

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

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CONTENTS

- 4 | High School Hockey
- 5 | Holly's Kyle Woodruff
- 6 | High School Skiing
- 8 | Corunna's Sklar Napier
- 9 | Durand Girls Basketball
- 10 | Haslett Girls Basketball
- 11 | Mt. Pleasant's Hannah Kahn Commits
- 12 | College Signings
- 13 | College Signings
- 14 | Chaos, Excitement Of National Signing Day
- 15 | Local Trio Signs With Grand Valley
- 16 | Area Athletes Sign On Dotted Line
- 17 | Mt. Pleasant Trio Signs
- 18 | Meet Fulton Coach Todd Walden
- 19 | St. Louis Bowling
- 20 | Saginaw High's Algevon Eichelberger
- 21 | Saginaw Heritage Loses First Game Of Season
- 22 | Valley Lutheran Pom Pon Wins State
- 23 | Eye On Breckenridge
- 24 | Hemlock Girls Hoops Solid
- 25 | Vetsburg Boys Basketball
- 26 | Eye On The Jack Pine Conference
- 28 | Eye On Alma

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Hey Sports Fans! It's another great day at Sports Scene.

The Wrestling Finals are finally upon us. As your official MHSAA home for all things high school wrestling, make sure you log into highschoolsportsscene.com for updates during the tournament or find us on Facebook.

This month's issue is always a big one for me. Our 16-page wrestling guide is chocked full of information for high school wrestling fans. We cover wrestling like no other publication in the entire state. This is something we are proud of.

In last year's special section, we brought our readers the official Top 100 wrestlers of all time. Brent Metcalf was named the number 1 wrestler to ever strap on the boots in Michigan. Although Metcalf is probably deserving of the honor, I have to take a stand on the ranking. Although our writer Butch Harmon did an excellent job compiling the list, I have to disagree with Metcalf being named number 1 of all time.

If I was writing the article, my number 1 would be Lansing's own Kevin Jackson; you can't go wrong with an Olympic Champion. Jackson, who is the current wrestling coach at Iowa State University, is still active in the wrestling community today. Metcalf will attempt to make the Olympic team in 2016, but until he brings home the gold, my vote goes to Jackson. You can read about Kevin Jackson in this month's wrestling Special Section of Sports Scene.

Something To Pay Attention To

An epidemic has struck high school baseball pitchers.

According to a study presented last summer at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine's annual meeting, 15- to 19-year-olds made up 56.7 percent of all Tommy John surgeries performed in the United States between 2007 and 2011.

Just as alarming: The rate is increasing by 9.1 percent every year.

Something has to be done about this and fast. That's why coaches and administrators need to pay attention to this alarming statistic.

A proposal would follow USA Baseball guidelines, which limit the number of pitches a pitcher can throw in a game and the amount of pitches he can throw on specific days of rest.

Keep an eye on this in the coming months as the spring sports season is just around the corner.



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Hartland Emerges As First Time KLAAs Champion

Dan Stickradts Sports Scene

Despite all of its success in the past decade, Hartland has never emerged as the KLAAs champion.

Until 2016.

The Eagles surpassed a 20-win plateau on Feb. 19 and claimed the overall KLAAs championship by skating past fellow state power Livonia Stevenon, 4-0.

Hartland, which won the KLAAs-West Division title and Lake Conference championship, blanked Kensington Conference titlist Stevenson in convincing fashion. Stevenson was ranked second in D-2 entering the contest.

The Eagles are 20-2-1 and ranked third in Division 2 entering the final week of the regular season. Hartland reached the D-2 state title game twice in last three years.

Hartland head coach Rick Gadow was not on hand for his team's celebration. I instead he spent the evening at the hospital as his wife was in labor.

Senior Christian Spangler had one of the best games of his career,

stopping 45 shots in the shutout against the talented

Spartans (17-6-1). Both teams are expected to contend for regional and state championships when the postseason comes around Feb. 29.

KLAAs AMONGST STATE'S BEST

The four-division KLAAs is again amongst the state most competitive conference for boys hockey and has been so during the past decade.

As of Feb. 20, Stevenson (No. 2), Hartland (No. 3), Livonia Churchill (No. 7) and Plymouth Salem (No. 8) were all ranked in Division 2. Over in D-1, Brighton (No. 2), Northville (No. 5) and Howell (No. 7) all held spots amongst the royalty club.

Additionally, Livonia Franklin and Plymouth are honorable mention in Division 2.

In the past decade, Brighton finished as state champs in 2006, 2012 and 2013, while the Bulldogs were state runners-up in 2014, all in Division 1.

Howell finished as the D-1 state runner up in 2009 and 2010, while Hartland lost in the D-2 finals in 2013 and 2014.

Livonia Stevenson was state champion in 2013 and state runner-up in 2015, both in Division 2, while Novi won the D-1 state title in 2011.

Several more times these schools have reached the regional finals, Elite Eight or even Final Four.

SCORING MACHINE

Pinckney senior Connor Smith is more than lighting up scoreboards. He is burning out the bulbs.

As of Feb. 20, he not only led the KLAAs in scoring with 50 goals and 15 assists, but he has scored more goals in 2015-16 than any other player statewide.

While a likely first-team All-State selection, he has not been listed in the Mr. Hockey watch list

Amongst that group is Howell senior forward Max DiCicco,

Livonia Stevenson senior defenseman Adam Olson, Romeo senior forward Logan Jenuwine, Novi Detroit Catholic Central senior forward Joe Mancinelli, Calumet-junior forward Rory Anderson, Detroit U-D Jesuit senior goaltender Jake Robinson, Hartland senior goaltender Christian Spangler, Grandville senior forward Noah Wiggle, Brighton senior forward Reid Pietila and Houghton senior forward Reid Pietila.

The award, issued by the Michi-

gan High School Hockey Coaches Association, began back in 1994.

FINAL REGULAR SEASON HOCKEY RANKINGS

Division 1 — 1) Novi Detroit Catholic Central; 2) Brighton; 3) Detroit U-D Jesuit; 4) Orchard Lake St. Mary's; 5) Northville; 6) Grandville; 7) Howell; 8) Utica Eisenhower; 9) Rockford; 10) Troy Unified.

Honorable Mention — Lake Orion, Holland West Ottawa, Jackson, East Kentwood, Rochester United.

Division 2 — 1) Birmingham Brother Rice; 2) Livonia Stevenson; 3) Hartland; 4) Romeo; 5) Marquette; 6) Trenton; 7) Livonia Churchill; 8) Plymouth Salem; 9) Grosse Pointe South; 10) Escanaba.

Honorable Mention — Plymouth, Berkley, Livonia Franklin; Midland Dow; Macomb L'Anse Creuse North.

Division 3 — 1) Saginaw Heritage; 2) Hancock; 3) Calumet; 4) Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook Kingswood; 5) Warren DeLaSalle; 6) Grand Rapids Catholic Central; 7) Houghton; 8) Flint Powers Catholic; 9) Chelsea; 10) Allen Park.

Honorable Mention — Sault Ste. Marie, Grosse Pointe Woods University-Liggett, Wyandotte Roosevelt, Grand Rapids Christian, Farmington.



Hartland is putting together a dream season, eclipsing their 20-game win plateau with a Feb. 19 victory over Livonia Stevenon (Doug Bargerstock, High School Sports Scene Photo)



Novi Boys Swim Team Sets its Sights on Strong Finishes at State Meet

Dan Stickradts Sports Scene

With its recent top-flight finish at the Oakland County Championships, Novi's boys swimming team sent a statement to the rest of the sport's community. The Wildcats have landed on the radar and are going to be a threat for top-10 state-meet success.

Novi finished second at the prestigious Oakland County meet on Feb. 5, an event dominated for decades by schools from the Birmingham/Bloomfield Hills area.

While those schools still dominate the county and state scene — Birmingham Brother Rice won the county with 369 points, while Birmingham Seaholm (third, 212), Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook Kingswood (fourth, 211.5), Birmingham Groves (seventh, 159) and Bloomfield Hills (ninth, 84) — Novi was able to crack the top list. The Wildcats' 228 points was enough to vault them past Seaholm into second place.

"I don't think anyone expected us to do that," said Novi coach Brent Pohlonski. "I mean Oak-

land County had the (team) state champions last year in every division."

Brother Rice (Division 1), Seaholm (Division 2) and Cranbrook Kingswood (Division 3) all captured state championships last season and were the top three teams at the 2015 Oakland County meet. Going back 25 years and few non-Birmingham/Bloomfield schools have cracked the top three at the county meet and the last school not from that talent-rich area to win the Oakland title was Rochester Adams in 2000.

"I honestly didn't expect that," said Pohlonski of the county runner-up finish. "I figured we would finish in the top 10 and maybe squeak in the top five. With all of the great teams and great swimmers in Oakland County every year, I was being realistic. Top five would be a great accomplishment. We ended up second and maybe we'll have bigger expectations down the stretch."

Novi has since climbed to eighth in the Division 1 rankings and is starting to gain some statewide respect. A strong top 10 state finals finish in March would solidify the Wildcats' place amongst the state powers.

Novi first constructed its pool in the mid-1990s and cracked the scoring column at the Class A state finals for the first time in 2002, coming in 30th with four points that year. The

Wildcats have scored points at the Class/Division 1 state meet for 14 straight seasons, with four top 20 finishes.

Novi's best finishes at the state level were 11th in 2011 (100 points) and 11th in 2013 (69 points). This year's team has a goal of cracking the top 10 for the first time.

Looking back over the years at the programs in the current KLAAs, the two conferences that merged less than a decade ago (WLAA, KVC) and the schools that have dominated the sport of boys swimming, Novi has joined that elite group. Northville, Livonia Stevenson, Brighton and Hartland have been the most successful of that group in recent years.

The Wildcats could be the best of that bunch this season with an experienced and talented cast. Novi already owns dual meet wins over Northville, Stevenson and South Lyon Unified, all teams listed as honorable mention in the most recent D-1 state polls.

"We're thrilled with what we have accomplished so far," said Pohlonski, who has 13 seniors on his roster. "It has been a lot of fun to watch our team improve. We are way better than last year."

Novi had two winners at the county meet; senior Ryan Katulski won the 100 freestyle



Novi's Phillip Billiu swam on a pair of top five relays at the recent Oakland County meet and helped the Wildcats to a runner-up team finish and to a top 10 state ranking. (Submitted Photo)

(47.18) and junior Joey Berman won the 100 backstroke (52.66).

Katulski was also second in the 50 free, Sidhardha Kareddy placed third in both the 200 IM and 100 butterfly, Berman was sixth in the 500 free and the Wildcats placed third in the 200 medley relay, 400 free relay and 200 free relay to account for their high finishes.

The recent success has Novi's swimmers thinking big.

"At the beginning of the year the goal was to finish in the top 10 in the state, reminded Pohlonski. "Now I think that is not only a realistic goal, but maybe we can go for a top-eight, top-five finish. If we continue to work hard and continue to improve, then those goals are possible. I don't know if Novi has ever finished that high at the state finals before."

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Woodruff Back Healthy; Helping Holly Contend Again FML

Dan Stickradts Sports Scene

Sometimes a player just knows something is wrong. That was the case for Holly's Kyle Woodruff.

At a practice in early January 2015, Woodruff collided with a teammate going for a loose ball in a practice. It was a case of tough breaks — literally.

Woodruff ended up in the hospital, the diagnosis a broken collarbone. Holly, a deep team at the time, suffered through an array of injuries last season but still won the Flint Metro League title and advanced to the Class A Sweet 16 (regional finals), the furthest the school has ever advanced since becoming a Class A school in the early 1980s.

"I knew something was wrong," recalled Woodruff, who eclipsed the 1,000 points barrier this season. "We had a lot of talent last year. But it was really hard sitting on the bench last year and watching. Making it to the regional finals was exciting. But not being able to go out there was really rough."

The 6-foot-3, 175-pound Woodruff, who garnered All-FML honors as both a freshman and

sophomore, toughed it out on the bench as a junior, where he saw action in only nine of his team's 25 games.

This season, Woodruff is averaging around 20.5 points, 4.0 rebounds, 2.0 assists and 2.0 steals a game for Holly, which as of Feb. 21 stood at 14-3 overall and in a heated run for the FML crown along with Flushing and Ortonville Brandon. He has teamed up with fellow senior Ian Hodges to form one of the state's top scoring duos. Hodges also averages more than 20 points a game.

Once a Division I college recruit, many of the larger schools backed off the recruiting trail after Woodruff's injury. He has had to prove himself all over again after putting up impressive numbers during his first 2.5 seasons of high school basketball.

Division II schools Grand Valley State and Northwood have still shown heavy interest, along with a multitude of Division III and NAIA schools from around Michigan and the Midwest. The talented Woodruff has improved his overall game, going from a three-point and spot up shooter to a player who can shoot from anywhere, drive, dish, rebound and play pesky defense.

Holly's Kyle Woodruff has put together a solid four seasons, while hopefully leading the Broncos to another Flint Metro title this season. (Submitted Photo)

Otherwise, be a leader for Holly.

"The kid can play. And it's great to have him back because last year was really tough on him," said Holly coach Lance Baylis. "He is a quality player that has stepped up this year. We lost a few guys to graduation and we're not as deep. He has done a great job teaming up with Ian Hodges and taking the scoring duties for this team. Last year he was one of scoring leaders before he got hurt. He worked hard to come back stronger"

Woodruff also plays for the Michigan Mustangs on the AAU circuit, where he earned All-Tournament honors last summer at the Up North Challenge. He averaged 17.5 points and 4.0 assists in AAU ball last spring and summer while shooting more than 50 percent from the floor. Now he is back in a Holly uniform — healthy — and hoping to lead the Broncos to another league title and long tournament run.

"We still have a lot of talent and I think we can put it together and make a run at least a league and district, maybe more," said Woodruff, who is the school's all-time leader in three-pointers made. "It's good to be back on the basketball court again."

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GIRLS SKIING: Fenton's Weinberg Making A Run At Being State's Best

Dan Stickrad
Sports Scene

Every athlete has expectations of what they might accomplish once they reach a certain level. Zoe Weinberg wanted to be the top skier on her Fenton/Linden Unified girls ski team when she was a freshman two years ago.

She became more than that. Weinberg developed into one of the state's premier freshmen in 2014 and has since emerged as one of Michigan's top ski racers regardless of grade.

"We knew she was good — really good — ever since she was little," said Fenton/Linden Unified coach Tim Hiscock. "I have watched her grow up and train (through Thunderbolt club skiing) and we knew she would be special once she got to high school."

Weinberg was always in the top 10 at large meets her freshman season, sweeping both races at the Mt. Holly Divisional and Division 1 Pine Knob regional. After a pair of top-10 finishes at the South-

eastern Michigan Ski League Championships, she was sixth in the GS and 33rd in the slalom at the D-1 state finals following a slight slip-up in one of her runs.

As a sophomore, Weinberg was even better. She was divisional champion in both races, finished first in the GS and second in the slalom at both the Mt. Holly regional and SEMSL meet and capped the year by winning the state title in the slalom and finishing second in the GS. She became the first Fenton skier to win a state title and she did so by some 2.5 seconds in the slalom.

As a junior, she has not lost a high school race; either slalom or giant slalom. Through Feb. 21, she was unbeaten in duals at Mt. Holly, won both races at the Mt. Holly Divisional and swept both races at the Division 1 Pine Knob regional.

Weinberg is amongst the favorites at the SEMSL and state meets.

"I want to go out there and ski my best and try to win both races," said Weinberg, who also runs

track for Fenton. "I would like to (win both) more than anything. That's my goal. I need to put together four good runs each time. I have been able to that every meet so far this season."

Weinberg's relentless year-round work ethic to becoming an elite-level athlete has helped her become one of Michigan's most dominant high school racers in several years.

"She's driving herself up north on weekends sometimes. In the summertime, she's doing camps and workouts to get stronger. She's getting in fall camps in Colorado — just does every she can to make herself a better ski racer," said Hiscock. "Zoe is dedicated to the sport. She loves it. She's passionate about it. Coaching her is a pleasure because she works so hard at it. There's no question that she's one of the best in the state. She's earned it."

Weinberg would love to compete in college and perhaps even higher in her future. Today, she is just concentrating on finishing her junior season strong — and undefeated.

"My actual training has paid off. I have worked really hard to get this point for the past couple of years," she said. "Now I have just a couple of more races in the high school season and I want to finish it off with a sweep."



Fenton's Zoe Weinberg has emerged as one of Michigan's most dominant high school ski racers during her career. (Daniel Tetor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Clarkston A Model Of Consistency On Slopes

Dan Stickrad
Sports Scene

A sign of a quality program is not always recorded in championships, but in consistency over long periods of time.

Clarkston's boys skiing team has become a true model of consistency on the slopes over the past quarter century. In fact for a school known for its strong boys basketball and football teams, the school's boys ski team has been perhaps one of the most consistent programs in Southeastern Michigan dating back to the early 1990s, and close to rivaling the school's other top sports.

The Wolves have qualified for the state finals in 19 of 25 seasons, including winning the recent Division 1 Pine Knob regional on Feb. 1. Since the MHSAA broke skiing up into two classifications in 1996, Clarkston has reached the state slopes in 17 of 21 seasons, including seven straight.

"We just always have good kids," said Clarkston

coach Mike Foyteck. "I know when (former coach) Bruce (Rosengren) was here they were in the top 10 in the state for years. In recent years, we have been able to do the same thing. We have kids that train as much as they can. They ski on the weekends and go out west when they can. It makes a difference."

From 1996 to 2006, the Wolves missed the state meet only once (2000). Clarkston also went through some dry years, failing to qualify three consecutive times from 2007 to 2009. Since 2010, the Wolves have again been a steady force in Division 1.

In the past 25 years, Clarkston owns a total of 12 top five finishes, including five third place finishes, two state runner-up trophies (2011 and 2013) and one state title (2012). The Wolves became the first boys team from a public school in the Detroit area to win a state title four years ago.

Birmingham Brother Rice (D-1 in 2007) also won a state crown to become the only other Detroit-area team to

win a state championship in boys skiing. Okemos (1977) and East Lansing (1981) were the other downstate schools to claim titles dating back to the mid-1970s, when the MHSAA began governing the sport. Both come from the Lansing area.

Max Wiedmann, a Clarkston sophomore, said that he has heard stories about Clarkston's success and is glad to be part of the legacy.

"It something that we talked about (in middle school)," said Wiedmann. "Clarkston won a state championship a couple of years ago and we hope to (accomplish) that again soon. That's the goal before we graduate"

Clarkston is expected to be amongst the leaders on Feb. 29 at the state finals in Marquette.

"We'll be up there," said Foyteck. "I know we're not favored. Marquette will be on its home course and they are really good. But I expect us to compete for a spot in the top three. That's a realistic goal for us."



Clarkston's Alex McIntosh and the Wolves program have qualified for the state finals in 19 of 25 seasons. (Daniel Tetor, High School Sports Scene)

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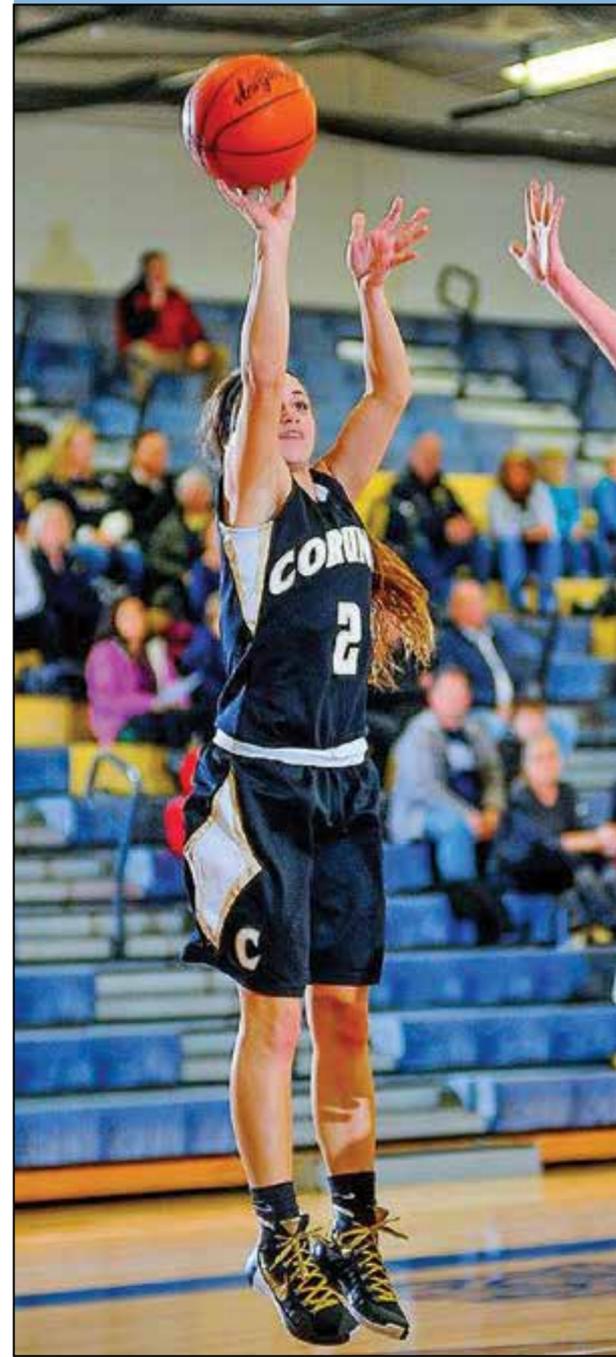
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Skylar Napier: Ideal All-Around Athlete For Corunna

David Cook
Sports Scene

When it comes to all-around athletes, few do it better at the high school level than Corunna senior Skylar Napier.

A senior on the Corunna girls basketball team, Napier is a four-year varsity letter winner. Skylar also won three varsity letters in volleyball and this spring will pick up her fourth varsity letter in track, giving her a total of 11 varsity levels.



This winter Napier is putting the finishing touches on a big senior season. Corunna's starting point guard, Skylar is averaging 8.8 points per game and is shooting 67 percent from the free throw line. Skylar is more than just a scorer; she also added 6.6 rebounds, 3.6 assists and 4.2 steals per game. Napier's signature game of the season came against Mt. Morris in early February when she scored 25 points, pulled down eight rebounds, added five steals and four assists. Skylar went nine-of-10 from the free throw line in that game and also connected on eight-of-11 shots from the floor.

"Skylar is our point guard and floor general," said Corunna assistant coach Larry Cole. "Everything runs through her. She's very aggressive and is always moving on the floor. She generally only gets a one or two-minute rest a game. Skylar is a stat stuffer. She scores, rebounds, assists and steals."

Napier has been a constant in the Corunna lineup the last four years. As a freshman she was a

big contributor and she has started every game the last three years.



While Skylar is an outstanding all-around athlete, she is also an all-around student, who is involved in more than just athletics.

"Skylar has been a team captain the last two years," Cole said. "Her teammates follow her lead as they value her experience. Off the court, she's a member of the National Honor Society and this year's Homecoming Queen. She also volunteers her time at the Humane Society and with the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). Skylar is conscientious, hardworking and an excellent student."

With her high school career winding down, Napier is looking for opportunities to continue her basketball career in college.

Durand Girls Basketball Team Looks Strong Heading into State Tournament

Butch Harmon
Sports Scene

Durand girls basketball coach Jeff Long knew he could have a strong basketball team this season, what he didn't know was just how successful this team would be.

As the girls basketball season heads into the state tournament, the Durand girls are one of the top teams in the state in Class B. Durand is ranked seventh in the state in Class B with a 15-2 record and 11-0 conference record as of mid-February. The Railroaders have also wrapped up the outright GAC-Red Division championship.

"I figured we could be a good team this season, but I'm overly pleased with how it has turned out, up to this point," said Long. "To win the GAC-Red Division championship outright is quite an accomplishment. What makes the accomplishment even more impressive is that we have been doing it with only seven players since the holiday break. And on top of that, one of those players is a foreign exchange student who has never played basketball before."

The league title is Durand's first league championship since the 2009 season.

A lot of factors have gone into Durand's success this season.

"Effort, attitude, and selflessness are strong points to this team," Long said. "The players have a willingness to go through the grinds of practice to become the toughest team they can be, both physically and mentally."

Durand's trio of senior guards has been key

to the success this season. Alexis Ayala is averaging 13 points, 7.5 rebounds and 3.7 assists per game.

"Alexis has been willing to adjust her game for the betterment of the team," Long

The Durand girls basketball team have put together a solid season, including knocking off conference powerhouse Goodrich earlier in the year. (Submitted photo)

said. "Her assists are up by two per game and her rebounding is up by three per game."

Sarah Dunavant is averaging 6.4 points per game along with 3.8 rebounds and 2.8 assists.

"Sarah is a very well-rounded player that does many things well on the court," Long said. "She is the first one on the team to dive for loose balls and make the hustle play. That rubs off on the other players. Sarah leads Shiawassee County in free throw shooting at 83%."

Cassie Podulka is adding 4.1 points along with 2.1 assists and 1.3 steals per game.

"Cassie is the best on-ball defender in the entire area," Long said. "She can slow opposing offenses down due to her tremendous ball pressure."

In the post, the Railroaders count on senior center Meaghen Nanasy. Nanasy is averaging 14 points and 8.2 rebounds per game.

"Meaghen has made major improve-

ments in her play from a season ago," Long said. "That's a credit to her work ethic."

Sophomore Cierra Cole is Durand's point guard and is averaging eight points, 4.1 rebounds and 2.1 assists per game.

"Cierra has really developed a confidence and aggressive mentality in the past few games," Long said.

Junior forward Hunter Lowe is averaging 2.4 points and 2.4 rebounds per game.

"Hunter is a significant contributor coming off the bench," Long said. "She is an excellent athlete."

Senior center Ester Hulzebosch rounds out the squad.

"Ester is a foreign exchange student from the Netherlands who has never played basketball," Long said. "I admire Ester so much because she has been willing to go through all of the demands of daily practices. Because of our small numbers, Ester has been an essential piece to this championship team."

One reason the Durand team is low on numbers is because junior guard Heather Koons is out with a season-ending knee injury.

"The team has gotten closer, and the camaraderie among the players is very good," Long said. "We have also been playing solid defense this season. Also, our starting five all handle the ball pretty well, so that limits the number of turnovers."



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Haslett Girls Basketball Fighting for Post-Season Success

David Cook Sports Scene

If the Haslett girls basketball team goes on another deep post-season run this season, they could look back to a triple-overtime thriller against rival DeWitt as

a catalyst to success.

In a game that the Vikings needed to stay alive in the conference race, Haslett kept battling and came away with a 61-59 win in three overtimes.

The game was a matchup of top 10 teams in the state, as Haslett

came in ranked ninth and DeWitt entered the game ranked fifth. Haslett also entered the game short-handed as senior Karson Tripp missed the game due to an injury.

Senior guard Megan Mowid showed the leadership that Haslett fans have come to expect; she scored 15 points for the Vikings. Mowid has been turning in an all-state caliber season for Haslett and averaging 15 points, 3.5 assists and 2.3 steals per game this season.

Junior guard Sydney Dennis stepped up big for Haslett as she led the team with 19 points while fellow junior Annisa Whims added 12 points. Senior center Shannon Twichell, Haslett's leading rebounder this season, added nine points while freshman guard Ella McKinney scored six points.

The game was a good tune-up for the upcoming state tournament where Haslett will be competing in one of the toughest districts in the state. Haslett opens



district play with a first-round game against an East Lansing that already clinched at least a share of the CAAC Blue title with two games remaining in the season. The winner of that matchup will get Grand Ledge in the district semifinals. The other side of the bracket has DeWitt along with Lansing Waverly and Lansing Eastern. Another Haslett-DeWitt matchup is possible in the district

finals. Haslett put together its non-league schedule with an eye towards getting tested for the tournament. In early February, Haslett faced Detroit Country Day, the number one team in Class B. Country Day defeated Haslett 69-56 despite 20 points from Mowid, 16 from Dennis and 11 from Tripp. The Vikings also faced Class A top 10 Ann Arbor Huron.



The Haslett girls basketball team has picked up where it left off a year ago and is making another strong run into the post season in 2015-16. Senior Megan Mowid is enjoying a strong senior season for the Vikings. (Submitted Photos)

John Glenn Soccer Standout Headed to Michigan Tech

John Raffel Sports Scene

Jamie Brisson of Bay City John Glenn has decided to take her talents to Michigan Tech University.

"It's one of the only schools that has my (biomedical engineering) degree," she said. "It seemed like the right fit."

It was a late decision for Brisson.

"I was planning on going somewhere else just for school,"

she said. "They contacted me and I realized I wanted to keep playing soccer."

Brisson plays midfield for John Glenn. But at Michigan Tech, "they'll probably move me around to defensive and attacking mid," she said.

Brisson will be starting her fourth varsity season this spring. She was all-conference and all-district last season.

"I try to be a strong, well-rounded player and play defense and put the ball on people's feet," Brisson said.

Right now, Brisson is focusing on the upcoming spring soccer season.

"We want to win districts and the conference," she said. "I want work on being able to score and be in more of a forward position."

Bay City John Glenn's Jamie Brisson signed her National Letter of Intent Feb. 3 to play soccer at Michigan Tech University. (Submitted Photo)



Mount Pleasant's Hannah Kahn Commits to WMU

John Raffel Sports Scene

John Bunting is coaching a Mount Pleasant girls soccer team that includes senior Hannah Kahn, who has committed to Western Michigan University.

She signed a letter on Feb. 3.

"She was kind of up in the air," said Bunting. "Her big sister (Emma) plays at Western, so I think it's something she's kind of wanted to do. But she's been looking at other options and they did not offer a scholarship. She's just committed to walk on at this point. She decided it was a good fit for her sister and it's a good fit for herself as well."

Hannah, an offensive midfielder, will be a senior team member for the Oilers this spring.

"She's played for me three years and has done a wonderful job," Bunting said.

"Her role has changed and developed over time. The last couple of years, she definitely has taken on as being a goal scorer and contributing a lot of the offense with assisting and things like that. She's a good leader for the love of the game and hustle and drive as well.

"Kahn had foot surgery her sophomore year and played but didn't have a tremendous season because she was still

recovering from that," Bunting said. "Last year, she still had an ankle injury that kind of plagued herself. She has not gotten her fair looks because she has not been 100 percent for the last couple of years. I think she was waiting out. But at the same time, Western was intriguing enough to her that she wanted to make that commitment."

Bunting expects a healthy Hannah Kahn to be a productive player this spring.

Hannah and Emma, "are similar in a lot of ways," Bunting said. "Her sister has evolved in a different kind of a role for Western, more of an outside forward attacker."

Mt. Pleasant's Hannah Kahn signed her National Letter of Intent to play soccer at Western Michigan University. Hannah joins her sister Emma, who currently plays soccer for the Broncos. (Submitted Photo)



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Delta College Signs Several Local Soccer Players

John Raffel Sports Scene

Delta College has stocked its women's soccer roster with talented athletes from various area schools.

Area signees include Taylor Farrand (Swan Valley), Bree Redman (Heritage), Paige Renshaw (Montrose), Hannah Rouse (Bay City Western), Chelsea Temple (Swan Valley), Maddie Tweddle (Heritage) and Madison Jewell (Grand Blanc).

Delaney Gravelin (Cheboygan) and Nicole Hills (Elk Rapids) are among the other recruits for the 2016-17 season. All have earned various all state and/or all-conference honors during their career.

"All of these girls we expect to come in right away and challenge for a spot," Delta College's attacking and recruiting coach Damon Amey said. "They're all very fast. They've all got speed."

Here's Amey's take on each local recruit: Farrand, "has been an all state forward. She has a great knack for scoring goals."

Jewell "is an outside mid or forward. She was on that Grand Blanc team that went to the state finals."

Redman "plays multiple positions. She actually played for me in high school when I coached at Heritage. She plays anywhere on defense and outside mid-areas."

Rouse "plays outside [defense], and is extremely fast and aggressive and willing to get into the attack."

Renshaw "is an outside mid or forward. She has a knack for getting to the goal, and will be a great asset to us on top."

Temple "can play anywhere on the outside, outside mid, outside forward, outside [defense]."

Tweddle "plays center mid or forward. She was an all state forward two years ago."

The recruitment of players from the Tri-Cities area continues as a trend for Delta, which has recruited heavily in the local area. Along with being a former coach at Heritage, Amey is also a former assistant women's soccer coach at Saginaw Valley State University.

"This is a very talented recruiting class, and many are outstanding students," said women's head coach Paul Stenglein in a statement released by the school. "This combination is a very good indication that we can be successful both on the field and in the classroom."

"I was very pleased that our current team was at the (signing) event to welcome the new recruits and exchange contact information. I am anticipating that this is going to be a close group that may have the chance to experience some very special team accomplishments."



Saginaw Swan Valley's Taylor Farrand and Chelsea Temple have signed their National Letters of Intent to attend Delta College in the fall to continue their soccer careers. (Submitted Photos)

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Midland Dow Soccer Player Commits to Michigan Tech

John Raffel Sports Scene

Alexie Flaminio of Midland Dow is another area soccer player planning on taking her talents to Michigan Tech. She signed recently with the Huskies.

"I went there last year for a visit just to get to the expos there," she said. "I went there and I decided it could be one of my top three choices. The coach came and watched me play

a couple of times and offered me a spot on the team, and I decided to commit. Everyone was so friendly. The teammates were amazing. I have [a portion of] my family up there. We have a cottage about two hours away up there and that's where a lot of my mom's side is located."

Flaminio plays defense and mid at Dow.

"Up there, they are looking to put me as a defensive mid," Flaminio said. "It's like a happy medium."

Flaminio's fourth year is coming up at Dow. The program has made it to regionals a few times during her time there.

Midland Dow had four athletes sign their National Letters of Intent Feb. 3. Those athletes included from left to right Justin Cook (Northwood), Alexie Flaminio (Michigan Tech), Devontae Stine (Northern Michigan) and Mike Robb (Grand Valley).



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Midland Trio Ready For Women's College Soccer

John Raffel Sports Scene

Three of Midland High School soccer players have committed to college sports careers.

Marie Bringard signed a letter to Central Michigan University, Erin Murphy has selected Michigan Tech and Maddi Davis is going to Aquinas in Grand Rapids. All three will be making the transition to girls soccer in the spring to women's soccer in the fall.

Murphy said she started thinking about college soccer during her freshman year, but was "on the fence" on what her exact plans would be. She then went to Tech and checked out the school's academic and soccer program, which convinced her of the decision

she made.

Murphy is a defender, who was all-district and all-conference last season.

"I think I'm able to read offensive players really well and cut off their opportunities for passes and stuff," Murphy said. "I think my intelligence of the game has what's gotten me this far."

For now, Murphy is focusing on the 2016 season.

"We have a strong freshman class coming in," Murphy said. "I'm excited to see what happens."

Davis said she began looking at colleges during her sophomore season.

"When I came up with my criteria of going to a smaller school with an accounting program and soccer program, I began looking into Aquinas," she said. "I went there to get a feel for the school. Then I started talking with the

coaches and the process of getting to know the school."

A defender, Davis decided that Aquinas would be her school.

Last year, Davis earned all-conference and all-district titles, as well as league all-conference awards.

College soccer is in the fall, but Michigan girls soccer is in the spring and Davis will be zeroing in on having a strong senior year.

"I'm working on strength workouts and working on various agility workouts to be quicker with my feet and be stronger on the ball," Davis said.

Bringard, along with the other two, will be senior varsity captain for Midland. As a junior, she scored 12 goals and had seven assists and was second team Division 1 all state. She played a key role in her team's league and district titles.

"I chose CMU because I loved everything about it," she said. "I

high school season she'll focus on "shooting and attacking more with the ball. I want to be a better leader for the team this year, being a senior. I think we'll have a really good team this year. The girls are all really compatible. They get along well."

It will be O'Dell's fourth year on varsity. During her time on the team she has earned first-team all-district and all-conference titles.

"I think I'm a very good shooter," she said. "I have a very strong leg. I'm a very good passer. I have good vision to give the ball to my



Midland High's Marie Bringard (Central Michigan University), Erin Murphy (Michigan Tech) and Maddi Davis (Aquinas College) have signed their National Letters of Intent to continue their playing careers at the next level. (Submitted Photos)

am not one for huge colleges, they are very overwhelming to me. I liked CMU because everything is relatively close, but it is still big enough to where I feel like it is different from high school. I think the coaches really helped make my decision to go there easy as well.

"[The coaches] are fantastic people and they are always so positive. I can ask any question and as many questions as I want and they are always eager to help me. I also really liked CMU because I am very interested in the medical field, and they have a good program for that."

teammates and set them up for scoring opportunities."

In the fall, O'Dell can start focusing on her college soccer career.

"I'm actually really excited for college," she said. "I'm really glad to have the opportunity to play soccer another four years. It's really exciting."

Saginaw Heritage's Bri Redmond, Taylor O'Dell and Maddi Tweddle signed their National Letters of Intent Feb. 3 at Heritage High School. Redmond and Tweddle will attend Delta College and O'Dell is heading to Adrian. (Submitted Photo)



Saginaw Heritage's Tayler O'Dell Set for College Soccer Career at Adrian

John Raffel Sports Scene

Saginaw Heritage's Tayler O'Dell has decided to continue her soccer career at Adrian College.

"I made that decision in August," she said. "I went there for a camp in July. It felt like home. The girls there were welcoming. It just felt it was the right place to be."

O'Dell also considered Ferris

State University.

"But I wasn't sure how big of a campus I wanted to go to," she said. "The smaller campus at Adrian felt better, and I felt more comfortable there."

O'Dell plays midfield or forward at Heritage.

"I'll probably be playing forward [at Albion]," O'Dell said, adding that during the upcoming spring

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Chaos, Excitement of National Signing Day

For Three Ithaca Standouts, It's The Culmination Of Years Of Hard Work And Dedication; Smith, Demenov, Gimmey Heading To Next Level

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

National Signing Day is over, so everyone can quit hyperventilating about who committed, who decommitted, which school is swooping in, which school is out and isn't it just a bit creepy that Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh is having a sleepover at a recruit's house?

It's exhausting. If I was sports czar for a day, the only recruiting news we'd hear about is when a kid actually signed with a school. Not his 10 finalists or his five finalists or he's taking a trip here or a trip there. When. He. Signs.

You know, real news.

But since that has as much chance of happening as me living out one of my semi-regular dreams - dunking in an NBA Finals game - how about some practical solutions to help unplug the recruiting process.

For instance, the oral commitment dance played between the schools and recruits; neither party treats the words, "I've committed to the University of fill-in-the-blank" as a binding contract.

But for three Ithaca High School

standouts, the whirlwind recruiting process is finally over, as they made their choices known Feb. 3 during a National Signing Day Ceremony held at their school.

Jake Smith, Ithaca's state-championship quarterback announced he will play for Harvard, with Ithaca linebacker Jace Demenov signing to play for Grand Valley State University and receiver Grant Gimmey announcing that he will play for Olivet College.

Smith knows all too well about how the recruiting process works, having gone through it with his brother, Travis. Travis committed to Wake Forest, moved to Eastern Michigan University, and finally settled in at Central Michigan University, where he will likely go into spring football as a backup to starter Cooper Rush.

"It's finally official," said Jake Smith. "I can't really get a better degree anywhere else. They've won the last three Ivy League championships, and they run a spread offense. It's a winning program, and I'm coming from a winning program."

Jake Smith won't immediately begin classes at Harvard. He will spend his first year at Exeter Prep Academy in New Hampshire.

Smith led Ithaca to the Division 6

state championship, Ithaca's fifth in the past six years. Along the way, he set Ithaca's season record for rushing (1,772 yards) and rushing touchdowns (34). He also set Ithaca's career rushing touchdown record with 58.

The recruiting process is no bed of roses by any means. Sometimes the coaches and players can't see eye-to-eye.

"I'll throw a scenario out there: A wide receiver from Arizona said he was ready to commit to Boise State when the school asked him to make an official visit. He did, the visit went well but the next day, a coach told him that their 'receiver spots were full.'"

They said anything can happen. The kid eventually signed with Wyoming. "They said things can change."

In other words, we thought you fit into our plans but now you don't. Good luck.

The athletes can be just as undependable. They'll tell a school they're interested but hold off on committing until the school has no choice but to rescind the offer so it isn't holding the bag on Signing Day.

"There's a lot of stress," said Ithaca coach Terry Hessbrook. "I couldn't be happier for the three young men that committed today. It's a pretty special day for Ithaca football."

Jake Smith won't immediately begin classes at Harvard. He will spend his first year at Exeter Prep Academy in New Hampshire.

"It's one of the top three prep schools in the nation," Smith said. "There are two quarterbacks coming in who are in my class. They don't want to take three, so I'm going to a prep school the first year and then Harvard after that."

Smith had offers from Brown, Bryant and Dayton, but chose Harvard, both because of football and education.

However, the grind to getting to that point of commitment is overwhelming. One solution for all of the chaos is to have an early signing period in the spring after a player's junior season. That would accomplish two things: First, a player could play his senior season without having to deal with the pressure of trying to figure out where he's going to play college ball.

Second, colleges would get a jump on their recruiting class, allowing them to more specifically target their needs for National Signing Day.

If that rule was in place, it would change everything.

There would need to be a caveat, though. If, for whatever reason, a college coach is no longer at that program on Signing Day, the player can get out of his early letter of intent and sign elsewhere. Yes, student-athletes should pick schools rather than coaches but, let's be honest, how many kids are going to Michigan because of Harbaugh? Or Alabama because of what Nick Saban has accomplished?

The whole thing is a bit unseemly. But recruiting - and the reporting of it - has become big news and the genie can't be put back in the bottle.

The process can be improved, though. There's already an early-signing period for other sports, including basketball.

So, why not football?

Ithaca's Grant Gimmey (Olivet College), Jace Demenov (Grand Valley) and Jake Smith (Harvard) celebrate with friends and family as their future plans became official during National Letter of Intent Day held at Ithaca High School.



Peyton Smith hopes to follow in his big brothers Travis and Jake's footsteps in the coming years, as he will be a freshman next season. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)

making a decision, fine. But those kids who are firm in their commitment can sign early and enjoy their final semester in high school without the constant phone calls and text messages from coaches trying to sway them off their oral commitment.

As soon as colleges believe there's a "weeble-wobble" from a player, recruiters will swoop in to try to get the kid to change his mind.

It's why so many kids profess their allegiance to a school one day and then decommit the next. They're confused and stressed out. They're hearing advice from coaches, family members and friends. What should be a celebration turns into consternation.

The whole thing is a bit unseemly. But recruiting - and the reporting of it - has become big news and the genie can't be put back in the bottle.

The process can be improved, though. There's already an early-signing period for other sports, including basketball.

So, why not football?

Lakers Gain Three Area Standouts on Signing Day

Demenov, DeLong, Robb taking talents to Grand Valley

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

Ithaca's Jace Demenov has waited for this day for as long as he can remember.

He doesn't have to wait any longer as he, along with two other mid-Michigan standouts, signed a National Letter of Intent on Feb. 3 to continue their high school careers at Grand Valley State University beginning in the fall.

"When you are a little kid you dream of a day like this," Demenov said. "This is something you work for

all of your life, and now that you sign it becomes reality. I couldn't be happier with my commitment to Grand Valley."

Demenov, a 6-foot, 215-pound senior who led the Yellowjackets defense the past three seasons, reaching the state championship all three years.

In 14 games as a senior at Ithaca, Demenov totaled 163 tackles, including 12 tackles for loss.

"Ithaca has been a special place and doing what we have been able to do the

previous four seasons is pretty special," he said. "Now it's time to move on to the next chapter of my career."

Joining Demenov at Grand Valley are two Midland residents Luke DeLong and Mike Robb.

DeLong, a receiver from Midland High, and Robb, a receiver from Midland Dow, both signed letters of intent to play football next season for Grand Valley State University.

DeLong, a 5-foot-11, 175-pound senior, was a versatile offensive weapon for the Chemics, using his speed as a runner and receiver. Injuries knocked him out of three games during his senior season.

He still caught 39 passes for 403 yards and six touchdowns, adding 767 yards and nine touchdowns rushing. He added 436

yards rushing. DeLong also played quarterback during his career at Midland High.

DeLong said staying healthy at the next level is going to be crucial for his development.

"Right now we are working on getting myself bigger and stronger," DeLong said. "Right now I expect I will likely redshirt my first year, but I wouldn't mind just because it will allow me to settle in and be a college student. I can't wait to get there to get started."

Robb is a 6-foot-6, 205-pound target who was heavily recruited. As a senior, he set Dow receiving records with 66 catches, 1,029 yards and 12 touchdowns. He holds the Dow career receiving records in receptions (175), yardage (2,458) and receiving touchdowns (28).



Above: Midland High's Luke DeLong signs his National Letter of Intent Feb. 3 in front of friends and family during a ceremony held at the high school. DeLong, along with Ithaca's Jace Demenov (left) both will continue their high school careers at Grand Valley University. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)

St. Louis Basketball Team Looking for Strong Late Season Run

John Raffel Sports Scene

St. Louis basketball coach Daniel Nealy and his team of Sharks have been enjoying an impressive season despite battling various ups and downs.

A major highlight was a 54-44 win

over Class D power Vestaburg, a team that has had a strong season.

Prior to a 62-41 loss to Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary on Feb. 19, the Sharks had won four of their previous five games with a 54-49 loss to Merrill being the only blemish during that stretch.

Going into the final two weeks, the

Sharks were 8-8 overall.

"We beat Vestaburg, who at the time was undefeated," Nealy said. "We've struggled some, but we've made big improvements from where the program has been."

The scoring leadership has been back and forth between Seth Bewow and Alex Garza. Bewow has been leading in rebounds and is top two in scoring on the team. Garza is usually in the top two in scoring.

"When we're playing well, we're playing good intense defense," Nealy

said. "We can run and we can hit shots."

The Sharks are looking to end the regular season strong and become a district title contender.

"We just need to get stops and rebounding," Nealy said. "We've struggled with rebounding lately. It's all about stops for us."

St. Louis boys basketball team has had a solid season under second-year coach Dan Nealy. As of press time, St. Louis was 8-8. (Russ Pierce, High School Sports Scene Photo)





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Good Luck to All Area Teams !!

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|--|---|---|---|

Area Athletes Make It Official

The following is a look at high school seniors who have signed or committed to play sports in college as of now. Feb. 3 marked the start of the signing period for football, soccer and boys water polo athletes. April 13 is when the regular signing period for other sports begins. If we missed anyone in the Sports Scene Coverage Area please send submissions to randy@highschoolsportsscene.com

BASEBALL

Nick Schaldenbrand, Clarkston (Cornerstone)
Brendan Charette, Novi Det. Catholic Central (Carroll University)
Camden Hadley, Clarkston (Rochester)
Nick Marcon, Novi Det. Catholic Central (College of Central Florida)
Devin Hager, Walled Lake Northern (Eastern Michigan)
Grant Hartwig, Novi Det. Catholic Central (Miami OH)
Colin Campbell, Mason (Kalamazoo Valley)
Cameron Collins, Grand Ledge (Lansing Community College)
Riley Creamer, Lansing Catholic (Kellogg Community College)
Sam Davison, Grand Ledge (Lansing Community College)
Chase Johnston, Mason (Kalamazoo Valley)
Avery Maurer, St. Johns (Lansing Community College)
Nic Olson, Lansing Catholic (Sienna Heights)
Hunter Rusterhorst, Haslett (Lansing Community College)
Schuyler Shirey, Bath (Adrian College)
Luke Sheper, Haslett (Stanford)
Jacob Songer, Grand Ledge (Lansing Community College)
Mason Schwellenbach, Heritage (Saginaw Valley)
Trace Painter, Heritage (Delta College)
Jason Clark, Bay City Western (Saginaw Valley)
Brandon Wise, Bay City Western (Saginaw Valley)
Connor Sommer, Bay City Western (Saginaw Valley)
Cole Brooks, Bay City John Glenn (Saginaw Valley)
Derek Clyde, Bay City John Glenn (Saginaw Valley)
Austin Koin, Standish Sterling (Saginaw Valley)

BASKETBALL

Dylan Carl, Alma (PPWF)
Nakia Drane, Everett (St. Claire Community College)
Lilly George, DeWitt (Ferris State)
Riley Lewis, Williamston (Hope College)
Taryn McCutcheon, East Lansing (Michigan State)
Kamrin Reed, Holt (Western Michigan)
Renee Sturm, Williamston (Ferris State)
Megan Walter, Ovid-Elsie (Davenport)
Brayne Benner, Frankenmuth (Ferris State)
Billy Burton, Arthur Hill (Ferris State)
Algevon Eichelberger, Saginaw High (DePaul)
Laurel Jacqmain, Nouvel (Saginaw Valley)
Clare Glowniak, Flushing (Bowling Green)
London Barber, Flushing High School (Concordia)
Alexis Sevillian, Goodrich High School (Iowa)
Cassidy Boensch, John Glenn (Grand Valley)
Jenai Laporte, John Glenn (Grand Valley)
Monica Keiche, Waterford Mott (Concordia)
Haley Tewes, Waterford Kettering (Gannon University)
Kaitlyn Smith, Holly (Lawrence Tech University)

CROSS COUNTRY

Sarah Kettel, Capital Homeschool (Michigan State)
Alyssa Mankay, Ithaca (Lansing Community College)
Blair Showers, Ithaca (Lansing Community College)
Hayden Bailey, Alma (Mid-Michigan Community College)

FOOTBALL

Gabe Baumann, Rockford (Northern Michigan)
Tyler Bradford, Rockford (Grand Valley)
Quinn Nordin, Rockford (U of M)
Jelani Taylor, Flint Beecher (Cornell)
Jay Vallie, Goodrich (Dayton)
Otis Jackson, Heritage (Northwood)
Matt Barnett, Holly (Northwood)
Dan Collins, Howell (Northwood)
Tim Gabryel, Lapeer (Northwood)
Luke Delong, Midland High (Grand Valley)
Mike Robb, Midland Dow (Grand Valley)
Justin Cook, Midland Dow (Northwood)
Devontae Stine, Midland Dow (Northern Michigan)
Nate Moore, Arthur Hill (Saginaw Valley)
Noah Sargent, Flint Powers Catholic (Saginaw Valley)
Cody Witzgall, Bay City Western (Saginaw Valley)
Jaylen Bradley, Flint Carman-Ainsworth (Saginaw Valley)
David Kray, Lapeer (Saginaw Valley)

CONNOR STEIN, FLINT POWERS CATHOLIC (SAGINAW VALLEY)

Tyler Humpert, Vassar (Saginaw Valley)
Devonte Mysliwski, Bay City Central (Sienna Heights)
Trent Ballor, Pinconning (Michigan Tech)
Lamont Morrison, Vassar (Saginaw Valley)
Lawrence Gordon, Arthur Hill (Ferris State)
Cooper Alsbaugh, Grand Ledge (Mount Union)
Brendan Baker, Grand Ledge (Northern Michigan)
Mark Brooks, Portland (Western Michigan)
Reid Burton, East Lansing (Michigan State)
Malik Busch, East Lansing (Michigan Tech)
Evan Conn, DeWitt (Wayne State)
Jace Demerov, Ithaca (Grand Valley)
Brody Dyer, Eaton Rapids (Trine)
Grant Gimney, Ithaca (Olivet College)
Jordan Goebel, Grand Ledge (Valparaiso)
DaVarie Halliburton, Waverly (Wayne State)
Brandon Haska, Owosso (Wayne State)
Mitch Kauffman, Holt (Concordia)
Tony Palser, Lansing Catholic (Northern Michigan)
Amaan Payne, Holt (Concordia)
Jacob Pingson, Holt (Saginaw Valley)
Tony Poljan, Lansing Catholic (Central Michigan)
Louden Newbury, Owosso (Northwood)
B.J. Powell, East Lansing (Ferris State)
Jake Rivers, Morrice (Olivet College)
Blake Roe, Haslett (Northern Michigan)
Austin Ryan, DeWitt (Lakeland University)
Jalon Simpson, Portland (Olivet Nazarene)
Jake Smith, Ithaca (Harvard)
Trent Stone, Holt (Davenport)
Jake Tahaney, Haslett (Hope or Elmhurst)
Devin Taylor, Sexton (Saginaw Valley)
Jarrett VanHavel, Mason (Mount Union)
Heath Williams, East Lansing (Saginaw Valley)
Tim Gabryel, Lapeer (Northwood)
Jalen Lewis, Flint Carman-Ainsworth (Northwood)
Louden Newbury, Owosso (Northwood)
Andrew Sheffield, Freeland (Northwood)
Nathan Skene, Hartland (Northwood)
Nick Tinson, Walled Lake Central (Northwood)
Ben Rybicki, Freeland (Michigan Tech)
Joe Rybicki, Freeland (Michigan Tech)
Kaden Keon, St. Louis (Central Michigan)
Kaleb Perry, Mt. Pleasant (Western Michigan)
Hunter Buczkowski, Mt. Pleasant (Central Michigan)
Bill Titthof, Mt. Pleasant (Northern Michigan)
Landin Mitchell, Goodrich (Davenport)
Eric Hildebrand, Goodrich (Michigan Tech)
Josh Jackson, Flint-Carman Ainsworth (Sienna Heights)
Brett Pero, Swartz Creek (Ferris State)
Ryan Honea, Grand Blanc (Concordia)
Karson Murley, Waterford (Ferris State)
Jacob Baldwin, Waterford Mott (Saginaw Valley State)
Alex Rock, Novi Det. Catholic Central (Ferris State)
Joey Bruce, Walled Lake Western (Lawrence Tech)
Tarek Dalou, Novi Det. Catholic Central (Concordia)
Nolan Eriksen, Clarkston (Air Force)
Dez Fitzpatrick, Waterford Mott (Louisville)
Mitch Heaton, Clarkston (Northern Michigan)
Emanuel Jackson, Novi (Western Michigan)
Alex Kessman, Clarkston (Pittsburgh)
Tom Kowalkoski, Novi Det. Catholic Central (Boston College)
Tyler Laurentius, Novi Det. Catholic Central (Hillsdale)
Ade Ogundeji, Walled Lake Central (Notre Dame)
Hayden Schoenherr, Clarkston (Notre Dame College OH)
Clay Senerius, Waterford Our Lady of the Lakes (St. Francis)
Devin Senerius, Waterford Our Lady of the Lakes (Avila University)
Tyler Shreve, Walled Lake Western (Ferris State)

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Josh Stein, Novi Det. Catholic Central (Lawrence Tech University)
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Kailli Gozalka, Haslett (Davenport)
Alyssa Kaminski, Okemos (University of Montevallo)
Olivia Cottom, Holt (Michigan-Dearborn)
Ally Hawkins, DeWitt (Concordia)
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Angela Palmer, Okemos (Central Michigan)
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Matt Rice, Holt (Michigan State)
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Nathaniel Webber, Holt (University of Indianapolis)
Case Williamson, Holt (University of Tampa)
Drew Gilhooly, Novi Det. Catholic Central (Lourdes University)
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Erika Curley, DeWitt (Findlay)
Brandon Desmyter, DeWitt (Northern Michigan)
Sydney Everts, Dansville (Jackson College)
Brian Ganton, Williamston (Alma College)
Cole Goatley, Okemos (Spring Arbor)
Isiah Handspike, DeWitt (Spring Arbor)
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Forster Holland, Haslett (Alma College)
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Maddy Tweddie, Heritage (Delta College)
Bri-Redmond, Heritage (Delta College)
Chelsea Temple, Swan Valley (Delta College)
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Marie Bringard, Midland High (Central Michigan)
Erin Murphy, Midland High (Michigan Tech)
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Jamie Brisson, Bay City John Glenn (Michigan Tech)
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Sparrow Hospital's PEAK PERFORMERS

Veteran Fulton Boys Basketball Coach Enjoying Another Fun Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Todd Walden is having fun coaching the Fulton Pirates this season. After the team's first 15 games, the Pirates are 10-5.

"Of those five losses, three were one-possession games," Walden said. "We lost three in a row that were two, two and three. We stumbled a couple of times on the road in league games with P-W and Laingsburg when we didn't play very well. Other than that, we've done a pretty good job of battling every night."

Colton Antes leads the team in scoring at 16 points per game. Jake Litwiller is leading in rebounding, averaging 10 points and eight boards.

"We're capable of making a run in March," Walden said. "We're at Fowler

(for districts). Vestaburg is there too, plus Ashley and (Portland) St. Pats. I hope we can go on a roll that second week in March and make another deep playoff run."

The Pirates competed in the state semifinals last year and in the state finals in 2011.

"We've had some great kids and some really good basketball players," Walden said. "They're fun to be around and they're willing to put the time in. They've work hard in the offseason and summer. That's enabled them to play in late March quite a bit lately."

The tradition of Fulton basketball has trickled on down to the lower levels, Walden said.

"Winning breeds winning," Walden said. "The younger kids see it, and the

games played on big stage with lots of people, and they want to be a part of that. We're fortunate enough to get some breaks and win some big games."

This is Walden's 22nd year of coaching the varsity team and 26th year overall. He observed that coaching now is somewhat different than it was 26 years ago.

"The kids have changed a little bit," Walden said. "They're forced to grow up a little faster today than maybe we'd like. They have a lot of responsibilities and are trying to blend that with jobs they've got, along with school and athletes. Our kids have done a good job of balancing that, being dedicated and putting the time in to be better basketball players. I'm lucky. We have kids that are fun to be around and represent the school well. I'm really proud of this group."



After coaching 26 years and 22 of those years as a varsity coach, Fulton's Todd Walden is still having fun on the sidelines coaching the Pirates. Fulton was 10-5 on the season prior to press time. (Randy Miniard, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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Shark Bowlers Ready for Regional Competition

John Raffel Sports Scene

The St. Louis Sharks girls bowling team, led by Emily Thelen, has been enjoying plenty of success on the lanes this season.

Coach Brittney Mizer noted that her girls took second in their first two tournaments; the first one by only six pins to Alma. They then won their first nine league matches and won the conference title for the second time in the last three years at 9-1.

Thelen, Mizer said, "has come a long way this season, consistently carrying at least a 170 average at all times, and being a strong team leader. So far this season, every one of the girls has had a high game of at least 194, and five of them had shot above a 220. [Each] of the girls has shown a lot of improvement throughout the season, and all of them are very close to reaching the goals they set at the beginning of the season, if they haven't already."

"We are all looking forward to the regional competition

with high hopes of making it to states," Mizer added. "While we would love to win regionals, there will be some tough teams, so the girls just need to go in and do their best and make sure they have fun doing it."

Mizer pointed out that this is the first time Al Post has not coached bowling in many years.

"He has been very willing to help us out whenever needed with the guys and the girls, from understanding the team dynamics to adjusting the line-up during a match," Mizer said. "Coaching the girls this season has been an amazing experience, and I have learned so much about each one of them. They are all very close and supportive of one another. I have never seen a bond like this among a high school sports team, and it is part of the reason they are doing so well this season. I look forward to what the last couple weeks will bring, and I have no doubt if the girls have fun and keep their spirits high they can accomplish anything."

Boys coach Scott Mizer had been working with an inexperienced team.

"Only one bowler has three years of experience, the rest with two or less," Mizer said. "We pushed hard to win some tough matches this season and ended up third in our conference. We had some really nice scores, including juniors Devon Humphrey with a 245, Dawson Milks with a 224, Ethan Pitcher with a 211 and our freshman, Grant Mills with a 211. This team has come a long way since the beginning of the season and are looking really promising going into the regional tournament next weekend and next season."

"I'm looking for Dawson to help his team stay calm and strong next week. If we bowl like the team we are, we can make top three in the regional match and advance into state," said Scott. "I have really enjoyed coaching boys this year. I have a great bunch of kids and am looking forward to seeing all of them back next year except for our one senior."



The St. Louis boys and girls bowling teams have been atop of the Division 4 rankings most of the 2015-16 season. (Submitted Photos)

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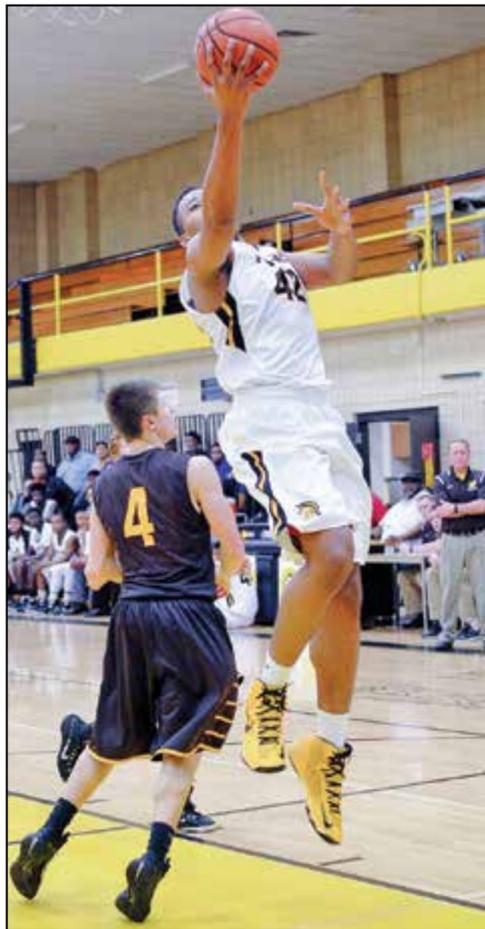
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The Skies the Limit

Trojans Have Size, Depth Talent To Make Long Tournament Run

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

When Algevon Eichelberger left Saginaw High at the end of his sophomore season, he made a decision that was going to change his life forever.

Eichelberger, who has committed to DePaul, averaged 13 points, 13 rebounds and eight blocked shots a game as a sophomore at Saginaw High, but played his junior season with Detroit star Josh Jackson at Prolific Prep Academy in California.

That season with Prolific Prep allowed Eichelberger to become a more well-rounded player. However this season the 6-foot-7 senior decided not to return to Prolific Prep, but elected to attend La Lumiere, a prep school in Indiana, so that he could have the opportunity to play alongside former Saginaw Arthur Hill standout Brian "Tugs" Bowen.

Eichelberger was at La Lumiere for a semester, but because of family con-

cerns he returned to Saginaw High with the hopes of helping the Trojans make another Class A championship run.

Eichelberger's grandfather was diagnosed with cancer, so he elected to return home to be closer to family. "I felt I needed to be here with my family, to be with my grandfather," Eichelberger said. "I loved La Lumiere. I played with them for a semester. We became a team. They were my teammates. It was a tough decision, but family comes first."

Returning home was a no-brainer, and with Eichelberger returning to Saginaw High to go along with the transfer of Carrollton's Henry Speight, the Trojans have become a legitimate contender in Class A.

Now the hardwork is about to begin.

"I feel like I'm more of an all-around player now compared to before when I left," Eichelberger said.

"I think I made just one 3-pointer in my first two years of high school, but I'm not afraid to pull up from long range. My game has definitely evolved over the past 18 months. Now my focus is on helping Saginaw High make another memorable run come tournament time."

Saginaw High coach Julian Taylor knows the impact Eichelberger and Speight will have on the team the rest of the season.

"We welcomed Al back right away, although this is not how we wanted him to come back," Saginaw High coach Julian Taylor said. "He talked to the team, told them the situation, and they welcomed him back."

As for Speight, Taylor said he is only going to get better in the coming years.

"They (Henry and Algevon) brings so much to the table, but the biggest thing is with them it gives us so much depth," Taylor said. "They fit in well, and they give us a lot of added toughness on the court, especially around the rim. Right now, we're playing hard and working to get all the right pieces together, but in the back of your mind you can't help but think about those two guys playing."

Saginaw High's Algevon Eichelberger has returned to the Trojans and has brought with him a more well-rounded game since returning from prep school. With the addition of Eichelberger and junior Henry Speight, Saginaw High is primed to make a long tournament run. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)

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Dow, Heritage On Collision Course To Meet Again In Tournament

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

Saginaw Heritage coach Vonnie DeLong doesn't like to lose. But in this case, she will gladly accept a loss.

Heritage dropped its first game of the season 48-40 Feb. 12 to Midland Dow, the first game without standout sophomore Jaela Richardson, who is lost for the season with an apparent knee injury.

"It's so hard to run the whole season undefeated and when you get to the tournament it's one and done," DeLong said. "So I will accept this loss and get the girls ready for the tournament and another possible game against Midland Dow. Our district is a tough one and you have to give Dow all of the credit in the world for being in the position they are in. We have to be on our game in order to move on in the tournament. I can't wait to get started."

Midland Dow coach Kyle Theisen said the win was huge for the Chargers team.

"It's a good confidence builder for

us, and it shows our girls that they're not invincible," Theisen said. "There was that aura of invincibility because of the way they had been beating people."

Dow made nine 3-pointers, accounting for 27 of the Chargers 48 points. The biggest, however, belonged to Molly Davis, who banked in a 3-pointer at the buzzer to give Dow a 22-21 halftime lead.

"That was huge momentum shift for us," Theisen said. "If we don't make that, our girls go into halftime behind and looking down. She made that and now we're leading and everybody's yelling and screaming."

Ellie Taylor led the Chargers with 13 points, followed by Davis with 12 points. Kaylee Wasco grabbed 11 rebounds.

Courtney McInerney and Jenna Falkenberg scored eight points each for the Hawks, who were ranked No. 1 in the state in Class A before the loss to Dow.

DeLong said the Hawks will be on their game come tournament time.

"Our number one goal and the one we talk about regularly is winning our conference championship," she said. "We don't discuss the state tournament until it starts. We focus on one game at a time. We put all of our energy into that one game and when it's over we move on to the next one."

DeLong said the difference between this year's defensive team compared to last year's is experience. She is hoping the momentum continues to carry the team to another visit to Breslin Center and the Class A finals.

"The first year it was a traditional 2-3 zone," DeLong said. "Last year we had to find a way to cover shooters better. We started matching up during the second half of the season. By the time the tournament started we were pretty good at it. This year we have several kids back who have played it and understand the shifts. That has made it easier for the freshmen to pick it up. Our length and athleticism force people to shoot quicker than they are used to in order to get their shot off."

Midland Dow handed Saginaw Heritage its first loss of the season with a 48-40 victory Feb. 12 at Midland Dow High School. Both teams have been on top of the Class A rankings all season long and will likely meet up in the upcoming districts. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene)



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Valley Lutheran Pom Pon Squad Brings Home Another State Title

John Raffel Sports Scene

They're the state champions. In this case, the Saginaw Valley Lutheran pompon squad, which won the state title on Feb. 7.

It's the second straight year the team has claimed the title for the Chargers.

Mallory Raines coaches the

team. Members of the team were: Captains Shannon Cleary and Angela Kaczynski; teammates Abigail Arndt, Nicole Felten, Sydni Klein, Lauren Koltvedt, Marissa Lacy, Kaitlyn Ruger, Hunter Riedlinger and Kaitlyn Walk.

The state competition was at the Breslin Center in East Lansing. Poms is not an MHSAA sanctioned sport, but is instead sanctioned by the Mid-American Pompon. Valley

Lutheran was first in Class C-D and competed against six other teams. The Chargers competed in a regional competition on Jan. 23.



"You have to get 75 percent of the total points to qualify for state,"

Raines said.

During competition, a team performs a 2 and a half to 3-minute routine.

"The only main requirement is that it has to have a kick line," Raines said.

Valley Lutheran was also successful in competition at Alma during the season.

During a performance, pompon

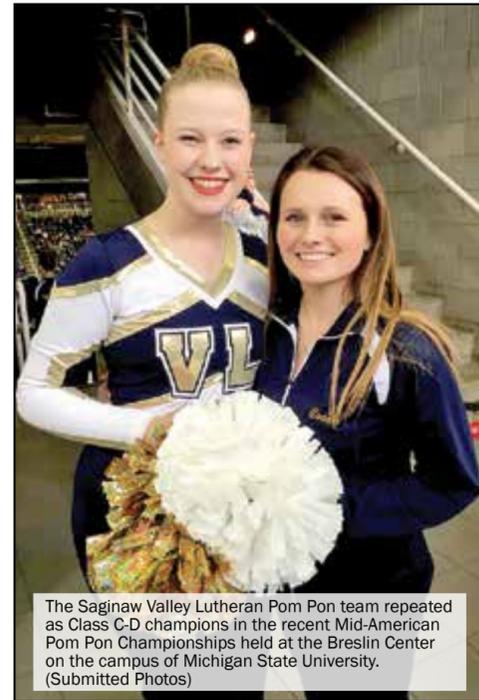
members are judged on various categories, including appearance, smiling, choreography, kick line skills, ability and talent, overall performance, use of the poms and execution and form.

"We did pretty equal in all the categories," Raines said. "The one where we stand out is execution and form."

The poms team also performs at Valley Lutheran basketball games.

As the defending champions, there was some pressure to win again this year, and Raines had full confidence in her team.

"I had a good feeling about this season," she said. "I knew if the girls did their best, they could do it again. They were highly motivated to do so."



The Saginaw Valley Lutheran Pom Pon team repeated as Class C-D champions in the recent Mid-American Pom Pon Championships held at the Breslin Center on the campus of Michigan State University. (Submitted Photos)



Breckenridge Competitive Cheer Focused on Another State Title

John Raffel Sports Scene

It's never easy being a defending state champion.

But Breckenridge is defending a Division 4 state championship in competitive cheer and confident in a bid for another title.

Coaches this season for Breckenridge are Deb Gaines and Jenna Graham. The Huskies' roster consists of Anyssa Betancourt, Justine Brabaw, Megan Carter, Amiah Cole, Carmen Collins, Dakota Colthorp, Harley Conklin, Kasey Conn, Kaitlyn Corson, Lena Crowell, Alexandra Gillis, Paige Guthrie, Alicia Gutierrez, Olivia Mayle, Katie Mortensen, Lindsey Reichard, Emma Rohde and Madison Smith.

The seniors are Brabaw, Colthorp, Corson, Guthrie, Gutierrez, Mortensen and Reichard; all seven were on the 2015 state championship team.

"We're busy trying to tighten everything down, just like everybody else is," Gaines said, prior to the districts. "We had a little setback a couple of weeks ago when one of our main starters was ill, so we've had to redo some roundwork. It's pulled back together just fine."

Breckenridge won the TVC West Conference title this winter.

"We were unable to go to the overall league championship because we had the illness that weekend and were unable to attend," Gaines said. "We did win that and they've been strong every week they've been out. They've been first everywhere they've gone. It's been a good season for them."

She noted that this team is potentially good enough to win another state championship.

"We picked up three freshmen that came onto the roster and have contributed in a nice way," Gaines said. "We added a little more depth."

She also indicated that her team has been solid in all three rounds so far.

"Our skill rounds are Round 2, right now, and is our most solid, especially with the changes we've had to make recently," Gaines said. "I'm guessing the other two will follow in weeks to come."

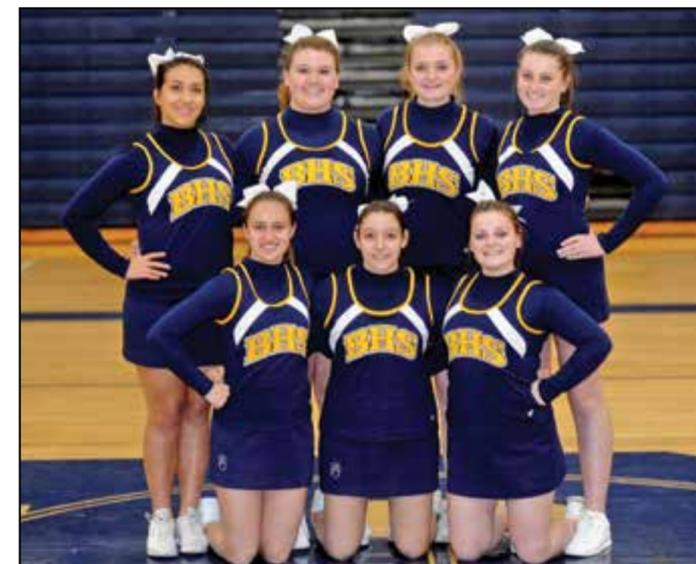
She's expecting other tough opponents at the state meet to also be at regionals with teams like Michigan Center, which had won the state title four years prior to Breckenridge's 2015 win. Hudson and Pewamo-Westphalia are other possible state contenders.

"We just have to keep getting better and keep fine tuning all the areas where we look at the score sheet, and we aren't quite where we want them to be," Gaines said. "We address them and keep paying attention to them every week and hopefully hit all the areas we want to hit."

Gaines has coached for more than 30 years. Her teams have won eight overall state titles.



Breckenridge's Lindsey Reichard recently received her appointment to West Point and will begin her career after graduation. Good luck Lindsey and to all of the other athletes who have signed their National Letters of Intent this month.



The Breckenridge Competitive Cheer Team is looking to repeat as D4 champions in the upcoming cheer championships March 4-5 in Grand Rapids. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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Samantha Krauss Leading a Solid Hemlock Attack

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Scott Neumeyer is coaching a Hemlock girls basketball team that has earned an impressive 12-5 record after its first 17 games.

"We play in a really tough division, and we're the only Class C school in a Class B division," he said. "But we like it that way. We see some of the best players in the state in our conference and I think that helps us. The last few years, I think just about everyone of our first-team (all-conference) basketball players has gone on to play college basketball. That's good for us as a program and it helps us get better."

The Huskies have been battling through injuries throughout the season.

"We're pretty young and I'm excit-

Krauss is averaging 18 points, five rebounds and four steals per game.

"She's a terrific defender too," Neumeyer added. "We need her to be more of a scorer this year. Everybody else knows it. We get everybody's best effort defensively, which makes what she's doing even more impressive."

Krauss has been an effective shooter from all over the floor.

"She's an outstanding 3-point shooter," Neumeyer said. "She's shooting about 40 percent from 3-point line and about 80 percent from free throws. She has worked hard on her ball handling and her post-up game; she's about 5'8". We have some smaller guards in our league. She's been working hard on her post game and has done some postup stuff this year that has been helpful, too. I think that will only help her down the road as well. She wants to get better and she does whatever it takes."

Last season, Krauss scored an impressive 25 points in the second half of a game.

"This year (in early February) we

played St. Louis and she finished with 29 points," Neumeyer said. "She had 21 in the first half. She can go on some scoring runs that are impressive, but what really impresses me is that she's an outstanding defender, too. She plays both ends of the floor. She's on the other team's top player most games. She's playing a full 94 feet every night."

Krauss said her team's success this winter "reflects all the extra work myself and other teammates have put in this summer with our coach, and I think we've had a pretty good season compared to others."

She added that her role is to bring the ball up, start the plays and run the offense.

"I'm kind of who my teammates look up to, to tell them what to do," Krauss said. "My coach really wants me to be a leader out there. He looks for me to score and pass and get other people involved as well."

Her single game season high is 29 points.

"I felt I could make all the shots I had," she said. "My teammates gave me the ball when I was open."



The Hemlock girls basketball team is holding its own this season posting a 12-5 record prior to press time. The Huskies are led by junior Samantha Krauss. (Randy Miniard, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Youth + Depth = Wins for Falcons

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

Freeland coach Tom Zolinski has had the luxury of exceptional guard play over the last six or seven years. First it was Tori Jankoska (Michigan State) and Tara Padgett (Alma College). Then stepped in Taryn Taugher (Northern Kentucky), who also put four solid years on work in for Zolinski.

Now it's junior Jenna Gregory's turn. Gregory is capable of playing

almost every position on the court, aside from sitting back and knocking down a long 3-pointer if needed.

It's Gregory's versatility that has college coaches salivating over what her future plans are at the next level.

Zolinski loves that Gregory has remained healthy this season.

"Over the last couple seasons, Jenna's big problem is finishing the season," Zolinski said. "I think we have that figured out and Jenna's is putting together a great season for

us. We expect a lot from her, but she has delivered this season. Bigger things are yet to come from her."

Gregory has had a big month for the Falcons, helping Freeland to upset victories over Frankenmuth and Ithaca in TVC crossover games.

Freeland rolled over Frankenmuth, 49-36, Jan. 29 and came back to defeat Ithaca 56-44 Feb. 5 after losing big to Nouvel two prior to the victory over the Yellowjackets.

The Falcons have used a strong mix of veterans, youth and depth to be 15-3 prior to press time.

Freeland has more freshmen than seniors, with Lily Beyer, Alyssa Argyle and Autumn Kloha coming off the bench. The three combined for 23 of Freeland's 49 points against Frankenmuth, with Beyer scoring 15. Argyle added seven points and five rebounds, with Kloha making one free throw.

"They're deep and talented and athletic," Frankenmuth coach Tom Keller said. "Not only that, they're so young."

Zolinski is hoping that combination of winning continues in the upcoming tournament.



Vestaburg Boys Basketball Team Looks To Continue Their Success

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Wolverines are also hoping to make some noise in upcoming weeks.

Coached by Todd Halcomb, the team is 11-2 overall and 7-0 in the Mid-State Activities Conference.

"I'm pretty satisfied with the season," Halcomb said. "We're making progress where we need to make progress. Right now we're going through a bugaboo with injuries where we're trying to get everyone healthy from either being sick or out with concussions, sprained ankles and those things."

"We're down right now two to three starters, but we have depth where we can fill in for those guys, which makes me happy. Overall, I'm satisfied with the kids and the improvement they've made. We're getting better guard play than what we've been getting and our post play is solid."

Colin Dove leads the Wolverines in scoring while guard Christian Keeler has been topping the rebounding stats in recent games. Seth Stratton, a sophomore guard, was a leading scorer in another recent game. Alex Steed has

played solid as a senior and contributed double figures in rebounds and points.

"Our overall ability and the length we have defensively," are among the strengths his team has, Halcomb added. "We're long and we're very quick up front with our guards. Our two big guys are really long inside with long arms. A couple of our guards have long arms that are hard to shoot over. We're pretty athletic. We have some kids that are learning how to be basketball players. That's where we're making our greatest improvement so far. That makes us tough."

"We move fairly well. Now that they understand the game better, and the concepts,

it's making us a better team overall."

The Wolverines will finish the regular season at Carson City-Crystal with the potential to the Mid-State Activities Conference title on the line.

For the first time in seven years, Vestaburg will compete in the Class D districts rather than Class C.

"If things go right and we play right, we could make a nice run," Halcomb said. "We also know that if we don't do things right we could be done the first night like we were last year. But the potential is there for us to have a long run. We're also in one of the toughest districts in the state with Fulton, Fowler, St. Patrick and Ashley,"



The Vestaburg boys basketball team has put together a solid season and are preparing for a long post season run in the coming weeks. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)



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Harrison Boys Ski Team Returns to State Meet

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

There's no business like snow business, and business is good for the Harrison boys ski team.

The Hornets finished third at the Division 2 regional at Caberfae Peaks to earn a return to the state meet.

"The team had a great attitude going into regional and the boys were determined to make it to states," said Harrison coach Linda Coon. "We all knew it was possible and the boys knew exactly what they had to do to make this dream come true for the third year in a row. They all skied hard and made it happen."

Coon was confident that the Hornets would make the grade again when the season started, but there were a few unexpected bumps along the way.

"I knew we should make it, but I started getting a little nervous in the middle of the season," she said. "Each one of them made little mistakes here and there, and they were mistakes that should not have been made. They have all skied together and raced together for years and they were better than what they were showing at times."

"I thought we should have been first at every meet, but we ended up third at

any given day," according to Coon.

Also contributing throughout the season were newcomers Jens Oellers, an exchange student from Germany, Raymond Ramirez and Tyler Collins.

Harrison won the Central Alpine Ski Conference championship with Mount Pleasant second, Clare third and Saginaw Heritage fourth. The Pioneers were led by all-conference selections Ryan Lightman, Max Hosweder and Gavin Showalter.

Lightman finished second in giant slalom and sixth in slalom at the regional to qualify for the state meet as an individual.

"He made it last year in both events and he placed well in both throughout this season," said Clare coach Ross Crawford. "He was around the top 20 last year, and if he can improve on that and place in the top 10, that would be a pretty big deal."

Clare's girls team will have two representatives at the state meet. Hannah Hosweder and Molly Merillat made it as individuals in one event each.

"Hannah did not have a good run in the slalom and she didn't make it," Crawford said. "Molly had an awesome run and got in. It was just the opposite in G.S.; Molly was not at her best, but Hannah did really well and made it."

Jacob Jackson brought leadership, hard work and dedication to the mix, as well as a tendency to win medals. James Gillespie was another hard-working competitor and Jeremy Fillhard can, "keep up with the best of them on



"They are both seniors and they both made it last year in their same events, so I was glad they will both get to go back."

The girls team at Harrison was young, except for senior Lexus Weldon and there was no doubt that she could be counted on in any situation.

"Lexus has been a great asset to the team since my first year," Coon said. "We started that season with only four girls and lost one because of an injury, so we didn't have enough for a team."

"Some of the girls called Lexus the night before a big race and asked if she would join. Without hesitation,

she said, 'sure,' even though she had never raced before. She had never even practiced before, but she jumped into a set of skis and raced down one of the bigger hills, and from then on, she has been a member of this team and has helped the girls improve every season."

Weldon will be gone next year, but freshman Abbigail Fillhard is expected to be back in a big way.

"She will be in the running for the states next year," Coon said. "Her talent will take her a long way in a short period of time and the rest of the girls are right on her heels, so I am looking forward to coaching them next year."

Jack Pine Team Challenge Returns Interesting Results

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

A wild finish at the Jack Pine Team Challenge Tournament left three teams claiming a share of the boys' bowling league championship.

Beaverton was first in the dual meet standings with a 6-1 record. Gladwin

Gladwin fourth with 3376; Clare fifth with 3270; Meridian sixth with 2954; Roscommon seventh with 2883 and Houghton Lake eighth with 2601.

After all of that, the final overall standings left Beaverton, Harrison and Farwell tied for the championship with Gladwin fourth, followed by Clare, Meridian, Roscommon and Houghton Lake.

"It was up for grabs between all four teams," said Gladwin coach Kent Crawford. "Farwell bowled really well to win it and Beaverton and Harrison did what they needed to do to get a piece."

"We would have been right there with them, but we had a hard time with spares that day."

The Flying G's also had a hard time replacing Aaron Weston, who was the Jack Pine's top bowler all season with a 210 average, but missed the big event with an ACL injury.

Farwell was led throughout the year by Jacob Gross, who averaged 183 with a high game of 258, and C.J. Fiedler, who averaged 179 with a top effort of 224.

Chase Castro averaged 190 and rolled a 255, while Brandon Cerngul

averaged 179 and had a 267 for the Beavers.

Harrison had a dependable trio in Cody Roehrs, who averaged 177 and rolled a 225; Brandon Solosky, 177/237; and Robert McCarver, 174/224.

J.J. Gross averaged 185 and had a 245 to lead Clare.

Keith Lang averaged 194 and had a 248 game, while Austin Castillo averaged 179 and had a 257 for Gladwin.

Meridian's Cole Ordway averaged 181 and had a 254 along the way.

Gladwin Girls Bowl Over Local Rivals

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

You can pin the title of Jack Pine Conference champion on the Gladwin girls' bowling team.

The Flying G's rolled through the league dual-meet season with a perfect 7-0 record and won the title outright by placing first at the Jack Pine Team Challenge Tournament at Snowbird Lanes in Harrison.

"I don't want to sound arrogant about it, but I'm anticipating kicking some butt this year and we dominated our league," said Gladwin coach Kent Crawford. "There were only one or two matches where we thought there was a chance we could lose and the girls pulled together and came through. They are driven to succeed and they never give up."

"They may get down a little bit here and there, but then they hunker down and support each other to the end."

"They have great camaraderie and cohesion and they keep each other going. We've been having a ball all year."

The Flying G's piled up a grand total of 3,456 pins at the tournament, led by junior Carley Van Tiem, who rolled a 248 that day.

"Carley was our top bowler all year," said Crawford. "She had rough week, which dropped her average a bit, but 248 is a very good score for any high school bowler."

Junior Allison Hager bowled a 199 for the champions.

Junior Kasidey Easlick finished the regular season with a 178 average and a high game of 217. Sophomore Kelcie Farison had a 150 average with a high game of 210. Freshman twins Mackenzie and Bailey Weston had big debut season, with Mackenzie averaging 165 with a high game of 212 and Bailey averaging 150 with a 210 on her resume.

Gladwin made it to the state finals as a team last season and has ideas of punching that ticket again. The Flying G's are ranked No. 4 in the state heading into the Division 3 regional at Sparetime Lanes in Cheboygan on Feb. 29.

"We're all excited about the state tournament," said Crawford. "If the girls bowl as well as they did at the Jack Pine Tournament, we will win the regional."

Beaverton also had a nice season, finishing second in the dual meet standings with a record of 6-1. The Beavers were also second at the challenge tournament with a total of 2818. Cheyenne Ficek won the Jack Pine Mid-Winter Singles Classic with a four-game series of 760 that included games of 219 and 213 and led the Beavers all season with an average of 169. Hallie Brink averaged 159 and recorded a high score of 215.

Clare and Meridian each went 4-3 in duals with Harrison next with a 3-4 mark.

At the tournament, Harrison was third with 2659, followed by Clare with 2530 and Meridian with 2507. That all shook out with Clare and Harrison tying for third in the overall standings and Meridian in fifth.

The Hornets were led by Natalie Lewandowski, who averaged 164



and shot a 212 during the season. Angela Kinna averaged 153 and had a 183 game.

Clare's big shooter was Emerald Forbes with a 163 average and a 193 high game. Natalya Prosser averaged 148 and threw a 199.

Meridian's Brittany Altman had a big season, averaging 171 with a high game of 206.

Houghton Lake went 2-5 in duals and finished 6th at both the tourney and in the overall standings. Farwell and Roscommon went 1-6 with Farwell earning seventh place by outscoring the Bucks at the tournament.

Top Wrestlers Stand Out at the Jack Pine Wrestling Meet

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

The champion was easy to find, but there was a wild scramble for the rest of the glory at the Jack Pine Conference wrestling league meet at Meridian.

Roscommon rolled through the dual meet season with a 7-0 record and kept the pain coming at the tournament, placing first with 87 points to wrap up the outright crown.

Meridian was second in the standings with a 4-2 mark, but placed fifth at the tournament with 38 points and wound up fourth overall.

Beaverton, Gladwin and Farwell all went 3-3 in duals to finish tied for third. At the league meet, the Beavers separated themselves from that pack by placing third with 42 points to finish second

overall. Farwell was fourth with 39 and ended up tied with Meridian in the final standings, while Gladwin was sixth with 30 and fell to sixth overall.

Clare, meanwhile, was just 2-4 in duals, but leapt into second place at the tournament with 53 points to claim a share of second place in the final standings with Beaverton.

Houghton Lake had a tough season and finished seventh with a 0-7 mark and 16 points at the league meet.

Clare's Amante Young was the champion at 103 after pinning second-place Brandon Spencer of Roscommon. Gladwin's Colton Kanyo finished third.

The Pioneers grabbed gold again at 112. Kyle SchAAF beat Houghton Lake's David Johnson 3-0 to leave Johnson in second place and William Dominsek was third for Roscommon.

The Bucks were best at 119 as Ethan Noryeko pinned four foes for the crown. Devin Shalay was second for Houghton Lake and Meridian's Tyler Brinley was third.

Roscommon ruled again at 125. Danny Rowe pinned Farwell's Clay Forfonski in the key match. Forfonski was second and Gladwin's Bryce Bartles took third.

The hosting Mustangs were in the winner's circle at 130, where Cole Federer pinned Roscommon's Tyler Hatfield in the battle for first and second. Farwell's Chandler Skornicka was third.

Roscommon's Gage Major won the gold medal at 135. Kyle Cassidy was second for Beaverton after a 2-0 loss to Major. Austin Sandel was third for Farwell.

Farwell's Brendan Smith won five matches with four pins and placed first at 140. Beaverton's Wade Muma was second after losing a major decision to Smith. Brandon Avery was third for Meridian.

Clare's Isaiah Dole was first with Gladwin's Austin Palmateer second at 145. Dole took a tough 5-3 decision over Palmateer for the crown. Justin Norburg was third for Farwell.

Meridian's Matt Hoffman beat Roscommon's Doug Fishell 6-2 in the battle for first and second at 152. Beaverton's Jack Owens was third.

Farwell's Garrett McQuiston came out on top of a competitive field at 160 with five pins and was named the meet's Most Valuable Wrestler. Roscommon's Donald Jernigan was second and Armando Vanderbrook third for Clare.

Gladwin's only champion of the day was Owen Ritchie, who was tops at 171. Hart Smalley of Clare was second after losing a tough 2-1 decision to Ritchie. Paul Streeter was third for Meridian.

Beaverton's lone gold medalist was Eric Cassidy, who won five bouts with three pins to take first at 189. Roscommon's Logan DuVall was second after falling to Cassidy 5-1 in the main event. Gladwin's Leroy Bouck was third.

Clare's Keegan Billerbeck was the big winner at 215. He pinned second-place Gabe Stern of Roscommon in the pivotal match. Beaverton's Luke Owens placed third.

The heavyweight champion was Roscommon's Tommy Tiepel, who had four pins and a 9-6 decision over Beaverton's Wade Sturgeon, who wound up second. Mason Schultz was third for Meridian.

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Last Man Standing

Alex Rosas Qualifies for State for Panthers

**Scott Keyes
Sports Scene**

Alma sophomore Alex Rosas is the last wrestler standing third at 125-pounds in the very tough Williamston Regional. Rosas now advances to the March 3-5 Individual Wrestling Championship held at the Palace of Auburn Hills.

"Alex is the last guy we have left in the tournament," said Alma coach Randy Miniard. "If he catches a few breaks along the way, he could very well be All-State. We have one wrestler left, but we have a lot of talent coming through in the coming years and I expect the program to continue to grow and only get better."

Alma Cheer Advances

The Alma Competitive Cheer Team qualified for regionals for the first time in school history after finishing fourth with a final score of 713.04 in the recent districts hosted by the Panthers.

Escanaba won the district with a score of 752.66. Freeland took second, Gladstone third, while Chippewa Hills and Shepherd just missed out on advancing, finishing in fifth and sixth, respectively.

Alma Signings

Alma's Taylor Kinnunen signed a National

Letter of Intent to play softball at Muskegon Community College. She hit .405 last season for the Panthers with eight doubles, two triples and three homers. She also drove in 39 runs and had a .485 on-base percentage and 1.140 OPS. She played first base for Alma in 2015.

On Feb. 10, Alma senior Hayden Bailey became the first-ever prep cross country runner to sign a National Letter of Intent to run for Mid-Michigan Community College.

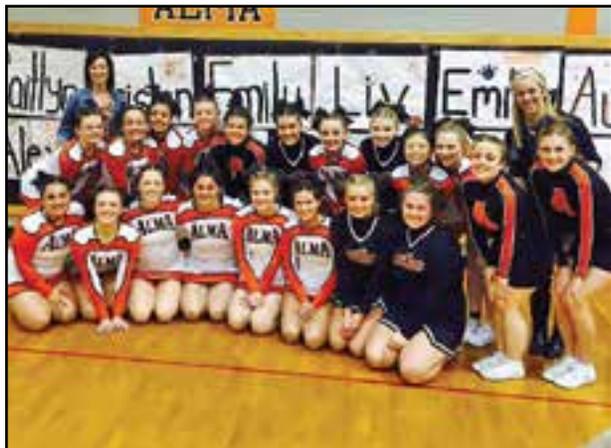
With the emergence of mid-Michigan as one of the finest prep-running hubs in the state, Mid Michigan Community College is looking to take advantage of this fact as it will offer varsity cross country starting this fall.

Boys Basketball Wins TVC Central For Second Straight Year

Alma clinched the Tri-Valley Conference Central championship for a second straight year Feb. 19 after defeating Hemlock on Parent's Night by a score of 63-49.

Alma improved to 14-3 overall and 11-0 in the TVC Central prior to press time.

Dylan Carl paced the Panthers with 20 points, while Ryan Cornejo added seven points and Konner Vedrode chipped in with six. Damon Anguiano scored five points and Justin Doyle added four.



Alma athletes have put together a solid winter sports season as the boys basketball team recently clinched the Tri Valley Central Division championship for the second straight season and the girls cheer team advanced to regionals for the first time in school history. Meanwhile sophomore Alex Rosas advanced to the state tournament after finishing third at regionals.

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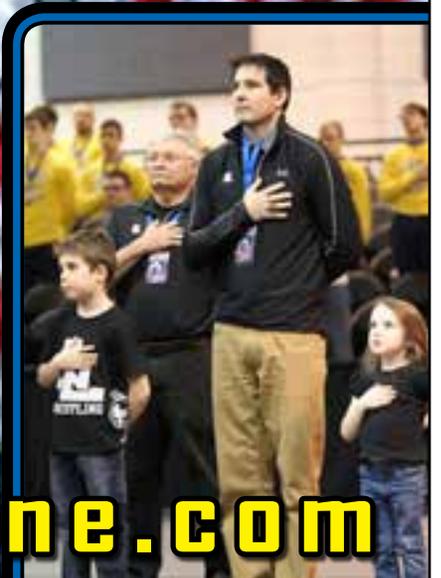


DIVISION 4 NEWLOTHROP

FROM LANSING EASTERN TO OLYMPIC GOLD

Meet Iowa State Wrestling Coach, Mid-Michigan Native Kevin Jackson; With 2016 Being An Olympic Year, Jackson Discusses What It Takes To Win Olympic Gold, While Growing Up In Lansing

Going For Broke
New Lothrop Coach Jeff Campbell Has Hornets Thinking Of 3-Peat





DIVISION 1 WRESTLING PREVIEW

Walled Lake Central's Ben Freeman Eyes Third D1 Title

103 POUNDS: 1) Rayfon Foley, Ann Arbor Pioneer; 2) Ben Kamali, Detroit CC; 3) Nathan Hollifield, Fraser; 4) Kyle Kantola, Hartland; 5) Isiah Berry, Plymouth; 6) Jack Samuels, Hudsonville; 7) Justin Tiburcio, Macomb Dakota; 8) Kyle Borthwell, Westland Glenn.

Foley improved his record to 51-0 after blazing his way to the individual district title and is the wrestler to beat at 103 pounds. Keep an eye on Kamali, a sophomore from Detroit Catholic Central who could make it to the finals.

112 POUNDS: 1) Max Johnson, Davison; 2) Jack Medley, Anchor Bay; 3) Michael Mars, Westland Glenn; 4) Nolan Klapek, Lakeland; 5) Cole Janes, Grand Ledge; 6) Vince Priante, Traverse City West; 7) Terrin Machart, Utica Ford; 8) Lean Abad, Warren Mott.

Davison senior Max Johnson is undefeated this year and will be tough to beat at the finals. Jack Medley of Anchor Bay and Michael Mars, last year's champion at 103 pounds, of Westland Glenn will be among the top challengers.

119 POUNDS: 1) Kevon Davenport, Detroit CC; 2) AJ Facundo, Davison; 3) Carl Antrassian, Monroe; 4) Dan Poupre, Saline; 5) Austin Wiczorek, East Kentwood; 6) Brendan Stevens, Battle Creek Lakeview; 7) Kaleb Marion, Walled Lake Central; 8) Kemonte Simons, Southfield.

Davenport has turned in a huge freshman year, but winning a state title at 119 will be no easy feat. Facundo won a state title at 112 pounds last season and will provide a tough hurdle as will Antrassian and Poupre who have staged some outstanding matches.

125 POUNDS: 1) Jackson Renicker, Brighton; 2) Nolan Smith, Portage Northern; 3) Jack Snauko, Grand Ledge; 4) Deven Perez, Davison; 5) Noah Lopez, Hartland; 6) Victor Shoenherr, Bay City Western; 7) Donte Rivera-Garcia, Southgate; 8) Xavier Graham, Woodhaven.

This will be one of the most wide-open weight classes, with several wrestlers more than capable of winning the title. Renicker, Smith, Perez and Lopez are seasoned seniors while Rivera-Garcia took second at 112 last year.

130 POUNDS: 1) Noah Schoenherr, Bay City Western; 2) Grant Morrison, Brighton; 3) Chris Brown, Belleville; 4) Cameron Amine, Detroit CC; 4) Tyler Sander, Macomb Dakota; 5) Nick Freeman, Walled Lake Central; 6) Vince Marceau, Utica Ike; 7) Lee Grabowski, Brighton; 8) Andrew Hansen, Rockford.

Schoenherr took second at 119 pounds in Division 2 last season and will be among the favorites at 130 this year. Morrison and Brown are a pair of tough seniors that are also capable of winning the title while Amine is a freshman to watch.

135 POUNDS: 1) Ben Freeman, Walled Lake Central; 2) Carlo Marceau, Utica Ike; 3) Aidan Pierobon, Rochester Hills Stony Creek; 4) Brian Case, Davison; 5) John Siemasz, Westland Glenn; 6) Josh Brower, Grandville; 7) Dante Latora, Portage Central; 8) Jeremy Nelson, Livonia Franklin.

Freeman, a junior, is a two-time state champion and is looking to make it three in a row this year. Freeman is yet to be defeated this year and is the big favorite in this weight class.

140 POUNDS: 1) Dylan Steward, Grand Ledge; 2) Reece Hughes, Hartland; 3) Layne Malzewski, Macomb Dakota; 4) Alex Hrisopoulos, Oxford; 5) Will Marano, Dearborn Ford; 6) Abe Ajami, Dearborn Fordson; 7) Blake Jackson, Bay City Western; 8) Danny Pfeffer, Fraser.

Steward is the defending state champion at 140 pounds and has dropped just one match all season. Plenty of quality challengers will look to knock off Steward including Hughes, Malzewski and Hrisopoulos.

145 POUNDS: 1) Nathan Atienza, Livonia Franklin; 2) Owen Donovan, Utica Ike; 3) Matt Heaps, Portage Northern; 4) Dylan Dwyer, Plymouth; 5) Coby Moore, Bay City Western; 6) Alje Buitert, Grandville; 7) Kajuan Caldwell, Bloomfield Hills; 8) Nick Costanzo, Walled Lake Central.

A finals showdown between unbeaten Nathan Atienza and Owen Donovan would be a great way to crown a champion in this competitive weight class. Heaps, Dwyer and Moore could also find their way into the finals.

152 POUNDS: 1) Sage Castillo, Hartland; 2) Kam Bush, Grandville; 3) Kolin Leyrer, Holt; 4) Sam Karel, Muskegon Mona Shores; 5) Caleb Brown, Belleville; 6) Hunter Grasso, Woodhaven; 7) Brad Stewart, Temperance Bedford; 8) Logan Vish, Hartland.

Castillo is undefeated through the individual districts and will be one of the favorites. Plenty of strong challengers are also in the mix including Bush, Leyrer, Karel and Brown.

160 POUNDS: 1) Blake Montrie, Temperance Bedford; 2) Nate Vandermeer, Clarkston; 3) Matt Mills, Forest Hills Central; 4) Sam Addy, Rochester Adams; 5) Gabe Ellis, Davison; 6) Jared Roberts, Fraser; 7) Kassem Salameh, Dearborn Heights Crestwood; 8) Conor Cox, Detroit CC.

This weight class took on a different look when Grandville's Boony Merryweather was ruled out of the tournament. Montrie of Temperance Bedford, won the 152-pound title last year and is the big favorite to add the 160-pound title this year.

171 POUNDS: 1) Devon Pingel, Lapeer; 2) Tyler Morland, Detroit CC; 3) Lucas LaForge, Hartland; 4) Dylan Powers, Saline; 5) Cole Rechsteiner, Bay City Western; 6) Hunter Schneider, Midland; 7) Nick Mason, Utica; 8) Jon Gough, Grosse Pointe South.

The 171-pound title should come down to showdown between Morland and Pingel. Pingel handed Morland his lone defeat of the season with a 5-2 win at the DCC invite in early January and a rematch in the finals would be great to watch.

189 POUNDS: 1) Brenden McRill, Davison; 2) Zane Gorby, Caledonia; 3) Nick May, Kalamazoo Loy-Norrix; 4) Trevor Yank, Anchor Bay; 5) Roy Foster, Plymouth Salem; 6) Austin Hanson, Howell; 7) Keenan Montoya, Holland West Ottawa; 8) Ben Cushman, Flushing.

Gorby and May both have undefeated records after individual districts while McRill has wrestled a challenging schedule. This three are the favorites at what will be very competitive weight class.

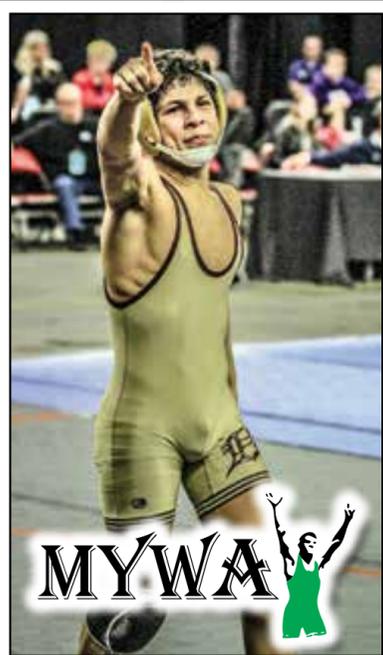
215 POUNDS: 1) Luke Ready, Brighton; 2) Wyatt Harden, Oxford; 3) Eric Conquest, Brighton; 4) Robert McQueen, Howell; 5) Jalen Goudelock, Chippewa Valley; 6) Josh Retting, Livonia Franklin; 7) Austin Emerson, Temperance-Bedford; 8) Sam Kinne, Lapeer.

Ready is the defending state champion at 215 and has not been defeated at 215 pounds this season. Ready also has wins over both Harden and McQueen this season and is the heavy favorite to claim the title again this season.

285 POUNDS: 1) Dan Perry, Lapeer; 2) Ali Wahab, Dearborn Heights Crestwood; 3) Nathan Troutvine, Clarkston; 4) Nick Jenkins, Detroit CC; 5) Tim Stevens, Temperance Bedford; 6) Andrew Bowen, Caledonia; 7) Matt Lloyd, Grand Ledge; 8) Brandon Krol, Hartland.

Perry and Wahab are on a collision course for a repeat of last year's state title match that Perry won 3-2. Wahab is undefeated so far this year while Perry's two losses were a pair 4-3 decisions against Trent Hilger. The heavyweight class has incredible depth as Troutvine, Jenkins, Stevens, Bowen and Lloyd are all outstanding wrestlers who could crash the title match.

The above wrestling rankings are through individual districts. The regional results were after press time. For updated rankings please visit www.highschoolsportsscene.com



Davison's Auggie Facundo celebrates after winning a state championship a year ago. (High School Sports Scene Staff Photo)



Dan Perry (Lapeer)



Myles Amine (DCC)

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DIVISION 2 WRESTLING PREVIEW



Lowell's Lucas Hall Has Sights On Another D2 Crown

103 POUNDS: 1) Andy Ruhstorfer, Flint Kearsley; 2) Derek Giallombardo, Gaylor; 3) Brendan Zelenka, St. Johns; 4) Chaise Mayer, Warren Woods Tower; 5) David Stepanian, Warren Woods Tower; 6) Davynn Schneider, Allegan; 7) Jeff Leach, Lowell; 8) Jacob Osmolinski, Sparta.

Ruhstorfer and Giallombardo staged an epic struggle in the district finals with Ruhstorfer claiming a one-point decision. Look for those two to carry the struggle into the finals where Zelenka will also be in the mix to make it to the title match.

112 POUNDS: 1) Austin Franco, Stevensville-Lakeshore; 2) Elijah Weaver, Warren Woods Tower; 3) Cameron Mahlich, Ionia; 4) Trevor Giallombardo, Gaylord; 5) Branson Proudlock, Gibraltar Carlson; 6) Andrew Flick, Niles; 7) Emilio Campos, Owosso; 8) Drew Hutchinson, Clio.

Mahlich defeated Giallombardo by a single point to win last year's 103-pound title. Both will be on the hunt for this year's 112-pound title. Franco, who finished second at 112 last year, is undefeated through the district as is Weaver and both could easily meet in the finals. Proudlock is another undefeated wrestler through district competition.

119 POUNDS: 1) Dom LaJoie, Gaylord; 2) Dylan Wilkins, Sparta; 3) Michael Higley, Edwardsburg; 4) Julian Saldana, Melvindale; 5) Kyle French, Marysville; 6) Larry Beek, Bay City Glenn; 7) Hunter Lajiness, Monroe Jefferson; 8) Stephen Hilliker, Greenville.

LaJoie is undefeated as a junior and is a strong favorite to win a third straight state title. LaJoie will face plenty of competition as Wilkins, Higley and Saldana are all turning in solid seasons.

125 POUNDS: 1) Lucas Hall, Lowell; 2) Drew Marten, Tecumseh; 3) Justin Manuel, Dearborn Heights Annapolis; 4) Hunter Vargo, Edwardsburg; 5) Tony Williams, Stevensville-Lakeshore; 6) Kyle Hughes, Monroe Jefferson; 7) Austin O'Hearon, Eaton Rapids; 8) Hunter Hohman, North Branch.

A two-time state champion, Hall is aiming to cap his career with three straight state titles. Look for Marten to reach the finals although Manuel, Vargo and Williams also capable of making it to the final match.

130 POUNDS: 1) Jon Martin, Gaylord; 2) Brendan Ladd, Ortonville-Brandon; 3) Avery Mutschler, Lowell; 4) Branden Hall, Niles; 5) Mike Bergmooser, Carlton Airport; 6) Wasam Kasem, Hamtramck; 7) Chris Fauson, Charlotte; 8) David Leija, Lansing.

Martin and Ladd are a pair of senior veterans that have been solid all season. Mutschler is the talented freshman who is looking to break-through. Hall and Bergmooser are also possibilities to make the finals.

135 POUNDS: 1) Nathan Ellis, Goodrich; 2) Trent Lashuay, St. Johns; 3) Luke Raczkowski, Parma Western; 4) Joey Orr, Allegan; 5) Mitch Findieson, Niles; 6) JD Greathouse, Mason; 7) Doug Ferrier, Marysville; 8) Gianni Baez, Byron Center.

Look for Ellis, Lashuay and Raczkowski to be the favorites to make the final match at 135. Orr is a solid senior from Allegan that could also figure in the final match.

140 POUNDS: 1) Ian Parker, St. Johns; 2) Zeth Dean, Lowell; 3) Chase Veydt, Parma Western; 4) Travis Wildfong, Flint Kearsley; 5) Alec Rees, Sparta; 6) Sam York, DeWitt; 7) Nolan Rickman, Trenton; 8) Nino Bastianelli, Marysville.

Another loaded weight class, Parker won the 125-pound title last season while Dean claimed the 130-pound title. Toss in Veydt who finished second at 135 and you have a trio of blue chips. LaVeam is another wrestler who could break through while Rees is a super-talented freshman.

145 POUNDS: 1) Austin Melton, DeWitt; 2) Dustin Gross, Dearborn Heights Annapolis; 3) Garrett Kaercher, Warren Lincoln; 4) Dawson Blank, Linden; 5) Kyle Roberts, Fowlerville; 6) Stahj McCoy, Hamtramck; 7) Gabe Bechtol, Tecumseh; 8) Bryce Dempsey, Lowell.

Melton, a senior, has reached the state finals the last two years, winning the 135-pound title as a sophomore. Gross and Kaercher will be two of his main challengers this year.

152 POUNDS: 1) Joel Rees, Sparta; 2) Brandon Garcia, Riverview; 3) Ameer Munasser, Melvindale; 4) Bret Fedewa, St. Johns; 5) Lane McVicker, Eaton Rapids; 6) Bryce Davis, Linden; 7) Beau Caster, Marquette; 8) Blake Ross, Muskegon Reeths-Puffer.

A solid group of seniors will battle it out this year with Rees, Garcia, Munasser and McVicker all strong candidates to top the podium. Fedewa is a talented junior who upended McVicker in the district finals.

160 POUNDS: 1) Derrien Perkins, Warren Lincoln; 2) Lucas McFarland, St. Johns; 3) Connor Charing, Trenton; 4) Luke Carver, Sturgis; 5) David Kruse, Lowell; 6) Sean McWilliams, Muskegon Reeths Puffer; 7) Chase Smith, Clio; 8) Dylan Tarrence, Flint Kearsley.

Perkins has an undefeated record heading into the regionals and will be tough to beat. That said, this is a tough weight class with plenty of depth with McFarland, Charing, Carver, Kruse and McWilliams all capable of reaching the finals.

171 POUNDS: 1) Jelani Embree, Warren Lincoln; 2) Will Feldkamp, Dexter; 3) Maxwell Underwood, Gibraltar Carlson; 4) Dan Kruse, Lowell; 5) John Penfold, Goodrich; 6) Gabe Lerner, DeWitt; 7) Levi Sabin, Allegan; 8) Sam DeMeester, Coldwater.

Embree has been on a roll this season and will be tough to stop. Plenty of challengers abound including seniors Underwood, Kruse and Penfold while Feldkamp and Lerner are a pair of juniors that will be major threats as well.

189 POUNDS: 1) Max Dean, Lowell; 2) Ryan Vashinder, Byron Center; 3) Trevor Piggott, Ionia; 4) Brad Wilton, Mason; 5) Kane Williams, Clio; 6) Jon Cox, Dearborn Heights Annapolis; 7) Nick Humphrey, Monroe Jefferson; 8) Blake Parsons, Edwardsburg.

After being stung by injury last year, Dean is determined to claim his second state title to cap off a tremendous high school career. Vashinder is a rugged junior that can battle with anyone. Piggott, Wilton and Williams are a trio of outstanding juniors that can also reach the finals.

215 POUNDS: 1) Landon Pelham, Tecumseh; 2) Clayton Higelmire, Eaton Rapids; 3) Colin McFarland, Carlton Airport; 4) Anthony Neal, Sturgis; 5) Isaac Weir, Stevensville-Lakeshore; 6) Zack VanValkenburg, Zeeland West; 7) Connor Bruinius, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern; 8) Jimmy Gray, Holly.

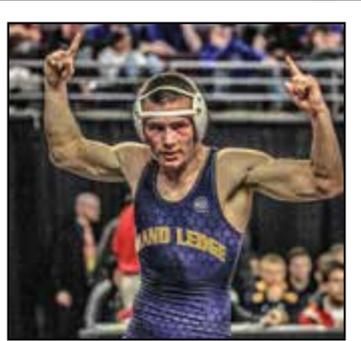
Pelham is a man on a mission and will be tough to stop. Higelmire reached the finals at 215 last season and could very well be there again this year. McFarland and Neal could also make a run at the final match.

285 POUNDS: 1) Isiah Espinoza, Adrian; 2) Jake Gnegy, St. Johns; 3) Sam Benson, Mason; 4) Pat DePiazza, Cedar Springs; 5) Tom Rock, Sparta; 6) Chase Bouschour, Sault Ste. Marie; 7) Evan Gast, Byron Center; 8) Jake Stevens, Sturgis.

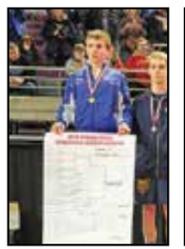
Espinoza came up short in last year's state finals and could again find himself in the title match. Gnegy and Benson put on a show in the district title match and could settled things in the state finals. DePiazza is a talented junior who can very well take the top prize this year.



The above wrestling rankings are through individual districts. The regional results were after press time. For updated rankings please visit www.highschoolsportsscene.com



Grand Ledge's Dylan Steward is back to defend his championship this season. (High School Sports Scene Staff Photo)



Cameron Mahlich (Ionia)



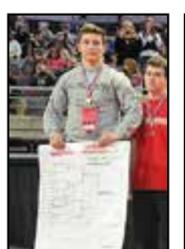
Josh Colegrove (Lowell)



Zeth Dean (Lowell)



Lucas Hall (Lowell)



Connor Myers (St Joseph)



Logan Ritchie (New Boston Huron)

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MYWA DIVISION 3 WRESTLING PREVIEW

GRCC's Schroder Bids To Become A 4x Champion

103 POUNDS: 1) Anthony Gallagher, Perry; 2) AJ Geyer, Lake Fenton; 3) Jonathon White, Dundee; 4) Amante Young, Clare; 5) Brandon Wireman, Ida; 6) Cole Jackson, Lakewood-Lake Odessa; 7) Nate Ernst, Caro; 8) Mason Hayes, Chippewa Hills.

Gallagher has had the upper hand over Geyer this season, and the two rivals may settle the score one last time in the finals. Keep an eye on Young, who has been on a tear. White of Dundee is also a threat to reach the finals.

112 POUNDS: 1) Nick McGhan, Howard City Tri-County; 2) Spencer Good, Jackson Lumen Christi; 3) Blain Wood, Caro; 4) Reese Wallis, Montrose; 5) Stuart Massa, Hemlock; 6) Garrett Cleveland, Berrien Springs; 7) Mitchell Christensen, Essexville-Garber; 8) Jacob Spiess, Perry.

McGhan of Howard City Tri-County has turned in a solid season and the senior is primed to make a run at the top spot this year. Good is a top challenger while Wood and Wallis are a pair of talented sophomores capable of making it to the finals.

119 POUNDS: 1) Devin Schroder, Grand Rapids CC; 2) Jarrett Trombley, Lake Fenton; 3) Tristan Serbus, Corunna; 4) Eric Spidle, Flint Powers; 5) Corey Robinson, Whitehall; 6) Dakota Greer, Howard City Tri-County; 7) Cody Keller, Richmond; 8) Kaden Ellis, Chippewa Hills.

Schroder is looking to put his name in the history books as the newest four-time state champion. A fourth title will be well earned as 119 is stocked with talent. Jarrett Trombley won the 112-pound title last year as a freshman and is undefeated this year and would provide a dramatic opponent for Schroder in the finals. Serbus fell to Trombley in last year's 112-pound title match while Greer won the 103-pound title last year.

125 POUNDS: 1) Aaron Kilburn, Richmond; 2) Mason Breece, Birch Run; 3) Hunter Corcoran, Lake Fenton; 4) Cooper Gunbells, Brooklyn Columbia Central; 5) Nick Felt, Shelby; 6) Zach Bellaire, Dundee; 7) Patrick Ford, Caro; 8) Alex Rosas, Alma.

Kilburn dropped a 3-0 decision to Devin Schroder in the 119-pound finals last season and has a good chance to make it back to the finals this year. Breece of Birch Run is a talented sophomore who could end up in the finals while Felt is the class of the freshmen class at 125.

130 POUNDS: 1) Alex Martinez, Ida; 2) Kole Krauss, Grand Rapids CC; 3) KJ Suito, Swan Valley; 4) Nolan Saxton, Lakeview; 5) Dominic Gardner, Portland; 6) Saban Spangler, Lake Fenton; 7) Adam Bruce, Gladstone; 8) Andre Bourlier, Algonac.

This could be one of the most competitive weight classes in Division 3.

Krauss was the runner-up at 130 last year and is enjoying another big year. Martinez entered the regional with a perfect record while Suito and Saxton are also top-level wrestlers capable of making it to the finals.

135 POUNDS: 1) Matt Santos, Swan Valley; 2) Reiley Brown, Whitehall; 3) Tylor Orrison, Dundee; 4) Graham Barton, Richmond; 5) Devan Melick, Lake Fenton; 6) Gage Major, Roscommon; 7) Sean Trombley, Lake Fenton; 8) Kyle Cassidy, Beaverton.



Matt Santos (Saginaw Swan Valley)

A pair of defending state champs lead the way at 135. Santos won the title at 130 last year while Brown took the 125-pound title. The two seniors are the big favorites to meet in the title match with talented sophomores Orrison and Melick also in the mix.

140 POUNDS: 1) Zack Blevins, Dundee; 2) Jwan Britton, Whitehall; 3) Kolten Radaz, Freeland; 4) Slade Todd, Chippewa Hills; 5) Jackson Nevadomski, Lake Fenton; 6) Jacob Battani, Almont; 7) Levi Stoll, Omega Heights; 8) Brady Payne, Millington. Seniors dominate this weight class with Blevins, Britton, Radaz and Todd all looking to end their career with a state title. A Blevins, Britton finale would be one to watch.

145 POUNDS: 1) Kanen Storr, Leslie; 2) Lane Allen, Lakewood-Lake Odessa; 3) JoJo Dowdell, Whitehall; 4) Bobby Beauchamp, Gladstone; 5) Joey Hayden, Crosswell-Lexington; 6) Isaiah Dole, Clare; 7) Alex Motylinski, Dundee; 8) Mike Wickowski, Grosse Ile.

Storr is setting his sights on a third state title and is a big favorite to accomplish that goal. Who Storr faces in the finals is up for grabs, but keep an eye on Beauchamp from the U.P. along with Allen and Dowdell.

152 POUNDS: 1) Sean Sterling, Dundee; 2) Collin Lieber, Crosswell-Lexington; 3) Jake Reed, Delton-Kellogg; 4) Dom Forbes, Grand Rapids CC; 5) Nick Worden, Birch Rapids; 6) Malachi Breece, Birch Run; 7) Paul Livermore, Capac; 8) Jerry Hall, Byron.

Sterling and Lieber look to be the favorites this weight class with Lieber looking to go out with a perfect record as a senior. Reed and Forbes are two more seasoned seniors that can reach the final match.

160 POUNDS: 1) Foster Karmon, Grand Rapids CC; 2) David Dumond, Corunna; 3) Trevor Patterson, Chesaning; 4) Jerry Yelinek, Corunna; 5) Tyler Childs, Birch Run; 6) Logan Bovee, Birch Run; 7) Owen Ritchie, Gladwin; 8) Austin Demeuse, Gladstone.

Gladstone.

Karmon is aiming for a third straight state title and an undefeated senior season. While Karmon will be tough to stop, Dumond, Patterson, Yelinek and Childs will be battling it to get the opportunity to do that in the finals.

171 POUNDS: 1) Adam McCann, Midland Bullock Creek; 2) Daniel Thompson, Lakewood-Lake Odessa; 3) Anthony Reo, Paw Paw; 4) Daniel Waterman, Constantine; 5) Colton McKiernan, Richmond; 6) Boyd Glenn, Almont; 7) Aaron Bolo, Iron Mountain; 8) John McNeil, Jackson Lumen Christi.

McCann is the favorite at 171 as he is looking to go out with an undefeated senior season. Thompson is a junior to watch while McKiernan is a talented sophomore from Richmond. Waterman and Reo and a pair of talents from Southwest Michigan that could crash the title match.

189 POUNDS: 1) Brandon Whitman, Dundee; 2) Jared Roehl, Millington; 3) Dominick Reo, Paw Paw; 4) Michael Phipps, Grayling; 5) Zach Morris, Ovid-Elsie; 6) Jarrod Tague, Howard City Tri-County; 7) Brendan Barry, Chippewa Hills; 8) Blake Rodarmer, Belding.

One of the deepest weight classes from top to bottom, a pair of defending champs top the chart. Whitman won the 171-pound title last season while Roehl took the 189-pound title. Reo and Phipps are a pair of strong juniors who are also capable of reaching the title match.

215 POUNDS: 1) Quintin Wilber, Montrose; 2) Tyler Deming, Caro; 3) Devin Philo, Benzie Central; 4) Gabe Heiserman, Dundee; 5) Tyden Ferris, Delton-Kellogg; 6) Billy Koepf, Chippewa Hills; 7) James Smith, Lakeview; 8) Lucas Prater, Howard City Tri-County.

There is no clear-cut favorite at 215 where a number of wrestlers are capable of taking the top spot. Wilber, Deming and Heiserman are solid seniors looking to cap their careers in style while Philo is an undefeated junior that has the ability to make the finals.

285 POUNDS: 1) Trent Hilger, Lake Fenton; 2) Maddox Maki, Williamston; 3) Aaron Kelley, Byron; 4) Andrew Vinton, Chippewa Hills; 5) Rashaad Powell, Grant; 6) Tyrique Moore, Berrien Springs; 7) Robert Eineder, Napoleon; 8) Wade Sturgen, Beaverton.

After capturing the 215-pound title last year, Hilger is poised to add the heavyweight title this year. Maki, last year's state champion, fell to Hilger in the district final and must figure out a way to prevail over Hilger to keep his title.

The above wrestling rankings are through individual districts. The regional results were after press time. For updated rankings please visit www.highschoolsportsscene.com

MYWA DIVISION 4 WRESTLING PREVIEW

New Lothrop Trio Seek Repeat Performances In D4

103 POUNDS: 1) Tucker Sholl, Hudson; 2) Nik Andavarde, Mendon; 3) Ash Stokes, Marcellus; 4) Frankie Najera, Adrian Madison; 5) Reese Fry, Manchester; 6) Dylan Leathers, Hudson; 7) Sam Soback, Rogers City; 8) Robert Altland, Hart.

Sholl, a freshman, has put together a big season against some top-notch competition. Andavarde and Stokes will be the prime contenders to meet Sholl in the finals.

112 POUNDS: 1) Jordan Hamdan, Hudson; 2) Noah Comar, Clinton; 3) Seth Harvey, Addison; 4) Anthony Mack, Dansville; 5) Khalil Moten, Flint Beecher; 6) Andrew Park, Pine River; 7) Tommy Malloy, New Lothrop; 8) Sam Whitmore, Mio.

Hamdan could join Sholl as Hudson freshman state champions. Hamdan has defeated Comar twice this season and also defeated Harvey of Addison. Harvey won the 103-pound state title last season over Mack of Dansville and with state final experience both Harvey and Mack can't be counted out.

119 POUNDS: 1) Robert LeFevre, Erie-Mason; 2) Carson Price, Hudson; 3) Coy Helmut, Decatur; 4) Nathan Park, Pine River; 5) Elijah Sanchez, Sand Creek; 6) Chaz Kehres, Dansville; 7) Trevor Williams, Burton Bentley; 8) Taylor Barkley, Carson City-Crystal.

LeFevre took second at 112 pounds last season and is fashioning a perfect record this season. LeFevre blanked Price 5-0 at the individual district final and is the favorite to take the title this season.

125 POUNDS: 1) Davian Gowens, Hesperia; 2) Robert Rogers, Burton Bentley; 3) Marcus Richardson, Addison; 4) Tyler Teague, Springport; 5) Isaac Nave, Onaway; 6) Landon Elliott, Fife Lake Forest; 7) Spencer Fox, Schoolcraft; 8) Calvin Moten, Flint Beecher.

Look for seniors like Gowens, Richardson, Nave and Elliott to make strong runs at the top spot. Gowens won the 103-pound title as a sophomore. Rogers of Burton Bentley entered the regional with a perfect record and will also be a factor.

130 POUNDS: 1) Dallas O'Green, Carson City-Crystal; 2) Ethan Woods, Manchester; 3) Lucian Parish, Decatur; 4) Dayton Vanderploeg, Martin; 5) Noah Teague, Springport; 6) Evan Jones, Kent City; 7) Tyler McCallum, Charlevoix; 8) Mason Rife, Webberville.

O'Green won the 125-pound title last year and is undefeated this year. Woods will be his major challenger after taking second at 119 last year. Parish of Decatur and Vanderploeg from Martin are a pair of experienced seniors from Southwest Michigan capable of making the finals.

135 POUNDS: 1) Sean O'Hearn, Springport; 2) Johah Grimm, Mendon; 3) Clay Ragon, Dansville; 4) Noah Nieman, Blissfield; 5) Jesse Lochmundy, Niles Brandywine; 6) Tate Larson, Sandusky; 7) Ryan Bockheim, Kent City; 8) Jayce Kuehnlein, St. Louis.

O'Hearn has dropped just one match this season and that was due to an injury. Ragon was runner-up at 125 last season and will be a leading challenger. Grimm and Lochmundy, from Southwest Michigan, can also pull a surprise.

140 POUNDS: 1) Dresden Simon, Dansville; 2) Owen Gaffney, Webberville; 3) Ethan May, Decatur; 4) Konor Holton, St. Louis; 5) Logan Eaves, Hesperia; 6) Hunter Dart, Addison; 7) Brenden Smith, Farwell; 8) Jacob Gray, Lawton.

Simon won the 130-pound title last season and was a runner-up at state as a sophomore. Simon's lone loss this season came to Ian Parker and Simon also defeated Parker 3-2 earlier this season. Pencil in Simon as a huge favorite.

145 POUNDS: 1) Cole Hersch, New Lothrop; 2) Gerrit Yates, Hesperia; 3) Mason Lopinski, Hudson; 4) Logan Merrick, Mason County Central; 5) Wyatt Cool, Mendon; 6) Taylor Whitmore, Springport; 7) Elijah Luth, Decatur; 8) Zach

Young, Hesperia.

Yates reached the finals at 135 pounds last year and will battle it out with Hersch for the title this season. Yates and Hersch are the premier wrestlers in the class this year along with Lopinski who was the runner-up at 145 last season.

152 POUNDS: 1) Steve Garza, New Lothrop; 2) Zeth Caudill, Springport; 3) Jacob Shoop, Mason County Central; 4) Ethan Sharp, Schoolcraft; 5) Zac Menck, Lawton; 6) Nicholas Roland, Clinton; 7) Donovan Underwood, Addison; 8) Brady Tate, Hart.

Garza captured the 145-pound title last year and is a strong favorite to take 152 this year. Garza defeated Caudill earlier this season at the Leslie invite. Garza suffered his lone loss at Leslie when he dropped a 7-4 decision to Kanen Storr.

160 POUNDS: 1) Spencer Knizacky, Mason County Central; 2) Kyle Johnson, Hudson; 3) Tanner Gonzales, Manistique; 4) Johnny Robinson, New Lothrop; 5) Garrett McQuiston, Farwell; 6) Zac Sharp, Schoolcraft; 7) Trevor Willing, Sandusky; 8) Zack Mobley, Martin-C-S.

Look for a wide-open scramble for the top spot at 160. Johnson of Hudson is tested tough against some of the top wrestlers in the state while Knizacky has also turned in a big season. Gonzales, Robinson, McQuiston and Sharp are also capable of being on the top stand.

171 POUNDS: 1) Erik Birchmeier, New Lothrop; 2) Mark Workman, Hesperia; 3) Trevor Humphrey, Manchester; 4) Mason Lawson, Gobles; 5) David Erwin, Bronson; 6) Ethan Korb, Dansville; 7) Sam Burge, Niles Brandywine; 8) Clayton Howd, St. Louis.

Another wide-open weight class, Birchmeier, Workman and Humphrey appear to be the favorites with Lawson and Erwin also capable of making it to the finals.

189 POUNDS: 1) Nick Cooper, Springport; 2) Hunter Sadler, Munising; 3) Josh Jackson, Pine River; 4) Brandon Verwey, Schoolcraft; 5) Tylor Grames, Hudson; 6) Ernie Diaz, St. Louis; 7) TJ Moore, Cass City; 8) Michael Hinkle, Charlevoix.

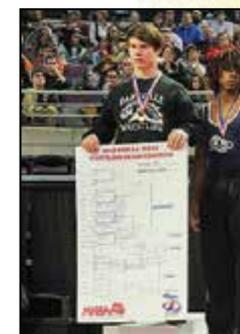
Cooper and Sadler are the top two contenders. Cooper was second at 171 last year and has just one loss this season as does Sadler. Jackson, Verwey and Grames will be major obstacles for Cooper and Sadler.

215 POUNDS: 1) Caleb Symons, New Lothrop; 2) Devon Kozel, Bangor; 3) Dylan McGregor, Mio; 4) Nathan Caudill, Bronson; 5) Caleb Bangerter, Blissfield; 6) Ethan Simmons, Martin-C-S; 7) Landon Burton, Manistique; 8) Jared Mroz, White Pigeon.

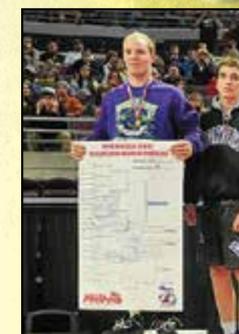
Symons placed second at 189 last season and has been on a mission this year. Kozel has an undefeated record and a matchup between these two would be a dandy final. McGregor and Caudill are two to keep an eye on.

285 POUNDS: 1) Kevin Koenig, Laingsburg; 2) Josh Ehrke, Hesperia; 3) Logan Kennedy, Decatur; 4) Jason Craig, Lawton; 5) David Curl, Watervliet; 6) Brad Gierman, Brown City; 7) Ethan Vaughn, Clinton; 8) Tom Harkema, Grandville Calvin Christian.

Koenig has appeared in the 215-pound finals the last three years, winning the title as a sophomore. Koenig is the favorite in what is a stocked heavyweight class this year with standouts like Ehrke, Kennedy and Craig capable of coming away with the title as well.



Dresden Simon (Dansville)



Shane Rodenburg (Kent City)



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DIVISION 1 TEAM WRESTLING FINALS

Friday, February 26, Quarterfinals 2 p.m.
McGuirk Arena, Mt. Pleasant

- #1 Hartland (31-1) vs. #8 Temperance Bedford (21-4)
- #4 Oxford (23-8) vs. #5 Hudsonville (26-5)
- #3 Detroit Catholic Central (15-5) vs. #6 Macomb Dakota (27-11)
- #2 Davison (22-4) vs. #7 Grand Ledge (19-7)

HARTLAND: The Eagles took second in the state last year and have the talent to get to the final match again. Hartland boasts 10 state qualifiers, including four regional champions: Reece Hughes (140), Sage Castillo (152), Lucas La-Forge (171) and Brandon Krol (285). Hartland also defeated Davison (27-26), Oxford (48-12) and Dakota (56-12) this season.

DAVISON: The Cardinals fell to Brighton by four points in last year's semifinals. With 11 state qualifiers in the lineup, Davison has the depth to survive a grueling weekend. Regional champions Max Johnson (112 pounds), AJ Facundo (119) and Deven Perez (125) give Davison plenty of firepower in the lower weights. Davison also defeated Detroit CC 29-23 earlier this season.

DETROIT CATHOLIC CENTRAL: The Shamrocks fell by seven to Davison in last year's quarterfinals. This season, Detroit Catholic Central has posted impressive wins over both Oxford (46-17) and Hartland (33-16) and with nine state qualifiers on the team the Shamrocks have the firepower to make it to the title match.

OXFORD: Oxford fell by 20 to Brighton in last year's quarterfinals. Oxford has a pair of wins to their credit over Dakota this season and has five state qualifiers led by regional champions Alex Hrisopoulos (140) and Dalton Myers (103).

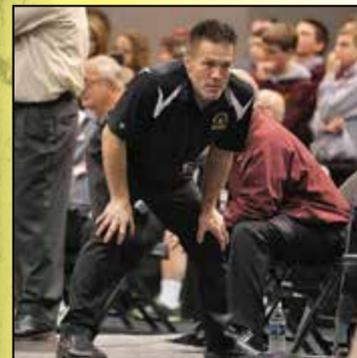
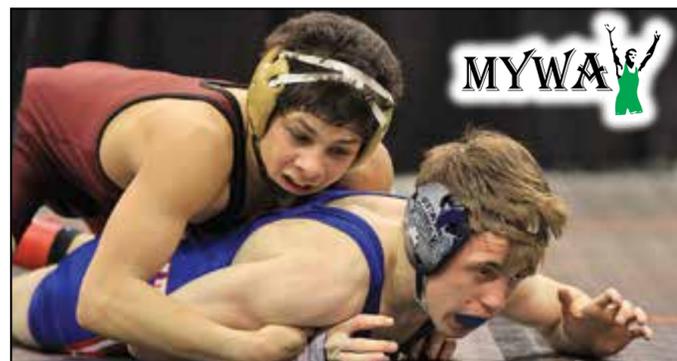
HUDSONVILLE: The Eagles are in the finals for the first time since 2011. Hudsonville benefitted

from Grandville being disqualified from the state tournament, but they are a very worthy team, having defeated Grand Ledge (33-30) and Division 2 power Gaylord (36-34) during the regular season. The Eagles have six state qualifiers on the roster led by regional champion Jack Samuels (103).

MACOMB DAKOTA: Dakota is in the finals for the first time since 2014 and with plenty of talented young wrestlers, they may become regular contenders. Sophomores Tyler Sanders (130) and Lane Malczewski (140) placed second at regionals while freshman Dustin Solomon (145) took second and freshman Justin Tiburcio placed third.

GRAND LEDGE: Grand Ledge has reached the finals for the first time since 2005. The Comets defeated last year's state champion Brighton 34-27 in the regional finals to earn their trip to this year's finals. The Comets are led by a trio of regional champions in Cole Janes (112), Dylan Steward (140) and Matt Lloyd (285).

TEMPERANCE-BEDFORD: The Kicking Mules are back in the finals for the first time since 2013. Temperance-Bedford edged Westland John Glenn 31-28 in the regional to earn its trip to the finals. An outstanding senior class has led the way led by regional champs Blake Montrie (160) and Gabe Erlarton (189) and state qualifiers Austin Teague (135), Brad Stewart (152) and Tim Stevens (285).



Davison is back in the Division 1 finals hoping to give coach Roy Hall his seventh title during his stellar coaching career. (Staff Photos High School Sports Scene)



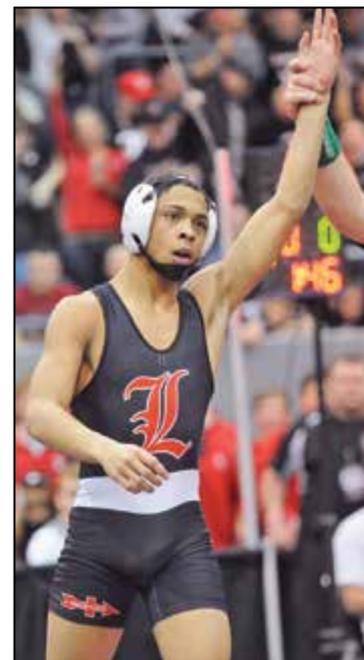
Brighton and Hartland battled until the final match in last year's finals until the Tigers put the match away late to capture the Division 1 championship. (High School Sports Scene Staff Photo)

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DIVISION 2 TEAM WRESTLING FINALS

Friday, February 26, Quarterfinals 6 p.m.
McGuirk Arena, Mt. Pleasant

- #1 Lowell (19-3) vs. #8 Sturgis (27-7)
- #4 Goodrich (33-4) vs. #5 Allegan (29-5)
- #3 Gaylord (41-1) vs. #6 Warren Woods Tower (26-6)
- #2 St. Johns (26-4) vs. #7 Dearborn Hts. Annapolis (38-3)



Lowell is hoping to make it three straight Division 2 titles in 2015-16. (Staff Photos High School Sports Scene)

LOWELL: Arguably the best team in the state regardless of class, the Red Arrows are set to win a third straight state title. Lowell is among the top teams in the nation and features a lineup with 11 state qualifiers including six regional champions. Seniors Lucas Hall (125), Zeth Dean (140), Danny Kruse (171) and Max Dean (189) lead the way for the Red Arrows who are looking for a sixth team state title.

ST. JOHNS: The Redwings are back in the finals after a year's absence when they edged out Eaton Rapids 32-30 at the regional. St. Johns features a deep squad with eight state qualifiers including four regional champions in Trent Lashuay (135), Ian Parker (140), Lucas McFarland (160) and Jake Gnegy (285). St. Johns has a number of noteworthy wins this season including a 45-23 win against Allegan, a 35-27 win against DeWitt and a 47-12 win against Temperance-Bedford.

GAYLORD: Gaylord reached the semifinals a year ago before falling to Lowell. Gaylord

edged Flint Kearsley 33-27 in the regionals and also defeated Eaton Rapids (37-30) and Grand Ledge (38-35) this season. Undefeated junior Dom Lajoie (119) leads a group of six state qualifiers that pace Gaylord.

GOODRICH: The Martians are back in the finals for the first time since 2009 when they were in Division 3. Goodrich has posted a number of impressive victories this season, including Brighton (32-29), Eaton Rapids (29-27), Grand Ledge (48-20) and Warren Woods-Tower (34-33). The Martians qualified eight wrestlers for state led by regional champs Caleb Teague (103) and Nathan Ellis (135).

ALLEGAN: The Tigers qualified in Division 3 last year and have moved up to D2 this season. Allegan defeated Allendale 37-24 at the regional and also defeated Sturgis (36-33) earlier this season. The Tigers have seven state qualifiers on the team led by regional champions Joey Orr (135) and Trey Boerman (160).

WARREN WOODS-TOWER: Get used to seeing the Titans in the finals, as all six of their state qualifiers are non-seniors. Junior Elijah Weaver (112) and freshman Chase Mayer (103) are regional champions who have helped lead the team back to the finals after missing out last season.

DEARBORN HEIGHTS ANNAPOLIS: The Cougars have qualified for state for the first time since 2010. Annapolis qualified for the finals with a 29-28 win over Monroe Jefferson. Senior Jon Cox (189) and sophomore Dustin Gross (145) won regional championships and are two of five Cougars headed to individual state.

STURGIS: It has been a memorable season for Sturgis as the Trojans qualified for the state team finals for the first time in school history. The Trojans broke through at the regional where they defeated Stevensville-Lakeshore 30-27. Sturgis is led by senior state qualifiers Luke Carver (160), Anthony Neal (215) and Jake Stevens (285).

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DIVISION 3 TEAM WRESTLING FINALS

Friday, February 26, Quarterfinals 4 p.m.
McGuirk Arena, Mt. Pleasant

#1 Dundee (18-0) vs. #8 Delton Kellogg (18-3)

#4 Richmond (24-10) vs. #5 Whitehall (25-1)

#3 Lake Fenton (38-3) vs. #6 Birch Run (26-4)

#2 Remus Chippewa Hills (39-1) vs. #7 Gladstone (16-1)



DUNDEE: After falling to Richmond in last year's D3 finals, Dundee is primed to regain the title this season after winning the two previous years. Dundee has a number of impressive wins to its credit, including a 51-23 win against Oxford, 35-27 against Brighton and 58-4 against Temperance-Bedford. Regional champions Zach Blevins (140), Sean Sterling (160) and Brandon Whitman (189) lead a cast of eight state qualifiers on the roster.

REMUS CHIPPEWA HILLS: The Warriors reached the semifinals last season before falling to Richmond. With nine state qualifiers, including regional champions Slade Todd (140) and Jaycob Sharp (145), Chip Hills has the talent to take it a step farther this season. Chip Hills prepped for the finals by defeating Caro, a top 10 team, 33-27 in the regionals.

LAKE FENTON: The Blue Devils can compete with anyone in the state as evidenced by their 37-24 win against DeWitt, 39-26 against Oxford and 34-26 against Dakota. Regional champions Trent Hilger (285) and Jarrett Trombley (119) are both undefeat-

ed this season and join fellow regional champion Devan Melick (135) as part of seven Blue Devils headed to individual state.

RICHMOND: Last year's state champions have a team that boasts nine individual state qualifiers, including regional champions Hunter Seguin (103) and Aaron Kilburn (125). Richmond has a number of quality wins this season including a 44-24 win against Oxford and a 39-33 win against Merrillville Ind.

WHITEHALL: The Vikings are back in the state finals for the first time since 2013 and have a team capable of making it to day two. Whitehall boasts nine individual state qualifiers led by regional champions Hunter Bower (103), Reiley Brown (135), Jwan Britton (140) and Jojo Dowdell (145). Whitehall defeated Grand Rapids Catholic (48-23) at the regional and have defeated Division 2 qualifier Sturgis (48-21).

BIRCH RUN: The Panthers fell to Richmond in last year's quarterfinals. Birch Run is led by eight individual state qualifiers including regional champion

Tyler Childs (160). The Panthers are strong in the middleweight classes and defeated Crosswell-Lexington (37-25) to qualify for the state meet.

GLADSTONE: Gladstone is making its first trip to the state finals since 2013. The Braves earned their trip to the finals after defeating Roscommon, a top-ten team, 40-32 in the regional. Gladstone has five state qualifiers led by regional champions Adam Bruce (130) and Zach Bailey (285).

DELTON-KELLOGG: The Panthers are making their first-ever trip to the team wrestling finals. Delton-Kellogg defeated Buchanan 64-12 in the regional and has a total of five state qualifiers. Senior Jake Reed (152) and sophomore Tyden Ferris (215) are regional champions that lead the way.



Left to Right: Richmond, New Lothrop and Chippewa Hills are all making return trips back to the Wrestling Team Finals in 2015-16. (High School Sports Scene Staff Photos)

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DIVISION 4 TEAM WRESTLING FINALS

Friday, February 26, Quarterfinals 12 p.m.
McGuirk Arena, Mt. Pleasant

#1 New Lothrop (21-5) vs. #8 Munising (19-5)

#4 Hesperia (36-6) vs. #5 Springport (28-6)

#3 Hudson (16-14) vs. #6 Manchester (23-6)

#2 Decatur (27-3) vs. #7 Leroy Pine River (25-4)

NEW LOTHROP: New Lothrop is in position to claim its third straight Division 4 state title after defeated Hudson in the past two title matches. The Hornets are tested tough with wins against top 10 Division 1 teams Dakota (42-36) and Westland Glenn (38-37) along with wins against Goodrich and Richmond. The Panthers have nine individual state qualifiers led by regional champions Cole Hersch (145), Steven Garza (152), John Robinson (160), Erik Birchmeier (171) and Caleb Symons (215).

DECATUR: The Raiders dropped a six-point decision to Hudson in last year's D4 semifinals. Decatur is primed to take it a step forward this year with regional champions Lucian Parrish (130), Ethan May (140) and Logan Kennedy (285) leading a group of five individual state qualifiers. Decatur has defeated Hesperia (42-36), Manchester (38-33) and Springport (36-33) this season.

HUDSON: The Tigers fell to New Lothrop in last year's D4 state championship match. Hudson needed to edge Clinton 28-27 in this year's regional to make it back to the state meet. The Tigers have seven individual state qualifiers on this year's squad including regional champions Tucker Scholl (103), Jordan Hamdan (112), Mason Lopinski (145), Kyle Johnson (160) and Tylor Grames (189).

HESPERIA: Hesperia is back in the finals after missing out last year. The Panthers have six state qualifiers led by regional champions Gerit Yates (145), Mark Workman (171) and Josh

Ehrke (285). Hesperia has defeated D1 Grand Haven 36-33 and also defeated Allendale 38-32 this season before stopping St. Louis 43-27 in the regional.

SPRINGPORT: The Spartans are back in the finals after missing out last year. With impressive wins against Birch Run (33-31), Manchester (43-30), Stevensville-Lakeshore (42-25) and Niles (34-27) the Spartans are capable of making it to day two. Springport has seven state qualifiers led by regional champions Sean O'Hearon (135), Zeth Caudill (152) and Nick Cooper (189).

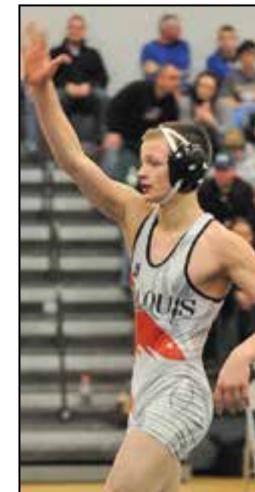
MANCHESTER: The Flying Dutch reached the D4 semifinals last year where they fell to New Lothrop. Manchester has seven state qualifiers on this year's team led by regional champions Reese Fry (103) and Ethan Woods (130). Manchester defeated Dansville 45-23 in the regional to pave its way to the finals.

LEROY PINE RIVER: Pine River defeated Farwell 55-14 to return to the state finals where it fell to Manchester in last year's quarterfinals. Pine River has a deep squad with nine state qualifiers led by regional champions Andrew Park (112), Nate Park (119) and Josh Jackson (189).

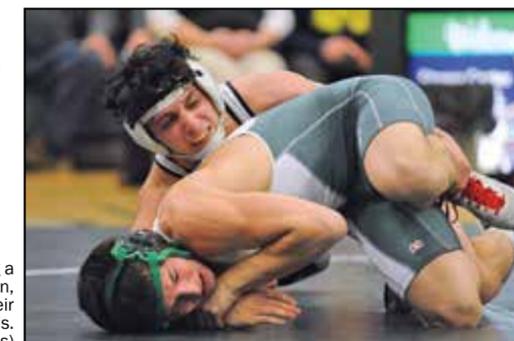
MUNISING: The Mustangs are making their first trip to the team finals since 2002. A 36-34 win against Rogers City punched Munising's ticket to the finals. State qualifiers Hunter Sadler (189) and Nick Miles (119) lead the way for the Mustangs.



Hudson coach Scott Marry shares an embrace with one of his wrestlers during last year's D4 finals (High School Sports Scene Staff Photos)



St. Louis battled Hesperia during a tough regional finals match this season, but the Sharks came up short in their quest of making it to the D4 finals. (High School Sports Scene Staff Photos)



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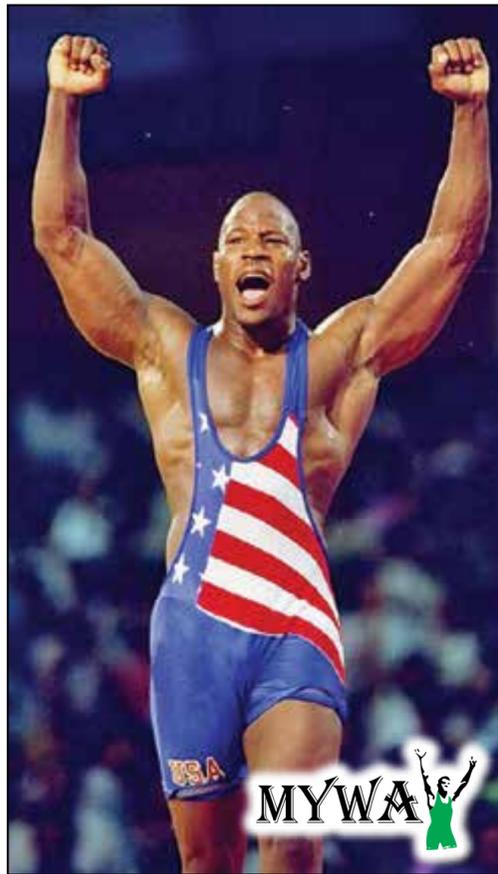
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Lansing Native Kevin Jackson One of Michigan's Greatest Ever as Coach and Competitor

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

When it comes to success in wrestling, Lansing's own Kevin Jackson has set the bar about as high as it can be set.

As a competitor, Jackson was a two-time, high school state champion at Lansing Eastern. From there, Jackson went on to be a three-time college All-American at LSU before closing out his career as an All-American at Iowa State as a senior after LSU discontinued wrestling.

After college, Jackson took his career to another level. Jackson won a gold medal at the 1992 Olympic Games and two gold medals at the World Championships. Jackson also became the first American to win the prestigious Takhti Cup in Tehran, Iran. Jackson also won three United States Open titles.

After his competitive career came to an end, Jackson began a new chapter in his wrestling career as a coach. Jackson served eight years (2001-08) as the National Freestyle Coach for USA Wrestling. In 2010 Jackson became head coach of one of the premier wrestling programs in the nation when he began coaching at Iowa State.

Since taking over at Iowa State, Jackson has continued the Cyclones' winning ways and has the program poised for even more success.

"We continue to get better every year at Iowa State," Jackson said. "We are vying for titles and I'm excited about the kids coming in and excited about the kids in our program. I'm really excited about the future of Iowa State wrestling."

Jackson has returned to his Michigan roots for some of the kids in the program, and next season he will welcome in two of Michigan's best as Ian Parker of St. Johns and Kanen Storr of Leslie will be arriving on campus for their freshmen year.

"To be able to come to Michigan and get the best the state has to offer is very exciting for our program," Jackson said.

Former Lansing Eastern product, Olympic champion and current Iowa State University coach Kevin Jackson continues to mold young minds while building one of the top college wrestling programs in the country. Jackson is considered one of the top wrestlers to ever come out of the state of Michigan. (Submitted Photos)

"We already have two former Michigan state champions in Quean Smith (Highland Park) and Lelund Weatherspoon (Napoleon). Wrestling in Michigan continues to grow. It has produced quite a few Division 1 wrestlers and is very strong nationally. Michigan is right up there with every other state and has outstanding wrestlers who have proven it at Fargo and Virginia Beach. Michigan wrestlers are as good as any state in the country."



Jackson was one of those top high school wrestlers back in the early 1980's at Lansing Eastern. He got his start in wrestling following his older brother Wayne, a two-time state champion as well.

"A lot of people helped me at the start of my career," said Jackson. "My high school coach at Eastern, Jim Walker. His assistant Charlie Cross, who was a great assistant and a mentor to me, and my junior high coach. Also Jimmy Keaton who took as many kids as he could get into his station wagon and go to as many events as we could get to. They taught me the basic skills that not only made me successful in high school but

also in college and after college."

Jackson has been passing those skills on to the next generation of wrestlers since finishing his competitive career.

"What I try to emphasize is that every aspect of life affects how you compete in wrestling," Jackson said. "I want our wrestlers to do everything the right way from a lifestyle and social standpoint and in the classroom. That all goes hand in hand with wrestling. It's a direct carry over. I also stress the basics and making sure you master the basic skills."

Jackson's coaching career has had numerous highlights, but what stands out the most for Jackson is seeing his wrestlers overcome adversity.

"I really enjoy seeing a young man who might start out as a freshman and not perform to the level he expects, but then after a few years, all of a sudden he gets it and performs to his expectations," Jackson said. "It was really special to see Kyven Gadson win the 197-pound title last year. He was facing a lot of life issues. His father passed away before the Big 12 tournament and to see him come back and win the NCAA was very special. My biggest satisfaction is seeing our young guys at Iowa State mature into adults."

As a competitor, Jackson has many memories that stand out.

"Obviously winning an Olympic gold medal is one of the biggest moments," Jackson said. "Also winning a World Championship as a 30-year-old. One thing that really sticks out is not winning an NCAA championship. That really stuck with me for a long time and it fueled me in the future and helped to keep me focused."

That focus eventually led Jackson to being enshrined in a number of halls of fame. Jackson is a member of the FILA International Wrestling Hall of Fame, the United States National Wrestling Hall of Fame (as a distinguished member), the Greater Lansing Area Sports Hall of Fame and the Iowa State University Athletics Hall of Fame.

WRESTLING CAREER:

1981: Class A 138-pound state champion, Lansing Eastern.

1982: Class A 155-pound state champion, Lansing Eastern.

Three-time NCAA All-American at Louisiana State University.

1987: NCAA All-American at Iowa State, NCAA national runner-up with a 30-3-1 overall record. Captain of Iowa State's NCAA championship team.

1991 Gold medalist at the World Championships in Varna, Bulgaria.

1991 USA Wrestling and USOC Wrestler of the Year.

1992 Gold medalist at the Barcelona Olympic Games.

1992 Amateur Wrestling News Man of the Year

Jackson won two Pan American Games titles as a U.S. World Team member in 1993 and 1995.

1995 Gold Medalist at the World Championships in Atlanta.

1995 John Smith Award as National Freestyle Wrestler of the Year.

1998, Jackson became the first American to win the prestigious Takhti Cup in Tehran, Iran.

Jackson is one of just five wrestlers in U.S. history with three career world-level titles.

Jackson won three U.S. Open titles, placing second five times.

COACHING CAREER

Jackson was a freestyle resident coach at the Olympic Training Center, head coach for the U.S. Army team at Fort Carson (1998-2001) and head coach of the Sunkist youth development program.

Jackson served eight years (2001-08) as the National Freestyle Coach for USA Wrestling. He was the first full-time freestyle wrestling coach for the organization and took two United States teams to the Olympics. Two of his athletes - Cael Sanderson (2004) and Henry Cejudo (2008) - won gold medals. His 2001 freestyle team won the World Cup, the 2003 team placed second and the 2006 squad finished third at that meet.

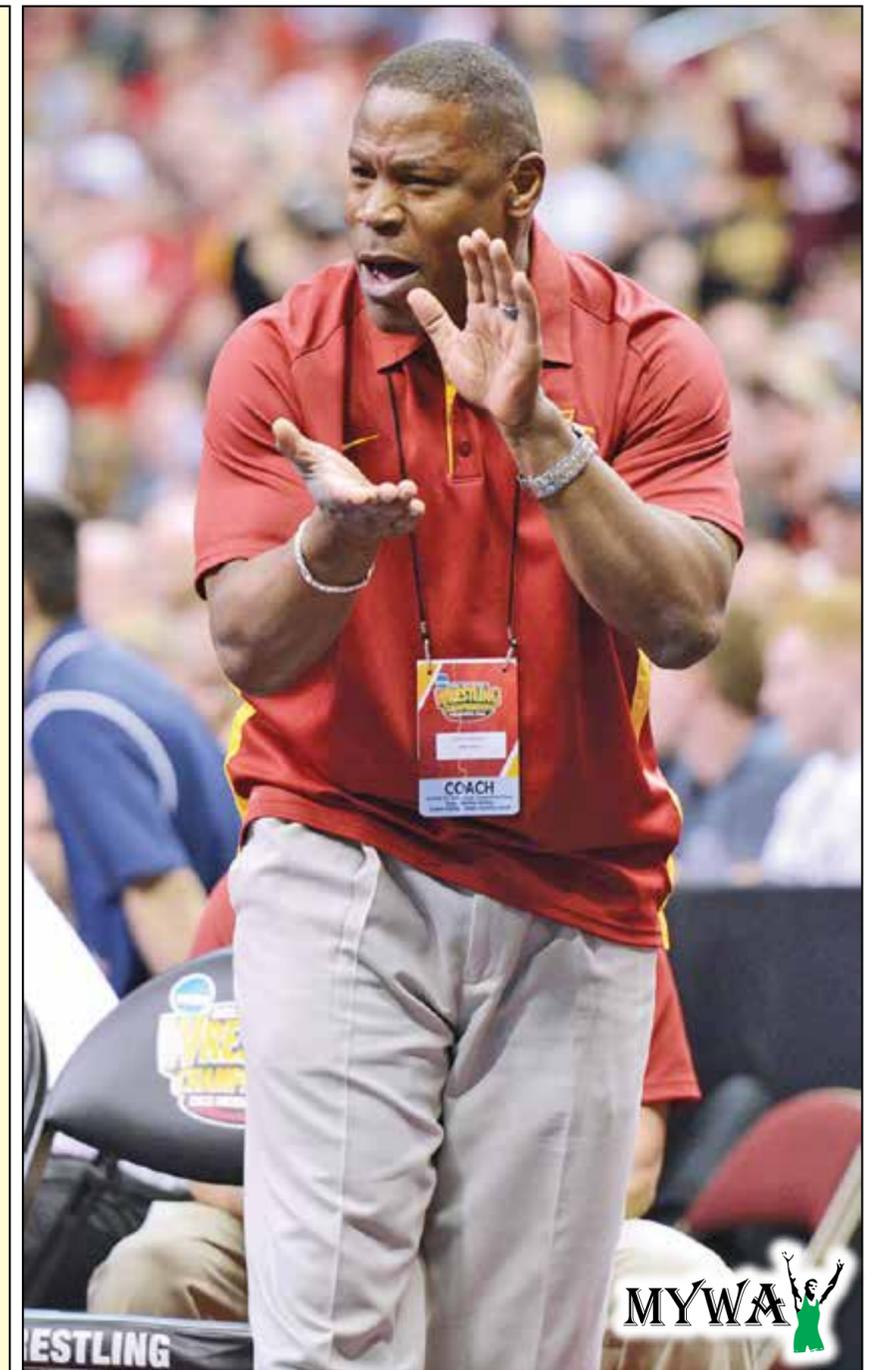
2010-2016: Head coach at Iowa State University.

In his initial year at the helm, Jackson coached two NCAA individual champions en route to a third place finish at the 2010 NCAA Championships.

Honored as Amateur Wrestling News magazine's 2010 Rookie Coach of the Year. Jackson coached Iowa State to a 13-2 overall dual record, with a perfect 4-0 mark in Big 12 action.

Jackson coached the 2014-15 Iowa State wrestling squad to its best regular season performance since 2010. The Cyclones finished with an 11-2 dual record (.846) and finished the season ranked No. 8 in the coaches' poll. Iowa State finished runner-up champions to Oklahoma State at the 2015 Big 12 Championships, and qualified seven grapplers for the NCAA Championships.

At the 2015 NCAA Championships, Jackson coached Kyven Gadson to a perfect 5-0 record, including a fall in the 197-pound finals. Gadson credited Jackson for showing him the move that he used, "The Gadson", to pin Kyle Snyder in the Championship bout.



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Area Wrestlers, Teams Bring Home Title In Division 1, Division 2 Post-Season Action

Butch Harmon Sports Scene DIVISION 1

The Holt wrestling team captured a team district title this season. Holt junior Kolin Leyrer won the 152-pound regional title while Aries McFadden also qualified for state.

Bay City Western defeated Midland Dow to win a team district. Western junior Noah Schoenherr also won a regional title (130 pounds) while Austin Hale (103), Victor Schoenherr (125), Cole Rechsteiner (171) and Cody Witzgall (285) also qualified for state.

Midland's Zach Donoghue (152) and Hunter Schneider (171) qualified for individual state.

Howell seniors Austin Hansen (189) and Robert McQueen (215) qualified for individual state.

Malcym Carroll of East Lansing qualified at 152 pounds.

DIVISION 2

The Owosso wrestling team defeated Saginaw Arthur Hill to win a team district title. Owosso senior Emilio Campos also qualified for individual state at 112 pounds.

Eaton Rapids defeated Jackson Northwest to win a team district title. Seniors Lane McVicker (152) and Clayton Higelmire (215) both won regional titles while Austin O'Hearon (125) and Austen Hutchinson (160) both qualified for state.

Greenville edged Cedar Springs in a 35-34 thriller to win a team district title. The Yellowjackets' Stephen Hilliker (119) and Tyler Kuiper (285) both qualified for individual state.

Mason defeated Chelsea to win a team district title. Bulldog junior Brad Wilton won a regional title at 189 pounds while JD Greathouse (135) and Sam Benson (285)

also qualified for state.

Lansing Eastern defeated Haslett to win a team title.

A total of six DeWitt wrestlers qualified for individual state. Austin Melton won the 145-pound regional title while Ronald Slater (103), Quentin Hall (125), Tyler Alvarez (130), Sam York (140) and Gabe Larner (171) also qualified for state.

Cedar Springs junior heavyweight Pat DePiazza ran his record to 49-0 as he won a regional title. Freshmen Lucas Pionton (145), Ryan Ringler (171) and Jordan Ringler (119) also qualified for state.

Ionia's Cameron Mahlich (112) and Trevor Piggott (189) both qualified for individual state.

Charlotte's Chris Fauson (130) and Mike Demello (215) both qualified for individual state.



Hemlock junior Stuart Massa recorded his 100th career victory earlier this season for the Huskies. (Submitted Photo)

David Leija of Lansing Waverly won a 130-pound regional title while Larry Beek (119) of Bay City Glenn, Kyle Roberts (145) of Fowlerville, Nevin Brittain (189) of Haslett and Billy Tithof (285) of Mt. Pleasant also qualified for state.

Castillo Hopes To Lead Hartland To The Promised Land

Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

Sage Castillo has a chance to do something very special this winter.

The Hartland standout is hoping to conclude an unbeaten season all while leading the Eagles to the Promised Land — the school's very first team state title.

A senior in the 152-pound weight class, Castillo enters the team and individual state finals sessions with a perfect 52-0 record on the year — he is ranked second behind Holt's Kolin Leyrer — and is looking to become the first wrestler in Hartland to win an individual and team state title in the same campaign.

"Ever since our freshman season when we reached the quarterfinals, we've wanted to win the state title," said Castillo, one of 11 individual state qualifiers for Hartland. "For our seniors it's our last shot."

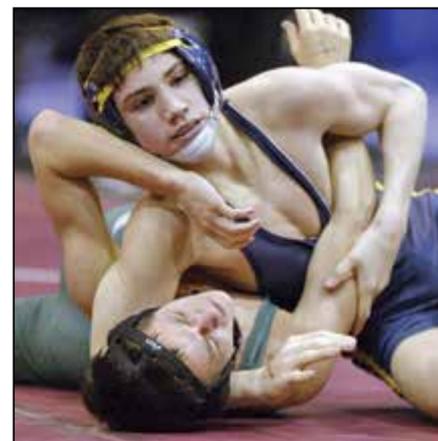
Since current coach Todd Cheney took over in 1992-93, Hartland has reached the team state quarterfinals 17 times, including 15 straight. Castillo and his teammates don't know anything but reaching the final weekend of the team tournament and personally he is a four-time state qualifier as well. Castillo finished fifth at 125 as a sophomore but did not place at state at 135 during his junior year.

But Hartland, which is 31-1 as a team this winter, is 0-5 all-time in state title matches, including a 31-25 loss to Brighton last season in the Division 1 finals — a match that came down to the final two weight classes.

Hartland will face Temperance-Bedford in the state quarterfinals at 2 p.m. Friday at Central Michigan University's McGuirk Arena.

"I do believe we have a chance. We just have to believe we can win," said Castillo. "If there is a match where we got a decision from in the past, we have to go for the major decision, or a technical fall or the pin. The bonus points will be huge because it could go down to just a couple of points."

"I think after losing (in the state finals) last season, that gave us the extra incentive to work harder, to stay at practice a few minutes longer — whatever it takes," continued Castillo. "You could be down by one point with 15 seconds



Hartland's Sage Castillo hopes to lead his school to its first team state title and claim his first individual state title. (Courtesy Photo, Hartland Athletics)

left and getting a take down is the difference from your team winning or losing."

With Hartland, Davison and Novi Detroit Catholic Central all spending time in the top spot this season, the door is wide open for Hartland to grab its first title.

Beyond the team state tournament, Castillo will be in the hunt March 4-5 at the Palace of Auburn Hills for the Individual State Finals. He carries a 195-31 career record

into the home stretch, sixth on Hartland's all-time career wins list with the hopes of joining a handful of wrestlers in school history to eclipse the 200 wins mark.

"I had 99 wins after my sophomore year, so I then thought that 200 wins could be possible," said Castillo. "But the first goal is to win a team state championship, then come back and try to win the individual state championship. It's right there."

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Division 3, Division 4 Area Wrestlers Reap Post-Season Success On The Mat

David Cook Sports Scene DIVISION 3

The Hemlock wrestling team captured a team district title when it blanked Saginaw 78-0. Hemlock reached the finals with a thrilling 35-29 win against Saginaw Swan Valley. Hemlock junior Stuart Massa ran his record to 45-3 for the season when he won a regional title at 112 pounds. Senior Landon Honsinger (125) also qualified for state.

The Corunna wrestling team defeated Durand 60-24 to win a team district title. Individually, junior David Dumond ran his record to 44-5 for the season as he won an individual title at 160. Tristan Serbus (119) and Taylor Jackson (171) also qualified for state.

The Chesaning wrestling team defeated Alma 42-22 to win a team district title. Individually, Kegan McAlpine (140) and Jacob Wright (189) also qualified for state.

The Shepherd wrestling team defeated Clare 45-27 to win a team district title. Freshman Trevor Robinson won an individual regional title at 125 while Brandon Robinson also qualified for state.

Montrose edged out Mt. Morris 40-39 to win a team district title. Senior Quintin Wilbur won a regional title at 215 pounds while Reese Wallis (112) and Bradley Payne (130) also qualified for state.

Lakewood-Lake Odessa defeated Portland 39-22 to win a team district title. Junior Daniel Thompson (171) ran his record to 45-2 as he won a regional title. Cole Jackson (103), Lane Allen (145) and Luke Tromp

(215) also qualified for state.

Belding defeated Lakeview 56-15 to win a team district title. Belding defeated Howard City Tri-County 33-32 in the district semifinals. Jonathan Silva (135), Connor Barker (140), Mitchell Ward (160), Kody Wilcox (171) and Blake Rodarmer (189) all qualified for individual state.

Leslie defeated Olivet 60-21 to win a team district title. Blackhawk senior Kanen Storr ran his record to 53-0 as he won a regional title at 135 pounds.

The Perry wrestling team has a pair of regional champions in Anthony Gallagher (103) and Mike Gramza (215). Jacob Spies (112) and Ethan Orweller (152) also qualified for state.

Howard City Tri-County's Nick McGhan (112) improved to 40-2 for the season as he won a regional title. Ben Behrenwald (140), Jarrod Tague (189) and Lucas Prater (215) also qualified for state.

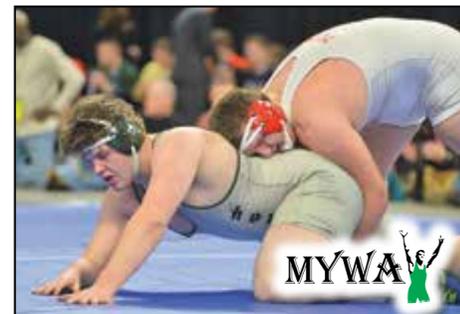
Saginaw Swan Valley had a pair of regional champions in seniors KJ Suito (130) who improved his record to 51-1 and Matt Santos (135) who improved to 48-1.

Big Rapids senior Nick Worden (152) won an individual regional while DeSaun Griffin (145) also qualified for state.

Bullock Creek senior Adam McCann (171) improved to 50-0 for the season as he won a regional title.

Essexville-Garber's Mitchell Christensen (112), Ryan Christensen (125), Charlie Newton (130) and Carson Kaymer (215) all qualified for individual state.

Sanford-Meridian's Cole Federer (130),



Williamston's Maddox Maki is a favorite to defend his Division 3 heavyweight title during the March 3-5 Individual Wrestling Finals, held at the Palace of Auburn Hills. (Staff Photo, High School Sports Scene)

Matt Hoffman (152), Paul Streeter (171) and Mason Schultz (285) all qualified for individual state.

Portland's Dominic Gardner (130), Devin Miller (140) and Hayden Maus (145) all qualified for individual state.

Williamston's Ben Benitez (112), Colton Hanyasak (130) and Maddox Maki (285) all qualified for individual state.

Lakeview's Curtis Perry (103), Nolan Saxton (130) and James Smith (215) all qualified for individual state.

Clare's Amante Young (103) and Kyle Schaaaf (112) qualified for individual state.

Alma's Alex Rosas (125), Freeland's Kolten Radaz (140), Ithaca's Derek Teed (152), Merrill's James Castillo (215) and Ovid-Elsie's Zachary Morris (189) all qualified for individual state.

DIVISION 4

Carson City-Crystal defeated Grandville Calvin Christian 57-21 to win a team district title. Eagle senior Dallas O'Green (130) ran his record to 51-0 for the season as he won an individual regional title while senior Taylor Barkley (119) also won an individual regional. Braxton Seida (140) and Shane Wiggins (189) also qualified for individual state.

St. Louis defeated Montabella 60-23 to win a team district title. Qualifying for individual state for St. Louis are Austin Rios (112), Ryan Downs (125), Jayce Kuehnlein (135), Konner Holton (140), Clayton Howd (171) and Ernie Diaz (189).

Farwell defeated Whittemore-Prescott

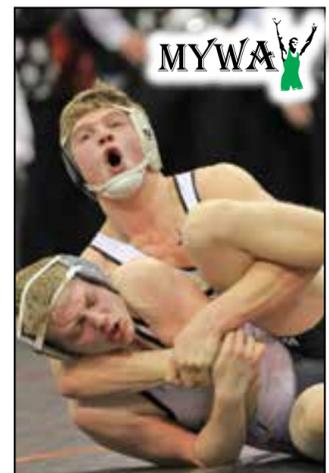
54-22 to win a team district title. Senior Brendan Smith (140) won an individual title while Clay Forfinski (119), Austin Sandel (135), Justin Norbury (145), Jay Thrush (171) and Garrett McQuiston (160) also qualified for individual state.

Dansville defeated Laingsburg 54-24 to win a team district title. Senior Dresden Simon improved to 48-1 as he won an individual regional title while Anthony Mack (112) and Clay Ragon (135) also won individual regionals while Chaz Kehres (119), Nico Rincon (145), Jonathan Stid (160) and Ethan Korb (171) all qualified for individual state.

Michigan Lutheran Seminary won a team district title with wins against Valley Lutheran and Vassar. Keith Brassow (215) qualified for individual state.

Laingsburg senior Kevin Koenig (285) improved his record to 51-1 as he won an individual title. Carlito Lilly (103) also qualified for individual state.

Hunter Sweatland of St. Charles (152) qualified for individual state.



The New Lothrop wrestling team is gunning for its third straight Division 4 championship in 2015-16. (Staff Photos, High School Sports Scene)

New Lothrop Wrestling Team Looking for Third Straight State Title

David Cook Sports Scene

The New Lothrop wrestling team has been sitting atop the Division 4 state polls this season and are on track to win a third straight Division 4 state title this season.

The Hornets have been overpowering so far in the state tournament. New Lothrop opened the tournament by defeating Saginaw Nouvel 70-3 in the district. The Hornets then dominated at the regional level by defeating Michigan Lutheran Seminary 61-12 in the semifinals and then taking out Bad Axe 71-11 in the regional title match.

This year's New Lothrop team is led by a dominating group of wrestlers in the middle-to-upper weights. At 145 pounds, senior Cole Hersch is a district and regional champion with a 44-1 record. At 152 pounds,

senior Steven Garza, a defending state champion, improved his record to 50-1 as he captured district and regional individual titles. At 160 pounds senior John Robinson upped his record to 36-3 for the season and is also a district and regional champ. At 171 pounds, junior Erik Birchmeier upped his record to 28-2 for the season as he won district and regional titles. At 215 pounds senior Caleb Symons improved his record to 48-1 as he also captured district and regional crowns.

Blending in with the veterans are a promising group of young wrestlers. Freshmen Logan Zell (103 pounds), Austin Wolford (130) and Zack Riley (140) all qualified for the state meet as individuals as did sophomore Tommy Malloy at 112 pounds.

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Devin Schroder Focused on Winning Fourth Straight Championship

Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

Devin Schroder was born to be a wrestler.

The son of former Northview and current Grand Rapids Catholic Central wrestling coach B.J. Schroder, Devin Schroder, a senior 119-pounder at Catholic Central, knows exactly when he fell in love with the sport.

"I started wrestling when I was five years old," Devin Schroder said. "When I was little, all I wanted to do was wrestle with my dad. I knew then that it would be my favorite sport."

It doesn't hurt that his father is also a huge wrestling fan. B. J. Schroder wrestled for Hartland High School, went on to wrestle at Grand Valley State University and has coached the sport for the past two decades.

"I always thought he was a good little wrestler," B. J. Schroder said. "One thing I do know is that he is a mat junkie. He has always sat at the edge of the mat and has absorbed the sport. Then I coached the

Disney Duals team for five years, and he got to see some of the best wrestlers in our state, and he absorbed a lot from them."

The wrestling sponge seemed to take what he saw and learned and turned it into mat success himself.

This weekend Devin Schroder will try and be the 22nd wrestler in state history to try to win his fourth state title when he competes in Division 3. Along the way, Devin Schroder has won four OK Gold Conference, four district and three regional titles.

He's also done well on the national scene, winning a Flonational national title and earning All American status at the Super 32 national tournament. This year he posted a 42-1 record heading into regional action, and was 187-6 overall in his career at Catholic Central.

Next year he will be taking his talents to the Big Ten where he will wrestle at Purdue University and studying engineering.

Still, Devin Schroder is very humble about all his accomplishments.

"I have always had great coaches and workout partners," Devin Schroder said. "(Catholic Central assistant coach Kyle Waldo) and teammate Kole Krauss have really helped me get to where I am at."

Not only is Devin Schroder physically tough on the mat, he's also mentally tough. He knows there will be pressure to win his fourth state title, and knows a lot of eyes will be on him this weekend, but he welcomes the pressure.

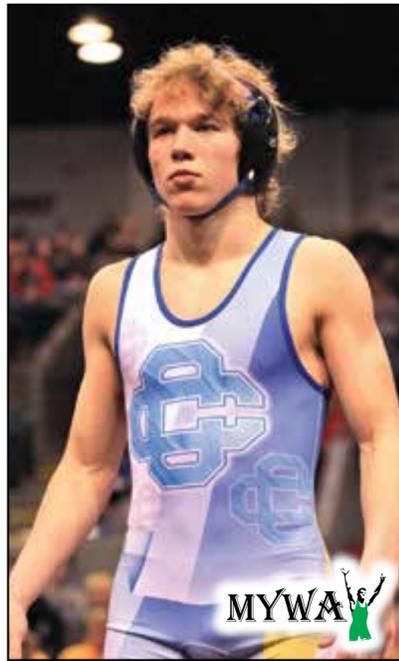
"I'm pumped and excited," Devin Schroder said. "This is the most ready I have been going into this tournament."

Ready to make history and possibly become the 22nd wrestler to join the four-time state champion fraternity, like his coach, Waldo.

"It would be great to win four," Devin Schroder said. "When I was a kid growing up, I saw greats like Brent Metcalf, Justin Zeerip and Waldo do it. I think it would be cool to be part of that elite group."

His son may be taking this all in stride, but his dad admits he'll have a few butterflies in his stomach when Devin steps onto the mat this weekend.

"Each year he has had to defeat a state champion in the finals to win his championships," B.J. Schroder said. "He's had to handle pressure each time down here, and he's done it in his own way. He knows what's ahead of him, and there is no need to talk about it now. He's a gamer, and with the way he has prepared, he has a good chance to win four."



Grand Rapids Catholic Central's Devin Schroder is looking to become a four-time state champion during the March 3-5 Individual Wrestling Finals held at the Palace of Auburn Hills. (Staff Photo, High School Sports Scene)

St. Johns Wrestling Team Ready to Fight for a State Title

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

After falling short of qualifying for the Division 2 state finals last season, the St. Johns wrestling team was on a mission to get back to the finals this season.

Not only did the Redwings accomplish that mission, but they had to do it the hard way. At the district tournament, St. Johns needed to defeat No. 2-ranked DeWitt and then at the regional level, the Redwings needed to overcome No. 7-ranked Eaton Rapids.

St. Johns defeated Eaton Rapids 32-30 in a tense back-and-forth battle. The Redwings jumped out to an early 9-0 lead thanks to decision from Lucas McFarland (160 pounds), and one-point win from Derek Droste (171) and a

three-point win from Blake Thelen (189).

In a dual where every point was valuable, senior heavyweight Jake Gnegy won by DQ. Emilio Sanchez added four points with a major decision at 112. Junior Derek Selden provided three key points when he won a three-point decision at 125 pounds.

The Redwings then picked up a major decision from Trent Lashuay at 135 and a pin from Ian Parker at 140 pounds.

Parker provided a big win in the

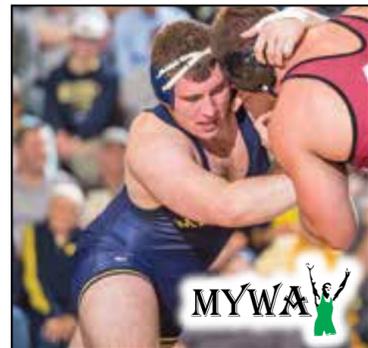


district win against DeWitt when he outlasted Austin Melton at 140 pounds in a matchup of the top-ranked wrestlers in the state at 140 (Parker) and 145 (Melton). Lashuay (135) won a decision and McFarland (171) and Sanchez (112) both won two-point decisions. The Redwings also received a technical fall from Brendan Zalenka at 103 and pins from Gnegy (285), Brett Fedewa (152) and Derek Droste (160).

With the key wins at the regional and district, the Redwings earned a trip to the Division 2 state finals at Mt. Pleasant where they will face Dear-

born Heights Annapolis in the quarterfinals. The winner of that match will then face the winner of Gaylord vs. Warren Woods-Tower in Saturday's semifinals.

Former St. Johns standout and current U of M wrestler, Logan Massa won an individual state title a year ago for the Red Wings. Massa has since graduated, but St. Johns hasn't missed a beat, making a return trip to the Feb. 26-27 team finals at Central Michigan University. St. Johns missed team finals a year ago. (Staff Photos, High School Sports Scene)



A Look At Local College Performers

David Cook Sports Scene

With this year's high school wrestling championships upon us, many of past year's former wrestling standouts are gearing up for their run at post-season honors on the collegiate levels.

- Former Lowell standout Gabe Dean is gearing up to defend his NCAA title. Dean, who wrestles for Cornell, is ranked first in the country at 184 pounds. Dean has captured a number of high-profile tournaments this season, as he took first at the Southern Scuffle, the Cliff Keen Invitational in Las Vegas, the New York State Intercollegiate Championships and the Bearcat Open. Dean has also defeated the number two and three-ranked wrestlers at 184 pounds.
- Adam Coon, a Fowlerville graduate, is turning in a big season at the University of Michigan. Coon is the No. 4-ranked heavyweight in the country and has a 14-0 record this season.
- Logan Massa of St. Johns is also turning in a big season at the University of Michigan. Massa is 13-1 at 165 pounds with three falls.
- Conor Youtsey, a Mason graduate, is ranked 20th in the country at 125 pounds and is wrestling for the University of Michigan.
- Davison's Justin Oliver is turning in a big freshman season at Central Michigan University. Oliver is ranked ninth in the country at 149 pounds. Oliver has a 24-4 record and is undefeated in the Mid-American Conference. Oliver also placed third at the Southern Scuffle.
- Senior Adam Robinson from Mason and junior Austin Severn from New Lothrop are also turning in strong seasons for Central Michigan. Robinson is a heavyweight with a 22-11 record while Severn is 14-7 at 184 pounds.
- Noah Gonser, a Grand Blanc grad, is turning in a big freshman season at Eastern Michigan University. Gonser is 16-10 at 125 pounds. Gonser won the

Local standouts for the University of Michigan, Adam Coon (Fowlerville) and Logan Massa (St. Johns) are preparing for long runs in the upcoming NCAA tournament. (Submitted Photos)

Eastern Michigan open, was second at the Alma open and third at the Michigan State open.

- A number of area wrestlers are experiencing success at Northern Illinois University. Gabe Morse, a Lowell graduate, was named the MAC Wrestler of the Week in December. Shawn Scott, a Holly grad, is ranked 19th in the country at 197 pounds and has an 18-7 record. Senior Arthur Bunce from Dansville is 14-11 as a heavyweight for Northern. Austin Eicher, a redshirt-freshman from Hartland, is 15-11 at 133 pounds.
- Former Richmond standout Devin Skatzka is wrestling unattached this season at the University of Indiana. Skatzka is 24-8 at 165 pounds with 12 falls to his credit.
- Angus Arthur of St. Johns is turning in a big freshman season at Adrian College. Arthur is ranked fifth in the nation in Division 3 at 197 pounds. Arthur also won the 197-pound title at the Mid-States Conference tournament.
- Austin Eldred of Eaton Rapids is another freshman having a big season at Adrian College. Eldred finished second at the 133 pounds at the Mid-States Conference tournament.



Walled Lake Central's Ben Freeman In Midst Of An Incredible Run

Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

When Ben Freeman walked off the wrestling mats two years ago at The Palace of Auburn Hills, he ended what was quite a memorable freshman campaign at Walled Lake Central.

In four matches at 103 at the Division 1 Individual State Championships, he posted four technical falls en route to the state title. His 20-5 victory over Monroe's Carl Antrassian ended his campaign with an impressive 43-1 record.

Freeman, who is the son of onetime Walled Lake Central coach Al Freeman, did not live through a sophomore jinx by any stretch in 2014-15, either. He ventured

One loss, two years and a legion of championships, including back-to-back state titles, was a solid foundation for Freeman, in the midst of another fine campaign.

Any pressure?

"I don't feel much pressure," admitted the junior after winning the recent Oakland County title for the third straight season. "I just work hard at every practice and go out there and wrestle like it's my last (match)."

Few wrestlers work as hard as Freeman, who has only one loss in three years. This season, following another regional crown

through a stellar 47-0 ledger, capped by two more technical falls and two decisions, the last coming in a 10-7 victory over Kalamazoo Central's Romeo Riley in the D-1 125-pound state finale.

at the D-1 Hartland regional Feb. 20, Freeman is now 40-0 on the year and 130-1 in his career — already ranking amongst the all-time greats at Walled Lake Central.

Few of his matches are even close.

"He practices really hard and drills a lot. He's tireless," said Coach Freeman. "He just loves the sport, so he's always thinking about it. It's a big challenge for him to go out there and win. He hates to lose."



Freeman has already committed to the University of Michigan, taking off the pressure of the recruiting world. He can now concentrate on doing what he does best — taking opponents down and competing for championships.

Freeman has a chance to be a four-time state champion.

"I thought about it, but there's still a long ways to go. I have this year and next year," noted Freeman. At every meet I always go out there and try to win. If it happens, then it will be special. But I concentrate on being a (four-time) champ. I have to stay focused on my next match."

Walled Lake Central's Ben Freeman won an individual title a year ago after defeating Kalamazoo Central's Romeo Riley 10-7 in the finals. (Staff Photo, High School Sports Scene)

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