

Eagle track team looking to turn the corner in '08

By Joey Falkoff

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Some teams have talent. Some are just deep. The 2008 Colby Eagle track and team feels like it has a nice combination of both.

Head boys coach Gordon Rasmussen and girls coach Lesley Wagoner have a combined 57 athletes at their disposal this season, returning all but four from last year.

"This is the most kids we've had in several years," said Rasmussen, who is entering his 23rd season at Colby High. "We've got the majority of our team coming back, so it looks like we should be pretty decent."

Also returning are seven of the nine athletes who qualified and six who placed at the state tournament last year. The only one not back is Darren Sporing, who qualified in the 800M.

Last year, the Eagle girls track team didn't place and the boys finished 17th. Rasmussen believes this season looks much more promising.

"This is as many or more state qualifiers and placers as we've had in a long, long time," said Rasmussen. "This could be one of the better teams we've had. I think without injuries we have a shot at doing really well at state."

Among the seven state qualifiers returning this year is senior Lissa Mazanec.

Mazanec won the state championship in the discus as a sophomore and finished second last year.

Rasmussen hopes she is able to finish her high school athletic career with a bang.

"Lissa will have a good shot at winning the discus. It depends how well she competes at state," said Rasmussen. "She'll probably have a little more motivation since this is her last sport as a high school athlete. She wants to go out on top."

The other returning Lady Eagle who qualified for state last year is



LEFT: Lady Eagle sophomore April Gee will look to improve upon her fourth place state tournament finish in the triple jump this year. RIGHT: Heath Stephens, front, and Scott McCoy are two of the three Eagles that return to this year's boys 4X100 relay team that finished fifth at state last year. Senior Mitchell Tuma is the other returning member of the team.



FILE PHOTOS

sophomore April Gee, who finished fourth in the triple jump.

"If she wants to work hard, she could win a state championship," said Rasmussen. "She has to decide she really wants to work at it."

The girls will have to replace Caitie Henry, Carleigh Demepwolf and April Weaver, but Rasmussen has some younger girls ready to take on the challenge.

Freshmen Katherine and Katrina Kaus are among several freshman girls out for the team. The Kauses had the two best times for the Lady Eagle cross-country team at state last fall.

"Almost all of those freshman girls out there should be pretty good," said Rasmussen. "Your good cross-country runners are usually your good distance runners in track."

While the girls strong spot looks to be in the field events, the boys return the majority of their talent and experience on the track.

Colby's 4X100 relay team of Scott McCoy, Heath Stephens, Mitchell Tuma and Eli Robert fin-

ished fifth at state last year. Robert decided to play baseball this year, and Rasmussen is still looking for his replacement.

"Our 4X100 team could be really good," said Rasmussen. "There's a number of guys vying for that fourth spot."

Senior Josh Baden gives the Eagles a potential state champion in the distance events. Baden finished fourth in the 1600M and third in the 3200M last season. This past fall, he took second at the state cross-country meet.

"He'll have a run to place easily and could also make a run at a state championship," said Rasmussen.

Other state qualifiers returning for the boys include senior Ethan Stover in the javelin and junior Breck Arnberger in the 1600M.

"I can't say we're only strong in the distance, because we've got some really good sprinters," said Rasmussen.

"We've got a good combination of runners. They're not all in one area which helps. We've got good field events people in different

spots also."

The boys also have some younger competitors who figure to make a big impact on the team this season.

"The boys have a good athletic bunch," said Rasmussen. "Most of them played football and will help us a lot on varsity. Ryan Baalman was injured last year and has looked really good. He'll run the mile and the 400 and a relay or two."

After what's been a warmer-than-usual few weeks of pre-season practice, the Eagles will open their season 10 a.m. Saturday at McCook, Neb.

They'll compete in Norton, Goodland and Atwood before heading to the K.T. Woodman Classic in Wichita, which features 1A-6A schools from across the state.

Scott City figures to be another highly competitive meet April 15.

Rasmussen said he may also send Mazanec and Baden to compete in the KU Relays April 16-19 in Lawrence.

"That's a huge one," said Ras-

mussen.

The Eagles host their own tournament May 2, and then have the good fortune of hosting the league meet May 9 and regionals May 16.

"Our regional is not terribly tough," said Rasmussen.

"It's probably the second toughest with Concordia being the toughest."

The top four finishers in each of the 18 events will qualify for the state tournament May 23-24 in Wichita.

Rasmussen lists Concordia, Buhler, Abilene, Chapman and Baldwin as some of the top 4A track programs in the state.

Given the large amount of depth and experience he has returning, Rasmussen believes his team can fit right in among that top tier.

"With what we have returning, my goal is to win a league championship," said Rasmussen.

"We could have a good shot at winning a regional championship with boys or girls. I think we can do pretty well at state and maybe have a shot at a trophy."

Wildcats expect to take a blow

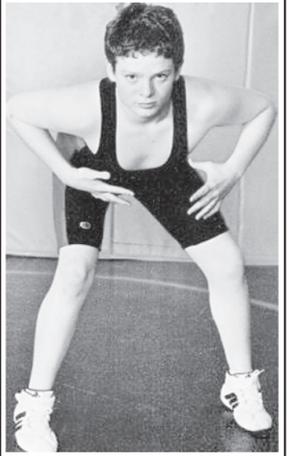
MANHATTAN, (AP) — Michael Beasley is still grappling with a decision, but his coach expects the Kansas State super freshman to head into the NBA draft.

Frank Martin said in an interview with The Associated Press and the Manhattan Mercury on Tuesday he believes the 6-foot-10 power forward, even though he loves college life, will probably opt to turn pro.

"I think he's going to go, and I think it's the right thing to do, because he's going to be the top pick in the draft," Martin said.

Kevin Durant, who was the second overall player taken in the draft, is now worth about \$100 million.

Good luck... Dustin Burleigh HEADING TO STATE! Colby Kids Wrestling



We are so proud of you!
Love - Mom, Dad & Family

GOOD LUCK AT STATE!!

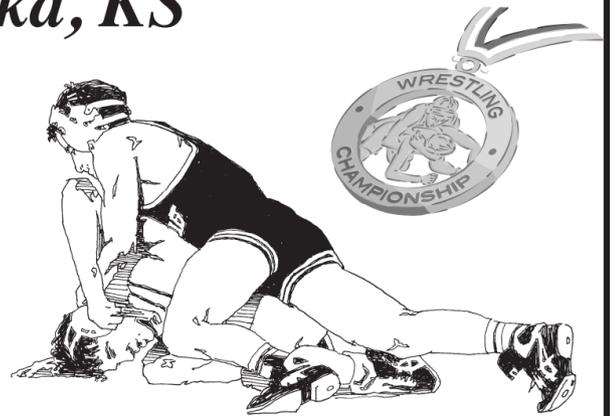


Colby Wrestling Club

26 Wrestlers...

Qualified to go on to State Competition
at Topeka, KS

Saturday & Sunday
March 29th & 30th



Peyton Moeder	8U/46 lbs
Zach Hart	8U/73 lbs
Jeron Schutte	8U/95 lbs
Luke Taylor	8U/110 lbs
Tate Carney	10U/61 lbs
Dillon Blackhart	10U/64 lbs
Brady Holzmeister	10U/82 lbs
Connor Edmundson	10U /85 lbs
Dustin Reed	12U/80 lbs
Macen Shull	12U/84 lbs

Quade Woofter	12U/96 lbs
Trek Keck	12U/115 lbs
Andrew Taylor	12U/130 lbs
Dustin Burleigh	12U/140 lbs
Zell Bieberle	12U/165 lbs
Devon Schlageck	14U /85 lbs
Michael Tubbs	14U /105 lbs
Taylor Moeder	14U /110 lbs
Dryden Baumfalk	14U /125 lbs
Dalton Snyder	14U /130 lbs

Clayton Applehans	14U /155 lbs
Nathan Reed	16U/115 lbs
Torey Taylor	16U/145 lbs
Ethan Stickel	16U/155 lbs
Breck Arnberger	16U/165 lbs
Tanner Kriss	16U/175 lbs

Go get'em boys!!!