

SPORTS



Falls Fusion 12U
Softball team wins Tier 9 state title

B3

QUICK HITS

Fort Frances faces Dryden in Kraft Celebration Tour

Members of the Fort Frances Curling Club from International Falls are hoping to benefit from Friday's matchup against Dryden in the "Kraft Celebration Tour."

At stake is \$25,000 that could help pay for the curling club's geothermal heating and cooling system in the event Fort Frances wins a 24-hour online voting contest over Dryden, which is seeking the award to help pay for a regulation-sized and surfaced athletic track.

Dave Johnson, a curling club member from the Falls, said approximately 30-40 members — about 10 percent of the total membership — are from the Falls, for which Fort Frances is the closest curling facility.

Johnson said winning Friday's contest would help "keep the cost of curling at the present level."

The matchup between Fort Frances and Dryden is the 10th and final one on this year's Kraft Celebration Tour, which has awarded \$1 million to communities across Canada over the past four years.

The Kraft Celebration Tour's judging panel selected 20 finalists to go head-to-head from this year's nominations seeking a \$25,000 award for a community project.

The online voting between Fort Frances and Dryden begins at 11 a.m. Friday and runs for 24 hours with the community with the most votes receiving the \$25,000, along with a live broadcast from TSN — the Canadian equivalent of the ESPN Sports Network — and a community barbecue next month.

The website where people from around the globe are allowed to vote more than once is located at: kraftcelebrationtour.ca/en/nominate/vote/

An effort to encourage people from the United States to vote early and often for Fort Frances has been going on at 93.1 FM in Fort Frances.

Falls Kart Club go-kart results July 11

Go-kart races took place last Thursday at the Falls Kart Club/Rainy Lake Oil Raceway with the feature results in the following classes:

Beginner — Brady Nicholson, Garrett Froemke.

Junior 1 — Tanner Williamson, Jake Froemke, Raice Westover, Justin Besch, Garrett Paull, Brady Nicholson, Jordan Gamsby.

Junior 2 — Wyatt Boyum, Jyllian Westover, Gina Boyum, Cameron Netland, Taylor Turcotte.

Senior — Ashley Johnson, Wyatt Boyum, Aaron Nelson, Cole Turcotte, Dylan lowes.

Master — Blair Plourde, Chad Jonson, Dane Olson, Brian Nelson, Jon Froemke, Cody Wickstrom, Bill Norton, Cody Grasshorn, Rusty Mai.

Heavy — Dane Olson, Darren Lowes, Mike Christianson, Jon Froemke, Cody Grasshorn, Bill Norton, Rusty Mai.

Go-kart races at the Falls Kart Club/Rainy Lake Oil Raceway resume this Thursday at 7 p.m. More information about the races is available online at: www.ifallskartclub.webs.com.

Dave Christensen on top of Smokey

Jeff Lindvall wins seniors title

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

Dave Christensen has joined three others with his last name as an overall winner of the Smokey Bear Golf Invitational.

Christensen, who is from Elk River, won last weekend's 59th annual men's amateur tournament at the Falls Country Club with a 45-hole championship flight score of 174, four strokes ahead of last year's winner, Casey Hill.

Hill's brother, Tyler, placed third with a 180.

Christensen was the only player to shoot under 70 for both the 18 holes on Saturday (67) and the first 18 holes on Sunday (69) and held a three-stroke lead over his cousin from Grand Rapids, Mike Christensen, going into the final nine holes.

Dave Christensen said staying patient was key to winning the tournament.

"There's a lot of places where you can make a lot of bogeys and higher scores, so just kind of trying to make sure you manage your game a little bit and not having any explosive holes and shoot yourself out of the tournament (is key)," he said.

After recording three bogeys on three par-four holes to start the final nine — FCC's front nine — Dave Christensen picked up a pair of birdies to end up with a one-over 38.

"I had a tough get-go off the start on the last nine, but was able to pull things back together a little bit," he said.

Dave Christensen, who also played college golf at East Tennessee State before turning professional for about seven years and then returning to amateur status in 2009, said

playing in the Smokey Bear tournament has been a "family tradition."

"I think this is about my fourth time playing in the championship," he said. "So this is my first win, and I'm kind of joining my cousin and brother and uncle as champions."

Mike Christensen, who placed fourth this year after carding a 180 for 45 holes, won the tournament in 1996.

Dave's brother, Mark, who placed sixth this year with a 45-hole total of 183, had won in 1999 and 2002.

Dave's uncle, Buzzy Christensen, who is from the Falls and now resides in Grand Rapids, was the overall winner in 1972. This year, Buzzy ended up winning the sixth flight with a 36-hole score of 162.

Golf to B2 ➤



STAFF PHOTOS BY KEVIN BONESKE

Dave Christensen chips onto the green of hole No. 1 in Sunday's Smokey Bear Golf Invitational at the Falls Country Club. Christensen won the tournament with a 45-hole score of 174.



Tyler Hill hits a chip shot near a water hazard on hole No. 5 in Sunday's Smokey Bear Golf Invitational. Hill finished third in the championship flight with a 45-hole score of 180.



From left, Jeff Lindvall receives a crystal cup from Smokey Bear Golf Invitational tournament director Dave Cronin on Sunday after winning the senior championship with a 45-hole score of 180.

BOYS HOCKEY

Elson out as Broncos' head coach

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

It's unanimous — the International Falls School Board doesn't want Bruce Elson back as the head boys hockey coach.

With no discussion, the board voted 6-0 Monday not to renew Elson's coaching contract for 2013-14.

In a letter dated June 21 about the recommended non-renewal, Falls superintendent Nurdy Nelson informed Elson, "The action is being taken because the program is looking to head in a new direction."

When asked following the board meeting about the "new direction" referred to in the letter, Nelson said it is "standard language that's used when you want to make a change."

Nelson previously said the non-renewal involved a "personnel matter" and an "administrative decision," but he declined to elaborate.

Elson, a physical education teacher in the district, has been the Bronco boys hockey head coach the past two seasons, compiling a 27-23-4 overall record with a pair of winning seasons

and finishing 12-11-4 last season.

Elson, who was not present for Monday's board meeting, informed The Journal in a photo call Tuesday afternoon that he would not contest the board's vote not to renew his coaching contract and wished the boys hockey program well in the future. He declined further comment.

Monday's action marks the second time in four years the board voted not to renew Elson's contract as a head hockey coach.

Elson had previously been Falls' head girls hockey coach for three seasons from 2006-09, compiling an overall record of 29-47-2.

He had led the Broncos to their first non-losing season in the first 10 years of the girls varsity program, finishing 13-13-1 in 2007-08.

His departure as Falls' head girls coach had been mired in controversy. The Journal reported in 2009 that the motion to termi-



Bruce Elson

nate Elson's coaching contract then had related to alleged "self-control issues."

According to the district's policy related to coaches/advisors, the assistant coaching positions will also be vacant upon the head coach's contract not being renewed and the assistants being allowed to apply for head coach.

No boys hockey coaches have yet been approved by the board for next season.

ELSON REQUESTING UNPAID LEAVE

Though Monday's non-renewal vote didn't affect Elson being able to return as a physical education teacher for the 2013-14 school year, Elson said he is requesting a five-year unpaid leave from his teaching position to take care of father, who is in Canada and has dementia.

Nelson said the board would be considering Elson's leave request at next month's meeting.

MELLSTROM TO COACH HOCKEY IN WINDOM

One teacher leaving the Falls school district is be-

Elson to B2 ➤

Committee to study situation with teachers out of classroom to coach

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

A committee comprised of three International Falls School Board members and others is being formed to look into the situation with teachers being out of the classroom to coach.

The board Monday backed members Gordon Dault, Michael Holden and Willi Kostiuik and also favored high school principal Tim Everson and athletic director Kevin Grover to be part of that committee, which has its first meeting scheduled for next Monday at 9 a.m.

The issue of teachers who coach being out of the classroom was brought up at last month's board meeting when the board tabled a recommendation to approve Jay Boyle as an assistant girls basketball coach.

Boyle, who is a math teacher at Falls High School, has been coaching all three seasons during the school year as the head football coach, assistant girls basketball coach and

an assistant track and field coach. He was also on hand for Monday's board meeting.



Jay Boyle

Falls superintendent Nurdy Nelson provided board members with copies of the district's current policy related to coaches/advisors, which was last revised June 13, 2006, as well as a list of the estimated number of away events for each sport.

According to that list, four of the winter sports have the highest estimated number of away events during the school year led by boys basketball with 16, followed by girls basketball (15), boys hockey (14) and girls hockey (12).

"The issue here is, and I've seen it everywhere I've been, is the number of times a teacher (who) coaches (is) out of the classroom," Nelson said. "To

Coach to B3 ➤