



2021 Tri-City United Spring Sports Preview

Baseball:

One team, one mission

Head coach: Bruce Davis, 35th year as head baseball coach

Changes?

Practice started on March 29. We have had very good practices so far. The kids are getting better each and every day. We are all very excited about this baseball season.

Areas of strength

The Titans will be strong defensively this spring. If we throw strikes and play good defense we will be in all games this spring.

Key players (seniors)

- Kayden Factor will be the only player that TCU has with any varsity experience. Kayden started as catcher as a freshman and sophomore and will be a team leader.

- Brody Rud will be a team leader and play in the outfield and first base.

- Collin Barnett will pitch and be a key defensive player for the team.

- Reece Wydert will be a utility player for the Titans. He will be asked to play a number of positions.

- Dom Miland is starting out the season with an arm injury, but with some rehab, the team hopes to get him back at some point this season.



The seniors on the TCU Baseball Team this season are (from left) Reece Wydert, Dominick Miland, Collin Barnett, Brody Rud, and Kayden Factor.

2019 recap and covid

With a year off due to COVID, the 2021 Titans lack ex-

perience. We only have one player who has seen varsity action. With hard work and

game experience this TCU Titans team could be very successful. These kids are

working very hard and every-one is very excited about the season.

2021 season outlook

The Titans' goal this year is to get better each and every week during the season and be playing their best baseball in June when the playoffs roll around.

Belle Plaine is the favorite to win the MRC and the Section this spring, but there are a number of teams including the Titans who could give the Tigers a run by the end of the season.

The loss of the 2020 season took away a chance for the players at all levels to get better as baseball players. Yes we lost a lot of games, but more importantly we lost baseball practice every day. Practice is where players get better, and it is like starting over now.

Roster

Seniors: Dom Miland, Collin Barnett, Brody Rud, Reece Wydert, Kayden Factor

Juniors: Jayson Macho, Brendan O'Keefe

Sophomores: Chris Johnson, Carter O'Malley, Jud Narum

Freshmen: Dylan Westerman, Max Krautkremer.

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Softball:

Teams have new passion: Come back stronger in 2021

Head coach: Kelly Jo Closser, first year coaching varsity high school (seven years as program director for Titans Fastpitch Association)

Assistant coaches: Gary Novak, Eric Closser, Lexi Franek – All first-year coaching High School Softball (Combined 20 years Association/Club Softball Program Coaching)

Key Players

- Brooke Blaschko – Senior (Catcher, SS) Returning 2019 varsity letter winner and All-Conference recipient. We are really looking for Brooke to step in for us this season at the catcher position leading our team on the field. She is already a solid hitter and is fantastic on the bases for us.

- Molly Closser – Junior (3rd, Pitcher, SS) We expect Molly to be a consistent performer for us this season. She is a talented player both defensively and offensively that plays the game year round. We will use her toward the top of our lineup and are counting on her to be the leader in our defensive game. She will also see time on the mound this season.

- Isabelle Factor – Senior (Utility) Isabelle is a returning 2019 varsity letter winner and we are looking for her to



Wade Young Photo

The TCU Softball Teams practice on Monday at Carol Lilla Fields in Montgomery.

win a starting position. She's a great athlete that can do some nice things in the field and has the speed for great base running.

- Ellaina Novak – Junior

(Pitcher, 1st, Utility) Ellaina is a returning 2019 varsity letter winner and will start most of our innings on the mound this season. She starts with the most varsity experience on our team and is one of our strongest hitters and also plays year round. I expect her to contribute huge success for us this season both offensively and defensively.

Rachel Rynda – Senior (OF, Utility) Rachel is another returning 2019 varsity letter winner. She is a very strong athlete for us with a lot of versatility. We will look for her to play a variety

of positions throughout the year.

Keep Your Eye On:

Nikaija Young – Senior (IF) Nikaija has been working really hard in the off season for us and it shows. She has a strong arm and her bat will be a solid start for us throughout the year.

Savannah Squires – Junior (OF, Utility) Savannah is player that can play almost anywhere on the diamond. She is a very smart player and one of our toughest competitors.

Moved on

Ellie Singleton, Sydney Sartori, Keilee Westlie, Lillian Barnes, Cohl Paggen

2019 Recap and COVID

TCU Varsity Softball completed its most successful season in 2019 with an overall record of 14-8 and was seeded #3 in section play.

Being involved in the Titans program for years I watched these girls grow up. I saw the 2020 season cancellation take a real toll on them. Overcoming such a heartbreaking setback though, I did see a majority of these players get out and play over

the summer, fall and winter leagues.

I will say that it also created a new passion to come back stronger for the 2021 season.

2021 Season Outlook

I expect us to compete in every game we play this year. We have a strong and dedicated group of players here that have been involved with the program and softball for years. We are hoping that their experience can finally "pay itself forward" this season.

We will need to play excellent defense this season to be successful, gone are the days where we rely on Elly Novak to get us 15-plus strikeouts per game. We also play in a very strong Minnesota River Conference against teams like Le Sueur and Norwood that typically are in the running to win the Conference title, so we will have to bring our best game every night.

Practice has gone great so far, the team's energy, enthusiasm and hunger to win has been exceeding my expectations coming into this first week. If we can keep improving all year long, and keep our 110 percent "want", this should be a great season.

We are focusing on the "controllables" this year with the girls. With the way the last year has gone, we will be focusing on what is within their control, which the main ones are attitude and effort.

We can't control what is going to happen with school, games, the season, or umpire calls, but we can control our attitude and effort in everything we do. If we go out at 110 percent attitude and effort, we will naturally be successful in all things.

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2021 Tri-City United Spring Sports Preview

Girls Track: Rebuilding after a lost 2020 season

Head coach: Brian Fogal, 13 years coaching

Assistant coaches: Craig Nordling, Chad Polson, Jim Timmerman, Hailey Fogarty

Key Players

- Lauren Houn - 2019 she was in the section finals in the 400. She is a very good sprinter and jumper.

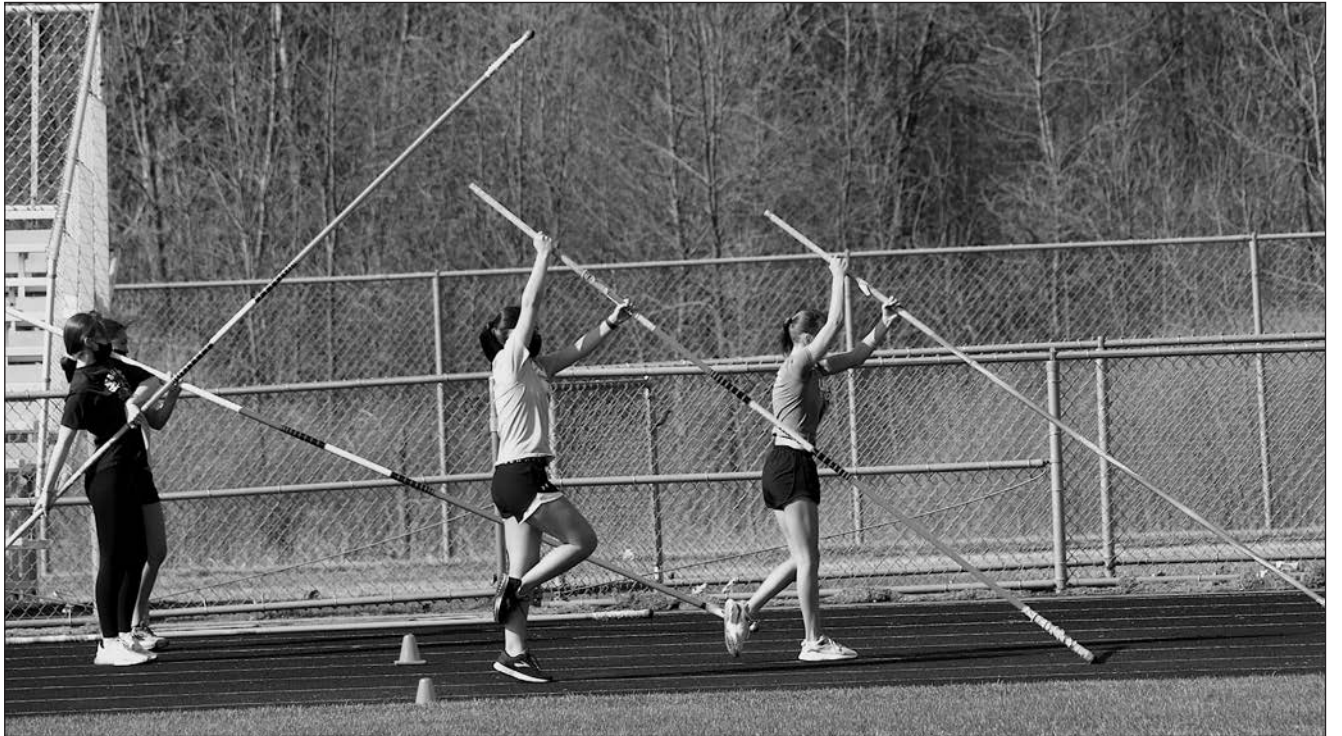
- Josie Plut broke the TCU one-mile record two years

ago. Hopefully she can build on that this year.

- Yasmin Ruiz went to state this year in cross country. This will be her first year in track since she is an eighth grader.

- Erika Kadrlik was our top jumper two years ago and was a key member of our sprint relay teams.

- Kathleen Pichotta missed the past year in cross country due to injury. She has been a



Wade Young Photo

Girls from the TCU track team learn how to pole vault during practice on Monday.



Wade Young Photo

Lily Kaplan practices the shot put on Monday.

track letter winner since seventh grade.

Anabelle Davies has run everything from 100 to the mile in the past six years. She also made state this past year in weightlifting.

Keep Your Eye On

Charlotte Houn was injured most of 2019. She is very athletic and can sprint, hurdle, and vault.

Moved on

With last year being lost to covid, nearly half our team is brand-new or one-year experience in actual competition.

2019 Recap and COVID

Two years ago we were very young and inexperienced. We were able to get a lot of girls in a lot of different events.

2020 Pandemic cancelled the season last year. It was

very difficult for athletes and coaches. We had almost 60 athletes registered for track. It would have been our largest team in school history. Many of those girls chose not to go out this year. It was tough to see our seniors not get a last season. Many of them had run in the program since seventh grade.

2021 Season Outlook

We had a really good first

week of practice. I think it will take time to get back in racing shape after a year off of track. I think we have a lot of talent. Most of our girls are multisport athletes so they are already in good shape and ready for the season.

I sense that everyone is excited for the season. It will be great to just get outside and compete again. The lost season makes you appreciate the team and coaches more.

Golf: High school golf returns after hiatus

Coaches: Jamie Nelson (second year), Bryce Brunz (fifth year), Phil Campbell (first year) All are experienced coaches in several sports.

Changes due to COVID-19?

Golf is lucky because there are no restrictions to play. It will hopefully be a mostly normal season.

Areas of strength

We have some returning players, access to a course for practice everyday, and a positive attitude.

Adam Henze is the top returning player. He is a very consistent and intelligent player.

Our girls team is made up of new golfers, but they are getting better every day and hope to make some real progress by the end of the season.

However, we need to stay focused and show up everyday with a positive growth mindset.

2021 season outlook

We have some talented individuals and a team full of great attitudes. We hope to grow into a strong team that might surprise some people by midseason. 2020 was a challenging year because of the uncertainty and ultimately the loss of the whole season.

Roster

Seniors: Gabe Robinson, Tyler Glockner, and Miyu Kobayashi.

Juniors: Brady Lehrfald, Tyler Gaudreau, Ryan Westerhouse, Reice Narum, Colton Nelson, Logan Blaschko, Adam Henze, and Ryan Miller.

Sophomores: Will Trcka, John Urtuzuastegui, Will Bulger, Jacob Glockner, Marco Reyes, Jake Kroyer, Mecca Nightingale, Lloyd Watts, Anna Barnett, Kierra Meyer, Abby Rutt and Emma Kaplan.



Wade Young photos

The girls' golf team includes (from left) Miyu Kobayashi, Anna Barnett, Kierra Meyer, Emma Kaplan, and Abby Rutt.



Ryan Westerhouse tees off on hole #1 of the Montgomery National Golf Course during practice on Monday, April 5.

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Boys track and field: After a year off, boys' team returns with good numbers

Head coach: Craig Nor-dling, fifth year as Head Coach, ninth year coaching track at TCU; Chad Polson - distance coach eighth year; James Timmerman - throws coach third year; Don Mar-cussen - pole vault coach second year; Hailey Fogarty - junior high coach first year.

Managers: Kyra New-man, Madeline Kempenich, Owen Block, and Kayln Krautkremer.

Changes

Social distancing is a huge part of our practice organiza-tion. Our goal is to have ev-ery athlete make it through the season without missing time due to current guide-lines.

Areas of strength

It looks like we will have good numbers in all events. Our distance runners are coming off of a very strong Cross Country season. It will be interesting to see how that success plays out on the track.

- Jack Erickson, senior, hurdles/sprints, captain - Jack returns his senior year as a two-time captain of the team. Jack has experience in

many different events, both track and field. His leader-ship and mentoring of our younger athletes will be great for our team.

- Torii Cross, senior, sprints, captain.

- Connor Antony and Aus-tin Rutt. Both are juniors, dis-tance runners, and captains.

Other runners include Adi-an McNamara, Jack Erick-son, and Jordan Meyer.

- Jordan Meyer, junior, hurdles, Section 2A qualifier in 2019 as freshman, cap-tain. Jordan returns after last year's non-season with the hope to return to the Section 2A race.

- Dylan Thompson, junior, hurdles/pole vault, captain. Dylan returns with the most experience of our pole vault-ers.

The top field athlete will be Marco Reyes.

Newcomers are Brant Lemieux, Payton Hennen, Dante Juberian, and Fak-ourou Tandia.

Areas to work on

Relays will be an area of focus. There are many young sprinters who will be com-pleting to fill the relay teams. There is much to do in the



Wade Young Photo

Rafael Balcazar practices the shot put on Monday.

area of the field events. Most events have technical compo-nents that we have not been able to work on. From the end of the 2019 season until now, there have been few op-portunities to teach technical skills.

2021 season outlook

Our schedule looks quite different from past seasons. Guidelines from the MSHSL continue to change, and that is expected. Our athletes are practicing with their masks on. Other than field events, it is possible that masks will be worn during running events.

Our goals for the year are to see personal growth and team success. The coaching staff will be working hard with the athletes with goals of bringing both individuals and relay teams to the Sec-tion 2A meet.

Our athletes will have sev-en days of practice and then our first meet. As a coaching staff, we need to work with our athletes both at practices and the meets to help them on the little things.

Not only did we lose the 2020 season, we have also lost some valuable athletes. Some of these losses have come from seniors graduat-ing, but other losses are due to other interests. Athletes found other activities to fill their time last spring, some picked up early summer jobs. We have high school students who feel that they need to work instead of participating in school activities. As a team we will have our successes and times to celebrate. It is nice to be back on the track with great people.

Many individuals on the team will contribute heav-ily in both field and running events. The last opportunity these athletes had on the

track was when they were ninth and tenth graders. This year there is added depth in all events which will allow for us to field a more com-plete meet roster.

With eight returning mem-bers who registered all-time top five marks last year, it will be exciting to see what happens this year. Our tenth graders are coming in with a solid group of athletes that were given a chance to run varsity as eighth graders.

We are returning with un-derclassmen that are return-ing and have many athletes with the potential to make it to the Section 2A meet in Mankato. It will be fun to watch how the team progress-es throughout the spring.

We are returning many athletes with experience. Most of the events will have at least one returning member from last year's team. Expe-rienced members of the team allow coaches to move past basic instruction to details with form and technique. Our upperclassmen will also be great mentors to the younger runners. Distance runners are returning after posting a strong Cross Country season.



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