TigerScots softball looking forward to jump to 3A

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

In this April 14, 2015 file photo, Jessica Lambert, of Weston-McEwen, connects with the ball in a game against Pilot Rock.

COACH: Jeff Griggs, 14th year
2015 SEASON: 23-7, 8-4 SD6 (3rd)
POSTSEASON STORY: The TigerScots knocked off two-time defending champion Union 3-0 in the state semifinals before falling to Pilot Rock 2-1 in the championship. It was the third finals appearance in program history.
LOSSES: OF Katie Schroeder, P/INF Taylor Entze, OF Jessica Pease, INF Keegan Shepard
KEY RETURNERS: P Jessica Lambert, sr.; INF Isabelle Dillow, sr.; C Sydney Peal, jr.; OF Megan Coffman, sr.; INF Charmayne Bennett, soph.; 1B/DH Ashley Hill, jr.

With a lot of talent returning to the diamond and several newcomers that will be challenging for starting roles, the TigerScots are looking to take Class 3A by storm after making it to the 2A final last year.

"With 3A comes some different teams, different games, different game schedule," said Coach Griggs, then added, "I think we'll be competitive in the 3A from what I've seen in the past. We've watched the state games in the past and it's a not a big jump in talent."

Another big change for the TigerScots this season is their pitching situation, which was Lambert's sole domain in 2015.

"We're probably not going to be so unidimensional this year in the circle," Griggs said.

Transfer junior Bailey Hillmick will be one of the players getting plenty of innings in the circle, and a pair of freshmen also have shown the ability to pitch at the varsity level and could end up in the rotation.

Griggs said the team has a lot of options at the field positions as well.

"Things could look a little bit different this year," he said. "I think that we have a good freshman class, we had pretty good numbers and pretty talented kids."

The incumbent players aren't going to be relinquishing their spots willingly, though, and Griggs said he was happy to see the number of players participating in summer and fall ball.

"They have a vested interest outside of the season, so that's always nice to see as a coach," he said. "The girls want to go back (to state), they want to play for another state title and have big hopes."

2016 SCHEDULE

March 17	at Mac-Hi	4:30 p.m.
March 18	vs. Scio (at Pilot Rock)	11 a.m.
March 18	vs. Central Linn (at Pilot Rock)	1 p.m.
March 19	vs. Enterprise (at Pilot Rock)	1 p.m.
March 19	at Pilot Rock	5 p.m.
March 22	vs. Touchet (DH)	3 p.m.
April 1	at Nyssa (DH)*	1 p.m.
April 9	at Riverside (DH)*	1 p.m.
April 12	vs. Echo*	1 p.m.
April 22	vs. Enterprise (DH)*	1 p.m.
April 26	at Umatilla (DH)*	1 p.m.
May 3	vs. Grant Union (DH)*	1 p.m.
May 6	vs. Elgin (DH)*	1 p.m.
May 13	vs. Vale (DH)*	1 p.m.

*League game

Weston-McEwen Baseball

COACH: Corey Thacker, 1st year
2015 SEASON: 8-17, 4-8 SD6 (5th)
POSTSEASON STORY: The TigerScots did not make the postseason last year, but still have players on the roster that were involved in 2014's appearance in the state championship.
LOSSES: C Cedric Hall, OF/P Sutter Ball
KEY RETURNERS: SS Brett Speed, soph.; C/OF Vince Roff, sr.; P/UT Hunter Sater, jr.; P/OF Jimmy Patrick, sr.

Coach Thacker was an assistant with the TigerScots when they made their deep playoff run in 2014, and the team is hoping to follow that model to make its return to the playoffs.

"They know who I am and what I do, and I told them early in the year every position is open, and right now and they're working really hard," Thacker said. "I like what I see."

After missing his junior year due to shoulder surgery, Jimmy Patrick is back to serve as their No. 1 starting pitcher and Thacker said he's showing great command on his fastball and curve ball.

The TigerScots surround him with a lot of experience, which has Thacker optimistic for the team's prospects in the coming season.

"I think we're going to have a great year," he said. "We'll be fairly good defensively and we've got some (hitting) power and so I think we'll be right in the mix."

2016 SCHEDULE

March 15	at Heppner	4 p.m.
March 17	vs. Mac-Hi	4:30 p.m.
March 19	at Dayton, Wash.	2 p.m.
March 22	at Riverside Tourney	1:30 p.m.
March 23	at Riverside Tourney	1 p.m.
April 1	vs. Heppner (DH)	2 p.m.
April 5	at Dufur	4:30 p.m.
April 9	vs. Dufur (DH)	11 a.m.
April 12	at Pilot Rock*	4 p.m.
April 16	vs. Pilot Rock (DH)*	11 a.m.
April 19	at Sherman	4 p.m.
April 22	vs. Joseph (DH)	1 p.m.
April 23	vs. Sherman (DH)	1 p.m.
April 26	vs. Union*	4 p.m.
April 30	at Union (DH)*	1 p.m.
May 3	at Grant Union*	4 p.m.
May 6	vs. Grant Union (DH)*	1 p.m.
May 10	vs. Burns*	4 p.m.
May 13	at Burns (DH)*	2 p.m.

*League game

Weston-McEwen Tennis

COACH: Troy Olson, 4th year
2015 SEASON: The TigerScots did not advance any players to the regional tournament.
LOSSES: (Boys) John Cogswell (Girls) Lacey Keuhn, Bebe Calley
RETURNERS: (Boys) Caleb Olsen, sr., David Froese, jr.; Michael Shafer, jr.; Ryan Schmidtgall, jr.; Kellen Fairchild, jr.; Robby Davison, soph.; (Girls) Emmaline Irvine, jr.; Becky Taylor, jr.; Amanda Kidd, jr.; Johanna Albert, soph.

The TigerScots had an active offseason and bring back a lot of experience to the courts, leading to plenty of excitement as they prepare for the season.

"As far as what we're hoping to accomplish, we have high hopes," said Coach Olson. "We hope that we can get some seeded players into the district tournament and get some into the (regionals) this year.

"Obviously state would be an amazing opportunity that we'd love to get to, and that's always there. I think the kids are excited for this year and the opportunities they have."

Olson said he isn't sure of the last time the TigerScots sent a player to the state bracket.

Senior Caleb Olson will man the No. 1 singles spot for the TigerScot boys and juniors David Froese and Michael Shafer will pair for No. 1 doubles, their first season as a team. Sophomore Johanna Albert will play No. 1 singles for the girls and juniors Amanda Kidd and Becky Taylor have established themselves as the No. 1 doubles team.

2016 SCHEDULE

Mar. 17	at Umatilla	4 p.m.
Mar. 29	at Stanfield	4 p.m.
Mar. 31	vs. Helix	4 p.m.
Apr. 1	vs. Ione	4 p.m.
Apr. 5	at Mac-Hi	4 p.m.
Apr. 7	vs. Helix	4 p.m.
Apr. 12	vs. Riverside	4 p.m.
Apr. 14	at Umatilla	4 p.m.
Apr. 19	at Mac-Hi	4 p.m.
Apr. 21	at Riverside	4 p.m.
Apr. 26	vs. Umatilla	4 p.m.
Apr. 28	vs. Umatilla	4 p.m.
Apr. 30	vs. Helix (at Hermiston)	9 a.m.
May 3	vs. Stanfield	4 p.m.
May 7	Districts (Kennewick, Wash.)	9 a.m.
May 13-14	Regionals (Ontario)	11 a.m.

Weston-McEwen Track & Field

COACH: Loran Monaco, 24th year
2015 SEASON: The TigerScots girls team finished fifth and the boys were sixth at districts.
POSTSEASON STORY: Three girls made the state meet and Madison Carlin took their highest placing with fourth in pole vault.
KEY LOSSES: (Girls) Madison Carlin (sprints, hurdles, vault, jumps), Shylee Stroud (vault); (Boys) Justin Humble (middle distance)
KEY RETURNERS: (Girls) Maddi Muilenburg, soph. (throws); Adrienne Olson, soph. (middle distance); (Boys) Jacob Speed, soph. (sprints, hurdles); Ian Speed, sr. (distance); Kani Li, sr. (distance, sprints, relay); Cody Caldwell, soph. (throws)

Several returners and a healthy crop of newcomers has Coach Monaco eager to see what the TigerScots can do in 2016.

"They're pretty much where they were last year at this time or a little bit ahead," he said.

Monaco is particularly excited to see what his girls team can accomplish with several freshmen that are coming off successful junior high campaigns.

"They've got average to above average speed, so we're going to have a decent sprint relay on the girls side," he said, but added it will be important for the team to temper its expectations due to their youth. "Like all track seasons when you have a lot of freshmen, they come off the junior high season at the top of the heap and some of the times they don't end up top of the heap in high school."

On the boys' side, junior Hayden Scott is out for the first time and is coming off a third-place finish at the cross country state meet in the fall.

EO file photo

Weston-McEwen's Hayden Scott is a newcomer to the track team this season and one of the athletes coach Loran Monaco has high hopes for.

"He's a gifted runner," Monaco said. "We'll make him better. We're hoping to, anyway."

Scott's freshman brother Kirk and returning sophomore Cody Caldwell are athletes Monaco expects to be among his best throwers.

2016 SCHEDULE

March 17	at Pendleton	Noon
April 1	at Mac-Hi	Noon
April 2	at Sherman	11 a.m.
April 8	at Umatilla	Noon
April 9	at Stanfield	10 a.m.
April 14	at Heppner	2 p.m.
April 15	at Pendleton	3 p.m.
April 23	at Union	11 a.m.
April 26	vs. WM Invite	2 p.m.
April 30	at Joseph	1 p.m.
May 6	at Baker	1:30 p.m.
May 13	Districts	TBD

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