



Making moves

With older rosters, the Penguins and Capitals are making moves to stay contenders. B3

TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2023

Carroto commits to Pitt-Greensburg

Charleroi's Bella Carroto will be a Bobcat and continue playing soccer close to home.

By JEREMY SELLEW
jsellew@yourmvi.com

One of the Valley's highest-scoring girls soccer players has found herself a home next fall.

Charleroi's Bella Carroto announced this week that she'll continue her athletic and academic career nearby at Pitt-Greensburg.

"It's a beautiful campus and its academic programs and facilities blew me away," Carroto said. "Within the first hour of telling the coaches I was committed, the other commits and a bunch of players had texted me to congratulate me. It 100% cemented my decision and made me happy to be a part of the program."

The Bobcats are heading into the 2023 season coming off a 16-4-1 campaign with a perfect 7-0 record in the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference. The Bobcats also advanced to the NCAA Tournament.

Carroto was recruited by UPG head coach Chuck Wigle and assistant Chris Fabian. "Coach Wigle was very



Ben Bamford / MVI Sports

Charleroi's Bella Carroto will continue her playing career at Pitt-Greensburg next fall. Heading into her senior season, she has 77 career goals for the Cougars.

passionate and it was easy to tell how much he loved the game of soccer," Carroto said. "It's obvious he brings out the best in all his student-athletes. The team and staff have been so welcoming this summer and made

me feel I was already part of the team."

Carroto, who will major in biology, is a three-time All-Section performer for the Cougars. She has 77 career goals and 41 assists heading into her senior season.

She's a three-time Mon Valley Independent-BeeGraphix Fab 15 performer and finished in the top 10 of the WPIAL in scoring in two of her three seasons. She was an All-WPIAL honoree last season.

She did play Cup soccer for Beadling before deciding to end her traveling soccer career.

"I knew I didn't have the desire to play college soccer at the Division I level and I didn't want to play outside of the Pittsburgh area," she said. "Another big factor was the amount of school that I would have to miss due to travel."

Right now, Carroto is ranked second in her class of 112 students and carries a 4.54 grade-point average.

She added that she considered LaRoche and Seton Hill before setting her sights on Pitt-Greensburg.

"I really liked the campus, coaches and team at LaRoche," Carroto said. "It was a hard choice letting them down, however, I really felt like Pitt-Greensburg was where I had my heart set on. Plus it's a University of Pittsburgh education, one of the top out there."

Carroto said she's really looking forward to her senior season now that her commitment is behind her. Playing for the Cougars has come to mean a lot to her.

"Playing at Charleroi was a new experience for me," she said. "We had minimal numbers the past few seasons, which was hard to deal with

over a long season. It gave us all such a close bond, though, and that's something I will cherish forever. We all trust each other to do our part to be as successful as possible. It's tough, but it helped me grow as a player and leader."

The Cougars are about to get the 2023 season underway and Carroto is looking to build on her success at the high school level. Making her commitment frees her up to play with a clear mind and plenty of focus.

"I have to thank Coach (Tom) Cameron for pushing and believing in me throughout my career," she added. "He's just one reason that I have the opportunity to continue my career."

When her season is over, she knows she has what it takes and is prepared for the next step in her playing career.

"I can't wait to play this season with players that I began playing soccer with since youth soccer," Carroto said. "I've played against many of my future teammates in Cup soccer, high school and indoor tournaments. They're all great competitors that I'm familiar with. I look forward to working with them in the future to see what we can accomplish together."



Steelers General Manager Omar Khan looks on as wide receiver Calvin Austin runs past him during a drill at training camp at St. Vincent College.

Chaz Palla / Trib Total Media

Austin looking to become 'well-rounded' receiver

By JOE RUTTER
Trib Total Media

Barring the same type of unexpected — and unfortunate — injury that ruined his rookie season, wide receiver Calvin Austin will make his professional debut Friday night for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

After suffering a foot injury on the eve of the 2022 preseason opener, Austin eventually needed surgery and spent the entire year on injured reserve.

Now healthy and flashing the type of playmaking skills that led the Steelers to using a fourth-round draft pick on him, Austin is just days away from hitting another marker in his recovery when the Steelers play at Tampa Bay.

Austin, though, isn't looking that far ahead, which is probably smart considering his injury last summer occurred during a walk-through the day before the first exhibition game.

"I haven't," Austin said Sunday when asked about suiting up for the first time in a game. "I'm really just

thinking about this practice. I have to make this practice the best one."

Then, Austin went out and made a deep reception on a pass from Kenny Pickett, beating slot corner Chandon Sullivan down the right sideline for a completion that went for a touchdown.

"It definitely has been an emphasis," Austin said. "I've made some plays down the field, and I have to continue to do that."

It was another in a series of plays this summer that has brought a smile to the face of wide receivers coach Frisman Jackson, who, like Austin, joined the Steelers organization a year ago.

"We saw some of that (last year), but you really see it now," Jackson said. "One year of growth and development has helped. He's had to sit back, watch, lift weights and get stronger. He's bigger, he's stronger, and you can see the confidence he has in himself now."

Austin was the second receiver the Steelers drafted in 2022, following the selection of George Pickens in the second round. While

Pickens was the camp darling last year with his spectacular one-handed catches, Austin was holding his own for the first two weeks before his injury.

Until that point, the 5-foot-8, 162-pound Austin was on track to earning a spot as the team's slot receiver. Armed with his 4.32 speed in the 40-yard dash, Austin was getting open on a consistent basis.

The speed that could have been sapped from his foot injury has returned for Austin this summer, and he has evolved into a more well-rounded receiver by making plays all over the field — and not when the Steelers ask him to go deep. "I've seen him making some catches running across the middle that gives us confidence he's not just an outside-the-numbers, vertical-speed guy," Jackson said. "He's got to continue to get better. We're starting to see some other things flash."

"We've also got to find a way to get him the ball

AUSTIN • B2

Looking back at the MVISBL, Pens' trade and trade deadline

This year in the MVISBL, a pair of teams continued their tear through the boys and girls divisions at Marx's Court Time Sports Center in Elizabeth Township.

On the girls side, AMD Industries won their third division title while making their fourth straight appearance in the championship game. A day later, the boys from Elite Physical Therapy repeated as champions by winning in their third straight title game appearance.

Led by head coaches Bria Rathway and Vada Epps, AMD and EPT proved that depth is the most important thing you can have in the MVISBL.

AMD was led by player of the year Mallorey Daly, who doubled as defensive player of the year, but they were so much more than a one-player show. Avery Davis provided consistent secondary scoring, while everyone else simply embraced their roles and did whatever it took to win games.

Bella Klobucar, Brianna Dawson, Emily Eisenberg, DaShae Cochran, Leila Marchinsky, Saylor Lee, Chloe Zombek and Makayla Canty were all important to the championship win.

While AMD didn't have a ton of double-digit scoring threats, EPT did.

Led by boys division MVP Notorious Grooms, EPT featured seven players who averaged more than 10 points per game. They each played an unselfish brand of basketball and embraced Vada Epps' defense-first mentality.

Both divisions were filled with talented players and teams, but it was clear that AMD and EPT were the most well-rounded of the bunch.

Congratulations to this year's champions.

Karlsson a huge get for Pens

I don't have a ton to say about the Penguins acquiring Erik Karlsson. Obviously, it's always a great thing when you can get a three-time Norris Trophy winner and a future hall of famer.

Kyle Dubas, who officially stepped into the general manager role on Thursday, should be applauded for his ability to make the deal happen without having to include Pierre-Olivier Joseph, a 24-year-old defenseman who many thought would have to be involved in the trade for it to happen.

I expected draft picks to be included and I knew some players were going to depart, but Dubas deserves credit for making it hap-



José Negron

pen while shipping away Mikael Granlund and finding a way to keep POJ in a Penguins uniform.

I think this has to be one of the best trades in franchise history. Talking with a friend of mine, he ranked the Ron Francis trade as the cream of the crop, while listing the deals for Phil Kessel and Jarome Iginla near the top of his list.

No arguments here.

No surprises at deadline

I know the trade deadline has come and gone in Major League Baseball, but a week later, I'm still confused as to why some Pirates fans on social media were surprised by the trades involving Rich Hill, Ji-Man Choi and Carlos Santana.

At the beginning of the season when those players were signed, I thought it was universally understood that their time in Pittsburgh was going to be short lived. They were signed as rental players brought in to take up space until it was time to go elsewhere.

I'm sure the Pirates would have kept them around, especially Santana and Hill, if they were in contention to make a playoff run this year, but that isn't the case.

Ben Cherington did the right thing in dealing those three, while keeping the likes of Mitch Keller and David Bednar.

Even the Rodolfo Castro trade is one I don't necessarily have a problem with, especially with the amount of middle infielders the Pirates have.

Speaking of the Pirates, I will say I'm enjoying seeing the younger guys get their opportunities. I think everyone has to be patient with the process, as there are going to be some inevitable growing pains. But it is nice to see some of them having immediate success.

Let's just hope there are better days ahead.

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Jeremy Sellw
Sports Editor



José Negron
Assistant
Sports Editor

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High school roundup

A number of area teams opened their fall sports seasons over the week-end. B2

MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2023

Today On...



SPORTS WEBCAST

High School Volleyball
Charleroi at Frazier, 7 p.m.

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Charleroi may have found missing piece

Freshman defender Aryana Chiplaskey joins the fold for a Cougars team that has plenty of offensive firepower with Bella Carroto and McKenna DeUnger.

By JEREMY SELLEW
jsellew@yourmvi.com

With a smaller roster than he would have liked the past few seasons, Charleroi girls soccer coach Tom Cameron knows it's all about having the right pieces in place.

This season, he's hopeful the missing piece is finally in place.

Charleroi returns the offense in seniors Bella Carroto (77 career goals, 40 assists) and McKenna "Boots" DeUnger (69 goals, 24 assists).

While the offense is exciting, it's the defensive addition of freshman Aryana Chiplaskey that may have Cameron even more excited for what could be.

"She's a special player as a freshman," Cameron said. "From our two scrimmages, I think the biggest thing is she has to get used to playing in high school games with high school rosters instead of Cup soccer with a lot of the highest-caliber players surrounding her."

"She has a very high IQ back there because she's played at a high level. She can make runs, she can take goal kicks, corner kicks ... a lot of things a normal freshman can't do."

Cameron said Chiplaskey is gaining confidence quickly and it has



Charleroi's Bella Carroto and McKenna "Boots" DeUnger enter their senior seasons with a combined 146 career goals. Ben Bamford / MVI Sports

led to a lot of trust building between her and her varsity teammates.

"I have her playing a deep sweeper, she's running our defense back there with seniors Cam (Musser) and Ella (Sypolt). That's allowed us to do some other things," Cameron said.

Sypolt and Musser have devel-

oped into a tough defensive unit as they approach their senior season.

"Just their maturity as young ladies is what really stands out," Cameron added of the pair. "Their IQ for the game continues to grow and their work ethic is great. They'll do whatever they have to do and always give you 100%."



One of those other things the Cougars will be able to do now is allow Taylor Ramsdell and her big leg to move back up into the midfield.

"Taylor is a really talented player and with her moving up into the formation, it's really going to make us that much harder to defend," Cameron said. "Boots is a handful up

there, and adding Taylor is just going to give us more skill to deliver the ball and move up in the attack."

Carroto, who is aiming to hit the 100 career-goal mark this season, has committed to play soccer at Pitt Greensburg. She's been a fixture at off-season workouts and has taken

CHARLEROI • B3



Natalie Lamenza, last year's MVI Fab 15 Player of the Year, is back for her senior season at Thomas Jefferson after scoring 25 goals last season.

Mike Darnay / MVI Sports

High expectations exist for TJ girls

By LIAM BELAN
lbelan@yourmvi.com

The Thomas Jefferson girls soccer team won 17 games last season, but it suffered three losses to a WPIAL and state champion in Moon, a state-playoff qualifier in Latrobe and a difficult section foe in Elizabeth Forward that put a bit of a damper on such a strong season.

First, the Jaguars went down 2-0 against Moon, a team that conceded just three goals and scored 99 goals en route to a 26-0 record. After the Elizabeth Forward loss was a season-ending 3-0 loss in the district quarterfinals against the Wildcats, as they made program history.

Needless to say, the Jaguars ran into a bit of bad luck last season. This year, coach Sean Richter likes what he's seeing as his squad is showing chemistry at the right time.

"I think things are just coming to-

gether where we're getting the right mix of girls who have played together for a long time and understand the system and the work rate we're trying to achieve, and it's coming together," Richter said. "That being said, we also lose some significant help and some senior leadership like Bella Kozar and Jordan Sinclair."

"But I'm confident that we have the girls to step right in there and keep us competitive at the same time."

Among those difference makers are senior Natalie Lamenza, who is back after a 25-goal season, junior Olivia Della Lucia, who controls the midfield and often dictates the tempo of matches, sophomore Sami Maglico, who went under the radar, according to her coach, and sophomore Aubrey Little who plays at a high level in club soccer with other Jaguars players.

The senior class includes Sierra Frisoli, Abby Ngugi, Katie Sukal, Karolyn

Day, Kennedy Alava, Emma DeSimone, Alexis Marcinko and Liz Price. The juniors are Ashlynn Fry, Savannah Baker, Toni Blosl, Annmarie Graham, Aislin Majoris, Alissa Tarpey, Addison Fenlock, Cassidy Lamarca, Sylvia Kashak and Marie Beatty.

"There are a lot of girls that can make an impact," Richter said. "The hardest part is figuring out how the puzzle is built and how we can get the right players in the right places."

Richter said the older players have helped to implement the culture that he's envisioned for the program since taking over in 2020. The team's captains are Lamenza, Della Lucia, Fry and Frisoli, with Richter crediting the group as leaders that have maintained standards that he wants the Jaguars to embrace.

"What was able to happen with Olivia and Ash coming in as freshmen was

TJ • B3

Serra volleyball eyes more success

By ADAM BREWER
MVI Sports

The 2022 season was a successful one for the Serra Catholic volleyball team.

The Eagles captured 18 wins, went 12-0 in Section 4-1A, finished as the WPIAL runners-up in Class 1A and advanced to the state playoffs.

But despite all those accomplishments, winning the Class 1A Title is still something that is on the minds of veteran coach Keith Trahan and the Eagles.

"We had a lot of talent last year," said Trahan, who is entering his 13th year with Serra. "We had a good mix of players. A lot of experienced players, but also a lot of underclassmen that made a difference. We were very deep last season. We were not afraid to go 10 deep in most of our matches."

"But that title game loss to Frazier hurt. We did not play our best, and when you do that against a great Frazier team, you get that result. Serra has never won a WPIAL title in volleyball, so that is still our goal. We know it's going to be tough because there are still some quality teams in Class 1A this season."

Of their three losses last year, one was the 3-0 sweep to Frazier in the title game, and the others were a 3-2 non-section setback to Kiski Area and another 3-2 thriller in the first round of the PIAA playoffs on the road against Oswayo Valley.

One of the Eagles' biggest wins a season ago was in the Class 1A semifinals against perennial championship contender Bishop Canevin.

Serra only lost four seniors from that squad, and depth looks to be a strong suit again for the Eagles as they currently have 22 players on their roster.

The Eagles will have plenty of experience, as the squad will be led by eight seniors.

"Those eight seniors have seen a lot of playing time together," Trahan stated. "A lot of those seniors are three, four-year starters. They have been through it all on a volleyball court and know how to handle their emotions. We are excited for them to lead us this year."

A strong passing game and a dependable offense will once again be the Eagles' calling card in 2023, and that will be led by the play of senior setter Emerson Trahan.

"We run our offense through Emerson," Coach Trahan expressed. "She is a great leader out there and has a very calming presence about her on the court. She is very composed out there. She also has tremendous hands and is very athletic with a high volleyball IQ."

Emerson was first team all-section, as well as a member of

SERRA • B3

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CHARLEROI FROM B1

a leadership role along with DeUnger. “She was all in all summer long, even before she made her college commitment,” Cameron said of the senior forward. “She came to all the workouts and made it fun for the younger players. We had low numbers, but so it goes in Class 1A soccer. But she stepped right up and led them. “Boots is the same way. She’s really led by her effort. She never wants to stop. She didn’t want to come out of our scrimmage. She’s 100 miles per hour all the time. We love that effort.” Sophomore Anna Kondratowicz and junior Fernanda Andrade will move into the mid-field with Ramsdell and junior Mylie French and Caroto will be atop the formation. Rhianna Grogan will be on the outside. “Rhianna can not only put the ball in the net, but she has a really strong left leg,” Cameron said of the junior forward-midfielder. “We’re hoping her being on the outside that she can deliver a big cross into the box.” Lilly Withers and Lita Zelinsky will find themselves on the other side of the formation. Senior Addison Conrad returns between

the pipes at goalkeeper. “I said when she was a freshman that she was going to turn into one of the best in goal,” Cameron said. “I think she’s there. She was all-section last season and I think she’s capable of being an All-WPIAL keeper. She has good hands and she’s not afraid to come out of the net. Her positioning and lines are so much better. Her punches and punts are so much better. Her confidence is really up and she really trusts Aryana running that defense. If she stays healthy, she can be one of the best.” Another addition Cameron made to the squad this season is bringing Brooke (Rebar) Ramsdell on as the assistant coach. “The girls all respect her and we have a good working relationship. We’re communicating well,” Cameron said. “She was a heck of a player in her day and she’s giving her input and making suggestions. She’s going to be a great addition to the team and on the bench.” So far in the preseason, Cameron likes what he sees from his Cougars. “We’ve looked all right. I mean, we have 14 kids, so it’s going to be a matter of us staying

healthy,” Cameron said. “We’re going to do our best, but we do have some goals we want to fulfill and it starts with winning games. “If we can keep them healthy, I think it’s a given we should be in the playoffs. It’s still a tough section,” Cameron said. “I’m not going to predict a championship or anything.” The Cougars return to Section 2-1A with the likes of defending champion Chartiers-Houston, Waynesburg Central, Bentworth, Monessen, South Allegheny and Beth-Center. “I think it’s going to be a very competitive section, just like it was last season. I think we all match up pretty evenly,” he said. “Chartiers-Houston and Waynesburg didn’t lose too much. South Allegheny returns a bunch of seniors and I don’t care how young Tyler (Hamstra) says he is, he has a great program at Bentworth and they’re going to be tough. We can’t sleep on Monessen, either, and I know Beth-Center has a new coach, I’m sure they’ll be improved. “There’s going to be a lot of competitive games and I don’t think either team is going to run away with it. A 9-3 team could very well win this section.”



Bob Smith / MVI Sports
Charleroi goalkeeper Addison Conrad was an all-section selection last season.

TJ FROM B1

their work rate, their commitment and their leadership became so visible, you can’t deny it,” he said. “Now they’re juniors in the same role getting better, and you have to be on board or move out of the way. “That’s the culture I’ve wanted. You have to have this environment that everyone’s buying in, inspired, motivated and playing hard, or it’s really hard to balance. This is one of those years. I’m not saying this is our best team or the best players, but we’re more cohesive as a unit. There’s more buy-in, the work rate is a little bit higher; it’s just a better soccer culture for what we want to accomplish.” The Jaguars want to accomplish a lot. According to Richter, the list starts with trying to repeat as section champs, but he’s hoping for even more. Early matches against Canon-McMillan, West Allegheny and Franklin Regional will gauge

where the team is at. “We gotta get in that second-level tournament game and that state game,” he said. “Scheduling-wise, I tried to give us strong teams so we know where we’re at, but you have to win that second playoff game, put your name out there and get into something bigger. “I would rather go 12-7 and learn and compete like dogs and be successful in the playoffs than go 15-0 and not be ready for what’s coming. I look at where we were maybe not as prepared as they were (last year), and that’s what I take into this season. We know what the top of the food chain looks like. What do we do? What are the steps to get there? That’s our approach. Does much change tactically? No. We need to be better, faster, stronger.” But they will have to get through Section 2-3A first. The section of Elizabeth Forward, Ringgold, Belle Vernon, Connellsville, Lau-

rel Highlands, Albert Gallatin, Uniontown and TJ still features a lot of strong teams. The section lost some top players, so the Jaguars will look to take advantage before looking to make a run in the district playoffs and beyond. “Belle Vernon loses a big piece, so it’s gotta change the way they play,” Richter said. “I look for them to come out with a different look, so that’ll be interesting. I think Ringgold, they didn’t lose much and they have a new coach, so I think they’ll get better. “Elizabeth Forward will be interesting. They don’t lose anything and they come back with (new coach) Sotiri (Tsourekis) who’s a good coach. He’s been around and I know he knows what he’s doing, so I’m excited. I look forward to the challenge. You want to play good teams and you want to be pushed or it’s really hard to maintain a high level for your own team.”

SERRA FROM B1

the first team WPIAL Class 1A squad. Junior libero Cassidy Trahan is also back, and she is also coming off a season where she was first team all-section and Class 1A. Other key contributors coming back this fall are senior defensive specialist Caitlyn Cooley (second team all-section), senior hitter Olivia Hussein (first team all-section/second team Class 1A) and senior hitter Maria Goldstein (second team all-section). Senior Brianna Battles, who also was a force for the Serra basketball team, will see some action in front of the net to add more depth as a hitter. “These girls are very comfortable playing together,” Coach Trahan said. “They have played as a unit a lot over the last couple of years. We expect to be deep and get contributions from some younger kids

as well. We want to be a ball control offense and have our top players touch the ball. It starts with Cassidy and Caitlyn digging the ball to Emerson, and then Emerson setting up the right hitter at the net.” Serra has been utterly dominant in section play over the years, as they have won their last 24 games in section play and are 58-2 in section play since 2018. “We have always put a strong emphasis on section play throughout the years,” Coach Trahan pointed out. “I think we have won the section 10 out of the last 12 years. Before you make a playoff run, you’ve got to first win your section and get a good seed. We have been in some pretty competitive sections over the years, and I think that level of play has only helped us in the playoffs.” Rounding out Section 4-1A this year will be Greensburg Central

Catholic, Leechburg, Riverview, Saint Joseph, Springdale and Trinity Christian. After officially opening the season at the Butler Tournament on Sept. 2, the Eagles will start section play on Sept. 5 at home versus Riverview. Some of Serra’s key non-section games this fall will be against South Allegheny (Sept. 18), Kiski Area (Oct. 2), Seton LaSalle (Oct. 9) and South Park (Oct. 16).

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TJ rolls over BVA
Head coach Sean Richter's Jaguars were impressive in their section win. B2

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High school boys soccer

Chartiers-Houston at Charleroi, 7 p.m.

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Frazier starts title defense, sweeps Cougars

Defending Class 1A champions handle Charleroi – 25-19, 25-20, 25-18 – with balanced offensive attack.

By JEREMY SELLEW
jsellew@yourmvi.com

The Frazier volleyball team opened up defense of their WPIAL Class 1A championship in impressive fashion Monday, picking up a 3-0 sweep over visiting Charleroi at Henry DiVirgilio Field House.

The Commodores (1-0) won by scores of 25-19, 25-20 and 25-18.

While it wasn't the prettiest game on either side of the net, with both teams committing numerous hitting and service errors, Frazier head coach Mandy Hartman was proud to see her team back on the court in dominant fashion.

"As ugly as it was at times, if I wasn't in this position before, I'd be concerned. But I know the things I saw in this game were things that are going to clean themselves up as we move on, even within the next week," she said. "We just weren't as sharp as maybe I thought we'd be."

Coming off a championship in the Chartiers-Houston tournament over the weekend, Charleroi coach Ashley Abbott thought she'd see a little more from her team coming in with a little momentum.

"Just a lot of errors all over the court," Abbott said. "I always say

we have to trust our defense. Then offensively, we were giving them free ball after free ball, and against a good offensive team you just can't do that. I thought the back of their formation was wide open and we couldn't get the ball to our hitters."

Frazier, carried much of last season by Jensyn Hartman and Braylin Salisbury, looks a lot different this year with the ability to attack from all over the court.

"I think that did bother us a little bit. Last season, they were a little more deliberate," Abbott said. "I'm not sure I expected Gracen (Hartman) as an outside hitter. (Maddy Salisbury) was left-handed, and it took us a while to adjust to that. It wasn't a clean game for us defensively. We didn't get to practice after the weekend and I think it showed."

Frazier took a 7-1 lead in the first set before three errors and a Sofia Celaschi kill cut its lead to 7-5. The Cougars (0-1) pulled even at 10-10 before six straight points highlighted by a pair of kills from junior Grace Vaughn made it 16-11.

Kyra Short, who led the Cougars with nine kills in the match, had a kill and an ace to cut the lead back down to 17-15.

The Commodores' Addison Schultz responded with a kill and four service points – two aces – to make it 22-15. Frazier ended up winning the set, 25-19.

"Addison Schultz was big for us



Mike Darnay / MVI Sports

Frazier's Maddy Salisbury slams down one of her SEVEN kills during the second set of the Commodores' win over visiting Charleroi Monday.

all night," Hartman said. "I was really comfortable knowing that if we got her the ball, she was going to win us a point. She played well at the net and from the service line."

Neither team led by more than three points in the second set until

late when Frazier broke open a 13-13 game and made it 19-13 with a 6-0 run.

A hitting error by Charleroi's Alexa Pro led to four service points from Gracen Hartman. She reeled off an ace and Salisbury added a kill

and a big block in the run.

Charleroi was able to cut it down to 22-19 after a Commodores' hitting error, but Vaughn ended the set with a kill to give Frazier a 2-0 lead.

"Kyra played great on the outside, but we had issues getting the ball to our setters," Abbott said. "We couldn't get any runs going because we hit long or wide."

The third set went to the Commodores, aided by an 8-1 lead to start it off behind the serving of Vaughn. She finished with five aces and a total of 14 service points.

Short helped cut the lead to 8-5 with a kill and pair of aces, but the Commodores wouldn't let the Cougars within three points for the remainder of the match.

Molly Yauch led the Frazier defense with 20 digs from the libero spot, while Gracen Hartman (15) and Allie Monack (10) combined for 25 assists.

Schultz (8) and Salisbury (7) combined for 15 kills. Four Commodores had over six kills in the match.

"We'll sharpen things up. All the errors will clean up as we get deeper into the season and I don't think it will take us long. But I did like what I saw from a lot of these girls," Hartman said.

The Cougars jump into Section 3-2A action tonight at home against Southmoreland. Frazier is off until the weekend when they'll play in the Franklin Regional tournament.



Jenn Codeluppi / MVI Sports

Bentworth's Jesse Laskey (8) and Charleroi's McKenna DeUnger battle for a bouncing ball during Monday's match.

DeUnger's brace leads Cougars

McKenna DeUnger had a pair of goals to lead Charleroi to an important section win at Bentworth.

By JOSE NEGRON
jnegron@yourmvi.com

Charleroi kicked off its Section 2-1A slate with a hard-fought victory in its season opener Monday night.

The Cougars benefitted from a two-goal performance by McKenna DeUnger, a late insurance tally from Bella Carroto and a defensive unit that managed to fend off Bentworth for a 3-1 win at the Bearcats' athletic facility in Ellsworth.

"Every time we play them, it's a hard-fought game," Charleroi head coach Tom Cameron said. "I respect (Bentworth coach) Tyler (Hamstra). He's a great guy, a great coach and he always has his team ready to play."

"The girls did what they had

to do. We didn't do anything special, but we did what was necessary to come away with a win on this field."

DeUnger's first goal came with 7:20 to go in the first half. The senior standout, who entered the season with 69 career goals, belted a ball after it trickled between a few Bearcat defenders. DeUnger's shot sailed to the right of Bentworth keeper Cassidy Sicchitano and into the back of the net for a 1-0 Cougars lead. Taylor Ramsdell was credited with an assist on the goal.

Charleroi maintained that edge at halftime and struggled to generate chances in the early going of the second half.

A little over midway through the frame, DeUnger gave the Cougars some much-needed momentum. Ramsdell delivered a cross pass that DeUnger placed into the back of the net with a header for a 2-0 edge.

"That was a fabulous play," Cameron said. "If you wanted to make a film on heading, there it was. It was perfect."

The Bearcats were held without a shot in the first half before compiling seven shots in the opening 10 minutes of the second.

While the home team managed to consistently maintain possession in its attacking third, all of the shots produced were either wide of the net or high over the cross bar.

"There was a 20-minute stretch there in the second half where we were the better team," Bentworth head coach Tyler Hamstra said. "We couldn't capitalize, but I'm still very proud of this team."

The Bearcats finally cashed in with just under 15 minutes left. That's when freshman Bella Moyer netted her first career varsity goal with a shot she chipped past Charleroi keeper Addison Conrad. Fellow freshman Alexandria Jackson picked up a

helper on the tally.

"Bella's a very good player and she was obviously somebody I knew was going to help us this year," said Hamstra, who played a number of freshman in the season opener, including Jackson, midfielder Madelyn Johns and defender Megan Keturakis.

"Bella was very active early on and I knew she was due to eventually cut loose, which she did on that goal."

Charleroi tallied an important insurance goal with 8:15 remaining.

Senior Bella Carroto, a Pitt-Greensburg recruit, found the back of the net off a feed from Rhianna Grogan to give the Cougars a two-goal cushion. Carroto now has 78 goals in her high school career.

Bentworth resumes play at Waynesburg Central Wednesday, while Charleroi hosts Chartiers-Houston.

Ringgold girls drop opener to Connellsville

By JASON BLACK
For MVI Sports

Although the Connellsville girls soccer team didn't have all the right connections in the first half of Monday's section opener against visiting Ringgold, the Falcons kept the pressure on for most of the match and were rewarded with a big second half and an important 5-2 win.

Emma Tikey scored a pair of goals and Molly Gillott, Claudia Prinkey and Rylee Leasher also found the back of the net as the Falcons topped the Rams in a Section 2 (3A) match at Connellsville Stadium.

"We played well," Connellsville coach Jeff Puskar said. "We had a boat-load of missed opportunities (early), but we are building."

The win pushes Connellsville to 2-0 on the season.

"This is a good second step and getting that first section win is always big," Puskar said. "We're still figuring out who we are, but we are taking steps forward and getting better."

In this match, it was the Rams (0-1, 0-1) who struck with the opening tally as Imani Arnold benefitted from a Connellsville giveaway. Arnold found herself wide open off of a Falcons' turnover and was able to blast a shot into the goal for a 1-0 Ringgold advantage.

But Connellsville struck back quickly as Gillott raced down the left sideline, cut toward the goal and scored to make it 1-1.

Then with 13 minutes left in the half, Tikey found the back of the net off of a corner kick to put Connellsville in front, 2-1.

Connellsville could have had a bigger lead, but a few missed shots,

coupled with some big saves from Ringgold keeper Emily Doleno kept it a one-goal game at the half.

But in the final 40 minutes, the Falcons (2-0, 1-0) were dominant and put three more balls into the back of the cage.

Winning keeper Sarah Tinkey made a big save early in the second half, which seemed to spark the Falcon offense.

Tikey was able to give Connellsville some breathing room as she tapped in a shot off a nice rush from Leasher to make it 3-1. Then just a few minutes later, Prinkey knocked home a shot off of a throw-in to give Connellsville a 4-1 edge.

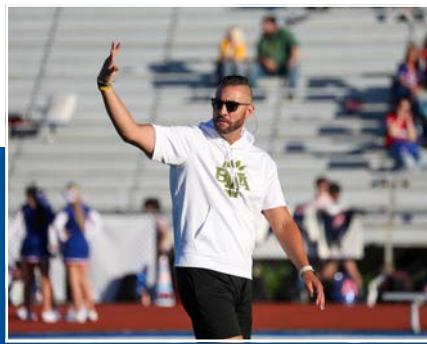
Connellsville's last goal of the night was perhaps the nicest of the bunch as Leasher beat a couple of defenders with her speed through the middle of the field,

RAMS • B2



Jason Black / For MVI Sports

Ringgold's Sophie Poland (left) looks to maintain possession against the Falcons' Addison Bandemer during Monday's game at Connellsville Stadium.



Sportlight
Belle Vernon Area
should benefit from its
tough non-conference
slate. B3

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

Today On...



**SPORTS
WEBCAST**

High school volleyball
Riverview at Serra Catholic, 7 p.m.

Watch Local Sports Live On <https://www.meridix.com/channel/?liveid=mvlive#/>

Cougars top Leps at Sasko Classic

Bella Carroto scored two goals and McKenna DeUnger added another to lead Charleroi to a 3-1 win over Belle Vernon Area.

By JEREMY SELLEW
jsellew@yourmvi.com

Playing at the Paul Sasko Memorial Classic Saturday, the Charleroi girls soccer team picked up a Valley rivalry win, and a personal one for their head coach Tom Cameron.

After a “less than amicable” split between Cameron and the district after a section-title winning season, Cameron’s Cougars picked up a 3-1 win over the Leopards on “The Beach” at James Weir Stadium.

“It was a good win for us, considering I don’t think we played our best soccer,” Cameron said. “But I think our defense’s speed was a factor and I thought we were better offensively than they were.”

Bella Carroto scored a pair of goals and McKenna DeUnger added the other to lead the Cougars’ offense.

“Well, we didn’t show up,” Belle Vernon coach Tracy Lovett said. “We didn’t decide we wanted to come out hard until the 50th, 55th minute. We didn’t win 50-50 balls, we didn’t win on goal kicks and we showed a lack of aggressiveness and most importantly, physicality.”

The Cougars took a 1-0



Jeff Helsel / MVI Sports

Charleroi’s McKenna DeUnger battles for possession with Belle Vernon Area’s Chessa Mertz during Saturday’s game in the Paul Sasko Memorial Classic.

lead into the half thanks to Carroto’s first goal.

Fellow captain Taylor Ramsdell sent a free kick in on goal from 13 yards out on the right side. Leopards keeper Abby Showman got a hand on he shot, but she left a juicy rebound that Carroto followed up as it was rolling toward the net.

“I told the girls coming in that (Abby) is a good goalkeeper, but she gives some

rebounds,” Cameron said. “Good things happen when you get the ball to the net or into the box.

“It says a lot about Bella’s soccer intelligence. She just instinctively knows were to be. That goal was all about her being in the right place at the right time.”

It wasn’t until nearly 40 minutes later that McKenna DeUnger got into the scoring act for Charleroi (3-0).

The senior midfielder made a great run that began beyond midfield. When the ball got away from her, she kept giving chase as BVA’s Kalin Lezama’s clearing attempt hit the legs of DeUnger. She carried the ball into the box and beat Showman low to her left for the second goal.

“That was a dynamic run and just speaks to the player Boots is,” Cameron said. “She knew she could block

that clearing attempt and she finished it off with a great goal.”

Just under 10 minutes later, Cameron’s squad got another “dynamic run” as he called it.

Defender Cam Musser sent a long ball up the right sideline for Carroto to run under. She used one touch that turned around BVA defender Saylor Lee and ripped a shot past Showman for a 3-0 lead.

The Leopards were finally able to get on the board with 13:39 remaining on a goal by Willa Zarichnak. She put home a rebound off of Charleroi keeper Addison Conrad off a cross from Danika Lee.

“It was good to get on the board there, but we have a lot of work to do,” Lovett said. “We had a lot of turnovers and we missed a lot of chances to get the ball through and send girls on runs. That’s one thing we’re definitely going to be working on. We gave up a lot of corner-kick chances and shots at the net. We looked good for maybe 20 minutes but we have to work on our possession and getting more offense.”

Conrad finished with 9 saves for the Cougars. Showman had 8 stops for the Leopards.

Cameron said his team’s performance has been a work in progress and he sees that they’re finally finding the confidence in themselves when they take the field.

“This has been the culmination of three years of work.

We have 14 girls. They go out there and give it there all every game,” he said. “They do everything I ask of them and I’m so proud of them for getting this win.”

SUNDAY
Belle Vernon Area 1, Kiski Area 0

The Leopards (1-3) bounced back from Saturday’s defeat to earn their first win of the season against Kiski Area (2-2) on the final day of the Paul Sasko Memorial Classic.

Ava Scalise scored BVA’s lone goal in the first half, while Abby Showman went on to make 10 saves.

The Leopards resume play at home against Connellsville Wednesday.

Charleroi 3, Connellsville 1

McKenna DeUnger netted two goals and Rhianna Grogan scored one more to guide the Cougars to another victory at the Paul Sasko Memorial Classic.

Bella Carroto chipped in with three assists, as the Cougars (4-0) put three goals on the board for the fourth straight game.

Haley Washington scored the lone goal for Connellsville (2-3) off an assist from Madison Fitzgerald.

Charleroi travels to Beth-Center on Wednesday.

EF boys soccer hopes to get back to 2A playoffs

The Warriors have 18 underclassmen on their roster.

By JOSE NEGRON
jnegrn@yourmvi.com

A strong crop of young players are featured on this year’s Elizabeth Forward boys soccer team.

The Warriors, who are 1-1 to start the season, have a roster that features 15 freshmen, three sophomores, six juniors and just two seniors.

While EF is relying on an abundance of youth this fall, the expectations are high for head coach Doug Finke.

“We have a lot of new guys, but we returned a decent amount of starters,” Finke said. “I definitely expect us to push for a playoff spot.”

EF’s season began with a 3-1 setback at the hands of South Park on Aug. 29. The Warriors then earned their first victory of the new campaign two days later when they defeated Steel Valley, 4-1.

Junior Carson Ruffing has helped carry the load offensively for EF, scoring three

EF • B3



Mike Darnay / MVI Sports

Will Sinay is one of Elizabeth Forward’s two senior captains. He has a goal and two assists through the team’s first two games of the new season.

HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP



Dylan Klinger scored two goals in the second half of Charleroi’s 3-2 win over Belle Vernon Area at the Paul Sasko Memorial Classic on Saturday.

Mike Darnay / MVI Sports

Strong second half leads Charleroi past BVA

By the Mon Valley Independent

Charleroi scored three second-half goals en route to a 3-2 rivalry win over Belle Vernon Area in non-section play at the Paul Sasko Memorial Classic at James Weir Stadium Saturday.

Dylan Klinger scored two goals to lead the way for the Cougars, while Gage Patterson added another.

BVA led 2-0 with 20 minutes to go in the game.

Trevor Kovatch scored both goals for the Leopards, who bounced back with a 6-2 win over California (1-2) on Sunday. The Trojans suffered a 5-1 setback against Connellsville Saturday with Darryl Ray having the team’s lone goal.

In his team’s triumph over California, Kovatch scored four times for BVA (3-1). Mason Yeschenko and Anthony Sawa added goals, while Jackson Coneybeer, Brandon Yeschenko, Mason Yeschenko, Nick Walsh and Jackson Pressel each had helpers.

Charleroi (4-0) finished off a perfect weekend by defeating Connellsville, 7-0, Sunday.

Bryce Large and Ethan Hartley tallied two goals apiece. Joel Chambers, Luke Mazon and Klinger also found the back of the net.

Adding assists were Patterson, Jake Chambers and Hartley.

Charleroi resumes play at Beth-Center today, while BVA hosts Waynesburg Central. California hosts Beth-Center Thursday.

ROUNDUP • B2

KNOW YOUR TEAM

Team MVI



Jeremy Sellew
Sports Editor



José Negron
Assistant Sports Editor

To get your sports scores into the **Mon Valley Independent**, call or email our Sports Department. 724-314-0040 or sports@yourmvi.com.



Bucs win series
Pittsburgh rallied past the Brewers to take two of three games. B2

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

Today On...



SPORTS WEBCAST

Volleyball - Thomas Jefferson at Belle Vernon, 7 p.m.

Watch Local Sports Live On <https://www.meridix.com/channel/?liveid=mvlive#/>

Warriors play for Beinlich, shut out Rams

Giovanna Ferraro scored twice and Brooklyn Baldensperger added a goal and assist for EF.

By JEREMY SELLEW
jsellew@yourmvi.com

Playing for their injured teammate Abby Beinlich Wednesday, the Elizabeth Forward girls soccer team returned from their eight-day hiatus in impressive fashion at Ringgold's Joe Montana Stadium.

Giovanna Ferraro scored a pair of goals and Brooklyn Baldensperger notched a goal and assist to lead the Warriors to a 4-0 win over the Rams in Section 2-3A action.

All wearing warmup shirts reading "Warrior Strong" with a heart with the name "Abby" across it, the Warriors played a disciplined, physical game against the Rams. It was a performance head coach Sotiri Tsourekis was happy with, especially the play of his back line, which allowed only six Ringgold shots at the net and three on frame.

"We work on a lot of defensive principles and we want to bring a lot of aggressiveness," Tsourekis said. "There's a lot of discipline and a lot of leadership on that back line. We have a lot of big, strong girls that are multi-sport athletes. They're high-level athletes and our goal is to make Addy Davis as comfortable as she can be back there in the goal."

The Warriors fired off 14 shots on goal and 22 shots in all. Ringgold keeper Emily Doleno did her best to keep her team close until things snowballed in the second half.

"They were very disciplined all over the field," Ringgold coach Ed Rosensteel said. "We knew coming in and playing against Sotiri that was what we were going to see. We had opportunities, but once we got to the final third of the field, things just kind of fell apart."

The game was close, much like the last meeting between the teams last season. The Warriors (2-0, 2-0) led 1-0 at the half on Mia Valerio's goal on a nice feed into the middle just inside the 18-box by



Mike Darnay / MVI Sports

Elizabeth Forward's Mia Valerio (2) celebrates scoring the opening goal with teammate Brooklyn Baldensperger in the Warriors' 4-0 win at Ringgold Wednesday.

Baldensperger.

"The one thing that the Lord has blessed us with on this team is a lot of speed. Abby was quick and strong, but without her, we have

a lot of other players and young players that are ready to step up when needed. Mia is fast, Brooklyn was all over the place and Giovanna was moving well," Tsourekis

said.

Rosensteel said he liked where his team was at, just needing a quick goal in the second half to change the game around, but instead, the

quick goal went to EF.

Leilanna Speney carried the ball into the final third and sent a pass across to Ferraro. She carried the ball around one defender and fired a shot from 20 yards out that deflected in off the left post to make it 2-0.

"Once they got that second goal things just went downhill," Rosensteel said. "They did what they wanted to do and stretched us out and we lost our discipline in the back and couldn't offset their speed. We weren't where we were supposed to be and they beat us to the ball."

With just under 12 minutes remaining, Baldensperger made it 3-0 after a soft header by Terza found its way to her feet and she ripped it over top of Doleno.

The senior keeper finished with 10 saves for Ringgold (3-2-1, 2-2).

"We stress playing the ball first when it comes to using our physicality," Tsourekis said. "I think it showed in each of our goals where our girls really used their size to their advantage. I thought we

EF • B2



Jenn Codeluppi / MVI Sports

South Allegheny's Abby Allan carries the ball as Bentworth's Bella Moyer defends during Wednesday's game.

HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP

Gladiators remain unbeaten

By JEREMY SELLEW
jsellew@yourmvi.com

South Allegheny kept within a half game of first place Wednesday with a hard-fought 1-0 win at Bentworth in a Section 2-1A thriller in Ellsworth.

Ava Martorelli scored off an Abby Allan assist to give the Gladiators (4-0, 2-0) all the scoring they would need thanks to the steady play of Ella Lotz in goal.

Lotz finished with seven saves to get the clean sheet, while Bentworth's Cassidy Sicchitano did her job in net for the Bearcats, finishing with 10 saves.

"We had a few starters out tonight, but we've had close ones with SA over the last few years," Bentworth head coach Tyler Hamstra said. "I'm really proud of how hard we fought. We had

a really good 20 minutes, but couldn't make them pay. (SA) got a fluke bouncing-ball goal.

"We responded well in the second half and threw everything we could at them and couldn't get the equalizer. The young team is playing well, just learning how to win games."

The Bearcats (2-3, 1-2) will travel to East Allegheny Saturday for a 1 p.m. start in a non-section game. The Gladiators host Chartiers-Houston Monday in a section matchup.

Charleroi 6, Beth-Center 2

Bella Carroto scored twice and Taylor Ramsdell and McKenna DeUnger each scored a goal and assisted on another as the Cougars (5-0, 3-0) remained unbeaten early in the season.

Rhianna Grogan and Mylie French

each found the back of the net for Charleroi.

Kendall Welsh had a goal and assist and Paige Gilbert scored a goal for the Bulldogs (1-3, 0-2).

Charleroi will host McGuffey Saturday at 3 p.m. in non-section play.

Connellsville 3, Belle Vernon 1

The Leopards remained winless in section play Wednesday as three different scorers registered goals for the visiting Falcons (3-3, 2-1) on "The Beach."

Hailey Washington, Grace Bosnic and Addison Bandemer each found the back of the net for Connellsville.

The lone goal for the Leopards (1-4, 0-3) came off the foot of Ava Scalise,

ROUNDUP • B3

SPORTS STEW

Ruey recalls some of the Valley's best athletes

By WAYNE STEWART
For MVI Sports

Speer Ruey played one year of basketball, and two seasons of football at what he called the "monster position, like a free safety or a roving linebacker."

The president of his senior class of 1968, he also spent all three of his Donora High School years on the baseball team.

With his background, who better to share thoughts on some of the Valley athletes he saw and competed against.

"The best curveball pitcher I ever saw was Jimmy Parsons at Donora High. What's ironic about that is when we played Little League, I caught him and I could read him like a book," Ruey said. "And that curve was almost unhittable – it broke a few feet."

"When I played PONY League,

Bernie Galiffa was his catcher. I just sat on Jimmy's fastball because he didn't have an outstanding fastball, so I hit him pretty well."

Parsons once held Ruey's team to five hits and Ruey had four.

"The other guys were biting on his curve, but I just let them go," Ruey said. "He played Legion ball with us with the Charleroi Magicians."

One of the fastest pitchers that he remembers was Vic Worry at Bellmar.

"I batted against him when I was a sophomore. Ed Miller was a good pitcher for them, too," Ruey said. "They could really bring it."

Another Valley star was Donora's John Peltz, a slick infielder out of the Class of 1967. Ruey said he was virtually guaranteed to make any team he tried out for "because he was that good."

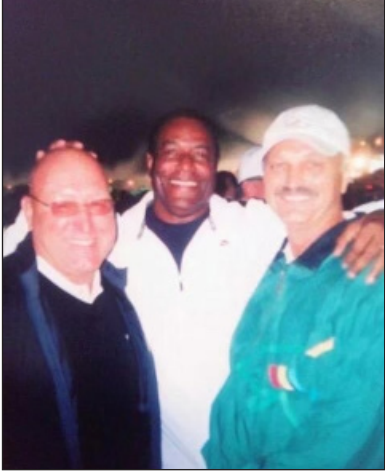
One outfielder Ruey singled out was Jack Lundy.

"He was one of the smoothest center fielders – he looked like Andy Van Slyke out there," Ruey recalled. "Everything was real fluid with him. He robbed a home run off me once and I ended up marrying his sister."

As for the high school basketball scene, Ruey called Dragons' star Galiffa "the best passer, by far. He made people look silly. I'd say he was the best shooter, too."

Sticking with Dragons, Ruey added, "Another one of the best shooters I saw was Dennis Lomax, who had a great jump shot. Rick Booth was an excellent shooter. Inside the paint 'Simmie' Keith James, had a real nice jump shot, and Kenny Griffey had a great shot."

Ruey's sharp memory took him to many schools around the Valley, and that included Monongahela's John Radic, who was also a good running back on the gridiron.



Submitted

Speer Ruey (left), Ken Griffey and Bernie Galiffa.

"I remember Chuck Roman from Monessen who was a really good shooter," Ruey said. "They didn't have much of an offense, so he kind of took over. And there was a re-

ally good ballplayer named Junior Wilson for Belle Vernon and Rich Planey, too.

"Gene Belczyk was a three-sports star at Belle Vernon. In baseball, he had a real strong arm and he could fly in the outfield. The top four athletes I ever saw and played with were Ken Griffey, Bernie Galiffa, Malcom Lomax and Belczyk."

Ruey is also proud of another Donora athlete, his father, a man who exemplified Western Pa. blue-collar pride and grittiness.

"My dad played (defensive) end on the 1932 Donora Dragon team when they defeated Monongahela, 7-6. He was about 5-8, probably about 150 pounds. He blocked two punts in the game on a frozen field. It was like 15 degrees, and he caught the winning pass to end the game."

STEW • B2

KNOW YOUR TEAM



Jeremy Sellow
Sports Editor



José Negron
Assistant Sports Editor

To get your sports scores into the **Mon Valley Independent**, call or email our Sports Department. 724-314-0040 or sports@yourmvi.com.



Bucs top Yankees
The Pirates avoided a three-game sweep with a 3-2 win at PNC Park. B3

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2023

Today On...



SPORTS WEBCAST

High School Soccer

Girls - Elizabeth Forward at Thomas Jefferson, 7 p.m.

Watch Local Sports Live On <https://www.meridix.com/channel/?liveid=mvlive#/>

Mistakes hurt Cal in loss to No. 14 Shepherd

By JOSE NEGRON
jnegrone@yourmvi.com

California had plenty of offensive firepower on Saturday afternoon.

The Vulcans finished with 570 yards of total offense and featured a 400-yard passer, a 200-yard receiver and a running back who nearly surpassed the 100-yard plateau. Mistakes came back to haunt them, though.

Cal committed three turnovers, including one with five-plus minutes remaining, and allowed 14 unanswered points in the final six and a half minutes of a 44-34 loss to No. 14 Shepherd at Adamson Stadium.

The Vulcans (1-1), who also surrendered a special teams touchdown in the second half, lost a fumble and Davis Black threw an interception on back-to-back drives in the first quarter before Black's second interception led to a game-clinching touchdown for the Rams (3-0) in the fourth.

"I thought we improved from last week, but we gave them too many," California head coach Gary Dunn said. "We just made too many mistakes to beat a good football team."

Shepherd trailed 34-30 before taking the lead for good with around 6:30 remaining in the game.

Quarterback Seth Morgan, who completed 26 of 33 passes for 326 yards and



Nate Kurtz / California Athletics

California running back Bobbie Boyd breaks a tackle for extra yardage during Saturday's game against No. 14 Shepherd at Adamson Stadium. Boyd, a McKeesport graduate, had 97 yards and a touchdown in the Vulcans' 44-34 loss.

four touchdowns, capped off a seven-play drive with a 6-yard touchdown pass to Jeremiah Taylor in the corner of the end zone. An extra point by James Bozek allowed the Rams to take a 37-34 lead.

Cal look to respond on its next possession, but it ended prematurely, as a pass from Black was a bit overthrown and went off the hands of Eric Willis III. It landed in

the hands of Shepherd defensive back Donte Harrison, who returned it to the Cal 31-yard line.

Seven plays later, Morgan was in the end zone following a 1-yard touchdown run that capped off the scoring and put the game out of reach.

"It's not an excuse, but we're playing a lot of young kids, and we've got to grow up quick," Dunn said. "We're

making way too many mistakes on both sides of the ball and on special teams. You're not going to beat a 14th-ranked team in the country when you make the kind of mistakes that we did."

The team exchanged leads throughout the second half, as Cal held a 21-17 advantage at halftime.

On the lone play of the Vulcans' second drive, they extended that lead.

Black connected with Willis on a bubble screen and the 5-8, 160-pound sophomore receiver did the rest, taking it to the house from 95 yards out to make it 28-17 in favor of Cal.

The touchdown grab was one of two on the day for Willis, who also scored on a massive 91-yard touchdown in the second quarter.

Willis, who finished with 273 yards as a freshman last year, posted the second-most single-game receiving yards in school history by finishing with six catches for 274 yards. He was just eight yards shy of the mark set by Garry Brown in 2014.

"Eric is dynamic and we look to find ways to get the ball into his hands," Dunn said. "For him to have six catches for 274 yards is incredible."

Omari Hopkins led the Vulcans with seven catches and totaled 73 yards with two touchdowns. Demonte Martin had five catches for 56 yards.

"We need to get more guys involved. I thought Omari Hopkins had a good game, but we need other guys to step up," Dunn said. "We can't have just three receivers, we need other guys to contribute in crucial spots."

The excitement from Willis' second long touchdown reception was short lived, as Cameron Dornier returned the ensuing kickoff 96 yards for a Rams touchdown, cutting

the deficit to 28-24.

Four minutes later, Dornier was on the receiving end of a 49-yard touchdown pass from Morgan that made it 30-28. Dornier had a team-high nine receptions for 124 yards and two touchdowns, including a 27-yard reception in the final minute of the first half.

Cal answered Dornier's second touchdown reception with 9:33 to go in the fourth when Hopkins from 2 yards out to allow Cal to momentarily regain the lead at 34-30.

"You can't turn the ball over twice going into the red zone, you can't give up a kickoff return for a touchdown and you can't give up big plays. That was the story of the game, but I'm still super proud of the way the kids battled and competed."

Shepherd held an early 10-0 lead after a 25-yard score from Morgan to Kordell Batten in the first quarter and a 43-yard field goal by Bozek in the opening minutes of the second.

Then, Black began to heat up under center for the Vulcans.

In his second start donning the black and red, Black completed 19 of 31 passes for 411 yards and four touchdowns.

He threw for two touchdowns in each half, adding a 22-yard strike to Hopkins with just over a minute left in the half.

"Davis is a gamer. He

CAL • B4



Bella Carroto netted four goals in Charleroi's 9-1 victory over Yough in nonsection play Saturday.

Bob Smith / MVI Sports

WEEKEND ROUNDUP

Charleroi cruises behind Carroto, DeUnger hat tricks

By the Mon Valley Independent

Bella Carroto and McKenna DeUnger combined to score seven goals in Charleroi's 9-1 victory over Yough in a non-section affair Saturday morning.

Carroto found the back of the net four times in the first half, while DeUnger added three goals of her own in the frame. Charleroi (6-1) took a 7-0 lead into halftime before Taylor Ramsdell and Aryana Chiplaskey scored second-half tallies.

Adding assists for Charleroi were Carroto, DeUnger and Ramsdell each with two, and Rhianna Grogan, Anna Kondratowicz and Camryn Musser with one apiece.

Katelyn Slavick scored the lone goal for Yough (3-5) in the second half off a feed from Jesse Dermotta.

Charleroi travels to South Allegheny tonight, while Yough hosts Mt. Pleasant.

Thomas Jefferson 10, Uniontown 0

Cece Wessel netted a hat trick and was one of six different goal scorers, as Thomas Jefferson (6-1, 5-0) claimed a Section 2-3A win over Uniontown (3-5, 0-4) in shutout fashion.

Anna Kondos and Sami Maglicco each scored twice, while Natalie Lamenza, Aubrey Little and Kennedy Alava had one goal apiece.

Maddy Gula, Olivia Frisoli and Annmarie Graham combined for the shutout in net.

TJ hosts Elizabeth Forward tonight in a battle for first place in the section.

ROUNDUP • B4

SPORTLIGHT

It's time for Pat Narduzzi to be held accountable

By JEFF OLIVER
MVI Sports

In Pat Narduzzi's first six years as Pitt's coach, his results on the field were lukewarm, at best.

The Panthers were more mediocre than successful.

But over the last two seasons, it appeared Narduzzi was not only turning the corner with the program, but also starting to look like the long-term answer at Pitt.

And in one game, he has lost just about all credibility, he has with me anyway.

In his ninth season, Narduzzi should be held accountable for his decision not to pull quarterback Phil Jurkovec at any point of Saturday night's disappointing 17-6 loss to West Virginia.

As bad as Jurkovec played in last week's loss to Cincinnati, there was absolutely no excuse for Narduzzi to stick with the journeyman quarterback Saturday.

Jurkovec completed just 8 of 20 passes for 81 yards and three interceptions. He failed to get the Panthers into the end zone all night.

Without a doubt, at the bare minimum Narduzzi should have started the second half against WVU with Jurkovec on the bench. Six quarters of frustrating offense should have told Narduzzi that it was time for a change.

Is Jurkovec the only quarterback on Pitt's roster?

The embattled Panther quarterback looked lost most the night, misfiring on most of his attempts. And the play calling seemed to show even Pitt offensive coordinator Frank Cignetti Jr. was having his doubts because while they were losing the entire game, the

Panthers seemed more content on running the ball.

I'd like to know what Narduzzi saw over the previous six quarters of Jurkovec's play that made him think going into halftime his quarterback was going to break out in the second half.

Fans are blaming the loss on Jurkovec because he was so horrible.

But the bulk of the blame lies squarely on the shoulders of the coach who kept trotting a beleaguered player out there time after time.

I always thought the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over expecting a different result.

Well, Pat Narduzzi coached insanely Saturday. He denied his team a fighting chance to win because he kept calling the number of a player who clearly can't get the job done — at least he has not shown the ability to the last two weeks.

No way should the Pitt coach get a pass for not trying anything different to give the Panthers a chance to win Saturday night.

I'm not saying it's a fireable offense, but it does deserve an explanation.

• It might be a little exaggerated to say the second contest of the NFL season is a "must win" game. But if tonight's home game with Cleveland isn't a "must win" game for the Steelers, it is still crucially important not to lose.

After last week's embarrassing performance in front of the home crowd against San Francisco, a similarly poor effort tonight could signal that this team is nowhere near the contender many people felt it would be going into the season.

SPORTLIGHT • B2

KNOW YOUR TEAM



Jeremy Sellow
Sports Editor



José Negron
Assistant Sports Editor

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LOSS • B2


Mike Darnay / MVI Sports


RIVALS • B2


Mid Mon Valley All Sports Hall of Fame


Arnold “Pope” Galiffa is shown during his time with the Army football team.





**JEREMY SELLEW**


**JOSÉ NEGRON**


**LIAM BELAN**

**ALEX LYONS**

**ADAM BREWER**

**BRIA RATHWAY**

**TAYLOR ANDRISKO**

**BELLA CARROTO**

T.Jefferson at BVA	BVA	BVA	BVA	BVA	Jags	Jags	Jags	BVA
Knoch at E. Forward	EF	EF	EF	EF	EF	EF	EF	EF
Cen. Cath. at North Alle.	CC	CC	CC	NA	NA	NA	NA	CC
Upper S.C. at Peters Twp.	Peters	Peters	Peters	Peters	Peters	Peters	Peters	Peters
Hempfield at P-Trafford	Hempfield	Hempfield	PT	PT	PT	PT	PT	PT
Ohio State at Notre Dame	Irish	Buckeyes	Irish	Buckeyes	Buckeyes	Irish	Buckeyes	Buckeyes
Ga. Tech at W. Forest	Wake	Wake	Wake	Wake	Wake	Ga. Tech	Wake	Wake
W. Chester at Millersville	West Chester	West Chester	M'ville	West Chester	West Chester	M'ville	M'ville	M'ville
Fla. State at Clemson	Noles	Noles	Noles	Noles	Clemson	Noles	Noles	Noles
Saints at Packers	Packers	Saints	Packers	Packers	Packers	Saints	Packers	Saints
Chargers at Vikings	Vikings	Vikings	Chargers	Chargers	Vikings	Chargers	Vikings	Chargers
Falcons at Lions	Lions	Falcons	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions	Falcons
Titans at Browns	Titans	Titans	Titans	Titans	Titans	Titans	Browns	Browns
Steelers at Raiders	Steelers	Steelers	Raiders	Raiders	Raiders	Steelers	Raiders	Raiders
Rams at Bengals (M)	Rams	Bengals	Rams	Rams	Bengals	Rams	Bengals	Rams
Last Week	9-6	10-5	10-5	11-4	9-6	12-3	6-9	6-9
Season Record	27-18	27-18	29-16	28-17	27-18	26-19	24-21	27-18

Jeremy Sellew is the sports editor of the Mon Valley Independent. Jose Negron is a staff writer for the Mon Valley Independent. Liam Belan is a news and sports reporter of the Mon Valley Independent. Alex Lyons is the multimedia director of the Mon Valley Independent/MVI Live. Adam Brewer s a freelance writer for MVI sports. Bria Rathway is a 2022 MVI Huddle Picks champion and the head coach of AMD Industries in the MVISBL. Taylor Andrisko is the California High School head baseball coach. Bella Carroto is a multi-sport senior athlete at Charleroi and Pitt-Greensburg soccer recruit.

RIVALS FROM B1

a wide-open net. Conrad was still out of position after chasing the ball down behind the goal line.

“I don’t know. I didn’t hear a whistle for the ready for play. I just told Addi that she has to always protect that net, no matter what,” Cameron said. “I don’t think anyone was ready for play there.”

It was Grogan delivering a bad blow to the Greyhounds, though, taking a great long feed from DeUnger to the middle of the 18-yard box and getting just enough of a shot past Volosin with only four seconds to go in the half to make it 5-2 at the break.

“That was a huge goal there,” Cameron said. “Any time you score that late, it can really bring a team down.”

In the second half, play began getting a little bit more physical with some jawing between players from the two teams.

Carroto scored off an indirect kick, assisted by Grogan, from 8 yards out of the left side of the goal. Lita Zelinsky followed up a rebound on a Carroto shot six minutes later to make it 7-2.

Carroto capped off the scoring with 5:31 remaining to seal up the Cougars’ eighth win of the season. She finished with three goals and three assists.

“We needed to have a tough, physical and chippy game like this,” Cameron said. “That’s good. We’re sitting at 5-1 in the section and coming into games against Waynesburg, Chartiers-Houston and tough teams we’re battling with, it’s going to be chippy. Those teams need to know we can chip back.”

The Cougars are back in action Monday at home against Bentworth, while the Greyhounds (2-5-1, 1-4-1) travel to Albert Gallatin for a non-section game tonight at 7:30 p.m.

Home runs lift Pirates over Cubs

CHICAGO (AP) — Joshua Palacios hit a three-run homer in a seven-run fourth inning and the Chicago Cubs’ post-season drive remained stalled with their sixth loss in seven games, 13-7 to the Pittsburgh Pirates on Wednesday night.

Connor Joe hit a two-run homer in the sixth as All-Star Justin Steele (16-5) lost his second straight start, allowing six runs and eight hits in three-plus innings.

Chicago (79-73), which has lost nine of 12, remained a half-game ahead of Miami (79-74) for the third NL wild card spot, with Cincinnati (79-75) another half-game back.

Ian Happ’s third career grand slam, a drive off Mitch Keller (13-9) in a five-run fifth, cut the deficit to 8-6. Christopher Morel started the inning with his 24th homer, a 440-drive to left that sailed to Waveland Avenue.

Joe, who finished with three hits, homered off Mark Leiter Jr. Jared Triolo added a solo shot for Pittsburgh.

Keller, like Steele a first-time All Star in 2023, yielded seven runs and nine hits in 5 2/3 innings as the Pirates beat the Cubs for just the second time in 12 games this season.

Keller struck out six and with 204 became the third Pirates right-hander to reach 200. He is the Pirates winningest pitcher in a season since Jameson Taillon and Trevor Williams both had 14 victories in 2018.

Four relievers allowed three hits in 3 1/3 scoreless innings.

UP NEXT

Pirates RHP Johan Oviedo (8-14, 4.27) faces Cubs RHP Kyle Hendricks (6-7, 3.77) on Thursday in the series finale.

HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP

EF girls bounce back with shutout win over BVA

By JEREMY SELLEW
jsellew@yourmvi.com

The Elizabeth Forward girls soccer team rebounded from their first section loss of the season and shut out rival Belle Vernon, 3-0, Wednesday at Warriors Stadium.

After a scoreless first half, the Warriors (5-2, 5-1) picked up two goals from Brooklyn Baldensperger and another from Giovanna Ferraro in the final 40 minutes to claim the win.

Baldensperger added an assist to the stat sheet as did teammate Mia Valerio.

Adysson Davis picked up the win in net for the Warriors. Abby Showman did everything she could in goal for the Leopards (3-5-1, 2-4-1), finishing with 13 saves.

“Abby Showman had a great game in the net,” BVA coach Tracy Lovett said.

The Leopards are at first-place Thomas Jefferson Monday. EF will host Uniontown Saturday at 10 a.m.

Thomas Jefferson 8, Ringgold 1

The Rams dropped their fifth game in their last six as they suffered a Section 2-3A loss at home to first-place TJ.

Ashlynn Fry and Denika Bergman

each scored a pair of goals to lead the Jaguars’ offense.

Also added tallies for TJ were CeCe Wessel, Sami Maglicco, Katie Sukal and Natalie Lamenza.

The Rams (3-6-2, 2-4-1) got on the board in the second half on an Elizizabeth Wilson goal, assisted by Miranda Santana.

Both teams are in action Monday as the Rams host Connellsville while the Jaguars entertain Belle Vernon at home.

Bentworth 3, Beth-Center 1

Meredith Allender got credited with the game-winning goal in the second half as the Bearcats (4-4-1, 2-3-1) earned a Section 2-1A win over the Bulldogs (1-7, 0-6).

Emily Kisner and Alex Jackson registered the other goals for Bentworth.

The Bearcats kick off the second half of section play Monday at Charleroi.

Boys Bentworth 14, Geibel 0

The Bearcats led 10-0 at the half and rolled to a non-section win of a rebuilding Gators squad.

John Scott scored three goals and added an assist, Andrew Vipperman

had a pair of goals and assisted on another. Cameron Butler scored twice as Bentworth (8-1) also got goals from Austin Hollier, Ben Frost, Dillan Colbert, Ryan Moessner, Billy Moyer and Caden Hackinson.

Bentworth is back on the pitch today on the road at Ligonier Valley.

Volleyball McKeesport 3, Woodland Hills 0

The Tigers (3-4, 1-3) picked up a Section 1-3A win over the Wolverines Wednesday.

Kyra Stephenson chalked up 16 assists and Shaniya Simmons-Brown ended with seven kills to lead the Tigers’ offense.

Danyla Glover registered nine digs on the defensive end.

The Tigers will take part in the Plum Tournament this weekend.

Ringgold 3, A.Gallatin 1

After getting off to a slow start Tuesday, the Ringgold volleyball team picked up a Section 3-3A win on the road against the Colonials.

Aubrey Siwula led the offense with 17 kills and Izzie Walsh added 13. Each finished with 16 digs. Camryn Bucci and Ryann Lape each added 13 digs on the defensive

end. Setter Riley Lewis picked up 26 assists in the win.

The Rams dropped the first set 21-25, but rebound to take the next three by scores of 25-10, 25-13 and 25-16.

Ringgold (6-2, 3-2) travels to Laurel Highlands today for a big section matchup.

Eliz. Forward 3, Connellsville 2

The Warriors (3-5, 3-2) were pushed to the limit by the Falcons (1-7, 1-4), but were able to recover from two straight set losses to win a fifth set.

Game scores were 25-12, 25-12, 22-25, 22-25 and 15-8.

Kaelynn Settles led the offense for EF, finishing with 19 kills. Nila Mrvos added 12 kills and nine digs.

Alivia Grimm (16) and Julia Resnik (10) combined for 26 digs on the defensive end.

The Warriors return home tonight to face off against Albert Gallatin.

Bentworth 3, Avella 0

The Bearcats easily dispatched the visiting Eagles (1-7).

Jocelyn Babirad handed out 18 assists and Chelsea Dindal added nine aces from the service line and eight kills in the win.

Sydney Gonglik contributed to the Bentworth offense with six kills.

The Bearcats (6-3) will travel to Mapletown Saturday for a tournament.

Golf Boys Charleroi 207, Yough 287

Washington County’s Cougars picked up a Section 8-2A win over the Cougars from Westmoreland County Tuesday at Mon Valley Country Club.

Elliot Lenhart carded a 1-over par 37 to lead all scorers and earn medalist honors for Charleroi. Jake Corrin finished with a 40 and Gage Patterson fired a 41.

Yough was led by Caden Doran, who finished with a 52.

Charleroi 198, Ringgold 241

The Cougars earned a non-section golf win on the road Wednesday at Rolling Green, knocking off the Rams.

Charleroi (6-8) was led by Jake Corrin, who shot an even-par 36 to lead all scorers. Cougars teammate Elliot Lenhart finished with a 38 and Gage Patterson ended with a

ROUNDUP • B3

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Taking a hit
Charleroi's playoff hopes went down a notch after a loss at Southmoreland. B2

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

Rams let Falcons snatch away a win

Connellsville scored a pair of goals late in the second half to claim a 4-3 win in Section 2-3A action.

By **JOSE NEGRON**
jnegrone@yourmvi.com

Ringgold held three separate leads Monday night. But none of them managed to stick.

Visiting Connellsville continuously battled back and scored a pair of unanswered goals in the final 18 minutes of play to capture a 4-3 win over the host Rams in Section 2-3A action at Joe Montana Stadium.

“We knew how they were going to play, they were going to play over the top,” Ringgold head coach Ed Rosensteel said. “We got caught up in their kickball game and were chasing. That gave them opportunities to go. It’s just a matter of being focused. When you get excited and lose your focus, it’s going to create opportunities for the other team.”

With the win, Connellsville (7-4, 6-2) completed the regular-season sweep after winning the first meeting between the teams, 5-2, on Aug. 28.

In the rematch, Ringgold

(3-7-2, 2-5-1) held a 3-2 lead before Grace Bosnic managed to get past the Ringgold defense and beat goalkeeper Morgan Bell on a breakaway to tie the game with just over 18 minutes left.

The Falcons took their first and only lead of the game with 9:12 on the clock. Bell made an initial save on a shot before Addison Bandemer blasted the rebound chance off a defender and in for the eventual game-winning tally.

“It wasn’t pretty but we hung on,” Connellsville head coach Jeff Puskar said. “We had chance after chance and we just couldn’t finish. Hats off to Ringgold, though, because they were ready to play and they outworked us. We escaped with a lucky win tonight.”

Every time Ringgold took the lead throughout the night, the Falcons were relatively quick to answer.

The Rams broke through with just under 30 minutes left in the first half when Elizabeth Wilson buried a header past Connellsville goalkeeper Sarah Tinkey following a corner kick by Emma Santina.

Less than seven minutes later, Connellsville responded on another rebound



Jenn Codeluppi / MVI Sports
Ringgold goalkeeper Morgan Bell takes control of a loose ball as Connellsville's Addison Bandemer gets a foot on it during Monday's Section 2-3A game at Joe Montana Stadium.

opportunity, as Bell made the first save but couldn’t stop the next shot by Haley Washington that tied things at 1-1.

Ringgold regained the lead with 16:30 on the clock. That’s when Imani Arnold scored one of two goals on the night, finishing

off a rebound chance to beat Tinkey for a 2-1 edge.

The Falcons managed to get the equalizer less than a minute later when Mikayla Hay found the back of the net to make it 2-2, a score that remained the same heading into halftime.

“Ringgold was very phys-

‘Best defensive effort’ leads Cougars past Bearcats

McKenna DeUnger scored twice and Bella Carroto added a goal and three assists for Charleroi.

By **JEREMY SELLEW**
jsellew@yourmvi.com

After a scoreless first half, the Charleroi girls soccer team unloaded four goals on visiting Bentworth en route to a 4-0 win in Section 2-1A action Monday at Myron Pottios Stadium.

The win by the Cougars (9-1, 6-1) sets up a showdown for first place Wednesday at Chartiers-Houston.

“It was a tough first half for us,” Charleroi coach Tom Cameron said. “I don’t necessarily think it was us knowing we were starting the second half of the season. At this point, every game is a big game. I think we just came out tight.”

The Cougars had plenty of opportunities early as they fired 12 shots at the Bentworth goal, but only four of those were on goal and were from distance. Those turned into easy saves for Bearcats keeper Cassidy Sicchitano.

“I was extremely happy with what I saw from our team tonight,” Bentworth coach Tyler Hamstra said. “I liked where we were at. I thought we were in a good place if we had them scoreless or even trailing 1-0 at half. But when they scored that first goal, it forced us to open things up a bit and they were able to get more space.”

The Cougars found their way more in the second half, playing the ball out wide and using their speed and ball skills heading to the net.

The first goal came with 27:46



Mike Darnay / MVI Sports
Charleroi defender Ella Sypolt and Bentworth forward Emme Orsatti chase down a ball deep in the Bearcats' offensive third during the first half of the Cougars' 4-0 win in Section 2-1A play.

remaining in the game when Bella Carroto corralled a bouncing ball sent in from a cross by McKenna DeUnger. Carroto ripped a shot from 17 yards out to make it 1-0.

“I told them we were doing a better job of playing outside and in, but we just weren’t outside far

enough. We were at the numbers instead of being wider,” Cameron said. “I think when we went farther out, we were better out there. We moved Boots out there and she was able to send a nice ball in.”

Just five minutes later, the two Cougars’ stars switched roles as Carroto sent a nice drop pass back

to DeUnger. She ripped a low shot through traffic, beating Sicchitano to her right to make it 2-0.

“The things I saw from us tonight were just experience things,” Hamstra said. “They did a good job getting those 50-50 balls and settling the ball at their feet.

“But again, it’s their two differ-

ence makers. We’re still waiting for those players to develop with our squad.”

Rhianna Grogan found the back of the net with 11:31 to go to make it 3-0. The goal was assisted by Carroto, one of her three on the night.

DeUnger added her second goal of the night on a long run with a feed from Carroto with seven minutes to go.

“We had some scoring balance tonight, and hopefully, these teams coming up realize they can’t just mark Bella and Boots,” Cameron said.

The Bearcats (4-5-1, 2-4-1) were held to only five shots in the game. Charleroi keeper Addison Conrad made two saves to earn the clean sheet.

“I think this was the best defensive game we’ve played this season,” Cameron said. “I thought Fernanda (Andrade) did a great job in that stopper role.

“I thought Anna (Kondratowicz) was fantastic on the outside getting the ball up to Rhi and the girls in the midfield. ... Definitely one of the best defensive efforts we’ve had. Aryana (Chiplaskey), Cam Musser and Ella Sypolt, they’re really tough back there. I don’t give teams a lot of room or a lot of time.”

The Cougars will travel to Chartiers-Houston Wednesday for a 7 p.m. kick, while the Bearcats will host Waynesburg on the hill in Ellsworth.

KNOW YOUR TEAM

Jeremy Sellaw
Sports Editor

José Negron
Assistant Sports Editor

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Around The Valley

CHARLEROI HOMECOMING ROYALTY



Charleroi Area High School will host homecoming festivities Friday evening at Myron Pottios Stadium. Shown, from left, are members of the year's homecoming court: Joel Chambers, Camryn Musser, Bryce Large, McKenna DeUnger, Gianni Pellegrini, Sofia Celaschi, Jacob Chambers, Ella Sypolt, Arlo McIntyre, Bella Carroto, Kaleb Pinchok and Addison Conrad.

Jenn Codeluppi /
Mon Valley Independent

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Detective back on job after drug case is dismissed, but charges could be refiled

The DA's office rehired Raymond Bonacci, 57, of Elizabeth after the charges were dismissed.

By PAULA REED WARD
Trib Total Media

A Westmoreland County district judge dismissed charges last week against a former detective with the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office who police said provided testosterone and Adderall to his son when he played high school football.

The DA's office rehired Raymond Bonacci, 57, of Elizabeth after the charges were dismissed, though the case has been referred to the state Attorney General's Office and charges could be refiled.

The DA's office did not respond to requests for comment. The AG's office declined to comment.

Michael DeRiso, Bonacci's defense attorney, said Monday that the case was a rush to judgment that was improperly handled.

"None of these allegations took place in Westmoreland County — if they are true," DeRiso said.

Bonacci was charged in mid-July with two felony counts of drug delivery after state police said they learned that he provided testosterone and Adderall to his son, Anthony Bonacci, in 2019 when the younger Bonacci was a senior center and nose guard on Franklin Regional High School's football team.

Police said that information came to light after the younger Bonacci applied for a job as a state trooper. As part of his interview process, police said he told the agency that his father gave him Adderall and testosterone in the fall of 2019 "to enhance his performance and attention," according to a criminal complaint filed in the case.

While conducting its background check of the younger Bonacci, state police said

they requested an interview with the Bonacci family. During the interview, Raymond Bonacci admitted to injecting his son with testosterone and providing him with Adderall, police said.

Magisterial District Judge Charles Conway dismissed the charges during a Sept. 19 preliminary hearing.

A spokeswoman for the Westmoreland County DA's office said the office received information after the charges were filed that the case had to be prosecuted in Allegheny County.

Although the original criminal complaint listed Raymond Bonacci's home address in Westmoreland County's Murrysville, DeRiso said his client lives in Elizabeth in Allegheny County.

DeRiso said his client is separated from his wife, and that for years, she has lived in Murrysville while he has resided in Elizabeth.

"Mr. Bonacci had to live in Allegheny County for residency requirements for his

employment," DeRiso said. "I don't think anyone is disputing where he lives."

After the charges came to light, DeRiso said his client was asked to retire by the DA's office.

"He wasn't given much of a choice based on the charges," he said. "It's just a big rush to judgment."

As for the case, the spokeswoman for the Westmoreland County DA's office said, "Upon conferring with the Allegheny County District Attorney's office and the obvious conflict of interest, we have jointly referred the criminal case to the Office of the Attorney General."

Raymond Bonacci returned to work with the Allegheny County DA's office on Monday, according to the county controller's office.

A county database that redacts officers' names showed a DA's detective matching Bonacci's hire date earning \$104,000 annually as of June.

round trip for passenger train service between Pittsburgh and New York City.

PennDOT officials said the state will invest more than \$200 million for infrastructure and safety improvements that will help to accommodate the additional trains.

Amtrak now operates one daily round trip between Pittsburgh and New York City, via Harrisburg and Philadelphia. The agreement supports increasing that to two daily round trips. It would mark the first additional passenger train service for Western Pennsylvania in decades.

Separate federal funding is also providing new Airo trains on the route, which include new cabin interiors with panoramic windows, larger tray tables and upgraded chairs.

Amtrak's Pennsylvanian line runs through stations in Pittsburgh, Greensburg, Latrobe, Johnstown and Altoona before continuing to Harrisburg, Philadelphia and eventually New York City.

An eastbound Pennsylvanian train departs Pittsburgh once daily, at 7:30 a.m., and a westbound Pennsylvanian train arrives in Pittsburgh at 8 p.m. daily.

A feasibility report about adding a round trip said one possible schedule would have eastbound trains departing Pittsburgh at 7 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. daily and westbound trains arriving in Pittsburgh at 3 and 10 p.m. daily.

NEWS BRIEFS

I-70 pipe lining and repair work starts

Single-lane restrictions began on eastbound and westbound I-70 between the Madison Interchange and Mt. Pleasant/West Newton Interchange in South Huntingdon Township, Westmoreland County, according to PennDOT District 12.

The restrictions will be in place overnight through Thursday — 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., depending on weather and operations.

Crews from Trumbull Corporation will be conducting pipe lining and repairs.

The work is part of the \$92.8 million I-70 Yukon and Madison Interchanges Improvement Project for the reconstruction and widening of I-70, reconstruction of the Yukon and Madison interchanges, replacement of four mainline I-70 structures, replacement of culverts, and maintenance work for a structure on Route 3010.

Motorists can check conditions on major roadways by visiting www.511PA.com.

Deal will bring added passenger rail service between Pittsburgh, NYC

PennDOT and Norfolk Southern Railway finalized an official agreement Friday to bring an additional

Dale Provins Jr. annual memorial softball tournament set for Saturday

The event will be held at the DiVirgilio Sports Complex in Rostraver Township.

For the MVI



Submitted
Provins was a 15-year veteran of the Jefferson Hills Police Department.

local law enforcement, military service members and veterans, members of the Center for Fitness and Health at the MonVale HealthPlex and community members will participate in the third annual Dale Provins Jr. Memorial Softball Tournament set for Saturday at the DiVirgilio Sports Complex in Rostraver Township.

The event was rescheduled from April 30 due to rain.

The annual event is held to honor his memory and as a way to raise money to help those who are interested in attending the Municipal Police Academy (ACT 120) at Westmoreland County Community College.

An opening ceremony, including the National Anthem and "honorary first pitch," and group photo will take place at 1 p.m. on the baseball field at the DiVirgilio Sports Complex. Provins' family members will also be in attendance.

The 2023 tournament will feature five teams: three teams consisting of members of the Pa. State Police, a team from the Center for Fitness and Health, and a team of members of the armed forces and community members.

Provins served in Operation Desert Storm and Operation Desert Shield and was a third-generation police officer. He was also an active member of the Center for Fitness and Health.

COMING THIS FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

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Realistic view
James Harrison doesn't believe he belongs in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. B2

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2023

Today On...



SPORTS
WEBCAST

Boys soccer - Connellsville at Thomas Jefferson, 7:30 p.m.

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Charleroi back in the driver's seat

A 2-0 win over Chartiers-Houston has the Cougars sitting in first place in the Section 2-1A standings.

By ADAM BREWER
MVI Sports

Charleroi girls soccer coach Tom Cameron asked his team one simple question before its critical Section 2-1A contest against Chartiers-Houston.

"Do you want to be drivers, or passengers?" Cameron asked.

The Cougars grabbed the keys and took the wheel Wednesday night by flexing their defensive poise in a 2-0 triumph over Chartiers-Houston at Buccaneers Stadium.

"This is probably the biggest win for these girls over the last four years," Cameron said. "They were funny tonight on the bus. Usually, the bus ride is loud and the girls are chatty, but tonight these girls were quiet as could be. Just very mellow and they did not say a word. That focus carried us tonight."

Both teams had high-scoring offenses, but it was the Cougars' defense and the play of keeper Addison Conrad that defined the section matchup.



Mike Darnay / MVI Sports

Charleroi goalkeeper Addison Conrad made five saves and posted a shutout against Chartiers-Houston Wednesday.

rad that defined the section matchup.

The Cougars (10-1, 7-1) currently hold first place in the section with four section games remaining in the season. Charleroi picked up a

3-0 victory over Char-Houston on Aug. 20.

With the loss, the Bucs (10-2, 6-2) had their eight-game winning streak snapped. C-H won the section last year and swept Charleroi a year ago

by outscoring them 13-5.

After the home team registered the first three shots of the game, Charleroi had its first scoring chance when a shot from McKenna DeUnger went wide right at the 24th

minute mark of the first.

With under 13 minutes to play in the first half, Charleroi's Bella Carroto found room in front of the net and put a foot on a high shot that found the back of the net and gave the visitors a 1-0 lead. Ella Sybolt tallied the assist on the marker.

"I saw a nice opening and I only had one defender on my back," Carroto said. "I thought I could take her and if I got around her, I thought I would have a wide-open net. I called for it and I got a great pass from Ella. She played me a perfect ball."

Carroto had another scoring chance nine minutes later after receiving a beautiful pass from DeUnger, but the home team's goalkeeper, Grace McAvoy, made a point blank save.

The Bucs had two quality chances in the attacking zone in the final 10 minutes of the first half, as Amelia Brose and Ava Capozzoli had breakaway shots, but Conrad made a couple of aggressive saves to preserve the shutout in the opening 40 minutes of play.

"This group of 14 girls have a lot of heart and resiliency," Cameron said. "We are just

very tenacious on defense and it shows. I am so proud of the play of Addy. Her saves kept us in the game. I mean those were some high-level saves that not a lot of Class 1A keepers can make. She was top notch tonight."

Conrad recorded four saves in the first half, and five for the game, as both teams collected five shots apiece in the opening half.

Both teams were struggling to maintain possession to begin the second half, and a lot of the action was played in the midfield.

The Bucs had a chance to knot the contest up just seven minutes into the second half when a corner kick went awry and Seanna Riggle launched a long shot that went high above the crossbar.

After a Charleroi player was fouled in front of the net, Carroto garnered the insurance goal with a penalty kick at the 22:29 mark of the second half. The marker was her 17th of the fall.

"On the bus ride here, we were just trying to get into the right mindset," Carroto said. "We were quiet, but it was a confident quiet. Composure was huge for us to-

CHARLEROI • B3

TJ shuts out Connellsville

The first-place Jaguars extended their win streak to 10 games with their 2-0 triumph.

By JASON BLACK
For MVI Sports

The Connellsville girls soccer team entered Wednesday's Section 2-3A home match with Thomas Jefferson knowing that it had to be almost flawless in order to knock off the section-leading Jaguars.

The Falcons did play a strong game and were within one shot for most of the match. However, Thomas Jefferson controlled territory and netted a marker in each half on its way to a 2-0 win.

It was the 10th win in a row for the Jaguars (10-1, 9-0). The loss snapped a four-game winning streak for the Falcons (7-5, 6-3).

"Thomas Jefferson is the cream of the crop in our section," Connellsville coach Jeff Puskar said. "They play fast and we had to try to keep up with them."

Puskar noted that the Falcons tried to play a strong defensive game, especially after losing to the Jaguars 6-0 earlier in the season.

"We wanted to keep them from getting around us for lay-ups, and for the most part we were able to do that," Puskar said. "The two goals they did get, they were earned, but I think our girls would like to have those back."

The Jaguars applied pressure early and often, but Connellsville keeper Sarah Tinkey made some big saves to keep the game scoreless.



Jason Black / For MVI Sports

TJ's Aubrey Little brings the ball up the field during Wednesday's match at Connellsville Stadium.

She stopped a header from in close with 18 minutes left in the first half, which kept the match level at 0-0. But with 9:41 left in the half, Kaitlyn Sukal found a little opening and was able to lift a high shot into the back of the net for what turned out to be the game-winning marker for Thomas Jefferson.

In the second half, the Falcons managed a few more chances at the other end, but couldn't generate much of a sustained attack. Connellsville's Hannah Kurtiz put a hard shot on goal, but Thomas Jefferson keeper Nyla Kiral was there to make the save. Kiral and relief keeper Annmarie Gra-

ham shared the shutout victory in goal.

At the other end, Tinkey continued to be tested, but she continued to come up big. She made three big stops in succession to keep Connellsville within one goal. But with 24:19 left in the match, Samantha Maglicco was able to bury a shot from the right side for a huge insurance marker for the visitors.

"We are a team that likes to keep the ball," Thomas Jefferson coach Sean Richter said. "But the way they were set up, they made it hard, and they defended well as a team."

Richter credited Con-

TJ • B4



Jenn Codeluppi / MVI Sports

South Allegheny's Rylee Stetz scored three second-half goals in the team's 4-1 win over Monessen in Section 2-1A action Wednesday afternoon.

SA's Stetz nets hat trick in crucial section win

By JOSE NEGRON
jnegrone@yourmvi.com

Rylee Stetz scored three of South Allegheny's four second-half goals in a 4-1 win over Monessen in Section 2-1A play Wednesday afternoon.

The Gladiators (8-3, 4-3) earned a sweep of their regular-season series with the Greyhounds (3-7-1, 1-6-1) while aiding their playoff hopes as the current fourth-place team in the section standings.

"The girls showed great effort and didn't give up on themselves whenever they were missing early," SA head coach Andrew Dyson said. "We weren't finishing to start the game, but I just told them at halftime to keep with it."

SA had more than a few chances to find the back of the net in the first half, totaling 12 shots and firing four on Monessen goalkeeper Ashley Volosin, who finished with eight saves.

Things were different in the second half, though, as Stetz led the charge.

The senior forward netted her first goal of the game with just over 23 minutes to go in regulation. She took a feed from Ronnie Acrie and lifted it over the leaping hands of Volosin for a 1-0 SA lead.

The advantage was short lived, as Monessen struck back just over a minute later when Sam Saylor, the Greyhounds' leading scorer with 20 goals on the year, lined up for a free kick. Instead of firing a shot at the

SA • B3

KNOW YOUR TEAM



Jeremy Sellew
Sports Editor



José Negron
Assistant Sports Editor

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HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP

Reith's hat trick leads Serra past Jeannette



Jeff Helsel / MVI Sports
Lydia Reith had three goals in Serra Catholic's 8-0 win over Jeannette on Wednesday.

By the Mon Valley Independent

Lydia Reith netted a hat trick and Lexie Genes added two more goals to help lift Serra Catholic to an 8-0 win over Jeannette in Section 1-1A play Wednesday.

Charlotte Childs, Bianca Gajdos and Milena Poziviak also found the back of the net for the Eagles (4-3, 3-3).

Haley Genes was in net for the shutout of the Jayhawks (0-8-1, 0-7).

Serra travels to Riverview Monday.

Waynesburg 4, Bentworth 0

Bentworth (4-6-1, 2-5-1) held its

own through one half of play before Waynesburg Central (8-2, 6-2) erupted for four second-half goals in a Section 2-1A win.

“It was another great 50 minutes of soccer against an experienced team,” Bentworth head coach Tyler Hamstra said. “We are just at the point of the season where we can’t be satisfied with 1-0 losses, so we have to push all in once we concede a goal. We are close and look forward to putting it together next week.”

The Bearcats resume play at South Allegheny Monday.

Ringgold 7, Albert Gallatin 0

The Rams (4-7-2, 3-5-1) put an

end to a seven-game winless streak with a shutout win over the Colonials (1-11, 0-9) in Section 2-3A play.

Miranda Santina, Imani Arnold and Elizizabeth Wilson each had two goals. Kayla Franks also scored.

Ringgold is back in action tonight at Uniontown.

**Volleyball
Waynesburg 3, Bentworth 1**

The Bearcats suffered a four-set loss at the hands of Waynesburg Central.

Waynesburg won the first two sets by 25-18 scores before gaining a 25-22 win in the fourth set. Bentworth won the third set, 25-22.

Chelsea Dindal led the way with 11 kills and eight digs for the Bearcats. Haylee Wolfe had 23 digs, Zoie McDonald finished with three aces and 21 assists, and Sydney Gonflik had six kills and five blocks.

**Golf
Waynesburg 190, Ringgold 238**

Dylan Callaway shot a 31 and Brice Kowall finished with a 44 but it wasn’t enough to lift Ringgold past Waynesburg Central.

Braden Benke and Chase Phillips were low scorers for Waynesburg with scores of 37. Derek Turcheck and Jarett Tretinik each shot a 38 and Joe Kirsch finished with a 40.

Harper leads playoff-bound Phillies past Pirates

Bryce Harper hit a go-ahead home run in the seventh inning of a 7-6 victory.

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Garrett Stubbs still stripped one strap down on his powder blue Phillies overalls at his locker, just as he did 24 hours earlier when he hosted a hoedown inside a booze-soaked clubhouse.

It was the same garish look Stubbs sported when he sprayed the team owner with bubbly. He wore overalls just as he did a night earlier when he tipped his head back and let teammates pour beer down his throat as part of a rowdy postseason clinching celebration.

Yes, Stubbs drank all the alcohol and then laughed at all the memes, the ones that showed the backup catcher would see six baseballs at once when it was his time to hit in what was affectionately called a “hangover game.”

One that seemed appropriate when Stubbs awoke from a night of partying.

“Probably still a little hammered from the night before,” Stubbs said, laughing.

Once at the plate, Stubbs hammered one — a three-run shot — that sparked a rally for the Phillies that was completed when Bryce Harper hit a go-ahead solo homer in the seventh inning in a 7-6 win over the Pittsburgh Pirates on Wednesday night, a day after clinching the NL’s top wild-card spot.



AP
Philadelphia Phillies' Garrett Stubbs, right, react after hitting a three-run home run against Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Johan Oviedo during the fourth inning of Wednesday's game in Philadelphia.

Stubbs, who entered the game batting just .196 in 30 games, hit his first homer since Aug. 16, 2022.

“Yeah, all it took was a bunch of champagne, drinking all night and going out,” Stubbs said. “There it was the next day, a homer.”

A night after a raucous late-night celebration that saw outfielder Brandon Marsh ride a mechanical bull, designated hitter Kyle Schwarber, third baseman Alec Bohm, catcher J.T. Realmuto and right fielder Nick Castellanos

all took the night off.

Harper, one of the few regulars in the lineup and playing first base, had three hits, and slugged his 21st homer of the season off reliever Jose Hernandez (1-3) for the 7-6 lead.

Gregory Soto struck out the side in the ninth inning for his third save and preserved the Phillies’ seventh straight win.

And yes, Stubbs survived all nine innings.

The backup catcher became a social media hit in Philadelphia after videos of him dancing and drinking in overalls in the clubhouse on Tuesday night were unleashed into the viral universe, and there was faux concern that he could actually play.

Was he really hydrated? Was he rested?

“I love popping champagne,” Stubbs said. “I think the rest of the guys in the locker room do, too.”

Stubbs took a healthy cut on a four-seam fastball from Pirates starter Johan Oviedo in the fourth and slugged a three-run homer to right.

Phillies fans went wild for their cult hero, and he was welcomed at home with a warm embrace from Bryson Stott.

“Everybody just pulls for Stubby,” Phillies manager Rob Thomson said. “He’s kind of the energy guy in the clubhouse and in the dugout. He’s a great teammate. One of the best teammates I’ve ever been around. So everybody pulls for him.”

His homer cut the Phils’ deficit to 5-4, the second time in as many years Philadelphia trailed early in the first game after a clincher. A year ago, the Phillies secured a wild-card spot in Houston, then Ranger Suarez went out and got rocked for six runs in two innings the next game. It happened again against the Pirates.

Suarez gave up three runs in the first and two in the second against the Pirates. The 28-year-old left-hander was chased in the fifth after Jack Suwinski tripled in a run to make it 6-4.

Edmundo Sosa hit his 10th homer of the year for the Phillies, a solo shot, and Christian Pache tied the game 6-all on an RBI single in the sixth that scored Harper.

Connor Joe had four hits for the Pirates.

his first big league win. He’s thrown two shutout innings in two appearances since his debut over the weekend.

The 22-year-old Kerkering blazed through four stops in the minor leagues this year and was expected to make the postseason roster.

HOSKINS UPDATE

Phillies first baseman Rhys Hoskins continues to make progress in his return from a torn ACL in his left knee that has cost him all season. Hoskins might soon see some live pitching, and Thomson continues to say “there’s a chance” the popular slugger is back for the World Series, should the Phillies make it. Hoskins would be a DH or pinch hitter only and would not play first base.

Hoskins is a candidate to head to Clearwater, Florida, to continue his rehab and work out with minor leaguers the Phillies have sent to their complex to stay ready in case they are need in the post-season. Darick Hall, Weston Wilson, Cody Clemens and pitchers Andrew Bellatti, Connor Brogdon and Nick Nelson are among the group headed to Florida.

UP NEXT

Zach Wheeler (13-6, 3.64 ERA) gets the start for the Phillies in the series finale on Thursday. The Pirates did not name a starter.

CHARLEROI FROM B1

night. Our defense has been unreal lately and we are just communicating so well on the backline. We are a better defensive team than last year.”

The Bucs put pressure on the Cougars’ defense late, but their chances did not find the back of the net. Mia Reddix had a free kick from 30 yards right in the middle of the field, but the shot was way too high.

Cameron mentioned the superb play of freshman defender Aryana Chiplaskey in the shutout victory.

“She’s a freshman, but she plays at a very high level,”

Cameron said. “She is very smart and is just taking over the defense. Her play has been outstanding. But then I’ve got to mention the play of the other defenders in Ella (Sypolt) and Camryn (Mussener). Just a total team effort on defense.”

Charleroi will be idle until a section matchup against Beth-Center at home Monday.

“We are in the driver’s seat now,” Cameron said, referring to the section. “We know we have a lot more games to go, but I like where we are headed. I am excited for the ride.”



Bella Carroto (33) scored both of Charleroi's goals in Wednesday's 2-0 win over Chartiers-Houston. Carroto now has 17 goals on the season.

Mike Darnay / MVI Sports

SA FROM B1

net, Saylor played the ball over to Regan Cribbins who buried a shot past SA goal-keeper Ella Lotz to tie the game at 1-1.

“That’s a play they just learned the other day,” Monessen head coach Matthew Strine said. “That was important for the girls to answer quickly like that. It was nice to see that play work to perfection.”

Monessen held the momentum for a bit, especially after Ava Martorelli was forced into the net following a yellow card that was issued to Lotz. The Greyhounds were given a free kick opportunity right after Lotz’s exit, but Saylor’s shot went high to keep the game tied.

Under two minutes later, the Gladiators took the lead for good when Stetz beat Volosin to a loose ball and chipped it into the net for her second goal of the game.

Ava Ellwood added an insurance tally just over a minute later when she chipped a shot over Volosin for a 3-1 cushion.

“We knew (Volosin) played a high line and that we’d have those opportunities,” Dyson said. “In the first half, I think we were chipping it too far.”

Stetz finished off her hat trick with 6:17 on the clock, as she fired a shot off the cross bar and in to cap the scoring.

“We came out with a bit of

a different game plan by putting Rylee up top to change things up a little bit,” Dyson said. “I think that gave us a different dynamic because we knew they would key on Lily (Dranko) after the first time we played them.”

With the loss, the Greyhounds are now eliminated from postseason contention, but that doesn’t mean there isn’t anything left to play for.

Strine said he hopes the girls come ready to compete when they resume play at Bentworth on Oct. 4.

“We’re not going to be making the playoffs, but we can definitely play the spoiler role,” Strine said. “We’d love to do that.”

South Allegheny has a pair

of non-section games against Carlynton and Deer Lakes today and Saturday before hosting Bentworth in a crucial section matchup Monday.

day. SA defeated Bentworth, 1-0, in the first meeting on Sept. 6.

“There is still a lot of soccer to play,” Dyson said. “We’ll

use these next two games to work on and try some things that could helps us down the line.”

THIS WEEK ON

MVI LIVE

THURSDAY 7:30 PM BOYS SOCCER

TJ

THOMAS JEFFERSON

VS

C

CONNELLVILLE

FRIDAY 7:00 PM FOOTBALL

E

ELIZABETH FORWARD

VS

S

SOUTHMORELAND

HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP

Moyer plays hero for Bearcats

By JOSE NEGRON
jnegrone@yourmvi.com

Bella Moyer delivered with the golden goal with three minutes remaining in the second overtime to lift Bentworth past South Allegheny, 1-0, in a Section 2-1A clash at Gladiators Stadium Monday.

The freshman tallied the goal in support of goalkeeper Cassidy Sicchitano's shutout effort, which helped the Bearcats (5-6-1, 3-5-1) secure the school's first ever win at a South Allegheny venue.

"We played our hardest and best game of the season," Bentworth head coach Tyler Hamstra said. "The girls were tough and I am so proud of Bella. She's a good young player and she gets herself into scoring situations every game. It was nice to see her score a big goal."

Moyer's goal occurred after SA goalkeeper Ella Lotz came out to play a ball. It skipped off her foot and went right to Moyer, who buried a shot from about 18 yards into an open net.

The loss was a tough one for a Gladiators (9-5, 4-4) team that was seeking a regular-season sweep of the Bearcats. SA won the last meeting, 1-0, on Sept. 6 and was looking to move one step closer to securing a playoff spot.

"If we would have won this one, we would have controlled our fate and made it hard on Bentworth," SA coach Andrew Dyson said. "We have to work for it now."

Dyson said his team managed to get forward consistently, but the Gladiators weren't able to get many opportunities from within 20 yards.

"Once we hit the box, they tightened up on us and made it tough," Dyson said, crediting the Bearcats' game plan. "It was two equal teams. It's always a tough battle against them."

SA will resume play at Chartiers-Houston Wednesday, while Bentworth plays a home matchup with Monessen.

The last time the Bearcats and Greyhounds went head to head, the game ended in a 1-1 tie.

"It's a very competitive section," Hamstra said. "It's almost like a 4A section where anyone can win on any given night. It's kind of a unique scenario in single-A."



Jenn Codeluppi / MVI Sports

Bentworth's Bella Moyer scored the golden goal in double overtime to give the Bearcats a 1-0 win at South Allegheny in a key Section 2-1A match.

Eliz. Forward 7, Ringgold 1

The Warriors (9-2, 8-1) took a three-goal lead into halftime before adding four more in the second half of a Section 2-3A win over the visiting Rams (5-8-2, 4-6-1).

Brooklyn Baldensperger and Taylor Snyder each scored two goals for the victors. Giovanna Ferraro, Leilana Spenny and Izzy Crosby netted one apiece.

Miranda Santina scored Ringgold's lone goal on a free kick in the second half.

EF takes a five-game winning streak into a home matchup against Connellsville Wednesday, while Ringgold returns to action at Belle Vernon Area to open things up next week.

Charleroi 12, Beth-Center 0

Four-goal performances from McKenna DeUnger and Bella Carroto highlighted a dominant win for Charleroi (11-1, 8-1) against visiting Beth-Center (2-9, 0-8) in Section 2-1A action.

Taylor Ramsdell added two goals, while Anna Kondratowicz and Rhianna Grogan scored one apiece for the Cougars, who led 7-0 at halftime.

Carroto, now two goals away from 100 in her career, contributed with four as-

sists and DeUnger notched two.

Addison Conrad made one save for Charleroi, which travels to Uniontown Wednesday.

**Volleyball
Yough 3, Woodland Hills 1**

The Cougars topped the Wolverines in a four-set nonsection matchup.

Yough won the first two sets by scores of 25-10 and 25-20. Woody High prevailed, 25-22, in the third set before Yough closed things out with a 25-23 victory.

No statistics were provided.

McKeesport 3, Brentwood 2

The Tigers (5-6) took two of the final three sets to rally past the Spartans (2-7) in non-section play Monday.

Scores of the sets were 18-25, 25-20, 23-25, 25-19 and 15-11, in favor of McKeesport.

Freshman Jenesis Kisasonik (8) and junior Elonna Walker (7) combined for 15 kills for McKeesport.

Freshman Kyra Stephenson added six aces from the service line.



AP

Kenny Pickett is tended to after being injured during Sunday's game in Houston.

Pickett's injury not as serious as thought

By CHRIS ADAMSKI
Trib Total Media

Kenny Pickett walked through the Pittsburgh Steelers locker room repeatedly during the lead up to a 2 p.m. team meeting Monday. Less than 24 hours after suffering a knee injury that forced him out of a game at the Houston Texans, Pickett was walking with no obvious limp and without any brace or so much as a compression sleeve on his left knee.

Pickett carried a playbook and attended to his locker as he was spotted twice during a 45-minute period the media was permitted in the Steelers' UPMC Rooney Sports Complex headquarters Monday.

All in all, it was a welcome sight for a team that feared it might be without its starting quarterback for a significant amount of time.

Pickett avoided serious injury, according to reports from ESPN and the NFL Network, and is still in the running to start the Steelers' next game Sunday at home against the AFC North rival Baltimore Ravens. The NFL Network report got specific with Pickett's injury, referencing it as a bone bruise and muscle strain.

With an idle week coming after the Ravens game, the Steelers (2-2) reportedly are considering sitting Pickett this week so he can more fully recover in time for their sixth game, Oct. 22 at the Los Angeles Rams.

Pickett suffered his injury while being sacked by Jonathan Greenard on a failed fourth-and-1 play with 1 minute, 10 seconds left in the third quarter of a 30-6 loss at the Houston Texans.

Mitch Trubisky finished the game at quarterback for the Steelers. Veteran Mason Rudolph is the Steelers' No. 3 QB.

WR Fitzpatrick waived

The Steelers waived receiver Dez Fitzpatrick on Monday, a day after he did not play on offense and was limited to three special teams snaps during his Steelers regular-season debut.

Fitzpatrick was added to the active roster off the practice squad Sept. 14 in the wake of the hamstring injury suffered by No. 1 receiver Diontae Johnson.

But Fitzpatrick was inactive for the Steelers' next two games. He was chosen over Gunner Olszewski to be in uniform against the Texans, but the Steelers effectively stuck with just three wide receivers Sunday. Special-teamer Miles Boykin played just six offensive snaps as a WR4.

Johnson is not eligible to come off injured reserve until after the Baltimore game.

It's possible the Fitzpatrick move is related to injuries suffered Sunday by tight end Pat Freiermuth (hamstring) and/or left tackle Dan Moore (knee).

GOLF COURSE FOES AND FRIENDS MOVING ON



Brian Corrin / Charleroi Golf

From left: Belle Vernon's Rogan Maloney and Jordan Mocello, Uniontown's Logan Voytish, Elizabeth Forward's Aaron Didjunas, Frazier's Nixen Erdely, Charleroi's Elliot Lenhart and Brownsville's Daniel Sethman, will head to Penn State University's White Course for the PIAA Class 2A Golf Championship on Oct. 16 and 17.

THIS WEEK ON MVI LIVE

TUESDAY 7:15 PM VOLLEYBALL

RINGGOLD VS ELIZABETH FORWARD

WEDNESDAY 12:00 PM

THE VALLEY VS SPORTS GUYS

THURSDAY 7:00 PM HOCKEY

TJ THOMAS JEFFERSON VS SOUTH FAYETTE

FRIDAY 7:00 PM FOOTBALL

YOUGH VS SERRA CATHOLIC

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Enrollment drop
Interim president Laurie Bernotsky explained how PennWest is responding. **A3**

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Pa. officials hear Charleroi's refugee issues

The language barrier is among several challenges of trying to educate foreign-born students.

By **TAYLOR BROWN**
tbrown@yourmvi.com

Members of the Pennsylvania Department of Education got a first-hand look Thursday at what teachers, administrators and staff are up against in the Charleroi Area School District when it comes to providing top-of-the-line education for refugee students who are now Cougars.

Superintendent Dr. Ed Zelich said the meeting allowed teachers, administrators, staff and board members to sit at the table with PDE officials and other stakeholders to discuss challenges within the district as educators navigate how to best educate refugee students.

State officials at the meeting included Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Deputy Secretary Dr. Carrie Rowe, Bureau Director Amy Lena, Division Chief Carmen Medina, Nancy J. Keeling, assistant director of federal and state programs for the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit, Jose Reyes-Lua, statewide program recruiter coordinator, Lavinia Ritter, PDE Intermediate Unit Migrant Education Program officer and Deke Showman, supervisor of Migrant Education for the region.

Officials heard from Zelich, who shared the district's story as it navigates education for a new population, with a focus on struggles with communication barriers, and how the PDE might be able to help.

There are 120 refugee students enrolled in the district, with the majority of new students at the el-

CHARLEROI • A4



Bella's big night
Charleroi star hits 100, wins a section title on senior night. **B1**

Superintendent Dr. Ed Zelich talks with Dr. Carrie Rowe, deputy secretary of the state Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, who visited the Charleroi Area School District on Thursday.

Taylor Brown / Mon Valley Independent



Liam Belan / Mon Valley Independent

At Thursday's unveiling of the new Mon Valley LaunchBox space in McKeesport, from left, are Eric Ewell, LaunchBox director and director of continuing education for Penn State Greater Allegheny, state Rep. Matt Gergely, state Sen. Jim Brewster, Care Heart CPR founder Shalay Williams, McKeesport Mayor Michael Cherepko and Penn State Greater Allegheny Interim Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer Megan Nagel. To purchase this photo and more from our online photo gallery, go to our website at www.monvalleyindependent.com.

LaunchBox has new McKeesport home

The former location for the initiative was destroyed in an explosion last year.

By **LIAM BELAN**
lbelan@yourmvi.com

A year after the Mon Valley LaunchBox suffered a devastating setback due to an explosion inside its building, the initiative unveiled a newly renovated location on Fifth Avenue in McKeesport Thursday afternoon.

The initiative is a collaboration among the City of McKeesport, Penn State Greater Allegheny and Invent Penn State designed to provide resources, networking opportunities and facilities to aspiring entrepreneurs in the area. It's headed by LaunchBox Director and Penn State Greater Allegheny Director of Continuing Education Eric Ewell.

At the time of the explosion in August 2022, The Mon Valley LaunchBox was located in the former YWCA building on Ninth Avenue in McKeesport and was sharing space with the Fry Bar, Paint at Your Own Risk, Just a Little Talk Counseling Services, the Black Women's Policy Center and Care Heart CPR.

Shalay Williams, founder of Care Heart CPR, was one of the entrepreneurs who suffered monetary setbacks and lost her workspace as a result of the accident. Upon seeing the new home of the LaunchBox, Williams was

thrilled with the turnout at the new location at 225 Fifth Ave.

"It's really nice to see the new space," she said. "I love the colors and the signs on the walls. They really made sure that they brought everything back together for us. At the time of the explosion, there were five businesses displaced, and it was very devastating. ... When we lost that space, I also lost a significant amount of equipment and thousands of dollars in CPR mannequins and emergency medical training equipment.

"LaunchBox wasted no time jumping in and helping me to continue on with my

"This is a dream come true. I mean, the first time was a dream come true, so this is the re-dream."

ERIC ELWELL
PENN STATE GREATER ALLEGHENY

dream. They allowed me to continue my CPR training up at the (Penn State Greater Allegheny) campus, so now it's like we're reuniting with a new space for us to come to."

The updated space replaces what was formerly the location of First Commonwealth Bank years ago. In the design process, the facility combined some features

LAUNCHBOX • A5

MONESSEN

Chaos erupts as council tries to curtail negativity

Many issues that have been raised at recent meetings have nothing to do with city business.

By **KRISTIE LINDEN**
klinden@yourmvi.com

After months of citizens' comments from a few disgruntled residents about things Monessen City Council has no control over, the mayor tried to institute some new rules Thursday night.

Over the past few meetings, the commentary has devolved into name-calling, insults and often yelling.

Near the beginning of Thursday's meeting, Mon

Valley Independent owner Moe Galis stood to talk about the minutes of last month's meeting, in which resident Pino Cianflone called the MVI "fake" and called Mayor Ron Mozer "a liar."

"Well, I'm here for the newspaper and if you got anything fake about it, say it to my face right now," Galis said to Cianflone.

"Your paper is not printing what's going on in here, you're not," Cianflone said. Galis told Cianflone he was lying and Cianflone asked how he could be lying.

"We print the truth every day," Galis said over Cian-

MONESSEN • A2

Donora votes to seek audit bids

The borough will get prices on a two-year and seven-year review of its finances.

By **MICHAEL RICHTER**
mrichter@yourmvi.com

During Thursday's meeting, Donora council approved a motion to advertise bids for a two-year and seven-year forensic audit after debate about its specifics and questioning from the public.

Conducting a forensic audit on the borough's finances was originally proposed by council last month.

Before council voted on

the motion, Councilman Gib Szakal asked council members if they were going to specify what will be audited.

"This next motion: I thought we were going to lay out what was supposed to be put up for bid for the audit," Szakal said.

Councilwoman Cindy Brice said the audit will cover all the borough's finances, and Council President Michael McDowell echoed her statement.

"It's a bid to do everything," McDowell said. "All this is for bids; it isn't written in stone."

DONORA • A5



INSIDE
Homecoming set
"Back to the Future" will be the theme of PennWest's homecoming celebration Saturday. **A3**

SPORTS
BVA wins section
Trevor Kovatch and the Leopard boys avenged their only section loss of the season. **B1**

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FRIDAY
Don't miss our weekly food page and Real Stats property transfers in Saturday's Mon Valley Independent.

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Section champs
Belle Vernon Area won its section title outright with a 4-0 shutout of McGuffey. B2

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2023

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BVA golfers are WPIAL champs

They captured the title with a comfortable 5-stroke victory on their home course at Cedarbrook.

By **JEREMY SELLEW**
jsellew@yourmvi.com

It's time to make some more room in the trophy case at Belle Vernon Area High School.

This time, it's the boys golf team that earned the hardware, capturing the WPIAL Class 2A team championship Thursday at Cedarbrook Golf Course.

It was sweet redemption for the Leopards, who lost in last year's championship to Sewickley Academy in a one-hole playoff.

"This is so much better. It's such a sweet, sweet taste," BVA senior Rogan Maloney said. "Last season was the motivation for this year and it really fueled us heading into today."

The Leopards finished with a team score of 417, five strokes ahead of runner-up Neshannock (422).

Maloney led the way for BVA, shooting a 7-over 79. Sophomore Jack Edwards finished his round with a 9-over 81 with fellow sophomore Jordan Mocello closing it out with his 85.

It marked redemption for



Jeff Helsel / MVI Sports

Belle Vernon Area's Rogan Maloney watches a shot from the fairway on hole No. 8 on the Gold Course at Cedarbrook Golf Course during the WPIAL Class 2A championship Thursday. Maloney led the Leopards with a 79.

Mocello, who missed a key putt on the playoff hole last season.

"I feel a lot better today than I did last year," Mocello said with a smile. "I'm just glad we won it straight up and not

in a playoff. We came in and wanted to win it outright and that's what we did."

Mocello finished his round on the front nine, and it didn't go quite as well as he wanted to.

"This might be the worst round I've ever shot on the Gold Course," he said. "I had an unlucky 8 on No. 6. Coach came and talked to me and just told me I had a little room, so I just figured

I'm going to go out and make pars."

And that's what he did, finishing his last three holes going par, par and par.

"After last year's disappointment, we knew we had the guys to win it this season," BVA coach Melvin Gouker said. "Sometimes it was a little harder this season because we have four or five guys that can be the No. 1 guy. Even today, I mixed some things up a bit, put our No. 1 (Maloney) in the three spot.

"For Jordan, I'm really happy for him. He had the three pars to clinch it and was so locked in to close it out."

Rounding out the scoring for the Leopards were John Bellissimo and Seth Tomalski, who each shot 86.

"That's been the key for us all season. It takes consistency to win a championship," Gouker added. "Rogan wasn't happy with the way he played in the semifinals Tuesday and played a rough round. He came in really focused today."

Another detail not lost on the Leopards was some added pressure from playing at home.

"I think we were the favorites coming in, and there was a little more pressure playing the home course," Maloney said. "If we lost, there's a

lot of questions we'd need to answer. All the whys and hows."

Despite having a "home-course advantage" Gouker said the course wasn't what his team was used to.

"The course played pretty tough today," he said. "They double cut, they double-rolled the greens. It was definitely harder than we've played it all season."

Trevor Kovatch finished the day with a 95 and had the no-count score for the Leopards. He had a disastrous hole on which he took a 15, but probably shouldn't have. In the end, it was inconsequential.

"Yeah, that was tough for him because he probably shouldn't have taken that score on the hole," Gouker said. "It was an issue with the (Interstate 70) construction. In the end, it didn't affect us, but I know he wanted to be a contributor."

With the championship in hand, the Leopards move on to the PIAA Championships Wednesday at Penn State University's White Course.

"We're playing with house money now, that's what I told them," Gouker said. "It's the program's first championship, I really want them to enjoy it. Let's go up there, enjoy the couple of days off school and see what happens. You just never know."

Carroto nets goal No. 100, Cougars win section outright

Charleroi celebrated its first section title in eight years with a 2-0 win over South Allegheny on Senior Night.

By **JOSE NEGRON**
jnegron@yourmvi.com

It was a night for celebration under the lights at Charleroi's Myron Pottios Stadium Thursday.

Bella Carroto was honored alongside five fellow seniors before netting her 100th career goal as the Cougars clinched the Section 2-1A title outright with a 2-0 victory over visiting South Allegheny on Senior Night.

Behind its high-scoring duo of Carroto and McKenna DeUnger, Charleroi (13-1, 10-1) secured its first section title in eight years. The last time the Cougars won their section was when they played in Class 2A in 2015.

"I'm really proud and happy for the girls because it's been a long three years for these kids," Charleroi head coach Tom Cameron said. "My first year here, we had two wins. Then, we finally got 10 wins last year and they worked really hard to get to where they are this year. It means so much for them to

win it on their home field and to do it on senior night."

SA (11-6, 6-5), which has already clinched a playoff spot, held Charleroi in check for 33 minutes before the home team struck for its two goals within the span of a minute.

The Gladiators couldn't generate many opportunities in the second half. They had four shots in the first half and just two in the second.

Charleroi goalkeeper Addison Conrad made five saves in the shut-out.

"We had them frustrated and we were happy with where we were," SA head coach Andrew Dyson said. "We did the right things defensively, we just didn't break down well enough on the goal by Bella. We can't have those things happen in the future."

Carroto reached the historic milestone with just under seven minutes left in the first half. She worked her way through a pair of defenders before beating another and firing a left-footed shot past SA goalkeeper Ella Lotz for a 1-0 lead.

"I just thought to myself, 'It's been too long; it's now or never,'" said Carroto, who became the fifth

COUGARS • B2



Jenn Codeluppi / MVI Sports

Charleroi's Bella Carroto works her way past the South Allegheny defense before scoring the 100th goal of her high school career during the first half of Thursday's game at Myron Pottios Stadium. Carroto is the fifth player in program history to score 100 career goals.

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José Negron
Assistant Sports Editor

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Leps claim sole rights to section crown

Trevor Kovatch scored two goals in Belle Vernon Area's 4-0 win over McGuffey.

By **ADAM BREWER**
MVI Sports

It was a busy Thursday for Belle Vernon Area's Trevor Kovatch. In the afternoon, Kovatch was a part of the BVA golf team that won the school's first ever WPIAL Class 2A team championship at Cedarbrook Golf Course. Then Kovatch exchanged his golf clubs for his soccer cleats in the evening, as the junior scored a pair of goals in the Leopards' 4-0 victory over McGuffey to win the Section 3-2A title outright at James Weir Stadium. "It wasn't too bad tonight," Kovatch said. "My legs felt a little tired in the second half, but I just pushed through it. We were really excited about the WPIAL championship and making school history. We worked for it all summer. But after, I went to the soccer field and got refocused. It was not too bad of a day winning a WPIAL title and then a section title."

The Leopards (14-2, 13-1) completed a perfect second half of the section schedule and extended its winning streak to seven games. In that win streak, BVA has outscored the competition by a 36-2 margin. BVA also gained revenge on the Highlanders (12-5, 10-4), as McGuffey gave BVA their only section setback, 2-1, on Sept. 19. "After a little bit of a rough start, I liked how we settled into this one," BVA coach Alan Yeschenko said. "We limited our turnovers and errant passes. I think once we possessed the ball and moved it well in the midfield, that kind of deflated McGuffey. Things clicked for us when we can control the middle. To get four goals against a defensive-minded team like McGuffey is something I am really excited



Bob Smith / MVI Sports

Belle Vernon Area's Trevor Kovatch maintains possession of the ball in front of a McGuffey defender during Thursday's game at James Weir Stadium. Kovatch scored two goals in the team's 4-0 win, pushing his season total to 47.

about." McGuffey took first possession in the contest and registered a corner kick in the first minute, but after that did not produce a shot on goal, it was all BVA for the next couple of minutes. Kovatch had a header off a throw-in that the visitors' keeper grabbed seven minutes into the first half. Then two minutes later, Brandon Yeschenko blasted a shot on net from 30 yards out that the opposing keeper made a sliding save on. After both teams traded close-in free kicks that didn't produce a goal, Kovatch was able to break through with a hard shot that found the back of the net. "It starts with our defense," Kovatch said. "The defense has carried

us all season, especially these last couple of games. To get that first goal was key and to play with that lead early on was great for our confidence. We are excited about winning the section title, but we want more in the playoffs." Tyler Bell grabbed the assist on the opening goal at 18:22. The Highlanders tried to get the equalizer five minutes later when Dylan Stewart broke loose from the defense, but BVA's keeper Bryce Burkhardt squared up and made his second save of the first half. The Leopards held a 1-0 lead at halftime and outshot the visitors, 9-3, in the opening 40 minutes of play. Brandon Yeschenko tallied the opening shot of the second half six

minutes in, but the Highlanders keeper, Sam Stout, was there for the point blank save. Stout was busy all night, and he recorded nine stops in between the pipes for the visitors. "We had a lot to play for tonight," Brandon Yeschenko said. "It was a bad loss at the time against McGuffey, but it actually helped us out. We learned from it and we were able to bounce back from it. We wanted to control the ball tonight and now we go into the playoffs with a lot of momentum." The Leopards continued to press in the attacking zone and had some heavy traffic in front of the road team's net. Tim Reda was credited with the goal for BVA, as the ball deflected off a McGuffey's defender header right over the keeper's

outstretched arms. The goal was at 31:11 of the second half. BVA added a pair of goals over a seven-minute span. Brandon Yeschenko received a perfect feed by Kovatch for a close-in shot at 20:34 and then Kovatch converted a penalty shot at 13:16. "On my goal, I was out wide and just waited for an opening" Brandon Yeschenko said. "I saw my man Goose running down the sidelines. He was blowing by their defenders and he was able to find me for a good look. It was an easy goal. We will take these days to recover and we are excited for the playoffs." The goal for Kovatch was his 47th of the fall, as he continued to add to his single-season, school record. The previously school record was 37 by Markello Apodiakos in 2017. Burkhardt was once again solid in net and on defense for BVA in the second half, as the junior keeper garnered three saves on the night. The shutout was the 10th overall for the Leopards this fall and the fourth straight. "Bryce started out as a field player a couple of seasons ago," Coach Yeschenko said. "He was interested in making the switch to keeper, and right there I knew he was going to be a solid keeper for us. He can play with his feet and he is very active in the field. He has total freedom to move around." BVA will now await their playoff fate when the WPIAL brackets get released Wednesday. "I welcome the few days off," Coach Yeschenko said. "This season goes by so fast and there is not a lot of training. So, we will work on our touches and clean some other things up with our passing. It has been a grueling, regular season and I think our guys will get healed up for the playoffs. I am very proud of this group for winning the section, especially after losing nine seniors last year. This group has a lot of grit."

HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP

Frazier adds another section title with win over Carmichaels

By the *MV Independent*

Frazier clinched its 16th section title in 20 years with a 3-1 win over Carmichaels in Section 2-1A volleyball action Thursday night. The Commodores (14-1, 12-0) won the first set 25-18 before dropping the second by a 25-23 score. They rallied to win the final two sets by scores of 25-11 and 25-19. Maddie Salisbury led the way with 13 kills and Grace Vaughn added 12. Gracen Hartman tallied 30 assists and 13 service points, Allie Monack finished with 23 assists and five blocks, Molly Yauch contributed with 23 digs and 15 service points and Addison Schultz chipped in with three blocks. Carmichaels fell to 5-8 overall and in section play with the loss. Frazier plays at Avella Tuesday.

Brownsville 3, Bentworth 1

The Bearcats (7-9, 6-9) won the first set before dropping the next three against Brownsville (9-7, 8-6) in Section 3-2A. Bentworth claimed a 25-17

victory in the opening set, but the Falcons responded by capturing set wins of 25-19, 25-16 and 26-24. Chelsea Dindal led the Bentworth offense with 11 kills while adding 18 digs. Jocelyn Babirad had 13 digs and 18 assists, Sofia Gaussa totaled three kills and nine digs, and Abigail Chester had seven kills and five digs. Haylee Wolfe added a 10-dig performance. Bentworth heads to Burgettstown Monday for a non-section clash.

Ringgold 3, Albert Gallatin 1

The Rams (13-3, 9-3) won the final two sets to capture a four-set win over Albert Gallatin (6-8, 5-7) in Section 3-3A. Ringgold won by set scores of 25-16 in the first, 25-13 in the third and 25-20 in the fourth. The Colonials won the second set 25-22. No statistics were reported. Ringgold travels to Charleroi for non-section action Monday.

Charleroi 3, Yough 1

The Cougars (9-8, 8-6)

moved into fourth place and the final playoff spot with a win over visiting Yough (13-6, 9-5) Thursday in Section 3-2A action. No game scores or statistics were reported. Charleroi hosts neighboring Ringgold Monday in a non-section match.

South Allegheny 3, Brentwood 0

The Gladiators (11-4, 10-2) defended their home court with a sweep over visiting Brentwood (3-10, 3-9). No scores or statistics were provided. South Allegheny will host Seton LaSalle Tuesday in a section contest.

Soccer Boys Thomas Jefferson 7, Uniontown 1

Ray Schrello and Brayden Miller combined to score all seven goals in a Section 3-3A win for Thomas Jefferson (14-2-1, 12-1-1) over Uniontown (5-13, 2-12). Schrello netted four goals in the victory, while Miller tallied three. TJ held a 3-1 lead at halftime before scoring four in the second half of the win. The Jaguars travel to face Elizabeth Forward in non-

section play Tuesday.

Bethel Park 4, Ringgold 1

Jackson Friday netted a hat trick and Xavier Jackson contributed with a goal to help Bethel Park (15-1-1, 13-0-1) secure the Section 3-3A title outright with a win over Ringgold (11-4-1, 9-4-1). Bethel Park held a 3-0 lead at halftime before Owen Haywood got the Rams on the board in the second half. Ringgold hosts Washington to end the regular season Monday.

Yough 5, Washington 1

The Cougars (9-7-1, 8-6) scored all of their goals in the first half of a Section 3-2A win over Washington (5-12, 5-9). Isaac Pacacha and Collin Barner each scored twice and Tyler Woloshun notched a goal of his own for Yough, which is slated to host Serra Catholic on Saturday.

Elizabeth Forward 5, South Allegheny 1

The Warriors (9-5-1, 8-4-1) finished off their Section 1-2A slate with a four-goal win over the Gladiators (1-15-1, 0-14). Will Sinay scored two

goals, while Hugo Davila-Sanz, Evan Marasco and Aiden Davis scored one apiece. Ethan Childers, Ron Chambers and Matt Johnston contributed with assists, while Nick Moffa and Johnston combined to allow just one goal in net. Moffa had two saves. EF is scheduled to host Thomas Jefferson Tuesday.

Bentworth 6, Chartiers-Houston 0

A five-goal first half catapulted Bentworth (13-2) to a non-section win over Chartiers-Houston (2-15). Ryan Colbert netted a hat trick, Dillan Colbert scored two goals and Ryan Moessner added a goal and an assist. John Scott had three assists and Coltyn Lusk added two helpers. The Bearcats travel to face Uniontown on Saturday.

Cross country Fayette County Coaches meet

The Belle Vernon Area boys and girls cross-country teams each finished second overall in the annual Fayette County Coaches Association meet at Connellsville. Gianni Pesi finished third overall while Leopard

teammates Dylan Holliday finished fifth and Logan Metzger was eighth. For the BVA girls, Tessa Rodriguez was the top runner with a second-place finish.

Mingo Classic

The Elizabeth Forward boys had a pair of top-10 finishers on its way to the boys Class 2A team title at the Mingo Classic Pink Out Thursday. But the top overall position went to Ringgold's Ryan Pajak. Pajak, a Notre Dame recruit, broke the all-time course record at the Classic. He crossed the finish line with a time of 14:40, the first athlete to ever break the 15-minute barrier in course history. EF's Patrick Burgos finished second and Thomas Fine was sixth overall to lead the Warriors. Braden Donovan finished 13th overall representing Serra Catholic. The Rams were third in the team standings and Thomas Jefferson finished fourth. Ringgold claimed the 2A title led by great finishes by Lily Brenneman, Annie Daerr and Angelique Mariana. Elizabeth Forward was fourth in the team standings, led by top finisher Brooke Yurkovich.

COUGARS FROM B1

player in program history to join the 100-goal club. "I saw the opportunity and capitalized on it." Caroto, who sits one goal behind Kyra Watkins for fourth place on the program's all-time list, admits the emotions of the night's events started to translate into tears when the team walked over to ring the victory bell following the win. She then joined her fellow seniors – DeUnger, Conrad, Ella Sybolt, Camryn Musser and Taylor Ramsdell – for one last lap around their home field. "As I was ringing the bell, it hit me that it was the last time I'd be doing that after a win," Caroto said. "These girls

are like my family, so there are a lot of emotions knowing that it's almost over." Caroto, a Pitt-Greensburg commit, played the role of facilitator less than a minute after notching her 23rd goal of the season. She delivered a pass up to DeUnger, who belted a shot off the left hand of Lotz and into the net for her 93rd career goal. "Once Bella scored and then Boots followed, I thought the gates would open," Cameron said. "Unfortunately, they didn't, but we had our chances." Despite the loss, South Allegheny still has something to play for on Monday. The playoff-bound Gladiators could move into a tie for third place in the sec-

tion with a win over Waynesburg Central. "If we split with Waynesburg, we'll be right there," Dyson said. "We still have an opportunity to help ourselves with the seeding." With sole possession of the section title secured, Charleroi will close out section play at Monessen Monday before traveling to Elizabeth Forward for a playoff tuneup on Wednesday. The Cougars will look to finish the season strong, while having the memories of Thursday's win to last a lifetime. "This whole night was surreal," Caroto said. "I couldn't be happier to get my 100th goal and help us clinch the section title on Senior Night."

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PIHL Hockey - Ringgold at Connellsville, 8:35 p.m.

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Warriors eliminate Leps with 5-0 win

The Leopards needed a win to qualify for the upcoming WPIAL playoffs.

By JOSE NEGRON
jnegrn@yourmvi.com

Elizabeth Forward gained momentum with a late first-half surge and never looked back in its Section 2-3A finale Monday night.

After controlling possession and generating plenty of chances in the opening half, the Warriors got the offensive production it needed in the final 11 minutes en route to a 5-0 road victory over Belle Vernon Area on “The Beach” at James Weir Stadium.

Brooklyn Baldensperger and Leilana Speney each had two goals, including one in each half. Giovanna Ferraro also found the back of the net for the playoff-bound Warriors (13-3, 12-2), who benefitted from assists by Ferraro, Maicee Smith, Taylor Snyder and Alyssa Terza.

“We wanted to stay sharp and finish section play strong,” EF head coach Sotiri Tsourekis said. “The girls just did what they’ve been doing all year.

EF outshot the hosts by a 10-2 margin in the opening



Bob Smith / MVI Sports

Elizabeth Forward’s Brooklyn Baldensperger, center, celebrates with teammates after scoring her first of two goals against Belle Vernon Area Monday night.

40 minutes.

The Warriors had two key chances in the latter portion of the frame, including one on a perfect cross from Ferraro that went just past the

foot of Mia Johnston in front of the net.

Three minutes later, Mia Valerio had another opportunity on a free kick that was stopped by BVA goalkeeper

Abby Showman, who finished with 10 saves in the loss.

The Leopards (7-9-1, 6-7-1) had both of their first-half shots saved by EF goalkeep-

er Adysson Davis. One of those shots came on a free kick with just under 20 minutes left in the first half.

“I thought we were right there for the first 30 minutes,” BVA head coach Tracy Lovett said. “Even at half-time, I still thought we could go out there, put one on them and tilt the game a little bit. We did go a little more offensive, but they found some holes and some lanes to break us down. It was hard to recover after that.”

With the loss, BVA was eliminated from playoff contention.

The Leopards needed a win and a Laurel Highlands loss to qualify. LH lost to Connellsville, 2-1.

“We needed that game, but we really turned our season around,” Lovett said. “One more win and it would have been a different scenario. It wasn’t the result we wanted, but I’m proud of how we progressed.”

Elizabeth Forward opened the scoring with just under 11 minutes remaining before halftime, as Baldensperger got to a loose ball that deflected off a BVA defender and ripped it past Showman for a 1-0 lead.

Just over eight minutes lat-

er, Speney took a pass from Ferraro and buried a shot to give the Warriors a two-goal cushion heading into halftime.

EF benefitted from two quick goals in the opening 10 minutes of the second half.

Baldensperger netted her second in close with 32:49 on the clock before Ferraro found the back of the net just over a minute later.

Speney cashed in with over 13 minutes left in the game to contribute another insurance goal for a Warriors team that finished with over 20 total shots.

Davis finished with three saves in the win, as she worked well with EF’s back line to help preserve the team’s 10th shutout of the year.

“All season, this has been a work in progress, but every week it gets better and better,” Tsourekis said. “This week, the message was just to stay sharp and stay attentive to the things that got us here.”

BVA closes out its season at home against Greensburg Salem tonight, while EF has a scheduled matchup with Charleroi on Wednesday.

DeUnger inches closer to 100 in win over Monessen

Charleroi’s McKenna DeUnger now has 97 career goals after a four-goal performance.

By JEREMY SELLEW
jsellew@yourmvi.com

The Charleroi girls soccer team upped its winning streak to nine games and another one of their stars got a little closer to a milestone Monday.

McKenna DeUnger scored four times, moving her career-goal total to 97, as the Cougars rolled to a 5-1 win at Monessen’s Memorial Stadium, playing spoiler on senior night for the Greyhounds.

Bella Carroto added a goal and three assists and Cam Musser and DeUnger each

added assists in the win.

The Cougars (13-1, 11-1) got on the board in the eighth minute as DeUnger scored the first of her goals off a feed ahead from Carroto.

Eight minutes later, it was DeUnger again, reining in a long pass up the field from defender Cam Musser and beating Monessen keeper Ashley Volosin.

Bella Carroto added to the lead, making it 3-0, after DeUnger chipped a nice ball ahead. Seven minutes later, DeUnger finished off a hat trick off a Carroto feed to give the Cougars a 4-0 lead at the half.

For the game, the Cougars launched 20 balls toward the net and finished with 15 of those shots on goal. Volosin played well, making 10 saves



Jenn Codeluppi / MVI Sports

Charleroi’s McKenna DeUnger beats Monessen’s Sidney Campbell just before scoring the second of her four goals in the Cougars’ win over the Greyhounds at Memorial Stadium.

for the Greyhounds (4-11-1, 1-10-1). Monessen ended the

season with their sixth loss in seven games.

In the second half, Monessen got on the board when Sam Saylor converted a penalty kick with 18 minutes remaining.

DeUnger wasn’t done, though, adding her fourth goal with seven minutes to play.

The Greyhounds finished with six shots on goal. Getting the win in goal for Charleroi was Addison Conrad, who finished with five saves.

While Monessen’s season comes to an end, the Cougars will await their spot in the WPIAL Class 1A playoff brackets, which will be released Wednesday. They’re tentatively scheduled to travel to Elizabeth Forward Wednesday for an exhibition game.

Bentworth 4,
Beth-Center 0

Four different players found the back of the net for the Bearcats (8-7-1, 5-6-1) as they shut out the Bulldogs (3-12, 1-11) for senior night on the hill in Ellsworth.

Emily Kisner, Megan Keturakis, Cassidy Sicchitano and Meredith Allender each scored a goal, and Nita Anderson got the shutout in goal for Bentworth.

“We really played well all night,” Bentworth coach Tyler Hamstra said. “Jesse Laskey was stellar in the back, which allowed Megan and Cassidy to attack. We really took big steps over the second half of the season and the girls look like they found

ROUNDUP • B3

SPORTS STEW

McKeesport’s Marty Vaughn was a trailblazer at QB

By WAYNE STEWART
For MVI Sports

Marty Vaughn was not only a great football player for McKeesport High, he was also a pioneer.

He guided his Tigers to a 9-1 record as a senior and in 1973, he became one of the first Black quarterbacks to play in the Ivy League, doing so for the Pennsylvania Quakers.

His trailblazing ways were never more evident than on Oct. 6, 1973, when he and opposing quarterback Dennis Coleman of Brown became the first-ever pair of Black quarterbacks to start a major college game.

Vaughn said that he and Coleman

knew they were making history, and realized there were only about five college Black quarterbacks in the entire nation at that time. He said they wanted to put on a good display, and they did.

Vaughn led his team to a 28-20 victory, throwing for 200 yards, and Coleman ended up rushing for more than 10 yards per carry.

Chris Berman of ESPN did a nice piece on Vaughn at a pre-Super Bowl event this year when all of the conversation was about the first time there would be two Black quarterbacks starting in the Super Bowl.

Super Bowl LVII featured Patrick Mahomes of the Chiefs and Jalen

Hurts of the Eagles in February of 2023, but the Ivy League had the NFL beat by decades.

As for Vaughn’s feats, in his first collegiate season his completion rate was 55% for 1,926 yards. His 17 touchdown tosses helped him earn a quarterback rating of 153.3, playing for a coach with a fitting name for a bold leader, Harry Gamble.

In Vaughn’s next and final season, he completed 52.6% of his passes and added a dozen more touchdowns through the air. A recent article stated Vaughn still ranks sixth all-time at Penn for career passing yardage and 10th for his best single-season output.

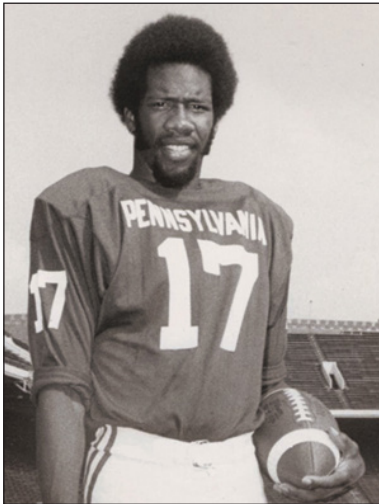
The humble and articulate Vaughn said, “When I got to Penn, there was myriad people from Asia, Africa, and Black, Hispanic, Caucasian and Jewish Americans – we all lived in the same dorms, but with different backgrounds.

“It was a microcosm of what the world is. It was a relaxed, friendly atmosphere and we exchanged ideas. It was like how I grew up in McKeesport.”

Off the gridiron, Vaughn continued his winning ways which was not surprising to high school classmates who saw him as a natural leader in and out of the classroom.

Charley Kiss, McKeesport’s ath-

STEW • B3



University of Pennsylvania Athletics
Marty Vaughn



Rams get new coach
After a sudden resignation, the Ringgold boys basketball team has a new coach. B2

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2023

Today On...



SPORTS
WEBCAST

VOLLEYBALL - Mapletown at Frazier, 6 p.m.

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Cougars earn No. 1 seed, Leopards No. 5 in 2A

Thomas Jefferson No. 7, Ringgold No. 14 in 3A bracket; Serra Catholic sixth, Bentworth seventh.

By JOSE NEGRON
jnegrone@yourmvi.com

After winning the Section 2-1A title and finishing its regular-season slate with a perfect 16-0 record, the Charleroi boys soccer team was rewarded Wednesday afternoon.

The defending Class 1A runner-up Cougars earned the No. 1 seed in the upcoming WPIAL playoffs and will host No. 16 Beaver County Christian (6-8-1) in the first round Saturday.

The contest is scheduled for a 1 p.m. start at Myron Pottios Stadium.

"I really like the seeding," Charleroi head coach Jon Ducoli said. "The team has worked hard for that respectable No. 1 seed."

During the regular season, the Cougars averaged just over six goals per game while allowing under one. They outscored their 16 opponents by a 99-8 margin.

Beaver County Christian, the fourth-place team out of Section 1, only allowed 26 goals through 17 games.



Arlo McIntyre (left) and Charleroi were awarded the No. 1 seed in the Class 1A playoffs. Trevor Kovatch and his 47 goals will lead the No. 5 Leopards against No. 12 East Allegheny.

They scored 22. "BCC didn't put up a lot of goals during the regular season, nor did they give up a lot," Ducoli said. "I feel that if we stick to the style of soccer we play, we will be alright."

Two other teams will represent the Mon Valley in the Class 1A tournament.

No. 6 Serra Catholic (12-4) will take on No. 11 Trinity Christian (9-5) in a first-round bout 1 p.m. Saturday at Bethel Park High School.

The Eagles shared the Section 4 title with Seton LaSalle, while Trinity Christian finished fourth in Section 3.



Mike Darnay & Bob Smith / MVI Sports

The teams had a scheduled regular-season matchup postponed in mid-September.

"I think seeding worked out how we expected. There are a lot of good teams across the sections, so we anticipated being in the five or six range in recent days," Serra Catholic head coach Chad Bruns said.

"I think it will be a good game and a tough match. Trinity and Serra used to be in the same section for over a decade, so we've had a lot of close back-and-forth battles in recent years. It should be a game filled with a lot of history and a matchup of two grass-field teams meeting on turf. Ben Kost does a great job with the program over there."

Following a second-place finish behind Charleroi in Section 2, No. 7 Bentworth (14-2) will begin postseason play against No. 10 Our Lady of Sacred Heart (10-5-2) 3 p.m. Saturday at South Fayette High School.

The Bearcats finished the regular season as the highest-scoring team in Class 1A, netting 110 goals and allowing 11 through 16 games. Their only two regular-season defeats came at the hands of the Cougars.

OLSH is the third-place team out of Section 1. The Chargers led their section with 55 goals during the regular season.

Belle Vernon Area earned the highest seed among three local teams in the Class 2A bracket.

The No. 5 Leopards (14-2) will host No. 12 East Allegheny (11-4-1) on "The Beach" at James Weir Stadium 7 p.m. Monday.

BVA won the Section 3 title, while East Allegheny finished second.

BOYS • B2

Charleroi girls seeded third in 1A, Jaguars fourth in 3A

By JEREMY SELLEW
jsellew@yourmvi.com

Charleroi girls soccer coach Tom Cameron admitted Wednesday he was expecting his Cougars to fall into the WPIAL Class 1A bracket as the four, or even five seed.

Needless to say the long-time coach was ecstatic when the WPIAL delivered the Cougars (14-1) the No. 3 seed.

"I really was hoping for the four, maybe even five. I wasn't sure whether the other section is any better or worse than ours," Cameron said. "But I think the body of work these kids did, I'm so excited for them. These girls deserve it."

The Cougars — champions of Section 2 — will also have the chance to play a first-round home game at Myron Pottios Stadium when they face No. 14 Riverside (4-8) Tuesday at 7 p.m.

"It's been a long, tough three years for these girls. I'm ecstatic for them," Cameron said. "Playing at home is huge. They don't have to travel, they get to stay in their routine and come down 45 minutes prior to the game. They get to see their family and friends and play at our house. Very seldom am I at a loss for words, but this, this is close."

The Panthers were the fourth-place team from Section 3. They average less than a goal per game offensively, but that doesn't matter



Mike Darnay / MVI Sports

Bella Carroto

to Cameron.

"We're 0-0. We're not 14-1 anymore, that's gone. They're 0-0, too. It's a whole new season," Cameron said. "I think no matter who we play, if we come out and play soccer the way we're capable of playing, we can make



Mike Darnay / MVI Sports

Natalie Lamenza

a deep run. We have the keys, we can't give them away."

Another Valley entry in the Class 1A bracket is South Allegheny. The Gladiators (11-7) are the No. 12 seed and will face a tall task in knocking off No. 5 Greensburg Central Catholic (10-2). They play Tuesday at 6 p.m. at Southmoreland High School.

"As a team, we're happy with our seed," SA head coach Andrew Dyson said. "(GCC) will be a good test for us. We scrimmaged them at the start of the year and we feel we match up well with them."

Dyson said his team is playing some of its best soccer over the past few weeks. "The girls are peaking at the right time, even if we didn't get the results we wanted the past two games," he added. "I feel like we're right there with a lot of teams in the classification."

In Class 2A, the Yough girls (5-13) were seeded 16th after a fourth-place finish in Section 3. The Cougars, under first-year coach Bob Broadwater, travel to face No. 1 Avonworth (14-1-2) at 8 p.m. Tuesday.

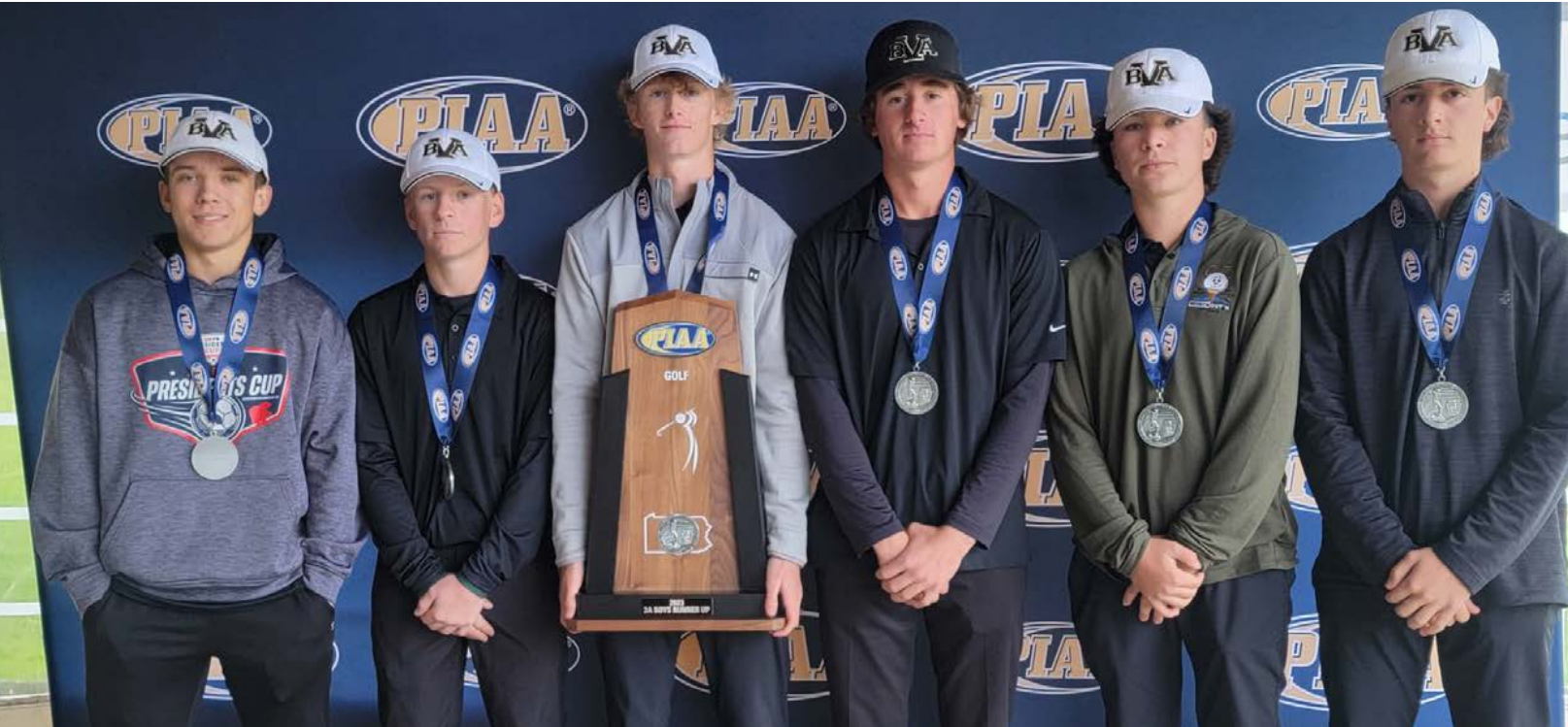
Two local teams find themselves in the Class 3A bracket, led by No. 4 Thomas Jefferson, the champion out of Section 2. The Jaguars (16-1) opened the season with a 1-0 loss at West Allegheny, but have won 16 straight since.

They'll host No. 13 Oakland Catholic (6-6-2), the third place team from Section 1, Monday at 7 p.m. at Jaguars Stadium.

"I wasn't sure where we'd be because we can't control our section and who we play," TJ head coach Sean Richter said. "We're happy with where we are, though. I was worried

GIRLS • B2

LEOPARDS FINISH SECOND AT PIAA CHAMPIONSHIP



The Belle Vernon Area boys golf team claimed a runner-up finish in the PIAA Class 2A Team Championship Thursday on Penn State's White Course. Jordan Mocello and Seth Tomalski each finished with a 74. Rogan Maloney and Jack Edwards each shot 79 for the WPIAL champion Leps. Posing with the PIAA runner-up trophy are team members, from left: Trevor Kovatch, Mocello, Maloney, John Bellissimo, Edwards and Tomalski.

BVA Athletic Department

TOWLER • B5



Leps ready to defend
Belle Vernon is the top seed in the Class 3A playoffs; seven other local teams qualify. B2

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2023

Springdale ends Charleroi's season

The Dynamos scored four first-half goals en route to a 6-2 win over the Cougars.

By ADAM BREWER
MVI Sports

Sometimes speed kills on a soccer field, and Springdale just had too much for Charleroi to handle.

After getting the opening goal a minute in, the Cougars couldn't maintain that pressure and couldn't control the Dynamos' team speed in a 6-2 loss Saturday afternoon at Myron Pottios Stadium in Class 1A quarterfinal girls' soccer action.

"Springdale is a very good team," Charleroi coach Tom Cameron said. "You can't take anything away from them. They have a lot of speed and have a lot of girls that can score. The film didn't lie, we knew it would be a challenge today."

The No. 3 Cougars (15-3) were looking for their first semifinal appearance since 2015. That season, Charleroi defeated New Brighton in the round of eight and then Shady Side Academy in the semifinals before falling to Greensburg Central Catholic in the finals in overtime.

With the win, the No. 6 Dynamos (14-3) will move on to face No. 2 Freedom, a 3-2 winner over Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, in the semifinals Tuesday.

Springdale lost to Freedom in the championship game last year.

"Our balance scoring has carried us this season," Springdale coach Marc Bentley said. "Whether we play Freedom or OLSH, we just have to continue to play the same style. Both are good teams. We will concentrate on our play and focus on putting more balls in the back of the net."



Bob Smith / MVI Sports

Charleroi's McKenna DeUnger scored her 100th career goal Saturday in the Cougars' WPIAL quarterfinal loss to Springdale.

Coming into the game, Springdale had scored 92 goals, 10 of which were in their first-round contest against Sewickley Academy. The Dynamos finished third in a stacked Section 1-1A behind top seed Riverview and GCC.

"They come from a very good section," Cameron said. "They were probably tested a lot in section play and they know how to score. They are fast and well-coached. They played a physical game and we didn't have an answer for it today."

The first goal was scored by

Charleroi just 50 seconds in and it was a historic goal by McKenna DeUnger. The senior midfielder was battling for possession of the ball 20 yards away from the net, but her hard shot ricocheted off a defender and then off the near post before bouncing into the back of the net.

The goal by DeUnger was the 100th of her storied career with the Cougars. She is the sixth player to join the milestone goal list. Bella Carroto, who tallied her 100th career goal earlier in the season, as-

sisted on the marker.

Charleroi, unfortunately, couldn't celebrate the goal for very long as Springdale came storming back with the tying goal by Molly Hurley 34 second later.

The Cougars had their second shot of the day in front of the visitors' net went wide right, but on the play DeUnger was injured. At the 31:14 mark of the first half, DeUnger exited the game and did not return.

"I hate making excuses, but not having Boots really stung," Cameron said. "She is such a big part of our team. Our girls played hard and we fought, but those early goals put us back on our heels. We used a different formation in our attack and it didn't work."

With Charleroi being without one of their top scorers, Springdale took full advantage and titled the field in their favor. After several scoring chances were thwarted by Cougars' keeper Addison Conrad, the Dynamos struck for a 2-1 lead after another goal by Hurley at 22:38.

Hurley completed the hat trick with a marker with 2:10 left in the first half and then the visitors extended its advantage to 4-1 with a goal by Charli McClafferty 50 seconds before halftime.

Conrad was extremely busy in net for Charleroi in the first half, as Springdale held a 16-3 shot advantage over the Cougars in the opening 40 minutes of play.

After the teams battled for possession to start the second half, the Cougars climbed back into the quarterfinal contest with a goal by Rhianna Grogan at 29:46. Carroto had an assist on the goal.

Charleroi had another chance that was stopped, and then Springdale countered with a huge, insurance

goal with a shot from 20 yards out by Hailey Marchlewski with 27:39 left in regulation.

"We played really well in the first half and bounced back from that early deficit," Bentley said, "We got everyone involved and we moved the ball well in the offensive third. These girls had resiliency and they are not satisfied with a one or two goal lead. Our message is to always attack and be the aggressors."

The play was more even in the second half, as Springdale held an 8-4 edge in shots. Conrad finished with 10 saves in net.

Briana Ross, who had four goals in the first round triumph over Sewickley, ended the scoring in the game with a goal at the 2:50 mark of the second half. The marker was her 41st of the season.

Baileigh Hass was credited with two stops in net for the Dynamos.

Despite the postseason setback, Charleroi had a historic season by winning their section and capturing its first playoff victory since 2016. The Cougars will lose six key seniors – DeUnger, Carroto, Conrad, Camryn Musser, Ella Sypolt and Taylor Ramsdell.

"The girls gave it their all this season," Cameron said. "You can't take that away from them. We have worked our butts off the last three seasons and these seniors have faced some adversity. We went through some agony and self-doubt, but we came together this fall. They gave me their heart and soul."

The high-scoring duo of DeUnger and Carroto ended their spectacular careers with some staggering numbers and milestones. DeUnger has totaled 100 careers goals with 36 career assists, and Carroto has compiled 101 goals with 68 assists.



South Allegheny goalkeeper Ella Lotz made a huge save on a penalty kick and helped the Gladiators win a shootout with a goal of her own and another big save to lead SA to a 1-0 win over Winchester Thurston Saturday.

Jenn Codeluppi / MVI Sports

Gladiators stun Bears to advance to semifinals

By JEREMY SELLEW
jsellew@yourmvi.com

The South Allegheny girls soccer team picked up a program-defining win Saturday, stunning No. 4-seeded Winchester Thurston and moving on to the WPIAL Class 1A semifinals.

The Gladiators (13-7) took the Bears (11-4) to the limit, winning a penalty-kick shootout by a 4-2 margin to pick up the 1-0 win.

"A win like this can do a lot for a program," South Allegheny coach Andrew Dyson said. "It's one of those things that makes it easier to get more players into the program, for sure."

The teams remained scoreless through 110 minutes of soccer, but there were some close calls throughout regulation that could have turned the tide.

The Gladiators' Lily Dranko hit a post with a shot and Ava Martorelli missed on another shot by a matter of inches in the first half.

"The first half we were a little more forward," Dyson said. "We wanted to shut down certain players and force them to play more to the outside defensively."

In the second half the Bears started to press offensively, but early on it was the Gladiators with the momentum after goalkeeper Ella Lotz made a save on a penalty kick by the Bears.

"Over the second half, we kind of went into a shell defensively because they started throwing a lot of numbers forward," Dyson said. "When Ella made that save, it gave us a lot of confidence."

As the second overtime expired, Dyson felt the momentum was on the Gladiators' side.

"We were really confident heading into the shootout," Dyson said. "I think it was because of the way Ella played the entire game. I pulled her off to the side after we got to the shootout and told her we had faith in her."

It was Lotz's offense that

started the shootout as the Gladiators' keeper came out of the net and scored the opening goal for the Glads.

After the goal, Lotz made a save to give her team a 1-0 advantage after the first shooters. Rylee Stetz scored and the Bears added a goal to make it 2-1 after the second round.

The Gladiators missed their next attempt, followed by a miss by the Bears' goalkeeper on her attempt.

Molly Zrenchak scored for the Gladiators and Abby Allan added the game-winning goal to make it 4-2.

South Allegheny now moves on to face No. 1 Riverview (17-2) and Pitt commit Lola Abraham in the semifinals at 6 p.m. Tuesday at North Allegheny.

"We need to go in there and play our game," Dyson said. "Seeing the film and watching them play in person, we need to find ways to break her down defensively and pick up a couple goals on the other end."

Cougars looking for repeat trip to Highmark Stadium

Charleroi (18-0) will face No. 4 Seton LaSalle tonight at Peters Township Middle School in a WPIAL semifinal.

By JEREMY SELLEW
jsellew@yourmvi.com

The Charleroi boys soccer team will look for its second straight trip to Highmark Stadium in Pittsburgh and another WPIAL Class 1A championship appearance when it meets No. 4-seed Seton LaSalle tonight at Peters Township Middle School at 8 p.m.

The Cougars (18-0) also look to remain unbeaten on the season, while the Rebels (15-2-1) enter winning 12 of their last 13 games.

Seton LaSalle enters the game after beating No. 5 Springdale, 5-0, last week in the quarterfinals. The same day, the Cougars beat No. 9 Eden Christian, 3-1.

"If we stick to our possession game and can get on a quick counter, I think we're going to be just fine," Charleroi head coach Jon Ducoli said. "We have to make sure we cash in on our opportunities when they present themselves. It's been that way for every game."

The Cougars' offense is led by Arlo McIntyre's 24 goals and 11 assists on the season. Fellow senior Bryce Large has 19 goals and three assists on the season.

Dylan Klinger, who scored twice in the win over Eden Christian, now has 18 goals and 12 assists on the year.

The fourth player with double-digit goals on the roster is junior Landon Barcus, who has 12 goals and a team-high 16 assists.

"You can't just mark one of our guys," Ducoli said. "We're really balanced on the offensive end and any of our guys can finish around the net. We have to cash in on our chances."

The Rebels bring along leading scorer, senior forward Jack Billick, who scored four of his team's five goals against Springdale.

"We definitely have to keep track of him," Ducoli said. "We wouldn't have the success we've had this season without the play of our back line, though. They're a special group."

Defensively, the Cougars are led by senior captain Nate Mazon in goal. Mazon and the Cougars have only allowed seven goals all season, with Mazon owning 11 shutouts. He's made 40 saves on the sea-



Jenn Codeluppi / MVI Sports

Arlo McIntyre leads the Charleroi offense with 24 goals and has 11 assists this season.

son, a testament to the difficulty the back line has made it on teams getting shots.

Ducoli said the team's training before their celebratory bonfire Sunday was one of the best of the season.

"The guys at training (Sunday) were fantastic," he said. "They're 100% locked in and focused. It helps that we've been in this situation before as recently as last year. I don't expect the moment to be too big for them. There was an eerie, intense feeling about it, but it was a good thing."

All season the Cougars have had a target on their backs, coming in as the defending WPIAL runner-up and rolling through this season with an unbeaten record.

"The guys are taking the pressure in stride and it feels like every game is another day at the office for them," Ducoli said. "They're ready to go."

The winner of tonight's game will play the winner of No. 7 Bentworth and No. 3 Burrell in the championship.

The Bearcats (16-2), whose only losses have come to Charleroi this season, upset No. 2 Sewickley Academy Thursday.



Vulcans rally
California rallied from a 13-point deficit to capture a lopsided win over Mercyhurst. B2

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2023

All-Valley showdown in 1A

Moessner sends Bentworth to first WPIAL title game

By **JOSE NEGRON**
jnegron@yourmvi.com

The Bentworth boys soccer team will make its first appearance in the WPIAL championship game Friday night.

Ryan Moessner is a big reason why.

The sophomore scored a pair of goals, including the game-winning tally in overtime, to help give the seventh-seeded Bearcats a 2-1 victory over third-seeded Burrell in the WPIAL Class 1A semifinals Monday night at Peters Township.

Bentworth (17-2) will meet No. 1 Charleroi in Friday's 8 p.m. championship. The Cougars swept the regular-season series with the Bearcats.

"At the beginning of the year, you tell the kids they're a special group, but sometimes they don't believe in themselves," said first-year Bentworth head coach Nick Malarbi. "We're seeing how special they are."

Moessner gave Bentworth the win with just under 10 minutes left in the first overtime period. John Scott played a ball right in front of Moessner, who took a touch around a defender and buried a shot for the winner.

"It was surreal," Moessner said. "I've never done anything like that in my life. It feels so good to help our program get to the championship for the first time."



Jenn Codeluppi / MVI Sports

Bentworth's Ryan Moessner controls possession around a fallen Burrell defender during Monday night's WPIAL Class 1A semifinal matchup at Peters Township.

Moessner scored the lone goal of the first half at the 26-minute mark, as he took a shot from the right of the box that beat Burrell goalkeeper Ryan Croushore for a 1-0 advantage.

"Ryan is a special player who could play at any classification," Malarbi said. "That kid is gonna go down in Bentworth history."

Croushore was strong throughout the night, making three saves in the loss.

Burrell (14-4) peppered

Bentworth netminder DJ Hays with plenty of shots, including a handful in the second half.

Luke Guerrini, Billy Kowalkowski and Will Doult were each denied by Hays, who finished with five saves and benefitted from a strong defensive effort by the back line of Gaige Davenport, Isaac Reynolds, Andrew Viperman and Dillan Colbert.

"We knew with a team that

BENTWORTH • B2



Jenn Codeluppi / MVI Sports

Charleroi's Arlo McIntyre looks to get past the defense of Seton LaSalle's Sasuk Nyarsuk during play in the WPIAL Class 1A semifinals Monday at Peters Township.

McIntyre leads Charleroi past Seton LaSalle

By **LIAM BELAN**
lbelan@yourmvi.com

For the second straight year, Charleroi is returning to Highmark Stadium to play in the WPIAL Class 1A boys soccer championship after Arlo McIntyre scored the winning golden goal on a penalty kick against Seton LaSalle in Monday night's semifinal.

After 80 minutes of scoreless action, it took just under five minutes of extra time to find a winner after Seton LaSalle was called for a handball inside their penalty box.

The Cougars looked to McIntyre to put them into Friday night's final against Bentworth, and he did just that with a laser to his bottom left of the net.

"It feels great," the senior said. "I'm just trying to do whatever it takes for my team. It felt good that my team had the confidence in me to take that one. I knew where I was going from the start."

For Seton LaSalle, goalkeeper Nick Cherry made nine saves to keep the Rebels in the thick of a highly competitive match, but they ultimately came up just short.

"I'm trying to see if (Nick) can fail classes so we can have him back next year," Seton LaSalle coach Nick Balzer said with a laugh. "He's such a rock back there. He's so steady, he's so calm and he makes saves that you don't think he should make. He was phenomenal."

CHARLEROI • B2

All-WPIAL girls teams filled with Valley talent

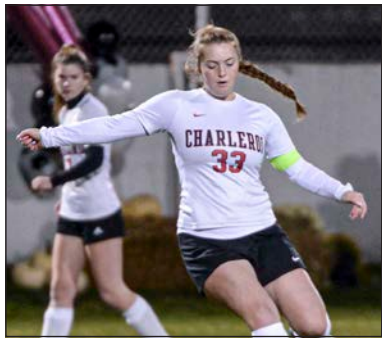
A total of 14 area standouts were recognized in Class 1A and 4A.

By the Mon Valley Independent

A handful of local girls soccer players were named to the All-WPIAL teams Monday.

Charleroi had four honorees, including a trio of seniors in Bella Carroto, McKenna DeUnger and Addison Conrad. Freshman defender Aryana Chiplaskey joined her veteran teammates, as she and Conrad, the Cougars' star goalkeeper, were named to the team for the first time in their careers.

Carroto and DeUnger were select-



Bella Carroto

ed for the second straight year after each tallied more than 24 goals in their final high school season. They also became the fifth and sixth players in program history to join the



Ella Lotz

100-goal club. Chiplaskey helped anchor Charleroi's back line in her first varsity season and Conrad was a steady presence in net for the Cou-



Brooklyn Baldensperger

gars, who won 15 games and captured their first playoff win in seven years. Joining the four Charleroi standouts among the 1A representatives



Natalie Lamenza

were South Allegheny's Abby Allan and Ella Lotz, Bentworth's Megan Keturakis, Monessen's Sam Saylor and Serra Catholic's Lydia Reith.

ALL WPIAL • B2

Broadcasts to continue as MVI Live becomes affiliate of NFHS

By **JEREMY SELLEW**
jsellew@yourmvi.com

With the WPIAL agreeing to a five-year deal with the National Federation of State High School Associations that gives the NFHS Network exclusive video streaming rights to WPIAL postseason games, there will undoubtedly be a decline in the number of local teams' games that are livestreamed.

But MVI Live has taken steps to bring local playoff action to those around the Mon Valley.

MVI Live has agreed to a deal to become an affiliate of NFHS, allowing broadcasts to continue.

The difference now that the regular season is over is that all games will be streamed on the NFHS website at the MVI Live site. It can be found at <https://www.nfhsnetwork.com/affiliates/the-mon-valley-independent-live>.

"Affiliating with NFHS gives our local high school athletes potentially national exposure and gives our viewers a national array of viewership opportunities. It's a win-win for all," the MVI Board of Directors said in a statement.

The action kicks off tonight with a pair of WPIAL Class 1A semifinal volleyball games. No. 2 Frazier will face No. 3 Bishop

Canevin at 6 p.m., followed by No. 1 Serra Catholic taking on No. 4 Greensburg Central Catholic at 7:30 p.m.

"This partnership will allow us to continue to provide great coverage of our local teams for the playoffs once again," MVI Multimedia Director Alex Lyons said. "It will also allow us to enter into new opportunities with MVI Live that we wouldn't be able to participate in without it."

The first postseason football game on the MVI Live slate will be Friday when Thomas Jefferson hosts Kiski Area in a WPIAL Class 4A first-round game at 7 p.m.



KNOW YOUR TEAM



Jeremy Sellaw
Sports Editor



José Negron
Assistant Sports Editor

To get your sports scores into the **Mon Valley Independent**, call or email our Sports Department. 724-314-0040 or sports@yourmvi.com.