

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE
KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

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Vol. 8, Issue 91 • June/July 2017

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Hey Sports Fans!
It's another great day at High School Sports Scene!
What a way to end another year of high school sports.
From the tracks to ball diamonds and soccer fields and everything in between, the spring championship season had plenty of thrills for everyone.
Congratulations to all our outstanding track athletes who brought home individual state championships at the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) state track and field finals. And hats off to all the athletes that earned all-state honors in both the girls and boys finals. You continue to make all of us in the mid-Michigan area proud.
A big salute goes out to Chesaning boys and the Lansing Waverly girls track and field teams. The Waverly girls captured the Division 2 team state title while the Chesaning boys brought home the Division 3 state crown.
On the soccer field, what a season for Flint Powers Catholic and Freeland. The two area teams advanced to the Division 3 state title match where Powers won its second girls state title in school history.
On the baseball field, Portland St. Patrick returned to the Division 4 state title game for a second straight season and this time took home the championship hardware back to the City of Two Rivers for the first baseball state title in school history. Way to go Shamrocks!
While Portland St. Patrick celebrated its first baseball state title, the dynasty that is Rockford girls lacrosse continued its dominance. The Rockford girls won the Division 1 state title for the fifth consecutive season and sixth time in school history. With a core of outstanding young players hoisting the trophy this season, expect to see the Rams in the running for a few more state titles the next few years.
A big shout out to the Midland Dow girls tennis team. After claiming the Division 1 title last year, the girls from Dow came back to make it two in a row. Well done Chargers!
On the golf course, the St. Johns boys also made it two in a row. The Redwings posted outstanding numbers all spring and were on top of their game at the Division 2 state finals as they won the team title by 24 strokes. Zach Rosendale made it a complete sweep for St. Johns golf as he won medalist honors in Division 2. What a way to send out coach Paul Sternburgh who wrapped up his 37-year coaching career in a perfect way. Great job coach Sternburgh and all the St. Johns golfers, what a way to wrap up the year!!!
While the 2016-17 high school sports season ended with plenty of smiles and thrilling moments, it also ended with tragic loss as well. Everyone here at HSSS Magazine sends our condolences out to the family and friends of Amante Young, Young, who thrilled all of us here at HSSS when he won the first individual wrestling title in Clare history this March, passed away May 31 from injuries suffered in an automobile accident. Just 16 years old, Amante touched the lives of many in and outside of the wrestling community and Clare during his short stay with us. Rest in peace Amante, we will never forget the spirit you wrestled with and the zest for life you lived with.



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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON GOLF

St. Johns Sends Sterburgh Out On Top; Redwings Repeat As D2 Champs

Dick Hoekstra Sports Scene

A year ago, the St. Johns boys golf team was a surprise state champion in Division 2.

"This year, because we had everybody back, I think everybody assumed we would win," St. Johns boys golf coach Paul Sternburgh said. "But I kept telling the guys that last year a lot of things had to go right for us to win - and they did."

The Redwings shot 298 and 299 in 2016 to edge favorite East Lansing by four strokes. Sternburgh was hoping some team wouldn't do that this season to his squad at Grand Valley State's Meadows Golf Course.

"This year, we shot 298 (on the first day) - and that didn't surprise me," he said. "But the 14-stroke lead did."

Sternburgh stressed to his team not to play defensively the second day.

They didn't, shot 305, and cruised to a 24-stroke victory over second-place Flint Powers

Catholic.

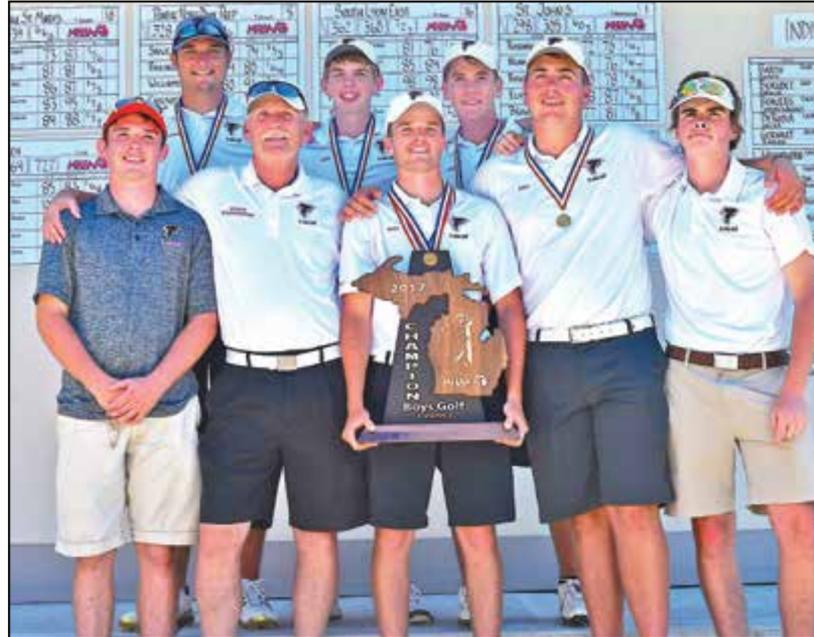
"That was the highlight of my 37 years of coaching," said Sternburgh, who is retiring from his St. Johns position. "Last year was the first ever state title for St. Johns in golf. This was the perfect ending, the cherry on the top of the ice cream sundae. It's pretty hard to do."

Senior Zach Rosendale was Division 2 state tournament medalist or individual champion by shooting 72-70-142 after taking fifth last year.

"Zach committed to Michigan State back when he was in eighth grade, which kind of put a target on his back and extra pressure that probably kids that age shouldn't have," Sternburgh said. "But he handled it really well, and learned to grow emotionally as well as athletically over the four years."

"He's really stepped up his game the last year. He averaged 70.4 for 18 holes and 35.7 overall. He was a very steady golfer."

Senior Eric Nunn, who tied for first place individually in Division 2 in 2016 before losing in a playoff,



finished in third place with a 71-76-147. Nunn has signed to play golf at Grand Valley.

"Eric became a very good golfer in his own right," Sternburgh said. "His junior year, he averaged better than Zach. They've been really good friends since they were 11 years old. I don't think Zach would have been as good as he was at the high school level if he didn't have Eric pushing him."

St. Johns only lost to two Division 2 teams all year: East Lansing at the St. Johns Invitational and

St. Johns sent longtime coach Paul Sternburgh out on top after the Redwings won its second straight Division 2 championship. Sternburgh retired at the end of the season. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Flint Powers Catholic at its Division 2 regional.

"Last year we finished third in the regional," Sternburgh said. "Your goal in regionals is to get out (to state finals by placing in the top three teams). We played OK. We

shot 312, and Powers shot 309."

The only other teams to finish ahead of St. Johns this season in any of its tournaments were four ranked Division 1 schools: Detroit Catholic Central, Grosse Pointe South, Rockford and Clarkston.

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Lansing Christian Golfers Make History

Dick Hoekstra Sports Scene

The Lansing Christian boys golf team qualified for the Division 4 state finals for the first time ever, and placed fourth of 18 teams at Michigan State University's Forest Akers East Golf Course.

Junior Parker Jamieson, who took 1st place a year ago individually at Forest Akers West with a 71-76-147, shot 78-74-152 for 8th place in his third state finals appearance.

"While it was exciting for him to win last year, his hope and desire was for our team to qualify this year," Lansing Christian's third-year boys golf coach Jason Block said.

The Pilgrims (329-330-659) trailed only Clarkston Everest (629), Grand Rapids

Lansing Christian qualified for the Division 4 finals for the first time in school history. The Pilgrims finished fourth out of 18 teams. (Submitted Photos)



Northpointe Christian (640) and Kalamazoo Christian (653) in the two-day event.

Earlier in the season, Lansing Christian also captured its first Greater Lansing Athletic Conference title in boys golf.

"Our senior trip corresponded with the conference championship, which was a double point 18-hole event," Block said. "So I told the guys we've got to be three points up (in the seven league jamborees) going into the tournament, and then we've got take at least second and not take third. We ended up taking second (to Olivet) and winning the title (without seniors Nick Jamieson and Jack Gillespie)."

Block said the addition of junior Andrew Prieskorn, who transferred from De-

troit Catholic Central, to the team this spring was "huge."

"Parker is a steady rock who is always dependable, but Andrew is solid and is going to give you a good score every time," Block said. "I don't think he played varsity (at DCC), but it's quite a program. Andrew is not ever satisfied in a healthy way."

After a tough round, Block said you'll likely find Prieskorn on the practice greens.

"That's what drives him, and I think his best golf is ahead of him," Block said.

The fifth golfer at region-

als, where the Pilgrims came in second place to Northpointe Christian, and at state finals was junior Dawson Block. Dawson had an incredibly busy spring sports season where he ran track and field distance races and played on the baseball team at Lansing Christian besides golfing.

"His capacity is pretty substantial," his father said. "If he missed a practice, he would try to make it up. But if he had to do it again, I think he would probably say his golf slipped a little bit. As much as you try to do everything well, it's tough."

East Lansing Golfers Finish Second In D2 Tourney

Dick Hoekstra Sports Scene

After one day of the Division 2 golf state final on the Meadows Golf Course at Grand Valley State University, the East Lansing boys golf team was right where it finished a year ago - second place.

A tough final hole dropped the Trojans from third to a sixth-place finish, but it was still a strong year for a program making its fifth straight state tournament appearance.

"The back nine at Grand Valley is way harder than the front nine, and I had a bunch of kids stagger and not play very well but rally back the first day," East Lansing's coach Vic Whipp said. "Tony Fuentes, who is a great player, shot 69. He's one of the best players in that field. We went from

20-over on the back nine to 4-over on the front nine."

Fuentes, who has signed to play at Eastern Michigan University, birdied two of his first three holes on the second day. The senior ended up second after taking eighth a year ago.

"We started OK, and the team was hanging in there," Whipp said. "Then the wind, and playing the back nine late hurt us."

Three of the four Trojans double bogeyed their last hole to cause the slip from third to sixth.

"Our regional performance (a third-place 326) was our worst performance of the year, and that one was worse," Whipp said. "We averaged 307, and we shot 336. But it was still a great season. I'm proud of our kids."

East Lansing repeated as Capital

Area Activities Conference Blue division champions, and earned their third crown in five years. The Trojans took second place the two years they didn't win.

East Lansing also beat the eventual state champion St. Johns to win its St. Johns Invitational.

The Trojans had dominated the Redwings, who won the state tournament by 24 strokes this season, a year ago.

"I think the only time St. Johns beat us all year was the state finals," said Whipp, whose team finished second by four strokes to the Redwings at the 2016 Division 2 finals. "Everyone thinks it's all about winning, but only one team gets to win. So out of 180 teams in Division 2, we did OK."

East Lansing Sam Fuentes tees off during the recent Division 2 finals held at the Meadows on the campus of Grand Valley State University. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)



CHEVROLET Shaheen

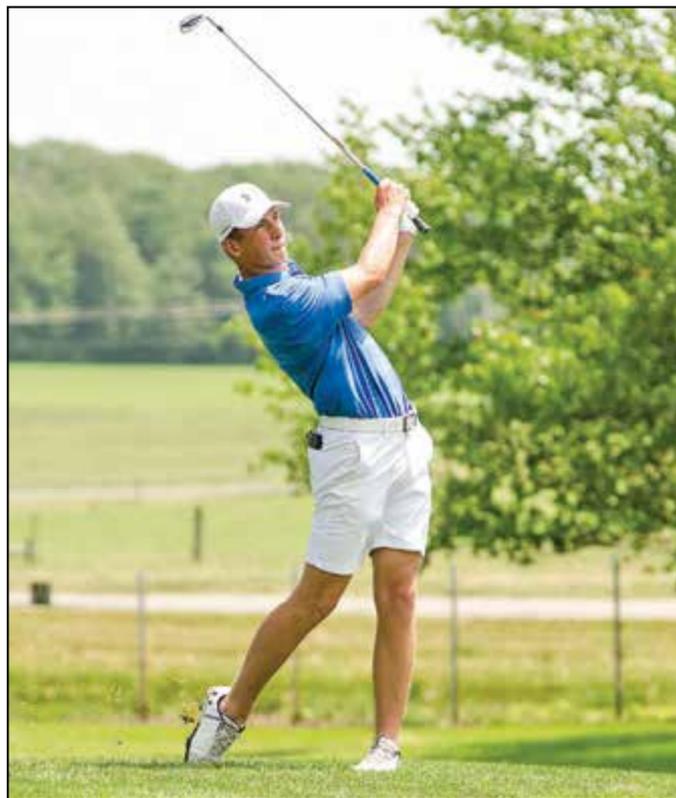
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Area Golfers Turn In Outstanding Efforts At State Golf Tournaments.

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The boys golf season wrapped up in a big way for area golfers with many outstanding efforts at the state finals. St. Johns led the way by capturing the Division 2 state title while Rockford, Grand Blanc, Flint Powers, East Lansing, Big Rapids, Lansing Catholic Central and Lansing Christian all turned in top-10 finishes at the state meet.

DIVISION 1

It was business as usual for the Detroit Catholic Central golf team as the Shamrocks captured the Division 1 state championship for the third straight season. Catholic Central totaled a 581 team score to outdistance second-place Grosse Pointe South by 18 strokes. Catholic Central also crowned the individual champion as Sean Niles carded rounds of 70 and 69 for a 139.

Rockford placed fifth overall with a 622 total. Kevin Healey led the way for the Rams with a 150 while Andrew Barton and Adam Brayton both posted a 156 total.

Grand Blanc, led by Nick Bruett's 160, placed seventh as a team while Midland took 11th overall with Drew Gandy shooting a 155 and Nevada Walters a 156.

DIVISION 2

St. Johns repeated as state champions in Division 2 and made it three in a row for the Capital Area Activities Conference Red Division. The Redwings totaled a 603 team total to win by 24 strokes. Zach Rosendale captured medalist honors with rounds of 72 and 70 while Eric Nunn placed third overall with rounds of 71 and 76.

Flint Powers Catholic took runner-up honors. Zach Hopkins finished 10th individually to pace the Chargers.

East Lansing, led by Tony Fuentes, placed sixth as a team. Fuentes finished runner-up for medalist honors with rounds of 69 and 77.

Individually, DeWitt's Brandon Kahl placed eighth with rounds of 81 and 72.

DIVISION 3

After placing second three of the previous four seasons, Jackson Lumen Christi and its

senior-leaden squad broke through to wins its first state title since 2012 as it totaled a 639.

Big Rapids finished eight strokes behind Lumen Christi with a 647 total. Sophomore Pierce Morrissey led the way for Big Rapids with rounds of 77 to place fifth overall.

Lansing Catholic Central finished in sixth place overall. Senior Peter Kramer Kramer finished 10th overall with a 157 while Ethan O'Farrell added a 162.

Shepherd placed 13th overall. Junior Scott Sura led the Blue Jays with a 167 total while senior Joey Yuncker followed with a 172.

Frankenmuth placed 15th overall. Junior Jacksen McKenzie led the way with a 176 while sophomore Wes Darrow shot a 178.

St. Charles finished in 18th place. Senior Jeff Wachowicz and junior Matt Benson led the way with 179 totals.

Individually, Charlevoix senior Matt Good and Daniel Shattuck of Tawas tied for medalist honors with a 150. Good won the title in a one-hole playoff.

Portland freshman Zach Pier finished three strokes behind in third place with a 153 total.

Chesaning junior Eddie Murphy totaled a 159.

DIVISION 4

Clarkston Everest Collegiate won its second consecutive Division 4 state title with a 629 team total while Grand Rapids North Pointe Christian was runner-up for a second straight season with a 640.

Lansing Christian placed fourth as a team with a 659. Parker Jamieson led the Pilgrims with a 152 total to place eighth overall. Andrew Prieskorn added a 163 and Nick Jamieson a 168.

New Lothrop finished 16th overall. Tucker Morarity shot a 166 total while Drew Dice came in with a 171.

Saginaw Nouvel finished 17th overall. Jack Grant led Nouvel with a 170.

Clinton Austin Fauser claimed medalist honors with a 139.

Fowler's Eric Kohagen posted a two-day total of 171.



Big Rapids Boys Golf Team Takes Second At Division 3 State Tournament

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The Big Rapids boys golf team took another big step toward its biggest goal this season and the Cardinals are looking for a big final step next year.

After placing third at last year's Division 3 state golf finals, the Big Rapids boys came back this year and took second place at this year's finals. Big Rapids posted team scores of 322 and 235 for a 647 total to finish eight strokes behind Jackson Lumen Christi.

Lumen Christi featured a senior-laden team determined to avenge a second-place finish last year, and with all but one starter due to return next season, Big Rapids is looking to follow Lumen Christi's blueprint.

"It always hurts and stings for a while," said Big Rapids coach Mark Posey. "We're going to use this as motivation for next year. This will give the guys a lot to think about and work on over the summer. We have four guys coming back and we plan to come back a lot stronger."

Big Rapids was paced in the finals by sophomore Pierce Morrissey. Morrissey shot rounds of 77 on both days of the tournament to place fifth overall with a 154. Junior Fletcher Bolta carded rounds of 81 to total a 162 while senior Tait Morrissey shot rounds of 79 and 85 to finish with a 164.

"Tait was our leader," Posey said. "He has worked hard and had four solid years for us. He will be playing in college at Alma College."

Sophomore Owen Seay turned in a strong tournament with rounds of 85 and 82 for a 167 while junior Ben Fath turned in rounds of 95 and 96.

"Owen had two really good days for us," Posey said. "For your number five golfer to come through like that really helps."

The Cardinals turned in a solid season from start to finish.

"Overall, we had a great year,"



The Big Rapids boys golf team celebrates after finishing second during the recent Division 3 golf finals. Jackson Lumen Christi went on to win the championship. (Butch Harmon, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Posey said. "We won the conference and regional titles. We traveled all over playing in tournaments in Ohio and Traverse City.

Everything we play in 18 holes. The guys put in a tremendous effort this year. We also had six first-team all-conference golfers."

Portland Tennis Finishes Fifth In D4

Dick Hoekstra Sports Scene



A Portland tennis player gets set to serve the ball during the recent Division 4 finals held in Holly. (High School Sports Scene Staff Photo)

The Portland girls tennis team won the Capital Area Activities Conference White division plus its regional and earned its second-highest finish with a fifth place in the Division 4 state finals at Holly.

"I think fourth a few years ago is the best we have ever done," Portland's girls tennis coach Jim Niebling said. "We just graduated three of the winningest players we've ever had in our team's history. So going into the season, we knew this was going to be a good team. We're very proud of where we finished up."

One doubles team reached a

final and two others advanced to semifinals for the Raiders.

The No. 3 doubles flight of senior Brittany Thelen and sophomore Rachel VanHouten won 2-6, 6-4, 6-3 over Harbor Springs; 6-1, 6-1 over the No. 6 seed in a quarterfinal from Royal Oak Shrine; 2-6, 7-6 (5), 6-3 over the No. 2 seed from Bloomfield Hills Sacred Heart in a semifinal; and lost 4-6, 7-6 (4), 6-3 to the No. 1 seed Ann Arbor Greenhills in the final.

"They were up 5-4 returning serve in the second set," Niebling said. "The immensity of everything that it meant to them just kind of got the better of them and led to a couple of unforced errors at an inopportune time. The match got extended, which was

all Greenhills needed."

The No. 2 doubles duo of junior Rebekah and freshman Ainsley Ludema won two 3-setters (including over No. 5 seed from Grand Rapids NorthPointe Christian) before losing 6-4, 3-6, 6-0 in the semifinals to the No. 1 seed and eventual champions from Greenhills.

"They had actually beaten that team early in the season, and it was a really good match," Niebling said. "It was back and forth with everybody holding serve. We were the ones that blinked at the end, and that's how they got us."

The No. 4 doubles of sophomores Riley Thelen and Sam Weber won 3-6, 7-5, 6-1 over the No. 3 seed Greenhills in a quarterfinal before losing 6-3, 6-4 in a semifinal to Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic.

Senior Brooke Butterfield, and juniors A'hlon Jordan and Syd-

ney Schneider each won a match before losing in the quarterfinals at No. 2-4 singles - as did the No. 1 doubles flight of seniors Morgan Wittkopp and Hannah McNaughton. But Wittkopp and McNaughton took a set during a 6-4, 3-6, 6-1 loss to the eventual champions from Jackson Lumen Christi.

"No. 1 doubles was dealing with injuries most of the season, and had a hard time meeting their full potential," Niebling said. "By the time we got to the conference and regional tournaments, they were healing up."

Most of the top teams in Division 4 each year are private schools.

"We have a little banner in my classroom at school, and we call it 'public school state champions,'" Niebling said. "We're pretty proud that we were able to put another tennis ball up there for 2017."

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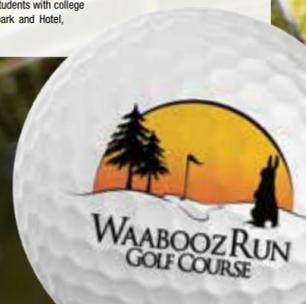
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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON TENNIS



Flint Powers, Williamston Excel At Division 3 Tennis State Finals

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Flint Powers Catholic and Williamston both had strong showings in the Division 3 state tennis finals at Kalamazoo College.

While Detroit Country Day waltzed away with the title with 39 points, Flint Powers was eighth with 12 and Williamston 11th with seven. Lakewood was tied for 16th with two.

In No. 1 singles, Sophie Daavettila of Williamston advanced to the semifinals. Allise Haddad of Flint Powers also advanced to the semis.

Big Rapids made an appearance in the tournament with the coach's daughter Katherine Langell, a regional champion. She lost to Elli Formentin of Grosse Ile 3-6, 6-2, 6-1 in her first match.

Langell's team finished the 2017 campaign with a 6-8-1 record while competing against some of the top tennis programs in the state.

Langell's team faced several opponents ranked in the top 10.

Big Rapids is not in a tennis conference and focuses on regionals. Langell's team placed sixth in regional play this season and won

six flights.

Big Rapids failed to qualify for the state tournament as a team, but No. 1 singles player Katherine Langell qualified as a regional champion.

The Cardinals only lost one player to graduation and figures to return a roster featuring eight seniors, six juniors, and four sophomores.

At No. 2 singles at the state final, Deena Haddad of Flint Powers advanced to the semifinals. Neha Iska of Flint Powers advance to the semifinals in No. 3 singles.

Sophie Daavettila of Williamston is following in her older sister Sara's footsteps finishing second at No. 1 singles during the recent D3 tennis finals. (Bob Campbell, High School Sports Scene Photo)



Sema Colak of Okemos took second at No. 3 singles during the recent Division 2 finals held in Holland. (Butch Harmon, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Okemos Girls Tennis Team Wraps Up Season With Top Ten Finish At State Finals

Butch Harmon
Sports Scene

After winning its sixth straight regional tennis championship, the Okemos girls tennis team wrapped up the season by placing in the top ten at the Division 2 state finals at Hope College in Holland.

Okemos placed eighth overall at the finals with 14 points. East Grand Rapids won the Division 2 state championship with 31 points followed by Forest Hills Northern in second with 28.

Sema Colak led the way for Okemos as she took second at No. 3 singles. Colak, who came into

the tournament as the fourth seed, dropped a three-set match in the finals to second seed Audrey Olson of East Grand Rapids.

Georgie Padalac (No. 2 singles) and Anushka Murthy (No. 4 singles) both reached the semifinals.

"I could not have asked for a better group of girls to coach this season," said Okemos coach Catherine Parenteau. "Every day at practice, everyone gave one hundred percent and I truly believe that all these girls have bright futures ahead of them. We had a very successful season as we finished eighth at states, only two points away from being tied for fifth.

This team will forever have a special place in my heart."

Mason finished in 10th place with eight points as a team at the state finals. Senior Olivia Hanover closed out her career by playing for the championship at No. 1 singles for a second consecutive season. Hanover, who won a regional championship at No. 1 singles this season, came into the finals as the second seed. Hanover reached the finals where she dropped a three-set match to top seeded Sloane Teske of East Grand Rapids. Hanover, who will continue her career in college at Grand Valley State University, finished the season with a 27-1 record.

Midland Dow Finds Way To Earn State Title Share With Northville

Dan Stickrad
Sports Scene

In the unlikelyst of scenarios, Midland Dow repeated as a state champion.

Second-ranked Midland Dow and top-ranked Northville shared the MHSAA Division 1 crown with 30 points apiece on June 3 at the Midland Community Tennis Center — making it the first time that the D-1 finals ended with a tie.

"The way the seeds were, I wasn't sure if we could do it or not," said Midland Dow coach Garrett Turner. "But the girls stepped up."

Northville edged out Dow for the team title in 2015, while Dow defeated Northville for the crown in 2016. The Chargers also won a title in 2009.

Bloomfield Hills came in a close third with 27 points, while Grosse Pointe South (17), Ann Arbor Pioneer (16), Novi (12), Troy (8), Farmington Hills Mercy (7), Port

Huron Northern (7) and Rockford (6) round out the top 10.

"We had a couple of upsets along the way, and Northville had a couple of kids lose earlier. The helped," said Turner, who team competed in its 20th straight state finals — last missing the cut in 1996. "Northville had been us (at a tournament) earlier in the year.

Northville's Renee Torres edged Dow's Hadley Camp, 1-6, 6-1, 6-3 at No. 3 singles late in the day which forged the tie between the two state powers.

Torres, however, won a three-set semifinal and beat the No. 2 seed just to reach the finals.

"I think what we really needed was for a couple of our flights to play beyond their seeds and I think we were able to do that in a couple of flights," said Turner. "We weren't supposed to win on paper. We had just one top seed but ended up with three champions."

Third-seeded Sarah Ismail cap-



Second-ranked Midland Dow and top-ranked Northville shared the MHSAA Division 1 crown with 30 points a piece on June 3 at the Midland Community Tennis Center. (Michael Hollenbeck, High School Sports Scene Photo)

ured the crown at No. 2 singles for Dow, topping top-seeded Laurel Sullivan in the finals, 6-2, 6-4.

In the doubles flights, Dow's Mina Fabiano and Tatum Matthews lost in the finals at No. 1 to top-seeded Neha Chava and Maya Mulchandani of Northville, 7-5, 6-1, at No. 2 doubles.

At No. 3 doubles, Dow's No. 1

seeded duo of Caroline Szabo and Christina Vanerkelen swept Northville's second seeded Connie Gao and Andrea Nam, 6-3, 6-3. Szabo had shoulder surgery last winter and had to switch hands but still recovered to have a fine season.

Lastly, Midland Dow's third-seeded unit of Maggie Schaller and Reema Patel claimed a state title at No. 4 doubles. The

duo outlasted Bloomfield Hills' top-seeded Lauren Ruby and Kaela Bernard, 6-4, 7-6 (3).

"That was the difference for us, seeing our lower-seeded kids rise to the occasion and win their flights, going through other seeded players to win and give us the extra points," said Turner. "This was a great team effort. They truly saved their best for last."

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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON LACROSSE

Rockford wins state title, Okemos reaches final four in state lacrosse tourney

David Cook
Sports Scene

After winning one for the thumb last year, the Rockford girls lacrosse team started on the other hand as it won its sixth state championship in school history.

Rockford won the title with a 17-7 win against Birmingham United in the Division 1 state title match. Rockford reached the finals by defeating Northville 22-4 in the state semifinals.

In Division 2, Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook Kingswood won the state title in about as exciting

fashion as possible. Cranbrook Kingswood defeated East Grand Rapids 17-16 in triple overtime to win the Division 2 state title.

Cranbrook Kingswood reached the title match by holding off Okemos 14-8 in the state semifinals.

Okemos, a team loaded with talented underclassmen and juniors, reached the final four by defeating DeWitt 18-6 in the regional title match. Junior Jensen Adair led Okemos in the regional title match with a career-high five-goal performance.

Earlier this season Okemos won its 10th consecutive Capital Area

Activities Conference title. Okemos clinched the title with a 17-9 win against the Haslett/Williamston co-op team. Melaina Grewal, an all-state selection this season, led the offense with five goals and two assists against Haslett/Williamston while junior Grace Bielby, a second-team, all-state player added four goals and two assists and junior Alyssa Karber, an honorable-mention, all-state player scored three goals.

Okemos sophomore goalkeeper Mallory Keenoy was also named first-team, all-state this season while Lauren Foltz and Allison Schloss and junior Emily Renfrew

were named honorable-mention, all-state.

"This season has been an incredible season of growth, growth as a team and as individuals," said Okemos coach Brandon Schwind. "This growth translated to a level of play that is fast paced, fun, and extremely competitive. The girls' level of play helped us carry on the tradition of Okemos girls lacrosse by winning both the CAAC and regional titles. The team graduates one senior and the cupboard is stocked for what should be a deep run into the state playoffs in the 2018 season."



Rockford won its sixth straight Division 1 title with a 17-7 win against Birmingham United. (Submitted Photo)

Okemos Lacrosse Continues Winning Ways

Dick Hoekstra
Sports Scene

The Okemos girls lacrosse team captured its 10th straight Capital Area Activities Conference title, won its Division 2 regional, and advanced as far as a state semifinal be-



fore losing 14-8 to eventual state champion Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook-Kingswood.

Next season looks even better with all but one player returning from a team that finished 17-5-1 by defeating East Lansing 21-7, Haslett/Williamston 15-9 and DeWitt 18-6 in regional contests.

"Every CAAC championship means a great deal," 2nd-year Okemos coach Brandon Schwind said. "We enjoyed a great season of growth as a team and individually, but we ultimately fell short of our goal of competing for a state championship."

Melaina Grewal and Mallory Keenoy were selected first team all-state, Grace Bielby second team, and Emily Renfrew, Allison Schloss, Lauren Foltz and Alyssa Karber hon-

orable mention. Grewal and Bielby were also named U.S. Lacrosse All-Americans.

"Melaina is always the first one at practice and one of the last to leave," Schwind said. "She is a great leader who led our team in points, and really sparks our game from the draw circle. Grace is another special player that had a great season. She is one of our best finishers on the team. She brings a little bit of attitude, and transitioned beautifully to the midfield this season (after playing attack in 2016).

"Mallory is a brick wall in the cage," he continued. "She's a three-year starter at goalie, and always seems to make those saves she is not supposed to make. Our goalie coach, Chuck Holton, has done an incredible job with Mallory. Her career save percentage continues to climb.

"Emily was our unsung hero in the second half of our season. She came up with some big-time performances. She is one of our best dodger/creators and an incredible force on defense.

"Alyssa is one of our players that really

flies under the radar. She scored a point in every game in the 2017 season! She loves the game and loves to go to the cage. She doesn't get as much press as Melaina or Grace, but is clearly on the same level as a player.

"Lauren did a wonderful job doing what her coaches asked of her. She does not get noticed as much as an offensive player, but she helped lead our defense to a No. 3 ranking in the state. With our strength of schedule, that was an incredible feat.

"Allison came out of nowhere this season. In January, I asked her if she was interested in playing defense this season (after playing midfield in 2016). She has developed into a great defender who displays great fundamental form when playing 1-on-1 defense."

Schwind feels 2018 is going to be a special year for the Chieftains.

"Most of these girls have been playing together since middle school and their chemistry on and off the field is undeniable," he said. "This team is an incredible group, and 2018 could be the year where we take the next step."

TINNEY Presents Westside Ramblings



Rockford defeated Birmingham United 17-7 to win its sixth straight Division 1 state title. Junior Maggie Hammer scored six goals and junior Brooklyn Neuman added four goals to pace the Rams in the title match. (Submitted Photo)

Rockford's Girls Lacrosse Team Continues Dominance With Sixth Straight State Title

David Cook
Sports Scene

So much for rebuilding years.

With eight starters having graduated from a team that won its fifth straight state title last season, one would think that the Rockford girls lacrosse team was facing a major rebuilding project this season. Instead of rebuilding, however, the Rams reload and what the Rams loaded up with this season was a sixth straight Division 1 girls lacrosse state title.

Fueled with outstanding young talent, Rockford showed that it indeed is a girls lacrosse dynasty as it defeated Birmingham United 17-7 to win the Division 1 state title. Junior Maggie Hammer scored six goals and junior Brooklyn Neuman added four goals to pace the Rams in the title match.

"We're a lot younger than last year, but we have a lot of talent," said Rockford coach Mike Emery. "The

freshmen and sophomores that have come up play like veterans. It's fun because we have played with them since elementary school."

Rockford reached the finals by defeating Northville 22-4 in the state semifinals. Overall, Rockford outscored its opponents 100-27 during the state tournament. Rockford's closest match came in the regional finals where it outlasted rival Forest Hills Central 12-8.

Neuman, who earned all-American and all-state honors this season, led the Rams with 122 total points this year as she scored 72 goals and added 50 assists. Neuman is already committed to the University of North Carolina to play her college lacrosse.

Rockford's leading goal scorer this season was a sophomore. Karrington Vander Molen, who has already committed to Ohio State University, led the Rams with 80 goals and 14 assists.

Vander Molen's older sister, junior McKenzie Vander Molen, is also committed to Ohio State. McKenzie totaled 51 goals and 33 assists this season.

Hammer wrapped up her junior season with 34 goals and 16 assists.

Sophomore Isabelle Holmes was another impact player on offense. Holmes tallied 26 goals and 43 assists for a total of 69 points.

Rockford's talented freshman class also added key contributions this season. Freshman Sydney Zimmerman scored 58 goals along with 28 assists for 86 points while freshman Madelyn Yakes was Rockford's starting goalkeeper this season.

"All year long it has really been this way," Emery said. "We lost a ton of kids last year and some kids that are making some great strides at local universities and in the Big Ten and other places. We've been dominant all season, and these kids are awesome."

Rockford did start three seniors this season and two of them will be playing lacrosse on the collegiate level. Sisely Vongphasouk is headed to Kennesaw State University in Georgia while Samantha DeBoer will be playing at Alma College.

Greenville Vaulter Takes Another State Championship

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Greenville's Landon Kemp is off to South Dakota State University to begin a collegiate pole vaulting career. But she didn't leave the high school sports scene without making some noise.

Kemp cleared 13 feet, 3 inches to take another state title in Division 2 at Zeeland. Two others also cleared that but Kemp had fewer misses. She had bounced back from regionals when she took second place at 11-3. Her performance at the state meet was a season's best.

Kemp got a personal record of 19-3 in the pole vault for second place at the state meet. She was also fifth in the 100-meter hurdles in 14.94 seconds.

Her personal record had been 13-4, which she cleared in 2016 while winning the state meet.

"It's definitely not the season I wanted to have my senior year," Kemp said. "But it was the best season I could have made with the circumstances I had."

Kemp had to battle injury issues during the season. Ironically, she was 100 percent healthy going into the season.

"But at the end of the basketball season, I could feel that my foot was starting to hurt a little bit again," she said. "But I thought 'oh, it's probably just sore and probably won't be a big deal.' The first couple of indoor meets, I felt really good. But once outdoor hit, it kind of progressively got worse.

"There were a lot of smaller meets I didn't participate in. I

had to be cautious on how much I did. I hurdled on the football field just to give me some padding on my foot. I went out there with the starting blocks and my spikes on and ran it like on I was on the track. It was definitely different. I couldn't train on my sprinting because that hurt, too."

Kemp wound up a lot of swim workouts toward the end of the year.

Her performance at the state final "went as well as it could have gone," she said. "The only thing I was a little disappointed about was the long jump. I was three-fourths of an inch away from a state record and first place. But I PR'd by about five inches. Switching from my left foot to my right foot, I PR'd by almost a foot."

Kemp plans on taking some time off to heal her foot, and then is looking forward to the challenge of competing at South Dakota State, which has been known for its high quality of pole vaulters.



Greenville's Landon Kemp cleared 13 feet, 3 inches to take another state title during the recent Division 2 at finals in Zeeland. (Jamie McNich, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON TRACK

Chesaning Boys Emerge As Track Champions

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Chesaning's boys track and field teams were on top of the Division 3 track world on June 3 at Comstock Park with a state championship.

The Indians scored 47 points compared to 42 for second-place Hillsdale.

The state champions seized on several clutch performances.

Sam Forsyth won the long jump (21-6 1/2) and anchored the 4x200 meter relay team that took first in 1:29.55

Paxton Ruddy was third in the high jump (6-6). Brandon Keys was sixth in the long jump (21-6 1/2). The foursome of Anthony Aguado, Brady Fraiser, Zach McFarland and Brandon Keys were seventh in the 4x100 meter relay in 43.93. McFarland took third place in the 400-meter dash (50.74). Forsyth was third in the 200-meter dash (22.88). The

4x400 relay team of Paxton Ruddy, Hayden Giesken, Forsyth and McFarland was fifth (3:24.59).

In March during preseason training, Forsyth was asked if he thought this team could win a state title.

"Coming into the season, I didn't think so," he replied. "Going into the meet, we knew we were going to be top three. Coach (Jason) Hengesberg, that guy knows what he's doing."

Forsyth is back next season and that factor, along with the return of others, could give the Indians a chance to repeat.

"We're losing a couple, including a guy who placed in all four of his events at state and another guy who got third in the high jump," Forsyth said. "It's going to be rough. We're also losing a hurdler. But I think we'll be able to replace some. Our sprint relays will be OK. The 400 and high jump athletes who are leaving, that will be a little tough."



Chesaning's boys track and field teams celebrate after winning the Division 3 championship June 3 at Comstock Park High School. The Indians scored 47 points to secure the victory. (Submitted Photo)

Chesaning Long Jumper Celebrates State Title

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Considering his team won the Division 3 boys track and field state title by five points, 47-42, over Hillsdale, Sam Forsyth's title in the long jump was huge.

His jump of 21-6 1/2 beat Tai Alle of Manistee, who had a 20-11, by 7.5 inches.

He ran a lot of events for the Indians this season. He had a 100-meter dash personal record

of 11.52 seconds in the 100-meter dash. But he had a lot of success in the 200-meter dash and placed third in the state at 22.88 seconds. His personal record was 22.55 seconds. He won the regional and TVC Central title in those events. He also ran the 400 meters and had a personal record of 51.96 seconds.

But the long jump was Forsyth's main event. He covered 22-1 on May 3 at a meet for what is still his personal record. He won the regional (21-0) and TVC Central

(21-10) titles and then went 21-6 1/2 for first in the state meet.

Forsyth was also the anchor of the 2x400-meter relay team that clocked a 1:29.55 at the state meet. Zach McFarlan, Brady Fraiser and Brandon Keys were also in that event

Forsyth was the third leg of the 1,500-meter relay that clocked a 3:24.59 at the state meet for fifth place. Paxton Ruddy, Hayden Giesken and McFarlan were also in that relay.

In the long jump, "I got second last year so I was hoping I could get at it again," Forsyth said. "It depends on that day, I guess. I was feeling good that day. It's all about speed for the long jump."

He has a year left and Forsyth will go for back-to-back success next season with hopes of even a better performance.

In this year's 1,600-meter relay, Forsyth recalls getting the baton for the last leg when the Indians were way ahead.

"We worked our handoffs a lot," he said. "We don't have anyone who is super fast. We have a lot of people who are decently fast. We had three guys who could probably qualify for state in the open 200."

It was Forsyth's first state title. He was second in the long jump during the 2016 season when he was a junior; the 4x200 relay team had taken second place in 2016, and the 4x400 relay squad was fifth.



Chesaning's Sam Forsyth won the Division 3 long jump championship with a jump of 21-6 1/2. Forsyth helped Chesaning win an overall D3 championship this season. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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YOUNG OWOSSO Presents Area Athletes To Watch



Jacobs Caps High School Career With Two More State Title Wins

Dick Hoekstra
Sports Scene

Noah Jacobs accomplished the rare feat of winning both the 1600 and 3200-meter runs in the Division 2 state finals at Zeeland.

But more amazingly, he did so after rehabilitation from a foot injury earlier in 2017.

"It's pretty hard to put into words what Noah's been able to accomplish, and the impact he's had in our program," Corunna boys track and field coach Jason Beldyga said. "He had a stress (fracture) late in the winter season, and that's the first injury he's had to overcome. We had to be a little more creative in his training. He spent a lot of time in the pool and on a bike because he wasn't able to put the mileage in that we would normally be building up to or putting in during the winter."

Jacobs helped Corunna, which won a Division 2 state title in cross country last fall, take fourth place with 32 points.

"There's a small part of that that made him appreciate the state meet a little more - not that he wasn't appreciative of his past state championships," Beldyga said. "The state meet at Zeeland was definitely a physical, emotional and mental high for that kid, because he had been building up and working to get back to being able to run at that meet."

Jacobs had won the 3200 the past two years.

"The thing that is one of the more underrated aspects of

Noah's running ability is his leg speed," Beldyga said. "He was our fastest 400-meter guy this year. He's able to pair that with a fantastic oxygen delivery system. He's got a great range. He split a 50.8 in the 400 (in a relay) for us this year, and can turn around and run a 9:11 in the 3200."

Jacobs used that leg speed to edge Coldwater junior Shuaib Aljabaly by .21 seconds (9:11.63 to 9:11.84).

"Going into the state meet, we knew he probably wasn't going to touch his 8:55 he ran as a junior," Beldyga said. "But I don't think that was important. It was more about the team."

Others who earned all-state honors for Corunna included sophomore Ben Jacobs (fourth in the 1600), senior Cooper Clapp (fifth in the shot put) and senior Cameron Welte (sixth in the 110 hurdles). Junior Dakota Hundley (ninth in the 3200), senior Jaron VanFleteren (10th in the pole vault), sophomore Charlie Bruckman (12th in the 3200) and senior Max Nations (12th in the discus) narrowly missed scoring points.

Later in June, Jacobs wanted this year to take teammates to the New Balance Nationals meet in North Carolina where he had run last year. So besides finishing ninth in the 5,000-meter run with the seventh-fastest 5K time on a track in Michigan history, Noah teamed with Ben Jacobs, Bruckman, and Hundley to run 17:44.31 in the 4x1 mile for fourth place in the nation.

Noah plans to continue his running career this fall at the University of Wisconsin.

Corunna Makes Trip To Baseball Quarterfinals

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Corunna's baseball team had a fun month in June.

It ended with a tough 5-4 loss to Chelsea in the Division 1 quarterfinals.

Corunna beat Fowlerville 3-1 in the regional finals after having dumped Godrich 15-5 in six innings of the regional semifinals.

The Cavaliers were coached by Chuck Osika. It was the first trip to the quarterfi-

nals since 2005. Corunna was 20-16-1 but enjoyed a strong postseason.

"We threw strikes and played good defense," Osika said. "We kept the ball in play. It all came together at one time. We had the goal of making it to district finals."

The Cavaliers enter the quarterfinal round as underdogs against state ranked Chelsea. "I thought we played very well," Osika said. "We had our chances to win it. But our kids played hard to the last out. I think we surprise people both in the regionals and in the quarterfinals."

It was the first regional title in Corunna's school history.

Austin Schemenauer was a junior

catcher, who hit .453 and earned all-district honors. Zach Sawyer, a junior second baseman batted .393. Dominic Smith hit .340. He was a senior shortstop-pitcher. He got both pitching wins at regionals.

Osika is already looking ahead to next season.

"We should be pretty strong," he said. "I'm losing Dominic Smith, two seniors who started. I started a freshman, sophomore and five juniors. Next year, we should be just as strong."

The Corunna baseball team advanced to the baseball quarterfinals for the first time since 2005. (Mike Schutt, High School Sports Scene Photo)



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Shepherd Track Girls Post Third-Place Finish

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Shepherd enjoyed another impressive performance in the Division 3 state track finals for both girls and boys.

The girls team had an impressive performance in the state meet, taking third with 33 points, trailing Adrian Madison with 56.6 and Lansing Catholic with 41.

The Bluejays set a new Lower Peninsula Division 3 record in the 3,200-meter run with a 9:18.06. Seniors Rachel Mathers, Katelyn Hutchinson and Kylie Hutchinson ran the first two legs while Amber Gall was the anchor.

The Shepherd girls track team finished third during the recent Division 3 Track Finals held at Comstock Park High School. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photos)

Gall won the 800 meters in 2:12.81, and was fourth in the 1,600-meter run (4:48.31). The foursome of Rachel Mathers, Gall, and Kylie and Katelyn Hutchinson was second in 4:02.26.

"We had a tremendous day," coach Carey Hammel said. "Getting 33 points is quite an accomplishment. (Third place) is the highest accomplishment since I've been coaching. It may be the highest since we won the title in 1993. We did the things we wanted to do. Going into the state meet, we scored 33 points and sometimes that puts you eighth or ninth, sometimes it puts you third or fourth."



or fourth."

The Bluejays will graduate talent such as the two Hutchinson girls and Mathers.

"We have some good runners on the team with Amber Gall and other," Hammel said.

Gall set the school record in the 800, as did the



1,600-meter relay team.

Shepherd boys were coached by Rick Cahoon and scored 10 points to tie for 20th place. The foursome of Bryce Hegenauer, Dane Nestle, Tyler Travis and CJ Spencer was third in 8:12.22. Owen Howard was fifth in the 3,200-meter run (9:38.64).



Model Of Consistency Rockford Repeats As State Runner-Up

Dan Stickrad
Sports Scene

When it comes to the sport of track and field, everything must go right in order for a team to enjoy success at the state finals.

Rockford has proven to be one of those boys track and field programs in Michigan that, more often than not, has scored points at the state finals over the past two decades — and with that enjoyed tremendous success over the years.

In the past 20 seasons, Rockford has cracked

the scoring column at the Division 1 state finals in 19 of 20 years. Only the 2008 season saw the Rams fail to register at least one

point at the state meet.

During this 20-year timespan, Rockford owns four state runner-up finishes, finished third on two occasions, collected a total of eight top-10 finishes and 11 top-20 finishes.

A total of 14 times the Rams have finished in the top 30 in the team scoring, proving to be a model of consistency.

"It boils down to senior leadership and the seniors setting an example each year," offered Rockford coach Andrew Martin, who had over 100 athletes on the roster this season. "When

you have good seniors and good upperclassmen, it kind of carries over each year."

Rockford finished as the Division 1 state runner-up for the second straight year after collecting 62 points at East Kentwood High School.

Host East Kentwood scored 78.5 points to win the title, while defending state champ Oak Park was third (44).

"We qualified a lot of athletes and what I think really helped us is that we scored in most events," noted Martin. "We scored in three relays, we scored in the field events, we scored in the hurdles, middle distances, long distances — we scored in every area. We only won two events, but we had several great performances and (top-eight) finishes that helped us (rack) up a lot of points."

The Rockford boys track team finished second for the second straight year during the recent Division 1 track finals. (Submitted Photo)

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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON BRECKENRIDGE



Breckenridge Girls Impress During 2017 Campaign

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Breckenridge girls track coach Griffin Bohannon was impressed with his team's performance in the most important meet of the season.

"I was very happy with the girls performance in the state finals," he said.

Breckenridge placed 15th and scored 16 points at the meet. Brooklyn Federspiel placed fourth in shot put (36-2).

"She had a real nice throw to get herself a spot in the finals," Bohannon said. "From there, we felt pretty good after she got to the finals that she would medal. She had a nice throw in the finals."

"The 4x800 meter relay team was third in 9:52.6 for a school record with the group of freshman Annie Laurenz, senior Carly Jenkins and juniors Ellen Laurenz and Chloe Brittain.

"We were very excited to go down there with a school record," Bohannon said. "We were excited to get third there."

Brittain, the anchor in the

4x800, was fourth in the 800-meter run (2:21.86).

"She made a move for the lead with about 300 meters to go," Bohannon said. "It's what she and I had talked about. She put herself up in front. But a couple of girls had more than she did that day and she wound up fourth. It was a nice race and what I was hoping for. She set a new personal record.

"Everything went really well all day. The only real downfall was I had a freshman hurdler, Anne Laurenz, who ended up ninth in the 300 hurdles a tenth of a second from all-state. She fell on the third to the last hurdle. There were three girls on the fast heat out of eight that fell. It was a bummer for her. But she was able to get up strong and take ninth. That was the only sour spot of the day."

Breckenridge had qualified five girls for the meet.

"We wanted a top 10 (as a team), but with fall in the hurdles, it was tough to make up those six to eight points we were counting on there," Bohannon said. "I thought the girls ran very well. We were overall very happy."



Breckenridge finished the 2017 season with a 15th place finish at the recent Division 4 finals. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photos)



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Fulton Runners Have Magical Performance In D4 Finals

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Fulton's 4x100 meter relay team had quite a day at the Division 4 state finals on June 3.

Fulton won the title with the combination of senior Ben Fischer, Jon Baker, Adam Duflo and Tristan Johnston (44.33 seconds).

Coach Jeff Biddinger works with the relay teams.

"It was very successful," Biddinger said. "Jon Baker has never run varsity track before. They got faster and faster as the season progressed. The handoffs were always spot on, which helped. When they got to state, the splits were

very fast. They won the crazy thing. They ran the fastest they have all year 44.33. Muskegon Catholic Central was second (44.43)."

Their performance was a personal record by "quite a bit," Biddinger said. "All of our runners PRed in their splits. They got the adrenalin. Their handoffs were really quick. Nobody fumbled a handoff. They got them off strong. When they get the baton, they're almost up to the next (gate). That what makes a fast relay."

Baker dual-sported with golf and track.

"We didn't see him much during the week," Biddinger said. "It took the early meets to get in sync. As the season

went on, they got further. Speed wasn't the problem. When you have a dual sporter, you don't get them all the time in practice. With relays, it's all about timing. They bonded well. They were a tight-knit group. That's what helps."

Fulton took 10th place overall in Division 4 with 21 points. Braydan Biddinger was third in the high jump at 6 feet, 5 inches.

The foursome of Fischer, Baker, Duflo and Johnston was also first in the 4x100 relay in 45.50 seconds. They had the same time in winning the regionals. The 4x200 relay team of Colin Stahl, Baker, Adam Duflo and Tristan Johnston was first at the regional competition in 1:35.84.

Fulton's 4x100 meter relay team of Ben Fischer, Jon Baker, Adam Duflo and Tristan Johnston won a state title with a time of (44.33 seconds). (Submitted Photo)



Beal City Girls Enjoys Strong State Track Meet

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Beal City girls track coach Dave King will soon realize, if he hasn't already, how much quality matters on a track team, compared to quantity. Not that he has anything against quantity.

"I have some very good athletes and all of my athletes work hard," he said. He started the year with 12 girls and went most of the season with nine. "It's made it very difficult to try to fill out our lineup and competed as a team, in dual meets

Beal City qualified six girls for the Division 4 state meet. The Aggies scored a total of 22 points. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

and even some invitationals."

Five girls qualified for the Division 4 state meet with two relays and three individuals.

"We placed in four out of the five events," King said. "We scored 22 points and finished ninth at the state meet. That was a satisfying end to what had been kind of a difficult season."

But it wasn't necessarily unexpected for the Aggies coach.

"I knew we could do well in those events," King said.

The Aggies were less than four

points away from sixth place.

Junior Ashley Reihl was fourth in the long jump at 16-2 1/4, and was also on the second place 4x800 meter relay team with freshman Gaby Gamble, junior Natalie Gross and senior Kayla Bierschbach (9:51.25). Bierschbach was sixth in the 400-meter dash (1:00.50). The Eagles were third in the 4x400 meter relay with Reihl, sophomore Amy Schwerin, Gross and Bierschbach (4:11.03).

"We had our best performances of the season at that state finals meet in three out of the four events we placed in," King said. "Our 3,200-meter relay had qualified for the state meet third in our regional at 10:21. In the last two weeks of the season between the state and

regionals, we took off 30 seconds and beat both of the teams that had finished ahead of us at regionals and took the runner-up spot at the state finals.

"We had already brought our time down to 9:56 at the Mid-Michigan Meet of Champions on that Tuesday before the state meet. We felt we'd do well at the state meet. But the fact we ran our best time of the year (and finished second was excellent for us. In the 400 relay, we ran a new school record at the state meet. All our girls ran their best relay leg of the year at the same time. My long jumper had her lifetime best long jump. We knew we had talent and could do well. The girls put it all together that day."

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McConnell Sisters Lead Sacred Heart To Fifth-Place State Finish

John Raffel
Sports Scene

It was a once in a lifetime chance for Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart girls track and field coach Jamie Slate.

He had the four McConnell sisters, with four different grade levels, competing at the state meet and finishing in place second, third, fourth and fifth in the 3,200-meter run.

Junior Bailey McConnell was second (11:28.60) while senior Alexis McConnell was third (11:31.96), freshman Desiree McConnell was fourth (11:43.73) and sophomore Cammie McConnell was fifth (11:44.77).

"We knew going into the season we were going to have a pretty

good team," Slate said. "We were a little surprised we did as well as we did going into the regional. We thought we had a legitimate chance to walk away with a top three finish. Things didn't go quite the way we had hoped for in the state finals. But overall, we were really pleased with the season. You walked away with a fifth place (in the state) and a regional championship and you're pretty happy."

Bailey and Cammie McConnell ran the first three legs of the 3,200-meter relay, with Scout Nelson as the anchor. The team was fourth in 9:59.33.

"Anyone watching that at Houseman Field had to be blown away," Slate said. "They took two-three-four-and-five. You look at that and not another team in the state has

four sisters as a set of runners. It's very impressive."

Alexis ran her last high school race. She'll be performing at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids.

"We're losing Alexis, a four-time all-state runner," Slate said. "We're losing Jody Houck in the field events. Losing them is going to be tough. In the big scheme of things, we've got some young runners who are getting better every single year. It should be another strong year for us. Distance running isn't going to take much of a hit. It's crazy to think you'll lose Alexis and not take much of a hit. But the distance running team is strong. Our relays are still going to be strong. Next year looks pretty good."



Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart finished fifth during the recent Division 4 state finals. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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Waverly Girls Track Repeats As D2 Champs

Dick Hoekstra
Sports Scene

The Lansing Waverly girls track and field team scored five more points this spring at the Division 2 state finals than last year.

The Warriors needed every one of them to hold off host Zeeland East 47-46 and repeat as state champions.

"I felt like this one was a little more difficult," third-year Waverly coach Rex Wilkes said. "Obviously going back to back is probably one of the harder things to do."

"Last year, winning our first state title was a very magical moment. We returned everybody, so we had expectations that we were going to score well. We just didn't know how many points other teams were going to score. Teams like Zeeland East were putting up a lot of points with one girl who scored 36 by herself."

The Warriors needed the points provided by freshman newcomer Priscilla Trainor, who made all-state in four events. She placed third in the 200-meter dash, sixth in the 100-meter dash, first in the 4x200 relay that also included senior Teagan Thomas, and juniors Jazlynn Wilcox and Maya Garrett,

and first in the 4x100 relay that also included Thomas, Garrett, and junior Trachele Roberts.

"We were a little hampered by Trachele Roberts, who won the 100 and anchored both the 4x200 and 4x100 last year," Wilkes said. "She had a hamstring strain most of the season. By the end of the season, she was only running the anchor of the 4x100. We were able to move and shuffle girls around so they could be successful."

Wilkes says the Waverly 4x200 relay was a repeat state champion, the 4x100 relay has won three state championships in a row, and the 4x100 won the Greater Lansing Honor Roll meet for four years straight.

"So our senior Teagan Thomas went undefeated, because she was the one that led off every single one of those relays," Wilkes said.

The Warriors also earned key state meet points with all-state performances in the throwing events. Junior Malin Smith took second in the discus and third in the shot put, and senior Maya Bennett fifth in the shot put.

"We qualified a girl in every field event for the Honor Roll Meet, and we won six events there," said Wilkes, who pointed out that is hard to do because the Greater Lansing meet only accepts the eight top athletes from



Lansing Waverly narrowly escaped with a 47-46 victory over host Zeeland East to win its second straight Division 2 championship. Bottom: The Waverly boys team finished third during D2 state finals. (Submitted Photos)

approximately 40 schools in field events. "We were just blessed that we were very well spread around. We're not very strong in the distance events, so we have to make up for it in the jumps, throws, sprints and relays."

Waverly swept Capital Area Activities Conference Red, Division 2 regional and

state meet titles this spring after earning only the state meet crown in 2016. The Warriors placed second in the CAAC Red Meet, third at regionals, and fourth overall in their league a year ago.

"We took care of things this year," Wilkes said. "I was very proud of all of the girls."

Waverly Boys Solid; Finish Third In D3 Finals

Dick Hoekstra
Sports Scene

The Waverly boys track and field team compiled another strong season where the Warriors won the Capital Area Activities Conference Red division, placed second to Corunna in their Division 2 regional meet at Williamston, and then placed third in the state finals at Zeeland.

"We had graduated three all-staters from the previous year," Waverly boys track and field coach David Pike said. "The story of our season is how our kids progressed and really stepped up. Our kids performed really well."

Warriors earned all-state honors in seven events.

Sophomore Keshawn Harris came in second in the 110-meter hurdles, and third in the 300 hurdles.

Senior Wanya Sanders took a close second in the 400-meter dash (49.24 to 49.21 by Cameron Oleen of Fruitport), and seventh in

the 200 dash.

Senior Tom Nelson placed seventh in the 100-meter dash in 11.27, and joined Harris, junior Kenny Brewer, and Sanders to finish third in the 4x200 relay.

Sanders and Brewer teamed with seniors Denzel Ray and Jordan Robinson to also take third in the 4x400 relay.

Brewer also qualified for state in the long jump, and placed 19th.

"I think we exceeded others' expectations," Pike said. "I said at the start of the year to our kids that we are going to be sneaky good, because no one else is going to expect us to do the things we are going to be able to do this year."

Waverly edged St. Johns 137-131 to win the CAAC Red Meet.

"It was a matter of our kids stepping up and outperforming our seeds," Pike said. "We had great performances from kids in their field events, and our top-level kids performed at a top level."

Sanders went on to cap his high school career by finishing seventh in the 400-meter



dash in the Midwest Meet of Champions in 50.07 seconds at Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, Ohio.

"I'm looking forward to next year," Pike

said. "Hurdles state qualifier Keshawn Harris returns, and Kenny Brewer is back as a state qualifier in the long jump and 4x400. We've got some big shoes to fill, but we've got some great kids coming back."

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Fowler Track Girls Enjoy Their Second Place Finish

John Raffel
Sports Scene

It was a very strong showing for Fowler's girls track team at the Division 4 state meet on June 3 at Grand Rapids Houseman Field.

Coach Jill Feldpausch's team was second in the competition with 52 points, only 10 points shy of first-place Southfield Christian.

"Overall, going into the season, our goal was top three," she said. "That's what I thought would be a lofty goal. We won it last year. We were state champions. We lost a lot of numbers from that team. So, I thought top three would be a goal. But as the season progressed, I could see the times coming down, the team coming together and everyone kept

improving.

"About mid-May is when it hit me we could do better than top three. We were hoping for top two and went away with it and everybody performed well. We had three school records that day, which contributed to the second-place finish."

The Eagles were first in the 4x100 meter relay with four juniors: McKenzie Feldpausch, Ciera Weber, McKenzie Koenigsnecht and Sidney Horak. They were second in the 4x400 meter relay in 4:10.61 with the combination of Koenigsnecht, Morgan George, Grace Boak and Sidney Horak. George was fifth in the 800 meters with a new school record (2:21.96).

Alyssa Vandegriff won the high jump (5-4), to tie the school record and was

second in the 100-meter hurdles (15.43) for another school record.

Ciera Weber was fourth in the pole vault (9-3).

"What really helped our day, along with the first-place from the 400-meter relay team, is we weren't expecting first from that, Feldpausch said. "We weren't expecting to score that high. We hoped for fourth through sixth. They had a big PR that day. They nailed the handoffs and got first place. It's the first time in the 10 years I've coached that the 400 team has taken first at that level."

Fowler will be graduating just one senior who participated at the state meet.

"We have a great eighth-grade class coming up," Feldpausch said. "We're excited for next year."



The Fowler girls track team finished with 52 points, only 10 points behind Southfield Christian to finish second during the recent Division 4 finals held June 3 at Grand Rapids Houseman Field. (Submitted Photo)

Fowler Sophomore Is High Jump State Champ

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Alyssa Vandegriff is only a sophomore, but has already made her mark for Fowler girls track team.

Vandegriff played a huge role in Fowler's second-place finish at the state meet.

Vandegriff cleared 5-4 in the high jump at the state meet for her personal record and took first place. She also had a personal record in the 100-meter hurdles in 15.4 seconds and took second place. She had a strong season in the 300 hurdles. And competed at the state meet. She placed 110th in 49.72 seconds, three places away from another state medal.

"It was definitely my team and my coaches," Vandegriff

said. "They really helped me."

Her state-meet jump for a personal best is one Vandegriff won't soon forget.

"I was pretty nervous," she said. I went up and went over and I looked up and the bar was still there. I looked at my team and they were all screaming and hugging. I don't know, but I was really excited.

Last season, as a freshman, Vandegriff was fourth at the state meet in the high jump with a clearance of 5-feet.

She's been high jumping for two seasons.

"I tried high jumping once in the eighth grade and I got something like 4-6," she said.

Vandegriff's performance in the hurdles also put a smile on her face.

"I was expected to get out of prelims but I didn't know what I'd get overall," she said. "I think my strength in the hurdles is my ability to three-step in-between each hurdle."

Vandegriff also runs cross country and plays basketball. But of the three sports track is her favorite for no other reason, basically, then it's the one where she's had the most success.

Fowler could be a state contender again next year and Vandegriff is looking forward to it.

"I certainly hope I can be better next year," she said.

The high school season is over but Vandegriff will be busy. In June, she goes to basketball camps. Then for the rest of the summer she focuses on running.

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Ithaca Sophomore Throwers Reflect On All-State Season

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Ithaca throwers finished the season in high style.

Baylee Chaffin and Alex VanDeWeghe both went to the Division state finals.

Both are sophomores and qualified for the state meet and earned all-state



honors. VanDeWeghe (56 ¼) was third and Chaffin fifth (52-6 1/2). VanDeWeghe, a sophomore, took 12th at the state finals in the discus with a throw of 141-5.

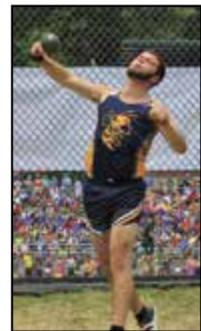
VanDeWeghe on June 18 competed in the New Balance Nationals Outdoor meet and hit his personal record of 56-10 and took second place.

"It went well," VanDeWeghe said. "I definitely got my PR there. It was the good competition in general. Everyone there was throwing fine. I had a good year with some pretty good throws."

But the state meet was a definite highlight for both athletes.

"The atmosphere was amazing," Chaffin said. "I was very happy. It was a great season. I was very consistent with my

throws." Chaffin threw his PR at the state meet and then threw a 52-5 ½ on Jan. 18 in the New Balance Nationals Outdoors. He also



went to the state finals in 2016 for the shot put. But he placed 27th.

"My plans for next year are to hit the weights

hard in the offseason," he said. "I'll be switching (his style) and hopefully (improve) my distances"

VanDeWeghe is also looking forward to 2018.

"We're looking to make some big improvements again," he said. "Hopefully we can get all state at shot put and discus and perform well at nationals."

Ithaca athletic director Terry Hessbrook commented earlier in the spring how impressive the Yellowjacket throwers have been.

"Our boys throwers are amazing," he said. "Alex VanDeWeghe broke a school record in shot put with a throw of 54-10 ½. The record was close to 30 years old. Baylee Chaffin has also broken 50 feet in the shot put. Not bad for two sophomores."



Ithaca sophomore throwers Baylee Chaffin (left) and Alex VanDeWeghe (far right) finished in the top 5 of the Division 3 track finals in the shot put. Both Ithaca throwers are only sophomores. (Submitted Photos)

Ithaca Girls Track Team Looks To Future

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Ithaca's girls track team entered the state finals as defending champions and coach Gene Lebron knew it wasn't going to be easy to repeat.

It wasn't.

The Yellowjackets scored 12 points in the state finals on June 3 at Comstock Park, finishing way behind Adrian Madison with 56 ½.

Emily Foster was third in the 300-meter hurdles (46.10) and Courtney Allen was third in the 800-meter

run (2:16.99).

"I thought we had a great season," Lebron said. "It's always hard after you win it all. I look at every year as a different year. I know with everything we lost we wouldn't be able to win the state meet again. But we won a league championship and were regional runners-up. That's a pretty good season if you ask me."

"We went to the state meet and scored some points. I'd thought we'd score a little more. But it was so competitive across the board. It's unbelievable how crazy and

competitive it was. I thought the girls did as good a job of regrouping and having some good times late in the season."

The 2016 Ithaca team was the first one to take a state



title.

"I knew last year that we weren't going to win this year," Lebron said. "Track and field is such a numbers

games. Championships aren't won on paper, but paper can tell you a lot. I've always been a realist with the kids. Setting a goal to win the state meet was unrealistic. Our goal was to win the region and score as many state meet points that we could."

Next season will be a big question mark.

"We'll rely heavily on freshmen," Lebron continued. "It will be one of the biggest question marks I've ever had as a coach in either sport, cross country or track. I like some of the things we have coming back. We have some good underclassmen coming back. We have some good eighth graders coming in. But it's a big question mark. We'll work hard with what we've got."



With the graduation of many of its top runners, the Ithaca girls track team will be extremely young a year from now. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photos)



Goodell Makes It Back-To-Back Titles

John Raffel
Sports Scene

It was a sparkling end to Evan Goodell's career as a distance runner for St. Louis. He ended with another state championship in the 3,200-meter run.

Goodell had a 9:08.04 for first place at the Division 3 state finals. A week later he was fifth in 9:08.56 at the Midwest Distance Classic. He won the regional meet in 9:26.63 at Shepherd. His personal record came at the Shepherd Invitational at 9:05.06;



St. Louis' Evan Goodell ran 9:08.04 for first place at the recent Division 3 state finals held in Comstock Park. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

he also won the 1,600 meters in 4:19.06 at Shepherd but did not compete in the state finals. Goodell had a personal record of 4:18.18 at the Alma College Scottie Classic.

"I had specific splits for each lap that I wanted to run," he said. "I got out slower than I wanted ... But I'm happy with how I raced. I got the Division 3 state meet record, so that was a nice addition to the second state championship."

Goodell said he was shooting

for the state mark.

"We were actually shooting for faster than I ran," he said. "But I still had a good race."

Goodell won the 3,200-meter run in 9:21 at the 2016 state meet.

"I was happier with this year because I got the state meet record," he said. "I ran a lot closer to my best this year. It's the second one, so it's nice."

The second-place winner at the state meet, finishing way behind Goodell, was Corey Gorgas

of Saugatuck in 9:29.16.

Goodell could also take enjoyment from the fact that while a lot of athletes win a state title, not many can do it twice.

"It was a little warm for distance running but it cooled down by race time," Goodell said of the 2017 meet. "By the time it got to race time, I was happy with how conditions were."

Goodell is now resting and is getting ready for the college level. He has committed to run at William & Mary in the fall.

St. Louis Baseball Team Caps Off 20-Win Season With District Championship

Butch Harmon
Sports Scene

Led by all-state senior Jimmy Pierce, the St. Louis baseball team turned in a solid season.

Pierce, a first-team, all-state player, did a little bit of everything this season as he helped lead St. Louis to a district championship and a 20-win season.

"The season went pretty good," said St. Louis coach Rollie Carman. "I wouldn't say it was an out-

standing season, but it went pretty well. We won our district, which was probably the best thing that happened this year, we won more than 20 games for the second year in a row and we had Jimmy make all-state. Those were the three biggest things this season."

Pierce, who will be continuing his baseball career at Lansing Community College, was a leader at the plate, in the field and on the pitching mound for the Sharks.

Pierce hit .489 this season with 15

doubles, four triples and a home run while driving in 52 RBI, just two shy of the school record.

"Defensively, Jimmy is a gem," Carman said. "He is just outstanding defensively. Offensively, he hits the ball hard and hits it all over the field."

Pierce also showed plenty of skills on the mound, highlighted by a five-inning no-hitter against Ithaca in the district semifinals where he struck out 14 of the 15 batters he faced.

Junior center fielder Dylan McCloskey earned all-conference and all-district honors. McCloskey, the Sharks' leadoff hitter, batted .400 this season with nine doubles, a triple and 31 RBI.

Senior Marcus Beeson earned

all-district and all-regional honors along with second-team, all-conference honors. Beeson, who is headed to Siena Heights College to continue his career, went 8-3 this season with two saves. Beeson also struck out 92 batters in 69 innings pitched.

Mic Munderloh and Jayce Kuehnlein also earned all-district honors for the Sharks who fell to Pinconning in the regional semifinals.

"Our regional was loaded," Carman said. "We had Pinconning, who won our league, Hemlock and a Clare team that had over 30 wins this season. We had a real tough season both in our league and at the regional. Three of the teams at the regional were from our league."



St. Louis turned in a 20-win season and a district championship for coach Rollie Carman this season. (Randy Miniard, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE'S TRACK BRIEFS



Frankenmuth Thrower Celebrates Two Titles

Frankenmuth's Dan Stone was a double winner at the Division 3 state finals in the discus and shot put.

He was fourth in the discus and second in the shot put as a junior.

"Back in his sophomore year, he went through a growth spurt," Frankenmuth 27-year coach Jerry Drake said.

"He's grown. This year he's 6-4, probably 230. He works out nonstop. As a junior, he broke the school (shot put) record.

Stone has been among the best throwers Drake coached.

"Dan has the desire," Drake said. "And he has the physical characteristics to take him to the next level. He threw well all year."

Stone broke the school discus record by about 20 feet.



Flint Powers excels in 3,200-meter relay

Flint Powers girls track coach Leo Fowley took pride in a 4x800 relay team that had a strong season.

Powers was second in the state in 2016 and this year wound up 13th with 19 1/2 points.

"They broke the prior state record, which was about 9:19," Fowley said.

His relay team "worked extremely hard," Foley noted. "We've been blessed in past years to have some great 800-meter runners.

"We used the same group of girls this year in the 4x4 relay in the last event of the meet," Foley said.



Okemos' Outlaw Rebounds To Have Stellar Senior Campaign

Napoleon Outlaw made the most of his final prep track and field season.

The Okemos senior sprinter did not qualify in any event as a junior for the Division 1 state finals.

Outlaw bowed out by competing in four events at the D-1 state finals June 3 at East Kentwood High School.

He also claimed third in the 200 meters (21.82 in the prelims and 21.99 in the finals), ran a leg on the Chieftains' third-place 800-meter relay unit (1:27.85) and anchored the school's 1,600 relay that finished 13th.

As a sophomore, Outlaw was seventh at state in the 200 meters and ran on two state-placing relays — fourth on the 1,600-meter relay (3:24.32) and fifth on the 800-meter relay (1:28.80).



East Lansing's Patterson Bows Out A Double-Champ

Kentre Patterson finished up his high school career as a multi-event state champion.

One event was expected, the other was somewhat of a surprise.

The East Lansing senior captured the 110-meter high hurdles at the Division 1 state finals June 3 at East Kentwood, winning the prelims in a school-record 13.74 seconds.

That was expected, as Patterson finished unbeaten against Michigan foes in the event as both a junior and senior.

Patterson wasn't as heralded in the 300 hurdles. Although he won the CAAC Blue Division league meet, he was only second at the Greater Lansing Meet of Champions and fourth at the Holt regional (39.82).

He saved his best for last in winning the 300 hurdles in a blazing 38.23 seconds, four one-hundredths of a second faster than Allen Stritzinger of Warren DeLaSalle.

"I won (the 110s) last year, so I expected to win this year," said Patterson. "I didn't run that great at the regional. Three guys beat me there. But I had some extra energy (at the state finals) I guess. I was able to win the 300 (hurdles) and finish up with a second state title.



Lakewood's Caudy Completes Trifecta In 110 Hurdles

Lake Odessa Lakewood senior Noah Caudy capped his high school track and field career by winning both the 110 and 300-meter hurdles events in the Division 2 state finals at Zeeland.

The senior's times were 14.05 seconds in the 110 hurdles, and 37.85 in the 300 hurdles.

"It's his third time winning the 110 hurdles," Lakewood track and field coach Jim Hassett said. "After seeing times, I was actually more confident in the 300 hurdles than I was in the 110.

Caudy was also part of the fifth-place 4x100 relay for Lakewood that earned all-state and helped the Vikings finish in sixth place as a team with 24 points.

"Noah is a one in a coaching career talent," Hassett said. "He's a pretty humble kid, too. He doesn't let the success he's had go to his head.



Smith Brothers Shine In Shot Put For Carson City-Crystal

It was a unique combination in the shot put for the Carson City-Crystal track team this season with the Smith brothers.

Jacob Smith, a senior, threw the 50-5 for third place at the state meet. Daniel, a sophomore, took fourth in 48-10 3/4.

"They were my top throwers throughout the season," Coach Grant Woodman said. "Jacob was the top discus guy and the top shot guy. Dan and Jacob and he flip-flopped sometimes in meets for the shot, but not the disc.

The two brothers train extensively in the weight room, which is among the keys behind their success, Woodman said.

"They're constantly out there getting reps in for their throws working on technique," he said. "Their dad (Frank Smith) is a pretty positive influence in that respect.

Special thanks to John Raffel, Dick Hokestra, Butch Harmon, Scott Salowich and Dan Stickrad for breaking down the 2017 Track Finals for Sports Scene.

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE'S TRACK BRIEFS



Vanitvelt Leaves Flint Powers On High Note

Julia Vanitvelt enjoyed a season for Flint Powers' girls track team that she'll remember for a long time.

The Flint Powers senior earned three all-state medals at the recent Division 3.

She took third place in the 1,600-meter run (5:03.21). She was on two relay teams that placed: The 4x800 relay squad placed second (9:17.75) and the 4x400 relay team took seventh place (4:05.75).

Vanitvelt was the school record-holder in the 1,600. She was third in the Midwest Meet of champions, between Ohio, Indiana and Michigan.

"She is a tremendous worker, she does everything we ask her to," Powers coach Leo Foley said. "She's a team leader. We're going to miss her a lot.

Vanitvelt also has the team's fastest time in the 3,200. "Is kind of hard to say what her best event will be," Foley said.



LC Distance Runner Takes State Title

Connor Maloney got the job done for Lansing Catholic in the Division 3 state finals meet this season.

Maloney saved his personal record at the right time. He clocked the 400-meter run in 48.63 seconds for first place.

He was also on the 4x400 relay team of Ryan Schroeder, Noah Alvarado and Ryan Ruitter that was first in 3:23.56.

"I was ranked first so going into it I had the mind set I was going to win. I knew I had to run hard. I expect to push hard and still finish first.

Entering the season, Maloney's major goal was to be a state champion.

"I was confident, but obviously state meet is the biggest meet of the year," he said. "I was nervous, but I was excited for the opportunity to run it."

He'll play football and run track at Hillsdale College.



Clare Vaulter Staley Wins Another State Title

The latest polls are out, and Clare's Kasey Staley is way ahead of the competition.

The Central Michigan-bound senior cleared the bar at 12 feet to win the Division 3 state championship in the pole vault for the second year in a row.

"Kasey has been a big part of our team ever since she got here," said Clare coach Kyle McCown.

While McCown enjoys filling out the lineup and knowing he is getting max points in at least one event, he is quick to give credit where credit is due.

"Her dad (T.J. Staley) is our primary vault coach and he does an amazing job with all of them," McCown said. "He gets all the credit."

The Pioneers finished seventh in the team standings with a total of 26 points. Staley scored 10 for her gold medal and the rest came from distance runners Jasmine Harper and Laine Veenkant.

Harper was fifth in the 1,600 meters in 4:59.89, with Veenkant sixth in 5:02.11.

In the 3200, Harper was fourth in 10:53.16, with Veenkant fifth in 10:56.17.

Farwell scored seven points, courtesy of Lillian Albaugh, who was fifth in the shot put with a 38-6 effort, and Jenna Odykirk, who was sixth in the 400 meters in 59.75.

Beaverton's Donna Jean Eschenbacher was fifth in the long jump at 16-8.75.

Harrison's Aja Heber was fifth in the pole vault at 10-6.



Okemos' Hartman Aids Chieftains To Fourth-Place Finish

Okemos' fourth-place finish at the Division 1 state finals was aided by the legs of Vail Hartman.

Teammate Napoleon Outlaw placed in three events, Hartman, a senior, finished second in the open 400-meter run (47.88) in a race where three runners dipped under 48 seconds and 12 runners were under 50-flat.

Hartman also joined Outlaw, Spencer Alexander and Davis Williams for a third-place finish in the 800-meter really (1:27.45).

Okemos rang up 33 points overall.



Morse Takes Second At State

Essexville-Garber scored many points in the 800-meter run this season, thanks especially to junior Josiah Morse, who placed second at the state meet.

Morse won several races this year, including in the regionals (1:58.78) and then took second at the Division 2 state finals with a personal record (1:53.74). He recently ran at the New Balance Nationals outdoor meet (1:55.22).

Morse also ran on the 1,600-meter relay team that was seventh (3:28.10) at the state meet. He clocked a 49.7 in the first leg at the regional to come from behind and help his team take second to qualify for the state meet.

This was his best season. He said he was "very" happy with his performance in the 800 at the state meet.

"Throughout the year on practices, we've focused a lot on speed," he said. "I've always had a good kick at the end. It's a combination of my speed and kick."

Morse only lost twice in the 800.

"I'm pretty strong throughout the race," Morse said. "I can kick it in anywhere from the 200 meters and from there."

Next year Morse hopes to win the state meet in the 800 and break the school record in the 1,600 and 400.



Flushing's Perry Goes Out With High Jump Title

Breanna Perry finished up out on top, less than 18 months after suffering a serious knee injury.

The Flushing senior, who enjoyed being a starting forward on the Raiders' Class A state championship girls basketball team in March, added the Division 1 state title as a high jumper in track and field.

Perry leapt a school record 5-foot-7 at the D-1 finals at East Kentwood, winning by one inch over Muskegon Mona Shores' Elizabeth Knoll and finishing unbeaten against Michigan competition.

"What a great way to finish up," said Perry. "To be where I was at a year and a half ago (with the knee injury) to winning a state title in basketball and track is amazing. I couldn't be happier."

Perry, a 6-foot, 160-pound jumping jack, was also a regional, Flint Metro League, Badar Invitational Davison Twilight Classic, Shake Off the Rust Invite, Marco Marcet Invite and Spartans Classic Invite champ in the high jump.

Perry was also one of the Raiders' top sprinters this season, and she finished third at the regional in both the 400-meter relay and 800-meter relay, with those two relays narrowly missing state cuts. She also claimed second at the FML meet in the 200 (26.70).

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HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE'S TRACK BRIEFS



Alma Pole Vaulter Takes Second Place

Ezra Faust scored valuable points for Alma at the Division 2 state meet on June 3 at Zeeland with an effort of 13 feet, 7 inches.

It was his senior season and was his best performance in the pole vault at the state meet. His personal record stands at 13-9 which he cleared in a dual earlier in the season.

His pole vault effort was a huge improvement from the 2016 state meet when he cleared 12-10 for 12th place but was four places from all-state honors.

"In some ways, I exceeded (expectations)," Faust said. "I fell short a little bit. In the morning, I woke up and said, 'I'm going to be state champ.' In the end, the guy who took first place (Remington Bott of Allendale), and I tied. We had to do a jump off. I lost the jump off, but I was happy with second. I knew the competition was going to be really hard."

In being a good pole vaulter, "I felt confident and strong," he said. "It turned out to be a really good day."



Alma Thrower Breaks Record

Ryan Cornejo broke the school record in the discus for Alma this season and had another strong year.

He threw the discus 162 feet, 5 inches for fifth place at the Division 2 state finals to end his high school career. A few days prior to that, he threw his personal record of 171-3 1/2 in the Greater Lansing Honor Roll Meet of Champions. Cornejo broke the school record by 12 feet.

"The main thing, was all week I was working my speed in the circle and working a lot of on my release," he said. "It was actually my first throw."

His personal record in the shot put was 46-2 at the TVC Central championship meet.

Cornejo is going to Saginaw Valley State University to play football.

"Track was really fun," he said. "I met a lot of people and we really bonded. It was fun and I had a good experience. It was fun for us to go there with our throws coach and see some good competition and still compete."



Montrose Thrower Enjoys Huge Season

Brooklyn Klopff established herself as one of the state's best throwers this season.

The Montrose senior was first in the shot put and second in the discus at Division 3 state finals. The Montrose senior won all seven of her meets in the shot put and had a

personal record of 45-0.5 in the state meet. For the discus, she was undefeated until her last two meets when she took second, including at the state finals despite a personal record of 144-7.

As a junior, Klopff also was undefeated in the shot put and won the state title at 40-3 1/4. She was 18th in the discus but made a marked improvement in that this season. Klopff started throwing as a sophomore and this was her best season.

"I was originally a sprinter, but the throws coach got ahold of me and said, 'if you come try this you can be good at it,'" Klopff said. "I quit running and started throwing."

The shot put has been her best event with the two state titles

"I set goals for this year and I reached both of them," Klopff said.

The key in the shot put, she said, "is a lot of behind the scenes work, a lot of practice and work in the weight room. It's a lot of technique and having a positive attitude. On some days, you'll have bad days when you won't throw far. You just have to worry about the next day."

Klopff focused on the throws.

At the state finals staying relaxed and focused helped Klopff to persevere; she was basically the only female thrower on the Montrose team. Klopff has been throwing for the whole year and has spent a lot of time in the weight room during the winter.

Klopff will be going to Central Michigan University for track and field. She liked the coaching staff and was offered a scholarship, motivating her to attend. She plans on majoring in education. She may be participating in the hammer throws, weight throw and javelin, which is offered on the college level.

"They'll decide where I'm best at," Klopff said.



Bartels Excels For Saginaw Nouvel

Matt Bartels had a memorable day for Saginaw Nouvel in the distances at the June 3 state finals.

Bartels, a senior, was second (4:29.60) in the 3,200-meter run (9:54.13) and third in the 1,600-meter run. His 1,600-meter run was a personal record.

It was his best performance at the

Division 4 state meet.

"I was able to do the work I needed to do and use my abilities," he said. "It was a pretty good season. Going into it, I had a little bit (of a challenge) But everything worked out in the end. I had a good experience."

By racing a lot throughout the season, Bartels felt he was able to keep getting better. He also did cross country and indoor track. He also had a strong cross country season. He placed first at various meets and finished 14th at the state meet.

As a team, "we were third in the region," Bartels said. "There were very few points separating us from first and second."

He plans on attending St. Johns University in Collegeville, Minn., and run cross country.



Fenton's Dimambro Wins 3,200 To Keep Title Home

Dominic Dimambro kept the state crown in the 3,200 meter run within the Fenton family. The senior fought off a tight pack of competitors June 3 at the MHSAA Division 1 state finals at East Kentwood High School to win the event with a blistering 9:07.79 clocking in one of the fastest 3,200 meters races in state history.

A total of 23 runners dipped under the 9:30 mark and nine runners were under the 9:20 barrier. Senior teammate Andrew Bond also finished eighth (9:17.70) to medal and earn All-State accolades.

Former teammate Jacob Lee captured the 3,200 meters crown (9:07.72) in 2016. Both Lee and Dimambro will be teammates again this fall at the University of Michigan.

"I saw what Jacob Lee did last year and knew if I worked hard that I could have a chance," said Dimambro. "I knew there was some amazing distance runners in that race and I knew I would have my hands full. I stayed with that front pack and used my kick in the end. I really trained on my foot speed and it paid off in the end. It's an amazing feeling."

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE'S TRACK BRIEFS



LC's Former Softball Player Is State Record-Breaker In First Year Of Track

Sometimes, deciding to switch sports can be a tough decision.

But for Lansing Catholic junior Olivia Theis, who won two straight state titles in the Division 3 meet for track and

field in record-setting ways, it was an incredibly correct decision.

She won the 1,600 in 4:50.10 to set a new Lower Peninsula Division 3 record. She also set a Lower Peninsula Division 3 record in the 3,200-meter run in 10:30.49.

She broke her personal and school records at the same time in both events.

"This was my first season," Theis said. "I had played softball. I was thinking about it last year. My older sister was on the softball team. I had played softball since third grade. It was a big part of my life. I had a lot of fun on it."

"I knew I wanted to run. I do cross country too. I've done cross country since sixth grade I

love running. I knew I wanted to run track."

In the fall, she decided to run track. What she was able to accomplish exceeded even her own expectations.

"Cross country was going really well for me. I had no idea how track would go. It's shorter different distances and different competition. I was pleasantly surprised."

After an extensive amount of training, "I figured out I liked it," she said. "It's different than cross country. I figured out a few meets in that I could be pretty good. I didn't know how good I could be. I like cross country better with the trails. What I like about track is the different events you can do. You don't just do one event and you're done. You prepare for several events."

"With the shorter distances, you can do faster. It's something different than cross country."

Of the two distance races, "I've done the 1,600 more but I would say I like this both equally. I don't know which is my stronger one," Theis said. "The 3,200 (is more challenging). You're trying to do the same pace as the 1,600, but it's longer."

She indicated the strength in the mile is probably her third lap. The second half of her 3,200 race is usually stronger, Theis indicated.



Clare Boys Run Away With League Track Title

After winning all seven dual meets, the Clare boys track team won six gold medals at the Jack Pine Conference

league meet to run away with the outright championship again.

The Pioneers were first at the main event with 176.5 points, followed by Gladwin with 105, Meridian with 84.5, Roscommon with 84, Harrison with 81, Beaverton with 66, Houghton Lake with 34 and Farwell with 21.

Xavier Martin was first in the 100 meters in 11.56, Brenden Sersaw took the 200 in 23.4 and Ben Haupt the 3,200 in 10:22.56 for the Pioneers, who captured three of the four relays as well.

Gladwin's winners were Mason

Fitzpatrick, who cleared the bar at 6-2 to win the high jump, and the 400-meter relay team of Devon Aleman, Fitzpatrick, Evan Rhind and Ryan Wisniewski.

Kyle Stockford won the long jump for Meridian with a 21-4 leap.

Austin Lavigne won the 400 meters in 51.95 and Jeremy Fillhard pole vaulted 13-6 to win titles for Harrison.

Parker Hayes hit the daily double for Beaverton, winning the 800 in 2:05.92 and the 1,600 in 4:37.

Clare scored 11 points at the Division 3 state meet. Zac Stickler was sixth in the discus with a toss of 148-10 and three relays hit the board. Haupt, Brody Allbee, Justin Tickle and Jimmy Teall were fifth in the 3,200. J.J. Gross, Brandon Zinser, Martin and Sersaw were sixth in the 800. Martin, Zinser, Tickle and Sersaw were eighth in the 1,600.

Harrison's Tyler Head was second in the 110 high hurdles.



Rockford All-American Cole Johnson Back On Track With Stellar Junior Showing

Cole Johnson found himself in an unfriendly position as a sophomore.

Perhaps one of the favorites for the Division 1 state title in the 1,600 meters, Johnson was tripped up on the back straightaway during the race and fell off the pace. He eventually picked himself back up and fought hard to chase down the pack.

Johnson still finished a respectable third overall in 4:13.37, but far from his goal of a state crown and the greatness established by so many other former Rockford High School distance aces.

"I learned a bit from what happened to me last season," recalled Johnson of his sophomore experience. "You have to put yourself in good position and not get boxed in. You have to get out fast. There's too many good runners and I made a mistake."

Bad luck continued in the fall of 2016 at the D-1 cross

country state finals. An illness forced Johnson, one of the favorites, to the back of the pack — literally — as he finished dead last.

The Rockford junior left no doubt this time around in the 1,600 at the D-1 state meet, staving off Oak Park's Cameron Cooper to win the battle in a sizzling 4:08.60. Cooper was second in 4:08.96.

"I knew it would come to down to the last 100," smiled Johnson. "I saw (Cooper) go by me a little bit. That's when I decided to (push it hard) for the finish line. It felt great to finally win it."

Johnson debuted onto the scene in 2015 when he surprised some by taking fifth in the 1,600 at the D-1 finals with a 4:10.50 clocking — one of the fastest efforts for a freshman in state history. He was also 16th in the 3,200 (9:28.89) at the state meet, proving he would be a legitimate challenger in the future.

With great foot speed for middle distances, Johnson has also shined in the 800 meters in his career, consistently placing high at a variety of meets. At the D-1 state meet as a sophomore, he placed fifth (1:54.13).

He emerged even better as a junior, winning the league, regional and MITCA meets before finishing second to the

aftermentioned Cooper at the state finals (1:52.99). At the recent Midwest Distance Galla, he won the event in a blistering 1:50.72 to rank high nationally, just like in the 1,600 meters.

Johnson also anchored the winning 3,200-meter relay at the D-1 state as a sophomore, where the Rams' foursome finished in 7:43.92 and came back to place fourth and post a 7:39.94 effort at the 2016 New Balance Outdoor Nationals.

At the New Balance Outdoor Nationals in 2017, Johnson won the 1-mile in 4:11.10, a slightly longer race than the 1,600 meters.

And to showcase his foot speed once again, he anchored Rockford's 1,600 relay to a third-place finish (3:19.08) at this year's D-1 state finals.

With his impressive resume, Johnson has joined an elite group of prep runners in Michigan in recent years and eyes some bigger prizes down the road. He wants to win the cross country title next fall and eventually break the magical 4-minute barrier in the 1,600.

"That's the long-term goal," added Johnson. "Breaking the 4-minute barrier is one of the hardest things to do in high school. But it's a goal and one I hope can reach between now and the time I graduate."

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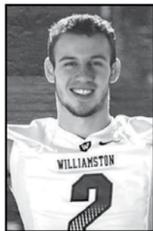
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HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE'S TRACK BRIEFS



Williamston's Barnett Wins D2 Long Jump Title

Williamston senior Sy Barnett earned all-state honors in a third sport by taking first in the long jump and fourth in the high jump at the Division 2 track and field state finals.

The football and basketball all-state athlete broke Williamston's oldest boys track and field state record (set in 1991 by James Harrison) with a 22 foot, 9 1/4-inch long jump to help Williamston take 12th as a team in Zeeland. He also went 6-4 in the high

jump, two inches less than his 6-6 personal best at the Williamston Invitational on May 13.

"Sy struggled through some injuries during the season, so being a two time all-state selection was a quite remarkable accomplishment," Williamston track and field coach Mitch Lutzke said. "He was very coachable and well-liked by his teammates even though he bumped some athletes from spots on the team.

"Sy is a fierce competitor who wants to do well for both himself and the team. I also had Sy in class at Williamston High School, and he was a very bright and polite young man who was a joy to be around."

Barnett will be attending Ferris State on a football scholarship.



LC Girls Have Strong Showing At Division 3 Track Finals

Lansing Catholic girls track and field coach Tim Simpson had reason to enjoy the Division 3 state finals track meet this season.

His team took second place with 41 points. Adrian Madison was first with 56.5.

LC took third place in the 3,200-meter relay with the foursome of sophomore Lauren Cleary, junior Grace Frost, freshman Jaden Theis and junior Olivia Theis in 9:24.38. Olivia Theis set two state records by winning the 1,600-meter run (4:50.10) and 3200-meter run in 10:30.49. Jaden Theis was third in the 1,600 meters (4:55.81) and third in the 3,200 (10:34.73) Cleary was sixth in the 3,200 (10:58.8).

"Our state meet went as we were hoping it would go," Simpson said. "Three of our relay girls competed in open events. We were hoping to pile up a lot of points in the distances. Those three girls (Olivia and Jaden Theis, Cleary) are three of the better distance girls in Division 3. They had good meets. It came out pretty much the way we had been hoping."

Coming into the meet, it was hard to determine what place his team would take.

"But I knew our points were pretty solid," Simpson said. "I knew Olivia, Jaden and our relays were going to place high. I figured we'd get 40 to 50 points, depending on how everything fell. I knew we'd be in the hunt with some other teams in terms of going for first and second. I'm not surprised we got second. That's about where we were hoping it would be."

Lansing Catholic has perennially been a highly-ranked team in the state meet for boys and girls, netted a boys track title in past seasons. The boys tied for eighth place this season.



Freeland Hurdler Ends Fabulous Career

Freeland's Zach Townsend proved to be a master in the hurdles this season.

In the 100 hurdles, the Freeland senior had his personal record in early May with 15.14 seconds in a TC meet. He won the regionals in 15.52 seconds and took fifth in the state finals for Division 3 in 15.28

seconds.

He had a personal record of 42.68 seconds for third place in the TVC Central championships. But he didn't advance to the state meet in that event.

"Zach had an impressive season breaking our school re-

cord in the 110-meter hurdles on four different occasions," Freeland coach Jason Robinson said. "When it came time for the big meets at the end of the season, Zach was the Saginaw County Meet champ, regional champ for Division 3, he was the runner up in TVC Central Championships, losing to last year's Division 3 state champ, and he received All-State honors at the Division 2 state finals in Zeeland with a fifth-place finish.

"Outside of the high hurdles, Zach had great times in the 300-meter hurdles and was very versatile in the sprint relays running various legs of the 4by100 meter and 4by200 meters. He was always ready at the end of the meet to anchor the 4x400 and did his fair share of catching teams from behind and holding off opposing teams who were making a surge to try to take the top spots from him and his teammates."

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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON BASEBALL

John Glenn Suffers Heartbreak Defeat In D2 Title Game

Dick Hoekstra Sports Scene

The Bay City John Glenn baseball team outfit Stevensville Lakeshore 6-2 but lost 1-0 in the Division 2 championship game at Michigan State University's McLane Stadium and Kobs Field.

The Bobcats narrowly missed a state title that was one of their goals.

"We talked about it," John Glenn coach Jeff Hartt said. "We had kind of a pyramid where we knew we had to win the district first. The next thing was to get to the regional, to CMU for the quarters, and to Michigan State for the first game."

Hartt thought playing an inde-

pendent schedule helped his team.

"We played a lot of tough schools," he said. "We were in a lot of weekend tournaments, and we did a lot of traveling to different parts of the state where people didn't know us. We made it tough on our guys. We made them stay overnight in hotels to get used to that type of experience."

The Bobcats finished 34-9.

"Early in the season, we ran into a rough patch where we lost five games in two or three weeks," Hartt said. "They were close (losses) to good teams. But we were disappointed that we didn't play a little better at that time. That was kind of an impetus to get us to play a little

better. Our goal every day has been to get better."

John Glenn won 16 of 19 to end the season, including 4-0 over Freeland and 8-6 over Midland Bullock Creek in a district, 5-4 over Birch Run and 4-2 over Alma in a regional, 11-1 over Sault Ste. Marie in a quarterfinal, and 15-4 over Dearborn Divine Child in a state semifinal.

"We have hit the ball well pretty well all season," Hartt said. "All the way through the lineup, there's nobody who's an automatic out. It's tough to pitch around nine people.

"We've won quite a few games, and the games we lost have been to good teams where we played decent games. Our kids play hard, and they play pretty loose."

The Bobcats also finished 2012 as a state runner-up.

"We talk about that all of the time," Hartt said. "It was a completely different team with different strengths and weaknesses, but that 2012 team was pretty special too.

"I was hoping someday I would get back. It's such a great experience to be down here (in East Lansing). It happened. It's pretty cool."

Senior Tanner Gilles had four hits and two RBI, senior Corey Langenberg two hits and four RBI, senior Matt Fisher a triple and three RBI, and senior Alex Dingee a triple and a single in the semifinal, while Fisher hit a double and a single in the final.

"High school baseball is the end of the road for a lot of guys," Hartt



Bangor John Glenn made it all the way to the Division 2 baseball final losing to Stevensville-Lakeshore 1-0 in the championship game. (Submitted Photo)

said. "A few guys move on and play, but most of the time your last game is your last game of baseball. I wanted them to enjoy the experience."

Heritage's Season Ends In Quarterfinals

John Raffel Sports Scene

A banner season for Saginaw Heritage's baseball team ended in the Division 3 state quarterfinals.

Heritage lost 2-0 to Grand Haven after having won district and regional titles. Heritage wound up at 31-8. The team beat Alpena 11-0 and Midland 3-0 in the Division 1 regionals.

Coach Bob Andrezejewski noted it was a tough quarterfinal loss for his team.

"We struggled offensively, mainly because their pitcher had good command of his pitches. He kept us off-speed," said Andrezejewski. "Because of the speed of his fastball and curveball, we were way out in front. We did hit a lot of balls right at them. You have to give them

credit. The pitcher was pretty much in control the whole game. He was ahead of the count.

"We did move the ball consistently and only struck out one time. We had some opportunities. We had three or four innings with the go-ahead run on base but didn't get the big hit when we needed to," he continued. "I think it was a combination of their pitchers keeping us off stride and off-balance, and their defense that made some outstanding plays against us. It was a well-pitched game on both sides. I thought our pitcher did very well."

Brandon Smith, one of the team's top two pitchers, was on the mound for Heritage. Spencer Schwellenbach, also a shortstop, was the other top Heritage pitcher.

"We had a very good one-two

punch," Andrezejewski said. "They were very consistent, very dominating all year for us."

Top hitters included senior Noah Marcoux, Schwellenbach and Smith, who also played third base and first base.

"We had a lot of other hitters in the .300s," Andrezejewski added. "Our overall team batting average was .349, which shows we were solid one through nine. It wasn't one or two guys. Offensively, we had good production. It was the same thing with our pitching. We had nine pitchers that we threw. Nine pitchers got at least one win."

Heritage graduated nine seniors from last year, including five starters.

"Many of our main pitchers last year, except two or three, were



Saginaw Heritage finished the season 31-8 after losing to Grand Haven 2-0 in the Class A quarterfinals. (Submitted Photo)

seniors," Andrezejewski said. "We weren't sure how things would end up. We had to deal with some injuries. We had setbacks with people being injured. The people involved with pitching and playing a lot didn't have a lot of varsity experience. We had to deal with some injuries. We had setbacks with people being injured. That was the uncertainty of what was

going to happen. We had to rely on other people who did well.

"As the season went along, they gained confidence."

Andrezejewski will lose several seniors again.

"We have to find a couple of new outfielders and we also lost some senior infielders and pitchers," he said. "We have only four starters returning."

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Redemption: Portland St. Pats Wins D4 Baseball Title

Dick Hoekstra
Sports Scene

A school with just 92 students captured a state title when the Portland St. Patrick baseball team defeated Hudson 6-2 in the Division 4 championship game at Michigan State's McLane Stadium and Kobs Field.

To get there, the Shamrocks had to overcome 7-3 and 8-4 deficits to defeat Unionville-Sebewaing 8-4 in a state semifinal the day before.

"Our motto this year is losing's unacceptable," said 13th-year Portland St. Patrick baseball coach Bryan Scheurer, whose team finished 34-3-1. "Everybody loses, but they (the players) really embrace

that. We're going to do what we do, chip away, grind away, continue to keep pressure on them, and see what happens. It takes a special group of kids to really believe, because things weren't going well. They stayed with their approach. They stayed small, and small things add up. I'm so proud of them."

The Shamrocks, who finished as state runner-up a year ago but suffered heavy graduation losses, scored four runs in the fifth inning to tie the state semifinal, and then four in the seventh to top USA and advance.

"Our first three innings, we were uncharacteristic," Scheurer said. "They say since you were here last year can there be nerves? But when you're start-

ing three freshmen and two sophomores, yes absolutely there can be nerves. They're still kids. I'm being honest, there are still nerves even for me."

St. Patrick went 15-1 while winning the Central Michigan Athletic Conference, lost 4-0 to Division 1 Okemos in the Capital Diamond Classic, won 10-0 over Morrice, 12-2 over Lansing Christian and 12-1 over Pottsville in a district, 10-1 over Wyoming Tri-Unity Christian and 7-6 in 9 innings over Bay City All Saints in a regional, 6-0 over Muskegon Catholic Central in a quarter-final.

In the state final for the Shamrocks, junior Dan Mackowiak compiled four hits and an RBI, senior Brendan Schrauben a triple, single and 3 runs scored, sophomore Brandon Scheurer a double, single and an RBI, senior

Noah Goodman a single and an RBI, and freshman winning pitcher Devin Fedewa a double as well as 3 strikeouts of Hudson batters.

In the semifinal, Scheurer finished with four singles and two RBI, Schrauben a triple and a double, 2 RBI and 2 runs scored, Fedewa a triple, single, 2 RBI and 2 runs, Nathan Lehnert two singles, two RBI and a run, and Goodman two singles and a run.

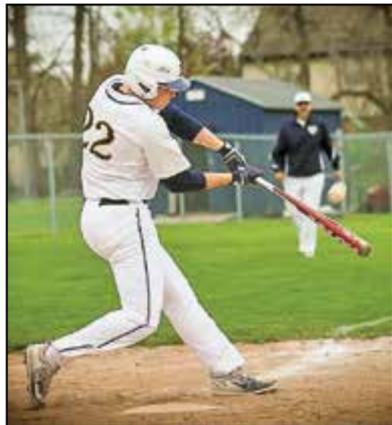
St. Patrick has quite a tradition in certain sports such as baseball despite a school population that hovers around 100.

"It's cousins, kids you have grown up with, and families that we hang out with," Scheurer said. "That's our community. The stuff we do off the field is absolutely as important or more than what we do on the field."

DeWitt's Quest For D2 Title Falls Short After Losing In Regional Semis

Dick Hoekstra
Sports Scene

The DeWitt baseball team finished 32-4-1, won the Capital Area Activities Conference



Red title, earned a Division 2 district crown, and captured its second Capital Diamond Classic tournament title ever before losing just 3-2 to Fowlerville in a regional semifinal.

"This team was incredibly focused on winning every game - which is an extremely tough thing to do in baseball," DeWitt coach Alan Shankel said. "That was the big difference between this and some of my other teams.

"We had a saying 'we chase perfection in hopes of catching excellence'."

The Panthers won their first eight games before losing 2-0 and 3-1 to Holt.

"You would have thought the world was coming to an end," Shankel said. "But that was one thing that helped us reach that Diamond Classic goal."

DeWitt compiled a 9-1 record to

DeWitt put together another solid season finishing the year 32-4-1 before losing to Fowlerville 3-2 in a regional semifinals game. (Angela Knauf, High School Sports Scene Photo)

win their league.

"People look past the league championship, but that's a tough thing to win," Shankel said. "This year it was 10 games in 11 calendar days compressed because of a rain out."

The Panthers took their district crown by winning 11-0 over Lansing Eastern, 10-3 over Charlotte and 12-2 over Lansing Catholic.

To earn its first Capital Diamond Classic trophy since 2009, the Panthers defeated Okemos 5-4, Fowlerville 10-4 and Holt 14-0. But the rematch with Fowlerville five days later was different.

"They had to throw someone beyond their top four pitchers in the Diamond Classic," Shankel said. "We knew we would see Eric Fritz on Saturday. He's an all-state pitcher. It came down to a pitcher's duel between our guy Michael Stygles and him, and they happened to get the breaks to score enough to win."

"We had a team that could compete for a state championship, and he stopped us that day."

Stygles and fellow senior Will Nagel earned first team all-state. Stygles set DeWitt

career records for hits and career batting average at .422, and tied the record for doubles in a season with 19.

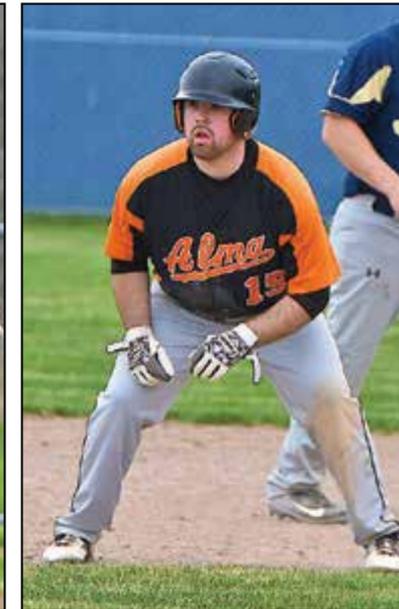
"He was a tremendous hitter, and he pitched as well," Shankel said. "The power that Will provided doesn't come along very often. He drove in a ton of runs and pitched for us."

"Those are two special guys that we will miss, but we always seem to have somebody that steps up. We're looking to see who that will be next year."

Junior Josh Robinson made second team all-state. A back injury to Robinson during the seventh inning of a 6-5 win at Division 1 power Grand Ledge opened the door for Shankel to discover a key player.

"Robinson was going to be our game two starter," Shankel said. "I brought sophomore Logan Simon with us just in case we might need him. I told Logan 'no pressure. We got game one. Besides, who comes to Grand Ledge and sweeps them?' He looked me right in the eye, and said 'we do'."

Simon threw a 5-inning no-hitter as the Panthers won 10-0, and then assumed the No. 2 starter role.



Alma's Baseball Season Ends In Regionals Finals

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Alma's baseball team made a bid for a state quarterfinal spot in Division 2 this season, but just fell short in the championship game.

The season ended at 26-11 for coach Denny Kreiner's team.

The Panthers had a memorable win in the regional semifinal 10-8 over Swan Valley and fired out to a 9-0 lead in the fourth but then had to hang on against Swan Valley.

Darron Anguiano, who pitched a shutout in the district semifinals, picked up his ninth win of the season when Alma defeated Swan Valley in the regional semifinals. Konner Vedrode let the Alma offense with two hits and four RBI in the regional semifinals while Villalobos added two hits and three RBI, Hunter Frisbie added two hits and Alward scored three runs. The win was the 26th of the season for Alma, which dropped a 4-2 decision to Bay City Glenn in the regional title game.

John Glenn had a 3-1 lead in

the third inning against Alma and upped it to 4-1 in the sixth. Anguiano completed a three-hit complete game shutout and walked only one batter. Anthony Humm's two-run single was a key hit for Alma.

In the title game, a 4-2 loss to Bay City John Glenn, Brock Milan had an RBI single while Camden Sutherland singled and scored. Villalobos was the losing pitcher.

Alma had not won a district title since 2001 but broke the ice at the Portland district with two wins.

Trailing 3-0, Alma chipped away at Portland's lead beginning with an RBI single by Brec Alward. Alma cut the gap to 3-2 when Troy Bastian bunted home Alward. The Panthers tied the game in the sixth inning when Konner Vedrode scored on an error and in the seventh inning Drew Humm scored the winning run as he escaped a pickle on a missed squeeze play.

Pitcher Tristan Villalobos picked up his seventh win of the season in the game



The Alma baseball team finished the season 26-11 and won a district title before losing to John Glenn 4-2 in a Division 2 regional finals game. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photos)

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Caro's magical season came to a close after losing to eventual state champion Madison Heights Bishop Foley in the Division 3 semis at Michigan State University's McLane Stadium and Kobs Field. (Submitted Photo)

Caro's Dream Season Ends In D3 Semis

Dick Hoekstra Sports Scene

The Caro baseball team that advanced as far as a Division 3 state semifinal started the season 0-7 before Victor Gomez took over as head coach.

After a slow start under Gomez, the Tigers ended up 15-15 with their new coach (for a total of 15-22) after a 3-2 loss to eventual state champion Madison Heights Bishop Foley at Michigan State University's McLane Stadium and Kobs Field.

"It was a smooth transition," Gomez said. "I was the assistant for a couple years prior to this. I just took over after the head coach stepped away. Then we started chipping away, splitting games with teams, and forming a good team.

"I've watched these young men grow up, watched them play ball, and knew they had the skill set to have a good team."

Gomez and assistant coaches Joe Chapelo and Andy Nichols let the kids

know that they believed in them and that they had skills.

"When they started believing in themselves and each other, that's where it all came together," Gomez said.

Then came the key win.

"We had a tournament back home at midseason where we played Hemlock, and we knew they were a tough team," Gomez said. "At one point, they were rated in the state.

"It took us nine innings to do it, but we pulled it out. At that point, I knew these guys had it in them. We just picked up from there and took off."

Caro still finished 4-9-1 for sixth place in the Tri-Valley Conference East division and the regular season at 10-21 overall before reeling off wins of 9-0 over Otisville Lakeville and 4-1 over Vassar in a district, 7-0 over Durand and 16-6 over Elkton-Pigeon-Bay Port in a regional, and 2-0 over Hemlock in a quarterfinal.

"Every coach's goal at the beginning of the year is to get their team to come

together and make a run," Gomez said. "We put it together as best we could. I have to thank my assistants and my family."

The Tigers trailed 3-0 before scoring two runs in the top of the sixth inning of the state semifinal in a bid to make the Division 3 championship game.

Senior Conner Langenburg hit in junior teammate Dylan Brown (who tripled) with the first run, and then scored the second after nearly getting caught in a rundown. He came home after an errant throw by a Bishop Foley player.

Although senior pitcher Deven Hodder held the Ventures to just five hits, Caro was unable in the seventh inning to get a third hit that could lead to a run that might force extra innings.

But Gomez was pleased with the Tigers' showing.

"It's really huge for the program," he said. "Back home people are talking. Hopefully this becomes a tradition for us."



Unionville-Sebewaing lost to eventual Division 4 state champion Portland St. Pats 12-8 in a semifinals contest to end its season 30-8-1. (Submitted Photo)

Unionville-Sebewaing Comes Up Short In D4 Semis

Dick Hoekstra Sports Scene

With leads of 7-3 after three innings and 8-4 after four, the Unionville-Sebewaing baseball team seemed on its way to a Division 4 state final appearance at Michigan State's McLane Stadium and Kobs Field.

But Portland St. Patrick rallied with four runs to tie the game in the fifth inning and four more in the seventh to eliminate the Patriots 12-8, and end their season at 30-8-1.

"Baseball is a cruel game when momentum comes at you," USA baseball coach Tyler Bader said. "You've got to kind of manage the storm. We weren't able to get it back after they tied it up. But we fought, and we did exactly what I wanted to do. We left a couple plays out there that obviously you want to have back. But it was a bat-

tle. That's all I wanted them to do was go in there and try to take it. We just came up a little bit short."

Junior Cooper Kauffold had a double, two singles and three RBI, junior Myles Geiger a double, single and two runs scored, junior Ryan Cain two hits and an RBI, and senior Cody Finkbeiner two hits for the Patriots in the state semifinal.

"There's not a star-studded kid on the team, and there are guys that haven't hit in a couple weeks that made big plays tonight," Bader said. "They love the game. That's why this season has been so fun. Every game you didn't look in the dugout and say these guys are uptight. They're having a blast, because they are playing a game they like and they're winning.

"We felt the community definitely got on the baseball train this year. We were pumped about that. I thought we carried that flag."

USA tied for first place with an 8-2 record in the Greater Thumb Conference before winning 2-1 over Kinde-North Huron and 10-1 over Owendale-Gagetown in a district, 9-0 over Kingston and 2-0 over Sterling Heights Parkway Christian in a regional, and 4-3 over Royal Oak Shrine in a quarterfinal.

"There was never a doubt that we could get here," Bader said. "On day one, that's what we talked about. I think this is definitely going to help us.

"I will tell the guys 'you've got to use it as a springboard.' I bring a lot of guys back. Not having experience here can add up a little bit, but for the most part I thought we did a pretty good job. I know those guys, and they're not going to be happy just to be here this year. They're going to be ready to get back."

Area Teams Put Together Solid Seasons

Grand Ledge won the Okemos district in a close game as it edged East Lansing 4-3. Led by senior pitcher Wyatt Rush, an all-state Dream Team selection, the Comets defeated Portage Central 7-3 in the regional semifinals. Senior infielder Sam Goodman and junior outfielder Cal Johnston both earned second-team, all-state honors in Division 1 for Grand Ledge.

• Corunna also turned in a memorable post-season. The Cavaliers edged cross-town rival Owosso 3-2 in the finals of the Perry district. Corunna continued its dramatic tournament run at the Eaton Rapids regional with a 15-5 win over Goodrich in the semifinals and a 3-1 victory against Fowlerville in the regional title game. Corunna's tournament trail ended with a 5-4 loss to Chelsea in the state quarterfinals.

• DeWitt's season also came to an end in a one-run game when the Panthers fell to Fowlerville 3-2 in the

semifinals of the Eaton Rapids regional. DeWitt featured a productive offense this season led by senior outfielder Michael Stygles who was named to the all-state Dream Team. Senior Will Nagel was named first-team in Division 2 while junior Josh Robinson was honorable-mention, all-state.

• Holt turned in a big effort in the Division 1 state tournament. Led by second-team, all-state pitcher Jesse Heikkinen and second-team infielder Tyler Brown, Holt reached the Division 1 state quarterfinals where it dropped a 3-2 decision to eventual state champion Saline. Close games were the norm for Holt throughout the tournament. The Rams edged Jackson 2-1 to win the district title, defeated Howell 3-1 in the regional semifinals and then clipped Grand Ledge 5-4 in the title game of the Grand Ledge regional.

• Midland, led by first-team, all-state senior Jordan Patty and junior Martin Money, a second-team, all-state pick, turned in several dramatic

tournament wins of its own. Midland edged Mt. Pleasant 3-2 in the district semifinals and then stopped Bay City Central 5-3 to win the district title. Midland's season came to an end when it dropped a 3-0 decision to Saginaw Heritage in the regional title game.

• Lowell won the rugged Rockford district as it edged Rockford 5-2 in the semifinals and then blanked Greenville 2-0 in the district title game. Lowell's season ended with a 9-8 loss in nine innings against Grandville in the regional semifinals.

• Greenville, which reached the district finals, won 22 games this season, the first time it has surpassed 20 wins since 1993. Senior Calvin Syrjala led the way for Greenville this season. A second-team, all-state pick, Syrjala hit .435 this season and set school records in hits (54) and triples (8).

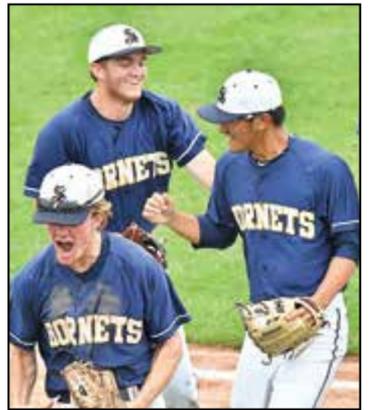
• In Division 3, Hemlock put together an impressive post-season streak. Led by Brandon Bakos, a second-team, all-state selection in Division 3, the Huskies began their tournament run by defeating Valley Lutheran to win the

Chesaning district. Hemlock then turned back Clare 10-4 in the regional semifinals and outlasted Pinconning 12-11 in the regional title game. Hemlock's season ended with a 2-0 loss against Caro in the Division 3 state quarterfinals.

• Led by first-team, all-state athletes Nic Johnson and Zach Besant, New Lothrop defeated Montrose in the title game of the Montrose district. Johnson hit .543 this spring while Besant hit .492.

• Beal City displayed plenty of offense in the state tournament. The Aggies defeated Evart 15-0 in the title game of the Evart district and then advanced to the finals of the regional it hosted before dropping a 14-12 barn burner to Muskegon Catholic Central.

• Breckenridge was another team with a potent offense. Breckenridge



Saline celebrates after winning the Division 1 Baseball championship with a victory over Northville in the title game. (Submitted Photo)

outscored Coleman 16-8 in the finals of the Merrill district. Bay City All Saints ended Breckenridge's season by a 9-4 score in the regional semifinals. All Saints then dropped a 7-6 decision in nine innings to eventual state champion Portland St. Pat's in the regional title game.



Hemlock Baseball Season Ends In Quarterfinals

John Raffel Sports Scene

The 2017 baseball season is one Hemlock coach Tony Escamilla will enjoy and remember for a long time.

The Huskies advanced to the Division 3 quarterfinals but lost 2-0 to Caro. Hemlock beat Pinconning 12-11 in a wild regional title game. Hemlock finished at 26-12.

Jacob Beckrow had an outstanding pitching performance for the Huskies in the quarterfinals, but it wasn't enough.

"Obviously, we didn't get the right hit at

the right time," Escamilla said. "It was a good season. We had a lot of tough games we played. Nobody thought we would do what we did this

year. Teams in our area were ranked, we were never ranked. We did a fantastic job because of the work the kids put in and they listened to what I said. It put them in a situation where we could win."

Gabe Kanouse and Beckrow were key seniors. Ryan Bray also had a strong season. "I anticipated they'd been among my top three players," Escamilla said. Brandon Bakos was among the team's top hitters as a senior. "I own the Great Lakes Baseball-Softball in Saginaw," added Escamilla. "Bakos lives there. He's been there since he was 12 years old. He really got the job done. I knew he'd be able to do it with

all the time and work he put in. He was all-state second team."

Kanouse also had a strong season the plate at the No. 3 spot. Catcher Harvey also had a productive spring.

"He did a fantastic job and hit the ball well for me," Escamilla said.

The Huskies will have some rebuilding work as it looks ahead to 2018. But Escamilla is optimistic.

"We had quite a few seniors on the team this year and will be losing a lot of those kids," he said. "But we have some kids coming in already I'm working with. We're doing Colt League this summer. I'm checking the kids out. They need to get on the same page with me. I think we'll be fine if we put the work in we did this year, will be fine. If you don't you don't get anything in return."

Hemlock lost to Caro 2-0 in a Division 3 quarterfinals game held at Saginaw Valley State University. The Huskies finished the season 26-12. (Kevin Gregory, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON SOFTBALL

Area Softball Teams Conclude Season With Strong State Tournament Efforts

David Cook
Sports Scene

Area softball teams wrapped up a successful spring with some strong efforts in the state tournament. Midland, Flint Powers Catholic, Swan Valley, Shepherd and Coleman all captured regional titles this season with Shepherd advancing to the Division 3 state semifinals and Coleman reaching the Division 4 semis.

Following is a look at some of the highlights of the softball post-season.

DIVISION 1

Led by first-team, all-state selections Julia Gross, Tara Gross and Maya Kip-fmiller, Midland captured both district and regional titles. The Chemics outlasted Mt. Pleasant 11-6 in an entertaining district semifinal that saw Midland out hit a Mt. Pleasant team led by all-state catcher Hannah Carson. Midland won a thriller in the regional finals with an 8-7 victory against Swartz Creek.

Swartz Creek featured one of the most explosive offenses in the tournament. Swartz Creek outscored its three district opponents by a combined score of 41-0 and then defeated Traverse City Central 9-0 in the regional semifinals before dropping the barn burner to Midland.

Grand Ledge turned in a solid season

winning a conference and district championship. Rockford captured a district title as well. The Rams defeated Lowell 7-3 in eight innings to win the district title before falling to eventual state runner-up Grandville in the regional semifinals.

DIVISION 2

Featuring one of the most potent offenses in the area, Swan Valley won both district and regional titles this season before bowing out of the state tournament in the state quarterfinals against Escanaba. Swan Valley was paced by its first-team, all-state quartet of Grace Dutoi, Lauren Addy, Becca Curtis and Callie Burgess. Curtis hit .629 this spring with eight home runs and 53 RBI while Dutoi hit .559 with 13 home runs and 80 RBI and Addy hit .535 with 73 stolen bases and 54 runs scored.

Led by a talented group of seniors, Central Montcalm finished the season with 30 wins. Central Montcalm added a district title with a 7-6 win against Portland at the Portland district. Pitcher Mallory Morgan came up big in both of Central Montcalm's district wins.

Flint Powers Catholic went on an impressive post-season run that included titles at the Goodrich district and Eaton Rapids regional before falling to eventual state champion Ida in the state

quarterfinals.

Perry defeated Owosso in the semifinals and Corunna in the finals to win the district it hosted. The Ramblers faced Flint Powers in the semifinals of the Eaton Rapids regional where they dropped a 1-7 decision in nine innings.

DeWitt, led by first-team, all-state picks Kilee Way-Walton and Nikki Willard defeated Lansing Catholic Central to win a district title this season.

Chippewa Hills won the district it hosted. Chippewa Hills defeated Big Rapids in the semifinals and then edged Whitehall 3-2 in the title game.

DIVISION 3

Led by honorable-mention, all-state selections Ashleigh Bryant and Adriana Nelson, Shepherd advanced to the Division 3 state semifinals. Shepherd began its tournament run with an 8-5 win against St. Louis to win the district title. Shepherd then scored eight runs in both its regional semifinal win against Pinconning and its regional title win against Beaverton. The Blue Jays blanked Millington in the state quarterfinals before falling to eventual state champion Monroe St. Mary's in the state semifinals.

New Lothrop turned in a strong tournament effort. New Lothrop defeated host Montrose 13-2 to win the district

title and then advanced to the regional finals before falling to Millington.

Led by all-state pitcher Parker Viele, Byron blanked Durand 11-0 to win a district title. Byron then dropped a 2-1 decision to Millington in the regional semifinals.



Monroe St. Mary's Catholic's Meghan Beaubien captured the 2017 Miss Softball award. (Submitted Photo)

Hemlock brought home the title at the Chesaning district with a 6-2 win against Valley Lutheran. The Huskies fell to Beaverton in the regional semifinals.

All-state third baseman Taryn Perun helped lead Bath to a district title with a 13-4 win over Laingsburg in the title game. The Bees fell to eventual state runner-up Napoleon in the regional semifinals.

Saranac made a strong tournament

run as it reached the regional title game at Napoleon. Saranac defeated Pewamo-Westphalia in the district title game and then upended Jonesville 4-0 in the regional semifinals before dropping the regional title game to Napoleon.

DIVISION 4

Coleman capped a big season by reaching the final four in Division 4. Coleman defeated Breckenridge for the district title and then put up 23 runs in the regional. The Comets then blanked Holton 5-0 in the state quarterfinals before falling to Ottawa Lake Whiteford in the semifinals. Senior all-state catcher Liz Dana hit .462 with 45 RBI this season while junior all-state pitcher Faith Barden went 17-4 with a 1.54 ERA and 184 strikeouts in 127 innings. Barden also hit .421 with 51 RBI. Sophomore Jaden Berthume made a big impact at the plate with a .521 batting average and 54 RBI and on the mound with a 16-3 record and a 1.54 ERA.

Morrice defeated Portland St. Pat's to win the Potterville district. The Orioles then defeated Blanchard-Montabella in the Sacred Heart regional before falling to Coleman in the title game. Jessica Eva and Taylor Hewitt both were named first-team, all-state for Morrize.

Blanchard-Montabella won its first district title since 2007 when it defeated Vestaburg in the finals of the Fulton-Middleton district.

Beal City won the Evart district with a 7-0 win against Marion. The Aggies then defeated Mason County Eastern at the regional it hosted before dropping a one-run game to Holton in the finals.

Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary won the Genesee district before falling to Coleman in the regional semifinals.

Swan Valley Softball Won 40 Games, Tamed By Escanaba Again

Ben Murphy
Sports Scene

For most teams, a quarterfinal appearance and 40-2 final record would be pretty good. The Swan Valley softball team isn't like most team's however, which makes their 5-0 quarterfinal loss to Escanaba in the division two quarterfinals a tough pill to swallow.

"I feel bad for the seniors, they're as good of a group as I've ever had," longtime head coach Tom Kennelly said. "The team just didn't play very well in that last game so it makes it a little frustrating."

The usually potent Lady Viking

offense was stifled for just two hits, one apiece by Grace Dutoi and Carlee Larsen.

"In hindsight, I don't think our district and regional games did us much good," Kennelly said. "We won the district against Carrollton and only played one game in the district because Saginaw High forfeited. Then we won in five and three innings in our regional games against Stanton Central Montcalm and Frankenmuth. We had a really, really good team this year we. I think we pitched OK in the game but we didn't hit it really well, which surprised me because we are a really good offensive team."

Despite the abrupt ending to the same team that beat them the previous year, even Kennelly admits what this group of players accomplished was nothing short of amazing.

"The 40-2 record might be tied for the second or third best in my 38 years here," he said. "They were 39-3 last year and 40-2 this year and they lost in the quarterfinals the last two years. I feel bad for the seniors though, they don't get another shot. I do and the rest of the girls do, but they don't. We played as tough of a schedule as we've ever played. We played Midland, we played Escanaba earlier in the year, Millington and Shepherd too. This was our 26th conference title tough, you always start with the conference and go

from there. Aside from the loss to Escanaba we played consistently well throughout the year and they're a good group of girls."

The Vikings lose seven starters from this year's squad, including Lauren Addy who set the consecutive steals record of 156, Becca Curtis who hit for .526, 20 doubles, nine triples and eight home runs and Dutoi who hit .540, smacked 12 home runs and had a school record 80 RBI.

"I lose seven starters but I have both of my top pitchers back and a good group of juniors and sophomores coming up so we're going to be fine," Kennelly said. "We might not be as strong as we were this year, but we will be OK."

Swan Valley's Callie Burgess delivers a pitch in a recent contest earlier this season. Swan Valley lost in the Division 2 quarterfinals 5-0 to Escanaba. (Submitted Photo)



Coleman's Dream Season Ends In D4 Semis With Loss To Ottawa Lake

Dick Hoekstra
Sports Scene

The Coleman softball team was young this year, but still managed to advance to a Division 4 state semifinal before losing 6-1 to Ottawa Lake Whiteford at Michigan State's Secchia Stadium.

"I don't know if anybody really expected us to get back to the quarters where we were after losing the girls we lost last year," Coleman softball coach Chad Klopff said. "From the get-go, there are a lot of young girls on this team that weren't with us last year. They stepped it up right away. You can't question their heart and determination. They go after it."

With just one senior on the roster, the Comets went 14-0 in the

Mid-State Activities Conference and finished 35-7 overall. They won 6-1 over Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart and 10-0 over Breckenridge in a district, 11-1 over Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary and 12-6 over Morrize in a regional, and then 5-0 over Holton in a quarterfinal.

"This was the next step," Klopff said. "The jitters that were there the last two years in the quarters that weren't there this year were sort of there a little bit to start this (state semifinal). Now we've had this step, and hopefully we can make another step next year."

After Whiteford senior Erin Manley hit the first of two home runs to give the Bobcats a 3-0 lead in the first inning, Coleman answered with a run in the second.

Junior Autumn Tubbs tripled, and scored on a single by freshman Brianna Townsend.

"Autumn did a great job at the plate," Klopff said. "From the minute we got in that batting cage today, she was hitting the ball hard. She did a nice job, got herself on base, put herself in position to score, and some of the younger girls down toward the bottom of the lineup did a nice job for us."

Autumn also doubled in the seventh inning, but three total hits was all Coleman could manage off Whiteford's Lindsey Walker, who struck out nine Comets.

Liz Dana played in her last game for Coleman.

"We're going to miss her," Klopff said. "She's been with us a long time now. She's passed on what the



Coleman made it all the way to the Division 4 semifinals before losing 6-1 to Ottawa Lake Whiteford in the semis. Coleman finished the season 35-7. (Dick Hoekstra, High School Sports Scene Photo)

other girls (in past years) have given to her. Behind the plate, without her there, we're not here."

Eleven Comets should be back for the 2018 season.

"They'll go play travel ball, keep playing ball, and they'll be ready when we get around to this time of year next year," Klopff said. "They'll be ready to take the next step."

Shepherd Gives MSCC All It Can Handle In D3 Semis; Falls 1-0 To Kestrels

Dick Hoekstra
Sports Scene

It may not be much consolation, but the Shepherd softball team gave eventual Division 3 state champion Monroe St. Mary Catholic its closest game of the state tournament.

The Blue Jays lost just 1-0 to the Kestrels in a state semifinal at Michigan State University's Secchia Stadium. Only Blissfield in a 7-1 district final loss and Napoleon in a 13-1 state final loss even scored a run on Monroe St. Mary and its star senior pitcher Meghan Beaubien.

Beaubien struck out 15 Blue Jays, and only allowed a double by junior Kianna Andrews and a single by senior Rianne McKenna. But Shepherd threatened to score twice, and junior pitcher Haley Peska allowed just a sixth inning run and five hits while striking out six Monroe St. Mary batters.

"There's probably not too many teams that have gotten two runners to third base on that girl," Shepherd third-year

softball coach Bobb Servoss said of Beaubien. "She was lights out."

"We scared them a couple times, and they knew they had a game. I'm proud of the girls."

Shepherd went just 8-6 while taking fourth place in the Tri-Valley Conference Central division and finished the regular season 20-18.

"Nobody expected us to be here, although we played the best game against one of the best teams in the state," Servoss said. "The girls were all crying, but it's nothing to hang your head about. We played well. So I just told them to keep your chin up."

The Blue Jays won 15-1 over Carson City-Crystal and 8-5 over St. Louis in a district, 8-2 over Pinconning and 8-7 over Beaverton in a regional, and 5-0 over Millington in a quarterfinal.

"We beat a team in the regional that had beaten us in a doubleheader earlier, beat a Beaverton team that was dynamite, and then got revenge with Milling-

ton in a quarterfinal game," Servoss said. "Last year, they beat us 1-0."

Peska struck out 8 Millington hitters and pitched her first career perfect game by getting 21 straight batters out as Shepherd advanced to its first state semifinal appearance in softball since 1997.

"Although this is kind of disappointing, it's been a pretty good year," said Servoss, who got to watch a Coleman team where he previously coached play in a Division 4 state semifinal prior to the Blue Jays' game with Monroe St. Mary.

Servoss graduates five seniors, but is optimistic about the future at Shepherd.

"I've got five juniors coming up that like to hit the softball," he said. "I looked in the stands, and I saw five or six girls that hang around our ball park that are all 12 or 13 years old. To see them in the stands with their eyes about this big around, it gets the bug in them, and it gets them so they want to work hard. It's always good to be here (in East Lansing)."

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Grand Ledge Softball Team Turns In Memorable Season

David Cook
Sports Scene

It was a season for the record books and with plenty of talent due back next season, the future looks just as bright for the Grand Ledge softball team.

The Comets set several records this year. Finishing the season with a 36-3 overall record, Grand Ledge set a school record for both wins in a season and winning percentage. The Comets won the Capital Area Activities Conference with a perfect 14-0 record. In the state tournament, Grand Ledge captured its first district title since 2011 as it won the Okemos district. The Grand Ledge offense exploded for 34 runs at the district tournament by defeating St. Johns 16-3 in the semifinals and East Lansing 18-0 in

the title game. "We had a great season," said Grand Ledge coach Pat Malloy. "The kids performed well all year and I couldn't be more proud."

the title game.

In his fourth season as head coach, the season had a special meaning for Malloy.

"This was my first class to move through the program," Malloy said. "I had five seniors, four were with me as freshmen and started all four years. The leadership by them will be hard to replace, but the underclassmen will be fine. We return seven and plan to work just as hard."

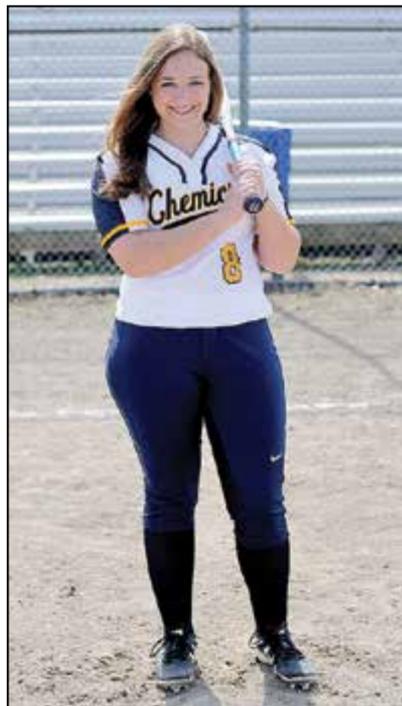
Individually, many Comets were recognized with post-season honors. Nina Bennett, Lindsay Goodman and Emily Songer were all named unanimous se-

lections to the CAAC Red all-conference team. Bennett, the ace of the pitching staff, also set a school record for wins (25) in a season. Kahlei Ethridge, Bri Rodriguez, Olivia Dawson and Kenzie Trierweiler also earned all-conference honors with Kaylee Dumond earning honorable-mention, all-conference honors.

Rachel Pelfrey, Bennett, Goodman, Rodriguez, Songer, Ethridge, Dawson, Dumond and Trierweiler were named to the all-district team. Bennett, Goodman, Songer, Ethridge, Trierweiler were named to the all-region team with Goodman earning honorable-mention, all-state.

Goodman, a junior and Bennett, a sophomore, will return to the lead the way next season as well.

"We have three spots to fill, and have started that process," Malloy said. "I'm looking forward to next year, and building on what we have accomplished this year. The kids are ready and have already started."



After Leading Chemics, Kipfmiller Heads To Boston University

Ben Murphy
Sports Scene

A good season capped off what was a great softball career for Midland High's Maya Kipfmiller. Kipfmiller, a pitcher for the Lady Chemics, was a key cog for the team as they marched all the way to the division one quarterfinals, where they lost a close 2-1 contest to Grandville, a team that lost in extra innings in the state finals.

"Overall, we had a great season," Kipfmiller said. "I was really proud of our entire team, especially with how we played in the post-season and how we kept fighting through everything. Things could have ended differently but I am proud of the things we accomplished."

In districts, Midland had a relatively easy time with Mt. Pleasant and Bay City Central, earning 11-6 and 11-3 wins. The following weekend the Chemics toppled

Davison 9-0 in the regional semi-finals and won a hard-fought battle with Swartz Creek in the regional final, 8-7. The season came to an end in the quarterfinals at Central Michigan University against Grandville. Midland had base runners on in every inning but could only plate one run. The inability to hit in the base-runners caught up to the Chemics as Grandville broke a 1-1 tie in the bottom of the sixth inning to pull off the win.

"It was really tough to lose that one because it was such a close game," Kipfmiller, who fanned four batters and gave up just five hits in the game said. "We made some mistakes throughout the game and that came back to cost us at the end. I was proud of how we played though, we had good results in the game, aside from losing it."

The game also put a bookend to her high school career.

"My high school career, I really

enjoyed it, we had a lot of great people throughout the years and I made a lot of good friends that I'm hoping I can keep for a long time," she said. "Obviously there are ups and downs on any team that you play with, but overall it was great. I thought my high school career was successful because of all my work I the off-season. All of my extra pitching and hitting in the off-season paid off in the regular season and especially in the post-season games."

Kipfmiller will now focus her attention to Boston University, where she will study Biochemistry and play for the softball team there as well.

"I'm really excited for next year, it's going to be a big change, especially since I'll be playing in a big city," she said. "The main thing for me is to work on balancing my time for school and to be able to handle all my classes and the time commitments for softball. I'm really excited to be playing at the next level though. I know I'll do the best that I can do and hopefully I'll represent my school the best that I can."

Midland's Maya Kipfmiller capped her stellar career helping the Chemics win their third straight Saginaw Valley League, district and regional titles. (Submitted Photo)

MLS Softball Heats Up Late To Finish Season Strong

Ben Murphy
Sports Scene

For the Michigan Lutheran Seminary softball team, it wasn't how they started; it was how they finished. The Lady Cardinals, after starting the season 2-12-1 caught fire as the weather heated up as they racked up wins and claimed a district title. The team did fall to eventual division four state semi-finalist, 11-1 in their regional semi-final contest.

"I was very happy with how the girls played at the end of the season," second year head coach Seth LaBair said. "We won eight of our final 10 games to finish 10-4-1. We doubled our win total from last year and won our second district title in the last two years."

Despite not getting off to the start they had wanted, the Cardinals tapped into their experienced roster to help turn the corner.

"Nine of our girls were on the

varsity last year and our experienced roster helped us be more successful this year," LaBair said. "We were able to have defined roles and I was confident in what we could do. A lot of our students play multiple sports at MLS, they don't just focus on one they are always involved in different things and will compete to the best of their ability. Eight of the girls that were on the team that went to the state final in basketball this year. We knew we had a chance to get back to the regionals in softball and the girls played their best at the end of the year. It helps us that there are so many good teams in our conference because it gets us ready for tournament play."

Several players helped set the tone for the team as well.

"Our MVP was senior Samantha Schoch, she primarily played third base but also played shortstop, she led the team with a .364 average and she also led the team in on base percent-

age, slugging, doubles, triples, home runs, walks and she only struck out six times in 81 plate appearances," LaBair said of his first team all-conference player. "Junior Reese VanLue was named second team all-conference for the second year in a row as an outfielder, she is a great defensive outfielder who also tied for the team lead in RBI and walks. Laura Scharder played first base for us this year and was named honorable mention all-conference."

Though several of the players living far away from the school in the summer, the Cardinals are still hoping to have a strong off-season to lead to another good year on the diamond next spring.

"We had eight seniors on this year's team and it will be tough to replace them next year," LaBair said. "We do have five girls returning next year that played key roles in the 2017 season. One of our goals next year is to win a third district title in a row. We are hoping that our younger girls will be able to pick up where our seniors left off this year."



The Michigan Lutheran Seminary softball team finished the season strong winning eight of its last 10 games and won a district title in the process. (Submitted Photo)

Keyes Sisters Led Frankenmuth To Strong Season

Ben Murphy
Sports Scene

There was a time sisters Laurin and Courtney Keyes only played soccer with each other in the backyard. Now that they're both in high school, the two were finally able play together on the field; where they were both been key forces behind a strong girls soccer team at Frankenmuth.

"I really like playing with her, it's definitely fun to have someone I've always played with in the backyard and now we're actually on the field together and able to win some games," Laurin, a junior on the team said. "I like playing with her in the mid-field, she knows the game really well. It's nice to know someone is seeing what I'm seeing."

So far, the sister duo has been a wild success. Both play the midfield and both had several goals and assists, with finishing as the team leader in

goals. The duo helped the Eagles to a share of the Tri-Valley Conference East title, though they had a short post-season as they lost to eventual state champion Flint Powers 7-0 in their district opener on May 31.

"It's been fun to have them, they both (were) playing very well this year," head coach Paul Stenglein said. "It's a good working relationship that the two of them have and it has also been a good healthy rivalry. They push each other and they expect each other to do well. They're certainly a key reason we're leading the conference right now."

For Courtney, having her sister there to share her first varsity soccer season with has been a time she has cherished as well.

"On my travel team I normally play defense, so when our coach told me I was going to play midfield with my sister, I was really excited," she said. "I've always looked up to her as

a soccer player. I've always wanted to play with her in high school so this opportunity has been really fun and I've really enjoyed it. We even have a secret hand-shake that we do every time we score."

And with over 20 goals between them, they've had plenty of opportunities to practice that secret hand shake.

"We just feed off of each other, make good runs and passes and help out the team," Courtney said. "It's a good team so to be able to help out with our season is really exciting. We're all really coming together as a team."

While as sisters, they'll naturally have similarities, Stenglein is quick to point out the that the two aren't the exact same players.

"They are different, even in size, Courtney is a taller player than Laurin," he said. "Both of them handle the ball quite well, they use all the portions of their feet as well as their upper body to be able to control and distribute balls. I would say that Laurin is more of a post-range scorer and Courtney's forte is really a

longer shot. Both are used for serving corner kicks and to be target players on corner kicks. If both are in there, one is serving the corner kick and the other is a target."

Laurin admits however, that the success the two have seen didn't come as a total surprise.

"At the beginning of the season, we were joking around that we were going to be a key to Frankenmuth's success," she said. "It has been really nice to have someone who knows the position as I do. She knows what to do, we cover each other. We have the same thought process so that helps a lot too."

"This year, we (had) a really great



Laurin and Courtney Keyes, pictured with their grandpa Art helped Frankenmuth to a solid 2017 season. The Eagles lost to eventual state champion Flint Powers 7-0 in the first round of districts. (Submitted Photo)

season," Laurin added. "It has been very exciting to win with my sister on the team to share the experience with her. It has been a lot of fun playing with her."

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Lansing Christian Edges Kalamazoo Christian In Shootout For First D4 State Title

Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

Like a slow rising single on the charts, Lansing Christian took its time to reach the summit. The Pilgrims are now on top of the world. Goalkeeper Lynn Cullens, who told her coach weeks before that she wasn't worthy, made a save in a shootout as top-ranked Lansing Christian posted a 2-1 victory June 17 over third-ranked Kalamazoo Christian in the MHSAA Division 4 state finals at the Williamston High School Soccer Complex. Lansing Christian collected a 4-3 edge in the shootout to lift the Pilgrims to some new pioneer territory — their first state title. "This is a program thing, really," said Lansing Christian coach Joel Vande Kopple. "We had some people from the 2011 team here and some people from the 2015 team here. (in 2015) we made a run to the final which was some-

what unexpected. Then last year everyone thought we'd get here and we were upset in the semifinals. This year we got back here and I thought we'd played a great game. We almost had it won in overtime. I told them that we can't give up any late restarts and we did give up the late corner and they scored. But we got in done in penalties. No one likes to go dot a shootout and lose. That's the way it goes. We were fortunate enough to win. But the credit to Kalamazoo Christian. They played a great defensive game and took us to a shootout." While Lansing Christian was an offensive juggernaut this season — the Pilgrims outscored the opposition 125-12 over 27 games — it was the improved play of Cullens, a junior goalkeeper, who helped make the difference in the end. "A few weeks ago, Lynn said that she didn't think we could win with win her as the goalie. We had faith in her and the coaches really worked hard with her (on stopping penalty kicks)," said Vande Kopple.

"She ended up making a save in the shootout. She came through for us when we needed her to." Lansing Christian (23-2-2) lost in the finals in 2011 and 2015 and also in the state semifinals three other times, including last year. A rejuvenated Cullens, a third-year starter, saved the day in the end. "I did say something to my coaches, but they worked with me for this," said Cullens. "I just I just had to trust in God and everything would work out. I had to stop doubting in myself." Cullens made only four saves during regulation and the two 10-minute overtime periods, as Lansing Christian dominated play throughout the contest. Meanwhile, Kealeigh Usiak, Abby Lyon, Jessie Kruger and Eliza Lewis their penalty kicks, with Lewis booting the tie-breaker in the shootout. "I was so nervous. I have never been in one of those before," said Lewis of the shootout. "I just knew I had to pick a place and shoot it towards that spot and we would make the difference in the end." The Pilgrims were ranked No. 1 all of last season before being stunned in the semifinals by eventual state champion Grosse Pointe Woods University-Liggett. Lansing Christian, again ranked No.1 the

whole 2017 campaign, was not to be denied this time in their third trip to the finals. Lansing Christian dominated throughout the contest and outshot the Comets by a commanding 21-6 margin, including 13-5 with shots directly on frame, and even held a 10-3 edge with corner kicks. Lansing Christian finally broke the stalemate with 7:22 remaining in the first overtime. Sophomore Jackie Moore floated a long serve into the penalty box and sophomore Rilyn Ross flicked the ball over the hands of Kalamazoo keeper Allyson Kranstz and into the far corner of the goal. Kalamazoo Christian (20-3-3) made a final push and forced all 11 players upfield on a corner kick opportunity to try to knot the score. Freshman Lauryn Money converted a corner kick from senior Meagan Laaksonen with 3:03 remaining in the second overtime session to set up the shootout. Kranstz finished with 12 saves



Lansing Christian celebrates its first-ever Division 4 girls soccer championship. The Pilgrims finished the season 23-2-2. (Submitted Photo)

for Kalamazoo Christian, which recorded 16 straight shutouts heading into the finals. "I think our defense is what got us here," said Kalamazoo Christian coach Jay Allen "We had 20 shut-outs on the year and our defense was great all season. We gave it our best shot and just came up short. "I think once we got down 1-0, we saw they were a little tired, too, so we started to push it. We knew new once it got to the shootout that anything can happen."



Lansing Catholic Soccer Puts Together Solid Campaign

Dick Hoekstra Sports Scene

The Lansing Catholic girls soccer team beat Williamston for the first time in 12 years, captured the Capital Area Activities Conference White division title, won the CAAC Silver Cup, earned a Division 3 district crown, and advanced as far as a regional final before losing 5-0 to eventual state champion Flint Powers Catholic. "We had six great seniors, including a real star in Abi-

gail Gilmore," Lansing Catholic 5th-year coach William Pettit said. "So I felt like it could be a very good season if other players stepped up — and they did. They exceeded expectations, although I was quietly hopeful of the results we did achieve." The Cougars finished with a 15-6 record after defeating Portland 8-0, Battle Creek Pennfield 1-0 and Delton Kellogg 1-0 in a district, and then Jonesville 1-0 in a regional semifinal. They were led by Gilmore,

who has signed to play soccer at Ferris State University in Big Rapids. "She's probably one of the two or three best players to come out of Lansing Catholic along with Doris Sullivan from the 1990s, and Kathleen Frank from the early 2000s," Pettit said. "I think she was probably one of the three best D3 midfielders in the state. She was third team (all-state), and she should definitely have been first team. She was the best player on the pitch in virtually every game we played — and that included against the state champs Flint Powers. "If we had a little more firepower with her, I think

we would have gone further." But Pettit was very complimentary of many of his other players. "A real unsung hero was (senior) Olivia Poupard, who I think could play in college if she wants to," he said. "She was one of those players that never came off in a big game. "Riley McCann had incredible growth from her freshman year to her senior year, and Kyra Wieber, Rachel Foy, and Megan Lycos were seniors who really played well for us and will be missed. "It was an incredible season and probably the best year for Lansing Catholic soccer since the mid-1990s."

Lansing Catholic advanced all the way to the Division 3 regional finals before losing to Flint Powers. The Cougars finished the season 15-6. (Submitted Photo)

Area Soccer Teams Cap Season With Strong Tournament Runs

David Cook Sports Scene

It was a memorable tournament season for area girls soccer teams this spring. Area teams captured half of the state titles with Flint Powers Catholic winning the



Division 3 state title and Lansing Christian winning the Division 4 state crown. A pair of area teams also earned runner-up honors with Grand Blanc taking second in Division 1 and Freeland taking second in the state in Division 3.

Following is a look at several other area teams that turned in solid tournament efforts.

DIVISION 1

Midland captured a district title with a 5-0 win against Traverse City West before falling to eventual state runner-up Grand Blanc in the regional semifinals. Senior midfielder Makenzie Rajewski and junior defender Carlee Davis both earned honorable-mention, all-state honors this season.

The Rockford soccer team turned in a memorabilia season. The Rams won their first conference title in program history as they captured the rugged OK Red title. Rockford's season ended in the district finals when it dropped a 3-0 decision to eventual state champion Forest Hills Central. Senior twins Cesily and Eliese LaCourt both earned honorable-mention, all-state honors.

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DIVISION 2

The DeWitt soccer team turned in a solid season. The Panthers defeated Lowell 5-2 to win the district title before dropping a 3-2 decision to eventual state runner-up Forest Hills Northern in the regional semifinals. Seniors Mackenzie Dawes and Danielle Stephan both earned first-team, all-state honors while seniors Maddie Dickens, Brooklyn Holley and Jessah McManus earned honorable-mention honors.

Linden turned in a memorable season winning district and regional titles. Linden's season ended in the state semifinals where it fell to eventual state champion Bloomfield Hills Marian. Seniors Alia

Fredrick and Madison Paige were both named first-team, all-state while senior Madeline Zayan was named to the third team. Lowell turned in a solid season reaching the district finals. The future looks bright for the Red Arrows as sophomore forward Regan Coxon was named third-team, all-state with junior Darby Dean and freshman Khloe Hayes earned honorable-mention, all-state.

DIVISION 3

It was another solid season for the Williamston soccer team. Williamston defeated Lake Fenton for a district title before dropping a 2-1 decision to eventual state champion Flint Powers in the regional semifinals. Senior goalkeeper Madison Clem and sophomore forward Maisie Fenech both earned first-team, all-state honors with senior Paige Lanier and junior Alexis Russel earning second-team honors and Renata Cunningham named honorable-mention.

Lansing Catholic Central captured a district title and reached the regional finals before falling

to eventual state champion Flint Powers. Senior midfielder Abigail Gilmore was named third-team, all-state. Tri-County finished the season strong by defeating Lakeview 4-0 to win a district title. Junior midfielder Taylor Prins and sophomore forward Grace Miller were named honorable-mention, all-state. Big Rapids captured a district title with a 7-1 win against Shelby. The Cardinals fell to Charlevoix in the semifinals of the Clare regional.

DIVISION 4

After seeing its string of district titles snapped last season Saginaw Nouvel began a new streak when it defeated Unionville-Sebewaing 8-0 to win the Laingsburg district. Nouvel's season came to an end with a loss to Muskegon Catholic Central in the regional semifinals at Big Rapids Crossroads. Sophomore midfielder Katherine Felton earned third-team, all-state honors while seniors Lauren Champney and Emily Felton earned honorable-mention, honors.

Top-Ranked Forest Hills Central Denies Grand Blanc First D1 State Crown In 2-0 Triumph

Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

Over the past two decades, both Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central and Grand Blanc have consistently been amongst the top programs in Michigan. The only thing separating the two powerhouses is that one owns more than one state title and the other is still seeking its first crown. The same element is the one thing that still separates Forest Hills Central and Grand Blanc. Top-ranked Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central ran the tables as the state's No.

1-ranked team in Division 1 and capped it with a 2-0 victory June 17 over fourth-ranked Grand Blanc in the MHSAA Division 1 state finals at the Williamston High School Soccer Complex. It marked the Rangers' fourth overall state title, with the others coming in 2005, 2007 and 2008. FHC lost in the finals back in 2003 — with those previous four title game appearances coming in Division 2. Grand Blanc dropped its second state title match in three years and third overall with the other defeats coming in 2004 and 2015. This day belonged to Forest Hills Central, ranked in the top 25 in the nation.

"We've been able to change and adapt and find ways to score goals all season long and that has been our strength," said FHC Coach Jeremy Stacy. "This is an incredible accomplishment to beat a team with so many weapons," continued Stacy. "Grand Blanc is a very talented team and very well coached. It took a great effort to keep them off the scoreboard and defeat them." Forest Hills Central (21-0-4) went on a 7-0 run through the state tournament. The Rangers finished with a 114-10 scoring edge in their dominating season. Grand Blanc (22-3-4) outscored its opposition 100-24 this season.



Grand Blanc advanced all the way to the Division 1 title game before losing to Forest Hills Northern 2-0 in the championship game. (Submitted Photo)

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SPORTING EVENTS

DeWitt's Danielle Stephan Wins Miss Soccer Honor

Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

Danielle Stephan recorded many firsts during her stellar four-year prep soccer career at DeWitt.

She added another recently — and one that will never be duplicated.

Stephan, a senior center midfielder, became the school's first Miss Soccer award winner, given annually to the state's top high school player by the Michigan High School Soccer Coaches Association.

No other DeWitt player will be the first to win the award. It's all hers.

"It's quite an honor, really. I didn't know if I would get it, to be honest," said Stephan, who was told by her

coach one week before the coaches association announced its all-state teams for the 2017 season.

"I saw back early in the pre-season that I was ranked No. 1 (by one publication) and then right before the state playoffs started I saw that Bailey Kohorn (of Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central) was ranked No. 1 (by another publication) and I was second. I would have been okay with that. Bailey is a great player. There are a lot of great players in Michigan that are worthy."

Kohorn, a midfielder/forward, finished second in the voting and both were also honored on the All-State Dream Team by the MHSSCA. Senior midfielder Gabriela Jozdis of Utica Eisenhower was third, while

East Kentwood senior goalkeeper Maia Perez, Utica Ford senior midfielder Cecilia Steinwascher, Troy Athens senior forward Ashley Leonard, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central defender Emily Ashby, Flint Powers Catholic senior defender Rachel Phillpotts, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central junior forward Madeline Becker and Lansing Christian junior forward Kasey Jamison rounded out the 11-member squad.

It has been a whirlwind 12 months for Stephan, who finished her career with 57 goals and 59 assists and ranks amongst the school's all-time leaders for goals, assists and total points. Stephan recorded 14 goals and 10 assists as a senior.

Stephan won an Elite Clubs National League title with the Michigan Hawks last July and then at the beginning of 2017 received a phone call that she was one of 26 players invited to the U.S. Olympic Developmental Program U-19 Women's National

Camp in Florida in late March.

She also signed with Michigan State back in February.

"It's been an amazing year," said Stephan. "I couldn't have imagined everything that has happen to me even a couple of years ago. I have worked hard training to be where I'm at right now. I am truly blessed. Every award I have been given I take great pride in because I have worked so hard and there are so many other deserving players."

"I am sad to see high school end and at the same time I am really excited to start college," continued Stephan, who will report to training at MSU on August 1. "We have some really strong players coming into MSU this year and a lot of talented players returning. We're excited. We hope to do well this year and maybe win a (Big Ten) title sometime in the future."



DeWitt's Danielle Stephan, who finished her career with 57 goals and 59 assists and ranks amongst the school's all-time leaders for goals, assists and total points recently won Miss Soccer for the 2017 season. Stephan recorded 14 goals and 10 assists as a senior. (Staff Photo)

Flint Powers Catholic Deflates Freeland 4-0 For D3 Crown

Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat; Flint Powers Catholic has tasted both the past two years.

A year ago, Powers Catholic lost in the Division 3 state championship to Hudsonville Unity Christian, 2-0, despite holding a 17-3 shots advantage in that contest — a contest the Chargers more than dominated.

This time around the top-ranked Chargers left no doubt.

Powers Catholic scored three first-half goals and added another in the second half to blank first-time state finalist Freeland, 4-0, on June 16 at the Williamston High School Soccer Complex, capping a stellar season where the Chargers were ranked No. 1 for the entire campaign.

Rachel Phillpotts remembers the long ride home from Lansing last June, and her and the 11 other seniors on the Chargers' roster vowed not to suffer the same fate again.

"It was definitely on our mind,"

said Phillpotts, Powers' most highly-rated player who aided 15 shutouts this season. "We didn't like that feeling, losing last year. We had some pressure this year being No. 1 in the state. We wanted to win the state title this season more than anything."

Powers Catholic (26-1-2) motored through the state tournament with seven wins and a 31-2 scoring edge.

"That was rough last season. We dominated that game and still lost," noted Powers Catholic coach Art Moody. "We gained some valuable experience and I thought we dominated again this time."

Powers Catholic outshot Freeland 13-6 overall, including 9-3 with shots directly on frame. More importantly, the Chargers' frustrated the Falcons high-powered offense and rarely allowed Freeland to pose a serious threat.

"We play Powers soccer. We play possession. We play direct. We use our speed. We kind of mix it all around and it works," added Moody. "I thought our defense was strong

all season. They didn't give up very many chances (in the finals) at all."

Powers Catholic took a 1-0 lead on the Chargers' first shot on frame. Following a free kick from sophomore Rachel Rasin, the ball bounced around the penalty area before freshman Kennedy Myers tucked in a shot from one yard out with 30:18 to play in the first half.

Myers pushed the lead to 2-0 with 19:05 remaining in the first half.

After her initial shot down the right side was blocked, Myers blasted home the rebound.

Powers Catholic added to its lead less than two minutes later. Following a long throw in, the ball stayed in the penalty box before senior Emilie Pechette booted home on a close-range shot with 17:31 left before the break.

The Chargers capped the scoring with 20:25 left to play in the contest, when senior Gabrielle Amato headed in a corner kick from senior Sophia Dubiel.

"I think the girls wanted (Hudsonville) Unity Christian after what happened last season," said Moody. "When we saw it was Freeland, we knew they were good, too. We did a great job attacking their defense, going after their defenders 1-v-1 and

creating chances. Scoring those three goals in the first half I think deflated them a little bit."

Freeland lost in the state semifinals the past three years, including the previous two years to Unity Christian, which has won 10 state titles over the past 13 seasons. The Falcons slipped past Unity Christian, 3-2, in this year's semifinals, but that victory came with a cost.

One of Freeland's top players, senior Jessica Piper (Northwood), suffered a serious knee injury with 48 seconds left in that semifinals win.

In the finals, Powers Catholic marked up Freeland's Michelle Herring (Michigan State) and leading goal scorer Mackenzie Stroebel, limiting the Falcons to only six total shot attempts.

"That hurt. When you lose one of your playmakers who is also very good defensively, it changes the way you play," said Freeland coach Lauren Kemerer. "We struggled to get into any type of a flow. Credit Powers' defense for that."

Still, Kemerer acknowledged how far the Freeland program has come in recent years and has solidified itself amongst the Division 3 powerhouse teams.



Flint Powers defeated Freeland 4-0 to win the Division 3 soccer title. The Chargers finished the season 26-1-2. (Submitted Photo)

A total of 18 of 24 players are expected to return next year for Freeland (23-2-0).

"Our goal this year was getting past Unity," added Kemerer. "We wanted it and worked towards it. We hit our goals. We expected to make it here. It's unfortunate we lost but it is what it is. It's a learning experience for all of us. We went out there and gave it our best. That's all we can ask of them. We lost to a very talented team."

NORTHERN REPORT

Meridian Wins Jack Pine Pennant, Beavers Take District

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

The curse lives on.

For the past several years, the Division 3 softball teams in the Jack Pine Conference have tended to be the top competitors for the league title.

They beat on each other for a month and then find themselves in the same district going at it all over again.

Emerging from all that with two trophies has proven to be impossible.

"It seems like for the past five or six years, it's a curse in the district to win the league," said Beaverton coach Aaron Wentworth.

"I'm not saying I wasn't happy when we won the league championship last year, but then we didn't win the district. This year, we didn't win the league and we turned around and won the district. It just shows how good our league is and how good our district is year after year. You're playing the



Sanford Meridian might have finished first in the Jack Pine standings, but Beaverton got revenge in the end by winning a Division 3 district title. (Randy Miniard, High School Sports Scene Photo)

same teams three times and you never know what's going to happen."

Meridian was the Jack Pine champ doomed by the curse this time around.

The Mustangs split a doubleheader with Beaverton and swept the rest of their league games to finish first with a record of 13-1.

The Beavers split a twin bill with Farwell (last year's district champ) to wind up second at 12-2.

The Eagles finished tied with Clare for third place in the standings at 9-5. Gladwin was fifth at 7-7, followed by Harrison at 4-10, Roscommon at 2-10 and Houghton Lake at 0-12.

Meridian hosted this year's district, but the home field advantage couldn't overcome the curse.

The tourney opened with a 3-0 victory for Farwell over Harrison in the qualifier. Beaverton blanked the Eagles 3-0 in the semifinals, while the Mustangs knocked off Clare 8-4 to set up a battle of the Jack Pine's best.

The Beavers won the final 3-1.

"We had to win two tight games that could have gone either way," Wentworth said. "It's a difficult road every year."

Gladwin competed in Kalkaska's Division 2 district and lost to the home team 9-5 in the semifinals.

Meridian and Beaverton dominated the Jack Pine's All-Conference honor rolls.

Earning first team honors for the Mustangs were Brooklyn Kelly, Haley Maynard, Kassiday Zmiky, Mya Hall and Peyton Grice. Second team honors went to Karly Kent, Kaylee Lavack and Makayla Kent.

Makayla Bassage, Faith Howe, Jordyn Knake and Ann Marie Hicks were first team for the Beavers. Kaytlin Hall, Dallas Longstreth and Madeline Krause were second team.

Grace Saupé was first team, with Kat White and Harley Crawford second for Farwell.

For Clare, Bailey Carbeno and Peyton Hubel were first team, with Hailey Hochstetter and Cami Miller second.

Brenna Hover was Gladwin's first team honoree, with Gabby Airbets and Macy Bittner on the second team.

Record-Breaking Season Ends In Regional Final For Beavers

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

A record-breaking season ended in classic fashion for the Beaverton softball team.

The Beavers dropped an 8-7 battle with Shepherd in a Division 3 regional final to finish with a 38-4 record that will not soon be forgotten.

"Obviously, you'd like to at least get to the semifinals and see what can happen," said Beaverton coach Aaron Wentworth. "But Shepherd was playing really well at the



Beaverton finished the season 38-4 before suffering a tough 8-7 loss to Shepherd in a Division 3 regional finals contest. (Randy Miniard, High School Sports Scene Photo)

end of the season and the regional final was just a great, back-and-forth high school softball game. We were just on the losing end of it. That's the way it is."

A tough season-ending loss is always hard to swallow, but a spoonful of records helps the medicine go down.

"Last year, we finished 30-8 and got the school record for wins, so adding eight more to it means we did a pretty good job," said Wentworth. "This is a great group of kids, they've been together a long time and they kept battling right to the end."

The school's record book for pitchers also requires a revision. Junior Faith Howe went 34-4 with a 0.61 earned run average and racked up 397 strikeouts.

Howe earned First Team All-State honors, along with senior catcher Makayla Bassage, who batted leadoff for the fourth straight year and posted a .504 average.

Bassage will play at Madonna University next season, as will center fielder Jordyn Knake, who earned all-state honorable mention. Senior third baseman Ann Marie Hicks was also honorable mention all-state.

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NORTHERN REPORT

Clare Wins League, District Baseball Crowns

Scott Salowich
Sports Scene

After ripping through the Jack Pine Conference with a 13-1 record, the Clare baseball team was able to survive its rivals again at Meridian's Division 3 district to lock up a pair of pennants.

That goal eluded the Pioneers last season when they fell to Beaverton in the district final. This year's rematch was another war and Clare marched out with a 9-8 victory in the final after topping Meridian 9-1 in the semis. The Beavers beat Harrison 12-1 in the other semifinal after the Hornets

advanced with an 8-1 win over Farwell in the first round.

The Beavers finished with an impressive overall record of 28-10.

Clare finished 30-5-1 after a 10-4 loss to Hemlock in the first round of the regional.

Beaverton and Meridian tied for second place in the Jack Pine standings with records of 11-3. Roscommon was next at 8-6, followed by Harrison at 5-9, Gladwin at 4-10, Farwell at 3-11 and Houghton Lake at 1-11.

Earning all-league honors for Clare were Gabe Denton, Jeff Allen, Cole Keene and Tucker Roe. Travis Vida

and Tyler Smith were second team.

Shane Yzquiendo, Bryce Crowder, Garrett Stockford and Hunter Merilat were all-league for the Mustangs, with Brett Bohn and Jake Zielinski second team.

Nick Hartner topped the honor roll for the Beavers, with Hunter Brink, Carson Longstreth, Brandon Evans and Cameron Schneider on the second team.

Brandon Shell was all-league for Gladwin, with Aaron Weston second team.

Harrison's Bryce Lipovsky was also on the second team.

Clare finished the season 30-5-1 after losing to Hemlock 10-4 in a Division 3 regional semifinals games. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)



Gladwin Soccer Wins League, District

Scott Salowich
Sports Scene

After winning the Northern Michigan Soccer League South Division title for the second year in a row, Gladwin faced a major obstacle on the road to winning the league championship.

The Flying G's had already lost to North Division champ Cheboygan 5-1 and needed to turn things around in a big way in a rematch for the outright crown.

Whatever could go right, did go right and Gladwin pulled off a 2-1 victory to win it all in the league for the first time since taking two in a row in 2010-11.

"We had a lot of returning players and we won the South last year, so we knew we would be in contention," said Flying G's coach Jerome Smalley, "but beating Cheboygan was a big surprise.

"They had won it the last five years in a row and they had another talented team. Soccer

is a funny game sometimes. We played hard and, when you do that, sometimes things just go your way."

The victory sent Gladwin into the Division 3 state tournament with a wave of confidence and the Flying G's rode it all the way to a district title.

In the first round, they beat Tawas 3-2 in overtime. A 3-1 victory over Ogemaw Heights in the semifinals was next and then they beat Roscommon 2-1 in the final.

"We knew we had a chance in the district," said Smalley, "but it was never easy. We played close games against good teams and we were very happy to be able to win the district championship."

The regional was no fun as eventual state runner-up Freeland ran off with an 11-0 victory.

"There was no one in our district that was not going to get mercied against them," Smalley said. "They finished second in



The Gladwin girls soccer team won the Northern Michigan Soccer League South Division title for the second year in a row in 2017. Gladwin would go on to lose to Freeland in the Regional Finals. The Flying G's finished the season 15-7-1. (Submitted Photo)

the state and rightfully so."

The Flying G's checked out with a record of 15-7-1.

Lauren Seebeck led the offense with 32 goals. The sophomore

was third team All-State.

Senior Carly Hickey controlled both ends of the field from her spot at center midfielder and finished with eight goals and 12

assists to earn honorable mention All-State.

Freshman stopper Mara Pellerito and junior sweeper Sabrina Boylen led the defense.

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