

The News SPORTS

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GIOVANNI CORONEL/THE NEWS

Karson Grout (left), Collin Miller (center) and Alex Bean (right) make up the trio of Golden Hawks who played their way onto the All-State team, a well deserved honor.

ALL-STATE HAWKS

Three Golden Hawks selected to All-State baseball teams

BY GIOVANNI CORONEL

The News

KALONA

The same summer will never come again. With no two summers being the same, it's important to take a step back and reflect on all the good tidings this summer brought. For Mid-Prairie, this summertime proved to be another great one.

After a season that saw Mid-Prairie capture its fourth consecutive district title, winning the River Valley Conference championship, and claim 27 victories, it came as no surprise the postseason accolades came rolling in.

Three Golden Hawks from this year's baseball team received all-state recognition from the Iowa High School Baseball Coaches Association.

Mid-Prairie junior Karson Grout was named first team all-state and seniors Collin Miller and Alex Bean were named second team all-state.

Being selected first team all-state shortstop is an accom-

plishment Grout can add to his list of impressive postseason accolades, having also been named first-team all-conference as an infielder and named first-team all-district shortstop.

"God has blessed Karson with the talent that most do not have. He is truly special and players like him do not come around often," Mid-Prairie baseball coach Kyle Mullet said. "Karson knows he is special and has the talent. He is meant to be a baseball player."

Grout, who has verbally committed to the University of Iowa baseball program, has been playing for Mid-Prairie since he was an eighth grader.

In his four years as a Golden Hawk, this year was the first season where he saw no playing time on the mound, but it also turned into his most productive year on offense.

Reaching his high school career high, Grout ended his junior year with 48 hits. His hit total not only led Mid-Prairie, but it was also the second most

in Class 2A.

More often than not his hits brought in his teammates to score, amassing a team leading 37 RBIs which was also the fifth most in the state. Helping that RBI total was Grout connecting on four home runs, the most on the team.

"He works so hard behind the scenes that the public does not see. He puts in countless hours in the batting cage and on the field working on his talents. Karson surrounds himself with good coaches and mentors," Mullet said.

Grout also excelled when it came to baserunning. Never getting caught, he was able to go 20 for 20 on stolen bases. He also scored 34 runs, the second most on the team.

A vital part of Mid-Prairie's success this season, Grout is no doubt a player his teammates and coaches hold in high regard.

"Traveling across the country getting exposure to college coaches and pro scouts," Mullet said about Grout. "Those

experiences, the coaches, the people, the training, his work ethic and his love for the game is what helps him to be the best player he can be."

Collin Miller began his Mid-Prairie baseball journey as a freshman back in 2020 and even then, he was able to stand out from the crowd as someone who isn't afraid of high-pressure situations.

"As a freshman he was a closer on our 2020 State run," Mullet said about Miller. "Closing out a big game against Central Lee to take us back to the State tournament. Since then, he has progressively been a starting pitcher for us. Ending his career as one of the top Pitchers in the state and especially class 2A."

For Miller, being selected second team all-state as a pitcher comes on the heels of his first team all-conference and first team all-district selections which were also as a pitcher.

Miller's play at the pitcher position has only gotten better and better every season.

Just looking at his ability to strike out batters in his four-year high school career, he went from six strikeouts to 22 strikeouts to 72 strikeouts to a career high 74 batters.

"Anytime Collin was on the mound we knew we had a good chance to beat our opponent," Mullet said. "His physical ability is what makes him a good ball player but it's his mentality, competitiveness, and knowledge of the game and how to pitch that makes him a great pitcher/ ball player."

This season Miller, who pitched in 58 innings, held an unblemished 7-0 pitching record, giving him the third most wins in Class 2A. He had an earned run average (ERA) of 1.68 and gave up 15 runs in total.

Not just limited to the defensive side of baseball, on offense Miller was able to finish the season with 22 hits, 12 RBIs,

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Lions head toward Chicago for football opener

BY PAUL D. BOWKER

The News

LONE TREE

It's time to gas up the bus. The first act for Lone Tree's football team this season is a three-hour road trip to Chicagoland.

The Lions have a Week 0 game, meaning they'll begin their season Friday night, a full week ahead of most other Iowa schools, and they'll hit the road for it. Lone Tree takes on Parkview Christian, a small private school in Yorkville, Illinois, located about 50 miles southwest of the Windy City.

Parkview is one of five new teams on the Lions schedule, but most of those are because Lone Tree was moved from District 6 to District 5 in this year's new eight-man football alignment in Iowa.

That means the Lions won't have to face WACO, which won District 6 with an unbeaten conference record last year, but they will have to face Easton Valley, the defending District 5 champion, in the last week of the regular season. And they'll also face Central

City, the District 5 runner-up that drilled the Lions 44-21 last year.

Because the Lions had a Week 0 game, they were allowed to begin fall practice August 7, a week before most other teams. And already on that first day, returning senior quarterback Ethan Bockelman was running plays for the Lions in a practice that included 40-yard sprints at the finish.

Bockelman, who passed for 741 yards and 10 touchdowns last year, is one of five returning seniors. Joining him are wide receivers Jader Sanchez and Dominic Graap, and offensive/defensive linemen Cole Abbott and Harry Brenneman.

The first test for the Lions will come Friday, followed by their home opener next week against Iowa Valley, which is remaining in District 6.

Lone Tree's District 5 opener will be against Midland on September 8, following a bye week.

Head coach Joe Donovan, who is also Lone Tree's ac-



PAUL D. BOWKER/THE NEWS

Lone Tree senior quarterback Ethan Bockelman passed for 10 touchdowns last year and also ran for 10 touchdowns.

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