

SPORTS

JUNIOR HOCKEY



At center, the Lakers’ Mason Meyer (9) battles for the puck with Thunderbird skaters Andrew Barbeau and Brandon Grandinetti (8) at left while goalie Mario Culina (30) sets up in front of the net in Saturday night’s Dudley-Hewitt Cup title game at Ice for Kids Arena.

STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

Thunderbirds down Lakers to win Dudley-Hewitt Cup

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

A Matt Pinder goal just over 4 minutes into the third period turned out to be the game-winner Saturday night when the Soo Thunderbirds edged out the Fort Frances Lakers, 3-2, in the title game of the Dudley-Hewitt Cup Central Canada Junior A Championship at Ice for Kids Arena.

With the victory, the Northern Ontario Junior Hockey League-champion Thunderbirds advance to the RBC Cup Canadian Junior A Championship being held May 9-17 in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

The season came to an end

for the Superior International Junior Hockey League-champion Lakers, who advanced to the title game after winning Friday’s semifinal over the Ontario Junior Hockey League-champion Toronto Patriots, 6-4, and received silver medals for finishing runner-up in pursuit of the Dudley-Hewitt Cup.

Saturday night’s title game remained close with neither team able to score in the first 20 minutes.

After a possible goal for Fort Frances was waived off by the referees about 5 minutes into the second period, the Soo scored first when Eric Hillock passed the puck to Nicolas Tassone,

who scored on Lakers goalie Pierce Dushenko at 10:45.

The crowd of more than 1,300 came to their feet just over 4 minutes later when Wyatt Cota tied the game for Fort Frances after shooting the puck past Thunderbirds goalie Mario Culina.

Then two goals were scored in the final 2 minutes of the second period. Tassone put in his second goal of the game at 18:14 to put the Soo back in front. The Lakers answered back 43 seconds later to tie the game on a goal from Nick Minerva.

Like Wednesday’s round-robin game between the two teams, the title game had the same score tied at 2-2 after

two periods.

Pinder put the Soo back in front for good in the final frame of the title game when he scored the game-winner with 15:55 left to play in what would be the final goal of the five-day tournament.

Shots on goal in the championship contest favored the Thunderbirds, 44-32.

Player-of-the-game honors went to Tassone and Cota.

Cota, who led all skaters in overall points, was named the tournament’s most valuable player.

T-birds 3, Lakers 2	
Lakers	0 2 0 – 2
T-birds	0 2 1 – 3

BOYS BASEBALL

Broncos fall to Giants, down Rangers

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The International Falls baseball team picked up its second loss of the season after recording more hits Friday than Mesabi East, but not more runs.

The Broncos had an 11-10 advantage in hits when they lost at home to the Giants, 7-2.

Kevin Kilbride, who led the Falls at the plate with three hits, also accounted for both of the team’s runs. Ben Humbert added two hits for the Broncos.

Mesabi East pitcher Ben Suslavich threw all seven

innings to record the victory, giving up an earned run out of the two scored on 11 hits with a hit batter while striking out 12.

Jakob Eide pitched the first four innings for the Falls and recorded the loss, allowing four runs, two earned, on six hits while striking out two. Max Vergeldt closed out the final three innings, giving up three runs, two earned, on



Jack Bartkowski

four hits with two walks.

IF 9, M-IB 4

The Broncos scored six runs in the top of the first Monday and held on to win their road game against Mountain Iron-Buhl, 9-4.

The Rangers cut the deficit in half with three runs in the bottom of the third, before the Falls went back in front by six with a run in the fourth, fifth and sixth inning. MI-B’s final run came in the bottom of the seventh.

Of the Falls’ 10 hits, Clay Bergstrom and Jackson Vol-lom had two singles apiece.

The Broncos’ Jack Bart-

kowski pitched the first four innings to record the win, allowing three earned runs on two hits with seven walks and a hit batter while striking out two. Vergeldt closed out the final three innings, giving up an unearned run on a hit while striking out three.

The Ranger’s Billy Gellerstedt picked up the pitching loss working only the first inning, giving up six unearned runs on two hits with six walks and a strikeout.

The Falls’ season record stood at 9-2 going into Tuesday’s home doubleheader against Eveleth-Gilbert.

GIRLS TRACK AND FIELD

Broncos third at the Esko track and field Showcase

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The International Falls girls track and field team placed third out of seven teams that competed in the same division at Saturday’s Esko Showcase.

Duluth East had the top team score with 155 points, followed by Eveleth-Gilbert (141), the Falls (135), Esko (90), Two Harbors (76), South Ridge (54) and Duluth Den-feld (36).

Broncos senior Savanah Olson was a double individual winner by placing first in both the shot put (38 feet, 1 inch) and discus (112-02). The Falls added another top-three finish in both of those events with Emma Gilbert placing runner-up in the shot put (36-6) and Jena Sullivan coming in third in the discus (96-10).

The Broncos also went 1-2 in the pole vault with Emily Saari finishing first at 8-9 and Claire Herzig placing runner-up at 8-6.

Falls sophomore Lexi Erickson ended up with three runner-up finishes by placing second in the 1600-meter run (5 minutes, 35.05 seconds), 3200 run (12:13.3) and high jump (4-10).

In the four relay events, the Broncos had top-three finishes in the three of them. Herzig, Abby Kostiuik, Grace Gilbert and Emma Gilbert placed first in the 4X200 (1:56.94), Herzig, Bailey Milette, Grace Gilbert and Emma Gilbert came in second in the 4X100 (54.95) and Kostiuik, Sullivan, Anna Earley and Carolann Stone finished third in the 4X400 (4:44.2).

BOYS TRACK AND FIELD

Broncos second at LOW AAA Invite

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The International Falls boys track and field team had five first-place finishes out of the 18 events Friday when the Broncos came in second at the Lake of the Woods AAA Invite.

Roseau topped the team standings with 134 points, followed by the Falls (117), Northome/Kelliher/Black-duck (99) and Warroad (89).

Broncos junior Ethan Phung finished first individually in three events by winning the high jump (5 feet, 10 inches), triple jump (37-8) and long jump (19-7.25).

Phung joined Cole Tatsak, Wyatt Helgeson and Tanner Budris for another first-place finish in the 4X100-meter relay (47.72 seconds).

The Falls’ other first-place finish came from freshman John Cowman in the 800 run (2:22).

“We had a great meet (Friday),” Cowman said. “The weather was nice, it wasn’t too windy and our team did great.”

The Broncos also got runner-up finishes from Tatsak in the 300 hurdles (44.19), Helgeson in the high jump (5-6), Gary Harala in the discus (111-0) and Wyatt Amdahl in the pole vault (9-6).

Tatsak added a third-place finish in the 200 dash (25.09), while the Falls’ 4X400 relay team of Am-dahl, Jordan Anderson, Remington Veillieux and Tanner Sether came in third in 4:59.48.

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