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Senior Lida King (18), junior Sylvia Koenig (11) and senior Bronwyn Timperley (7) celebrate during Tuesday's 3-2 victory against New Prague at Northfield High School. It's the second win in a row to start the year for the Raiders. (Michael Hughes/Northfield News)

RAIDING THE RANKINGS

Northfield volleyball leaps into Class AAA rankings with wins against New Prague, Prior Lake

By MICHAEL HUGHES
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During what represented the biggest test of their young varsity careers, the newcomers for the Northfield volleyball team soared past the benchmark Aug. 27 at Northfield High School and Thursday night in Prior Lake.

Northfield prevailed Aug. 27 over Class AAA No. 9 New Prague in five sets (17-25, 25-19, 25-23, 23-25, 15-7) for its second straight win to start the year, before extending that streak to three wins with a dominant 25-16, 25-14, 25-4 triumph against Class AAA No. 7 Prior Lake.

Packed within those victories, though, were standout performances and moments from players competing in their second varsity matches.

Juniors Sylvia Koenig and Emma Hodapp, along with freshman Sydney Jaynes, all started the match on the floor for the Raiders, while junior Laura Wellbrock and freshman Annelise Larson contributed major points throughout the five-set match Aug. 27.

"That was important," Northfield coach Tim Torstenson said. "That's one of the things we're looking for at the beginning of

this year. Those are spots we needed to fill. They came in and did their jobs and it was really fun to see."

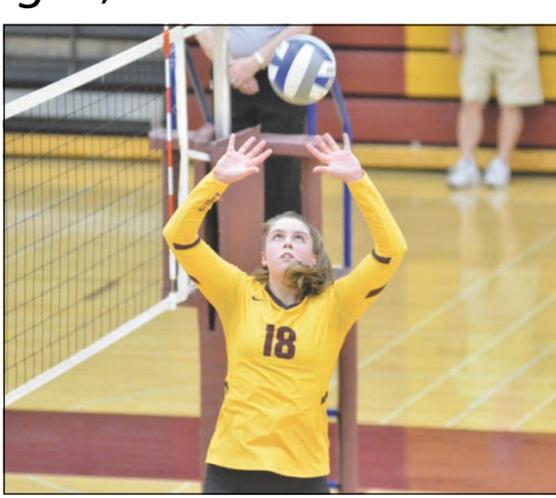
Koenig paired nine kills with a team-high five blocks. Larson added two kills and a block. Wellbrock recorded an ace on the penultimate point of the match and Jaynes raced around the back line of the defense keeping rallies alive with 11 digs.

"It's just so fun," Koenig said. "We tried to not get too stressed over it and just play the game we love. Just play volleyball, take deep breaths and play our game."

That all supplemented the returning talent, which carried Northfield throughout stretches of the match. Junior Rachel Wieber starred with a team-high 23 kills to go along with 18 digs and a pair of aces, while junior Megan Reilly powered home 19 kills, second only to Wieber.

"That's what we need them to do," Torstenson said of Wieber and Reilly. "We went from being middle heavy the last two years to our outside hitters needing to get kills for us, and that's what they did tonight. They both had a lot of kills, and that's what our offense is

See VOLLEYBALL on 2B



Northfield senior Lida King sets a ball during Tuesday's 3-2 victory against New Prague at Northfield High School. King assisted on 52 of Northfield's 63 kills. (Michael Hughes/Northfield News)

CLASS AAA TOP 10

1. Eagan (2-0)
2. Lakeville South (2-0)
3. Wayzata (3-0)
4. Lakeville North (4-0)
5. East Ridge (1-1)
6. Champlin Park (1-2)
7. Northfield (3-0)
8. Moorhead (3-1)
9. St. Michael-Albertville (3-0)
10. Hopkins (1-1)

Dukes swept by Chanhassen on Labor Day, finish 2nd in Class B

By MICHAEL HUGHES
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Dundas had been living near the top of its best possible range of outcomes throughout the Class B state tournament. That good fortune reverted to the mean Monday in Maple Lake.

On the heels of three consecutive one-run victories, the Dukes entered Labor Day needing one win in two tries against Chanhassen, which already had four games under its belt this weekend, to claim the team's sixth state title.

Instead, the Redbirds raced to an 8-1 victory in the first game to force a winner-take-all game two, which they also won 9-2 to claim their second consecutive state title. Chanhassen won the 2018 crown as well with a pair of wins on Labor Day.

"We're obviously disappointed in the way that they won," Dundas co-manager/third baseman Mike Ludwig said. "They're a very good team and took advantage of everything that we gave them, and we gave them a fair amount. You have to tip your cap and give them credit. I thought the better team won today. They made plays and had big knocks with two outs and we didn't."

Of the 17 runs Dundas allowed across the two games, only six counted as earned.

With seven combined errors in the two games prolonging rallies throughout the day, the dangerous Redbird bats racked up 28 hits. "We knew that they were capable of it and it was going to be tough to just get one of two," Ludwig said. "Still disappointed that we didn't play well."

With Chanhassen's ability in mind, and knowing it only needed to win one game, while the Redbirds needed to win twice, the Dukes saved their top remaining starting pitcher, John McCaustlin, and top reliever, Charlie Ruud, for the potential second game.

The thinking was to let Chanhassen burn its best remaining arms attempting to win game one and then swarm with the level of pitching the Redbirds would have used much earlier in the weekend.

That didn't pan out, partially because Chanhassen's game one starter, Miles Nablo, threw a complete game, and in the second game a pair of arms that pitched earlier in the weekend, Shawn Riesgraf and Logan Spitzack, returned to stifle Dundas.

Across the two games, Chanhassen's pitching staff, which might be the deepest in the state, allowed only 14 hits and three runs.

Even so, the Dukes received solid pitching in the first game. Mick Dudero took the ball first and fired four innings while allowing two runs, only one of which was earned, before Derek Albers gave up five runs, four earned, across 2 1/3 innings and Nic Zabel surrendered an unearned run in 2 2/3 innings.

"Mick is deceptive," Ludwig said. "He's below hitting speed. He doesn't throw that hard, so for a team like this we thought he could give them fits. I thought he did a great job. I gave them an unearned run in the first, but for him to get through four down two, that is exactly what we wanted in that first one."

The largest issue, especially in the second game, was the defense. After Jon Bishop blasted a solo home run to tie the score 2-2 in the top of the third, Chanhassen raced away with six runs in the bottom of the fourth.

That fourth-inning surge was aided by a pair of Dundas errors that allowed the No. 7 and No. 9 batters to reach, before the top of the Redbird order tallied four consecutive hits, had the next batter hit by a pitch and then roped another hit.

"That's uncharacteristic of the brand of baseball that we play," Ludwig said.

That meant Dundas will have to wait for its sixth state title, instead settling for its eighth runner-up finish.

Bishop, Carson Jones and Todd Mathison were named to the all-tournament team, and all were part of the reason why the Dukes were able to storm into the championship undefeated after qualifying as the final team out of Section 1B.

"We joke around a lot that we feel like we're the sixth- or seventh-best team in the state of Minnesota, but if we get in the tournament we feel like we have a really good chance to win," Ludwig said. "We have all the pieces. ... The way the tournament worked out we just found a way to win games. The way it's set up, to get to this day was an accomplishment. I'm obviously disappointed, but as long as we have our guys healthy and able to play, we have a chance to get to this day."

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ALL-TOURNEY DUKES

Jon Bishop (1B, five games): 8-for-24, five runs scored, five RBIs, two walks, one home run, one double.

Carson Jones (CF, five games): 11-for-30, five runs scored, three doubles, one walk.

Todd Mathison (SP, three games): 2-0, 24 1/3 innings, five earned runs, 26 strikeouts, one walk.

Dickerson adjusting to busy role with Northfield football

By MICHAEL HUGHES
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While senior Simon Dickerson was playing every snap of Friday's 48-15 loss at Rochester Mayo at safety, as well as about 75 percent of the snaps at running back, he gained some newfound appreciation.

He had watched Mitchell Stanchina, a senior on last year's Raider football team who started at running back and safety, play nearly every snap and assumed the feat was a typical one.

Turns out, playing both ways can grind you down.

"I was thinking about how Mitchell played both ways like all the time, and I don't know how he did that," Dickerson said. "I'm not in as quite as good of shape as Mitchell was, and it's definitely a lot on you to try and play both ways to whole game."

Dickerson's not the only Northfield player adjusting to the increased workload, with a number of Raiders playing both ways for the first time after the departure of last year's 34-player senior class, a number of whom occupied a starting spot on both sides of the ball.

Dickerson, though, is one of the more high-profile newcomers, as the senior received the majority of the carries coming out of Northfield's new-look pistol offense, while also starting at



Northfield senior Simon Dickerson bursts through a hole during Friday's 48-15 loss at Rochester Mayo. Dickerson rushed 11 times for a team-high 62 yards. (Michael Hughes/Northfield News)

safety after he started a handful of games in the spot last year before going down with an injury. He figures to play prominently in both roles Friday, when the Raiders host Class 5A No. 1 Owatonna.

In last Friday's loss, Dickerson registered a team-high 11 carries for 62 yards, also the highest total on the team.

"He's athletic," Northfield coach Bubba Sullivan said. "From a defensive standpoint he was a kid that didn't mind being physical. He would come up and make

a tackle, so we didn't mind that about him. This year, you just see he's a year more mature. I like the way he runs. He's got good forward lean from the offensive standpoint. From the defensive standpoint he's got some experience and is just an athletic kid."

Coming up through the ranks, Dickerson received plenty of time at both running back and wide receiver, but had never broken through on the varsity offense with Stanchina and Jim Vitito, also a senior last year, holding

down skill positions for the better part of nearly three seasons.

Now Dickerson, senior Joey Glampe, senior Drew Woodley, senior Josh Dresow and junior Blake Mellgren all received carries Friday night, while senior Christoph Tisdale, who played all of the first-team snaps at inside linebacker Friday, is also capable of producing out of the backfield.

"It's been weird because you think that wouldn't be as much

See DICKERSON on 2B



Jon Bishop blasted a solo home run Monday during the Class B championship against Chanhassen at Maple Lake. Dundas lost both games to finish as the Class B runner-ups. (Michael Hughes/Northfield News)