



Photos by Jed Carlson / jcarlson@superiorteleg.com

Runners from Duluth East, Lakeview Christian Academy and Hibbing take off from the starting line at Lester Park Golf Course in Duluth Thursday morning, Aug. 27.

MAKING A RUN FOR IT

Northland cross country teams happy to return to competition, hope for the best

By Jon Nowacki
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Most high school cross country teams start the season with optimism aplenty, with goals of getting a runner or perhaps even an entire team to the state meet.

That's not exactly the case this year. With the country still in the grips of the coronavirus pandemic, this five-kilometer venture is going to start with baby steps.

"Our goal right now is to finish the season," Duluth East coach Dave Wicker said. Teams like East have established training pods to keep runners in smaller groups so if someone tests positive for COVID-19, only the small group has to be isolated, not the entire team.

"So far, things are good," Wicker said. "We never have the whole team gathering at once, and with three coaches, we are able to split into six groups."

Wicker is in his 24th year at East as a cross country coach and 42nd year as a head high school coach, including nine seasons at Duluth Denfeld, and track and basketball coaching stints at Clayton, Wisconsin; Badger, Minnesota; and Sebeka, Minnesota. He is assisted by Laura LaFontaine and Grandma's Marathon co-founder and former executive director Scott Keenan.

East's top returning boys are junior Blake Bortnem and sophomores Oliver Miatke, Simon Long and Addison



Hibbing's Jocelyn Strukel leads Duluth East's Crystal Kaczmarczyk around a turn at Lester Park Golf Course in Duluth Thursday morning, Aug. 27.

Kent. The Greyhounds' top returning girls are seniors Gillian Skar and Crystal Kaczmarczyk and sophomores Veronica Wahman and Jenna Johnson. With a large team of more than 100 athletes, East is staggering its practices with three starting times and two groups at each time.

While Wicker is optimistic, he is also reasonable. After sports were shut down in March due to the pandemic, just to have something, anything now in terms of competition is a bonus for these athletes. It's a common theme this fall.

"I hope that sections can happen, but I'm not too

optimistic because there are bound to be positive cases in all sports, and based on colleges and other high school leagues, the Minnesota State High School League may shut things down," Wicker said. "I think that the sports precautions are good, but we are not the NHL or NBA with a bubble."

Best of the rest
Duluth Denfeld has its best numbers in eight years with 27 runners. The boys are led by senior Isaac Fink, a two-time state qualifier who will be a favorite to win in all six of the Hunters' triangular races.

Senior Joey McCormick is a solid second runner, and

if there is a section meet he will definitely be a challenger for a state-qualifying spot. The rest of the varsity is between sophomore Charlie Juntunen and three juniors, Xander Schroeder, Peyton Bradbury and Jacob Gelineau.

The Denfeld girls are inexperienced. The Hunters have some young runners who have shown promise but don't have enough numbers for a team score. Juniors Rachel Bergh and Grace McCormick, along with sophomore Lilly Paul and freshman Milla Beldo, will be counted on to lead the varsity. Coach Mike Scignoli said this fall will be a challenge but at the same time important, adding

that "kids need kids." "We are embracing just being together as a group," he said. "We feel fortunate our season is up and moving forward and we're getting used to the COVID protocol. It's been a fun start."

Duluth Marshall has seen a lot of turnover with seniors graduating and new runners joining, so it's hard to know where the Hilltoppers stand this early in the season. Coach Jessica Hard said they've had a great attitude, even with dealing with all the COVID precautions in place. They have been diligent in social distancing and wearing masks and are hoping to have as long a season as possible. Junior Keegan McAuliffe is the Northland's top returning state qualifier from last fall, having finished 16th in Class A.

Proctor has increased numbers, with 55 runners in grades 7-12. The Rails have picked up a few football and volleyball players, adding depth to what were already pretty good squads. Both teams placed second to Cloquet last fall in the Lake Superior Conference and have the potential to finish in the top two in sections.

Senior John Werner, a state qualifier as a sophomore, junior Josh Knight, senior Isaiah Manninen and sophomore Elijah Wozniak return to the boys team.

The girls team has two of the top runners in the

CROSS COUNTRY: Page B3

Vikings rookie K.J. Osborn emerges as potential return man

By Dane Mizutani
St. Paul Pioneer Press

EAGAN — Maybe Vikings special-teams coordinator Marwan Maalouf was telling the truth when he said rookie K.J. Osborn is still in an open competition to be the return man this season. It certainly didn't look like it on Friday at U.S. Bank Stadium when the 23-year-old rookie handled all the kickoffs and punts with nobody else rotating in.

It gave Osborn a sneak peak of what to expect if he indeed is the starting return man in a few weeks when Vikings host the rival Green Bay



Brad Rempel / USA TODAY Sports
Minnesota Vikings wide receiver K.J. Osborn (17) and wide receiver Chad Beebe (12) take the field during practice at TCO Performance Center in Eagan, Minn., on Aug. 16.

Twins relying on duo's return

Usually when a player personnel man tells you getting his injured players back will be better than any trade the team could have pulled at the deadline, he's lying, mostly to himself.

But when Derek Falvey polished up that chestnut on Monday afternoon, it was his truth. After giving it the old small-private-college try, he and Thad Levine decided there was nothing out there that would make the Minnesota Twins better than Josh Donaldson and Michael Pineda. Pineda, the Twins' best pitcher when



JOHN SHIPLEY
St. Paul Pioneer Press

LATE GAME
The Twins' game Tuesday was not completed in time for this edition of the News Tribune. Check duluthnewstribune.com for updated results

he was dunked by a drug suspension, was expected to make his first start since Sept. 6 on Tuesday against the Chicago White Sox.

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SCOREBOARD

Standings as of 1 p.m. Tuesday when this edition of the News Tribune went to press.

TODAY'S EVENTS

Baseball
MAJOR LEAGUES
 Detroit at Brewers, 6:40 p.m. (FSN-Wis./WNXR-FM 107.3)
 Chicago White Sox at Twins, 7:10 p.m. (FSN/KDAL-AM 610/KDAL-FM 103.9/WMOZ-FM 106.9)

Basketball
WNBA
 Lynx at Chicago, 6 p.m.

Cross country
HIGH SCHOOL BOYS AND GIRLS
 Ely, Hibbing at Virginia, 8 a.m.
 Chisholm, Greenway/Nashwauk-Keewatin vs. Mountain Iron-Buhl (Virginia), 10:30 a.m.
 Deer River, Eveleth-Gilbert at Virginia (Olcott Park), 10:30 a.m.

Soccer
MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER
 Houston at Minnesota United, 7 p.m.

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS
 Two Harbors at Duluth East, 6 p.m.
 Duluth Marshall at Duluth Denfeld, 7 p.m.

Tennis
HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS
 Grand Rapids-Greenway at Bemidji, noon
 Grand Rapids-Greenway vs. East Grand Forks (Bemidji), 1:30 p.m.

UMAC delays 2020 schedule

The UMAC announced Tuesday it was suspending all men's and women's basketball and indoor track and field conference competitions through the end of the calendar year.

The UMAC Council of Presidents and Chancellors supported a recommendation from the UMAC Council of Athletics Directors to suspend conference competition through Dec. 31.

Nonconference schedules for

St. Olaf and Wisconsin-Superior are not governed by the decision and remain at the discretion of individual schools.

Conference competition in winter sports will begin in 2021 with modified conference schedules for men's and women's basketball. The adjusted conference basketball schedules will be finalized when additional information is available, including,

but not limited to, NCAA Sports Science Institute requirements for winter sports and confirmed NCAA Division III Championship dates.

Any further decisions for 2020-2021 made by conference governance groups will continue to be driven by available guidance from local and state health officials and the NCAA SSI and are subject to change.

News Tribune

Prochnow wins race, VanHouse wins championship

Mike Prochnow of Menomonie, Wisconsin, started in the ninth spot but charged all the way up for the win on Championship Night on Friday at Gondik Law Speedway in Superior.

Prochnow set a new track record in a feature event with a lap of 15.867 seconds. Travis Budisalovich of Minneapolis took second and Deven VanHouse of Silver Bay was third in defending his track championship.



Jacy Norgaard Photography

Brandon Sheppard of New Berlin, Ill., won the 50-lap World of Outlaws Late Model feature in July at Gondik Law Speedway in Superior. The track is planning a big week of events with the Northern Nationals Sept. 10-12.

which includes the Russ Laursen Classic, will be Sept. 10-12 at Gondik Law Speedway in Superior. This is the third year it is a three-day event.

There will be a practice on Wednesday, Sept. 9, from 6-9 p.m., which will include 1-on-1 Hornet two-lap bracket races, NCAA tournament style, with the loser being eliminated. Then to end the night, there will be eight Midwest Modifieds and eight Super Stocks competing for \$1,000 to win, with the Midwest Mods getting the first eight spots on the starting grid followed by the Super Stocks in spots 9-16 since they are a little faster. The events are being dubbed King/Queen of the Hill and the Super Stock vs. Midwest Modified Showdown in Soup-town, respectively, and is free for all fans.

Gondik Law Speedway track champions included Johnny Broking of Grand Rapids (Modifieds), Kevin Berdick of Proctor (Super Stocks), Cody Carlson of Superior (Midwest Modifieds), James Vendela of South Range (Pure Stocks) and A.J. House of Cloquet (Hornets).

Up next: invitational season
 The year-ending invitational season will kick off with the Wisconsin Classic on Friday at Grand Rapids Speedway followed by the Labor Day Shootout on Saturday and Sunday at Hibbing Raceway.

The 32nd annual Northern Nationals,

LOCAL AUTO RACING POINTS: FINAL

GONDIK LAW SPEEDWAY

At Superior

Next races:
Wednesday, Sept 9: Northern Nationals Practice Night (includes King/Queen of the Hill and the Super Stock vs. Midwest Modified Showdown in Souptown), free event
Friday-Saturday Sept. 10-12: 32nd Annual Northern Nationals (includes Russ Laursen Classic)

Late Models

1. Deven VanHouse	654
2. Travis Budisalovich	607
3. Derek Vesel	585
4. Kyle Peterlin	531
(tie) Tim McMann	531
4. Aaron Lillo	474
5. Pat Doar	463
6. Darrell Nelson	523
7. Steve Laursen	520
8. Terry Lillo	483
9. Chris Lillo	481
10. Mike Prochnow	480

Modifieds

1. Johnny Broking	760
2. Jody Bellefeuille	728
3. Danny Vang	724
4. Shane Sabraski	723
5. Brandon Copp	680
6. Al Uotinen	663
7. Darrell Nelson	661
8. Donnie Lofdahl	616
9. Clayton Wagamon	611
10. Dan Kingsley	594

Super Stocks

1. Kevin Burdick	1,017
2. Shana Sabraski	958

3. Dave Flynn	953
4. Kyle Copp	931
5. Andrew Mackey	925
6. D.J. Keeler	852
7. Scott Lawrence	842
8. Andy Grymala	819
9. Ronnie Malecki	766
10. Doug Koski	585

Midwest Modifieds

1. Cody Carlson	862
2. McLean Andrews	855
3. Jimmy Latvala	816
4. Jack Rivord	804
5. Wyatt Boyum	790
6. Ryan Savoy	784
7. Andrew Inman	779
8. Brady Uotinen	699
9. Jesse Polson	558
10. Paul Ripley	548

Pure Stocks

1. James Vendela	931
2. Trevor Treviranus	922
3. Cory Jorgensen	895
4. Tanner Gehl	838
5. Aaron Bernick	819
6. Jared Akervik	791
7. Tyler Kachinske	772
8. Eric Lillo	551
9. McLean Andrews	524
10. David Pederson	489

Hornets

1. A.J. House	1,103
2. Kristy Marken	1,075
3. Hunter McDougall	1,047
4. Jase Wiarda	906
5. Tyler Schramm	873
6. Andrew Parendo	849
7. Lucas Lillo	814
8. Michael Egan	743
9. Reid Johnson	738
10. Carson Gotelaere	735

HIBBING RACEWAY

Saturday-Sunday: Labor Day Shootout, 6 p.m.

Late Models

1. Derek Vesel	628
2. Jay Kintner	600
3. Kyle Peterlin	574
4. Keith Koski	545
5. Kevin Carlson	530

Modifieds

1. Johnny Broking	610
2. Danny Vang	583
3. Keith Koski	563
4. Jeffrey Wood	558
5. Ryan Jensen	553

Super Stocks

1. Tristan LaBarge	613
2. Robert Lore	580
3. Kevin Salin	564
4. Mikey Vajdl	532
5. Dean Mattila	515

Midwest Modifieds

1. Tyler Kintner	628
2. Dylan Miller	538
3. Matthew Anderson	528
4. Chad VanDuker	526
5. Mervin Castle III	484

Pure Stocks

1. Chad Finckbone	656
2. Austin Carlson	584
(tie) Stephen Erickson	584
4. Victor Westerlund	559
5. Mark Gangl	519

Hornets

1. Chaston Finckbone	555
2. Michael Egan	540
3. Alyssa Reini	516
4. Tyler Schramm	389
5. Ricky Helms	362

GRAND RAPIDS SPEEDWAY

Friday: Wisconsin Classic, 6:30 p.m.

Late Models

1. Jeffrey Massingill	209
(tie) Kyle Peterlin	209
3. Zach Wohlers	207
4. Derek Vesel	204
5. Jeff Provinzino	194

Modifieds

1. Johnny Broking	657
2. Ryan Jensen	588
3. Michael Procopio	530
2. Bob Broking	520
5. Ken Hron	464

Super Stocks

1. Tristan LaBarge	605
2. Robert Lore	572
3. Kevin Salin	564
4. Don Smith	542
5. Kevin Burdick	516

Midwest Modifieds

1. Charlie Castle	598
2. Travis Krumrei	577
3. Darrin Lawler	549
4. Leo Schweiss	538
5. Justin Feltus	529

Pure Stocks

1. Chad Finckbone	661
2. Margo Butcher	568
3. Chris Miller	566
4. Jon Burt	558
5. Josh Berg	538

Hornets

1. Chaston Finckbone	619
2. Travis Olafson	600
3. Justin Barsness	586
4. Derek Arment	414
5. Jordan Thayer	350

PREP SUMMARIES

BOYS SOCCER

Monday's Results

Hermantown 1-1-2
Duluth Marshall 1-1-2

First half — 1. DM, Masaki Hirata, 17th minute (pk); 2. H, Kevin Couillard, 29th. Second half — 3. H, Aydyn Dowd (Cole Antcliff), 50th; 4. DM, Hirata, 72nd (pk). Saves — David Rutka, H, 7; Oscar McNeill-Dingels, DM, 5.

GIRLS TENNIS

Monday's Results
Duluth East 5, Cloquet-Esko-Carlton 2

Singles — Cursta Dimberio, DE, def. Marina Dostal 6-0, 6-0; Natalie Goetzman, DE, def. Addie Loeb 6-1, 6-1; Winnie Benjamin Hall, CEC, def. Sarah Rectenwald 6-2, 6-1; CiCi Stender, DE, def. Lydia Stone 6-1, 6-2.
 Doubles — Aili Hietala/Annabelle Humphreys, DE, def. Carlee Maslowski/Kylie McKeon 6-0, 6-1; Gweneth Moe/Erin Holliday, DE, def. Della Harriman/Brynn

Martin 6-2, 6-1; Camden Pollard/Tenley Stewart, CEC, def. Isabelle Bailey/Marie Holliday 6-7, 4-6, 10-8.

Duluth East 6, Duluth Marshall 1

Singles — Aili Hietala, DE, def. Meredith Boettcher 6-0, 6-0; Brenna Bollins, DM, def. Annabelle Humphreys 6-1, 6-1; Cursta Dimberio, DE, def. Reese Orn 6-1, 6-1; Natalie Goetzman, DE, def. Christina Duncan 6-0, 6-1.
 Doubles — Ally Johnson/Eiley Graymark, DE, def. Emily Etter/Danica Mark 6-2, 6-1; Taran Dimberio/Ella Johnson, DE, def. Eva Etter/Anna Koski 4-6, 6-4, 10-6; Isia Poppeljak/Sylvie Markham, DE, def. Georgia Kenney/Grace

Strandberg 7-5, 6-7, 10-7..

Hibbing 4, Duluth Marshall 3

Singles — Meredith Boettcher, DM, def. Abigail Sullivan 6-0, 6-0; Brenna Bollins, DM, def. Megan Bussey 6-4, 6-3; Mercedes Furin, H, def. Reese Orn 6-1, 6-0; Claire Rewertz, H, def. Grace Strandberg 6-0, 6-2.
 Doubles — Maddy Reivitz/Danika Lundell, H, def. Emily Etter/Danica Mark 2-6, 6-1, 6-2; Eva Etter/Anna Koski, DM, def. Kasey Jo Revski/Lola Valeri 6-1, 7-6 (7-3); Bella Vincent/Heidi Rasch, H, def. Georgia Kenney/Christina Duncan 6-4, 6-4.

BASEBALL

Professional MLB

American League East

W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	25	11 .694	—
NY Yankees	19	14 .576	4.5
Toronto	18	15 .545	5.5
Baltimore	15	19 .441	9.0
Boston	12	23 .343	12.5

Central

W	L	Pct	GB
Chi. White Sox	22	13 .629	—
Cleveland	21	14 .600	1.0
Minnesota	20	16 .556	2.5
Detroit	16	16 .500	4.5
Kansas City	14	21 .400	8.0

West

W	L	Pct	GB
Oakland	22	12 .647	—
Houston	19	14 .576	2.5
Seattle	15	22 .405	8.5
Texas	12	21 .364	9.5
LA Angels	12	24 .333	11.0

National League East

W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	20	14 .588	—
Miami	15	15 .500	3.0
Philadelphia	15	15 .500	3.0
NY Mets	15	20 .429	5.5
Washington	12	20 .375	7.0

Central

W	L	Pct	GB
Chi. Cubs	20	14 .588	—
St. Louis	13	13 .500	3.0
Milwaukee	16	18 .471	4.0
Cincinnati	15	20 .429	5.5
Pittsburgh	10	22 .312	9.0

West

W	L	Pct	GB
LA Dodgers	26	10 .722	—
San Diego	21	15 .583	5.0
Colorado	17	17 .500	8.0
San Francisco	17	19 .472	9.0
Arizona	14	21 .400	11.5

American League Monday's Results
 Baltimore 4, Toronto 3, 11 innings
 Seattle 2, LA Angels 1
 Tampa Bay 5, NY Yankees 3
 Kansas City 2, Cleveland 1
 Chi. White Sox 8, Minnesota 5

Wednesday's Games
 Tampa Bay at NY Yankees (Montgomery 2-1), 6:05 p.m.
 Cleveland (McKenzie 1-0) at Kansas City, 7:05 p.m.
 Texas (Allard 0-3) at Houston, 7:10 p.m.
 Chi. White Sox (Lopez 0-1) at Minnesota (Berrios 2-3), 7:10 p.m.
 Oakland at Seattle (Kikuchi 1-2), PPD

National League Monday's Results
 Miami 5, NY Mets 3
 St. Louis 7, Cincinnati 5
 Philadelphia 8, Washington 6
 Milwaukee 6, Pittsburgh 5
 San Diego (Richards 1-2) at Colorado (Marquez 2-4), 8:40 p.m.
Wednesday's Games
 San Francisco at Colorado (Freeland 2-1), 2:10 p.m.
 St. Louis (Oviedo 0-1) at Cincinnati (Mahle 1-1), 5:40 p.m.
 Chi. Cubs (Hendricks 3-4) at Pittsburgh (Holland 1-2), 6:05 p.m.
 Washington (Scherzer 3-1) at Philadelphia (Wheeler 3-0), 6:05 p.m.
 Arizona at LA Dodgers (Kershaw 4-1), 8:40 p.m.

Interleague Monday's Results
 Atlanta 6, Boston 3
Tuesday's Games
 Toronto at Miami (Hernandez 1-0), 5:40 p.m.
 Atlanta (Anderson 1-0) at Boston (Weber 0-2), 6:30 p.m.
 NY Mets at Baltimore (Wojciechowski 1-3), 6:35 p.m.
 Detroit (Fulmer 0-0) at Milwaukee (Lindholm 1-2), 6:40 p.m.
Wednesday's Games
 NY Mets at Baltimore, 3:05 p.m.
 Toronto (Ryu 2-1) at Miami (Sanchez 1-0), 5:40 p.m.
 Atlanta (Erlin 0-0) at Boston (Perez 2-4), 6:30 p.m.
 Detroit (Turnbull 3-2) at Milwaukee, 6:40 p.m.
 San Diego at LA Angels, 8:40 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS

Monday

Baseball
American League
 Baltimore Orioles - Optioned 1B Tyler Nevin to Orioles alternate training site.
 Boston Red Sox - Placed LHP Darvinzon Hernandez on the 10-day IL, retroactive to Aug. 30. Selected the contract of 2B Yairo Munoz, LHP Mike Kickham, and RHP Robinson Leyer from Red Sox alternate training site.
 Chicago White Sox - Designated 2B Ryan Goins for assignment. Selected the contract of 2B Yolmer Sanchez from White Sox alternate training site.
 Cleveland Indians - Designated LF Domingo Santana for assignment. Optioned SS Yu Chang to Indians alternate training site. Recalled RF Oscar Mercado from Indians alternate training site.
 Detroit Tigers - Claimed RHP Derek Rodriguez off waivers from the San Francisco Giants, optioned him to Tigers alternate training site.
 Kansas City Royals - Activated CF Nick Heath from the 10-day IL, optioned him to Royals alternate training site.
 Placed RHP Ian Kennedy on the 10-day IL. Recalled RHP Chance Adams from Royals alternate training site.
 Los Angeles Angels - Activated RHP Cam Bedrosian from the 10-day IL. Optioned RHP Gerardo Reyes, RHP Keynan Middleton, and LHP Ryan Buchter to Angels alternate training site. Recalled RHP Jaime Barria and 2B Jahmai Jones from Angels alternate training site. Selected the contract of C Jose Briceno from Angels alternate training site.
 Minnesota Twins - Outrighted LHP Danny Coulombe to Twins alternate training site.
 New York Yankees - Optioned RHP Deivi Garcia to Yankees alternate training site.

BASKETBALL

Professional NBA Playoffs

Conference Semifinals (Best-of-7; x-if necessary)
Central Eastern Conference
Miami 1, Milwaukee 0
 Monday, August 31: Miami 115, Milwaukee 104
 Wednesday, September 2: Miami vs. Milwaukee, 5:30 p.m.
 Friday, September 4: Milwaukee vs. Miami, TBA
 Sunday, September 6: Milwaukee vs. Miami, TBA
x-Tuesday, September 8: Miami vs. Milwaukee, TBA
x-Thursday, September 10: Milwaukee vs. Miami, TBA
x-Saturday, September 12: Miami vs. Milwaukee, TBA

Monday

Baseball
American League
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HOCKEY

Professional National Hockey League

Wednesday's Games
 Colorado vs Dallas, at Edmonton, Canada, TBA

Conference Semifinals (Best-of-7; x-if necessary)
Eastern Conference
Tampa Bay 3, Boston 1
 Sunday, August 23: Boston 3, Tampa Bay 2
 Tuesday, August 25: Tampa Bay 4, Boston 3, OT
 Wednesday, August 26: Tampa Bay 7, Boston 1
 Friday, August 28: Tampa Bay vs. Boston, 6:30 p.m.
 Saturday, August 29: Tampa Bay 3, Boston 1
x-Monday, August 31: Boston vs. Tampa Bay, 6 p.m.

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CROSS COUNTRY

From Page B1

area in eighth-graders Lizzy Harnell and Della Bettendorf, with Harnell qualifying for the state meet last year and Bettendorf missing by a second. Paige Evans, Paisley Kleiman, and a pair of seniors, Morgan Binsfield and Courtney Werner, all did a lot of running this summer.

Lowell Harnell has been head coach of the Rails for more than 20 seasons and like everybody else, has never seen anything like this. He was saddened by some of the restrictions, three teams per meet, LSC competition only, limited travel, etc., but was just happy to have a season, no matter what it looks like.

"We're already having more of a season than track, baseball or softball had last spring, so we can't dwell on what we've lost but have to make the most of what we have," Harnell said.

Hermantown returns four senior captains in Joe Gigliotti, Grace Aho, Miranda Folen and Addie Peterson, who along with Madelynn Olsen earned all-Lake Superior Conference honors last fall.

Cloquet returns strong teams looking to defend their Lake Superior Conference titles, including boys Josh Sanders, Benjamin Bauer, Sam Buytaert, Cale Prosen and Miles Fischer and girls Harmony Tracy, Amelia Allen, Lauren Sertich and Charlotte Ripp. At the Section 7AA meet last fall, the Lumberjacks boys team finished second, advancing to the state meet, while Tracy and Allen, now juniors, advanced as individuals.

South Ridge returns everyone from both its squads, including boys Jimmy Zupancich and Alex Burkhardt and girls Jillian Sajdak and Addison Burkhardt. The co-op, which also includes Cherry, Northeast Range and North Woods, has also seen an influx of depth and talent with football players coming out, including South Ridge standout Tyler Anderson and Northeast Range quarterback Oskar Koivisto, third among its boys runners.



Jed Carlson / jcarlson@superiorteleg.com
Duluth East's Sophia Revoir (right) and Gillian Skar and Hibbing's Reese Aune and Aune Boben approach a turn at Lester Park Golf Course in Duluth Thursday morning, Aug. 27. Revoir, Skar and Aune finished the five kilometers seventh through ninth, respectively, in 22:50, 23:01 and 23:06, while Boben was 11th in 23:32.

The girls are the two-time defending Polar League champions.

Greenway/Nashwauk-Keewatin has arguably the state's best runner in two-time defending state champion Geno Uhrbom. The Titans also return juniors Daniel Olson and Connor Thoennes and senior Michael Butterfield, all of whom placed in the top 40 as GNK defended its Section 7A championship last fall.

Cromwell-Wright has a small enrollment but consistently finds ways of getting runners to the state meet, including last year, when Noah Foster and Emaleigh Olesiak made it to Northfield, Minnesota. Those two are back and looking good, with Foster finishing second to Uhrbom at the GNK Early Bird last week, and Olesiak winning the girls race. Last year the Cardinals had their largest team ever with 23 runners; this year they start with 19 and more are expected after the start of the school year.

"We all look forward to every week we can get another race in for our kids," coach Pete Koenig said.

North Shore returns senior Isaac Swanson, 25th last year in Class A in 16:39.0, as well as almost its entire girls team, which finished third at sections last fall.

Virginia returns one of the Northland's top boys runners in sophomore Cameron Stocke, who finished sixth at the Class A state meet last fall in 15 minutes, 51.1 seconds. The 15-year-old won the Park Point 5-Miler in July. He is joined by John and Jack Kendall,

along with senior Owen Engel, all of whom finished in the top 40 at sections last fall.

Senior state qualifier Alex Wercinski leads the girls team and is joined by freshman Emma Lamppa and junior Kaari Harsila, who finished 23rd and 24th, respectively, at sections last fall. The Blue Devils have seen an increase in numbers and just need more experience.

Coach Andy Del Greco expects GNK, Pequot Lakes, Mesabi East, Proctor and Virginia to be among the top boys and girls teams in Section 7A this fall.

"There are so many," Del Greco said. "It's a very competitive section, and that's what makes it interesting. This is a great section to be in. Everybody knows it's very strong, and we are lucky to have a state champion (GNK's Geno Uhrbom). It helps motivate up-and-coming competitors. This is a great time for athletes to try cross country and see what they think."

Mesabi East finished 10th at the Class A girls state meet last fall but graduated stalwart Ava Hill, a Minnesota Gophers recruit who finished fourth at the state meet the past two seasons. Lydia Skelton placed 60th as a junior last fall and then-freshman Bella Thomas also cracked the top 100, taking 96th.

Mountain Iron-Buhl returns junior Jeffrey Kayfes, 34th at the Class A state meet last year in 16:44.9, as well as state-qualifying girls Liz and Kate Nelson, freshmen twins.

Hibbing returns seniors David Platt and Owen Hendrickson and juniors Zach

Rusich, Ethan Roy and Jeremiah Wentland to its boys team. Among a few football imports, sophomore Bryson Larrabee will be a key contributor and was Hibbing's third placer in the first meet of the season.

The Hibbing girls will be young, with no runners older than sophomores, but they have some experience, with five runners back from last year's section team: sophomore Reese Aune, freshmen Aune Boben, Jorie Anderson and Jocelyn Strukel and eighth-grader Alizah Langner. That team finished fourth for the Bluejackets' best finish in years.

"I 100% agree about how it is nice to be back," coach James Plese said. "I'll jump through all the hoops and COVID stuff to have this chance. Last spring was no fun for anyone."

Grand Rapids' Sam Stertz made the Class AA boys state meet last year as a junior.

Ely senior Emmett Faltese is back after qualifying for the Class A state meet last fall. Senior Jasper Johnston and junior Gabriel Pointer also looked strong in training this summer. The girls team includes Zoe Devine, Phoebe Helms and Sydney Durkin, all of whom finished in the top 45 at sections last year.

International Falls returns a girls Class A state meet qualifier in junior Ryan Ford.

Wisconsin

Superior returns junior Shane Leask, senior Jonny Rhodes and sophomore Ed Hakanson. Its girls team had a tough year with injuries and a smaller squad. Most of the varsity is back, including sophomores Kaylee Eisel and Savannah Leopold and will benefit from the return of senior Halle Barker after a one-year hiatus.

Northwestern has won the Heart O' North Conference boys team title 22 times since 1977, including 11 straight. The girls have won 18 titles since 1983, including six straight from 2012-17.

"We hope to defend our title, but it might be a season with asterisks, however, as we're not sure who is going to come back yet, who is going to be healthy," coach Phil McGrath said.

TWINS

From Page B1

He was 7-3 with a 2.88 ERA in his last 10 starts of 2019. Donaldson hasn't played since July 31 because of calf issues but has averaged 39 homers and 98.2 RBIs in his past five seasons. He could be back as early as this week.

Byron Buxton should be back soon, as well — he and Donaldson played in a scrimmage with the minor-leaguers at CHS Field in St. Paul on Monday — and Jake Odorizzi, the Twins' best pitcher last season, should pitch in September. Because of injuries, he has pitched only three times this short season.

There's your deadline deal, and it was a good one because it didn't cost a single prospect. It's not real exciting; no new names or faces to plug into the rotation or lineup, but it's essentially two good players the team hasn't had all season.

"We can't predict any of the future perfectly," Falvey said, "but I'm excited about looking at the group that we have right now that should join us sometime this week as being huge boosts for our club."

The question now is whether the Twins have time to put it all together. They woke up Tuesday as down as they've been under manager Rocco Baldelli, last year's American League manager of the year after leading his first team to 101 wins and the Central Division title. Their 8-5 loss to the White Sox on Monday was their sixth straight. They didn't lose more than four in a row all last season, and that was once.

At 20-16, they're an average offensive club with above-average pitching — a playoff contender, certainly, but they have to be more. Simply making the playoffs, or even winning another Central Division title,

won't cut it. The Twins' first order of business isn't so much to defend their division crown as it is to go into the playoffs with whatever they've been lacking since they beat the Oakland A's in the 2003 Division Series.

Winning the Central hasn't been the ticket; they've done that four times since. Hitting a major league-record 307 home runs hasn't worked either; they did that last season and were swept 3-0 by the New York Yankees.

As Baldelli has pointed out, winning anything during the pandemic will be an achievement, but it's unlikely Twins fans will appreciate it if their team can't advance past the first round of the playoffs. With three-game series in the first round, even for division winners, that means winning just two games. The problem, of course, is that the Twins haven't won a playoff game, singular, since 2004.

Throw in a wild-card spot in 2017 and the Twins are 0-16 since beating the Yankees in Game 1 of the 2004 Division Series at Yankee Stadium.

The Twins appeared to get better last winter when they signed Donaldson, a former AL MVP, traded for Kenta Maeda. They're not. Can they be? Beginning Tuesday night, they have 24 regular-season games to solidify a playoff spot and become a team that can win a pennant. OK, let's be generous, win a playoff series.

In either case, it won't be easy. After blowing 4-0 and 5-4 leads on Monday, the Twins need a shot of B-12, 2½ games behind the White Sox, now leading the Central after winning eight of their past 10 games.

"Nothing worthwhile is ever going to be easy," manager Rocco Baldelli said.

At least help is on the way.

John Shipley is a sports columnist for the St. Paul Pioneer Press

VIKINGS

From Page B1

Packers in the season opener.

"The stadium was beautiful," Osborn said. "I didn't have any issues with the light or anything. It was awesome. I saw (the ball) clear. I was having fun out there. I can't wait for the season."

Osborn is also focused on developing into a viable option at wide receiver. He has watched intently as veteran receiver Adam Thielen has gone about his business in practice.

"He's a technician," Osborn said. "His moves are calculated with how he does things. He's a true professional. I love to come to work with him every day."

As for where Osborn stands on the actual depth chart, he clearly is competing with Chad Beebe, Tajae Sharpe and Alexander Hollins for some of the final roster spots behind Thielen, Bisi Johnson and rookie Justin Jefferson.

It certainly helps Osborn's cause that he has ability as a return man.

"Just being myself,"

Osborn said. "I feel like that's all I've been doing. I feel like that's what got my here. I'm not going to change it now."

Hunter's progress

Danielle Hunter participated in stretching drills at practice Monday, but he did not participate in any individual drills.

Nonetheless, the fact Hunter was participating in any capacity is a good sign for the Vikings. He had missed the previous 12 practices with what coach Mike Zimmer nonchalantly referred to as "a little tweak" a few weeks ago.

No doubt the Vikings are hoping Hunter returns to practice soon. They must be salivating about seeing him in action opposite the recently acquired Yannick Ngakoué.

In the trenches

It's becoming increasingly evident that the Vikings will enter this season with Shamar Stephen and Jaleel Johnson as their starting interior defensive linemen. While that duo has impressed defensive coordinator Andre Patterson, he also made sure to mention Armon Watts and Hercules Mata'afa as rotational

pieces.

"I like my combination of guys that I have inside," Patterson said. "We move those guys around and play them in different spots at nose and three. I really like that group, and I think they're going to play really well for us."

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Kentucky Derby will be strangely different, quiet

By John Clay
Lexington Herald-Leader

No stylish hats. No colorful dresses. No infield crowd. No crazy costumes. No grandstand gawkers. No paddock seekers. No smell of cigar smoke. No mint juleps. No fans. No noise.

"It's going to be weird," said Jack Wolf on Friday.

Jack Wolf is from Louisville. Bruce Lunsford lives in Louisville. Both own horses expected to be entered in Saturday's Kentucky Derby. Wolf is part owner of Authentic, winner of the Haskell Stakes on July 18. Lunsford owns Art Collector, winner of the Blue Grass Stakes on July 11 and the Ellis Park Derby on Aug. 9. Both horses are considered credible threats to cer-

tain favorite Tiz the Law in the 146th running of horse racing's most famous event.

Only this isn't any ordinary Derby. It's a Kentucky Derby during a coronavirus pandemic. Instead of its traditional date of the first Saturday in May, it's a Kentucky Derby on the first Saturday in September. Instead of the pomp and pageantry that makes the Kentucky Derby the Kentucky Derby, it is being run at Churchill Downs without fans in the stands.

Said Lunsford, "Probably the thing I'll miss the most is the crowd's roar when they leave the gate."

On a basic equine level, it is still the nation's best and healthiest 3-year-olds vying for immortality. And

it will not be the first 2020 horse race to be run before empty seats. By now, we are used to that, be it Keeneland, Churchill Downs or beyond. And there will be wagering, maybe more than ever before.

But it won't be the same. Not really. Not without the spectacle — 150,792 fans a year ago. That's why Churchill postponed the race in the first place. The hope was a four-month delay would allow time for treatments, maybe even a vaccine, or at least behavior that would bring the pandemic under control. Didn't happen. The presence of persistent protests in Louisville over the death of Breonna Taylor added to the uncertainty. Originally hoping to allow

up to 23,000 fans, Churchill ultimately opted to keep the gates closed.

"What I'm hearing is that we're getting eight tickets per horse," said Wolf, who runs Starlight Racing. "We've got many more partners than that, of course. It's obviously going to be very limited."

"The trainer gets six and he gets his family taken care of and I'm really happy for that," said Lunsford of Tommy Drury. "Initially when they said no fans, his daughter heard him talking and she had a tear in her eye. And he said, 'Don't worry, you're going to get to go.'"

"It's going to be disappointing," Wolf said. "But the main thing I'm very pleased about is all the tracks that are

running. At least we're giving the horses the opportunity to run, albeit a different environment totally."

Keep the main thing the main thing. In Saturday's case, the main thing is the opportunity to win a Kentucky Derby.

"I just want to win the race," said Barclay Tagg on Friday. Tagg is the 82-year-old trainer of Tiz the Law, winner of the Belmont and Travers. He trained 2003 Derby winner Funny Cide. "It's nice with the fans there and all that. It's a great sport and we want to keep everybody happy and have everybody enjoying the sport. But strange things happen sometimes and we're in the middle of that."

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