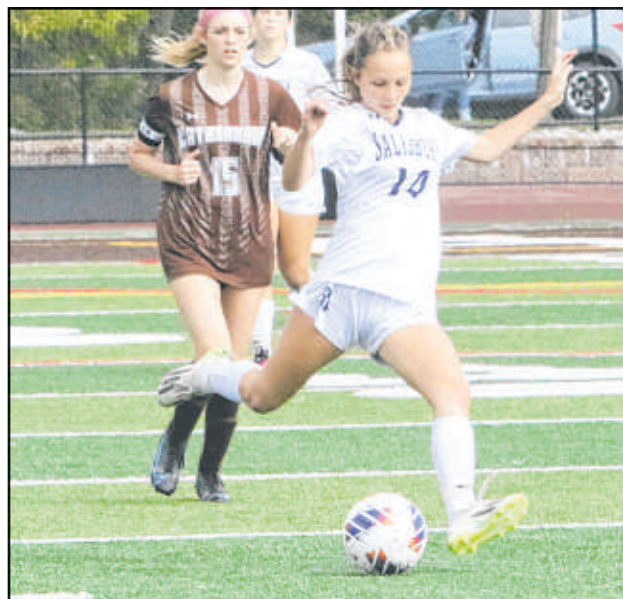
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PRESS PHOTO BY LINDA ROTHROCK

Senior Ellyana Belletieri-Beiber is part of a Salisbury girls soccer team that heads into the season with its largest roster in several years.

GIRLS

Continued from page 7

work well together and have the ability to play a couple of different positions for us. It's a nice crop of young players and that's what we needed to provide the balance of young players and experienced players on the team."

Even with an 0-12 mark in the Colonial League last season, the influx of young players and the hard work that the team has put

in through the preseason gives the coaching staff optimism for the upcoming season as the program looks to turn things around.

"The potential is there and if they keep working, I think we will see some good results," said Babyak. "Our numbers are higher than they were last year and not by just a couple of players, they're really up and that is a great sign for us. If we can avoid the injury bug we should be able to take a step up this season."

HOCKEY

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Brennan. "She will pick up more skills as we go along."

The good news defensively is that junior goalie Caroline Gedney, who had eight shutouts last season, returns to anchor the cage.

Senior Lauren Kushma joins the group of midfielders and brings strong stick skills to the group. Also in the midfield is Katie Carbone, who started all 17 games for Salisbury last season as a freshman and classmate Ellie Schneider (2 goals, 4 assists in 2023) showed an ability to help defensively and to set up the offensive attack for the Falcons.

For team leadership, Brennan points to senior Maya Afif, who was one of the stalwarts on the team last season and is known for her stick skills around the cage. Brennan also has a pair of juniors in Gwyn DeFazio and Meredith Kelly, who both emerged as part of the team's leadership last season.

Brennan credits DeFazio for her ability to play both offensively and defensively and find open players to start scoring opportunities, while Kelly has the communication skills to keep the team together.

Another pair of juniors, Sarah Beckage (10 goals) and Kendra Morgan (5 goals) provide experience and a scrappy style of play to the attack from their forward positions.

Brennan is confident that her team can extend its streak of



PRESS PHOTO BY NANCY SCHOLZ

Maya Afif is one of several returning seniors on this year's Salisbury field hockey team.

district playoff experiences to three straight seasons and will be among the contenders for the Colonial League playoffs, especially if the defense steps up and overcomes the graduation losses.

"One of our strengths is that the majority of our team has been playing together since middle school and they all work well

together and bring a solid chemistry to the team," she said. "The girls who haven't been in that core are fitting in well thanks to the leadership on our team. Our communication has been really good and the girls pick each other up on the field, so those things bode well for us."

ENERGY

Continued from page 2

defensive backs Jamani Cruz, Caleb Gonzalez and Dominic Figueroa, linebacker Jacob Watson and tight end/defensive end Brandon Flores.

A couple of newcomers that will be depended upon to contribute this season include quarterback/defensive back Bryan Gonzalez, kicker Josh Hudak, wide receiver/defensive back AJ Moren and tight end/linebacker Keaton Frye.

"Our players have had near

perfect attendance throughout winter/spring workouts," DiZenzo said. "Our summer wasn't any different. Our roster has near doubled in size. We had a great training camp and we're excited to get out there and compete. Football is all about execution. Our success or demise will be in the details."

The regular season is set to begin Friday, August 23. The Falcons open up with a home game against Panther Valley in a White Out game.

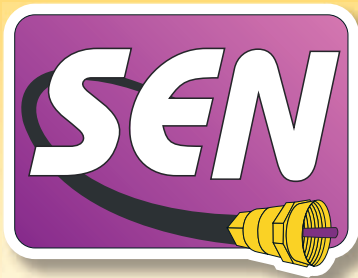
"We are going to take this season one week at a time," said DiZenzo. "We believe in each other and belief goes a long way."



Senior Derek Trinidad and the Falcons have a new head coach, a larger rosters and a new enthusiasm around the football program heading into the 2024 season.

PRESS PHOTO BY MARK LINEBERGER

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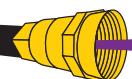
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