



SPORTS

- First day of fall sports practice
- Monday, August 19
- Boys' golf vs. Kewanee/Hall, 4 p.m.
- Tuesday, August 20
- Boys' golf vs. Rock Island, 4 p.m.
- Saturday, August 24
- Girls' golf at Rock Falls Invite, noon

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Friday, August 2, 2013

BRIEFLY

First day of fall practices:

The first day of fall practice for Geneseo sports teams will be Aug. 14. Start times are as follows: girls' golf, 2:15 p.m.-4:30 p.m. at the Geneseo Country Club; boys' golf, 2:30 p.m. at Maple Bluff; cross country, 2:15 p.m. in the facility; volleyball, 2:30 p.m.-5:15 p.m., sophomores and varsity in main gym and freshman in facility; girls' tennis, 2:15 p.m.-3:15 p.m. at Richmond Hill; football, 2:15 p.m.-3:45 p.m. and 5:15 p.m.-6:45 p.m. at practice field; boys' soccer, 2:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m. at soccer practice field. Cheerleaders and Maplettes will hold their first practice at 3:30 p.m. Aug. 15. Cheerleaders will meet on the GHS track and Maplettes in the cafeteria. All athletes must have a physical and medical authorization form completed to start practice. For more information and updates, visit the GHS athletic Web site at www.high.com/geneseo/ or follow on Twitter at @athleticsGHS.

GOLF REPORT

Country View: Flight A-Sharon Yoder, low gross;

Youth program focuses on learning

By AMY CARTON
Sports Editor

From the beginning, the Geneseo Youth Football program has strived to inspire young football players with the help of the Geneseo community, and that still holds true 55 years later.

"The program was set up the right way many years ago," said board president Ray Hanson. "Everyone is on a team, everyone gets to play, the season is short and sweet, only six weeks, no records are kept and we don't hand out trophies."

The youth football bylaws, which were established when the program began in 1958 and are still followed today, state: "The objective of Geneseo Youth Football is to inspire boys to practice the ideals of sportsmanship and physical fitness, to teach them good habits of fellowship with others boys to respect adults, and to develop the

ability to take adversity without complaint."

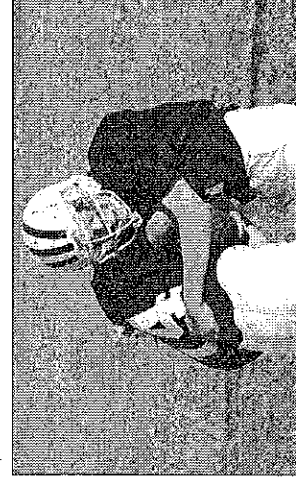
"We really want to focus on learning, discipline and not winning," said Hanson. "The program has proven to be successful and has sustained itself. It is Geneseo's program."

Besides the board and coaches, the community has stepped up over the last 55 years to help give young football players an opportunity to learn the game at a young age.

"It is a local community program which has always supported it," said Hanson. "This is all done on contributions and every business in Geneseo and surrounding areas has been a part of it at one time."

The support is why still today it only costs youth football players \$1 to play the whole season, which goes toward the purchase of a mouth guard.

"We've always had enough money to run the program," said Hanson.



Photos by Amy Carton

LEARNING FUNDAMENTALS during the 2012 Youth Football season are the Bears' Ethan Seamen and Cameron Darin (top left) practicing their tackling; the Chiefs' Nathaniel Hines (top right) holding tight to the ball; and members of the Eagles' squad (bottom) running through plays at practice.

"We never wanted to be a burden for people to play so that is why it only costs \$1 to play."

All the funds the program receives go toward the equipment the kids have. Hanson also said the program has been fortunate the Geneseo School District

Please see **YOUTH, A13**

Football teams hone skills at camp



Photos by Amy Carton

PREPARING FOR THE SEASON are members of the Geneseo High School football teams during summer camp July 22-26. Jeremy Harper (top left) receives the handoff and sprints down field and the Geneseo lineman (top right) work on blocking. Jacob Pauley (bottom left) throws the ball to an open receiver, Ryan Pitra (bottom center) races down field during a drill and sophomore football players practice their blocking skills.

Youth: Program for the kids, supported by community

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Aside from the minimal cost to play youth football in Geneseo, Hanson says he believes what also sets this program apart is the league doesn't get too competitive.

"We always stress to the players they are playing on different teams now, but will play together at the next level," he said.

The coaches, some who have been coaching for 30 years, teach the players the fundamentals of the game and try to instill that even at this level that players are required to come to practice.

"The big thing for the coaches is for them to keep the players playing football through being involved and making them a part of the team," said Hanson. "We look for coaches with experience who are positive and like to be around kids."

Hanson said the program sees a lot of returners each year and only a few drop out of the program because they find out the sport is not for them.

"I like to think the kids get something out of the program — learning discipline, sportsmanship and how to get along with other people," said Hanson. "I know my boys always said what they enjoyed was it was legal to hit somebody and not get in trouble for it."

In the early 70s, the program expanded

from four teams to eight teams and went from having 35 players on a team to 26 or lower to give everyone an opportunity to play.

Also in the 70s, the program began the third-quarter team, which is comprised of fifth graders. The third-quarter team plays the third quarter of the games on Wednesdays and Thursdays, but also has the chance to play a complete game and gain more experience on Saturdays.

"Time on the field is very important and when they see their success like the first time they get a touchdown it is a pretty happy time," said Hanson. "The kids enjoy putting on the helmet, and I always get a kick out of it. The kids know they can be at the high-school level someday and play on Friday nights."

Safety is always a top priority with coaches having taken proper safety tests, along with making sure the equipment is always up to date from updating equipment every three years and recertifying helmets every year.

"It is all about the kids," said Hanson. "The program was started because people thought there was a need, it has always been backed and supported by the community and is a long-running program."