

SPORTS



2015 Voyageurs season previews
RRCC baseball, softball teams to open in Florida
B2-3

QUICK HITS

Adam Rotar out as RRCC women's hoops head coach

Rainy River Community College women's basketball head coach Adam Rotar is leaving after one season.

Rotar, who coached much of the Voyageurs' 2014-15 season with only five players on the roster and compiled a record of 2-12 in the Minnesota College Athletic Conference's Northern Division and 6-19 overall, said he was informed by RRCC provost Carol Helland and director of student services LeAnne Hardy that his contract would not be renewed, but wasn't given a reason.

"I am able to finish my current contract," he said. "I am disappointed by their decision, but I have to move on."

A statement provided to The Journal by Hardy said that Rotar "will not be returning as RRCC women's basketball coach next season."

"The college will inform you when a replacement decision is made," the statement further said. "This is all the comment RRCC will make at this time."

Rotar, who first arrived at RRCC for the 2014-15 school year, had replaced longtime coach Dieter Humbert, who decided after the 2013-14 season to step down from coaching women's basketball to have more time watching his own children in grades 7-12 play sports.

FHS girls hoops team defeats Deer River

Teagan Anderson made nine 3-pointers Friday night as part of her game-high 30 points to lead the International Falls girls basketball team to an 80-36 victory at Deer River in the Broncos' regular-season finale.

Bianca Carlson added 12 points for the Falls while Cassie Tomczak and Emma Gilbert also scored in double figures with 10 points apiece.

The Warriors were led by Natalie Bebeau with 17 points.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Broncos fall to Deer River...again

FHS ends season 22-6

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

The season came to an end Saturday afternoon at Duluth Denfeld for the International Falls boys basketball team when the top-seeded Broncos lost their Section 7AA quarterfinal game to No. 4-seeded Deer River, 76-69.

The Broncos, who had trouble with the Warriors' full-court press and trailed 37-22 at halftime, cut the deficit to three points late in the game, but could come no closer. "The pressure got to us, I think, a little bit," said Falls head coach Derek Dowty. "We worked our way back into it, but kind of ran out of gas at the end."

The Broncos, who had defeated Deer River 75-64 in the regular-season opener Nov. 21, fell behind by nine points early in Saturday's tournament game, but battled back to tie it at 20-20 with 6:36 left before halftime when Ben Humbert made a pair of free throws.

The Warriors, who

were able to score both inside and outside on the Falls, then closed out the half with a 17-2 scoring run.

"I thought the pressure was what hurt us the most," Dowty said. "A lot of turnovers led to their transition points. Also, I thought they shot the ball really well...and we didn't."

Deer River, which ended up making 10 3-point baskets, led by as much as 18 points early in the second half before the Broncos began to narrow the deficit.

With less than 5 minutes to play, Falls pulled within 3 points at 57-54 following a 3-pointer by Allen Johnson and a layup by Humbert.

The Broncos found themselves fouling the Warriors late in the game. Deer River was able to extend its lead to nine points at 70-61 with 1:05 to play when Aaron Drotts made a pair of free throws.

Then after Johnson made another 3-point basket, the Warriors' Ben Eby



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From right, the Broncos' Allen Johnson (4) works the ball along the perimeter while being guarded by Deer River's Todd Tibbetts (21) in Saturday afternoon's Section 7AA quarterfinal game at Duluth Denfeld.

Basketball to B3 ➤

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Voyageurs 1-2 at Region 13 Tournament

RRCC ends season 17-12

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Rainy River Community College men's basketball team won one of three games it played last weekend in the NJCAA Division III Region 13 Tournament at Anoka-Ramsey.

The Voyageurs, a No. 4 seed, stayed close Friday with top-seeded Rochester Community and Technical College, the eventual region champion, in the opening quarterfinal game, but ended up losing, 81-74.

"We almost pulled off the upset," said RRCC head coach Kristofer Babler said about RCTC, which got to the free-throw line often and went 20-25 (80 percent) from the charity stripe.



Sam Stirgus



Jammere Carlisle

The Voyageurs, who trailed 38-30 at halftime and were tied at 74-74 late in the second half before the Yellow Jackets scored the final seven points, were led by sophomore guard Sam Stirgus with 31 points, which included five 3-pointers. Antoine Tobias added 14 points, while Jammere Carlisle recorded a double-double with 13 points and 14 rebounds.

RCTC was led by Justyn Galloway with 24 points. Robert Claypool added 16 points.

RRCC 74, MWCTC 70

The loss to the Yellow Jackets dropped the Voyageurs into the tournament's consolation bracket, where they won Saturday over No. 3-seeded Minnesota West Community and Technical College, 74-70.

RRCC, which led 38-32 at halftime, ended up outshooting MWCTC from the field overall, 26-51 (51 percent) to 27-62 (43.5 percent), and from 3-point range, 9-16 (56.3 percent) to 5-17 (29.4 percent).

The Voyageurs had five players score in double figures led by Ahmad Poche with 17 points, which included three 3-pointers. Teekay Biti added 13 points. Carlisle and Tobias scored 12 points apiece with Stirgus putting in 11 more.

The Blue Jays were led by Derek Buysse with 25 points. Vencel Tigie added

14 points with Sam Nhial scoring 13 more.

MRCTC 79, RRCC 69

The Voyageurs closed out the tournament Sunday by losing the consolation title game to No. 3-seeded Mesabi Range Community and Technical College, 79-69.

"We did not play well on Sunday against Mesabi Range," Babler said.

RRCC led 34-33 at halftime before being outscored 46-35 by the Norsemen in the final 20 minutes.

The Voyageurs were led by Carlisle, who recorded a double-double with 20 points and 19 rebounds.

Mesabi Range has three players score in double figures led by Kiwane Crowder with 25 points. Ken Manigat added 17 points with Gary Innocent scoring 13 more.

RRCC, which ended the season 17-12 overall, is losing four players who have

used their sophomore year of eligibility – Poche, Stirgus, Jimson Clerveus and Colin Tyrone.

Babler said he expects most of the eight freshmen on the roster to return next season, for which he is also "recruiting very heavily" for new players and will be seeking the region tournament's No. 1 seed from the Minnesota College Athletic Conference's Northern Division.

Friday's game

RCTC 81, RRCC 74
RRCC 30 44 - 74
RCTC 38 43 - 81

Saturday's game

RRCC 74, MWCTC 70
MWCTC 32 38 - 70
RRCC 38 36 - 74

Sunday's game

MRCTC 33 46 - 79
RRCC 34 35 - 69

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Today's games

Women's hockey

RRCC vs. Michigan St. in ACHA D2 National Tournament at York, Pa., 3 p.m.

Girls basketball

Greenway at I. Falls in Section 7AA Tournament, 7 p.m.

Thursday's games

Boys diving

Class A preliminaries at U of M Aquatic Center, noon

Women's hockey

RRCC vs. Buffalo in ACHA D2 National Tournament at York, Pa., 2:30 p.m.

Girls basketball

L-BF vs. Bigfork in Section 7A Tournament at Hibbing Memorial, 5:45 p.m.

Friday's games

Women's hockey

RRCC vs. Cal U in ACHA D2 National Tournament at York, Pa., 3 p.m.

Saturday's games

Women's hockey

ACHA D2 National Tournament at York, Pa., TBD

Boys diving

Class A finals at U of M Aquatic Center, Noon

Girls basketball

I. Falls/Greenway winner vs. Proctor/Mesabi East winner in Section 7AA Tournament at UMD, 2:45 p.m.

L-BF/Bigfork winner vs. Cherry/Northeast Range winner in Section 7A Tournament at Hibbing Memorial, 5:45 p.m.

Sunday's games

Women's hockey

ACHA D2 National Tournament in York, Pa., TBD

BOYS SWIMMING AND DIVING



FILE PHOTO

The Broncos' Cole Tatsak, shown competing at a home dual meet Feb. 12 against Virginia, has qualified for this week's State Class A Swimming and Diving Tournament after placing second in the 1-meter diving competition at Saturday's Section 6A Meet in Grand Rapids.

Tatsak qualifies for state

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

International Falls senior diver Cole Tatsak has qualified for this week's State Class A Swimming and Diving Tournament after having placed second Saturday in the 1-meter diving competition at the Section 6A Meet in Grand Rapids.

Tatsak had 279.55 points for 11 dives to finish runner-up.

"I messed up on a couple of dives and that really hurt me," said Tatsak, whose score was less than 12 points ahead of the two state qualifiers who finished behind him.

The top diver, Grand Rapids sophomore Wil Kangas-Olson, scored 413.9 points. The third- and fourth-place divers also qualifying for state at the section meet included Hibbing eighth-grader Riley Pernat (275.4

and Grand Rapids seventh-grader Ethan Ward (268.5).

The top-four divers and the top-three individual swimmers and relays all advanced to the state meet being held March 5-7 at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center.

The Broncos also had an individual swimmer and two relays in Saturday's championship finals, but didn't advance any of them to state.

Falls freshman Alex Belanger placed seventh in the 100-yard butterfly (1 minute, 3.33 seconds). Hibbing freshman Sam Iozzo won the race in 57.27 seconds.

Belanger and Tatsak teamed up with freshman John Cowman and sophomore Jared Hunter for a sixth-place finish in the 200 freestyle relay (1:44.75). Grand Rapids won in 1:31.65.

Tatsak, Cowman and

freshmen Joey Griffith and Tanner Sether placed eighth in the 400 freestyle relay (4:12.32). Grand Rapids won in 3:24.67.

Two Bronco swimmers were in the consolation finals. Belanger placed 10th in the 200 individual medley (2:26.9) with Cowman coming in 11th in the 100 breaststroke (1:17.1).

In the team standings, the Falls finished eighth out of nine teams with 90 points. Grand Rapids had the top score of 423, followed by Hibbing (336) and Chisholm (320) rounding out the top three.

CLASS A STATE MEET

Of the 24 divers who have qualified for the State Class A Meet, four are returning medal-winners from last year – Austin Ferris of Faribault, runner-up; Mitch Raihle of Spring

Tatsak to B3 ➤