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**PUBLISHER'S NOTE**

What a thrilling winter sports season we just had! And what an amazing 100 issues of High School Sports Scene Magazine!

It seems just like yesterday we thought about putting together a magazine focused on local high school athletes. The doubters were many, but some nine years later here we are. What a tremendous journey it has been. This month's 100th issue takes a look at 100 of the thousands of great moments we have been able to cover since our debut in 2009. We have had the pleasure of reporting on thousands of high school athletes and hundreds of teams over the past nine years that have provided memories for thousands of families, students, teachers, coaches and athletes in mid-Michigan area. How lucky we are to be able to chronicle the amazing accomplishments of local kids and publish stories that they can keep forever in a world that is increasingly focused on chats, tweets and posts to a computer.

This month's issue also includes our winter all-area teams. Digging inside the numbers of the wrestling all-area team, one can find that mid-Michigan wrestlers and the entire Michigan high school wrestling community is among the elite in the nation. What other area in the country would you have an all-area team with numerous state champions on the first and second team! The depth of wrestling talent in the HSSS coverage area is unbelievable. You could easily field a successful NCAA Division 1 wrestling team with the talent that comes out of coverage-area wrestling schools.

Although the recent weather might not reflect it, spring is underway in Michigan and so are spring sports. Hundreds of athletes are hitting the diamonds, fields, tracks, golf courses and tennis courts around mid-Michigan. Take the time to attend an event or two this spring involving area athletes.

I'd like to also thank all of our loyal readers and advertisers, without who we would not have a High School Sports Scene Magazine. Thank you for all you do for kids and high school athletics in mid-Michigan.

We've had an incredible 100 issues and hope for 100 more!



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## BOYS BASEBALL PREVIEW

# Baseball Season To Feature Plenty Of Highly Talented Teams, Players

Butch Harmon  
Sports Scene

### DIVISION 1

**Saginaw Heritage:** The Hawks reached the Division 1 state quarterfinals last season and with one of the premier players in the state returning this year, Heritage is primed for another strong season. Senior Spencer Schwellenbach is a returning all-state Dream Team selection. Headed to the University of Nebraska, Schwellenbach hit .482 last season with 29 RBI. With a fastball clocked in the mid-90s, Schwellenbach had a 0.65 ERA on the mound. Senior pitcher Brandon Smith has a fastball in the upper 80s and went 7-3 with a 1.31 ERA. Smith also hit .400 last year.

**Midland:** The Saginaw Valley champs and district champs last year, the Chemics bring back plenty of talent. Senior outfielder Martin Money hit .429 and earned all-state honors. Garrett Willis was an all-conference pitcher who went 11-1 with a 1.27 ERA. Junior first baseman Jeff Landis is a power hitter who blasted six home runs and hit .390 and is also a solid pitcher. Juniors Ryan Freed and James Harris add more punch to the batting order.

**Bay City Western:** Senior shortstop Tyler David hit .417 last spring with 33 runs and 24 RBI. Junior catcher Nick Dardas, an all-state honoree, hit .423 with 27 RBI. Senior infielder Seth Gower and senior infielder Logan Lacourse also return.



**Midland Dow:** The Chargers are primed for a solid season led by senior infielder Zachary Nelson who hit .415. Sophomore shortstop Shane Juday hit .388 while senior first baseman Evan Coughlin hit .380. On the mound, senior Connor Moe and junior Jacob Stone return.

**Holt:** The Rams made school history with their first-ever regional title last year and dropped a one-run decision to eventual state champion Saline in the state quarterfinals. Senior pitcher Burrell Jones returns from that squad. A lanky righthander with a 91-mph fastball is the ace of the staff. Senior catcher Spencer Baldwin earned all-conference honors and hit .485 last year.

**Grand Ledge:** Central Michigan recruit Cal Johnston leads the Comets this year. Johnston earned all-state honors last year and is one of the top outfielders in the state.

**Rockford:** With plenty of talent back, the Rams are poised for a bounce-back season. Senior catcher Khale Showers hit .328 with 22 RBI last year. The entire infield returns led by first baseman Logan Lee and shortstop Paul Reinke. Junior pitcher Jake Engelkes anchors a promising pitching staff.

### DIVISION 2

**DeWitt:** District champions last season, the Panthers have a senior-laden squad with plenty of talent. Josh Robinson is a returning all-state player that will pitch and play the outfield. Kade Preston is a talented catcher/third baseman that will be playing at Central Michigan next spring. Seniors Mark Connelly (2b), Nolan Knauf (p/3b), Garrett Larner (inf/p), Noah Koenigsneht (of) and Stephen Walker (inf) also return along with hard-hitting junior Jace Preston.

**Corunna:** Coming off their first regional title since 2005, the Cavaliers have a strong group of returnees. Senior catcher Austin Schemenauer hit .453 with 35 RBI. Junior pitcher/shortstop Ethan

DeWitt's Nolan Knauf is back for his senior season for the Panthers. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo.)

Hollister is an ace on the mound. Seniors Lucas Barkman (p/of) and Zach Sawyer (2b) return along with Sam Thompson and Kail Stratton (p).

**Owosso:** Owosso won 20 games last year and returns all-state catcher Jordan Klapko. Klapko hit .478 last year with 45 RBI. Dan Clevenger returns along with Luke and John Wheeler. Both Wheelers will also anchor the pitching staff.

**Alma:** District champions a year ago, Alma brings back plenty of talent. Senior pitcher Dominic Anguiano went 9-1 with a 1.16 ERA and hit .396 with 31 stolen bases. Junior infielder Brec Alward hit .383 with 36 steals last year.

**Haslett:** Senior Hayden Garrett (p/inf) is a four-year varsity player that returns along with juniors Logan Cross (inf/of), Nick Donovan (p) and Jaden Thelen (inf) to provide the Vikings with a solid veteran core.

**Mason:** Plenty of talent is on hand at Mason this spring led by senior Austin Willard (3b/p) and junior Trent Stuewe (ss/p). Senior Kacey Carpenter returns in the outfield while sophomore Jake Lock is a talented young pitcher.

**Birch Run:** District champions last year, the Panthers return one of the top pitchers in the area in senior Trevor Beck who went 8-0 with a 0.85 ERA enroute to earning all-state honors.

**Portland:** Talented senior Austin Allison (p/inf) leads the way after hitting over .400 last season and is the ace of the pitching staff. Senior Dean Battley was also a big part of the offense last year.

**Essexville-Garber:** Senior outfielder Charlie Newton, an all-state player last year, returns to lead the Dukes after hitting .429 with 44 runs scored last year.

**St. Johns:** The Redwings are building around the senior nucleus of Chad Gilroy (c/utl), Austin Jakus (p/of), Josh Taylor (p/inf) and Peyton Workman (p/inf).

**Chippewa Hills:** The Warriors are led by Cade Schafer, a talented all-around player who hit .355 and went 5-2 with a 3.07 ERA on the

mound.

**Big Rapids:** The Cardinals return a pair of all-state players in senior infielder Jackson Lund and junior catcher Elliott Blair.

**Shepherd:** The Blue Jays are paced by senior Dyre Leonard (3b/p). Leonard hit .390 with 30 RBI last season.

### DIVISION 3

**New Lothrop:** A pair of all-state athletes return from a squad that went 33-8 last spring. Senior infielder Nic Johnson hit .543 with 46 RBI while senior pitcher/utility Zac Besant won seven games with a 2.02 ERA and hit .492 with 50 RBI. Junior infielder Colin Linau also returns after hitting .395 with 31 RBI.

**St. Louis:** District champions last year, the Sharks are led by senior outfielder Dylan McCloskey who hit .400 with 31 RBI and 23 stolen bases. Senior catcher Jayce Kuehlein hit .397 with 30 RBI and 24 stolen bases while senior outfielder Joe Smith hit .387.

**Clare:** The Pioneers return some key players from a team that won 30 games last season. Senior Jeff Allen went 11-1 with a 1.06 ERA on the mound and hit .302 with 42 RBI. Senior outfielder Tyler Rodenbo hit .365 with 32 runs scored.

**Bath:** The Bees will challenge for the top spot in the CMAC behind the pitching of juniors Trey Nordmann along with seniors Jaden Black (3b/p) and Kody Juhas (p/1b).

**Carson City-Crystal:** Junior standout Drew Stout returns to lead the way after hitting .404 last spring, with 29 runs scored and 14 stolen bases.

### DIVISION 4

**Portland St. Patrick:** After falling in the state title game in its previous four trips to the finals, the Irish broke through last year to win the first state baseball title in school history. With all-state shortstop Brandon Scheurer returning, St. Patrick is poised for another big year. Senior second baseman Dan Mackowiak and junior Nathan Lehnert (p/dh) also return along with sophomores Devin Fedewa



Portland St. Pats looks to defend its Division 4 baseball championship this season. (File Photo)

(of) and Sam Mauren (p/1b) who started last year as freshmen.

**Breckenridge:** A host of talented hitters return from a team that went 14-0 in the Mid-State Conference and won a district title. Senior Caden Foster (p/inf) hit .487 and went 4-1 with a 1.76 ERA on the mound. Senior catcher Garrett Miller hit .405 while senior first baseman Kenyon Story hit .394 and junior Lukas Ebricht hit .391.

**Coleman:** A wealth of talent returns from a squad that won 24 games. Senior Jason Beckner (ss/of) hit .494 with 38 stolen bases and senior Tayven Cottrell (of/p) hit .446 with 33 RBI. Junior Spencer Pracek (1b/p) hit .465 while junior second baseman Carson Cotton hit .413. Senior Josh Hilliard hit .392 and posted a 2.77 ERA.

**Beaumont:** The Aggies bring back a pair of standout seniors to lead the way for a team that won conference and district titles last spring. Ryan Schafer (p/of) hit .450 and went 5-1 on the mound. Brett Upton (p/inf) hit .374 with 30 RBI and went 5-3 with a 0.87 ERA.

**Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart:** The Irish are led by junior first baseman Cross DeLau who hit .465 with 22 RBI. Sacred Heart also returns seniors Carter Lowe (inf) who hit .393 with 26 RBI and Andy Gruss (ss) who hit .390.

**Fowler:** Senior Mason Pline (p/inf) is a returning all-state honoree and is joined by fellow seniors Dane Armbrustmacher (p/of), Noah Hamilton (of/p) and Dylan Antes (p/utl) for a Fowler team that will again be one of the top teams in Division 4.



# Ithaca Throwers Eye Another Huge Season

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Ithaca throwers Alex VanDeWeghe and Bailey Chaffin are looking to have big seasons for the Yellow Jackets this spring as juniors.

VanDeWeghe competed during the indoor season. He placed third at a Saginaw Valley indoor meet with a throw of 55'10" and won the 25-pound weight throw with a distance of 62'2". He competed at the new Balance Nationals indoor meet and had a PR of 56'7.14" for 18th in the shot put and 54' 3 1/4" for 36th in the weight throw.

Last season, VanDeWeghe was impressive in the shot put with several first place finishes, including at the TVC West meet and the regionals. He took third at the state finals and threw a PR of 56'0" at the New Balance Nationals outdoor meet, where he took second.

He was also conference and regional champ in the discus and took 12th place at the state meet. His PR is 154'10".

"It's been great to make a contribution to the team," he said.

This season VanDeWeghe's biggest goal is to place well at state and throw as far as he can.

"Probably right now, I'm strongest in the shot put," he said. "A lot of it is physical conditioning at the time and how your technique is doing."

VanDeWeghe is confident his team can score a lot of points in the throws.

"We have a lot of potential with teammates like Baylee Chaffin," VanDeWeghe said. "Overall, as a team, we should be doing well. We're coming off a league championship from last year. In the league, the biggest competition in throws and overall as a team will probably be Ovid-Elsie; Hemlock has some strong throwers too."

Chaffin has also had an impressive indoor season in the throws. He was fifth in the 12-pound shot put at 51'9" and seventh in the weight throw at 51' 4 1/2" at the Saginaw Valley indoor meet. He placed third at another indoor meet at Saginaw Valley. His personal record in the shot put last spring was a 52'6 1/2" at the state finals for fifth place. He had taken second at the regional. He was fourth at the regional in the discus.



Ithaca is expecting big things from its track throwers this season. (Submitted Photos)



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The Midland Dow tennis team would love to defend its Division 1 championship this season. (File Photo)

## GIRLS TENNIS PREVIEW

# High School Girls Tennis Teams Set To Hit Courts To Begin New Season

David Cook  
Sports Scene

### DIVISION 1

**Midland Dow:** Last year's Division 1 state champions return plenty of skilled players and will be in position to defend their title. At No. 1 singles, Jessica Brown is a returning regional champion. Senior Sarah Ismail is a returning regional and state champ at No. 2 singles. Hadley Camp reached the state finals at No. 3 singles last year while sophomore Victoria Leiti was a regional finalist at N. 4 singles. In doubles action, senior Kelly Livingston and junior Meghan Killmaster were regional champs and reached the state semifinals at No. 1 doubles. Dow also returns the No. 2 doubles team of Mina Fabiano and Tatum Matthews who were regional champions last year and the No. 4 doubles squad of Amelie Kraft and Reema Patel that won a regional championship.

**Rockford:** Rockford finished 10<sup>th</sup> at last year's state meet and is relying on a talented junior class this season. Alayna Bowman reached the state finals at No. 4 singles last year while fellow junior Delanie Rietschleger reached the quarterfinals at No. 3 singles at the state meet. Junior Abby Ducharme, a member of the No. 1 doubles team also returns.

**Saginaw Heritage:** Heritage is led by talented junior Sabrina Laynes. Laynes reached the semifinals in the regional at No. 1 singles last spring. Sophomore Sophia Manlapit is also back at No. 2 singles in a returning regional semifinalist.

### DIVISION 2

**Okemos:** With plenty of talented players returning, Okemos is looking to improve on last year's eighth-place finish at the state meet. In singles play, senior Georgie Anne Padalec reached the semifinals at No. 2 singles at the state meet. Junior Sema Colak was a state finalist at No. 3 singles and senior Anushka Murthy reached the semifinals at No. 4 singles.

**Mason:** The Bulldogs finished 10<sup>th</sup> in the state last year but were hit hard by

graduation. Mason does return sophomore standout Sophie Hanover who was a standout at No. 2 singles last season. Senior Sarah Johnson is an experienced player who was at No. 1 doubles last year.

**DeWitt:** DeWitt is led this season by senior Kara Johnson who is one of the top singles players in the area. The Panthers placed 13<sup>th</sup> at the state meet a year ago.

### DIVISION 3

**Flint Powers:** With all-state athletes Alisa Haddad back at No. 1 singles and sophomore Deena Haddad at No. 2 singles, the Chargers have a team capable of finishing in the top ten against this season in Division 3. Senior Neha Iska earned all-conference honors last year and is also back in the singles lineup.

**Williamston:** Led by standout sophomore Sophie Daavettilla, Williamston has a squad determined to improve on last year's 11<sup>th</sup>-place finish at the state meet. Senior Maddie Ganton and junior Sofia Mirate both started in the doubles lineup last spring and return this year.

**Haslett:** The Vikings qualified for state last year and bring back a solid core of players led by senior Anuva Suresh at No. 1 singles. Siwon Han is a junior that played No. 3 singles last year. Haslett also returns Anjani Rajo and Sophia Vogelsang who earned honorable-mention, all-state in doubles last year.

**Big Rapids:** With the bulk of the team returning and the addition of talented sophomore transfer Eden Short at No. 1 singles, the Cardinals are poised for a big season. Katherine Langell, a regional champion at No. 1 singles last year, is at No. 1 doubles this year with Zofia Freiberg back at No. 2 singles.

### DIVISION 4

**Portland:** The Raiders placed fifth in the state last year and are looking for another strong season. Seniors Alhoma Jordan (No. 3 singles) and Sydney Schneider (No. 4 singles) return along with sophomore Ainsley Ludema who played doubles last year.

## GIRLS TRACK PREVIEW

David Cook  
Sports Scene

### DIVISION 1

**Rockford:** The Rams took fourth in the state last year and have another solid group of athletes. Sophomore sprinter Grace Gohl earned all-state in the 100 meters. Junior Ericka VanderLende is one of the premier distance runners in D1. The Rams have plenty of outstanding hurdlers led by sophomore Taylor Korytkowski, senior Jillian Roney and junior Natalie Huls. Senior Caleigh Dunn is one to watch in the 800m.

**Okemos:** A top 10 team in the state last year, Okemos is led by sophomore thrower Jasmine Clerkley, senior middle-distance standout Ally Burba and sophomore distance runner Brooke Soper.

**Saginaw Heritage:** Senior standout Briana Walker is one of the best in D1 in both the 400m and the long jump. Senior Rachel Kempf is a solid distance runner.

**Lansing Waverly:** Moving up to Division 1 after winning the Division 2 state title last year, Waverly is paced by all-state thrower Malin Smith and sophomore Priscilla Trainor (400m).

**Midland Dow:** Senior Maija Rettell is one of the top middle-distance runners in D1. The Chargers also have a talented freshman distance runner in Anna Jensen along with sophomore Anastasia Tucker.

**East Lansing:** The Trojans, a top 10 team last year, are led by senior Kayla Gibbs (200m) and freshman Abbie Draheim (800m).

**Bay City Western:** A talented young

team, Western is led by junior Sydney Nesbitt (800m) and sophomores Jenna Picard (800m) and Ashlyn Nagel (distance).

**Frankenmuth:** Senior Hannah Loucks and freshman Delaney Knoll leads a strong core of distance runners while freshman Gabbie Michael is a solid newcomer in the 800m.



### DIVISION 2

**Lansing Catholic:** Second in the state in D3 last year, Catholic Central will be a challenger in Division 3 this year. The Cougars feature maybe the deepest and fastest group of distance runners in the state in senior Olivia Theis, junior Lauren Cleary and sophomores Rachel Reid and Jaden Theis. Senior Grace Frost is a middle-distance standout.

**Corunna:** The Cavaliers placed fourth in the state last year and brings back plenty of talent to make another run. The Cavs feature some of the premier distance runners in the state in juniors Ben Jacobs and Charlie Bruckman, senior Dakota Hundley and sophomore Evan Roka. Miles Petersen is one to watch in the 800 meters in D2 this season.

**Portland:** Senior Olivia Sandborn is one of the top hurdlers in D2 this spring. Junior Lesley Barker is a returning all-state long jumper.

**Belding:** The Black Knights have a deep and talented group of hurdlers in seniors Alyssa German, Sharlyn Ornelas and Laura Tuttlar.



# Gall, Theis Lead Way For Strong Contingent Of Runners In Area This Season

**Mason:** The Bulldogs have a talented crew of young runners led by junior Cecilia Stalzer (distance) and Lucy Petee (middle distance).

**DeWitt:** Senior Katie Vitou and junior Ashley Shippis head up a solid core of distance runners at DeWitt.

**Williamston:** Seniors Jessica Robach (long jump) and Meghan Douglass (shotput) head up a solid core of field athletes with senior Hannah Jones (400m) as standout on the track.

### DIVISION 3

**Pewamo-Westphalia:** The Pirates have plenty of versatility and depth with seniors Grace Trierweiler (pole vault) and Sidney Horak (long jump) and juniors Marisa Snyder (discus) and Alyssa Vandergriff (high jump). Fowler also returns all-state athletes Alyssa Vandergriff (100 hurdles) and Morgan Grace (800m).

**Shepherd:** Junior distance runner Amber Gall is the returning state champion in the 800 and earned all-state in the 1600. Junior Haley Hegenauer (3200) adds to the quality distance crew.

**Farwell:** The Eagles have the potential to pile up points with senior Lillian Albaugh in the throws and junior sprinter Jenna Odykirk who earned all-state honors in the 400m last season.

**Clare:** A top 10 team at the state meet last year, the Pioneers are paced by junior distance standout Lainey Veenkant and senior Ellie Johnson in the middle distances.

**St. Charles:** The Bulldogs return some talented young athletes in junior Mikayla Williams (long jump) and sophomore Erica Garcia (hurdles).

**Chesaning:** Middle distance is a strong point for Chesaning with senior Samantha Hill and sophomore Julia Syard leading the way.

**Bath:** Junior sprinter Chloe Spaulding is a returning all-state athlete in both the 100 and 200-meter dashes.

**Perry:** Sophomore Elizabeth Gramza is a versatile talent in both the field (pole vault) and the track (400m).



### DIVISION 4

**Fowler:** The Eagles placed second at last year's state meet and have the athletes to claim the top spot this year. A solid group of field athletes include seniors Ciera Weber (pole vault) and Sidney Horak (long jump) and juniors Marisa Snyder (discus) and Alyssa Vandergriff (high jump). Fowler also returns all-state athletes Alyssa Vandergriff (100 hurdles) and Morgan Grace (800m).

**Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart:** A top five squad last year, the Irish returned as one of the premier distance crews in the state in senior Bailey McConnell, juniors Cammie McConnell and Lauren MacDonald and sophomore Desiree McConnell. Versatile junior Scout Nelson (sprints, long jump) and senior Erikah Cudjoe in the throws offer more point potential.

**Potterville:** An outstanding group of pole vaulters in seniors Kyleigh Booden and Natalie Shafor and junior Morgan Myles lead the way for Potterville.

**Fulton-Middleton:** Junior Lyndsi Wolfe is a versatile field athlete (discus, high jump) while sophomore Rachel Craft is a promising pole vaulter.

**Breckenridge:** A pair of all-state athletes return in senior Chloe Brittain (800) and junior Brooklyn Federspiel (shot put) with sophomore Annie Laurenz returning in the hurdles.

**Portland St. Patrick:** Junior Leah Cook is one of the top long jumpers in the area while junior Annie Gunderman is a returning all-state athlete in the 400 meters.

**Carson City-Crystal:** The Eagles are paced by sophomore Sarah McCrackin in the high jump and Haleigh Hubbell in the discus.

Distance runners will be key to area teams success this spring. Amber Gall, (Shepherd), Olivia Theis (Lansing Catholic) and the McConnell sisters (Sacred Heart) are all long distance threats that can very likely win state titles in June. (File Photos)

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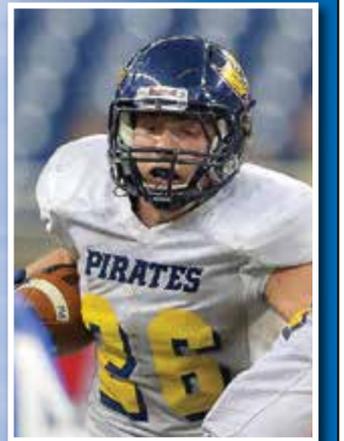
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# From 1 to 100 Sports Scene Breaks Down Top Stories Over Last Nine Years

The 100 issues put out by High School Sports Scene Magazine has given us the opportunity to cover some amazing stories and athletes. The following is a list of 100 of the top stories during the 100 issues of HSSS Magazine.

By David Cook - Sports Scene

- Ithaca football's 69-game winning streak and five consecutive state titles.
- Freeland's Tori Jankoska winning the 2013 Miss Basketball and going on to play at Michigan State and the WNBA.
- Jordyn Wieber winning a gold medal in the 2012 Summer Olympics.
- Lowell wrestling winning five straight state team wrestling titles.
- Lansing Sexton led by future NBA players Denzell Valentine and Bryn Forbes winning back-to-back Class B state titles.
- Pewamo-Westphalia running back Jared Smith setting a new state single-season rushing record with 3,250 yards.
- Taylor Massa of St. Johns winning four state titles and finishing his high school career with a perfect 221-0 record.
- Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart softball's Sara Hansen's state-record 91-game hitting streak from 2011-2014.
- Lansing Catholic Central quarterback Cooper Rush throwing for a state-record seven touchdowns in one half.
- Dustin Neyer's game-winning 3-pointer for Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart in the 2014 regional title game against Middleton-Fulton that finished as the No. 1 play on ESPN's SportCenter Top-10.
- Olivia Theis of Lansing Catholic became the fastest female runner in history recording a time of 16:52.1 during the 2017 MHSAA finals. The previous state record was set by Megan Goethals of Rochester at 16:54.8 in Div. 1.
- East Lansing's Klarissa Bell winning the 2010 Miss Basketball Award.
- East Lansing's Jaida Hampton winning the 2018 Miss Basketball award.
- Matt Costello of Bay City Western winning the 2012 Mr. Basketball award.
- Saginaw Swan Valley running back Alex Grace running for over 200 yards in eight consecutive games.
- Midland Dow boys tennis winning five straight D2 state titles.
- Rockford girls lacrosse winning five straight state titles.
- St. Johns wrestling winning four straight team wrestling titles.
- Adam Coon of Fowlerville winning four state titles and going on to college success at the University of Michigan.
- Emily Struble of Okemos winning four straight D2 singles individual state tennis titles.
- Kirsten Olling of Breckenridge winning four consecutive D4 individual cross-country state titles.
- Noah Jacobs of Corunna and his record-setting distance-running career.
- Midland Dow's Julian Guerra and Michael Szabo winning four straight D2 individual tennis singles titles.
- Grand Ledge gymnastics winning six straight open class state championships.
- Pewamo-Westphalia football winning back-to-back state titles.
- St. Johns boys golf winning back-to-back D2 state titles and sending veterans coach Paul Sternburgh out in his final year coaching with a state title in 2017.
- Elle Nichols of Okemos winning three consecutive D2 individual golf state championships.
- New Lothrop wrestling team wins three straight state titles.
- Bay City Western baseball winning back-to-back Division 1 state titles.
- Shepherd baseball winning back-to-back D3 state titles 2009 and 2010.
- Beal City baseball winning back-to-back D4 state titles in 2009 and 2010.
- Mt. Pleasant winning the 2014 Division 2 baseball state title.
- Bay City Western softball winning the 2014 D1 state title.
- Belding's Taylor Johnson finishing her career in 2010 with a state record 49 career home runs.
- Saginaw boys basketball winning the 2012 Class A state title.
- Rockford baseball wins first-ever baseball state title in 2011.
- Fulton-Middleton boys basketball reaching the 2011 Class D state finals.
- Lansing Catholic Central boys golf team winning three consecutive D3 state championships.
- DeWitt boys golf winning back-to-back D2 state titles in 2010-11.
- Ithaca's Kayle Belles earning first-team, all-state honors and leading the Yellowjackets to three straight league titles her first three years of high school basketball.
- Alma wrestling reaching the team state finals for the first time in school history.
- Alma freshman Demetrius Castillo winning an individual state title, the first by an Alma wrestler since 1993.
- Justin Alleman of Holt being named co-Mr. Baseball in 2012.
- Pewamo-Westphalia girls track winning three state titles between 2010 and 2015.
- Midland Dow girls tennis winning back-to-back D1 state titles.
- Kyle Tuttle of St. Charles winning three state D4 individual bowling state championships.
- Sara Daavettila of Williamston winning back-to-back D3 state tennis titles at No. 1 singles.
- Corunna's Meredith Norris wins 2016 Miss Volleyball award.
- Sanford-Meridian boys track winning state titles in 2014 and 2016.
- Lansing Waverly girls track winning back-to-back D2 state titles.
- East Lansing boys soccer winning back-to-back D2 state championships.
- Fowler girls track winning back-to-back D4 state titles in 2011 and 2012.
- The 2018 Saginaw Heritage girls basketball team winning the Class A state title.
- St. Johns girls track winning the 2015 D2 state title.
- Chippewa Hills girls track winning the 2014 D2 state title.
- Ithaca girls track winning the 2016 D3 state title.
- Lowell defeating Inkster to win the 2009 Division 2 state football title.
- Beal City, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart and Saginaw Nouvel winning state titles in 2009, 10 and 11 respectively.
- The 2010 East Lansing girls basketball team winning the Class A state title.
- DeWitt football reaching the 2013 D3 state title game.
- Portland football winning the 2012 D5 state title.
- Morley-Stanwood girls basketball winning the 2012 Class C state title.
- Morley-Stanwood winning the 2011 Class C volleyball state title.
- Saginaw Nouvel winning the 2014 Class C girls basketball title.
- Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart winning the 2014 Class D girls basketball title.
- Greenville's Landon Kemp smashing the girls state pole vault record by nearly a foot with a vault of 13-4.
- Mt. Pleasant football reaching the 2011 Division 3 state finals.
- Midland Dow's Ben Roeder winning the 2014 D1 individual golf state championship.
- Zach Rosendale of St. Johns winning the 2017 D2 individual golf title.
- Parker Jamieson of Lansing Christian winning the 2016 D4 individual state golf title.
- Alma girls bowling winning team state championships in 2016 and 2018.
- St. Louis and Ithaca girls winning D4 state bowling titles in 2015 and 16 respectively.
- Lansing Catholic Central girls golf winning three consecutive state championships.
- Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart girls winning three consecutive D4 cross country championships.
- Lansing Catholic Central's Keenan Rebera winning back-to-back individual cross-country titles.
- Beal City girls winning back-to-back cross-country titles.
- Breckenridge winning three consecutive competitive cheer state titles.
- Ryan Orr of Bath pitching three perfect games during the 2013 season.
- Kayla Belles of Ithaca pulling down 36 rebounds in one game, second-most in state history.
- Alma's Dylan Carl earning all-state honors three times and scoring over 1,000 points in his high school basketball career.
- Saginaw Valley Lutheran wins consecutive pump on state titles.
- Midland Dow's Becca Mills a three-time, Class A all-state basketball player.
- 2016 Ithaca girls basketball reaches state semifinals for the first-time in school history.
- Merrill baseball goes on thrilling post-season run and reached D4 state finals.
- Lansing Christian freshman Kristy Gomez scores 41 goals and helps lead Lansing Christian to D4 soccer finals.
- Bobby Leddy of Saginaw Heritage wins pair of D1 ski titles in 2012.
- Hemlock girls basketball reached 2011 Class B state finals.
- Amonte Young wins first-ever individual wrestling title in Clare wrestling history.
- Portland St. Patrick baseball wins first-ever baseball state title after falling in title game the year before.
- Durand wrestler Roger Wildmo wins three individual state titles and ends his career with 230-2 record.
- Lansing Eastern's LaDonotae Henton makes run at Mr. Basketball and goes on to college success at Providence.
- Ithaca's run of outstanding quarterbacks that included Alex Niznak, Travis Smith, Jake Smith and Joey Bentley.
- Swan Valley softball standout Lauren Addy with state-record 156 consecutive stolen bases.
- Breckenridge football goes 9-0 in a season for first time ever.
- St. Louis kicker Kaden Keon goes from high school standout to Central Michigan football team.
- Fulton-Middleton basketball's Tyler Walden breaks school record for career points.
- New Lothrop baseball team reaches 2016 D4 state finals.
- Laingsburg, Pewamo-Westphalia boys basketball teams reach Class C title game in successive years.
- Pewamo-Westphalia girls basketball reached Class C finals in 2017 and semifinals in 2018.
- Midland football's Steve Elmer goes from high school all-American to Notre Dame.



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## GIRLS SOFTBALL PREVIEW

# Softball Teams Feature Plenty Of Talented Hitters, Pitchers

### David Cook Sports Scene

#### DIVISION 1

**Mt. Pleasant:** Led by one of the premier high school softball players in the nation, Mt. Pleasant is a team to watch this season. Senior catcher Hannah Carson, a University of Michigan recruit, has hit over .550 in each of her previous three seasons and has yet to strike out in a high school game. Carson enters the season with 24 career home runs and 133 RBI. Junior standout Oaklie Mogg hit .505 last year with 41 RBI. The ace of the pitching staff, Mogg was 24-3 with a 1.65 ERA. Sophomore infielder Katie Sexton hit .451 with 33 RBI while junior infielder Lindsay Watters hit .372.

**Midland:** Saginaw Valley co-champs with Mt Pleasant last spring, the Chemicals are led by senior catcher Nicole Mueller who hit .423 with 37 RBI and senior outfielder Allison Gray who hit .408.

**Rockford:** District and conference co-champions last year, the Rams return pitchers Jenna Davis who won 15 games last season and Rachel Foster. Senior third baseman MyKayla Vallad hit .411 while junior catcher Lauren Lanphear slugged .422 with 44 RBI.

**Grand Lodge:** Plenty of veteran talent returns for the Comets who claimed a district title last year. Senior shortstop Lindsay Goodman is a returning all-state player. In the circle, junior Nina Bennett is one of the top pitchers in the area. Senior first baseman Olivia Dawson brings a productive bat to the lineup.

**Holt:** A trio of returning all-conference players will lead the way for Holt. Senior



Kalynn Bird will pitch and play the outfield while sophomore Kyla Bird with pitch and play second. Senior Rachel McDaniels can play shortstop, catcher or third base.

**Bay City Western:** The Warriors won 32 games last season and return power-hitting first baseman Tauri Hintz who hit .348 with 35 RBI.

#### DIVISION 2

**Saginaw Swan Valley:** One of the top teams in the state last spring, the Vikings reached the D2 state quarterfinals. Swan Valley was hit hard by graduation but returns a pair of multi-talented players to build around. Senior pitcher Callie Burgess went 23-1 with a 1.50 ERA last year. At the plate, Burgess hit .415 with 23 RBI. Fellow senior Kaylynn Gulliver had a 1.24 ERA when pitching and was a force at the plate with a .448 average and 48 RBI. Senior Ali Fuller is also back after hitting .449.

**Eaton Rapids:** Led by sophomore pitching ace Grace Lehto, the Greyhounds are one of the top young teams in the area. Sophomores Peyton Benjamin and Shelby Warner are all-conference players while seniors McKenzie Anderson and Aubrie Benward are versatile players in the field, at the plate and can also pitch.

**Owosso:** Senior pitcher Maegan Jodway, an all-state player last year, is one of the premier pitchers in the area. Senior outfielder Tabitha Elliott is a returning all-conference player while Grace Miller brings a solid bat to the lineup.

**DeWitt:** District champions last season, the Panthers return a trio of all-conference players. Kilee Way-Walton (1b) is an impact hitter with junior Camryn Bekker returning behind the plate and senior Mattie Leece in the outfield. Second baseman Kayle Bevier also returns.

**Alma:** The Panthers return junior pitcher Amanda Efav who struck out 128 batters with a 3.03 ERA. Plenty of senior veterans return along the infield including Kimmie Shunk (ss/of), Olivia Apple (2b/of), Aaliyah Wilson (1b/of), Morgan Johnson (3b) and Bailey Ward (2b). Junior standout Hailey Leister (p/3b/of) offers more pitching depth with junior Danielle Shaw back at catcher.

**Portland:** The Raiders are deep in pitching led by senior Abby Gryns along with Shelby Battley and Adrianna Novara. Senior Taylor Trierweiler returns at first base with standout

The Shepherd softball team made it all the way to the Division 3 quarterfinals a year ago. (File Photo)

sophomore Jade Walton back at second base.

**St. Johns:** The Redwings are led by all-conference pitcher Brittany VanHorn. Talented sophomores Madi Knauf and Alexa Jakus both earned all-conference honors as freshmen.

**Chippewa Hills:** The Warriors return junior infielder Sydney Wright from a team that won a district title last year. Wright hit .412 with 20 RBI.

#### DIVISION 3

**Shepherd:** After finishing fourth in the conference, the Blue Jays went on a memorable tournament run where they reached the state semifinals. The good news is that a solid core of players returns from that squad led by senior pitcher Haley Peska. Peska has a 2.33 ERA last year and threw a no-hitter in the state quarterfinals. Senior catcher Adri Nelson hit .456 with 30 RBI last year while senior first baseman Ashleigh Bryant hit .504 with 53 RBI. Senior shortstop Kianna Andrews hit .326.

**Beaverton:** The Beavers turned in a 38-4 record last year and reached the regional finals. Senior pitcher Faith Howe returns after going 34-4 with a 0.63 ERA. Howe also hit .387 with 39 RBI. Senior catcher Ann Marie Hicks hit .388 with 47 RBI and senior shortstop Maddy Krauss hit .385 with 34 RBI.

**St. Louis:** The Sharks have a solid crew of hitters led by junior Olivia Anderson who hit .368 with 36 stolen bases last year and junior Aynslee Koutz who hit .438 with a school-record 12 home runs.

**Ithaca:** Plenty of young talent is on the roster led by sophomore Sam Vermeesch who hit .507 and had a 1.40 ERA in the circle. Sophomore outfielder Mackelle Thompson hit .531 with junior Bailey Miniard a solid hitter at third base.

**Clare:** Senior catcher Cami Miller returns after hitting .495 with two home runs and 27 RBI. Senior Peyton Hubbel hit .406 with 21 RBI.

**Farwell:** Grace Saupe is a returning all-state player who hit .400 with 22 RBI and had a 2.00 ERA as a pitcher. Junior infielder Harley Crawford hit .435 with 30 RBI.

#### DIVISION 4

**Coleman:** Several key players return from a team that won 35 games last season and reached the state semifinals. Senior Faith Barden (p/1b) went 16-3 with a 1.41 ERA and hit .433 with 50 RBI. Junior Jaden Berthume (3b/p) hit .518 with 53 RBI and had a 1.49 ERA as a pitcher. Junior outfielder Makailyn



Swan Valley's Callie Burgess brings the heat during a game last season. Burgess returns for her senior season this year. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Monson hit .444 with 25 stolen bases.

**Beal City:** The Aggies won 26 games and reached the regional finals last spring. Sophomore slugger Sydney Upton hit .514 with 45 RBI while junior infielder Megan Zeien hit .368. Junior pitcher Elizabeth returns and added 25 RBI last year.

**Fowler:** Senior outfielder Kennedy Koenigsnecht returns after earning all-state honors last year. Senior outfielder Jolie Wieber and junior catcher Maddie Veale also return.

**Portland St. Patrick:** A senior core led by Katie Coyne (1b/3b), Chloe Cross (c/of) and Alaina Schrauben (ss) will have St. Patrick in the thick of the chase for the CMAC title.

**Fulton-Middleton:** Seniors Abby Case (1b) and Emma Wiser (of/inf) return to pace the Pirates. Sophomores Morgan Warne (of/c) and Mia Canfield (3b) and junior Brittany Barrus (ss) also return.

**Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart:** Senior outfielder Katie Goenner returns after hitting .476. Sophomore pitcher Sara Peltier heads up the pitching staff.

**Vestaburg:** Senior catcher Kailee McGarvey leads the way after hitting .486 last year.

**Breckenridge:** Senior infielder Haley Willman is a returning all-state player who hit .378 last year.

# Mt. Pleasant's Hannah Carson In A League All Her Own

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Mount Pleasant's Hannah Carson is considered to be a strong Miss Softball candidate this season, and for good reason.

The Oiler senior is in her fourth varsity season and has had some amazing highlights.

"Last year we won the conference, and we haven't done that since 2010 in our softball history," Carson said. "My batting

Mt. Pleasant's Hannah Carson is one of the top returning softball seniors in Michigan this season. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

average had gone up almost every year. I'm focused on my batting average and getting on base. I've become better at knowing the game better each year. I'm excited with that."

Her best batting average has been .560. The key behind a glittering batting average has been "on the mental part. You have to be confident," Carson said. "It involved mechanics but it's mostly about the mental part and your approach (at the plate)."

Carson is confident she can improve her average by 70 points this season.

# Swan Valley Pitchers Bring The Heat

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Swan Valley senior softball pitchers Callie Burgess and Kalynn Gulliver both are committed to playing at Northwood University next year.

But first, the two right-handed pitchers want to help Swan Valley make another long ride into the state tournament this spring.

They've both been four-year varsity players. Coach Tom Kennelly's team has lost in the state quarterfinals the past two seasons and have built an 80-5 record, led by Burgess and Gulliver.



Kalynn Gulliver (Left) and Callie Burgess (Right) are back this season to lead the Swan Valley pitching staff. Both Gulliver and Burgess are seniors. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)

"Callie has been all-state both years," Kennelly said. "Kalynn has been honorable mention. She hits pretty well too. Callie has been the No. 1 hitter. They're very different. Callie is strong, but very small. Kalynn is big, tough."

Kennelly has observed the two girls have different strengths as pitchers.

"Callie has a variety of pitches," Kennelly said. "She has gotten better every year. She throws a rise ball, change and a curve. She has more pitches than Kalynn, who more or less has a pretty hard drop ball and changeup. Kalynn tries to get hitters to get into ground balls. Callie is more apt to strike you out, throwing the rise ball."

# Beaverton Pitcher Set For Banner Softball Season

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Beaverton softball coach Aaron Wentworth can't say enough about his standout pitcher Faith Howe. It's her fourth varsity season.

Howe had a 34-4 pitching record last year and was close to 400 strikeouts. Her ERA has been below 1.00.

It was her best year. She earned first-team all-state honors as a junior and honorable mention acclaim as a sophomore.

"She just gets better every year," Wentworth said. "I'm hoping this is her

best year yet. She's strong and works all year on her pitching."

Howe started softball when she was 5 years old.

"My mom encouraged me to do it but didn't force it on me," Howe recalled. "It's something I want to do. My friends were doing it too."

She started pitching when she was 9.

"Everyone's trying it at that age and the team needed a pitcher," Howe said. "My mother was a pitcher when she played and my sister pitched before me."

Highlights for Howe included her team winning a conference championship in

Gulliver had seven home runs last season and plays first base when she doesn't pitch.

"Callie can play just about any position besides catch when she doesn't pitch," Kennelly said.

The decision on who pitches usually depends on the opponent.

"Callie is usually No. 1 and Kalynn No. 2," Kennelly said.

Burgess has enjoyed plenty of highlights in her high school career at Swan Valley.

"Throughout the years, I've gotten help to improve my batting," she said, adding that as a pitcher, "I can read the batter really well."

Burgess and Gulliver are hoping to post



a memorable final high school season. But they admit they're intrigued with the idea of going to Northwood together."

"We're really excited," Burgess said.

Gulliver had seriously considered going to Ferris, but being able to be closer to home and other factors contributed to her decision to pick Northwood.

Right now the focus is on her spring high school season.

Gulliver is confident her pitching performances can be even better this year.

"My batting average, I'd like it to be higher than it has been," she said.

her sophomore season. "Last year, we were district champs and beat the previous school record of wins of 38."

Howe has already made her collegiate commitment to NCAA Division II Lincoln Memorial in Tennessee.

"She had gone down there a few times," Wentworth said. "She had family down here and had interest in pitching in warmer weather."

"I've been playing for travel teams in North Carolina on and off," Howe said. "One of my coaches said 'hey check his place out.' The coach was great."

Howe has also been a .350 to .400 hitter.

"She's seen a lot of softball and plays a ton of games," Wentworth said. "She plays all summer and plays on some really good travel teams. You see that constant good pitching and hitting, and you'll be good at both."

Howe has also pitched a few no-hit

games during her career. She also plays hockey in the Midland area but it's been her softball career that's taking her places.

Wentworth feels that with Howe leading the way, his team can go far.

"I hope so," he said. "We have a lot of returning kids."

"Everyone has a long shot for a state title by the end of the season," Howe said. "Right now, we're taking it game by game. We'll start trying for a conference title, then district and go from there."

As a pitcher, "I don't get rattled very easily," Howe said. "My curve ball is my go-to (pitch). I've been working on my changeup and rise ball."

When it comes to being a better hitter, "to me, it's a focus thing," she said. "If a pitcher is not quite throwing her hardest, I have a hard time having to wait and hold back on the pitch."

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Freeland looks to return to the Division 3 championship game this season. The Falcons lost to Flint Powers a year ago in the title game. (Submitted Photo)

## Despite Losing Some Talent Freeland Soccer Still Team To Beat In TVC

**John Raffel  
Sports Scene**

Freeland soccer coach Lauren Kemerer is confident she has another strong team on her hands this season.

If that's the case, Freeland opponents have good reason to be concerned.

The Falcons are coming off a season that ended at 23-2 after losing 4-0 in the championship game to Flint Powers Catholic.

It's Kemerer's fifth year as coach.

"We had some goals," Kemerer said of the 2017 season. "We just weren't ready for the next step. I definitely think this year will be different. Last year, we met our goals but didn't set goals further after we met them."

The Falcons lost two top

notch players who are now in college. This includes Michelle Herring who is now at Michigan State and Jessica Piper at Northwood. Piper blew out her ACL in the state semifinal round.

"We lost some talent last year but we have a lot of young talent this year," Kemerer said.

The returning talent includes senior forward Mackenzie Stroebel.

"She's an absolute powerhouse on the field," Kemerer said. "She's definitely one to look out for. She has her eye on the prize. She's determined and focused, a very good player."

Another key performer is junior forward Autumn Kloha.

"She never stops," Kemerer

said. "She has a good work ethic. She's always going. She's nonstop and is aggressive. She's a really good player."

Hannah Doran is a center midfielder.

"She's a very smart player," Kemerer said. "She's very aggressive. In that position you have to be because you're controlling the field."

Freeland has a talented goalie with Alexa Walker.

"She's become very vocal on the field," Kemerer said. "All the offseason training she's got going has built her strength and her confidence. It's really come together the last couple of years."

It could be another special year for Freeland.

"We have a lot of talent this year; it's going to be great," Kemerer said. "I'm super

excited."

The goals have been set high, again.

"We're working for another good year, that's for sure," Kemerer said.

As always, the schedule poses some various challenges.

"During the season, I know we're playing some bigger schools that aren't necessarily in our conference," she said. "Midland High usually has good teams. I suspect they'll be good. In the postseason, we'll be going west again. Hudsonville Unity Christian is always a good challenge. They have a lot of talent as well. My goal is to beat them again this year. That's what my girls are working toward. Getting that next step and hitting state finals again, it will take hard work and dedication."

Okemos: The Chiefs have a team stocked with talent led by senior all-state forward Sara Lee and senior midfielder Lauren Southworth.

Okemos is solid on defense led by senior Veronica Gawarecki and sophomore Julia Mocny. Juniors Sophie Alegi (mf) and Zoey Williams (fw) also return along with sophomores Anya Dhar (mf) and Jackie Reilly (mf).

Rockford: Coming off the first league title program history, Rockford is building on that success



Spencer Schwellenbach is looking for a big senior season for the Heritage baseball team this season. Schwellenbach will play his college baseball at the University of Nebraska. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

## Heritage Baseball Star Excited By His Future At Nebraska

**John Raffel  
Sports Scene**

Spencer Schwellenbach is focusing on his senior season for Saginaw Heritage's baseball team.

But after he graduates, the Saginaw Heritage shortstop-pitcher will concentrate on a promising collegiate career at Nebraska, although he may be drafted in June by Major League Baseball organization.

The Hawks senior is in varsity his fourth season. As a freshman, he was second-team all-conference. He earned first-team all-conference and second-team all-state honors as a sophomore. As a junior he was first team all-conference and all-state.

Schwellenbach batted .481 last season. As a pitcher, he was 6-3 with a 0.65 ERA. He had a no-hitter during the 2017 season.

Schwellenbach's hitting excellence has hardly been a secret.

"I go out to it every day," he said. "With my dad, after practice, we'll go up to the Little League field and hit. We're always hitting. Hitting every day is the key to seeing the ball and being able to take it both ways so when the game comes, you'll be able to see well and hit it."

Schwellenbach's goal is to hit .more than .500 this season.

"The key is just swing at good pitches, I guess, and waiting for my pitch and not swinging at the first pitch like I did sometimes last year," Schwellenbach said.

He has some lofty goals for his potential on the mound.

"I hope to not give up a run this season," he said. "Obviously, that's going to be tough. Last year, I was touching 95 with the

fastball. I'm trying to get above that so it will be more powerful. I want to work my off-speed pretty well and keep them off

stride."

Schwellenbach is at shortstop when he's not pitching.

"I have a good glove," he said. "Last year, I only had three errors. I have good range, too."

Schwellenbach decided to go with Nebraska after going to the campus as a sophomore.

"I went to a couple of practices of the baseball team and the coaches were helpful and let me come down and watch," he said. "It felt like home to me. I could see myself going there. That summer, they came to every single game even like the mercy rule games. My relationship with the coaches helped me a lot to decide to go there. They won the Big Ten last year.

"It was Michigan State, Michigan and Nebraska at first. In the

summer of my sophomore year, I started to pitch pretty well. (Other schools) started to contact me. But I had it in my mind I wanted to go to Nebraska. I told the others I wasn't interested."

Schwellenbach is excited over his senior season prospects.

"We could be really good, honestly," he said; "We lost a lot of seniors. But all the guys there want to be there and want to play. A lot of guys are fighting for positions. Last year we lost in the quarterfinals so everyone wants to get back and try to win a state championship."

Bob Andrezejewski is Heritage's baseball coach, and will be with Schwellenbach for their fourth season together.

"No. 1, it's been his determination to be a very good baseball player," Andrezejewski said, "whether it's as pitcher or infielder, he puts in a lot of time. He's very determined to be successful on completing. It's what he puts into his work ethic."

## GIRLS SOCCER PREVIEW

**Butch Harmon  
Sports Scene**

Last spring was a successful one for area soccer teams. A pair of area teams, Flint Powers Catholic (Division 3) and Lansing Christian (Division 4) won state championships and Freeland reached the state finals. This season the area again boasts a wealth of solid teams.

### DIVISION 1

**Midland:** District champions last year, the Chemics will be solid against this spring. Senior defender Carlee Davis is a returning all-state player that will anchor the defense. Juniors Jorgia Nye and Sami VanSumeren head up the offense.

**Okemos:** The Chiefs have a team stocked with talent led by senior all-state forward Sara Lee and senior midfielder Lauren Southworth. Okemos is solid on defense led by senior Veronica Gawarecki and sophomore Julia Mocny. Juniors Sophie Alegi (mf) and Zoey Williams (fw) also return along with sophomores Anya Dhar (mf) and Jackie Reilly (mf).

**Rockford:** Coming off the first league title program history, Rockford is building on that success



behind senior goalkeeper Keeli Kornak-Kotarba who posted 12 shutouts last year. Senior midfielder Raegan Radz is an all-district player and sophomore Regan Dalton scored 11 goals as a freshman.

**Grand Ledge:** Standout junior Cassidy Pettinger returns to pace the offense. Seniors Michaela Donahue, Hannah deSilva and Ashley Siwek bring plenty of experience to what should be a solid Grand Ledge squad.

### DIVISION 2

**DeWitt:** District champions last year, the Panthers were hit hard by graduation. That said, DeWitt typically has plenty of talent, and that is no different this year. Junior forward Lily Stephan is a returning all-conference player. Senior Taylor Bishop (fw/mf) and sophomore forward Abigail Dawes are two more talented returnees.

**Lowell:** Led by senior midfielder Darby Dean, the Red Arrows are one of the stronger Division 2 teams. Junior forward Regan Coxon is a returning all-state player, as is sophomore Khloe Hayes who is coming off a big freshman year.

**Mason:** Senior forwards Kate McElhone and Jenna Chappell provide the Bulldogs with a solid scoring punch. Senior Jane Barkholz returns to anchor the midfield with senior Keara Bullen back to head up the defense.

**Haslett:** Defense is the calling card for Haslett this year. The Vikings return all-conference goalkeeper Ali Swackhammer and all-conference defender Lily Campbell. Seniors Catherine Surian and Anna Sharkey return at outside back and senior Cami Harp is back in the midfield.

**Fenton:** The Tigers are one of the top teams in the Flint Metro League. Senior midfielder Margaret

Berry earned second-team, all-state honors. Junior midfielder Lauren Murphy returns to midfield after earning honorable-mention, all-conference honors.

## Girls Soccer Teams Set To Follow Up On Last Year's Success



and junior Grace Miller (fw). **Big Rapids:** The Cardinals claimed a district title last year. Senior midfielder Kaitlyn Ray returns to lead the way this season.

### DIVISION 3

**Flint Powers:** The returning D3 state champions are led by a dynamic one-two offensive punch. Junior forward Rachel Rasins earned first-team, all-state honors last season as she scored 31 goals and added 14 assists. Senior forward Sophie Bubnar, a second-team, all-state pick, added 15 goals and 20 assists.

**Freeland:** The Falcons reached the D3 state title game and finished the season with a 22-2 record. Plenty of talent returns this year led by senior Mackenzie Stroebel, a first-team, all-state player who totaled 40 goals last year. Junior forward Autumn Kloha added 32 goals and senior goalkeeper Alexa Walker notched 14 shutouts. Talented midfielders Kayla Radaz and Emerson Lynch also return.

**Williamston:** Plenty of talent returns for a Williamston team that won a district title last year. Junior forward Maisie Fenech earned first-team, all-state honors while senior midfielder Alexis Russell was second-team. Senior forward Isabelle Herb and sophomore midfielder Abigail Tuggle are two more key returnees.

**Alma:** The Panthers return a trio of players who earned all-state honors last year. Senior midfielder Sydney Hanson earned second-team, all-state honors. Seniors Tia Everdeen (fw) and Abby Schmieder (gk) both earned honorable-mention, all-state honors.

**Howard City Tri-County:** Winners of a district title last year, Tri-County is led by a pair of returning honorable-mention, all-state players in senior Taylor Prins (mf)

earned all-state honors last year.

**Laingsburg:** The Wolfpack have a solid squad anchored by junior defender Sophie Wilsey who earned all-state honors. Senior defender Cassy Ballard adds more experience on defense.

**Bath:** The Bees are paced this year by junior Tait Hosford, a returning all-state performer.

**Saginaw Valley Lutheran:** Senior midfielder Lizzie Trent is a returning all-state player that leads the way this year.

**Saginaw Nouvel:** Winners of a district title last year, Nouvel is led by junior Katherine Felton who



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## BOYS TRACK PREVIEW

# Boys Track And Field Athletes Enter Season In Top Shape

Butch Harmon  
Sports Scene

### DIVISION 1

**Rockford:** The Rams placed second in the state last season and return plenty of talent again this year. Senior Cole Johnson is one of the premier distance runners in the state and is joined by Dayton Brown. Junior Noah Stallworth is a standout in the sprints. In the field events, Gavin McIntyre is among the best in the state in the discus and senior Chase Novak is a returning all-state athlete in the long jump. The 4x100 relay team of Eli Haddad, Kevin Isley, Novak and Stallworth is one of the best in the state.

**Okemos:** Senior Paul McKinley is one of the top distance runners in the state. Senior Charles Arrington anchors the field events in the shot put. Senior Saano Murembya has already gone under 2:00 in the 800-meters this season.

**Lansing Waverly:** After placing third in Division 2 last year, Waverly is in D1 this season. The Warriors are led by returning all-state athletes Kenny Brewer in the long jump and Keshawn Harris in the hurdles.

**East Lansing:** The Trojans placed in the top ten at last year's state meet and are led by senior distance standout Evan Meyer.

**Grand Ledge:** The Comets are solid in the field events led by sophomore all-state long jumper Kavion Autrey and senior Hawke Harrington in shot put. Junior Stanley Elder is a solid distance runner.

**Mt. Pleasant:** Senior Gage Shellenbarger is a standout in both the 110 and 300 hurdles with senior Andrew Harrast a standout in the distance events.

**Greenville:** The Yellowjackets are paced by one of the best hurdlers in the state in Jake Rasmussen. Junior Ryan Olsen is also a standout hurdler.

### DIVISION 2

**Corunna:** The Cavaliers placed fourth in the state last year and brings back plenty of talent to make another run. The Cavs feature some of the premier distance runners in the state in juniors Ben Jacobs and Charlie Bruckman, senior Dakota Hundley and sophomore Evan Roka. Miles Petersen is one to watch in the 800 while senior Tyler Brooks is a standout in the shot put.

**St. Johns:** The Redwings had one of the top 4x400 relay teams in the state last year led by Dillan Haviland, Gabe McClain and Travis Feldpausch. Joey Fox (800m) and distance runners Trevor Luznak and freshman Troy Cramer (3200) also look strong. Feldpausch is also a standout in the high jump.

**Lansing Catholic:** A top-ten team in D3 last year, the Cougars are in D2 this year. Sophomore distance runner Eli Meder is one of the top in the state. Senior Ryan Schroeder (800m) is a standout mid-distance who teamed up with fellow seniors Noah Alvarado and Ryan Ruitter as part of the state champion 4x400 relay team last year.

**Cedar Springs:** Senior Brandon Sawade is a standout in the pole vault while freshman Corey Bowers is one of the top young distance runners in the area.

**Essexville-Garber:** The Dukes feature senior Josiah Morse who placed second at the state in the 800

meters last year.

**Charlotte:** The Orioles return one of the top long jumpers in D2 in senior Jordan Butler who placed third at last year's state meet.

**Portland:** Senior sprinter/long jumper Brock Gross is off to a strong start this year.

### DIVISION 3

**Chesaning:** The defending D3 state champions have plenty to build around this season. Senior Sam Forsythe is the defending state champ in the long jump while senior Brandon Keys placed sixth in the long jump. Junior sprinter Brady Fraiser (200/400m) will also be a solid source of points.

**Clare:** The Pioneers are solid in the throws with seniors Zac Stickler Noah Nivison in the discus and shot put. Senior Xavier Martin is one to watch in the 200m and junior David Good is a distance standout.

**Ithaca:** Plenty of talent returns at Ithaca. The Yellowjackets are solid in the throws with juniors Alex VandeWeghe (shot/discus) and Baylee Chaffin (shot). Jacob Allen is a standout hurdler while junior Ransom Allen and Landon Strong head up the distance crew.

**Morley-Stanwood:** The Mohawks are led by sophomore distance standout Aiden McLaughlin, a returning all-state athlete. Senior Kyle Robinette heads up the mid-distance crew.

**Shepherd:** Junior distance standout Seth Schafer leads the way for the Blue Jays.

**Perry:** Sophomore distance runner Ryan O'Neill is primed for a big year

for the Ramblers.

### DIVISION 4

**Potterville:** A top-ten team last year, Potterville boasts plenty of talent this year. Zane Stanton took third in the pole vault last year and fifth in the 300 hurdles. Senior Dylan McPhee is a standout in the shot put. Freshman Zach Wright is a standout distance and senior Ross Schmiedeknecht is one to watch in the 800m.

**Fulton-Middleton:** A top 10 team at state last year, the Pirates have solid depth. Junior Braydan Biddinger earned all-state in the high jump and 110 hurdles. Seniors Jon Baker, Tristan Johnston, junior Adam Duflo and freshman Collin Stahl were part of all-state 4x100 and 4x200 relay teams. Sophomore Nate Alwood returns in the 400.

**Carson City-Crystal:** The Eagles are

led by senior Daniel Smith who is one of the best in the state in the shot put.

**Vestaburg:** Seniors Noah Johnston (110 hurdles) and Justin Stehouwer (pole vault) lead the way for the Wolverines.

**Portland St. Patrick:** Sophomore Ashton Walker returns after earning all-state honors in both the 1600 and 3200-meter runs.

**Merrill:** Senior sprinter Joe Felker leads the way for the Vandals where he is a standout in the 400-meter dash.



Chesaning and Lansing Waverly are both looking to continue their momentum from a year ago that saw both teams celebrate state championships.

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# Sparrow Carson Hospital Presents BOYS GOLF PREVIEW

## BOYS GOLF PREVIEW

# Boys Golf Teams Prepare To Hit Links In A Big Way This Season

Butch Harmon  
Sports Scene

### DIVISION 1

**Rockford:** After placing fifth in the state last season, the Rams have a team capable of another top 10 finish. Junior Kevin Healy is a returning all-state golfer. Healy is joined by senior Daniel Froumis who placed in the top 10 at last year's regional and sophomore Nathan Barton.

**Midland:** The Chemics have one of the top individuals in the area in senior Drew Gandy. An all-state selection, Gandy also placed second at the regional last year.

**Saginaw Heritage:** The Hawks return a solid nucleus of golfers that helped the team place fifth at the regional. Junior standout Arnav Sharma is the returning regional champion while senior Eathan McKenzie placed in the top five at the regional. Junior Matt Moretuzzo also returns.

**Grand Ledge:** The Comets look to contend in the CAAC Blue this year behind seniors Evan Marchlewicz and Connor Merryfield.

**Okemos:** The Chiefs will be in the mix in the CAAC Blue led by a veteran team that returns seniors

Zach Fraser, Patrick Gordon and Avi Rajendra-Nicolucci,

### DIVISION 2

**St. Johns:** The Redwings turned in a memorable year last golf season capped by winning the Division 2 state championship. Rebuilding is in the cards this season as St. Johns was hit hard by graduation. Senior Zeke Ely is the lone veteran starter returning from last year's squad.

**DeWitt:** The Panthers are poised to make a run at the CAAC Red crown this season. Junior Charlie DeLong is a returning all-state golfer while senior Joey Croley earned honorable-mention, all-state honors. Seniors Anthony Joseph and Nick Hegerfeld also return.

**Haslett:** With plenty of talent returning, the Vikings will make things interesting in the CAAC Red. Senior Ben VanGorder earned honorable-mention, all-state honors last year while junior Michael Corder tied VanGorder for seventh place at last year's regional. Senior Sam Zayko and junior Dennis Whitaker also return.

**Mason:** Led by junior Alex Jordan, who earned honorable-mention, all-state honors last year, the Bulldogs have a promising squad this year. Juniors Brett MacNeil and Alex Ferguson and sophomore Tanner Miller bring more experience to the course.

**Flint Powers:** The Chargers placed second in the state last year and return senior Zack Hopkins, an all-state golfer last year. Sophomore Ty Vanitvelt placed in the top 10 at the regional while

sophomore Grant Tucker placed in the top 20.

**Williamston:** With seniors Luke Schafer and Owen Rokita returning along with junior Matthew Krueger, the Hornets look to be improved this year.

**Mt. Pleasant:** The Oilers recorded a top-10 finish at last year's regional. This year's squad is paced by juniors Christian Elmore-Turner, who placed in the top 20 at regional, and Lucas Lapoe.

**Alma:** Rebuilding is in store at Alma this year. Senior Jaden Jerome gives the Panthers a veteran anchor to build around.

### DIVISION 3

**Big Rapids:** After taking second at last year's state meet, the Class C Cardinals have bigger goals this year. Junior standout Pierce Morrissey was named to the all-state Super Team last year and is a returning regional champion.

**Lansing Catholic Central:** The Cougars finished sixth at last year's state meet and have the talent to place higher this year. Senior Ethan O'Farrell earned all-state honors last year and returns with junior Aaron Haamel, who placed in the top 10 at the regional.

**Portland:** Sophomore standout Zach Pier returns after earning first-team, all-state honors last year. Senior Devin Miller and junior Ethan Getchell are two more starters back for a promising squad.

**Shepherd:** The Blue Jays won a regional championship last spring. A core of seniors that includes Scott Sura, Logan Yuncker and Kyle Bendele has Shepherd looking for a return trip to the state meet this season.

**Laingsburg:** The Wolfpack placed

fifth at the regional last year. With seniors Nick LaFontsee and Josh Righter back along with sophomore Aiden Soeltner Laingsburg is looking to make a run at the state meet this year.

**Corunna:** The Cavaliers return a veteran nucleus from a squad that placed sixth at last year's regional. Seniors Javen Howes and Hunter Belous and junior Jon Cornell-Duranleau provide plenty of experience.

**Chesaning:** Senior Eddie Murphy earned first-team, all-state honors last year. Murphy will again be one of the top individuals in the area this season.

**St. Charles:** Seniors Matt Benson and Dominic Franzel return for a St. Charles squad that qualified for the state meet last year.

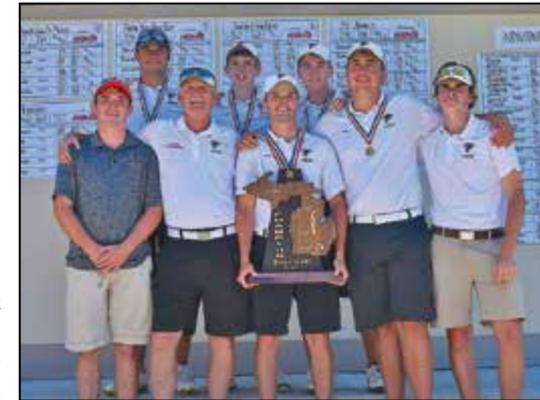
### DIVISION 4

**Lansing Christian:** The Pilgrims placed fourth at last year's state meet and have an outstanding trio of seniors leading the way this year. Parker Jamieson is a returning all-state golfer. Andrew Prieskorn placed in the top 10 at the regional and returns along with Dawson Block.

**Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart:** A solid veteran core has Sacred Heart optimistic about the season. Senior Greg Jones, juniors Evan Chomchai and Patrick Ervin and sophomore Austin Lobsing bring plenty of experience to the links.

**Fowler:** Senior Eric Kohagen leads the way after placing in the top 10 at the regional last year. Senior Carter Bertram also returns for the Eagles who placed fifth as a team at the regional.

**Fulton-Middleton:** The Pirates placed sixth at last year's regional. Senior Matt Craft and junior Jayden Coblentz return to lead this year's squad.



St. Johns is looking for its third straight Division 3 golf title in 2018. Left: Lansing Christian's Parker Jamieson is one of the top returning golfers this season. Jamieson won the state title as sophomore. (File Photos)

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**LACROSSE  
PREVIEW**

**Rockford Girls, Boys Lacrosse  
Teams Among Best In State**

**David Cook  
Sports Scene**

**GIRLS DIVISION 1**

**Rockford:** One of the premier girls lacrosse teams in the Midwest, Rockford won its fifth straight state title last spring with a 17-7 win against Birmingham United. Just three seniors are gone from last year's team making the experienced and talent-laden Rams a big favorite to win the title again. Junior standout Karrington VanderMolen returns after totaling 74 goals last year while senior Brooklyn Neumen tallied 64 goals and 43 assists. Senior McKenzie VanderMolen added 47 goals and 29 assists while sophomore Sydney Zimmerman scored 53 goals with 27 assists. Senior Margaret Hammer added 28 goals while junior Isabelle Holmes scored 24 goals with 42 assists.

**Midland:** Senior attack Lexa Wild returns to pace the offense after earning honorable-mention, all-state honors last year. Ella Lane returns in goal with fellow senior Ashley Neuenfeldt returning at midfield.

**GIRLS DIVISION 2**

**Okemos:** The Chiefs return a solid group of seniors from a team that went 17-5-1 last season before falling in the state semifinals to eventual state champion Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook-Kingswood. Winners of the last 10 CAAC league titles, Okemos looks strong again this season as evident by a strong effort against returning D2 state finalist East Grand Rapids in early-season action. Seniors Jensen Adair, Grace Bielby, Melaina Grewal, Alyssa Karber and Mallory Keenoy lead the way for a team with lofty goals this season.

Grewal and Keenoy both earned first-team, all-state honors last season while Bielby earned second-team, all-state honors and Karber earned honorable-mention, all-state honors.

**DeWitt:** DeWitt reached the regional finals last year before falling to Okemos. A solid core of players return from that squad led by juniors Delaney Kirinovic and Ashley Setter who both earned honorable-mention, all-state honors. Juniors Grace Brown, and Natalie Yabs both earned honorable-mention, all-conference honors.

**Haslett-Williamston:** The Haslett-Williamston squad is led by talented senior Reagen Russell. A second-team, all-state pick, Russell will play college soccer at Kent State. Senior Chloe Alverson is a skilled attack/mid that will also make an impact along with junior Emily Kurdziel.

**Grand Ledge:** The Comets are paced this season by senior Danyelle Hardy. A second-team, all-state selection, Hardy is headed to Notre Dame College for her college soccer.

**BOYS DIVISION 1**

**Rockford:** The Rams are led by senior Ian Rodriguez, a returning all-state midfielder who scored 30 goals with 19 assists last year. Outstanding in face-offs, senior Cole Scheffler also earned all-state honors last year for the Rams who captured a regional title last year and turned back Brighton in the state quarterfinals. The season ended in the semifinals with an 8-6 loss to eventual state champion Birmingham Brother Rice.

The Rockford girls lacrosse team will look to make it six straight Division 1 titles if this year's team is capable of securing the title in 2018. (Submitted Photos)

**Midland:** Midland won a fifth-straight Saginaw Valley League lacrosse title last spring and reached the regional finals where it dropped an 11-10 decision to Hartland. Senior attacker Garrett Brillhart and junior attacker Ryan Sisitki lead the offense along with junior mid Elliot Moore and senior Jared Zahn. Senior goalie Jacob Pokriefka returns in goal after earning third-team, all-state honors last year.

**BOYS DIVISION 2**

**Okemos:** The Chiefs claimed a regional title last year before falling to eventual D2 state champion East Grand Rapids last season. Nolan Jamieson, Mitchell Chermak, Damien Hudson and Nick Lim are among the players that will contribute on offense. Senior Tyler Lim also returns along with Sebastian Carrier who is outstanding on face-offs.

**Haslett-Williamston:** After opening the season with a loss to Rockford this season, the team reeled off three straight wins and is poised for a solid season.



Sophomore attacker Griffin Fenech and junior mid Samuel Faber are among the players to watch for a team that dropped an 11-8 decision to Okemos in last year's regional finals. Juniors Evan Field (long stick), Kaleb Guarnaccia (attack) and Tate Virkus (attack) will also make an impact.

**DeWitt:** The Panthers have the makings of a solid defense led by third-team, all-state selection Keltin Langdon. Seniors Alan Smith and Dannie Ward are a pair of heady players that bring more experience to the squad.



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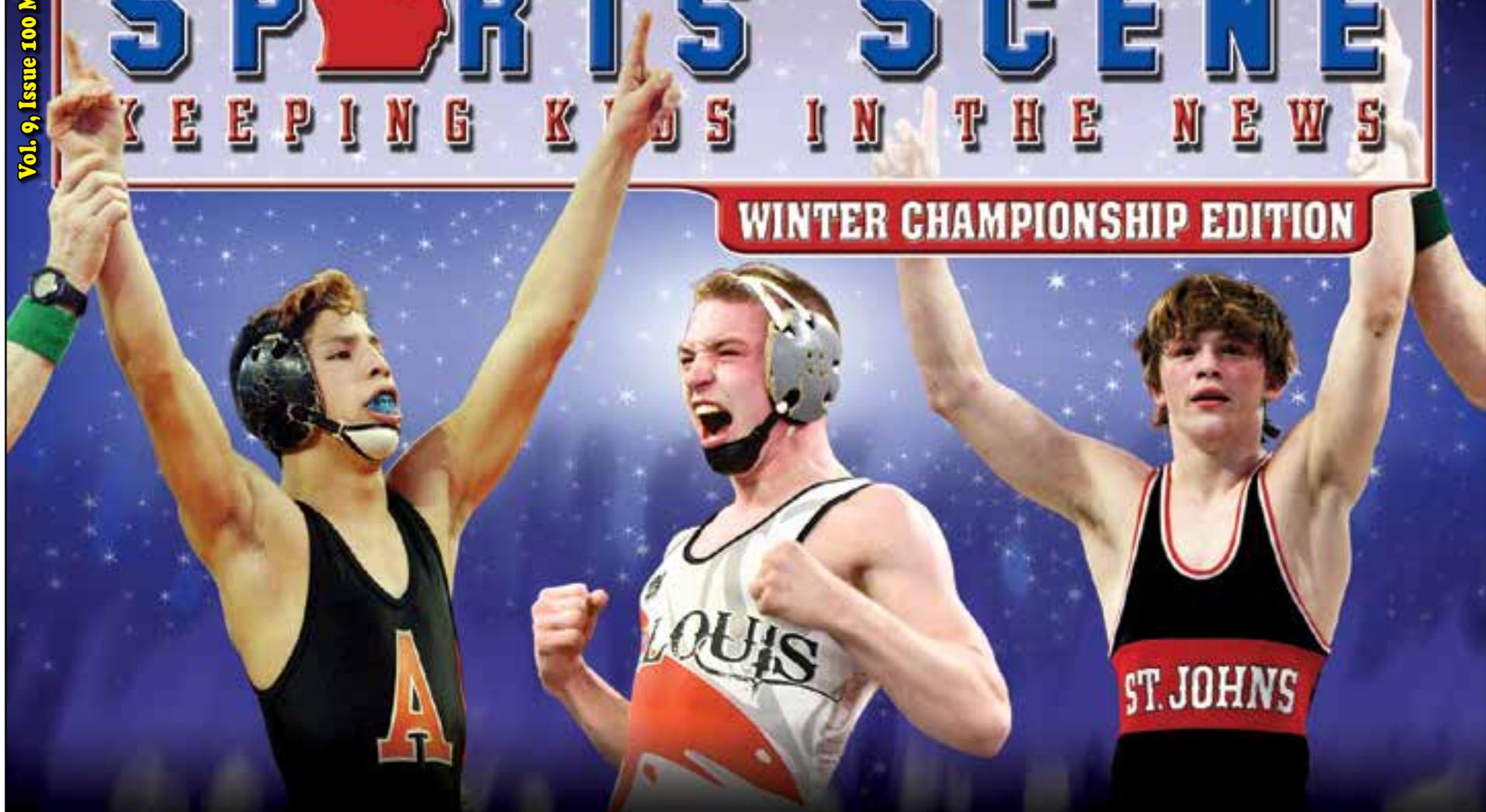
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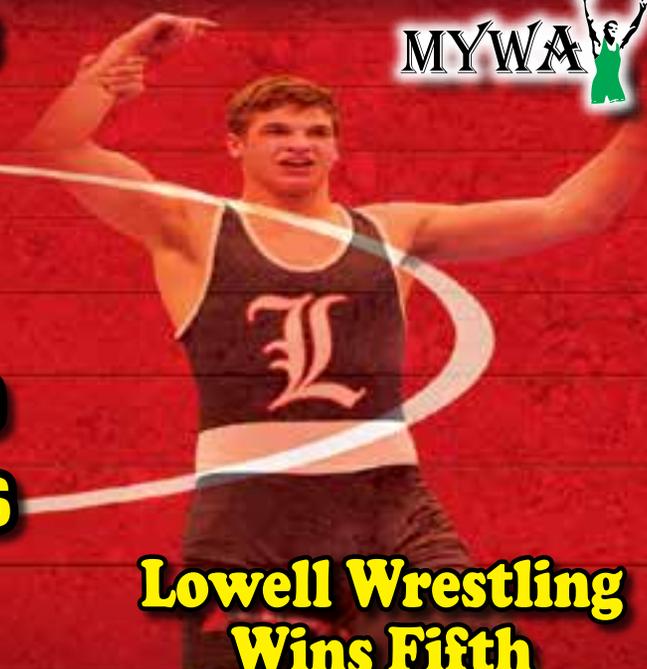


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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

### What a "Feelin"

It's a feeling that folks in towns like Lowell, St. Johns and New Lothrop experience every year in February and early March.

The wrestling team and individual tournaments crank up and months of hard work are on the line for local wrestlers. Wrestling fans make the mid-week journey to the district and regional for team tournaments and on the weekend head to the individual district and regional, all culminating with trips to Detroit and Kalamazoo where school pride is evident by the colors they wear and the intensity of their rooting for the local kids.

This year Alma experienced state tournament wrestling fever in full force. For the first time in school history the Alma wrestling team earned a trip to the team finals where it faced one of Division 3's blue bloods, Richmond. While the Panthers fell short, the experience was one Alma wrestling fans will never forget.

A week later, it was on to Detroit where Nolan Rodriguez, Demetrius Castillo, Jarrett Ferman, Justin VanBlaricum and Greg Simmons competed for individual state titles. The atmosphere at Ford Field was amazing and it was even more amazing when the final seconds of Castillo's 119-pound championship match ticked off the clock and he raced into the arms of his coaches with Alma's first individual state championship in 25 years.

Castillo's title was the icing on the cake for an amazing season of wrestling at Alma. Add in Lowell's fifth-consecutive Division 2 state team title, New Lothrop's amazing run from sixth seed to finalist in Division 4, Chipewa Hill's repeat run to the state semifinals in Division 3 and the plethora of individual state titles and all-state honors won by area wrestlers and this tournament season was one to remember.



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## SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON COMPETITIVE CHEER

### Area Teams Enjoy Strong Showings In Division 3

#### John Raffel Sports Scene

Charlotte and Lakewood both displayed their talents in the Division 3 competitive cheer meet.

Lakewood's final score was 751.22 for fifth place. The Vikings finished behind Pontiac Notre Dame (776.48), Richmond (771.50), Monroe Jefferson (764.88) and Flat Rock (757.32). Charlotte was sixth at 749.36.

"I thought we had three solid rounds today," Viking coach Kim Martin said. "You want to finish on a big note and this is the best finish we've had at the state finals, the best placing. Before, we've never finished higher than sixth place. This was the fifth out of the last six years. We've been here a few times and it's our best perfor-

mance with a very young team."

The only seniors are Maddy Beimers, Katelynn Kietzman, Kyle Maurer, Anna Twitchell and Ali Wheeler.

Martin said the team had one of its better third rounds, which features mounts.

"When you get to the state finals, you're one of the best teams in the state," Martin said. "It's a great experience for the girls. You're here with the best of the best."

Charlotte coach Yvonne Ridge would gladly concur.

"We did awesome," Ridge said. "It's our first year in Division 3. They brought the energy and did a great job. We'll be stronger next year."

Charlotte was in Division 2 last year

and took sixth.

"The competition was about the same (in both divisions). We highly met our expectations. We have 10 freshmen on our team and only one senior."

They're 10 reasons why she's looking forward to 2019.

The only senior for Charlotte was Lilly Taylor. Juniors were Mackenzie Bleisch, Mady Conklin, Charis Demello, Karlie Hicks, Morgan Seavolt and Lauen Wietzke. Sophomores are Erica Brock, Kenzie Galinis, Haley Hoyt, Zaraya Newth, Christeny Pena and Lynsey Peters. Freshmen were Alaysha Cannon, Sadie Earegood, Sydney Foster, Ellie Lundy, Macy Mauk, Maggie Miller, Julia Phillips, McKenna Sine, Megan Treadwell and Kaylynn Weaver.



The Lakewood Odessa cheer team performs a routine during the MHSAA finals in early March in Grand Rapids. (John Raffel, High School Sports Scene Photo)

### P-W, Merrill, Farwell Cheer Solid In Division 4

#### John Raffel Sports Scene

Pewamo-Westphalia's competitive cheer team has made a habit of contending for Division 4 state titles. Coach Staci Myers' team won the title in 2008 and 2010, and had runner-up finishes in 2007, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2015.

This season on March 3, the Pirates took eighth out of eight teams in the Division 4 meet, but Myers was upbeat with what her young team was able to accomplish. PW's final score was 723.76.

The only PW senior is Karson Hengesbach.

"They did amazing," Myers said. "We came in here hoping they could do their best rounds one, two and three and where the chips

fall, they do. We worked hard this season and made huge transformations with this young team."

Juniors for the Pirates are Kelsey Russell, Olivia Ferguson, Esmeralda Gonzalez and Cierra VanElls. Sophomores are Emma Thelen, Isabella Droste and Olivia Richards. Freshmen are Rachel Kent, Mya Beech, Ellie Pohl, Ella Simon and Ella Smith.

"We're really hoping next year we come out strong," Myers said. "We have a lot of freshmen coming up and are hoping to have a nice big team."

Merrill and Farwell had a close fight for fourth place. Merrill took it with 750.74 while Farwell scored 749.62 and took fifth.

"We really did our best," Farwell senior Brooke Pritchard said. "That

was our peak of the season. We placed seventh last year. We wanted it a lot more than last year."

Round 3 was Farwell's best round, she added.

The Eagles had seven seniors on the team including Pritchard, Alexis Andreas, Taylor Johns, Druanne Marsh, Morgan Nestor, Halee Scheidt and Jordyn Smith. Others were junior Karley Edwards, Brianna McQuiston and Morgan Vanthull and sophomore Mia Fetzter.

Merrill coach Molly Garno was upbeat over her team's performance.

"They went out there and had three solid rounds," Garno said. "I couldn't be prouder. We absolutely exceeded expectations for the season. We came across a lot of battles



The Pewamo-Westphalia cheer team finished eighth during the recent Division 4 MHSAA Finals held in Grand Rapids. (John Raffel, High School Sports Scene Photo)

and they overcame them time after time."

"We're graduating four seniors who will be missed. But we have talent coming up. We hope to keep the Merrill tradition strong."

Cheerleaders for the Vandals were Orien Artcliff, Keira Dittenber, Kyle Dittenber. Nicole Dubay, Molly Frantz, Gracie Hjordvatd, Jamie Huntoon, Caitlin Lisee, Emma Platt and Gabrielle Stoneman.



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**SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON GYMNASTICS**

**Area Athletes Turn In Quality Performances During Finals**

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

Rockford and other area athletes had top notch performances March 10 and 11 at the state gymnastics meet at Rockford.

In the team event on opening day, Farmington was first (144.75), Northville second (144.55) and Rockford third (144.45).

"We are extremely proud of our performance at the state meet," Rockford coach Michelle Ankney said. "During the team competition, the girls came out and had the best beam and floor competition we have had all year. I was amazed at their stamina and confidence on the beam. We were in the race the

whole time, and we feel just a little bit short. We did the best we could, and my personal favorite is that we are not graduating any seniors so these girls are returning for another fight next year."

In Division 2 competition, Morgan Case placed second in the vault (9.4), while Reagan Ammon (9.250) took sixth. Rockford was 1-2 in the uneven parallel bars with Ashley Faulkner (9.050) and Ammon (8.975). The Rams were 4-5 in the balance beam with Chanel Lokers (9.3) and Morgan Case (9.25). Nicole Curtis tied for ninth (9.15). The Rams were also one-two in the floor exercise with Case (9.6) and Ashley Faulkner (9.05).

"Morgan Case had her best meet

at individual finals," Ankney said. "She went four for four on all her events.

She was steady and confident. She also won floor which was one of her biggest goals for this year. Ashley Faulkner also had her best meet at individual finals. We changed her bar routine two weeks before state, and she performed it the best she ever has that night. She also upgraded her vault. She is one to keep watching over the next two years.

"Reagan Ammon was a huge asset during team finals. This team would not have done as well without her. She suffered a pretty significant injury the week of state, but she pulled it together and had her best competition at team finals. She then came back and was strong at individual finals. My favorite part about Reagan is that she is genuinely proud of everyone around her. She wants everyone to do their best."

Chantel Lokers "has been a

consistent gymnast all year long," Ankney said. "She comes in and regularly and routinely hits four for four. Her dance is amazing, and she shows a lot of grace in her gymnastics moves. She has big dreams for her senior year, and I can't wait to see what the next year will bring for her."

For all-around standings, Case placed second (36.825), Ammon fifth (36.325), Faulkner sixth (36.175) and Lokers eighth (35.850). Farmington's Elisa Bills was first in all-around (378.175).

In Division 2, East Lansing individuals did very well. Eve Petrie was third in balance beam (9.350). Olivia Fossum tied for eighth in the floor exercise (9.325); Ammon tied for 10th (9.175).

"The season itself was quite the roller coaster ride," Ankney said. "The team is young, and there was



Rockford finished third at the MHSAA Gymnastic Team Finals held on the Rams home floor. (Nick Rethman, High School Sports Scene Photo)

a lot to learn. I was amazed by all 12 girls on the team. They all stepped up. They all learned new skills. They all dream big. I am glad they will get to stick together for another year."

**Sanford Meridian Cheer A Solid Second In Division 4**

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

It was somewhat expected that Hudson would win the Division 4 meet for competitive cheer on March 3.

But second place was wide open.

That was the challenge for Sanford-Meridian Early College's cheer team at the Grand Rapids Delta Plex. After three rounds, Val MacKenzie celebrated her 31st year as the team's coach with the coveted second place trophy

Hudson had a final score of 759.26 to take first with Sanford Meridian second at 756.86, barely ahead of third-place Adrian Madison at 756.56. After the first two rounds, Hudson had a 452.66-450.26 lead over the Mustangs. But

Hudson outscored SM by 10 points in the third round to clinch the win.

"I'm very proud of how they bought into the program and are so dedicated," MacKenzie said. "They never missed practices. They're a good bunch of girls."

MacKenzie had thoughts of possibly getting first place as she prepared the team for the meet. "I knew we could be in the top three or take it," she said. "Our goal was met. We have a strong round 1. I knew it'd hold us over and if it doesn't we would go into round 2, which is always strong.

"Round 3 has just been strong all year. The girls have really worked on getting the strength to do all that stuff. It was just a good day.

Round 3 today was solid. We got a lot of bonus points which is what we were looking for."

Mustangs who performed at the state meet were Katie Blanchard, McKenna Burns, Tirzah Doud, Aubrey Erskin, Jade McRoberts, Elizabeth Melchi, Alexis North, Becky O'Dell, Delaynie O'Hare, Jacqueline Poston, Tara Spangler, Sumer Storms, Reese Wallace, Olivia Wiggins and Libby Wildfong. She has no seniors and is led by six juniors.

"This is my third time," MacKenzie said. "The first time we were at state, we were at Lake Orion.



The Sanford Meridian Cheer team finished second during the recent MHSAA Cheer finals held in Grand Rapids. (John Raffel, High School Sports Scene Photo)

We were here in 2016. This was our goal. It was something we constantly worked for. The juniors I have started with me when they were in the sixth grade. When they came here in 2016 - that was their first sight of all of this. They knew

what to tell the other girls in what to look for." MacKenzie didn't hesitate to hint the Mustangs would like to return next season and win it. "That's our goal," she said.

**SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON BOWLING**

**Alma Girls Win Another Bowling Title!**

**David Cook Sports Scene**

After being ranked first in Division 3 for most of the season, the Alma girls bowling team sealed the deal at the Division 3 state bowling finals by winning the championship.

Alma turned in a total-team effort as the Panthers totaled 1,205 pins to best second place Muskegon Oakridge which totaled 1,072.

The title was the second in the past three years for the Alma girls, who captured the title in 2016. Alma reached the finals last year where it fell in the title match to Birch Run.

"We set our goals before the season started and this was one of them," said Alma coach Ken Shunk. "They said they wanted to win conference, regionals and a state title at the beginning of the season and they did it."

Balance was key for the Panthers. In the final against Oakridge Alma was led by senior Aaliyah Wilson with a 181. Senior Morgan Johnson added a 178 followed by junior Hallie Weaver with a 172, senior Kimmie Shunk with a 171 and junior Sarah Gadde with a 165. Seniors Shauna Brenner and Morgan Lindsey rounded out this year's veteran squad.

"We had a really good year," Shunk said. "It feels good to win another state championship."

**DIVISION 3**

**Corunna boys:** The Corunna boys reached the Division 3 state finals where they fell short to Jonesville. Johnny Pavka led the Cavaliers with a 188 in the final match with Jonesville.

Corunna senior Javen Howes turned in a big effort the following day as he won the Division 3 individual state championship.

Howes defeated Jack Dalman of Portland 429-317 in the title match. "I bowled really well today from the very start," Howes said. "I got lined up on my very first ball, so I knew it was going to be a good day."

**Birch Run girls:** The Panthers, last year's state champions, fell in the state semifinals to Muskegon Oakridge. Birch Run senior Tessie Birchmeier wrapped up her career by taking second in the individual state finals.

**DIVISION 4**

**St. Charles boys:** The St. Charles boys reached the Division 4 team finals where they fell in the finals to Bronson. Michael Pratt led St. Charles in the finals with a 255 while Alex Dittenber rolled a 200 and junior Drake McFarland a 191.

**New Lothrop boys:** The New Lothrop boys stopped Breckenridge in the Division 4 team quarterfinals. New Lothrop fell to St. Charles in the semifinal match.

**DIVISION 1**

**Davison boys:** The Davison boys bowling team placed second in the Division 1 finals. Brandon Kreiner led the Cardinals with a 224 and Josh Hubbard added a 218 in the final match against Waterford Kettering.

**Rockford boys:** Rockford sophomore Matt Buck



turned in a huge effort to win the Division 1 individual title. In the finals matchup against Detroit U-D Jesuit senior Ryan Reid, Buck jumped out to a big lead by winning the first game 196-152. Buck went on the win the title by a 397-370 margin.

**Holt girls:** The Holt girls defeated Chippewa Valley in the quarterfinals before falling to the eventual state champion, Oxford, in

the Division 1 team semifinals.

**DIVISION 2**

**Lowell boys:** While the Red Arrows missed out on advancing from the qualifying block as a team, senior Carson Clark reached the semifinals as an individual.

**Mason girls:** The Mason girls defeated Coldwater in the Division 2 team quarterfinals before falling to Tecumseh in the semifinals.

The Alma girls bowling team won its second title in three years after defeating Muskegon Oakridge 1,205-1,072 in the Division 3 championship match. (Submitted Photos)

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2017-18 Girls Bowler of the Year



**The Kemmie Shunk File**  
 Alma High School  
 Grade: Senior  
 Season Accolades: Helped lead Alma to its second Division 3 championship in three years.  
 Shunk averaged 198 as the anchor for the team, which was 14-0 in the Tri-Valley Conference West Division. She will continue her bowling career at Alma College.



Presenting The



2017-18 Boys Bowler of the Year



**The Dalton Carl File**  
 Ithaca High School  
 Grade: Senior  
 Season Accolades: Carl led the TVC in average this season with a 211, 14 pins better than the second place bowler. Carl finished in the top 20 at the state tournament before losing in the first round of match play.



Submitted Photos



# Panther Pride...



## Alma Freshman Dametrius Castillo Claims Alma's First Individual Wrestling Title In 25 Years

**Butch Harmon Sports Scene**

A week after reaching one milestone, the Alma wrestling team accomplished another major milestone at the Division 3 individual wrestling finals at Ford Field in Detroit.

Alma freshman Dametrius Castillo ended a more than two-decade drought when he became the first Panther to win an individual state title since Dan Seeley won a state title in 1993. Castillo won the 119-pound individual state title in thrilling fashion with a 3-2 victory against Clare junior Kyle Schaaf.

Coming into the finals, Castillo was ranked 6th in his weight class, but that did not stop him from accomplishing his goal.

"It just shows rankings don't matter," Castillo said. "You have to come out here and wrestle. I just came out here and wrestled big to win big. My goal was to come back and beat all the guys I lost to and coming back and placing higher than all the guys I lost to."

The match was a tight battle the entire way, with a takedown being the difference.

"Once I got that takedown I was confident," Castillo said. "I knew how he wanted to wrestle. I knew what I had to do. I knew I had to keep moving and not stop. I just had to wrestle, wrestle, wrestle and move my feet and get angles to take shots on him."

Alma head coach Randy Miniard had no doubts that Castillo would come through with the title on the line.

"Dometrius knows when it's time," Miniard said, "he knows when it's urgent and he did it. He knew he could beat him and losing was not an option. It was just a matter of taking care of business in the moment and he's the kind of kid who rises to the occasion."

Castillo's state title was the icing on the cake of what was a memorable season for the Alma wrestling team.

"It's just absolutely amazing," said Miniard. "Dometrius being a freshman, Alma not having a state champion since the 92-93 season with Dan Seeley who is here with us and worked his

butt off this year with Dametrius. It's just very special. We've got two assistant and three to five volunteer coaches who worked real hard and a team that worked together as one team and one family. For Dametrius to do what he did right there, win a state championship as a freshman makes it very, very special. It puts a cap on the season where we made it to the team state finals for the first time in Alma's history."

For Castillo, the individual title was something his whole family has been pursuing for several years. Dametrius' older brother Damian Castillo was an all-state wrestler for Alma who placed seventh in the state in 2015.

"I was just born into the sport," Castillo said. "Ever since I've been able to wrestle I've went out there and wrestled. It's been my goal ever since I was born. I've been thinking about this day since coach Miniard came in my brother's freshman year. I've been practicing for a long time with my brother and everyone else and it paid off. It shows anything can happen if you come out and practice hard and practice every day. You have to work for everything you get."

Castillo loves working hard and also gives back to the community and the Alma wrestling program.

"Dometrius is very special," Miniard said. "He's been working hard for this. This is my seventh-year coaching in Alma he's the first one to practice, last one to leave. He takes care of business. He helps out others. He helps in our youth program. He helps out with our young kids and our youth program. He officiates. He helps with his church. He's a great community kid from a great family."

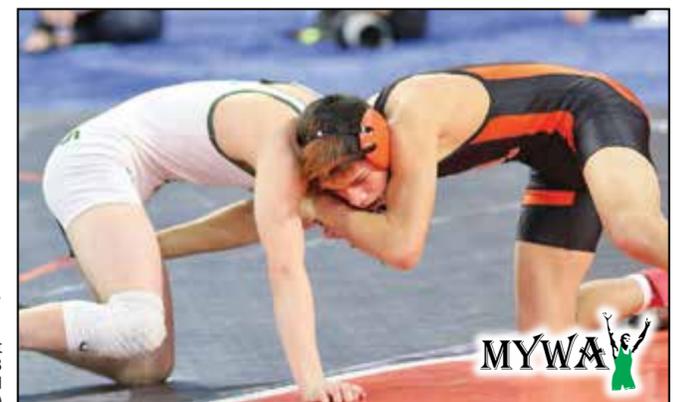
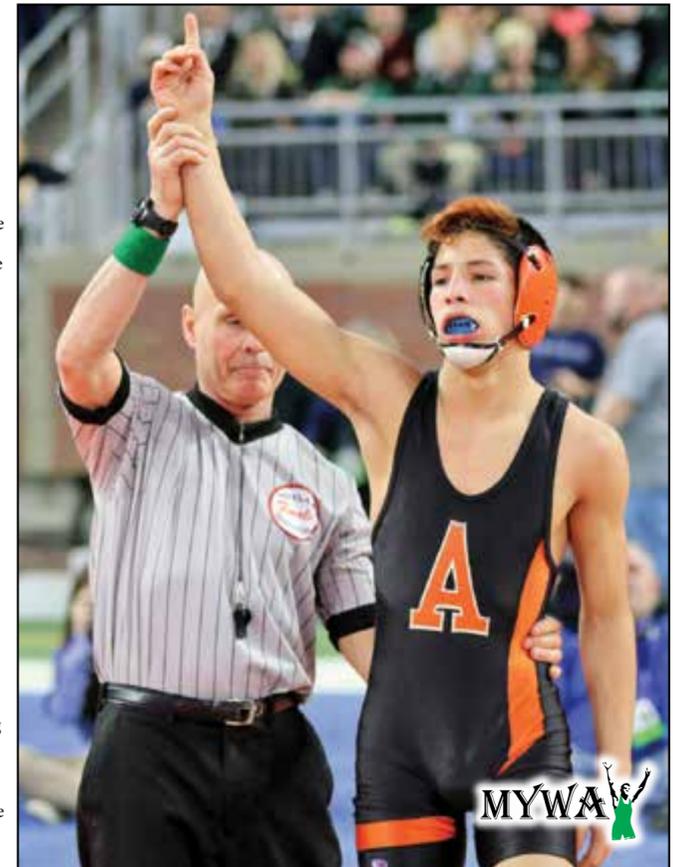
**Rodriguez, Simmons earn all-state honors at Division 3 state meet**

Castillo was not alone on the victory stand at the Division 3 individual finals as two more Alma wrestlers earned all-state honors.

At 103 pounds, Alma freshman Nolan Rodriguez placed eighth. Rodriguez finished the year with a 41-13 record.

Alma senior heavyweight also earned all-state honors. Simmons placed seventh at 285 pounds and wrapped up the season with a 38-8 overall record.

Alma freshman Dametrius Castillo gave Alma its first individual champion in 25 years after winning the Division 3 119-pound title in early March during the MHSAA Individual Finals held at Ford Field. (High School Sports Scene Photos)



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# YOUNG OWOSSO

## PRESENTS AREA TEAM WRESTLERS

Stories by David Cook...Photos by High School Sports Scene

### New Lothrop's Austin Wolford Claims Individual State Title At Division 4 Finals

After placing fourth last year as a sophomore, New Lothrop junior Austin Wolford made it to the top of the podium at this year's Division 4 individual state finals.

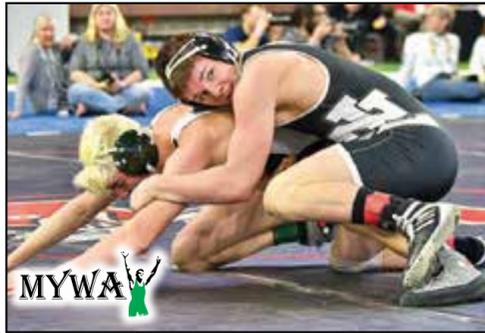
Wrestling in the 140-pound weight class, Wolford claimed a 5-1 win against Andy Park of Leroy-Pine River in the title match.

"This means everything," Wolford said.

"Now I'm a state champion and I accomplished my goal. Now it's time to set a new one and become a two-time state champion."

With the win, Wolford wrapped up his junior year with a 52-2 overall record. Wolford followed a pretty straight-forward game plan to achieve the win.

"My game plan



was just finish on my feet," Wolford said. "Don't get taken down, don't get thrown in a headlock, ride him out and don't let him off the bottom."

Wolford was one of four New Lothrop wrestlers to reach the podium. Sophomore Justin Carnahan placed second at 171 pounds and finished the season with a 40-6 record. Junior Logan Zell placed sixth at 125 pounds and wrapped up the year with a 34-24 mark while senior Cameron Dusenberry placed seventh and ended the season with a 33-20 record.

### Heart Proves To Be The Difference As Mason's Riley Smith Wins D2 Heavyweight Title

While statistics are a big part of sports and a good way to predict outcomes, one element of sports for which no statistic has been developed yet is how to measure heart. Heart and desire can make the difference in many competitions and in many cases is more important than reams of statistical data.

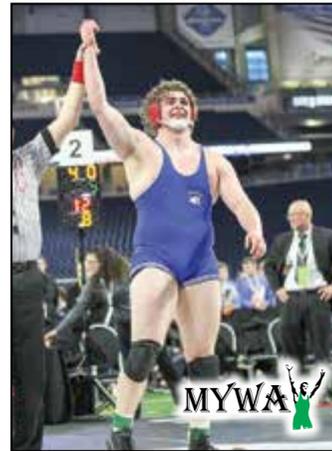
That was the case for Mason heavyweight Riley Smith. After placing at last year's individual finals, Smith was determined to win the title this year and that was what he did as he won with a third-period fall to claim the Division 2 285-pound title.

"You can look at all the statistical things, but I just had a lot more heart this year," Smith said. "I just came in a lot stronger than I was last year."

Smith met a familiar foe in the finals, and defeated fellow senior Tyler Hill of Stevensville-Lakeshore.

"He beat me at regionals for the finals so I got a second seed," Smith said. "It's kind of scary once you get somebody that's beaten you. I put so much time and effort into it; I'm just a kid chasing a dream."

The win in the title match capped a big



two-year run for Smith that saw him win a combined 98 matches his junior and senior year. The final win of his high school career, however, is the one he will remember most.

"I feel really relieved," Smith said. "Two years of me chasing it, I finally did it. My coaches meant so much along the way, I can't be more thankful. It's a relief, mostly happiness, sadness it's over but mostly relief."

### Hard Work Results In Second Consecutive Title For Austin O'Hearon Of Eaton Rapids

When it comes to hard work, Eaton Rapids senior Austin O'Hearon has few peers.

Moments after winning his second-consecutive individual state title, O'Hearon was on his way to the other side of Ford Field to begin running sprints.

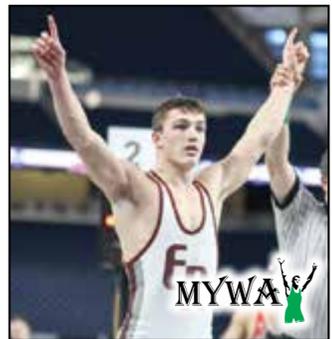
"He's conditioning is superior," said Eaton Rapids coach Joe Ray Berry. "Austin is in the gym every morning at 6 running. 11:00 at night after the semifinals for team, I talked to him and he's in the gym lifting and we just got done wrestling Lowell. Most guys are at home eating, kicking their feet up. 11:00 at night he's in the gym lifting. He's running sprints here. At this point conditioning is out of play and he's still running sprints. It's just a routine for him. Matter of fact, we had to kind of knock him down and tell him ... no lifting, no running. Get away from your routine for a minute, because he's that hard of a worker. You can't stop him."

O'Hearon's over-the-top training paid dividends as he handed Dustin Gross of Dearborn Heights Annapolis his first loss of the season, 3-1, in the finals of the 160-pound weight class in Division 2.

"We've been preparing for that match since summer," Berry said. "We saw him at camps. He's been preparing for this match since July. They went 1-1 at camp so we kind of knew what to expect, a tight match. He's a good competitor. We knew it was going to be one of those dog-fight matches."

With the win, O'Hearon capped his season with a 47-1 record.

O'Hearon was one of three Greyhounds to earn all-state honors in Division 2. Sophomore Caleb Fish placed second at 140 pounds while sophomore Chris Haynes placed seventh at 125 pounds.



### Portland's Guilford Snags Title In D3

After placing fourth as a sophomore, Portland junior Owen Guilford was determined to make it to the top of the podium this season.

That determination paid off as Guilford topped the podium after claiming a major decision against Robert Granberry of Chipewewa Hills to win the 171-pound title in Division 3.

"We knew how close we were to being on top so we knew we had to keep pushing, keep pushing and keep pushing," Guilford said. "A lot of long hours at the wrestling room, went to a few summer camps and it just worked out in the end."

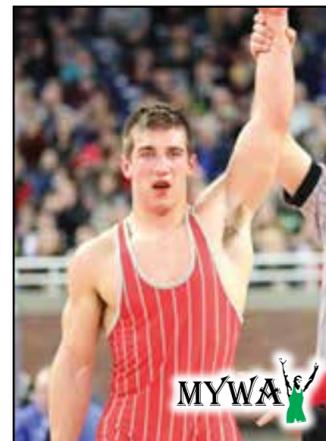
Guilford wrapped up the season with a 40-1 record and snapped a state championship drought in Portland by becoming the first Portland wrestler to win an individual state championship in 18 years.

Facing the tall and athletic Granberry, Guilford knew he needed to be spot on in the title match.

"I knew my takedowns were on point this weekend so I just knew if I could get him down I could ride him out and score points," Guilford said. "He's a great opponent; I have

a lot of respect for him. I just knew I had to stay safe with that long body, it's easy to get wrapped up and stuff."

Guilford was joined on the podium this year by seniors Desmond Gardner and Devin Miller. Gardner placed fifth at 140 pounds and finished the season with a 42-5 record while Miller placed fourth at 160 pounds and finished the year 44-6.



# ★ ★ ★ MORE AREA TEAM WRESTLERS ★ ★ ★

### State Champion Austin Boone One Of 11 Lowell Wrestlers To Earn All-State Honors At Wrestling Finals

On a day when a pair of wrestlers joined the exclusive four-time state champion club, Lowell sophomore Austin Boone made it way halfway to joining that club as well.

Boone won the 145-pound state title in Division 2 by grinding out a 6-4 decision against DeWitt senior Kilian Southworth. The win gave Boone a 44-1 final record this season, and more importantly, put him two titles away from his goal of four.

"It's part of the plan," Boone said. "Two more to go. It's just a match like any other tournament; just a bigger place and more people. Truthfully, maybe 25 percent are watching ... This doesn't feel different than some of the tournaments I've been to."

Southworth, who finished his senior season with a 50-3 record, provided Boone with a major hurdle in the finals.

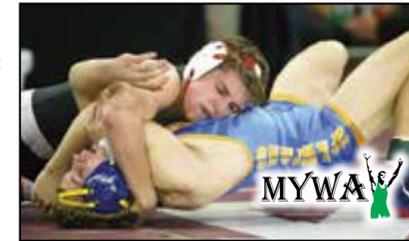
"He's a tough wrestler," Boone said. "He (Southworth) reversed me, had me scared for a second but I got it back. I heard he had a nasty high crotch so I didn't want him to get that, and then I heard he's got a good power-half once he gets a leg in."

Boone was able to defend everything Southworth threw at him

to get the title and become one of 11 Lowell wrestlers that earned all-state honors and get their names put on the wall in the wrestling room.

"The goal is to get as many names up on the wall as we can," Boone said. "This year we broke our record of nine, we got 11 up there and from what I've heard that ties the D2 record."

Along with Boone's title, Lowell had a trio of wrestlers place second. Red Arrow sophomore Nick Korhorn took second at 103 pounds, junior Avry Mutschler placed second at 135 pounds and senior David Kruse took second at 189 pounds. Senior Austin Engle placed third at 171 pounds and fellow senior Keigan Yuhas took fourth at 215 pounds. A trio of Lowell sophomores earned seventh-place finishes in Dawson Jankowski at 119 pounds, James Fotis at 140 and Tyler Deloof at 285 pounds. Freshmen Zeth Strejc and Doak Dean placed eighth at 125 and 130 pounds respectively.



### Socks Provide Good Luck For Dakota Greer Of Tri-County As He Wins Third State Title

Howard City Tri-County senior Dakota Greer wore socks signed by Tri-County, three-time champions Ryan Froese and Dan Thompson during this year's Division 3 individual finals. After winning the 125-pound state title, Greer can add his signature to the socks.

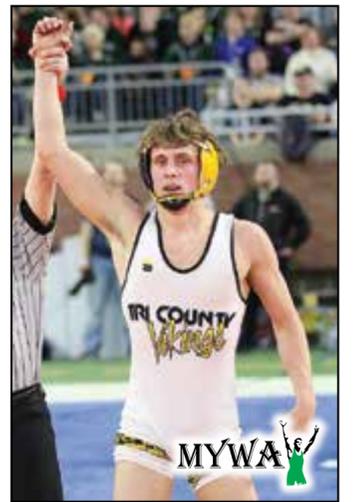
Greer capped his career and added his name to a select group of Tri-County wrestlers to have won three individual titles. He defeated Reese Wallis of Montrose 9-2 in the 125-pound title match. Greer previously won individual titles his freshman and junior years and joins Froese who won three titles from 2001-2003 and Thompson who won three in a row from 2000-2002.

The socks came in handy as state title number three was a stressful challenge.

"These socks brought me good luck for the weekend," Greer said. "It's awesome. I don't know how to explain it. The third one was the hardest, that's for sure. The first one I got I didn't really know what I was capable of my freshman year. My second one I got last year, it was kind of revenge for me from the season before, not being able to make it. This year it was just a lot more stress, a lot more expected to do it. There was a lot more on the plate - that was the hardest part for me."

Greer finished the season with a 43-2 record as he outlasted a game Wallis who also finished his senior year with a 43-2 mark.

"He (Wallis) was a little different style," Greer said. "He had a good defense, staying away from me and not wanting to tie up, but I was able to figure it out pretty quick, and then get on my offense and control the match from there. He was a tough kid for sure."



### Mason Breece Of Birch Run Cashes In On Final Chance To Win An Individual Wrestling State Title

A three-time all-state wrestler, Birch Run senior Mason Breece had one final challenge during this year's state tournament: win an individual state title.

Breece accomplished that goal and did it in exciting fashion as he edged Nick Felt of Shelby 2-1 in the finals at 140 pounds in Division 3.

"It feels great to finally get what's coming my way," Breece said. "I needed that final send off. It took a lot of work and I'm glad it paid off."

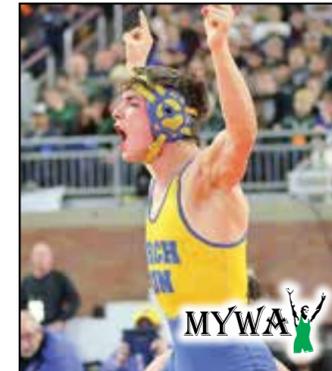
Breece placed sixth at the state meet his freshman season and came back to place third as both a sophomore and a junior. Breece had one final opportunity to win a state title and he faced a stout opponent in Felt. The match came down to the end with Breece, trailing by one point, scoring a late takedown to earn the win.

"I just knew I had to score," Breece said. "No matter what the time was I needed my points, even if it was just one to take it to

overtime. I was confident that I could at least pull it off then, or if I could score a reversal and win the match and that's what I did."

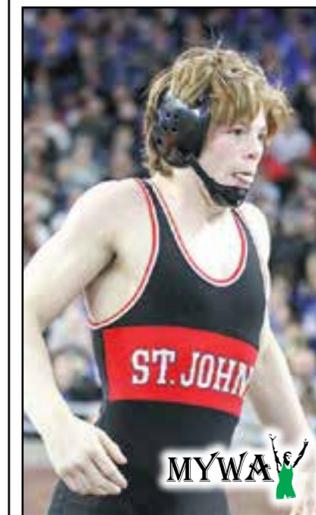
The win was the 217th in his career against 20 losses.

Birch Run had a total of three wrestlers earn all-state honors. Sophomore Macintyre Breece placed fifth at 119 pounds and finished the season with a 58-5 record. Panther junior Brockton Cook also reached the finals and took second place at 189 pounds, finishing the year with a 56-5 record.



### St. John's Whitaker Impressive In Championship Run

A strong start proved to be the key for St. Johns junior James Whitaker at the Division



2 individual state finals.

Scoring a key takedown early in the match, Whitaker went on to turn back Eaton Rapids sophomore Caleb Fish 6-4 in the championship match at 140 pounds in the Division 2 individual state finals.

"I had a really good first period," Whitaker said. "I got that takedown and then I rode him hard and put him on his back. That really opened it up for me."

Whitaker, who placed fourth last year as a sophomore, wrapped up his junior season with a 39-1 record.

"It feels great," Whitaker said. "I put in a lot of work for this and it paid off. It's just a great feeling."

Whitaker was one of three St. Johns wrestlers that earned all-state honors in Division 2. Senior Brendan Zelenka placed second at 125 pounds and finished the season with a 28-8 record. Junior Kaleob Whitford placed third at 130 pounds and wrapped up the year with a 33-8 mark.

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# Jayce Kuehnlein Makes Up For Last Year's Disappointment By Winning Individual Title

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

A year after putting a pair of wrestlers in championship matches and ending up with a trio of all-state wrestlers, the St. Louis wrestling team mirrored that performance at this year's Division 4 individual state finals.

St. Louis seniors Jayce Kuehnlein, Jake Davis and Ernie Diaz each earned all-state honors. Kuehnlein, who placed second at last year's finals, broke through and won a state title this year. Davis placed second while Diaz took fourth.

Coming up short last year served as a big motivation for Kuehnlein who won the 145-pound title with a 2-1 win against Payton Hunt of Climax-Scotts/Martin and finished the year with a 45-3 record.

"Motivation from losing in the finals last year and knowing that I was that close just drove me to not let anybody beat me and take it away from me this year," Kuehnlein said. "This offseason I lifted a lot more than I had in previous seasons. I did a lot of wrestling. I traveled more for wrestling. I wrestled stiffer competition and I just made sure I was doing everything to get to this point."

A point his coach whole-heartedly agreed with.

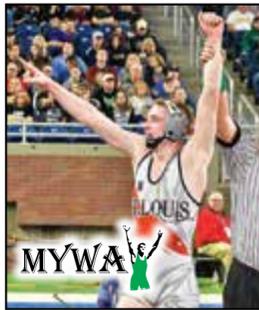
"Jayce didn't like that runner-up feeling," said St. Louis coach Kevin Kuhn. "He put in a heck of an offseason. He wrestled all over all summer. He made a real commitment to the weight room and then all season long he did everything right: Proper nutrition, extra workouts, no distractions, good sleep, healthy habits, all the things that this sport really requires of somebody to reach that top-level status."

The hard work and sacrifice paid off in a big way for Kuehnlein.

"It is a great sense of achievement," Kuehnlein said. "There's nothing that compares to this, especially after last year. I was at the lowest of lows because I felt I was right there and it got snatched from me, and then this year I was able to hold on to it and take it."

Davis, who placed fourth at last year's state meet, finished second at 152 pounds this season and finished the year with a 43-4 record. Fellow senior Ernie Diaz placed fourth at 189 pounds and wrapped up the year with a 36-10 record.

"It was the same as last year," said Kuhn. "We actually had two in the finals and we had one win and one loss last year too. The last couple years it's been a real nice group of upperclassmen. They've made each other better and it shows."



St. Louis's Jayce Kuehnlein celebrates after winning the Division 4 145-pound title at Ford Field. (High School Sports Scene Photo)

# Alex Facundo, Andrew Chambal Win Individual State Titles For Davison Wrestling Team

## David Cook Sports Scene

In one of the most exciting matches of the Division 1 individual state finals, one dream was dashed while another dream blossomed.

In the 152-pound championship in Division 1, Davison freshman Alex Facundo edged Detroit Catholic Central's Cameron Amine 4-2. Facundo won the first state title of his high school career and has his sights set on winning four while Amine, a state champion as a

freshman and sophomore, saw his dream of four titles dashed.

Facundo knew he was facing a formidable foe Amine but was more than ready for the challenge.

"He's (Amine) a two-time state champ, a Flo All-American, that's pretty impressive stuff," Facundo said, "but look at my stuff. I loved being the underdog. I had nothing to lose out there. I'm a freshman, wrestling a junior, two-time state champ; I went out there and had fun."

Facundo came into the match

prepared, knowing that Amine would try to intimidate him.

"The key was to use my shots," Facundo said. "He tried to be a bully, push me around and stuff, so I had to become a bully too. Got to my shots, take him down, that was the match right there. Like my coach said, you can't bully the bully, so that's what I came here thinking."

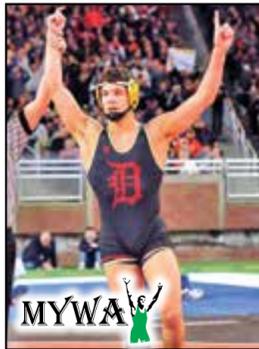
With the win, Facundo accomplished one dream and has another ahead of him.

"It means a lot," Facundo said. "I

dreamed of this when I was a little kid. To become a state champ, now I have a shot to become a four-time state champ, that's the dream right there."

Facundo was not the only Davison wrestler to stand atop to podium in Division 1 as sophomore Andrew Chambal won the 112-pound title.

Six more Davison wrestlers earned all-state honors. Junior Cal Stefanko took second at 171 pounds, sophomore Jay Nivison placed third at 160 pounds and sophomore Marc Shaeffer placed fourth at 135 pounds. A trio of Davison juniors placed seventh including Steven Garty (112 pounds), Brian Case (152) and Aaron Gilmore (285).



Davison won two titles during the MHSAA Individual Finals held at Ford Field. (High School Sports Scene Photo)

# Cassiday Brothers Make History For Beaverton Wrestling Team At Individual State Finals

## David Cook Sports Scene

From battling each other at home growing up, to grappling on the mats at Ford Field, the journey has been a family affair for the Cassiday

brothers and the Beaverton wrestling team.

In the fourth year of wrestling as a varsity sport at Beaverton, brothers Kyle and Eric Cassiday made wrestling history for Beaverton by becoming the first individual state champions in program history.

Kyle Cassiday, a junior, claimed the first individual state title with an 8-1 win against TJ Rizer of Leroy-Pine River in the title match at 189 pounds in Division 4.

Kyle and Eric Cassiday won titles during the MHSAA Individual Finals held at Ford Field. (High School Sports Scene Photo)

"It's amazing," Kyle said. "It's the greatest feeling I've ever had in my life. I'll never forget this."

Minutes later Kyle's older brother Eric Cassiday became the second Beaverton wrestler to win a state title when he claimed a 4-0 decision against Chase Gibson of Bronson.

Watching his brother win the 189-pound title helped prep Eric for his title match and is also part of the routine at most meets.

"For me, I always come after my brother," Eric said. "He's 189 and I'm at 215. I always watch my brother

and it helps to get my mind off the pressure. I get excited for him, and if it wasn't for him, honestly, I wouldn't be here."

The brothers have been close and have been wrestling each other since as far back as they can remember.

"We wrestled around the house all the time, ever since I was five," Kyle said. "It was mainly in the bedroom, but it would go into other rooms. I broke a tablet once and was grounded for like a month."

Breaking things around the house was a byproduct of the competitiveness that the brothers bring to the sport.

"Me and my brother are both very competitive," Eric said. "When we wrestle, it's not just wrestling, we get really chippy and it was good to have wrestling when we were growing up so we were able to translate that anger and aggression out on the mat."

Tying everything together is Kyle and Eric's father Bryan Cassiday. The elder Cassiday has coached the boys for years and has been the Beaverton coach since the program started.

"My dad is happy beyond believe," Eric said. "He's coached us before we could walk. He dropped everything he was doing to pick up the youth program, to pick up the high school program and in my opinion; he is one of the best coaches in the state. This year I was so happy because my littlest brother Jacob made it, Kyle made it and I made it and we both won a state championship."

Jacob, a sophomore, qualified for the state meet at 152 pounds. The Cassiday brothers were joined at the state finals by teammates Cameron Austin, Jack Owens and Seth DeMoines. Owens, a junior, earned all-state honors as he placed fifth at 171 pounds.



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# Lowell Wrestling Team Makes History With Fifth Consecutive State D2 State Title

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

It was one for the thumb and a new start record as the Lowell Red Arrows won a fifth-straight Division 2 team state wrestling championship. The Red Arrows won the title in impressive fashion with a 43-17 win against Galord at the Wings Event Center in Kalamazoo.

"This is a major feat," said Lowell head coach R.J. Boudro. "It's a difficult thing to do just one year. Of all five of our titles we won we faced the same team just once. So much goes into winning a state championship. I don't think people realize everything that goes into winning a championship."

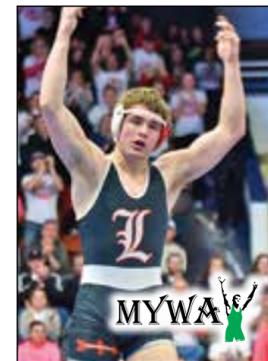
The championship was the fifth in a row for Lowell, setting a new Division 2 record for consecutive team state titles. The five consecutive titles also equal the Michigan High School Athletic Association all-class record with Hudson and Davison.

Lowell turned in dominant performances in both the quarterfinal and semifinal round as well. Lowell defeated Tecumseh 52-17 in the quarterfinals and Eaton Rapids 45-16 in the semifinals.

Lowell began its run of state titles in 2014 when it defeated St. Johns 35-34 in Dave Dean's final year coaching the Red Arrows. Boudro took over the next year and led the Arrows to state titles against Eaton Rapids, St. Johns, Warren Woods-Tower and Gaylord this year.

"Each one of the five teams that won it is unique," Boudro said. "When we went up there to take the team picture that is the last time this group will all be together. This is pretty special."

Lowell senior Dave Kruse has been a part of the past four team state titles.



"Only two other teams have won five in a row," Kruse said. "I am so happy to have been a part of these teams. It seems surreal."

For junior Avry Mutschler, who has been a part of the two previous championships, the feeling never gets old.

"This just feels awesome," Mutschler said. "It's exciting with so much of the community coming down here and supporting us. So many of us have grown up wrestling together since youth wrestling, most of the guys started wrestling with the Mighty Arrows when they were four years old."

Eaton Rapids wrestlers wrap up season with berth in final four

The Eaton Rapids wrestling team may have begun the season overlooked by many, but it ended the year among the final four in Division 2.

"We've gotten the most out of those kids that we can get," said Eaton Rapids coach Joe Ray Berry. "Starting out the year no one even knew we had a team here and we worked are way up the rankings, kept beating big schools head to head. We wrestled Brighton; we wrestled some of the top teams in the state."

Eaton Rapids reached the state finals the hard way having to defeat a highly-ranked DeWitt team and Mason to win its regional.

"We don't get any love," Berry said. "Nobody gives us any love. For the most part we like it that way. We love being the underdogs come in fighting, that is kind of our M.O all year. I couldn't be more proud of them. They are the hardest working group I've been around."

The Greyhounds defeated Stevensville-Lakeshore 35-26 in the quarterfinals. Eaton Rapids fell behind 16-0 to start the match before storming back with pins from Dacoda Whalen and Caleb Fish, major decisions from Hayden Campbell and Coltin Anderson and a decision from Chris Haynes to take a 23-16 lead. The Greyhounds closed the match out with a pin from Jared Davis and decisions from Brayden McNamara and Austin O'Hearon.

The season came to an end in the semifinals with a loss to eventual state champions Lowell. Eaton Rapids finished the season with a 27-5 overall record.

Left: Lowell celebrates after winning its fifth straight Division 2 championship. (High School Sports Scene Photo)

## DIVISION 3

Alma wrestling team makes history with thrilling tournament run

It was a landmark year for the Alma wrestling team as the Panthers reached the team state finals for the first time in school history.

Alma finished the season with a 32-10 overall record after dropping a 57-18 decision to Richmond in the Division 3 quarterfinals.

Freshman Dametrius Castillo, who would win an individual state title the next weekend, was one of three Panthers to score points against Richmond as he won by fall at 125 pounds.

"I am proud of all the guys from the seniors all the way down to the freshmen," said Alma coach Randy Miniard. "Having (Castillo) win the individual state championship was the feather in the cap. To most people he came out of nowhere, but we knew what he was capable of."

Jacob Torrez won by injury default at 130 pounds while Justin VanBlaricum won by fall at 152 pounds.

"Coming into the season we knew what we had," Miniard said. "We knew that we could win a conference and district championship and we knew we had a shot at winning the regional and making it to state. I'm just really proud of what we accomplished at Alma this year."

After breaking through to the state meet, Alma's next step is advancing past the quarterfinal round.

"Richmond and Dundee are in a different class in Division 3," Miniard said. "That is our next step."

Chippewa Hills wrestling team reaches state semifinals for second straight season

For a second straight year the Chippewa Hills wrestling team reached the final four in Division 3.

Coming into the state team finals with an unbeaten record, Chippewa Hills defeated Dowagiac 47-21 in the state quarterfinals. The Warriors reeled off 29 straight points to start the match with Billy Koepf, Andrew Vinton, Daylin Wittig winning by fall, Robert Granberry winning by technical fall and Jaycob Sharp and Chayton Wiggins winning by decision to stake Chippewa Hills to a 29-0 lead.

Dowagiac battled back with four straight wins to cut the deficit to 29-21. That was as close as Dowagiac would get as Chippewa Hills won the next four matches with falls from Caleb Fate and Brandon Russell and decisions from Korante Lowrey and Austin Young.

Chippewa Hills' season came to an end in the semifinals when the

Warriors dropped a 36-15 decision to Richmond and ended the season with a 25-1 overall record.

"It was a great duel, a competitive dual" said Chippewa Hills coach Nate Etheridge. "We just didn't win enough of the close ones we needed to. Our kids didn't go out there and lay down. We got beat today and sometimes that happens. I'm proud of our guys."

Birch Run wrestlers drop close battle in D3 state quarterfinals

An outstanding season came to an end in a tight dual in the state quarterfinals for the Birch Run wrestling team.

Birch Run, which finished the season with a 32-3 record, dropped a 38-34 decision to Whitehall in the Division 3 state quarterfinals.

Birch Run was led in the match by Brockton Cook, Terrance Watson, Macintyre Breece and Trenton Naragon who all won by fall. Christian Miller added a major decision and Mason Breece won for forfeit.

## DIVISION 4

New Lothrop wrestlers reach state finals in Division 4 tourney

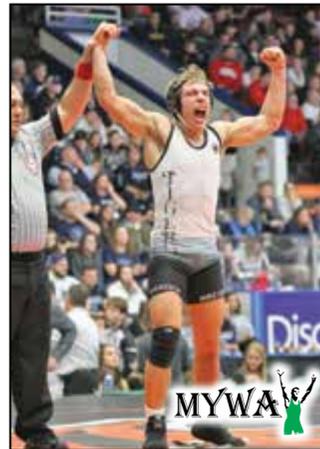
For the second year in a row the New Lothrop wrestling team reached the Division 4 team state finals. Unfortunately for Hornet fans, so did the Hudson Tigers who won their second straight state title.

Coming in as the No. 1 seed in Division 4, Hudson was pushed to the limit by the underdog Hornets who came in as the No. 6 seed. New Lothrop took to the underdog role well as it defeated No. 3 seed Carson City-Crystal 41-19 in the quarterfinals and No. 2 Clinton 31-24 in the semifinals. A third upset of the weekend fell just short as Hudson claimed a 34-22 win.

The title match was close early as New Lothrop grabbed an early 6-3 lead with decisions from Cameron Dusenberry and Andrew Krupp and were up 9-6 after a decision from Tommy Malloy. Hudson, however, won the next six matches to take control of the dual.

New Lothrop closed out the match with wins from Zackery Riley and Justin Carnahan in two of the final three matches.

"We are back to chasing these guys again," said New Lothrop coach Jeff Campbell. "They are ahead of us, and we have a lot of work to do. There was a lot of parity in Division 4 this year, so it didn't matter when the seeds came out. We could wrestle this tournament again and we could have two different



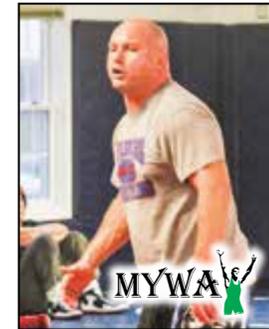
New Lothrop lost to Hudson for the second straight year in the Division 4 finals. (High School Sports Scene Photo)

teams wrestle here."

New Lothrop wrapped up the season with a 25-4 overall record.

Carson City-Crystal wrestlers fall short in D4 state quarterfinals

It was a productive season for the Carson City-Crystal wrestling team but one that came to an end in the Division 4 state quarterfinals against New Lothrop.



Chippewa Hills Coach Nate Etheridge

Carson City-Crystal dropped a 41-19 decision to New Lothrop to end the season with a 38-4 overall record.

Carson City-Crystal reached the team finals this season by defeating Fowler/Fulton and Laingsburg in the district and then stopping St. Louis and Hesperia in the regional.

In the quarterfinal match against New Lothrop the Eagles were paced by Jamison Ward and Aiden Adkins who won by fall along with Nolan Datema who won a major decision and Daryn Shepler who won a decision.

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SPORTS SCENE'S 2018



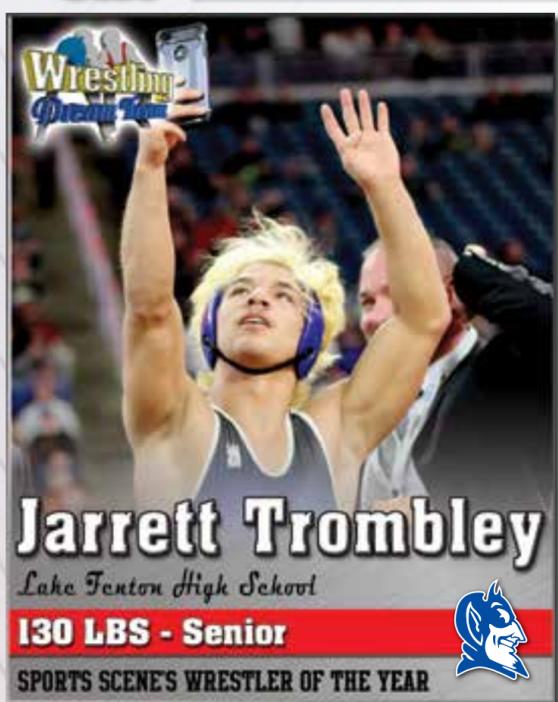
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Presenting The



2018 Wrestling Dream Team



Four-Time State Champion Jarrett Trombley Leads The Way For HSSS Wrestling Dream Team

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Most high school wrestlers in the state of Michigan dream of one day winning a state championship. Lake Fenton senior Jarrett Trombley accomplished that goal and then some as he became a rare, four-time state champion after winning the 130-pound individual title in Division 3.

Trombley defeated Dundee sophomore Christian Killian 8-2 to win the title and cap his senior season with a perfect 59-0. Trombley ended his high school with a 194-1 overall record and is this year's High School Sports Scene Wrestler of the Year.

That one loss, suffered during his freshman year, fueled Trombley in his march to winning four state titles.

"That's been the reason for the majority of my success in high school," Trombley said. "That one loss; if you don't lose, if you don't fail, then you don't know how to get better. That loss helped me get better for the next four

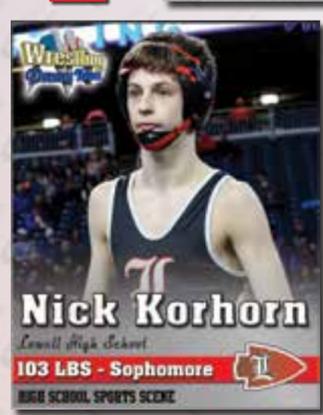
years and helped me achieve what I wanted to achieve."

Trombley became the 23rd wrestler in the state of Michigan to win four individual titles during his high school career. Becoming a four-time state champion was a goal of his that has been systematic process.

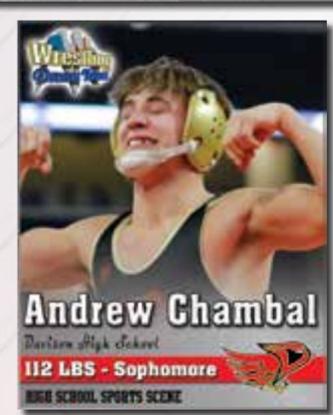
"It's always been a goal to be a state champ," Trombley said. "It's a completely different goal to be a four-time state champ. I just took it year by year, match by match. I never overlook anyone and that's how you get better. My first year was definitely a learning year. My sophomore year was just trying to keep up the pace. Get better each day. Junior year you've already been through half of high school so that's the time to turn it up, senior year just leave everything on the mat because you'll never get to do it again."

Trombley, ranked seventh nationally by Intermat Wrestling, will continue his career in college at North Carolina State University next season.

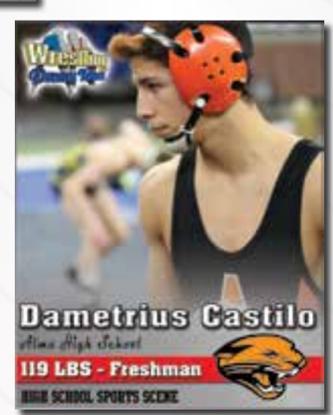
Jarrett Trombley Lake Fenton High School 130 LBS - Senior SPORTS SCENE'S WRESTLER OF THE YEAR



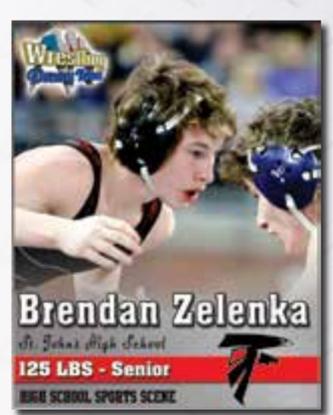
Nick Korhorn Lowell High School 103 LBS - Sophomore



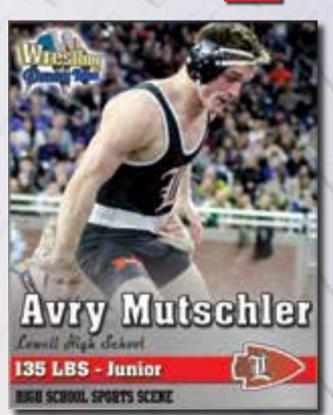
Andrew Chambal Davison High School 112 LBS - Sophomore



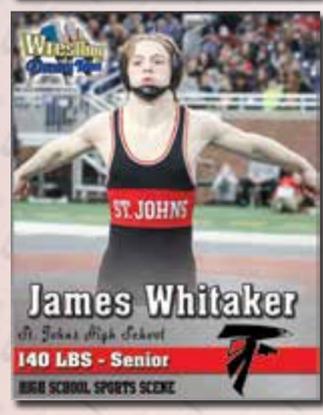
Dametrius Castilo Alma High School 119 LBS - Freshman



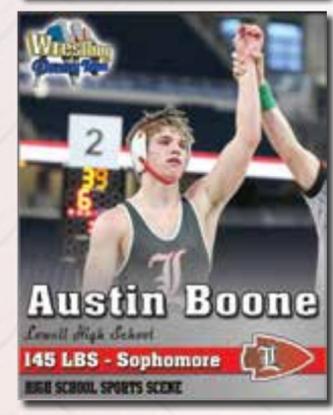
Brendan Zelenka St. Johns High School 125 LBS - Senior



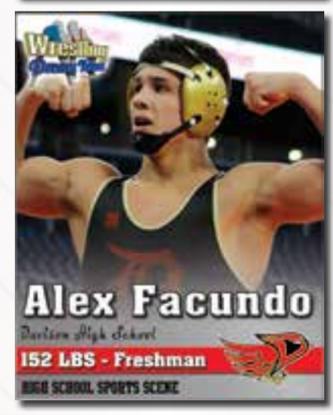
Avry Mutschler Lowell High School 135 LBS - Junior



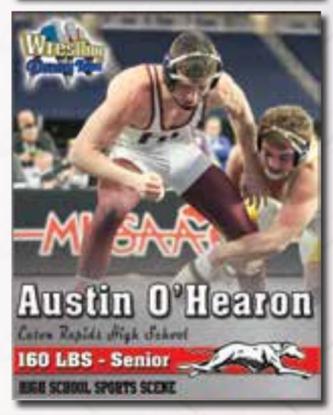
James Whitaker St. Johns High School 140 LBS - Senior



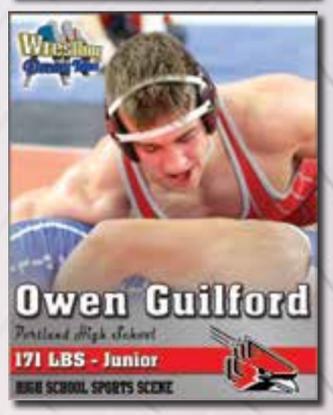
Austin Boone Lowell High School 145 LBS - Sophomore



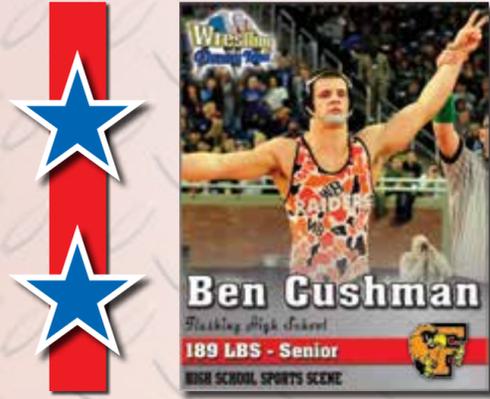
Alex Facundo Davison High School 152 LBS - Freshman



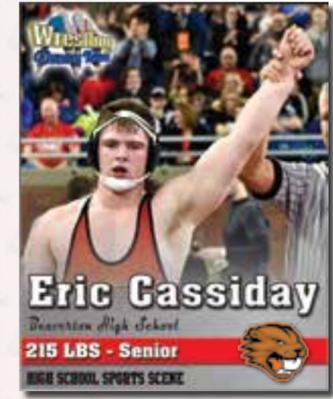
Austin O'Hearon Eaton Rapids High School 160 LBS - Senior



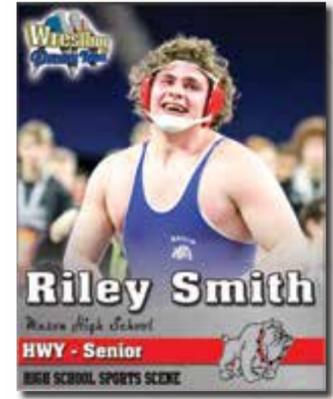
Owen Guilford Portland High School 171 LBS - Junior



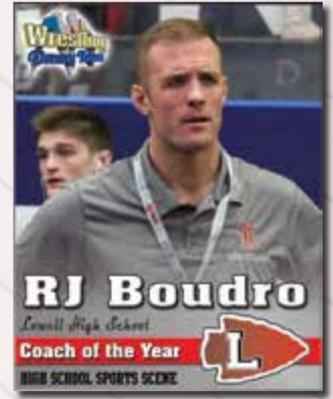
Ben Cushman Flashing High School 189 LBS - Senior



Eric Cassiday Davison High School 215 LBS - Senior



Riley Smith Mason High School HWY - Senior



RJ Boudro Lowell High School Coach of the Year

FIRST TEAM

- 103 - Jake Elavich, Montrose
112 - Andrew Hughes, Grand Ledge
119 - Kyle Schaaf, Clare
125 - Reese Wallis, Montrose
130 - Kaleob Whitford, St. Johns
135 - Trevor Robinson, Shepherd
140 - Austin Wolford, New Lothrop

- 145 - Jayce Kuehnlein, St. Louis
152 - Brian Case, Davison
160 - Sam York, DeWitt Ryan
171 - Ringler, Cedar Springs
189 - Kyle Cassiday, Beaverton
215 - Keigan Yuhas, Lowell
285 - Brady Riggs, Grand Ledge

SECOND TEAM

- 103 - Jack Sherman, Millington
112 - Steven Garty, Davison
119 - Dawson Jankowski, Lowell
125 - Chris Haynes, Eaton Rapids
130 - Tanner Miller, Mason
135 - Marc Shaeffer, Davison
140 - Mason Breece, Birch Run

- 145 - Vic Schoenherr, Bay City Western
152 - Lucus Pionton, Cedar Springs
160 - Jackson Nevadomski, Lake Fenton
171 - Cal Stefanko, Davison
189 - Dave Kruse, Lowell
215 - Billy Koepf, Chippewa Hills
285 - Aaron Gilmore, Davison

SPORTS SCENE'S HONORABLE MENTION

Aiden Adkins (130), Carson City-Crystal; Adam Aguilar (215), Grand Ledge; Griffin Barnette (285), Montrose; Evan Becker (125), Essexville-Garber; Tyler Brandt (135), DeWitt; Macintyre Breece (119), Birch Run; Justin Carnahan (171), New Lothrop; Mitchel Christensen (130), Essexville-Garber; Lance Clapp (285), Swartz Creek; Brockton Cook (189), Birch Run; Ethan Crawford (119), Blanchard-Montabella; Wyatt Daniel (119), Fowlerville; Nolan Datema (103), Carson City-Crystal; Jake Davis (152), St. Louis; Doak Dean (130), Lowell; Colby Deberry

(160), Holt; Tyler Delooff (285), Lowell; Ernie Diaz (189), St. Louis; Brennan Doyle (160), Midland Dow; Cameron Dusenberry (285), New Lothrop; Austin Engle (171), Lowell; Caleb Fish (140), Eaton Rapids; James Fotis (140), Lowell; Desmond Gardner (140), Portland; Dawson Giesken (112), Chesaning; Robert Granberry (171), Chippewa Hills; Jerry Hall (182), Byron; Quenten Hall (140), DeWitt; Bray Haynes (125), Chippewa Hills; Brock Holek (125), Durand; Peyton Kobel (189), Midland Bullock Creek; Manuel Leija (112), Lansing Eastern; Anthony

Mack (130), Dansville; Devin Miller (160), Portland; Alex Moore (152), Clio; Zachary Morris (285), Ovid-Elsie; Chandler Murton (171), DeWitt; Charley Newton (160), Essexville-Garber; Jay Nivison (160), Davison; Jack Owens (171), Beaverton; Jack Richardson (145), Rockford; Jayden Rittenbury (135), Fenton; Jordan Rodriguez (103), Chesaning; Nolan Rodriguez (103), Alma; Jordan Scofield (125), Stanton Central Montcalm; Braxton Seida (145), Carson City-Crystal; Jaycob Sharp (152), Chippewa Hills; Daryn Shepler (135), Carson City-Crystal; Greg

Simmons (285), Alma; Daniel Smith (189), Carson City-Crystal; Kilian Southworth (145), DeWitt; Sean Spidle (112), Flint Powers; Jacob Spiess (145), Perry; Zeth Strejc (125), Lowell; Ben Surato (215), Mason; Dakota Tatro (130), Millington; Jack Thayer (215), Corunna; Brady Triola (135), Fenton; Sean Trombley (145), Lake Fenton; Jamison Ward (119); Carson City-Crystal; Mitchell Ward (171), Belding; Connor White (135), Rockford; Brian Yeakey (215), Carson City-Crystal; Alex Yocom (215), Clio; 125; Logan Zell (125), New Lothrop.

SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON SWIMMING

# Swimmers, Divers Wrap Up Strong Season With Personal Records During Finals

David Cook Sports Scene

### DIVISION 3

**Alma:** The Panthers turned in a big effort at the Division 3 state swimming and diving finals by placing 15<sup>th</sup> overall. Kyle Lovas and Brody Ross both earned all-state honors to lead the Panthers. Lovas, a senior, placed seventh in the 100 butterfly and also 10<sup>th</sup> in the 200 freestyle. Ross, a junior, earned all-state honors in a pair of events by taking seventh in the 200 IM and eighth in the 500 freestyle. Jack Lesinger,

sophomore, placed 14<sup>th</sup> in the 100 backstroke.

The 400 free relay team made up of junior Aaron Stanekwitz, Ross, Lovas and Lesinger placed 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Flint Powers Catholic:** The Chargers placed 11<sup>th</sup> at the Division 3 state finals won by Holland Christian. Griffin Seifert earned all-state honors by taking fourth in the 100 backstroke and eighth in the 200 IM. Seifert also teamed up with Trevor Purman, Cooper Prue and Murphy Prue to place eighth in the 200 medley relay.

**St. Johns:** St. Johns junior diver

Cayden Petrak won the diving competition to lead the Redwings to a 21<sup>st</sup> place finish in Division 3.

### DIVISION 2

**Midland Dow:** The Chargers wrapped up the season by placing eighth in the state at the Division 2 state meet.

Senior Jacob Krzciok, who will be swimming in college at Miami University next season, led the way for Dow. Krzciok placed third in the 50 free and fourth in the 100 free.

Sophomore Collin Che also earned a pair of all-state honors taking seventh in both the 50 and 100 freestyle.

Dow also had a pair of relay teams earn all-state honors. The 200 free-relay team of Ben Newman, Zach Fewkes, Krzciok and Che placed second and the 400 free-relay team of Hans Dehn, Krzciok, Che and Fewkes placed third.



Area swim teams took to the pool in early March looking to bring home championships of their own. (Laura Brown, High School Sports Scene Photos)

**Saginaw Heritage:** The Hawks placed 14<sup>th</sup> overall at the Division 2 meet that was won by Dexter. Senior Zach Rychel led the way as he placed eighth in the 100 freestyle.

**Okemos:** The Chiefs placed 17<sup>th</sup> as a team. Sophomore diver Hunter Hollenbeck turned in a big effort as he won the diving competition. Junior Alexander Eddy placed

seventh in the 200 freestyle.

### DIVISION 1

**Rockford:** The Rams of Rockford placed 15th overall in the Division 1 state meet that was won by Ann Arbor Skyline. Senior Jacob Newberger led the Rams as he earned all-state honors in a pair of events. Newberger placed third in the 100 backstroke and fifth in the 100 butterfly.

SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON HOCKEY

# Heritage Hockey Falls To Brighton In D1 Championship Game

John Raffel Sports Scene

A banner season for Saginaw Heritage's hockey team ended one win short with a 5-2 loss to Brighton in the Division 1 title game at USA Hockey Arena on March 10.

Brighton had a 2-1 lead on Heritage after the first period, following a scoreless second period. Brighton had a 3-1 scoring edge in the third period.

Brighton was 1-of-7 on power plays and had a 34-25 edge in shots. Heritage was 2-of-5 with the extra man.

"We've never made it to the championship game," Heritage coach JJ Bamberger said. "It was the fourth time we made it to the semifinals and we had never won a semifinal game before this year.

David Helpap scored the first goal for Heritage. John Michael Watson also

scored for Heritage, assisted by Collin Addicott.

A dramatic overtime in the semifinals, 3-2, over Traverse City West put the Hawks in the finals.

Heritage scored two goals in the first and TC had two in the second. The winning goal in overtime came from Matte Cole, assisted by Brady Rappuhn.

Other goals were scored by Edison Symons, assisted by Cole and David Helpap, assisted by Parker Severson and Jacob Best.

"It's the third time we played TC West," Bamberger said. "They came in with a great game plan and battled us. We had a 2-0 lead. They were competing hard. Our style of play is to open it up a little more offensively. It went into overtime and our goal was to end it fast and not let

them settle in to what they were trying to do. We did that by ending the overtime in one of the first couple of shifts of the overtime."

Junior Jack Jesko was the winning goalie.

"The kids at the beginning of the year before the season ever started, we didn't know what to expect," Bamberger said. "I knew we had a difficult schedule. I felt our record could possibly be .500. After the first couple of games, I had to re-evaluate that because these kids worked extremely hard. Off the ice and on the ice, team comradery, everything you want as a coach, we had. We had six or seven defensemen who can all play. We had some young players in their first year on the team, who stepped up their game as well. It seemed like everything came together through hard work and being good teammates."

Helpap was a first-team all-state performer. Severson also scored a lot of goals along with Rappuhn and Symons; Jesko had 2.89 goals against average.

Heritage's final record was 22-5-3.



The Heritage hockey team lost 5-2 to Brighton in the Division 1 championship game played in Plymouth. Heritage finished the season 22-5-3. (Submitted Photo)

Presenting The

2017-18 Swimmer Of The Year



CAYDEN PETRAK

**The Cayden Petrak File**  
 St. Johns High School  
 Grade: Junior  
 Season Accolades: Petrak won the Division 3 Diving title for the second straight season with 470.35 points, edging East Grand Rapids sophomore Nick Merritt by a mere 1.5.



Presenting The

2017-18 Hockey Player Of The Year



DAVID HELPAP

**The David Helpap File**  
 Heritage High School  
 Grade: Junior  
 Season Accolades: Helped lead Heritage to the Division 1 title game before losing to Brighton 5-2. Helpap finished the season with 59 points (28 goals and 31 assists).



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**SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON GIRLS BASKETBALL**

# Area Girls Basketball Teams Turn In Outstanding Seasons

Butch Harmon  
Sports Scene

**CLASS A**

**Saginaw Heritage:** The premier team in the state this year, Heritage defeated East Lansing 57-36 to win the Class A state title. Moira Joiner, the Class A Player of the Year, led a talented group of players that included all-state, honorable-mention players Shine Strickland-Gills, Jessi Bicknell and Mallory McCartney.

**East Lansing:** The Trojans won 26 straight games this season before falling to Saginaw Heritage in the Class A finals. Senior standout Jaida Hampton was named this year's Miss Basketball winner. Aaliyah Nye earned honorable-mention, all-state honors and Amelia McNutt was a first-team, all-conference player.

**Okemos:** Led by sophomore Jasmine Clerkley, a first-team, all-state player, Laya Hartman, an honorable-mention, all-state player and junior forward Bergin Robinson, a three-year starter, the Chiefs won a district

championship this season before falling to Coldwater in the regional semifinals.

**DeWitt:** The CAAC Blue Conference champions, DeWitt finished the sea-



son with a 21-2 record with the lone losses being to East Lansing, including one loss in the district tournament. Grace George earned honorable-mention, all-state honors while Maddie Petersen, Sydney Mills and Annie McIntosh all earned first-team, all-conference honors.

**CLASS B**

**Freeland:** The Falcons won district and regional titles before falling to eventual state champion Detroit Country Day in the Class B state quarterfinals. Alyssa and Kaylee Argyle both earned second-team, all-state honors to lead the Falcons this year.

**Birch Run:** Winners of the Tri-Valley East, the Panthers also won a district title before



Area teams found success on the court this season winning conference, district or regional titles. Heritage High School was lucky enough to win the Class A championship. (High School Sports Scene Photos)

falling to Freeland in the regional finals. Sophomore Sarah Miller led the way as she earned first-team, all-state honors.

**Corunna:** The Cavaliers won a district title this season and dropped the regional semifinal game against Birch Run. Maddie Birchmeier led the Cavaliers and earned honorable-mention, all-state honors.

**Fowlerville:** The Gladiators closed the season strong by winning a district title and defeating Charlotte in the regional semifinals before falling to eventual Class B state finalist Jackson Northwest in the regional finals. Elie Smith earned second-team, all-state honors this season.

**Alma:** The Panthers turned in a 16-5 record this season and dropped its first-round district game against Big



Rapids. Olivia Apple and Hailey Leister both earned honorable-mention, all-state honors this season.

**Charlotte:** Led by first-team, all-conference player Carly Scheblo, the Orioles won a district title this season.



**CLASS C**

**Pewamo-Westphalia:** The Pirates turned in a big season, winning 25 games in a row this season before suffering their first loss of the season against eventual Class C state champion Detroit Edison. Senior Emily Spitzley earned first-team, all-state honors while Hannah Spitzley and Ellie Droste both earned honorable-mention, all-state honors.

**Hemlock:** Led by honorable-men-



tion, all-state players Sydney Peake and Natalie Hoffman, the Huskies won the Tri-Valley West title and a district title. Hemlock's season ended in the regional finals against Pewamo-Westphalia.

**Carson City-Crystal:** The Eagles finished the season with a 19-4 overall record. Carson City was 12-2 in the league with both losses coming against Sacred Heart (25-1 record). The Eagles also dropped a game to Central-Montcalm (20-1) and fell in the district finals to Hemlock (21-4). Baily Fitzpatrick and Kayla Stone both earned honorable-mention, all-state honors.

**Laingsburg:** Sophie Wilsey and Alex Randall both earned honorable-mention, all-state for the Wolfpack this season and led the squad to a district title.

**Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary:** Meghan Blaine earned honorable-mention, all-state honors and led MLS to a district title this season.

**CLASS D**

**Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart:** The Irish finished the season with a 25-1 record and were a perfect 14-0 in the Mid-State Conference. Junior Scout Nelson earned first-team, all-state honors while senior Sophie Ruggles was named to the second team. The Irish also won a regional championship before falling in the state semifinals to eventual Class D state champion Adrian Lenawee Christian.

**Fulton:** The Pirates ended the season on a roll winning the Merrill district title and reaching the regional finals before falling to Kingston. Rachel Craft, Lyndsi Wolfe and Kylie Slavik led the way for the Pirates this season.

**Portland St. Patrick:** Katie Coyne earned honorable-mention, all-state honors this season and helped lead St. Patrick to a district title.



**Player Of The Year**  
**Moira Joiner, Saginaw Heritage, Jr.**

Joiner averaged 16 points, eight rebounds, six assists and four steals while helping Heritage win a Class A championship and finishing the season with a 27-1 record.

- FIRST TEAM**  
Sarah Miller, Birch Run, So.  
Maddie Watters, Williamston, Jr.  
Emily Spitzley, Pewamo-Westphalia, Sr.  
Sophie Ruggles, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart Academy, Sr.  
Grace George, DeWitt, Sr.
- SECOND TEAM**  
Mallory McCartney, Saginaw Heritage, Jr.  
Destiny Strother, Flint Carman-Ainsworth, Jr.  
Ali Aldrich, Beaverton, Sr.  
Morgan Kaniszewski, Tawas, Sr.  
Maddie Voelker, Goodrich, Jr.

**HONORABLE MENTION:**  
Molly Davis, Midland Dow; Hannah Smith, Midland; Maddie Barrie, Midland; Jessi Bicknell, Saginaw Heritage; Aaliyah Nye, East Lansing; Laya Hartman, Okemos; Makenzie Todd, Grand Ledge; Maddie Maloney, St. Johns; Chloe Idoni, Fenton; Elie Smith, Fowlerville; Alyssa Argyle, Freeland; Kaylee Argyle, Freeland; Hannah Thiel, Saginaw

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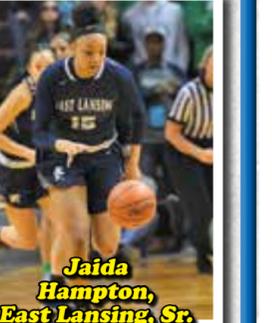
**Shine Strickland-Gills, Heritage, Jr.**

She led Heritage in rebounds with 9.1 per game. Gills also averaged 2.5 blocked shots, 2.0 steals and 2.0 assists per game.



**McKenna Walker, Bay City Western, Sr.**

Walker averaged 22.1 points, along with 6.8 rebounds, 3.0 steals, and 2.8 assists per game for the Warriors this season.



**Jaida Hampton, East Lansing, Sr.**

Hampton won the 2017-18 Miss Basketball award after helping East Lansing make it all the way to the Class A title game before losing to Heritage.



**Jasmine Clerkley, Okemos, Soph.**

Only a sophomore, Clerkley has already committed to Michigan State University.



**Scott Nelson, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart, Jr.**

Nelson helped the Irish make the Class D semis for the second straight year. Nelson is also an accomplished distance runner.



**Coach: Vonnie DeLong, Heritage**

DeLong is 106-14, averaging more than 21 wins a season after leading the Hawks to the Class A state title in 2018.

(High School Sports Scene Photos)

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# Heritage Girls Too Much For East Lansing In Class A Finals

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

It was all Saginaw Heritage in the Class A state championship girls basketball game.

The Hawks ended the season at 27-1 and handed the 26-1 Trojans their only loss of the season.

"It's been a tremendous run," Heritage coach Ronnie DeLong said. "We played a lot better than we did Friday."

East Lansing enjoyed an early lead but it was all Heritage from there. The Hawks were up 12-8 after the first quarter and 28-15 at halftime. It was 42-29 after the third quarter and Heritage put it away with a 15-7 run in the fourth for the 57-36 final.

Heritage defense did the trick, holding East Lansing to 10-of-43 from the floor for 23.3 percent. Heritage was 23-of-50 from the floor for 46 percent.

Four of the Hawks' starters were in double figures, led by Madison Camp (15) who was 6-of-8 from the floor, Shine Strickland-Gills (12), who was 6-of-9 from the floor and had 12 rebounds, Jessica Bicknell (12), who five boards and

Mallory McCartney (10) who had four rebounds. The other starter, Moira Joiner, had six assists and nine rebounds.

East Lansing's Jaida Hampton, the new Miss Basketball, struggled with 1-of-13 from the floor and hit four free throws for six points.

DeLong decided to use a zone against Heritage and it turned out to be an excellent decision.

"I thought they were pretty quick for us. We traditionally play a lot of zone but this year we played almost all man," she said. "We played zone against Carman Ainsworth and Detroit Edison and that was it. A zone gives us a different look. It's a struggle. I think you saw for East Lansing, it was a struggle for them to attack it."

"Watching (East Lansing), I thought their strength was their perimeter game. They hit a lot of threes. That's what they do. I thought we could stop them in the paint."

It was Heritage's first girls basketball state title since 2002.

"Any state title, it's my first one, and it's great for me," DeLong. "I've lost in the finals and I've lost in

the semis. It's the first time that I've coached one. It's a credit to these kids. You get a sense for what it means to Heritage. They were here in full force all week long. Our fans have been unbelievable the whole year. It's a good group of kids. They support each other.

"Our hockey team went to the state finals last week for the first time in school history. They're just excited. They were thrilled to get back here and come back again. Our students show up and support us and I think the community does."

It was a disappointing loss for East Lansing coach Robert Smith and his players.

"They're disappointed with the outcome but the body of work is truly amazing," he said. "I've had some of these ladies four years and they've done amazing things. They've gotten better every year. We're a team, that doesn't have a lot of size. It's a necessity for

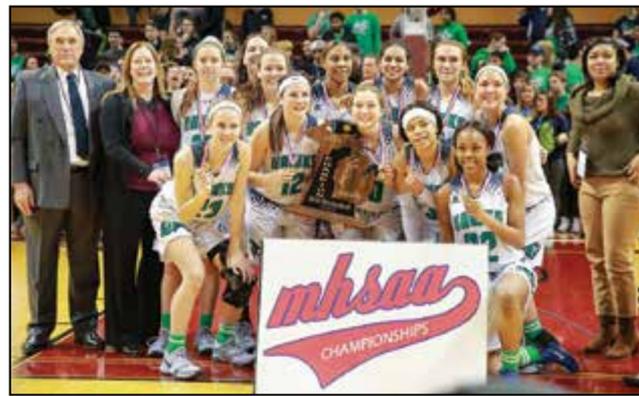
us to box out to win games. We were victimized 43 times on the boards. And we had 23 (rebounds). You're not going to win too many basketball games in that situation. The Strickland kid was really good; she had 12 boards. She was tough down low. We didn't have an answer for her.

"Our kids have battled through the playoffs. We played the No. 4, No. 6, No. 8, No. 10 in the state and now the No. 2. Heritage is very good with their only loss coming to Detroit Edison (57-55 in double overtime). We thought if we could

do certain things, this could be our game. But hats off to Heritage - they executed better at the end of quarters. They executed their game plan well, getting the ball off the boards."

Heritage's 2-3 zone defense was extremely effective.

"We have a lot of players who will be back next year," Smith said. "I know they're going to be hungry and very motivated to work hard in the offseason. We have other kids coming. As difficult as it is to swallow this loss, the future is very bright."



The Heritage girls basketball team won the Class A championship with a 57-36 victory over East Lansing in the title game. Heritage finished the season 27-1. (Lori Melton and Nick Rethman, High School Sports Scene Photos)



Jessi Bicknell

# Seniors Play Big Role In Heritage's State Title

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

Senior girls basketball players would love to have their best games in the season finale.

That seemed to be the case for Saginaw Heritage seniors Madison Camp and Jessica Bicknell, who may have saved their best for last in the 57-36 Class A state championship win over East Lansing on March 17 at Calvin College.

Camp was 6-of-8 from the floor for 12 points and had 10 rebounds. Bicknell was 5-of-12 from the floor for 12 points and had five boards.

"They played great," Heritage coach Ronnie DeLong said. "We talked about that when the state tournament started that

for the seniors it was their last shot and their last go around, and make it worth your while. They came with everything today and had a great day. I was proud of them."

Shine Strickland-Gills, the junior forward, who had 12 points and 12 rebounds agreed that the Heritage girls were able to add onto the school's state championship legacy.

"It feels good to finally bring home a state championship for girls basketball," she said. "It's been mostly boys sports. It makes me happy we finally got it."

Strickland-Gills was asked if she expected to have the type of game she produced.

"I come out and I go hard," she replied. "That's pretty much

what I do. Most people would say I'm a defensive player. I know my teammates will get me to score so I don't worry about that. The thing is to play defense."

Strickland-Gills admitted this was a moment she had been thinking about since the eighth grade. The two other juniors on the team, Moira Joiner and Mallory McCartney, have played together since the eighth grade.

"It feels better than I thought," Strickland-Gills said

DeLong said the team's only regular season loss, 57-55 to Detroit Edison in double overtime, got everybody focused and everybody back. They took it to another level. They knew it was time to go and the tournament was right around the corner. By the time we played Edison, we were firing on all cylinders. It went back-and-forth. It was such an incredible game. It focused us."



Maddie Camp

# East Lansing's Hampton Wins Miss Basketball

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

Miss Basketball came to East Lansing this season.

The award went to Jaida Hampton, who was named the state's top senior by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan.

She's the second Trojan player to earn the honor, along with Klarissa Bell, a 2010 East Lansing graduate.

She averaged 16.1 points and five rebounds while hitting 63

percent of her shots from the floor.

Hampton realized her goal of playing in the state title game when her Trojans won their semifinal contest over Wayne Memorial 60-52 on March 16 at Calvin College.

She only had seven points with 2-of-8 shooting that day, but grabbed nine rebounds. Aaliyah Nye picked up the slack for East Lansing with 16 points and 10 boards.

"We had to relax and kept telling each other to calm down and

East Lansing's Jaida Hampton eyes up a free throw during the Class A title game against Heritage. Hampton was named the 2018 Miss Basketball winner this season. (Lori Melton, High School Sports Scene Photo)



# Pewamo's Season Ends With Another Close Loss To Detroit Edison In Class C Semis

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

It was fun while it lasted; Pewamo-Westphalia's girls basketball season ended at 25-1 following its only loss of the season in the semifinals on March 17 to Detroit Edison PSA 50-39, at Calvin College. Rickea Jackson scored half of Edison's points with 12-of-20 from the floor for 25 and had seven rebounds. Amiya Hagemann added 13 points.

"I was pushing her to come in and get more rebounds," Edison coach Monique Brown said. "That was our issue last year."

P-W coach Steve Eklund noted Edison was ranked in the country and went on to beat Ypsilanti Arbor Prep 51-34 in the finals.

Edison edged Pewamo-Westphalia 46-44 in the 2017 finals.

"We knew what we were up against," Eklund said. "I couldn't be prouder of our group of girls. They battled for 22 minutes. The scoreboard doesn't tell the whole story some of the times."

Edison was up 22-14 at halftime.

"We don't see that type of athleticism in the CMAC," Eklund said. "We were 4-of-19 from the 3. We as a team shoot over 40 percent. We didn't shoot the ball well. It was uncharacteristic of us. We would have liked to have shot the ball better. It might have been a different story."

Emily Spitzley ended her career at P-W with 14 points and 11 rebounds.

"I wouldn't trade it for the world," she said. "We made so much progress and have gotten so much better. It's been a great ride."

"It's tough to lose in the finals and semifinals," Eklund said. "A 25-0 start matched the best start in school history."

Ellie Droste scored 11 points and Hanna Spitzley had nine.

"The whole tournament run was the best part," Spitzley said. "We faced better teams and had some great wins against some good teams since we had that huge run last year, we wanted to play Edison. It didn't come out the way we hoped it would."

Waterford Our Lady of the Lakes

It was looking good after two quarters for Waterford Our Lady

of the Lakes in its Class D semifinal game on March 16 at Calvin College. The Lakers were up 33-24 at halftime, but were outscored by Chassell from the western Upper Peninsula 18-8 in the third and 13-10 in the fourth. Chassell shot 22-of-44 from the floor.

"Down the stretch, I felt we were able to get to the basket," Our Lady coach Steve Robak said. "Even though we were getting good looks, I didn't feel we had many turnovers. We had nine turnovers and they had 18. In that regard, we did what we wanted. The second half, we struggled shooting. That was really the difference there."

Milly Allens scored 24 for Chassell

"We had trouble with her when she had the ball," Robak said.

The team's final record was 20-5.

"We had an incredible season," Robak said. "We had four losses to some incredible teams."

She played varsity since her freshman season.

"Every game and every year I get better," Hampton said. "You get more experience in how you react to certain situations. I've gotten better. I'm nowhere near the player I was as a freshman."

Her 3-point shooting was the best part of her game going into the season.

"But they've fallen off," she said, adding that she's focused on other shots. "I was calm with my shots. Now teams run out to me quicker and I'm rushing it. I need to slow down on my shot."

The team didn't necessarily enter the season pointing to a state title.

"It's always been our goal to get here," she said. "But we took it a game at a time. Winning (a state title) would have meant more to me than winning Miss Basketball."



Pewamo-Westphalia's girls basketball season ended at 25-1 following its only loss of the season in the semifinals on March 17 to Detroit Edison PSA 50-39, at Calvin College. (Submitted Photo)

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Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart's season came to a close after losing to Adrian Lenawee Christian 46-44 in overtime during the Class D semis at Van Noord Arena on the campus of Calvin College. (Lori Melton, High School Sports Scene Photo)

# Sacred Heart Falls In Class D Semis

## John Raffel Sports Scene

It was a rather unusual postgame press conference for Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart's girls basketball team.

Coach Damon Brown and Irish players were smiling, laughing, joking and chuckling from start to finish while answering questions from reporters after their semifinal game with Adrian Lenawee Christian on March at Calvin College's Van Noord Arena.

What's unusual about that? The Irish lost 46-44 in overtime.

But one wouldn't have figured out the Irish's season had ended at 25-1 at the hands of the team that would wind up as Class D state champs.

But the mood was extreme-

ly upbeat despite a loss which came with two seconds to go in OT with the winning shot for Lenawee Christian.

"You couldn't have asked for anything more tonight," Brown said. "It was a great tournament high school basketball game. This is what the tournament is all about. You leave it on the floor. That's why we're smiling. We're sad we won't have a chance to hang out with each other anymore, but it was a great game. Hats off to Lenawee Christian; we knew it was going to be a defensive battle."

Sacred Heart shot 18-of-51 from the floor while Lenawee was 17-of-51, plus 3-of-17 in 3-point tries. Sacred Heart had a 42-28 rebounding advantage. But the Cougars were able to overcome it.

"Unfortunately, in these

type of games, someone goes home," Brown said. "It doesn't change anything we've done this season. I'm proud of the girls. It's two really good teams with good players."

For Sacred Heart, Sophia Ruggles was 9-of-13 from the floor for 19 points and had 15 rebounds. Bree Salenbien, a freshman, had 16 points for Lenawee.

"I couldn't be more proud of Sophia," Brown said. "She held her own. Bree had a great game. It was fun watching her play. Sophia has been doing this for four years."

"I'm so blessed to have played in this program, and with these girls," Ruggles said.

Junior Scout Nelson had 15 points for Sacred Heart and eight points.

"It's been a fun season and

we've gone in with a positive attitude," she said.

Other seniors were Grace Reetz, Megan Nowak, Margaret Yonker and Hadyn Terwilliger.

"I look at where we've come these past four years," Brown said. "Four years ago, I decided not to coach. I lost my wife to cancer, gave up basketball and I didn't have any energy. But along came the players. We've been the last four years together. With what we've been through, these games in no way shape or form define us. We've held each other's hands in dark times."

"When we came here last year, we played for Hadyn," Brown continued. "She lost her mom last year. This is just a game. What we have here is more important. Basketball is a game, it's just a game. The girls are all winners in the game of life in my book."



# Bridgeport's Season Ends In Quarterfinals; Finishes Year 24-2

## John Raffel Sports Scene

The first and last games of the season provided the only blemishes on the boys basketball record for the Bridgeport Bearcats.

It opened on Dec. 5 with a 73-70 loss to Lansing, and then came 24 straight wins that put the Bearcats in the quarterfinals, where Bridgeport lost to New Haven 78-72.

Bridgeport finished the year 24-2 and lost in the Class B quarterfinals to New Haven. (Nick Rethman, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Coach Kevin Marshall's team was 22-0 for first place in the Tri-Valley Conference East and handed Frankenmuth its only two league losses.

"The boys played tough," Marshall said. "They laid it all on the line. They came in the game against the defending champs. Overall, I was very impressed with how my team played. It's unfortunate it ended the way it did. There were a lot

of issues and some crazy non-calls that shouldn't have been called. We won't say that's the reason we lost.

"But I'm very proud of the Bridgeport team and the season we had," he continued. "We accomplished a lot. A lot of people didn't think we'd do it, especially being my first year there."

The last time Bridgeport made the quarterfinals was in 2009.

"It was a family," Marshall said. "I had coached JV at Bridgeport the last three years.

A majority of those players played for me on JV. The guys were used to playing with each other. Out of 15 players, nine of them played football. So the guys had a close family bond. We started when I took over the football program. I think that's what built the chemistry. The kids were phenomenal. It's a brotherhood."

Charles Garrett led the team in scoring at 27.7 points and 10 rebounds per game. SirQuarius Ball was at 17 points and 10 rebounds per game. Markele Garrett was at 13 points, five rebounds and five assists per game.

# Meridian's Season Ends In Class C Quarters; Fulton Surprises

## John Raffel Sports Scene

A strong season for Sanford Meridian ended at 21-4 with a 53-30 loss to Grand Rapids Covenant Christian in the Class C state quarterfinal round.

Meridian won the Jack Pine Conference with a 13-1 record.

Four senior starters graduated from last season.

"I thought we'd be very good because our sixth man was a junior, we started a soph-

omore and our JV was 19-1," coach Mitch Bohn said. "So we felt we'd be good."

Lucas Lueder was averaging 15 points per game as the team's leading scorer. Gabe Brady was averaging 10 points a game.

"After those two, it's pretty even, pretty spread out," Bohn said.

**Fulton gets hot in playoff**

Fulton had a strong post season run that went to the regional finals. The Pirates were 9-11 to end the regular season. But it was a special playoff run. They won over Ashley,

Vestaburg and Fowler (59-53) in the districts. Fulton beat Bay City All-Saints 65-22 in the regional semifinals but lost to Flint International Academy in the finals 74-62.

"We did a decent job on the boards, but had four turnovers in the first half that put us in a hole," Fulton coach Todd Walden said of the regional final. "I don't think it was decided until a minute was left. We couldn't get over the hump. We were excited to get a big win over Fowler in the district finals. It's seven district titles in the last nine years."



Sanford Meridian coach Mitch Bohn guided his team to the Class C quarterfinals this season. (Submitted Photo)

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# Area Teams Finish Strong; Many All-State Honors Handed Out

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

### CLASS A

**East Lansing:** Led by first-team, all-state forward Brandon Johns, East Lansing captured district and regional titles before falling to Holland West Ottawa in the Class A state quarterfinals. Senior Justin McAbee closed out his career by earning all-conference honors.

**Okemos:** It was a memorable year for the Chiefs who won their first conference title since 2011. Jordan Henry earned second-team, all-state honors while Evan Thomas and Noah Pruitt joined Henry on the all-conference team and helped Okemos claim a district title as well.

**Mt Pleasant:** A young team thought to be a year away from contending, the Oilers turned in a 18-5 and won a second-straight district championship. Sophomore guard Mason Wojtusik led the way as he earned honorable-mention, all-state honors. The Oilers also received key contributions from sophomore Joe Ostrowsky, junior Peyton Fountain, Jackson Ostrowsky and Tyler

Huenemann.

**Haslett:** The Vikings turned in a big season as they won the CAAC Red with a perfect 10-0 record. Mitchell Mowid earned honorable-mention, all-state honors and was named all-conference along with Patric Hintz and Sam Laczynski.

### CLASS B

**Williamston:** Led by first-team, all-state selection Cole Kleiver, the Hornets were a perfect 10-0 in the CAAC White. Sean Cobb earned honorable-mention, all-state honors and helped Williamston add both district and regional titles before falling to eventual Class B state champion Benton Harbor in the state quarterfinals.

**Bridgeport:** The Bearcats were back in the headlines this season. Led by second-team, all-state athlete Charles Garrett, Bridgeport won conference, district and regional titles before dropping a 78-72 decision to New Haven in the quarterfinals. SirQuarius Ball and Markele Garrett also earned honorable-mention, all-state honors.

**Ovid-Elsie:** It was a memorable



the season.

**Alma:** The Panthers won a fourth straight district title this season. Senior guard Damon Anguiano, an honorable-mention, all-state honoree, turned in a thrilling district performance with 82 total points in Alma's three district wins.

**Swan Valley:** Terryron Liddell earned honorable-mention, all-state honors and led the Vikings to a share of the TVC-Central title with an 11-3 league record.

**Ionia:** Ionia wrapped up the season

winning a district championship. Brady Swinehart earned honorable-mention, all-state honors and was all conference along with Nick Szymanski.

### CLASS C

**Dansville:** Led by standout junior big man Caleb Hodgson, who earned first-team, all-state honors, the Aggies won a district title and reached the regional finals.

**Hemlock:** The Huskies won a district title this year. Nolan Finkbeiner led the way for Hemlock and earned honorable-mention, all-state honors.

**Beal City:** The Aggies finished the season strong by winning a district title and finishing with a 16-8 overall record. Logan Chilman and Ryan Schafer both earned honorable-mention, all-state honors.

**Saginaw Nouvel:** TJ Raedy earned honorable-mention, all-state honors and helped Nouvel end the season with a district title.

### CLASS D

**Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart:** The Irish captured a district title and reached the regional title before falling to Buckley. Colten Nelson and Joe Methner both earned honorable-mention, all-state honors and helped Sacred Heart finished the season with an 18-6 record.

**Fulton:** The Pirates closed the season with a flourish winning a district title and a regional semifinal game before falling to Flint International Academy in the regional finals. Evan Barton, Cole Blair, Brevin Cassidy, Tristan Rudy, Blake Batis and Austin Avery all came up with big efforts down the stretch.

**Lansing Christian:** The Pilgrims won a district title before dropping a 59-51 decision to eventual Class D state champion Adrian Lenawee Christian in the regional. Andrew Prieskorn earned honorable-mention, all-conference honors as he helped Christian finish the season with an 18-6 record.



Alma won its fourth straight district championship this season. Above: Swan Valley's Alex Fries drives to the hoop during a recent game this season. (Nick Rethman, Skip Traynor High School Sports Scene Photos)

# Future MSU Standout Foster Loyer Leads Clarkston To Second Straight Class A Title

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Thanks to Mr. Basketball, Foster Loyer, the Class A state championship basketball game on March 24 at the Breslin Center was no contest.

Loyer was 14-of-18 from the floor, including 6-of-11 in 3-pointers and 6-of-7 in free throws for 40 points and also had seven assists in leading Clarkston (26-1) to its second straight Class A title with a 81-38 waltz over Holland West Ottawa.

"It was an outstanding performance for our kids," Clarkston coach Dan Fife said. "We were able to come out from the start."

With his future college coach, Tom Izzo of Michigan State looking on, Loyer led his team to a 49-20 halftime lead. It was 66-26 after the

third quarter to turn on the running clock.

Loyer was tough for the West Ottawa team to face.

"He shot 12-of-17 in the semifinal," West Ottawa coach Steve Windemuller said. "We were hoping he couldn't do that two days in a row. I told our kids before the game that people in social media said he was going to drop 50 on us. It looked like that in the first half. You hope he misses a few."

"He's a heck of a player, he's not fun to guard," West Ottawa's Nick Wehrmeyer said.

CJ Robinson followed with 18 points for Clarkston and Taylor Currie had 13.

"We caught them on a day they were hot and we weren't," Windemuller said.

### Class C

Detroit Edison outscored Maple City Glen

Lake 34-20 in the second half for the 53-38 Class C state title victory. Pierre Mitchell Jr. had 17 points for Edison while Gary Solomon added 16.

"Two words describe what these guys have learned: perseverance and patience," Edison coach Brandon Boe Neely said.

Edison's final record was 17-10. The Pioneers were 10-10 during the regular season.

"They understand what it takes to get to the next level," Neely said. "To see Pierre have a game like that was just exciting."

"This was a little easier than the PSL playoffs," Mitchell said. "We clicked at the right time."

Edison was 2-6 in the Detroit Public School League.

### Class B

Benton Harbor beat Grand Rapids Catholic Central 65-64 in overtime for the Class B title. Southfield Christian topped Buckley 64-54 in the Class D title game.



Clarkston's Foster Loyer drives to the basket during the Wolves second straight Class A hoops championship. (Marvin Hall, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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# East Lansing Falls In State Quarterfinals

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

The season for East Lansing's boys basketball team came down to the quarterfinals with a 58-55 loss to Holland West Ottawa.

It ended a banner season at 22-4 for the Trojans.

Kevin Mayes coached the team starting in mid-February when regular skipper Steve Finamore reportedly got suspended and then resigned after an argument with a player's parent and his athletic director.

Mayes was disappointed with the quarterfinal loss.

"On Saturday (March 17), I went to our girls state finals game against Saginaw Heritage," Mayes said. "My daughter is on

that team and I watched as we shot a lot of threes and struggled against the zone. Then I watched my Spartans lose. It was the same type of scenario.

"Something that stuck with me from a clinic long time ago is that you need to practice against a zone. It is different and not many people do it. (West Ottawa) came out in that 3-2 zone. But we had been preparing for it. They had played man-to-man against Muskegon. In our first half we didn't get as many touches to Brandon Johns as we'd like. We were hitting them. In the first half, we settled for jump shots and didn't get as many inside touches."

East Lansing made it all the way to the Class A quarterfinals this season before losing to West Ottawa in the quarterfinals. (Marvin Hall, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Turnovers also hurt in the quarterfinal game, Mayes recalled.

"They were not pressing us," he said. "What it really came down to was our teams trying to create something that wasn't there; make the simple pass to the guy in the short corner, make the simple pass to whomever was in the middle. As the game was winding down, we shot two free throws in the fourth and they were 12-for-14. You take advantage of your opportunities and they capitalized on them. But we had bad turnovers and it was 100 percent on us. The officiating was great."

Johns, a prized recruit for Michigan, led the team with 26 points and 10 rebounds per game.



Williamston finished the season 22-3 after a 71-51 loss to Benton Harbor in the Class B state quarterfinal game. (File Photo)

# Williamston Boys Basketball Put Together Another Solid Season

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

It all came to an end for Williamston's boys basketball team on March 20 in the Class C state quarterfinal.

The Hornets claimed a final record of 22-3 with a 71-51 loss to Benton Harbor in the Class B state quarterfinal game.

Benton Harbor went on to win the state title game over Grand

Rapids Catholic Central, 65-64 in overtime.

"We had been scouting Benton Harbor basically since the start of the season," Coach Thomas Lewis said. "We had a plan. We were tied at halftime. We knew the first few minutes of the second half were critical. They came out with a 9-4 run. Finally, we had to come out and try to trap them and get some steals, even create a little more tempo. We got a little loose. They

went on a run and finished us off," Lewis called it a great season.

"We had won 17 straight coming into the quarterfinal game. Our last loss was against Warren DeLaSalle in Motor City Roundball," Lewis said. "We learned early in some losses. We had injuries early in the year. Guys stepped up. I was proud of everybody. We had six or seven different starting lineups during the year because of injuries. They

got better. We really got challenged in the district and regionals.

"Our seniors leaving leave with three league titles, three district titles, three regionals and a final four under their belt," Lewis continued. "That's pretty impressive for those guys."

The team's leading scorer was Cole Kleiver with 24 points per game and Sean Cobb with 13 points and 7.5 rebounds per game.



# Foster Loyer Leaves No Doubt Who Mr. Basketball In Michigan Is

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Mr. Basketball put on quite a show at his future home during the Class A state finals.

Clarkston senior Foster Loyer was named Mr. Basketball in early March and fans watching the title game on March 24 at the Breslin Center could see why. He had 40 points with 14-of-18 shooting from the floor.

Loyer averaged 27 points, seven assists, four rebounds and three steals during his senior season. He put on a

Clarkston's Foster Loyer, who will continue high college career at Michigan State University was named the 2018 Mr. Basketball winner in March. (Marvin Hall, High School Sports Scene Photo)

clinic in his final game.

"It's surreal, to come out there and play the way I played," he said after the title game. It hasn't sunk in yet I've played my last high school game."

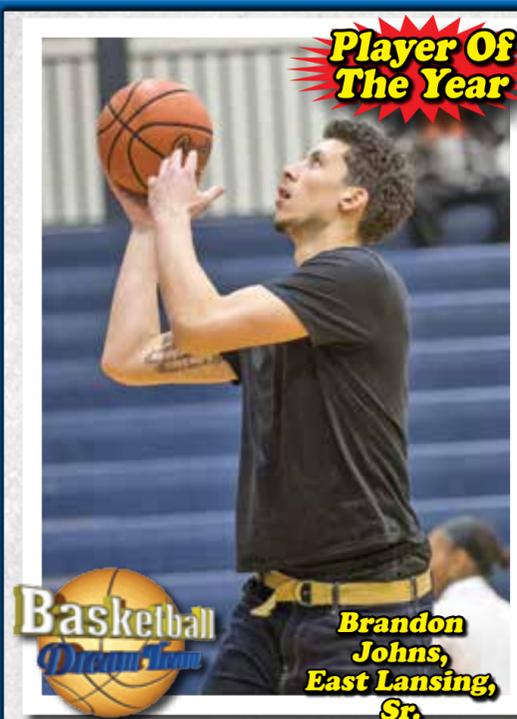
It was appropriate his final game was at the Breslin Center. He's committed to play at Michigan State. His future coach Tom Izzo was watching the title game

"I can't wait to get up here," Loyer said. "I'll be up here in a few months. My teammates did a good job getting me the ball. It was a great team effort."

Clarkston whipped Holland West Ottawa 83-38 in the title game and Clarkston ended the season at 26-1.

As he gets ready to come to MSU, "I'll have to improve my strength and athleticism," Loyer said. "I'm coming to a different level. I'll have to be ready for it. Last year, I was a little more beat up than I was this year. I know what it's like to get beat up. Playing at the Breslin in front of my future teammates was fun. It was exciting to be here in front of this crowd. To win the way we did was great. It was noted his Clarkston coach, Dan Fife, played for the Michigan Wolverines. But Loyer decided to become a Spartan.

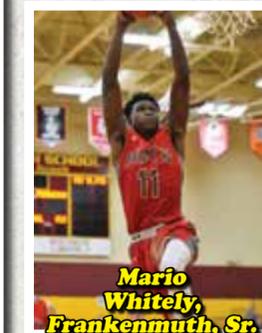
"It was fun to be out there," Loyer said.



**Brandon Johns, East Lansing, Sr.**

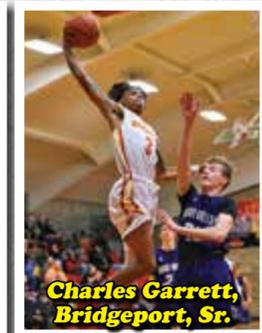
# Presenting 2017-18 Boys Basketball Dream Team

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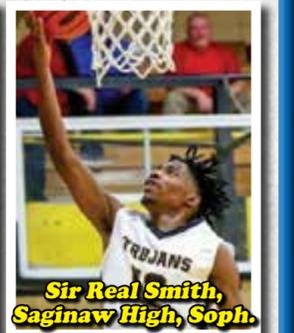
**Mario Whitely, Sr., Frankenmuth, Sr.**

Whitely finished a stellar senior season averaging 25 points, 9.5 rebounds, 4.1 steals and 3.0 assists for Frankenmuth.



**Charles Garrett, Bridgeport, Sr.**

Garrett averaged 20.7 points, 8.2 rebounds, 4.6 assists and 3.7 steals for the Bearcats, who finished the season 24-2.



**Sir Real Smith, Saginaw High, Soph.**

One of the top sophomores in Michigan, Smith averaged 21.5 points a game and 4.5 rebounds for the Trojans this season.

Johns, a University of Michigan commit finished the year averaging 27 points on 72.3 percent shooting from the field. Johns also averaged 10.9 rebounds, 2.6 blocks, 2.3 steals and 2.1 assists a game for an East Lansing team that lost to West Ottawa in the Class A quarterfinals.

## FIRST TEAM

- Ja'Kavien Lewis, Flint Carman-Ainsworth, Sr.
- Cameryn Carpenter, Flint Powers, Sr.
- Caleb Hodgson, Dansville, Jr.
- Jalen Terry, Flint Beecher, So.
- SirQuarius Ball, Bridgeport, Jr.

## SECOND TEAM

- Reggie Williams, Saginaw Arthur Hill
- Damon Anguiano, Alma
- Earnest Sanders, Flint Beecher, So.
- Nick Johnson, New Lothrop, Sr.
- Isaiah Williamson, Unionville-Sebewaing, Sr.

## HONORABLE MENTION:

- Brian Booker, Saginaw Heritage; Mason Wojtusik, Mt. Pleasant; Flint Carman-Ainsworth; Cal Endicott, Flushing; Jackarus Smith, Grand Blanc; Noah Baylis, Holly; Terryon Liddell, Saginaw Swan Valley; Sam Gray, Frankenmuth; Riley Bugg, North Branch; Tyler Smith, Clare; Tomas Teklergergis, Harrison;
- Deontae Balderas, Harrison; Braeden Childress, Big Rapids; Carson Vincent, Ovid-Elsie; Mitchell Mowid, Haslett; Brady Swinehart, Ionia; Sean Cobb, Williamston; Makai Connor, Flint Powers; Tyson Davis, Goodrich; Jalen Rawls, Mt. Morris; Sam Johnson, Spring Lake; Zach Goodline, Coloma; Shaun Hopkins, Benton Harbor; Tirrell Hausmanis, Three Rivers; Evan Finch, Plainwell; Alex Finney, Cranbrook-Kingswood; Demetrius Champion, Detroit Country Day; Jack Hannon, Pontiac Notre Dame Prep; Amier Gilmore, St. Clair Shores South Lake; Jonathan Giglio, Saginaw Valley Lutheran; Nolan Finkbeiner, Hemlock; TJ Raedy, Saginaw Nouvel; Connor Riley, Blanchard Montabella; Logan Chilman, Beal City, Ryan Schafer, Beal City; Hunter Bohn, Unionville-Sebewaing; Gabe Robinson, Reese; Kyle Stockmeyer, Reese; Harry Gilstrap, Bath; Ashley, Colin Dolloff, Ashley; Colten Nelson, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart Academy; Joe Methner, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart Academy; Noah Johnston, Vestaburg; Seth Stratton, Vestaburg; Britton Angell, Big Rapids Crossroads; Brandon Scheurer, Portland St. Pat's; Andrew Prieskorn, Lansing Christian; Nathan Walker, Webberville

(High School Sports Scene Photos)

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