



Photos by Patrick Bernadeau / West Central Tribune

Willmar sophomore Sydney Schnichels hammers an attack during Tuesday's Central Lakes Conference match against Rocori from Willmar High School.

BIG NIGHT AT THE BIG RED GYM

Willmar improves to 10-0 with a 3-0 win over Rocori

By Patrick Bernadeau
pbernadeau@wctrib.com

WILLMAR

Facing a squad with just two wins this season, the Willmar volleyball team outclassed its opponent to remain undefeated.

Using spurts to exert their dominance while mixing in their reserve players, the Cardinals improved their record to 10-0 with a 3-0 victory over Rocori on Tuesday.

The set scores were 25-10, 25-12 and 25-11 during the Central Lakes Conference match from the Big Red Gym at Willmar High School.

"We did get a lot of the girls and all the seniors in for some playing time, which

was great," Cardinals head coach Traci Grussing said. "I thought we were a little bit slow to start in the second and third sets. That was an issue, but other than that, when we got the ball to our setter, our offense was fairly unstoppable."

The home team went on three separate six-point runs in the opening set; the last featuring a pair of kills from senior hitter Bailey Olson and two ace serves from junior setter Lydia Larson to extend Willmar's lead to 24-8.

With the second set tied at 8-8, senior right-side hitter Sophie Kobienia helped the Cardinals pull away. She collected a kill and an ace

block before capping a 5-0 run with a powerful attack to make it 13-8.

Throughout the night, the force behind Kobienia's left-handed attacks gave the Spartans fits. As an example, one of the senior's attacks bounced off the head of an opponent and the ball floated into the stands. Kobienia finished with eight kills.

"It's really difficult for a team to defend a left-handed hitter on the right side of the court," Grussing said. "Lydia is pretty good at getting her the ball and Sophie was unstoppable tonight. She's had some games where she's

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Willmar senior outside hitter Bailey Olson serves during the first set of Tuesday's Central Lakes Conference match against Rocori from Willmar High School.

Gophers slowed by COVID

Men's basketball is paused, while women practiced together Tuesday after a long hiatus

By Andy Greder
St. Paul Pioneer Press

The Minnesota Golden Gophers men's basketball team has paused preseason workouts due to positive COVID-19 cases and the women's basketball team is coming out of its own hiatus due to coronavirus pandemic, the school confirmed to the St. Paul Pioneer Press on Tuesday.

A university spokesman said in a statement the men's team took this action "recently" and will resume activities once it has been cleared to do so. The school later revealed that the women's program paused workouts last week but resumed individual workouts starting Tuesday.



John Autey / St. Paul Pioneer Press

Minnesota Gophers head coach Lindsay Whalen tries to motivate her players as they take on Ohio State in the first quarter of an NCAA Women's basketball game at Williams Arena in Minneapolis on Dec. 31, 2019.

It is unclear how many positive cases have been diagnosed within the two programs to force the stoppages.

The Gophers athletics department had been reporting totals of COVID-19 cases across all sports on a mostly monthly, but it has not shared its figures for October. The

department started sharing overall totals in June, did not share in July, then resuming sharing again in August and September.

The Gophers' basketball programs began practices in mid-October, and both

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VOLLEYBALL ROUNDUP

BBE shuts down Paynesville for a 3-1 CMC victory

No 5 Jaguars beat host Bulldogs 25-13, 21-25, 25-20, 25-15

By Joe Brown, Patrick Bernadeau and Tom Elliott
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PAYNESVILLE — After trading the second and third sets with Paynesville, Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa emphatically closed the door on Tuesday's Central Minnesota Conference match.

Up 2-1 through three sets, the fifth-ranked (in Class A) Jaguars were tied 14-all in the fourth against host Paynesville. But BBE would score 10 straight points en route to winning the decid-

ing set. The Jaguars took the match 25-13, 21-25, 25-20, 25-15.

In the 10-point stretch, BBE had an ace by Kailey Fischer, back-to-back kills by Paige Rupp and a pair of kills by Abby Berge.

In the third set, the Jaguars also ended on a hot streak, going from a tie at 20-20 to five straight points. In that span, Berge had a kill, Emily Kern had an ace serve and the Jaguars scored a block.

Natalie Riley had a Paynesville-best seven kills and Ashley Osendorf was a force at the net defensively with 5-1/2 blocks.

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SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL

Professional NFL

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pct, PF, PA. Rows include Buffalo, Miami, New England, N.Y. Jets, Tennessee, Indianapolis, Houston, Jacksonville, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Kansas City, Las Vegas, Denver, L.A. Chargers.

N.Y. Giants 23, Washington 20 Tennessee 24, Chicago 17 Las Vegas 31, L.A. Chargers 26 Pittsburgh 24, Dallas 19 Miami 34, Arizona 31 New Orleans 38, Tampa Bay 3 Monday's Games New England 30, N.Y. Jets 27 Week 10 Thursday's Games Indianapolis at Tennessee, 7:20 p.m. Sunday's Games Houston at Cleveland, 12 p.m. Washington at Detroit, 12 p.m. Jacksonville at Green Bay, 12 p.m. Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants, 12 p.m. Tampa Bay at Carolina, 12 p.m. L.A. Chargers at Miami, 3:05 p.m. Buffalo at Arizona, 3:05 p.m. Denver at Las Vegas, 3:05 p.m. Cincinnati at Pittsburgh, 3:25 p.m. Seattle at L.A. Rams, 3:25 p.m. San Francisco at New Orleans, 3:25 p.m. Baltimore at New England, 7:20 p.m. Monday's Games Minnesota at Chicago, 7:15 p.m.

GOLF

Professional Masters Tournament Tee Times

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pct, PF, PA. Rows include Philadelphia, Washington, N.Y. Giants, Dallas, New Orleans, Tampa Bay, Carolina, Atlanta, Green Bay, Chicago, Minnesota, Detroit, Seattle, Arizona, L.A. Rams, San Francisco.

LOCAL SCHEDULE

Wednesday, Nov. 11 Football Kimball at BOLD, 5 p.m. ACGC at Eden Valley-Watkins, 6 p.m. Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted at Benson, 6 p.m. Browerville/Eagle Valley at BBE, 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 12 Football Litchfield at New London-Spicer, 5 p.m. Dawson-Boyd at Minnetta, 5 p.m. MACCRAY at Lakeview, 5 p.m. LQPV at Canby, 6 p.m. Pierz at Montevideo, 6:15 p.m. Willmar at Becker, 7 p.m. Paynesville vs. Osakis, 7 p.m. at Alexandria Cedar Mountain at RCW, 7 p.m. Russell-Tyler-Ruthton at YME, 7 p.m.

TV SCHEDULE

Wednesday, Nov. 11 College football Toledo at Western Michigan, 7 p.m., ESPN2 Thursday, Nov. 12 Football NFL: Indianapolis at Tennessee, 7 p.m., FOX College football Colorado State at Boise State, 7 p.m., FS1 Golf The Masters, first round, noon, 7 p.m. ESPN Soccer Wales vs. U.S., 1:30 p.m., FS1

TRANSACTIONS

Tuesday Baseball National League Pittsburgh Pirates - Named John Baker director of coaching and player development. Football National Football League Arizona Cardinals - Protected DT Trevon Coley, DE Michael Dogbe, DB D.J. Foster, and DB Jace Whittaker. Atlanta Falcons - Activated LB Edmond Robinson from the practice squad. Waived DE Takkarist McKinley. Baltimore Ravens - Activated DB Tramont Williams and DB Nate Brooks from the practice squad. Added T R.J. Prince to the practice squad. Placed DB Khalil Dorsey on IR. Protected TE Sean Culklin, LS Nick Moore, DE Chauncey Rivers, and DB Nigel Warrior. Buffalo Bills - Protected C Jordan Deyer, C Jonathon Harrison, WR Jake Kumerow, and DB Daryl Worley. Carolina Panthers - Added DT Woodrow Hamilton and RB Reggie Bonafon to the practice squad. Placed DB Jus-

Noon Patrick Cantlay, Rory McIlroy, Dustin Johnson 12:11 p.m. Justin Rose, Zach Johnson, Cameron Champ 12:22 p.m. Sung-jae Im, Brendon Todd, Victor Perez Tee No. 10 7 a.m. Jimmy Walker, Sandy Lyle, Yuxin Lin 7:11 a.m. Marc Leishman, Webb Simpson, Hideki Matsuyama 7:22 a.m. Scottie Scheffler, Kevin Kisner, Adam Hadwin 7:33 a.m. Bryson DeChambeau, Jon Rahm, Louis Oosthuizen 7:44 a.m. Patrick Reed, Tony Finau, Paul Casey 7:55 a.m. Tiger Woods, Andy Ogletree, Shane Lowry 8:06 a.m. Gary Woodland, Jordan Spieth, Ian Poulter 8:17 a.m. Si Woo Kim, Graeme McDowell, Nate Lashley 11:05 a.m. Nick Taylor, Shugo Imahira, Justin Harding 11:16 a.m. Sebastian Munoz, Byeong-Hun An, Chez Reavie 11:27 a.m. Matthew Wolff, Bubba Watson, Tommy Fleetwood 11:38 a.m. Francesco Molinari, Billy Horschel, Cameron Smith 11:49 a.m. J.T. Poston, Bernhard Langer, Christiaan Bezuidenhout Noon Max Homa, Dylan Frittelli, Fred Couples

ton Burris on the IR/Designated for Return list. Protected G Mike Horton, LB Clay Johnston, LB Chris Orr, and TE Giovanni Ricci. Removed K Taylor Bertolo and DT Mike Panasiuk from the practice squad. Chicago Bears - Activated DT Anthony Rush from the practice squad. Added G Eric Kush and QB Kyle Sloter to the practice squad. Protected QB Tyler Bray and NT Dan McCullers. Removed C Aaron Neary from the practice squad. Cincinnati Bengals - Placed DE Sam Hubbard on the IR/Designated for Return list. Protected DB Brian Allen, DT Reggie McKenzie, WR Stanley Morgan Jr., and G Quinton Spain. Cleveland Browns - Added DB Stephen Denmark and C Javon Patterson to the practice squad. Protected QB Kyle Lauletta, DE Cameron Malveaux, K Matt McCrane, and T Alex Taylor. Removed G Evan Brown and DB Prince Smith Jr. from the practice squad. Dallas Cowboys - Activated DB Chidobe Awuzie from the IR/Designated for return list. Denver Broncos - Acquired DB DeVante Bausby off waivers from the Arizona Cardinals. Placed TE Albert Okuegbunam on IR. Detroit Lions - Added DB Jalen Elliott to the practice squad. Protected DE Frank Herron, C Marcus Martin, WR Mohamed Sanu Sr., and DB Dee Virgin. Removed TE Khari Lee from the practice squad. Green Bay Packers - Activated QB Jordan Love from the IR/COVID-19 list. Protected DB Henry Black, DB KeiVarae Russell, and DB Stanford Samuels. Houston Texans - Activated T Max Scharping from the IR/COVID-19 list. Activated LB Dylan Cole and LB Whitney Mercilus from the IR/COVID-19 list. Added LB Curtis Bolton and DE Kendall Fretrell to the practice squad. Protected DT Corey Liuget, C Greg Mancz, RB Scottie Phillips, and RB C.J. Prosise. Removed WR Devin Smith from the practice squad. Indianapolis Colts - Activated WR DeMichael Harris from the practice squad. Added RB Darius Jackson to the practice squad. Waived DE Ron Dell Carter. Jacksonville Jaguars - Cut DB Doug Middleton. Protected K Jon Brown, LB Joe Giles-Harris, DB Josh Nurse, and TE Eric Saubert. Signed K Chase McLaughlin. Kansas City Chiefs - Activated T Martinus Rankin from the physically unable to perform list. Waived DE Demone Harris. Las Vegas Raiders - Added WR Rico Gafford to the practice squad, protected him. Protected K Dominik Eberle, DE David Irving, DE Chris Smith.

Los Angeles Chargers - Protected RB Kalen Ballage. Los Angeles Rams - Removed C Cohl Cabral from the practice squad. Waived LB Natrez Patrick. Miami Dolphins - Protected WR Antonio Callaway, DB Tae Hayes, TE Chris Myrick, and QB Reid Sennett. Minnesota Vikings - Activated LB Todd Davis from the IR/COVID-19 list. Placed DB Holton Hill on IR. Placed LS Austin Cutting on the IR/COVID-19 list. Waived LB Ben Gedeon. New England Patriots - Acquired TE Jordan Thomas off waivers from the Arizona Cardinals. Added TE Dylan Cantrell and TE David Wells to the practice squad. Removed DT Ryan Glasgow from the practice squad. Reverted LB Terez Hall and WR Kristian Wilkerson to the practice squad. Waived LB Cassh Maluia. New Orleans Saints - Removed QB Tommy Stevens from the practice squad. New York Giants - Activated G Will Hernandez from the IR/COVID-19 list. Protected DB Montre Hartage, P Ryan Santosco, QB Clayton Thorson, and LS Carson Tinker. Waived DB Corey Baklentine. New York Jets - Reverted DT Tanzel Smart and TE Ross Travis to the practice squad. Waived QB Mike White. Philadelphia Eagles - Protected G Jamon Brown, TE Jason Croom, DB Michael Jaquet III, and DT T.Y. McGill. Pittsburgh Steelers - Activated RB Trey Edmunds from the practice squad. Placed T Jerald Hawkins, QB Ben Roethlisberger, RB Jaylen Samuels, and LB Vince Williams on the IR/COVID-19 list. Protected DB Antoine Brooks Jr., WR Deon Cain, TE Kevin Rader, and RB Wendell Smallwood. Seattle Seahawks - Removed DB DeMarkus Ayce from the practice squad. Tampa Bay Buccaneers - Protected K Greg Joseph, DT Jeremiah Ledbetter, and G John Molchon. Tennessee Titans - Added NT Miles Brown, C Daniel Munyer, and K Giorgio Tavecchio to the practice squad. Protected LS Matt Overton, DE Wyatt Ray, and LB Tuzar Skipper. Washington Football Team - Activated WR Jeff Badet from the practice squad. Cut WR Tony Brown. Protected DT Devaroe Lawrence, QB Steven Montez, C Ross Pierschbacher, and K Kaare Vedvik. Basketball Hockey

SPORTS BRIEFS

Steelers' COVID outbreak includes QB Roethlisberger

Four more Pittsburgh Steelers players were moved to the COVID/Reserve list on Tuesday, bringing the team's total to five and including quarterback Ben Roethlisberger.

Roethlisberger, offensive lineman Jerald Hawkins, running back Jaylen Samuels and linebacker Vince Williams are isolating for five days and are not permitted in the UPMC Rooney Sports Complex.

It's not out of the realm of possibility Roethlisberger and his teammates, including tight end Vance McDonald, will be eligible to play Sunday against the Cincinnati Bengals.

McDonald was placed on the COVID/Reserve list on Monday.

Each player would need to pass COVID-19 tests — and produce back-to-back negative test results — before

potentially becoming eligible to play Week 10.

All players are permitted to take part in virtual meetings.

ACC unveils 20-game conference slate

The Atlantic Coast Conference announced Tuesday that it will stage a 20-game conference season, beginning Dec. 12.

The league said the final day of the regular season will be March 6. The ACC tournament is scheduled for March 9-13 in Washington, D.C.

The brief time between the end of the regular season and the start of the tournament leaves no time for makeup games lost to the coronavirus. The plan will be to make up any lost contests during openings in the schedules of the affected teams.

ACC commissioner John Swofford doesn't expect much hardship despite the pandemic still raging out of control.

“Our institutions, following the guidance of our league’s Medical Advisory Group and public health officials, continue to the uphold the necessary measures to compete in a safe and responsible manner,” Swofford said in a statement. “ACC Basketball is always met with excitement, which is a tribute to the league’s rich tradition of student-athletes, coaches and championship programs. As has been the case throughout the fall, during these unique times we will remain nimble and be as prepared as possible should adjustments be necessary.”

The first conference game will involve Syracuse visiting Boston College on Dec. 12. All 15 ACC teams will play at least one December league contest prior to the holiday season.

Duke basketball won't have fans

Duke basketball will be without one of the loudest

fan bases in the nation in the 2020-21 season.

The school announced Tuesday that no fans will be permitted at Cameron Indoor Stadium, quieting the Cameron Crazies, as the fans are known, because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The fan ban affects both the men’s and women’s teams. Duke’s football team also is playing without fans on campus in Durham, N.C.

“The decision to maintain our non-spectator protocol is imperative for the overall health and safety of the Blue Devil fan base, student-athletes, coaches and support staff, notwithstanding the immediate campus population comprised of students, faculty and staff,” athletic director Kevin White said in a statement.

“We will continue to embrace the challenges of this unique if not unprecedented time with flexibility and

compliance, and can’t begin to thank our dedicated, passionate fans enough for their unbridled support.”

Cameron Indoor Stadium, opened in 1940, seats about 9,500 people and traditionally is an unwelcoming venue for visitors because of the fierce fan base. The men’s basketball team is 901-162 (.848) all-time at the arena, including a 543-67 mark (.890) under coach Mike Krzyzewski.

The school also announced its 2020-21 men’s basketball schedule on Tuesday, which is slated to kick off at home on Nov. 25 against Gardner-Webb. The Atlantic Coast Conference portion of the schedule begins Dec. 18 at Notre Dame.

College basketball is getting set to play amid rising COVID-19 cases around the country. On Monday, legendary Michigan State coach Tom Izzo announced he tested positive for the virus.

—Field Level Media

GOPHERS

From previous page

of their seasons’ starts have been delayed by the coronavirus, with it now expected to start in a couple of weeks. They have yet to release full or even partial schedules.

Men’s coach Richard Pitino said last month they hope to play 27 regular-season games, including the now-standard 20 Big Ten games.

This story was first reported by KSTP-TV.

CARDINALS

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made some errors. Tonight, she put everything in play, she attacked everything and hit hard.”

Junior outside hitter Marissa Rosen smashed a free ball at the end of a 7-0 run to close out the second set.

In the third set, Rocori trailed 13-10 before Willmar created a cushion with a 4-0 spurt. After the visitors put a point on the board, the Cardinals finished the match with a 8-0 surge. At 22-10, junior middle hitter Madelyn Knofczynski delivered a kill before senior defensive specialist Ashley Guse put up an ace serve and senior libero

Abby Stark produced a dump-off.

Larson led the hosts with 36 assists, nine digs and two ace serves. Stark added a team-high 18 digs. Schnichels put up a Cards-best 12 kills, four ace blocks and six digs. Olson added 10 digs, seven kills and two ace blocks.

Willmar’s next scheduled match is 7 p.m. Thursday at Sauk Rapids.

Willmar 3,

Rocori 0

Table with columns: Team, Kills, Aces, Digs. Rows include Rocori (2-6), Willmar (10-0), Rocori, Willmar, Serving (aces), Stats not available, Willmar, Serving (aces), Stats not available, Willmar, Serving (aces), Stats not available, Willmar, Serving (aces).

BBE

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Emma Stanley scooped up 14, digs in the loss.

BBE faces Eden Valley-Watkins at 7:15 p.m. Thursday in Brooten. Paynesville’s next scheduled match is 7:15 p.m. Monday against visiting Maple Lake.

BBE 3,

Paynesville 1

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, PF, PA. Rows include BBE (8-1), Paynesville (4-4), Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa, Paynesville, Serving (aces), Set assists, Hitting (kills), Blocking (aces), Digs (5 or more).

EV-W 3,

Kimball 2

Lindsey Wirz had 15 kills and McKenna Moehrle added 11 to help Eden Valley-Watkins to the Central Minnesota Conference victory at Kimball.

EV-W won the match 25-19, 25-20, 13-25, 21-25, 17-15.

The Eagles play at 7:15 p.m. Thursday against Belgrade-

Brooten-Elrosa in Brooten.

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, PF, PA. Rows include EV-W (5-3), Kimball (3-7), Eden Valley-Watkins, Serving (aces), Set assists, Hitting (kills), Blocking (aces), Digs (5 or more), Kimball, Stats not available.

West Central

BOLD 3,

Montevideo 1

Caylee Weber and Leslie Snow each hammered down 10 kills and Ella Mages had 15 set assists to help BOLD beat Montevideo at Olivia.

BOLD won 25-13, 25-18, 23-25, 25-11.

For Montevideo, Tenley Epema had 23 set assists and Livia Gades contributed 23 digs. Avery Koenen led the attack with 14 kills.

BOLD plays Friday at Minnewaska. Montevideo next plays at 7:15 p.m. Monday against Morris/Chokio-Alberta at Montevideo.

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, PF, PA. Rows include Montevideo (1-3), BOLD (2-4), Montevideo, Serving (aces), Set assists, Hitting (kills), Blocking (aces), Digs (5 or more).

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, PF, PA. Rows include Koenen 8, BOLD, Serving (aces), Set assists, Hitting (kills), Blocking (aces), Digs (5 or more), Ryber 10, Mages 7, Weber 6.

Melrose 3,

Morris/CA 1

Melrose beat visiting Morris/Chokio-Alberta in a West Central Conference match.

The Dutchmen prevailed 21-25, 25-19, 25-15, 32-30.

Melrose improves to 6-1 in the conference and 6-3 overall. That’s the best record in the West Central.

Morris/CA falls to 3-5 in the WCC and 4-5 overall. The Tigers are scheduled to host Benson at 7:15 p.m. Thursday.

The Tigers were led by LaRae Kram’s 12 kills and Sydney Dietz’s 11. Sophia Carlsen contributed seven kills and four ace blocks.

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, PF, PA. Rows include Morris/CA (3-5), Melrose (6-1), Morris/Chokio-Alberta, Serving (aces), Set assists, Hitting (kills), Blocking (aces), Digs (5 or more).

Camden

D-B 3, RCW 2

Dawson-Boyd captured its

first victory of the season in a thriller over Renville County West at Dawson.

The Blackjacks beat the Wolverines 25-23, 24-26, 25-12, 21-25, 15-13. Karoline Dahl had 23 kills and Kate Dahl added 14 for the D-B, which got 29 set assists from Kyndall Franzky. Tarah Johnson led the Blackjacks with 17 digs.

RCW plays host to Lac qui Parle Valley at 7 p.m. Friday. D-B is scheduled to play at 7:15 p.m. Friday at MACCRAY in Clara City.

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, PF, PA. Rows include RCW (0-9), D-B (1-8), Renville County West, Stats not available, Dawson-Boyd, Serving (aces), Set assists, Hitting (kills), Blocking (aces), Digs (5 or more).

YME 3, LQPV 1

Alli Steffen had 16 kills and Shelby Mortenson and Yansi Flores each added 10 to help lead Yellow Medicine East over Lac qui Parle Valley at Madison

YME won the match 23-25, 25-19, 25-19, 25-21. Aria Peters had 46 set assists for the Sting, who got 22 digs from Kiara Sakry.

YME next plays at 7 p.m. Friday against Russell-Tyler-Ruthton in Granite Falls. LQPV is scheduled to play Renville County West at 7 p.m. Friday in Sacred Heart.

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, PF, PA. Rows include LQPV (2-7), YME (4-6), Lac qui Parle Valley, Stats not available, Yellow Medicine East, Serving (aces), Set assists, Hitting (kills), Blocking (aces), Digs (5 or more).

Non-Conference

Osakis 3, Benson 0

Host Osakis improved to 6-1 with the non-conference victory over visiting Benson.

The Braves were led by Beth Cain’s four kills, three service aces and 13 digs. Ellie Moesenthin added 10 set assists.

Benson next plays at 7:15 p.m. Thursday at Morris/Chokio-Alberta.

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, PF, PA. Rows include Benson (3-5), Osakis (6-1), Benson, Serving (aces), Set assists, Hitting (kills), Blocking (aces), Digs (5 or more), Osakis, Stats not available.



Photos by Joe Brown / West Central Tribune

The Willmar football team runs through a banner before the start of the third quarter during Friday's North Central White district game at Hodapp Field in Willmar.

PLAYOFF PATH CLEARS UP

Willmar, seventh-ranked in QRF, secures a playoff bye with win at Becker

By Joe Brown
 jbrown@wctrib.com

Willmar is hoping to earn itself a break. Going into Thursday's regular-season finale at Becker, the Cardinals' postseason path became much clearer Monday morning. The first QRF rating was released by Minnesota-Scores.net.

While Willmar is ranked seventh overall in Class AAAA, they are third in the five-team Section 8AAAA behind a pair of undefeated teams in Grand Rapids (first in QRF) and Rocori (third). Like the Cardinals, Detroit Lakes is 4-1. But, the Lakers' QRF score is fourth in the section (17th overall), which sets the Lakers up with a quarterfinal game on Tuesday, Nov. 17 against fifth-seeded Little Falls.

So Thursday's goal is simple: win, then wait for the section semifinals on Saturday, Nov. 21.

"The great thing is, we control our own destiny



Willmar quarterback Jacob Streed rolls out to pass during Friday's North Central White district game at Hodapp Field in Willmar.

with how we perform," said Willmar head coach Jon Konold. "If we take care of our business and win on Thursday, I assume we'll have the bye."

But a win over Becker is hardly a given. The

Bulldogs are led by coach Dwight Lundeen, who is the only head coach in school history and sits third in state history with 369 career wins.

While the Bulldogs come into Thursday's game

at 2-2, their losses have come in competitive games against Rocori on Oct. 30 (14-13) and Hutchinson last Friday (20-7).

Becker is also the stingiest **PLAYOFF: Page B2**

Transfer gets immediate eligibility from NCAA

Both Goch, a guard from Utah by way of Austin, Minn., can play right away

By Andy Grader
 St. Paul Pioneer Press

The Minnesota Golden Gophers men's basketball program went two for two in receiving NCAA waivers for projected starters to play this season.

The school announced Monday, Nov. 9, that Both Gach, a guard from Austin, Minn., who transferred to Minnesota from Utah, was granted immediate eligibility. He can play two seasons at Minnesota.

Gach follows Drake transfer Liam Robbins, a center from Davenport, Iowa, who received his waiver to play in early September. Robbins and Gach are penciled-in starters next to point guard Marcus Carr, shooting guard Gabe Kalscheur and Brandon Johnson, a graduate transfer from Western Michigan.

The Gophers were confident Gach and Robbins both would receive waivers after they were surprised two years ago when Carr was denied a waiver in his move from Pittsburgh.

"We are grateful the NCAA made the right decision in granting Both immediate eligibility," Pitino said. "We are also thankful for the hard work our compliance office did in putting together this waiver."

As a sophomore at Utah, Gach averaged 10.7 points, 3.6 rebounds and 2.9 assists in 27 games last season. He shot 40 percent for the field, 25 percent from 3-point range and 77 percent from the free-throw line.

"Both will make an immediate impact on the court and in our locker room," Pitino said. "He can play three positions; his versatility will certainly improve our back-court."

Pitino said Gach has similar attributes to Amir Coffey, a player with length and athleticism to slash to the basket. Gach impressed Pitino before the Gophers and Utes

GOPHERS: Page B2

It's Blackjacks vs. Vikings in stiff test

Both teams are 5-0 heading into game Thursday at Minneota



Patrick Bernadeau / West Central Tribune

Dawson-Boyd sophomore linebacker Holt Larson wraps up Lac qui Parle Valley junior running back Dain Mortenson during Friday's Southwest District West Division game from R.B. Clay Field in Dawson.

By Patrick Bernadeau
 pbernadeau@wctrib.com

DAWSON — Coming off a come-from-behind victory at home against Lac qui Parle Valley last Friday, the Dawson-Boyd football team is one of five teams in Class A with a 5-0 record.

However, one of teams from that unbeaten group is expected to give the Blackjacks their stiffest test of the season.

In a Southwest District West Division match-up with postseason implications, Dawson-Boyd puts its undefeated record on the line at 5

p.m. Thursday at Minneota.

Dating back to 2012, the Vikings have won their last 10 games against the Blackjacks.

The two teams are on top of the Section 5A standings. After the reveal of Minnesota-Scores.net's Quality Ratings Formula rankings — a computer formula used to determine playoff seeding — on Monday, Dawson-Boyd ranked ninth in QRF. The Vikings are 12th.

"They're very good and a very, very well-coached team. That's why they are right there

year after year," Dawson-Boyd head coach Cory Larson said of Minneota. "They're solid defensively, solid on special teams and solid offensively."

Solid everywhere

Taking the snaps under center for the Vikings is Jacob Hennen. The 6-foot-4, 195-pound senior quarterback has

TEST: Page B2

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SCOREBOARD

LOCAL SCHEDULE

Wednesday, Nov. 11
Football
 Kimball at BOLD, 5 p.m.
 ACGC at Eden Valley-Watkins, 6 p.m.
 Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted at Benson, 6 p.m.
 Browerville/Eagle Valley at BBE, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 12
Football
 Litchfield at New London-Spicer, 5 p.m.
 Dawson-Boyd at Minneota, 5 p.m.
 Melrose at Minnewaska, 6 p.m.
 LQPV at Canby, 6 p.m.
 Pierz at Montevideo, 6:15 p.m.
 Willmar at Becker, 7 p.m.
 Paynesville vs. Osakis, 7 p.m. at Alexandria

MACCRAY at Lakeview, 7 p.m.
 Cedar Mountain at RCW, 7 p.m.
 Russell-Tyler-Ruthton at YME, 7 p.m.

Volleyball
 Willmar at Sauk Rapids, 7 p.m.
 Eden Valley-Watkins at BBE, 7:15 p.m.
 Benson at Morris/CA, 7:15 p.m.
 CMCS at KMS, 7:15 p.m.

Toledo at Western Michigan, 7 p.m., ESPN2

Thursday, Nov. 12
Football
 NFL: Indianapolis at Tennessee, 7 p.m., FOX
College football
 Colorado State at Boise State, 7 p.m., FS1
Golf
 The Masters, first round, noon, 7 p.m., ESPN
Soccer
 Wales vs. U.S., 1:30 p.m., FS1

list. Placed S Deon Bush on the IR/COVID-19 list.
 Cincinnati Bengals - Placed DE Margus Hunt on the IR/COVID-19 list.
 Cleveland Browns - Activated RB Nick Chubb from the IR/Designated for return list.
 Detroit Lions - Activated LB Jarrad Davis from the IR/COVID-19 list.
 Green Bay Packers - Activated LB Kamal Martin and RB Jamaal Williams from the IR/COVID-19 list.
 Houston Texans - Acquired DE Nate Orchard off waivers from the Washington Football Team.
 Jacksonville Jaguars - Waived DB Doug Middleton.
 Las Vegas Raiders - Cut WR Rico Gafford.
 New England Patriots - Activated LB Terez Hall, WR Kristian Wilkerson, and DL Tashawn Bower from the practice squad.
 New York Jets - Activated DB Bryce Hall from the non-football injury list. Activated DT Tanzel Smart, TE Ross Travis, and QB Mike White from the practice squad. Cut DB Quincy Wilson.
 Pittsburgh Steelers - Cut RB Trey Edmunds and G Stefan Wisniewski.
 San Francisco 49ers - Activated WR River Cracraft and DB Johnathan Cyprien from the practice squad.
 Tennessee Titans - Cut C Daniel Munyer.

PIGSKIN PICKS

The Pickers
 Tom Elliott, Sports Editor
 Joe Brown, Sports Writer
 Patrick Bernadeau, Sports Writer
 Kelly Boldan, Editor
 Rand Middleton, Former Sports Writer

Wednesday's Games
 Kimball at BOLD
 ACGC at Eden Valley-Watkins
 HL-W-W at Benson
 Browerville/EV at BBE

Thursday's Games
 Willmar at Becker
 Litchfield at New London-Spicer
 Dawson-Boyd at Minneota Min
 Melrose at Minnewaska
 LQPV at Canby
 Pierz at Montevideo
 Paynesville at Osakis
 MACCRAY at Lakeview
 Cedar Mountain at RCW
 R-T-R at YME

Last Week	Season
8-2	46-15
8-2	45-16
7-3	46-15
8-2	45-16
8-2	45-16

Tom	Joe	Patrick	Kelly	Rand
BOLD	BOLD	BOLD	BOLD	BOLD
EV-W	EV-W	EV-W	EV-W	EV-W
Ben	Ben	Ben	Ben	Ben
B/EV	B/EV	B/EV	B/EV	B/EV

Washington Football Team - Waived WR Tony Brown.
Basketball
Hockey
National Hockey League

Dallas Stars - Re-signed LW Roope Hintz to a three-year, \$9.45 million contract.
 Florida Panthers - Named Ulf Samuelsson assistant coach.

Nashville Predators - Signed RW Luke Evangelista to a three-year, entry-level contract.
 Winnipeg Jets - Signed C Cole Perfetti to a three-year, entry-level contract.

TV SCHEDULE

Wednesday, Nov. 11
College football



Kelvin Kuo / USA TODAY Sports

Utah Utes guard Both Gach (11) drives to the basket during a 2019 game against San Diego State. Gach, from Austin, Minn., has transferred to the University of Minnesota and will be eligible to play for the Gophers immediately.

GOPHERS

From Page B1

played in Salt Lake City last season. "I saw Both going through his pregame routine and he is drenched in sweat and I'm sitting there going, 'OK, this kid is going so hard, he is not going to have any energy for our game,'" Pitino told the St. Paul Pioneer Press in June. Gach then put up a team-high-tying 19 points and four rebounds in the Utes' win over Minnesota. Pronounced Booth Gotch, the

6-foot-6 wing led Austin High School to the 2017 Class 3A state championship before playing one season at Arizona Compass Prep in Chandler, Ariz. In his first season at Utah, he averaged 7.7 points, 2.1 rebounds and 2.1 assists in 30 games.

Briefly

Also Monday, Carr was one of 10 players named to the preseason all-Big Ten team. ... On Friday, Robbins was named on the watch list for the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Center of the Year Award.

PLAYOFF

From Page B1

defense in the North Central White district at 11.8 points allowed per game.

"They return all 11 starters from last year's team," Konold said of the Bulldogs' defense. "They're not the biggest as far as size wise, but they're quick and extremely aggressive."

While Hutchinson was able to rattle off 231 rushing yards on Becker in last week's win, the Bulldogs managed to hold Big Lake (27) and Rocori (70) to less than 100 yards on the ground. None of Becker's four opponents have broken 250 yards of total offense.

The Bulldogs' 3-4 defense has proven to be versatile, according to Konold.

"It depends on who they're playing. Against Rocori, they blitzed a ton and against Hutch,

FOR LATE RESULTS

Check out the West Central Tribune's E-edition at Epaper@wctrib.com for coverage from Tuesday's night high school activities, including prep volleyball matches involving Rocori at Willmar and Annandale at New London-Spicer.

not so much," Konold said. "We expect a fair number of blitzes. ... They do multiple things along their front that causes trouble."

In the secondary, Konold is looking for a more efficient passing attack to counteract Becker's man-to-man pass defense.

"Our receivers, if they have an opportunity one-on-one, they have to win some battles and our quarterbacks have to put it on the money," Konold said.

On defense, Willmar's goal is to not get burned on play-action passes.

"They seem to have one or two kids out wide at 6-(foot)-2 and 6-3 and they're able to get some jump balls," Konold said. "We'll need to stop their run game, and on their

play-action, make sure our linebackers and secondary are reading their keys well."

Konold continued, "Their number one back is tough to bring down. Their quarterback is a sophomore and he's an athletic kid with a strong arm. They run counters and sweeps and like to throw deep to get the wide receivers into play."

Elsewhere in the section:

- Grand Rapids hosts Hibbing at 6 p.m. Thursday.

- Rocori faces Hutchinson at 5 p.m. Thursday at Monticello High School.

- Detroit Lakes hits the road for a 6 p.m. game Wednesday at Pequot Lakes.

- Little Falls travels to Princeton for a 7 p.m. game on Thursday.

TEST

From Page B1

completed 56.7 percent of his passes for 758 yards and eight touchdowns to just one interception.

A.J. Myhre has been Hennen's favorite target. The senior tight end has 15 catches for 203 yards and three scores. Senior wide receiver Joseph Rybinski has 10 catches, three going for touchdowns. Junior wide receiver Cale Sorensen has 13 catches for 179 receiving yards and a touchdown.

Out of its hybrid wing-T formation, Minneota picks up most of its yardage on the ground. Junior running back Conner Sik leads the squad with 387 rushing yards on 60 carries and two touchdowns. In addition to his passing numbers, Hennen has 39 rushes for 257 yards and three scores. With a team-high four rushing touchdowns, A.J. Josephson put up 210 yards on 23 carries.

Even with all of their offensive options, the Vikings have turned in their best numbers on the defensive side of the ball. Allowing just six points in each of its five games, the team is third in Class A in points allowed. Relinquishing 77 total yards in a 37-6 win last Friday against Russell-Tyler-Ruthton, Minneota's defense gives up 142 yards of total offense per game.

Junior middle linebacker Tucker Thooff paces the unit with 39 tackles. Senior defensive end Jacob Citterman is second with 27.

"Defensively, they're so disciplined," Larson said. "They give you different looks, so you can never get real comfortable with what you're going to see. I think it's the discipline that Coach Johnston instills those kids; they're just solid.

They do their job, they do their assignments and tackle well."

Room to improve

While the Vikings have won four of their five games by double figures, Dawson-Boyd has squeaked by its opponents the last three weeks.

Overall, Larson believes that his team has played good football and commends its fight, but he is still hoping his players can take it up a notch.

"I think at times we've played great this year, but I think we haven't put together a super complete game," Larson said. "We've played well for good chunks of a half or maybe you could say a whole half, but three-fourths of a game, we just haven't strung together that consistent four quarters that I think we're capable of playing."

The Blackjacks trailed LQPV 13-0 in the second quarter before regrouping behind Micah Olson. The senior quarterback sliced the deficit with a 63-yard romp to the end zone. He added two more rushing touchdowns and another through the air in the second half.

"We executed better and made just enough plays I would say," Larson said of his team's comeback. "Micah got us

going in the first half and scored on a long run. We kind of struggled, defensively. Give LQPV a lot of credit; they did some really nice things."

With nearly 300 yards of total offense, the Eagles' played well up front and moved the ball with their multidimensional offense. Although playing in a drastically different system with a dual-threat quarterback, Minneota also is multidimensional offensively.

Facing one of the best defenses in the state, Dawson-Boyd can't afford to fall behind this time around.

"Coming up this week, we've got to string together four really solid quarters of football," Larson said. "You don't have to be perfect. Being great doesn't mean you have to be perfect, but you have to be solid."

Here is a look at three other games of note in the area:

HL-W-W at Benson

Emerging with a 20-18 overtime win against Upsala/Swanville Area last week, Benson improved to 4-1 and clinched its first winning season since 2008. The Braves will look to match that '08 win total against a Howard Lake-Waverly Winsted team that has dropped its last 27 regular-season games. The Lakers visit Benson at



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Cora apologetic as he returns to manage Red Sox

Field Level Media
Alex Cora was contrite at a press conference Tuesday as he was re-introduced as Boston Red Sox manager less than a year after being fired for his involvement in a cheating scandal at his former job, as a coach with the Houston Astros. Cora was identified through a 2019 Major League Baseball investigation as the only non-player involved in the Astros' 2017 cheating ploy, which included stealing signs meant for the opposing pitcher through live video and then relaying them to Astros hitters via bangs on a trash can behind the dugout. The Astros ended

up winning the World Series in 2017, an honor that helped raise Cora's profile as a managerial candidate. He was hired as manager by the Red Sox in 2018 and the team went on to win a World Series of their own that year. "I was spending time at home (in 2020) for the wrong reasons, and for that I want to apologize," said Cora, who was given a one-season suspension by MLB earlier this year, but the Red Sox elected to fire him in January. "I deserve what has happened this year. "It's not something I'm proud of, but we went through the whole process with the commissioner's office and, in

the end, I got my penalty and I served it." The Red Sox made bench coach Ron Roenicke their manager for 2020, but he was fired in advance of the team's season finale in September, as the club went 24-36 in the pandemic-shortened 60-game season. The Red Sox have now turned back to Cora to revive their winning ways, officially hiring him again on Nov. 6. "I want to apologize to the organization for putting them in such a tough spot coming into the season," Cora said. "I never thought I was going to be in the situation that I was in. ... Like I told (Red

Sox chief baseball officer) Chaim (Bloom) when we decided to part ways, 'Sorry for what happened, and sorry for what happened during the year.' As a leader, as a person who loves to manage, I put the organization in a tough spot and I'm sorry." Cora's Red Sox won 108 regular-season games during the championship season of 2018, but that slipped to 84 victories in 2019. Now he returns to the bench of a team in dire need of pitching additions this offseason, both in the rotation and bullpen. Moving forward, he hopes to be judged on his leadership skills as manager and not the



Kim Klement / USA TODAY Sports File Photo
Boston Red Sox manager Alex Cora (20) reacts during a 2019 game against the Tampa Bay Rays at Tropicana Field.

poor decisions he made as an Astros coach. Cora insisted he never brought the sign-stealing scheme to Boston. "I know they were dis-

appointed for everything that happened," Cora said. "... They've been very supportive. They understand that we all make mistakes."

La Russa was charged with DUI a day before White Sox hired him as manager

By LaMond Pope
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — Tony La Russa's surprising return to manage the Chicago White Sox took another turn late Monday when ESPN, citing court records, reported the Hall of Famer was charged with driving under the influence after a February arrest in Arizona. The case was filed Oct. 28 — one day before the Sox announced La Russa's hiring — according to the Maricopa County Justice Courts website. A White Sox spokesman confirmed to the Chicago Tribune that the organization was aware of the arrest before hiring La Russa. "Because this is an active case, we cannot comment further at this time," the spokesman said. When ESPN reached him Monday night, La Russa said, "I have nothing to say," and hung up. A "high-ranking" Sox official told USA Today that "La Russa is in no danger of losing his job, or receiving any discipline by the club."

It's the second known DUI arrest for La Russa, 76, who was arrested in March 2007 in Jupiter, Fla., after he was found asleep at the wheel with his vehicle running and in park at a stop sign. He pleaded guilty to that charge eight months later. According to an affidavit cited by ESPN, La Russa allegedly ran his car into a curb on Feb. 24 near Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. He told a responding officer he had been at dinner with friends and hit something and had a tire blow out.

The officer detected "a light odor" of alcohol and described La Russa as "argumentative" in the affidavit, ESPN reported. La Russa was taken into custody after a field sobriety test, the report said. La Russa was named the White Sox manager on Oct. 29. He replaced Rick Renteria, who guided the Sox to their first winning record since 2012 and first playoff appearance since 2008 last season. The Sox and Renteria parted ways on Oct. 12, less than two weeks after the Sox lost to the Oakland Athletics in three games in a best-of-three American League wild-card series. Renteria is one of three finalists for American League Manager of the Year.

La Russa hasn't managed since 2011, when he led the St. Louis Cardinals to a World Series championship. His major league managerial career began at age 34 with the Sox. He went 522-510 from 1979-86 and won the AL West title in 1983 during the stint.

The Sox had a 26-38 record when La Russa was fired on June 20, 1986, by Ken "Hawk" Harrelson, who was in his first — and only — year as the baseball operations chief after being moved from the broadcast booth. Less than a month later, La Russa became the A's manager. He is a three-time World Series winner (1989 A's, 2006 and 2011 Cardinals), is third all time in managerial victories and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2014.

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Tom Fox / Dallas Morning News / TNS
Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott (4) is excited by his touchdown catch as he returned to the sideline in the second quarter Oct. 11 at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas. Quarterback Andy Dalton (14) would replace him in the third quarter fouling his ankle injury against the New York Giants.

DALLAS NOT DRAFTING A QB

Jerry Jones says Dak Prescott is Cowboys' QB

By Clarence E. Hill Jr.
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

FRISCO, Texas
If the season ended today, the Dallas Cowboys would have the third pick in the 2021 NFL draft based on their 2-7 record.

With seven games to go in the 2020 season, the Cowboys are still in the hunt for the top spot in the NFC East. However, they have lost four straight games and based on how their season is trending they also could be in prime contention for a top-5 pick, which would put them in the position to take a star quarterback, like Ohio State's Justin Fields. Team Vice President Stephen Jones said none of that is under

consideration for the Cowboys right now because they are focused on moving up in the standings this season and because they remain committed to Dak Prescott. "Dak is our quarterback and we're so fired up about him and him leading us in the future," he said. Team owner Jerry Jones doubled down on his son's statement, saying it's crazy to think the Cowboys would consider drafting a quarterback with a high draft pick when they have Prescott on the roster.

"Yes, yes. You asked me if it was crazy to bring the idea up, and I'm answering you. Yes," Jerry Jones said on his radio show with

105.3 The Fan Tuesday. "We're playing games here, guys, but it's nothing to be talking about at all. Dak is our quarterback."

Prescott is out for the season with a compound fracture and dislocation in his right ankle, and injury he sustained against the New York Giants on Oct. 11, the date of the Cowboys' last win. At issue with Prescott and the Cowboys is his unsettled contract situation as he is a free agent after the season. Prescott turned down a five-year deal worth more than \$34 million annually with \$110 million guaranteed in the offseason.

He played in 2020 on a one-year franchise tag of \$31.4 million and it will cost the Cowboys \$37.7 million to tag him again. A top rookie

quarterback would be cheaper for the Cowboys, but Jones says Prescott is their guy.

The team has certainly missed Prescott, losing four straight games without him and scoring just two touchdowns during that span.

The good news, said Stephen Jones, is that Prescott is ahead of schedule in his rehab. "This is a four-month injury barring setbacks and so far, if anything, everything that we're getting from the doctors is that he's ahead of schedule," Jones said.

"So yes, he's been able to avoid any setbacks and if anything, he's ahead of schedule, which shouldn't be surprising the way he goes after any challenge. It's full speed ahead with Dak and he's done a great job at this point."

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Former Giants outfielder sues team over career-ending concussion

By Kerry Crowley
The Mercury News

Former San Francisco Giants outfielder Mac Williamson is suing the franchise over concussion-related injuries he suffered after tumbling over the home bullpen mounds and crashing into the side wall at Oracle Park on April 24, 2018, in a game against the Washington Nationals. Williamson maintains he is still dealing with concus-

sion symptoms more than two years later and said, "My life hasn't been the same since suffering the injury."

"The concussion ended my career and left me with life-long injuries that have also taken a significant toll on my personal life," Williamson said in a statement released by a public relations firm on behalf of Randy Erlewine, Williamson's lawyer. "I'm fortunate to have such an understand-

ing fiance who has been there every step of the way and helps me get through the days I suffer nausea, trouble sleeping, mood swings, and other issues. I wake up every day hoping that today is a better day and that I will get closer to how I felt before the injury."

Williamson filed the lawsuit in Superior Court in San Francisco on Tuesday against China Basin Ballpark Company LLC, the owner and

operator of Oracle Park which is controlled by the Giants' ownership group. The Giants' late owner, Peter Magowan, apologized to Williamson following the incident and Williamson alleges Magowan told him the mounds were located on the field against the wishes of former MLB Commissioner Bud Selig. In a statement provided to the Bay Area News Group, the San Francisco

Giants said, "MLB and its clubs have a long-standing practice of addressing claims from player injuries through the collectively-bargained grievance process and workers' compensation system. Williamson's claims are properly resolved through the grievance or workers' compensation process, not through the courts."

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Big Ten coaches tab Gophers for hockey title

Minnesota picked to win Big Ten for first time since '17

By Jess Myers
The Rink Live

MINNEAPOLIS — So much for the “play hard, do your best and we will see where we finish” mantra that some coaches adopt as a season begins. The expectations for the Minnesota Gophers heading into coach Bob Motzko’s third campaign behind the bench were raised considerably on Monday.

The Big Ten’s seven hockey coaches see a favorite in the Gophers, who finished atop the annual preseason poll, and will be looking to win the program’s fifth conference crown since the league began play in the 2013-14 season. Minnesota, under previous head coach Don Lucia, won the first four Big Ten titles.

In the poll, the Gophers were followed in second place by Michigan, which has what many consider the

best freshman class in the country. Defensive specialists Notre Dame and Ohio State tied for third, Wisconsin was fifth, Michigan State was sixth, and Penn State, which won the conference last season, fell all the way to seventh.

“Just go ahead and look at the Big Ten standings from last year...We could end up in sixth place along with Minnesota, and Michigan State could end up first,” Wolverines coach Mel Pearson said. “The depth and the quality across teams is so good that it’s hard to pick anyone. Minnesota and us were young last year and we both found our way in the second half of the season and finished strong. Hopefully we won’t start as slow this year, and will be ready to go.”

The Gophers return nine of their top 10 scorers from last season, having lost only defenseman Tyler Nanne to graduation.

The wide-open nature of the conference race — typified by the Nittany Lions’ fall from first to the preseason pick for worst — is what has come to be expected from the Big Ten in its first decade. Last season the Gophers headed into the final regular season

game able to clinch a share of the conference title with a win, or fall out of the home ice race with a loss and a few other circumstances.

“I would say there isn’t one team that is starting conference that doesn’t think they’re in a position to have a year where they can compete for the Big Ten title and should be a team that makes it to the (NCAA) tournament,” said Badgers coach Tony Granato, whose team finished seventh last season after being picked for the conference title by some. “All of us feel we have teams and programs that should feel that way going in. So I love our conference and I love where we’re at.”

Gophers junior captain Sammy Walker, who was the Big Ten’s freshman of the year two seasons ago, was picked by the coaches for the preseason first team, which included one player from every team except Notre Dame. Senior forward Brannon McManus and sophomore defenseman Jackson LaCombe were named to the second team, and sophomore forward Ben Meyers, recently named an alternate captain, was pegged for honorable mention.

With 12 newcomers



John Autey / The Rink Live

Minnesota Gophers freshman forward Bryce Brodzinski celebrated his first period goal on Saturday, Jan. 25, as his team took on the Ohio State Buckeyes in the second game of their weekend Big Ten series in Minneapolis.

on the team a year ago, the Gophers took some lumps in the first half of the season, winning just twice in one 14-game stretch before the holidays. They matured quickly in the second half, going 11-5-3 and putting themselves on the bubble for a NCAA tournament berth. The Gophers beat Notre Dame in a best-of-three first round Big Ten playoff series, before the remainder of the college hockey season was cancelled on March 12 due to the pandemic.

The last Big Ten team to win a NCAA title was Michigan State in 2007, when the Spartans played in the original incarnation of the CCHA. The Gophers in 2014 and Notre Dame in 2018 both lost in the national championship game. Overall the league’s coaches see the conference getting more respected and competitive on the national stage.

“We continue to get better, we continue to add players that are elite,” Granato said. “So

if I look at our conference right now, I look at what Michigan has in their lineup, I look at Minnesota and what Bob has done with his team last year and where they’re at. I see Penn State and Ohio State and two programs that have had phenomenal years. You know Notre Dame is going to be in the mix. I think (Spartans coach) Danton (Cole) has done a great job at Michigan State. So I would say it’s wide open.”

Jess Myers
(@JessRMyers) can be reached at jmyers@forumcomm.com.

Tribune As good as gone!

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Puzzle Corner

Conceptis **SUDOKU** by Dave Green

1	4	5	8	6				
		8			2	3	4	
		7			3			8
	5				6		4	
8							2	7
4							1	
	2				5			
		9			7			
			3	9				

Difficulty Level ★★★ 11/11

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Scheffer

ACROSS

39 "Downton Abbey" role character
1 Ga. neighbor
4 Slightly wet
8 Coin toss
12 Slithery fish
13 "Understood"
14 Leak slowly
15 Atlas page
16 Grass cutter
18 Photoshop maker
20 Homer's neighbor
21 Austen novel
24 Boxer's dream
28 Continent, e.g.

DOWN

1 Disaster aid org.
2 Starring role
3 Dog food brand
4 Pickle
5 Botanist Gray
6 Kitten's cry
7 Ivy League team
8 Restaurant fan
9 Blue
10 Noun-to-verb suffix
11 For each
17 Ran into creature
19 Nap site
22 Teen hangout
23 Equally dreadful
25 Model Banks
26 Lusty look
27 Glimpse
28 Sugar unit
29 Miles away
30 Terse denial
31 Pop
35 "I'm to blame..."
38 Male feline
40 Peaks (Abbr.)
42 Fan's cry
45 Rap-scallions
47 Logical
48 Idyllic place
49 Horn sound
50 Napkin's place
51 Half of dos
52 SSW opposite
53 Shoe width
54 Indian bread

Solution time: 23 mins.

CULT	ACME	ABS
ONEI	BRAY	RAP
DISPARAGE	TIA	
TAM	SAI	
TACOS	GOLF	
ASHE	SHORTAGE	
LEA	OHARE	COM
CARTHAGE	STAT	
LAI	BUSTS	
ECONO	ABEL	
LET	ADVANTAGE	
BLT	NEON	AVER
ATE	SAWS	NAME

Yesterday's answers:

4	2	1	7	6	5	9	8	3
9	5	3	2	1	8	6	7	4
7	8	6	9	4	3	2	1	5
5	9	4	1	2	7	3	6	8
3	1	2	6	8	4	5	9	7
6	7	8	5	3	9	4	2	1
2	3	7	8	5	6	1	4	9
1	4	9	3	7	2	8	5	6
8	6	5	4	9	1	7	3	2

Difficulty Level ★★ 11/10

11-11 **CRYPTOQUIP**

KVP UJVPIW MVS TO
CVXXKFML DTVPS JVC
IFLJSJODWOW DMW CVVAK F
DR. RFMW KVPX VCM
WFAAFMOUU!

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF MAKING COATS FROM ANIMAL SKINS BECAME LEGALLY BANNED, THEN I GUESS THEY'D BE FUR-BOTEN.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals W

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

12

13 14

15 16 17

18 19 20

21 22 23 24 25 26 27

28 29 30 31 32

33 34 35 36

37 38 39 40

41 42 43

44 45 46 47 48 49

50 51 52 53 54 55

56 57 58

59 60 61

Yesterday's answer 11-11