

SPORTS



NFC North Preview
Division has potential for plenty of points
B2

QUICK HITS

Thursday’s volleyball results posted online

Thursday night’s girls volleyball results involving the season-opening matches with International Falls at Mountain Iron-Buhl and Littlefork-Big Falls at Mesabi East are posted on the ifallsjournal.com website and will also be published in Wednesday’s paper.

Beste chosen as L-BF AD, girls hoops coach

The head baseball coach at Littlefork-Big Falls now has two more sports-related responsibilities.

The L-BF school board on Wednesday approved the hiring of Dan Beste as athletic director, a position he is taking over from Christopher Bachmeier, who has become the district’s superintendent, and as head girls basketball coach to replace John Larson, who left L-BF to accept a teaching job in Warroad.

Bachmeier said Beste, who has been the Vikings’ head baseball coach the past two season and also teaches social studies in the district, will now be teaching an hour less to allow him time to handle the athletic director duties.

In other board action Wednesday, Derek Bilben received formal approval as the head football coach, a position he previously held before Larson took over the program the past two seasons.

Group ends fight to change nickname

WARROAD (AP) — An organization that works to stop racism in sports is backing off its threat to sue a Minnesota school district over use of the Warriors name and logo.

Henry Boucha, an Olympic silver medalist and a former professional hockey player, is an Ojibwe American Indian from Warroad and said he spoke to the board of the National Coalition Against Racism in Sports and Media on Monday about the history of the Warroad Warriors name.

“Na-May-Poke, one of my great-great uncles, was awarded land through the land allotment in 1905. He was able to sell part of that land for the first Warroad school,” Boucha said. “He was a wise old man, because he asked the school, if I sell you the land, will you instill the name, Warroad Warriors?”

Boucha said the area’s name came about because it was part of the war trail during skirmishes between Ojibwe and Sioux peoples.

“Warroad is a significant place in the history of the Anishinabe and Ojibwe,” Boucha said.

The coalition threatened the school district with a lawsuit earlier this month, but has issued a new statement, according to Minnesota Public Radio News.

GIRLS SWIMMING AND DIVING PREVIEW

Broncos seek top 3 in IRC, state qualifiers

FHS numbers down with loss of key athletes

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

After having state qualifiers last year for the first time since 2005, one of the International Falls girls swimming and diving team’s goals in 2014 is to return athletes to the Class A State Meet.

The Broncos broke school records on the way to state last year. They qualified their 200-yard medley relay team comprised of Breanna Shofner, Blair Johnson, Abby Kostiuk and Emily Saari. Kostiuk was also an individual state qualifier in the 100 backstroke with Saari qualifying in the 100 breaststroke. New school records were set in all three events in respective times of 1:56.57, 1:03.4 and 1:12.28.

The Falls finished fourth at the Section 7A Meet when the team had 20 top-16 finishes. The top-eight Section finishers not among those qualifying for state included: Shofner, third in both the 50 and 100 freestyle; Shofner, Johnson, Kostiuk and Claire Herzig, fourth in the 200 freestyle; Emma Misner, fourth in the 100 butterfly; Courtney Klow, fourth in the 100 backstroke and eighth in the 100 butterfly; Misner, Tayler Hebner, Johnson and Klow, sixth in the 400 freestyle; and Jessie Hell, seventh in diving.

The Broncos also placed third in the Iron Range Conference/True Team Meet and recorded a dual meet record of 8-2, which included defeating Hibbing for the first time since 2002.

Jill Herzig, who last year was named the Section 7A Coach of the Year for the second time, is beginning her seventh season as Falls’ head girls swimming and diving coach.

The Broncos’ graduation losses include Shofner, who has been the team’s top short-distance freestyle swimmer in recent years, along with Johnson, Klow and Logan Amundsen.

Jill Herzig’s list of top returning athletes includes Kostiuk, Saari, Claire Herzig, Misner, Hell, Hebner, along with Anna Earley in the breaststroke, Carolann Stone in the freestyle and

STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

The Broncos’ Abby Kostiuk swims the backstroke during a practice last week in the Falls High School pool. Kostiuk, who is entering her junior season, set the school record last year in that event in 1 minute, 3.4 seconds.

backstroke, and Kylie Skallman in diving.

Though the Broncos return several swimmers with experience competing in the Section finals, Jill Herzig also noted the team’s numbers are down this year with the loss of key athletes to graduation.

She said the team goals this season include finishing with a 7-3 dual meet record, placing in the top three at the Iron Range Conference/True Team Meet, once again having 20 top-16 finishes at the Section 7A Meet and sending athletes to state.

Jill Herzig said she is looking forward this season to “watching the girls improve their times and

achieve personal goals” as well as having “a fun and exciting season.”

Herzig said the teams to watch out for in 2014 include Grand Rapids, Hibbing, Mesabi East and Two Harbors.

The Broncos open the season Thursday at Hibbing. Their first home meet is Sept. 4 against Eveleth-Gilbert.

WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL PREVIEW

RRCC seeks to crack MCAC North top four

Four sophomores return in 2014

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

After finishing one place short of qualifying for the Region 13B Tournament for the second year in a row, the Rainy River Community College volleyball team will be seeking to make it there in 2014 with a top-four finish in the Minnesota College Athletic Conference’s Northern Division.

The Voyageurs placed fifth in the MCAC North with a 5-9 conference match record and finished 7-21 overall in 2013.

Mel Millerbernd enters her 26th season as RRCC’s head coach with four players returning from last year’s team, from which the departing players include Libero Rachel Clark and hitters Emily Jerome, Andrea Barylski and Caseylynn Fulton. Clark led RRCC with 34 serving aces and also had 209 digs last season. Jerome led the team with 241 digs.

Millerbernd’s list of top returning players includes setter Tali Plate, who received MCAC North second-team and Academic All-State honors last season, and hitter Roneisha Jordan.

Plate recorded 435 serving assists last season for an average of 5.24 assists per game, fourth highest in the MCAC North. Jordan led the Voyageurs in 2013 with 52 blocks for an average of .65 blocks per game, fifth highest in the division.

RRCC’s other returning players include hitter Jordan Vezina of Bigfork and setter Megan Johnson of Dryden.

The incoming players include two hitters from Littlefork-Big Falls, Dyana Imhof and Brooke Millerbernd, the head coach’s daughter. Two other incoming players of note include Libero Jasmine Draper from Lake of the Woods and hitter Katie Langaas from Greenbush-Middle River.

Mel Millerbernd said the strengths of this year’s team include being energetic and competitive.

STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

At left, Voyageurs freshman hitter Dyana Imhof hits the ball over the net during a practice this week in the RRCC gym. Imhof is one of two Littlefork-Big Falls High School graduates on the team this season.

“Also, we have some very good hitters,” she said.

However, the head coach also noted that serving and blocking are weak-

nesses going into this season, which begins today at a tournament in Fergus Falls.

Mel Millerbernd said she is the most concerned this season with injuries and is looking forward to “watching a group of hard-working girls accomplish their goals.”

While the team will have to finish among the MCAC North’s top four to achieve the goal of advancing to the Region 13B Tournament, she said the teams to watch out for this season include the top-four division finishers from last season – Central Lakes, Northland, Mesabi Range and Itasca.

Central Lakes and Northland are ranked nationwide in the NJCAA Division III preseason top 10.

RRCC has a triangular meet Wednesday in Grand Rapids against Itasca and St. Cloud Community and Technical College before the first division match Friday in Cloquet against Fond du Lac. The Voyageurs’ first home match is Sept. 3 against Mesabi Range.

Broncos scrimmage at Sports Stadium

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The International Falls football team held an intrasquad scrimmage Wednesday morning at Sports Stadium in preparation for the 2014 season.

The Broncos have another scrimmage today at Virginia before opening the regular season at home next Friday against Eveleth-Gilbert.

The Journal will preview the International Falls and Littlefork-Big Falls football teams in next Wednesday’s paper. L-BF opens the season Thursday at South Ridge.



From left, the Broncos’ Tyler Coffield runs with the football while quarterback Riley Nemec looks on in Wednesday morning’s intrasquad scrimmage at Sports Stadium.

STAFF PHOTOS BY KEVIN BONESKE



The Broncos’ Ben Humbert jumps up to catch the football in front of Ethan Phung in Wednesday morning’s intrasquad scrimmage at Sports Stadium.

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Today’s games
Women’s volleyball
RRCC at Fergus Falls
Tourney, 9 a.m.

Monday’s games
Girls volleyball
Two Harbors at I. Falls, 7 p.m.

Tuesday’s games
Girls volleyball
Cherry at L-BF, 7 p.m.

Wednesday’s games
Women’s volleyball
RRCC vs. SCTC/Itasca in triangular at Grand Rapids, 5:30/7 p.m.