

Cyclone grapplers are ready to reload for the season

By Heather Jordan

After a highly successful 2023-2024 campaign, the Clark-Willow Lake wrestling teams are ready to reload. The Cyclones had a banner year last season, placing second in the Northeast Conference, qualifying as a team for the state dual tournament for the first time in program history and placing four wrestlers on the podium at the state tournament.

Where are the Cyclones headed in 2024-25? According to head coach Greg Marx, "From the looks of it, we are in for another competitive run with our Northeast Conference foes. The NEC is the conference of champions and to win that would be a big check mark for our team moving onto the state duals. We do have a different team this year with some major holes to fill. We can no longer rely on just winning matches like last year. I will be asking all our wrestlers to score bonus points consistently."

The boys' squad returns three state place winners from last year, including seniors Joshua Kannegieter (fourth) Elliot Bratland (eighth) and junior Cooper Pommer (fifth). The team boasts experience in 2024 state qualifiers Cade Gaikowski and Austin Vig, who are both freshmen.

With a veteran crew, the sky is the limit, and the bar has been set high. "Our goal for everyone is to win state, and that will never change. My expectations, of course, are to improve on last year's state placers/qualifiers to place higher and of course have a year where the entire team makes it into the state tournament," added Coach Marx.

The Cyclones return a strong nucleus but also have an infusion of youth who are striving to make an impact.

"This year, the impact will mostly be seen on the girls' side, as we have six newcomers with Mia Holmstrom being the only wrestler with experience. I think with these girls' naturally competitive nature, we won't have any issue getting them on the mat and wrestling competitively,"



There are three seniors on the Clark-Willow Lake Cyclones wrestling squad this year. Pictured above from left to right: Elliot Bratland, Josh Kannegieter and Riley Popp.

These seniors will help lead the Cyclones take to

stated Coach Marx.

"As for the boys, we will have not so much newcomers but new starters in Kaden Wookey and Benny Pommer who will play huge roles in our team's individual and dual success," Marx added.

Leading the charge for CWL and helping to guide and shape the team will be an experienced mix of upperclassmen.

"I have always had extremely good luck with team leaders. This year, I'd say Josh Kannegieter, Elliot Bratland, Cooper Pommer and Lincoln Reidburn have really shown their commitment to wrestling and have proven to be vocal leaders for me," shared Coach Marx.

With senior Danielle Batchelor (eighth place in 2024) now graduated and wrestling in college, Coach Marx leaned on the fortitude and will of lone returning wrestler, Mia Holmstrom.

"That basically took care of itself with the determination of Mia asking every girl in the co-opto participate, and from what I've seen in practice, it won't be very long before our whole girls' team is on the mat together and making a name for

themselves," added Coach Marx. "They collectively hold one another accountable and support each other just like any solid wrestler. Once the whistle blows, they are aggressive and not friends anymore."

2024-25 Boys' Team roster:

Elliot Bratland (165), Maverick Clausen (106), Mato DeNoyer, Logan Foster (144), Cade Gaikowski (113), Aksel Gjerde (113), Isaac Johnson (138), Josh Kannegieter (190), Benny Pommer (106), Cooper Pommer (126), Riley Popp (190), Lincoln Reidburn (175), Damian Severson (144), Mason Severson (133), Austin Vig (157), Griffin Wellnitz (106), Kaden Wookey (120) and Kooper Wookey (113).

2024-25 Girls' Team roster:

Emma Bochek (107), Cadence Bochek (120), Kadee Frankfurth, Hadley Gjerde (114), Chyanne Guerdet and Mia Holmstrom (120).

2024-25 Wrestling Schedule

Dec. 7: WBC Tournament in Clark - 9:30 a.m.
Dec. 10: Triangular @ Redfield - 6:00 p.m.
Dec. 14: Faulkton Invite @ Faulkton - 10:00 a.m.

Dec. 17: Quadrangular @ Flاندrea - 5:00 p.m.

Dec. 19: NEC Tournament @ Groton - 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 4: Webster Invite @ Webster - 9:30 a.m.

Jan. 11: Bob Lager Invitational @ Miller - 10:00 a.m.

Jan. 14: Quadrangular @ Deuel - 6:00 p.m.

Jan. 18: Potter County Battler Wrestling Tournament @ Gettysburg - 10:00 a.m.

Jan. 21: Triangular in Willow Lake - 6:00 p.m.

Jan. 25: Parkston Little B Tournament @ Parkston - 10:00 a.m.

Jan. 30: Triangular in Clark - 6:00 p.m.

Feb. 1: Groton/Lee Wolf Tournament @ Groton/Aberdeen - 10:00 a.m./9:30 a.m.

Feb. 8: Big East/LCC Tournament @ Montrose - 10:00 a.m.

Feb. 14: State Team Duals @ Pierre

Feb. 20: Girls Regions @ Clark - 4:30 p.m.

Feb. 22: Region Tournament @ Hayti - 10:00 a.m.

Feb. 27 - Mar. 1: State Tournament @ Rapid City



Junior Snow Queen Selma Nelson, left, and Senior Snow Queen Hannah Heiman, right, were crowned at the 56th Annual Clark Area Snow Queen Festival on Saturday at the Clark High School gym. Nelson and Heiman will now compete in the South Dakota Snow Queen Festivals in their respective age divisions in January in Aberdeen.

Photo by Heather Jordan

Heiman crowned 2025 Snow Queen

Selma Nelson is 2025 Junior Snow Queen

Hannah Heiman was crowned the 2025 Clark Area Snow queen at Saturday evening's 56th Annual Snow Queen Festival. Nevaeh Rusher, 2024 Senior Snow Queen, passed on the crown to this year's winner. Heiman will represent Clark Area at the upcoming South Dakota State Snow Queen Festival in January held in Aberdeen.

Hannah is the daughter of Heath and Erin Heiman of Clark. She was also named this year's Miss Congeniality.

Selma Nelson, daughter of Randy and Vicki Nelson of Carpenter, was crowned Junior Snow Queen by last year's winner Brynn Roehrich. Nelson will represent the Clark area at the South Dakota Junior Snow Queen Festival in January.

Katelynn Merkel of Clark was named first runner up Senior Snow Queen. First runner-up for junior

snow queen was Chyanne Guerdet of Willow Lake. Madison Brenden of Willow Lake was named Miss Congeniality of Junior Snow Queen.

Crowned as Little Miss was Mila Bokinskie, daughter of Chris and Mel Bokinskie of Clark. Little Master was Cash Butler, son of Rick and Jen Butler of Clark.

This year's talent section saw six contestants. Kaylyn Hofer of Willow Lake won the Senior Talent portion with her vocal solo of "Automatic" by Miranda Lambert. The duo of Grady Huber and Baylar Lamb, both of Clark, won the Junior Talent portion with their piano duet of "Joy to the World."

The program was coordinated by the Clark Area Snow Queen Committee and was sponsored by many area businesses. Good luck to the 2025 contestants at State Snow Queen.



Julie Zubke, left, congratulates her volleyball officiating partner Cassi Kottke, right, for 25 years of officiating.

Submitted photo

Cassi Kottke earns 25-year volleyball officiating award

By Heather Jordan

Cassi Kottke has been officiating volleyball for 25 seasons. Cassi's love of the game started at a young age when she used to go watch her mom, Deb Schlagel officiate. Later, she played volleyball in high school and has been officiating ever since.

Cassi has had the honor to officiate with some of the best in South Dakota. She has worked numerous postseason matches including districts, regions, the SoDak 16, and she has also line judged at several state tournaments. Kottke also served on the South Dakota Volleyball Officials Association Board for six years.

Over the last 25 years, Cassi has put in extra work behind the scenes by helping with jamborees as a participant, an evaluator, a clinician and recruiting and mentoring new

officials. What is most enjoyable for Cassi, beyond watching the student athletes compete, is making relationships with coaches and fellow volleyball officials. Volleyball has given her the opportunity to meet lots of great people whose friendships extend beyond the volleyball season.

Cassi and her husband, Brandon, have one son, Brody. Cassi works full-time as a Customer Success Director for First Advantage Background Screening. She is very active in the Clark community and serves on several boards and committees. In her spare time, Kottke enjoys reading, golfing and spending time with family and friends.

Cassi would like to thank her fellow officials and her family for their support throughout the years.

Living Art Dance Studio classes began in Clark in August

By Heather Jordan

Over the past decade, many youth dance enthusiasts in Clark were able to learn poise, grace, strength and stage presence through the Clark Dance Club. Lisa Paulson began that venture and extended dance's availability in Clark through student teachers Sarah Weisbrod and Nevaeh Rusher. Both teachers are now college students and no longer able to provide instruction to Clark Area youth.

After 10+ years, it seemed that dance in Clark was about to turn out the lights. That is until Vicki Schnoor of Living Art Dance Studio in Watertown was approached about holding classes in Clark. "A couple of my Watertown dance parents who were students of mine when they were children approached me about losing Nevaeh Rusher, who was teaching dance in Clark. She was set to graduate in the spring of 2024," added Schnoor. "One parent was a former student in the Aber-



The third through fifth grade class of Living Art Dance Studio had practice on Monday night at the Ulliyot Building in Clark. Their instructor is Molly Thorson.

Photo by Heather Jordan

deen studio and one was a former student in the Redfield studio when I taught for Johnny Cavelle. They asked if I would be interested in opening a studio in Clark. When I was a child, I lived on a farm outside of Ashton, S.D. and studied dance in Redfield until fifth grade and then transferred to Aberdeen for my remaining dances through high school."

Schnoor agreed, and since August, Living Art Dance has offered classes in Clark one night per week on Mondays for grades K-8. "We have a preschool/kindergarten

class, a first/second grade class, a third through fifth grade class and a sixth through eighth grade class. We had also originally scheduled a high school class, but we didn't have anyone this year who signed up. We're hoping that grows next year. Molly Thorson, who is on the faculty at the Watertown studio, is the teacher in Clark this year."

According to Schnoor, "Not only is dance beneficial to a person physically, but it teaches quick footwork, quick transference of weight, balance, coordination, all the things you would imagine dance would

do for you, but it also teaches you self-discipline and self-confidence which are so important in development of children and young adults!"

Schnoor has owned the Living Art Dance Studio since 2009, and she currently has a studio in Watertown. "For 10 of those years, I had a studio in Aberdeen as well. After Covid-19, I had to sell my Aberdeen studio to one of my past dancers," she explained.

At nearly four months in, the classes are a success. "This year has been incredibly fun!" she exclaimed. "It is always exciting to see kids enjoying dance lessons."

What does the future hold for Living Art Dance in Clark? "We are hoping to grow our studio in Clark by offering more forms of dance and hopefully have high school students join as well," Schnoor stated.

For now, the plan is to get the new dancers acclimated to the rigors of dance technique and have some fun while doing it. "Right now, our younger classes are putting together a little bit of a Christmas performance, and we will have the parents come in and watch during class to see what we've been up to for the last few months. After the holidays, we begin dances for our spring recital which will be held at Clark High School on Sunday, April 27."

For more information, contact Vicki Schnoor at Living Art Dance Studio by calling 605-380-1908, via email at livingartdance@abe.midco.net or visit the website at www.livingartdance.net.

WEATHER

Robert Cole - Official Weather Observer

	HI	LO	PR
November 26	21	8	0
November 27	27	9	0
November 28	23	13	0.02
November 29	15	-3	0
November 30	9	1	0
December 1	12	2	0
December 2	18	7	0.05
2024 precipitation to date	20.85"		
2023 precipitation to date	18.40"		

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