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September 6, 2024 | neenahnewsnow.com



Boys & Girls Club breaks ground

Fundraising clears way for July opening in city

Neenah News

The city of Neenah celebrated a ground-breaking for construction of a Boys & Girls Club during a Tuesday ceremony that brought together community leaders and excited families to mark a new chapter for area youth.

Held at the project site on Marathon

Avenue, the event signifies a significant investment in the community, with local businessman John Bergstrom announcing the fundraising campaign that he spearheaded with son Tim for construction raised \$10.5 million in 90 days.

The Bergstrom family's support of the Boys & Girls Club dates to the 1990s, with John Bergstrom chairing the campaign to buy land and renovate the Appleton facility. He also helped bring a club to Menasha in 2015 and supported its expansion in

2020. The Bergstroms' fundraising efforts for the Neenah club are ongoing, aiming to cover the total cost that is estimated at more than \$15 million.

The club will be the 16th location for the Boys & Girls Club of the Fox Valley, which supports youth ages 6-18 in Outagamie, Calumet, northern Winnebago and Manitowoc counties. The Boys & Girls Club provides an estimated 16,000 young

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Olkowski leads Rocket
runners
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Recovery month

Apricity marks success stories and support Page 4



Photo by David Hall

Treats along the way

Monday's Labor Day parade from Menasha's Curtis Reed Square to downtown Neenah treated children to candy along the route. The holiday parade was followed by a festival at the Neenah Labor Temple.

Civic club rolls out more than 1,400 handicap ramps

By Bethanie Gengler Neenah News

A local civic group is celebrating the completion of more than 1,400 accessibility ramps for individuals with mobility challenges.

On Aug. 20, six Larsen-Winchester Lions Club volunteers were busy drilling, sawing, measuring and leveling as they installed a ramp at a home in Omro.

After about an hour of work, the ramp was coming together quickly, with a volunteer joking it's because they're experienced: The Omro installation marked 1,407 handicap ramps that the program has built and installed since it began in 1989.

Volunteers from the Lions Club install more than 60 ramps per year for residents in Neenah, Menasha, Appleton and the surrounding 25-mile radius, excluding Oshkosh.

The program is operated entirely by volunteers who construct the ramps at the Lion's Club warehouse in Larsen next to Trailhead Park. They then transport and install the ramps at homes, averaging about one new ramp per week yearround.

The program comes at no charge for qualified residents in the towns of Clayton and Winchester. Outside of the towns, the club charges the family half the cost of the materials needed for construction. If the cost is still prohibitive for a family, the club encourages residents to seek assistance from a local Lions Club or other organization. The program is

SEE **Ramp builders** ON PAGE 7



Neenah N

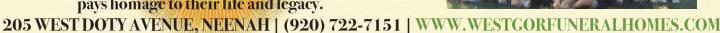
Larsen-Winchester Lions Club volunteers install an accessibility ramp at a home in Omro.



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Corrections

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Bergstrom team boosts United Way efforts

Neenah News

Bergstrom Automotive team members collectively donated \$400,667 to the United Way statewide to help make a difference in the Green Bay, Fox Cities, Madison, Oshkosh and Manitowoc com-

munities.

"Giving back has been a part of our company vision since our inception 50 years ago," stated John F. Bergstrom, executive chairman. "It's special to see how much our team members connect with this and



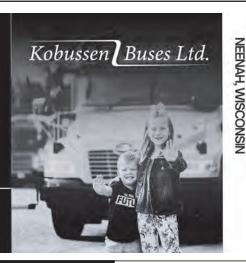
Neenah Historical Society photo

School in session

Sixth-grade teacher Loren Graunke works with students in Hoover School in 1958.



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give their personal income to help people in need."

The \$400,000 contribution will be allocated to various initiatives within United Way, including programs such as early childhood education and mental health services.

"We are incredibly proud of our team members for their commitment to making a difference," said Tim Bergstrom, president and chief executive of Bergstrom Automotive. "United Way plays a crucial role in improving the quality of life for so many people, and we are honored to support their mission."

Bergstrom Automotive's donation included a 25% match along with a 2024 Ford Bronco Sport, 2024 Chevrolet Trax and 2024 Ford Escape.

Correction

AUG. 30, PAGE 1: The Intertribal Powwow is being held Sept. 14 at Shattuck Park, not Riverside Park as was stated in a story about the event due to an editing error.



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New vaccine requirements detailed for school year

ThedaCare Communications

As a new school year approaches, health care providers are asking parents and guardians to ensure children are protected against preventable diseases.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has updated its immunization requirements for school-age children. The agency says the changes align with the longstanding childhood vaccine recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

The main changes involve the vaccine-preventable illnesses meningitis and chickenpox.

The meningococcal (meningitis) vaccine is now part of the mandatory schedule for students entering seventh grade. A booster dose is available for eligible students entering 12th grade. Meningitis is a potentially life-threatening infection affecting the brain and spinal cord membranes. It can spread rapidly, especially in close quarters such as schools.

Children now must have a confirmed diagnosis of chickenpox from a qualified health care provider to be exempt from the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine requirement. Previously, a parent or guardian simply needed to report the disease. Chickenpox is a highly contagious viral infection causing an itchy rash with small, fluid-filled blisters. The disease can lead to serious complications.

"Requiring meningitis and chickenpox vaccines bolsters the state's efforts to prevent outbreaks and protect children's health, possibly allowing them to stay in school and thrive," said Dr. Emily Olson, a pediatrician with ThedaCare Physicians Pediatrics. "These new measures can help keep our communities healthier."

Beyond meningitis and chickenpox, Wisconsin mandates a series of vaccinations for children entering school (kindergarten through seventh grades) to ensure overall protection:

- Polio baccine: Prevents the poliovirus that can cause paralysis.
- Hepatitis B: Guards against liver infection
- DTaP/Tdap (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis): Protects against three serious bacterial diseases. DTaP is recommended for infants and young children, and Tdap is recommended for older children and adults
- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella): Shields against highly contagious viral in-

fections. Measles cases are on the rise this year. Experts attribute the trend to declining vaccination rates in the United States and a rise in cases worldwide.

"These vaccinations can help protect individual children, as well as contribute to herd immunity," Olson explained. "This can help reduce the risk of outbreaks within school communities."

Olson encourages parents to consider additional vaccinations beyond those which the state requires. These include annual influenza starting at 6 months of age to protect against seasonal flu, human papillomavirus (HPV) beginning around age 11 for both boys and girls, a vaccine that has been shown to prevent more than 90% of HPV-related cancers, and a COVID-19 booster.





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- Why signing your home over to your kids might be a huge mistake.
- ▶ How planning in advance can help you and your spouse afford quality care.



Practicing Since 1996

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Recovery specialists focus on successful outcomes

Apricity notes recognition month, funding challenge

By Dan Roherty Neenah News

Apricity, the area's main nonprofit treatment and recovery organization, is celebrating successes toward a healthier community through its multilayered programming while launching an annual fundraiser to keep those services at the ready.

Apricity chief executive Michelle Devine Giese, who was a program participant seeking recovery from alcoholism before her 28-plus years of sobriety, said National Recovery Month allows the organization to focus on the people living better lives after getting the professional help they needed.

"I love that they started Recovery Month (in 1989) because I do think there is so much about addiction, but let's celebrate all the people who are in recovery and doing great things," she said. "You might be sitting next to them at work and you don't even know."

Devine Giese said Apricity worked with more than 1,000 people last year, mostly in Winnebago and Outagamie counties, while serving a wider Fox Valley region

"More people are receiving services but for shorter amounts of time, and a lot of that is due to funding," she said, which relates to the annual awareness initiative.

A matching gift challenge totaling \$35,000 will support Apricity's four core treatment and recovery programs thanks to The Boldt Group, U.S. Venture and an anonymous donor. All donations

throughout September will be matched up to \$35,000.

The organization's sober living program generally runs at a deficit and often needs support outside of available grants, as do general day-to-day operations.

Apricity connects with 10 hospitals from as far as Shawano, Waupaca and Berlin primarily through Ascension and ThedaCare facilities, providing recovery coaches who can be there within an hour to talk to patients in need.



Giese

"It might just be a conversation or it might be, 'I need help,' or 'I need a place to stay,' and just helping them navigate where they are going to go next and stay connected," she said. "They will call the person the next day and check on them and they can stay connected to them for up to 18 months."

Formed with the 2018 merger of Step Industries and The Mooring Programs, Apricity has its job training center and three sober living homes in Neenah. Treatment centers – Mooring House for men and Casa Clara for women – are in Appleton, with another job training center in Milwaukee.

Devine Giese said the region's support agencies often work together with their leaders serving on boards of related non-profits such as Solutions, COTS and the St. Joseph Food Program.

"That's one thing that is really great about the Fox Valley. Generally nonprofits will work together rather than competing, and that doesn't happen everywhere in the United States," she said.

Devine Giese brings familiarity and empathy to both her leadership role and in personal contact with those seeking help.

"I have been able to have conversations with the people in our program and go, 'I was in your spot, I sat in that chair, I did this work,'" she said.

"I'm still in recovery and paying attention to it every day. But I've also been able to be a face in the public and not ashamed to say, 'I'm an alcoholic and this is what an alcoholic looks like.'"

Alcohol addiction continues to be a major focus of recovery programs at Apricity and elsewhere while not getting the same current media attention as opioids and other drug use.

"The commonality is: Something has you looking for that escape. Something happened or you grew up in a certain way," Devine Giese said. "There's a reason why drugs or alcohol became so prevalent in your life. Let's look at why.

"That's the thing we need to help because otherwise if that's always there it's never going to get healed and there's never going to be that long-term help or healing with it. So let's figure out that."

The programs change the lives of individuals afflicted with substance use disorders, such as a former client who told Apricity, "Since being in recovery, I've become responsible, formed positive relationships, maintained employment and live an overall better life. I could never have imagined that I would be living this life today. I am grateful to Apricity for helping me along the way."

The alcohol and other drug abuse

2024AEPRX

(AODA) certified treatment and recovery program offers inpatient and transitional residential treatment, support services, sober living and job readiness training. Staff provide community outreach and education, train recovery coaches and support patients in regional emergency departments and several behavioral health clinics.

National Recovery Month awareness programs were launched 35 years ago to educate the public that substance use treatment and mental health services help people live healthy, rewarding lives. While society's acceptance of addiction as a disease has advanced greatly since that time, Devine Giese said shame still plays a role in keeping people away from treatment.

"I think it has moved a long way now, but I think it still has a long way to go," she said. "There are so many people who don't find recovery because of the stigma or the family members don't talk about what they're struggling with, with their loved one because of the stigma.

"Sometimes when celebrities come out it can be good and bad because then if something happens and they go back to using, that is also reflected and gets a lot of attention – sometimes that gets more attention than talking about their recovery."

In addition to highlighting client success stories on social media and other marketing initiatives, the program will highlight stories from community figures such as law enforcement and community advocates.

To donate, send a gift to Apricity, 1010 Strohmeyer Drive, ATTN: Recovery Month, Neenah, WI 54956.





Not connected to the Federal Medicare program. This is a solicitation for insurance

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Local man faces fifth OWI charge

A local man has been charged with his fifth offense of operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated (OWI) after crashing his car into the back of a vehicle in the Town of Oshkosh last November while on methamphetamine.

Sean Rasmussen, 36, whose recent addresses include Neenah, Oshkosh and Butte des Morts, made his initial appearance in court last week in connection with the accident that left one person in need of medical evaluation.

According to the criminal complaint, the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department responded to Vinland Street around 10 a.m. Nov. 14 and located two cars in the ditch.

The driver of one of the cars said he was traveling southbound on Vinland and noticed that while passing Fernau Avenue, Rasmussen passed another vehicle and turned onto Vinland without yielding at the stop sign.

The driver swerved into the northbound lane to avoid a collision and then got back into the southbound lane. Rasmussen, traveling at a high rate of speed, crashed his car into the back of the other vehicle and forced him into the ditch.

An independent witness reported that before the accident Rasmussen was driving erratically on Interstate 41 northbound from State 21, nearly striking the guardrail and deviating from his lane. The witness was ahead

of Rasmussen and observed him in his mirror crashing into the other vehicle.

Rasmussen told a deputy he crashed into the back of the vehicle because he was texting while driving. He said he has a seizure disorder but did not think he was having a seizure when the crash happened.

The deputy administered a field sobriety test and observed 10 clues of intoxication. A preliminary breath test to identify whether Rasmussen was consuming alcohol came back as .000, leading the deputy to believe he was impaired on something other than alco-

Rasmussen was transported to a hospital for a blood draw. Once there, he said he was now sure he was having a seizure when the accident happened. A forensic analysis of his blood revealed he was on methamphetamine.

Rasmussen has previous OWI-related convictions in 2015, 2020, 2022 and 2023. His license was revoked due to OWI and he was required to have an ignition interlock device installed in any vehicle he operated. He did not have the device installed in the car he was driving.

He faces felony charges of OWI fifth offense, operating with a restricted controlled substance fifth offense, and misdemeanor charges of operating while revoked and failure to install an ignition interlock device.



Music in the street

Boogie Downtown Neenah concluded the summer concert series last Wednesday with Boogie and the Yo-yoz performing to a crowd that packed Wisconsin Avenue.



ATV crash claims Neenah man in Marinette County

Neenah News

A 37-year-old Neenah man was killed in an ATV accident last weekend in Marinette County.

Sheriff's deputies reported KC Duane Bolles was southbound on Wayside Road in the Town of Middle Inlet about 7:45 p.m. Friday when he went into the ditch

on a turn and struck a tree. He was pronounced dead by the Marinette County Medical Examiner's Office.

Bolles was wearing a helmet at the time of the accident, which remains under investigation. Assisting at the scene were the state Department of Natural Resources and Crivitz Rescue.

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Walk to End Alzheimer's set at Jewelers Mutual

Neenah News

The Alzheimer's Association invites Fox Cities area residents to join the Walk to End Alzheimer's on Sept. 14 at Jewelers Mutual Group in Neenah.

The event starts at 8:30 a.m. with an opening ceremony at 9:30 a.m., followed by the walk at 10 a.m.

As advancements in Alzheimer's treatments continue, participants walk to honor their loved ones battling the disease, those they have lost and to support future generations. The event starts with the Promise Garden ceremony where walkers carry a colored flower symbolizing their personal connection to the

More than 7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, a leading cause of death in the United States. In Wisconsin, more than 110,000 people are living with the disease and serving as unpaid caregivers.

Jeff Levering, a sportscaster covering the Milwaukee Brewers, is the honorary chair for all 27 Wisconsin walks.

To register and receive the latest updates, visit act.alz.org/foxcities. Preregistration is encouraged by contacting Deb Paul at 920.260.4532.

Neenah man killed in auto crash in Illinois

Neenah News

The Lake County Coroner's Office has identified 26-year-old Joseph Eli of Neenah as the victim of a single-vehicle fatal traffic crash in Antioch, Ill., on Monday.

Sheriff's deputies responded to Grass Lake Road and Bluff Lane around 4:45 a.m. and located a car on the south side of the roadway that had crashed into a tree.

They reported both the vehicle and the tree had major damage.

The driver and sole occupant was identified Tuesday as Eli. Police said he was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected from the vehicle and pronounced dead at the scene.

The cause of the crash remains under investigation.



Officials break ground at the site of a future Boys & Girls Club on Marathon Avenue in Neenah.

B&G Club

FROM PAGE 1

people with free or low-cost services each year among its Fox Valley clubs.

Neenah's Boys & Girls Club will span 35,000 square feet on 3.5 acres across the street from the Neenah Police Department. About 1,000 young people and their families are expected to use the club annually, with spaces including a Life and Workforce Readiness Center, dance studio, sensory room, trio of learning centers, family conference room, dining area, playground, gymnasium, teen lounge and makers lab.

The club is being built by Miron Construction alongside Gries Architectural

Group and expected to be completed by July and serving youth at the start of the 2025-2026 school year.

Mayor Jane Lang was among the speakers during the groundbreaking, noting that the clubs fill a crucial gap in society.

"They do more than just provide a safe place to be," she said. "They offer hope, guidance and a sense of belonging. These clubs show children that they are not alone; that there are people who care deeply about their well-being and their future. They help children realize their potential even in the face of challenging circumstances by offering educational support, mentorship and opportunities for personal growth. Boys and Girls Clubs play a vital role in transforming lives."

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Calendar of events

Saturday, Sept. 7

Future Neenah Farmers Market, 8 a.m., Shattuck Park

Fox Valley Out of the Darkness Walk, 9 a.m., Riverside Park

Art Activity Day, 10 a.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

Live Music Series: The Rings Band, 5 p.m., Batley's Grill & Bar, 1010 Cameron Way

Monday, Sept. 9

Monday Matinee, 1 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Short Story Night, 7 p.m., Lion's Tail Brewery

Community Living Room Series, 6 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Thursday, Sept. 12

Brigade Open House, 4 p.m., 109 W. Columbian Ave.

Saturday, Sept. 14

Future Neenah Farmers Market, 8 a.m., Shattuck Park

Walk to End Alzheimer's, 8:30 a.m., 24 Jeweler's Park Drive

Ultimate Ladies Day, 9 a.m., downtown Neenah

Neenah-Menasha Intertribal Powwow, 2 p.m., Shattuck Park

Monday, Sept. 16

Walk to Neenah Historical Society and Tour, 9:30 a.m., Neenah-Menasha YMCA

Tuesday, Sept. 17

Chasing Stars: Faces in Art with Ben Erickson, 6 p.m., Ballroom at The Reserve, 116 S. Commercial St.

Wednesday, Sept. 18

Nutman sale, 10 a.m., ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Neenah

True Crime Series: Father Alfred Kunz, 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Thursday, Sept. 19

Nutman sale, 9 a.m., ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Neenah

The Homefront: Neenah's Efforts During WWII, 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Friday, Sept. 20

Oktoberfest Celebration, 3 p.m., Lion's Tail Brewery

Saturday, Sept. 21

Future Neenah Farmers Market, 8 a.m., Shattuck Park

Oktoberfest Celebration, 3 p.m., Lion's Tail Brewery

Tuesday, Sept. 24

Movie Talks: "Double Indemnity," 6:30 p.m., Neenah-Menasha YMCA



Ramp builders

FROM PAGE 1

estimated to have saved residents more than \$8 million.

Lead volunteer Bruce Stowe has been involved since 2008. Having previously taken youth to the Appalachia region to do home repair, volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and completed other repairs around the country, Stowe thought the program would be a good fit.

"I enjoy that type of work to begin with and helping people," he said.

For a resident to have a wheelchair ramp installed by a commercial company, Stowe estimated it would cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000. The club purchased the equipment needed to construct the ramps and is able to significantly reduce the cost by using volunteers and repurposing some materials.

"The company has overhead and administration and all those other costs that they have to account for, and we don't have to account for any of that, and labor that we don't have to account for," Stowe said. "So once you get down to just

paying half of the material, it's a big difference."

The majority of the ramps are wooden, although there are some aluminum ramps donated to the club and may be used if a home has the correct dimensions

When a family no longer needs a handicap ramp, the club retrieves it to repurpose. Recently, the club removed a ramp that had been installed at a home 17 years ago, showcasing the durability and lasting impact of their work.

The program has improved accessibility and independence for individuals with mobility challenges throughout the region, but with a waiting list of about nine weeks, Stowe said he could really use more volunteers.

"We can train anyone," he said.

The club regularly gets calls from outside its service area from people in need of the ramps, particularly in Waupaca and Oshkosh, and recently received a call from a resident who lived about 100 miles away in Mountain.

Stowe encouraged other communities and civic groups to get involved in supporting residents by starting a handicap ramp program.

"I need more communities to find an organization so they can handle their community," he said. "I get calls from those areas that I can't support."

He added that all it takes is people willing to volunteer and put in the work.

"You do not have to be a carpenter; you do not need to have a huge skill set," he said. "Once you learn how they're built, they're pretty straightforward. We just need people committed to helping people."

The volunteer ramp builders are rewarded with hugs, smiles and tears from grateful residents.

"The ability for a person to stay in their home and the freedom to allow people to get out easily is extremely significant to these people," he said. "They don't have to call their son or daughter to help them get out of their house to go to a doctor's appointment. It's just the freedom they get and they're so appreciative to get out of the home."

For those interested in contributing or getting involved, visit e-clubhouse.org/sites/larsenwinchester or call 920-427-3236.







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Olkowski hits perfect stride running for Rockets

Neenah News

Neenah senior Mazie Olkowski can deal with the physically grueling aspect of

That side of the sport was never an issue. But when it came to the big state meets she found herself in at the end of the cross country and track and field seasons, something on the mental side just didn't click. Physically she was ready to run those races, but they weren't turning out how she

"I think I figured out the mental part of running at state and getting over the nerves of it," said Olkowski, who has qualified for state track and state cross country in each of her first three seasons. "We would go to the big meets and I would run with the lead pack and I would be able to stick with them. I knew I had done the work to do it and if it worked at those meets with the same kind of people, it should work at (state)."

The change in approach worked.

After finishing 23rd in the 3,200 meters as a freshman and 22nd as a sophomore, Olkowski made the awards podium with a fifth place finish in the event last June. She also took seventh place in the 1,600 meters – just missing out on stepping onto the podium.

"I was terrified. It was the first meet I was actually nervous for, especially going into the two-mile," Olkowski said. "It was a relief (to make podium) for sure. I felt like I figured it out."

Senior Standout

Now Olkowski aims to carry that confidence into cross country.

Neenah has qualified for state as a team the last three years and Olkowski has been a key member of each squad. Last season, she ran in the top spot for the Rockets all season, but was the No. 3 Neenah finisher at the state meet and placed 44th overall.

She is taking aim at a much higher finish this season.

"I definitely think a top-10. Well, hopefully a top-10 finish, if everything goes the way I want it to go," Olkowski said. "I'm excited for the season, especially because our team is so good. It makes it twice as exciting just to see what everyone can do this year."

The Rockets are coming off a second-place finish as a team last season and return all five scoring runners from that squad and six of the seven athletes who

Olkowski said she has been thinking about what this group could do this season for a while - pretty much since the final team scores were posted after last year's meet.

"I kind of had it on my mind since we got second. It was like guys we have to win



Neenah senior Mazie Olkowski is a three-time state qualifier in both cross country and track and field.

next year," Olkowski said. "It would be cool to leave on a win."

Distance running is something that certainly runs in Olkowski's blood.

Both of her parents were distance runners at UW-Oshkosh and her mom has helped coach the Neenah program for the last 17 years. Olkowski's younger sister, Eme, is a junior on the squad and was a member of last year's state cross country team as well.

"We get a little feisty with each other from time to time," Olkowski said about being a teammate with Eme. "But we get to share some of the same experiences and it's fun we get to have that."

Distance running may be something that Olkowski has passion for now – she is hoping to run collegiately but hasn't made a decision yet as to where - that hasn't always been the case.

In fact, it took a pandemic to really get her fully engulfed in the sport.

"During COVID, my parents were like you have to go out and run at least five days a week. You are not walking around at school and you are not doing anything," Olkowski said. "They would make us go out and run, almost every day even if it was just a mile or two. Just to get outside."

Despite having the training to be a high-level runner, Olkowski wasn't into running as a sport. She said that as a sixth and seventh grader, she would simply go out and jog around the course during middle school cross country meets, not worried about how she finished.

"I kind of got into it against my will in middle school," Olkowski said. "I did not want to do it at all."

But while accompanying her mom to a Neenah High School cross country practice as an eighth grader, Olkowski had a bit of an epiphany.

Her mom made her run the time trial the high school runners were doing and Olkowski finished in the top eight.

"I was like, if I tried I could be pretty good," Olkowski said.

She has since been trying and has helped elevate Neenah back into a state power.

Olkowski is proud of restoring Neenah's tradition in girls cross country and glad that now there is pressure to perform.

"My freshman year there wasn't that much pressure because our team hadn't made it (to state) in a long time, but after we started making it and especially after last year, there is some pressure," Olkowski said. "Now we are one of the teams to beat which makes it kind of scary. To help build a team to be at that level is fun to be a part of."

Olkowski hopes all the miles the Rockets have ran can lead them to a title.

"(Running) has taught me your hard work, even if you don't notice right away, it will pay off eventually," Olkowski said. "It gets really tiring doing the same thing over and over and you feel like you are getting nowhere but it will pay off and you will notice."



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St. Mary Catholic looks to follow up state run

Neenah News

A special class of seniors carried the St. Mary Catholic boys soccer team to its first ever WIAA State Tournament appearance last season and a runner-up finish in the

Division 4 field.

Soccer PREVIEW

Seven seniors from that squad earned all-conference recognition

after last season and formed the nucleus of that successful state run.

Although those players have moved on, the cupboard is not bare for the Zephyrs and head coach Chris Corrao entering the 2024 season.

It may take some time to find the right recipe with all of the new ingredients but the foundation is there for another successful run.

"Last year's run showcased the talents of an entire team that included deep bench strength," Corrao commented. "This year will require 100 percent commitment to tactical requirements of our formation, maintain health and fitness and a little luck."

It also helps when the list of returning players includes the best offensive player in the conference.

Senior Kieran Barrientos was the leading goal scorer in the Big East/Eastern Wisconsin Conference last year and was named the league's Offensive Player of the Year as a junior. Barrientos finished with 41 goals, while also picking up 17 assists in leading the Zephyrs in scoring. The senior has 61 goals in his career, including a hat trick already this season.

After Barrientos, the Zephyrs don't return much scoring from last year.

Senior Nathan Seiske tallied five goals from his midfield position and will lead that position group this season.

The Zephyrs do return two of its backline players in seniors Harry Bergstrom and John Osland. St. Mary Catholic allowed just eight goals all of last season and registered three shutouts in the WIAA Tournament.

One of the players who will be counted on to anchor the defense will be junior goalkeeper Zach Beyer, who will be replacing Hunter Schreiber as the Zephyrs netminder. Beyer saw limited varsity action in relief of Schreiber last year but will handle the bulk of the goalkeeping duties this season.

Corrao also expects sophomores Alexei Quinonez and Carlos Verhoff to step into key roles in the midfield, while freshman forward Dylan Brenn will be counted on to give the Zephyrs another scoring threat up front.

Oostburg, who finished second to the Zephyrs last season, could be the favorite in the Big East/EWC this season as the Flying Dutchmen return six players who earned all-conference recognition last year.

Kiel, Roncalli and Kohler also bring back talented players and will compete with the Zephyrs for a top finish in the league.

Neenah

The Rockets look to defend their Fox Valley Association title under first-year

head coach Martin Valenzuela. Valenzuela takes over the program from Will Krautkramer.

Neenah graduated its top three scorers from a year ago – including the FVA co-Player of the Year in Blake Rhodes – but do bring back an experienced goal-keeper and a solid core of players to build around.

The Rockets have one returning player who earned all-FVA recognition a year ago in senior Rylan Mendoza, who was an honorable mention honoree as a defender last season.

Mendoza will lead the backline in front of senior goalkeeper Julian Gallmeier, who played in all 21 matches a year ago and allowed just four goals in conference play.

Senior Ayden Weisbrod is the top returning goal scorer from last year having netted seven goals, while tying for second on the team with eight assists a year ago.

Seniors Preston Schamens and Grant Romjue will also be key offensive figures for the Rockets, having scored seven goals apiece a year ago.

Neenah girls return bulk of lineup after runner-up state finish

Neenah News

Things couldn't have gone much better for the Neenah High School cross country programs last

Cross country season.

PREVIEW

Both the girls and boys teams claimed Fox Val-

ley Association titles – for the boys, it was their third in a row in non-COVID seasons – and both teams had to survive rugged sectionals to return to the WIAA Division 1 state meets.

Now, the Rockets look to do it all again.

The girls are coming off a second-place finish at the state meet last season and return nearly its entire varsity lineup from that squad. All five scoring runners return from the squad that finished second to only Slinger at Wisconsin Rapids. Fellow

Senior Mazie Olkowski leads the expe-

FVA rival Kaukauna finished third.

rienced group of runners, having been a part of the three straight state-qualifying teams for Neenah.

Juniors Elsa Gruber and Natalie Willes were the top two finishers for the Rockets at the state meet last year, while sophomores Natalie Schultz and Maddie Schoonover rounded out the scoring lineup at last year's state meet.

Junior Eme Olkowski also ran on the varsity squad last season, while senior

Brooke Veith has varsity experience and also had a strong track and field season last spring.

The Rockets could also get contributions from freshmen Izzy Malloy and Elsa Weiland, who figure to compete for spots in the varsity lineup.

"The girls will look to improve on their state finish and repeat as conference cham-

SEE **Cross country** on Page 11



	NEENAH
8/27	6:30pm
8/31	1:00pm
9/3	7:00pm
9/7	1:00pm
9/10	7:00pm
9/12	7:00pm
9/17	7:00pm
9/19	7:00pm
9/24	7:00pm
9/26	7:00pm
9/28	12:00pm
10/1	7:15pm
10/5	10:00am
10/8	7:00pm
10/17	7:00pm
Homes games played at NHS Soccer Stadium	

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Page 10 I NEENAHNEWSNOW.COM **S**EPTEMBER **6**, **2024**

Prep sports roundup

FOOTBALL

Neenah's offense erupts in win over Menasha

The Rockets rolled up more than 400 yards of total offense and pounded rival Menasha, 50-13, last week.

Neenah evened its record at 1-1 heading into Thursday's Fox Valley Association opener against Appleton East.

Evan Vanevenhoven threw for two touchdowns and ran for another to spark the Rocket offense, which put up points in every quarter. Vanevenhoven finished 8-of-11 for 104 yards and threw both of his touchdown passes to Luke Jung.

Grant Dean racked up 127 yards rushing - on just five carries - and had scoring runs of 69 and 14 yards in the second quarter as Neenah took a 22-7 halftime lead. Dray Hannan and Cooper Sieck added scoring runs for the Rockets.

Jung also led the defense with 10 tackles, while Jonah Ritner finished with nine.

St. Mary Catholic shuts out Manawa

Maddox Dwver and Daniel Harness connected for three touchdowns and Kieran Barrientos kicked three field goals as the Zephyrs topped the Wolves, 30-0, in a nonconference game last Friday.

Dwyer finished 13-of-24 for 295 yards with Harness catching five passes for 161

yards. The two had scoring plays of 44, 78 and 27 yards.

Mason Wagner added two catches for 72 yards, while Tarver Trinkner had four catches for 43 yards.

The Zephyrs were slated to play their first Eastern Wisconsin Conference game Thursday against Valders.

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

Zephyrs finish second at Omro invitational

St. Mary Catholic posted a 4-1 record Saturday at the Omro Invitational to finish second.

The Zephyrs beat Wautoma, Green Bay West and Omro in pool play before topping Wild Rose in the semifinals. St. Mary Catholic won all four matches in two games, while allowing more than 18 points in only one of the eight games.

Bonduel edged St. Mary Catholic 21-25, 25-21, 16-14 in a close title match.

Eliana Brenn led the Zephyrs with 24 kills, while also picking up nine aces and seven blocks. Autumn Crowe finished with 22 kills, while Kate Nackers and Luci Nackers each added 12 kills. Luci Nackers led the team with 24 digs, followed by Ava Rankin with 22.

Sammy Weiss and Stella Virlee finished with 46 and 41 assists, respectively, while Virlee also had six aces.

The Zephyrs also went 2-1 at a home quad to open the season, beating Pacelli and Random Lake before falling in three sets to West Bend East.

Crowe led the team with nine kills, while Luci Nackers and Brenn each finished with eight. Rankin led the team with 17 digs, with Weiss and Virlee each totaling 25 assists.

Neenah notches six wins at tournament

The Rockets won all six matches it played at a tournament at the Milwaukee Sting Center last Saturday.

Neenah beat Cedarburg and Germantown in three sets to start the tournament and then rolled to straight-set wins over Muskego, Verona, Wauwatosa East and Wauwatosa West.

CROSS COUNTRY

Neenah girls dominate Jamie Block Challenge

The Rockets posted the top time in each grade and finished six minutes ahead of second-place Franklin in total time to take first at the Jamie Block Challenge held Saturday in West Bend.

Mazie Olkowski led the way for Neenah, winning the senior race while posting the only time under 20 minutes on the day. Elsa Gruber and Natalie Willes finished first and second, respectively, among the junior runners, while Natalie Schultz and Maddie Schoonover went 1-2

in the sophomore race. Izzy Malloy and Elsa Weiland were the top two finishers among the freshmen.

Neenah's top five runners - Olkowski, Schultz, Gruber, Schoonover and Malloy - all finished within 38 seconds and were the only team to have its top five runners all finish under 21 minutes.

The Neenah boys finished second to Hartford in total time and had one runner win his grade as Zach Verhagen took first among all junior runners. Oliver Steiner was the Rockets' second-fastest runner on the day, followed by Bly Wheeler, Carson Verhagen and Nolan Smith.

Ripley, Higgins lead Zephyr girls at invite

Lauren Ripley finished second and Claire Higgins took fourth to lead the St. Mary Catholic girls to a second-place finish at the season-opening Amherst Invita-

Freshmen Claire Mislinski and Alice Troian Mello placed 22nd and 24th, respectively, behind the top two, while Audrey Weber rounded out the Zephyr scoring runners in 27th place.

The St. Mary Catholic boys did not compete as a complete team but were led by Ethan Auer in sixth place, Brady DeLeeuw in 14th place and Brandon DeBraal in 36th place. Anderson Homberg also finished 50th for St. Mary Catholic.

SEE **Prep roundup** ON PAGE 11

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Prep roundup

FROM PAGE 10

SOCCER

Barrientos scores hat trick in victory

Kieran Barrientos finished with three goals and an assist as St. Mary Catholic picked up a 4-1 win over New Holstein.

Wes Auth also scored for the Zephyrs, who racked up a whopping 29 shots on goal in the game.

Zach Beyer made three saves in net for St. Mary Catholic.

Rockets tie Polar Bears in conference opener

Neenah scored a 1-1 tie with Hortonville on Tuesday night in its first Fox Valley Association match of the season.

The Rockets were coming off a 3-1 win over Kettle Moraine on Saturday and are 2-0-1 on the season.

BOYS VOLLEYBALL

Neenah finish fourth at Madison West invite

The Rockets went 2-2 on the day to take fourth place at the tournament.

Neenah swept both Fort Atkinson and Union Grove before falling in three sets to host Madison West. The Rockets fell to Whitefish Bay in its final match.

Miles Weaver and Julian Kuehn each finished with 34 kills to lead the Rockets, while Weaver added 19 digs and Kuehn led the team with five aces.

The Rockets opened the season by sweeping both Oak Creek and Waterford in a triangular. Weaver finished with seven kills and Trevor Ricketts had five in the win over Oak Creek, while Kuehn and Ricketts each had seven kills in the sweep of Waterford. Cam Ciekfuss had 37 assists in the two matches.

TENNIS

St. Mary Catholic breezes to win

The Zephyrs won all seven matches in straight sets as they topped Waupun, 7-0.

Audrey Wanless at No. 1 singles and Ella Chier at No. 3 singles led the way for St. Mary Catholic as each posted 6-0, 6-0 wins in their matches. Lorelai Miller and Nolie Anderson added a 6-0, 6-0 win at No. 3 doubles.

St. Mary Catholic lost just eight games overall in the seven matches.

Also last week, the Zephyrs used a sweep of the doubles matches to edge Sheboygan Falls, 4-3.

Adel Schneider and Vivie Auth at No. 1 doubles and Emily Vogel and Nadia Alexander at No. 2 doubles each won in straight sets, while Alice Cole and Anderson rallied from a second-set loss to win their No. 3 doubles match in three sets.

Wanless picked up the lone singles win for the Zephyrs.

Neenah finishes 3-1 at Brookfield invite

The Rockets blanked Nicolet and Cedarburg and beat De Pere, 5-2, before fall-

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ing to Divine Savior Holy Angels to finish 3-1 at the Brookfield Central invitational.

Ella Motto finished 4-0 at No. 3 singles, while the No. 2 doubles team of Ava Motto and Rebekah Thomas also went unbeaten to lead the way for the Rockets. Josie Kohlbeck finished 4-0 at No. 3 doubles, winning two matches with Elsa Johnson and two matches with Evelyn Buss on the day.

Celia Gentile added three wins at No. 2 singles as Neenah used a variety of lineups over the course of the four matches.

Neenah also cruised to a Fox Valley Association dual meet win over Kaukauna, winning all seven matches by 6-0, 6-0 margins.

Singles wins were tallied by Izzy Murray, Gentile, Ella Motto and Norah Spanbauer, while Meredith Werner and Sydney Michalkiewicz, Ava Motto and Thomas and Kohlbeck and Buss earned doubles wins.

GIRLS GOLF

Neenah picks up win over Oshkosh West

Annika Searles earned medalist honors as the Rockets beat Oshkosh West, 205-265, at the Oshkosh Country Club last

Adrianne Oitzinger added a 49, followed by Lilly Quella with a 51 and Carly Callahan with a 59.

The Rockets posted a team score of 203 in a loss to Kaukauna at Countryside Golf Course, with Quella leading the way with a 48 followed by Searles with a 50.

niors from those groups and will be trotting out almost all new lineups this year.

The boys team qualified for the state meet last fall and return a pair of runners who ran on that team.

Senior Nathan Seiske was the Zephyrs' No. 3 runner at the state meet last year, followed by junior Ethan Auer. Both runners will move up in the St. Mary Catholic lineup this season.

The Zephyr girls narrowly missed a chance to run at the state meet, finishing third at the Wabeno/Laona sectional.

St. Mary Catholic did have an individual state qualifier in senior Lauren Ripley, who will return to once again lead this year's group. Ripley also went to state as a freshman.

Also expected to return for the Zephyrs is sophomore Claire Higgins, who ran with the team last year and is coming off a successful track and field season.

"There is excitement based on last year's results," commented head coach Chad Mc-Cartney. "With the large number of runners that graduated from last year's team, we will need new leaders to step up and new runners to fill in the missing depth."

Cross country

FROM PAGE 9

pions," Neenah head girls coach Mike Heidke commented. "They will face stiff competition from Kaukauna and a strong Appleton North team in the FVA."

The boys finished 17th at the state meet last year with a roster that included a trio of seniors but the Rockets have a strong nucleus from that group to build around this season.

Junior Zach Verhagen led Neenah at the state meet last season, while seniors Braedy Klawikowski, Harmon Psegate and Nolan Smith were also part of the Rockets' team at Wisconsin Rapids.

Seniors Bly Wheeler, Carson Verhagen and Finn Lettau along with juniors Oliver Steiner and Jackson Holzheu are also expected to compete for spots on the varsity

St. Mary Catholic

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