

SPORTS



Minnesota Vikings

Defense ready to play for real

B2

QUICK HITS

L-BF football team loses season opener

The Littlefork-Big Falls football team opened the season Friday night by being shut out at South Ridge, 22-0.

After a scoreless first quarter, South Ridge took an 8-0 lead at halftime with a safety and a two-yard touch-down run, after which the two-point conversion failed.

South Ridge added two more touchdown runs in the second half from a yard and two yards away with only one of the two-point conversions being successful.

The Vikings were only able to generate 51 yards of offense, all on the ground, with Peter Franz rushing for a team-high 23 yards on four carries.

Both passes L-BF's Rylan Henrickson threw were incomplete.

The 0-1 Vikings return to action at 7 p.m. Friday when the host Bigfork, which won its season opener over Silver Bay, 41-22.

HOF nominations for 2015 being accepted

International Falls sports fans who want to submit nominations for possible induction next year into the Bronco Athletic Hall of Fame have just under a month remaining to do so.

The group involved with forming the Hall of Fame is planning for the fourth year in a row to honor inductees nominated as athletes, coaches/directors/advisors, at-large members or teams.

Nominations previously submitted but not selected in the first three groups of inductees remain in consideration for the future.

To have new nominations considered for the 2015 induction class, Bronco sports fans must submit them by Oct. 1 to the Hall of Fame in care of Falls athletic director Beth Sherman. The nomination form is available on the school district's website at: <http://www.isd361.k12.mn.us/schools/fhs/sports/nominationformhalloffame.pdf>

The 2015 Hall of Fame induction banquet is scheduled for the evening of April 18 at the AmericInn in International Falls.

Draper MCAC North POW on defense

Rainy River Community College Libero Jasmine Draper has been named the Minnesota College Athletic Conference Northern Division's Defensive Player of the Week.

Draper, a freshman from Williams, recorded 50 digs last week, including 29 in the match loss to Itasca.

In 17 games this season, Draper has 92 digs and leads the MCAC North with 5.41 digs per game.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



From left, Eveleth-Gilbert's Sam Roberts rolls out to pass while being pursued by the Broncos' Max Vergeldt (73) in Friday night's game at Sports Stadium.

Golden Bears devour Broncos in opener

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

What a difference a year made.

After winning last year's season opener on the road by 50 points, the International Falls football team played the same team Friday night at home to open the 2014 season and lost by three touchdowns.

The Broncos trailed by only a point early in the second quarter before falling in a non-conference game to Eveleth-Gilbert, 28-7, at Sports Stadium.

"(The Golden Bears) played the opposite of how they did last year," said Falls head coach Glen Anderson, who was an assistant with the Broncos last year before taking over

the team in 2014. "Last year they put the ball on the ground quite a bit.... (Friday night), they didn't make those mistakes. We made some of those mistakes. In general, I think we were beat by a very, very good, very sharp Eveleth team."

The Falls lost three of its four fumbles, while the Golden Bears' single fumble didn't result in a turnover. Both teams had one interception.

Eveleth-Gilbert scored first with 1:38 left in the first quarter on a 14-yard pass from Sam Roberts to Charlie Ryan. Roberts then passed to Mark Tikkanen for the two-point conversion to extend the Golden Bears' lead to 8-0.

On the ensuing kick-

off, Ethan Phung put the Broncos in scoring position when he returned the ball 84 yards to Eveleth-Gilbert's six-yard line. The Falls, which advanced the ball to the one-yard line to close out the first 12 minutes, opened the second quarter with a fourth-and-goal play that Lane Skallman ran into the end zone. Riley Nemec kicked the extra point to cut the Golden Bears' lead to 8-7.

Light rain began to fall as the second quarter progressed. Eveleth-Gilbert extended its lead with long running plays capped off with a 37-yard touchdown run by Cooper Dosan for a 14-7 advantage.

The Golden Bears ended up with 198 yards rushing, compared to the Broncos'



At left, the Broncos' Tyler Coffield (34) runs with the football while being pursued by Eveleth-Gilbert's Charlie Ryan (85) as the Falls' Jakob Eide (15) and Nick Hedtke (25) look on in Friday night's game at Sports Stadium.

90 yards on the ground. The Golden Bears also had 54 passing yards and 252 yards of total offense. The

Football to B2 ➤

CROSS COUNTRY

Bronco girls seek return trip to state

FHS boys are developing depth

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

Though the International Falls girls cross country team has graduated three of its top-five runners on last year's state-qualifying squad, one of team goals in 2014 is to return to the Class A State Meet for the fourth year in a row.

The Broncos, who finished 15th at state last year, have graduated Sydney Raboin, Amy Auran and Lexi Owen. Raboin placed ninth at last year's Section 7A Meet, while Auran was an individual state qualifier her freshman season in 2010. Raboin and Auran were both part of the section runner-up teams that qualified for state in each of the last three years.

"One of our weaknesses (in 2014) will be our lack of depth at the varsity level," said longtime head coach Paul Hjelle.

However, Hjelle also notes the Falls has its top runner back from last year, sophomore Lexi Erickson, who placed third individually at the Section 7A Meet and 30th at state in 2013. In the first meet of 2014 at the Virginia Invite, Erickson finished second.

Others returning with varsity experience running at state include senior captain Jenna Anderson, sophomore Lexi Edwards and eighth-grader Faith Black.

In addition to seeking a return trip to state, Hjelle said the team goals this season include winning meets and having more girls finish in the top 20 at meets.

Hjelle said he is looking forward this season to the "battles between the girls at meets and the improvements from beginning to the end."

He said the teams to watch out for this season include South Ridge, Esko, Mesabi East and Ely.

BRONCO BOYS BRING SENIOR EXPERIENCE

Falls' boys team returns the bulk of its runners with the key graduation loss being Wyatt Ulrich, who was one of the Broncos' top finishers and placed 43rd individually in Section 7A last year.

The Falls, which finished 11th in the Section 7A team standings and also had no individual state qualifiers in 2013, returns senior Cole Tatsak, who finished 39th at the section meet, and freshman John Cowman, who placed 65th in Section 7A.

Hjelle said the strengths of this year's boys team include having "five experi-

enced seniors" and "lots of younger potential" as part of a "growing team with depth."

However, Hjelle also noted that aside from Tatsak and Cowman, the Bronco boys lack "strong third, fourth and fifth runners."

"Everybody else on the team is very equal, making it a battle everyday," he said.

Hjelle said he is the most concerned this season about "not be able to compete with the top teams" and is looking forward to "growing closer as a team and improving throughout the year."

He said the teams to watch out for this year include "all of them," particularly Mesabi East and Esko.

The Broncos' next meet is Thursday at Roseau. Their only home meet this season will be Oct. 9 when they host the Hial Pike Invitational at the Falls Country Club.

The Broncos' Lexi Erickson (119), shown competing in last Thursday's Virginia Invite, where she placed second, returns this year as Falls' top girls runner.



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SPORTS SCHEDULE

- Today's games
- Women's volleyball
- Mesabi Range at RRCC, 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday's games
- Cross country
- I. Falls at Roseau, 4 p.m.
- Girls swimming/diving
- Eveleth-Gilbert at I. Falls, 4:30 p.m.
- Girls volleyball
- L-BF at Northland, 7 p.m.
- Friday's games
- Women's volleyball
- RRCC at Itasca, 6:30 p.m.
- Football
- Cloquet at I. Falls, 7 p.m.
- Bigfork at L-BF, 7 p.m.