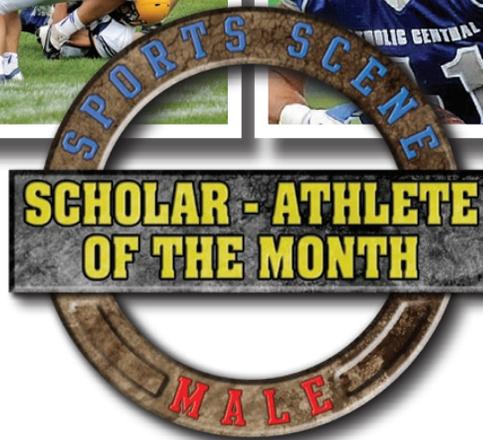
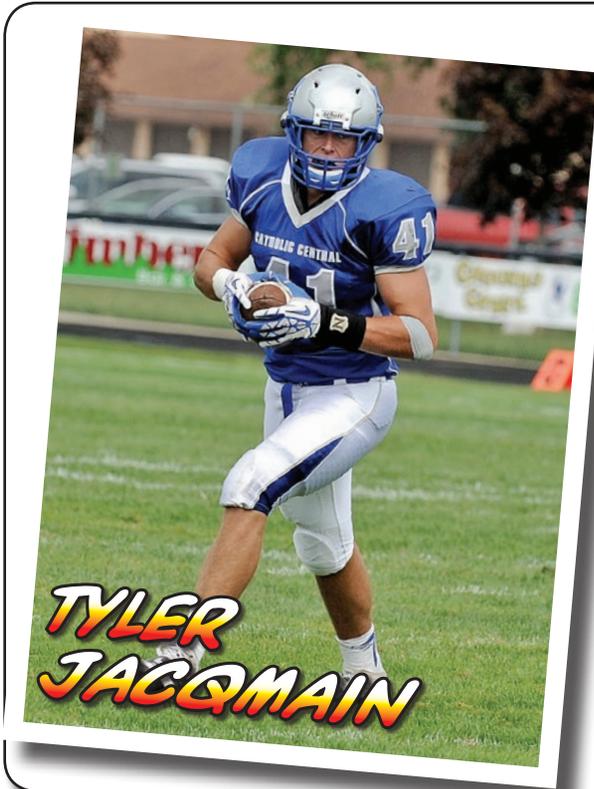




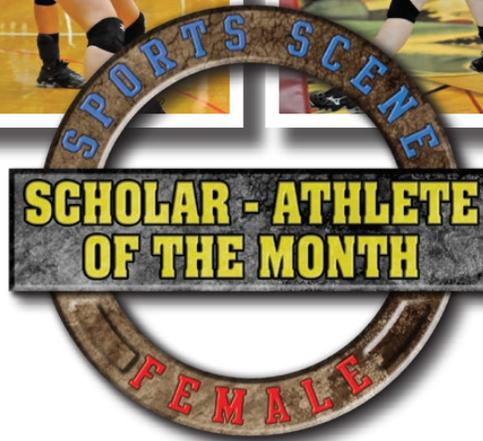
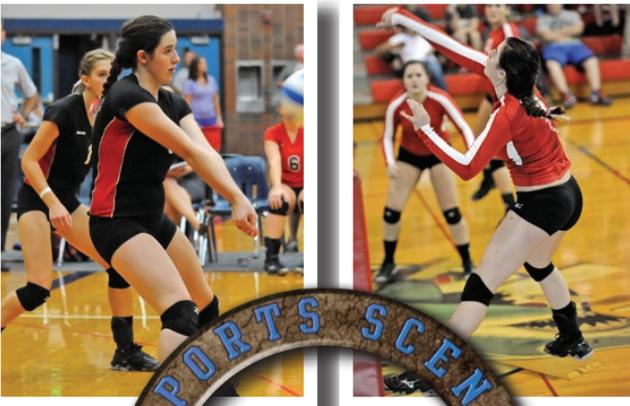
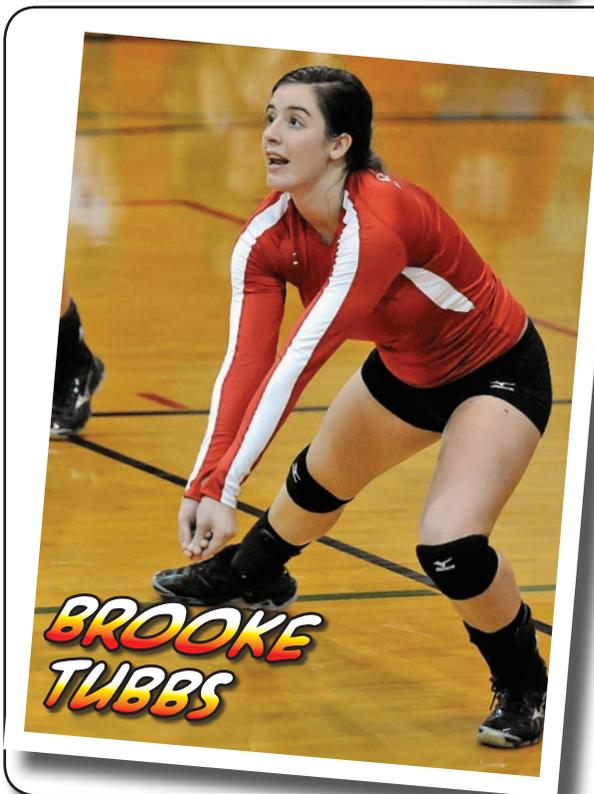
# MALE AND FEMALE SCHOLAR-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH PRESENTED BY:

# COVENANT CENTER FOR ADVANCED ORTHOPAEDICS



## Scholar-Athlete of the Month

**Name:** Tyler Jacqmain  
**School:** Nouvel Catholic Central  
**Sport:** Football  
**Season Accolades:** Nouvel has gotten off to a 3-1 start this season with Jacqmain leading the way on defense. He is also contributing on offense at his tight end position.  
**Accomplishments:** In 2012, Jacqmain had 110 tackles, five sacks, three fumble recoveries, and two interceptions. Jacqmain is a three-year starter and first team all-stater at inside linebacker. He was also a member of the 2011 Division 7 state championship team.  
**GPA:** Jacqmain carries a 4.3 grade-point average, and he scored 32 on the ACT.  
**Future:** Jacqmain has attended camps at Western Michigan University, Central Michigan University, Michigan State University, and Northwestern University in hopes of making the move to the next level.



## Scholar-Athlete of the Month

**Name:** Brooke Tubbs  
**School:** St. Louis High School  
**Sport:** Volleyball / Outside Hitter  
**Season Accolades:** Has helped St. Louis to a No. 1 ranking in Class C. Along with senior Bri Albaugh, makes up a dynamic duo that has the Sharks gunning for another possible trip to Battle Creek and a state championship.  
**Accomplishments:** As a freshman in 2010, Tubbs was on the team that made it all the way to the Class C finals before losing to St. Mary Catholic.  
**Future:** One of the top students in her class, Tubbs plans on playing volleyball at Alma College, where she plans on studying pre-med.



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## Staff Directory

### Publisher

Randy Miniard  
517-202-1808

randy@highschoolsportsscene.com

### Sports Editor

Scott Keyes

scott@highschoolsportsscene.com

### High School Liaison

Paul Hornak

paul@highschoolsportsscene.com

### Photographers

Chuck Prikasky, Alan Holben, Nathan Bootz, Bob Campbell, Jamey Conn, Reyna Widman, Gary Williams, Jordan Oster, Anne Russ, Jeff McGinthy, Kevin Gregory, Chip DeGrace, Tom Reynolds, Anne Russ, Zip Widman

### Editorial

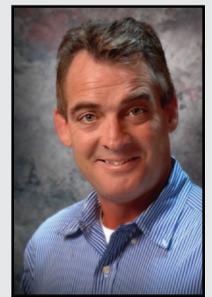
John Raffel, David Cook, Jeff Chaney, Ben Murphy, Greg Tunnicliff, Butch Harmon, Dan Stickrad, Geoff Mott, Bill Khan

If you have a story idea or suggestions please contact Randy Miniard at 517-202-1808. or randy@highschoolsportsscene.com.

Thanks again for your support.

## Publisher's note

It's a great day here at High School Sports Scene, and we're in the middle of a busy and great fall high school sports season. With a little more chill in the air and the leaves starting to turn colors, you know you are in the middle of the high school football season, and what a season it has been so far! I was at the mega-blockbuster football game in Lowell September 20, when the unbeaten Red Arrows took on the unbeaten Muskegon Big Reds, who have been defeating everybody in the sight. Coach Noel Dean, however, had his Red Arrows primed, and Lowell came out of the battle royale with the win and their sights set on a trip to Ford Field come November.



Randy Miniard

Other area teams have been having huge seasons this fall, including the Ithaca Yellowjackets, who have not skipped a beat as they go for a fourth straight state title. The area is also home to several other teams that started the season with 4-0 records, including Beal City, Carson-City Crystal, Coleman, DeWitt, Lansing Sexton, Mason, Midland, Montrose, New Lothrop, Pewamo-Westphalia, Portland, Meridian, and Swan Valley. Good luck to all the area football teams as the season heads for the home stretch and teams look for that sixth win to qualify for what should be a great playoff season.

Area runners, golfers, swimmers, tennis players, soccer players, and volleyball players are also busy with their sports. Girls' golf teams are gearing up for conference tournaments and for the state meet coming up in October.

The area, especially the greater Lansing area, is home to some outstanding soccer teams this fall. Look for East Lansing boys' soccer to make a big run at a state title this year. Some outstanding runners are blazing the cross-country courses this fall. The countless miles that high school runners logged in the off-season are starting to pay off as the state finals get closer.

Everyone here at High School Sports Scene Magazine is working hard to bring the stories and capture all the photos of the fall action. Check out the High School Sports Scene Magazine website to keep on top of the action and to get photos of your favorite athletes. With the nice weather winding down, be sure to get out to your local football field on a Friday night or check out some soccer or golf or tennis and enjoy the fall Sports Scene.

Randy Miniard

Publisher

517-202-1808

randy@highschoolsportsscene.com



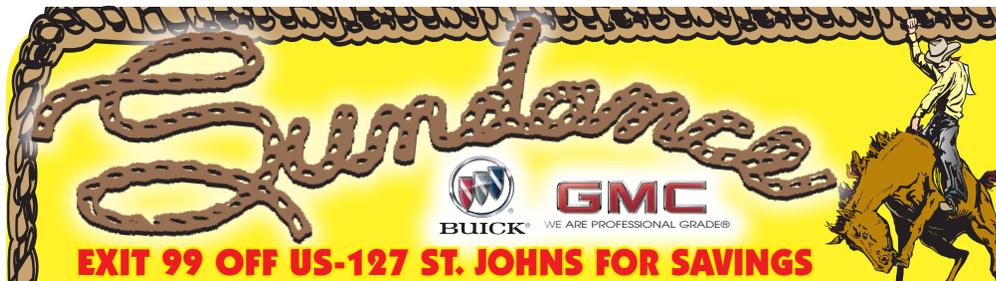
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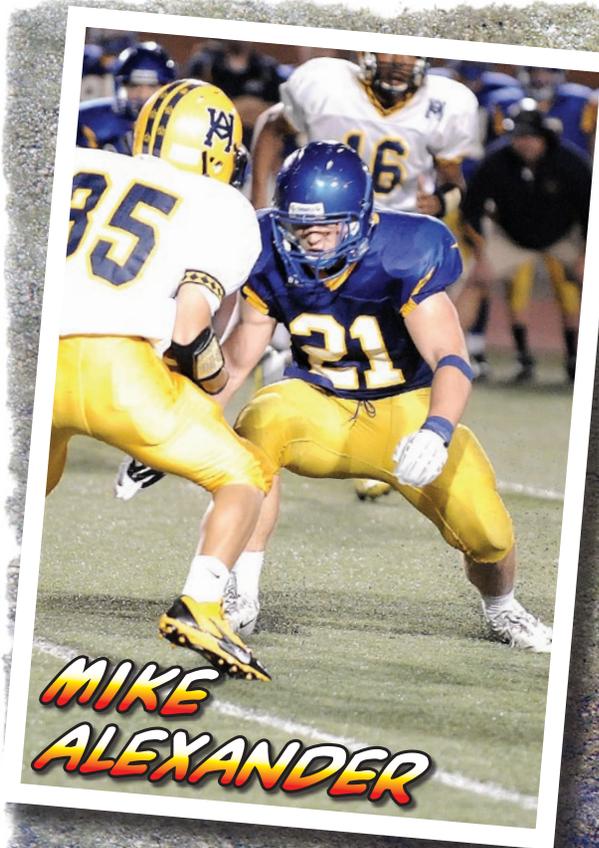
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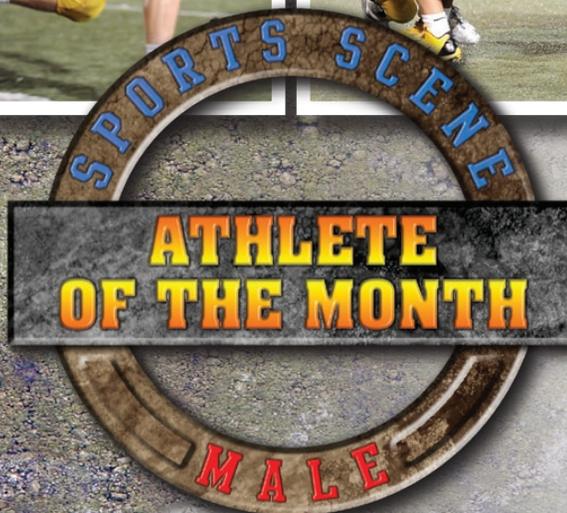
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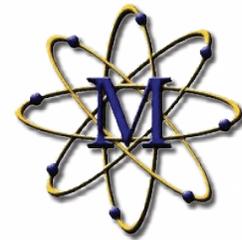


MIKE ALEXANDER

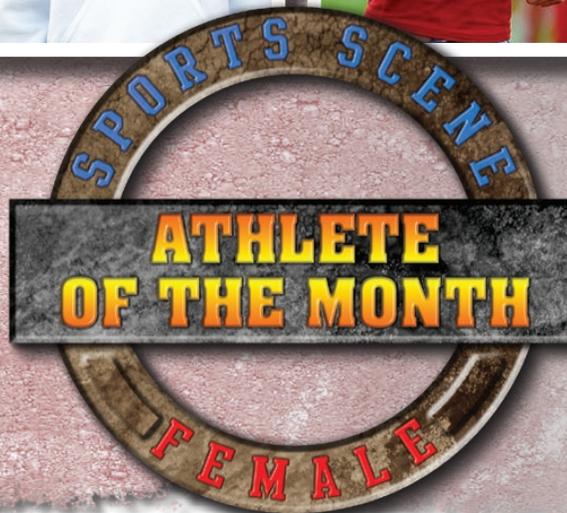


The Mike Alexander File

Midland High School
Sport: Football / LB / FB
Season Accolades: Alexander has helped the Midland football team to a 4-0 record this season...
Accomplishments: After playing football through his 10th grade season in Missouri...
GPA: 3.3
Future: Alexander has his sights on making the move to the next level next season.



MEGAN O'NEIL



The Megan O'Neil File

Chippewa Hills High School
Sports: Cross-Country / Track
Season Accolades: She finished third at the Grand Rapids Cougar Invitational September 21 in 19:11...
Accomplishments: She was seventh in the Division 2 state finals last year in 18:14.2...
GPA: 3.833
Future: O'Neil is being recruited by Big Ten and other Division 1 schools but has yet to make a decision.



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# SHARKS CHOMPING

## St. Louis Continues To Set

**The St. Louis volleyball team is on a mission this season to win another Class C state championship. Led by a solid group of seniors including Brooke Tubbs and Bri Alspaugh the Sharks have started the season strong and looking forward to another strong run at a state title. St. Louis is coached by one of the best in the business Gary Stanglewicz.**

**Geoff Mott**  
Sports Scene

ST. LOUIS – As a freshman playing varsity during the St. Louis volleyball team's run to a runner-up finish at the Class C state finals in 2010, Brooke Tubbs couldn't fully grasp the magnitude of what happened.

"At that time, I didn't really know what was going on," Tubbs said. "I realized that we lost, but I couldn't understand the significance of it. Now it's hitting me that that was one of my best times, and I want to go back.

"I'm going to push my team as hard as I can, and hopefully we can win a championship this time."

Tubbs is one of five veteran seniors who has her eyes on volleyball's top prize of a state championship. With Tubbs as a four-year starter and four girls returning as three-year starters, the Sharks are preparing for a long playoff run.

"I think we're doing pretty good right now," Tubbs said. "We started really strong and then had a little lull a couple weeks ago. But we're picking it back up and continuing to improve. That's what we need to keep on doing."

Tubbs is a 5'7" outside hitter who joins fellow senior outside hitter Bri Alspaugh. St. Louis coach Gary Stanglewicz describes both all-stars as "dynamic."

"Brooke is a smart girl – she wants to go play at Alma College and study pre-med," Stanglewicz said. "She jumps high, hits hard, and is very fast. She goes full speed and wants every hit to be a kill and every serve to be an ace. She goes so hard.

"Bri is also dynamic in that she jumps well and hits hard. She can jump off one leg and is a real solid kid. When she blocks, those balls fly back hard. You have to put your helmets on when you play those kids."

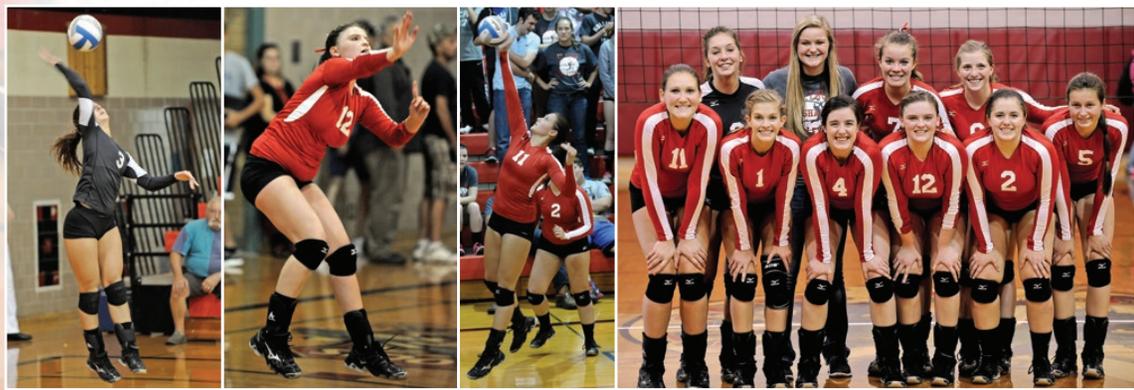
After two years of varsity play at the libero position, senior Michaela Austin has made a smooth transition to setter.

"She's done a great job," Stanglewicz said. "You'd look at her and wouldn't even think this is her first year as a setter."

Amanda Eajena, a 5'5" senior, also adds athleticism with a 27-inch vertical jump.

"She plays a lot taller and is a great defensive player," Stanglewicz said. Kenya House rounds out the veteran group of seniors with her al-

Photos by Scott Keyes



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# AT SUCCESS

## Bar High In Class C

ways-dependable play.  
 "She's a control player," Stanglewicz said. "She's a big server, she's steady, and she keeps the ball in play. You like a player who does those kinds of things on a consistent basis."  
 The Sharks spent all summer preparing for the season. They took one week off after school let out in the spring and then it was back to the weight room.  
 "The bar is set pretty high here," Alspaugh said. "Coach has told us teams are excited to play us and that's the case. They want to see how they can do against us."  
 "I don't feel pressure with it. It's a regular feeling, but we don't worry because we know what we're doing out there."

early age. She's always participated in volleyball but didn't realize that the St. Louis program is a perennial powerhouse at the state level.  
 "In my eighth grade year, I started to realize that volleyball is pretty important in St. Louis," said Alspaugh, who hopes to play collegiate volleyball. "I tried for varsity as a freshman and Brooke made it, but coach said I wasn't quite ready for varsity. That spring I played AAU as a setter and libero and that really got me going."  
 "I was ready my sophomore year to contribute."  
 The senior-laden group has bought into everything Stanglewicz's St. Louis program offers. Now it's state title or bust.  
 "We've spent three years together and we are a pretty close-knit group," Tubbs said. "We like to do a lot of things together and we hold each other accountable for a lot of things we do. We make the changes necessary to get better."  
 "We help each other out without yelling or friction and it helps."



### Long Time Coach Gary Stanglewicz Still Enjoys Coaching, Success

#### Geoff Mott Sports Scene

ST. LOUIS - Gary Stanglewicz ranks third among active Michigan high school volleyball coaches in all-time wins, amassing a 1,200-428-112 record in 29 years as the varsity volleyball coach at St. Louis.

The 55-year-old enters his 30th season with a pair of state championships in 1999 and 2001 and a runner-up finish in 2010. The Sharks have reached the semifinals five times under Stanglewicz and have won 10 regional titles, 23 district crowns, and 20 league championships between the Central State Activities Association and the Tri-Valley West.

Even with that long list of accomplishments, the 2005 Michigan Interscholastic Volleyball Coaches Association Hall of Fame inductee feels there could be more accomplishments on the list. But that's not why he coaches.

"I think if I was a little bit better of a coach, we would have won four state championships," he said. "Those titles are certainly highlights, and there's lots of high points there, but there are other things too. I get great pleasure out of watching these girls develop and grow as young women."

Stanglewicz really enjoys when former players remain committed to the game. One of his best players, Monica Paul, continues a beach volleyball career in Florida while she is in her 30s. Former players Sara Bissell and Bonnie Girard serve as the eighth grade and junior varsity coaches, respectively, at St. Louis, while former player Kristi Herrington (Lippert) is a successful coach at Mount Pleasant High School.

"She was a phenomenal player and an even better coach," said Stanglewicz of Lippert, whose teams have already split decisions this year. "I definitely can't take credit for that. I've run across players coaching at different schools and playing in leagues. Monica Paul is still playing and is in great shape. I always like it when players stay involved in volleyball. Somehow it makes me feel like I didn't ruin them for life."

Returning all-stater Bri Alspaugh has started for three seasons at St. Louis. When the momentum is lost and the team is struggling in the heat of the moment, Alspaugh says that Stanglewicz takes a direct approach to remedy the situation.

"He doesn't sugarcoat anything, and that's a good thing," Alspaugh said. "He gives us key advice, tells us what the problem is and how to fix it. Then we can go out and win games. Most of the time he's really positive, but he'll let us know when things are going wrong."

With the program's high expectations, varsity players train in volleyball nearly year round. But Stanglewicz keeps practices competitive, and it relates to play on the court according to Alspaugh.

"We play lots of games in practice," Alspaugh said. "We have six-on-six, middle hitter versus middle hitter, and 'All-goes.' He keeps track of wins, and at the end of the year somebody wins the Competitive Cauldron Cup. You get your name on a plaque that's displayed in the trophy case."

"He makes volleyball fun."

Brooke Tubbs learned the game on the fly as a freshman on varsity during the Sharks' run to a Class C state runner-up finish in 2010. Stanglewicz gives responsibility to his veteran players to help prepare younger teammates.

"I like the fact that he pushes us hard," Tubbs said. "He pushes us every day to improve. It was nerve-racking to play as a freshman on varsity, but the girls really helped me learn the ropes. Now we have a freshman [Jaelin Block], and we are teaching her now. We try and help her know what coach expects of us and what we have to do to get better."

Stanglewicz has found that steady improvement of a team is key once the postseason pressure arrives. "Our expectations are that we continue to improve, because if you aren't getting better, those other schools are, and they are looking to beat you. We're ranked high, and teams are excited for that chance. You have to play at a high level at all times."

Stanglewicz said expectations in girls' athletics have changed drastically since he started coaching.

"Expectations weren't high back then, because you didn't have girls playing volleyball when they were four or five years old," Stanglewicz said. "The girls are more athletic now. I have to work hard to stay ahead of these kids."

"You want the girls to work hard and you never want them to outwork you. If they work hard for two hours, I have to work hard for three hours."

Stanglewicz has taught at St. Louis Public Schools and retired last spring before returning to teaching this year. He'll continue coaching as long as he has something to contribute to the program.

"I love to coach, and I'd love to continue coaching," Stanglewicz said. "I still feel I have something to offer, and as long as I continue to give the girls a positive experience, I want to be here."



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# Aggies continue to romp

## New QB has command of Beal City's potent offense

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Beal City came into the season realizing it had an outstanding football team, with most of its players back from a 2012 squad that was 13-1 and lost to Harbor Beach in the Division 8 state title game.

The question, however, was who would be the quarterback.

The answer has been Kurt Gross.

The Aggies compiled 171 points in their first three games. The offense was led by a powerful running attack, headed by Hayden Hubert with 23 carries for 223 yards and six touchdowns, and Alex Schafer with 186 yards on 17 tries for one touchdown.

Gross was 12 of 16 for 392 yards in those games with four touchdowns. Two of the strikes went to Carson Salisbury, who had four catches for 136 yards. Ryan Tilmann snagged four passes for 148 yards and a TD.

Beal City coach Lou Rau acknowledged that Gross has committed some errors on offense, but "other than that, he has done well."

The Aggies knew they were going to have a good football team, but they just didn't know who would be the quarterback. Kurt Gross, Alex Schafer, and Tucker Gross were all vying for the job. Rau said that there was always a chance he might use more than one quarterback in a game, but regardless of who got the job, plenty would be expected of him. "For any team, the quarterback is critical," Rau said. "We have to be able to focus, not just on our running game, but have an accurate passing game."

Going into week one, Rau decided that Gross would be the guy. He had a very good scrimmage," Rau said. "He's a senior. Those were two major factors. I have the other guys playing in other spots. This way, we could get everybody on the field. It was our best option."



New Beal City quarterback Kurt Gross (No.4) has picked up where Sam Schafer left off a year ago, as the Aggies' offense hasn't missed a beat in 2013. Beal City will be a tough out come playoff time. (Shannon Millard Photo)

Tucker Gross, a sophomore, has also has taken some snaps at the quarterback spot and could do the job at that position if necessary. He plays linebacker on defense.

Schafer is a junior running back.

What has made the quarterback job easier to inherit from Sam Schafer, who held the position last year, has been the return of so many excellent players.

"Sam was a tough quarterback to replace," Rau said. "But we return so many kids."

It's Gross's second full varsity season for the Aggies. He was brought up for the playoffs his freshman year. He was backup quarterback last season and did some kickoffs. He also does the kickoffs this year.

Gross knew there would be competition for the starting quarterback job and did extensive off-season

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work to get himself ready.

"A lot of throwing drills I did on my own... plus working on my footwork," he said. "I tried to do as much as I could around baseball and some basketball. When I could be there, I was there. Did as much as I could. I was there in the weight room."

His baseball team was state runner-up and the basketball team made it to the state quarterfinals.

Gross's first year of football was in the eighth grade when he was tight end. "I wanted to try [quarterback]," he recalled. "I always wanted to, but in eighth grade, we already had a quarterback."

Eventually, though, Gross did become quarterback, getting the starting job his freshman year on the junior varsity squad.

"Beal City runs the ball a lot," he said. "My freshman year, my first year playing quarterback, I did a lot of handing off. My sophomore year, we passed a little more and I got experience."

As quarterback for a T offense, Gross works on his fakes and also his throws. He had a five-yard touchdown run against Clare.

He feels his accuracy as a passer can be strong when he uses his footwork. He's thrown one interception, which he blames on his failure to use proper footwork.

He attributes the powerful Aggies offensive line and the quality of the backs for helping the team score so many points.

The Aggies hope to have another memorable season. "Every year we have high expectations," Gross said. "We want to get better every week."



# Aggies rolling

The Beal City Aggies started the volleyball season 19-0 this season, and in the most recent coaches poll were ranked No. 2 in the state behind St. Louis.

The Aggies used their talent in their first Highland Conference match of the season, a 25-13, 25-5, 25-9 victory over an improved Evert team on September 17.

Melanie Schafer had a stretch of six straight service points, and Brittany Schumacher later had two straight aces for a 22-4 lead. Addie Schumacher served an ace for the 25th point. Jenna Theissen also served some aces for Beal City.

In that match, Addie Schumacher had 10 kills,

while Anna Reihl added eight aces and Nicole Gross had six kills.

"A lot of our more competitive tournaments are coming up," said coach Kelly David. "We've been playing some good teams."

The Aggies have only four seniors but have seven returners from last season.

They are expecting to face strong competition from St. Louis. They have already defeated Morley Stanwood, a state power in the past.

Beal City is in Class C this year instead of class D, but David doesn't anticipate that will hinder the Aggies from achieving their regular season and post season goals.



The Beal City volleyball team has started the season 19-0 and would love nothing more than to make a return trip to Battle Creek for the state finals. (Chuck Prikasky Photo)

## Hasler leads ways for St. Louis football team

Matt Hasler has been running wild for the St. Louis Sharks. He has accumulated 841 rushing yards after only four games.

It was quite a Tri Valley Conference football season debut against Breckenridge. In a 34-7 St. Louis victory, Hasler ran for 313 yards and two touchdowns.

He didn't have a bad game in the

season opener, either, a nonleague victory over Beaverton 13-12. In that game, he rushed 31 times for 181 yards.

In a 28-20 loss to Merrill in week three, Hasler did the job again, with 262 rushing yards and one touchdown on 35 carries.

In week four, the Sharks lost to Michigan Lutheran Seminary. Hasler

was limited to 85 yards in a 52-14 loss.

Aaron Mungerloh, St. Louis coach, commented about that game. "We had five turnovers in the first quarter and fell behind 35-0."

But with a weapon like Hasler, Mungerloh still likes his team's potential. "We're still a work in progress," he said.





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Photos by Alan Holben and Scott Keyes

# REALIGNMENT

## ARE YOU READY?

**The CAAC is going through major changes next season with area teams leaving to go to other conferences and others staying put. In the end the student-athletes are the main concern here. Hopefully the changes that are made will be for the best.**

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Who says bigger is always better?

Over the past several years, the Capital Area Activities Conference (CAAC) was one of the largest high school athletic conferences in the state. It contained 26 teams and was broken into four divisions.

Starting next fall, the league will be smaller, as several teams are on their way out of the league, and the remaining teams will be spread over three divisions.

Schools scheduled to leave the league this year include Charlotte, Corunna, Lumen Christi Catholic, Northwest, Western, Lakewood, and Stockbridge.

The defections leave the CAAC with 20 teams over three divisions. Long-time CAAC Blue teams Eastern, East Lansing, Everett, Grand Ledge, Holt, Jackson, Okemos, and Sexton will still make up one division. DeWitt, Haslett, Mason, Owosso, St. Johns, and Waverly will comprise a second division, while Eaton Rapids, Fowlerville, Ionia, Lansing Catholic, Portland, and Williamston will make up the third division.

The net bottom line of the defections and reorganization is a leaner, more compact league where traveling has been trimmed. No longer will Lansing-area teams make the lengthy trip to Jackson to face Lumen Christi, Northwest, or Western. Corunna eliminates one of the farthest road trips to the east.

"I don't think it was much of a surprise," St. Johns athletic director Chris Ervin said. "We knew this was coming for the

most part. I'm kind of excited about the shrinking boundaries of the league. I think it's a good thing. By losing the schools from the south, the three Jackson schools, it will pull the boundaries back."

Changing leagues is nothing new in sports today. The Big 10 Conference expands from 12 to 14 teams next year. The once massive Big East Conference has been whittled to bare bones. The Southeastern Conference and the Pacific 12 have both expanded, while the Sun Belt and Conference USA have seen massive makeovers. "I think it looks good going forward," said Mason athletic director Greg Lattig. "We live in a society where change is more prevalent.

"I think with the three divisions we now have, we will have a good, competitive balance," he continued. "I think it is a good arrangement by size and a more uniform geography than what we had in the past. I think we can have a strong league with three divisions."

The restructuring of the league will also improve the overall competitiveness of the league. "The proposal looks good," said East Lansing coach Thomas Hunt. "It gives schools a competitive opportunity. The travel also looks pretty good."

The one constant is the CAAC Blue remaining the same. Change, however, could come down the road if the Lansing school district decides to close Eastern or Sexton High School.

The new proposal keeps open the flexibility for the league to further downsize or to increase in size. "It allows us the flexibility to add more schools if other schools are interested in joining the league," Hunt said. "If some schools think they want to move

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# COMING To CAAC

on or to join the league, it will allow us to do that as well.”

For Mason, the change in the league will not have much of an effect. “Owosso is in our division, and that will be our farthest trip,” Lattig said. “We’ve been in a division with them before, and it was not an issue before.”

The CAAC was formed in 2003 when schools from the old Capital Area Conference (CAC) and Capital Circuit (CC) combined. Since then, a number of schools have moved into and out of the league. This season the league began with 27 teams.

The league has made changes and added teams over the years since its inception. While bigger is usually seen as better, that’s not always the case.

“I don’t think expansion is always a good thing,” Ervin said. “You have to be careful in the schools you bring in. You want to make sure it’s good for the long term. I think bringing back the three divisions will be a good thing.”

The most recent school to leave the CAAC was Corunna. The Corunna school board voted unanimously September 16 to leave the CAAC and join the Genesee Athletic Conference.

The move actually had a benefit for the CAAC. Had Corunna stayed in the league, the breakdown of the conference divisions would have been eight teams, six teams, and seven teams. The uneven number of teams would have made scheduling more difficult for the seven-team division. With all the divisions at an even number, scheduling is more uniform.

The new divisional breakdown also keeps a lot of rivalries in place. Old CAC rivals Holt, Grand Ledge, East Lansing, Sexton, Everett, and Eastern will continue their storied rivalries on the gridiron and hardwood, as well as in other sports.

The DeWitt-Haslett rivalry will continue, as well as the annual battles between Haslett and St. Johns and between DeWitt and St. Johns.

Tennis powerhouses Lansing Catholic, Portland, and Williamston will continue to battle. Western schools Portland and Ionia will now be in the same division, which will renew a great Ionia County rivalry.

## NEW LEAGUES POPPING UP AROUND MICHIGAN

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The Capital Area Athletics Conference (CAAC) is not the only high school league that will be experiencing change next season. As in college football and basketball, the high school athletic league landscape will be changing all over lower Michigan next fall.

Two new leagues have been formed and will be making their debuts next fall.

The larger of the two leagues that will debut is the Interstate 8. The league takes its name from the proximity of the schools to two local expressways, which will make for ease of travel. All eight member schools are located near I-94 or I-69, which intersect just west of Marshall.

Four of the new teams will come from the CAAC. Lumen Christi Catholic, Northwest, Parma Western, and Charlotte are CAAC members. They will join Pennfield from the Kalamazoo Valley Athletic Association (KVAA) and Harper Creek, Marshall, and Coldwater from the Southwestern Michigan Athletic Conference.

The league will be an instant football power, as Lumen

Christi, Harper Creek, Marshall, and Pennfield have storied football traditions.

The Greater Lansing Athletic Conference is the other new league. It will have five football-playing members in Lakewood and Stockbridge coming over from the CAAC, Perry from the Genesee Athletic Conference, Maple Valley from the KVAA, and Leslie as an independent. Lansing Christian, also an independent, will be a non-football playing member of the league.

In the Flint area, the Flint Metro Conference will have a new look. Lapeer East and Lapeer West are merging into one school and will be leaving the conference to join a larger league. Flushing is moving over from the Saginaw Valley Association to replace the two Lapeer schools and give the league eight members.

In west central Michigan, the Central States Activities Conference will be adding two new members to bring its membership to 12. Grant and Tri County are moving into the league from the Lakes Eight Conference and will join Big Rapids, Hesperia, Holton, Lakeview, Morley Stanwood, Newaygo, Reed City, Chippewa Hills, Central Montcalm, and White Cloud.

### CAAC BLUE

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**Grand Ledge**  
**Holt**  
**Jackson**  
**Okemos**  
**Sexton**

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**RED**

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**Owosso**  
**St. Johns**  
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# Corunna bolting CAAC to GAC

Butch Harmon  
Sports Scene

After competing in the Capital Area Athletics Conference (CAAC) since 2007, the Corunna Cavaliers will have a new athletic home next year, as they voted September 16 to move to the Genesee Athletic Conference (GAC).

"Our board voted 7-0 to withdraw from the CAAC and move to the GAC," said athletic director Nicole Norris. "We will withdraw from the CAAC and begin play in the GAC in the 2014 season. I'm in the process of doing the paperwork right now."

A number of factors went into the decision to switch to the GAC, which is more of a Flint-area league than the CAAC, which is more of a greater Lansing area league.

"We looked at a lot of things," Norris said. "One of the main factors was the travel and transportation cost and how that affects our athletes athletically and academically. We wanted to reduce the amount of travel for our teams. Not only the cost of the travel but having our student-athletes getting back home later. Not only will switching to the GAC

reduce the travel, but it will allow our students to get home earlier, and it will give their parents and our fans more of an opportunity to see them play."

By joining the GAC, the Cavaliers will re-establish their league rivalry with Durand. The Cavaliers will be in the Red division of the GAC, where they will also be competing against Beecher, Montrose, Mt. Morris, Goodrich, and Lake Fenton.

"There were a lot of positives to both conferences, but the GAC is more local," Norris said. "It will also give us the opportunity to be competitive on the field. The GAC is an established league and it will give us outstanding competition. It has a lot to offer our student-athletes."

The GAC is just the third league the Cavaliers have been a part of in the past 50 years. From 1962 through 2007, Corunna was a member of the Mid Michigan B League that included at one time or another Durand, Ovid-Elsie, Perry, Portland, Alma, Chesaning, St. Johns and Ionia.

"We enjoyed our association with the CAAC," Norris said. "We just see the move to the GAC as more beneficial for our to our student-athletes, their parents, and our fans."



Corunna will pack up and leave the Capital Area Athletics Conference (CAAC) at the end of the year and move to the Genesee Area Conference (GAC) beginning next season. (Alan Holben photo)



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# Mid-Michigan a hot bed for boys' soccer

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

When it comes to excellence in Division 2 soccer in the state of Michigan, the greater Lansing area has the market cornered this fall. Not only does the area boast East Lansing, which sits at No. 1 in the state polls, but also Mason, which is ranked No. 2 in the state in Division 2 and DeWitt, which is ranked No. 3.

"Soccer is strong in mid Michigan," East Lansing coach Nick Archer said. "DeWitt has a very good team this year again, and I don't think that Mason has had a loss. They always seem to have a solid team. We are very fortunate in mid Michigan, and especially in Division 2, to have so many good teams. It's not just Division 2. Holt has been on a run the last few years in Division 1, and Okemos is always up there, too."

Mason coach Nick Binder also sees the area as being extremely strong in soccer this season. "Okemos and Holt are very strong in Division 1," he said. "We saw Lansing Christian over the summer, and they are a very strong team in Division 4. There is just a large collection of good players in the area and a lot of good teams because of that."

Stability in the coaching ranks is a big reason for the success of area teams, according to Archer, who himself is one of the deans of area soccer coaches.

"I've been dabbling in coaching since 1973," Archer said. "I played at Michigan State and then started teaching at East Lansing. The kids enjoyed it, and we started playing after school, and the team grew from there. I've been here since then, and my assistant Henry Rojas has been with me for over 15 years and Jeff Lyon has been assisting me

for 13 or 14 years.

I know Brian Guggemos has been at Okemos for 10 years or so, and Aaron Smith has been at Holt a long time, and Jamal [Mubarakeh] at DeWitt has been there for 15 years or so. The coaches at Williamston have also built a good program."

This year, few teams in the state can match the strength of the East Lansing team that is ranked in the super six power poll by the Michigan High School Coaches Association.

"Things have been going good for us on paper," Archer said. "We have a nice record and the kids are playing well. We have a nice group of young guys who are playing well."

The Trojans have had their share of adversity, as starting goalkeeper Blair Moore was lost for the season with a broken hand. Backup goalkeeper Chris Warner has stepped up and is now manning the net.

The Trojans have a solid core of defenders in front of their keeper. "Our back line players have done a great job in holding down the goals this year, giving up only nine," said Archer. "Our back line is Michie Nimsombun, Torey Redmond, Noel Fuentes, and Grant Brogan. Losing our keeper Blair Moore was a big loss, but Chris Wallace has the ability to step in and carry on."

On offense, East Lansing features a balanced attack. DeJuan Jones is a double-digit goal scorer who leads the team in scoring. Ben Swanson-Ralph is also a double-digit goal scorer, and the Trojans have been getting contributions from Jared Howenstein, Trevor Early, and Tommy Lammers.

"We're improving every time out and moving forward," Archer said. "We still have to tighten down a few things, but I'm pleased with our start and where we are at."



Mason, DeWitt and East Lansing make up three of the top teams in the area not to mention in Division 2. All three teams could be tough outs once the playoffs begin. (Alan Holben Photo)

Binder is also pleased with the progress the Bulldogs are making at Mason. "Things are going pretty well," he said. "We had to replace a lot of starters, but we've had a lot of new kids step up. We have two or three seniors start, so I thought we would struggle with leadership, but we have been getting there. We have some good young players, who will help us next year and the years to come."

Mason served notice that

it is for real this year when it defeated Linden, which was ranked No. 3 at the time, and No. 7-ranked Dexter at a tournament early this season.

Defense has been the calling card of the Bulldogs this season. "Josh LeMay is in his third year as our starting goalkeeper," Binder said.

"He was all-state second team as a sophomore and first-team all-state as a junior. We have three sophomores and a junior starting on our back line,

and they have played well."

Mason has been getting strong play from freshman John Kingman, sophomores Holden Dippel and Christian Jordan, and junior Kevin Stalzer. "We have very good defensive players, but that's not to say we don't have some good attacking players either," Binder said.

"We have a lot of room for improvement, but we have some good players, and the potential is there."

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# Nichols gunning for another state title

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Led by one of the premier golfers in the state, the Okemos girls golf team is off to another sizzling start this season. The Chieftains passed the midway mark of the season ranked No. 2 in the state in Division 2.

"We're off to a pretty good start," coach Dan Stolz said. "We have won every event we competed in this season except for two. In one tournament we finished second, two strokes behind, and in the 16-team Holt Invitational, we also finished two strokes behind."

Okemos opened conference play by winning every event in which it participated. The Chieftains also won the Brighton, Mason, and Lakewood invitationals.

Elle Nichols, a senior, has been pacing the squad this season. After winning the Division 2 individual state title as a sophomore and as a junior, she is looking strong in her attempt to make it three in a row.

"Elle is just having an outstanding season," Stolz said. "I think she is the best player in the

state. She has won two individual state titles, and this year she is hoping to make it three. She has her average under 70 now at 69.9."

Along with winning state titles, Nichols has been shaving strokes off her average each season.

"The amazing thing about Elle is how she drops strokes off her average each year. From her freshman to sophomore season she dropped five strokes. Last year from her sophomore to her junior year she dropped almost five more strokes. This year she is not quite at five strokes. She had a 73.8 average last year and this year it's at 69.9. She has been one of the top eight players in the state the last two years, and to drop off almost five strokes a year is pretty amazing. She works hard to keep improving her game."

Nichols has already settled on her destination after high school, as she will be continuing her golf career at Oakland University next season. The Chieftains, however, are far from a one-person team. Along with Nichols, Okemos has some solid young players.

"The reason we are as solid as we are this season is that we have some younger kids who have

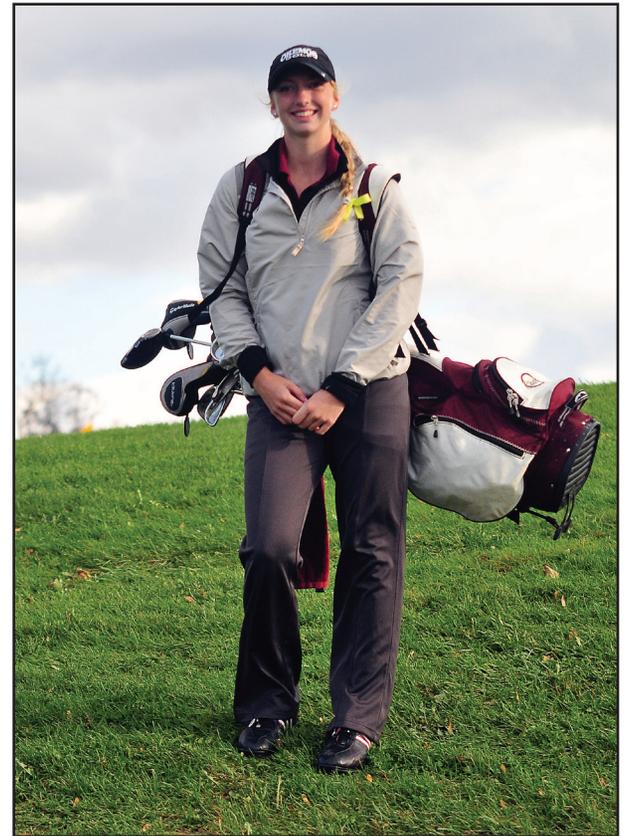
worked really hard to become better players. They are scoring better this year, and that makes us a deeper team."

Following Nichols in the lineup is Sydney Williams, who has a nine-hole average of 42.3. Sophomore Jessica King is averaging 43.9 for nine holes.

"Sydney has really been doing well this year," Stolz said. "Jessica is another girl who has really come on. She shot an 81 at the Holt Invitational to finish in the top ten. Macy Dahnke is also playing well. In her last four rounds she averaged 44. Senior Carly Bullock is also playing well. We have got some kids who are shooting some good, solid numbers this year."

With Nichols leading the way and a solid supporting cast, Okemos is primed to make a charge in the Division 2 state tournament.

"We think we can be right there at the end," Stolz said. "What we see in the other teams across the state in our division, we think we can compete with all these teams and be right in the hunt. We just have to play well and all pull together."



Okemos' Elle Nichols fired a 64 earlier this season and is a favorite to win her third consecutive Division 2 title this season. (Scott Keyes Photo)

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# Midland Dow tennis reloads after losing one of state's best

Ben Murphy  
Sports Scene

The Dow varsity tennis team is proving that it doesn't rebuild, it reloads. The four-time defending Division 2 state champions are off to another fine start, sitting with a 14-1 record as of September 23.

"Last year, we lost a lot of senior talent," seventh-year head coach Terry Schwarzkopf said. "In fact, three of last year's graduates are now playing at the collegiate level. My seniors were determined to leave with a perfect record, and they trained and played all all season with that goal in mind. They left with four state championships as a team, which is where we stand today."

Though they lost four players from last year's team, the Chargers are still standing plenty tall.

Julian Guerra (three-time defending singles champion in either number four or number three) returns for his senior season, having lost just one match at number two singles so far this year.

Vikram Shanker is playing first-flight doubles as a senior, after finishing undefeated in the same spot last year to win a state championship. Jason Chang, another senior, is playing with Shanker to fill out the other half of their championship pairing. Chang also won state titles as a doubles player as a freshman and as a sophomore. He has set the state record this season for consecutive doubles wins and is 11 matches away from securing the most doubles wins in state history.

The last two senior returnees are Patrick Eschbach, who will play second doubles and who won a state title in third doubles last year, and Seamus Bartlett, who will be playing third doubles after playing as a reserve last year.

The lone returning junior is Daniel Magno, who will be playing with Bartlett at third doubles after playing as a reserve last year.

Sophomores returning to the team are Michael Szabo (fourth singles, 40-1 record last year, fourth singles state champion) and Colin Angell (third doubles), who was a reserve last year.

Schwarzkopf welcomes four new players this season and hopes they help continue the team's storied tradition.

Cole Williamson (junior) will play fourth doubles, William Kirkman (sophomore) will play first singles, Spencer Bouck (sophomore) will play fourth doubles, and Varun Shanker (freshman) will play third singles.

"[Williamson] has a ton of size," Schwarzkopf said.



Despite losing one of Michigan's all-time greats, Austin Woody, to graduation, the Midland Dow tennis team hasn't missed a beat this season and should contend for its fifth straight D2 title. (Gary Williams Photos)

"He has the arm span of an orangutan and a fierce competitive spirit. [Kirkman] transferred from the Dominican Republic and, though only a sophomore, he brings a ton of experience and obvious talent, as he is playing number one singles. That allowed us to shift our entire team down, creating a much stronger unit. [Bouck] is a consistent and methodical player; he moves well and complements Williamson's game perfectly. [Shanker], though a freshman, he brings intelligence, determination, and unity to the team. He works as hard as anyone and helps uplift his teammates constantly. He has respect and honor for both the sport and the program."

The Chargers' lone blemish has come at the hands of Brother Rice, to whom Dow's first doubles lost its first match ever.

Dow is undefeated in Saginaw Valley League play. "We have looked really strong against other Division 2 teams that we have faced," said Schwarzkopf, who recently reached his 100<sup>th</sup> career win. "I believe that if we were to see [Brother Rice] again, we would be victorious. Forest Hills Central is always our main competition, and Detroit Jesuit looks

pretty strong this year. However, we have seen both of them this year and we won 7-1 and 8-0. I think we just need to maintain our focus and avoid overconfidence or a sense of entitlement. None of those previous matches matter once we are at the state tournament."

So far, it hasn't been hard for his team to stay on task.

"I would say they are pretty focused on one goal - win states again," Schwarzkopf said. "We lost half the team last year and nobody wants to be the team that breaks the streak, so they have been playing focused and with a purpose. We have seen most of the Division 2 competition and have only dropped two total matches. I think we have a strong chance at five."

As for the kids themselves, Schwarzkopf already feels like they're winners. "I love these kids, I love their personalities, our conversations, and the closeness," he said. "Winning the tournaments has been a wonderful addition to an already fantastic job. I am most proud of how my boys succeed in life, how they give back to their community, and how they treat each other as family. God has truly blessed me."

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# Family

## Capen Family Ithaca's Three Championship

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Many families and individuals have contributed to the rich tradition of Ithaca football in the past.

One name that really sticks out is Capen.

Scott Capen played football for the Yellowjackets in his youth and has transferred the talents and passions of the game to his three sons, Luke, Josh, and Seth. The three have been a part of the three straight titles and 42-0 record coming to this season.

That name has not been lost on coach Terry Hessbrook, when went to school with Scott Capen. He also went to school with Fran Crumbaugh, who would become the mother of the three Capens. She was also athletic, Terry recalls.

"She played some basketball early in her career," he said.

The Yellowjackets won the 2010, 2011, and 2012 football state title games. But it was one play in that first championship game that produced a moment Hessbrook won't forget. "I remember Luke catching the first pass of our 2010 state finals game and running all the way to the 1-yard line," Hessbrook said.

Obviously, Hessbrook and others are always asked to compare the three Capen sons and their dad as football players.

"All three of the boys are very different," Hessbrook said. "All bring different abilities to the field. Their Dad was a running back and was very fast. They are all respected among their teammates."

Luke played as a sophomore and was a receiver and safety. He was Detroit Free Press all-state as a senior.

His first year of football was the fifth grade. "We loved to compete, we're all competitors," he said. "All three of us played it, and we always enjoyed it."

In 2010, Ithaca defeated St. Mary Catholic Central 45-35 in the state title game in which senior Luke played split end and defensive guard and sophomore Josh played noseguard. Luke had 11 catches for 134 yards in that game. Luke had 14 tackles and Josh three.

It doesn't surprise Luke that the tradition has continued.

"I knew when me and the seniors left, there were a bunch of guys left, like my brother's grade was loaded with talent," Luke said. "I knew we left that school in good hands. I knew it would be something special. I didn't know it would last this long. You never think that it would go this long; it doesn't usually happen. I didn't know it would be quite like this. It's unreal. It's fun to watch."

He's proud of that first state title and especially having had Josh as a teammate.

But when it comes to style, "me and Josh are night and day," Luke said. "He's a grinder. He was inside of the defense, a tough nose guy. I was more of a finesse guy, I'd say."

Luke played football at Northern Michigan University his freshman year and transferred to Michigan State University to focus on academics, where he is majoring in Finance.

He also played basketball and baseball in high school. "Baseball was my best sport," he said. "I was three-time all-state in baseball. I played outfield and I pitched."

The 2011 football team that beat Constantine 42-14 in the finals featured Josh as left offensive guard and nose guard, starting both ways. He had three tackles.



Seth Capen (NO huge role on this team and its qu straight Division

**Father Scott played on the same team as Hessbrook while sons Luke, Josh and Seth continue to make history on the field**

Luke Capen was a senior during Ithaca's first championship run in 2010.

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# Affair

## A Staple During Consecutive D6 Runs

The 2012 team included Josh and Seth in a 37-27 win over Constantine. Josh again started both ways and had 10 tackles. Seth collected four tackles.

Josh Capen graduated last year after playing on all three state title teams. He was brought up to varsity as a sophomore and played both ways. "Luke is more of offensive player," Josh said. "Seth and I are more defensive than Luke is. I'm bigger than both. I'm 230. Luke is about 180."

"We all think we're faster than each other," Seth smiled. "There's no doubt Josh is the strongest. Me and Luke probably have the most comparable build."

Now Josh gets to be a spectator, but he relished his opportunities to be a player.

"Those games, I realize I should not take for granted," he said. "I was so excited to get all those wins. I was excited to play in the state championship games."

Josh also participated in other sports, including wrestling. He was 43-1 as a senior at 285 pounds, losing 4-1 to John Marogen of Dundee in the finals to take second place. He is now attending Lansing Community College.

Seth, a senior, is outside linebacker and quick guard on the weak side of the offensive line.

"I'd like to think of myself as a leader and that I push the team to do what we can and do our best and are trying to keep everyone's heads up," Seth said.

He is in his second varsity season. The first five games last season he was on special teams. Then he started six straight games and started in the state title game.

"I knew starting the season I wouldn't start as an outside linebacker," Seth said, recalling that the spot was filled. "When [Jacob] Barnes went down, I got my chance to play and that was awesome. Being in the state finals, game, that was sweet."

Playing with his brother on the third state title team was special for Seth.

"When I was on JVs, I watched Luke and Josh play together and win," Seth said. "Then I got to watch Josh by himself in 2011. To be on the field with him in 2012, that was sweet."

He's hoping to be a part of state championship No. 4. "I have a better understanding of what I need to do," he said. "The motto this year is 'Team 100' and how do we want to be remembered. Either way, we'll be remembered as the team that could continue the streak or the team that couldn't continue the streak. Everyone wants to be remembered as the team that did it. That's the goal."

This marks the 100th year of Ithaca football, Seth noted.

He also wrestles and he ran track in the past. Football is his favorite sport. He's not sure yet if he'll be playing football after he graduates. "I don't think it gets any better than playing football at Ithaca," he said.

Their parents obviously have had a remarkable impact on their sons.

"Our parents never made us do anything," Luke said. "They never forced football on us. They just wanted us to have fun. They always supported everything we did. My parents never missed a game for any of us three guys. They've been at every game from fourth grade on. They're always there when we're down and to cheer us on when we're doing well. They've had a huge part in the success we've had. We appreciate that a lot."

Scott Capen recalls playing football when Ithaca had strong teams, although they were not quite the state power the Yellowjackets are now. He recalls having his sons in Ithaca football by the fifth

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**...ms in high school with coach Terry  
... Seth have helped the Yellowjackets  
... over the past four seasons.**



**Josh Capen, father Scott, and brothers Luke and Seth (Left to Right) have proved that Ithaca football is a family affair. Dad got things started back in the early 80s and his kids took over from there helping the Yellowjackets to three straight D6 titles.**

grade and in a third- and fourth-grade program that was available in Alma. It was up to the sons if they wanted to be in sports, but Scott recalls what a passion they had at an early age.

Scott was an excellent track athlete and was on school record-breaking relay teams. He was also a record-breaking long jumper. He graduated in 1984. Now that he's a fan, he's enjoyed following his sons in all sports. "I don't miss anything," he said.

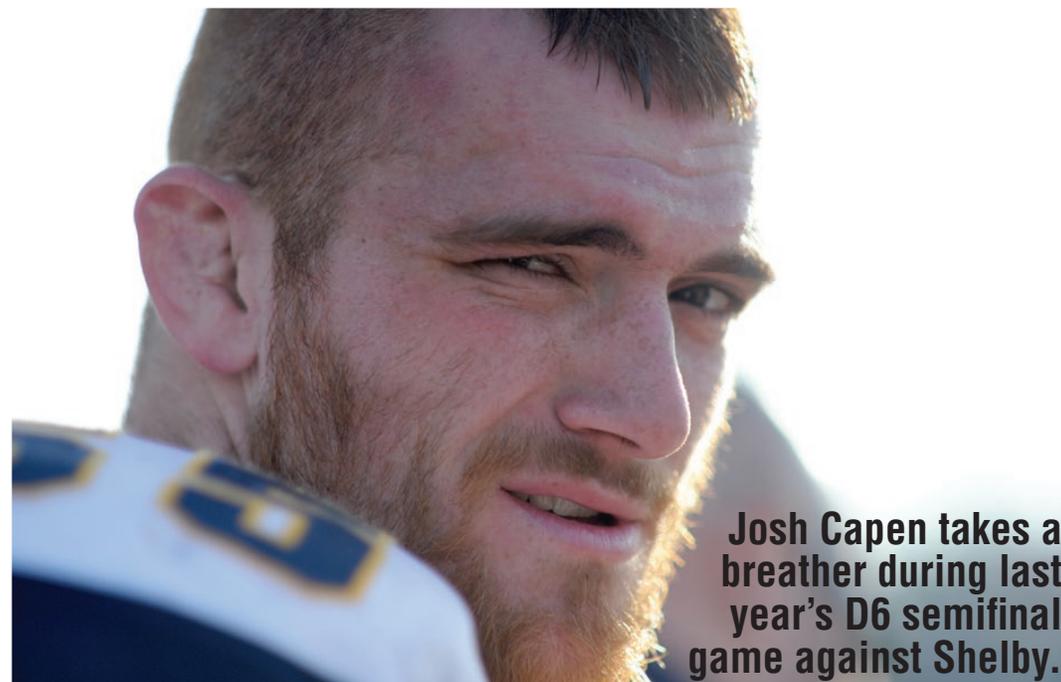
"Knowing that there's been at least been one Capen on every state championship team," has been special for Seth. "We've all played key roles. We're just not another player on the field. People know who we are."

The community's passion for the sport, especially with football success in recent years, has also impressed Scott, who notes that Ithaca football has always had a solid tradition.

But the Capens, like everyone else in Ithaca, marvel at the remarkable winning streak and current run that Ithaca football has produced.

Luke gives a lot of credit to the coaching staff. "They relate to the kids really well," he said. "They get along. They know what they're doing. The kids do what they're asked and are committed. There's a lot of pride in that town."

"A lot of pride."



**Josh Capen takes a breather during last year's D6 semifinal game against Shelby.**

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# SHARING A

## SAGINAW NOUVEL MOMS BROUGHT

Saginaw Nouvel sports moms Cecelia Sullivan and Sue Joynt will always be linked to one another as Sue donated 60 percent of her liver to her dear friend nearly a year ago. Both moms have been active parents in the athletic programs at Nouvel High School. Currently Cecelia's son Ryan is the starting running back for the Panthers while Sue's boys Brad and CJ recently graduated. Sue's youngest Alex plays basketball for the Panthers.




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# LIFETIME BOND

## TOGETHER BY LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESS

**Geoff Mott**  
Sports Scene

SAGINAW TWP. – Family, faith, and football.

Nouvel Catholic Central's football program has preached that in its system since it opened its doors 29 years ago.

At the end of last season, about the time of the season-ending loss to Beecher in the state final, the program served witness to what happens when all three elements intertwine.

Celia Sullivan, the mother of Ryan, a senior running back with the Panthers, learned that she had an auto-immune liver condition shortly after Ryan was born 18 years ago. She had been on a donor waiting list for four years as family member after family member was ruled out as a match.

As her health deteriorated last fall, fellow football mom Sue Joynt took notice. Her son C.J. had played with Ryan since they were both coached by her husband Sean Joynt at St. Stephen's. She decided to get tested as a possible donor, and one month later, 60 percent of her liver was saving Celia's life.

"You know we talk all the time, and we use football as this metaphor for life, and this was something that couldn't be more realistic," said Nouvel head coach Mike Boyd after Saturday's 41-0 win over Chatham-Kent Secondary. "There's this bigger picture where we talk about family, and this is someone in our extended football family who stepped forward, right there among us, and made a sacrifice. It made you ask yourself, 'Would you do that?'"

Sean Joynt had concerns as his wife took a leap of faith.

"We talked about it as a family, and we knew this was the right thing to do," said Sean, who has been married to Sue for 23 years. The couple's oldest son, Brad, graduated from Nouvel in 2011 while daughter Alex is a junior at the school. "The whole family was involved. But that's our faith. And give all the credit to Sue. She taught us all about giving."

Sean Joynt unknowingly steered the story into place four years ago. When he found out Ryan was planning to play soccer instead of football, he called his former player and asked him to reconsider. It set up a series of events that, as it turned out, ended with Sue being a perfect match in this story of faith, family, and football.

Both families have three children. Celia and husband Matt Sullivan's oldest child, Briana, graduated from Nouvel in 2008 while Megan Sullivan graduated with Brad Joynt in 2011. Both women are 48 years old, while the husbands are both 53 years old. And both women are the same height and weight.

"If Ryan had played soccer, who knows if this would have even happened," Sue Joynt said. "We had tailgated together in the summer [of 2012] and I got to know her week to week in the stands. I just noticed her color was getting yellow and she was getting worse. I asked her brother 'What's the deal? What's wrong?' When I heard she needed a liver transplant, I had to get tested.

"I went to Henry Ford Hospital and had a blood test. I found out I was compatible."

The average wait for a donor is four years, and Celia was at the top of the list last fall. A week before Sue found out she was a successful match, Celia was preparing for surgery after getting a call on a cadaver liver. But it ended up being too big.

"At the start of the four years I was so active that I'd forget about [the liver]," Celia said. "I had active kids, and I was working full time [as a nurse at Covenant]. But I was feeling like crap, and my doctor pushed me to get the surgery done."

Within a month, Celia and Sue were set for surgery. While there was a possibility that the moms could miss a possible state championship game, the love and support from the Nouvel community helped ease the anxiety of the month-long wait.

"There was a prayer service with more than 300 people there," Celia said. "It was very emotional time. [Mike Boyd] had me address the team [after the loss

to Beecher], and I'm crying and my son is crying. It was a very emotional time, but everyone rallied for us.

"The teachers and staff and community at Nouvel were great and so supportive."

The women met briefly on a Monday morning last November at Henry Ford. Sue went first and was in surgery for four hours while Celia's surgery lasted six hours. The families anxiously waited together at the hospital.

"We talk about football and the team being a family, and it sounds so cliché," Ryan Sullivan said. "But this was real. This was one of my football brothers whose family was helping mine.

"It was hard sitting in that waiting room not knowing how your mother is doing. But we had all those cards and prayers. It really helped."

Within a month after surgery, the livers of both women had grown back to 99 percent of their regular size. Doctors told Celia she wouldn't be out of the woods with her health until she lived a year with her new liver. She lives with some weight restrictions and has to take other precautions.

Matt and Celia Sullivan and Sean and Sue Joynt plan to celebrate the one-year anniversary together.

"It kind of hit me when Ryan made homecoming court this year, and that's something I would have missed," Celia said. "I would have missed my oldest daughter getting married and Megan playing soccer at Spring Arbor."

Matt and Celia Sullivan celebrated their 25th year wedding anniversary in April and took their first vacation in four years this past summer.

"I'm still overwhelmed from the community, and how I sat there with those cards and knew we weren't alone," Matt Sullivan said. "As men, we act tough. But Celia was so tough with her pain that you wouldn't have known she was sick.

"There was a higher power with us. You could feel it in the hospital that day. It's just unbelievable."



Alex Joynt



CJ Joynt



Ryan Sullivan

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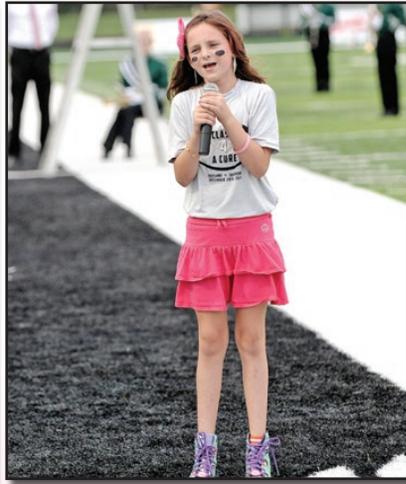
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**Geoff Mott**  
Sports Scene

**FREELAND** – When it comes to raising money for breast cancer research, the Freeland football players literally give the shirts off their backs.

The Falcons improved to 3-1 on the season September 20 after beating Shepherd 34-6 in their fourth annual Clash for the Cure game. Along with a variety of auctions, a raffle for a golf cart, and a kids carnival before the game, the Freeland players wear pink jerseys trimmed with green and the nameplate of a sponsor family of a cancer patient.

The players give their game-used jersey to the sponsor's family after the game.

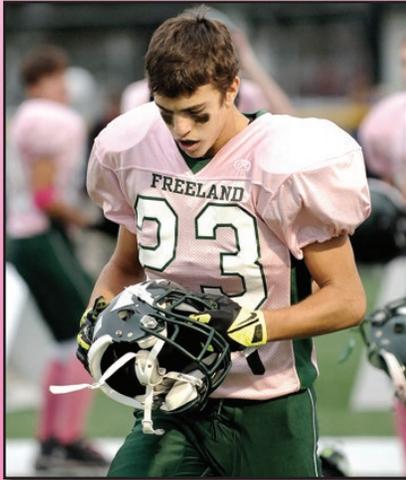
Freeland raised nearly \$60,000 in its first three years and expects another big total this year. Last year's rain-soaked game raised

\$14,500 and organizers expect more than that this year.

Jake Jankoska led Freeland's ground attack with 11 carries for 129 yards and scored on a 61-yard touchdown run. He also recovered a fumbled reception in the end zone for a touchdown. Freeland, which also had Josh Schlak run 10 times for 125 yards and a score, led 14-0 by halftime and 27-0 heading into the fourth quarter.

"We have some young guys, and we feel we are working our way up to being a good team," said Jankoska, one of many Freeland juniors who finished 9-0 on junior varsity last year. "We do [have a lot of good running backs], and you'd think there would be a lot of competition for carries. But we know it takes 11 of us to win."

With the game well in hand, Freeland brought senior Kyle Guster in to take the final three snaps on quarterback kneel downs. Guster, a top returner for the Falcons, tore ligaments in his knee a week before the season opener and is out for the season.



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# Alma Pride at work



Senior Maddy Seeley leads the way for the Alma volleyball team. Seeley will be attending Northwood University next year where she will be playing basketball. (Scott Keyes Photo)



Alma's Maddy Seeley already knows where she will be playing her college basketball next year. She gave a verbal commitment to Northwood University over the summer.

Although hoops is where her heart is, Seeley is encouraged about her senior season of volleyball.

The Panthers have a new coach this season, as Jamie Mallia, who spent seven seasons as the head coach of the junior varsity program at Shepherd and then took a year off from coaching, has taken over the Panther program after taking a year off from coaching last fall. She replaces longtime coach Steve Humm, who is now coaching football.

"It was definitely a big transition being with Steve and the new coaching staff," Seeley said. "Somethings are still the same, but we knew coming into the season things were going to be different to some degree. A lot of stuff we do as a team goes through me, but it has taken a lot of getting used to so far."

Alma has only two seniors and three returners, but Seeley sees the junior class stepping up on varsity.

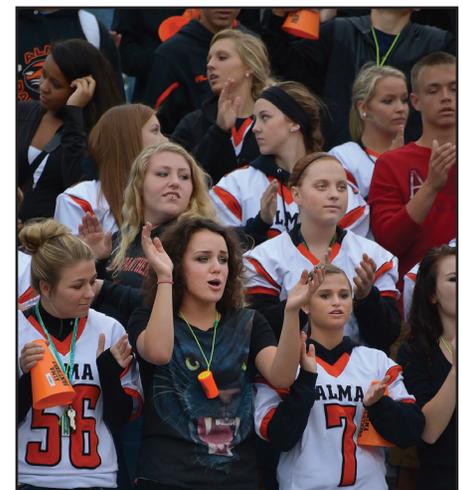
"My heart lies in basketball, and everyone knows that, but I still put forth that effort that I do on the volleyball court as I do on the basketball court," Seeley said. "Sometimes it does get a little frustrating when some of the better athletes don't come out, but you learn to come to grips with it."

Cali Anderson is another player along with Seeley that Mallia will lean on this season.

As of press time Alma was 5-18.



On Parents Night the Alma High School football team won an exciting 28-27 overtime game against Hemlock. Tony Speckhard scored a 9-yard touchdown run to secure the overtime win. Justin Doyle was 17 of 32 passing for 293 yards and two touchdowns for Alma, which faced a 14-0 halftime deficit and a 21-7 fourth-quarter deficit. (Chuck Prikasky Photos)



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# Grace on record pace

Geoff Mott  
Sports Scene

SWAN VALLEY -- In top-ranked Swan Valley's 4-0 start to the football season, junior running back Alex Grace is good for nine and a half yards every time he takes a handoff.

After rushing for more than 2,000 yards as a sophomore, the 6'1", 205-pounder has returned stronger, faster, and more agile, and it shows, as he's rushed 100 times for 948 yards and 13 touchdowns.

He opened the season with 202 yards on 29 carries and three touchdowns against powerful Nouvel Catholic Central and followed with nine carries for 145 yard and two touchdowns in an easy win over Shepherd. He blasted rival Freeland in a 29-19 win with 337 yards on 38 carries and four touchdowns and scored four more touchdowns with 264 rushing yards on 24 carries in a win at Ovid-Elsie.

"It all starts up front," Grace said after beating Freeland and eclipsing his past personal best of 303 yards rushing in a game. "The offensive line did an excellent job of making holes. We keep motivating ourselves to do better."

While Swan Valley enjoys the No. 1 ranking in the Associated Press Division 4 prep poll, the Vikings know that they're a weekly target.

"This is a pretty amazing [start to the season] because we have big wins over Nouvel and Freeland," Grace said. "But we're not letting that ranking get to our heads."

Grace is on pace for a near 3,000-yard season if the Vikings have a playoff run like last year's trip to the state semifinals, which ended a loss to Detroit Country Day. With another big season as a senior – and good health – Grace could make a run for a top five finish in career yardage in the



Swan Valley junior Alex Grace is on pace to rush for over 3,000 yards if the Vikings can advance as far as they did a year ago. Grace ran for 337 yards against Freeland earlier this year.

Michigan High School Athletic Association's record books. Fellow Tri-Valley Central running back Chris Robinson (Ovid-Elsie, 2006-09) ranks No. 4 all-time with 7,123 rushing yards.

"We've done about all we can do against him," Freeland coach Kevin Townsend said of Grace. "Good luck to anyone who can slow him down. He falls forward on every run. He's fast, he's strong, and they have strength in that offense line. They beat us up front."

Ben Finzel has added 109 rushing yards for Swan Valley while Hunter Wunderle has 102 rushing yards, including a 93-yard touchdown run. Quarterback Nick Call is 13 of 30 passing for 202 yards, two touchdowns, and two interceptions.



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# Ithaca football success can be felt on soccer field

The fact that the Ithaca High school football team has won 46 straight games (prior to press time) and is vying for its fourth consecutive Division 6 state title tends to motivate the rest of the sports teams on campus to elevate their games a notch or two just to keep pace.

That is what is transpiring with the Ithaca boys soccer team. Playing its third game in five days, Ithaca blanked Birch Run 3-0 September 19.

Head coach Doug Strait sees the difference in the team every time they hit the field.

“There is no doubt the success of the football team has elevated everyone’s game to new heights,” said Strait. “I mean, to see what those guys over there have done the past three years and this season it is pretty remarkable. Everyone definitely wants to be a part of it, that’s for sure.”

Against Birch Run, the Yellowjackets had goals from three players, Alex Vanderploeg, Mario Cuapio, and Koby Lee. Vanderploeg, John Derry, and Brett Boucher each added an assist for Ithaca.

Jacob Pierce made two saves in goal, while Birch Run’s Andrew Leidel made 16 saves at the other end.



The Ithaca boys soccer team traveled to Birch Run Sept.19 and came away with a 3-0 win over the Panthers. Ithaca scored two second half goals to secure the win. (Scott Keyes Photo)

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# Wendling, New Lothrop set bar high

Geoff Mott  
Sports Scene

NEW LOTHROP – New Lothrop senior Josh Wendling has title aspirations this year, and he started off his campaign with a bang.

Expectations are high for the Hornets football team. They were ranked No. 4 in the latest Associated Press Division 8 prep poll. New Lothrop opened its season at Traverse City St. Francis, ranked No. 9 in Division 7. After playing to a 7-7 halftime tie against the perennial powerhouse, Wendling took a trap play 84 yards for a touchdown to spur the Hornets to a 28-7 victory.

That momentum has pushed New Lothrop to a 4-0 record. It's averaged a 48.6-point margin of victory in its last three wins over Genesee Area Conference opponents.

"Our offensive line is pretty good; they know what they are doing, and they had a nice kick-out block to spring me free," said Wendling, one of five New Lothrop ball carriers with 100 yards or more this season. "I made a couple moves and our guys are good at getting downfield to block."

"It was a tough and close game and going up seven points was a huge deal. We kind of fed off of it."

Wendling tore the meniscus in his knee as a sophomore and injured his knee again last year during a playoff loss to Harbor Beach. He recovered in time for wrestling season, where he captured the 145-pound individual state title in Division 4 with a 4-2 win over Nouvel Catholic Central's Austin Hughes.

Wendling was pinned by Hughes two

weeks prior to the championship match. He got revenge and captured a state title, something his father, Leo Wendling, couldn't get as a standout wrestler with New Lothrop. Leo Wendling's best finish was fourth place at the state meet.

"But he was on teams that won a bunch of state titles," Josh Wendling said. "Wrestling was always my sport as a little kid. My dad is the president of New Lothrop's youth wrestling program, and we learn a lot at an early age."

"We know what we're doing when we get to high school, and that helps us excel once we get to the varsity."

Five of New Lothrop's returning seniors finished in the top four in the state last season. The senior group has reached the team state semifinals all three seasons but were narrowly defeated all three years. Two losses came down to one match, and a third was lost after a tie went down to criteria.

New Lothrop's football team has finished three consecutive 9-0 regular seasons. Wendling is looking for magical playoff runs in both sports.

"I'd trade a regular season loss for a state championship," Wendling said of this football season. "I hate losing, but I wouldn't be crushed to lose and bounce back for a playoff run. I just want to win championships."

And if those titles elude him?

"I think I'd possibly try again in baseball," said Wendling, who played as freshman before injuries sidelined him the last two years. "We made it to the state semifinals last year, and I don't want to be that kind of kid who tries to jump on board for a state title."

"But I'd want to join and contribute any way I could."



Josh Wendling won a state championship in wrestling for New Lothrop and would love nothing more than to help the Hornets win another Division 8 title this season. (Mike Schutt Schutt Photo)

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# Pringle back on sidelines in Carson City

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Carson City-Crystal is hoping the return of the coach who turned the football program around in the late 1990s will ignite it to championship contention. It's looking good so far, as the team is off to a 3-0 start.

Devin Pringle coached the Eagles from 1996 to 1999, and in his final year, the team was 7-2 during the regular season and made it to the third round of the playoffs before losing.

Pringle, a native of Haslett, then went to Waverly for six seasons. He returned in 2006 to CC-C as an administrator. The Eagles, who had been in the Central Michigan Athletic Conference, switched to the Mid-State Activities Conference and finished 4-1 in the league last season and made the playoffs before losing to Ewart in the first round.

A 49-8 victory over Baldwin, a team that is expected to make the playoffs this season, was a further boost to the Eagles, who could wind up 9-0 this season.

The Eagles used an offense that effectively disguised the football and executed blocks up front almost to perfection in rolling up 337 yards in the first half on only 23 total plays.

After the game, Pringle smiled and said "it's Irv Sigler type of football," referring to the longtime high school football coach who brought the full-house backfield to Belding in 1989 and left that school nine seasons later after taking it to state titles in 1994 and 1997. Sigler was a master of disguising the football, and Pringle has become a Sigler disciple.

The Panthers, who fell behind 35-0 before scoring late in the second quarter, compiled only 97 yards on 37 plays in the first half.

"They were definitely a step above what I thought, real fundamentally sound," said Baldwin coach Doug Bolles. "Their quarterback ran the offense very well. In my opinion, from seeing Sacred Heart, Carson City is the class of that league."

Garner Cusack and Robert Failing had scoring runs of 13 and two yards for the first two scores. Will Beedy exploded for 81 yards for the third score and 21-0 lead.

The Eagles put 14 more points on the board in the second quarter, with Rhett Pringle completing an 80-yard pass to Aaron Haines the only time they put the ball in the air all night, and with Beedy exploding for an 80-yard run.

Beedy led the Eagles with 193 yards rushing.

For the game, the Eagles had 452 yards rushing and eight passing on one completion. Baldwin had 79 yards



rushing and 35 passing.

"We're starting to understand the little things," said Pringle, referring to his team's offense and the full-house backfield. "When you run that stuff, it's the little things that matter. We're getting better every week. The big move has been from the big kids up front."

Baldwin has had an explosive team, putting 34 points on the board against Sacred Heart Academy, but it couldn't figure out the talented Eagle defense.

"The defense stepped up and played awfully well," Pringle said. "That's a result of kids having confidence in their bodies from working in the off-season and doing the things physically that allow them to play physical."

If the Eagles can slip past the likes of Ashley, Coleman, Montabella, Sacred Heart, and Vestaburg, it will be their first conference title since 1961, when they won the Montcalm County League championship.

This year's team features six returning starters on offense and six on defense.

Garner played quarterback last year but is focusing on defensive back this season. Rhett Pringle has taken over

the quarterback spot.

Scott Postema and Frank Smith are among the returning two-way starters for CC-C.

Pringle expects Rhett Pringle to be the league's top offensive player, and Smith, a linebacker, to be the best on defense.

The Eagle coach is looking at leadership to take the Eagles a long way. "Cusack, Postema, and the rest of our seniors know how to lead and win," he said. "We return a lot of kids who have played significant roles. We have six or seven kids who can turn any play into a touchdown."

Coming into the season, Pringle realized it would be critical to defeat a good program. CC-C had only one win against a team with a winning record in the last eight seasons.

"We expect to be very competitive in a very good conference," he said. "Our expectations are that we will make the playoffs and be competitive with the top teams in the MSAC. We face five teams who finished with winning records in 2012. They all expect to win, also, so we need to be at our best every week."

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# Colosky rock solid

**Ben Murphy  
Sports Scene**

Golfing countless evenings with her father has transformed Farwell junior Bria Colosky from an ordinary golfer into one of the best in the state.

"My dad [Dennis Colosky] bought me my first set of clubs when I was five, and we've been golfing ever since," Bria Colosky said. "I honestly wouldn't be the golfer I am today without my dad. He's taught me everything I know. We watch golf together so we can bond over that, and we try the tips they talk about on TV and try them trial and error together."

Colosky finished in ninth place in the Division 4 state tournament as a sophomore and finished 10<sup>th</sup> as a freshman. She also competes in numerous amateur tournaments throughout the off-season. Her high school head coach, TJ Staley, believes that her potential is limitless.

"If she continues to practice like she has so far this year, she could add state champion to her resume," Staley said.

"She is capable of shooting par on a tough course like Bedford Valley, and that would put her in contention. In years past, she has improved from just getting on the course and playing. She has dedicated herself to being a better practice player this year. I am proud of her for spending more time on the range and around the putting green."

A state championship isn't something that Colosky is afraid to talk about, in fact, she strives for one.

"Last year about five or six of the girls were seniors, so they're going to be gone this year," Colosky said. "If I shoot the way I know I can take at least fifth this year and hopefully by next year I can reach my ultimate goal. Hopefully we can get back to states as a team this year, but my ultimate goal would be to win a state championship."

If it wasn't obvious already, golf isn't just a hobby for Colosky, it's

a passion she hopes to have for a lifetime.

"Golf means everything to me honestly," she said. "I try to work hard at it because I know that it's something that will make me a better person in the future and get me through school hopefully."

Colosky has tied the individual 18-hole school record (74, Emily Rhody) and has been close to the nine-hole record of 35 (Rohdy). Reaching those marks, winning a state championship, and competing at the collegiate level, perhaps at her dream school University of Michigan continue to drive her.

"I would love to play college golf," she said.

"I don't know how far I'd take it after college, but I really hope that college golf is in my future. I'm trying to practice every day and work out the little kinks here and there. I'm just trying to devote more of my time to it and work out the technical errors and keep shooting in the 70s."

## Vestaburg gets off to impressive start; Carson-City halts winning streak

Vestaburg's 3-0 start in football was impressive, but it came to an end September 20 with a 24-6 loss to Carson City-Crystal.

The Wolverines started the season well. They won in impressive fashion against Brethren 63-8. Austin Meyers threw for 262 yards and six touchdowns. Christian Benavidez had 105 yards receiving and Keigan Ryckman had 113 yards

rushing. Dewayne McKinney had four catches for 85 yards.

The win over Brethren put Vestaburg at 3-0.

Danny Ryckman is coach of the Wolverines, who opened the season with 32-0 and 50-12 victories over Breckenridge and Onkama.

Vestaburg's schedule will toughen with upcoming games against Coleman, Sacred Heart Academy, and Montabella.



Far Left: The Carson-City football team improved to 4-0 on the season after defeating Vestaburg Sept. 20. Left: Vestaburg started the season off 3-0 before losing to the Eagles 24-6. Above: Farwell's Bria Colosky has been in a league of her own thus far this season. She finished ninth last season in the D4 state finals. (Dave Knarr and Ben Murphy Photos)

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# Belding bounces back

Jeff Chaney  
Sports Scene

BELDING, MI – The 2013 Belding football team has conjured memories of Redskin teams of years past.

This year's version is off to its best start since 1998, the last time that Belding played for a state championship.

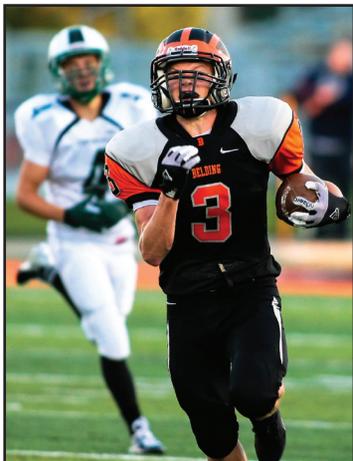
And that has the Belding faithful the most excited since the 1990s, when iconic coach Irv Sigler was roaming the Belding sidelines, and each year the Redskins made deep runs in the state playoffs.

In the 1990s, Belding went to the playoffs eight times. During that time, the Redskins advanced to the state semifinals twice and to the final game four times. They won it all in 1994 and 1997.

Back then, the team was loaded with talent, like running backs Brent and Paul Cummings and Mick Faasen. And the offensive and defensive lines were huge and rugged, anchored by monsters like Erik Faasen.

Since the 1999 season, when the Redskins made it to the second round of the Division 4 playoffs, Belding has only made it to the playoffs five times, and only in 2007 did it advance past the first round. The team lost to Alma in the second round that year.

This year's team has players similar to the Cummings



brothers and the Faasens. The Redskins have a great offensive backfield that includes senior quarterback Kole Hart, senior fullback Neil McCully, senior running back Nick Price, and junior running back Sam Beckett.

Up front, the offensive line is anchored by senior tackle Bryce Wilker and senior noseguard Jake Krieger.

Just like the Belding fans, the players are excited. "Putting Belding back on the map would be my greatest satisfaction," Hart said. "Whether that's the playoffs, or going all the way, that would be my greatest satisfaction."

This year's team is in position to make that happen. Through the first four weeks of the season, the Redskins are 4-0 and have outscored their opponents 192-77, including a 49-14 pounding of Leslie September 20.

But the meat of the schedule is still ahead and begins with a four-week stretch that includes games against perennial powers Comstock Park, Allendale, and Hopkins. That stretch starts September 27 at Comstock Park in a tough OK Blue Conference game.

"We have a rough conference, obviously," Hart said. "As a team, we can be as good as we want to be, if we stay focused at practice and in the games. We can set out to do whatever we want to do."

Second-year coach Joe Schwander, who played for and coached for Ralph Munger at Rockford High School, says he has been blessed with a humble senior class that struggled last year to a 2-7 record but came back with a strong off-season.

"There has been a lot of talk about this class," Schwander said. "They have had a lot of success in this class. I think last year was good for them, because they were humbled, and that made them hungry this off-season and motivated."

Even though his team is off to a great start, Schwander is still cautious. "We have some tough kids now," he said. "We are one deep, so we need to work on some depth. We are trying to start building a culture. There are a lot of passionate people in Belding – this community wants to support football."

Winning does that.

## Football, volleyball teams are putting together excellent seasons

Gabby Holyfield is happy to be healthy and playing for the Belding Redskin volleyball team. Her teammates are happy, too.

In mid-September, Holyfield helped her team win its home invitational.

The Redskins defeated Grand Rapids West Catholic 25-17, 25-13 in the championship match. Holyfield, who caught fire at the net with her attacks and blocks, had a kill for the 24th point in the final match.

"There's five seniors, it's our last home tournament, and we really wanted to win this," Holyfield said. "We all had to come together and pick it up, and we did."

"We got into some big holes that we played out of," said Belding coach Mikayla Linebaugh. "That's a big key for us. We have to learn to play strong from point one to 25. We got into a little bit of a hole that first game but got through it and then took control."

Belding, 12-2-4, was led for the day by Holyfield with 32 kills and seven blocks. "I thought Gabby stepped up in that last



Belding sports teams are back in familiar territory this season. (Jamie McNich Photos)

game," Linebaugh said. "She was touching everything or blocking and started to hit the ball well."

"I don't ever want to let my teammates down, so I had to pick it up and help my teammates," said Holyfield, who is coming off a torn meniscus that kept her out of the entire 2012 season. "I played AAU last year, so it wasn't like I took a whole year off. It took some getting used to, but I'm [OK]."

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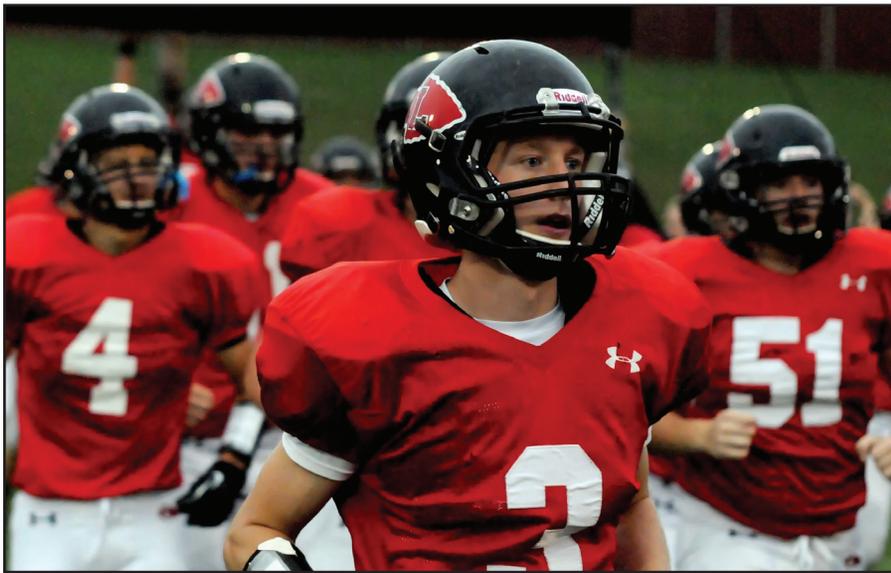
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# Lowell shows Muskegon it means business



Lowell proved once again that it is one of the best teams in Division 2 by defeating Muskegon 31-20 in front of a huge home crowd Sept. 20. A week earlier, Muskegon beat Rockford 45-0. (Randy Miniard Photo)

## Jeff Chaney Sports Scene

Since 2006, the football teams from Muskegon and Lowell have met a total of eight times.

Each game has been an epic battle, with the winner usually going on to play for a Division 2 state championship at Ford Field.

Last year, the Big Reds of Muskegon won both games played between the two powerhouses, during the regular season 36-21 and again in the playoffs, 15-13. They then went on to play in the state final, where they fell to Brother Rice 35-28.

The two teams met up at Lowell's Bob Perry Field on September 20 and did not disappoint the large crowd, as

the host Red Arrows beat Muskegon 31-20 in a battle between the No. 1 (Muskegon) and No. 3 (Lowell) teams in the state in Division 2.

It was a game of costly mistakes for coach Shane Fairfield's Muskegon team. "It just came down to execution," Fairfield said. "They played better than we did."

The Lowell defense was up to the challenge, as it held Muskegon dual-threat quarterback Deshaun Thrower to a pedestrian game by his standards. He finished with just 30 yards rushing and struggled through the air as a passer.

To most coaches, a letdown after the stretch of games that Muskegon played to open its season may be acceptable. After all, the Muskegon opened their season with impressive wins over Grand Haven (41-7), defending Division 3 state champion Grand Rapids Christian (35-13), and rival Rockford (45-0), but this is Muskegon, one of the top teams in the state, year in and year out.

"We have now played four big games," Fairfield. "We haven't had a chance to breathe."

And that might not happen in the near future, as the Big Reds play unbeaten Mona Shores September 27.

\*Once again, the cross-country teams from Sparta High School are running ahead of the pack. At the huge Sparta Cross Country Invitational,

which was run on the campus of the old Sparta High School September 14, the girls' team won the varsity Gold Division with 35 points, beating out neighborhood rival Cedar Springs, which was second with 68 points.

Alexis Heimbaugh and Carley Andrews paced the Spartans by taking second and third in the race, respectively. Cedar Springs' Kenzie Weiler won with an impressive time of 18 minutes, 5.67 seconds. The boys' team came in third in the deep Gold Division with 129 points. Perennial state power Ionia won the Gold boys' race with 60 points. Leading the Sparta boys' team was Carter VerSluys, who finished 13th.

\*The Sparta Cross Country Invitational ended a tough week for the Sparta running family, as long-time cross-country and track coach John Thomas' wife, Nancy Brady-Thomas passed away after a short battle with cancer. It's a big loss to the Sparta family.

\*On September 27, the Kelloggsville football team will be celebrating 300 program wins with an open house for former players taking place before its game with visiting power Hopkins. The Rockets won their 300th game with an opening-night win over Whitehall. Also, Kelloggsville coach Don Galster picked up his 100th win as coach of the Rockets.

## Lowell's Stehley has no regrets; finds home on mat

## Jeff Chaney Sports Scene

Garrett Stehley does not regret giving up two sports that he enjoyed and had played since he was a little kid.

The Lowell senior gave up football and baseball after his sophomore year to concentrate on wrestling, the sport he loves the most.

That decision, although tough, paid dividends last year, as Stehley took second in the 189-pound weight class in Division 2.

He lost a heartbreaking 11-9 decision to St. Johns' Payne Hayden in the final. Hayden now wrestles for the University of Michigan.

Stehley is a three-time all-state

wrestler. He took fourth at 189 his freshman year, sixth at 171 as a sophomore, and finished runner-up last year.

"No regrets, because I know I'm pursuing the goals in the sport I love," said Stehley, who has a 98-15 record in his three years on the varsity wrestling team. "I wasn't where I wanted to be as a wrestler. I knew not everyone could be a great athlete at two or three sports, so I knew I had to drop one or two."

The thing is, Stehley was pretty good in the other two sports.

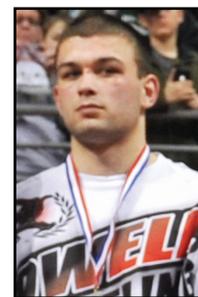
In football, he started at center as a freshman and at linebacker as a sophomore, and he played in two Division 2 state championship games.

He was also a two-year starter on the

varsity baseball team.

"He wanted to improve his wrestling and wanted to prepare for wrestling in college," said Garrett's father, Rob Stehley. "It's been harder for me and his mom than him.

He is fine with it; he trains year round for wrestling now. We miss him playing football and baseball more than he does. But he has put his goals first, and his goal to compete at a high level for a college Division I program in wrestling. He has put his goals in front of everything else, and



Garrett Stehley

you have to respect that."

Garrett Stehley says he was helped with his decision when his brother Jake Stehley graduated from Lowell and went to Elmhurst College in Illinois to play football.

"I grew up playing football and baseball all my life, and I enjoyed playing them," Garrett Stehley said. "I played with my brother, but after he graduated, it wasn't the same. About that time, I determined I wanted to be a Division I college wrestler, and I knew I needed to step up my level to do that."

He has gotten looks from Division I programs. He has already visited Michigan State University and Clarion University of Pennsylvania. He will also visit Lehigh University.



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# New pool brings big expectations for St. Johns

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The St. Johns girls swimming and diving team is off to a strong start this season, and they are doing it in style in a new pool.

"We have a brand new 10-lane pool," coach Kim Brewbaker said. "Our previous pool was a six-lane pool, so it is a quite noticeable improvement. We are very, very happy and very, very fortunate to have this facility available for our kids."

Having a 10-lane pool is an asset for the team. "It's a tremendous benefit," Brewbaker said. "With a six-lane pool, you give up a couple of lanes to have your divers practice. With only four lanes, it makes things quite crowded for our swimmers. It's quite difficult to have a quality workout. With 10 lanes, it enables everyone to practice. It allows our divers to work out at the same time as our



swimmers."

The hard work the Redwing swimmers are putting in is paying off. "The season has been going very good for us," Brewbaker said. "We just defeated Owosso 130-53. We also finished second out of 12 teams at the Waverly Relays.

Okemos was the only team that finished ahead of us, and they are a perennial powerhouse."

The Redwings have a young team with a strong nucleus of newcomers. "We are a young team, but we have a pretty good mix of veterans and new kids," Brewbaker said. "We

have eight or nine new girls, and we only lost three seniors off last year's team. We have a good group of returnees and a good group of new girls that adds to our depth."

Among the swimmers leading the way for St. Johns are Alexandra Davis (distance),

Kari Bellant (backstroke/sprint), Rachel Ely (all events), Meg Pope (IM/breaststroke), Catherine Voisin (butterfly/IM), Kayla Bellant (backstroke/sprints), Emma Shaefer (all events), Callie LaBar (all events), and Lily Burns (diving).

"We have a good group of girls," Brewbaker said.

St. Johns is looking to build off the strong start and the excitement of the new pool as the year goes on.

"Our number one goal is to win our conference," Brewbaker said. "We finished fourth in the conference last year, and we look to improve on that this year.

Our other goal is to have a better showing at the Division 2 state meet this year. We want to get some girls to make it to the second day at state and score some points. We didn't get anyone to the second day last year at state, and this year we want to get some to the second day."

Kristin Novak and her son Jack pose for a picture with NASCAR driver Kasey Kahne during the Grand Opening of Ollie's Discount Outlet in Saginaw Township. Kahne drives the No. 5 Farmers Insurance Chevy for Hendrick Motorsports. (Scott Keyes Photo)

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# Running in Clare sisters' blood

## Ben Murphy Sports Scene

For her entire high school career, Clare senior Victoria Harper has blazed down the cross-country trails, racking up individual and team honors. Last year alone, she won all three Jack Pine Conference jamboree races to be named MVP, and she finished 21st in the Division 3 state finals, leading the Lady Pioneers to a 12th place finish as a team. Now, she's joined by her freshman sister, Jasmine. If Jasmine's rookie season is any indication, expect her career to be just as storied.

"Our team is definitely blessed to be able to have both Harper sisters run on the same team," head coach Kyle McKown said. "Cross-country is unlike any other sport in how close of a bond that the team typically develops throughout the season, but having sisters who are strong leaders on the team only makes that team bond even closer."

Victoria's personal best time is 19:04, the second fastest in school history.

"I have really enjoyed running for Clare over the years," she said. "Some of my running goals are to get all-state at the state meet and place high as a team in the state

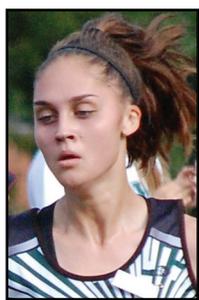
meet. God allows me to be successful in running. Running is a way that I can give back to Him.

For me, running is an act of worship to God. [Coach McKown] has worked well with me over the years. He is one of the most positive and influential people in my life."

Her coach has taken note of just how significant Victoria's career has been in her time running as a Pioneer.

"Victoria is the hardest-working athlete that I have ever coached," McKown said. "She values the necessity of doing the right things, is an inspirational team leader, and she is a fierce competitor that always is willing to step up to any challenge. Her drive to be the best that she can be allows her to maximize her potential.

"She is the type of leader that every coach wants to have lead their team," he added. "She is selfless and humble, often making many sacrifices so that her team will be able to enjoy large amounts of success. She is a role model and is well



V. Harper

respected because of her character. She pushes the people around her to be the best that they can be at all times both on and off the athletic field. She leads by example and clearly showed that with her strong performance in the first Jack Pine Conference jamboree at Harrison [a first place finish on September 18]."

Jasmine feels she has seen the early success in her career for many of the same reasons as her older sister. "I think that God has blessed me with a successful season so that I can give glory to Him," she said. "I also think that if it weren't for my family who introduced me to running early on, that I would not be in this same position."

Jasmine has already broken the 20-minute mark in her young career and has even finished ahead of Victoria in a few races this season. Victoria is nothing but happy to see her younger sibling flourish so quickly.

"I feel blessed that we are on the same team together,"



J. Harper

Victoria said. "Not many people can say that they have a sibling who runs on the same team. We are very supportive of each other, we help push each other to be the best that we can be.

"I have taken Jasmine under my wing, she's done a great job adjusting to high school cross-country," said Victoria, who is considering studying and running at Spring Arbor University. "I'm really proud of her."

McKown adds that he realizes he's fortunate to have another Harper working her way through the ranks, though Jasmine's success comes as anything but a surprise to him.

"Jasmine is a very hard-working and gifted runner," he said. "She also has demonstrated a strong and consistent work ethic that has prepared her well for this season. She was very successful at the middle school level and it comes as no surprise that she is able to compete at as high of a level as she currently is this season. She has incredible drive and she is fearless when confronted by any challenge. She works hard and consistently does the right things in order to be successful."

Jasmine knows just how good a role model she has

in her older sister. "Let me just say that Victoria is very dedicated and keeps me in line," she said. "She is not only a great teammate but she is my best friend. I can't imagine what these next few years will be like without her after she graduates.

"She encourages me to stay calm before my races and she is very wise in the way a runner's lifestyle should be," Jasmine added. "When I see the challenging workouts that she does, it makes me feel like I can do them, too."

McKown is hoping the state finals meet results in the ultimate send-off for Victoria and a preview of more to come for Jasmine.

"It would be amazing to see both Victoria and Jasmine earn all-state honors this season and to share that honor together," he said. "That is the ultimate competition goal for any athlete, but it would be even more special if they both could share it this season as sisters. For their careers, it would be great to see them both run in the 18s, as well. Victoria and Jasmine both value the higher spiritual purpose behind their running and often use it to motivate them to work hard and to be the best athletes, students, and people that they can be."

## Arthur Hill continues to improve under coach Townsend

The Saginaw Arthur Hill football team has made tremendous strides this season under coach Fred Townsend, who, until this year, had not coached the Lumberjacks since 2008. Townsend, who is also the school's Athletic Director, has used discipline, athleticism, and smarts to move the Lumberjacks to a 3-1

mark after the first four games. Although the Lumberjacks dropped a 51-21 decision to Saginaw Valley League North Division foe Midland September 20, Arthur Hill is showing signs of moving forward and is bringing pride back to a once proud program. "A lot of people didn't give us a chance," Townsend said after his

team's opening night victory over Goodrich. "Our coaching staff has done a great job getting the kids to buy into what we are trying to do here. These kids are making strides, and they still have a long ways to go. We just need to learn how to keep our composure and execute the game plan these guys can win."



Arthur Hill's Darrion Robinson gives a stiff arm to a Midland High defender during the Lumberjacks 51-21 loss to the Chemics Sept. 20 (Scott Keyes Photo)



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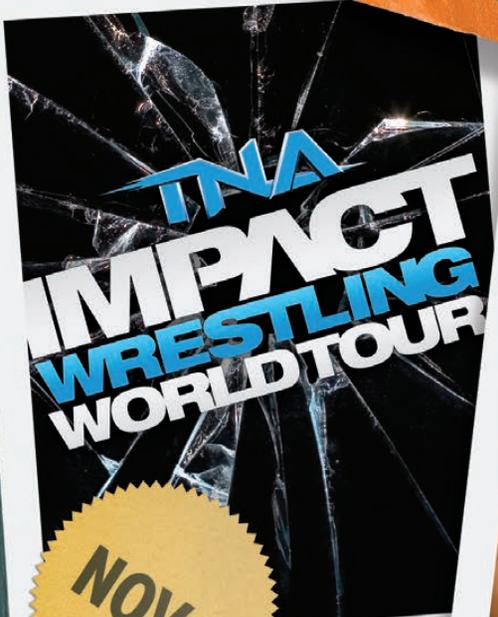


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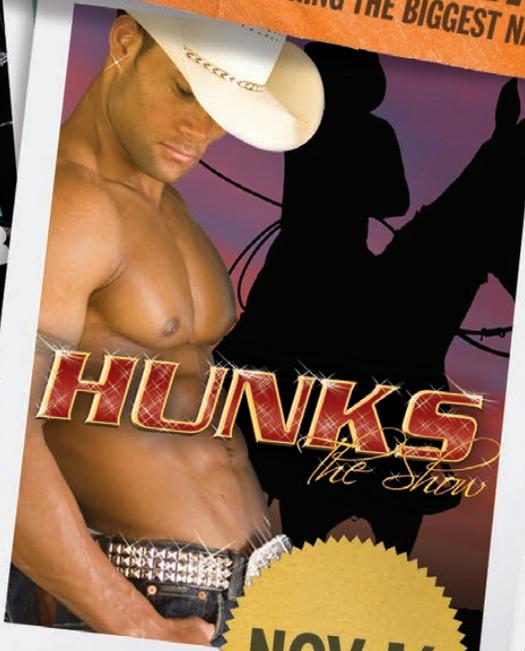
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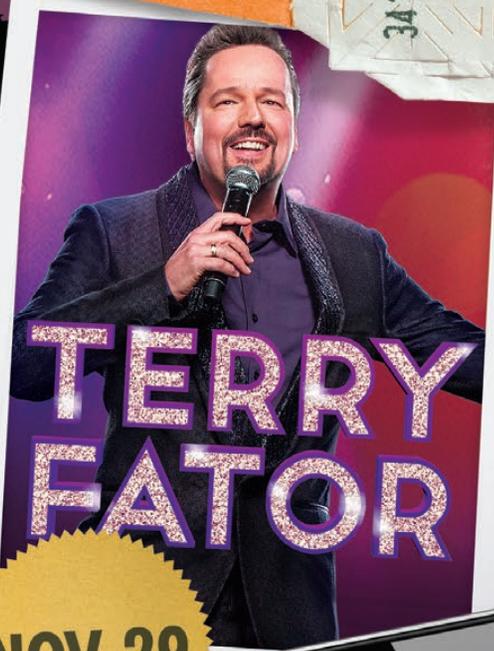
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