

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE
KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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

The 2023-24 high school sports season is off to a smashing start. Area athletes are hard at work making a name for themselves both on the local and the state level.

The football season is off to a strong start. The area is stocked with outstanding football teams from Division 1 through Division 8 along with some outstanding 8-man football teams. With the state playoffs quickly approaching the area will have some outstanding teams to follow on their trail to Ford Field for the state finals. Look for teams like Rockford, Saginaw Heritage, Mason, Portland, Corunna, Frankenmuth, Beal City and Ithaca to make deep state tournament runs along with several more squads. This year's state playoffs promises to be exciting to say the least.

Area runners are also off to blazing starts. Several area boys and girls cross country teams are ranked in the state and are led by some of the fastest runners in the state. Look for the area to be well represented at the state cross country finals in early November.

On the soccer field, the Alma soccer team continued to make history and is poised for a big state tournament run.

Area volleyball teams are also off to a strong start with several outstanding teams in the area.

The mid-Michigan area is always home to some great golf and this season is no different. The area has several outstanding teams and individuals who are looking to make their name in the upcoming state tournament.

While the state tournaments are quickly coming up, there is still plenty of time to get out and see some of the outstanding teams and athletes showcase their skills this fall. While the weather is still decent, get out and catch an area football game or soccer match or head inside for some outstanding volleyball action.

A big thank you to all our advertisers and sponsors, without you there would be no High School Sports Scene Magazine.

See you at the games!



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Area Home To Several Talented 8-Man Football Teams This Season

David Cook & Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Growth continues in 8-man football in the state of Michigan and the mid-Michigan area is a big part of that growth. The area is home to some outstanding 8-man football teams that are looking to follow in the footsteps of the Merrill 8-man team that reached the Division 1 state finals last year. Following is a look at some of the top area teams in 8-man, Divisions 1 and 2.

DIVISION 1

Carson City-Crystal

The Eagles are flying high this season as they are fifth in playoff points in Division 1 and have put together a 7-0 record. The Eagles picked up a big 45-30 win against Merrill early this season and have not missed a beat since. Carson City-Crystal has scored at least 26 points in every game this season with a high-powered offense led by quarterback

David Cook. Running back Landen VanderVlucht is also having a big year and gives the team a solid ground attack.

Merrill

While the Vandals graduated several key players from last year's state finals team, enough talent returned to help the team to a strong start this season. Merrill is eighth in playoff points and has a 6-1 record with the lone loss coming against undefeated Carson City-Crystal. Merrill is also coming out on top in close games with a 28-20 win against Morrice and a 16-12 win against Coleman.

DIVISION 2

Portland St. Patrick

The Irish reached the Division 2 state title game in 2020 and this year's squad has similar goals. St. Patrick opened the season with a 6-1 mark and is fifth in playoff points. The Irish have scored 30 or more points in all six of their victories with the lone loss being a 21-20 loss against Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart. St.

Patrick features a strong running game led by quarterback Brady Leonard and running back Brayden Simon while Leonard is also an effective passer who keeps defenses honest.

Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart

Sacred Heart is sixth in the division in playoff points and has fashioned a 6-1 record. The Irish have a big 21-20 win against Portland St. Patrick to their credit with the lone loss coming against Morrice.

Morrice

The Orioles are 11th in the division in playoff points and have a 5-2 overall record. Morrice has a big win against Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart to their credit with their two losses coming against Division 1 Merrill by eight points and Portland St. Patrick by six points. The Orioles feature a strong running game led by Wyatt Cartier and Joel Fisher who have combined for nearly 2,000 rushing yards and 26 rushing touchdowns.

Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart is sixth on the 8-man, Division 2 playoff points list and is one of several area 8-man football teams getting ready for the state playoffs.

Multi-Sport Athletes Playing Key Roles For Alma Football Team

David Cook Sports Scene

Some familiar names in some other sports at Alma are putting up some impressive numbers for the Alma football team this fall.

Seniors Jacoby Dunlap, Cole O'Boyle and Cade Sutherland are a trio of talented players who are a big part of generating offense for the Panthers this season. The trio are also standouts in other sports for Alma during the winter and spring seasons.

Dunlap is the quarterback of the Alma football team this fall. An outstanding athlete with a strong throwing arm, Dunlap has passed for 1,115 yards and 10 touchdowns this season. Dunlap has turned in a number of big passing games this season including a season-high 234 yards passing and a touchdown pass

against Swan Valley, 204 yards and three touchdown passes against Bridgeport and 176 yards and one touchdown pass against Birch Run.

Dunlap also experienced plenty of success this past spring as a member of the Alma track and field team. That was where he won the Division 2 state championship in the high jump with a jump of 6-foot-7 inches.

Senior wide receiver Cade Sutherland is also having a big year hauling in passes from Dunlap. An athletic receiver with good size and speed, Sutherland has a season-high eight receptions for 117 yards against Swan Valley. Sutherland also hauled in eight passes for 96 yards against Birch Run and caught seven passes for a season-high 152 yards and a touchdown against Bridgeport.

During the winter months, you can

find Sutherland racing up and down the basketball court for the Panthers where he is one of the top all-around players for Alma. Sutherland is also a talented hitter and pitcher in the spring for the Alma baseball team.

Senior running back Cole O'Boyle has provided Alma with a threat in the ground game. O'Boyle rushed for a season-high 103 yards and scored a touchdown against Bridgeport. O'Boyle also had 84 yards and a touchdown against state-ranked Frankenmuth and 76 yards and a touchdown against a state-ranked Freeland team.

During the winter months, O'Boyle is a key member of the Alma wrestling team. Last wrestling season O'Boyle reached the semifinals at 175 pounds in the Division 3 state tournament and ended up placing third in the state.



The Alma football team is receiving plenty of production on offense from a trio of athletes who have success in other sports at Alma.

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Area Football Teams Making Their Mark In Divisions 1 Through 4

David Cook & Butch Harmon Sports Scene

As the high school football season heads to the home stretch, a number of area teams have steadily climbed the rankings in the state playoff points list. Following is a look at some of the top area teams in Divisions 1 through 4.

DIVISION 1

Rockford

Year in and year out the Rams of Rockford are one of the premier teams in the state in Division 1. This year is no exception as the Rams are looking to be one of the favorites in Division 1 when the state playoffs begin the final Friday of October.

Through week seven of the regular season the Rams are ranked fourth in the state in playoff points in Division 1. Rockford has been dominating play in the rugged OK Red Conference. The Reams boast an explosive offense that has scored 30 points or more in six of the seven games it has played. Quarterback Drake Irwin is a talented two-way threat at quarterback who has a deep group of talented receivers to throw to. The Rams are also gashing teams via the run. Along with quarterback keepers from Irwin, the Rams have a deep stable of running backs including Ryan Ahern, Corbin Starkey and Isaac Poot. The Strength of the Ram offense, however, is a big and talented offensive line that controls the line of scrimmage.

Rockford also boasts a stingy defense that has allowed 16 points or less in all seven games. Ryan and Luke Ahern led the charge on defense along with defensive standouts like Gabe Stouffer, Sam Cummings and Hudson Hensley.

Davison

The Cardinals of Davison are turning in a huge season in Division 1. Davison is ranked third in the state in Division 1 in playoff points and has racked up some impressive wins. Davison defeated OK Red power Grandville and also took down Defending Division 2 state champion Warren De

LaSalle along with stopping Saginaw Heritage.

Davison features an explosive offense that has scored 30 or more points in all seven wins this season. Quarterback Sawyer Glennie is turning in a big season passing the football and has an array of talented receivers led by Buddy Banks-Williams and Braylen Naves. The Cardinals are also effective running the ball led by running back AJ Hill who operates behind a big, strong offensive line that matches up with any in the state.

DIVISION 2

Saginaw Heritage

Saginaw Heritage had big expectations entering the season and the Hawks have not disappointed. Heritage is one of the top teams in the state in Division 2 and after week 7 the Hawks were sixth in playoff points. Heritage is 5-2 after the first seven games with the lone losses coming against D1 power Davison and Grand Blanc, another D1 team.

Offense is the calling card for Heritage and the Hawks can strike in a variety of ways. Senior wide receiver Braydon Isom is one of the premier wide receivers in the entire state. Senior quarterback Ethan Mason is turning in a huge season piloting the proficient Heritage passing game. The Hawks can also pound the rock led by senior running back Ty Robertson (6-3, 225). Fellow senior running back Zion Riley is also establishing himself as a threat at running back with his breakaway speed. Paving the way for the backs is a big, strong offense line led by senior offensive tackle Joshua Walker (6-3, 290) and junior tackle Ethan Kraatz (6-4, 280).

East Lansing

After opening the season with losses to Portage Central and Hudsonville, East Lansing has been on a roll. The Trojans have strung five straight wins together highlighted by big wins against DeWitt and Grand Blanc. Quarterback Benjamin Fletcher keys the passing game along with wide receiver Charlier Baker while running back Jace Clarizio and Dwataye Sams head up a strong ground game.

DIVISION 3

Mason

Mason has been on a roll the past few years and this season the Bulldogs are looking for even bigger things. Mason is fourth in the state in playoff points in D3 and have fashioned a 7-0 record with big wins against DeWitt, Haslett and Williamston. Mason features a potent offense that has scored 35 points or more in all seven wins. The Bulldogs can strike through the air led by junior quarterback Cason Carswell or can use the power running of senior running back AJ Martel to grind out yards.

Mt. Pleasant

After opening the season with a loss to Division 2 power Saginaw Heritage, the Oilers of Mt. Pleasant have been on a roll. The Oilers have strung together six straight wins since the opening-night loss and are third in the state in playoff points in Division 3.

Mt. Pleasant can score points in bunches and has scored four or more touchdowns in all four wins this season. Senior quarterback Logan Borodychuk leads a balanced offense that can move the ball through the air or via

the ground. Another big key to success on offense is a big and talented offensive line that establishes dominance at the line of scrimmage.

DeWitt

The Panthers will be a factor as usual come playoff time. The Panthers are 15th in the state in playoff points in D3 and have been improving as the season progresses. DeWitt traditionally has a potent offense and that is no different this year with the highlight being a 41-38 win against Division 1 and conference foe Grand Ledge.

DIVISION 4

Portland

Portland has been one of the most consistent programs in mid-Michigan in Division 4 over the years and the Raiders are again turning in a solid season. The Raiders are 13th in the state in playoff points and have been a model of consistency all season. On offense, the Raiders have scored 33 or more points in every win and have gone over 40 points in five of seven games. Portland is also strong defensively, allowing just one team this season to score in double digits.

Lansing Sexton

Lansing Sexton has a long and storied football tradition and after a few down years the J-Dubbs are back with a vengeance this season. Sexton is sixth in the state in D4 in playoff points and sport a 7-0 record. Sexton features a potent offense that has scored 23 or more points in all seven of its wins this season. Sexton faces a tall task in week eight when it faces off with Portland in a CAAC Blue showdown.



Quarterback Logan Borodychuk and his Mt. Pleasant teammates are among the top teams in the state in Division 3 this season.

Area Boasts Large Group Of Standout Teams In Divisions 5 Through 8

David Cook & Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The mid-Michigan area is home to some high-level Division 5 through Division 8 football programs. This season the list of standout teams in the area is even larger with several teams ranked among the best in Divisions 5 through 8. Following is a look at some of the top area teams in Divisions 5 through 8.

DIVISION 5

Corunna

The Cavaliers have turned in some big seasons recently and this year Corunna is turning a memorable campaign. Corunna is ranked second in the state in Division 5 in points and has a 7-0 record through the first seven weeks of the season.

Corunna boasts an explosive offense that has scored at least 35 points in every game this season. Quarterback Wyatt Bower is an explosive player both with his passing arm and running the football while his twin brother Tarick provides game-breaking plays on the perimeter. The Cavaliers also boast an outstanding defense that has produced three shutouts and allowed just one team to reach double figures.

Frankenmuth

The Eagles reached the Division 5 state championship game last season and this year's squad has similar aspirations. Frankenmuth is fifth in the division in points and has fashioned a 6-1 record with the lone loss of the season coming on opening night when it fell to Goodrich 14-8. Since that game the Eagles have reeled off six straight wins and have scored 30 points or more in all six wins. Frankenmuth also boasts a strong defense having allowed just one team to reach double digits on them.

Williamston

The Hornets have turned in some outstanding seasons recently and this year is no different. Playing a rugged schedule, the Hornets are 5-2 and are seventh in the division in points. Both of Williamston's losses have come against Division 3 schools

including a loss to powerhouse Mason.

Williamston boasts an outstanding offense led by quarterback Zach Cribbs who has passed for over 1,100 yards this season and running back Noah Dunckel who has rushed for close to 600 yards.

Belding

The Black Knights are turning in a big season and are eighth in the division in points. Belding's lone loss was a 43-28 decision against Division 4 Spring Lake.

Running back Codey Manley is turning in a big season with over 800 yards rushing and 15 touchdowns. Manley is a big part of an offense that has scored at least 22 points in every game this season.

DIVISION 6

Chesaning

After dropping the opener against Bath, Chesaning has been on a roll this season. The Indians have reeled off six straight wins since the opening-night loss and are closing in on a Mid-Michigan Activities Conference title.

Chesaning has been consistent on offense this season scoring 20 or more points in all but one game. Offensively, the team is led by running back Brayden Florian who has rushed for over 1,000 yards. Chesaning can also mix in the pass with quarterback Max Volk.

Clare

Offense has been the name of the game for the Pioneers who are 5-2 this season. The two losses suffered by Clare came against Division 4 Freeland and defending Division 5 state champion Gladwin. Clare has scored 26 points or more in all of its games this season. Quarterback Jayden Arthur and running back Westyn Bryant lead the way for a balanced offense.

DIVISION 7

Pewamo-Westphalia

The Pirates have been a Division 7 powerhouse for several years and this season is no exception. Pewamo-Westphalia's lone loss this season came in week one when the



Beal City is third in playoff points in Division 8 this season and will be looking for a deep playoff run after reaching the Division 8 state championship game two years ago.

Pirates dropped a 17-14 struggle against a North Muskegon squad that has the second-most playoff points in Division 7. The Pirates boast a balanced offense led by versatile quarterback Dylan May. Defense is a strong point for the Pirates who have allowed just two teams to reach double figures in points.

DIVISION 8

Beal City

The Aggies reached the Division 8 state championship game two years ago and another deep playoff run could be in the cards again this season. Along with being undefeated through the first seven weeks of the season Beal City also has the third most playoff points in D3. The Aggies boast a big-play, high-scoring offense that has put up 30 or more points in every game this season. Quarterback Jack Fussman ignites the offense while Cayden Smith is a big-play performer both running and catching the football.

Ithaca

The Yellowjackets are in Division 8 this season and are anxious to add to their illustrious playoff history. Ithaca boasts a high-scoring offense led by quarterback

Jackson Conn who is carrying on the legacy of outstanding quarterbacks who have come through Ithaca. Nathan Mikesell provides a productive running option for an offense that has scored at least 26 points in every game this season. The Ithaca defense is also a stout crew that has pitched three shutouts this season. Kalob Hallock, Brandon Pass and Broden Peska are some of the defenders leading the charge for Ithaca this season.

New Lothrop

The Hornets can be counted on to make deep playoff runs every year and this year's squad has the talent to carry on that legacy. New Lothrop is sixth in Division 8 in playoff points and has a 6-1 record with the lone loss being a 27-22 struggle against Division 6 Chesaning.

Fowler

The Eagles again battled Pewamo-Westphalia for Central Michigan Athletic Conference supremacy this season with P-W coming away with a 27-14 win. That was the lone loss of the season so far for a high-scoring Fowler squad that has scored 50 or more points in six of seven games this season.

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HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE FOOTBALL STATS

PASSING YARDS
 Preston Wallace, Ewart 1,555
 Owen Terwilliger, Otisville-LakeVille 1,439
 Sawyer Glennie, Davison 1,385
 Wyatt Bower, Corunna 1,343
 Landon Mann, Roscommon 1,194
 Ethan Mason, Saginaw Heritage 1,149
 Alex Fernandez, Lansing Catholic 1,111
 Jackson Conn, Ithaca 1,061
 Owen Halstead, Essexville-Garber 1,053
 Zach Cribbs, Williamston 1,046
 Drake Irwin, Rockford 1,036
 Preston Otter, Saginaw Nouvel 1,028
 Benjamin Fletcher, East Lansing 907
 Jacoby Dunlap, Alma 881
 Keegan Gochenour, Eaton Rapids 869
 Elliott Lamer, DeWitt 785
 Christian Powers, Charlotte 728
 Jayden Arthur, Clare 714

PASSING TOUCHDOWNS
 Sawyer Glennie, Davison 20
 Preston Wallace, Ewart 19
 Jackson Conn, Ithaca 18
 Alex Fernandez, Lansing Catholic 18
 Wyatt Bower, Corunna 16
 Ethan Mason, Saginaw Heritage 16
 Owen Halstead, Essexville-Garber 15
 Landon Mann, Roscommon 14
 Zach Cribbs, Williamston 13
 Drake Irwin, Rockford 12
 Jayden Arthur, Clare 11
 Jacoby Dunlap, Alma 9
 Amauri Haller, Port Huron 9
 Benjamin Fletcher, East Lansing 8
 Preston Otter, Saginaw Nouvel 8
 Owen Terwilliger, Otisville-LakeVille 8
 Max Volk, Chesaning 8

RUSHING YARDS
 Jahn Wood, Lansing Waverly 942
 Brayden Florian, Chesaning 881
 Ty Robertson, Saginaw Heritage 819
 Bradley Uhlmann, Bath 770
 Hoyt Patrick, Owosso 762
 Trevor Jones, Muskegon Oakridge 739

Codey Manley, Belding 708
 AJ Hill, Davison 684
 Gavin Troy, Port Huron 694
 William Salgat, Mich. Lutheran Seminary 655
 Nakai Amachree, Haslett 634
 Elliot Lamer, DeWitt 588
 Cutler Brandt, Charlotte 582
 LaDon Hatcher, Holt 544
 Jacob Stewart, Almont 541
 Mark Bendele, St. Johns 529
 Wyatt Bower, Corunna 509

RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS
 Codey Manley, Belding 13
 AJ Hill, Davison 12
 Ty Robertson, Saginaw Heritage 12
 Jahn Wood, Lansing Waverly 12
 Nakai Amachree, Haslett 11
 Bradley Uhlmann, Bath 10
 Wyatt Bower, Corunna 9
 Brayden Florian, Chesaning 9
 Amauri Haller, Port Huron 9
 Sam Talaga, Freeland 9
 Gavin Troy, Port Huron 9
 Elliot Lamer, DeWitt 8
 Nathan Miksell, Ithaca 8
 Jackson Reisbig, Lowell 8
 Dwataye Sims, East Lansing 8
 Bo Schwartz, Bullock Creek 8
 Chase Battani, Almont 7
 Mark Bendele, St. Johns 7
 Hoyt Patrick, Owosso 7
 Jake Ritch, Frankenmuth 7
 William Salgat, Mich. Lutheran Seminary 7

RECEIVING YARDS
 Brayton Isom, Saginaw Heritage 851
 Lucas Bell, Otisville-LakeVille 801
 Tarick Bower, Corunna 722
 Max Fellows, Essexville-Garber 707
 Braden Rabideau, Lansing Catholic 595
 Tristen Elizalde, Saginaw Nouvel 560
 Max McCune, Williamston 551
 Charlie Baker, East Lansing 531
 Noah Vanderlinde, Ewart 523
 Dakobe White, Ewart 466

Camden Kruisenga, Rockford 450
 Keaton Pratt, Roscommon 377
 Abram Lamer, DeWitt 358
 Buddy Banks-Williams, Davison 356

RECEPTIONS
 Lucas Bell, Otisville-LakeVille 53
 Brayton Isom, Saginaw Heritage 41
 Braden Rabideau, Lansing Catholic 37
 Charlie Baker, East Lansing 36
 Max Fellows, Essexville-Garber 33
 Noah Vanderlinde, Ewart 29
 Dakobe White, Ewart 26
 Tristen Elizalde, Saginaw Nouvel 25
 Justin DeVarona, Lansing Catholic 20
 Hayden Hendrickson, Eaton Rapids 20
 Abram Lamer, DeWitt 20
 Ryan Louch, Clare 20
 Cade Sutherland, Alma 20
 Xavier Luea, Lansing Catholic 19
 Buddy Banks-Williams, Davison 18
 Keaton Pratt, Roscommon 18
 Ethan Gaston, Eaton Rapids 17
 Max McCune, Williamston 17
 Owen Mikulka, Ithaca 17
 Bryce Edgington, Corunna 16
 Trenton Oliver, Otisville-LakeVille 16

RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS
 Brayton Isom, Saginaw Heritage 14
 Tarick Bower, Corunna 10
 Max Fellows, Essexville-Garber 10
 Noah Vanderlinde, Ewart 9
 Braden Rabideau, Lansing Catholic 8
 Xavier Luea, Lansing Catholic 7
 Owen Mikulka, Ithaca 7
 Jamison Pelt, Swan Valley 7
 Buddy Banks-Williams, Davison 6
 Max McCune, Williamston 6
 Keaton Pratt, Roscommon 6
 Lucas Bell, Otisville-LakeVille 5
 Tristen Elizalde, Saginaw Nouvel 5
 Ryan Louch, Clare 5
 Brayton Naves, Davison 5
 Dakobe White, Ewart 5

TACKLES
 Fred Hammond, Otisville-LakeVille 85
 Garrett Forghash, Bay City Glenn 70
 Hoyt Patrick, Owosso 68
 Carter Herriman, Davison 67
 McCoy Wernholm, Central-Montcalm 64
 Jalen Edwards, Davison 62
 Jaxon Craven, Ewart 59
 Ayden Ferqueron, Almont 58
 Ethan Hammond, Otisville-LakeVille 58
 Kaydin Lujan, Sault Ste. Marie 58
 Noah Reif, Mich. Lutheran Seminary 56
 Jaden Edgington, Corunna 55
 Cameron Doody, Perry 53
 Logan Broekhuizen, Mich. Lutheran Seminary 51
 Tanner Graber, Ewart 51
 Dayne Zeerman, Corunna 51
 Nathan Presce, Owosso 50
 Aiden Van Bonn, Clare 50

SACKS
 Colin Main, Frankenmuth 10
 Callen Campbell, Sault Ste. Marie 6.5
 Fred Hammond, Otisville-LakeVille 5
 Brandon Pass, Ithaca 5
 Jake Vanderhaar, Frankenmuth 6
 Caleb Calhoun, Alma 4
 Ashton Collins, Eaton Rapids 4
 Jalen Edwards, Davison 4
 Kalob Hallock, Ithaca 4
 Broden Peska, Ithaca 4
 Derek Simmons, Frankenmuth 4
 Keighan Stoddard, Chesaning 4

INTERCEPTIONS
 Keenan Harris, Lansing Waverly 4
 Jamison Pelt, Swan Valley 4
 Jordan Sherman, Clio 4
 Hagan Wascher, Frankenmuth 4
 Riley Hubbard, Frankenmuth 3
 Owen Mikulka, Ithaca 3
 Caden Tate, Bullock Creek 3
 Weston Yoho, Owosso 3

Alma Soccer Team Turning In Big Season, Ranked Among The Best In The State In D3

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

After turning in a strong season last year, the Alma soccer team is taking things to the next level this fall.

Last year, Alma turned in a 14-3-1 record while placing second in the conference and reaching the regional finals. This season, the Panthers are accomplishing even more. Ranked eighth in the state in Division 3 the first week of October, Alma has a 14-4 record going into the final week of the regular season. The Panthers are also closing in on their first conference championship since 2017.

The 14-4 record is also a bit misleading as the Panthers started off the season by playing a rugged non-conference schedule. Alma opened the year with a 3-4 mark

but three of those losses came against state-ranked teams. One of the losses was a 3-0 decision against Berkley, the number-one ranked team in the state in Division 1. Alma also dropped a 2-1 decision to Pontiac Notre Dame Prep, the number-five team in the state in Division 3 and a 3-2 decision to Elk Rapids, the number-nine team in the state in Division 3. Alma also dropped a 3-2 decision to Swan Valley in the early going, however, the Panthers came back to avenge that loss with a 4-0 win against Swan Valley later in the season.

Since starting 3-4, Alma reeled off a program-record 11 consecutive wins. The Panthers outscored their opponents 58-7 during the 11-game winning streak and won seven of those games by shutout.

Along with the team success,

the Alma soccer team is receiving a historic effort from senior Leo Richter. In Alma's win against conference rival Frankenmuth, Richter tallied a hat trick. Those three goals gave Richter a new career-record of 81 goals, breaking the previous record of 80 goals set by Connor Lemerand in 2021.

With the regular season drawing to a close, Alma is primed to make another deep state tournament run. Alma will play in the Division 3 district tournament at Shepherd. Among the main challengers facing the Panthers at the district will be Clare and Reed City who both have winning seasons this fall along with Howard City Tri-County which has been playing .500 soccer this season. Host Shepherd has also been hovering around the .500 mark this season setting up for a wide-open district tournament that the Panthers look to be favored at.



The Alma soccer team won its 11th straight game with an 8-0 win against Frankenmuth.

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE 8-PERSON FOOTBALL STATS

PASSING YARDS
 Vance Sysak, Coleman 1,178
 Garrett Somers, Lincoln-Alcona 1,058
 Jace Brown, Mayville 817
 Gavin Reeder, Carson City-Crystal 734
 Carter Zeien, Au Gres-Sims 702

PASSING TOUCHDOWNS
 Garrett Somers, Lincoln-Alcona 20
 Vance Sysak, Coleman 14
 Jace Brown, Mayville 13
 Gavin Reeder, Carson City-Crystal 11
 Carter Zeien, Au Gres-Sims 11
 Brady Leonard, Portland St. Patrick 9

RUSHING YARDS
 Wyatt Cartier, Morrice 859
 Cole Dewald, Au Gres-Sims 897
 Joel Fisher, Morrice 740
 Sam Vyner, Whittemore-Prescott 542
 Landon VanderVlucht, Carson City-Crystal 519
 Brady Leonard, Portland St. Patrick 519
 Jared DeVrieze, Coleman 521
 Carter Zeien, Au Gres-Sims 541
 Brayden Simon, Portland St. Patrick 423
 Austin Harris, Farwell 366
 Luka Campbell, Mayville 360

RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS
 Wyatt Cartier, Morrice 12
 Cole Dewald, Au Gres-Sims 15
 Carter Zeien, Au Gres-Sims 13
 Brady Leonard, Portland St. Patrick 10
 Sam Vyner, Whittemore-Prescott 7

Jace Brown, Mayville 6
 Joel Fisher, Morrice 8
 Hudson King, Portland St. Patrick 6
 Cole Pendred, Au Gres-Sims 6
 Landon VanderVlucht, Carson City-Crystal 9

RECEIVING YARDS
 Grayson Ackels, Carson City-Crystal 589
 Austin Murray, Montabella 503
 Mason Halsne, Mayville 394
 Samuel Bovee, Coleman 363
 Collin Walker, Lincoln-Alcona 349
 Jeremiah Bullis, Lincoln-Alcona 340
 Collin Stockero, Coleman 307
 Jared DeVrieze, Coleman 281
 Christian Tocco, Whittemore-Prescott 257

RECEPTIONS
 Samuel Bovee, Coleman 35
 Jared DeVrieze, Coleman 26
 Grayson Ackels, Carson City-Crystal 25
 Mason Halsne, Mayville 21
 Collin Stockero, Coleman 21
 Collin Walker, Lincoln-Alcona 21
 Jeremiah Bullis, Lincoln-Alcona 19
 Luka Campbell, Mayville 17

RECEIVING TOUCHDOWNS
 Grayson Ackels, Carson City-Crystal 8
 Samuel Bovee, Coleman 8
 Austin Murray, Montabella 8
 Jeremiah Bullis, Lincoln-Alcona 7
 Cole Pendred, Au Gres-Sims 7
 Mason Halsne, Mayville 6

William Liebler, Lincoln-Alcona 6
 Christian Tocco, Whittemore-Prescott 5
 Collin Walker, Lincoln-Alcona 5
 Tyler Zaherniak, Au Gres-Sims 5

TACKLES
 Jared DeVrieze, Coleman 72
 Brady Hoag, Mayville 62
 Travis Murray, Coleman 56
 Aiden Mosser, Portland St. Patrick 55
 Austin Gutting, Morrice 54
 Travis Smith, Morrice 47
 Evan Borsvold, Lincoln-Alcona 42
 Oliver Long, Morrice 41
 Riley Mosser, Portland St. Patrick 41
 Dakota Nelson, Au Gres-Sims 41
 William O'Neill, Lincoln-Alcona 38
 Griffin Long, Morrice 37
 Wyatt Buskirk, Farwell 35
 Carter Zeien, Au Gres-Sims 35
 Mason Tucker, Coleman 33
 Samuel Bovee, Coleman 31
 Matt Wingert, Mayville 31

SACKS
 Travis Smith, Morrice 7.5
 William O'Neill, Lincoln-Alcona 4

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

Mason Tucker, Coleman 3.5
 Dakota Lattimer, Coleman 3
 Oliver Long, Morrice 3
 Tyler Schliep, Whittemore-Prescott 2.5
 Evan Borsvold, Lincoln-Alcona 2
 Devin Cook, Portland St. Patrick 2
 Jack Gates, Coleman 2
 Mason Halsne, Mayville 2
 Kaidence Freiburger, Au Gres-Sims 2
 Dakota Nelson, Au Gres-Sims 2
 Christian Tocco, Whittemore-Prescott 2
 Carter Zeien, Au Gres-Sims 2

INTERCEPTIONS
 Cole Pendred, Au Gres-Sims 8
 Bransen Belville, Whittemore-Prescott 4
 Logan Glazier, Coleman 4
 Nathan Nardi, Lincoln-Alcona 3
 Monty Wenkel, Au Gres-Sims 3
 Carter Zeien, Au Gres-Sims 3
 Cden Binkley, Morrice 2
 Luka Campbell, Mayville 2
 Austin Gutting, Morrice 2
 Landon Simpson, Portland St. Patrick 2
 Rylee Strawn, Carson City-Crystal 2
 Travis Walker, Lincoln-Alcona 2

Ithaca Soccer Off To Impressive Start

John Raffel Sports Scene

Paige Beracy, Head Coach, has the Ithaca soccer team off to an impressive start.

Among the highlights of the season was a back-and-forth battle in Ithaca against Bullock Creek but a 1-0 victory to enjoy..

"It was a back and forth contest, both teams had quality chances," Beracy said. "Ithaca scored with 10 minutes left in the first half for the only goal of the game," Junior Till Redman scored the lone goal off a toe poke pass from senior Derin Delo. Senior Keegan Henderson had 10 saves in the shutout. Juniors Brandon Hephner, Mikey Goldsmith, and Andrew Lombard put in gutsy performances to keep Bullock Creek from scoring. Sophomores Tanner Lamey and Brady Paradise as well as senior Derin Delo had several good looks at goal."

Ithaca is 3-1-2 in the league.

Last year was a dream season for Ithaca.

"It was one of the best records we have had in recent years of 11-7-3, finished third in the TVC-10, tied Valley Lutheran at home scoring the game tying goal with less than 20 seconds left," Beracy said. "We had a six-game winning streak in the middle of the season; we won the Laker Invitational at Elkton Pigeon Bayport."

Key players included Ayden Draper-Piper who had one goal and one assist, was a lockdown defender and enforcer; Amarius Alago with 15 goals and seven assists, leading goal scorer. Lane McDonald with 6 goals and 16 assists, and leading assist man, deadly long throws.

Leading players back are senior Carlson Eckelbarger, captain and leader of the defense "who will stop other team's chances and will be keeping our defense organized," Beracy said. "Senior Preslee



Ithaca hopes to win the conference soccer title

Chaffin, is captain and leader of the midfield, looking to create scoring chances with feet and throw-ins. Senior Keegan Henderson, captain and keeper, sometimes plays in the field and we are looking to him to keep the ball out of the net and score when in the field. Senior

Derin Delo, came on strong at the end of the year last year scoring eight goals in the second half of the season and we are looking to him to be our leading goal getter.

"We want to improve our overall record, and play more consistently. Our goal is to win league and

make a district final. We have team chemistry, and score off set pieces. We need to minimize opponents scoring chances, and be more composed on the ball. League favorites are Valley Lutheran and Bullock Creek. We are trying to win the league."

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Area Cross Country Teams Turning In Some Sizzling Times This Season

Butch Harmon & David Cook Sports Scene

The cross country season is off to a flying start this year with numerous boys and girls teams ranked among the top in the state. Following is a look at some of the top cross country teams in the area.

DIVISION 1 GIRLS

Okemos

Okemos is ranked 15th in the state this season and with the bulk of the team back from a squad that placed 14th at last year's state finals the Wolves are primed for another big season.

Okemos turned in a strong early-season performance as it placed fifth in the elite division at the Michigan State University Invitational. Senior Shannon Gillahan led the way as she placed 14th individually with a time of 19:06 while senior Lily Salazar was 26th in a time of 19:48. Freshman Gabrielle Fugazzi placed 27th while senior Nicole Mays and sophomores October Harns and Elizaeth Schafer also placed in the top 50.

Bay City Western

Western has a young and talented squad that has turned in some strong efforts this season. The Warriors placed fifth as a team in Division 1 at the Michigan State University Invitational. Junior Isabelle Becker led the way as she won the individual title with a time of 18:51. Freshman Jaelyn Suderman placed 13th overall as she turned in a time of 20:17.



DIVISION 1 BOYS

Bay City Western

The Bay City Western boys are coming off a state finals appearance last season and are ranked among the honorable-mention in Division 1 this season. Senior Noah Selvaraj, who placed 20th at the state meet last season has picked up where he left off. Selvaraj turned in a time of 15:38 and finished ninth as an individual at the MSU invitational. Western finished fifth as a team in the Elite Division at Michigan State.

DIVISION 2 GIRLS

Alma

The Alma girls cross country team turned in a solid season last fall and are looking for even bigger things this season. The Panthers placed 15th at last year's state finals and are ranked 14th in the state as of mid-September this season. Alma is turning in some impressive efforts in the early season including a third-place finish at the MSU Invitational. The Panthers had a pair of runners placed in the top ten at Michigan State including junior Ezgi Kurt who placed second in a time of 19:12 and junior Joy Evans who placed sixth in 19:54. Senior Hannah Raglin placed in the top 40 while junior Vivian Wickes and freshman Alexa Palmer finished in the top 60.

DeWitt

The DeWitt girls cross country team is primed for a big season. The Panthers have a young and talented squad that is ranked eighth in the state in Division 2. The Panthers are led by junior Kayla Williams who has placed in the top ten in two events this season and has turned in a top time of 19:17 this season. Fellow juniors Autumn Thompson, Mia Williams and Ayla Holben have also turned in some solid times this season and have been consistently in the top 20 at early-season events.

Freeland

Freeland placed 22nd at the Division 2 state finals last year and the Falcons are primed for an even loftier finish this season. Freeland is ranked 10th in the state this season. The Falcons have turned in some strong efforts in the early going this season including a fourth-place finish in the large division at the Shephard invite. Freshman Clara Kaczor led the way for the Falcons at Shephard as she placed ninth with a time of 19:05. Senior Paige Kloha and juniors Karie Keefer and Landry Kuhn all placed in the

The Ithaca boys cross country team is ranked 15th in the state in Division 3.

top 50 for the Falcons at Shephard.

DIVISION 2 BOYS

Alma

The Alma boys cross country team reached the Division 2 state finals last season and the Panthers are back among the elite this season. Alma placed 21st at the state meet last year and through the early going this season Alma is ranked fourth in the state. The Panthers have turned in some big efforts so far this season including winning the Large School title at the Shephard Invitational and placing fourth in Division 2 at the Michigan State University Invitational. Freshman Ezekiel Baltierra led the way at Shephard as he placed seventh with a time of 16:03. Sophomore Thomas Larson placed 10th with a time of 16:14 while senior Ali Kudami placed 14th. Junior Bodie Heiss and sophomores Elijah Baltierra and Luca Lebron also placed in the top 30 at Shephard. Larson and Ezekiel Baltierra led Alma at the MSU invite with Larson placing fifth in a time of 15:15 and Baltierra taking ninth in a time of 16:27.

Gladwin

The Gladwin cross country team is up among the top teams in the state in Division 2 as the Flying G's are ranked 12th. Gladwin turned in a big effort at the Michigan State Invitational where it placed fifth in Division 2. Senior Caleb Palmreuter led the way at Michigan State as he placed sixth individually with a time of 16:16. Junior Seth Mead placed 13th in a time of 16:37 while junior Elijah Christensen was 16th in a time of 16:43.

Freeland

Freeland junior TJ Hansen was one of the top runners in the state in Division 2 last year. This season, Hansen is turning in some even faster times and is one of the premier runners in the state. Hansen placed fifth at last year's state finals with a time of 15:45. This season Hansen is busy putting up some even more impressive times. So far this season Hansen has won all five of the races he has run in. Hansen turned in a time of 15:13 at the Shephard Invitational and two weeks later he established a new personal record as he turned in a time of 15:03 at the Cadillac Veterans Invitational. That time at Cadillac is the fastest time in the state by a boy in any Division.

DIVISION 3 GIRLS

Ithaca

The Ithaca girls cross country team placed 15th at last year's state finals and the



The Breckenridge boys cross country team is ranked 14th in the state in Division 4.

Yellowjackets look to be even stronger this season. Ithaca is ranked 10th in the state rankings this season and has been turning in some strong efforts. Ithaca turned in a second-place finish in Division 3-4 at the Michigan State Invitational. Senior Liliana Lehnst led the way for the Yellowjackets as she placed ninth individually with a time of 20:23. Freshman Makinna Foglesong placed 14th with a time of 20:55 while sophomore Myleigh Hephner was 17th in 21:14 and junior Hayden Whitmore was 49th in 22:39.

Lehnst is turning in a strong season as she has posted top-10 efforts in four of her first five events with a personal-best time of 19:53. Foglesong has turned in five top-five performances with a best time of 20:31 while Hephner has finished in the top 20 in four of five events with a 20:44 top time.

Pewamo-Westphalia

The Pirates placed second in the state last season and are looking to have a solid team again this season. Ranked seventh in the state in Division 3, the Pirates are led by junior Whitney Werner who has won three of the four events she has competed in this season. Werner has a top time of 19:01 this season. Freshman Alyssa Kramer is also off to a strong start with four top-six finishes and a top time of 20:17. Senior Melanie Werner has finished in the top ten in all four of her races and has a top time of 20:25 while sophomore Abbie Schneider has four top-tens and a season-best time of 21:06.

Central-Montcalm

The Hornets placed 10th at last year's state finals and has another squad capable of a top-ten finish this season. Currently ranked 8th in the state, the Hornets showcased their overall team speed by winning the Division 3-4 title at the Michigan State University

Invitational. Junior Kyah Hoffman, who placed ninth individually at last year's state finals, led the way at MSU as she placed second overall with a time of 18:36. The Hornets had a trio of runners place in the top ten at MSU as junior Ashley Chophonis was fourth with a time of 19:54 while sophomore Grace Coston placed sixth with a time of 20:16. Freshman Andrea Rolston turned in a strong effort as she placed 24th with a time of 21:42.

St. Louis

The St. Louis girls cross country team turned in a strong effort in Division 3-4 at the Michigan State invite with a 10th-place finish. The Sharks were led by senior Jaiden Dickman who placed 12th overall with a time of 20:49. Junior Abby Dice finished in the top 50 with a time of 22:28 while freshman Lily Mann turned in a time of 23:06. Dickman is off to a fast start this season with three top-ten places and a personal-best time of 20:05. St. Louis also placed second to Ithaca in the first TVC 10 Jamboree of the year with Dickman and Dice finishing in the top 10 and senior Natalie Lemert, sophomore Aeralyn Leonard and Mann all placing in the top 20.

Chippewa Hills

With the bulk of runners back from a team that placed 20th at the state finals last season, Chippewa Hills is primed for a solid season. The Warriors are ranked 13th in the state this fall and turned in a sixth-place finish in the Division 3-4 race at the Michigan State invite. Sophomore Quinn Hatfield led the way for Chippewa Hills at



Michigan State as she placed 10th with a time of 20:36. Senior Avelina Hollandsworth was 16th with a time of 21:04 while sophomore Kerttu Juvonen and junior Augusta Bowman both placed in the top 50.

DIVISION 3 BOYS

Pewamo-Westphalia

The Pewamo-Westphalia boys are ranked third in the state this season and are in good shape to improve on last year's 12th place finish at the state finals. The Pirates are led by senior Collin Farmer who has won all four of the races he has competed in this season. Farmer broke the 16-minute mark this season as he turned in a season-best time of 15:43 at the Sparta Invitational. Farmer is joined at the front of the Pirate pack by some talented freshmen. Freshman Wyatt Werner has three, top-ten finishes this year and a season-best time of 16:58. Freshman John Kowatch has a pair of top-ten finishes and a top time of 17:26 while freshman Nolan Mitchell has a top time of 17:33.

Clare

A top-ten finisher at last year's state finals, Clare has the bulk of that team back this season and are ranked fifth in the state so far this season. Senior Brad White leads the way for the Pioneers. A top-20 finisher at state last year, White has two wins to his credit this season and a personal-best time of 16:08. Senior Nic Porter has three, top-ten finishes and a season-best time of 16:54 while senior Andrew Klaus has a pair of top-ten finishes and a 17:08 top time. Freshman Connor Schmidt is also of to a strong start with a personal-best time of 17:38.

Central-Montcalm

The Hornets placed 10th at last year's state finals and are ranked seventh in the state this season. The Hornets were the top area team in the Division 3-4 race at the MSU invite as they finished third. Sophomore Gage Hoffman led the way for the Hornets as he took second place with a time of 16:37. Senior Graham Coston placed sixth at MSU with a time of 16:53 while sophomore Sulus Wilson was 15th in a time of 17:23 and sophomore Kyler Fertig placed in the top 50.

Ithaca

A top-ten team at state last year, Ithaca is in a bit of a rebuild this year after the graduation of standout Parks Allen who finished third as an individual as a senior last year. The Yellowjackets showed the rebuild is progressing nicely as they placed fifth in the Division 3-4 race at the MSU invite. Ithaca was led at MSU by sophomore Landon Styka who placed ninth with a time of 17:02. Junior Miingen Bertrand was 27th with a time of 17:52 while sophomore Jacob Mankey placed in the top 50 and junior Brent DeSaegher finished in the top 60.

St. Louis

The Sharks placed third in the state at last year's state meet and look to have another solid squad this season. The Sharks turned in a sixth-place finish in the Division 3-4 race at the MSU invite. St. Louis is led by senior Ben March who placed in the top 20 at last year's state finals. March turned in a time of 16:40 as he placed fourth individually at Michigan State. Junior Landon Pestruie, who finished in the top 25 at state last year, is also off to a solid start as he placed seventh at MSU with a time of 16:58.

DIVISION 4 GIRLS

Breckenridge

With a host of runners back from a team that finished 22nd at last year's state meet, the Huskies are off to a strong start this season. Ranked ninth in Division 4, the Huskies are led by sophomore Ally Schmitz who has placed in the top 20 in all five of her races this season. Schmitz also leads the way with a season-best time of 20:52. Junior Danica Aldrich has four, top-20 finishes this season and has a top time of 21:30. Junior Avery Westall also had four, top-20 times and has a time of 21:22 to her credit while senior Tori Most has three, top-20 finishes and has a top time of 22:43.

Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart

The Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart girls cross country team is ranked among the honorable-mention in the state in Division 4. The Irish are paced by freshman Anna Sheppard who has a season-best time of



The Alma girls cross country team is ranked 14th in the state in Division 2.

20:45 and a pair of top-five finishes to her credit. Senior Jacqueline Morton has a season-best time of 20:54 and a trio of top-ten finishes. Sophomore Kaya Rose has a season-best time of 22:25.

DIVISION 4 BOYS

Breckenridge

The Breckenridge boys cross country team is looking for a big season as it returns the majority of its runners from a squad that placed 26th at last year's Division 4 state finals. Ranked 14th in the state this season, the Huskies are led by senior Sawyer Stoneman who placed in the top 50 at state last season. Stoneman has five, top-five finishes this season and has a personal-best time of 16:37, already a full minute better than his state-finals time last season. Freshman Anthony Rowe is making a big impact as he has five, top-ten finishes this season and a season-best time of 17:20. Senior Isaac Humm has a pair of top-ten finishes this season and a top time of 18:28 while junior Aimon Humm has a pair of top-20 finishes and a top-time of 20:18.

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Frankenmuth Cross Teams Enjoying Success

John Raffel Sports Scene

Frankenmuth High School cross country Mike Snyder is having a strong season again.

"We do not keep season records for all of the meets/invitationals," Snyder said. "What we do track is how well we do in our Tri-Valley-Conference (TVC). The girls were second last year in our TVC-8 and in the TVC-overall meet out of 16 schools. The boys were second in our TVC-8/4th in the TVC-Overall meet out of 16 schools."

"The girls placed second in the Regional meet earning a trip to the Division 2 MHSAA State Finals and placed 12th at the Finals with Junior Mary Richmond earning All-State with her 3rd place finish. Freshman Natalie Foltz earned the 7th spot on the FHS Top-10 record board with her 19:07.03 time."

Snyder added: "The boys placed fourth in the Regional meet just missing the top-3. Landen Wise and Brett Magnus earned MHSAA State Finals births with sophomore Landen Wise earning All-State honors with his 12th place finish. First year runner Landen earned the top spot on the FHS Top-10 record board with his 15:50.10 time."

"We lost several key leaders on our team to graduation, and we believe everyone played a key role in their own way. They will be missed, and we wish the best of luck to Grant Conger, Aiden Maki, and Caleb Grimshaw for the boys and Dylan Abke, Josie Guinther Ashley Stuart, and Maddie Zehnder for the girls."

Frankenmuth cross is loaded for

this season.

"We truly believe that everyone that returns on our teams play an important role in their own individual way," Snyder said. "There are those that stick out because they have the top times on the team and score in the meets. We are looking forward to strong finishes for both the boys and the girls teams this season. Some of the key returners that look to be in our top 7 runners include:

Girls: "Senior Mary Richmond is looking to have a strong season as she placed 3rd in the MHSAA State Finals last season to add to her 2nd and 4th place finishes in the previous two years. Mary won 14 of the 16 races that she competed in during the 2022 season and was in the top 20 runners in the State (all divisions).

"Sophomore Natalie Foltz earned the 7th spot on the FHS Top-10 record board and placed 40th at the MSHAA D2 State Finals last season and will be counted on to continue her strong position on the team. Other returning runners that we believe will be in our top-7 scoring athletes include sophomore Elise Barden and Gabby Cleveland, both strong

athletes and very close and very capable of earning spots on the Top-10 record board this season. Senior Kaitlyn Miller and junior Clare Conzelmann also are looking to place in our top-7 team positions this season and have great work ethics."

For the boys: "Junior Landen Wise was a first year runner last season and burned up the course, Snyder said. "Landen earned the

top spot on the FHS Top-10 record board which is an incredible accomplishment. He also earned All-State honors at the MHSAA D2 State Finals with his 12th place finish. He is very motivated and will be one of our top runners this season.

"Sophomore Brett Magnus is a strong returning runner and earned a trip to the D2 MHSAA State Finals last season and is a key team member looking to help the team qualify for the Finals this season. Sophomore

Anthony Plana is another strong runner returning to the team and looking to be a key scoring member. Junior Cougar Clark is coming into his own and looking very strong this season. Jagger Clark is

someone that will be contending for one of the top-7 scoring positions

on the team. We have several new runners this season that will be looking at the top-7 scoring positions on the team.

"For the girls, freshman Lucy Conzelmann has already made her mark on the team as she earned a spot on the FHS Top-10 record board taking the 8th position in her first meet as a high school athlete with her time of 19:41.60. Lucy is just beginning. For the boys, first year runner, sophomore Cole Pergram is looking strong after his first 5k race of his career along with freshman Nick Parker who both placed in our top-7 runners in our first meet."

Expectations have been high. "Coach Hayes and I are looking for both the boys and the girls



The 2023 Girls Cross Country team.



The 2023 Boys Cross Country team.

teams to be strong this season," Snyder said. "We have strong TVC and Regional line-ups but believe that both teams are up to the task. It will be an exciting season with goals from both the boys and girls' teams qualifying for the D2 MHSAA State Finals.

"I believe our team's strength is simply having a group of young athletes that work together and support one another from the top runners on the record board to the athlete that may not ever score in a meet but works

just as hard as everyone else on the team. We are always working on building their confidence in 'racing' during a meet. They are in

great aerobic shape and working on their confidence that they can compete at that next level is something that will help everyone on the team."

The Tri-Valley Conference has some strong teams that have State qualifying potential this season," Snyder said.

"We currently see Alma and Freeland as two teams for both the boys and the girls that will be looking for that top spot in the league just as we are doing," Snyder said. "We have great kids on both the boys and the girls teams and we are looking forward to helping each individual on the team have the best season they can have."

Dammann (Sr) look to compete at the top of the MMAC. I look for our team to continue to get better throughout the season and use all the hardwork they have put in to compete at the top of

our conference. I look for our seniors to help the freshman adapt to the rigor of the high school season."

Skinner said the strength of his

team "will be our freshman class of boys and our senior class of girls," and added the team "would have to work on the mental aspect of the race."

In the MMAC for the boys, top teams will be Lakeville, Ovid Elsie and New Lothrop

Girls top teams will New Lothrop, Ovid Elsie and Chesaning.

New Lothrop Runners Have High Hopes

John Raffel Sports Scene

Justin Skinner is coaching a cross country team showing a lot

of promise this season.

From last year, "Ryan Heslip, Alex Milks, Parker Noonan, and Alex Milks all graduated and were a big part in mentoring younger

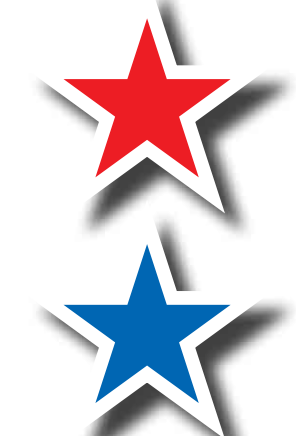
runners and leading at all parts of the season," Skinner said. Kevin Heslip (Jr), Lieu Vincke (Jr), Marshall Kruske (Fr), Ty Sweers (Fr), Sean Dammann (10th) create a solid core for our guys team that looks to compete for first in the MMAC.

"Josie Bauman (Sr), Klara Mulcahy (Sr), Lexy Andres (Jr), Olivia Gillett (Jr), and Sara

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DeWitt Girl Golfers Continue Their Fine Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Chris Thelen has a varsity golf team at DeWitt which continues to have a fine season in the CAAC Blue.

DeWitt is coming off a season from last year when they won the regional championship at Coldwater Golf Club and gained the first regional title in 13 years. The team finished ninth in Division II in the state and finished top 5 in five 18-hole tournaments. All six players earned All-Conference Honors and DeWitt earned team academic All-State honors.

Maddie Beckner was the lone senior from the 2022 team.

"She was a key member of the Regional Championship," Thelen said. "Her leadership

and positive demeanor helped shape the program into what it is today. Though not the most talented, Maddie will go down as one of the greatest team players I have coached."

Key players are seniors Jordyn Crawley, Laynie Hanlin and Kennedy Tiemann and juniors Courtney Novak and Cate Piesko. These are the five returners from last year's team.

"Coming into this season the goal is compete at a high level in the very competitive CAAC White," Thelen said. "Next we hope to finish in the top 3 at Regionals and make it back to the State Finals. I expect the team to learn, have fun, and compete at a high level every day in practice and at every match and tournament. When one player may not be on

top of their game, there are others able to step up and score. We have tremendous depth. This team is also very much like a family, we laugh, we joke around, we push each other to be the best.

"We can't be Chicken Little; when things get tough we have to understand the sky is not falling and to persevere through the challenging times."

Thelen adds: "We have a very strong conference with Okemos being the favorite and Grand Ledge also being tough. There will be some very competitive jamborees/matches with any of us being able to win. East Lansing and Holt are in a reload and Waverly is working hard to build their program and have a nice player in Mack Price. Alena Li is the top player in the league, but Courtney and Isabel Kelly (GL) are also very good players that compete at a very high level and will finish at the top of the league individually.

"I am looking forward to seeing what these girls can accomplish."



DeWitt golfers had a championship season in 2022.

Fulton Runners Having Impressive Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Fulton-Middleton coach Jeff Biddinger is having a fun time with his Fulton cross country team.

He has freshman Rush Marsde and Kaydense Ryan,

who currently ranked in the top 10 in the region.

"We want to keep working hard and get faster," Biddinger said.

Other runners on the team are Makyia Telling, Breanna MacIntyre, Destiney Seida,

Braleigh Andrews, Kaydense Ryan, and Alex Herrick.

In the first MSAC race of the season, Ryan was eighth in 22:56.90, Telling was 31st in 28:18.93 and Breanna MacIntyre 37th in 29:26.99.



The 2023 Fulton Cross Country Team.

John Glenn Golfers Off To Solid Start

John Raffel Sports Scene

Bay City John Glenn girls golf coach Pete Remington has been very enthused with the start for his girls golf team this season.

The team was 2022 Bay County champs. Remington said he returns all athletes from that team.

Top athletes this year are Kiera Inda, Quinn Kowalczyk and Addison Alexander.

"We expect to win the county championship again and have a solid overall record. Currently we are sitting at 5-1. The team does a good job with not letting a bad hole control the round."

Remington said the team needs to work on its putting.

League favorites, he said, are Freeland and Frankenmuth.

A highlight for Bay City Central came on Sept. 25 with a 199-223

win over Bay City Central.

Top scorers for John Glenn were Inda (42), Alexander (51), Kowalczyk (52), Ali Caldwell (54), Kahland Dutkiewicz (57) and Adalynn Sugden (57).

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Area Golfers Posting Some Low Scores As Season Heads For Home Stretch

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Area golf teams are turning in some sizzling scores this season as the golf season is in full swing. Following is a look at some of the teams and players making news in the area.

DIVISION 1

Rockford

The Rockford golf team is off to a strong start this season. Ranked sixth in the state in Division 1, the Rams are led by standout senior Jessica Jolly who is one of the top individuals in the state. Jolly, who placed third individually at last year's state finals, made school history when she fired a six-under par 29 to help the Rams win an OK Red Conference jamboree at Pigeon Creek Golf Course. Along

with the 29 by Jolly, Rockford received a pair of 39s from Aubrey Wilson and Carly Sampson and a 41 from Violet Andrews to finish with a school-record team total of 148, 31 strokes lower than second-place Caledonia.

The Rams also turned in a solid performance at the American Dunes Invitational in Grand Haven where they competed against some of the premier golf teams in the state. Brighton, ranked No. 1 in the state in Division 1, won the event with a team score of 343 followed by Grand Rapids Catholic Central, the No. 1 team in the state in Division 3 with a 344 score while Rockford placed third with a 351-team score. Jolly was medalist at the event as she finished one-under par while Sampson shot a 91 at the event.



Okemos

Led by super-sophomore Alena Li, the Okemos golf team is one of the top squads in mid-Michigan this season. Li, who finished sixth individually at the state meet a year ago, is off to a strong start this season. Li helped Okemos capture the CAAC open as she won medalist honors with a 68. Okemos won the tournament by 11 strokes. Li also carded a 68 to help Okemos win the title at the Redwing Invitational and shot a 37 to help the team win a conference jamboree earlier this season and also carded a rounds of 34 at conference jamborees at DeWitt and Grand Ledge.

DIVISION 2

Mason

After placing sixth at the state finals last season, the Mason golf team is on track for another lofty finish this season. The Bulldogs are ranked third in the state in Division 2 this fall. Mason has a veteran crew led by seniors Ava Clark and Claire Heathman along with juniors Kortney Osborn and Gabby Hanover. The Bulldogs placed second to Division 1 Okemos at the CAAC Open and competed against some of the premier teams in the state at the Marian Invitational at Oakland Hills Country Club. Clark fired an 83 to lead the Bulldogs at Oakland Hills.

Lowell

The Lowell golf team is ranked fourth in the state in Division 2

The Freeland golf team is off to a strong start this year led by junior Averie Pumford.



The Ithaca golf team has turned in several strong performances this year including a hole in one from Lakyn Zimmerman.

and has been turning in some record-breaking rounds this season. The Red Arrows won the Russ Johnson Invitational with a school-record 320 team total. That was the second time this season the Red Arrows totaled a 320. Junior Elle Sluss led the way for Lowell as she won medalist honors. Lowell also added titles at the Whitehall and Greenville Invitationals. Hannah Flickenger led the way at the Whitehall invite with an 80 while Elyse Veldman added an 84 and Sluss shot an 86.

Midland Dow

Led by one of the top golfers in the Bay region, the Midland Dow golf team is looking to improve on last year's 15th-place finish at the state meet. Sophomore Sophia Lee placed 20th as an individual last season and is turning in a big season leading the Chargers this fall. Lee captured medalist honors and fired an 85 to help Dow win the title at the Bay City Central

Invitational. Junior Kylie Keefer placed second at the event with an 87 while Savannah Reitz placed ninth with a 100.

DIVISION 3

Williamston

After taking 10th place at the state meet last season, the Williamston golf team is poised for an even better finish this season. Ranked third in the state, the Hornets have turned in some big performances. Williamston edged Division 2 powerhouse Mason 167 to 169 to win the conference jamboree at Fowlerville. Junior standout Nicole Schafer led the way with a 37 while senior Ellie Thorburn added a 42 as did freshman Paige Radebach. The Hornets also turned in a big effort in winning the Williamston Invitational. The Hornets finished with a 328 total to outdistance Haslett with a 363 and Mason at 388. Schafer led the way with a 73 followed by Radebach with an 81

and Thorburn with an 84. Williamston also placed third at the CAAC Open with Schafer pacing the team with a 73.

Chippewa Hills

After placing 16th in the state in Division 4 last season, the Chippewa Hills golf team has moved up to Division 3 this season and is ranked eighth in the state. The Warriors have turned in some outstanding efforts this season including a victory at the St. Ives Tournament. Chippewa Hills recorded a team total of 382 to win the tournament by 18 strokes over second-place Grand Rapids West Catholic. Madison Allen led the way with an 83 followed by Ryleigh Allen with an 88, Erin Riesenberg with a 102 and Rileigh Abel who shot a career-low 109. Ryleigh Allen also turned in a big effort at the Big Rapids Cardinal Invitational where she shot a 76 to take home the medalist honors. Madison Allen followed close behind with an 80 at the power-packed tournament that was won by Division 1 Traverse City Central.

Freeland

Led by standout junior Averie Pumford, the Freeland golf team is off to a strong start this season. Pumford, who finished ninth in the state individually at last year's state finals, is off to a strong start this season. Pumford shot a 75 to win medalist honors at the Midland Country Club tournament. The win was the fourth in a row for Pumford. Freeland won the team title at the tournament with a season-low score of 358. Reese Conlee and Alexis Heinz both finished in the top ten as they both carded rounds of 88. Freeland also placed second at the Alma Invitational with a team score of 361. Pumford finished second while Heinz placed eighth and Lilly Spencer 13th overall. Pumford also fired an 82 to help Freeland win the Essexville-Garber Invitational and carded a 76 as Freeland won the St. Louis Shark Invitational. Freeland is looking to get back to the state finals where it finished 16th last year.

DIVISION 4

St. Louis

The St. Louis golf team is coming off a solid season that saw the Sharks qualify for the state finals where they placed 17th. With several players back from that team, St. Louis is off to a strong start this season. The

Sharks turned in their best performance of the season when they placed eighth at the rugged Alma Panther Classic that featured some of the top teams in the state. Senior Josie Schrot, who placed 39th at the state meet last year, led the way for the Sharks as she fired an 88. Senior Emma Worthy carded a 92 while senior Natalee Hoyt shot a 93. Hoyt also provided a huge highlight as she recorded a hole in one. Hoyt used a 9-iron to ace hole number 17 from 120 yards out. St. Louis finished with a season-best team score of 402.

Ithaca

The Ithaca golf team is turning in some solid efforts this season. The Yellowjackets turned in a season-best team score of 399 at the Alma Panther Classic. Breanna Becker led the way for Ithaca with a 98 while Lakyn Zimmerman shot a 99 and Libby Mauer carded a 108. Zimmerman turned in a big highlight in a match at Tullymore Golf Course in the Lady Tullymore Invitational. That was when she recorded a hole in one on the par 3, 85-yard hole four. Zimmerman finished her round with a 104 while Ivy Davenport shot a 94 and Becker recorded a 108.

Lansing Catholic

The Lansing Catholic golf team is primed for a big season. The Cougars, who placed third at last year's Division 4 state finals, are the number-one ranked team in the state in Division 4 this season. Senior Sophie Hauser, who finished ninth as an individual last year, leads the way for the Cougars this season. Hauser shot a 38 to help the Cougars record a team score of 176 enroute to winning a conference jamboree earlier this season.

Bath

The Bath golf team placed 13th at last year's state finals and the Bees are looking for even more this season. Ranked fifth in the state in Division 4, Bath returns the bulk of its lineup from last year. Junior Anna Schaibly, who placed 21st as an individual last season, leads the way for the team this season. Schaibly has already turned in some outstanding efforts this season. Schaibly carded an 81 to take medalist honors at the Dick's Sporting Goods Invitational. Schaibly also fired a 41 to help Bath to a win at a conference jamboree as the squad finished with a team total of 181.



The Lowell golf team has won several tournaments in the early going this season.



The St. Louis golf team is looking for more success this season after qualifying for state last fall.

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St. Patrick's Volleyball Prospects Look Rosy

John Raffel Sports Scene

Nicole Easlick's Portland St. Patrick volleyball team is poised to have a strong season.

"Last season the team record was 25-16-2," Easlick said. "We won our third district title and went on to win a regional title as well. It is only the second time in school history that we have won regionals. It was a very exciting season."

"Natalee Teachworth was a key athlete for us," Easlick said. "She led our team in kills with 432 and blocks with 61. Natalee broke 3 school records last season getting most kills in a match with 32, most kills in a season with 432 and best kill average of 3.66. She is currently at Aquinas College where she is playing volleyball for them."

St. Patrick has several fine players on this year's squad.

"Tori Sandborn was a strong player for us last year and we expect her to continue that this

season as well," Easlick said. "She is a senior and plays libero. Last year Tori broke 2 school records of most digs in a season with 671 and has a dig average of 5.686. She has already hit over 1000 digs in her career and continues to add to that number."

"Bella Russman is a junior this season and will be a key contributor to the team. She is an outside hitter, that also plays left back. Bella is leading the team in kills so far this season and has a solid hit. She is a strong defensive player as well."

Easlick added: "Sophia Schrauben is a senior this season that stepped up to fill a setting position that we needed. She also is a right side hitter and is one of the top players on the team with kills. She is a very scrappy player, that hustles and makes some great plays. Marley Weems is a senior, middle hitter this season. She was a top contributor to our team last season with her strong blocking. Marley has continued



The 2023 Portland St. Patrick volleyball team.

that this season already, starting our first tournament with 11 blocks. She is also one of the top players on our team with kills and we look forward to what she brings to the team this season.

"This season I expect us to compete well with all teams and I think we have a strong shot at winning districts again this season. We have some strong junior players joining the team this year and I think it will be a good season for them to learn and grow

as well. Our strength this season will be our defense. Tori, our libero is a very strong defensive player and makes key plays every match. Bella and Kenzie, also play back row and have a strong defense as well. They all make some great plays that keep us in games. This team is also a strong serving team and that will help win games."

Easlick said the focus of the team is offense.

"We lost our top offensive player

last year and we have had to work hard to fill that spot," she said. "The girls are really working on their technique and timing, so that we can have some strong hitters."

We are in the CMAC and the top teams this season are Pewamo Westphalia and Dansville. Our team should be in the top as long as we play with intensity each match. We can compete with many of the teams in our league and already have this season."

Lansing Catholic Volleyball Team Eyes State Title

John Raffel Sports Scene

Lansing Catholic volleyball coach Kevin McMillan is confident this team can compete for a state title this season.

Last year, Lansing Catholic was 43-4-6 and first in the CAAC White. Top moments were beating D2 (North Branch), and D3 (Pewamo Westphalia) in the same season.

LC graduated five all-conference players, four of which were All Region, 2 of which were D2 commits to Thomas Moore University and Northern Michigan University.

"Middle hitter Emilia Gulock (Northern Michigan University), set the standard on how to dominate in the middle both

on offense and defense, while libero Isabella Schultz (Thomas Moore University) dominated in the backrow," McMillan said. "They both left legacies at Lansing Catholic that will live on for quite some time."

McMillan provided a list of key players on his 2023 roster.

Ava Wilcox, Sr. OH - "She will eclipse 1,000 kills and 1,000 digs in her career while playing at Lansing Catholic. She has been a 3-year starter through 3 years, and has helped her team win 3 Conference and District Championships. She has also helped her team to a record over those

three years of 108-10-7"

Makena Snitgen, Sr. OH - "She is the most underrated of the players in the area. She has

a stealthy serve, can defend her position on defense at the net and in the backrow, and can score in multiple ways at the net. She will be tough for defenders to stop this season."

Bella Lewis, Jr. Setter - "Bella set a school record last season with over 1,200 assists, and is on pace to set a school record for her career. Bella has grown to become a great defender and is running her offense like a seasoned veteran. Bella will continue to be the standard at her position in our conference going forward."

Eleni Lahanas, Sr. MH - "Eleni is another player that not many teams are aware of. She was learning behind two middle hitters last season who were both All Conference, one was All State, and plays at Northern Michigan. Eleni is a great blocker, hitter, defender, and her serve is really tough as well. She is a great all around player and can play multiple positions."

Addison Prosen, So. Libero -

Addison has come in and filled a much needed hole after losing Thomas Moore commit Isabella Schultz to graduation. Addison is aggressive and unafraid and

has an extremely high volleyball IQ. Her ability to read hitters and has the ability to get to most every ball. Addison is a great communicator and is well respected by her teammates and coach."

McMillan has high expectations for his team/

"I expect to win our conference, win our district, win our region, and to compete for a state championship," he said. "You will see a team that will compete every day, both in practice and competition. This team is young and hungry," he said. "All of the players are very skilled. There is no major drop in talent, which makes practices very effective and efficient. Another strength is also our leadership with Ava Wilcox, Makena Snitgen, and Addison Prosen. Our three captains

are loved and respected in our program, and they set the tone for this team.

"Lastly, we are a hungry team, not for outcome goals, but for effort goals. We want to get better every day, every play. We do not settle for anything less than that. We will be very strong at every position and very hard to beat. "We need to get older very quickly. We have three freshmen, and two sophomores in the starting lineup. Once they forget that they are younger than most, we will likely be the team to beat for quite some time."

The conference, McMillan said, just got much stronger with the addition of Lakewood.

"They are always typically in the top five in the state," McMillan said. "We have won this conference for the last decade or more, and don't plan on giving that up any time soon. I believe that we will win the conference again, but will have to elevate our play this year."

Portland Volleyball Team Off To Impressive Start

John Raffel Sports Scene

Portland volleyball coach Jason Zeek has a team which has been making a lot of noise in the CAAC White this season.

The 2022 Portland Raiders finished with a 20-20-3 record (4-6 in league) and 5th in the CAAC White. They walked away with 1 tournament win in Carson City, and fell to Ionia in District Finals.

A trio of Raiders have graduated and continued their careers at Montcalm; Abbey Pohl, Piper Groesser, and Lauren Rowe. Also graduating in 2022 was Defensive Specialist Avery Moore. These four ladies combined for 62 percent of Portland's kills, and Pohl finished

just outside the Top 5 for Portland's all time block leaders.

"Jaylee Pitchford will look to lead the Raiders in 2023," Zeek said. "The lone senior on the roster is an all-around talent who will most likely continue play at the next level. McKenna Boykin is a defensive stalwart in the middle, and only a sophomore. She currently has 30 blocks on the season, and is pacing to finish as one of the top blockers in Raider history. "The back row pairing of Lilli Spenski and Anastasia Seidelman has been ramping up with the start of the season. Both juniors have been platooning Libero responsibilities, and have combined for over 200 digs already this campaign."

Zeek likes his teams prospects for this season.

"It is no surprise that the Raiders aren't known for their Volleyball, but their program has been making improvements year over year. Portland will look to build around a very young team (1 senior, 7 Juniors, 4 Sophomores), and aim to gain as much experience as possible heading into the heart of league play," Zeek said. "Portland's largest strength comes from their outside hitters. Jaylee Pitford is a proven outside, and newcomer Makayla Evansen have the potential to blister attacks through blocks, but need to find consistency."

"This Raiders team needs to



The 2023 Portland volleyball team.

overcome their lack of size with disciplined defense, and a speedy attack.

The addition of Lakewood to the Conference has provided a strong source of competition, Zeek said.

"They join Lansing Catholic in a battle at the top for league supremacy. Portland will push to improve on their fifth-place finish from last season, aiming to battle for a top half finish," Zeek said.

New Lothrop Volleyball Coach Has High Hopes For Team

John Raffel Sports Scene

Jill Severn is varsity volleyball coach of a New Lothrop team that competes in the Mid Michigan Activities Conference and is coming off a unique year.

"The 2022 season was an exciting season for New Lothrop volleyball," Severn said. "We won our first district championship since 2016 and went on to the regional championship. Our overall record was 34-14-1."

Graduates included Carley Martin, an outside hitter and great all around player.

"Carley played with tenacity every day," Severn said. "She was a great leader for our team on the court."

Taylor Moore, setter, "had a calming and positive presence on the court," Severn said.

Madison Wendling- Libero, "was a fighter on the court. She always worked to better everyone on the team."

Severn has several talented players on her 2023 team.

"Kara Wendling, a senior middle blocker, "is a consistent hitting and blocking threat. Kara is an all around player that adds great game knowledge to our team," Severn said.

Ashlynn Orr, is a junior outside hitter.

"Ashlyn is a great all around athlete. She is all out on every play," Severn said, adding senior middle blocker Lexi Birchmeier "is

a dynamic player; she brings lots of energy onto the court with her every play."

This year's team excites Severn. "I expect relentless pursuit in bettering ourselves every day," she said. "We have a talented group of individuals and they are working well and improving everyday. The team is a dynamic group. We have talent spread across the court. We need to work on "Staying in the game when we have a few missed points."

"Our conference is becoming stronger each year. I see the addition of youth programs in our communities strengthening our league. I think we will be in the running for top of the league this year."



The 2022 New Lothrop volleyball team.

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New O-E Volleyball Coach Expects Team To Be Contender

John Raffel Sports Scene

New Ovid Elsie volleyball coach Angie Ehle has been encouraged with the development of her team this season.

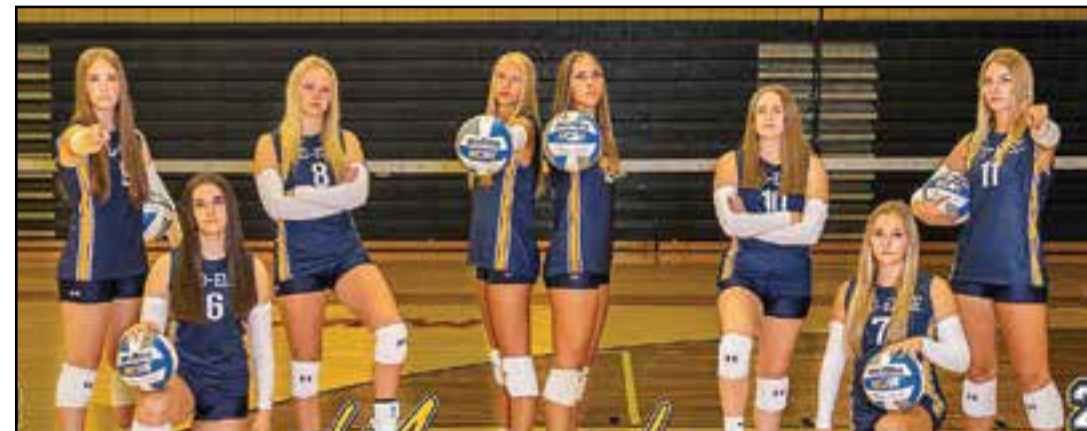
Returning senior captain, and three-year varsity player, Hailee Campbell is a middle hitter. And expectations are to bring leadership, an aggressive attack, solid block and serving consistency.

Senior captain, Braeden Tokar is a first-year middle hitter, who

returns after two seasons off due to injuries. His expectations are to bring leadership, an explosive attack, and aggressive back court defense.

Junior setter and new to O-E, Kyden Ehle, is a 3-year varsity setter, 2022 NSL Honors, 2022 All Region, and 2022 Division 3 honorable mention. Expectations are aggressive jump serve, run a fast, balanced offense, aggressive attack and blocking at the net.

Returning Junior, two-year varsity player, Ellyanna Carman is a strong right-side hitter who has



Ovid-Elsie's 2032 Volleyball Team.

an aggressive right side attack, and jump serve.

Sophomore outside hitter and new to the team is Ashton Ehle, a second-year varsity outside hitter, 2022 NSL Honors.

"Collectively, we do not have a lot of volleyball experience so we are working very hard on skill development and other basic concepts," coach Ehle said. "My expectations for my team are to serve aggressively and consistently,

run a quick offense, and play aggressive defense. I expect us to finish at the top of our league.

"We are a good serving and attacking team. We need to work on serve receive, blocking and back court defense."

Ionia Volleyball Team Enjoying Strong Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Heidi Wenzel feels she has good reasons to like the potential of this year's Ionia volleyball team.

Last year's Bulldog team was 25-10-3 overall and 7-3 in the conference and won districts. There were some key athletes who graduated from the program.

Tess Griffith 'was our go to hitter and a leader on the team,' Wenzel said. "She was very efficient and consistent contributor on offense. Londyn Brown was libero who worked hard in the off season to step up as a major contributor on defense. We relied on her to lead the back row and she created

a lot of offensive opportunities for us by keeping the ball in play. She was also a major contributor from the service line.

There's some very good players on this team.

"Grace Droste, sophomore setter, will keep our offense running this year and she is growing into a more offensive setter," Wenzel said. "Kate Brown, senior, libero is the backbone of the defense and a great server. As the libero this year she has stepped into a big role and is really doing a great job leading the back court. I'm excited for the upcoming season. I've been seeing a lot of growth from day one and know we will continue to see the team mesh and leaders

step up. I think we're going to create a lot of opportunities for ourselves that will help us succeed.

"Our strength this year will be defensively and Working to create more opportunities for our offense to put the ball away. Consistency will be a key aspect of our game for us to work on and finding ways to consistently put the ball away and come together when things aren't clicking."

The Bulldogs are looking to be a factor in the conference.



finishing in the top three of conference play."

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Greenville Set To Contend In Conference

John Raffel Sports Scene

Kaylee Fracker is coaching a Greenville volleyball team which she expects will be competitive in the OKOK White this season.

"All of the seniors last year truly had some kind of impact on the team, Whether it was

being a leader on the stat sheet, good teammate, or a good role model off the court, they all seemed to contribute somewhere," Fracker said.

She has confidence in her players for 2023. "All of my athletes are key players," she said. "I have super high expectations for my team, but especially my seniors Kaydie Weber, Burgundy Coleman, Taylin Cooper, and Isabelle Johnson.

They are our role models and hold their teammates accountable on and off the court each day. I

pulled up two freshmen this year who both have stepped up

tremendously on the court each

day. Adalyn Weber who is a defense specialist and Haylee Kubec who is a middle blocker.

"We also have sophomore Lauren Russell who brings consistency to the team as an outside hitter.

Our juniors Melanie Wallis, Annabelle Wilhite, Mikasia Amelia, and Makenna deForest all

contribute as well each day are appreciated. I have high expectations for my team this year and a lot of it comes from the chemistry they have built off the court. This group truly has each other's backs and cares for one another genuinely. This helps them to gel on the court and trust that they will do their job as individuals

to see the team aspect come together."

What will be your team's strength?

"Our strength is definitely holding each other accountable," I



Greenville's volleyball team gets ready for a game.

have girls that look each other and just simply say 'I believe in you, we need you right now' and to see them really come

out after hearing their teammate say that is a beautiful thing to witness. We definitely need to work on changing things up and get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Being able to

change the game when we are struggling instead of falling into the same mistakes."

As for OK White Conference, "We have a tough conference from teams that go to states each year or win their district titles continuously. I am excited to see my team compete with our conference teams this year as

we have a variety of things to offer and truly put up some competition that they usually do not

seem to anticipate. It will not be easy for anyone in our conference this year. There does not seem to be any 'underdog'.

Vestaburg Volleyball Team Showing Promise

John Raffel Sports Scene

Bruce Keyes is coaching a Vestaburg volleyball team which is showing plenty of promise.

"I am a new coach to the program this year, but to my understanding they only had one win last year," he said. "I have seven players on my varsity roster: three seniors, two juniors, one sophomore, and one

freshman, along with an additional sophomore and freshman on standby if we need to pull up any additional help. They are all an intricate part of making this team successful.

"My expectations for this team is for them to play and compete at a high level and to finish in the upper half of the league standings. Our strengths are playing team ball and utilizing each other's strong suits. We have to continue to build

our confidence individually and as a team, and we need to continue to work on our little errors to help make us competitive."

In the MSAC, "St. Charles looks to be a pretty good competitor for league champion this year.

Sacred Heart also looks to be pretty strong and competitive as well. Again, our goal is to finish in the upper half of the league standings by the end of the year."



Vestaburg's 2032 Volleyball Team.

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Alma Boys Tennis Team Getting The Job Done

John Raffel Sports Scene

Todd Brasher's Alma boys tennis team, has been getting the job done this season.

The Panthers have been striving to be a factor in the TVC. They hope to be even better a year ago when they had a winning record for the first time in several years

"No. 4 singles or doubles players advanced to the semifinals at Regionals," Thrasher said. "Michael Howey II was a three-time team MVP, and his contributions at No. 1 singles was a great boost to our program. His leadership will be missed."

"Juniors Clark Lux and Gideon Sacco will hold our top two spots in singles and will be called upon to provide some stability. Ian Roe and

Trey Craige are seniors with loads of doubles experience and will need to mentor the younger players on our team.

Sophomore Zakary Schloff and freshman Landon Huntoon.

"We have a small team this year, so weekly improvement is the key," Brasher said. "We want to build good habits and strong fundamentals. Our 1 and 2 singles players will be our strength, as we'll rely on them for stability for every match. We need to work on steady improvement from our younger players."

Alma plays in the TVC.

"The TVC is a strong conference in nearly every sport, and tennis is no different. We expect strong challenges from Garber and Bay City John Glenn. Bullock Creek is a tough opponent, too," Brasher said.



The 2023 Alma Boys tennis team.

Fowlerville Eyes Another Huge Tennis Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Jim Jonas is coming off an impressive season for the Fowlerville tennis team as head coach and is looking forward to the 2023 season.

The team competes in the CAAC Red.

"Last year was a great year for us," Jonas said. "We finished 17-1-4 in dual matches, finished second

in our league (Mason) and won the regional for the first time in school history. We lost some key contributors from last year's team.

Lucas Anderson (1 singles) was a three-year all league performer, and left schools as our all time wins leader. He currently is playing at the university of Olivet. Alex Jonas (1 doubles) was an all league performer, regional runner-up, and

made the Lansing State Journal dream team, he is also currently playing at the university of Olivet."

This year's team consists of:

1 singles Mason Munsell, 2 years on varsity and played 3 singles last year.

2 singles Cole Sova, 3 years on varsity and played 2 singles last year.

3 singles Ryder Lukasik, 3 years on varsity and played 4 singles last year.

4 singles Ethan Way, 3 years on varsity and played 3 doubles last year.

1 doubles Oliver Farmer, 4 years on varsity and played 1 doubles last year.

Ben Durbin, 2 years on varsity and played 4 doubles last year.

2 doubles Grant Wilkinson 2



The 2023 Fowlerville Boys tennis team.

years on varsity and played 4 doubles last year.

Lon Pringle 1 year on varsity only freshmen in top 12.

3 doubles Drake Cook 2 years on varsity played some at 3 and 4 doubles last year.

Matt Jeffrey 2 years on varsity played some at 3 and 4 doubles last year.

4 doubles Christian Orr 1 year on varsity played on JV last year.

Preston Browne 1 year on varsity played on JV last year.

"This year's team has a nice mix of returners and new talents," Jonas said. "We have the potential of having a very successful season. We play in a very tough league. Last year 5 of the 6 teams either

made the state finals as a team or had their No. 1 singles player qualify. Most of the team returns most of their players from last year so this year is going to be a real battle. Our strength is our experience and especially in our top flights. The key to the season will be how quickly our doubles team jells and improves."

Ionia Girls Swimmers Eye Titles

John Raffel Sports Scene

Ionia Public Schools swim coach Amy Fuller has a strong team competing in the CAAC Red this season.

Last year, "Madeline and Amelia McGee qualified for the state meet and swam in the same finals heat for the 100 yard backstroke, finishing 2nd and 7th, respectively," Fuller said. "The 100 yard butterfly record was broken by Madeline McGee. Our brand new swimmers were able to advance to the finals at our end-of-season conference meet

"Madeline McGee made her mark on Ionia swimming, currently holding 4 individual records and part of 2 relay records. She worked hard to get faster herself but also to support the growth of her teammates."

Key swimmers for Ionia include: Eily Martinez, senior, captain mid-distance freestyle;

Isabelle Robinson, junior, captain, distance freestyle, butterfly; Katelyn Lamphere, junior, distance freestyle, IM and Amelia McGee, sophomore, sprint freestyle, fly, backstroke.

"All of these girls have been swimming in the off-season and making tremendous progress," Fuller said. "They are versatile swimmers who can swim any event they are put in. Amelia will return to the state meet this season with a lot of potential in several events. We have a very young team so I'm looking forward to seeing a lot of growth. They need to learn to push themselves to race harder, to find that drive within themselves.

"Our strength this year is in our numbers. Many teams are struggling to find athletes, and we have a big team. We also have more swimmers who are training in the off-season so that will help us compete in dual meets. Since we are so young, we are working on



The 2023 Ionia Girls Swim Team.

basic techniques and learning to swim all of the strokes. They are learning racing strategy and how to push hard at the end of a race." Ionia compete in the CAAC

"Haslett, Williamston and Mason are consistently strong teams," Fuller said. "Our place will be determined by the growth our team makes over the season.

I am proud to see the support our athletes give each other and other teams. It is rewarding to see each athlete grow according to their strengths and potential."

Okemos Fielding A Strong Tennis Team This Fall

John Raffel Sports Scene

Karim Jelassi is coaching a tennis team which last season won league and regional championships, and finished sixth in the Division 2 state finals.

"Ben Wie graduated but won league and regional championships at No. 4 singles," Jelassin said.

This season, junior Suchir Nagisetty is the No. 1 singles player and top candidate to make a run at the state tournament in October.

"Senior Rikhil Rajanikanth, no. 2 singles, is also expected to do well, as is our No. 1 doubles team of second-year Kai Minamisono and junior

Alex Zang," Jelassi said. "We have a promising freshman at no. 3 singles, Sahaj Pakala," Jelassi said. "Though we are in somewhat of a

rebuilding year and despite being moved up in class from D-2 to D-1, we expect to win league and regional titles, and in or near the top ten at the D-1 state finals. Singles are strong and no. 1 doubles, plus team spirit is high."

Okemos needs to work on "lower doubles, net play in general, learning how to finish matches and gaining experience for our younger players," Jelassi said, adding that the conference "has moderate strength, but we expect to win our 13th or so league title in a row."



Okemos' 2023 boys tennis team.



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