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YOUR 2016 PANTHER GRIDDERS



Members of the 2016 Saratoga High School Football Team are:
Standing, left to right, Michael Wagy, Morgan Rempel, Justin Bonner, Sam Schneider, Alex Zeigler, Tristan Gray, Thomas Ingraham, Nathan Rimmer, Greg Swanson, Max Schneider, J.D. Shaw, Wyatt Cox, Kyler Miller, Colton Jones, Andrew Everett and coach Kegan Willford.
Kneeling, Dayne Anderson, Sean Stewart, Logan Seahorn, Trezdon Martinez, and Memphis Smith.

Willford takes reigns, sees reason for optimism

By Max Miller

Following in his father Burt's footsteps, Kegan Willford has taken the reigns of the Saratoga High School Football program, and he foresees good things to come on the gridiron for the Panthers. Although Saratoga

wearing the whistle. At the age of nine, Willford started following his father around the sidelines, and he has never been far from the game since. Willford enjoyed a successful high school football career, playing in the Shriner Bowl and also getting All-State recognition while playing for Saratoga. During college, he said he often returned to the Valley to volunteer for Saratoga's football program, and he was also a coach for Saratoga's Middle School program for several years. Willford said having trained some of the current Panthers players when they were sixth graders has made the coaching transition easier on the players. He said the seven seniors included both "vocal leaders" and those who lead more quietly by example, and said it made for a good mix for younger players to look up to. When asked whether he had taken any plays from his dad's playbook, Willford gave

a big laugh and agreed that he had retained a lot of his father's practices, though he also has his own ideas. One of the younger Willford's habits is to study film

extensively when preparing for matches. "I got to watch two different films on Burns last week, and right now I've seen three different films on Lusk," he said. Over Labor

Day weekend, while most of America was out flipping burgers or flicking fly-rods, See "Willford takes reigns" on page 16

“Physicality is one of the big things we want to instill.”

—Kegan Willford
Saratoga Panthers head football coach

faced a tough opponent in Willford's coaching debut, he said the team has a strong core of senior leaders and he saw a lot to like on both sides of the ball in his first game

Saratoga High School Football

Date	Opponent	Place	Time
Sept. 2	Burns	Saratoga	6 p.m.
Sept. 9	Niobrara County	Lusk	7 p.m.
Sept. 12	Pine Bluffs JV	Saratoga	4 p.m.
Sept. 16	Southeast	Saratoga	6 p.m.
Sept. 19	Shoshoni JV	Saratoga	4 p.m.
Sept. 23	Wyoming Indian	Ethete	6 p.m.
Sept. 30	Shoshoni	Saratoga	6 p.m.
Oct. 7	Cokeville	Cokeville	4 p.m.
Oct. 10	Wheatland JV	Saratoga	4:30 p.m.
Oct. 14	Rocky Mountain	Cowley	1 p.m.
Oct. 21	Wind River	Saratoga	6 p.m.
Oct 28/29	Playoff Quarter Finals	TBD	TBA
Nov. 4/5	Semi-Finals	TBD	TBA
Nov. 11/12	State Championship	Laramie	TBA

Sept. 30 is Homecoming
Head coach - Kegan Willford

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Your 2016 Saratoga Panthers High School Cross Country Team is:
Front row, left to right Bel Oiler, Haylie Wells, Katie Loose, Ashlynn Johnson and Kaylyn Hunter.
Middle Row, Logan Wells, Joey Gonzeles, Reed Schroeder, Aaron Detterer and Owen Mills.
Back Row, Jeremy Detterer, Cody Cor, Ben Fairbanks, Jackson Cor, Kyle Solos, Gage Bartlett and Jeron Herring.

CC team looks to push the pace

By Fred Broschart

The Saratoga High School Cross Country team returned from the Rawlins Invitational Friday with more feathers in its cap and several standout performances.

Like last week, Encampment freshman Reid Schroeder turned in a performance that placed him at the head of the pack, running the 5K event in 18:30, which was good for a seventh place finish in the event. Freshmen Logan Wells and Joey Gonzales, running as part of the junior varsity team, placed 24th and 30th. Last week, Coach Rex Hohnholt told the *Saratoga Sun* that the teams freshmen athletes were a solid group of performers.

Junior High runners for Saratoga performed well, with Gavin Bartlett running the 1½ mile event in 9:59. This under-10-minute per-

formance saw Gavin Bartlett claim 7th place. Grant Bartlett and Grady Bartlett finished the event in 10:04 and 10:05, results that were good for 9th and 10th place finishes.

High School Varsity girls only had one athlete running at the Rawlins event. Katie Loose ran the 5k in 23:43, good for 12th place. Her time this week was slightly off from her performance in the same event last week, but overall showed consistency.

Two athletes who were benched last week because of concerns over the surface at the Green River Invitational turned in performances this week. Kaylyn Hunter ran the 5K for the junior varsity girls team, and Ben Fairbanks ran the 5K for the varsity boys.

See “CC pushes pace” on page 16



Photo by Max Miller
The cross country meet in Sinclair gets off to a start Friday afternoon.

Saratoga High School Men and Women Cross-Country

Date	Meet	Location
Aug. 26	Green River Invite	Green River Wyoming
Sept. 2	Rawlins Invitational	Sinclair Golf Course
Sept. 9	Liberty Bell Invite	Littleton, Colorado
Sept. 16	John Martin Invite	Ft. Collins, Colorado
Sept. 23	Saratoga Invitational	Saratoga, Wyoming
Sept. 29	Lyman Invite	Lyman, Wyoming
Oct. 7	Cheyenne Invitational	Prairie View Golf Course
Oct. 15 or 16	Simulated Race	Saratoga
Oct. 22	State Championship	Sheridan

Head coach - Rex Hohnholt

GOOD LUCK LADY PANTHERS!



Your 2016 Saratoga Lady Panther Volleyball team is comprised of:

Back row, left to right: Tiffany Bauer, Bryce Schwartzkopf, Makiya Johnson, Maya Zeiger, Meredith Lincoln, Aubrey Berger, Sarah Burton and coach Shayley Love.

Middle Row, Kaylynn Herring, Jenna Dew, Dallys Chitwood, Matti Stevenson, Kennison Spiering, Lairren Peebles, Alicia Zaragoza, Shianne Baker and Shaelee Hamann.

Back Row, Taylor Bennett, Kylee Conseen, Mychaela Jackman, Melissa Escobedo-Pinedo,

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Panther netters roar to 5-1 season start

By Max Miller

Panthers' volleyball coach Shayley Love is in her 15th year of coaching and her eighth year with Saratoga, but the veteran said some-

thing feels a little different this year. The Panthers have come out roaring with a 5 and 1 start, and Love said in 2016, "I think we have more energy than we've had in the past."

Love enjoyed a successful high school volleyball career, and was set to play for Casper College when she was sidelined by an ACL-injury prior to her freshman year. The injury kept flaring up and effectively ended Love's playing career, but she has channeled her passion for the game into her coaching efforts.

Those efforts may be coming to fruition this year. "The girls are always really excited and peppy and glad to cheer and do all the fun stuff," but that belies a serious sense of competition among the young women, Love said.

In addition to high energy levels, the Panthers have brought some new tools and

"It took us a little bit to get going with our defense, but I have a lot of confidence that will be one of our strengths this year."

—Shayley Love
Saratoga Lady Panther volleyball coach

See "Panthers roar" on page 16

Saratoga High School Girls Volleyball

Date	Opponent	Place	Time
Aug 26/27	Tournament	Saratoga	11 a.m./8 p.m.
Sept. 1	HEM	Hanna	5/ 6:15 p.m.
Sept. 6	Laramie 9th/10th	Saratoga	4:30 9p.m./5:45 10 p.m.
Sept. 10	Snake River	Saratoga	12/ 1:15 p.m.
Sept. 13	North Park	Saratoga	4:30/5:30
Sept. 16	Laramie 9th/10th	Laramie	4 9 p.m./5:15 10 p.m.
Sept. 17	Kaycee	Saratoga	1/2:15 p.m.
Sept. 23	Farson/Eden	Saratoga	4/5:15 p.m.
Sept. 24	North Park	Walden	4/5:15 p.m.
Sept. 30	Encampment	Saratoga	3/4 p.m.
Oct. 1	Cokeville	Saratoga	9/10:15 p.m.
Oct. 7/8	Kaycee Tourney	Kaycee	TBA
Oct. 14	HEM	Saratoga	5/6:15 p.m.
Oct. 15	Farson/Eden	Farson	1/2:15 p.m.
Oct. 21	Snake River	Baggs	4/5 p.m.
Oct. 22	Encampment	Encampment	1/2:15
Oct. 28	Regionals	Lander	TBA
Oct. 29	Regionals	Lander	TBA
Nov. 3	State Tournament	Casper	TBA
Nov. 4	State Tournament	Casper	TBA
Nov. 5	State Tournament	Casper	TBA

Head coach - Shayley Love

GO

Encampment

NETTERS



Your 2016 Encampment Volleyball team: *Front row (from left); Rachel Stubbs, Katie Russell, Ember Geary, Micaiah Pantle, Cheyanne Jordan, Riley Little and Kayla Wagy. Back Row; Hailey Barkhurst, Takoda Pedersen, Lauren Buford, Sierra Martinez, Paige Powell, Emily Morgan, McKenzie Powell, Noelle Peterson, Taylor Huntley. On Team but not pictured; Ariana McKinney*

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— from your Encampment Boosters

Cohesion key to quick start for Tigers

By Fred Broschart

The Encampment Volleyball team is off to a good start this year with hopes of repeating taking state as the Tigers did last year.

◆

“Our focus is to be grateful and theme is more grit than quit.”

—Robin O’Leary
Encampment Lady Tiger volleyball coach

◆

The team’s coach, Robin O’Leary, a 17-year veteran coach of the team says the team has some excellent strengths that will help it in that endeavor, but the school is in a very tough conference

this year and will have to work hard on some aspects of the game.

“We took state last year and we are hoping to repeat this year. That’s going to be tough because we have a super strong conference,” O’Leary said. “Our focus is to be grateful and theme is more grit than quit.”

O’Leary also said the focus was on having the athletes work well as a team, and less on having individual players be stars.

The team is already showing a good degree of cohesion, even though it lost two very strong players when they graduated in spring, O’Leary said.

“We have a lot of new girls that have never even played volleyball, and those things considered, our upperclassman have done a great job of getting the time to get to know those new players,” O’Leary said. “We are a closer united team already at this

point in the season than we ever have been, even though we have 17 girls and we usually have about 10.”

“I think that’s a huge strength for us and the girls

have spoken about them feeling that that’s a strength for us.”

Besides good cohesion and a positive *esprit de corps* between players on the team,

O’Leary also cites some physical attributes she feels give the Tigers a good shot at

See “Cohesion key” on page 16

Encampment High School Girls Volleyball			
Date	Opponent	Location	Time
Sept. 9	Little Snake River Valley	Encampment	4 p.m.
Sept. 10	H-E-M Tournament	Hanna	TBA
Sept. 16	H-E-M	Encampment	4 p.m.
Sept. 17	Rock River	Encampment	Noon
Sept. 22	H-E-M	Hanna	4:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Farson-Eden	Encampment	11 a.m.
Sept. 30	Saratoga	Saratoga	3 p.m.
Oct. 1	Cokeville	Encampment	2 p.m.
Oct. 7-8	Kaycee Invite	Kaycee	TBA
Oct. 13	North Park	Encampment	4:30 p.m.
Oct. 14	Little Snake River Valley	Baggs	4 p.m.
Oct. 21	Farson-Eden	Farson	2 p.m.
Oct. 22	Saratoga	Encampment	1 p.m.
Oct. 28-29	West Regional Tournament	Lander - Field House	TBA
Nov. 3-5	State Tournament	Casper - Court 1A	1 p.m.
Coaches: Robin O’Leary and Marci Catron			



Paige Powell puts one over the net during Hanna tournament play.

Photo courtesy Mary Martin



Lauren Buford goes up against two Big Piney defenders Aug 27.

Photo courtesy Mary Martin

Cohesion key ... continued from page 15

going for a repeat this year.

The team, she said, is special because of its very quick offense. When comparing the height of the ball above the net to other high school teams, the ladies of Encampment leave a lot less space between the ball and the net, O’Leary said.

This makes the action very quick, and gives the other teams’ defenders less time to react and get into a good position for defense or scoring. By keeping the other teams running around with little reaction time, Encampment’s girls bring a fast-paced game to their foes.

But despite the positives, O’Leary said there are areas

that will need to be improved upon if the Lady Tigers want to repeat their championship win last year in a very competitive conference. “Defense and servicing are the two areas we need to work on to do that (repeat the win at state finals),” she said.

In practice, the team was practicing those very skills under O’Leary’s watchful eye. “I want my hitters to be able to be able to hit a certain spot,” she said, explaining a drill that was underway.

Despite the seriousness with which she takes the job, O’Leary, a 1996 graduate of Encampment School, said she never expected to be a volleyball coach. But after her 17th

season of coaching the team, she says the love for the game is still the motivating factor for her.

“I love the game of volleyball. I love playing,” She said. “I never thought I would coach it; I took over when they could not find a coach 17 years ago.”

O’Leary said she derives the most happiness from seeing the members of her team improve their skills and develop a love for the game that is as deep as hers. But there’s one other thing about the team that is special, she said.

“Being good sports. We really try to make sure we’re good sports.”

Willford takes reigns ... continued from page 12

Willford watched the Panthers game against Burns three times, studying his team’s play intently.

A lesson he took away from that game was that the team will need to bone up a bit on its open field tackling. “Physicality is one of the big things we want to instill. Football’s definitely a contact sport, so we’ve been doing hitting drills almost every night in practice,” he said.

Two teams in the Western Conference Willford mentioned as being on his radar going into the season were Shoshone and Cokeville. He called Cokeville a team with a lot of tradition, and also mentioned that the Panthers would have to travel five hours for that game, making for “a very, very long travel day.” Shoshone, the coach said, won the Conference last year, and Willford said he thought competition would be tight in Western this year.

Even when the Panthers were down big in their first game, Willford said, “the kids never gave up or quit.” That kind of spirit is invaluable in all athletic pursuits, Willford said, and he said his team needs a few minor tweaks but no major fixes.

“Now I’m just happy to be back,” Willford said, looking it.

Panthers roar ... continued from page 12

talents to Saratoga’s gymnasium. “We’ve always had quickness,” Love said, but a taller cohort of players has changed the dynamics of the game for the Panthers. A weapon like Meredith Lincoln, who has provided reliable kill-shots throughout the early season, has given Saratoga a bigger playbook to work with offensively.

On defense, “In the past, we haven’t had a block, so we just had to get down and get the ball up,” Love said. No longer. “Now we’ve got a block that’s touching (the ball) and it’s bouncing off a lot shorter.”

Love said this is generally a good thing, but it’s necessitated some evolution in the way the team reacts to attacks. “We’re getting a lot more touches on blocks than we’ve ever had, so that causes our defense to be completely different,” Love explained of the shift. “It took us a little bit to get going with our defense, but I have a lot of confidence that will be one of our strengths

this year,” she said.

On offense, in addition to some heavy-handed spikers, the Panthers bring consistency to the service line. “Our serving has come a long ways. I’d say that’s one of our strengths as well,” Love said.

Challenges Love foresees for the year ahead include tough competition with teams from Baggs, Encampment and Cokeville. She said the group has been studying film weekly so the girls can “Find out who needs to be shut down on other teams and build on their weaknesses.”

Another challenge will be facing a new slate of unfamiliar opponents in the Panthers new, smaller, 1A classification. It is the first year the cats will be competing in the smaller division and Love said learning the ins-and outs of these unfamiliar teams will be a top priority.

With a strong slate of senior leaders, talent to spare and newfound height, the Panthers are off to a promising start and could go far.



Photo by Max Miller

Kaylynn Hering, No. 6, charges toward a ball teetering on top of the net in a game against the Laramie sophomore team. Saratoga took the set in four matches, winning two in extra points.

Lady Panthers go 3-1 against Miners and Plainsmen

Saratoga netters make comeback against Hanna, go to extra points against Laramie

By Max Miller

Although the Panthers lost their first match against Hanna Elk Mountain 25-18, they came roaring back to win the next three matches and take the set from the stunned Miners. Registering hard-fought victories of 25-22, 25-23 and 25-18, the Panthers improved to 4 and 1 on the season (prior to their victory against Laramie Sept. 6). The cats look to be one of the top teams to beat in 2016.

Coach Shayley Love credited the Panthers turn around to a defense that stayed on its toes and made critical adjustments as the day went on. After losing by seven in the first set, “we re-evaluated and the girls knew where they needed to

be on defense,” Love said. More and more hands came into contact with the ball on blocks as the Panthers learned the Miners’ habits and were better able to predict routes of attack.

Reacting to the blocked balls was also something the Panthers improved upon as the set wore on. “Particularly Mychaela (Jackman) and Kaylynn (Herring)—I noticed they had a tremendous amount of digs. Those two really figured out where the hitters were coming,” Love noted.

The coach likewise had praise for Meredith Lincoln’s eight notched kills. Lincoln has quickly established herself as a reliable finisher for the team.

Alicia Zaragoza was also called out for her strong,

consistent serving, which has helped the team greatly throughout the young season.

The Panthers likewise dominated the Laramie High School Sophomore squad Sept. 6. The cats quickly opened up a ten point lead in the first match, which they took fairly easily 25-14. The next match they came out even stronger, winning by a two-touchdown score of 25-11. In the third round, the cats wobbled a bit, losing 29-27 in extra points. Saratoga regained its composure, however, and put the fourth match away 27-25, also in extra points.

Next, the Panthers will host a conference contest against Little Snake River Sept. 10 at 1:15.



Photo by Max Miller

Panther runner Ben Fairbanks has competition close at heel at Friday’s Sinclair meet.

CC pushes pace ... continued from page 13

Last week, both athletes were sidelined, Hunter because of her knee, and Fairbanks due to ankle concerns.

Fairbanks, Hohnholt said last week, was predicted to have a very strong season, and his 19th place finish in the 5K in Rawlins served as a good warmup for the athlete, whom Hohnholt said was one of the fastest

Panthers during last year’s season.

The Panthers will roll into Littleton, Colo., on Sept. 9 for the Liberty Bell Invite and will reprise their appearance in the Centennial State on Sept. 16 at the John Martin Invite in Fort Collins. The Saratoga Invite will be held in the Valley Sept. 23.



Morgan Rempel runs up against the Broncos defense Friday.



Two Panthers bring an abrupt end to a Broncos kick return.



Panthers quarterback, Sam Schneider, lets loose a pass in the second quarter.



A Burns pass is framed against the mountain backdrop Friday night.

Photos by Max Miller

Panthers keep optimism through loss to Burns

By Max Miller

The Panthers drew a tough opponent for their first game of the football season Sept. 2. With about 70 boosters in the stands and Teense Willford cracking wise on the public announcement (PA) system, Saratoga fought hard but ultimately conceded the match to Burns 36-15.

Freshly-minted coach Kegan Willford said he was proud of the spirit his team showed in coming out fighting in the second half. After going into the locker rooms down 30-7, the Panthers rallied for a touchdown and converted a two-point conversion to tighten the game to 30-15.

A Broncos turnover had the crowd briefly on its feet in the third quarter, but the rally sputtered in the wake of yet another reversal of possession. Even so, the cats held Burns to six second-half points while

putting up an eight-spot of their own, evening out what had been a lopsided game.

“There was always hope, and that’s something that’s hard to instill in any group.”

—Kegan Willford
Saratoga Panthers head football coach

“For the first game I was pretty pleased and I saw a lot of positive things both offensively and defensively,” Willford summed up. The coach said one of

the biggest challenges the game revealed was a deficit in open-field tackling, and that was being addressed with more hitting drills in practice.

Despite the broken tackles, he said the team’s heart and seven senior leadership was strong, and that the group needed tweaking but not major revamping. “There was always hope, and that’s something that’s hard to instill in any group,” Willford said proudly.

Looking ahead to Saratoga’s next match against Lusk on Sept. 9, Willford said he was already scheming. Having watched three films of Lusk, he said confidently, “We have a pretty good idea of what they’re going to do Friday.”

If Willford’s read is as good as he believes, the Panthers should be well-positioned to take on the Tigers for top-cat honors.

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PAY THE BALANCE OWED ONLY!!!

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