Boys must replace core of team

Graduation hit the Swede boys cross country team hard after last season, leaving only three returning letter winners and a host of inexperience.

The girls, on the other hand, bring back a solid core of runners.

“The girls are balanced as far as numbers,” said longtime coach Steve Reeves.

Seven letter winners make up the majority of the team, with two freshmen.

“The young girls are running well,” Reeves said. “That provides some competition among themselves for varsity spots. I think we’ll see our team situation vastly improve because of it.”

The Swede girls didn’t make an appearance at state last fall but junior Abbie Mazour ran in Kearney as a freshman.

“We have an opportunity to do some good things,” Reeves said of the girls. “We’re just going to have to get a little more aggressive when it comes to the meets.”

Reeves expects Cozad to be the front-runner as far as this year’s competition is concerned with teams such as Ogallala and Holdrege vying for top team spots.

“We’re going to see good competition everywhere we go this year,” the coach said.

As for the boys, Reeves is looking for inexperienced runners willing to move into varsity spots early.

After losing four of the Swedes’ top five runners to graduation, the boys have big shoes to fill.

GHS CROSS COUNTRY

Aug. 30—Cozad Invite, 5 p.m.
Sept.4—Lexington Invite, 5:15p.m.
Sept. 8—Broken Bow Invite, 10 a.m.
Sept. 13—Filmore Central Invite at Geneva, 5 p.m.
Sept. 22—Minden Invite, 10 a.m.
Sept. 24—UNK Invite at Kearney, TBA
SEPT.27—GOTHENBURG INVITE, 4 p.m.
Oct. 4—SWC at Valentine, 4 p.m.
Oct. 11—C-4 district at Ogallala
Oct. 19—State meet at Kearney

“I’ve seen a lot of leadership from Aaron Collins and Alex Spencer,” Reeves said. “After that, we’re looking for some boys to step up and fill varsity roles.”

Cozad and Ogallala are again Reeves’ favorites in the Southwest Conference for the boys, with Minden and Valentine much improved.

“At the state meet last fall, over half of the boys who finished in the top 10 were from our district,” Reeves said. “There will be plenty of talent out here again this year.”

The Swedes kick off the action Thursday at the Cozad Invite.

Reeves said he plans to take baby steps, choosing to foster the confidence of young kids before throwing them into the fire.

“If we work slowly to improve, hopefully we’ll have a competitive team by the end of the year.”

The meet at the Cozad Country Club is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. Thursday.

Members of the 2012 Gothenburg girls and boys cross country teams are (*denotes letter winner):

Seniors—Morgan Kowalewski*, Carlie Stevens*, Tyler Block, Aaron Collins*, Kyle Maline, Alex Spencer*.

JUNIORS— Abbie Mazour*, Betsy Potter*, Curtis Andres.

SOPHOMORES— Alayna Collins*, Holly Hudson*, Amanda Kowalewski*, Seth Eg-gleston*, Jacob Franzen, James Shuman.

FRESHMEN—Jennifer Maline, Destiny McVay, Dylan France, Hayden Hubbard, Bryce Kowalewski, Mathiel Martinez.