

SPORTS



Who is...
Brooke Millerbernd, Viking girls basketball senior forward, is featured

B2

QUICK HITS

Viking boys hoops team downs the Greenway Raiders

The Littlefork-Big Falls boys basketball team is entering the new year 2-3 after winning Thursday night at Greenway, 76-55.

L-BF head coach Jeff Maish said the Vikings trailed 10-1 to start the game, but then were able to work the ball inside and make their free throws, taking a 32-27 half-time lead.

Maish said L-BF shot 15-18 from the charity stripe in the first 18 minutes, in which senior center Jacob Franz shot 7-7.

“Jacob was the key to keep us in the first half,” said Maish, who also noted the team played well on defense Thursday night.

In the second half, Maish said the Vikings shot better.

L-BF had three players score in double figures led by Rylan Henrikson with 25 points, followed by Taylor DeLack with 20 and Franz with 15. DeLack made three 3-pointers, while Henrikson sank two shots from behind the arc.

L-BF’s next game will be Jan. 3 at Mountain Iron-Buhl.

FHS boys swimmers lose dual meet to E-G

The International Falls boys swimming and diving team competed in its second road dual meet in two days on Tuesday and lost to Eveleth-Gilbert, 49-32.

Broncos head coach Dawnn Taylor said the meet went well considering the boys were tired after having competed in their first meet of the season on Monday.

Taylor also noted she changed around a couple of swimmers in the events they competed, while new swimmers on the team are already showing improvement in their times.

The Golden Bears swam for exhibition purposes only in the final three varsity events — the 100-yard backstroke, 100 breaststroke and 400 freestyle relay — after having built up a large enough lead earlier in the meet to win the dual.

In the contested races, Falls’ only top finish came from senior Levi Lucy, who won the 160 individual medley (2:00.63).

Lucy also placed runner-up in the 100 butterfly (1:12.71) and joined Ian Ducharme, Alex Belanger and Ed Serrano in finishing second in the 160 freestyle relay (1:30.69).

The Broncos’ other runner-up finish in the contested races came from Marcus Mindl in the 200 freestyle (2:46.99).

The Falls then had a triangular meet Friday at Virginia.

Elk’s Hoop Shoot

The Elk’s Hoop Shoot will be held Jan. 4 in the Falls High School gym with registration beginning that day at 8:30 a.m. and the Hoop Shoot starting at 9 a.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From right, the Broncos’ Teagan Anderson (23) looks to shoot the ball inside while being guarded by Bemidji’s Maura Chadwick (11) in Thursday night’s game in the Falls High School gym.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Vikings tame Bears, conquer Greenway

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Littlefork-Big Falls girls basketball team is entering the new year 5-1 after winning two games this week.

On Tuesday night, the Vikings won big in a road game at Lake of the Woods, 63-24.

L-BF head coach John Larson said the Vikings took a 36-9 lead at halftime and were able to have the reserve players see action in the second half.

Ten L-BF players scored led by Kaylee Kennedy with



Brooke Millerbernd

L-BF 64, GREENWAY 31

The Vikings led by only four points at halftime Thursday night when they ended up winning at home over Greenway, 64-31.

Larson said L-BF was able to convert a 20-16 half-

14 points, while Brooke Millerbernd also scored in double figures with 10 points.

Four Vikings scored in double figures led by Millerbernd with 20 points, followed by Breann Larson with 12, Kennedy with 11 and Abby Thompson with 10. Millerbernd also hauled in more than 10 rebounds to record a double-double.

L-BF’s next game will be Jan. 6 at Mesabi East.

2014 BRONCO FOOTBALL CAPTAINS



From left, the 2014 Bronco football captains named at the football banquet held earlier this month include Kameron Koerbitz, Nehemiah Olson and Ben Humbert.

Ben Gordon records hat trick in Oilers’ win

In the Tulsa Oilers’ 6-4 win over the Brampton Beast on Dec. 12, Oilers forward Ben Gordon of International Falls scored a natural hat trick in the first period with three goals on three shots in the span of just over 3 minutes.

Gordon, Tulsa’s second-leading scorer in 2012-13, redirected a pass from Ryan Menei for his first

goal of the night and followed that with a wrist shot from the circle for his second goal of the game.

He finished off the hat trick by dragging the puck across the Brampton



Ben Gordon

crease and roofing a backhand into the net. The 28-year old winger recorded his first multi-goal game as an Oiler and finished the night with five points after chipping in a pair of assists.

Gordon’s 3-goal night is the second Oilers hat trick of the season. Adam Pleskach found the net four times on Nov. 23 in Tulsa’s 10-8 win at Allen.

Bemidji cuts down Broncos

Falls drops to 4-1

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

After starting off the season with four victories, the International Falls girls basketball team picked up its first loss Thursday night by dropping a 70-54 decision at home to Bemidji.

“(The Lumberjacks) were probably a little more athletic than we were and I guess that gave us some problems,” said Broncos head coach Shawn Gilbert.

The Falls, which was without starting senior guard Lexi Owen – whom Gilbert noted was out with the flu – trailed from the first minute of the game until the final buzzer. Turnovers plagued the Broncos throughout the contest as they first fell behind by double digits with 10:25 to play in the first half when Bemidji junior forward Kelsey Olson completed a 3-point play from the charity strip to give the Lumberjacks a 19-7 lead.

“(Being without Lexi Owen) did affect our rotation a little bit – usually we have three guards rotating and to take her out maybe messed us up a little bit,” Gilbert said. “But still the difference in the game is Bemidji played a lot better than we did (Thursday night).”

The Falls waged a comeback midway in the first half when the Broncos cut the lead to 21-18 on a 3-pointer by Teagan Anderson. However, the Falls then was only able to score two more points in the final 7 minutes of the first half and trailed at intermission, 31-22.

Fouls limited the playing time in the second half for some of the Broncos, who accumulated 28 fouls with three starters – Anderson, Shelby Wolden and Emma Gilbert – fouling out of the game and another starter – Cassie Tomczak – ending up with four fouls.

Bemidji extended its lead in the second half as three Lumberjack players ended up in double figures led by

Maura Chadwick with 19 points, followed by Cheyenne Woods and Olson with 17 points apiece.

Anderson led the Broncos in scoring with 13 points, while Maddie Filipiak was the only other Falls player to score in double figures with 10 points.

The Falls, which dropped to 4-1 on the season, returns to action next Thursday when the Broncos face Eveleth-Gilbert to open the three-day Hibbing Tournament.

Bemidji 70, I. Falls 54
Bemidji 31 39 – 70
I. Falls 22 32 – 54

Bemidji: Maura Chadwick 8, Alexa Greendahl 19, Kelsey Olson 17, Cheyenne Woods 17, Alissa Sage-dahl 3, Casey Palmer 4, Kandis LaRose 2. 3-pointers: Woods 3, Olson 2. Free throws: 23-28. Fouls: 20. Fouled out: Palmer.

I. Falls: Maddie Filipiak 10, Shelby Wolden 3, Madeline Dahle 4, Cassie Tomczak 8, Teagan Anderson 13, Janet Humbert 2, Jena Sullivan 7, Emma Gilbert 5. Bianca Carlson 2. 3-pointers: Tomczak 2, Anderson 2, Filipiak. Free throws: 17-29. Fouls: 28. Fouled out: Wolden, Anderson, Gilbert.

Cassel has helped Jennings, Vikings find their rhythm

EDEN PRAIRIE (AP) — Greg Jennings wanted to make sure he knew what he was getting into before he joined the Minnesota Vikings, so he sat down and studied film of Christian Ponder.

Jennings liked the trailer enough to sign up for the entire movie. The ending of this season was spoiled a long time ago, though. Critics have already begun to look ahead to the sequel. Maybe starring Matt Cassel?

“I would love to see Matt back. He’s a great guy. He’s a great leader,” Jennings said.

Jennings doesn’t have to rave about Cassel. He can just point to his production.

“I respect how Greg works. I like his football mind, and we have a lot in common in terms of where we are in life. So there’s a combination of things why we get along so well,” Cassel said.

Jennings has played in 13 games in his first season with the Vikings. He’s been targeted 94 times and has caught 59 passes for 733 yards and four touchdowns, and without Cassel throwing him the ball he’d be barely registering in the box scores.

Cassel has started four games: Sept. 29 against Pittsburgh, Oct. 13 against Carolina, Dec. 8 at Baltimore and last Sunday against Philadelphia. He took over late in the second quarter on Dec. 1 against Chicago. Over those nine halves, Jennings has been targeted 44 times. He has 31 catches for 418 yards and all four of his scores this year.

In the remaining 17 halves he’s been on the field, Jennings has been targeted 50 times. He has 28 catches for 315 yards and no touchdowns.

“Some quarterbacks see things differently,” Jennings said. “I’ve never played the position so I can’t say what one quarterback sees vs. what another quarterback sees. All I know is what I do never changes.”

Cassel and Jennings were the two most important free agents the Vikings signed this year. They immediately struck a



Matt Cassel



Greg Jennings

friendship and developed a mutual sense of trust.

“We were kind of on the same level when it comes to what we see and what we’re expecting the defense to do. ... That’s why you see us rhythm up,” Jennings said.

Now that the Vikings have decided neither Ponder nor Josh Freeman is who they want to run their offense for the years to come, Cassel could be back as the starter for 2014 while general manager Rick Spielman pores over the prospects in the draft for the next quarterback of the future.

Cassel has one season left on his contract. Both he and the team can opt out of the final year.

“We’ve got two games to go and when you start worrying about and thinking about that stuff, I think it distracts you,” Cassel said. “For me, there’s going to be a time and a place for me to sit down with my wife, my family and discuss all that stuff. But right now is not that time.”

At 31, with five prior seasons as an NFL starter, Cassel’s experience has stood out. Where he’s made the biggest impact, though, is his willingness to and effectiveness at throwing deep. With Jennings, Cordarrelle Patterson and Jerome Simpson, there’s enough here to make this a productive passing team with the right quarterback. Cassel has been able to read defenses and find the open receivers under pressure far more effectively than Ponder did.

“I’d like to say we’re confident in whoever plays quarterback, but we’ve been a lot with Cassel the past couple of weeks and he’s been doing a great job. You have to be very confident in a guy who’s playing at a high level like he is,” wide receiver Jarius Wright said.