

**Alex Yager hoped to contribute as a senior leader for the Hinsdale Central girls gymnastics team this season, but not necessarily as the only one.**

**Yager, primarily a junior varsity I gymnast last season, currently is the lone senior on the varsity after two regulars decided not to come back.**

**"It's weird being the only senior because I was always in gymnastics with those other girls that were my really good friends and teammates for a really long time," Yager said. "It's kind of sad seeing them leave, but you can make new friends. There are some really cool freshmen who joined us and a sophomore who wasn't on the team last year so we're having fun."**

**The Red Devils will try to continue their success with a predominantly new lineup after reaching sectionals again last year and posting the 12th highest score overall among the 24 advancing teams (140.90 points).**

**Junior Maddie Sesemann and sophomores Elle Bergevin and Lindsey Riker return from the sectional lineup. Yager and sophomore Jamie Sherlock also gained brief varsity experience last season while freshman Margot Tye arrives with club experience at Action Gymnastics.**

**The Red Devils opened the season at Hinsdale South's Hornet Invitational Nov. 27 with a sixth-place 122.625, roughly 11 points lower than they scored at the invite in 2012.**

**"We haven't really figured out our goals as a team. We're kind of waiting to see how we're doing," Hinsdale Central coach Kim Estoque said.**

**"It's kind of nice having a different group. Those three JV I girls (Riker, Yager and Sherlock) did work out with (the varsity) last year so that helps, too, and then we've got Margot as a freshman coming in."**

**Last season, the Red Devils were third at the West Suburban Conference Silver Division Meet (139.00 points) behind state champion Lyons Township (148.25) and Glenbard West (145.40), which finished seventh at**

state, and tied for third in the final overall standings with York. Riker, Yager and Sherlock helped the JV I team win an outright overall Silver title at that level.

The Red Devils then won their fifth straight regional title (138.65) to advance to sectionals, where they finished second to LT (149.25 to 140.90).

Hinsdale Central graduated four-year state qualifier and 2012 all-stater Erin Morgan and two other varsity regulars, Hannah Kapelinski and Annie Zircher. Seniors Cayley Brenk, a three-year state qualifier and all-rounder, and Emma Christoph, who usually competed on everything but the uneven parallel bars, also decided not to return.

"It was a little bit iffy at the beginning of the summer, but at the start of the school year, we knew (our lineup situation). In the little bit of (preseason) practice, we knew we had to kick into gear because we weren't going to have the strong girls we had last year," Sesemann said.

"It's a different atmosphere, but it's still the same and it's still good. We do our best at practice each day. It's harder because from last year we're missing some of our really good girls. We know that this year if we really try, I'm sure we'll be able to come back stronger."

Sesemann sometimes competed as an all-rounder last year but injuries contributed to her limiting events as the season progressed. Bergevin primarily was a specialist on uneven bars and occasionally competed on floor.

At the Silver Meet, Sesemann was 17th on floor (8.3) and uneven bars (8.15), and Bergevin was 20th on uneven bars (8.0).

For regionals and sectionals, Sesemann and Bergevin competed on uneven bars and Riker competed on uneven bars and floor.

The uneven bars scores by Sesemann and Bergevin (7.875) and Riker (7.85) just missed the 7.975 at-large sectional cutoff to advance as individuals.

Riker's 8.0 on floor missed that at-large cut of 8.475.

Competing solely for the team at sectionals, Sesemann (8.55), Riker (8.45) and Bergevin (8.35) improved their uneven bars scores significantly, and Riker boosted her floor score to 8.325.

"Every routine I have has gotten harder and I've done a lot more harder skills," Sesemann said. "I hope to give (my teammates) the best advice I can and try to steer them to what to do and not to do during meets and what to do in routines. It's kind of hard to try and give everyone the right advice at the same time."

Last year's JV I team won the Silver title outright after winning the Silver Meet with 128.075 points, .625 ahead of second-place LT.

Riker (33.30) and Yager (32.55) were first and second in all-around, and Sherlock (30.125) was seventh.

Yager won vault (8.8) and Riker won uneven bars (8.1). Riker also was second on floor (8.4), third on beam (8.2) and tied for fifth on vault (8.6), and Yager (8.0) and Sherlock (7.3) were third and fourth on uneven bars.

During the regular season, Yager (uneven bars) and Sherlock (vault) competed for the varsity once at the New Trier Invite at the start of winter break.

This year's JV gymnasts may see varsity action in similar fashion. Besides Yager, there are five other seniors on the team at the JV I and II levels.

"I think a successful season would just be everyone doing their best and working really hard at practices and just kind of showing it off at the meets, just how we do in practice," Yager said.

"(As the senior on varsity) I'm supposedly just kind of getting everyone on time where they need to be, mediating and making sure everything runs

smoothly, getting judges' score sheets, just making general announcements about which leotards we're wearing, that kind of stuff, but it's still fun."

In the Silver, the Red Devils will try for another top-three finish against state title contender LT and Glenbard West. Hinsdale Central will play host to the varsity and JV I Silver Meets at 10 a.m. Feb. 1.

Hinsdale Central also will again play host to one of the state's four sectionals at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 12.

"As a team, we'd like to make it as a team to sectionals. Since we're hosting, it would be really nice to make it as a team so I think that's what we're shooting for," Estoque said.

"That's just something we've always done. To make it to sectionals as a team is just something that I really think we can do if we really tried hard," Sesemann said. "For me personally, my goal is to definitely place at conference, regionals and sectionals and hopefully make it to state this year."

## **HINSDALE CENTRAL GIRLS GYMNASTICS AT A GLANCE**

**HEAD COACH:** Kim Estoque (9th season)

**2012-13 RESULTS:** Season-high 141.575 points; 2-3 in West Suburban Conference Silver Division duals; third at Silver Meet (139.00 points) and tied for third overall with York; won Hinsdale Central Regional (138.65); second at Hinsdale Central Sectional (140.90)

**VARSITY RETURNEES:** Junior Maddie Sesemann; and sophomores Elle Bergevin and Lindsey Riker

**VARSITY NEWCOMERS:** Senior Alex Yager; sophomore Jamie Sherlock; and freshman Margot Tye

**QUOTABLE:** "I think (our focus is) just having clean routines, trying to get real clean, because the skills aren't there right now," Estoque said. "If we can have no falls and just good, clean routines, I think that's going to make a big difference."

- By Bill Stone