

## Kennedy tennis opens with 2-1 mark at Faribault

### Richfield hosts successful doubles tourney

By **JASON OLSON**  
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With six of the 10 rostered tennis players back on the court for Kennedy this fall, co-head coaches Ryan Keith and Haley Horning Shibley have players with a growing tennis background and varsity experience to lean on.

Back as captains are sophomore Lila Coval and senior Julia Ohm. They are joined by new captain Elissa Dinneen, who Keith says is not only providing leadership to the players but taking initiative for other logistics to help the team run smoothly, from uniform organization to running preseason captains practice and in-season communication with new players to bring them up to speed with the program.

Eighth-grader Molly Miller returns at the top singles spot, where she is off to a 4-0 start. Keith anticipates Miller to garner state coaches poll votes very soon.

Coval is 3-1 at second singles and is pushing Miller at practice. Coval dropped her opening match but recovered with three wins by wide margins. At third singles is Mary Hajduk, who put the time in during the off-season to improve her performance. She is also one of the top softball players for the Eagles.

Ohm and Dinneen have split duties between singles and doubles as the coaches work to figure out the most effective lineup when the team match is a best-of-seven format (four singles and three doubles matches).

The program is 22 players deep, which allows the coaches to run varsity and junior varsity programs, which is something they haven't always been able to do in the past.

Returning to non-conference matches is



(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Richfield eighth-grader Elizabeth Hernandez reacts at the net during Saturday's doubles tournament in Richfield.

another plus the program after playing only Metro West Conference opponents last fall due to COVID-19 protocol. Those opponents include DeLaSalle, Minneapolis South, Minneapolis Roosevelt and Richfield to name a few.

Kennedy picked up a 4-3 win over DeLaSalle on Aug. 24 with Miller, Hajduk and Ohm sweeping the singles matches for the first win over the Islanders in years.

The season began with a 2-1 record at a triangular meet at Faribault High School Aug. 21. They beat the Falcons (6-1) and Tri-City United and lost to Lake City (5-2). Against Faribault, Miller, Coval and Ohm won their singles matches in straight sets while the No. 2 doubles team of Sharon Rosas Benitez and Jacy Simmons came back in the third set for the win 6-4, 3-6, 10-4.



(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Jefferson junior Melina Peters reaches for the ball during Saturday's doubles tournament on the courts at Richfield High School and Augsburg Park.

Miller won the lone Lake City, defeating 6-2. Coval dropped her singles match against Madeline Medvec 6-2, No. 2 singles match

against Brooke Bee 6-3, 2-6, 10-8. Hajduk also lost in three sets at No. 3 0-6, 7-5, 10-6.

What has Keith excited about the season – and the prospect of a sixth-to eighth-place finish in the 13-team Metro West Conference – is the increase in the level of play by the less experienced players who were on the low side of JV last season and are now fighting for varsity spots in the lineup, including seniors Sharon Rosas Benitez, Emma Shuck and Talayah Stackhouse.

### Richfield

Richfield opened the season with its traditional quadrangular doubles tournament on the high school and Augsburg Park courts Aug. 28.

The Spartans will have a number of new contributors after seven varsity starters graduated in June. Back for a third season at No. 1 singles is Cristina Furnace-Rubio who is growing more comfortable into her role at the top. Coach Chris Olson said she is starting to recognize when to play at the net to force the opponent to make the mistake instead of sticking to the baseline. He gave a stat about Roger Federer losing nearly half of the points from the baseline while winning 84 percent of the time he comes to the net. "She's learning when to come up and endpoints," he said.

The Spartans lost all three matches on Saturday, which were 8-game pro set formats, including 6-0 losses to Jefferson and Southwest Christian. The lone team point came from the top doubles team of Elizabeth Hernandez and Furnace-Rubio, who knocked off their Minneapolis Southwest counterparts while the team lost 5-1.

Junior captain Audrey Palmersheim and Evelyn Smiley lost two of their matches 8-6.

Olson hoped Saturday would be an opportunity to gain experience for



# Girls soccer teams dodge early-season weather

By **JASON OLSON**

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With nine returning starters from Richfield's 2020 roster, the 2021 girls soccer team will look to improve on a 4-6-2 record, sharing fourth place in the Tri-Metro Conference with DeLaSalle.

Among those back are senior forward and captain Morgan Brown, who led the team in scoring, senior midfielder Diana Barrera and junior defender Eva Patenaude as captains to help coach Amy Frank guide a group of players that has played together since eighth grade.

Frank anticipates incoming underclassmen to help fill in the gaps and compete for a varsity role on what should be a competitive team. They opened the season with a 2-1 win at St. Paul Como Park on Aug. 27 and continued the early-season road trip at Apple Valley (Aug. 31) before the Thursday, Sept. 2 conference opener at Columbia Heights. The Spartans host DeLaSalle on Thursday, Sept. 9 in the home opener at 5 p.m.

"Their experience playing at this level will help us be successful," Frank said. "We have been improving each year and I'm hoping to be competitive in our conference and sections as our schedule is more difficult than in past years."

## Kennedy

The Aug. 27 season-opener at St. Croix Lutheran was canceled due to weather making the Aug. 31 contest at Orono not only the Metro West Conference opener but the season opener for the Eagles who are looking to turn the page after a one-win and four-draw 2020 season.

The Eagles had several key moments including the first program to score on Chanhassen to break their streak of clean



(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Jefferson junior Isabella Warren, right, shields the ball away from a Prior Lake player during the 0-0 draw at Bloomington Stadium Aug. 28.

sheets and played strong against Chaska, St. Louis Park and Cooper. The Eagles gave up 26 goals in 13 games, not counting a 9-0 loss to Benilde-St. Margarets.

Coach Mario Lone added former Southwest standout Nora Landry as the junior varsity coach and Kevin Lieu to lead the B squad. Lieu is a Kennedy alum and is the Director of Rec Soccer for Bloomington United.

Experience will be a strength of the program with leading scorer Izzy Lone back as a junior captain in her fourth season with the program. She tallied 18 goals and 14 assists with her club team Salvo Premier with a combination of state, regional and national play.

Senior captains Amaya Fierro, Susie Monson and Alex Munoz Rosales will provide stability in

the midfield and defense. This marks Fierro's sixth season in the program and fifth season for Monson.

Look for the attack to be led by juniors Cameran Renneke, Mackenzie Kane, Anay Pulido and Ruthie Gyasi. Defensively, Gyasi will organize the backline along with returning varsity contributors Pulido and Shane Jimenez Lezama.

## Holy Angels

Holy Angels is off to a 2-0 start thanks to a 4-0 win over St. Paul Highland Park in the Aug. 26 opener at StarDome, before a 2-0 win at Totino-Grace Aug. 28.

Sophomores Audrey Garton and Ava Telep provided the second-half goals on Saturday with two assists from senior Cat Duffy-Shaw.

Duffy-Shaw assisted on each of the four goals in

the opener as four different players scored including sophomore Tatum Klassen, Garton, senior Brigid Plunkett and freshman Elizabeth Mejia.

## Jefferson

Jefferson is off to a 1-0-1 start thanks to a 4-1 win at Hastings on Aug. 26 as Abby Longhenry made her mark with a hat trick as the team dodged severe weather with a 30-minute lightning delay two minutes into the second half.

Longhenry opened the scoring with a long-range goal followed by Emma Yates with another long goal seven minutes later.

After the delay, junior Ayah Makled goes end-to-end before setting up Longhenry to make it 3-0 in the 53rd minute. The pair hook up again this time with a well-timed through ball for Longhenry to run onto

and convert.

Coach Eric Johnson was wondering how the team would react after the delay as his worries were soothed.

The team matched Prior Lake stride for stride Saturday, ultimately securing the scoreless draw with the services of three goalkeepers. Senior starter Lily Benson started but had to leave at halftime due to a previous commitment. Junior Rhianna Anya helped preserve the clean sheet before leaving with an undisclosed illness in overtime.

Zosel stepped in and made a few saves in the extra session, moving from her defensive role to wear the gloves.

Captains include seniors Jolie Gunn, Jayda Johnson, Emma Nelson and Hadley Zosel. All four have started since their sophomore seasons and

will be aided with a return of All-Conference midfielder Makled, Yeates a sophomore midfielder, senior defender Ruby Studer, seniors Grace Murray, Sarah Totten and Grace Schuck and sophomore defender Lexi Evans.

Senior Lily Benson will be the new varsity starter along with juniors Maddie Faulk and McKenna Long, sophomores Sarah Totten and Becca Brendalen and Studer.

The Jaguars move to Section 3AAA but will still face a number of former Section 2AAA foes in the non-conference part of the schedule.

What impressed coach Eric Johnson the most about the start is the defending as a group. "The collective attitude and mentality to defend, which is a mindset, not a skillset, and they bought in. They had the ball way more than us and more chances but they were still locked in," he said.

In the four years as coach, Johnson said he hasn't seen a player grow in an understanding of the game like that of Longhenry. "She has just gotten a lot better over the last year and we're excited to see how she plays this year," he said.

Scoring chances Saturday came on the counter-attack and off the hard work to defend to spring the ball loose and being the attack going the opposite way. "We did the defending work and had the opportunities, not as many as we'd like," Johnson said.

Jefferson hosted BSM in the Metro West Conference opener Aug. 31 before starting a four-game road trip at Edina (Sept. 2), Eden Prairie (Sept. 7), Orono (Sept. 9) and Shakopee (Sept. 11) before returning to play New Prague Sept. 14 at the high school turf at 4 p.m.

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# Kennedy swimmers mark opener with thrilling win

By **JASON OLSON**

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Kennedy girls swimming and diving looked like a team closer to mid-season form instead of the

season and Metro West Conference opener in a 99-77 win over Robbinsdale Cooper at Oak Grove Middle School Aug. 26.

The Hawks dominated the first four events but

Kennedy chipped away the lead with first, fourth and fifth-place finishes to ultimately win the meet. "It was a great overall effort," coach Todd Walsh said. "Our goal was to

not finish sixth more than they did and we had two sixth-place finishes to their four. That's going to make a big difference when you can score three athletes and they can only

score two."

The Eagles welcomed back diver Candice Luu to the pool after some time away and she scored close to her dual-meet personal best with 162.65 points.

Kennedy picked up all six team points to take a 36-32 lead in the fifth event and never looked back. Luu is joined by

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(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTOS BY JASON OLSON)

## Final tune-ups

Left, Kennedy's Rayzjon Walker breaks away from the Champlin Park defense during an Aug. 28 scrimmage at Burnsville High School. Right, Kennedy's Chris Martin, right, cannot be denied the end zone during an Aug. 28 scrimmage. The final Saturday before football season-openers served as a chance for teams to iron out the details against multiple opponents. Jefferson and Richfield hosted scrimmages, while Holy Angels and Kennedy traveled. Season openers are spread across Thursday and Friday, Sept. 2 and 3. Thursday games kickoff at 7 p.m. with Jefferson hosting Chaska at Bloomington Stadium and Hill-Murray at Holy Angels at Richfield's StarDome. Friday's contests include Kennedy at Park Center and Richfield at Providence Academy.



### Volleyball

Jefferson hosts Eagan in an early-season test among two of the premier teams in the state at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 2.

Kennedy is at South St. Paul that night and hosts United Christian Academy Tuesday, Sept. 7 at 7 p.m.

### St. Olaf CC

Several cross country teams compete in the St. Olaf Showcase Thursday, Sept. 2, at St. Olaf College in Northfield. The appeal of the meet is the chance to run on the course that will be used for the State Meets in November.

Jefferson, Wayzata, Minnetonka, Hopkins and St. Michael-Albertville are sending runners to St. Olaf. The girls varsity race begins at 9:45 a.m., followed by the boys varsity race at 11 a.m.

Richfield Cross Country will be at the Irish Invite in Rosemount on Friday, Sept. 3 with the varsity girls at 10:50 a.m. and boys at 11:15 a.m.

Richfield hosts Hmong College Prep Academy at

6 p.m. Sept. 7.

### Soccer

Kennedy boys host Roosevelt Thursday, Sept. 2 at 5 p.m. Jefferson travels to Edina on Thursday with the girls playing at 5 p.m. followed by the boys at 7 p.m. at Edina Community Center. Kennedy girls host Como Park at noon Saturday, Sept. 4.

On Tuesday, Sept. 7 Jefferson boys host Woodbury at 5 p.m. on the high

school turf while Kennedy hosts Eagan at 5 p.m. at Bloomington Stadium.

Holy Angels boys host Cristo Rey at 5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 2 and is at St. Thomas Academy at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 7.

### Tennis

Jefferson hosts Chanhassen on a busy Thursday, Sept. 2 at 4 p.m. with other Metro West Conference action including Kennedy

at BSM (Aquila Park), Orono at Cooper, New Prague at Park and Chaska at Waconia.

Holy Angels will host Jefferson in a non-conference match at Valley View Park at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 8.

### Swimming

Holy Angels/Richfield is at the Tri-Metro Conference Relays at St. Catherine's College at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 2.

## Swim

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eighth-grader Hannah Oliver and juniors Cassie Fetsch and Maddie Houtkooper for a complete diving group that shares coach Jonathan Bovee with Jefferson.

Bovee dove for Farmington High School before moving on to Gustavus Adolphus.

Senior Libby Lozinski is the lone captain this fall

and is the top medley and 100 freestyle swimmer.

Senior Natalie Wenner is the top returning sprinter, finishing 23rd in the 50 free at sections and 24th in the 100 free last season. She didn't swim against Cooper.

Sophomore Kayla Schletty is back as the top middle and distance swimmer for the Eagles, finishing ninth in the 500 free at sections and was 23rd in the 200 IM. She won both events against Cooper and

was part of the winning 200 and 400 free relays.

Classmate Dakota Luack was the top butterfly and 200 freestyle winner last season, finishing 15th in the 200 free and 16th in the 100 fly at sections. She won the 50 free and 100 fly against Cooper and was part of the winning 200 and 400 free relays.

Look for freshman Audrey Jensen to build on her varsity experience with a strong background in all four strokes. "She will fit

virtually anywhere in our lineup and compliment our top swimmers," Walsh said. "She is strong in the pool and seems to have a lot of grit in the races."

Jensen was fourth in the 100 fly and was part of the third-place 400 free relay team against Cooper.

Walsh is excited about this season because of the progression the group has put in since competing since seventh grade. Those upperclassmen are in the prime of their high school

careers. "It is their time to rise up and take charge as well as perform well in the meets."

Jefferson

Jefferson girls swim and dive coach Paula Lee has sophomore Ana Sorenson back as a backstroke and individual medley specialist this fall, to go along with captains seniors Carly Staufer and Abby Murphy-Thompson and juniors Abby To and Kathryn Boldenow.

Lee said a quarter of

the team swims during the off-season, "which I'm sure will help them in their short high school season."

The Metro West Conference adds Orono, Waconia and New Prague this season, which should lead to some surprises in the conference. The section added Edina to make an already fast section, possibly the quickest in the state.

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## Tennis

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those new to the team and in some cases new to the sport. They opened preseason practices with two-hour sessions Aug. 16 and postponed the season-opener against Farmington. Olson

noticed the team learning how to play with and against the wind as it picked up later on Saturday.

"I've been really happy and surprised with the skill set of the up-and-coming singles players," Olson said, pointing out eighth-grader Kiersti Jaegers, who will play at

second singles along with other former JV players playing at third and fourth singles. Jaegers didn't play on Saturday due to a concussion.

Jefferson went 3-0 including the sweep of Richfield to go with a 4-2 win over Minneapolis Southwest and a 5-1 win over Southwest Christian.

Sae Mee Oh and Sydney Walworth, Greta Campbell and Melina Peters and Emily Colby and Halle Johnson each went 3-0 at their respective spots, first-third singles.

### 100-set match set for Sept. 18

Anyone interested in

showing their support for Richfield tennis can do so by heading over to the courts on Saturday, Sept. 18 as the program hosts the annual 100 set fundraiser, weather permitting. Olson said the event helps build community throughout the program with anyone interested to play a set is welcome to

join them anytime from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Going on for more than a dozen years, the fundraiser includes walking tacos, refreshments and music.

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