

SPORTS



Voyageurs baseball
RRCC wins 2 of 3 weekend games

B2

QUICK HITS

Auran scores in NCAA DIII third-place game

University of Wisconsin-River Falls women's hockey freshman forward Amy Auran of International Falls scored a goal Saturday when the Falcons defeated Norwich University, 4-3, to place third in the NCAA Division III National Tournament at Plattsburgh, N.Y.

Auran's unassisted goal at 11:26 of the third period tied the game at 3-3, before Kendal Evenson scored UWRF's game-winner at 17:21.

The Falcons finished the season with an overall record of 26-4-1. Auran, who appeared in all 31 games for UWRF, recorded two goals and three assists for five points.

DeBenedet named to the SIJHL first team

For the second year in a row, Fort Frances Lakers forward Lucas DeBenedet of International Falls has been named to the Superior International Junior Hockey League's all-star first team.

DeBenedet, who has played for the Lakers the past two seasons after graduating from Falls High School in 2013, led Fort Frances this season by averaging 1.45 points per game.

He finished second on the team in scoring with 58 points in just 40 games. DeBenedet had started the 2014-15 campaign with the Minot Minotauros of the North American Hockey League before rejoining the Lakers.

Fort Frances, which finished atop the SIJHL regular-season standings, went 28-1 this season in games DeBenedet registered at least one point.

The top-seeded Lakers are slated to begin the SIJHL playoffs at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Ice For Kids Arena in Fort Frances against the No. 4-seeded Thunder Bay North Stars. Game two of the best-of-seven semifinal series is set for 7:30 p.m. Saturday at Ice for Kids Arena.

Derek Dowty IRC Coach of the Year

Following this past season's Iron Range Conference boys basketball championship, International Falls head coach Derek Dowty has been named the IRC Coach of the Year.

Dowty, who finished his sixth season in charge of the Broncos' program, led the Falls in 2014-15 to the IRC title with a 9-1 conference record. The Broncos ended up 22-6 overall after losing their Section 7AA quarterfinal game to Deer River.

Three Falls boys basketball players were named to the All-IRC Team. They include senior forwards Ben Humbert and Jack Bartkowski and junior guard Clay Tomczak

GIRLS SOFTBALL PREVIEW

Broncos seek Section 7AA title

FHS with 13 players back

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

After closing out last season four games into the Section 7AA Tournament, the International Falls girls softball team has most of its players back and greater expectations for 2015.

The Broncos, who ended up 9-7 overall last year when they were eliminated in the section tournament after losing 13-12 to Virginia, have lost only one player to graduation, reserve fielder Chelsea LaVigne.

Kevin Gordon enters his 17th season as Falls' head coach with 13 players back from last year and all the starters returning.

"Most of the seniors on this team are in their third year as a starting player, so I would have to say that experience could be a strong point for us," Gordon said.

The players back in 2015 include the team's top pitcher, senior Teagan Anderson, who had a record of 7-4 last year with a 3.96 ERA and threw two shutouts. Anderson, who is in her third season as a starter, recorded 46 strikeouts and 15 walks last year.

The top-three hitters who played in 10 or more regular-season games have returned. They include:



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

In front, the Broncos' McKenna Rasmussen relays a throw during a practice earlier this month in the Falls High School gym.

■ Senior first baseman Meghan Tomczak, who had a .500 batting average and was the team leader in hits (20) and singles (16).

■ Senior shortstop Cassie Tomczak, who bat-

ted .475 and was the team leader in runs scored (18), doubles (7) and home runs (1).

■ Anderson, who batted .350 and had 13 singles.

Anderson, along with Meghan and Cassie Tom-

czak, had been named last year to the All-Arrowhead Conference softball team.

Other returning seniors include outfielder Stephanie Christianson, third baseman Ashley

Jonson, catcher Emma Johnson and outfielder/pitcher McKenna Rasmussen.

The returning juniors include outfielders Emily

Broncos to B2 ➤

GIRLS SOFTBALL PREVIEW



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From right, Vikings head softball coach Mike Imhof hits the ball while catcher Ellie Julson looks on during a practice last week in the Littlefork-Big Falls gym.

Vikings seek return to the Section 7A finals

L-BF graduates 2 power hitters

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

After finishing runner-up in Section 7A the past two seasons, the Littlefork-Big Falls girls softball team will be seeking to return to the section finals for the third year in row.

The Vikings, who finished with a record of 16-5 after losing the Section 7A championship to Cherry for the second year in row, also won the Northern Lakes

Conference title last year.

Mike Imhof enters his 13th year as L-BF's head coach with the key graduation losses from last season including a pair of power hitters.

Brooke Millerbernd, an infielder who also handled much of the pitching load in 2014, led the team with eight home runs. Infielder DyAna Imhof recorded six homers last season. Both now play on Rainy River Community College women's softball team.

Two other infielders who have graduated include Karli Little and Katie Fort.

Imhof's list of top returning players includes junior Amanda Nelson, who shared pitching duties last season with Millerbernd when they switched between the pitching circle and third base.

Four other juniors of note returning include catcher Ellie Julson, shortstop Emily Knaeble, outfielder Breann Larson and pitcher Karly Swenson.

The strengths of this year's team, Imhof said, include the return of "five solid starters."

Vikings to B2 ➤

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

Voyageurs win 5 of 6 at Irish Dome

RRCC now 5-6

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Rainy River Community College softball team wrapped up six games in two days late last week at the Rosemount Irish Dome by winning all three games Friday.

"We had a real good day," said RRCC head coach Dieter Humbert. "It was fun. The kids played well."

The Voyageurs' first game Friday was the only one of the three that day to go the full seven innings when they defeated Hibbing Community College, 2-0.

Deven Chandler pitched all seven innings to record the shutout victory, allowing only two hits with a hit batter while striking out six.

"Deven pitched a phenomenal game," Humbert said of Chandler's second shutout in two days.

In the field, RRCC committed four errors.

The Voyageurs, who scored both of their runs in the third inning, tallied nine hits for the game. DyAna Imhof singled and doubled with an RBI. Jaimie Shaw and Chandler also had two hits with a single and a double. Sierra Ramirez doubled and drove in a run. Megan Johnson and Karen Songergard each added a single.

RRCC 20, VERMILION 4

The Voyageurs pounded out 18 hits when they won their second game Friday



Deven Chandler



Brooke Millerbernd



Jaimie Shaw



DyAna Imhof

over Vermilion Community College, 20-4, in five innings.

Ramirez worked all five innings to pick up the pitching victory, allowing four runs, two earned, on four hits with four walks and a hit batter while striking out seven.

At the plate, Shaw had four hits with a double and three singles along with 4 RBI.

Three other RRCC players had three hits apiece. Brooke Millerbernd had a home run and two singles with 5 RBI. Imhof also homered and had two singles with 3 RBI. Ramirez doubled with two singles and had 5 RBI.

Chandler and Songergard added two singles apiece. Beth Austad also singled for the Voyageurs.

RRCC to B2 ➤

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Friday's games
Women's softball
RRCC vs. Riverland/Rochester at Rochester Dome, 9/11 a.m.

Saturday's games
Women's softball
RRCC vs. Ridgewater/Fergus Falls at Rochester Dome, 7/11 a.m.

Men's baseball
RRCC at Minnesota West (DH), 1 p.m.

Sunday's games
Men's baseball
RRCC at Minnesota West (DH), 11 a.m.

Tuesday's games
Track and field
I. Falls at BSU Little Amik Indoor, 1 p.m.