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### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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

What a start to the new school year it has been!!!!!! Area athletes and teams have begun the 2022-23 high school season in a big way with outstanding performances across all sports around the regional. From outstanding football teams and games to thrilling volleyball matches, impressive golf scores, sizzling times on the cross-country courses, solid play on the tennis courts, great swims and dives in the pool and great action on the soccer field, our area athletes are busy making memories they will treasure forever.

When it comes to football the greater Mid-Michigan area is home to some of the best teams in the state. From Mason in the southern reaches of the coverage area east through Williamston, Durand and New Lothrop, north to Gladwin and west to Rockford and Howard City Tri-County and points in between, the area will be well represented come playoff time next month.

Area cross-country runners are posting some impressive times too. Both in the boys and girls races area runners are on the fast track this season.

Inside, area volleyball teams are making a name for themselves as well. Rockford in Division 1, Lake-wood-Lake Odessa, Frankenmuth and Birch Run in Division 2, Pewamo-Westphalia in Division 3 and Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart and Lansing Christian in Division 4 all have teams ranked in the top ten or honorable-mention in the state volleyball polls.

On the soccer field, Okemos in Division 1, DeWitt in Division 2, Flint Powers and Frankenmuth in Division 3 and Lansing Christian in Division 4 also show up in the top ten or honorable-mention.

With some color beginning to show on the leaves, it must mean we are getting close to state tournament action getting underway. Check out High School Sports next month for coverage of state tournaments taking place in October and a preview of the state football playoffs.

A big shout out to all our advertisers and sponsors, who make High School Sports Scene Magazine possible. We would not be able to keep the kids in the news without your help.

See you at the games!



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## Mt. Pleasant Relying On Total-Team Effort To Put Together Strong Season

### David Cook Sports Scene

Heading into the season with inexperience along both lines and facing some strong competition right off the bat, the Mt. Pleasant football team knew it had some challenges in front of it. So far, the young Oiler linemen is meeting many of those challenges.

"We are really happy with where we are at right now," said Mt. Pleasant coach Jason McIntyre. "We looked at the schedule before season and we had some powerhouse programs on the front end. Teams like Midland, Traverse City Central, Cadillac and Bay City Central. So far we're pretty excited about where we are at. We like what we've accomplished so far."

The Oilers have turned in some strong efforts in those games including a 51-29 win against Midland, 27-21 against Traverse City Central, 27-24 against Cadillac and 46-18 against Bay City Western.

"It has been a combined effort McIntyre said. "The big thing is how explosive we've been on offense. We have some explosive playmakers in Max Humphrey and Scooter Polk. We've also grown in some areas. Our defensive line is making good progress. We only returned two starters on the offensive line and we've had a host of guys who have stepped up there."

Along the defensive line, the Oilers are getting strong play from nose guard Grant Stahl. An all-state wrestler, Stahl did not play last year but has come in and made an impact this season. Senior linebacker Blake Moore, a backup last year, has stepped up and is a key part of the defense this season.

Along the offensive line, juniors Andrew Dennis and Kal Kowallic were starters as sophomores and have stepped up as veteran leaders this season. Junior Ed Molyneux stood out along the offensive line the first four weeks of the season before suffering an injury. Junior

guard Trevor Combs has stepped up as has Brennen Bunker who is in his first year as the starting center.

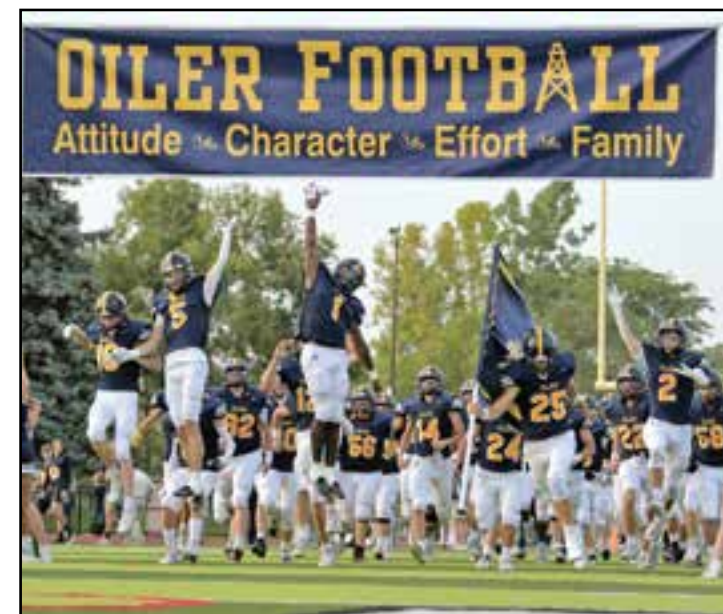
"We have some young guys who have stepped up and are playing better," McIntyre said. "We ran the ball very well in our last game against Western. We've had some injuries and guys changing positions and we've had a host of guys helping out."

Junior quarterback Logan Borodychuk has also stepped up big in his first season as a starter.

"Logan has had a real good year," McIntyre said. "He is leading the league in passing and he's done a great job of getting our playmakers the ball. He's also thrown just one interception in five games and is making good decisions."

Borodychuk has plenty of playmakers to work with.

"Max has been a little banged up but he's still had a few 100-yard plus rushing games," McIntyre said.



A total-team effort has the Mt. Pleasant football team putting together a strong all-around season so far this fall.

"Scooter had four touchdowns and was voted the Homecoming King in the Western game. Aidan Klein has also been making plays and we have a handful of other guys that we can count on for big plays also."

With the second half of the season and the playoffs ahead, the Oilers are looking to keep the

momentum going.

"At this point we want to get as healthy as we can," McIntyre said. "We are going to rely on some other players and backups to make a difference. That is why we reach to all our guys to always be ready. A lot of other guys are going to get opportunities."

## Mason Football Team Using Balanced Attack To Stay Undefeated

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Led by a potent offense that is scoring points in bunches, the Mason football team is off to a strong start this season.

Mason opened the season by reeling off four straight wins. A big key to the early success is a balanced offense that can chew up big chunks of yardage through the air or on the ground. The Bulldog offense has scored at least five touchdowns in every game this season and scored 50 or more points in two of the first four games.

"Our season is progressing just fine," said Mason coach Gary Houghton. "We are coming

together as a team and the players are believing in the process.

A big part of that process is an offense that can strike opposing defenses in a variety of ways.

"Our strengths are our passing and running game balance," Houghton said. "We have many different looks that make our offense very productive."

Putting the Mason offense in motion is quarterback Cason Carswell. Carswell has a pair of dynamic wide receivers to throw to in Colin Page and Kaleb Parrish. Mason also has a one-two punch in the running game. AJ Martel and Derek Badgley can wear down opposing defenses with their tag-team approach of sharing the workload at running back.

Paving the way for the running backs and providing Carswell with ample time to throw the ball is a solid group of offensive linemen. Brian Ingram, Hunley Horn, Grant Gilchrist and Noah Frederick are among the linemen leading the way for the Bulldogs.

Mason is not all about putting points on the scoreboard as the Bulldog defense has also been getting the job done. Among the defenders stepping up on defense are Malik Popp, Badgley, Frederick, Gilchrist, Horn and Parrish.

"Our defense is getting better every week," Houghton said.

Having a strong defense to complement an explosive offense will be key for the Bulldogs who are looking to put together a deep



The Mason football team started the season strong with wins in their first six games including a big Cedar Street rivalry win against Holt.

playoff run after advancing to the Division 3 state semifinals last year where they fell to eventual D3 state champion Detroit King.

Mason returns several players off that team and has the experience to handle the rigors of the state playoffs. Not only are the Bulldogs experienced, but the experience is

not just concentrated in the senior class.

"This team is unique in the sense that we are young and experienced at the same time," Houghton said. "We have several players that are second and third-year varsity players, the majority of which are not seniors."

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# Balanced Offense, Strong Defense Has Williamston Football Team Off To A Strong Start

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

With a balanced offense and a stingy defense leading the way, the Williamston football team is off to a strong start this season.

The Hornets are among the top teams in the state in Division 5 this season. Williamston opened the season with a 30-12 win against Division 3 Zeeland East and then blanked defending Division 6 state champion Lansing Catholic 22-0. Williamston's lone loss this season was a hard-fought 37-29 decision against Division 3

powerhouse Mason.

"I feel pretty good about the season so far," said Williamston coach Stever Kersten. "We are 4-1 and lost to Mason in a real battle. Mason is a very, very good team and I think that game will prepare us well for future challenges and the playoffs."

Williamston is led on offense by senior quarterback Alex Petersburg who is in his second season as the starter.

"Alex threw for a hundred yards and ran for a hundred yards in our last game against Fowlerville," Kersten

said. "He is an outstanding leader and humble young man. He can run, he's super smart and he can find the open receiver."

The Hornets also have a solid ground game led by running backs Noah Dunckel and Ollie Brown.

"Noah is a solid 195 pounds and he can gain yards when nothing is there," Kersten said. "Ollie is more of a speedy, shifty back. Both are juniors and both are very good at running the ball."

Paving the way for the backs is a young and improving offensive line.

"Luke Chambers started for us last year and he's a very steady player," Kersten said. "Senior Will Geiger is in his first year starting at center and senior Austin Jones is a tackle doing a very good job for us. Our offensive line is coming along."

Our receivers and slot backs have a lot of athletic ability. We spread the ball around a lot and we have a lot of guys doing a great job at those positions."

On defense, the Hornets are led



The Williamston football team has relied on a total-team effort to start the season strong with a 5-1 record.

by outside linebacker Joey Mahaney. Williamston has a strong pair of linebackers led by senior Zach Wagner and Brown. The secondary is solid with Petersburg at free safety and Dunckel at the other safety spot.

"We are pretty good in the back end," Kersten said. "Joey is a great run stopper and Zach Wagner has really stepped up his game as a senior. Ollie Brown is playing well. He's aggressive and makes a lot of plays at the line of scrimmage."

The defensive line is led by junior nose guard Ian young and Cooper Keener who is in his first year as a starter.

"We have a great group of guys," Kersten said. "They are forming a brotherhood and play for each other. The culture on this team is very good. We also have a lot of kids with 4.0 grade-point averages. We just have to remain consistent and work hard to improve every day."

for the first time in his career.

Mahaney's wrestling skills come in handy on the football field.

"Joey is a wrestler and he's good at those two-leg takedowns," Kersten said. "He squares up and he hits them. He gets to the ball carriers legs and takes them down. He just tackles so well and does a great job in space. He is an old-school, blue-collar player who makes plays. He wants teams to run the ball at him."

During the spring and summer, Mahaney can be found on the baseball diamond. A centerfielder who can play all three outfield positions, Mahaney hit over .300 for Williamston during the season and then hit over .300 with his summer baseball team.

Academically, Mahaney is looking to major in architecture or construction management in college.

that football is his favorite sport.

"Football became my favorite sport during my sophomore year when we made it to the state semifinals," Mahaney said. "After that season I really began to focus on football. I just got my third college offer and I'm talking to a couple other schools."

Lawrence Tech was the third school to offer Mahaney who was also offered by St. John's of Minnesota and Mt. Union of Ohio.

During the winter season Mahaney is a member of the Williamston wrestling team. Last season Mahaney qualified for the individual state finals at 171 pounds

Bilina said Riley "is probably the best athlete in Midland County/Jack

Pine Conference and a 3-year starter." Nick Metzger (WR/DB) Nick Keene (DL/OL) and Spencer Nohel (LB/RB) are key players for Sanford Meridian.

"We expect to be competitive in all of our games," Bilina said. "We have gained a lot of experience from last season. We feel we can surprise some teams this year. We have a dynamic player in Brayden Riley. He will create tough matchups for teams. Our offensive line has shown the most improvement so far."



Meridian's Brayden Riley.

# Balanced Offense Has Ithaca Football Team Scoring Points In Bunches This Season

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

With a high-scoring offense putting up video-game numbers and a defense that is improving by the week, the Ithaca football team is off to a strong start this season.

The Yellowjackets started off the season with a bang by defeating Homer 60-39. After a stumble against unbeaten Standish-Sterling in week two, Ithaca has reeled off three straight wins to up its record to 4-1 at the midway point of the season.

"I've been pleased with how the season is going," said Ithaca coach Jordan Hessbrook. "The kids have been playing well. They have done a good job of responding to adversity and responding to success. They have kept their focus and I'm pleased with that. We still have work to do but I'm happy with where we are at right now."

On offense, the Yellowjackets feature a balanced attack. Senior quarterback Bronson Bupp has improved as a passer and is a dangerous runner. Bupp and running back Noah Risner lead

the team in rushing.

"Bronson has looked more confident at the quarterback position this year," Hessbrook said. "The guys along the offensive line have played well both in the run and the passing game. Our wide receivers have also done a good job both in the passing game and blocking in the run game."

Ethan Hull is Ithaca's go-to receiver in the pass game with Ryley White and Charlie Martyn also providing strong play at wideout. The Yellowjackets are deep at wideout with Joe Dawe, Owen Mikulka and Kaleb Hallock also providing contributions at receiver.

Up front, the offensive line is led by senior standouts Kaleb Peska, Jeffrey Lombard and Mason VanCamp.

"I'm please with our offensive line," Hessbrook said. "There is always work to do but we have a pretty smart group that communicates and works really well together."

On defense, the Yellowjackets continue to

improve by the week.

"We're getting better defensively," Hessbrook said. "We gave up some points the first two weeks to two pretty good football teams but since then we have been steadily improving."

Kaleb Peska is the leader of the defense from his Mike linebacker position. Outside linebacker Nathan Mikesell and defensive lineman Brandon Pass have played the run really well according to Hessbrook while Noah Risner has played well at the other inside linebacker spot. Charlie Martyn leads the team in interceptions and is the leader in the secondary. The defensive line is also getting a big effort from Trent Polish whose work does not always show up in the stat book.

"Trent is a tough kid inside who clogs holes and frees up our linebackers to make tackles," Hessbrook said.

Ithaca is looking to accomplish one of its main goals for the season when it plays Michigan Lutheran Seminary in on October 7 with the



While the offense has been putting up some impressive numbers this season, the Ithaca defense has also been busy shutting down opposing offenses.

league title on the line.

"The first goal we set for ourselves is to win the league and we will have that opportunity against MLS," Hessbrook said. "MLS is a very good team with a very good quarterback and a very good group around him. We are looking to finish the season strong and grow and improve every week and get ready for the playoffs."



# Multi-Sport Athlete Joey Mahaney Leading The Charge For Williamston Defense

## Butc Hamon Sports Scene

Defense has been a strong suit for the Williamston football team this season and senior multi-sport athlete Joey Mahaney is at the core of the Hornet defense.

A versatile, all-around athlete, it's no surprise that Mahaney plays a versatile role in the Williamston defensive scheme. A hybrid-type defender, Mahaney plays a combination of outside linebacker/nickel back for the Hornets where he can impact the game in a variety of ways.

"Joey is a great run stopper and is good against the pass," said Williamston coach Steve Kersten. "He is a very good player who has Division 2 and Division 3 colleges looking at him. He is the type of player who can take away one side of the field."

Mahaney himself models his game after University of Alabama outside linebacker Will Anderson who is considered the premier defensive player in college football due to his ability to impact games in a variety of roles on defense.

A standout wrestler and baseball player for Williamston, Mahaney says

that football is his favorite sport.

"Football became my favorite sport during my sophomore year when we made it to the state semifinals," Mahaney said. "After that season I really began to focus on football. I just got my third college offer and I'm talking to a couple other schools."

Lawrence Tech was the third school to offer Mahaney who was also offered by St. John's of Minnesota and Mt. Union of Ohio.

During the winter season Mahaney is a member of the Williamston wrestling team. Last season Mahaney qualified for the individual state finals at 171 pounds

# Meridian Senior Has College Potential

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Sanford Meridian football coach Mike Bilina is confident he has a true college football prospect in senior quarterback Brayden Riley, also a defensive back.

"Brayden is extremely talented," Bilina said. "He was on the state championship 4x200 relay team this past spring. He's a four-sport athlete last year in football, basketball, baseball and track

In week 1 vs. Bullock Creek, Riley had 17 carries for 220 yards and two TDs and passed 9-of-20 for 112 yards and one TD.

"He puts the time in the weight room and watching film," Bilina said. "He has ability to start and stop when running full speed and it is impressive. He is taking more ownership in this team. Being a senior captain is important and he has a strong desire to be successful. He has impressed me with his athletic ability. He does things that I

haven't seen during my tenure as the head coach (10 years). He makes guys miss and I can't explain how he does it.

"The sky's the limit with him. He will have the opponent's attention each week."

Riley definitely has college potential, his coach said.

"Brayden might be one of the biggest secrets in Mid-Michigan from an athletic standpoint. I'm hoping the secret gets out," Bilina said.

Pine Conference and a 3-year starter."

Nick Metzger (WR/DB) Nick Keene (DL/OL) and Spencer Nohel (LB/RB) are key players for Sanford Meridian.

"We expect to be competitive in all of our games," Bilina said. "We have gained a lot of experience from last season. We feel we can surprise some teams this year. We have a dynamic player in Brayden Riley. He will create tough matchups for teams. Our offensive line has shown the most improvement so far."

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# HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE FOOTBALL ROUND UP

## Area Football Teams Putting Up Impressive Numbers As Season Reaches Halfway Point

### Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The high school football season has hit the halfway point of the regular season and a host of area teams are on track to earn spots in the state playoffs. Following is a look at who some of the top teams are in the area and how the season is progressing in each division for area teams. The top 36 teams in each division across the state qualify for the playoffs and the top 16 teams in the two 8-player divisions qualify for the playoffs.

#### DIVISION 1

**Rockford** is off to another outstanding season as it is tied for second in the state in Division 2. The Rams have a 5-0 record that includes an impressive win against Muskegon Mona Shores. The Ram offense, led by quarterback Mac Vandenhout, is averaging 40.3 points per game and that includes a 2-0 forfeit win against Grand Haven.

**Davison** has turned in a 4-1 record while playing a brutal schedule. The Cardinals opened the season in a big way with a 28-



Midland is chasing down a playoff berth after missing post-season play last year.

21 win against Clarkston. Davison's lone loss was a 44-34 setback against Detroit Catholic Central.

**Grand Ledge** is on track for a playoff berth as it has a 4-1 record. The Comets picked up a key 29-28 win against Jackson and also defeated a tough Waverly squad. Grand Ledge has a tough second-half of the season looming with games against DeWitt, Lapeer and East Lansing.

#### DIVISION 2

**Midland** is turning in a solid bounce-back season after going 2-7 last fall. The Chemics feature a potent offense that is putting up 36.4 points per game this season. Midland has posted impressive early-season wins against Cadillac and Traverse City Central with the lone loss coming against an unbeaten Mt. Pleasant squad.

**East Lansing** is putting together a solid season and is 11<sup>th</sup> in the state in D2 playoff points. The Trojans are scoring points in bunches averaging 36.6 points per game. East Lansing opened the season with four straight wins before dropping a 28-21 decision to Grand Blanc in week five.

**Saginaw Heritage** has been one of the surprise teams of the season. The Hawks reeled off three straight wins to begin the season including a big week-three win against Grand Blanc. The Hawks feature an explosive offense that is putting up 45.6 points per game. The two losses came against a 4-1 Davison squad and a seven-point loss to undefeated Lapeer.

**Bay City Western** is hanging tough in the rugged Saginaw Valley North and is 25<sup>th</sup> overall in playoff average. Western is tied for second in the conference and has posted wins against Traverse City West and Midland Dow. The offense has big a big reason for success this season averaging 36.6 points per game.

**Midland Dow** is looking to

continue a string of nine straight playoff appearances. The Chargers are led by quarterback Jack Bakus who has helped Dow average 29.6 points per game. The schedule is backloaded so the Chargers will need to be at their best as they close out the season with games



Mt. Pleasant is one of the top teams in the state in Division 3 this season.

against Heritage, Mt. Pleasant and Dow.

#### DIVISION 3

**Mt. Pleasant** suffered some heavy graduation losses last spring but the results so far this season show that the Oilers have reloaded in a big way. Mt. Pleasant is second in the state in Division 2 in playoff points and has started the season off with key wins against Midland and Bay City Western. The Oiler offense has been in overdrive all season, averaging 38.6 points per game.

After reaching the Division 3 state semifinals last season, **Mason** is putting together an impressive encore so far this season. Mason is fourth in the state in playoff points in Division 3. The Bulldogs reeled off five straight wins to begin the

season including big wins against Williamston (37-29) and Haslett (28-13). The Bulldog offense is putting up 44.8 points per game while the defense is holding teams to 14.8 points per game. Mason is also on track for its third unbeaten regular season in the past four years.

**Lowell** is in the middle of a rebound year. The Red Arrows, who are ninth in the state in Division 3 playoff points, won their first three games this season before falling to Byron Center. The Red Arrow offense is clicking this season as they have scored 43 or more points in all four of their wins.

**Lansing Waverly** has been one of the surprise teams of the 2022 season. The Warriors kicked off the season in a big way with an 18-7 win against Lansing Catholic and then added wins against Sexton and Everett to start the season 3-0. Waverly boasts a potent offense averaging 30.2 points per game. To stay on a playoff path Waverly has to navigate a rugged schedule down the stretch with games against Holt, East Lansing, Haslett and DeWitt.

**DeWitt** is 15<sup>th</sup> in the state in playoff points in Division 3. The Panthers, who needed to replace a large group of standout seniors from last year, have faced a gauntlet of a schedule that began with a big win at Michigan Stadium against Haslett. The Panthers then staged a huge comeback win against Portland in week two before coming up just short against Detroit Catholic Central in week three and East Lansing in week five.

**Haslett** is 27<sup>th</sup> in the state in playoff points in Division 3. The Vikings have been humming on offense averaging 41.8 points per game. Haslett has faced a rugged schedule with the two losses coming against DeWitt and Mason. The Vikings wrap up the season with a trio of tough games against Williamston, Waverly and Jackson and have their playoff fate in their own hands.

#### DIVISION 4

**Charlotte** is off to one of its best



East Lansing opened the season with four straight wins.

starts to the season in years. The Orioles reached the halfway mark with a perfect 5-0 record and are 11<sup>th</sup> in the state in Division 4 in playoff points. Charlotte kicked off the season with a big 29-22 win against Olivet and added a 16-13 win against Lansing Catholic. The Orioles boast a potent offense putting up 38-6 points per game while the defense is allowing just 13.4 points per game. Charlotte faces a huge league showdown against Portland in week six.

**Freeland** is coming off one of the finest seasons in school history last year. While the Falcons were hit hard by graduation, a new group of players have stepped up and have led the team to a 4-1 record. Freeland is averaging 39 points per game and has a defense that is holding teams to 10 points per game. The Falcons, 20<sup>th</sup> in the state in Division 4 in playoff points, reeled off four straight wins to start the season kicked off by an opening-night win against Clare.

**Big Rapids** is on the cusp of qualifying for the playoff. The Cardinals have a 3-2 record and are second in the Central State Activities Conference. Big Rapids features an offense that is putting up 36 points per game.



The DeWitt football team picked up a big early-season home win against Portland.

#### DIVISION 5

**Frankenmuth** reached the state finals two years ago and this year's edition of the Eagles is poised for another deep playoff run. The 5-0 Eagles sit atop the playoff points ranking in D5 led by an offense that is putting up 37.8 points per game and a defense that has posted two shutouts this season and is allowing just six points per game. The Eagles also have impressive wins against Freeland, Goodrich and Birch Run.

**Belding** is turning in a season that will remind fans of the glory days of Irv Sigler Sr. Belding is off to a 5-0 start and is fourth in the state in playoff points in Division 5. The Black Knights feature an impressive offense that has scored 40 or more points in all five games this season and is averaging 51 points per game.

**Corunna** opened the season by posting four straight wins. The Cavaliers claimed big wins against Fowlerville and Pinckney and also pitched a pair of shutouts before

suffering their first loss against Goodrich. The Cavaliers are averaging 27.8 points per game on offense and allowing 16.6 points per game on defense.

**Gladwin** has been putting up numbers as impressive as any team in the state. The 5-0 Flying G's are averaging 41.2 points per game on offense with a defense that is allowing just seven points per game. That defense started the season with four straight shutouts while the offense scored 50 or more points in four of the five wins.

**Williamston** is ninth in the state in Division 5 in playoff points and have a 4-1 record with the lone loss coming against Division 4 unbeaten Mason. The Hornets started the season strong with a big win against Zeeland East and a 22-0 shutout against Lansing Catholic.

**Howard City Tri-County** is off to one of its best starts to the season in several years. The undefeated Vikings have a high-powered offense that is putting up 47.2 points per game while the defense is allowing 18 points per game. Tri-County picked up a huge league win by knocking off long-time conference powerhouse Reed City 48-40.

**Portland** is 14<sup>th</sup> in the state in D5 in playoff points and are just within a few seconds of having an undefeated record. Led by running back Drew Miller, pound-for-pound one of the top players in the area, the Raiders are putting up 38.8 points per game and were 12 seconds away from defeating DeWitt in week two. Portland faces a rugged home stretch to the season with games against Charlotte, Lansing Catholic, Cadillac and Berrien Springs.

**Swan Valley** has made the playoffs the past 10 years and the Vikings are 26<sup>th</sup> in playoff points in D5 this season. The 3-2 Vikings have a productive offense putting up 29 points per game. Swan Valley's two losses came in the

first week of the season against unbeaten Frankenmuth and Crosswell-Lexington.

**Birch Run** is looking for its first winning season since 2018. The Panthers are led by standout running back Kahleel Brown who is one of the leading rushers in the state. Brown is the focal point of an offense that is putting up 31.4 points per game.

**Lakewood-Lake Odessa** is also aiming for its first winning season since 2018 and the Vikings are 29<sup>th</sup> in playoff points in D5. Lake O's lone loss came to undefeated Belding in the season opener and the Viking offense has been a force since as the team is averaging 31.8 points per game.

**Shepherd** is turning in a resurgent season under new coach Irv Sigler Jr. The Bluejays are 3-2 at the halfway mark and would qualify for the playoffs as they are 31<sup>st</sup> in playoff points in D5. Shepherd has a tough schedule down the stretch with games against Clare and Ithaca still on the slate.

#### DIVISION 6

**Durand** is putting together one of its finest seasons in years. The Railroaders, who have the 11<sup>th</sup> best playoff point percentage in D6, opened the season with five straight wins. Included in the streak were a thrilling 56-52 win against Montrose and a 28-22 win against Ovid-Elsie. The Railroaders can score points in a hurry as they have topped the 50-point mark four times this season.

**Millington** opened the season with four straight wins before falling to Standish-Sterling in a battle of unbeatens. The Cardinals are averaging 43.8 points per game on offense and are giving up 15 points per game on defense.

**Ovid-Elsie** is 21<sup>st</sup> in the division in playoff points and have as tough a schedule as anyone. The Marauders two losses have come against Portland and Durand

while one of their wins was a 16-6 defensive gem against Montrose. O-E still have New Lothrop and Corunna on the slate in the final weeks of the regular season.

**Lansing Catholic** has hit some bumps in the road after winning the D6 state title last year. The Cougars opened the season with losses against Waverly, Williamston and Charlotte before regrouping for a pair of wins. The Cougar defense has been stingy allowing 11.2 points per game. The final weeks of the season will not be easy with Portland and Pewamo-Westphalia still on the schedule.

**Sanford-Meridian** is aiming to post its first winning season since 2019. After an opening-night loss to Bullock Creek, Meridian reeled off three straight wins before falling to Gladwin.

**Clare** is 29<sup>th</sup> in the state in D6 in playoff points. The Pioneers have a 3-2 mark with a loss to open the season against Freeland and a loss in week five to unbeaten Gladwin. Clare is averaging 32 points per game this season.

**Chesaning** is 32<sup>nd</sup> in playoff points in D6. Chesaning won three of its first four games this season and is putting up 25.2 points per game. The two losses came against unbeaten New Lothrop and Montrose with major hurdles against Durand and Ovid-Elsie left on the slate.

**Laingsburg** is two spots away from qualifying for the playoffs. The Wolfpack opened the season with losses against unbeaten Durand and defending D7 state champion Pewamo-Westphalia before responding with three straight wins. The Wolfpack still have tough games against Fowler and Montrose in the second-half of the schedule.

#### DIVISION 7

**New Lothrop** won the Division 7 state title two years ago and the Hornets have another championship-worthy contender

this season. New Lothrop is sixth in the state in playoff points in Division 7 and has a 5-0 record. The Hornet offense, led by dual-threat quarterback Jack Kulhanek, is putting up 41.8 points per game. New Lothrop is equally as strong on defense allowing opponents just 4.2 points per game. The Hornet defense has also strung together three consecutive shutouts since week two. New Lothrop opened the season with a statement win by defeating Jackson Lumen Christi 12-7. The schedule down the stretch is challenging with games against Montrose, Ovid-Elsie and Durand.

**Ithaca** has been a virtual points-scoring machine this season. The Yellowjackets, 16<sup>th</sup> in playoff points in D7, are averaging a whopping 50.6 points per game. Led by do it all quarterback Bronson Bupp, have scored 59 or more points in three games this season.



Ithaca has one of the most potent offenses in the state averaging over 50 points per game.

**Pewamo-Westphalia** has won the Division 7 state title two out of the last three seasons. Making it three out of four this year will be

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Clare is looking to return to the playoffs this year in Division 6.

a major challenge for the Pirates who are 3-2 at the midway mark. The Pirates dropped their opener to Redford Union and then fell to Fowler in a week five conference showdown. The schedule remains challenging with a game against Olivet in week six and a meeting with Lansing Catholic in the regular-season finale.



Montrose is 21<sup>st</sup> in the state in Division 7 in playoff points. The Rams entered the season facing some major rebuilding and have responded with an offense that is putting up 38 points per game. Montrose has suffered league losses against Durand and Ovid-Elsie and still faces a matchup with New Lothrop in week six.

Bath is on course for a berth in the playoffs as it has reached the halfway point of the season with a 3-2 overall record. The Bees fell to Fowler and Laingsburg in league games and still have Pewamo-Westphalia on the slate.

Lakeview is just four spots away from qualifying for the playoffs. The Wildcats have faced a rugged schedule in the early going with losses against undefeated teams Kent City and Tri-County. Lakeview came up with a big effort in a 25-20 win against Allen Park Cabrini.

**DIVISION 8**

Michigan Lutheran Seminary is among the top Division 8 schools in the state this season. MLS has a perfect 5-0 record and is fourth in the state in playoff points in Division 8. Led by standout quarterback Evan Wakefield, the Cardinals are averaging 46.6 points per game and have a defense that is allowing just 10.2 points per game. MLS has some tough hurdles yet to clear with games against Saginaw Nouvel and Ithaca remaining.

Beal City reached the Division 8 state title game last season and the Aggies have another team

Beal City is off to a 5-0 start this season and is looking to return to the state finals.

capable of a deep playoff run. Beal City is fifth in the state in playoff points in D8 and has a 5-0 record. The Aggies opened the season in a big way with a 22-21 win against Ravenna. That win avenged last year's loss to Ravenna when the Aggies dropped a 21-20 decision. Beal City is averaging 31.6 points per game and the Aggie defense is surrendering 12 points per game.

Fowler took command of first place in the CMAC with a thrilling 20-16 win against Pewamo-Westphalia in week five. The Eagles are seventh in the state in playoff points and feature a stingy defense that is allowing just 8.8 points per game. Along with the win against Pewamo-Westphalia Fowler also came up with a big win against Carson City-Crystal.

Saginaw Nouvel is in the top ten in playoff points in Division 8 and has opened the season with a 4-1 record. The Panthers feature a potent offense that is hanging 39 points per game on the scoreboard. Nouvel's lone loss came against Ithaca and the schedule still has plenty of roadblocks with games against Michigan Lutheran Seminary and Standish-Sterling remaining.

Evert is battling it out with Beal City for the top spot in the Highland Conference. The Wildcats have a 4-1 record with the lone loss being a 26-21 loss to Beal City in a conference showdown. Led by quarterback Preston Wallace, Evert is averaging 38.6 points per game on offense. The Wildcats are also 13<sup>th</sup> in the state in Division 8 in playoff points.

Carson City-Crystal is doing a good job of being road warriors

this season as their stadium is under construction. After dropping the opener to Fowler, the Eagles have responded with four straight wins and are 18<sup>th</sup> in the state in playoff points. The Eagles are putting up 28.2 points per game and have a big 23-20 win against Riverview Gabriel Richard to their credit.

**8-Player Football Division 1**

Merrill is among the top teams in the state in Division 1 of 8-player football. The Vandals have a perfect 5-0 record at the midway point of the season and are third in the state in playoff points in D1. Merrill features a high-powered offense that is averaging 44.8 points per game along with a solid defense that is surrendering nine points per game. Merrill has key league wins against Breckenridge, Fulton-Middleton and Portland St. Patrick to its credit and faces unbeaten Morrice in a key Central Michigan 8-Man Conference game in week six.

Breckenridge is in position to qualify for the playoffs as they are 14<sup>th</sup> in points in Division 1. The Huskies have wins against Fulton-Middleton and Portland St. Patrick with both losses coming against league unbeaten Merrill and Morrice.

Fulton-Middleton is three spots away from qualifying for the playoffs. The Pirates have a potent offense that is putting up 44.6 points per game.

**8-Player Football Division 2**

Morrice is fourth in the state in Division 2 8-player football points and has a 5-0 record. Morrice is



Saginaw Nouvel is off to a 4-1 start this season with an offense averaging 39 points per game.

averaging 44.4 points per game on offense while the defense is allowing 12.8 points per game.

Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart is three spots away from qualifying for the playoffs. After opening the season with losses to Morrice and Fulton-Middleton, Sacred Heart reeled off three straight wins. The remaining schedule is daunting with games remaining against Breckenridge, Merrill and Portland St. Patrick.

Portland St. Patrick is tied for 19<sup>th</sup> in playoff points with Sacred Heart. St. Patrick opened the season with three straight wins before falling to Breckenridge and Merrill. Like Sacred Heart, the remaining schedule is difficult with games against Fulton, Morrice and Sacred Heart.

**HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE FOOTBALL STATS**

**PASSING YARDS**

Jaxon Laubscher, Breckenridge (8-man) 1,223  
Sam Rosales, Alma 1,134  
Ty Randall, Laingsburg 1,094  
Preston Wallace, Evert 1,026  
Braylen Himmelein, Davison 1,012  
Max Vandenhout, Rockford 972  
Jack Bakus, Midland Dow 927  
Dalen Adams, East Lansing 914  
Bronson Bupp, Ithaca 720  
Jack Kulhanek, New Lothrop 655  
Alex Fernandez, Lansing Catholic 542  
Austin Williams, Flushing 540  
Alex Petersburg, Williamston 512  
Alan Kaczanowski, Bay City Central 500  
Cade Coquillard, Essexville-Garber 496  
Colton Klein, Swan Valley 450

**PASSING TOUCHDOWNS**

Preston Wallace, Evert 16  
Max Vandenhout, Rockford 15  
Jack Kulhanek, New Lothrop 13  
Jaxon Laubscher, Breckenridge (8-man) 12  
Braylen Himmelein, Davison 11  
Ty Randall, Laingsburg 10  
Sam Rosales, Alma 9  
Dalen Adams, East Lansing 7  
Bronson Bupp, Ithaca 7  
Jack Bakus, Midland Dow 6  
Cade Coquillard, Essexville-Garber 6  
Alan Kaczanowski, Bay City Central 6  
Bruce Thelen, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 6

**RUSHING YARDS**

Bruce Thelen, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 1,271  
Kahleel Brown, Birch Run 924  
Amarion Jenkins, Flushing 740  
Evan Wakefield, Michigan Lutheran Seminary 691



Cole Hopkins, Evert 577  
Bryce Kurncz, DeWitt 549  
Logan Demarest, Bay City Glenn 513  
Austin Williams, Flushing 513  
Jack Kulhanek, New Lothrop 504  
Jay'len Flowers, Davison 478  
Braden Hill, Charlotte, 466  
Travis Tucker, Ionia 449  
Ben Grant, Lakeview 418  
AJ Hill, Davison 417  
Kale Snyder, Bullock Creek 414  
Alex Petersburg, Williamston 413  
Kanye Jackson, East Lansing 410

**RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS**

Bruce Thelen, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 15  
Kahleel Brown, Birch Run 14  
Amarion Jenkins, Flushing 11  
Evan Wakefield, Michigan Lutheran Seminary 10  
Jay'len Flowers, Davison 8  
Alex Petersburg, Williamston 8  
Ian Crump, Millington 7  
Kanye Jackson, East Lansing 7  
Bronson Bupp, Ithaca 6  
Cole Hopkins, Evert 6  
Jaxon Laubscher, Breckenridge (8-man) 6  
Nolan Mulcahy, New Lothrop 6  
Dallias Walsh, Millington 6  
Jack Bakus, Midland Dow 5  
Jalen Brown, Midland 5  
AJ Hill, Davison 5  
Landon Miller, Midland Dow 5  
Ty Randall, Laingsburg 5  
Kale Snyder, Bullock Creek 5  
Mason Stocker, Grand Ledge 5  
Travis Tucker, Ionia 5  
Austin Williams, Flushing 5

**RECEIVING YARDS**

Ryan Wolfgang, Breckenridge (8-man) 651  
Cade Sutherland, Alma 524  
Zack Parker, Midland Dow 534  
Evan Boyd, East Lansing 472  
Alex McLean, Rockford 449  
Jadon Podolak, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 423  
Dakobe White, Evert 419  
Teon Armstrong, Davison 390  
Ethan Hull, Ithaca 369  
Bryce Kurncz, DeWitt 360  
Connor Hulliberger, Laingsburg 330  
Marcel White, Evert 301  
Braylon Isom, Saginaw Heritage 294  
Dorijan Jackson, East Lansing 291  
Jack Borgman, Laingsburg 279  
Chase Stephens, Saranac 270  
Carson Dabrowski, Bay City Glenn 262

**RECEPTIONS**

Zack Parker, Midland Dow 41  
Ryan Wolfgang, Breckenridge (8-man) 33

Kanye Jackson, East Lansing

Alex McLean, Rockford 31  
Cade Sutherland, Alma 29  
Jack Borgman, Laingsburg 27  
Evan Boyd, East Lansing 26  
Marcel White, Evert 24  
Bryce Kurncz, DeWitt 22  
Connor Hulliberger, Laingsburg 21  
Delvon Pascoe-Ward, Alma 20  
Teon Armstrong, Davison 19  
Mitch Jackson, Saranac 19  
Ethan Hull, Ithaca 18  
Brandon Lewis, Lansing Catholic 18  
Dakobe White, Evert 18  
Jadon Podolak, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 17  
Carson Dabrowski, Bay City Glenn 15  
Chase Stephens, Saranac 15

**RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS**

Ryan Wolfgang, Breckenridge (8-man) 7  
Bryce Kurncz, DeWitt 6  
Cade Sutherland, Alma 6  
Dakobe White, Evert 6  
Ethan Hull, Ithaca 5  
Alex McLean, Rockford 5  
Zack Parker, Midland Dow 5  
Jadon Podolak, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 5  
Braylon Isom, Saginaw Heritage 4  
Teon Armstrong, Davison 4  
Noah Mulcahy, New Lothrop 4  
Brady Thompson, Rockford 4  
Teddy Williams, Grand Ledge 4

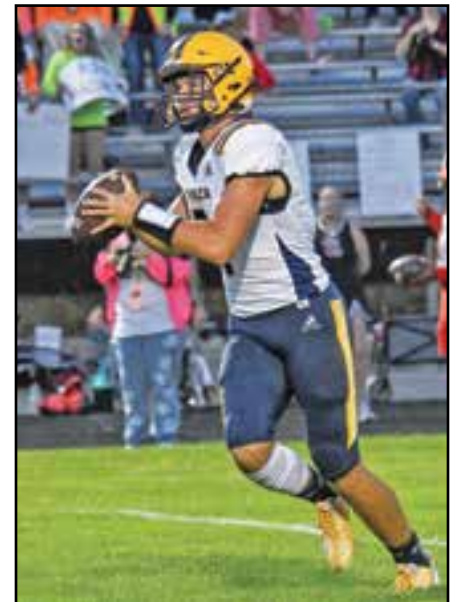
**TACKLES**

Cameron Raftery, Merrill (8-man) 60  
Collin Sitts, Breckenridge (8-man) 60  
Ben Sporman, Bay City Central 59  
Ethan Burrows, Essexville-Garber 57  
Zayne Moore, Morley-Stanwood 57  
Cole Hopkins, Evert, 53  
Carter Herriman, Davison 47  
Rick Beison, Rockford 45  
Bruce Thelen, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 45  
Westyn Bryant, Clare 44  
Cade Coquillard, Essexville-Garber 43  
William Eubank, Michigan Lutheran Seminary 41  
Kieran Jackson, East Lansing 41  
Timmy Faustin Michigan Lutheran Seminary 40  
Brady Houck, Charlotte, 40  
Kanye Jackson, East Lansing 40  
Jackson Vrable, Bay City Glenn 40

**SACKS**

Xzavior Garcia, Breckenridge (8-man) 8  
Devon Eaton, Charlotte 7  
Collin Sitts, Breckenridge (8-man) 7  
Kruz Rumsey, Morley-Stanwood 6.5  
Teddy Williams, Grand Ledge 5.5

Coaches, statisticians, High School Sports Scene Magazine wants to be the source for high school football stats this season. Feel free to contact us with any updates or statistics you have. Send any updates to [greg102300@yahoo.com](mailto:greg102300@yahoo.com). HSSS will be updating the football stats page on a daily basis.



Bronson Bupp, Ithaca

Brandon Pass, Ithaca 4.5  
Nathan Mikesell, Ithaca 3.5  
Jacob Brocht, Swan Valley 3  
Jaxen Clark, Davison 3  
Drew Ferguson, Rockford 3  
Garrett Forgash, Bay City Glenn 3  
Carter Herriman, Davison 3  
Kieran Jackson, East Lansing 3  
Colin Main, Frankenmuth 3  
Matthew Nehf, DeWitt 3  
Peyton Reynolds, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 3  
Drew Titsworth, Frankenmuth 3  
Ryan Tutt, Frankenmuth 3

**INTERCEPTIONS**

Maxx Eastman, Breckenridge (8-man) 5  
Jadon Podolak, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 4  
Bruce Thelen, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 4  
William Eubank, Michigan Lutheran Seminary 3  
Carson Koehler, Michigan Lutheran Seminary 3

**PUNTING**

Tyson Smith, East Lansing 48.2  
Blake Guilford, Central-Montcalm 39.4  
Mitchell Roberts, East Lansing 38.9  
Sam Rosales, Alma 37.9  
Westyn Bryant, Clare 36.6

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# Bay City Western Volleyball Team Hopeful Of Title Contention

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Melissa David is the varsity volleyball coach of a team of a Bay City Western which has a lot of returners and is expected to be a force in the Saginaw Valley League.

"In 2021 we finished 21-18-4, finishing sixth in a very tough SVL, and making it to our first District final since 2018," David said. "We had one graduated senior, Lillian Watson that made second team all SVL. We had four SVL honorable mention players last year with seniors Maggie Holman, Erica Albrecht and freshman Breanna David, and sophomore Shelby Rajewski.

"Lilly and Maggie were key players that graduated last year, each playing three years on the varsity team. They left with great leadership and love/knowledge of the game."

Key returners this year include sophomore Breanna David.

"She is an all-around athlete that helps the 6-2 offense we run as a setter," David said. "She also is a key hitter/blocker to the team, bringing her athleticism to the front row as well. We are expecting huge things from her this year."

Senior Katie Bothe is the libero.

"She has a defensive mindset and intuition to get to the ball which makes her a great Libero," David said. "I am expecting her backrow/defensive skills to bring us some excitement to some key plays during matches this year."

Olivia Jatczak is a senior right-side hitter.

"She is a super strong and consistent hitter that should put up some great numbers for me this year," David said. "Her hitting efficiency and ability to put just

about any ball that dished to her in play makes her presence on the court necessary for our success."

Junior Shelby Rajewski, is the junior middle blocker. "Shelby is a great blocker," Rajewski said. "She reads hitters well and puts up that big block in key moments in the game."

Melanie Nalazek is a senior setter.

"Melanie is the other half of our 6-2 offense," David said. "She has worked really hard to improve her game and is a key leader on the court and off for the team this season."

Up and coming talent, that will see plenty of court time this year are junior outside hitter Eva Schoennher, sophomore outside hitter Ally Clifford and sophomore Jenna Derosia.

"We have a young team with

lots of talent," David said. "I expect improvements to continue every time we step on the court. I want them to have the mindset of knowing the game and not just playing the game. We have been working hard off the court to achieve this. I expect them to give 100 percent every time they step on the court, physically and mentally.

"Blocking and offensively we should hold our own this year. We have some good hitters, and athletes that can get in the air and do some great things at the net. Our passing as a whole, needs to improve. It's one of the most important yet overlooked skills of the game. Defensively we are a work in progress behind our blockers. Working on our short game coverage is something we are incorporating into almost every practice."

In the SV returning champions, "Davison will be predicted as the ones to beat," David said. "But Mount Pleasant is up there too with returning and new talent on their team. Grand Blanc is also a one to watch team with



Bay City Western's Breanna David.

some really great players on their roster. The SVL has some very good, competitive teams. I feel we are in the mix with them this year and am optimistic about being in the top 5. Of course our progress throughout the season will be a key indicator of that.

"This is my fourth season at the reigns as varsity coach and in trying to make the turn in the right direction for the program. We worked really hard in the off season with preparing for the season and working on our mental game."



Volleyball player Grace Laubenthal of Holt.

# Holt Outside Hitter One Of The Best In State

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Holt volleyball coach Billie Jo Olcheske can't wait to see what her third-year senior outside hitter Grace Laubenthal will accomplish before the end of the season.

"Grace has improved every year," Olcheske said. "Her sophomore year she was not a starter at first but worked her way into a starting spot. Last year, as a junior she was our

leading attacker with 144 kills in the season. This year she is one of the best leaders we have and although quiet before, she is really stepping up as a vocal leader on this team.

"She listens to instruction and makes changes to improve her game. She also understands the game plans and how to win and doesn't hang her head on a loss. She is consistent and reliable and that is what I hope the underclassman see and try to imitate. This year, as a senior, I have

seen Grace become more vocal on the court and helping her teammates. Her teammates trust her and look to her on the court."

Laubenthal has had a unique career at Holt.

"Last year she made this play, I still don't understand how it worked but she got turned around and almost did a full turn and somehow got the shot off for a kill and it made no sense, but it worked," Olcheske said. "I expect consistent growth from her and her team. Grace is going to enjoy her senior year but she understands the big picture/ Grace comes to a ton of stuff during the off season and anytime I need help with a camp or

young event, she is there. She puts in her time and then some.

"I know she has played softball in the past but I think volleyball is her jam. She is one of the kindest athletes I have had the privilege to coach. The great news is, her sister is a sophomore, Sadie, and I have her a little longer and I am very grateful for the Laubenthal girls."

Olcheske feels Grace has college potential.

"Grace could play somewhere but I think she is really ready for the academic piece of college and ready to push herself in that direction," Olcheske said.

# Alex Price Leads Dow's Volleyball Attack

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Midland Dow volleyball coach Ali Taylor is excited over the senior season of third year varsity-setter Alex Price, and for good reason.

"Alex has been a key part of Dow High Volleyball the last three years," Taylor said. "She has been running the show and has been voted captain by her peers

the last two years at Dow High. In the SVL Alex had 22 aces, which was fourth on the team. She led the team in assists with 181, had six big blocks, and 55 digs, which is very impressive as a setter.

"Alex has been constantly in the gym improving throughout the past three years and working with the rest of the team. Alex distributes the ball very well as our setter and got too many balls that other setters wouldn't have gotten to.

Last year she was able to read the defense more and set her hitters up for success."

Taylor expects Price to show

"Alex has improved on her defense and being able to distribute the ball no matter what pass she gets," Taylor said. "She is always the only setter that I see diving, attacking, and setting the ball. She does ALL things. And does them at a very high level. I expect her to continue to keep developing herself as a setter and be a leader even more this year than she has been in years past. She is constantly in the gym with club sports."



Alex Price goes high for the kill.

# Ithaca Volleyball Girls Set To Be Title Contenders

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Ithaca showed early in September it was a volleyball team, which needed to be reckoned with when it took Alma down to the wire in the championship round of the Big Rapids Invitational before losing and taking the runner-up trophy.

Players for Ithaca, coached by Karla MacDonald, include Macy Seifert, Brynn Bootsma, Karlee Whitmore, Jordyn Smith, Delaney Seaman, Natasha Nowakowski, Olyvia Saxton, Agathe Mollet, Jenna Cantu, Hannah Sherman, Erica Johnson and Mallorie Ecker.

"We did all right," MacDonald said after the Big Rapids Invitational. "We

did what we had to do. We fell apart in the last round. But it happens. We'll do OK."

The Yellowjackets started out the season 10-2.

"We haven't played that much," MacDonald said. "We have a lot of different hitters so we're not just relying on one person. Our defense is what we're working on."

Bootsma and Saxton are Ithaca's big hitters. Smith is the team's setter.

In the TVC, Ithaca started off early in the season with a win over Saginaw Valley Lutheran in a big game.



Ithaca's volleyball team had a strong appearance in the Big Rapids Invitational.

# Rockford Field Hockey Ready For Third Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Mark Neumen is coaching a Rockford field hockey team, which is in its third season of existence.

It was a memorable season in 2021.

"In just our second year, the team finished third in Division 3 with a division conference record of 4-2," Neumen said. "We played the 11th-seeded team in Division 2 in the first round of the playoffs and lost a triple shootout overtime to Dearborn 6-5."

Top departing seniors from 2021 were Ava White and Piper Riley.

"They were two outstanding midfielders who contributed in so

many ways last year," Neuman said. "They did so much on both the offensive and defensive ends of the field. Their competitive drive was such a huge asset to our team as well as their leadership."

There are several key players for 2022.

"Returning to this year's team are All-State players seniors Alexis Neumen and Issi Osborn plus junior goalkeeper Olivia Hewitt," Neuman said. "They are the key contributors of a talented midfield group. Senior McKinley Collins and junior Victoria Iacoboni round out the first line of midfielders. This is a very competitive group that works very well with one another.

"We excited about our depth

and expect to see good things from senior Leah Rings and junior Maddie Pyle at the midfield and some additional scoring leaders with junior forward Hope Deuel, senior Myah Schultz and senior Jordan Kerr looking to contribute."

Expectations for 2022 are high.

"This being only our third year of play and the fact that we have moved from Division 3 to Division 1 we know we will have some challenges and growing pains," Neuman said. "We are excited for the challenges that lay ahead and with this strong group of returning players, we look to be competitive with some of the top teams in the state. Our hopes are to get our first playoff win this year. This team is extremely athletic and has quite a bit of depth that I see can help



The 2022 Rockford field hockey team.

us on the offensive end. Nearly all the starters from last year's team on the offensive end return this year. As they continue to play the more experience and cohesive they become.

"We graduated all our defensive starters from a year ago. We are excited about this year's defensive crew but they are relatively young and are still working on their chemistry as a unit. We are in the independent conference which has a mix of very experienced teams

and some newer teams to the league with just a few more years of experience then us. The two big teams in our conference, East Grand Rapids and Forest Hills, are well established teams that have been around a long time. They will be competing at the top along with defending Division 2 state champion Grosse Pointe South. Our goal is to hopefully finish in the top 4 in our conference. There are 11 teams total in our conference."

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# MLS Boasts Lots Of Runners, Talent

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Michigan Lutheran Seminary has 190 students in its school and 45 of them are on the cross country team, which has Seth LaBair excited for the season.

"The girls' and boys' teams finished third in the conference last season," LaBair said. "I thought that was a big accomplishment since we are the smallest school in our conference. The girls finished fourth at the regional meet and missed out on making it to the state meet by four points. Autumn Wakefield earned second team all-conference, while Alex Schroeder was named honorable mention all-conference for the girls. Jeffrey Harden earned honorable mention all-conference for the guys.

"Alex Schroeder and Madison

Martin both graduated on the girls side. Alex was usually our No. 2 runner and Madison was our No. 5 runner. Madison was a top five girl for us the past four years and Alex made a huge difference her two years on the team. The guys still have eight of our top nine back."

The MIS girls return Autumn Wakefield (Sr.), Maddie Miller (Sr.), Sarah Kober (Jr.), and Amelia River (Jr.) who were varsity runners last season.

"We also have depth with seniors Rachel McCaughna, Gracie Forcier and junior JoAnna Harden," LeBair said. "There are also some newcomers that we're hoping can push for a varsity spot. The girls are going to have to work hard since we graduated a couple of key contributors and we don't have girls to plug into those spots. We've got a lot of work to do but it's possible.

"The boys return our top four runners and we have a handful of other guys with varsity experience. Jeffrey Harden (Jr.) and Camden Fager (So.) both return as our top two runners. Seniors Silas Schultz and Caleb Munson look to be solid three and four runners. Newcomers Matthew Bannick (So.) and Summer Yuan (Fr.) look to solidify the varsity. Senior Caleb Needham also has the potential to be a dark horse."

Seminary moved to a new region this year.

"Our guys team has a lot back and with some improvement there's a chance for us to possibly be in the top three in the region," LeBair said. "Our No. 5 runner is going to be key. If we can get someone to step up, we should be competitive. I'm excited for the guys because we have a lot of guys that have been in the program for a few years.

"The girls are led by Autumn Wakefield who has been an all-conference runner the past three years. She's gone to the state meet and gives us a solid number 1 runner. She needs to push herself this season and finish strong. Our 2-to-7 runners are really going to have to push each other. We need to keep dropping time and improve throughout the year. We've got some work to do to finish in the top three in our region."

There are 21 guys and 24 girls on the team.

"This leads to added competition on the team," LeBair said. "Our goal is to get as many students involved as possible. The large number make practices and meets a lot of fun. Having so much depth gives us options which a lot of schools our size don't have. The team needs to work on making progress throughout the season. I don't want our runners to settle and stay the same speed. Our new runners are also going to have to build themselves up



Michigan Lutheran Seminary's Autumn Wakefield.

and get acclimated to the rigors of a full cross country season.

"We are in the TVC 10. St. Louis and Ithaca should dominate as others vie for third place. Both teams are solid and have had teams ranked in the top 10 in D3. I'm hopeful both boys' and girls' teams can compete for third and close the gap on the other two."

# State Runner-Up Mary Richmond Leads Frankenmuth Cross Country Attack

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Junior Mary Richmond leads the attack for Frankenmuth's girls cross country attack this season.

"Mary Richmond earned many first-team honors during the season including earning second place at the D2 MHSAA state finals," coach Mike Snyder said. "Hailey Lenhard earned many second team honors including placing 94th at the D2 MHSAA

State Finals. Collin Fall and Grant Conger earned many first and second-team honors during the season.

"The girls placed third in the TVC-8 league and the boys were fourth. The girls placed fifth in the TVC-overall meet (17 teams). The boys placed 7th. We always miss out seniors that graduate because of their leadership that they provide our team."

The seniors were Collin Fall,

Jacob Caton, Hailey Lenhard, and Avery Knoll.

For the boys, key runners are: Landen Wise, Grant Conger, Brett Magnus, Anthony Plans, Aiden Maki and Cougar Clark.

Key girl runners are Richmond, Natalie Foltz, Clare Conzelmann, Elise Barden and Kaitlyn Miller, plus Gabby Cleveland, and Evie Culver.

"It will be a stretch goal," Snyder said, "but both the boys and the

girls teams are looking to qualify as a team for the D2 MHSAA State Finals and be top three in our tough region. Our strength will be teamwork and supporting one another in workouts and in meets no matter what position each of the kids are on the team.

"It's important having that sense of team for both the boys and the girls and not just having a few individual athletes that can score to support a team result. Our team members support everyone on the team, but there is a little something extra when the team can compete at that higher level as a team."

The key, Snyder said, "will be simply sticking to the program,



Mary Richmond will be a key runner for Frankenmuth.

staying healthy, and rallying around everyone on the team to make for a successful season."

# State Placers Highlight Montabella Cross Country Team

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Dan Gibson has plenty of talent back for his boys and girls cross country teams this season.

The 2021 highlights include four state qualifiers with Sadie Quackenbush for the girls team

and James Wilson, Riley Dailey and Dakota Dykhuis for the boys.

"Riley graduated last year," Gibson said. "Sadie Quackenbush returns for the girls team and is hoping to make a return trip to the state finals and repeat as an all MSAC performer. James Wilson and Dakota Dykhuis return for

the boys team. Both are hoping to return to the state finals.

"Dakota is in great shape at the start of the season. Last year he was a dual sport athlete with football and cross country. This year he is focusing on cross country and he should be much improved this year. In his second meet of the

year, he has already run faster than he did all of last year."

The Mustangs were hoping to be a factor in the MSAC this season.

"We have five boys on the team right now so we don't have a lot of depth," Gibson said. "The athletes we do have are working very hard and should show great improvement throughout the year. In the MSAC, I expect Breckenridge to be very strong this year for both boys and girls."



Dakota Dykhuis will be among Montabella's top runners this year.

# Dow Tennis Back In Familiar Territory; Among Best In State

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Terry Schwartzkopf has had outstanding boys tennis teams in past years at Midland Dow but this one could be exceptional.

"Last year was a mess with injuries," Schwartzkopf said. "There were COVID and various issues. Our team was not whole until the Regional. Even so, we were ranked No. 8 heading into the state final. We surpassed our ranking by five spots ending the year at No. 3 at the tournament. This makes a top 5 finish at states (sans Covid team year) every year since 2008. It also recorded our 14th straight regional win and 16th straight SVL tournament win.

"We actually only lost two (players to graduation). Michael McGaugh was our captain and led our team through an

unprecedented and difficult time with COVID. He played fourth doubles and though his athletic ability will be missed, his leadership and example will be missed even more so. We also lost our 2 singles player as he relocated to Florida. His absence is a hit as he had a strong chance to win his flight at states."

The expectations are high.

"Honestly, I expect the best out of all my players regardless of position or age," Schwartzkopf said. "Tennis in high school is a team sport and whether you are at 1 singles or 4 doubles, your wins and points count the same. I expect the entire squad to reach at least the semifinals at the state tournament and to see continuous growth throughout the season.

"Our number one goal is the same as every year. We want to bring home a state championship

and continue winning both our regional and league. My expectation of the team is a constant hunger to improve and to take nothing for granted. Success can be celebrated at the end of the season when the mission is over, but until then, the entire season is simply preparation for that big tournament in October."

Depth is indeed a strength.

"We are strong at every flight," Schwartzkopf said. "I would say our biggest strength is a mix of our depth and the mental strength and determination of this group of guys

to finish the race. We have won our conference for 16 years straight. In my time as a coach, we are 87-1 in the valley with our lone loss to Midland High my first year as a coach.

"It's been six years since we last held a state trophy. Our goal is to rectify that and this particular group of boys is one of the most focused I have coached in years. So we just might accomplish that."



The 2022 Midland Dow tennis team.

# Portland Tennis Team Eyes Another Regional Title

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Portland boys tennis coach Joel Cross has an exciting team this fall.

"We play a very difficult schedule to help us prepare for the league, regional and state tournaments at the end of the year," Cross said. "I never consider our record during the regular season to be important. Last year we struggled a little in our league. Ionia had some outstanding players that really lifted them up and Lansing Catholic was as solid as they always are. We ended up finishing third in the league ahead of Eaton Rapids and Charlotte.

This schedule did end up benefiting us and we did win the regional tournament and finished 14th in the state."

Ethan Webert, senior, will play No. 1 singles.

"He is playing great so far and I expect that he will give other No. 1 singles players some pretty great matches," Cross said. "Casey Smith, senior, will play No. 1 doubles. This is Casey's fourth year as a varsity doubles player. He knows what it takes to be successful at this flight and will have a great season."

Also in singles, freshman Tejan Virk is at No. 2 single, sophomore Keagan Krieger is at No. 3 and

Jace Cross is at No. 4. For No. 1 doubles, it's Smith and sophomore Damien LeDu. Senior Marshall Smiley and freshman Max Weller is at No. 2, junior Eddy Holcomb and freshman Camden Calkins are at No. 3 and freshmen Cohen Soles and Vander Nye are at No. 4

"We always expect to qualify for the state tournament," Cross said. "We would like to have a solid showing in the league and at regionals. But the expectation is the state tournament. This team



The 2022 Portland tennis team.

seems to be on track to do that.

"No. 1 and 2 singles and 1 and 2 doubles are doing great so far this year," Cross said.

"We are a very young team. We need to get our lower flights up to speed by the end of the season."

As for conference title chances, "This is tough," Cross said. "Ionia seems to have most of their players back and Lansing Catholic is always tough. Throw us in there and any of those three teams could win this year."

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# DeWitt Golf Team Achieving Success On And Off The Golf Course

## David Cook Sports Scene

The DeWitt girls golf team may not have much veteran experience this season, but that is not keeping the Panthers from competing with some of the top golf programs in the area.

While DeWitt has just one senior on this year's team, the Panthers have showed they have plenty of golfing ability. Through mid-September DeWitt has four third-place finishes and a second-place finish in league events and two top-five finishes in 18-hole invitationals.

This year's DeWitt squad is comprised of senior Maddie Beckner and juniors Jordyn Crawley, Laynie

Hanlin and Kenna Tiemann along with sophomores Courtney Novak and Cate Piesko.

Three of DeWitt's golfers are ranked in the top ten in the conference this season with Novak ranked fourth, Piesko ranked seventh and Crawley ranked 10th.

"Anyone who watches this year's squad would not be able to tell that this is a team with just one senior," said DeWitt coach Chris Thelen. "The team has really shined in the 18-hole invitationals."

DeWitt placed fifth at the 18-team Sydney Carfine Memorial held at The Meadows at Grand Valley State University. Novak led the way for the Panthers with an 86 which earned her a medal.

Novak also earned a medal at the Redwing Invitational hosted by St. Johns at The Emerald Golf Course where she finished in the top ten with a score of 85. Piesko and Crawley finished close behind in 11th place at the Redwing Invitational. DeWitt finished with a team score of 360 to finish fourth out of 17 teams, just one shot behind league-leading Okemos and three shots from the runner-up.

"We gave a glimpse of what the team could be capable of at the invitational at The Meadows," Thelen said, "and we played our best round of the season at the St. Johns invitational."

Along with posting low scores on the golf course, this year's team is putting up big numbers in the classroom with a team grade-point average of 3.858.

"This team has so much to be proud of both on the course and off the course," Thelen said. "This level of commitment to academics, participation in school clubs and organizations and the mindset of the players as they go through practices and matches speaks



The DeWitt golf team has posted two top-five finishes in some major invitationals this season and is also posting impressive numbers in the classroom.

of how truly amazing these six student athletes are. The team has built a great community feel and a level of care and love for one another. This comradery will help the team to continue in their growth and improvement, but also

makes practices and events even more enjoyable. The parental and community support has been terrific and the team is excited to continue their push for success into the postseason."

# Okemos Golf Team Doing A Strong Job Of Rebuilding After Lofty State Finish Last Season

## David Cook Sports Scene

After placing third in the state in Division 1 last season, the Okemos golf team is showing that it has another solid team despite graduating some of the top golfers from that squad.

Okemos lost three of the top four players from last year's state-finalist team. Despite the losses, the team is turning in another

solid season.

"We currently have a huge lead in the CAAC Blue Division," said Okemos golf coach Dan Stolz. "That is a nice accomplishment for a team that lost three of its top four players from last year's third-place in Division 1 squad. I'm very pleased with the progress of the team."

Sophomore Alena Li is among the golfers leading the way this season. Li is shooting four-under par for the season

and led Okemos to the Lansing Area CAAC Open championship as she shot a 68 at Forest Akers East. Li is a key returnee off last season's squad as she earned first-team, all-state honors as a freshman last year.

Senior Chloe Chen is turning in a solid season and has the second-lowest average on the team.

"Chloe has worked very hard on her game," said Stolz.

Okemos is also receiving strong efforts from senior Alaina Pabbathi and juniors Rachel Chomas, Addie Karpinski and Akshara Kavaturu.

Okemos will begin its quest to return to the state golf finals when it competes in the Division 1 regional hosted by Grand Ledge on October 3. The regional will take place at El Dorado Golf Club in Mason.

"This year we have a really core group of returners. They're really jelling. They're playing well together. We're not very big but they really scrap and fight.

"Our conference is extremely tough. We have a lot of teams that are ranked so our Wednesdays are extremely difficult. Our goal is to take it one Wednesday at a time and get better."

Munro is expected to be the team's leader in kills with Green as the setter.

Alma graduated four from last season.

"I have a good group of returners," Lippert said.



The Okemos golf team finished third in the state in Division 1 last season and is turning in a big season this year with a number of golfers stepping up.

# Alma Volleyball Team Off To Impressive Start

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Alma coach Kristi Lippert was showing signs of having another talented championship team when her team, in early September, defeated Ithaca in the title match of the Big Rapids Invitational.

Players on Alma's roster include Ava

Atchinson, Adison Green, Jada Munro, Lauren Steeley, Nora Watson, Gracie Mellinger, Bailey Walkington, Kendal Malarney, Ashlynn O'Boyle, Makaila Boatman and Zoe Jackson.

"We have won our last eight matches in a row," Lippert said at the end of the tournament. "Traditionally my teams are a little bit the opposite of that, as they struggle early and peak late," she said.



Alma's volleyball team won the Big Rapids Invitational on Sept. 10.

# Alma Golf Team Making Steady Improvement As Season Progresses

## David Cook Sports Scene

Steady improvement is the name of the game for the Alma girls golf team this season as the Panthers are making steady progress this season.

A balanced effort has been key to improvement for the Alma golfers as all the team members have been picking up their games and pitching in to help the team.

"This season we have shown steady improvement throughout," said Alma coach Steve Kettler. "At the third Tri-Valley

Conference jamboree at Pine River Country Club we shot under 400 as a team for the first time in a long time. We had four players that contributed and wee all within six strokes."

Sophomore Ava Vogt has been leading the way for Alma this season. Vogt is a returning second-team, all-conference player that has been turning in some solid rounds all season. Vogt has broken 100 twice this season including a round of 96 at the third TVC jamboree.

Sophomore Kaleigh Johnston is also leading the way for the Panthers this season. Johnston is also a returning second-team, all-

conference player. Johnston shot a round of 99 at the third TVC jamboree which established a new personal record.

Senior Abbie Treacy is a third returning second-team, all-conference golfer. Treacy shot a 101 at the third TVC jamboree to establish a new personal record. Fellow senior Mallory Edwards shot a 102 at the third TVC jamboree which also set a new personal record.

The Alma golf team closes out the season by competing at the Division 3 regional tournament on Oct. 4 at the Wheatfield Golf Club in Williamston.



The Alma golf team includes (from left to right); Ava Vogt, Kaleigh Johnston, Maggie Lux, Olivia Holt, Mallory Edwards and Abbie Treacy.

# P-W Girls Golfers Start New Program

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Lisa Bartlett's Pewamo-Westphalia girls golf team is having another impressive season.

"Brooke Spitzley (Jr.) comes to the team with the most golf experience," Bartlett said. "I expect to see great things from Brooke. Grace Fox (Jr.) is another athlete that has some experience and works hard

to improve her game. Taylor Nurenberg (So.), although limited experience, has a great golf swing, which helped her ace a par 3 at practice with Ava Smith and Coach Bartlett to witness the awesome shot.

"Our newly formed team started with very little experience, so working on the basics to develop each player is the goal. We are looking for improvement throughout the season. We are also hoping to

spark interest with other girls in high school to grow our program. The girls are hard workers and take the sport very seriously. They listen and focus on instruction to try and improve their game."

Bartlett expected to have a team capable of doing good things.

"They will have to continue to work on fundamentals to improve their game," Bartlett

said. "There are only two other schools in our conference who have a girls golf team so that means playing other teams outside our conference and traveling far for many events.

"Our girls golf team made school history on Sept. 7, competing for the first time ever. I am so proud of their dedication and commitment to bringing a great sport to the school."



The Ithaca golf team has increased the number of golfers on the team this season and is showing steady improvement throughout the season.

# Chippewa Hills Golfers Posting Another Strong Season

## John Raffel Sports Scene

The Allen sisters have been among the top golfers for Chippewa Hills in the Central State Activities Association and are very anxious to see what they might be able to do in the state tournament.

Ryleigh Allen, a junior, shot an 85 for medalist honors, in

Chippewa Hills golfers Ryleigh and Madison Allen have formed a dynamic one-two punch this season.

the final Central State Activities Association jamboree on Sept. 27. Her sister, Madison, a sophomore, shot a 93. Both are all-conference golfers and were hopeful of advancing to the state tournament.

It's Ryleigh's third season of golf and she's been among the leaders at all of her matches.

"I just want to shoot

consistently this year and in the high 70s," Allen said. "The key is keeping the ball in play and making smart decisions."

Allen said her long game has been her top asset.

Sometimes Ryleigh has been her team's medalist. At other times, it's been Madison.

Madison Allen had an 86 as one of the top golfers at the

Cardinal Invitational, hosted at Katke Golf Course last month.

"The key was making putts," Madison Allen said, "and hitting the greens."

For 18 holes, Madison Allen was hoping to average in the low 80s and maybe into the 70s.

She said her short game is the strongest part of her golf, but she has to improve on her long game.

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# Haslett Golfers Posting Low Numbers On Links

## David Cook Sports Scene

The golf season has been a memorable one so far for the Haslett golf team and the Vikings are looking to keep the sizzling rounds going as the state tournament begins.

Haslett opened the season with some strong efforts and has not slowed down. The Vikings turned in a big effort as they won the Portland Invitational by 52 strokes. Haslett also finished in first place at the 17-team St. Johns Redwing Invitational and finished in first place at the first four CAAC Red league jamborees.

One of Haslett's most impressive efforts came at a tournament it didn't win. That was where the Vikings placed third at the 14-team Mason-Sun-dried Invitational.

The field at the Mason event included Northville, ranked No. 1 in the state in Division 1, South Lyon, ranked No. 1 in the state in Division 2 and Jackson Lumen Christi, ranked No. 1 in the state in Division 4.

"The team is doing great so far," said Haslett coach Bob Dausman.

Leading the way for Haslett this season is the duo of senior Sydney Dausman and Mina Yoo. Dausman and Yoo are the top two golfers in the CAAC Red this season.

Sydney Dausman has finished in first or tied for first in every event this year except for a tie for second at the Redwing Invitational. She currently has an 18-hole average of 74.3 and a nine-hole average of 38.5.

Yoo tied Dausman for first place at the Portland Invitational and at

two of the league jamborees. Yoo has an 18-hole average of 82 and a nine-hole average of 39.8.

Haslett continued its sizzling play at the Coldwater Lady Cardinal Invitational on September 16. Haslett took first place as a team at the 19-team event. The Vikings tied with Jackson Lumen Christi and Dexter for first place with a team score of 349 but won the championship on the tiebreaker of the fifth-player score.

Dausman tied for first place with



The Haslett golf team has turned in several strong showings this season including winning championships at the Portland, St. Johns and Coldwater invitationals.

Ashley Hilderley of Jackson Lumen Christi with a 73 and then won the medalist honors in a playoff. Yoo finished in a tie for eighth place with a round of 84.

Haslett will again make the trip to Coldwater for the Division 2 regional tournament on Oct. 6. The regional is one of the toughest in the state as it includes Haslett, DeWitt, Mason and Dexter.

# Improved Numbers Has Ithaca Golf Team Turning In Solid Season On Links

## David Cook Sports Scene

Improved numbers in the program is leading to solid season for the Ithaca girls golf team.

With more girls out for the team and steady progress being made in every practice and competition, the Yellowjackets are turning in a solid season on the links.

"The season has been great so far," said Ithaca coach Josh Rayburn. "We are able to have a roster of 10 girls which is great for the program. These girls are continuing to get better every

week."

Ithaca golfers have been steadily lowering their averages as the season progresses. The Yellowjackets shot their best team score of the season when they recorded a 406 at Pine River Country Club in the third Tri-Valley Conference match of the season.

"Having 10 girls in the program has given us a lot of depth to rotate the girls and get them matches to compete in," Rayburn said.

What is even more promising news for the Ithaca golf team is



The Ithaca golf team gets together with Alma golfers following their conference match.

that many of the golfers leading the way are underclassmen who will be back in the future.

"Laykn Zimmerman and Ivy Davenport have been the team leaders this season," Rayburn said. "They are both only sophomores and had a great freshman year. Both are averaging a 52 for nine

holes and continue to get better each week. Elizabeth Hudson and Breonna Becker are juniors and third-year golfers. Both are averaging a 58 for nine holes."

The Ithaca golfers are looking

to close the season strong. The Panthers close out the season at the Division 4 regional on October 6. The regional is hosted by Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart and will take place at the Mt. Pleasant Country Club.

# Lowell Golfers Expect To Be Competitive

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Josh Bruwer likes the looks of his Lowell golf team this season.

Last year, "we had a very young team and were led by freshman Elle Sluss," Bruwer said. "She made it to states as an individual last season. As a team we just missed making it to states. That has fueled our team this off season and we are striving to make it this season. All of our key players are returning from last season.

"Looking toward this upcoming season, we are excited about our depth as well as our blend of youth and experience. We return seniors, including Emma Jo McCormick, who was all-conference honorable mention last season. Rylee Jannenga returns after a great junior season where she almost broke the school record twice for a nine-hole round. We also return Stephanie Spinnella who has played varsity for four seasons and is capable of being one of the top

players in the conference. Sophia Flickinger will also return from last year's team. She provides leadership and has always been an extremely steady player for us. She outperformed everyone at her position in the lineup in last year's regional."

Lowell also returns three talented sophomores.

"Elle Sluss will be our No. 1 player and made it to states last season as a freshman," Bruwer said. "Leah Krieger and Hannah Flickinger also return and have improved immensely. We are looking to them to help put us over the top and reach another level as a program. We also have newcomers Elyse Veldman who is a freshman and has shown a tremendous amount of potential. Ellery Ostrander has worked extremely hard to be a part of this team and continues to improve each day.

"We are looking to take a huge step forward for our program. We want to break through and make it to states this season and show

that we have the talent to perform at that level. Our team's strength is our depth and team culture. This group really loves and cares for another. They compete and forge each other in practice but still remain really tight and close and really good friends. They have fun and a lot of laughs but when it comes time to compete, they know when to turn it on."

The team definitely has potential.

"We need to realize what a talented group we are," Bruwer said. "We have the confidence to take another step forward and not be content with being middle of the pack."

The OK White "is historically one of the deepest and most talented in the state," Bruwer said. "The last five years the OK White has produced three state champions and two state runners-up. If you want to see a state championship caliber team, look no further than the OK White. This year will be no different. We need



The 2022 Lowell girls golf team.

to prove to ourselves and the rest of the league that we are here to compete every match. I fully expect us to have one of the deepest teams in the league as well as compete at the top of the league.

"I couldn't be more proud of this team. They have worked very hard in the off-season and our seniors have helped establish a new

mindset. The younger kids have developed a hunger not seen in this program in a very long time. They push each other in practice and we are seeing a lot of improvement on a weekly basis. We have every intention on continuing that improvement throughout the season and playing our best golf in October."

# Greenville's New Golf Coach Hopeful

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Sam Gallup has taken over as Greenville girls golf coach.

"We lost a 4 year starter Serena Schroeder this past season whose experience and low scores will be greatly missed," Gallup said, adding Ryleigh Reese, a junior "is in her second year playing competitive golf and is our No. 1 player, much improved from last year. She has the ability

to hit great golf shots and shows phenomenal rhythm. Further work on technique and fundamentals and a wonderful golf future will be attainable.

Olivia Reese, a freshman, is in her first year playing competitive golf, has high end athleticism and great short game touch. She was the low score in one of our earlier matches with a 43. She is another golfer with extremely high potential.

"Most of our team is fairly new to golf, tournament golf especially 3 of our current top 6 just started playing this summer. We have tons of talent so the biggest thing with us is getting into the right setup and being in a good position to be able to execute whatever type of shot is in front of us. How we hold the club and address the ball are some of the basics we work on everyday."

Gallup sees continual improvement.

"I see improvement every day so we are hoping to compete in our conference and have a chance to make it to Regionals," he said. "Our team's strength will be continued fundamental work and awareness of our swing keys which we will use to produce our best golf. Most of it is in the setup before we swing, the more these girls see, feel and be aware of the right way to address the ball. Also, sticking with the proper grip is key to having a chance to hit good golf shots, and less of the bad ones."



Ryleigh Reese of Greenville.

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# Ithaca Soccer Team Coming On Strong As Season Heads For Stretch Run

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

With a roster loaded with young players, the Ithaca boys soccer team expected to go through some growing pains this season. While the Yellowjackets have experienced some rough spots this season, they have also posted plenty of positives.

At the halfway point of the season, Ithaca had the same amount of wins and ties as last year showing just how much improvement the young squad is making.

"The season started slow," said Ithaca coach Paige Beracy, "but the boys are starting to really get

the hang of things and how to play together. They seem to be soaking in all of the information and getting better every day."

Along with matching last year's win and tie total by midseason, Ithaca also turned in some standout efforts. One of those highlight matches came the first week of August against long-time soccer power Saginaw Valley Lutheran.

"The Valley Lutheran match was our biggest highlight so far," Beracy said. "We battled a very tough Valley Lutheran team that is always a top contender for the league. We scored with 19 seconds left to tie them 2-2."

Leading the way for Ithaca



The Ithaca soccer team is turning in a solid season as the Yellowjackets had as many wins and ties at the midpoint of the season as it did all of last season.

by providing strong play and leadership are seniors Amarius Alago and Lane McDonald and juniors Preslee Chaffin and Keegan Henderson."

Those veteran players are providing plenty of leadership to a large group of promising young

players that have been improving as the season progresses.

"We have a very young team and a very experienced freshman group that does a lot for us," Beracy said. "We also have two strong center backs in junior Carlson Eckelbarger and senior Ayden

Draper-Piper. Between those two and the freshman group they keep our team going."

Heading into the final week of September Ithaca improved its record to 9-4-2 and fashioned a five-match winning streak.

# Laingsburg Soccer Competing In Competitive GLAC

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Natalie Elkins is coaching a talented Laingsburg team this season which hopes to make a lot of noise in October.

The Wolfpack was 8-4-2 last season.

This season's roster was focused on five particular outstanding seniors. Midfielders Dylan Hulliberger and Brayden Thomas were four-year varsity players, who had received all-conference and all-district honors.

Alex George is a senior defenseman, who has been on the varsity four years and has earned all-conference honor. Luke Snyder is a senior keeper, who also is a fourth-year player for the varsity and has earned all-conference and all-district honors.

Aaron Willoughby is a senior defenseman-midfielder, who has three years of varsity experience and is an all-conference player.

Top newcomers for the Wolfpack include junior winger Dano Winans, junior defenseman Mitchell George, who is shifting

from outside back to center back, freshman midfielder Noah Devereaux and freshman keeper Jake Rivet.

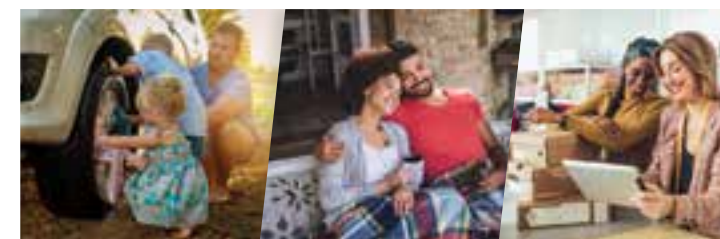
The Wolfpack has started this season at 8-2-3 Impressive wins have been 8-0 over Potterville, 2-0 over Corunna, 7-0 over Olivet, 9-0 over Vermontville Maple Valley, 5-1 over Cheasaning, 6-0 over Bath and 7-2 over Perry.



The 2022 Laingsburg boys soccer team.

It's been a close race in the Greater Lansing Activities Conference with Lansing Christian at 9-0-0 in the league and 15-2-0

overall and Lake Odessa Lakewood at 6-1-1 in the league and 11-3-1 overall.



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# DeWitt Soccer Team Rounding Into Form As Season Progresses

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

It may have taken the DeWitt soccer team a few weeks to get up to speed, but since then the Panthers have picked up where they left off last season.

DeWitt has had one of the top teams in the state in Division 2 the past few years and this year's squad is doing its best to carry on the legacy of success at DeWitt. After opening the season by splitting their first four matches, the Panthers have put together a 5-0-2 record since August 30 and have a 7-2-2 overall mark heading into the last third of the month of September. DeWitt has been putting up some impressive numbers during September as the

offense has produced 30 goals during the win streak and the defense has turned in a pair of shutouts.

"The season has been going well so far," said DeWitt soccer coach Joe Ishraidi. "We are tied for first in the CAAC Blue and have played some quality non-conference opponents and are unbeaten in our last seven matches. We played very well in our match against East Lansing and came back from two goals down against Okemos to earn a tie."

Balance is a key for the DeWitt soccer team this season. The Panthers combine a potent scoring offense with a stingy defense. A balanced attack is a big factor in DeWitt's success in the attacking zone. Lucas Perez is a versatile player who leads the Panthers with seven goals and

seven assists. Brayden Powers is also having a big season in the offensive end of the field with eight goals and two assists. Ruslan Masalatin is another productive frontline player who has totaled five goals along with four assists.

The Panthers have a strong group of veteran players on the backline the provide strong defensive play.

"Sam Aesciman, Jack Clark, Caiden McDonald and Sampson Sprague have been big for us on our backline," Ishraidi said. "They are all seniors and have all at least been on the varsity for three years."

Those players have been part of some strong DeWitt teams the past couple of seasons and will be key as the Panthers gear up for what they



The DeWitt soccer team has fashioned an unbeaten record since the end of August including a tie against an Okemos team that is state-ranked in Division 1.

are hoping is another deep state tournament run.

"This is a very experienced team that has big goals for the season," Ishraidi said. "In 2020 we were state runner-up, losing in overtime to Gull Lake. Last year we lost in the state semifinals to Brother Rice in a

shootout."

The soccer state tournament begins the second week of October. DeWitt will host a Division 2 regional that will include Haslett, St. Johns, Eastern, Everett, Sexton and Waverly.

# Lansing Christian Among Top D4 Soccer Teams In State This Season

## Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The state-ranked Lansing Christian soccer team may not be unbeaten this fall, but opponents of the Pilgrims have to go the extra mile if they want to get a win.

Lansing Christian has an 11-2 overall record as of mid-September and is ranked fourth in the state in Division 4. While the Pilgrims have a pair of losses, both of those losses came in overtime shootouts. The losses also came against larger, state-ranked schools as Christian dropped shootouts against Elk Rapids, ranked eighth in the state in Division 3 and Flint Powers ranked 11th in the state

in Division 3. Lansing Christian also has posted wins against larger schools with wins against Williamston, Marshall and Eaton Rapids to its credit.

Lansing Christian features a balanced squad this year with a potent offense and a strong defense.

"We attack and pass very well," said Lansing Christian coach Tommy Ziolkowski. "Our defense is also very strong. Our back line consists of all returning players. We also attack very well and score a lot of goals."

Lansing Christian's back line is led by senior captain Tim Sullivan and senior Noah Marl. Also returning to the back line are junior Dylan Kinnas

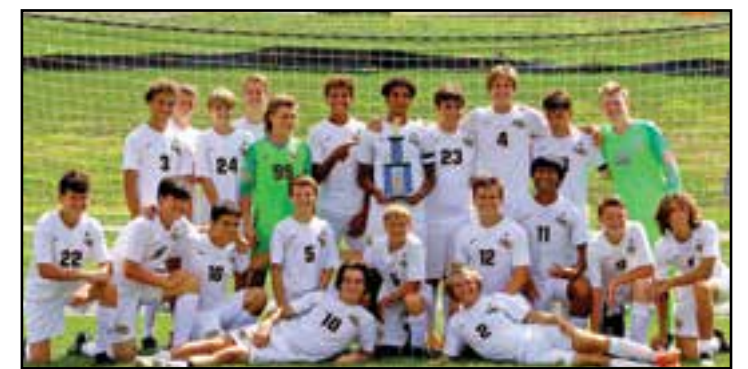
and senior Cam Damesworth.

The defense is also receiving outstanding work in goal from freshman Brady Carmichael. Through 13 matches this season Carmichael has allowed just five goals.

"This is Brady's first year in goal and he is doing an excellent job," Ziolkowski said. "He is an athletic keeper and is pretty brave in goal. He played a lot in the field in middle school and soccer has not been his primary sport but he has been doing an outstanding job for us."

Lansing Christian also features a solid group in the midfield. Senior Baylor Brogan anchors the Pilgrim midfield. Senior captain Elijah Ellis is a two-time, team captain who has played all over the field for the squad. Ellis led the team in scoring last year and is lining up at right wing in recent games. Sophomore center-midfielder Owen Resch earned third-team, all-state honors last season and controls the game for the Pilgrims.

Along with Ellis, the Christian



The Lansing Christian soccer team is among the top-ranked soccer squads in the state in Division 4 this season.

front line is led by junior captain Tyler Kendrick who is a center-forward.

After winning a district title last year before falling in the regional semifinals, the Pilgrims have lofty goals this season.

"Our goals are to win our league, win our district, win the regional and win state," Ziolkowski said.

"Every day in our training sessions and our games we are growing. We are learning things that will help us prepare for the state tournament."

Lansing Christian will begin the state tournament next month at the Laingsburg district where the host Wolfpack, a conference rival, will be one of the major hurdles the Pilgrims must clear to win a district title.

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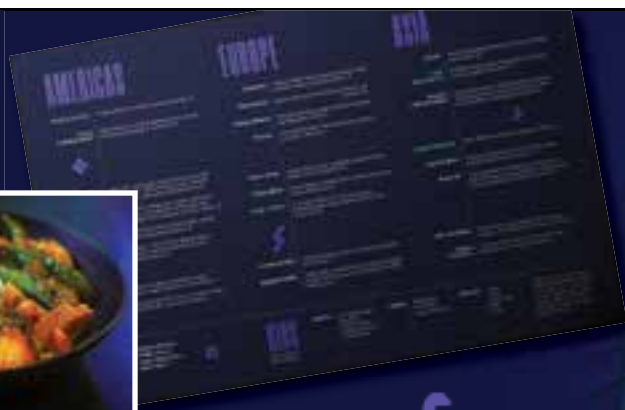
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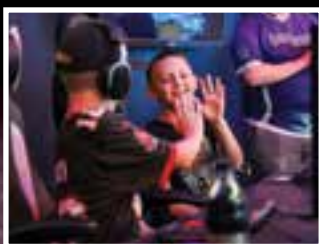
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