

**HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE**  
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Vol. 9, Issue 95 • October/November 2017

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

It's a great day here at High School Sports Scene Magazine! What an exciting time of year for high school football fans. The state playoffs are here and area teams are lit over the prospects of making it to Ford Field.

So many story lines around this year.

Can Ithaca make it back to Ford Field after being stopped in the regional finals last year? Will Pewamo-Westphalia make it a repeat title in Division 7? Can Saginaw Swan Valley make a deep run and make it to Ford Field?

How about those St. Louis Sharks! For the first time in school history St. Louis will be playing in the state playoffs. What a thrill for the players, coaches, students and fans at St. Louis.

Football fans on the East Side of the state will get a treat the next few weeks with the Lowell Red Arrows heading down M-21. Lowell will be playing at Flushing in the first round and if the Red Arrows can get past the Raiders they could be back in the Flint area facing a talented Fenton team. Not only could Lowell be making a return trip to Genesee County, but Lowell head coach Noel Dean would be matching wits with his brother-in-law, Fenton head coach Jeff Setzke.

The girls golf and boys tennis finals just concluded on a picture-perfect weekend for playing both sports. Speaking of pictures, check out HighSchoolSportsScene.com for photos from all the girls golf and boys tennis finals.

A big shout out to the Okemos boys tennis team. The Chiefs turned in an amazing effort in winning the Division 2 state title.

With the state cross country finals approaching, the football playoffs kicking off, the boys soccer season reaching its zenith and the volleyball state tournament and boys swimming state finals on the horizon, everyone here at High School Sports Scene wishes all the athletes and coaches the best of luck for a memorable postseason!!!

Hope to see you out there at the games!

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D3	Muskegon	vs.	Tower
D4	GRCC	vs.	South Christian
D5	Swan Valley	vs.	West Catholic
D6	Ithaca	vs.	Lumen Christi
D7	New Lothrop	vs.	Madison Heights Madison
D8	Saginaw Nouvel	vs.	MCC

ENJOY THE GAMES!



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<p><b>2012 JEEP LIBERTY SPORT</b></p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$8,900</b></p> <p><b>\$179/DOWN \$179/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2009 CHEVY EQUINOX</b></p> <p>LEATHER, MOON</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$8,500</b></p> <p><b>\$169/DOWN \$169/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2010 FORD EDGE SEL</b></p> <p>LEATHER</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$11,900</b></p> <p><b>\$229/DOWN \$229/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2013 GMC ACADIA SLE</b></p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$16,900</b></p> <p><b>\$299/DOWN \$299/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2008 BUICK ENCLAVE CXL</b></p> <p>LEATHER, MOON</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$10,900</b></p> <p><b>\$209/DOWN \$209/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>
<p><b>2008 JEEP LIBERTY</b></p> <p>MOON</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$8,900</b></p> <p><b>\$179/DOWN \$179/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2010 FORD TAURUS SEL</b></p> <p>LEATHER</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$7,900</b></p> <p><b>\$155/DOWN \$155/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2013 CHEVY SILVERADO EXT</b></p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$23,900</b></p> <p><b>\$355/DOWN \$355/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2009 SATURN AURA</b></p> <p>LEATHER</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$6,300</b></p> <p><b>\$135/DOWN \$135/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2005 DODGE DAKOTA CREW SLT</b></p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$5,900</b></p> <p><b>\$129/DOWN \$129/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>
<p><b>2009 CHEVY IMPALA LT</b></p> <p>LEATHER</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$8,900</b></p> <p><b>\$179/DOWN \$179/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2007 PONTIAC G6 GT</b></p> <p>MOON</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$3,900</b></p> <p><b>\$99/DOWN \$99/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2006 CHRYSLER 300 TOURING</b></p> <p>LEATHER</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$7,900</b></p> <p><b>\$155/DOWN \$155/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2011 GMC SIERRA EXT Z-71</b></p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$16,900</b></p> <p><b>\$299/DOWN \$299/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>	<p><b>2008 CHEVY IMPALA SS</b></p> <p>LEATHER, MOON</p> <p><b>SALE PRICE \$5,900</b></p> <p><b>\$129/DOWN \$129/MONTH</b></p> <p>TAX &amp; PLATE INCLUDED IN PAYMENT</p>

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# Herrington Becomes Winningest Football Coach In MHSAA History

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

John Herrington is on top of the MHSAA football coaching mountain.

The long-time Farmington Hills Harrison head coach, who took over in 1970 and is the only coach to ever lead the Hawks, broke the career wins record October 13 at home with a 39-0 victory over Berkley.

When the clock ticked down to zero, Herrington walked onto the field with a huge smile on his face and swarmed by a throng of people - players, coach, media, parents, you name it.

It was all to honor and congratulate the legendary Herrington,

who has guided Harrison to an astounding 13 state championships and sent countless players onto college football and the National Football League.

"I couldn't even imagine this when I started coaching," Herrington admitted after the Berkley game. "I didn't even know if I'd last three years. We started winning consistently when the playoff format started in 1974 and it's continued from there for 48 years."

After the Hawks missed the playoffs in 2016 with a 5-4 record, clinching a berth with the win over Berkley was as important to Herrington as setting the record. He says he doesn't rank the win particular high in his memories, just because of the blowout nature

of it and it wasn't in a championship setting.

The win was made even more important because of a week nine 23-12 loss at Clarkston that completed Harrison's regular season at 6-3.

"That was awesome," Herrington said about clinching a playoff spot. "A couple weeks ago, we weren't sure if we were going to make the playoffs. Now we're rolling into them and we think we can do some damage in the playoffs. So I'm excited."

Farmington Hills Harrison last won a state championship in 2010 when it defeated Lowell 38-28 to complete a perfect 14-0 season.

Herrington now has a career record of 431-110-1, passing former Royal Oak Shrine and Birmingham Brother Rice coach Al Fracassa who retired after the 2013 campaign with a career record of 430-117-7.



Farmington Hills Harrison coach John Herrington recently became the winningest coach Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) history surpassing former Brother Rice Al Fracassa 430 wins. Herrington heads into the playoffs with a career record of 431-110-1. (Nate Schneider, High Sports Scene Photo)

"It was great to do it at home with so many people here," Herrington added. "And everyone stayed until the end of the game. Seeing everyone here was awe-

some. Thank God we got it."

Farmington Hills Harrison is shuttering its doors after the 2018-19 school year.

# Austin Brown Leads Madison Heights Madison

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

Austin Brown made quite the grand entrance to Madison Heights Madison football.

A junior transfer who started at quarterback the last two seasons at Detroit Catholic Central, Brown was playing his first game with the Eagles and his first contest since breaking his leg in the state semifinals last year versus Romeo.

One by one in the first half versus Warren Lincoln, the touchdown passes piled up.

And they kept coming.

By the end of the half, Brown had an MHSAA state record with eight touchdown passes in a single half. The previous record of seven was held by three players - Eric Van Swol (Grand

Rapids NorthPointe Christian, 2011), Cooper Rush (Lansing Catholic Central, 2011) and Mason Gee-Montgomery (Stockbridge, 2015).

For a player who says he was working his way back to feeling 100 percent physically, it was an incredible opener for Brown.

"I never would have thought that would happen but once I saw there was a shot I took advantage of it because you know it's not going to happen again," Brown said.

The reasons for Brown transferring to Madison are pretty obvious, a decision he made shortly after the broken leg last year.

Austin's father, Jimmy, is the athletics director at Madison and not only is he now attending school close to where he lives, but he is now surrounded by friends he has known for many years.

Brown can bring to the table as a 6-foot-1 and 190-pound quarterback who is drawing some interest from Michigan State along with a few Mid-American Conference schools.

"That first game was an eye-opener for all of us," Rogers remarked. "We found out we had some deep threats we didn't even know about and some speed we didn't know about. We worked on it some over the summer, but when Lincoln kept playing press man and it kept being there we continued going to it."

Brown threw for 243 yards against Lamphere and two TDs, one being a 72-yarder to Zyaire Croskey which accounted for the game's first score.

Heading into the postseason, Through the regular season, he threw for 24 touchdowns and ran for six more. Brown now has 2,024 passing yards on the season.

"We've taken it one game at a time all season," Brown added. "If you see our scores, some games we're blowing teams



Madison Heights Madison quarterback Austin Brown broke a state record earlier this season with eight touchdown passes in a half of a game. (Nate Schneider, High Sports Scene Photo)

out and some games we're squeaking by. We have the capability of doing anything, it's just a matter of how hard we work and become students of the game."

# Former Ithaca Product Al Gulick Has Warren Woods-Tower Back Into Football Playoffs

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

Al Gulick was presented with a package to open by his Warren Woods-Tower football players and assistant coaches in the moments following the regular season finale win over Sterling Heights.

The third-year head coach of the Titans opened the gift and inside he found a black-and-white photo of the back of his head, wearing a hat and the coach headset on a game day. It was autographed by every Woods-Tower varsity player and coach, showing their appreciation to the man who helped orchestrate a turnaround from a 1-8 team two years ago to what is now a playoff-bound 7-2 squad.

The present clearly meant something to Gulick, who immediately strung together a "wow, this is incredible" among other appreciative phrases upon opening it.

Gulick is a 1985 graduate of Ithaca High School, classmates with Yellow-jackets head coach Terry Hessbrook and High School Sports Scene publisher Randy Miniard.

He has lived in the Warren area since 1997 and teaches at the middle school while also coaching, inheriting a

Woods-Tower varsity program in 2015 that was inexperienced but full of hope.

The one-win season of '15 was improved on last year with a 3-6 mark, but the uptick has been far more significant this year as the Titans have reeled off seven wins and outscored opponents a combined 304-141.

What has been the key to the resurgence?

"We returned 16 starters from a year ago," Gulick said. "Eight on offense, eight on defense. We have 20 seniors on the team and 37 total kids. Four players have been with me all three years. All that experience is a huge key."

The four players who have been on varsity with Gulick for the duration are senior middle linebacker/fullback Trey Barbour (37 tackles, one INT), quarterback/defensive back Matthew Byrd (987 passing yards, 13 TDs; 1,182 rushing yards, 17 TDs), senior wide receiver/safety Jajuan Lovejoy (25 catches, 405 yards, 6 TDs; 28 tackles, 2 INTs) and junior running back/middle linebacker Joel Radvansky (45 tackles, one INT).

Following back-to-back losses, Woods-Tower got back on the right track Friday night with a 63-14 thrashing over winless Sterling Heights.

"We had a good week of practice and the kids were focused," Gulick stated. "My biggest fear was that Sterling Heights was coming in at 0-8 and that we wouldn't have focus and we'd come in and make a bunch of mistakes. We had one turnover, but we didn't make a lot of mistakes and I was happy with that."

Lovejoy had touchdown receptions of 63 and 10 yards in the first half to play a big role in the blowout

"Our passing game has been up-and-down this year so it hasn't always been there for Jajuan," Gulick said. "But he showed in this game that he can make big plays when we're able to get the ball in his hands."

Woods-Tower now gears up for the postseason, which could include a rematch with crosstown rival Warren Fitzgerald. The Titans downed the Spartans by a count of 21-14 earlier this year.

"There are only 32 teams left and we're going to hang our hat on that," Gulick added. "Hopefully we can win a couple. We'll probably get Fitzgerald again and it was a heck of a ballgame last time. I wouldn't expect anything different."



Former Ithaca High School product Al Gulick has Warren Woods-Tower back in the playoffs this season after posting a 7-2 record. (Nate Schneider, High Sports Scene Photo)

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# Sparrow Carson Hospital Presents Area Teams To Watch

## Return To T-Formation Has Carson City-Crystal Running Wild This Season

### David Cook Sports Scene

After a year running the spread offense, the Carson City-Crystal has gone back to its roots with the T-formation and the results have been impressive.

Led by junior running back Drew Stout, the Eagle ground game is gaining yards in chunks this season. Through the first eight games of the season Carson City-Crystal is averaging 375 yards rushing per game.

Stout, the team's quarterback last year in the spread offense, has transitioned back to running back this season and the results have been impressive. Through the first eight games Stout has rushed the ball 158 times for 1,777 yards (11.2 avg.) and 20 rushing touchdowns. Stout has also scored on a pass reception and has contributed on defense with four interceptions.

"The guys up front are where it

all starts," said Carson City-Crystal coach Tim Stout.

Paving the way for the Eagle running backs is an offensive line consisting of tight end Brody Mikula, left tackle Jeremiah Eller, left guard Daniel Smith, center Seth Seida, right guard Nash Akin, right tackle Brandon Murray and tight end Caleb Collins.

While the line is creating running lanes, Drew Stout's running skills take full advantage of the holes in the defense.

"Drew has great vision and sees the game real well," said his coach and father, Tim Stout. "He is a very patient runner who lets things develop and is able to see things develop. Even when he was younger, he was always able to see things develop. He also has some decent speed in the open field. There have not been many times where he has been chased down from behind. He is a real coachable kid too."

The move to the T-formation has also suited the Eagles to a tee. That move came about when the elder Stout was hired as head coach just a few weeks before the season started.

"We had a little bit of a slow start," said Stout. "We brought the T-formation back after running the spread last year. Carson City has always been a T-formation team, even back to the 90s under coach Pringle. We decided to go back to the T-formation as our primary offensive scheme."

The Eagle offense also went through a personnel change midway through the season that is paying dividends. The change came about when Nathan Ewalt, a starter at offensive tackle to start the season, went out with an injury.

"When Nathan came back from injury we put him in the backfield," Stout said. "He has done a great job for us. In the three games he has been in the backfield he has scored five touchdowns. We have three good

backs in Nathan, Drew and junior fullback Noah Lopez. Noah has also had multiple 100-yard rushing games this year."

Carson City-Crystal's defense has also been rounding into form. Middle line-backer Daniel Smith is the cornerstone of the Eagle defense with 105 tackles through the first eight games.

"We've shown a lot of improvement on defense," Stout said. "Last we played Merrill and they beat us 54-6. This year we shut them out 36-0. The guys have really been showing improvement on defense this year."

Progress has been made throughout the program and the future also looks bright for the Eagles.

"We have quite a few pieces coming back next year," Stout said. "It took us a little while to get going due to the



Carson City-Crystal's Drew Stout has rushed close to 1,800 yards in 2017. (Courtesy Photo)

late start. Once we got a few games under our belt we got going. It's like riding a bike, we were a little wobbly at first but once we got the hang of it we have started clicking pretty good."

## Kramer Coming Up Big For Cedar Springs Football

### John Raffel Sports Scene

It's been a memorable season for Brandon Kramer and the Cedar Springs Red Hawks.

The Red Hawks finished the regular season 6-3 to make the playoffs and get a first-round date at East Grand Rapids. They clinched a playoff spot with a 56-12 victory over Ottawa Hills to end the regular season.

Cedar Springs also enjoyed wins over Lowell 28-14, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern 44-21, Northview 48-20, Greenville 48-7 and Battle Creek Lakeview 60-14.

Kramer, a senior lineman, has had an enjoyable season in his second varsity year.

"Last year was a developmental year for me," he said. "I was behind two amazing players on the depth chart, and both deserved to start. Through watching them, I've been able to tweak my game which is part of the reason I've been fortunate enough to start the past three weeks."

It's been a season Kramer won't soon forget.

"It's been a ride this year," he said. "We've been put to the test against some really good schools. I've had to block great players from teams and I feel like every play that I line up against those guys I'm getting better myself."

Kramer said he's improved immensely.

"Looking at the film from my junior year and comparing it to this season, I feel like I'm watching two completely different players," Kramer said. "I'm stronger, faster, and more experienced than I was last season."

He's been a starter on offense.

"But I also have the role of a senior leader and because of that I truly try to set this program up for long term success," Kramer said. "I want to come back from college in a few years and see Cedar Springs High School doing even better than we've done so far this year."

"I feel like my awareness of the game is truly what sets me apart from the other

tight ends in the OK White. Being able to work with Paul (Duran) week in and week out is certainly a bonus as he has a one of a kind football mind that is truly hard to find anywhere else"

The Red Hawks were down after the 50-12 loss to Zeeland West in the opener but came back impressively against Battle Creek Lakeview.

"Taking those final knees to run the clock out against Lakeview was something special," Kramer said. "To have completely turned things around between weeks one and two was important for us as a team. I feel like what happened week one made us stronger and brought us closer. To come back and win against a team like Lakeview was important. It gave us momentum going into conference play."

Kramer said he put more work in the weight room than he ever has.

"Of course there was the sessions in the weightroom as a team, but on top of that I was going to the gym almost daily," he said. "Being able to work with Legacy Football on the east side of the state also helped set me up for the season. Having the ability to go to camps on a snowy weekends allowed me to stay in shape throughout the offseason and into the preseason."



Cedar Springs Brandon Kramer has helped the Red Hawks reach the playoffs after finishing the regular season with a 6-3 record. (Courtesy Photo)

# YOUNG OWOSSO Presents Fall Stat Leaders

## FOOTBALL

### PASSING YARDS

Hunter Bridenbaugh, Essexville-Garber 2,341
Charles Garrett, Bridgeport 2,120
John Meyer, Ionia 2,092
George Waterhouse, Linden 2,034
Josh Czarnota, Fenton 1,983
Jackson Pollak, Williamston 1,733
Spencer Pnacek, Coleman 1,670
Zach Sawyer, Corunna 1,626
Joey Bentley, Ithaca 1,499
Nolan Bird, Grand Ledge 1,469
Jackson Ostrawsky, Mt. Pleasant 1,442
Seth Stratton, Vestaburg 1,426
Jackson Barnes, Lansing Sexton 1,343
Blake Gatfield, DeWitt 1,320
Drew Humm, Alma 1,295
Michael Lynn III, Lansing Catholic 1,244
Geoff Knaggs, Fowlerville 1,231
Connor Charamella, East Lansing 1,174
Avery Moore, New Lothrop 1,161
Brian Elder, Bay City Central 1,129
Kaden Kelly, Clare 1,080
Travis Courter, St. Louis 1,022
Jimmy Lehman, Pewamo-Westphalia 1,014

### RECEPTIONS

Ben VanSumeren, Essexville-Garber 85
Chase Setzke, Fenton 48
Corbin Sines, Linden 41
Gage Taylor, Ionia 40
Brenden Sersaw, Clare 38
Noah Johnston, Vestaburg 37
Manny Joppich, Essexville-Garber 35
Matt Grand-Girard, Ionia 34
Blake Underwood, East Lansing 34
Seth Mackenzie, Chippewa Hills 33
Andrew McFadden, Fowlerville 33
Judson Morse, Bay City Central 33
Kari Brooks, Lansing Sexton 31
Noah Koenigs knecht, DeWitt 31
Mic Munderloh, St. Louis 31

### RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS

Brec Alward, Alma 22
Taven Haskins, Saranac 20
Drew Stout, Carson City-Crystal 20
Joey Bentley, Ithaca 18
David Kruse, Lowell 17
Carter Lowe, Mt. Pleasant Sac. Heart 17
Konner Near, St. Johns 17
Zach Jacobs, Frankenmuth 16
Josh Czarnota, Fenton 14
Korbin Knapik, Hemlock 14
Garret Metiva, Freeland 14
Zach Sawyer, Corunna 14
Tariq Reid, Davison 12
Troy Jordan, Holt 11
Parker Smith, Lakewood-Lake Odessa 11
Brand Thelen, Fowler 11
Jacob Umholtz, Grand Ledge 11
Peyton Workman, St. Johns 11

### TOUCHDOWN PASSES

Josh Czarnota, Fenton 23
Charles Garrett, Bridgeport 23
Blake Gatfield, DeWitt 23
John Meyer, Ionia 21
Jackson Ostrawsky, Mt. Pleasant 21
Jackson Pollak, Williamston 20
Nolan Bird, Grand Ledge 19
Joey Bentley, Ithaca 18
Kaden Kelly, Clare 18
Zach Sawyer, Corunna 18
George Waterhouse, Linden 18
Spencer Pnacek, Coleman 17
Cannon Hall, Davison 15
Connor Charamella, East Lansing 14
Drew Humm, Alma 14
Seth Stratton, Vestaburg 14
Jackson Barnes, Lansing Sexton 13
Jimmy Lehman, Pewamo-Westphalia 13
Cade Schafer, Chippewa Hills 13
Brian Elder, Bay City Central 12
Jericho Herblet, Ovid-Elsie 12

### RECEIVING YARDS

Ben VanSumeren, Essexville-Garber 1,259
Chase Setzke, Fenton 1,085
Noah Johnston, Vestaburg 854
Jason Beckner, Coleman 799
Blake Underwood, East Lansing 730
Noah Koenigs knecht, DeWitt 704
Matt Grand-Girard, Ionia 692
Corbin Sines, Linden 684
SirQuarius Ball, Bridgeport 669
Markele Garrett, Bridgeport 664
Karl Brooks, Lansing Sexton 643
Jackson Morse, Bay City Central 625
Seth Mackenzie, Chippewa Hills 587
Branden Sersaw, Clare 541
Spencer MacGregor, Mt. Pleasant 533
Brandon Huff, Alma 525
Gage Taylor, Ionia 523
Evan Barton, Fulton 522
Dalton Denman, Vestaburg 512
Seeger Degayner, Linden 511
Jacob Denham, Essexville-Garber 510

### INTERCEPTIONS

Colin Day, Lansing Catholic 6
Brenden Sersaw, Clare 6
Josh Kramer, Lansing Catholic 5
Drew Martin, Frankenmuth 5

### PUNTS

Connor Charamella, East Lansing 39.6
Milo John Verlinde, Holt 37.5
Cade Kestner, Mich. Luth. Sem. 37.5

### RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS

Chase Setzke, Fenton 14
Ben VanSumeren, Essexville-Garber 13
Markele Garrett, Bridgeport 11
Evan Barton, Fulton 10
Noah Koenigs knecht, DeWitt 10
Noah Johnston, Vestaburg 10
Matt Grand-Girard, Ionia 9
SirQuarius Ball, Bridgeport 8
Jacob Denham, Essexville-Garber 8
Jayden Perry, Mt. Pleasant 8

### TACKLES

Gabe Ellis, Davison 140
Trevor Brock, Fowlerville 119
Brandon Genwright, Bridgeport 110
Marcel Colwey, Bridgeport 106
Zach Hessbrook, Ithaca 106
Daniel Smith, Carson City-Crystal 105
Phoenix Dickson, Linden 104
Kevin McKeever, Gladwin 104
Mic Munderloh, St. Louis 102
Sam Thompson, Corunna 102
Matt Pike, Swan Valley 99
Colton Hyble, Mt. Pleasant Sac. Heart 98
Peter Smith, Mt. Pleasant 96
Nate Stone, Frankenmuth, 96
Ryan Pummell, Clare 92

### FIELD GOALS LONGEST

Adam Culp, Ithaca 42
David Martin, Mich. Luth. Sem. 42

### FIELD GOALS MADE

Adam Culp, Ithaca 6
Evan Johnson, Holt 5

### RUSHING YARDS

Drew Stout, Carson City-Crystal 1,777
Taven Haskens, Saranac 1,296
Brec Alward, Alma 1,273
Emmett Boehler, Swan Valley 1,186
David Kruse, Lowell 1,138
Konner Near, St. Johns 1,111
Tariq Reid, Davison 1,108
Luke Burns, Blanchard-Montabella 1,026
Joey Bentley, Ithaca 989
Brand Thelen, Fowler 954
Troy Jordan, Holt 946
Peyton Workman, St. Johns 944
Garret Metiva, Freeland 939
Jacob Umholtz, Grand Ledge 937
Luke Bushey, Saginaw Valley Lutheran 928
Josh Czarnota, Fenton 918
Zach Jacobs, Frankenmuth 870
Aaron Rutila, Laingsburg 870
Tristan Johnson, Fulton 859
Korbin Knapik, Hemlock 841
Zach Sawyer, Corunna 840
Alec Yagiela, Frankenmuth 812

## VOLLEYBALL

### KILLS PER GAME

Grace Rekegew, Midland 4.6
Elizabeth Norris, Corunna 4.5
Grace George, DeWitt 4.3
Lindsey Taylor, Rockford 4.2
Kristen Huebner, Swan Valley 4.1
Sara Majerle, Rockford 3.8
Jordan Valley, Haslett 3.8



### BLOCKS PER GAME

Grace Ross, Midland Bullock Creek 2.0
Katie Lehman, Pewamo-Westphalia 1.5
Bre Deloye, Okemos 1.4
Rachel Hiler, Saranac 1.3
Isabel Waldie, Midland Bullock Creek 1.3
Desiree Becker, DeWitt 1.2
Olivia Waszak, St. Johns 1.2

### DIGS PER GAME

Laurny Gibbs, Mt. Morris 8.6
Grace Szynekowski, Morley-Stanwood 7.3
Lori Cook, Bath 6.8
Brooke Franco, Eaton Rapids 6.0
Lesley Barker, Portland 5.8
Jordan Barker, Portland 5.6
Jennifer Shamel, Mt. Morris 5.5
Bailey DeSander, Freeland 5.3
Jordan Valley, Haslett 5.3
Madison Birchmeier, Corunna 5.0

### ASSISTS PER GAME

Lexi Mort, Corunna 10.7
Brooke Birkley, DeWitt 10.1
Hailey Delacher, Rockford 10.1
Peyton Hubel, Clare 10
Betsy Cook, Freeland 9.9
Alexandria McMath, Midland 9.4
Taylor Pitts, Tri-County 8.3

## CROSS COUNTRY

### BOYS

Cole Johnson, Rockford 15:20
Dayton Brown, Rockford 15:24
Paul McKinley, Okemos 15:31
Chandler Lorf, Flint Powers 15:41
Dillan Haviland, St. Johns 15:50
Adugna Moritz, Holt 15:51
Ben Jacobs, Corunna 15:53
Tyler Buchanan, Linden 15:55
Ransom Allen, Ithaca 15:56
Evan Meyer, East Lansing 16:01
Alex Penski, Holt 16:04
Chris Davis, Fowlerville 16:05

### GIRLS

Olivia Theis, Lansing Catholic 16:58
Jaden Theis, Lansing Catholic 17:19
Ericka VanderLende, Rockford 17:25
Anna Jensen, Midland Dow 17:57
Cecilia Stalzer, Mason 17:57
Amber Gall, Shepherd 18:05
Alexa Keiser, Fenton 18:07
Camryn Gabriel, Rockford 18:10
Laren Cleary, Lansing Catholic 18:15
Taryn Chapko, St. Johns 18:23
Lainey Veenkant, Clare 18:25
Ashley Shippis, DeWitt 18:28

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# Fulton Football Playoff-Bound

## Caleb Walden Sports Scene

The Pirates are back in the playoffs.

The Pirates are set to make their 22nd state playoff appearance.

The Pirates' high powered offense and ball hawking defense head into a playoff match-up with Climax Scotts.

Fulton was considered a "football school" for most of its existence until recently when its basketball program improved at the same time that the football program took a dive, but football has made its return to prominence at Fulton.

Head Coach Paul Hungerford's motto since he took the job has been "Revive the Drive." The Pi-

rates have done that this season.

The Pirates came out of the gate playing well, though they dropped two of their first five games. Then Fulton caught fire. They closed the season with four consecutive impressive victories.

Fulton went into their homecoming week matchup against Saranac with a respectable 3-2 record. An overtime thriller, ending on a two-point conversion, saw the Pirates pull out a 36-35 win in what was an absolute classic.

Fulton then traveled to Bath, where the Fighting Bees were no match for the surging Pirates. Fulton become eligible for postseason play, claiming their fifth win of the season 33-14. The Pirates returned home to Middleton for their contest with Dansville. This one was played under some of the

lights when a transformer blew, causing the field to only be lit by half of the available lights. The Pirates guaranteed themselves a spot in the playoffs with their sixth win, a 39-20 game that was controlled on both sides of the ball by the Pirates. Coach Hungerford then lead his squad to Vestaburg, where they dominated all night and left no doubt that they were post-season worthy. The Pirates took that one convincingly, 62-27.

Fulton has had many huge contributors to their renewed success this season. Seniors Evan Barton, Jon Baker, Matt Craft, and Jason Skyard have led a lock-down secondary for Fulton, while Barton, TJ Johnston, and Quincee Mahler have rallied the offensive troops. Junior Zach Andrews has also been a great asset for Fulton, playing with poise, throwing with accuracy, and protecting the ball

like a player with far more experience would.

Andrews' passing has been fantastic, especially when hooking up with Evan Barton. Barton has been a matchup nightmare for CMAC defensive backs all season long. The explosive running back play by Jon Baker and TJ Johnston has also proven to be a reliable source of offense for the Pirates as game in and game out, the two come up with chunk play after chunk play.

Skyard has been a mainstay on defense along with Barton defensively. Skyard hits hard and has forced many fumbles this season. Matt Craft gets after the quarterback play after play, leading to poor decisions made by opposing quarterbacks. Barton seems to always be in the area to make interceptions when quarterbacks start to force passes into windows that simply aren't there.



Fulton's Evan Barton leads a strong group of seniors as the Pirates enter the playoffs with a 7-2 record. (Courtesy Photo)

# Portland Looking To Regain Its Playoff Magic

## Nate Schneider Sports Scene

Portland football has struggled in recent years to recreate the same postseason magic of 2012.

After winning the 2012 MHSAA Division 5 state championship with a 12-9 victory over Grand Rapids West Catholic, the Raiders lost to the same GRWC squad in the pre-district game the following year by a count of 27-14.

Portland did not even qualify for the playoffs in 2014, but fol-

lowing two straight undefeated regular seasons the last two seasons it was the district final game that tripped up the Raiders with losses to Lansing Catholic Central in 2015 (21-14) and once again Grand Rapids West Catholic in '16 (10-7).

Yet here Portland stands again this season as one of the favorites in D5, tied atop the rankings with Frankenmuth as of last week. The Raiders are 8-1 on the season, falling 20-14 in week two to Lansing Sexton but since having reeled off seven straight victories

including a 35-6 thrashing on Sept. 22 over rival Lansing Catholic Central that could be viewed as a statement game.

The closest call for Portland came in week eight as it escaped with a 29-27 victory over a playoff-bound Pontiac Notre Dame Prep squad that had won via shutout in six of its previous seven games.

In nine games, the Raiders have outscored their opposition by a count of 276-97.

Portland is coached by John

Novara, who now boasts an overall record of 130-63. He is a math teacher at the high school.

Quarterback Austin Allison threw for almost 1,500 yards last year and is again achieving big things with his arm and legs this fall. Despite only returning three starters on offense and three on defense in 2017 including Allison, the Raiders haven't skipped a beat in continuing their trend of excellence.

Is Portland on the path to repeat the hoisting of the state title trophy it achieved in 2012?



Portland finished the regular season with an 8-1 record and could possibly make a long run in Division 5 in 2017. (Randy Miniard, High Sports Scene Photo)

# Seniors Lead St. Louis To Its First-Ever Football Playoff Appearance

## Nate Schneider Sports Scene

No matter what happened on that fateful night, one thing was certain - the St. Louis senior football class was going to hold nothing back on the field.

Playing for a program that has never reached the postseason ever since the MHSAA adopted a playoff format in 1974 and expanded it in the 1990s, the 12 seniors on the Sharks roster knew what was at stake October 20 at rival Breckenridge.

Win and you're in.

St. Louis' coaches and players knew the foolproof way to qualify for the playoffs a first time in school history would be to win a sixth game, an automatic qualifier.

But as it turned out, a late touchdown by the Huskies sent the Sharks to a 12-7 defeat that left them with a 5-4 record and at the mercy of the system that decides who is in and who is out.

"Those kids will all be walking off the field for the last time whenever that is," St. Louis head coach Aaron Munderloh said prior to the Breckenridge game. "I hope it's a couple more weeks, but we'll see. When you've coached kids for four years and seen them through, it's always an emotional time when it's their last time on the field. And this year is a unique situation, because we're not 100 percent sure when that is."

Despite the loss, the Sharks were still

prognosticated by MHSAA football playoffs mapetology website Snooze2You.com to be in the Division 7 playoffs with a 5-4 record.

St. Louis found out for sure whether it was in Sunday night when the brackets were announced. The Sharks were announced as in the 32-team Division 7 field, told they will be traveling to Beaverton for a first-ever postseason experience.

It set off jubilation within the St. Louis football program and on social media.

The last time the Sharks had finished 5-4 was in 2009 under previous head coach Paul Reid, but were left out of the postseason.

This year's version of St. Louis football held a much better case for being included in the field as it has outscored opponents a combined 223-185 and suffered narrow defeats to a pair of playoff-bound teams in Hemlock (27-20) and Breckenridge.

This is only the second time the Sharks have finished above .500 since 1996.

"We've really tried to push it with these kids and they've really responded," Munderloh said. "They have pride in everything they do and want nothing more than to be the first St. Louis team to participate in the playoffs."

Senior quarterback Travis Courter has thrown for 1,134 yards with 15 touchdowns and eight interceptions through the first eight games this season. Senior running back Dylan Weller leads the team in rushing with 440 yards and four TDs on 97 carries through eight

games. Senior Mic Munderloh, the son of the head coach, has made a team-best 27 catches for 419 yards and seven scores. Senior Jake Davis has 17 receptions for 353 yards and four touchdowns.

Defensively is where the Sharks have shined all year and again it is the seniors who have a lot of the counting stats.

Munderloh leads the way with 83 tackles including 13 for a loss and two forced fumbles. Senior Jayce Kuehnlein has contributed 80 tackles, 17 going for a loss, and three interceptions. Senior Ernie Diaz has contributed 59 tackles including 10 for a loss. Davis has racked up 49 tackles, eight for a loss, two interceptions and two fumble recoveries.

Two other seniors, Maverick Giles and Dylan McCloskey, could not play this season due to medical issues. Giles suffered a cardiac arrest during a basketball practice last winter, while McCloskey suffered a brain injury.

But the duo still had roles carved out to keep them as integral parts of the team.

"Dylan and Mav help us with daily drill activities," Munderloh explained. "Mav helps us out a lot with drills. He's almost like a stu-



St. Louis enters the playoffs for the first time in school history after finishing the year 5-4. (Randy Miniard, High Sports Scene Photo)

dent-coach or grad assistant type of position. Same with Dylan, who also helps us with a lot of film breakdown and tagging data. They're both on the sideline every Friday helping us with ball management stuff. You try to involve them in every single way possible, especially when you know how tough it is for those kids knowing how much they want to be out there."

St. Louis' playoff game at 8-1 Beaverton will be Friday night at 7 p.m.

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# Panther Pride...



## Seniors Turn In Big Efforts For Alma Football Team

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

While they may be small in number, the senior class on the Alma football team makes a huge impact on the field.



Alma's seniors have played major roles in the Panthers winning six of their first eight games this season and qualifying for the state playoffs for a third straight season.

Brandon Huff is one of the seniors delivering big plays for the Panthers. A wide receiver on offense and safety on defense, Huff (5-11, 185) is a playmaker on both sides of the football. As a receiver, Huff has caught 27 passes for 525 yards and six touchdowns through the first eight games of the season. On defense, Huff has totaled 57 tackles along with three interceptions.

"Brandon is pretty integral in what we are trying to do," said Alma coach Dan Falor. "He's our top receiver but he also lines up in the backfield as our lead back for Brec Alward. He can line up at receiver on one play and play fullback the next."

With his skills on the field, Huff has attracted the attention of college football recruiters. While he is open to playing football in college, academics is his priority.

"Brandon is a great student," Falor said. "He is interviewing with MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and is looking to eventually play football there. I tell all the college coaches that Brandon is at a high level academically. We're talking Ivy League schools. Even if he had a football offer he would jump at the chance to attend an Ivy League school."

Huff forms a dynamic wide receiver duo with fellow senior Chase Albaugh (6-2, 190). Albaugh is Alma's second-leading receiver with 21 receptions for 425 yards and five touchdowns. Albaugh is also a two-way starter. An outside linebacker for the Panther defense, Albaugh has totaled 51 tackles along with nine tackles for loss and five quarterback sacks.

"Chase lines up at tight end but we can flank him out at wide receiver," Falor said. "He has the ability to play in space. Chase and

Brandon are solid outside. They both have speed, good hands and run decent routes."

Senior Kody Kenny lines up at the outside linebacker spot opposite Albaugh. Another two-way starter, Kenny also lines up at wide receiver.

"Kody plays outside linebacker opposite Chase," Falor said. "Teams trying to avoid Chase have been running at Kody and he's done an excellent job for us. Outside linebacker is also a position change for Kody. He was a defensive back last year and he came to us saying that he'd like to try linebacker. Him and Chase are our two best defensive players this year."

Greg Simmons (6-2, 285) is a senior who provides a cornerstone for both the offensive and defensive lines. While he has 37 tackles this season, an even bigger contribution is ability to clog the middle of the line and occupy blockers. Simmons is also a starter at offensive guard.

"Greg is our biggest and strongest player," Falor said. "He plugs a lot of holes on defense allowing the other guys to clean up."



Alma seniors have helped lead the Panthers to a 7-2 in 2017. Alma hosts Flint Powers in the first round of the playoffs. (Don Goostrey, High Sports Scene Photo)

## Alma Quarterback Leads Team To 7-2 Regular Season

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Drew Humm completed his second regular season as quarterback at Alma but was especially happy to win on week nine.

The Panthers had started out at 6-0 before losing to 24-14 to Freeland and 36-19 to Saginaw Swan Valley.

It wasn't easy Friday at Big Rapids but Humm and the Panther offense were able to pull out a 39-33 non-league victory entering the playoffs.

Humm was 6-of-11 for 74 yards with no interceptions.

His favorite receiver was Brandon Huff with four catches for 51 yards.

Brec Alward was a rushing machine for the Panthers with 268 yards rushing and

Alma's Drew Humm will be one of the top quarterbacks in the area returning in 2018. (Randy Miniard, High Sports Scene Photo)

four touchdowns. Humm also had a punt for 33 yards.

As a junior, Humm made significant progress at quarterback.

"I'm starting to be more of a leader for the team," he said. "Last year we had a lot of senior leadership. This year, we were looking for leaders to step up. We've had a lot of different guys filling that role."

"My passing game has improved with making decisions and throwing the ball when I need to instead of taking sacks."

Humm recalls the key to the 6-0 start.

"It was a lot of good play by our defense," he said. "They came up strong in all of those games. But they had a rough last two games. Those were two of the best teams we played."

Alward "is an amazing back especially

when our line gets a hole open," Humm said. Defensively, he had four tackles.

"After the last two games we wanted to regain the confidence," Alma coach Dan Falor said.

Winning the ninth game was critical for the Panthers, Falor said, in their hopes of hosting a playoff game.

"It's a new season and we've put everything behind us," Falor said. "Everyone is 0-0. We had high expectations coming into the year and we still have them. The kids play hard. They give us everything they've got. You can't ask for a better group of guys. We have to play good defense."

"I think we can easily win a district championship and go farther than we did last year," Humm said. "The key will be our defense and O line."

## Swan Valley Is Believing No Telling Where The Vikings' Journey Will End In 2017

### Scott Keyes Sports Scene

About six years ago I was introduced to a group of young boys that have become young men in a blink of an eye.

Now the Swan Valley seniors and the rest of the team can call themselves Tri-Valley Conference Central Division champions. It's Swan Valley's first conference title since 2014.

Let me just say six years ago those seniors were very wet behind the ears at that time, but overall they were a great group of kids.

You had this running back that was similar to other backs at Swan Valley in previous seasons. His name was Emmett Boehler. Boehler was kind of quiet, but until this day he did most of his talking on the field just like other running backs at Swan Valley did before him. Alex and Jonathan Grace have been huge influences on Boehler in recent years and that determination and drive has shown up on the field.

Then there is Cameron Toth. Toth has always been one of the bigger seniors in this class, but his work ethic in recent seasons has moved on to the field of play this season. Toth finished the regular season with 11.5 sacks and 72 total tackles. It wouldn't surprise me if both Toth and Boehler are All-State players in Division 5 this season.

How about the jokesters of the group, Logan and Payton Pietz.

These two guys are the life of the party,

but I had to admit I'm highly impressed how they have matured through the years. Their football IQ is off the charts and their maturity level on the field continues to amaze. They have dedicated themselves to the craft and have become solid players for the Vikings this season.

Meanwhile, my cousins Chad Keyes and Michael Leszczynski have fought to see the field on a regular basis through the years. Chad moved to North Carolina and is a senior at Pigsah High School. Chad was a Viking until his sophomore season. Mikey as his friends refer to him has dedicated himself for four years to the Vikings squad. When he is called upon to see the field he makes the most of his opportunity. Life of a practice squad player is never glamorous, but Mikey has given his all to the team and a coach can't ask for much more than that.

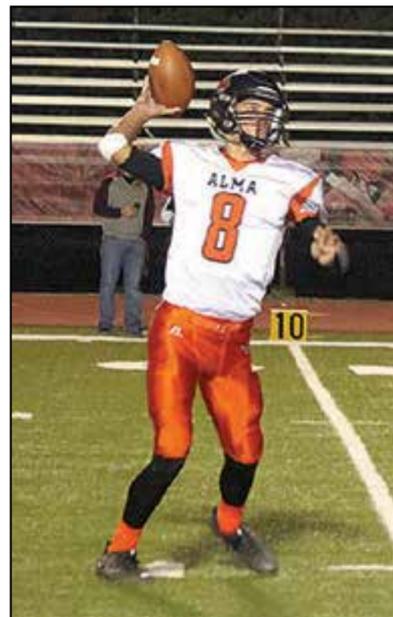
Grant Vacik, Logan Ducharme, Ty Perry, Brady Kessler, Jake Dawson, Grant Neilson, Zac Goodman and Mark Hart all bleed purple and white just like the players who were mentioned earlier.

This senior class is more than capable enough of doing something teams in the past haven't and that is make it to Ford Field. The stars are aligned just perfect and this team is more than capable enough to make that happen.

Even after a season-opening loss to Zeeland East, the Vikings are primed and ready to go for a long playoff trip that hopefully ends at Ford Field.



Top: Swan Valley junior Matt Pike (No. 33) delivers a stiff-arm against Carrolton earlier this season. Below: Swan Valley celebrates after capturing the Tri-Valley Conference Central Division title after defeating Alma. (Shawn Pietz and Scott Keyes High School Sports Scene Photos)



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# FOOTBALL PLAYOFF PREVIEW



Grand Ledge (8-1) hosts a 6-3 Rockford squad in the first round of the Division 1 playoffs. (Marvin Hall, High Sports Scene Photo)

## DIVISION 1

### Region 1

#### Rockford (6-3)

**Breakdown:** Few teams have faced as challenging a schedule as Rockford and the Rams are banking on that schedule to pay dividends. With quarterback Jason Whittaker at the helm the offense can score in a multitude of ways. Rockford's defense has been solid for most of the season other than encounters with high-powered offenses from Mona Shores and West Ottawa. A rematch with West Ottawa looms if the Rams can get by Grand Ledge in the first round.

#### Grand Ledge (8-1)

**Breakdown:** The Comets were the class of the CAC Blue this season with a potent offense led by senior quarterback Nolan Bird. Grand Ledge and Rockford have staged some memorable playoff battles in the past and this year's meeting has the makings of another classic. The winner of this game will likely face a Holland West Ottawa team that features a big-time offense and turned in a perfect record in winning the OK Red Conference.

#### Lapeer (6-3)

**Breakdown:** Lapeer comes into the state tournament having dropped two of its final three regular-season games including a 35-17 loss to first-round foe Davison. The key for the Lightning will be a strong defensive effort, something that was lacking in all three of their losses this season.

#### Davison (8-1)

**Breakdown:** Led by talented running back Tariq Reid, Davison has a team built for a long playoff run. Reid has rushed for 1,108 yards and 12 touchdowns this season but the Cardinal offense is far from a one-man show.

#### Grand Blanc (7-2)

**Breakdown:** The Bobcats dropped two of their last three regular-season games and need to regain the magic that enabled them to start the season with six straight wins. Traveling to Clarkston for a playoff game, however, is not the best recipe for success.

#### Clarkston (7-2)

**Breakdown:** The Wolves have played solid defense all season other than a loss against high-powered West Bloomfield. Clarkston is tough at home and is playoff tested. A district final meeting with Davison would be a game not to miss.

### Region 2

#### Walled Lake Central (5-4)

**Breakdown:** The Vikings are in the playoffs for the first time since 2014. Central opens the playoffs on the road at White Lake Lakeland, a team it defeated 20-13 in the first week of the season.

#### White Lake Lakeland (6-2)

**Breakdown:** The Eagles last made the playoffs in 2008 and this year's squad is capable of a nice playoff run. Since falling to Walled Lake Central in the season opener, Lakeland won six of its next seven games with the lone loss being a 13-11 loss to Walled Lake Western.

### Region 4

#### Waterford Mott (8-1)

**Breakdown:** It's been a year to remember for the Corsairs who won eight games for the first time since 1973. Mott's lone loss this season was a two-point loss to White Lake Lakeland in week two. Corsair quarterback David McCullum has been among the best in the state with 2,642 yards passing and 34 touchdowns.

#### Bloomfield Hills (6-3)

**Breakdown:** The Black Hawks are in

the playoffs for the second straight season in the five-year history of the school. Bloomfield Hills is a dangerous team to face as West Bloomfield found out in week two when the Black Hawks defeated West Bloomfield 28-24.

#### West Bloomfield (7-2)

**Breakdown:** It took the Lakers a while to get going this season after they dropped their first two games. Led by standout senior quarterback Bryce Veasley, West Bloomfield has one of the most potent offenses in the state averaging 39.7 points per game.

**HSSS Regional picks.** R1) Holland West Ottawa R2) Plymouth Canton R3) Detroit Cass Tech R4) West Bloomfield

**HSSS Finals pick:** Detroit Cass Tech over Holland West Ottawa

## DIVISION 2

### Region 1

#### Midland (8-1)

**Breakdown:** After dropping the season opener against Traverse City West, Midland has reeled off eight consecutive wins. The Chemics are one of the hottest teams in the Thumb with double-digit wins against playoff teams Davison, Lapeer and Midland in the last four weeks of the regular season.

#### Midland Dow (7-2)

**Breakdown:** Dow makes the long trip north to face the Titans of Traverse City West. West opened the season with eight straight wins, including a 42-20 win against Midland on opening night before dropping its regular-season finale against Coldwater.

### Region 2

#### Flint Carman-Ainsworth (5-4)

**Breakdown:** The Cavaliers' four losses have come against playoff teams, with

three of the four losses by 12 points or more. The trip to Fenton will be difficult as Fenton defeated C-A in last year's playoff opener by 30 points.

#### Fenton (8-1)

**Breakdown:** In quarterback Josh Czarnota, Fenton has one of the most productive offensive players in the state. Czarnota has passed for 1,983 yards and 23 touchdowns while he has rushed for 918 yards and 14 scores. Fenton is coming off a tough loss to Waterford Mott and will be extra motivated.

#### Lowell (6-3)

**Breakdown:** The Red Arrows enter the game with three losses, but don't let the record deceive you. Lowell is more than capable of making a run to Ford Field. Two of the losses have come against unbeaten Forest Hills Central and East Grand Rapids so any team expecting to make a name for themselves against the Red Arrows, beware.

#### Flushing (7-2)

**Breakdown:** The Raiders can score points in bunches, as witnessed by three games where they scored 53 or more points. Defense is another

story and if the Raiders are to get out of this district they need to tighten up the defense.

#### Walled Lake Western (8-1)

**Breakdown:** State finalists last season, the Warriors have the talent to make it back to Ford Field against this year. Junior quarterback Sam Johnson III is one of the premier quarterbacks in the state and this fall has completed 58% of his passes for 1,863 yards and 22 touchdowns with an average gain of 19.2 yards per completion.

#### Pinckney (8-1)

**Breakdown:** A three-point loss to league rival Chelsea is the lone blemish on Pinckney's resume this season. The Pirates are capable of putting plenty of points on the board behind senior quarterback Jack Wurzer who has passed for 1,543 yards and 16 touchdowns this year.

**HSSS Regional picks.** R1) Muskegon Mona Shores R2) Walled Lake Western R3) Detroit King R4) Warren DeLaSalle

**HSSS Finals pick:** Detroit King over Muskegon Mona Shores

## DIVISION 3

### Region 1

#### Cedar Springs (6-3)

**Breakdown:** Any team that can drop a 28-14 win on Lowell must be considered dangerous and the Red Hawks are one of the most dangerous teams in the state. Not a big team, the Red Hawks sell out on every play and never back down.

#### DeWitt (8-1)

**Breakdown:** The CAAC Blue champions opened the season with a 38-30 loss to Grand Rapids Christian. DeWitt gets another shot at the Eagles in the district opener and with momentum on its side the Panthers are poised to start a tournament run.

### Region 2

#### East Lansing (7-2)



**Breakdown:** The Trojans have strung together six straight wins after opening the season with a 1-2 record. Playing on its home field, East Lansing is set up for a tournament run and is the favorite to win the district.

#### Haslett (7-2)

**Breakdown:** This is Haslett's best team since the 2006 team went 7-2 during the regular season. A win against Parma Western could set up a showdown with old rival East Lansing, who Haslett hasn't faced since 2013 and hasn't defeated since 2009.

## Region 4

#### Bay City Central (5-4)

**Breakdown:** The Wolves are a scrappy squad that has defeated Midland Dow this season and three of its four losses have been by seven points or less. Central is more than capable of an upset or two in the playoffs.

#### Linden (7-2)

**Breakdown:** The Eagles have annually been one of the best passing teams in the state and this year has been no exception. Junior quarterback George Walterhouse has passed for 2,034 yards and 16 touchdowns this season

#### Ortonville-Brandon (6-3)

**Breakdown:** It's been a boom or bust season for the Blackhawks. Ortonville-Brandon has scored 69 and 65 points in wins this season but have also lost by a 53-0 score.

**HSSS Regional picks.** R1) Muskegon R2) Battle Creek Harper Creek R3) Dearborn Divine Child R4) Farmington Hills Harrison

**HSSS Finals pick:** Muskegon over Dearborn Divine Child

## DIVISION 4

### Region 1

#### Bay City John Glenn (5-4)

**Breakdown:** The Bobcats drew the short straw and must make the long trip north to Escanaba. John Glenn has faced a rugged schedule this

season but a trip north to face the Eskymos is a tall challenge.

#### Flint Powers Catholic (5-4)

**Breakdown:** Competing in Division 4, the Chargers will be a tough out even though they have four losses on their ledger. Those losses, however, have come against schools like D1 Davison, and D2 school Midland Dow and Carman-Ainsworth.

#### Alma (7-2)

**Breakdown:** It's been an exciting season for the young Panthers. Junior quarterback Drew Humm and junior running back Brec Alward have been turning in some impressive performances and a nice playoff run is possible.

#### Williamston (5-4)

**Breakdown:** The Hornets reached the playoffs with five wins and their reward is rematch with a Lake Fenton team it dropped a 35-28 decision to in week nine.

#### Lake Fenton (8-1)

**Breakdown:** The Blue Devils allowed just 19 points and recorded four shutouts in GAC Red play this season. In two non-league games, Lake Fenton went 1-1 and allowed 56 points.

#### Goodrich (8-1)

**Breakdown:** From 0-9 last year to 1-8 this season, few teams in the state have shown the dramatic improvement that the Martians experienced this season. Goodrich has also scored 40 or more points seven times this season.

## Region 2

#### Belding (7-2)

**Breakdown:** Last season Belding drew Ithaca in the opening round of the playoffs. This year's opener is nearly as tough a rugged Whitehall squad coming to town.

## Region 3

#### Lansing Sexton (6-3)

**Breakdown:** The Big Reds have a



potent offense and play solid defense. Sexton hung tough against Grand Ledge and dropped a 9-7 defensive struggle against East Lansing proving it can play with anyone in Division 4.

#### Lakewood-Lake Odessa (8-1)

**Breakdown:** Last season the Vikings defeated Lansing Sexton 36-28 to win the district title. This year the two teams collide in the district opener in what should be another entertaining game to watch.

**HSSS Regional picks.** R1) Escanaba R2) Grand Rapids Catholic Central R3) Grand Rapids South Christian R4) Chelsea

**HSSS Finals pick:** Grand Rapids Catholic Central over Chelsea

## DIVISION 5

### Region 1

#### Remus Chippewa Hills (7-2)

**Breakdown:** For Chippewa Hills, the playoffs begins with a rematch of last year's district opener against Clare. Chip Hills won 32-27 last season and another close tussle in the cards this season with a date with powerhouse Reed City likely in the district finals.

Football Playoff Preview Continued On Page 14

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**Continued From Page 13**

**Clare (8-1)**

**Breakdown:** Since an opening night loss to Ithaca, Clare has blitzed through the remaining eight games of the regular-season schedule. Clare's offense is more productive than last season's and the defense is just as good if not better also.

**Region 2**

**Bridgeport (6-3)**

**Breakdown:** It has been a landmark season for the Bearcats. Bridgeport qualified for the playoffs for just the second time in school history (1999) and the Bearcat offense set a single-season record with 291 points. Senior quarterback Charles Garrett has passed for 2,120 yards and 23 touchdowns along with rushing for 683 yards and nine touchdowns.

**Saginaw Swan Valley (8-1)**

**Breakdown:** Swan Valley has been on a roll since falling to unbeaten Zeeland East in the first game of the season. The Vikings have been piling up points on offense and have a rugged defense that is equipped to make a deep post-season run.



**Carrollton (6-3)**

**Breakdown:** The Cavaliers are back in the playoffs for the first time since 2012. Carrollton faces a familiar foe in the first round when it takes on league rival Freeland. Freeland defeated the Cavaliers 35-18 in week eight.

**Freeland (6-3)**

**Breakdown:** The Falcons are one of three TVC Central teams in this district so there is plenty of familiarity. Freeland has defeated Carrollton and played Swan Valley close. The Falcons also play solid defense.

**Region 3**

**Ovid-Elsie (7-2)**

**Breakdown:** The Marauders are facing Portland for the third time in the last two years. Ovid-Elsie fell to Portland last season and then dropped a 26-17 decision in the season opener this year. Ovid-Elsie's other loss came against Ithaca and the Marauders have played solid defense in all but the Ithaca game.

**Portland (8-1)**

**Breakdown:** Portland's lone loss this season was a six-point decision against Lansing Sexton. Champions of the CAC White, Portland has both a productive offense and a solid defense. A regional title is defense will need to deliver a huge effort if they are to get past a loaded Montague team in the first round.

**Lansing Catholic Central (7-2)**

**Breakdown:** You can bet that Cougar quarterback Michael Lynn III and his teammates would like another shot at Portland. Lynn has turned in a productive senior season passing for 1,244 yards and rushing for 546 yards.

**Region 4**

**Frankenmuth (9-0)**

**Breakdown:** The Eagles turned in their first 9-0 regular season since 2012. This year's Frankenmuth team has been tested by several playoff teams. The Eagles boast a potent offense and have the type of

defense that can take a team a long way in the playoffs.

**HSSS Regional picks.** R1) Kingsford R2) Saginaw Swan Valley R3) Grand Rapids West Catholic R4) Frankenmuth

**HSSS Finals pick:** Grand Rapids West Catholic over Kingsford

**DIVISION 6**

**Region 1**

**Hemlock (6-3)**

**Breakdown:** The Huskies are in the playoffs for a second consecutive season. This year's team is much stronger on defense while still playing solid on offense. The opener against Millington will be a difficult hurdle.

**Millington (8-1)**

**Breakdown:** The Cardinals are poised for another deep post-season run after reaching the state semifinals last year. Millington started its post-season run last year with a 50-7 win against Hemlock and the Cardinals have the talent to get on a roll this season as well.

**Region 2**

**Lakeview (6-3)**

**Breakdown:** Lakeview opened the season with a 2-3 record but finished strong down the stretch with four straight wins. The Wildcats have a potent offense but is defense will need to deliver a huge effort if they are to get past a loaded Montague team in the first round.

**Morley Stanwood (7-2)**

**Breakdown:** The Mohawks dropped a 28-0 decision to Kent City with the CSAA Silver decision on the line in week six. Morley Stanwood gets a chance to avenge that defeat with even higher stakes on the table in the district opener.

**Byron (5-4)**

**Breakdown:** The Eagles have lost their nine consecutive playoff openers, including a 56-6 loss to Ithaca in 2011. Byron has the tough task of traveling to Ithaca to open

the playoffs this season.

**Ithaca (9-0)**

**Breakdown:** Another year, another loaded Ithaca football team. The Yellowjackets have a stifling defense and a prolific offense. About the only thing not known about this Ithaca team is how they would do in a close game, as Ithaca's closes game this season was a 24-point win against Clare in the season opener.

**Laingsburg (7-2)**

**Breakdown:** For the third straight season Laingsburg faces Montrose in the playoffs. Two years ago, the Wolfpack defeated Montrose 23-13 while last season Montrose stopped Laingsburg 52-21 in the district opener.

**Montrose (7-2)**

**Breakdown:** Montrose's two losses this season came against league foes Lake Fenton and Goodrich. The Rams have home-field advantage against Laingsburg but will have to go on the road if they face Ithaca in the district finals.

**HSSS Regional picks.** R1) Millington R2) Ithaca R3) Jackson Lumen Christi R4) Warren Michigan Collegiate

**HSSS Finals pick:** Ithaca over Warren Michigan Collegiate

**DIVISION 7**

**Region 1**

**St. Louis (5-4)**

**Breakdown:** History is being made by this year's St. Louis football team as the Sharks qualified for the state playoffs for the first time. The Sharks have played solid football all season and have played the type of schedule that has them prepared to go on the road and face a quality team like Beaverton.

**Beaverton (8-1)**

**Breakdown:** The Beavers are in the playoffs for the second straight season and only the third time in school history. This year's squad opened the season with eight straight wins before falling to Clare



in week nine.

**Breckenridge (8-1)**

**Breakdown:** Breckenridge began the season dropping a 29-8 to Beaverton, since then, Breckenridge has won eight straight games including a 12-7 win against St. Louis in week nine. The Huskies have last year's playoff experience under their belts and that should make a difference this season.

**Region 2**

**Saranac (6-3)**

**Breakdown:** The Redskins are back in the playoffs for the first time since 2011. Saranac was tested in the tough CMAC this season but will need to tighten up on defense if it wants to get out of New Lothrop with a win.

**New Lothrop (9-0)**

**Breakdown:** The Hornets have been an offensive juggernaut this season averaging 47.1 points per game. New Lothrop has played a challenging schedule this season and a district title matchup with Pewamo-Westphalia will be a thriller.

**Pewamo-Westphalia (8-0)**

**Breakdown:** The defending Division 7 champions are turning in

another solid season and can't be ruled out of making it back to Ford Field. The Pirates have played some outstanding defense this season and have a more potent passing game on offense.

**HSSS Regional picks.** R1) Ishpeming Westwood R2) Pewamo-Westphalia R3) Reading R4) Hudson

**HSSS Finals pick:** Pewamo-Westphalia over Hudson

**DIVISION 8**

**Region 2**

**Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart (6-3)**

**Breakdown:** For the Irish, the mission is straight forward, find a way to solve the Saginaw Nouvel. Sacred Heart dropped a 35-0 decision to Nouvel in week nine and have to go on the road

for a rematch.

**Saginaw Nouvel (9-0)**

**Breakdown:** The Panthers have been on the prowl this season with a defense that is allowing just 7.3 points per game. Nouvel faced a challenging schedule this season and is well prepared to make a deep post-season run.

**Region 3**

**Fulton-Middleton (7-2)**

**Breakdown:** The Pirates finished the regular strong with four impressive wins down the stretch. The lone losses have come against defending D7 state champion Pewamo-Westphalia and Laingsburg, a playoff team in Division 6. This Pirate team has the talent to make a playoff run.

**HSSS Regional picks.** R1) Iron River West Iron County R2)

Saginaw Nouvel R3) Muskegon Catholic Central R4) Ottawa Lake Whiteford

**HSSS Finals pick:** Muskegon Catholic Central over Saginaw Nouvel

**8-Player Division 1**

**Morrice (8-1)**

**Breakdown:** The Orioles have the skill to reach the state finals as evidenced by their 33-32 win against Deckerville. Morrice does have a tough opening-week assignment when it hosts Kingston, the only team to defeat Morrice (30-26) this season.

**Webberville (5-4)**

**Breakdown:** The Spartans are back in the D1 playoffs for the second consecutive season but faces a rugged road with a trip to Bellevue in the first-round. Get

past Bellevue and 9-0 Camden-Frontier awaits.

**HSSS Finals pick:** Central Lake over Camden-Frontier

**8-Player Division 2**

**Portland St. Patrick (8-1)**

**Breakdown:** The Shamrocks have qualified for the 8-man playoffs every year since switching to 8-man in 2012. This year's squad has the talent to make a strong run at a state title.

**Bay City All Saints (6-3)**

**Breakdown:** The move to 8-man football this season has proven to be a fruitful one for the Cougars. All Saints featured a potent offense that could enable the Cougars to pull a surprise or two in the playoffs.

**HSSS Finals pick:** Onekama over Portland St. Patrick

Lansing Sexton finished the regular season 6-3. (Marvin Hall, High Sports Scene Photo)



# Pewamo-Westphalia Hopes To Have Another Championship Run

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Pewamo-Westphalia won't be entering the postseason undefeated as it did the previous two years.

But the Pirates and coach Jeremy Miller like the momentum the team has as it gets ready for playoffs.

The defending Division 7 state champions lost their first game against Monroe Saint Mary Catholic 30-20.

"We have a small core group of seniors," Miller said. "Overall I'm happy the way we progressed as the year went on."

As always for the Pirates, who have not

had a losing season since 1995, it was a year with some special highlights.

"We had a nice homecoming win over Laingsburg," Miller said. "We played a solid football game against Fowler, our rival, and was able to clinch our (Central Michigan Athletic Conference) championship."

A non-conference win to end the regular season over Hastings (42-12) was extremely impressive.

"We played a very tough schedule and were happy the way we came out and executed against Hastings," Miller said.

The Pirates again have a huge edge in total point differential with 353 points scored and 58 allowed after nine games, although one

Pewamo-Westphalia looks to make its third consecutive trip to Ford Field in Division 7. (Scott Keyes, High Sports Scene Photo)

was a 2-0 forfeit victory.

Quarterback Jimmy Lehman has had a strong season for P-W.

"He's done a good job of commanding our offense."

Also having a good year has been Bryce Thelen, a senior running back and wide receiver on both sides of the ball.

"Damon Schneider has been a good defensive end for us," Miller said. "Those three guys have stood out. We've also got Isaiah Schafer on our offensive and defensive line."

If his team keeps getting better, Miller likes the prospects.

"We have the potential to make a long run in the playoffs," he said. "I like this team and how they've come together and they've gotten every week."

Miller notes that tradition from the past few years has provided the program with confidence.

"Our kids are used to it and know what to expect," Miller said.

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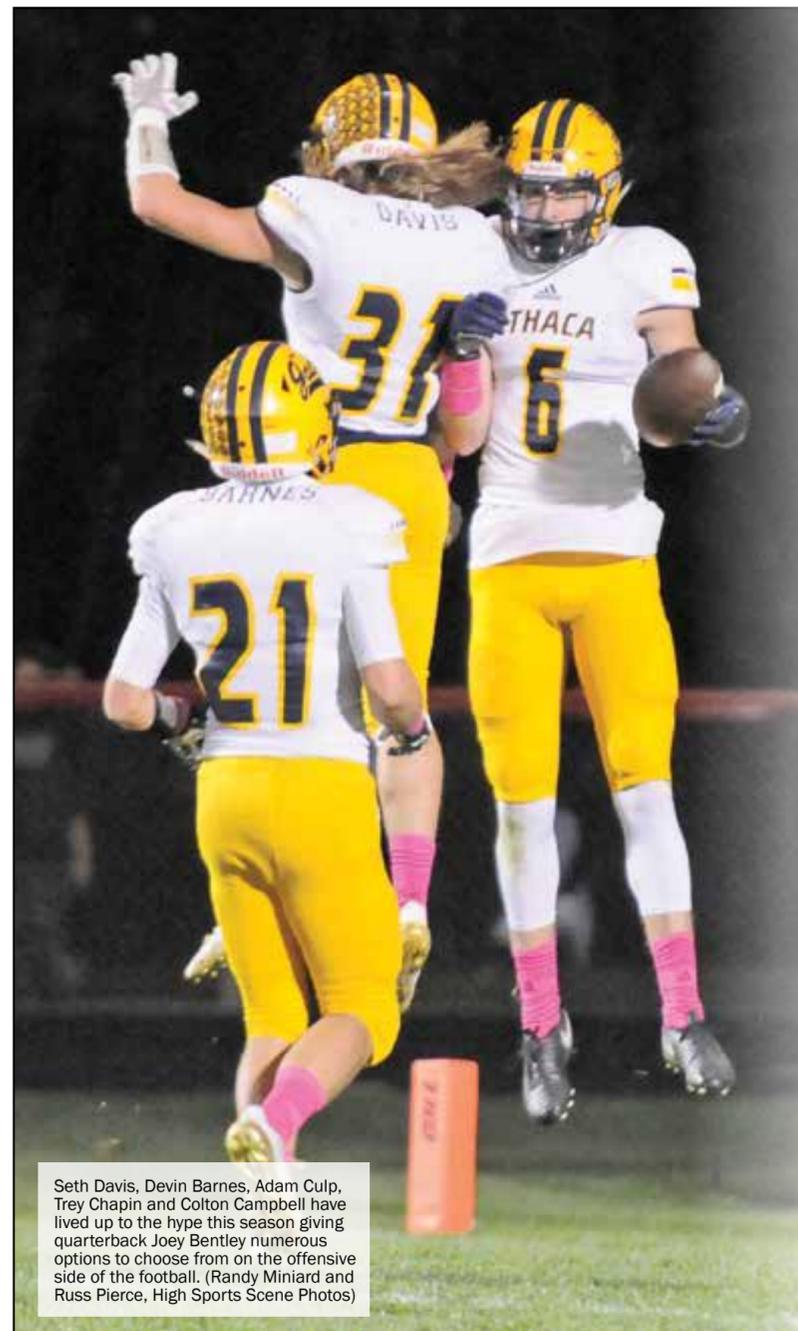
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# Playmakers Ithaca Receivers Scary Fast, Elusive, Explosive

Nate Schneider  
Sports Scene

Sure, the quarterbacks at Ithaca are rightfully heaped with praise for helping turn the program into a powerhouse since 2010.

But without an outstanding stable of wide receivers year in and year out, even the most talented of quarterbacks would struggle to guide the way to eight straight undefeated regular seasons and five state championships.

The current crop of Yellowjackets wideouts - seniors Seth Davis, Devin Barnes, Adam Culp, Trey Chapin and Colton Campbell - have certainly made life a little easier for fellow senior quarterback Joey Bentley the last couple years.

"Barnes, Davis and Chapin are all similar size and have similar speed," Hessbrook said. "They can all go and get it and make things happen in space. Then you have Culp, who is a 6-foot-4 receiver that is really a mismatch for defensive backs when we can get him singled to a side. He's really stepped in and played well at receiver for us this year after not catching a lot of passes last season."

The number of receptions for any of the Ithaca wide receivers might not look overly impressive, but that is mostly due to all the blowouts limiting the amount of passes thrown in any game as well as the depth at the position.

But when you turn your attention to the yards per catch and TD rate per

reception for any of the wide receivers, it gets a lot juicier.

Davis leads the bunch with 22 catches for 423 yards and three touchdowns through the first eight games, while Culp has 16 catches for 269 yards and three scores. Barnes has accounted for 15 receptions 378 yards and four TDs. Chapin has 11 catches for 117 yards.

Additionally, Davis and Chapin each have a rushing touchdown and are explosive when the ball is put in their hands in any fashion.



"Put the ball in their hands and they'll make something happen," Hessbrook stated.

Culp also has a booming leg and has the responsibility of kicking, which he has excelled at the last couple of years.

In the first eight games, 47 of Culp's 60 kickoffs went for a touchback. He has made 50-of-51 point-after attempts and 5-of-6 field

goals with a long of 42 yards.

"He's such a talented kicker that you almost hate to risk putting him out there," Hessbrook said about Culp. "I truly believe he has a future as a Division I kicker. But with everything he presents for us as a wide receiver, it would be silly to keep him on the sideline. He's really come along after not catching many passes a year ago."

Campbell (nine catches, 74 yards, 3 TDs) has seen limited action at receiver this year due to an ankle injury, the second straight season an injury has

Seth Davis, Devin Barnes, Adam Culp, Trey Chapin and Colton Campbell have lived up to the hype this season giving quarterback Joey Bentley numerous options to choose from on the offensive side of the football. (Randy Miniard and Russ Pierce, High Sports Scene Photos)



# From Ball Boy To Waiting His Turn Freshman Brady Hessbrook Contributing On Both Sides Of Football For Ithaca

Nate Schneider  
Sports Scene

A huge key to Ithaca's success is always having someone who is next in line at quarterback.

Right now the quarterback-in-waiting appears to be freshman Brady Hessbrook, son of Yellowjackets head coach Terry Hessbrook, who is gaining valuable experience on varsity his initial year of high school.

Due to the blowout nature of most of Ithaca's contests this fall, Hessbrook has seen ample time at quarterback in almost every game.

He's thrown 15 passes, completing eight of them, and thrown for 185 yards plus two touchdowns. Hessbrook has also rushed for 132 yards and four TDs on 22 carries.

Injuries to members of the secondary have also given the freshman an opportunity to start six games at defensive back, where he has racked up 15 tackles and a pair of interceptions.

"It's really big because he's getting those repetitions during key times," Coach Hessbrook said about his son. "He was thrust into it on varsity because of some injuries we had over the summer which concerned us. So we brought him up and kind of threw him into the wolves. He played a cornerback position he's never played before and he's adjusted really well."

Brady has grown up with the program, serving as a ball boy and being on the sidelines for every state championship since 2010.

Now that he is a freshman and a member of the varsity team, it is almost surreal for his father to see how time has flown by to get to this point.

"When he's on the field I'd like to think I don't treat him any differently than anyone else on the field," Terry said. "I've coached him through his youth years as well, so we have a little experience doing this. It's

one of those things where when we're on the field, I'm coaching. When we step off the field, I'm dad. There's that fine line and you have to leave some of that stuff at practice or at games."

While there is no doubt the senior class at Ithaca has been the major driving force behind another undefeated regular season and high hopes in the postseason, the fact that a freshman in Brady Hessbrook can carve a role out at such a young age speaks to his bright future with the Yellowjackets.

"Look at where Joey Bentley went from where he was a freshman to where he is now," Coach Hessbrook added. "It's an amazing transformation if they're willing to put in the time and effort and work that goes into that. The sky is the limit for some of these guys."



Ithaca freshman Brady Hessbrook has given Ithaca added depth on both sides of the football this season. (Randy Miniard, High Sports Scene Photo)

slowed him. But as he nears 100 percent, look for him to get more reps in the postseason.

Ithaca completed its regular season with a 9-0 record Friday night with a 38-6 victory at Carrollton, running its regular season win streak to 73 straight.

Culp caught a 17-yard TD pass from Bentley to open the scoring and later

booted a 24-yard field goal.

If the Yellowjackets are to once again make a deep postseason run, expect the senior-laden group of wide receivers to play an important role.

"We're blessed to have such great talent at depth at that position," Hessbrook added. "It definitely makes Joey's job a little easier."

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# HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE SCENE STEALERS!



**Alicia Woolcott, Grand Blanc**  
Woolcott had quite a night Oct. 6 as the linebacker was named homecoming queen. She is the only girl on a Bobcats team that is play off-bound after starting the season 6-0 before a couple losses. She is also a competitive cheerleader, does water polo and is captain of the powerlift



**Holly McKenna, Big Rapids**  
She shot a 113 the first day of the Division 3 state finals at Michigan State, then improved by a whopping 30 strokes for an 83 the second day. Her improvement helped the Cardinals go from 16th place the first day to 12th place the second.



**Alexandria McMath, Midland**  
McMath is tied for 20th on MaxPreps.com in the state in assists per set with 9.3, while she has the 13th-most assists statewide this season with 955. The Chemics are 36-8 on the season.



**Olivia Waszak, St. Johns**  
Waszak is having a tremendous season with 103 total blocks which ranks her 11th on MaxPreps. She recorded double digit numbers in kills in five of eight matches between Sept. 27 and Oct. 11. St. Johns is 20-14 on the season.



**Josh Lobsinger, Sacred Heart**  
A 20-yard interception return by Lobsinger with 1:44 to play clinched the Irish's 22-8 win over Coleman on Oct. 13, giving SHA a sixth win to qualify it for the playoffs. This is the last year Sacred Heart will be playing 11-man football before switching to 8-man in 2018.



**Kenny Stalzer, Mason**  
He clocked a personal record of 16:28.8 and took second in the CAAC Red Jamboree No. 3. He was 30th in the Greater Lansing Cross Country Championship in 16:49.4. He was 44th at the Portage Invitational in 17:22.4.



**Katie Clevenger, Owosso**  
On Senior Night, Clevenger broke her own school record in diving that she had set earlier this month as she scored a 242.15 to best the previous record of 240.6. She helped her team to a 115-69 win over Corunna.



**Kyle Proctor, Tri County**  
He had a strong senior season at running back and safety for the Vikings, who struggled for most of the year. He had an impressive performance in the only Tri County win of the season, a 63-16 clubbing of the Fremont Packers



**Bryce Veasley, West Bloomfield**  
The Bowling Green commit completed 19-of-23 passes for 320 yards and five touchdowns plus another rushing TD in a 62-37 win over host Southfield A&T to clinch the Lakers' playoff berth on Oct. 13.



**Brooke Brauher, Morley Stanwood**  
She had 14 kills and 25 digs in a win over Kent City to clinch a share of the CSAA Silver title. Brauher has been a top hitter all season for the Mohawks who will be defending their Class C district title next week.



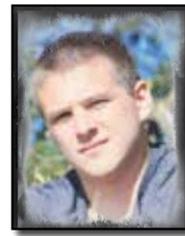
**Paden Morris, Lake Odessa Lakewood**  
Morris is a two-year senior center and captain that has paved the way for Lakewood's rushing attack and success. Anchor of O-line for team that averages 44.1 points per game and 282 rushing yards per game. Lakewood is 7-1 through eight games.



**Cameron Toth, Swan Valley**  
Toth, a senior lineman finished the regular season with 11.5 sacks and 72 tackles to help lead the Vikings to an 8-1 record and a Tri-Valley Conference Central Division title.



**Roderick Heard, Farmington Hills Harrison**  
On the night Hawks head coach John Herrington set the record for most career MHSAA victories, Heard played a huge role with three first half TDs - two rushing, one INT return - in a 39-0 victory over Berkley.



**Nick Burlingame, Ashley**  
He had four solos and five assists in final game of season against Pittsford. In a loss to Coleman, he gained 48 yards rushing and had seven solos and nine assists and a fumble recovery. Against Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart, he rushed for 25 yards and had seven solo tackles.



**Noah Johnston, Vestaburg**  
Despite the Wolverines only having one win this season, the senior Johnston is turning in a fine campaign. He has 35 catches for 806 yards and 10 touchdowns. Johnston also has 45 tackles defensively with three going for a loss plus two forced fumbles and five passes defensed.



**Tyler Dennis, Big Rapids Crossroads Academy**  
He's been among the team's top offensive weapons this season. One of CCA's better games was against Baldwin when Dennis combined for 150 passing and rushing yards for the Cougars.



**Anna Jensen, Midland Dow**  
Won the first two Saginaw Valley League jamborees this season with times of 18:57.6 and 18:35.4 before slipping to sixth place in a time of 19:35.4 in the latest SVL jamboree on Oct. 18.



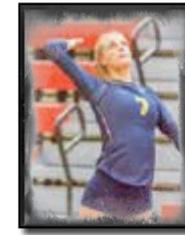
**Alex Fries, Swan Valley**  
The strong-armed junior has completed close to 60 percent of his passes this season and has only thrown five interceptions. Fries will be one of the top returning quarterbacks in the area next season.



**Hunter Smith, Breckenridge**  
Smith tallied a team-best 17 tackles in a 49-14 victory over Vestaburg on Oct. 13 which locked up the Mid-State Activities Conference title. It is the first time since 1944-45 that the Huskies have won back-to-back conference championships.



**Philena Johnson, Vestaburg**  
She placed 11th at Late Season Chippewa Hills Warrior Invitational in 23:54.8. She was 17th in the Mid-State Activities Conference Jamboree in 23:21.0 She was 22nd at the Montabella Invitational in 24:25.0. Her PR is 23:43.9.



**Abbey Malinowski, Clarkston**  
Malinowski has recorded 418 kills in 85 sets played this season (4.9 per set) to help guide the Wolves to a 25-12 record. Her hitting percentage of .384 ranks ninth in the state.



**Cade Schafer, Chippewa Hills**  
He passed for 74 yards in a 28-12 win over Beal City. Schafer is in his second year as Chippewa Hills' starting quarterback and has led the Warriors to a combined record of 15-3 the past two regular seasons. He also plays basketball and baseball.



**Cole Johnson, Rockford**  
Won the Portage Invite on Oct. 7 with a season-best time of 15:20.2. Has finished second in the OK Red jamborees with times of 16:26.5 and 16:12, while taking second in the OK Red Championships on Oct. 19 via a time of 15:32.7.



**Jalen Myles, Carrollton**  
Myles rushed 329 yards and two touchdowns, in Carrollton's 26-14 win over previously unbeaten Alma earlier this season.

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# MORE HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE SCENE STEALERS!



### Heritage Cross Country

The Hawks swept the Saginaw County meet earlier in the month at Birch Run High School.

The Heritage girls, led by Rachel Kempf, won their 10th straight team title. The Heritage boys won their 11th consecutive team championship with a perfect 15 points. Heritage's Michael Fiore claimed the boys championship and Kempf won the girls title.



### Tate Hausbeck, Nouvel

The senior quarterback helped Saginaw Nouvel to a perfect 9-0 record this season. Nouvel is averaging close to 35 points a game on offense.



### Jolie Brochu, Flint Powers Catholic

Brochu shot a 166 two-day total to earn All-State honors for the Chargers. Brochu also had a hole-in-one during the tournament to lead Flint Powers to a fifth place finish.



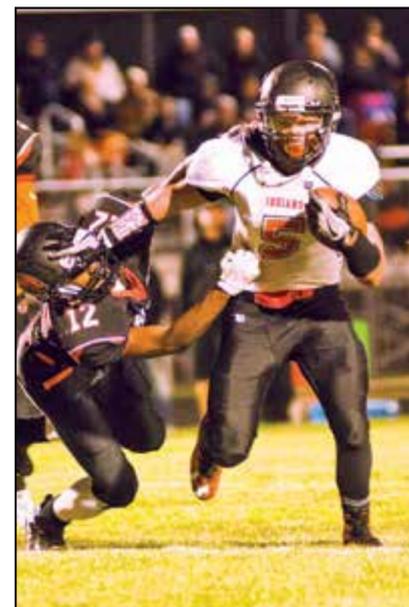
### Rylie Johnstone, Midland High

A standout gymnast, Johnstone recently announced she will continue her college career at the University of Illinois Chicago.



### Joey Bentley, Ithaca

Bentley was named as a Top 10 finalist for Mr. Football. Bentley has 1,499 passing yards on 88-for-139 passing, including 18 touchdowns and just four interceptions. However, he also has accomplished plenty in the run game with 989 rush yards (10.8 per carry) and 18 more touchdowns. Ithaca finished the regular season a perfect 9-0.



## Forsyth Puts In Strong Football Season

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Sam Forsyth enjoyed a banner season for Chesaning's football team, which had a disappointing ending by finishing 4-5 and missing the playoffs.

But coach John Mimranek still enjoyed the fruits of having a memorable player like Forsyth on his team.

He played a slot receiver position for the Indians.

"We also used him out of that slot in the backfield a lot of times," Mimranek said.

Among the highlights has been a school-record setting 95-yard touchdown

reception.

"His numbers are much-improved over last season," Mimranek said. "We were 2-7 last year. He was still our key weapon, but only accounted for a few offensive touchdowns. But this year, he's accounted for 23 offensive touchdowns. So he's averaging almost three per game through eight games."

A key highlight came on week seven during the homecoming game against Shepherd. He had four rushing touchdowns and one receiving score. He hit the four-TD rushing mark four times this season.

"He doesn't get that many

carries," Mimranek added. "He's only had 97 carries (after eight games) this season but still accounted for 869 yards rushing."

He also had 23 catches for 566 yards.

It's his third year on the varsity team and second under the current coaching staff.

"He's extremely competitive," Mimranek said. "He's a three-sport athlete and never out of competition mode."

Chesaning had a few close losses, he added.

"I'm here to help the team out," Forsyth said.

Forsyth was also a long jump state champion during

the 2017 track season and helped Chesaning claim a team state title. Track and football complement each other, he agreed.

The Shepherd football game was a highlight, he added. He said it's been his best football season.

"It's not all me," he said. "Our whole offense has come so far as a team. You can have Barry Sanders on your team, but if no one on the offense does their job, it doesn't matter."

A lot of Division II schools are looking at him for football, and Forsyth said he's definitely interested in playing the sport at the next level.

Chesaning's Sam Forsyth (No. 5) carries the ball during an early season game against Alma. (Don Goostrey, High Sports Scene Photo)

## Hurt Having Outstanding Season For Breckenridge

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Senior strong safety Caleb Hurt has been getting the job done for Breckenridge's football team this season

"He's had a pretty good season this year," Huskies coach Kris Robinson said. "Two weeks ago against Merrill, he had 21 tackles and a pick six, which was impressive. He's a constant for us on the defensive side of the ball."

Hurt had, after eight weeks of action, 345 yards on 52 rushing attempts and five touchdowns, plus seven catches for 263 yards and two touchdowns.

Hurt rotates at wing back and

running back for the Huskies.

We lost our starting running back two weeks and filled in there and did a great job," Robinson said. "He has the speed-quickness. He's very elusive but has a firm handle on blocking and schemes."

But defense has been his strength with 102 tackles, two sacks and two interceptions including the 40-yard pick 6. It's his second season starting on the varsity for Breckenridge.

"He's improved a great deal," Robinson said. "I think he's improved a great deal. He worked really hard in the weight room this year. He also starts on the offensive side of the ball for us. He's got a phenomenal work ethic. He's a joy

to have on our team."

Robinson continues to be impressed with Hurt's gifts on that side of the football.

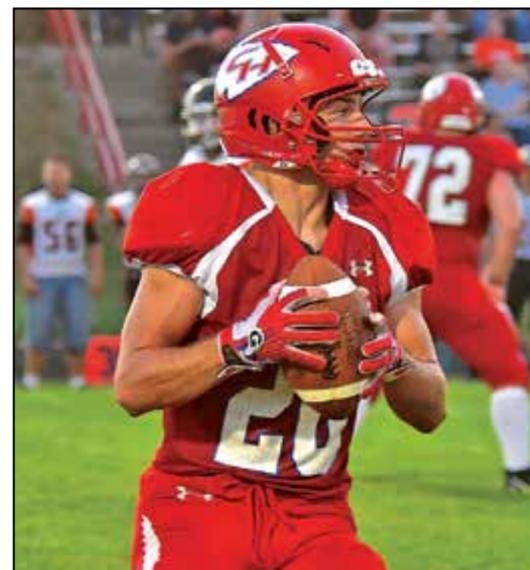
"He's got great speed and is one of our faster kids," Robinson said. "He tackles extremely well. He's a good sure tackler. He sets up the defense for us. He makes sure the secondary is in the right place. He moves all over the field on defense for us."

Hurt also plays basketball and runs track.

"He's pretty good at all of them," Robinson said. "He's on the 4x100 last year that made it to the state meet. I had him in my weightlifting class. He's always in there. I wish I had more players like him."



Breckenridge's Caleb Hurt (No. 13) makes a tackle against Ashley during a game earlier this season. (Chuck Prikasky, High Sports Scene Photo)



## Spedowski Leads Warriors Into Playoffs

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Chippewa Hills finished the regular football season at 7-2 to qualify for the playoffs again and senior David Spedowski has played no small role in that success.

"Team-wise we're doing pretty good," he said. "We've had two losses. I think we're a better team because of those losses. We've got some sophomores who have stepped up to the task. We're pretty good there."

"Offensively, Seth McKenzie, Cade Schafer and Ty Jose have stepped up a lot."

As for his season, "it's not as good as last year. I missed three games because of (ankle) injuries. Other than that I've had a pretty good season. I had a good game against Grant and Newaygo."

Spedowski leads the team in rushing yards and is second in tackles.

His position, "depends on the team we play," he said. "If they pass the ball a lot, I'm at defensive back. If they run the ball a lot, I'm at linebacker."

His strength is stopping the outside run, Spedowski indicated.

Spedowski is hopeful the Warriors can enjoy plenty of postsea-

son success.

"We'd like to win the district title this year," he said. "We hope we get a good draw and then we'll go from there."

The Warriors will play at Clare in the first round of districts. The winner plays either Reed City or Grayling for the district title.

Spedowski has been a key member of the Chippewa Hills wrestling team in past seasons.

"I've had a couple of injuries I need to heal up for because I want to play college football," he said. "I may not start wrestling until after Christmas so I can rest my body."

Chippewa Hills' David Spedowski has had a huge season running the ball this season for the Warriors. (Skip Traynor, High Sports Scene Photo)

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# Veteran Players Leading Way For DeWitt Volleyball

Nate Schneider  
Sports Scene

The last two seasons for DeWitt volleyball have ended in Class A regional finals heartbreak.

Could this be the year the Panthers carve out an even deeper postseason run?

DeWitt volleyball, under the direction of head coach Christy Drayton, has been one of the top programs in Michigan in recent years and with seven returning seniors in 2017 the writing was on the wall that this would be another special team.

The Panthers have lived up to those lofty standards as they ended last week with a 30-4 record and ranked fourth in Class A. Not only

is the record impressive, but a 21-match win streak shows it is a team playing their best volleyball of the year as the postseason nears.

"The last two years and the way they ended really has motivated our girls," Drayton said. "We went 44-2 last year and lost a tough five-set match to Portage Central in the regional finals, the second straight year we lost a five-set match in the regional finals. You get a little chip on your shoulder after a while. All seven of our seniors have been through this and want to push past that point so they don't have that empty feeling again."

DeWitt was led the previous couple of seasons by the graduated Lexi Nordmann, a 2016 Miss Volleyball candidate who guided the way to a

combined record of 88-6-1 over the two-year period.

Nordmann is now playing collegiately at Southern Methodist University, paving the way for different girls to be front and center on this year's roster.

Senior Grace George has met that challenge, accounting for a team-best 322 kills (4.1 per set). Junior Desiree Becker has racked up 244 kills and team-highs with 93 blocks and 28 aces, while fellow junior Sydney Mills has 144 kills and 22 blocks. Senior Bailey Yonkman has 91 kills and 56 blocks.

Setting up the hitters is senior setter Brooke Binkley, who has dished out 749 assists (9.6 per set), while leading the defense is senior

libero Stephanie Starr with 273 digs (3.5 per set).

DeWitt won a sixth consecutive Capital Area Activities Conference Red title last week as it hammered Haslett 25-14, 25-17, 25-16.

While there are bigger fish to fry, taking care of business within the conference is not lost on the girls.

"It's always a goal," Drayton said. "When you win a couple conference titles in a row, you're going to have a target on your back. Everyone wants to play you. We can't overlook anybody and it still means a lot to these girls to accomplish that. Now they can turn their attention to our next goal."

DeWitt will head to Lansing Waverly for districts next week.



The DeWitt volleyball team entered the final week of the regular season 30-4. (Courtesy Photo)

# Notre Dame Prep Volleyball Is Scary Good

Nate Schneider  
Sports Scene

Betty Wroubel is the third-winningest coach in MHSAA volleyball history, so anything she says related to her team can be taken as gospel.

When the long-time Pontiac Notre Dame Prep coach says her current team is "one of the best she's ever had", you can put a lot of emphasis on it being nothing other than the truth.

The top-ranked Fighting Irish's

record stands at an amazing 59-2-2 following a weekend tournament in which it defeated Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart Academy (25-7, 26-24), Dansville (25-6, 26-8), Fowlerville (25-9 25-17), Onsted (25-14, 25-12), Marshall (25-15, 25-17) and finally St. Johns in the championship match (25-16, 25-14).

It puts Notre Dame Prep in the midst of a 14-match streak in which it hasn't even lost a set, which is actually not even closest to the longest stretch it has gone this season without dropping a set. The Fighting Irish have won 47 matches in a row, while in the entirety of their 63 matches this season they have only dropped a total of 10 sets.

The scariest fact might be that Notre Dame Prep has rarely been at full strength this season.

"We still haven't played

Pontiac Notre Dame Prep was an impressive 59-2-2 entering the final week of the regular season. (Courtesy Photo)

a tournament with a full lineup," Wroubel said after a midweek win over Rochester Adams. "We've either had someone hurt or out of town for a family emergency or whatnot. We've had seven tournaments and haven't had everyone available for any of them. That makes us stronger though. It's a little bit rough, but it's developing some depth on our team should anything happen down the road or if someone just has an off day."

The Fighting Irish were defeated last year in the Class B regional semi-finals by eventual state champion North Branch, which is now ranked second behind Notre Dame Prep this year.

Helping to lead the way for the Fighting Irish this season is junior Purdue commit Madeline Chinn, who has racked up 563 kills (4.3 per set) along with 72 aces and 79 blocks.

"We were talking about it being

Senior Night and our seniors' last home match about close we are as a team," Chinn said. "This is the closest team I've been on since I was a freshman. I think our team chemistry and willingness to work super hard and 110 percent for each other is what gives us that drive to be successful."

Chinn narrowed her college decision down to Purdue and Michigan State, ultimately choosing the Boilermakers last spring due to a couple of factors.

"I love Dave Shondell and the Purdue coaching staff," Chinn beamed. "I mean, I love Cathy George and the Michigan State coaching staff as well. It was a really hard decision. But with Purdue, I just love their campus. A lot of people told me during the recruiting process that when you go on a school's campus, you'll know when you know. I felt that feeling at Purdue."

Wroubel has observed the 6-foot-3 Chinn dominate matches regularly the last couple of years and offered her thoughts on one of the most talented players in the state.

"She has such a great personality and brings great skills," Wroubel remarked. "She was highly recruited obviously. But the way her personality shines on the court, it takes some pressure away from some other girls."

But it is certainly not a one-girl show at Notre Dame Prep, with contributions coming from so many sources en route to this remarkable season.

Senior setter Lauren Burnick has accumulated 966 assists (7.4 per set), while junior Natalie Risi has recorded 402 kills plus 388 digs (2.9 per set) and 144 aces. Senior Gabrielle Shilling has 296 kills and a team-best 156 blocks.

"It's really a balanced team," Wroubel added. "Chinn gets a lot of the credit and she deserves it. But it's really a well-rounded and good overall team. One of my best."

Pontiac Notre Dame Prep has won state championships in 2007 and 2013 under Wroubel.

# Mount Pleasant Volleyball Putting Together Solid Season

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Mount Pleasant's volleyball team has put some impressive talent on the court this season and the result has been a very talented squad.

Coach Ali Smith's team was 35-10 entering the final full week of October.

"We're having a really great season," she said. "We've had some kids step up who have a lot of experience. We've had a lot of young kids step up also."

Four players, two seniors and two juniors have high hitting percentages.

"I feel the offense is pretty well spread out," Smith said. "We also pass really well. Those things combined is a major reason for our success so far."

The team's top hitter has been Camden Odykirk, a senior, who is hitting .358. She leads in blocks and is a three-year starter and captain.

"She's done a great job this year in a leadership role," Smith said. "We are better when she's on the floor."

Junior transfer Ashley Alford is another key player.

"She moved to Mount Pleasant this summer," Smith said. "She is hitting .227 for the season. She leads the team in service aces with 71, which is almost double what anyone else is doing. She comes from a great volleyball background and is kind of a student of the game. She understands the game very well."

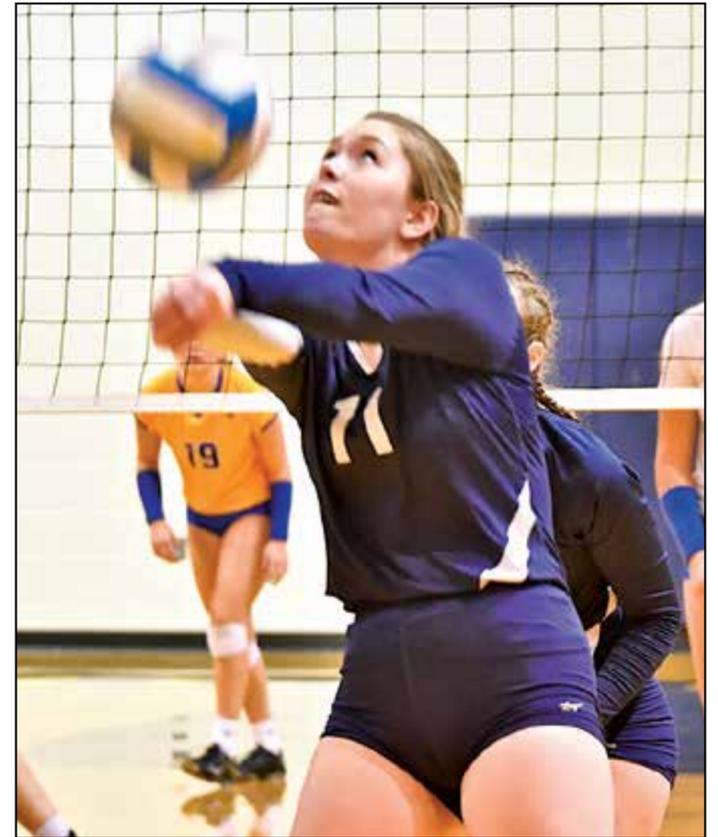
Kolbey Boyd is a sophomore libero.

"She has jumped into that position and has 364 digs this season, which is more than twice what anyone else does," Smith said. "Her ability to control the back row has been super important, especially keeping these girls in high hitting percentages."

The squad has done a good job of competing against and beating the teams we should beat," Smith said. "There's a couple of teams we're looking to take out. We're really in a position where we need to get over the hump and compete a just a little higher level to achieve the things we've set out to achieve this year, to win our district and win our region."

"In districts, we play Midland Dow in the first round."

Mt. Pleasant coach Alison Smith's squad was 35-10 entering the final full week of October. (Skip Traynor, High Sports Scene Photo)



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# Lakewood-Lake Odessa Volleyball Team Among The Best In Class B This Season

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Like clockwork, the Lakewood-Lake Odessa volleyball team is back among the top Class B teams in the state. The Vikings closed out the month of October ranked third in Class B and are gearing up for another long post-season run.

A constant for the Vikings over the years has been head coach Kellie Rowland. Rowland passed a career milestone earlier this season when she recorded her 1,000th career win.

Seniors Alivia Benedict and Breanna Wickerink are leading the way for this year's Lake Odessa squad.

The Freeland Falcons are closing in on the Tri-Valley Central Conference title. Freeland is ranked ninth in the state in

Class A this season and improved its record to 38-8-2 for the season when it went 6-0 and claimed the championship at the St. Louis tournament. Freeland defeated host St. Louis, ranked 10th in the state in Class C, in the semifinals of the tournament and then defeated Mt. Pleasant in the finals. Senior Noelle Duley and sophomore Caitlenn Pistro are leading the Falcon offense this season that is quarterbacked by senior setter Betsy Cook. Defensively, senior Bailey DeSander leads the team in digs while junior Taylor Bakos leads the squad in blocks.

Swan Valley continues to nip at Freeland's heels in the TV-Central. The Vikings are ranked among the honorable mention in Class B this season. Senior Kristen Huebner is turning in a solid all-around season for Swan Valley as she

leads the squad in kills and blocks and is among the leaders in digs and aces. Senior Emma Bierlein and junior Hallie McIntyre are also turning in strong efforts on the attack. Sophomores Claire Bierlein and Bridget Ready are both averaging over four assists per game with junior Mallory Eurich turning in a big season on defense.

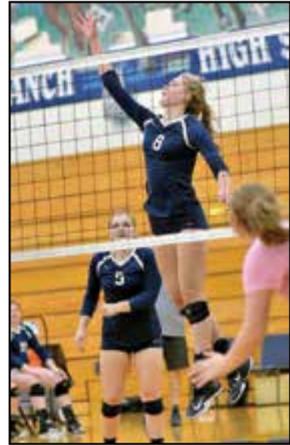
DeWitt continues its strong play in Class A this season. The Panthers, led by their seven seniors, are ranked fifth in the state this season and are gaining momentum as the state tournament approaches. DeWitt has turned in a number of strong efforts this season including winning titles at the St. Johns and the Novi tournaments. Senior outside hitter Grace George leads the team in kills. DeWitt is also receiving strong play from seniors Brooke Binkley

and Stephanie Starr and junior Desiree Becker.

The Lowell volleyball team is ranked among the honorable mention in Class A. The Red Arrows feature a strong group of hitters this season led by Abigail Mangus, Jenna Reitsma and Carly Hoekstra. Meghan Meyer is among the team leaders in blocks with Sydney Powell pacing the squad in assists and Jill Fidler leading in digs.

After turning in a perfect month of September, the Corunna volleyball team is continuing its strong play. Corunna turned in a 6-0 record as it won the title at the Laingsburg tournament. Elizabeth Norris and Rylee Thayer both earned all-tournament honors for the Cavaliers. Senior Lexi Mort reached a career milestone when she recorded her 2,000th career assist in a match against Lakeville.

Alma's Olivia Apple also recorded a career milestone. Apple set a new school record in digs in a match with Bullock Creek. Apple set the new record with 1,574 digs and counting.



Don't be surprised if Lakewood - Lake Odessa and North Branch face one another once again in the Class B volleyball finals. (Courtesy Photo)

# Apple Breaks Career Digs Mark At Alma

## Nate Schneider Sports Scene

Olivia Apple knew in August she had a good shot at breaking Alma High School's all-time digs record at some point this season.

That day arrived Oct. 18 at Midland Bullock Creek.

Apple surpassed previous record holder Bailey McCarthy with the 1,565th dig of her career during the match, then added some more to up the new benchmark to 1,574 by the end of the night.

It was a momentous occasion for the four-year varsity performer, who has been a defensive stalwart as the Panthers have continually gotten better and better the last couple of seasons.

"It was definitely a surprise," Apple said about breaking the record. "I had no

idea. I felt very accomplished. It's been something I've been working for a long time."

Making the record of McCarthy, who played volleyball at Alma through 2015 and is someone Apple greatly admired.

"Bailey was one of my role models and I really looked up to her," Apple said. "I wanted to be her as a player. So it was pretty cool to break the record of someone who drove me to be as good as possible and work so hard for it."

Apple and the rest of the Panthers have been coached the last two years by former Mount Pleasant varsity coach Kristi Lippert, who has helped Alma rise to a second straight strong season as it improved to 21-10-3 and 5-1 in the Tri-Valley Conference Central with the victory over Bullock Creek. The Panthers will be playing Swan Valley for second place in the TVC Central next week behind first-place Freeland.

Lippert managed to keep it a secret from Apple that she was closing in on the career digs record.

"She knew that if she had a year anywhere close to last year that she would do it," Lippert explained. "But I did not tell her when she was getting close. I'm someone who would rather wait until it happens and then we can talk about it. So I didn't tell her.

But my assistant coach and I have been talking about it and knew it would happen at Bullock Creek. We contacted Bullock Creek to let them know it was going to happen and they were really cool about stopping the match between sets to make the announcement. We brought a game ball to give her at the match. And we let her family know, so they could invite everyone who wanted to attend. It was a great moment for Olivia."

As her coach the last two seasons, Lippert has seen up close what Apple brings to the table as a top-notch libero.

"She's a defensive catalyst," Lippert said. "She carries so much of our defensive burden. She's a kid who doesn't

give up on a ball. She goes all out. She shows up day in and day out. She's very consistent. She played defensive specialist her first two years instead of libero, so it limited her total digs. But last year in her first year as libero, she set the single-season digs record with 624 which McCarthy had held. She is just so quick to the ball and very instinctual."

Another senior leader on Alma is setter Tia Everdeen, who is a tremendous soccer player and athlete but backed up Kenzie Seeley last year before emerging this season.

"Being a backup was difficult for Tia," Lippert admitted. "As such a great athlete in multiple spots, I don't think she'd been asked to do that before. But she accepted it and learned so much from Kenzie which she has carried with her this year. Our offense hasn't skipped a beat with her setting for us."

Also playing a significant role as seniors are defensive specialist Sam Melinger, senior right side Marissa Smoker, defensive specialist Aubrie Dunlap and outside hitter Kimmie Shunk.

The Panthers will look to win a district

title at Clare, one year after falling to Belding in their district opener.

"Winning a district title is a huge goal for us in our last year as seniors and it would be a big step forward for this program," Apple added.



Alma's Olivia Apple set the school's dig record this season. (Randy Miniard, High Sports Scene Photo)

# Seniors Leading Strong Midland Volleyball Team

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Tim Zerull is coaching a Midland volleyball team that enters the late stages of the season with a 39-9 record.

"I'm pleased with how well

we're playing," he said. "We've won three tournaments overall, and we're getting ready as the season winds down to challenge for championships. We're playing at a high level and keeping our focus on what's important in having

Midland High finished the regular season 39-6. (Skip Traynor, High Sports Scene Photo)

# Rockford Boys, Girls Cross Country Teams Among The Best In The State

## David Cook Sports Scene

When it comes to combining excellence in both boys and girls cross country, few schools do it better than Rockford. This season is no exception as the Rockford girls are ranked No. 1 in the state in Division 1 while the boys are ranked No. 7 in the state.

The Rockford girls have been rolling since the season began. Along with dominating the OK Red Conference, the Rams have won several major invitationals this season. At the top of the list was their championship in the Elite Division at the Spartan

Invitational at Michigan State University. Rockford also won the Portage Central Early Bird Invitational, the Allendale Invitational and the Portage Invitational.

"We've been doing exceptionally well," said Rockford coach Ben Watson. "We've had a lot of girls run really well this season."

Rockford has several talented runners on this year's squad. Leading the way for the Rams is junior Ericka VanderLende. One of the premier runners in the state, VanderLende won individual titles at the Portage Central, Bath and Allendale invites, placed third at the Portage invite and fourth at

Michigan State. VanderLende's best time this season is 17:25.

The Rams have plenty of talent behind VanderLende including seniors Cam Gabriel and Caleigh Dunn and junior Emma Everhart-Deckard.

Rockford's boys are also turning in a big season. Ranked seventh in the state in Division 1, Rockford won the Portage Central Early Bird Invitational and the Bath Invitational and finished in the top ten at both the Portage Invitational and the Michigan State Spartan Invitational.

Like the girls team, the Rockford boys are paced by one of the top individuals in the state. Senior Cole Johnson turned in the best time by a boy in the entire state this season when he won the Portage Invitational in a time of 15:20.2.

Fellow senior Dayton Brown is also turning in a big season. enroute to winning the Portage Invitational. Brown also turned in a season-best time of 15:24.5 as he took second at the Allendale Invitational.

"Cole and Dayton are both having good seasons," said Rockford coach Andy Martin. "They are doing a great job of leading the younger guys and have been posting some great times." Junior Jack Grimm is holding down the third spot for the team. Grimm has turned in a season-best time of 16:07.7.

Sophomore Ian Cook and freshman Jude Parks round out Rockford's top five runners. Cook has a personal-best time of 16:36.5 while Parks has a personal-best time of 16:36.5.



Rockford's boys and girls cross country teams have hovered around the top spot in Division 1 all season. (Gary Williams, High Sports Scene Photo)

# Morley Stanwood Runner Gearing Up For States

## John Raffel Sports Scene

A year after placing 17th in the state in Division 3 and earning all-state honors, Morley Stanwood sophomore Aiden McLaughlin is poised to finish among the top runners in the state before the season ends.

As a freshman, McLaughlin was fifth at regionals and then placed 17th in a season's best of 16:39 at state for 17th.

He posted his personal record of 16:24.5 at the Montabella Invitational. He has not taken a first but

has several second places at various invitationals and jamborees. He led his team to second place in the Central State Activities Association Silver Division behind Kent City. "I'm getting excited for regionals,"

he said. "I'm hoping to get under 16:20. I have a couple of meets left. By state, I want to PR again. I think I just about to go out faster and try to keep my pace."

He was second overall in the conference. It's been his best season.

"Endurance for sure (is better)," McLaughlin said. "My whole race has gotten better. I've been able to be at top speed longer. Last year, my first mile, I'd be pretty fast, then I would go downhill."

But McLaughlin has become a strong

runner this year. "Our team did a lot better, they did very well this year," he said. "We had a lot of kids step up. We lost some key seniors last year. They had to step up and improve their times to help our team take second in the conference."

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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON CROSS COUNTRY

Area Runners Fine Tuning As Cross Country State Finals Draw Near

David Cook Sports Scene

With the state cross-country finals fast approaching, area runners have been shaving seconds off their times as they gear up for the state meet slated for November 4. A number of Mid-Michigan area schools are ranked among the top teams in their divisions this season and the this year's state finals will have plenty of area teams and athletes in the chase for all-state honors...

onships where they won the title by 26 points. Balance was key for the Cougars as senior Ryan Schroeder placed 10th with a time of 16:22 followed by sophomore Eli Meder (13th, 16:25) and senior Davis Tebben (14th, 16:27).

Lansing Catholic Central's girls cross-country team is also among the tops in the state as the girls are ranked second in Division 2. The Lansing Catholic girls turned in an impressive performance at the Greater Lansing as they won by 51 points. Senior Olivia Theis is one of the premier girls in the state and turned in a big performance at the Greater Lansing. They won the race going away as

she posted a time of 17:26, winning by 43 seconds.



Cougar junior Lauren Cleary placed third in 18:18 while sophomore Jaden Theis placed

fourth in 18:30. Pewamo-Westphalia is another school experiencing success with both the boys and the girls teams as both squads are ranked fifth in the state in Division 3. The Pewamo-Westphalia boys primed for the finals by winning the Alma College Scottie Classic. Balance was key for the Pirates with four runners in the top 10. Sophomore Hayden Germain led the way as he placed fifth as an individual with a time of 16:47 followed by junior Mitch Nurenberg (6th, 16:47), junior Kyle Hengesbach (7th, 16:50) and sophomore Troy Hagen (9th, 17:06). The Pewamo-Westphalia girls also took first at the Scottie Classic. Like the boys, balance was key for the girls. Pewamo-Westphalia's sophomore quartet of Emily Nurenberg, Brooklyn Hengesbach, Caile George and Bailey Droste finished fifth through eighth respectively to lead the way.

The Breckenridge girls

cross-country team continues to turn in solid efforts. Ranked third in the state in Division 4, Breckenridge took second at the Alma Scottie Classic. Senior Chloe Brittain took first place at Alma with a time of 19:41 followed by sophomore Annie Laurenz who turned in a time of 20:09. A group of talented freshmen girls gave a glimpse of the future of cross country in the Lansing area. A total of five freshmen placed in the top 16 at the Greater Lansing invite has Holt's Aiden Grasse placed fifth, East Lansing's Abbie Draheim took sixth, Lansing Christian's Madison Volz placed seventh, Grand Ledge's Grace Buckland placed 14th and Corunna's Evie Wright took 16th. At Owosso, sophomore Jordan Sowash is making an impact for the Owosso boys team. Sowash placed third at the Flint Metro meet with a time of 16:52. Sowash also took third individually at both the Holly and Linden invites



earlier this season.

Carson City-Crystal freshman Coleman Clark is making an impressive debut with the Eagles' boys team. Clark won each Mid-State Athletic Conference jamboree this season and also won the Mid-State league meet. Clark also placed fourth at the Alma Scottie invite and fifth at Carson City-Crystal's Don Baese invite.



Ithaca junior runner Ransom Allen continues to put up impressive times for the Yellowjackets this season. (Russ Pierce, High Sports Scene Photo)

Ithaca's Allen Hitting His Stride

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

Ithaca junior runner Ransom Allen will never claim to be a four-year star of the cross country team.

That is because Allen opted not to run as a freshman, only taking up the sport of cross country for the Yellowjackets as his sophomore year in 2016. Last season, the lack of experience showed as his best time of 17:05 did not come until the Division 3 state finals at Michigan International Speedway, which placed him 42nd overall and helped pave the way for what would come.

One year later, you have a version of Allen that is rounding into one of the better D3 runners in the entire state of Michigan.

"He had a decent season last year but this is definitely his breakthrough year," Ithaca head coach Tim Lam-

brecht said. "Part of that is experience and part of it is training. It takes a while to figure out how to race. You just don't know how hard to push yourself and your body is telling you to slow down. It takes some people years and years before they figure it out. But he's definitely getting it nailed down this year."

Allen showed immediately that he was poised for a big season at the Laingsburg Early Burg Invitational on August 24, unofficially breaking the school record in the 5,000 meters with a time of 15:56.1. It is unofficial because Lambrecht sees all the fast times run at this course throughout the years and is convinced it is shorter than a true 5,000 race.

But it mattered little as the next time out for Allen, on the home course at the Yellowjacket Invite on August 31, Allen truly did break the school record and his time of 16:09.6 was

counted as official.

He broke the record previously held by Stephen Merchant, who set the previous standard in 2012 and has helped guide Allen toward success this year.

"Stephen graduated in 2012 and ran for Lansing Community College and then Siena Heights on scholarship for both schools," Lambrecht said. "Him helping out this year is one of the things that has really helped Ransom. He was a national qualifier in track in the 5K, so he's actually been able to pace Ransom through a lot of the key workouts. Not to take anything away from Ransom, but that has really helped him and our team. So hats off to Stephen Merchant."

Allen, whose older sister Courtney was a star cross country and track athlete for Ithaca and now runs at Western Michigan University, has shown all season the running gene runs in the family. He proceeded to win all three Tri-Valley Conference West jamborees before finishing

second to defending state champion Yami Albrecht from Caro at the TVC Championships on October 17.

"I guess if you are going to lose to anyone, lose to a state champion," Lambrecht quipped.

Ithaca has never won a regional title and it seemed to have a great shot this season, but an injury to another talented Yellowjackets runner in Landon Strong damages those chances significantly.

But Allen has a great shot at All-State honors and possibly a top 10 finish if everything goes as planned.

"The top 30 get All-State," Lambrecht added. "His goal last year when I sat down with all the kids was to be All-State this year. I told him that it was a very realistic goal with seniors who will graduate and the fact he will be faster. And as the summer progressed, we realized he's going to be even better than that. We started raising those goals and now the goal for Ransom is really a top 10 finish at states, which would really be something."

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LCC's Theis Is On A Redemption Tour

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

The narrowest of margins pushed Olivia Theis, the Lansing Catholic Central runner into second place as a junior at the Division 3 cross country state finals last year, as her time of 17:41.3 was edged by Hart's Adelyn Ackley who ran a 17:40.6.

Theis opted to run track and field for the first time in her high school career last spring, determined to be the best distance runner of anyone in the state. She achieved exactly that, winning both the D3 1,600 and 3,200 state championships.

Along the way, Theis has also excelled on the national stage as after the 2016 season she competed in the Foot Locker nationals and took 14th place. She went to the New Balance nationals and placed second overall, running one of the fastest-ever two-mile races for a Michigan girl.

And now her sights are set on the D3 individual state title that has so far eluded her.

"I know we're in a different division [than Ackley] now, but I've definitely been motivated to get that state cham-

ampionship back and have had my mind set on that," Theis said.

Theis, whose younger sister Jaden is a promising sophomore on the Cougars, has dominated the competition thus far during the prep cross country season.

She has finished first in seven out of nine races, only taking second twice during two Capital Area Activities Conference jamborees where she opted to coast rather than run a fast time.

With the attention of universities around the country, Theis has been busy all season with a stretch of five straight weekends taking official visits to various schools.

"It's definitely fun to visit different schools and get closer to making a decision on my future," Theis said. "But I do want to focus on my team right now and my season and getting our team to the state meet. It's kind of hard to focus on both, but I've been trying to make my team the focus."

Lansing Catholic Central head coach Tim Simpson, who has been at the helm for 17 years, has no shortage of praise when it comes to Olivia.

"Right now she's amongst the top five in the country amongst high school

cross country runners," Simpson said. "She was good last year and even better this year. She's in my opinion the best runner the Lansing area has ever seen and probably one of the top five or 10 runners all-time in Michigan."

And as far as Division 3 goes, the evidence is already there that Theis will likely cruise to victory in the upcoming state finals.

"She's already raced the second-place girl in D3 from Portage twice this year and beaten her by over a minute both times," Simpson stated. Despite her extreme talent in running, Theis did not start running until sixth grade and began to realize over the next couple years it might be something she is good at.

"I wasn't sure if I even liked it at first but my middle school coach convinced me to stick with it," Theis said. "I started seeing by the end of sixth grade that I was getting decent at it and I saw my older sister doing well in running when she was in sixth grade, so that was pretty motivating. I just kept at it from that point on."

Olivia has also embraced the opportunity to run on varsity with Jaden these past two years.



Lansing Catholic's Olivia and Jaden Theis are two of the top runners in Division 3 this season. Olivia finished second at the D3 finals a year ago. (Courtesy Photo)

country. One of the services that does rankings has her ranked 30th amongst girls from all classes. Being Olivia's sister, she's getting beat by Olivia but she's one of the only runners out there who isn't scared of her sister. She gets frustrated when she loses to Olivia because she isn't used to losing either. But I tell her, 'You have two more years to beat all of Olivia's records.' She's taken that as a challenge and I'm sure over the next two years Jaden will have those records in her sights."

"As far as sophomores go, she's one of the top three or four runners in the

Mudel Hoping For Top 5 Finish At States

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

When Gabriel Mudel earned All-State honors as a sophomore at Novi



by taking 14th place at the Division 1 cross country state finals in 2015, he thought it would be onward and upward.

Mudel had a tremendous junior season for the most part, but it took a turn for the worse at a terrible time as a case of vertigo leading up to the state finals left him not feeling himself.

He ended up finishing in 58th overall, around 55 seconds slower than the time he had run the previous year.

After taking seventh place in the 3,200-meter run for All-State honors at the D1 track and field state championships this past spring, Mudel is now

poised and ready to complete his prep cross country career with a bang.

"I'd love to finish in the top five and even the top three I believe is attainable," Mudel said. "After the way last year went, I just really want to have a great race to end the season on."

Mudel has been in fantastic form all season long, most recently winning the Kensington Lakes Activities Association individual title with a time of 15:33.1 as he narrowly edged long-time friendly rival Ethan Byrnes from Plymouth (15:33.7).

"I felt a little sick yesterday and had a sore throat today but the running

conditions were great," Mudel said. "This is a fast course and my PR is 15:29, so being only four seconds off that I felt good with. I'm not thrilled about it because a career PR would have been nice, but I can't complain about much."

It is only the second time this season Mudel has been challenged in a race. The only other instance came in the only race he didn't win, the MSU Spartan Invitational, where he finished a close second behind Coldwater's Shuaib Aljabaly (15:28.1) with his career-best time of 15:29.2.

If Mudel were to run exactly his

personal-best at the state finals on November 4, it would probably assure him of a top-three finish as only one runner finished with a time better than that at the state finals in 2016.

First-year head coach Brad Moore says Mudel should be able to compete for an individual state title if all goes well.

"Our original goal was top five and I still feel it's a pretty good goal," Moore said. "But with all the guys out there, he's seen all of them and competed against all of them. It's pretty tough to win at that meet, so we'll see."

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# Midland Dow, Freeland Capture District Titles

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Defense is the name of the game for the Midland Dow boys soccer team and the strong defense being played by the Chargers is paying dividends.

For the second consecutive season Midland Dow captured the Saginaw Valley League title. Dow clinched the title with an 8-0 win against Midland.

The Chargers continued their strong defensive play into the state tournament. Dow's defense produced three shutouts at the district tournament. The Chargers opened district play with a 3-0 win against Bay City Western and then added a 2-0 win against Saginaw Heritage. Dow then won the district title with a 1-0 shutout of Traverse City Central.

The shutout win against Traverse City was the tenth straight shutout posted by Dow. Goalkeeper Kyle Hop and junior

center back Jordan Plewa anchor the Charger defense. Sophomore Tyler Lyman scored the lone goal of the game for Dow with an assist from Cody Glazier. With the win in the district finals Dow improved to 22-3-1 for the season.

• Winning the close games was the key to success for the East Lansing Trojan boys soccer team at the St. Johns district. East Lansing opened the district tournament with a 2-1 overtime win against DeWitt. Petrus Martens scored the game-winning goal for the Trojans in overtime. East Lansing added a 3-1 win against St. Johns in the semifinals. In the district title game East Lansing defeated Haslett, ranked 14th in the state in Division 2, 3-2 in an overtime shutout.

• Flint Powers Catholic used a potent offense and a stingy defense to claim its third consecutive district championship. Ranked third in the state in Division 3, Powers opened state tournament action with a 10-0 win against Durand followed

by an 8-0 win against Lake Fenton in the semifinals. Powers won the district title with a 5-0 win against Ovid-Elsie. Garrett DeLamilleure and Bryan Lenzion scored two goals apiece to pace the Chargers offense. Powers goalkeeper Brendan Tilden recorded the shutout which was the 11th shutout of the season for the Powers defense.

• It was a battle of top ten teams when ninth-ranked Lansing Catholic Central faced off against seventh-ranked Williamston in the title match of the Division 3 district at Williamston. Lansing Catholic came out on top of a thrilling struggle as it won 2-1 in overtime.

• The Alma soccer team won a conference title for the fourth time in the last six years. Alma clinched the title with a 2-1 win against Chesaning. CJ Lemerand scored both goals for the Panthers.

• It's been a banner season for the Big Rapids soccer team. After winning the Central States conference title, the Cardinals won the Division 3 district title at Fremont. Senior Mason Gifford scored



Freeland celebrates a district championship after edging Swan Valley 2-1 in a match that went to a shootout in the finals of the Division 3 district at Alma. (Courtesy Photo)

a pair of goals in Big Rapids' 5-0 win against Fremont in the finals and scored three goals in a 4-2 win against Newaygo in the semifinals.

• Freeland defeated a familiar rival when it edged Swan Valley 2-1 in a match that went to a shootout in the finals of the Division 3 district at Alma. Ryan Svorinic scored the lone goal in regulation for Freeland. Svorinic also scored a pair of

goals in Freeland's 4-0 win against Shepherd in the district semifinals.

• Saginaw Valley Lutheran's offense was in high gear during the Division 4 district tournament at Harbor Beach. Valley Lutheran scored 13 goals in three games including a half-dozen goals in a 6-4 win against Saginaw Nouvel. Valley Lutheran defeated Bad Axe 3-1 in the district title match.

MVP. He had a 29-9 record this season.

Also contributing in singles was Tyler Conrad, at No. 2 singles, who was also an SVL and regional champ and first team all-conference and was 34-5 this fall. Senior Noah Nichols was the team's third singles player and was a four time SVL and four time regional champion. He was first team all conference and went 31-6 this season and finished 120-23 for his career.

At No. 1 doubles was senior Aditya Middha and sophomore Saketh Kamaraju. Middha was a four time SVL and regional champion, four time all conference and had a 36-4 record this season and was 126-24 in his career and also had an individual state title.

"Aditya was the driving force behind the team this year, he pushed himself, he pushed others, he organized extra practices, he handle small details of behind the scene activities and led conditioning," Schwartzkopf said. "The kid was all team, all the time. He leaves behind an incredible legacy as part of a senior class that finished in the top three of states every year of their career and includes a state championship. This kid was the real deal."

Kamaraju was an SVL and regional champion this season and was 37-3 this season.

On the second doubles team was the senior team

of Daniel Zhang and Gopal Parthasarathy. Zhang was a three-time SVL champion and four time regional champion. He had a 31-8 record this year and had a career mark of 116-24 and also won an individual state title.

"Zhang is a special individual whose impact on this team and myself was profound," Schwartzkopf said. "He served as a driving force from day one. He was always intense, drive and desired to achieve to the best of his ability."

All of these players added up to yet another strong season for the Chargers.

"My boys get pushed year round, Schwartzkopf said. "They know the expectation. Dow tennis means something around here and they know if they are going to play there are expectations of success from more places than just the coach. I think that serves, pun intended, as a strong motivator."

The Chargers do lose seven seniors during the off-season, so the team may have to put in even more work that usual to keep themselves in the conversation of the top tennis teams in the state.

"Losing seven seniors is not an easy thing, the car ride home reminiscing about their careers is always one of my favorite moments," Schwartzkopf said. "We have already started training (for next year). All I can say is we will do our best."

# Okemos Wins Division 2 Championship

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The Okemos boys tennis team was on a mission this season. Not only were the Chiefs aiming for their first state tennis title in 10 years, but the team was also looking for a perfect season.

Okemos accomplished both goals as the Chiefs dominated the action at the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Division 2 state tennis finals at Kalamazoo College.

Okemos put up 36 points to win the state title by 15 points over Birmingham Groves and Midland Dow who tied for second place with 21 points apiece.

Okemos made it a clean sweep in double action by winning all four flights and winning a pair of singles championships in an impressive two-day display of tennis.

At No. 1 doubles, Dinakar Talluri and Zal Chino came in as the second seed but won the title with a two-set victory against Midland Dow. The Chiefs also pulled an upset at No. 4 doubles where the second-seeded duo of Karthik Kollisetty and Aditya Kandula defeated top-seeded Birmingham Seaholm

in three sets.

The seeds held true to form at No. 2 and No. 3 doubles. At No. 2 doubles, Okemos' top seeded duo of Rohan Shah and Siddharth Nagisetty claimed the title while at No. 3 doubles top-seeds Deniz Kalfa and Druy Talluri of Okemos claimed the crown.

In singles action, top seed Shrey Patel of Okemos won the title at No. 3 singles while top seed at No. 4 singles, Daniel Gorelik of Okemos, also captured a state title.

Josh Portnoy of Okemos took second at No. 2 singles while Ben Letzer reached the quarterfinals at No. 1 singles

Midland Dow was led by No. 1 doubles team of Aditya Middha and Saketh Kamaraju who placed second. Reaching the semifinals for Dow was the No. 2 doubles team of Daniel Zhang and Gopal Parthasarathy and No. 3 doubles of Ryan Killmaster and Kevin Krae. Advancing to the quarterfinals for Dow were Anish Middha (1s), Tyler Conrad (2s), Noah Nichols (3s), Caleb Qiu (4s), Sami El Nacheh / Senthur Skv (4d).

The East Lansing team of William Lau (1s), Garrison Messenger (2s), Ibrahim Elsadek

(3s), Noam Drews (4s), Casey Ring/Jack Belloli (1d), Drew Wilk/Thomas Adelman (2d), Joe Roboski /Charlie Wilk (3d) and Tommy Paris/Devante Blocker (4d) placed 16th.

Harry Fu of Mt. Pleasant competed at No. 1 singles as an individual.

## DIVISION 1

It was a close battle for the team championship at the Division 1 state finals at the Greater Midland Tennis Center. Bloomfield Hills ended up with the title as it totaled 30 points to edge second-place Troy which totaled 28 points.

Bloomfield Hills entered the tournament ranked first in the state in Division 1 and held on to outlast took Troy. The state title was the second in the last two years for Bloomfield Hills. The Black Hawks finished second at last year's state tournament. Bloomfield Hills won title at No. 1 doubles, No. 2 doubles and No. 3 singles.

The Grand Blanc team of Ben Shapiro (1s), T.J. Schultz (2s), Stuart Johnston (3s), Daniel Rubin (4s), Braedon Schick/Caleb Czajka (1d), Ben Gottlieb/Nick Norman (2d), Patrick Chatterton/Michael Chatterton (3d) and Jacob DeFriez/Austin Zhang (4) placed 16th.

The Holt team of Sebastian Collazos (1s), Jake Gilman (2s), Bernard Anderson (3s), Jonathan Laier (4s), Joe Corner/Carlos Collazos (1d), Justin Coscarella/Josh Corkwood (2d), Andrew Ferdig/Kennedy Simmel and Brian Stump/Jacob Bondi (4d) placed 17th.

Brandon Johnson of Midland reached the second round at No. 1

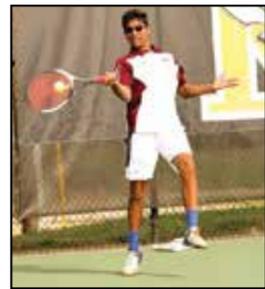
singles as an individual.

## DIVISION 3

Threes were wild at the Division 3 state finals at Hope College in Holland. For the third straight season Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook Kingswood won the Division 3 state title. Cranbrook Kingswood totaled 36 points to outlast neighborhood rival Detroit Country Day by eight points.

Cranbrook Kingswood won three of the four singles flights and came away with the title at No. 2 doubles.

Haslett finished in a tie for seventh place as a team with 10 points.



Haslett was paced by Henry Zayko

who reached the quarterfinals at No. 3 singles and Ethan Fajardo who reached the quarterfinals at No. 4 singles. The No. 3 doubles team of Jae Han and Logan Mowid also reached the quarterfinals. Also competing at the state meet for the Vikings were Nathan Choi (1s), Alex Stanulis (2s), Sam Zayko/Luke Bollman (1d), Matt Bidigare/Bruno Takahashi (2d) and Nathan Stewart/Nolan Kelley (4d).

The St. Johns team of Juan Pablo Saenz (1s), Bobby George (2s), Joey Deliso (3s), Nate Wenzlick (4s), Jack Pope/Alex George (1d), Jack Thalison/Wes Cressman (2d), Eric Jackson/Alex Pervine (3d) and Alex Pung/Noah Rumney (4d) placed 14th.

Oliver Weaver of Williamston reached the semifinals at No. 1 singles as an individual.

## DIVISION 4

Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett won its second consecutive Division 4 state title as it totaled 34 points to hold off Ann Arbor Greenhills by two points.

University Liggett won titles at No. 1 and No. 4 singles and claimed the state title at No. 2 doubles.

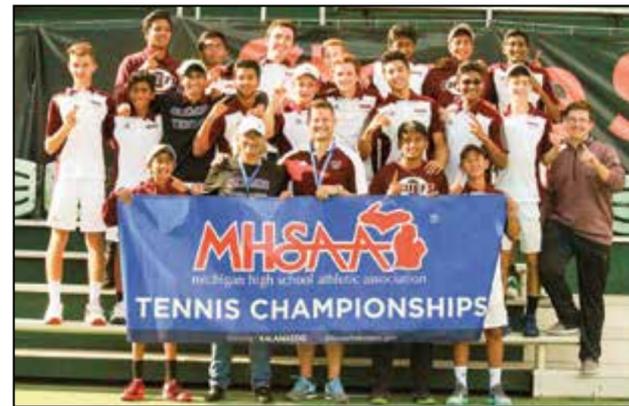
Lansing Catholic Central placed fifth overall with 13 points. Reaching the semifinals for Lansing Catholic was the No. 3 doubles team of Ethan O'Farrell and Sam Zemke and the No. 4 doubles team of Jack Wolfe and Jack Hadley. The Cougars' No. 1 doubles team of Charlie Deluca and Parrish Robart and the No. 2 doubles team of Carter Moore and Adam Grand reached the quarterfinal round. Justin Stanley reached the quarterfinal round at No. 4 singles. Also competing at the finals for Lansing Catholic were Charlie Mora (1s), Frank Nylander (2s) and Julian Lanum (3s).

The Portland team of Ryan Lefke (1s), Kyle Leonard (2s), Aryan Virk (3s), Jack Roe (4s), Vaughn Cross/Bailey Bullock (1d), Desmond Gardner/Dawson Collins (2d), Cameron Hindmorn/David Yang (3d) and Finn Mull/Gabe Hankey (4d) placed 12th.

The Chesaning team of Jarrett Kelley (1s), Joshua Wirt (2s), Les Agnew (3s), Dawson Giesken (4s), Ed Murphy/Garrett Bishop (1d), Kieran Himm/Austin Rolka (2d), Blaine Eastwood/Noah Rieder (3d) and Kyle Rolfe/Garrett Powell placed 15th.

The Essexville Garber team of Trevor Tulin (1s), Trent Urban (2s), Logan Brown (3s), Connor Bash (4s), Brandon Dineaur/Jabob Mannikko (1d), Ashton Thompson/Max Johnson (2d), Logan Gakstatter/Grant McMartin (3d) and John Hyland/Jacob Watson (4d) placed 22nd.

Isaac Johnson of Lansing Christian reached the quarterfinals at No. 1 singles as an individual and Connor Nowosatka of Saginaw Nouvel competed at No. 1 singles as an individual.

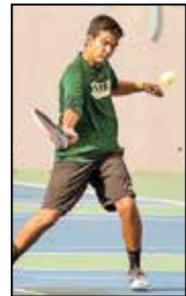


Okemos celebrates after winning the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Division 2 state tennis finals at Kalamazoo College. Okemos put up 36 points to win the state title by 15 points over Birmingham Groves and Midland Dow who tied for second place with 21 points apiece. (Kim Larner, High Sports Scene Photos)

# Dow Tennis Takes Second At Finals

## Ben Murphy Sports Scene

The machine that is the Dow boys tennis program just keeps on turning out great seasons. The Chargers, competing in the Division 2 state finals at Kalamazoo College on Oct. 20 and 21, wrapped up the two day tournament in a tie for second place. Dow scored 21 points, tying with Birmingham Groves. Okemos won the state championship with 36 points.



"I think in some ways, we over-achieved," 11th-year head coach Terry Schwartzkopf said. "Although we didn't finish with the points we were seeded to achieve, we had so many holes to fill at the start of the season, I was not sure we could finish in the top five. We

had strength, but not depth. However, these kids trained hard and pushed themselves and each other to improve. We were able to take home hardware and we did so in a manner which I am proud of."

The Chargers finished off another strong season with an 18-3-1 overall record and runner-up in the state after taking the state championship last year. The Chargers also won five straight state titles from 2009-2013. The team has also won 12 straight Saginaw Valley League titles and nine straight regionals.

"I think at this point, we have such tradition and expectations that these kids fight for more than themselves," Schwartzkopf said. "They are fighting for the honor of the school, the community and each other but it goes beyond the players. The parents offer up time, service and sleep taking care of these boys. They help at practices, they work with them outside of the normal practice time, they provide food, houses for team bonding experiences and cart them all across the state."

It doesn't end there either for the Chargers' recipe for success.

Playing number one singles this year was sophomore Anish Middha. He was a SVL and regional champion and was also first team SVL and league

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# SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON GOLF

## Nice Weather Contributed To Low Scores During Finals Weekend For Local Golfers

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The girls golf season ended with a pair of perfect days for golf as girls golfers from around the state competed for individual and team titles at the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) team and individual finals.

Following is a look at how area teams and golfers did at the state finals.

#### DIVISION 1

Traverse City West turned in



a strong two-day effort to win the MHSAA Division 1 title at The Meadows on the campus of Grand Valley State University.

Traverse City West totaled a 311 on the first day of the tournament and came back and posted a 315 on the second day to finish with a total of 626 to win the state title by 22 strokes over second-place Brighton. Anika Dy won medalist honors and led the way for West as she shot a 141 for the tournament to win medalist honors by eight strokes over Savannah Haque of Rochester. West also received strong efforts from Anci Dy who placed sixth and Megan Jenkinson who finished ninth.

Brighton was paced by Annie Pietila who placed eighth overall.

#### DIVISION 2

Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern turned in a consistent two-day performance to claim the title at the Division 2 finals that took place at Bedford Valley Golf Course in Battle Creek.

Northern totaled a first-day score of 327 and came back with a 329 on the second day to win the title by 12 strokes over Bloomfield Hills Marian. Lilia Henkel and Kay Zubkus both placed in the top ten individually to pace the Huskies.

Freshman Shannon Kennedy of Bloomfield Hills Marian fired a two-day total of 146 to win the

individual medalist honors.

Defending champion Midland Dow placed fourth as a team. Alexis Carras led the way for Dow. Carras shot a 149 to placed second overall as an individual. Rose Hamil finished with a 170 and Grace Baillargeon added a 174 for Dow.

Okemos finished ninth overall. Savera Rajendra Nicolucci led Okemos with a 167 while Lauren Kim totaled a 175 and Rhea Shenoy a 177.

St. Johns finished in 11th place.



Abby Murray led the Redwings with a 172 while Alli Ecclenton followed with a 176.

Claudia Vondra of Mason

finished in fourth place as an individual with a two-day total of 154.

#### DIVISION 3

Macomb Lutheran North won the Division 3 state title held at the Forest Akers West course on the campus of Michigan State University. Lutheran North totaled a 697 to edge Grand Rapids South Christian by three strokes.

Danielle Staskowski of Pontiac Notre Dame Prep won medalist honors as she carded rounds of 72 and 72 to finish with a 144, edging second-place Serena Nguyen of Lutheran North by eight strokes.

Flint Powers Catholic placed fifth overall. Jolie Brochu led the way for Powers as she placed eighth overall with a 166 total.

Big Rapids placed 12th overall. Hope Thebo led the way for the Cardinals with a 187.

Olivia Pumford of Freeland placed 10th as an individual with a two-day total of 167.

#### DIVISION 4

Harbor Springs captured the Division 4 state title that took place at Forest Akers East. Harbor Springs shot a blistering 328 on the second day to finish the tournament with a 680, 11



strokes better than second-place Jackson Lumen Christi.

Alissa Fish of Brooklyn Columbia Central won medalist honors with a 159.

Shepherd placed sixth overall with a 730. Morgan Yates led the way for the Bluejays as she finished in a tie for sixth-place overall with a 164. Olivia Raymond added a 177 for the Bluejays.

Frankenmuth placed seventh overall. Shelby Schneider led Frankenmuth with a 177 and Ella Smith added a 185.

Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart also qualified for the state finals and was paced by Ayesha Mohan who totaled a 188.

## Big Rapids Sophomore Golfer Posts Memorable Season

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Hope Thebo's sophomore season as a Big Rapids golfer could be a sign of things to come.

Thebo was named the Most Outstanding Player of the Central State Activities Association and picked up first-team all-conference honors.

Big Rapids won the league meet at Farwell's Eagle Glen Golf Course in early October to clinch the team title.

"It was pretty awesome," Thebo said. "I'm glad I did well this year."

A solid season for the Big Rapids girls golf team came to a close last weekend at Michigan State University's Forest Akers West Golf Course.

The Cardinals qualified for the



Big Rapids' Hope Thebo hits the range earlier this season for the Cardinals. (John Raffel, High Sports Scene Photo)

tourney by placing second at the regionals.

"There is a lot of good competition in our division," Big Rapids coach Mark Posey said. "We took 10th place last year and want to improve on that finish."

Big Rapids placed 12th at the state finals, led by Thebo with rounds of 94 and 93.

Thebo and Haley Geib are Big Rapids' returning players who have played at a state finals.

"Last year was their first year playing in the finals," Posey said. "Hope posted her personal-best score last year on Day 2 of the finals with a 96. It was the lowest round ever posted by a Big Rapids freshman girl at the state finals. It gave her a lot of inspiration to continue to work on her game."

Going into the state finals, Posey realized what Thebo's potential could be.

"She is capable of posting two rounds in the 80s and earning a top 10 finish," Posey said. "Her key will be to build on the confidence that she earned while taking third at regionals."

Thebo had a 95 average, was Most Outstanding CSAA Player 2017, first team all-conference; low of 80 at Manistee; is averaging 94 in her last all-conference and had a low 89 at regionals.

Thebo had her personal best of 89 at the league meet.

"Hope was solid all day long with her strong mental game," Big Rapids coach Mark Posey said. "Her hard work at practice on her short game and putting really helped her

out." It's Thebo's second year on varsity. She's averaging around 96 for 18 holes.

"I've met my expectations but I want to do better than I am now," Thebo said. "I've improved much (from last year) on my short game."

Her long game remains a strength. "I need to work on putting for sure," she said.

Big Rapids hosted the regionals, which Thebo indicated worked to her team's advantage.

"We're all coming together," she said, prior to the postseason. "We spend a lot of time on this course, I think it's an advantage having it here. It's a harder course and a little longer than others."

## Dow Golf Takes Fourth In Finals

### Ben Murphy Sports Scene

The Dow girls golf team has become a mainstay at the state finals in recent years. The Lady Chargers, who were making their fifth straight state finals appearance on Oct. 20 and 21 at Bedford Valley Golf Course in Battle Creek, took fourth overall in Division 2.

"The season was successful because of hard work and time dedicated to improving," eighth year head coach Doug Bradford said. "This has been the norm in our program over the last five years, something which helps our program rise to one of the top in the state."

On day one of the tournament, the Chargers hit for a team score of 339. They followed that up with a 332



Midland Dow's Alexis Carras finished second at the Division 2 finals at Bedford Valley in Battle Creek. Carras the tournament with a two-day total of 149. Midland Dow finished fourth as a team. (Tim Chrapek, High Sports Scene Photo)

on day two for a total of 671. Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern is the state champion, tallying a two day score of 656.

Dow was the state champion last year and the state runner up in 2015. This was the fifth straight season that the team has finished in the state's top five.

Senior Alexis Carras had a fine ending to her high school golf career, as she finished second in the state. She was consistent both days, hitting a 74 on day one and a 75 on day two for a total tally of 149.

Carras was all Saginaw Valley League all four years of her career, two-time league MVP, three time all-state selection and was state runner-up twice.

Also competing over the weekend was senior Rose Hami who had scores

of 96 and 84 for a total of 170. Grace Baillargeon had scores of 84 and 90 for a 174, Giacomina Fabiano had scores of 95 and 85 for a 180 and Tatum Matthews carded scores of 97 and 88 for a total of 185.

Fabiano, also a senior made first team all-conference this year, Hami, a junior was first team all-conference, Matthews, a senior was second team and Baillargeon, a sophomore was named to honorable mention. Megan Killmaster (junior), Reema Patel (junior), Kristina Danielson (senior) and Taylor Hunter were also on this year's team.

"We had a great season," Bradford said. "We won the Saginaw Valley for the fifth time in a row, won five straight division two regional titles and placed fourth in the state tournament. Always being one of the top teams at the tournaments we competed in (was great). The laughs and good times had

before and after tournaments (made for) great memories."

The Chargers have made a habit out of being one of the final teams at the state's highest level. Bradford is hoping it stays that way.

"I think it says we are one of the top teams in the state," he said. "When you look at it, about 20 strokes separated the top five teams in a two day tournament, that tells you how many good teams there are and to be one of them is an honor."

Dow does take a heavy hit to graduation this season, losing three seniors, including two all-conference members, but the coach is hoping that his team can just reload into next season.

"I certainly feel we will be successful as a team next year," Bradford said. "We have some very good players coming back and the tradition these previous teams have built will carry on with our next group."

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# NORTHERN REPORT



## Clare Runners Finish Atop Jack Pine Conference

### Scott Salowich Sports Scene

The Jack Pine Conference held three jamborees to determine its cross country champions this fall and not much changed over the course of the season as Clare swept every race on both the boys' and girls' sides.

The girls squad looked sharp in the final race, taking five of the top six spots to win with just 19 points.

Lainey Veenkant was first in a time of

18:50.

Roscommon's Alayna Ostling was a distant second in 20:29, followed by a quartet of Pioneers, namely Olivia Haring, who was third in 21:07; Katherine Haupt, fourth in 21:08; Kameron Haag, fifth in 21:10; and Riley Schroeder, sixth in 21:11.

Rounding out the top 10 were Colette Morris of Gladwin, who was seventh in 21:26; Beaverton's Anna Killian, eighth in 21:45.4; Nicole Taylor of Clare, ninth in 21:45.7; and Meridian's Alexis North, 10th in 21:52.

Gladwin ran second with 61 points, followed by Roscommon with 81, Meridian with 85, Harrison with 133 and Farwell with 170.

Beaverton's Parker Hayes was the boys' individual champ in 16:54, but Clare took team honors with just 23 points. The Beavers were second with 66, Meridian third with 74, Farwell fourth with 112, Gladwin fifth with 122, Houghton Lake sixth with 133 and Roscommon seventh with 177.

Jimmy Teall led the Pioneers pack, placing second in 17:25. Jayce Miller was

third in 17:32, David Good fourth in 17:37, Kaleb Schroeder fifth in 17:39 and Alan Winter ninth in 18:02.

Farwell's David Gordon was sixth in 17:40. Zach Grubaugh was seventh in 17:52 and Gage

White eighth in 17:59 for Meridian. Gladwin's Fengjin Cui was 10th in 18:14.

Clare, Farwell and Harrison will compete in a Division 3 regional at Benzie Central. Gladwin will run in a Division 2 regional at Michaywe Pines Gold Course, Houghton Lake and Roscommon will run in a Division 3 race on the same course. Meridian will be at Shepherd's Division 3 regional.

## Clare, Beaverton Finish Regular Season 8-1

### Scott Salowich Sports Scene

For the second year in a row, the Clare football team lost its season-opener to Ithaca and then closed out the regular season with eight straight wins.

Naturally, a Jack Pine Conference championship and a trip to the playoffs resulted in each case.

The Pioneers hope the similarities



to 2016 end there as they once again drew Remus Chippewa Hills in the first round of the Division 5 postseason tournament, the team that knocked them out 32-27 last time around.

"Getting a chance to play them again matters to us, because we only lost by five last year and we had our opportunities," said Clare coach Kelly Luplow. "We made some mistakes that they were able to capitalize on and our tackling wasn't very good in that game."

"They are going to be tough again this year but, this time, we've got them at home. I think the comfort level of playing in front of our fans in our community will be huge for us, much like it was for them last year."

A first-round win could be the start of something big, according to Luplow.

"I felt good about this team," he said. "If they play to their ability, the sky's the limit for these guys. I can honestly compare them to the 2005 team we had that went to Ford Field and lost in the finals."

"They have a lot of skill, even the bigger kids, and there are just so

Clare finished the regular season with an 8-1 record with its only loss coming in the season opener against Ithaca. (Russ Pierce, High Sports Scene Photo)

many ways we can go about things offensively

and defensively.

"If everything falls into place, we have the talent and the chemistry to make a run."

The explosive offense features receivers Brenden Sersaw, Nick Roe, Tanner Panches and Tyler Rodenbo,

"We've had good receivers before," said Luplow, "but this is the best group of four we've had since I've been here, anyway."

The offensive line and running backs have also been outstanding and the quarterback situation has been interesting.

Kaden Kelly just lit it up for the first seven weeks before hurting his shoulder. He was replaced by Jeff Allen, who was an all-conference offensive tackle last year.

"Jeff has played every position on offense for us, except guard and center," said Luplow. "He's a big, strong guy, but he is also a great athlete. He sort of demonstrates the kinds of options we have with this year's group."

Clare dominated the Jack Pine to the tune of an average victory margin of 51-15 in league games, but didn't clinch the crown until the final week of the regular season when the Pioneers beat Beaverton 38-14.

"They have a good, physical team and they'd been shutting out some schools that they normally don't shut out," said Luplow. "I know they had some injuries toward the end and we were able to make some plays and get off to a 28-0 lead on them, but they should do really well in Division 7."

The loss was the first of the year for the Beavers, who accomplished their goal of making it back to the playoffs and drew St. Louis in the first round.

"Our goal has always been to get our program to a level where we compete every week against whoever we run into on the field," said Beaverton coach Aaron Seiser. "We took a step up this year."

"We've got some good players who compete and play hard every week."

Coming up short in week 9 obviously stung, but it shouldn't be an issue moving forward.

"There's no shame in losing to Clare," said Seiser. "They are a really good team and they played a good game against us."

"I don't think are going to be over-

whelmingly disappointed heading into the playoffs because we lost and we're not going to be sky high, either, just because we know we didn't play that great against them."

"Hopefully, we learned a little bit and we can move on from there."

The Beavers have been led all season by linebackers Eric Cassidy, Kyle Cassidy and Jack Owens. Nate Taylor has been excellent at both cornerback and in the slot on offense.

Eric and Kyle Cassidy have sparked the offense at fullback, along with Dan Breault.

Logan Gerow has called the shots at quarterback, behind an offensive line that has been pretty amazing, all things considered.

"We told everyone we had half a starter coming back this year on the O line," said Seiser. "We had one guy who started half the games last year. The rest of them either didn't see much action or were new to the program. Those guys have worked hard to come together and do a great job for us."

Also representing the Jack Pine Conference in the playoffs will be Harrison and Houghton Lake. Both teams finished 6-3 and will square off against each other in Division 6 at Harrison.

The Hornets won the regular-season meeting between the rivals 24-22.

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