

SPORTS



Bronco wrestling
Hedtke, Rasmussen win in matches at Virginia
B2

QUICK HITS

Bronco girls hockey team 4th at Kaposia

The International Falls girls hockey team went 1-2 and finished fourth at last week's Kaposia Classic hosted by South St. Paul at Wakota Arena.

The Broncos opened the tournament Thursday with a 2-1 victory over South St. Paul, a top-10-ranked team in Class A.

"We played really, really good," said Falls head coach Gerald Bolstad.

Lexi Edwards and Amber Tilander scored the Broncos' two goals, while Kalaya McConnell stopped 22 of 23 shots to record the win in net.

The Falls lost Friday's game to Mounds View, a Class AA school, 5-2.

Tilander and Clara Palm each scored for the Broncos with McConnell recording the loss in goal after making 23 saves.

The Falls closed out the tournament Saturday by being shut out by Hill-Murray, a top-10-ranked team in Class AA, 6-0.

The Broncos trailed by two goals after two periods before Hill-Murray scored four times in the final 17 minutes.

McConnell stopped 36 of 42 shots in recording the loss in net.

The Broncos, whose season record now stands at 6-9, return to action Friday when they host Park Rapids.

Bronco boys hockey team falls to Hawks

Coming off three losses last week at the holiday tournament in Warroad, the International Falls boys hockey team lost its seventh game in row after falling Saturday at Hermantown, 11-1.

Jakob Eide scored the Broncos' only goal against the Hawks, who outshot the Falls, 52-12.

Kyle Sjoblom recorded the loss in goal for the Broncos, whose season record dropped to 3-10.

The Falls returned to action Tuesday night at home against Virginia/Mountain Iron-Buhl.

Tulsa Oilers release goalie Brady Hjelle

There is now only one player from International Falls remaining on the Tulsa Oilers' roster after the East Coast Hockey League team last week released goalie Brady Hjelle.

Hjelle played in his final game for Tulsa on Dec. 30

when he stopped 35 of 40 shots in the Oilers' 5-3 home loss to the Rapid City Rush.

Appearing in goal for nine games this season, Hjelle stopped 295 of 332 shots for a .889 save percentage and recorded one win, six losses and one shootout loss.

Hjelle, who started the season on the disabled list, had been one of two goalies on the active roster for Tulsa prior to his release. The Oilers have signed goalie Kevin Murdock, who played in net Saturday and Sunday.

Tulsa had four players from the Falls on the training camp roster before forward Ben Gordon retired to become an assistant coach at St. Scholastica and Ryan Cramer was released prior to the start of the season.

Forward Drew Fisher is the Oilers' only remaining player from the Falls following Hjelle's release. In 31 games this season, Fisher has 11 goals and 24 assists for 35 points.



Brady Hjelle

BOYS BASKETBALL

Broncos dominate Blue Devils 69-46

MI-B beats L-BF

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

Ben Humbert tallied 33 points with Clay Tomczak scoring 18 more Friday night to pace the International Falls boys basketball team to a 69-46 home victory over Virginia.

"A big win for us, probably one our biggest rivals, and we came ready to play and played a good game," said Broncos head coach Derek Dowty.

The Falls opened the game by scoring nine unanswered points against the Blue Devils, who had trouble scoring early on against the Broncos' man-to-man defense, and then pulled ahead to a 20-4 advantage.

"They were off on their shots a little bit, and I think that had to do with our defense," Dowty said.

After the Falls held a 26-16 lead at intermission, Virginia opened the second half with a 6-0 scoring run to pull within four points.

The Blue Devils came as close as three points in the second half at 33-30 when Ethan Youso banked a shot off the glass and into the basket, then the Broncos went on a 12-2 scoring run to pull in front by double digits.



From right, the Broncos' Allen Johnson (4) works the ball along the perimeter while being guarded by Virginia's Max Carlson in Friday's game in the Falls High School gym.

"They had their run in the second half, and we kept our heads up and kept battling and made a nice run back at them and kind of put them away at that point," Dowty said.

Virginia, which played without senior forward Ryan Cunningham, had two players score in double figures led by Tom Prittinen with 12 points and Ricky Sipila tallying 10 more.

The win improved the Falls' season record to 8-4 going into Tuesday's road game against Greenway.

MI-B 102, L-BF 69

In other boys basketball action Friday night, Littlefork-Big Falls lost at home to Mountain Iron-Buhl, 102-69.

The Vikings, who trailed 59-33 at halftime,

Broncos to B2 >



STAFF PHOTOS BY KEVIN BONESKE

From right, the Broncos' Clay Tomczak (32) shoots between Virginia's Ricky Sipila (30) and Tom Prittinen in Friday night's game in the Falls High School gym.

MEN'S BASKETBALL



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

At center, the Voyageurs' Sheldon O'Neal drives in the lane between Leech Lake's Jeremy Neadeau (32) and Joe Strong (41) in Monday night's game in the RRCC gym.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Giants tower over Vikings 63-49

L-BF now 4-3

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

The Littlefork-Big Falls girls basketball team started the new year on a losing note Monday night when the Vikings lost at home to Mesabi East, 63-49.

"We looked at times like we just had a two-and-a-half-week break from playing a basketball game, but that doesn't excuse that we've got to get better at rebounding the basketball," said L-BF head coach Dan Beste.

The Vikings, who trailed

36-25 at halftime, were down by nine points with about 7 minutes left in the game before the Giants went on a 12-0 scoring run capped off by a pair of free throws by Anna Ribich to lead 61-40 with 2:18 to play.

"We came back as well as we could (in the second half)," said Beste, who noted L-BF had a couple of girls out sick and a starter, junior guard Emily Knaeble, out with an injury.

"We just got tired, and we got in foul trouble as well. It just didn't play in our favor. Hats off to Mesabi East. They did a pretty good job."

Kaylee Kennedy ac-

counted for most of L-BF's scoring with a game-high 35 points. Ribich led the Giants with 28 points.

The loss dropped the Vikings' season record to 4-3 going into Thursday's home game against Kelliher/Northome.

ME 63, L-BF 49

ME 36 27 - 63
L-BF 25 24 - 49

ME: Britta Erie 11, Alyssa Belange 1, Emily Moiso 4, Emma Erie 8, Anna Ribich 28, Ava Hill 9, Isabella Kalb 2. Free throws: 13-18. Fouls: 9.

L-BF: Alexis Doucette 1, Breann Larson 3, Karly Swenson 6, Kate Knaeble 4, Kaylee Kennedy 35. 3-pointers: Kennedy 3. Free throws: 6-9. Fouls: 15. Fouled out: Larson.

RRCC maneuvers past Leech Lake

Voyageurs at 8-4

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

The Rainy River Community College men's basketball team returned to action Monday following the holiday break and defeated Leech Lake Tribal College, 101-91, in the RRCC gym.

"It was a win that we needed," said Voyageurs head coach Kristofer Babler. "Hopefully we got the bugs out before conference play starts."

RRCC, which had won 109-93 in the previous non-conference game between the two teams last month, took an early lead in the second matchup and pulled in front by as much as six points before the Lakers battled back to take the lead at 19-18 on a 3-point basket by Josh Redday.

LLTC pulled in front by as much as five points in

the first half as the lead changed hands with the Voyageurs able to land nine of 18 3-point shots when they closed out the first 20 minutes with the lead, which grew to as much as 11 points before they held a 49-44 advantage at intermission.

RRCC's 6-6 freshman forward, Antoine Tobias, made a pair of 3-point shots and scored all 11 of his points in the first half.

"(Shooting 3-point shots is) a huge point of emphasis for us - we are 0-3 in games that we've taken less than 20 3-point attempts," Babler said. "It's the future of the game - we're going to take advantage of it."

For the game, RRCC shot 12-29 (41.4 percent) behind the arc and 39-78 (50 percent) from the field overall, compared to LLTC shooting 8-18 (44.4 percent) from 3-point range and 35-59 (59.3 percent) from the field overall.

The Lakers regained the lead in the second half. They held a 67-63 advantage with 12 minutes to play before the Voyageurs went on an 8-0 scoring run capped off with a pair of free throws from Jammere Carlisle and never trailed again.

"Leech Lake is a really, really good basketball team - they just played Mesabi (Range) before the break and it was a six-point game," Babler said. "I think our guys just came in thinking they had this won, so luckily they came out in the second half with a little more energy, little more pizzazz, and we got the job done (Monday night)."

RRCC capitalized on turnovers in the second half with LLTC turning the ball over 13 times in the final 20 minutes, compared to six turnovers for the Voyageurs.

RRCC to B2 >



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From left, Mesabi East's Leah Panyan (43) works the ball along the perimeter while being guarded by the Vikings' Kate Knaeble (1) in Monday night's game in the Littlefork-Big Falls gym.