

SPORTS



FHS Alumni Basketball

Twelve teams compete in annual tournament

B2

QUICK HITS

FHS baseball team wins season opener

The International Falls baseball team opened the 2015 season on a winning note Friday when Broncos shut out Hibbing, 10-0, in six innings at the University of Minnesota's Siebert Field.

Ben Humbert allowed only one hit and struck out 12 batters to record the pitching victory.

"Ben Humbert was dominant to say the least," said Falls head coach Eric Walls. "We sure hits the bats really nice."

Of Falls' 12 hits, Humbert, Clay Bergstrom, Jakob Eide and Tyler Coffield had two apiece. Jackson Vollom and Lane Skallman each tripled, while Humbert and Jack Bartkowski both doubled. Eide and Skallman drove in two runs apiece.

The 1-0 Broncos are scheduled to return to action Thursday at Cherry. Their first home game is set for Friday afternoon against Virginia.

'Top of the Nation' wrestling Sunday

More than 225 youth wrestlers are expected to compete Sunday at Falls High School when the Mighty Mustangs host the first annual "Top of the Nation Championship."

The tournament for wrestlers from pre-kindergarten through the eighth grade begins at 11 a.m. Sunday's meet is the season finale for the Mighty Mustangs and the first wrestling tournament to be hosted in the Falls in more than 20 years.

Those attending will also have the opportunity to meet former UFC lightweight champion Sean Sherk.

Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for students and senior citizens. There will also be a pancake breakfast beforehand from 8:30-10 a.m. for \$5.

Lakers face Dryden in Bill Salonen Cup

The Fort Frances Lakers will open the Superior International Junior Hockey League's Bill Salonen Cup finals at 7:30 p.m. Thursday when they host the Dryden Ice Dogs in game one of the best-of-seven championship series at Ice for Kids Arena.

Game two of the series is set for 6:30 p.m. Friday at Ice for Kids Arena.

The series will then shift to Dryden Memorial Arena for games three and four on April 14-15 at 7:30 p.m..

Should a fifth game be needed, it is slated for April 17 in Fort Frances.

BOYS BASEBALL PREVIEW

Vikings seek Northern Lakes title and to be competitive in Section 7A

L-BF graduates two starters

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

Following a Cinderella playoff run last season as a No. 7 seed, the Littlefork-Big Falls baseball team will seek to be competitive this year in Section 7A.

The Vikings last year placed third in the Section 7A Tournament, in which they won their first four playoff games before being knocked out of the tournament with losses to the eventual section champion, Ely, and South Ridge. L-BF ended the season 10-12 overall.

Dan Beste enters his third season as the Vikings' head coach with the key graduation losses from last season including shortstop/pitcher Taylor DeLack, who last year received All-State honors and had a .535 batting average, and outfielder Eric Thydean, a three-year starter in left field.

Beste's list of top returning players includes:

■ Senior Rylan Henrickson, a three-time All-Northern Lakes Conference and 2014 All-Section 7A selection. Henrickson batted .315 as the leadoff hitter and appeared in 13 games on the mound. He had a 6-5 pitching record with a 2.42 ERA.

■ Junior Darian Erick-

son, a 2014 All-NLC selection as an outfielder. Erickson batted .389 his sophomore season and played every game in center field.

■ Senior Tommy Manninen, a 2014 All-Section 7A selection. Manninen batted .270 last year and started the majority of the games at catcher. He also pitched 23 2/3 innings.

■ Senior Evan Wimmer, who batted .245 last year and played first base. Wimmer also pitched in 25 innings.

■ Sophomore Tate Promersberger, who batted .310 last season and played third base.

Beste said the strengths of this year's team include having "five starters returning who are smart baseball players and play the game the right way" and also having "four pitchers back who are going to throw strikes for us."

However, with the low numbers out for baseball this year at L-BF, Beste said "most of our guys are very young or are playing baseball for the first time this year."

He said the team goals this season include winning the NLC title and competing in the section.

Beste said he is con-



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

The Vikings' Rylan Henrickson relays a throw during a baseball practice last week outside the Littlefork-Big Falls school.

Baseball to B2 ►

MEN'S BASEBALL

RRCC goes 3-5 on Wisconsin road trip in 8 games in 4 days

Voyageurs now 10-13

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Rainy River Community College baseball team closed out its eight-game road trip last week in Wisconsin by going 3-5 after winning two of the final six games taking place Thursday through Saturday.

"I thought we battled through (the eight-game road trip) pretty well," said Voyageurs head coach Josh Koenig. "By the end of the week I was very happy with our defensive play."

Koenig also noted he was "very satisfied" overall with the team's pitching and also thought the players hit well overall, though being able to get a "timely hit" with runners on base was probably the biggest difference in winning or losing.

After splitting a doubleheader Wednesday against Western Technical College in La Crosse, RRCC lost both games of Thursday's twin bill to WTC.

In game one, the Voyageurs didn't score until the sixth inning when they lost to the Cavaliers, 7-2.

Stephen Rivera pitched the first 4 1/3 in recording the loss for RRCC, giving up five earned runs on five hits with four walks and a hit batter while striking out six.

J.D. Knutson came in relief for the final 1 2/3 innings, giving up two runs, one earned, on a hit with four walks while striking out two.

RRCC outhit WTC, 9-6, but also left 12 runners on base.

Sam Pelechaty led the



Dyan Zayas



Connor McGuinness

Voyageurs at the plate with three singles and an RBI. Tanner Helms added two singles.

WTC 5, RRCC 4

In game two Thursday, the Voyageurs gave up a run with two outs in the bottom of the seventh and lost to the Cavaliers, 5-4.

Will Aesoph recorded loss pitching in the seventh inning, allowing an earned run on a hit with a walk while striking out a batter.

Kris Barber pitched the first five innings for RRCC, allowing four earned runs on six hits with two walks and a hit batter while striking out seven. One of those runs was a second-inning solo homer by Chris Castillo.

Jake Schulte threw a scoreless sixth inning for the Voyageurs when he walked two batters.

Of RRCC's eight hits, Dyan Zayas and Connor McGuinness had two apiece. Zayas recorded two singles with an RBI, while McGuinness doubled and singled. William Thomas added a double and drove in a run.

RCTC 14, RRCC 1

The Voyageurs played two games in Mauston, Wis., on Friday when they lost the first game to Rochester Community and Technical College, 13-1, in six innings.

Talon Kunkel pitched the first 3 2/3 innings and recorded the loss, allowing

seven runs, three earned, on four hits with five walks and two hit batters while striking out four. Joseph Hudson threw in the final 2 1/3 innings, giving up six unearned runs on five hits with four walks.

RCTC's Quinn Cannoy pitched all six innings to record the victory, allowing an earned run on four hits with five walks while striking out five.

Zayas accounted for two of RRCC's four hits with a pair of singles and drove in the only run.

RRCC 6, MN STATE 5

The Voyageurs scored two runs in the bottom of the seventh to win their second game Friday over Minnesota State Community and Technical College, 6-5.

McGuinness pitched the complete-game victory, allowing five earned runs on 11 hits with three walks while striking out six.

Of RRCC's nine hits, Sean Deviney, Kunkel and Helms had two apiece. Helms doubled and singled with 2 RBI.

RRCC 6, MN WEST 3

The Voyageurs played their final two games on their road trip in Wisconsin on Saturday in Mauston, winning the first game against Minnesota West, 6-3.

RRCC's Landon Freeman pitched the first five innings and recorded the victory, allowing three earned runs on six hits with a walk and a hit batter while striking out three.

Two other RRCC pitchers threw an inning apiece without giving up a run. Schulte allowed a hit and a walk while striking out a batter in the sixth inning. Helms gave up a hit and struck out three in the seventh inning.

RRCC to B2 ►

BOYS AND GIRLS GOLF PREVIEW



FILE PHOTO

The Broncos' Eric Cann, shown following through on a swing in last year's State Class AA Golf Tournament at the Ridges at Sand Creek in Jordan, placed 57th at state in 2014 and returns this season as the boys team captain.

Broncos seek to compete for Section 7AA team titles

FHS graduates two state qualifiers

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

Though two of the three state qualifiers from last year have graduated, first-year head coach Steve Johnson expects the International Falls boys and girls golf teams to have "steady improvement" this season and be able to contend for the Section 7AA titles.

The Broncos, whose boys team placed runner-up and girls team finished third in last year's Section 7AA Tournament, have graduated an individual state qualifier on each team.

Gone from the boys team is Brady Walls, who qualified for state the past two seasons and placed 39th last year. Johnson noted another key loss from last season is sophomore Riley Nemec, who will be out of action this spring because of a shoulder injury.

The two-time state qualifier who graduated from the girls team, Katie West, finished 29th last year at state.

However, both teams return a golfer who previously qualified for state.

Junior Eric Cann, who qualified for state and

placed 57th last year, is back this year as the boys team captain. Senior Jenna Anderson, who qualified for state in 2013 when she tied for 40th place, returns this year as the girls team captain.

Johnson said the strengths on this year's teams include both returning six players with varsity experience.

He said the goals for each team in 2015 include being able to "steadily improve and contend for the section title."

This week's meets that were scheduled to start the season for the Broncos in Eveleth were called off because the course was still closed there. Johnson said he is concerned the most this season about "the weather" and "getting in enough quality practices before competition begins."

He said he is looking forward this season to "steady improvement of all players and healthy competition for playing spots."

Johnson said the teams to watch out for this season include Hermantown for the boys and Pequot Lakes for the girls.

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Today's games

Women's softball

RRCC vs. Bottineau/
Northland at TRF, 1/5 p.m.

Thursday's games

Track and Field

I. Falls hosting Bronco
Booster Invite, 4 p.m.

Girls softball

Cherry at L-BF, 4:30 p.m.
I. Falls at Mesabi East,
4:30 p.m.

Boys baseball

L-BF at Ely, 2 p.m.
I. Falls at Cherry, 4:30 p.m.

Friday's games

Girls softball

Chisholm at I. Falls, 4:30 p.m.
MI-B at L-BF, 4:30 p.m.

Boys baseball

Virginia at I. Falls, 4:30 p.m.

Saturday's games

Men's baseball

RRCC vs. Vermillion/TBA at
Ely, 11 a.m./1:30 p.m.

Women's softball

RRCC vs. Hibbing/Itasca/
Mesabi Range at Itasca
Tournament in Grand
Rapids, 11 a.m./1 p.m./3 p.m.