

Tom A. Savage
Contributing writer

After opening at O'Gorman on Thursday, the Lynx host Sioux Falls Jefferson for its home-opener on Tuesday, Dec. 16. The Cavs feature another one of the state's top players in junior Brinley Altenburg, a sharp-shooting three-point threat.

BV ATHLETIC BOOSTER CLUB



The quest to be the best begins Friday

Boys hoops enters season as defending champs

Tom A. Savage
Contributing writer

Brandon Valley enters the 2025-26 season as the defending Class AA state champions. It's the first time they've held that distinction since 2019.

The Lynx weren't able to defend that title as the COVID-19 global pandemic shuttered the state tournament in March of 2020, making this year's Brandon Valley season that much more special with potential added pressure.

And it starts in a hurry. The Lynx opened practice on Monday, Dec. 1. They host Bishop O'Gorman on Dec. 12 for a quick turnaround from practice sessions, to game-night intensity.

The Lynx enter this season after losing some scoring power to graduation in Landon Dulaney, Brayden Miller and Aiden Zerr. Towards the end of the season, Grant Hennen also contributed with significant minutes in Brandon Valley's tournament run. Dulaney was named to last season's All-Tournament team after averaging 14.6 points, 6.4 rebounds and 3.5 assists per game.

Despite those losses, the Lynx return their point guard in senior Briggs Knutson, and post player in 6-foot-4 junior Austin Dowd.

"Anytime you have a post and a point guard coming back, that helps solidify things," said fifth-year Brandon Valley head coach Craig Nelson. "Sometimes



Six seniors will lead the defending Class AA champions through the 2025-26 season. They are, from left, Brayden Knutson, Briggs Knutson, Will Peterson, Ayuel Deng, Dylan Williams and Jackson Burns. Senior Jack Rice is the team manager. Brandon Valley opens their season Friday at home against Sioux Falls O'Gorman.

for AA teams, you start five seniors and you have nothing coming back. So it's been nice the last couple years that even when we've lost some really good pieces, we've had some good stuff coming back."

Also returning this season is sophomore Lincoln McInerney, who played significant minutes last year with some timely baskets as a freshman down the stretch, including back-to-back 3-pointers against Mitchell in the title game.

Also back this year is Ayuel Deng, a senior that transferred out of Brandon Valley to Creighton Prep in Omaha after his eighth-grade year. The 6-foot-1 forward could also

add an offensive spark for the Lynx.

As for defending their title, Nelson said he thinks the Lynx have enough to make another run, although – like last year – it may take a second to find out.

Brandon Valley erased a double-digit, fourth-quarter deficit and outscored O'Gorman 19-6 in the fourth quarter last year to open with a Metro Conference win. After they squeaked out that victory, Brandon Valley lost at Sioux Falls Jefferson and the Lynx were 1-1 before going on a terror, winning 13 straight.

"I didn't know we were that type of team (championship caliber) last year un-

til we were 10 to 12 games into it, maybe more," Nelson said. "It took a while. It was kind of a slow start going into Christmas break. You're even going into Christmas wondering if you're any good at all. Not only about making the state tournament, but are you any good at all?"

If they do get a crack at defending their title, they'll likely have to go through Sioux Falls Lincoln. The Patriots lost in last year's semifinals to Mitchell, but return three sure-bet First Team players in Brody Schafer, Sam Ericsson and Augustana-commit Sam DeGroot. Brandon Valley gets the Patriots on Feb. 13 at Lincoln.

Huron will also be in the mix this season with arguably the state's best player in 6-foot-10 guard Blake Ellwein. The Lynx host Huron in the regular-season finale on Feb. 27.

Brandon Valley will also play in the Hoop City Classic, an annual Christmas break tradition where South Dakota schools welcome some of the best high school teams from around the country. This year, Brandon Valley will play Florida's Zephyrhills Christian Academy in late December at the Corn Palace in Mitchell.

Zephyrhills features some star power in five-star power forward Toni Bryant, and five-star shooting guard

Evan Roberts. Alexander Davis is a 6-foot-9 power forward who averaged 9.4 points, 15.2 rebounds, 3.3 assists and 3.1 blocks per game last year for Mainland High School in Daytona Beach. He transferred to Zephyrhills for this season.

Despite the traditional mismatch when teams visit South Dakota for the Hoop City Classic, Brandon Valley more than held its own last year and defeated St. George's of Germantown, Tenn., by eight.

In what could prove to be a boost down the stretch, Brandon Valley plays four of its final five regular games at home.

BOYS BASKETBALL

- Dec. 12 O'Gorman
- Dec. 18 at SF Jefferson
- Dec. 20 SF Roosevelt
- Dec. 29 TBD
- Jan. 2 at Marshall, Minn.
- Jan. 6 Watertown
- Jan. 8 at Brookings
- Jan. 13 at Harrisburg
- Jan. 22 at Pierre
- Jan. 24 Aberdeen Central
- Jan. 30 at Yankton
- Feb. 6 at RC Central
- Feb. 7 at RC Stevens
- Feb. 10 SF Washington
- Feb. 13 at SF Lincoln
- Feb. 17 Tea Area
- Feb. 20 Spearfish
- Feb. 21 Douglas
- Feb. 24 at Mitchell
- Feb. 27 Huron
- March 7 SoDak 16
- March 19-21 AA State Tournament

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Jill Meier/BV Journal

The Lynx wrestlers opened their 2025-26 season last weekend at the Sergeant Bluff-Luton Invite and continue their early-season tournament run this Friday and Saturday at the Council Bluffs Classic. Wrestling for Brandon Valley this season are, from left, row one: Harvey Scheuer, Talong Van Diepen, Ethan Haas, Ayden Reasonover, Levi Anderson, Aaron Tucker, Braydon Bach, Isaac Weerheim, Sirjan Rai, Shawn Scheicher, Kaushik Rai, Hayden Josephson, Brendon Oehme, Beckett Rehorst; row two: Gunnar Deffenbaugh, Luke Danielson, Dawson Haffner, Xavier Bolden, Levi Veskna, Joe Anderson, Rony Fuentes, David Fuentes, Parker Ripperger, Garrett VanDusen; and row three: Braden Shoemaker, Pablo Torres, Aiden Schrandt, Edin Musinovic, Mason Poolman, Elijah Schunke, Roman Elofson, Tone Ledbetter, Anneyso Ahmed, Jameson Plautz and Cody Lindekugel.

Lynx matmen poised for big success in 2025-26

Jill Meier
Journal editor

‘I think we’re going to be really good’

Brandon Valley head wrestling coach Tom Meester enters his second year at the helm with a roster loaded with experience and depth, giving him good reason for optimism once again this season.

The Lynx held their wrestle-offs last week, rolling out 43 athletes – including five wrestlers stepping into competition for the first time. For Meester, who watched newcomers wrestle in singlets under the lights for the first time, he sums up the night as “eye-opening and very competitive.”

“It was good,” he said. “They’ve been practicing, but having people watch is different. We had some

really competitive matches, and a good crowd. It was fun.”

And as Brandon Valley reloads, the Lynx look poised to contend again – both in duals and tournaments.

As usual, the Lynx graduated several key contributors, but returns a core that Meester believes is deeper and more mature than last season’s squad.

Junior Brendan Oehme (120 pounds) is one of the state’s most decorated lightweights. A state runner-up last season, he returns to the BV mat down one weight class at 120, and Meester expects him to shine.

“He looks great. Physically, it’s the perfect weight for him,” Meester said. “He wrestles year-round and

hasn’t taken his foot off the gas once. I think he’s going to beat up some people this year.”

Senior Elijah Schunke looks poised to continue last year’s undefeated season and state title win at 215 pounds. Despite stepping into the heavyweight role, Schunke has also trimmed down from the upper 260s to 245-250, and the difference is showing.

“He really accepted the challenge of becoming a heavyweight,” Meester said. “He’s moving really good and we expect him to do exactly what he did last year.”

Junior Beckett Rehorst (126) is another year-round wrestler who committed fully to the sport. He’s added size and strength in the off-season but suffered a

pre-season foot injury. The hope is to have him back by late December.

“He’s been doing great,” Meester said. “We’re hoping he’s ready for those duals later in December.”

Fresh off a standout football season, senior Levi Veskna (175) took zero time off between the fall and winter seasons, despite Meester’s encouragement to ease into the wrestling grind.

“That’s just Levi,” Meester said. “He wants to go, and I think he can win a state title this year.”

After bouncing between 165 and 175 last winter, Veskna, whose headed to the University of Sioux Falls to play football, will remain at the upper weight with added size and strength.

Senior Tone Ledbetter and sophomore Cody Lindekugel may share time in the 215-pound weight class, although Ledbetter may see action as heavy-weight, too.

Meester also looks for big things this season from senior Aaron Tucker (144) and junior Braden Shoemaker (150).

Tucker has moved up to 144, where Meester hopes less weight-cutting will translate to stronger match-day performances.

Shoemaker, meanwhile, brings momentum after winning a USA Wrestling post-season national title in Des Moines.

“He’s put on size and looks really good,” Meester said.

Senior Roman Anderson

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BOYS WRESTLING

Dec. 6 at Sgt. Bluff-Luton
Dec. 12-13 at Council Bluffs Classic
Dec. 18 at SF Lincoln quad
Dec. 19-20 at UofM Xmas Tourney, Rochester, Minn.
Dec. 30 at Floyd Farrand Invite, SFL
Jan. 5 at Tea Area
Jan. 8 Huron
Jan. 10 Dan Pansch Invite
Jan. 15 at Yankton quad
Jan. 20 at Brookings
Jan. 23 Mitchell & Watertown
Jan. 24 at Pierre Invite
Feb. 5 Pierre
Feb. 3 Harrisburg
Feb. 5 at O’Gorman quad
Feb. 14 at State Team Duals, Pierre
Feb. 20 at Regional Tourney, Harrisburg
Feb. 26-27 State Tourney, Sioux Falls

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Lady Lynx look to add banners to wrestling wall

Jill Meier
Journal editor

When South Dakota sanctioned girls' high school wrestling five seasons ago, Brandon Valley had just seven girls on the roster. Today, the Lady Lynx are pushing nearly four times that number – a sign of a young program that's not only growing, but maturing into a legitimate force on the mat.

Head coach Derek Outland is excited about both the numbers and the returning talent. "We're right around 26, 27, and we have a great mix of some new high school athletes, but also a solid wave of seventh and eighth graders," Outland said.

The incoming youth is pairing with the most experienced and accomplished group the program has had to date.



The Lady Lynx return five state qualifiers, including one state place winner in junior Kendall Clayton (135 pounds), who stood on the third-place podium step last winter.

"She has grown, so she's going to be at a bigger weight class, and she's adjusting to that new weight class," Outland said. "She has some really high goals for herself this year, and she's been working extremely hard, pretty much from the time that the state tournament ended last year."

Also returning is two-time state place winner Lily Hamner. On the team than the senior, who fill the 170-pound slot for the Lady Lynx this season. Injured late in the season, she endured two off-season surgeries.

Brandon Valley's girls' wrestling program has elevated in numbers this season. Representing the Lady Lynx on the mat this season are, from left, row one: Leah Nelson, Shaylee Arredondo, Brynn Engelking, Tessa Reese, Cordelia Hofer; row two: Jocelyn Parker, Faith Kanengieter, Danica Swanson, Trinity Carson, Lariana Mora-Robles, Ashton Grimmus, Brenna Reker, Lilly Hamner; and row three: Sally Beal, Kendall Clayton, Michal Parker, Natalie Delaughter, Elysia Mittan, Gracie Peters, Grace Carson, Kayleeann Solum. Not pictured are Rinoah Gabriel, Maddi Haas and Aloung Lual.

Outland said her comeback will be gradual.

"She's working her way back, so she won't be on the mat right away," Outland said.

Junior Brenna Reker returns to the mat in a new, lighter weight class. She's stepping down from 138 to the 130-pound slot.

Eighth-grader Gracie Peters, who placed eighth last season at 100 pounds, moves up to the 110-pound weight class, and Lariana Mora-Robles begins the season at 155 pounds.

"When Lily (Hamner) gets ready, I think one of them will change weight

classes," he said.

Junior Grace Carson (140), freshman Leah Nelson (120), eighth-grader Brynn Engelking (130), junior Shaylee Arredondo (105) and freshman Sally Beal (starting at 235 with a goal to drop to 190) are also seasoned veterans returning to the varsity mat.

"Leah worked really hard this off-season and she's been looking good in the first weeks of practice," Outland said.

The Lynx coach describes Engelking as "an athlete who really enjoys the sport."

South Dakota introduces

new weight classes in girls' wrestling this season, and Outland said that should play in Arredondo's favor.

"She's one that the new weight classes are really going to help, because it's going to help us to spread out some of our girls in the lineup. Last year, she was a really tough girl, but she didn't have a spot to wrestle just because of her size, so 105 is probably about perfect," Outland said.

Seniors Kayleeann Solum and Janessa Skyberg, who rejoined the program after a two-year absence, are both gunning for a varsity role. Solum

will wrestle at 125 and Skyberg drops down from her previous heavyweight role to 170 pounds.

"She wanted to come back in her senior year and give it another try," he said.

Renoah Gabriel is a junior who will wrestle at 100 pounds. Outland said he sees big potential in Gabriel and is aiming to get her into the lineup.

"Then we just have a whole bunch of youth that we're excited about getting them in here and learning the sport this year, kind of low pressure," he said.

Incoming talent is also starting to filter through the

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Dec. 12-13 at Lewis Central Invite, Mid-America Center
Dec. 18 at SF Lincoln
Dec. 20 at Canton Invite
Dec. 29 at SF Lincoln Invite
Jan. 5 at Tea Area
Jan. 8 Huron
Jan. 10 Dan Pansch Invite
Jan. 15 at Yankton quad
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Feb. 19 at Regional Tourney, MCM HS
Feb. 26-28 State Tourney, Sioux Falls

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Lynx are rolling strong in 2025-26

Representing Brandon Valley on the lanes this season are, from left, row one: Khloe Solum, Monica Kranz, Tori Gunderson, AnneMarie Warne, Sienna Hewitt, Addison Holmquist; row two: Jessa Berning, Cyrus VanDyke, Miles Hoiland, Masen Velgersdyk, Anthony Bovis, Brailey Gulbrandson, Madilynn Van Sloten; row three: Brynn Henning, Wesley Benfield, nEthan Sturgeon, Lennox Kane, Max Marnach, Nyemah Cotton, Brennan Hewitt, Coach Dwight Harris; row three: Coach Pat Knopf, Coach Rob Tille, Evan Lyng, Norah Putnam, Lucy Tille, Carter Stahl, Spencer Lund, Amir Alic, Miles Hoiland. Blake Honken and Coach Danielle Cotton.

Submitted photo

BV Boys WRESTLING cont. from page 3B

will battle with sophomore Gunner Duffenbaugh for the 132 spot. Meester appreciates having depth in the weight classes, especially with injuries and sickness already surfacing.

Determined to crack into the varsity lineup, senior Garrett Van Deusen (157) may finally get his shot. He's battling with freshman Parker Ripperger for the varsity nod.

After sitting out last season out, junior Hayden Josephson won his wrestle-off handily and takes over the 138 spot.

Junior Sean Schleicher (175) also won the wrestle-off with Veskna sidelined to earn the start early in the season.

The sophomore class, Meester said, may quietly be the backbone of BV's future.

Gunner Deffenbaugh (132) is vying for a varsity role. Harmon Kramer (165) is a year-round wrestler who placed third at nationals in Des Moines, aling with Lindenkugel, a strength-heavy, multi-sport athlte., and junior Anneyso Ahmed (190) – a transfer from Sioux Falls Jefferson, who was a state seventh-place finisher last season – is provint to be a huge pickup for the Lynx “He’s really athletic,” Meester said. “He’s going to fit in really well.”

Other returning sophomores, including Pablo Torres and Harvey Scheur.

Both wrestlers have shown significant improvement and off-season commitment.

Freshmen Isaac Weerheim (113) and Braylon Bach headline a young class already pushing upperclassmen.

Weerheim presently is hovering around 118–119 pounds and will get down to 113 after Christmas per SDHSAA weight-de-scent rules, Meester said. Bach will temporarily fill in at 126 while Rehorst recovers, and could challenge at 132 or 138 as the season progress.

And an impressive newcomer emerged from the middle school ranks in eighth-grader Jagger Rehorst (106).

The underclassman won a dramatic three-match wrestle-off series with freshman Ethan Haas, and Meester was excited about his competitiveness he witnessed.

“It’s nice to have that competition, and good to have the brothers on the team,” he said.

Last season, BV tied for eighth in the individual state tournament despite qualifying 13 wrestlers. In duals, the Lynx entered as the No. 6 seed and finished fourth, falling to Rapid City Stevens by a single point.

This season, Meester believes they’re positioned to climb steps on the podium.

“Of the 14 weights, I count 10 guys who can place,” he said. “And there’s

a lot of champs in there. If we stay healthy and train right, I don’t know where we’ll finish – first, second, third, fourth – but they’re doing the right things.”

He expects the usual powers – Sturgis, Watertown, and Aberdeen Central – to remain strong, but believes the Lynx have elevated, especially with many top wrestlers from other teams graduating.

This season, the Lynx will wrestle on the home mats on four different dates.

“It’s a lot of mat moving,” Meester said, “but it’s good, especially from last year when we were barely home.”

With injuries, lingering football recovery and roster competition, Meester expects plenty of movement in the BV lineup early on in the season.

“We’ll do wrestle-offs in two weeks before Christmas, then again after Christmas,” he said. “Everyone has to stay ready. Injuries happen.”

Despite the early-season vacancies, Meester believes this team is simply stronger overall.

“Everyone has matured a little more,” he said. “On paper, this team looks better than last year. And the leadership – they’ve grown up and they’re passing it on.”

With depth at nearly every weight class, star power at key positions, and a coaching staff bolstered by volunteer assistant and former Lynx standout Riley Pletten, the Lynx appear primed for a big leap forward.

“We’ll see where we stack up,” Meester said. “But I think we’re going to be really good.”

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No Parliament, but Brandon Valley powerlifting primed for new headliners in 2025-26 season

Tom A. Savage
Contributing writer

In previous years, the South Dakota state powerlifting championships have been a Hudson Parliament side show.

Throughout the tournament the last three seasons, all eyes were on the massive Brandon Valley offensive lineman as he moved an enormous amount of weight, all to the dismay – and cheering – from the large group of athletes, coaches and fans assembled. Last season, he set a state record in the Squat, lifting an astonishing 650 pounds in front of a raucous crowd that cheered him on during the impressive lift.

But the three-time defending – and record-setting – powerlifting champion is off to the University of Iowa next semester to begin his football campaign with the Hawkeyes. He won't be at Brandon Valley when the powerlifting season gets into full swing in South Dakota, and although that's likely a disappointment for many, it clearly seems to be the right thing to do.

"You can't blame him at all," said Brandon Valley powerlifting coach Adam Bobzien of Parliament's decision to head to Iowa after the first of the year. "He's got nothing left to prove in high school powerlifting. He's set every record, he's won at multiple weight classes, he's won every year since he was a



Tom A. Savage/BV Journal

Nine seniors are among the large-in-number powerlifting program at Brandon Valley High School this season. Pictured are Lynx seniors, from left: Zach Osdoba, Taylor Smook, Zurie Petersen, Lucy Lamont, Jacob Johnson, Carson Hunt, Archer Johnson, Isaac Mitzel, Emily Dooley.

POWERLIFTING

Dec. 13 at O'Gorman
Jan. 17 BV Invite
March 14 State Meet, SF Roosevelt

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we'll miss him. You always miss guys like that, not just because of what he can do, but what he brings to the team as far as that team aspect. Just a great person to have around."

Despite Parliament's absence from the lineup of lifters, Bobzien said he's anxious to see what the Lynx can do this season. Brandon Valley last won a state powerlifting title in 2022. In 2023, they were

continued on page 8B

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IceCats Team – Back row, from left-to-right: Assistant coach Austin Rosenbaum, Jon Lafond, Hunter Hoogendorn, Kalil Kalil, Justin Pederson, Jordan Montplisir, Nolan Swenson, Hudson Keffeler, Ethan Gruenig, Max Peters, head coach Matt Niessink. Middle row, from left-to-right: Ryler Harms, Elias Michailidis, Max Miller, Tripp Stevens, Lynden Pyle. Front row, from left-to-right: Eli Honken, Isaac Hass, Lucas Peterson, Quinn Reinwald, Cole Clites, Max Kranzler, Aiden Smith, Eli Hortsmeyer, Sam Johnson.

‘Astoundingly game-changing’

IceCats hope to build on indoor facility success

Tom A. Savage
Contributing writer

It’s a new day for the Brandon Valley IceCats varsity hockey team. After years of competing at their outdoor facility in McHardy Park, the IceCats finally have an indoor arena to call home.

And it will be a game-changer.

This year marks the first time the IceCats, both varsity and junior varsity, will be competing in their new indoor home at IceCat Arena. It’s been a long time coming, and the new digs will hopefully begin to build a solid program in the state.

“It’s astoundingly game-changing,” said first-year head coach Matt Niessink. “Not just the physicality portion of it, but the emotional backing of it. We have a home now.

We get to step into our own doors, and that feeling of pride that comes with it is beyond words to the kids, the families, the community, and even to the coach.

You walk in the doors and it has your name above it. That sense of pride that comes along with it adds to the competitive nature of kids.”

The 32-year-old Niessink played high school varsity hockey at Luverne, Minn., and was the assis-



Submitted photo
IceCats Seniors – Back row, from left-to-right: Elias Michailidis, Cole Clites, Max Peters. Front row, from left-to-right: Eli Honken, Tripp Stevens. Not pictured: Cody Dorsett.

stant coach last year for the IceCats, taking over for Dennis Paquette. This year, Niessink has Austin Rosenbaum, a 22-year-old Dordt University hockey alum as his assistant. Kevin Peters also serves as an assistant coach.

Although they have the

new facility at Aspen Park, the IceCats have some work to do, and they’ll be the first to observe it.

The IceCats played host last Friday and Saturday for their first varsity games ever in the new facility, and they took it on the chin. Brandon Valley welcomed

the Rapid City Rushmore Thunder to their new facility and were defeated 16-0 on Friday and 14-1 on Saturday.

Although the grandstands were packed, the on-ice result clearly wasn’t the hope for opening a new building, but it also wasn’t a huge

surprise.

“We’re not at their level yet, but we hope to get there,” said Brandon Valley Hockey Association team coordinator Marsha Pederson. “But the building was full of people. That was so great to see and we’re excited for more.”

Part of Brandon Valley’s setback compared to other varsity hockey teams across the state is roster size. The IceCats have only 24 skaters combined to make up both a varsity and junior varsity roster.

Per South Dakota Amateur Hockey Association (SDAHA) rules, teams can freeze 10 players who can compete in only varsity games. Because Brandon Valley is under the state rule of 28 players, SDAHA gave the IceCats an exception to freeze five. That means several Brandon Valley skaters are playing four, five, and six periods per night on a junior varsity/varsity back-to-back.

“Forty-five second shifts on the ice – nothing else compares to it,” Niessink said. “You’re going constantly, you’re stopping, you’re making a hard stop going full speed, and then you have to rebuild all that energy. Forty-five seconds feels like an eternity. And then you get 45 seconds to a minute off the ice, and you’re right back on doing it again. Most of our kids

are pretty worn out.”

That’s where conditioning, Niessink said, is going to be vital to continue to build something at Brandon Valley. His goal this year is to build competitiveness.

“We want to walk out of the arena knowing we skated with them,” he said. “We want to hold our own, and not be red in the face after every shift. We want to skate with them, and put pressure to them like they put pressure to us. Just walk out of there feeling better about ourselves than last year against teams that we know are going to be stronger, but we want to show that we are becoming stronger as well.”

Although the IceCats this season may have their hands full, it’s quite clear that IceCat Arena is building something for the future. The indoor facility will likely bring Brandon Valley up to contention in short order.

“We’re at the tail end of our career,” Pederson said in reference to her son, Justin, who’s a junior on the IceCats. “But I hope to be involved going forward and helping these other families be as successful as we think they will be. We’re very hopeful for the future. It truly is going to be monumental for them to be a competitor when they get to that level.”

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LADY LYNX WRESTLING cont. from page 4B

“This sport is still new, but last summer we had a great group of fifth and sixth graders that came and practiced with us, because they can see there’s a way that you can go forward and compete. One of the cool things right now is that we do have a lot of leaders on this team, and we have a lot of girls with really high, high goals,” Outland said.

Once again, Pierre, Canton, Harrisburg and Watertown are in the top-tier chatter. Although Pierre has a new coach this season, Outland said the Lady Gows return with a number of veteran wrestlers.

“Harrisburg has some really good quality individuals, and Watertown is kind of the same thing. They don’t have a lot of girls, but they have some top ones who were state champs last year, or really close to it,” Outland said.

Coming off a 24th-place finish, Outland confidently believes the Lady Lynx



Jill Meier/BV Journal

Eighth-grader Gracie Peters is on pace to be a state place winner this season in the 110-pound slot.

can be a top-six team this season.

“If we can get girls in the right spots, get people healthy and stay healthy throughout the year, we’re hoping we can have a really solid year,” he said. “I think top six would be a great goal for the girls. It won’t be an easy thing to get, but I think we’re capable. Honestly, we have multiple girls who very well could be state place winners, and it will take a solid group of girls that go out there and

place in the tournaments to give us a shot to do that.”

Outland said off-season commitment was the best he’s seen.

“We had workouts three times a week this summer, and the girls were consistent,” he said. “They came back motivated.”

Unfortunately, injuries are already part of the early-season storyline, but nothing unexpected for Week 3. Outland expects the Lynx to fill at least nine of the 14 weight classes

early on in the year.

Brandon Valley will host more home meets this year, giving local fans plenty of chances to watch the program’s historic rise.

“That’s exciting,” Outland said. “People will get to see what these girls are building.”

Five years in, the Lady Lynx are on the right path to building a successful, solid girls’ wrestling program.

“We’re going to compete with anybody,” he said. “These girls are ready.”

Outland will be assisted this season by Rachel Master, a former wrestling standout at Canton and recent South Dakota State grad.

“She’s teaching at the elementary and helping me, which has been an awesome thing. We want more women able to get an opportunity to come in here and help the girls’ team,” Outland said of the former state runner-up.

BRANDON VALLEY POWERLIFTING

cont. from page 6B

close to defending it, but lost in a tiebreaker to Sioux Falls Washington. In 2024, the boys finished third and the girls finished just outside of placing. Last season, neither team placed, but Bobzien said he’s excited to see what could transpire at the state meet to be held at Sioux Falls Roosevelt on March 14.

“I like where we’re at with the people that we have,” Bobzien said. “We’re spread out over multiple weight classes. I think any one of them can steal the headlines. They have that opportunity. We’ve got a lot of great people in place and looking forward to another great year.”

Parliament obviously won in his weight division last season. The other Brandon Valley individual state champ was Gabby Klein, who returns this season for her junior campaign.

But she’s not the only Lynx athlete Bobzien said he thinks could eke out a title this year.

“I think that we have some pieces that could perform very well,” he said. “Top 5 for sure and some that will definitely be in contention for a state championship.”

The powerlifting season didn’t officially start in Brandon Valley until Monday, Dec. 1 when the Lynx convened for their first practice. It’s a quick turnaround as Brandon

“I think any one of them can steal the headlines. They have that opportunity.”

- Adam Bobzien
Head coach of Brandon Valley powerlifting

Valley heads to Bishop O’Gorman in Sioux Falls on Dec. 13 for its first meet of the season.

“It’s a unique year because we have that first meet right away, so it gives us two weeks to practice,” Bobzien said. “We’re doing something that we’ve never done this year as far as preparation. It’s just going to be a little bit different with the way everything fell into place. We’re going to make it work and it’s going to be great.”

The Lynx host the Brandon Valley Invitational on Jan. 17. Just like last year, O’Gorman will be the only team attending due to the large number of competitors in both programs.

The club sport has grown tremendously in numbers over the past several years, both in individual competitors and with more schools entering teams. That makes for a potential wide-open state meet in March.

“Some of those other programs have really developed and have the right pieces right now,” Bobzien said. “It’s their time, but it’s an opportunity for us to knock them off.”

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