

BIRRENKOTT

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1992). Carter made sure he kept the tradition in the household his last time in the Packers jersey.

“It was so special. He’s had the kind of season where he’s wanted to step up in the big times,” Mike said. “He stepped up at the biggest time and I’m so proud of him for that.”

West Fargo jumped out to a 12-4 lead five minutes in on buckets from three players. The Packers continued to widen the margin, which grew to as high as 17 points (40-23) in the first half.

Minot came roaring back and opened the second half with a 14-2 run. Martinez was the catalyst of the comeback bid, dropping 19 points Sunday. Minot’s Michael Ross posted 11 points in the second half.

“Martinez is phenomenal. We knew they were gonna do that,” Packers head coach Adam Palczewski said. “I didn’t think we responded great right away, but at the end we calmed down and played team basketball. And at the end, team basketball was what won the game.”

When things went south Sunday, the Packers kept their composure.

“We dug them in a hole, they came right back,” Carter said. “It seemed like they had all the momentum at the time, but we had to stick with it. We’re a mentally tough team, Coach Palczewski has been breeding us that way. So we stuck with it, stayed tough and got it done.”

Carter registered a double-double with 21 points and 12 rebounds, both of which were team highs.

“It’s indescribable,” Palczewski said of the win. “We’ve had some bad luck in the past and things happen and you want a little bit



“I’m just proud of them. This team, we came a long way.”

NOAH DANIE, a sophomore at West Fargo

of justice. A little bit of West Fargo justice was good today. I’m so proud of our guys.”

Brett Limke tallied 13 points for the Packers and Pease had 10.

“It doesn’t even feel real. It feels so crazy. I’m so happy,” Pease said. “Everyone just played their hearts out. Even the bench people, all the energy they gave us — we run off energy.”

Noah Daniel, a sophomore at West Fargo, only played one season for the Packers, but was emotional after the win. Originally from South Sudan, Daniel was 19 years old when he played his freshman year for West Fargo. In North Dakota, students

cannot play high school athletics once they turn 20 years old.

“My tears cannot stop. I’m just so happy,” Daniel said. “I’m just proud of them. This team, we came a long way.”

Though he doesn’t suit up, he’s still very much a part of the program. Daniel is at practice each day, and has a spot at the end of the bench every game.

“It doesn’t matter what comes my way, I’ll stick with them for the rest of my life,” Daniel said.

Half: West Fargo 40, Minot 25
M: Ross 11, Wilcox 12, Butz 2, Wentz 2, Dissette 14, Martinez 19.
WF: Carlson 6, Limke 13, Hegerle 8, Pease 10, Grefsrud 5, Birrenkott 21, Zepeda 2.

Sports reporter Carissa Wigginton can be reached at (701) 241-5536.



Above: West Fargo’s Carter Birrenkott cuts the final strand of net to the delight of his teammates after the North Dakota Class A boys basketball tournament championship game at the Bismarck Events Center on Sunday, March 14, 2021.

David Samson / The Forum

Left: West Fargo’s Mike Birrenkott, left, is shown during the 1991 state championship game against Bismarck. Mike Birrenkott hit a free throw that sent the game in overtime and the Packers went on to win. The Packers also won the title in 1992, and on Sunday, Mike’s son, Carter, scored the winning points in the Packers’ Class A championship game victory over Minot. It was West Fargo’s first championship since the 1992 season.

Dave Samson / West Fargo Pioneer file photo

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Maggie Manson in 2018.

Kinnebrew led the scoring charge in the first half, recording 10 of her 12 points before the break.

“I was just thinking I’ve got to do the best I can for my team if I wanted this season to end the way I wanted it to end as a senior,” Kinnebrew said. “Us six seniors went out there and played our hearts out.”

Century and Davies went back-and-forth

early before Century pulled away. There were five lead changes and a tie in the first 9:30 in the first half.

Nissley made a 3 to give the Patriots a 7-4 lead with 11:43 to go. Ava Wild made a put back and Ryleigh Wacha made a layup to put the Eagles in front 8-7. Kinnebrew scored to push the Patriots back in front 9-8, Taylor Fey answered to push the Eagles in front 10-9 and Taylor Safranski made a 3 to push the Eagles’ lead to 13-9.

Century scored the next eight points with 3s by Julia Fitterer and

Kinnebrew and a 2-point bucket by Gabby Rush to give the Patriots a 17-13 lead with eight minutes to go in the first half.

The Patriots pulled away from there and kept rolling through the second half. They went on a 12-0 run from the end of the first half into the beginning of the second half to go ahead 40-22. Their biggest lead was 19 at 44-25.

“I think that’s how this team works,” Nissley said. “We have confidence in ourselves and we have confidence in each other that throughout this game, the lead changes, we

just knew that we had to keep going and push through the lead changes and push through the adversity and come away with the win.”

Fey led Davies with 14 points and eight rebounds and Ava Wild had nine points and seven rebounds.

The Eagles finished the season 24-3 and reached the state championship game for the first time in school history.

Half: Bismarck Century 58, Fargo Davies 47
BC: Julson 4, B. Kinnebrew 6, Fletcher 3, Anderson 2, Fitterer 5, Nissley 18, Klein 6, A. Kinnebrew 12, Rush 2.
FD: R. Wacha 9, Fey 14, Safranski 6, Burian 2, A. Wacha 3, T. Safranski 3, Wild 9, Kerzman 1.

Forum reporter Adam Watts can be reached at (701) 241-5548.

BRIEFS

Omaha claims 5-set volleyball win over Bison

FARGO — North Dakota State freshman Ali Hinze tallied the first Bison 20-kill, 20-dig match since 2010, but Omaha staved off NDSU to secure a 3-2 Summit League volleyball victory Saturday at Bentson Bunker Fieldhouse.

Omaha claimed the first, fourth and fifth sets for the match win. Set scores were 25-16, 24-26, 22-25, 25-22 and 15-5.

Hinze totaled 22 kills and 23 digs to lead the Bison. Alexis Bachmeier also had a double-double for NDSU, finishing with 10 kills and 13 digs. Kelley Johnson tallied four aces and libero Taylor Quan posted 13 digs.

Omaha rose to 11-5 overall and 10-4 in the Summit. The Bison dropped to 8-6 overall and 6-6 in conference play.

Dragon softball drops two to Mayville State

MOORHEAD — The Minnesota State Moorhead softball team dropped two games to Mayville State on Saturday at the Nemzek Softball Field.

Mayville took the opener 5-1 and blanked the Dragons 3-0 in the second game.

In the first game,

MSUM’s Ally Helgoe had a double among her two hits and scored the team’s run. Shay Weber had two hits and Kiley Washnieski doubled.

In the second game, Miah Hartvigsen had two hits, including a double, and Emma Dummer hit a pair of singles. Weber had the Dragons’ other hit.

The Dragons (2-8) play host to Minnesota Crookston for a Wednesday double-header. Games are at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

3-goal third period lifts Cobbers women’s hockey over Augsburg

MOORHEAD — The Concordia Cobbers women’s hockey team failed to find the back of the net, falling 2-0 to Augsburg Saturday afternoon, March 13.

Hannah Gold tallied midway through the first period for the Auggies. The two sides played to a goalless second frame, before an empty-net goal from Kaite Flynn provided the final margin.

The visitors out-shot the Cobbers 27-20. Kiania Flaig made 25 saves for Concordia.

The Cobbers closed the season with a 2-2-1 record in Minnesota Intercollegiate Conference play. Augsburg improved its mark to 3-6-2.



David Samson / The Forum

Fargo Davies’ Ashton Safranski collides with Bismarck Century’s Megan Klein during the North Dakota Class A girls basketball tournament championship game at the Bismarck Events Center on Sunday, March 14.