

# SPORTS

## QUICK HITS

### Local football playoff results posted online

Tuesday night's high school playoff football games involving International Falls playing at Two Harbors and Littlefork-Big Falls playing on the road against Kelliher/Northome took place after the production deadline for today's edition.

Results from those games are posted on the ifallsjournal.com website and will also be published in Saturday's paper.

### FHS spikers hosting Hibbing in playoffs

The International Falls volleyball team has received a No. 4 seed in Section 7AA and will open postseason play at 7 p.m. today in the FHS gym against No. 5-seeded Hibbing.

The Broncos, who have a season match record of 16-7, defeated the Bluejackets for the first time since 1980 when the two teams faced each other earlier this month.

The playoff winner will advance to Friday's quarterfinals to face the winner between top-seeded Greenway and No. 8-seeded Two Harbors with the highest remaining seed hosting the match at 7 p.m.

The quarterfinal winner will advance to the semifinals Oct. 28 at Duluth Denfeld. The Section 7AA title match is set to take place at Duluth Denfeld on Nov. 1 at 2 p.m.

### Steve Johnson approved as FHS head golf coach

All the head coaching positions for 2014-15 at International Falls High School have now been filled.

On Monday, the Falls School Board approved the hiring of Steve Johnson as the Broncos' head golf coach. Last season, Johnson was the assistant golf coach, a new position that was added in 2014.

Falls superintendent Kevin Grover said last season's head coach, Kelly Blair, a 2012 FHS graduate who is in her junior season playing for the Bemidji State University women's golf team, will not be available to continue coaching in 2015.

Blair last season had replaced Bill Mason, who was the head golf coach for 18 years.

Grover said the school district will now be seeking to fill the assistant coaching position following Johnson's elevation to head golf coach.

## GIRLS VOLLEYBALL PLAYOFFS

# Vikings sweep the Huskies in 7A opener

## L-BF to face MI-B tonight

BY KEVIN BONESKE  
Sports Editor

For the third time this season, the Littlefork-Big Falls volleyball team has swept a match over Bigfork.

The No. 5-seeded Vikings opened the Section 7A playoffs Monday night by winning at home in three straight games over the No. 12-seeded Huskies, 25-14, 25-16, 25-20.

"It feels good to get a win," said L-BF head coach Kim Wimmer. "On our first game in playoffs, you never know what to expect, but I thought we came out strong."

The Vikings, who had picked up their first match victory of the season Sept. 2 when they won at home over Bigfork in three straight games and then swept the Huskies in two straight games Sept. 27 at a tournament in Virginia, pulled away around the midway point of the first two playoff games to win and then struggled in game three before breaking an 18-18 tie en route to winning the game and match.

"The third (game) we struggled a little bit with passing," Wimmer said. "When you struggle with passing, it's hard to set up and get good approaches and good hits like we did in games one and two. I was proud that we stuck with it and were able to come back and get the win anyway."

The Vikings' statistical leaders included: Amanda



From left, the Vikings' Karly Swenson (12) and Bigfork's Brianna Haley (6) battle at the net in Monday night's Section 7A playoff match in the Littlefork-Big Falls High School gym.

Nelson, 10 kills and five ace serves; Karly Swenson, 10 kills; Breann Larson 19 digs; Emily Knaeble, 15 digs; and Taylor Wendt, 16 set assists and three ace serves.

L-BF, which improved its season match record to 13-11, advances to play at 7 p.m. today in a road playoff match against No. 4-seeded Mountain Iron-Buhl, which had lost the Oct. 9 regular-season match to the Vikings in four close games.

"We're going to have to bring our best game into Mountain Iron-Buhl," Wimmer said.

## WOMEN'S HOCKEY PREVIEW

# Voyageurs seek return to national tourney

## Previous head coach, three players back

BY KEVIN BONESKE  
Sports Editor

After not having qualified for the American Collegiate Hockey Association Division 2 National Tournament the past two seasons, the Rainy River Community College women's hockey team is seeking to get back there next March with a different head coach and a roster with only three returning players from last season.

Jeff Wickstrom, who had headed up the Voyageurs in the first three seasons of the women's hockey program – including the first season RRCC won a national title in 2007-08 – is back as head coach. He replaces Evan Amdahl after six seasons.

"I am excited to be back on the ice coaching after a few years break," Wickstrom said. "I am looking forward to a successful season with the girls. They are working hard and look good, and I think they would agree that it is going to be a good season."

The Voyageurs, who finished last season with a record of 5-8-1 in ACHA games, return two goalies from 2013-14 – Shay Perry of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, and Tori Taylor of Hokah. Last season, with four goalies on the roster, Perry had appeared in about half of the games.

Though both of RRCC's goalies this season have a year of experience on the



From right, Rainy River Community College women's hockey head coach Jeff Wickstrom speaks with goalie Tori Taylor at the end of last Wednesday's practice at Kerry Park Arena. Wickstrom, who headed up the Voyageurs in the first three years of the women's hockey program, replaces Evan Amdahl after six seasons.

team, only one of the 10 skaters – Taina Kaartinen of Eriksdale, Manitoba – is back from last season.

Half of the skaters the Voyageurs will have this season are from Fort Frances. They include Liz Henderson, Katie Sinclair, Hailley Clendenning, Shelby Tymkin and Shilo Beck.

"This year's team has a core group of girls that came from Fort Frances," Wickstrom said. "Last season those girls made it to their OFSAA (Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations) playoffs, which is similar to our state tournament. Their skills and chemistry will be a key part of our success this season, along with two veteran returning goalies."

However, with only 10 skaters and two goalies on



In front from right, the Vikings' Breann Larson (10) hits the ball while facing blocking opposition from Bigfork's Jessica Schmit (16) in Monday night's Section 7A playoff match in the Littlefork-Big Falls High School gym. Also shown in back, from right, are the Vikings' Emily Knaeble (1) and Amanda Nelson (9).

Today's winner advances to the Section 7A quarterfinals at 7 p.m. Friday to face the winner between top-seeded Hill City and

No. 9-seeded Chisholm with the highest remaining seed hosting the match.

The quarterfinal winner advances to the semi-

finals at 7 p.m. next Tuesday in Grand Rapids. The Section 7A title match is set for Nov. 1 at 4 p.m. at Duluth Denfeld.

## ECHL HOCKEY

# Oilers release Cramer, put Hjelle on 21-day IR

## Drew Fisher remains on active roster

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Though four hockey players from International Falls had signed to play for the Tulsa Oilers in 2014-15, only one player from the Falls will be on the active roster when the Oilers open the regular season Friday.

In addition to forward Ben Gordon recently announcing his retirement from pro hockey to accept an assistant coaching position with the St. Scholastica men's hockey team, the Oilers last week released forward Ryan Cramer and placed goalie Brady Hjelle on the 21-day injured reserve list, leaving forward Drew Fisher as the only player from the Falls to suit up for Tulsa in Friday's road game against the Allen Americans.

Cramer, who first joined the Oilers in 2011 after completing his senior year of college eligibility at Bemidji State University, has played every game of his pro career for the Oilers. He has recorded 85 points (41 goals, 46 assists) over 178 pro games.

In 2011-12, his first full season as a pro, 28-year-old Cramer posted career highs in goals (17), assists (21) and points (38). After putting up 33 points in 2012-13, he registered 16 points last season.

Hjelle, who was a pro goalie last season in Norway for the Rosenborg Elite Ice Hockey Club of Trondheim,

signed a pro deal for this season with Tulsa, which will place him on the active roster after being on injured reserve for 21 days, said Oilers media relations director Rob Loeber.

Loeber said Hjelle sustained a "minor injury" during training camp.

The 24-year-old Hjelle, who split his college hockey career between the University of Minnesota Duluth and Ohio State University, played his final season in college at Ohio State in 2012-13, then saw some playing time in the pro ranks as a back-up goalie for the East Coast Hockey League's Florida Everblades, before playing a full year professionally in Norway last season.

The Oilers are joining the ECHL this season after having been part of the Central Hockey League.

Tulsa presently has two other goalies, Mike Zacharias of Minneapolis and Kevin Carr of Unionville, Ontario, on the team's active roster.

Fisher, who also happens to be Gordon's brother-in-law, is entering his fourth pro season in Tulsa. He suited up for all 66 games last season and tallied 10 goals with 22 assists and 30 penalty minutes.

Fisher, who closed out his collegiate hockey career at BSU, began playing pro hockey with the Oilers at the end of the 2011-12 season. In the two years since his debut, the 27-year-old Fisher has played in 144 consecutive games with Tulsa.

## SPORTS SCHEDULE

**Today's games**  
**Girls volleyball**  
Hibbing at I. Falls in Section 7AA Tournament, 7 p.m.  
L-BF at MI-B in Section 7A Tournament, 7 p.m.

**Thursday's games**  
**Cross country**  
I. Falls in Section 7A Meet in Cloquet, Noon  
**Girls swimming/diving**  
I. Falls at Mesabi East, 4:30 p.m.

**Friday's games**  
**Women's volleyball**  
RRCC at Central Lakes, 6:30 p.m.  
**Girls volleyball**  
I. Falls/Hibbing winner vs. Greenway/Two Harbors winner in Section 7AA Tournament, 7 p.m.  
L-BF/MI-B winner vs. Hill City/Chisholm winner in Section 7A Tournament, 7 p.m.  
**Women's hockey**  
RRCC vs. North Thunder in CAN-AM Tournament at Bronco Arena, 7:15 p.m.