

SPORTS



Emo Speedway

Racing twin bill for Rae Memorial Weekend

B3

QUICK HITS

Ross Johnson named head hockey coach

An assistant coach the past two seasons for the International Falls boys hockey team has become the new head coach.

The hiring of Ross Johnson for the head coaching position was approved Monday by the school board.

Johnson replaces Bruce Elson, who did not have his head coaching contract renewed by the board last month after two seasons in the position.

Johnson and Tom Biondich were Elson's assistants for both seasons, in which the Broncos compiled a 27-23-4 overall record and also finished 12-11-4 last season.

Falls athletic director Kevin Grover said Johnson received the unanimous recommendation of a four-person interview committee.

Grover said the Falls district will now be looking to fill two assistant boys hockey coaching positions with Biondich able to reapply.

He said he expects a recommendation for the assistant coaches will be forwarded to the board for consideration at its September meeting.

Assistant girls hoops coach being posted

The International Falls school district will be posting the assistant girls basketball coaching position for anyone to apply, though the teacher who held the position in 2012-13 could possibly return next season.

Falls athletic director Kevin Grover said the position is being posted in response to the school board's discussion Monday about a district policy being drafted related to the situation with teachers being out of the classroom to coach.

A recommendation to re-hire Jay Boyle as the assistant girls basketball coach had initially been tabled by the board in June when Shawn Gilbert received approval to return as the girls head basketball coach.

This past school year, Boyle, a math teacher at Falls High School, coached all three seasons while being the head football coach, an assistant girls basketball coach and an assistant track and field coach.

Boyle, who has already received board approval to return as the head football coach this fall, said he plans to reapply for the assistant girls basketball coaching position and wants to help out athletics in the Falls school district any way he can.

Though concern has been raised with the number of times teachers are absent from the classroom to coach, Grover said Boyle could return as the assistant girls basketball coach if he is the only one to apply or would clearly be the most qualified applicant.

"The best candidate is going to be recommended to the board," he said.



STAFF PHOTOS BY KEVIN BONESKE

A wave of swimmers runs into Rainy Lake at City Beach on Saturday morning to begin the Backus Rainy Lake Triathlon. This year's swimming, biking and running event attracted 61 individuals competing in all three stages and 32 others on relay teams.

2013 Backus Triathlon attracts 93 competitors

Running, biking and swimming event grows in second year

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

The second annual Backus Rainy Lake Triathlon held Saturday at City Beach benefited from warm, sunny weather while attracting

93 competitors entering the swimming, biking and running event.

"It went wonderful," said triathlon organizer Ken Krueger, who also entered the event himself. "We had really good weather."

The 2013 triathlon exceeded the number of entrants in last year's inaugural event by having 61 individuals — 23 males and 38 females — compete in all three stages and 32 others be part of relay teams — 10 three-person

teams and one two-person team.

Krueger said having a triathlon with a quarter-mile swim, an 11-mile bike ride and a 5-kilometer run worked well for attracting both experienced triathletes and those who entered the event for the first time.

The top overall individual, Ladd Ojala, 43, of Minneapolis, led from the moment he completed the quarter-mile swim around



Ladd Ojala, 43, of Minneapolis, exits Rainy Lake first after swimming a quarter mile to begin Saturday's Backus Rainy Lake Triathlon at City Beach. Ojala ended up with the top overall time in 1 hour, 2 minutes, 20 seconds.

Triathlon to B2 ►

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From left, International Falls juniors Teagan Anderson and Maddie Filipiak dig out the ball during a recent practice in the FHS gym. The Broncos open the season at home Thursday against Mountain Iron-Buhl.

Broncos seek top-four Section finish

Graduation losses include All-Conference players

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

After finishing 13-12 overall and third in the Arrowhead Conference last season, the International Falls volleyball team is seeking a top-four finish in Section 7AA for 2013.

The Broncos advanced to the second round of the Section 7AA Tournament in 2012 after sweeping

Eveleth-Gilbert, before seeing their season come to an end by being swept by Hermantown.

Erin Shikowsky enters her 12th season as Falls' head coach with graduation losses including a pair of All-Conference players — setter Reva Renollet, who signed a letter of intent to play junior college volleyball at Fergus Falls, and outside hitter Sara Christianson.

Other graduation losses include outside hitter Olivia Santee and defensive specialist Shawna Misner.

Shikowsky's list of top returning players includes senior right side hitter Hailey Fentem, junior middle hitter Tessa Walls, junior setter Teagan Anderson, junior middle hitter McKenna Rasmussen,

Broncos to B3 ►

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

L-BF seeks state trip in 2013

Vikings also aim to improve on 2012 record

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

After losing only two players to graduation from last year's team that went 20-4-1 and came within two matches of a trip to state, the Littlefork-Big Falls volleyball team is looking to do better in 2013.

The Vikings won both the Arrowhead Conference and Northern Lakes Conference titles in 2012 when their season came to an end in the Section 7A semifinals against Carlton.

Sarah Bradley enters her third season as L-BF's head coach with the key personnel losses from last season being graduates Courtney Pfeifer, an All-Conference outside hitter, and right side hitter Chelsey Ziemba.

Bradley's list of top returning athletes includes a trio of seniors who were All-Conference selections last season — middle hitter Abby Thompson, middle hitter DyAna Imhof and outside hitter Brooke Millerbernd, the team-voted most valuable player in 2012.

Other top returning players include junior setter Taylor Wendt and sophomore Libero Breann Larson.

"We have a very experi-



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

Littlefork-Big Falls senior middle hitter DyAna Imhof spikes the ball during a recent practice in the L-BF High School gym. The Vikings open the season at home Thursday against Mesabi East.

enced veteran team," said Bradley, who also noted the Vikings have a "number of girls who can play multiple positions and "have a very strong work ethic and love to compete."

In addition to seeking the Section 7A title and having a better record in 2013, Bradley said the Vikings' goals also include winning the Bigfork Tournament on Oct. 5.

"Because of the team's success (last) year, we were invited to play in a Showcase Invitational in Burnsville (on Sept. 20-21)," she said. "We will be playing

Vikings to B3 ►

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Thursday's games

Girls volleyball

MI-B at I. Falls, 7 p.m.

Mesabi East at L-BF, 7 p.m.

Saturday's games

Women's volleyball

RRCC at Fergus Falls

Tournament, 9 a.m.

Monday's games

Girls volleyball

I. Falls at Two Harbors, 6 p.m.

Tuesday's games

Girls volleyball

L-BF at Cherry, 7 p.m.