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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Hello sports fans, it's another great day here at High School Sports Scene Magazine.

The winter sports scene is in full swing and what an exciting season it has been so far!!!!

Area athletes are turning in outstanding performances on the basketball courts, wrestling mats, rinks and bowling alleys.

In basketball, area boys and girls are putting up some outstanding numbers and providing outstanding games.

In boys basketball, teams like East Lansing, Okemos, Williamston, Bridgeport and Potterville are putting together outstanding seasons. In girls basketball, teams like East Lansing, Midland, Portland, Freeland, Pewamo-Westphalia and Fowler are putting together memorable runs.

On the wrestling mats, Lowell, DeWitt, Alma, Chippewa Hills, New Lothrop and Carson City-Crystal are fashioning outstanding years.

The Saginaw Heritage hockey team, the Charlotte and Pewamo-Westphalia competitive cheer teams and Midland Dow and Mason boys swim teams are also making plenty of waves this season.

With state tournaments looming on the horizon, area athletes and team are sharpening their skills and hunting for conference titles. With a break in the weather, now is a great time to get down to your local high school and check out how our local student-athletes are doing. I encourage everyone to get out and meet their neighbors and support our local kids. Also, let us know how we are doing. Drop us a line if you see a local athlete or team you'd like us to recognize. Check us out on Facebook, we'd like to hear from you!

See you at the games.



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## Ithaca Coach Enthused Over Wrestler's Potential

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Ithaca coach Daryl Dawe is excited over Chanc McCormack's potential this season as a senior wrestler.

It's McCormack fourth year on varsity.

"It is too early in the year to know how good Chanc is going to be, but based on his work ethic and desire, this could be a great season for him," McCormack said. "Chanc was 35-7 last year and was knocked out in the blood round at regionals. Staying focused on the match he is wrestling and letting go of regionals last year are the keys to his success.

"Chanc is coming into the year healthy and hungry. He has improved his top position wrestling greatly. Chanc has

always been good off the bottom and attacks a lot for a heavier guy (215) but his greatest leap in ability over last year has been the top position. I remember him breaking his hand at Ford Field his sophomore year and how hard he worked at PT to get back to the line up that year."

Dawe is expecting plenty from McCormack this season.

"I expect him to be a leader on and off the mat," Dawe said. "Chanc is an exceptional student and I have always been impressed with that. On the mat, I expected him to pick up where he left off last year and go on to compete in the state tournament. Chanc is a three-sport athlete and he doesn't know the meaning of slowing down. He is always working towards a goal."

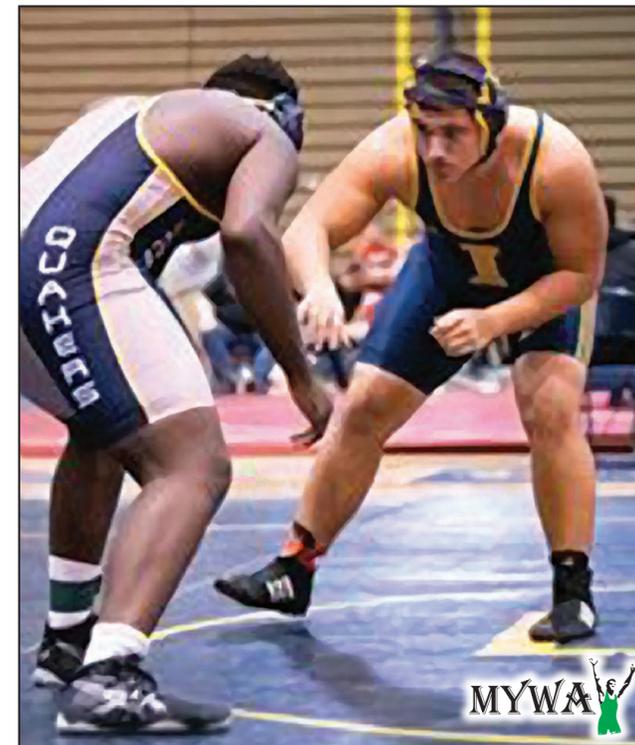
McCormack also plays football and basketball.

Dawe has high hopes for the Ithaca wrestling team this season.

"In the past, we have been giving teams 18-to-30 points a match and it is very difficult to win like that," he said. "In our upper weights is where we will win and lose matches. We need to be able to wrestle for six minutes. I don't need everyone to win every match but making it six minutes and limiting our opponents' points will be vital."

Dawe sees St. Louis as the TVC favorites.

"They have been on top for a long time," he said. "I would like our team to finish in the top half and give some teams a good scare."



Chanc McCormack is banking on a huge wrestling season.

## Mr. 800: Lakewood Wrestling Coach Reaches Unique Milestone

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Lakewood assistant coach Tony Harmer is likely to take over as wrestling coach next year if head skipper Robert Veitch decides to retire.

Veitch, who in early January notched his 800th career win, has hinted this could be his last season. If so, Harmer realizes the tough shoes he has to follow.

"There's nobody in the sport that has as much dedication and love as he does," Harmer said. "He goes through ups and downs and through emotions. It puts a strain on your life and personal life. To do it for 35 years and get that many

wins, it's something that inspires you."

It's Harmer's fifth year as assistant coach. He's a 2001 Lakewood graduate and wrestled under Veitch.

This milestone came earlier this month against Leslie.

"We've had good teams for 35 years," Veitch said. Every kid is different every team is different. I guess the one biggest thing was when we beat Mason when they were ranked No. 2 in the state and Eaton Rapids was ranked No. 1. We beat both of them by one point at the regional championship."

Lakewood has been to the state semifinals twice but never was able

to get into the finals. The Vikings have won their fair share of league (19), district (180) and regional titles. He's only has 234 losses compared to 800 wins.

Lakewood was 6-9 in Veitch's first year.

"From that point on we were pretty much a state-ranked team the rest of the time," he said. "No. 1, you have to have a great wife (Sheila) who lets you do something you enjoy doing and assistants who have helped me. We have great people in the community which has always been great for us."

Veitch is a Lake Odessa native and wrestled at Lakewood. He was third in the state at heavyweight

in 1976. He wrestled collegiately four years including the last two at Western Michigan University

Veitch was a physical and health education teacher for 36 years.

"Norm Young was the coach before me," Veitch said. "I would come back in the summer and help out. I needed someone to work out with, too, as I was going to college."

But he didn't necessarily imagine he would be coaching the next 40 years.

"You never know what could transpire when you get going," he said. "Every year, it's a new challenge and new kids to work with."

Veitch also coached baseball and football. Wrestling has been No. 1.

"I won a gold medal at the Pan Ams in 1978," Veitch said. "Norm got me started and other coaches took me under their wings. I fell



Lakewood coach Robert Veitch

in love with it and went on from there. You can say I have had the most success in wrestling. I like taking kids to the next level, trying to get them to college. I've had around 100 kids playing college sports."

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# Chippewa Hills Wrestlers Eye State Title

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Chippewa Hills appears loaded for another banner wrestling season.

Last year, in Kevin Edwards' first as head coach, the Warriors had a 28-2 record and were conference, district, regional champions and state semifinals.

From last year, the Warriors graduated Bray Haynes and Mason Hayes as both were three-time state qualifiers and two-time state placers.

"We have high expectations," Edwards said. "We want to return to the team state finals and make a run at a state title. We will put 14

kids on the mat that are all tough. We don't really have any soft spots in our lineup. We have eight returning state qualifiers.

"We want to improve everyday to be at our best at the end of the season. We are in the running to be league champions again this year."

Among the top wrestlers will be Colby Roosa, a junior, who took a 10-0 record into the title match at 285 pounds at his Chippewa Hills Joe Loren Memorial Invitational. He lost 5-4 to Clayton Hackett of Bullock Creek, who was 12-1.

It's Roosa's third high school season.

"I definitely worked on my cardio way more this year," he said. "I've been wrestling heavy for two

years now. This year, I'm hoping to wrestle heavy for half a season. Then I'm hoping to go with 215. I get most of my speed back."

Roosa finished sixth at the state final last season. His record was 42-5 last year and he has started out at 8-2 this year but hopes to continue to build toward a championship season.

Carson Hayes is another title contender.

Hayes came into this year after taking a second-place effort at the home Joe Loren Memorial Invitational. He lost 2-0 to undefeated Garrett Stebleton of Eaton Rapids in the title match at 130 pounds.

"It didn't go the way I wanted it

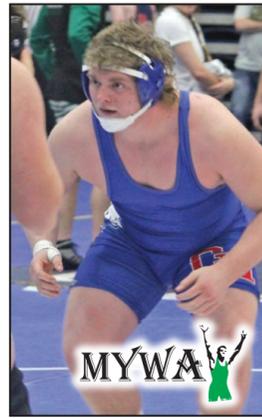
to go," Hayes said. "I was trying to make 125 for this meet. I weighed in at 126. I couldn't get anymore weight off."

Hayes got eighth place in the state last year.

"I can do better," Hayes, who is figuring on wrestling at 125 in the post-season tournament, said. "This year I've improved on wrestling on my feet. But I need to improve on my bottom."

Hayes worked on his wrestling extensively during the preseason.

"The team looks pretty good. We have a few holes but we should be good this year," Hayes said. "We have some first-year kids whom we want to get better."



Chippewa Hills' Colby Roosa (right) gets set to battle Bullock Creek's Jason Hackett at the Joe Loren Invitational in December.

# Alma Wrestling Team Poised To Take The Next Step This Season

## Greg Chrapek Sports Scene

After qualifying for the team state finals the past two seasons, the Alma wrestling team is determined to take the next step this season.

Ranked third in the state in Division 3, the Alma wrestling team is not just looking forward to making a third-straight trip to the state finals, but are looking to notch some wins at state and make it to the second day.

With a lineup peppered with outstanding wrestlers, the Panthers have a team capable of making it past the quarterfinal round. Those wrestlers have propelled Alma to an 18-2 start this season that included wins against Division 3 state-ranked teams like Montrose and Portland and Division 2 state-ranked Jackson Northwest.

"I feel the season has been going good," said Alma coach Randy Miniard. "We've seen some great competition and the kids have been wrestling well. We're primed

to make a run this year.

Junior captain Solomon Rosales is one of the leaders on the mat for the Panthers. A returning all-stater, Rosales has put together a 15-match winning streak as of mid-January and has picked up a number of impressive wins including a win against defending state champion Jake Elavich of Montrose and Shepherd all-stater Lance Clark.

Senior captain Jarrett Fermun, who placed third at state last year, is turning in a big season and is ranked second in the state individually. Fellow senior Justin VanBlaricum, who placed fifth at individual state last year, is ranked third in his weight class this year.

Junior Demetrious Castillo, a returning all-state wrestler and a state champion his freshman season, is turning in a strong season in his quest to return to the top of podium at individual state this year.

Along with the veteran standouts, Alma is receiving strong efforts



The 2020 Alma Wrestling Team

from a number of younger wrestlers. Freshman Gianni Tripp has made a major impact with wins against state-ranked wrestlers like Nick Korhorn of Lowell and JD Gross of Richmond. Freshman Joey Oberle has put together a 16-9 record at 112 pounds. Sophomore Josiah Baltierra, a returning state qualifier, has put together a 21-11 record this season. At 103 pounds, sophomore Jordan Pannill has put together a 18-8 record.

Sophomores Brenden Everdeen and Jacob Munger are building in their second year on the varsity. Everdeen is 16-8 this season while Munger is 19-9 as they have collected some impressive wins. Senior Carlos Espinoza has made a move into the state rankings this year at 171 pounds and is 20-9 this year.

"So far we've hit every goal I've set for the team," Miniard said. "We're looking forward to a state tournament run. Our goal is to not only make it to state but to make

some noise once we get there."

Making it to state will be no easy task as Alma competes at the Chesaning district and faces a possible showdown with Lakewood-Lake Odessa, ranked fifth in the state, at the regional level.

"We beat them (Lakewood) by eight or nine at the regional last year," Miniard said. "Their coach just picked up his 800th career win and they are really good. It will be a battle."

# Young Portland Wrestling Team Eager To Learn And Improve

## Greg Chrapek Sports Scene

After graduating several key wrestlers from last year's squad, the Portland wrestling team is facing some rebuilding this season.

Led by Owen Guilford, Portland's first-ever, two-time state champion, the Raiders racked up 18 team dual wins last season and won three invitational championships.

While key wrestlers like Guilford, Ethan Getchell, Kyle Hinds and Zac Fedewa have graduated, Portland has a talented core of young wrestler returning to build around.

Sophomore Caiden Pelc (119 pounds) is a returning all-state wrestler poised

to take the next step this year. Like Pelc, Jared Thelen (140) is a returning state qualifier looking to march up the podium at individual states.

Trent Trierweiler and Dillon Vroman (171) bring more experience to the lineup.

"Trent is an underrated wrestler looking to find a place on the podium at Ford Field," said Portland coach Andy Pulling. "We expect Dillon to have a breakout year and help guide our underclassmen. Where he finishes is up to him and his goals."

The Raiders have a pair of freshmen looking to make memorable debuts. Freshman Drew Miller is at 119 pounds while classmate Branson Goodman is at 215 pounds.

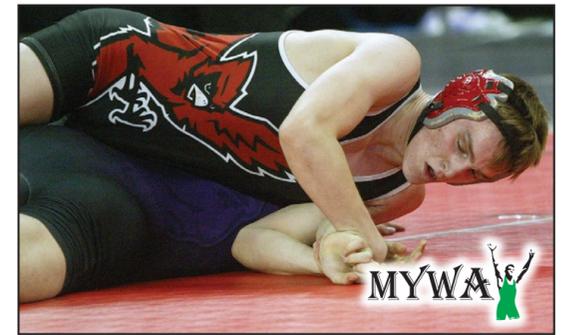
"Drew is a competitive freshman eager to make a run at Ford Field," said Pulling. "Branson is an incoming freshman looking to find his bearings while going after tough competition."

While the Raiders are young this season, they have lofty goals and are determined to have a strong season.

"We are a young, but eager team," Pulling said. "We are willing to take our lumps and grow. We should finish about .500 in duals and send a handful to Ford Field."

The Raiders expect to be an aggressive team on the mat, willing to take the fight to their opponents.

"The strength of our team is our willingness to attack, make mistakes



Portland Wrestling

and learn," Pulling said. "We have to work on our understanding of the sport, scoring and technique."

In the conference, Pulling looks for Eaton Rapids to be the team to beat

again this year. He expects the league to be competitive from top to bottom but believes the team can make a strong run to finish in second behind the state-ranked Eaton Rapids squad.



Carson City-Crystal's Jamison Ward

# Carson City-Crystal Ranked Among The Top In The State In Division 4

## Greg Chrapek Sports Scene

Graduation day hit the Carson City-Crystal wrestling team hard last spring, but thanks to a seasoned core of veterans, the Eagles are back among the elite in the state in Division 4.

Ranked fifth in the state in Division 4, Carson City has a lineup capable of making a repeat appearance at the team

state finals. Heading into late January, Carson City-Crystal has put together a 26-4 overall record with wins against larger schools like Belding, Comstock Park, Jenison, Millington, Portland and Shepherd.

While standouts like Braxton Seida, a three-time state placer and state champion, Nolan Datema and Daryn Shepler, a pair of three-time state placers and Dan Smith, a two-time,

state placer graduated, the Eagles have a strong core of veterans leading the way.

"We are a well-rounded team with very few soft spots," said Carson City-Crystal coach Kacy Datema. "We expect to win our conference and be in a position to win our region."

Senior Jamison Ward (130 pounds) is a returning state champion that leads the way this season. Fellow senior

Brian Yeakey (215) is a two-time state placer while junior Jaron Johnson (125) placed third at the state meet. Senior Nash Akin (171) is a returning state qualifier while junior Jared Shepler (112) and sophomores Bryce Stanley (140) and Cole Stone (135) are returning regional qualifiers. Seniors Cade Fleisher (145) and Ryan Holland bring more experience to the lineup.

With conference and state tournaments coming up, the Eagles are working to get even stronger.

"We are always trying to get better," Datema said. "We need to get our weakest spots caught up to the rest of the team. I believe we will have it ready by the end of the year."

# New Lothrop Eyes 16th State Wrestling Title

## John Raffel Sports Scene

It wouldn't be a typical wrestling season without a championship contending effort from New Lothrop.

Coach Jeff Campbell has another strong team in the MMAC.

The 2018-19 season was a good one for New Lothrop.

"During the year, our team won the Marquette challenge, New Lothrop Hall of Fame tournament, as well as the MMAC both dual and individual tournament," Campbell said. "We also won the district title, as well as our 19th consecutive regional

title. We advanced to the team state semifinal where we lost a very close match to Clinton. We had a total of eight individual state qualifiers, and state placers.

"Last year's team graduated Logan Zell, who placed second in the state at 135, Micah Polletti who placed sixth in the state at 140, Austin Wolford who was a two-time state champion at 140, 145 and Zack Riley who was a 3-time state qualifier. These seniors were terrific leaders who worked hard and made many sacrifices to our program. They were part of our last team state title when they were freshman, and in all they made 3 appearances in the state championship dual and finished as team state semi-finalists as

seniors. They made a lasting mark on the history of our storied program."

This year's team will have several key wrestlers.

- Andrew Krupp (junior): Andrew will compete at 125/130. He placed fifth in the state last season. He will serve as a team captain.

- Alex Wolford (soph.): Alex will compete at 125/130. He placed seventh in the state last season.

- Logan Wolford (senior): Logan is a two-time state qualifier and will serve as a captain of this year's team, and compete at 135.

- Justin Carnahan (senior): Justin is a two-time state placer 5th and 2nd. He will be a big point scorer for New Lothrop this year at 189.

- Cam Orr (junior): Cam is a returning state placer (sixth). He will compete at 215 and serve as

a team captain.

- Isiah Pasik (soph.): Isiah is a returning state qualifier and will compete at 285.

"My expectation for this team is to find a way to make their own mark on our program," Campbell said. "I believe they will be a very hard working team that will consistently improve during the season and rely on each other during big matches. This team will compete for a 20th consecutive regional title and attempt to win the 16th state title in NL history."

"This year's team strength is depth. We have multiple kids and almost every weight who will be pushing the starters to keep their positions. This competition in the room will allow for much growth during the season and also provide us multiple options for line-up adjustments in dual competitions."



New Lothrop Wrestling

New Lothrop again competes in the MMAC.

"Our conference is very strong," Campbell said. "There are several teams in our conference with a very rich tradition in the sport of wrestling. The first that comes to mind is Montrose. They return a

very talented line-up that made a deep run at a team state title last season in Div 3. Up and coming teams like Lakeville, and Durand will pose a serious threat to us as well. I believe our team will be among the favorites to win the conference but there is much work that needs to be done to make that happen."

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# Area Wrestling Teams Earn State Rankings, Prepare For Upcoming State Tourney

## John Raffel Sports Scene

The Mid-Michigan area is loaded with quality wrestling teams as several area schools are ranked in the top ten in the state of Michigan this season. Along with teams like Alma, New Lothrop and Carson City-Crystal, the following teams are also making a big impact this season.

### HOLT

Ranked sixth in the state in Division 1, the Rams boast a young and talented squad this season.

Holt turned in an impressive performance in winning its own Holt Invitational. A trio of Rams took first at the invite including sophomores Ralph Thompson (145 pounds) and Nathan Bremer (160) and senior Ian Smith (171). Thompson improved his record to 19-2 for the season.

Seniors Dylan Phelps (130) and Christian Lenon (135) and junior Zach Platte all eclipsed 20 wins for the season as they placed second. Senior Peyton Bruce, sophomore Joshua Terrill (285) and freshman Mariano Lopez (103) also placed second. Sophomore Jason Jones (140) and freshman Jackson Bremer (152) placed third with junior Adam Russell (189) and sophomore Grant Bachman (125) placing fourth.

### LOWELL

Ranked No. 1 in the state in Division 2, the Red Arrows have been

sharpening their skills for a run at the state title by taking on some of the toughest competition in the Midwest.

At the Brecksville (Ohio) Christmas tournament, senior Austin Boone took first place at 145 pounds. Jacob Lee (170) and Tyler DeLoof (285) both placed sixth, Nick Korhorn took seventh with Ramsy Mutschler (106) and Doak Dean (160) placing eighth.

Lowell followed that performance up with a big effort at the Detroit Catholic Central invite. Boone took a first place at DCC while James Fotis (152) and Jacob Hough (215) placed third. Lee and Dean both placed fifth with William Link (140) and Korhorn taking sixth place with Zeth Strejch (130), Dawson Jankowski (135) and Derek Mohr (189) placing eighth.

### DEWITT

Ranked fourth in the state in Division 2, DeWitt is gearing up for a deep post-season run. The Panthers showed plenty of skill in going a perfect 5-0 at the Lapeer team tournament. A trio of DeWitt wrestlers also placed in the top five at the DCC invitational. Senior Matt Foddrill took third at 125, senior Jacob Brandt took fourth at 215 and junior Kiefer Kolito took fifth at 119.

### EATON RAPIDS

Led by a core of talented seniors, Eaton Rapids is ranked fifth in the state in Division 2.

Senior Caleb Fish, a returning state champion, is turning in a big season.

Fish upped his record to 23-0 when he won the 160-pound championship at Williamston's Jim Mooney Invitational. Seniors Chris Haynes (140) and Chad Haynes (145) also took first place at Williamston while junior Jay Shaull improved to 23-1 as he won the 103-pound title. Senior Dylan Norris (215) placed second at 215 with senior Raphael Sigurani taking third at 112 and junior Robert Davids placing fourth at 125 pounds.

### CHIPPEWA HILLS

Ranked fourth in the state in Division 4, Chippewa Hills picked up key league wins against Fremont (37-33) and Grant (54-21).

Chippewa Hills also had five wrestlers place at the Williamston invite. Junior heavyweight took first as he improved to 13-1 for the year. Junior Trenten Wiggins took second at 171 while seniors Gabe Petoskey (189) and Clayton Wiggins (215) and junior Carson Hayes (130) placed fourth.

### MONTROSE

Montrose is ranked sixth in the state in Division 3 and turned in an impressive warm-up for the state meet by going 5-0 at the Forest Hills Northern invite. The Rams added a pair of key league wins against Durand and Mt. Morris.

Montrose has a quartet of wrestlers place in the top five at the Clinton Dave Elliott invitational. Sophomore Aiden Bernard improved to 19-1 as he placed third at 125 pounds. Senior

currently wrestling at Indiana Tech.

Hall hesitates to single out any wrestlers on the 2019-20 team.

"I can't name just a few since every guy is just as important as the next, the best guy and the worst guy can only score or give up six points for the team," Hall. "We want to win a team state title and multiple individual state titles, working towards a national title. (Team strength) is our kids love of the sport and drive to be the best."

Seniors are Andrew Chambal, Jay Nivison, Jerud Payne, Garret Williams and Jaron Wilson. Juniors are Alex Facundo, McKal Hankerd, Riley Henderson, Tyler Jelinek, James Johnston, Landon Kish, Xavier Murphy and Troy Wittke.



The Chippewa Hills wrestling team opened the season with a big win against Division 1 Grandville and have worked up to No. 4 in the state in Division 3.

Griffin Barnette (285) and sophomore Levi Harber (215) both placed fourth with senior Sean Kittle (140) taking fifth.

### BIRCH RUN

Ranked eighth in the state in Division 3, Birch Run showed just how deep of a lineup it possesses as it ran away with the Saginaw County Championships.

Five Birch Run wrestlers took first place at the county meet including Mac Breece (135), Christian Miller (140), Ty Tanner (152), Ben Mudge (171) and Terrance Watson (285). Breece and Watson both improved their records to 23-1 for the season while Tanner improved to 22-1.

Taking second at the county meet for Birch Run were Evan Tanner (103), Madell Breece (112), Dylan Gage

(119), Bryce Husen (125), Kahleel Brown (130), Nathan Smith (160) and Nathaniel Lacross (189).

### SHEPHERD

The Bluejays, who qualified for team state last year, just entered the state rankings at number 10 in Division 3.

Shepherd picked up a big win when it edged Leroy-Pine River by two points to win the Shepherd Invitational. A trio of Bluejay wrestlers took first place including senior Kyle Andrews (140), Ty Tanner (152), Ben Mudge (171) and Terrance Watson (285). Breece and Watson both improved their records to 23-1 for the season while Tanner improved to 22-1.

Andrews also placed second at the Williamston invite the week before while Clark took third and Cline placed fifth at Williamston.



2019-2020 Davison wrestling team

Sophomores are Jimmy Colley, Austin Dunaway, Cameron Freeman, Breton Lumm, Brendan Maybee, Isaac Norton, Owen Payne, Kyle White and Aden Williams. Freshmen

are Jaydon Ball, Josh Barr, Max Callahan, Evan Herriman, Caden Horwath, Bradley Singles, Luke Sphon and Domink Watson.

# St. Charles Bowlers Excited Over Future

## John Raffel Sports Scene

St. Charles bowling program has had a strong tradition with a state bowling title for the boys in 2010 and runners-up finishes in 2016 and 2018.

Coach Mark Faupel frequently has his team in state contention but acknowledges this could be a challenging year.

For the 2018-19 season: St. Charles finished with a record of 14-1 in conference and won the Tri Valley West Division. Their only loss was to Ithaca (27-3). St. Charles did not qualify for the regional and finished a disappointing seventh place. Senior Michael Pratt qualified for the state singles.

"St. Charles graduated four seniors last years, two of which were on varsity all four years of high school," Faupel said. "Drake McFarland and Michael Pratt were excellent athletes who consistently performed big when the team needed it. Drake and Michael were in the 4/5 position of the Baker Lineup and provided key shots in the clutch when the team needed it. They qualified for state singles twice in their high school career and made the top 16 both times. They averaged in the 190's and were excellent mentors to the underclassmen. They will definitely be missed.

Junior Hunter Bashans, Faupel said, "had a very successful first year on the varsity team capping off his season by winning the Tri Valley Conference singles tournament with a score of 628. Hunter will be bowling in the key

"Haden Nothelfer bowled on the varsity team his final three years, spending his first year on the junior varsity team. Possessing excellent athletic ability, he quickly got his game to the 175 level his first year on varsity. His final two years, he consistently averaged in the mid to high 180's posting a high game of 279, which he did twice. Haden was able to throw with velocity, so he was a tremendous asset to the team when the lane conditions broke down."

Holden Huntoon, Faupel noted, "bowled on the varsity team his junior and senior year after spending the first two years on the junior varsity team. Holden quietly made improvement and managed to get his average to around 175 by the end of his senior year. Holden's biggest achievement in high school bowling was winning the Tri Valley Conference Singles tournament his first year on the varsity team. He started out the day by throwing the first nine strikes ending up with a career high best game of 279. Holden was just coming into his own as an accomplished player."

Junior Nicholas Armstrong, Faupel said, "bowled the first two years of his high school career on the JV team and now is ready to move up to the varsity level. Armed

Baker spots of 1,4, and 5 this year as he is very versatile. The goal this year for Hunter is to average 185 and make a run at qualifying for the state singles. His knowledge of lane conditions and equipment has elevated his game to a higher level. He just needs to develop more consistency in his shot making."

Junior Brandon Armstrong, Faupel said, "is ready to make the jump to varsity. Although he lacks varsity experience, he is more than ready to challenge for state singles. Brandon won the 2019 Saginaw Youth USBC City Tournament Singles Handicap and Actual with a career personal best high game of 278 and high series of 693. Brandon has improved his average about 40 pins since the end of the JV season last year. He absolutely loves the sport and is usually the first one to practice and last one to leave, along with his twin brother Nicholas.

"He is an extremely hard worker and will only get better. Experience at the varsity level is the only thing Brandon lacks at this point. I would expect Brandon to average around 190 this year and make a strong run at qualifying for state singles."

Junior Nicholas Armstrong, Faupel said, "bowled the first two years of his high school career on the JV team and now is ready to move up to the varsity level. Armed



St. Charles bowling team

with a powerful two-hand style from the right side, he adds a nice complement to his twin brother Brandon's two-handed delivery from the left side. Nicholas was the champion of the LeFevre's Family Bowl Summer Sport shot singles league, one of the strongest summer scratch completion leagues in the Saginaw area.

"Nicholas was the All Events Champion of the 2019 Saginaw USBC Youth City Tournament. Nicholas is a student of the game and is always looking for ways to improve. He has a deep knowledge of equipment and is very helpful

in selecting new equipment for new bowlers. I expect Nicholas to average around 185 and make a strong run at qualifying for State Singles."

Faupel has high hopes for the team.

"With five new bowlers up from the JV team and two returning underclassmen, the expectations are not to compete for a state championship this season, but to compete next year. It will take some time for the new bowlers to gain experience and knowledge, but this group of juniors is eager to get better," Faupel said.

# Davison Aiming For Another Team State Championship

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Chase Hall is assistant coach of a Davison wrestling team, which is currently ranked second in the state and 16th in the nation.

Davison wrestles in the Saginaw Valley.

Last season, Davison beat Division 1 No. 3 Brighton but then lost to Brighton in the state semifinals.

Davison had five champions at the

DCC Invite, considered the toughest individual tournament in the state: 103- Aden Williams (So); 130 - Andrew Chambal (Sr.); 152 - Josh Barr (Fr.); 160 - Alex Facundo (Jr); and 189 - Max Callahan (Fr.).

Davison also beat the No. 7 nationally ranked St. Edwards team of Ohio.

Davison graduated wrestlers including Brian Case, currently wrestling at The Naval Academy (Annapolis) and Steven Garty,

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# Chippewa Hills Bowlers Off To Solid Start

## John Raffel Sports Scene

It didn't take long for Chippewa Hills' bowling team to establish itself as having an extremely talented program.

The Warriors were third at the Jenison Invitational in early January. Braydon Fate bowled a 290 game.

"We are expecting Nate Snyder, Dylan Sharp and Braydon Fate to help us out

this year," coach Chris Stirn said. "We have to fill three spots and vying for those spots are Larry Jasman, Jace LaLonde, Colton Sherman and Jacob Beckley. Since this is our first year I don't know what to expect. We will compete and go from there. Our guys will just go out and bowl and have fun. There is no pressure on our team this year."

But at the Jenison meet, the Warriors bowled like pros.

"They had a great day," Chippewa Hills coach Chris Stirn said. "They were led by Braydon Fate, who finished third individually. One of his games was a 290, which was the high game for everyone at the tournament.

"Nate Snyder averaged a 203 on the day," Stirn said. "It was a great day for our first tournament ever. We were running up against some big boys down there. We played schools like Jenison and

Grandville."

The Chippewa Hills girls are led by Kayla Remus, Allyssia McCall, and Kyra Young, who have experience bowling.

"Our girls need to work on hitting their marks and focusing on every throw," Stirn said.

I'm not sure who the league favorite is. I know we have many other things to worry about."



Chippewa Hills' bowling team took third place at the Jenison Tournament. (Courtesy photo)

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# Holt Boys Bowlers Eye State Title

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Holt coaches Alexis and Josh Regnier make it very clear: they want to go for a state title this season, especially in the boys division.

The 2018-19 season was a good one.

"The boys and girls won the Mel Wolfe Open, the first time in history the same team has one on both the boys and girls side," Regnier said. "The boys won the regional team event. Gabby VanHorn won the regional singles event for girls and finished in the top eight at states. Last year

we lost star player, Gabby VanHorn, who has been a key player for the Holt Rams the past four years. We didn't have any seniors for the boys."

Key boys players this year: are sophomores David Schaberg, Jeremy Scholten and seniors Zachary Gietzel, Steven Levra and Austin Montgomery.

Key girls players this year are Kayla Alana, Angelita Mireles and Alissa VanHorn, who is Gabby VanHorn's sister.

"The boys are set out to win states this year, with many seniors on the team," Regnier said. "The girls are looking to

redeem themselves from just missing the cut at regionals last year, and make it to states this year. The boys team biggest strength is definitely their experience. The girls team is small this year with only six players, but I believe this will play to their strength.

"The boys focus this year is the mental game. The girls need to get experience this year, as they are a very young team. I definitely see Holt boys winning the conference. The Mason girls have a strong team, per usual. I would expect Mason girls to have a chance at winning the conference."

# Portland Bowlers Expect To Be Contenders Again

## John Raffel Sports Scene

William Armour is ready for another challenging season as Portland boys bowling coach.

"This year is a rebuilding year for us as we graduated eight seniors last year," he said. "My expectations however are the same as last year due to the depth of last year's underclassmen; we will win the CAAC Blue Division and be competitive at regionals and likely get another bid to state finals for team. Individually we will have 2-to-3 boys make it to state."

Notable losses to graduation from last season: Jack Dalman, Noah Spedoske, Bennett Rushin, Evan Warner, Jarod Huhn, Vaughn Cross, Aiden Pung and Ryan Miller

Promising newcomers are: Josh Rutkowskia, Brandon Ladisky, Joshua Krausz, Kyle Edlund, Collin Calley and Jacob Vroman.

"All have made significant improvement over last year on the JV team and all can throw a 180 game or better," Armour said. "Luke Dalman is our returning senior. He is pure talent and will average over 200 this

year, and will make it to state finals. This team will need a few weeks to find their chemistry but have no doubt they will be great."

Girls coach Joe Whitford also anticipates a rebuilding season.

This year is a rebuilding year for us as we graduated six seniors last year," he said.

"My expectations however are the same as last year due to the depth of last year's underclassmen. We will win the CAAC Blue Division and be competitive at regionals. Likely it will be another bid to state finals for team. Individually we will have 2-to-3 girls make it to states."

Notable losses to graduation from last season were Emma Armour, Sammi Krausz, Jordyn Fyan, Kaylee Becker, Brooke Adams

and Hannah Schafer.

Promising newcomers to the varsity teams are Olivia Gallt and Hannah Martin who have been on JV and will make a move this year.

"Jessie Whitford and Aubree Martin both

are bowlers that can throw a 200 game at will. With the bowlers moving up from JV team, these girls will be fun to watch. I truly believe Jessie and Aubree will compete in the state finals with possibly one more of the girls to join them."



From left to right - Top: Head Coach: Joe Whitford Assistant Coach: Hilary Platte. Middle: Anna Humphrey, Raelyn Holliday, Hannah Martin, Aubree Martin. Bottom: Kaelyn Bayless, Jessie Whitford, Brooke Sandborn, Olivia Gallt, Emma Cannon. Not pictured: Claire Kwiecinski

# Ithaca Girls Anticipate Solid Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Coach Ty Warczynsky's Ithaca girls basketball team started out the season at 5-0 and is ready for something very special.

It's his fourth year at Ithaca. The team was 13-7 last season.

"It was pretty successful," Warczynsky said. "We finished third in our league."

Top players this season include Emma Belles, Sam Vermeesch and Lydia Davenport.

Belles scored 17 points and had 11 rebounds in a 35-33 win over Michigan

Lutheran Seminary.

"We were down seven with four minutes to go," Warczynsky said. "MLS



Ithaca's Emma Belles has signed a letter of intent to study and play basketball at Spring Arbor College.

did not score in the last four minutes. Emma

Belles hit the game-winning shot with 1.8 seconds remaining."

This could be a special season.

"There's a lot of good teams at the top but I'd like to think we're up there," Warczynsky said. "We have 18 league games this year so that makes it very challenging.

"We have a lot of experience, which really helps. We defend really well and we rebound very well. We're not the biggest team, but we do a really nice job rebounding the ball. We have really good guard play, which will help us out."



Emma Belles (11) looks to make a move in action last season.

# Midland Girls Off To An Impressive Start

## John Raffel Sports Scene

It's been quite a turnaround season for Midland girls' basketball season, which has started out at 10-0 under coach Jaden Clobes.

The team was 5-16 last year.

"We played last season without three starters who were all hurt, but since have all returned this season," Clobes said. "We had no seniors on the team."

Jordan Phillips is a senior second-team all-Valley player who averaged 15.3 points last season.

"She is one of the best shooters

in the state and has had four games of eight 3-pointers made," Clobes said. "She signed to play at Rochester University."

Olivia Carpenter, a junior, "is the fastest point guard from one end to the other," Clobes said. "She had a 31-point game this year."

Senior Alyssa Chrutz "is the best defensive player I have ever coached. She is getting 5.3 steals per game this year," Clobes said, adding junior guard-forward Anna Tuck "sat out all last year with an ACL. She can pretty much do it all inside outside."

Junior Sydnie Schafer "does

everything a coach would want," Clobes said.

Midland is gearing to make a bid for conference and district titles.

Defense is a definite strength. "We are only giving up 29 points a game," Clobes said, adding "moving the ball" is among the things his team needs to improve upon.

Midland hopes to compete in the SVL North.

"We have the two-time defending state champs Heritage along with Midland Dow,



Midland's Girls Basketball Team

Carmon, John Glenn and Grand Blanc," Clobes said.

Midland beat Heritage 42-37 on the road.

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# Alma Girls Look For Another Strong Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Alma's High School's girls basketball team had a fabulous season last year and is looking for more of the same this winter.

Corey Hungerford's team was 16-5 last year and is district finalist and had a 10-game winning streak from Jan. 16 to Feb. 28.

"Haley Leister and Sophie Patrick were key players that graduated last year," Hungerford said. "Leister was the emotional leader of last year's team and also led by example leading the team in both points and rebounds. Hailey is now playing basketball at Northwood. Sophie was a very reliable member of the rotation as she provided size and experience defensively. Sophie's ability to rotate on defense and protect the

rim was very valuable and will be missed on this year's team."

Alma has started off 6-3.

Among the key returners is senior guard Taylor Cleveland. "Taylor will be a leader and floor general for us this year," Hungerford said. "As a returning starter she is very comfortable with the offense and how to get good shots. She will need to be an impact defender and take care of the ball in order for us to be successful."

Alyssa Leister, a junior forward, "will be a huge offensive threat," Hungerford said. "She is a very special athlete that will be asked to take her abilities to the next level. Alyssa has been working very hard to improve every area of her game including her jump shot and ball-handling. Defensively with her length

and speed she will cause other teams fits and be able to create offense both for herself and her teammates."

"Aliyah Castillo is a senior guard who will be asked to make strides defensively and also to space the floor on offense with her shooting ability."

For the season, "we want to be competitive in the very athletic and deep TVC Central and improve throughout the season in order to be playing our best basketball at the end of the season in order to win a district title," Hungerford said. "The 2019-2020 Alma Panthers will be led by their strengths in the back court including Taylor Cleveland, Alyssa Leister and Aliyah Castillo. Offensively, the Panthers will be able to play fast and stretch the floor with shooting ability. On defense the Panthers'

strength will be their speed and ability to force turnovers.

"The Alma Panthers will look to focus on improving their depth throughout the season due to being very young. The multiple areas that need improvement include physicality, rebounding, limiting turnovers and the ability to handle adversity. I am very confident in my team's desire to compete each and every night. Our team is full of competitors that are used winning and will fight through adversity when times get tough. Our finish in the TVC Central will depend on our ability grow together throughout the season. I would consider the league favorites to be Standish Sterling and Frankenmuth as both teams are very athletic and have the ability to depend on their depth when needed."

# Leister Delivering The Goods For Panthers

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Alma coach Corey Hungerford is expecting a lot from junior third-year varsity player Alyssa Leister, and is getting it.

"Alyssa has been asked to expand her role and do many things both offensively and defensively so far this year," Hungerford said. "She has handled her new role very well throughout the early parts of the season. So far this year Alyssa is averaging 17 points, 5 steals and 7 rebounds per game."

What's been the keys to her success?

"The key to Alyssa's success has been buying in on the defensive end of the floor and converting those steals into easy baskets on the other end of the floor. In the half court she has also done a very good job of attacking the basket and crashing the offensive glass for extra opportunities to score."

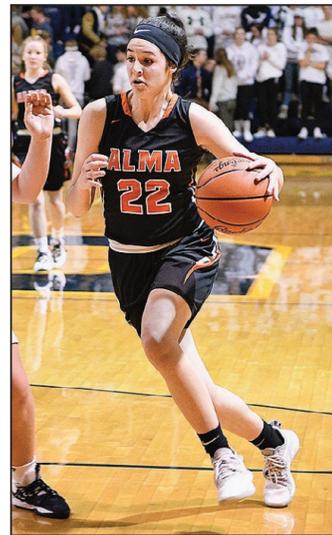
There's been significant improvement.

"I believe Alyssa has greatly improved on defense since last year," Hungerford said. "She has bought into her role and impacted our team in positive manner. She has also been working very hard on improving her jump shot, although some of her shots have

not fallen early in the season. Once her jump shot starts falling consistently again, she will be an even bigger asset to our team."

Leister has improved in defense, shooting, finishing and ball handling, her coach said. She opened the season with 29 points, nine rebounds and seven steals. She had the go-ahead basket with under 10 seconds vs. Bridgeport in an overtime win.

"Alyssa is a very hard worker, she is a gym rat and chases perfection while working out," Leister said. "She plays AAU basketball for the Mystics as well as attending our off-season workouts. She is also a very good volleyball and softball player."



The Panthers are looking for a big year from Alyssa Leister (22).

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# Kenzie Lewis Leads Williamston Attack

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Williamston girls basketball coach Pete Cool wouldn't mind having as successful of a season this winter as he did a year ago.

Williamston was 18-4 overall and 10-0 in the CAAC Red.

Allie Sherrer and Meghan Douglass were both great leaders on and off the court.

Williamston has several seniors with Evey Peplowski (6-1, forward/center), Abbey Rancour (5-8 senior forward), Bailey Kluisza (6-1 senior forward/center), Kenzie Lewis (5-10 senior guard) and Jayda

Bush (5-8 senior forward).

"Kenzie is going to Bowling Green and we have a number of veteran players mixed with new players that are working well together," Cool said. "Our goal is to build chemistry and I thought we had a nice offseason. I expect us to embrace the process of working hard in every practice and see where that gets us."

Lewis is a four-year varsity player who averaged 13.6 points, 7.8 rebounds, 7.0 assists and 3.1 steals a game last year.

"Kenzie does whatever is needed to help the team be

successful," Cool said. "There are players that average more points per game but few are as well rounded as she is regarding both offense and defense. She has the internal drive, she is the ultimate competitor. She is a 4-year varsity player with a lot of experience from year's past.

"She has improved both statistically and being a great leader who can joke around with the players but also have an intense drive. Kenzie has grown and matured a lot of the years. It has been fun watching her play. She gives everything she has so I don't usually expect much more

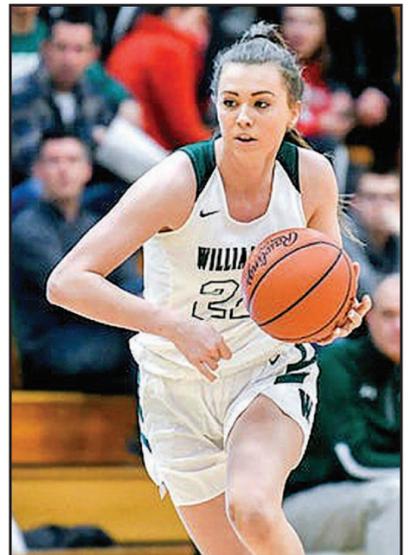
from her than she is already doing. Kenzie plays at the highest level of AAU with some of the best players in the state. She attends workouts all the time and always goes all out."

Cool expects to have multiple scorers.

"We need to get experienced players to mix with the inexperienced players," he said. Cool expects the CSAA Red to be "fairly strong conference." He said coaches have predicted the following finish in standings:

1. Haslett, 2. Williamston, 3. St. Johns, 4. Fowlerville, 5. Mason, 6. Eastern

Williamston has started out 7-2.



Williamston's Kenzie Lewis

# Gaffke A Key Factor For Bullock Creek

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Justin Freeland is coaching a Midland Bullock Creek team with top scorer and rebounder early in the season being sophomore Ella Gaffke, averaging about 15 points, and seven rebounds per game.

"Forward Mayson Barringer is our only senior, missed game one with injury but is working her way back into lineup and

should be major contributor," Freeland said. "Addi Buda, Lauren Bradford and Lexie Hartnagle are juniors on varsity for the third season. We have five freshmen, all of whom are great kids and will contribute on the floor."

"It's going to be a process. We had a streak of 15 winning seasons snapped the past two seasons. With only one senior and five freshmen among our five players, we are focused

on improving each day and winning some games along the way. In many ways this is year one of shaping what the next generation of Creek basketball is going to look like."

Balance is expected to be a strength.

"We're a team without two or three super elite players, but instead have several ladies who on a given night can give us some points or

rebounds," Freeland said. "We have the ability to get up and down the floor closer to the tempo we would prefer to play."

"Our young players just need to go more experienced at the varsity level. Claiming youth is an excuse so we won't ever use that, but one fact of life is when you are playing a lot of 14 to 15 year old kids, they are going to get physically stronger in the next year or two that will help their games develop immensely."



Bullock Creek's Ella Gaffke

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# Breckenridge Girls Set For A Special Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Breckenridge girls basketball coach Phillip Baldwin is looking for something special to happen from his Huskies girls team this season.

Last year, Breckenridge was 8-13 and lost to Hemlock in the district title game.

"We only lost two seniors from last year but are returning all 5 starters from last year's team," Baldwin said. "Alexis Alonzo, (junior) I expect her to create opportunities for our offense and be an impact defender for our team this season. Bre Sumner (senior), was 1st team all-conference last season and I expect her to have an impact in many ways for our team this season. Summer Smith was honorable mention last year as a sophomore. Summer is a very hard worker and I expect that to show this season."

"Alivia Cross (junior). I expect Liv to be an impact player down low this season. She's a kid who plays with a lot of effort and I really like that about her. Grace Staley, (senior) was injured early last year but really started to make shots as the year went on. I expect Grace to be a factor offensively this season. Emily Saunders (a senior) has grown as a leader this offseason and worked hard. I expect her offseason work to payoff this season both offensively and defensively."

Breckenridge has started out 7-3 and is showing a lot of promise.

"We have a lot of experience on this team," Baldwin said. "I expect us to play hard and be competitive in all of our games this season. I think this team is full of smart players that realize what it takes to win games. They've dealt with adversity and know how to bounce back. I know they will work hard and prepare for each game so that they can compete to the best of their ability."

"I think our experience will be our strength. Last year, we were a young team that struggled at times. This year the girls are more prepared for the speed of varsity basketball. This group of girls has had success on the court growing up. They have worked hard this offseason and I expect that to show. I look forward to watching them do their thing. It's a great group of kids to coach. This team needs to continue to grow and learn. They need to take every experience and use it to fuel their success."

The Huskies hope to be a factor in the MSAC "Our conference should be competitive this



The 2019-20 Breckenridge girls basketball team.

year," Baldwin said. "I have no idea who is going to finish on top of the conference. I look around the league and see 4-to 5 teams that could potentially win it. I think we had three teams from the conference playing in district title games last year. Some of those teams were very young teams."

# Hemlock Girls Coming Off 24-1 Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Hemlock Huskies girls basketball coach Scott Neumeyer realizes it won't be easy to duplicate what his team did last season. The Huskies have started out 5-2. Last year, Hemlock finished the season 24-1 for the best record in school history, including an undefeated regular season (20-0). The team won conference and district titles. It lost by five to state runner-up Flint Hamady in the regional final. "Katy Snyder was a four-year varsity player," coach Scott Neumeyer said of a key graduate. "She was first team all-conference last season and honorable mention all-state. We will miss her size and scoring inside as well as her understanding of our defensive system. We haven't lost her completely, though, as she's serving as an assistant coach this season."

"Olivia Watson was a three-year varsity player who provided good

ballhandling and shooting for us at the guard position. She also was a leader in our defensive system. We are lucky to have her around this year as an assistant coach as well." But there are key players back such as Sydney Peake, a senior, 5-foot-10 forward, four-year varsity player, honorable mention all-state last year, second-leading scorer last season, who can guard all five positions, and is a good inside/outside scorer. Kylee Ryder is a senior 5-11 forward/center, and four-year varsity player, who is second team all-conference last year, an excellent inside/outside scorer and rebounder.

Cassidy Peake is a junior 5-foot-4 point guard, three-year varsity player, who was second team all-conference last year, who is an outstanding ballhandler and defender and gives great leadership from the point guard position. Chloe Watson is a freshman 5-foot-8 guard/forward, "who can handle

the ball as well as anyone we've had in our program, and is an excellent shooter who can post up as well and has a very high basketball IQ," Neumeyer said. Regan Finkbeiner "is a 5-foot-6 freshman guard, outstanding athlete who can handle the ball and shoot it as well, and is an excellent defender," Neumeyer said. "We have three returning starters from a team that went 24-1 a year ago, but other than that we're very young. We have seven first-year varsity players (four freshmen, two sophomores, and a junior). They're talented, but they're still learning the varsity game. We'll likely struggle at the beginning of the season, but if we stay healthy, we should be a decent team by the end of the season once we gain experience."

"From top to bottom, this is the fastest, most athletic team that I've had at Hemlock. It's also the best shooting, passing, and ballhandling team. Unfortunately, it's also the youngest team I've had, so it will take



The 2019-20 Hemlock girls basketball team.

them time to learn our defensive system and gain experience. I think by the end of the season we could be a very good team."

Neumeyer is looking for improvement.

"We need to get stronger and gain experience," Neumeyer said. "With such a young team, we're still prone to mental mistakes and are still learning the game. "We added some

new teams to the conference this year. Ithaca returns a strong group of starters and have added a talented freshman. Michigan Lutheran Seminary returns its 6-foot-1 center and point guard. Nouvel also returns several starters along with players from a talented JV team last year. I think those teams would be contenders for the league title. I'd like to think that we'll be in the mix as well."

# Blanchard A Key Factor For Freeland This Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Freeland started out 7-3 after its first 10 games following a state runner-up finish in Division 2 last season.

Matt Hirschenberger took over as coach when Tom Zolinski passed away at his home on Nov. 22 following a successful 12-year coaching career with the Falcons.

One of Freeland's top players is Kadyr Blanchard in her third varsity season.

"We went through a tragedy when we lost our head varsity coach just before the season got started," Hirschenberger said. "(Blanchard) recently signed to play basketball at Ferris State University. She has been our leading scorer. She also had a buzzer beater shot against Bay City Western. Her season high is 23 points."

"She's obviously a very important player for our team," Hirschenberger said. "She can play any situation. The one thing about her that's unique is

she can play every position on the floor well. That helps us out a lot."

A few weeks into the season, Blanchard was averaging 15 points per game.

"She's the type of player who is going to get better," Hirschenberger said. "She's expanded her role into leadership. She really enjoys her teammates."

Blanchard was first team All-State last season when she averaged 15 points, five rebounds, two assists and two steals per game as a guard. She also was second-team all-conference with volleyball.

Last season was memorable.

"It was pretty awesome since we went to the state finals," Blanchard said. "It was a cool experience and

everything. We reached our potential. We played an amazing team (Detroit Edison) in the finals. They were hard to beat. We played together as team.

Last year, I'll always remember.

"We lost four starters. I'm the only starter who came back. We lost one more senior who was our second player off the bench. We've all played together."

Her role has changed. "This year, I have to be a bigger threat than I was last year and be more of a leader because I'm a senior and I have the most experience on the team," she said.

Blanchard said she had offers from Wayne State, Davenport, Niagara and others before deciding on Ferris.

"It just seemed like home to me," she said.



Freeland coach Tom Zolinski answers questions during a press conference at the state finals last season. He passed away prior to the start of this season.



Kadyr Blanchard is a returning All-Stater for Freeland girls.

# Corunna standout signs with North Dakota

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Corunna volleyball all standout Elizabeth Norris has made it official.

She'll be playing her college volleyball at the University of North Dakota. She was a 2019 Miss Volleyball candidate.

"It's something I've been looking forward to my whole life," Norris said. "Making a verbal commitment was one thing but

to finally have it down on paper that this is my future and this is where I'll be is really cool. Talking to girls already on the team, I can become a part of the family as I end up my career here."

Corunna coach Kari Carnell tremendously enjoyed having Norris on her team for four varsity seasons. She was a setter and middle hitter.

"She is an extremely hard worker," Carnell said. "She is

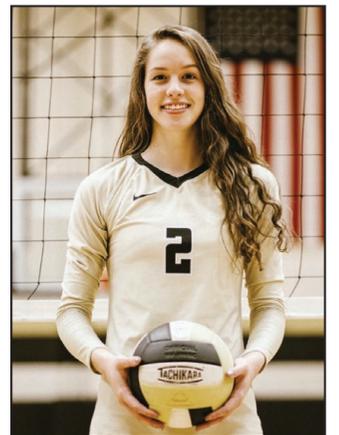
always very smart. She knows the game and is very smart about how she scores points. She can see the court on the other side at all times and reads plays well. She is good at multiple positions and is a six rotation player so she can make an impact in the game at any time."

"She has improved since last year. Coming off club season where she is her team's main setter has been beneficial to her as a player. She has always been a setter at the club level and now

she gets the opportunity to fill that role in high school as well."

Carnell has had some cherished moments with Norris.

"One of my most memorable moments with the athlete is honestly just sharing in the memories we have created over the past three years," Carnell said. "Winning districts for the first time in school history and then repeating the next two years after that has been such a fun memory that she and I will always have."



Corunna's Elizabeth Norris



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# P-W Girls Eye Another State Title

## John Raffel Sports Scene

The Pewamo-Westphalia Pirates are off to a 7-2 start as defending Division state girls basketball champions and are looking at seniors Ellie Droste and Hannah Spitzley to lead the way again.

Early season losses have included one to state power East Lansing.

P-W was 27-1 last season and edged Flint Hamady in the title game 40-33. Spitzley had eight points and three rebounds

Droste had 18 points in the title game, shooting 12-of-14 in free throws.

Spitzley had 16 points and Droste 15 in the semifinal game, a 37-33 verdict over Ypsilanti Prep

Spitzley was named the Associated Press Division 3 Player of the Year, leading the first-team balloting while Droste also made the first team, and coach Steve Eklund was Coach of the Year.

On the season, Spitzley averaged 13.8 points, 4.3 rebounds and 2.5 steals per game. She shot 50 percent from the field and 37 percent from 3-point range.

"Last year, we had so many great leaders and examples to look up to," Spitzley said.

"We had Rachel Huhn who led our team and loves the game so much. Everyone, at least I did, played the game for her. We all played pretty well last year especially getting into the tournament. Overall, we had one of the best seasons we've had in awhile."

The Pirates graduated four seniors from last. But they have nine seniors and three juniors and four returning starters.

"We're a very senior-led team," Spitzley said. "We hold high expectations for ourselves, especially coming out of a season winning a state championship. Anything less than that seems not as good. We hold ourselves to the highest expectation of trying to win the whole thing."

Spitzley usually has the role of guarding the best offensive defender from the other team.

"Offense has changed a little bit," Spitzley said. "We'll have a new ball handler this year. I'll be more of guard than a post this year."

Spitzley has committed to Western Michigan.

Droste, a guard, was All-State last season and averaged 14.1 points per game, while tallying 2.6 assists and 1.7 steals per game as well. She shot 59 percent from the field and 42 percent from 3-point land.

"The key last year was all the experience we've had with this team," Droste said. "We've gone far every year I've been on varsity. This helps when it comes to tournament time. Obviously we want another state championship. It will be hard. It won't be easy. We have to play our hardest. We can't take a possession off. Whatever happens, happens."

Droste will focus on being point guard.

"I try my best to get everyone in their places," she said. "I can see the floor pretty well. I think I can penetrate pretty well. I'm not the greatest ball handler in the world. I use my speed to my advantage."

Droste will play college basketball at Grand Valley.



Ellie Droste (40) and Hannah Spitzley (3) are returning All-Staters for P-W.

# Dove Leading Wolverines To Strong Record

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Jenna Dove and the Vestaburg Wolverines are turning the program around this season. They have gone from a team last season, which was 5-15, and are bidding for a winning record this winter.

"We had no seniors on last year's team," coach Matt Koutz said. "We have everyone back this year."

Dove, Koutz said, "will be one of our main offensive weapons. She has a high basketball IQ and will need to be a floor leader for us."

Brianna Zinn, he added, "is our captain and her leadership will be key in keeping us moving towards our goals."

Philea Johnston, Koutz said, "is our defensive stopper. We rely on her on both sides of the ball, as she is our point guards as well, but her biggest role is taking care of the other team's best player

most nights and she is always up for the challenge."

Rocky VanLuven "has worked hard on her shot and hopefully that will translate into some increased offensive production," Koutz said. "Defensively she is a tough, hard-nosed defender, especially in the interior."



Vestaburg's Jenna Dove

# Alma Boys Eye Another Championship Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Boys basketball coach Jerome Cleveland has been happy with how his boys basketball team has played all season. But he was especially pleased with the effort against Frankenmuth on Jan 24 in a 59-45 win.

Alma jumped out to a 16-6 lead and kept the advantage the rest of the game. Alma led at halftime 31-21. In the third, Frankenmuth made a great push, out scoring Alma 15-8 with some strong finishing inside. Alma then slammed the door with a 20-9 fourth quarter to pick up the TVC win.

It was the second one-loss team in two games RC has vanquished.

"Connected defense and balanced scoring have been the spark," Cleveland said. Alma was led by Cade Frillici's 22 points and four assists, Case Martin's 10 points seven rebounds and four steals, and Paul Gaddé's 10 points. "Our defense played at a high level for most of the night," Cleveland said. "We handled their pressure. They run a 1-3-1 trap. We did a good job getting excellent looks all night. We did a pretty good job on the boards. We got turnovers off the press. We got off to a good start."

Alma is 7-3 overall and 4-2 in the TVC.

"We got the W," Cleveland said. "They were 8-1. We beat Shepherd on Tuesday and they were 8-1 as well. It was a nice week for the Panthers." Frankenmuth goes to 8-2 and 4-2.

"Our first two opponents were pretty good opponents but we've made a lot of progress," Cleveland said. "We're playing nine or 10 guys every night and doing good things. We've won five straight district championships, they want to make it six. They won the regional last year and we want to go back-to-back. We want to get better each day and see how far that will take us."



Alma's David Apple attempts to take a shot against Shepherd.

# O-E Superintendent Coaching Girls Team To Successful Record

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Ryan Cunningham is superintendent of schools at Ovid-Elsie and is also coach of the Marauders girls basketball team, which has gotten off to an impressive 8-3 start.

"2018-19 was a decent year for us," Cunningham said. "We made it to the district finals and finished 12-10 on the year. We had several records fall as a team and for some individuals."

Key graduates included Erin Witt, Kylee Sevenski, Kennedy Haynes, Kierah Darling, Kylie Visger, Katelyn Stewart and Micayla Coleman many of which played three or four years on the varsity.

"Josie Nash, senior this year, decided to swim instead of play basketball,"

Cunningham. "She was also a three-year player."

Lauren Barton, who has signed with Indiana Tech, was last year's leading scorer and leading rebounder. She was all-conference for three years, all-area, all-state and all-academic.

Caitlyn Walter broke all three-point records as a freshmen and was all-conference

"We are very young," Cunningham said. "We have four freshmen, four sophomores, three juniors and three seniors. My expectations are to compete and show improvement each week. We have some tough teams in our conference. We have team chemistry, coachability and we return our top two scorers in Barton and Walter. We just need some game experience and



Ovid-Elsie's Girls Basketball Team

things will fall into place once we get a few games under our belt."

Ovid-Elsie is in the Mid-Michigan Activities Conference

"Byron is exceptional and could win a state

title this year and next," Cunningham said. "I don't see them getting beat in our league. New Lothrop is always good and well-coached and Chesaning has a strong crew coming through."

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Coach Scott Swinehart

# Ionia Boys Set For Another Fabulous Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

It was fabulous season for the Ionia Bulldogs boys basketball team last winter.

It's starting out to be another great year for Ionia.

The Bulldogs improved to 9-0 with a thrilling 56-53 win over Eaton Rapids in overtime.

Last season, Ionia finished 20-4 and won the CAAC White Division for the first league championship in 17 years. Ionia also won the district for the second year in a row.

"Wd lost eight seniors that

contributed heavily to the program and four starters, including Brady Swinehart, who averaged 21 points per game and earned All-State honors," coach Scott Swinehart said.

But the cupboard is hardly bare for this season.

Nick Szymanski is a 4-year varsity player, averaging 16.8 ppg, 8.1 rpg and 4. 2 apg. Logan Schafer is averaging 14.8 ppg and 7.4 rpg.

"Our goal is to win the CAAC White Division again this season," Swinehart said. "It will be a balanced league with a number of teams that could win it. Players have quickly adapted to their roles and accepted them within our

team. The team has versatility and with different lineups we have the ability to play it differently. They have been coachable which has allowed us to improve. We are just trying to grind it out and improve daily.

Ionia has already beaten Lansing Catholic and Eaton Rapids and is expected to be two of the toughest league opponents for the Bulldogs.

Quotes from players:

Nick Szymanski Sr. (4 year varsity player): "We have been bringing it to practice every day and working hard and that has carried over to games. We all know our roles, work hard and the ball movement has been good."

Logan Schafer Jr. (2-year varsity player): "We worked hard in the off-season which has led to the good start to this season. Hard practices have helped us improve. We all know our roles and we have good team chemistry. We have to continue working hard and playing together."

Caiden Reed Sr. three-year varsity player: "We have been successful and solid at the defensive end and have been creating for others on the offensive end."

In the first games, Ionia is averaging 65 ppg while giving up 49 ppg.

# Bridgeport Off To 10-0 Start

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Bridgeport's boys basketball team is making some noise again this season.

The Bearcats have bolted out to the first half of the season with a

10-0 record under Kevin Marshall and are leading the Tri-Valley East Conference.

It's his third year on varsity and was JV coach two years before that.

Bridgeport was 22-1 last season, advancing to the regionals before losing to Alma.

"It's our hard work and the guys buying into the system of the program we run here at Bridgeport," Marshall said. "We continue to work hard and it's paying off on game night.

"Compared to last year, I think this is a deeper team, a more

complete team. We don't have a superstar individual. We have a bunch of kids who work hard."

Top players include Jaylen Hodges, a junior and Kevin Mills. Hodges is averaging 16 points and six rebounds a game. Mills is at 10 points and six rebounds per game.

Bridgeport is 4-0 against Class A schools.

"We'll always continue to work on offense to get it more fluent," Marshall said. "We rely on defensive pressure. We want to stay healthy right now."



The 2019-2020 Bridgeport boys basketball all team. (Jaylen Hodges)

# Hemlock Boys Basketball Team Putting Together A Special Season

## Greg Chrapek Sports Scene

Heading into the season, the Hemlock boys basketball team knew it had the ingredients for something special. With the season reaching the halfway point, the Huskies are putting together a season to remember.

Hemlock opened the season with a 7-1 overall record and 6-1 league mark with the lone loss coming against unbeaten Carrolton.

"I knew going into the season that this team had good potential

and big upside," said Hemlock coach Matt Bauer. "We returned four of five starters from a 14-7 team and then we added some kids off an undefeated JV team. Maybe more important, the kids genuinely seem to like each other and enjoy coming to daily practice. We started off like gang busters with three convincing wins before Christmas."

Playing strong defense has been a key to success for Hemlock this season.

"We've done a good job on the

defensive end of the court so far," Bauer said. "We've also been solid rebounding the ball. In all of our games we've got off to a good start and made our opponents play from behind. We've played with a lot of energy and had contributions from a lot of different guys. We've had really good balance this year."

Nolan Finkbeiner leads a balanced Hemlock offense with 14 points per game along with 4.5 assists and two steals. Jayden Evans is adding 13 points per game along with 3.5 assists and 3.5 steals. Michael Zolinski is a presence in

the post with nine points, seven rebounds and two blocked shots per game. Brady Devereaux is another force up front with nine points, rebounds and three steals per game. Dylan LaGrow and Brayden Green are both averaging around six points per game while Max Dinninger, Mitch Hingson and Carter Miller has given the Huskies nice contributions off the bench.

Strong guard play is also a key to success.

"We've had almost twice as many assists as we have turnovers," Bauer said. "Our guard trio of Nolan,

Jayden and Dylan LaGrow have been terrific at taking care of the basketball."

With the second half of the season coming up, Hemlock is focused on improving and building on the early success.

"The biggest thing that we have to focus on is ourselves," Bauer said. "We need to make a conscious effort to improve daily. We need to make a conscious effort to improve daily. We need to focus on our skill development and executing our offense, defense and continue to play as a unit."



# Loynes Leads Solid Ovid-Elsie Boys Attack

## John Raffel Sports Scene

The last two boys basketball seasons have been special for Ovid-Elsie and coach Joshua Latz.

This season isn't looking too bad either, so far.

The Marauders won the MMAC league championship, finished 18-3 (for back-to-back 18 win seasons), and broke two school records with defensive points per game allowed, and Jake Loynes making eight 3-pointers in a game. Loynes, Liam Thompson and Cayleb Carman graduated from last season.

"They were great leaders who really set a tradition of success and the way to do things the right way around our program," Latz said.

Key returners include Shayne Loynes, who averaged 12 points a game, is a three-year varsity player, all conference and all area last year and should be one of the best point

guards in the area.

Justin Moore, a three-year varsity player, and all-area last year, "is

one of the most versatile big men in the area. Shayne and Justin are one of the best inside-outside combos in the state," Latz said. "We expect to continue to build off back to back 18-win seasons and back-to-back conference titles. We expect to compete in every game we play in, and hope to play to our standard each night. "We are strong with leadership and playing the right way. Our guys have bought in to our culture very well. We need to get some of our younger guys up to speed and get them reps at the varsity level quickly."

The first priority is going after a league title. "Our conference is very strong at the top," Latz said. "New Lothrop, Chesaning, and Durand should all be contenders, and we consider ourselves to be contenders as well as long as

we can continue to improve and play up to what we expect our guys to play."

It's Moynes' third year on the varsity.

"Shayne has had a great start to the season in leading us to two victories," Latz said.

"I think the key to my success has been my work ethic and a strong supporting cast," Moynes said. "I have worked so hard during the offseason to improve my skills and get ready for this season and I'm glad that it shows. However, I could never do this without the support of my teammates. I really love the culture we are building and how close we are on a personal level. "I have made sufficient improvements in all five of the major statistical categories when compared to last year, but the most noticeable is the scoring. I also think that my turnover ratio compared to last year is much lower, which is the main thing I wanted to focus on this year. Additionally, I also feel

like my leadership qualities have improved from last year to this year."

Leadership, scoring, IQ and passing abilities are areas in which Loynes feels he has especially improved.

"The memorable moments I can recall are winning the district championship as a sophomore in front of a sold-out crowd at home, winning conference championships in my sophomore and junior years, and then getting to spend time with my teammates during camps and weekend vacations, Loynes said.

"I want to continue to be a great leader for us and always set the tone on both sides of the floor," he said.

"Shayne is a gym rat," Latz said. "He spends countless hours in the gym everyday working to be the best he can be. Shayne is the perfect example of a role model to younger kids. He is truly a joy to be around." c



Ovid-Elsie's Shayne Loynes

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# Mount Pleasant Basketball Picking Up Where It Left Off

## Greg Chrapek Sports Scene

With a talented core group of players back from last season, the Mount Pleasant boys basketball is picking up where it left off.

One of the premier Division 1 teams in Mid-Michigan last season, Mt. Pleasant, is again among the top teams this season. The Oilers reeled off six straight wins to open the new season with a combination of a stingy defense and a balanced, explosive offense leading the way.

Mount Pleasant won by double digits in all six of its opening wins and limited opponents to 40 points or less in four of the six wins.

“So far we’ve been taking care of business,” said Mt. Pleasant coach Dan Schell. “Our defense has been pretty good. We have a pretty athletic team and they have been

playing some pretty good defense so far.”

On offense, the Oilers have been putting up some impressive numbers and have a big upside as well.

“We still have some issues to fix on offense,” Schell said. “We have been getting better every game on offense. It’s a long season and we just want to continue to improve on offense.”

Mount Pleasant is built around its seven returning veterans, including a trio of returning all-conference players. Senior guards Mason Wojtusik and Jo Ostrowsky and senior forward Tyler Huenemann bring outstanding skill and leadership to the floor. Senior guard Jack Payton, senior forwards Tyrone Rios and Alec Mills and junior center Josh Schell brings even more experience and talent to the floor for a deep Oiler squad.

Ostrowsky is off to a sizzling start this

season highlighted by a 43-point outburst in a win against Essexville-Garber.

“Jo is just a real good guard,” Schell said. “He is one of the best I’ve coached. In the Garber game he got rolling and was knocking the shots down. He takes the shots that are available. One night he might score 40 points, but the next game he might just take six shots and score 10 points.”

Being unselfish is a big focus of the Mt. Pleasant offense as the scoring load is spread out from game to game.

“No one cares who scores the points,” Schell said. “We look for the best matchups on offense. We get the ball to the players who give us the best percentage to win the game. Scoring is not a big deal to them.”

Sitting at the top of the conference standings, the Oilers are looking get stronger as the season develops.

“I’ve been pleased,” Schell said. “So far we are making strides and heading in the right direction. We are not an elite team yet, but we are making strides.”



Senior guard Jo Ostrowsky is one of three returning all-conference players for Mt. Pleasant this season.

# Defense A Strong Point As Fulton Boys Basketball Team Starts Strong

## Greg Chrapek Sports Scene

Thanks to a stingy defense and sharing the ball on offense, the Fulton-Middleton boys basketball team has started the season strong.

The Pirates approached the halfway point of the season with a 7-2 overall record. Fulton’s losses came in overtime to Dansville and against undefeated, league-leaders Potterville.

“The season has gone well so far,” said Fulton coach Todd Walden. “We haven’t shot the ball very consistently yet, but we have been pretty good defensively so far. Our defense has allowed us to get off to a pretty good start.”

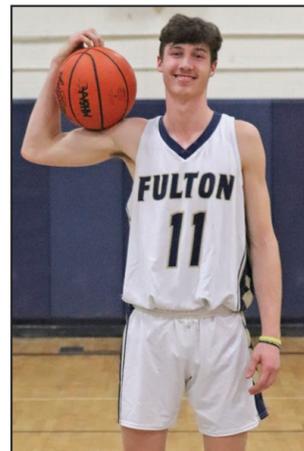
Through nine games this season the Fulton defense is allowing 45.6 points per game.

On the offensive side of the floor, the Pirates have relied on balanced scoring to pace the offense. Through the first seven games this season Hunter Elkins is averaging 12.6 points per game while Sam Lung is scoring 12.4 points per game and Grant Batis is adding 12 points per game. Travis Hungerford leads the team in rebounding is a threat on offense as he is averaging seven points and seven rebounds per game. Colton Wells is averaging seven points per game while George Glidden is adding four points and four rebounds per game.

“Our scoring has been pretty balanced,” Walden said. “We have had several kids step up and play well on different nights.”

As the calendar turns to February the Pirates have some challenging games coming up. Fulton face defending state champion Pewamo-Westphalia in the coming weeks along with a rematch with league-leading Potterville.

“We are very happy about the start to the season,” Walden said, but realize we have lots of work to do in order to compete with the best teams in our league and reach our goal of making a tournament run in March.”



Fulton Senior Hunter Elkins

# Pewamo-Westphalia Hopes To Be State Contender Again

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Luke Pohl has a unique challenge this year as Pewamo-Westphalia’s basketball coach.

Pohl’s Pirates won the state title last year and have started off at 8-1. The only loss so far has been 61-59 to Laingsburg, a member of the Central Michigan Athletic Conference.

“We’re pleased with where we’re at,” Pohl said. “Every win is a key win as far as I’m concerned. I’m happy to be where we are defensively. We didn’t do a very good job the second game of the year to Laingsburg. We have the meat of the schedule coming

up.”

On Jan. 24, P-W beat previously undefeated Potterville 56-24.

Aaron Bearss is the only returning starter from last year’s state championship team. He scored 15 points in the title game.

“He’s been doing all right,” Pohl said. “Kyle Stump has picked it up for us. He’s a senior. He was a sub last year. He’s been a tremendous leader. Keegan Smith has had some good ballgames also.

“We’re doing well defensively. If you take out the Laingsburg game, we’re probably averaging giving up 31 points game. That’s as good of a number as I’ve had in coaching. I still think we can do better.

We’re continually trying to develop our offense.”

As defending state champs, Pohl finds the opposition focuses on playing a strong game against the Pirates.

“We won every game last year, and we’re on a winning streak going up against Laingsburg,” Pohl said. “You could tell how pleased they were to beat us.”

Pohl likes his team’s prospects.

“We’ve got some different strengths from last year’s team but also have weaker point from last year team,” Pohl said “We have a sophomore and freshman up. They’re playing better and better. They’re starting to come on.”



P-W coach Luke Pohl patrols the sidelines at last year’s state championship game.

# Central Boys Team Hungry For Titles

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Central Montcalm’s boys basketball team went all the way to the district finals last year before losing to Alma in the title game.

But coach Dan Basom’s team is looking for more this season, and has started out with a 6-2 record.

The Hornets were 8-6 in the Central State Activities Association Gold last year and are making some noise this season.

Key graduates from last year were Jared Ledford (capable wing scorer), Drew Jacoby (strong post player) and Brian Cooper (2-year

starting point guard).

But Basom has some exceptional talent for this year’s squad.

Gunner Hill is a senior forward, and all-state honorable mention last season and all-conference each of the last two seasons, and three-year team captain.

“Gunner is our leading returning rebounder and scorer,” Basom said. “He is the vocal leader of our team.”

Asher Vissman is a senior wing and all-league honorable mention last season.

“He is a terrific shooter and has high basketball IQ,” Basom said.

“He is a 3-year team captain, and the team’s best shooter and perimeter scorer.”

Trenton Shaffer is senior center, team captain, and an “excellent post player with terrific ball skills, and a 4.0 GPA” Basom said.

The Hornets want to compete for championships, he added.

“Our post players, our height and



2019-2020 Central Moncalm boys basketball team.

strength inside,” are strengths for the team, he said, adding “limiting turnovers and improving team defense” will be critical. “We feel

we are one of the league favorites and other strong teams will be Grant and Big Rapids.”

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# Okemos Hockey Skates Out To 15-1 Record

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Coach Bill Sipola's Okemos Chiefs mean business on the hockey rink this season.

Okemos has started off with a 15-1 record.

Last season, "we had a pretty good year losing in the regional tournament. Okemos graduated key players like Logan Faustyn, Christian Montrose and Keegan Lucker.

Key players this year are senior defenseman Sawyer Walker, junior defenseman Casey

Faustyn, junior forward Cooper Derath and Max Donneras and senior forward Kurt Sohlden.

"These are just a few (key players) but the expectations are to play to win every game," Sipola said. "We expect to compete for the league title."

Skating will be a team strength but Okemos needs to work on its goaltending, Sipola said.

Okemos competes in the South Central High School Hockey League. The team has had early-season wins over Jackson,



Okemos Chiefs Hockey Team

Flushing, Walled Lake Northern, Pinckey, East Lansing, Portage Central, East Grand Rapids, Holt, Kalamazoo Loy Norrix, Mount Pleasant, Jackson, DeWitt, Flushing, Jackson

Lumen Christi and Holt. The only loss has been to Chelsea.

"We have a good conference," Sipola said. "We are ready to get at it."

# Flint Powers Will Be Strong Again

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Catholic is again expected to have a very formidable hockey team again this season. Last year, coach Travis Perry's team was 17-7-2 record and took second place in the SVL. Last year's captain was Luke Evo, and he is playing in the CCHL. Key players will be Tim and Alex Washburn, Tyler Lawrence, Brent Zloto and Brennan Churchill. It will be the same type of expectations: League title, regional title and a state championship. "Strength will be goaltending and defense," Perry said. "Goal scoring will be tough to come by, since we have a very young team as well with 10 underclassmen. "It's a tough conference,"



Flint Powers Catholic Hockey Team

Perry said. "Heritage and Dow are probably the favorites, hopefully we can surprise a few teams." League members are Flint Powers Catholic, Saginaw Heritage, Midland Dow, Midland, Mt. Pleasant, Davison, Bay City Central, Bay Area Thunder, Lapeer and Grand Blanc.

# Lowell Eager For Another Ski Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Karla Byrne has her Lowell ski team ready for a unique second varsity season.

Lowell is in the OK White Conference and Region 5 of Division 2.

"Last year was our first time back to the racing scene for Lowell in about six years," Byrne said. "Our girls team competed at regionals for the first time. Highlight of the year was having freshman, Kaylee Byrne, qualify as an individual for the state finals in both slalom and giant slalom. She ended up finishing the season with a 12th

place finish in slalom and 13th place finish in GS.

"We are excited to have Kaylee Byrne back as a returning sophomore this year. New to the team is sophomore Preston Sobock and freshman Colton Byrne, both of whom are also experienced racers. Returning this year and looking to improve on their times are sophomores, Cole Lillie and Olivia Torline. Returning senior and a member of the girls regional team last year, is Mattie Torline. We have grown our program from just seven athletes last year to 14 this year."

The building program continues.

"As always, we are looking to build a solid team of skiers," Byrne said. "Most importantly we want them to have fun participating in a sport they can do for a lifetime. Time will tell as we get time on the snow, but they all definitely share a competitive spirit."

We have seven athletes new to racing on the team, so learning to navigate the courses will be our top priority.

We hope to have both a competitive boys and girls team this year. Last year, we struggled as a team to gain enough points to be competitive, but we are hoping to turn that around this year."



The 2019-20 Lowell ski team.

# Heritage Ski Team Plans On Being Conference Contender

## John Raffel Sports Scene

David Corcoran is coaching a Saginaw Heritage ski team which hopes to be a factor in the Central Alpine Ski Conference this season.

Highlight of the season included at the Division 1 regional at Crystal Mountain when sophomore Avery Kenny qualified as an individual for the state final meet with a sixth-place finish in giant and a ninth-place finish in slalom. The boys team finished ninth in giant and seventh in slalom, eighth overall. The girls team finished ninth in slalom and 10th in GS, 10th overall.

At the Division 1 state final, Avery Kenny went onto place 12th in giant slalom and 20th in slalom.

"Kyler Brown and Max Smith graduated," Corcoran said. "Kyler was boys team captain. Both were strong journeymen skiers who often contributed to team scoring."

"Key athletes this season will be Avery Kenny and Logan Boardman, both returning as juniors. We anticipate that both will achieve all conference status. We expect Avery will repeat as a state meet individual qualifier and we expect Logan may well join Avery as individual qualifier."

The expectations are high.

"Our hope is to improve over last



The 2019-20 Saginaw Heritage ski team.

year's performance for both boys and girls teams," Corcoran said. "We are reduced to only four skiers on the girls' team. A strong work ethic and good sportsmanship

characterize our teams. We need to focus on consistency.

"Hard to predict, but Mount Pleasant, Clare and Harrison all have strong teams and any of

them could be league favorites. I just don't know who they lost to graduation and Heritage will do its best but I wouldn't say we are favorites."

# Skier Eyes Return To State Finals

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Saginaw Heritage varsity ski coach David Corcoran is expecting plenty from junior Avery Kenny this season and Kenny plans on being more than happy to oblige.

"We anticipate that Avery will be an individual state finalist in 2020," Corcoran said. "As a sophomore, Avery finished ninth in slalom and 6th in giant slalom at the regional to qualify as an individual for the state

finals last season. At the state final, Avery finished 12th in giant slalom and 20th in slalom.

Avery's key to success is his hard work and dedication along with his focus on continuous improvement."



Saginaw Heritage skiers get ready for a practice.

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# CC-Crystal Expects To Be Poms Contender

John Raffel Sports Scene

Carson City-Crystal coach Natalie Smith expects to have a very talented pompon coach this season.

Smith is a new coach at CC-C.

"Poms had three seniors graduate last year and they helped make the routines to perform," Smith said. "I have three returning pom girls: Anne Fitzpatrick, senior; Mariah Wesner, junior and Kianna Newswanger,

sophomore. They are all great leaders to the new girls and help when ever needed. New to the team are sophomores: Shawna Sua; Sydni Bentley, Alexis Moreland and Jayden Tenahve and freshman Isabelle Kapustka and Rivers Stewart.

"I expect my girls to strive to get better each and every time they practice and perform. There is always room for improvement in this sport. Our strength comes from our

teammates. They count on each other to work in unison. We have struggled with kickline, that is one of the hardest parts of a routine. With lots of determination it will come together."

The Eagles compete in Michigan Pom Association's competition and the Mid American Regionals.

"We're looking to achieve higher scores than the prior years," Smith said.



The 2019-20 Carson City-Crystal poms team

# Charlotte Cheerleaders Focusing On Another Strong Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Charlotte coach Yvonne Ridge expects to have another highly competitive cheer team this season.

Last season, the team broke three school records through the 2018-2019 season and qualified for its third consecutive state final championships.

The team won its eighth consecutive league championship, won districts, placed fourth at states and were the State Academic Team Champions in Davison 3 with a 3.73 team GPA.

Some excellent talented graduated from last year's Charlotte team.

"Flyers Mady Conklin and Kenzie Bleisch, they both cheered all four years on varsity and competed in all three rounds of competition," Ridge said. "They're not only tremendous athletes but amazing leaders who definitely left their mark with the Charlotte Cheer program. Mady Conklin is attending Davenport University on a cheer scholarship and Kenzie is attending Michigan State University. They have both made it back to Charlotte to visit

and watch the team they were so proud to be part of.

Seniors are Lynsey Peters (main base), Erica Brock (back spot), Zaraya Newth (flyer) and Haley Hoyt (secondary base)/

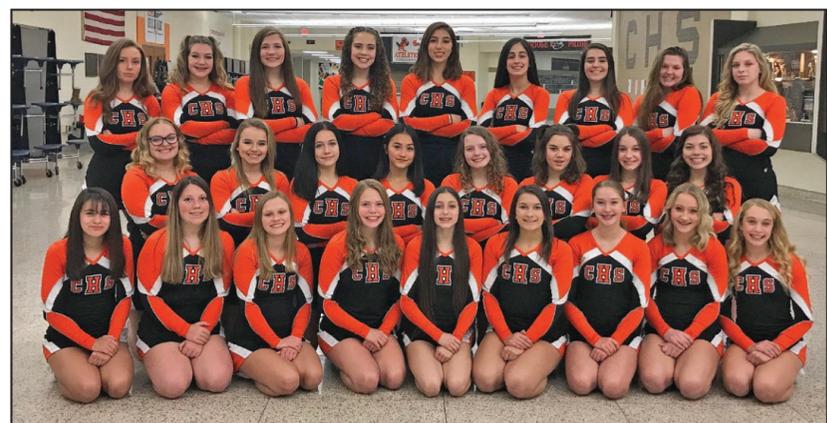
"These seniors set the pace for Charlotte cheer," Ridge said. "They are driven, dedicated and help push our young team to the next level. They are the teachers, motivators and set the example for athletes to follow. Coaches expectation of these athletes is to own our theme. We decide how hard we work at practice. We decide to be academically strong. We decide to be respectable and be a leader at cheer, school and the community. We decide how successful we will be as a team."

Juniors are Julia Phillips (main base) and Ellie Lundy (flyer).

"Expectations are to continue the traditions of Charlotte cheer and to support the seniors as they lead the team to the next level," Ridge said.

Sophomores are Dakota Gerald (main base) and Cara Rankin (secondary base)

"Both of these sophomores



The Charlotte cheerleaders are set for another competitive season.

compete in all three rounds of competition," Ridge said. "Cara is extremely talented in tumbling and Dakota is a true leader on the team. Expectations are they continue to believe that we decide and continue to lead by example and build confidence on the floor as they compete."

Freshman are Annabelle Densmore (flyer), Savanna McConnell (back spot) and Serena Sparks (flyer)

"These freshmen have worked hard and earned a spot in all three rounds of competition," Ridge said. "Coaches expectations are that they continue to improve their already great skills and learn the tradition of

hard work and dedication."

Among the team goals is win a ninth straight league championship, break four school records, qualify for the state meet and be the Division 2 All Academic state champions.

"We have always been a strong stunting team," Ridge said. "In addition to stunting being strength I would add tumbling and jumps. Last year we had eight team tucks and so far this year we have 13 team tucks. We have worked hard on jump conditioning and feel we are at our best right now. Being strong in stunts, jumps and tumbling will be a game changer for our team this year.

"We have a team of four seniors, five juniors, seven sophomores and 10 freshmen so gaining confidence on the floor is something we will continue to work on. In addition, we are always working on motions, jumps, tumbling and stunting. No matter how good the scores, there is always room for improvement."

It will be an extremely competitive league.

"Last year Charlotte was Division 3 and DeWitt was Division 2 and we tied for the league champions," Ridge said. "This year with Charlotte being moved back to the Division 2, it will make the league even more competitive."

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# Mount Pleasant Anticipates Strong Season In Cheer

John Raffel Sports Scene

Justin Freeland is coaching a Midland Bullock Creek team with top scorer and rebounder early in the season being sophomore Ella Gaffke, averaging about 15 points, and seven rebounds per game.

"Forward Mayson Barringer is our only senior, missed game one with injury but is working her way back into lineup and should be major contributor," Freeland said. "Addi Buda, Lauren Bradford and Lexie Hartnagle are juniors on varsity for the third season. We have five freshmen,

all of whom are great kids and will contribute on the floor.

"It's going to be a process. We had a streak of 15 winning seasons snapped the past two seasons. With only one senior and five freshmen among our five players, we are focused on improving each day and winning some games along the way. In many ways this is year one of shaping what the next generation of Creek basketball is going to look like."

Balance is expected to be a strength.

"We're a team without two or

three super elite players, but instead have several ladies who on a given night can give us some points or rebounds," Freeland said. "We have the ability to get up and down the floor closer to the tempo we would prefer to play.

"Our young players just need to go more experienced at the varsity level. Claiming youth is an excuse so we won't ever use that, but one fact of life is when you are playing a lot of 14 to 15 year old kids, they are going to get physically stronger in the next year or two that will help their games develop immensely."



Mount Pleasant girls work on their round 3 during a practice.

# St. Louis Set For Strong Poms Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Amiee Taylor is coach of the very successful St. Louis poms team this season.

She's expecting another strong season.

"It's hard to pick one star player as all of the girls play an important part of this team in making a routine whole, as there is no I in team," Taylor said. "In the offseason, we condition and fund raise for the next competition season, such as pumping gas, selling pizzas, and selling bake goods that we make together as a team.

"The very top moment of the season so far is that we are very excited to advance from regional's competition to states come Feb. 9, at Eastern Michigan

University, and with it being my second year coaching, to have this happen is very rewarding. Top moments include us being asked by Wrestling Coach Kuhn for our team this year to perform sidelines routine at our home meet against Shepherd."

Taylor said over half of the team is first-year pommers.

"They all have grasped onto everything and improved with their pom skills," Taylor said. "This season has been a journey but nothing short of amazing as the girls have gotten along so well and it's so rewarding having a team that bonds so well together.

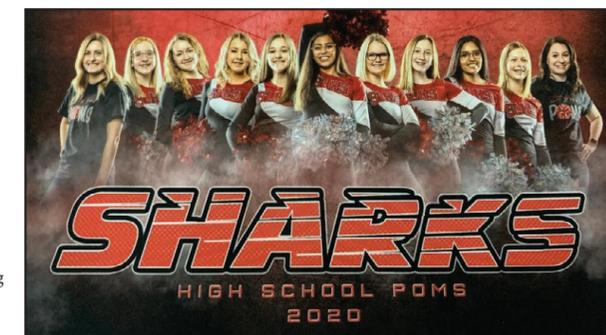
"Some athletes that graduated last year that I would say that we miss is as follows:

Megan Greenup for her beautiful C jumps and toe touches, knowing that she came into this sport for

her first year last year and killed it; Holli Rivard for her being a four-year athlete, sharpest girl on the team, and always had flawless performances; Rilyn Hrabal and Allyssa Roberson for their facials that won over the crowd and judges, and them being quick learners."

Taylor has some key expectations her girls.

"Expectations for the girls is that they work hard inside and outside of practice and to know the routine practically forwards and backwards," Taylor said. "Also, when stepping onto that performance floor, we want to 'leave' it out on the floor. Giving me, the audience, and judges 110 percent to show us all that they deserve to be there and that they



deserve a chance at the title of state champs.

"The girls strength is they have this season is team unity and I am proud to be their coach. Also their kick-line skills have been amazing from the start of season and have just gotten better as the season goes on. The girls weakness is that they need to remain a team outside of practice.

"The league favorites and our biggest competition is Fulton High School Poms and Hemlock High School Poms teams," Taylor said. "We would like to say that we keep our friends close and our enemies closer. But we always wish them good luck and have good sportsmanship towards all other teams that we compete against."



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**\$995/DN.\* **SAVE** \$195/MO.\* **\$6,995!****

**\$2,000/DN.\* \$139/MO.\***

**SALE PRICE \$18,900**

MSRP \$25,895

PRICE AND PAYMENT BASED ON COURTESY TRANSPORTATION VEHICLE, GMS, GM LEASE LOYALTY PMT BASED ON \$899 DOWN PLUS TAXES AND STATE FEES AND 1 ST PAYMENT \$4 MO FLEX PURCHASE, 8500 MILES PER YEAR



### 2019 GMC SIERRA LIMITED DOUBLE CAB 4X4

**\$187/DN.\* **SAVE** \$187/MO.\* **\$11,035!****

**\$3,000/DN.\* \$112/MO.\***

**SALE PRICE \$28,700**

MSRP \$39,735

GM FINANCIAL, GMS 36 MO 10K LEASE C.T.P. 8500 MILES, LEASE LOYALTY TAX AND PLATE NOT INCLUDED



### 2020 GMC TERRAIN FWD

**\$259/DN.\* **SAVE** \$259/MO.\* **\$6,390!****

**\$3,000/DN.\* \$159/MO.\***

**SALE PRICE \$23,500**

MSRP \$29,890

GM FINANCIAL, GMS, 24MO 8500 MILE LEASE C.T.P. 8500 MILES, LEASE LOYALTY TAX AND PLATE NOT INCLUDED



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<h4>2011 CHEVY MALIBU LS</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$3,900</b></p> <p><b>\$99/DOWN \$99/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2007 CHRYSLER PT CRUISER</h4> <p>SUNROOF</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$3,900</b></p> <p><b>\$99/DOWN \$99/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2008 CHRYSLER 300 LIMITED</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$6,900</b></p> <p><b>\$129/DOWN \$129/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2010 CHEVY SILVERADO LTZ</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$19,900</b></p> <p><b>\$309/DOWN \$309/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2008 FORD FUSION</h4> <p><b>SALE \$1,800</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 
<h4>2011 GMC TERRAIN SLE</h4> <p>SUNROOF</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$9,500</b></p> <p><b>\$185/DOWN \$185/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2012 GMC SIERRA 2500 HD SLT</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$25,900</b></p> <p><b>\$365/DOWN \$365/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2011 RAM 1500</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$15,900</b></p> <p><b>\$279/DOWN \$279/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2014 CHEVY TRAVERSE LTZ</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$15,900</b></p> <p><b>\$279/DOWN \$279/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2016 FORD FOCUS S</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$7,900</b></p> <p><b>\$155/DOWN \$155/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 
<h4>2016 GMC CANYON SLE 1</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$22,900</b></p> <p><b>\$345/DOWN \$345/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2014 DODGE GRAND CARAVAN SE</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$11,900</b></p> <p><b>\$229/DOWN \$229/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2009 CHEVY IMPALA LS</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$2,900</b></p> <p><b>\$89/DOWN \$89/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2007 GMC SIERRA 2500 HD</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$17,900</b></p> <p><b>\$275/DOWN \$275/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 	<h4>2017 CHEVY TRAX</h4> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$12,900</b></p> <p><b>\$229/DOWN \$229/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p> 

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