

SPORTS



Who is...
Stephanie Christianson, Bronco girls volleyball back row player, is featured

B2

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Vikings trail big early, lose close late to MI-B

L-BF enters playoffs 3-5

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

Despite doing all the scoring in the final 24 minutes, a three-touchdown deficit after the first half was too much for the Littlefork-Big Falls football team to overcome Wednesday night.

The Vikings lost their regular-season finale on the road against Mountain Iron-Buhl, 21-14.

“We had to fight back. It was an uphill battle,” said L-BF head coach Derek Bilben. “We made too many mistakes. We just made one mistake after another and it showed. We didn’t come to play ball (Wednesday night).”

Both teams went into the game with 3-4 records with the winner in line to receive the higher seed in the Section 7 nine-man playoffs. The Rangers received the No. 5 seed and will open the postseason Tuesday at No. 4-seeded Bigfork. The Vikings picked up the No. 6 seed



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From left, Rangers quarterback Archie Winans (3) eludes being tackled by the Vikings’ Jaydon Thompson (18) and Rylan Henrickson in Wednesday night’s game at Mountain Iron.

and will open the playoffs on the road against No. 3-seeded Kelliher/Northome.

A defensive stop with time running out in the first half would have had

L-BF trailing 15-0 at intermission. However, MI-B used clock-stopping spikes in the final seconds by quarterback Archie Winans to drive the ball near the goal line, which Ryan

Mogenson ran across from a yard away as time expired to give the Rangers a 21-0 lead at halftime.

“All three (MI-B) touchdowns were all the same,” Bilben said. “We created

our own mess and it was completely mistakes by us that shouldn’t have happened. They’re all mental mistakes. We weren’t doing our jobs.”

The Vikings got onto

the scoreboard with 2:14 left in the third quarter when Rylan Henrickson ran into the end zone from 19 yards away. Darian Erickson then ran in the two-point conversion to cut the Rangers’ lead to 21-8.

After stopping MI-B on downs late in the fourth quarter, L-BF scored again with 2:09 to play when Henrickson took a pass from Quin Vork 85 yards for a touchdown.

Henrickson led the Vikings in both rushing – running 16 times for 92 yards – and receiving – catching both of Vork’s passes for 90 yards.

After Vork’s pass for the two-point conversion failed late in the game, L-BF’s onside kick attempt was recovered by the Rangers, who then ran out the clock.

MI-B 21, L-BF 14
L-BF 0 0 8 6 – 14
MI-B 8 13 0 0 – 21
Team statistics: L-BF: 199 yards rushing, 90 passing, 289 total.
Rushing: L-BF: Darian Erickson, 10-33; Rylan Henrickson, 16-92, 1 TD; Peter Franz, 16-74.
Passing: L-BF: Quin Vork, 2-2, 90 yards, 1 TD.
Receiving: L-BF: Henrickson: 2-90, 1 TD.

CROSS COUNTRY

Bronco girls 4th, boys 8th in IRC Meet

Lexi Erickson, John Cowman All-Conference

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The International Falls cross country teams competed Tuesday in the Iron Range Conference Meet when two runners placed in the top 15 to receive All-Conference honors.

In the girls competition, a fifth-place finish by sophomore Lexi Erickson paced the Broncos to placing fourth out nine teams.

Grand Rapids had the top score with 62 points, followed by Ely (75), Mesabi East (86), the Falls (101) and Hibbing (105) rounding out the top five.

Erickson’s time of 16 minutes, 27.6 seconds, on the 4,000-meter course was 45.7 seconds behind the top finish of Greenway/Nashwauk-Keewatin sophomore Ellyssa Peterson.

Two other Falls runners finished in the top 20. Senior captain Jenna Anderson came in 17th in 17:33.1, while Avery Sivonen placed 20th in 17:51.9.

The other two Bronco runners whose finishes counted toward the team total included: Faith Black, 24th in 18:27.5; and Lexi Edwards, 35th in 19:08.1.

FHS BOYS EIGHTH

In the boys competition, the Broncos had a team score of 203 for eighth place.

Hibbing won the team title at 45, followed by Eveleth-Gilbert (53), Mesabi East (93), Grand Rapids (101) and Ely (128) in the top five.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

At center, the Broncos’ John Cowman competes between runners from Eveleth-Gilbert in Hibbing at Tuesday’s Iron Range Conference Meet. Cowman placed 14th in 18 minutes, 48.5 seconds, and earned All-Conference honors.

Falls freshman John Cowman earned All-Conference honors by placing 14th on the 5,000-meter course in 18:48.5.

“John and Lexi have worked extremely hard this season,” said Broncos head coach Paul Hjelle. “This is an accomplishment that they should feel good about. Both have been leaders at practices, meets and at school.”

Eveleth-Gilbert’s Reed Melicher had the top time of 17:00.3.

The other four Bronco boys whose finishes

counted toward the team total include: Ben Erickson, 43rd in 20:10.6; Joe Glowack, 49th in 20:15.9; Brock O’Loughlin, 58th in 20:53.2; and Jared Hunter, 66th in 21:43.4.

The Falls next competes in the Section 7A Meet being held Oct. 23 in Cloquet.

Iron Range Conference Meet GIRLS

Team scores: Grand Rapids 62, Ely 75, Mesabi East 86, International Falls 101, Hibbing 105, Greenway/Nashwauk-Keewatin 114, Eveleth-Gilbert 165, Deer River/Northland 178, Virginia 219.

Top individual: Ellyssa Peterson, Greenway/Nashwauk-Keewatin,

16:41.9.

International Falls runners: 5. Lexi Erickson, 16:27.6; 17. Jenna Anderson, 17:33.1; 20. Avery Sivonen, 17:51.9; 24. Faith Black, 18:27.5; 35. Lexi Edwards, 19:08.1; 46. Grace Gilbert, 20:02.

BOYS

Team scores: Hibbing 45, Eveleth-Gilbert 53, Mesabi East 93, Grand Rapids 101, Ely 128, Greenway/Nashwauk-Keewatin 134, Virginia 147, International Falls 203, Mountain Iron-Buhl 252.

Top individual: Reed Melicher, Eveleth-Gilbert, 17:00.3.

International Falls runners: 14. John Cowman, 18:48.5, 43. Ben Erickson, 20:10.6; 49. Joe Glowack, 20:15.9; 58. Brock O’Loughlin, 20:53.2; 66. Jared Hunter, 21:43.4; 68. Gary Harala, 21:49.5; 70. Billy Brokaw, 21:59.9.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Broncos lead early, then shut out in second half

FHS enters playoffs 0-8

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The most points scored in the first half this season by the International Falls football team was followed up Wednesday night by no points in the second half with the end result being another loss.

The Broncos led after two first-quarter touchdowns and added another touchdown in the second quarter. However, the Falls gave up 26 unanswered points in the final 24 minutes and lost their regular-season finale on the road to Greenway/Nashwauk-Keewatin, 50-19.

The loss dropped the Falls’ season record to 0-8 overall and 0-6 in the Sea-Range Conference going into the Section 7AAA playoffs, which begin next Tuesday at 7 p.m. when the No. 7-seeded Broncos will play at No. 2-seeded Two Harbors.

The Falls’ first touchdown was set up after the Titans fumbled the ball away on a punt return at their own 21-yard line. Broncos running back Nick Hedtko then rushed to the 1-yard line and completed the final yard on another running attempt for the touchdown with 8:46 to play in the opening quarter. Riley Rasmussen kicked the extra point to give the Falls a 7-0 lead.

G/N-K scored less than a minute later on a 41-yard run by Spencer Potter. The Broncos remained in front at 7-6 after the extra point failed.

The Falls scored on the ensuing kickoff, which Tyler Coffield ran back 83 yards for a touchdown. The Broncos’ lead remained at 13-6 after the extra point failed.

The Titans responded with another rushing touchdown late in the first quarter from two yards away by Taylor Haigh, but the Broncos remained in front, 13-12, after a pass for the two-point conversion failed.

G/N-K went back in front in the second quarter on a 55-yard touchdown pass from Jesse Nelson to Kaleb Pelkey.

Hedtko then scored his second rushing touchdown of the game in the second quarter to pull the Falls in front, 19-18.

Hedtko ended up recording more than half of the Broncos’ rushing yardage with 166 yards on 26 carries. He also accounted for both of the team’s pass receptions for 22 yards.

The Titans scored the game’s final five touchdowns, adding a touchdown before halftime to lead 24-19 at intermission and then scoring three third-quarter touchdowns and another touchdown in the final 12 minutes.

Both teams accounted for more than 800 yards of offense between them. G/N-K gained 528 yards (418 rushing and 110 passing), compared to the Falls totaling 309 yards (287 rushing and 22 passing).

The Titans, who finished the regular season 3-5 overall and 3-3 in conference play, received the No. 4 seed in Section 7AAA and open the playoffs Tuesday by hosting No. 5-seeded Duluth Marshall.

G/N-K 50, IF 19

IF 13 6 0 0 – 19

G/N-K 12 12 20 6 – 50

Team statistics: IF: 287 yards rushing, 22 passing, 309 total. **G/N-K:** 418 yards rushing, 110 passing, 528 total.

Rushing: IF: Nick Hedtko, 26-166, 2 TD. Wyatt Helgeson, 20-81; Tyler Coffield, 6-41; Jakob Eide, 2-(-1).

Passing: IF: Eide, 2-13, 22 yards, 1 INT.

Receiving: IF: Hedtko, 2-22.

RRCC spikers sweep Vermilion at home

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Rainy River Community College volleyball team won its final home match of the season Tuesday by defeating Vermilion in three straight games, 25-15, 25-9, 25-6.

“I think we came ready to play,” said Voyageurs head coach Mel Millerbernd. “It was fun to have a nice crowd. Being Sophomore Appreciation Night, we just wanted to go out hard.”

RRCC’s statistical leaders included: Tali Plate, 22

set assists; Kate Howell, eight kills; Katie Langaas, six kills; and Jasmine Draper, 12 digs.

The Voyageurs, whose season match record now stands at 13-15 overall and 3-7 in the Minnesota College Athletic Conference’s

Northern Division, return to action next Tuesday when RRCC will travel to Virginia for a triangular against Mesabi Range and Gogebic Community College.

RRCC then has a match Friday at Central Lakes.