



Former Cleve Hill coach takes over Central track

After seven years of coaching the Cleveland Hill High School girls track team, Rich Bridenbaker decided to move across town this spring to take the reigns of another local squad- Cheektowaga Central.

Bridenbaker brings a wealth of coaching knowledge to track and field at Central and will serve as head coach of the Warriors' boys' team and co-head coach of the girls' squad.

"I'm glad I'm at least at another Cheektowaga school," quipped Bridenbaker.

Central, which did not place at several meets last year due to having a small team, got a little bigger in numbers this spring.

On the boys' side, Bridenbaker named seniors Zack Sucharski and Eric Morganstern as Central's cocaptains. Sucharski will participate in the shot put and discus events and Morganstern, middle distance running and sprinting.

"Zack is our lockdown guy and he's a hard worker," Bridenbaker said of Sucharski. "He's a big kid. Eric is a terrific athlete as well."

Other athletes leading a relatively young squad are senior Justin Lafko (sprinter), junior Jake Havernick (shot put and discus), sophomore Patrick Eck (thrower, middle distance runner) and freshman An Dang (mile and two-mile runner).

"We've got a nucleus of young kids," the former Eagles coach said. "The numbers are still not where we want them to be but it's our goal to put Cheektowaga Central back on the map."

Bridenbaker and Anthony Massop will both coach the Central girls. Captaining the team is junior Renee Valentino, who will sprint and hurdle this spring.

"She's a tough little girl," Bridenbaker said of Valentino.

Other top athletes include twin sisters Margo and Taylor Pagano, juniors who will participate in sprints, distance running and discus throwing, respectively. Senior Noelle Lutereck (high jumper, sprinter) and sophomore Melanie Grzebinski (1,500 and 3,000-meter runs) also add needed experience to the squad.

Bridenbaker added that many freshmen and sophomores comprise the Lady Warriors' team.

Central returns to action next Tuesday to take on local and league foe Depew on the road at 4:30 p.m.