



DECATUR COMMUNITY HIGH ATHLETES have been showing up at the high school gym three times a week – as early as 6:30 a.m., no less – to train and prepare for this year’s fall sports. Clockwise from top, Grace Randel, 14, with Taylor Macfee, 16; Matt Glading, 17; Regent Erickson, 16; and Kennedy Fortin, 16, lift weights and work muscle to get in peak physical form. The kids work with weights and equipment of all kinds, listening to loud music and working with coaches in the open exercising room.

– Herald staff photos by Stephanie DeCamp

Student athletes prepare for the fall sports season

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**
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 Decatur Community High athletes, boys and girls alike, are training at the high school gym, getting ready for the upcoming fall sports season and all the glory it might bring. School starts Friday, Aug. 17, but practices start that Monday, Aug. 13, and the kids in the gym are making sure they’re tough enough to play their best by then, said Coach Caleb Howland. The boys are buffing up for foot-

ball, wrestling, basketball and cross-country, he said. The girls are strengthening up for volleyball, basketball and cross-country, too. The volleyball girls went to Phillipsburg for a camp tournament this summer and won, he said, so you know they’re already revved up to play. “We should be pretty competitive this year,” said Mr. Howland. “We have lots of returning starters for football, and wrestling is good, too. We lost some good seniors last year, but have three returning

students that placed at state: Kade Brown, Dayton Dreher and Channing Fortin. There’s also a new basketball coach this year, he said, Daniel Conrad, from Wichita. The gym is open to junior and high schooler students Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 6:30 a.m. to noon. On average, Coach Howland said, around 25 boys come, 10 to 15 girls, and 20 kids from junior high, getting the jump on physical fitness before taking the leap to high school.

