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JCC GYMNASTICS

Benda qualifies for state on balance beam



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Payten Benda (second from left) is all smiles after her sixth-place performance on balance beam at the Section 3A meet earned her a medal and trip to state. Celebrating with Benda are coaches Brandon Halverson (from left), Ellen VonOhlen and Brooklyn Schuett.

Huskies finish third in team competition at Section 3A meet

by DAN CONDON
Sports Editor

When Jackson County Central gymnastics coach Ellen VonOhlen got back in the gym after putting equipment away following the Section 3A meet Saturday in Jackson, she saw Payten Benda crying.

It turns out they were tears of joy after Benda found out she qualified for the state tournament on balance beam.

"I was in the other room putting equipment away and I walked back in and she was crying," VonOhlen said. "I said, 'Why are you crying,' and she said, 'Those aren't sad tears; those are happy tears. I made it to state.' That was awesome."

Benda scored 8.775 on her balance beam routine to finish sixth and earn her first trip to the state meet.

"She's excited," VonOhlen said.

But VonOhlen said she wasn't sure if Benda would make it after she missed a connection during her routine.

"She missed her connection, but the rest was really solid," VonOhlen said. "I figured the only way she was going to get a spot is if she hit solid, so it was a nice surprise."

Benda also finished seventh on floor exercise with a season-high score of 9.0, missing a trip to state by one spot.

Benda placed 11th on bars (7.575) and scored 8.6 on vault. Her all-around score of 33.95 put Benda in eighth place.

Huskies finish third

JCC posted a team score of 132.6 to finish third in the meet. Worthington easily won the team title and

earned a trip to state with its score of 143.05. Martin County Area scored 133.15 to finish second.

Rounding out the top five were Redwood Valley (131.25) and Luverne (129.55).

VonOhlen said she was glad to see the Huskies so close to MCA after the Magic beat the Huskies by more than five points in the regular-season finale.

"We were right there with everybody," she said. "We were only behind Martin County Area by .55, so that was good."

Gymnasts step up

Carson Schneekloth tore her ACL and MCL in practice during the week, so the Huskies had to fill her spots on vault, beam and floor.

VonOhlen said it was hard to see Schneekloth

See **GYM** on **B3**

Inside...



Payten Benda might add some new skills to her routine and is hoping for a beam stick at Friday's state meet.

JCC WRESTLING

Seven Huskies to state

Ten wrestlers are considered state qualifiers, seven advance to final state tournament

by DAN CONDON
Sports Editor

Seven Jackson County Central wrestlers will compete in the final day of the Class A individual state tournament and three others are considered state qualifiers.

The top two finishers at Saturday's Section 2A/3A Super Regional advanced to the eight-man state tournament and the top four were considered qualifiers.

"We had 10 state qualifiers because the top four are going to be state qualifiers this year because there were two sections and usually two go per section," JCC head coach Nate Hanson said. "I'm going to consider it 10 state qualifiers, which is the most since 1999. So that was a really, really, really good effort."

Logan Butzon, Payton Handevit and Caleb Vancura are going to state as Super Regional champions, while Nolan Ambrose, Kie Anderson, Thomas Freking and Matthew Haley advance as runners-up.

William Freking finished third at the Super Regional tournament and Dylan Withers and Coltan Bents both placed fourth to be considered state qualifiers.

Hanson said he knew going in to the individual postseason — which began with the Section 3A tournament last Tuesday, in which the top four finishers advanced to the Super Regional — there would be



PHOTO BY DAN CONDON

Logan Butzon tries to get a pin during the Section 3A tournament last Tuesday in Wabasso. Butzon won the Section 2A/3A Super Regional Saturday to advance to the state tournament for the third straight season.

plenty of stiff competition. "I knew it was going to be tough," he said after Saturday's Super Regional. "We have a couple pretty tough sections. There are some ranked guys staying home after today."

Vancura emerged as champion in one of the toughest brackets, finishing first at 195 pounds to advance to state for the

first time. He pinned both of his opponents in the section tournament last Tuesday, then pinned his first two in the Super Regional tourney.

That set up a matchup in the finals against Carter Quam of Kenyon-Wanamingo, who is ranked fifth at 220 pounds. Quam got to the finals by pinning sixth-ranked Josh Steffen

of Canby in the semifinals. "I knew I had my work cut out for me," Vancura said.

Neither wrestler scored in the first period, but Vancura got a takedown with five seconds left in the second period to lead 2-1.

"That was a good momentum starter," Vancura said. "It gave me confi-

See **WR** on **B3**

JCC BOYS' BASKETBALL



PHOTO BY DAN CONDON

Travis Rogotzke scores two of his 30 points after getting a steal against Fairmont in last week's post-season opener.

Rogotzke's huge game not enough as Cardinals rally past the Huskies

JCC sophomore scores 30, but Huskies give up 17-point second-half lead

by DAN CONDON
Sports Editor

A first-round upset seemed inevitable when

Travis Rogotzke made a 3-pointer to give the sixth-seeded Jackson County Central boys' basketball team a 47-30 lead over third-seeded Fairmont last Friday in the Section 3AA opener.

And it still seemed likely when Gavin Jacobsen made a 3-pointer for a 15-point lead with just

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BIG SOUTH CONFERENCE STANDINGS

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Team	BSC	All
Marshall	12-0	16-3
Luverne	9-3	14-4
Redwood	7-5	14-6
Worthington	6-6	9-10
Pipestone	4-8	10-10
Windom	3-9	10-10
JCC	1-11	3-16
East Team	BSC	All
Waseca	8-0	18-1
BEA	7-2	15-4
St. Peter	6-4	8-11
Fairmont	3-5	7-11
New Ulm	3-6	5-11
St. James	0-10	2-17

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Team	BSC	All
Marshall	12-0	18-0
Worthington	8-4	14-5
Windom	8-4	13-8
Redwood	5-6	12-8
Luverne	5-7	9-10
JCC	3-8	6-12
Pipestone	0-12	5-13
East Team	BSC	All
St. Peter	7-1	8-7
Waseca	5-2	12-7
Fairmont	7-3	13-6
St. James	4-4	8-9
New Ulm	2-8	3-15
BEA	1-8	4-14

WRESTLING

Team	BSC	All
JCC	11-0	31-3
Worthington	10-3	19-9
Marshall	8-3	19-13
Redwood	3-6	11-20
Pipestone	4-9	9-24
Windom	3-8	13-17
Luverne	0-10	2-26
East Team	BSC	All
Fairmont	8-0	28-1
BEA	6-3	21-6
New Ulm	5-4	23-9
St. Peter	5-4	22-10
Waseca	2-7	11-16
St. James	0-8	2-25

GYMNASTICS

Team	BSC	All
Worthington	13-0	14-0
JCC	7-3	7-4
Redwood	3-3	4-3
Luverne	3-3	3-3
Windom	6-9	7-9
Pipestone	3-6	3-6
Marshall	0-10	1-10
East Team	BSC	All
New Ulm	8-1	8-2
Fairmont	9-1	10-1
St. Peter	5-4	6-4
Waseca	2-6	2-6
BEA	1-7	1-7
St. James	0-6	0-8

BOYS' HOCKEY

Team	BSC	All
New Ulm	15-0	16-4
Windom	12-3	12-7
Waseca	10-5	11-9
MN River	8-4	9-5
Redwood	8-8	8-11
Luverne	7-9	8-12
Marshall	5-11	5-14
Worthington	3-13	4-16
Fairmont	0-15	0-18

GIRLS' HOCKEY

Team	BSC	All
New Ulm	12-1	16-4
Luverne	12-2	16-4
MN River	11-4	11-8
Marshall	9-5	11-8
Worthington	4-9	6-11
Windom	4-10	7-13
Fairmont	3-10	5-13
Waseca	0-14	0-19

Get sports updates as they happen on Twitter @PilotSports

SPORTS CALENDAR

- Thursday, March 25**
No events
- Friday, March 26**
GYM - state tournament
- Saturday, March 27**
WR - team state tournament
WR - individual state tournament
- Sunday, March 28**
No events
- Monday, March 29**
BASE - Practice begins
SB - Practice begins
T&F - Practice begins
Golf - Practice begins
- Tuesday, March 30**
No events
- Wednesday, March 31**
No events

twitter @PilotSports

March 2, 5:24 p.m.
Caleb Vancura uses a reversal with five seconds left to win the 195-pound championship 4-3. He's going to state for the first time.

March 20, 9:25 p.m.
Payten Benda scored 8.775 on balance beam at the Section 3A meet today to qualify for state.

March 21, 9:29 p.m.
No. 2 Kie Anderson (32-3) opens the Class A 113-pound state tournament against No. 6 Gavin Albers (30-1) of LPGE-Browerville.

Follow for more updates

ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



Name: Payten Benda
Grade: 10
Sport: Gymnastics
The week that was: Benda scored 8.775 on balance beam at the section meet to finish sixth and qualify for the state tournament for the first time.
Coach's comments: "She missed her connection, but the rest was really solid," Ellen VonOhlen said. "She did a great job. That was awesome."



Name: Logan Butzon
Grade: 10
Sport: Wrestling
The week that was: Butzon won the Super Regional championship to return to state for the third time and had some big wins in the team state prelims.
Coach's comments: "Logan is having a really good year," Nate Hanson said. "He is one of the hardest workers in teh wrestling room and really enjoys the sport. He is one of our captains this year and has lead by example with the work and time he has put in."

Athletes of the week sponsored by:

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Talking my way to a sore tongue

I do not know if I have been doing a little too much yapping lately, but my tongue sure has been sore the last couple of weeks.

I know if your ears are ringing, someone is talking about you. Does it follow that if your tongue is sore, you are talking about yourself? I talk to myself, but about myself?

I do know people talk about me. They have to be. Constantly. My ears have had a constant ring for several years. Doctors call it tinnitus; I call it people wanting to talk about one really nice, neat, good-looking guy. So why are my ears the ones that are ringing?

Back to my tongue. I know I flap my jaws a lot, yet my jaw feels just fine. Of course, that could be due to the fact I have been flapping my jaw for so long it is used to it. I think I came out flapping my jaw about my interwomb life.

But my tongue? Dogs yap; humans do not. We wag our tongues. Maybe I have been wagging my tongue too much. However, I have yet to meet a dog with a sore tail because it wagged it too much. Maybe that is why some dogs are so yappy. Or would that be yippy?

I do not even want to think about if I yak too much. Every time I do, such as right now, I go to the inner theater of my mind and rewatch the scene from Christmas Vacation in which Eddie's dog is yakking on a bone. Luckily he got it up.

When it first hit, not only was my tongue very sore, but it even hurt to swallow. It was so hard to swallow, I had to force myself to eat. Eating became a chore instead of a hobby.

Some people eat for nourishment; some eat for something to do. I eat for a hobby. But then, my hobby is body sculpting. Yes, I am an amateur

body sculptor.

You may have seen my work while walking the streets of Lakefield. Me. Stevie Weevie. I am the piece of art I have been working on for the past 61-plus years.

I like to think I have done a pretty good job sculpting this piece of art I call my body. Maybe even worthy of hanging in the Louvre. Or a closet.

But then, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and my stomach be holding all it can.

That is the nice thing about being a body sculptor; you can sculpt your body any way you want. You do not even have to watch any YouTube videos. Just chop off a chunk here, plonk on a chunk there.

Of course, I watered it down a bit. There is more to body sculpting than meets the simple eye. A good body sculptor knows exactly what to eat and when to eat it so the morsel plops into the most optimal space to create the most aesthetic appearance.

Luckily for me, the most optimal space for my food landing has been my stomach.

If you are thinking of a new hobby, body sculpting might be just the thing for you. Anybody can do it. I can; you can. In fact, you have probably been body sculpting yourself for quite some time now. And you did not even realize it. It is that easy.

Of course, to make it to the big leagues, whether as an Olympian or a professional, it will require a lot of can-do, or rather can-eat, spirit and a fair share of talent. Not everybody has a knack for eating the right amount of the right thing at the right time.

But if you are willing to put in the time and the effort, willing to sink your teeth into the task and chow down that extra scrap of morsel, you, too,

can sculpt your body to look like mine. Which is almost as gratifying as winning Olympic gold.

Almost. But thankfully, not quite. If everybody gets the taste for Olympic gold, we will flood the market with body sculptors, which will cause a shortage in the food supply.

Nobody will win. Instead of being hungry for Olympic gold, we will just be hungry. For food.

The Jackson County Central wrestling team is hungry for gold. Minnesota state championship gold. Congratulations to the team, and also to individual state qualifiers Nolan Ambrose, Kie Anderson, Logan Butzon, Thomas Freking, Payton Handevitd, Matthew Haley and Caleb Vancura on their accomplishments so far and good luck in their continued pursuit of gold.

Congratulations, also, to Payten Benda for qualifying for the state gymnastics meet on balance beam.

With spring revving up, so too are the spring sports teams. The JCC Middle School spring athletes are preparing for their sports seasons, which begin in early April.

As that is probably enough tongue-in-cheek writing for one week, I had better bite my tongue and close Wide Write for this week. Until next week, let your tongue be yapping as you cheer our teams on to victory. Go, Huskies!



WIDE WRITE
Stephen A. Condon



WOLFF SETS ANOTHER RECORD WITH FIFTH ALL-BSC HONOR

One year ago, March 26, 2020
JCC senior Alaina Wolff has earned all-conference honors for a school-record fifth time. Wolff has been named to the first-team all-Big South Conference team for the West Division for the third straight season after earning honorable-mention honors twice. The only other three-time first-team all-conference players in team history are Angie Hummel, Whitney Burmeister and Kaylee Burmeister. Hummel and Kaylee Burmeister were each also an honorable-mention selection once, but no previous Husky had been on five all-conference squads. The record is yet another for Wolff, who finished her career with a team-record 2,041 points and has the record for most points in a game (44) in school history. Wolff was also named to the Class AA honorable-mention all-state team by the Minnesota Girls Basketball Coaches Association and was on the Class AA academic all-state team. Sophomore Sadie Voss was named honorable-mention all-conference after recording 407 points, 127 rebounds, 60 assists and 55 steals during the season.

RINGKOB SETS RECORD, BEHREND'S AN ALL-STAR

Five years ago, March 31, 2016
A pair of Jackson County Central seniors still have accolades coming their way a few weeks after the end of the basketball season. Matt Ringkob found out his 3-point shooting percentage during his junior season of 2014-15 ranks as the best in the state's history and Bodey Behrends was named to play in the Minnesota High School All-Star Basketball Series. Ringkob shot 61 percent from 3-point range his junior season, making 45 of the 74 3-pointers he attempted. That puts him ahead of the previous record of 59 percent by Jeremy Johnson on Champlin Park set in 2014. Behrends has been selected to play in the all-star series, which features 40 of the state's best senior players to play two games. He's the first JCC player selected to play in the series.

SCHWARTING, CHRISTOPHER NAMED TO ALL-CONFERENCE TEAMS

10 years ago, March 31, 2011
Jackson County Central seniors Ty Schwarting and Bryce Christopher have both been honored by the Southwest Conference for their play on the hardwood. Schwarting was named first-team all-conference and Christopher earned honorable-mention honors. The two helped the Huskies win a school-record 18 games this season. Schwarting is the first JCC boy to score 1,000 career points, finishing with 1,160. He averaged 22.5 points, 5.3 assists and 4.5 rebounds per game this season. Christopher averaged 12.6 points, 2.7 assists and 5.6 rebounds per game. He's sixth in school history with 686 career points.

WACKER IS NAMED WEEK'S TOP PITCHER IN WAC

25 years ago, March 28, 1996 - Jackson County Pilot
Lincoln Wacker has been named the Western Athletic Conference's Eastern Division Pitcher of the Week for his efforts in Wyoming's 8-1 win over Brigham Young University. Wacker, a senior right-hander for the Cowboys, threw a complete-game two-hitter at the Cougars. In seven innings, he struck out two batters and walked four in recording his first win of the season. He was working a one-hit shutout until allowing a home run in the seventh inning. It was the first start and third appearance of the season for Wacker, who has a 2.77 earned-run average in 13 innings. Several of his pitches against BYU were clocked at more than 90 miles per hour.

KRAFT FINISHES FIFTH IN NATION AT 150

25 years ago, March 28, 1996 - Lakefield Standard
Chad Kraft capped his freshman season at the University of Minnesota with a fifth-place finish at 150 pounds at the NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships at Target Center. Kraft won four of six matches in the tournament and earned all-American honors by placing in the top eight. Kraft, seeded 11th, won his first three matches, first with a 4-3 decision before a 3-1 double-overtime win over No. 6 Eric Siebert of Illinois. Kraft won 3-2 in the quarterfinals before losing 8-0 to eventual champion Chris Bono of Iowa State. Kraft then lost to top-seeded Russ Hughes in wrestlebacks before beating fifth-seeded Mike Rogers of Lock Haven 4-1 in the fifth-place match. Kraft finishes the season with a record of 29-10.

HL-O CORNER

Loss to WWG brings end to Coyotes' season

A remarkable season came to an end Saturday for the Heron Lake-Okabena/Fulda boys' basketball team in the sub-section semifinals.

The third-seeded Coyotes lost 68-53 to second-seeded Westbrook-Walnut Grove to finish the season with a record of 13-7. Three of those losses came to the Chargers.

The Coyotes trailed WWG 41-33 at the half after the Chargers made a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

Eli Fest finished with 21 points and Zach Thier added 10. The Coyotes opened the playoffs last Thursday with a 67-51 win over Hills-Beaver Creek. Sawyer Drent made six 3-pointers and scored a game-high 24 points. Carter Drent had a double-double of 14 points and 13 rebounds. Fest flirted with a triple-double, finishing with 12 points, nine rebounds and six assists. Jaden Stranberg scored eight points.

Coyotes lose playoff opener to Eagles

The season came to an end for the Heron Lake-Okabena/Fulda girls' basketball team with an 80-38 loss to top-seeded Southwest Minnesota Christian last Thursday in the Section 3A opener.

The Coyotes finish the season with a record of 1-18. Chrissy Hermeling made five 3-pointers for most of her team-high 17 points against the Eagles.

SWC went on to win the sub-section title and plays North No. 1 Minneota tonight (Thursday) for the section title.

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JCC GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Huskies drop playoff opener to sub-section champions

The Jackson County Central girls' basketball team had its season come to an end last Tuesday with a 67-36 loss at Redwood Valley.

The seventh-seeded Huskies scored just 15 second-half points against the Cardinals, who went on to win the sub-section championship after adding wins over Tracy-Milroy-Balaton and Windom.

JCC trailed 35-21 at the half before being outscored 32-15 in the second half.

Maci Farmer made a trio of 3-pointers and led the Huskies with 19 points. She also grabbed five rebounds.

Sadie Voss scored 10 points and added six rebounds for the Huskies.

Regan Farmer and Geor-

gianna Wenzel each had a team-high seven rebounds, with Farmer adding four points.

Grace Brinkman scored three points. She and Regan Farmer are the lone seniors on this year's team.

The Huskies finish the season with a record of 6-12.

Girls' basketball

JCC at Redwood Valley

JCC	21	16	36			
RV	35	32	67			
JCC (36)						
Player	2	3	FT	PF	TP	
MFarmer	3	3	4	2	19	
RFarmer	2	0	0	1	4	
Voss	3	1	1	1	10	
GBrinkman	0	1	0	3	3	
Totals	8	5	5	11	36	
Redwood Valley (67)						
Totals	21	7	4	6	67	

EAGLE BOYS' HOCKEY

History doesn't happen for Eagle boys as Cards win Section 3A opener

The Windom Area boys' hockey team hosted a section quarterfinal game for the first time in team history last week, but was unable to make more history.

The fourth-seeded Eagles were gunning for their first ever trip to the section semifinals, but came up short of that goal with a 3-0 loss to fifth-seeded Willmar.

Neither team scored until midway through the second period when the Cardinals finally broke a

scoreless tie. Willmar added another goal late in the period to double its lead.

The Cardinals maintained their 2-0 lead until adding an empty-net goal with just 33 seconds left in the game.

Jackson County Central's Dan Stubbe stopped 21 of the 23 shots he faced in the game.

Windom Area was outshot 24-20 in the loss.

The Eagles finish the season with a record of 12-7.

EAGLE GIRLS' HOCKEY

Season ends to section champs

The Windom Area girls' hockey team opened the postseason March 15 with a win over Worthington for its first playoff victory in more than a decade.

After the long-awaited win, the season came to an end two nights later with an 11-0 loss to Luverne in the Section 3A semifinals.

The shutout is the 12th of the season for Luverne, which went on to win the section championship.

Luverne scored six goals in the first period, including two in a span of 22 sec-

onds late in the period. The Cardinals then tallied five more goals in the second period to cap the win.

The Eagles managed just two shots-on-goal in the first period — compared to 21 by the Cardinals — and three in each of the final two periods.

Toria Robillard, filling in for the injured Kaylie Baerg, made 24 saves for the Eagles, who were outshot 35-8.

Windom Area finishes the season with a record of 7-13.

BBB: Fairmont rallies for win over JCC

Continued from B1

more than 10 minutes to play.

But the Huskies' offense went silent the last 10 minutes and the Cardinals got hot to earn a 66-58 comeback win over JCC.

The loss ends JCC's season with a record of 3-16.

Cardinals come back

Rogotzke dominated the early stages of the second half, scoring JCC's first 11 points of the second stanza and 13 of its first 14.

That helped the Huskies build a big lead, but the offense slumped in a hurry.

Jacobsen's 3-pointer with 10 minutes, 28 seconds left gave JCC a 53-38 lead, but the Huskies scored just two points — on a basket by Rogotzke — in the next five-and-a-half minutes as the Cardinals went on a 9-2 run.

After a pair of Rogotzke free throws put the Huskies back ahead 57-47 with just less than five minutes to play,

Fairmont ended the game on a 19-1 run, including scoring the final 14 points.

During that time, the Huskies made just three-of-eight free throws as they tried to put the game away.

"Late in the game, we tried to extend possessions on offense, but we couldn't make free throws and missed some easy looks, which let Fairmont back in the game," head coach Alex Hein said.

Fairmont eventually tied the game with one minute, 50 seconds left after its second straight 3-pointer, then took the lead 42 seconds later with another 3-pointer.

The Huskies had a shot to tie the game, but missed, and Fairmont added five more points in the final 35 seconds to finish off the win.

"Defensively, we fouled too much in the second half, didn't rebound good enough and Fairmont made some really tough shots," Hein said.

Huskies start strong

The Huskies started strong and then ended the

first half on a run, giving them hopes of an upset.

Jacobsen scored the first four points of the game and a 3-pointer by Carter Ahrens gave the Huskies an early 7-2 lead.

Fairmont answered with seven straight points to grab its first lead, but Ahrens sank another 3-pointer to put JCC back on top.

The lead changed hands two more times before the Huskies went on a roll.

Rogotzke made a 3-pointer to start a 10-0 run late in the half. Trevin Gaustad followed with a basket before Roman Voss converted a three-point play after getting a steal. Rogotzke then scored after pulling down an offensive rebound for a 33-21 lead.

After a Cardinal free throw, Rogotzke made another 3-pointer to cap a 13-1 run that gave the Huskies a 36-22 lead. JCC led 36-24 at the half.

Rogotzke opened the second half with a steal and basket, then got another steal and turned it into a three-point play when he was fouled while making

a layup.

He drained a pair of 3-pointers — the second of which gave JCC its 47-30 lead — giving him 16 straight JCC points.

Gaustad made a free throw to break up Rogotzke's scoring run, but Rogotzke blocked a shot on defense and then scored on offense for a 50-35 lead. Jacobsen sank his 3-pointer two minutes later to put the Huskies back ahead by 15, but the Cardinals answered with their game-winning run.

"In the first 30 minutes of the game, we executed our game plan really well," Hein said. "We moved the ball and limited our turnovers on offense and, on defense, we created tough shots and rebounded well."

Hein said the loss is tough, especially seeing how far the Huskies have come during the season.

"The game stings as we led for most of the game and I feel like we should have won, but I'm so proud of how much this team improved this year," he said. "We started the year 0-11, but the guys stayed locked in, continued to work hard, ended up winning three games and played our basketball at the end of the year."

Rogotzke has huge night

Rogotzke scored 30 points in the game, giving the sophomore at least 30 points for the second time this season. Rogotzke added four rebounds and three steals.

"Travis played a great game as he was aggressive on offense, got some steals on defense and shot it well," Hein said.

Jacobsen finished with nine points and four rebounds and Ahrens had six points and three assists. Damien Phaly scored four points and Gaustad, Voss and Clay Cranston each scored three.

Erik Hesebeck grabbed a team-high six rebounds and Christian Benda recorded five rebounds and two blocks.

Boys' basketball

JCC at Fairmont

JCC	36	22	58		
FAIR	23	40	63		
JCC (58)					
Player	2	3	FT	PF	TP
Gaustad	1	0	1	3	3
Phaly	2	0	0	3	4
Ahrens	0	2	0	1	6
Jacobsen	3	1	0	2	9
Rogotzke	6	5	3	3	30
Cranston	1	0	1	2	3
Voss	0	1	0	1	3
Totals	14	8	6	22	58
Fairmont (63)					
Totals	11	8	17	16	63



PHOTO BY DAN CONDON

Carter Ahrens glides toward the basket while attempting a layup in last week's playoff opener at Fairmont.

GYM: 3rd

Continued from B1

miss more time after a shoulder injury has sidelined her in the past, but said the girls who filled in do a great job.

Alexis O'Reilly finished eighth on balance beam with a career-high score of 8.55 and scored a career-high 8.5 on vault.

It was O'Reilly's first varsity action since the first meet of the season.

"Alexis had a great meet, finishing eighth on beam," VonOhlen said.

Hannah Carson filled in for Schneekloth on floor and scored 8.475 — JCC's third best score in the event during the meet.

Makayla Hotzler had JCC's best score on bars, finishing ninth with 7.75. Carson scored 7.425, Emma DiBrito scored 7.125 and Bailey Finck had a 6.95 on bars.

Daysia Tomlin scored 8.55 on vault, DiBrito had a 8.525 and Peyton Hanson scored 8.5 for the Huskies.

On beam, Olivia Blaskey placed 11th with a score of 8.425, giving the Huskies three gymnasts in the top 11. Finck scored 8.05 and Maia Reed scored 7.975.

Reed had the 11th-best score on floor exercise with an 8.85.

"Maia had a great meet,"



Alexis O'Reilly



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOEL ALVSTAD/COTTONWOOD COUNTY CITIZEN

Maia Reed competes on floor exercise during the Section 3A gymnastics meet Saturday afternoon in Jackson.

VonOhlen said.

Blaskey scored 8.425 on floor and Hanson scored 8.15.

"I was very happy with how well we did," VonOhlen said. "We had a great meet."

Balanced section

Seven of the eight teams will have at least one gymnast at the Class A state meet, with the only exception being Marshall.

That speaks to the level of competition in Section 3A, VonOhlen said.

"To see that coming out of our section is pretty good," she said. "We have a strong section."

Benda aiming for beam stick at state

Payten Benda will make her debut at the Class A state gymnastics meet Friday night, competing on balance beam after a sixth-place finish at the section meet. The competition takes place at Champlin Park High School.

Jackson County Central gymnastics coach Ellen VonOhlen said Benda has a few new moves she might try at state.

"She has a couple skills that we have been working on for the season, but haven't put into her routine," VonOhlen said. "We'll be working on them this week and my goal is to get her to try a couple new skills that she's been working on."

VonOhlen said Benda's goal is to stay on the beam. "I know her goal is to stick," she said. "She doesn't want to fall. She wants to hit her beam routine."

VonOhlen said the trip to state will be a fun one for Benda.

"I'm pretty excited," she said. "I know it will be a good experience for Payten."

WR: Seven to state

Continued from B1

dence that I could do it."

Vancura allowed a takedown in the third to fall behind by a point, but again had some last-second heroics up his sleeve. He got a reversal with five seconds left to earn a 4-3 victory.

"I just had to stay calm," Vancura said of wrestling while trailing by a point. "I knew I could do it. I just did what I needed to do."

"That was a great match," Hanson said. "It was one of the best matches of the day because that was one I wasn't so sure about."

Handevidt seemed like a sure bet to win the 152-pound tournament, but he also needed some last-second action to get it done.

Handevidt pinned both of his opponents last Tuesday and his first on Saturday before winning an 8-1 decision in the Super Regional semifinals.

In the finals, Handevidt, ranked No. 1 and the defending state champion, needed a takedown with 15 seconds left in the match to beat fifth-ranked Jonah Gruenes of Minnesota 3-1.

"I was trying to keep it close and feel him out because I haven't wrestled him in a while," Handevidt said. "But now that I think back, I should've opened it up

more because I felt like when I wanted to score, I basically got there and did."

That's exactly what he did at the end of the match.

"It was mostly just, believe," Handevidt said. "I thought that I could get it. It came down to the end and I went harder than he did and ended up coming out on top."

Hanson said it's tough being a defending state champion because everyone wants to knock him out.

"Everybody's got a little pressure, especially when you're Payton Handevidt and the defending state champ, you're not supposed to get beat," he said. "I would imagine there's a little bit of pressure, but he's been handling it all year."

Butzon also won a 3-1 decision in the finals at 126 pounds. He opened the postseason with a technical fall and decision last Tuesday, then won a technical fall and major decision to get to the finals.

Butzon, ranked No. 2, got a first-period takedown against eighth-ranked Boden Simon of Maple River and then used an escape in the second period to lead 3-0. An escape by Simon in the third ended the scoring with Butzon hanging on for the win.

"I've never wrestled him before, but I did watch a few videos on how he

See WR on B4

WR: Ten state qualifiers, seven advance

Continued from B3

wrestles,” Butzon said of Simon. “I knew it would be a close match, but I had to get the key takedowns and get the rideout.”

Butzon said a few recent matches have prepared him for another postseason run after he finished fourth last year. One was a narrow win over Eric Carrasco of Minneota in the team section tournament and the other was a loss to Jaxson Rohman of Martin County in the regular-season finale.

“I think my biggest match that helped the most was the team section finals against Minneota,” he said. “I was up right away and quit wrestling and stalled, which is not how you want to win the match. The other one was with Jaxson Rohman. It was a slap in the face to know you’ve got to do your stuff and not let them do theirs or you’re going to get your butt kicked. It’s good for me because you’ve got to be able to beat those guys to win state.”

While Vancura, Handevitd and Butzon won tight matches in the finals, Ambrose suffered a close defeat. He got to the championship match by virtue of two technical falls, a pin

and a decision, then faced third-ranked Tommy Elwood of Medford.

Ambrose, ranked second, got a first-period takedown and then a second-period reversal to lead 4-0, but Elwood got a reversal late in the second period to pull within two. Elwood then earned a penalty point in the third period and got a reversal with three seconds left to win 5-4.

A win would’ve been nice, Hanson said, but advancing was the main goal. “That’s obviously the most important thing,” he said.

Anderson needed an extra match to do so at 113 pounds. He opened the postseason with a pin last Tuesday, then got a reversal late in the second period to beat Devin Carter of Tracy-Milroy-Balaton/Westbrook-Walnut Grove. On Saturday, Anderson got a pin and major decision to advance to the finals, where he faced third-ranked Hudson Burnett of Pipestone. Burnett led 4-2 and 6-4 after the first two periods, respectively, but Anderson got within one point in the third. Burnett held on to win 8-6, sending Anderson to a true-second

match against Carter.

Carter got the first takedown in the true-second match, but Anderson responded. He got an escape later in the first period, then an escape and takedown in the second to lead 4-2. Anderson sealed the 6-3 win with another takedown in the third.

“Kie’s match right at the end was awesome,” Hanson said. “We beat that guy three times already. The first time he was way ahead and we pinned him, the second time we beat him up 5-1 and kind of controlled the match. The next time we got a reversal at the end at sections and beat him 2-0. This time, he got the first takedown and we came back to beat him. Four little bit different matches, but four really good results for us.”

Hanson credited Anderson’s ability to stay calm in the win-or-go-home true-second match.

“He’s pretty mature,” Hanson said. “He’s got a good head on his shoulders. He doesn’t panic. He just keeps going and keeps working and he did a great job of that in that match.”

Thomas Freking finished second at 132 pounds to

qualify for state for the first time. He opened the section tournament with a pin before beating Kade Lozinski of Minneota 1-0. On Saturday, Freking won a major decision and decision before losing 9-4 to second-ranked Ayden Horner in the finals.

Haley had a similar path to his second-place finish at 160 pounds. He won a pair of decisions Tuesday, then won a major decision to open Saturday’s Super Regional. Haley used an escape and takedown to beat Gabe Krick of TMB/WWG 3-2 in the semifinals before losing 5-4 to second-ranked Max Ehrich of Blue Earth Area in the championship match.

William Freking finished third at 182 pounds, narrowly missing a trip to the final day of state. He won with a pin and technical fall on Tuesday and then won a major decision to open Saturday’s competition.

Freking then lost 3-2 to 10th-ranked Nick Frank of BEA, allowing a takedown with 17 seconds left in the match.

Freking rebounded to get a pin and win a 3-2 decision to place third and didn’t get



PHOTO BY DAN CONDON
Caleb Vancura controls Carter Quam in the 195-pound championship match at Saturday’s Section 2A/3A Super Regional tournament.

a true-second match when Frank lost in the finals.

Withers won a major decision and decision on Tuesday, then lost to eighth-ranked Tucker Wills of Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial to open Saturday’s tournament. Withers then earned a pair of injury forfeit wins before losing in the third-place match to place fourth at 138 pounds.

Bents went 1-1 at 145 pounds last Tuesday and opened Saturday’s tournament with a 2-1 decision before losing 6-3 to eighth-ranked Joe Anderson of Springfield.

Bents then won a decision before losing in the third-place match to seventh-ranked Micah Hamson of United South Central.

Seth Stai also qualified for Saturday’s tournament at 120 pounds and would’ve

wrestled for fifth place had that match taken place. He was 2-1 last Tuesday before losing to ninth-ranked Bryce Sonnek of USC to open Saturday’s tourney.

Stai rebounded with a pin before losing to Lane Fink of Canby, who then won the true-second match.

“Seth had a great tournament,” Hanson said. “He was right there and wrestling really well right now.”

Isaiah Rodriguez and Trace Michelson each went 1-2 last Tuesday and Tycyn Bejarano was 0-2. All three failed to make it to Saturday’s competition.

Up next

The individual state tournament — as well as the team state tournament — is Saturday at St. Michael-Albertville High School (see preview below).

Huskies hoping to ‘bring home some hardware’ from team, individual state tournaments

The Jackson County Central wrestling team will compete in the Class A state tournament Saturday at St. Michael-Albertville High School and seven Huskies will compete in the individual tournament that afternoon.

The Huskies (31-3) are seeded second in the team tournament and open against third-seeded Bertha-Hewitt/Verndale/Parkers Prairie (28-7) at 9 a.m.

The winner faces either top-seeded Kimball Area (23-4) or fourth-seeded Royalton-Upsala (21-10) in the finals. There is no third-place dual.

BHVPP beat second-ranked Belgrade-Brooten-Elrose in the Section 5A/6A team tournament after BBE beat top-ranked Long Prairie-Grey Eagle/Browerville in the section finals. Those two sections had five of the top seven ranked teams in the state.

“They’re pretty tough,” JCC head coach Nate Hanson said of BHVPP. “They upset some teams to get there. They weren’t supposed to make it out of their section and their super-section. They were the underdog both times and they made it out, so they’re obviously wrestling well.”

BHVPP finished fifth at state last year and RU also qualified but went 0-2.

Junior Payton Handevitd, a three-time state qualifier and defending state champion, said it’ll be nice having the entire team at state this year after just a couple individual qualifiers the last few years.

“I’m excited that half the team is up there individually. It’s just exciting to see how much we’ve improved from last year.”

He said everyone feeds off each other during duals. “When someone else does something good, it just impacts the rest of us,” he said. “It’s just that motivation to get us all going.”

Sophomore Logan Butzon said that also extends to the practice room.

“I think the most important thing is having good partners,” he said. “Iron sharpens iron, and that’s what JCC has and it’s been like that forever.”

While the team and individual tournament won’t be at the Xcel Energy Center, Handevitd said there can still be plenty of excitement.

“I think it’s going to be different,” he said. “I like the Xcel a lot. I think it’s going to be a little different, but you still just have to go out there and treat it like it’s the Xcel and do your thing.”

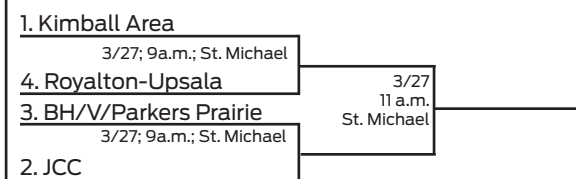
Hanson said his team is used to everything being a bit different this year, anyway.

“I’m sure it’ll be different,” he said. “The whole year has been different. You go to the first meet and you don’t even know where to sit down or who you can talk to and who you can’t. It’s been different all year. The guys have really adjusted to it and they’re kind of used to what the protocols are now and what you can and what you can’t do. They’re doing a really good job and it’s been a lot of fun.”

Individuals aiming for gold

Handevitd returns after winning state at 145 pounds a year ago. He said the goal is to do the same at 152

Class A state wrestling tournament



this year.

“Win it again — that’s my goal,” he said. “I feel like if I wrestle my match and not be so defensive — come out and be more aggressive — I believe I can win.”

Butzon has the same goal after finishing fourth last year.

“The goal is to go undefeated and win state — team and individual,” he said. “It’s not your goal to be there. It’s your goal to win it.”

The two are the lone returning state qualifiers, but JCC has five other state entrants in Caleb Vancura, Nolan Ambrose, Kie Anderson, Thomas Freking and Matthew Haley.

Hanson said he thinks the group can do some damage at state.

“We’re going to try to bring home a bunch of hardware,” he said.

NOLAN AMBROSE 106 • FR



Record: 36-2
Rank: 2
State appearances: 1st
Opens against: No. 10 Cole Sykora, 18-4, Soph., Border West

Nolan Ambrose makes his state tournament debut after finishing second in the Section 2A/3A Super Regional.

He’ll face Border West sophomore Cole Sykora (28-4) in the first round. Sykora is ranked No. 10 at 113 pounds, while Ambrose is ranked second at 106.

With a win, Ambrose would likely face top-ranked Anthony Romero of Grand Meadow-Leroy-Ostrander-Southland in the semifinals. Romero, who finished second at state last year, won a decision over Ambrose earlier this season.

Sixth-ranked Zach Remer (34-0) of Mille Lacs is seeded second and third-ranked Tommy Elwood (25-1) of Medford is seeded third.

All eight wrestlers in the 106-pound bracket are in the state rankings.

KIE ANDERSON 113 • JR



Record: 36-3
Rank: 2
State appearances: 1st
Opens against: No. 6 Gavin Albers, 30-1, Soph., LP-GE/B

Kie Anderson finished second at the Section 2A/3A Super Regional to advance to the state tournament for the first time.

Anderson, ranked second, opens against No. 6 Gavin Albers (30-1), a sophomore from Long Prairie-Grey Eagle/Browerville.

With a win, Anderson would likely have a rematch of the Super Regional finals against No. 3 Hudson Burnett (30-2) of Pipestone. The two wrestlers have split a pair of matches this season.

On the top half of the bracket is top-ranked and top-seeded Jevon Williams (26-4), a freshman from Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City who finished fifth at 106 pounds last season.

The only other ranked wrestler in the bracket is No. 5 David Revering (35-4) of Bertha-Hewitt/Verndale/Parkers Prairie.

LOGAN BUTZON 126 • SOPH



Record: 37-1
Rank: 2
State appearances: 3rd
Opens against: Drew Lange, 31-6, Fr., Holdingford

Logan Butzon won the Section 2A/3A Super Regional to qualify for the state tournament for the third straight season. He finished fourth at 113 pounds last season.

He opens the tournament against unranked Drew Lange (31-6) of Holdingford.

With a win, Butzon would either face No. 3 Walker Bents (34-2) of Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa or No. 7 Boden Simon (27-7) of Maple River in the semifinals. Bents was the 106-pound state champion last season and finished third in 2019.

Derek Steele (33-0) of Sibley East is the top seed after winning the 113-pound title last year and finishing second in 2019. Also in the field are No. 4 Gavin Winter (25-6) of Kimball Area and Braden Thom (26-4) of Long Prairie-Grey Eagle/Browerville, who is ranked fifth at 120 pounds.

THOMAS FREKING 132 • SOPH



Record: 30-8
Rank: 9
State appearances: 1st
Opens against: No. 1 Drayden Morton, 30-0, Jr., Sibley East

Thomas Freking advanced to his first state tournament by finishing second at the Section 2A/3A Super Regional tourney.

He opens against top-ranked Drayden Morton (30-0) of Sibley East. Morton is a two-time defending state champion, having won at 120 pounds last year and 106 pounds in 2019.

On the same half of the bracket are No. 5 Coy Gunderson (31-4) of Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg — a two-time state place-winner — and No. 6 Brodie Kellen (27-4) of Dover-Eyota.

No. 3 Ethan Hendrickson (31-0) of United North Central — another two-time state place-winner — is seeded second and No. 2 Aydan Horner (35-2) of Tracy-Milroy-Balaton/Westbrook-Walnut Grove — also a two-time state place-winner — is seeded third in the loaded bracket.

PAYTON HANDEVITD 152 • JR



Record: 38-0
Rank: 1
State appearances: 3rd
Opens against: Preston Mayfield, 15-7, Fr., Frazee

Payton Handevitd enters the tournament

undefeated and looking for his second straight state championship. He finished first at 145 pounds last year and was sixth at 120 pounds in 2019.

He opens against Preston Mayfield (15-7) of Hayfield.

With a win, Handevitd would likely face No. 4 Rece Voigt (35-1) of Grand Meadow-Leroy-Ostrander-Southland, who Handevitd beat at last year’s state tournament.

Four ranked wrestlers make up the bottom half of the bracket. No. 2 Landon Gode (30-1) of Long Prairie-Grey Eagle/Browerville, who finished second last year and fourth in 2019, opens against No. 8 Jett Thoreson (24-4) of St. Charles. No. 3 Jordan Lohse (32-3) of West Central Area/Ashby opens against No. 5 Jonah Gruenes (33-2) of Minneota.

MATTHEW HALEY 160 • SOPH



Record: 28-10
Rank: 9
State appearances: 1st
Opens against: No. 1 Mason Gode, 31-0, Sr., LP-GE/B

Matthew Haley debuts at the state tournament after finishing second in the Section 2A/3A Super Regional tourney.

Haley opens the tournament against top-seeded Mason Gode (31-0) of Long Prairie-Grey Eagle/Browerville. Gode won the 138-pound title last year after finishing second at 132 in 2019 and sixth at 126 in 2018.

Max Ehrich (29-1) of Blue Earth Area — who beat Haley in the Section 2A/3A Super Regionals — is ranked second at 170 pounds and seeded second in the tournament. He finished fourth at 160 last season.

Seeded third is Zack Holtz (20-0) of Kimball Area, who was sixth at 152 pounds last year after finishing fourth at state each of the previous two seasons, and seeded fourth is Gabe Gorecki (30-1) of Royalton-Upsala.

CALEB VANCURA 195 • SOPH



Record: 30-2
Rank: 9
State appearances: 1st
Opens against: No. 4 Carter Holtz, 29-3, Jr., Kimball Area

Caleb Vancura extended his winning streak to 30 straight matches by winning the Section 2A/3A Super Regional.

He’ll debut at the state tournament against No. 4 Carter Holtz (29-3) of Kimball Area.

The winner will likely face top-ranked Thomas Dineen (34-0) of Benson, who finished fifth at 182 pounds last year.

Ethan Boll (36-2) of Crookston is seeded second and opens against Carter Quam (27-3) of Kenyon-Wanamingo. Quam is ranked fifth at 220 pounds and lost in the Super Regional finals to Vancura.

Ethan Kovars (28-1) of Zumbrota-Mazeppa is seeded third and opens against second-ranked Gideon Ravasti (26-3) of Bertha-Hewitt/Verndale/Parkers Prairie in a bracket that features seven ranked wrestlers.