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Sports, 1B

# St. Cloud Times

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, 2022 | SCTIMES.COM

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**GROWING THE GAME**  
THE RISE OF SOCCER  
IN ST. CLOUD



## 'It was spectacular the pieces we put together'

The unlikely way soccer became popular in St. Cloud

Zach Dwyer St. Cloud Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

One year after graduating from St. John's University, Pat Haws was hired to take care of the new pool on campus and serve as the first head coach of the men's swim team in 1973. • Four years later, he was asked to help coach another program on campus, founded a decade earlier in 1967. It wasn't an extremely popular game in Central Minnesota at the time: soccer. • "A student that had just graduated was hired to be the head soccer coach," Haws said. "They wanted me to kind of be a part of that, guide him along; before the '78 season he quit. John Gagliardi, who was the (athletic director), called and said, 'I want you to be the soccer coach.'"

"I said, 'John, I don't know anything (about soccer),' Haws recalled. "He said, 'What did you know about swimming?'"

Gagliardi clearly had an eye for leadership, achieving his own national records as the all-time winningest college football coach with 489 victories in a 64-year career. Haws also experienced some incredible longevity with the Johnnies, remaining head soccer coach for 32 seasons until 2010.

Haws guided teams to seven MIAC titles and seven national tournament appearances, including Division III quarterfinals trips in 1986 and 1989. His career record of 341-140-50 makes Haws the winningest

See **SOCCER**, Page 6A

### About the series

"Growing the game: The rise of St. Cloud soccer" is a three-part series diving deep into soccer's evolution in the St. Cloud Area. This is part one; All three parts are subscriber-only content at sctimes.com.

Here's the remaining print publication schedule for "Growing the game: The rise of St. Cloud soccer".

**Sunday – Part 1: Emergence**

Monday – Part 2: Challenges

Tuesday – Part 3: Future

Above: Tech junior Ethan Miller beats a Holy Angels defender on Oct. 28, 2019, at US Bank Stadium for the Class A state semifinals. ZACH DWYER/ST. CLOUD TIMES

## Minnesota to increase minimum wage Jan. 1

Tribune Content Agency

Minnesota's minimum-wage rates will be adjusted for inflation on Jan. 1 to \$10.59 an hour for large employers and \$8.63 an hour for other state minimum wages, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry announced Tuesday.

The current large-employer minimum wage, \$10.33, will increase by 26 cent. Other state minimum wages, including the small-employer, youth and training wages, as well as the summer work travel exchange visitor program wage, which are all currently \$8.42, will increase by 21 cents to \$8.63. These increases are both 2.5%.

"This increase is designed to help minimum-wage workers keep up with inflation to better provide for themselves and their families," said Nicole Blissenbach, DLI temporary commissioner.

As of Jan. 1:

• Large employers must pay at least \$10.59 an hour when the employer's annual gross revenues are

See **WAGE**, Page 4A

USA TODAY

## Market pinches businesses

NEW YORK – The chill in the housing market is rippling out to the carpenters, landscapers and other small businesses that lose out when fewer homeowners are renovating their properties.

Inflation was already causing some homeowners to delay big renovation projects as prices for building materials, fixtures and appliances jumped. More recently, higher mortgage rates have put a damper on the number of homes being sold.

The Federal Reserve has been raising interest rates in an effort to reduce inflation, which is running at almost 10% annually at the wholesale level. The fear is the Fed will go too far and the economy will go into a slump.

Nation & World, 12A

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# Soccer

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coach in Minnesota college men's soccer history.

"In the '80s we were unbeatable ... one loss in four years at home," Haws said. "We were nationally ranked; we were knocking on the door of something huge."

"But it wasn't me. My knowledge was (small)," Haws added. "We had good players. It was spectacular the pieces we put together."

His son John was born in 1977 and was around the Johnnies from the time he could kick a ball, serving as a ball boy for the team before playing high school soccer at St. John's Prep.

John also played for the Johnnies in college, coaching Prep during his senior season before graduating in 1999. He immediately began serving as an assistant coach for SJU and served in that capacity for 10 years before taking over as head coach after his father. The younger Haws has many years ahead to chase his dad's record of 341 wins, but he's already tallied 100 wins in his 12 seasons.

John Haws has been in Collegetown his entire life; he attended his first SJU swim meet when he was three days old. And he now coaches games on Haws Field, opened in 2013 in his father's name.

"I didn't want to coach college soccer. I wanted to coach Johnnie soccer," John Haws said. "I believe in Division III, and I think St. John's does it better than anywhere else."

## The Haws tradition carries on in expanding soccer in St. Cloud

John Haws didn't only get his early soccer training from his father. Another Haws was also key in his development.

"I was a part of a team out of St. Cloud that wasn't like other teams," John Haws said. "(Pat's) uncle Larry Haws was the coach of the team. ... We weren't his first soccer team, but he had a deep understanding of sport and how to become better. He knew to motivate young athletes and they'd run through walls for you, but also you have to get the base skills from a sport. With that understanding you can go to any sport."

Larry Haws took the Central Minnesota Youth Soccer Association under-12 team and grew with them through the



The St. Cloud Apollo Eagles soccer team celebrates its State Class A title after defeating Minneapolis DeLaSalle 1-0 Thursday morning at Husky Stadium in St. Cloud. KIMM ANDERSON/ST. CLOUD TIMES



St. Cloud Apollo's Leighton Lommel (10) works to steal the ball from Rochester Lourdes' Esteban Bedoya (8) during the first half. PROVIDED BY BRE MCGEE

years. John Haws remembered a summer of going 35-0 overall, and the "St. Cloud Rollers" went on to win multiple state titles and AAU national championships in 1992 and 1993 in the U15 and U16 divisions.

"A lot of what I did, a lot of what John does, we learned that from Larry," Pat Haws said. "Just from being around him and watching him. In Central Minnesota soccer ... Larry Haws blows it out of the water."

Larry Haws wore many hats, working in the St. Cloud Parks and Recreation Department for over 30 years and later serving three terms in the Minnesota House of Representatives. He died at age 72 in 2012 after battling brain cancer.

College of St. Benedict head coach Steve Kimble has been coaching in the area since he graduated from Sartell High School in 1995. He's seen huge development in the 27 years since he coached his first U-14 girls team, much of which he traces back to a legend like Larry Haws.

"Larry was critical in starting a lot of good soccer in the area," Kimble said. "He was critical for developing Whitney Field complex up to a standard of play when Whitney was the heyday. He started a number of teams for minorities in the area; he really leveraged soccer to support a number of different people."

"That family has to take a lot of credit for development of interest, development of players, expansion of opportunities and development of facilities in that early-mid '90s era. They did a ton of work there."

That legacy continues to live on. John Haws can name multiple players from

See **SOCCER**, Page 7A

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# Soccer

Continued from Page 6A

his St. Cloud Rollers teams that are now coaching their own kids' teams, bringing more experienced soccer knowledge to youth coaching. He said that can lead to more intelligent conversations between parents and kids about the sport they're passionate about, which further enhances development.

"I've always been very high on soccer skills, and I get that from Larry Haws, who basically kicked off my coaching career," Kimble added. "He was all about technical abilities: foot skills, foot skills, foot skills. That's always been a priority."

John Haws and Kimble now get the chance to pass down those same lessons to dozens of players every season at the Division III level, and those ideas get spread even further when college players return to their own communities post-graduation.

Larry Haws planted a small seed through years of dedication, and its blossoming has already had immeasurable impact on the soccer community.

## St. Cloud high school soccer started out as outsiders, rose to state champions

While St. John's kickstarted the local college soccer scene with an early string of success in the 1970s, high school soccer took a longer time to gain a foothold in the area. The Central Lakes Conference, home to the largest public schools in Central Minnesota, didn't sponsor soccer as a girls sport until 1997 and boys until 2000.

St. Cloud Tech girls were an early dominant force, winning the first five conference titles and making trips to state in 1997 and 2001. Brainerd girls have owned the conference the past two decades, winning 15 of the last 19 CLC titles and the past eight from 2014-21.

CLC titles have been more spread out on the boys side, with Tech and St. Cloud Apollo earning at least a share of the title in 12 of 22 seasons. Tech has been a regular at state in recent years with four consecutive section titles, including top-three finishes in 2015 and 2019. But their first state appearance didn't come until 2008 under first-year head coach Nantha Viswanathan.

By that time, two other schools from St. Cloud had already established them-



St. Cloud Apollo's Abdiaziz Handule (11) tries to block the progress of DeLaSalle's Christian Kardio (14) during the first half on Oct. 30 at Husky Stadium.

KIMM ANDERSON/ST. CLOUD TIMES

selves as state regulars. St. Cloud Cathedral qualified for state 10 times between 1997 and 2012, and Apollo qualified in 2006 and 2007.

Reaching state would only do so much to establish Central Minnesota as a legitimate contender for titles. Someone had to go out and win the whole thing.

Enter the 2014 Apollo boys soccer team.

The Eagles went undefeated in 23 games, only allowing 10 goals the entire season. Apollo junior Leighton Lommel scored on a free kick in the 67th minute of the Class A championship over DeLaSalle to win 1-0 at St. Cloud State's Husky Stadium.

It was the only shot on goal of the game, and Apollo senior goalie Cooper Gray helped his team record its 16th shutout of the season.

"Going to the section finals as a ju-

nior, we knew we'd be back again because of the squad we had," Abdiaziz Handule said, who was a senior on the 2014 team. "The guys we had gave that commitment to reach a higher level and reach state."

Raising the state title trophy on that late October morning, the Eagles cemented themselves as another in a wave of soccer pioneers in Central Minnesota.

"It had to be the most people watching a soccer game in St. Cloud ever, the stands were just full," Lommel's younger brother Logan remembered. "The atmosphere was just electric and the boys were fighting so hard ... it was just nail-biting being in the crowd."

Logan Lommel would go on to star for the team in later years before graduating in 2019 to play Division I soccer at Western Illinois. He tried out for that 2014 team as an eighth grader but didn't



Granite City Days parade Grand Marshal Larry Haws tips his hat to the crowd in 2010. PROVIDED BY ADAM HAMMER

make the cut. He rests easy knowing he wasn't good enough to make the best high school team in St. Cloud's history.

"They had two overqualified coaches in Manny Campos and Ganard Orionzi," Lommel said. "The coaches were able to just unite the team and it was really fun to watch. All the guys grew together every year."

They were the first team (boys or girls) from the area to even reach a state soccer title game, let alone come away victorious. No soccer team from beyond the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area has claimed a state title since Apollo in 2014.

Apollo had proven Central Minnesota could have a legitimate state contender, and Tech was on the precipice of becoming a soccer power in the area.

The work of the Haws family decades prior was continuing to pay dividends at the youth level. Local soccer was seeing rising participation from high schools and gaining more mainstream appeal.

But as with any growth, it created new obstacles. Talented players who'd had soccer deeply ingrained in their lives wanted to be challenged in new ways. An established soccer scene was already booming in the Twin Cities hardly an hour away.

How could the St. Cloud Area keep its homegrown talent local and maintain steady growth?

The answer isn't a simple one.



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### GROWING THE GAME THE RISE OF SOCCER IN ST. CLOUD



## Chasing an opportunity

Sartell's Reese Kloetzer celebrates a first-half goal during the game on Sept. 15, 2020, against Sauk Rapids at Sartell High School. DAVE SCHWARZ/ST. CLOUD TIMES

### Challenges continue to arise, while solutions feel like moving targets

Zach Dwyer St. Cloud Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

Central Minnesota soccer has experienced significant growth in recent decades, most notably in St. John's longevity at the collegiate level and St. Cloud Apollo High School's state title run detailed in part one. ● But challenges have also arisen. Soccer is an ever-evolving game in the area, which means problem-solving can also feel like a moving target. ● But one challenge always persists: How do you keep youth talent local? ● That is always the first topic that comes up when you ask an area coach about what difficulties youth soccer faces. ● And for good reason. See **CHALLENGE, Page 2A**

#### ABOUT THIS SERIES

This is part two of a three-part series on soccer's evolution in the St. Cloud-Area. All three parts are subscriber-only content at sctimes.com.

Here's the remaining print publication schedule for "Growing the game: The rise of St. Cloud Soccer".

Sunday — Part 1: Emergence

**Monday — Part 2: Challenges**

Tuesday — Part 3: Future

## Isle Royale wolf population surges after nearly dying off

John Flesher  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Isle Royale National Park's gray wolf population has reached 28, a dramatic comeback after the species nearly disappeared from the Lake Superior island chain, researchers said Wednesday.

Health problems from inbreeding caused a die-off that left only two wolves a few years ago, leading park officials to authorize an airlift of mainland replacements. Wolves play a crucial role in balancing the is-

land ecosystem by preying on moose, which browse heavily on balsam fir and other plants.

"Mission accomplished. The goals have been met," said John Vucetich, a Michigan Technological University biologist who has long studied the relationship between the island's wolves and moose.

Nineteen wolves were brought to the park in 2018 and 2019 from Minnesota, Ontario and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Some died and one found its way back to the mainland. But at least five litters of pups have been born to those that settled into their new surroundings.

This year's population is the highest since 2006, when it totaled 30, said Sarah Hoy, a research assistant professor and animal ecologist at Michigan Tech.

A team of scientists surveyed the wolves and moose from the air last winter, resuming one of the world's longest running field studies of a predator and prey. It was canceled in 2021 to protect the research team from exposure to COVID-19.

"The wolves were doing everything we'd expect them to be doing," Hoy said. "We found them killing

See **WOLF, Page 6A**

## Quarterly Business Report

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St. Cloud State and Augustan play in an NSIC matchup on Oct. 22 at Husky Stadium in St. Cloud. ZACH DWYER/ST. CLOUD TIMES

Challenge

Continued from Page 1A

St. Cloud's proximity to the Twin Cities draws competitive players who want to play in college

The Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area's population stood at about 3.7 million in the 2020 census, about two-thirds of Minnesota's population.

With dozens and dozens of clubs in the Twin Cities, opportunities in an ultra-competitive market are easy to find. The main obstacle to entry is the hour-plus drive back and forth for training multiple times a week.

But that doesn't stop St. Cloud-area players from chasing that opportunity. Sartell senior captain Reese Kloetzer is one example.

Kloetzer first started playing soccer at the age of three in Ohio, instantly falling in love with the feeling of the ball at her feet. She moved to Minnesota in fifth grade, initially playing a few seasons in the Central Minnesota Youth Soccer Association.

In seventh grade she started playing for the Sartell High School team, and in eighth grade she began training with her longtime club Twin Cities Rush in Blaine.

"I wanted to play in the (Twin) Cities because I wanted more opportunities to get exposure in front of colleges and to venture out with other coaches and players," Kloetzer said.

"That was awesome; best trip of my life," Kloetzer said about the 2022 Gothia Cup in Sweden. "We got to represent USA and walk the flag around the field in front of 46,000 people."

Kloetzer is currently weighing options to play Division I or Division II college soccer on the east coast, crediting her Rush club for her development as a player.

"I've noticed tremendous growth just from playing club and then going straight into high school," she added. "I feel that bringing my skill into the high school level also helps other players around me get better."

Can Central Minnesota clubs accomplish the mission of building a soccer culture on the same scale as Minneapolis?

Can Central Minnesota clubs accomplish that same mission on a smaller scale? Work is being done to make that a reality. Emily Willaert is the current di-



Sartell's Reese Kloetzer looks for an open teammate during the game on Oct. 7 in Sartell. DAVE SCHWARZ/ST. CLOUD TIMES



Willaert

rector of coaching and player development for CMYSA, joining in 2015. The Mankato native played for the College of St. Benedict from 2007-11 and is entering year eight as an assistant coach on Steve Kimple's CSB staff.

The club has 25 travel teams from U9-U19, totaling nearly 1,000 kids with its recreation soccer programs included.

"As soccer grows in the area, they want to play at a higher and higher level," Willaert said about growth in travel teams. "As a club, we've established our developmental curriculum - what you're going to do at each age group.

club."

CMYSA has also added two assistant directors of coaching: SCSU men's assistant coach Zach Neiberger and recent SCSU defender Eddie Saydee. Willaert said their passion and energy for the game is huge for the club's progress.

"They've both picked up a club team and taken on training responsibilities for our younger kids," she said. "Now at the U9 level, our kids are training with three college coaches. ... They train with us for 12 weeks throughout the year."

CMYSA used to be the only youth club in the area for decades, but that has changed. A St. Cloud suburb has their own club, the Sartell Soccer Association. A football-centric town is now home to the Cold Spring Soccer Club for rec and travel teams ranging from 4-14 years old.

See CHALLENGE, Page 4A

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Monday, Aug. 29, the 241st day of 2022. There are 124 days left in the year. On this date in:

1632: English philosopher John Locke was born in Somerset.

1814: During the War of 1812, Alexandria, Virginia, surrendered to British military forces, which occupied the city until Sept. 3.

1862: The Bureau of Engraving and Printing began operations at the United States Treasury.

1944: Some 15,000 American troops of the 28th Infantry Division marched down the Champs Elysees in Paris as the French capital continued to celebrate its liberation from the Nazis.

1957: The Senate gave final congressional approval to a Civil Rights Act after South Carolina Sen. Strom Thurmond (then a Democrat) ended a filibuster that had lasted 24 hours.

1958: Pop superstar Michael Jackson was born in Gary, Indiana.

1966: The Beatles concluded their fourth American tour with their last public concert, held at Candlestick Park in San Francisco.

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# Challenge

Continued from Page 2A

Roy Snyder, director of player development for Sartell Soccer Association, has also been the head girls soccer coach at Sartell High School since 2015. Developing talent at the youth level and keeping them within the club at older ages is a challenge Sartell faces just like CMYSA. Snyder wants Sartell Soccer Association to continue to grow so players don't feel the need to drive to Monticello or Blaine for competitive soccer.

"The kids can be a part of Sartell soccer from the time they first lace up cleats at six years old all the way through their high school experience. Hopefully that's special for them," Snyder said. "Do we have an environment where we can really challenge our elite players to continue to grow and still provide a good experience for (rec soccer)? Finding ways to balance that is a struggle."

Nearly every leader in the soccer community also cited a key area that is a necessity to spur growth: coaching education.

Many of the local college coaches have taken advantage of the extensive licensing system available for coaching. Extending that further to the high school level and the next generation of coaches will only raise the level of play.

"Good coaches develop good players; if you really want to grow the game, you've got to have people who are committed to learning to be really good coaches," Snyder said. "As more and more of our kids grow up playing high-level soccer and care about the game ... they come back and will be that next group of coaches."

"These kids will now have grown up playing soccer: that's a good foundation."

## How can St. Cloud's diverse population be integrated into club play?

The St. Cloud area has become increasingly diverse in the past decade. Just take a look at the 2020 census data.

Over 10 years, every major community in the St. Cloud area saw its population of Black citizens grow by more than 100 percent. Waite Park went up 400 percent.

Remember Abdiaziz Handule, who played on the Apollo state team featured



St. Cloud State graduate student Eddie Saydee is introduced before the game against Northwood University on Sept. 24 at Husky Stadium in St. Cloud. ZACH DWYER/ST. CLOUD TIMES

in part one? He came to St. Cloud from Somalia when he was 12, already deeply ingrained in soccer culture. He'd follow his older brothers to play anywhere they could, whether it was an open field or in a warehouse.

He still plays soccer often, happy to see the pickup games now trend younger with new faces joining in.

But Handule never had the chance to play on a local club team, playing only a year of U18 soccer on a premier team in the Twin Cities.

CMYSA is hoping to bridge that gap, getting talented local players who may not have had the opportunity in the past to get into the club at an early age.

"Our board right now is really committed to our financial assistance program, just trying to make soccer accessible to everyone in the area," Willaert said. "When I first started we were giving out about \$1,500 worth of financial aid, and now we average about \$15,000. ... It makes it easier to allow more kids to play since our price point is different."

St. Cloud Tech and Apollo have seen large shifts in demographics at their respective high schools, something that could cause division. Instead, the schools have utilized their different soccer backgrounds for a common goal.

"Our biggest strength is that we have so many different players from different soccer and cultural backgrounds," Tech head coach Dan Stoterau said. "Everybody brings different knowledge and skills and style of play. We have a wide range of abilities. ... It makes it more fun. A real experience of getting to know people unlike ourselves."

"Coming together to achieve something great and working towards it ... (is) one of my favorite things about coaching in St. Cloud."

College of St. Benedict head coach Steve Kimble also believes soccer has come a long way in recent years, growth that can be partially attributed to the diverse population in St. Cloud.

"Soccer is such a global sport; they play in all kinds of countries," Kimble said. "As our community becomes more diverse, I think soccer is a connection that brings everybody together."

## Can St. Cloud area facilities support the growth of the game - even in winter?

One of soccer's biggest challenges in Minnesota has always been Mother Nature. How do you get consistent, year-round play with snow covering the

ground for nearly half the year?

Domes at St. John's University and St. Cloud State help, especially for players looking for local winter training within their clubs.

Opportunities have also arisen due to construction at the College of St. Benedict and the opening of its outdoor athletic complex in 2018. The turf fields are now home to all of CMYSA's league games, also bringing divisions of the youth state tournament to St. Joseph.

St. Cloud State's Husky stadium also has plenty of soccer history, serving as the site of Apollo's state soccer title in 2014. It's been the home for SCSU women's soccer since the 4,400-seat stadium was built in 2004.

But its main tenant was the SCSU football team.

The final home game of the 2019 SCSU football season saw the Huskies fall 24-13 to MSU-Moorhead on a November afternoon. Little did anybody know, that would be the final Division II football game played in St. Cloud.

Husky Stadium soon had an extra locker room available.

And a radical new project was on its way to shake up the St. Cloud sports landscape.

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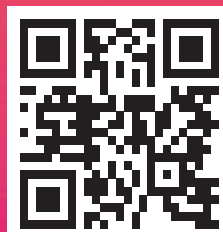


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## Top 5 players to watch for 2022 boys, girls soccer seasons

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# St. Cloud Times

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022 | SCTIMES.COM

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DAILY DISCOUNTS & SAVINGS ... Dining Deals USA PAGE 2A

**GROWING THE GAME** THE RISE OF SOCCER IN ST. CLOUD



Players from Granite City FC and Ebesua FC fight for the ball on May 4, at Tech High School in St. Cloud. PHOTOS BY ZACH DWYER/ST. CLOUD TIMES

## St. Cloud soccer fans, players want to grow more

Zach Dwyer St. Cloud Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

**D**ec. 10, 2019. ● A game-changing day in the future of soccer in St. Cloud. ● Buried in the shocking news of St. Cloud State University cutting its football program due to budgetary concerns was a small detail: SCSU still needed an NCAA-sanctioned fall sport for men to replace it. ● And soccer was its choice.

**How do you start a program from scratch? With no players, no conference – and a pandemic?**

Only two months later, Sean Holmes was hired, facing the tall task of building a program from scratch to begin play in six months.

SCSU also had to find a conference to play in. The Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference sponsors women's soccer and is home to nearly every other SCSU sport, but that isn't the case for men's soccer.

The COVID-19 pandemic delayed that start to the fall of 2021, giving ample time to prepare the Huskies for the Division II level and find a conference in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

Success doesn't come easily. Long bus trips to Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa yielded few wins, with SCSU's only road win coming against St. John's in September. The Huskies did pick up three conference wins at Husky stadium in a 4-13-1 campaign.

As the only Division II men's soccer team in the state of Minnesota, there's not exactly a blueprint for

### ABOUT THE SERIES

This is part three of a three-part series on soccer's evolution in the St. Cloud Area. All three parts are subscriber-only content at sctimes.com.

Here was the print publication schedule for "Growing the game: The rise of St. Cloud soccer".

Sunday — Part 1: Emergence

Monday — Part 2: Challenges

**Tuesday — Part 3: Future**

success. Holmes coached Drake University for nearly 20 years at the Division I level, and relished the challenge of building something new on the banks of the

See **SOCCER**, Page 2A



St. Cloud Dynamo's Logan Lommel prepares for a corner kick on July 21 at Whitney Park in St. Cloud.

## Strong storms knock down trees, shut down State Fair

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS – Strong storms knocked down trees and caused power outages across the Minneapolis area Saturday night, prompting the Minnesota State Fair to shut down rides and cancel a concert.

Wind gusts over 60 mph were reported as the storm moved across the metro area.

National Weather Service meteorologist Tyler Hasenstein told the Minneapolis Star Tribune there were reports of fallen trees blocking roads after the storm.

An Xcel Energy outage map showed that more than 27,000 customers lost power at the peak of the outages Saturday night, but that number had been cut to less than 2,500 by Sunday afternoon as crews worked to restore power.

At the State Fair, the rain sent many people fleeing for the exits.

"All of a sudden, rain started pouting from the sky and everybody started running," said Marisa Palmer,

See **STORMS**, Page 2A

**"All of a sudden, rain started pouting from the sky and everybody started running. It felt really scary at first. The entire sky was covered with lightning. It was truly petrifying."**

Marisa Palmer, New Jersey resident

USA TODAY

**War games:** Russia to hold sweeping military drills with China. **Nation & World, 6A**

**Ending the season on a 'high note'**

Rory McIlroy reflects on 'Super Bowl' win. **Sports, 1B**

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# LOCAL & REGION

## IN BRIEF

### The Ledge to host first-annual Flannel Fest Oct. 1

WAITE PARK — The Ledge Amphitheater announced it will host the inaugural LEDGETober Flannel Fest on Saturday, Oct. 1 from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m.

A ticket for the event includes beer sampling from local craft breweries, games, give-away prizes, contests and music, as well as entertainment from

the hilarious Deer Camp The Musical. You can also pre-register for a Cornhole Tournament at theledgecamp.com for an additional entry fee.

Presale tickets are available online at Ticketmaster.com, or are available at The Ledge's box office every Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Buy tickets before Labor Day at a discounted price of \$30 per ticket. General admission tickets will be sold after La-

bor Day until Aug. 30 for \$35 each. Day-of-event tickets are \$40.

You must be 21 or older with a valid photo ID to attend the event.

*Times Staff Report*

### Man struck by train near Clear Lake was from St. Cloud

The man who died after being hit by a train south of Clear Lake Friday has

been identified.

The Sherburne County Sheriff's Office identified Jeffrey Grewell, 48, of St. Cloud as the man who died. He was standing on the railroad tracks near 97th Street.

An Amtrak train was heading east at around 9 a.m. when it hit the man.

*Sarah Kocher, St. Cloud Times*

## Soccer

Continued from Page 2A

Division I St. Thomas for recruits.

Progress was made in year one, and Holmes said he wouldn't mind more competition at the DII level if more schools add the sport. Growing the game always takes precedent.

### St. Cloud is becoming a soccer town

The 21st century hasn't only sparked a rapid rise in teams at the youth level. Players want to keep playing competitive soccer once they finish high school, and now there's multiple local teams to join that compete across various leagues in Minnesota.

Granite City FC, established in 2016, plays in the United Premier Soccer League each spring. The club plays teams from around the state, while the league is filled with teams composed of either former or current collegiate soccer players. Granite City FC had Tech graduate Andrew Holmes feature in midfield this season before heading to Division I University of Evansville.

St. Cloud Dynamo FC got its start in the Minnesota Amateur Soccer League a year later in 2017, winning promotion three straight seasons to sit in the top division. It has expanded to two teams in different divisions, featuring plenty of former local high school stars in its

**"Being able to go watch games in person gives women and girls the drive (to) play at that level. It paved the way for us."**

**Reese Kloetzer**  
Sartell High School senior

summer season.

"There's only a handful of us left that first played in 2017," Dynamo player Logan Lommel said. "We've tried to make it sustainable. ... It's nice that we have something here.

"There's a lot of grassroots stuff going on where you can play soccer."

New teams are also expanding at the high school level. ROCORI High School first started boys and girls teams in 2016, with the boys team reaching its first section final last year. Tech secured its fourth-straight section title with a 1-0 win, denying the ROCORI Spartans their first trip to state.

A nearby town like Albany is also dipping its toe into soccer at the high school level for the first time in 2022, fielding a junior varsity girls team.

And not only are more teams popping up, but the talent is also rising along with it.

Young soccer players are developing at incredible rates. Just ask Tech head coach Dan Stoterau, who played Division III college soccer at Minnesota-Morris for five years after playing on Tech's first state tournament team in 2008.

"Players now are doing things as middle schoolers and high schoolers that I wasn't even doing in the college setting," Stoterau said. "As far as foot skills and one-on-one work, their technical abilities have exceeded anything I'd seen growing up. The game has already evolved dramatically."

### Minnesota becoming known as a soccer state

Soccer has undergone a major transformation in roughly a generation. Global success from United States National Teams surely raised awareness for up-and-coming men's and women's players. It'd be difficult to consider it a "niche" sport any longer.

"Soccer used to feel like lacrosse feels right now: like, what is that?" St. Benedict head soccer coach Steve Kimble said, who coached his first girls team in 1995. "Now soccer feels more (like) baseball. Everybody knows what it is. ... It's pretty mainstream now.

"In the summer you can drive around the area and it's soccer kids on every field."

Sartell senior Reese Kloetzer agrees, saying she's noticed a rise in soccer-focused athletes in the area. She always has someone to go kick the ball with, jointly raising passion for the game.

Major soccer teams like Minnesota United and community-owned Minnesota Aurora are only a short drive away. Add in the influx of soccer on TV, and there's plenty of role models for young

players to be inspired by.

"Being able to go watch games in person gives women and girls the drive (to) play at that level," Kloetzer said, who has been particularly motivated by Minnesota Aurora's success this summer. "It paved the way for us."

### So where does soccer in St. Cloud go from here?

The talent level and soccer IQ should only continue to rise as the next generation is further surrounded by a growing soccer culture.

More youth clubs could emerge, continuing to spread soccer into rural communities. That competition could also make area clubs improve.

Soccer now has a foothold in the community, but more passionate supporters are still necessary to take the next step. Coaching education needs to continue growing. Integrating St. Cloud's diverse players at an early age would be beneficial. Clubs and facilities need to continue adapting so local talent feels it can remain in the area and still achieve the goal of playing at a higher level.

More national success at the college level or another St. Cloud area high school state title could also inspire another set of young players.

The pieces are in place to take soccer up a notch, and St. Cloud soccer isn't content with where it stands.

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