

West Fork Girls Track and Field Season Preview

BY EVAN PHARR
THE HAMPTON
CHRONICLE

After a strong 2025 season, the West Fork girls track and field team will look to have similar success in the 2026 season. The Warhawks qualified nine girls for the state meet and had seven top three finishes in meets as a team, including placing second in the Top of Iowa-East Conference track meet and third in the state qualifier meet. Of those state qualifiers, senior Brylee Dickman, senior Abby Schoning, junior Evelyn Hitzhusen and junior Alyssa Wood will be returning to the team for the 2026 season. Warhawks' head coach Ashley Sears has high expectations for the Warhawks.

"Abby Schoning, Brylee Dickman and Jenny Ramirez are our three returning seniors this year," Sears said. "I would expect most of our athletes who qualified for state last year to qualify again this year. Brylee was a state qualifier in shot put and I assume she defiantly will be heading back this year. Abby is a great hurdler, and she is solid in the 400 meter race. We also have Evie Hitzhusen coming back this year as a junior and she qualified for state in four events last year. I think we are going to have a solid squad, and I think the freshman coming in are going to help. Including Makenna Dick, who qualified for state in cross country."

The Warhawks will have a young roster this season, with over half of



Brylee Dickman throwing discus in a meet during the 2025 season. Photo by Evan Pharr.

the roster being underclass- man. Coach Sears spoke on

the expectations she has for the underclassmen.

"I think that is the fun part of being a track coach;

when you get these new athletes come in and they have only really dabbled with middle school track," she said. "It's kind of just fun trying to figure out where everyone is going to be the most successful. Not only for team points but for individuals. The first couple of meets is usually just trying to try people out in different spots and find where they shine. It's like putting a puzzle together, just seeing where everyone is going to be successful."

With a young exciting roster and high expectations, coach Sears and the Warhawks are more than ready to get the season started. The girls first outdoor track meet of the season is on Tuesday, March 21 at St. Ansgar High School at 4:30 p.m.

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The 2026 West Fork boys track and field season is just around the corner and the Warhawks will look to build on the success they had last season. The Warhawks finished in the top five in five of their 10 outdoor meets last season and qualified one athlete for state. Xavier Haller qualified for state as a senior in the high jump last year and was part of a group of seniors who were a big part of the team's success last season. Warhawks head coach Caleb Hovenga discussed the challenges of replacing those seniors.

"I definitely can't understate the leadership from our seniors last year, especially Trevor Despenas and Xavier Haller," Hovenga said. "Both of them were one and two in point scorers for our team last year, even with Trevor getting hurt so early in the season. They leave a whole as far as leadership and who is going to step up into their role and score points for us. Some seniors this year I am looking at this year to step up and be those leaders are Rylan Dorenkamp, who trained with Trevor a lot last year, and Dax Suntken, who was somebody who was a big point scorer for us last year. Both of their goals are pretty high this year."

Coach Hovenga also spoke on what he expects from the underclassmen and athletes who will be



Blaine Schulz running in a meet during the 2025 season. Photo by Evan Pharr.

stepping into big roles for the first time this season.

"I think that is what is going to be the biggest challenge this year," he said. "We have about 28 or 29 kids on the roster, and about one-third of them are freshman. This will probably be the most well-rounded group of freshman I

have had in a long time. Not just in numbers but in pure athletic ability. I would like to see them push themselves but also push the upperclassmen."

With a lot of new faces, the Warhawks will look to improve as the year goes on and hopefully qualify multiple athletes for state. The

Warhawks' first outdoor meet of the season is on Tuesday, March 31 at Saint Ansgar High School at 4:30 p.m.

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