

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

555 E Downie St
Alma, MI 48801
(517) 202-1808

www.highschoolsportsscene.com

- Publisher**
Randy Miniard
randy@highschoolsportsscene.com
517-202-1808
- Editor**
Scott Keyes
midmichigansportsscene@yahoo.com
989-890-4036
- High School Liaison**
Paul Hornak
paul@highschoolsportsscene.com
989-331-1168
- Northern Michigan Sales**
Scott Salowich
ssalowich@yahoo.com
313-408-4410
- Livingston/Oakland County Sales**
Mike Valvona
mikev@highschoolsportsscene.com
248-937-0122
- Editorial**
Scott Keyes, John Raffel, David Cook,
Butch Harmon, Jeff Chaney,
Scott Salowich
- Dan Strickrandt
dan.stickrandt@northoaklandsports.com
Twitter: @LocalSportsFans
- Photographers**
Chuck Prikasky, Alan Holben,
Zip Widman, Mike Schutt,
Russ Pierce, Skip Traynor,
Bob Campbell, Gary Williams,
Phil Niekerk, Don Goostrey

Vol. 7, Issue 78 • May/June 2016

CONTENTS

- 4 | Eye on Girls Track
- 5 | Eye on Boys Track
- 6 | Swan Valley's Lauren Huebner Breaking Records in Bunches
- 7 | Freeland Twins Setting Bar High in High Jump
- 8 | US-127 Becoming Hot Bed for Track Talent
- 10 | Ithaca Girls Track Wins Regional Title
- 11 | Meet Paxton Titus
- 12 | Girls Soccer Roundup
- 14 | Hemlock's Sierra Grodinsky a hot commodity
- 15 | DeWitt Soccer On The Move
- 16 | KLAAs Teams Having Banner Seasons
- 17 | Birch Run Twins, Playing "D" Scoring
- 18 | Robyn Pruitt Stays Humble On Court
- 19 | Rockford Girls Lacrosse Continues Dominance
- 20 | A Look At Sports Specialization In High School Athletics
- 22 | Eye On Baseball
- 24 | Howell Baseball Heating Up
- 25 | Mercy's Vanacker Coming Into Her Own
- 26 | Eye On Softball
- 28 | Slick's Playing Key Role On Diamond In St. Charles
- 29 | Fulton Wins First-Ever Softball Conference Title
- 30 | Meet St. Johns' Kendall Smith
- 31 | St. Louis Putting Together Solid Softball Season
- 32 | Shepherd Softball
- 33 | Mt. Pleasant's McIntyre Hits Milestone
- 34 | Belding's Wilker Honored By Sports Illustrated
- 35 | Bullock Creek Softball
- 36 | Eye On Golf
- 37 | Detroit Catholic Central Golf Seeks Repeat
- 38 | Coleman Softball Nearly Perfect
- 39 | Northern Michigan Report
- 40 | Northern Michigan Report

Find Us On

facebook



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Hey Sports Fans!
It's another great day at Sports Scene
As we enter the final month of our seventh year, there are a couple things that I want to point out, or I should say have bugged me in recent months.
Social media has taken over the way mainstream media is perceived and the way high school recruiting is being conducted. Gone are the days of sending tapes to recruiters and hopefully you get a call back or a try out.
Because of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr and whatever other platforms people like to use information is at your finger tips in seconds.

So when big time recruits normally in football and basketball give their verbal commitments, coaches and assistant coaches assume those commitments are worth their weight in gold.

It's your word.
But nowadays your word doesn't mean as much.
Coaches take verbal commitments like most - if not all - college coaches do. However, recruits don't consider it a binding contract. Until recruits sign, coaches from competing schools are constantly communicating with players and/or badgering them to try to get them to change their minds. It's part of the business of college football.

Here's what I'm wondering: Why is that O.K.?
There's enough pressure on elite athletes to pick a college. They're bombarded with text messages and phone calls and home visits. It can be overwhelming. Several players have told me they couldn't enjoy their senior season because the recruitment process was constantly on their minds.

So how about this quaint notion: Once a recruit makes a commitment, even a verbal one, other schools back off. If a recruit decommits or makes it known he still welcomes overtures from other schools - that apparently was the case with some recruits - they are still fair game. But until then, how about honoring his word and leaving him be?

Or is that simple gesture too much to ask for?

Ithaca Documentary a Hit

A big shout out goes to Mason Slick on making of the Ithaca Documentary. The movie was incredible and it was pretty cool seeing myself on the big screen. If Hollywood comes calling, I might just have to go.

It was extremely gratifying to watch those young men overcome obstacles and achieve their dreams. Ithaca is a small town that surrounds itself with family values and lucky for us our football team has done only what a few schools could even imagine. Take a bow Mason Flick because the movie was awesome.



Randy Miniard
Publisher/Owner
517-202-1808
randy@highschoolsportsscene.com

SUNDANCE 989-224-3900 TAX & PLATES INCLUDED IN ALL PAYMENTS!

EXIT 99 OFF US-127 ST. JOHNS FOR SAVINGS

2013 CHEVY MALIBU LTZ LEATHER SALE PRICE \$15,900 \$259/DOWN \$259/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2011 DODGE CALIBER SXT SALE PRICE \$12,500 \$209/DOWN \$209/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2007 SATURN ION 3 MANUAL SALE PRICE \$5,500 \$139/DOWN \$139/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2010 CHRYSLER SEBRING CLOTH SALE PRICE \$7,500 \$179/DOWN \$179/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2013 GMC ACADIA SLE-1 8 PASS. SALE PRICE \$21,500 \$349/DOWN \$349/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT
2014 CHEVY IMPALA LEATHER SALE PRICE \$18,900 \$309/DOWN \$309/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2012 CADILLAC SRX LEATHER, SUNROOF SALE PRICE \$21,500 \$349/DOWN \$349/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2014 JEEP PATRIOT SUNROOF SALE PRICE \$16,900 \$279/DOWN \$279/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2008 JEEP LIBERTY SALE PRICE \$10,900 \$219/DOWN \$219/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2015 CHEVY CAMARO LEATHER SALE PRICE \$24,900 \$369/DOWN \$369/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT
2011 FORD F-150 XLT SALE PRICE \$20,900 \$325/DOWN \$325/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2012 LINCOLN MKS LEATHER, SUNROOF SALE PRICE \$23,900 \$355/DOWN \$355/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2013 CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY LEATHER, DVD SALE PRICE \$19,900 \$329/DOWN \$329/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2013 FORD TAURUS SEL LEATHER, SUNROOF SALE PRICE \$15,600 \$259/DOWN \$259/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2011 CHEVY MALIBU LT SALE PRICE \$9,800 \$189/DOWN \$189/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT
2013 GMC TERRAIN SLT SUN ROOF, LEATHER SALE PRICE \$19,900 \$329/DOWN \$329/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2009 PONTIAC G6 GTP SALE PRICE \$9,900 \$199/DOWN \$199/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2008 CHEVY IMPALA LTZ SUNROOF SALE PRICE \$9,900 \$199/DOWN \$199/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2013 CHEVY TRAVERSE LT LEATHER SALE PRICE \$25,900 \$385/DOWN \$385/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2007 CHEVY TRAIL BLAZER LT LEATHER SALE PRICE \$7,900 \$159/DOWN \$159/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT
2013 DODGE JOURNEY SXT SALE PRICE \$14,500 \$239/DOWN \$239/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2013 GMC SIERRA SLE Z-71 SALE PRICE \$27,900 \$395/DOWN \$395/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2010 DODGE GRAND CARAVAN SE SALE PRICE \$10,900 \$209/DOWN \$209/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2008 PONTIAC G6 SUNROOF, CLOTH SALE PRICE \$8,900 \$189/DOWN \$189/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2013 FORD ESCAPE SE SALE PRICE \$15,600 \$269/DOWN \$269/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT
2013 DODGE CHARGER CLOTH SALE PRICE \$21,500 \$349/DOWN \$349/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2010 DODGE CHARGER SXT SALE PRICE \$11,500 \$229/DOWN \$229/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2009 FORD FOCUS SES SALE PRICE \$7,900 \$179/DOWN \$179/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2009 DODGE AVENGER SXT SALE PRICE \$8,700 \$165/DOWN \$165/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT	2014 BUICK ENCORE LEATHER, SUNROOF SALE PRICE \$18,500 \$299/DOWN \$299/MONTH TAX & PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT

OPEN SUNDAYS NOON - 5PM! **877SUNDANCE.COM**

SUNDANCE In St. Johns

2016 GMC TERRAIN FWD SALE PRICE \$23,400 \$229/DN. \$229/MO. SAVE \$4,920	2016 GMC ACADIA FWD SALE PRICE \$28,900 \$303/DN. \$303/MO. SAVE \$6,745	2016 GMC SIERRA 2WD DOUBLE CAB SALE PRICE \$28,450 \$249/DN. \$249/MO. SAVE \$4,610	2016 BUICK VERANO SALE PRICE \$20,400 \$225/DN. \$225/MO. SAVE \$4,400	2016 BUICK REGAL SALE PRICE \$24,900 \$239/DN. \$239/MO. SAVE \$4,115	2016 BUICK ENCLAVE FWD SALE PRICE \$33,700 \$329/DN. \$329/MO. SAVE \$6,680
---	--	---	--	---	---

*New & Used Vehicles. All Payments are with approved credit, see dealer for details. New car offers on approved credit for limited time only, subject to change without notice. See dealer for details.

Lux-Moody-Wolfel Funeral Home
531 N State St.
Alma, MI 48801
Phone: 989-463-8970

Lux and Whiting Funeral Chapel
204 Second St.
Breckenridge, MI 48615
Phone: 989-842-3547

Lux and Schnepf Funeral Home
521 S. Main St.
Crystal, MI 48818
Phone: 989-235-4212

Dodge Funeral Home
404 S. Newton
Middleton, MI 48856
Phone: 989-236-7270

Lux Funeral Homes, Inc.
Funeral Directors
Paul C. Lux
Nicholas P. Lux
Scott Kilgo
Laura E. Krebs

Lux Funeral Home
228 W. Center
St. Louis, MI 48880
Phone: 989-681-2982

Lux and Schnepf Funeral Home
6479 N. Lumberjack Rd.
Riverdale, MI 48877
Phone: 989-833-7352

Lux and Schnepf Funeral Home
816 E. Main St.
Carson City, MI 48811
Phone: 989-584-3504

Assistant Directors
Carl Cecil
Chris Krebs
Mike Krebs

IN YOUR HOUR OF DARKNESS LET US BE YOUR LIGHT

www.luxfuneralhomes.com

SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON TRACK

Rockford Boys, Girls Lead Way In D1 Track

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Like the Rockford boys, the Rockford girls are ranked second in the state in Division 1. Junior hurdler Olivia Rademacher has turned in a 46.4 in the 300 hurdles this spring. Brighton is ranked ninth in D1. The Bulldogs have been paced by senior Erin Dowd who is in the top ten in D1 in the 100 hurdles (15.0), 300 hurdles (44.3) and the 400-meters (57.3).

Greenville junior Landon Kemp is posting some big numbers. Kemp is the top pole vaulter in D1 (12-10) and has the second-best long jump (18-0) and has turned in a 15.0 time in the 100 hurdles.

Okemos has a pair of standouts in junior Sophia Franklin and freshman Laya Hartman. Franklin has cleared 12-3 in the pole vault and has run a 15.1 in the 100 hurdles. Hartman is fourth in the long jump (17-4 ½) in D1.

East Lansing junior Taylor Manson



has the top time in the 400 (54.02) and has run a 24.38 in the 200 meters.

Division 2

Swan Valley senior Lauren Huebner is capping her senior year in style. Huebner is ranked second in the 200 meters (25.4), second in the 300 hurdles (45.1) and third in the 100 hurdles (15.0).

Waverly sophomore Trachele Roberts is the top sprinter in D2 with a time of 12.44 in the 100 meters.

Flint Powers senior Nikole Sargent is the top thrower in D2. Sargent ranks first in the shot put (47-9 ¾) and third in the discus (142-1).

Division 3

Ithaca is ranked first in the state in D3 and has the most versatile athlete in senior Erica Sheehan. Sheehan is ranked second in the long jump (17-4), fourth in the 100 (12.8), fifth in the 200 (26.3) and fifth in the 400 (1:00.6). Sheehan is also a member of the 4x100 and 4x400 relay teams that are ranked first in the state. The Yellowjackets are also strong in the 800 where Courtney Allen (2:22) is ranked third and Blaire Showers (2:23) is ranked fourth.

Clare is ranked second in the state. Senior Paige Gould leads the Pioneers as she is ranked first in the 300 hurdles (47.4), second in the 200 (26.0) and sixth in the 100 (12.9). Clare is solid in the distance races with

Jasmine Harper, who is fourth in the 1600 (5:11) and fourth in the 3200 (11:06) and freshman Lainey Veenkant who is fifth in the 3200 and sixth in the 1600. Kasey Staley is the top pole vaulter in D3 with a vault of 12-3.

Shepherd is ranked fifth in Division 3. The Blue Jays are paced by twins Kylie and Ketelyn Hutchinson who are ranked in the top ten in the 800 meters and freshman Amber Gall who is second in the 3200 (11:01).

At Pewamo-Westphalia senior Emma Schafer is ranked in the top ten in three events. Schafer is second in the 100 hurdles (15.7), fourth in the 300 hurdles (47.9) and fourth in the shot put (38-0).

Division 4

The Blanchard-Montabella girls are ranked third in the state in Division 4. The Mustangs are strong in the field with Bri Nelson who is second in D4 in the high jump (5-2) and Maliena Sheehan who is second in the long jump (15-11). Senior Kensington Garvey is third in the 1600 (5:20).

When it comes to the relays few teams are as strong as Fowler. The Eagles have the top times in D4 in the 4x100 (51.9), the 4x200 (1:50.4) and the 4x400 (4:12) and the second-best time in the 4x800. Sidney Horak and McKenzie Koenigsnecht are members of three of those teams while McKenzie Feldpausch, Julie



Many local teams an individual state qualifiers are gearing up for the June 4 state finals held at many venues around Michigan. The Sports Scene coverage area is well represented with Rockford leading the way in Division 1. (Staff Photos)

Thelen, Madison Koenigsnecht are members of two relay teams and Ciera Weber, Kiah Becker, Morgan George and Ashley Vanells are members of one relay. Thelen also has the top time in D4 in the 800 meters (2:23).

Powers Catholic's Sargent Aiming For Double Gold Elite Status

Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

When growing up, Nikole Sargent heard stories among stories involving sports. Around the dining room table, in the car, from the bleachers — you name it. Seemingly, everyone

in her family is or was an athlete at one time.

"Sports...that's usually what we talk about," said the 18-year-old from Fenton, who is graduating from Flint Powers Catholic High School with honors. "All the time, wherever we went."

That's understandable.

Sargent is graduating from Powers Catholic with a 3.94 GPA and multiple accolades in volleyball and track and field, where she is among the state's very best.

Her twin brother, Noah, is a football player and track athlete who will play football for Saginaw Valley State



Flint Powers' Nikole Sargent is considered one of the premier throwers in Michigan regardless of class. Sargent will continue her track career at Michigan State University. (Submitted Photos)

University next fall.

Sargent's older sister, Jordan, was an All-State soccer player at Powers Catholic and later played soccer for Division I

Oakland University.

Nikole Sargent's mom, Tracy, played tennis, basketball and track at Fenton High School back in the 1980s, while her father, Mike, was a standout in football and track at Powers, also in the 1980s. In fact, he threw more than 60 feet in the shot put and was the Class A state champion in 1984, later competing for MSU.

"I think I know where she got it from," joked Mike Sargent.

Nikole Sargent is also one of the state's best — all-time, that is — in the throws. Her efforts in 2016 rank

amongst Michigan's top-10 all-time list in both shot put and discus. Working under throws coach Mike Stewart, a legend in the Flint area track scene who has coached 27 state champions at a variety of high schools, has helped Sargent reach elite status this season.

Entering the regional weekend, Sargent, who won the Division 2 shot put state title as a junior and D-3 state title in the shot put as a sophomore, had posted a 47-9.75 in the shot put and 152-9 in the discus.

To put that in perspective, only four different competitors on 10 occasions have gone further in the shot put, with the all-time record coming from Byron Center's Mary Angell in 2007, a 49-6 toss in a dual meet.

Over in the discus, where Sargent has yet to place in the state meet, the all-time Michigan mark came from Grosse Ile's Alana Robinson in 1998, a 166-5 effort at the Midwest Meet of Champions. Only nine Michigan

competitors on 27 occasions have gone further than Nikole Sargent's 152-9 effort this season.

"It is my goal to win them both (at state) this year," said Sargent, who doesn't have any serious threats in Division 2 this season. "I would like to compete at the Midwest meet and see what happens, see where I rank nationally. I might want to go to one of the national meets. I still feel like I can hit 49 feet, maybe 50 feet in the shot put and, hopefully, try to get up over 160 in the discus. I think it will take a lot hard work and mental (preparation). But I think I can do it."

A 5-foot-9.5, 160-pound jumping jack and agile athlete, Sargent is an all-conference outside-hitter in volleyball, where she played all-around to become one of the Saginaw Valley Conference's best. She has destroyed school and conference records in track and hopes to depart even higher amongst the state's all-time leaders in the throws.

Junior Noah Jacobs Has Corunna In D2 Title Contention In Boys Track

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The Corunna track team won the Corunna Classic and is ranked second in the state in Division 2. Junior distance runner Noah Jacobs has the fastest D2 times in the 1600 (4:18) and the 3200 (9:03). Senior Jacob Trowbridge is seventh in D2 in the 3200 while freshman Ben Jacobs took first in the 1600 at the Corunna Classic. Corey Mort is in the top ten in D2 in the long jump while Max Nations won the shot put at the Cavalier Classic.

St. Johns senior sprinter Steven Linton continues to blaze away on the track. Linton has the fastest time in the 400 in D2 with a time of 49.46. Linton is also in the top ten in both the 100 and 200-meters.

Freeland's Ben Whiting is one of the premier high jumpers in the state as he has already cleared 6-7 this season.

The Mason track team has a number of standouts. Mason has one of the best throwers in the state in senior Justin Scavarda, who is tops in D2 in the shot put (59-2 ½) and discus (183-3). Jarrett VanHavel is second in D2 in the pole vault

(14-7). Senior sprinter Joe Grundstrom is in the top ten in D2 in both the 100 meters (11.07) and the 200 meters (22.61).

Division 1

The Rockford boys track team is ranked second in the state this spring. The Rams feature outstanding balance with distance runners Isaac Harding and Cole Johnson and sprinters Tyler Bradfield, Marcus Remtema, Josh Patterson and Noah Stallworth. Johnson has the top time in the 1600 in D1 this season with a 4:13. In the field, Johnny DeHaan is second in D1 with a 14-7. Senior throwers Dakoda Pankratz and Logan Anderson are both in the top ten in D1 in the shot put.

The East Lansing boys track team won the CAAC Blue title. The Trojans have a premier hurdler in junior Kentre Patterson, who has the top time in D1 in the 110 hurdles (14.06) and third-best time in the 300 hurdles (39.37).

Mt. Pleasant has some outstanding individuals as well. Senior Kaleb Perry has the second-best high jump in D1 with a 6-6 ¼ jump and a long jump of 22-1. Sophomore sprinter Gage Shellenbarger turned in a big effort at the Davison

Twilight Classic as he took first in the 110 hurdles and 400-meter dash. Sloan Felton took first in the 300 hurdles at Davison.

Division 3

Sanford-Meridian is as strong as anyone in the sprints led by Christian and Monte Petre. Christian Petre is one of the top sprinters in the state with a time of 10.71 in the 100 meters and 22.36 in the 200, both times are the best in D2. Monte Petre has posted an 11.03 in the 100 meters and 22.87 in the 200. Junior hurdler Clay Plachta is in the top ten in the 110 hurdles (15.21) and 300 hurdles (40.62).

Hemlock's Kurt Sollner is one of the area's top middle distance runners as he has recorded times of 1:58 in the 800 meters and 51.31 in the 400.

Evan Goodell of St. Louis is a strong favorite for a lofty finish at the state meet as he has the best time in D3 in the 3200 meters (9:13) and the third-best time in the 1600 (4:22).

Saranac's Joe Conley has been posting some impressive numbers. Conley has cleared 6-8 in the high jump and has long jumped 19-6 ½. Conley has also run a 10.9 100-meter dash and 23.4 in the 200.

Division 4

Merrill senior Jacob Kulhanek is having a big season. Kulhanek has won the pole vault in every meet he has competed in and has a D4 state-best vault of 13-9. Kulhanek also runs the 100, 200, is part of the 4x400 relay and is a long jumper for the Vandals.



Rockford's boys track team continues to be one of the top teams in Division 1 this season. (Jamie McNich, High School Sports Scene Photo)



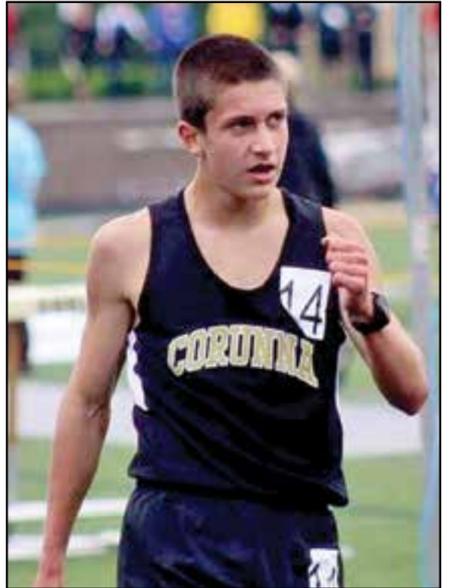
St. Louis was fifth in Division 3 with 476 points during the May 14 Scottie Invitational held at Alma College. (Don Goostrey, High School Sports Scene Photo)



The Alma boys track team finished fourth in Division 2 during the recent Scottie Invitational held at Alma College. (Don Goostrey, High School Sports Scene Photo)



Mason's Justin Scavarda is considered one of the premier shot and discus throwers in Division 2. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photo.)



Corunna's Noah Jacobs is one of the premier distance runners in Division 2. (Submitted Photo)

Mid-Michigan Dental Excellence

306 North State Street
Alma, MI 48801
(989) 463 - 4036

www.midmichigandental excellence.com • Find us on Facebook!

ECO WATER SINCE 1925. ISO 9001

Lindsay Soft Water Co.
1209 Michigan Ave. St. Louis, MI 48880
(989) 681-5436 | 1-800-244-3464
www.ecowater.com | E-mail: waterboy@cmsinter.net

KEVIN EAREGOOD
Certified Water Specialist

P.O. Box 401 Gladwin, MI 48624
(989) 426-4220 | Cell (989) 429-6576

Good Luck All Area Sports Teams

PROANE GAS
RESIDENTIAL • FARM • INDUSTRIAL • COMMERCIAL

Gas Production Co. Inc.
989-268-5079 8152 East M-46 Vestaburg 801-991-7477

Carman's Tree Service & Stump Removal

Gary Carman
Owner/Operator

8426 N. Wheeler
Wheeler, MI 48662
(989) 330-9782 cell
25yrs. Experienced
Free Estimates
License/Insured

Taking Pride in our Exceptional "Clean up!"

Seeley AUTO

7625 N. Alger Rd. Alma - Between Walmart & K-Mart Center

989-463-AUTO (2886)
seeleycars.com

02 Chevrolet Avalanche 1500 SL NA V8, Automatic	02 Ford Focus ZTS 2.0L NA I4, Automatic	10 Dodge Grand Caravan SXT 3.8L V6, Automatic	04 Subaru Outback Anniversary Edition, Automatic
\$4,995	\$2,995	\$7,995	\$4,995

Ask About Our
BUY HERE, PAY HERE PROGRAM
SPECIALIZING IN CUSTOMERS WITH SSI,
DISABILITY AND SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME

Swan Valley Hurdler Has Both Legs Up On The Competition

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

Swan Valley High School's champion hurdler, Lauren Huebner, sometimes "gets off on the wrong foot." But for sure, she has the right stuff.

Lauren is preparing to defend her Division 2 state crown in the 300 hurdles, with a style that doesn't always follow the track textbook.

Ideally, a classic hurdler takes the same number of strides between each barrier and leaps off the same favored leg - in Lauren's case, the right leg. But she attacks the challenge with such athletic abandon that on occasion, she uses her left leg.

"No, I do not count steps, which may be unorthodox," she explained. "I'm way better off of my right leg, but mainly I come out as hard as I can, especially on the first two hurdles."

Coach Mario Guerrero says he encourages Lauren to seek more consistency in her strides and her takeoffs, but not at the expense of raw speed.

"It's difficult when (a hurdler) doesn't have someone to chase, and Lauren is out ahead all the time," he said, "but when she ever gets all right legs (on hurdle jumps), she will have her best time ever."

It's not a question of work ethic. Coach Guerrero praises her rigorous multiple-sprint workouts and her team spirit.

"Lauren is a complete athlete willing to do whatever the team needs," he said. "If we need her to run a mile, she'll do it."

As a result of her versatility, Lauren holds a remarkable seven school records at Swan Valley, and still counting, in various events. In spring 2015, in addition to winning the 300 hurdles crown, she achieved all-state status in the long jump and with a pair of sprint relay squads.

This season, Lauren also has entered the 100 hurdles for the first time, even though at 5-foot-7 she lacks the typical physical long-legged height for the taller barriers. She ranks No. 3 in the state despite her novice status, a testament to her abilities.

As a child, the daughter of Brian and Cheryl Huebner showed speed on the soccer pitch and leaping ability in volleyball, a sport in which she has continued in high school with her sister Kristen, a sophomore teammate. Coach Guerrero spotted those abilities and immediately encouraged Lauren to focus on the hurdles. She placed seventh in the state in the 300 as a freshman and fourth as a sophomore, forerunners to her championship as a junior.

Lauren has earned a track scholarship to Saginaw Valley State University, the alma mater of Coach Guerrero and Assistant Coach Rich Canole, both Division II all-Americans at SVSU. They see a similar future for Lauren.

"She's going to be an All-American also. She's got 'it,'" Guerrero said simply.



Lauren Huebner continues to break records for the Swan Valley track team. Huebner will run track at Saginaw Valley State University beginning in the fall. (Submitted Photos)

Right Here Right Now
in St. Johns
PHYSICAL THERAPY close to home



Sparrow Clinton Hospital • St. Johns • 989.224.1575 • www.sparrowclinton.org

At Sparrow Clinton Hospital

Leading-edge Techniques +
Compassionate Caregivers =
Exceptional Recovery Support

- Physical Therapy
- Sports Medicine
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech & Language Therapy
- Adult, adolescent & pediatric patient support



We support outstanding athletes by providing Sports Medicine services on the field, court and track for the Redwings of St. Johns High School

Freeland High Jumpers Take Turns Twinning And Winning

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

Nate and Ben Whitting, Freeland High School's standout high jumping twins, cherish the chances to go head-to-head in their favorite sport.

Ben defeated Nate and the field for last season's Division 2 regional championship, but then Nate took top honors at the state meet.

Nate's career best jump, duplicated several times, is 6 feet 6 inches, but Ben has reached 6'7".

They won't even settle for ties. At a dual meet this spring, they were knotted at 6'4", and all other opponents had been eliminated. Rather than continue their endless leaping, they opted to decide first place by playing rock-paper-scissors. Nate won.

"We used to look a lot alike, but not so much anymore," Ben said. "We go back and forth. Like any sibling rivalry, we get on each other's nerves. We try to support each other."

Honestly?
"I don't wish he misses," Ben continued, "but let's say he's trying to beat my 6'7". I hope I still stay ahead of him."

The senior twins - sons of Ed and Annette Whitting - stand 6-foot-2, which means they are capable of jumping over one another with several inches to spare. Both played up front on the basketball team. In football, Nate specialized at running back on offense and at safety on defense, while Ben manned slots as a tight end and linebacker.

In track, both also participate in the long jump and in sprint relays, in which they often hand the baton to one another. They certainly have ample opportunity to practice the timing.

Both made the high jump their favorite event, starting in seventh grade on Freeland Middle's team.

"In seventh and eighth grade, things pretty much came naturally," Nate said. "We were not formally taught. We basically learned by watching YouTube videos. Then, in high school (under Coach Jason Robinson), we started to receive more coaching."

Nate's approach: "Repetition is important to be really consistent. You



need speed on the runway and to be mentally strong. You have to tell yourself that you can get over that bar."

Ben said: "Put yourself in a happy place and don't think about the things going on around you. Be consistent."

Ben would like to have captured that state crown last spring, but if it couldn't be himself, he's happy it was Nate. After all, they're twin brothers.

"Besides," Ben noted, "when I beat him, I get to say I beat a state

champion."
Nate plans to study civil engineering at Michigan State, while Ben intends to major in welding engineering at Ferris State. Both are exploring scholarship options.

In their "twin relations," they have role models. Twin brothers Jake (soccer, basketball and track) and Mitch (football and golf) are 2013 Freeland High graduates. Jake now is a track decathlete at University of Detroit-Mercy.

Freeland twins, Ben (Left) and Nate Whitting (Right) have each qualified for the state meet in the high jump. Nate won the Division 2 high jump championship a year ago. (Submitted Photo)

No Doc Fees Here!

 2005 Chevy Cobalt #1028 \$3,995	 2004 Chevy Trailblazer #1053 \$4,995	 2002 Chevy S-10 #1082 \$3,295	 2008 Jeep Patriot #1084 \$9,995	 2010 Chevy Impala #1052 \$6,995	 2006 Pontiac Torrent #1043 \$5,995	 2006 Chevy Trailblazer #1044 \$5,995
 2006 Chevy Cobalt #1086 \$4,595	 2006 Chevy Uplander #1051 \$4,995	 2002 GMC Envoy #1089 \$4,995	 2007 Chevy HHR #1058 \$3,495	 2008 GMC Yukon XL #1091 \$15,995	 2006 Pontiac G6 #1062 \$6,495	 2006 Honda Civic #1092 \$5,295
 2003 VW Passat #1093 \$4,995	 2009 Dodge Ram 1500 #1096 \$8,295	 2008 Hyundai Tucson #1072 \$6,495	 2005 Jeep Grand Cherokee #1073 \$3,995	 2002 Ford Explorer #1075 \$4,495		

611 E. Saginaw St. Lansing, MI 48906 **517-253-0375**

LANSINGAUTOCONNECTION.COM

Denny Emmer
Owner

Mark George
Owner

Mike Pier
Sales Manager

All vehicles plus tax, title and plate fee.

PREMIER COMPONENTS, INC.

Panther Pride... Hard Work... Dedication.. Commitment... Meet Alma's Peak Performers



sears of Alma



Stretch Of US-127 Schools Showing Their Magic In Track And Field, Plus Cross Country

John Raffel Sports Scene

Perhaps it's just a coincidence. Or maybe it's not.

But it sure seems like high schools along the US-127 freeway in mid-Michigan have been enjoying success in track and cross country, boys and girls, for many years and also have been occasionally winning state championships.

Schools like Ithaca, St. Johns, Shepherd, Breckenridge, Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart, Alma, St. Louis and Beal City have all been involved in some type of track and cross country success.

It goes from St. Johns winning the girls state title last year to several other track and field and cross country titles.

Neil Feldpausch coaches the St. Johns 2015 state girls track title team. His school's boys track and field team has also been a regional runner-up. He had CAAC Red boys and girls titles in 2014 and 2015, with the boys expected to extend that for another year and the girls in close contention.

"Student athlete leadership and good athletes," Feldpausch said, has been the key for that success.

Dale Devine is the Alma boys cross country coach, and has had that position since 1993. He also worked as the assistant coach two seasons prior to becoming the head coach. He was girls head coach for track 1995 to 2013 and was an assistant 1991-94

In girls track and field, Devine has witnessed 102 career dual meet wins as head coach, 17 consecutive winning seasons (1997-2013), three undefeated seasons, six conference titles, three regional crowns, 100 state qualifiers, 37 all-state athletes and

seven teams invited to the MITCA state meet.

His boys cross country teams have won four conference titles and were 2010 regional champs. They had five Division 2 MHSAA state qualifying teams and were back-to-back Division 2 all-state academic team champions in 2009 and 2010, and have had multiple individual state qualifiers. His girls cross country squads have had two league titles and were a 2015 Division 2 MHSAA state qualifying team and have had many multiple individual state qualifiers.

"Some ingredients (for this success) include an obvious passion for the sport, a very competitive nature, consistency, longevity of the coaching staffs, and getting athletes to buy into each program," Devine said. "For me, it took 'hooking' one or two athletes into believing in the training program I established. Once others saw the success of those who 'bought into' the



From St. Johns to Clare, boys and girls track teams on that stretch of road have enjoyed a tremendous amount of success over the past decade. This year seems to be no different. The Ithaca girls team recently won a regional championship, along with the St. Louis boys team. Shepherd, Ithaca and Clare should contend for a Division 3 championship. (Chuck Prikasky and Don Goostrey, High School Sport Scene Photos)

program, it spread to others. "In track and field, it's also important to direct athletes to the events in which they will maximize their potential," he continued. "One of my most common dialogues, well, actually a monologue because I had already made up my mind as the coach, with decent sprinters would be something like, 'hey, why don't you try training with the middle distance kids for a week or so and jump in a race or two?' When those kids went from average performances in the sprints to scoring consistent points for the team every meet, it created a new mindset for them, and their teammates."

Griffin Bohannon coaches track and cross country at Breckenridge and points out that in cross country, the boys were regional champions in 2011, TVC West champions in 2011, and ninth in Division 4 in 2011; regional runner-up in 2012, TVC West runner-up in 2012, fifth in Division 4 in 2012, 13th in Division 4 in 2014 and TVC West runner up in 2015.

Meanwhile, the girls were regional champions in 2011, seventh in Division 4 in 2011, regional runner-up in 2012, 10th in Division 4 in 2012, regional champions in 2013, second in Division 4 in 2013 and seventh in Division 4 in 2014.

Breckenridge also boasted a four-time state champ in Kirsten Olling and Footlocker Nationals Qualifier in 2013.

"The key behind our team success is a core group of athletes who bought into our training system back in the early 2010s when Royce



Humm, Kris James and Grant Woodman were coaching," Bohannon said. "The primary groups responsible for this were the girls class of 2014 and the boys class of 2013. Additionally, we have a long history of throwing success. Our current throwing coaches, Kyle Wheeler and AJ Smith, are right at the center of that. In recent years, we have been known almost exclusively for cross country, distance running and throwing. The success of these groups has been contagious and has started to carry over into other areas such as sprints and hurdles."

Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart cross country coach Mark Zitzelsberger's school has won state titles in girls cross in 1999 and 2015, plus many regional titles. The boys have been runners-up in the state finals two of the last five years.

"We have kids willing to put in the off-season hard work," Zitzelsberger said.

Sacred Heart won the Division 4 girls state cross country title last season after Dave King's Beal City Aggies did the trick in 2013 and 2014. Beal City boys won it in 2014.

Gene LeBron coached Ithaca to a girls state title in 2014, to nudge out runner-up Shepherd, which won it in 2013.

Lansing area schools have enjoyed track and field success including DeWitt's girls with a runner-up finish in 2009. Mason took the Division 2 boys cross title in 2011.

Jay Puffpaff coaches a St. Louis girls cross team that has won conference and regional titles in cross country and has also had title winning success in track.

"For both the track and cross country teams, a lot of the success we had is due to consistency," he said. "Holding running clubs throughout the off-season keeps a lot of athletes committed and prepares them for the upcoming season, wherever it may be."

What's the reason for the success of US-127 schools?

"There's definitely a running culture that's been established in this area," Devine said. "You have to consider the seeds planted in the early 70's by coaches like Rudy Gode-

Alma's Mariah Castillo hits the track during the recent Scottie Invitational at Alma College. The Alma girls team is encouraged about the depth of the team this season.

froid (former Breckenridge coach) and Rob Johnson (long-time Clare coach). Of course, there are other long-time success stories as well, Jerry Mayer and Kathy Hutfiltz both of St. Louis, my alma mater. Passionate coaches breed other passionate coaches. My current student teacher and the two teachers in classroom adjacent to mine are former athletes who are currently coaching in the area."

"I believe that the biggest reason for this success is the type of kids that are being raised in this area," Bohannon said. "The majority of kids in mid-Michigan come from good, hard-working backgrounds and do not shy away from a challenge. Additionally, the area is full of very passionate and capable coaches who are getting kids to buy into their programs. Some of the best high school coaches in the entire state are right here in the middle of the mitten."

"Kids in this area are willing to do what it takes to excel in this sport," Zitzelsberger said. "There has also been good, consistent long-term coaching."

"I really don't believe there is one particular reason," Puffpaff said. "I believe the sport is much more understood than in the past and coaches are using that information to make gains in every aspect of their program."

What's the future for US-127 schools in these sports?

"Since Jamie Puffpaff took over the (Alma) girls' track and field program, they extended their streak to 20 consecutive winning seasons," Devine said. "The Alma girls' XC team is very solid right now. We finished second at our regional meet in 2015 and our top two finished 49th and 51st in the Division 2 state meet. We are expecting eight of our top 10 athletes to return for the fall season."

"The Tri Valley Conference Central Division has traditionally been strong, especially on the boys' side in cross country. A few years ago, our division had a situation where any one of six teams, of the eight total, could have legitimately won the league. The same six schools all had great showings at the state meet (all in the top 13). Alma won the league that season, by the way."

"The future is very bright for



St. Louis and Beal City runners are neck and neck during the recent Scottie Invitational at Alma College.



St. Johns Steven Linton (center) helped lead the St. Johns boys team to its first regional track championship since 1996. (Submitted Photo)

Breckenridge cross-country and track," Bohannon said. "We have 40 middle school athletes participating in track this spring. Our middle school cross country teams had two of the most successful seasons in school history this past fall. We have three to four girls coming up who will make an immediate impact at the varsity level and a couple of boys who could do the same if they put in the work. The TVC West is very strong in both cross country and track. My first year coaching cross country was in 2014. My girls finished third in the conference (out of eight schools) and went on to land seventh place at the state championships. Track is the same story. The boys side is much the same. My boys have been a top 10 contender for awhile now and still find themselves fighting for a top three finish in the league each year."

"Distance kids have consistent coaching," Zitzelsberger said. "Having the same coach for both seasons also plays a large role in that success because of the coaching style," Puffpaff said.

our girls over the next three years and they should be contending for state championships," Zitzelsberger said. "The boys team has potential for top 10 finishes."

If a school's cross country program is strong, does that translate into track and vice-versa?

"At Alma, there's always been a consistent relationship between the two sports," Devine said. "A strong cross country team translates to a strong middle distance and distance team."

"Our two programs certainly feed off of each other," Bohannon said. "Most of my XC athletes also participate in track"

"Distance kids have consistent coaching," Zitzelsberger said.

"Having the same coach for both seasons also plays a large role in that success because of the coaching style," Puffpaff said.

PREMIER COMPONENTS, INC.

YOUR #1 SOURCE FOR MILL ACCESSORIES

- Square & Round Spouting & Accessories • Truss Kits
- Screw Conveyors & Parts • Power Transmission Components
- Belting, Buckets & Fasteners • Drag Conveyors & Accessories
- Level Controls • Bin Sweeps and Unloading Equipment

3984 W. Monroe (M-46) Alma, MI 48801

Ph.: (989) 463-4532 Fax: (989) 463-4560 Toll Free: 1-877-681-3064

www.premier-com.com

sears of Alma HOMETOWN STORE

LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED

1650 Wright Ave. • Alma, MI • 989-466-6688

RE-GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION!

Lawn & Garden: CRAFTSMAN Husqvarna

Appliances: Kenmore Whirlpool MAYTAG SAMSUNG LG

Tools: CRAFTSMAN DEWALT BLACK & DECKER

Bedding: Serta STEARNS & FOSTER Sealy

Fitness Equipment • Gas & Charcoal Grills

5% Instant Savings or 12 Months Special Financing!

See Sears Associate Today!

SAVE \$25.00

Off Any Service Purchase Over \$100.00 With This Ad

1800sundance.com

Sundance

BUICK GMC

1205 N. US-27, St. Johns, MI 48879

(989) 224-3900

Sale Hours
Mon-Thurs: 8am-9pm; Fri: 8am-6pm
Sat: 8:30am - 5pm, Sun: 12pm-5pm

Service Hours
Mon: 7am-7pm; Tues-Fri: 7am-6pm
Sat: 8:30am - 2pm



Ithaca Sprinter Goes The Distance For Faster Times

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

Ithaca High School track star Erica Sheahan wondered what was up when Coach Gene Lebron asked her to run cross country.

After all, Erica stands out in the speed events – the long jump, the sprints and the relays. What would gut-wrenching 3-mile runs through wet fall leaves have to do with anything?

Nowadays, she's glad she followed her coach's leadership and advice.

Erica will close her senior year this June. She was part of a fall 2014 cross county squad that carries the legacy of being Ithaca High School's first girls state championship team in any sport.

Then, in spring 2015, she won the Division 3 state long jump crown with a leap of 17-7.75 to become the school's first individual girls champ.

"To run cross country gives me the strength and endurance to be faster" in the long jump and the sprints, said Erica, who is head-

ing on a track scholarship to Western Michigan University, where she will study accounting.

She wasn't the star of the cross country team. In fact, her status was as the No. 7 runner. But the point was that she put in the effort and the miles.

"I really didn't want to do it at first," Erica recalled, "but I knew it would help me. Coach Lebron helps with everything."

The daughter of Bill and Adele Sheahan and Rob Slagell will have a big-time individual legacy to defend at the state meet.

In addition to winning the long jump, she was runner-up in both the 100 and 200 meter sprints and joined a fourth-place 4 X 400 relay quartet. Give her a 1.5-point share for the relay effort, and she racked



up an amazing 27.5 for the day.

The Lady Yellowjackets placed fourth overall, and with a more experienced squad here in 2016, Coach Lebron and his girls are aiming even higher at this year's upcoming state meet.

To ask track sprinters to run cross country may seem like an unusual step, but the coach also emphasized a rigorous weight-room regimen – three times per week during the offseason, and then two times when the season begins.

"We even lift on competition

days during the regular season," Lebron said. "The girls may be a little bit sore when they get out there to run, but it pays off in the long haul."

Junior Courtney Allen is a three-time cross country all-state athlete who, in contrast to Erica Sheahan, sticks to the distances on the track. She placed fifth in last year's state meet individual 800 and anchored a sixth-place 4 X 800 relay, overcoming a fall down the stretch. She also runs the 1600 and the 4 X 400 relay.

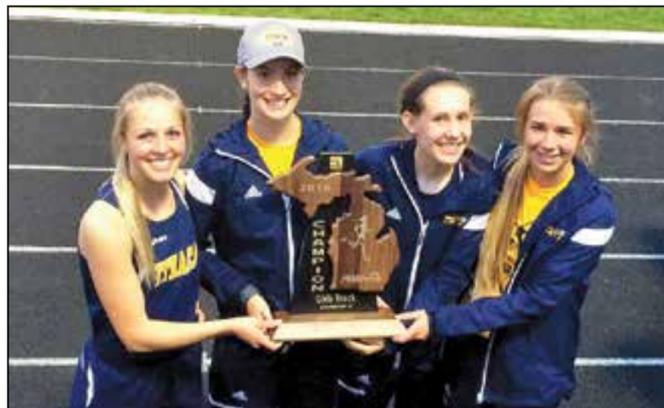
Courtney started running in seventh grade to join friends for fun, and to stay in shape for soccer.

The daughter of Lester and Sandy Allen reflects Coach Lebron's emphasis on team spirit when she says her favorite event is the 4 X 800 relay, even more so than the individual 800 or 1600 races.

"When you run with a (relay) team, it means more," Courtney said. "It's not just individually, for yourself. Your teammates are relying on you."



The Ithaca girls track team celebrates after winning a regional track title May 21. Ithaca has been considered one of the top Division 3 teams all season and will be contending for a state championship during the MHSAA finals June 4. (Submitted and Staff Photos)



1031 E. Center Street
Ithaca, Michigan
Phone 989 875-4181
Fax 989 875-4841

www.ithacachevy.com

Ithaca's Home Of The
\$9.95 Oil Change!

When Vehicle Purchased From Ithaca Chevy



Livingston Christian's Paxton Titus A Talented One-Man Show

Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

Every time that Paxton Titus steps into the discus or shot put ring, he's proud to represent his high school.

Titus attends Pinckney Livingston Christian, a 47-student high school that opened up in the mid-1990s and only joined the Michigan High School Athletic Association less than a decade ago.

Titus's situation is a little bit different than most small-school track and field programs: He's the only one on the roster, literally.

"That's O.K.," said Titus. "At least I've started something here. I hope to see it grow."

Titus attended Class A Novi Detroit Catholic Central as a freshman and sophomore, but wasn't even close to the varsity ranks. He threw the shot put around 35 feet and discus around 110 feet as a sophomore.

He came to Livingston Christian this season because his seventh-grade brother, Carver, attends the school, which has been housed in multiple locations over the years. Titus wanted to attend the same school with his younger

sibling.

There was only one problem: No track team and just a few sports to choose from at the current time.

"I'm not tall at all, so basketball is out of the question," said Titus, who checks in at 5-foot-10 and 250 pounds. "I'm just big and strong. I love to throw. There are a couple of golfers at the school, but it's not really formal. I tried football when I was younger, but it wasn't for me. I love to throw the shot put and discus. That's my sport."

Titus became the first regional champion in any sport on May 21, as he won Division 4 regional titles at Webberville in both the shot put (50-3) and discus (160-8). He has a career-best of 51-2.5 in the shot put set in mid-May and is re-setting his school records frequently. His regional discus effort was a career-best as well.

"There's one guy (in Division 4) that has gone farther than me in the shot put by about a foot, but I have the best discus throw," said Titus, who is eyeing at least All-State in both events. "I have shot at



Livingston Christian's Paxton Titus is a one-man show for his high school track team. Titus is one of the top throwers in the state regardless of class. (Submitted Photo)

both of them. I don't think anyone has ever won a state title at my school (in any sport)."

True, Livingston Christian has never even made a long run or had an individual state qualifier or state champ in any sport since joining the MHSAA.

Until Paxton Titus' arrival.

The school currently only sponsors boys basketball, girls basketball, girls volleyball, boys golf and now track and field.

"I hope that we have some kids come out next year and try to build a program," said Titus. "I heard a few years ago a couple of kids tried to start a track program, but it never really went anywhere."

As a one-man show, host schools have welcomed Titus into invitationals, even without male teammates or a girls team to accompany him.

"I think the events we have taken Paxton to have been great. Even if they are relay events, they have still let him compete," said his father and coach, Lane Titus. "We have had him throw against some great competition this season, which has helped a great deal. This has been a great experience for him."

Toward the end of his sophomore school year, Lane Titus got

to know Walled Lake Central head coach Nebojsa Stojkovic and Ann Arbor Skyline throws coach Steve Stein. He took his son to track and field camps and clinics at those two schools and has allowed Paxton Titus to train with those coaches as well through private lessons.

It has more than paid off.

Titus will attend one more invitation this season before heading to the Lower Peninsula Division 4 state finals June 4 at Grand Rapids Houseman Field.

"I am going to try to win both," said Titus. "I have come a long ways since last season. I never really dreamed a year ago to be where I'm at right now. I want to try to add a few more feet in both events. I know I can do it."

Titus said he is being rewarded by his grandfather, Jim Branscum, later this summer. Branscum is taking Paxton Titus to Rio de Janeiro for the 2016 Olympic Summer Games, in particular the shot put and discus championships.

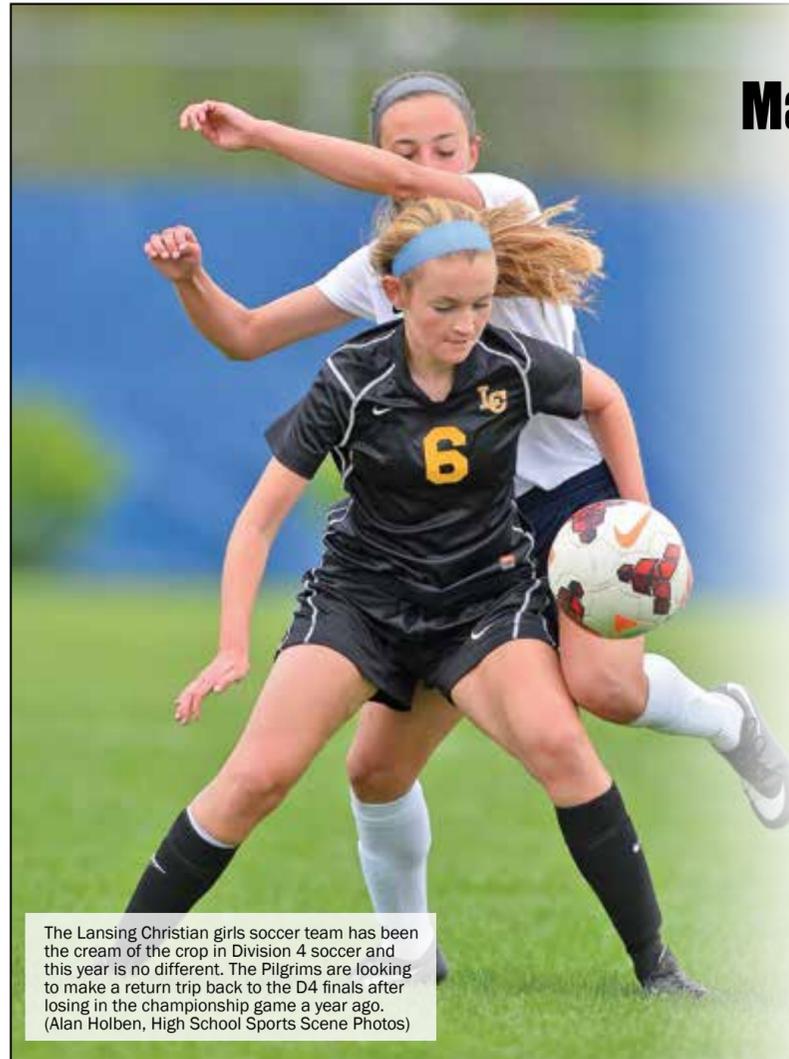
"He's paying for the whole thing," said Titus. "I can't wait. Hopefully, I'll be able to learn a lot more, see something great. But it will be incredible regardless. Just going to the event will be something I will always remember."

Nutrients to Refuel • Protein to Rebuild • Backed by Science • Produced by Local Farm Families

Chocolate Milk: Nature's Sports Drink

For more information, please visit www.MilkMeansMore.org or call 1-800-241-MILK (6455) to learn how your school can get involved.

SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON SOCCER



Lansing Christian Looks To Make Return Trip To D4 Finals

David Cook
Sports Scene

Few teams have dominated a conference like the Lansing Christian Pilgrims have in the Greater Lansing Athletic Conference this spring. Not only were the Pilgrims undefeated in conference play, but they were also unscored upon as they outscored their league opponents by a combined score of 107-0. Sophomore Kasey Jamieson paced the offense as she scored 26 goals in league play this season for the No. 1 ranked team in the state in Division 4. Lansing Christian features a balanced attack as Ally Melvin scored 17 goals in league play and Juliana Figueiredo added 16 goals in the league. Freshman forward Eliza Lewis also made a huge impact this season. Lewis recorded a hat trick in both goals and assists in Christian's win against Lakewood-Lake Odessa and finished the league season with 11 goals.

Division 3

The Alma soccer team has enjoyed a record-setting season this spring. Battling Hemlock for the TVC West league title, Alma has boasted a record-setting offense this season. The Panthers reached a new single-season record for goals in a 5-0 win against Lakeview. Alma broke the record of 50 goals in a single season in the shutout win. Sophomore forward Tia Everdeen is a leader of the Alma offense and set a new individual single-season goal record when she recorded her 16th goal against Hemlock. Everdeen has 20 goals as of mid-May. Sophomore midfielder Sydney Hanson broke the record for total career points during Alma's win against rival Ithaca. Alma has also received plenty of offensive production from freshmen Kennedy Davis and Emma Licina. Davis has 11 goals as

of mid-May while Licina recorded a hat trick in the win against Ithaca. Defense has also been a strong point this season for Alma. Sophomore goalkeeper set a new single-season record for shutouts when she recorded her ninth shutout of the season against Ithaca.

Birch Run is another area team that is posting some impressive defensive numbers. Ranked eighth in the state in Division 1, the Panthers won 15 of their first 16 games this season. Junior goalkeeper Kalyn Breckenridge has recorded 15 shutouts this season and is part of a dominating defense that includes her twin-sister Kyla Breckenridge and Ariana Irish. Madison Enderle has been pacing the Panther offense along with Mackenzie Stafford. A junior forward, Enderle has totaled over 35 goals and over 50 points this spring.

The Hemlock soccer team has also been scoring goals in bunches this season. Hemlock has been battling with Alma for first place in the conference this spring. Standout senior Sierra Grodsinsky and her younger sister Sydney Grodsinski have been pacing the high-scoring Hemlock offense. Grodsinsky has reached 85 career goals as of the middle of May. Hemlock has also received strong play in goal from Hannah Bauer.

The Williamston soccer team is ranked fourth in the state in Division 3 and will be a major force come tournament time. Williamston boasts one of the strongest keepers in the area in Grace Kraft. The Hornets have a strong midfield led by seniors Leah Davis and Sarah Tuggle, along with sophomore Lexi Russell. Up front, senior forward Renee Sturm and junior forward Paige Lonier have paced the offense.

Flint Powers is ranked second in the state in Division 3 and is a strong favorite

to reach the state finals. Powers defeated Williamston 2-0 in mid-May and is gaining momentum down the stretch. Senior Erin Emmert and junior midfielder Rachel Phillpotts have been leading the team this season. The Chargers have also received a big lift from freshman Rachel Rasins who leads the team in scoring.

Freeland is ranked sixth in the state in Division 3 and has been turning in a big season. Freeland boasts a potent offense led by Michelle Herring, Taylor Radaz and Mackenzie Stroebel while Alexa Walker has provided solid play in goal.

Division 2

One of the youngest teams in the area last season, the DeWitt soccer team is one of the best in the state in Division 2 this

year. DeWitt is ranked second in the state and demonstrated its strength when it went to Detroit Country Day and recorded a big 2-1 road win. Junior midfielder standout Danielle Stephan has been leading the way this season with plenty of help from her younger sister, Lily Stephan, who scored both goals in the Country Day win. DeWitt boasts a balanced offense that has been getting big contributions from Mackenzie Dawes who has recorded over 25 assists this season and Taylor Bishop who is a double-digit goal scorer. The Panthers have also received strong play in goal from Brooklyn Holley.

Division 1

Okemos wrapped up a perfect season in winning the CAAC Blue title with a 7-0

record. Sara Lee paces the offense and leads the team in goals while Hannah Hughes and Kailey Peterson have also been big contributors on offense. Okemos has also received strong play in goal from Caroline Serkaian.

The Midland Chemics won a second straight Saginaw Valley League North title this spring. Led by high-scoring senior Marlieda Bringard, who has committed to Central Michigan University, the Chemics wrapped up the league title after a 1-1 tie with rival Dow.

Walled Lake Northern is ranked fifth in the state in Division 1. Northern is led by one of the top players in the state this season in senior Devyn Brough who is headed to Auburn University.



Saginaw Heritage's Taylor Swartz delivers a kick against Fenton earlier this season. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)



Saginaw Heritage's Bri Redmond (No. 9) tangles with a Fenton defender during a recent game. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)



Fenton made it all the way to the Division 1 soccer semis a year ago. This year they have been ranked in the top 10 in D1 most of this season. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)



Lansing Catholic has hung around the top 10 in Division 3 rankings for most of the season. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photos)



Mason continues to be a top tier team in Division 2. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photos)

THE Camera SHOP
 M-F 9am-6pm, Sat. 10am-4pm
 We Can Transfer To DVD
 Home Movies Including:
 • VHS
 • 8mm, Super 8mm & 16mm
 • 8mm & High 8mm video
 • Digital 8mm video tape
 • Mini DV Type
FREE Second Copy With This Ad
 6006 S. Pennsylvania at Miller, Lansing
517-272-0027
 www.LansingCamera.com

FIRST CONTRACTING INCORPORATED
 Specializing in MSHDA multi Family Renovations
 701 South Main - Ovid, MI 48866
 989-834-1500

No Limit to the Fun You'll Have
City Limits
 Bowling Center Sports Grill
 Pizzas Burgers Steaks Ribs
 801 N. Cedar St. • Mason
 517-244-1090
 www.citylimitasmason.com

WWW.HIGHSCHOOLSPORTSSCENE.COM

wmlm 1520am
 Real Country Music
 News • Sports • Weather

Your Voice For Local High School Football & Basketball Games!

The New **Z 92.5** THE CASTLE
KROL COMMUNICATIONS INC.

MAYAN INSURANCE SINCE 1916
 THE MAYAN AGENCY
 Merrill, MI 48637
 (989) 643-7207
 (800) 646-2926
 www.mayanagency.com

Crop Production Services **Dyna-Gro**
Doug Belles
 Manager
 Office: (989) 842-1185
 8263 N. Ransom Rd.
 PO Box 157
 Breckenridge, MI 48615
 www.cpsagu.com

Kubota
ALDERMANS INCORPORATED
 Lennon, Michigan 517-621-4201
 www.aldermans.com

Kubota RTVX900
 4 wheel drive Diesel
 Sale \$13,600

0% for 48 months

*0% financing for 48 months on purchases of new Kubota equipment including T, GH, G, F & VS Series is available to qualified purchasers from participating dealers' in-stock inventory through 9/30/2015. Example: A 48-month monthly installment payment term at 0% A.P.R. requires 48 payments of \$2000 per \$1,000 financed. 0% A.P.R. interest is available to customers if no dealer documentation preparation fee is charged. Dealer charge for document preparation fee shall be in accordance with state laws. Inclusion of intangible equipment may result in a higher blended A.P.R. 0% A.P.R. and low-rate financing may not be available with customer finance return offers. Financing is available through Kubota Credit Corporation, U.S.A., 3100 Del Amo Blvd., Torrance, CA 90503, subject to credit approval. Some exceptions apply. Offer expires 9/30/2015. See Alderman's in Lennon for details. ©2015 Kubota may be shown.

Hemlock Soccer Star Lets Her Feet Do The Talking

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

Ever since preschool, Hemlock High School's Sierra Grodzinsky has been fast on her feet. She learned how to use them for soccer, and became a school record-setting goal scorer with 90 and counting. Her career will continue at Oakland University.

The daughter of Gus and Dawn Grodzinsky had her father as her first recreation league coach when she was 3 years old. She now practices on dad's backyard concoction of two "rebound walls" and a set of cones to build her skills for trapping, juggling, dribbling, passing, and - of course - shooting.

"I've always been faster than most of the other players," Sierra said. "I've had to work on the technical things, mainly the foot skills."

Hemlock Coach Joel Bauer sees the results of all the practice and hard work. He noted that Sierra, at 5-foot-8, is not especially muscular, but she displays outstanding strength to go with her speed and footwork. He recalls a particular performance in which she tallied three goals on similar back angle boots near a corner of the 18-yard box.

"Most of her goals are from 15 to 25 yards out," Bauer says. "One time, and the opposing players and coaches and fans might think 'that's just luck.' But two, three times with those rocket shots, and you know she's a well-trained player. She has learned the patience and self-control to take quality shots."

Sierra says her motivation comes "from being a very intense person, someone who pushes myself and my teammates to always get better." She has

tallied nearly 40 career assists, demonstrating that she is not a ball hog or a one-girl show.

Sierra won't be scoring so many goals if Golden Grizzlies' Coach Margaret Saurin sticks to plans for deploying her as an outside defender. She focused on defense as an adolescent on the Detroit Vardar traveling team, as a participant in the U.S. Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program, and also at the start of her Hemlock High career, and she enjoys making a good pass just as much as a good shot.

"I used to be nervous about playing on defense because I didn't feel I had all the skills, but not any more," she says. "I'll play anywhere in college."

Her favorite player is Abby Wambach, retired at age 35 amid the glory of a U.S. World Cup championship.

The Oakland University team possesses an international flavor. About half of the players hail from Canada, England, Ireland and Norway also are represented.

"I love how aggressive she is," Sierra explained. "And how fearless she is going for the ball" on her trademark header shots and plays. In fact, Sierra has scored a few of her own career goals with her noggin. She intends to continue playing well into her adult years. Her college studies will be devoted to the health sciences and sports medicine, with options ranging from becoming a doctor or a physician's assistant.

Meanwhile, Coach Bauer can take some solace at Sierra's departure. Her sibling, Sydney, is a freshman with three seasons to come as a standout player.

Hemlock's Sierra Grodzinsky became the schools all-time school record-setting goal scorer with 90 and counting. She will continue her career at Oakland University in the fall. (Russ Pierce, High School Sports Scene Photo)



Long Road To Success For Dewitt Girls Soccer

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

Fate has been kind to the DeWitt High School girls and boys soccer programs, and a long-term result is that this spring's girls team is the best in school history, undefeated in late May when this magazine went to the printer.

Veteran Coach Jamal Mubarakheh, an immigrant citizen from Jordan, in 1989 was playing a pickup game at Michigan State's Spartan Village. Fate - the timing of the moment - took place when a DeWitt parent informed him that the school was searching for soccer coaches.

He started with the boys JV and the girls club squad, and by 1996 he was at the helm of both varsity teams.

"Looking back, it's like a dream happened," Coach Mubarakheh said. "It all happened so quickly."

His girls are playing like a dream this spring. They favor a style of building an attack that becomes gradually ferocious, with pinpoint passing toward the opposing goal.

"We build up from the back, with a lot of patience," the coach explained.

An example of the teamwork emerges when he describes junior forward MacKenzie Dawes.

"She has 29 assists and five goals," Mubarakheh noted, mentioning the goals almost as an afterthought. "She's the creator, and without a creator we're not going to score."

Team anchors also include seniors Allison Sims, Erika Curley and Brianna Bishop, and junior Danielle Stephen.

Last year's team lost in overtime in the Division 2 state semifinals, but graduated only one senior.

"This year we are a different team, more experienced and more determined. They want it this year, no doubt about it," Coach Mubarakheh said. "Sometimes, with a high school team, you will see the best effort for a minute here, a minute there. But in our best games, we play two whole halves."

He arranged the toughest schedule possible to prepare the Panthers for the tournament, and they have defeated five of the state's top-ranked teams.

Through late May, Mubarakheh's career records were 330-94-42 with the girls and 289-107-35 with the boys. He stopped coaching the boys last fall to create more time for visits back home to Irbid, Jordan, the nation's second-largest city behind Amman.

He said that he enjoyed a happy, soccer-playing childhood in Jordan, which is among the more peaceful nations in the war-torn Middle East. He came to the United States as a young man for two main reasons: To visit American relatives and for "adventure."

Mubarakheh has four children with his wife, Rhonda. He works as a private chef, baker and caterer, and also in the DeWitt High cafeteria.

Mubarakheh describes himself as someone who is "not political" and tries "to keep myself out of things," aiming only for "peace among people."

"Some of what is said in the news is true, and some is not," he explained, in summary. "You have to live there to understand what's going on."



The DeWitt girls soccer team remains undefeated heading into the final week of the regular season. The Panthers are putting together of its best seasons in school history. (Submitted Photos)

WIDEMAN APPRAISAL SERVICE
Full Line Of Appraisals

1002 E. Center St.
Ithaca, MI 48847

Office: (989) 875-4544
Fax: (989) 875-4838

James J. Wideman
Owner

www.widemanappraisal.com
E-mail: jim@widemanappraisal.com

Bumping & Painting • Glass Repair
Insurance Work • Custom Painting
FREE ESTIMATES

YIM'S BODY SHOP
Domestic and Foreign
Most Deductibles Waived Or Reduced

Adam Musselman

Monday-Friday
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

phone/fax
989-681-2577

GRAFF CHEVROLET DURAND

Jason Saunders
Sales Professional

(989) 288-2657
Flint (810) 232-9157
Fax (989) 288-2347
jsaunders@hankgraff.com

9009 Lansing Road
Durand, Michigan 48429
www.graffchevydurand.com

ISN'T IT TIME
YOUR CUSTOMERS CAN READ YOUR PUBLICATION ON THE INTERNET?

Zoom
Zoom Pubs
1-866-262-4449

MIDSTATE SALES AND SERVICE
Outdoor Power Equipment

Ingersoll
YAMAHA
STIHL
SCAG
SNAPPER

3251 W. M-21
St. Johns, MI 48879
(989) 224-2711
(800) 582-8152
(989) 224-1781 Fax
midstatesales.net

Rebates up to \$300

Downtown Auto Services Inc.

Scott Nevins
President

110 W. Newark St.
Ithaca, MI 48847

Shop Hours
M-F 8-5:30

989-875-4261

Auto Value CERTIFIED SERVICE CENTER

OBGYN4U
The Center For Women's Healthcare

Your Health. Our Passion!

The Center For Women's HealthCare
http://cfwhc.com

989.584.3107

WATERSHED TAVERN AND GRILL

Family Owned And Operated

5965 Marsh Rd • Haslett, MI 48840

517-999-SHED
Call Us For Take-Out!

Grand Blanc, WL Northern, Brighton, Novi All Eyeing Long Runs

Dan Stickrad
Sports Scene

Life in the Kensington Lakes Activities Association girls soccer circles can be rough sometimes.

There are so many quality teams and players that winning division, conference and district titles can seem more daunting than winning some type of lottery.

Grand Blanc is usually a top 20 team in Division 1 each season dating back to the 1980s, and since moving to the KLAA seven years ago, the Bobcats have found out that winning isn't as easy as the old Big Nine Conference, where Grand Blanc dominated for decades.

"We had a good team last year, but we were only third in our division (KLAA-West)," noted veteran coach Greg Kehler. "We put it all together in the end and made a run to the state finals. But you wouldn't have guessed it by looking at the conference standings."

Grand Blanc finished 18-6-3 before losing to unbeaten Saline, 4-0, in the D-1 state finals.

"There are so many good teams in the KLAA, in all four divisions," admitted Kehler. "There are also some programs that have become a whole lot more competitive in the past few years and the schools down towards the bottom of the standings are better than they used to be."

Entering the final week of the regular season, Grand Blanc posted a fine 14-1-6 overall record, including winning the KLAA-West with 24 points (7-3-0). Brighton finished second with 23 points (7-1-2).

As for the state rankings, the 24-school KLAA boasted six schools ranked in the D-1 top 15.

Walled Lake Northern (No. 4), Grand Blanc (No. 5), Brighton (No. 6), Novi (No. 9), Plymouth Canton (No. 14) and Livonia Stevenson (No. 15) all gained some state notoriety.

Novi (9-1-6, 6-1-3, 21 points) emerged as the KLAA-South champion, two points ahead of Stevenson (12-4-3, 6-3-1) and Northville (8-6-5, 5-1-4), which won the D-1 state title in 2014.

Canton finished unbeaten in the KLAA-South (11-1-4, 8-0-2), three points ahead of Plymouth (9-5-5, 7-1-2).

Walled Lake Northern has proven to become of a power team over the past 5-6 years and repeated in the KLAA North Division this season. The Knights (11-3-2, 7-2-1) totaled 22 points and edged Walled Lake Central (7-4-1, 7-3-0, 21 points) and Waterford Mott (12-5-1, 6-3-1, 19 points).

Novi downed Canton, 3-1, for the Kensington Conference crown, while Grand Blanc clipped Walled Lake Northern, 2-1, for the Lakes Conference crown.

Novi and Grand Blanc faced off in the KLAA finals May 25

(after press deadlines).

So which lucky side from the KLAA will make a deep run this postseason? Besides Grand Blanc reaching the finals last year, Canton, Hartland and Northville all reached the regional finals a year ago.

Most of the power teams from the KLAA are lumped together in three districts, meaning it will be extremely difficult to make a deep run.

"That's just it," said Kehler. "You have one unlucky bounce and your season is done. Sometimes you have to win three one-goal games just to win a district, and often times you have to go to overtime or a shootout to decide the winner."

The toughest first-round matchup in the entire state will take place on May 31, where Brighton and Walled Lake Northern tangle in a battle of top-five teams.

Hartland upset Walled Lake Northern in the pre-district last season and ended the Knights season earlier than expected. Both Brighton and Walled Lake Northern have rosters dotted with college prospects.

DIVISION 2

After losing to eventual D-2 state runner-up Fenton in last season's district finals, Linden has charged back with vengeance this season. The Eagles began the campaign 11-0-0 and enter the postseason ranked fourth.

Linden, 17-1-1 overall as of May 23, has picked up 13 shutouts on the season.

Linden and 15th-ranked Fenton should face off in the district semifinals this season, barring any upsets.

DIVISION 3

Flint Powers Catholic entered the season as one of the teams to beat in Division 3 and is currently ranked second in the state in late May. The only squad ranked higher is defending champion Hudsonville Unity Christian, which has won nine of the last 11 state titles in D-3.

Powers Catholic, which is 14-1-4 this season after posting a 24-4-0 ledger last season, actually defeated Unity Christian, 1-0, in the 2011 state finals. Unity Christian got the best of Powers in the state title game in 2009 (1-0) and 2007 (3-2).

Powers Catholic also reached the state finals in 2000 and 2003, losing to East Grand Rapids and Madison Heights Bishop Foley, respectively.

Brighton and Okemos battle it out on the soccer field during and early season contest. Brighton won the game 2-0. Brighton along with Grand Blanc, who made it all the way to the Division 1 championship game a year ago have both been ranked in the top 5 all season in D1. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photos)



Birch Run Soccer Twins Score And Save

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

Kyla and Kalyn Breckenridge, twins who are Birch Run High soccer standouts in their junior seasons, get along with one another just great. They even hope to stick together when they head for college, hopefully to pursue athletics along with academics.

But this doesn't mean they've never competed, starting as preschoolers in their first years of pee-wee soccer.

"They didn't really put us in positions, so we were just running all over the field," Kyla recalls. "We would take the ball from each other and try to score. We have it on video, and it's pretty funny."

At that age level, none of the children were assigned to play goaltender. This did not evolve for Kalyn until farther along into elementary school, performing for

the Frankenmuth Rush travel team.

"I was a catcher for softball," Kyla explains, noting that is was only natural that she would become a goalie. "I always had the mentality to be fearless, not afraid to throw my body across to take a ball that's going 30 miles per hour, and to be able to stop it."

She is approaching a career school record for shutouts with more than 40, helping to establish Birch Run among the top teams in the region, at the top of the Tri-Valley Conference East Division.

Meanwhile, Kyla specializes in a mid-field role.

"I knew I wasn't as good as (Kalyn) as far as being a goaltender," Kyla says. "I want to have the ball, win the 50-50 balls, pass and shoot."

One time the twins - daughters of Todd and Laura Breckenridge - tricked Coach



Birch Run junior twins Kyla and Kalyn Breckenridge have excelled on the soccer field and basketball court over the last three years as a Panther. (Chip Degrace, High School Sports Scene Photos)



Pat's Auto, Inc.
"Quality Of Our Work Guaranteed"
Complete Collision Repair • Serving Gratiot County Since 1982

Phone (989) 681-5334
FAX # (989) 681-3855

1501 West Monroe Rd. (M-46)
Saint Louis, MI 48880
www.patsautoinc.com

Ric's
FOOD CENTER
A Michigan Family Business

7 am - 10 pm Everyday!
1006 E. Center Street • Ithaca, MI 48847
Phone: (989) 875-4907 • Fax: (989) 875-8702
Proud of our Yellowjackets!

C & S Steel **PRECISION**
MACHINE & MFG., INC.

203 Industrial Pkwy. 1102 Industrial Pkwy.
Ave B - Ithaca Ave. A - Ithaca

Ph: 989-875-5145 Ph: 989-875-2359
Fx: 989-875-4754 Fx: 989-875-4615

Capitol Bowl **Val's PIZZA** **HOT SPOT**

Your Family Fun & Entertainment Center
Open/League/Cosmic Bowling, Parties, Arcade, Proshop
Val's - Dine In, Carryout Delivery
CB's Hot Spot - Sports Viewing, Pool, Weekend Bands/DJs
219 S. Washington St. Owosso, MI 48867 capitolbowl@yahoo.com
989-725-7717 989-725-VALS (8257)
www.capitolbowl.net Become a Facebook Fan Today!

Bring this ad into any JFCU location to receive a **FREE GIFT** when you open a new account!

JOURNEY
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
Ouvrir des possibilités

ST. JOHNS - FOWLER - OVID
989.224.9511
www.JourneyFCU.org

Serving Clinton, Gratiot & Shiawassee Counties

The name you've grown to trust just got better
Put Our Team To Work For You

Weichert Realtors

Broadway Realty 989-775-3800
Mount Pleasant WeichertBroadway.com

EXPERIENCE CAMPUS LIFE
real fun. real friends. real life.

@cmfyc High School Mondays, 7pm
@cmfyc 7th & 8th Grade Thursdays, 7pm
/cmfyc 6th Grade Tuesdays, 3pm

989.463.4274 | 2550 W Cheesman Rd, Alma | www.cmfyc.net

GA General Agency Company
Insurance since 1915
Knowledgeable. Committed. Trusted.

(989) 773-6981 (800) 589-6982
www.ga-ins.com

RPC
Roslund Prestage & Company
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

DAVID RAYBURN

308 Gratiot Avenue Ph. (989) 463-6123
Alma, Michigan 48801 Fax (989) 463-4055
www.rpcpas.com e-mail: dave.rayburn@rpcpas.com

Gratiot Towing (989) 875-8484

From Shy To Star, SASA Standout Beats The Odds

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

Family, friends and fans of Robyn Pruitt may have a hard time believing that back in fall 2010 at Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy, she wasn't even sure she could earn a spot on the seventh-grade basketball team.

"I was kind of nervous about playing the game," Robyn recalled.



"I still had to learn to set the foundation for playing proper defense, and at the tryouts I was the new kid. I didn't really know anybody."

Robyn remains soft-spoken, but she accomplished far more than merely making the SASA squad. The 5-foot-3 point guard earned all-state honors with 1,896 career points – third highest in Saginaw County girls prep history – along with 446 steals and 216 assists. Her reward is a basketball scholarship to Rochester College in Rochester Hills, east of Pontiac, where she aims to study physical therapy with a minor in psychology. The private school, enrollment 1,200, was founded by the Church of Christ in 1959.

Robyn is the third of

seven children born to Odie and Brenda Pruitt, frequent visitors to the Saginaw YMCA who would workout while the children were supervised on the "Kids' Court." That's where Robyn started shooting baskets as a preschooler on a Playskool-type of tots' hoop. By second grade, she could push a ball all the way up to a regulation rim, and she was competing on organized "Y" teams starting in third grade.

"I just always loved the game. I was fascinated with it," she said. "On Sports Center I would watch games with my dad, and then he would take me to Pistons games. In fourth or fifth grade he took me to a Detroit Shock (WNBA) game, where I was given an autographed ball."

These elementary-age activities all were forerunners to eighth grade, when Robyn scored 25 points for a surprisingly unbeaten SASA team in the City League championship game against the former Central Middle School.

"It seemed like I couldn't miss," Robyn said, in no way bragging,

but simply still thrilled with the memory.

The traditional high schools had longer-established sports programs than the Arts and Sciences Academy, but Robyn opted to stay at SASA – based in the former Ruben Daniels Lifelong Learning Center near the Saginaw River – for the academics. In the process, she became a SASA athletic pioneer who demonstrated that advanced students can play ball, too.

She most likely will score fewer points, but pass for more assists in her role at Rochester College, where she already has started to attend occasional voluntary workouts.

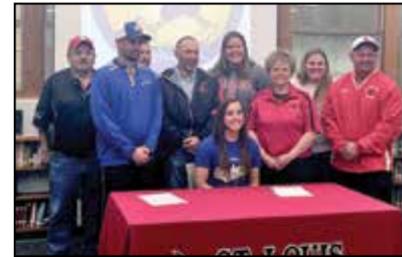
"I'm feeling really comfortable," Robyn said, in contrast to seventh grade at SASA. "I already know my teammates, and they're being really great with me. Plus I love the style



of play – fast-paced and aggressive. As a point guard, there is a big transition from being a senior in high school to a freshman in college. But my coaches made me the player I am today, with support from my parents and siblings and everyone who supported me, and I'm willing to work hard."

Saginaw Arts and Sciences standout Robyn Pruitt recently announced she will continue her basketball career at Rochester College. Pruitt will go down as one of the top scorers in the history of Saginaw County. (Submitted Photos)

Area Signings



St. Louis senior Nicole Koczenasz recently announced she will be continuing her college softball career at Muskeon Community College. (Submitted Photo)



Saginaw High product Algevon Eichelberger (far right) signed his National Letter of Intent to attend Depaul University. He is among six Saginaw High athletes who were honored or signed letters of intent, joining Ja'La Taylor (Central Michigan University track), Childress Cannon (Rhode Island track), Ty'Asia Robinson (Mott Community College women's basketball) and Darrion Adams (Lansing Community College men's basketball). (Submitted Photo)



Flint Powers swimmer Erin Emmert announced she will be swimming at the next level at Hope College. Lacrosse players Katie Buchanan (Madonna University) and Kendall Carino (Aquinas College) were also in attendance. Football player Daniel Tolbert (Hope College), softball standout Bailey Stevens (Mott C.C.), soccer player Alec Smith (Alma College) and track star Sarah DeDolph (Detroit Mercy) also signed their National Letters of Intent. DeDolph was the lone NCAA Division I signee of the bunch. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)



Bullock Creek senior Madison Hill announced she will be playing college basketball at Alma College. (Submitted Photo)



Alma junior Kenzie Seeley announced she will be joining her sister Maddy to continue her basketball career playing Northwood University. (Submitted Photo)

FEATURES AT MOREY COURTS

- 8 Basketball/Volleyball Courts
- 3 Racquetball Courts
- 2 Tennis Courts
- Complete Fitness Center
- Walking/Jogging Track
- Championship Sports Individual Training
- Basketball & Volleyball

MOREY COURTS RECREATION CENTER
Creating Enjoyment Through Recreation

5175 East Remus Road
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858
989-953-7529
www.moreycourts.com

CHAMPIONSHIP SPORTS AT MOREY COURTS
- Camps & Leagues -

Check out Championship Sports Summer Basketball & Volleyball Camps & Clinics at
www.moreycourts.com

Visit Our Club Page At
www.championshipsports.net
For More Details

SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON LACROSSE

Rockford Continues D1 Dominance In Girls Lacrosse

David Cook Sports Scene

When it comes to excellence in high school lacrosse in the state of Michigan, few do it better than the Rockford Rams.

Winners of the past three Division 1 state championships, and state champions four out of the last six years, Rockford is ranked number one in the state again this season. The Rockford program is also one of the best in the entire Midwest, as they are ranked ninth in the Midwest by LAX Power.

This year's Rockford team is paced by the dynamic one-two scoring punch of senior Alexandra VanderMolen and sophomore Brooklyn Neumen.

VanderMolen, who is headed to Ohio State University next fall, is a returning all-American player who has totaled 37 goals and 28 assists this season.

"Alex has been a prolific scorer through her career," said Rockford coach Mike Emery. "She makes everyone around her better and she has what we call a great lax IQ. She is a very smart and determined player."

Neumen, a returning all-state player, has totaled 70 points this spring with 52 goals and 18 assists.

"Brooklyn has a motor that doesn't quit, as she plays with tremendous energy at both ends of the field," Emery said. "She is very fundamentally sound and understands the game very well for such a young player."

Senior Grace Gunneson has also stepped up on offense as she has totaled 37 goals and 24 assists.

While the Rams have been putting up some impressive offensive numbers, their defense has also been solid, led by returning all-state seniors Ryann Deuel and Zoe Newmann. In goal, Briana Houle has stepped into the starting spot and has a 47.2 save percentage.

The Rams have accomplished their impressive numbers against some of the finest lacrosse teams in Michigan and the Midwest. Rockford's two losses have come against East Grand Rapids, the top-ranked team in Division 2, by one goal and a two-goal loss to Loyola Academy of Chicago, ranked third in the Midwest. Rockford also defeated New Trier (Illinois), ranked fifth in the Midwest and has defeated Forest Hills United, the second-ranked team in Division 1 in Michigan, twice this season.

"We are very athletic and versatile this season," Emery said. "They work very hard every day and are a very close-knit group."



Alen VanderMolen, (No. 11), an Ohio State University recruit has Rockford thinking about a 3-peat in Division 1 girls lacrosse. Rockford is currently ranked No. 1 in Division 1 in the recent state power rankings. (Submitted Photos)

"We Care Enough To Make A Difference"
Helping people stay home with dignity and independence.

Daily Living HomeCare, Inc.
Non-Medical In-Home Services
145 E. Center St. P.O. Box 133
Ithaca, MI 48847

Kim Hodge, President
Locally Owned & Operated
www.dailylivinghomecare.com

Phone: (989) 875-7405
Fax: (989) 875-8685
Toll Free: (800) 834-1915

Blake Hollenbeck Auto Sales Inc.
W. M57 Greenville, MI

Over 100 Available Cars To Choose From!

www.Blakehollenbeckinc.com
CHECK OUT OUR INVENTORY

Hours:
Monday and Wednesday 9 to 8
Tuesday, Thursday Friday 9-6, Saturday 9-3

Ph. (818) 754-5566
Toll Free (866) 358-7473

Tim McCormick
Sales

749 W. Main
Lowell, MI 49331
Phone: (616) 421-7615
Cell: (616) 717-3686
Fax: (616) 897-5007
tmccormick@grandautofamily.com

Wittenbach GMC
CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED

Supporting The Red Arrows Since 1988
www.wittenbachgmc.com

Train With The Best OR Call Now For Your Free Evaluation

248-926-5656

www.puckmasters.com/detroit

50950 Century Court
Wixom, MI 48393

Pick One Sport, Or Try 'Em All?

Many High School Athletes Resist 'Specialization'

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

She believes she is better at volleyball because she plays basketball.

Jaelynn Block, a St. Louis High School junior, and her parents, Tim and Buffy Block, are examples of a youth athletics debate that has emerged for at least a generation.

Is it best to focus on one sport in hopes of becoming a star performer with enhanced chances of earning a college scholarship and - who knows - launching a pro career?

Or is it better to follow tradition and take part in the various games of the season, similar to Frank Merriwell or Chip Hilton in those old youth sports novels of yore?

A simple web search for "high school sports specialization" reveals the depth of the dispute.

Jaelynn Block, at 5-foot-11, continues signing up for basketball in winters, even though she decided during her freshman year that volleyball is her favorite game and the sport that gives her the most potential to excel.

She still enjoys basketball and enjoys being part of the hoops squad. Furthermore, she says athletes who play multiple sports during their youthful development tend to improve in all of them.

"I can do things on the volleyball court that I couldn't do if not for basketball," explained Jaelynn, who aims for a career as a physician's assistant. Examples she lists include pivoting her hips and spreading her feet to dig out spikes and to set the ball for teammates at the net.

"Everything in volleyball comes naturally to me," she added.

O.K., then. Doesn't that mean the highest-level volleyball squads, such as the U.S. women's national team, should play basketball as part of their practice routines? Jaelynn isn't falling for the bait.

"I wouldn't go that far," she answers.

"When you are younger, your overall athletic ability is developing and it helps to develop different ranges of skills by playing different sports."

Tim Block, during the late 1980s at Beal City High, was a standout in the traditional "big three" sports - an all-state lineman in football, and a key cog in state-title contending teams in basketball and baseball. The former Buffy Foster at St. Louis High School was an all-state sprinter in track and a basketball standout. Both have served as assistant coaches and youth coaches in the St. Louis system.

Tim describes himself as an "old school" multi-sport advocate, explaining, "If I can get an athlete to be good in one sport, and I can get them to be good in other sports."

He questions whether coaches who preach one-sport specialization are giving priority to "winning conference championships" rather than acting in the best interests of their athletes. Buffy joins her husband in emphasizing that multiple sports make maximum use of multiple muscles, promoting stronger overall health and youthful physical development.

But this doesn't mean they necessarily would encourage Jaelynn to continue playing both volleyball and basketball in college, even though some smaller schools may make the opportunity available with so-called split scholarships. First they give top priority to academics, the same as their daughter, and they question whether a two-sport college life would permit sufficient time for studies. Second, if volleyball is Jaelynn's first choice, they are realistic about an injury risk playing basketball on the side.

Jaelynn says she remains open to a two-sport option in college, but she would fully understand if a volleyball coach insisted on volleyball only.

"They're paying me (via a scholarship) to give everything I have (to volleyball)," she explained.



St. Louis' Jaelynn Block is a multiple sport standout at St. Louis High School each of the last three years and she firmly believes by playing basketball it has made her a better volleyball player. Block is expected to play volleyball at the next level after graduation next year. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photos)

Area Athletes, Experts Discuss Ongoing Trend Of Specialization In High School Athletics

Heritage High School's Taylor O'Dell never really made an either/or decision to select soccer as her only competitive sport.

She simply loved soccer in a special way, far more than other games.

In debates over sports "specialization" - highly visible on the internet - coaches and parents sometimes are cast as villains who pressure youngsters to focus on one sport, in order to excel narrowly to the maximum.

But deeper research reveals that some children, as far back as early elementary, simply and unquestionably prefer a single sport above all others. Taylor is an example, and now she headed to Adrian College with a scholarship.

"I just fell in love so much (with soccer), it didn't occur to me to reach out and play other sports, too," said the daughter of Michael and Elisa O'Dell. "Friends would ask me to join them on other teams, but it was like they were kidding. They knew I was so focused

on soccer."

The former Elisa Rodriguez was a multi-sport athlete all through childhood, including all-state in softball, and graduated in 1990 from Arthur Hill High School. She joined her husband in exposing Taylor to all sorts of early elementary sports - even floor hockey.

"We tried getting her into something different, but we didn't push it," Elisa noted. "It was obvious that Taylor's long-term goals involved soccer. Some

parents force their kids to do things they don't want to do. But if that (single-sport 'specialization') is what makes you happy, why not?"

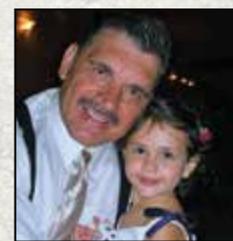
Taylor acknowledges that she only gave fleeting childhood thoughts to volleyball or softball or basketball "because those are sports my mom used to play."

She summarized, "I'll always be happy with the memories I've made with the sport I've chosen."

-- Scott Keyes



Taylor O'Dell (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)



George Kubiak (Submitted Photo)

Carrollton High School's George Kubiak was a basketball all-state athlete who led his recently-formed suburban school to the 1970 Class B state finals against long-time powerhouse River Rouge, in which the upset-minded Cavaliers fought to the end before facing a narrow defeat.

Basketball was his glory and led to a scholarship at Central Michigan University, but he remains grateful he also played football in the fall and ran track in the spring.



Jack B. Tany (Submitted Photo)

Jack B. Tany specializes in high school sports history, not the trend of one-sport "specialization."

"The topic comes up quite a big with our Saginaw County Sports Hall of Fame," said Tany, the organization's founding president. "Historically, all the top athletes are three-sport athletes."

His first reference is to Saginaw High School's Bill Watson, an eventual pioneer at the University of Michigan, who was so versatile that he won a decathlon



Don Durrett (Submitted Photo)

Former Saginaw High Coach Don Durrett Encourages Idea Of Three Sport Student-Athletes

Some modern basketball coaches are the main enablers of a growing trend to "specialize" in one sport, according to Don Durrett, retired Saginaw High football coach, because they selfishly fear losing their stars to other activities.

However, Durrett praises Michigan State hoops coach Tom Izzo for a welcome old-school outlook. Durrett's example focuses on Saginaw High alum Draymond Green near the midpoint of

"Being from a small community, most everyone in the school crossed into other sports," Kubiak recalls. "In track I became an all-state miler, and it served me well, because then I got to CMU, the basketball team had to run the mile for time in the preseason (to qualify for making the team). My experience in high school made running that mile a breeze for me."

After completing his hoops stint with the Chippewas from 1972-74, he launched a longtime career as a "trav-

eling" elementary physical education instructor for Saginaw City Schools, responsible for several elementary buildings at the same time. He also coached the Arthur Hill varsity Cagers from 1976-96.

"My greatest basketball teams consisted of many football players," Kubiak said. "It took them a little bit longer in December to get their basketball legs, especially if they made a run in the football tournament. (Arthur Hill won the state crown in 1992.) But I

didn't mind if they played other sports. I always worried about them getting injured in football and missing the basketball season, but I encouraged them to do other sports. There they could learn discipline and teamwork."

His philosophy is that if someone never tries a sport, they'll never know the potential rewards.

"Students at that age should not pick just one," Kubiak said. "Experience them all!"

-- Scott Keyes

world title "I still think Bill Watson is the greatest athlete to ever emerge from Saginaw County," Tany noted. "He dates back to the mid-1930s and played football, basketball and track for SHS."

A review of Hall of Fame inductees at saginawcountysports.com reveals the tradition of playing multiple sports.

A sampling of anecdotes from Tany: -- Arthur Hill High's Curt Young, future big league baseball pitcher and

his MSU career. "Day Day wanted to play spring football at tight end, and Coach Izzo encouraged him to go ahead," Durrett recalled. "Izzo figured this would encourage Day Day to build some toughness."

In contrast, Durrett says too many coaches - especially at the AAU or traveling club team levels - preach a one-sport approach.

"AAU takes so much time from other sports," he opined. "Too many of these adults are not in it for the well-being of the kids. They travel all over the coun-

try with no idea what's going on." He equated multiple sports to classroom learning in multiple subjects, ranging from reading and writing to science and math.

"Otherwise," he says, "a young person becomes one-track minded."

Durrett recalls his Saginaw High tenure, mostly during the 1990s, when he joined the basketball coach, Marshall Thomas, to urge athletes such as LaMarr Woodley and Charles Rogers to play both sports. Both coaches guided their teams to state championships in their respective sports.

At Flint Northern High during the 1970s, Durrett was a star in the "big three" sports - football, basketball and baseball. He said his ticket to the Flint Sports Hall of Fame was baseball, roaming centerfield and hitting for a .423 average. Yet if he had specialized in baseball, he may not have landed the football scholarship to Calvin College (running back) that paved the way for his career as an educator and coach.

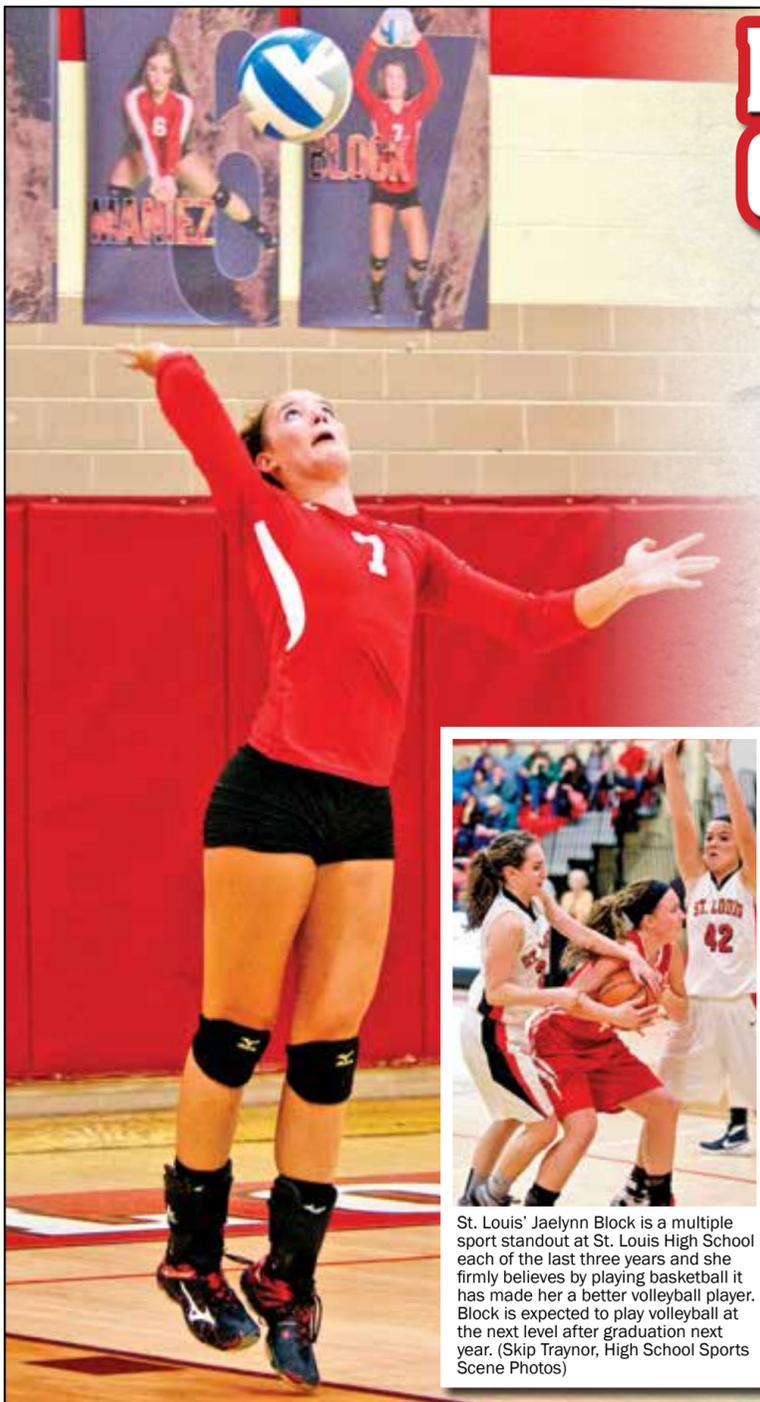
"If you're really interested in the kids you coach," Durrett said, "you will push them to play all the sports."

--Scott Keyes

coach, originally was recruited to Central Michigan on a football scholarship. -- Jim Eurick -- football coach at Chesaning, Arthur Hill and Bay City Western -- recruited baseball players for football skill positions.

-- Tom House, a retired major league baseball pitcher with a second career as a doctor, says hurlers who play other sports rather than throwing year-round are less likely to suffer arm injuries.

Joe Tany, Jack's son, is a top young



CHEVROLET Shaheen

New • Used • Finance • Service • Parts • Body Shop

SELL US YOUR CAR MID MICHIGAN'S ONLY AUTOTRADER BUYING CENTER AutoTrader.com

517-803-2568
632 American Rd. • Lansing, MI
www.shaheenlansing.com

FIND NEW ROADS
CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED

Next To Celebration Cinema Lansing

Mid-Michigan's Largest Chevy Dealer!

Private showings and group rates are available by contacting your local NCG Cinema location or by e-mailing Groupshows@NCGmovies.com

Midland Cinemas

NCG offers 10 regional locations including: Alma, Auburn, Courtland, Coldwater, Grand Blanc, Greenville, Owosso, Lansing, Lapeer & Midland

GREENVILLE CINEMAS

ALMA CINEMAS

NCG CINEMAS

WWW.NCGMOVIES.COM

Midland Cinemas

SPORTS SCENE'S **EYE ON BASEBALL** **YOUNG OWOSSO**
 Sponsored by:



Prior to press time, DeWitt High School was ranked No. 3 in the latest Division 2 polls. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Pitching Will Play Key Roles In Area Teams Advancement In State Tourney

Butch Harmon
Sports Scene

If pitching wins championships, the Saginaw Heritage baseball team is in good shape for the state tournament. Ranked first in the state in Division 1 by Prep Baseball Report, Heritage opened the season with a 24-3 record. The Hawks have a deep and talented pitching staff led by Brandon Smith, Eli Abenth and sophomore Spencer Schwellenbach. Heritage has a number of impressive wins this season including an 8-5 win against DeWitt at the Hawk Invitational and a 5-4 win against Lake Orion en route to winning the Lake Orion Invitational.

The Rockford baseball team is another team loaded with good pitching. Ranked third in the state in Division 1 by Prep Baseball Report, the Rams won 18 of their first 22 games and had a combined team ERA of 0.96. Senior pitchers Jack Weisenburger and Bryce Kelley have been the co-aces of the pitching staff. Weisenburger, headed to the University of Michigan, has compiled a 7-0 record with a 0.60 ERA and 55 strikeouts in 35 innings pitched. Weisenburger is also hitting .357 this season with 10 doubles, two home runs and 21 RBI. Kelley, a lefthander headed to Michigan State, is also turning in a big season for the Rams.

The Holt Rams also have the pitching to go far in the state tournament. Junior Jesse Heikkinen, a Michigan State commit, began the season with a 5-0 record and 0.72 ERA. Sophomore Burrell Jones began the season with a 4-0 record and 1.27 ERA while Scott Barger opened with a 4-0 record and 0.68 ERA.

Midland junior Jordan Patty is getting the job done at the plate and on the mound. Patty threw a no-hitter and came with in one error of a perfect game when he no-hit Bay City Central in a 10-strikeout performance. Patty also collected three hits and three RBI in the game and is hitting .417 this season.

St. Johns junior catcher Adam Proctor is putting up some big numbers this spring. Through the middle of May, Proctor is hitting .462 with six home runs and 30 RBI. Andy Maurer has also been on a tear hitting over .400 this year while on the mound Frankie Posadas is 5-0 with a 1.60 ERA.

Howell pitcher Sam Weatherly has been putting up some impressive numbers. A junior who has committed to Clemson, Weatherly has a 3-0 record with a 1.36 ERA and has recorded 50 strikeouts in 25 innings pitched.

DIVISION 2

DeWitt is ranked third in the state in Division 2 by Prep Baseball Report. The Panthers have been featuring a powerful offense this season led by Michael Stygles, who is hitting .469 with 27 RBI. Kade Preston is hitting .462 while Will Nagel has hit four home runs and driven in 22 runs.

Haslett will provide DeWitt with a major challenge during the

district tournament. The Vikings feature a dominant pitching ace in Luke Sleeper who started the season with a 5-1 record and 1.65 ERA. Senior Hunter Ruhstorfer is the catalyst of the Haslett offense with a .431 batting average along with two home runs and 18 RBI.

DIVISION 3

Sanford-Meridian is ranked third in the state Division 3 and opened the season with a 25-1 record. The Mustangs have solid pitching in senior, Ben Blake, who began the season with a 5-1 record, and Shane Yzquierdo, who opened 4-0. Sanford-Meridian also has a high-powered offense led by seniors Christian and Monte Petre who possess speed and power, Nick Arthur, Stryker O'Boyle, Hunter Merillat and Parker Reynaert.

Jack Pine Conference rival Clare has been battling the Mustangs for the league title and are on a collision course in the district. The Pioneers have a deep and talented pitching staff led by Camden Dice, Max Swain and Travis Vida. Junior catcher Gabe Denton has also been turning in a big year.

New Lothrop is ranked third in the state in D3 and has been tearing the cover off the ball this year. Senior Quentin Taylor is hitting .606 with six home runs and eight doubles. Sophomore Nick Johnson is hitting .493 with eight doubles while sophomore catcher Zac Besant is hitting .491 with nine doubles. Freshman Nate Lane is hitting .488. On the mound, Cam Pope has eight wins and an 0.38 ERA and has recorded 65 strikeouts in 37 innings.

DIVISION 4

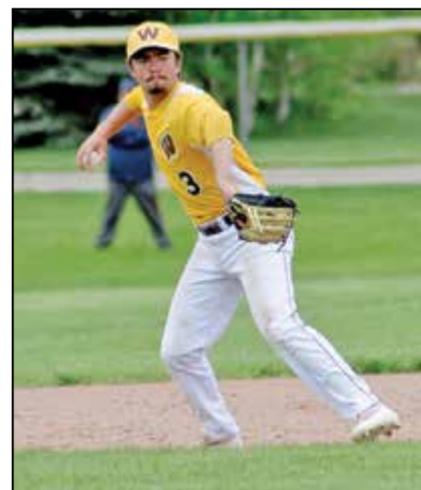
Beal City is ranked third in the state in Division 4 and is primed for a deep tournament run. Senior pitcher/shortstop Chase Rollin leads the Aggies at the plate and on the mound. Senior pitcher Kendall Flaughter and senior catcher Ian Hoogerhyde have also been turning in strong seasons along with sophomore pitcher/third baseman Brett Upton.

Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart captured the Mid-State Athletic Conference title. The Irish have been led on the mound and at the plate by Jackson Reetz and Matt Kornexl. Reetz has a 6-0 record this season while Kornexl opened with a 5-2 record and racked up 19 strikeouts in a game against Edmore-Montabella.

Portland St. Patrick's Brendan Schrauben is turning in a huge season. Schrauben is hitting .468 with six home runs and 34 RBI. Travis Moyer is getting the job done at the plate and on the mound as he is hitting .431 with 24 RBI and has a 7-1 record with a 0.30 ERA.

Fowler has an ace on the mound in Dane Armbrustmacher who has a 6-1 record this season with a 0.50 ERA and 70 strikeouts. At the plate, Nolan Wieber has been pacing the offense with a .432 batting average.

Heritage's Aaron Esparza gets tagged out at the plate during a recent game against Bay City Western. Heritage and the Warriors split a doubleheader on the day. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)



Bay City Western's Jason Clark make a play at third base in the Warriors 4-0 loss to Heritage. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)



Heritage's Elijah Abneth brings the heat against Bay City Western during a recent contest. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)



GI-TEC Students
 Bring this coupon to ICCU's Student-Run Credit Union for a free prize!




ICCUonline.com *One prize per person

Insured Free Estimates Nathan Schooley (989) 388-6924

(989) 388-6924

SCHOOLEY'S LAWN CARE
 Residential • Commercial

Evans Eye Centers
 Dr. Lawrence M. Evans
 OPHTHALMOLOGIST

120 E. Warwick, Alma, MI. 48801 (989) 463-EYES (3937)
 1203 S. Mission, Mt Pleasant, MI. (989) 775-EYES (3937)
 102 S. Third St, Carson City, MI. (989) 584-3111

(989) 463-8321

A great place to join see how we can help you



CRIPPEN MANUFACTURING COMPANY
 Providing Quality Grain Equipment Since 1924!

4000 WOODSIDE DRIVE ST LOUIS, MICHIGAN 48880 PHONE 989.681.4323

www.crippenmfg.com

Good Luck Panthers **DLP**

DLP FINANCIAL GROUP
 & ASSOCIATES, INC.
 WILSON NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE LISTED

RAYMOND JAMES
 Financial Adviser

Daniel R. De Jong, AAMS
 Vice President, Investments

Randy Lewis
 Associate Vice President, Investments

John W. Pobanz
 Financial Adviser

989-463-5052 Toll-Free: 888-846-7895 Fax: 989-463-1989
 dlpfinancialgroup.com

YOUNG OWOSSO
 989-725-2184 • 800-725-2188
 www.YoungAutoSales.com

Chevrolet GMC
 1500 East Main Street
 Owasso, MI 48867

Your Best Deals are at Young in Owasso!!
 Supporting High School Athletics For 25 Years



Howell, Northville Hoping To Break Through With Long Runs

Dan Stickrad
Sports Scene

Northville and Howell have a lot in common when it comes to the sport of baseball. Both have fielded respective ball clubs for the past two-plus decades, and both are normally found in the mix of a division or conference title chase in the Kensington Lakes Activities Association.

Over the past several years, both have spent plenty of time ranked in the Division 1 coaches' poll, and as of May 23, both teams were in a five-way tie for 10th in the state.

No surprise there. KLAAs schools often gain statewide respect and several league members have made deep postseason runs over the years. All-time, the members of the 24-school KLAAs have a 5-1 record in Class A/Division 1 state finals games.

Northville (21-5, 13-3) won the KLAAs-South and Howell (24-6, 14-1) captured the KLAAs-West this season. Northville bested Plymouth Canton, 4-1, for the Kensington Conference title, while Howell edged White Lake Lakeland, 4-1, for the Lakes Conference title.

Howell topped Northville, 3-1, in the KLAAs association finals May 20. Both again have the talent to make their marks in the 2016 postseason.

"One of the most difficult things to do in our area is win a district," noted Northville coach John Kostrzewa. "In recent years, we've had districts where there are two, maybe three ranked teams in our district. It's happened several times. I remember (2007) when we opened with Farmington and both of us were ranked in the top five. We had a 27-game win streak that season. Farmington beat us and reached the state finals before losing (to Lake Orion). Throw (Novi Detroit) Catholic Central in our district, and there's another team that has fielded some really good teams over the years. It's really hard to make a run from our area."

In the state tournament, Northville has never advanced beyond the Class A/Division 1 regional finals. Howell has posted some long tournament runs, reaching the D-1 Final Four in both 2012 and 2013.

"We have never been to the finals," said Howell co-coach Mike Weatherly. "We came close a couple of times. It's just so hard in baseball, maybe harder than any other sport. All it takes is one pitcher that has a great day and it's all over. On the other hand, if you have a lot of good arms, then you might be able to make a run. You have to have some luck, too."

Howell graduated 10 of 20 players after last sea-

son, but are still one of state's best with an arsenal of quality players.

Senior Brian Rindell (2B-P), who was hurt most of last season, has teamed up with seniors Spencer Ford (P-DH-INF) and Brett Chaperson (OF) to form quality leaders. Ford is hitting close to .430 and leads the team in the RBI department.

Junior shortstop Caleb Balgard has already committed to Indiana University. Junior Sam Weatherly, a 6-foot-3 left-hander who has verbally committed to Clemson, has emerged as the ace of the pitching staff and quality arm in the outfield. Senior Bailey Burton (P-INF) has emerged as the team's closer from the bump, junior right-hander Evan Maize is 5-0 on the mound, and junior Kaeon Palmer is the signal caller behind the plate and has handled the staff quite well.

Last season, Howell won a district before falling in the regional semifinals, while in 2014 the Highlanders captured a district title before making a run to the regional finals.

Northville finished 28-3 in 2015. The Mustangs defeated Brighton 3-2 late in the regular season, only to fall to the Bulldogs 6-0 in the pre-district contest.

Northville reached the regional finals two years ago. The Mustangs have reached that point several times in school history, but have never won a regional and made it to the Elite Eight or Final Four.

There are several holdovers at Northville that remember last year's defeat quite well.

Senior Chris Dunn (P-OF) has become one of the team's top pitchers, while fellow senior Zach Prystach (P-OF) has a quality arm. Senior David Dillon (P-INF), junior Kevin Morrissey (SS), junior Nate Wixom (3B), junior Aram Shahrigian (1B-P) and sophomore Jack Sargent (OF) have all had solid seasons.

Shahrigian hits in the clean-up position and has become the program's most improved player.

"We have a core of 6-7 players that have been really solid this season, sort of carrying on our tradition," said Kostrzewa. "We have a solid enough program to where we have new guys that step in every year and help us out."

The idea is for another team from the KLAAs to finish with some state glory in the near future.

"Brighton has had some great teams over the years. So has Hartland and they finally won it last year," said Kostrzewa. "Maybe someone like us, or Howell, or another team from our league will finally make a run to the finals. There is plenty of talent in our league."



Howell is putting together a solid season in the Kensington Lakes Activities Association conference this season. Howell is led by junior Sam Weatherly, a Clemson University commit. (Submitted Photo)

SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON SOFTBALL

Mercy's Vanacker Aims To Help Marlins Glide To Frist Title

Dan Stickrad
Sports Scene

In one of her finest moments of her athletics career this past winter, Sophia Van Acker scored what proved to be the game-winning goal for Farmington Hills Mercy's girls hockey team on the final day of the season.

Van Acker collected a third-period tally in helping Mercy claim its second straight Michigan High School Girls Hockey Coaches Association state title with a 3-2 victory over Grosse Pointe South.

Now, Van Acker is one of the top players on Mercy's softball team that is gunning for its first state title this season. The Marlins reached the Division 1 Final Four a year ago, leaving a certain hunger for Van Acker and her teammates to end the season on a high note in 2016.

The school's best-ever finish in softball was a state runner-up trophy back in 2002.

Mercy is loaded this season and on a mission, entering the Catholic High School League champions May 23 with a stellar 26-1 record and a No. 2 ranking in the D-1 state rankings. The Marlins reached the state semifinals last year before falling to Caledonia (5-2) and returned over 80 percent of the roster, including Van Acker, one of the state's rising stars.

"I think one of the reasons I went to Mercy was its athletics tradition and it also offers great academics. It offers everything," said Van Acker. "The softball team is always really good. I wanted to be a part of that."

Van Acker was one of four All-State players on the Marlins' roster last season, including 2015 Miss Softball winner Alex Sobczak and Abby Krzywiecki, a candidate for the award this season.

"With all of the talent we've had the past three years, Sophia, in a way, has been in the shadows a little bit of Alex Sobczyk and Abby (Krzywiecki)," admitted Mercy coach Alec Lesko. "She's a great player in her own right and I wouldn't be surprised to see her be up for Miss Softball next year as a senior. She's tearing the cover off the ball and she's a great outfielder. She's our anchor out there."

Van Acker, who earned All-State Honorable Mention honors last season as a sophomore left fielder, has shifted over to center field and has utilized her speed to patrol the outer rim with near perfection. She bats in the No. 2 position in the order.

"When I was younger, I played second base. But not anymore. I love the outfield," said Van Acker, whose team only lost to Richmond early in the season in a weekend tournament. "They moved me out there in ninth grade because of my speed. I love it. You get to do acrobatic leaps for catches and you get to (chase) down fly balls. It only took me a couple of games to fall in love with the outfield."

Van Acker is hitting close to .600 this season and has an on-base percentage close to .700. She is a shoe-in for All-State honors again this season.

The speedster has already picked up an offer from Division I Oakland University and is on the radar of multiple D-I and D-II college programs. She hopes that another long tournament run, plus suiting up for Finesse travel team this summer, will help her gain plenty of exposure.

"I don't know where I want to play just yet. I wouldn't mind going away to school, learning a new area and exploring," she said. "But if the right offer comes near close to home, I will be fine with that."

Van Acker said her team is eyeing the big prize this season — the school's first state title in softball.

"I think we're coming around. We were a great offensive team last year and now we might be just as good, maybe even better this year before it's over," noted VanAcker. "We have a lot of talent on this team and we love playing with each other. It is our goal to get to the state finals and try to win it."

If that happens, it will be another great moment in Sophia Van Acker's career. And there have been plenty.

Farmington Hills Mercy outfielder Sophia VanAcker, only a junior, is following in the footsteps of many top players who have put on the Marlins uniform in recent seasons. Mercy made it all the way to the Division 1 semifinals a year ago. (Submitted Photos)



lean
lifestyle, exercise and nutrition

116 N. Mill St., St. Louis, Michigan
989-620-0365
info@leangroupfitness.com

COMPUTER CABLE CONCEPTS, INC.
VOICE & DATA CABLING • NETWORK CABLING • FIBER OPTICS

5904 STERLING DRIVE
HOWELL, MI 48843
PH: 517.548.9800
FAX: 517.580.0504
CELL: 810.599.5916
MIKE@COMPUTERCABLECONCEPTS.COM

MIKE MATLOCK
OWNER

211 N. Grand Ave.
Suite 200
Fowlerville, MI 48836

6 Days A Week
Closed Tuesdays
Call For Hours

Find Us

www.sudzpetsgrooming.com
Visit pocketpleasers.com/192 For Coupons!

300 BOWL
All You Can Bowl!
Regular Or Laser **\$5.00**
Great Food, Great Fun!
BOOK YOUR PARTY NOW
LASER BOWL - CHRISTMAS - BIRTHDAY - ANY BIG EVENT

300 BOWL 3000 WEST MONROE (M-46)
ALMA, MI 48801 • (989) 463-3000
SAT. NOON-11PM • SUN.-FRI. 4PM-11PM

ALLEY 1
SCREEN PRINTING & EMBROIDERY

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS
SCREEN PRINTING
EMBROIDERY
LOGO DIGITIZING
ON SIGHT DESIGNER
SCHOOL SPIRIT WEAR

P: (989) 875-4793 F: (989) 875-7148 www.alley1.com M-TH 8-5
designs@alley1.com 103 S Jeffery Ave. Ithaca, MI 48847 SAT 9-1 F 8-5:30

THE STORE
BEER GAS LOTTERY

Medium Pizza Special!
Up To 3 Items
\$10 + Tax
Available 7 Days A Week!

Elm Hall • 989-833-7311
Open Sun - Thurs 7am - 10pm
Fri & Sat 7am - 11pm
*Deli closes one hour before store closing

NEW OWNERSHIP!
Stop In And See BIG MIKE!

JIM NAVARRE
Central Michigan's Fastest Growing Ford and Lincoln Mercury Dealership

Supporting Gratiot County's Youth for Over 25 Years!
- Our Hard Working Sales Staff.
Bob Bechill Jim Britting Tom Wesolek TJ Hodges

M-46 • Alma • Between Alma & St. Louis • (989) 681-5776 • www.jimnavarreford.com
We Service What We Sell, Just Ask Our Many Satisfied Customers!!!

True Value
START RIGHT. START HERE.™
PAINT SPECIAL

ALMA
Alma True Value
102 W. Superior Street
Phone (989) 463-4921

CARSON CITY
Barnes True Value Hardware
132 W. Main Street
Phone (989) 584-6411

EDMORE
Edmore True Value
418 E. Main Street
Phone (989) 427-5637



COVER YOUR DREAMS

We're here for you to help make your dreams come true. Ask us about our farm insurance!



Swan Valley Putting Together Magical Season; Area Teams Gearing Up For Post Season Push

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

When it comes to putting big numbers on the scoreboard, few teams do it as well as the Swan Valley softball team. Ranked number one in the state in D2, the Vikings have been steam rolling everyone in their way en route to a 29-0 record. Swan Valley has defeated some of the state's best competition including sweeps of Mt. Pleasant and Unionville-Sebewaing and a win over Bay City Western.

Swan Valley hitters are putting up video game numbers like junior shortstop Lauren Addy, who is hitting .626 this season with 12 doubles, seven triples, 48 runs scored and a perfect 55-for-55 stealing bases.

Fellow junior Rebecca Curtis is hitting .584 this spring with 12 doubles, four home runs and 38 RBI and is 23-for-23 stealing bases. Supplying more offense is sophomore Kaylynn Gulliver who is hitting .559 with six home runs and 23 RBI, junior Grace Dutoi who is hitting .548 with five home runs and 41 RBI, senior Jenna Baase who is hitting .544 with 14 doubles, five home runs and 46 RBI and senior Kaylie Scott is hitting .511 with nine doubles and 36 RBI.

The Vikings have strong pitching to go with the hitting as Gulliver is 14-0 with a 0.56 ERA and eight shutouts while fellow sophomore Callie Burgess is 14-0 with a 1.01 ERA, five shutouts and 92 strikeouts in 76 innings pitched.

Few teams can match the pitching depth of Portland, ranked eighth in the state in D2. What is more impressive is that all three Portland pitchers are underclassmen. Sophomore Abby Grys has a 0.27 ERA this season, sophomore Shelby Battley is 9-2 with a 2.29 ERA and freshman Adrianna Novara is 9-1 with a 0.95 ERA. Veteran Portland coach Jack Anderson also recorded his 700th career win during May.

DeWitt is turning in a solid season. The Panthers handed previously unbeaten Grand Ledge its first loss of the season. Nikki Willard has been leading the way for DeWitt with a .519 batting average and 25 RBI.

Breckenridge is having a solid season in Division 4 ranked 10th in the latest polls. (Randy Miniard, High School Sports Scene Photos)

Senior catcher Abby VanLake turned in a big day at the plate against Grand Ledge with a home run and four RBI.

The future looks bright for Alma, where the Panthers have a pair of solid young pitchers. Freshman pitcher Danielle Shaw has tossed a pair of no-hitters this spring and has struck out 71 batters in 64 innings pitched. Sophomore Amanda Efav has struck out 85 batters in 61 innings and is holding opposing batters to a .202 batting average.

Corunna sophomore Tori Hyde is having a big season as she is hitting .564 with a .607 on-base percentage and 18 stolen bases.

Division 3

The St. Louis softball team is turning in a big season. The Sharks have a 23-6 record headed into the final week of the regular season. Senior pitcher Nicole Koczenasz, who has singled to pitch at Muskegon Community College, is leading the pitching staff along with Alexis Beeson. Aynslee Kouth and Meghan Smith have been leading the hit parade along with Beeson.

The Ithaca softball team has been putting up some big numbers this spring. Senior outfielder Brooklyn Dolloff is hitting .646 this spring while sophomore Kayla Belles is hitting .644. Senior Kylee Chaffin has been getting the job done at the plate where she is hitting .568 with three home runs and 32 RBI while in the circle she has totaled 99 strikeouts with an ERA of 0.48.

Edmore-Montabella has a pair of talented hitters in Jenna Harrison and junior Madi Cutler. Harrison is hitting .469 this spring while Cutler is hitting .446 with a .526 on-base percentage.

Division 4

The Fulton-Middleton softball team captured its first-ever conference championship when it swept Laingsburg to win the CMAC title. Senior pitcher Connor Proctor led the way when she tossed her fifth no-hitter of the season in game one. Proctor finished the day with 21 total strikeouts to move her career total to 998. Fulton-Middleton has also been getting the job done on offense led by seniors



Kirsten Maniez, Chloe Fife and Proctor along with junior Savannah Fuller and sophomore Kate Good.

The Coleman softball team is ranked number one in Division 1 with a perfect 27-0 record. Senior Grace Staley has been putting up some huge numbers with a .581 batting average, .629 on-base percentage, 50 runs scored and 37 RBI.

The Breckenridge softball team is ranked 10th in the state in D4. Kylie Federspiel leads a balanced attack along with Makayla Young, Bri Gillis and Lizzy Hart while Allison Willman and Maddy Smith lead the pitching staff and have also contributed at the plate.

Fowler has a pair of strong hitters this season. Taylor Schmitt is hitting .510 for the Eagles with 28 stolen bases while Jolie Weber is hitting .502.

Division 1

Midland is ranked fifth in the state in D1 and is poised for a long tournament run. Junior

pitcher Maya Kipfmiller has been getting the job done at the plate and in the circle where she has pitched a no-hitter against Lapeer. Jillian Elmer and Zoe Manary have also had big years at the plate and add to the pitching depth. Tara and Julie Gross, Nicole Miller and Allison Gray have also been hitting the ball well this season.

Grand Ledge has been turning in a big season. The Comets were undefeated before falling to DeWitt. Kahlei Ethridge, Lindsay Goodman and Emily Songer have paced the offense while Songer has been the ace of the pitching staff.

Walled Lake Central's Kaitlyn Wolschlagler has been putting up some big numbers this spring as she is hitting .615 with 13 doubles, 10 hoe runs and 54 RBI. Freshman Molly Padrock is also hitting .554.

Veteran Mt. Pleasant coach Ted McIntyre recently won his 1,000th career game when the Oilers swept a doubleheader from Saginaw Arthur Hill.

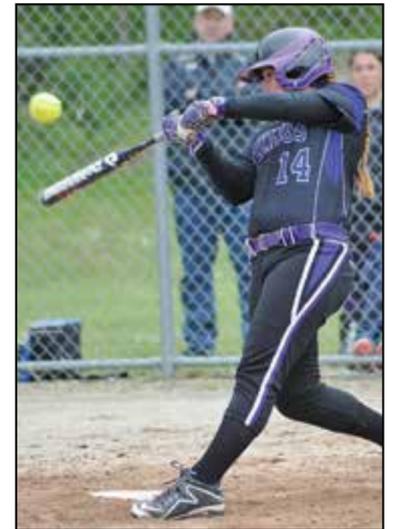
Prior to press time the Swan Valley girls softball team was undefeated at 31-0 and was currently ranked No. 1 in Division 2. The Vikings narrowly escaped victory defeating Unionville-Sebewaing 3-2 May 15 as Becca Curtis slid under a tag at home plate to secure the victory. Senior Jenna Basse had the game-winning hit. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)



USA pitcher Nicole Bauer has the Patriots thinking repeat in Division 4. USA is currently ranked No. 2 behind Coleman in the latest polls.



DeWitt and Eaton Rapids do battle in the rugged CACC during a recent early season contest. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photos)



Swan Valley junior Grace Dutoi delivers a hit against USA.

Kingsley Insurance Group
Rich and Louanne Kingsley
800-783-0817

Alma 116 W. Superior Street Suite 1 989-463-5347	St. Johns 1000 E. Stugis St Suite 12 989-224-3505	Lansing 526 S. Creyts Rd. Suite C. 517-489-2257
--	---	---

— Auto / Home — **CIRCLE OF HONOR** — Boat / Umbrella—
www.KingsleyInsuranceGroup.com

BOLAND'S
BEST ONE TIRE
BRECKENRIDGE

The Leader In The Field

120 S. Pine Street
Breckenridge, MI 48615
989-842-5855

General • Cooper
Firestone • Bridgestone
Goodyear

24 Hour On The Road Service
Large Selection of Farm Tires ~ Semi
Light Truck ~ Passenger ~ ATV ~ Lawn & Garden

Serving Mid-Michigan • Fully Insured

Grass Wackers Inc.
Lawn Care Service
(989) 763-1425

DAN SEELEY

Lawn Mowing and Trimming • Trees and Shrub Care
Spring and Fall Clean-Ups • Fertilizing

BRECKENRIDGE INSURANCE
AGENCY OF MICHIGAN

989-842-3161
www.biaofmi.com

Auto-Owners
INSURANCE
LIFE • HOME • CAR • BUSINESS

Committed to our Future ...

Village of Breckenridge

Inspired by our Past.

A Brother/Sister Championship Combo In St. Charles

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

St. Charles High School's Brenden Slick and his younger sister, Sammi, felt like they were teammates again, even though this time they were on separate teams.

As children, they were on the same T-ball and Coach Pitch teams. Soon enough they were divided by boy/girl tradition - Brenden to baseball, of course, and Sammi to softball.

But for one shining moment last season, there was a memorable bond. The St. Charles baseballers, with Brenden at second base, captured a Division 3 district championship at Montrose. Then the fellows gathered at an adjacent diamond to celebrate the closing inning of a Lady Bulldogs' district crown, with Sammi in outfield.

The entire baseball team at that moment was providing support for the girls, "but I was probably watching it with more focus," recalled Brenden, who is graduating this spring. Sammi is a year younger.

Their parents are Kraig and Angie Slick. Kraig coached them in T-ball and Coach Pitch, and always joined them in the family yard for fun practices. Then, when the those years were finished, Dad and Brenden followed the baseball route while continuing to support and to encourage Sammi.

When games were at the same time, the games became father/son and mother/daughter events. Sammi noted that because

softball games generally transpire faster than baseball contests, a common scenario was that she would view the final innings of Brenden's games.

"I feel like I grew up watching him," she said.

The siblings also played basketball, extending through St. Charles High School, and sometimes their games were scheduled as varsity doubleheaders, but they say the sports with bats, balls and gloves always have been their favorites. They are soft-spoken and all-positive when describing how they evaluate one another's skills and performances.

Sammi praises Brenden's versatility - he switched to third base this year and has played all the infield positions at one time or another "with very good mechanics and good hands." But is she implying that her brother is all field/no hit? "No," she quickly responded. "He's a really good hitter, too."

In turn, Brenden lauds Sammi as "aggressive and competitive" behind the plate, with a "pretty good arm." So would he try to steal a base on her? "Definitely not," he insisted.

As highlights, Brenden recalls his sister belting a pair of homers in the same game and Sammi remembers her brother launching a grand slam homer in the district tournament.

"He's a good teammate, always someone you can count on," Sammi says, describing her brother the baseball player - and also her brother as simply her brother.



Brenden and Sammi Slick helped the St. Charles baseball and softball teams to district titles a year ago. The brother and sister team have been a mainstay in the St. Charles sports community each of the last four years. Brenden will graduate this year and Sammi will be right behind him in 2017. (Submitted Photo)

Gary A. Schluackebien
General Dentistry
921 N. Pine River Rd.
(989) 875-4721
thacamidelist.com

GO DEWITT PANTHERS! **GO ITHACA YELLOWJACKETS!**

Simmet Insurance Agency
Established 1939
"Protection For You & Yours"
Auto - Home - Farm
Business - Life

Agents:
Bradley M. Simmet
Candice L. Waisson
Autumn Koobel
Brandon M. Simmet

117 West Center
Ithaca, MI 48847
Ph. (989) 875-8580

EFAW BUILDERS
COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL

FULL SERVICE BUILDING LICENSED & INSURED
AND REMODELING Charles Efav
Cell: (989) 763-0916 efawbuilders@msn.com

Become a School Coach or Game Official
Contact your local high school athletic administrator or the Michigan High School Athletic Association

MHSAA
michigan high school athletic association

1661 Ramblewood Dr.
East Lansing, MI 48823
517-332-5046
www.mhsaa.com



Presents

Sparrow Hospital's PEAK PERFORMERS

Fulton Softball Celebrates First Ever League Crown

John Raffel
Sports Scene

The 2016 Fulton softball team is one Pirate sports fans will remember for a long time.

The Pirates won their first ever softball league title in program history by finishing first in the Central Michigan Athletic Conference. Coach Chris Barrus also said it's the first league title at Fulton for any girls program since 1980.

It's his second year as varsity head skipper but he also was assistant coach four years prior to that.

A key reason for Fulton's success has been the pitching talents of Connor Proctor. As of mid-May, the team was 22-4, which was also Proctor's record with an ERA of 1.127. She's pitched all but five of Fulton's innings so far this season. She's also had one of the team's top batting averages at .414. Leadoff hitter Kirsten Maniez also has had a productive season at .403.

The conference record was 12-2. Saranac and Laingsburg were the two biggest rivals for Fulton's conference title bid. Fulton clinched the title on May 19 when it defeated Laingsburg 2-0 and 5-1 in a league twinbill.

Proctor's senior season has been huge for Fulton.

"She's basically our workhorse," Barrus said. "It's been her work ethic and the

way she comes to practice every day trying to get better. She throws pretty hard. She has command with the pitches she does throw. She hits her spots."

Barrus coached Proctor last season.

"She improved every year in batting, pitching, everything," he said. "She's been able to pick her spots. Her location has improved this year."

The key behind Proctor's successful hitting, "has been her approach at the plate," Barrus added.

The first conference title "is huge for the school, huge for the girls and huge for the program, Barrus said. "That's a pretty good accomplishment. As much work as they have put in, they deserve the reward of a conference title."

Barrus has high hopes for postseason contention.

"We have never won a district title," he said. "That would be our next goal."

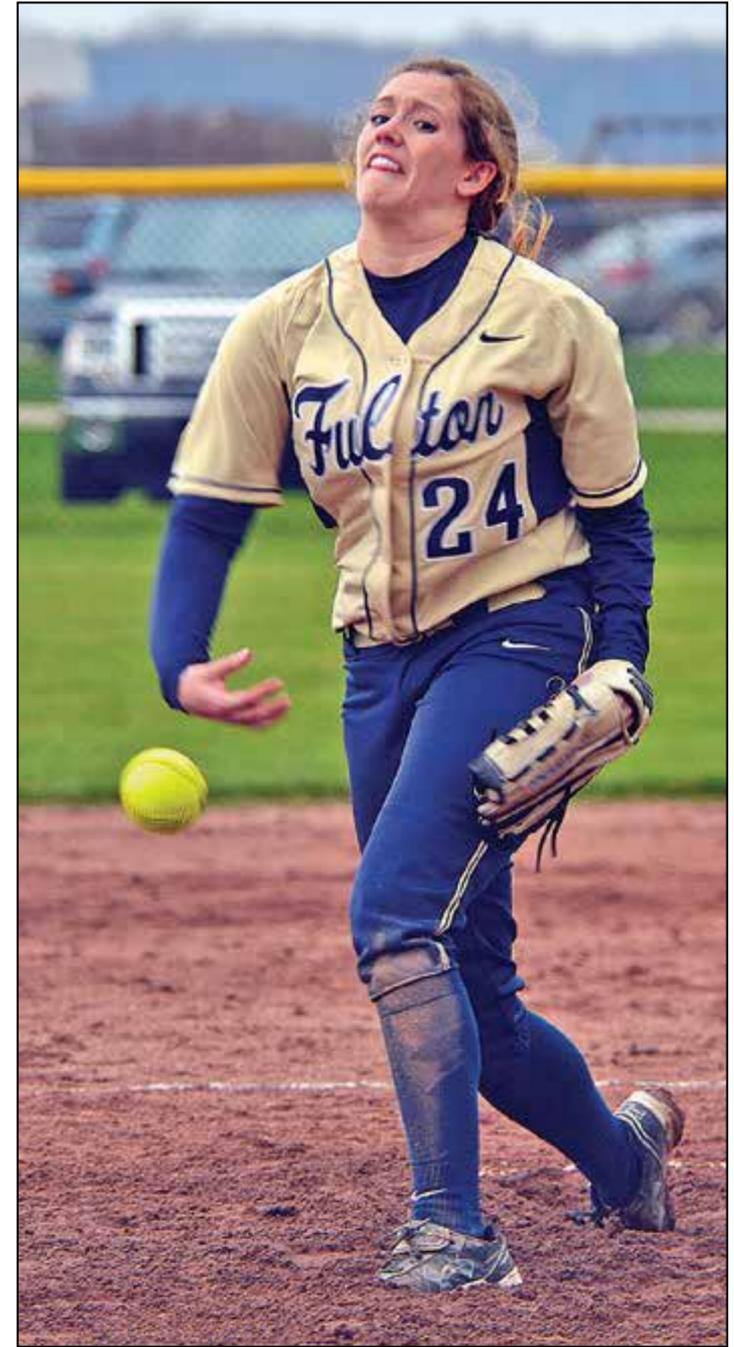
Coming into the season, Barrus knew his team would have talent.

"What made me a little apprehensive coming into the season is how young we really were," he said. "We had to fill a lot of holes. There were some younger girls who would have to step up. I knew we could hit the ball and Connor could do her thing. It was a matter if we could back her up and play good defense."

That question was answered as soon as the league championship celebration began.



Fulton's Connor Proctor has helped lead the Pirates to the school's first ever softball conference championship in 2016. (Skip Traylor, High School Sports Scene Photo)



Choose Wisely. Choose Sparrow.

Making the right decision is important. Especially when it comes to your health. Sparrow is a leader in every major area of care. Choosing Sparrow means getting clinical expertise, exceptional nurses and breakthrough treatments, unavailable anywhere else in the region. Call 1.800.Sparrow to find your Sparrow Physician today.

Sparrow.org/SparrowCarson • 989.584.3131



St. Johns Standout Sees Siblings As Role Models

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

Kendall Smith's older twin sisters and her brother paved the way for athletic achievement at St. Johns High, but she does not feel a burden of pressure to match their footsteps.

"I use that as motivation," she explained. "I look up to them."

Kendall is wrapping up her junior seasons in volleyball and softball. The daughter of Kevin and Chrissi Smith said her favorite sport is whichever one happens to be in season at the particular time, but she can't be blamed for leaning toward softball, because her father is a St. Johns assistant coach, and as a child she played stick ball and Whiffle ball with her older sisters - Kayleigh and Karrigan - in the family's front yard.

The twins have finished their freshman year at Michigan State, where Chrissi works in the college of music. Kayleigh also took part in high school softball and volleyball, while Karrigan took a different path into distance running with a Division 2 state championship in cross country and a pair of crowns in the track 1600 (including a state record 4:51.0). Devin, a 2010 graduate, opted for wrestling and football at St. Johns. In wrestling, he was captain of a state title team and placed fifth individually.

Therefore, in their sports choices, Kendall most closely follows Kayleigh. But even in that case, Kendall finds her own space.

"We play different positions, so that makes a difference, too," Kendall noted. Kayleigh was an ace pitcher, while Kendall stars in centerfield. A common trait is their speed. At one point during the 2015 season, they were tied among the Lansing area's leaders in stolen bases with 22 apiece, and Kendall's favorite athlete is Curtis Granderson, the New York Mets' fleet centerfielder who started his career with the Detroit Tigers.

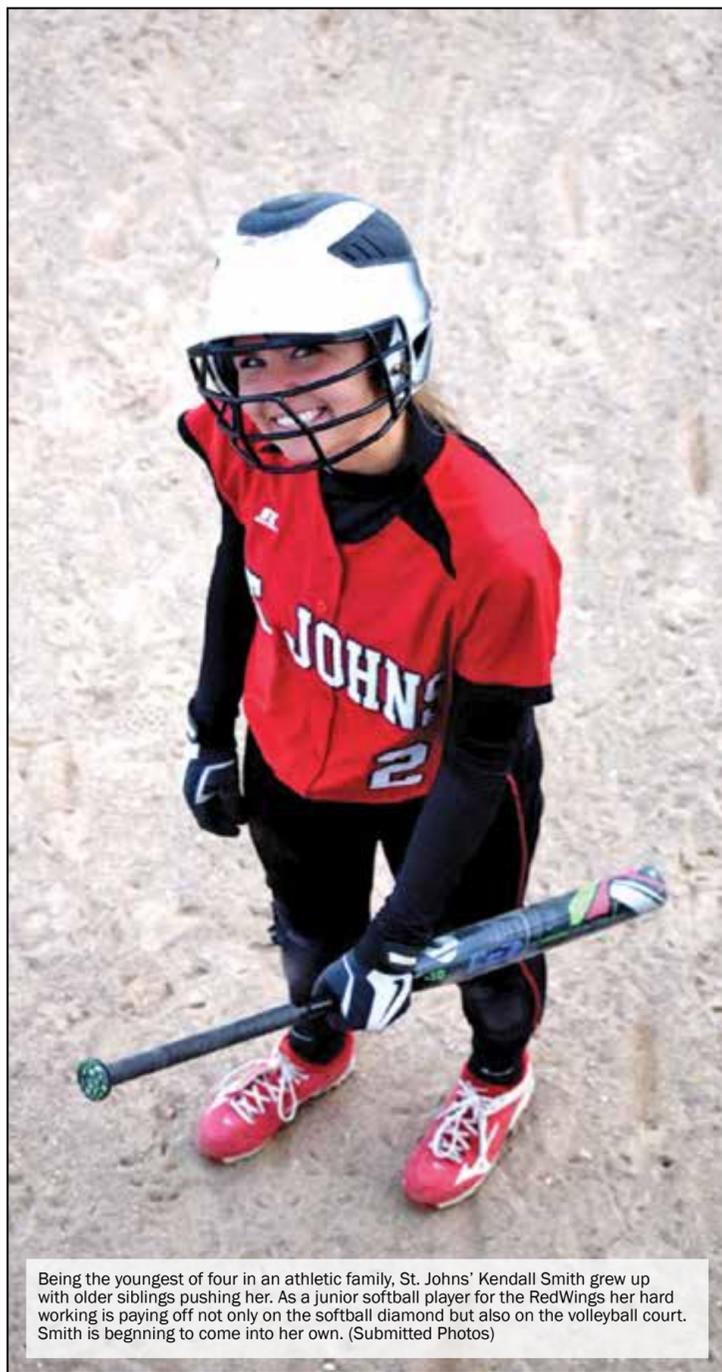
At MSU, Karrigan completed the fall 2015 cross country season as a redshirt freshman. She looks forward to regular competition when the leaves change colors again in a few months.

"I have to be patient and trust the process. Not everything's going to happen at once," said Karrigan, who also sampled some steeplechase runs during her redshirt time.

Meanwhile, Kayleigh took part in intramural volleyball and found herself by chance in Karrigan's shoes. Kayleigh took up distance running to stay in shape, to the point where she is prepping for the Upper Peninsula's Pictured Rocks Half-Marathon late in June. She's now up to 40 miles of training per week.

"It's a lot more than being physically tough," Kayleigh says. "It's the mental aspect."

In the end, all the sports activities don't get in the way of academics. The twins both are studying kinesiology and have achieved Dean's List status, while Kendall aims for a college education for a career in speech therapy.



Being the youngest of four in an athletic family, St. Johns' Kendall Smith grew up with older siblings pushing her. As a junior softball player for the RedWings her hard working is paying off not only on the softball diamond but also on the volleyball court. Smith is beginning to come into her own. (Submitted Photos)



Koczenasz Having Excellent Season For St. Louis

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Nicole Koczenasz has been having a dream season for St. Louis's softball team, much to the Sharks' delight.

Her coach, Robin Hanline has had Koczenasz on the varsity for four seasons. This year, as of mid-May, she was 11-2 with a 1.791 ERA, and it's been her best season.

"She's matured a lot," Hanline said. "Before it was more of a mind game a little bit. If someone made a mistake, she took that to heart. But now she's doing a good job of getting it done herself. She's definitely improved."

Hanline added that Koczenasz's fastball has been effective.

"Her curveball has been real effective," the Sharks coach said. "Her freshman year was a little rough. We didn't have everything to go along with that. She was 2-9. She was young. There were a lot of errors that contributed. Her sophomore year was definitely better. She was 7-11. Last year, she did well, and had a lot of close losses that should have been wins, minus some errors. She was 14-9 as a junior. Her ERA was 3.5. She's almost cut that in half."

Koczenasz threw a no-hitter against Chesaning. "She's really been throwing well the last couple of weeks," Hanline said. "In the league, she's only given up 18 hits in six games. That's pretty good. She only gave up three hits against Ithaca and Merrill. She's also seen action in second games."

Koczenasz has been batting .328. "She has a lot of power," Hanline said. "She's had multi-base hits with five doubles, three triples and one home run. Her (on-base) percentage is .506

so she's very selective. She doesn't get a lot of great pitches to hit. She leads the team with 20 walks, which is double from everyone else has. She's been a good hitter for four years. But she's been at the top this year. She's a very hard worker. She works with a pitching coach all year round."

"I think I hit better last year," Koczenasz said. "I have hit a home run this season and I'm hoping I can get better and contribute to my RBI."

Koczenasz has committed to Muskegon Community College.

"I was going to sign with Alma," she said. "I really connected with the girls (at MCC). I'm hoping I can develop my skills, and then I could go to a (four-year) school."

The Sharks started out the year at 25-6 prior to a showdown with Valley Lutheran.

"It's tight group of girls who work as a team," Hanline said. "I have eight batters hitting .300, so that helps. We're averaging 9.9 runs a game. Nicole has only given up not quite two runs (a game). You win a lot of games that way. We're all doing what we can."

"It's mostly been my defense and knowing I have a good defense behind me," Koczenasz said. "As a pitcher, it gives me more confidence knowing they'll back me up. I'll back them up and will try my best to hit corners and try to get them to pop up. I know my defense will get it."

It's been a close team, Koczenasz said.

"I would say we all connect really well this year," she added. "I'm hoping we continue with our bats and hits. We're hoping for the conference title and are hoping for the districts. We want to go far this year."

The Sharks ended the regular season second in the conference at 12-2.



The St. Louis softball team has put together a dream season in 2016 led by senior pitcher Nicole Koczenasz. The Sharks finished second in the Tri-Valley Conference West Division with a 12-2 record. (Randy Miniard, High School Sports Scene Photo)

U.S. 27 YOUR GATEWAY TO THE NORTH SUPERSTORE!
866-554-4217
MOTORSPORTS & TRAILERS
www.us27motorsports.com
LINK TO US-27 HERE!

SERVICE PROFESSIONAL AND PARTS EXPERTS.....SERVICING ALL MODELS OF ATVs, MOTORCYCLES, SNOWMOBILES, PWC AND TRAILERS

EXCELLENT QUALITY! WINTER FUN! HUNTERS WELCOME! RIDERS WANTED! FALL COLOR TOURS! BEST DEALS!

can-am POLARIS HONDA YAMAHA ski-doo SUZUKI seadoo ARCTIC CAT SURE-TRAC

NEXT LEVEL
 Graphic & Design
 SCREEN PRINTING - EMBROIDERY
 GRAPHICS - SIGNS - SPORTS APPAREL
 989-681-0009 118 N. Mill St.
nextlevelgd@gmail.com St. Louis, MI.

PLUMBING • HEATING • AIR CONDITIONING • ELECTRICAL
FREE ESTIMATES
Powell's Service, Inc.
 760 East Monroe Road (M-46)
 St. Louis, Michigan 48880
 Phone: (989) 681-5751
 Fax: (989) 681-3583
 1-800-576-3555
DAN SHERWOOD
 Owner/Manager

ANDERSON CUSTOM CARPETING
Mary Anderson
 Store Manager
989-681-3536
 603 E. Washington
 St. Louis, MI 48880
 Hours:
 M-F 8-5:30; Sat. 9-2

Shepherd's Standout Pitcher Also Proving To Be A Capable Hitter

Almost everyone realized how talented of a pitcher Hayley Buckley was with the Shepherd Bluejays. But this season, Buckley has proven how talented she can be in the batter's box as a senior.

It's her fourth varsity season. "We have a really good team this year and we have a really good shot of making it pretty far," Buckley said.

This is Buckley's best overall season. At the plate, she's batting .460.

"This is the first year I've gotten to bat," she said. "My coaches in previous years were worried about me getting hurt. This year, I convinced them to give me a shot and I've been holding up my end of the deal."

Coaches wanted Buckley to focus on pitching.

"A lot of times if I would strike out or something, I would be upset with myself," she said. "Just thinking only about pitching would be easier."

But being able to bat has been enjoyable.

"I really like it that I can help my team out more," Buckley said. "I got my first home run at Essexville-Garber. That was really cool."

As of mid-May, Buckley had 260 strikeouts. The Bluejays were 25-6 and Buckley had done all of the pitching except for one inning. Her ERA is slightly above 1.00.

As a pitcher this season, "I've added some speed to it a little bit," Buckley said. "We had one guy come with a radar gun and he said I was around 60. It's a little more speed added and more movement on the ball and hitting my spots better."

Buckley established herself as a talented pitcher her first three seasons.

"My freshman year, I was happy to be on varsity and wanted to (prove) I should be there," she said. "My sophomore year, I was more open to speak out more because I had been there for a year. My junior year, I definitely felt more comfortable and opened up with the team. This year, we have a strong group of seniors. We're

keeping the whole team motivated and showing how dedicated we are to be here. As a team, we've done very well."

This is "by far" the best team she's played for, Buckley said.

She started pitching since fifth grade.

"We've gone to pitching coaches here or there," Buckley said. "For the most part, my dad taught me everything pretty much. We looked up stuff on online and figured it out on our own."

In her first three seasons, Buckley was all-conference and all-district. She was all-state honorable mention last season. She's planning on entering the Marines.

Buckley also ran cross country and track and played volleyball as a freshman.

Being a hitter this season has complemented her pitching abilities, Buckley agreed.

"When I get a good hit, I go into the next inning feeling good about my team and feeling I've done my part," she said



Senior Hayley Buckley carries the pitching load for the Shepherd softball team. (Randy Miniard, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Nelson Swinging Productive Bat For Shepherd Softball Team

John Raffel Sports Scene

Bobb Servoss is coaching a Shepherd softball team that has a lot of talent.

That talent includes Adri Nelson, who hit nine home runs and 33 RBI in her first 25 games as of mid-May with a .488 batting average, .907 slugging percentage and 1.423 on base percentage.

Nelson is a sophomore who was brought up at the end of her freshman season. It's her first full year, but she has already established herself as one of the top power hitters in the area.

"I knew she was a heckuva talent," Servoss said. "She kind of took off this year. She's gotten a lot stronger."

Nelson has played strictly catcher this year.

"She caught every game on JV last year," Servoss added. "When I brought her up, I brought her and the pitcher up, and we started practicing. We noticed she chased a flyball as well as anyone on our team. We were having a few problems in the outfield. So when I brought her up, we put her strictly in the outfield."

Nelson played six games as a freshman and hit .364.

"From what I saw last year, I could tell she was a really good hitter average wise," Servoss continued. "I never thought she would hit that many home runs. I didn't see the power she displayed this year. We spend a lot of time in practice hitting. We went out and bought a pretty nice pitching machine and spent a lot of time hitting a softball."

"I have high expectations for myself," Nelson said. "I feel that I could exceed more

than I have been. We've been working at practice on hitting more line drives than home runs."

Against Alma, she had back-to-back at-bat home runs.

"In our game against Bullock Creek, one of their coaches is one of my summer ball coaches, and he pitched around me a little bit," Nelson recalled. "I hit a single, double and triple off them in the first game. I've been working on my mechanics this year and have been loosening up."

As a catcher "she's a pretty good receiver and has a very strong arm," Servoss said. "Nobody seems to run too much on her. I think they watch her throw during infield practice."

Nelson has been playing softball since she was five. It's her best hitting season ever so far.



Shepherd's Adri Nelson has hit nine homeruns in her first 25 games this season for the Bluejays. (Randy Miniard, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Mt. Pleasant's Ted McIntyre Eclipses 1,000 Win Plateau

John Raffel Sports Scene

Ted McIntyre has seen plenty of wins in his 41 years as Mount Pleasant's softball coach. But a sweep over Saginaw Arthur Hill 20-0 and 6-0 was especially rewarding on May 9.

Those wins put McIntyre at the 1,000-win mark. He's the sixth Michigan high school coach to hit that mark along with Diane Laffey (Warren Regina), Brad Walraven (Frankenmuth), Tom Kennelly (Swan Valley), Denny Dock and Joe Alsop (White Lake-Lakeland).

McIntyre, 66, started the Oiler softball program in 1975, and except for one season, has been the program's only coach. He played high school ball at Lincoln Alcona, and after graduating from Central Michigan University, he was hired in 1973 as Mount Pleasant's math teacher. All of his softball coaching years have been with the Oilers.

"In 1975, there was a threat of a Title IX lawsuit and they had to institute (women sports)," McIntyre said. "Softball was one of the sports we added. There were a few schools ahead of us."

After the sweep over Arthur Hills, McIntyre's record was 1,002-375 as of May 19.

"It's kind of neat, I guess," he said. "I think more so than the milestone was having all the (former players) come back. They really made a pretty special event out of that. We had kids from the 80s and 70s. We had two kids from the original team in 1975, of course they're not kids anymore. It was neat."

A solid summer program has been the key behind that success, as far as McIntyre is

concerned.

"It hasn't been done by me alone," he said. "This is parents and we have a lady that's run our summer program since the 1980s."

In 1982, McIntyre was laid off and went to Brighton to teach. Then he got called back to Mount Pleasant.

2016 marks his first year of retirement.

"It's nice to not have to rush around and do things, and to have time to set things up and get things organized. I'm adjusting to it," he said.

The Oilers earned a state title in 1993 under McIntyre's leadership.

"That was obviously very special," McIntyre said. "We got to the semis and finals back in 2010. That was special for that team too. There have been special years, but they've all been fun."

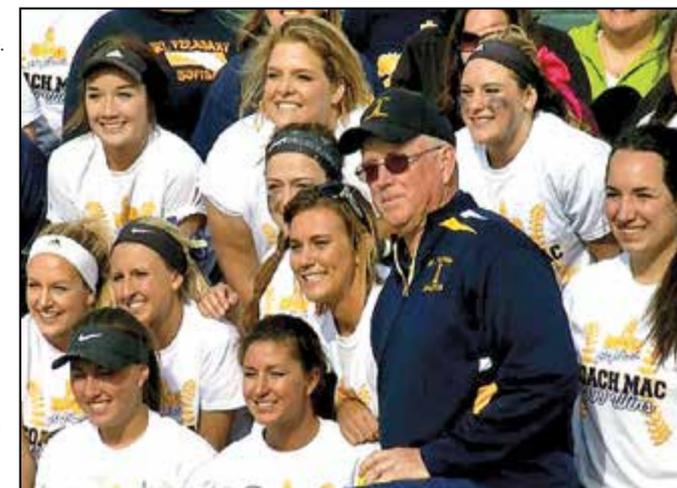
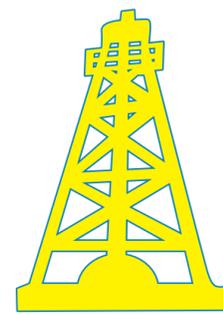
McIntyre said his teams work "hard on the fundamentals of the game at this stage and time. You're working on cutoffs and what I consider technical things. In the beginning, you're working on fielding the groundballs and the technique of throwing and all kinds of things. It's a matter of being fundamental on strategic things. It's a matter now of getting them to execute under pressure."

It's a "year by year" deal for McIntyre.

"I'm happy and having a good time," he said. "Hopefully there's a message of some type that tells me when to quit."

His team is 23-6.

McIntyre coached football for several years and his son, Jason, is now the head coach while Ted works with the JV team. He has also worked with the basketball team.



Mt. Pleasant softball coach Ted McIntyre recently recorded his 1,000th career victory with a pair of wins over Saginaw Arthur Hill. He is only the fourth coach in MHSAA history to hit that milestone. (Submitted Photo)

Northwestern Mutual

 114 E. Broadway Street
 Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
 989 773 6433 office
 989 621 4990 cell
 989 773 6477 fax
 ryan.hohlbein@nm.com
 www.nm.com/ryanhohlbein
Ryan D. Hohlbein
 Financial Representative

VALET AUTO CARE, INC.

 • FIRE Pickup Toppers
 • Track Accessories
 • Tonneau Covers
 • Detailed Auto Cleaning
 Over 100 new and used toppers on site
 Factory seconds also available
 610 N. Mission (in Mount Pleasant
 (2 blocks S. of Meijer)
989-773-3477

COMMERCIAL BANK

 COMMUNITY...it's what we are.
 Alma • Ithaca • St. Louis • Greenville
 Mt. Pleasant • Middleton • Hastings • Lake Odessa
 www.commercial.bank.com
 800-547-8531

ROTH ELECTRIC SOUND

 System Optimization
 Rentals & Installation
 Certified Design
BOSE
 Professional Systems
 AUTHORIZED DEALER
Steve Roth
 1708 N. Fancher St.
 Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
 Phone: (989) 779-8828
 Cell: (989) 621-0628
 steve@rothsound.com
 www.rothsound.com

Proud to support our local athletes!

Mercantile
 Bank of Michigan
 Alma | Ithaca | Mt. Pleasant
 St. Louis | St. Johns | DeWitt
 www.mercbank.com

FIRST CONTRACTING INCORPORATED

 Specializing in MSHDA multi Family Renovations
 701 South Main • Ovid, MI 48866
 989-834-1500

Gratiot Aerials

 Office 517-719-4670 • Mobile 989-285-8685
 JoeBosley9133@gmail.com

Gratiot Aerials

 Office 517-719-4670 • Mobile 989-285-8685
 JoeBosley9133@gmail.com

WLS

 WLS
 WLS

SEALS • TACIA BARTZ • ZAINEA • WHITEMORE

 Comprehensive Optometry

Alma
 1321 Pine Avenue
 Alma, MI 48801
 989-463-1139
Wolverine Optical
 7314 North Alger Rd.
 Alma, MI 48801
 989-463-1838

Carson City
 Suite 400
 102 South Third
 Carson City, MI 48811
 989-584-6868
Mt. Pleasant
 Pleasant Optics
 500 South Mission St.
 Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
 989-773-7747

Good Luck to All Area Teams !!

Belding's Greta Wilker Honored As Sports Illustrated Athlete Of Month

John Raffel
Sports Scene

It's been a remarkable four-year varsity high school sports career for Belding's Greta Wilker, and not just because she has 16 letters.

Wilker was named by Sports Illustrated as the Student Athlete of the Month in May. At Belding's annual awards ceremony on May 18, Wilker was presented with the award from Amanda Chidester, All-American softball player at the University of Michigan and a member of the U.S. Women's national team. Chidester also shared advice with Wilker on playing college softball and how to manage her time. Chidester set Michigan's school home run record while playing for the Wolverines 2009 to 2012.

Wilker will be playing softball at Emory University of Georgia next season. She also throws shot put for Belding's track team in the spring. Like track and softball, she also played four years in volleyball and basketball. She has earned all-state titles in softball and has been a state qualifier in track.

But volleyball and basketball were also strong sports for Wilker.

"In volleyball my highlight was winning another district title," she said. "It was a hard loss for us last year as juniors in districts, so it was awesome to be able to get back to having the title. For basketball, it was definitely winning a conference title. We fought so hard all season to put ourselves in the position to win and it was amazing to win."

"My highlight so far in softball was in my last at bat on senior night on our field," she continued. "I hit a three-run home run. It was the best way to leave the field that I can think of. Track so far has been breaking my school record again at the conference track meet as well as winning a fourth straight conference title as a team."

Wilker's mom, Heidi, had thought she was nominating for daughter for Sport's Illustrated's Faces in the Crowd. But after seeing all of her accomplishments, they called and said they wanted Greta to be a Student Athlete of the Month. They came to Belding for the interview and videotape program.

"I think the coolest part about the whole thing was the support that I received from the community," Greta said. "They all just showed their love and pride in what I have accomplished and it was amazing to see."

But it was more than just Wilker's athletic exploits. She carries a 4.2 grade point average and also has been involved as a service dog trainer for Paws with a Cause.

"I kind of got started on my own," Greta said. "I remember a Belding student having a dog when I was younger and it was always on the back of my mind that I wanted to do it. I am currently on my fourth dog a golden retriever Porsche. Paws is an amazing organization that I am continually blessed to be a part of. The independence that they are able to provide with people through these amazing dogs is sometimes incomprehensible. The biggest challenges are just having the patience to work through the little misbehaviors to get a great end result."

Her dad, Joel Wilker, is Belding's athletic director and former football coach.

"Heidi and I are extremely proud of Greta and everything she has accomplished," he said. "For me, her ability to manage her time and do so well in school, in her athletic endeavors and raising the puppies, is special. The fact that she is raising the puppies to help others says a lot about her character and her person. We are truly blessed as parents to be a part of her life. We are also excited for her as she moves on to Emory University. It will create new chal-

lenges for her academically as well as in softball and hopefully move her in the direction she wants to go."

Wilker will have many memories of Belding sports.

"There have been a lot of key moments that have been amazing in my career," she said. "Winning regionals my freshman year in softball was amazing, and that was when I hit my first high school career home run. Our first district game this year against Central Montcalm in basketball was one of the most fun games I have ever played in. Every shot was going in for our whole team and we completely dominated."

Her sports career won't end until sometime in June.

"In my last meet for track I would really like to break 40 feet [in shot put]," Greta said. "I have done it in practice but haven't quite gotten it in a meet and I would really like to. Softball, I definitely want another district title. We lost a hard one last year and I would like to leave on a high note with my team."

It's a four-year varsity career Wilker will miss deeply.

"I will miss the closeness of everybody at Belding the most," she said. "Because we are a smaller school, I am teammates with a lot of my friends in multiple sports, and because of that, it only strengthens my friendships with them. I will definitely miss that the most ... plus every day going to practice with my best friends and getting to share not just the win but the bus rides, team movie nights and all the great memories we have made."

During the summer, it will be off to Emory.

"I chose Emory because of the great Pre-med and Medical school that they have," Wilker said. "I have always pushed myself academically so having that as well as a well-regarded softball program was the perfect fit for me."



Belding's Greta Wilker will graduate with 16 varsity letters during her high school career. (Jamie McNich, High School Sports Scene Photos)

Bullock Creek Softball Family Reflects Unity Among Variety

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

Bullock Creek High's Kalina softball family displays some differences. Coach Darren Kalina and elder daughter Maison, now a sophomore standout at Central Michigan University, are more intense and demonstrative. Wife and No. 1 fan Jenny Kalina and younger offspring Rylie, a junior star for the Lady Lancers, care just as much about winning but are more laid back.

But on the basic focal point, the foursome could not be more tightly knit; they love their softball.

"Maison gets angry sometimes, the same as me. That's just our nature," her dad and coach explained. "Rylie, nothing bothers her. Something (negative) happens in the game, it is what it is. Let's play."

Jenny said, "I feel like the spectator-slash-wife-slash-mom. I'm talking different to him than I would to the girls. Sometimes I like a counselor. He and I really go back and forth, but we work well together."

The same goes for the children with their parents, according to Maison.

"It's been great," she reflected. "We've had our dad as our coach, my sister and I playing and our mom is right there

supporting us."

In terms of winning and losing, the family has encountered more happy times than sad. Bullock Creek has achieved Division 2 state rankings for six seasons in a row, and 13 players have advanced to play college ball. One of them is Maison, a catcher who set state batting records in high school and this spring at CMU achieved second-team all-Mid-American Conference status. Rylie, a shortstop, already has earned an advance softball scholarship at Davenport University in Grand Rapids.

This all took root when Darren Kalina, a Hemlock High product, played baseball and football at Alma College. He met and wed the former Jenny Florey of Midland High. They found employment at Bullock Creek High, Darren as a physical education teacher and Jenny as supervisor of the library and the computer lab.

Maison was 3 years old when her father took her into the yard to play catch for the first time. He half-joked that she threw the ball so hard that "a couple of the other kids were crying."

Rylie Kalina and father / coach Darren Kalina discuss strategy during a doubleheader last season against Swan Valley. Rylie will follow her big sisters footsteps into the college ranks after graduation next year. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)

Meet Bullock Creek's Kelsi Jacobs

It is good to be a good teammate.

Case in point: Bullock Creek softball, with Megan Robinette on the pitching rubber and Kelsi Jacobs behind the plate.

Both earned scholarships to take their talents to Howell-based Cleary University, a four-year business school.

Coach Tim Bailey was scouting Megan, and in the process, Kelsi caught his eye.

Bailey's summary: "Today was

a great day for Cleary softball. Not only did we sign a great pitcher, we were lucky enough to sign a great hitting catcher who has caught her for years."

"Megan is an outstanding pitcher with a tremendous amount of potential. I see big things for her at Cleary. I quick realized that Kelsi is outstanding and yet another big stick for our lineup," Bailey added.

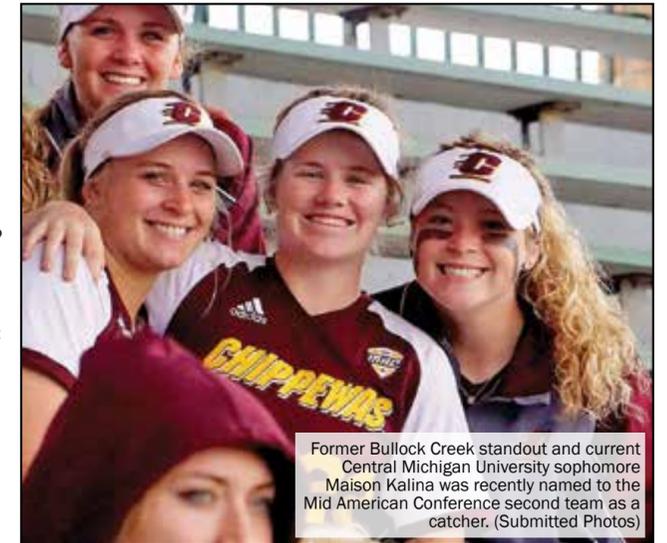
Kelsi is grateful.

"My favorite thing about Meg is

that we have grown up together," Kelsi said. "We have played softball together since I was 8 years old, and we have been best friends for as long as I can remember. We have always pushed each other to be better ball players and to make smart choices in life. I know that I can always depend on Megan to pick me up on a bad day, and give me truthful advice."

-- Scott Keyes

Kelsi Jacobs along with teammate Megan Robinette will continue their playing careers at Cleary University in Howell. (Dana McCann, High School Sports Scene Photo)



Former Bullock Creek standout and current Central Michigan University sophomore Maison Kalina was recently named to the Mid American Conference second team as a catcher. (Submitted Photos)



Tomorrow's *Anywhere* Adventure

Anywhere Checking with Mobile Banking*

- Mobile Deposit
- Bill Pay with Person-to-Person Payments
- Transfer
- Manage Cards

Member FDIC isabellabank.com 800.651.9111 isabellabankmi



COVENANT CENTER FOR ADVANCED ORTHOPAEDICS

specializing in -

SPORTS INJURIES • SHOULDER REPLACEMENTS • ADVANCED SHOULDER SURGERY
JOINT PAIN • HIP AND KNEE REVISIONS • TOTAL HIP AND KNEE REPLACEMENTS
FRACTURES • ACETABULUM AND PELVIC FRACTURES • NONUNION FRACTURES
COMPLEX INTRA-ARTICULAR JOINT FRACTURES

 Anthony de Bari, MD Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon Fellowship Trained	 B.C. de Beaubien, MD Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon Fellowship Trained in Adult Reconstruction	 Colleen Linehan, MD Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon	 Michael Tucker, DO Board Eligible Orthopaedic Surgeon Fellowship Trained in Orthopaedic Trauma	 Bryon Chamberlain, MD Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon	 Jason Maxa, PA-C	 Lindsey Pilling, PA-C
---	---	---	--	---	--	---

SAGINAW 4701 TOWNE CENTRE, SUITE 301 989.921.3500	SAGINAW 3875 BAY RD., SUITE 2-5 989.793.1372	SAGINAW 800 COOPER, SUITE 5 989.583.7450	FRANKENMUTH 600 NORTH MAIN ST. 989.921.3500	MIDLAND 1549 WASHINGTON 989.921.3500
--	---	---	--	---

Center for Advanced Orthopaedics

Area Golfers Shooting Low Numbers Entering Post Season Competition

David Cook Sports Scene

Division 1

Detroit Catholic Central came into the season as the team to beat in Division 1, and so far this season the Shamrocks look stronger than advertised. Catholic Central dominated at the Seaholm tournament with a 282 team score, shot a 292 to win at Grand Rapids Forest Hills and won the East Lansing classic with a 294. The Shamrocks are loaded with quality golfers led by Sean Sooch who carded a 69 at Seaholm, Ben Smith who shot at 70 at Seaholm, Sean Niles with a 72 at Forest Hills and James Piot with a 72 at East Lansing.



Both Brighton and Hartland had solid showings in last year's Division 1 finals held at Ferris State University. (Staff Photos)



Division 2

The mid-Michigan area is the home to some outstanding golf teams in D2. St. Johns is ranked third in the state in D2 and has turned in some big efforts including a first place at the Mt. Pleasant Oiler Invite and second place finishes at the Redwing invite and Tullymore invite. Zach Rosendale captured medalist honors at Tullymore with a 71. Eric Nunn has also turned in some big efforts including a 74 at the Oiler Invite.

East Lansing is ranked sixth in the state in D2. The Trojans tied for second at the Redwing invite and tie for third at the East

Lansing classic. Ian Carroll carded a 73 at East Lansing to lead the way while Tony Fuentes placed second at the Redwing with a 74.

Haslett sophomore Ben VanGorder is having a strong season highlighted by a 73 at the East Lansing classic. Derek Choma and Tobia Bepler have also been leaders for Haslett.

Division 3

Lansing Catholic Central has won the past three D3 state titles and the Cougars are in strong position to make it number four this year. Senior Owen Rush has been leading the way for the Cougars as he took medalist honors at the Redwing invite with a 73 and posted a 73 at the East Lansing classic. Rush, who placed third individually at last year's finals, will be in the hunt for medalist honors again this year.

Big Rapids is ranked fourth in D3 and has posted some low numbers this spring highlighted by a 303 en route to winning the Tullymore invitation. Tait Morrissey led the Cardinals with a 73 to place third at Tullymore. Pierce Morrissey, Ben Fath and Carter Bechaz have also been playing strong golf.

Division 4

Mt. Pleasant Sacred will be aiming for a top 10 finish at this year's D4 meet. Sacred Heart tied for second at the Chippewa Hills invite led by Jake Starry and Ryan Chomchai. Sam Kindermann and Ayush Mohan have also been turning in strong efforts.

Saginaw Nouvel will also be looking for a lofty finish at the state meet. Jack Grant and Tom McCarthy have been among the leaders this season for Nouvel.



The Ithaca boys golf team celebrates after winning the Tri-Valley Conference West Division championship under coach Josh Rayburn. (Submitted Photo)

Senior Cody Yates leads the way for the Alma golf team. (Randy Miniard, High School Sports Scene Photo)

FATHER'S DAY WEEKEND GOLF SCRABBLE

2 PERSON SCRABBLE

6.18.16

10 AM SG Start

\$40 / Player

INCLUDES:
18 Holes With Cart
Door Prize - Burgers & Brats After Golf
Entry Into Cash Draw (Father's ONLY)

36 Team Max
(4) \$250.00 Cash Draws
(5) \$100.00 Cash Draws
1st - \$250.00
2nd - \$150.00
3rd - \$100.00
Proximities Prizes
50/50 Drawing
\$20 Skins Game per Team

Call 1.877.2EAGLE2 & ask about our **SPECIAL FATHER'S DAY WEEKEND** Golf Scramble Room Rate!*

SINGLE KING \$89 +tax & resort fees per night

TO ENTER, visit the Pro Shop or call WAABOOZ RUN @ 989.817.4802

www.waaboozrun.com
5665 E. Pickard Rd. • Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858 • 989.817.4802

*Includes one breakfast voucher. Waterpark passes not included.

AARON WALDRON TRUCKING, LLC

7480 West Polk Road, Alma, MI 48801
Local 989-466-2300
Or Toll free 866-507-2300

- Haulers of Agricultural Commodities
- Temporary Dumpster Service
- Van and Flatbed Hauling
- 10, 15, 20 & 30 Yard Containers

Check Out More Photos At

highschoolsportsscene.com

Catholic Central Has Depth, Talent To Defend State Title

Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

Mike Anderson has a dilemma that most high school golf coaches could only dream of during their careers:

Amazing depth; how about incredible depth.

While most coaches hope to have four or five quality golfers, Anderson has a plethora at his disposal.

Anderson is the head coach at Division 1 top-ranked Novi Detroit Catholic Central, where an amazing 14 players are on the varsity roster. The most difficult task for Anderson and his assistants is getting all of the players action in various tournaments, all while trying to keep this squad atop the charts.

So far, so good. Catholic Central, which has won three state titles (2003, 2010 and 2015) and 12 regional crowns in school history, the expectations are

through the roof this season.

Anderson usually has a core of seven players that play in the biggest tournaments, all while spreading the wealth around for dual matches and other tournaments for the remaining players. The Shamrocks have an 'A' and a 'B' team and players on the varsity 'B' would play varsity at a lot of schools across the state this season.

"We are very fortunate to have this many quality golfers," said Anderson, who returned four of his top five from last season's state championship squad. "We have several guys that will play in college in the future and 3-4 guys that could be All-State and a couple of players might be up for Mr. Golf or (All-State) Super Team honors."

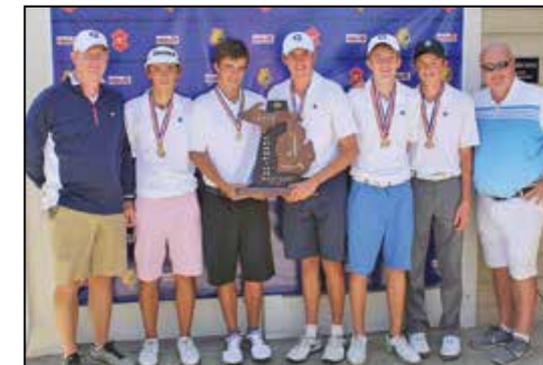
Junior James Piot, who has committed to Michigan State and recent-

ly won the Oakland County Division I Tournament, joins junior Ben Smith (Georgia Tech), junior Sean Niles, who carries the team's lowest 18-hole average, senior Max Palmer, junior Sean Soochs, the team's most improved player, senior Joe Manicelli and senior Josh Stein (Lawrence Tech) have all played in major tournaments.

Juniors Sam Holland and Dyllan Skinner and sophomores Brandon Britz, Mike Alloee, Tommy Dye, Sam Holland and Ryan Katofiasc have also cracked the lineup on occasion this season.

When playing any configuration of the school's top seven players, Catholic Central has not lost a tournament this season. In fact, the Shamrocks' core has routinely shot in the 290s and 280s all season, including 290 at the Oakland County tourney to win by 13 strokes. The Shamrocks posted three of the top five scores and had four in the top 10 of the 124-player field at the county.

They are not eager for the state tournament, which will begin in late May with the district round. The



The Detroit Catholic boys golf team is showing no signs of letting up this season, as it prepares to defend its Division 1 title in the next few weeks. DCC is currently ranked No. 1 in the recent Super Six Polls. (Submitted Photo)

regionals and state finals are in June, with the Lower Peninsula Division 1 state finals taking place June 10-11 at Grand Valley State University's The Meadows Golf Course.

"Our goal is to get back to the state finals and try to win it again," said Anderson. "But there's still a lot of good teams in Division 1. Grosse Pointe South, Grand Blanc and a few others can beat you on any given day

if we have an off day. We have to be mentally prepared.

"By the scores, we are the favorites going in. But anything can happen," continued Anderson. "We were third at the regional last year and barley qualified. We still came back and won the state title, but one off day almost cost us. Hopefully we learned from the regional last year."

CC's Piot Wins Prestigious Oakland County Medalist Honors

Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

A year ago, James Piot didn't get the chance to play at the Pontiac Country Club. On a depth-laden team, he was not one of the players chosen to represent Novi Detroit Catholic Central at the prestigious Oakland County Division I Tournament.

This season, Piot was given the opportunity to play in the county tournament, and he more than made the most of it. The junior carded a two-under round of 70 to earn medalist honors and top the charts

in the 124-player field.

A total of 34 players broke 80, and it was the first time he had played the course in a tournament.

Getting off to a fast start and playing consistent all the way through was the key for Piot, who edged Rochester senior and Mr. Golf candidate Michael Busse by a mere stroke to claim the county gold.

"I hit the ball pretty decent, kept it in play, I putted pretty well and that's what helped me," said Piot, who has shot 70 or lower three times this season. "I got off to a pretty good start. I was 2-under through

the first eight holes. I was playing pretty well and just kept it going the whole round. I was just really consistent."

With seven high-level junior players on the Shamrocks' 14-player varsity roster, gaining the opportunity to play at the top tournaments comes within the rotation before the state tournament begins. Playing consistently has helped Piot become a regular in the top five for the Division 1 top-ranked Shamrocks.

"Playing well here helps a lot. It will give me confidence heading into districts, regionals and (state

finals)," said Piot, who placed eighth at the D1 state finals last season with a two-day total of 150.

Piot was also the Michigan Junior Amateur champion last August and is awaiting this year's state tournament with great anticipation. He is one of five Shamrocks who are averaging in the low-to-mid-70s this season and has already committed to play for Michigan State in the fall of 2017.

"We have so many good players and our goal is to win it all," said Piot. "Winning the county gets us ready for the (state tournament). We know we can win it again if we all step in and play well."

DCC's James Piot captured the recent Oakland County Golf Championships held in Pontiac. (Submitted Photo)



28TH ANNIVERSARY

2016 Michigan Jr. Invitational

July 20, 2016
Pine River Country Club
1400 W. Superior, Alma, MI

18 Holes of Stroke Play
Open to Golfers Ages 11-18
Boys and Girls Divisions
Players Flighted Into Age Divisions

Entry Fee: \$40 Deadline July 12, 2016

Call (989) 463-4610 or visit Pine River Country Club For More Details!

COUNTRY MEADOW FARMS LLC

HOURS: 9-6
7 DAYS A WEEK

11384 RIVERSIDE DR. ST. LOUIS, MI
989-681-2014

Your local agent insures your

Auto

Tony Cook
tcCook@fbinsmi.com
FarmBureauInsurance.com

FARM BUREAU INSURANCE
Michigan's Insurance Company

(989) 720-5700
401 S. Shiawassee St., Owosso

AMERICA'S CHOICE REALTY L.L.C.

108 E. Center St. Suite A, Ithaca
989-875-5148 • www.homesandland.com

When Buying or Selling Your Choice... Your Home...

Marci Browne
Broker - Owner
989-620-1027

Michelyn Crowley
Realtor
989-388-1750

Sherri Hessbrook
Realtor
989-875-4649

Amber Weburg
Realtor
989-620-7918



Coleman has picked up where it left off a year ago and have exceeded all expectations as the Comets currently are ranked No. 1 Division 4 with a 30-0 record prior to press time. (Skip Traynor Photo)

NORTHERN REPORT

I Was Born A Comet Top-Ranked Coleman Off To A Near Perfect Start

Scott Salowich
Sports Scene

The day after his team swept a doubleheader with Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart to finish alone atop the Mid-State Activities Conference standings, Coleman softball coach Chad Klopf was wrestling with who to put up for All-Conference honors.

Talk about a good problem to have.

"I was going over the stats to pick our nominations and we can only have six," Klopf said. "I couldn't figure it out because all of them are deserving."

"With our starting lineup, when one of them is down, the other eight pick her up. These girls take care of each other."

They take pretty good care of the competition, too.

After starting the season with a perfect 26-0 record, Coleman had a run differential of 345-31 and was ranked No. 1 in the state's Division 4 polls.

"At the beginning of the year, we scored 200 runs before we gave up 10," said Klopf. "All of the girls can hit, even down to 7-8-9 in the order, and our team ERA has been hanging around 1.0 all year."

Coleman rolled to league, district and regional championships last season before checking out of the state tournament with a 4-2 loss to Holton in the quarterfinals. Holton went on to lose to Unionville Sebawaing in the state title game.

The track was laid for a big 2016, but 26-0 was even bigger than expected.

"We lost one pitcher and our center fielder and we knew we had five returning seniors with one returning junior and a sophomore pitcher to help us out," said Klopf. "We've had some success with this group, but not this kind of winning streak."

The extra pop has a lot to do with the infusion of three freshman phenoms.

"We got lucky," said Klopf. "We needed speed and had a couple of holes to fill and we added three freshmen who have stepped into the mix and helped us out a lot."

In a lineup that reads like a softball who's who, the biggest name might be senior second baseman Cassidy Tucker, who leads the team with a .578 batting average.

That's not the half of it.

Tucker has blasted 11 home runs, along with

six doubles and seven triples for a stratospheric 1.166 slugging percentage. She has knocked in 43 runs.

"Cassidy is seeing the ball really well," Klopf said. "She is quiet and she doesn't get emotional about it, but she hits the ball hard."

She also sees more decent pitches than the typical slugger, as there are four teammates hitting at least .500 and a few more in the .400 range.

"Cassidy has people in front of her and behind her in the order," said Klopf. "If they try to throw around her, they get into trouble."

Senior shortstop Grace Staley was also batting .578 after the first 26 games and she had 36 RBI. Senior third baseman Carley Starnes was at .562 with 37 RBI. Senior catcher/outfielder Kaylie Scott had a .506 average with 33 ribbies and junior catcher/outfielder Liz Dana was at .500 with 29 RBI.

Scott plays a major role, whether she is behind the plate or not.

"She's like an extra coach," said Klopf.

"Whether she is in the game or sitting on a bucket next to the dugout, she is calling the pitches. She works with the girls every day and she really knows the game."

The ace of the pitching staff is senior Laken Berthume. She got off to a 13-0 start with six shutouts and 86 strikeouts with a 1.32 earned run average. In the "helping-your-own-cause" department, she bats .451 with three homers and 44 RBI.

"As the year has gone on, she has gotten tougher and tougher to hit," said Klopf. "Her mindset is that she is going to beat you, no matter what it takes."

Sophomore Faith Barden has also been reliable in the circle with a 10-0 record and 1.30 E.R.A. She racked up 66 strikeouts.

Juniors Grace Cozat and Allison Lovejoy have each made their contributions and the impactful freshmen are Jaden Berthume, Kenzie Miller and Makailyn Monson.

With the league title in the bag, the Comets planned to close the regular season with some tough games to tune up for a run at the state tourney.

"Our goal is to win the state championship, but there is a long way to go," Klopf said. "Our motto all season has been 'Win the day,' and we're going to focus on that, whether we have a game to play, or just some work to do in practice."

NORTHERN REPORT

Farwell's Seiter Cleans Up

Scott Salowich
Sports Scene

A second straight Jack Pine Conference pennant eluded the Farwell softball team this spring, but it's not because the clean up hitter left a mess of runners stranded on the base paths.

Senior Kelsey Seiter made the most of her fourth year on the varsity, posting a .580 batting

average with three home runs.

"She's a contact machine," said Eagles coach Steve Klinge. "She doesn't strike out much and she leads our team in just about everything. She's got a lot of fence power."

That is a relatively new development.

"She was just a contact hitter for the first two years or so," Klinge said. "She's developed

since then and given us a lot of extra-base hits. When we have runners in scoring position, she is the one we want at the plate."

Seiter also pays defensive dividends in her third year as the starting catcher.

"She is an excellent catcher," said Klinge. "She has worked hard and turned herself into a great all-around ballplayer."

Farwell finished 10-4 in league

games and lost a doubleheader to first place Beaverton in the opening week. The Eagles were 20-10 overall heading down the stretch and are looking forward to a rematch with the Beavers in the district tournament.

"Last year, we won the league and lost the district," Klinge said. "We're peaking right now and we're hoping we can flip that around this time."



Farwell senior Kelsey Seiter has proven to be a very productive hitter for the Eagles this season. (Submitted Photo)

Clare's Denton Is A Reliable RB-Eye Man

Scott Salowich
Sports Scene

After earning All-State honors as a sophomore last year, Clare's Gabe Denton didn't exactly have a ton of room for improvement.

He got better anyway.

The junior catcher helped the Pioneers finish 13-1 in the Jack Pine Conference, good for a tie

with Meridian for the pennant.

At the end of the league campaign, Clare was 22-2 overall and ranked No. 4 in the state's Division 3 polls.

Batting No. 3 in the order, Denton had a .563 average with five home runs, 15 doubles and a team-high 38 RBI.

His slugging percentage of 1.031 is a number that jumps off the page, but Pioneers coach Skeet Colosky has a stat he likes

even better.

"Gabe has only struck out four times this year, and he's got 20 walks," Colosky said. "He's got a nice approach at the plate, he hits for power and he's got a pretty good eye, which is an improvement from last year."

None of which is much of a surprise.

"Gabe has been with us all three years, and he's been hitting in the three spot the majority of the time," Colosky said. "He plays a ton of summer ball and he's really a student of the game. He does a great job working with our pitchers, too. A lot of colleges are looking at him, but he hasn't committed anywhere yet."

Clare's Gabe Denton has shown versatility behind the plate this season for the Pioneers. (Submitted Photo)



Gladwin's Fennell Taking Shots At HR Record

Scott Salowich
Sports Scene

Heading into the final weeks of the season, the Gladwin softball team had posted some memorable wins, come up just a little shy of winning the Jack Pine Conference championship and proven itself to be capable of making a strong run in the state tournament.

Oh, and Dana Fennell was taking a shot at the state record for home runs.

The senior had launched 15 with two tournaments, a doubleheader with Midland Dow and the state tournament left on the schedule.

Dayna Fennell
(Submitted Photo)

The record is 18.

"I'm feeling the pressure," Fennell said, "but I really don't think about it that much. I've already broken my own school record and, even if I don't hit another one, that is still an accomplishment. I'm not trying super-hard to break it, but a lot of people are talking about it and encouraging me and it would be awesome."

Fennell hit six bombs last year, and that was enough to set the record at Gladwin.

Since then, she has worked on her game, playing summer ball and hitting in the cages and she added a little something that might not

make a lot of sense at first thought.

"I played slow-pitch," she said, "and I really think that helped a little. You have to stay back and wait on the pitches and I started hitting the ball pretty far. I even won the home run derby and that kind of surprised me."

As the homer count mounts, teams felt less and less inclined to give Fennell anything to hit, but she is taking all of that in stride.

"I have tried to hit a few pitches that were maybe out of the zone, but if they walk me and I score a run, that's good for the team," she said.

Gladwin coach Jill Keefer isn't crazy about the whole slow-pitch

thing, but she will take all the bombs she can get from Fennell.

"She's put Gladwin softball on the map, for sure," Keefer said. "She's a strong girl and she has worked hard on her hitting. Last year, the slower pitchers gave her some problems, but she is more disciplined now. She can wait on her pitch and she knows when to drive it."

Fennell also contributes with the glove, seeing action as a shortstop, catcher and pitcher.

"She's just an excellent all-around player," Keefer said.

Fennell has signed to play college ball next year at Delta.

Your local agent insures your

Life

Scott Allen
sallen@fbinsmi.com
FarmBureauInsurance.com

FARM BUREAU INSURANCE
Michigan's Insurance Company

989-875-2200
225 East Center Street, Ithaca

MEADOWLANES

BOWLING & BANQUET

Glow Ball - Fridays & Saturdays
Book Your Christmas Parties Today!

430 W. Fifth St. - Gladwin
989-426-7671
www.bowlmeadowlanes.com

I Have The Trailer U Need!

BECK'S!

Trailer SUPERstore & Service Center

800 Trailers, Low Prices & E-Z Financing

Ask For Fred - Get A MMSS Discount

1-888-336-0271 7607 N US-27
www.BecksTrailerStore.com St. Johns MI. 48879



Where excellent care, the latest technology, and friendliness live

Pine River DENTAL CARE

Jenna Putman, D.D.S. • Brian Putman, D.D.S.
610 N. Pine River Street • Ithaca, Michigan 48847
(989) 875-2888 www.pineriverdentalcare.com

NORTHERN REPORT



Meridian catcher and No. 3 hitter Zac Spangler minds his post. (Submitted Photo)

Meridian's Spangler Hunts With Ducks On The Pond

**Scott Salowich
Sports Scene**

As the No. 3 hitter for Meridian, senior Zac Spangler has a pretty good gig.

Hot hitting speedsters Christian and Monte Petre get on base a lot and are so fast that any position is pretty much a scoring position.

Spangler has made the most of the situation.

By the end of the Jack Pine Conference season, he had posted a .524 batting average with one home run, nine doubles and a team-leading 44 RBI.

"He's done a little bit of everything for us," said Mustangs Coach Mark

Novak. "With the twins hitting one and two, he gets a lot of chances with runners on base and he has done a good job seeing the ball, hitting it hard and getting the runs in for us."

Spangler is in his third year as the starting catcher and he was already good enough to sign with Alma before this season started.

He's even better now.

"We moved him up from six in the order to No. 3," Novak said. "He's definitely a better hitter. He played football and lifted some weights and his strength has really improved. He's always been a good hitter, but he's able to drive the ball more now."

Meridian finished the Jack Pine campaign with a 13-1 record, good for a tie with Clare for the conference championship. The loss to the Pioneers was the only one in the first 28 games for the Mustangs, who headed into the final weeks of the regular season ranked No. 2 in the state, behind only Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett.

Having a force behind the plate has been a major factor.

"Zac is a really good catcher, and having him back there makes my job a lot easier," said Novak. "He's played a lot of summer ball and worked with a lot of people on his catching. He's put in a lot of effort and our whole team benefits from it."

Kylie Keys Beavers Attack

**Scott Salowich
Sports Scene**

As the regular season wound down, the Beaverton softball team was ready to wrap up the Jack Pine Conference championship.

The Beavers have been strong in all phases of the game, and offense is never a problem with Kylie Keeley holding down the middle of the order for the third year in a row.

"This is her third year on the varsity and she

has been rock solid all the way," said Beavers Coach Aaron Wentworth. "She knows how to hit the ball hard. She stays back on it and gets the barrel of the bat on it and she does it consistently. We've had doubleheaders where she's gone 6-for-8 and, even when she struggles, she's not down for long. She may have an off game or two, but then she brings herself out of it."

Also an outstanding third baseman, Keeley carries a .485 average and had 37 RBI as Beaverton rolled to a 27-4 overall record.

She had two home runs, with most of her shots into the gap.

"She's more of a doubles hitter and the thing about her is that, the better the pitching, the better she hits," Wentworth said. "She plays summer ball with the Mid-Michigan Heat and has figured out how to hit a lot of really good pitchers."



Kylie Keeley (Submitted Photo)



Big Bat Finds Holes For Harrison's Anderson

**Scott Salowich
Sports Scene**

Hitting the pockets is paying off for Harrison's Zach Anderson.

Hitting it hard pays off even more.

The senior has been on the varsity baseball team for four years and has been a consistent hitter out of the three hole in the lineup most of the time.

Last season, he racked up a .466

batting average and he has upped the ante this spring, taking a .548 mark into the final doubleheader of the Jack Pine Conference campaign.

"He's having one of those seasons where he hits the ball hard and it finds a hole," said Hornets coach Tom Whitfield. "One year, we had a guy who must have lined out to center field eight or nine times and it cost him 100 points off his batting average. Anderson

hits the ball hard and he's been fortunate not to hit it right at people. They're falling in."

Anderson has driven in 18 runs and has also done well on the mound and patrolling center field.

Harrison did not contend for the league title this year, but that's hard to do, considering that co-champs Meridian and Clare are ranked in the top four in the state.

"The Jack Pine has some very good teams this year and I've been happy with our effort," Whitfield said. "One thing I can say for sure

is that all of the teams are showing us a lot of respect. We've seen the No. 1 and No. 2 pitcher in every doubleheader except one."

While Anderson's bat has been steady as a clock, the team has seen its ups and downs, sometimes on the same day.

"You can set your watch by it," said Whitfield. "We'll play one game well and the next game not so well."

"That's the way it goes in high school baseball. The consistent teams are the big winners."

Zach Anderson (Submitted Photo)

KRAPOHL

Serving You Since 1950

MT. PLEASANT 772-2991 • 1-800-772-5974

Cliff Anderson Jim Cole
Kim Laurenz Tony Marshall

Central Michigan's Service Leader!

Ray Garver Casey Gott Tom Shafer
Mike Croll John Lerg Greg Noyes

www.krapohlford.com