

2021 SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW

## Minneota/Canby Viking Softball



Head Coach Heidi Boerboom, 6th Year

Assistant Coaches: Emily Citterman, Katie Boettger, Emily Hennen

2021 Varsity Roster:

**Seniors** - Zahndra Bordewyk, outfield/first base; Audra Buysse, second base; Abby Hennen, catcher/shortstop; Abby Rost, outfield/first base; Shelby Sik, outfield

**Juniors** - Summer Hennen, outfield/third base; Ava Larson, pitcher; Morgan Moorse, utility; Lexi Sanov, shortstop/catcher; McKenna Yost, utility; McKenzie Tolk, pitcher/outfield

**Sophomores** - Tessa Anhalt, outfield; AshleeAnn Cole, outfield; Tylee Gruenholt, third base

**Freshman** - Faith Myhre, pitcher

# Athleticism likely to overcome inexperience

By Scott Thoma  
scott@thomabooks.com

With last season being wiped out due to coronavirus restrictions set by the governor, the Vikings only return two players with varsity experience from the 2019 season, senior catcher Abby Hennen and second baseman Audra Buysse.

"We had a great group of seniors last year that didn't get to step on the field," said coach Heidi Boerboom. "But we have athletic girls who can play many positions this year. We will be trying different things until we find the best fit."

Canby/Minneota's softball team got off to a late start due to the girls basketball team winning the Class A state championship. The Vikings have 18 girls out for softball in grades 9-12 and 23 out in seventh and eighth grade.

"I am so happy to see so many girls out," Boerboom noted.

The Vikings have seven players who have seen some time on the varsity, but only Hennen and Buysse saw significant playing time in 2019.

"This year's team is comprised of so many new players from two years ago, so I just want to see improvement from

one game to the next in all aspects of the game," Boerboom said.

Hennen, one of the area's best catchers, is also expected to see some time playing at shortstop. Buysse will again play second base.

Expected to see some time in the pitching circle this season are juniors Ava Larson and McKenzie Tolk, and freshman Faith Myhre.

"I expect great things from this group," Boerboom remarked. "Some of our team will be coming off a state championship in basketball. I hope to keep that energy and enthusiasm alive in our sport, too."

## Despite year off, experience is team's strength

By Scott Thoma  
scott@thomabooks.com

The clay target team is growing in popularity as evidenced by the team having 14 experienced shooters returning to the field this season. To be considered varsity, an athlete has to shoot an average of 19 and above for the entire season.

"There is a lot of camaraderie between teammates and there is also a lot of competition for those top five varsity spots," said coach Kent Williams. "That is one thing that is great about this sport. It is a team sport, but you also compete against yourself trying to improve your individual score each week."

Besides the 14 athletes returning for the Vikings, there are also 12 newcomers from grades 6-11 that could help the team.

"We have a lot of young shooters who are eager to learn," Williams said. "The older shooters are great role models for the new team members."

The first three practice weeks

do not count towards competition average. Minneota's competition scores began on Tuesday, April 20.

Last season was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the team is excited to return.

"Everyone is excited to be on the trap field again," Williams said. "The students have a lot of energy and I don't think they will skip a beat."

Because trap shooting is basically a social distance sport anyway, it makes it easier and safer for the athletes.

"While we still have COVID rules in effect, once athletes are in their positions it is just like shooting was two years ago," Williams said.

Williams expects the Minneota team to improve as the season progresses.

"As a coach, we have some top shooters that still have a few years of competition in their high school career," he said. "I am hopeful that we can develop the team to be competitive this year and in the future with other teams in the league."

## Minneota Viking Clay Target



Head Coach Kent Williams, 3rd Year

Assistant Coaches: Ken DeBoer, Mike Monnet, Dale Vershelde

Returning team members:

**Seniors** - Isabelle Kimpe, McKenzie Monnet, Kaden Myhre

**Juniors** - Nate Allen, Elizabeth DeSmet, Landon DeSmet

**Sophomores** - Garett DeBoer, Wyatt Myhre, Hudson Scholten, Joseph Vershelde

**Freshmen** - Brayden Monnet, August VanHecke, Joseph Voit

**8th grade** - Bretten Coequyt

Newcomers:

**Juniors** - Hailey Kimpe, Troy VanKeulen

**Sophomores** - Evan Popowski, Michael Popowski

**8th graders** - Brock Kremin, Gabe Sterzinger

**7th graders** - August Buysse, Thomas DeSmet, Dawson Dovre, Kaden Lasnetski

**6th graders** - Nolan VanKeulen, Gavin Wendt

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## Canby/Minneota Boys & Girls Track



Head Coach Sara Hemish

Assistant Coaches: Tony Ourada, Jeremy Stoks, Brandon Berndt

Canby/Minneota boys varsity:

Seniors - Joey Hiedeman

Juniors - Joseph Anderson, Tristan Bierschenk, AJ Josephson, Blake Stoks, Tucker Thoof

Sophomores - Caleb Danielson, Trevor Gray, Isaac Guza, Gavin Maynard, Logan Myhre, Joseph Wollum

Freshmen - Kolton Duis, Braelyn Merritt, Zach Ourada, Sam Skorczewski, Ryan Siedschlag, Michael Tol

7th grade - Damien Villela-Schroder

Canby/Minneota girls varsity:

Seniors - Hannah Jelen, McKenzie Ruether,

Juniors - Natalie Bach, Aidyn Bruns, Grace Drietz, Gabby Harding, Rachel Harding, RyAnn Hansen, Mackenzie Janiszkeski, Alexis Wollum, Elysa Wollum

Sophomores - Emylee Drietz

Freshmen - Mariah Buysse, Sydney Hemish, Grace Hennen, Brooklyn Kindopp, Cheyenne Milbrandt

8th grade- Nohemi Diaz, Claire Stoks, Natalie Stoks, Lillie Wollum

7th grade - Lillie Wollum

# C/M boys will have many new faces

By Scott Thoma  
scott@thomabooks.com

The lone senior on the boys track team this year is Joey Hiedeman. AJ Josephson, Tristan Bierschenk and Isaac Guza are the only others with significant varsity experience.

"Our boys numbers are a little low this year," said coach Sara Hemish. "But we

have a good core of freshmen, as well as a few sophomores and eighth graders that will contribute this year."

Because of restrictions placed by the governor, there was no high school track and field last season, making it difficult for coaches to determine who will be performing in certain events this season.

"We haven't seen these athletes for two years and these athletes can change a lot

in that amount of time," said Hemish. "We also essentially lost two graduating classes since that last time we competed."

"This long gap in time mixed with us having several athletes quarantined and less than ideal weather has made the first couple of weeks challenging. Although the start has been less than ideal we are excited to be back and can't wait to see what these athletes can accomplish this year."

# Girls to defend conference, True Team titles

By Scott Thoma  
scott@thomabooks.com

Returning members that advanced to state in 2019 include Grace Drietz, RyAnn Hansen, and Braelyn Merritt.

Seniors McKenzie Ruether and Hannah Jelen also return for the Canby/Minneota girls' team.

"We also have a large group of juniors that have had significant varsity experi-

ence," said coach Sara Hemish. "Our girls' team is the reigning Camden Conference and True Team Section champs. We have a few holes to fill but are hoping to be able to defend our titles this year."

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**Good luck to all the teams this spring!**

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# Myhre, Downing lead young team

By Scott Thoma  
scott@thomabooks.com

Junior Cole Myhre, a state participant two years ago, and senior Braxton Downing both have two years of varsity experience despite being unable to participate last season when the governor shut down all spring sports due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"I am very excited to be able to work

with the kids again and it feels great to get out and see some golf and see how the kids have improved with having last year off," said coach Walker Hennen.

Varsity newcomers this season for Minneota include junior Jackson Esping, sophomore Anthony Rybinski, and freshmen Alex DePestel and Max Rost.

"We are hoping that our strength on course will be the short game," said Hennen. "We will be dedicating quite a large

part of our practice time to work on putting and shots inside 100 yards."

Hennen feels that all high school golfers need to work on the mental aspect of golf.

"Along with short game, one area all high school golfers can work on is course management," Hennen said. "They need to think their way around the course and set themselves up for success on any given hole."

## Minneota Viking Boys Golf



Head Coach Walker Hennen

## Minneota Viking Girls Golf



Head Coach Nicole Evers, 3rd Year

Assistant Coach:  
LeaAnne Bot

# Shorthanded Vikings eager to get started

By Scott Thoma  
scott@thomabooks.com

The Vikings have two varsity players this year, juniors Lauren Bowyer and Jeren Rost, both who have been on the varsity for three years.

The junior varsity also has two players, sophomore Kaci Callens and seventh grader Izzy Gillund.

"Lauren and Jeren have experience and

are able to pass that onto the younger girls," said Minneota girls golf coach Nicole Evers. "The girls are positive, hard working and are wanting to improve their game."

Evers said the area that golfers are working hard to improve is the short game, and the younger golfers need to gain some valuable experience, which will improve their confidence.

With COVID wiping out all spring

sports in 2020, the coaches and golfers are eager to compete again.

"I am excited that we are back with the athletes and I cannot wait to see how they took last year to work on their game without having a season," Evers said. "The athletes are excited and ready for warm weather to be able to get out on the course and compete again."

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2021 SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW

# Minneota Viking Baseball



Head Coach Keven Larson, 23rd Year

Assistant Coaches: J.D. Pesch, Les Engler, Chad Johnston, Brandon Bursack

2021 varsity roster:

**Seniors** - Kaden Culver, outfield; Carter Schuelke, infield/pitcher; Josh Schuelke, infield/pitcher; Jacob Hennen, utility/pitcher; Braeden Panka, infield/pitcher; AJ Myhre, infield/pitcher; Cooper VanOverbeke, outfield/pitcher; Thor Fischer, infield/pitcher; Ben Skorczewski, infield/pitcher.

**Juniors** - Jayden Gamrak, infield/pitcher; Tyler Gronke, outfield/pitcher; Jonah Gruenes, outfield

**Sophomores** - Peyton Gillund, infield/pitcher; Isaac Pohlen, infield/pitcher; Jack Lacek, infield/pitcher.

Minneota coach Keven Larson addresses his team between innings Friday at K.P. Kompelien Field in Minneota. Mascot photo by Brian Jeremiason

# Vikings armed with moundful of pitchers

By Scott Thoma  
scott@thomabooks.com

Baseball is back! Even though the season was shut down in 2020 due to state COVID restrictions, several of the players participated in a summer league that kept them in shape for this season.

"It was tough for them to sit out, especially since the date just kept getting moved back every couple of weeks," Larson said. "We thought we would have a little bit of a season. However, we were able to play some last summer. The kids are excited to play, and hope that the weather will coop-

erate for this year."

The Vikings have a veteran group with nine seniors, three juniors and three sophomores; many of them who can pitch, which is always important in a short season in which games are bunched together. It all starts with pithing.

"We have quite a few guys that can pitch," Larson said, "but not a lot with a great amount of varsity innings because of last year. They will have to work into it."

It also helps to have a pair of experienced catchers which the Vikings have in seniors Carter Schuelke and AJ Myhre.

Because of having a year off and los-

ing some players last year to graduation makes it difficult to gauge what type of a team a coach will have until playing several games.

"Offensively, we have quite a few guys that have experience in certain spots in the line up that played last summer; a few in 2019," Larson noted. "As far as infield, we have a few guys that will be able to play multiple positions depending on who is pitching. And our outfield will be pretty quick, but they haven't played together much, so it will take a few games to work into that."



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