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KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

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### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Hello sports fans, it's another great day here at High School Sports Scene Magazine.

What an amazing winter season we are having so far!!!

While the weather has been freezing the action in area gymnasiums has been heating up this winter. Area wrestling teams are keeping things heated with some outstanding efforts. A long list of area teams are turning in big seasons in all four divisions this winter. In Division 1, Davison is back among the best in the state in Division 1 while both Holt and Rockford are ranked in the top ten in Division 1 in the state. A shout-out to the Saginaw Arthur Hill wrestling team that is turning in a solid season showing that Arthur Hill is not just a basketball school.

In Division 2 Lowell is continuing to be not just a premier team in the state but also one of the top teams in all of the Midwest. Mason and Bay City John Glenn are also area teams that are ranked in the top ten in the state rankings in Division 2.

In Division 3, the only thing that is slowing down the Alma wrestling team is the Covid-19 virus. That Panthers have notched some impressive wins this season and also won the prestigious New Lothrop tournament for the first time in school history. With good health you could see Alma reach the title match at the team state finals next month. The Panthers are not alone in the Division 3 state rankings as Montrose, Freeland and Williamston are also ranked in the top ten in the state and have squads capable of deep tournament runs.

In Division 4, the St. Louis wrestling team is turning in a big season. The Sharks are ranked just behind second-ranked New Lothrop in the No. 3 spot in the Division 4 state rankings.

On the basketball court, both the Williamston and Flint Beecher boys are state-ranked and will be among the area teams primed for deep state-tournament runs. Keep an eye on a super-talented Freeland team that is also capable of a deep run.

In girls basketball, Midland Dow and Rockford are ranked in the top ten in Division 1. In Division 2 Frankenmuth, Lansing Catholic, Portland and Swan Valley are all ranked in the top ten while Portland St. Patrick and Fowler are atop the polls in Division 4.

With plenty of action still on the schedule, get out of the cold and into a warm gym to watch some outstanding local athletes show off their skills!

See you at the games!



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## Familiar Face Takes Over Alma Boys Basketball Team This Season With Familiar Results

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

A familiar face is in a new role this season for the Alma boys basketball team but the positive results are remaining the same.

Long-time Alma junior varsity basketball coach Chris Brown is now the head coach of the Panthers. Brown is no stranger to Alma basketball as he is in his 25th year of coaching the Panthers with the past 19 years having coached the junior-varsity squad. Brown is no stranger to the success of the Alma basketball program and was himself a part of the success on the court as he was part of an Alma team that reached the regional finals in his senior season of high school. Brown played basketball at Alma under Scott Apple who is now one of his assistants.

Brown has the Panthers off to a strong start this season as Alma opened the new campaign with four straight wins. The Panthers won a pair of conference games in the process including a big win of Essexville-Garber.

This year's Alma squad is led by a solid veteran nucleus. Leading the way is senior center Sam Leppien. The 6-foot-10 center who has committed to Calvin College worked hard in the offseason to improve his offensive game.

Senior guard Connor Lemerand is an outstanding athlete who brings excellent quickness and speed to the court. Junior forward Michael Howey is another seasoned player. Howey is in his third season on the varsity and is a strong, athletic and explosive forward who can play both inside and outside.

Brown likes the makeup and strong points of this year's squad.

"We will be a tough-nosed team that plays and competes tremendously hard," Brown said. "We expect to be a balanced team both inside and out. We also want to represent our school and community in the best possible way both on and off the court."

The Panthers are also working to improve on this season's strong start.

"We must improve our overall depth," Brown said. "We want to better trust in each other's abilities and make each other better on a daily basis."

Improvement is key as the Panthers have a string of tough conference games looming.

"The TVC 8 is competitive and well balanced from top to



Photo courtesy Jim Lahde.

## P-W Boys Basketball Team Set To Be Contender Again

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Pewamo-Westphalia's boys basketball team is expected to have another huge season, under coach Dominic Schneider.

"Last year we went 12-3," Schneider said. "We graduated two seniors but return quite a bit of experience. We will have quite a few injuries to start the year but hope to get healthy as the year goes on."

P-W graduated two key players from a year ago."

Blake Smith is senior guard. "Blake is our returning starting point guard that understands the game. We will expect a lot from him to lead the team this year."

Brock Thelen is a senior guard.

"Brock is a third-year varsity starter that plays hard and was voted our team MVP last year," Schneider said, adding senior guard Braden Miller. "Braden put a lot of time in this offseason and really has a well rounded game."

Experience in big games will be a plus for P-W.

"Last year we were a young team that had guys 'thrown into the fire' so I hope that experience helps us in crucial situations this year," Schneider said. "We need to work

on being better on the boards and taking care of the ball."

P-W hopes to win the CMAC again.

"I feel like year in and year out our conference is one of the strongest 'small school' conferences in the State," Schneider said. "I don't see it being any different this year. My hope is that we can compete for a league championship this year. I would consider Bath and Laingsburg the league favorites."

"The stress level of the COVID situation is way down compared to last year and it feels like things are almost back to normal. Last year, the biggest stress was always wondering who will be there the next day due to sickness,



Blake Smith is a senior guard for Pewamo-Westphalia.

quarantines, etc. We are looking forward to a more 'normal' year and cannot wait to see fans in the stands."

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## Veteran Group Has Ithaca Boys Basketball Team Off To A Strong Start To New Season

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

With a large group of veterans back, the Ithaca boys basketball team is primed for improvement this season and has started the new season strong.

A total of seven players return to the 11-player roster the Yellowjackets this season. Those players have enabled Ithaca to start the season with four wins in their first five games.

"I'm really excited about the season," said Ithaca coach Josh

Rayburn. "We have 11 guys on the team and seven of these players are returning seniors. We have a pretty good-sized senior class and all seven of them either started or play big minutes as juniors last year. We also have four juniors off last year's junior varsity team that went 13-1 on the junior varsity level. The kids are really working hard and we are adding things to what we put in place last year."

Brendan Wood heads up the returning seniors. In his third season on the varsity, Wood is a sharp-shooting guard who led the Yellowjackets in scoring last

season and was named second-team, all-league.

Gibson Marr is a senior returning at point guard. Marr earned honorable-mention, all-league honors last season and can score the ball along with setting his teammates up.

Up front, the Yellowjackets return senior Trevor Wight who led the team in rebounding last season.

Seniors Dalton Seaman and Chad Pratt are back after rotating as starters last season. Both of them are hard-workers on the

defensive end of the floor and can hit the open shots on offense.

Senior guard Shawn Parker has improved his game over the offseason and will provide valuable minutes. Senior Jesse Sorsen (6-foot-4) is the tallest player on the team and has improved his skills as a rebounder.

"We are not the tallest team," Rayburn said. "We have quite a few guys who are able to dribble and shoot and we will be trying to get up and down the floor and play with tempo. We will try to take advantage of our quickness."

The Ithaca boys basketball team is led by a solid group of veterans back who have the Yellowjackets off to a strong start.

## Mt. Pleasant Boys Basketball Team To Rely On Depth, Shooting Skills This Season

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

A deep bench and the ability to shoot are the strong points that the Mt. Pleasant boys basketball team will rely on this season.

The Oilers feature a deep squad highlighted by the ability stretch defenses with some strong outside shooting. Mt. Pleasant demonstrated their shooting skills in a pair of early-season wins against Midland and Grand Ledge. The Oilers defeated Midland 62-53 in the first game of the season and then came back and defeated Grand Ledge 59-56 in a double-overtime thriller.

The quick start was welcome news for a squad that came into

the season not knowing exactly what to expect.

"I didn't really know what to expect," said Mt. Pleasant coach Dan Schell. "Last year with the Covid shutdown we only had 10 practices. We really had a lot of unknowns coming into this season. We had to wait and see how we jelled and how quickly we would come together."

Mt. Pleasant is led this season by a pair of senior guards. Ryan Gottleber and Drew Pereida are a pair of returning starters who have solid all-around skills and are excellent shooters.

Up front, sophomore Logan Borodychuk is an athletic 6-foot-5 big who saw playing time late last season as a

freshman. Borodychuk has played a lot of basketball and is very good in the transition game. Senior Kory Davis is another outstanding athlete. Davis is an outstanding defender with a solid all-around game.

Senior Owen Wojtusik is a solid veteran player who adds to the depth in the backcourt. Up front, Wyatt Ervin (6-foot-3) and Thomas Narr are a pair of returning forwards who are good all-around players that can shoot the ball.

"We have a bunch of returning players and the nice thing is we can go 10 deep," Schell said. "Everybody has earned the opportunity to play and we have some good depth. I can put five guys on the floor

anytime that can shoot the ball and stretch defenses."

The depth is needed as the Oilers face a rugged schedule and a tough conference that includes the likes of defending Division 1 state champion Grand Blanc along with outstanding teams like Flint Carman-Ainsworth and northern rivals like Midland, Bay City Central and Bay City Western.

"The key for us is to really value the defensive end of the court," Schell said. "There are some pretty high-powered offenses in the conference. We have to team rebound and hold teams in the 50 to 55-point range."



## Veteran Guards Leading The Way For Fulton Boys Basketball Team This Season

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Led by a veteran backcourt, the Fulton boys basketball team is primed for a run at the top spot in a loaded Central Michigan Athletic Conference title.

Veteran guards Bruce Thelen and Joe Lung return to lead the way for the Pirates this season. Thelen, a junior, and Lung, a senior return after turning in

big efforts last season where they both earned all-conference honors. Lung and Thelen provide the team with strong play at the guard positions.

The Pirates also bring back seniors Markus Mills, Walker Eyer, Xander Ramsey and Renn Spalding. Added to the mix are junior Zach Saller, Dez Blair and Jadon Podolak.

"It's going to be a work in progress with some young

players playing some key roles," Fulton coach Todd Walden said. "Bruce and Joe are going to be counted on to do a lot, but everyone will be needed to make big contributions."

Rounding out this year's squad are Ryan Trefil, Ryan Bradford and Adrien Delaunay, an exchange student from France.

Fulton opened the first quarter of the new season with a 2-3 record. The Pirates picked up

home wins against Saranac and Dansville in league play. Fulton also came up just one-point short in a non-league game with Ithaca and a league game with Fowler while dropping the season opener against Pewamo-Westphalia.

"Our league is going to be pretty good again," Walden said. "We hope to play fast and be competitive in our league and get ready for March."

The Fulton boys basketball team is led by a strong group of guards this season.



## Saginaw Arthur Hill Boys Basketball Team Off To A Strong Start This Season

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The Saginaw Arthur Hill boys basketball team is off to a strong start this season with wins in five of its first seven games.

The Lumberjacks opened the year with wins against Flint Powers and Davison before suffering its first loss of the

season against a Detroit Cass Tech squad that has a 9-1 overall record. Arthur Hill went on to win three of its next four games with the lone loss coming against defending Division 1 state champion Grand Blanc.

Arthur Hill picked up a big road win against rival Saginaw when the Lumberjacks came from behind to defeat Saginaw 59-54.

Saginaw Arthur Hill picked up a big win when it defeated rival Saginaw 59-54 in a game at Saginaw High School.

The win was the third straight win for Arthur Hill against the rival Trojans. The Lumberjacks trailed 32-24 at halftime before rallying in the second half to earn the win. Evan Booker led the way for Arthur Hill as he scored 18 points. Elvis Machul added 13 points for the Lumberjacks while Markell Martin scored 10 points while Chris Smith added seven points

and 13 rebounds.

Arthur Hill improved to 5-2 for the season with a 76-31 win over Bay City Central. Martin led the team with 16 points and six rebounds while Machul added 13 points, five rebounds and four steals and Booker added 12 points and four steals.

Arthur Hill also defeated Oak Park in the Motor City Roundball Classic. Booker led the Lumberjacks with 18 points while Smith added 17 points and Machul 13 points.

## Defense The Key To Success This Season For Carson City-Crystal Boys Basketball Team

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Defense is the name of the game for the Carson City-Crystal boys basketball team this season and solid play on the defensive end of the court has the Eagles flying high in the early portion of the season.

The Eagles opened the season with five straight wins and a 5-1 record after the first six games of the season. During the span the team has allowed 30 points or less

in all six games.

"I think the strength of our team is our defense and we try to make every possession tough on our opponent," said Carson City-Crystal coach Cory Schneider.

Carson City-Crystal's defense kept opponents under the 30-point mark in the five wins and limited two opponents to under 20 points. A key to playing good defense is hard work and Schneider likes the effort he sees from this year's

squad.

"I enjoy the work ethic and attitude of this year's team," Schneider said. "I think that if we continue to get better, we will have a shot at winning the league title."

Leading the way for the Eagles this season are a pair of returning standouts. Mitchell Wing and Mason Smith are a pair of veteran players that make an impact on both ends of the floor.

"Mitchell can score in a variety

of ways and always plays under control," Schneider said. "Mason has great instincts on the defensive end and offensively he also can score in a variety of

way."

Blending in with the veterans are some promising juniors that are contributing both on offense and defense.

"We have some juniors that are stepping up for us," Schneider said. "Oisin O'Grady, Max Heleski, Brayden Clark, Jacob Stevens and Aiden Weber have all done a great job and always provide a spark when we need it."

With a strong start to the season, the Eagles are looking forward to the heart of the conference season and seeing how much they can



improve during the season.

"We're looking forward to our team getting better every day," Schneider said, "and seeing how good we can become."

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# Carrollton Senior Dj Voltz Goes Over 1,000-Point Mark For His Career

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Carrollton senior DJ Voltz reached a career milestone when he scored the 1,000th point of his career in a win against Millington.

The 6-foot-2 senior totaled 18 points in the win as he helped lead the Cavaliers to a 62-45 win. For the season

Voltz is averaging 18 points per game. Voltz also added 12 rebounds and four assists in the game.

Carrollton improved to 7-0 for the season when it followed up the Millington win with a 77-69 win against Standish-Sterling. Voltz led the way for the Cavaliers in the win as he erupted for 34 points and added 12 rebounds

in the win.

Voltz has recorded a number of double-doubles in points and rebounds this season. A three-sport standout for the Cavaliers, Voltz is also one of five high school basketball players in the state of Michigan that have been nominated for the McDonald's All-American basketball team.

Voltz is also on the Michigan Mr. Basketball watch list. Along with a number of double-doubles this season, Voltz produced a triple-double in a win against Valley Lutheran as he scored 26 points to go along with 12 rebounds and 10 assists. Voltz also added five steals in the game.

Carrollton senior DJ Voltz eclipsed the 1,000-point mark for his career when he scored 18 points in Carrollton's 62-45 win against Millington.



# Hemlock Boys Basketball Team Working To Continue Last Season's Success

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The Hemlock boys basketball team turned in a winning season last winter. While several key performers have graduated from that squad, the Huskies have some talented players returning to keep things going this season.

Hemlock compiled a perfect 15-0 record during the regular season and finished up 17-1 overall. A number of key players graduated from that squad led by four-year starting guard Nolan Finkbeiner who scored over 1,000 points and was the winningest player in Hemlock history. The Huskies also graduated Michael

Zolinski, a three-year starting power forward who totaled over 500 points and rebounds in three seasons, Brayden Green a three-year varsity player and two-time all-conference player and Dylan LaGrow a honorable-mention, all-conference player.

While those players will be missed, the Huskies have a strong senior class to build around this season. Senior guard/forward Max Dinninger (6-foot-1) is a three-year varsity player with starting experience and a strong all-around game. Senior Jacob Shelagowski (6-foot-4) returns to provide a presence in the post.

"Jake is an elite athlete who plays above the rim," said Hemlock

coach Matt Bauer. "He excels on defense and is an excellent rebounder. We're looking for him to improve his offensive output this season as well."

The Huskies are also happy to have a healthy Bryce Murphy back at point guard.

"Bryce missed the entire season last year with a broken fibula," Bauer said. "He has really good skills and a love of the game. Getting a healthy Bryce back will lessen the pain of losing Finkbeiner to graduation."

A pair of younger players are poised to step in and make an impact. Chad Brown is a 6-foot-5 freshman forward and Carter

Gensch is a 6-foot-1 sophomore.

"Chad plays a very cerebral game and is going to be a really good one in a Huskie uniform for years to come," Bauer said. "Carter



is another good young player that is going to be asked to score the ball and play great defense."

While the Huskies graduated a lot of talent, Bauer likes the players

he has on this year's squad.

"We lost a lot of talent due to graduation but feel that we have enough talent to keep the ball rolling," Bauer said. "We did lose one of our veterans in senior Espin Miller to a knee injury from football. Hopefully we can get him back at some point during the season."

Team chemistry is another strong point of the team.

"I think we have terrific team chemistry," Bauer said. "I'm not sure how many complete players we have, but I think we have enough ball handlers, a couple solid shooters, a little bit of size and some quickness. I also think we have good length and interchangeable parts. We should be able to become a good defensive team but we are certainly not there yet. If players play their role well, we should be able to be very competitive."

# Senior Veterans Lead The Way For Vestaburg Boys Basketball Team Looking To Improve

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

With a solid core of senior veterans leading the way, the Vestaburg boys basketball team is working on improvement this season.

The Wolverines turned in a 3-16 mark last season but a large group of seniors are working hard to turn things around this season

under first-year head coach Ty Warczinsky.

Vestaburg is led this season by a veteran group of guards. Senior point guard Cole Dailey runs the offense for the Wolverines this season.

"Cole is one of our leaders," Warczinsky said. "He is such a competitor and our offense runs through him."

Hayden Palmer returns at shooting guard while Brennen Avery brings even more depth to the backcourt.

"Hayden is such a great leader and plays both ends of the floor at an extremely high level," Warczinsky said. "Brennen is another solid guard. He can hit open shots and does an amazing job on the defensive end."

Up front, the Wolverines return

veteran senior forwards Jaylin Maddox who is back at power forward and Levi Halliwill at small forward.

"We need Jaylin to bring a great deal of energy," Warczinsky said. "He has the ability to rebound outside his zone. He has the potential to average a double-double."

Levi can really get to the basket. He is a great athlete and we need him to play a full game on both ends of the floor."

The Wolverines started the season playing strong and are

working to improve.

"We are working hard and have great attitudes," Warczinsky said.



"Our versatility on both ends of the floor is a strong point. One thing we have to work on is our defense needs to be much better."

# Cleveland Set For Strong Senior Season For Alma

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Alaina Sunken is Alma's girls basketball coach this season and is enjoying having junior Jordan Cleveland on her team.

Cleveland, a point guard, is in her third varsity season.

"Since this is my first year coaching at Alma High School I do not have much insight into her past seasons compared to the coaches who actually coached her, but statistically I know she did really well," Sunken said.

Against Clare on Nov. 30, Cleveland had 30 points, eight rebounds, one assist and four steals.

Against Ionia on Dec. 23, Cleveland had 26 points, five rebounds and three steals.

Alma's Jordan Cleveland gets set to attend a free throw last year.



"This is Jordan's third year on the varsity team so she has a lot of experience," Sunken said. "Now that she is an upperclassman I think she feels comfortable taking charge on the court. Based off of our two first games of this season, I think we are already seeing improvement on Jordan's end compared to the previous seasons."

"This is my first year coaching at Alma, but I have watched film from last year and I can tell that Jordan is taking charge more on the court this year compared to last year."

"We've had a lot of transition in the past four to five years with coaches," Cleveland said. "This is probably one of the best teams that I've played on."

"I'm trying to get better at seeing the court better. I need to

work on my skills of seeing my other teammates and trying to set up opportunities for everyone."

Sunken likes Cleveland's potential.

"I believe Jordan is already giving it her all on the court and I feel like there is not much more I can ask from her on that end," Sunken said. "My hope is that Jordan helps me change the culture of girls basketball program at Alma by turning it into a competitive program. I can tell at our girls basketball youth camps (Panther League) that the elementary age girls look up to her"

Cleveland also runs cross country and plays soccer.

"Basketball is definitely my favorite sport," Cleveland said.

"She could definitely play at the college level if she wants to," Sunken said.

Other key players for Alma will be Gracie Mellinger (freshman guard/point guard), Stephanie Bielaga (senior guard) who is a strong 3-point shooter, junior guards Ava Atchinson and Laila Heiss, who can be counted on for strength and defense, Lauren Brasher (senior, guard/forward) and Eliana Rodriguez (sophomore), guard/forward) who are versatile players who we use for a little bit of everything. I put them wherever I need them at the time.

"Zoe Jackson (junior forward) and Kaitlyn Rouse-Wilson (senior forward) "are great to have for their height and length and to create mismatches for the opposing teams."

# Freeland Point Guard Eyes Strong Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Freeland has produced high quality girls players over the years and it appears this season has been no exception.

Matt Hirschenberger, head varsity coach for Freeland girls basketball, has been coaching Whitney Farrell, a fourth-year varsity starter. Farrell is also an All-State runner in both cross country and track and field.

"Whitney is our point guard and averaged over 10 points a game as a junior and she has a current season

high of 17 points in our first three games this year," Hirschenberger said.

It's her senior season. "Things have gone pretty well," Farrell said. "My freshman year we actually made it to state finals which was really cool. We had our COVID year and we were going to go to our regional final. The seasons have been really good."

"I've changed a little bit, looking to score more than I have been and getting involved with my teammates a little bit more."

Farrell indicated her best shot comes from driving into the paint. She handles the ball a lot as point guard.

"Your teammates look at you to be calm and don't freak out," Farrell said. "And it's a key knowing your teammates so if someone is hot, they should be given the ball."

The team started out 1-2.

"The first couple of games, I think we have a lot to learn from them," Farrell said. "I think we can keep growing by game. District is a goal of all of ours."

Of her three sports, "I like playing basketball the most," Farrell said. "I also like running. They all have their perks."

Whitney Farrell (21) applies the defensive pressure for Freeland in girls basketball action.



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Ithaca's Delaney Seaman was a first team All TVC West, honorable mention All-Stater her sophomore season.

# Ithaca Girl Junior Guard Expected To Have Impressive Season

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

Ithaca girls basketball coach Khris Nevins has a standout junior guard on her team with Delaney Seaman.

"Delaney is a great scorer, defender and her court awareness makes it hard for other teams to prepare for," Nevins said. "She was first team All TVC West, honorable mention All-State her sophomore season. As a sophomore, Delaney averaged 17 points a game.

"Delaney puts in the work during the off season, which shows during the season. She puts up lots of shots every day, and is always bugging me to get in the gym during the off-season. Delaney is a junior, and with no seniors on our team, it is her job to step up and be a leader to her teammates. I expect her to grow as an adult this year as she takes on new responsibilities."

"I would say things have gone pretty well," Seaman said of her first two seasons. "I definitely think I improved a lot since my freshman year points wise and everything like that. I think I'm doing pretty and this year should be better."

"This year is looking a little rougher than in past years (as a team) but I'm hoping we can still do even better than last season. It's a little harder this year with no seniors and being a young team. If we come together and play as a team, we should do pretty good."

Seaman plays AAU basketball during the spring.

"In the past I've been a pretty good 3-point shooter," she said. "I think this year I'm getting better driving to the basket and finishing."

Nevins has observed plenty of improvement from Seaman.

"She has gotten much stronger at driving to the basket, taking on the contact, and finishing," Nevins said. "In Delaney's freshman year in the regional semifinal win over Muskegon Western Michigan Christian, she came off the bench and scored 13 points, but most importantly she was all over the floor defensively, and played an amazing defensive game."

"I expect her to turn up her defense this season and take advantage of bad ball handlers. All year long she is working, constantly bugging me to get in the gym."

Seaman also plays volleyball.

"Delaney is young and has experienced early success on the basketball court. I hope she continues to work hard and master her craft," Nevins said. "She has the ability to be a memorable player at Ithaca. She draws the attention of college scouts."

Ithaca last year was 6-9 overall and was 4-5 in league.

"I expect a much better outcome this year," Nevins said, while adding she lost two top players from a year ago, Lydia Davenport and Natalie Nowakowski. "They were both great players at Ithaca. Lydia played varsity four years and Natalie played varsity for three years. Lydia is currently playing softball at Lansing Community College and Natalie is currently playing basketball at Rochester University. Those two will be hard to replace."

Along with Seaman, other top notch Ithaca players are Olyvia Saxton, a junior forward/guard; Lauryn Humphrey, a junior forward; Jenna Cantu, a sophomore forward; Brynn Bootsma and Hailey King, junior forwards; Ivy Davenport, a freshman guard; and Maddison Carman, Megan Mankey and Natasha Nowakowski, junior guards.

"I expect my team to be fundamentally strong, play smart basketball, limit turnovers, and play hard," Nevins said. "We have the ability to get after the ball defensively and pressure teams."

# Garber Captain Set For Another Huge Basketball Season

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

Essexville-Garber's girls basketball team is off to a 5-1 start and as far as coach Kim Klein is concerned, a key reason is the play of Lauren Walker.

"She is a three-year varsity player who was named second team Tri-Valley East all-conference player last year," Klein said. "The 5-foot-7 senior captain plays at the guard and small forward position. Lauren is extremely quick and is a key to our success on the defensive side of the floor. She has good court vision and anticipation skills resulting in her averaging six steals a game."

In addition, she led our team in scoring and rebounding; averaging 10.6 points per game and averaging 6.5 rebounds per game this year.

"She hit her season high in points of 24 against Alma and she had a double-double against Bridgeport when she garnered 11 rebounds and 10 points. She scored in double figures eight times this season."

It's her fourth year on the varsity.

"Her work ethic is second to none," Klein said. "She is a competitor in all that she does. She holds herself to an extremely high standard. She has improved every year she has played. Her confidence is at an all-time

high. Her overall understanding of the game and what we are trying is at an all-time. She is taking on more of a leadership role as we are a very young team. She is so very quiet, I only have to say something once and she rises to the challenge."

"She will do what she does, it is not my expectations it is what expectations she puts on herself. Knowing her as I do she will increase her personal numbers but more importantly she will want her team to improve. She is an all-year long worker as she participates in soccer, volleyball, track and basketball. She is in the top six in track state long jump finals."

Klein has signed her Letter of Intent to play soccer at Central Michigan University.

"She is everything a program and a school would want as their representative and all of this and more can be said about her performance in the classroom," Klein said.



Lauren Walker is a three-year varsity player for Essexville-Garber who was named second team Tri-Valley East all-conference player last year.



# Vestaburg Girls Will Eye Some Titles

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

Vestaburg girls basketball coach Matthew Koutz is expecting to have a championship contending team this season.

"Jenna Dove and Madison Graham, last year's captains, both graduated. Jenna is the all-time leading scorer for girls basketball so a big challenge will be replacing her consistent scoring," Koutz said. "We are really looking to our senior class to lead us this year. Natalie Skowron, senior forward is long and athletic and can get to the rim, Rebecca Bornman, senior center, has a really nice short to mid-range jumper. Both of these girls play solid interior defense."

"Kaitlyn Palmer, Felina Gondek and Allison Wichert are our senior guards. They are all three athletic guards who we will rely on to handle the ball and facilitate the offense. Defensively, Felina and Allison are good on-the-ball defenders and we will look at them to slow down our opponents' guards. Junior Kelsie Zinn is going to be our super utility player this year. She can play at any position when we need her to."

It's going to be a fun season as far as Koutz is concerned.

"I expect our girls to compete night in and night out," she said. "If we play our game we should be in a position to win every game. Our senior experience should be a strength for us this year, especially down the stretch."

We still need to improve our communication on the floor."

Vestaburg expects to be a contender in the MSAC.

"This may be one of the strongest years our conference has seen in the last decade," Koutz said. "There are several teams who are really good. Every night we are going to have to bring our best or we may end up on the wrong side of the scoreboard. I believe that we have the ability to be in the hunt for a conference championship, we just have to go out and execute each and every game."

"It is nice to be back to a more normal preseason. There have still been some COVID-related things to deal with but it is definitely better than last year."

Vestaburg's 2021-22 girls basketball varsity team.

# Raphael Hopes To Lead Shepherd To League Title

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

He's the new girls basketball coach at Shepherd. But Cody Hoover expects to contend for the Jack Pine Conference this season with talented players like Andee Raphael.

Raphael is a senior forward in her third varsity season.

"She's a great team player and the best passer in the program," Hoover said. "She has great hands and a soft touch."

Hard work and dedication are Raphael's strengths, as far as Hoover is concerned.

"I am thinking she is going to make another stride on both sides of the ball," Hoover said, adding Raphael has improved on "the offensive side of the ball."

One memorable moment Shepherd fans have had of Raphael was when she had a triple double against Gladwin.

"We expect her to take a step forward as a leader," Hoover said. "She has put in tons of hours in all the sports she plays: volleyball, basketball and softball. She is a great kid who is a joy to be around and is a great glue person."

Shepherd lost some key players from a year ago.

"Brooke Faber offensively got to the basket anytime she wanted which led to us getting open looks," Hoover said. "Riley Hohlbein was the best defender in the conference. You could put her on the other teams' best player and she would lock them down."

Hoover said Raphael, a senior forward, "will contribute on both sides of the ball and be our anchor. Gracie Meyer is a senior guard who can take to the reins of the team and run the offense. Ellie Suckles is a senior guard who will get the outlet and push the ball up the floor for easy hoops and also play lockdown defense on the opposing guard."



Andee Raphael is a senior forward in her third varsity season.

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The 2021-22 Beal City girls basketball team.

## New Beal City Girls Hoop Coach Is Confident

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Chadd Fletcher is working with a Beal City girls basketball team with high hopes of turning it into a winner this season.

"We are working hard to improve each day and get the program going back in the right direction," Fletcher said.

Key players will include senior point guard Sami Ames.

"Ball handling and experience are important aspects for us this season," Fletcher said.

Another key player is senior guard Karly Smith.

"Leadership, experience and shooting are important aspects for us this season," Fletcher said,

adding that with Morgan Wilson "experience, rebounding and physicality are important aspects for us this season.

"Our biggest goals are to work hard each day, see improvement, be competitive in the conference and to have fun."

Fletcher said leadership and work ethic will be team strengths.

Fletcher is hopeful his team can be a factor in the league.

"We consider the Highland Conference to be above average in strength," he said. "Lake City, McBain, Manton and McBain NMC are most likely the top teams. We are most likely a lower level Highland Conference team at the moment, but hope to be somewhere in the middle by the

end of the season."

Fletcher and other coaches have appreciated not having to deal with major COVID restrictions coming into the 2021 season.

"It has been great being able to go to camps and play games this summer," Fletcher said. "We were able to play 21 games this summer including attending Gaylord Team Camp."



Swan Valley junior point guard Rachel Resio (22) hopes to point the way to success for her team this season.

## Swan Valley Point Guard Set For Outstanding Season

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Saginaw Swan Valley girls basketball coach Reyna Luplow expects junior point guard Rachel Resio to be among the top area players this season. "Rachel has progressively improved through her first seasons on varsity into a strong, confident threat on the floor," Luplow said. "Her skill set allows her to be dynamic

and versatile, but her effort goes unmatched on both ends of the floor. Last season, she had averaged 12 points a game, four rebounds a game and three assists a game. "Her key to success truthfully has been her off-season work and commitment. She has played and weightlifted fervently since our last game in March to now. The amount of time she has put in the off-season will certainly show up on the court this year. I

don't think people are ready for the Rachel Resio that steps on the court this season. She may look like a whole different player."

Compared to a year ago, "her leadership, energy, effort and IQ have improved greatly," Luplow said. "One of my favorite moments of Rachel was last year in my first win as our point guard. She had four fouls, but we put her in anyway. I looked at her as she went in and said something along the lines of 'Rez you can do this.' It was literally like a movie because she kept her composure and finished the game and we got the first win.

"If we were living a sports movie it sure would have been a tear-jerking moment. Second one is our team's win against Freeland in our last regular season game of the year. It showed how our team came full circle and how Rachel grew in her leadership to help us get that big win and accomplish that moment as a team."

Resio also plays softball and has college potential as far as Luplow is concerned. "She's a workhorse and definitely the kind of athlete any coach desires to have on their team," Luplow said. "If she wanted to, she could definitely play somewhere."

## Holt Set To Have A Contending Team

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Tori Brooks is the first- varsity girls basketball coach for Holt, who is looking forward to having four-year varsity player Claire Groenewoud on her side.

This is my first-year coaching at Holt," Brooks said. "Claire is a consistent player and strives to get better every day. Her leadership and hard work during this past off-season shows. I believe she will build off of her past three seasons on varsity and have an excellent senior year."

Groenewoud was first team all Conference CAAC member last season

The keys to her success has been "her leadership and competitive nature," Brooks said. "She always wants the team to succeed and does

anything necessary to support that goal/vision," Brooks said. "Her basketball IQ is strong. I'm confident that Claire will have a successful senior season, be a leader and consistently provide for the team."

Groenewoud, Brooks said, has improved "on her 3-point shooting and ability/strength to finish at the basket. Claire will continue to be a tremendous athlete throughout the season and will be a factor for the team's success. Claire always give 100 percent effort. She frequently wants to put in extra work, get extra shots up and plays AAU basketball during the off-season.

"She also runs track and is a very talented athlete."

Groenewoud has college potential "but has not made a final decision on where she will be attending," Brooks said

Holt competes in the CAAC

Blue Division.

"Our conference record last year was 4-7," Brooks said. "This is my first year coaching for the program. We have a strong returning group this year and I believe our record will drastically improve."

Other key players for Holt will be junior Janae Tyler at the post, and sophomore Rhema Dozier and freshman Allison Metzger at guard.

Goals for Holt, Brooks said, will be "first first place in our conference; district champs and to make a good run into the regionals. A team strength will be "our athleticism, ability to get up and down in transition and finish at the rim, Brooks said. "The CAAC Blue is always a strong conference. The league favorite is East Lansing High School. There is no doubt that our team will be a contender for winning the conference."



Four-year varsity player Claire Groenewoud will lead the way for Holt's girls basketball team the season.

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# Rockford Girls Will Be A Powerhouse

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

Rockford's girls basketball team hopes to assert itself as one of the state's top Division 1 teams this season.

Brad Wilson is coaching the Rams this year.

Last year's team was 13-7 and won the district championship while placing third in the OK Red, one of the top conferences in west Michigan.

What makes the Rams' outlook so bright is the fact Rockford didn't graduate anyone from last season.

Among the returners is senior Ellie Irwin who "is a good outside shooter with the ability to score inside and will be playing at Ferris

State next year," Wilson said, adding senior Sam DeKuiiper "is a smooth ball handling point guard who can shoot and run the team from the point," and Megan McCauley "is a slashing hard working forward who plays great defense and can shoot from the three," Wilson said.

He added that senior Alina Anderson "is a hard-working wing that is as good as any defensive player in the area. She has the ability to score and rebound with anyone."

Junior Alyssa Wypych "is a good outside shooter with great ball handling skills, and has committed to play at Michigan Tech." Wilson said, adding sophomore Grace Lyons "is an outstanding outside shooter

who is mature beyond her years. She has not committed yet but will be playing college basketball somewhere."

The Rams want to be district and league contenders.

"We believe that we are a very good defensive team and that we can score with anybody," Wilson said. "We have a bunch of highly motivated young ladies that are working hard in practice and expect to be successful. We feel we can compete with everyone in the league and hope to come out on top."

Not having to deal with COVID restrictions has been liberating," Wilson said. "It was great to see the girls faces again."



Rockford's girls basketball team hopes to be celebrating a lot of wins this season.

# Baynes Leads Laingsburg Basketball Attack

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

Doug Hurst is in his 10th season as coach of the Laingsburg girls basketball team, and has a talented player in 5-foot-11 junior second-year player Ellie Baynes, who plays both forward and wing.

"Ellie moved to Laingsburg after her freshman year, so I have only been around her a little over a year as we go into this season," Hurst said. "Last season, she showed she has basketball skills both handling the ball and scoring, as well as being a good team player."

Baynes averaged just over 10 points and five rebounds a game.

It was her first year in a tough CMAC conference and she received league honors.

"Going into this season, Ellie has a lot more responsibilities put onto her shoulders," Hurst said. "We have a young team based on varsity experience. So she will be one of three leaders we will depend on and off the court, and especially on the court. I'm hoping she can continue to score from driving outside shooting, but also posting up. She actually is a very good post player, and she will be used more this year in that role. I will also look for her to step up on defense both being a stopper, but big

time rebounder.

"Ellie loves basketball, and tries to put as much time in as she can in the off season, but she plays two other sports as well so it makes it difficult to specialize. She plays volleyball, as well as softball. So she has the whole school season covered. I do believe Ellie has an interest in possibly moving to the next level if given the chance."

Laingsburg had to deal with COVID last season. "We only got 12 total games in," Hurst said. "We finished 6-2 in the league, and 8-4 overall. The biggest thing that really stuck out for us last season was we were a very tight group, and showed great chemistry, which at times certainly helped us where we may have lacked a little talent compared to a few other teams."

Laingsburg had five seniors last year, "who were great girls and got along great, and made everyone else come together as well," Hurst said. "I'm very big about my teams every year having basketball family time and we get together a lot and I cook and bake for them."

"They love coming over and having family time. Last season it was rough in the beginning because of Covid. So we made sure we had two zoom practices a week where we all had to be on and talk basketball and every day things. It helped."

One of the departed players was Grace Graham.

"She broke the school record for most steals in a season, and had it not been for Covid she would have broken the career record," Hurst said. "She averaged 11.5 points, seven rebounds, and five steals as my point guard. She was 5-foot-8 quick and very tough. So Ellie will need to try and pick some of that up this season, as well as my other senior forward Lorna Strieff, who also is a solid player."

"Other captains who need to help on and off the court are Julia Starr, and Erica Wade. These girls need to lead on and off the court with our young team. Our biggest weakness right now is confidence and maturity. We were young. So as that improves .so should our skill level."

The Central Michigan Athletic Conference is certainly know for being a tough Class C-D league.

"In the last six years alone we have had three teams make it to the Final Four for states and won a few," Hurst said. "Laingsburg was 26-1 and Final Four 2014-15. P-W has been there several times with a title two years ago. Fowler won it last season. We are a very tough league. Fowler, St. Pats, Dansville will be the top 3. The rest of us are in rebuilding seasons. As the season progresses, so does our skill level and maturity. So by the middle of the season we are looking at being way more confident going to games and making a strong second-half finish to the season."



Ellie Baynes plays both forward and wing for Laingsburg's girls basketball team.

# Area Basketball Teams Turning In Strong Seasons In The Early Going

**David Cook Sports Scene**

**Ovid-Elsie Reels Off Six Wins To Start Season**

The Ovid-Elsie boys started the season strong by winning its first six games. The Marauders won four straight Mid-Michigan Activities Conference (MMAC) games to jump to the top of the standings after opening the season with non-league wins against Bath and Portland. Ovid-Elsie won a key MMAC game with a 54-42 win against New Lothrop. Senior guard Dylan Carman is leading the way for the Marauders as he is averaging 13 points per game. Freshman forward Axel Newell is turning in a big season as he is averaging 10.8 points and 7.5 rebounds per game. The team is also receiving strong efforts from junior Logan Thompson who is averaging 7.5 points and 4.7 rebounds per game and junior Clay Wittenberg who is adding seven points and four rebounds per game.

**East Lansing Among Top Teams In Division 1**

The East Lansing basketball team is looking like one of the premier teams in the state in Division 1 this season. The Trojans, who are 3-0 in the Capital Area Activities Conference (CAAC) Blue Division are 6-1 overall. After an opening-night loss against North Farmington, the Trojans have reeled off six-straight wins. Included in the streak was a 48-45 win against Kalamazoo Central at the Cornerstone University Showcase and a 52-47 win against Hamtramck at the Motor City Roundball Classic. The Trojans improved to 3-0 in the CAAC with a 60-50 win against DeWitt. Mason Woods led East Lansing with 28 points while Evan Boyd added 16 points in the win against DeWitt.

**Williamston Looking Strong In Division 2**

With a trio of college prospects leading the way, Williamston is one of the premier Division 2 basketball teams in the state. The Hornets opened the season with

six straight wins and are 3-0 in the CAAC Red Division. Williamston has won all six games by double-digit scoring margins. The closest game of the season for Williamston was a 65-42 win against North Farmington in the Motor City Roundball Classic. Senior guard Mason Docks led the Hornets with 24 points in the win against North Farmington while 6-foot-9 senior center Max Burton added 20 points and 11 rebounds in the win. Williamston improved to 3-0 in the league with a 76-35 win against Haslett. Jay Wallace led the Hornets with 23 points, five rebounds and four assists in the win while Docks added 19 points, seven assists and three steals and Burton chipped in with 10 points and eight rebounds.

**Ionia Taking Charge In CAAC White**

The Ionia Bulldogs are looking to be the team to beat in the CAAC White this season. Ionia won its first three conference games as it opened the season with a 6-1 record. Ionia improved to 3-0 in the league with a 71-48 win against Charlotte. Lance Atkinson led the Bulldogs with 19 points and 13 rebounds in the win against Charlotte while Trevor Tooker added 13 points and four assists and Gauge McQueen added eight points. Ionia also picked up a big non-league win as it handed Lakewood-Lake Odessa its first loss of the season. McQueen led Ionia with 12 points while Tooker added nine points, four assists and three steals. Five of Ionia's six wins this season have been by double-digits. Ionia's lone loss of the season came against Division 3 powerhouse Pewamo-Westphalia.

**Freeland Starting Strong In TVC 8**

Freeland is off to a sizzling start in the Tri Valley Conference 8. The Falcons reeled off five straight wins to open the season highlights by an 80-57 opening-night win against Bridgeport. Bryson Huckleby paced the Falcons with 24 points in the win while Josh Elliott added 20 points, Alex Duley 10 points and

seven rebounds and Cullum LeBaron 11 points. Freeland improved to 3-0 in conference play with 74-56 win against Essexville-Garber. Elliott led the way for Freeland with 24 points while Huckleby added 18 points, eight assists and seven rebounds and Duley scored 15 points with eight rebounds. Freeland won all five games by a margin of 18-points or greater with the offense scoring at least 61 points in all five wins.

**Carrollton Taking Charge In TVC 10**

The Cavaliers of Carrollton are off to a fast start this season. Carrollton opened the season winning five straight conference games. Carrollton opened the season with a tight 44-43 win against Hemlock. Since then, the Cavaliers won their next four games by double-digit margins. The Cavalier have been lighting up the scoreboard this season and scored a season-high 83 points in an 83-67 win against Saginaw Nouvel. DJ Voltz led the Cavs with 30 points in the win against Nouvel while Arthur Gomez added 18 points and Maco Hernandez 17 points. Carrollton upped its record to 5-0 with a 73-52 win against Valley Lutheran. Voltz led the Cavs with 26 points in the win while Gomez added 11 points and Dre Gissendanner added nine points.

**Defense Key To Success For Clare**

Thanks to some strong play on the defensive end of the floor, Clare is at the top of the standing in the Jack Pine Conference. After a season-opening loss to Alma, Clare won four straight games including three conference wins. Clare picked up a key 41-27 league win against Shepherd. Ritchie Montgomery led the Pioneer with 16 points in the win against



The Ovid-Elsie boys basketball team has turned in a strong start to the season by winning its first six games.

Shepherd including hitting four, three-point shots. Al Warner added seven points while defensive standout Caden Dunn led the way on defense.

**Sanford-Meridian Challenging In Jack Pine**

The Sanford-Meridian basketball team is challenging for the top spot in the Jack Pine Conference. After an opening-night loss to Shepherd, the Mustangs strung together five-straight wins. Defense was key during the streak as Sanford-Meridian held the opponent to 34 points or less in all five wins.

**Flint Beecher Looking Strong In D3**

Defending Division 3 state champion Flint Beecher is on a mission to repeat as state champions. The Bucs are undefeated through early January and will be among the favorites to win the D3 state title come March. The Bucs claimed some impressive non-league wins highlighted by a 75-69 win against defending Division 2 state champion Grand Rapids Catholic Central at the Grand Blanc Classic. Beecher also defeated Division 1 power Grand Rapids Ottawa Hills.

**Rockford Challenging For Conference Title**

The Rockford Rams are setting up to challenge for the top spot in the Ottawa-Kent Conference Red Division. The Rams are 6-1 overall and 1-0 in conference play. Rockford's lone loss this season

was a 76-48 defeat against Detroit Catholic Central. The Rams have posted some impressive wins this season including an overtime win against Grand Rapids Union and a 79-73 win against Lansing Everett. Rockford also defeated Forest Hills Eastern at the Cornerstone Hoops Jam behind 24 points from Blake Murphy.

**Big Rapids In Hunt For League Crown**

The Cardinals of Big Rapids are making a bid for the Central States Activities Association title this season. The Cardinals are off to a 4-1 start to the season and 3-0 mark in league play. With juniors Jack Ruggles and Mason Dunn playing key roles, Big Rapids has won a number of close games this season including a 62-60 overtime win against Fremont in the season opener, a 65-64 win against Cedar Springs and a 70-65 league win against Newaygo.

**Lakewood-Lake Odessa Off To Solid Start**

The Vikings of Lakewood-Lake Odessa have started the season strong. The Vikings are 6-1 overall and 2-0 in the Greater Lansing Activities Conference. Four of Lakewood's six wins this season have come by double-digits. Lakewood is getting strong play from 6-foot-6 junior post player Caleb Hull along with strong contributions from senior Denny Sauers, junior Jayce Cusack and Nathan Willette.

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# Lowell Wrestlers Working To Add To Record State Title Winning Streak

## David Cook Sports Scene

With four individual state champions having graduated from a team that won a record eighth consecutive team wrestling state championship, one would think that the Lowell Red Arrows will take a step back this year. The Red Arrows do anything but take steps back and with a roster full of wrestlers with big goals, a ninth straight team state title is the ultimate goal.

Lowell will miss departed state champions graduated seniors that are currently wrestling in college including Doak Dean (Harvard), Jacob Lee (Michigan State), Keegan Nugent (Michigan) and Zeth Strejc (Ellsworth Junior College). Those four seniors were part of a deep group of 11 seniors who helped the team navigate through the challenges of last year's Covid-filled season.

"We graduated 11 seniors who were all special to the program," said Lowell coach R.J. Boudro. "We are proud of their individual contributions and what they are moving on to do after high school."

This season Lowell has a mixture of returning veterans and talented newcomers that have the Red Arrows up among the premier teams in the state.

Senior Carter Blough is ranked number-one in the state at 215 pounds and brings great leadership to the team said Boudro. Fellow senior Nate Cleaver is ranked 11th in the state at 152 pounds. Cleaver is another strong leader who played quarterback on the football team and has a 4.0 grade-point average. Senior James Link is ranked fourth in the state at 135 pounds and also sports a 4.0 grade-point average. Senior Ramsy Mutschler is another state-ranked wrestler and will be at 130 pounds. A trio of seniors poised to make bigger contributions this season include Cole Vandervest at 160 pounds, Will Neeley at

171 pounds and Bryson Vadnermeulen at 285 pounds.

Lowell also boasts a strong junior class led by Carson Crace. Ranked first in the state in Division 2 at 189 pounds, Crace finished second at state last year to Doak Dean. Crace also has a 4.0 grade-point average. Junior Landon Miller also sports a 4.0 grade-point average and is ranked in the top five in the state at 140 pounds. More juniors to watch for include Steve Skinner at 119 pounds and Easton Lyons at 119 pounds.

The sophomore class is led by Tacho Gonzales who is ranked in the top ten at 145 pounds and Jared Boone who has potential for a lofty finish at the state individual finals.

Lowell also welcomes a deep and talented class of freshmen led by Jackson Blum who is highly-ranked both in the state and in the entire nation at 112 pounds. Owen Segorski is also highly-ranked in the state at 119 pounds. Fellow freshmen Carter Cichocki (103 pounds) and Landon Musgrave (103) also also ranked in the top five in the state.

"This team is going to have a lot of firepower this year," said Boudro. "We are deep in a lot of weights and this roster is filled with hard-working student athletes. I am excited about what this team will accomplish both on and off the mat."

Boudro is points to an entire program, coaches and community effort as being key to Lowell's success.

"Our coaching staff has gotten stronger as we have welcomed some alumni back to the program. Our staff welcomes back the Division 2 coach of the year, Joshua Cooper, the middle school coach of the year, Matt Dood, and one of the best youth coaches in the country, Kyle Slocum. Our community support is something that we are very proud of and it is something that we are very proud of and it is stronger than ever before."



The Lowell wrestling team is looking for more celebrations this season as they take aim at extending their record for consecutive team state championships. Lowell won its eighth-straight Division 2 team championship last season and with several state-ranked wrestlers in the lineup they are favored to extend the streak this season.

# Alma Wrestling Team Off To Best Start In History Of The Program

## David Cook Sports Scene

The Alma wrestling team is off to the best in program history this season although a familiar foe that is tough to beat is rearing its ugly head.

On the mats, Alma wrestlers are piling up the wins and the team has been taking down an impressive list of opponents. Alma has fashioned a 13-1 record in dual matches this season. The Panthers, who are ranked third in the state in Division 3, have posted wins against Goodrich, ranked third in the state in Division 2, Bay City Glenn ranked ninth in Division 2 and Montrose, ranked sixth in Division 3. Alma's lone loss this season was a 14-point loss against a Brighton team ranked eighth in the state in Division 1.

"The season is going great," said Alma coach Randy Miniard. "We are off to a great start and everybody is working hard. We've also defeated some state-ranked teams and won the New Lothrop



tournament for the first-time in program history."

Alma wrestlers came up with some huge performances enroute to winning the New Lothrop tournament that featured a host of state-ranked wrestlers from all across the state. A total of 10 out of the 14 Alma wrestlers at the tournament placed including a trio of wrestlers who won individual championships.

Senior Isaiah Mullins improved his record to 19-2 for the season as he won the title at 112 pounds. Alma freshman Fabian Facundo upped his record to 18-2 as he won the 125-pound title while sophomore Cole O'Boyle improved to 18-2 as he claimed the title at 171 pounds.

A trio of Panthers placed third at the tournament. Senior Jacob Munger placed third at 189 pounds as he improved his season record to 19-2. Munger's lone loss at New Lothrop came in the semifinals when he dropped a narrow 1-0 decision to Aidan Wardell of Midland Dow who is ranked fourth in the state in Division 1.

Junior Gianni Tripp improved to 16-6 for the season as he placed third at 135 pounds.

Alma freshman Buddy Leonard upped his record to 16-6 for the season as he took third at 130 pounds. Leonard's lone loss at the tournament was a one-point decision to Aidan Bernard of Montrose who is ranked fourth in the state in Division 3. Leonard then came back to defeat Austin Marry of Hudson, the No. 1-ranked wrestler in Division 4, in the third/fourth-place match.

A pair of Alma wrestlers placed fourth. Senior Josiah Baltierra

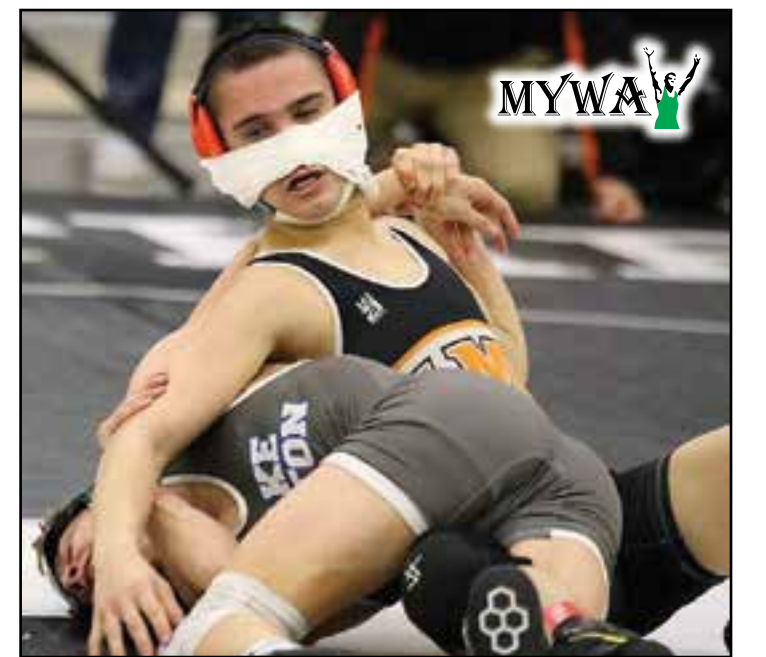
The Alma wrestling team has had plenty to celebrate this season as the Panthers have several state-ranked wrestlers in the lineup and are ranked third in the state in Division 3 as a team.

improved to 13-7 as he placed fourth at 140 pounds while senior Adam Garcia improved to 12-5 as he took fourth at 215 pounds. A highlight of the day for Garcia was a win against Eddie Olson of Richmond who is ranked seventh in the state in Division 3 at 215 pounds in the quarterfinals.

The Panthers also received strong efforts from seniors Landon Bethka and Jaden Morrow. Bethka improved to 16-6 for the season as he took sixth place at 145 pounds while Morrow improved to 20-3 by taking sixth place at 160 pounds.

Alma's plans for an impressive run down the stretch of the regular season has hit a roadblock, however, as a familiar foe has made its presence felt. Last season the Covid-19 virus ruined Alma's appearance at the Division 3 team state finals and the virus is again playing havoc on the Panthers' season. A trio of Alma wrestlers tested positive for the Covid virus just before Alma's double dual with Freeland and Frankenmuth on Jan. 12.

"We had three kids test positive for the virus and when you have three or more kids test positive for the virus our school shuts you down," Miniard said. "They consider three cases an outbreak and you have to stop all activities, including practices and competitions, for seven days. Not only did our match with Freeland get cancelled, but we were scheduled to host our team tournament on Saturday with state-ranked teams from Kingsley, Richmond and St. Louis along with previously state-ranked Portland coming in. We also had plans to go and attend the Penn State/ Michigan wrestling match the following week on our way to the



Hudson team tournament and now that is in question. It's really an unfortunate situation."

The big hurdle facing the Panthers now is getting healthy and remaining healthy for the upcoming team state tournament in February. With a roster loaded

with state-ranked and experienced wrestlers, the third-ranked Panthers have a team capable of wrestling in the Division 3 state championship match. Getting healthy and regaining the momentum built during the season so far is key for Alma to fulfilling its dreams.

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# Greenville Wrestling Team Battling It Out With Lowell In Rugged Ok White Conference

## David Cook Sports Scene

With eight-time Division 2 state champion Lowell in its conference, the Greenville wrestling team knows it has to prepare to compete with the best each year. That competition has helped the Yellowjackets develop a solid wrestling program and this year will be no different as Greenville has another solid squad.

Greenville is coming off a solid season where it went 20-3 and had a pair of all-state wrestlers. One of those all-staters was Caleb Peterman who was a four-year varsity starter and two-time all-stater who placed second at state last season.

Greenville does return senior Zack McMillan who earned all-state honors last season. MacMillan placed third at state at 285 pounds

last year and is ranked second at 285 this season. MacMillan is also a key team leader for the Yellowjackets.

Greenville also returns senior Seth Leutzinger (160 pounds) and Kristian Stewart (189).

"Seth has consistently improved and matured," said Greenville coach Brett Peterman. "He looks to have the piece together for a successful season. Kristian also looks to be a solid contributor this year."

Camden Beyer (135) is another senior primed for a big season.

"Camden has been on the edge of post-season success," Peterman said. "He looks to have the right mind-set for a successful season."

Along with the seniors, Greenville has a deep and talented group of sophomores and freshmen poised for big seasons.

Liam Dailey (125) and Naythan Dobson (152) are a pair of sophomores primed for big things.

"Liam recorded a great record last season," Peterman said. "He came up just short in the post season."

Naythan is another wrestler who had a great freshman year and came up short in the post season. I'm looking for Nayte to go deep this year."

The Yellowjackets also have several promising freshmen including Case Johnson at 215 pounds along with Conner Peterman (103) and Kamden Witte.

"Case is an amazing athlete that will make a huge impact," coach Peterman said. "Conner and Kamden both come in with several years of youth wrestling experience."



The Greenville wrestling team faces a familiar foe in powerhouse Lowell as it battles for the top spot in the rugged OK White Conference.

The combination of veterans and young talent has the Yellowjackets primed for a solid season.

"I expect this team to be very competitive," Peterman said. "There are several wrestlers that have the talent to push

deep into the post season. The strong points of this team is the family atmosphere along with a willingness to work hard and positive attitudes."

# Midland Wrestling Team Carving Out Winning Niche Is Rugged Saginaw Valley League

## David Cook Sports Scene

Wrestling in the Saginaw Valley League with perennial state powerhouse Davison, it can be easy to get overlooked in the shadow of the Cardinals. While that can be a daunting task, the Midland wrestling team is carving out a winning tradition of its own.

Last season was a solid effort for the Midland wrestling team. Along with compiling a 24-4 overall record, the Chemics won a fourth-consecutive team district championship and reached the regional finals.

A key part of Midland's success the past four seasons was a group of seniors led by Daniel Revord,

Connor Schelb, Alex Noey, Brennan Anderson and Hunger Kruger who graduated after a memorable four seasons.

"This was the most successful senior class in that they were the first class to win four consecutive district titles," said Midland coach Michael Donovan. "Four of them reached the regionals at least once. They were great leaders and young men who cared about the program and the legacy they left."

While the seniors will be missed, the Chemics are being led this season by a solid group of returning veterans. Daniel Berg and Cole Schelb are a pair of returning state qualifiers. John Hine is a returning regional qualifier. Seniors Lorenzo Cabrera

and River Eurton are seasoned wrestlers with three years of varsity experience that are significant contributors.



"The standard has been set to win a district title every season," Donovan said. "We're looking to break through and get past the regional this year. We expect to challenge for one of the top two spots in the conference and win

a few tournaments during the season."

A total-team effort is needed to accomplish the goals that the Chemics have for the season.

"We will have to rely on our depth this year," Donovan said. "We've got a few home-run hitters but we are going to have to use our ability to put a competitive wrestler on the mat at every weight each meet. We will rely on some sophomores who have put a lot of work in, but need to keep progressing every week and traversing through tough times. If we get development out of those guys, we will challenge anyone."

That development is needed in a loaded wrestling conference like the Saginaw Valley League.

"The top of our conference is as tough as it can be," Donovan said. "Returning state champ Davison and a lot of competitive teams like Grand Blanc. Many other teams that were down, especially last year, have made impactful hires at the coaching level and are showing growth in terms of their numbers and abilities. It should be a great year with challenges every week."

Midland is also having its first season of a girls team. Midland has nine girls on the team this year and this year will be the first year there will be a girls division at the state tournament."



# Area Wrestlers, Teams Turning In Big Performances As Wrestling Season Heads For Home Stretch

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene Two-Time State Champ From St. Johns On Winning Path

An individual state champion his first two years of high school wrestling, St. Johns senior Jacob Brya saw his dreams of a third-straight state title dashed by the Covid-19 virus last year. This year, Brya is looking to close out his career in a big way by again reaching the top step of the podium at the Division 2 individual state finals. Brya won the 103-pound state title as a freshman as he compiled a 42-2 overall record. His sophomore season saw similar results as he went 41-0 and claimed the state title at 112 pounds. Covid-19 cut short Brya's state tournament hopes last season but this year he is back on track. Brya ran his record to 18-0 this season when he took first place at the New Lothrop Hall of Fame Tournament. Ranked first in the state at 140 pounds in Division 2, Brya won two matches by pin and one by technical fall on his way to the 140-pound title at New Lothrop. Brya defeated Brayton Mears of Union City, the No. 1-ranked wrestler in Division 4, by pin in the finals of the tournament. During the season Brya has also won matches against Williamston's Ryker Johncheck, ranked number one in the state in Division 3 at 140 pounds, Holt's Ralph Thompson, ranked third in Division 1 at 140 pounds and Clinton's Coy Perry, ranked number two in the state in

## Division 3 at 130 pounds. Bullock Creek Wrestler Rebounding

Like Jacob Brya of St. Johns, Bullock Creek senior Peyton Brooks is also looking to have a big post-season after Covid-19 ruined his tournament season last year. As a freshman, Brooks turned in a 40-9 record and qualified for state. As a sophomore, Brooks went 48-6 and placed second in the state in Division 3 at 152 pounds. Last season Brooks had a 20-0 record before Covid-19 cut his season short. This season Brooks has compiled a 22-1 record through mid-January. Brooks is ranked sixth in the state in Division 3 at 160 pounds. So far this season Brooks won individual titles at both the Joe Lauren and Freeland invitationals and placed second at the St. Louis Invitational where he dropped a one-point decision to Dylan Reynolds of Bay City Western who is state-ranked in Division 2. Brooks has recorded wins against David Watson of Yale, Kyle Fessenden of Kingsley and Tyler Brooks of Pinconning who are all ranked at 160 pounds in Division 3 this season.

## St. Louis Wrestling Team State-Ranked In Division 4

The St. Louis wrestling team is off to a strong start this season and has been climbing the ladder in the Division 4 state rankings coming in at No. 3 in the state as of mid-January. The Sharks have compiled a 10-1 record in dual meets through mid-January with a 49-25 win against Leroy-Pine River ranked eighth in the state

in Division 4 to its credit. The lone loss St. Louis suffered was a 30-46 loss to Hart, ranked ninth in the state in Division 3. St. Louis wrestlers turned in impressive performances at the St. Louis Invitational it hosted. A total of three Sharks won individual titles including Colin Kuhn at 103 pounds, Martine Wiggins at 140 pounds and Justice Onstott at 189. Genaro Soto took second place at 125 pounds while Robert Long-Terwilliger took third 112 pounds. Placing fourth for St. Louis were Josh Dew at 145 pounds, Ben Dousuah at 215 pounds and Braden Ball at 285 pounds. Taking fifth place were Josh Voories at 119 pounds, Dylan Marr at 135 and Conner Daniels at 152 pounds while John Campbell took sixth at 119 pounds.

## Holt Wrestling Team Among Top In State In Division 1

The Holt wrestling team is among the tops in the state as the Rams are ranked No. 4 in Division 1 behind traditional powerhouses Detroit Catholic Central, Davison and Hartland. The Rams feature a lineup loaded with state-ranked wrestlers including senior Joshua Terrill who is the top-ranked heavyweight in the state in Division 1. Junior Ryan Mosher is ranked third at 112 pounds and senior Ralph Thompson is



St. Johns senior Jacob Brya is on a mission to win a third individual state title after the Covid-19 virus cut short his tournament hopes last season.

third at 140 pounds while senior Alex Russell is ranked sixth at 160 pounds. Also ranked in the top ten in their weight classes are Nathan Bremer who is ranked seventh at 189 pounds, Jason Jones ranked eighth at 130 pounds and Mariano Lopez who is ranked ninth at 112 pounds.

## Freeland Wrestling Team Ranked In The State

The Freeland wrestling team is turning in a solid season as the Falcons are ranked eighth in the state in Division 3. The Falcons have tested themselves against the toughest schedule it can find including matches against Brighton, a state-ranked team in Division 1, along with Bay City John Glenn, state-ranked in Division 2 and a win against New Lothrop, ranked second in the state in Division 4. Freeland has a number of state-ranked wrestlers including freshman Malachi Hill ranked sixth at 103 pounds, sophomore Noah Graham ranked seventh at 119 pounds, sophomore Gibby Shephard ranked 13<sup>th</sup> at 125

pounds, junior Cayden Remainder ranked 11<sup>th</sup> at 130 pounds, sophomore Ty Fournier ranked fifth at 135 pounds, senior Wilson Longnecker ranked 10<sup>th</sup> at 140 pounds and senior Cole Fournier ranked fourth at 145 pounds.

## Mason Wrestling In Top Ten In Division 2

The Mason wrestling team is back among the top in the state in Division 2 as the Bulldogs are ranked sixth in the latest state poll. Mason is undefeated in dual matches this season and has a lineup full of state-ranked wrestlers. State-ranked wrestlers for Mason include freshman Matthew Ausel ranked fifth at 103 pounds, junior Tayden Miller ranked second at 119 pounds, senior Justin Presley ranked 15<sup>th</sup> at 125 pounds, sophomore AJ Martel ranked fifth at 160 pounds, sophomore Derek Badgley ranked fourth at 171 pounds, senior Landon Peiffer ranked seventh at 189 pounds and senior David Fancher ranked 12<sup>th</sup> at 285 pounds.

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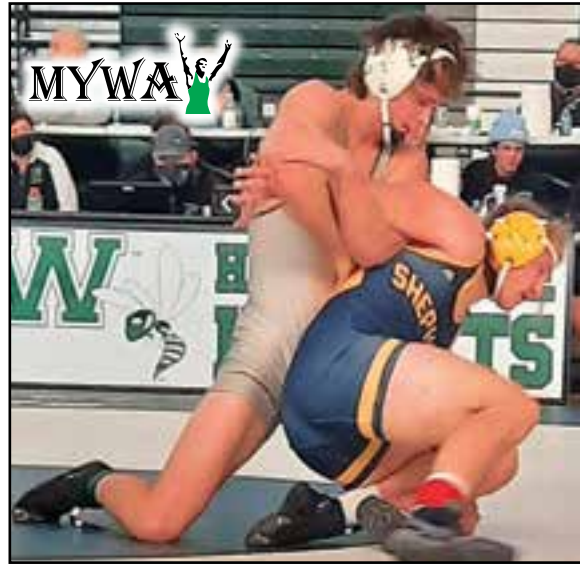
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## Williamston Wrestling Team Ranked In The Top Ten In Division 3 This Season

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The Williamston wrestling team is turning in a big season with a number of state-ranked wrestlers in the lineup. Those state-ranked wrestlers have helped the Hornets crack the state rankings as Williamston is ranked 10th in the state in Division 3.

Williamston is 11-1-1 in dual matches through mid-January this

Williamston senior Joe Mahaney is one of several state-ranked wrestlers in the Hornet lineup this season.

season with highlight wins against Fowlerville, DeWitt, St. Johns, Ionia and Napoleon. Williamston will host a team district in early February that includes Olivet and Stockbridge. At the regional level two-time, defending Division 4 state champion Clinton, ranked No. 2 in the state in its first season in Division 3, looms as a potential major roadblock for Williamston.

The Hornets are led this season by senior Ryker Johnecheck who is ranked

first in the state at 140 pounds and junior Camden Johnecheck who is ranked second at 145 pounds. Ranked in the top five in the state are seniors Jack Chambers who is fourth at 112 pounds and senior Greg Dion who is fourth at 135 pounds. Senior Joe Mahaney is ranked 11th in the state at 171 pounds while senior Jared Bloom is 11th at 145 pounds and sophomore Luke Chambers is 11th at 215.

## Shepherd Wrestling Team Looking To Capitalize On Young Athletes During Rebuild

### David Cook Sports Scene

Youth will be served for the Shepherd wrestling team this season. Several outstanding athletes graduated and a large group of inexperienced but hungry wrestlers are waiting in the wings.

Shepherd lost some outstanding wrestlers from last year's team led by Caleb Cline a two-time, all-state wrestler who graduated this past spring. Tanner Gaw, who teamed up with Cline to provide consistent leadership, is a two-time, state qualifier that also graduated. The

Bluejays also graduated two-time, all-state Lance Clark and two-time state qualifier and one-time all-state Max Kyser.

This season, the Bluejays are building around a core of talented wrestlers led by junior Talon Denman.

"Talon has put in a lot of time in the offseason and has greatly improved his abilities and understanding," said Shepherd coach Ty Lentovich. "If he continues to grow, he could perform well by the end of the year."

Freshman Maddox Cline is a newcomer to watch.

"Maddox comes to us with a fair amount of experience and ability for an underclassman," Lentovich said. "Look for him to continually improve."

Shepherd is also looking for contributions from seniors Cole Wonsey and Jaden Carl in the upper weights as well as sophomore Nate Parker.

Overall, the season is a question mark for the team.

Shepherd has had all-state

wrestlers every consecutive year since 2016," Lentovich said. "As a coach I've been blessed to have all-state finishers every consecutive year since 2013. In the past we



could point to wrestlers that we were confident would finish high on the podium. We are always looking to produce all-state individuals. This year, inexperience coupled with parity in our post-

season route could make keeping that streak alive challenging. I'm not going to limit us and say it won't happen. I'm just going to say we are going to need significant growth to reach our program goals and expectations."

The Bluejays are also looking at their overall youth as a team strong point.

"We are basically tabula rasa with very little knowledge or experience," Lentovich said. "While it's a huge hurdle, it also is an opportunity. It means that we have no bad habits, and can mold the athletes into the wrestlers we want them to be. We've assembled a large and accomplished coaching staff. The only question will be how quickly and efficiently we can train our athletes because they are currently inexperienced."

## Talented Core Of Veterans Has Portland Wrestling Team Among The Elite In The State In Division 3

### David Cook Sports Scene

Led by a talented and deep group of veteran wrestlers, the Portland wrestling team is among the top teams this season in the state in Division 3.

The Portland wrestling team is coming off a solid campaign last year where it won the CAAC White division and posted a 23-3 overall record. While talented wrestlers like Nathan Zimmerman and Chandler Murton are missed from that squad, the Raiders return plenty of strong wrestlers.

Leading the way from the senior

class is Caide Pelc at 130 pounds.

"We expect Caide to blast into this season after being injured last year," said Portland coach Andy Pulling. "He had a good summer of wrestling and is excited to take on his senior season."

Trent Treirweiler at 145 pounds is another talented senior returning.

"Trent is taking leadership to another level and it's taking his understanding of this sport and his wrestling ability to another level," Pulling said. "He is also excited to get into competition during his senior year."

Portland also brings back a deep and talented group of juniors led by Isaiah Pelc at 145 pounds.

"Isaiah is hungry, loves this sport and is eager to pick up where he left off last year," Pulling said.

Branson Goodman is a junior anchoring the upper weights at 215 pounds.

"Branson has had an exciting and motivating offseason," Pulling said. "He is thirsty to get the season underway."

Juniors Ethan Webert (125 pounds) and Drew Miller (135) bring more talent to the mats in

the lower weight classes.

"Ethan finished last season strong but wasn't fulfilled," Pulling said. "I'm excited about where he wants to be in March.



Drew didn't conclude his season where he wanted and his off-season reflected where he wants to be. He's been excited to watch grow."

With the work ethic and focus of this year's team, Pulling is looking for a big year from the Raiders.

"The strong point of our team is our ability to take every chance to learn and then be able to compete together as one team with one heart," Pulling said. "We expect our guys to make history in our program this year."

Repeating as conference champs is a goal of the team and Pulling expects a competitive league season.

"The CAAC White is strong and fun to be a part of," Pulling said. "Each year it seems like our duals get more competitive. I think we have a great shot at winning another league title but it won't be a walk in the park with teams like Eaton Rapids and Charlotte in our way."

# INDIVIDUAL WRESTLING RANKINGS

### Division 1

- 103 pounds
- 1) Jacob Harris, Holt
  - 2) Braylenn Aulbach, Rockford
  - 3) Sawyer Hosford, Holt
  - 4) Jaden Thomas, Saginaw Arthur Hill
- 112 pounds
- 1) Dominic Perez, Davison
  - 2) Mariano Lopez, Holt
  - 3) Ken Aquilar, Rockford
  - 4) Elliot Kozel, Midland Dow

- 119 pounds
- 1) Caden Horwath, Davison
  - 2) Ryan Mosher, Holt
  - 3) James Diel, Rockford
  - 4) Melvin Brewer, Saginaw Arthur Hill
- 125 pounds
- 1) Justin Gates, Davison
  - 2) Jak Keller, Rockford
  - 3) Kaleb Smith-Baldwin, Okemos
  - 4) Kyle Jelinek, Davison

- 130 pounds
- 1) Brendan Maybee, Davison
  - 2) Elijah Bunn, Rockford
  - 3) Jason Jones, Holt
  - 4) Justin Hughes, Saginaw Arthur Hill
- 135 pounds
- 1) Evan Herriman, Davison
  - 2) Emilio Caberera, East Lansing
  - 3) Ayden Mosher, Holt
  - 4) Logan Anglin, Rockford

- 140 pounds
- 1) Cameron Freeman, Davison
  - 2) Ralph Thompson, Holt
  - 3) Daniel Berg, Midland
  - 4) Nathan Wescott, Rockford
- 145 pounds
- 1) Cole Schelb, Midland
  - 2) Grant Bachman, Holt
  - 3) Jayden Smith, Saginaw Heritage
  - 4) Lorenzo Cabrera, Midland

- 152 pounds
- 1) Max Callahan, Davison
  - 2) Bryson Aulbach, Rockford
  - 3) Carter Hodges, Holt
  - 4) Steve Perez, Saginaw Arthur Hill
- 160 pounds
- 1) Kyle White, Davison
  - 2) Alex Russell, Holt
  - 3) Kalem Pick, Holt
  - 4) Steve Hackbarth, Midland

- 171 pounds
- 1) Josh Barr, Davison
  - 2) Nathan Bremer, Holt
  - 3) Ty Hafke, Holt
  - 4) Mike Baldwin, Saginaw Arthur Hill
- 189 pounds
- 1) Remy Cotton, Davison
  - 2) Ryan Ahern, Rockford
  - 3) Aidan Wardell, Midland Dow
  - 4) Jackson Raymond, Grand Ledge

- 215 pounds
- 1) Jimmy Colley, Davison
  - 2) Cole Newman, Holt
  - 3) Bryce Simmons, Davison
  - 4) Adam Brenske, Midland Dow
- 285 pounds
- 1) Josh Terrill, Holt
  - 2) Zane Richardson, Davison
  - 3) Lionel Baldwin, Saginaw Arthur Hill
  - 4) Lucas Guerra, Rockford

### Division 2

- 103 pounds
- 1) Carter Cichocki, Lowell
  - 2) Matt Ausel, Mason
  - 3) Sean Pettigrew, St. Johns
  - 4) Conner Peterman, Greenville
- 112 pounds
- 1) Conner Greer, Bay City Glenn
  - 2) Kaden Lapaugh, DeWitt
  - 3) Noah Webster, Mt. Pleasant
  - 4) Trenten Bashore, DeWitt

- 119 pounds
- 1) Jackson Blum, Lowell
  - 2) Tayden Miller, Mason
  - 3) Adrian Sigurani, Eaton Rapids
  - 4) Alex Kolar, Haslett
- 125 pounds
- 1) Owen Segorski, Lowell
  - 2) Lane Huizar, Bay City Glenn
  - 3) Justin Pressley, Mason
  - 4) Liam Dailey, Greenville

- 130 pounds
- 1) Grant Stahl, Mt. Pleasant
  - 2) Elijah Bunn, Rockford
  - 3) Landon Miller, Lowell
  - 4) Emeterio Costilla, Waverly
- 135 pounds
- 1) Ramsy Mutschler, Lowell
  - 2) James Link, Lowell
  - 3) Jayden Schwartz, Charlotte
  - 4) James Wagner, Lansing Waverly

- 140 pounds
- 1) Jacob Brya, St. Johns
  - 2) Wyatt Bossbach, Bay City Glenn
  - 3) Garrett Stebleton, Eaton Rapids
  - 4) Killian Campbell, Ionia
- 145 pounds
- 1) Zam Thompson, Eaton Rapids
  - 2) Logan Houghton, Charlotte
  - 3) Nate Cleaver, Lowell
  - 4) Jared Boone, Lowell

- 152 pounds
- 1) Tacho Gonzales, Lowell
  - 2) Logan Demarest, Bay City Glenn
  - 3) Nathan Dobson, Greenville
  - 4) Zavier Williams, Waverly
- 160 pounds
- 1) Ashton Laguire, Charlotte
  - 2) AJ Martel, Mason
  - 3) Dylan Reynolds, Bay City Western
  - 4) Aaron Boucher, Mt. Pleasant

- 171 pounds
- 1) Carson Crace, Lowell
  - 2) Derek Badgley, Mason
  - 3) Garrett Forgash, Bay City Glenn
  - 4) Jahleel Rollins, Waverly
- 189 pounds
- 1) Landon Peiffer, Mason
  - 2) Case Johnson, Greenville
  - 3) Joe Meier, Bay City Glenn
  - 4) Logan Lee, Waverly

- 215 pounds
- 1) Carter Blough, Lowell
  - 2) Ryan Dimmick, St. Johns
  - 3) Dillon Babb, DeWitt
  - 4) Cayden Bell, Waverly
- 285 pounds
- 1) Zach McMillan, Greenville
  - 2) Harun Mkumbakwa, Lansing Eastern
  - 3) David Fancher, Mason
  - 4) Hunter Winchell, Bay City Glenn

### Division 3

- 103 pounds
- 1) Talan Parsons, Ovid-Elsie
  - 2) Quinton Everett, Chesaning
  - 3) Malachi Hill, Freeland
  - 4) Ryan Moreno, Clare
- 112 pounds
- 1) Isaiah Mullins, Alma
  - 2) Jack Chambers, Williamston
  - 3) DeAngelo Campos, Corunna
  - 4) Cameron Bacchus, Durand

- 119 pounds
- 1) Bryson Hernandez, Clare
  - 2) Noah Graham, Freeland
  - 3) Joaquin Campos, Corunna
  - 4) Cole Workman, Ovid-Elsie
- 125 pounds
- 1) Fabian Facundo, Alma
  - 2) Hunter Coxon
  - 3) Jonathan Krebs, Lakewood-Lake Odessa
  - 4) Bryce Jacobus, Lakeview

- 130 pounds
- 1) Aiden Bernard, Montrose
  - 2) Alex Riedel, St. Johns
  - 3) Buddy Leonard, Alma
  - 4) Cayden Remainder
- 135 pounds
- 1) Zachary Gibson, Lakewood Lake Odessa
  - 2) Gianni Tripp, Alma
  - 3) Ty Fielder, Durand
  - 4) Drew Miller, Portland

- 140 pounds
- 1) Ryker Johnecheck, Williamston
  - 2) Trent Trierweiler, Portland
  - 3) Josiah Baltierra, Alma
  - 4) Alex Goodson, Sanford-Meridian
- 145 pounds
- 1) Camden Johnecheck, Williamston
  - 2) Isaiah Pelc, Portland
  - 3) Landon Bethka, Alma
  - 4) Cody Ueberroth, Swan Valley

- 152 pounds
- 1) Peyton Brooks, Bullock Creek
  - 2) Ty Emmendorfer, Montrose
  - 3) Hunter Anderson, Corunna
  - 4) Jared Bloom, Williamston
- 160 pounds
- 1) Hayden Holmes, Millington
  - 2) Connor Owens, Flint Powers
  - 3) Trent Behrenwald, Tri-County
  - 4) Gavin Morrow, Alma

- 171 pounds
- 1) Randy Pyrzewski, Gladwin
  - 2) Cole O'Boyle, Alma
  - 3) Joe Mahaney, Williamston
  - 4) Gavin Vaughn, Lakewood-Lake Odessa
- 189 pounds
- 1) Jacob Munger, Alma
  - 2) Jack Ward, Belding
  - 3) Jake Nelson, Tri-County
  - 4) Cody Smith, Montrose

- 215 pounds
- 1) Hunter Huguélet, Gladwin
  - 2) Sean Divine, Laingsburg
  - 3) Ethan Schmid, Belding
  - 4) Adam Garcia, Alma
- 285 pounds
- 1) Levi Barber, Montrose
  - 2) Brenden Quackenbush, Chesaning
  - 3) Aiden Viar, Montrose
  - 4) Caden Adams, Alma

### Division 4

- 103 pounds
- 1) Colin Kuhn, St. Louis
  - 2) Cameron Perez, Lakeview
  - 3) Hunter Wolf, New Lothrop
  - 4) Blake Wendling, New Lothrop
- 112 pounds
- 1) Matthew Slaght, Maple Valley
  - 2) Joe Perez, Lakeview
  - 3) Robert Long-Terwilliger, St. Louis
  - 4) Leo Bauman, New Lothrop

- 119 pounds
- 1) Daven Lockwood, New Lothrop
  - 2) Ben March, St. Louis
  - 3) Seth Onweller, Beaverton
  - 4) Dustin Winans, Laingsburg
- 125 pounds
- 1) Genaro Soto, St. Louis
  - 2) Blake Baker, Dansville
  - 3) Landon Zastrow, Hemlock
  - 4) Bryce Jacobs, Lakeview

- 130 pounds
- 1) Caleb Sharp, New Lothrop
  - 2) Alex Baker, Dansville
  - 3) Dalton Birchmeier, New Lothrop
  - 4) Maddox Retberg, Michigan Lutheran Seminary
- 135 pounds
- 1) Derek Mayle, Breckenridge
  - 2) Aiden Baines, Laingsburg
  - 3) Parker Noonan, New Lothrop
  - 4) Garrett Muma, Beaverton

- 140 pounds
- 1) Seth Grooms, Perry
  - 2) Joseph Dawe, Ithaca
  - 3) Martine Wiggins, St. Louis
  - 4) Dylan Marr, St. Louis
- 145 pounds
- 1) Cole Stone, Carson City
  - 2) Gage Vasold, Breckenridge
  - 3) Ethan Mills, Carson City-Crystal
  - 4) Trent Cole, Lakeview

- 152 pounds
- 1) Jack Kulhanek, New Lothrop
  - 2) Josh Collins, Hemlock
  - 3) Hunter Doyle, Leslie
  - 4) Jesse Brandt, Lakeview
- 160 pounds
- 1) Bryce Stanley, Carson City
  - 2) Liam Zastrow, Hemlock
  - 3) Aaron Mazurek, Lakeview
  - 4) Seth Sivak, Laingsburg

- 171 pounds
- 1) Cole Hopkins, Ewart
  - 2) Colton Symons, New Lothrop
  - 3) Conner Bramble, Dansville
  - 4) Noah Risner, Ithaca
- 189 pounds
- 1) Brady Gross, New Lothrop
  - 2) Justice Ostott, St. Louis
  - 3) Evan Wakefield, Mich. Luth. Sem.
  - 4) Tristan Almanza, Edmore-Montabella

- 215 pounds
- 1) Grayson Orr, New Lothrop
  - 2) Sean Divine, Laingsburg
  - 3) Colton Symons, New Lothrop
  - 4) Braden Ball, St. Louis
- 285 pounds
- 1) Isiah Pasik, New Lothrop
  - 2) Matthew Johnson, Byron
  - 3) Mason Vancamp, Ithaca
  - 4) Jesse McClure, Perry

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# Holt Expects Another Championship Bowling Team

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

Scott Schaberg takes over the coaching job for Holt boys and girls bowling teams in the Capitol Area Activities Conference this season.

Holt is coming off a terrific 2021



Holt bowler David Schaberg took third place in MHSAA state singles Division 1 last year.

season when the varsity girls and boys won team regionals and the varsity girls made match play for MHSAA state team competition.

Nick Schaberg was the highest finishing freshman for MHSAA state singles Division One and David Schaberg was third place in MHSAA state singles Division 1.

Several fine athletes graduated from last season's team.

Zach Geitzel and Steven Levera were on the regional team championship team, show great leadership qualities, and are currently attending Spring Arbor and are on the bowling team.

Gabriella VanHorn was singles regional champion and Lansing State Journal Bowler of the Year, shows great leadership qualities and is attending Concordia University in Ann Arbor and is on their bowling team.

David Schaberg is back as a senior. "He is strong, calm, and a competitive leader," Scott Schaberg said, adding as a sophomore and second-year varsity bowler, Nick Schaberg will start "to develop leadership qualities for the upcoming years as upperclassman

move on."

On the girls side, senior Angelita Mireles "is a strong, calm, and competitive leader," Schaberg said, adding junior Alissa VanHorn "will start to develop leadership qualities for the upcoming years as upperclassman move on and be more vocal."

Holt is looking to win its third straight divisional title in its conference and

qualify for MHSAA team states with hopes of making match play and having multiple MHSAA singles state qualifiers with hopes of some making match play.

"Good energy and steady team improvements, plus overall focus and general shot making, "will be the keys for the team to have success," Scott Schaberg said. "The conference is improving as a whole. I would consider ourselves (Holt),Dewitt and Portland as league favorites.

"I've been an assistant volunteer coach for Holt bowling for the previous three years. This year, I chose to apply for the head coach position after the last coach moved on. I wanted to ensure that our

Holt Public Schools was going to continue to have a bowling program. I'm happy to take on this endeavor to help the bowling program grow in our community."

He's also happy to be coaching David Schaberg.

"David has had steady improvements every season, including moving from a one-handed to two-handed bowler," Schaberg said. "His shot making has improved from year-to-year, as well as, his mental game."

Last season, Scaberg was voted team MVP, best spare shooter and high average at 225 varsity team. He was a MHSAA match player, MHSIBCA Division I First Team All-State, Lansing State Journal Bowler of the Year and Dream Team and all-CAAC All-Conference Team.

"David has a positive attitude, practices countless hours, always strives for excellence and looks for areas where he can improve," Scott Schaberg said. "David bowls on extremely hard lane conditions through Michigan Junior Masters Association and other organizations throughout the Great Lakes area. These organizations

have helped him grow into the elite bowler he is today.

The hope is to get his team to MHSAA state finals match play and win the state title in singles. Last year, his team was just short of making match play, and was a finalist in singles. David has been more of a leader to help his team grow and develop.

"I'd like to see David beat some school scoring records. David practices multiple days a week, and performs in many tournaments monthly. He's always looking for areas to improve his game."

As for after this season, "David Schaberg will be attending Concordia University in Ann Arbor, Mi., majoring in Sports Management with a minor in Data Analytics," Scott Schaberg said. "He will also be on the Concordia bowling team. He has also received academic and sports scholarships with his GPA of 3.675."

This season, David said he's seeking to have more consistency "and overall be a good leader when it comes to the team aspect. It's a fun sport and I love the competition."

His home lanes are The City Limits in Mason.

# Chesaning Bowlers Will Be Strong

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

Chesaning coach Phil Larner expects to have another unique team this season.

"I have been the varsity coach for the six years we been bowling," he said; Three



The Chesaning girls bowling team: front, coach Phil Larner, Skylar Wissinger and Desire Obuchowski; back from her, Jamie Felix and Lilly Swartzmiller. Missing are Kyle Jackson and Kelly Rodriguez.

Larner has a solid history with the Chesaning team "I was at the beginning in setting up a bowling team for Chesaning," he said. "Another teacher at Chesaning came to me, because of my youth bowling program running in Chesaning for

years as a club and the last three as a school sport. In the past two years, we have had one bowler go to state and three missed going to states by 15 pins each. We have one junior, two sophomores and four freshmen this year for the boys. The girls team has one sophomore, one junior and four freshmen.

years. The teams were a club for the first three years to show that we could hold our own. We did.

"After Paul Martin retirement and moved, I was head coach. The past few years were up and down. Then COVID hit and no one wanted to bowl. This year we are starting the first match with a couple bowlers out with COVID. I have seven boys and six girls, and will be missing one from each team."

"This year's boys team looks good, I have one junior, three sophomore and three freshmen that bowled in my youth programs."



The Chesaning boys bowling team: front, coach Phil Larner, Michael Swartzmiller; back Theodore Lowe, Zander Moore, Ian Russell and Josh Sicard. Missing are Matthew Speech and Connor Strickland.

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# Alma Competitive Cheerleaders Have High Hopes Again

**John Raffel Sports Scene**

Brianne Elliott is coaching an Alma competitive cheer team, which is expected to be extremely talented this season.

One of her top athletes is expected to be four-year senior Hailey Beebe, who performs at base.

"Hailey has always been a big part of the team whether it is team bonding, leadership, or skill," Elliott said. "She is always a go-to athlete that we can rely on. She is in all three rounds starting out this year. She is a very hard worker and is confident in herself as an athlete. She is the first one to practice and always goes above and behind to ensure her success along with her teammates.

"It was a big step up into all three rounds this year when previously she had been only in 1 or 2. She is going to make a huge impact regarding skill and success but also leadership and being a good role model to her teammates. Her jumps and tumbling have improved in a very strong and confident way, giving her spots in round 1 and round 2.



Four-year senior Hailey Beebe, of Alma, performs at base.

She is always a light on the team, cracking jokes and telling stories. She finds the best in her teammates and appreciates them for it."

Elliott is expecting plenty from Beebe this season.

"I expect huge improvements in jumps and stunting," Elliott said. "She has transitioned to a main base and is finding success in it. She is a hard worker in the off season but also takes the initiative to make sure her teammates are working hard and getting what they need to do done for the success of the team. She is the only senior on the team this year and is showing a huge step up into the leadership and role model position. She is my go to for someone with skills and experience but also as someone who connects very well with her teammates."

Alma will be competing in the TVC.

"In 2020-21 we placed second in the TVC which was a huge success for us and something to be proud of," Elliott said. "The highlight of our season was qualifying for the state finals and competing at the Breslin Center in East Lansing. Last year's six seniors gave so much to the program. In

terms of stats and titles, they excelled and notably qualified for the state finals twice in their four years. Their individual personalities and strengths provided the team with so much."

She was referring to Christa Fornusek, Victoria Gotaas, Embree Smith, Madison Davison, Hannah Miller and Emma Ebeling.

Besides Beebe, Elliott is expecting lots from others.



2022 Alma Cheer Team.

Shelby Irvin is a junior flyer, who gives "so much growth thus far being on the team, and I expect that she will continue to thrive as a tumbler and flyer who leads the team by example," Elliott said, adding that junior flyer Brilyn Garcia is "a big leader by example and I believe she will continue to develop a voice on the team. She is a very skilled athlete, and this year we will capitalize on her confidence in the mat."

Elliott said junior base Carlee Fall "has a huge personality and is a leader. She is "always the positive light on the team and making the most of every moment. She is going to be counted on for her strong jumps and I expect her to grow into a strong and successful base."

Elliott added Olyvia Albaugh, sophomore base "is the best 'teammate' we have this year, with

great attitude, huge leadership personality and always bringing up the energy and aura of the room when needed. We expect huge success and she is counted on for her tumbling and basing."

As a new skipper, "I have no expectations for my team this year, being a first-year coach," Elliott said. "With a young team, we are all trying to find our footing. I believe that we can be very successful, and I expect to grow so much through the season. We have huge potential, so meeting that will be a fun challenge for all of us.

"The unity of our team is already something that stands out in a positive way. We will have strong jumps in round 1 and are hoping to put out a fun and interesting round 3. The biggest focus is building my team's confidence so, as we start competing, that is something that will start to develop. We are

implementing things that will give girls that push and realization that they are great cheerleaders and can succeed this season even though we have little experience overall as a team."

The competition will be very stiff.

"We have a strong conference with many good competitors," Elliott said. "Teams that stick out to me include, Birch Run and Bullock Creek. I believe we will compete again within those top 3 teams and finish somewhere in that mix.

"As I was just hired into this position, I want to shout out the previous head coach, Kelly Gibson. She did so much for this program the past eight years and brought in huge accomplishments. She is missed and will always be remembered for all she provided for AVC."

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# Frankenmuth Gymnast Expects Banner Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Suzu Weldon is coaching the Vassar Co-op Gymnastics team, which is a co-op with Vassar, Reese, Caro, Frankenmuth, and Bay City Central.

Piper O'Rourke, a junior from Frankenmuth High School, is her third year on the team and she is an all-arounder.

"Piper has been one of the top all-arounders for Vassar the last

few years and has placed in the top three at most dual meets she has competed in," Weldon said. "She missed making it to the state meet last year, by 0.2 points on the bars and beam. Piper came in with club experience, so her basics and lines are beautiful and easy to work with. It's a lot easier to teach new complex skills when their basics are clean and strong.

"What improvement do I expect this season? Piper seems more confident in her skills and she is more aggressive in upgrading all her

routines. This will help her overall performance and scores. She has been very aggressive in improving all four of her events, but especially bars and beam. These two events tend to be the most physically and mentally challenging to most gymnasts."

Weldon has high expectations of O'Rourke.

"I want to see her take more of a leadership role with her team," Weldon said. "She is a hard worker in the gym and she gets along great

with all girls, especially coming from four other neighboring districts. Many of her younger teammates look up to her. Piper has worked hard this past summer by conditioning and trying new skills. She is very motivated in making it to the state meet because she was close two years in a row.

"Piper played varsity volleyball and did track and Field for Frankenmuth. I have no idea if she is pursuing athletics in college. If she is, it would be in track and field for pole vaulting."

Piper O'Rourke, a junior from Frankenmuth High School, is her third year on the Vassar gymnastics team and she is an all-around performer.



# Mount Pleasant Cheerleader 'An Amazing Flyer'

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Mount Pleasant competitive cheer coach Sydney Reynolds is looking forward to seeing what one of her talent performers, senior flyer Nevaeh Trainor will be able to do this season.

"Nevaeh has improved so much as an athlete and as a person," Reynolds said. "She has always had a positive attitude and keeps everyone smiling. Over the past four years as a varsity cheerleader she has been a key role in all of her seasons. She has become an amazing flyer and has also become one of our best tumblers on our team. Her drive to want to be better helps not only her, but her teammates as well.

"Nevaeh has been on varsity for four years including her freshman year. She has been in all three rounds for three of her four years

while on the team. She has been on the Saginaw Valley League 1st Team, the Saginaw Valley League Academic team and has received a scholar athlete award through Mount Pleasant High School."

It's no secret why Trainor has been successful.

"Some major keys to Nevaeh's success is her drive to better herself and her team," Reynolds said. "She is always pushing to become a better cheerleader and teammate. Nevaeh is always there to bring the positive light to the team and keep everyone laughing and smiling.

"I expect major tumbling improvements from Nevaeh this season. She is working hard on gaining new tumbling skills and I am already seeing improvement this early in the season. I am also expecting improvement in her stunting abilities. Trying new stunts is exciting for her and she

loves twisting so twisting out of new body positions is something I am looking forward to from Nevaeh."

Reynolds has been impressed with Trainor's improvement.

"Nevaeh has improved in her leadership from the 2020-2021 season," Reynolds said. "She is now a senior so she isn't afraid to say something to the team. Nevaeh's tumbling confidence has also improved since last season. She used to get into her head while working on new skills and now she is still learning how to get over some mental blocks.

"One of Nevaeh's most memorable moments was at our district competition which we were hosting. In the middle of round 3 her shoe came off. Her face and everyone's face looked panicked but they just kept going. I remember the team running off of the mat and Nevaeh being

terrified that her team was going to be so mad at her for causing a penalty. Now we look back on that competition and laugh."

Expectations are high.

"I expect Nevaeh to have fun and enjoy her final season," Reynolds said, "and to take in everything that goes on in practice, competitions, the warm up room, team dinners, every little thing this season. I expect her to keep lifting up her teammates when they need a smile and keep her positive attitude no matter the situation.

"You can tell she works hard in the off season. You can tell how hard she works in her skills and strength as a tumbler. I can totally see Nevaeh cheering in college. She is looking into Central Michigan University to further her academic and athletic career."

Mount Pleasant senior flyer Nevaeh Trainor and her teammates are set for a unique season.

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# Tumbler-Flyer Plays Key Role For P-W

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Pewamo-Westphalia's competitive cheer team has a state contending team thanks to many talented athletes such as junior Emma Flannigan, a third-year varsity performer and tumbler/flyer.

One of P-W's coaches, Amber Weber, said constant off-season work, continual positive and uplifting attitude has been keys behind Flannigan's success.

"Emma has shown us each week that she is only here to improve and give us her personal best," Weber said. "She is always showing us how much she loves this sport not only by her own attitude but also helping her teammates better themselves, mentally and physically. She has been working on her back tuck like crazy. We expect to see this added in numerous areas of our round 3 this year.

"She has constantly been showing us her improvements

in her jumping, motions and especially her tumbling. Since she was a freshman, this girl has shown consistent improvements in all she does, but especially her tumbling. She has been trying to perfect them to the best of her ability. Emma has very few fears. She falls, she gets back up. She stumbles? No problem. She comes right back with vengeance and proves she can do anything."

Weber has been impressed with Flannigan's work habits.

"The minute she walks off the mat from state finals, Emma is ready to start the next season," Weber said. "There is never a day that passes where she is not putting her heart into this sport. Emma is always willing to put in the extra time and make sure she is not only improving herself but helping her teammates. She has always been so positive and encouraging. She never lets anyone feel down and if they do, she is the first to be there to cheer them up.

"Emma is quite the universal cheerleader. She's not only a

fearless tumbler but also is a fantastic, determined flyer. Anything is possible."

P-W was second at the state meet last year.

"Of course it was not the exact outcome we had hoped for but as always, we greatly accepted the silver medal and know we did everything we could, leaving with no regrets," Thompson said. "The P-W Cheer program has been a well-known success story. With that being said, we have had our fair share of talented cheerleaders throughout the decades. Our program started with some of the current cheerleaders moms, aunts, cousins. It's a 'family business' and year after year we look forward to seeing what newcomers we will have and the cheer legacy they continue to carry on.

"This year we have an extremely young team. One senior is Halie Myers, our own, coach Staci Myers daughter. She has been with this program since she was 3 years old so it's no surprise that she knows her way around the gym. Halie has

worked her way to the center of our round 1 year. She is constantly working in the weight room and exercising to become stronger each year. Because of her strength, she not only can fly but is a shoo-in for a main base in our round 3, giving confidence to our younger freshman and sophomore flyers. She has been one of a kind since she was officially part of this team and we know she will continue to do great things this year and many years to come."

As for expectations this year, "as always, we will fight until the bitter end," Weber said. "We teach our girls from the very beginning to never give up, always stay confident and trust in each other. If you do all of those things, there will always be a success story to tell."

Attitudes will be a key for P-W.

"We have a lot of new faces to this cheer program which we couldn't be more excited about," Weber said. "Some have never stepped foot into a cheer gym. However, you would never be able to tell from looking at them. From the very start, they have remained laser focused and stayed

encouraging and positive towards one another. These girls are a breath of fresh air for the program and we can't wait to watch them do great things.

"Each week we plan to continue working on our crispness in all 3 rounds. Our jumps, tumbling and strength in stunting. We know if they continue to do this, in no time, we will be right where we want to be."



P-W junior Emma Flannigan, is a third-year varsity performer and tumbler/flyer.

# Improved Numbers Has Ionia Swimming Team Primed For Improvement

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Growth is the key work for the Ionia boys swimming program. With more swimmers coming out for the sport the Bulldogs look to continue to build the program and lower their times.

Ionia will miss graduated senior JJ Harris and Joel Cairns. Harris and Cairns were the first four-year swimmers to graduate since 2015. The duo filled a number of key roles on last year's squad as Harris competed in the 100 butterfly and diving while Cairns was a standout in the 500 freestyle, breaststroke and 200 IM during his career with

the Bulldogs.

This year's squad is led by a pair of seniors in their fourth year with the program. Kenny Felice is a standout in the breaststroke while Xander Lange is a standout in the backstroke and also competes in a number of other events. Senior Andrew Gerdis is back for his second year with the team. Gerdis is also solid in the backstroke and can swim other events.

Ionia has a number of new swimmers out for the squad this season highlighted by freshman Carl Goeckel.

"Although Carl is a freshman, he is not new to the world of

competitive swimming," said Ionia coach Laura Cairns, "so we're looking forward to some fast swimming from him."

Ionia also continues to see its diving roster grow with Elijah Peterson, Hannah Wirtz, Tayvon Schwab and Connor Hickok leading the way.

With improved numbers, Ionia is primed for improved results and times this season.

"We have high expectations for everyone," Cairns said. "With much better numbers this season we hope to put a win or two in the books. There's a lot of room for growth also as the majority of the

new swimmers are underclassmen. Our biggest expectation is that each swimmer will return next year and bring more with them."



Cairns also likes the work ethic and determination shown by this year's team.

"We have many strengths this season," Cairns said. "We have lots

of new swimmers who have great attitudes and the willingness to work toward improvement every day. Swimming is a demanding sport to pick up. All of the young men and women on the team truly show their grit by learning and getting stronger every day."

Continuing to sharpen their skills and techniques is a key to success this season.

"From a purely technical standpoint, they need to continue improving on technique and stamina," Cairns said. "Most are transitioning from recreational swimmers to competitive swimmers. The learning curve is steep."

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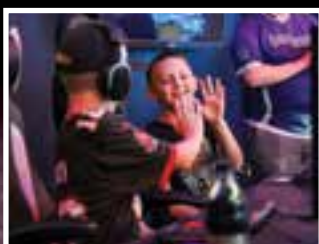
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