

Kohawks ready for indoor track season

Written by Jim Ecker

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Aaron Carley had a good workout Wednesday afternoon and is looking forward to the start of the indoor track season this Saturday at the Sol Butler Invitational in Dubuque.

You get the impression that Carley, 32, would love to compete in the long jump, triple jump and sprints like he did as an All-American at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point 10 years ago, but he's equally excited now as the head coach at Coe.

Carley has young teams as he begins his second season with the Kohawks, but he thinks there's good potential as he builds the program.

"For me it's a blast," Carley said Wednesday in his office at Eby Fieldhouse. "I've been waiting for this first meet for quite a few months now. I'm really, really excited for some of our kids."

Carley coaches both the men's and women's track teams at Coe. He was hired in August of 2012, too late to do much recruiting for the 2012-13 school year, but he brought in 17 freshmen this year - nine women and eight men - to bolster the squads.

"We're a very young team, but we're a young and talented team," he said. "I'm really looking forward to seeing what the younger kids on the team can do."

Beau Freeborn, the Class 1A state champion in the 800 from North Mahaska, has joined the Kohawks. Austin Springsteen, the Class 1A state champ in the 1600 from Lisbon, is also a freshman at Coe.

The Osterberger sisters from Dubuque Senior - Alexandria and Samantha - have joined the Kohawks after qualifying for the Class 4A state meet last year in eight events.

Melissa Alger, a sophomore from Lisbon, placed 13th in the discus at the NCAA Division III

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outdoor track track meet last and is one of the top returning athletes in the program. Kirstin Franklin, a triple jumper from Greeley, Colo., and Alex Deeds, a thrower from Benton Community, also are back this season.

"We have some pretty talented kids," said Carley.

The Kohawks have only 28 men and 22 women on their roster, about half of what Carley would like to have some day, but he likes the response he's getting from potential student-athletes as he puts the pieces together.

He knows there's a big gap between Coe and some of the elite track programs in the Iowa Conference, but he's anxious to try and reel them in.

"I think we're definitely heading in the right direction to close that gap. But it's a long road," he said. "It's four or five years out, that you can get a number of recruiting classes in and let those kids grow within the philosophy of the program."

Carley was an assistant coach at the University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, where he was part of quality programs that helped prepare him for his first head coaching job with the Kohawks.

Carley wanted to become a head coach and liked what he saw at Coe when he interviewed for the job.

"That's been a goal from Day 1, to take over my own program and implement my philosophies," he said. "It wasn't just an opportunity to be a head coach (at Coe). It was an opportunity to be a head coach at an institution that valued the academics and then athletics, where kids were truly getting an opportunity to be a student-athlete."

"That was an environment I wanted to come to," he said. "I feel pretty fortunate to be here."

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