

ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



Jake Comfort

School: Fraser
Sport: Wrestling

Highlights: Comfort qualified for the Division 1 state finals by placing third at 171 pounds in a Division 1 regional at Ford. Comfort defeated T.J. Carter of Grosse Pointe South 9-5 in the consolation match.



Brittany Simon

School: Chippewa Valley
Sport: Basketball

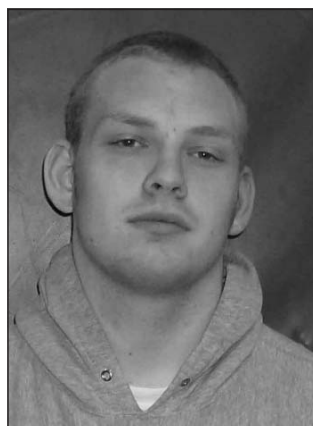
Highlights: Simon made all five of her 3-pointers and scored 19 points in Chippewa Valley's 43-40 victory over Fraser in a Class A regional semifinal on Tuesday.



Claire Cannon

School: Chippewa Valley
Sport: Basketball

Highlights: Cannon made five 3-pointers and scored a game-high 22 points in Chippewa Valley's 50-47 overtime loss to Grosse Pointe North in a Class A regional final on Thursday.



Nick Scalici

School: Ford
Sport: Wrestling

Highlights: Scalici finished fourth at 215 pounds at a Division 1 regional at Ford to advance to this week's state individual finals.



Zach Ulewicz

School: De La Salle
Sport: Wrestling

Highlights: Ulewicz won the Catholic League championship at 171 pounds. Ulewicz has a 4.233 cumulative GPA, and he scored a perfect 36 on the ACT.



Steve Pelkey

School: Chippewa Valley
Sport: Hockey

Highlights: Pelkey scored six goals and assisted in another in a victory over L'Anse Creuse. On the season, Pelkey has 29 goals and 14 assists for the Big Reds.

Coaches: E-mail nominations for Athletes of the Week to sports@macombdaily.com

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Specialty teams come through for Dakota

■ Cougars beat Troy Athens 3-2 in overtime for victory.

By Susan Smiley
Journal Register News Service

TROY — In a game where every goal was scored on the power play, it was Aaron Agrusa's goal with 3:37 left in overtime that gave Macomb Dakota a 3-2 win over Troy Athens and a Division 1 regional championship.

Dakota will play the winner of Saturday's Grosse Pointe North-Livonia Stevenson regional final.

Regional Hockey Championship

"Our power play was outstanding and I thought our penalty kill was outstanding," said Dakota head

coach David Koons. "They are a great team especially when they are up a man so we did really well tonight I thought."

The first period was a battle of goal-tenders. Neither Athens' Greg Lindow nor Dakota's Paul Savage allowed the puck to slip over the goal line.

Cougars junior forward Kyler Kolb was the first to score midway through the second period.

Athens was unable to capitalize on three two-minute power plays in the first period,

but managed to score two goals on a five-minute power play late in the second period when a Dakota player was serving a five-minute major. Victor Pasque and Kirk Brown put the Red Hawks up, 2-1, to end the second period.

"For us all year it has been sort of feeling out teams in the first period and then taking advantage in later periods," said Athens head coach Joe Barone. "Our stats in the first period are not that strong and we know that. But we got that opportunity in the second period on that five-minute major and that was our time to capitalize and we absolutely did."

As much as the Red Hawks (20-5-2) had the upper hand in the second period, Dakota (20-4-3) had the edge in the third. The Cougars came out banging against the boards, but Athens held the lead until David Demick scored the tying goal at 6:44 of the third period.

"I thought in the third period we had a little more legs than they did and we were taking it to them a bit," said Koons. "The whole coaching staff just told the kids to keep doing what they had been doing all game. There is always a chance the other team is going to get the lucky bounce but we felt we had been playing well all game and that we could make something good happen for us."

Koons praised his senior defensemen — Agrusa, Kolb, Todd Nichter, Joe Rogowski, and Tom Beres — for helping to hold Athens to two goals.

It was not a lucky bounce but a set play that earned Dakota the overtime win. The Cougars worked the puck up to the top of the Athens zone, shot low, and then picked up the rebound to score.

"We knew they were moving the puck extremely well and that it was going to be a battle of special teams," said Barone. "They executed their game plan perfectly. My goalie made another great save and my defenseman on the post lost sight of the puck and their guy didn't. It was not a bad bounce in their favor it was just a great hockey game."

The two teams hope to play each other next year on the regular-season schedule.

"Both teams were very evenly matched," said Koons. "We have very similar teams in that both are more offensively oriented and it was just a great game to watch and it was great fun being here."

Even though Athens did not skate away with the regional trophy, Barone believes his team proved something to doubters in the post season.

"Being in the last 16 teams when you had a 1-21-1 season the year before is an accomplishment," Barone said.



De La Salle's goalie John Kleinhans shuts down a Grosse Pointe South wrap-around attempt in the Pilots' 1-0 double overtime regional victory.

Macomb Daily staff photo by Craig Gaffield

Summaries

Boys Ice Hockey Regionals

DIVISION 1
(At Troy Sports Center)
March 1: Dakota 3, Troy Athens 2, OT
DIVISION 2
(At Great Lakes Ice Arena, Fraser)
March 1: De La Salle 1, Grosse Pointe South 0

Boys Basketball Regionals

CLASS A
(Host Grosse Pointe South)
March 3: De La Salle vs. L'Anse Creuse North, 5 p.m.; Eisenhower vs. Detroit Finney, 7 p.m.
March 5: Championship - TBD, 7 p.m.

(Host Lake Orion)
March 3: Pontiac Northern vs. Flint Southwestern, TBA; Romeo vs. Clarkston, TBA
March 5: Championship - TBD

CLASS D
(Host Roper)
March 3: Parkway Christian vs. Canton Agape Christian, TBA; Detroit City vs. Plymouth Christian, TBA
March 5: Championship - TBD

Follow high school playoff action in The Macomb Daily

HOCKEY: Kleinhans downplays role

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on the play.

Both teams played fairly conservatively throughout regulation time. Grosse Pointe South held a narrow 17-15 lead in shots and the Devils wound up with 21 shots to the Pilots' 18.

Amazingly, the play didn't start opening up until regulation had ended.

Three minutes into the first extra frame, Kelly O'Donnell-Daudin found his way behind the DLS defense for a break-away. His shot, however, was turned aside coolly by John

Kleinhans — while the Pilots crowd roared in appreciation.

"John has been seeing the puck like it's a beach ball," Barry said. "He's making the first stop and even the second stop — and sometimes the third stop for us when we need it."

Kleinhans was also able to bail the Pilots out on a number of chances earlier in the game. Most notable was a second-period stop on South's top forward Brian Auty. With the Devils on the power play, Auty took a one-timer that forced Kleinhans to go into the splits to make the save.

In the first overtime, Klein-

hans turned aside back-to-back scoring chances in a sequence that preceded the winning goal by less than a minute.

Kleinhans downplayed his role in the victory, despite the junior's outstanding performance between the pipes.

"It was a great game that was well-played by both teams," Kleinhans said. "When overtime started I was thinking I don't want to lose the game because I know the next goal wins. I just wanted to do my best out there."

The Pilots next play the winner of No. 1 Trenton and Brownstown Woodhaven.

BOWLING: AB's Raden reaches D-1 quarterfinals

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that's part of bowling."

Essenmacher needed three games to get by Sanker in his first match. He won the first game 224-223. Sanker returned the favor with a 226-225 win in game two. Essenmacher then used six-straight strikes in game three to advance, 258-191.

Belz, just a sophomore, looked to be on a roll after a convincing 259-168, 220-202 win over Lakeview's Alan Wyzlic in the first round.

He then won the first game in the quarterfinals, 236-230, against Mattawan's Tyler Houser. But Houser rebounded with a 236-212 win in game two and capped off the comeback with a 203-198 win in game three.

"I was happy. I didn't expect to

get this far," Belz said. "I'm going to work a little harder (in the offseason). Now I know what it's like to be here. I won't have any pressure next year."

Armada's Tiffany Warbington and Richmond's Rebecca Wright also qualified for tournament play but were bounced in the opening round. Wright's teammates, Chelsea Stumpf and Lauren Todrzynski also competed at the finals. On the boys' side, Lakeview's Stephen Angelo just missed qualifying for tournament play while Armada's Greg and Gary Ezzo and Richmond's Eric Young also missed the cut.

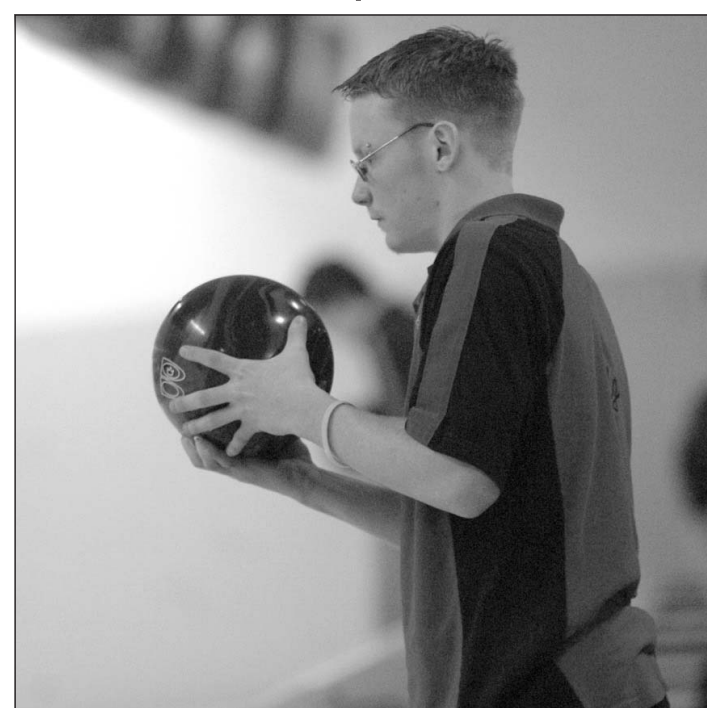
Raden makes the cut

Anchor Bay senior Ashley Raden made it through the first round of the Division 1 tournament at Northway Lanes in Muskegon before losing to Lakeview's Addi Pointer in three tough games.

Pointer won the match 255-129, 235-254, 279-207.

Raden defeated defending Division 1 state champion Jenna Law of Milford in straight games to open tournament play.

Stevenson's Amanda Niedermaier and Cousino's Katelyn Matthews qualified for tournament play but lost in the first round. Other state qualifiers included Kelly VandenBrooks (Stevenson), Shelby Polsinelli (Ford), Erica Kozicki (Cousino), Sarah Rawski (L'Anse Creuse North), Tammi Allison (East Detroit), Alexa Suida (Chippewa Valley) and Natalie Runson (Eisenhower).



Lincoln's Pete Belz zeroes in as he gets ready for his next shot at Saturday's Division 2 bowling state finals at Sunnybrook Lanes.

Stevenson's Brad Burgess won his first match of tournament play, defeating Grand Blanc's Nic Sutherland in straight games.

He then lost to top-seeded Abed Daher in the quarterfinals.

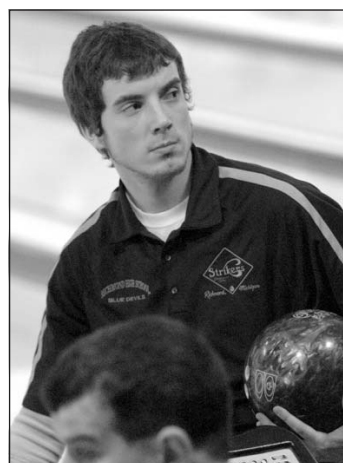
Also competing at the finals were Jonathan Murphy (Cousino), Mike Rajnicek (De La Salle), David Andrzejewski (Stevenson), Dominic Borsa (Cousino), Matt Papais (Stevenson), Matt Woods (Roseville), Brandon Sawyers (Cousino), Chris Rahn (Lake Shore) and John Di-Laura (De La Salle).

Meldrum reaches D-3 tournament play

New Haven's Rachel Meldrum qualified into the tournament round of 16 at Airport Lanes in Jackson Saturday.

Meldrum lost her first-round match to Flat Rock's Alyssa Sanders in straight games.

Also competing in the Division 3 finals were New Haven's Samantha Parnell and Kellie Lang. Memphis' Luke Heldt was the lone Macomb County bowler in the Division 3 boys' competition.



Macomb Daily staff photo by Craig Gaffield
Richmond senior Justin Essenmacher looks to his coach, John Essenmacher, during his first-round match Saturday.