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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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

Winter is in full snow and cold mode and so is the winter sports season for area high school athletes.

While the temperature is cold outside the action is hot indoors.

As usual, area wrestling teams and individual wrestlers are turning in some outstanding seasons. Traditional powerhouses like Lowell, Davison, Mason and St. Louis are among the top teams in the state in their Divisions. The area is also home to some more outstanding wrestling teams like Bay City John Glenn, Portland, Freeland, Montrose, Lakewood-Lake Odessa and Lakeview.

The team and individual state tournaments are drawing near and some great wrestling action is on tap for February.

On the basketball courts, area teams and players are turning in some sizzling seasons. The East Lansing and Rockford boys teams are among the best in Division 1 while the Rockford girls basketball team is ranked number one in Division 1. The Saginaw Heritage girls basketball team is also ranked in the top three in the state in Division 1.

Freeland and Rockford are having especially exciting seasons. The Freeland wrestling team and both the boys and girls basketball teams are ranked in the top ten in the state and the same is true at Rockford.

Basketball is holding court in both Fowler and Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart where both the boys and girls basketball teams at each school are ranked in the top ten in the state.

Pewamo-Westphalia is also home to some great basketball as both the boys and girls teams are battling for conference titles and have the talent for long state tournament runs.

The expanded (22-game) basketball schedules that the MHSAA gave the green light to a couple years ago is also giving high school basketball fans plenty of exciting non-league games to take in across the state.

With the calendar soon to turn to February, there is still plenty of time to catch some great high school action.

See you at the games!



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SPORT SCENE'S BOYS BASKETBALL ROUND UP

David Cook & Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Division 1

East Lansing is back among the premier teams in the state this year as the Trojans are ranked eighth in the state in Division 1. The Trojans lead the CAAC Blue with an 11-1 record and a perfect 5-0 in conference play. East Lansing is led by senior standout Cameron Hutson who is averaging 18.2 points per game and junior guard K.J. Torbert who is pouring in 20.9 points per game. Torbert also passed the 1,000-point mark for his career in a thrilling double-overtime win against Okemos. The Trojans season began with a five-game win streak that included a 75-65 win over Lansing Waverly. The Trojans followed up a heartbreaking 69-65 overtime loss to Muskegon with a current six game win streak highlighted by a 74-50 win over Lansing Sexton and a 69-68 victory against Orchard Lake St Mary's.

Mason leads the CAAC Red with a perfect 4-0 conference record and 10-1 overall and is ranked among the honorable-mention in the state in Division 1. The Bulldogs won their first five games including a 65-57 overtime victory against Brighton and a 65-63 win over conference rivals Haslett. Mason followed up a loss to DeWitt by winning their last five games against tough opposition

including St Johns, Charlotte, and Howell. The win against Howell came in the title game of the Mason Holiday tournament. The Bulldogs have a talented, veteran team led by a talented senior core. Senior Cason Carswell leads the team with 18.3 points per game. Senior Levi Stambaugh, who scored a career-high 31 points in the win against Howell, is averaging 17.6 points per game.

Lansing Waverly is off to a great start to the season with a 7-2 record and 4-1 in conference play. The Warriors, who are ranked 12th in the state in Division 1, won their first three games including a 60-53 win over Belleville and an 82-point performance in a win over Holt. A 1-3 stretch which saw the Warriors lose an 87-82 shootout to Carmen-Ainsworth and a loss to East Lansing was followed up by a three-game win streak highlighted by a 48-45 win over Okemos.

Rockford is atop the OK Red with an 12-1 start to the season and a perfect 4-0 in conference play. Rockford is also ranked No. 5 in that state in Division 1. The Rams kicked off the year with a five-game win streak that included impressive wins over Grand Rapids Catholic Central, Traverse City Central, and Northview. Rockford recovered from a 51-44 loss to Orchard Lake St Mary's to win their last six games including a 76-37 win over Grand Haven and a 65-61 overtime victory against Byron Center.



Flint Carmen-Ainsworth is off to an 8-0 start to the season that has them among Division 1's elite. The Cavaliers have notched big wins over the likes of Lansing Waverly, Goodrich, and Pewamo-Westphalia thanks to an offense that has scored a minimum of 70 points in all but one game this season including two 90-point performances.

Greenville is off to a perfect 12-0 start to the season that includes three wins in conference play. The Yellow Jackets have played well on both sides of the ball, having scored 80+ points in three games and limited opponents to under 30 points in five games including a four-game streak. A 72-56 win over Allendale and a 62-60 overtime victory against Ionia are included in Greenville's list of quality wins.

Midland Dow had an up and down start to the season, going 3-3 with losses to Mount Pleasant and Traverse City West. The Chargers rebounded by going on a four-game winning streak including a 60-56 victory over Swartz Creek and wins over Lapeer and Flushing. Dow is currently 9-3, 3-1 in conference play, putting them among the top of the Saginaw Valley Conference. Dow is led by Ben VanSumeren along with sophomore guard Wynn Diegel while J.D. Curtis and Jake Szajenko have also stepped up for the Chargers.

Mount Pleasant got off to a rough start to the season, losing three of their first five games including a 51-50 overtime loss to Alma. The Oilers rebounded by winning five of their last six games including wins over Lapeer and Essexville Garber. Mount Pleasant is 7-4, 2-1 in the SVC, at the midway point.

Okemos is 10-2 with a 4-2 record in the CAAC Blue. The Wolves kicked the season off with a nine-game winning streak highlighted by a 60-45 win over Lansing Sexton and a 64-39 victory over Howell. Okemos had a three-point loss to Lansing Waverly, after which the Wolves rebounded with a win over Dearborn Heights Robichaud. The Wolves also dropped a double-overtime heartbreaker to East Lansing. Okemos is led

The Mason basketball team is challenging for a league title this season.



East Lansing junior K.J. Torbert and his teammates are ranked eighth in the state in Division 1.

by Christian Chiou who is averaging 14.2 points per game and post player Sawyer Lick who is pulling down 7.4 rebounds.

Saginaw Heritage won their first three games of the season, including a 67-61 win over Traverse City Central, before losses to Warren de la Salle and Freeland. The Hawks rebounded by winning their next three including victories over Roseville and Alpena, scoring a season high 87 points in the latter game. Heritage won seven of the first 10 games is played this season. Jaylin Cooper is having a big season for the Hawks including a 28-point performance against Roseville that earned the 6-foot-5 junior guard game MVP honors at the Carmody Classic.

Saginaw United had to navigate a tough non-conference schedule that included losses to Detroit Catholic Central, Fort Wayne, and Detroit Martin Luther King. However, the Phoenix were able to emerge with a 4-4 record including a highlight win over Freeland 58-49. A 3-1 start to conference play




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has lifted the Phoenix to 8-5 overall and near the top of the SVC. Saginaw is a deep and talented team led by seniors Deon Anderson and Tyler Dorsey along with sophomore guard Jamarion Williams who has been filling up the hoop with shots from beyond the three-point arc.

Division 2

Flint Powers has established themselves as the top team in Division 2 thanks to a 11-0 start to the season. The Chargers have had little difficulty handling a tough schedule including the likes of Riverview Gabriel Richard, Schoolcraft, and Goodrich. Flint Powers has dominated on both sides of the ball, allowing 60 points only three times while scoring over 65 points in all but their first two games.

Freeland is back among the top teams in the state in Division 2 as the Falcons are ranked third. Freeland is challenging for the top spot in the TVC Red at the halfway point with a 10-2 overall record, and 5-1 in conference play. Freeland is led by standout forward Wilson Huckleby who is averaging 19.4 points per game and forward Tristan Comer who is adding 16.8 points per game. The Falcons suffered a loss to Saginaw United in non-league play before falling to Bay City John Glenn in the league. The Falcons have an impressive resume that includes wins

over Warren de la Salle, Mount Pleasant, and Saginaw Heritage. A 67-61 overtime victory over Frankenmuth has put the Falcon's in strong position in the TVC Red going into the second half of the season.

Bay City John Glenn rebounded from a 2-2 start to the season by winning their last nine games to put the Bobcats near the top of the Tri-Valley Red with a 11-2 record, and 6-1 in conference play. Victories over Freeland and Frankenmuth are among the highlights for a John Glenn team that has allowed an opponent over 60 points in a game just once this season. The Bobcats are led by senior big man Sean Wesolek who has committed to play college basketball for Hope College next season.

Big Rapids is off to a 4-1 start in conference play and 9-3 overall. The Cardinals strung together five straight wins to begin the season before bookending a 75-48 win over Reed City with losses to Cedar Springs and Kenowa Hills. Big Rapids have recovered with a three-game win streak that includes a 56-35 victory over White Cloud.

Durand had a hot start to the season, winning their first five games including a 64-57 win over International Academy of Flint. After losing to Ovid-Elsie, the Railroaders rebounded with three straight wins, but stumbled in conference play against Mt

Morris and Chesaning. Durand is currently 8-3 with a 5-3 record in the Mid-Michigan Activities Conference.

Frankenmuth are among the top teams in the TVC Red with an 8-3 record, 5-2 in conference play. The Eagles have overcome quality opposition including Bay City John Glenn and Swartz Creek while a 67-61 overtime defeat to conference rivals Freeland and losses to Goodrich and Bay City Glenn have been their only blemishes. Defense has been the key to Frankenmuth's success so far, having allowed over 50 points only twice this season.

Gladwin started the season with a six-game winning streak including a 64-49 win over Ogemaw Heights. The Flying G's lost their next two games to Bay City John Glenn and Standish-Sterling before rebounding with a 45-33 win over Sanford Meridian. Gladwin is currently 7-2, 5-1 in the Jack Pine I conference, thanks to a defense that has allowed 50 points in only three games this season.

Haslett are having a strong start to the season with a 10-1 record including 4-1 in conference play. The Vikings began the year with a four-game win streak including a 60-42 victory over Laingsburg and wins against Ionia and West Catholic. After a 65-63 loss to CAAC Red rivals Mason, Haslett is in the midst of a six-game win streak that sees them second in the conference at the mid-way point. Wardrell Wicker leads the way for the Vikings along with sharpshooters Charlie Dutcher and Luke Blattert.

Lansing Sexton started the season by winning five of their first six games including a 61-51 win over Charlotte. The J-Dubbs rebounded from a loss to East Lansing with an emphatic 92-45 victory over Lake Odessa followed up with a win over Ionia. Sexton currently sits atop the CAAC White with a 8-3 overall record and a perfect 6-0 conference record. Junior standout Keyshawn Summerville leads the way for Sexton. Summerville poured in 31 points in a game against Waverly and scored 21 against Portland in a game that he went over the 1,000-point mark for his career.

Portland is challenging for the top spot in the CAAC White thanks to a 10-1 start to the season that includes six conference wins. The Raiders have notched wins over St Johns, Ionia, Bath, and Charlotte. Defense

The Okemos basketball team is off to a strong start this season.



Lansing Sexton standout Keyshawn Summerville surpassed the 1,000-point mark this season.

has been Portland's strong suit this season, having allowed 50 points in only two games so far. The Raiders have a balanced squad led by Evan Gross, Owen Moore and Kaden Dickerson who is pulling down 10 rebounds per game.

Division 3

Beal City sit atop the Highland Conference with a 9-2 overall and a 7-0 conference record. Beal City is also moving up the state rankings as they are 10th in the state in Division 3. The Aggies began the season with a three-game win streak that included a 57-48 win over McBain. After bookending a 73-60 win over Evert with losses to Ithaca and Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart, Beal City rightened the ship with another three-game win streak to secure their spot atop the conference standings at the halfway mark.

Chesaning had an up and down start to the season, going 3-3 with losses to tough opposition including Flint Powers, Mt Morris, and Ovid-Elsie. The Indian's have been able to recover by winning their last three games including a 47-35 win over Fulton

and a 57-51 victory over conference rivals Durand. Chesaning is currently 6-3 and 5-2 in conference play.

Evert started the season on a six-game win streak that included an 81-point performance against Roscommon and a 60-38 victory over Baldwin. After a loss to Beal City, the Wildcats won two against Morley Stanwood and Blanchard Montabella before losing to McBain. Evert recovered with an impressive 71-55 win over LeRoy Pine River and a victory over Marion to bring the Wildcats to 10-2 and 4-2 in the Highland Conference. Evert is led by talented senior guard Aidan Anderson who is averaging 15.1 points per game.

Hemlock is 6-5 and 3-1 in the Tri-Valley Blue to begin the season. Wins over Sanford Meridian, Saginaw Valley Lutheran, and Vassar are highlights of the Huskies' season so far. Hemlock has relied heavily on defense this year as they are yet to allow 60 points in a game this year.

Ithaca got off to a hot start to the season by winning their first six games including a 54-52 win over Standish-Sterling and a 57-48 victory over Beal City. The Yellowjackets are ranked 11th in the state in Division 3. An early-season loss to Millington, ranked sec-

ond in the state in Division 3, was followed by a three-game win streak before losing to Saginaw Swan Valley. The Yellowjackets are battling for the top spot in the TVC Blue with a 9-3 record, 3-2 in conference play, thanks to a stifling defense that has limited opponents to under 30 points in three games this season.

Laingsburg suffered a rough start to the season, losing their first four games including a 59-19 loss to Pewamo-Westphalia. A 56-49 overtime win over Potterville proved to be the catalyst for the Wolfpack as they began a six-game winning streak to put them back over .500 with a 6-4 record and 5-3 in the Central Michigan Athletic Conference.

Ovid-Elsie stumbled out of the gate, going 1-2 with losses to Charlotte and Mt Morris, but responded by winning their next nine games including a 66-51 win over Durand and a 58-55 victory over Chesaning. The Marauders are currently 10-2 and 7-1 in the Mid-Michigan Activities Conference. Tucker Loynes is leading the way for Ovid-Elsie as he is averaging 18.4 points per game while Tryce Tokar is adding 16.9 points per game giving the team a potent one-two scoring combination.

Pewamo-Westphalia sits atop the Cen-

tral Michigan Athletic Conference with an 8-2 record and a perfect 8-0 in the conference. The Pirates won their first six games highlighted by a 59-19 win in the season opener against Laingsburg and a 51-49 victory over top conference challenger Fowler. Pewamo suffered a two-game skid after playing big school powers Grand Rapids South Christian and Flint Carmen-Ainsworth, but rebounded with wins over Potterville and Bath.

Pinconning made a statement in their season opener with an 82-8 win over Whittemore-Prescott and have continued to back it up with a 9-1 record and a spot atop the Jack Pine II conference. The Spartans have recorded 80+ points in three games so far this season including a 93-55 win over Rudyard. The team's only loss coming to conference rivals Sanford Meridian 53-52.

Saginaw Valley Lutheran endured a difficult non-conference schedule which saw the Chargers go 2-5 against tough opposition against the likes of Reese, Sanford Meridian, and Pinconning. The Chargers have fared better in conference play with a 3-1 record including a 50-48 win over Ithaca and wins over Nouvel and Michigan Lutheran Seminary to put them at 5-6 overall.

Sanford Meridian is 5-5 and 3-2 in the conference after an up and down first half of the season. The Mustangs won four of their first six games before a two-game losing streak that was snapped with a 53-52 win over Jack Pine II leaders Pinconning. Defense has been the Mustang's specialty this year; allowing

Saginaw Heritage is one of many standout teams in the Saginaw Valley League.



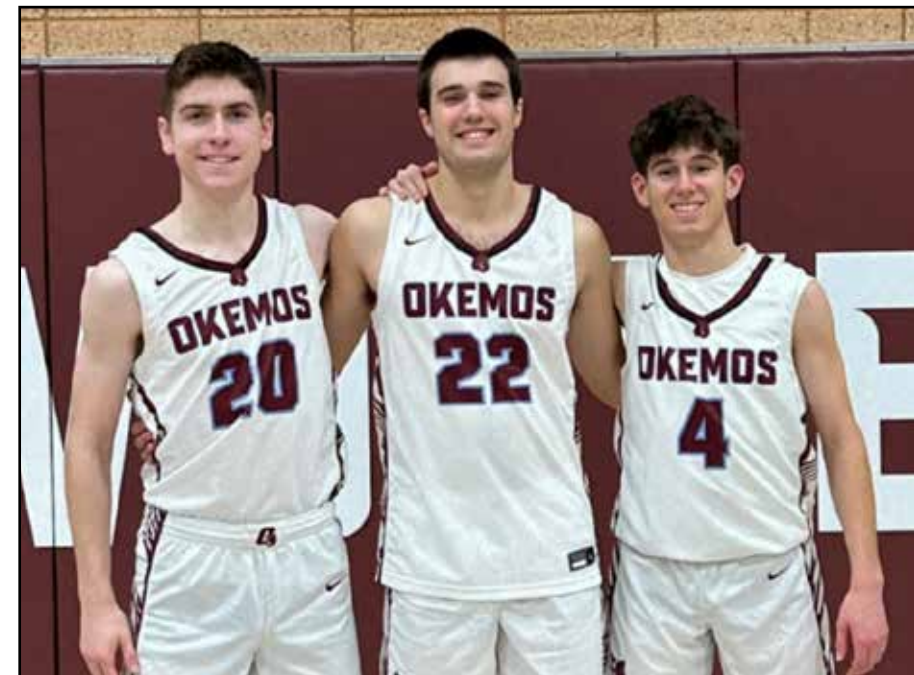
The Saginaw United basketball team is turning in a big debut season as a program.

a game high of just 55 points in a loss to Roscommon and a low of 21 points in a win over Farwell.

Division 4

Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart is among the top teams in the state against this season as the Irish have climbed to No. 2 in the state in Division 4. The Irish are a perfect 9-0 in the Mid State Activities Conference at the midpoint of the season and are 11-1 overall. Among the highlights this season are a 53-42 win against Beal City in the Backyard Brawl at Central Michigan University.

Fowler is one of the top teams in Division 4 after a 12-2 start and a 9-1 record in conference play. The Eagles, who are ranked No. 9 in the state in Division 4, won their first five games including wins over Laingsburg, Portland St Patrick, and a 62-59 win over Wyoming Tri-unity. After a short stumble in which the Eagles went 1-2, Fowler got back on track by winning their last six including victories over Marshall and Fulton.



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SPORT SCENE'S GIRLS BASKETBALL ROUND UP

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Division 1

Rockford is ranked No. 1 in the state in Division 1. The Rams kicked the season off with a 71-36 win over Haslett before splitting their next two, including a loss to Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard. Rockford has since won their last ten games in impressive fashion. The Rams have some of the best talent in the state including senior Anna Wypych and juniors Sienna Wolfe and Kate Higgins.

Saginaw Heritage has had a strong start to the season with a 10-2 record against tough competition. The Hawks, ranked third in the state in Division 1, defeated Sanford Meridian 58-42 in their season opener to begin a six-game win streak that included a three-game stretch with wins over Cass Tech, Freeland, and Hemlock. The Hawks feature some of the most talented young players in the state led by junior standout forward Alesia Ode along with freshman guard Jayla Laster.

Midland is having a strong season so far with an 9-1 record and 3-0 in the SVC. The Chemics, who are ranked eighth in the state in Division 1, handed Flint Hamady their first, and so far, only, loss of the season 42-37 in the season opener and won two

more before a loss to Grand Haven. Midland has since won their last five games including wins over Linden and Midland Dow and have scored 60+ points four times in that stretch. The Chemics are a deep team with plenty of options on offense including Payton Palmer, Ella McLaughlin, Emma McLaughlin and Jensyn Arduoin.

Holt leads the CAAC Blue with a perfect 5-0 conference record and are 8-3 overall so far. The Rams responded to their season opening loss to Hartland by going on a seven-game win streak highlighted by a 47-39 victory over DeWitt and wins against Coldwater and East Lansing. The Rams are led by senior Allison Metzger who moved up to No. 17 on the all-time Holt career scoring list. Sophomore guard Olivia Gadson is also having a big season for the Rams who are ranked in the honorable mention in the state.

DeWitt is a strong contender in Division 1 with a 10-1 record and 5-1 in the CAAC Blue. The Panthers split their first two games before winning their last eight thanks to strong effort on both ends of the court, exemplified by their 84-8 win over Lansing Everett. Dewitt is led by a talented group of seniors including Madi Uyl and Tara Kuncz who became the sixth player in DeWitt girls history to eclipse 1,000 points for her career.

Greenville has a commanding lead in the River Cities Conference thanks to a 10-1

start and 3-0 conference record. The Yellow Jackets won their first four games, highlighted by a 51-31 win over Belding, before suffering their first loss against Northview. Undeterred, Greenville has since won their last six games including wins over Kent City and Kenowa Hills.

Mount Pleasant started the season 2-2 with losses to Freeland and Alma along with a 39-27 win over Roscommon. The Oilers found their groove after defeating Sheperd 51-31 and have not lost since with wins over Flint Powers and Essexville Garber included in their current win streak. The Oilers are led by Jordyn Egger who earlier this season surpassed the 1,000-point mark for her career. Mount Pleasant is currently 8-2 and are a perfect 4-0 in the SVC.

Division 2

Freeland is turning a big season. Ranked 10th in the state in Division 2, the Falcons started the year strong with a three-game win streak with wins over Hemlock and Mount Pleasant before dropping two of their next three games. The Falcons are led by senior Addie Seemann who is turning in a big season along with Karie Keefer who is also turning in a big season. Freeland is currently 9-2 and 5-1 in conference play due to a strong offensive game that has seen the Falcons reach the 70-point mark in six

games this season.

Frankenmuth suffered a rough start to the season with a 1-2 start that included losses to Portland and Midland Dow. The Eagles have since responded in a big way by winning their last nine games to reach 10-2 and lead the TVC Red with a 7-0 record. Frankenmuth has notched impressive wins over Flint Powers, Freeland, and Alma along with handing Detroit Country Day their first loss in a convincing 65-39 victory. Clare Conzelman leads the way for the Eagles as she is averaging 18.6 points per game this season while Macy Donovan is adding close to 11 points per game.

Haslett responded quickly after losing their season opener to Rockford by winning their next seven games with wins over Leslie, Fowlerville, and Williamston. Ranked among the honorable-mention in the state in Division 2, Haslett features a potent offense that has scored over 70 points in three games so far this season. Christina Dixon leads the team with 14 points per game while Kaitlyn Johnson and sharp-shooting sophomore guard Avery Hannah are averaging around 12 points per game.

Portland is atop the CAAC White at 8-2 and a perfect 5-0 in conference play. Junior point guard Lilly Thelen leads the way for Portland averaging over 13 points per game and nearly five assists per game. Aaleigh Roberson is adding close to seven rebounds per game. The Raiders started strong with a 57-56 win over Frankenmuth and further wins over Ionia and East Lansing as part of a five-game win streak. The Raiders have played well on defense, allowing 50 points in just one game so far this year.

Alma got off to a slow start to the season, going 1-3 with losses to Fowler and Sanford Meridian. The Panthers were able to use a 60-34 win over Essexville Garber as a catalyst for a four-game win streak that also saw them defeat Mount Pleasant 55-41. Alma is 7-4 and 4-2 in the TVC Red at the halfway point.

Big Rapids leads the CSAA Red with a perfect 5-0 conference record and are 10-1 overall in an impressive start to the season. The Cardinals, led by freshman standout Nuray Fricke who recently scored 26 points Tara Kuncz of DeWitt became the sixth player in program history to eclipse the 1,000-point mark for her career.

in the league showdown with Newaygo, won their first two games before suffering their only loss in a 34-32 defeat to Spring Lake. Big Rapids has since won their last eight games including a 48-44 win over Cedar Springs which was the only game in which the Cardinals have allowed 40 points this season. Senior Hadley Fox has also been a team leader for the team.

Clare recovered from an opening season loss to Sheperd to complete a three-game win streak that included a 56-22 win over Standish-Sterling. The Pioneers have gone 2-2 in their last four games with wins over Ithaca and Midland Bullock Creek and are currently 5-3, 4-2 in conference play.

Corunna split their first four games before going on a four-game win streak that included a 47-10 victory over Clio. The Cavaliers currently sit 7-4 and 4-1 in the Flint Metro Stars League.

Sheperd leads the Jack Pine I Conference with a perfect 8-0 conference record and are 9-3 overall. The Blue Jays won their first five games of the season with wins over Beal City and Clare before a two-game skid against Mount Pleasant and Central Montcalm. Sheperd is strong on the defensive end of the floor, having allowed 50 points only once so far this season.

St Johns is turning in a solid season with a 9-3 record and 3-2 in the CAAC Red. The Redwings won their first three games including a 57-44 win over Fowlerville before falling to Williamston. St Johns then reeled off a six-game win streak.

Williamston overcame an opening season loss to Howell by winning their next five games including a 41-36 win over St Johns. The Hornets are 8-4 with a 4-1 conference record at the midway point.

Division 3

New Lothrop is ranked eighth in the state and is 10-1 overall. The Hornets sit atop the Mid-Michigan Activities Conference with a perfect 8-0 record. The Hornets kicked off the year with a 62-17 win over Saginaw Michigan Lutheran and won two more before recording their only loss to Flint Hamady. New Lothrop has a strong offense that has scored 60+ points in over half of their games.

Roscommon split their first two games of the season before going on a five-game win streak that included a 58-17 win over Grayling and wins over Beaverton and Beal City. Ranked ninth in the state in Division 3, the Bucks are currently 8-2 and 4-1 in the Highland Conference. Roscommon has yet to allow 40 points in a game this season.

Evert is the frontrunner in the Highland Conference with an 10-1 record and 5-1 in conference play. The Wildcats started the season with a six-game win streak with wins over Beal City and Sanford Meridian before suffering their only blemish in a 46-40 loss to McBain. Evert's high-powered offense has scored a minimum of 50 points in all but one game so far this season.

St. Charles is ranked among the honorable-mention teams in the state in Division 3. Led by Allison Zelinko who is averaging around 16 points per game and Nicole Zelinko who is averaging around 10 points per game, the Bulldogs are 7-0 in the league and 7-2 overall.

Beaverton is among the leaders in the Jack Pine II Conference with a 6-1 conference record and 7-3 overall mark. The Beavers lost their opener before a 35-33 win over St Louis kickstarted a three-game win streak that was snapped with a loss to Roscommon.

Morley Stanwood is turning in a solid season with a 7-2 overall record and 3-1 conference mark. The Mohawks started the season with a 57-52 overtime win over LeRoy Pine River before splitting their next two games. Morley Stanwood put together a five-game winning streak due to strong offensive play where the Mohawks scored over 50 points in four of those five games.

Ovid-Elsie is 11-2 and 9-1 in conference play at the midpoint. The Marauders are led by Ellyanna Carman who is averaging 11 points per game and Kendal Tokar who is dishing out three assists per game.

Division 4

Fowler is off to a great start to the season and is ranked fifth in the state in Division 4. The Eagles beat Alma and Laingsburg in their first two games before a three-point loss to conference rival Pewamo-Westphalia. Fowler has since reeled off seven straight wins. The Eagles are strong on offense, scoring 60+ points seven times this season. Senior forward Cali Thelen is leading the way for the Eagles this season.

Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart is ranked sixth in the state in Division 4. The Irish are a perfect 10-0 and 7-0 in the league after the first ten games of the season. Sophomore standout Kari Terwilliger is turning in a big season for the Irish along with help from seniors Kallie Smith and Chelsea Lynch who are also off to strong starts for the talented Irish.

Laingsburg is turning in a solid season with a 7-3 overall record and 6-2 mark in conference play at midseason. The Wolfpack is led by Brooklyn Holm who is averaging over 14 points per game along with three



Mt. Pleasant senior Jordyn Egger eclipsed the 1,000-point mark for her this season.

assists per game.

Lansing Christian started hot out of the gate with a 37-9 win over Jackson Christian in the season opener and continued their fine form with three more wins. The Pilgrims are 6-3 overall and 5-3 in the conference at the midway point. Lydia Brogan leads the way for the Pilgrims as she is averaging 15 points per game while Sophia Carillo is pulling

down over seven rebounds per game.

Saginaw Michigan Lutheran is putting together a winning season with an 8-3 overall record and 3-1 league mark at the midway point. Defense has been a strong point as MLS has allowed 40 points or more in just five games this season. Kerin Gardner leads the offense at 10.5 points per game.




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New St. Patrick Coach Replaces A Legend

John Raffel Sports Scene

Michelle Smith takes over at Portland St. Patrick as girls basketball coach, replacing the legendary Al Schrauben.

The Shamrocks were the 2024 Central Michigan Athletic Conference (CMAC) league champions with a 17-1 league record and finishing the season with an overall record of 21-3. They also earned Team Academic All-State. The Shamrocks fell to Fowler in the District Final. The biggest news coming out of the 2023-24 season was the retirement of longtime girls' basketball coach Al Schrauben. After 40 years serving as the varsity girls basketball coach at St. Patrick High School, he retired with a record of 729 wins and 208 losses. He won six state championships and was state runner-up five times.

The Shamrocks graduated 5 key members of the 2023-24 team, including three 4-year varsity players in Laynie Meredith, Rylee Scheurer, and Addison Scheurer.

Laynie Meredith: 1st Team CMAC, 2nd team AP All-State, 1st Team BCAM (BCAM's Best), 3rd Team All State Detroit Free Press, All-County Girls Basketball Team, and Academic All-State. She is currently a member of the Davenport University basketball team. Rylee Scheurer: 2nd team

CMAC and Academic All-State and a current member of the Oakland University track team.

Addison Scheurer: Honorable Mention CMAC and Academic All-State and a current member of the Lansing Community College softball team. Hannah Weller: Academic All-State and BCAM Team First Award and Tori Sandborn: Academic All-State both were key contributors to the Shamrocks success the past two seasons.

Top players for this season:

Gracelyn Rockey- Grace is a sophomore and 3 year varsity starter as she started for our CMAC title teams as an 8th grader and freshman. She averaged 11.6 points, 6.1 rebounds, 2.4 assists and 2.4 steals per game as a freshman last season. Grace was named 1st team all league, All-County team, honorable mention Detroit Free Press and BCAM All-State last season. She has also been named a Lansing State Journal Top Area Player for this season and pre-season LSJ player of the year nominee.

"What makes Grace special is her strength, athleticism, leadership, and versatility. At 5-9, she can play and guard all positions on the floor," Smith said. "She has a great understanding of the game and is an tremendous leader on and off the court. I expect Grace

to continue to be one of the top players in Division 4, leading the Shamrocks in all statistical categories.

Mattie Honsowitz- Mattie is entering her junior year and along with Grace, she is the only other returning starter for the Shamrocks. Mattie is coming off an ACL tear that she suffered in the District Final game last season. As a sophomore, she averaged 7.9 points, 6.3 rebounds, and over 3 blocks per game. Mattie was named 2nd team all-league last season.

"What makes Mattie special is her strength, leadership, and athleticism. She is a strong post presence at 5-11 and a really difficult match up for teams," Smith said. "She has a great understanding of the game and has worked on her outside short this off season. I expect Mattie to be a top scorer and rebounder for the Shamrocks this season."

Bella Russman and Megan Myers- Bella and Megan are the only seniors on the team this year, they play center/forward for the Shamrocks this season.

"Both played a key role off the bench last season and have a great motor and are excellent rebounders," Smith said. "I expect them both to be a key contributor this year, helping us defend in the post and build on one of our teams'



Portland St. Patrick girls get ready for a game

strengths, which is rebounding.

Lily Sandborn- Lily is a junior point guard and saw some minutes on the varsity last season. She is extremely quick and a great defender," Smith said. "We will look to her to run the point guard position this season for the Shamrocks and turn to her to defend some of the best guards in the area.

Macie Smith- Macie is a sophomore entering her first year on the varsity. "She is a 5-10 guard that because of her height can be a tough matchup for others. She has a nice outside shot and we will look to her to help with the scoring this season," Smith said.

The Shamrocks graduated five seniors from last year's CMAC League Championship team

and under first year head coach Michelle Smith, they will look to their two seniors and youthful experience to remain competitive and amongst the top of the very talented CMAC.

"The team's strength will be our ability to defend and rebound," Smith said. "The team will need to work on finding consistency on the offensive end and limiting turnovers.

"The CMAC is once again one of the toughest small school leagues in the State. This season there is more parity amongst the middle of the league than there has been in a number of years. The league favorites are Pewamo-Westphalia and Fowler. I see our group competing for third behind these two groups."

Ionia Girls Basketball Team Eyes Strong Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Coach Laurie Hoppough is confident of a highly successful winning program for girls basketball at Ionia this season.

Ionia completes in the CAAC White.

Head Coach Laurie Hoppough has been an assistant coach in the program for four years and then took over as head coach in 2021. Niki Williams is the varsity assistant coach. Williams has been part of the basketball program at the high

level for seven years and prior to that part of our middle school/Red Cedar coaching staff for over 10 years.

Ionia last year was 10-14 overall and 4-10 in the conference for fifth place.

Emma White, a guard forward, was a key player who graduated from a year ago.

"We have four returning starters and our 5, 6, 7, 8 players are also returning," Hoppough said.

Coming back are guards Aubree White, Alexia Daugherty, Avery

Hoppough, Kennedy McDiarmid and Logan Thomas plus forward Tess Lemke.

The seniors will be the team captains with Aubree White (G), Alexia Daugherty (G) and Stevie Gross(F).

Key players this year include Aubree White and Alexias Daugherty (seniors) "They have been part of the varsity program for four years," Tessa Lemke (junior) who missed part of the season last year due to an injury.

Logan Thomas (sophomore) returning starter. We only graduated 3 seniors last year and had a young team. We are going to compete each game this year and hope to finish at the top in our league."



The 2024-25 Ionia girls varsity basketball team.

Pewamo-Westphalia Expecting Another Strong Girls Basketball Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Pewamo-Westphalia girls basketball coach Steve Eklund expects a strong team again this season.

Last season P-W finished 16-9 (13-5 CMAC) and won a District championship.

"We graduated two seniors from last year's team (Brynn Bauer and Kambrie Thelen)," Eklund said. "Brynn was a multi-year starter at point guard for us and Kambrie was a great example to our younger players for how a player can maximize their abilities through effort and determination."

For this season's P-W team Elly Bengel (jr.) is a returning 1st Team All-CMAC performer from a year ago who will be tasked with taking over the point guard position. Alonna Thelen (Jr.) is another returning starter from last season and one of the team captains this season. The other returning starter this

season is Logan Drake (sr.) who is in her fourth year on varsity and the other team captain.

"Logan, Alonna and Elly will look to lead our aggressive defensive style of play along with Brenna Thelen (Jr.) as players with the most experience on the team," Eklund said. "Adrianna Eklund (Fr.) and Peyton Eklund (So.) come in with lots of promise on the offensive side of the ball taking some pressure off Elly as perimeter threats. Renell Eklund (So.) is the understudy to Logan in the paint as a rim protector and shot blocker."

There are a lot of complementary pieces to this 11-girl roster.

"The ability to go that many players deep on many nights should keep us fresh in games and throughout the season along with maintaining player engagement during the long winter months. It's a group that really enjoys competing in practice and there should be season-long growth as a result,"

Eklund said. "Depth might be the biggest factor. We should be able to absorb the knicks and bruises that teams face during a long season. We have improved perimeter shooting. Several girls that can bring the ball up the floor and initiate the offense.

"We need to keep the ball out of the paint on defense."

Eklund expects the CMAC will be tough again.

"This is a great conference," Eklund said. "I don't love the 18-game conference schedule but we're fortunate that on most nights we're going to have to be prepared for a fight. Fowler, Bath, Laingsburg and Portland St. Patricks are all teams that can come out on top. Dansville, Lansing Christian and Perry both have some great individual players that are going to attempt to push their teams to the top of the division standings. We plan to be right there in the mix."



Pewamo Westphalia's Alonna Thelen.



Fulton Girls Basketball Team Confident Of Success

John Raffel Sports Scene

Fulton girls basketball coach Brandon Trefil is confident of having a strong Fulton basketball team this season.

Fulton was 13-11 last year and fourth in the Mid-State Activities Conference.

Four starters are back from last season.

Kalyn Duflo, a junior point guard "will handle the ball a majority of the time"

Trefil said. "She is a knock down shooter and competes defensively."

Jaci Canfield is a senior guard. "She does everything for us," Trefil said. "She is a slasher and can shoot it."

Kayla Canfield is a senior forward. "She is another player who does a lot for us," Trefil said. "She is undersized in the post but you couldn't tell with the effort she plays with."

Dayten Lambert is a junior guard.

"She is long, athletic can shoot and slash,"

Trefil said.

Brooklyn Kanous is a junior guard. "She is a defensive specialist and isn't afraid to do anything we ask of her," Trefil said. "I am excited for this season. We have a lot of returners that have played at the varsity level for three or more years. I hope we can compete for the conference title and make a run in the tournament. We will always compete with energy and effort. Those are our two keys each game."

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Vestaburg Boys Basketball Team Building On Success It Experienced Last Season

David Cook Sports Scene

The Vestaburg boys basketball team experienced a number of highlights last season, and with a strong core of players returning from that team, the Wolverines are picking up where they left off.

"Vestaburg turned in an 11-13 overall record last season. Among the highlights of the season was a big win against rival Montabella. Vestaburg also had a highlight during the post-season when it won its first-round game in the state tournament.

Vestaburg is off to a solid start this year as it looks to improve on last year's record. The Wolverines opened the season winning six of their first eight games. Vestaburg reeled off an impressive four-game winning streak during the month of December that saw the team win all four games by 20-plus points.

Strong defense was a key to the streak as Vestaburg held all four opponents to less than 40 points in the run including two wins where they allowed less than 30 points.

Strong defense was anticipated to be a strong point of the team this season.

"I think we could be a great defensive team this year," said Vestaburg coach Ty Warczynski. "I also think we can really score the ball on the offensive end."

Vestaburg has a number of players leading the way this season led by senior Landon Arntz.

"Landon has played a huge role for us the last three years," Warczynski said. "He always guards the other players best big. He also led us in rebounding last year."

Junior Jansen Scholer is another key player for the Wolverines. A talented guard, Scholer is a key player on both ends of the court.



The Vestaburg basketball team is building off of last year's successful season.

"Jansen is one of our top defenders," Warczynski said. "He also does a great job with the ball on offense. He was one of our top assist guys last year."

Sophomore Brehm Warczynski is another key returner. Warczynski is building off a solid first season on the varsity.

"Brehm had a huge freshman

year for us," coach Warczynski said. "We want him to take a jump on the defensive end this year. He is a great playmaker and lead us in scoring."

Vestaburg is also making its mark in the Mid-State Activities Conference (MSAC). The Wolverines won six out of their first seven MSAC games to take sole possession of second place

in the league behind Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart.

Continuing to improve from game to game is a major goal of the squad.

"I want us to show up every day and prepare for the best," Warczynski said. "If we defend and rebound, we could be a special group this year."

and bring 6-5 off the bench.) We need to keep improving on the defensive end and getting the ball into the post.

"Our conference is very strong. I would say Godwin Heights is the favorite, Fruitport is going to be solid and you can never count out Calvin Christian and Northpoint Christian. We have a chance to finish fairly high in the conference."



We are hoping to have more success than last season and keep improving as the season progresses. I would say the strength of our team is that we are decent at everything, we don't have any glaring weaknesses. The team is young so some of the players have to get used to the pace and intensity of varsity basketball."

As for the league race, "the SVL is always strong which makes it challenging on a nightly basis. The top teams in the league are Grand Blanc, Saginaw United, Davison, Saginaw Heritage and Mt Pleasant."



year. He is off to a good start this year averaging 18 pts/game and 11 rebounds/game. Wynn Diegel is the only sophomore on the team but is a very good player who will help our varsity team. He is averaging 15 pts/game in our first six games. Owen Bond, Carter Greiman and JD Curtis round out our starting lineup.

"Our team is on the younger side but I like the makeup of the team.

for graduates,

"Ian Balch had a very good season last year averaging 20 points per game and seven rebounds/game. Jacob Jensen was one of the best defenders to come through Dow High over the past 10 years."

As for this year's team "Ben Vansumeren is our top returning player, he averaged 13 points per game and 13 rebounds per game last

Belding Has New Boys Basketball Coach

John Raffel Sports Scene

Belding has a new boys basketball coach with David Ingle who likes the potential of his team.

Key players are expected to be:

Gavin Andres, Sr, Guard...Area Player of the Year last year, All-State

last year. Tore his ACL, MCL and Meniscus in football so he is done for the season.

Joe Coles, Jr. Forward...3rd year on varsity, "he is a captain for us, holds the school record for blocked shots already."

Jeryn Frisbee, Jr, Guard..."Started every game last year for us, holds the

school record for 3s in a season."

Colton Hummel, Jr, Forward...6-5 post player "that we will need to rebound and give us some scoring.

"We should be very competitive although we are still young," Ingles said. "The loss of Gavin Andres hits us hard but we will fight through. Our size is a big strength (6-6, 6-5

Dow Boys Hopeful Of Productive Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Midland High Dow basketball coach Mike Skinner likes the prospects for his Midland Dow boys basketball team this season.

"We ended last season 6-17 against a very difficult schedule. We competed in nearly all of our games but couldn't get over the hump in most of them," Skinner said, adding

for graduates,

"Ian Balch had a very good season last year averaging 20 points per game and seven rebounds/game. Jacob Jensen was one of the best defenders to come through Dow High over the past 10 years."

As for this year's team "Ben Vansumeren is our top returning player, he averaged 13 points per game and 13 rebounds per game last

year. He is off to a good start this year averaging 18 pts/game and 11 rebounds/game. Wynn Diegel is the only sophomore on the team but is a very good player who will help our varsity team. He is averaging 15 pts/game in our first six games. Owen Bond, Carter Greiman and JD Curtis round out our starting lineup.

"Our team is on the younger side but I like the makeup of the team.

Hemlock Basketball Team Working Hard To Repeat As Conference Champions

David Cook Sports Scene

While the Hemlock girls basketball team graduated some key players from last year's league championship team, the Huskies have brought back the talent to make another run at a league title this winter.

So far the Huskies are doing just that. Hemlock has started the season with a 7-2 overall record and are 4-0 in the Tri-Valley Conference Blue Division.

"I think we can be a very good team by the end of the season," said Hemlock coach Scott Neumeyer. "I think we'll be a very good defensive team. It's probably the most team speed I've ever had. The big question will be whether or not we can score enough points against elite competition, particularly inside. We're a work in progress on the offensive end, but I think we have the capability of being a decent scoring team by the end of

the season."

Hemlock turned in an 18-6 record last season and were undefeated conference champions. The Huskies also reached the district final where they fell to Sanford-Meridian. Hemlock lost some key players from that team including talented post players Lauren Borsenik and Hannah Borsenik and Jaedyn Mallek along with a key guard in Kylee Miller. All four were four-year varsity players.

This year's squad is led by junior guard Victoria Hauffe. A returning all-conference player, Hauffe is the team's top returning scorer from last year.

"We expect Victoria to step up and be even more of a scorer for us this year," said Neumeyer.

The Huskies also have a quartet of seniors who also bring good skills on both ends of the court.

"Senior point guard Klaira Salo

is also a key contributor for us," Neumeyer said. "She broke her arm in the first game of her freshman season, so she's really only beginning her second season of varsity basketball. We'll lean heavily on her speed, ballhandling, and leadership. We also return three other seniors. Guard Carly Siler who is a very good perimeter shooter and ballhandler, Izzy Krueger who can play inside and outside on offense and defense and is a tremendous defender, and Izzy Curry who is a tremendous athlete and defender. She is improving offensively and is a key component for us this year."

Team quickness is a key for the Huskies this season as they graduated some size from last year.

"Without a doubt, our team's strength is our speed and how we utilize it on the defensive end of the floor," Neumeyer said.

"Unfortunately, we're not very big, so rebounding can be an issue for



The Hemlock basketball team is working hard to repeat as conference champions despite some key graduation losses.

us. Being consistent and focused on the offensive end of the floor is another area of concern early in the season. We're very athletic, but we have to continue to work on the mental part of the game, particularly when we play elite competition and athletes."

Off to an unbeaten record in conference, the Huskies know they have plenty of work still left to do.

"I would think that we're probably the favorites to win our conference, but being a favorite doesn't mean anything," Neumeyer said. "As defending conference champions, we know we have a target on our back and get every opponent's best effort, so we have to be focused and prepared every night."

Sanford-Meridian Looking To Claim Jack Pine Hoops Title Despite Graduation Losses

David Cook Sports Scene

Winners of the last three Jack Pine Conference girls basketball championships, the Sanford-Meridian Mustangs have been the gold standard in the conference. With a large group of seniors having graduated last season, the Mustangs seemed primed for a letdown this season, but so far, the team is not missing a beat.

Sanford-Meridian has captured three straight Jack Pine Conference title. Last year the Mustangs turned in a 23-2 overall record and captured a district championship before falling to Lake City in the regional final.

Seven seniors graduated from last year's squad including four starters. Among the graduated

were standout players like Josie Barriger, McKenna Pratt and Grace Chinavare who earned a host of honors last season and during their careers.

While the Mustangs graduated a ton of talent, the team is turning in an impressive reloading job so far this season. Sanford-Meridian opened the season reeling off seven straight conference wins to take sole possession of first place in the conference at the midpoint of the season. The Mustangs also have an 8-2 overall record.

While the team suffered heavy graduation losses, the expectations for the new players are still the same.

"Our expectations towards the season is to be undefeated conference champions," said

Sanford-Meridian coach Tanner Smith. "We want to win a district title and make a run in the postseason."

One key player who returned from last season is senior Halen McLaughlin. A three-time, all-conference player, McLaughlin also earned all-state honors last season. For her career McLaughlin has also scored over 1,500 points.

Seniors Becca Nohel and Sydney Crowder also provide the team with some excellent experience and skill on the court.

Blending in with the core of veterans are some talented young players.

Sophomore Kam Fillmore is a second-year varsity player. A talented all-around player, Fillmore is looking to be an all-conference



Sanford-Meridian opened the season by winning eight of its first ten games.

player this season.

Fellow sophomore Mariah Gaskell is another promising young player who is on course to be an all-conference player during the next few seasons.

The Mustangs are very excited about freshman Lily Lafave who Smith says "has the potential to be one of the best Mustangs ever."

This year's squad is a talented and skilled team that plays well together on both ends of the floor.

"Our team strength is ball movement and being cohesive as a unit," said Smith. "We are also a good rebounding team and three-point shooting team. We also need to work on our conditioning, timing and our offense and also being mentally tough."

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Greenville Boys Eye Another Huge Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Joel Visser is back for another season as Greenville boys basketball coach. He's back from a team which last year was 15-10 overall and 7-7 in the OK White.

"We won the first-round game in the tournament vs. Cedar Springs before losing to Muskegon in the district. Best win was Byron Center at home," Visser said. "Caleb Clements and Trevor Zamarron were our two seniors. Both are now playing at Montcalm Community College."

Returning starters are Braylon Haist, senior point guard and team captain and all-conference, Michael Lindquist, junior

guard, first team all OK White, who led the team in scoring last season; Braden Latimer, junior forward; Jaxon Ingles, senior, who missed all last season with an injury is back and senior forward and team captain Zeke Robinet, who led the team in rebounding last year.

Contributors Sullivan Witt, senior captain; Noah Long, senior forward; Kyle Graber, junior guard and Lucas Lisagor, junior guard.

"We play a nine-man rotation and all contribute valuable minutes for us," Visser said, adding strengths for his team will be "depth and athleticism. We have some new face who are just getting their first regular varsity minutes and it is vital they give us



The Greenville Boys Basketball Team.

quality time off the bench and fill shoes to play critical roles.

"The new RCA is very evenly matched with good teams top to bottom. There aren't any games where you can just show up and win. Everything for us will be earned every

day through practice and by competing as a team on Game nights. Coopersville is the favorite given their success last season and what they return this year."

Both JV and varsity teams are currently 5-0 this season. Visser added.

Belding Girls Basketball Team Challenging For Conference Honors

David Cook Sports Scene

The Belding girls basketball team has been turning in some solid seasons the past few years and this year is no exception as the Black Knights are off to a strong start.

With the season reaching the midpoint, Belding is 7-2 overall and 4-1 in the Ottawa Kent Silver Conference, a game behind first-place Grandville Calvin Christian.

Belding is coming off a season where it turned in an 18-6 overall record and reached the district title game for the third consecutive season. The Black Knights were led last year by Hop Kanouse who is now playing at Aquinas College. Kanouse was a four-year starter for Belding and a three-time, all-conference player.

This year, the Black Knights

are led by senior guard Alison Rockburn. A four-year starter, Rockburn is a returning all-conference player who also earned honorable-mention, all-state honors.

"Alison can play at both ends of the court," said Belding coach Shad Breimayer. "She is a leader of the team offensively and defensively."

Senior forward Emma Rehkopf is also a talented veteran who makes an impact on both ends of the floor.

"Emma is a three-year, varsity player," Breimayer said. "She is contributing to our offense more this year and helps on the defensive end."

Belding is especially deep and talented at the guard positions. Junior guard Hayley Conrad is a two-year varsity player who earned all-conference honors last

season. Conrad is a lock-down defender who is asked to guard the opponent's best player on most nights.

Junior point guard Mylie VandenToorn is a three-year varsity player. VandenToorn runs the offense for the Black Knights and also helps out with some of the scoring.

Taylor Manley is a junior guard and a second-year varsity player.

"Taylor is our Dennis Rodman," Breimayer said. "She does all the dirty work for us. She can score and defend. She comes off the bench and brings energy."

Junior forward Amora Hall is a first-year varsity player. Hall helps defend the other teams post players and rebounds. She possesses an effective mid-range jumper and can mix it up under the basket and rebound.



The Belding girls basketball team is challenging for the top spot in the Ottawa-Kent Silver Conference.

Sophomore guard Kailey Meyers is another first-year player. Meyers brings energy to the floor and plays with grit especially on the defensive end of the floor.

Belding also has a pair of talented freshmen. Emma Ingles is a point guard while Olivia Ingles is a shooting guard. Emma Ingles gives the team strong depth at

points guard and is an excellent shooter. Ingles adds depth at shooting guard where she is able to score at all three levels.

"We believed we can compete for the conference title," Breimayer said. "We are a guard heavy team with good speed and shooting. We continue to work on defense as we need to be good defensively."

Alma Basketball Team Building This Season After Heavy Graduation, Injury Losses

David Cook Sports Scene

Rebuilding is the name of the game for the Alma boys basketball team this season as heavy graduation losses from last year and a key injury that hit the program hard.

Alma graduated a number of key players off of last year's squad that turned in a 13-10 overall record and 8-6 league mark. Among the key players that graduated were Cade Sutherland and Jacoby Dunlap. Sutherland was an all-state player for the Panthers while Dunlap earned all-conference honors last season.

Leading the way for Alma this season is senior forward Owen Seeley. A talented player with plenty of experience, Seeley earned honorable-mention, all-conference honors last season.

Alma is also relying on senior forward Sam Gadde, senior guard Ashton Wilson and junior guard Koby Shunk this season.

Gadde is another veteran player who brings plenty of experience to the floor. Shunk is a talented and athletic guard who provides a spark on the offensive end of the court while Wilson is a versatile veteran that offers outside shooting but has taken over the point guard duties this season.

Alma suffered a major loss before the season even began when junior point guard Jack Lemerand suffered a major knee injury during the soccer season that is forcing him to miss the entire season.

"We are extremely young and undersized compared to our league," said Alma coach Chris Brown. "We have a number of players playing out of position in order to fill injury voids that took place in the offseason. Our goal this season is to be the hardest working team on our schedule. We had a great commitment throughout the offseason and we are relying on that and our attitudes to be the driving force of our growth throughout the course of the season."



The Alma basketball team continues to improve despite injuries and heavy graduation losses.

Alma started the season strong winning three of its first five games. With a young team, playing in a loaded Tri-Valley Conference with teams like state-ranked Freeland, Frankenth, Bay City John Glenn and Bridgeport is no easy task.

"Our conference is always loaded and competitive," Brown said. "This league has

a veteran group of coaches who do a strong job preparing their teams for the rigor of the TVC-Red."

"I like our chemistry, attitude and willingness to learn," Brown said. "We have solid athletes from one through twelve and we have solid length at the guard position. Being consistent on a day-to-day basis is important for us."

Pewamo-Westphalia Boys Basketball Team Turning In Big Season

David Cook Sports Scene

From year to year, the Pewamo-Westphalia boys basketball team can be counted on to pile up the wins and make a run at titles come state tournament time.

This year is no exception as the Pirates are again collecting a bushel of wins and looking for titles.

Heading into the second half of the season, Pewamo-Westphalia is undefeated in the Central Michigan Athletic Conference (CMAC) with an 11-0 record. The Pirates are 11-2 overall with the two non-conference losses coming again big-school powerhouses Grand Rapids South Christian (47-34) and Flint Carman-Ainsworth (55-51). Those non-league losses are sure to pay dividends once the state tournament begins for a Pirate team that is built for a deep post-season run.

Before the state tournament begins, the Pirates have some unfinished business like

winning the rugged CMAC that includes a Division 4 state-ranked power in Fowler.

"I would argue it (the CMAC) is one of the strongest leagues in our area and the best small-school conference in the state," said Pewamo-Westphalia coach Dominic Schneider. "We are competing for a league title along with Fowler."

Pewamo-Westphalia edged Fowler 51-49 at Fowler in the first meeting between the two league heavyweights and the two teams have a rematch scheduled for Feb. 4.

This year's Pewamo-Westphalia squad is a veteran group with plenty of talent up and down the roster.

The Pirates have a pair of talented forwards up front in seniors Trevor Smith and Lane Trierweiler. Coach Schneider describes Smith as a "great defender and knock-down, three-point shooter." Trierweiler is a team captain who Schneider calls "a great teammate that does it all".



The Pewamo-Westphalia boys basketball team is perfect in league play this season and has an 11-2 overall record.

The Pirates also have a strong group of senior guards who bring plenty to the court. Senior guard and captain Brady Heckman is another outstanding defender who has a versatile offensive game. Cody Fox can score points in bunches. Dominic Weber is another do-it-all type of player who also excels at hitting the three-point shot. Senior captain Reece Thelen is another versatile player who Schneider says the team relies on him "to do a lot of the tougher things defensively and offensively."

"Our team strength is our defense," Schneider said. "We want to compete for the CMAC championship and hope to be playing our best ball come playoffs. We have to continue to improve our talking on both defense and offense."

The Pirates still have some big-time, non-conference matchups left on the schedule as Division 1 state powerhouse comes to Pewamo-Westphalia on Feb. 7 and the Pirates travel to another Division 1 power when they visit Hudsonville on Feb. 18.

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SPORT SCENE'S D1 & D2 WRESTLING ROUND UP

Lowell Back Atop Poll In Division 2 As Area Loaded With Strong D1-D2 Teams

David Cook & Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Division 1

Davison is ranked third in the state in Division 1. The Cardinals have turned in some big efforts this season highlighted by winning the Genesee County Tournament and a fourth-place finish at the power-packed Detroit Catholic Central Invitational. The Cardinals also placed fourth at the Grappler Gold in the early season and gave top-ranked Detroit Catholic Central a struggle before falling 40-25. Davison also reached the finals of Lowell's Gary Rivers Memorial where it fell to Division 2 kingpin Lowell 42-16. Davison is led this season by senior Tanner McDunnah who is 23-7 at 157

pounds, Kyle Jelinek who is 17-5 (175) and Brandon Glisson who is 21-7 (285).

Rockford is ranked eighth in the state in Division 1. The Rams placed third at the Gary Rivers Memorial where they defeated Plainwell 55-24 in the third/fourth-place match. The Rams also defeated Greenville 35-33 in an early-season thriller. Rockford is led by sophomore Layne Martin (120) who is 27-2, junior Logan Hammingh (190) who is 29-2, senior Braylenn Aulbach (157) who has a 27-2 record and junior Liam Fitzpatrick (144) who is 25-5.

Division 2

Lowell is again atop the poll in Division 2 and has a loaded squad that is taking on the best wrestling programs in the Midwest. The Red Arrows defeated Davisoknk 42-16 in the

finals of the Gary Rivers Memorial. Lowell also went 9-1 at the Roughneck Duals in Ohio where its lone loss was a 36-25 decision against Brecksville (Ohio), ranked 24th in the nation. Lowell is ranked 36th nationally and is led by senior Jackson Blum (132) who is looking to make history this year as he pursues a fourth individual state championship. Senior Owen Segorski (160) is looking for a third individual state championship this year while junior Jarrett Smith (113) is a returning state champion. Casey Engle (190) is also looking for a big year after placing at state last season.

Mason is ranked third in the state and kicked off the season by winning the J.A.W.S. tournament in Jackson. Mason also has wins against Portland (41-27), St. Joseph (37-34) and Williamston (57-24). The Bulldogs are led by Dylan Granger who ran his record to 17-0 for the season after winning the 150-pound title at the New Lothrop tournament. Matt Ausel (144) also won a title at New Lothrop where he ran his record to 15-2 for the season. Gavin Vankirk (175) suffered his first loss in 15 matches at New Lothrop where he placed third.

Cedar Springs is ranked seventh in the state in Division 2. The Red Hawks won the Kent County Classic where they edged Rockford. The Red Hawks are led by Tyler Parmeter who ran his record to 25-1 when he won the title at 157 pounds at the Sparta Invitational. Luke Egan improved to 23-2 for the season when he won the title at 138 pounds at Sparta.

Bay City John Glenn is ranked ninth in the state in Division 2. The Bobcats placed sixth at the Gary Rivers Memorial in Lowell where they picked up a win against Lakewood-Lake Odessa (43-24). John Glenn also has wins this season against Division 1 Romeo (37-

31), conference rival Freeland (38-34), Gaylord (47-23) and Lapeer (51-24). John Glenn has a deep and talented roster led by Ruben Rivera (113) who is 27-4, Edward Smith (113) who is 34-2, Izaak Kukulski (138) who is 29-6, Johnathan Ford (157) who is 29-6 and Conner Greer (138) who is 15-1.

Freeland is ranked 10th in the state in Division. The Falcons have turned in some big efforts this season including winning the Saginaw County Tournament and taking second at New Lothrop. The Falcons have defeated Grand Ledge (36-31) and Jackson Northwest (57-14) with a loss against Division 1 state-ranked Brighton (48-16). Freeland has a power-packed lineup anchored by with wrestlers like Fabian Facundo who is having a big season and ran his record to 24-1 after winning the 175-pound title at Reed City. Easton Rosebush upped his record to 26-5 as he took first at 106 pounds. The Falcons have several more wrestlers turning in big seasons including Michael Wilson (126) who is 24-8, Bringham Smith (215) who is 19-3, Preston Wetherell (113) who is 19-9 and Maddox Wilson (120) who is 21-9.

DeWitt is home to a pair of brothers who are putting together some big seasons. Trenden and Tyler Bashore have combined for a 80-1 record this season. Trenden is 28-1 at 138 pounds with tournament championships at the Jim Dewland and CJ Crowe Classic. Trenden's lone loss was a decision to Clarkston's Preston Lefevre at the Herm Wilkinson Classic. A senior, Trenden is a three-time state placer. Tyler is 38-0 at 157 pounds. Tyler won titles at the Dewland, CJ Crowe and Hem Wilkinson tournaments. Tyler is a sophomore who placed fourth at the state tournament last season.

Lowell and Freeland are both looking to return to the Division 2 state team finals this season.



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SPORT SCENE'S D3 & D4 WRESTLING ROUND UP

St. Louis Among Top Of Division 4 State Poll With Several More Area Teams Ranked

David Cook & Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Division 3

Portland is turning in a big season and is ranked fourth in the state in Division 4. The Raiders have some solid dual-meet wins including a 44-23 win against Williamston and a 54-15 win against Eaton Rapids. The Raiders also placed second behind Fowlerville at the Shepherd Invitational and have turned in strong efforts against Division 1 heavyweights Grandville and Hudsonville and D2 power Mason. The Raiders are led this season by Bradley Meyers (175 pounds) who ran his record to 33-3 after winning at title at the Shepherd invite and Landon Guilford (165) who improved to 31-3 after also taking a title at Shepherd. Landon Lanz (113) upped his record to 30-3 after taking second at Shepherd while Brandon Simon (106) took third and improved to 31-4. Zach Stanton (138) has a 32-13 mark while Griffin

Opperman (144) is 29-6.

Lakewood-Lake Odessa is ranked eighth in the state in D3 and has wins against Holt (61-14), Williamston (54-23) and Anchor Bay (58-14) to its credit. Lake Odessa also placed seventh at the Gary Rivers Memorial tournament in Lowell. The Vikings are led by seniors Kade Boucher (126) who has a 36-1 mark and Joel Simon (215) who is 34-3 and sophomore Vincent Stamm (126) who has a 21-1 record. Sophomore Bryson Boucher (150) is 31-6, senior Lydon Rogers (150) is 27-89 and freshman Dakota Harmer (106) is 29-8.

Montrose is ranked 10th in the state in Division 3. The Rams placed fifth at the Genesee County tournament and have posted wins against Birch Run (36-31) and Frankenthum (45-29). Montrose is paced by Noah Szwed who has a 39-3 record and won the 144-pound title at the Shepherd Invitational. Gauge Vincke has a 34-7 record and placed third at 150 pounds at the New Lothrop

tournament. The Rams are also getting big seasons from Brysen Briggs (106) who is 33-8, Freddy Priest (106) who is 30-13, Richard Cummings (157) who is 32-8 and Joey Glinski (165) who is 29-12.

Williamston is ranked ninth in the state in Division 3. The Hornets have a 38-29 win against Lakewood-Lake Odessa to their credit. Williamston is led by sophomore Justice Harding (113) who has a 24-1 record and took a first-place at the Jim Dewland tournament. Senior Matt Dion (150) is turning a solid season with a 26-5 record, junior Brayden Young (157) is 24-8, senior Kingsten Stiffler (144) is 29-8, freshman CJ Miller (126) is 26-8 and junior Anthony Heinritz (285) is 25-10.

Division 4

St. Louis reached the Division 4 team wrestling finals last season and the Sharks are primed for another deep tournament run. St. Louis is ranked second in the state in Division 4 this season behind perennial powerhouse Hudson. St. Louis has turned in some big efforts so far this season highlighted by a first-place finish at the New Lothrop tournament. The Sharks were led at the New Lothrop tourney by Alex Rodriguez (120 pounds) and Owen Fogel (113) who both took home titles. Colin Kuhn (132) took a second while Rudy Clapp (106), Maddox Cline (157) and Ray Frye (215) all placed third. St. Louis also had some big efforts at the Hudson Super 16. Fogel took a second

at Hudson while Rodriguez and Drew Challenger placed fourth and Kuhn took a fifth. The Sharks also posted some impressive dual-meet wins. St. Louis has wins over Freeland (45-30), Hart (46-24), Fowlerville (35-34) and Frankenthum (68-12). The Sharks were also busy the final Saturday of January. At the Shepherd invite Genaro Soto ran his record to 30-5 for the season as he won the title at 126 pounds. Karson Tweh upped his record to 17-8 as he took third at 165. At the Leslie Blackhawk invite Rodriguez ran his record to 35-3 as he won the title at 126 pounds. Challenger upped his record to 33-6 as he won the 165-pound title. Fogel improved to 32-2 for the year as he took third at 120 pounds.

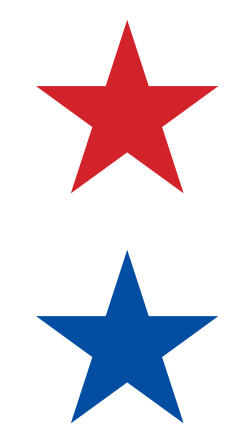
Lakeview is turning in a big season and is ranked seventh in the state in Division 4. The Lakeview has turned in some impressive wins including a 38-33 win against Birch Run, a 60-15 win against Mt. Pleasant, a 57-24 win against Grand Rapids Catholic Central, a 43-33 win against Central-Montcalm and a 56-24 win against Chippewa Hills. Leading the way for Lakeview is senior Cameron Perez (132) who improved to 31-2 for the season after a second-place finish at the Reed City tournament. Senior Landen Johnson is turning in a big season and improved to 32-1 for the season after a second-place finish at Reed City. Also turning in big seasons for Lakeview are Braxton Hill (190) who is 20-3, Jack Zaborac (215) who is 23-7, Lucas Vail (175) who is 24-4 and Zach Schenden (150) who is 24-11.



St. Louis is ranked second in the state in Division 4 and is rounding into form as the postseason draws near.



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Michigan Lutheran Seminary Picking Up After Last Year's Finals Trip

David Cook Sports Scene

Last wrestling season was a historic one for the Michigan Lutheran Seminary wrestling team and this year the squad is picking up where it left off.

Michigan Lutheran Seminary turned in a 20-11 record in dual meets last season. The Cardinals also added a district and more importantly a regional championship. That regional title sent Michigan Lutheran Seminary to the MHSAA team state finals for the first time in school history under the current team format. The Cardinals also had Ethan Wakefield finish in fourth place at 190 pounds at the individual state finals.

While a pair of key wrestlers in Gavin Frederick and Andrew Archibald graduated from last year's squad, a large group of talented wrestlers are back from last season.

The Cardinals return regional qualifiers in sophomore Ridley

Wakefield (120 pounds), sophomore Ricky Ochoa (132), senior Brennan Burke (144), sophomore Noah Adams (165), senior Brock Ochoa (175), senior Ethan Wakefield (190) and junior Joey Cain (285).

Those wrestlers have helped enable the Cardinals to put together a fast start to the season with wins in 14 of their first 15 duals and a third-place finish at the Saginaw County Invitational.

"With most of the team back from experiencing a trip to the team state finals the expectations for this season are high," said Michigan Lutheran Seminary coach Josh Wakefield. "The senior leadership is key in trying to continue to build on last year's season and starting out the season 14-1 is very encouraging. It shows that the guys are working hard towards the goals they have set. They are a very self-motivated group."

Along with experience, the Cardinals have depth and can fill out all the weight classes.

"Experience and having a full line up covering all the weight classes are team strengths," Wakefield said. "We also have some balance and depth which doesn't always happen from year to year."

Staying locked in is key for the team in reaching its goals this season."

"We want to stay consistent and maintain focus throughout the year while navigating a tough schedule," Wakefield said.

The team is also keeping its focus during the rugged conference season.

"With St. Louis, Bullock Creek, Standish and Millington leaving the conference it definitely opens the door for any team to make a run for the conference title," Wakefield said. "There are a lot of great teams and individual wrestlers in the conference so you hope the team is prepared enough when we start the conference schedule. It's always a team goal to win the conference and be wrestling well when the individual TVC meet rolls around at the end



Ethan Wakefield



Noah Adams



Brock Ochoa

of the season. It prepares everyone for post season matches."

The Cardinals have opened the league season in a winning way. The team also placed third at the Wayne Brady Invitational. Among the top individuals at the Wayne



Joseph Cain

Brady invite were Ethan Wakefield (190 pounds), Joey Cain (285 pounds) and Noah Adams (165) who placed second, Brock Ochoa (175) who placed third and Ridley Wakefield (120) and Richard Ochoa who placed fourth.

Young Sanford-Meridian Wrestling Team Making Progress After Strong Effort Last Year

David Cook Sports Scene

Last season was a strong one for the Sanford-Meridian wrestling team. Along with turning in a 14-9 overall record, the Mustangs won a team district championship and qualified a pair of wrestlers for the individual state finals.

A core of four seniors led the way for last year's squad and those wrestlers are missed this year. Dawson Kolka hit the 100-win mark while Elliot Noyes finished his career with over 150 wins and Reece Teer finished with over 100 wins.

This season, the Mustangs are again on pace for a winning season. The team has been competitive in the Jack Pine Conference and has turned in some strong efforts at tournaments including a 4-1 mark at the Sault Bridge Brawl.

This year's squad has a strong group of wrestlers led by seniors Ethen Methner (165 pounds) and John Durfee (215). Methner has a 15-8 mark at the midpoint of the season while Durfee is off to a 27-6 overall record.

Junior Logan Brawt is another talented veteran.

Sanford-Meridian also has a large group of talented sophomores making an impact. Sophomores Alex Sampson, Brodie Pierce, Karson Yancer, Austin Bourassa and Cooper Walser are all returning starters. Sampson is off to a 21-7 record at 106 pounds while Pierce is 19-12 at 120 pounds giving the team scoring punch in the lower weights. In the middle weights, Yancer is 26-6 at 144 pounds. In the upper weights, Bourassa is 24-4 at 190 pounds while Walser is 14-13 at 285 pounds.

Another sophomore making his mark this season is Brady Wallace who is 14-6 at 215 pounds.

Young wrestlers also contributing are Scottie Garrison, Jaxon Dorman, Steven Davis, Brayden Killinger, Bradyn Miller, Aiden Methner, Witten Alexander, Miles Pontius and Blake Clark who give the team added depth. Returning veterans Nick Lanphier and Cylus Hopkins also add to the depth.

"We are quite young," said Sanford-Meridian coach Jeremy Sampson. "We have three total seniors and one junior in a roster of 23. With that, I expect us to grow and improve as the season goes on. We have a very solid core and great leadership on the team and I believe we will finish the season well. Our team is a very close-knit group. They are unselfish and wrestle with a team-first mentality."



Frankenmuth Wrestling Team Building On The Program-Best Success Of Last Season

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Last season was one of the finest in Frankenmuth wrestling history and the Eagles are working hard to build on that success this season.

"Last season was a historic one for us," said Frankenmuth coach Skylar Ley. "We were runner-up at the Saginaw County Tournament, which was our highest finish ever. We were also team district champions and reached the regional finals, coming one dual away from qualifying for the state championships. We also won the Heritage team duals and Mio tournament during the season. We also had several standout individual performances, including state qualifiers and county champions. Another highlight was the team earning Academic All-State recognition, which speaks volumes about the character and dedication of our athletes both on and off the mat. We also showcased improvement across all weight classes, demonstrating the depth

and development of the program. Kaleb Reece finished the season 49-2 with a runner-up finish at the individual state tournament which is the highest in program history."

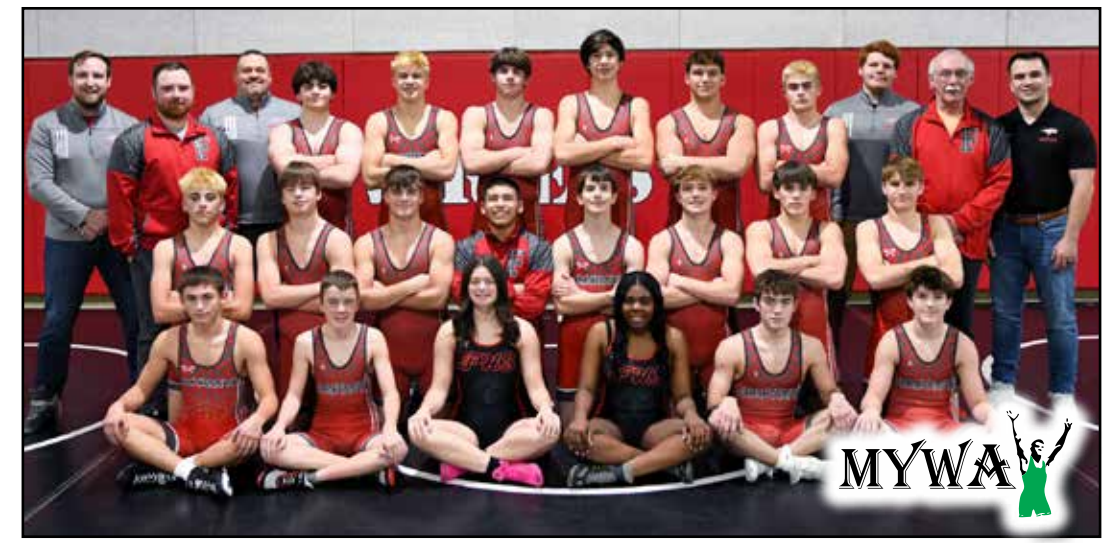
While the Eagles graduated some solid wrestlers like Ashton Edie, Jaden Hansen and Kaden Miller, they return a wealth of talented wrestlers.

Leading the list of returners is Reece, who is off to a 23-2 through the midpoint of the season.

"Kaleb is determined to build on last year's success and bring home a state championship," Ley said.

Junior Colton Whittaker, who went 32-11 last season and was a Saginaw County Champion, is off to another big season with a 23-2 record.

Sophomore EJ Bernthal is building off a big freshman season. A regional qualifier last season who went 34-15 and just missed qualifying for state, Bernthal is off to a 16-7 record this year while wrestling at 138 and 144 pounds.



The Frankenmuth wrestling team is building on last year's successful season.

Owen Tucker is another talented sophomore building off a big freshman season. Tucker, who represented Team Michigan in the Freestyle Nationals last summer, is coming off a 31-14 freshman season. Tucker has put together a 20-4 record this season at 175 pounds.

Junior Bradyn Curtis (138 pounds) joined Reece at individual state finals last season. This season Curtis is state-ranked and has fashioned an 18-2 record this season and is "determined to earn all-state honors" said Ley.

Junior Griffin Clontz (157 pounds) is also a returning

regional qualifier who just missed advancing to state. Clontz has a 17-2 record so far this season and is also on a mission to earn all-state honors as he is ranked in the state.

"In addition to our standouts we've got a deep group of underclassmen who are stepping up and making an impact in key weight classes," said Ley.

Frankenmuth wrestlers showed off their skills again earlier this month at the Saginaw County Championships where a total of four Eagles won individual titles. Reece (113 pounds), Hatch (126), Clontz (157) and Tucker (175) were all crowned champions. Curtis placed second at 138

pounds while Bernthal took third at 144 pounds. Sophomore Braydon Hopp (215) and freshman Camden Anderson (175) both placed sixth.

"This group is hungry, coachable and works hard," Ley said. "Our strengths lie in our depth and conditioning. We have a full lineup of talented individuals this year and our athletes are well-prepared to wrestle hard for six minutes. Team chemistry is also a big asset. These wrestlers are motivated, supportive and driven to improve every day. We're looking to build on last year's success and take another step forward as a program."

Portland Wrestlers Expect Winning Season

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Andy Pulling expects another strong wrestling season at Portland.

"The 23-24 season was a solid one in our program's history as we established our 4th consecutive academic all-state award, placing 4th in Division 3 and earned our 4th consecutive league championship," Pulling said. "Our girls team had their inaugural year with incredible GPA and multiple qualifying to the

MHSAA individual finals."

Key graduates from last year were Mark Meyers, "great leader, worker and captain," Pulling said.

Madi Newberry is a "fantastic first year wrestler, now wrestling in college," Pulling said.

Top wrestlers this season:

- Barrett Spitzley - Senior 215 - Captain
- Brad Meyers - Junior - 175 - All State
- Landon Lanz - Sophomore - 120

Branlun Simon - Sophomore 113

"We expect our teams to be Academic All State, CAAC White Champions and team state qualifiers with five individual state qualifiers."

"The key is focusing on wrestling as a tool for life, academics and scoring points," Pulling said. "The CAAC White is strong and getting stronger. I think the league favorites are Lakewood, us and Eaton Rapids. I see us competing for a league championship."



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Ionia Wrestlers Expect To Be Strong

John Raffel Sports Scene

Ionia coach Luke Smalley coaches an Ionia team which had a dual record of 11-14 last season. Ionia Varsity Wrestling team was also Academic All-State as a team. Ionia also had two of its guys qualify for regionals.

Ionia had one state qualifier Sarah Schafer Girls Division at 170 pounds.

Ionia lost four seniors last season: Logan Rozewski 120, Levi Schied 132, Carter Castillo 138 and Hunter Barker 150. Carter

and Hunter were both Regional qualifiers and Hunter also earned his 100th win last season.

"Chad Campbell is a sophomore this season. He had a great freshman year went 36-6 and was one match away from being a regional qualifier," Smalley said. We have big goals for this season to do even better. We have a very young team this season but I expect us to keep growing and getting better as the season goes along. We are young and have a lot of new wrestlers on our team this year or strength is going to be how hard we work each week getting better and our



The Ionia High School Wrestling Team.

wrestlers being coachable.

"Our team is doing a great job already this season. Some areas we need to work on is just getting more mat time and

experience. Our conference is very tough CAAC. Wrestling programs all seem to be growing every season and more and more competitive every season."

Chippewa Hills Wrestler Eyes Another State Title

John Raffel Sports Scene

Natalie Gibson won a state girls wrestling title as a junior last season and hopes to be a repeat performer this year.

Gibson last season was 26-2 with 22 falls. She scored 153 team points and was state champion at 105. She spent 5:55 obtaining four falls at the state meet, pinning her final opponent in 54 seconds.

She got her chance in March,

against an opponent who had beaten her twice during the season.

This time, the Chippewa Hills junior was not to be denied.

"I took a shot at her and she made a simple mistake of holding onto my head so I buried her in a half-nelson and got the pin," Gibson said. "I thought it was going to be a lost closer. I wrestled her before this year and she beat me. It was super close every time. For it to be short like that was super surprising." Gibson ended her season at 22-2 with the only two

losses having been previously to the opponent she beat at state.

"It was a matter of enjoying the moment and having fun," Gibson said, "and knowing no matter what the outcome is I would just have to give my all and trust in God's plan."

Gibson was pinned in the 105-pound finals a year ago as a sophomore and wanted another shot.

She continues to hold her own against male opponents during the regular season.

"It means so much to me and to my family and to be able to do this for my coaches through all the support of the Chippewa Hills community and everyone else," Gibson said the 2024 finals. "I'm glad to bring home the win and hopefully get one next year."

Coach Tyler Vogel hopes to lead Chippewa Hills to the Central State Activities Association title and the program's 21st straight district title.

Standout wrestlers include Jon Koepf and Austin Humphrey.



Natalie Gibson is a returning state champion for Chippewa Hills.



Portland Boys Bowlers Hoping For Another Huge Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Dan Graef is coaching a Portland boys bowling team coming off an excellent season from a year ago.

Portland won the league with a 11-1 record, won regionals and finished tied for fifth at states.

"Jack McBride was a vocal leader that will be missed. He threw the strike that clinched the Regional Title," Graef said.

As for this year's team, "Alec McGinnis is a senior, who won

a individual regional title his sophomore year, and has been in the program for four years I expect him to make it to individual states and to average close to 200 this season," Graef said.

"Dre Cross is in his 3rd year in the program and has already been to individual states once and I expect him to go again. Eli Dakin is a senior and has been in the program for four years I expect him to make it to individual states and to average close to 200 this season."

"I expect us to challenge for the

league title and hopefully challenge for another regional title. If we make it to states I expect us to make match play and hopefully we have grown from last season where we don't let your nerves affect us. Overall I would say we are a top heavy team as my top 4 or 5 bowlers are very strong."

Depth is a key for the team, Graef said.

"I need to get my sixth and seventh bowlers up to speed in case someone gets sick or just struggles," he said.



The Portland Boys Bowling Team.

Become a School Coach or Game Official

Contact your local high school athletic administrator or the Michigan High School Athletic Association

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East Lansing Swim Counting On Young Core Of Swimmers To Lead The Way

John Raffel Sports Scene

The Trojans also return a top sprinter in senior Nathan Thayer. Thayer is a top sprinter in both the 50 and 100 and is also a key part of the sprint-relay teams.

East Lansing also returns junior Jonah Robertson who is back after suffering an injury last season. Robertson provides top times in the 200 IM and the 100 butterfly and is also a key contributor in the relay events.

While the Trojans graduated some key swimmers like Matt Thompson, John Bellon, Eron Palmer and Henry Menzies along with diver JJ VanDyke, they have some talented swimmers back in the pool.

Leading the list of returning swimmers is junior Colin Fitzgerald. An all-around contributor, Fitzgerald returned to the squad with some top times in the 500 freestyle and 100 backstroke.

Overall, the Trojans are a young team but one capable of a solid season.

"We have very large sophomore and junior classes so we are looking to grow some of the younger athletes into leaders as they transition into upperclassmen," said East Lansing coach Madelyn Zink. "Our goal is to be in the top half of the conference and be in contention for another possible top three finish."

Zink is also looking for the sophomores and juniors to not only step up this season but be the foundation of success in the coming seasons.

"I am looking forward to the experience that our team brings and room for growth most of them

still have with at least two years left," Zink said.

The Trojans have turned in some solid efforts in the early going of the season. East Lansing placed second, four points behind Okemos, at the 12-team Waverly Relays early in the season.

East Lansing also claimed a



The East Lansing swim team has been posting some impressive times this season.

112-75 win against St. Johns. Fitzgerald won three events in the meet highlighted by winning the 500 freestyle in a time of 5:27.52. Thayer also won a pair of swims highlighted by winning the 50 freestyle in a time of 24.76. Robertson also won a pair of swims.

Branch Is Ionia's New Powerlifting Coach

John Raffel Sports Scene

As the first-year head coach for the storied Ionia Powerlifting programs, Coach Branch, recalled the success and growth of his many young athletes. Of his 18 athletes who qualified for the State meets last year, 15 return.

Placing at two of the three regional meets, the team hopes to build on last year's success.

Seniors who are gone but not forgotten as they helped to build the new program:

Addyson Roundtree, Bralynn Bledsoe, Isabella Glick, McKenna White - State Qualifier and top 10 finisher

Brennen Brownell, Ethan Fountain, Gabriel Hatfield, Hunter Anderson, James Crissman and Kohl Morris

"This year's key athletes all should push for state qualification and be top ten qualifiers. In addition, these are

our emotional and character leaders," Tracey Branch said.

Charlie Frost - Sr; Nelly Shippey - Jr; Ella Udell - Sr; Seth Woods - Sr; Summer Clark - Jr and Ava Bucholtz - So.

"The biggest expectation heading into the season is effort and commitment," Branch said. "The biggest thing about gaining power and strength is you need to spend time under weight. We need to be in the weight room as a team growing as a powerlifting family. You cannot learn to swim if you don't get in the water and you cannot gain strength if you are not under the bar. As a team, we desire to bring home some hardware from regionals and eventually the state competitions at Flint Powers (JV) and Lake Orion (Varsity) in early march. Our team motto is F.A.M.I.L.Y.; Forget About Me I Love You. This togetherness that the team possess across grade levels is one of our greatest strengths. The way the team lifts each

other up, works on technique together and challenges/pushes each other to be the very best, it is priceless. GRIT is our other strength. This team will dig in and except challenges and when others would whin and roll over, this group pulls on the work butts, straps on the belt and goes to work. They are an impressive group to watch work. There are plenty of challenges for this team.

"The biggest challenge we face is our youth," Branch said. "We have some great leaders and experience, but 60 percent of our team is in their first or second year of power lifting. So the team needs to stop doubting themselves and listening to what they thought about themselves before, and instead, believe what could be and strive for it. "As a team we are excited for this season. We are looking forward to a little down time this coming week, but then we will be back at it growing and getting ready for our home meet on Jan. 25."



Ionia boys and girl powerlifters continue to have a strong season.

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Talented Seniors Leading Lowell Competitive Cheer Team Into New Conference

**Butch Harmon
Sports Scene**

Led by a talented and determined group of seniors, the Lowell competitive cheer team is on a mission of taking the program to the next level this season.

"Expectations are high," said Lowell coach Dayna Bosma. "At our first competition of the season at West Catholic, we already got close to last season's highest score. Our first round-1 score of this season (224.9) has already beaten last year's highest round-1 score. Our overall score from our competition at West Catholic was 693.14. We are starting from a high point, and we will continue to move up."

Lowell is led this season by a core group of five seniors in Bri Fullerton, Josie Hackett, Maya Schilling, Kaylynn VanAlstine and Hope Worsley. Fullerton, Schilling and Worsley are all four-year, varsity athletes. Four of the five seniors are also flyers for the team. Worsley will also be cheering at the next level as she has committed to cheer at Indiana Wesleyan University.

"All these seniors are leaders on the team," Bosma said. "They are positive and show their teammates what it means to represent this program. Bri Fullerton is a top scholar athlete who is currently taking 5 AP (Advanced Placement) courses while maintaining well above a 4.0 GPA."

While the Red Arrows have some top seniors, they also have some promising young cheerleaders poised to step up.

"We graduate out five, but we also have five very strong freshmen on varsity," Bosma said. "There are also four sophomores and five juniors. Most of our sophomores and juniors are on their way to becoming four-year varsity athletes."

With a large and balanced squad this season, the Red Arrows have plenty of strong points to count on.

"Our team has a lot of strengths this year," Bosma said. "This is definitely a strong stunting year. At our first competition, every stunt hit. We also have been working very hard on volume and jumps. Our jumps have been the most symmetrical in every season



The Lowell competitive cheer team is off to a strong start this season as it competes in the new River Cities Alliance Conference.

I have coached. The timing is incredible and the form is matching across the team. This team is also one of the loudest teams that I have coached. When I think they can't be any louder, they surprise me with more volume."

All that talent and skills is needed competing in the new River Cities Alliance Conference that features plenty of strong cheerleading squads.

"In the River Cities Alliance competitive cheer conference we have Allendale, Cedar

Springs, Coopersville, Kenowa Hills, and Sparta," said Bosma, who is assisted by coach Michele Schilling. "We have been in a conference with Cedar Springs before, so we know they are tough competitors. Each one of these teams has grown in strength over the last few years, so it will be very interesting to see how close the scores will be. I hope to be at the top of the conference, but I will say that each team in this conference wants the title so it will be a fight for all of us."

East Lansing Co-Op Gymnastics Team Focusing On Improvement This Season

**Butch Harmon
Sports Scene**

Last season was a building one for the East Lansing gymnastics team and this year the squad is looking to continue the building process.

The East Lansing team is a co-op squad that includes gymnasts from Lansing Catholic and DeWitt.

"Last year continued to be a building year for the co-op team," said East Lansing coach Angie Madden. "We had two athletes qualify for the individual state finals, with Bella Arriaga (DeWitt) placing on the balance

beam."

Last year's squad was led by senior captains Maddie Baldwin (DeWitt) and Sarah Bollman (East Lansing) who provided the team with plenty of leadership and skill.

"Maddie and Sarah's contributions aided the team in qualifying for the post season two years in a row," Madden said. "They were both outstanding leaders on and off the mat. Maddie continues to coach gymnastics locally and Sarah has joined the club gymnastics team at the University of Wisconsin."

This year's squad has a strong group of

versatile gymnasts to build around led by juniors Maggie Crowe (East Lansing) and Elliot Pennington (East Lansing). Also returning to the squad is Taliyah Andrews (East Lansing) who qualified for the state finals as a freshman last year.

A pair of new additions to the team from DeWitt are junior Ciani Lopez and freshman Karly Lammer who have already made an impact for the team this season.

Sophomore Hendrix Domangue (East Lansing) is an all-around gymnast who is also contributing to the squad.

"I expect this team to qualify for the post season as well as have multiple individual qualifiers," Madden said.

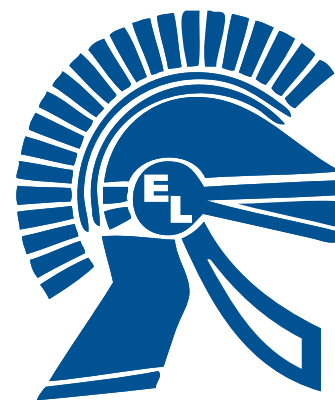
The strong point of this year's team is the squad's work ethic and their attitudes.

"Our team strength is already in our attitudes," Madden said. "We are a group of hard-working women who want to do their best for their team. I haven't seen a team this collaborative and eagerly willing to help each other in a long time."

Gaining confidence and improving is a major goal for the season that the team wants to improve in.

"We need to work on our confidence," Madden said. "We have the skills, we just haven't put them all on the floor in a meet

yet this season. Our roster is full of first-time high school athletes. Even those with a gymnastics background, the high school environment is new to them."



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