

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE
KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

It's a great day here at High School Sports Scene Magazine and it's been a memorable year as well!

What a year 2017 has been! From the Lowell boys bowling and wrestling teams winning state titles last winter along with the Breckenridge competitive cheer team, the Rockford gymnasts, the Flushing girls basketball and the Beecher boys basketball teams winning state title. The state titles continued to roll in during the spring sports season with the Portland St. Patrick's baseball team, Lansing Christian's and the Powers Catholic girls soccer teams, the Rockford girls lacrosse team, the St. Johns boys golf team, the Midland Dow girls tennis team, the Chesaning boys track team and the Lansing Waverly girls track claiming state titles. This fall area teams winning the ultimate prizes were the Pewamo-Westphalia football team, the Okemos boys tennis team, the Powers Catholic boys soccer team, the Lansing Catholic girls cross country and both the Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart boys and girls cross country teams bringing home state championships. A big shout out to all the young athletes from those teams for making us so proud and thrilling us with your great performances.

What will 2018 bring us?.....From the way our high school athletes continue to work so hard at their sports plenty of thrills and titles will be rolling in during 2018. So many area athletes are already putting up some amazing performances this winter. It may be cold and snowy outside, but I encourage everyone to try and make it out to your local high school to support their local athletes and teams. The kids put in so much time and effort that they deserve to see their family, friends and neighbors coming out to support them. Is there a better way for communities to come together then by attending a local athletic contest and supporting our kids. They may not headline Sportscenter each night, but the accomplishments of our local student athletes are just as important.

As we enter 2018 I'd like to give a big shout out to our supporters and advertisers of HSSS Magazine. Without your continued support we would not be able to bring the communities of Mid-Michigan the stories and accomplishments of our local student athletes, who are truly student athletes. In this age where coverage of high school sports continues to dwindle, your support is keeping alive a publication that exclusively supports local kids. Thank you for your support and have a great 2018 to everyone!!!



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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON GIRLS BASKETBALL

Statewide Teams Better Take Notice As Area Girls Hoop Squads Are Gunning For Them

Butch Harmon
Sports Scene

The girls basketball team is in full swing with area players and teams off to a sizzling start. Following is a look at some of the top teams to watch in the High School Sports Scene Magazine coverage area.

CLASS A

SAGINAW HERITAGE: The Hawks turned in a 20-2 record last season and have plenty of talent returning. Junior guard Mo Joiner (5-foot-9) is one of the state's most dynamic players. Senior guard Jessi Bicknell is a sharp-shooting guard headed to the University of Detroit. Up front, junior post player Shine Strickland-Gillis provides strong board work and



points in the paint.

BAY CITY WESTERN: Senior guard McKenna Walker is a dynamic player returning along with Sydney Nesbit. Walker, headed to Northwood University, averaged 19 points and eight rebounds per game last season.

FLINT CARMAN-AINSWORTH: As talented as any team in the state, Cavaliers return guard Destiny Strother is one of the top juniors in the state and is committed to Marquette University. Aaliyah McQueen and guard Xeryia Tartt also return from a team that went 18-4 last season.

FLUSHING: Although hit hard by graduation, the defending Class A state champs have one of the top freshman talents in the state in Alex Long. The Raiders can also count on Thailya Christensen to supply points on the offensive end.

MIDLAND DOW: The Chargers suffered some key graduation losses from a team that went 21-3 last year. Junior guard Molly Davis is back and will provide plenty of offense from the backcourt.

EAST LANSING: Plenty of talented players return from a team that compiled a 21-3 mark last year. Senior post player Jaida Hampton (5-11) averaged 14 points per game last year and will play in college at Wichita State. Aazhenii Nye is a returning

across the country while sophomore Jasmine Clerkley (5-11) is next in line after averaging 13 points and 10 rebounds last year. Sophomores Kelsey Henry and Maddie Sermack and freshman Lexi Sermack add to the collection of talent.

GRAND LEDGE: The Comets return junior all-conference guard Makenzie Todd. Junior post player Courtney Sharland is a strong rebounder and post threat. Maddie McKinley is a dangerous outside shooter while Lauren Edlin helps in the paint.

OWOSSO: Senior guard Anna Raffaelli is an impact player all over the floor. A defensive dynamo, Raffaelli can hit the three, drive to the bucket or set up teammates. Ashley Abrams provides points and rebounds along with Brooke Edington.

HOWELL: The Highlanders have plenty of impact players returning from a squad that went 18-4 last season. Senior guard and Wayne State



DEWITT: With eight of last year's top ten back from a team that went 21-2 the Panthers are stocked for a big season. Senior forward Grace George is one of the most talented players in Mid-Michigan and is off to a big year. The Panthers also have a strong junior class led by Annie McIntosh, Sydney Mills, Maddie Peterson and Lily Stephan.

OKEMOS: Few teams can match the young talent on hand at Okemos. Junior forward Laya Hartman (5-10) is being heavily recruited by school



recruit Alex Miller is averaging 20 points per game this season. Howell also sports an impact player in the post in Leah Weslock (6-0).

CLARKSTON: The Wolves feature one of the premier centers in the state in Kayla Luchenbach. The 6-foot-1 senior averaged nearly a double-double in points and rebounds last year and is headed to Oakland University. Molly Nicholson (6-2) and Maddie Beck (6-0) add even more talent up front.

CLASS B

FREELAND: The Falcons reached the Class B state semifinals last season and return the talent to make another deep tournament run. The Falcons feature a stocked backcourt led by returning all-conference players Kaylee Argyle and Lily Beyer. Alyssa Argyle is a talented scorer returning along with Autumn Kloha. Up front, returning all-conference player Olivia Farrell provides points and rebounds.



WILLIAMSTON: The Hornets are one of the favorites in Class B and have a Miss Basketball candidate in senior guard Maddie Watters. Watters is one of the best all-around guards in the state and is headed to Western Michigan University. Inside, the Hornets return senior center Allison Peplowski (6-2) who is headed to the University of South Dakota.

FOWLerville: Junior forward Elie Smith leads the way for a talented Gladiator team this season. An offensive force, Smith can hit the trey or drive to the bucket. Grace Wallace and Taylor Patterson also provide options on offense.

EATON RAPIDS: Another solid CAAC White team, Eaton Rapids is led by points guard Sam McDaniel. Junior forward Arianna Sysum can provide a double-double in points and rebounds any night.

DURAND: Senior guard Cierra Cole is off to a strong start this season av-



eraging over 18 points per game. The Railroaders are a veteran squad with seniors Morgan Raley and Graysen Fulbright also playing key roles.

BIRCH RUN: Sophomore Sarah Miller and her twin Emmaly have the Panthers poised for a big season. A returning all-state player, Sarah Miller is a dynamic playmaker who excels offensively, on the boards and defensively.



CLARE: The Pioneers will be tough to beat in the Jack Pine Conference this season. Ellie Johnson is a talented offensive force while Natalie Kunse is a skilled all-around player that can also provide plenty of points.

BIG RAPIDS: Three-time defending champs in the CSAC Gold, the Cardinals return a premier post player in Jayla Strickland (6-2). Headed to Northwood University, Strickland earned honorable-mention, all-conference honors last season. Senior Kaitlyn Ray and sophomore Savannah Seath provide Strickland with plenty of help.

CENTRAL MONTCALM: The Hornets will challenge Big Rapids in the CSAC Gold. Junior forward Hannah Putnam and junior guard Kiara Wernette are talented all-around players. Junior guard Libby Ledford provides points from the perimeter with junior forward Melissa Mezquitic helping up front.

CLASS C

HEMLOCK: The Huskies reached the Class C quarterfinals last season and have the talent to make another strong run this season. A trio of all-conference players return in Olivia Watson, Natalie Hoffman and Katy Snyder. Sydney Peake is another talented player on hand.

SAGINAW VALLEY LUTHERAN: Valley Lutheran will challenge Hemlock in the TVC West. The Chargers have a deep and balanced team led by Katie Engelhardt, Kennedy Maurer, Miranda Ayala and Lindsay Hagenow.

MICHIGAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY: MLS reached the Class D state title game last season. That won't happen this season as the Cardinals are now in Class C. MLS will still be a force to be reckoned with thanks to the return of Meghan Blaine who can light it up from outside.

ST. LOUIS: The Sharks have a talented core of players led by Allison Taipalus and Chloe Pestru. Brooke Filipiak and Aynslee Koutz also play key roles for the squad.

FARWELL: The Eagles will give Clare a run for the top spot in the Jack Pine Conference. The backcourt of senior Rio Risbridger and junior Hunter Sponseller is solid on both sides of the floor. Up front, junior Jenna Odykirk is an impact player in the post.

CARSON CITY-CRYSTAL: Carson City-Crystal turned in a 19-3 mark last season and has a talented core of players to build around this season. Junior guard Bailey Fitzpatrick is an offensive spark plug while junior Kaylee Reeder is a solid option up front. Juniors Kaylee Stone, Megan Dailey and Kolbi Humphrey add to the depth along with sophomore Alyson Stevens.

PEWAMO-WESTPHALIA: One of the top teams in the state in Class C, the Pirates have the talent to make a deep tournament run led by senior Emily Spitzley. A returning all-state player, Spitzley will be playing in college at Grand Valley State. The Pirates are a deep squad that also return Ellie Droste, Hannah Spitzley, Kiera Thelen and Rachel Huhn.

LAINGSBURG: The Wolfpack have a tall and athletic squad that will challenge Pewamo-Westphalia for the top spot in the CMAAC. Senior forward Alex Randall (6-0) is a talented front-court standout. Senior forward Sophie Strieff (5-10) and senior shooting guard Jordyn Nightengale provide even more offensive firepower and rebounding prowess.



The 2017-18 girls basketball season is shaping up to be a banner year for many local squads. Saginaw Heritage, Freeland, Williamston and DeWitt are putting together memorable seasons thus far, but the action will be heating up on local courts after the holidays. (Staff Photos)

BATH: The Bees are led by an outstanding all-around player in Tait Hosford who can hit the three or drive to the bucket. Hannah Zaldivar provides strong rebounding and a post presence.

CLASS D

MT. PLEASANT SACRED HEART: Sacred Heart reached the Class D state finals two years ago and the Irish have the talent to make another deep tournament run. Senior center Sophie Ruggles (6-0) is a returning all-state player who can control the paint. In the backcourt, junior point guard Scout Nelson is also a returning all-stater the runs the offense. Senior Hadyn Terwilliger (5-8) and senior guard Megan Nowak are also key returning players.

MORRICE: The Orioles are young but have plenty of talent. Junior point guard Jessica Eva is a skilled ball handler. Sophomores Gracie Nowak and Olivia Riley supply plenty of offense for a team that starts four sophomores.

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Panther Pride...



Alma Girls Basketball On Rise

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

Alma might be without a Seeley starring on the roster for the first time in many years, but the Panthers are still on an upward trajectory.

Maddy Seeley is now a senior on the Northwood roster after being a standout performer at Alma for four varsity years, while her sister Kenzie Seeley joined her on the Timberwolves roster this winter after also being a four-year varsity leader in high school.

But instead of taking a downturn now that there is not a Seeley highlighting so many games, the Panthers instead look like a program still on the rise.

"The bottom line is that girls are stepping up and filling the role of the girls that we lost last year," Alma coach Scott Apple said. "We graduated six girls from last year and I

feel like the program has come along in the last few years. The girls were ready to step in and replace the girls who graduated. I've always thought you are only as strong as your seniors. We had some juniors last year who started and others who didn't play a lot were always ready to step in. Now they are getting their shot and showing they were ready for their turn."

Apple says his seniors all "handle the ball well and have good court vision", which helps lead to team basketball and balanced scoring.

Alma's four seniors are point guard Olivia Apple, Marissa Smoker, Sydney Hanson and Abby Mellinger. Another starter, Hailey Leister, is a junior who started most games as a junior.

A key newcomer to the roster is freshman Alyssa Leister, who currently leads the Panthers in scoring

with a 15 point per game average. Hailey Leister is putting in 11 points per.

Apple is averaging 5.1 steals per game and 2.5 assists this season, while junior Sophie Patrick is pulling down 6.2 rebounds per. Hailey Leister is averaging 5.7 rebounds.

The Panthers are 5-1 overall and 4-1 in the Tri-Valley Conference Central after a 54-32 home win over rival Shepherd on Dec. 19. Alma is now off until its Jan. 5 date at Swan Valley.

Alma was 15-6 overall last year, finished second in the TVC Central and lost to Ithaca in districts last season.

"It was one of the best seasons Ithaca has had in quite a while," Apple added. "We're trying to build off that with the group we have and have another really strong year."

The Alma girls basketball team was 5-1 entering the holiday break. The Panthers only loss was to Freeland 48-37. (Randy Miniard, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Panthers Wrestling Team Looking To Take The Next Step This Season

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

After winning the TVC Central championship and turning in a 30-14 record in dual meets last season, what will the Alma wrestling team do for an encore this season? With a strong core of veterans back along with some talented youngsters, the plan is to take the program to the next level.

"We have started out season on a high level," said Alma coach Randy Miniard. "We have goals of winning league, district and team regional titles and qualifying for the MHSAA team championships in Kalamazoo

for the first time ever."

Senior captains Alex Rosas (145), Greg Simmons (285) and Jaden Jerome (140) anchor the Panthers. Rosas is a two-time, state qualifier and a state placer last season. Simmons, a conference champ, also qualified for the state meet while Jerome is a two-time, regional qualifier.

Alma has a deep senior class that also includes Hunter Frost (215), Travis Hamilton (171), Trent Knopf (152), Noah Gross (119), Chase Albaugh (160), Thomas Davis (189), Tyler May (189), David Castillo (215) and Vincente Oliva (285).

Alma's junior class includes Char-

lie Alegria (130), Davis Anderson (135), Matt Shanklin (152), Jake Cena (145) and Joseph DeLaSantos (135).

Sophomores in the mix include Terry Wentworth (125), Jarrett Ferman (135), Justin VanBlaricum (152) and Coleton Garrett (145).

Alma also has a large and promising freshman class that includes Dom Anguiano (103), Nolan Rodriguez (103), Nick Galbraith (112), Solomon Rosales (112), Demetrius Castillo (125), Jacob Torrez (130), Norman Davis (189), Alex Smith-Denslow (215) and Mason Everitt (285).



Alma senior captain Alex Rosas controls his St. Louis opponent during a match earlier this season. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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Sacred Heart Academy Has Pieces In Place To Make Another Run At Class D Finals

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

There was no rebuild, reload or reupping to be done with the Sacred Heart Academy girls basketball team this season.

It was simply a matter of getting the game back together.

Everyone who played for the Irish last year, when they advanced to the Class D state semifinals at the Breslin Center, returned to the roster.

In addition, Sacred Heart brought up a 6-foot sophomore in Lauren Munley from the junior varsity to add some size on the interior.

As perhaps the prohibitive favorite to win a state title in Class D, the Irish are brimming with talent and already taking it to their competition with a 5-0 start.

"We didn't talk about being a favorite coming into the season," SHA head coach Damon Brown said. "But being at the Breslin Center the last two years and coming up short has been a great motivating factor. Now we want to make one more

step and bring home a state championship. All of our girls set their goals high and there is nowhere higher to go than that."

Sacred Heart's roster is highlighted by two returning All-State players in junior point guard Scout Nelson and senior forward Sophie Ruggles.

Nelson has led the Irish to an astounding 54-4 record including this season's five victories since taking over the reins as point guard as a freshman. She averaged 14.5 points, five rebounds, four assists and five steals per game a year ago.

Ruggles led Sacred Heart in scoring as a junior with 16.5 points per game to go with seven rebounds and four steals. She shot 66 percent from the floor.

What the Irish make up for with a lack of depth on their nine-girl roster, they more than make up for with not only skilled and intelligent basketball players but a group that is constantly working in cohesion. Whether it is a defensive switch or a player cutting to the hoop, all five SHA girls on the court always seem

to know exactly where their counterparts are and will be.

"Everyone knows their role and there are no bad attitudes," Brown said. "They challenge each other. The five seniors are constantly pushing each other and are always helping out the underclassmen."

Seniors Megan Nowak, Hadyn Terwilliger, Grace Reetz and Maggie Yonker are all do-everything type of players who provide grit, determination and a willingness to do whatever it takes to help Sacred Heart succeed.

The Irish went into the break with its most impressive win to date on Dec. 21 at Grand Rapids West Catholic, securing a 54-40 victory. Sacred Heart previously defeated Vestaburg (76-14), Morley-Stanwood (45-18), Carson City-Crystal (53-13) and Coleman (67-27).

"These girls have worked so hard in every aspect of their games and we really like where we're at right now," Brown added. "There is plenty of work to be done, but we feel really good about this team."

Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart sophomore Sammy McDonald dribbles the ball up court during a recent game. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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Okemos' Leah Hartman is considered one of the top junior players in Michigan this season. (Submitted Photo)

Okemos Junior Laya Hartman Leads Way For Talented Young Basketball Team

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The Okemos girls basketball program has a long and storied tradition of excellence. That tradition is being carried on this season by one of the premier players not only in the state but on a national level.

Junior guard Laya Hartman is a little more than halfway through her high school career and has already become one of the top players in the long history of Okemos girls basketball. Hartman has earned all-state honors as both a freshman and a sophomore and is ranked by numerous scouting and talent-ranking services as a top junior in the

state.

Hartman and her Okemos teammates are off to a strong start this season with five wins in their first seven games. Hartman tipped off the season in a big way by nearly recording a triple double in a win against Fowlerville. Hartman scored 29 points, pulled down 11 rebounds and came away with seven steals in the win.

That type of production on the floor, combined her outstanding work in the classroom, has made her a highly sought-after student athlete for Division 1 universities across the country. Hartman has a total of 12 confirmed scholarship offers. Hartman has offers from Big

10 schools Michigan State, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, Purdue and Minnesota. The offers have come from coast to coast as Oregon State, Marquette and Villanova have offered and schools like Tennessee, Vanderbilt, Stanford and Rutgers have kept in contact with her.

On the court, Hartman is a 5-foot-11 combo guard that is tough to stop on the offensive end of the floor. Hartman is an excellent shooter from beyond the three-point line and as well as a mid-range shooter. Excellent in the open floor, Hartman is an excellent finisher at the rim or setting up teammates. Along with being able to play either guard position, Hart-

man can also play small forward or power forward if needed.

Hartman is not the only Okemos player drawing attention from major colleges. Sophomore post player Jasmine Clerkley (5-11) has already been offered by Michigan State as well. Clerkley averaged 12 points and 10 rebounds a game last season and scored 20 points in the opening-night win against Fowlerville.

Okemos has even more young talent this season in sophomores Kelsey Henry and Maddie Sermack and freshman Lexi Sermack making Okemos a school to watch when it comes to watching talented young basketball players this season.

Maddie Watters, Williamston Girls Basketball Team Off To Sizzling Start

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

As the month of December drew to a close, there was arguably no girls basketball player in the area with a hotter hand than Williamston senior guard Maddie Watters.

One of the premier guards in the state and a candidate for the Miss Basketball award, Watters gave Williamston basketball fans an early Christmas present as she put up a school record 44 points in the Hornets' 67-59 win against Michigan Center in the Hornet Holiday Hoops tournament. Watters was in the zone the entire game as she connected on six, three-point shots and went 10-of-11 from the free throw line. The performance came off a 23-point effort in

Williamston's 76-43 win against Mason two days earlier.

The wins at the tournament improved Williamston's record to 7-0 for the season.

A returning first-team, all-state player in Class B, Watters averaged 18.3 points, 3.9 rebounds, 2.4 assists and 2.3 steals as she helped lead Williamston to the quarterfinals of the Class state tournament.

One of the premier shooters in the state, Watters is also dangerous driving to the basket with her ability to finish at the bucket. That ability to score the basketball enabled Watters to enter this season with over 1,000 career points, a total that is growing each game.

Recruited by a number of Division 1 universities, Watters

committed to Western Michigan University in the offseason where he will play for former Michigan State assistant Shane Clipfell.

Clipfell and the Broncos are getting a player that not only has outstanding skills but knows how to win.

"Maddie is a kid that is used to winning and also knows that it is something that has to be earned," Clipfell said. "Se is arguably one of the best shooters in the state, but she is also very crafty at getting to the rim. She has very good instincts and knows how to move without the ball, which could give her a head start on her transition to college. Her high school program at Williamston is among the best in our state and her club team, Capitol City Express, consistent-

ly competed with and beat teams at the highest levels as well."

Watters is not the only college recruit on the Hornet roster this season. Senior center Allison Peplowski will be playing her college basketball at the University of South Dakota. Peplowski had a solid game of her own against Michigan Center with 12 points, nine rebounds and two blocked shots.

Williamston sophomore guard Kenzie Lewis is also a rising standout that is making a major impact. Lewis collected seven points, eight rebounds, six steals and three blocked shots in the Michigan Center game.

The Hornets are working at making another long tournament run in this year's state tournament and have some big hurdles coming up in the month of January. Williamston hosts Haslett in a non-conference matchup Jan. 9 and then host Class A powerhouse East Lansing on Jan. 30.



Williamston senior Maddie Watters scored a school-record 44 points in the Hornets' 67-59 win against Michigan Center in the Hornet Holiday Hoops tournament. (Submitted Photo)

Angell Putting Up Huge Numbers For Big Rapids Crossroads Charter Academy

John Raffel Sports Scene

Britton Angell has gotten his junior basketball season off to a fabulous start. But he's hoping the fortunes for his Big Rapids Crossroads Charter Academy boys basketball team will follow right along very soon.

Angell opened the season with 34 points in a win over McBain Northern Michigan Christian. Next up was Walkerville and Angell had a game for the record books. He scored a school-record 53 points and added 17 rebounds. But it wasn't enough and his team,

which struggled against Walkerville's perimeter attack, lost the game 93-84. The Cougars are 1-4 after reaching the five-game mark.

His 53-point game was obviously a memorable one.

"We got into transition very well," Angell recalled. "We were able to move the ball quickly down the floor. That's where I tend to thrive, in transition."

"I can shoot it from three. But I'm primarily a dribble-drive kind of guy who tries to get to the boards, be fouled and hit free throws."

He sank 14 free throws in the 53-point game.

After five games, he's averaging 32.4 points per outing. It was 16.9 points per game for all of last season. He also scored 38 points and had 18 rebounds in a loss to Brethren. His two lowest point totals have been 25 and 22 points.

"This year, our team is faster, from last year," Angell said. "My teammates give me open looks. We're good at moving without the ball. They can find me wherever I am."

Offense is nice, but Angell admits the defense needs some work.

"If we improve our defense, I think we can win a lot of games," he said. "Right now, that's a struggle. Once we work together as a unit on defense, we'll be a lot better."

Through five games, Big Rapids Crossroads Academy junior Britton Angell is averaging 32.4 points game, including a 53-point game in a loss to Walkerville. (Submitted Photo)



Tawas Area's Morgan Kaniszewski Headed To Northwood

Ben Murphy Sports Scene

Northwood University dipped into northern Michigan for a recent women's basketball recruit. She is Tawas Area senior Morgan Kaniszewski. Kaniszewski has already left her mark in the school's record books. Now, the Lady Braves' basketball program's all-time leading scorer is set to for her next challenge, as she signed to play college basketball at Northwood University in November.

"I'm excited, it's going to be a change though," she said. "It's a lot more intense than I'm used to."

Kaniszewski has played guard for the Braves the last three seasons and was instantly a factor, even as a freshman as

she was a key piece to that year's quarterfinal run. Last year she broke Rachel Adaline's career scoring mark and entered this season with 1384 career points.

"Morgan is a unique athlete, very fast and also quick," her father and head coach Jason Kaniszewski said. "She is also very long for her height, she has arms like a spider. Those are qualities that coaches like. She also is not afraid of contact and is very competitive. She also has proven herself at the AAU level playing against the best players in the country."

Last winter, Kaniszewski averaged 27.9 points a game on a team that went 18-5 and won its third straight district title. She likes the fact that Northwood is just a short drive away.

"It's closer to home and I re-

ally love the coaching staff," she said. "Between the offer they gave me and the fact that it is such a good business school, I chose them. It's a lot more physical at that level but I'll work at cleaning up the fine details of my game."

Her father and coach is confident she'll be able to meet the challenge head on.

"I do think she has what it takes," he said. "In a lot of ways she has been preparing for the college game all along. She does have the speed to play at that level. That's the biggest difference in levels of play. She is a hard worker, always has been. That is what I see as her greatest strength and reason for next level success. Plus she can shoot the heck out of the ball; that always helps."



Tawas Area senior Morgan Kaniszewski signed to play college basketball at Northwood University in November. Kaniszewski is the all-time leading scorer for the Tawas girls basketball program. Pictured at the signing: Back left to right: Todd Kaems (current boys basketball coach and former girls basketball coach) and Jason Kaniszewski (father and current girls basketball coach). Front: Morgan Kaniszewski and Staci Kaniszewski (mother).

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Freeland Set For Another Big Season In Girls Basketball

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Tom Zolinski's Freeland Falcons have gotten off to a 5-2 start, but are expected to make plenty of noise in the girls basketball ranks before the season comes to an end.

Much is usually expected from a Freeland girls basketball team and this one is no exception. The losses have been to Saginaw Heritage and Bay City Western in non-league play. The Falcons are 4-0 in the Tri-Valley Conference Central.

It's Zolinski's 11th year. Last season, Freeland lost in the state semifinals to Ypsilanti Ar-

bor Prep 54-46. Freeland had been undefeated prior to that game.

Freeland's Alyssa Argyle sets up the Falcons offense during a recent game against Heritage. (Nick Rethman, High School Sports Scene Photo)

bor Prep 54-46. Freeland had been undefeated prior to that game.

"Offensively, I think we're a little bit better this year," Zolinski said. "We're struggling a little defensively. We're starting to gel a little bit and are reading off each other offensively."

Freeland enjoys plenty of experience back including two seniors in her fourth year on the varsity and three juniors who are in their third year of varsity play.

Senior Kaylee Argyle has committed to play at Trine University, Ind., and is a captain.

"She's up in her points per game," Zolinski

said. "She's stepped it up offensively. She can be real annoying for the other team on defense. She plays great defense."

Olivia Farrell is also a senior in her fourth year and is a center. She's averaging 12 rebounds a game.

"She's really going after the ball," Zolinski said. "She's strong. She's committed to playing in Rochester College in the Troy area."

Junior Alyssa Argyle is in her third varsity season and plays inside and outside for the Falcons.

"She's a great passer, she can shoot the 3-pointer," Zolinski said. "She's an all-around offensive threat. It's her second year starting."

Lily Beyer is another outside threat for Freeland.

Autumn Kloha has been the team's top defensive player and is in her third varsity season.

Falcons Using Early-Season Losses As Building Blocks For Rest Of Season

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

Freeland coach Tom Zolinski knows championships aren't won in December.

However, building a team's championship drive during the early season will likely payoff in March.

Through the holiday break, Freeland was 5-2 overall and 4-0 in the Tri-Valley Conference Central Division. The Falcons only two losses were a 59-57 loss to an undefeated Bay

City Western squad and a 51-35 loss to Class A power Saginaw Heritage. Both Western and Heritage were undefeated heading into break.

"Live by the three and die by the three," Zolinski said after the loss. "When we did go inside, Heritage put up a wall. But that's why you play teams like that, to get better to make a run in March."

"You learn things. We learned things in this game, like every possession matters."

While both teams are undoubtedly athletic,

the Hawks are bigger, longer, and stronger, and that showed against, as Heritage pretty much controlled the game from the opening tip. The Hawks led by as much as 10 in the first quarter and kept their lead near or in double digits for most of the remainder of the contest.

"Definitely, we've got some work to do," said Zolinski, ... It was a good experience for us. ... I learned tonight what I've got to do with my team, and that's (the) most important (part of this matchup)."

As a result, Heritage shot 45 percent (22-of-49) from the floor to only 29 percent (10-of-34) for the Falcons. The Hawks also had 11 steals and forced 20 total FHS turnovers.

Alyssa Argyle led the Falcons with 12 points, while Kaylee Argyle and Beyer both scored six, and Olivia Farrell grabbed seven boards.

Kadyn Blanchard drives to the hoop in the Falcons 51-35 loss Dec. 18 against Saginaw Heritage. (Nick Rethman, High School Sports Scene Photo)



Cedar Springs Player Asserting Herself As Standout Rebounder

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Ashley Wise established herself as a strong softball player last season for Cedar Springs.

But she's asserting herself as an excellent girls basketball player on the rebounding side.

Wise is a 5-foot-10-inch junior forward in her second varsity season.

"She was real consistent for us last year," Cedar Springs coach Brandon Miller said. "She didn't score a lot. She doesn't score a lot for us now. She's a good defender inside and rebounds the ball very well."

Miller indicated Wise usually draws the toughest post player from the competition.

"She works her tail off to get in the right position so they're not a threat."

Wise has been averaging eight rebounds a game.

"She's been real consistent," Miller said. "I think she's been at eight every game. If I look at last year, she was at about five rebounds a game."

"She's team captain for our basketball team and has shown great leadership this year in working with our younger players as well."

Miller has been able to learn plenty about

his team after its first three games.

The team "is so young and we'll have games where we'll have to learn," Miller said "We started out 1-2. Overall, we'll look for consistent improvement throughout the season."

Wise's top sport has been softball.

"She plays a lot of travel softball," Miller said. "But (in basketball) she's improved significantly since her freshman year enough to be on the varsity as a sophomore. She does put in the time. Softball is her passion."

Ashley Wise (No. 21) has been a force on the boards for the Cedar Springs girls basketball team. (John Raffel, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Ashley Wise (No. 21) has been a force on the boards for the Cedar Springs girls basketball team. (John Raffel, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Ashley Wise (No. 21) has been a force on the boards for the Cedar Springs girls basketball team. (John Raffel, High School Sports Scene Photo)



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Continuing To Make Strides

Things Falling In Place For Heritage Girls Basketball

Scott Keyes
Sports Scene

Christmas came early for the Heritage girls basketball team and coach Vonnie DeLong.

About a week into the start of practice, DeLong got word that junior Shine Strickland-Gills was returning to the Heritage squad after moving away in the summer. Unfortunately for Strickland-Gills, her mother's potential job fell through in Georgia and the family returned to the Saginaw area.

Strickland-Gills' return to Heritage propelled the Hawks into a legitimate Class A championship contender.

Even without the gritty shot-blocking rebounder Strickland-Gills, Heritage was still loaded with juniors Mo Joiner, Mallory McCartney, senior Jessi Bicknell and sophomore Lo Lo Reed. However, Strickland-Gills provides the X-factor that DeLong was hoping to see when she returned to Saginaw.

"Shine does so much for our basketball team and when we knew she was coming back to Saginaw, the girls and myself were so glad to see her in a Heritage uniform," DeLong said. "We had things in place to start the season without her, but there is no question with her in our lineup we become an even better team."

One player who has really excelled since the return of Strickland-Gills is senior Madison Camp.

Initially, Camp would have been Heritage's first option in the paint for the Hawks offensively, but with the return of Strickland-Gills, they now have two solid post players that are capable of changing a game on both the offensive and defensive ends of the floor.

Camp, a starting forward for Heritage, scored 11 points with 10 rebounds Dec. 18 in Heritage's 51-35 win over Freeland.

"She's really just what we needed," DeLong said. "We needed that extra Saginaw."

post player who can score inside. She does that. She gives us depth at the post position.

"Considering she hasn't played in two years, she's done a great job."

Camp hasn't played basketball in two years, but you wouldn't know it with the start to this season.

"I can honestly say Shine coming back and pushing me in practice and during the game has really elevated my game," Camp said. "Shine really brings out the best in your game."

Camp played on the junior varsity team as a freshman, but on Oct. 17, 2015, she tore the anterior cruciate ligament and the meniscus to her left knee. She also broke a bone.

"It was during soccer, and I was going to score, and I got taken out," Camp said. "It turns out I had broken a bone earlier, and the bone was degrading, so it was probable that I would have broken it at some point. It was kind of fortunate because now I'm a senior, and my knee is 100-per-

cent healthy."

So with the knee injury two seasons ago and last year elected to play travel soccer in the winter, but this season, she knew Heritage would have lost a lot in the paint if Strickland-Gills wouldn't have returned so she decided to give hoops a final try.

So far Camps play has paid dividends for the Hawks squad.

"I love it," Camp said. "Coming back has probably been one of the best decisions I've ever made."

DeLong said with Madison's return it helped fill a void Heritage was enduring in the post.

"We're pretty happy about it," DeLong said. "She hasn't played since the ninth grade, and she's doing fantastic."

Against Freeland, Joiner had her usual solid all-around game for Heritage, scoring a game-high 16 points with six assists and five rebounds, while Strickland-Gills added 10 points, seven rebounds, three assists, two blocks, and two steals.

McCartney, who was making her 2017 debut after sitting out the Hawks' first four games while rehabilitating a strained ACL, came off the bench to score seven points with five steals.



Heritage's Shine Strickland-Gills pulls up for a jumper during a recent victory against Freeland. (Nick Rethman, High School Sports Scene Photo)

"This is her first action of the year, and I think she actually played pretty good," DeLong said of McCartney, who was just cleared. We have a lot of holes to fill so far, but we are making strides and we are only going to get better."

Alma's Castillo Excited About Postseason Football Game Experience

Nate Schneider
Sports Scene

Two days before Christmas, Alma senior David Castillo spent his time on the gridiron rather than doing some last-minute holiday shopping.

Castillo participated in the Legacy All-Star Game at the Legacy Center in Brighton on Dec. 23. He was part of the winning squad as his Legacy Team beat the Legends Team by a score of 20-12 in a contest that featured 80 standout prep players invited from Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

diana and Ohio.

Castillo, a Tri-Valley Conference Central first team selection this past fall, was nominated to play in the game a month or so earlier. Out of 400 nominations, Castillo made the cut as one of 80 players invited to play in the Legacy All-Star Game and he quickly accepted.

As for the game, Castillo says he had a blast.

"It was great," Castillo said. "Everything they said was going to go down, it happened the way they explained it. It was a great experience

to play with the talented guys that were there and it was cool getting to meet everyone who also has the heart for the game."

Castillo has his sights set on playing college football somewhere and he currently has interest from Olivet College. Around 30 colleges were present at the game, which could help widen his exposure.

"I liked having all the coaches there being able to watch me and it allowed me to show what I could do," Castillo remarked. "I'd love to play at the next level if I have the opportunity."

Castillo was part of three Alma squads that qualified for the postseason and he added that he thoroughly enjoyed his time playing football for the Panthers.

"I lived it up for sure," Castillo added. "Going back-to-back-to-back to the playoffs and playing in two district finals, it was so much fun. We went 0-9 our freshman year and we went on to win nine games our junior year plus another eight our senior year. It was great watching our team improve so much."



Alma's David Castillo is all smiles after participating in the Legacy All-Star Game at the Legacy Center in Brighton on Dec. 23. (Submitted Photo)

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Yellowjackets Adjusting With Life After Hoag, Lehman; Girls Hoops Starting To Come Around

Nate Schneider
Sports Scene

A quarter way through the season has not shown the best the Ithaca boys basketball team has to offer.

While the defensive effort has been there, porous shooting and untimely turnovers have been the main culprits in a couple losses as the Yellowjackets sit at 3-2 overall and 2-2 in the Tri-Valley Conference West.

Ithaca has posted wins over Shepherd (48-23), St. Louis (55-30) and Michigan Lutheran Seminary (52-41) in addition to losses to Hemlock (52-43) and Saginaw Valley Lutheran (50-42).

"We had a 15-point first half lead against Hemlock and blew that game," Yellowjackets coach Jim Thompson said. "A lack of discipline and knowing the situation cost us. We forced some things and before you know it, a 15-point lead turned into us losing the game."

The Yellowjackets are still adjusting to life without the graduated 6-foot-6 duo of All-Staters Levi Lehman and Isaiah Hoag, but return several talented backcourt players highlighted by senior leading scorer Joey Bentley. Sophomore Peyton Smith is in his second year on varsity as a point guard, while junior Tom Steward is listed as a forward but stretches defenses as the team's best perimeter shooter. Junior forward Baylee Chaffin is also among the top returners and will be counted on heavily.

"We just need to find our way offensively and hit some shots," Thomp-

son added. "We're not turning the ball over a lot, but we're doing it at bad times late in games. And we're playing solid defense. So really, we just need to figure out how to make some shots so we can start scoring in the 60s."

Yellowjacket Girls Struggling With Belles Out

Ithaca had its season take a downward turn before it ever began when senior center Kayla Belles, a 6-foot-3 Michigan State commit and three-time All-Stater, tore her ACL over the summer during a camp at Adrian College.

Instead of being a contender to perhaps make a deep postseason run, the Yellowjackets were forced to regroup and rely on more inexperienced players.

Ithaca has struggled through seven games, posting a 1-6 record. But there are signs of improvement as two of the last four losses have been by four and five points, respectively. Additionally, Ithaca is coming off its first win of the season as it dined a strong Michigan Lutheran Seminary team 44-41 at home on Dec. 21.

"Being without Kayla is something we knew going into the season," Yellowjackets coach Ty Warczynsky said. "To the girls' credit, they're taking everything in stride and continuing to improve as you can see by our recent games. And Kayla has been awesome for us at every practice and game, being a leader despite not being able to play."

Ithaca is led in part by sophomore point guard Sam Vermeesch and sophomore forward Emma Belles,

both in their second year on varsity. Senior Lauren Sheets has a 24-point game this season, while junior Lindy Litwiler has come on strong the last couple games.

The Yellowjackets continued their season Dec. 29 when they played at Shepherd.

Ithaca Poised For Strongest Season In Years

After being down on numbers in recent seasons, the Ithaca wrestling team has roster depth and the talent to be competitive this season.

The Yellowjackets headed into the holidays 4-0 in duals with a 20-wrestler roster, up considerably from where it had previously been under head coach Daryl Dawe.

"We're filling weight classes and have a lot of returners that are really wrestling well," Dawe said.

Dakota Hamilton (11-3), Tristan Sparks, Guillermo Macias (11-2) and Ethan Shaw (11-3) are among the top wrestlers for Ithaca thus far.

"We started on November 15 and usually when I go upstairs to the practice room for the first time there are maybe five or six kids up there," Dawe said. "This year, there were like 12 wrestlers. And that doesn't include the kids on the football team who joined us later. So I was ecstatic. And once the football players joined us, it transformed the room and made it a lot more competitive."

Ithaca resumed action at the Bob Threlloff Invitational hosted by St. Louis on Dec. 29.

Ithaca sophomore Peyton Smith uses the crossover to get past a St. Louis opponent during a recent game. Ithaca went on to win the game 55-30. Bottom: Ithaca senior Lauren Sheets gets set to pull up for a jumper against St. Louis. (Russ Pierce, High School Sports Scene Photos)

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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON BOYS BASKETBALL

Area Boy Squads Are Hoop'in It Up

David Cook Sports Scene

The boys basketball season is heating up and if the early part of the season is any indication of what to expect the rest of the year then hoop fans will be in for a heck of a ride. Following is a look at some of the top teams and players to watch in the High School Sports Scene Magazine coverage area.

CLASS A

CLARKSTON: The defending Class A state champions, the Wolves will be tough to stop this season. Senior point guard Foster Loyer, headed to Michigan State University next season, is a strong candidate for Mr. Basketball this season. Clarkston also has a future Big 10 player along the front line in University of Wisconsin recruit Taylor Currie (6-foot-8). Senior guard CJ Robinson is a talented veteran guard with senior Hank Schemmel (6-6) another impact player up front. The Wolves also have a rising standout in 6-foot-11 sophomore Matt Nicholson.

FLINT CARMAN-AINSWORTH: The Cavaliers have already proven they can play with anyone as the dropped a five-point decision at



Clarkston. Senior point guard Jakavien Lewis is an outstanding floor general while junior center Mike Fletcher is a powerful force up front. Omari Duncan (6-3) is a talented wing with good skills.

MT. PLEASANT: The Oilers have a young but promising team this season. Senior forward Noah Sawmick and sophomore forward Tyler Huenemann lead the way up front while junior Peyton Fountain and sophomore point guard Mason Wojtuski provide steady play in the backcourt.

EAST LANSING: The Trojans are led by one of the front runners for the Mr. Basketball award in senior Brandon Johns (6-9). A University of Michigan commit, Johns is one of the most talented players in the Midwest and leads a talented all-around squad. Point guard Malik Jones is an outstanding talent who can set up others or drive to the bucket. Noah Schon is an accurate three-point shooter while Ben Zeka (6-7) adds strong defense and rebounding up front.

OKEMOS: The Chieftains are led by senior combo guard Jordan Henry (6-2). An outstanding all-around player, Henry averaged 16 points, four rebounds and two assists per game last year. Evan Thomas provides strong rebounding while Mason Kaczmarek is a solid guard.

GRAND LEDGE: The Comets have a deep and balanced squad this season. Alex McCready is a talented offensive player that leads the offense. Javel Lewis is an explosive offensive player and rim protector on the defensive end of the floor. Senior captain Sam Todd is a solid defender.

HOLT: Strong guard play highlights the Rams this season. Senior Troy

Jordan (5-11) is a steady source of offense along with senior Caleb Cooper. Sophomore guard Josiah Shamsideen is a promising young guard making an impact.



LANSING EVERETT: Senior guard Allen English is a talented two guard with Shamar Howard running the offense at the point. Dominique Davidson (6-7) is a talented forward that will be a force up front.

DEWITT: The Panthers are the team to beat in the CAAC Red this season. Senior Tanner Reha is an excellent scorer who is headed to Northwood University. Senior power forward Luke Hyde (6-6) is headed to Grand Valley State next season and is a strong rebounder and scorer. Junior guard Collin McCrackin is a talented guard with senior Mason Laube and junior Isaac Hungerford also playing key roles.

OWOSSO: One of the top baseball players in the area, senior Jordan Klapko is a solid, all-around basketball player that leads the Owosso hoops squad this season. Nick Prater is a leader up front while Carson Bornefeld is a steady performer at

guard. CLASS B

WILLIAMSTON: Led by the dynamic inside-outside combination of senior guard Cole Kleiver (5-11) and junior center Sean Cobb (6-6), the Hornets are one of the top teams in the state in Class B. Senior Frankie Thomey and sophomore Mitchell Cook add to the strength in the backcourt. Providing more size up front are Case Conley (6-6) and Joseph Hahnenber (6-6).

BIG RAPIDS: Winners of two straight CSAC Gold titles, the Cardinals are set up for a run at a third title this winter. Senior Braeden Childress (6-3), a Central Michigan football recruit, is off to a strong start averaging 23 points and eight rebounds per game.

FRANKENMUTH: The Eagles will be flying high in the TVC East Division. Senior forward Mario Whitley (6-4) provides a double-double in points and rebounds almost every night.

BRIDGEPORT: The Bearcats will battle it out with Frankenmuth for the TVC East title. Senior Charles Garrett (6-3) is an outstanding all-around player and force on the offensive end. Junior forward SirQuarius Ball (6-5) is an improving big man that provides an impact up front.

ALMA: The Panthers will be in the thick for the title in the TVC Central. Up front, senior Camden Sutherland (6-5) is a skilled big man. Junior Hazen Latoski (5-11) is a solid rebounder and adds offense. Alma has a deep group of guards led by senior Damon Anguiano and juniors Drew Humm and Brec Alward.

OVID-ELSIE: The Marauders are led by senior big man Carson Vincent (6-4) who leads the squad in points and rebounds and is an excellent passer. Junior wing Liam Thompson (6-3) is also an effective player on the offensive end along with sophomore Justin Moore (6-2). Junior guard Jacob Loynes provides leadership in the backcourt.

CORUNNA: The Cavaliers have a promising young squad with a big upside. Junior center Sage Walker (6-9) is a force in the post with his



scoring and rebounding. Junior forward Logan Lepage (6-4) is a versatile forward providing points, rebounds and has good passing skills. Junior guard Mitchell Skym heads up the backcourt with versatile Ethan Hollister.

PERRY: Look for the Ramblers to make a run at the Greater Lansing Activities Conference title. Senior center Logan Daniher is averaging a double-double in points and rebounds. Perry also has an outstanding group of sophomores led by Caleb Leykauf (6-3) who can score in side or hit the three from deep. Sophomore guards CJ King and Brodie Crim bring strong all-around games to the floor.

CLARE: The Pioneers will be tough to beat in the Jack Pine Conference this season. Clare boasts a solid front line with senior Tyler Smith (6-3) and junior Kaden Kelly (6-4) providing a steady supply of points and rebounds. Junior guard Tanner Panches and Nick Roe also play key roles for the Pioneers.

CLASS C

FLINT BEECHER: The Bucs have won three consecutive Class C state titles and five out of the past six. Notching a fourth will not be easy as several talented seniors have graduated. The Bucs do have a pair of dynamic sophomores ready to take center stage. Guard Jalen Terry (5-11) is already collecting Division 1 schol-

arship offers while Earnest Sanders (6-2) is a dynamic athlete catching the eyes of college recruiters.

HEMLOCK: Shaping up as the team to beat in the TVC West, the Huskies have a well-balanced squad. Lucas Liebrock leads the Hemlock attack along with Jonas Kanouse and Nolan Finkbeiner.

SAGINAW VALLEY LUTHERAN: The Chargers boast plenty of talented young players and will challenge in the TVC West. Junior point guard Andrew Gunn is an outstanding all-around guard. Up front, junior center Brady Hagenow (6-5) is a strong rebounder and post scorer. Senior forward Matt Jahnke is a rugged rebounder while junior forward Jonathan Giglio (6-2) has a nice shooting touch.

SANFORD-MERIDIAN: The Mustangs have the talent to make a run at the Jack Pine Conference title this season. Center Lucas Lueder (6-5) is a talent in the post who supplies a



steady flow of offense. Gage White is a solid rebounder while Brett Barriger is a skilled ball handler and defender.

DANSVILLE: The CMAC is loaded this season highlighted by a Dansville team that has more size than many Class A schools. Junior center Caleb Hodgson (6-9) is a versatile big man with offers from both Western and Central Michigan. An outstanding inside player, Hodgson can also spot up and drain the three ball. Brendan Ryder (6-6) is a strong rim protector who can also score inside or hit the outside shot. Preston Graf (6-5) and John Dell (6-3) bring good size off the bench. Carter Frantz offers another threat from long range while Devin Patrick is an outstanding passer. Hayden Voss is also an excellent pass and ball handler.

PEWAMO-WESTPHALIA: The defending CMAC champs, Pewamo-Westphalia is will be tough to dislodge from the top spot. Bryce Thelen and Garrett Trierweiler are a pair of strong defenders and ball handlers. Andre Smith (6-7) brings good size and is an outstanding outside shooter. The Pirates will also get stronger in January when Jimmy Lehman (6-4), the quarterback of the state champion football team, returns from an injury suffered in the title game.

BATH: The Bees are led by one of the most talented guards in the CMAC in junior Harry Gilstrap (6-3). Gilstrap is a productive two guard with an excellent shot and the ability to finish at the basket. Point guard Jaylen Miller also returns to a solid backcourt.

LAINGSBURG: The Wolfpack is loaded with experience this season

with a total of four, three-year players returning along with a total of eight seniors. Kam Brown is a quick, talented point guard that is comfortable leading the break or penetrating the lane. Nate Mentus is a three-year varsity player that is the team's defensive specialist. Nick Putnam, also a three-year player, is a great passer



and floor leader.

CARSON CITY-CRYSTAL: Junior guard Drew Stout is an outstanding all-around athlete that leads the way for the Eagles. Beau Hollinshead and Thomas Taeter are solid outside shooters. Up front, Bryan Tyler and Brody Mikula provide strong rebounding and scoring in the paint.

BLANCHARD-MONTABELLA: A guard-heavy team, the Mustangs can light it up from outside behind the three-point shooting of senior David Gormley and the all-around offensive skills of junior Connor Riley. Senior Jordan Balhorn is also an effective perimeter player.

MORLEY-STANWOOD: The defending CSAC Silver champs are led by a pair of returning all-conference

players. Senior point guard Carson Brauher (6-0) has a solid, all-around game and is a team leader. Senior forward Tyler Dard (6-2) is a skilled player that can score the basketball.

LAKEVIEW: Lakeview will challenge Morley-Stanwood in the CSAC Silver. Senior Keola Kaaikala is a returning all-conference player. Senior Nick Ruvalcaba is back at point guard. Junior Andrew Nummer is a solid offensive player and strong rebounder with junior Brien Keene also helping on offense.

ITHACA: The Yellowjackets lost a lot from last year's squad, but do return solid juniors Michael Steward and Baylee Chaffin along with sophomore Peyton Smith. Ithaca's offense goes through senior Joey Bentley.

CLASS D

MT. PLEASANT SACRED HEART: With plenty of experience and talent returning, Sacred Heart is primed for a big season in Class D. Junior Colten Nelson (6-3) is a returning all-state player who averaged 21 points per game last season. Senior forward Joe Methner (6-4) earned honorable-mention, all-state honors last season and is a double-digit scorer and rebounder. Senior center Colton Hyble (6-5) is another talented scorer in the post.

FOWLER: The Eagles will be in the thick of the chase for the CMAC title this season. Senior Mason Pline (6-8), is an outstanding big man that is headed to Ferris State University next season. A three-year varsity player, Pline is an offensive force and solid rebounder. Sophomore Mason Pline (6-4) is back bigger and more experienced. Senior Owen Simon (6-



3) is in his third year on the varsity. In the backcourt, Nick Thelen returns to run the point. Dylan Antes (6-1) also returns to the backcourt. Tyler Rademacher (6-3) saw plenty of playing time last year and gives the team quality depth.

FULTON-MIDDLETON: Veteran guards Evan Barton and Cole Blair leads the way for the Pirates. At 6-foot-2, Barton is one of the tallest players on the team and is an outstanding all-around athlete. Senior Austin Avery starts in the post. Avery will match up with the opponent's big man and be counted on to provide strong defense and rebounding. Senior Hudson Friesen is stepping in at the three spot with senior Grant Batis coming off the bench. Juniors Tristan Rudy and Adam Duflo are a pair of promising juniors that will play key roles on a team that will look to run and hit the boards hard.

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Gage Bryce Was A True Inspiration

St. Charles Community Rallies Behind Teen Who Battled Cancer Right To The End

Nate Schneider
Sports Scene

Gage Bryce was a beacon of strength for the St. Charles community for more than a decade.

After being diagnosed with neuroblastoma as a toddler, Bryce became an inspiration to so many as they saw every day a kid who enjoyed each day to the fullest with a smile on his face.

Bryce, a St. Charles sophomore, died on Nov. 28 two days shy of turning 16 years old.

Showing how much he meant to everyone in St. Charles, around 1,200 people showed up at the high school two days later to celebrate what would have been his 16th birthday.

"It was overwhelming," Melanie Bird-Bryce, Gage's mother, said about the birthday party. "The outpouring of love was just amazing."

Gage lived every day to the fullest, even

attending the Ohio State at Michigan football game only a few days prior to his death. It was not his first experience at an Ohio State-Michigan game as in 2013 he was surprised by being asked to run on the field during the U-M marching band's halftime show.

He was a member of the St. Charles basketball team as a freshman and an avid sports fan, becoming a superfan for the Bulldogs' football team and making sure he was at every school sporting event he was able to attend.

Gage always kept a positive outlook despite his condition, according to Bird-Bryce's best friend Paula Berent.

"You would never hear him complain," Berent said. "You'd never see the smile off his face and you'd never hear him once say he wasn't going to beat this. We were just in New York getting treatment and in the 12-hour car ride on the way back home, you didn't hear a peep from him. And he had hours-long just a couple weeks earlier to get



Gage Bryce, a St. Charles sophomore, died on Nov. 28 two days shy of turning 16 years old. Bryce, who battled cancer most of his life became a true inspiration to not only the St. Charles community but to everyone that has followed his story through the years. Bryce will be missed. (Submitted Photos)



a tumor off his hip. It was a testament of how tough a kid he is."

As part of the basketball team, Gage was an ace 3-point shooter his freshman year and had his sights set on resuming that role as a sophomore before a setback with neuroblastoma in the early summer kept him out of school.

Despite not being at school with his friends, they were encouraged to come and visit with Gage at home and they very often did.

During the football season, Gage was made an honorary captain for one of the games. He joined the other captains for the coin toss and was interviewed by media afterward.

"He said after that day he felt a whole lot better," Bird-Bryce said. "We can't thank our community enough for everything they've done for us. Gage has amazing faith and never gave up. He always had that smile on his face."

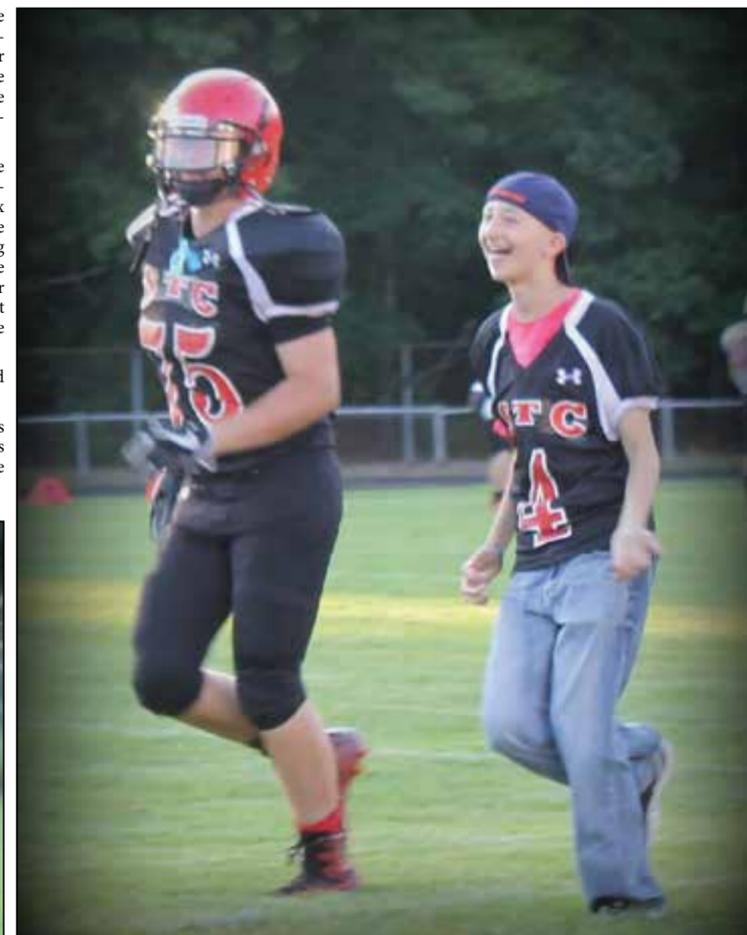
After Gage's death, he was remembered with a tribute prior to a St. Charles basketball junior varsity basketball game.

"It was the very first game they had and he would have been on their team," Berent remembered. "He played with these boys their entire life. They honored him before the game and gave mom a basketball. And then the game started and the weirdest stuff was happening."

"The game went to four overtimes. On one play, one of his really good friends [Joey Gonzales] was inbounding the ball with five or six seconds left. And for some reason, he runs the wrong way and goes for a layup on the wrong basket with the game tied but missed it. We were like, 'well, Gage blocked that one for Joey.' Everyone that was there could feel that he was there. It was his team and his presence was with them."

In addition to his mother, Gage is survived by his father Donald and his sister Madison.

"Madison is struggling," Melanie said. "She's not a quiet person, but she holds her feelings in more. The main thing she says is that she lost her best friend. They were close."



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CMAC Hoops Teams Flexing Their Muscles On Court

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Long known as a strong conference when it comes to high school football, the Central Michigan Athletic Conference (CMAC) has developed an equally strong reputation for producing outstanding basketball teams.

This season, the CMAC is shaping up to be even stronger than normal.



Heading into the holiday break, seven of the nine teams in the CMAC have winning records with one team at .500 and one team a game below the .500 mark. In non-conference games, the CMAC has shown its muscle with an outstanding 15-2 combined record in non-league games.

"I always make the argument this is the best small-school league in the state," said Dansville coach Cole Feldpausch. "I think we've currently had a run of five out of seven years where we've sent a team to the Breslin Center. There are a lot of great players throughout the league and the teams and players work exceptionally hard."

Two teams, Fowler and Dansville, are unbeaten heading into the break

Fulton coach Todd Walden directs his team during a game last season. (File Photo)

with a combined record of 9-0.

"It's crazy how top-heavy the league is," said Fowler coach Jason Goerge. "The league is like the Big 10 was three or four years ago with everyone beating each other up."

Success in basketball is not limited to just one or two teams in the league. Since the year 2000, Bath, Fowler, Fulton-Middleton, Laingsburg and Pewamo-Westphalia have all reached either the Class C or Class D state championship game with Bath winning the Class C state title in 2007.

"The league has always been known as a strong football league," said Fowler coach Jason Goerge. "Fowler, Fulton and Pewamo-Westphalia have always had good football programs. The last three, four years there has been some tremendous basketball being played. Fulton was in the finals seven, eight years ago, Laingsburg has been to the finals and so has Pewamo-Westphalia."

While not a league full of Division 1 college recruits, the CMAC has had more than its share of players go on to play college basketball

at the Division 2, 3 and NAIA levels. Among the CMAC grads playing in college this year are Fowler's Jeremy Pung at Saginaw Valley State, Pewamo-Westphalia's Nick Spitzley at Northwood and Fulton grads Gregg Jones and Colton Antes at Mid Michigan Community College. Carrying on the tradition will be current Fowler senior Mason Pline who is committed to Ferris State University and Dansville junior Caleb Hodgson who is being recruited by Central and Western Michigan University among others.

While the players in the league come in a variety of sizes, they all share the traits of a strong work ethic and a grit that they bring to the court in games and practice. Defense and sharing the ball on offense is also a common theme at all the programs in the CMAC.

"Teams in our league really buy into the fact that ball movement and defense wins games," Feldpausch said. "Sometimes it's like football on the hardwood."

Each school in the league has its own unique basketball history and puts its own stamp on the way

it plays the game. Having all nine teams play a round-robin league schedule adds even more to the mix with each team visiting all of the other gyms in the league each season.

"The diversity in the league makes it strong and competitive," said Laingsburg coach Dan Blemaster. "Every team has their own unique style that poses different challenges. The 16-game league schedule doesn't give much room for mistakes. You have to be ready to play every night which is hard for hard school players."

Kids growing up in the small towns that comprise that CMAC grow up following the local high school and want to be a part of that success when they reach high school.

"Our league and teams have a really great history that keeps motivating and breeding success for future teams," Feldpausch said. "Every kid in P-W, Laingsburg and the rest of the league wants to grow up with a basketball in their hand and carve out their piece of history amongst these storied programs."

Huskies Hoping Last Season's Success Will Catapult Squad For Future Years To Come

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

Breckenridge is coming off a historic boys basketball season, but with some key graduations it came into the 2017-18 campaign with some questions.

The Huskies won the program's first conference title in 30 years last February, taking the crown in their first year as part of the Mid-State Activities Conference.

Breckenridge head coach Jeff Os-

trander believes it has helped catapult the program forward as there is plenty of motivation to remain at a championship level now and in future years.

"They believe," Ostrander remarked. "They coach themselves. Losing is not an option. They pay attention and work hard. We will not lose a game for a lack of effort, I will tell you that."

It is difficult to get a gauge on how good the Huskies might be thus far through three games as they have a

1-2 record, opening the season with a 50-31 win at St. Louis before falling at home against Ashley (52-40) and Bullock Creek (63-53).

Breckenridge graduated its two best players in Class C first team All-State center Jack Staley along with honorable mention All-State recipient Gavin Ostrander.

While it is impossible to replace that kind of production with one player, the Huskies do return plenty of talent including senior guard Caleb Hurt and junior Carter Sta-

ley. Senior Caden Foster has come on strong, posting a 20-point game against St. Louis in the opener which included four 3-pointers.

Hurt has a 19-point and 15-point game, while the steady Staley provides Breckenridge a productive presence in the paint.

"We only have two seniors so we're getting a lot of younger players on the court," Ostrander added. "We're undersized and going to struggle with rebounding. We've tried to press a little bit with our height disadvantage and have struggled a bit, but we'll get better with it in time. When you have speed and no height, you have to gameplan to your team's advantages."

Breckenridge's Carter Staley is back this season as one of the leaders of the Huskies offense. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)



CC-C Volleyball Coach Lauren Taylor Has Eagles Moving In Right Direction

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

For Carson City-Crystal volleyball coach Lauren Taylor, the task was a major one. Not only was she coaching a volleyball team for the first time, but she took over the job just weeks before the first match.

Despite having zero coaching experience and precious little time to prepare, Taylor led the Eagles to a successful season and has the team headed in for more success in the seasons to come. With just two seniors on the team, Carson City-Crystal turned in a 17-20-6 record and reached the district finals before falling short against St. Louis.

"I thought the season went pretty well," Taylor said. "The girls definitely surprised me. I got the job right before the season. I didn't know the girls and we had no offseason to prepare. I just wish we had pulled out a few of the close games we played. The girls played really hard and we just came up a little short in a few matches."



Lauren Taylor took over the Carson City-Crystal program two weeks before the season started and helped the Eagles turn in a 17-20-6 record while reaching the district finals before falling short against St. Louis. (Submitted Photo)

Taylor and her young squad enjoyed plenty of positive experiences during the season which saw the Eagles place third in the Mid State Activities Conference.

"The way the girls played together was a big highlight all season," Taylor said. "When we played some of the more challenging teams the girls came together and worked real hard. Another highlight was the pink-out game against Ithaca. We pulled that game out and raised money for a good cause."

Carson City-Crystal also had several players earn all-conference honors this season. Sydney Evans earned first-team, all-conference honors while Kaylee Reeder was named to the second team. Bailey Fitzpatrick and Megan Dailey both earned honorable-mention, all-conference honors.

"Sydney was our setter and she did a great job," Taylor said. "She was all over the court and gave 110 percent in every game. She gave us a lot of extra energy."

Reeder, a middle hitter, totaled the most kills on offense this season.

Fitzpatrick is a versatile player that helped the team in a number of ways this season.

"Bailey played all the way around," Taylor said. "She brought a lot to the floor for us."

Carson City-Crystal also received strong play and leadership from Libbi Cusack.

"Libbi was one of our captains," Taylor said. "She brought a lot of positive energy to the team. She worked real hard and was the voice of the team."

With all but two players returning next year, the future is promising for the Eagles.

"I think the season went pretty well," Taylor said. "It was difficult getting the job a week before the dead period. I literally met the girls during try-out week. We will have an off-season to get ready this year. I think we will be able to grow as a team. All the girls played key parts in our success and with most of the girls coming back next season looks strong."

DeWitt Boys, Girls Basketball Teams Off To Strong Starts This Season

David Cook Sports Scene

The DeWitt High School student section, known as The 6th Man Club,



is one of the most involved and energetic student sections in high school basketball. The 6th Man Club has plenty to cheer this season as both the DeWitt girls and the boys basketball teams are among the top ten in the state.

Annually producing outstanding teams and players, both DeWitt squads are among the best in Mid-Michigan this season. The girls team, led by veteran coach Bill McCullen, are off to a 6-1 start this season. DeWitt's lone loss was a 52-51 decision to East Lansing and all six of DeWitt's wins have come by 12 points or more. McCullen passed a landmark in DeWitt's win over Grand Ledge when he recorded his 400th career win.

This year's squad is led by senior wing Grace George. George, who

averaged 16 points per game last season and helped DeWitt to a 21-2 overall record, has signed to continue her basketball career at Wayne State University next season.

The Panthers also have a talented core of juniors making an impact this season. Sydney Mills (5-foot-11) is an outstanding defender and rebounder at the center position while Annie McIntosh (5-9) is a quick, scrappy forward. Heading up the backcourt are point guard Maddie Petersen and shooting guard Lily Stephan.

The DeWitt girls will be battling it out with rival Haslett for the top spot in the CAAC Red this season. The two teams meet at Haslett on Jan. 12 and then play at DeWitt on Feb. 16.

The DeWitt boys are off to a 4-1 start this season. After dropping a 67-58 decision to East Lansing in the season opener, the DeWitt boys won

their next four games by 13 or more points.

The senior tandem of Luke Hyde (6-6) and Tanner Reha (6-5) lead the way. Hyde is a two-time, all-conference player that is heading to Grand Valley State University. Reha, a three-time, all-league player, is heading to Northwood University next season.

Hyde has turned in several strong efforts this season including 26 points and 13 rebounds in a 64-44 win against Holt and 21 points and 15 rebounds in a 58-45 win against Okemos.

Reha has also turned in some solid games including 17 points and five rebounds against Holt and 15 points in a 81-49 win against St. Johns.

The Panthers have a deep and balanced team this season with senior Mason Laube and juniors Isaac Hungerford, Nate Flannery and Collin McCrackin making key contributions. McCrackin totaled eight points, five rebounds, four assists and four steals in the win against St. Johns, Flannery



Both the DeWitt boys and girls basketball teams were a combined 10-2 this season entering the holiday break. (Tom Pearson, High School Sports Scene Photos)

totaled nine points, five assists and four steals against Holt, Hungerford scored 15 points against St. Johns and Laube totaled 11 points against St. Johns.



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Ryan Earl, Rockford, hockey
He's Rockford's senior captain, forward. He scored nine goals in Rockford's first 13 games. He had two goals in a 9-2 victory over Jackson Lumen Christi in the semifinals of the Big Rapids Holiday Tournament on Dec. 21.



Austin Young, Chippewa Hills, wrestling
A senior, he's off to an 8-1 start. He took place at 152 pounds in the Joe Loren Memorial Invitational on Dec. 6. He defeated Matt Waier of Midland in the title match 6-4 and finished 4-0 for the day.



Haley Nelson, Sandusky, girls basketball
First-team all-state last season. She has led her team to a 6-1 start. The Redskins lost their first game 38-34 against Kingston. One win was 65-8 over Memphis.



Ethan Davis, Big Rapids Crossroads, basketball
A junior, he's a multi-talented athlete coming off an all-conference soccer season. He scored 13 points in a basketball West Michigan D League game against Brethren.



Aiden McLaughlin, Morley Stanwood, basketball
A sophomore, he's been among the Mohawks' leading scorers this season. He scored 16 points on Dec. 15 in a 51-47 Central State Activities Association Silver Division victory over the Lakeview Wildcats.



Grace George, DeWitt, girls basketball
She is one of 8 of 10 players returning from a 21-2 team last season. She has committed to Wayne State. She averaged 16 points and will play on the wing where she is an effective scorer as well as an inside threat.



Heather Buck, Rockford, bowling
Junior bowler was a Division 4 state qualifier in 2017 and bowled an 1152 to make the top 16 cut at Sterling Heights. She lost in the first round of the finals to Natalie Kline of Brighton 343.



Nicolas Poprawski, Tri County, basketball
He's been among the top defensive players for Tri County in his junior season. He had several key defensive plays in a Central State Activities Association Gold Division loss to Big Rapids.



Jasmine Clerkley, Okemos, girls basketball
She's playing a key post role for Okemos. She had 18 points and 11 rebounds for Okemos in an early season contest.



Blake Neibarger, Big Rapids, hockey
A sophomore forward, he scored two goals in 5-2 victory over Mount Pleasant in non-league action at Ferris State's Ewigleben Ice Arena. It was his first two goals of the season.



Brandon Johns, East Lansing, basketball
Mr. Basketball candidate. The Michigan signee scored 51 points, and grabbed 15 rebounds in East Lansing's 114-82 win over Lansing Sexton. A future Michigan Wolverine, Johns averaged 20 points, 10 rebounds 3 assists and 3 blocks last season.



Scout Nelson, Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart, girls basketball
She's one of the team's top two returning players. Nelson, a junior point guard, averaged 14.5 points, four rebounds, three assists and five steals per game last year while leading the team to the state semifinals.

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE SCENE STEALERS!



Jamison Ward, CC-Crystal, wrestling
He was a state runner-up last season in Division 4 at 103 pounds. Ward came into the state individual wrestling finals with a 50-1 record and was one of the favorites going into the Division 4 103-pound tournament.



Taylor Peabody, Blanchard-Montabella, volleyball
Peabody turned in a solid season for the Mustang volleyball team. A senior team captain, Peabody totaled 300 digs, 283 kills, 53 aces and 38 blocks and helped the squad to a 4-3 record in the Mid-State Conference this season. Peabody was also voted the school's homecoming queen.



Carson City-Crystal wrestling
The Eagles have been on a tear so far this season. Carson City went 3-0 at the Belding team tournament including a 31-30 win over Lowell's B team. Carson City also defeated Division 2 Sparta 40-34 and picked up wins against Tri-County and Lakeview at the Tri-County invite.



Chris Fausen, Charlotte, wrestling
He was a state runner-up last season. He qualified for state by winning the regional title and in the process, taking his 100h career win.



Davison wrestling
The Cardinals flexed their muscles by winning nine individual titles at the Genesee County championships. Winning titles for Davison were Andrew Chambal (103 pounds), Steven Garty (112), Mmarc Shaeffer (140), Jay Nivison (145), Alex Facundo (152), Brian Case (160), Cal Stefanko (171), Trevor McGowan (189) and Aaron Gilmore (285).



Jordan Rodriguez, Chesaning, wrestling
Rodriguez took third at 103 pounds at last year's Division 3 state finals and finished the season at 48-6. This year, Rodriguez is picking up where he left off as he went 2-0 at the Hemlock invite and helped Chesaning to three wins at the Frankenmuth invite.



Emma Belles, Ithaca, basketball
Belles is off to a solid start with the Ithaca girls basketball team. A sophomore, Belles scored six points and pulled down 11 rebounds against Valley Lutheran and then helped the Yellowjackets to their first win of the season with 12 points and 12 rebounds against MLS.



St. Johns wrestling
The St. Johns wrestling team is off to a solid start this season. The Redwings turned in a big effort at the Jackson JAWS invitational where they posted four impressive wins. St. Johns defeated Chelsea (53-17), Hartland (40-33), Manchester (45-24) and Montrose (51-15).



Dan Clevenger, Owosso, wrestling
Clevenger and his Owosso teammates are starting strong this season. A regional qualifier last year, Clevenger has helped Owosso post seven wins in the first couple weeks of the season while picking up six wins of his own including a pair of pins.



Baylee Chaffin, Ithaca, basketball
A 6-foot-3 junior forward, Chaffin is a source of offense for the Yellowjacket basketball team. Chaffin scored 19 points in a win against Shepherd and added 11 points against Hemlock. In the spring Chaffin is one of the top throwers in the area for the Ithaca track team.



Victor Schoenherr, Bay City Western, wrestling
Last season Schoenherr placed seventh in the state at 135 pounds at the Division 1 individual state finals. Schoenherr is off to a strong start this year as he went 4-0 to help Western to a pair of wins at the Bay County Tournament.



Brighton wrestling
The Bulldogs defended their home mats in a big way by going 5-0 in the team tournament they hosted. Brighton picked up wins against Eaton Rapids (36-22), Goodrich (56-12), Alma (60-15), Jackson Northwest (69-12) and Saline (67-6). Brighton also went 5-0 at the Warren Woods-Tower team invite.

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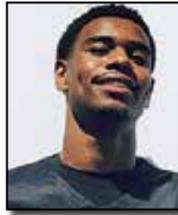
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Mitchell Ward, Belding
Last season Ward placed sixth in the Division 3 state meet at 171 pounds and won 50 matches. So far this season Ward has totaled 10 wins including four pins and a technical fall. Ward has helped Belding to an 8-7 start this season.



Bryce Washington, Southfield Christian, basketball
Washington, whose brother is a walk-on freshman at Michigan State, has a lot of Division I attention of his own despite being at a Class D school. A 6-foot-3 shooting guard, Washington can create whatever shot he wants and is a tenacious defender. Look for the Eagles to possibly make a run to the Breslin Center.



T.J. Daugherty, Walled Lake Central, wrestling
Daugherty is one of the top returning prep wrestlers in the state after winning a Division 1 state championship at 103 pounds as a freshman last year. He won his semifinal match in triple OT by a 2-1 score over Davison's Andrew Chambal before downing Macomb Dakota's Nick Alayan by fall at the 1:03 mark in the title match.



Foster Loyer, Clarkston, basketball
The Michigan State commit is on the Mr. Basketball watch list and is charged with leading the Wolves again after the MHSAA ruled transfer Thomas Kithier, also an MSU commit, is ineligible this season. Loyer guided Clarkston to a Class A state title last season, the first in school history.



Brandon Kreiner, Davison, bowling
Kreiner, now a senior, was a Division 1 second team All-State recipient last year as he helped the Cardinals to the state finals. Davison could again be a contender for a state crown this winter.



Kevon Davenport, Detroit Catholic Central, wrestling
He won one of five Division 1 individual state championships for the Shamrocks last year as a sophomore at 130 pounds. Detroit Catholic Central rolled to its first team state title since 2014. Davenport has now bulked up to 145 pounds and will look to defend his state crown and help the Shamrocks toward the team title.



Kaela Webb, Detroit Country Day, basketball
Webb has shined in the Class B state title game twice in the last three years, leading Country Day to two state championships. She is one of the best girls basketball players in the state and a Miss Basketball candidate. Don't be surprised if Webb helps lead the way to another state title for the Yellowjackets.



Natalie Klein, Brighton, bowling
Klein was the state runner-up in Division 1 as a junior last, falling to senior Brittney Schnicke from Caledonia in the title match as she shot a 243 and a 161. Klein is quite possibly the favorite to win an individual state championship this year.



Kedrick Teague, Lansing Sexton, wrestling
Sexton began the season with a 6-1 dual record and Teague is a big reason why, including a successful day at the Jackson Area Wrestling Showcase when he won all four of his matches at 160 pounds as Sexton went 4-1.



Carl Bow Jr., Hazel Park, basketball
A Class B All-Stater last season, Bow Jr. tallied 16 points and six boards in a recent quality win over East English Village Prep. The Vikings shared the Oakland Activities Association title with Troy last season and won the program's first district title since 1965.



Kasey Conn, Breckenridge, competitive cheer
A Division 4 All-State performer last year as a junior, Conn was a major contributor on what was a third straight state championship for the Huskies. She'll be a senior leader on a squad that won't have as much other senior guidance as last season, so she's been looked at as a leader from day one.



Skylar Nelson, Sacred Heart, basketball
Averaged over 20 points per game as a sophomore last season to guide the Irish to a Class D district championship, earning first team All-State recognition in the process. Along with senior Joe Methner, who garnered All-State honorable mention honors last season, this will be a team to be reckoned with all season. The Irish are 2-2 in the early going.

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE SCENE STEALERS!



Noah Johnston, Vestaburg, basketball
Johnston earned Class D All-State honors last year and will be a leader on a young Wolverines roster this winter. Although Vestaburg might not win a lot of games, expect Johnston to fill the stat sheet on a nightly basis.



Parker Severson, Saginaw Heritage, hockey
Severson has been key in helping the Hawks to a 5-1-1 start as he has scored seven goals to go with nine assists, putting him second on the team in points behind teammate David Helpap (eight goals, nine assists).



Nodin Jackson, Mount Pleasant, hockey
Jackson has notched a team-high six goals to go with an assist for the Oilers through eight games. Teammate Logan Smith has recorded five goals and three assists, while Cole Smallwood has accounted for three goals and four assists.



Mady Conklin, Charlotte competitive cheer
Conklin picked up Division 2 first team All-State honors last year as a sophomore flyer, becoming a major factor in the Orioles finishing sixth at the state finals. Charlotte won a sixth straight conference title, won a district title and advanced to the state finals for the first time in program history.



Mason Pline, Fowler, basketball
The Eagles began the season 4-0 overall and 2-0 in the Central Michigan Athletic Association as Pline had a benchmark performance of 26 points and 16 rebounds in a win over Bath.



Sophie Wilsey, Laingsburg, basketball
Laingsburg had a fantastic 17-4 season last year, but lost 43-39 to a strong Bath team in what was a loaded Class C district. Wilsey, who earned All-State honors as a junior, will be at the forefront of helping the Wolfpack to an even better season in 2017-18.



Maylee Hatt, Byron, basketball
Hatt was a major reason Byron finished last season 16-5 as her scoring, rebounding and defense earned her Class C All-State honors. She is now a junior and looking for an even bigger and better year.



Ryan Gilmore, Capital Area Patriots, hockey
Helped the Patriots split a pair of contests early in the season by making 96 saves in a single weekend, turning away 39 shots in a 2-1 victory over DeWitt/St. Johns and stopping 57 more shots in a 3-1 loss to Jackson Lumen Christi.



Caleb Hodgson, Dansville, basketball
The junior had a massive game with 35 points and 24 rebounds in an early-season 91-65 win over Leslie, while he followed it up with the game-winning basket in a 57-56 victory over Detroit Osborn the next game.



Jaycob Sharp, Chippewa Hills, wrestling
Sharp was a Division 3 state-runner up as a sophomore in 2015 before falling in the quarterfinals at last year's state finals. He'll be a top wrestler for the Warriors in the middle weight classes this winter, looking to not only win an individual state title but also help Chippewa Hills to the program's first-ever team state championship.



Emily Spitzley, Pewamo-Westphalia, basketball
Spitzley will attempt to get the Pirates back to the Class C state championship after they lost a 46-44 heartbreaker to Detroit Edison last year. The Grand Valley State commit scored 15 points and pulled down five rebounds in that her game. Her sister, Hannah, tallied a team-best 17 points in that game and is now a sophomore.



Nautiga Garcia, Lansing Eastern, basketball
Poured in 40 points in an early December victory against Pottersville, which has helped the Quakers to a 4-2 start and wins in four of their last five games.

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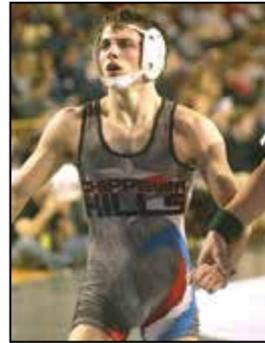
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Usual Suspects Expect To Take Down Competition; Lowell Gunning For Fifth Straight D2 Title

David Cook Sports Scene

DAVISON: Davison reached the Division 1 finals last season where it fell to Detroit Catholic Central. The Cardinals have a stacked lineup this season and are gearing up for another run at the team title. Senior AJ Facundo (145/152 pounds) is a returning state champion. The Cardinals also return a quartet of regional champions in the middle of the lineup including juniors Steven Garty (119) and Brian Case (160) and sophomores Jaron Wilson (125) and Jay Nivison (145). In the upper weights Davison returns state qualifiers in senior Cal Stefanko (171) and juniors Trevor McGowan and Arron Gilmore (285). Sophomore Andrew Chambal (112) returns after placing third at state at 103 pounds last year.

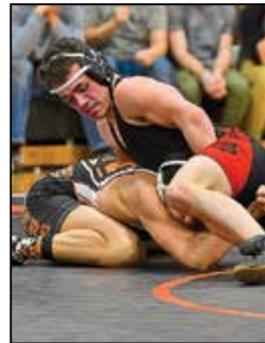


DIVISION 2

LOWELL: The Red Arrows have won four straight Division 2 team titles and will be tough to stop from winning a fifth. Lowell returns talent up and down the lineup led by sophomore Austin Boone (145), a defending state champion, and returning state placers Avry Mutschler (135) and David Kruse (189). Also back are state qualifiers Nick Korhorn (103), Dawson Jankowski (119), Jeff Leach (130), James Fotis (140) and Keigan Yuhus (215). Added to the mix are promising freshmen Seth Strejc (125) and Jacob Lee (145) and sophomore heavyweight Tyler Deloof.

GRAND LEDGE: The Comets return several talented wrestlers led by sophomore Andrew Hughes (112) who placed fourth at state at 103 last year. Juniors Karson Kost (140) and Alex Kingsley (119) are a pair of returning state qualifiers while seniors Ryan Legal (119) and Adam Castaneda (145) are returning regional qualifiers. In the upper weights, regional qualifiers Adam Aguilar (215) and Braeden Riggs (285) return.

ROCKFORD: A strong core of wrestlers return for the Rams led by state qualifiers Noah Anderson (145) and Jack



EATON RAPIDS: The Greyhounds have a solid group of wrestlers back led by senior Austin O'Hearon (160), a returning state champion, and sophomore Caleb Fish (145) a returning state placer. Surrounding them is a talented group led by Robert Davids (103), Chris Haynes (125), Chad Haynes (135), Nick Haynes (140), Brayden McNamara (171) and Dallas Price (285).

DEWITT: Senior Sam York (152) returns after placing third at last year's state finals. The Panthers also return senior Kilian Southworth (152) and junior Quenten Hall (130) who both placed

fourth at state. Senior Jackson Severns (135) is a returning state qualifier and Ronald Slater (119) is a returning regional qualifier. In the lower weights, the Panthers have some talented wrestlers including Kiefer Kolito (103) and Matt Foddrill (112).

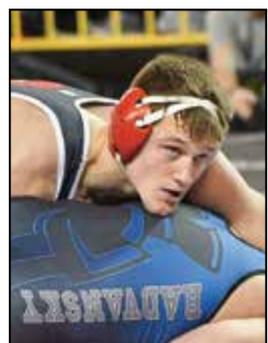
ST. JOHNS: The Redwings have a quartet of returning state placers leading the way. Senior Brendon Zelenka (125) placed third, junior James Whitaker (140) placed fourth, junior Kaleob Whitford (135) took fifth and senior Cross Gonzalez (160) placed seventh. Junior Brendon Smith (103) is a returning state qualifier while Spencer Sillman (145) and Braxton Parks (171) are returning regional qualifiers.

MASON: Senior heavyweight Riley Smith placed seventh at state and leads the way for the Bulldogs this season. Senior Ben Surato (215) is a returning state qualifier and sophomore Richard Mayer (103) is a returning regional qualifier.

OWOSSO: Sophomore Colton Blaha (140) is a returning state qualifier. Owosso also brings back a pair of regional qualifiers in senior Dan Clevenger (189) and junior Nathan Mariutza (103).

MT. PLEASANT: The Oilers return a group of regional qualifiers that includes senior Isiah Schafer (215) and juniors Darren Wilson (112) and Nich Brown (130).

GREENVILLE: The Yellowjackets are led by returning state qualifier D'Andre Sage (130) and regional qualifiers Anthony Goodfellow (112), Matt Jeffrey (135) and Eli Kunkle (145).

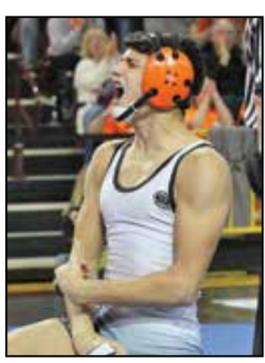


DIVISION 3

CHIPPEWA HILLS: The Warriors reached the Division 3 state semifinals last season before dropping a 28-22 decision to Dundee. Plenty of talent returns this season led by senior state placers Jaycob Sharp (152), David Spedowski (171) and Robert Granberry (189). Chippewa Hills also returns

state qualifiers Billy Koepf (215) and heavyweight Andrew Vinton along with regional qualifiers Korante Lowrey (135), Brandon Russell (160) and Austin Young (152).

BIRCH RUN: The Panthers fell just short of qualifying for the team state finals last season and brings back a squad more than capable of making it to state this year. Senior Mason Breece (152) and sophomores Christian Miller (112) and Macintyre Breece (119) are a trio of state placers returning. The Panthers also return state qualifiers Kyle Parlborg (135) and Brockton Cook (189) along with regional qualifier Nolan Bovee (140). Heavyweight Terrance Watson and Trevor Beck (215) are a pair of solid wrestlers at the top of the lineup.



ALMA: The Panthers return a pair of state qualifiers in seniors Alex Rosas (145) and heavyweight Greg Simmons. Rosas also placed at state last season. Sophomores Jarrett Ferman (130) and Justin VanBlaricum (152) are a pair of returning regional qualifiers.

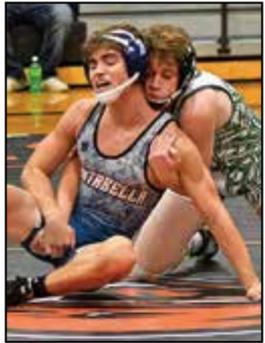
LAKE FENTON: A core of outstanding wrestlers have the Blue Devils looking strong. Jarrett Trombley (130) is a returning state champion that went 57-0 last season. Junior Sean Trombley placed second while senior Jackson Nevadomski placed fourth last season.

SHEPHERD: Junior Trevor Robinson (130) placed third in the state last year and returns to lead Shepherd this season. Also back are regional qualifiers Kyle Andrews (103) Hunter Dysinger (119), Logan Buckner (145) and heavyweight Kevin Smith.

CORUNNA: Trevor Briggs (130) is a returning state qualifier leading the Cavaliers this season. Gabe Serbus (112), Devon Anderson 9135) and Jack Thayer (215) are also among the team leaders.

HOWARD CITY TRI-COUNTY: Dakota Greer (130), a returning state champion, returns to lead the way for the Vikings. Tanner Astrauskas (135) is a returning state placer.

PORTLAND: The Raiders are led by senior Owen Guilford (160) who placed fourth at state last season. Desmond



Gardner (145) and Jared Thelen (130) also return.

PERRY: Jacob Spiess returns to lead the Ramblers after placing third at state and winning over 50 matches last season. Also back is Jacob Porter (103) who won over 40 matches last season.

DIVISION 4

NEW LOTHROP: The Hornets had their string of three straight Division 4 team state titles snapped last season. New Lothrop is led this season by returning state placers Tommy Malloy (125), Austin Wolford (135) and Justin Carnahan (140). The Hornets are also looking for strong efforts from Andrew Krupp (103), Logan Wolford (119), Logan Zell (130), Cole Wendling (145), Zack Riley (152), Austin Wendling (160), Cam Orr (171) and Cam Dusenberry (285).

CARSON CITY-CRYSTAL: The Eagles were edged by New Lothrop in last year's team quarterfinals and return with a stocked lineup this season. Returning state placers Nolan Datema (103), Jamison Ward (119), Daryn Shepler (125) and Braxton Seida (145) lead this year's squad. Carson City is solid in the upper weights with Nash Akin (171), Daniel Smith (189), Konner Datema (189), Brian Yeakey (215) and Seth Seida (285). Kohlon Blasher (140) and Brandon Murray (160) strengthen the middle weight classes.

ST. LOUIS: Plenty of talent returns for the Sharks led by state placers Jayce Kuehnlein (160) and Jake Davis (171). Senior Ernie Diaz (215) is a returning state qualifier that won 39 matches last season. A pair of talented juniors, Ryan Downs (145) and Isaac Howd (152), return after winning of 40 matches apiece last season. In the lower weights the Sharks are looking for contributions from Modestie Hitchcock (103), Alex Newton (103), Gavin Giles (125) and Andrew Shattuck (135).

BLANCHARD-MONTABELLA: The Mustangs are led by a returning group that includes Carson Dalrymple (130) and Caden Woolworth (189). Korbin Ingram (103), Mason Dalrymple (112), Ethan Crawford (119), Matt Chaney (140) and David Shattuck (145) will also be filling key roles.

St. Louis' Kuehnlein A State Title Contender

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

St. Louis' Jayce Kuehnlein is in his senior wrestling season and is looking to have an outstanding one.

Kuehnlein was a qualifier at the state meet as a freshman and went 1-2. He was all-state with a seventh-place finish at 135. Last year, he was state runner-up at 135.

"Going into the season, I knew I

had a good chance at making a run at the state finals and at the championship," Kuehnlein said. "It was disappointing to lose, especially when you're so close to where you wanted to be. But it was definitely a stepping stone to help me realize where I'm at as a wrestler and what I can do, especially this year."

Kuehnlein is starting out the season at 145. He's unsure where he'll be wrestling at in the postseason this year.

He's currently at 10-1. "I think I'm wrestling the best I can so far," he said. "I'm getting some tough

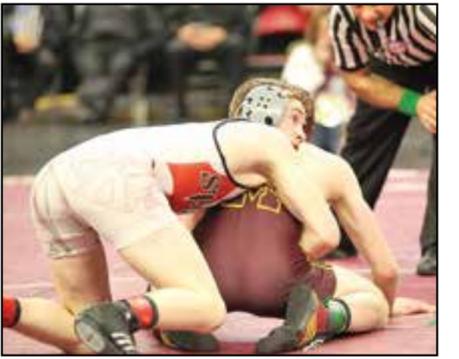
matches early in the season, which I feel is important. These matches are helping me for March when I'll need them the most."

Kuehnlein's strength as a wrestler is being able to take anybody down and being very tough on top.

He expects to see some tough competition in the Hudson Super 16 in January.

"That should be the toughest competition we'll see all year," Kuehnlein said.

St. Louis' Jayce Kuehnlein was runner-up last season at 135 pounds at the Division 4 finals. (Staff Photo)



Sharks Wrestling Hoping This Is The Season They Make Jump To Next Level

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

The core of the St. Louis wrestling team is in great shape this winter as five former state qualifiers or medalists are back in the fold.

But question marks are scattered throughout the rest of the lineup as youth and inexperience provide some challenges in the early going this season, but also show there is a tremendous upside for the Sharks as a team.

"We're not quite where we've been in the past right now," Sharks coach Kevin Kuhn said. "We're in a position where we have five state qualifiers or placers, but everyone else is a freshman or a first-year wrestler. We had

some kids from last year who opted not to wrestle this year, so that hurt some."

St. Louis is currently 4-4 in dual meets heading into the Bob Threlloff Invitational it will host on Dec. 28, but Kuhn keeps reminding his wrestlers that they have yet to wrestle a Division 4 team.

The Sharks have had an outstanding five-year run with four district titles, but they have been unable to get over the hump in regionals with some heartbreaking losses.

Leading the charge this winter in part is senior Jake Davis, who is undefeated thus far while bouncing between 152 and 160 pounds. He recently won a tournament by pinning

Hesperia's Gerrit Yates, who is the defending state champion at 152 pounds and a three-time state finalist.

Davis advanced to the state semifinals at 145 last winter and has shown he is a clear contender at whichever weight class he falls into.

Senior Jayce Kuehnlein is the state runner-up at 135 pounds, but is now bumped up to 145 and 152 pounds. Kuhn hasn't ruled him out dropping to as low as 140 by the state tournament.

Ernie Diaz, also a senior, advanced to the round of 16 last year and will look to better that although he is being slowed by an injury right now.

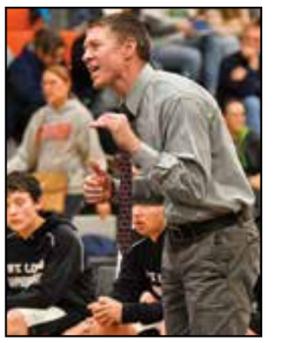
"His only loss this year is because he suffered a knee injury and had to default," Kuhn said of Diaz. "He came back and got a win for us over Shepherd, but it's something that will probably eventually require surgery. For now he's probably going to have to put up with it. He is a small 189-pounder

and we'd like him to transition to 171 at some point."

Junior Isaac Howd advanced to the round of 16 last year at 130 pounds, while another junior in Ryan Downs qualified for the state finals as a freshman in 2016.

Additional wrestlers to keep an eye out for include sophomores Gavin Giles (119) and Alex Newton (103), a couple bright spots that could help propel the Sharks forward.

"We're a work in progress with the young kids," Kuhn added. "We lost a dual to Clare and a dual to Shepherd, where we gave up bonus points with our young kids. If we fix that, we win. We have a month-and-a-half to teach our young kids not to get caught on their back. We still believe we have the pieces in place to make a nice postseason run." "That should be the toughest competition we'll see all year," Kuehnlein said.



St. Louis coach Kevin Kuhn directs his team during the Sharks first triangular meet of the season at Alma High School. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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DCC Continues Dominance In D1 Wrestling

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

Following a couple years of not hoisting the Division 1 state championship trophy, Detroit Catholic Central returned to its dominant ways last winter.

The Shamrocks were able to blitzkrieg the competition en route to the state title, defeating Davison by a count of 35-22 in the title dual to hoist the crown and finish the season with a 31-1 record. They

had won three consecutive state titles between 2012 and 2014, while under head coach Mitch Hancock the 2017 state championship was their fifth total.

Additionally, Detroit Catholic Central racked up five individual state championships - Benyamin Kamali (112), Kevon Davenport (130), Cameron Amine (145), Tyler Morland (171) and Nicholas Jenkins (HWT).

Morland and Jenkins have grad-

uated, along with third-place finisher Jackson Ross (215). But that leaves three defending state champions back in the fold, along with a supporting cast that is stocked full of talent and kids determined to keep the Shamrocks in the state's top spot.

Davenport has gone up a couple weight classes to 145 after going 43-3 last season, while Kamali is now wrestling at 119 pounds after finishing his state champion season at 41-13. Amine is fluctuating between the 152 and 160-pound weight class, looking to become a champion once again following his 45-3 season a year ago.

Taking over at 171 pounds for Morland is state qualifier Aidan

Wagh. Three state placers back in the mix are junior Rhett Newton (130-135), who took third at 112; sophomore Derek Gilcher (135-140), who finished fourth at 119 with a 32-10 record; and senior Devon Johnson (112), who was 35-12 last year and took seventh at 103 pounds.

Additional state qualifiers include senior Stone Moscovic (125-130), junior Joe Urso (145-152) and Wagh.

The icing on the cake is a transfer who is paying immediate dividends in Orchard Lake St. Mary's transfer Josh Edmond at 140 pounds. Edmond went an astounding 53-1 last season to take runner-up at 135 in Division 2.



Detroit Catholic Central coach Mitch Hancock has his team thinking about another run at a Division 1 title this season. (Staff Photo)

Can Lowell Make It Five Straight Titles In D2?

David Cook Sports Scene

The Lowell wrestling team is looking to make history this season, and if the early results are any indication, the Red Arrows will be difficult to stop.

Winners of the last four Division 2 team state championships, the Red Arrows are looking to set a new Division 2 state record with five straight 2 state titles. Lowell and St. Johns (2010-2013) have both won four straight Division 2 team titles.

With its mix of talented veterans, skilled newcomers and outstanding overall depth, Lowell is off to a strong start this season. After qualifying eight individuals for the finals and winning

four individual titles at the Allegan Southwest Classic, the Red Arrows came back and sent 10 wrestlers to the finals and won nine titles at the Kent County Wrestling Championships.

"I feel really good about the way we wrestled," said Lowell coach R.J. Boudro. "Everyone was focused. We sent 10 wrestlers to the finals at Kent County and they all wrestled pretty darn well."

Individual champions for Lowell at the Kent County were sophomore Nick Korhorn (103 pounds), sophomore Dawson Jankowski (119), freshman Zeth Strejc (125), junior Jeff Leach (130), junior Avery Mutschler (135), sophomore James Fotis (140), sophomore Austin Boone (152), senior David Kruse (189) and senior Keegan Yuhas (215). Sophomore Tyler Deloof placed second at 285 pounds. Mutschler, Boone, Kruse and Yuhas also won titles at Allegan.

Yuhas has opened the season in a big way,

winning his first six matches of the season in the first period.

Along with the veterans, several younger wrestlers are making their mark. Placing at the Kent County were sophomore Bryce McCune (3rd, 112), freshman Jacob Lee (5th, 145) and freshman Derek Mohr (6th, 160). McCune took second and Mohr placed third at Allegan.

While Lowell has started the season strong, they have plenty of tough tasks ahead of them, especially in the month of January.

"Our January is ridiculous," Boudro said. "We wrestled the number two team in the country (St. Paris Graham, Ohio), the number five team in the country (Cleveland St. Edward), the number 10 team in the country (Detroit Catholic Central) and the



Lowell's Austin Boone controls his opponent during an early season match. Boone returns this season hoping to lead the Red Arrows to their fifth straight Division 2 championship. (Butch Harmon, High School Sports Scene Photo)

number 19 team in the country (Cincinnati LaSalle). It (the schedule) will bring us back down to earth. Our goal is to be the best we can be at the end of the season."

YOUNG OWOSSO PRESENTS AREA TEAM WRESTLING RANKINGS

Different Season, Familiar Faces Sit Atop HSSS Area Team Wrestling Rankings

DIVISION 1

- 1 DAVISON
- 2 BRIGHTON
- 3 GRAND LEDGE
- 4 ROCKFORD
- 5 HOLT
- 6 HOWELL
- 7 FLUSHING
- 8 BAY CITY WESTERN
- 9 GRAND BLANC
- 10 MIDLAND

DIVISION 3

- 1 CHIPPEWA HILLS
- 2 BIRCH RUN
- 3 ALMA
- 4 LAKEWOOD-LAKE ODESSA
- 5 LAKE FENTON
- 6 MT. MORRIS
- 7 PORTLAND
- 8 TRI-COUNTY
- 9 CLARE
- 10 ESSEXVILLE-GARBER

DIVISION 2

- 1 LOWELL
- 2 EATON RAPIDS
- 3 ST. JOHNS
- 4 DEWITT
- 5 CEDAR SPRINGS
- 6 GOODRICH
- 7 MASON
- 8 GREENVILLE
- 9 CLIO
- 10 OWOSSO

DIVISION 4

- 1 CARSON CITY-CRYSTAL
- 2 NEW LOTHROP
- 3 BEAVERTON
- 4 ST. LOUIS
- 5 BLANCHARD-MONTABELLA



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Sparrow Carson Hospital Presents Individual Wrestlings Rankings

DIVISION 1

103
Andrew Chambal, Davison
Brody Kemper, Grand Blanc
Mason Shrader, Brighton
Treyton Gabold, Flushing
Zach Platte, Holt

112
Andrew Hughes, Grand
Ben Manly, Brighton
Connor Humphrey, Grand Blanc
Nolan Johnson, Howell

119
Steven Garty, Davison
Alex Kingsley, Grand Ledge
Brecken Griswatsch, Swartz Creek
Jacob Yost, Flint Carman-Ainsworth
Brennen Herr, Flushing

125
Jaron Wilson, Davison
Mateo Diaz, Midland
Zach Johnson, Brighton
Trenton Wachter, Rockford
Jackson Turnbow, Grand Blanc

130
Eddie Homrock, Brighton
Joe Carpenter, Swartz Creek
Evan Kaser, Rockford
James Johnston, Davison
Marco Shinn, Howell

135
Augustine Facundo, Davison
Aiden Brown, Brighton
Jack Wooster, Howell
Noah Arciniega, Bay City Western
Christian Lenon, Holt

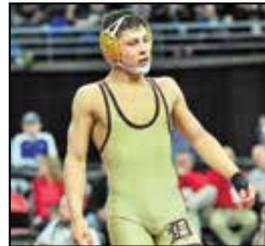
140
Marc Shaeffer, Davison
Kaleb Kemper, Grand Blanc
Connor White, Rockford
Karson Kost, Grand Ledge
Dane Donabedian, Brighton

145
Jay Nivison, Davison
Noah Anderson, Rockford
Braxton Gabold, Flushing
Victor Grabowski, Brighton
Adam Castaneda, Grand Ledge

152
Alex Facundo, Davison
Victor Schoenherr, Bay City Western
Jack Richardson, Rockford
Nick Bleise, Brighton
Eugene Durbin, Grand Blanc

160
Brian Case, Davison
Brennan Doyle, Midland Dow
Seth Dominguez, Grand Blanc
Matt Waier, Midland
Shane Morrison, Howell : d. M.Payne(-
Flushing)
Cole Gleason, Rockford

171
Cal Stefanko, Davison
Sam Hine, Midland



AJ Facundo, Davison

Tyler Waterstrat, Rockford
Harley Berne, Brighton
Jonah Schrock, Howell

189
Trevor McGowan, Davison
Logan Kozarian, Howell
Aidan Belgiorno, Midland Dow
Grayson Stevens, Brighton
Jacob Putnam, Grand Blanc

215
Ben Cushman, Flushing
Brent Booth, Midland Dow
Travis Eads, Davison
Luke Stanton, Brighton
Alex Wilson, Howell

285
Arron Gilmore, Davison
Lance Clapp, Swartz Creek
Colby Ford, Brighton
Braeden Riggs, Grand Ledge
Drew McCullough, Grand Blanc

DIVISION 2

103
Nick Korhorn, Lowell
Robert Davids, Eaton Rapids
Kiefer Kollito, DeWitt
Trevor Marsman, Cedar Springs
Peyton Frederick, St. Johns

112
Brendon Smith, St. Johns
Darren Wilson, Mt. Pleasant
Bryce McCune, Lowell
Nathan Mariutza, Owosso
Matt Foddrill, DeWitt

119
Dawson Jankowski, Lowell
Ronald Slater, DeWitt
La'Ron Ruffin, Flint Kearsley
Justin Cygnar, Linden
Cody Wood, St. Johns

125
Brendan Zelenka, St. Johns
Seth Strejc, Lowell
Jayden Rittenbury, Fenton
Aaron Smith, Cedar Springs
Chris Haynes, Eaton Rapids

130
Quenten Hall, DeWitt
Jeff Leach, Lowell
D'Andre Sage, Greenville
Wyatt Daniel, Fowlerville
Carson Turnbow, Goodrich

135
Avry Mutschler, Lowell
Chris Fauson, Charlotte
Kaleb Whitford, St. Johns
Andy Runstorfer, Flint Kearsley
Jackson Severns, DeWitt

140
Kilian Southworth, DeWitt
James Fotis, Lowell
Garrett Nyswander, Clio
Koleton Strauss, Linden
Nick Haynes, Eaton Rapids

145
Caleb Fish, Eaton Rapids
James Whitaker, St. Johns
Tommy Adams, Fenton
Jacob Lee, Lowell
Jacob Galinis, Cedar Springs

152
Austin Boone, Lowell
Sam York, DeWitt
Lucas Pionton, Cedar Springs
Colton Blaha, Owosso
Jacob Smith, Clio

160
Austin O'Hearon, Eaton Rapids
AJ Moore, Clio
Malik Davis, Flint Kearsley
Cross Gonzalez, St. Johns
Nate Patin, Cedar Springs

171
Ryan Ringler, Cedar Springs
Braxton Parks, St. Johns
Brayden McNamara, Eaton Rapids
Avery Jacobs, Linden
Cody Franks, Clio

189
Dave Kruse, Lowell
Jared Davis, Eaton Rapids
Austin Engle, Lowell
Dan Clevenger, Owosso
Juwan Vines, Goodrich

215
Keigan Yuhas, Lowell
Honour Kline, Goodrich
Ben Surato, Mason
Connor Nugent, Lowell
Alex Yocom, Clio

285
Riley Smith, Mason
Blake Coffell, Goodrich
Dallas Price, Eaton Rapids
Tyler Deloof, Lowell
Blake Amy, Clio



Austin Boone, Lowell

DIVISION 3

103
Jordan Rodriguez, Chesaning
Nolan Rodriguez, Alma
Jake Elasovich, Montrose
Garret Mogg, Sanford-Meridian
Dominic Anguiano, Alma

112
Christian Miller, Birch Run
Kanon Atwell, Lakewood-Lake Odessa
Sean Kittle, Montrose
Carson Hayes, Chippewa Hills
Alex Ventimilia, Freeland

119
Sean Spidle, Flint Powers
Kyle Schaaf, Clare
Macintyre Breece, Birch Run
Curtis Perry, Lakeview
Demetrius Castillo, Alma

125
Dakota Greer, Howard City Tri-County
Reese Wallis, Montrose
Eric Spidle, Flint Powers
Jordan Scofield, Stanton Central
Mont-calm
Travis McDonald, Sanford-Meridian

130
Mitchel Christensen, Essexville-Garber
Colt Smedley, Clare
Kyle Pariberg, Birch Run
Cody Aidi, Mt. Morris
Jared Thelen, Portland

135
Jarrett Trombley, Lake Fenton
Trevor Briggs, Montrose
Jon Maag, Lakewood-Lake Odessa
Devon Anderson, Corunna
Jarrett Ferman, Alma

140
Sean Trombley, Lake Fenton

Mason Hayes, Chippewa Hills
Trevor Robinson, Shepherd
Scotty Amaya, Mt. Morris
Cole Federer, Sanford-Meridian

145
Alex Rosas, Alma
Desmond Gardner, Portland
Jacob Spiess, Perry
Charlie Newton, Essexville-Garber
Brandon Avery, Sanford-Meridian

152
Mason Breece, Birch Run
Austin Young, Chippewa Hills
Justin VanBlaricum, Alma
Jake Allen, Mt. Morris
Matt Weiss, Corunna



Mitchel Christensen, Essexville-Garber

160
Jackson Nevadomski, Lake Fenton
Gavin Morgan, Mt. Morris
Owen Guilford, Portland
Brandon Russell, Chippewa Hills
Vern Fields, Lakewood-Lake Odessa

171
David Spedowski, Chippewa Hills
Mitchell Ward, Belding
Jon Clack, Lakewood-Lake Odessa
Logan Julian, Lake Fenton
Trenton Naragon, Birch Run

189
Brockton Cook, Birch Run
Logan Young, Mt. Morris
Robert Granberry, Chippewa Hills
Lane Allen, Lakewood-Lake Odessa
Thomas Davis, Alma

215
Billy Koepf, Chippewa Hills
Jack Thayer, Corunna
Toby Niedzwiecki, Freeland
Trevor Beck, Birch Run
Diontae Givens, Tri-County

285
Greg Simmons, Alma
Emiliano Flores, Hemlock
Andrew Vinton, Chippewa Hills
Terrance Watson, Birch Run
Griffin Barnette, Montrose



Dakota Greer, Howard City Tri-County

DIVISION 4

103
Nolan Datema, Carson City-Crystal
Andrew Krupp, New Lothrop
Korbin Ingram, Blanchard-Montabella
Alex Newton, St. Louis

112
Jamison Ward, Carson City-Crystal
Jordan Allen, Flint Beecher
Mason Dalrymple, Blanchard-Montabella
Jackson Knieper, New Lothrop
Devin Marshall, Dansville

119
Khalil Moten, Flint Beecher
Ethan Crawford, Blanchard Montabella
Logan Wolford, New Lothrop
Mike Post, Dansville
Cade Fleisher, Carson City-Crystal



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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON HOCKEY

Area Hockey Teams Solid With Returning State Champion Brighton Leading Way

John Raffel Sports Scene

A coach who has a very challenging job this season is Midland High's Steve Witt who has some very talented players to replace.

"Last year's team featured a high powered offense with a young defensive corp," Witt said. "We lost 3 All State players in Brendan Witt, Greg Landis and Luke Trombley which is tough to replace. They were great leaders, great students and great athletes."

Key returnees for Midland are senior forwards Matthew Gross, Tom Pritchett, and Dylan Sirrine who provide senior leadership

while defenseman Noah Eller and goalie Liam Grady provide stability on defense.

"Newcomer Matthew Babinski will be a prolific goal scorer along with freshman Tanner Squires and goalie Luke Buza," Witt said. "We can surprise some teams down the stretch. We have two solid lines that can play with anyone and have strong and steady defense."

"Our goaltending is more mature and solid. We need to spread out the goal scoring. The key for this team to have success we must out work the other team in the defensive zone and minimize turning the puck over."

Who expects to make splash during second half of season?
Retuning state champions are Brighton in

Division 1, Birmingham in Division 2 and Warren De La Salle in 3. Runner-ups were Detroit Catholic Central in 1, Forest Hills Northern in 2 and Calumet in 3.

Big Rapids was a state quarterfinalist and despite having only four seniors, the Cardinals have started out at 6-3-1. They beat Sault Ste. Marie 4-0 on Dec. 21.

"I thought it was an unbelievable effort," Big Rapids coach Tim Blashill, brother of Red Wings coach Jeff Blashill said. "We have seven forwards and four defensemen but our kids competed the whole game. I was very proud of them."

Hundersmarck has eight goals this season. "Today we had a good D zone," he said. "The wingers got the puck up to me. I just put one on net and good things happen when we put pucks on net."

Area schools participating include Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook, East Lansing, DeWitt, Holt, Lansing Catholic, Grand Ledge, Lowell and Rockford in one, Bay City Central, Mid-



Brighton and Detroit Catholic Central hope to square off again and play for a Division 1 hockey title in 2018. (Submitted Photo)

land Dow, Midland High, Rochester Hills Stone Creek, Swan Valley in Division 2 and Big Rapids, Freeland, Saginaw Heritage and Okemo in 3.

Brighton Hockey Continues To Set Bar High After After Winning D1 Title Last Winter

Nate Schneider Sports Scene

Year in and year out, Brighton hockey continues to be one of the standard bearers for Division 1 hockey in Michigan.

After watching Detroit Catholic Central claim three straight state championships between 2014 and 2016, the Bulldogs reclaimed the top spot as they won the D1 state title last winter.

Brighton, under the direction of 22-year varsity head coach Paul Moggach, has now won four state crowns since 2006 and are more often than not right in the mix when it comes to naming the best

prep hockey teams in the state of Michigan.

The Bulldogs won the 2017 state title via a 5-2 win over Detroit Catholic Central, getting a measure of revenge from the year before when the Shamrocks upended Brighton in the state title game by a 3-0 score.

"We've been to the state finals four of the last five years, so we've been there but just weren't able to seal the deal until last season," Moggach said. "We played Catholic Central earlier in the year and beat them, so I think it got us over the hump giving us the confidence that we could play with them."

After finishing last season 24-6-1

to win the state championship, the Bulldogs have begun this campaign with a 6-2-1 mark.

Leading the charge for Brighton is senior forward Adam Conquest, who is committed to Bowling Green State University. Senior defenseman Sam Brennan, an Air Force commit, provides a dominant blue line player.

Senior Robert Pegrum, who served as backup goaltender last season and did not receive a lot of playing time, has stepped into the starter role this winter and has helped ensure the Bulldogs have not skipped a beat.

In all, approximately half the roster from the state title team has

returned to the fold this year. "You want to keep it in the moment but also have that longer vision of going after another state title," Moggach added. "First off, we really want to win our confer-

ence again after watching Trenton win it last year. So winning our conference first and then going after another state championship, these kids are all focused on trying to accomplish that."



Brighton celebrates after winning the Division 1 championship last season. (Submitted Photo)

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SPORTS SCENE'S EYE ON BOWLING

Strong Mix Of Youth, Veterans Have Area Bowling Teams Excited About Rest Of Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Many area bowling teams are excited over their prospects for the 2017-18 season, and that includes veteran skipper Exie Robinson of Saginaw Heritage. Robinson has been involved in bowling for more than 30 years. "Jonathan Villarreal, a freshman, is a very talented bowler and we are hoping we will have a better season this year," Robinson said. Key returnees this year are Samuel Seegobin Ryan Henne Emilio Duran and John Jacoby. Robinson expects to have a team that can compete for a regional title. "Strengths of this team is that they have been exposed to the fundamentals of the game of ten pins," he

said. "Things to work on are spares, definitely, and more time on the lanes. The key to success is to stay focused on and off the lanes."

BOYS

DIVISION 1

Davison is led by senior Brandon Kreiner. Ryan Blanchard is an all-stater with Bay City Western and ready for another big season along with sophomore teammates Jackson Elias, a sophomore. Sophomore Matt Buck is a returning sate qualifier for Rockford.

DIVISION 2

All-staters returning are seniors "Carson Clark of Lowell and state qualifiers Justin Engadine (sophomore) from Mansoe and Matt Bidigare (sophomore) of Haslett.

DIVISION 3

Corunna is defending state runners-up and could make a bid for



Ithaca's Dylan Macha

the title.

Returning state qualifiers include Mason Eddy of Swan Valley, junior Jack Dalman of Portland, seniors Matt Hoard, Dalton Carl and Dylan Macha of Ithaca, senior Trevor VanLoo of Belding, and senior Jason Homrich of Tri County.

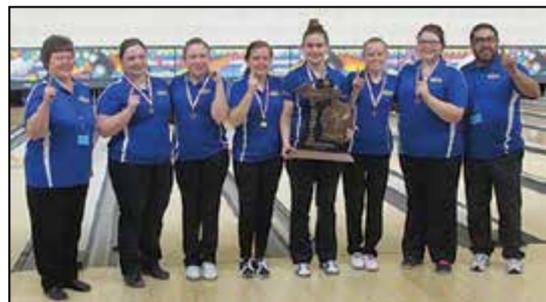
DIVISION 4

St. Charles' Kyle Tuttle has graduated after three state titles. Junior Matt Pratt is a returning all-stater for St. Charles as is sophomore Weston Wise for Breckenridge.

GIRLS

DIVISION 1

Davison was the state champion and Rockford a quarterfinalist last season. Junior Heather Buck of Rockford is a returning all-stater. Junior Cecilia Mosqueda is back for Midland along with senior Samantha Rocjow of Bay City



Western, both state qualifiers. Other reigning qualifiers are junior Gabriella VanHorn for Holt, senior Ivanna Villarreal for Saginaw Heritage and senior Courtney Rathbun for Midland.

staters with senior Barbara Hawes, junior Haley Roof and sophomore Imari Blond. All-stater Taylor Duff, a junior, is back for Lansing Waverly. State qualifiers returning include senior Emma Boychui of Flint Kearsley, and senior Whitney Adams of Charlotte.

Other state qualifiers back are junior Sara Galloway of Cedar Springs, senior Morgan Allison of Lowell, and senior Karlee Griffin of Flint Kearsley.

DIVISION 3

Birch Run took the state title last season. State qualifiers returning include senior Elizabeth Ancler of Bullock Creek, junior Madison Hoffman of Birch Run, senior Kimmie Shunk of Alma, junior Jordyn Ryan of Portland, juniors Denise Bryce of Birch Run and junior Makayla Phenix of Central Montcalm and senior Jeanette Courtnay of Ovid Elsie.

DIVISION 4

St. Louis was state runner-up last season. Junior state qualifier Jaxin Milks returns for the Sharks. Another state qualifier back is junior Samantha Bitterman of New Lothrop.



Alma's Kimmie Shunk

DIVISION 2

Flint Kearsley beat Bay City John Glenn team in last year's state title match. Charlotte was a state semifinalist. Kearsley returns three all-



The Birch Run girls and Lowell boys celebrate after winning state bowling championships last season. (Submitted Photos)

NORTHERN REPORT

Small Town, Big Sports Season 2017 A Year To Remember For Beaverton Athletics

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

For a small school in a small town, Beaverton had a big year in 2017.

Others won more titles and produced more scholarship athletes, but the Beavers were consistently strong across the board in the Jack Pine Conference standings and grabbed a few monstrous headlines along the way.

The biggest news story was a real



show stopper as boys' basketball coach Roy Johnston passed River Rouge legend Lofton Greene to become Michigan's all-time leader in victories.

Johnston went by the milestone with No. 729 in February and the team went on to finish second in the Jack Pine before winning district and regional titles until bowling out with a loss to eventual state champ Flint Beecher in the quarterfinals. Carter Johnston earned All-State honors. Coach Roy's ever-expanding victory record stood at 742 heading into the Christmas break after Beaverton opened the new season with a 4-1 mark.

The girls' basketball team finished third in the league last year and the wrestling team was fourth, led by

Beaverton's Roy Johnston passed River Rouge legend Lofton Greene to become Michigan's all-time leader in victories last February. (Submitted Photos)

Eric Cassidy, who placed sixth in the state at 189 pounds to earn All-State honors.

In bowling, the boys were second in the Jack Pine, led by Chase Castro, who reached the Final four at the individual state tourney. The girls were third, led by Cheyenne Ficek, who was a state quarterfinalist.

When spring came, the softball team grabbed the spotlight. The Beavers finished a game behind Meridian in the Jack Pine standings, but avenged that by beating the Mustangs on the way to a district title and then advanced to the regional finals before checking out. Faith Howe had a banner season in the circle, earning All-State honors with a record of 34-4 that included 379 strikeouts. Makayla Bassage was also named to the All-State Team.

The baseball team finished tied for second in the league and lost an epic battle with pennant winner Clare in the district final 9-8.

Small squads make team success tough to come by in track, but Parker Hayes excelled in the distance events and placed 10th at the state meet in the 1,600. More on him later.

The football team broke a long playoff drought in 2016 and was a "what have you done for me lately?" candidate heading into this past season. The Beavers responded by winning eight games in a row to lock up a return to the postseason before falling to Clare in the regular season finale to place second in the Jack Pine behind the Pioneers.

All that winning rubbed off on the volleyball team, which had its best season ever. The Beavers won the Jack Pine title for the first time and then earned the first district championship in the history of the program. The fun ended with a loss in the regional final, but Beaverton's unprecedented accomplishments earned the team MHSAA Team of



the Month honors for October and even more kilowatts of spotlight. Hayes was back to work at the cross country state meet, where he earned All-State honors for running 22nd.

The early line on 2018 is promising. As noted, Johnston's hoop team is 4-1 and the girls are an even-better 5-1 so far, so the small school is obviously still thinking big.

Former Clare Standout Lindsay Winter Carrying Load For Michigan Tech

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

Winter is a big deal way up north at Michigan Tech University.

Lindsay Winter, that is.

After graduating from Clare in 2014 holding school records for career points with 1863 and career assists with 310, the two-time All-State selection took her action across the bridge and has

been making like the Aurora Borealis of late, having been named Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference North Division Player of the Week three times already this year.

The most recent award came after the senior guard averaged 14 points and 7 rebounds in a pair of victories for the Huskies.

Tech headed into the holiday break with an overall record of 11-1 and a 5-0 mark in the GLI-

AC, good for a No. 13 ranking in the Women's Basketball Coaches Association NCAA Division II poll.

Winter is second on her team in scoring with a 13.9 average, which is 11th in the GLIAC. She is shooting 50.4 percent from the field and 42 percent from beyond the 3-point line.

She leads the Huskies and is second in the league in assists, which is expected of a senior

guard. More remarkably, at only 5-foot-6, she also leads her team in rebounds with 7.0 per game, which is eighth in the league.

Winter was named to the GLIAC All-Tournament Team last season and has twice earned All-Academic Excellence honors.



Clare grad Lindsay Winter has won GLIAC Player of the Week honors twice this season leading the Huskies to a 11-1 mark on the season prior to press time. (Submitted Photo)

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