SPORTS

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WIAA DIVISION 1 STATE BOYS SWIMMING AND DIVING CHAMPIONSHIP





LEFT: The Brookfield East/Central boys swim team poses with the first-place trophy after winning the WIAA Division 1 Boys State Swimming and Diving Championships Saturday at Waukesha South. RIGHT: Arrowhead junior Lance Johnson swims the freestyle portion of the 200-yard individual medley during the WIAA Division 1 Boys State Swimming and Diving Championships Saturday at Waukesha South.

POOL'S GOLD

Barracudas win their first state championship

By Dave Radcliffe dradcliffe@conleynet.com 262-513-2655

WAUKESHA — Prior to the start of the season, the Brookfield Central/East boys swimming and diving team looked around and saw

the talent in the room. "I don't think we've ever done this as a combined program and the boys came in and said, 'Our sights are set on state,'" Brookfield coach Van Donkersgoed said. "I was like, we can plan a season around that. I'm cool

The plan needed a few tweaks along the way. But in the end, the goal was real-

Winning two events and placing in several others, including a one-two finish in the 100-yard backstroke, the Barracudas used a late surge to surpass three teams and claim their first WIAA Division 1 state championship with 208 points Saturday at Waukesha South.

"We came into this year pretty hungry," Brookfield senior Michael Long said. "I

ON THE WEB

For a slide show of photos from Waukesha County sports events, visit us online at

www.gmtoday.com/slideshows.

personally came in on one of the very first days. I was like, not gonna lie, we have a chance. We knew that it was possible and I remember my friends asking me, 'Oh, you think you can win state?' I said if everybody puts forth 100% this year, I think we

Long, the defending state champion in the 100 back out of Lane 6, was in Lane 5 this time around next to

See SWIMMING, PAGE 3B

Arrowhead junior Johnson wins both 200-yard IM and 100-yard breaststroke

By Dave Radcliffe dradcliffe@conleynet.com 262-513-2655

WAUKESHA — The sophomore-to-junior leap benefitted Lance Johnson both in and out of the pool.

Put it all together, and the Arrowhead junior is now a two-time state champion.

Seeded first in both the 200yard individual medley and the 100 breaststroke, Johnson made good on both of those designations to help the top-ranked Warhawks finish runner-up at the

Championships with 188 points Saturday at Waukesha South.

I learned a lot," Johnson Waukesha South/Catholic said. "Sophomore going into Memorial reached the podijunior year is a milestone for um in the 200 medley relay as swimming. A lot of swimmers really kind of step up their game and I really utilized that to the fullest extent. For everything in my also get in the correct mindtraining to pay off, it's just the greatest gift in the world."

Johnson was no stranger

WIAA Division 1 Boys State to the podium coming in to Swimming and Diving his third state experience. He finished third in the two aforementioned events last season, medaled in two "Coming off this past year relays, and as a member of a freshman.

But to take the next step, Johnson not only had to keep improving in the pool, but set. For that, he credited head coach Norma Balogh.

See JOHNSON, PAGE 3B

PIONEERS 84, VIKINGS 50

Pioneers enter postseason on high note



Carroll junior Megan Madsen is fouled during a home game against North Park on Saturday.

Carroll ends regular season with victory on Senior Day

By Rob Reischel Freeman Correspondent

WAUKESHA — They came in when the program

was in the basement. Now, they're leaving it much closer to the pent-

Carroll's women's basketball program is one of the best kept secrets in Waukesha County. And the senior class that helped the Pioneers make dramatic strides was honored on Saturday afternoon.

The trio of Katie Evans, Theresa Wichser and Kayla Stefka were all recognized on 'Senior Day.' The Pioneers then went on to hammer visiting North Park, 84-50. in front of a festive crowd that included the vast majority of Carroll's foot-

ball team.

'When I decided to come here, the program obviously wasn't where it is now," said Evans, who grew up in Oconomowoc and attended Catholic Memorial High School. "And I wanted to come into a program where I could make a difference and create a culture. Coach (Lindsay) Schultz told me where she wanted the program to get in a couple of years and I just trusted her."

That trust has paid off for

everyone involved. Carroll won its fourth straight game and improved to 18-6 overall and 10-6 in the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin. The Pioneers clinched third place in the league and

See PIONEERS, PAGE 3B

WIAA DIVISION 1 WRESTLING SECTIONAL



Kenny Yoo/Special to The Freeman

Magnus Kuokkanen of West tosses down Layth Jaraba of Ronald Reagan during the 160 class in the sectional finals at New Berlin West High School on Saturday.

Three pairs of Waukesha brothers move on to state

West's Kuokkanen, Guerrero and North's Zirbel siblings qualified for this week's tournament

By Jim Hoehn Freeman Correspondent

NEW BERLIN — The sectional wrestling tournament became quite the family affair for both Waukesha

West and Waukesha North. Magnus West senior Kuokkanen won the title at 160 pounds at the WIAA Division 1 sectional at New Berlin West on Saturday to improve to 35-0 on the season. His brother Xander Kuokkanen, a sophomore, also advanced to the state tournament with a second-place finish at 138

pounds. "Obviously, I'm happy that I get to go to state, but that's just another step. I want to get on the podium," Magnus Kuokkanen said. "It will be cool this year, because my brother's going, too. It makes it even more special that I get to go and be there with him."

The Wolverines also got second-place finishes from freshman Isaiah Guerrero at 126 pounds and his brother Xavier Guerrero, a junior, at

North's Aiden Zirbel at 145 and senior Elijah Zirbel at 152 won sectional titles in consecutive matches on the center mat at Drexel Fieldhouse.

"Both sectional champions, that just makes it that much better," said Aiden Zirbel, a sophomore. "Going to state is an extremely good reward, but going together after being able to wrestle together in practice, it just makes it that much better and really shows how hard we've worked as brothers."

Muskego led area schools with six state qualifiers four titlists and two runnersup. Pewaukee and New Berlin West-Eisenhower each had five qualifiers, and Waukesha

The top two finishers at

See WRESTLING, PAGE 3B

VIKINGS 77, PIONEERS 64

Hope for the future

Despite losing on Senior Day, Pioneers think they're close to something special

> By Rob Reischel Freeman Correspondent

WAUKESHA — Justin Gruber has the kind of future lined up that most 20-somethings can only dream about.

Gruber has earned a Marketing degree from Carroll University with a minor in Finance. He's in the time job at a promotional products company in Hartland.

Gruber also finished up his fifth season as a member of the Pioneers' men's basketball team Saturday and many expected him to walk away.

Not a chance. Gruber — who was given a redshirt year due to injury and an additional High School. "Everyone's frustrated vear because of the COVID-19 pandemic — plans to return for a sixth competitor if you're not frustrated season with the Pioneers.



Mary Catanese/Special to The Freeman

school's MBA program and has a full- Pioneer junior Carter Sturgeon drives past a North Park defender during a home game on Saturday.

> Considering Gruber has yet to play on a winning team at Carroll, it's easy to wonder why he wants back in? Let him explain.

> "I think we're close," said Gruber, a former standout at Menomonee Falls when you lose, right? You're not a when you lose. So, I think we've

grown closer as team due to it. I think moving forward as a team, I believe we're going to be better for it.' If that happens next winter, Gruber

wants to be along for the ride. Carroll ended its 2021-22 campaign with a 77-64 loss to visiting North Park (Ill.). The Pioneers finished the

See CARROLL, PAGE 4B

Howard suspended five games

Michigan coach disciplined for actions in Sunday's game

By Larry Lage AP Sports Writer

ANN ARBOR, Mich. Michigan basketball coach Juwan Howard has been suspended the final five games of the regular season and fined \$40,000 for hitting a Wisconsin assistant in the head, triggering a postgame

The Big Ten Conference also on Monday suspended three players one game for the altercation following the Badgers' 77-63 win on Sunday: Michigan's Moussa Diabate and Terrance Williams II, and Jahcobi Neath of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin coach Greg Gard was fined \$10,000 for violating the conference's sportsmanship policy, but was not suspended. Howard is expected to be back for the Big Ten tournament. which begins March 9 in Indianapolis.

"After taking time to reflect on all that happened, I realize how unacceptable both my actions and words were, and how they affected so many," Howard said Monday in a statement released by the university. "I am truly sorry."

Phil Martelli will serve as Michigan's interim coach in Howard's absence. Michigan's final five regular-season games are home contests with Rutgers on Wednesday, No. 15 Illinois on Sunday, Michigan State on March 1 and No. 25 Iowa on March 3 plus a visit to No. 22 Ohio State on March

"Big Ten Conference coaches and student-athletes are expected to display the highest level of sportsmanship conduct," Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren said in a statement. "I am grateful for the partnership with Michigan Athletics Director, Warde Manuel and Wisconsin Athletics Our expectation is that the incident yesterday will provide our coaches and student-athletes with the a Michigan man and repreopportunity to reflect, learn senting the University of and move forward in a manner that demonstrates decorum and leadership on and not do that, nor did I set the off of the court."

player and the reigning I will learn from this mis-Associated Press men's take, and this mistake will coach of the year, was upset never happen again. No after Gard called a timeout excuses!"

NBA



Michigan head coach Juwan Howard reacts during the first half of an game against Wisconsin on Sunday in Madison.

with 15 seconds left and his team leading by 15 on Sun-

The altercation began in the postgame handshake line, when Gard grabbed Howard by the arm in an attempt to explain why he called the timeout. Howard yelled "Don't (expletive) touch me!" and put his right index finger in Gard's face as the two began to argue.

"At that point, I felt it was time to protect myself,' Howard said in his postgame news conference.

After the two coaches were separated, Howard swung his right hand and struck Wisconsin assistant Joe Krabbenhoft on the left side of the head with an open hand.

'Someone touched me and I think it was very uncalled for, for them to touch me, as we were verbalizing and communicating with one another,' Howard said Sunday. 'That's what escalated it."

Players from each side got involved in the skirmish, and video appeared to show Diabate and Neath throwing punches.

In his statement Monday, Howard apologized Krabbenhoft as well as Michigan's players and Director, Chris McIntosh. their families, his staff, his own family and "Michigan fans around the world.'

"I speak a lot about being right example in the right Howard, a former NBA way for my student-athletes.

Gard said Sunday he took action underscores the serithe timeout because his backup players had four seconds to get the ball across half court and he wanted to reset the clock to 10 seconds.

"Maybe he doesn't know the rule, that you get the 10 seconds reset," Gard said. "I wasn't going to put my players in that type of situation, to have to break a press in four seconds coming in cold off the bench. I wouldn't do that for a regular group. I can take a timeout. That gives my players the best chance to have success. So that's where it started. He said, 'I'll remember that. I'll remember that.' I said, 'Hey, let me tell you why I did.' He didn't want any part of that.

Wisconsin athletic director Chris McIntosh said he quickly contacted Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren about the situation after the game, adding that the Badgers had staff members who were "affected and injured," during the altercation.

'There's no room, no space for conduct like that in any competition, much less a Big Ten competition," McIntosh said. "The Big Ten takes pride in sportsmanship. The Big Ten takes pride in acting with class. That didn't happen today."

Michigan athletic direcstatement Sunday saying averages Michigan with class and that he had apologized to pride," Howard said. "I did McIntosh and that Michigan President Mary Sue Coleman had contacted Wisconsin Chancellor Rebecca Blank "to apologize for the totally unacceptable behavior."

"Today's disciplinary

ousness with which we take the incident that unfolded on Sunday," Manuel said Monday in a statement. "Simply put, there is no room at U-M for the behavior we saw. We will learn from this incident as a department, work improve ourselves while operating under a spotlight, and move forward in a positive light."

This isn't Howard's first high-profile incident with another Big Ten coach.

Last season, Howard got into a shouting match with then-Maryland coach Mark Turgeon and had to be restrained during the conference tournament. Howard drew two technical fouls and was ejected from a game Michigan ended up winning 79-66.

The Wolverines (14-11, 8-7) started the season with aspirations of contending for the national championship and are closing it trying to earn an NCAA Tournament bid.

Howard is in his third season as Michigan's coach after being part of Michigan's Fab Five teams three decades ago. Last season, he helped the Wolverines win the Big Ten title, 23 games and reach the NCAA Tournament regional finals.

Diabate has 5.7 rebounds per game to rank second on tor Warde Manuel issued a Michigan's team and also points. Williams is a reserve forward playing 15.4 minutes per game.

Neath is a reserve guard playing 8.9 minutes per game for Wisconsin. He will miss the 13th-ranked Badgers' game Wednesday at Minnesota.

NBA gets ready for second half

Bucks hope to have another springtime surge

By Brian Mahoney AP Basketball Writer

CLEVELAND — When the All-Star break ends, the stretch run begins.

There isn't much time left in the NBA season. The All-Star weekend came at about the 60-game mark for teams. far beyond the midpoint of the 82-game schedule. It's a sprint to the finish now, and the Brooklyn Nets and Los Angeles Lakers have to prove they have the legs to make a

The Nets could have Kevin Durant and Ben Simmons on the floor soon to spark a surge. But the Lakers might be without Anthony Davis for more than a month because of a foot injury, putting a heavy burden on LeBron James.

Injured and inconsistent, neither team is a sure thing to even make the postseason. Both have performed far below expectations, with the Lakers only 27-31. But poor play in the winter is quickly forgotten if a team warms up come springtime, just as the Milwaukee Bucks did last year.

"As a team, we started playing good basketball towards the end," Giannis Antetokounmpo said. "Maybe we can do it again."

Who knows? We're in a good place. We have a hell of a team." The Bucks are actually

only in fifth place, but that means little in the tightly packed Eastern Conference. Miami and Chicago are tied

at the top, surprising Cleveland and Philadelphia are 2 1/2 games back and Milwaukee is just percentage points behind them.

There's more separation out West, where Phoenix has pulled away to a 6 1/2-game lead over Golden State by winning seven straight to run its record to 48-10.

Even those teams have concerns, with Phoenix bracing for a lengthy absence for Chris Paul and Golden State still going without Draymond Green because of a back injury.

The Nets hope their injury issues are almost over. Durant is nearing a return after missing a month with a sprained left knee ligament, though coach Steve Nash said he isn't expecting the All-Star forward to be ready when they resume their sea-Thursday against Boston.

Injuries are a part of every season, but the usual problems this season were compounded for some teams by the coronavirus. An outbreak within the Nets contributed to them deciding to bring the unvaccinated Kyrie Irving back part time even though he still can't play in home games. The Atlanta Hawks lost nine of 12 games during one rough stretch in December, having to sign multiple players just to field a team while their regulars

were out. "At one point it was crazy. Like, just going out there and not knowing any of your teammates besides two of

them," All-Star Trae Young said. "It was different, but like the world might not always, always see that and see the struggle early on and understand that's the reason. So now that we're here, we're starting to pick things up and guys are getting healthy. It's going to be good for us if we keep it going."

The play-in helps them. For the second straight year, the teams in the Nos. 7-10 spots will play for the final two postseason spots in each conference. Right now, both the eighth-place Nets and ninthplace Lakers would find themselves there.

There's still time to climb, but not much. Some other things to watch

down the stretch:

PAUL'S PAIN

The All-Star point guard injured his right thumb in the Suns' final game before the break and had a soft cast covering it this weekend. He could miss the rest of the regular season.

"We have to figure it out," fellow All-Star Devin Booker said. "Everybody has to give a little bit more. I look at the beauty in it. He gets to rest his legs. He gets to get ready for a long postseason that we're trying to make happen. So we got to hold it down without him. We got to hold the fort down.'

MVP RACE

Denver's Nikola Jokic has a strong case to win a second straight MVP award and Antetokounmpo could win his third. They both might be chasing 76ers center Joel Embiid, the league's leading scorer with 29.6 points per game who gets an All-Star sidekick this week when James Harden debuts after

being swapped for Simmons. "Well, I don't really want to bush for the whole thing, but the way I've been playing speaks for itself," Embiid

said, "especially with everything we went through, the drama this whole year, and obviously missing a big piece, and everything we added to our team and the way our team is set up.'

SURPRISES OF THE SEASON

All-Star Ja Morant has fueled Memphis to a 41-19 record and third place in the West, while Cleveland is an unexpected 35-23. They don't have any postseason polish, but Green doesn't think that will hurt the young teams.

"We won a championship my third year," he said, referring to the Warriors' 2015 title. "The majority of us were going into that playoffs 15 to 20 playoff games in our career and we were able it win a championship. So I don't view the inexperience as a problem.'

IN THE EAST

Miami made a run to four straight NBA titles from 2011-14 when James was there, but the conference wasn't nearly as deep as it appears this sea-

"It's compelling in the East right now. If you have real competitors, that's what you want," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "You want to be challenged, you want to be pushed and see how your team stacks up against the other best teams. That's what it's all about and there's some great teams in the East."

AND IN THE WEST Is it as wide open in the

other conference? "No, we're going to win it," Green said. "Seriously."

SCOREBOARD

Winter Olympics

2022 BEIJING WINTER OLYMPICS FINAL MEDAL COUNT 109 of 109 total events G S B Tot 16 8 13 37 6 12 14 32 Norway ROC 12 10 5 27 4 8 14 26 8 10 7 25 8 5 5 18 Germany United States Austria Netherlands Switzerland France South Korea Finland Slovenia Australia New Zealand Hungary Britain Belgium Czech Republic Slovakia Belarus

Recreation

Bowling

Ukraine

SUNSET BOWL Friday Mixed Handicap League Chris Kerr 645, Kerry Calton 640, Henry Knutson 640, Phil Bender 632

Monday No Shows Dean Inhoff 742, Eric Van Rite 719, R.J. Fleigle 716, David Bilodeau 700, Jim Remondino 693, Tim Klinger 669, Chris Redford 661, Angel Rocha 653, William Kerr 649, Jennifer Zich 631, Lucy Herman 629, Austin Loichinger 623, David Schwabe 619, Christopher Kerr 617, Peter Van Aacken 609 Hannah Fleigle 556 Maddy Beckers 529, Dee Campbell 529 Kayci Van Rite 526

JAY'S LANES Jay's Wednesday Senior League Mark Trojanowski 654, Tom Harmeyer 628. Paul Schultz 626. Bill Sampson 607. Drew Tordik 604, Dan Riva 552, Paul Mosser 548, Jim Radewan 538, Harv Kuenn 525, Don Kayne 519, Tom Steinke 517, Woody Woods 510, Karen Woods 503 Dennis Bednarek 496, Glenn Volkmann 460. Bob Budzien 455. Kirt Maieskie 450. Roger Haab 444, Rich Schrank 443

SUSSEX BOWL Monday 3 Man League Dennis Berthenheier 832, Matt Grimm 721, Brian Henschel 717, Mike Hanson

701, Char Rockteschel 661, Jane Buxbaum 649, Melissa Geurtsen 644 FOXX VIEW LANES

Saturday Night Red Pin Matt Newman 627, Eli Swan 607, Dana Sobotik 598, Chris Holzschuh 564, Cindy

Monday Night Mixers
Paul Reichert 736, Matt Harding 661,
Matt Newman 658, Jim Westphal 652, Tim Westphal 648, Mark Meyer 632, Rob Perrigo 618, Randy Hotz 614, Jean Paradowski 617, Paul Chelminiak 601, Jensen Bacskai 586, Alyssa Athas 578, Jill Athas 564, Cindy Praeger 546, Amy Reichert 534

Shooting

WAUKESHA GUN CLUB Saturday's Results Winter 5-Stand League Alec Baenen 47, Brendan McAvoy 47

Erik VonAsten 46, Pat Thrall 45, Mark Laschen 45, Steve Greenquist 45 Winter 3 Bird League Steve Bogdan 40, Steve Miscikowski 38, Steve Bogdan 37

Sunday's Results Winter 5-Stand League Mark Richman 50, David Songco 49, Joe Walentoski 48, John Lappley 48,

Anthony Julien 48 Jim Piotrowski 47 Joe

Walentoski 47, Kurt Crowbridge 47, Doug Shaw 47, Steve Dermody 47, Brad Fierst 46, Jim Grenz 46, Mark Richman 46, Gary Hazzard 46, Jim Suvagian 46, Greg King 46, Jay Cox 46, John Boggio 45, Wayne Martin 45, Marv Scherr 45, Tom Williams 45. Tim Piscitello 45. Jack Eichorst 45. Anthony Julien 45, Jordan Schlosser 45, Matt Wade 44, Mark Kowalski 44, Aaron ean Covkendall Kowaski 44, Adam Schlidt 44, Tom Mitchell 44, Tim McAvoy 44, Ed Geb 43, Mark Kowalski 43, Ian Bartlmez 43, Jim Cunderman 43, Ron Wahl 43, Sean Thoresan 43, Shawn Stamm 43, Tom Piscotello 42, Nathan Taylor 42, Nick Campbell 42, Jack Eichorst 42, Lee Tarte 42, Brian Ket tner 42, Tim McAvoy 42, Nick Campbell 42, Ken Blaeske 42, Adam Rortvedt 42, Ed Geb 41. Nick Dwan 41. David Songco 41 David Songco 41, Dan Roskopf 41, Tom Schwanebeck 41, Nick Dwan 41, Bryan Soto 41, Zach Hockin 41, Bryan Soto 41, John Danek 40, Jordan Schlosser 40, Eric Kubiak 40, Doug Heding 40, Jim Piotrows ki 40, Jacob Barker 40, Fred Spiewak 40 Eric Kubiak 40. Will Schwanebeck 40 Zach Hockin 40, Stephen Raggenfuss 40 Tarte Lee 40, CJ Gough 39, John Danek 39 Steve Brietlow 39, Steve Nehs 39, Joe Smukowski 39, Ron Wahl 39, Ken Blaeske 39, Cj Gough 39, Nick Dwan 38, Wayne Martin 38, Andrew Wells 38, John Boggio 38, Jay Cox 38, Nick Cambpell 38, Mike Dermody 38, Steve McAvoy 38, Nick Bick-ler 37, Collin Keating 37, Matt Stockinger 37 Stephen Raggenfuss 37 Chris Plant 37 Kurt Hellmann 37, Dom Mateo 37, Collin Keating 37, Garo Boghossian 37, Bob Johnson 37, Ian Bartelmez 37, Dave Sheedy 36, Tom Ziegert 36, Bryan Soto 36, Dan Meinike 36, Matt Stockinger 36, Apryl Berg 36, Dan Everson 35, Tim Flaten 35, Zach Hockin 35, Pete Mulock 35 Dom Mateo 35, Brian Kettner 35, Collin Keating 34, Christina Brietlow 34, Amy Shaw 34, Sawyer Hellmann 34, Stephan Regganfuss 33, Dan Jaworski 33, Mike Bickler 33, Justin Hougham 32, Dan Meinike 32, Dan Jaworski 32, Steve McAvoy 32, Amy Shaw 31, Lexi Richard-sen 30, Todd Beede 30, Phil Miller 28, Todd Beede 28, Apryl Berg 28, Russ Baumler 27, Jeff LeClaire 27, Mike Franz 26, Dan Everson 25, Joel Smukowski 22 Winter 3 Bird League Rich Johnson 43, Gary Hazzard 42

Rich Johnson 43, Gary Hazzard 42, John Lappley 42, Kane Behling 38, Mike Brandl 36, Chris Poquette 34, Josh Hansen 32, Nick Starkey 31, Toddd Merrill 28, Andy Maahs 28

Deals

FOOTBALL
National Football League
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS: Re-signed

MINNESOTA VIKINGS: Named Matt Daniels special teams coordinator Daronte Jones defensive backs coach, Ben Kotwica assistant special teams coach Wes Phillips offensive coordinator and Mike Smith outside linebackers/pass WASHINGTON COMMANDERS:

HOCKEY National Hockey League ARIZONA COYOTES: Traded G

future considerations.

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS: Reas-

signed F Josiah Slavin to Rockford (AHL).

NASHVILLE PREDATORS: Recalled F Matt Luff from Milwaukee (AHL).

NEW YORK ISLANDERS: signed G Cory Schneider to Bridgeport

OTTAWA SENATORS: Reassigned G

Filip Gustavsson to Belleville (AHL).

PITTSBURGH PENGUINS: Reassigned F Radim Zohorna to Wilkes Barre/Scranton (AHL), Activated LW Drew O'Connor from injured reserve and re-assigned him to Wilkes Barre/Scran-

VANCOUVER CANUCKS: Promoted D Madison Bowey from Abbotsford

WINNIPEG JETS: Activated D Nathan Beaulieu from injured reserve.

SOCCER

FC DALLAS: Signed G Antonio Carrera to a three-year contract.

HOUSTON DYNAMO FC: Waived M

On The Air

Television

TODAY 2 p.m. — UEFA Champions League Soccer: Chelsea vs Lille. (CBS) 6 p.m. - College Basketball: Arkansas at Florida. (ESPN2) 6 p.m. - College Basketball: Michi-

gan State at Iowa. (ESPN) 7 p.m. — College Basketball: Nebraska at Northwestern. (Big Ten)

8 p.m. — College Basketball: Kansas State at Kansas. (ESPN/2)

WEDNESDAY

2 p.m. — UEFA Champions League Soccer: Atletico Madrid vs Manchester

6 p.m. - College Basketball: Duke at Virginia. (ESPN) 6 p.m. - College Basketball: TCU at

Texas. (ESPN2) 6 p.m. - College Basketball: Rutgers

at Michigan. (Big Ten) 6:30 p.m. — NHL Hockey: Edmonton

Oilers at Tampa Bay Lightning. (TNT) 8 p.m. — College Basketball: LSU at

Kentucky. (ESPN) 8 p.m. — College Basketball: Wisconsin at Minnesota. (Big Ten)

8 p.m. — Women's Soccer: SheBe lieves Cup - USA vs Iceland. (ESPN2) 9 p.m. - NHL Hockey: Los Angeles Kings at Arizona Coyotes. (TNT)

WEDNESDAY

8 p.m. - College Basketball: Wisconsin at Minnesota. (AM 920)

NHL

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE EASTERN CONFERENCE **Atlantic Division**

GP W L OT Pts GF GA Florida $50\ 35\ 10\ \ 5\ \ 75\ 208\ 145$ 49 32 11 6 70 169 139 Tampa Bay 49 32 14 3 67 176 137 Toronto Boston 50 29 17 4 62 145 139 Detroit 51 23 22 6 52 147 176 Ottawa 49 18 26 5 41 130 156 Buffalo 51 16 27 8 40 138 182 Montreal 51 11 33 7 29 117 197 **Metropolitan Division**

GP W LOT Pts GF GA

50 35 11 4 74 176 121 Pittsburgh 52 31 13 8 70 173 140 N.Y. Rangers 50 32 13 5 69 151 127 52 28 15 9 65 171 145 Washington 49 25 23 1 51 163 180 Columbus N.Y. Islanders 45 18 20 7 43 111 126 Philadelphia 50 15 25 10 40 128 176 New Jersey 50 17 28 5 39 146 182

WESTERN CONFERENCE **Central Division** GP W L OT Pts GF GA

Colorado 50 36 10 4 76 199 143 47 31 13 3 65 183 143 49 29 14 6 64 175 137 Nashville $50\ 28\ 18\ \ 4\ \ 60\ 153\ 143$ 49 27 20 2 56 143 145 Dallas 50 22 20 8 52 145 150 Winnipeg 52 18 26 8 44 126 176 Chicago 50 13 33 4 30 114 186 Arizona

Pacific Division GP W L OT Pts GF GA

49 30 13 6 66 169 114 Calgary 51 29 18 4 62 169 150 Vegas 50 28 19 3 59 168 161 Edmonton 50 26 17 7 59 147 141 52 24 19 9 57 156 158 52 24 22 6 54 140 148 Vancouver San Jose 49 22 22 5 49 131 154

Monday's Results Boston 5 Colorado 1

52 16 32 4 36 135 185

Carolina 4, Philadelphia 3, OT Calgary 3, Winnipeg 1 Montreal 5, Toronto 2 Vancouver 5, Seattle 2

Seattle

Today's Games

Minnesota at Ottawa, 6 p.m. Nashville at Florida, 6 p.m. St. Louis at Philadelphia, 6 p.m. Toronto at Columbus, 6 p.m. N.Y. Islanders at Seattle, 9 p.m. San Jose at Anaheim 9 n m

Wednesday's Games Buffalo at Montreal, 6:30 p.m Colorado at Detroit, 6:30 p.m. Edmonton at Tampa Bay, 6:30 p.m

Winnipeg at Dallas, 6:30 p.m.

Los Angeles at Arizona, 9 p.m.

NBA

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION EASTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division W L Pct GB 38 21 .644 Chicago Cleveland 35 23 .603 2 1/2 BUCKS 36 24 .600 2 1/2 Indiana

20 40 .333 18 1/2 13 45 .224 24 1/2 **Atlantic Division**

W L Pct GB Philadelphia 35 23 .603 34 26 Boston 32 25 .561 2 1/2 Toronto Brooklyn 31 28 .525 4 1/2 25 34 .424 10 1/2 New York

Southeast Division

Miami

Utah

Denver

W L Pct GB

W L Pct GB

36 22 .621

33 25 .569

38 21 .644

Atlanta	28 30 .483	9	1/2				
Charlotte	29 31 .483	9	1/2				
Washington	$27\ 31\ .466$	10	1/2				
Orlando	13 47 .217	25	1/2				
WESTERN CONFERENCE							

Southwest Division W L Pct GB

Iemphis	41 19 .683 —
allas	$35\ 24\ .593\ 5\ 1/2$
an Antonio	23 36 .390 17 1/2
lew Orleans	23 36 .390 17 1/2
louston	15 43 .259 25

Minnesota		31 28	.525	5	1/2	
Portland		25 34	.424	11	1/2	
Oklahoma	City	18 40	3.	10	18	
Pacific Division						

Phoenix 48 10 .828 Golden State L.A. Clippers 27 31 .466

42 17 .712 6 1/2 30 31 .492 19 1/2 22 38 .367

Johnson

From Page IB

who swam at Michigan and has also previously coached at the collegiate level.

"She has tons of experience and she really worked well with our guys, including me," Johnson said. "There were times where I wasn't confident and she really kind of reassured me. She just made me into a better person in general."

Johnson saw it all pay off in a big way at his former and current — home.

He cleared Madison West sophomore Abram Mueller in the 200 IM by nearly two seconds, posting a winning time of 1:48.82. Noting he was still feeling the effects of that race, Johnson still turned in a 54.91 in the 100 breast, edging Mueller by 10 one-hundredths of a second this time.

"A 54.9 in the breast, a sub-55 is really, really good, so seeing that is just incredible and going into the championship season for club in five weeks

down in Orlando, now I know placing fifth (4:36.40). what I need to do," Johnson

Arrowhead knew what it up to its No. 1 ranking, although it would require meet scored out. That help didn't arrive, but Balogh didn't see how things could have all swam really well.' gone much better for her

"We did score it out of course and we were second, Brookfield prevented Waukebut it was so tight onethrough-six, so we knew it'd and it did not disappoint," Balogh said. "It was neckand-neck and the all of the man, junior Tyler Hartmann, team places kept changing throughout the meet."

Arrowhead's best result in the relays came in the 400 free, as junior Tyler Hansen, senior Aidan Jacobson, sophomore Anakin Fischer and Johnson took fourth with a time of 3:07.65. Aside from Johnson, Hansen was the the 100 backstroke (50.54) to performer, taking third in the 500 free (4:33.15) and fourth in ed with an eighth-place total the 200 free (1:39.66). Fischer of 121 points. also podiumed in the 500 free,

"I'm really proud to have three relays in the top eight,' Balogh said. "I think that's a needed to do if it was to live big team win right there and then I'm so proud of our 200 and 500 freestylers. We really some help based on how the have a lot of talent there and they did exceptional. The team as the whole, they just

Several other area competitors came home with a medal from Waukesha South. sha North/Kettle Moraine/ Pewaukee from defending its be really great competition state title in the 200 medley relay, but it got the next-best thing as senior Andrew Hersenior Drew Millette and junior Gavyn Bowen took second (1:33.19).

The same foursome also teamed up to take fourth in the 200 free relay (1:26.13), while Millette was fourth in the 100 butterfly (50.40) and Herman also placed fourth in Warhawks' top individual help the Northstars finish a few spots better than expect-

"We had talked about maxi-

mizing our potential Saturday and we did that," WNKMP coach Kyle Bedalov said. "We earned our second straight automatic All-American time in the medley relay with the second-place finish.

"We tied for the most plusup points at plus 24 with Oak Creek. Those are calculated by seed versus actual finish.'

Muskego junior Ryan Slonac was a two-time medalist, taking fourth in the 200 IM (1:52.51) and fifth in the 100 back (50.57) as the Warriors were 14th with 50 points.

Johnson, who still swims for Waukesha Express, also credited coach Blaine Carlson for his success. He and many of his Arrowhead teammates will be back to take another shot at the team title next season.

"After we saw what happened last year, we got third, but there's always something you can do better," Johnson said. "So we came together and were like, hey, what can we do? We took action and put in what we needed to do to do that. So this week we were really feeling good."



Mary Catanese/Special to The Freeman

Pioneers freshman Olivia Rangel drives down the court in a home game against North Park on Saturday.

Pioneers

From Page IB

they'll host sixth-seeded North Central in the first round of the conference tournament tonight at 7 p.m.

Saturday at Millikin University (Ill.), where the Big Blue are the tournament's No. 1 seed.

It's been a remarkable turnaround for a Carroll program that won just one game in Schultz's first season (2016-17). After three straight 9-16 campaigns, the Pioneers have notched back-to-back winning seasons, highlighted by a breakthrough 2021-22 campaign.

"Definitely in the beginning it was a struggle," said Wichser, who played one year at Waukesha South before transferring to Brookfield Academy. "I felt like our team has grown so much from where I came from. We're definitely playing more like a team, we communicate and we lift each other up. And coach said we made a statement (against for a reason."

One reason is a senior through the tough times, changed the culture and are now reaping the benefits.

Evans played her freshman year at Luther College and has been a solid contributor during her three years at Carroll, starting 48 of the 61 games she's appeared in. This year, Evans has started 23 games and is averaging 5.2 points, 3.3 rebounds and 1.3 assists per game.

Evans had a handful of options when she left Luther. But she knew and decided to give the Pioneers a shot.

Today, she's thrilled with that decision.

"She just sold me on it," Evans said of Schultz. "We had a lot of one on one meetings and she knew that she didn't want to be on a one-win team ever again. So, I trusted her again. She had good recruits coming in, so that really sold me and it's really worked out."

Wichser is the top 3point shooter in school history and her 173 career triples are a program record. Her 60 3-pointers as a sophomore are also a Carroll record.

This season. Wichser leads the Pioneers with 28 3-pointers and is averaging 5.2 points per game.

"I'm just like a local kid and I knew I wanted to stay perfect opportunity to do that."

who's Stefka,

Johnsburg, Ill., is the third senior in the class. Stefka averaged 8.3 points per game her first three seasons, but has been limited to six games this year due to illness.

Together, that trio has helped the Pioneers jump from one win five seasons The league's Final Four ago to produce one of Carwill be held Friday and roll's best seasons in three decades.

Carroll's 10 wins in the CCIW are its most since the 1991-92 season, when it went 11-5 in conference play. The Pioneers' 18 total wins are also their most since the 2007-08 season.

And there's no question the senior class got the ball rolling.

"I think we definitely led by example," Wichser said. 'They kind of saw like this is how it's going to be and they fed off of our energy and they took that and they owned it and it's obviously showing every day."

The program is in terrific shape moving forward,

Point guard Olivia Rangel (Franklin) and guard Natalie Palzkill (Germantown) are two of the top freshmen in the league. Junior forward North Park). We are third Elizabeth Behrndt (Sussex) and junior guard Kate Christian (New London) class that stuck it out join Rangel as top-25 scorers in CCIW games.

If the current roster stays together, the Pioneers will return 81.8% of their scoring and 86.3% of their rebounding next season. And there's an impressive freshman class set to enroll this fall.

Of course, there's still work to do this season.

If Carroll wins the conference tournament, it would earn an automatic berth to the NCAA Division 3 tournament. The Pioneers are hopeful that a Schultz from her AAU days trip to the league championship game could also earn them an at-large berth.

> No matter what happens, though, the seniors are leaving behind a program that looks nothing like the one they stepped into.

"I feel like they're only going to get better from here," Evans said of the that it wouldn't happen Pioneers. "And I think we did a great job setting the foundation for that. It was definitely a lot easier for coach to go out and recruit because we helped turn the program around and had a winning season and now people want to come here because they respect our program."

Wichser agreed.

"I think they're in good hands," she said. "Our freshmen are great. They push us in practice to get better every day and I close to home, super close think they're going to conto my family," Wichser tinue to bring this prosaid. "Carroll gave me that gram to the top. I think think they're going to conwe've just all come together and we've made this from program what it is."

Swimming

From Page IB

junior teammate Stuart Seymour. At that time, the Barracudas had some ground to make up.

They'd make it up in a hurry, as the two speedsters combined for 38 points after Seymour won gold with a time of 48.53 seconds and Long was right behind him in second (48.76).

Long figured if anyone was going to prevent him from defending his state title, it might as well be his teammate.

"I will gladly bow down to this guy right here," Long said. "It was so amazing. If it weren't for him, I probably wouldn't have gone nearly as fast. He pushes me so hard and you don't get fast by doing it by yourself. You get fast by having a faster teammate."

That in-house competition bred success for Brookfield.

"Our chemistry at practices is like no one else," Seymour said. "We always are pushing each other to our max because it's always a competition even if it's just a 25 backstroke. That has been awesome and I love racing Michael, so it'll be sad next year, but it's been a great season."

The two teammates would get to race with each other one more time in the 400 freestyle relay after senior Brady Miller swam to a third-place finish in the 100 breaststroke (55.09). Long, senior Jonathan Day, Seymour and sophomore Thomas Bergin narrowly missed out on winning Brookfield's second relay of the day, settling for second at 3 minutes, 4.76 seconds.

By then, the gold trophy was already

"I think what stood out most, we came with a plan," Donkersgoed said. "I'm really proud of what they did ... focus on that plan the whole season and then execute that plan and having that goal in mind and then just taking it step by step. That's how this happened."

If it weren't for a few alterations to that plan and the swallowing of some pride, a state championship may not

have been in the cards. First came a midseason meet that Long couldn't attend, leading to Seymour taking his place in the 200 medley

"We kind of had an epiphany early on that maybe Stuart in the 200 IM wouldn't be as impactful as the 100 fly," Donkersgoed said. "We put him in the medley relay at an early dual meet. He



WNKMP senior Andrew Herman swims the breaststroke during the WIAA Division 1 Boys State Swimming and Diving Championships Saturday at Waukesha South.

went 23 (seconds) ... on a 50 fly. We were like, wow, maybe we should switch the order of our relay and maybe we should put him in the 100 fly because his 200 IM is good, but it's not as good as his 100

So Seymour would go from missing the podium in the 200 individual medley last season to taking second in the 100 butterfly this time around at 48.36 seconds, finishing only behind new state-record holder William Hayon of She-

boygan North. "I took over the fly in the relay and my coaches were like, 'Oh, you're pretty good at this. Let's put you in the 100 fly," Seymour said. So then it kind of start-

ed from there." But the relays still weren't totally set in stone. Donkersgoed thought they would stack their 200 medley and 200 free relays for state, but decided after sectionals that keeping them as is would

be the only way a state title was possible. "Frankly, I'm proud of my boys," Donkersgoed said. "We had an adult conversation. It was either potentially a state record in the 200 medley relay or win the meet, and they said we're here for the team and we wanted to win the meet. So that was I guess a bump in the

The Barracudas would still go on to win gold in the 200 medley relay, as Long, Miller, Seymour and Day combined for a first-place time of 1:31.14. 'That's definitely what we needed at

the start of meet," Seymour said. "Just the whole atmosphere of the whole meat was awesome, and to start off with a win like that just got us all motivated and ready to finish off the rest of the meet because we were like, 'It's finally here. Let's go after the goal we've been waiting for.'

Long also placed in the 200 free, finishing fifth at 1:39.94, while Bergin took third in the 50 free (20.83). When the points were all tallied in the end, Brook field cleared second-place Arrowhead

Coming off a third consecutive championship for the East girls, the boys wanted to keep Brookfield the swimming capital of the state.

'They're the ones that set the bar," said Long, who will swim at the University of Wisconsin. "They crushed it. Last year they almost broke the national record and then it hits you, like, I've got to do that.

'I'm just immensely proud of how hard everyone's worked and it's really awesome !

Wrestling

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each weight class advance to the WIAA state individual wrestling tournament, which begins Thursday at the Kohl Center in Madison.

Muskego got sectional titles from freshman Cael Zelinski at 106; freshman Cole Reid at 138; senior Dylan Cleveland at 195; and senior Emmett Bock, a Division 1 rugby recruit to collegiate power Lindenwood University, at 285. Matt Kinzel at 170 and Adam Dzievit at 182 finished second.

"I felt like I wrestled pretty good, not quite 100 percent, but there's enough time between now and state where I'll be ready for it," said Bock, a first-time state qualifier. "I'm looking to do that the best that I can and I can't ask for more than that."

Pewaukee had three champions and two runners-up. Senior Andrew Martin, who finished third at state last season at 106, won at 120 pounds. Freshman Caleb Cady won at 132 and senior John Mohr at 220. Jacob Bruner at 145 and Konnor Tubin at 152 finished second.

Junior Jack Gillis of New Berlin West-Eisenhower finished first 170, while Alex Konlock at 106; Ryan Gillis at 113; Thomas Perra at 220; and Spiro Perra at 285 each finished second.

"Fantastic. The boys just wrestled so well. I'm so happy for them," said New Berlin West-Eisenhower co-coach Brian Wojiechowski. "Finally, for the boys to realize that work does actually pay off. And, you still have to execute.



Kenny Yoo/Special to The Freeman

Aiden Zirbel of North locks the body of Jacob Bruner of Pewaukee during the 145 class in the finals at New Berlin West High School on Saturday.

We had a pretty good game going to be a big week for was all on them today. They wrestled their fannies off."

Waukesha South got a pair of second-place finishes Isaiah Balderas at 195.

standings with 186.5 points, followed by New Berlin West-Eisenhower, 156.5; Pewaukee, 104.5; Waukesha West, 92.5; Whitnall-Greendale, Waukesha North, 75.0; and Waukesha South, 57.0. Magnus Kuokkanen, a state

qualifier at 113 as a sophomore, got an 11-3 major decision over Layth Jaraba of Milwaukee Reagan in the final after pinning Muskego's

Ryker Morgan in the semis.
"He's on a different level,"

Waukesha West coach Der-

rick Amrhein said of Magnus

plan for a lot of those kids, him. He's got a lot of opportuand they executed the plan. It nity to place really high in the state tournament.' Elijah Zirbel opened with a

46-second pin of Greenfield's Dominic Corso, got a 9-0 Jimmy Wollenberg at 120 and major decision over Ben Shingledecker of New Berlin, Muskego won the team and then pinned Pewaukee's Tubin in 36 seconds in the championship match.

Isaiah Guerrero, who did not make his varsity debut until early December, won his first two matches before losing the final to Dylan Paulos of Whitnall-Greendale.

"From the start, I always thought I had a chance, but I just tried to put the work in throughout the season to get there. I gained some more confidence, too," Isaiah Guerrero said. "It's going to be a cool experience.'

Martin, fourth in the state

third trip to state.

"This year it's definitely a harder run, but I have a lot of confidence," Martin said of moving up two weight classes this season. "106 is more technique, and 120 is a little more strength than just technique.

Devin Llanas, one of North's senior captains, was one those who came up just short — finishing third after losing late to Xander Kuokkanen, 5-2, in the 138 semifinals and then not getting a wrestleback.

Having two teammates qualify for state shows how far the North program has progressed, he said.

"In my four years, we've gone from pretty much an 0-8 team to definitely over .500," Llanas said. "Very, very proud. Everybody's been working their butt off. I'm Kuokkanen. "Next week's rankings at 120, is making his just really proud."



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PREP WRESTLING ROUNDUP

Trio of Mukwonago wrestlers qualify for state

Stachowski makes history as first female wrestler to reach tourney

Freeman Staff

FORT ATKINSON — Mukwonago's strong depth resulted in three state qualifiers, eight third-place finishes and a meet-best score of 186 1/2 points at the WIAA Division 1 Fort Atkinson Sectional on Saturday.

All three of the Indians' state qualifiers were also sectional champions, one of which made history by becoming the first female to reach the Division 1 state meet. Sophomore Josephine Stachowski left little doubt as she won by major decision, 11-1, in the 106-pound final to run her record to 31-14 on the season.

dramatic fashion to claim the 145-pound title, needing extra time to earn a 3-1 decision. At 160 pounds, junior Zach Eliszewski took first with a 5-3 decision.

Kettle Moraine senior points. Parker Schlueter is also on to state. He fell in the 170 first-place match but to state tournament knocked off Mukwonago senior Alex Jacobi in the wrestleback round via pin, helping the Lasers take 12th with 25 points.

Two Crusaders heading to Madison this week

WAUPUN — Seniors Fidel Jaramillo and Josiah Nathaniel are both state-Senior Cody Goebel won in bound for the Catholic feated on the season, as

Division 2 Waupun Sectional on Saturday.

Jaramillo reached the 113pound first-place match before settling for third. Nathaniel won the 285 thirdplace match via pin at 3:17, as the Crusaders were 13th in the sectional with 31

Warhawks advance six

OSHKOSH — Arrowhead advanced six wrestlers to state and had five first-place finishers at the WIAA Division 1 Oshkosh North Sectional Saturday, giving the Warhawks a meet-best 168.5 points.

Senior Mitchell Mesenbrink and sophomore Wyatt Duchateau remained unde-

152-pound final, Duchateau needed just 1:28 to put away his opponent and win the 132-pound championship.

At 106, freshman Collin ond via pin at 182. McDowell stuck his final's adversary in 50 seconds, while junior Noah Mulvaney rolled to a 17-2 tech fall in the 170 final. In a battle between Classic 8 Conference foes, Arrowhead sophomore Connor Crumer edged Oconomowoc junior Quintin Wolbert 14-11 to win the 126 title, but Wolbert still advanced to state.

Needing to win a wrestleback to take second at 138, Arrowhead junior Nate Druckey did just that with a 17-10 decision.

Freshman Jayden Yauck also advanced to state for the Raccoons, who were eighth

Memorial wrestling team, as Mesenbrink won by pin after with 39 points. Yauck earned in the 126 final, Skaug both took third at the WIAA 1 minute, 22 seconds in the a 9-1 major decision in the while 120 final. Hamilton was 11th with 29 1/2 points. Its lone state representative will be nent after 1:21. senior Sam Behrndt, who won a wrestleback for sec-

Trio of sectional champs lead BE qualifiers

MEQUON wrestlers will represent Brookfield East's wrestling team at state as three were crowned sectional champions at the WIAA Division 1 Homestead Sectional on Saturday.

The Spartans finished with the third-highest points total at 117. Juniors Aiden Crawley and Brett Skaug, and senior Aaron Botsch all won their respective weight classes.

Crawley won by pin at 1:23

picked up a 17-2 tech fall for the 145 title and Botsch stuck his 220-pound finals oppo-

Sophomore Johnny Botsch was runner-up at 160 for the Spartans, who also pushed through junior Matthew Seim. Seim was second at 120 after winning his wrestleback over Brookfield Central sophomore Mason Bartels, 6-3.

Menomonee falls had two sectional champions and had 80 points to take fifth as a team. Senior Ben Kaus won by 12-7 decision to take first at 138, while senior Brayden Rosenow won by tech fall, 15-0, to win the 195

Junior Ben Otto will represent the Lancers at state. He earned a 10-6 decision in the 170 final, as Central was seventh overall with 49 points.

Carroll

From Page IB

year 7-18 overall and 3-13 in the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW). That was Carroll's fewest wins in a season since the 2001-02 campaign and the Pioneers' lowest conference win total since they joined the league on 2016.

Carroll finished eighth in its nine-team league. And the Pioneers failed to qualify for the conference tournament, which takes only league's top six teams.

Still, Gruber and many others around the program believe there's nowhere to go

but up.
"There are better days ahead," said coach Paul Combs, who just wrapped up his ninth season at Carroll. "I like this team, I like this group, I like their character.

"There's still a lot of

got some pieces in the locker room and we have some solid commits to our 2022 class. So it's a good group we'll bring

Carroll said goodbye to reserves Trenton Nickel (7.6 points per game) and Gio Carrillo (1.9) during Saturday's 'Senior Day.' If the rest of the roster returns, the Pioneers would bring back 85.9% of their scoring, 83.0% of their rebounding and 84.3% of their assists from

this season. If that happens, Combs believes Carroll could end a string of five straight losing Parker next fall. seasons.

Combs, who led the Pioneers to winning seasons three of his first four years before their recent slide. "We do have 15 freshmen and sophomores ... and the eight sophomores that are in our Gruber said. "We've lost program play a significant amount of minutes.

growth to be made, but we've league you've got to have group, we've stuck together make a nice jump.'

experience. And when you look at how some of our games went down, we struggled in the last five minutes. I think that's just a lack of experience. But we are a noexcuse program and we're going to continue to build, we're going to continue to fight and we're going to do things the right way.'

The Pioneers have an intriguing group of guards and wing players. What they lack, though, is size, something that could be fixed with the arrival of 6-foot-9 Jacob Naber of Janesville

The top teams in the "We are super young," said league were senior dominant. And the youthful Pioneers — who lost nine of their games by single digits could make a move next

"It's been a battle for us," some close ones and that's been tough. But I think our "In order to win in this culture that we have as a

and did so in a great way.

"I think growing together as a team is a big thing for us. In my five years, we've been in a heck of a lot of close games. It's a bounce here and a bounce there or there were some seasons we could have ended up over .500. So I think it's just more as a team learning to finish games and making plays that we need at crunch time."

That certainly didn't happen Saturday — or most of the last three months.

Carroll started the season with high hopes. Instead, the Pioneers will now turn those ambitions to next year.

'Obviously, we're disappointed," Combs said. "It's a tough locker room when it's your last one of the year.

"I thought we did some really good things this year and I think we have a chance to continue to grow and build. We have a large majority of our team back ...and I think we'll have a chance to



Mary Catanese/Special to The Freeman

Sophomore Justin Steinike looks for an opening amidst heavy pressure during a game at Carroll on Saturday.

MLB

Negotiations between MLB, MLBPA resume

Sides hold lengthy session on Monday to make progress on new deal

By Ronald Blum

JUPITER, Fla. — Baseball negotiations resumed with new intensity Monday in an effort to salvage opening day, and owners made a pair of slight moves toward locked-out players but put off bigticket bargaining issues until later.

With a week or perhaps a little more time left to preserve openers on March 31, union head Tony Clark attended negotiations for the first time since since the work stoppage began on Dec. 2.

New York Mets stars Max Scherzer and Francisco Lindor were among 10 players who were at a pair of sessions during a fivehour span. In contrast to the union leaders Tom Glavine and David Cone during the 1994-95 strike, none of these players spoke pub-

MLB increased its offer of a

bonus pool for pre-arbitration players by \$5 million to \$20 million fraction of the \$115 million for 150 players the union has asked for.

Clubs also increased their proposal for a lottery for the amateur draft from the top three picks to the top four. Players have asked for the top eight.

Teams also dropped their proposal to have the flexibility to decrease domestic minor league contracts along with a plan to limit optional assignments to five per player each season. The union opposed the minor league proposal and asked for a limit of four

The previous time the sides met. they talked for only 15 minutes on Thursday. This time, the parties described the discussions as candid and productive, but the union interpreted the slight moves as dis-

games from Feb. 26 through March 4 and has told the union a deal is needed by Feb. 28 for opening day to come off as scheduled. Players have not said whether they agree that is a deadline, and past practice indicates a deal could be reached in early March that would allow sufficient training time.

The session was just the seventh on core economics during the lockout, and talks are to continue at 1 p.m. Tuesday, when the secondlongest stoppage in baseball history will be in its 83rd day. Until now the sides have bargained on consecutive days just once during the lockout.

Players are angry that payrolls last year dropped to their lowest level since 2015, and they want new mechanisms in the agreement to spur competition — and spending.

Teams have told the union they will not increase salary arbitration eligibility, will not decrease revenue sharing and will not add new methods for players to accrue service time, which players said are needed to prevent teams from

MLB canceled spring training holding players back to delay free labor policy committee, was on

Clubs also say they won't make new proposals on luxury tax thresholds and rates until the late stages of talks.

The Cardinals' Paul Goldschmidt, the Yankees' Jameson Taillon, the Reds' Sonny Gray, the Whit Merrifield, the Royals' Twins' Taylor Rogers, the Brewers' Brent Suter and the Mets' Brandon Nimmo also were among the players at bargaining in Roger Dean Stadium, the vacant spring training home of St. Louis and the Miami Marlins.

The site of negotiations is about 3 miles from the home of Scherzer, among the eight players on the union's executive subcommittee. Lindor and the Astros' Jason Castro also attended from the executive subcommittee

Clark and the players conferred with Bruce Meyer, the union's chief negotiator, in the right field parking lot before entering the ballpark.

Colorado Rockies CEO Dick Monfort, chairman of the owners'

hand along with San Diego Padres vice chairman Ron Fowler, the immediate past chair of the committee. Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred was not present, and the MLB delegation was headed by the clubs' lead negotiator.

Players spoke directly to owners during the session. They had for the most part not attended bargaining in large numbers in person, partly because of the pandemic. They previously joined in Denver last August and in Irving, Texas, just before the expiration of the five-year labor contract.

Until now, all talks during the lockout had been in New York at the offices of MLB and the players' association. The union asked they be shifted to Florida so players could attend without disrupting their pre-spring training work-

Big league spring training failed to start on time last Wednesday due to baseball's ninth work stoppage, its first since 1995.

MLB

Report to Spring Training or stand with the union?

Two Rangers pitchers have different approaches to lockout

Evan Grant The Dallas Morning News (TNS)

SURPRISE, Ariz. — Across the country, owners and players sat down for nearly five hours Monday in Florida seemingly intent on finally chipping away at the issues on a lockout that is bordering on three months long and which threatens the start of the MLB season.

What is clear for now: Major leaguers are at home; minor leaguers have started to report to camps, including the Rangers, for workouts.

Not so clear: What do guys stuck in between — veteran big leaguers on minor league contracts — do?

Show solidarity with a union that currently doesn't represent them? Or get on to working for a job that may get them back in the union? It's not always an easy decision.

In the cases of Matt Bush and Nick Tropeano, two veteran candidates with realistic chances at the Rangers' openknow the caveat by now: acknowledged as much Mon-

Whenever opening day may arrive), the approaches have been different. Both are on minor league contracts and thus permitted to work out at team facilities and with the minor leaguers. What is permitted and what is comfortable can be different stories entirely.

Bush, 36, was in Surprise Monday and throwing a bullpen session as he embarks on yet another comeback. Tropeano, 31, was at home and will remain there at least for a few more days while MLB and the MLBPA try to get closer to a collective bargaining agreement. With MLB experience during each of the last seven seasons, Tropeano feels more connected to the principles for which big leaguers are fighting than to whatever might be gained from a few

Rangers' personnel. The Rangers are understanding of both perspectives. President of Baseball ing day pitching staff (you Operations Jon Daniels

extra workouts in front of

and the awkward dynamics the lockout has created need to." demands it.

to be in major league camp as non-roster invitees — whenever it opens. There are a handful of other players in minor league camp with a bit of major league experience, but nothing close to Bush's three-plus years of service or Tropenao, who has more than four full seasons and has pitched in the big leagues in parts of each of the last seven

For Bush, the decision wasn't difficult. He's been hurt most of the last four years, twice undergoing Tommy John surgery and then suffering a flexor tendon injury a week into the 2021 season after winning a job as a nonroster pitcher. He returned on the last day of the season to pitch one perfect inning.

"It's different," Bush said of the atmosphere in camp. "It's almost like when the coronavirus first hit in 2020. You just have to go with the flow because there is nothing else I can do. For me, I can't sit around and wait for the lockout to end. There wouldn't be any point in that when I need to be here getting ready. It just

day. The current landscape comes down to going with the flow and doing whatever I

When he returned last year, Both players are expected Bush made it clear, he didn't intend for that to be the final chapter on a remarkable story of a career that was full of promise, tragedy, growth, and comebacks. He fully expected to pitch in 2022.

Given his history, it's easy to see why navigating the awkwardness of a lockout isn't difficult. When you've been forced out of the game once, it becomes a little more precious.

He was, you may recall, the first pick in the 2004 draft. iust ahead of Justin Verlander. He was beset by substance abuse issues that eventually led to a car wreck that left a 72-year-old man seriously injured and led to a 39month prison term for Bush. When he got a second chance at baseball with the Rangers, he made it clear he'd not take anything related to the game for granted.

"It's the start of spring training; I'm always excited for that and as excited as I ever would b Bush said. "There isn't that much of a change for me other than switching sides of the clubhouse and not seeing as many



FILE — Texas Rangers relief pitcher Matt Bush throws to the Toronto Blue Jays during a baseball game in Arlington, Texas on April 6, 2021.

famous on the back of jer-

But make no mistake, when major league camp does open, a well-prepared Bush is going to have an inside track for a job in a bullpen still lacking veteran presence.

If he can stay healthy, there is ample opportunity for him.

"To me, this is part of the process," Bush added. "For the guys that have been around a little bit longer, it's about giving back and allowing someone else to learn spring training.

from you. If I'm not giving back, I feel like I'm cheating the game. Baseball is a team thing. There is so much to it. We need everybody pulling for one another. So, I feel like it's huge to help any way I Right now, the best way for

him to help is to help himself. The Rangers need more veteran arms. They need more mentors for young pitchers.

For Bush, that means there is only one place to be: In