

SPORTS

Lexi Gerdes and the Detroit Lakes swimming and diving team placed second at the Section 8A championship in Grand Rapids and qualified for 10 of a dozen state events in an impressive combined performance Nov. 8-9 in the Thunderhawks' home pool.

Vance Carlson / Forum News Service



LAKERS STATE QUALIFIERS IN 10 OF 12 EVENTS

By Robert Williams

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Head coach Carol Fischer was pumped about the performance of her swimming and diving team at the Section 8A championships in Grand Rapids over the weekend.

"The Lakers were OUTSTANDING at sections!" she relayed in a post-meet email. "We had some incredible swimming and diving."

Detroit Lakes will be represented by seven swimmers and one diver in ten events at the State Class A meet later this week.

DL sends two individuals to state holding three section titles: Jennifer Tracy in the 200-individual medley and the 100-butterfly and Madi Gerdes in the 100-breaststroke.

Tracy broke section and pool records in her fly win. One of those marks is something new.

Her butterfly record time was 58.49. The former pool record of 59.20 was held by Amanda Paulson of Monticello and had stood since 2008. Paulson was a state 50-free champion, member of the Magic's state True Team winning team and a four-year standout at Iowa State—a four-year Most Valuable Swimmer for the Cyclones and a holder of more than 100 career wins.

That's a big mark to take down.

Tracy already owned the section record having set it during her freshman season in 2017 (58.82).

"Jen makes it look so easy that most people don't realize what an incredible

swimmer she is," said Fischer.

Tracy and senior Lucy Steinke were voted swimmers of the Year in Section 8A by the 10 section coaches.

Steinke had her best meet ever.

"By earning a bronze in the 50-free and swimming out of her mind in the 100 backstroke—a new event for her this year—taking second place and punching a ticket to state," said Fischer.

Madi Gerdes took a powerful, yet ethereal route to her section championship, according to Fischer.

"Madi's swim was sublime in the 100 breaststroke," Fischer said. "She's fun to watch because she knows exactly when to turn up the pace to full-throttle and just burns it into the finish."

Gerdes won in a time of 1:09.63, besting Grand Rapids' Hannah Rauzi (1:10.22), but more impressively beating three of her own teammates as the Lakers owned half of the finals field in the breaststroke.

Evan Westrum was 0.23 seconds off of sending two Lakers to state in the event placing third, followed by Lexi Gerdes in fourth place (1:10.96) and Ellie Staley in seventh (1:15.07).

Rauzi's finish was important to Grand Rapids in the team standings as her 17 points for second place had to fend off a combined 63 points from DL's quartet. Theaker domination pulled DL to within 16 points of the Thunderhawks heading to the final relay. Grand Rapids and DL finished one-two in the 400-free.

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Robert Williams / Tribune

Jackson Hegg led Detroit Lakes divers with a third place finish and a second consecutive state berth at Saturday's final day of competition at the Section 8A championships.

Richter, Dragons have 'total faith' in QB Sinani

By Eric Peterson
Forum News Service

Minnesota State Moorhead junior Jakup Sinani had missed the previous five games heading into last weekend's game at Minot State.

The 6-foot-3, 197-pound quarterback played like he had never left the lineup.

Sinani passed for more than 500 yards and four touchdowns returning from a lower leg injury that he suffered in a Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference football game against Northern State in September.

"I was pretty anxious all week," said Sinani, who has played in four games this season. "I had a good feeling going into it." Sinani is set to make back-to-back starts for the first time since September. The Dragons (5-4) host rival Bemidji State at Scheels Field at Alex Nemzek Stadium this weekend. The teams are playing for the "Axe" traveling trophy and the Dragons have a chance to win three consecutive games for the first time this season.

The Dragons have two games remaining in the regular season, including the game against Bemidji State.

"It's a program that's been traditionally strong," Dragons head coach Steve Laqua. "The last two games are huge. It will swing how you look at the final record. This is criti-



David Samson / Forum News Service

Minnesota State Moorhead junior quarterback Jakup Sinani (6) passed for more than 500 yards last Saturday as he returned to the lineup after missing the five previous games.

cal, the last two games. We're playing both like they are playoff-type games."

Sinani looked in postseason form last weekend, completing 40 of 51 passes for 513 yards against Minot State. The passing yards and completions were both single-game school records for Sinani, who hadn't played since Sept. 21, the third week of the season. He was named the NSIC offensive player of the week. "Whenever anyone comes off an injury we are pretty pumped up," said Dragons wide receiver Jake Richter, who had 10 catches for 207 yards and a touchdown last Saturday. "Everyone was excited for him. I have total faith in him."

Richter missed the first four games this season after he suffered an Achilles injury last February. The 6-foot-4, 214-pound junior has tried to increase his workload the past five games in returning from the injury. Last Saturday, Richter played about 60 snaps, which is the most he's been able to play this season.

The Minot State game is the first game in which both Sinani and Richter played together this season.

"Having Sinani back was a big thing for me," said Richter, who is from Detroit

Lakes, Minn. "We have a little bit of that chemistry."

Laqua added, "I think the two of them have a special connection."

While Sinani was sidelined, he was on the headsets on the sideline during games and was able to listen to Laqua call plays during games. Sinani said being plugged into the play calling helped him mentally prepare for his return to the field last Saturday.

"I got a feel how Laqua likes calling his plays," Sinani said. "He took advantage of that time," Laqua said.

Sinani helped mentor true freshmen quarterbacks Matthew Plasterer and Max Carter, who both saw playing time while Sinani was sidelined. Plasterer has completed 119 of 201 passes for 1,313 yards and seven touchdowns with seven interceptions this season.

"I thought he did a really good job of bringing suggestions to us when he was injured," Laqua said of Sinani, who passed for more than 1,500 yards and 11 touchdowns last season.

"These next two weeks kind of separate us if we want to be in the middle of the pack or the upper part of the league," said Sinani, who is from Oak Creek, Wis.

Running attack lifts Pierz over Perham

By Jason Groth
Forum News Service

The Pierz Pioneers used a three-headed running attack and a dominant performance from its offensive line to defeat the Perham Yellow-jackets 58-16 in the Class AAA Quarterfinals at Alexandria High School on Nov. 9.

The Pioneers had a pair of running backs eclipse the 100-yard mark in the win and a third come within seven yards. Michael Leidenfrost rushed for 132 yards and a touchdown, while University of Nebraska commit Matthias Algrain added 111 yards and two scores.

"We didn't show up to play, and they did," Perham head coach Kyle Knutson said. "They are an outstanding football team and we just couldn't get things done."

The Pioneers set the tone up early with their powerful offensive line. They opened holes for Blake Kowalczyk, Algrain and Leidenfrost during the opening quarter when they grabbed a 14-0 lead behind a 4-yard run and a 15-yard run from Kowalczyk and Algrain, respective-

ly. The first scoring drive was 10 plays, while the second one was six plays.

"They owned the line of scrimmage for the most part," Knutson said. "Our scheme was fine, and I thought we put people in position to make plays, but they were more physical than we were."

Perham answered back in the second quarter. Colton Hackel was back to punt, but it was blocked. He recovered it behind the line of scrimmage and fired to Noah Rooney down the sideline for the first down. The play set up Perham's first score when Hackel faked the hand off and took off down the left side for the 44-yard touchdown. Hackel connected with Finn Diggins for the 2-point try.

However, the Pierz offense was clicking on all cylinders. The Pioneers answered with a 15-yard touchdown pass to Preston Veith from Peter Schommer. It was one of three pass completions for Schommer in the win.

Blake Kowalczyk finished another scoring drive with a

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Robert Williams / Forum News Service

Pierz runningback Matthias Algrain dives forward and gets tackled by Perham's Isaac Lung and Dawson Kellogg.

Steil leads RCORI to state semis

By Robert Williams
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RCORI quarterback Jack Steil scored both touchdowns last week in the Spartans' defeat of Detroit Lakes in the Section 8AAAA final and Friday night Steil ran for three touchdowns and threw a scoring pass to lead the Spartans to the state semifinals in a 35-7 victory over Delano at St. Cloud State's Husky Stadium.

The Spartans will make a state semifinal appearance for the first time since 2016.

Both teams scored on opening drives. Delano ate up seven minutes on the clock to go up 7-0 on a Robbie Knight three-yard run and fumble recovered by quarterback Max Otto in the end zone.

Steil and the Spartans chewed up the remainder of the first quarter with a 12-play, 60-yard drive ending in a Steil fourth and goal, one-yard plunge to tie the game.

RCORI's Luke Humbert led the lone touchdown of the second quarter on a

five-yard run to send the Spartans to the huddle in a close game up 14-7.

RCORI's defense has been stellar throughout the playoffs limiting opposing offenses and the Tigers left Husky stadium with the lone touchdown on its first drive of the game.

Steil hit Tucker Haakonson from 14 yards out for the only third quarter score and a 21-7 lead heading to the final 12 minutes.

Steil added three and four-yard touchdown runs to tie the game late.

RCORI had 289 yards of total offense; Steil rushed 17 times for 74 yards and three TDs; he was 12-15 passing for 146 yards and a score.

Otto was 12-23 passing for 111 yards but was picked off twice.

RCORI has won five straight games to improve to 9-2 and will face undefeated Winona (11-0) in the state semifinals Friday, Nov. 15 at 4:30 p.m. at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis.

Winona defeated Simley 24-14 in Hastings to advance Friday night.



Robert Williams / Tribune

RCORI quarterback Jack Steil ran for three touchdowns and three for one in a blowout state quarterfinal victory over Delano in St. Cloud Friday night.

Swimmers load up section field in prelims

By Robert Williams
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The defending champion Detroit Lakes swimming team qualified in all 11 preliminary events Friday at the Section 8A championships in Grand Rapids sending No. 1 seeds into the finals in all three relays and in five individual events.

The Lakers began the meet with a 200-medley win from Lucy Steinke, Madi Gerdes, Evan Westrum and Jennifer Tracy touching first in a time of 1:54.89.

The 200-freestyle relay team of Kaitlyn Peterson, Chelsy Johnson, Steinke and Evan Westrum placed first in 1:41.95.

Tracy, Faith Hamm, Johnson and Peterson completed the relay sweep taking first in the 400-free in a time of 3:45.29. Jennifer Tracy led the individual portion of the meet with a pair of first place finishes in the 200 Individual Medley (2:16.75) and the 100-fly (59.69).

DL will send three to the butterfly finals with Evan Westrum (1:00.95) the two-seed and Lexi Gerdes fifth (1:02.4).

The Lakers owned half of the breaststroke championship field qualifying four swimmers led by first place qualifier Madi Gerdes (1:10.17). Evan Westrum (1:10.89) placed third, followed by Lexi Gerdes (1:11.08) in fourth and Ellie Staley (1:14.41) in seventh.

Steinke was the lone backstroke qualifier and heads to the finals in the top spot after a prelim winning swim of 1:02.33. She also will represent DL in the 50-free after placing third in a time of 25.48.

Kaitlyn Peterson swam the top 500-freestyle time of 5:31.65 with Faith Hamm (5:37.59) advancing in fourth place.

A trio of Lakers advanced in the 200-freestyle paced by Peterson's third place time of 2:01.78. Faith Hamm (2:02.38) qualified fourth, Chelsy Johnson (2:06.6) finished seventh, Johnson is the lone Laker



Robert Williams / Tribune

Junior Jennifer Tracy and the Detroit Lakes swimming and diving team are eyeing state qualifying performances in each of the 12 events at the Section 8A championships in Grand Rapids and are in good position for a run at a second consecutive section team title.

in the 100-freestyle finals after placing third in 56.76.

Each section qualifies the top four divers to the state meet. A diver must have performed 11 dives in the section meet to advance. The top two swimmers qualify in each individual swimming and relay event or a contestant or relay team shall qualify by equaling or surpassing the established standard.

Section 8A championship lists qualifiers
1 DL 1:54.89 (Steinke, M. Gerdes, E. Westrum)
200 Free
2 Kaitlyn Peterson 2:01.78

4 Faith Hamm 2:02.38
7 Chelsy Johnson 2:06.6
200 IM
1 Jennifer Tracy 2:16.75
50 Free
1 Lucy Steinke 25.48
100 Free
1 Jennifer Tracy 59.69
2 Evan Westrum 1:00.89
6 Lexi Gerdes 1:02.4
100 Free
2 Chelsy Johnson 56.76
500 Free
1 Kaitlyn Peterson 5:31.65
4 Faith Hamm 5:37.59
200 Free relay
DL 1:41.95 (Peterson, Johnson, Steinke, E. Westrum)
100 Back
1 Lucy Steinke 1:02.33
100 Breast
1 Madi Gerdes 1:10.17
3 Evan Westrum 1:10.89
4 Lexi Gerdes 1:11.08
1 DL 1:14.41 (Staley, Hamm, Johnson, Peterson)
1 DL 3:45.29 (Tracy, F. Hamm, Johnson, Peterson)

Warriors spoil home opener for Lakers

By Staff report

Sydney Phaneuf, Julianna Teske, Tayla Hendrickson and Hannah Cornelissen tallied two goals each as the Warroad Warriors spoiled the home-opener for the Detroit Lakes Lakers with a 13-0 victory at the Kent Freeman Arena on Nov. 9.

The Warriors wasted little time when they jumped ahead just 13 seconds into the game with a goal by Marlie Johnston and never looked back in securing their first win of the season in the Section 8A contest.

Six of the 19 Warroad shots in the first period found the back of the net and they continued to pile on with a big second period, scoring on five of their 15 shots on goal.

Maddy Skogman, Karlie Meeker, Geno Hendrickson, Marlie Johnston and Sophie Johnson each added a goal for the Warriors. The Warriors were strong on the power play as well, converting on two of their three chances in the game.

Detroit Lakes' goalie Leah Honer stopped 31 of the 44 shots she faced. Warroad's CJ Lanctot stopped all seven shots she faced in the win.

The Lakers search for win No. 1 when they travel to East Grand Forks on Nov. 14. The Green Wave opened the season with a 5-2 defeat to Bemidji. Jacelyn Brenden scored both goals for the Green Wave in the second period of their season-opening defeat.

Warrior Stats:
W: Julianna Teske, ES, (Lila Lanctot)
W: Karlie Meeker, ES, (Cornelissen)
W: Cornelissen, ES, (Meeker)
W: Geno Hendrickson, PP, (Sydney Phaneuf)
W: Tayla Hendrickson, ES, (Abbey Harwick)
Second Period:
W: Phaneuf, ES, (Hardwick)
W: Hendrickson, ES, (Lila Lanctot)
W: Cornelissen, PP, (Meeker)
W: Julianna Teske, ES, (Madison LaVigne, Reanne Smith)
W: Phaneuf, ES, (Unassisted)
Third Period:
W: Maddy Skogman, ES, (Unassisted)
W: Sophie Johnson, ES, (LaVigne)

EVENTS

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The Lakers scored 419 total points to grab a runner-up team finish behind the host Thunderbolts. Grand Rapids scored 439 points to complete a sweep of the True Team section title and the Section 8A Girls Championship.

This section has been tightly contested. Bemidji defeated DL, by only nine points for first place in 2017; the Lakers returned the favor in 2018.

The bronze team finish of 2019 was up for grabs between Bemidji and Park Rapids battling to the last race with the Lumberjacks grabbing bronze by one point over the Panthers 292-291.

The top two finishers in all swim races and on top four divers advance to state.

The list of Laker state qualifiers is big:

► The 200 medley relay (Lucy Steinke, Madi Gerdes, Jen Tracy and Evan Westrum)
► The team is one of the best the Lakers have ever had. The foursome qualified (1:52.98) for state not only by place, but also by time, a new standard (4:53.49).

"Which doesn't always happen but sets them up for good racing," said Fischer. "They are close to breaking the school record and that is a goal for state."

► Kaitlyn Peterson a two-race runner-up in the 200 and 500-freestyle; Kaitlyn posted two of her best times with a couple of the best races of the meet," Fischer said.

► Jackson Hegg with a bronze finish in one-meter diving.
► "Jackson turned in an outstanding 11-dive performance earning her way to state," said Fischer.

Hegg placed 18th at state last season and 21st as an eighth-grader in 2015.

► Evan Westrum, second in the 100-butterfly;
► 200-free relay team (Westrum, Steinke, Chelsy Johnson and Peterson);

► Steinke, runner-up in the 100-backstroke;

► The 200-freestyle relay team of Tracy, Johnson, Faith Hamm and Peterson.

Westrum, Steinke, Johnson and Peterson continue to shatter their own school record. New time: 1:41.50.

► The 400-freestyle relay (3:44.11 - Tracy, Johnson, F. Hamm, Peterson)

"The 400-free team swam a super race and will need to do that again at State to make it into finals," Fischer said.

Other scoring finishes (top 16) came from Faith Hamm 3rd in the 200-free and 4th in the 500; Chelsy Johnson 6th in the 200-free and 3rd in the 100; Madi Gerdes 11th and Rylie Wendi 16th in the 200-IM; Lucy Steinke 3rd in the 50-free; Jessica Bolz 13th in the 50-free; Lexi Gerdes 6th in the 100-fly and 4th in the 100-breaststroke; Marin Westrum 10th in the 100-free and 12th in the 100-Back; Ellie Staley 11th in the 500-free and 7th in the 100-breaststroke.

Fergus Falls' Joyce Monk was named section coach of the year.

The State meet will be

held Nov. 14-16 at the University of Minnesota's Jean K. Freeman Aquatic Center in Minneapolis.

Section 8A Girls Swimming and Diving Championships, Grand Rapids, Nov. 8-9, 4:30 p.m. Detroit Lakes, 419, Bemidji 292, Park Rapids Area 291, Fergus Falls 206, Thief River Falls 123, Perham/MV Mills/Henning 113, Warroad/Rosseau/CB-MR 81, Crookston 56.

(Top 2 swimmers, relay, top four divers 200 Medley relay
1 Grand Rapids 1:52.33
2 Detroit Lakes, 1:52.98 (Steinke, M. Gerdes, Tracy, E. Westrum)
200 Freestyle
1 Elsa Vinin GR 1:59.12
2 Kaitlyn Peterson DL 1:59.16
3 Faith Hamm DL 2:03.41
4 Chelsy Johnson DL 2:06.71
200 Individual Medley
Jennifer Tracy, DL 2:12.88
2 Emily Carlson PP 2:17.81
1 Madi Gerdes DL 2:20.04
100 Breaststroke
1 Lucy Steinke DL 1:02.37
2 Anrika Dalgner TRF 26.01
200 Freestyle
11 Jessica Bolz DL 27.31
11 Dana Fischer PER 416.50
2 Jada Johnson GR 380.50
3 Jackson Hegg JF 358.95
4 Mady Schmitt BEM 377.00
100 Breaststroke
13 Kaitlyn Peterson DL 275.70
1 Ava Morrison DL 267.86
100 Butterfly
1 Jennifer Tracy DL 58.49
2 Evan Westrum DL 59.89
6 Lexi Gerdes DL 1:03.10
100 Freestyle
1 Ellie Vinin PER 85.65
2 Alyssa Wilson PER 86.14
3 Chelsy Johnson DL 87.08
10 Marvin Westrum DL 1:00.17
500 Freestyle
11 Jennifer Tracy GR 625.50
2 Kaitlyn Peterson DL 625.90
3 Lexi Gerdes DL 630.90
11 Ellie Staley DL 6:55.61
100 Breaststroke
1 Grand Rapids 1:41.24
2 Detroit Lakes 1:41.80 (E. Westrum, Steinke, Johnson, Peterson)
100 Backstroke
1 Alyssa Jackson GR 1:01.62
2 Lucy Steinke DL 1:02.24
12 Marlin Westrum DL 1:10.96
100 Breaststroke
1 Madi Gerdes DL 1:10.89
2 Hannah Raatz GR 1:10.21
3 Evan Westrum DL 1:10.84
4 Lexi Gerdes DL 1:11.08
7 Ellie Staley DL 1:15.07
400 Freestyle relay
1 Grand Rapids 3:42.60
2 Detroit Lakes 3:43.11 (Tracy, Johnson, F. Hamm, Peterson)

PIERZ

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1-yard run late in the second quarter to make it 29-8 at the half.

The Pioneers defense was strong as well, limiting the Perham offense throughout. Hackel finished with 112 yards on the ground and 87 yards through the air. Rooney finished with four receptions for 65 yards, while Dawson Kellogg rushed for 30 yards for the Yellowjacks.

The Pioneers used a long drive that carried into the fourth quarter to seal the victory. Carter Moulzoff broke free for a 20-yard touchdown run to make it 37-8 in the fourth quarter.

Algarn added a 9-yard run to make it 44-8 in the fourth quarter before Perham struck back. Hackel finished off a 11

play drive with a 14-yard pass to Diggins. Kellogg converted the try to make it 44-16.

However, a pair of 1-play drives for Pierz ended the game with a 60-yard run from Leidenforst and a 56-yard run by Virnig closed out the scoring.

Blake Kowalczyk finished with 93 yards and two scores for the Pioneers. Pierz finished with 367 yards of offense in the win.

The Pioneers improved to 12-0 on the season and will now play Jackson County Central at US Bank Stadium on Nov. 16 in the Class AAA semifinals.

Perham finishes the 2019 season with an 8-4 mark. It was Perham's second consecutive trip to the Class AAA Tournament and eighth appearance at the state tournament.

Knutson said the

senior's class impact on the Perham football program was immeasurable.

"This group of seniors are just outstanding," Knutson said. "They are outstanding people and outstanding young men. I feel blessed to have been able to work with them. The leadership that they have provided and what they brought to this program is tremendous. They are going to be missed!"

PR 14 15 29 - 58
PR 16 8 - 16
First Quarter
PRZ Blake Kowalczyk 4-yard run (Maverick Kowalczyk kick)
PRZ Mattias Algerin 15-yard run (M. Kowalczyk kick)

Second Quarter
PER Colton Hackel 44-yard run (Hackel to Finn Diggins)
PRZ Preston Voth 15-yard pass from Peter Schommer (Maverick Kowalczyk run)

PRZ Blake Kowalczyk 1-yard run (M. Kowalczyk kick)
Fourth Quarter
PRZ Carter Moulzoff 20-yard run (Mitch Laidenforst pass from Schommer)
PRZ Algerin 5-yard run (Mason Zalcik kick)

Finn Diggins 14-yard pass from Hackel (Dawson Kellogg run)
PRZ Schommer 100-yard 60-yard run (Mason Rack run)

PRZ Benjamin Virnig 56-yard run (conversion failed)

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