

SPORTS

MEN'S HOCKEY

Falls foes to face off at AMSOIL Arena

UMD-UNO series also has playoff implications

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

This weekend's regular-season series finale at AM-SOIL Arena in Duluth involving 2010 International Falls High School graduates Willie Corrin and Matt Youso on opposing Division I men's hockey teams playing as defensemen – as well as featuring a nephew, Corrin, opposing his head-coaching uncle from the Falls, Dean Blais – could have postseason implications along with personal rivalries on the line.

Friday and Saturday will mark the second of two two-game series the University of Minnesota Duluth and the University of Nebraska Omaha will have against each other this season as members of the National Collegiate Hockey Conference, which is in its first year of existence.

UNO, for which Blais is



Dean Blais



Matt Youso



Willie Corrin

assists, but no goals. Youso has appeared in 12 of 32 games, recording two shots and 13 blocks, but no goals or assists.

Broncos.

“We need to get more points this weekend,” Corrin said.

Denver, presently in sixth with 32 points, could also crack the top four, while North Dakota and St. Cloud State, presently tied in first with 42 points, are already assured of a top-four finish.

in his fifth year of coaching and Youso is a freshman, and UMD, for which Corrin is in his sophomore season, are battling for a top-four finish in the conference and the ability to host the first round of the NCHC playoffs.

The Bulldogs swept the Mavericks in the first two-game series Jan. 10-11 in Omaha when Corrin played in both games and Youso saw action in only the first game. Though Corrin and Youso have been on opposing teams before when they played junior hockey, Corrin noted they weren't on the ice at the same time for the first UMD-UNO series.

Corrin has played in 21 of 32 games this season, recording 27 shots and 30 blocks along with seven

UNO presently sits in third place in the conference at 12-8-2-1 with 39 points, five points ahead of UMD in fourth at 10-10-2-2 in the NCHC, for which the teams presently in the top six are all in the running to host the first round of the league playoffs.

“(The possibility of being this close in the NCHC standings at the end of the season is) everything that we talked about,” Blais said.

Western Michigan has the same record and number of points as the Bulldogs, which could assure themselves of a top-four spot in the conference with another sweep of UNO and the six points that would go with that because of having the tiebreaker against the

Lakers shut out Miners, scorch Wilderness

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Fort Frances Lakers got a pair of goals and two assists from Lyndon Lipinski along with four assists from defenseman Cody Wickstrom and 19 saves from goalie Jordan Cartney in the 8-0 shutout victory Friday night over English River in Superior International Junior Hockey League action at Ice for Kids Arena.

The Lakers took a 2-0 lead after one period on goals from Lucas DeBenedet of International Falls and Ryan McQueen.

Fort Frances added four more goals in the second



Lucas DeBenedet



Mason Meyers

period from Bryce Lipinski, Lyndon Lipinski, Miles Nolan and Hunter Leishman to go up 6-0.

Lyndon Lipinski and Cameron Jackson closed out the scoring with third-period goals to complete the shutout.

P.D. Melgoza saw 46 shots

fired his way in the loss for the Miners.

LAKERS 7, WILDERNESS 2

Fort Frances built up a five-goal lead Monday night en route to a 7-2 victory over the Wisconsin Wilderness at the Spooner Ice House.

Bryce Lipinski and Brent Aiken scored in the opening period to put Fort Frances up a pair after 20 minutes.

The Lakers extended their lead to 5-1 after the second period on goals supplied by Bryce Lipinski, DeBenedet and another Falls native, Mason Meyer, before Nick Eytcheson got

Wisconsin on the scoreboard with a shorthanded goal at 14:28.

Fort Frances then put the game away in the final frame sandwiching goals by Kevin Kurm and Bryson Jasper around another by Eytcheson to complete the scoring on the night.

Devin Tappenden made 27 saves to register the victory for the Lakers, while Griffin Strain and Zann Anderson combined to face 60 shots in a losing cause for the Wilderness.

Fort Frances closes out the regular season at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at Ice for Kids Arena against Wisconsin.

Wild douse Flames, stretch win streak to 5

ST. PAUL (AP) — Surging into and out of the Olympic break, the Minnesota Wild have created a significant cushion between them and their competitors for the two Western Conference wild-card playoff spots.

That's not enough. With five days before they play next, this was still a game they were worried about — and had to win.

Jared Spurgeon and Zach Parise scored in the third period, and the Wild notched their season-high fifth straight victory, 3-2

over the Calgary Flames on Monday night.

“You don't want to go a week without getting any points the way things are, even if you have a cushion,” Wild coach Mike Yeo said. “The cushion to me is nothing ... because it's not about where the people are behind you. To me it's much more of a race of what you need to get to.”

The Wild have 75 points, nine ahead of the cut, but they are off until Saturday. Then they will launch their final stretch of 20 games in 37 days.

“I don't think we were at our best. I don't think we played at a level we need to play. But it doesn't matter when you look back at the score,” Parise said.

Kyle Brodziak also scored, rookie Darcy Kuemper stopped 21 shots during his 15th start in a row, and the Wild raised their record at home to 22-7-2 while playing in front of their fans for the first time in 25 days.

Captain Mikko Koivu, back from a 17-game absence due to a broken ankle, skated on the second line with Dany Heatley and

Charlie Coyle, apart from Parise for the first time.

Parise gave the Wild some insurance by camping in the crease and deflecting a shot past Reto Berra with 5:16 remaining for his 21st goal. Just 77 seconds later, Mark Giordano scored to bring the Flames back within a goal. But Kuemper hung on to raise his record to 11-3-2.

Kuemper has played so well in place of Josh Harding and Niklas Backstrom that the Wild might not need to trade for a goalie before the deadline.

WOMEN'S HOCKEY

Voyageurs just miss national tourney invite

RRCC 5th in ACHA D2 West

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

For the second season in a row, the Rainy River Community College women's hockey team has missed out on receiving a bid to the American Collegiate Hockey Association Division 2 National Tournament.

Needing a top-four ranking in the ACHA D2's Western Division to be invited to the 2014 national tournament, the Voyageurs finished fifth in the final coaches rankings that came out last week, two points behind the fourth and final qualifier in the west, the club team from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

Based on rankings in which the lower points determine the higher seeds for the national tournament, North Dakota State University, which won three of its four games against the Voyageurs this season, received the top seed in the west.

Iowa State University, which won both games against RRCC, received the No. 2 seed at 24 points, the same score as the No. 3 seed, the University of Alaska, which didn't play the Voya-

geurs this season.

UW-La Crosse, which also didn't play RRCC, got the No. 4 seed at 40 points. The Voyageurs were ranked No. 5 with 42 points, two points ahead of the No. 6-ranked club team from the University of Minnesota Duluth, which lost three of the four games against RRCC with the other game ending up in a tie this season.

Voyageurs head coach Evan Amdahl said it is unfortunate RRCC just missed out on a national tournament bid, noting that a different way to rank teams is being looking into for next season, such as a method that would invite the four best teams in each division, not necessarily the ones with best win-loss records, to the national tournament.

Amdahl pointed out that the final ACHA D2 rankings on myhockeyrankings.com placed RRCC, which had a record of 5-8-1 in ACHA games, seventh nationwide with the highest strength of schedule score, while UW-La Crosse, with a record of 8-12, was ranked 11th with a lower strength of schedule score.

The University of Delaware is hosting the 2014 women's national championships March 13-16.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

FHS seeded No. 1 in 7AA; L-BF No. 4 in 7A

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The International Falls girls basketball team has received a No. 1 seed and will open the Section 7AA playoffs with a home game at 7 p.m. today against No. 8-seeded Greenway.

The winner advances to the Section 7AA quarterfinals to play at 2:45 p.m. Saturday at Duluth Denfeld against the opening-round winner between No. 4-seeded Virginia and No. 5-seeded Eveleth-Gilbert.

The quarterfinal winner advances to the semifinal game at 5:45 p.m. March 13 at the University of Minnesota Duluth. The Section 7AA championship game is set for 7 p.m. March 15 at UMD.

In Section 7A, the Littlefork-Big Falls girls basketball team has received a No. 4 seed and will open the tournament at 5:45 p.m. Thursday at Greenway High School against No. 5-seeded Chisholm.

The winner advances to the Section 7A quarterfinals at 2:45 p.m. Saturday at UMD to play the winner between No. 1-seeded Mountain-Iron Buhl and either No. 8-seeded Nashwauk-Keewatin or No. 9-seeded Bigfork. Nashwauk-Keewatin hosted Bigfork in a play-in game at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

The quarterfinal winner advances to the semifinal at 5:45 p.m. March 12 at UMD. The Section 7A championship game is set for 7 p.m. March 14 at UMD.



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