

SPORTS



Major League Re-Grand Opening

Greg Gagne appears at Menards in the Falls

B2

QUICK HITS

I. Falls Bronco boys golf team 4th at Pokegama Invite

The International Falls boys golf team was able to get in two 18-hole rounds last weekend in Grand Rapids, where the Broncos tied for fourth with Virginia at the Pokegama Invite.

Forest Lake won the two-day tournament with the top score of 612, 35 strokes ahead of the Falls. Staples/Motley placed second with Grand Rapids coming in third out of 10 teams.

On day one of the tournament Friday, Broncos freshman Brady Wright had the top score of 75, three strokes ahead of senior teammate Brady Walls. Sophomore Eric Cann and freshman Riley Nemec each had an 84 as the other two Falls golfers whose scores counted toward the team's day-one total of 321.

On day two Saturday, Walls carded another 78 to top the Broncos, while Nemec had a 79 with Wright recording an 84 and Cann picking up an 85 for the day's team total of 326.

Falls' two other golfers in the tournament were freshman Brock O'Loughlin, who had opened with an 87 and closed out with a 92, and eighth-grader Josh Cann, who also opened with an 87 and then closed out with a 94.

Saints' softball season ends for Sydney Gordon

College of St. Scholastica junior infielder Sydney Gordon of International Falls has wrapped up another season with the Saints' softball team, which was eliminated Saturday in the NCAA Division III Regional Tournament in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, after dropping a losers' bracket game to St. Thomas, 7-4.

Gordon, who doubled and drove in a run in CSS's season finale, started in 37 games and ended the year with a .307 batting average. In 94 at-bats this season, she tallied 29 hits, including six doubles. She also had 14 RBI and scored 15 runs.

In the field this year, Gordon had 67 putouts and 71 assists with 10 errors for a fielding percentage of .912.

Gordon, a 2011 FHS graduate, has played softball for two seasons with the Saints, for whom she has started 65 games and played in 68 with a career batting average of .344.

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

Voyageurs win Region 13B title

RRCC advances to DIII national tourney this week

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

The Rainy River Community College softball team has qualified for this week's NJCAA Division III National Tournament in Rochester after winning the Region 13B Tournament it hosted last weekend.

The top-seeded Voyageurs closed out the four-team, double-elimination region tournament on Saturday with a perfect 3-0 record after winning the title game by shutting out No. 2-seeded Mesabi Range, 4-0, in Littlefork.

Both teams had played each other a day earlier in the winners' bracket game at Grand Rapids, where RRCC trounced the Lady Norse, 19-3, in five innings. Mesabi Range earned another opportunity to play the Voyageurs after having won Saturday in the losers' bracket game against Itasca, 7-2.

"Mesabi's a good team, and I know (Saturday) they would come out and play hard," said RRCC head coach Dieter Humbert, who was named the Region 13B Coach of the Year. "They had some momentum coming off that win against Itasca."

"Give (the Lady Norse) credit. They pitched well."



STOAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From right, Mesabi Range's Kendra Dallmann (7) slides into second base and beats the throw to the Voyageurs' Sam Cantu while Andrea Barylski looks on in Saturday's Region 13B Tournament title game at Littlefork.

They kept us off balance. We couldn't seem to get the timely hit. We did get enough (hits) to win, but it was a good game. It was a good solid pitchers' duel and defensive game. Fortunately, we came out on the right end of the score."

The Voyageurs scored first in the first inning when shortstop Sam Cantu hit the first of her two solo home runs off of Mesabi Range starting pitcher Shania Novak.

"I just went up there to hit base hits....," Cantu said. "I just pushed through the ball the way I was taught – just find the middle of

the ball and push right through it."

Novak, who recorded the loss, left the pitching circle with two outs in the bottom of the second after RRCC second baseman Andrea Barylski doubled to place runners on second and third. Lady Norse reliever Kendra Dallmann then got outfielder Rachel Clark to fly out to the infield to end the inning.

Cantu led off the fifth inning with a solo home run off of Dallmann. RRCC pitcher Oashaja Dobie then came to the plate and singled, reached second base on a fielder's choice and

scored on a single by Alexis Fancy to give the Voyageurs a 3-0 lead.

RRCC plated its final run in the bottom of the sixth when Barylski reached first on an infield hit, stole second base, advanced to third on a wild pitch by Dallmann and scored on a sacrifice fly by Clark.

Of the Voyageurs' 12 hits, Cantu had three of them by also adding a single. Fancy and Barylski had two hits apiece.

Dobie allowed only two hits with a hit batter while striking out 13 over seven innings to record the complete-game shutout

victory. She picked up all three pitching victories last weekend for RRCC and was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

"I couldn't do it alone," Dobie said. "I had some great teammates behind me. I just took every inning and every pitch one at a time."

Four RRCC players – Dobie, Clark, Cantu and Barylski – were named to the Region 13B All-Tournament Team.

Cantu, who is from Texas and joined the team this

Softball to B2 ►

MEN'S BASEBALL

Voyageurs sweep Vermilion in playoff series

RRCC advances to Region 13 Tournament

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

The Rainy River Community College baseball team has qualified for its first region tournament in the program's five-year history.

The Voyageurs won their Minnesota College Athletic Conference Northern Division best-of-three playoff series by sweeping Vermilion in Saturday's doubleheader at Grand Rapids.

"There's been a lot of work that has gone into this," RRCC head coach Josh Koenig said following the opening-round playoff twin bill that had been delayed for two days and moved because of rainy weather. "(I'm) ecstatic, extremely proud of their efforts (after) starting

a program back in 2009 and, in a short period of time, getting a team to the region tournament. I'm just speechless. I just feel blessed and proud to have the opportunity to coach this group of young men."

The Voyageurs won game one, 7-5, with Talon Kunkel picking up the win pitching a complete game. Kunkel allowed all five runs, four earned, on seven hits with four walks while striking out seven.

At the plate, RRCC had six hits with Tanner Helms picking up a double and a single as the team's only player with two hits for the game.

The Voyageurs scored what turned out to be the winning runs in top of the seventh on back-to-back solo home runs by Makana Canda and Sean Deviney.

"I told these guys all year long that if they keep a patient approach at the plate, and take advantage of the mistakes that the other team makes, we can



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

The Voyageurs' Makana Canda (15) is greeted at the plate by Sean Deviney (13) and Tanner Helms (3) after hitting a solo home run in the first game of Saturday's MCAC North playoff doubleheader against Vermilion.

capitalize on it, and we did," Koenig said. "We had an opportunity to capitalize there, and that really broke that first game open for us."

The Ironmen switched pitchers after Canda hit a homer off starter Jack Nikko, who took the loss after pitching six-plus innings, allowing six runs, five earned, on five hits with

four walks and a strikeout. Vermilion reliever Trevor Gomer gave up the home run to Deviney, then was able to pitch out of the inning after going up two walks with no more runs.

RRCC's five-run lead was cut to a pair in the bottom of the seventh after Ironmen catcher David Olson hit a three-run homer with two outs off of

Kunkel, who then got Nick Kutryb to strike out to end the game.

"Talon pitched a heck of a game," Koenig said. "He left one pitch up that got them back to that 7-5 (score), but found a way to stay with it."

In the field, the Voyageurs committed only one error, compared to six for the Ironmen.

RRCC 6, VERMILION 2
In game two, RRCC defeated Vermilion, 6-2.

The Voyageurs' Gino Strebing picked up the pitching victory working the first six innings, allowing a run on five hits while striking out nine. Jose Pedraza pitched the seventh inning to close out the game, giving up a run, a hit and a walk while striking out three.

"We just pitched consistent, solid," Koenig said. "We didn't give up a lot of freebies to Vermilion. We put the ball in play, they

Baseball to B2 ►

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Today's games

Boys baseball

North Woods at L-BF, 1:30 p.m.
I. Falls at Hermantown (DH), 4 p.m.

Boys golf

I. Falls at Pokegama Golf Course, 9:30 a.m.

Girls golf

I. Falls in ERC Championship at The Quarry at Giants Ridge, 2 p.m.

Girls softball

L-BF at Ely, 4:30 p.m.

Thursday's games

Girls golf

I. Falls at Virginia Invite, 10 a.m.

Women's softball

RRCC vs. Monroe Community College in DIII National Tournament at Rochester, 10 a.m.

Men's baseball

RRCC vs. Century College in Region 13 Tournament at St. Cloud, 11 a.m.

Track and field

I. Falls at Warroad Invite, 4:30 p.m.

Girls softball

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

Boys baseball

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

BOYS TRACK AND FIELD

Broncos finish 4th at O.J. Belluzzo Invitational

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The International Falls boys track and field team battled with the rainy weather and well as seven other teams Thursday in Chisholm, where the Broncos placed fourth in the O.J. Belluzzo Invitational.

Though the 3200-meter run didn't take place, the other 17 events were held as the rain fell.

Ely had the top score with 134 points, followed by Eveleth-Gilbert (112.25) Virginia (92.75), the Falls (78.5) and Mesabi East (66.5)

rounding out the top five.

The Broncos' only top finish came from sophomore Wyatt Helgeson, who won the rain-affected pole vault competition after being the only one to clear 8 feet.

"The weather may not have been the best, but I thought the team did well," Helgeson said. "The kids didn't let the weather bring them down and everyone did the best they could."

Falls sophomore Ethan Phung placed second in the high jump (5-8), where Helgeson tied for sixth at 5-2. Phung also came in third

in the triple jump (36-9.5), where junior Cole Tatsak placed sixth at 35-4.

Falls' 4X200 relay team comprised of Helgeson, Tatsak and seniors Jake Piekarski and Jakob Ettestad placed second in 1 minute, 41.4 seconds, 47-hundredths of a second behind Eveleth-Gilbert's top time.

Ettestad, freshman Nick Hedtke, junior Nehemiah Olson and senior Jake Piekarski placed third in the 4X100 relay (49.7).

"We had some nice team bonding time as we huddled up in the tent together trying

to keep dry," Olson said. "Despite the rain, we managed to do well."

Tatsak added third-place finishes in the 300 hurdles (46.5) and 110 hurdles (19.18). Skoglund came in sixth in the 110 hurdles (19.41).

Piekarski also placed third in the 400 dash (58.31).

Olson tied for fourth in the 100 dash (12.1) and placed fifth in the long jump (16-2.5). Ettestad added a sixth-place finish in the 200 dash (25.4).

Falls' 4X400 relay team

placed fifth in 4:27.5.

Prior to the North Sub-Section 7A meet May 21 in Hibbing, the remaining meets scheduled for the Bronco boys this week included being in Hibbing on Tuesday for the Iron Range Conference meet and an invitational Thursday in Warroad.

O.J. Belluzzo Invitational BOYS

Team scores: Ely 134, Eveleth-Gilbert 112.25 Virginia 92.75, International Falls 78.5, Mesabi East 66.5, Chisholm 63.75, Greenway/Nashauk-Keewatin 46.75, Bigfork 42.5.