

GUTHRIE COUNTY SPORTS GUIDE FALL 2026



BIG EXPECTATIONS



PHOTO BY BETTY COOPER

Front row: Cora Fluharty, Ilana Baumert, Stella Largent, Olivia Mahaffey, Nora Langaard, Miranda Gruber and Rylee Robson. Second row: Tessa Slaybaugh, Mya Klemish, Sophie Young, Jerzee Huss, Megan Underwood, Alli Wiers, Carrie Downing, Kailee Kautzky, Trinity Calhoun and Blair Brown. Third row: Emma Martens, Taryn Carroll, Khloe Riley, Jayna Hascall, Valia Roen, Monroe Fagan, Dakota Johnson-Dawson, Sidney Follmann, Charli Lehman and Camdyn Coffman.

A senior heavy roster spearheads the Chargers' push for postseason success.

BY CYOTE WILLIAMS

The ACGC volleyball team is fresh off a 24-12 season, where the Chargers finished third in the West Central Activities Conference and won a playoff game, all under new head coach Caley Vaughan. Vaughan was no stranger to the program and had been an assistant for several years before leading the Chargers last season. Continuing the team's positive momentum to 24 wins, the second most in program history, is a great sign of things to come.

"My main goal of being the head coach for the first time was just to improve on our record from the previous year, and we did that. We have had a great summer so far, and I think this year is going to be awesome, too," Vaughan said.

ACGC graduated three seniors from last year's squad, all three of whom played major roles. Two of them started all 36 games: Camdyn Richter and Becca Littler. Littler led the team in assists with 764 and aces with 58. Richter was second on the team in kills with 262, and second in digs with 235, and Savannah Akers was second on the team in blocks with 26. That is a lot of offensive and defensive production the team will have to replace.

Lucky for the Chargers, Vaughan has a large senior class at her disposal. It is her largest grouping of players with six: Rylee Robson, Meranda Gruber, Stella Largent, Olivia Mahaffey, Nora Langaard and Ilana Baumert.

Largent is expected to, once again, be the driving force on offense for the Chargers. Her team-high 514 kills last season were also the fourth-most in the entire state. Her sophomore season was equally impressive, again leading the team with 443 kills, which was the eighth-highest in the state. She was effective on defense as well with 14 blocks, the third-most digs with 224 and was second on the team in aces with 50.

Baumert returns again as the team's libe-

ro. Her 48 assists were second-most on the team, and she led the team in digs with 284. As a server, Baumert had 39 aces.

Langaard will likely step into a bigger role to replace Richter's production on offense. She had 59 kills last season, third most on the team. She was a huge asset on defense last season, leading the team in blocks with 28.

Mahaffey played in all 36 games last season as a junior. She had the fourth-most kills last year with 43. On defense, she was tied with Largent for the third-most blocks with 14.

Gruber played in all 36 games as well, starting three of them. She had 42 digs and was the team's most efficient server at

92.5% with 20 aces. Robson only featured in two games last season, but Vaughan says she currently has her as a starter and playing defensive specialist.

The team has one junior, Megan Underwood. Underwood is new to the team this season.

The sophomore class is Tessa Slaybaugh, Jerzee Huss, Blair Brown and Kailee Kautzky.

Of those four, Kautzky was the only one to feature as a freshman. She started in 33 games and played 34. She contributed 11 assists, was fourth on the team in digs with 174 and had 10 aces. Vaughan says to expect her to have a bigger impact this season.

Vaughan also mentioned Brown's ability that she has shown over the summer and expects her to take on a larger role this year as well.

Rounding out the roster are two freshmen: Camdyn Coffman and Monroe Fagan. On a team heavy with seniors, it's unlikely they will see the floor too often this season.

Expectations were already high for the Chargers coming off a successful season

and what has been an overall solid program for some time. ACGC has not had a losing season since 2015. After finishing third in the conference last year, and with some now former conference juggernauts leaving the WCAC, the door is open for the Chargers to have a massive year.

"I feel like we're really going to be top of the conference this year. We played some really big schools in the Iowa Girls Coaches Association tournament that they have every year. We played really well against some really big schools; these girls have been playing together for four years. I think they really play well together and complement each other. I think it's going to be a really good season," Vaughan said.

That gives ACGC fans plenty of reasons to be excited for already, but if that wasn't enough, Vaughan gave a few more.

"We have some really big players. The girls, the positive energy that they have. They're constantly smiling. Very rarely do you see them not smiling or giving each other high fives. We're just a really close-knit, small-town, positive team that works really well together," Vaughan said. ■



ACGC 2026 VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

- 9/1/26 WCAC Triangular at Panorama, 6 p.m.
- 9/3/26 vs. West Central Valley, 5 p.m.
- 9/3/26 vs. Exira-EHK, 6 p.m.
- 9/3/26 vs. Nodaway Valley, 7 p.m.
- 9/8/26 vs. Madrid, 4:30 p.m.
- 9/8/26 vs. Ogden, 5:30 p.m.
- 9/10/26 vs. Panorama, 6:30 p.m.
- 9/12/26 Griswold Varsity Tournament, 8 a.m.
- 9/15/26 vs. Pleasantville, 6:30 p.m.
- 9/19/26 Carroll Invitational, 8:30 a.m.
- 9/26/26 BV Classic at Boyer Valley, 9 a.m.
- 9/29/26 Volleyball Quad at Panorama, 5 p.m.
- 10/3/26 Greene County Volleyball Tourney, 9 a.m.
- 10/6/26 at Interstate 35, 6:30 p.m.
- 10/10/26 CAM Volleyball Tourney, 9 a.m.
- 10/13/26 vs. Van Meter, 6:30 p.m.

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A LOT OF ENERGY AND A TON OF TALENT

Panorama Coach Angela Mincy hopes to keep the Panthers upward trend moving as she takes over the volleyball program.

BY CYOTE WILLIAMS

Panorama's volleyball program had seen some steady improvements under former head coach Mollie Lint. The team went from five wins, to seven, to 11 and then 10 last season. The girls overall record last season was 10-18 with a 1-5 record in the West Central Activities Conference. Lint has now left the program, and in her place comes Angela Mincy.

Mincy had spent the last few seasons on the squad as an assistant. She brings that coaching experience and familiarity with the school and incoming players, mixed with her time coaching club and AAU volleyball.

"I started working with a Parks and Rec out of Urbandale, UGRA, and then I did a couple club teams out of Urbandale. Then we moved out to Panora, and I started an AAU team just to get some girls playing because they wanted to keep playing, and then I ended up coaching at the high school as the JVR coach. My daughter and I started a club here in the area, and I coach the middle school age group for AAU during club season," Mincy said.

Mincy says she doesn't plan on changing the philosophy of the team too much now that she's in charge. With some years of consistent improvement and familiarity with the squad, there's not much reason to.

"I was coaching with Coach Lint for all of my years here. We have very similar styles, and so I'm just going to kind of keep riding with what we've got going. We've been trying to grow the program,



Front row: Danica Isom, Ana Cruz, Bella Kelly, Nerea Gimeno-Perez, Hailey Hellman, Jessica Randol and Gracie Recker. Second row: Addison Wagner, Adalynn Godwin, Maddie Davis, Dakota Pierce, Maliya Kelly, Hannah Dishman, Lexi Galvan, Ines Gimeno-Perez, Jacey Glade, Hannah Hellman. Third row: Kashley Klein, Bryna Wearmouth, Madeline Olson, Aleeah Trinidad, Mackenzie Ponstein, Libby Miller, Andrea Knode and Aleah Knode. Back row: EmmaLee Slater, Alyssa Hall, Addy Brewster, Aria Stanley, Ashley Crees, Ruth Fett, Leah Carstens and Tessa Knapp.

and I don't want to stop that and change things out too much. We're just trying to put the best girls out there. We've got a lot of talent, and we need to figure out how you put it together to make them successful," Mincy said.

Panorama graduates several seniors from last year's team: Elah Molloy, Lillie Arganbright, Miranda Laabs and Evelyn Hummel. Molloy led the team in digs last season, and she and Hummel were two of the team's most consistent servers. Losing them will sting, but for the most part, Panorama returns the majority of its talent from last year.

Much different from last season, the Panthers have a large senior class, packed with some of their best players. Seniors this year are Hailey Hellman, Nerea Gimeno-Perez, Bella Kelly, Jessica Randol, Danica Isom and Gracie Recker. Kelly and Isom are new to the team this

season.

Nerea Gimeno-Perez returns as the team's leader in assists with 226. She also added 24 kills. Nerea was also second on the team in digs last season with 134. She was also the best from behind the line, leading the team in aces with 52 and successful serves at 270. Her production will be key for the Panthers this season.

Hellman also had a highly productive junior season. She was second on the team in assists with 159, adding five kills. Hellman was also solid on defense with 89 digs, fourth most on the team. Serving, she had 22 aces, fourth most on the team, and 157 successful serves. Her 94.5% success rate was highest among those with more than 100 serves.

Randol was another productive junior. She was often on the receiving end of Nerea and Hellman's assists, finishing

the season with 100 kills, third most on the team. Her 79 digs were sixth most on the team, plus six blocks. Randol did little serving, but still had three aces in her 31 attempts.

Recker returns as the team's leader in kills with 168 last season. This was 60 more than the next-best Panther. She was also a menace around the net on defense, leading the team in blocks with 35, adding 39 digs. Recker was also a capable server, with 25 aces, third most on the team. Her offense and defense will both have major impacts this season.

Mincy is excited to see what this senior class is able to accomplish.

"I have so many returning, strong players. Our senior class, there are several of them who have been playing on the varsity level since they were freshmen or sophomores. They've done a great job showing leadership to some of the

PHOTO BY BETTY COOPER

younger ones," Mincy said.

Juniors this year are Leah Carstens, Ashley Crees, Andrea Knode, Hannah Dishman and Ruth Fett. Carstens only played in six sets last season, and Dishman was not on the roster.

Crees will be one of the team's best returning players on offense. She was second in kills last season with 108, adding 13 assists. She was also a solid defender with 16 blocks, third most on the team, and 18 digs.

Fett had 48 kills last season, the fourth most on the team and six assists. She was another solid contributor on defense with 19 blocks, second most on the team, and 17 digs.

Knode had 36 kills with nine assists, making her a decent part of the offense's production last season. She had 77 digs on defense. Serving, she had 11 aces.

Sophomores are Lexi Galvan, Ines Gimeno-Perez and Maliya Kelly. Kelly is new to the team this season, and Ines only played in three sets last season.

Galvan saw some solid time as a freshman, playing in 24 matches and 66

sets. She recorded five assists and four kills. She also had 86 digs, fifth most on the team last season. She was a productive server with 13 aces and an 88.1% success rate.

There are no freshmen on this year's varsity roster.

It's hard to determine expectations ahead of the season, but with several years of consistent improvement, back-to-back double-digit win seasons, and the team returning the vast majority of its offensive and defensive production, Mincy should have some confidence heading into her first year at the helm.

"I think that if you ask any coach, and if they don't tell you that their goal is to make it to state one day, then they're lying. I would love to make it further along in postseason, so hopefully they can grow as the season goes on and hopefully we can make it further than we've made it in the past years," Mincy said.

Overall, Mincy says that Panther fans should be excited to watch the team compete this year.

"I think that this team's got a lot of en-



PANORAMA 2026 VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

▪ 8/25/26 at Van Meter, 4:30 p.m.	▪ 9/28/26 South Hamilton Volleyball Tournament, 5 p.m.
▪ 8/25/26 at Interstate 35, 6 p.m.,	▪ 9/29/26 Panorama Quad, 5 p.m.
▪ 8/27/26 Volleyball Triangular, 5:30 p.m.	▪ 10/1/26 vs. Griswold, 6:15 p.m.
▪ 9/1/26 WCAC Triangular, 4:30 p.m.	▪ 10/3/26 Madrid Pink Out Tournament, 8 a.m.
▪ 9/8/26 at Martensdale-St Marys, 7:30 p.m.	▪ 10/6/26 Pleasantville Triangular, 5 p.m.
▪ 9/10/26 at ACGC, 6:30 p.m.	▪ 10/13/26 at Earlham, 6:30 p.m.
▪ 9/15/26 vs. Ogden, 7:15 p.m.	
▪ 9/22/26 at Grand View Christian, 6:30 p.m.	
▪ 9/26/26 Panorama Triangular, 9 a.m.	

ergy, a ton of talent, and I would just love for the community to really wrap around that and really help grow the game of volleyball. We're hoping to make our mark and make the community excited about the program," Mincy said. ■

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‘CHOMPING AT THE BIT’

Will Shull takes over the Chargers football program to begin new era.

BY CYOTE WILLIAMS

This season will be a season of change for the ACGC football team. For the first time in eight seasons, Cody Matthewson will no longer lead the Chargers out to the field on Friday nights. Matthewson transformed the program into a powerhouse that has gone 10-1 in the last three seasons. For 2026-2027, he has passed that torch to Will Shull.

This will be Shull's third year with the program, spending the last two as an assistant.

“Originally, I wasn’t sure if I wanted to do that. I have a 13-month-old at home, so I didn’t know if it was quite the right time for my family, and I was questioning it. I talked to Cody a lot, and he was pretty helpful. The biggest thing he told me was, ‘You’ll never be fully ready,’ and I was like, OK, you’re not really leading me to take this job very well,” Shull said. “It is a lot right out of the gate. But I think once you kind of get into the swing of things, it’s not too bad.”

Taking over a program that has won 30 games over the last three seasons certainly comes with some pressure. But, it also comes with the benefit of a solid foundation. Having spent the last two seasons under Matthewson and returning the majority of last season’s staff, Shull is in a solid position to keep the positive momentum rolling.

“I thought we improved really well. We had a lot of positives. We tried to find some negatives to hone in on so we can improve those. We won some really big games in the Mount Ayr game



Front row: Morgun Nolte, Aiden Grace, Nathan Baxter, Lucas Barnett, Carson Lovelace, Ty Ganzer, Brandon Carlson, Cash Suhr, Ryder Cline, Cole Van Meter and Garrett Lemke. Second row: Gavin Pederson, Carson Kading, Devon Doherty, Ryan Martens, Lane Stringer, Keegan Gettler, Kinnick Froehlich, Caden Larsen, Blake Ganzer and Hudson Gilland. Third row: Casen McCool, Will Skran, Aaron Langaard, Cal Clark, Coy Gruber, Joseph Fagan, Gavin Steensen, Andrew Baumert, Reece Emgarten and Creighton Suhr. Fourth row: Jax Lauzon, Braden Schafer, Raymond Cardenas, Cain Squires, Hudson Seeck, Cordell Wolfe, Roger Ochoa, Tanner Farrant, Kaleb Cline, Logan Stringer, Jaxen Knobbe and Logan Stringham.

and the Madrid game in back-to-back weeks, and we’re feeling pretty good,” Shull said. “It was a really great year. Our defense was stellar all year. Didn’t give up a whole lot of points or a whole lot of yards. I was pretty pleased with how we ended up and where we were at. We’re just going to try to build off of that for this year.”

ACGC graduates several program staples from last year, like star running back Joe Crawford and backup running back Brexton Schneider, who as the second-stringer still ran for 1,000 yards; starting quarterback Thomas Skram; star line-backer Xander Harwood; along with the next two highest leaders in tackles, Carter Richter and Charlie Christensen.

Losing that production and leadership on both sides of the ball will be a challenge to replace, but it’s something the

Chargers have consistently managed in the last few years.

Seniors this year are Morgun Nolte, Ryder Cline, Ty Ganzer, Cole Van Meter, Lucas Barnett, Nathan Van Effen, Cash Suhr, Carson Lovelace, Brandon Carlson, Aiden Grace and Garrett Lemke.

Cline will be a major part of the team this season. He is the leading returning rusher on the team with 48 carries for 410 yards and six TDs. Cline is also the team’s leading returner in tackles at 48 total with 23 solo, five tackles for loss and two sacks. Cline also led the team in fumble recoveries with four and had one interception.

Shull says Ganzer will be a solid returning piece on defense. He had 13 total tackles and one tackle for loss and one fumble recovery.

Nolte was another name mentioned

by Shull as one he expects to have a big impact on defense. As a junior, he had 12 total tackles, two for losses and half a sack and two fumble recoveries.

Lemke, Carlson and Suhr are players Shull named that will be leaders on the offensive line.

Last year’s team featured many starting seniors. Lots of players will have to step into new roles this season.

“We’ve got some guys that have played some quality time that we are hoping benefited them last year, and hopefully they can take that next step and be that guy this year,” Shull said.

The junior class will be Keegan Gettler, Lane Stringer, Ryan Martens, Caden Larsen, Kinnick Froehlich, Gavin Pederson, Devon Doherty, Carson Kading, Hudson Gilland and Blake Ganzer.

The player who had the most impact

as a sophomore was Froehlich. Going into last season, he was challenging for the starting QB job. Shull said he wasn't ready to name the starter for this season at the time of the interview. His defense is where he shined last season. He had 43 total tackles, which are the second-most among returners, one fumble recovery and led the team in interceptions last season with three. Charger fans can expect his role on both sides of the ball to increase this season.

Lane Stringer also had some solid playing time as a sophomore. He could join Cline in the backfield after having 33 carries for 174 yards and one TD last season. Stringer also had 13 total tackles on defense and one fumble recovery.

Martens will be expected to step into a larger role on defense as well at line-backer. As a sophomore, he had 14 total tackles and one for a loss.

Sophomores this year are Gavin Steensen, Andrew Baumert, Reece Emgarten, William Skram, Coy Gruber, Joseph Fagan, Aaron Langgaard, Cal Clark and Creighton Suhr.

Baumert had the biggest offensive impact as a freshman with 14 carries for 100 yards and two TDs.

Shull doesn't plan on changing much to the offensive or defensive systems that are already in place. After all, why fix something that isn't broken?

"We're going to do what we have been doing. Ninety percent of our staff has been with us through the years and known this offense, and we know how to run this offense and call the offense. We're going to throw a couple wrinkles in there and switch it up a little bit. We're going to keep our same mentality and play physical football on the defensive side. For the most part, we're just going to keep the philosophy the same of going out there and playing hard-nosed football," Shull said.

He added that after meeting as a staff and looking for weaknesses to improve, most would be hard-pressed to find ways to tear apart a team that just went 10-1. As long as they play physical, Shull sees them reaching last season's heights and beyond.



ACGC 2026 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- 8/21/26 at Woodward-Granger, 7 p.m., Scrimmage
- 8/28/26 at Panorama, 7 p.m.
- 9/4/26 vs. Southwest Valley, 7 p.m.
- 9/11/26 at Nodaway Valley, 7 p.m.
- 9/18/26 vs. Mount Ayr, 7 p.m., Band Night
- 9/25/26 vs. Madrid, 7 p.m., Senior Night
- 10/2/26 at Danville, 7 p.m.
- 10/9/26 vs. AHSTW, 7 p.m., Homecoming
- 10/16/26 at Riverside, 7 p.m.

"We've got to be physical. That was probably our biggest thing we took away from last year. We can always control how physical we are. I think, at times, we weren't as physical as we should be," Shull said. "We would like to be back at that quarterfinal game this year and win those big key games. I talked to the se-

niors, and one of their biggest goals is to win the district again, because this senior class would be four-time district champs, which is a pretty cool accomplishment for them."

Shull says he and his team are "chomping at the bit and are amped up to get the season started." ■

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TURNING INTO PREDATORS

New head coach Jim Demers wants to flip the script for Panorama football.

BY CYOTE WILLIAMS

Panorama football has not posted a winning record since a 6-3 season in 2020 and has recorded back-to-back 1-7 seasons the last two years. New head coach Jim Demers is looking to turn the Panthers into apex predators.

Demers comes to the team with a long list of personal athletic accomplishments. His performances at Buena Vista in basketball and football saw him inducted into the university's Hall of Fame in 2008. In his time after his playing days, he has led many programs across several sports, holding head coaching jobs in baseball, track and field and both boys and girls basketball.

"I've coached football for over 20 years. I was assistant football at Buena Vista for a couple years, and then I was assistant football at Newel Fonda, where I was defensive coordinator, and then at Aurelia, where I was the offensive coordinator for many years," Demers said.

He also started the Northwest Youth Football league for grades three through six in 2004. With all of that experience, however, Demers had yet to be the head coach of a football program. This will be his first lead gig, bringing 20 years of experience as an offensive and defensive coordinator.

Demers is aware of the team's record from the past few seasons, but that did little to scare him away. In his time getting the players ready for the season, all he knows is that he's seeing some hungry Panthers.

"I tell you, the thing is, these kids are working hard, honestly, and they're great



Front row: Miles Ostrander, Brennen Bell, Josiah Williams, Jace Denham, William Walker and Jairet Tigges. Second row: Cacen Crandall, Scott Matthias, Collin Lestina, Caleb Prescott, Mason Cates, Jorge Gimeno-Perez, Hunter Hines and Mason Meinecke. Third row: Bladyn Wearmouth, Brody Steenblock, Coach Bailey, Coach Coy, Coach Demers, Coach Clark, Cruz Stanley and Sam Scanlon. Back row: Devon Bell, Hunter Kline, Cole Carstens, Reed Draper, Eli Cooper, Cruz Crandall, Brayden Prescott, Connor Deardorff and Corbin Deardorff.

kids. The biggest thing I see right now is changing their mind and just bringing in the winning culture. It's not going to be easy. Being average or below average is really easy, but being great at something is going to be really hard, and it's going to take time," Demers said. "Last year's team is different than this year's team. They graduated 12 or 13 seniors. These kids are hungry, and they're ready to change things around here."

The senior class is Brayden Prescott, Reed Draper, Cruz Crandall and Cole Carstens.

Crandall was the team's starting QB last season. He threw for 1,0894 yards with 11 TDs and nine INTs. He made contributions on defense as well with 15 total tackles. Crandall also kicked off more

than half the time and was often the punter.

Draper returns as the team's leading receiver from last season with 43 receptions for 593 yards and seven TDs. Draper made an impact on defense as well with 32 total tackles and five tackles for losses. Demers said they will be looking to get Draper the ball as often as they can.

Carstens was a solid piece on defense for the team. His 42 total tackles are most of any returning player.

Prescott also made his presence known on defense with 17 total tackles and one tackle for loss.

"Our four seniors have done an excellent job with great leadership, and I'm talking on the field and off the field. They

have done an excellent job leading the team. They want to leave here knowing they got this program started on the right foot. They want to say, 'We're leaving this program in a better place than when we first came in as freshmen, and we're holding everybody accountable.' Those four leaders have been awesome on both ends," Demers said.

The junior class is the largest and is comprised of Court Vogel, Samuel Scanlan, Brody Steenblock, Bladyn Wearmouth, Corbin Deardorff, Devon Bell, Cruz Stanley, Hunter Kline, Connor Deardorff and Mason Meinecke.

Outside of a few tackles from Deardorff and Kline, none of these players made an impact at the varsity level last season after being such a senior-heavy roster the

year before.

The same can be said for the sophomore class, made up of Collin Lestina, Mason Cates, Hunter Hines, Jorge Gimeno-Perez and Caleb Prescott, as well as the freshman class with Brennen Bell, Cacen Crandall, Jace Denham, Josiah Williams, Jairet Tigges and William Walker.

Lots of new players will be stepping into the varsity spotlight alongside Demers. He went over his coaching philosophy and plans for the team. He plans on his defense being physical.

"We want to be a physical team. And I always tell them we're going to smack them right in the mouth, not literally or physically, but we're going to come out there and smack them in the mouth," Demers said.

On offense, he plans on using the team's athletes as much as they can, with a school like Panorama having such a rich track and field and cross country history, being able to take advantage of their speed as much as possible will be key.

"I feel like we do have some good ath-

letes, so we can be able to get the ball on the edge, or, we want to be able to pound it right down the middle. We're also going to run the I formation as well, so we want to keep the defense on its toes, and you know, we'll use a lot of motion and try to get them to switch up things and try to get them confused a little bit and use our athletic ability," Demers said.

Turning this program around will be a tall task, especially with Demers starting with such a young and largely inexperienced squad at the jump. He says as long as they can get 1% better every day, the team is going to be in great shape by the end of the season.

"I told them it doesn't matter what last year's team did or in the past years what those teams did because this is our team this year. You'll hear me say a lot, which I probably already have, average is easy. Anybody can be average, but to be a good to a great football team, it's going to be hard," Demers said.

And most of all, he is anticipating a solid season for Panorama and is looking to



PANORAMA 2026 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- 8/28/26 vs. ACGC, 7 p.m.
- 9/4/26 at South Hamilton, 7 p.m.
- 9/11/26 vs. Earlham, 7 p.m., Homecoming
- 9/18/26 at West Central Valley, 7 p.m., Homecoming
- 9/25/26 vs. Interstate 35, 7 p.m.
- 10/2/26 at West Marshall, 7 p.m., Youth Cheer Clinic
- 10/9/26 vs. Ogden, 7 p.m., Senior Night
- 10/16/26 at Pleasantville, 7 p.m., Senior Night

see the Panther faithful rally around this team.

"The work and the effort that these kids have been putting in for this summer and for the last two weeks, I think they're going to be surprised when they come out

and see us. They're going to be surprised at our effort, our physicality and how much our boys do care about each other and play together and are out there having fun. We're here to change things at Panorama for football," Demers said. ■

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WORK ETHIC IS SHINING THROUGH

Gabe Soda takes the reins of the ACGC girls program with talent from top to bottom.

BY CYOTE WILLIAMS

The ACGC girls cross country squad is under new leadership. Former head coach, Rick Blake, has been replaced by new head coach, Gabe Soda. Soda has previous coaching experience as an assistant at Madrid, where he was also the junior high track and field coach. Now, he steps into his first leading role of a high school program.

On what he has found out about the girls in his time getting to know them and their abilities before the season starts, Soda said their work ethic has shined through.

“They’re all willing to show up. They’re all willing to work hard. They all want to see themselves improve. Because they’re such a small team, they want to start to get in their heads that this is how they can support each other. This is how they can use each other and work together,” Soda said.

The girls lost some solid runners to graduation with Elizabeth Drake and Chelsea Kopaska. Nevertheless, the roster has rebounded well, and the team has six athletes again this season.

Seniors are Cadence Petersen and Brooklyn Schafer.

Petersen was the lone state qualifier for the girls last season, as she qualified as an individual. At the state-qualifying meet, she placed seventh in 21:03. At the state meet, she placed 89th in 21:50. Both of those times were much improved from her performance at the conference meet where she finished 26th in 22:55. Petersen has run all three years at the state meet, with the first two coming as part of a team.



Camdyn Coffman, Brooklyn Schafer, Cadence Petersen, Lillie Lanzon and Kennedy Reinhart. Not pictured: Vivian Crawford.

PHOTO BY BETTY COOPER

Last year was her first time qualifying as an individual, something she will hope to repeat this year.

Brooklyn Schafer was the Chargers' next-best runner last season. At the state-qualifying meet, she placed 26th in 23:12. At the conference meet, she placed 37th in 23:35.

The team has one junior, Lillie Lauzon.

Lauzon was another one of the top five runners on the team last season. At the conference meet, she finished 54th in 25:06. At the state-qualifying meet, she improved on her time, placing 45th in 24:18.

Kennedy Reinhart is the only sophomore. She ran on the team has a freshman last season with some encouraging results. At the conference meet, she placed 73rd in 27:28. At the state-qualifying meet, she improved on her time greatly, finishing 63rd in 25:50.

The team has one freshman, Cam-

dyn Coffman, and one eighth-grader, Vivian Crawford. Both finished in the top 10 while in junior high at the conference meet with Crawford finishing second and Coffman finishing seventh.

With a squad short on numbers this season, Soda is emphasizing staying healthy.

"I feel like I've talked to the girls a bit more about injury prevention. Just those little things they can do outside of practice, extra ankle rotations, extra hip mobility work, things they can do to make sure that they are as fit as possible, and that we don't run into any major issues further down the line," Soda said.

As long as the girls can stay healthy, Soda is entering his first season in charge with an athlete at the top in Petersen who can get to state on her own, some solid depth of runners behind her, and a few young talents that could surprise a few this season. ■



ACGC 2026 GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY SCHEDULE

- 9/1/26 Woodward Granger Cross Country Meet, 4:30 p.m.
- 9/10/26 Gilbert Cross Country Meet at Iowa State, 5:25 p.m.
- 9/17/26 Panorama Cross Country Meet, 5:35 p.m.
- 9/24/26 ACGC Cross Country Meet, 5 p.m.
- 10/1/26 Wildcat Invite at West Central Valley, 5 p.m.
- 10/8/26 2026 Jim Klein Cross Country Invitational, 4:55 p.m.
- 10/15/26 WCAC Conference Cross Country Meet, 5 p.m.

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GET TO THE STATE MEET

Head Coach Greg Thompson says Panorama girls cross country team will return their top five runners from last year.

BY CYOTE WILLIAMS

The Panorama girls cross country team suffered a setback last season with the injury of their star runner, Kylie Roccholz. The team was not able to qualify for the state meet without her but still came incredibly close to qualifying despite missing their best runner, a sure sign of a solid group.

"It took a lot of coaching on the psychology side to get in their brains and say, 'Hey, you can still qualify even if we don't have Kylie.' We got fourth place, but we missed qualifying by just 16 points. So you figure if Kylie was there, that probably would have made the difference. But the girls stepped up and ran really well," Head Coach Greg Thompson said.

Last season's team had two seniors: Almiranda Burnett and Mary Fett. Fett was one of the team's best runners and the coach says losing her will sting. But, a healthy returning Rochholz will make a massive addition to this squad that nearly qualified without her a season ago.

Rochholz, along with Laicey Lutz, make up the team's senior class.

Rochholz was only able to run in three races before she had to be shut down in the days before the state qualifying meet, but the coach says her impact will be massive. She is a two-time state qualifier. In 2024 as a sophomore, she finished 14th at the state meet.

Lutz will be the team's next-best



Front row: Avery Allen, Nella Rivas, Laicey Lutz, Lillian Rolston and Izzy Tripple. Back row: Avery Soultz, Alyssa Stanley, Kylie Rochholz, Olivia Beaudet and Corrie Knapp.

runner and also ran with Rochholz at that 2024 state meet, placing 34th. Plus, she qualified individually as a freshman. Last season, she recorded the second-best Panther time at the state-qualifying meet, placing 17th

in 22:35. She also had the second-best time at the West Central Activities Conference meet, placing 20th in 22:24.

Juniors this year are Corrie Knapp and Nella Rivas. Both are returning

athletes.

Knapp placed 58th in 25:21 at the conference meet last season and 31st at the state-qualifying meet in 23:32.

Rivas was another regular in the team last season, placing 59th at the



PANORAMA 2026 GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY SCHEDULE

- 8/27/26 Southeast Valley Invite, 5:40 p.m.
- 9/3/26 Madrid Invite, 5:20 p.m.
- 9/17/26 Panorama Meet, 5:35 p.m.
- 9/24/26 ACGC Meet, 5 p.m.
- 9/28/26 Ogden Invitational, 5:40 p.m.
- 10/8/26 2026 Jim Klein Cross Country Invitational, 4:55 p.m.
- 10/15/26 West Central Activities Conference Meet, 5 p.m.

conference meet in 25:26 and 34th at the state-qualifying meet in 23:50.

The sophomore class is made up of Olivia Beaudet, Rhaica Spencer and Alyssa Stanley.

Beaudet put together a solid freshman campaign, running the Panthers' best time at the state-qualifying meet, placing 13th in 22:11. She had the team's third-best time at the conference meet, placing 23rd in 22:47.

Rhaica Spencer also ran plenty of races with the main squad, placing 80th in 29:10 at the conference meet and 57th in 26:24 at the state qualifying meet.

Alyssa Stanley competed with the varsity squad as well, placing 79th at the conference meet in 28:58 and 58th at the state qualifying meet in 26:33.

Rounding out the roster are three freshmen: Lily Rolston, Avery Allen and Izzy Tripple. Thompson says he plans on working with Allen on making the transition from two-mile races to three-mile races. Injuries to Tripple's knee will limit her this season to potentially no race time. Thompson added that a healthy Tripple may have been one of their top-five runners this year.

Thompson and the Panthers are returning their top five runners from last year, and that's not something many other teams will be able to say.

"With them all coming back, and just narrowly missing the state meet, that would be a goal: to get to the state meet. Let's get to the state meet as a team," Thompson said. ■



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WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM

**New ACGC boys cross country
Gabe Soda loves his team's
confidence heading into the
season.**

BY CYOTE WILLIAMS

ACGC cross country will have a new coach leading the charge this season by way of Gabe Soda. Leading the Charger boys and girls cross country teams will be his first high school head coaching gig, but Soda did spend last year as an assistant coach at Madrid's cross country team and was the head coach of the junior high track team in Madrid as well. Soda says his main experience comes as an athlete, where he had been running cross country from eighth-grade through college while at Cornell College in Mount Vernon.

"I always wanted to be a teacher, and as I went through my athletic career, I started to enjoy it more. I don't know if I ever could stop running. If I do, something's wrong with me. I figured if it's something I can help out with at the school, and have it be another way to get to know these students on another level, help them develop that extra part of their person, then that's great," Soda said.

The senior class is Preston Kent, Jonny Kading, Jameson Pfrang and Cameron Mozingo.

No piece of this team will be more important to ACGC's success than Kent. He has qualified for the state tournament all three years and appears primed to repeat that success for his senior year. At last year's state tournament, Kent finished 28th in 17:06, a massive improvement from his freshman year time and placement of 93rd in 18:18 in 2023. Kent also finished seventh at the state-qualifier meet in 16.48,



Front row: Adam Brown, Ryne Noland, Dayton Crawley, Carver Johnston, Tai Riordan and Meyer Chance. Back row: Bryce Benda, Cameron Mozingo, Preston Kent, Jonny Kading and Jameson Pfrang. Not pictured: Leonidas Mendoza.

a personal best.

Fellow senior Mozingo was a top-five runner for the Chargers last year. At the conference meet, he placed 78th in 22:15. He improved on his time at the state-qualifying meet, pushing to 21:53 and placing 73rd.

Pfrang was a solid performer for the team last season. At the conference

meet, he placed 67th in 21:35. And at the state-qualifying meet, he placed 61st in 20:55. Both were the third-best times for the Chargers.

Kading was on the roster but did not run last season. He had previously run at the state meet when he was a sophomore as part of the team, placing 108th in 18:20.

Ryne Noland, Stetson Ellis and Tai Riordan fill out the junior class. Riordan did not feature in either of those meets but will look to improve on his times from last season.

Ellis was a solid piece for the Chargers as a sophomore. He finished 90th at the conference meet in 23:16 and 68th at the state-qualifying meet in

21:27.

Noland ran at the conference meet last year with a time of 25:50 and placed 109th. He did not run at the state-qualifying meet.

Sophomores are Bryce Benda, Adam Brown and Dayton Crawley.

Brown was often the Chargers' second-best runner last season. At the conference meet, he posted ACGC's second-best time, finishing 58th in 21:14. The same goes for his performance at the state-qualifying meet where he placed 56th in 20:39.

Dayton Crawley also made appearances in those big races. He placed 100th at the conference meet in 24:13 and 70th at the state-qualifying meet in 21:43.

Rounding out the roster are freshmen Carver Johnston and Leonidas Mendoza. Johnston posted the best junior high time at the conference meet for ACGC, placing 12th.

Soda spoke to us about what he has been focusing on with the boys now that he is leading the program.

"This summer, I've been telling them it's really just about building an endurance base. Just kind of pretty easy mileage all throughout the summer. Nothing too far, nothing too fast, but just something so that when that season's creeping up on us, once we do get into more intense work, they have that base, that foundation to build the speed and the strength and everything on top of that," Soda said.

Setting expectations for the team was tough with roster uncertainties in the air and Soda having limited time with his squad before the season starts. His athletes, though, are confident in their abilities to have an impressive season.

"We had a goal-setting meeting. I haven't seen any of these guys really run, but their goals are pretty ambitious. They would like to send a team to state. Sending a team to state is always the goal of every coach, and I think the big thing that I can say with confidence is that my goal right now is to have everyone work together as a team. Because with running, it's easy to think of it as an



ACGC 2026 BOYS CROSS COUNTRY SCHEDULE

- 8/27/26 Southeast Valley Invite, 5 p.m.
- 9/1/26 Woodward-Granger Invite, 5:30 p.m.
- 9/10/26 Gilbert Cross Country Meet at Iowa State, 5 p.m.
- 9/17/26 Panorama Meet, 5:10 p.m.
- 9/24/26 ACGC Meet, 5:30 p.m.
- 10/1/26 West Central Valley Meet, 5 p.m.
- 10/8/26 2026 Jim Klein Cross Country Invitational, 5:30 p.m.
- 10/15/26 vs. WCAC Conference Cross Country Meet, 5:30 p.m.

individual sport where you're just running your best, but with cross country, with the team aspect of it, if we can get everybody working together, running

close, and pushing each other to make each other improve, build on top of each other, then I think that I'd consider that a successful season," Soda said. ■

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STEADY IMPROVEMENT IS THE GOAL

Greg Thompson and the Panther boys are set for another year of lower times and continued development.

BY CYOTE WILLIAMS

The Panorama boys cross country team is once again led by the ever-present Greg Thompson. Last season, none of his boys were able to qualify for the state meet, but based off the roster he had going into the season, he was still pleased with their performances.

"Last season, I would say, was a season of growth. Very few of them had run cross country previously, or at least at the high school level, so it was just watching them learn about the sport and learn the dedication it takes. And their best race was at state qualifying. That's what we ask for as rookies to the sport, that you just continue to grow and be at your best at the end of the year," Thompson said.

With a lot of new or younger runners, one of the things he tries to instill in them is to take things slowly. The tortoise and the hare made their into his coaching philosophy

"You can't go out and try to be at the highest level right away. It's going to take time. It's going to take patience. You will end up getting injured and probably burned out mentally if you push too fast too soon. So we always have a philosophy that we're going to go slow at the beginning, and as you get older and stronger, then we'll pick up the intensity and the mileage in practice so that you can continue to just grow and be more confident as we continue," Thompson said.

Thompson has no seniors on the team this season but will have four juniors: Bennett Allen, Braden Bahrenfuss, Sam Hansen and Adrian Leone.



Sam Hansen, Caden Ratcliff, Braden Bahrenfuss, Adrian Leone, Bennett Allen, and Graysen Shaffer.

fuss, Sam Hansen and Adrian Leone. Allen, Bahrenfuss and Leone all competed on the team last season. Hansen is a new addition.

Of the returners, Leone had the best time at the state-qualifying meet at 20:28, placing 59th. This was a marked improvement over his time at the West Central Activities Conference meet, where he ran a 21:32 to place 65th. Thompson said he has shown great potential this offseason.

The next best time at the state-qualifying meet from the returning runners

was by Bennett Allen, who finished 50th in 20:41. He finished at nearly the same time as Leone at the conference meet, placing 66th in 21:33. Thompson added that Allen has bought into the mental side of the sport and has run close to 150 miles this summer.

Bahrenfuss rounded out the state-qualifying meet group last season, finishing 91st in 23:54. Another big improvement from his 101st place run at the conference meet at 24:34.

The team has one sophomore in Graysen Shaffer. Shaffer was also part

of the state-qualifying meet group, where he placed 63rd in 21:06. His time at the conference meet was 22:54 to place 89th.

Freshman Caden Ratcliff completes the team. Thompson says that Ratcliff ran for the first time as an eighth grader last season and has been showing some potential.

After losing their top two runners from a season ago, Thompson is tempering expectations for this group.

"We have to develop a couple of leaders on the team, and hopefully we con-

PHOTO BY BETTY COOPER



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- 9/3/26 Madrid Invite, 5:20 p.m.
- 9/17/26 Panorama meet, 5:10 p.m.
- 9/24/26 ACGC meet, 5:30 p.m.
- 9/28/26 Ogden Invitational, 5:10 p.m.
- 10/8/26 2026 Jim Klein Cross Country Invitational, 5:30 p.m.
- 10/15/26 WCAC Conference Meet, 5:30 p.m.

tinue to progress. I told the boys last fall when we finished that state-qualifying meet that they were probably two years away from being what I feel is a strong enough team that could be in the mix

to qualify for state. So, we just have to continue to progress toward that way. Hopefully we can drop 30 seconds to a minute on our average, and we'll see where that takes us," Thompson said. ■

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