

# OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL

## Sports report

(Continued from Page 1)

year,” Stark said. “And guys who start one game might not neces-

court is a strength of ours. I think shooting the ball is going to be a strength of ours,” Stark said. “We’re a little undersized, so post play and help defense is going to

Drew Pelkey provide depth in the frontcourt. Stark described the rest of the team as “eight guards,” although several are capable of sliding into

are Matt Bryant and Matt Greeno. Stark said the team’s two versatile sophomores will also make strong cases for minutes, guard Owen Thomas and swingman

and match, Stark said set lineups might be rare, especially in the early going.

“It will be what lineup is clicking, what group of five is clicking,” he said.

The Otters have a tough Division II schedule that includes both Rutland and Addison county teams, but Stark believes they can hold their own.

“We could have our ups and downs. But I think if guys continue to buy in and we keep committing to competing every single day, I think we could be anywhere between 12-8 and 8-12,” he said.

### WRESTLING

An influx of three sophomores and four freshmen, almost all with both middle school and youth experience, has given the OV wrestling program a numbers boost.

With eight upperclassmen also signed on, most back after missing last winter, when health officials ruled out wrestling as a high school sport because of the pandemic, Coach Cole Mason has close to a full ladder and full practice room — and competition in several weight classes.

“We’ll have some overlap. Kids are going to have to wrestle off for the first time at Otter Valley in a long time,” Mason said. “It’s a great problem to have.”

Having that many wrestlers in the room also helps build team spirit and camaraderie and makes for a more enjoyable experience for a team, he said.

“It makes it a lot easier to come to practice, especially because wrestling is a grind,” he said. “Having 15 kids is great.”

Among the returners Mason expects to excel are senior Sam Martin, a state meet third-place finisher at 195 pounds who might

(See Wrestling, Page 11)



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' VARSITY BASKETBALL

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME	1/11	@ MT. ANTHONY	7 P.M.	2/2	WINDSOR	7 P.M.
12/22	@ SPRINGFIELD	7 P.M.	1/14	MSJ	7 P.M.	2/7	@ HARTFORD	7 P.M.
12/27	@ WINDSOR	7 P.M.	1/21	HARTFORD	7 P.M.	2/10	FAIR HAVEN	7 P.M.
12/29	@ BRATTLEBORO	7 P.M.	1/24	BURR & BURTON	7 P.M.	2/17	@ WOODSTOCK	7 P.M.
1/4	VERGENNES	7 P.M.	1/28	@ FAIR HAVEN	7 P.M.	2/21	@ MT ABRAHAM	7 P.M.
1/7	MT. ABRAHAM	7 P.M.	1/31	BURR & BURTON	7 P.M.	2/24	SPRINGFIELD	7 P.M.

sarily start the second game. So it's nice to have 11 guys who are so similar, because I can play 11 guys, and there's not a drop.”

He sees a team that can run and fill up the basket, but one that is not the biggest he has coached.

“Getting up and down the

have to improve, and we’re working on that.”

Two seniors who will see plenty of playing time offer much of the Otters’ size, center Hayden Bernhardt and forward/center Dylan Clark-Stevens. Junior Thomas Politano and freshman

the small forward role.

The team’s other two seniors are both guards capable of running the point or playing off the ball, Elijah Tucker-Bryant and Evan Thomas. Two juniors who will start or see plenty of time at shooting guard or small forward

Aiden Decker. That leaves one more player, guard Logan Letourneau, who like his two older brothers made the varsity team as a freshman and brings both outside shooting and driving ability, according to Stark.

Given the many pieces to mix

## GO OTTERS!

### STORAGE CONTAINERS


#### Rentals & Sales

Delivered To Your Location  
Safe & Secure • Water Tight  
Great for Seasonal Storage,  
Renovation Projects  
or Job Sites



483-9900 • Pittsford, VT

## Good Luck OV student athletes - have a great season!



Rep. Butch Shaw (R)  
bshaw@leg.state.vt.us

Rep. Stephanie Jerome (D)  
sjerome@leg.state.vt.us



Wrestling

(Continued from Page 10)

bump up to 220; junior Caleb Whitney at either 132 or 138, who Mason said is “pretty hungry” after underperforming at the 2019 state tourney; senior Austin Cormany, who was one place short of the podium at 120 in 2019; and junior Tucker Babcock, who Mason said has “worked hard in the past two off-seasons.”

Other upperclassmen are senior Dom Davis at 182; juniors Malachi Sheldrick and Ben Marks, both at either 145 or 152; and Simon Martin at 195 or 220.

The three sophomores are heavyweight Derek Li, Carter Giles at 138 or 145, and Caleb Reynolds at 120.

The freshmen rounding out the squad are Isaac Whitney at 170 or 182, Quincy Boone at 138 or 145, Kingston Cotter at 126, and Jackson Marks at 106.

Mason clearly expects some of his younger wrestlers to excel, but opted not to be specific.

“We’ve got some young kids who are going to surprise some people,” he said. “I wouldn’t be surprised to see a couple of these young kids on the top of the podium come February.”

Mason also believes the Otters can fare well as a team.

“You don’t get a trophy unless you get top three,” he said. “The goal is to get a team trophy. The goal is to produce quality wres-



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY WRESTLING

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME	1/22	@ VERGENNES TOURNAMENT	TBA
12/29	@ MIDDLEBURY TBA.		1/26	@ MVL DUALS – BURR & BURTON	6 P.M.
1/6	MVL DUALS - FAIR HAVEN, RUTLAND	6 P.M.	1/29	OTTER VALLEY INVITATIONAL	TBA
1/8	@ MAU TOURNAMENT	9:45 A.M.	2/12	@ SVL DUAL MEET CHAMPION	9:30 A.M.
1/13	@ MVL DUALS - SPRINGFIELD	6 P.M.	2/25 & 26	@ CVU (STATE TOURNAMENT)	TBA
1/14	@ ESSEX TOURNAMENT	TBA	3/4 & 5	@ NEW ENGLAND TOURNAMENT	TBA
1/15	@ ESSEX TOURNAMENT	TBA			

The biggest news for the OV girls’ basketball program is the return of Coach Ray Counter, who led the program for several seasons about a decade or more ago.

Counter did not leave coaching after departing from the varsity. He simply returned to middle

Counter takes over a team that brings back several key players from a 4-6 season that included a strong finish and a first-round Division III home playoff win before a quarterfinal loss to eventual champion Lake Region.

He sees positives in the team, but also areas that will need shor-

ness and our team unity, and we have a lot of work to do on our defense and our rebounding,” he said.

Certainly, the Otters are not a tall team. Counter said only one of his returners, junior Emily Peduto, is a true forward, although standout senior Alice

who is likely to see significant minutes again.

The team’s other seniors are guards Marissa Connors and JoAnna Ray and forward Brittany Jackson. Counter said Jackson has been away from the sport for a while, but her athleticism will be valuable in the paint.

Speedy junior guard Ryleigh LaPorte will start along with Keith, Counter said, while junior guard Elena Politano will see plenty of minutes either as a starter or in the regular rotation, and junior forward Alivia Sheldrick will be in the frontcourt mix.

Two more players will, at least to start with, swing between the varsity and JV teams, sophomore Sierra Cormany and freshman Matelin LaPorte.

Counter described the lineup and rotation as “still up in the air” as the Otters’ opening game approached, and said he could continue to tinker with things as the season progressed.

“Right now we could have a number of starting lineups depending on who we are playing,” he said.

Essentially, Counter expects the Otters to gel as the weeks pass and be better when February and March roll around.

“I see us having some struggles early on, but as we spend more time together, I think that things will get much smoother, both offensively and defensively,” he said. “And my expectation is we will see those improvements through the season, and most of all any time we step on the court f  
(See Nordic Skiing Page 12)



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS’ VARSITY BASKETBALL

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME	1/8	WINDSOR	2:30 P.M.	2/4	SPRINGFIELD	7:00 P.M.
12/23	MIDDLEBURY	7:00 P.M.	1/11	@ VERGENNES	7:00 P.M.	2/8	@ WINDSOR	7:00 P.M.
12/28	@ MILL RIVER	5:30 P.M.	1/17	BURR & BURTON	7:00 P.M.	2/11	WOODSTOCK	7:00 P.M.
12/30	WEST RUTLAND	7:00 P.M.	1/25	WOODSTOCK	7:00 P.M.	2/15	@ PROCTOR	7:00 P.M.
1/3	FAIR HAVEN	7:00 P.M.	1/28	HARTFORD	7:00 P.M.	2/18	@ SPRINGFIELD	7:00 P.M.
1/6	@ RUTLAND	7:00 P.M.	2/1	@ HARTFORD	7:00 P.M.			

tlers. We’re finally at that point we’ve been working toward.”  
**GIRLS’ BASKETBALL**

school and kept preparing the next generations of Otter athletes for high school play.

ing up as the Otters face a tough schedule.  
“Our strengths are our quick-

Keith is a strong inside player as a guard/forward, as is junior Anna Lee, a mainstay in recent seasons



# Nordic Skiing

(Continued from Page 11)  
expect us to compete.”  
**NORDIC SKIING**

The Otter Valley Nordic ski team this winter is young and looking to build its skills, as the five-member team is comprised of three sophomores and two freshmen. And the dearth of snow hasn’t been helping, said Coach Bob Clark.

“The team is very young, but they’ve all done some skiing and they have great potential for improvement,” Clark said, but so far, the team hasn’t been on snow.

The team typically practices at Mountain Top Nordic Center in Chittenden, which has yet to open, and this week’s warmer weather forecast likely set things back compared to previous years.

Practices, Clark says, have been focusing on roller skiing, running a steep hill across from OVUHS that’s a mile and a half up and down, riding stationary bikes and other drills to build endurance, speed and cardiac capacity. “The kids are getting eager to get out on the snow and put their skis on, and so am I!” Clark added.

Team members are: sophomores Ike Bailey, Dillon Ladd and Baker LaRock; and ninth-graders Luke Calvin and Eli Bagley.

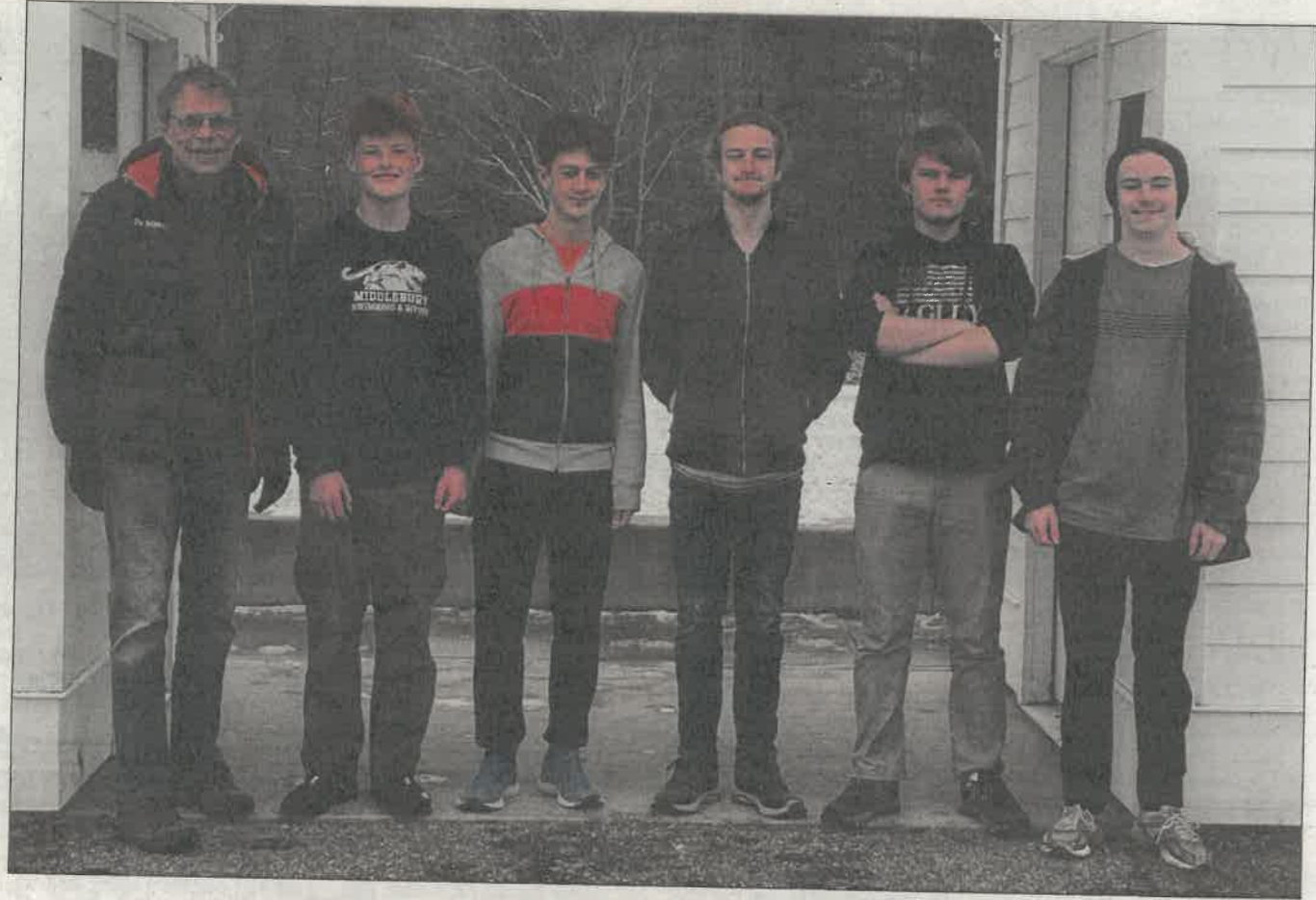
Vermont Nordic ski teams compete in two divisions, Divisions I and II, but Clark notes that even the Division II schools include such ski juggernauts as Middlebury, Harwood and Woodstock. For league competitions OV skis in Vermont’s Southern conference.

“There are very few small schools, OV’s size, that have Nordic teams,” Clark said, “but it’s a great sport, a great lifetime sport, and we’re building a program and we’re on the right track with these young kids.” Clark, who has been coaching varsity for the past two years, had spent more than a dozen years coaching at the middle school. A lawyer before he retired, Clark recalled that his daughters skied in the Bill Koch League, and two skied at Otter Valley years ago.

OVUHS has had a Nordic ski team since the early 1970s, he

said, recalling that the team’s most famous alum was Lawton Redman, who skied on the U.S. Olympic team in 2002, when the winter Olympics were in Utah.

While this season will be one on which to build toward more competitive seasons in the years ahead, Clark says he’s looking forward to seeing how much individual team members can improve, and how they can work together as a team to be able to compete at the varsity level.



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL NORDIC SKI TEAM

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME			
12/14	@ MAU	3 P.M.	1/19	@ MT ANTHONY	3 P.M.
12/22	@ BRATTLEBORO	3 P.M.	1/26	@ BRATTLEBORO	3 P.M.
12/29	@ WOODSTOCK	10 A.M.	2/9	@ BURR & BURTON	3 P.M.
1/4	@ RUTLAND	3 P.M.	2/15	@ RUTLAND	3 P.M.
1/8	@ WOODSTOCK	10 A.M.	2/17	@ BRATTLEBORO	3 P.M.
1/12	@ BURR & BURTON	3 P.M.	2/24	STATE MEET @ CRAFTSBURY (CLASSIC) 1	0 A.M.
			2/28	STATES @ RIKERT FREESTYLE SKATE)	10 A.M.



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL ROCK CLIMING TEAM

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME			
12/1	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.	2/2	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.
12/15	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.	2/16	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.
1/5	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.	3/9	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	
1/19	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.		(STATE FINALS)	TBA

# OTTER VALLEY CLIMBING TEAM

**BY ANGELO LYNN**  
Coach Andy McMillan is looking forward to a strong team doing well in the upcoming competition. (See OV Climbing, Page 13)

**BRANDON** — With a large number of returning climbers coming back to OV’s rock climbing team,



# OV Climbing

(Continued from Page 12)  
tions this winter.

McMillan said the team's numbers are comparable with previous years, noting that the team combines the school's middle school and high school into one team for competitions. This season, he said, "we have a robust high school roster of a 14 students, with an additional four middle school climbers. Overall, the numbers are solid and within the range we've seen in previous seasons (not counting 2020-2021, which was smaller and did not include competitions because of the coronavirus.)"

Otter Valley considers indoor rock climbing an official school sport and is looking ahead to seven meets this season. With the first meets starting in December, the team meets for regular practices at the climbing center in Rutland. The sport combines the difficulty of a designated route with the speed in which a climber can ascend that route — or as high up it as they can go without falling off.

"Our top climbers," McMillan said, "in order are: Patrick Daly, Lucas Klein, Sawyer Tinsman, and Adia Polli. We also have two homeschooled brothers climbing with our team this year, Drew and Kyle Frankenberg, who are climbing at a high level of difficulty. Given that many of these top climbers are returning, all on the high school team, and are bringing past experience with them, I am expecting OV to perform very well in competitions this season."

McMillan explained that rock climbing as an official school sport is unique to southern Vermont in the Rutland and Woodstock regions, and that the schools mainly compete at the Green Mountain Rock Climbing Center in Rutland. Currently there are no rock climbing teams from northern Vermont that participate in SIRCA, explaining that SIRCA is unique to GMRCC, which developed the program in collaboration with local area schools and coaches.

While returning top climbers will likely carry the team's fortunes this year, McMillan highlighted the several new members on the team and other

returners who continually work to improve their skills. Those members provide the foundation for others to learn the sport and to move up in the ranks as their skills improve.

"We are always working to improve upon the needs of each individual climber," McMillan said. "I coach for each individual's personal progression throughout the season more than anything else, and, if I'm successful, to instill some passion for climbing as a life-long sport so they can apply the problem solving skills and resiliency that climbing demands. And that applies to wherever they end up — whether climbing for fun outdoors, dealing with unexpected challenges that life often presents, or competing at the collegiate level."

Team members are:

- Seniors: Luca Cifone, Lucas Klein, Gunnar Tinsman; all are returning climbers.

- Juniors: Kelsey Adams, Keith Carrara, Katelyn Lee, Adia Polli, Morgan White; all are returning except Adams, who is new to the team.

- Sophomores: Sawyer Tinsman, returning;

- Freshmen: Christina Carrara, Patrick Daly, Andrew Easter, Kaiden Lee, Danika Poli; Carrara and Poli are new, the others are returning;

- 8th grade: Mia Fox and Kathleen Pape (both new);

- 7th grade: Lucia Carrara and Owen Harrison-Burvick (both new).

McMillan noted that of the team's four top climbers, Daly "trains extensively year-around and also competes in USA Climbing format competitions and has made it from regionals, to divisions, to nationals — and he's a freshman.

Adia Polli, the coach said, also stands out as a female climber and "routinely nabs top female scores in SIRCA competitions." Sophomore Sawyer Tinsman has "advanced quickly over the past two seasons," McMillan said, adding that senior Luca Klein "climbs with tactical skill and moves with precision."

It's a strong team, McMillan said. "I'm confident we'll be in contention for a top-place finish."



## OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADING TEAM

COMPETITIONS-TEAM WILL CHEER AT ALL HOME BASKETBALL EVENTS.

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME	2/12	@ VCCA (TBD)	TBA
1/29	@ CVCC (RUTLAND-CSJ)	TBA	2/19	@TBD STATES	TBA

## OTTER VALLEY CHEERLEADING TEAM

BY ANGELO LYNN

BRANDON — Let's hear it for OV's cheerleading team, it's — give me a B, O, O, M. I.N.G. Booming!

Last year's team had only 5 athletes, but this winter's team has grown to 11 athletes, says OV varsity cheerleading coach Cassidy Buley. Seven of those athletes were on the fall cheerleading team, with four of those being returners from the prior year.

"We have definitely grown as a team, especially from my first year coaching this team back in 2019 where we struggled with athlete numbers to now where we have 11 and can have alternates in case someone gets injured or ill. So I call that an improvement!"

Buley explained there are two divisions for Vermont cheerleading — D1 and D2. This is based on squad size, she said, adding that "as long as you have 9 athletes on the mat you are considered D2 and for D1 it is 10+. We will be in D2, so I will have 9 athletes on the mat competing."

The team members are: seniors: Virgil Chapin, Jade Flanders, Emily Hutchins, Maggie Loyzelle; junior, Capt. Zoe Elliott; sophomores, Kayleigh Corey, Delaney Fielder, Abigail Hayes, Brookelyn Kimball,

Lajay O'Connor; and freshman Grace Kenyon.

The team will have three competitions during the season, and otherwise will perform at OV basketball games. To prepare for the competitions and cheerleading at games, Buley says the athletes put in a surprising number of hours.

"Practice during this time is pretty hectic," she said. "We spent all last week going over and evaluating each athlete on different skills from stunting, tumbling, a cheer, a holiday dance, and jumps. This week we're putting together the holiday dance formations and going over more game day material. The first couple of weeks of practice is strictly basics, so cheers, tumbling, formations, etc. Our practice ranges from one and a half to two hours depending on the day and what is going on."

The team's goal, Coach Buley said, is to "keep improving with difficulty as well as cleaning up basics and improving where we stand for comp scores. Our main job is to cheer on our varsity basketball team — both boys and girls. That is our #1 concern, as it is a school-sanctioned event, but comps (competitions) fall right with it as this is what the team loves to do. They love adrenalin and learning new things. But they

also like cheering at basketball events to help support our team.

"For us," she said, "they both go hand-in-hand."

Looking ahead on the season, Buley said that while last year's comp scores improved, it was difficult because of the COVID protocols. "But I feel that we have come a long way since last year, so my hope as a coach is that we keep improving our score each time..."

"We did have a good fall season and I definitely think that from that we overcame a lot and pushed through. So long story short, improving our scores along with increasing the difficulty of the stunts and tumbling are our biggest goals this year, as well as having a safe, happy, and healthy one!"

As a team, Buley said, "we're really looking forward to this season and I'm excited we are able to sort of go back to our regular schedule — meaning attending games and traveling to comps. I know the athletes have been very excited about this upcoming year and have the drive to keep pushing through everything and being extremely motivated and willing to do just about anything I ask them or teach them cheer wise. I know we all are looking forward to all the events and just having a great season!"

For weekly sports updates  
check out our website  
[BRANDONREPORTER.COM](http://BRANDONREPORTER.COM)