

Buck-ing the norms: More girls are becoming hunters

KELLOGG

Around an hour before sunrise Saturday, two 12-year-old girls with blaze-orange clothing, 20-gauge shotguns and big dreams walked down an old road in what they called Buzzard’s Roost and prepared to hunt deer on the opening day of the 2021 firearms season.

Jada Fries, whose dad, Brian Fries, was with them, knows how big her dream is: “like a 20-pointer,” she said. “Pretty big, and fat too.” It would be her second deer — she shot a button buck last year. She proudly said she even field dressed it herself, with her dad’s help.

Her lifelong friend, Jessalyn Adams, said “I don’t have big dreams.” A 10- or 12-pointer will do nicely for her. It would be her first deer. She wants her dad to field dress it because she doesn’t know how.

They took part in a hunt up Cook’s Valley west of Kellogg where the Fries family has land dubbed Buzzard’s Roost in honor of Jada’s grandfather, Walt Fries, who has the “Buzzard” nickname.

They will also proudly be taking part in a major national trend — girls and women getting into hunting. While the number of men is static or dropping as a proportion of the population, females in the field wearing blaze orange or camo is on the rise.

According to a National Geographic report a few years ago “The proportion of women who hunt has risen 25 percent since 2006.”

In a forward to the 2019 book “Why Women Hunt,” hunter Brenda Valentine wrote: “Women hunters were never as accepted and celebrated as



OUTDOORS
John Weiss

they are in this decade. The number of women in boots and camouflage has exploded.”

That is great with Jada “because you are starting something new,” she said before going out scouting Thursday evening. “Because you’re part of a trend.”

Same with Jessalyn: “I like being part of it.”

Sure, hunting is known more as a male’s sport but they are more than happy to get in too. In fact, Jada has big thoughts about just how good they are. She thinks girls and women can show the men “they are better than the guys.”

True, said her friend. She thinks girls “want to show boys they can be like them too.”

Besides, they said they see some boys in dance. Boys can do things more traditionally known for girls so girls can do things more traditional with boys. In fact, they would love to see any idea of hunting being for women or men erased, blotted out, removed. It might take some time. “Maybe in a few years,” Jada said. “Yeah, a few years,” added Jessalyn.

It’s not that they need more interests. Both are very active, Jada in dance, volleyball, softball and skiing; Jessalyn in dance, softball, volleyball and basketball. But they have time to hunt.

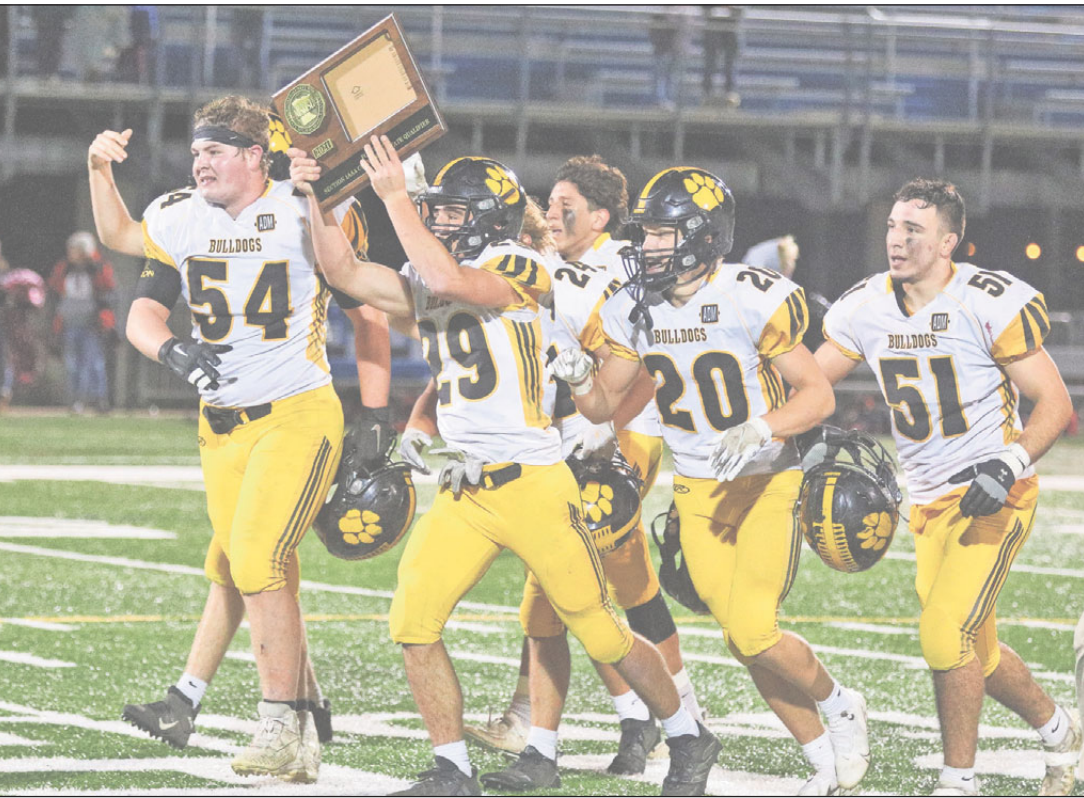
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Contributed / John Weiss

Jada Fries, at right, points out where deer might be while her friend and hunting buddy Jessalyn Adams checks out another part of the area where they planned to hunt deer last Saturday, the opening of the 2021 firearms season. They hunted along with Jada’s dad, Brian Fries, west of Kellogg.

H.S. FOOTBALL FOCUS



Alex VandenHouten / Post Bulletin

Plainview-Elgin-Millville players celebrate winning the Section 1AAA championship with a 21-18 victory against Cannon Falls on Friday at Rochester Regional Stadium.

Stage is set for state tournaments

Section finals saw many upsets in southeastern Minnesota

EDITORS NOTE: *These rankings are considered “pound-for-pound” rankings, similar to many rankings systems in boxing and mixed martial arts. They represent the six southeastern Minnesota teams who are state bound and are relative to the class they play in.*

BY PAT RUFF
Post Bulletin

Sam Backer goes for nearly 300 yards rushing in the first half, LeRoy-Ostrander does it again, Mayo ends its state tournament drought, Cannon Falls gets humbled by Plainview-Elgin-Millville, No. 1 Blooming Prairie loses, and on and on.

There’s so much to go over in the wild and woolly high school football playoff world. So let’s get to it.

WEEK’S 11’S TOP PERFORMERS

1. QB Sam Backer, Chatfield: Backer was at his ultimate best on Friday night, and so were the awesome Chatfield blockers who spring him. Backer finished with nearly 300 yards rushing in the first half, then tacked on two more carries in the second half to finish with a school-record 345 rushing yards. He also scored six touchdowns in

Chatfield’s 46-15 Section 1AA title win against Goodhue.

2. RB Chase Johnson, LeRoy-Ostrander: The “Chase” was on once again Friday night, and as has so often been the case this season, there was no catching the Cardinals’ 5-foot-6, 165-pound star. Johnson helped carry the Cardinals to a 30-6 upset win over No. 2-ranked Lanesboro, getting it done with 248 spectacular yards rushing. That included touchdown sprints of 72, 53 and 38 yards. Johnson now has more than 2,000 yards rushing this season.

3. RB Anthony Moe-Tucker, Kasson-Mantorville: The K-M senior was electric on Friday in the KoMets’ Section 1AAAA title win over Byron, scoring his team’s first three touchdowns and finishing with 157 yards rushing on nine carries. Tucker had TD runs of 7, 53 and 75 yards.

4. DL Tanner Olson, LeRoy-Ostrander: The LeRoy-Ostrander defense has gone from good to awesome in the last two weeks. Leading that charge has been the 6-3, 225-pound Olson, who toggles between defensive end and tackle for the Cardinals. In L-O’s Section 1, Nine-Man championship upset win over previously unbeaten Lanesboro, Olson

finished with 18 tackles, one sack and recovered a fumble.

5. RB, Noah Smith, Mayo: In one of the wilder and most impactful games that Mayo has played in years, nobody was more valuable to the Spartans’ cause than the 6-foot-1, 185-pound speedster, Smith. The senior scored three touchdowns, one of them a 53-yard catch from Bennett Ellsworth, and finished with 89 yards rushing. All of it guided Mayo back from a 16-point deficit late in the first half to ultimately beat Owatonna 38-33 in the Section 1AAAAA title game. Mayo is now headed to state for the first time since 1997.

STATE-BOUND POWER RANKINGS

1. Chatfield (10-1): 60-14, 54-0, 46-15. Those were the scores of Chatfield’s three section playoff games, the Gophers on the winning end of all of them. Simply, this team, led by a powerful offensive line and an amazing running quarterback, Sam Backer, has turned into a juggernaut.

2. LeRoy-Ostrander (9-2): The Cardinals made everyone a believer after what they did in their last two games. First, they beat No. 7 ranked Grand Meadow 39-34, then topped that by crushing No. 2-ranked and previously unbeaten Lanesboro 30-6 in the section final. As good

See **STATE**, Page **B2**

H.S. VOLLEYBALL REWIND

K-M, Cannon Falls volleyball teams head to ‘The X’

KoMets, Bombers win Section 1 titles

Post Bulletin staff

Don’t let up, don’t let the ball hit the ground.

Kasson-Mantorville excelled on defense on Saturday and had enough offensive firepower to sweep past rival Stewartville 25-23, 25-22, 25-19 for the Section 1AAA volleyball championship on Saturday at Mayo Civic Center in a battle of state powers.

“Anytime you beat Stewartville it always feels good, it doesn’t matter if it’s to get to state or not,” K-M coach Adam VanOort said.

The two Hiawatha Valley League rivals, ranked No. 2 and 3 in the state in Class AAA, had played a thrilling five-set match during the regular season. That made the K-M sweep in the section finals somewhat improbable.

winner of that match will play in the state semifinals at 7 p.m. Friday.

CANNON FALLS TOPS Z-M IN 1AA

The Cannon Falls volleyball program accomplished a first in program history on Saturday and the Bombers literally blocked Zumbrota-Mazeppa in the process.

Aided by an added class in volleyball this season, the Bombers earned their first state berth in program history as they swept Zumbrota-Mazeppa 25-23, 25-9, 25-13 in the Section 1AA championship match on Saturday at Mayo Civic Center.

“I can’t even express the words,” Cannon Falls coach Melissa Huseth said. “These girls set goals ... and they have just been crushing their goals. They knew that they had it in them to do this.”

The Bombers were the No. 1 seed, but they avenged a regular-season loss to No. 2 Zumbrota-Mazeppa as the two teams are Hiawatha Valley League rivals.

“After losing to them at the beginning of the season, it feels pretty dang good to beat them,” 6-foot Cannon Falls sophomore Madison Burr said.

It was the play of Halle Hustad and Burr at the net that sparked the Bombers. They not only combined for 28 kills — 15 by Burr and 13 by Hustad — but they also teamed up for a dozen blocks.

Z-M closes the season 25-7.

Cannon Falls (27-5) dropped just one set while winning four section matches.

“These girls just fight,” Huseth said. “They know they can do it, they just believe it from within that they can win a match.”

END OF THE LINE FOR MAYO, K-W

• No. 7-ranked Lakeville North proved too much for a youthful Rochester Mayo team that fully expects it can be back in the Section 1AAAA title match in coming seasons.

North, the top seed in the section, powered to a 25-19, 25-19, 25-21 win against Mayo on Saturday to earn a trip to the Class AAAA state tournament.

Mayo finished its season 20-10.

• Faribault Bethlehem Academy, with a dominant performance at the net and with its overall defense, swept Kenyon-Wanamingo in the Section 1A championship match. The Cardinals prevailed 25-16, 26-24, 25-21.

K-W closed its season at 19-5 overall.

Tessa Erlandson had six kills and 12 digs to pace K-W.

Parise returns to Minnesota

Former Wild star has chance to thank fans

BY DANE MIZUTANI
St. Paul Pioneer Press

ST. PAUL — Despite a somewhat messy divorce this past offseason, former Minnesota Wild star Zach Parise isn't holding a grudge.

The 37-year-old winger is now a member of the New York Islanders, signing there in September after the Wild decided to buy out the remainder of his contract in July.

Is any sort of revenge on Parise's mind with the Wild and the Islanders facing off Sunday night at Xcel Energy Center?

"No, I've moved on," Parise said before the game. "It's been a long time. I love where I'm at. We've got a great hockey team here. As I was saying earlier, it's a really fun group of players to be around, and that's made the transition that much easier."

Still, Parise admitted it's a little weird playing against his former team. He spent nearly a decade with the Wild after he and defenseman Ryan Suter signed matching 13-year, \$98 million contracts on July 4, 2012.

"There's going to be a lot of different feelings and emotions going



James Guillory / USA Today Sports

Former Minnesota Wild star and current New York Islanders left wing Zach Parise skates against the Carolina Hurricanes at PNC Arena in Raleigh, North Carolina, on Oct. 14.

in there as a visitor," Parise said. "When you're playing against the guys that you've been teammates with for so long, it's a little weird. But we'll worry about the game and getting the win."

As much as Parise is trying to treat this like a business trip, he's looking forward to saying goodbye to the Wild fan base once and for all. He never got that

chance last season due to COVID restrictions throughout the league.

"To go back to what I would imagine will be a sold-out crowd, I think it's going to be great," Parise said. "They have such a good fan base there. Just loyal fans that love the team. It's a fan base that was always great to me and my family when we were there. I'm excited to go play in front of them

again. It's been a long time since they've been able to have those sold-out crowds there that we were so accustomed to."

FAMILY STILL IN MINNESOTA

The hardest part about Parise's transition so far has been being separated from his family. With so many moving parts this season, he and his wife Alisha decided it was best if she stayed in Minnesota with

the couple's 7-year-old twins, Jaxson and Emelia, and 3-year-old son Theodore.

This is the first time in Parise's career that he's been away from his family for an extended period of time. The family met him in Nashville earlier this season and he recently hustled back to Minnesota for a quick visit. Obviously, the game between the Wild and the Islanders will give Parise a chance to

see them, too.

"As a parent, you're so accustomed to being with them all the time and bringing them to their hockey and their gymnastics and their sports," Parise said. "As a parent, you really miss that stuff. It's an important time in their lives. We're making the best of it."

As for how he's settling into his new role with his new team, Parise couldn't be happier.

State

From page B1

and dynamic as run-first quarterback Chase Johnson is (more than 2,000 yards rushing this season), L-O's defense has equally turned heads in November. The Cardinals have two college-level players along their defensive line in seniors Tanner Olson (6-3, 225) and Gavin Sweeney (6-4, 210).

3. Mayo (10-1): The Spartans hadn't been to state in 24 years. But Mayo ended that drought on Saturday with a drama-drenched 38-33 section title win over Owatonna. The question with Mayo is its defense, which allows close to 20 points per game. What's never in question is the Spartans' offense, which might be the best in school history.

4. Kasson-

Mantorville (7-3): The KoMets were decided favorites in their Section 1AAAA championship game with surprising Byron, which stunned previously unbeaten Stewartville in the semis. K-M lived up to that status and then some against the Bears, roaring to a 42-14 win. Containing K-M's two running stars, quarterback Matthew Donovan and running back Anthony Moe-Tucker, is a lot to ask. K-M has three losses this season, all of them to excellent teams — Mankato East, Stewartville and Owatonna — none by more than a touchdown.

5. Plainview-Elgin-Millville (9-2): The Bulldogs pulled off something on Friday that has us looking at them in an entirely new light. They not only hung around with offensive running machine Cannon Falls,

they beat the Bombers. And they did it while holding them to 18 points. Cannon Falls had scored 54, 52, 74 and 50 points in their previous four games. Enough said. P-E-M, take a long, deep bow. And answer the question: How did you do that?

6. Rushford-Peterson (11-0): The Trojans are the only unbeaten team left in southeastern Minnesota. R-P would be ranked even higher in this power poll if it had more notable wins. Unranked Fillmore Central is the toughest team it played so far, and R-P beat the Falcons twice. The last time was not easy, the Trojans escaping with a 7-0 win in the Section 1A championship. R-P's defense (allowing 8 ppg.) and the arm and legs of quarterback Malachi Bunke puts them in winning situations every week.

Weiss

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"It's fun when you see the big buck," Jada said. "You get excited."

During the special youths-only hunt in October, she hunted a few days but skipped out the last day. A really nice buck was seen on their trail cam that evening - she was not happy with her dad. She wants that big buck.

In the field up Buzzard's Roost, they knew it would be nice to sit in a tall tripod stand; if they get cold, they will sit in an old ice shack with shooting windows and a heater. Of course, they will bring treats along.

They have already spent time in the hunting woods. "It's quiet," Jessalyn said. You get a nice view of the trees, leaves and birds.

"It's quiet, peaceful.... lots of trees," her friend said.

But then, that can all change in a flash when they see movement and hear someone whisper "deer."

When that happened last year, "I can tell you that my heart started to race, it was exciting," Jada said.

"I think it will be exciting because I will kill it and then we will have food," Jessalyn said. Sure, they get most of their food from the grocery store but the venison "is more fresh and exciting," she said.

"It's boring when you get it from the supermarket, unless it's ribs," Jada said.

When they walked to the tripod stand Thursday to scout, they were great at spotting buck scrapes and rubs, and a few deer beds. They were keyed into the outdoors.

As soon as they climbed up to the tripod, they saw a few deer running away. After that, it was just a nice evening to sit up higher and see the trees.

Towards dusk, it was time to head back to the big shed at Buzzard's Roost. They had other things to do but they were a bit better prepared when that big 10-pointer or even that fat 20-pointer comes within range.

P.S. Brian Fries reported the girls saw a few deer, including two does around dusk Saturday but it was too dark to shoot. No mention of a 10- or 20-point buck.

John Weiss has written and reported about Outdoors topics for the Post Bulletin for 45 years. He is the author of the book "Backroads: The Best of the Best by Post-Bulletin Columnist John Weiss"

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TAKE ME TO THE DEALS PAGE

SCOREBOARD

ROCHESTER CALENDAR

TUESDAY, NOV. 9 JR. COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Exhibition: RCTC at St. Olaf, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 10 GIRLS SWIMMING & DIVING

Section 1A meet (swimming prelims), time TBD (at Rochester Recreation Center) Century, John Marshall, Mayo at Section 1AA meet (swimming prelims), time TBD (at Rochester Recreation Center)

JR. COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Dakota County Technical College at RCTC, 7 p.m.

NEXT 3

Next 3 games and TV info. for Minnesota sports teams:

MINNESOTA UNITED

• MLS Playoffs: at Portland, date TBD, time TBD

MINNESOTA VIKINGS

• Sunday, Nov. 14: at L.A. Chargers, 3:05 p.m. (Fox)

• Sunday, Nov. 21: Green Bay, noon (Fox)

• Sunday, Nov. 28: at San Francisco, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

GOPHERS FOOTBALL

• Saturday, Nov. 13: at Iowa, TBD (TBD)

• Saturday, Nov. 20: at Indiana, TBD (TBD)

• Saturday, Nov. 27: Wisconsin, TBD (TBD)

End Regular Season

MINNESOTA WILD

• Wednesday, Nov. 10: at Arizona, 9 p.m. (TNT)

• Thursday, Nov. 11: at Vegas, 9 p.m. (BSN)

• Saturday, Nov. 13: at Seattle, 9 p.m. (BSN)

MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES

• Wednesday, Nov. 10: at Golden State, 9 p.m. (BSN)

• Friday, Nov. 12: at L.A. Lakers, 9:30 p.m. (BSN)

• Saturday, Nov. 13: at L.A. Clippers, 9:30 p.m. (BSN)

GOPHERS MEN'S BASKETBALL

• Tuesday, Nov. 9: Kansas City, 7 p.m. (BTN Plus)

• Friday, Nov. 12: Western Kentucky, at Asheville, N.C., 5:30 p.m. (ESPN)

• Sunday, Nov. 14: South Carolina or Princeton, at Asheville, N.C., TBD (TBD)

GOPHERS WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

• Tuesday, Nov. 9: Jacksonville, noon (BTN Plus)

• Friday, Nov. 12: at Arizona State, 8 p.m. (No TV)

• Sunday, Nov. 14: George Washington, 2 p.m. (BTN Plus)

TV HIGHLIGHTS

TUESDAY, NOV. 9

PRO BASKETBALL

Milwaukee at Philadelphia, 6:30 p.m. (TNT)

Portland at L.A. Clippers, 9 p.m. (TNT)

MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Mount St. Mary's at Villanova, 3:30 p.m. (FS1)

Eastern Michigan at Indiana, 5 p.m. (BTN)

Akron at Ohio State, 5 p.m. (ESPN2)

Lafayette at Syracuse, 6 p.m. (BSN Plus)

Kansas vs. Michigan State, 6 p.m. (ESPN)

Jackson State at Illinois, 7 p.m. (BTN)

Wisconsin-Milwaukee at North Dakota, 7 p.m. (BSN)

Longwood at Iowa, 9 p.m. (BTN)

Southern at Louisville, 8 p.m. (BSN Plus)

Kentucky at Duke, 8:30 p.m. (ESPN)

WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

South Carolina at N.C. State, 4 p.m. (ESPN)

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Ohio at Eastern Michigan, 7 p.m. (ESPN2)

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 10

PRO BASKETBALL

Detroit at Houston, 6:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Minnesota at Golden State, 9 p.m. (BSN)

Miami at L.A. Lakers, 9:05 p.m. (ESPN)

MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Buffalo at Michigan, 5:30 p.m. (BTN)

Farleigh Dickinson at Seton Hall, 6 p.m. (FS1)

Youngstown State at Penn State, 7:30 p.m. (BTN)

Coppin State at DePaul, 8 p.m. (FS1)

PRO HOCKEY

Minnesota at Arizona, 9 p.m. (TNT)

HIGH SCHOOL PLAYOFFS

BOYS SOCCER

CLASS AAA

FINAL

Saturday, Nov. 6

Mounds View 3, Rosemount 2

CLASS AA

FINAL

Saturday, Nov. 6

Orono 1, Holy Angels 0

CLASS A

FINAL

Saturday, Nov. 6

Southwest Christian 3, St. Paul Humboldt 0

GIRLS SOCCER

CLASS AAA

FINAL

Saturday, Nov. 6

Stillwater 1, Centennial 0

CLASS AA

FINAL

Saturday, Nov. 6

Mahtomedi 3, Benilde-St. Margaret's 1

CLASS A

FINAL

Saturday, Nov. 6

Minnehaha Academy 4, Breck 2

CLASS AAAA STATE

QUARTERFINALS

(at Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul)

Wednesday, Nov. 10

No. 1 Wazyata vs. Roseville, 1 p.m.

No. 4 Lakeville North vs. No. 5 Rogers 1 p.m.

No. 2 Eden Prairie vs. Forest Lake, 3 p.m.

No. 3 East Ridge vs. Bloomington Jefferson, 3 p.m.

SECTION 1AAA

FINAL

Saturday, Nov. 6

Kasson-Mantorville 3, Stewartville 0

CLASS AA STATE

QUARTERFINALS

(at Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul)

Wednesday, Nov. 10

No. 1 Marshall vs. St. Paul Highland Park, 5 p.m.

No. 4 Monticello vs. No. 5 Grand Rapids, 5 p.m.

No. 2 Kasson-Mantorville vs. Sauk Rapids-Rice, 7 p.m.

No. 3 New Prague vs. Chisago Lakes, 7 p.m.

SECTION 1AAA

FINAL

Saturday, Nov. 6

Cannon Falls 3, Zumbrota-Mazeppa 0

CLASS AA QUARTERFINALS

(at Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul)

Thursday, Nov. 11

No. 1 Southwest Christian vs. Mounds Park Academy, 9 a.m.

No. 4 Jackson County Central vs. No. 5 Annandale, 9 a.m.

No. 2 Cannon Falls vs. Hawley, 11 a.m.

No. 3 Sauk Centre vs. Greenway, 11 a.m.

CLASS A STATE QUARTERFINALS

(at Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul)

Thursday, Nov. 11

No. 1 Mayer Lutheran vs. South Ridge, 5 p.m.

No. 4 Bethlehem Academy vs. No. 5 Breckenridge, 5 p.m.

No. 2 Minneota vs. Badger/Greenbush-Middle River, 7 p.m.

No. 3 Legacy Christian Academy vs. Walker-Hackensack-Akeley, 7 p.m.

FOOTBALL

SECTION 1AAAAA

CHAMPIONSHIP

Saturday, Nov. 6

Mayo 38, Owatonna 33

CLASS AAAAA

QUARTERFINALS

Saturday, Nov. 13

Alexandria (6-5) s. Robbinsdale Cooper (8-2) at Osseo H.S., 1 p.m.

Mahtomedi (8-2) vs. Mayo (9-1), at Woodbury H.S., noon

Andover (10-0) vs. Rogers (9-1), at St. Cloud Tech, 1 p.m.

St. Thomas Academy (10-0) vs. Mankato West (10-0), at Prior Lake H.S., 3 p.m.

SECTION 1AAAA

CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, Nov. 5

Kasson-Mantorville 42, Byron 14

CLASS AAAA

QUARTERFINALS

Thursday, Nov. 11

Becker (10-0) vs. Holy Angels (8-2), at Monticelli H.S., 7 p.m.

Fridley (8-2) s. Kasson-Mantorville (7-3) at Lakeville South H.S., 7 p.m.

Grand Rapids (8-2) vs. Orono (5-6), at Osseo H.S., 7 p.m.

Simley (7-3) vs. Hutchinson (9-1), at Hopkins H.S., 6 p.m.

SECTION 1AAA

CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, Nov. 5

Plainview-Elgin-Millville 21, Cannon Falls 18

CLASS AAA

QUARTERFINALS

Saturday, Nov. 13

Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton (9-1) vs. Annandale (8-2), at Buffalo H.S., 2 p.m.

Breck (6-4) vs. Plainview-Elgin-Millville (9-2), at Burnsville H.S., noon

Esko (10-0) vs. New London-Spicer (6-5), at Brainerd H.S., 1 p.m.

Fairmont (9-1) vs. Dassel-Cokato (11-0), at Prior Lake H.S., 11 a.m.

SECTION 1AA

CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, Nov. 5

Chatfield 46, Goodhue 15

SECTION 2AA

CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, Nov. 5

Maple River 40, Blooming Prairie 18

CLASS AA

QUARTERFINALS

Thursday, Nov. 11

Barnesville (8-2) vs. Eden Valley-Watkins (9-1), at Alexandria H.S., 7 p.m.

Minneapolis North (9-1) vs. Chatfield (10-1), Mayo H.S., 7 p.m.

Moose Lake/Willow River (8-0) vs. West Central/Ashby (9-1), at Brainerd H.S., 7 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 12

Pipestone (11-0) vs. Maple River (10-1), at Hastings H.S., 7 p.m.

CLASS A

QUARTERFINALS

Friday, Nov. 12

Mahnomen/Waubun (9-1) vs. Minneota (11-0), at Monticello H.S., 7 p.m.

Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa (8-3) vs. Rushford-Peterson (11-0) at Crown College, 7 p.m.

Deer River (11-0) vs. New York Mills (11-1), at Brainerd H.S., 7 p.m.

Murray Co. Central vs. Mayer Lutheran, at Jordan H.S., 7 p.m.

SECTION 1 9-MAN

CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, Nov. 5

LeRoy-Ostrander 30, Lanesboro 6

NINE-MAN

QUARTERFINALS

Thursday, Nov. 11

Wheaton/Herman-Norcross (9-2) vs. LeRoy-Ostrander (9-2), at Macalester College, 7 p.m.

Mountain Iron-Buhl (9-1) vs. Fertile-Beltrami (11-0), at Grand Rapids H.S., 6 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 12

Kittson Country Central (9-2) s. Ogilvie (7-3), at Moorhead H.S., 7 p.m.

Hills-Beaver Creek (9-2) vs. Renville County West (8-3), at Marshall H.S., 7 p.m.

AUTO RACING

NASCAR CUP SERIES

Final Standings

1. Kyle Larson 5040

2. Chase Elliott 5035

3. Martin Truex Jr. 5034

4. Denny Hamlin 5032

FOOTBALL

Professional

American Football Conference

East

Buffalo 5 3 0 .625 235 118

New England 5 4 0 .556 230 170

N.Y. Jets 2 6 0 .250 144 251

Miami 2 7 0 .222 155 242

South

Tennessee 7 2 0 .778 255 211

Indianapolis 4 5 0 .444 245 213

Jacksonville 2 6 0 .250 132 209

Houston 1 8 0 .111 128 258

West

Baltimore 6 2 0 .750 221 195

Cincinnati 5 4 0 .556 236 203

Cleveland 5 4 0 .556 224 196

Pittsburgh 4 3 0 .571 132 142

West

Las Vegas 5 3 0 .625 196 189

L.A. Chargers 5 3 0 .625 199 201

Denver 5 4 0 .556 187 153

Kansas City 5 4 0 .556 221 227

National Football Conference

East

Dallas 6 2 0 .750 241 192

Philadelphia 3 6 0 .333 227 218

N.Y. Giants 3 6 0 .333 179 216

Washington 2 6 0 .250 156 227

South

Tampa Bay 6 2 0 .750 260 183

New Orleans 5 3 0 .625 201 155

Atlanta 4 4 0 .500 175 220

Carolina 4 5 0 .444 171 183

North

Green Bay 7 2 0 .778 199 180

Minnesota 3 5 0 .375 194 191

Chicago 3 5 0 .375 123 195

Detroit 0 8 0 .000 134 244

West

Arizona 8 1 0 .889 277 155

L.A. Rams 7 2 0 .778 261 196

Seattle 3 5 0 .375 181 169

San Francisco 3 5 0 .375 185 202

Week 9

Thursday's Games

Indianapolis 45, N.Y. Jets 30

Sunday's Games

New England 24, Carolina 6

Atlanta 27, New Orleans 25

Denver 30, Dallas 16

Baltimore 34, Minnesota 31, OT

Cleveland 41, Cincinnati 16

Jacksonville 9, Buffalo 6

Miami 17, Houston 9

N.Y. Giants 23, Las Vegas 16

L

Vikings’ offense bogs down again

Second-half regression costs Minnesota in loss to Ravens

BY CHRIS TOMASSON
St. Paul Pioneer Press

BALTIMORE — After they took a 14-point lead Sunday, it would be unfair to say that the Minnesota Vikings became too conservative. After all, they tried a fake punt in the third quarter, and it worked. Nevertheless, it was still another Minnesota meltdown, The Vikings lost 34-31 to the Baltimore Ravens at M&T Bank Stadium after leading 17-3 in the second quarter and 24-10 in the third.

One reason for the comeback was Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson leading an attack that wore down the Vikings’ depleted defense. That was understandable considering Minnesota was playing without defensive end Danielle Hunter, cornerback Patrick Peterson and nose tackle Michael Pierce, all of whom are injured, and safety Harrison Smith, who was put on the COVID-19 reserve list Sunday morning. Jackson threw for 266 yards and ran for 120 yards as the Ravens rolled up 500 yards of total offense.



Tommy Gilligan / USA Today Sports

Baltimore nose tackle Justin Ellis rushes past Minnesota fullback C.J. Ham as quarterback Kirk Cousins throws a pass Sunday at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore.

On offense, though, the Vikings (3-5) were only missing one starter — center Garrett Bradbury, who is on the COVID-19 reserve list — and replacement Mason Cole played well. And there were no issues when the Vikings scored touchdowns on each of their first two possessions.

After that, though, there again were issues. All season, Minnesota’s offense often has bogged

down after the first half. “It was a disappointing loss,” quarterback Kirk Cousins said. “Didn’t do enough offensively. Too many negative plays, too many three-and-outs, too many second-and-longs, too many third-and-longs. And we find ourselves where we are.”

Cousins completed 17 of 28 passes for 187 yards and two touchdowns. The first TD throw was 50 yards down the middle to Justin

Jefferson in the first quarter for a 7-3 lead. On Minnesota’s second possession, running back Dalvin Cook, who finished with 110 yards on 17 carries, ripped off a 66-yard run. That led to a 1-yard Cousins run in the second quarter for a 14-3 lead. The Vikings took a 17-3 lead with 1:25 left in the first half on a 36-yard field goal by Greg Joseph, which followed rookie Cam

Bynum, returning an interception 27 yards to the Baltimore 16. But Cousins was frustrated the Vikings could move the ball only one yard in three plays before settling for the field goal. “That’s on me,” said Cousins, who took the blame for missing Adam Thielen and Jefferson on passes. Cousins said it hurt that the Vikings failed to run the clock down on that drive, and the Ravens got a touchdown with 19 seconds in the half to cut the deficit to 17-10. In the second half and overtime, Minnesota’s offense regressed, although special teams were helpful. Rookie running back Kene Nwangwu returned the second-half kickoff 98 yards for a touchdown and a 24-10 lead. Nwangwu later in the third quarter ran nine yards for a first down on a fake punt, although the offense couldn’t capitalize on that. After the Ravens scored 21 unanswered points to turn a 24-10 deficit into a 31-24 lead, Cousins did lead Minnesota on a 75-yard drive and threw a 1-yard touchdown pass to

Thielen to tie the score 31-31 with 1:03 left in regulation. But that was about all the offense did after halftime. “We didn’t convert third downs in the second half, that was a big thing,” said Vikings coach Mike Zimmer. “We’ve got to do better there.” After converting 4 of 8 third downs in the first half, the Vikings converted just 1 of 6 the rest of the way. On their only overtime possession, they gained one yard on three plays, and the Ravens then won the game on a 36-yard field goal by Justin Tucker with 16 seconds left. “We need to be better possession in, possession out,” Cousins said. “If we could do that, I think we’d be able to put up a lot of points, a lot of production (and) ultimately to wins.” On Sunday, after Cook had rushed for 90 yards in the first half, he gained just 20 the rest of the game. “The guys in this locker room don’t point fingers,” Cook said. “We are not down on each other. We’re trying to find the result. We’ve got to get better each and every day. That’s our mindset.”

Sortland guts out fourth-place finish at state

BY ALEX VANDENHOUTEN
Post Bulletin

NORTHFIELD — Natasha Sortland could start to feel her legs give out in about the final 150 meters. She then looked back once hoping to see who was behind her to figure out how much she needed to push her body for the homestretch. With only a few meters to go, the Zumbrota-Mazeppa/Kenyon-Wanamingo distance runner’s body gave out on her and she collapsed to the ground. Yet, the junior got back up and willed her body across the finish line despite being noticeably woozy, to finish fourth with a time of 18 minutes and 50.01 seconds at Saturday’s Class AA girls cross country state championships at St. Olaf College. Sortland only lost one spot as she was in third coming down the final stretch. “I’m glad with my fourth place (finish),” Sortland said. “... My legs were getting shaky. I looked behind me and I thought I had it. I remember thinking like, I just need to get better.

But suddenly I just hit the ground and I don’t remember much after that.” Temperatures in the mid-60’s tested the runners throughout the day. Yet, Sortland didn’t chalk it up to the heat, as she has dealt with something like this before. A similar situation happened to her at the most recent state meet in 2019 when the then-freshman said she took the first mile too fast before finishing 78th. Sortland was in the medical tent for more than 20 minutes before receiving her fourth-place medal at the awards ceremony. Considering that and the stakes of the state meet, it was a heroic effort. “I’m just happy I got fourth,” Sortland said. “I’m also just glad my legs didn’t give out with 15 meters to go.” Red Wing eighth-grader Nora Hanson took 20th (19:33.82) in the same race to earn all-state honors. Plainview-Elgin-Millville finished 15th out of 16 teams with 336 points. The Bulldogs were led by MollyKate

Fagan’s 94th-place finish. Hutchinson sophomore Isabelle Schmitz won the meet (17:59.44), while St. Paul Highland Park took the team title with 61 points. CLASS AA BOYS Winona High finished 15th, led by junior Myles Rasmussen, who took 62nd (17:40.31). It was the Winhawks 16th state appearance. Red Wing senior Aaron Freier led the area boys in Class AA with a 56th place finish (17:33.70). Stewartville freshman Josh Langseth finished 76th (17:46.15), while Plainview-Elgin-Millville senior Baylor Hagen took 102nd (18:05.43). CLASS A GIRLS Sonja Semling admitted she wasn’t exactly thrilled with her time, but at the end of the day the Winona Cotter freshman earned all-state honors with a 16th place finish (19:55.08). The Ramblers finished 11th as a team with 245 points. After winning the Section 1A meet, Lake City put out a respectable showing on Saturday with three



Alex VandenHouten / Post Bulletin

Zumbrota-Mazeppa/Kenyon-Wanamingo’s Natasha Sortland nears the finish line during Saturday’s Class AA girls cross country state meet at St. Olaf College in Northfield. runners finishing in the top 43 to take eighth with 226 points. It was the Tigers 20th state meet appearance. Seventh-grader Olivia Yotter led the Tigers with a 29th place finish (20:11.60). Staples-Motley won the team title with 103 points over Perham (109). Murray County Central’s Amanda Overgaauw won the individual title by almost 40 seconds (18:09.13). CLASS A BOYS Tyler Rislov didn’t even have to be asked how he was feeling after finishing Saturday’s race. His smile said it all. The Lewiston-Altura/Rushford-Peterson/Houston senior capped his high school career in style with a sixth-place finish that saw him finish in 16:38.42. “I knew I had to go out with a good one,” Rislov said. “My goal was top 10 so I’m really excited right now.” Fresh off the program’s first section championship, LARPH finished 13th as a team with 230 points. Lourdes senior Kevin Turlington had dealt with a flu bug all week leading up to Saturday,

but he didn’t let that stop him from garnering all-state honors with a 12th-place finish (16:54.59). As a team, the Eagles placed 12th with 229 points. CLASS AAA Century freshman Jazzlyn Hanenberger finished 52nd (19:38.42), while eighth-grader Clara Rock placed 83rd (20:07.14) in the first-ever Class AAA girls cross country state meet. Edina won the meet with 75 points, while St. Michael-Albertville’s Ali Weimer won the individual title by 15 seconds (17:42.81). Mayo sophomore Ryan Gwaltney placed 96th (17:06.78) and John Marshall senior Garret Eick finished 119th (17:22.89) in the first-ever Class AAA boys cross country state race. Minnetonka junior Nick Gilles took home the individual title (15:22.81), while Wayzata won the team title with 96 points, followed by Minneapolis Southwest (118). For more on the state cross country meets, visit Post-Bulletin.com/Sports/Cross-Country

Larson clinches NASCAR Cup Series title in Phoenix

Field Level Media

AVONDALE, Ariz. — Kyle Larson’s 2020 season ended in shame. His 2021 season ended in glory. Larson won Sunday’s NASCAR Cup Series Championship at Phoenix Raceway and the season title that went along with that victory. “I cannot believe it,” Larson said after wiping a torrent of tears from his face, crawling out of his car, hugging his crew members and taking a big drink from his in-car water bottle. “So cool. I cannot believe it.” The victory was the Hendrick Motorsports driver’s 10th of the season and handed him his first Cup championship. It came in his first career Championship 4 race.

In getting the victory, Larson led a race-best 107 laps. The winning effort got a major assist from Larson’s pit crew when it moved him from fourth to first during a yellow-flag stop with 30 laps to go. “There were so many points in this race where I didn’t think we were going to win,” he said. “And without my pit crew on that last stop, we would not be standing right here.” Finishing second in the race and the championship was Martin Truex Jr. of Joe Gibbs Racing. Truex, who won the 2017 championship, finished .398 seconds behind. “Second hurts. I’m not going to lie,” Truex said. “Especially with the car we had and the job the guys did. But that’s racing, as they say. Sometimes you’re just not on the right end of things.

“Gosh, second sucks. I hate it.” Third in the race and championship was Truex’s teammate, Denny Hamlin, who was looking for his first Cup championship. “I really liked where we were with about 25 to go,” Hamlin said. “Just exceptional on the long run. “Just a really good year. A really, really good year. It just didn’t pan out. We needed it to go green those last laps and it didn’t.” Fifth in the race and fourth in the championship was 2020 champion Chase Elliott of the Hendrick team. “I thought we brought a really good car and did a lot of things that we were wanting it to do today. It just didn’t work out,” Elliott said. “We’ll be back stronger next year and try to give them a run.”

Ryan Blaney of Team Penske, not a member of the Championship 4, finished fourth. The winning move for Larson may have come on Saturday when he won the pole and the No. 1 pit stall that came with it. He was running fourth when, with 30 laps to go, a caution flag waved. When the cars returned to the track from the pits, Larson had the lead. From there, he held off Truex, who was cutting into the lead over the final laps. For the first seven seasons in the Cup Series, Larson was a mid-level competitor, winning just six races during that time. Then, four races into the 2020 season, the California native was fired by the Chip Ganassi Racing team for which he had driven all those years, after he uttered a racist

slur into an open microphone during a televised iRacing event. Team owner Rick Hendrick, however, took a chance on Larson and the result has been stunning. In addition to the double-digit wins, Larson piled up 20 top-five and 26 top-10 finishes. “We’ve always known he’s a wheelman,” Hendrick said. “He deserves this and what a year, man.” “I didn’t even think I would be racing a Cup car a year and a half ago,” Larson said. “And to win a championship is crazy.” Elliott, 25, was looking to become the youngest driver to win back-to-back Cup championships and the 11th driver overall to do it. The last driver to win two or more titles in a row was Jimmie Johnson, who won five in a row between 2006 and 2010.

Mayo grad Holtan named MIAC Player of the Year



LOCAL SPORTS NOTEBOOK
Guy N. Limbeck

Rochester's **Kate Holtan** has been named the volleyball Player of the Year in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

Holtan, a senior, is a standout at Gustavus Adolphus University in St. Peter.

The 5-foot-8 outside hitter closed the regular season leading the MIAC with 409 kills and 4.01 kills per set. She finished the season with 15 straight matches with

10 or more kills, and eclipsed 20 kills in five matches this season.

Holtan, a Mayo High School grad, also excels on defense. She collected 283 digs and posted 13 double-doubles during the regular season. She recorded her 1,000th career dig early in the season. She ranked fourth in the MIAC in both digs and ace serves (42).

Heading into postseason play, Holtan had 1,614 career kills, which was third in Gustavus history. She

was first in kills per set with 3.64. She is sixth in all-time digs at Gustavus with 1,233.

Gustavus won the MIAC title with a 10-1 record this season and was 24-5 heading into postseason play.

The Rochester Honkers have named **Andrew Urbistondo** as their manager for the upcoming 2022 summer season.

The 26-year-old Urbistondo currently serves as an assistant coach at San Joaquin Delta College, a junior college that helped shape recent Honkers players like **Jackson Forbes**, **Carson Stevens**, **Zach Meddings** and **Nico Regino**. Urbistondo also fills the role of hitting and infielder

coordinator for the Mustangs, and plays a key role in recruiting.

Urbistondo helped San Joaquin Delta to a California Community College Athletic Association title in 2018. He is also a former junior college player as a middle infielder with Delta (2012-2014) and Bryan College (2014-2016).

"I'm a firm believer that the community is just as important as the on-field operations," Urbistondo said. "My goal in life has always been to give back just as much as anyone or anywhere has given me. Since the amazing community in Rochester takes the time to come support us, we want to show the same support back by building a connection with them

off of the field."

Kyle Hickey of Rochester is a member of the Central Oklahoma men's golf team and he is a having a strong fall season.

Hickey, a 2019 Lourdes grad, is in his first season at Central Oklahoma, an NCAA Division II school located in Edmond, Okla. A year ago he played junior college golf at Iowa Western and helped the team place eighth in the NJCAA National Tournament.

The junior recently won the 54-hole FHSU Tiger Classic in Kansas by a stroke with a 3-over-par score. For his effort, Hickey was named the MIAA Men's Golf Athlete of the Week.

Earlier this season, he had placed second overall in his second meet with Central Oklahoma at the Missouri Western Holiday Inn Express Invitational.

Hickey transferred to Central Oklahoma this fall from Iowa Western, following new head men's golf coach **Derrick Thompson**.

Hickey has played in three of Central Oklahoma's five tournaments this fall. Since cracking the lineup, he leads the team with a 72.5 stroke average per 18 holes with a low round of 68.

Guy N. Limbeck is a sports writer for the Post Bulletin. His Local Notebook appears each Tuesday. He can be reached at glimbeck@post-bulletin.com

Bench Gophers QB Tanner Morgan? You're talking crazy

MINNEAPOLIS

The University of Minnesota still has a chance to do something special this season, and quarterback Tanner Morgan, the fifth-year senior, has proven he can win big games for Minnesota.

It was all right there for the Gophers, an open road to a Big Ten West division championship and its first piece of conference hardware since 1967. It may no longer feel like that after Saturday's 14-6 loss to Illinois at Huntington Bank Stadium, but it still is.

Of course Minnesota isn't the only team with a shot at the division crown.

"Everything's in front of us but there are four teams in the league with everything in front of them," Minnesota coach P.J. Fleck pointed out. "We'll see how it goes. We've got 21 days. It's going to be a 21-game sprint, one game at a time."

The Gophers' slate is as difficult as any and harder than most, starting with No. 19 Iowa next Saturday in Iowa City and ending with a home game against Wisconsin. In between comes Indiana in Bloomington, and the Gophers (6-3 overall, 4-2 Big Ten) likely will have to run the table to earn a date in the Big Ten Championship on Dec. 4 in Indianapolis.

So, maybe now isn't the best time to bench the fifth-year senior quarterback, an idea that first surfaced after the Gophers' 14-10 loss



JOHN SHIPLEY

to Bowling Green on Sept. 25. Fleck remains uninclined. Morgan, the coach said Saturday, remains the Gophers' best chance to win.

"Absolutely," he said. "That's without question."

Morgan wasn't very good on Saturday, completing 15 of 28 passes for 180 yards and a rushing touchdown while throwing two interceptions, and neither he nor Fleck tried to gloss over it.

"Inconsistent," Fleck said.

"I have to be way better," Morgan said. "All of that starts with me."

Morgan doesn't have a huge arm, and he's not mobile, and he's slow. He won't win the Davey O'Brien Award. But he's been a good quarterback for Minnesota, leading the Gophers to their 11-2 season in 2019, and a 4-1 start to the Big Ten season after what many suspected was a season-killing loss to Bowling Green.

Last month.

"He controlled and managed and ran the offense incredibly well," Fleck said.

As for Saturday's loss, Fleck added, "There's a lot of things that go into it."

Indeed. Morgan was sacked six times by a fast, athletic Illinois team that had the



University of Minnesota quarterback Tanner Morgan runs the ball against Illinois on Saturday at Huntington Bank Stadium in Minneapolis.

advantage of a 14-0 lead after its first two drives. After rendering the Gophers' run game irrelevant — 35 attempts, 89 net yards — the Illini pinned their ears back and aimed at the backfield, finishing with nine total tackles for losses.

Minnesota was only penalized four times, but two were false starts and two were holding calls. The receivers weren't exactly creating space, and top wideout Chris Autman-Bell was lost to injury in the third quarter. Matthew Trickett missed a 45-yard field goal just

before the half, and when Morgan scored on a 1-yard run on fourth-and-goal in the fourth quarter, Trickett missed the PAT.

So, there was a lot going on, and outside of a defense that got its act together after giving up 14 quick points, none of it was good. Coaches like to say there is no such thing as a bad win; maybe so, but there are definitely bad losses. This was one of them.

Now instead of riding a five-game winning streak and basking in a week of hype for a mammoth game at Iowa, the Gophers will prepare

for their biggest game of the season under the cloud of apathy that comes so easily for Gophers football fans. Fleck has resurrected Minnesota's program, but he's 1-7 against Iowa and Wisconsin. Virtually no one believes the Gophers will beat Iowa to keep alive the possibility of a season finale against Wisconsin with all the chips on the table.

They might not — the Gophers haven't won in Iowa City since 1999 — but Morgan gives them their best shot, and it's the coaching staff's job to put him in position

to do it. It didn't on Saturday.

Is it possible backup Zack Annexstad could come in and give the offense some juice, or at least some urgency? Yeah, it's possible, but is it likely?

If the Gophers are to finish their 21-day sprint with a Big Ten West title, Morgan will have to play better than he did on Saturday, but he has played better. We've seen it. To start a new quarterback now is crazy; maybe not sign-Doug-Flutie-a-week-before-the-NFC-Championship crazy, but crazy nonetheless.

Rodgers-less Packers lose their winning streak against Chiefs

Field Level Media

Patrick Mahomes overcame a rocky performance, passing for just 166 yards and one touchdown, and the host Kansas City Chiefs edged the Green Bay Packers 13-7 on Sunday in what was supposed to be a matchup of two of the NFL's best quarterbacks.

But the loss of quarterback Aaron Rodgers after he tested positive for COVID-19 proved costly for the Packers (7-2), who lacked offensive consistency and had their seven-game winning streak snapped.

Packers QB Jordan Love, making his first NFL start, often got saddled with poor field position as the Chiefs

(5-4) overcame their offensive ineffectiveness with well-placed punts by Tommy Townsend.

Love passed for 190 yards, going 19 of 34, though the Packers went only 2-for-12 on third-down plays. Love completed his first nine attempts of the second half, and after an interception by the Chiefs' L'Jarius Sneed, he connected with Allen Lazard for a 20-yard touchdown pass with 4:54 remaining to make it 13-7.

The Packers could not get the ball back, however, exhausting their timeouts before Mahomes fired a 13-yard strike to Tyreek Hill on third-and-10 from the Green Bay 48 to seal the outcome.

Mahomes went just 20 of 37 as Kansas City seemed reluctant to rely on a decent run game in an effort to thaw out their passer. The Chiefs logged four three-and-outs, exceeding their season total (three).

Darrel Williams rushed for 70 yards on 19 carries. After coming in with a league-high 19 giveaways, the Chiefs committed no turnovers while totaling only 237 yards.

Special teams cost Green Bay in the first half. Mason Crosby missed a field goal and had another blocked. Then, a punt that bounded off the foot of Malik Taylor was recovered by Chris Lammons, setting up Kansas City for an easy

24-yard field goal by Harrison Butker with 1:51 left.

Butker tacked on a 55-yarder with one second remaining in the half after the Packers stalled on downs and gave the Chiefs the ball at the Green Bay 38 with 27 seconds left.

Mahomes engineered a methodical 15-play touchdown drive after Love and Green Bay went three-and-out on their first possession. Williams gained 33 yards on the 64-yard march, which ended with a 1-yard strike to Travis Kelce.

The Chiefs recorded five first downs on the drive before finishing with just 14.

Rodgers was in the spotlight all week

leading up to the game, after his positive test became public. He defended his decision not to get vaccinated and blasted the "shaming cancel society" for the criticism he's received.

Appearing on the "Pat McAfee Show" last Friday, Rodgers said being vaccinated doesn't make anyone less likely to get or spread the virus and that he is entitled to "bodily autonomy" to decide about the vaccine.

"I realize I'm in the crosshairs of the woke mob right now," Rodgers said. "So before my final nail gets put in my cancel culture casket, I would like to set the record straight on so many of the blatant lies that are out there about myself. I tested

for COVID over 300 times before testing for possible positive and I probably got it from a vaccinated player."

He had a lengthy, mostly one-sided conversation on the show, stating why he has refused the vaccine and sharing his opinion that the NFL's protocols aimed at keeping personnel safe aren't working and aren't rooted in science.

He also said his conversation with a league doctor produced a factual error about the vaccine — that it would prevent all spread.

According to Pro Football Talk, the NFL says no such conversation took place, or even could have taken place.