



More hardware for reigning state champion in 2020?

All four boys' soccer clubs can make a case to shine

By **JASON OLSON**
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Last fall was a spotlight season for soccer teams in the Sun Current coverage area. Holy Angels captured the Class A state title, Kennedy secured a top-seed in section play and finished one point away from a Metro West Conference crown. Jefferson is positioned well to compete for the Metro West title after splitting the last four titles with St. Louis Park and Richfield's move to the Tri-Metro Conference helped the program collect eight wins overall, three in conference play.

Thanks to the pandemic, it was uncertain if the 2020 fall season would

even happen. Teams are allowed to play up to two matches per week against conference-only opponents. Fans are capped at 125 per team and 250 per venue, meaning seating will become a valuable commodity to witness a high-caliber of product on the field.

Holy Angels

What do the defending Class A state champions have in store for an encore in 2020? The team returns several key contributors from a 21-0-1 run which ended in quite possibly the most dramatic ways possible – an overtime goal scored by Noah Hermanson with only a handful of seconds left on the clock for a 3-2 win over Blake at U.S. Bank Stadium.

Hermanson, a junior this fall, will move to defense after playing in a wing position last year

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(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Kennedy defender Ricardo Vera Martinez, front, is one of three captains aiming to build off a second-place finish in the Metro West Conference in 2019,

Fewer games among pandemic policies for girls soccer

By **JASON OLSON**
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Girls soccer this fall will look a bit different with no more than 250 people in the venue – StarDome, Spartan Stadium or Bloomington Stadium – due to COVID-19 procedures outlined by the conferences.

The Metro West Conference is giving each soccer player four admission cards to be distributed to whomever they choose. Admission fees still apply.

Schedules have been reduced to conference games only with one or two matches played each week, typically Tuesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday.

Holy Angels is coming off a fourth-place finish in the Class A state tournament while coach Dave Marshak believes the 2020 edition of the squad is even better than a 17-win squad from last year.

Kennedy remains a young squad building for

the future and Jefferson had the veteran players capable to compete in the Metro West Conference this fall.

Jefferson

Jefferson returns a majority of the starters from last year's rather unlucky squad that only came away with three wins, all by shutouts as goalkeeper Cayla Jungwirth who earned the clean sheets.

The four senior captains include Jungwirth, defender Claire Sazama, midfielder Ella Bloomquist and forward Rachel Hall. Junior midfielders Jayda Johnson, Jolie Gunn and Hadley Zosel along with junior defender Emma Nelson, freshman defender Lexi Evans and senior forward Rylee Keeler make up the group back on the turf this fall.

With a crowded roster of experience back, look for junior forward Abby Longhenry to crack and lineup along with sophomore midfielder Ayah Makled.



(FILE PHOTO)

Holy Angels senior goalkeeper Rachel Kaweicki secures the ball during the 2019 state tournament at U.S. Bank Stadium.

Jefferson was unlucky to convert its scoring opportunities last season as it took

seven games to earn a scoreless draw (0-0) against Chanhassen, Sept. 10) and eight games to find the first goal of the season (4-1 loss to Shakopee, Sept. 14).

Gunn assisted on both Jaguar goals in the first win of the season, a 2-0 shutout of Tartan Sept. 17. Gunn added an assist while Hall scored once in the 2-0 win over cross-town rival Kennedy on Sept. 26.

Entering his third season as head coach, Eric Johnson said the unusual summer saw a vast majority (42-of-55) take part in the various summer training workouts. That unusual feeling crept into the opening week of coaches' practice. "However, as a program we have been focusing on staying positive, being responsible and being grateful for every opportunity we have to play," Johnson said. "I am really proud of the approach the girls have taken this season – their attitudes and work ethic has been great."

Kennedy

Mackenzie Kane scored the first goal of the season for the Eagles in a 5-1 loss to Chanhassen on Saturday. The loss comes on the heels of a 4-0 defeat at Chaska to open the season Aug. 27.

Kane was in the right place at the right time for the equalizer as the play began with a free-kick to senior Melissa Duran Gutierrez whose shot was initially blocked before Kane converted the chance.

"To make it 1-1 against Chanhassen in the first half was a big accomplishment soon after we gave up the first goal," coach Mario Lone said.

While the team has been outscored 9-1 two games into the unusual season, Lone was happy with the play. "It's hard to swallow because I like the way we play and the ideas they are adapting into the game but we are still giving up too many goals," Lone said. "Things are

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Runners ready to make the most of smaller season

By **JASON OLSON**

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The cross country season will look different this year with the number of meets and teams competing at one time drastically reduced to one or two meets per week and only as many as three teams competing at one time.

That means events like the Jaguar Challenge, Milaca Mega Meet or the Roy Griak Invite at the University of Minnesota's Les Bolstad Golf Course will not take place in favor of closer courses like Brookside Park or Augsburg Park.

The Metro West Conference (Kennedy and Jefferson) will group two or three teams together at smaller venues to encourage social distancing.

The Tri-Metro Conference (Holy Angels and Richfield) will complete meets at Fridley High School and St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park with teams running in staggered starts in groups of three.

Jefferson

One of the ways coach Sean Faulk said for the teammates to connect over the summer was during training runs which meant more consistent attendance for what has been a consistently strong program in recent years. The girls program can boast six current collegiate runners which helped the team capture four of the last five Metro West



(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Jefferson sophomore Megan Lee, left, has established herself as a premier distance runner in the Metro West Conference.

Conference titles including the 2019 crown.

Four of the top eight runners wore the Jaguar colors including conference champion Megan Lee who is only a sophomore but has a wealth of varsity success including

two state meet appearances. Classmate Bella Thurston was seventh, senior captain Ella Graff was 13th and freshman Jamie Drewitz was 16th overall. Lee was third in 2018 meet with now MSU-Mankato freshman Megan

Narveson third and now-Hamline freshman Ruth Claycomb sixth.

Jefferson came close to cracking the top two at the Section 3AA meet last fall as Lee repeated from 2018 with a third-place overall finish and Narveson was

12th to secure their places at the state meet. Narveson was 10th overall in the 2018 section meet.

Graff is joined by seniors Bella Drewitz and Anna Gaul as captains along with junior Abby Tapajna.

The Jaguars added junior Emily Albert, who has a track background but is joining the cross country team for the first time, as is sophomore Nordic skiing standout Jackie Larson. Seventh-grader Amelia Borgen is also a newcomer to the program.

The boys aren't far behind with four runners on college rosters and will be guided by senior captain Joe Gajthe and junior captains Gabe Meier and Zach Studdlford. Gajthe and Studdlford will compete for the top spots on the team along with junior Mason Young and senior Zach Skinner. Sophomore Adam Lueth has jumped up the rankings on the team from a good freshman campaign.

Colden Longley had high aspirations for his senior season before an injury forced him to cut the cross country season short. He is now a freshman at Cornell. Classmate Tim Lueth plans to run at UW-Eau Claire while Anders Olson is a senior at Gustavus and Joey Holtzman is a sophomore at Goucher College in Maryland. Holtzman was the top Gophers runner at the Landmark Conference Championships in November.

Kennedy

Kennedy has several runners with at least four seasons of varsity experience led by senior

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Boys

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while twin brother Carter Hermanson looks to add to an already dominant scoring career for the Stars. He has 32 goals and 15 assists in two varsity seasons. The Noah and Carter Hermanson will serve as captains alongside junior midfielder Aidan Smith and senior goalkeeper Peter Forseth.

Forseth has 19 clean sheets in two seasons as the Stars starter and Smith has made 61 appearances heading into what will be his fourth varsity campaign.

It's easy to see how Holy Angels has to be in consideration for the top-ranking in Class A.

Senior Nick Meyer collected two goals and one assist in five games as a junior before a season-ending injury relegated him to the sideline for the rest of the season.

Coach James See says Meyer looks fit as ever after dealing with multiple injuries in high school.

"The work he's been doing during the shutdown and throughout the off-season is clearly paying off," he said. "This could be his year to leave a large mark in goal production."

The Stars might need that reinforcement after graduating Porter Ball and Connor O'Rourke – two All-State contribu-

tors from 2019.

Junior midfielder Shalim Montes-Hernandez missed much of 2019 but returned in time to play during the state tournament.

"Shalim brings balance to both sides of the ball, especially in transition, while we anticipate him to carry the midfield line in 2020," See said.

Sophomores Ben Frommelt and Fredrick Lang will look to earn their spot across the backline. Frommelt adds versatility as a defender or midfielder. Lang is one player See anticipates will make an impact on the backline along with freshman Everett Hoepfner.

Kennedy

Coming off a 13-win campaign in 2019, Kennedy was within one point of the Metro West Conference Championship, which went to St. Louis Park.

The Orioles won the lone meeting at Bloomington Stadium 2-1 but Kennedy went on to win 7-of-8 to close out the regular season. As a result, the Eagles earned the No. 1 seed in the new section (Section 2A) reaching the final.

Second-seeded Mankato West advanced to the state tournament by being the first squad to shutout the Eagles in a 1-0 final played at neutral-site New Prague High School.

Kennedy goalkeeper Carter Landale returns between the posts giving up one goal in each of the three-section games with a stout defense in front of him. He was part of eight clean sheets including a scoreless draw against Minneapolis Southwest.

Joining Landale as senior captains are defenders Ricardo Vera Martinez, Emir Rubio, and midfielder Jesus Ciriaco.

The Eagles will be without potent scorers Dennis Mensah (13 goals, 4 assists) and Dylan Sanchez who finished with 16 goals and 4 assists in 10 games.

"We feel strong again but we lost a few of the main attackers but what we tell them is next man up, they're a year older and more mature," Coach Dan Bushendorf said of the opportunity for the next group to impact the lineup. The Eagles coach feels the defense will again be strong with three seniors anchoring the backside while figuring out who will secure the role of the sweeper in the middle of the defense.

Rubio started the first half of the season but came off the bench later on.

For the first time in his coaching tenure at Kennedy, they decided to field teams at three levels (varsity, junior varsity, and B squad) with 56 players coming out for the fall season.

There are a number of reasons for fewer players, including COVID-19. Others moved away or had to address other issues, according to Bushendorf.

"We make it so accessible in BPS for kids to participate, money should never be an issue not to come out," he said. "We help them with languages, get them involved and they learn so much."

The longtime Kennedy coach has the same six assistant coaches back on staff, plus the addition of volunteer assistant coach Neython Lec Streit, a 2019 Kennedy High School grad. Streit was set for his sophomore season at Occidental College in Los Angeles, California before the season was canceled due to the pandemic. A two-time Metro West All-Conference defender, four-time academic letter winner and Eagle Award recipient, Streit stepped into the NCAA Division III line-up playing in 14 games as a freshman.

The challenge remains for Kennedy to compete in a nearly all Class AA conference, except for Benilde-St. Margaret's, and if 2019 is any indication, they will thrive in that environment.

"We're going to hold them to the same expectations as last year and keep challenging them," Bushendorf said. "I tend to like the idea of having a target on our back."

As for emerging new scorers, Bushendorf takes a more collective approach to the attack, building up through possession instead of having one or two forwards as the primary goal scorers.

"I like to push more of a style of play to create more opportunities so we really don't know who will emerge," he said.

Richfield

Richfield went 8-5-5 overall in 2019, its first season in the Tri-Metro Conference, facing some familiar foes from over the years including cross-town rival Holy Angels. The Spartans collected 11 points with a 3-2-2 to place fifth out of eight teams.

In its second year in the conference, Richfield should be even more potent offensively with leading scorer senior Miguel Leon back after tallying 12 goals and 9 assists.

Junior Rodrigo Castaneda poured in nine goals alongside Leon while midfielder Erick Lopez should also return after leading the team in assists (10) and added five goals.

Richfield will have a new goalkeeper after Andres Sanchez Vidal, a vocal leader on the field, who graduated in 2020. Junior Carlos Luis-Ibarra spelled Sanchez Vidal in three games.

Jefferson

After splitting the last four Metro West Conference titles with St. Louis Park, Jefferson aims to improve on a 3-3-0 record from 2019 which saw the team drop to fourth place among the seven teams, finishing with a 5-10-1 record.

The Jaguars have a hefty group of seniors back in three central midfielders including captains Leif Kaiser and Will Grant plus classmate Jonathan Acosta Hernandez. Senior center back Jake Heyer returns as does goalkeeper Cormac Merrill, both captains, which gives the team a solid spine up the middle to feed senior forward Brenden Akum who is another experienced varsity contributor.

Junior right-back Josh Anderson will help solidify the defense.

Look for junior forward Cristian Castillo-Acevedo to make an impact in the attack for head coach Danny Storlein's 26th season as a head coach and 23rd season at Jefferson. He is a five-time Class AA State Coach of the Year and added two new coaches to the staff this fall including Wes Durand who will work with the junior varsity and Nick Battle who will coach the B squad.

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Girls

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translating from practice to the game but the challenge is that we are not playing a full match yet."

He attributes that to several factors including a young team with two freshmen and an eighth-grader in the predominantly sophomore and junior-laden roster. "Part of that is the physicality of the varsity-level game and the pandemic caused a majority of the team to go idol for several months because [players] at other schools can play club soccer where our kids don't play much at the club level."

Captains for the 2020 season include some familiar names to the Kennedy soccer program including sophomore Isabella Lone, junior Amaya Fierro, Alex

Munoz Rosales, and junior Suzzie Munson.

One of those freshmen to crack the starting lineup is Kelsey Cruz Rojas, who started as an eighth-grader. "She has the soccer intelligence to compete at this level," he said while she is helping others lessen the steep learning curve from junior varsity to varsity.

"We don't have the luxury with true juniors and seniors on the varsity team which can make all of the difference in the world," Lone said. "What this does do for us is to lay a solid foundation down for the future of the program to have some very experienced upperclassmen ready to contribute as they get older."

Playing a second game in three days without the typical lead-up to the season, the Eagles coach usually has a couple of

scrimmages to gage the team and make necessary adjustments if needed.

He leaned on a phrase taken from Lakeville North coach Brian Lehman to help rally the girls at the half against Chanhassen. "It isn't how you start, what matters is how you finish," Lone said. "That really stuck with me and what I've seen is our team play stronger in the second half."

As for the lineup, Kane will be the target on the attack to use her mobility to generate scoring chances while Isabella Lone plays a holding midfielder, able to distribute in the attack or be the first line of defense in transition. Fierro along with Ruthie Gyasi will be the heart of the defensive unit and junior Brianna Dotter is the returning goalkeeper who is coming off

shoulder surgery. "She's a lot more confident and agile out there now," the Kennedy coach said. Senior Gabby Brown is serving as a very capable backup keeper and a familiar name to the Kennedy softball program.

Holy Angels

Holy Angels coach Dave Marshak is looking toward building on a 17-win season which finished with some hardware at state last November. The Stars placed fourth at state and might have an even better squad in 2020. Among the contributors ready to lead are senior captains Mia Van der Heide, Sydney Burns, and Rachel Kawiecki.

"The hardest part for us is knowing we probably have the best team in years, including juniors who have never not finished the season at U.S.

Bank Stadium and we're not likely to have any playoffs at all," Marshak said, adding that the stress and anxiety isn't related to the COVID-19 protocols but how the season could fall apart at any time. "The kids are anxious that their season, which has already been redacted, will be lost and they won't be able to do anything about it. We all feel a sort of low-grade anxiety all the time," he said.

Van der Heide and Burns will work alongside Ciara McCrory in the attack followed by Cat Duffy-Shaw and Lang returning to the midfield and Kawiecki's emotional energy as an anchor between the posts for her final season.

She will have to help break in an all-new defense led by center backs Sadie Klassen and Grace Hoepfner, who

both started in 2018 but missed 2019 due to injuries. Junior Ella Clow is back with the Stars after being a starter on the 2018 squad before deciding to focus on developing with her club in 2019.

Holy Angels started the season with a bang, handing Fridley an 8-0 loss during Friday's Tri-Metro Conference opener at StarDome in Richfield. Eight different Stars picked up a goal or assist including Van der Heide with two goals and two assists. Duffy-Shaw added one goal and three assists. McCrory and Lang each had one goal and one assist as the Stars had 36 shots. Burns, Audrey Garton and Bridget Plunkett each picked up a goal and Mia Meschini had one assist.

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Running

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Brayden Hill who is wearing the blue and gold for a sixth fall while junior Mari Podas is in her fifth season. Both are serving as captains along with senior Edda Pederson who marks her fourth season with the squad.

The boys are guided by a pair of senior captains with four years experience, respectively in Brady Vogt and Gannon Shilson.

Hill posted the top time among the Eagles' returners at the season-opening dual meet against Jefferson at Brookside Park Thursday, Aug. 27. She covered the 5K course in 24 minutes, five seconds.

Meanwhile, Kennedy eighth-grader Gwen Vogt ran a 22:36.27 to lead the team.

Shilson posted the best time for the boys against Jefferson in 20:09 while sophomore Joe Buch posted a personal-best time of 22:49 in his first race.

Being the first meet of the season in hot conditions, coach Josh Coval said the runners were a

little down about their performances, "but they ran pretty well, and many were right about where we predicted them to finish based on an earlier time trial on a one-mile course and given the heat."

Give the lack of a track season in the spring leading into summer training, for some it was their first race in 10 months.

The Eagles are back at Brookside for a triangular meet against Cooper and Chaska Sept. 3.

"That should be pretty fun to see the kids run on a course they will now have some familiarity with," Coval said. He anticipates times to drop in the abbreviated season. "They are such a great bunch of kids and they work so hard. I just want them all to crush all their goals and not be so hard on themselves because setbacks are part of the process and there is always something to celebrate. Heck, it was just so great to see all those kids out racing again after so long."

Coval gave a lot of credit to the Jefferson coach Sean Faulk and Brian Melendez for helping set up the modified course along

with the respective activities directors, Chad Nyberg and Jon Anderson plus the City of Bloomington to help navigate schedules. Coval was at Brookside at 11:30 a.m. to help mow the 5,000-meter course with a push mower. "Faulk and Melendez did a great job marking the course so it was neat to do my part to help them host a positive meet," said Coval said, who is at the start of his 20th season coaching at Kennedy alongside assistant coach April Baden, who is in her seventh season in the program.

Richfield

Marty Huberty credits a dedicated senior class to help boost the number of runners out for the cross country team. The class has 11 runners who can trace their passion for the sport back to Huberty's sixth-grade running club.

The group met up three times a week over the summer for conditioning and endurance workouts

"We've been focused on getting ready and fingers crossed we would get a season and now we have one," Huberty said. "The

dedication to put the work in is amazing and they are all unbelievably devoted to the program. It's awesome!"

Turnouts for summer training typically hover around 8-10 runners but this summer surged to 25-30 kids which created challenges for Huberty, who focused on training around the high school campus and Augsburg Park. "That makes it easier to watch everyone from seniors to the seventh graders," he said.

The second year in the Tri-Metro Conference finds the Spartans among the top tier of the nine programs competing on courses at Fridley High School or St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park due to COVID-19 protocol. Each event will include waves of three teams at a time.

Captains for the girls team include Crystel DiGrazia, Ava Durand, Ava Hanks, and Bridget Foley while Juan Jose DiGrazia, Jace Pulkravek, Josh Kuehn and Andy Soto-Moreno will captain the boys.

DiGrazia, Pulkravek and Soto-Moreno earned All-Conference

Honorable Mention while the girls brought home even more hardware with DiGrazia and Durand finished in the top 10 to earn All-Conference honors while Hanks and Helen Nguyen earned All-Conference Honorable Mention.

Huberty anticipates the girls should challenge for second or third place in the conference, pushing Visitation for the top spot.

Nguyen is one of four runners to play another fall sport as she is one of the top tennis players.

Huberty said it takes flexibility on the part of the coaches and students to make it work as the logistics of practice time and match/meet time comes into play.

This will be Nguyen's second season balancing a spot on both programs.

With 11 seniors in the program, Huberty can utilize those veterans to help show the newer runners the basics of what the coaches expect and how to improve. "The seniors take them under their wings, watch over them," the Richfield cross country coach explained. "We hear a lot of cheering and

camaraderie."

That encouragement is needed especially this summer. "We've always been positive and just told the kids to keep going," he said. "We've utilized the masks during training because as odd as it may seem, the mask is part of the uniform nowadays – its shoes, uniform and a mask. You have to have it for warmups, drop it to your chin for the meet and when done pull it over the nose. It might be uncomfortable."

In addition to the big senior class, the program has nine seventh-graders who were part of the sixth-grade running program at Richfield Middle School. "I just keep telling them that they are my future and they showed up all summer," Huberty said.

Huberty is known for his long streak of consecutive years with a marathon. While he did a virtual marathon earlier this summer, "It is not fun," he said. "I like having family and friends out on the course supporting me and it just wasn't the same."

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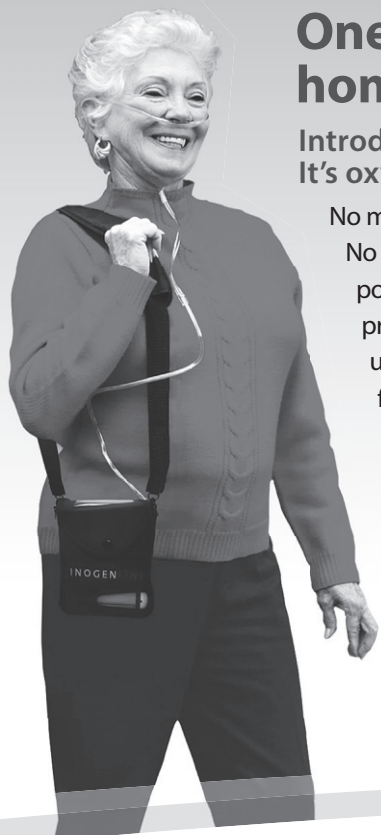


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Ringquist OT goal sends Jefferson past Kennedy

By **JASON OLSON**

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For the second time in a month, Jefferson and Kennedy played to a one-goal game with Jefferson prevailing both times.

The latest came in the Section 6 quarterfinals as Jefferson's Cody Ringquist scored on a shot late in the first overtime to give the third seeds a 9-8 win over No. 6 Kennedy on the Jaguars turf field June 3.

Jefferson led 3-2 at half-time as Kennedy standout Zyaire Marshall scored both goals in the opening half and appeared to have a third goal as he was alone with only Jaguar goaltender Jake McCarthy to beat.

Marshall would end up with five goals in the game, a sixth goal was waved off in overtime for an infraction committed in the Jaguars goal area with 32.5 seconds to go in regulation.

Both teams turned up the pressure in the second half but neither could establish a big run to put distance between themselves on the scoreboard.

Kyler Dawson gave the Jaguars an early 4-2 lead in the third quarter but



Kennedy's Logan Dosan (4) fires a shot at Jefferson goalie Jake McCarthy, middle, during the first quarter of the Section 6 game played at Jefferson June 4.

(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Kennedy came back to take a 5-4 lead on a quick faceoff win by Joe Workman who sprinted down the field less than four minutes into the third quarter.

The teams traded goals

the rest of the way, culminating with Ringquist giving the Jaguars an 8-7 lead with 1:12 on the clock before Marshall's tying goal with 32.5 seconds to go.

"That's the story of Section 6," Jefferson coach

Scott Cater said. "You look at the tournament and our side of the bracket you see a bunch of one-goal games in front of me. That's how our season has gone, multiple one-goal games, our defense battles

for four quarters and our goal keeps us in it and we survive and advance."

Kennedy's offense was potent when scoring in transition with quick goals whereas Jefferson worked the ball around

the field to play a more patient offense, allowing the play to develop which in turn helped the defense stay fresh and kept the pressure on Kennedy to keep the pace up.

As for the winning play, Ringquist stuck to the plan until he saw an opening for a shot and took the chance.

"That's a kid who has hit big shots for us all season," Cater said. "Love him."

As for McCarthy's performance between the posts, Cater explained why he believes the five-year starter is the best stopper in the state. "Zyaire has a 1-on-0 break early in the fourth quarter and Jake makes an incredible save. Not only making the saves but reading the offense and calling out the defense telling where the guys to go, he's more than a ball stopper."

The Jaguars traveled to No. 2 Prior Lake for the semifinals played June 8, after this edition went to press.

The Lakers beat No. 7 Eastview 10-7 in the June 3 quarterfinals.

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Jaguars walk-off home run starts sections with a bang

By **JASON OLSON**

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Bloomington Jefferson was rewarded for a perfect 9-0 run to the Metro West Conference title and a 12-1 regular season with the No. 1 seed in Section 2AAAA.

The Jaguars used every ounce of energy and enthusiasm generated by the largest crowd to fill the Toro Grandstand at Red Haddox Field in over a year in a 4-3 walk-off win over Eden Prairie May 31.

Bennett McCollow continued to etch his place in Jaguars baseball lore with a walk-off home run in the eighth inning over the fence in left-centerfield for his third hit of the day.

The Eagles built a 3-0 lead but Jefferson turned a double play to get out of

the second inning without more damage. Offensively, Jefferson chipped away at the deficit as Braden Ebeling started the third inning with a double and McCollow moved him to third base with a single. Senior captain David Steffen's RBI single past the shortstop made it 3-1.

Ebeling and McCollow were far from done as Ebeling was hit by a pitch with two outs in the fourth inning. McCollow's double allowed Ebeling to score from first base to make it a 3-2 game.

Once again it was Ebeling who came through in the sixth inning with the game-tying double to allow Aiden Sherman to score. Walks to McCollow and Carter Hanson loaded the bases before Steffen and Ben

Goedderz grounded out to end the inning.

Jefferson pitcher Noah Pinette retired Eden Prairie in order in the seventh and eighth innings to keep the pressure on.

The win allowed Jefferson to advance to face No. 4 Minnetonka in the winner's bracket at Haddox Field June 2. The Skippers scored three times in the second inning for a 3-0 victory in front of another near sell-out crowd in Bloomington.

Skippers starting pitcher Karsten Kimsal allowed three hits and two walks over six innings. He struck out six Jaguars before Zack Zaetta earned the save in the seventh inning.

Hanson started for

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(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Jefferson senior David Steffen struck out seven Minnetonka batters over four relief innings of work during the Section 2AAAA quarterfinal 3-0 loss June 2 in Bloomington.

Simley, St. Thomas to play for Section 3AAA title

Spartans upset Holy Angels

By **JASON OLSON**

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Eighth-seeded Richfield avenged a regular-season loss with a 5-3 win over Section 3AAA top-seed Holy Angels in the first round of the double-elimination section tournament May 29.

Four days before starting sections, Holy Angels emerged with a 13-9 win to wrap up the Tri-Metro Conference and regular season.

The Spartans started strong in the section opener, scoring twice in the first and again in the second inning to carry a 4-1 lead into the bottom of the third inning.

Fourth-seed Simley scored twice in the bottom of the sixth inning to spoil Richfield's 1-0 lead in the winner's bracket quarterfinal on May 31.

Jaxon Moon made Simley pay for a lead-off single as Max Lavin drove him in with a two-out single to right field to take a 1-0 lead.

Richfield doubled up Simley to get out of the first inning thanks to a catch by right-fielder Noah Wiederholt, who completed the play with a throwback to first baseman Tharin Jayamanne.

Jayamanne led off the second inning with a line drive to center field and reached second base on a single by Luke Wolterstorff but couldn't add to the slim lead.

Richfield was caught off the base to end the sixth inning with a double play as Connor Hintz's fly ball to right field was caught and the



Left, Richfield's Connor Hintz eyes up a throw during a regular season game at Red Haddock Field. Right, Kennedy's Sam Nicholson scores during a regular season game against Richfield.



(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTOS BY JASON OLSON)

throwback to first base beat Lavin to the base.

Simley scored both runs with two outs in the sixth inning, including the tying run on an infield base hit, followed by the second run scoring on an error at first base.

Jayamanne led off the seventh inning with a base hit, but pinch-runner Jamisen Holt was stranded at second base to end the game.

The loss set up an elimination game against No. 7 Kennedy (7-16), coming off a South St. Paul forfeit in the first elimination game for the Eagles on May 31.

Kennedy ended Richfield's season by a 9-2 score June 2 at Richfield

High School, thanks, in part, to a seven-run fourth inning.

The rally included six singles and four walks. Cole Houk began the inning with a single, stole home and picked up another single in the inning and was 3-for-4 on the day. JD Coady went 2-for-4, scoring twice and stealing four bases.

Five different Kennedy batters had at least two hits as the two teams combined for 28 hits.

Will Scott earned the complete-game win for Kennedy, scattering two runs on 15 hits. He struck out three batters with one walk on 98 pitches.

Kennedy faced Holy

Angels in the second elimination game for the schools in three days.

The Stars emerged with a 6-2 win on June 4 thanks to a four-run rally in the fourth inning to create enough space after Joe Longo gave the Stars a 1-0 lead with an RBI single in the first inning.

Longo and Sam Palmer added doubles and Riley Thuringer added a home run.

Kennedy broke up the shutout bid as Nick Manning came through with a two-out single to right field, scoring Houk.

Ryan Fortner and Sam Nicholson drew one-out walks in the seventh inning, with Fortner scoring on a ground ball

hit by Will Vogel, who reached on an error by the Stars third baseman to make it 5-2.

Zach Zesch came through with a one-out double in the seventh inning and Coady drew a two-out walk on four pitches before ending the game on a ground by Will Scott.

Kennedy pitcher Brett Conway struck out six Stars over four innings of work.

Holy Angels' season came to and ended in a 13-9 loss in eight innings to St. Thomas on June 5.

The Stars scored in bunches, including three runs in the first inning and six more runs in the fifth inning but were

otherwise shut out by the Cadets.

Tyler Niznick and Troy Lynch combined for five hits, including two doubles and three runs, while Sam Hellstrom went 2-for-5.

Niznik started on the mound going four innings as he gave up three runs on six hits. Longo scattered six runs on six hits over two innings before Charlie Cline worked the final two innings allowing four runs on four hits with three strikeouts. The trio issued seven walks.

Simley and St. Thomas Academy played for the section title June 8.

Follow Jason Olson on Twitter @JasonOlson.



BAJ Scholarships

Bloomington's Born Again Jocks recently presented 11 Kennedy and Jefferson seniors with a Jerry Molosky Scholarship valued at \$1,500. The recipients completed

an application process to evaluate high school athletic participation, community service, financial need and grade point average. Scholarships were presented to Carina Bustos, Jordan Fasching, Joe Gathje, Cayla Jungwirth, Isabelle Lynch, Isabelle Miller, Hannah Peters, Clarie Sazama, Addison Schloo, Maleia Shaw and Jenna Sorenson.

BAJ Softball League

Bloomington's Born Again Jocks are looking

for men age 55 and older to join the summer softball league. Warm-ups begin at 8:30 a.m. with games to follow from 9-11 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays at Valley View Fields 3 and 4 through September. All abilities are welcome. Contact Bill Borchers 952-831-0069 or borchersbj@comcast.net or Bob Wandberg at bwandberg@comcast.net for more information. Other BAJ programming includes cycling, bocce ball, tennis, table tennis,

golf and pickleball during the summer. Winter programs include bowling, volleyball and cards. The annual BAJ Night at Target Field is scheduled for Monday, August 9 against the Chicago White Sox. Tickets are \$27 and the registration deadline is Friday, July 15. Contact Bob Wandberg or Mark Keene (keen.mark@gmail.com) to register. The annual BAJ Pancake Breakfast and Silent Auction for 2021 has been canceled. Info:

bornagainjocks.com

Lynch Basketball camps set

Lynch Basketball camps will once again host summer basketball games in July and August in Bloomington. Camps are open to boys and girls ages 8-13 where they will learn new skills while building on fundamentals like ball-handling, shooting, rebounding, offensive moves, defensive footwork through drills and contests plus

5-on-5 full court games. Campers will be separated by age, size and skill level. The first camp is four sessions from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. July 6-9 at Oak Grove Middle School. The second camp is five sessions from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. August 2-6 at Jefferson Activity Center. Each camp is \$229 and campers are asked to bring a lunch and water bottle. Info: lynchcamps.com or call 952-426-2506.

See **Shorts**, PAGE 26

Holy Angels, Kennedy remain in Section 3AAA hunt

By **JASON OLSON**

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In Section 3AAA, top-seeded Richfield was upset by No. 8 Simley in the June 1 opener.

Second-seeded Holy Angels advanced to Monday's winner's bracket final against No. 5 Cretin-Derham Hall (completed after this edition went to press) with a spot in the June 11 final on the line as neither team lost in the double-elimination tournament.

The Stars opened with a 5-4 win over South St. Paul in 10 innings.

Kassie Caron hit a double to left field and Kendall Thorman brought Caron around on a ground ball to the shortstop to end the game.

Anja Anderson led the Stars going 3-for-5 and Rachel Kawiecki went 2-for-5.

Kaitlyn Kneeland struck out seven batters over 6 2/3 innings giving up three earned runs on eight hits with five walks. Leah Cierzan pitched three shutout relief innings. She gave up one hit and walk with five strikeouts.

Third-seeded Kennedy

opened with a 9-2 win over No. 6 St. Paul Highland Park on June 1 but Holy Angels relegated the Eagles to the elimination bracket with a 4-1 loss on June 3.

Kneeland, Mara Poidinger and Kawiecki each had two hits. Kawiecki and Thorman each drove in two runs and Kneeland scored twice.

Cierzan kept the Eagles bats in check allowing one unearned run on six hits with nine strikeouts and two walks.

Kennedy countered with two hits each from Taylor David, Katie

Edmonds and Ellie Baker. The win over Highland Park was the third straight for the Eagles as they were aided by a seven-run second inning.

Wheeler started the big inning with a one-out triple followed by a walk (Katrina Wrase), three consecutive hit-by-pitches (David, Ali Pauly and Edmonds) and another walk (Baker). Kennedy worked in two more walks and two more errors in the inning.

Mary Hajduk gave up one earned run on 10 hits for the complete-game win. She struck out four and walked one on 90

pitches. She served up first-pitch strikes on 25-of-33 batters.

Kennedy's Ava Morabito scored on a wild pitch for a 3-2 walk-off win over No. 4 Visitation on June 4.

Baker led the Eagles with a pair of hits including a double and scored once. Wheeler also scored in the low-scoring affair while Hajduk and Brinna Kopsichke combined to limit Visitation to four hits and two runs over seven innings. The pair struck out seven batters and didn't issue a walk.

Kennedy awaited the winner of Simley/No. 7

South St. Paul in another elimination game on Monday.

Jaguars out in Section 2AAAA

Third-seed Jefferson was eliminated from the Section 2AAAA tournament with a pair of losses June 1 at Miller Park in Eden Prairie.

The No. 6 seeded host Eagles used a 2-1 score to hand the Jaguars their first loss before No. 7 Chaska broke the elimination game open with a 10-3 final.

Follow Jason Olson on Twitter @JasonOlson.

Baseball

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Jefferson going two innings. He gave up three runs on four hits with two walks and three strikeouts.

Steffen shined in four relief innings. He only allowed two hits and one walk while striking out seven batters.

The Skippers scored all three runs with two outs in the second inning, including a squeeze play on a bunt toward third base as all of the runners safely moved up a base.

Zaetta's two-run double ended the inning as Goedderz made the tag at the plate to get out of the inning. McCollow made a strong relay throw to beat the Skippers runner to home.

Goedderz ripped a single to right field in the fourth inning and a walk by Sam Malecha put two runners on base before Alex Crusan struck out pinch hitting for Andrew Johnson.

Into the sixth inning, the heart of the Jaguars order went down swinging with three hard-hit flyball outs from Hanson, Steffen and Goedderz on nine pitches.

Down to its final three outs, Pinette reached



(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Jefferson's Braden Ebeling shows the ball after an acrobatic play to keep the ball in the infield while shortstop Bennett McCollow stays in position at second base.

on an error to start the seventh inning before Malecha successfully bunted his way on base without giving up an out. Johnson returned to his spot in the order in place of Crusan. A fly out continued the string of hard hits for outs with an out to right field. Littman was out on a fly to center field and Ebeling ended it with a fly out to left field.

The loss relegated the Jaguars to the elimination side of the bracket where they faced No. 2 Chanhassen Friday at Haddox Field in an all-Metro West Conference contest. The Storm scored five times in the fourth inning, pounding out 13 hits while Jefferson used five hits and six walks to produce four runs.

Pinette was the starting

pitcher, going 3 2/3 innings with five strike outs before Johnson picked up the final out in the fourth inning. Crusan struck out three batters over the final three innings in relief.

Pinette led off the second inning with a base hit and came around to score on an error by the catcher to get on the scoreboard, down 2-1.

He finished with two

hits and a walk, while Goedderz had a double and drew a walk. McCollow went 1-for-3 driving in two runs and drew one walk.

Ebeling drew a walk to start the third inning to help Jefferson put the leadoff runner on base for the third consecutive inning. Pinette came up with bases loaded but a ground out ended hopes

of a rally in the third inning.

Malecha was hit by a pitch to start the bottom of the fourth inning as the Jaguars trailed 8-1 after a big Storm rally.

Malecha came around to score along with Littman on a McCollow single to cut the lead to 8-3 before a Chanhassen pitching change stopped the comeback attempt with two fly outs.

Goedderz kept the strong start the innings going with a double in the sixth inning followed by a Pinette single and Malecha's sac fly to center field to make it a 10-4 game.

The Jaguars were retired in order in the sixth and seventh innings to end the game with the only consecutive losses of the season.

Chanhassen advanced to face No. 5 Shakopee in an elimination game on June 7, after this edition went to press, with a spot against No. 7 Prior Lake awaiting the winner on June 8.

Minnetonka advanced to the section final with a 3-2 win over Prior Lake on June 4. The final was played at Veteran's Field at Minnetonka High School on June 9.

Follow Jason Olson on Twitter @JasonOlson.

State Baseball

Chaska Athletic Park will host the first two rounds of the State Class AAAA Baseball Tournament Tuesday and Wednesday, June 15-16. And then the championship game will be played

Friday, June 18, at the home of the Twins, Target Field.

Going into the championship round of the section tournaments this week, Minnetonka was the undefeated team in 2AAAA, while Hopkins

was the undefeated team in 6AAAA. Minnetonka was in the running along with three one-loss contenders - Shakopee, Prior Lake and Chanhassen. Hopkins was awaiting the winner of a game between two one-loss contenders -

St. Louis Park and Maple Grove.

State Lacrosse

The Minnesota State High School League has announced dates for the State Boys and Girls Lacrosse Tournaments. All

games will be held at Stillwater High School with the boys playing June 15, 17 and 19 and the girls playing on consecutive days - Wednesday, June 16, through Friday, June 18. Each tournament features eight teams.





(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Jaguars keep pressure on

Jefferson's Morgan Jones (13) works the ball toward the Apple Valley/Burnsville goal during their Section 6 quarterfinal game played June 4 at Jefferson High School. The Jaguars advanced with a 19-9 win. Jones finished with three goals and one assist. Ella Graff finished with seven points (four goals), Cayla Jungwirth had six points (five goals) and Jenna Johns had four points (four goals). Jefferson faced No. 1 Edina June 8 in the semifinal ahead of the June 10 final against the winner of No. 2 Prior Lake and No. 3 Blake. First round: No. 7 Holy Angels defeated No. 10 St. Louis Park 16-14; No. 8 Minneapolis defeated No. 9 Kennedy 15-13. Quarterfinals: No. 1 Edina defeated No. 8 Minneapolis 18-0; No. 2 Prior Lake defeated No. 7 Holy Angels 21-1.

Shorts

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Jefferson football camps

The Jefferson football staff will host multiple opportunities this summer for those interested in football. A QB/WR camp is set for Tuesday, June 15. A three-day youth camp will be June 21-23. The staff will host four Sundays of free flag football for those going

into grades 6-8 in the fall. Email coach Tim Carlson at tcarlson@isd271.org or visit jeffersonfootball.org.

Richfield sports camps

RevSports Youth Sports Camps will operate three different sports camps June and July. Deadlines are quickly approaching.

Archery camp is open to boys and girls ages 4-11 with sessions July 19-22 at Augsburg Park. Ages 4-7 will meet 9:30-10:30 a.m. and Ages 7-11 will meet

10:40-11:40 a.m. (Fee is \$49 and registration deadline is July 2).

Ninja Warrior Fitness camp will meet for a second session at Jefferson Park on Tuesdays (June 22-July 20, fee is \$49 and registration deadline is June 7). PreStars (ages 3-5 require parent participation) from 5:30-6:10 p.m.; KinderStars (ages 4-6) from 6:15-6:55 p.m. and MiniStars (ages 5-8) from 7-7:40 p.m.

Ultimate Frisbee and

Frisbee Golf camp is open to kids ages 7-11 at Madison Park July 26-29 from 12:15-2:15 p.m. Fee is \$69 and registration deadline is July 11.

Sannah Soccer camps will host two sessions in conjunction with Richfield Recreation at Taft Park in July and August. Open to kids ages 4-12, each session costs \$25 and includes a snack each day and a camp T-shirt. Session 1 is July 12-15 and Session 2 is Aug. 9-12. Camp runs

from 9-9:45 a.m.

Sannah Basketball camps will also take place at Taft Park with a \$5 fee per session. Session 1 (June 21-24) is open to girls going into grades 3-6 from 9-11:30 a.m. Session 2 (August 2-5) is open to girls going into 7-9 grades from 1-3:30 p.m. Session 3 (Aug. 16-19) is open to boys and girls entering grades 3-6 from 9-11:30 a.m. and Session 4 (Aug. 16-19) is open to boys and girls entering 7-9 from 1-3:30 p.m.

Youth tennis lessons will be offered at Augsburg Tennis Courts and led by Coach Scott, Richfield Recreation Tennis Coordinator for over 25 years. Lessons are offered from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. based on ages and each four-lesson week is \$50 June 14-17, June 21-24, June 28-July 1, July 12-15, July 19-22, Aug. 9-12, Aug. 16-19 and August 23-26. If rain, makeup day is Friday at the same time. Info: richfieldmn.gov/online-registration.

TV

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9 p.m. Bloomington Chamber Town Talk - Big Tech is Booming in Bloomington

10 p.m. Bloomington: Where the Water Touches

the Bluffs - A Sesquicentennial Edition
11:30 p.m. Cinema Judge: "Flora & Ulysses"

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16

6 p.m. City Council Meeting: June 14

10:30 p.m. High School Quiz Bowl: Mounds Park vs. Minnetonka

11:30 p.m. Bloomington Today: June 16-22

THURSDAY, JUNE 17

6 p.m. Planning

Commission: June 17
8:30 p.m. Cinema Judge: "Flora & Ulysses"
9 p.m. Bloomington Today: June 16-22

9:30 p.m. Bloomington: Where the Water Touches the Bluffs - A Sesquicentennial Edition
11 p.m. Bloomington

Chamber Town Talk - Big Tech is Booming in Bloomington

The daily schedule for Bloomington TV starts at 6 p.m. and repeats every six hours for the next 24 hours (schedule subject to change). Find us on Comcast BTM 14(SD) and 859(HD). Other local channels

are BEC-TV 15(SD) and 799(HD) (952-681-5900); and BCAT 16 (952-563-4980). For more information and most current schedule, check blm.mn/btv-shows or call 952-563-8874.



Richfield looks to fill voids on Volleyball roster

By **JASON OLSON**

jason.olson@apgecm.com

Richfield's returning volleyball players put in extra work to get up to speed during the off-season to help fill the void created by a graduating class of 10 players off the 2020 roster.

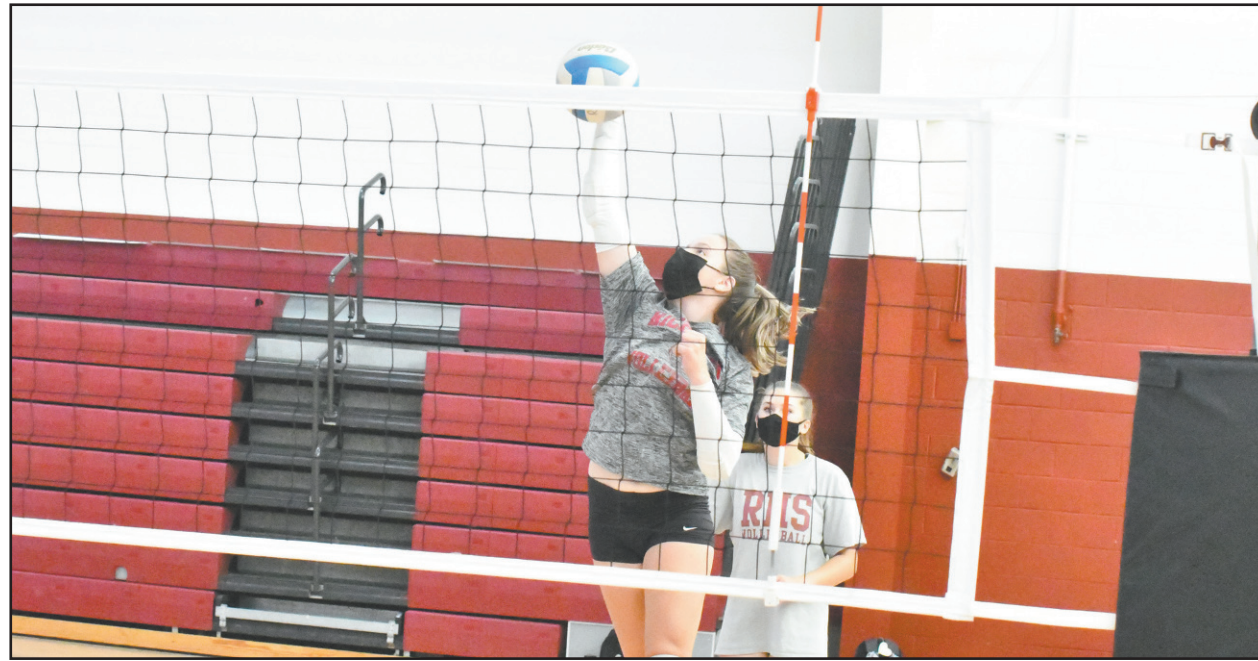
Mya Gibbs and Sidney Shavor are the captains, with Gibbs the lone returning starter back on the floor as a middle hitter/right side.

Shavor provides more stability as a setter/outside hitter to go with junior hitters Josie Popp and Isabelle Hamlin and sophomore Lydia Voxland. Setter Sarah Carlson should emerge to leave her mark on the varsity program.

Coach Carmen Christian said the level of accountability among the players has helped them raise their collective level of play. "They ask great questions and I think are going to surprise a lot of teams," she said.

The feeling around the first week of practice is one of optimism, even with the need to wear masks again on the court.

The Richfield School Board voted to require masks inside all buildings during its Aug. 16 meeting.



Richfield sophomore Lydia Voxland takes a swing during the first week of practice at Richfield High School.

(SUN NEWSPAPERS STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

"We didn't have masks so that was nice to be back to normal with that but it really isn't that big of a deal to wear them again," she said. "We put them on to play and if we have to wear them to play we will do that. Whatever it takes."

Gibbs had her first taste of leading a practice as a captain during captain's practice.

"Open gyms we had a good turnout and it was different leading a practice but it was fun and now that the season is starting we're excited to start playing again," Gibbs said of

playing with a completely new group that needs to learn the little nuances.

They are working on replenishing the program after such a large class graduated. Along those lines, Gibbs said the focus is on building unity and a sense of community.

"We have a group of optimistic individuals who are ready to try new things because we haven't been working together so everyone is open to different positions to see where they fit together," Gibbs said.

With a lot of three-sport teammates, Gibbs

said most of her volleyball teammates stick to the fall for volleyball and focus on other sports in the off-season.

Christian added Leah Barnes as a varsity assistant during the off-season. Barnes was a three-sport standout at Richfield High School before graduating in 2015. She went on to play basketball and volleyball in college with stops at North Dakota State College of Science and Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

Richfield opens the season at Mounds Park Academy Thursday, Aug.

26 before the home opener against St. Paul Johnson at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 31. Richfield will have a seven-match home stand from Sept. 7-27 before closing out the regular season with just two home matches between Sept. 28-Oct. 19.

Parent's Night is set for Oct. 16 against Brooklyn Center, Youth Night is set for Sept. 27 against Minneapolis Patrick Henry and Senior Night is set for Oct. 14 against Minneapolis Roosevelt. Each of those matches begins at 7 p.m.

Richfield will play in

a 17-team Section 4AA including Lakes International Language Academy (Forest Lake), St. Croix Prep, Math and Science Academy, Concordia Academy-Roseville, etc.

Kennedy

Kennedy volleyball coach Dayna Dant returns to the Eagles court after graduating in 2008.

The Eagles will have three captains voted on by the returning players, including senior outside hitter Nariah Dismukes, junior right-side hitter Siri Anderson and freshman setter Jorie Houk.

Kennedy opens the season at Holy Angels Thursday, Aug. 26 with the first serve set for 7 p.m., before visiting Orono for the Metro West Conference opener Aug. 31. The road trip wraps up at South St. Paul Sept. 2 before the home opener against United Christian Tuesday, Sept. 7.

The Eagles moved to Section 6AAA as the sport evolves to four classes including Delano, Mound Westonka, Orono, Jordan, New Prague, Holy Angels and Benilde-St. Margaret's.

Follow Jason Olson on Twitter @JasonOlson.

Cross country teams hit the trail for another season

By **JASON OLSON**

jason.olson@apgecm.com

Richfield cross country will be in a rebuilding phase this fall as the next group of runners gain the stamina and confidence to compete at the varsity level for longtime coach Marty Huberty.

Huberty, who is closing in on his personal goal of finishing 100 marathons, says the boys program is rebuilding while the girls are reloading.

The boys only have one of the top 12 runners back as eight graduated, one transferred and two elected to not come out this fall. Senior Ezekiel Gorshe is the lone runner with varsity experience

and will help guide classmates Theo McCarten and Ryder Whitaker, plus juniors Aidan Cossette and Nathan Gay. Sophomores include Thomas Madrid and Knut Linne and freshmen/eighth-graders include Cameron Spencer, Christopher Mellado, Jameson Rudolph and Jack Friel.

Gorshe and McCarten are captains.

The Spartan girls graduated the top two runners but return All Tri-Metro Conference runners Ava Hanks and Ava Durand and top-30 conference finisher sophomore Parker Pollis.

"The depth and experience come from seniors Bridget Foley and

Aryanna Krautkramer and junior Jessie Molina Escandon," Huberty said.

Newcomers include juniors Mari Rummel and Maggie Weiss along with eighth-graders Rose Thompson and Signe Linne.

Girls captains include Hanks, Durand, Foley and Krautkramer.

Huberty explained the team has put in the work all summer showing their leadership skills by running practices for the new and younger runners while working with them on conditioning and endurance twice a week.

Richfield has another big schedule against some of the top programs in

the state which Huberty believes will prepare them for the conference and section championships in October.

"Meet after meet, the kids will focus on running faster than the meet before," he said. "All our invitationals, scrimmages and extra meets against other teams will prepare us for the two biggies in October."

He believes the girls should compete for second in the Tri-Metro and boys should contend for a top-four finish.

The season begins Thursday, Aug. 26 with a quadrangular scrimmage around Richfield High



(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Jefferson's Mason Young is back with the top three runners which helped the team place second at the Metro West Conference Championships at Gale Woods Farm last fall.

Who will take the hardware in boys soccer this fall?

By **JASON OLSON**

jason.olson@apgecm.com

The amount of quality soccer coming out of Richfield and Bloomington over the last few years is one of the more underrated stories across the state.

Richfield boys captured the Tri-Metro Conference title and advanced to the Section 3A final before falling to Holy Angels. Bloomington Kennedy took the Section 2A title with a dramatic overtime goal from Jesus Ciriaco Mundo at Worthington 1-0 last October.

Holy Angels

Holy Angels boys were the 2019 Class A state champions, going 21-0-1 then 11-1-1 last fall, capturing the Section 3A title with a 4-1 win over Richfield, avenging a 1-0 loss to the Spartans at Spartan Stadium Sept. 29.

The Stars have several contributors back, including senior captains and twins Noah Hermanson and Carter Hermanson. Both are All-State at their position, with Noah garnering First Team status as a defender and Carter earning Second Team honors as an attacker. He is coming off three consecutive seasons of 15 goals or more and is two away from hitting 50 career goals.

Additional senior captains include defenseman Ryan Welsch and midfielder Aidan Smith.

Smith is a familiar face around Holy Angels as a three-sport standout with the basketball and baseball programs in addition to his soccer duties in the fall. He has been a routine varsity contributor since eighth grade and should set the program record for appearances this fall, playing in 75 games heading into 2021 after an abbreviated 2020 campaign. Last fall he was impactful when it mattered the most, involved in 7-of-9 section goals. “He shows up in big moments with quality, poise and creativity,” coach James See said.

Welsch was one of the most consistent performers for a defense that collected eight clean sheets and allowed just eight goals in 13 games in 2020.



(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Kennedy's Diego Perez, left, accounted for three goals and four assists enroute to the Section 2A title.



(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Richfield teammates Angel Mendez-Lopez (4) bumps fists with goalkeeper Carlos Luis-Ibarra, right, during the 2020 season.

All-Tri-Metro midfielder Shalim Montes Hernandez is back as a key cog, logging the most minutes in 2020. This fall marks his fourth varsity season.

Sophomore Everett Hoepfner started the final 12 games as a shutdown defender in 2020. “He’s grown in both stature and voice this off-season and is prepared for another

great season,” See said of Hoepfner, who was part of a stingy defense that yielded two goals in the run of play. The Stars conceded six goals off set-pieces, including

three penalty kicks and three dead-ball restarts.

Joining See’s staff as a varsity assistant and Blue Team coach is Dan Hedstrom who was the 2015 Class A Mr. Soccer recipient while playing at Hermantown. He went on to play at Northern Michigan before transferring to Augsburg University, where See was an assistant coach at the time. Hedstrom went on to garner All-American honors in 2018. He also coaches at Burnsville United and was on the Forest Lake staff last fall. A 2017 Holy Angels graduate, Abe Sanchez is back as a volunteer assistant coach.

Kennedy

A bulk of the 2020 section championship team graduated as the team finished 9-5-3 on the season but the energy and excitement building off the recent success continues for coach Dan Bussendorf and his capable crew coming into 2021.

Diego Fuentes Rodriguez scored nine goals last season as a defensive midfielder/forward and will be looked upon to be a leader as a senior captain. Diego Perez returns after collecting three goals and four

assists.

Bussendorf anticipated Justin Arias as another captain and is still just a sophomore, but he elected to focus on academy training instead of playing for Kennedy this fall. The Minnesota State High School League does not allow high schoolers to compete for their school and club during the same season.

Look for junior Owen Peters to step into the starting keeper role after being a backup to current UW-Superior freshman Carter Lansdale last fall.

“Having a surge in participation will be key to finding the next wave of Eagle champions,” Bussendorf said.

Returning coaching staff includes Brent Fairman, Bill Schwandt, Eddy Vuong and Ian Toledano. Brayan Lopez is not back on the sideline. The program offered four days of free training over the summer, and Bussendorf said many of the younger players took advantage of the extra time to improve their overall skills and fitness level.

The addition of Waconia, New Prague and Orono to the Metro West Conference means the level of competition is only going to grow tougher, according to Bussendorf. “Each and every game in the Metro West Conference is very challenging but these challenges help us improve so we can make another run at the state tourney.”

The Eagles will not have a chance to defend the Section 2A title as they were moved to Section 3AA, competing alongside Holy Angels and Richfield. Look for St. Thomas Academy and Simley to make the road to state even more difficult.

Kennedy opens the season against United Christian at 7 p.m. at Bloomington Stadium Thursday, Aug. 26 before hosting Rochester Lourdes at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 28 at Kennedy High School.

Richfield

Building on a regular-season Tri-Metro Conference title in 2020, Richfield finished the season

New faces join Jefferson's tennis team veterans

Walworth, Oh, Campbell set to guide more than 50 tennis players this fall

By **JASON OLSON**

jason.olson@apgecm.com

Jefferson girls tennis has another veteran group back including senior captains Sydney Walworth (No. 1 singles) and Sae Mee Oh (No. 1 doubles or No. 2 singles) and junior Greta Campbell (No. 2 singles or No. 1 doubles) ready to help organize and lead a team with over 50 players which wrapped up the preseason with the annual senior match Aug. 23 and Blue versus White intra-squad scrimmage on Aug. 24.

Walworth has four years of varsity experience including All-Conference Honorable Mention last season. Oh enters her fifth season and was an All-Conference honoree. Campbell enters her third season after playing at No. 1 doubles and senior Sarah Heeter

played at second doubles partnering with sophomore Ana Feeken as both were varsity newcomers in 2020.

The program will miss six-year varsity player Isabelle Lynch, who will play golf at St. Thomas.

The influx of participation this fall is something coach Lynn Larson can appreciate as several basketball players decided to join the program before their season. Several upperclassmen will attempt to add varsity team points, including seniors Emily Colby, Abbie Johns and Caroline Yue who saw some time on varsity as did junior Melina Peters. Look for help from seniors Kristin Kurschner and Anja Urbanz.

"We are very experienced and will be deeper than in past years," Larson said, as 20 players participated in USTA Junior Team Tennis. As a result, "Everyone has improved. We have huge numbers out for tennis this year."

Larson credits the coaching staff, "they make things so fun while teaching the basics. They really know how to work with kids."

Larson's 82-year-old father Marv Hartung is still an assistant coach and Larson joined him this season as a retired teacher after more than three decades teaching math. "The girls love working with Marv," she said. "I'm happy to have a little extra time to work with the team."

Another assistant coach Nick Hupton is back as is JV coach Tom McNutt and B squad coach David Carberry.

Molly Deering, who was added as a B squad coach, played for the Jaguars from 2011-14 before playing at UW-River Falls.

The Metro West Conference added Orono, Waconia and New Prague this season and Larson believes Orono will challenge Benilde-St. Margaret's for the conference title. She thinks the Jaguars should compete for a top-three finish. As for Section 6AA, Jefferson will once again have a tough road to reach state against teams like Edina, BSM, Eastview and Class A state champion Blake.

Follow Jason Olson on Twitter @JasonOlson.



(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Jefferson's Anna Freeman returns the ball during a preseason drill at Jefferson High School.

Soccer

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ranked fifth in the final Class A state coaches poll. The Spartans have very capable scorers back in Rodrigo Rodriguez (21 career goals) and fourth-year varsity starter Erick Lopez (15 goals and 22 career assists), helping make up for the loss of Mr. Soccer finalist Miguel Leon Alverado, who is part of Minnesota United organization this fall.

The Spartans return 13 seniors and 17 players with varsity experience, which helped revitalize the Richfield Soccer Association as they progressed through the youth soccer ranks going back to fourth grade.

Junior varsity coach John Niday has coached the group since the early days.

Senior captain Yulian Rodriguez Torres is a fifth-year starting midfielder who is a returning All-State honoree.

Senior goalkeeper



(SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Holy Angels' Noah Hermanson, left, encourages a teammate during the 2020 season.

and captain Carlos Luis Ibarra is a two-time All-Conference award winner as a keeper last fall and defender as a sophomore.

Junior defender and captain Angel Mendez Lopez earned All-

Conference honors for his work in the back as a sophomore.

Look for sophomore Antawain Ruiz to build off a breakout 2020 season, which saw him score nine goals coming off the

bench for coach Mike Harris.

Harris will mark his 15th season guiding the program as a proud alum. He boasts a 120-101-20 record.

The Spartans will host

Kennedy at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 16 after missing out on the rivalry game due to COVID-19 and schedule last fall. Richfield will look for a first win over the Eagles in a decade.

Richfield opens the season at Hastings on Aug. 26 and Blake on Aug. 28 before hosting Apple Valley at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 31.

Jefferson

Jefferson will look to build off a one-win 2020 with several contributors back including three midfielders who will serve as captains. Sophomores Dylan Goedderz will play in the central midfield while classmate Joseph Nyagaka and junior Thomas Robar will also play in the midfield. Senior Aidan Atkins will be another experienced player in the midfield feeding a pair of senior forwards in Cristian Castillo-Acevedo and Josh Anderson.

Junior goalkeeper Beckett Larson is joined by three sophomores

ready to emerge at the varsity level, including forwarding Bennett Lindman and defenders Matthew Ouelett and Connor Wigglesworth.

The Jaguars will move to Section 2AAA competing against primarily Dakota County programs: Apple Valley, Eastview, Eagan, Rosemount, and Burnsville, in addition to Park of Cottage Grove and Hastings.

The Jaguars head to coach Danny Storlien's alma mater Park of Cottage Grove for what has become the traditional season-opener at Wolfpack Stadium, 5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 26. Jefferson hosts Prior Lake at noon Saturday, Aug. 28 at Bloomington Stadium for the home opener. Jefferson will host Benilde-St. Margaret's at the Jefferson High School turf field for the Metro West Conference opener at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 31.

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Volleyball

Kennedy travels to Holy Angels to open the season at 7 p.m. at the Richfield campus.

Soccer

Holy Angels opens the season with a soccer doubleheader at StarDome with the girls facing St. Paul Highland Park at 5:30 p.m., followed by the boys against St. Paul Academy at 7:30 p.m.

The Stars boys host Minnehaha Academy at StarDome 1 p.m. and the girls play at Totino-Grace, also at 1 p.m.

Jefferson boys travel to Park Cottage Grove for the season-opener at 5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 26, while the girls visit Hastings for a 7 p.m. start.

Jefferson will host a soccer doubleheader against Prior Lake at Bloomington Stadium Saturday, Aug. 28. The girls begin at 10 a.m. followed by the boys at noon.

Kennedy boys open at home against

Rochester Lourdes on the high school turf at 4:30 p.m. Saturday. The Eagles girls' travel to St. Croix Lutheran for a 7 p.m. start on Friday, Aug. 27.

Richfield boys open the season at Hastings at 6 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 26 and travel to Blake for a 2 p.m. start on Saturday, Aug. 28.

The Spartan girls travel to St. Paul Como Park for the season opener at 7

p.m. Friday, Aug. 27.

Football scrimmages

Each area football team will take part in a scrimmage on Saturday morning.

Jefferson and Richfield will host at their respective high schools starting at 9 a.m. North St. Paul will visit Spartan Stadium. Jefferson hosts Hastings, Brooklyn Center and St. Paul Central.

Kennedy will scrimmage at Burnsville's Pates Stadium.

Tennis

Richfield High School will host a doubles tournament including Jefferson, Minneapolis Southwest and Southwest Christian on the courts at the high school and Augsburg Park starting at 9 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 28.

Fans have free admission to Gopher softball this fall

By JOHN SHERMAN

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The University of Minnesota women's softball team has an eight-game schedule this fall at Jane Sage Cowles Stadium on

the U of M campus.

No admission will be charged for any of the fall softball games.

Last season, the Gophers finished 31-13 and second in the Big Ten Conference. One of the team

leaders was left fielder Natalie DenHartog from Hopkins High, who made first-team All-Big Ten. The Gophers earned their eighth consecutive berth in the NCAA Women's Softball Tournament.

The first event is a doubleheader with Dakota Wesleyan at 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 18.

At 6:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 1, the Gophers host their alumni team.

At 1 and 3 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 2, the Gophers will play the University of North Dakota.

Minnesota-Duluth visits Sage Cowles Stadium of a doubleheader at 1 and 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 9.

The fall schedule concludes with the Gophers welcoming the University of St. Thomas to the NCAA Division I ranks in a 5:30 p.m. game Friday, Oct. 15.

Herschel wins Dwan Ladies Club championship

The Dwan 18-hole Ladies Club wrapped up a three-week tournament Aug. 19 crowning champions in four flights.

The best two-of-three round scores were used for the final standings with Terry Herschel earning the title with a low gross total of 155 strokes.

She beat out Ruth Hofmeister by eight strokes while low net score went to Emi Sako with a 133.

Flight 2 low net score went to Sue Olafson (135) while Lynne Becker was one stroke back. Flight 3 was won by Brenda Armstrong (131) while Lynne Norwich was seven strokes off the winning



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)
Terry Herschel won the Dwan 18-hole Ladies Club championship in Bloomington Aug. 19. The top two scores from three rounds counted for the tournament. She carded a score of 155 strokes, eight shots ahead of runner-up Ruth Hofmeister.

pace. Flight 4 was won by Sheila Kelly-Hoyt was eight strokes back. Kim Hanson (135) while

Running

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School and Augsburg Park before the Tri-Metro Jamboree set for Sept. 1 at Battle Creek Park.

The team will put on an alumni/community run starting at 9 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 28 on the training course used by the program that begins between Spartan Stadium and Kispert Field.

Jefferson

Jefferson cross country will look to build off a second-place finish (boys) at the Metro West Conference Championships, which were at Gale Woods Farms instead of the traditional home of Hyland Greens in Bloomington. The girls finished third in the

meet trailing St. Louis Park and Chanhassen as the trio should remain at the top again this season, despite the addition of Waconia, Orono and New Prague to the conference lineup.

The boys have senior captains Mason Young and Zach Studdiford back to go along with Adam Lueth, Ian Klein and Zach Tapajna.

Lueth was fourth, Studdiford was sixth and Young was ninth at the conference championship. Lueth and Young were 38th and 39th, respectively at the Section 3AA meet.

Junior Megan Lee will once again captain the squad and be among the front runners at each meet this season. She will be joined by senior captains Elena Coarsa and Abby Tapajna while the top returners

including Amelia Borgen, Caroline Hemann, Emily Albert and Jamie Drewitz.

Borgen and Lee placed fourth and sixth, respectively at the conference championship, while Hemann and Albert garnered 11th and 13th, respectively.

Meanwhile, at sections, Lee and Borgen placed 12th and 14th, respectively.

The section might look a little different as the Jaguars move up to the new Class AAA, joining Section 3AAA with Burnsville, Apple Valley, Eastview, Rosemount, Eagan, Park Cottage Grove, East Ridge and Hastings in a nine-team field.

The team will kick off the season at the St. Olaf College High School Showcase Thursday, Sept. 2.

Catcher make makes move from JUCO to Crookston

By JOHN SHERMAN

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Former Edina High baseball catcher Matthew Nunn has signed with the University of Minnesota-Crookston for the 2022 season.

Nunn has been the starting catcher at Century College, a two-year school in White Bear Lake, the last two seasons. At the conclusion of the 2021 season he won the national Gold Glove

Award for JUCO Division III catchers.

"A family friend is the coach at Crookston," Nunn said last week. "I am going from a program that wins a lot [Century] to a school that is building the program. Playing for Century the last two years was the most fun I've ever had in baseball." Part of the fun came when Nunn was named the Gold Glove winner. Another highlight was his selection to the

All-Region Team.

U of M-Crookston competes with Division II baseball powerhouses, including St. Cloud State, Augustana and Minnesota State University, Mankato in the Northern Sun Conference.

This summer, Nunn is keeping his skills sharp with the Metro Knights Class A amateur team. The Knights qualified for state for the second straight year with Nunn as the starting catcher

and lead-off hitter. Nunn throws right-handed, like most catchers, but hits from the left side.

"When I was growing up, I was more of a No. 2 hitter," Nunn said. "The game plan [with the Knights] is to have our fast guys at the top of the batting order and use our legs."

The No. 2 spot in the Knights' order is filled by outfielder Chester Dixon, a teammate of Nunn's at Edina High

School. Both Nunn and Dixon had key hits Aug. 14 when the Knights defeated Hopkins 4-0 in the opening round of state play at Palm Field in St. Anthony Village.

"When we have all our guys, we can play with any team in the state," Nunn said. The Knights are one of the younger teams in the Class A amateur ranks, and Nunn is one of the players who gives them their swagger.

The second weekend of

the State Class A Tournament ended abruptly for the Knights, who lost 10-0 to Baseball 365 in the quarterfinal round.

Nunn batted over .300 this summer against pitching comparable to what he will see in Division II. In Class A amateur ball, there are pitchers who made it to the majors and high minors. So some of them are even quicker than the Division II college pitchers.