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## HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE - KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

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#### **PURI ISHER'S NOTE**

The leaves are starting to fall and that must mean one thing in Mid-Michigan.....It's time for the football playoffs!!!

What a football season it has been so far and the playoffs promise more memorable action. From Division 1 through Division 8 and the eight-man playoff divisions, our area school are well-represented in the playoffs.

There are so many storylines to keep track of this season. Can Rockford make another deep run in Division 1? How far will Mt. Pleasant and Mason go in Division 3 and can DeWitt mount another run to the state title game in D3? Will Freeland go on another memorable run in Division 4? Is this the year Frankenmuth brings home the crown in Division 5? Will Durand continue its magical season in Division 6? Will Ithaca make it back to Ford Field in Division 7. Can Pewamo-Westphalia or Lansing Catholic repeat as state champions? Will Beal City make it back to the Division 8 title game? Can Merrill or Breckenridge reach the state finals in 8-man football? So many questions to be answered. We can't wait for the playoffs to kick off.

Plenty of action in taking place all-across the high school sports world. A big shout out to the Midland Dow tennis team that brought home another state tennis title. A big tip of the cap to the Alma soccer team as well. The Panthers won a district title and added a regional semifinal win to reach the elite 8 in Division 3 soccer. Panther coach Nick O'Neill has done a phenomenal job with the Alma soccer program over the years and reached a milestone with his 200th win as Alma soccer coach earlier this season

With so much great action taking place what a great time it is to get out and support our local athletes.

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See you at the games!



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#### **Butch Harmon Sports Scene**

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Alma finished the regular season with a 14-3-1 record. The Panthers turned in an 8-3-1 conference record and finished league play second in the TVC 8 behind Frankenmuth. That record earned the Panthers the number-one seed at the district it hosted as well as a first-round bye. Alma took advantage of that ranking and bye as the Panthers defeated Big Rapids 3-1 in the district semifinals and then captured their second district title in the past three years with a 7-0 win against Clare. The district title was also the third in program history.

in several more noteworthy accomplishments this season.







## Alma Soccer Team Turns In One Of **Finest Seasons In Program History**

The Alma soccer team has been seasons the last couple of years, and this season is taking its place as one of

Along with winning the district title, the Alma soccer team turned

"We defeated Mt. Pleasant 6-0

to start the season after taking a pretty bad home loss to Mt. Pleasant last season," said Alma coach Nick O'Neill, "We also won our home tournament and started the season 8-0 before tying Frankenmuth 2-2 on the road. All three of our regularseason losses were also by one goal."

O'Neill himself added a milestone win when he reached his 200th win with the Alma boys soccer program

Alma forward Leo Richter set a new school record for goals scored in a season. Richter has 35 goals as of the first round of the regional tournament. Those 35 goals broke the single-season goal scoring record of 33 goals that Connor Lemerand set last season

Along with scoring 35 goals this season, Richter has added 10 assists Alma has received offense from a variety of sources this season as Daniel Ash has totaled 20 goals and 15 assists, Jack Lemerand has totaled 12 goals and 10 assists and Keegan Crowe has scored six goals along with eight assists

Lemerand, a freshman, is an attacking midfielder and is part of a strong group of Panther midfielders. Alma's midfield is also receiving big efforts from junior team captain Aidan O'Neill. A defensive midfielder Aidan O'Neill has scored three goals along with six assists. Senior Aidan Barnes is also a team captain and defensive midfielder who has added three goals and five assists.

Along with outstanding offense, Alma has played some solid defense this season. Senior centerback Corey Yates, a team captain, has added three goals. Junior left centerback Collin Helinski has scored one goal this season while junior right centerback Ethan Bailey has scored a goal. Between the pipes, sophomore goalkeeper Noah Vega has totaled 48 saves this season. Vega has recorded 5.5 shutouts and has a 1.10 goalsagainst average.

"We ran a 3-5-2 formation and moved away from the 4-3-3," coach O'Neill said. "We have athletic and skilled players all over the field and play a very attack-minded brand of soccer. I would say that this team



The Alma soccer team brought home a second district championship in the past three years after defeating Clare 7-0 in the district title match at the Alma district.

16th assist of the season on the goal

The match was tied 2-2 at the end of regulation and overtime and ther went to penalty kicks to be decided. Alma received goals from senior Aidan Barnes, junior Aidan O'Neill, junior Daniel Ash, freshman Jack Lemerand and junior Leo Richter to win the match.

Senior defender Corey Yates along with junior defenders Collin Helinski Ethan Bailey and Eli Haller played major roles on defense against a talented Manistee offense

Alma finished the season with an 18-4-1 record after dropping a 1-0 defensive struggle to Elk Rapids (17-7-2) in the regional championship game



The St. Louis golf team was paced this season by a strong core of juniors including Josie Schrot.

## **St. Louis Golf Team Ends Season Competing At State Finals**

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Led by a talented core of juniors, the St. Louis golf team entered the season with a bright future. That future turned out to be now as the young Sharks earned a trip to the state golf finals for the first time since 2018

The Sharks were short on numbers heading into the season as well but golfers stepped up and St. Louis won a team regional championship before going on to place 17th overall at the state finals.

"The state finals was a great experience for our team this season, said St. Louis coach Andrea Biehl. "especially with three juniors and one sophomore on the team. We qualified for the state finals in 22018 as well. We had a solid group of senior golfers that year and they were a very nemorable team."

St. Louis was paced this season by junior Josie Schrot. Schrot was the first-place overall finisher in the Tri-Valley Conference 10. Schrot also led the Sharks at the state finals shooting a 195 total for the two-day

Fellow junior Natalee Hoyt also

turned in a big season for the Sharks. Hoyt finished third overall at the TVC 10 tournament and also led the way at the regional where she placed third overall. Hoyt capped the season with a strong second day at the state finals and shot a 218 total for the state meet. Junior Emma Worthy was another solid overall golfer as she placed sixth overall at the TVC 10 meet.

has been closer than any team I've

correlation to our success on the

Alma went on to the regional

field"

been with in my 19 years as a coach.

That bond and chemistry has a direct

With a third district title secured,

tournament at Clare. Alma defeated

Manistee 3-2 on penalty kicks in

overtime in the regional semifinal

Alma took a 1-0 lead in the first

half of the regional semifinal when

freshman forward Brayden Truman

scored his seventh goal of the season

with an assist from freshman Jack

Lemerand. After Manistee tied the

match. Alma took a 2-1 lead into

halftime when junior captain Leo

Richter scored his 36th goal of the

season. Junior Daniel Ash tallied his

"Our numbers were smaller than we had expected this season but people stepped up and filled in the missing spots," Biehl said. "We took a trip this summer to Garland Resort for a little team bonding and golfing. It got the girls excited for the season."

That excitement paid off with the Sharks winning the TVC 10 for the second year in a row.

"This group really seemed to enjoy competition" Biehl said. "It pushed them to improve. Good attitudes were another thing that really stood out. The girls were positive, didn't get down on themselves when they were struggling which is huge in golf."

With the bulk of the team returning next year, the future is bright for the Sharks.

"It's exciting to have my core group back and to only be losing one senior, Biehl said. "Now that they have experienced the state finals as a team they know they want to work to get back there again. Looking forward to adding a few new invites to our schedule to help better prepare us for next vear."









#### **David Cook Sports Scene**

### **DIVISION 1**

#### **ROCKFORD RAMS** Record: 9-0, 7-0 1st OK Red

Offense: 35.8 ppg. Defense: 15.7 ppg. Signature wins: 38-15 Caledonia (8-1), 31-27 Mona Shores (7-2).

**Playoff history:** Making its 28<sup>th</sup> straight appearance in the playoffs. Lost to Grand Blanc in last year's regional final. Playoff road: Rockford hosts East Kentwood (4-5) in district semifinal. Winner plays winner of Caledonia (8-1) at Grandville (7-

Skinny: The Rams have the highest playoff points in the state. Rockford possesses a balanced offense led by quarterback Mac Vandenhout and standout wide receiver Alex McLean. The Rams have a strong corps of running backs led by hard-charging junior Ryan Ahern. Vandenhout is also a dangerous running quarterback that can gain yards in chunks

#### HOLT RAMS

**Record:** 6-3, 4-1 tie 1<sup>st</sup> CAAC Blue Offense: 21.6 ppg. Defense: 16.4 ppg. Signature wins: 14-6 Grand Ledge (7-2), 16-13 East Lansing (6-3). **Playoff history:** In the playoffs for a fourth



straight season. Playoff road: Holt hosts 6-3 Hartland for district semifinal. Winner plays winner of Brighton (8-1) and Grand Ledge (6-3) Skinny: The Rams enter the playoffs on a roll

winning their last four games including wins in week eight against East Lansing (16-13) and in week nine against Ann Arbor Huron (14-8). The Rams have been playing strong defense and have a solid offense led by standout quarterback Seneca Moore.

#### **GRAND LEDGE COMETS**

**Record:** 7-2, 4-1 tie 1<sup>st</sup> CAAC Blue Offense: 30.2 ppg. Defense: 21.8 ppg. Signature wins: 56-49 DeWitt (6-3), 29-28 Jackson (5-4), 45-30 East Lansing (6-3). Playoff history: The Comets have qualified for the playoffs seven times in the past nine

Playoff road: The Comets travel to Brighton (8-1) with the winner playing either Holt (6-3) or Hartland (6-3)

**Skinny:** The Comets can score points in bunches as highlighted by wins over DeWitt and East Lansing. Senior Shawn Foster is one of the premier offensive players in the state and lines up in a variety of spots on offense for the Comets.

#### DAVISON CARDINALS

**Record:** 8-1, 5-0 1<sup>st</sup> SVL-SOUTH Offense: 44.8 ppg. Defense: 15.4 ppg.

Signature wins: 28-21 Clarkston (7-2), 52-14 Walled Lake Western (8-1). Playoff history: In the playoffs for the seventh time in the past eight seasons. Won

the D1 state title in 2019. Playoff road: Davison hosts 4-5 Grand Blanc in the district semifinal. Winner plays winner of Clarkston (7-2) and Lapeer (7-2)Skinny: The Cardinals have the talent to run the table as wins against Clarkston, Walled Lake Western, and Lapeer reflect their talent. Quarterback Braylon Himmelein pilots a

#### Top D1 contenders in the state: Rockford (9-0), Rochester Adams (8-1), Belleville (9-0), West Bloomfield (8-1), Macomb Dakota

East Lansing is primed to make deep playoff run in Division 2.

versatile and potent offense.



HSSS DIVISION 1 STATE FINAL PREDICTION: Rockford 34, Belleville 28 **DIVISION 2** 

#### **MIDLAND CHEMICS**

Record: 8-1, 5-1 tie 1st tie SVL North Offense: 34.4 ppg. Defense: 15.1 ppg. Signature wins: 27-21 Cadillac (5-4), 21-17 Traverse City Central (5-4).

Playoff history: The Chemics have qualified for the playoffs five out of the past six seasons.

Playoff road: Midland hosts Swartz Creek (7-2) in the district semifinal. Winner to play Saginaw Heritage (7-2) or Waterford Mott (7-2)

**Skinny:** The Chemics parlayed a stingy defense and the all-around offensive skills of Jason Davenport into a share of the Saginaw Valley League North Division title and an 8-1 record. The Chemics have the talent to win the district and possibly meet Dexter in the regional final.

#### EAST LANSING TROJANS

Record: 6-3, 3-2 2<sup>nd</sup> CAAC Blue Offense: 35.0 ppg. Defense: 17.4 ppg. Signature wins: 28-14 Fenton (7-2), 36-30 DeWitt (6-3).

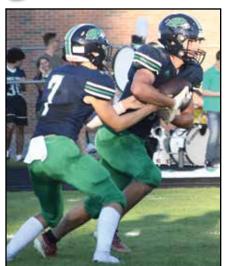
Playoff history: Trojans have qualified for the playoffs seven straight seasons and reached the district finals a year ago. **Playoff road:** Travels to 7-2 Battle Creek Central for the district semifinal. Winner plays the winner of Byron Center (7-2) and Portage Northern (6-3).

**Skinny:** The Trojans feature a potent offense led by quarterback Dalen Adams and explosive wide receiver Evan Boyd. Kanye Jackson provide East Lansing with a productive ground game. The Trojans are also solid on defense led by Kanye and Kieran Jackson along with Taveon Demps.

#### SAGINAW HERITAGE HAWKS Record: 7-2, 3-2 3rd SVL South.

Offense: 47.7 ppg. Defense: 28.7 ppg. Signature wins: 69-26 Flushing (4-5), 52-40 Grand Blanc (4-5).

Playoff history: The Hawks are in the playoffs for a third straight season. Playoff road: The Hawks travel to 7-2



Saginaw Heritage brings a high-scoring offense into this year's playoffs.

Waterford Mott for the district opener. The winner of that game plays the winner of Midland (8-1) and Swartz Creek (7-2). Skinny: The Hawks have one of the most prolific offenses in the state as they scored a school-record 428 points this season. Quarterback Ethan Mason pilots an offense that features standout junior wide receiver Braylon Isom along with wideout Charles Cork and running back Tommy Churchill. Top D2 contenders in the state: Muskegon Mona Shores (7-2), Dexter (9-0), Livonia Franklin (8-1), Temperance-Bedford (7-2), Warren De La Salle (8-1).

**HSSS DIVISION 2 STATE FINAL** PREDICTION: Warren De La Salle 34, Dexter 27

### **DIVISION 3**

**DEWITT PANTHERS** Record: 6-3, 3-2 2<sup>nd</sup> CAAC Blue Offense: 35.0 ppg. Defense: 26.0 ppg. Signature wins: 21-14 Haslett (6-3), 39-34 Portland (8-1), 38-8 Holt (6-3) Playoff history: The Panthers are in the playoffs for the 17th straight season. DeWitt won the 2020 Division 3 state title and were runner-up last season in D3.







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**Record:** 8-1, 5-1 tie 1<sup>st</sup> SVL North Offense: 36.7 ppg. Defense: 17.2 ppg. Signature wins: 51-29 Midland (8-1), 27-24 Cadillac (5-4), 27-21 Traverse City Central (5-4).

Playoff history: Oilers in the playoffs for a fifth straight season and fell to D3 state runner-up DeWitt in the district final last

Playoff road: Oilers host Gaylord (6-3) in the opening round with the winner to face DeWitt (6-3) or Cadillac (5-4) in the district

Skinny: Mt. Pleasant features a balanced offense led by junior quarterback Logan Borodychuk who has stepped in and kept the Oiler passing game humming this season. Senior running back Max Humphrey and Scotter Polk has been providing plenty of big plays as well while the retooled defense continues to improve

last year's state semifinals. district finals. in a state semifinal rematch.





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**Playoff road:** DeWitt hosts Cadillac (5-4) in the first round with winner playing Mt. Pleasant (8-1) or Gaylord (6-3).

**Skinny:** In what is a rebuilding season the Panthers turned in a winning record with a number of impressive wins while playing one of the toughest schedules in the state. The rebuilt Panthers offense averages five touchdowns per game and gives it a good opportunity to make another deep playoff

#### **MT. PLEASANT OILERS**

### MASON BULLDOGS

Record: 9-0, 5-1 1st CAAC Red Offense: 45.0 ppg. Defense: 10.2 ppg. Signature wins: 37-29 Williamston (7-2), 28-13 Haslett (6-3), 35-12, Holt (6-3). Playoff history: Mason has qualified for the playoffs eight out of the past ten years, falling to eventual D3 state champ Detroit King in

Playoff road: Bulldogs host Sturgis (5-4) in the first round with the winner playing Jackson (5-4) or Parma Western (6-3) in the

Skinny: The Bulldogs have been in overdrive since the beginning of the season overcoming every obstacle they have faced. With a potent offense led by quarterback Cason Carswell and a stingy defense allowing just 10 points per game the Bulldogs are on a collision course with defending D3 state champion Detroit King

### **HASLETT VIKINGS**

Record: 6-3, 4-1 2<sup>nd</sup> CAAC Red Offense: 37.3 ppg. Defense: 15.2 ppg. Signature wins: 30-27 Williamston (7-2), 42-6 Lansing Waverly (4-5). Playoff history: The Vikings have made the playoffs five out of the last six years. **Playoff road:** Haslett travels to Linden (5-4) in the first round with the winner to face either Fenton (7-2) or Holly (4-5). Skinny: The Vikings have an offense that can

explode at any moment and can also strike on special teams. Combined with a strong defense, the Vikings have been in every game this season and have been tested by a rugged schedule.

#### LOWELL RED ARROWS

Record: 6-3, 4-3 3rd OK White Offense: 37.3 ppg. Defense: 17.9 ppg. Signature wins: 24-7 Northview (4-5), 24-7

East Grand Rapids (3-6). Playoff history: Making its fourth straight appearance in the playoffs.

**Playoff road:** Travels to Zeeland West (8-1) to open the playoffs with the winner facing either St. Joesph (8-1) or East Grand Rapids (4-5) in the district finals.

**Skinny:** The Red Arrows are posting their best season since 2017. Lowell enters the playoff with an offense that has totaled 40 or more points four times this season while the defense has held three teams to single digits. Top D3 contenders in the state: Detroit King (5-3), Mason (9-0), Mt. Pleasant (8-1), Muskegon (7-2), Zeeland West (8-1), Walled

Lake Western (8-1). HSSS DIVISION 3 STATE FINAL PREDICTION: Detroit King 34, Mt. Pleasant 28

## **DIVISION 4**

#### FREELAND FALCONS Record: 7-2, 6-1 2nd TVC Central

Offense: 38.8 ppg. Defense: 13.1 ppg. Signature wins: 28-21 Swan Valley (6-3), 45-7 Essexville-Garber (6-3).

Playoff history: Freeland is making its 15th straight appearance in the playoffs. The Falcons fell to eventual D4 state champion Chelsea in last year's state semifinals and eventual D5 state champion Grand Rapids Catholic Central in the 2020 state semifinals. Playoff road: Freeland travels to 7-2 North Branch in the first round with the winner to play either Ortonville-Brandon (6-3) or

> Freeland is geared up to make a long playoff run in Division 4.

Goodrich (8-1) in the district final Skinny: Freeland enters the playoff with a productive ground game led by running backs Ty Fournier and Eli Murphy. The Falcons also play good defense with Gabe Blanchard and Tommy Melzo leading the

#### **CHARLOTTE ORIOLES**

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE - KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

Record: 8-1, 4-1 2<sup>nd</sup> CAAC White Offense: 35.9 ppg. Defense: 17.8 ppg. Signature wins: 29-22 Olivet (7-2), 16-13 Lansing Catholic (4-5).

Playoff history: Orioles are in the playoffs for the third straight season.

Playoff road: Charlotte hosts defending Division 4 state champion Chelsea (5-4) in the first round with the winner playing Hastings (8-1) or Vicksburg (504) in the district final.

**Skinny:** Charlotte is turning in its finest season since the 2004 team reached the state semifinals in Division 3. The Orioles are averaging five touchdowns per game on offense and have an opportunistic defense led by Brody Houck, Cutler Brandt and Devon Eaton.

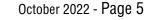
#### **BIG RAPIDS CARDINALS**

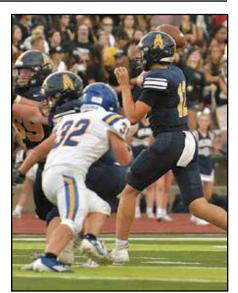
Record: 7-2, 5-1 tie 1st Central State Activities

Offense: 33.1 ppg. Defense: 17.8 ppg. Signature wins: 27-26 Tri-County (7-2), 41-8 Chippewa Hills (4-5)

Playoff history: Big Rapids is in the playoffs for the third straight season.

**Playoff road:** Big Rapids travels to 9-0 Whitehall for the first round with the winner





Quarterback Logan Borodychuk leads a potent Mt. Pleasant offense into the playoffs.

to play either Fruitport (7-2) or Ludington (7-2) in the district final.

Skinny: Big Rapids enters the playoffs on a five-game winning streak and has scored 40 or more points in three of those five wins. Top D4 contenders in the state: Grand Rapids South Christian (9-0), Whitehall (9-0), Edwardsburg (8-1), Goodrich (8-1), Riverview (9-0), Tecumseh (9-0). HSSS DIVISION 4 STATE FINAL **PREDICTION:** Grand Rapids South Christian 42, Riverview 28







#### David Cook **Sports Scene**

#### **DIVISION 5**

#### FRANKENMUTH EAGLES

Record: 9-0, 7-0 1st TVC Central Offense: 40.7 ppg. Defense: 5.7 ppg. Signature wins: 48-21 Freeland (8-1), 28-14 Goodrich (7-2).

Playoff history: The Eagles have qualified for the playoffs 12 straight seasons. Frankenmuth fell to Grand Rapids Catholic Central in the 2020 D5 state title game and lost to Catholic Central in last year's state semifinals.

**Playoff road:** The Eagles host Birch Run (5-4) with the winner facing either Essexville-Garber (6-3) or Swan Valley (6-3).

**Skinny:** The Eagles bring one of the best defenses in the state into the playoffs led by Drew Titsworth and Ryan Tutt. Aidan Hoard is a dangerous dualthreat at quarterback while the running game benefits from a deep stable of backs.

#### **PORTLAND RAIDERS**

Record: 8-1, 5-0 1st CAAC White Offense: 37.7 ppg. Defense: 12.4 ppg. Signature wins: 40-13 Charlotte (8-1), 40-6 Berrien Springs (6-2), 32-6 Cadillac (5-4). Playoff history: Since 2003 the Raiders have missed the playoffs just once, making it to the state finals twice during that span. Last season Portland fell to Marine City in the state semifinals Playoff road: The Raiders open the playoffs hosting Olivet (7-2) with the winner facing Corunna (7-2) or Williamston (7-2). Skinny: The Raiders are just a few seconds away from a 9-0 record having falling in the closing seconds of their week two showdown at DeWitt. Portland enters the playoff with wins against



Williamston is primed to make a deep playoff run in Division 5.

playoff teams during the final four weeks of the regular season.

#### **GLADWIN FLYING G'S**

Record: 9-0, 6-0 1st Jack Pine Offense: 49.3 ppg. Defense: 5.3 ppg. Signature wins: 33-27 Pontiac Notre Dame (6-3) 35-7 Standish-Sterling (7-1).

**Playoff history:** In the playoffs for the third straight year. Playoff road: Host Ogema Heights (7-2) in the first round with the winner facing either Kingsford (6-3) or Kingslev (7-2) in the district finals. **Skinny:** The Flying G's put up some amazing numbers for a second straight season and have done it against a toughest schedule that included non-league games against Pontiac Notre Dame and Standish-Sterling.

#### WILLIAMSTON HORNETS

Record: 7-2, 3-2 3<sup>rd</sup> CAAC Red Offense: 30.3 ppg. Defense: 16.4 ppg. Signature wins: 29-22 Olivet (7-2), 22-0 Lansing Catholic (4-5).

Playoff history: The Hornets have qualified for the playoffs seven straight seasons, falling in the state semifinals two years ago to the eventual Division 4 state champion Detroit Country Day. Playoff road: Williamston travels to Corunna (7-2) for the first round with the winner to play either Portland (8-1) or Olivet (7-2).

Skinny: The Hornets have a team capable of making a deep playoff run similar to what they did in 2020. Senior Alex Petersburg is a gifted dualthreat at quarterback while multi-talented senior Joey Mahaney is the leader of the defense and key contributor on offense

#### HOWARD CITY TRI-COUNTY VIKINGS

**Record:** 7-2, 5-1 tie 1<sup>st</sup> Central State Activities Offense: 44.4 ppg. Defense: 20.7 ppg. Signature wins: 48-40 Reed City (8-1), 52-14 Chippewa Hills (4-5).

Playoff history: In the playoffs for fourth time in the past five years.

Playoff road: Opens the playoffs by traveling to 8-1 Belding with the winner to face either Muskegon Oakride (8-1) or Shepherd (6-3). Skinny: The Vikings started the season strong with six consecutive wins highlighted by a 48-40 win against Reed City. Tri-County has scored at least four touchdowns in every game this season.

### **ESSEXVILLE-GARBER DUKES**

Record: 6-3, 4-3 4th TVC Central Offense: 30.6 ppg. Defense: 16.2 ppg. Signature wins: 34-21 Elkton-Pigeon-Bay Port (8-1), 38-13 Birch Run (5-4).

Playoff history: The Dukes are in the playoffs for a fourth straight season. Playoff road: Garber opens the playoffs by

traveling to Swan Valley (6-3) with the winner to play either Frankenmuth (9-0) or Birch Run (5-4). Skinny: Garber enters the playoffs on an upswing with wins in four of its last five games with the lone loss coming against unbeaten Frankenmuth. Garber is looking to avenge a 27-21 loss to Swan Valley in week three

#### **SAGINAW SWAN VALLEY VIKINGS**

Record: 6-3, 5-2 3rd TVC Central Offense: 30.7 ppg. Defense: 19.8 ppg.

Signature wins: 27-21 Essexville-Garber (6-3) 29-15 Birch Run (5-4).

Playoff history: Swan Valley has qualified for the playoffs the last 11 years in a row reaching the district finals the last five years.

Playoff road: Swan Valley opens the playoffs hosting Essexville-Garber (6-3) with the winner playing Frankenmuth (9-0) or Birch Run (5-4). Skinny: After starting the season with a pair of losses the Vikings have come on strong winning six out of their last seven games. Quarterback Colton Klein is an excellent passer while Tyler Drain provides Swan Valley a threat at running

#### **BIRCH RUN PANTHERS**

Record: 5-4, 3-4 5th Tri-Valley Central Offense: 28.8 ppg. Defense: 28.1 ppg. Playoff history: The Panthers have qualified for the playoffs three out of the last five years. Playoff road: Birch Run travels to Frankenmuth (9-00) in the first round with the winner playing either Swan Valley (6-3) or Essexville-Garber (6-3) in the district title game.

**Skinny:** Birch Run feature one of the premier running backs in the state in senior Kahleel Brown who has rushed for 1,838 yards and 23 touchdowns this season

#### SHEPHERD BLUEJAYS

Record: 6-3, 4-2 tie 2<sup>nd</sup> Jack Pine Conference Offense: 23.4 ppg. Defense: 20.7 ppg. Signature wins: 26-14 Clare (5-4), 21-20 Wyoming Godwin Heights (4-5).

Playoff history: The Bluejays have qualified for the playoffs three out of the last four years. **Playoff road:** Shepherd travels to Muskegon Oakridge (8-1) in the first round with the winner playing either Belding (8-1) or Howard City Tri-County (7-2) in the district title game. Skinny: The Bluejays are back in the playoffs after a one-hear hiatus thanks to a five-game winning streak in midseason. Strong defense has been a key

### **BELDING BLACK KNIGHTS**

for Shepherd this season

Record: 8-1, 6-0 1st OK Silver Offense: 41.8 ppg. Defense: 16.4 ppg. Signature wins: 46-14 Ionia (4-5), 40-35 Sparta

Playoff history: The Black Knights have qualified for the playoffs six out of the last seven years. Playoff road: Belding hosts Howard City Tri-County (7-2) in the first rounds with the winning playing either Muskegon Oakridge (8-1) or Shepherd (6-3) in the district title game. Skinny: The Black Knights are led by a talented group of seniors with their only loss coming in a non-league game against Cadillac.

#### CORUNNA CAVALIERS

Record: 7-2, 4-1 2<sup>nd</sup> Flint Metro Offense: 31.0 ppg. Defense: 16.1 ppg. Signature wins: 28-27 Swartz Creek (7-2), 49-14 Ortonville-Brandon (6-3).

Playoff history: Corunna has qualified for the playoffs in six of the last nine years Playoff road: Corunna hosts Williamston (7-2) in the first round with the winner playing either Portland (8-1) or Olivet (7-2).

**Skinny:** The Cavaliers reached the regional title game last year where they fell to eventual D5 state runner-up Marine City by a touchdown. A host of players return from that team and are looking for an even deeper playoff run this season. Top D5 contenders in the state: Gladwin (9-0)

Grand Rapids Catholic Central 8-1, Portland (8-1), Frankenmuth (9-0), HSSS DIVISION 5 STATE FINAL

**PREDICTION:** Frankenmuth 35, Portland 28 DIVISION 6

#### LANSING CATHOLIC COUGARS

Record: 4-5, 2-3 tie 3rd CAAC White

Offense: 24.1 ppg. Defense: 14.3 ppg. Signature wins: 42-7 Pewamo-Westphalia (5-4) Playoff history: The Cougars won state titles in 2019 and 2021 and reached the state semifinals in 2020

Playoff road: The Cougars open district play at 9-0 Durand with the winner to play Almont (6-3) or Ovid-Elsie (7-2) in the district finals. Skinny: A 42-7 win over Pewamo-Westphalia in the final week of the regular season earned the Cougars a trip to the playoffs and a chance to defend their Division 6 crown

#### **MILLINGTON CARDINALS**

**Record:** 8-1, 3-1 2<sup>nd</sup> TVC West 1 Offense: 47.6 ppg. Defense: 12.2 ppg. Signature wins: 26-20 Detroit Southeastern (6-3),

47-14 Bullock Creek (4-5). Playoff history: The Cardinals have missed the

playoffs just twice since 1994.

Playoff road: Millington hosts Sanford-Meridian in the first round with the winner to face Standish-Sterling or Clare (5-4) in the district title game. Skinny: The Cardinals lone loss this season was a 28-24 defeat against Standish-Sterling, a possible opponent in the district title game if the Cardinals can get past Sanford-Meridian.

#### **OVID-ELSIE MARAUDERS**

Record: 7-2, 5-1 t 2<sup>nd</sup> Mid-Michigan Athletic Conference

Offense: 29.8 ppg. Defense: 15.7 ppg. Signature wins: 21-20 Corunna (7-2), 16-6 Montrose (6-3), 14-13 New Lothrop (7-2). Playoff history: The Marauders have qualified for the playoffs eight out of the past ten years. Playoff road: Travels to Almont (6-3) to open the playoffs with the winner to play Lansing Catholic (4-5) or Durand (9-0) in the district title game. Skinny: The Marauders find a way to win the close games as they earned one-point wins over both New Lothrop and Corunna.

#### DURAND RAILROADERS

Record: 9-0, 6-0 1st Mid-Michigan Activities Conference

Offense: 43.3 ppg. Defense: 21.3 ppg. Signature wins: 48-28 Marine City (7-2), 28-24





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playoffs four years in a row.

Record: 5-4, 4-2 tie 2<sup>nd</sup> Jack Pine Conference Offense: 25.4 ppg. Defense: 20.1 ppg. Signature wins: 46-20 Sanford-Meridian (6-3). **Playoff history:** In the playoffs for the seventh

straight season. Playoff road: Travel to Standish-Sterling (7-1) to open the playoffs with the winner to face Millington (8-1) or Sanford-Merdian (6-3) in the district title game. **Skinny:** The Pioneers face a tough road trip to Standish-Sterling to open the playoffs.

### SANFORD-MERIDIAN

Record: 6-3, 4-2 tie 2<sup>nd</sup> Jack Pine Conference Offense: 25.1 ppg. Defense: 18.2 ppg. Signature wins: 14-0 Shepherd (6-3), 56-8 Oscoda

for the third time in the last four years. district title game.

playoffs.

1), Reed City (8-1). HSSS DIVISION 6 STATE FINAL Reed City 20





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Gladstone (7-2), 23-21 New Lothrop (7-2). Playoff history: The Railroaders have made the

Playoff road: Hosts Lansing Catholic (5-4) in a rematch of last year's district semifinal with the winner to play Almont (6-3) or Ovid-Elsie (7-2). Skinny: The Railroaders will be looking for some payback in the first round against a Lansing Catholic team that bounced them in the opening game of the playoffs last season. Durand's perfect 9-0 regular-season record is the team's first undefeated regular season since 1982.

#### **CLARE PIONEERS**

Playoff history: The Mustangs are in the playoffs

Playoff road: The Mustangs travel to Millington (8-1) to open the playoffs with the winner to face Standish-Sterling (7-1) or Clare (5-4) in the

Skinny: The Mustangs ended the regular season with three wins in their last four games and will count on their defense to keep things close in the

Top D6 contenders in the state: Durand (9-0), Clinton (9-0), Grand Rapids West Catholic (8-1), Millington (8-1), Warren Michigan Collegiate (8-

PREDICTION: Grand Rapids West Catholic 28,



Pewamo-Westphalia is looking to repeat as Division 7 state champions

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#### **DIVISION 7**

#### PEWAMO.WESTPHALIA PIRATES

Record: 5-4, 5-1 tie 1st CMAC Offense: 26.7 ppg. Defense: 17.3 ppg. Signature wins: 28-21 Laingsburg (6-3), 41-12 Bath (6-3).

**Playoff history:** Pirates have missed the playoffs just once since 1998, winning the D7 state title two out of the last three years including last year. Playoff road: Hosts Bath in a CMAC rematch with the winner to play New Lothrop (7-2) or Burton Bendle (4-5)

**Skinny:** Pirates are going through a down year by their standards but their playoff experience will serve them well in the second season.

#### **NEW LOTHROP HORNETS**

Record: 7-2, 4-2 3<sup>rd</sup> Mid-Michigan Activities Offense: 34.0 ppg. Defense: 8.7 ppg. Signature wins: 12-7 Jackson Lumen Christi (6-3), 42-13 Montrose (6-3). Playoff history: The last time the Hornets missed the playoffs was 1999.

Playoff road: Host Burton Bendle (4-5) in the first round with the winner playing either Pewamo-Westphalia (5-4) or Bath in the district final. Skinny: Hornets started the season on fire reeling off six straight wins including a season-opening win against Jackson Lumen Christi, Quarterback ack Kulhanek is a dangerous dual-threat that

#### **ITHACA YELLOWJACKETS**

leads a potent offense

Record: 8-1, 4-0 1st TVC Central II Offense: 40.9 ppg. Defense: 12.2 ppg. Signature wins: 60-39 Homer (7-2), 21-7 Shepherd (6-3), 50-18 MLS (8-1).

Playoff history: The Yellowjackets have missed the playoffs just once since 2006.

Playoff road: The Yellowjackets host Lake City (5-4) in the first round with the winner to play North Muskegon (8-1) or Ravenna (6-3) in the district title game.

Skinny: Yellowjacket offense has been firing on all cylinders this season behind standout senior quarterback Bronson Bupp who can gash opposing defenses through the air or on the ground. Ithaca defense has also come on strong this season

#### **MONTROSE RAMS**

**Record:** 6-3, 3-3 4<sup>th</sup> Mid-Michigan Activities Offense: 35.3 ppg. Defense: 20.8 ppg. Signature wins: 27-0 Clarkston Everest (6-3), 17-7 Laingsburg (6-3).

Playoff history: The Rams have qualified for the playoffs every year since missing out in 2009. Playoff road: Hosts Cass City (5-4) in the first round with the winner to face Elkton-Pigeon-Bay Port (8-1) or Bad Axe (6-3) in the district title game

Skinny: The Rams are come into the playoffs on a roll with a three-game winning streak and will have to get past some of the Thumb's best to win a district titl

#### **BATH BEES**

Record: 6-3, 3-3 2<sup>nd</sup> CMAC Offense: 25.1 ppg. Defense: 19.0 ppg. Signature wins: 30-10 Perry (3-6). Playoff history: In the playoffs for the second time n the last three year.

Playoff road: The Bees travel to conference rival Pewamo-Westphalia (5-4) to start the playoffs with the facing New Lothrop (7-2) or Burton Bendle

(4-5) in the district finals

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE - KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

Skinny: Bath totaled six regular-season wins this year, its highest total since the 2000 season. Top D7 contenders in the state: Traverse City St. Francis (9-0), Ithaca (8-1), Jackson Lumen Christi (6-3), Hudson (8-1), Napoleon (9-0), New Lothrop (7-2). HSSS DIVISION 7 STATE FINAL

PREDICTION: Traverse City St. Francis 35, Jackson Lumen Christi 28

#### DIVISION 8

**BEAL CITY AGGIES** 

Record: 9-0, 7-0 1st Highland Offense: 39.7 ppg. Defense: 8.9 ppg. Signature wins: 26-21 Evart (8-1), 22-21 Ravenna (6-3), 27-14 Cass City (5-4). Playoff history: The Aggies have missed the playoffs just twice this century.

Playoff road: The Aggies host White Cloud (6-3) with the winner to meet Fowler (8-1) or Cason City-Crystal (8-1) in the district finals. Skinny: Beal City reached the state title game last vear where it fell 14-7 to Hudson. With Hudson moving up to Division 7 this season the Aggies are looking to fill the void.

#### **CARSON CITY-CRYSTAL EAGLES**

Record: 8-1, Independent schedule Offense: 37.1 ppg. Defense: 13.8 ppg. Signature wins: 23-20 Riverview Richard (6-3), 36-7 Sterling Heights Parkway Christian (4-5). Playoff history: Eagles have made the playoffs nine out of the past 11 years.

**Playoff road:** Eagles face a familiar foe in week one when they travel to Fowler to play the lone team that beat them this year. Winner to play Beal City (9-0) and White Cloud (6-3) winner in what is a loaded district.

**Skinny:** The Eagles turned in an impressive 8-1 record this season while playing all of their games on the road as their stadium gets remodeled.

#### MICHIGAN LUTHERAN **SEMINARY CARDINALS**

Record: 8-1, 3-1 2<sup>nd</sup> TVC West II

Offense: 46.6 ppg. Defense: 13.4 ppg. Signature wins: 43-32 Marine City Cardinal oney (7-2), 14-13 Bullock Creek (4-5). Playoff history: The Cardinals have been to the playoffs four out of the past five years. Playoff road: The Cardinal host Harbor Beach (8-1) in the first round with the winner going against Ubly (9-0) or Saginaw Nouvel in the district finals. **Skinny:** The lone loss this season came against Division 7 powerhouse Ithaca. With standout dual-threat quarterback Evan Wakefield leading the way MLS has the talent to make a deep playoff run but faces some solid opposition in the district.

#### FOWLER EAGLES

Record: 8-1, 5-1 tie 1<sup>st</sup> CMAC Offense: 32.2 ppg. Defense: 9.3 ppg. Signature wins: 29-0 Carson City-Crystal (8-1), 20-16 Pewamo-Westphalia (5-4), 35-0 Bath (6-3). Playoff history: The Eagles have reached the playoffs 12 out of the last 14 seasons. Playoff road: Face a tricky opening-round game against a solid Carson City-Crystal team that they defeated in week one. Winner to play Beal City (9-

0) and White Cloud (6-3) winner in district final. Skinny: Eagles are one of the top Division 8 teams in the state but have a grueling district to navigate with Carson City-Crystal in the district semifinals and possibly unbeaten Beal City waiting for them

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Ithaca has its sights set on reaching the Division 7 state title game.

in the district title game

#### **SAGINAW NOUVEL PANTHERS**

Record: 6-3, 2-2 3rd TVC West II Offense: 33.8 ppg. Defense: 26.2 ppg. Signature wins: 41-8 Burton Bendle (4-5), 47-26 Flint Beecher (4-4)

Playoff history: The Panthers have reached the playoffs seven out of the last eight seasons. **Playoff road:** Travels to undefeated Ubly (9-0) in week one with the winner of that game to face MLS (8-1) or Harbor Beach (8-1) in district final. Skinny: The Panthers have the offense to keep up with anyone the key will be to get some stops on defense.

#### EVART WILDCATS

**Record:** 8-1, 6-1 2<sup>nd</sup> Highland Conference Offense: 42.0 ppg. Defense: 15.0 ppg. Signature wins: 48-20 McBain (5-4), 47-6 Lake

City (5-4). Playoff history: The Wildcats have reached the playoffs the last three seasons.

Playoff road: Host McBain in the opening round with the winner to play Frankford (8-1) or East Iordan (6-3) in district final.

Skinny: The lone loss Evart suffered was 26-21 to unbeaten Beal City. Quarterback Preston Wallace and running back Cole Hopkins give the Wildcats a dynamic one-two punch on offense.

Top D8 contenders in the state: Iron Mountain (8-1), Beal City (9-0), Fowler (8-1), Ubly (9-0), Ottawa Lake Whiteford (9-0).

HSSS DIVISION 8 STATE FINAL

PREDICTION: Ottawa Lake Whiteford 27, Beal City 20



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### **David Cook Sports Scene**

#### **DIVISION 1**

#### **MERRILL VANDALS**

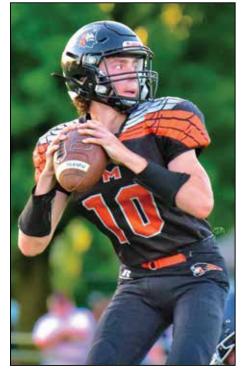
Record: 9-0, 9-0 1st Central Michigan 8-Man Offense: 43.1 ppg. Defense: 9.4 ppg

Signature wins: 48-12 Fulton-Middleton (7-2), 52-12 Morrice (7-2), 36-14 Breckenridge (7-2).

Playoff history: The Vandals have qualified for the 8-man playoffs two of the three years they have played 8-man football.

Playoff road: The Vandals host Indian River Inland Lakes (6-3) in the first round with the winner facing either Breckenridge (7-2) or Fulton-Middleton (7-2) in the regional final.

Skinny: The Vandals have one



8-man football this season and are primed for a deep playoff run. Senior quarterback Joel Tack is a talented dual threat who can throw the ball to a variety of talented targets including Hayden Ayotte, Kaleb Walker and Grant Vedrode. Running backs Carter Feith and Sawyer Jordan team up with Tack to give the Vandals a potent ground game. Defense is also a strong point for the Vandals as Merrill has allowed only one team to score more than two touchdowns on them this season.

of the top teams in the state in

#### BRECKENRIDGE HUSKIES

Record: 7-2, 7-2 tie 2<sup>nd</sup> Central Michigan 8-Man Offense: 37.4 ppg. Defense: 18.4

Signature wins: 40-36 Fulton-Middleton (7-2), 50-12 Montabella (5-4).

> Playoff history: The Huskies have made the playoffs in their first vear of playing 8-man football. Breckenridge qualified for the playoffs in 11-man football the past six years including a state finals appearance in 2018. **Plavoff road:**

### The Huskies host

Middleton-Fulton (7-2) in the first round with the winner going against Merrill (9-0) or Indian River Inland Lakes (6-3) in the regional final. Skinny: The Huskies have made a smooth

Merrill's Joel Tack

transition to 8-man football this season after being a small-school powerhouse in 11-man football the past several years. Breckenridge features a balanced offense led by dual-threat quarterback Jaxon Laubscher who passed for 1,696 yards and 15 touchdowns during the regular season. Ryan Wolfgang is the leading receiver having hauled in 50 passes for 904 yards and nine touchdowns. Collin Sitts and Laubscher have combined for 1,415 yards rushing and 26 touchdowns. The Huskies also play solid defense. Xzavior Garcia has totaled 16 quarterback sacks this season while Camden Smith and Sitts have combined for 17 more sacks. Maxx Eastman and Laubscher have teamed up for 11 interceptions

#### **MIDDLETON-FULTON** PIRATES

Record: 7-2, 7-2 tie 2<sup>nd</sup> Central Michigan 8-Man Offense: 51.0 ppg. Defense: 36.3

ppg Signature wins: 40-3 Morrice (7-2). 78-60 Montabella (5-4). **Playoff history:** The Pirates are making their first appearance in the 8-man playoffs in their second season of playing 8-man football. Playoff road: The Pirates open the playoffs at Breckenridge (7-2) with the winner facing Merrill (9-0) or Indian River Inland Lakes (6-3). Skinny: The Pirates have one of the most productive offenses in 8-man football averaging 51 points per game. Ouarterback Bruce Thelen is the focal points of the Fulton offense as he has rushed for 2,415 yards and 33 touchdowns this season while passing for 686

Village of Breckenridge



Breckenridge is looking to make a deep playoff run in its first season of eight-man football.

#### Montabella (5-4).

Playoff history: The Orioles have qualified for the 8-man playoffs eight out of the nine years they have played 8-man. Last season Morrice fell in the regional final to Colon.

Playoff road: Morrice travels to Peck (7-2) for the first round with the winner to play either Kinde North Huron (6-3) or Au Gres-Sims (8-1) in the regional final. Skinny: The Orioles have reached at least the second round of the

playoffs every season since 2017 and are prepared for another deep playoff run.

Top D2 contenders in the state: Powers North Central (9-0), Marion (9-0), Au Gres-Sims (8-1), Colon (9-0), Climax-Scotts (8-1) HSSS DIVISION 2 8-MAN STATE FINAL PREDICTION Powers North Central 45, Colon 20



PASSING YARDS Max Vandenhout Rockford 1 662 Sam Rosales Alma 1 173 Bronson Bupp, Ithaca 1,116 Aidan Heard, Frankenmuth 1.001 Austin Williams Flushing 890

PASSING TOUCHDOWNS Preston Wallace, Evart 26 Braylen Himmelein, Davison 23 Ethan Mason, Saginaw Heritage 21 Max Vandenhout, Rockford 20 Cade Coguillard, Essexville-Garber 18 Anthony Evans, Concord (8-man) 18 Jack Kulhanek, New Lothrop 18 Ty Randall, Laingsburg 18 Logan Borodychuk, Mt. Pleasant 16 Jaxon Laubscher, Breckenridge (8-man) 15 Alex Petersburg, Williamston 12 Colton Klein, Swan Valley 11 Bruce Thelen, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 11 Dalen Adams, East Lansing 10 Jack Bakus, Midland Dow 10 Jackson Boge, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart (8-man)

Bronson Bupp, Ithaca 10 Aidan Heard, Frankenmuth 10

RUSHING YARDS Bruce Thelen, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 2,415 Kahleel Brown, Birch Run 1,838 Amarion Jenkins, Flushing 1,085





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combined for 11 interceptions on defense. Dezmond Blair is a defensive leader with 71 tackles and 12 quarterback sacks while Peyton Reynolds has added 64 tackles and six sacks. Top D5 contenders in the state: Munising (9-0), Rogers City (9-0), Merrill (9-0), Martin (7-2),

yards and 11 touchdowns. Thelen

and Jadon Podolak have also

Kingston (9-0). **HSSS DIVISION 1 8-MAN** STATE FINAL PREDICTION:

### Munising 40, Merrill 35 **DIVISION 28-MAN**

**MORRICE ORIOLES** Record: 7-2, 7-2 tie 2<sup>nd</sup> Central

Michigan 8-Man Offense: 40.9 ppg. Defense: 21.3 ppg Signature wins: 42-20

Breckenridge (7-2), 50-12

Jenna Putman, D.D.S. • Brian Putman, D.D.S.

# **SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE**



Ethan Mason, Saginaw Heritage 2,042 Preston Wallace, Evart 1,913 Braylen Himmelein, Davison 1,823 Logan Borodychuk, Mt. Pleasant 1,793 Ty Randall, Laingsburg 1,764 Jaxon Laubscher, Breckenridge (8-man) 1,696 Cade Coquillard, Essexville-Garber 1,562 Dalen Adams, East Lansing 1,512 Jack Bakus, Midland Dow 1,506 Alex Petersburg, Williamston 1,369 Anthony Evans, Concord (8-man) 1.278 Colton Klein, Swan Valley 1,219 Jack Kulhanek, New Lothrop 1,199 Jackson Boge, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart (8-man)

Evan Wakefield, Michigan Lutheran Seminary 1,273 Robbie Slaughter, Hastings 1,265 Cole Hopkins, Evart 1,127 Aidan Robinson, Bay City Western 1,103 Shawn Foster, Grand Ledge 1,101

Jack Kulhanek, New Lothrop 1,004 Thomas Churchill, Saginaw Heritage 995 Travis Tucker, Ionia 956 Austin Williams, Flushing 945 Brvce Kurnzc. DeWitt 919 Jay'len Flowers, Davison 893 Braden Hill, Charlotte, 890 Brayden Riley, Sanford-Meridian 888 Alex Petersburg, Williamston 816 Collin Sitts, Breckenridge (8-man) 777 David Evans, Lakeview, 775 Tyler Drain, Swan Valley 739 Kale Snyder, Bullock Creek 720 Jalen Brown, Midland 710 Jaxon Laubscher, Breckenridge (8-man) 680 Logan Demarest, Bay City Glenn 678 Bronson Bupp, Ithaca 668 Jackson Boge, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart (8-man)

Caleb Neubecker Mt Pleasant 652 AJ Hill, Davison 637 Jace Clarizio. East Lansing 628 Ben Grant, Lakeview 624 Jack Borgman, Laingsburg 608 Ty Fournier Freeland 605 Cutler Brandt, Charlotte 578 Nolan Mulcahy, New Lothrop 577 Max Humphrey, Mt. Pleasant 575 Dallas Walsh, Millington 571 Kanve Jackson, East Lansing 556 Anthony Evans, Concord (8-man) 554 Jason Davenport, Midland 527

#### RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS

Bruce Thelen, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 33 Kahleel Brown, Birch Run 23 Evan Wakefield, Michigan Lutheran Seminary 20 Bronson Bupp Ithaca 17 Shawn Foster, Grand Ledge 17 Cole Hopkins, Evart 17 Amarion Jenkins, Flushing 16 Alex Petersburg, Williamston 16 Travis Tucker Ionia 16 Austin Williams, Flushing 16 Robbie Slaughter, Hastings 15 Jaxon Laubscher, Breckenridge (8-man) 13 Collin Sitts, Breckenridge (8-man) 13 David Evans, Lakeview, 12 Jalen Brown, Midland 11 Thomas Churchill, Saginaw Heritage 1 Max Humphrey, Mt. Pleasant 11 Kanye Jackson, East Lansing 11 Jack Kulhanek, New Lothrop 11 Bryce Kurnzc, DeWitt 11 Jackson Boge, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart (8-man)

Io Ian Crump, Millington 10 Ryan Dabe, Michigan Lutheran Seminary 10 Aidan Robinson, Bay City Western 10 Dallas Walsh, Millington 10 Brvce Cornelius, Holt 9 ason Davenport, Midland 9 Caleb Neubecker, Mt. Pleasant 9 Ty Randall, Laingsburg 9 Brayden Riley, Sanford-Meridian 9 Jace Clarizio, East Lansing 8 Tyler Drain, Swan Valley 8 Braden Hill, Charlotte, 8 Mason Stocker. Grand Ledge 8 Logan Thompson, Ovid-Elsie 8

#### RECEIVING YARDS

Braylon Isom, Saginaw Heritage 1,248 Mekhi Wingfield, Concord (8-man) 1,035 Ryan Wolfgang, Breckenridge (8-man) 90-Zack Parker, Midland Dow 901 Evan Boyd, East Lansing 813 Scooter Polk, Mt. Pleasant 758 Dakobe White Evart 705 Marcel White, Evart 66 Alex McLean, Rockford 633

Jadon Podolak, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 598 Connor Hulliberger, Laingsburg 591 Ethan Hull, Ithaca 579 Brayden Tacey, Essexville-Garber 570 Bryce Kurncz DeWitt 556 Aiden Klein, Mt. Pleasant 551 Brandon Lewis, Lansing Catholic 531 Cade Sutherland, Alma 524 Nick Barnette, New Lothrop 517 Henry Carstarphen, Davison 494 Teon Armstrong, Davison 457 Max Fellows, Essexville-Garber 431 Zach Cribbs, Williamston 427 Jack Borgman, Laingsburg 425 Mitch Jackson, Saranac 415 Clay Wittenberg, Ovid-Elsie 414 Dorijan Jackson, East Lansing 409 Drew Kaeckmeister, Swan Valley 407

#### RECEPTIONS

Mekhi Wingfield, Concord (8-man) 76 Zack Parker, Midland Dow 65 Ryan Wolfgang, Breckenridge (8-man) 50 Evan Boyd, East Lansing 46 Alex Mcl ean Rockford 46 Marcel White, Evart 41 Jack Borgman, Laingsburg 38 Connor Hulliberger, Laingsburg 38 Mitch Jackson, Saranac 35 Brvce Kurncz, DeWitt 34 Brandon Lewis, Lansing Catholic 34 Connor Stempky, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart (8man) 33 Dakobe White, Evart 32 Cade Sutherland, Alma 31 Henry Carstarphen, Davison 30 Jadon Podolak, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 29 Teon Armstrong Davison 28 Joe McDonald, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart (8-man) Ethan Hull. Ithaca 27 Brayden Tacey, Essexville-Garber 27

### **RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS**

Braylon Isom, Saginaw Heritage 16 Mekhi Wingfield, Concord (8-man) 16 Henry Carstarphen, Davison 9 Scooter Polk, Mt. Pleasant 9 Dakobe White, Evart 9 Ryan Wolfgang, Breckenridge (8-man) 9 Zack Parker, Midland Dow 8 Jadon Podolak, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 8 Marcel White, Evart 8 Drew Kaeckmeister, Swan Valley 8 Ethan Hull, Ithaca 7 Bryce Kurncz DeWitt 7 Alex McLean, Rockford 7 Noah Mulcahy, New Lothrop 7 Max Fellows, Essexville-Garber 6 Brandon Lewis, Lansing Catholic 6 Cade Sutherland Alma 6 Brayden Tacey, Essexville-Garber 6

**TACKLES** Ethan Burrows, Essexville-Garber 114 Collin Sitts, Breckenridge (8-man) 108 Cameron Raftery, Merrill (8-man) 105 Cole Hopkins, Evart, 97 Rick Beison, Rockford 96 Carter Herriman, Davison 93 Cutler Brandt, Charlotte 91 Brody Houck, Charlotte, 87 Cameron Raftery, Merrill (8-man) 105 Rvan Ahern Rockford 83 Cade Coquillard, Essexville-Garber 82

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Bruce Thelen, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 80 Kieran Jackson, East Lansing 79 Bo Schwartz, Bullock Creek 76 Jacob Ladd, Evart, 75 Ben Sporman, Bay City Central 75 Tommy Melzo, Freeland 74 Jaxon Craven, Evart 73 Westyn Bryant, Clare 72 Dezmond Blair, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 71 Tanner Szczepanski, Essexville-Garber 71 Tylend Allen, Concord (8-man) 70 Garrett Forgash, Bay City John Glenn 70 Collin Thompson, Concord (8-man) 70 Rollen Smith, Concord (8-man) 67 Tayeon Demps, East Lansing 66 Zayne Moore, Morley-Stanwood 66 Liam Zastrow, Hemlock 66 Nick Gruber, Lansing Catholic 65 Camden Smith, Breckenridge (8-man) 65 TJ Allen Concord (8-man) 64 Kanye Jackson, East Lansing 64 Levi Raymond, Concord (8-man) 64 Pevton Revnolds, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 64 Kaleb Peska, Ithaca 63 William Fubank Michigan Lutheran Seminary 62 Jackson Vrable, Bay City Glenn 60

#### SACKS

Xzavior Garcia, Breckenridge (8-man) 16 Dezmond Blair, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 12 Devon Eaton, Charlotte 9 Collin Sitts, Breckenridge (8-man) 9 Cameron Raftery Merrill (8-man) 8 Camden Smith, Breckenridge (8-man) 8 Kevin Lev. Ovid-Elsie 7 Brevin Hendricks, Millington 6.5 Kruz Rumsey, Morley-Stanwood 6.5 Teddy Williams, Grand Ledge 6.5 Colin Main, Frankenmuth 6 Brenden Marker, Frankenmuth 6 Peyton Reynolds, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 6 Tyler Dosh, Davison 5.5 Carter Herriman, Davison 5.5 Nathan Mikesell, Ithaca 5.5 Tanner Graber, Evart 5 Kieran Jackson, East Lansing & Landon Stoneman, Ovid-Elsie Drew Titsworth, Frankenmuth 5

#### INTERCEPTIONS

Daniel Duley, Freeland 6 Carson Koehler, Michigan Lutheran Seminary 6 Jaxon Laubscher, Breckenridge (8-man) 6 Jadon Podolak, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 6 Braxton Stenger, Ovid-Elsie 6 Ethan Burrows Essexville-Garber 5 Maxx Eastman, Breckenridge (8-man) 5 Joe McDonald, Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart (8-man

Brayden Rabideau, Lansing Catholic 5 Bruce Thelen, Fulton-Middleton (8-man) 5 Layton Eastman, Hastings 4 Payton Guilbeaux, Swan Valley 4 Brayden Riley, Sanford-Meridian

PUNTING Fulton Reed, Charlotte 41.0 Eli Murphy, Freeland 40.9 Blake Guilford, Central-Montcalm 39.8 Noah Dunckel, Williamston 39.7 Sam Rosales, Alma 37.8 Sawyer Glennie, Davison 37.2 Westvn Brvant, Clare 36.6 Mitchell Roberts, East Lansing 36.



## **Area Golfers Cap Season In Big Way By Competing For Honors At State Meets**

#### **Butch Harmon Sports Scene**

The girls golf season drew to a close with several area teams playing for state titles on what was a wicked weekend weather-wise for golf as players battled cold, rainy and windy conditions for two days. Following is a look at how this year's Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) girls golf state tournaments played out.

#### **DIVISION 1**

Rochester Adams came away with the state title in Division 1 at Bedford Valley Golf Course near Battle Creek. Adams ran away with the title as their 629 total score was 47 strokes better than second-place Brighton. Rochester placed third. Kate Brody of Grand Blanc captured medalist honors with a 145 as she carded rounds of 73 and 72 while Elise Fennell of East Kentwood took second just one stroke behind with a 146.

#### **Rockford Golfers Finish Fifth**

The Rockford girls golf team capped the season by placing fifth at the Division 1 state finals. The Rams, who placed eighth at last year's state tournament, finished with a 696 team total for the tournament.

Junior Jessica Jolly led the way for Rockford. Jolly, who placed 13th last year, finished in a tie for third overall this year as she carded rounds of 72 and 77 for a 149 total. Senior Mackenzie Davidson placed 33rd overall with a 174 total. Senior Bridget Parlmer totaled 186 while junior Aubrev Wilson finished with a 187.

Rockford qualified for the state meet by winning the regional that was hosted by Grand Haven. Jolly claimed medalist honors at the regional as she shot a sizzling score of 64 at The Meadows on the campus of Grand Vallev State University.

#### **Okemos Golfers Place** In Top Ten At State

The Okemos girls golf team closed out the season by placing ninth at the Division 1 state finals. Okemos was led by standout sophomore Alena Li who placed in the top ten individually for the second straight season. Li, who placed ninth as a freshman, fired rounds of 77 and 75 for a 152 to finish in a tie for sixth place this season. Senior Chloe Chen finished in the top 50 overall as she recorded rounds of 88 and 95 for a 183. Senior Alaina Pabbathi totaled 195 while juniors Rachel Chomas and Addie Karpinski both posted a 198 total.

Okemos qualified for the state meet by placing third at the Grand Ledge regional. Li finished second at the regional with a 74 while Chen placed ninth with an 83 and Pabbathi took 18th with an 89.

#### Grand Ledge Golfer **Competes At State**

Grand Ledge sophomore Isabel Kelly qualified for the state meet as an individual. Kelly finished in the top 20 individually at the finals as she totaled rounds of 81 and 85 for a 166 total that placed her 19th overall. Kelly earned a berth in the state finals by placing eighth overall at the regional with an 82.

#### **DIVISION 2**

Farmington Hills Mercy took home the team trophy in Division 2 as it ran away from the competition at Forest Akers West on the campus of Michigan State University. Mercy totaled a 684 to outlast second-place South Lyon by 27 strokes. Forest Hills Northern placed third. Byron Center junior Macy Elzinga claimed medalist honors with rounds of 72 and 76 for a 148 total. Gabriella Tapp of South Lyon placed second with a 153 total

#### **Mason Golfers Place Sixth At State Meet**

The Mason golf team wrapped up the season with a sixth-place finish in Division 2 with rounds of 387 and 385 for a 772 total. Junior Ava Clark led the way for the Bulldogs as she placed 26th individually with a 183 total. Freshman Tylar Southwell and junior Claire Heathman both finished in the top 50 individually as Southwell totaled a 191 and Heathman totaled 195. Sophomores Kortney Osborn and Gabby Hanover both totaled 204 for the tournament.

Mason qualified for the state meet by placing third at the Coldwater regional. Hanover and Heathman both shot 91 at the regional to tie for eighth overall. Clark was 11th with a 92 while Southwell was 12th with a 94 and Osborn 14th with a 95 at regional.

#### **Dewitt Golfers Place In Top Ten At State Meet**

The DeWitt girls golf team capped the season by placing ninth as a team in Division 2 with a 786 total. The Panthers were led by junior Jordyn Crawley who placed 32nd individually with a 189 while sophomore Courtney Novak was 37th with a 190. Sophomore Cate Piesko totaled a 200 for the weekend while junior Laynie Hanlin totaled

DeWitt advanced to the finals after winning the Coldwater regional with a 359 team score. Novak was fourth individually with a 85 while Piesko and Crawley tied for sixth with rounds of 89. Senior Madison Beckner placed in the top 20 with

#### **Lowell Golfers Finish Season With Trip To State**

The Lowell golf team finished the season by placing 11th overall at the Division 2 state finals with a team score of 797. Sophomore Elle Sluss led the way for the Red Arrows as she placed 40th overall with a 193 total

Lowell qualified for the state meet by winning the regional it hosted. Sluss placed eighth overall at the regional with an 88 while senior Rylee Jannenga took ninth with an 89. Three more Red Arrows placed in the top 20 individually at the regional as sophomore Leah Krieger shot a 91, senior Stephanie Spinella shot a 92 and senior Emma Jo McCormich shot a 93.

#### Midland Dow Golfers **Compete At State Meet**

The Midland Dow girls golf team competed at the Division 2 state finals where it placed 15th overall with two-day total of 811. Freshman Sophia Lee led the way for the Chargers as she placed 20th overall with a 181. Senior Abby Wilson shot a 201 followed by senior Joline Che with a 213 and sophomore Kylie Keefer with a 222.

Dow qualified for the state finals by winning the region it hosted at Currie West Golf Course. The Chargers totaled 363 to win the regional by six strokes over secondplace Petoskey. Lee won medalist honors at the regional with a 79 while Wilson placed sixth with a 90. Keefer and sophomore Savannah Reitz both tied for 16th with rounds of 97 while Che shot a 98

#### **Haslett Golf Team Finishes** In Top Ten At State

The Haslett golf team turned in a big effort at the state meet with a two-day total of 712 that placed the Vikings sixth overall in Division 2

Senior Prabhleen Pawar and junior Sydney Dausman led the way for Haslett at the state meet as they both finished the tournament with 171 totals to tie for 18th



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Ryleigh Allen of Chippewa Hills watches her putt head to the cup during the state golf finals.

> place overall. Pawar carded rounds of 84 and 87 while Dausman shot rounds of 85 and 86. Haslett sophomore Mina Yoo placed 31st individually with a total of 178 while junior Richa Shah totaled 192 for the tournament.

Haslett earned a trip to the state finals by placing second at the regional at Groesbeck Golf Course in East Lansing, Dausman led Haslett at the regional as she placed third overall with a 77. Yoo placed seventh individually with an 84.

#### **Pair Of Area Golfers Compete** At State Individually

Two area golfers competed at the state meet after qualifying as individuals.

Haslett senior Sydney Dausman capped off her high school golf career in a big way as she finished third overall with a 157 total. Dausman carded rounds of 76 and 81 at the finals. Dausman punched her ticked to the state meet by placing second as the regional tournament where she fired an 81.

St. John's senior Kenzie Eccleton closed out her career by competing at the Division 2 state finals. Eccleton placed 50th individually as she recorded rounds of 103 and 97 for an even 200. Eccleton qualified for the state meet by placing fifth at the Midland regional where she carded an 89.

#### **DIVISION 3**

Macomb Lutheran North came out ahead in a close competition for the Division 3 state title at Forest Akers East course on



the campus of Michigan State University. Lutheran North finished with a 668 total with Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook-Kingswood placing second with a 674 and Grosse Ile taking third with a 677. Macomb Lutheran North junior Lauren Timpf repeated as individual medalist as she carded rounds of 70 and 72 for a 142 while Lily Bargamian of Grosse Ille took second with a 149

#### **Williamston Places 10th At State Meet**

The Williamston golf team capped the season by placing 10th in Division 3 with a 739 total. The Hornets were led by sophomore Nicole Schafer, Schafer, who placed 15th at the state meet as a freshman, finished 12th this year as she turned in rounds of 77 and 84 for a 161 total. Junior Ellie Thorburn followed with a 181 while junior Allison Kane shot a 188, junior Emma Beck a 213 and sophomore Athena Hart a 217.

15th at the regional.

The Charlotte golf team earned a trip to the Division 3 state finals to cap the season. The Orioles placed 13th at the state finals with a team total of 761. Senior Hannah Robinson wrapped up her high school career in a big way as she placed third individually with rounds of 75 on both days for a 150 total. Freshman Addison Antcliff shot a 194, senior Logan Gingrich followed with a 204 while junior Delaina Rosier totaled 213 and junior Marissa Dye a 217.

Charlotte qualified for state by placing third at the Otsego regional. Robinson claimed medalist honors at the regional with a 77 while Gingrich and Rosier tied for 21st with rounds of 109

#### **Freeland Golfers Cap** Season Competing At State



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Williamston qualified for state by winning the regional tournament it hosted with a 344 total. Schafer won the individual regioal title with a 70 while Thorburn placed ninth with an 88. Hart and Kane both shot a 93 to place

#### **Charlotte Golfers End Season At State Meet**

The Freeland golf team ended the season competing at the Division 3 state meet where it placed 16th overall with a 789 total. The Falcons were led at the state meet by standout sophomore Ava Pumford. Pumford, who placed fifth overall last year

as a freshman, placed ninth this year with a 160 total, two strokes lower than her total last year. Senior Zoey Markey totaled a 191 followed by freshman Reese Conlee with a 215, senior Sophie Maxwell with a 227 and sophomore Lily Spencer with 231.

Freeland earned a trip to the state finals by placing second at the Williamston regional. Pumford took second the regional as she shot a 71. Markey was seventh with an 85 while Conlee was 13th with a 92.

#### **DIVISION 4**

Led by its all-senior lineup, Jackson Lumen Christi dominated play at the Division 4 state finals at The Meadows on the campus of Grand Valley State University Lumen Christi totaled rounds of 345 and 343 to finish with a 688 total. Adrian Lenawee Christian placed second with a 711 total while a young Lansing Catholic squad placed third with 715. Ann Arbor Greenhills sophomore Mia Melendez won the individual medalist title for the second straight year as she carded a 149 while sophomore Logan Bentley of Brooklyn Columbia Central placed second with a 150.

#### Lansing Catholic **Golfers Place Third**

A young Lansing Catholic golf team sent notice that it will be a major factor on the state scene the next few years as it placed third in Division 4 with a 715 total. The Cougars, who finished runner-up in state last year and graduated a trio of standout seniors, hardly missed a beat this year. Junior Sophie Hauser led the way for Lansing Catholic as he placed ninth overall with a 167. Sophomore Brynn Anderson placed 17th with a 171 total while sophomore Julia Sambaer was 24th overall with a 186 and freshman Addi Rule was 30th with a 191.

Lansing Catholic earned a trip to the state meet by placing second at the Laingsburg regional. Hauser placed second at the regional with an 83 followed by Sambaer in fifth with a 91, Anderson eighth with a 97 and Rule 10th with a 103

#### **Bath Golfers Improve** At State Meet

The Bath golf team finished one spot above its finish last year as state as the Bees recorded an 831 total and placed 13th overall. Sophomore Anna Schaibly led Bath at the finals as she placed 21st with a

182. Junior Aubrie Schaibly carded a 200 while junior Kaitlyn Dickey totaled 222 and sophomore Aubri Torok a 227.

Bath qualified for state by placing third at the Laingsburg regional. Anna Schaibly led the way at the regional as she placed third with a round of 90. Aubrie Schaibly took 13th with a 106 followed by Dickey with a 109 and Torok with a 116.

#### **Shepherd Golfers Return To State Meet**

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE - KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

After placing 15th at last year, the Shepherd golf team moved up one place at this year's state finals as the Blue Jays totaled an 847. Senior Grace Bohannon led the team with a two-day total of 195. Seniors Natalie Lloyd and Anna Lator both finished with totals of 218 while junior Aubrey Parker totaled 228 and senior Lily Gouin totaled 234.

Shepherd qualified for state by placing second at the Mt. Pleasant regional. Bohannon led the way at the regional as she placed sixth individually with 100. Lloyd carded a 106 followed by Parker with a 107, Lator with 108 and Gouin with 110.

#### **Chippewa Hills Golfers Compete At State**

The Chippewa Hills golf team concluded the season by placing 16th at the state finals with a total of 860. Sophomore Madison Allen led the way for Chipp Hills as she placed 17th individually with a 171 total. Junior Ryleigh Allen, who placed 27th at last year's finals, moved up to 19th this season as she finished with a 177. Freshmen Erin Riesenberg and Rileigh Abel finished with total of 253 and 259.

Chippewa Hills advanced to the state meet by placing third at the Mt. Pleasant regional. Madison Allen won medalist honors at the regional as she fired an 84. Ryleigh Allen was second with an 89 while Riesenberg shot a 113.

#### St. Louis Golfers Earn **Trip To State Finals**

The St. Louis golf team wrapped up the season by placing 17th at the Division 4 state finals. The Sharks were paced by junior Josie Schrot who placed 39th individually with a 195. Junior Natalie Hovt totaled a 218 followed by junior Emma Worthy with a 228, senior Danielle Thelen with a 261 and sophomore Lauren Devine with a 260.



Anna Lator of Shepherd follows her shot during action in the girls golf state finals.

St. Louis earned a trip to the state finals by winning the regional at the Mt. Pleasant Country Club. Hoyt led the way at the regional as she placed third overall with a 95. Worthy placed seventh with a 101 followed by Schrot with a 103 and Thelen with 114.

#### Four Area Golfers Compete As Individuals In D4

Four area golfers wrapped up their seasons by qualifying for the state meet as individuals

Stanton Central Montcalm qualified a pair of individuals. Junior Erika Thomas placed 36th at the state finals with a total of 184 while sophomore Alexis Curry was 78th with a 223. Thomas qualified for state by placing fifth at the regional with a 97 while Curry was seventh at the regional with a 101.

Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart senior Gretchen Wilson placed 79th at the state meet with a 224 total. Wilson qualified for state by placing fourth at the regional with a 96.

Lakewood-Lake Odessa junior Makenzie Vasquez placed 66th at the state meet with a 215 total. Vasquez shot a 104 at regional to earn a trip to state.

## **November 8th** Vote For **BRITTANY DICKEN FOR CIRCUIT JUDGE** ☆ EXPERIENCED ☆ FAIR ☆ PUBLIC SERVANT



Grand Blanc's Kate Brody was recently named 2022 Miss Golf by the Interscholastic Golf **Coaches Association** 

## Kate Brody named 2022 Miss Golf

#### Scott Keves Sports Scene

For four year's Grand Blanc's Kate Brody has made a name for herself on the golf course.

However this year not only has Brody made a name for herself, she left a lasting impression on the entire golf community rewriting the Michigan High School Athletic Association record books, while becoming one of the most prolific golfers to ever come out of the state of Michigan.

Brody wrapped up her high school career winning her second individual championship earlier this month at the Division 1 state tournament at the Bedford

Valley Golf and Country Club in Battle Creek.

Now she can add Miss Golf to her already

impressive resume. On Oct. 28 the Interscholastic Golf Coaches Association announced that Brody has won the 2022 Miss Golf award.

Brody has been the best player in the state since her first match this season, winning eight of nine 18-hole tournaments and averaging 68 shots in those nine matches.

Her scores include a courserecord 10-under-par 62 at The Fortress in Frankenmuth, a pair of 65s and she's carded 68 as well. Earlier in the summer Brody also carded a 62 at a junior event.

But if anyone who knows golf around Mid-Michigan knows shooting a 62 at the Fortress knows its no small feat, but on that day

that score.

Brody made it look easy.

"Going into that day at the Fortress I went into the tournament with no expectations of going that low," Brody said.

"Last year I shot a 67 at the Fortress and I think my goal heading into that tournament was to beat that. I didn't think I was going to go that low, but when I realized that I was six under through eight holes I knew I had a real shot at going low on the day."

As far as seeing if the 62 is an all-time low in the record books for the regular season, Grand Blanc coaches called the MHSAA, but unfortunately the MHSAA doesn't keep regular season records for girls golf, but most think that score is an all-time best for the high school ranks

Even if it can't be confirmed most think that the score is one of the best-ever in the history of girls golf in the state. She did go on and

break the scoring mark at Grand Blanc High School and the Fortress not to mention blowing away the field at the regional.

She won the regional by 17 shots with a score of 65 at El Dorado Golf Club in Mason and has been practicing hard at Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club, where her dad Doug is the head professional.

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"Honestly at regionals I knew my team was going to have to do pretty well if we were going to make state as a team, so I wanted to try and shoot really low so my team would have a chance," Brody said. "I made eight birdies and a bogey. I was playing really solid that day. I wanted to give my team a good chance of making it to the tournament, but unfortunately we came up a little short."

Brody will continue her golf career next fall at the University of Wisconsin

## **Pumford, Freeland Golf Moving In Positive Direction**

### Scott Keyes **Sports Scene**

Not only did Averie Pumford break the Freeland scoring record this season shooting a 74 early in the



season, she came right back less than a week later and fired a 71 to better her previous

Not bad for the 15-yearold Pumford, who is only a sophomore for the Falcons.

"I guess coming into this season breaking the school record I knew I could do it," Pumford said. "But I can honestly say I never go into a tournament thinking that is my main goal. I honestly didn't know what the school record was until this year."

To her surprise the school

Freeland's Averie Pumford set numerous school records for the Falcon's this season. Freeland advanced to the Division 3 finals for the fifth straight year.

record of 75 was held by her sister Olivia, who went on to play collegiately at Saginaw Vallev State University

"Like I said when I knew I broke the school record I had no idea Olivia held it so that makes it pretty cool," she said. "We have a little sibling rivalry going now and that makes it pretty fun out there.

Pumford admits she has watched her game evolve over the last year, but she knows hard works pays off in the end. Nothing seems to phase her on the links, but we she saw Grand Blanc's Kate Brody shoot a course record 62 at the Fortress earlier this year she couldn't help to be amazed by

#### incredible. I know how hard she works on her game and she deserves all the positive things heading her way in the future

Pumford has been equally impressive in her own right this season.

"A 62 is just nuts," she said.

"When I saw that score post

I couldn't believe it. Shooting

that low is one thing, but to

do at the Fortress is simply

She spent the summer golfing with her dad, who played at Michigan State and is the assistant coach at Saginaw Valley State University. Pumford also joined the Calloway Meijer Summer Tour, playing in the 16-18 age division.

"I'm only 15, but I wanted to play from the longer tees," Pumford said, "I did OK, But I wanted to compete with the



older players, who play from the teens in the back. I know I'm pretty long off the tee, so I wanted that challenge."

Pumford estimates her average drive is 250 yards.

At the end of the day Pumford helped lead Freeland to its fifth straight trip to the Michigan High School

3 finals at Forest Akers East in East Lansing.

Pumford led the way for

the Falcons finishing all-state after firing an 81-79 over two rounds to finish ninth overall Zoey Markey, Reese Conlee, Sophie Maxwell, and Lilly Spencer along with Pumford helped Freeland finish 16th in the 18-team field.

A. 100

FOR CIRCUIT JUDGE Vote **November 8th** 

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I am running for this family court position on our circuit bench because of my vast and unmatched experience in family law, compassion for people, and unwavering commitment to public service. My goals are to expand programs to include more alternative dispute resolution options, utilize our community resources and non-profits to assist families during the divorce process, allow reasonable access and an opportunity to be heard, simplify the process for our self-represented litigants, and make the courts easier to navigate for the general population. I am fair, impartial, respectful and am a non-partisan candidate who is passionate about following the law regardless of personal beliefs or opinions. I am the most qualified candidate and experienced candidate having worked for the County of Saginaw and presided over thousands of family law cases. I have been endorsed by 14 Saginaw judges who are joining with me to ask for your vote on November 8th!

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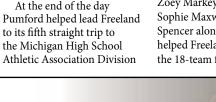




John Raffel **Sports Scene** 

Seminary (116)









## Alma Girls Are Regional Champs, **Boys Are Second**

#### John Raffel **Sports Scene**

Alma girls and boys cross country teams have both qualified for the state meet.

The girls were regional champions for the first time since 1988. In the regional meet at Alma had a 55 ompared to 67 for second-place Frankenmuth.

For Alma, Ezgil Kurt (18:59.1), Joy Evans (19:15.5)l Hannah Raglin (19:46.3), Jenna Overla (20:09.4) and Jordan Cleveland (20:57.6) took places second, third, seventh, 16th

Both the Alma boys and Girls cross country teams qualified for the state meet in 2022.

and 27th

"The girls did what they have been doing all year," LeBron said. "They had a great race every meet from the get go They're doing so well. Even though they're fairly young they're racing like veterans. Week in and week out they rally around each other and put up great performances. It's nice to see them coming together the way they are. Four of our top seven are sophomores

"We're ranked No. 9 in the state right now. A top 10 finish is a goal. The girls are fantastic. They did incredible."

The boys took second despite being seeded fifth

Thomas Larson was sixth at regionals (16:23.2), Al Kudmani 16th (17:05.2), Lucas Lebron 18th (17:10.5) Bodie Heiss 21st (17:15.8) and Elijah Baitierra 28th (17:37.1).

"We have four ninth graders in the top seven," Gene LeBron said. "We have a sophomore and two juniors. For having four freshmen, what they did was incredible."

Ithaca boys won their regional while the girls took third and both qualified for the state meet.

## **Breckenridge Girls Take Regional Title**

It's been quite a fall for the Breckenridge girls cross country team has had quite a

"The girls won the first cross country conference championship in school history," coach Kurt Gulick said. "They won regionals by nine points and haven't won in nine years. "It's a young young squad and always ready to strike when it matters most. They are very fun to watch and coach. Their hard work in the offseason is paying off and they are having fun seeing that payoff as well."

Breckenridge had a 48l followed by Farwell (57) Beal City (69)l M0ount Pleasant Sacred Heart (74) and Michigan Lutheran

Leaders for Breckenridge were Ally Schmitz (21:28.08) Avery Westall (21:43.10) Danica Aldrich 11th (22:25.15), Tori Most 12th (22:29.05) and Areyell Weiss in 22nd (23:41.0) and Nataly Vine 23rd (23:45.51).

The boys team took second in the regional and will be going to the state meet. Sawyer Stoneman was fourth (17:36.13)Isaac Humm sixth (17:59;52)l Jaden )Strander 12th (18:42.0) and Aimon Humm 24th (20:27.64).

Breckeridge edged traditional state power Mkount Pleasant Heart in all three MSAC meets.

In the final jamboree for Breckenridge, Schmitz (2203.13). Westall (22:2009), Most (22:40.12) aind Aldrich (22:42.50) took spots five through eight.



The Breckenridge girls cross country team qualified for the state meet for the first time in nine seasons



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## **Freeland Runners Putting In Work During** Solid Season For Both Girls, Boys Teams

#### John Raffel **Sports Scene**

It's another solid season for Freeland cross country coach George Drown.

The boys have had a spectacular season. They were St. Johns large school Invite champions, John Bruder Invite champions, Cadillac Invite Champions, TVC-8 Division champions, TJ Hansen TVC-8 individual champion, and Braydon Honsinger TVC-8 individual runner up. Braden Klein and Camden McLeod were first team all- TVC8 and Sam Nemeth honorable mention all-TVC 8.

The girls team was St. Johns Invite Champions, and third in the TVC-8.

For the boys, TJ Hansen "broke our school record with a time of 15:41 previously held by teammate Braydon Honsinger," Drown said. "He is our No. 1-2 runner on the team. Bravdon Honsinger rebroke our school record with a time of 15:34 previously held by TJ Hansen. Braydon is our No. 1-2 runner on the team."

For the CC-C girls, Jada Prescott "In her first season (a freshmen) is our No. 1-2 runner with a season best time of 19:50," Drown said. "Karie Keefer in her first season (sophomore) is our No. 1-2 runner with a season best time of 20:00."

The boys "have the best 1-2 punch in with Braydon Honsinger and TJ Hansen," Drown said. "The girls lost our No. 1 runner to vasovagal syndrome and our No. 2 girl did not come out this season. Pair that with the addition of three other varsity girls making their high school season debuts and we really needed to get to know each other and care about each other first, and I think we have succeeded in that.

"We have two boys towards the front in the 15s and we had one in the 17s and two in the 18s. Right now we currently have two in the 15's and three in the 17's, so we just need to continue to work on that. The girls just need to continue to be students of the sport, learn something new about cross country and about what our bodies are capable of one race at a time. I think if we can do that we will be happy with our season at the end?

The Freeland boys and girls cross country teams have had championship success this season.





## **Beal City Girls Runners Have Championship Expectations**

**GOOD LUCK** 

#### John Raffel **Sports Scene**

Beal City cross country coach Griffin Bohannon has been watching some excellent runners on his side all season.

The boys were runner-up at the Beaverton Invitational. The girls were champions at the Early Season Warrior Invitational, Beal City Invitational and Windmill Invitational. They were runner-up at the following: Apples to Apples Invitational, Oiler Invitational: currently in first place in the Highland Conference. The boys' top athlete has been Owen Gross.

"Owen is a senior and has been a great athlete all four years of high school," Bohannon said. "He qualified for the state meet as a reshman and junior and finished 49th last year. He is also a threetime all-conference performer and has a personal best time of 17:20 which he ran this season.

"For the girls, our top athlete is Kaylee Locke. Kaylee is a senior and is a two-time All-State athlete. She is also a three-time All-Conference performer and has won two rRegional titles. Kaylee has already clinched the Highland Conference title this season and she is also the reigning conference champion in the 100m dash and 400m dash. It's not too often that you have a girl win the league in the 100m and in cross country." The boys team has a lot of depth.

"We have a clear top 3, but beyond that are 4, 5, 6, 7 are very close together," Bohannen said. "If one of them struggles on the course, someone else is there to pick up the slack. Our girls are a very competitive group that runs to win. Their mindset is their biggest strength.

"Our boys team could use a little work on focusing on our easy days.

meet.



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The 2022 Beal City Cross Country Team.

For workout days, everyone takes the work seriously and does their job. However, some of the athletes take their recovery days a little too easy. The girls race very well when they are mentally pumped up, but sometimes struggle if they are not in the right headspace." The girls were hoping to clinch first in the conference on Oct. 18 in a home

"Our girls are looking to win the conference title and potentially win the Regional title," Bohannon said. "It would also be nice to achieve a top 10 finish at the state championship. For the girls, the key is getting everyone healthy and on the starting line. If we get the full squad healthy and ready to compete, I am confident we will reach our goals."







John Raffel **Sports Scene** 

country runners as possible, Woodman this season.



John Raffel **Sports Scene** 

Ben Watson has had a strong season with his Rockford girls cross country team.

"The team has improved consistently throughout the entire

season," he said. "We have gone from unranked to honorable mention



**Sports Scene** 

The boys team has won two

"We have had a solid season,"

### HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE - KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

## **CC-Crystal Runners Enjoying Another Strong Season**

Having as many All-State cross that's the goal for Carson City-Crystal cross country coach Grant

It's been an outstanding season

for Woodman's boys team. Highlights so far have been being

Josh Lott Memorial Invitational champions, first place at the MSAC Jamboree No. 1 and 2, and third place at the Evart Invitational. Beal City is currently ranked 13th in Division 4.

status and now are ranked 10th

Freshman Trinity VanderWoude

"has been our top finisher in each

said. "Her personal record of 18:45

places her as the 25th fastest girl in

Sophomore Natalie Lewis "has a

school history and fourth fastest

personal record of 18:55 which is

freshman in school history."

meet she has raced in," Watson

Top runners have been Deegan Bodell, Kristian Coon, Jacob Stevens and Carter Clark.

Strength of the team, Woodman said, "Our pack and first to fifth man split is consistently around a minute and 20 seconds which is good. What do we need to work on is moving the pack closer to the front of the races. Our goals at the beginning of the season are to contend and win the MSAC, be top three, win regionals and get the team to the State meet and ge as many to the All-State level as

an incredible improvement from

year. Her 18:55 is the 33rd fastest

racing a 20:03 in her freshmen

in Rockford school history,"

Watson said. "The strength of

the team is a competitive spirit

and drive to become as fast as we

possibly can become. This group is

very competitive and works every

day to make themselves as fast as

last three weeks, we need to work

on getting great sleep and eating

fourth in the conference which

features four of the top 15 ranked

teams in the state. The OK Red is

properly. We are between third and

"Over the championship season;

possible

possible

"All of those goals are still within reach. We are in excellent position to win the League title and we are going to have a fight to win the Regional, but it will definitely be possible. By doing that, we should get the boys team to the state meet (Nov. 5) in Brooklyn (at the Michigan International Speedway)."

> Deegan Bodell is having great season for Carson City Crystal's cross country team

cross country conference in the state of Michigan." Watson likes his team's potential

the toughest and deepest women's

"Goal No. 1 is for all the Rams to continually improve till their last race of the season," Watson said. "If we do this we can accomplish other team

goals like qualifying for the state finals by placing top three in

our regional championship race. The key is staying motivated and focused on taking care of our bodies; sleeping and eating properly in addition to training properly."





Trinity VanderWoude (left) and Natalie Lewis share a special moment for Rockford's cross country team.

## **St. Louis Boy Runners Eye Third Straight Title**

in the state."

Coach Jay Puffpaff's St Louis cross country teams have usually done well during the post season and hope to do it again in 2022.

straight Division 3 state titles.

Puffpaff said. "The team has come together and worked extremely hard striving to reach our end of

"Ben March taken a big step forward this season. He put in a lot of quality work in the off season and that focus on the process is evident in his performances. Jaiden Dickman is really coming into her own here at the end of the season. She has run her best in the championship phase and has set herself up to have a big end to the season'

Things have gotten better for the Sharks as time has progress.

"The team has really done a

great job staying focused on the process of continuing to improve through the season," March said "Their attitudes, actions and behaviors have stayed aligned with the performances and team that they are striving to become. After graduating a big group from last season we were a little inexperienced at the start to the season but our upperclassmen have done a great job leading and setting the example that our younger runners have responded to?

The boys were TVC 10 Champions. The girls were TVC 10 runners-up.

"Our goal as always is to perform our best in the championship phase of the season,"



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The St. Louis cross country teams have put together another strong season in 2022.

March said. "Our boys will be trying to capture their fourth

bryant Authorize

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regional championship in a row

tomorrow while our girls will be trying to qualify for the state finals as a team once again.



October 2022 - Page 15



## **Chippewa Hills Runner Eyes All-State Season**

John Raffel **Sports Scene** 

In his very first high school cross country race in 2019, Chippewa Hills' Jake O'Neil was the third fastest freshman in what was a very large field.

This year as a senior, O'Neil is getting closer to realizing his dreams as being one of the top runners in the state in Division 3

Chippewa Hills' Jake O'Neill is looking to be an all-state runner this seaso

"Jake has been a great kid to have out," Chippewa Hills coach Zach Hatfield said. "He strives to do his best. He works hard and is a positive member of the team. He looks out and helps the younger guys. I have enjoyed having him on the team and in the program for many years."

O'Neil's track season last spring was cut short when he developed breathing problems, which he

was told initially could be life threatening. But he got the go ahead from his doctors over the summer to train for the 2022 cross season and it's been a good one

He started with a 17:43.2 in the early season Warrior (Invitational on his home course and then cut it to almost a minute two weeks later with a 16:45.6 at the Shepherd John Bruder classic. Next was the Michigan State Spartan Invitational with a 17:40.4 for 16th place. He opened the CSAA conference season with a 16:31.8 and then took his first victory of the season

#### www.highschoolsportsscene.com

with a 16:51.4 at the Grayling Invitational

But the best was yet to come for O'Neil. He clocked a 17:04.5 at Lakeview in the second conference jamboree of the season

But next up was the 2022 Portage Invitational on Oct. 9 in one of the biggest XC meets in the state. O'Neil was eighth in his division but had his personal record of 16:18.09.

After this, he continued to stay below 17 minutes with times of 16:47.5 and 16:57.0.

**Lansing Catholic Girl Runners Having Strong Season** 

#### John Raffel **Sports Scene**

Lansing Catholic cross country coach Tim Simpson has enjoyed watching his cross country teams this season.

His boys teams were runners-up in 2016 and state champs in 2015. His girls were runners-up in 2016.

Last season his boys were third in the state but six of their top seven runners graduated. The only returning runner is junior Stephen Fair.

It's a different story for the Lansing Catholic girls team.

"We have easily won the three jamborees and will win the conference for the 11th consecutive year," Simpson said.

All but one runner returns from a 2021 team which was fourth in the Division 3 state meet, Juniors Hannah Pricco, Cc Jones, Emmie West, India Doerr and Zee Simpson were in the top seven along with junior Tessa Rowe.

In the CAAC White final jamboree for the girls, Lansing Catholic handily finished first.

LC took the top three spots with Cc Jones (19:40.3), Roe second (19:41.0) and Pricco third (19:41.01), Francis Melinn a freshman was seventh (22:01.1) and Doerr eighth (22:02.8)

Jones had a personal record of 18:13.3 She had three first places this season. Roe's personal record this season is an 18:38.2. She had a first place in one of the CAAC jamborees in 19:57.3. She also had a second in the Lansing Catholic Invitational in 19:40. Pricco took first place in the Lansing Catholic Invitational in 19:03.7.

"CC was a little surprise at regionals her freshman year running for Haslett," Simpson said. "She had to sit out her sophomore year at Lansing Catholic after transferring, last year and she was solid in XC but still a little

and down. In the past year she got consistent with her training and has kept herself healthy. She has been very good this season capped by winning the Greater

#### Lansing Invitational finishing ahead of her teammate Hannah Pricco.

"CC has run the workouts as intended and has been ready when it's time to race. She enjoys the big races in XC and is confident when she goes into them. Her running is very important to her and it shows in her preparation and approach to each day. She will finish highly in the big races. She is drawing

interest from numerous Big Ten and other D1 programs and is still in the process of deciding where to run in college."

For the LC boys in the final CAAC jamboree, Lucas Gates was seventh in 18:23.4. Fair was 13th in 18.51 4

For the girls team, "our strength is that our top-three is the best in D3 and one of the best in the entire state," Simpson said "We have a chance to do well in any meet because of those three finishing so high. We just need to keep developing our 4-to-7 runners. We have some freshmen and some seniors that are continuing to improve?

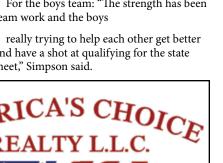




Lansing Catholic runners were conference champs and the boys were very competitive.

For the boys team: "The strength has been team work and the boys

and have a shot at qualifying for the state meet," Simpson said.











### HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE - KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

October 2022 - Page 17

## **Midland Dow Wins State Title As Area Tennis Players Wrap Up Season At State Tournament**

#### David Cook **Sports Scene**

The boys tennis season wrapped up with area teams battling for post-season glory in the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) state tournament. Following is a look at this year's state finals and how area teams fared in the state tournament.

#### **DIVISION 2**

The Midland Dow tennis team defended its home turf and came away with the seventh state tennis title in program history as it won the Division 2 state championship at the Midland Tennis Center. Dow totaled 32 points to win the title with Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern taking second place with 27 points and Birmingham Seaholm placing third with 22 points.

#### **Dow Wins Seventh State Title**

The Midland Dow tennis team won state title number seven and broke a six-year



Justin Jenkins of Holt returns a shot during action at the Division 1 state tennis finals at Hope College.

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in 2016.

The Chargers were led in the finals by a quartet of strong doubles players. Three of Dow's singles players reached the championship match with junior Aaron Li winning the state title at No. 2 singles and sophomore Nimai Patel winning the state title at No. 4 singles. Junior Logan Yu reached the finals at No. 3 singles while sophomore Austin King reached the semifinals at No. 1 singles.

In doubles play, Dow's No. 2 doubles team of Roofy Elsaadany and Aiden Tanis won a state title. The No. 3 doubles team of Vishagen Karthikeyan and Shubhan Nagarkar reached the finals. Reaching the semifinal round for the Chargers were the No. 1 doubles team of Thomas Ladwein and Boaz Qiu and the No. 4 doubles team of Dominic Griffin and Konner Janeczko.

### **Okemos Places In Top Ten**

The Okemos tennis team capped the season by placing seventh overall in Division 2 with a total of 17 points.

Okemos was led at the state finals by junior Rikhil Rajanikanth who reached the semifinals at No. 3 singles. The No. 1 doubles team of Siddharth Kandukuri and Kai Minamisono also reached the semifinals.

Okemos qualified for the state meet by winning the regional title at the East Lansing regional. Okemos dominated play at the regional by winning all eight flights. Sophomore Suchir Nagisetty won the title at No. 1 singles with Alex Zhang winning at No. 2, Rajanikanth winning No. 3 and Ben Wei winning at No. 4 singles.

Okemos also swept the doubles competition with Kandukuri and Minamisono winning at No. 1 doubles, Aswath Karai and Mithran Kannan winning at No. 2, Dhruv Ganguly and Addy Sarda winning No. 4 and David Shi and Izzath Mohamed Rafih winning No. 4 doubles.

#### **East Lansing Reaches State Finals**

The East Lansing tennis team ended the season by finishing in the top ten in Division

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drought as the Chargers last won a state title 2. East Lansing tied for ninth overall with six points at the finals.

> East Lansing qualified for the state meet by placing second at the regional it hosted. The Trojans were led at the regional by their doubles teams as all four squads reached the finals. Those teams included John Laxton and Bryce Aho at No. 1 doubles, James Knake and JD Hawthorne at No. 2 doubles, Grant Pennock and Sacha Karp at No. 3 and Alex Arnold and Henry Mahler at No. 4 doubles. In singles play William Sigdal reached the finals at No. 3 singles.

#### **DIVISION 1**

Metro Detroit teams held serve at the Division 1 state finals with Bloomfield Hills winning the state title with 35 points followed by Northville with 25 points and Troy with 24 points.

#### Holt tennis competes at state finals

The Holt tennis team qualified for the state finals and scored two team points at the Division 1 finals.

The Rams qualified for the state finals by winning the championship at the Kalamazoo Loy-Norrix regional. Holt was led at the regional by its doubles teams that won all four doubles flights. Winning doubles titles at the regional were the No. 1 doubles team of Andrew Rutter and Cade Greene, the No. 2 doubles team of Anderson Threadgould and Mitchell Dubois, the No. 3 team of Luke Ausel and Riley Lennox and the No. 4 doubles team of Thomas Groenewoud and Davin Thelen. In singles play, junior Adam Williams won the championship at No. 3 singles. Senior Noah Collins reached the finals at No. 1 singles with junior Justin Jenkins reaching the finals at No. 4 singles.

#### **DIVISION 3**

Ann Arbor Greenhills came away with the title in Division 3 with a total of 35 points. Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook-Kingswood came in second with 33 points while Detroit Country Day placed third with 23 points.

**Dewitt Tennis Competes At State** The DeWitt tennis team capped the season by finishing in a tie for 15<sup>th</sup> place at the Division 3 state finals with five points.

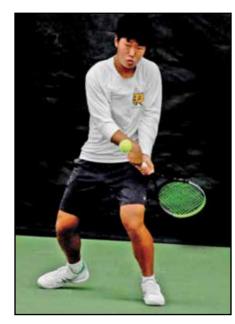
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A Midland Dow player returns a shot during action in the Division 2 state tennis finals.

DeWitt qualified for the state meet by taking second at the Mason regional. The Panthers were led at the regional by their doubles teams as all four squads reached the finals. The No. 1 doubles team of Kaleb Casler and Diego Canales won the title at No. 1 doubles. Also reaching the finals were the No. 2 doubles team of Parker Havard and Jace Montgomery, the No. 3 team of Blake Taylor and Rowan Page and the No. 4 squad of Brandon Keefe and Meric Gust Senior Alex Schmidt reached the regional finals at No. 3 singles.

#### **Haslett Netters Cap** Season At State

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The Haslett tennis team finished the season in a tie for 17th place at the Division 3 state finals with four team points.

Haslett earned the trip to the state finals by placing third at the Mason regional. Sophomore Sree Komiresetty, who won the regional title at No. 2 singles a year ago, won the title at No. 1 singles this season. Junior Ian Opel won the regional title at No. 2 singles while Aremis Leung won the title at No. 3 singles and Andrew Gingras won the title at No. 4 singles.

Mason tennis players compete at state The Mason tennis team ended the year by placing 20th at the Division 3 state finals.

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# **Lansing Catholic Tennis**

## **Trip To Tennis Finals**







The Bulldogs qualified for state after placing fourth at the regional. Mason was led at the regional by senior Lucas Preston who reached the finals at No. 1 singles. Junior Javden Miller reached the finals at No. 2 singles while junior Ethan Rice reached the finals at No. 4 singles.

#### **DIVISION 4**

Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett won the Division 4 state title with 30 points. Hudsonville Unity Christian finished second with 27 points while Traverse City St. Francis placed third with 22 points.

#### **Big Rapids Places** In Top Five At State

points.

The Cardinals received strong efforts from their doubles players at the state finals. Leading the way was the No. 4 doubles team of Elijah Haynes and Ari Ziska who won the state title. Reaching the semifinal round were the No. 2 doubles team of Isaac Zocco and Noah Sweppenheiser and the No. 3 doubles team of Dylan Walsh and Mason Sleeper.

Big Rapids qualified for the state tourney by taking second at the Traverse City St. Francis regional. Both the No. 3 and No. 4 doubles teams won regional titles while junior Preston Younge won the regional title at No. 4 singles.

**Reaches State** The Lansing Catholic tennis team ended the year by placing 13th at the Division 4 state finals with five team points.

The Cougars qualified for state after placing third at the Portland regional. Sophomore Dominic Perez won a regional title at No. 4 singles while senior Joey Castle (No. 1 singles), junior John Abood (No. 2 singles) and senior Sam Murphy (No. 3 singles) all reached the finals.

Williamston Earns

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HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE - KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

The Big Rapids tennis team turned in a strong effort at the Division 4 state finals as the Cardinals took fourth place with 18 team

The Williamston tennis team ended the year by placing 13<sup>th</sup> at the Division 4 state finals with five team points.

Williamston punched its ticket to the state finals by taking second at the Portland regional. The Hornets were paced by their doubles teams at the regional. The No.

3 doubles team of Adrian Eby and Seth Pennington and the No. 4 doubles team of Kendal Hampton and Liam Agnew both won regional titles while the No. 2 doubles team of Owen Masi and Jack Robke reached the finals

#### **Portland Tennis Team Advances To State Meet**

The Portland tennis team wrapped up the season in a tie for 20<sup>th</sup> place at the Division 4 state finals.

Portland qualified for the state finals by placing fourth at the regional tournament it hosted. Portland was led at the regional by the No. 1 doubles team of Casey Smith and Damien Ledu and the No. 2 doubles team of Marshall Smiley and Max Weller who both won regional titles. The No. 3 doubles team of Eddy Holcomb and Camden Calkins reached the finals.

#### **Saginaw Nouvel Tennis** Team Competes At State

The Saginaw Nouvel tennis team capped the season by finishing in a tie for 18<sup>th</sup> place at the Division 4 finals.

Nouvel qualified for the state finals by winning the regional tournament it hosted. Nouvel was led by Christian Beyers who won the title at No. 1 singles and Brady Vance who won the title at No. 3 singles. Noah Lucas reached the finals at No. 4 singles. A pair of doubles teams won regional titles with the No. 1 doubles team of Shawn McDonald and Javden Lucas and the No. 2 doubles team of Andrew Wagner and Cooper Swackhamer winning regional titles and the No. 4 doubles team of Conrad Wardin and Nathan Zeleniuk reaching the finals

#### **Bullock Creek Tennis Beaches State Meet**

The Bullock Creek tennis team qualified for the Division 4 state finals by placing second at the Nouvel regional.

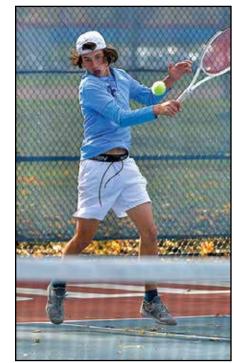
Bullock Creek crowned a pair of champions at the regional as Andrew Whittington won the title at No. 4 singles and Carter Bass and Corbyn Furlo won the regional title at No. 4 doubles. Bryce Herron reached the finals at No. 2 singles while the No. 2 doubles team of Jaren Kipfmiller and Griffen Anderson and the No. 3 doubles team of Kyle Kutzke and Logan Joseph also reached the finals.

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Area tennis players hit the court during the recent MHSAA Tennis finals two weeks ago at four different venues around the state.





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## **P-W Has Chance To Win School's First Volleyball Title**

### John Raffel Sports Scene

Pewamo-Westphalia's volleyball team is sizzling the court

The P-W girls entered late October with an amazing 33-3-2 record and is ranked No. 2 in the Division 3 polls.

Jon Thelen is coaching the team.

"This season has been fantastic so far," Thelen said. "We are undefeated in league play not giving up a single set in the regular season leading into the CMAC Tournament on Oct. 22. We have won three tournaments at St Louis. Michigan Elite D3/D4, and Flint Powers. On top of that, we are ranked No. 2 in Division 3 and have a record of 33-2-2.

"Senior outside hitter Dani Pohl is returning from last year's team where she was All state, all region, and first team all CMAC. She currently leads the team in kills and is our most consistent hitter. One of the team leaders, she has been a big part of our success."

John Raffel

White

starter.

**Sports Scene** 

Rockford's volleyball team is

Among the reasons has been

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the play of Meredith Simmons, a

5-foot-10 senior, outside hitter,

captain and third-year varsity

30-13 overall and 9-3 in the OK

**Outside Hitter Leads** 

**Effective Rockford Team** 

Junior setter Taylor Smith "is returning from last year's team where she was All-state, all-region, and 1st team all CMAC," Thelen said. "She is one of the top setters in the Lansing area in assists and has been a fantastic leader. All of our hitters hit great averages thanks to her consistent sets and being 6-1, and she wins most tight balls on the net either scoring or opening hitting lanes."

Junior middle hitter Saige Martin "is returning from last year's team where she was 1st team all CMAC," Thelen said. "She has grown so much this year as a player, leading the team in hitting percentage and aces as well as second on the team in kills. When we need a kill in a tough rotation, she will get it for us.

"Our strength this year has been our senior leadership with players that got to experience making the quarterfinals last year help lead this years team with confidence. They have been incredibly driven since we lost last year in the quarterfinals leading to a hard-working offseason and focused play through

"Meredith is having a breakout

Kelly Delacher said. "She is a great

level in recent weeks and is leading

our team in kills with 316. She also

has been an anchor to our defense

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and is leading the team in digs

(383) and aces (67).

season for us," Rockford coach

leader and role model for our

has taken her game to another

younger players. Offensively she

the regular season. Our serving, blocking and offense have been big parts of our success

Looking ahead, "we need to keep pushing to be more consistent with serve receive. If we are in system, we are basically automatic in scoring," Thelen said. "We are undefeated in conference play, not dropping one set in the regular season That put us as the No. 1 seed going into the conference tournament

"It is hard to win a state title. The school has never won a state title in vollevball. but I truly feel this is the team that could do it. We know the steps to get there and are focused on each one starting with winning league title first then proceeding from there in the state tournament. In order to get there, we need to keep focusing on the little technical

"Meredith as a leader has

done a great job of pushing our

extremely hard during the season

as well as the off-season and has

played on high level club teams

every year. She is a dream player

for a coach as she is self-motivated

for greatness. She sets the tone in

younger players and also has

helped create amazing team

chemistry. Meredith works



P-W's volleyball team hopes to contend for a state title.

details that have gotten us to where we are. The biggest mantra for the rest of the season is don't make the moment bigger than what it is and

Thelen added: 'Little schools like ours take a lot of time and effort to get teams like the one we have. When all the pieces fall into place,

just play Pirate volleyball."

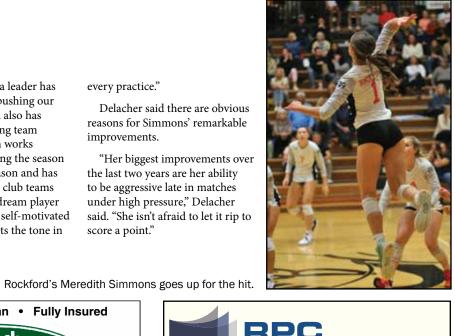
every practice."

improvements.

score a point."

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you get to enjoy having a season like this and I know these girls are hungry and driven enough to get us to the finals. I'm proud of how much we have grown, even improving on the team we had last vear.



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**Sports Scene** Jamie Ianni is the Okemos



# John Raffel **Sports Scene**

Rottman has had an exciting season so far.

schedule this year - playing grow, develop and adjust to faster tempo games.

"Senior Madelynn Rottman is in her third season at LCS and has been our 5-1 setter since she started. She was a second-team allconference pick in 2020 and first team All-Conference, All-Region and All-State Honorable Mention for the 2021 season. She is not only a smart setter, but she is also



### Vote **Cynthia Winiecke** For Saginaw County **Commissioner District 1** November 8

Kayla Ozanich.

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"I look forward to continuing my work as Commissioner for District 1. I welcome the opportunity to have a conversation with you regarding your questions or concerns. When you vote on November 8th, I am seeking your support."

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## **Okemos Volleyball Team Has High Hopes** was runner-up in the Lakewood

## John Raffel

volleyball coach and is working with a team which has been undefeated in the CAAC Blue and



Invitational. Top athletes have included Ali Pignataro, Taylor Stephens and

Ianni said offense has been a strength for Okemos but her girls need to work on serve receive and passing.

Communication and staying healthy, Ianni said, will be critical to reaching certain goals including winning league and conference titles. Taylor Stephens is a fourthvear senior.

Ali Pignataro (3) and her Okemos volleyball eam is having quite a seasor

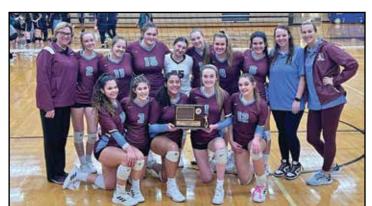
"She reached 1,000 digs in her career earlier in the season," Ianni said. "She is expected to reach 1,000 kills. She is a leader in three statistical categories in the area."

Stephens is averaging 2.7 kills, 0.7 aces and 3.0 digs per set.

"Ali, Taylor and Kayla plays on a national volleyball club team," Ianni said

Ozanich is a middle blocker for Okemos

"Kayla has had a great senior season, playing all six rotations," Ianni said. "She is expected to



reach the 1,000-kill mark. She is No. 1 in the area in kills per set at 4.2 and No. 1 in aces per set at 1.0.

Pigntaro is a third-year varsity player and a senior setter.

"Ali has had a great senior season and hit the 1,000 assist mark for her career earlier this season," Ianni said. "She currentl leads the area with 9.9 assists per set?

## **Lansing Christian Volleyball Girls Tough To Beat**

Lansing Christian coach Sarah

"We started out the season with a very strong tournament championship win at the WMVOA Officials for Kids tournament," Rottman said. "We did not drop a set in that tournament for the second year in a row and defended our title. We have had a tough Divisions 1, 2, and 3 schools and have stayed very competitive. It has been exciting watching these girls

one of our leading blockers and is quickly bringing up her number of aces. She started this season with an injury, but is finally back in full swing. She brings confidence and leadership on the court, and it's great to have her back.

Junior Katelynn Rottman is in her third year on varsity.

"She was a first-team All-Conference pick for the 2021 season as well," coach Sarah Rottman said. "She was also named to the 2022 AVCA Phenom Watchlist. She is a

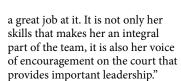
smart, aggressive hitter that knows where to put the ball. It's no surprise that she leads our team in kills, but she is also in the top three for digs. She reads and anticipates the ball well. She has worked very hard over the past year to improve her skills. Her hard work is paying off, and our whole team gets to benefit.

"Senior Eliza Wortz was a second team all-conference selection last year. She is a smart

strong middle hitter with wide range of hitting capabilities. She is willing and able to run anything. She also has great footwork that makes her our leading blocker so far this season. She has worked hard to expand her game in defense. She can read hits and anticipates very well. She is a versatile player that can play many different roles."

Senior Audra Usiak has flown under the radar in terms of allconference selections "but she is one of the most versatile players I ever had the privilege of coaching,' Rottman said. "When our setter was out in the beginning of the season, she stepped out of her defensive role and into a 5-1 setting position. She did an amazing job, although she is happy to be back in the back row. She is a fantastic soccer player, so she is fast and an incredible defender. Don't let her small stature fool you - she is also a very effective blocker and smart attacker at the net.

"Senior Grace Leavitt was an all-conference honorable mention selection last year. She is a strong hitter with great blocking skills. Grace is a very versatile front row player that can play and will play anywhere she is asked and will do



Rottman pointed out to her team's unique strength

"Many of these girls have played together for a while, and many have played multiple sports together for several years," she said. "We have great team chemistry that continues to be our strength. Like most teams at this time of the

year, we need to concentrate on staying strong, healthy and focused to keep our eye on the post season

Lansing Christian's volleyball team has

had championship success so far this season.

prize.

"We have a strong and versatile team. We will play one game at a time in the postseason in hopes of getting as far as possible. The key for our team as we reach the end of our season is to stay healthy, focused, and continue to play each game with confidence and 'next point' attitude. We will have a successful postseason if we can manage those few things?







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## **Meet New Swan Valley Girls Hoop Coach Kelly Miller**

#### Scott Keyes Sports Scene

In 18 seasons as the Delta College women's basketball coach Kelly Miller was 320-198 before stepping down five seasons ago to spend more time with her family

But fast forward to 2022 Miller is back patrolling the hardwood as she was introduced as Swan Valley's new girls basketball coach earlier this summer.



Kelly Miller

She takes over a Swan Valley program that was 19-5 last season under Revna Luplow, who left to take the head coaching job at Hartland High School.

Miller, whose maiden name was Kelly Beckman, was one of Carrollton's top players when it won the 1992 Class C state title. She played at Saginaw Valley State University before taking over at Delta College in 1999.

So why is Miller back?

That is something she discussed with Sports Scene as she is looking forward to he new season that opens up Nov. 14

**Q:** After taking time away from the game why did you decide now was a good time to make your return back into coaching?

**KM:** "After taking five years off of coaching I decided to return to the hardwood, because everything seemed to be the right fit and line-up perfectly," Miller said

"I love coaching and always knew I would return to it, but it needed to fit in my family's life. Having the opportunity to coach at Swan Valley, the school district where my children attend, was too good to pass-up. I am able to coach and still be there for my children. The practices and game times allow me to be home at a reasonable hour. I can make it to my children's sporting events to support them, and I will have the opportunity to eventually coach my daughter. One of my concerns to returning was missing my oldest son, Joseph's hockey games. He is a junior at

coaches not only in Mid-Michigan but

the age of 73.

across the state, passed away October 23 at

Anderson had a long and successful

basketball at Ithaca High School. When

he retired in 2016 Anderson finished his

career having coached a state-record 1,145

career coaching both boys and girls



New Swan Valley girls basketball coach Kelly Miller inherits a Vikings team that finished last season 19-5. Miller takes over this season for Reyna Luplow, who is now the head girls basketball coach at Hartland.

SV, and I didn't want to miss cheering him on in the stands. In previous seasons, the basketball games and hockey games really overlapped. Sitting down with Ryan Stephens, the AD for Swan Valley, and having open communication he ensured me we would be able to make it work. That was the last piece I needed to know I was making the right choice and it was the right time to come back to what I love.

**Q:** When you were away from coaching what was the one thing that you missed the most.?

**KM:** "Being away from coaching I missed the relationships with my players the most. Coaching for 21-years I have had the honor and privilege to work with so many talented and wonderful young ladies. I loved to see them grow not only as athletes, but as young woman. Building those bonds and sharing so

with a 702-443 overall record.

basketball games and finished his career

A 1967 graduate of Ithaca High School,

was inducted into the Basketball Coaches

Association of Michigan Hall of Fame in

Anderson started his coaching career

at Gaylord St. Mary's in 1979 where he

coached boys and girls basketball for

11 seasons. Anderson then coached at

as coach of the Alma girls team.

Vanderbilt for 10 years before taking over

Anderson began coaching at Ithaca

in the early 2000s and spent 21 seasons

many special moments is what drove me to be the best coach I could be, I never wanted to let my players down and wanted to make sure I was someone they could depend on and know I would always be there for them. Those connections I made over the years mean the world to me and I look forward to making more.

**Q:** Talk a little bit about this year's Swan Valley team. You inherited a team with a lot of pieces in place. What makes this year's team a special group?

**KM:** "I truly believe that this is where I am supposed to be and this is the group of girls I was supposed to come back to. This basketball team is special. They have been so welcoming and accepting of me and my ideas. They are a group of players that are so close and have such a connection with one another and have let me in their circle of trust. They truly

coaching the Ithaca boys and girls at different times. During 52 seasons of coaching boys, girls or both teams during the same year Anderson guided teams to 22 league titles, 18 district titles and two regional championships. Anderson was named the boys basketball state Class C Coach of the Year in 2010 and the girls basketball state Class C Coach of the Year in 2015

Longtime Ithaca basketball coach Bob Anderson passed away last week. Anderson retired from basketball in 2016.

work hard to make sure they don't le their teammates down. Everything is about team and not individual success Their desire and passion to win as a team mixed with their work ethic and leadership is why I'm so excited to be part of this family and know they will be successful. I couldn't have asked for a better group of ladies to come back to coaching to."

Q: Lastly you have seen people like former Heritage coach Vonnie Kilmer who took time off but came back and had success when she returned. Do vou feel you can make that same impact?

KM: "I'm looking forward to this new chapter and being a high school coach. I have a lot of experience and knowledge that I am looking forward to sharing with these girls. Having time away from the sideline has only rejuvenated me and I can't wait to start the season."



## Longtime Ithaca Basketball **Coach Bob Anderson Passes Away**

### **David Cook Sports Scene**

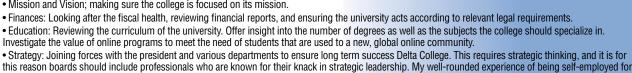
When it came to teaching and coaching basketball, Ithaca's Bob Anderson was one of the best

Anderson, one of the top basketball

C7

## Curt

My Top 5 Priorities: · Mission and Vision; making sure the college is focused on its mission





• Education: Reviewing the curriculum of the university. Offer insight into the number of degrees as well as the subjects the college should specialize in. Investigate the value of online programs to meet the need of students that are used to a new, global online community.

34 year and experience serving on various boards will assist in strategy. Management: Managing risk. Either adverse weather conditions or legal matters, the board should be equipped with a diverse group of individuals to assist.



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# **Butch Harmon Sports Scene**

take off just as impressively

Earls into the professional category for







### HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE - KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

#### October 2022 - Page 23

## **Saginaw's Lionel Baldwin is Arthur Hill's Renaissance's Man**

When it comes to combining athletic production and academic excellence, few high school student athletes can match what Saginaw Arthur Hill senior Lionel Baldwin is

A true renaissance man, Baldwin is doing a phenomenal job of combining excellent while also promoting his

Saginaw Arthur Hill and then the Saginaw United football team, Baldwin recently completed his fourth year as a starter on the varsity team. A talented lineman who starts on both sides of the football, the 6-foot, 260-pound senior started at center on offense this season. On the defensive side of the ball, Baldwin switched from an interior defensive line position to defensive end to help the team. Baldwin adapted well to the position switch as he averaged

and double-digit tackles for loss

With high school football in his rear-view mirror, Baldwin is turning his athletic focus to the upcoming wrestling season where he has high expectations for not only himself but for his team. Arthur Hill has one of its best team wrestling seasons in years last winter and Baldwin is excited to pick things up this year with the bulk of last year's team returning. Baldwin is looking forward to help leading the team again this year after a successful junior season that saw him qualify for the individual state wrestling finals where he came within seconds of reaching the medal round.

"I was one-point away from making it out of the blood round," said Baldwin, who competed in the heavyweight division in Division 1. "I lost with 20 seconds to go in the fourth

Baldwin finished the season with a 41-7 record and was the first Arthur Hill wrestler to qualify for state in years. Baldwin put in plenty of time over the summer working on his

wrestling skills and comes back this season prepared to be one of the top heavyweights in the state.

"I began preparing for wrestling a week after the season ended," Baldwin said. "I wrestled freestyle and Greco-Roman all spring and summer. I traveled to tournaments all over Michigan and the Midwest and went to nationals in Tulsa and Fargo, North Dakota. Baldwin was a runnerup at the state meet in both freestyle and Greco-Roman while his younger brother Michael, a sophomore on this year's team, won a freestyle state championship.

"I'm really excited about the wrestling season," Baldwin said. "We have a great coach in coach Angel (Rodriguez). He does not receive a lot of recognition for what he does. He has changed a lot of kids on and off the mat. Coach is the foundation of our all success. I know I would not be where I am if it wasn't for coach."

While Baldwin has become a standout both on the football field and the wrestling mat, his accomplishments

in the classroom and community stand out even more. Baldwin has a 4.24 grade-point average and is on track to finish number one in his class and to be Arthur Hill's valedictorian this year. Baldwin also takes an active role in the school's leadership as he is the Student Council President, a member of the National Honor Society and is a Saginaw County Youth Ambassador, a position that he takes extremely seriously

"I try to get a lot of people that are leaving Saginaw or plan to leave Saginaw to stay or come back," Baldwin said. "There is a lot of good things in Saginaw and I try to let people know about those things. I have even found out more things about Saginaw since I became a youth ambassador."

Baldwin takes an active role in adding to the good things taking place in Saginaw with his playing of the saxophone in the community. An accomplished saxophone player, Baldwin has turned playing the saxophone into a business where he is hired to serenade people in the community. Baldwin estimates he has played the saxophone for well over 500 and close to 1,000 people in the community

With his combination of athletic and academic skills, Baldwin is looking

like travel to different events along with equipment. Earls has a total of seven different sponsors so far in his young career. Earls also earned prize money while competing at the world championships.

After high school, Earls is looking to not only continue his career as a professional cornhole player, but will be competing at the collegiate level as well. Earls plans to attend Adrian College and play for the Adrian College cornhole club team. Adrian competes against other college cornhole clubs from schools like Michigan and Michigan State.

Earls also has long-range goals in the sport.

"It would be great in the future if cornhole become an Olympic Sport," Earls said. "Once the sport goes global who knows how big it can become. It is such an easy sport to play. Anyone can play it and become good at it.



Saginaw Arthur Hill's Lionel Baldwin is one of the top heavyweight wrestlers in Michigan ranks No 1 in his class, and promotes musical excellence with his saxophone.

to continue his education and playing career in college. Baldwin has been hearing from college wrestling coaches and also took a visit to Ferris State University for football. Academically Baldwin plans to major in political science in college with the goal of becoming a lawyer.



Freeland's Brandon Earls is considered one of the top cornhole players in the country in his age bracket.



The popularity of cornhole has skyrocketed in recent years and a Freeland High School student has seen his standing in the sport of cornhole

Brandon Earls, a senior at Freeland, placed in the top 20 nationally at the American Cornhole Organization World Championship tournament that took place in Branson, Missouri this past summer. Earls placed 17th overall out of some 10,000 competitors in the junior division at the world championship. That lofty finish moved

cornhole players

Earls has been playing cornhole since early childhood and has making steady progress in the sport.

"I started when I was four or five years old," Earls said. "I started playing with my family at the campground when we went camping and in the backvard. I would just have fun playing cornhole with my dad and friends."

Earls played in his first cornhole tournament as a nine-year old and won his first cornhole tournament in Freeland

With school in session, Earls is a member of the cornhole club at Freeland High School. The club, which

has around 15 competitors, competes against high school clubs from Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor and Detroit in a sport that is gaining in popularity around the state. Earls spends about three hours a day practicing cornhole.

"Most of practice is just playing games," Earls said. "There are definitely ways to improve but just playing games is the best way to improve. I've also learned a lot from pros in different levels of cornhole and that has helped me improve my game. At the end of the day, though, the best way to improve is to just play and learn from your experiences in games.

As a professional, Earls has attracted sponsors that help him with things





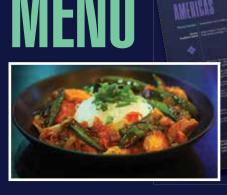
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## **YOUTH LEAGUES**

Elementary to high school players take the stage, team up, and show off some incredible skills to the cheers of parents, friends, and fans. Fornite BEL competed this past summer every Sunday





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