

winonapost

sports

River Valley Paddle Battle draws a crowd

Photo by
Chris Rogers

■ Professional pickleball player Bill Ritchie (left) and Dave Weinbach (right), the fifth-ranked male player in the world, returned volleys last Saturday. More than 100 players came to Winona for the River Valley Paddle Battle pickleball tournament over the weekend.



by CHRIS ROGERS

Over 100 pickleball players from across the Midwest — including the fifth-ranked male player in the world and a score of other professional players — gathered in Winona last weekend to face off in the Winona Area Tennis Association’s (WATA) River Valley Paddle Battle. With paddles that resemble oversized pingpong gear, balls that look like whiffle balls dipped in yellow paint, and rules that mix-and-match other racquet sports, pickleball might not be familiar to everyone, but it is one of the fastest-growing sports in the U.S. The games features lots of gentle shots, with players

testing each others’ consistency and waiting for an opening, Winonan Kurt Lossen explained. Then, he said, “It just explodes.” Lossen was in the stands last Saturday as players dinked the ball back and forth with an easy touch and intense concentration. When one player sent a shot a little too high, their opponents answered with a vicious spike. Lossen played racquetball for years. “When I started playing pickleball, I thought this is it.” He added, “I like the competitiveness, the quickness.” “Pickleball is a very unique sport,” Winona Area Tennis Association board member Jan Lucas stated. “It’s very easy to learn. It requires mental

agility and physicality, as well, but it doesn’t require the same physicality that you would in say tennis.” “It’s an all-ages sport,” Winonan Vivek Nagpal said. “It’s not like tennis where you have to give it up at some time.” He added, “I played badminton and racquetball some, but I found my home in pickleball.” Although it is easy to pick up, top-level pickleball requires remarkable skill, Lucas stated. “The pace your hands have to have at that high of a level — it’s pretty phenomenal. You’re standing seven feet from the net most of the time, and you can have a ball coming at you at 30 miles per hour, and you really have a blink of an eye to react.”

Lucas happens to be a regional ambassador for the sport for the U.S.A. Pickleball Association and an avid player herself. She recruited some of her friends and connections among the professional pickleball circuit to come play in last weekend’s tournament, including number-five-ranked Dave “The Badger” Weinbach of Wisconsin. “How often do you get to see someone who’s number-five-ranked in the whole world play?” Lucas asked. “It’s not like Roger Federer, but number five in the whole world is pretty cool,” she said. Weinbach and his partner Bill Ritchie had some intense rallies with opponents on Saturday morning, but they ultimately

came out on top, taking first place in men’s professional doubles in tournament. KaSandra Gehrke and Katie McKee finished first in women’s pro doubles, and Gehrke and Zane Navratil won the mixed pro doubles bracket. Winonans Kelly Kirk and Connie Jo Markel took third place in women’s doubles among the 3.5 skill level division. Scott Eglinton and Matt Slaggie, both of Winona, won bronze in the men’s doubles 3.0 skill level division, and Nagpal and Minnesota City resident Joe Alexander finished third in the 4.0/4.5 division for men’s doubles. Chris@winonapost.com

St. Mary’s sports wrap

Men’s basketball
Saint Mary’s sophomore Eli Cave was named to the All-MIAC Men’s Basketball Second Team, while teammate Caden Freetly was selected to the First Year Team.

Women’s tennis
For the second day in a row, the Saint Mary’s women’s tennis team squared off against the Panthers — with a much more favorable outcome. Less than 24 hours after dropping a 6-1 decision to NCAA Division II Davenport, the Cardinals got back on the winning track, dispatching Hanover 6-3 in Saint Mary’s final spring trip match.

Women’s basketball
Brandi Blattner was named All-MIAC First Team for the fourth straight year and was also selected to the MIAC All-defensive Team, while teammate Brooklyn Paulson was named MIAC Co-rookie of the Year, as well as landing MIAC All-first Year Team and honorable-mention All-MIAC honors, the league office announced.

Softball
Saint Mary’s fastpitch team picked up a pair of wins on Thursday in Clermont, Fla., as the Cardinals dropped Capital 3-1 to snap a three-game losing streak, turning around and routing Hanover 11-3 in five innings.

Baseball
James Green picked up his second straight pitching win, and Saint Mary’s scored the game’s first eight runs in dealing Neumann a 9-3 non-conference setback on Friday afternoon in Kissimmee, Fla.

Winona State’s golf team gears up for season, despite long winter

by MITCHELL BREUER
From The Winonan,
WSU’s student newspaper

Winona State University men’s golf will return to the green this week, as they travel to Las Vegas for two invites, marking their first action since October. While the weather in Minnesota hasn’t allowed for much golfing during this time off, head coach Jeff Straight is still confident heading into the spring season, despite the difficult winter conditions, noting that some of his players traveled out of state in an effort to better prepare themselves. “Our conference teams need to have the same play. I think we’re in pretty good shape. I think we’re pretty relaxed. I think we’ve worked really hard in the off season. That’s what we always struggle with ... It’s difficult to compete when you haven’t touched grass in six months.” With the preparation they’ve done, Straight believes that the team is in solid standing, and hopes their efforts are rewarded with the upcoming schedule. “All in all I think we’re in

pretty good shape,” Straight said. “Some guys worked super hard so we’ll see if that work pays off.” The winter problem is not a new one for the team, and it is one that Straight is used to facing. “That’s kind of the way it works and always has and always will,” Straight said. “Our goal is to make regionals. How we do that is primarily from playing really, really well in the fall. We believe we can compete at a higher level in the fall because we’re coming out of summer.” With the trip to Vegas, the team’s focus is required to shift from just teams in the conference. “I’m talking about competing against southern teams because that is our focus. Our focus is not our conference, our focus is playing well against teams in Missouri and Kansas and Oklahoma that have a big advantage over us playing during the season.” Straight hopes that these upcoming invites are a good warmup for action coming up later in the season in Missouri. “Our goal is really to try to

play as much as we can in the fall in the south and then go to Vegas where it’s a warmer climate, play some different kinds of tournaments and get warmed up so we can play. We have a tournament near St. Lois, Mo. There are some top teams that are nationally ranked that we’re playing against.” Straight believes the Warriors are ready to contend against not only NSIC, but some of the best teams in the NSIC. “Coming out of the fall we played really good against those teams,” Straight said. “We beat some teams that are ranked in the top 20 in the nation. Central Missouri’s a good example. We didn’t beat them, but we tied them twice. The team is ranked 20th in the nation, our record’s 0-0 with two against them. Two shots better, one in each tournament, we’re ahead of a top 20 team nationally. I like where we’re sitting.” One thing that the head coach stressed was his confidence in his team, and detailing each individual’s strengths and how he has been impressed with their ability to play the game. Straight described one in particular, junior Tyler Beeck,

as a leader of the team. “He’s our lead captain,” Straight said. “He’s really playing up to his potential. He was number two in scoring on the team in the fall. So, he’s continually developed.” When asked about his leadership role with the team, Beeck talked about how he believes that it was his coach that developed him into the person he is today. “Coach Straight has helped me immensely in becoming a leader on this team by giving me different responsibilities and decision-making opportunities,” Beeck said. “I try to be the best leader I can be, whether that be on the course, or by something as simple as just being a good friend outside of golf. I’m looking forward to helping lead the team throughout the rest of my career.” Like his coach, Beeck has set a high bar for this team season and his hopeful in the team’s ability. “We have some high expectations for this spring and are very excited to get going in Las Vegas,” Beeck said. “A big goal of our team’s is to put ourselves in position to


win every tournament we’re at. Our number-one goal is to win conference and advance on to the NCAA super regional tournament. Having been so close the last two years, I think everyone has been really driven this offseason to work as hard as possible. I’m really excited to

see what we can do this spring and I think we have a lot of good golf ahead of us.” The Warriors will experience their first action on Friday, March 8, as the team competes in the Minot Vegas Invite.

At Russell and Associates

we believe that teamwork, trust, effort, and knowledge are the keys to excellence

That's why we are proud to sponsor local high school athletics. The time that our young athletes spend in the classroom, training room, practice field, volunteering in our community, and in competition is a wonderful investment for a positive future.



RUSSELL & ASSOCIATES LLC

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS & ADVISORS

TAX – ACCOUNTING – CONSULTING

www.russellcpafirm.com | 507.452.3100

111 Riverfront, Suite 401, Winona, Minnesota

Because **Effort, Achievement,** and **Sportmanship** are qualities we admire **Lewiston Auto is proud to sponsor** local high school sports coverage.

COTTER RAMBLERS

WINONA WINHAWKS

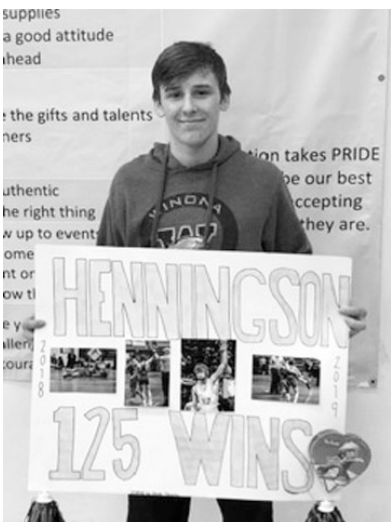
LEWISTON-ALTURA CARDINALS

ST. CHARLES SAINTS

lewistonauto.com 507-523-2164

Local wrestlers hit milestones

■ Trevor Pomeroy (pictured above) recorded the fastest pin in Winona Senior High School's history with a time of seven seconds on December 15, 2018, at Fillmore Central and Ryan Henningson (below) recorded his 125th win in Northfield on February 14, 2019.



Eight Warriors qualify for 2019 NCAA DII Indoor T&F Championships

by DAVID ALBRECHT

A total of eight student-athletes from Winona State University will compete at the 2019 NCAA Division II (DII) Indoor Track & Field (T&F) Championships, as announced with the release of the complete championship field by the NCAA DII T&F Committee.

The team of Kalley Harris, Brittany Schyvinck, Brooklin Schyvinck and Shereen Vallabouy comprise the Warriors' 4x400m qualifying relay team. Also qualifying is Winona State's record-holding DMR team of Brittany Schyvinck, Ali Johnson, Anna Rogahn and Hope Willenbrink.

Brittany will have the unique distinction of competing in three separate events at nationals as the senior has also qualified individually in the 200m dash. She will be making a return trip to the Indoor Championships for the first time since her freshman campaign in 2015 when her 4x400 team finished fourth to earn All-American honors.

Rogahn (mile run) and Vallabouy (400m dash) will each compete in two events at the championship meet.

Representing Winona State in the field events will be sophomore Kristi Springer in the triple jump.

The 2019 DII Indoor T&F National Championships are scheduled for March 8-9 in Pittsburg, Kan. Pittsburg State University and the Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau will serve as co-

hosts of the championships.

Coinciding with the announcement of the 2019 NCAA DII T&F Indoor Championship field, the U.S. T&F and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) has named this year's All-Region honorees.

Winona State University's Anna Rogahn not only earned All-Region recognition for the first time in her career, but the junior is a two-time 2019 recipient for her success in both the mile run and as a member of the Warriors' distance medley relay team.

Rogahn broke Winona State's 26-year indoor mile record earlier this season and then bested it once more at the NSIC Indoor T&F Championships with a time of 4:57.82. The DMR team also set a new program record this season with a time of 11:50.74.

Other members of the DMR team to earn 2019 All-Region honors include seniors Ali Johnson, Brittany Schyvinck and Hope Willenbrink. Johnson and Willenbrink each earn All-Region status for the first time in their respective careers. Brittany Schyvinck was previously a 2017 USTFCCCA Outdoor All-Region in the 4x100m relay.

For a complete list of Winona State national qualifiers, go to <https://winonastatewarriors.com/news/2019/2/26/womens-track-and-field-eight-warriors-qualify-for-2019-ncaa-dii-indoor-t-f-championships.aspx>.

Former Winhawk wins WIAC Player of the Year

The Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) office announced the 2019 All-WIAC women's basketball awards on February 27. Hallee Hoepfner, a junior at UW-Eau Claire, led the way for the Blugolds earning WIAC Player of the Year honors, along with First Team recognition.

Hoepfner led the WIAC in scoring averaging at 18.3

points per game, finished third in rebounds at 7.8 per game and second in minutes played. She recorded six double-doubles and two 30-or-more point games along with being named WIAC Player of the Week three times. Hoepfner is the fifth Blugold to earn Player of the Year honors in head coach Tonja England's tenure and eighth overall for the program.

Warrior baseball nabs 2 of 3 games against Maryville

by MAURICE HUDSON
From The Winonan,
WSU's student newspaper

The Winona State University baseball team sought to boost its overall record with the series against the Maryville University Saints this past weekend.

"The Pitt State series was the first time we were on a baseball field since the fall. Given that challenge, we produced two very well played games," junior pitcher Tanner Haessly said. "I think to come out of the weekend with zero errors as a team is very impressive for our first time outdoors. Unfortunately, we dropped the first game but we were able to bounce back and control the second game. There's a lot of positives that we can take away from that game moving forward."

Haessly explained where the team's mentality is going into the weekend series.

"Our team is going into this

weekend feeling very good about where we're at. We have a very confident team and we are expecting to come out of the weekend with a series win," Haessly said.

Friday contained a doubleheader, with the first game at 1 p.m. and the second game at 4 p.m. at Maryville University and a final game on Saturday at noon.

The first game of the doubleheader action featured a ninth-inning thriller win for Winona State, who came out on top 10-7.

The Maryville Saints started rolling early giving them a 7-2 lead at the end of the fourth inning. At the top of the fifth inning Winona State started to get its groove back, scoring eight unanswered runs to end out the game.

The barrage of runs started with a homerun in the fifth by sophomore infielder Tanner Williams.

First-year outfielder Mitchell

Seager scored and sophomore infielder Zac Stange doubled to left field, bringing sophomore pitcher Nathan Loomis in and the score to 5-7.

Winona State took over the game in the tenth inning, bringing in five total runs to end the game 10-7 against the Saints.

The second game of the doubleheader action from Friday ended with the Warriors grabbing another victory.

In the third inning, Loomis scored and junior first baseman Sam Kohnle flew out to right field, giving up a sacrifice fly and letting sophomore infielder Zac Stange score an unearned run.

In the fourth, sophomore infielder Zac Stange collected two RBIs up the middle, giving scores to first-year outfielder Mitchell Seager and first-year catcher Kyle Kosobucki to make it 4-0 going into the fifth.

Maryville was able to scrape up two runs on four hits later

in the inning, but it was not enough compared to Winona State's four runs.

The noon game on Saturday went a little different for the Warriors.

Maryville came out through the first two inning giving them a 3-2 lead over the Warriors.

Keeping the same intensity within the fifth inning, the Saints extended the lead to 4-2, giving them their first and only win throughout the series.

The Warriors will return to action in the Russmatt Florida Invitational starting on Thursday, March 7, at 1:30 p.m.

WSU basketball ends season with 14-17 record

by CHRIS EDWARDS
From The Winonan,
WSU's student newspaper

It is playoff time and Winona State University's men's basketball has brought out its best, scoring two wins and keeping tournament hopes alive for another week.

The Warriors beat University of Minnesota-Duluth 62-56 in the opening round of the NSIC tournament.

In the first matchup earlier in the season against the Bulldogs, the Warriors pulled out a 65-53 victory. In this outing, both teams came out cold in the opening minutes of the first half, before Duluth made a bucket to take the lead. Winona State finally got on the board with back-to-back threes from senior forward Tommy Gathje.

They went back and forth before the Warriors took a 17-12 lead with 8:57 left in the first half. Duluth responded by going on a 5-17 run to take a seven-point lead late in the first half. Winona State then cut the deficit to two points before the end of the half.

Despite being down just 27-29, the Warriors struggled from the field, only shooting 28 percent. They also hit on seven of 20 of their three-point attempts and allowed the Bulldogs to shoot over 40 percent from the field — but they only hit one of six shots from beyond the arc. The Bulldogs committed six turnovers while the Warriors had one turnover. Winona State lost the rebound battle 15-24 in the first half.

In the second half, the

Warriors tried to get back on track by playing tough defense and taking smarter shots. Both teams went scoreless for the opening 2:31 minutes before senior guard Mason Domask was able to tie the game at 29 after a made jumper.

The Warriors were able to take their first lead since 5:48 before the end of the first half. The team went on a 9-2 run to extend the lead to eight points halfway through the second half. Another jumper by Domask with 8:28 left gave the Warriors a nine-point lead, which was their largest of the game.

Down the stretch the Bulldogs got back in the game by going a 17-9 run to pull them within one with 10 seconds remaining in the game. Junior guard Caleb Wagner was fouled on the next possession. Wagner was sent to the throw line and made one of two attempts to extend the lead to 58-56.

A few moments later, Wagner was again sent to the free throw line, this time missing both attempts. The Bulldogs got the rebound but turned over the ball. Sophomore Kevion Taylor was fouled and the Bulldogs also received a technical. Taylor made all four free-throw attempts to hand Winona State the 62-56 win.

Domask told the Winonan the team made good adjustments in the second half to get the win.

"We kept up the intensity and physicality on D and continued taking high percentage shots," Domask said.

Since Domask is a senior, any game could be his last and

he wants to take advantage of every moment, knowing it can end at any time.

"I'm just trying to leave it all on the court and embrace every moment with my team," Domask said.

In their second-round NSIC tournament matchup against University of Minnesota-Crookston on Wednesday, the Warriors were once again victorious 80-67.

The team got revenge against the Golden Eagles, to whom they lost 66-80 earlier in the season.

The rematch began very close with both teams trading buckets. University of Minnesota-Crookston scored the first four points, but Winona State responded with eight straight points to take the lead. With 11:35 remaining in opening half the Golden Eagles took their first lead since the opening few minutes.

Then, the Warriors went on 13-2 run to take the 29-19 lead, which was the largest of the half. In the last 6:07 of the first half the Golden Eagles went on a 16-6 run to tie the game at 35 going into halftime.

The Warriors outrebounded the Golden Eagles 18-14 in the first half. Both teams shot about 45 percent from the field. Junior guard Caleb Wagner led the Warriors in points at the half with 10. Wagner also made both of his shoots from beyond the arc.

Both teams came out fast in the second half, but the Warriors were able to keep the lead throughout. After the Warriors took a six-point lead

with 15:16 remaining in the first half, Winona State went scoreless for a while and this led the Golden Eagles cut the lead to one.

The Golden Eagles tied the game at 51 with nine minutes remaining in regulation. After two more ties the Eagles were able to take the 65-64 lead with 3:37 left in the game. However, sophomore forward/guard Kevion Taylor made a three-pointer to take the lead back with 2:35 remaining. The Warriors then took a 13-2 run to finish the game and get the 80-67 victory.

Wagner led the Warriors in points with 24 and in rebounds with seven. He also connected on four of six shots from beyond the arc.

On Monday, Winona State headed into the NSIC Tournament Semi-Finals for a rematch against Northern State University.

In their first game of the season, the Wolves controlled the action and won 79-68. It appeared that Warriors would be in control, as they headed into halftime with an eight-point lead, but the Wolves would not stay down; in the second half they outscored Winona State by nine, and took a one-point lead at the buzzer to seal the win.

The Warriors end the season with a 14-17 record, and were 9-13 in conference play.

Wabasha-Kellogg takes first place in Walking Challenge

Winning teams have been announced in Southeast Service Cooperative's (SSC) eighth annual Walking Challenge, in which over 800 individuals from 24 SSC member organizations competed. Fifteen Southeast Minnesota school districts and nine local government members participated in two separate steps-based challenges.

Winners in the School District Challenge include Wabasha-Kellogg, first place; Goodhue, second place; and Grand Meadow, third place. The remaining teams, which each received an honorable mention, are listed in the order of their ranking: PEM, Rochester, Red Wing, Fillmore Central, Byron, Lewiston-Altura, Stewartville, Kasson-Mantorville, Lyle, Austin, Southland, and LeRoy-

Ostrander. Red Wing was the winner for having the highest participation.

Wabasha-Kellogg School District Wellness Coordinator Ashely Scheel shared, "The Wabasha-Kellogg Falcon Steppers thrive off of competition and take this contest seriously! This year we doubled the amount of participants compared to last year. Last year, during the final two weeks of the competition, our technology coordinator and math teacher Mike Schumacher calculated how many steps we would need to win. He then set personal goals for each participant on our shared Google doc. This was a great motivator for our competitive bunch and helped us pull off the win! This year, we continued with that strategy. It is enjoyable to see walking habits continuing after

the challenge and hearing that a person lost five pounds during it. The walking challenge has built camaraderie, new relationships, and is a major talking piece at Wabasha-Kellogg!"

Red Wing schools found they were able to recruit more walkers by adding in a building versus building challenge. Their wellness coordinator Tara Nelson said, "It was fun to see the number of steps come in from each building. Buildings would meet after school to get steps in."

Fillmore County was the winner in the Local Government Division (the first time a county has won since 2012), and Freeborn County came in second followed by Rice-Steele 911 Center.

The contest, which ran the month of January, was based

on the number of steps walked by participating members. Trophies (and bragging rights) are awarded to the winning teams. Certificates will be presented to all teams who participated.

Southeast Service Cooperative has operated since 1976. It is a public, nonprofit cooperative of over 100 member schools, local governments, and non-profits impacting over 82,000 students and almost 18,000 employees in eleven counties to mobilize resources and add value through collaboration. To learn more about the Southeast Service Cooperative, visit www.ssc.coop.

give the gift of the

winonapost

gift subscriptions available year round

3 months - \$35; 6 months - \$70; 1 year - \$140

first-class subscriptions available also. Call for rates, 507-452-1262

winona's twice-weekly newspaper since 1971