

Mid-Prairie cross country runs into new year



Paul Bowker
Columnist

Cross country will take on a different look this fall at Mid-Prairie.

While senior Danielle Hostetler chases after her fourth consecutive state championship, she'll do it without her dad, Mark, as the Golden Hawks head coach.

Mark Hostetler, who coached the Golden Hawks to five consecutive state team championships to tie a state record and led Mid-Prairie to a runner-up team finish at the 2023 Iowa High School Track & Field Championships, is taking the fall season off with a temporary leave of absence.

Also not returning this fall is Aaron Fleming, who has been Mark's longtime assistant coach at Mid-Prairie.

The Golden Hawks finished fifth at the state cross country meet in 2022, ending their state championship run that Danielle, and her older sisters Anna and Marie played big roles in. Marie, a junior at Liberty University, won three Iowa state titles and finished second to Anna in the only state race she didn't win. Danielle became a Golden Hawk the fall after Marie graduated from Mid-Prairie.

Jeremy Meyers is the head coach this year and the season cranks up soon. The Golden Hawks begin the season August 24 in a meet at the University of Iowa's Ashton course, featuring several large-class schools in a challenging competition. Among the schools competing are Iowa City High, City West and Liberty.

Lunch Date

Former longtime Mid-Prairie basketball coach and athletics director Don Showalter returned from a USA Basketball trip to Lithuania to speak August 8 at the Kalona Rotary Club's weekly meeting.

Joining him in the packed luncheon at the Kalona Historical Village were many of his former players and coaches, including Kelby Bender, who is now an assistant coach with the Golden Hawks, and brothers Chris and Jason Kern, among many others.

Showalter, a 10-time gold medalist with USA Basketball who is now Director of Coach Development, entertained the crowd with stories of the Golden Hawks and his days as coach for the USA's youth national teams. Many of the players on those teams wound up in the NBA.

Joining Don at the luncheon was his wife, Vicky, a native of West Chester who also worked in the Mid-Prairie School District. They now live in Iowa City.

A book on Showalter's life, "Cornfields to Gold Medals," was published and released this summer. Pete Van Mullen, a professor at Lewis-Clark State College in Idaho, authored the book.

Just a couple of days after his Kalona visit, Showalter was in Pittsburgh for a USA Basketball Gold Camp. Clearly, this Golden Hawk gets around.

After the Rotary luncheon, several visited the new and impressive Streetscape exhibit at the Historical Village's Wahl Museum.

Leaping for the Reivers

Cain Brown, a 2023 Mid-Prairie graduate and a prominent athlete in football, track and baseball, took to Twitter, or X, for a fun video this past weekend. The video showed him making a catch at the same time he was doing a somersault on the football field at Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs.

Brown looks to be on the gameday roster when Iowa Western opens its football season August 26 at Dodge City (Kansas). The Reivers are defending national champions.

Brown, who ranked second in Class 2A-6 last year in both receiving touchdowns and yards for the Golden Hawks,

Mid-Prairie volleyball partakes in first scrimmage before season



TJ RHODES/THE NEWS



The Mid-Prairie Golden Hawks volleyball squad played in their first scrimmage against Xavier High School in Cedar Rapids on Aug. 10. Their season will begin Aug. 24 when the Washington Demons make their way to Wellman.

Hillcrest travels to Washington for VB scrimmages



GIOVANNI CORONEL/THE NEWS



chose football at Iowa Western instead of a possible track scholarship at another school because of his love for football. He was a state track qualifier in the high jump and long jump over the last two years. Brown's vertical leap as a football receiver is impressive.

A starter for the Golden Hawks baseball team this summer, Brown went immediately to Iowa Western's preseason camp once Mid-Prairie lost in a 2A baseball substate at Ottumwa.

"I believe I made the roster, so that's exciting," Brown said.

It's enough to flip over, for sure.

Running for the Dutch

Leah Bontrager, a 2022 Hillcrest Academy graduate and now a sophomore at Central College in Pella, is one of the best rising cross country runners at Central.

A four-time state qualifier at Hillcrest, Bontrager was named Central's Newcomer of the Year in her freshman year in 2022.

The Dutch open their season September 1 with the Central Dutch Invitational, an event in which Bontrager finished fifth last year.

Gearing up for the upcoming season Hillcrest volleyball battled it out in a series of scrimmages against the hosting school, the Washington Demons, and the Keota Eagles on August 14.



KELSIE BERG

The Kalona Golf Course hosted some 70 youth for the Kalona Optimist Club annual Junior Golf Camp and Tournament. Mid-Prairie golf coaches Tracy McArtor and Kelby Bender served as coaches. Each participant received a golf bag towel with an Optimist logo on them. Each participant also received recognition. The Kalona Optimists members help to take the participants around the tournament course on golf carts.

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