

# sports

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## MEET THE PACK

Profiles of WolfPack athletes

### BASEBALL

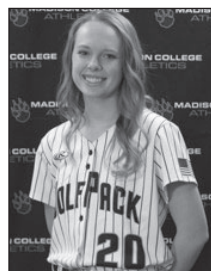
#### GUNNAR DOYLE

An outfielder on the Madison College baseball team, Gunnar Doyle has started 10 games already this season. He ranks third on the team in batting average, with a .465 average. He has 20 hits in 43 at bats, including two doubles, two triples and one home run. After 11 games, he has a team-high 18 RBIs and has scored 16 runs.

Doyle was a three-sport athlete at Oak Creek High School. As a junior, he



DOYLE



FOUNTAIN

earned first team all conference in the Southeastern Conference and third team all-state. The son of Jamie and Tim Doyle, he is a liberal arts transfer student in the pre-professional health program.

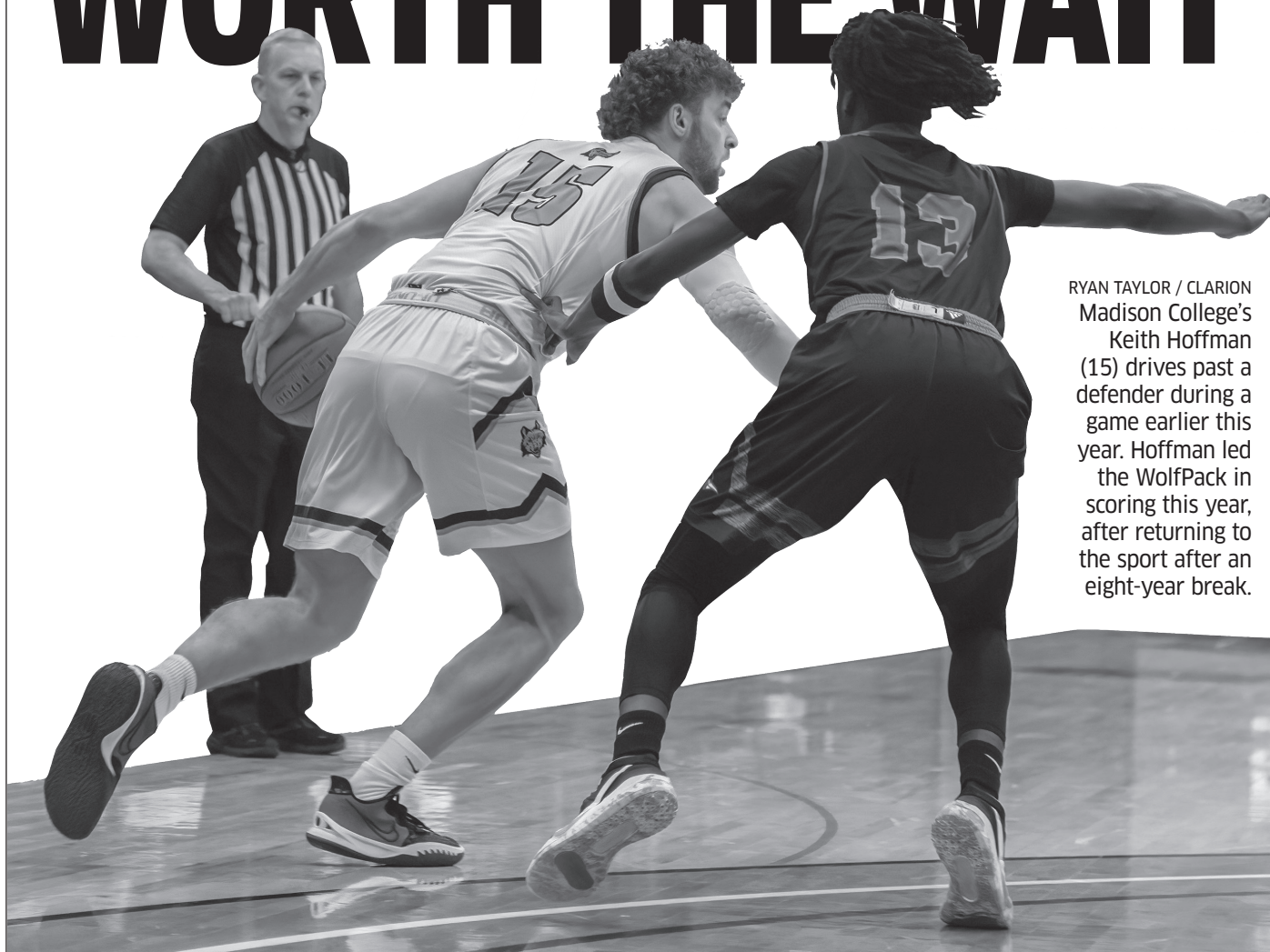
### SOFTBALL

#### CASEY FOUNTAIN

A pitcher on the Madison College softball team, Casey Fountain has a 3-1 record from the mound this season. She has pitched in six games, starting four. She has a team-leading 33 strikeouts and only four walks. She has allowed just nine runs this season, six earned, for an ERA of 1.56.

A graduate of Poynette High School, she was a three-time first-team all conference selection was the conference player and pitcher of the year as a junior. She was a member of back-to-back state championship teams. The daughter of Jenny and Mike Fountain, she is a liberal arts major.

# WORTH THE WAIT



RYAN TAYLOR / CLARION  
Madison College's Keith Hoffman (15) drives past a defender during a game earlier this year. Hoffman led the WolfPack in scoring this year, after returning to the sport after an eight-year break.

## WolfPack softball has 10-5 start on the season

### CLARION STAFF REPORT

Although their home season hasn't started yet, the Madison College softball team has already had an eight-game winning streak and a three-game losing streak.

Soggy weather cancelled the last four games of the WolfPack's annual Florida spring break trip, leaving them with an overall record of 10-5 overall. The team played seven games in Florida, winning three and losing four.

Madison College opened the season with eight games in the North Central Community College Conference Jamboree, posting seven wins.

The only loss in the jamboree came against defending conference champion Rock Valley College, which has also won seven-straight Division III National Championships.

Madison College will open its home season on Sunday, March 27, with a doubleheader against Triton College. Games are scheduled for noon and 2 p.m.

#### Florida Trip

Madison College's spring break trip opened with a pair of victories that extended the team's winning streak to eight games.

A performance by pitcher Casey Fountain helped the WolfPack earn a 5-1 win over Mott Community College on March 11. Fountain allowed one run on eight hits and a walk, striking out eight. First baseman Mia Noelker had a home run, a double and three RBIs to lead the offense.

Madison College followed

» SEE **SOFTBALL** PAGE 13

## Time off and a roundabout journey leads to the NCAA

KELLY FENG  
Opinion Editor

The typical NCAA athletic journey is to graduate from high school, enroll in your chosen school, go to orientation, receive loads of athletic swag and add your name to the roster.

For Madison College basketball player Keith Hoffman, his journey to NCAA basketball was more roundabout. After graduating from Stevens Point High School in 2016, the forward took time off to figure out who he was and what interested him. He started his own soft wash and pressure washing business, cleaning customers' driveways and roofs.

He also spent time at the Stevens

Point YMCA, becoming serious about weight training, gaining size and muscle.

Last fall, he returned to school after an eight-year break from basketball, and was the leading scorer for the WolfPack. Being the top scorer of a junior college Division III team is one thing. Still, according to the NCAA, the estimated probability of competing in college athletics basketball for Division I or II is 1 percent.

Will Hoffman be part of that 1 percent?

After this basketball season, he has a good shot.

During the 2021-2022 season, Hoffman scored 419 points and averaged 15.5 a game. It's just not field

goals or three-pointers. With 9.3 rebounds a game, Hoffman also added 11 double-doubles to his statistics.

After graduating from high school, college enrollment wasn't on Hoffman's radar. It wasn't because he wasn't interested. He needed time to figure out who he was. He knew he had athletic ability, but football was his original calling.

Hoffman played one year of basketball during his freshman year of high school. He was a good shooter with an exceptionally tall 6-foot-8 frame. However, at only 170 pounds, he was lanky and lacked confidence.

And yet, there was something

» SEE **JOURNEY** PAGE 13

# Madison College baseball off to one of its best starts

### CLARION STAFF REPORT

One thing is clear after the Madison College baseball team's spring break trip to Arizona - this team can score runs, and a lot of them.

The WolfPack scored 10 or more runs in each of their first seven games, all victories, before being "held" to six runs in their one loss.

Madison College, which has made three straight trips to the NJCAA Division II World Series, is currently ranked No. 4 in the Division II poll and is off to one of its best starts ever.

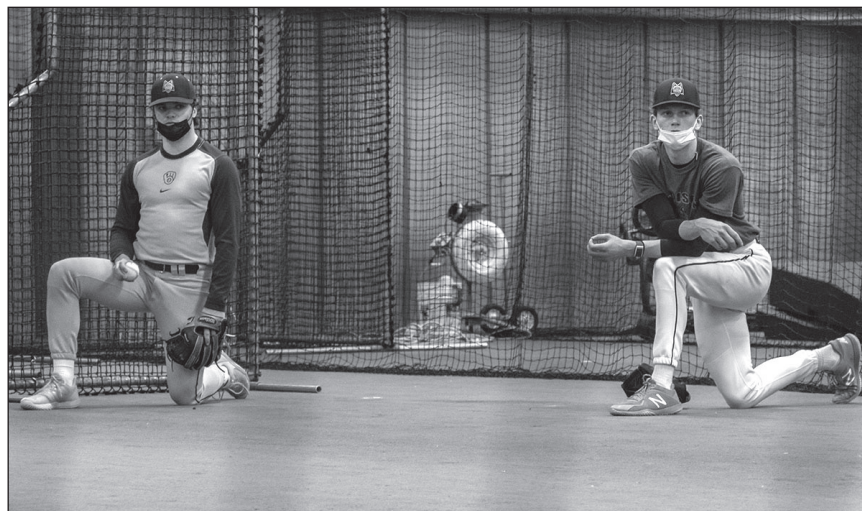
The team won 10 of 11 games on its spring break trip. In those 11 games, the WolfPack scored 120 runs on 135 hits.

Madison College still has a few games before its April 3 home opener. It will play a doubleheader at Moraine Valley Community College on March 25 and a doubleheader at Carl Sandburg College on March 27.

#### Madison College 11, Chandler-Gilbert College 8

Madison College's bats took until

» SEE **BASEBALL** PAGE 14



ANDRES SANCHEZ / CLARION

Madison College baseball players stretch at the start of a recent practice held at the GRB Academy facility in Deforest.

## JOURNEY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

about basketball that made Hoffman want another chance.

In addition to managing his business, the forward made a daily trip to the YMCA, developing a belief in himself. First, he focused on gaining muscle mass and conditioning. Then, he took a critical eye to his skills and focused on drills and ball handling. On weekends, he gathered a group of friends to play a pick-up game.

Outside the YMCA, Hoffman felt another calling, one that came from his pressure wash operation. Meeting customers, writing quotes and hiring labor gave him enterprising confidence. But with the business profiting, enrolling in college was the furthest thing on Hoffman's mind.

A couple of years into business ownership, Hoffman knew he wanted to be an entrepreneur, and he realized he could enhance his business judgment by earning a business degree.

"I thought if I'm going to get a degree, I might as well help a basketball program win while I'm at it," Hoffman said.

The proximity of the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point was a natural choice for Hoffman, and he enrolled and took virtual classes. However, he couldn't play basketball with the Pointers as their roster was already filled.

Hoffman's athletic talents didn't go unnoticed by the Stevens Point staff. If they couldn't utilize him, they were certain another team could.

Head Coach Jamal Palmer not only guides the men's basketball team but also serves as an academic advisor at Madison College. He often uses his master's in social work and athletic administration to elicit the best qualities in his athletes. After the Stevens Point staff contacted him, Palmer decided to give Hoffman a look.

At first, Palmer didn't know what he was getting from Hoffman. When they met in person, the head coach had seen that his future player had a strong frame, having gained muscle weight from his years working out. (The earlier videos of Hoffman tell a different story. Palmer had seen footage of his incoming player from his lone year of basketball where he couldn't help noticing Hoffman was "paper-thin.")

It didn't take Palmer long to realize that his incoming prospect was unusually gifted, especially given his many years' absence.

"It was like a blessing in disguise with Keith. He's been the perfect person as far as representing the college, representing the team, representing



RYAN TAYLOR / CLARION

Madison College's Keith Hoffman shoots during a game this past season.

himself and his family. He's been that perfect guy wanting to buy into and do everything the right way."

He sees his player as instrumental in inspiring recruits to join the WolfPack and credits Hoffman in helping the team adapt to their future Division II status, a change that begins next season.

"He does his work in the classroom. He does work on the basketball court. He bought into what we were trying to do. He's just like a model, so I'm excited to have him be part of our program," said Palmer.

Hoffman is grateful for the leadership advice from Palmer.

"Not having a coach since ninth grade (Palmer) welcomed me with open arms. Having someone like that in my life who respected me and gave me an opportunity meant a lot," Hoffman said.

Hoffman appreciates that Palmer trusted him to take the big shots down the stretch. "It made me play harder for him, especially when you have a coach that cares about you so much," he said.

Division I and Division II coaches haven't overlooked the hard work. Palmer has been fielding calls about his player all season, with several offering him full-ride scholarships.

Hoffman is excited but humbled. "(It's) awesome to hear coaches were reaching out and showing that interest and support and wanting me to be a part of the next program (and) the next

level," Hoffman said.

Someone who has seen Hoffman on and off the court is teammate and friend Teagan Kirslenlohr. The two met at the YMCA, where both were weight training. In addition to his friend being the team's highest scorer, he's seen an eagerness to learn and be a leader in Hoffman.

"(Whether) he's in practice, on the road, or whatever it may be, he's friendly with all the guys. He listens to the coaches. He wants to learn more," Kirslenlohr said. "I noticed when we needed it to in our locker rooms. He would try to talk to everybody to get everybody on the same page when we needed it [and] be a leader."

Hoffman knows that taking time off from high school is not the path for everyone, but it was the best path. He believes those years benefited him beyond becoming a better athlete, and he also believes he became a better adult.

As far as advising aspiring college athletes, Hoffman emphasizes patience and finding your own rhythm.

"Go at your own pace. You don't have to get to where you want to be in a day. It takes years of hard work, and it just took me a little longer to blossom than everyone else because I didn't play in high school, and I'm now looking to move to the next level, Division I or Division II, on a scholarship. I look back and know I made the right choice."

two earned runs and five hits. Gish had a solo home run for the WolfPack, and Fountain had an RBI double.

Polk State College took a pair of games from Madison College on March 15, winning 6-2 and 8-3. The first game saw the WolfPack held to five hits, two by Rademacher. In the second game, Madison College scored three times in the fourth inning, but was never able to take the lead.

### N4C Jamboree

Madison College won five games by run-rule in the N4C Jamboree and posted conference wins over College of DuPage, Joliet Junior College and Milwaukee Area Technical College. Their only loss was a 14-1 thrashing by Rock Valley.

Fountain pitched a two-hit shutout as Madison College beat College of DuPage, 7-0, to open the Jamboree on March 3. Maddie Kvatek, Rademacher and VonBehren each had doubles in the game.

Rock Valley scored 10 runs in the first two innings and cruised to a 14-1 victory, holding Madison College to just two hits in the game.

Five extra-base hits provided a boost for Madison College in its 9-1 win over Joliet on March 4. Gish had a home run, Myah Hennessey hit a triple and

Kianna Patterson, Trista Ripp and Kvatek each hit doubles.

Fountain and Patterson combined for a one-hit shutout as Madison College beat Milwaukee Area Technical College, 8-0, in five innings. Bri Unger and Kvatek both had triples to help lead the WolfPack.

Madison College had 13 hits and 14 runs in a 14-1 victory over Prairie State College on March 4. Smedema pitched the win, allowing just two hits in five innings and striking out nine. Gish led the WolfPack with three hits, two runs scored and two RBIs.

A nine-run first inning provided all the scoring Madison College needed in a 13-3 victory over South Suburban College on March 5. Gish had three hits, including two doubles, and four RBIs to lead the WolfPack. Warner pitched the win, allowing just four hits.

Madison College scored 12 runs on 12 hits in a 12-5 victory over McHenry County College on March 5. Ripp and Noelker both had two hits and a double in the game.

Another big game followed, with Madison College winning 14-0 in five innings against Elgin Community College. The WolfPack had 13 hits in the game and scored runs in all five innings. VonBehren had a triple and two hits to lead the WolfPack.

## MCSPORTS

Madison College schedules and results.

### BASEBALL

#### Schedule

- MAR. 10** at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, **11-8 WIN, 10-0 WIN**
- MAR. 11** at Mesa CC, **10-1 WIN**
- MAR. 12** vs. Riverland CC, **21-2 WIN**
- MAR. 12** vs. Miles CC, **14-11 WIN**
- MAR. 13** vs. Western Nebraska CC, **10-6 WIN**
- MAR. 15** vs. Williston State College, **14-4 WIN**
- MAR. 15** vs. Lake Region State College, **8-6 LOSS**
- MAR. 16** vs. Gateway CC, **8-4 WIN**
- MAR. 17** at Scottsdale CC, **9-3 WIN**
- MAR. 18** at Paradise Valley CC, **9-7 WIN**
- MAR. 25** at Moraine Valley Community College, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- MAR. 27** at Carl Sandburg College, noon, 3 p.m.
- MAR. 30** at Oakton Community College, 2:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m.
- MAR. 31** at Highland Community College, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 2** at College of DuPage, noon, 3 p.m.
- APR. 3** at home vs. Olive-Harvey College, 1 p.m., 4 p.m.
- APR. 7** at home vs. Sauk Valley Community College, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 9** at Milwaukee Area Technical College, noon, 3 p.m.
- APR. 10** at home vs. Carl Sandburg College, 1 p.m., 4 p.m.
- APR. 12** at home vs. Bryant & Stratton College, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 13** at Bryant & Stratton College, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 15** at home vs. Waubensee Community College, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 16** at home vs. Rock Valley College, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 19** at home vs. Triton College, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 21** at home vs. Black Hawk College, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 23** at home vs. Harper College, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 24** at home vs. Kankakee Community College, noon, 3 p.m.
- APR. 26** at College of Lake County, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 28** at home vs. Kishwaukee College, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 30** at Joliet Junior College, noon, 3 p.m.
- MAY 1** at home vs. McHenry County College, noon, 3 p.m.
- MAY 7** at South Suburban College, noon, 3 p.m.
- MAY 8** at home vs. Elgin Community College, 3 p.m.

### SOFTBALL

#### Schedule

- MAR. 3** at Rosemont, Ill., vs. College of DuPage, **7-0 WIN**; vs. Rock Valley, **14-1 LOSS**
- MAR. 4** at Rosemont, Ill., vs. Joliet Junior College, **9-1 WIN**; vs. Milwaukee Area Tech, **8-0 WIN**; vs. Prairie State College, 14-1 WIN
- MAR. 5** at Rosemont, Ill., vs. South Suburban, **13-3 WIN**; vs. McHenry County, **12-5 WIN**; vs. Elgin CC, **14-0 WIN**
- MAR. 11** vs. Mott CC, **5-1 WIN**
- MAR. 11** vs. Niagara CC, **4-1 WIN**
- MAR. 13** vs. Grand View JV, **3-2 LOSS**
- MAR. 13** vs. Minnesota Morris JV, **16-2 LOSS**
- MAR. 14** vs. Iowa Lakes CC, **5-4 LOSS**
- MAR. 15** vs. Polk State, **6-2 LOSS, 8-5 LOSS**
- MAR. 27** at home vs. Triton College, noon, 2 p.m.
- APR. 2** at Waubensee Community College, noon, 2 p.m.
- APR. 5** at Joliet Junior College, 3 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 10** at Highland Community College, noon, 2 p.m.
- APR. 14** at Bryant & Stratton College, 3 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 15** at McHenry County College, 3 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 16** at home vs. Sauk Valley Community College, noon, 2 p.m.
- APR. 19** at Rock Valley College, 3 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 23** at home vs. Carl Sandburg College, noon, 2 p.m.
- APR. 24** at home vs. Black Hawk College, noon, 2 p.m.
- APR. 26** at home vs. College of DuPage, 3 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 28** at Kishwaukee College, 3 p.m., 5 p.m.
- APR. 30** at home vs. Illinois Valley Community College, noon, 2 p.m.

## SOFTBALL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

that game with a 4-1 victory against Niagara County Community College. This time pitchers Claire Smedema, Addison Warner and Mallory Sterling teamed up to hold Niagra to just one run. Smedema earned the win, allowing just three hits in five innings.

Following a rain day, Madison College played an extra-inning game against Grand View University JV, losing 3-2 on March 13. Madison College scored twice in the second, but was held scoreless the rest of the way as Grand View rallied. Kianna Patterson pitched five strong innings for Madison College, allowing just one earned run on four hits.

Madison College dominated its next game, posting eight runs in the first inning on its way to a 16-2 win in five innings over the University of Minnesota-Morris JV. Taylor VonBehren homered, while Ellie Rademacher and Makenna Gish both had doubles. Warner pitched the win, allowing two runs on four hits.

Three errors allowed Iowa Lake Community College to score three runs in the fifth inning and claim a 5-4 victory over Madison College on March 14. Fountain took the loss, but only allowed