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Sports Editor • Mike McManus  
532-5601 • mcmanus@morningsentinel.com

# Sports

## Ram bowling teams rebuilding for new season

**BY RICK HAYES**

SENTINEL SPORTS STAFF

**MT. VERNON** — When Mt. Vernon High School opens its 2009-2010 boys' bowling season today in a triangular at Baden Bowl in New Baden, coach Dave Wagner doesn't know what to expect.

However, he says the experience will be invaluable.

"I hope to get the boys comfortable before the first home match so they know what it's like to be out with competition, so they don't fall under pressure when they get home," said Wagner.

Losing two of its best players to graduation — Josh Reeves and John Beckham — the Rams will be rebuilding.

"It looks like we've got a pretty decent team," observed Wagner. "We're going to go up against several good schools, but over the last three years our team has grown and we think we can compete."

Senior Adam Jolley and junior Daryl Bronson are expected to be the Rams' top two bowlers, according to Wagner. Sophomore Jase Soule will also get top billing in some of the matches, his coach said. Rounding out the squad is senior Andrew Bodine and juniors Jesse King and Kyle Welker.



Sentinel Photo/RICK HAYES

**RAMS BOWLERS** — Mt. Vernon's boys' bowling team kicks off the season today at New Baden in a triangular match with Wesclin and O'Fallon. Team members, front row FROM LEFT: Jase Soule, Daryl Bronson, Adam Jolley and Dylan Brown. Back row: Coach Dave Wagner, Andrew Bodine, Jesse King and Kyle Welker.

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# Bowling:

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"I've got a couple working on the junior varsity team that are going to be good over the years," Wagner predicted.

Despite the low number of players on the team, Wagner said there was another good turnout for tryouts this year.

"I was down in my turnout numbers, but it was kids who actually wanted to be on the team. They brought quality work with them. They came out and tried to do a serious job. I had to turn a couple of bowlers down, but overall, I was hap-

py with what I had to work with," Wagner said.

Following the match today in New Baden, the Mt. Vernon bowlers return to Nu-Bowl Lanes on Tuesday to take on always-tough Herrin.

"Herrin had a real strong team last year, but I've heard they lost a lot of players to graduation. They're in the process of rebuilding a little bit too," Wagner said.

It's much the same for the girls' team, under the direction of Kristi Johnson.

Despite having five seniors on the squad, only three are returning, but one of them is on the sidelines with an injury.

Returning seniors are Shaye Riley and Kelsey Hill, along with Ariel Ibarra, who has a broken left foot.

Seniors Latisha Wilks and Suzie Owens have no experience, but Johnson said she has a pair of veteran bowlers in sophomores Heather Topping and Casey Southers.

"They've been bowling in the YBA [Youth Bowling Association] programs for a long time. We're looking for a bright future from those young ladies," Johnson said. Topping averages about 170 to 180; Southers about 160.

The only junior on the squad is Kelly Williams.

"We're still rebuilding," Johnson said. "Shaye, Kelsey and Ariel are three players that I wish we could've started earlier because all three of them have the potential to be really good bowlers. With a lot of sophomores coming up, I'm hoping to have a pretty good team in a couple of years."

The girls start their season at home Tuesday against Herrin. The matches start around 4 p.m.

*mtvsports@morningsentinel.com*



Sentinel Photo/RICK HAYES

**MV LADY RAMS BOWLERS** — Mt. Vernon's girls' bowling team kicks off the season at home next Tuesday against Herrin. Team members, front row FROM LEFT: Latisha Wilks, Kelsey Hill, Casey Southers and Suzie Owens. Back row: Coach Kristi Johnson, Kelly Williams, Shaye Riley, Heather Topping, Ariel Ibarra and coach Dave Wagner.