DREAM TEAM 2013?

The North Star Bearcats are coming off another great season, finishing second in the state. Now the boys step back onto the court for the 2012-2013 season — with a team that’s only going to get better.

North Star is a school that has cherished some pretty incredible athletes, but none of the school’s sports teams have made as much history as its basketball team. The team has seen a lot of jaw-dropping games in its past. Now the team returns, with a few of the members who have lived through that history.

The Bearcats will return many veterans such as seniors Jacob Hagler, Daniel Grande, Brooks Larson, Aaron Armentrout, Steven Hunt, and Aaron Bergdahl, and sophomore Alex Weston. The team also added sophomore Christian Kvilevang to the roster. The team possesses much potential, returning with most of last year’s starting line-up.

Head coach Jeff Hagler talks to a team that’s short on numbers, but not in talent.

This season promises a lot of optimism for the boys of North Star. A couple of the team members gave took a look at the upcoming season, giving the press some insight about the team.

But first, some history.

Four years previous to this one, North Star embarked a journey that would end at the state tournament. The team, which consisted of seniors Zach Kennedy and Ethan Kitsch, went on to take 7th place at the state tournament, ending with 24 wins and 4 losses. The following season, the Bearcats returned with seniors Tanner Komrosky, Calvin Trubner, and Caleb Beck, and other underclass prospects; with the set of players they seemed destined to make history. Unfortunately, that history didn’t comply with North Star fans. It ended with the classic David and Goliath story; North Star came into the season with full momentum and remained undefeated, even unmatched in score, until the regional tournament where Carrington ended North Star’s win streak by just one point in overtime, 66-65. Of course, only one team leaves the region; North Star’s season was over, while Carrington went on to wear the victor’s crown at the state tournament. It was a close match-up, a heartbreaking loss for some and an emotional victory for others; it proved that anything could happen — and foreshadowed some future events.

The following year in 2010-2011, the Bearcats again came out in full swing, and this time went all the way, claiming that state title for themselves. After two seasons of coming up short, they finally reached their goal.

The next year they came out with a fresh line-up, although they still possessed a few of the championship team’s players. They stepped out that season posing a lot of energy and potential. The Bearcats paced through the season, facing many worthy contenders. The defending state champions were rated second in the state polls behind Beulah. In midseason, North Star traveled down to Beulah for what was going to be a big match-up. North Star left with their still undefeated record after topping the Miners 74-49. North Star went cruising through the season and collecting more victories, until the Regional tournament. There the Bearcats met their match yet again in the semifinal verse Warwick. The game was an intense battle between the two teams. Warwick played at the par of North Star the whole game, draining a record amount of 3-pointers. The game was close to the very end, but North Star scored to win in the final seconds, which was followed by a breath of relief from the audience. The boys then defeated Carrington in the region final to advance to the state tournament for the second year in a row.

The tournament, held in Grand Forks, came around and the fun began. North Star cut it close once more against Grafton in the opening round, but managed to slide past them once again, 63-58. They advanced to the semifinal and took on Shiloh Christian, claiming another win. Meanwhile, the Beulah Miners took down the other two undefeated teams there, both of which were ranked 3rd and 2nd behind North Star, to win a berth to the final.

North Star had done it again — they made it to the state final for the second year in a row. If they should win, they would be undefeated for two years straight. Beulah came in as the underdog, no previous state championship under their belts. But they had handed Berthold and Central Cass their first losses. Beulah had an eerie impression. It was bound to be a good game. And a good game it was. There was lots of energy to start it off. Both teams kept stealing the lead from each
other. Beulah trailed North Star in points several times, but the Miners left for half time 26-25 in their favor. The buzzer rang out. Beulah won, 51-49.

Things turned out the best for Beulah, who seemed to live out the underdog story. North Star ended with a state-runner up trophy and a 26-1 record, much like the season in 2000-2001, when the North Star Bearcats were the Cando Cubs.

Seniors on this year's crew have a lot of optimism about this year. Senior point guard Jacob Hagler, who has been through all of the previously described history, says he can't wait to get started. “It should be an exciting season. Expectations are pretty high.” Hagler is one of the most recognized players of the team, and the team has a lot of confidence in his leadership. The team has great athletes, good shooters, and talented players. But the boys describe their core strength as team chemistry. They are always mentally prepared but are always loose and joking around in the locker room.”

On the addition of new player Christian Kvilvang, the team has high hopes for this rookie – who is not a rookie at all. Kvilvang, who just moved to Cando from Valley City, served as the football team’s tight end, earning an All-Region honorable mention; now he’s ready to commence the basketball season. So far Kvilvang has showed good athleticism, one of the team’s strengths. “He played Class A ball.” Jacob Hagler noted. The boys seem to be welcoming him with open arms. All of the players had one thing to say about their goals this season: “State championship.” The chance of that remain, but history reminds us that anything can happen; North Star has a few steps to walk before that goal can be reached. They have one advantage on this though: they all have a similar goal; research has shown that teams that work together and have the same goals are more successful.

“If we can keep the fun in the game, we will do just fine.” Hagler said. Keeping the fun and teamwork in the game will be the key to success for North Star, and any team for that matter. If the team can keep that, they will only have one more barrier to break: staying healthy. “We need to get Aaron Bergdahl healthy as soon as possible,” Haugen said. Hagler agreed, citing one of his main goals as keeping everyone healthy. “If we stay healthy it should be a challenging, but fun, season.”

The season looks to be promising. There are many good teams around the area, making things wildly entertaining for this year’s audience. North Star has a good change at success, but only time will tell what happens. Furthermore, Hagler commented, “Our school and community can be very proud of this group of athletes. Everyone needs to enjoy the success we have had, and to hopefully come this season, because in a small school it unfortunately doesn’t last forever.”

Jacob Hagler, Sr. Guard
Named to the Class B All-State team the past two years. Scored his 1,500th career point last season.

2011-12 Stats:
28.0 points 58% 2 ptrs
7.1 rebounds 37% 3-ptrs
3.3 steals 87% FT
6.8 assists

Daniel Grande, Sr. Guard
Named to All-State team last year. Dan went over the 1,000-point mark for his career last season.

2011-12 Stats:
18.1 points 65% 2 ptrs
5.8 rebounds 37% 3-ptrs
4.1 steals 77% FT
3.7 assists

Brooks Larson, Sr. Forward
Last year was the first year as a starter for Brooks. He was honorable mention for the 9-man All-State football team.

2011-12 Stats:
4.9 points 40% 2 ptrs
3.3 rebounds 17% 3-ptrs
1.0 steals 46% FT
1.4 assists

Christian Kvilvang, Soph, Fd
Christian is a transfer student from Valley City where he played for the Hi-liners. Christian played tight end and defensive end and was named an honorable mention for the Region 4 team.

2011-12 Stats:
7.1 points 54% 2 ptrs
4.4 rebounds 27% 3-ptrs
0.8 steals 77% FT
1.4 assists

Alex Weston, Soph, Fd
Was the number one player off the bench last year. He made his minutes count, as he was third in scoring.

2011-12 Stats:
7.1 points 54% 2 ptrs
4.4 rebounds 27% 3-ptrs
0.8 steals 77% FT
1.4 assists