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KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Happy New Year high school sports fans! Another great year of covering our schools and their student athletes is in the books. The goal 10 years ago was to give high school athletes more coverage and that remains today. Thank you to all that have supported us along the way!

Winter sports are heating up and there is plenty of Mid-Michigan area schools and athletes that can flat out play! Get out and check out some games as the kids strive to come together as a team to compete for conference titles. Winning a district or regional or MHSAA state final is always the pinnacle, but the first goal is always to win your conference. That gets your team and your name in the school record books.

Enjoy this month's edition! Like and follow us on Facebook, check us out at High School Sports Scene.com and send comments and suggestions to miniard.randy@gmail.com.

A toast to all for a great 2019



**Career Milestone!**  
Alma junior wrestler Jarrett Ferman recently recorded his 100th career victory.

# Mid-Michigan Area Loaded With Solid Boys Basketball Teams In Divisions 1 and 2

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

After turning in a 20-5 record and reaching the regional title game last year, the Okemos Chiefs are off to a strong start this season with eight wins in a row to begin the campaign.

Led by returning all-conference players Evan Thomas and Noah Pruitt, Okemos is one of the teams to beat in the Capital Area Activities Conference (CAAC) Blue Division as it won its first three conference games.

DeWitt is poised to battle it out with Okemos for the CAAC Blue title this season. Moving up from the CAAC Red, DeWitt began the season with six straight wins and a 2-0 record in the CAAC Blue. Defense is the strong point for DeWitt as the Panthers have



yet to allow more than 50 points in any game this season. Nate Flannery, Issac Hungerford, and Collin McCrackin are among the leaders for the Panthers this season.

Williamston is the team to beat in the CAAC Red Division this season. The Hornets feature one of the most proficient offenses in the area this season. Williamston began the season with a 9-0 record and 3-0 league record and scored 70 points or more in eight of its nine wins. Senior forwards Sean Cobb, Case Conley, and Joseph Hahnberg all stand 6-foot-7 and brings versatile skill sets to the floor. The backcourt features a pair of dynamic freshmen in point guard Mason Docks and shooting guard Jay Wallace. Wallace is a sharp-shooting guard who flashed his potential with 30 points off the bench in a win against Portland. Add junior guard Mitchell Cook and sophomore forward Brandon Hunt (6-foot-6) and you have a deep and talented team with plenty of upside.

Haslett will challenge Williamston for CAAC Red supremacy this season. The Vikings dropped a three-point decision to DeWitt and fell by a point against East Lansing in overtime during December. Senior guard Mitchell Mowid leads the way for Haslett along with point guard Ty Andrades and 6-foot-5 forward Sam Laczynski.

Mt. Pleasant is coming off back-to-back district championships and has its sights set on even more this season. Junior Mason Wojtusik is one of the finest all-around players in Mid-Michigan. Senior guards Jackson Ostrowsky and Peyton Fountain and junior guard Joe

Okemos junior points guard Noah Pruitt is a returning all-conference player who has helped the Chiefs open the season with an 8-0 record.

Ostrowsky provide plenty of depth and skill in the backcourt. Up front, junior Tyler Huenemann (6-3) provides plenty of toughness in the paint with junior Alec Mills (6-6) and sophomore Josh Schell (6-4) giving the Oilers good length in the post area.

Saginaw opened the season with a 5-1 mark and will provide a challenge for Mt. Pleasant in the Saginaw Valley League Red Division. Junior point guard Freddie McIntosh and junior shooting guard Sir'Real Smith form a dangerous backcourt. Up front, junior James Baber (6-7) is an anchor in the post.

Look for East Lansing to develop into a challenger in the CAAC Blue. Freshman Mason Woods is an improving talent who combines with Marcus Wourman and Andre Anthony to give the Trojans a potent offensive trio.

Grand Ledge is another team with plenty of upside. Senior forward Javel Lewis (6-6) has as much talent as any player in the conference and is capable of a double-double in points and rebounds anytime he steps on the floor. Point guard Jarred Houghton is also a source of scoring on offense along with being a talented distributor.

Lansing Catholic Central is shaping up as a team to beat in the CAAC White this season. After opening the year with losses against powerhouses Okemos and Williamston, the Cougars responded with five straight wins by



Alma senior Drew Humm and his Panther teammates opened the season with a 7-0 record.

double figures. Freshman guard Alex Watters is making a major impact in his first year of high school basketball as he has scored in double figures in five of the first seven games and is averaging 13 points per game. Senior center Charlie Nylander is averaging 10 points and five rebounds per game.

Alma gave its Tri-Valley Conference Central Divisions opponents plenty to think about over the holidays. Alma opened the season with a 7-0 record heading into the break. Senior guard Cam Sutherland, in his third season on the varsity, has been one of Alma's leaders this season along with senior guard Marcus Owens Jr., Drew Humm, and Case Martin.



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# Sanford-Meridian, Pewamo-Westphalia Lead A Strong Group Of Area Division 3-4 Boys Basketball Teams

Butch Harmon  
Sports Scene

The **Sanford-Meridian** boys basketball team made a statement in its season-opening game against Saginaw Heritage and the Mustangs have done nothing but back it up since.

Hosting Division 1 Heritage in the opener, Sanford-Meridian came away with a 58-49 win, the lone loss Heritage has experienced this season. Sanford-Meridian has since reeled off five more wins and is the lone undefeated team in the Jack Pine Conference with a 4-0 record.

Sanford-Meridian features a balance of outside shooting the the inside game. Senior guard Brett Barriger and junior guards Trey Plichta and Jake Cay lead the Mustangs from the perimeter. Senior forward Lucas Lueder (6-foot-5) provides a consistent source of points for Meridian which is coming off its first regional championship in 17 years. Senior center Gabe Brady (6-4), senior forward Gage White and sophomore Blake Townsend (6-3) bring more skill to the front court.



- Led by talented senior Andre Smith, the **Pewamo-Westphalia** Pirates are off to a sizzling start this season. A 6-foot-7 perimeter player with an outstanding outside shot, Smith is averaging 20 points, 9.2 rebounds and 3.4 assists per game for a P-W team that won its first five games by margins of at least 18 points. Point guard Collin Trierweiler is also a catalyst of the offense. An outstanding ball handler, Trierweiler also has an outstanding ability to drive to the rim and score. Senior Hunter Hengesbach is a talented all-around player while Nate Wirth, Nate Martin, and Keegan Smith have also been key contributors for a well-balanced squad.

- With an experienced and talented group of seniors leading the way, **Saginaw Valley Lutheran** has started the season in a big way. The Chargers won their first six games this season by double digits and are averaging 67.8 points per game. Senior Jonathon Giglio (6-2) paces the Charger offense averaging 16.7 points per game. Senior post player Brady Hagenow (6-5) is a multi-skilled big man. Hagenow is a shot-blocking presence on defense and leads the team in rebounding while adding points in the paint. Seniors Andrew Gunn and Joel Wolter are a pair of 5-foot-8 guards that are combining for over 20 points per game. Senior Drew Greenwood is a versatile veteran with a well-rounded game on both ends of the court.

- Ithaca** is battling it out with Saginaw Valley Lutheran in the TVC West. Senior Baylee Chaffin is a talented all-around player and a consistent source of offense. Peyton Smith, Tom Steward, Grant Weburg, and Ben Drowley are also turning in strong all-around seasons for the Yellowjackets who reeled off five straight wins to start the season.

- With a talented sophomore class highlighted by Trent Reed, **Beaverton** is a team with plenty of upside this season. Reed (6-3) is a talented offensive player who has turned in several impressive efforts this season. Sophomore center

Brayde Keeley (6-4) is a talented big man emerging and sophomore Carson Oldani (6-2) is also in the mix. Senior forward Logan Gerow and junior forward Jarrett Inscho bring experience to the floor for the Beavers.

- Few area teams can fill it up as fast from the perimeter as **Carson City-Crystal** can. The Eagles have been lighting it up from three-point range this season enroute to winning their first five games. Seniors Drew Stout and Jackson Murphy along with Andrae Wilson, Connor Smith, Kolbe Rohn, junior Jake Schneider and sophomore Kyler Stone can all hit the three-point shot. Senior post player Brody Mikula (6-7) provides the Eagles with a shot-blocking presence in the paint and is a strong rebounder.

- Laingsburg** is one of several teams chasing Pewamo-Westphalia in the CMAC. Senior Jon Saylor (6-2) leads the way for the Wolfpack along with junior guard Gabe Hawes and sophomore forward Zach Hawes.
- Dansville** senior and Central Michigan University recruit Caleb Hodgson is off to a big season. The 6-foot-10 center is averaging 23 points and 17.8 points per game for the Aggies. Hodgson eclipsed the 1,500-point mark for his career when he scored 35 points in a win against Portland. Hodgson is part of a talented senior class at Dansville that includes Hayden Voss, Nathan Mack and Devin Patrick. Patrick, the team's point guard, is averaging six assists per game and eclipsed the 300-assist mark for his career. Voss is adding 10.8 points per game while Mack is adding 7.8 points per game.

- Edmore-Montabella's** Connor Riley is another area senior that is off to a sizzling start this season. In a game against Belding, Riley scored 51 points to break the 35-year old scoring record at Montabella. Riley nearly accomplished a triple-double in the game as he added 12 rebounds and nine steals. Junior guard Austin Pawlowski is also turning in a strong season both on offense and defense for the Mustangs who won four of its first five games. Trent Willemstein is also providing the Mustangs with some



strong efforts on the boards.

- After a memorable football season, the **Breckenridge** boys basketball team is carrying over the winning ways. Led by Brayden Aldrich and Brennan Waslusky, the Huskies won five of their first six games this season.

- Coleman** is one of the most improved teams in the area. With three wins in their first five games, the Comets have already matched last year's win total of three. With only two seniors on the roster, the Comets have plenty of upside. Junior forwards Connor Arnold and Kam DeVrieze return after averaging close to a combined 20 points a game last year. Seniors Logan Schocknesse and Spencer Pnacek brings experience to the lineup with junior Tyler Germain at a guard. Coleman has a deep junior class with Dominic Beauchamp, Spencer Brownlee, Trey Templeman and center Garrett Owens (6-5) all looking to contribute.

After reaching the state finals in football this past fall, the Breckenridge boys basketball team is off to a strong start this basketball season.



# BOYS & GIRLS BASKETBALL RANKINGS

## BOYS DIVISION 1-2

- OKEMOS** – Reeled off eight straight wins to begin the season with only one win by less than double digits.
- WILLIAMSTON** – Off to a sizzling 9-0 start this season.
- DEWITT** – Panthers opened the season with six straight wins including a 41-38 non-league win against Haslett.
- MT. PLEASANT** – Oilers are picking off where they left off last season.
- HASLETT** – Only losses came by three to DeWitt and by one in overtime to East Lansing.
- SAGINAW** – Trojans reeled off five straight wins after season-opening loss to Carman-Ainsworth.
- ALMA** – Overtime win at Frankenmuth highlight of a 7-0 start to the season for the Panthers.
- EAST LANSING** – Picked up an impressive win in overtime against Haslett.
- GRAND LEDGE** – Off to a 4-3 start this season but the three losses came against Okemos, Haslett and Mt. Pleasant.
- LANSING CATHOLIC** – Cougars won five impressive wins after falling to Okemos and Williamston to start the season.

## BOYS DIVISION 3-4

- SANFORD-MERIDIAN** – Has been on a roll since impressive opening-night win against Saginaw Heritage.
- PEWAMO-WESTPHALIA** – Pirates started the season in overdrive and keep cruising.
- SAGINAW VALLEY LUTHERAN** – Chargers off to a strong start this season with all six wins by double digits.
- ITHACA** – Yellowjackets will battle it out with Valley Lutheran for the top spot in the TVC West.
- BEAVERTON** – Beavers opened the season with five wins in their first seven games.
- CARSON CITY-CRYSTAL** – Won its first five games and looks to be the team to beat in the Mid-State Activities Conference.
- LAINGSBURG** – Wolfpack has turned in some strong efforts while playing a stacked schedule this season.
- DANSVILLE** – Tough schedule preparing the Aggies for a post-season run in Division 3.
- EDMORE-MONTABELLA** – Mustangs began the season strong winning four of their first five games.
- BRECKENRIDGE** – Following up memorable football season with strong start to basketball season.

## GIRLS DIVISION 1-2

- SAGINAW HERITAGE**. The defending state champs have key players back from last season's team. Enough said.
- EAST LANSING**. East Lansing would love a state title rematch with Heritage and it might happen.
- FREELAND**. Made it to the quarterfinals last season.
- DEWITT**. Coming back from a 21-2 season
- MIDLAND DOW**. Molly Davis will make this team tough to beat.
- BAY CITY JOHN GLENN**. The Bobcats are off to a 4-1 start.
- GRAND LEDGE**. Comets are off to a 4-1 start
- OKEMOS**. Laya Hartman can take team a long way.
- CENTRAL MONTCALM**. Green Hornets return everybody from a 20-0 regular season.
- ALMA**. Panthers are coming off a strong 16-5 season.

## GIRLS DIVISION 3-4

- MOUNT PLEASANT SACRED HEART** - The Irish lost in overtime in the state semifinal last season to eventual state champion Adrian Lenawee Christian.
- PEWAMO-WESTPHALIA** - Pirates have fired out to a 5-0 start
- MICHIGAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY** - MLS state runner-up in 2017
- HEMLOCK** - The Huskies have gotten off to an impressive 5-0 start
- FOWLER** - It's tough being in same conference as P-W.
- ITHACA** - Yellowjackets are out to 4-1 start.
- REESE** - This could be huge season after 6-1 start
- BATH** - Fighting Bees play in tough league, off to 6-1 start
- PORTLAND ST. PATRICK** - Shamrocks flying high at 6-1.
- DURAND** - It could be huge season with 3-1 start.

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# HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE SCENE STEALERS!



**TJ Moore**  
Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart, Cross Country  
TJ Moore of Mount Pleasant Sacred signed his letter of intent recently to run cross country, indoor track and track at Davenport University. He runs the distances and hurdles in track.



**Lauren MacDonald**  
Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart, Cross Country  
Lauren MacDonald of Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart signed her letter of intent to run cross country at Central Michigan University. She was 10th overall in the state finals in 2018 to help her team win another state title.



**Cross DeLau**  
Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart, Baseball  
Cross DeLau, a pitcher and outfielder for Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart, signed his letter of intent in November to play NCAA Division II baseball for Northwood University.



**Cole Cudney**  
Ionia, Wrestling  
Cole Cudney took first place in the 130-pound division on Dec. 28 in the Ionia Michael Adamson Wrestling Invitational. He pinned Shadi Beidoun of Livonia Stevenson in the finals.



**Jared Thelen**  
Portland, Wrestling  
Jared Thelen, (left) of Portland Raider wrestling. He took second place at 135 pounds in the Michael Adamson Wrestling Invitational on Dec. 28 in Ionia. He lost in the finals to Teddy Peters of Onaway.



**Andre Smith**  
Pewamo-Westphalia, Basketball  
Andre Smith (32) had 21 points for Pewamo-Westphalia on Dec. 18 at Central Montcalm in a 68-33 non-conference win over the Hornets. Smith is averaging 19 points per game for the Pirates.



**Britton Angell**  
Crossroads, Boys Basketball  
Britton Angell scored 21 points in a win over Ewart on Dec. 17. He has helped the Cougars to a 6-1 record so far in the early stages of the season.



**Jakob Martinson**  
Big Rapids, Boys Basketball  
Jakob Martinson scored 24 points in a win over Ewart on Dec. 20 and is averaging 20 points a game so far this season for the defending CSAA champions.



**Brooke Brauer**  
Morley Stanwood, Girls Basketball  
Brooke Brauer has been averaging in double digit points and rebounds in her second varsity season as a sophomore for the Mohawks. She was also a starter as a freshman.

## Okemos Boys Basketball Team Building On Last Year's Success

David Cook  
Sports Scene

Last season was a memorable campaign for the Okemos boys basketball team. With a talented cast of players back this season, the Chiefs are picking up where they left off.

Okemos won the Capital Area Activities Conference Blue Division title last season. The Chiefs added a district title before falling to East Lansing in the regional finals, ending the season with a 20-5 overall record.

This season, Okemos reeled

off eight straight wins to start the season and are one of the top Division 1 boys basketball teams in the state.

Led by senior wing Evan Thomas and junior point guard Noah Pruitt, Okemos has won all but one of its first eight games this season by double digits. Okemos upped its record to 8-0 with a 62-42 win against Waverly giving the Chiefs their best start since the 2008-09 season. Thomas, a returning all-league player and last year's team Most Improved Player, led the Chiefs with 17 points and eight rebounds. Senior guard Fabian

Leone added 11 points.

One of the highlights of the month of December came when Okemos traveled to Grand Rapids to the defeat Rockford 63-29 in a battle of unbeaten teams in the I-96 Hoops Classic. Thomas led the way for Okemos with 14 points and eight rebounds as he was named the game MVP. Junior guard Austin Gibson added 12 points and Pruitt chipped in nine points.

Okemos opened the season with a 70-44 win over Lansing Catholic Central and has not looked back. Thomas and Pruitt both scored 18 points in the season opener. Pruitt, who has started at point guard since his freshman season, is a quick point guard with outstanding ball-handling skills. A returning all-conference player, Pruitt is a threat to score the basketball and has

range past the three-point line.

Thomas, an outstanding all-around player, has stepped in as Okemos' leading scorer. Excellent at driving to the basket, Thomas also has an effective three-point shot.

Leone and junior Austin Gibson round out the starting backcourt for Okemos. Leone brings an excellent outside shot to the floor while Gibson is effective driving or shooting from outside.

Joining Thomas up front is senior forward Mason Kaczmarek. Kaczmarek is a strong defender and rebounder who can score in the paint on offense.

Senior guard Zach Hetfield, senior forward James Tanay, junior forward Grant Hinterman and sophomore forward KJ Rai provide the Chiefs with quality depth.



Okemos senior Evan Thomas is a returning all-conference player that has helped the Chiefs to eight straight wins to begin the season.

# SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON GIRLS BASKETBALL

## Heritage, East Lansing Among Top Division 1 And 2 Teams

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

### EAST LANSING

Teams to keep an eye on in Divisions 1 and 2 include East Lansing which was 26-1 before falling in the title game to Saginaw Heritage, which wound up at 27-1.

Miss Basketball, Jaida Hampton has graduated. But East Lansing still has a lot of talent with all-state third-year stater Aaliyah Nye, a 5-foot-11 forward, and, all-conference third-year starter Sanaya Gregory.

Also back is third-year player Kalaia Hampton, and second-year players Ahlura Lofton, Annelise Lebeda and Allie Mayes.

"We lost 3 All State kids and Miss

Basketball," coach Robert Smith said. "It is going to be a tough road but our girls are working really hard and improving every day. We will be very competitive with the other league teams."

Smith is looking forward to the rivalry with DeWitt, which has dominated the Red, while East Lansing has won 14 or the last 16 titles in the Blue. East is trying to win its 10th district and 9th regional title in the last 12 years. East has owned a (198-22) Conference Record in the last 16 years. His overall coaching record is 311-78.

### SAGINAW HERITAGE

The defending Class A champions have the talent to do it again with returning all-staters such as Moira Joiner, Shine Strickland-Gills and Mallory McCaskey. Heritage's only loss came to Class C state champion Detroit Edison during the regular season. Heritage has started out the season at 5-0 including a 51-31 regular-season win over Freeland.

### OKEMOS

Jasmine Clerkley and Laya Hartman give Okemos two very talented players who can help the Chieftains make a lot of noise this season. Hartman has already committed to Northwestern. "We're just getting ready and will have a (tough) conference season," Hartman said. "We'll have to be ready every game." Okemos has started the season at 4-3.



Aaliyah Nye (32) leads the hopes for East Lansing.

### DEWITT

DeWitt was 21-2 last year and is a senior-dominated team this season and dominated on its roster by seniors including power forward Sydney Mills and swing guard Lilly Stephan. The Panthers have started out 5-1 with their only loss being 45-41 to another other state contender, East Lansing.

### GRAND LEDGE

It's a tough schedule for Grand Ledge, which has started out 5-1 with five straight wins after a season-opening loss to Jackson. But a tough schedule includes the likes of East Lansing and Okemos. Courtney Sharland is an outstanding player for the Comets. Senior Mackenzie Todd is expected to have an outstanding season.

### ALMA

Sisters Hailey and Alyssa Leister give Alma plenty of reason to hope for a strong season, although the Panthers have been hit with turnover problems in a 3-2 start. More discipline would make the Panthers a solid team. In an early season win over Essexville-Garber, Hailey Leister led the Panthers with 13 points and 12 rebounds. Alyssa Leister added in 12 points. They both averaged 13 points a game last season.

### CENTRAL MONTCALM

The Hornets had a fabulous 20-0 regular season last year but lost in the playoffs. But almost everybody returns from this team and the Hornets have a score to settle in

the postseason. Libby Ledford is among the talented returning players. Forward Hannah Putnam was lost to an ankle injury late in the season and will be returning.

### MIDLAND DOW

Dow will be led by Maizie Taylor, a 5-foot-7 senior, who had a torn ACL in 2017 and missed a lot of last season while recovering. She has been a starter for Dow since her freshman season. Dow has started off the season at 4-1.

### FREELAND

Freeland made the state quarterfinals, led by Alyssa Argyle, who averaged 41 percent in 3-point shooting and averaged 4 steals, 4 assists and 3 rebounds a game.

### BAY CITY JOHN GLENN

Glenn sophomore Carly McCrum had some strong performances as a freshman last season. John Glenn has gotten off to a 4-1 start.

### GLAC

The Greater Lansing Activities Conference will feature many standout teams including Perry. Lakewood coach Marcus Urka could have the surprise team of 2018-19.

"Anja Kelley, a sophomore point guard, is our strongest ball handler, and she does a little bit of everything with scoring, rebounding, assists, and defense," Urka said. "I expect her to be one of the top players in our league."



Moira Joiner (4) will again lead the attack for Saginaw Heritage.

Zari Kruger, a senior power forward, "was our leading rebounder last year, and one of our leading scorers." Urka said. "She was All-GLAC, and I expect her to be again this year."

Patsy Morris is a senior guard. "Patsy is one of our best shooters, and she can also help out with handling the ball and setting up her teammates with assists," Urka said. "She is also a tremendous rebounder for her position."

Kristine Possehn is a junior guard. "Kristine can handle the ball, finish with both hands, and is one of our best shooters. I expect us to be a more competitive team this year," Urka said. "We expect to finish in the top 3 of our league, and have a winning record overall. Last year Perry won the GLAC, and I expect them to be strong again this year. We expect to finish in the top half, along with Perry, Olivet, and Lansing Christian."

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# P-W, Sacred Heart, Set To Pursue State Titles

### John Raffel Sports Scene

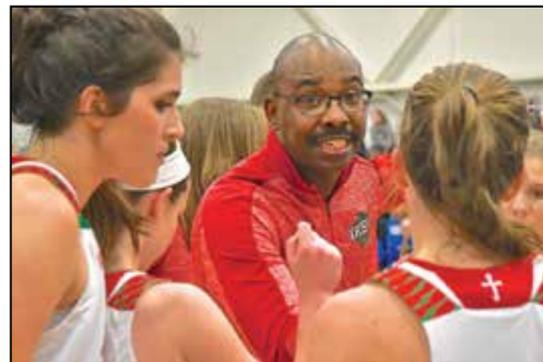
#### PEWAMO-WESTPHALIA

Area girls basketball teams in Division 3 and 4 this season, which have a chance to make plenty of noise, especially in the postseason, include Pewamo-Westphalia. The Eagles lost in the state semifinals and returns three starters, headed by junior Hannah Spitzley, who

averaged in double figures and led the team in rebounds and steals. Ellie Droste and Kiera Thelen are also key players.

#### MOUNT PLEASANT SACRED HEART

The Irish lost in overtime to eventual state champion Adrian Lenawee Christian in the semifinals last year, but should be solid again, led by Scout Nelson and Sam McDonald.



#### REESE

The Rockets are off to an excellent start at 6-1, led by Madi Thompson, who averaged 11 points and eight rebounds last season and Taylor Findlay, who averaged 10 points and seven assists.

#### MICHIGAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

MLS is led by Meghan Blaine, who sparked the Cardinals to the Class D state final as a sophomore and to a Class C district title as a junior. She made the Tri-Valley Conference West Division first team as a junior.

#### HEMLOCK

Hemlock won district and regional titles last season. The Huskies will be led by

Sydney Peake, a 5-foot-10 junior, who averaged 10 points a game last season in leading Hemlock to a 21-5 record. Hemlock will be a force inside with Katy Snyder, a 6-foot post player.

#### ITHACA

The Yellowjackets look to have a winning season, led by players like

Sacred Heart coach Damon Brown hopes to have another successful team.

Emma Belles, who had 13 points, 11 rebounds and eight steals in helping Ithaca to a near upset over Hemlock in the districts.

#### BATH

The Bees are off to a 5-1 start and led by players like Emily Angell, Taylor Buck, Isabella Handzo, Tessa Hosford, Jessica Stoskopf and Audrey Mohr.

#### PORTLAND ST. PATRICK

Legendary coach Al Schrauben continues to direct the Shamrocks who have gotten off to a 6-1 start. The only blemish was a 55-20 loss to state power Pewamo-Westphalia.

#### DURAND

Durand is coming off a respectable 16-6 season last year and 7-3 record in the Genesee Area Conference White Division. Durand last year had impressive wins over the likes of Chesaning and Perry, and has started off 3-1.

#### FOWLER

Fowler is off to a 4-2 start and plays in the CMAC, which includes Pewamo-Westphalia. The only losses have been to two other



Hannah Spitzley (3) leads Pewamo-Westphalia's state title bid.

CMAC powerhouses. Portland St. Patrick and Bath.

# Sacred Heart Set To Contend Again

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart's girls basketball team again expects to challenge for a state title.

Coach Damon Brown and his girls wouldn't have it any other way.

Th Irish lost in overtime to Adrian Lenawee Christian in the semifinal last season. Brown's team has started out 5-0 this year.

"We have a lot of new faces but the girls have responded very well and kind of have picked off

from where we left last year," Brown said. "I thought it would be a different of team, but as quickly as this group has grasped what we're doing...It's the same type of mentality. We're still up and down with a quick tempo.

"We lost six seniors last year so I didn't think we would be where we're at right now. It takes awhile to get there especially when you have three freshmen and a sophomore up on the varsity for the first time. It's a lot of learning, but they're challenging themselves each day in practice to get better. They've been able to grasp what we're trying to do

so far."

Senior Scout Nelson recently went over 1,000 points in her career.

"She's been my starting point guard her fourth year now," Brown said. "She has a great knack of making everybody better. That's one thing I've talk to her about on how can she make everyone better.

"Also, junior Sam McDonald has picked up her game this year. She's had to play behind other players but now can step into her own role. She's a very solid defensive player. A

big surprise for us has been a freshman, Delaney Scully. She went through our first game nervous the entire week. But she had 14 points her first game and was 3-of-3 from the 3-point line. She's Scout's shadow the moment she got into the gym."

The team can still get better defensively, Brown said.

"We have to get better at talking," Brown said. "At this level, you have to talk a lot. I told the girls you don't win anything in December. It's too early to tell. It's a process, one day a time. If we can continue to grow and develop, anything is possible."

Scout Nelson (3) will lead Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart's attack. (Skip Traynor photo)



# Strickland-Gills Wants Another State Title For Saginaw Heritage

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Shine Strickland-Gills is among the reasons Saginaw Heritage seems destined again to take another Division I state title.

The junior forward had 12 points and 12 rebounds in her team's state championship win last winter after the title winning effort.

"It feels good to finally bring

home a state championship for girls basketball," she said after her team beat East Lansing in the title game. "It's been mostly boys sports. It makes me happy we finally got it.

"I come out and I go hard," she replied. "That's pretty much what I do. Most people would say I'm a defensive player. I know my teammates will get me to score so I don't worry about that. The thing is to play defense."

Strickland-Gills admitted this was a moment she had been thinking about since the eighth grade. The two other juniors on the team, Moira Joiner and Mallory McCartney, have played together since the eighth grade.

"It feels better than I thought," Strickland-Gills said.

Gills provides the team a dominating post presence on offense and defense. Strickland-Gills, who signed to play for

Central Michigan University, averaged 12.5 points, 9 rebounds and 2.5 blocked shots per game.

Joiner, a three-year Class A all-stater, signed to play for Michigan State University.

Joiner was at 15 points, 8 rebounds, 6 assists and 4 steals a game during the state title season, but she also gives the Hawks her versatility and is an excellent defender.

McCartney became an important 3-point shooting threat during the Class A state title run and averaged more than nine points a game last season. She'll be playing at Ferris State.

Shine Strickland Gills (32) is back for another season at Saginaw Heritage. (High School Sports Scene staff photo)



# Farwell Senior Center Extremely Positive As She Combats Disease

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Harley Crawford is a senior center for Farwell who has been fighting at winning a battle off the court.

Crawford has been cancer free after suffering from a rare form of Lymphoma.

Depending on whether or

not Crawford would be going through a surgical procedure on a blood clot on her arm, she was expected to be able to return to the lineup sometime during the season.

"In June, I went into the doctors thinking it was something minor," Crawford recalled. "I was told I had blood clot (a mass) the size of a football in my chest."

She underwent treatment including chemo.

"As of Nov. 6, I got the news I was cancer free," Crawford said. She has played for the Eagles in the past.

"If things go a certain way, she should play for us," coach Gordy Risbridger said. "This will be her second year on the varsity."

Crawford started her treatment during the summer. She's been at every practice and game except for when she's had to be at the hospital.

"Rebounding, blocks and defense," have been strengths for Crawford in the past, Risbridger said.

Farwell opened the season with a win over Chippewa Hills with Crawford cheering he team on in full force.

"I'm surprised I could talk because I was cheering so loud," Crawford smiled.

Farwell's Harley Crawford talks to a TV station after a basketball game. (Raffel photo)

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# SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON WRESTLING

## Bay City Western, Holt, Grand Ledge Wrestlers Looking For Strong Seasons In Division 1

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

With 21 of 25 wrestlers who saw action in the starting lineup last year returning, the Bay City Western wrestling team is building on last season's success.

Western turned in a 13-9 record in dual matches last season. As of the end of December Western has put together a 7-3 mark in dual matches.

Senior Vic Schoenherr heads the list of returnees. Schoenherr placed second in the state last year and is looking to become Bay City Western's eighth state champion in school history. A three-time, team captain, Schoenherr is being looked at by several colleges.

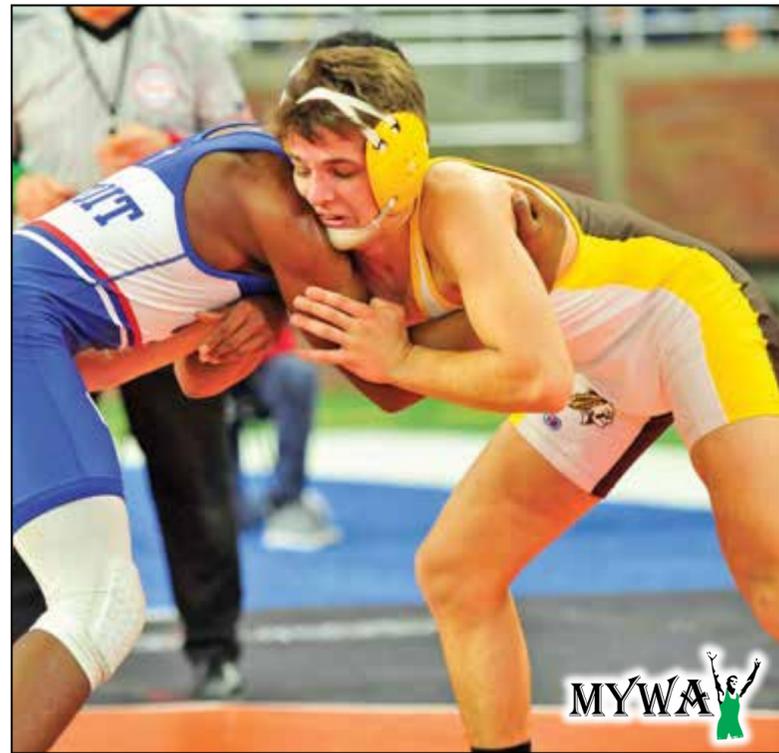
Junior captain Brock Niernberg has won 50 matches in his two years on the varsity and combines with Schoenherr to give the team outstanding leadership.

Sophomore Jacob Coffey is a returning regional qualifier. Fellow sophomore Ben Harris won over 20 matches last season and is was the Bay County champion at 285 last season.

"I expect us to be competitive in the area," said Western coach Isaiah Thomas. "We should be vying for county and district titles. We have competitive athletes here that push each other in practice every day."

Holt is off to a fast start with a 7-0 mark in duals through the end of December. Senior Colby Deberry (160), a returning state placer and junior Dylan Phelps (125), a returning state qualifier, lead the way for the Rams. Senior Jose Santiago (119) and sophomore Zach Platte (103) anchor the lower weights. Senior Isaiah Scruggs (189), junior Peyton Bruce (215) and freshman Joshua Terrill (285) are at the top of the lineup. Juniors Ryan Granger (145) and Ian Smith (171) add more experience.

Grand Ledge opened the season with a 6-5 record through the end of December. Senior heavyweight Brady Riggs, a returning state placer, leads the way with a 9-0 record. Junior Tommy Lear (130) is also off to a strong start with a 9-1 record. Senior James Sharpe (171) opened the season with a 7-1 mark and senior Garrett Kroczaleski (160) is off to a 5-1 start.



Bay City Western senior Vic Schoenherr is looking to become the eighth individual state champion in school history.

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## Lowell Wrestling Team Setting Sights On A Historic Sixth Straight State Championship

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Last wrestling season, the Lowell Red Arrows made history by becoming the first Division 2 team to win five consecutive team titles. This year, Lowell is aiming to become the first wrestling team regardless of division to win six consecutive state team titles.

With a lineup loaded with quality wrestlers from top to bottom, Lowell is off to a blazing start this season highlighted by a dominating performance at the Kent County Championships.

Junior standout Austin Boone is at the top of the list of returnees. A two-time state champion, is the hammer in the middle of the Red Arrow lineup.

Lowell graduated a trio of all-state wrestlers last season but plenty of young talent is primed to step up.

"We have a lot of youth we are depending on to step up and so far I'm not disappointed," said Lowell coach R.J. Boudro. "We have a lot returning so I feel good about that and we are young to so I feel we are in a good spot."

Lowell has a strong senior class led by Avry Mutschler (140). Mutschler placed second in the state

last year and is off to a fast start this year winning a title at Kent County and placing second at the loaded Brecksville holiday tourney. Senior Jeff Leach (135) is a returning state qualifier

Along with Boone, Lowell's junior class returns Nick Korhorn (112) who placed second at individual state last year and won a title at the Kent County. Dawson Jankowski returns after placing seventh at state. Junior heavyweight Tyler Deloof also placed seventh at state last year and finished fifth at Brecksville over the break.

Zeth Strejc (125) heads up the sophomore class after placing eighth in the state as a freshman last year. Fellow sophomore Jacob Lee (152) placed fifth at Brecksville while sophomores Derek Mohr (171) and Keigan Nugent (215) both placed at the Kent County this season.

Lowell brings in another talented group of freshmen led by Ramsy Mutschler (103) who took first at the Kent County.

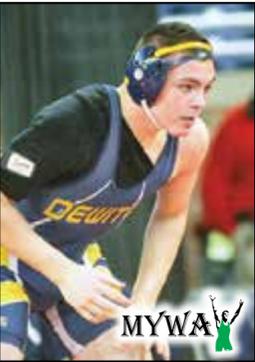
While the Red Arrows faced plenty of competition at Brecksville, the road gets even harder during January.

"We have the DCC (Detroit Catholic Central) Super Duals which are really tough. We bring in Davison and Richmond to our place and the week after that we wrestle Dundee, Brighton and New Lothrop so that's our January and it's a little bit of a gauntlet."

Eaton Rapids is off to fast start this season with a 14-1 overall record in duals. The Greyhounds' lone loss came against Division 1

James Whitaker (left) of St. Johns and Caleb Fish (right) of Eaton Rapids met in last year's state finals and are both looking to wrestle for state titles this season.

powerhouse Brighton. Eaton Rapids is led by junior Caleb Fish (152) who placed second in the state last season and junior Chris Haynes (130)



DeWitt sophomore Chandler Murton is one of several talented young wrestlers making an impact for the Panthers.

who placed seventh at state. The Greyhounds also return state qualifiers in sophomore Robert Davids (103), sophomore Chad Haynes (135) and senior Brayden McNamara (171).

Led by returning state champion James Whitaker (152), St. Johns has opened the season with an 8-1 record in duals. The Redwings have a strong senior class that also returns Kaleob Whitford (140) who placed fourth at state last season along with Cody Wood (119), Brandon Smith, Braxton Parks (171) and Andy Fortin (215). Juniors Keegan Kinne (152) and Brandon Yanna (285) are also making an impact this season.

Sophomore CJ Krum (189) is a returning state qualifier who

has opened the season with a 12-1 record after placing third at Goodrich. Freshman Jacob Brya (103) is making an instant impact this season as he improved to 15-2 for the season after winning a title at the Goodrich invite.

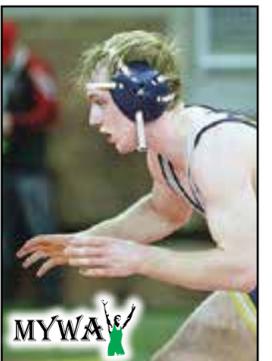
DeWitt opened the season on a roll winning nine of its first 10 duals. The Panthers are led by a strong core of seniors led by Quenten Hall (152), a returning state placer. Seniors Doug Trutzl (215) and Zachary Hasse (285) both placed second at the Howell invite and return along with senior Ronald Slater (140).

Juniors Matt Foddrill (130), Tyler Brandt (145) and Jacob Brandt (171) have turned in some strong efforts in the early season. The Panthers also have a deep and talented sophomore class led by Chandler Murton (189), a returning state placer, along with Cael Weinzwieg (103), Kiefer Kolito (112), Nick Ebright (119) and Devonte Stone (135).

Mason opened the season with a 5-4 record in dual matches. The Bulldogs are led by junior Tanner Miller (130), a returning state placer. Miller is off to a strong start this season highlighted by a second-place finish at the Marquette Challenge. Junior Kyle Fanson has started the season strong including a third-place finish at Marquett. Senior Heh Sey (103) placed fourth at Marquette while sophomore Logan Trimmer (112) placed fifth. Freshman Hayden Haynes (119) is also making an impact this season. Juniors Richard Mayes (135) and Brandon Singletary (145) have been strong in the middle weights.

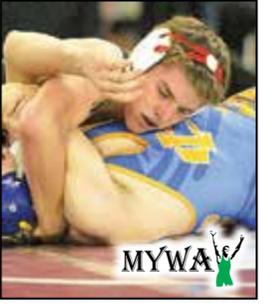
Mason is solid in the upper weights led by junior Jack Gilchrist (285) who placed third at Marquette. Juniors Devin Vasquez (215) and Brice Isenath (189) have also turned in some strong early-season efforts.

Owosso has opened the season with a 6-5 mark in dual matches through the end of December. Junior Colton Blaha (160), a returning state qualifier, has been leading the way this season with an 11-0 record. In the lower weights, junior Joey Devaras (112) is off to an 11-0 start while senior Nathan Mariutza (119) opened the season with a 10-1 mark.



Owosso junior Colton Blaha is a returning state qualifier who is off to a strong start this season.

A pair of Haslett wrestlers have started the season strong. Junior Kalif Kavanagh (130) placed second at the Salem Elks tourney and third at Lansing Eastern to end the month of December with an 11-3 record. Senior Anthony Root placed fourth at Lansing Eastern and wrapped up the month with an 8-3 mark.



Lowell junior Austin Boone is on a mission to win a third individual state title this season.

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# Alma, Chippewa Hills Wrestlers Working To Return To Division 3 Team State Finals

## Dave Cook Sports Scene

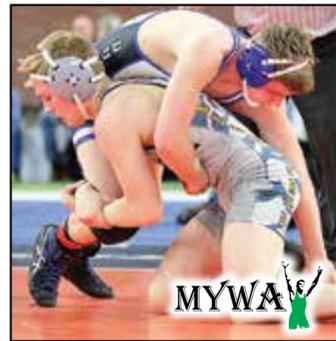
A year after reaching the Division 3 team state finals for the first time in school history, the Alma Panthers are working on the follow-up story. If early results are any indication the month of February will be an exciting one for Alma wrestlers and fans.

Led by sophomore **Dametrius Castillo**, a returning state champion, Alma features a lineup peppered with talented wrestlers and deep in talent. Castillo is off to a strong start this season highlighted by a 3-1 win against Kyle Schaaf of Clare in a rematch of last year's state championship match.

Alma has a strong core of wrestlers in the lower weights with sophomore **Nolan Rodriguez** (112 pounds) who has won 15 of his first 16 matches this season and sophomore **Dominic Anguiano** (112) who started the season with a 10-2 mark. Sophomore Solomon Rosales (119) is a returning regional qualifier.

A pair of junior standouts anchor the middle of the lineup. **Jarrett Ferman** (135) is a returning state qualifier off to a strong start while **Justin VanBlaricum** is also a returning state qualifier. Sophomore **Norm Davis** (215) and freshman **Josiah Baltierra** (125), **Jacob Munger** (145), **Adam Garcia** (152) and sophomore heavyweight **Mason Everitt** have also turned in some strong efforts for the Panthers who have picked up impressive dual wins against Clare, Portland, Caledonia and Leroy-Pine River during the opening month of the season.

**Chippewa Hills** is off to a fast start this season. The Warriors are strong up top with



sophomore **Colby Roosa** (285) and junior **Chayton Wiggins** (215) off to fast starts. Returning state qualifiers, Roosa and Wiggins ended the month of December with a combined record of 27-0.

In the middle of the lineup, senior **Bray Haynes** (135) is a returning state placer while sophomore **Carson Hayes** (135) is a returning state qualifier. Senior **Mason Hayes** (145) is off to a 9-0 start this season.

Chippewa Hills also boasts talent in the lower weights led by sophomore **Dayin Wittig** (119) who started the season with a 13-1 record and junior **Taylor Gibson** (112).

The Ithaca wrestling team is working to improve on last year's success which saw the Yellowjackets compile a 13-12 dual-meet record.

Ithaca is strong in the upper weights led by **Guillermo Macias** who reached the finals at 171 pounds at the Lansing Eastern invitational. **Jared Barden** placed third at 189 in Eastern and **Ethan Schall** placed fifth at heavyweight. Ithaca is also receiving solid efforts from **Kyle Wood** (125), **Chance Risner** (152), **Cole Tilton** (160) and **Chanc McCormack** (215).

"Our upper weights are going to carry us this year as we begin to start filling weight classes and taking voids instead of giving them," said Ithaca coach **Daryl Dawe**. "We are going to see improvements in our record. Our strength is our upper weights. They are not only good wrestlers, but they work incredibly hard."

Led by returning state champion **Owen Guilford** (171), **Portland** started the season with some strong efforts. Guilford went a perfect 8-0 in December as he has been on the mend from a long football season.

Seniors **Kyle Hinds** and **Zackary Fedewa** are also off to fast starts. Hinds on the title at the Ionia invite and started the season with a 14-1 mark while Fedewa went 12-3 in the early going.

Portland also has a trio of promising freshmen making an impact in **Carter Johnson** (103), **Caiden Pelc** (112) and **Trent Trierweiler** (125).

**Shepherd** is off to a strong start led by senior **Trevor Robinson**. Robinson, who placed second in the state last season, won titles at both the Howell and Hart invites this season. Junior

Shepherd senior **Trevor Robinson** has his sights set on a state title after placing second last year.

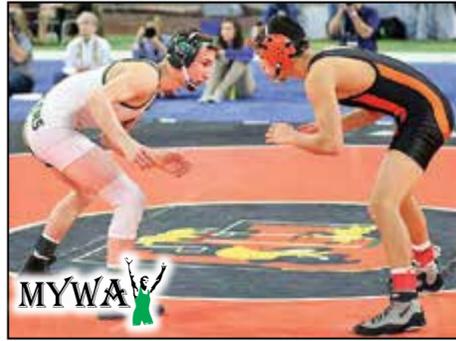
**Kyle Andrews** improved his record to 13-1 for the season after winning the title at the Freeland invitational.

Sophomore **Max Kyser** (152) is a returning state qualifier and fellow sophomore **Lance Clark** (125) placed second at the Howell invite. In the upper weights, senior heavyweight **Kevin Smith** placed third at Howell with junior **Logan Buckner** (171) taking fourth. Junior **Caleb Cline** (130) is off to a strong start with a 14-4 record after taking second at the Freeland invite with fellow junior **Hunter Ysinger** also starting strong.

Clare is paced by senior **Kyle Schaaf**. Schaaf placed second at the state meet last season and took first place at the Grayling and Chippewa Hills invites to start this season. Junior **Colt Smedley** (145) is a returning state qualifier who took first at Grayling. Sophomore **Jon Bouchey** is off to a strong start this season. The Pioneers are also solid in the upper weights led by senior **Devin Gaskill** (215), junior **Tony Cowles** (189) and promising sophomores **Bryce Stinson** (171) and **Josh Williams** (285).

**Williamston** started off the season in strong fashion with a 10-4 mark in duals against an early-season schedule that has included matches with DeWitt, Eaton Rapids, Jackson Northwest and Lake Fenton. The freshmen trio of **Jack Chambers** (103), **Greg Dion** (112) and **Ryker Johncheck** (119) has started their high school careers with a combined record of 32-6. Sophomores **Calvin Kittendorf** (130) and **Luke Mahaney** (135) are a combined 18-3 through December. The Hornets are also solid up top with senior **Maverick Pardee** (215) who has started 11-2, freshman **Zach Painter** (215) who started 8-1 and junior heavyweight who started the season with a 9-2 mark.

**Corunna** has started the season with some efforts in dual matches. The Cavaliers have some promising young wrestlers in the lower weights in freshmen **D'Angelo Campos** (103), **Joaquin Campos** (112) and **Gabe Serbus** (125). In the middle weight classes junior **Ty Anderson** (140) and freshman **Colin Laury** (152) have started the season strong with junior **Matt Weiss** (171) and sophomore **Jacob Lloyd** (215) anchoring



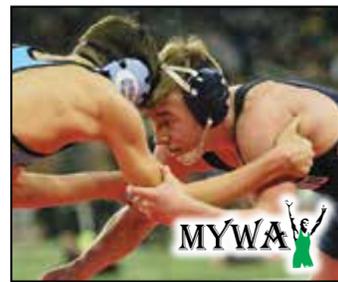
Kyle Schaaf (left) of Clare and Dametrius Castillo (right) of Alma met in the finals at 119 pounds at last year's D3 state finals and have squared off already this season.

the upper weights.

**Chesaning** junior **Jordan Rodriguez** (119) is a returning state placer off to a strong start this year. Rodriguez upped his record to 12-0 as he took first place at the Freeland invite. Senior **Colton Juliet** (103) also took a first at Freeland as he improved to 12-1 for the season.

**Durand** wrestlers turned in some strong efforts at the Genesee County Tournament. Junior **Gabe Fielder**, a returning state qualifier, placed second at 119 pounds. Seniors **Sayer Robinson** (189) and **Gavin Thompson** (215) both placed second while senior heavyweight **Denver Jewell** placed fourth.

The **Ovid-Elsie** wrestling team has opponents taking a double-take this season. Senior **David Hammond** is off to a 9-2 start while his twin **Justin Hammond** is off to a 10-2 start. At 103 pounds, junior **Mason Spiess** took a first place at the Ionia invite while freshman **Max Spiess** has started the season 8-3. Senior **Devon Stringum** (171) is off to an 11-2 start this season.



Durand sophomore Brock Holek placed seventh in the state in Division 3 at 125 pounds last season.

# New Lothrop, Carson City-Crystal Wrestlers Off To Strong Starts In Division 4

## Dave Cook Sports Scene

State finalists in Division 4 the past two seasons, the New Lothrop wrestling team is showing plenty of potential so far this season.

Among the top teams in the state in Division 4, **New Lothrop** wrestlers have turned in impressive performances throughout the month of December.

Senior **Austin Wolford** (145 pounds), a defending state champion, is off to a strong start this year as he won titles at both the Howell Classic and Marquette Challenge. Fellow senior **Logan Zell** (135), who placed sixth in the state last year, took second place at both Howell and Marquette. Senior **Zackery Riley** (160) placed third at Marquette and fifth at Howell.

At 171 pounds, junior **Justin Carnahan** is off to a fast start. A two-time, state placer, Carnahan took first at Howell and second at the Marquette Challenge. Fellow junior **Logan Wolford**, a returning state qualifier, placed fourth at Howell and fifth at Marquette.

The Hornets also have a strong group of sophomores led by **Andrew Krupp**, a returning state qualifier, who placed fourth at Marquette. Sophomore **Cam Orr** (189) took second at Marquette and fifth at Howell and **Will Taylor** (145) placed sixth



New Lothrop junior Justin Carnahan is a returning two-time, state placer.

at Marquette.

Freshmen **Alex Wolford** (119) and **Isiah Pasik** (285) are making instant impacts. Wolford took third at the Marquette Challenge while Pasik was third at Howell and fifth at Marquette.

In team duals, New Lothrop claimed impressive wins at the Grandville challenge against Division 1 Grand Haven (46-23) and Division 2 Byron Center (47-29).

**Carson City-Crystal** returns talent up and down the roster and the Eagles turned in a productive first month of the season. Carson City picked up an impressive win against Division 1 Grand Ledge (43-30) along with wins against Division 2 powers Sparta (40-26) and Cedar Springs (63-8) and Division 4 Leroy-Pine River (61-13).

The Eagles are led by a deep and talented senior class that includes two-time, state placers **Nolan Datema** (112), **Daryn Shepler** (135) and **Braxton Seida** (160) who are all off to strong starts this season. Senior **Daniel Smith** (189) placed third at state last year while **Aiden Adkins** (145) placed sixth at state.

Juniors **Jamison Ward** (130), a two-time state placer, and **Brian Yeakey** (215), a returning state placer, are picking up where they left off along with junior **Nash Akin** (171).

Sophomores **Jared Shepler** (103) and **Jaron Johnson** (125) along with freshmen **Kyle Mutschler** (119) and **Cole Stone** (125) are also making early impacts.

The young **Beaverton** program continues to show improvement as a team. Led by senior **Kyle Cassidy** (189), a returning state champion, the Beavers are solid in the upper weights. Cassidy has started the season strong winning tournament titles at Caro, Chippewa Hills and St. Louis. Senior **Jack Owens** (171) is a returning state placer who took first at Caro and St. Louis. Sophomore **Jake Fischer** (215) is also off to a solid start highlighted by a second-place finish at the St. Louis tourney.

Beaverton is also solid in the middle weights led by junior **Jacob Cassidy**

(160), a returning state qualifier, along with seniors **Brandon Shearer** (152) and **Cameron Austin** (160). Austin, a returning state qualifier, placed second at Caro while Shearer took second at St. Louis. Cassidy also placed second at St. Louis.

In the lower weights, junior **Jayvin Balzer** (145), sophomore **Christian Kowalski** (112) and freshman **Reuben Adams** (103) have flashed solid skills in the early going.

**St. Louis** gave notice that it can compete with anyone when it went 3-2 against Division 1 and 2 schools at the Pinckney Season's Beatings and 4-1 at the Swan Valley team tournament.

The Sharks are led by seniors **Ryan Downs** (152) and **Issac Howd** (160), a pair of returning regional qualifiers. Downs and Howd both won title at the St. Louis invitational. Junior **Gavin Giles** (135) is a returning state qualifier that is off to a strong start along with fellow junior **Alex Newton** (119) who won the 112-pound title at the St. Louis invite. A pair of sophomores, **Ean Bradley** (215) and **Luke Maxwell** (285) are making an impact in the upper weights.

**Edmore-Montabella** turned in a strong month of December with a 12-0 record in duals including a 5-0 mark at the Big Rapids Team Tournament.

The Mustangs boast a strong senior class led by **Ethan Crawford** (130) who placed fifth in the state last year. Senior **Caden Woolworth** (189/215) is a versatile big man off to a strong start along with seniors **Ethan Dove** (135) and **Anthony Warchuck** (160/171). Juniors **Mason Dalrymple** (119), **David Shattuck** (152/160) and **Matt Chaney** (145/152) and sophomores **Korbyn Ingraham** (112), **Joe Steffes** (125) and **Gavin Kent** (140/145) are all off to solid starts.

**Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary** has one of the premier heavyweights in D 4. Senior **Mason Borlaug** is a returning state qualifier off to a solid start this season including a title at the Pinconning invitational. At the other end of the lineup, junior **Liam Kopp** (103) is off to a winning start including the title at Pinconning. Junior

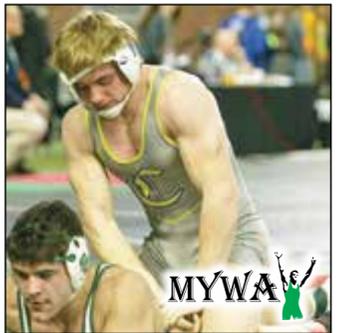


Braxton Seida is one of several state placers returning to the lineup for Carson City-Crystal this season.

**Solomon O'Brien** has started the season with a second and third-place finishes at the first two individual tournays. Seniors **Carson Solomon** (130) and **Gunner Fraser** (171) have opened the season with winning records.

At **St. Charles**, juniors **Logan Erskine** (130) and **Chase Young** (285) are starting the season strong. Erskine, a returning regional qualifier, won a title at the Hemlock invitational. Young placed third at Hemlock.

A trio of **Breckenridge** wrestlers ended the month with winning records. Freshman **Derek Mayle** (103) is making a big impact and placed second at the St. Louis invite. Senior **Logan Hurst** is off to a strong start at 215 pounds and sophomore **Ethan Summer** (135/140) has opened the season with a winning record.



Carson City-Crystal senior Daniel Smith placed third at 189 pounds at the Division 4 state finals last season.

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# RETURNING WRESTLING STATE PLACERS AND STATE CHAMPIONS

## RETURNING STATE PLACERS

### DIVISION 1

Andrew Hughes (Grand Ledge) Jr. 43-3 3<sup>rd</sup> 112  
Vic Schoenherr (Bay City Western) Sr. 47-3 2<sup>nd</sup> 145  
Brennan Doyle (Midland Dow) Sr. 51-9 5<sup>th</sup> 160  
Colby Deberry (Holt) Sr. 39-9 8<sup>th</sup> 160  
Brady Riggs (Grand Ledge) Sr (37-10) 5<sup>th</sup> 285

### DIVISION 2

Nick Korhorn (Lowell) Jr. 33-10 2<sup>nd</sup> 103  
Manuel Leija (Lansing Eastern) Jr. 38-8 8<sup>th</sup> 112  
Dawson Jankowski (Lowell) Jr. 27-12 7<sup>th</sup> 119  
Chris Haynes (Eaton Rapids) Jr. 40-11 7<sup>th</sup> 125  
Zeth Strejc (Lowell) So. 23-14 8<sup>th</sup> 125  
Kaleob Whitford (St. Johns) Sr. 33-8 4<sup>th</sup> 130  
Tanner Miller (Mason) Jr. 50-6 7<sup>th</sup> 130  
Doak Dean (Lowell) So. 34-12 8<sup>th</sup> 130  
Avry Mutschler (Lowell) Sr. 40-6 2<sup>nd</sup> 135  
Tyler Brandt (DeWitt) Jr. 39-11 8<sup>th</sup> 135

James Whitaker (St. Johns) Sr. 39-1 State champ 140  
Caleb Fish (Eaton Rapids) Jr. 48-3 2<sup>nd</sup> 140  
Quenten Hall (DeWitt) Sr. 51-8 6<sup>th</sup> 140  
James Fotis (Lowell) Jr. 35-12 7<sup>th</sup> 140  
Austin Boone (Lowell) Jr. 44-1 State champ 145  
Chandler Murton (DeWitt) So. 30-12 7<sup>th</sup> 171  
Tyler Delooff (Lowell) Jr. 35-9 7<sup>th</sup> 285

### DIVISION 3

Jake Elavich (Montrose) So. 46-7 3<sup>rd</sup> 103  
Jordan Rodriguez (Chesaning) Jr. 44-4 7<sup>th</sup> 103  
Nolan Rodriguez (Alma) So. 41-13 8<sup>th</sup> 103  
Dametrius Castillo (Alma) So. 38-6 State champ 119  
Kyle Schaaf (Clare) Sr. 52-3 2<sup>nd</sup> 119  
Bray Haynes (Chippewa Hills) Sr. 39-12 6<sup>th</sup> 125  
Brock Holek (Durand) So. 27-10 7<sup>th</sup> 125  
Evan Becker (Essexville-Garber) So. 47-11 8<sup>th</sup> 125  
Trevor Robinson (Shepherd) Sr. 42-4 2<sup>nd</sup> 135

Owen Guilford (Portland) Sr. 40-1 State champ 171  
Griffin Barnette (Montrose) Jr. 44-12 6<sup>th</sup> 285

### DIVISION 4

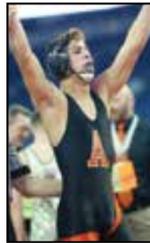
Nolan Datema (Carson City) Sr. 46-5 5<sup>th</sup> 103  
Jamison Ward (Carson City) Jr. 51-3 4<sup>th</sup> 119  
Ethan Crawford (Edmore Montabella) Sr. 45-12 5<sup>th</sup> 119  
Logan Zell (New Lothrop) Sr. 34-24 6<sup>th</sup> 125  
Aiden Adkins (Carson City) Jr. 47-9 6<sup>th</sup> 130  
Daryn Shepler (Carson City) Sr. 43-14 6<sup>th</sup> 135  
Austin Wolford (New Lothrop) Sr. 52-2 State champ 140  
Braxton Seida (Carson City) Sr. 47-6 6<sup>th</sup> 145  
Justin Carnahan (New Lothrop) Jr. 40-6 2<sup>nd</sup> 171  
Jack Owens (Beaverton) Sr. 50-7 5<sup>th</sup> 171  
Kyle Cassidy (Beaverton) Sr. 56-1 State champ 189  
Daniel Smith (Carson City) Sr. 47-4 3<sup>rd</sup> 189  
Brian Yeakey (Carson City) Jr. 43-9 5<sup>th</sup> 215

## RETURNING STATE CHAMPIONS



### James Whitaker

**St. Johns, Sr.**  
Whitaker won the 140-pound state championship in Division 2 last season. Whitaker turned in a 39-1 record last season and during the off-season he won the 138-pound weight class at the FloNationals. Whitaker has started this season strong for St. Johns as he reached the title match at 152 pounds at the Golden Grappler Invitational. Whitaker has also committed to wrestle in college at the University of Virginia.



### Dametrius Castillo

**Alma, So.**  
Castillo became Alma's first individual state champion in 25 years as he won the 119-pound title in Division 3 with a thrilling 3-2 win against Kyle Schaaf of Clare. Castillo wrapped up his freshman season with a 38-6 overall record. Castillo is off to a strong start this season. Castillo has picked up wins at 125, 130 and 135 pounds this season including a 3-1 win against Schaaf at 130 pounds in a rematch of last year's state finals in a season-opening quad.



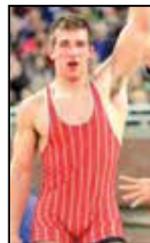
### Austin Wolford

**New Lothrop, Sr.**  
Wolford stamped his name in New Lothrop wrestling history as he won the 140-pound state title in Division 4 last season. Wolford wrapped up the season with a 52-2 record. Wolford opened this season in a big way as he won the 152-pound title at the Howell Highlander Classic and followed that up a week later when he won the 145-pound title at the Marquette Challenge.



### Austin Boone

**Lowell, Jr.**  
A two-time, state champion, Boone is half way to his goal of becoming a four-time state champion. Boone turned in a 44-1 record last year with his lone loss coming at the Brecksville (Ohio) Holiday Tournament. Boone is one of the premier wrestlers in the nation as he is ranked seventh nationally at 152 pounds by InterMat Wrestling. Boone is off to a strong start this season as he won the 152-pound title at the Kent County Championships.



### Owen Guilford

**Portland, Sr.**  
Guilford won the Division 3 state title at 171 pounds last season. Guilford capped the season with a 40-1 record. Guilford started the wrestling season getting back to full strength as he missed part of the football season with a knee injury. Guilford was able to return to the football field in time to help the Raiders reach the Division 5 state finals. Guilford began this wrestling season with eight consecutive wins at 171 and 189 pounds.



### Kyle Cassidy

**Beaverton, Sr.**  
Cassiday made Beaverton school history as he became the first wrestler in school history to win an individual state title as he won the 189-pound state title in Division 4. Minutes later Kyle's older brother Eric won the 215-pound state title. Kyle Cassidy finished the season with a 56-1 record. Cassidy has started this season strong winning the 189-pound title at both the Joe Loren Memorial and the Caro Invitational.



# SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON SWIMMING



## Area Boys Swim Teams Turning In Strong Efforts As Season Gets Into Gear

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The boys swimming and diving season is heating up and area athletes are turning in some strong efforts this season.

The area is home to some outstanding divers this season. **St. Johns** senior **Cayden Petrak** is the returning state champion in Division 3. A two-time, all-stater, Petrak will dive in college at Lake Superior State University.

At **Okemos**, **Hunter Hollenbeck** set both a new school record and a pool record as he helped the Chiefs to a 120-61 win against Jackson. Hollenbeck is also a standout in the classroom as he recorded a perfect score on the ACT test. As a team, Okemos opened the season with a 3-1 record in duals and a first-place finish at the Waverly Relays.

**Midland Dow** turned in a strong effort as it placed second at the Grosse Pointe South

Invitational. **Collin Che** turned in an impressive time of 22.12 to win the 50 free for the Chargers while **Luke Lezotte** was close behind with a time of 22.15. Che, Lezotte and **Zach Fewkes** each won two events during Dow's win over Bay City Western a week earlier.

**DeWitt** finished the season strong last year with a second-place finish at the league meet. DeWitt returns several solid swimmers led by senior captain **Jason Uyl** in the freestyle. Fellow senior captain **Zac Hakes** competes in the distance, freestyle and butterfly while senior **Myles Michalski** returns in the 200 IM, butterfly and backstroke. Sophomore **Dillon Blair** is a versatile swimmer while sophomore **Nate Schluckebier** swims in the breaststroke, freestyle and distance events.

"We have a deep team where we might not beat the other team's top swimmer, but collectively we

should point out ahead of teams in each event by finishing better than five and sixth place in the dual meet races," said DeWitt coach **Brock Delaney**.

**Mason** turned in a strong effort in winning its own invitational. **Anthony Branson** led the way for Mason as he turned in a time of 22.59 in the 50 freestyle and a 56.65 in the 100 backstroke. Branson is also the anchor of Mason's 200 Medley Relay that includes **Karim Seif**, **Jonas Jackson Uyl** and **Liam Boomer** that have posted an impressive time of 1:45.13. Cantrell, a sophomore, has also posted times of 56.51 in the 100 butterfly and 50.12 in the 100 freestyle.

**Alma** is led this season by **Brody Ross**. Ross, who placed in the top eight in both the 200 IM and 500 freestyle at last year's state meet, has turned in a time of 2:01.42 in the 200 IM this season. Junior **Jack Lesinger** has turned in a 57.31 in the 100 backstroke.

St. Johns senior Cayden Petrak is a two-time, all-state diver returning for the Redwings.

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# SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON HOCKEY

## Portland Hockey Player Enjoys Unique Career

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Portland doesn't have its own hockey team, but this doesn't mean one of its students, Jared Thomas, has to miss out on one of his favorite sports.

Thomas, of Portland High School, is a junior forward and assistant captain on the Holt co-op team, which plays its home games at the Capital Centre Summit in Dimondale, outside of Lansing. He's been on the team three years.

Thomas started playing in hockey when he was 3 years old.

"My mom played hockey when she was a teenager and I kind of followed along in the family," Thomas said.

As of early December, Thomas hasn't scored a goal yet. But he has five assists.

"I enjoy having a team that is so tight together," he said. "Every team I've played for, we've been good friends."

Thomas also golfs at Portland. But being a hockey forward or center is his 100 percent focus at the moment.

"I'm pretty good at skating," he

said. "I'm good at seeing everything going on on the ice. If I have to send someone to go to the puck, I'll verbally tell them that."

Holt was slightly below .500 during Thomas' freshman season and slightly above .500 last winter.

"We're on track to finish well above .500," Thomas said. "We're doing pretty good right now."

Rob Husulak is coaching the Holt co-op team, which is officially called the Mid-Michigan Marauders.

After the team's first six games, the Marauders are 4-2.

"Jared has been an integral part of our team," Husulak said. "He's a very good hockey player. He is a great athlete. He has a lot of experience through Lansing travel club hockey programs. He's had a lot of success throughout travel. That's transferred very well into high school hockey. He's a complete player. He does everything well. He's one of our best shooters. He has a very good hockey mind and is a two-way player. He's very strong offensively and defensively."

Thomas hinted he may play the sport after high school. "Maybe I'll play Division III somewhere, someplace small," he said.



Jared Thomas  
(Submitted Photo)

## Midland Dow Hoping To Go Beyond Quarterfinals

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Midland Dow's hockey team was 19-6-1 last season and lost in the



state quarterfinals to Hartland. But coach Dick Blasy's team is hoping for more of the same this season.

"We had nine seniors so we had several key graduates like Brendan Sanders, Jeremy Slasor, Jon Baillargeon and Casey LaRue, to name a few," he said.

Key players include senior defensemen Joey Johnson and Shane Astrike and junior forwards Luke Blasy and Austin Leuter.

"We always have high expectations," Blasy said. "But ultimately it is always to be playing our best hockey at the end of February and March. We have a team full of good, scrappy skaters

Shane Astrike  
(Submitted Photo)

that love to compete. (About) 50 percent of our roster is made up of first-year players for us. So being young, our team chemistry and getting acclimated to our game will take some time."

Midland Dow is confident of being league contenders.

"The SVL is always competitive. I would say Saginaw Heritage is the odds on favorite to win the league. They basically returned everyone from last year's state finals team. We should be one of the top 4 teams considered to win the Valley."

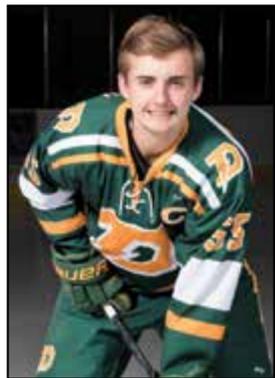
Holt Co-op team  
Holt is expected to have a

competitive team in the Lansing area.

Rob Husulak is coaching the Holt co-op team, which is officially called the Mid-Michigan Marauders.

"We're Rams varsity hockey for several years, with the parent school being Holt, along with Pottersville, Portland and Eaton Rapids," Husulak said. "This past year, we added Grand Ledge. The co-op has been in existence from 15 to 20 years. I've been a coach with the team three years and am the new head coach this year."

"The last two years, we've made it to our regional qualifying final. This year, with adding Grand Ledge, we're looking stronger as far



Joey Johnson  
(Submitted Photo)

as experience and talent and our added depth of ages."

## Heritage Appears Poised To Go For State Hockey Title

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Saginaw Heritage came up just one win shy of a state title last season when the Hawks fell to Brighton. A memorable season ended at 22-5-4 for the Hawks.

It's the 11th year for coach JJ Bamberger whose team has started out 7-0, including a 7-1 win over Brighton in a rematch of the state title clash.

"It was one of those years when I think we definitely overachieved," Bamberger said. "We had a bunch

of competitive kids and a bunch of winners who overachieved all year." Most of Heritage's top scorers and defenseman, plus the top two lines are returning.

Parker Severson is a senior forward and co-captain, plus one of the team's leading scorers.

"He's an all-around solid hockey player and we look for him to put up points," Bamberger said.

Brady Rappuhn is a junior forward "who also puts up a lot of points and scores key goals for us."

David Helpap is a senior forward

"who is a natural goal scorer," Bamberger said. "He'll put up some goal numbers for us."

Eddie Symons is a senior forward who is out there on all key situations of the game," Bamberger said. "We have six defensemen who are equally good, and then there's our goalie, Jack Jesko, a senior coming off a good year. When you have the success from last year and a majority of your team back, you can get caught up on expectations, and we're not trying to do that. It sounds like a cliché but we're literally taking it one game at a

time and one practice at a time and not trying to get in the center of that. If you get caught up in expectations, you're not trying to get better and you're putting up expectations.

"We want to get more focused

and compete every time we're on the ice whether it be in a practice or game. Out of our first four games, we play all ranked teams. We ended the season with a tough schedule. Our schedule is very difficult this year. Our schedule is extremely hard."



Saginaw Heritage's hockey team will be a Division I state title contender. (Courtesy photo)

## Saginaw Area Schools Form Unique Co-Op

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

It's a unique high school hockey coop of Freeland-(Saginaw) Nouvel-Valley Lutheran, and its playing very competitive hockey in the early stages of the season.

The team beat Jackson Lumen Christian 4-1 in a semifinal game of the Big Rapids Holiday tournament at Ferris State

University.

On Saturday in the title game. FNV had a 4-1 lead on Big Rapids but fell 7-5.

Over the weekend, top scorers were Connor Dovak, Brendan Maly and Kyle Ursuy and John Paul LeFevere.

"We've had a pretty rough start," coach Ron Miller said. "We have seven freshmen in the lineup and

five sophomores. We're young and we're growing every time we're on the ice. We're young, we'll try to compete every game."

It's the seventh year of the coop. There are 17 players from Freeland and six from Nouvel.

Adam Rivette is a senior captain who plays forward. It's his third varsity year. It's been fun but a different experience," he said. "I

really like playing in front of fans and coming to Ferris and playing in tournaments."

Rivette has been a leading scorer for FNV

"You have to take the puck wide and blow by everybody," he said. "Coach wants us to go wide and put pucks on net."

Rivette has played hockey since he was 4 years old.



Adam Rivette of Freeland-Nouvel-Valley Lutheran hockey

## Big Rapids Bids For Another Regional Crown

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Big Rapids' hockey team will be going for its third straight regional championship and has gotten off to a 6-3 start

"I thought we had a good year again," Big Rapids coach Tim Blashill said, looking at 2017-18. "The past four years, we had Fletcher Bolda, our goaltender

who started every game here except two. He was an unreal goaltender for us and leader. We'll certainly miss Fletcher along with the other seniors we had. But we return a lot. I think our team is looking solid enough to take another run at a regional title."

Eric Standen came in as a strong replacement for Bolda. But he sustained a neck injury in early

December and is out until late July.

Other standout seniors Big Rapids graduated were defensemen Connor McAdams and Connor Lee plus forward James Hundesmarck, who tied for the lead in scoring with River Spedowski, who will be a senior.

Blashill has a 19-player roster. Junior forward Ben Carroll had

a hat trick in a 7-5 win over Freeland in the title game of Big Rapids' Christmas tournament. Carroll, a junior, had two goals last Friday in a Big Rapids holiday tournament semifinal game over Wyandotte Roosevelt. "That was the best we played together as a team," Carroll said. "The D zone generates everything. From the D zone to the offense, that's how we play."



Ben Carroll (2) will be among the top players for Big Rapids.

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# Bay City Central Softball Standout Going To Central

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Bay City Central softball sensation Skylar Coberley, coached by Bob Kukla has signed a letter of intent with Central Michigan University softball.

She is a three-sport athlete (volleyball, basketball and softball)

and will have 12 varsity letters after her senior season.

Her awards include 2016 All State first team softball, utility; 2018 All State honorable mention, shortstop; 2017 All Region team softball; 2016-18 first-team All Saginaw Valley League, softball; 2017-18 All Academic Saginaw Valley League - All Sports; 2017

All Region Team Volleyball

"Skylar also excels in the class room carrying a 3.68 GPA, is a member of the National Honor Society and has volunteered in school programs such as link crew during her high school career," a spokesperson said. "Proximity to home played a factor as did the comfort level with the coaching

staff, university and current and committed players. The large student body and the wide selection of academic programs was also a considerable draw."

Central Michigan University was MAC West Champions most recently in 2017.

Bay City Central's Skylar Coberley signs a letter with Central Michigan University for softball. (Courtesy photo)



# Shepherd Golfer Signs With Alma

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

It may be winter, but Shepherd's Morgan Yates is already thinking of golf.

In November, Yates signed a letter of intent to play golf at Shepherd.

"The reason I chose to continue my golf and educational career at Alma College is because of the 'personal touch,' that the coaches, collegiate staff and students extended to me," Yates said. "I love my small town atmosphere in Shepherd, and that is how I

feel when I visit Alma College. People are friendly and accepting, which is very important to me. The interest with Alma College began through conversations with my high school coach and Mr. Charlie Goffnett, who is the assistant coach at Alma College. The interaction with the Alma College coaches was comfortable, genuine and felt real. My family, my coach and myself, all felt that the choice of Alma College women's golf was a great fit.

"When thinking about going to college, I considered the possibilities of Central Michigan

University and Olivet. My love of golf played a huge factor in my decision about college. The personal relationships that developed during the season with Alma College, made a huge impact on my college choice. Alma College felt right. My role at Alma College will be to develop into a stronger and smarter golf teammate. In the classroom, my role will be to continue my educational goals. It is my goal to be a confident leader in both the classroom and on the course."

Yates has already set her agenda for the transition to Alma golf.

"I plan to prepare for the next

level by doing several things," Yates said. "I will finish my high school academic education with strong, solid grades. To further my golf skills, I plan to practice, practice, practice. I plan to participate in golf opportunities over the spring and summer, along with increasing my physical fitness.

"The most exciting part about signing to play women's golf at Alma College is because of the support I have received from my coaches, family and friends. I look forward to them being able to continue to follow me at the next level. My parents and grandparents were golfers and their love of golf shaped me as the golfer I am and wish to become."



Shepherd's Morgan Yates sign her letter with Alma College.

# Nelson Signs With Davenport

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Scout Nelson has a dream to help her Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart girls basketball team win a Division 4 state girls basketball championship.

Prior to the start of the season, Nelson fulfilled another dream by signing a letter to play college basketball at Davenport University. She'll also run track.

She's planning on entering the nursing program at Davenport.

"It all started with the relationships I made with the coaches, they were extremely outgoing and personable," Nelson said. "When I visited the campus I couldn't find anything that I didn't like and everything else sort of fell into place from there. I met my future teammates and I have sat in on practices. I am extremely excited to join such a competitive and fun environment.

"An assistant coach in postseason saw one of our games, then the head coach (Coach Rick

Albro) came to semifinals at Calvin. He called me later that year. I talked to him a lot on the phone and we quickly made a connection. I hadn't really taken any other schools into serious consideration yet. On my first visit to Davenport I knew it was right. I did go on a visit to Bowling Green for cross country and track, and I also was interested in Eastern Michigan University for running as well."

Nelson said she'll be a point guard I am going to be a point guard on the basketball team and a mid-distance track athlete.

"I added a strength training class

into my schedule, and I have been working a little extra on my game," she said. "I try to take advantage of every opportunity I get with the ball to improve whether in games or practices. I also am taking some college classes which will help me experience what the academic workload will be like next year.

"Ever since I was a little girl I have had a dream of playing college basketball, and I am so excited to get to continue playing the game I love. I am also grateful that I still get to compete in track as well, and the coaches are very flexible and willing to let me do both sports."



Sacred Heart's Scout Nelson signs her letter with Davenport.

# SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON SKIING

## Clare Expects To Have Strong Ski Season

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

This could be quite a season for the Clare ski team.

Coach Tim Gariglio expects his team to make a lot of noise in the Central Alpine Ski Conference.

"The girls ski team is returning all of its members from last season which gives the team experience and some depth this season," he

said. "The team finished third in the conference last season. Kennedy Blackburn led the team last season and finished strong with a 38th place in G.S. at state finals last year. Also, returning is senior Maddie Potter who was out due to knee injury last season and there is an addition of several rookies this season.

"On the boys side the team finished first in the conference last

season, won several invitations and just missed the state finals by a few points last season. Seniors Max Hofweber and Justin Roberts both qualified for states last year and will be helped by several other returning seniors and other underclassman who will contribute. Both teams are focusing on being a good team member and supporting each other this season."

Clare's strength its season will be its team unity.

"I expect both teams to be good team members and support one another," Gariglio said. "I expect them to be a good representative of their school, parents, and coaches and give 100 percent. Both teams need to work on the fundamentals of skiing. Everything starts with the basics and the better we are with them the better we will be.

"Both teams have set goals to be competitive in the conference."

Other schools

Mount Pleasant's women's finished ninth in Division 2 last season and expects to have another good winter. Other area teams competing are Okemos, Rockford, Saginaw Heritage and Mount Pleasant.



Clare hopes to be conference contenders for both boys and girls this season. (Courtesy photo)



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# SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON BOWLING

## Area Girl Bowlers Hopeful

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

### Division 1 and 2

Rockford is taking dead aim at the girls state finals this season under coach Lianne Buck. Two individuals, Heather Buck and Isabelle Brekke, made it to the state Finals. Heather Buck qualified second for the top 16 but lost in the first round and finished third in the conference. Heather Buck was high average in the conference.

"The trio hopefully will come together when it counts. They have the ability to make things happen," Buck said.

"We had a slow start but I think we are starting to know how to score together as a team. I am hoping we make it to the state finals. The team's strength is building each other up. Not letting a bad shot take down the team but rise above it and try better next time. We need to keep making spares and not letting easy spares get away from us.

"I think we will be one of the top contenders in our conference," ill keep him grounded and focused."

Top 16 all-staters: Heather Buck, Rockford (1); Madison Burdick, Charlotte (2).

### Division 3-4

New Lothrop's girls team hopes to be a factor this season.

"The girls had a season that was topped with extreme ups and downs," coach Caryl Walling said. "There were times where we could not field an entire team due to a truck in the ditch to a time where they beat the unbeaten Bendle girls team. At regionals, the girls

just missed going to state as a team by 40 pins. But we had two girls qualify for states as individuals.

"Samantha Bitterman is a three-year captain of the girls team. She has been to the state tournament for the past three years and is looking to make it four this year with a trip to Battle Creek with her strong team and as an individual.

"Kate Muron is a relative newbie when it comes to bowling. But this two-handed girl is no joke, making the state tournament her first year of bowling and is expected to go again.

"Anna Miller, a three-year starter is a strong bowler, missing going to states in 2017 by one pin. We are looking forward to seeing this young lady shine in her senior year and expect to see her deep in the tournament.

"Elissa Henige is a three year starter and co-captain. This senior is a backup bowler with a mean swing shot that we have been working on. She is one to watch as we move into the season."

Carson City-Crystal has a new coach with Doug Sanders. Leading the team is senior captain Chloe Billings and senior Zoey Hunter; plus junior August O'Brien and sophomores Maria Miner, Kiars Keyes, Savannah Speckin and Grace Selleck.

"I am hoping as a new person to the varsity coaching position that I can bring enjoyment to all these bowlers, and with such a young team, I hope like everyone else to some day be able to have one or more go to state tournament from Carson City Crystal High School." Top 16 all-staters: Lynsey Blonshine, Central Montcalm (3); Jazmin Milks, St. Louis (4).



The Rockford girls bowling team will bid for the state meet.



The Carson City-Crystal boys and girls teams hope to be a factor in Division 4.

## Area Boy Bowlers Seek State Berths

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

### Division 1 and 2

Rockford could have one of the state's top Division 1 boys teams this season under coach Paul Bellgraph.

"The boys bowling team is off to a good start this season with a second place finish in the Wyoming Tournament and wins over Wellspring and Sparta," Bellgraph said. "We are led by Matt Buck, a junior and the defending D1 State champion, and Trey Laven, who are the only guys back from last year's top squad. They are joined this year by Sebastian Trampler, Chris Gutowsky, Jackson Miller and Kaleb Simon. We also have a good group that is pushing them and could make their way to the top squad at some point in the season.

"Matt Buck is ready to make the trip back to state but he knows it's a long season and he has to be ready every time out as the other teams will be coming to knock off the state champ. Matt has a great attitude for this and knows all he can do is his best each day but he also knows he'll have some off days and that understanding will keep him grounded and focused."

2018 top teams:

Top 16 all-staters: Matt Buck, Rockford (1), Carson Clark, Lowell (2), Chris Clark, Bay City John Glenn (2)

### Division 3

William Armour III is the head coach of a strong Portland boys bowling team that was the CAAC Blue Division champion and finished 11-1. The team in competition threw 29 200 games.

Luke Dalman, 11th grade last year, made it to states by winning regionals, and finished states in 11th. This year he is stronger and will compete for the state finals. Jack Dalman,

senior finished in second at the state finals and this year he will battle for the victory at states.

"Evan Warner, senior last year, missed state by 14 pins and is bowling better than ever and I expect him to make it to states," Armour said. "Bennett Rushin 12th grade has really come into his own this year and will be our fourth bowler to make states

"This will be a special year the talent and passion we have to win will drive us to a CAAC championship, regional championship, and state finals."

### Division 4

St. Charles and coach Mark Faupel hope to make some noise this season. St. Charles finished with a record of 13-1 in the West division of the Tri-Valley Conference and tied for 1st with Ithaca. The only loss was to Ithaca (17-13), which snapped a 37-game conference winning streak which dated back to December of 2015. Top moments were winning the Tri-Valley Conference Tournament and qualifying for the state tournament for the fourth consecutive season. Other top moments were having 3 bowlers qualify for the singles at the regional tournament (Michael Pratt, Drake McFarland, and Luke Martell).

The final highlight was defeating defending state champion Vandercook Lake in the quarterfinal round of the state finals. St. Charles lost to Bronson in the championship match."

Michael Pratt is the team's anchor bowler.

"Michael is the best athlete on the team," Faupel said, "and has decided not to play basketball this year to focus strictly on bowling. He is determined to lead the conference in average and qualify for singles once again at state. He has high expectations for the team and would like to

end his career with a state team tournament run this year."

New Lothrop boys had its season end against St. Charles in the state finals and coach Caryl Walling is hoping for another big season.

"Tate Steinborn, senior captain, and Anchor, is expected to be a standout bowler this year. Fresh off of a Junior Gold Championships qualifying in Dallas, Texas, this two-hander has the skill and mindset to roll an over 200 average and help captain his team at the same time. He will make an appearance at the state finals this year," Walling said.

"Braden Sovis our senior, co-captain (Lead-off) is expected to excel this season. This four-year varsity bowler has hidden depths and skill which allow him to roll a 240 game at the drop of a hat. This program expects him to make an appearance at the state finals this year.

"Kaine Moriarity (Junior and Co-Captain) is a strong bowler who made waves at the 2018 Collegiate Showcase. Kaine has a strong competitive spirit that pushes him to never give up and has been averaging 230 in practice. This young man has shown a strength of character and perseverance that makes him a student athlete that is wonderful to work with."

Carson City-Crystal has a new coach with Doug Sanders. Bowlers are: seniors Josh Currier, Justin Niemi and Xavier Waltz; juniors Austin Carmichael and Dakota Kolowski and freshmen Doug Billings, Marcairio Tenhave and Kaden Walker.

Top 16 all-staters: Matt Hoard, Ithaca (3); Dalton Carl, Ithaca (3); Luke Dalman, Portland (3); Jack Dahlman, Portland (3); Kyle Nohel, Meridian (3); Drake McFarland, St. Charles (4); Luke Martell, St. Charles (4); Vaughn Filkins, New Lothrop (4); Michael Pratt, St. Charles (4).



St. Charles is the defending Division 4 state runner-up.



Rockford is set to be a state contender.



Portland plans on being a bowling powerhouse this season.

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# SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON GYMNASTICS

## Grand Ledge, Rockford Gymnastics Team Hope To Be Contenders

**John Raffel  
Sports Scene**

Rockford is hoping to emerge as a state contender again in gymnastics after finishing third last season. Lowell finished 13th last year.

Rockford had won three state titles prior to last year. Grand Ledge

East Lansing, Fowlerville, Haslett and Holt also have gymnastics teams.

Michell Ankney is coaching the Rockford team which was also conference and regional champs last year. Rockford was conference champs, regionals champs and had

five gymnasts place individually at state. "No seniors graduated," Ankney said. "Most of the team has returned."

Key performers will be senior Reagan Ammon, Chantel Lokers and Taylor Cullen, and juniors Averi Nixon, Ashley Faulkner and Nicole Curtis and freshman Joey Gair.

"All of these gymnasts train all around and could step in on any of the four events as needed," Ankney said. "I expect the team to have a strong season. They have been working hard in the last few months to prepare for our season starting in a couple of weeks. Floor and beam tend to be our

strengths. I think we have made some improvements on the vault as well. We are still and may always be working on improving our bars. It is a tough event, and we hope to continue to get stronger at it.

"We hope to be strong in our conference. We don't know what our conference looks like at this point in time, but we are hoping to come out strong."

### GRAND LEDGE COMETS

Duane Haring hopes to have a competitive team at Grand Ledge.

"Samantha Hetzer was unfortunately injured for the whole season last year although in past

seasons she helped the team as much as she could with her skills," Haring said. "As a young team we are still working and do not know our key players yet. We think that every person on the team plays a key role in our success not only this season but in seasons to come. Expectations for this season are that we win conference meet as a majority of a team of freshman. We also would like to show that we are strong not only as a team but as a sisterhood."

"Our team's strengths are holding each other accountable and uplifting each other during practices and meets. We are also getting very strong on specifically beam and floor. As a freshman

team, we believe we are making a mark in the gymnastics community. Some things that the team can work on are upgrading our skills faster and competing them."

The Comets could very well be conference contenders

"Our conference has been downsize this season," Haring said. "We consider Fowlerville to be a favorite and we are going to try our best to compete against them this season. We see our team as a part of the top three in the conference. This year is a big learning year for us as a mostly freshman team. We believe that we could do big things in the future."



The Rockford Rams Gymnastic Team (Submitted Photo)

# SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON COMPETITIVE CHEER

## Competitive Cheer Teams Eye Return To State Finals

**John Raffel  
Sports Scene**

The area continues to boast outstanding competitive cheer competition and this season is likely to be no different.

DeWitt placed sixth in Division 2, Lakewood was fifth and Charlotte sixth in Division 3 and Sanford Meridian was second, Merrill fourth, Farwell fifth and Pewamo-Westphalia eighth in Division 4.

Merrill coach Molly Garno was upbeat over her team's 2018 performance.

"They went out there and had three solid rounds," Garno said. "I couldn't be prouder. We absolutely exceeded expectations for the season. We came across a lot of battles and they overcame them time after time."

"We're graduating four seniors who will be missed. But we have talent coming up. We hope to keep the Merrill tradition strong."

P-W is a perennial cheer power and

was eighth last year. But coach Staci Myers could have a special team again this season.

Myers' team won the title in 2008 and 2010 and had runner-up finishes in 2007, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2015.

In March, the Pirates took eighth out of eight teams in the Division 4 meet, but Myers was upbeat with what her young team was able to accomplish.

The only P-W senior was Karson Hengesbach.

"They did amazing," Myers, in her 11th year as coach, said. "We came in here hoping they could do their best rounds one, two and three and where the chips fall, they do. We worked hard this season and made huge transformations with this young team."

Charlotte coach Yvonne Ridge saw her team take sixth in Division 2 in 2017 and sixth in Division 3 last year. It could be a banner 2019.

"We did awesome," Ridge said after the 2018 state meet. "It's our first year

in Division 3. They brought the energy and did a great job. We'll be stronger next year. We have 10 freshmen on our team and only one senior"

Seniors are Mackenzie Bleisch, Mady Conklin, Charis Demello, Karlie Hicks, Morgan Seavolt and Lauren Wietzke. Juniors are Erica Brock, Kenzie Galinis, Haley Hoyt, Zaraya Newth, Christeny Pena and Lynsey Peters. Sophomores were Alaysha Cannon, Sadie Earegood, Sydney Foster, Ellie Lundy, Macy Mauk, Maggie Miller, Julia Phillips, McKenna Sine, Megan Treadwell and Kaylynn Weaver.

Lakewood has enjoyed strong success including last season at state.

"I thought we had three solid rounds," Viking coach Kim Martin said. "You want to finish on a big note and this is the best finish we've had at the state finals, the best placing. Before, we've never finished higher than sixth place. This was the fifth out of the last six years. We've been here a few times and it's our best performance with a very young team."



The Merrill cheerleaders hope to compete this season. (John Raffel, High School Sports Scene Photo)



The 2017-18 Meridian cheerleaders were state runners-up. (John Raffel, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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