

# Pilots hope to continue state tournament streak

The streak continues.

When De La Salle advanced to the state quarterfinal last season, it kept an impressive run going. Since 2005, the county has sent at least one hockey team to a regional championship game every season.



**Fred Costello**

There is a very good chance that history will repeat itself. The state playoffs start today, and there are several county teams poised for a deep run.

## Division 1

### DAKOTA REGIONAL

As far as first round games are concerned, fans would be hard pressed to find a better match-up than Dakota against Eisenhower. The Eagles prevailed in the lone regular season meeting between the schools, 4-2.

The Cougars (14-7-3 overall), though very strong most of the season, have had some trouble finding the back of the net toward the end of the year. However, there is no denying the strength of Dakota's offense. They finished second among the Macomb Area Conference Red division teams with 85 goals scored. In terms of goals against average, Dakota also finished second in the division. So all the pieces are there.

The question that remains is if the Cougars can find enough secondary scoring to knock off a team like Eisenhower. It is well known that the all-senior forward line of Jeff Monfils, Matt Demers and Alex Johansons can



Macomb Daily staff photo by Ray J. Skowronek

**Dakota's Spencer Grasso (9) skates with the puck as Romeo's Tyler Underhill pursues in a game earlier this season. Dakota opens up tournament play today against Eisenhower.**

score against any defense in the state. Beyond that, however, Dakota is going to have to find some goals to knock off Ike.

Defensively, Will Stawinski is among the county's best on the back end, and goalie Trevor Miller has had moments of brilliance.

Other than De La Salle, there is no county team built like Eisenhower. The Eagles, at 19-5-0 overall, finished with the more wins than any county team, en route to the MAC White championship. The team finished first in the division in both goals scored (124) and goals allowed (53).

The roster is packed with 16 seniors, many of whom suffered through last season's disappointing first-round exit against Rochester Unified. Building on that experience, the Eagles are hoping for a deeper run this year. However, even if they are to get past Dakota, Port Huron Northern awaits in the regional semifinal.

Ike has the advantage of skill at multiple positions. The leadership up front by stalwarts Ryan Maloney, Justin Whitson and Ryan Kalinowski mixes well with blue line depth, led by Adam Nimitz and Ryan Chovich. Eisenhower is one of the few teams with two solid options in goal: senior Erik Rodak and junior Everet Bommarito.

It will take a complete team effort by a crop of desperate seniors for the Eagles to capture a regional title.

**Prediction:** Eisenhower over Dakota; Eisenhower over Port Huron Northern; Clarkston over Grand Blanc; Clarkston over Lake Orion. **Regional Final:** Eisenhower over Clarkston.

### ST. CLAIR SHORES UNIFIED REGIONAL

Much like Eisenhower, Stevenson (16-8 overall) is preparing for a much deeper run than last year, where it bowed to Troy Athens in the first round. Runners up in the MAC White,

the Titans' strength is in its explosive offense. Boasting the most feared scoring line in the league – Drew DeMarti, Mitch Brinker and Justin Zyvon – Stevenson is especially potent on the power play.

All season, the team has relied on the sharp goaltending of senior Mason Henige, and the play-offs won't be any different. The key for Stevenson will be its play in the defensive zone. They allowed 60 goals against, good for second in the division.

This was a difficult season for Chippewa Valley, finishing 3-17-2 overall. A year removed from not fielding a varsity team, the Big Reds were thrust into the ultra-competitive MAC Red division, and it was a surprise to no one that they struggled. Chippewa Valley scored a county-low 45 goals and gave up 115. If the Big Reds are to have any chance against the Titans, forwards Nick Bayagich, Jimmy Gaydos and Connor Grossman will have to play their best game of the season.

Ford got perhaps the most difficult opening-round draw of any MAC team. The Falcons (8-15-1 overall) face Troy Athens, the most prolific offensive team in either division of the Oakland Activities Association. This may prove problematic for Ford, which allowed the second-most goals against in the MAC Blue.

The good news for Falcons fans is that there are a couple sharpshooters up front. Senior forward Josh Quick has been very productive all season, along with under-the-radar sophomore Mike Walny. Ford, however, will need its very best defense effort to have a hope against Athens.

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# CLASS A: Fitzgerald undefeated heading to tourney

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"They believe," Fitzgerald coach Sam Hines said. "Three years ago, being sophomores and freshmen, they learned how to win early. They handled pressure situations early."

Over the last three seasons, the group has posted a 57-8 record, captured three MAC Silver Division championships and claimed two Class B district titles.

This year, with the addition of newcomers such as Shawnicka Thomas and Da'Jourie Turner, the Spartans have been better than ever.

They swept through regular season play, winning by an average margin of 34 points. Their closest game came in a 53-48 victory over Utica in the season-opener. Fitzgerald won every other game by double-digits.

"They were able to deal with having the bull's-eye on their back every single night," Sam Hines said.

Competing in Class A this year, Fitzgerald will have to deal with the pressure again.

The Spartans' quarterfinal opponent, Center Line, won a share of the MAC Silver Division championship. The two teams met earlier in the season, with Fitzgerald winning 59-24 on Feb. 1.

Should the Spartans advance, they would face Detroit Pershing in the semifinals.

Pershing is No. 10 in The Associated Press Class A state poll, and the two teams share much in common.

Sam Hines was a co-coach for Pershing 2006 when the program won the city championship.

"Our girls know the other girls on their team, and they know our girls," he said.

Pershing is led by Dorina Barrett and Senee Shearer, and the team has size and speed at the guard position.

Similarly, Fitzgerald also has strong guard play.

Senior point guard Kristian Hines, the coach's daughter who has totaled almost 1,000 points in her three years with the Spartans, sets the tone.

"When you have a floor general, it carries over and it rubs off," Sam Hines said.

Fitzgerald's coach also believes his team can rise to the challenge.

"We're going to give everyone a handful," Sam Hines said. "We can go inside, we can go outside, we can go fast, we can go half-court."

**PREDICTIONS:** Quarterfinal – Fitzgerald def. Center Line. Semifinals – Fitzgerald def. Detroit Pershing; Detroit Mumford def. Hazel Park. Championship – Fitzgerald def. Detroit Mumford.

**Host Grosse Pointe North** Macomb County teams Lakeview, Lake Shore and East Detroit face a tough challenge in this district. Only Lakeview had a .500 record, and two of the other three teams in the field – Grosse Pointe South and Grosse Pointe North – won league championships.

The host Norsemen boast an impressive resume with a MAC Red Division title and a No. 3 ranking in the Associated Press state poll. GPN also has a star in senior forward Ariel Braker, whom Coach Gary Bennett said is even better than she was when she helped the Norsemen win a state title two years ago.

**PREDICTIONS:** Quarterfinals – Grosse Pointe South def. East Detroit; Grosse Pointe North def. Lake Shore. Semifinals – Grosse Pointe South def. Lakeview; Grosse Pointe North def. Detroit Finney. Championship – Grosse Pointe North def. Grosse Pointe South.

**Host Warren Woods-Tower** The district bracket at WWT might be the most wide-open in Macomb County.

Five of the six teams have winning records, and two teams – Roseville (MAC Gold) and Warren-Mott (MAC Bronze) – claimed league championships.

Fraser tied for second in the MAC Red, and has played well down the stretch, winning seven of its last eight games. In addition, the Ramblers have won seven straight district championships.

Cousino also has played well recently with victories in seven of its final eight games.

Regina has struggled since opening the season with five straight wins, but the Saddlelites

do have a one-point victory over Fraser in the regular season.

**PREDICTIONS:** Quarterfinal – Fraser def. Cousino; Warren Woods-Tower def. Roseville. Semifinal – Fraser def. Warren-Mott; Warren Woods-Tower def. Regina def. Warren Woods-Tower. Championship – Fraser def. Regina.

**Host Lake Orion** Romeo, the sole Macomb County team in this bracket, won a district title last season. The Bulldogs finished second in the MAC White and went 13-7 overall this season, and they defeated Rochester Hills Stoney Creek in the regular season.

**PREDICTIONS:** Quarterfinals – Rochester Hills Stoney Creek def. Clarkston; Rochester Adams def. Lake Orion; Romeo def. Oxford. Semifinals – Romeo def. Stoney Creek; Rochester Adams def. Rochester. Championship: Rochester Adams def. Romeo.

**Host Chippewa Valley** Chippewa Valley, Sterling Heights and Utica are the three teams in the field with winning records.

The host Big Reds tied for second in the MAC Red, and they present a tall order for any opponent with forwards Emily Cizmas and Nicolina Vitale. Chippewa Valley won three of its last four games.

Utica closed the regular season with two straight victories, including an impressive 50-39 over L'Anse Creuse in the finale. But the Chieftains dropped a 10-point decision to quarterfinal opponent Chippewa Valley earlier in the season.

Sterling Heights finished 14-6 overall and second in the MAC Silver, but the Stallions lost by 10 to Utica in the regular season.

Ford, which finished 9-11, has won three straight district championships. The Falcons lost to Chippewa Valley twice in the regular season, lost to Utica, split with Stevenson and swept Eisenhower.

**PREDICTIONS:** Quarterfinals – Ford def. Stevenson; Chippewa Valley def. Utica. Semifinals – Chippewa Valley def. Eisenhower; Sterling Heights def. Ford. Championship – Chippewa Valley def. Sterling Heights.

## Basketball District Pairings

| BOYS   | GIRLS  |
|--|--|
| <b>CLASS A</b><br><b>(Host Grosse Pointe North)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: Lake Shore vs. East Detroit, 5 p.m.; Grosse Pointe South vs. Grosse Pointe North, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: Lakeview vs. Lake Shore/East Detroit winner, 5 p.m.; Detroit Finney vs. Grosse Pointe South/Grosse Pointe North winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 7 p.m.  | <b>CLASS A</b><br><b>(Host Grosse Pointe North)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 1: Grosse Pointe South vs. East Detroit, 5 p.m.; Lake Shore vs. Grosse Pointe North, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Lakeview vs. Grosse Pointe South/East Detroit winner, 5 p.m.; Detroit Finney vs. Lake Shore/Grosse Pointe North winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 7 p.m.                  |
| <b>(Host Detroit Mumford)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: Hazel Park vs. Fitzgerald, 4 p.m.; Detroit Mumford vs. Detroit Pershing, 6 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: U-D Jesuit vs. Hazel Park/Fitzgerald winner, 4 p.m.; Center Line vs. Detroit Mumford/Detroit Pershing winner, 6 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 5 p.m.   | <b>(Host Fitzgerald)</b><br><b>Quarterfinal</b><br>MARCH 1: Center Line vs. Fitzgerald, 6 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Detroit Mumford vs. Hazel Park, 6 p.m.; Detroit Pershing vs. Center Line/Fitzgerald winner, 7:30 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 6 p.m.   |
| <b>(Host Fraser)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: De La Salle vs. Warren-Mott, 5:30 p.m.; Fraser vs. Cousino, 7:30 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: Warren Woods-Tower vs. De La Salle/Warren-Mott winner, 5:30 p.m.; Roseville vs. Fraser/Cousino winner, 7:30 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 7 p.m.  | <b>(Host Warren Woods-Tower)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 1: Fraser vs. Cousino, 5:30 p.m.; Roseville vs. Warren Woods-Tower, 7:30 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Warren-Mott vs. Fraser/Cousino winner, 5:30 p.m.; Regina vs. Roseville/Warren Woods-Tower winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 7 p.m.   |
| <b>(Host Clarkston)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: Lake Orion vs. Rochester Hills Stoney Creek, 5:30 p.m.; Clarkston vs. Rochester Adams, 7 p.m.; Oxford at Rochester, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: Lake Orion/Rochester Hills Stoney Creek winner vs. Oxford/Rochester winner, 5:30 p.m.; Romeo vs. Clarkston/Rochester Adams winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 7 p.m.   | <b>(Host Lake Orion)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 1: Rochester Hills Stoney Creek vs. Clarkston, 5:30 p.m.; Lake Orion vs. Rochester Adams, 7 p.m.; Oxford at Romeo, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Rochester Hills Stoney Creek/Clarkston winner vs. Oxford/Romeo winner, 5:30 p.m.; Rochester vs. Lake Orion/Rochester Adams winner, 7:30 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 7 p.m. |
| <b>(Host Chippewa Valley)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: Utica vs. Ford, 5:30 p.m.; Eisenhower vs. Chippewa Valley, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: Stevenson vs. Utica/Ford winner, 5:30 p.m.; Sterling Heights vs. Eisenhower/Chippewa Valley winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 7 p.m.   | <b>(Host Chippewa Valley)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 1: Ford vs. Stevenson, 5:30 p.m.; Chippewa Valley vs. Utica, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Eisenhower vs. Chippewa Valley/Utica winner, 5:30 p.m.; Sterling Heights vs. Ford/Stevenson winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 7 p.m.  |
| <b>(Host Anchor Bay)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: Port Huron vs. L'Anse Creuse, 5 p.m.; Port Huron Northern vs. Anchor Bay, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: L'Anse Creuse North vs. Port Huron/L'Anse Creuse winner, 5 p.m.; Dakota vs. Port Huron Northern/Anchor Bay winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 7 p.m.  | <b>(Host L'Anse Creuse North)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 1: Anchor Bay vs. L'Anse Creuse, 5 p.m.; Port Huron vs. L'Anse Creuse North, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Port Huron Northern vs. Anchor Bay/L'Anse Creuse winner, 5 p.m.; Dakota vs. Port Huron/L'Anse Creuse North winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 7 p.m.   |
| <b>CLASS B</b><br><b>(Host Highland Park Community)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: Clintondale vs. South Lake, 5:30 p.m.; Hamtramck vs. Highland Park Community, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: Detroit Crockett vs. Clintondale/South Lake winner, 5:30 p.m.; Lincoln vs. Hamtramck/Highland Park Community winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 7 p.m.   | <b>CLASS B</b><br><b>(Host South Lake)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 1: Clintondale vs. Highland Park Community, 5:30 p.m.; Hamtramck vs. South Lake, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Lincoln vs. Clintondale/Highland Park Community winner, 5:30 p.m.; Detroit Crockett vs. Hamtramck/South Lake winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 7 p.m.                                  |
| <b>(Host Mount Clemens)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: Marysville vs. Richmond, 5:30 p.m.; Mount Clemens vs. Marine City, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: Algonac vs. Marysville/Richmond winner, 5:30 p.m.; St. Clair vs. Mount Clemens/Marine City winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 7 p.m.  | <b>(Host Marysville)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 1: Marine City at Algonac, 7 p.m.; St. Clair at Richmond, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Marysville vs. Marine City/Algonac winner, 5:30 p.m.; Mount Clemens at St. Clair/Richmond winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 7 p.m.  |
| <b>(Host Notre Dame Prep)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: Capac vs. Lutheran North, 5 p.m.; Armada vs. Notre Dame Prep, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: Almont vs. Capac/Lutheran North winner, 5 p.m.; Imlay City vs. Armada/Notre Dame Prep winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 7 p.m.  | <b>(Host Armada)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 1: Imlay City vs. Almont, 5:30 p.m.; Armada vs. Notre Dame Prep, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Capac vs. Imlay City/Almont winner, 5:30 p.m.; Lutheran North vs. Armada/Notre Dame Prep winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 7 p.m.  |
| <b>CLASS C</b><br><b>(Host Chandler Park Academy)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: University Liggett vs. Hamtramck Frontier International Academy, 5:30 p.m.; Harper Woods vs. Chandler Park Academy, 7 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: Michigan Collegiate vs. University Liggett/Hamtramck Frontier International Academy winner, 5:30 p.m.; Detroit City vs. Harper Woods/Chandler Park Academy winner, 7 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 7 p.m. | <b>CLASS C</b><br><b>(Host Harper Woods)</b><br><b>Quarterfinal</b><br>MARCH 1: Harper Woods vs. Detroit City, 6 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Michigan Collegiate vs. Chandler Park Academy, 5 p.m.; University Liggett vs. Harper Woods/Detroit City winner, 6:30 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 6 p.m.  |
| <b>(Host Memphis)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: Marlette vs. Memphis, 5 p.m.; New Haven vs. Sandusky, 6:30 p.m.; Brown City vs. Mayville, 8 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: Dryden vs. Marlette/Memphis winner, 6 p.m.; New Haven/Sandusky winner vs. Brown City/Mayville winner, 7:30 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 6 p.m.   | <b>(Host Brown City)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 1: Brown City vs. Memphis, 4:30 p.m.; New Haven vs. Dryden, 6 p.m.; Marlette vs. Sandusky, 7:30 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Mayville vs. Brown City/Memphis winner, 6 p.m.; New Haven/Dryden winner vs. Marlette/Sandusky winner, 7:30 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 7 p.m.   |
| <b>CLASS D</b><br><b>(Host Cardinal Mooney)</b><br><b>Quarterfinals</b><br>MARCH 8: Merritt Academy vs. Eaton Academy, 6 p.m.; Cardinal Mooney vs. Macomb Christian, 7:30 p.m.<br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 10: Conner Creek vs. Merritt Academy/Eaton Academy winner, 6 p.m.; Parkway Christian vs. Cardinal Mooney/Macomb Christian winner, 7:30 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 12: TBD, 7 p.m.   | <b>CLASS D</b><br><b>(Host Cardinal Mooney)</b><br><b>Semifinals</b><br>MARCH 3: Macomb Christian vs. Merritt Academy, 6 p.m.; Parkway Christian vs. Cardinal Mooney, 7:30 p.m.<br><b>Championship</b><br>MARCH 5: TBD, 7 p.m.   |

### Girls Basketball County Top 10

| Team                    | Last | W-L  | PF   | PA   | Next                     |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|--------------------------|
| 1 Fitzgerald (40)       | 1    | 19-0 | 64.1 | 30.1 | vs. Center Line, tonight |
| 2 Dakota (33)           | 5    | 14-6 | 53.2 | 42.1 | TBA, Wednesday           |
| 3 Cousino (31)          | 3    | 14-5 | 49.2 | 41.4 | vs. Fraser, tonight      |
| 4 L'Anse Creuse (30)    | 2    | 17-3 | 53.5 | 36.6 | vs. Anchor Bay, tonight  |
| 5 Chippewa Valley (25)  | 4    | 13-7 | 45.6 | 44.1 | vs. Eisenhower, tonight  |
| 6 Romeo (14)            | 6    | 13-7 | 48.1 | 42.2 | vs. Oxford, tonight      |
| 7 Memphis (13)          | 7    | 17-3 | 56.1 | 36.3 | vs. Brown City, tonight  |
| 8 Utica (8)             | 8    | 11-8 | 46.9 | 43.0 | vs. Ford, tonight        |
| 9 Regina (6)            | 9    | 8-11 | 46.8 | 48.9 | TBA, Wednesday           |
| 10 Sterling Heights (5) | 10   | 14-6 | 51.2 | 42.5 | TBA, Wednesday           |

**Also receiving votes:** Fraser (4); Warren-Mott (3); Center Line (3); Lincoln (2); Lutheran North (1); Regina (1); Warren Woods-Tower (1).

*Voting panel is comprised of The Macomb Daily sports staff.*

### Boys Basketball County Top 10

| Team                       | Last | W-L  | PF   | PA   | Next                           |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|
| 1 De La Salle (40)         | 1    | 14-3 | 57.0 | 45.0 | vs. Pershing, Saturday         |
| 2 L'Anse Creuse North (32) | 2    | 15-3 | 55.0 | 44.9 | at Stevenson, Tuesday          |
| 3 Warren Woods-Tower (32)  | 5    | 16-2 | 69.2 | 55.1 | at Lincoln, Tuesday            |
| 4 East Detroit (28)        | 4    | 15-3 | 56.7 | 48.0 | vs. University Prep, tonight   |
| 5 Warren-Mott (24)         | 7    | 15-4 | 60.0 | 44.9 | vs. Marine City, Tuesday       |
| 6 Eisenhower (15)          | 3    | 12-6 | 48.6 | 43.7 | vs. U-D Jesuit, Tuesday        |
| 7 Richmond (12)            | 6    | 14-2 | 54.7 | 45.1 | at Croswell-Lexington, Tuesday |
| 8 Dakota (10)              | ur   | 12-7 | 59.4 | 53.1 | vs. Cousino, Tuesday           |
| 8 Mount Clemens (10)       | 9    | 15-5 | 59.0 | 48.2 | TBA                            |
| 10 Armada (7)              | 8    | 14-3 | 64.5 | 56.1 | at Hazel Park, tonight         |
| 10 Center Line (7)         | 10   | 13-6 | 64.1 | 60.8 | at Sterling Heights, Tuesday   |

**Also receiving votes:** Cousino (3).

*Voting panel is comprised of The Macomb Daily sports staff.*

## Thunder shut out Eagles

Macomb Daily Sports Staff

The first time Eisenhower and Warren-Sterling

### High School Hockey

United meet on the ice, the Eagles won by an eight-goal margin.

Saturday's Macomb Area Conference White Division meeting was a much different story.

Jacob Krzesak and Marty Case (assist) each scored and goalie Zach Nagi made 43 saves as the Thunder (2-7-1, 13-10-1) beat Eisenhower in a MAC White hockey game.

Coach Rob Pomaville commended the defensive efforts of Kyle Kozey (assist), Anthony DiMarco, Nick Logie and Alex Stefija David Pomaville and Collin Holman also had an assist for the Thunder.

# Johnson reels in Gordon to victory at Las Vegas

**LAS VEGAS (AP)**— Another race, another victory for Jimmie Johnson and yet another round of griping about the NASCAR champion's dominance.

Only this time, there was a silver lining for those ready to see someone else hoist

### NASCAR Sprint Cup

the Sprint Cup trophy: his competitors are clearly closing the gap.

Johnson reeled in teammate Jeff Gordon at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, where the four-time defending champion won for the second consecutive week. He needed luck to win last week at California and strategy Sunday at Las Vegas.

Sooner or later, though, he's going to run out of ways to win. "We don't feel invincible," Johnson said.

And he shouldn't. Kevin Harvick finished second for the second straight week, then showed signs of the swagger that only Harvick can pull off, and only when he's running well. "We can run with them, and

they know it," said Harvick, the current points leader.

Gordon, who dominated the race only to have to settle for third when his pit strategy backfired, was buoyed by his ability to lead 219 of the 267 laps.

"I think we've got more of what we showed today," he said. "We're going to show a lot more. I think we're just starting to tap into it."

Johnson took four tires on the final pit stop — Harvick and Gordon only took two — in a race-winning decision that gave him his 49th career victory and fourth at Las Vegas. It also made the four-time defending champion the career victory leader on 1.5-mile speedways with 15 — one more than Gordon, Dale Earnhardt and Richard Petty.

Informed of his intermediate track dominance, he did a celebratory fist-pound with crew chief Chad Knaus and shook team owner Rick Hendrick's hand.

This one required beating Gordon, Johnson's Hendrick Motorsports teammate who hasn't won a race in almost a year.

Gordon was out front when

Kevin Conway's spin brought out the final caution, and debated pitting strategy with crew chief Steve Letarte.

The call was made at the last second for Gordon to come in, and Letarte changed just two tires to get Gordon back on track before the competition. Knaus called for four tires in a decision that put Johnson in fourth on the restart.

Clint Bowyer, who didn't pit, restarted as the leader with 34 laps to go and the Hendrick cars immediately split him to move back to the front. Gordon held the top spot for 17 laps, but fretted several times as Johnson looked both inside and out.

Gordon tried to hold off Johnson, but he finally scooted past with 17 laps to go. He quickly pulled away, and Gordon was unable to hold off Harvick as he faded to third.

"If we won the race, we'd look like geniuses, Steve would have. The fact that we lost the race, now Chad looks like a genius," Gordon said. "I talked to Steve briefly after the race. He's pretty upset obviously.



Purdue's Lewis Jackson, right, and Michigan State's Korie Lucious collide. Michigan State won 53-44.

## MSU: Snaps Purdue's 10-game win streak

Continued from Page 1B

tional one-two punch and both of those guys have to be productive in the scoring column."

Opportunity knocked for Purdue (24-4, 12-4 Big Ten) a day after No. 1 Kansas lost to Oklahoma State and No. 2 Kentucky lost to Tennessee. Now, the Boilermakers' shot at a No. 1 ranking is gone, their chance at a top seed in the NCAA tournament took a hit, and they fell a half game behind Ohio State in the conference race.

"As soon as Rob went down, our backs went up against the wall," Purdue guard Chris Kramer said. "We can't expect him to be there anymore. We still control our own destiny. Everything we did wrong is fixable."

Raymar Morgan had 16 points and 11 rebounds, and Draymond Green added 12 points and 11 rebounds for the Spartans (22-7, 12-4), who avenged a 76-64 loss to the Boilermakers on Feb. 9 in East Lansing.

The win brought Michigan State even with Purdue in the Big Ten standings, a half game behind the Buckeyes for the conference lead. Coach Tom Izzo refused to make too big a deal about it, instead focusing on the Spartans' 23 turnovers and 40 percent shooting.

"We're going to enjoy it until we get home on the plane," Izzo said. "And then we've got to figure out that we've got some work to do here. Michigan State's got to get better, still, too."

"We're going to start working immediately on that and make sure we don't think we conquered the world because we won a game on the road against a really good team."

Both coaches acknowledged that Purdue missed Hummel, but Painter said one player couldn't account for Michigan State's 46-20 rebounding edge.

"I think Michigan State overpowered us a lot of times on the glass," Painter said. "I don't

think that has to do with one position or one slot."

Moore scored 12 points, and Johnson and Kramer added 11 for Purdue.

The Boilermakers shot poorly early, but stayed in the game at the free-throw line.

Michigan State led 22-16 before Purdue temporarily found its offensive rhythm. A steal and dunk by Kramer cut Michigan State's lead to 22-21, and a 3-pointer by Keaton Grant tied the score at 24 with 3:45 left in the first half.

Michigan State's Derrick Nix was called for a technical foul after he missed a dunk, then caught the ball while still hanging on the rim and dunked it in with his right hand. Moore made the technical free throws to give Purdue a 26-24 lead.

The Boilermakers led 28-26 at halftime, despite shooting 32 percent and getting a combined 2-for-13 shooting effort from Moore and Johnson.

Michigan State held Purdue to one basket during a 16-6 run that gave the Spartans a 42-34 lead with 11 minutes left.

Purdue had a chance to creep back into the game in the final minutes, but couldn't get a rebound. Green posted up against Kramer, missed, but tipped the ball twice before finally scoring to make it 50-44 with 1:20 to play.

Moore missed a 3-pointer, then Lucas found Morgan for a lob near the basket. Morgan made the layup, was fouled and converted the 3-point play to put the game out of reach.

Purdue now will focus on playing rival Indiana on Wednesday. The Boilermakers will close at Penn State on Saturday. Two wins would give Purdue at least a share of the conference title.

Izzo said Purdue is still a very good team, but clearly different without Hummel.

"Late in the game, when they need a basket, that's Hummel time," Izzo said. "And in fairness, he wasn't there."

## CLASS B-C-D: Lutheran North has a tough path

Continued from Page 1B

Wednesday when the Mustangs will face the winner of today's quarterfinal between Armada and Notre Dame Prep.

The Mustangs enjoyed a banner season in the last year for the Metro Conference, and they enter the postseason with a 12-8 overall record.

The district should prove a tough challenge with two other league champions. Almont won the Blue Water Area Conference title, and Notre Dame Prep finished in a three-way tie for first place in the Catholic League West Division.

Lutheran North already has faced three of the teams in the field. The Mustangs defeated Almont 43-41 in the second game of the season, and they lost 43-36 to Notre Dame Prep in December. Lutheran North also dropped a 38-21 decision to Imlay City two weeks ago.

Armada, which has an 8-11 record, also has faced league rivals Almont, Capac and Imlay City twice each this season. The Tigers went 2-4 in those meetings, defeating Capac twice.

Notre Dame Prep defeated Armada for the district championship last season.

**PREDICTIONS:** Almont def. Imlay City; Notre Dame Prep def. Armada. Semifinals: Almont def. Capac; Notre Dame Prep def. Lutheran North. Championship:

Notre Dame Prep def. Almont.

### Host South Lake

Lincoln wants a better fate this season after losing a big lead and losing to Detroit Crockett in last year's district play.

The Abes, 12-8 overall, seem well positioned this year. They have had success against some of the teams in this field, defeating South Lake twice and Clintondale once during the regular season.

South Lake defeated Clintondale 38-30 on Dec. 10.

**PREDICTIONS:** Quarterfinals — Clintondale def. Highland Park Community; South Lake def. Hamtramck. Semifinals — Lincoln def. Clintondale; Detroit Crockett def. South Lake. Championship — Lincoln def. Crockett.

### Host Marysville

Two perennially strong programs, St. Clair and Mount Clemens, have struggled this season.

The Saints were state finalists in 2006, but they are 2-18 this season. The Bathers have won four district championships this decade, but they went winless in the MAC Blue this season. Mount Clemens won its first seven games of the season before star guard Janise Cunningham was injured, and since then has lost 11 of next 13 games.

Richmond enters the district with a 10-10 record. The Blue

Devils split two games with Algonac, suffered an overtime loss to Marysville and fell by five points to Marine City (second in the MAC Gold) in the second game of the regular season.

**PREDICTIONS:** Quarterfinals: Marine City def. Algonac; Richmond def. St. Clair. Semifinals — Marine City def. Marysville; Richmond def. Mount Clemens. Championship — Marine City def. Richmond.

### Class C

#### Host Harper Woods

Michigan Collegiate has high hopes thanks to Precious Allen, and the Cougars already have a victory over semifinal opponent Chandler Park Academy. University Liggett, though, looms as the team to beat with an 18-2 record.

**PREDICTIONS:** Quarterfinals — Harper Woods def. Detroit City. Semifinals — Michigan Collegiate def. Chandler Park Academy; University Liggett def. Harper Woods. Championship — University Liggett def. Michigan Collegiate.

#### Host Brown City

Memphis and New Haven both had reasons to cheer this season.

The Yellowjackets went 17-3 overall and won the North Central Thumb League South Division title. New Haven, after suffering through two consecutive winless seasons, picked up seven

victories this season.

But both schools will face a tough road in the district at Brown City.

Memphis opens against host Brown City, the No. 6 team in The Associated Press Class C state poll. New Haven faces Dryden in the opener, but if the Rockets advance, they likely would face third-ranked Sandusky in the semifinals.

Brown City and Sandusky split their two games this season.

**PREDICTIONS:** Quarterfinals — Brown City def. Memphis; New Haven def. Dryden; Sandusky def. Marlette. Semifinals — Brown City def. Mayville; Sandusky def. New Haven. Championship — Brown City def. Sandusky.

### Class D

#### Host Cardinal Mooney

Parkway Christian enters the district with a 12-8 overall record, but the Eagles have a tough draw in the semifinals Wednesday when they face Cardinal Mooney (12-8), a runner-up in the Catholic League C-D Division tournament. The Cardinals enter the tournament on a high note after knocking off Class A Regina on Thursday.

**PREDICTIONS:** Semifinals — Macomb Christian def. Merritt Academy; Cardinal Mooney def. Parkway Christian. Championship — Cardinal Mooney def. Macomb Christian.

## HOCKEY: High school tournament kicks off today with pre-regional action

Continued from Page 2B

It's pretty doubtful that Warren-Sterling United fans have any sympathy for Ford. The Thunder (13-10 overall) are caught in quite a David vs. Goliath scenario. Perennial powerhouse U-D Jesuit awaits, and the Cubs are among the favorites to contend for the Division 1 championship.

The Thunder will not go into the game intimidated, however. The team has scored an impressive 111 goals on the season. In addition, they appear to be peaking at the right time. WSU earned an improbable victory, shutting out Eisenhower to close its regular season schedule. That said, leading scorers Mike Mero-la, Marty Case, Mike Perini and Dave Pomaville will need to be at their very best to have any chance at advancing.

St. Clair Shores Unified has been the class of the MAC for the entire season. The MAC Red champs led the league in goals against average, allowing a paltry 41, while posting a respectable 98 goals for. Built for success with all the ingredients of a contending team, Shores (18-4-2 overall) has gotten contributions from several key players. Joe Kommer, Chris Pontello and Cory Shafer are just a few of the skaters who have been more than impressive.

For as good as the Lakers have been, however, they will likely face the vaunted Cubs. If there is

one thing that SCS can hang its hat on, it is strength of schedule. The Lakers played non-conference games against Ann Arbor Pioneer, Grosse Pointe North, Grosse Pointe South, Rochester United and North Farmington. Finishing 3-2 against that kind of competition can only help as they try and pull the upset.

**Prediction:** Stevenson over Chippewa Valley; Troy Athens over Ford; Troy Athens over Stevenson. U of D Jesuit over Warren-Sterling; U-D Jesuit over St. Clair Shores. **Regional Final:** U-D Jesuit over Troy Athens.

### Division 2

#### ROMEO REGIONAL

No county team finished the season hotter than Romeo. The Bulldogs (13-10-1 overall) did not drop a game in February, scoring wins over Eisenhower, Stevenson and Stoney Creek.

Romeo can expect key contributions from forwards Brad Rice and Johnny Tiseo. Rice, a senior, has scored at better than a goal-per-game pace. Tiseo, a fellow senior, produced over a point-per-game offensively. The bad news for Romeo is staring at them in the first round. Port Huron was the only MAC team to finish 10-0 in division play. They led the MAC in wins (21), goals for (142), and tied Saint Clair Shores for the most shut-outs, with four. It is among the more intriguing games in the first round.

Anchor Bay (6-15-3 overall)

## High School Hockey

### REGIONALS

| DIVISION 1<br>Pre-Regional<br>(At McMorrow Ice Arena)                                     | DIVISION 2<br>Pre-Regional<br>(At Suburban Ice Arena)   |
|---|---|
| MARCH 1: Dakota vs. Eisenhower, 6 p.m.  | MARCH 1: Port Huron vs. Romeo, 4 p.m.; Rochester Hills Stoney Creek vs. Anchor Bay, 6:30 p.m.           |
| MARCH 3: Port Huron Northern vs. Dakota/Eisenhower winner, 5:30 p.m.                      | MARCH 3: Port Huron/Romeo winner vs. Rochester Hills Stoney Creek/Anchor Bay winner, 6:30 p.m.          |
| (At Great Lakes Sports City)  | (At Mount Clemens Ice Arena)  |
| MARCH 2: Chippewa Valley vs. Stevenson, 5:15 p.m.; Troy Athens vs. Ford, 7:45 p.m.        | MARCH 1: L'Anse Creuse vs. L'Anse Creuse North, 6:15 p.m.; Fraser vs. Utica, 8:15 p.m.                  |
| MARCH 4: Chippewa Valley/Stevenson winner vs. Troy Athens/Ford winner, 7:45 p.m.          | MARCH 3: L'Anse Creuse/L'Anse Creuse North winner vs. Fraser/Utica winner, 7:45 p.m.                    |
| (At City Arena)   | (At Great Lakes Sports City)  |
| MARCH 2: U-D Jesuit vs. Warren-Sterling United, 6:30 p.m.                                 | MARCH 1: Grosse Pointe North vs. Warren-Mott, 5:45 p.m.; Grosse Pointe South vs. De La Salle, 7:45 p.m. |
| MARCH 4: St. Clair Shores Unified vs. U-D Jesuit/Warren-Sterling United winner, 7:20 p.m. | MARCH 3: Grosse Pointe North/Warren-Mott winner vs. Grosse Pointe South/De La Salle winner, 8:15 p.m.   |

will likely engage in a low-scoring affair when it faces Stoney Creek. Both teams averaged around two goals per game offensively and tend to focus their efforts on the back end.

The Tars can look to late-season wins over L'Anse Creuse North and Dakota as proof that they can compete with just about anyone. Hockey fans know that with strong goaltending, a team can go places. Despite facing nearly 30 shots per game, senior netminder Alan Gaglio has been very solid. For that reason alone, Anchor Bay can head into the postseason with an upset in mind.

L'Anse Creuse North (13-8-3 overall) advanced to the regional championship game a season ago, before falling to De La Salle. This year, the Crusaders seem

deeper and better prepared.

Up front, the team boasts some dynamic offensive players in 40-point scorer Brandon Rentz, a senior, and blazing-quick sophomore Evan Corbett. LCN has one of the top five defensemen in the MAC, do-it-all senior Matt Orlando. In net, the Crusaders will lean on Alex Sypniewski, who has been strong all year.

L'Anse Creuse North was one of only four teams in the league to net a triple-digit goal total, finishing with an even 100.

L'Anse Creuse (10-14 overall) will have its hands full against LCN. The Lancers allowed a staggering 18 goals in two losses against their arch rivals. To have any hope of advancing, the team will need an otherworldly performance by sophomore goalie Brett Blum.

Mott turned in by far its best season, finishing 11-12 overall. Considering the team won just four games in the past two seasons combined, it appears the Marauders are on the way up. Junior forward Adam Merrifield finished with over 40 points on the season; classmate Chris Kiely had 35 points.

The young Warren-Mott defense will be tested mightily by the GPN attack.

If there is a county team ready to make a serious run at the Division 2 state championship, it would have to be De La Salle. The Pilots (18-5-1 overall) turned in yet another strong season. DLS is stacked with talent from top to bottom, and it is difficult to pinpoint a weakness.

Forwards Bill Coole and Austin Hibner finished near the top of the Michigan Interscholastic Hockey League scoring race. Defensively, the team has received outstanding play from Brad Annas and Bob Penrod. The Pilots would be just fine sending out either Lido Aldini or Matt Neal as the starting goaltender.

Two pieces of good news for the Pilots: they are quite familiar with the teams in their draw; perennial nemesis Trenton is on the other side of the bracket. The Trojans eliminated De La Salle in a controversial state quarterfinal game a year ago.

**Prediction:** Grosse Pointe North over Warren-Mott; De La Salle over Grosse Pointe South. **Regional Final:** De La Salle over Grosse Pointe North.