

# Sports



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## Boys soccer: Rangers grind past highly rated Hounds

### Oberholtzer's goal the difference in 1-0 win

Brad O'Neil  
Sports Editor

Sometimes in a down-pour, and always with slippery ground underfoot, the Forest Lake boys soccer team hosted Class AA No. 4 Duluth East in a much-anticipated clash of Section 7AA rivals Aug. 27. The Rangers sought revenge for a number of past playoff defeats, and though they had to grind all 80 minutes to get it, a second half goal by senior striker Jordan Oberholtzer held up for a 1-0 victory that will upset the general order in the section.

#### Man advantage

The Rangers and Greyhounds fought through intermittent rain, including one particular fierce, whipping shower near the halftime break, but neither side could break through for a goal before the interval. The turning point came in the 51st minute, when Hound defender Cy Goerdts was shown his second yellow card of the game for a foul on a Ranger breakaway. The subsequent red card left the Hounds a man down for the last half hour.

Junior midfielder Carter Thiesfeld took the free kick that followed, but his low effort was saved by Anthony McHenry, and though he could only parry, the rebound skipped past a charging wall of Rangers — junior forward Isaiah Dresel coming closest — to be

cleared by the Hound defense.

In the first minutes after going to 10 players, the Hounds kept up their famously aggressive strategy, sometimes placing every outfield player in the Rangers' half when they went on the attack. Jack Mitchell worked his way behind the Ranger defense in the 53rd minute but senior goalkeeper Gunnar Linn stopped his shot dead with an extended arm.

The numerical disadvantage soon began to tell on the visitors, though, and Ranger attacks became more frequent, particularly viable the long through balls that seem to be their greatest strength. One perfectly placed pass by junior midfielder Breen Eiden seemed to result in a goal by junior forward Austin Latessa in the 58th minute, but the Rangers' celebrations were cut short at the sight of the linesman's flag raised to rule the play offside.

"Our kids are fit, and they play with confidence," Tomas said. "We know we can put pressure on anyone."

Less than three minutes later, however, the Rangers got the goal that counted. Thiesfeld played a grass-cutting pass to Oberholtzer, who held possession under heavy pressure and a slide tackle from Hound captain Zach Lanigan and broke for the goal. McHenry charged and Hound defender Bailey Frantz closed fast enough to put an elbow in Oberholtzer's back, but as the three bodies came together, the



Forest Lake striker Jordan Oberholtzer holds strong against an attempted tackle by Duluth East captain Zach Lanigan en route to scoring the only goal in a 1-0 Ranger win on Aug. 27.

Ranger was able to finesse a shot inside the right-hand post.

"[Thiesfeld] has the best vision," Oberholtzer said. "I knew he'd get the ball to me, it was just up to me to finish it."

Oberholtzer, McHenry and Frantz collided again a minute later, with Frantz succeeding in forcing Oberholtzer to shoot wide this time.

"[Duluth East] never gives up on a play," Oberholtzer said. "They're different from other teams; you get by a kid and then he's right on your back. They also put up a great fight."

The Hounds tried continuously to force attacks down their right wing, but senior midfielder Victor Rizzo, shut down that side of the field. Their best shot at an equalizer came when they earned a free kick about 25 yards

from goal with less than a minute on the clock, but after a great deal of strategizing among both sides, the final effort was well over the bar.

"The man down helped, obviously, but this East team gets in your face, it doesn't matter," head coach Joe Tomas said. "They're so scrappy."

#### Section shift

The Hounds knocked the Rangers out of the playoffs in the Section 7AA semifinals last year and in the 2017 final, both times on northern turf. The Rangers' head-to-head victory means that, should the paths cross in this year's section tournament, the game would probably be played here, though there is, of course, most of a season still to be played. As if to mark the "new day"

in the section, a rainbow appeared over the Ranger bleachers at the end of the game.

The Rangers have won three playoff games across the last two seasons, but all three have been played on the road. The Rangers' last home playoff games came in 2015, when they beat Cambridge-Isanti in a quarterfinal before being upset in a semifinal by — who else? — Duluth East.

"We have to walk before we can run, but today was a big step toward our goals," Tomas said.

The Hounds won Section 7AA over Blaine in the final last year, but the balance of power seems to be shifting. The Rangers have beaten both of last year's finalists already this season, but have also lost to Andover, which confirmed its status as a title threat by beating

Centennial 1-0 the day of the Ranger-Hound clash. Tomas made a quick exit from Forest Lake to scout that game. Centennial is new to the section this year, having gone to state as Section 5AA champions last year — indeed, the Cougars met the Hounds in the state quarterfinals.

The Rangers have no further regular season games against section opponents, so the Rangers' section record will hold at 2-1-0 and any hypothesizing as to playoff outcomes will have to be put on hold until October. Like most Ranger teams, the soccer squad will play through a Suburban East Conference schedule against teams assigned to metro-based sections, beginning with a home tilt against Woodbury Thursday at 5 p.m. Woodbury will be tough out: The Royals handed Andover a loss late last week. The Rangers were fourth of nine in a stacked SEC that included the eventual state champions, Stillwater, last season. Tomas hopes to place third or better this year in what is now a 10-team league with the addition of Irondale.

In a non-conference, non-section game on Aug. 29, the Rangers were beaten at Hill-Murray 5-3; Thiesfeld accounted for all the Rangers' goals. Besides the Woodbury game, the Rangers (2-2-0 overall) will also head to Chisago Lakes Saturday at noon. On Tuesday, Sept. 10, the Rangers' schedule gets no easier: They will visit Stillwater for a 7 p.m. kickoff.



Forest Lake midfielder Nehmia Berhanemeskel looks to set an attack in motion.



Ranger head coach Joe Tomas delivers his post-game talk with the backdrop of a rainbow that appeared after the match against the Hounds.

## G-Fest pole vault meet benefits area families

The Forest Lake-based G-Force Pole Vault Club hosted its annual G-Fest meet and picnic at the high school Aug. 25, with all proceeds going to Rangers Supporting Rangers, which provides nutritional services, school supplies and other support to local families in need.

The competition brought together 24 vaulters from around the state along with families and supporters, who could provide donations to the cause.

In addition to vaulter entry fees, competitors could also buy a "mulligan," or an extra attempt at a given height after exhausting the three typical tries allowed, for a \$5 donation.

Food for the picnic was provided by the Tippy Steer in Blaine.

From all sources, the total donation to Rangers Supporting Rangers amounted to \$660, beating last year's figure of \$440.



A vaulter prepares to make an attempt during G-Fest at Forest Lake High School Aug. 25.

## Cha-a-a-a-a-arge!

Photo by Brad O'Neil

Sophomore midfielder Emma Collier of the Forest Lake girls soccer team sets an attack in motion during the Rangers' 3-2 home victory over Cambridge-Isanti Aug. 29.

That win, plus another by a 3-0 scoreline over Bloomington Jefferson two days earlier, gave the Rangers a winning streak, allowing them to run full steam ahead into the opening game of their Suburban East Conference schedule, a 7 p.m. home start against Woodbury on Thursday.

Collier was responsible for an assist on three of the six Ranger goals last week. Two goals each were scored by senior forward Maria Vilella and junior midfielder Olivia Mitchell, while one each went to senior midfielder Morgan Kuchenmeister and junior defender Abby Jones. Junior defender Emma Brust was credited with a pair of assists, while senior goalkeeper Ashley Halliday made eight saves in the two games, including her first shutout of the year against Jefferson.

The Rangers will join the boys in making a trip to Chisago Lakes for a doubleheader Saturday. The girls will kick off at 10 a.m. with the boys following.



# Sports



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## Rangers fall to Tartan on night of long touchdowns

Brad O'Neil  
Sports Editor

The Forest Lake football team's season-opening game at Tartan Aug. 29 was a good one for those who like big scoring plays: With the exception of one drive, the teams only saw the red zone as a blur during one of six long distance touchdown sprints, which covered an average yardage of 53.3. Alas for the local boys, the Titans accounted for four of the touchdowns to the Rangers' two, creating a 24-15 win for the home side.

Early mistakes were killers for the Rangers in their first offensive forays of the year. The Rangers received the kickoff and moved strongly from their own 14 to the Tartan 42 in eight plays, only to see a Colton Trapp pass picked off by Kenny Jordan and returned to the Ranger 43. The Titans only needed one play to take advantage, when Dorion Singer got behind the defense and received a 43-yard bomb from DeShawn Carter. A faulty point-after try held the score at 6-0.

The Rangers looked to make a similar move when Quentin Evans picked off a Tartan pass and brought the ball to the near 30. In a short drive that crossed into the second quarter, the Rangers rode power runs by Troy Pleski and a fourth-down conversion on a slant from Trapp to Westen Peterson to drive inside the Titan 5. Their attempt at a ty-

ing touchdown went completely awry, however, when a fumble was picked up by Singer, who ran 96 yards for a touchdown at the wrong end. A 2-point attempt was stuffed by the Rangers.

The Rangers began a later second quarter drive at their own 19, and a bobbled handoff nearly led to further disaster before Trapp managed to fall on the ball. Things improved from that inauspicious start when Trapp found Peterson for a 43-yard gain on the next play, and then Pleski took the next handoff 40 yards for the first Forest Lake points of the year. Trapp kicked the PAT to bring the score to 12-7.

The Rangers held Tartan at bay until late in the third quarter, when Quantrell Fields scored from 22 yards out, a relatively short touchdown by the game's standards. Singer would score his third touchdown on a 71-yard reception — in both cases, the Titans failed to add to their score on the extra point.

The Titans' three big offensive scoring plays (the fumble return not counting in that category) were harsh on the Ranger defense, which only gave up 100 yards all game otherwise.

"I thought the defense played really well," head coach Sam Ferraro said. "It was just three plays, defensively. The second [big pass] we undercut it and it was close to being a pick, we just couldn't get it."

Trapp hit Cole Brisbois for a 48-yard



Photos by Brad O'Neil

Wide receiver Quentin Evans picks up yardage after a catch during the Rangers' 24-15 loss at Tartan on Aug. 29.

score early in the fourth quarter, and Pleski picked up the 2-pointer to close the gap to 24-15, but that would be as close as the Rangers would come.

"The guys don't quit," Ferraro said. "They're still learning, and we'll get better. Usually the biggest change is from week one to week two, and that determines your season, I believe."

Forest Lake will try to even their record in a road contest Friday at Coon Rapids, which also stands 0-1 after being shutout by St. Thomas Academy 34-0 in week one. The game will represent both teams' first foray within the Suburban Blue subdistrict. The teams

played close games each of the last two seasons, with the Rangers falling 21-19 last fall despite threatening in Cardinal territory in the closing minutes.

Ferraro noted, though, that a new coaching staff at Coon Rapids means that the Rangers may not be able to take much from their past experiences.

"We'll see what they've got going on," Ferraro said. "We'll need to play with some heart and just make some plays."

After starting with two games on the road, the Rangers will head home in week three (Sept. 13) for a clash against Hopkins.



Troy Pleski scored the Rangers' first touchdown of the season on a 40-yard run in the second quarter. Joining in the celebrations are Austin Bergum, Westen Peterson and Pedro Castillo.



The Forest Lake defense swarms to stop by Tartan's Tien Deng rush during the third quarter of the season opener for both teams.

## Big week coming up for North Lakes, LILA squads

Brad O'Neil  
Sports Editor

The days ahead are packed with important early events on the local charter school schedule.

The first big game is actually in the past, played after the press deadline for this edition. The North Lakes Academy and Lakes International Language Academy boys soccer teams were set to square off for the first time ever on Tuesday. NLA and LILA have been frequent opponents over the past few years in middle school and other sub-varsity level sports, but they finally met for the first time in varsity competition in two boys basketball games last year, with NLA taking both

contests. See next week's issue of The Times for a report on the charters' first varsity soccer clash. NLA entered the game with an 0-1-0 record, while LILA was making its season debut. In other upcoming action, NLA will visit West Lutheran on Thursday and Christian Life on Friday, both with a 4 p.m. kickoff. LILA will visit Metro Schools College Prep Thursday at 5:30 p.m. before playing its first home game against the Academy for Sciences and Agriculture on Wednesday, Sept. 11, at 4:30 p.m.

The NLA vs. LILA game was due to represent the back end of a doubleheader with the NLA/LILA girls co-op,

which played Legacy Christian in the opener. The Husky girls came in at 3-0-0, with their most notable (indeed, most ridiculous) result being an 18-0 slaughter of St. Paul Johnson on Aug. 27. The Husky girls will also host the International School of Minnesota on Thursday at 4:15 p.m., but the big date for the girls will be Tuesday, Sept. 10, which is the annual Kick Gold game raising funds for childhood cancer research and awareness. Fans can participate in a silent auction during the Husky's match against Fridley and also help fund the Children's Hospital of St. Paul by purchasing various sale items or by freewill donations. The

match will get underway at 5:30 p.m.

LILA's two new fall teams will make their historic debuts in the coming days. The Dragon volleyball squad will play its first game Thursday at 7 p.m., at home against the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf, and the girls swimming and diving team will compete at South St. Paul on Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 6 p.m. The Dragon volleyball team will play at home again Wednesday, Sept. 11, against the AFSA. Start time will depend on the conclusion of a junior varsity match, itself set to begin at 4:30 p.m.

The NLA/LILA cross-country team will compete for the first time



as a co-op on Thursday when the Huskies head to Fridley (The program is a continuation of the existing NLA team).

NLA volleyball has a big day on Saturday when the Huskies head to the Becker Invitational. Besides NLA and the host school, the eight-team bracket will bring together Benson, ERA/ISM, Eden Valley-Watkins, Minneapolis Washburn, PACT Charter and West Lutheran. The volleyball team (0-2) also heads to Washington Tech Friday at 7 p.m.

**State Farm – Proud Sponsor of the Athlete of the Week**



**JORDAN OBERHOLTZER**  
FL BOYS SOCCER

The senior striker scored the only goal in the Rangers' 1-0 home win over state No. 4-ranked Duluth East on Aug. 27, avenging a number of Section 7AA playoff defeats over the past few years.

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**CRYPTO FUN ANSWERS:**  
A) text B) summary C) title D) character

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# Sports

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## SPORTS GALLERY

### New-look netters sweep debut

After so many senior stars graduated with the class of 2019, the Forest Lake volleyball team has a new face at nearly every position this fall.

The reconstituted Rangers played their opening match of the new season Aug. 27 and handed Hill-Murray a straight-sets defeat, winning three times by identical 25-17 scores.

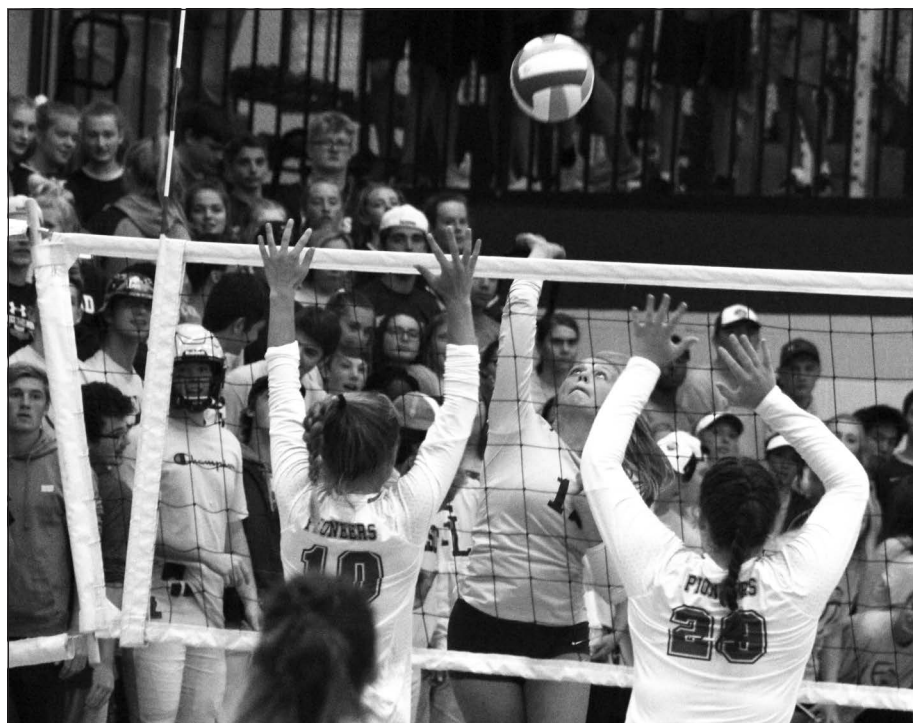
Photos from the home victory provide the subject of our first Sports Gallery, a new weekly feature we hope you will enjoy.

Junior right-sider Jamie Ihfe led the offensive effort against the Pioneers with nine kills, while junior middle hitter Maddie DeMars and senior outside hitter Josie Olson each ended with five. Two senior setters divided the assists, with Hanna Zlab making 17 and Ally Joslin 15; Zlab was also the serving leader with three aces. Lead-

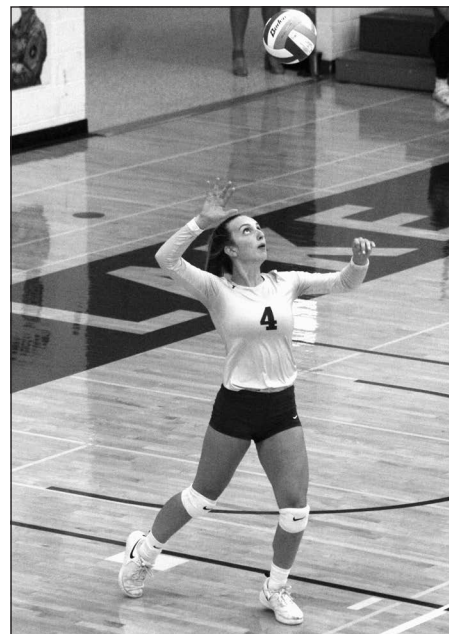
ing in digs were junior libero McKenna Andrews and senior outside hitter Kate Gemeunden. Senior middle hitter Abby Drury was responsible for three of the teams' five solo blocks.

The Rangers faced the toughest possible follow-up to their victory, welcoming defending Class AAA state champions Champlin Park to Forest Lake on Aug. 29. The Rangers won the first set 27-25 before the champs reeled off sets of 22-25, 19-25 and 18-25 to take the match.

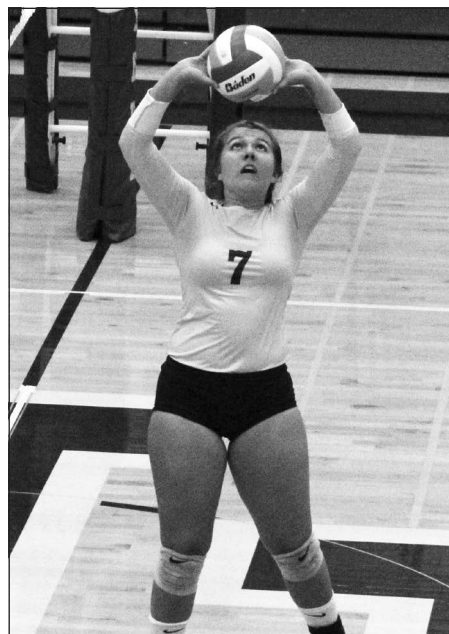
The Rangers (1-1) were due to host another state champion, Class AA titlists North Branch, on Tuesday after press time. They'll be on the road at Anoka Thursday, Elk River Sept. 10 and Cretin-Derham Hall Sept. 17 before returning home for a Sept. 19 clash with Mounds View. All the games begin at 7 p.m.



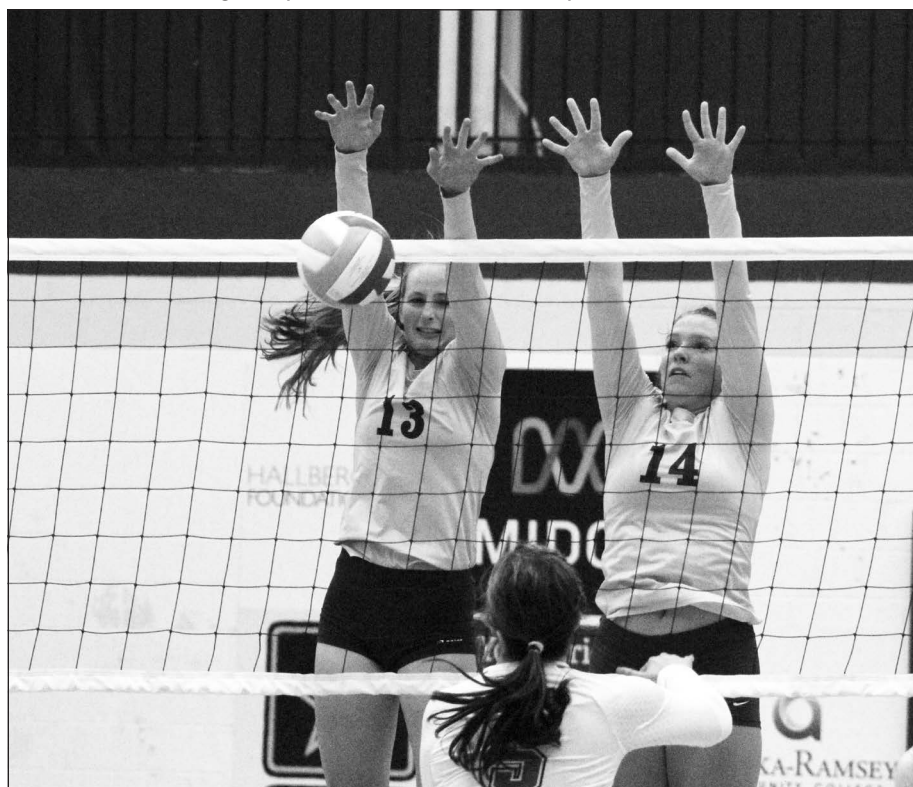
Senior Grace Sieber goes up for an attack in front of a packed student section. Photos by Brad O'Neil



The setters: Seniors Hanna Zlab (left) and Ally Joslin (right) guided the attack from the floor and from the serving line.



Senior Abby Drury (13) scores one of her three solo blocks in the match, with senior Josie Olson in support.



Senior Abby Drury (13) scores one of her three solo blocks in the match, with senior Josie Olson in support.

## SPORTS BRIEFS

### Rangers run near top of giant fields

The Forest Lake boys and girls cross-country teams began their 2019 campaigns in the St. Olaf Showcase, a meet that eschews the usual division of fields into varsity, JV, middle school and other categories and just throws every single runner into one race, pitting girls against a field of 608 and boys against a field of 862. The Forest Lake girls placed third out of 34 complete teams with 157 points, while the boys were sixth in a 39-team field with 241. Finishing "in the points" for the girls were junior Natalie Runquist (11th place, 19:45.5 for 5,000 meters), freshman Ellie Hanowski (13th, 19:48.2), junior Amelea Hauer (34th, 20:30.1), freshman Jordan Parent (38th, 20:42.0) and sophomore Annabelle Stang (68th, 21:15.5). In the boys top five were senior Max Charlsen (13th, 16:44.3), senior Austin Sievers (18th, 16:53.1), sophomore Dan Vanacker (28th, 17:07.2), senior Jeremiah Vanacker (47th, 17:42.0) and junior Drew Sampson (139th, 18:47). A total of 33 Ranger girls and 28 Ranger boys competed across the two races. The Rangers return to action Friday at 4 p.m. in the Cambridge-Isanti Norm Aven Invitational at Isanti Middle School.

### Swimming and diving outlasts Bears

The Forest Lake swimming and diving team conquered White Bear Lake 104 to 76 in the first dual meet of the new Suburban East Conference season, held at the White Bear YMCA on Aug. 29. Ranger entries claimed the top spot in all 12 events, including three girls who won top honors twice. Senior Ellie Thiele won the 50- (26.53 seconds) and 100-yard freestyle (58.39) races. Senior Ella Anderson took the 500-yard freestyle (5:44.94) and 100-yard backstroke (1:13.34) while freshman Haley Bent won the 200-yard individual medley (2:29.66) and 100-yard butterfly (1:07.56). Other Rangers to win individually were junior Paige Anderson in the 200-yard freestyle (2:05.05), senior McKinley Leavitt in 1-meter diving (252.50 points) and junior Ashlyn Mackowick (1:07.56). The Rangers also claimed relay victories in the 200-yard medley (Mackowick, Ella Anderson, Bent, Thiele; 2:01.88), 200-yard freestyle (Paige Anderson, Mackowick, freshman Izzy Maloney and Thiele; 1:50.72) and 400-yard freestyle (senior Annie Larson, junior Jenna Stockinger, Paige and Ella Anderson; 4:06.26). The Rangers will host Stillwater Thursday at 6 p.m. before heading to the White Bear Invitational all day Saturday.

### Tennis falls across three matches

The Forest Lake girls tennis team was beaten in its first Suburban East Conference match 6-1 by Cretin-Derham Hall on Aug. 28, a day after the match was postponed by rain. The following day, the Rangers traveled to Princeton for a triangular meet among Section 7AA foes and were swept 7-0 by the hosts and Elk River. On Tuesday, after press time, the Rangers were schedule to visit Irondale, becoming the first Ranger squad to compete in a conference game against the new SEC school. The Rangers will then face White Bear Lake at home Thursday at 3:30 p.m.



The sun sets and casts its last light of the evening over one of the more than 10,000 lakes in magnificent Minnesota. Photo by Ray Gildow

## Counting our Minnesota outdoor blessings

Ray Gildow  
Outdoors Columnist

As I was contemplating writing my next outdoor article with Max, my black lab and constant outdoor walking partner, it occurred to me that the world is getting overwhelmed with so much negative news that something needs to be written about all the great things we have to be thankful for. Let's forget about politics, climate change, invasive species, insurance, hate and greed, and pause to look around at what we sometimes fail to see.

We live in a part of the world blessed with water, an abundance of natural resources and a public that values these treasures. We have 67 state parks, nine recreation areas, nine state waysides and 23 state trails covering a total of 267,000 acres. Minnesota is home to five national parks and 42,000,000 acres of state forests. The state has 11,842 lakes over 10 acres in size and some of the cleanest water in North America.

Our air quality, for most of the year, is exceptional, and Minnesotans have long supported measures to keep our environment safe and clean. Yes, there are pressures to develop land, drain ditches, construct pipelines and reduce farmland, but there are checks

and balances in play that give thoughtful discussion to policies that impact those decisions.

Minnesota has an abundance of wildlife. Our lakes are still great for fishing, our woods are alive with deer, squirrels and an array of songbirds that is second to none. Then there are the moose, northern elk, black bears, turkeys, eagles, hawks and lightning bugs, some of which are not commonly seen in other parts of the country.

In Minnesota, it is possible to jump in the car and drive for a short distance in any direction and see all these wonderful resources, resources that perhaps are taken for granted when they should be celebrated and appreciated more often. There have been a number of recent studies that indicate that people who spend just a few hours a week outdoors have a healthier life than those who choose not to do that. It could be a walk down your local road or a short bike ride through the woods or a trip to the local park.

So, take some time to stop and think about all the wonderful things we have in our lives to be thankful for and share those thoughts with others. We live in a special place. Get outside and enjoy the marvel of Minnesota's outdoors. Of course, be sure to check for ticks before you go back in the house!