

Maddie Sesemann found herself in a new role at the Hinsdale Central girls gymnastics team's season opener Nov. 27.

The junior was the only one among the Red Devils' five all-arounders at Hinsdale South's Hornet Invitational who had competed in the eight-team meet in 2012.

"It's different. Only being a junior, it's different to be the veteran, but I can try my best to help the team along," Sesemann said. "That's all I can do. The point is to have fun and try your best. That's what we're all trying to do here."

The Red Devils finished fifth at the invite with 122.625 with a lineup of Sesemann, senior Alex Yager, sophomores Lindsey Riker and Jamie Sherlock and freshman Margot Tye. Sophomore Elle Bergevin, the Red Devils' only other returning varsity regular, sat out the meet to rest a back injury.

"I didn't get to compete in this meet last year. I was really happy to compete and I think we had a good meet," Riker said. "I was kind of nervous, but we did pretty well."

Riker (31.70, 9th) had the Red Devils' top all-around score, followed by Yager (30.90, 11th), Sesemann (29.55, tied for 16th), Tye (29.475, 18th) and Sherlock (29.25, 19th).

Sesemann had the Red Devils' highest finish, taking third on floor exercise (8.5) their final event. Hinsdale Central's 31.775 was the third highest team score on the event.

"Not bad for a first meet (as a team)," Hinsdale Central coach Kim Estoque said. "We've got a lot of improvements (to make) and we know it, but it's a young team so we're just trying to get what they have and try to clean it up and try to improve all of their skills."

On floor, Sesemann only finished behind Lyons Township junior Kelsy Kurfirst (9.1), the defending state champion on the event, and senior Katie Carling (8.55). Floor was the Red Devils' final event and the Lions' first.

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"It's not my best meet today, but during practice I feel like I've worked harder. My goal is to be a lot better than I was last year and to be an anchor for the team," Sesemann said.

"I think it was harder for the team to figure out what invites were like because for mostly everyone this is our first (varsity) invite and it's a different feeling than dual meets. That was just hard getting in the groove of it. I think that was the hardest thing."

Four Red Devils posted top-10 finishes. On vault, Yager had a team-best 8.4 to tie for eighth and Tye was 10th on floor (8.075).

Besides her all-around success, Riker had team-best scores on balance beam (8.05, tied for 12th) and the uneven parallel bars (7.7, 13th) and was 14th on floor (7.9).

Sherlock tied for 13th on vault (8.25). Yager also was 16th on beam (7.9) and uneven bars (7.3).

Yager, Riker and Sherlock saw some varsity action during last year but primarily competed for the junior varsity I team. Riker also was promoted for the postseason.

"Sticking my beam routine and bars (were the highlights). That was pretty good. I thought it was one of my better (beam) routines," Riker said.

After the graduation of three seniors, including 2012 all-stater Erin Morgan, and with two other current seniors not returning, 2013 state qualifier Cayley Brenk and Emma Christoph, Yager finds herself as the only senior currently in the varsity lineup.

"Some seniors came to watch us tonight so that was fun to see them again," Yager said. "This is actually the second time I competed varsity, but it was fun. I enjoy it. I love gymnastics. Probably sticking my beam routine (was my highlight). That made me happy."

• By Bill Stone