Led by six returning seniors, the HHS 2012-13 wrestling team is 25 members strong for the largest team in quite some time.

The Dragon wrestling squad is four members larger than last year and close to triple the size of the nine-member 2010-11 team.

After the six seniors, the team is young with no juniors, eight sophomores and 11 freshmen. But three of the sophomores are strong returning letterwinners from last year.

Coach Jack Garrison looks for solid leadership from the seniors and letterwinners. With much inexperience on the team, Garrison said it will be a year for building the program, and he's pleased with the large number of participants to help that happen.

Eight returning letterwinners lead this year's team. They include seniors Jesus Hermosillo, Spencer Kotch, Ben Martinez, Leo Ortiz and Astolfo Rojo; and sophomores T.J. Gertner, Dylan Kotch and Nicholas Ortner.

Hermosillo and Dylan Kotch both have state mat experience from last season. Hermosillo earned two match wins at state at 195 lbs. and Kotch performed well at 220 lbs. at state.

Returning letterwinners on the 2012-13 HHS wrestling team are pictured from left, front row, Ben Martinez, Astolfo Rojo and T.J. Gertner; and back row, Nicholas Ortner, Jesus Hermosillo, Dylan Kotch and Leo Ortiz. Not pictured is Spencer Kotch.—Enterprise photo

Other team members are senior Cesar Hinostroza; sophomores Troy Brown, Morgan Golden, Nathan Miles, Javy Rojo and Luke Stewart; and freshmen Dennis Amaya, Issac Brandt, Marques Harvey, Cavin Kramer, Cody Lamm, Fernando Lopez, Juan Quintana, Eric Rojo, Fernando Rojo, Sidney Struckmeyer and Avi Turcios.

Garrison will be assisted with coaching duties by Cutter Garrison and Dusty McConnell.

Despite the fact the team is very young, coach Garrison said they're ahead of where he thought they would be in practice.

He and the other coaches worked with both the junior high and high school teams last year, and Garrison sees that as a real benefit. He pointed out the younger participants know what to expect when they enter the wrestling room and they're ready to work at the level required.

There are some team members with little to no experience, and Garrison looks forward to working with them, as well. "Hopefully we will improve as a team," he added.

The Dragons open the season this Saturday, Dec. 1 at the St. Francis, Kan. tournament.

Three home duals during the season will provide the opportunity for local fans to check out the Dragon grapplers.

Home duals are scheduled Thursday, Dec. 13 with Yuma; Friday, Feb. 1 with Akron; and Thursday, Feb. 7 with Wray.

Regionals will be held Friday and Saturday, Feb. 15-16 at NJC in Sterling, with the state tournament Feb. 21-23 at the Pepsi Center in Denver.

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