

SPORTS



Voyageurs baseball

RRCC opens season Sunday in Florida

B2

QUICK HITS

MINNESOTA

Zimmer favors Cassel returning to Vikings

EDEN PRAIRIE (AP) — New Minnesota Vikings coach Mike Zimmer has taken a methodical approach to evaluating the team's muddled quarterback situation, refusing to make any concrete statements about the position until he had time to do his homework and come to a decision.

"I would love to have Matt Cassel back if Matt Cassel wants to be back," Zimmer said Thursday. "I don't know if that will happen or won't happen. But we're going to find a quarterback somewhere. And if it's not Matt Cassel, then we'll find someone else."

"I want guys who want to be here. I want guys that want to be part of the franchise, be part of the organization, be part of the team. And if Matt wants to come back, I'm sure that we'll get it worked out."

Zimmer said he has had conversations with Cassel, who went 3-3 in his six starts last season and was on the field at the end of the game for all five Vikings victories, to that effect.

Cassel opted out of his contract last month and Zimmer said he expected Cassel to explore free agency before the quarterback makes a decision. Free agents can sign with new teams starting on Tuesday.

"He's got a bunch of pretty girls looking at him right now," Zimmer said, referring to teams that are expected to court Cassel in free agency. "And he wants to explore and see what's best for him. I don't blame any of these guys. In free agency, I think that's why they have the rules is that they get a chance to go see what their market's worth."

Last year Cassel split the duties with Christian Ponder for most of the season, with Josh Freeman also getting one start. Cassel completed 60.2 percent of his passes for 1,807 yards with 11 touchdowns and nine interceptions.

"I think the team rallied around him a lot but I think the team has a lot of confidence in him," Zimmer said. "Other than playing against him I don't that much about him yet other than the conversation that we had on the phone."

The Vikings have the eighth overall pick in the upcoming draft and are expected to look at drafting a quarterback.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Broncos raid Greenway in 7AA opener

FHS to face Virginia in quarterfinals at Denfeld

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

The top-seeded International Falls girls basketball team opened the Section 7AA playoffs at home Wednesday night with a 78-51 victory over No. 8-seeded Greenway.

"It's nice to get the first one over," said Broncos head coach Shawn Gilbert. "I'd like to keep taking care of business, I guess, and hopefully we play a little bit better on Saturday."

The win advances the Falls to this afternoon's quarterfinals at Duluth Denfeld, where the Broncos will face No. 4-seeded Virginia, which won Wednesday's playoff opener over No. 5-seeded Eveleth-Gilbert, 58-48. The Falls has won the previous three games this season against the Blue Devils.

Wednesday's playoff opener between the Broncos and the Raiders stayed close early on as both teams experienced shooting woes. The Falls held the lead after breaking a 2-2 tie on a pair of free throws by Janet Humbert and then pulled in front by double digits late in the first half by taking advantage of outside scoring opportunities.

Teagan Anderson accounted for three of the Broncos' six 3-pointers in the first half as the they took a 44-28 lead at intermission.

The Falls opened the second half with 7-0 scoring run and began to put the game out of reach. A 3-pointer by Anderson midway in the second half extended the Broncos' lead to 66-34.

"I just think we have more depth than them, so I guess the key (to victory) was just try to keep pressing and try to wear them down," Gilbert said. "I think our depth kind of came through (Wednesday night)."

The Falls played without starting forward Emma Gilbert, whom the head coach noted has been out sick, but should be back with the team for today's quarterfinal game.

Anderson led the Broncos with a game-high 23 points, which included six 3-pointers, followed by Cassie Tomczak with 10 points.

Greenway, which had no 3-point baskets and primarily worked the ball inside, also had two players score in double figures led by Kate Kuck with 20 points and Meghan Foley scoring 15 more.



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From left, the Broncos' Shelby Wolden dribbles past Greenway's Jordan Ranta in the Wednesday night's Section 7AA playoff game in the Falls High School gym.

Shawn Gilbert said playing Virginia for the fourth time this season "scares me a lot."

"I've been talking to their coach, and he's really eager to play us, so hopefully we'll play really well on Saturday," he said.

The Broncos enter the

quarterfinals with a 20-7 record, while the Blue Devils are 11-15 this season.

Int'l Falls 78, Greenway 51
Greenway 28 23 - 51
Int'l Falls 44 34 - 78
Greenway: Seri Geisler 3, Jordan Ranta 4, Karli Rutherford 3, Amanda Borth 2, Meghan Foley 15, Kate Kuck 20, Jessica Kuck

4. Free throws 15-34. Fouls: 15. Fouled out: K. Kuck.
Int'l Falls: Cassie Harju 2, Maddie Filipiak 8, Shelby Wolden 9, Lexi Owen 7, Cassie Tomczak 10, Teagan Anderson 23, Janet Humbert 7, Jena Sullivan 6, Lauren Rautio 2, Bianca Carlson 2, Teah Goulet 2. 3-pointers: Anderson 6, Filipiak, Wolden, Owen. Free throws: 15-21. Fouls: 23. Fouled out: Sullivan, Carlson.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Vikings zip past Bluestreaks

L-BF to face MI-B in 7A quarterfinals

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

After giving up a pair of 3-pointers and trailing 6-0 early Thursday evening, the No. 4-seeded Littlefork-Big Falls girls basketball team pulled in front late in the first half and went on to a 64-51 victory over No. 5-seeded Chisholm to open the Section 7A Tournament at Greenway High School.

The win also marked L-BF's first playoff victory in John Larson's four seasons as head coach and advanced the Vikings to this afternoon's quarterfinal game at the University of Minnesota Duluth against top-seeded Mountain Iron-Buhl.

"We were able to push the ball, get some easy buckets once in a while, but their 2-3 zone kind of gave us fits every once in a while, too," Larson said. "It's nice to come out and play good and win against a team that beat you earlier in the year."

The Vikings, who had lost 49-45 in their regular-season game against the Bluestreaks a month earlier, also trailed in the playoff game for most of the first half before Kaylee Kennedy sank a 3-pointer to give L-BF a 20-19 lead. Kennedy made four of her six 3-pointers in the first half as the Vikings extended their lead to 35-27 at intermission.

"Kaylee had some big



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

In front from right, the Vikings' DyAna Imhof (11) battles on the floor for a loose ball with Chisholm's Toria Marturano while the Vikings' Brooke Millerbernd (33) and Chisholm's Tori Anderson (11) look on in back in Thursday night's Section 7A playoff game at Greenway High School.

outside shots and really opened the game up for us," Larson said. "I don't think they recovered very well at times against our offense, but we didn't recover well against their offense, either, so it was kind of a shootout there for a while, but us persistently trying to work the ball inside and get good quality shots was the difference."

Chisholm opened the second half by outscoring L-BF 13-4 to take the lead, which see-sawed back and forth before the Vikings went on a 15-0 scoring run and pulled in front to stay.

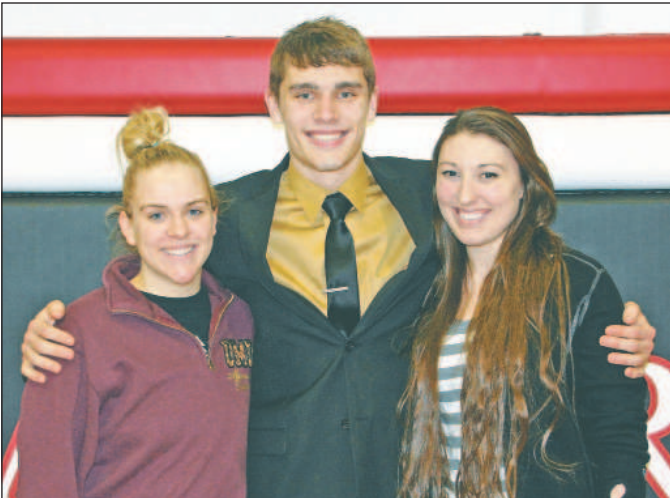
Kennedy led four L-BF players scoring in double figures with 22 points. Abby Thompson added

16 points, while Brooke Millerbernd and DyAna Imhof each scored 11.

Toria Marturano also scored 22 points to lead Chisholm, followed by Katie Buria with 16 points.

The win improved the Vikings' season record to 16-6 going into today's quarterfinal game against MI-B, which won 70-37 when the two teams faced each other Dec. 12 during the regular season.

"We know what they like to do, and we have to just deal with that," Larson said. "We've just got to play about as well as we can, and not worry about what they're going to do, and just take care of our business."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Littlefork-Big Falls senior athletes Brooke Millerbernd, Jacob Franz and DyAna Imhof have signed letters of intent to attend Rainy Rainy Community College in 2014-15. Millerbernd and Imhof will be playing volleyball, while Franz will be joining the men's basketball team.

Three L-BF athletes commit to RRCC

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Littlefork-Big Falls High School senior athletes Brooke Millerbernd, DyAna Imhof and Jacob Franz have signed letters of intent to attend Rainy River Community College for the 2014-15 academic year.

Millerbernd and Imhof will be playing volleyball, while Franz will be joining the men's basketball team.

Millerbernd, a 5-8 outside hitter, was part of the 2013 L-BF volleyball team that finished with a 17-9 match record. She also plays basketball, where she has exceeded 1,000 career points, and softball for the Vikings.

Imhof, a 5-11 middle hitter on the L-BF volleyball team, also plays basketball and softball for the Vikings.

RRCC athletic director and volleyball coach Mel Millerbernd, who is also Brooke Millerbernd's moth-

er, said she is "really excited to have both Brooke and DyAna attend RRCC."

"They come from an excellent L-BF program and will make an immediate impact," she said.

Brooke Millerbernd and Imhof both received RRCC's "Top of the Class Award" for academic excellence, having earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Franz, a 6-6 post player, was the starting center on the 2013-14 L-BF boys basketball team that compiled a record of 10-12. He also plays baseball for the Vikings.

"We are very excited that Jacob will be attending Rainy River," Mel Millerbernd said. "He has so much potential. It will be exciting to watch him develop into a great college basketball player."

Franz has received RRCC's "Academic Achievement Award."

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Today's games

Girls basketball

L-BF vs. MI-B in Section 7A quarterfinals at UMD, 2:45 p.m.

I. Falls vs. Virginia in Section 7AA quarterfinals at Duluth Denfeld, 2:45 p.m.

Sunday's games

Men's baseball

RRCC vs. MSCTC-Fergus Falls in St. Petersburg, Fla. (DH), 10 a.m.

Monday's games

Men's basketball

RRCC vs. Schenectady County Community College in St. Petersburg, Fla. (DH), 10 a.m.

Wednesday's games

Men's baseball

RRCC vs. St. Lawrence/Erie Community College in St. Petersburg, Fla., 12/3 p.m.

Girls basketball

Section 7AA semifinals at UMD, 5:45 p.m.

Thursday's games

Girls basketball

Section 7AA semifinals at UMD, 5:45 p.m.