

THE NORTHWOODS RIVER NEWS SPORTS

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PIGSKIN PREVIEW WEEK 5: RHINELANDER AT MEDFORD



BOB MAINHARDT FOR THE RIVER NEWS

Rhinelander's Cayden Neri carries the football during a GNC game against Hayward at Mike Webster Stadium Friday, Sept. 10. After his third-straight 200-yard rushing game, Neri sits fifth in the state at 869 rushing yards heading into a Week 5 showdown tonight at Medford.

Hodags to face 'red storm' vs. Raiders

By Jeremy Mayo

RIVER NEWS SPORTS EDITOR

The Rhinelander High School football team sees storm clouds on the horizon despite its 4-0 start.

Those clouds come in the form of defending Great Northern Conference champion Medford, whom the Hodags take on tonight in a pivotal Week 5 matchup.

Rhinelander and Medford are two of the three remaining unbeaten teams in the GNC (along with Mosinee) and the winner of tonight's game could have the inside track to being crowned conference champion a month from now.

For Rhinelander, which seeks its first football conference title since 1989, it means getting past a Medford program that has been a



WEEK 5 AT A GLANCE

WHAT: Rhinelander at Medford

WHEN: 7 p.m., Friday, Sept. 17

WHERE: Raider Field, Medford High School

WEATHER: Mostly cloudy, 62 degrees, 40% chance of rain. Winds N at 2 MPH.

RECORDS: Rhinelander 4-0 (2-0 Great Northern), Medford 2-2 (2-0 Great Northern)

LAST WEEK: Rhinelander def. Hayward, 41-0. Medford def. Lakeland, 45-20.

LAST MEETING: Medford 24, Rhinelander 7 — Nov. 6, 2020



and going toward this challenge. That challenge is not going to go away. If we lay down, it's going to roll over us, but if we go headlong into this storm, we're going to come out unscathed on the other side. That's our metaphor this week."

"We feel it's Medford's turn to say, 'Rhinelander's coming to play us,' rather than us looking and saying, 'man, it's Medford week.' We want to capitalize on the momentum we've had so far, utilize that buffalo mentality, go into the storm and realize that we know there's going to be adverse events, but our responses are going to be greater and allow us to have the best opportunity to win the football game."

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thorn in the Hodags' side in a number of sports over the last two years.

The Raiders have dealt Rhinelander key losses in football, boys' basketball and baseball. Historically speaking, the Hodags' lone win against the Raiders on the gridiron came back in 2010.

Hodag coach Aaron Kraemer said he knows no other way to beat Medford than tackling the challenge head-on.

"I gave (the players) a picture of a red storm and a green buffalo, kind of marching into the storm," he said. "I talked to them about being the buffalo this week



BOB MAINHARDT FOR THE RIVER NEWS

Rhinelander's Helena Wisner hits a return during a GNC girls' tennis match against Antigo at the RHS tennis courts Tuesday, Sept. 14. Wisner and No. 2 doubles teammate Kylee Younker secured the match-clinching point in Rhinelander's 5-2 victory over the Red Robins.

Hodag tennis tops Antigo 5-2

By Jeremy Mayo

RIVER NEWS SPORTS EDITOR

The Rhinelander High School girls' tennis team took a major step Tuesday toward unseating Antigo and reclaiming the Great Northern Conference championship crown.

The Hodags won everything except the bottom flights in singles and doubles to defeat the Red Robins 5-2 at the RHS tennis courts.

Rhinelander knocked off the defending GNC champs, who came into the day 12 points behind the Hodags for the conference lead. Rhinelander padded that margin to 22 points over the Robins as it continues to pluck off its major conference challengers one by one.

"It's another nice victory that will set us up well for the conference tournament," coach Matt Nichols said. "We talked a lot about the mental game the last couple days. We have strong girls and good strokes so they're able to use a variety of skillsets if needed and they can adjust."

Only one of Tuesday's seven matches went the distance. It proved to be the match-clinching point for the Hodags as the No. 2 doubles team of Kylee Younker and Helena Wisner fended off Antigo's Bailee Vander Sanden and Molly Neufeld 6-1, 3-6, 6-3.

"I think we just started hitting some shots we had earlier and then capitalized on the net play," Nichols said. "Both are

great volleyers and Helena's just super aggressive out there and puts ball away, which is nice to see."

Moments after No. 2 doubles secured the dual victory for Rhinelander, Annika Johnson improved to 17-3 on the season as she outlasted Antigo's Margo Kelly 6-3, 6-4 at No. 1 singles. Both players struggled to hold serve in the second set. After getting broken to go back on serve at 4-4, Johnson broke Kelly to get back up 5-4 and eventually held serve to close out the match in a game that featured four match point opportunities. Johnson finally closed it out with a cross-court winner to the back left corner.

See **Tennis**. . . page 15

Laggis, Miljevich score wins in Stratford

By Jeremy Mayo
RIVER NEWS SPORTS EDITOR

The Rhinelander High School cross country team fared well Tuesday in the Stratford Tiger Invitational.

Senior Cal Laggis and freshman Sophia Miljevich won the boys' and girls' races, and the Hodags claimed the six-team boys' division in Stratford. The Hodag girls, still down a couple of runners, finished third out of five qualifying teams.

Both Laggis and Miljevich won their races in similar fashion, jump-

ing out to early leads and leaving the rest of the pack in their wake.

The girls' race was first. Miljevich competed the five-kilometer course in 21 minutes, 32.20 second to beat Mosinee's Kate Fitzgerald to the line by 14.03 seconds.

"Sophie took control of the race early on. She got out to a nice lead less than a mile into it," coach M.J. Laggis said. "The way that's set up, I was able to get around the course and see her a lot of times. She did a great job. Sophie was just strong today, and that was really good. She's got a bright future

if she works hard, that's for sure."

Cal Laggis had an even more dominant run in the boys' race as he was the lone runner to break the 18-minute barrier. He crossed the line in 17:53.46, to beat Mosinee's Cooper Szekeress by 39.02 seconds for the win.

"Cal just took control of the race early," M.J. Laggis said. "He was less than a mile into it and it was him and the four-wheeler and he was starting to separate. He just started strong and got stronger as it went."

See **Stratford**. . . page 16

Hodag soccer foiled by foul trouble in Mosinee

By Jeremy Mayo
RIVER NEWS SPORTS EDITOR

To hear Rhinelander High School boys' soccer coach Nathan Bates tell it, one would think Rhinelander was playing 11 on 14 Tuesday afternoon on the road at Mosinee.

Mosinee converted on three free kicks from close range, and had a fourth goal that Rhinelander disputed as offsides as it defeated the Hodags 4-0 at Edgewood Park.

The loss dropped the Hodags to 2-2-0 in a hotly contested Great Northern Conference race.

Toren Holtz recorded a hat trick for Mosinee and assisted on the Indians' other goal. Stats compiled by Rhinelander showed the Hodags with 10 fouls to Mosinee's seven, but Bates said each of the first three goals came from free kicks that occurred after Rhinelander was called for fouls just outside its own 18-yard box.

"Where the fouls occurred was a big part of this game today," he said. "Honest to God, I wouldn't tell my boys to change a thing they were doing. The referee was very strict today."

Mosinee's first two goals came 29 seconds apart on either side of the 30-minute mark. Toren Holtz scored off a Cole Holtz free kick and Greyden Rogers finished a Toren Holtz free kick moments later. The Indians would get another similar chance early in the second half with Toren Holtz finishing a Cole Holtz cross in the 44th minute.

"The one went off the head of our player and went in. The other was a beautiful upper 90 shot from Toren Holtz. The third was just a perfectly placed ball that went in," Bates said.

Toren Holtz scored once more on a breakaway chance in the 51st minute, which Rhinelander contended should not have been allowed. Bates alleged Holtz was offsides.

"The kid was about 15-20 feet behind my defensive line, offsides," he said. "My defense held tight. They thought he was offsides and the ref just let it continue and they scored fourth goal ... I usually don't say much about officiating, but I was extremely upset with that one, big time."

Statistics were virtually even in the match, with Rhinelander holding a slight 18-17 edge in total shots. Mosinee had a 15-14 advantage in shots on goal.

"The first half we came out really strong actually. Our passing game today was extremely good," Bates said. "The boys continued to play tough. We had plenty of opportunities. Beau (Howard) had a really nice cross from Braden (Mork) with a header and their goalie was able to snag it."

"I think it was by far our best possession and passing game we've had all season, which is very good to see. Even after we got down, they did not hold their heads and they continued to fight throughout the whole game."

Gavin Ostermann made 11 saves in defeat for Rhinelander, which has dropped two straight conference matches after winning its first two. The loss put Rhinelander two games behind Lakeland, and one back of Mosinee in the conference race.

Rhinelander is playing back-to-back game to close out the week. The Hodags completed the first half of the GNC schedule at Antigo yesterday afternoon in a match that concluded after deadline and will travel to Shawano tonight for a non-conference matchup.

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PHOTOS BY JEREMY MAYO/RIVER NEWS

Members of the Rhinelander Northwoods Composite Mountain Bike team gathers prior to practice at the Washburn Trail System Monday, Sept. 13. The RNC squad is back to competition after the 2020 Wisconsin High School Cycling League season was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Back on the trails

RNC mountain bike team returns to competition for first time since 2019

By Jeremy Mayo
RIVER NEWS SPORTS EDITOR

It has been a long time since the Rhinelander-Northwoods Composite Mountain Bike team, or anyone in the Wisconsin High School Cycling League, has been able to battle wheel to wheel on the trails.

That changed this past Sunday as the WHSCL opened its 2021 season at Minooka Park in Waukesha.

Overall, the Hodag mountain bikers did well — with six of the 18 athletes who competed finishing on the podium in their respective divisions. But RNC head coach Jon Lester said the 22-month gap between the Sunday's race and the team's last competition underscored the fact that there is more to the sport than results.

"It's a lifelong sport that they can do anytime, they can pick up anytime," he said. "I think that's mostly what they got out of it. You don't need the competition necessarily, the competitive aspect of it to still have fun and ride your bike."



Megan Lester makes her way through the pump track during Rhinelander Northwoods Composite mountain bike team practice at the Washburn Trail System Monday, Sept. 13. Lester won the girls' varsity race in the WHSCL opener in Waukesha Sept. 12 by 0.05 seconds over Washington County's Kendra Schmidt.

Though the 2020 WHSCL season was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, calling it a year off for the RNC squad — which pulls in riders from several area high schools, including Rhinelander, Lakeland, Three Lakes and Tomahawk — would be a misnomer.

The team gathered for practice last July like it usually would, preparing just in case there would be competition. When the word came that races wouldn't happen, the team rode on anyway late

into the fall. There were adventure rides, different games and even a late-season night trek through falling snow on the Three-Eagle Trails between Eagle River and Three Lakes.

"We did some different adventures things with the athletes and it was a blast," Lester said. "We played mountain bike scramble out here on the course where we set up letters and had the athletes pick a word and have to go get the letters out on the course. We visited other trail systems,

things like that. We made the best of it."

Through it all, Lester said, the squad actually grew in numbers. The program has 32 riders, though not all of them ride competitively.

"Nor do they have to," he said. "They can just come to practice, learn mountain biking skills and have fun because they don't want to play ball sports or whatever their reason it. It's just another fun thing for them to do."

See **Bike**. . . page 15

Hodag volleyball swept by Northland Pines

By Jeremy Mayo
RIVER NEWS SPORTS EDITOR

As Rhinelander High School volleyball looks to snap its three-plus year Great Northern Conference losing streak, the team will need to overcome moments like what happened in the first set Tuesday against Northland Pines.

Tied at 13 in the first set, the Hodags surrendered a 7-0 run and never seemed to recover as they fell in straight sets to the Eagles at the Jim Miazga Community Gymnasium.

Rhinelander tied it in the first after back-to-back Addi DeMeyer aces, but an attack into the net was the first of four straight point-losing errors for the Hodags as Pines pushed the lead to 20-13 and eventually took the first set 25-16.

The Eagles completed the sweep with wins of 25-12 and 25-13 in the second and third sets.

“We hung with them that first set and, I don’t know, just couldn’t come back from a tough service run,” Rhinelander coach Dan Wolter said. “We started off the first set pretty well, getting the ball into system and playing well. The big question was our passing, if it would hold and it did not. I don’t know what the ace totals were again on us, but we had way too many freeballs the



Rhinelander’s Brynn Brzycki attempt to tip a ball during the first set of a GNC volleyball match against Northland Pines at the Jim Miazga Community Gymnasium Tuesday, Sept. 14. Brzycki led Rhinelander with three kills in the match.

whole game. Each set had way too many freeballs. When you’re always playing defense and on your heels, it’s going to be tough, especially with a good ball control team like Pines.”

The funk carried over to the second set as Pines got the first six



PHOTOS BY BOB MAINHARDT FOR THE RIVER NEWS

Rhinelander’s Addi DeMeyer, left, and Ariel Pauer nearly collide attempting to receive a serve during the second set of a GNC volleyball match against Northland Pines at the Jim Miazga Community Gymnasium Tuesday, Sept. 14. Rhinelander lost the match in three sets, 25-16, 25-12, 25-13.

points of the set and was never challenged. Things were more competitive in the third set as Rhinelander took a brief 3-2 lead and was within three at 12-9 midway through the set. But Pines answered with a 6-0 run on Sami Huelskamp’s serve and never looked back. The Eagles got a pair of kills from Maleea Eggleston to go up 22-13 before Paris Croker served three straight aces to end the match.

The Hodags allowed seven aces in the match. After not allowing any in the first set, they gave up three second in the and four in the third.

“They had a good float serve on us and we just couldn’t handle it,” Wolter said. “It’s something we work on every practice and every week we just start making it turn over into the games.”

See Volleyball . . . page 15

LOCAL SCOREBOARD

ATHLETICS

PREP CROSS COUNTRY

Stratford Invite
Tiger Field, Stratford
Tuesday, Sept. 14

Boys’ Team: 1, Rhinelander, 53 points. 2, Stratford, 70. 3, Athens, 73. 4, Pittsville, 91. 5, Rib Lake, 95. 6, Mosinee, 106.

Individuals: 1, Cal Laggis, Rhi, 17:53.46. 2, Cooper Szekeres, Mos, 18:32.48. 3, Nathan Wolf, Ath, 18:44.7. 4, Andrew Schaar, Ath, 18:50.00. 5, Sam Bowden, Pitts, 18:55.32.

Rhinelander: 1, Laggis, 17:53.46. 7, Jack DeNamus, 19:11.95. 8, Ty Welk, 19:15.16. 12, Jaden Beske, 19:35.01. 27, Gavin Denis, 21:47.42. 29, Jason Zheng, 22:06.43.

Girls’ Team: 1, Mosinee, 33. 2, Stratford, 37. 3, Rhinelander, 51. 4, Rib Lake, 124. 5, Pittsville, 139.

Individuals: 1, Sophia Miljevich, Rhi, 21:32.20. 2, Kate Fitzgerald, Mos, 21:46.23. 3, Britt Fitzgerald, Mos, 21:47.23. 4, Kayla Caspersen, Strat, 22:07.42. 5, Sydney Leszczyński, Mos, 22:13.64.

Rhinelander: 1, Miljevich, 21:32.20. 8, Emma Germain, 22:30.28. 12, Luna Grage, 23:11.08. 15, Eva Hetland, 23:33.81. 17, Juliana Smith, 23:59.25. 18, Reese Gehrig, 24:20.85. 29, Maria Hubler, 25:49.33.

BOWLING

HODAG LANES

Monday Morning Ladies League
Monday, Sept. 13

High Game
Donna Beiler 212
Vicki Larson 208
Jacki Fore 180
Jan Wege 177
Susan Worrall 175

High Series
Vicki Larson 578
Donna Beiler 545
Nancy Nebgen 491
Jacki Fore 481
Ann Lejvoki 469

Standings as of Sept. 13

Team	W-L
Alley Cats	7-0
Pin Pals	5-2
Hi Lo Rollers	5-2
Cat Lovers & Co.	2-5
Big Dogs	2-5
Class Act	0-7

CYCLING

PREP MOUNTAIN BIKING

WHSCC Race No. 1
Minooka Park, Waukesha
Sunday, Sept. 12

TEAM SCORES
Division 1: 1, Madison West, 3,932 points. 2, Shorewood, 3,507. 3, Stevens Point, 3,449. 4, Rice Lake, 3,349. 5, Madison Memorial, 3,136. 13, Rhinelander, 2,469.
Division 2: 1, Rhinelander-Northwoods Composite, 2,070. 2, Sauk Prairie, 1,890. 3, Wilmet, 1,883. 4, SLS Composite, 1,851. 5, Janesville, 1,828.

Varsity
Boys (21 miles): 1, Elias Saigh, Shore, 1:09:30.72. 2, Nathan Bailey, SnPr, 1:19:31.03. 3, Dylan Schroeder, Muk, 1:21:21.89. 4, Drake Marks, Hay, 1:21:23.94. 5, Jakob Craig, RNC, 1:23:36.94.
Girls (16 miles): 1, Megan Lester, RNC, 1:11:03.65. 2, Kendra Schmidt, WashCo, 1:11:03.70. 3, Emma Kasza-James, PrtWsh, 1:11:15.96. 4, Lauren

Maki, Marsh, 1:12:21.61. 5, Sage Flory, Rhi, 1:15:05.32.

JV-3 (16 miles)
Boys D1: 1, Ben Dohlby, Pwke, 1:02:46.07. 2, Jett Biolo, Rhi, 1:04:38.48. 3, Bruce Brundidge, SPASH, 1:04:55.12. 16, Travis White, Rhi, 1:23:10.32.
Boys D2: 1, Dylan Hart, Janes, 1:03:19.43. 2, Sam O’Carroll, Cent Wis, 1:03:19.49. 3, Max Garwick, Janes, 1:04:06.70.

Girls: 1, Anja Louise Lanser, WBEast, 1:10:12.18. 2, Estella Rogers, SnPr, 1:14:18.73. 3, Emilie Blomme, MadWest, 1:14:21.80.
JV-2 (11 miles)
Boys D1: 1, Corbin Crim, MSHS, 43:38.34. 2, Theo Hubanks, MadWest, 45:28.05. 3, Gavin Stenseth, RiceLk, 45:32.57. 28, Layne Roeser, Rhi, 49:38.93.
Boys D2: 1, Joey Belanger, RNC, 45:35.13. 2, Cohen Sylvester, GB, 45:43.80. 3, Ean Dalton, Janes, 45:18.18. 23, Carter Johnson, RNC, 48:56.79. 24, Tyler Marquardt, RNC, 48:57.40.

Girls: 1, Gabrielle Wrightsman, MilwCo, 50:29.16. 2, Sara Ross, MadWest, 51:08.46. 3, Tori Meyers, Wausau, 52:34.69. 33, Anna Wood, Rhi, 1:07:51.37.
Freshman (11 miles)
Boys D1: 1, Sam Marsteller, OkCrk, 43:34.89. 2, Arlo Morse, Hay, 44:21.86. 3, Christian Berg, Marsh, 45:35.10.
Boys D2: 1, Logan Powers, SLSComp, 44:14.70. 2, Hunter Gengler, SheyCo, 45:38.73. 3, Jon Olenick, Wilmet, 45:56.75.

Girls: 1, Meria Kalbas, N/A, 49:40.41. 2, Amelia Giles-Pufahl, MilwNor, 49:43.97. 3, Sam Paternoster, MSHS, 51:08.33. 6, Macy Lester, RNC, 52:38.78. 24, Lily Gleason, RNC, 1:01:01.61. 35, Emma Mankus, Rhi, 1:26:35.13.

HODAG BMX CLUB

Results — Friday, Sept. 10
12 & Under Minion Mayhem: 1, Levi Lakota. 2, James Wergin. 2, Jackson Wergin. 4, Nichols Lakota. 5, Trevor Martin. 6, Eli Franklin. 7, Wyatt Underwood. 8, Jacob MacFarland.
13 & Over Hodag Havoc: 1, Alexandr Aguirre. 2, David Houg. 3, Mya Potters. 4, Cameron Goetz. 5, Armando Aguirre. 6, Brad Kallio. 7, Jayden Jackson. 8, Alex Matushak.
3 Balance Bike: 1, Drak Deede. 2, Leo Hewett. 3, Cameron Schwartz.
4 Balance Bike: 1, Lilly Franklin. 2, Landon Scheuermann.
6 Novice: 1, Ivan Crass. 2, Noah Kallio. 3, Greyson Schubbe.
8 Novice: 1, Emmerich Crass. 2, Brooklyn Kallio. 3, Carter Schubbe. 4, Noah Biermeier.
9 Intermediate: 1, Nicholas Lakota. 2, Dominic McCarty. 3, Jacob MacFarland.
10 Intermediate: 1, Jackson Wergin. 2, Eli Franklin. 3, Alec Pilot.
10 Novice: 1, Teagun Mraz. 2, Dylan Brownell. 3, Jason Laursen.
11 Novice: 1, Trevor Martin. 2, Noah Preisler. 3, Jaelyn Manke.
12 Intermediate: 1, Levi Lakota. 2, James Wergin. 3, Wyatt Underwood. 4, Dalton McCarty.
14 Expert: 1, David Houg. 2, Armando Aguirre. 3, Alexandr Aguirre. 4, Mya Potters. 5, Jayden Jackson.
15 Novice: 1, Cole Biermeier. 2, Brennan Polaski. 3, Kody Kallio.
36-40 Novice: 1, Cameron Goetz. 2, Brad Kallio. 3, Shane Crass. 4, Laura MacFarland. 5, Krystie Deede.

FOOTBALL

PREP FOOTBALL

Great Northern Conference Standings as of Tuesday, Sept. 14

Team	GNC	Ovr
Rhinelander	2-0	4-0
Mosinee	2-0	3-1
Medford	2-0	2-2
Merrill	1-1	1-3
Antigo	0-1	0-2
Ashland	0-1	0-3
Lakeland	0-2	1-3
Hayward	0-2	0-4

Friday’s Games
Rhinelander at Medford, 7 p.m.
Hayward at Merrill, 7 p.m.
Lakeland at Antigo, 7 p.m.
Wittenberg-Birmamwood at Mosinee (NC), 7 p.m.
Ashland at Mosinee, ccd.

SOCCER

PREP BOYS’ SOCCER

Great Northern Conference Standings as of Tuesday, Sept. 14

Team	Great Northern	Overall	
Pts.	W-L-SW-SL	W-L-T	
Lakeland	12	4-0-0-0	8-0-1
Mosinee	9	3-1-0-0	7-3-0
Rhinelander	6	2-2-0-0	4-3-1
N’land Pines	6	2-2-0-0	3-3-0
Medford	3	1-3-0-0	3-4-1
Antigo	0	0-4-0-0	3-8-0

Tuesday’s Games
Mosinee 4, Rhinelander 0
Lakeland 2, Northland Pines 0
Medford 6, Antigo 1

Thursday’s Games
Rhinelander at Antigo, late
Medford at Northland Pines, late
Mosinee at Lakeland, late
Friday’s Game
Rhinelander at Shawano (NC), 6:30 p.m.
Saturday’s Games
Lakeland at Lakeland Invite (NC), 9 a.m.
Monday, Sept. 20
Merrill at Mosinee, 4:30 p.m.

Rhinelander at Mosinee
Tuesday, Sept. 14
Rhinelander 0 0 — 0
Mosinee 2 2 — 4

First Half: 1, Mos, Toren Holtz (Cole Holtz), 29:46. 2, Mos, Greyden Rogers (T.Holtz), 30:15.
Second Half: 3, Mos, T.Holtz (C.Holtz), 43:55. 4, Mos, T.Holtz (unassisted), 50:49.

TEAM STATS	Rhi	Mos
Shots (On Goal)	18 (14)	17 (15)
Fouls	10	7
Yellow Cards	1	2
Red Cards	0	1
Corner Kicks	2	4

SWIMMING

PREP GIRLS’ SWIMMING

Great Northern Conference Standings as of Tuesday, Sept. 14

Team	GNC	Pts
Rhinelander	2-0	4
Medford	2-0	4
Antigo	1-0	2
Ladysmith Co-op	1-1	2
Tomahawk	1-1	2
Lakeland	0-1	0
Mosinee	0-2	0
Colby/Abbotsford	0-2	0

Thursday’s Meets
Medford at Antigo, late
Mosinee at Ladysmith Co-op, late
Colby/Abbotsford at Tomahawk, late
Lakeland at Rhinelander, late
Saturday’s Meet
Rhinelander at Waukesha South Invite (NC), 11:45 a.m.

TENNIS

PREP GIRLS’ TENNIS

Great Northern Conference Standings as of Tuesday, Sept. 14

Team	W-L	Dual	Pts
Rhinelander	6-0	36-6	72
Pacelli	6-0	30-12	60
Antigo	3-3	27-15	54
Wausau Newman	4-2	23-19	46
Lakeland	3-3	22-20	44
Medford	1-5	13-29	26
Marshfield Columbus	0-5	9-26	18
Phillips	0-5	1-34	2

Monday’s Match
Pacelli 7, Phillips 0

Tuesday’s Matches
Lakeland 6, Phillips 1
Medford 4, Marshfield Columbus 3
Rhinelander 5, Antigo 2
Pacelli 4, Wausau Newman 3

Thursday’s Matches
Antigo at Lakeland, late
Medford at Phillips, late
Marshfield Columbus at Wausau Newman, late
Rhinelander at Pacelli, late

Saturday’s Matches
Medford at Altoona Invite (NC), 9 a.m.
Lakeland at Wisconsin Rapids Invite (NC), 9 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 20
Wausau East at Antigo (NC), 4 p.m.
Ironwood, Mich. at Lakeland (NC), 4:30 p.m.

Antigo at Rhinelander
Tuesday, Sept. 14
Rhinelander 5, Antigo 2

Singles: 1, Annika Johnson, Rhi, Margo Kelly, 6-3, 6-4. 2, Kaylee Pontell, Rhi, def. Brechlyn Flannery, 6-0, 6-4. 3, Tori Riopel, Rhi, def. Sierra Oelke, 6-3, 6-0. 4, Makayla Roberts, Ant., def. Kelsey Winter, 6-3, 6-0.
Doubles: 1, Taylor Riopel/Paige Oleinik, Rhi, def. Ellie Packard/Faith Bussiere, 6-4, 6-4. 2, Kylee Younker/Helena Wisner, Rhi, def. Bailea Vander Sanden/Molly Neufeld, 6-1, 3-6, 6-3. 3, Claire Musolf/Anna Evans, Ant, def. Claire Bramm/Shayla Coppenger, 6-4, 6-3.

VOLLEYBALL

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Great Northern Conference Standings as of Tuesday, Sept. 14

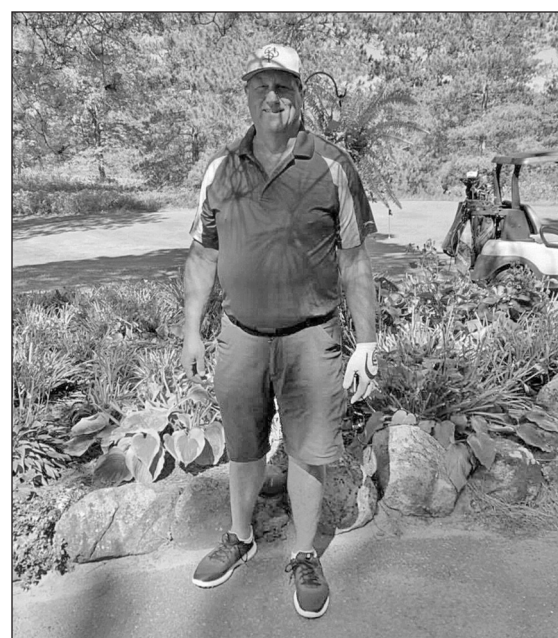
Team	GNC	Ovr
Mosinee	3-0	17-1
Tomahawk	2-1	9-7
Lakeland	2-1	4-9
Northland Pines	1-1	6-7
Medford	1-1	6-8
Antigo	0-2	5-15
Rhinelander	0-3	3-10

Tuesday’s Matches
Northland Pines 3, Rhinelander 0
Lakeland 3, Antigo 0
Mosinee 3, Tomahawk 1
Menomonie 3, Medford 1 (NC)

Thursday’s Match
Northland Pines at Wausau East (NC), late
Saturday’s Matches
GNC Meet No. 1 at Medford, 10 a.m.
Round 1
Medford vs. Tomahawk
Northland Pines vs. Antigo
Mosinee vs. Lakeland

Round 2
Medford vs. Lakeland
Northland Pines vs. Mosinee
Rhinelander vs. Antigo

Round 3
Antigo vs. Medford
Tomahawk vs. Rhinelander
Lakeland vs. Northland Pines



LUCKY SEVENS AT PINewood

Pinewood Country Club in Harshaw witnessed its seventh hole-in-one of the season Monday, Sept. 13. Greg Jones of Shoreview, Minn. aced the course’s par-3 seventh hole. Fittingly, he used a 7-iron to hole the 140-yard shot.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



SKIING SIBLINGS

Rhinelander brothers Cameron, left, and Ben Olson took part in the Wisconsin 3-Event Water Ski State Championship July 25-26 in Oconomowoc and recorded some podium finishes. Cameron Olson was first overall in the 9-and-10-year-old division, taking first in tricks and second in slalom. Ben Olson placed third in jumps in the 13-14 age group.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Tennis

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“Both are good players, both are very consistent and no surprise that they pushed each other like that. It was nice to see Annika on top,” Nichols said. “It looked like she was struggling a bit with her finishing shots, missing some shots she normally wouldn’t and then it became longer rallies because she wasn’t as trusting of that shot. Later on, I think she not only had the consistency, but she was also starting to put balls away like she normally would.”

Kaylee Pontell and Tori Riopel had the easiest wins of the day at Nos. 2 and 3 singles. Pontell downed Brechlyn Flannery 6-0, 6-4 while Tori Riopel was a 6-3, 6-0 winner over Sierra Oelke.

“Antigo is just very consistent in their singles and we had a lot of long points and we were pushed to earn those points. It was nice to get those two wins,” Nichols said.

Rhinelanders was also victorious at No. 1 doubles as Taylor Riopel and Paige Oleinik held off Ellie Packard and Faith Bussiere 6-4, 6-4.

“That’s huge for them. The two of them have come a long way and it’s great to see them get another win in the conference,” Nichols said. “Their team chemistry has improved so much and their play at the net. We worked a lot on vol-



BOB MAINHARDT FOR THE RIVER NEWS

Rhinelanders’ Kaylee Pontell returns a serve during a GNC girls’ tennis match against Antigo at the RHS tennis courts Tuesday, Sept. 14. Pontell rolled in straight sets at No. 2 singles, 6-0, 6-4.

leys and overheads yesterday. Today they could place that ball wherever their opponent wasn’t or right through their opponent.”

Antigo’s MaKayla Roberts defeated Kelsey Winter 6-3, 6-0 at No. 4 singles while Antigo’s No. 3 doubles tandem of Claire Musloff and Anna Evans defeated Clairra Bramm and Shayla Coppenger 6-4, 6-3.

Overall, Rhinelanders’ lead in the conference remained at 12 points but over a new second-place challenger in Pacelli. The Cardinals got to 6-0 in the GNC with a 7-0 win over Phillips on Monday and a 4-3 win over Wausau Newman on Tuesday. Pacelli has won six fewer individual matches in

conference play than Rhinelanders, resulting in the 12-point deficit.

Rhinelanders and Pacelli were set to face off Thursday in Stevens Point. Any result, aside from a 7-0 sweep for Pacelli, would ensure that the Hodags will enter next Saturday’s GNC tournament in Antigo with the conference points lead. Nichols said Thursday’s objective was to build as much of a cushion as possible.

“It’s nice going into the conference tournament. Crazy things happen there, so it’s always nice to have a little cushion leading up to it,” he said.

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Bike

From page 13

Those who want to race were able to put their skill out on the track for the first time Sunday. Due to the team’s size, the WHSCL splits the team into two squads — Rhinelanders High School and Rhinelanders Northwoods Composite — for classification purposes. The RHS squad placed 13th of 28 teams in Division 1 while the RNC squad, the defending state champions in Division 2, finished first in a field of 53.

Three Lakes Senior Megan Lester, the reigning state girls’ JV-3 champion, began the season with a thrilling finish in the girls’ varsity division. She completed the 16-mile course in 1 hour, 11 minutes, 3.65 seconds, edging Washington County’s Kendra Schmidt to the line by 0.05 seconds for the victory.

“It was such a sprint. Both of them are experienced, so they took good, clean lines,” Jon Lester said. “There was no elbow bumping or anything like that. I was probably 200 meters prior to the finish line cheering for her. I couldn’t quite see the finish and I was out of my mind like, ‘I’ve got to get over there and see how she did.’”

Joey Belanger claimed victory in the Division 2 boys’ JV-2 race, covering 11 miles in 45:35.13 to win by



JEREMY MAYO/RIVER NEWS

Joey Belanger rides through the pump track during Rhinelanders Northwoods Composite mountain bike team practice at the Washburn Trail System Monday, Sept. 13. Belanger won the Division 2 boys’ JV-3 race in the WHSCL opener in Waukesha Sept. 12.

roughly 8.5 seconds over Green Bay’s Cohen Sylvester. This was despite Belanger starting deep in a 93-rider field.

“Joey started in 60th position mind you in this race and finished first. He had to fight his way through a tone of people,” coach Lester said. “That’s pretty impressive.”

Lakeland senior Jakob Craig was fifth of 24 in the varsity boys’ race covering 21 miles in 1:23:36.94. Craig finished sixth overall in the varsity division two years ago.

“Coming off an injury earlier this summer, we didn’t know where he would stand and he didn’t really know where he would stand, so that was very impressive,” Lester said. “I’m excited to see how he

progresses through the season. Now that he knows where he’s at, he can try to stick with that next group of boys and build from there.”

Junior Jett Biolo was the runner-up in the Division 1 boys’ JV-3, covering 16 miles in 1:04:38.48. Sage Flory, the girls’ JV-2 champ in 2019, was fifth in the varsity girls’ race at 1:15:05.32. Macy Lester finished sixth in the girls’ freshman race.

Travis White took 16th in D1 boys’ JV-3, Layne Roeser was 28th of 103 in D1 boys’ JV-2. Carter Johnson and Tyler Marquardt were 23rd and 24th, respectively, in D2 boys’ JV-2.

Lily Gleason finished 24th and Emma Mankus was 35th in the freshman girls’ races. Anna Wood

placed 33rd in girls’ JV-2.

In the middle school ranks, Violet Biolo placed second in the eighth-grade girls’ race. Holden Schmitz and Olin Slette were 39th and 47th in the eighth-grade boys’ races. Austin Slette finished 40th in the sixth-grade boys’ race while Henry Schmitz finished 42nd.

“Our kids stayed safe and healthy and no mechanicals,” coach Lester said. “Every one of our athletes, all 18 of them finished. That was a huge plus. We didn’t have any DNFs. I was pretty proud of that.”

“I’m proud of them all. They all held their position pretty well. Even the ones who didn’t get podium positions. If they started 30th, they hung around that 30th area. If they started 20th, they hung around there.”

Sunday’s race was the first of a five-race WHSCL season in which riders accumulate points for overall series placement. Round 2 will take place Sept. 26 at Lowes Creek in Eau Claire, Wausau’s Nine Mile Forest will host Round 3 Oct. 3. Nordic Mountain in Mt. Morris will stage Round 4 Oct. 17 and the series finale takes place in Waterloo Oct. 24 at the proving grounds of the Trek Bicycle Company.

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WIS. SPORTS GLANCE



SCHEDULE

Sept. 12: Milwaukee 11, Cleveland 1
 Tuesday: Detroit 1, Milwaukee 0, 11 innings
 Wednesday: at Detroit, late
 Friday: vs. Chicago Cubs, 7:10 p.m. (BSWI)
 Saturday: vs. Chicago Cubs, 6:15 p.m. (FOX)
 Sunday: vs. Chicago Cubs, 1:10 p.m. (BSWI)
 Sept. 20: vs. St. Louis, 6:40 p.m. (BSWI)

MLB STANDINGS AS OF SEPT. 14

NATIONAL LEAGUE					AMERICAN LEAGUE				
East Division	W	L	Pct	GB	East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	76	67	.531	—	Tampa Bay	90	55	.621	—
Philadelphia	72	72	.500	4½	Toronto	81	64	.559	9
N.Y. Mets	72	74	.493	5½	N.Y. Yankees	81	64	.559	9
Miami	61	84	.421	16	Boston	82	65	.558	9
Washington	60	85	.414	17	Baltimore	46	98	.319	43½
Central Division	W	L	Pct	GB	Central Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	89	56	.614	—	Chi. White Sox	83	61	.576	—
St. Louis	75	69	.521	13½	Cleveland	70	73	.490	12½
Cincinnati	75	70	.517	14	Detroit	69	76	.476	14½
Chi. Cubs	66	79	.455	23	Kansas City	66	78	.458	17
Pittsburgh	53	91	.368	35½	Minnesota	64	82	.438	20
West Division	W	L	Pct	GB	West Division	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Francisco	95	50	.655	—	Houston	84	60	.583	—
x-L.A. Dodgers	93	53	.637	2½	Seattle	78	67	.538	6½
San Diego	74	70	.514	20½	Oakland	77	67	.535	7
Colorado	67	78	.462	28	L.A. Angels	70	74	.486	14
Arizona	47	98	.324	48	Texas	54	90	.375	30

x-Clinched playoff berth



SCHEDULE

Sept. 12: New Orleans 38, Green Bay 3
 Sept. 20: vs. Detroit 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)
 Sept. 26: at San Francisco, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

NFL STANDINGS AS OF SEPT. 14

AMERICAN CONFERENCE					NATIONAL CONFERENCE				
East	W	L	T	Pct	East	W	L	T	Pct
Miami	1	0	0	1.000	Philadelphia	1	0	0	1.000
N.Y. Jets	0	1	0	0.000	Washington	0	1	0	0.000
Buffalo	0	1	0	0.000	N.Y. Giants	0	1	0	0.000
New England	0	1	0	0.000	Dallas	0	1	0	0.000
South	W	L	T	Pct	South	W	L	T	Pct
Houston	1	0	0	1.000	New Orleans	1	0	0	1.000
Indianapolis	0	1	0	0.000	Tampa Bay	1	0	0	1.000
Tennessee	0	1	0	0.000	Carolina	1	0	0	1.000
Jacksonville	0	1	0	0.000	Atlanta	0	1	0	0.000
North	W	L	T	Pct	North	W	L	T	Pct
Pittsburgh	1	0	0	1.000	Minnesota	0	1	0	0.000
Cincinnati	1	0	0	1.000	Detroit	0	1	0	0.000
Cleveland	0	1	0	0.000	Chicago	0	1	0	0.000
Baltimore	0	1	0	0.000	Green Bay	0	1	0	0.000
West	W	L	T	Pct	West	W	L	T	Pct
Las Vegas	1	0	0	1.000	L.A. Rams	1	0	0	1.000
Kansas City	1	0	0	1.000	San Francisco	1	0	0	1.000
Denver	1	0	0	1.000	Arizona	1	0	0	1.000
L.A. Chargers	1	0	0	1.000	Seattle	1	0	0	1.000



SCHEDULE

Sept. 11: No. 18 Wisconsin 34, Eastern Michigan 7
 Sept. 25: No. 12 Notre Dame (at Chicago), 11 a.m., (FOX)
 Oct. 2: vs. No. 25 Michigan, Time TBA (TV TBA)

BIG TEN STANDINGS AS OF SEPT. 14

East Division	Conf.	Ovr.	West Division	Conf.	Ovr.
10 Penn St.	1-0	2-0	5 Iowa	1-0	2-0
Michigan St.	1-0	2-0	Illinois	1-0	1-2
9 Ohio St.	1-0	1-1	Purdue	0-0	2-0
25 Michigan	0-0	2-0	18 Wisconsin	0-1	1-1
Maryland	0-0	2-0	Minnesota	0-1	1-1
Rutgers	0-0	2-0	Northwestern	0-1	1-1
Indiana	0-1	1-1	Nebraska	0-1	2-1

Volleyball

From page 14

The Hodags were able to get to a handful of swings by Pines. Allie Dornfeld recorded three solo block kills along with one block assist while Ariel Pauer had a block solo and an assist. But Pines countered with the short game, getting six tip kills on Rhinelanders in the match.

“We had a handful of blocks and I think that helps, if you’re getting touches and a hand on their swing, they’re going to do something different to score points. We just didn’t read it properly and couldn’t get it back up,” Wolter said.

Pauer, who was second for Rhinelanders in conference play in kills last season, was eligible and played for the first time this season on Tuesday. She did not record a kill on four attempts with three errors, but Wolter said she will help the team — especially up front — down the stretch.

“She can definitely hold down our middle for us and she is a big block in there,” he said. “Hopefully we get used to playing around her and we can start putting pieces together and start getting more swings and opening up the outsides for everybody else.”

Brynn Brzycki led Rhinelanders with three kills on Tuesday. DeMeyer had four assists and three aces while Ava Lamers chipped in nine digs.

Rhinelanders (3-10, 0-3 Great Northern) will face Antigo and Tomahawk Saturday in the first round of the Great Northern Conference tournament in Medford.

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Storm

From page 12

The Hodags have not had much go wrong so far, as they've outscored their first four opponents by a combined 155-29. Rhinelander has racked up more than 400 yards of offense per game so far and senior tailback Cayden Neri currently ranks fifth overall in the state with 869 rushing yards.

But Neri was held to only 13 yards in last year's battle for the conference championship Nov. 6 — his first game back in the lineup after missing the better part of three weeks due to an ankle injury.

Kraemer said this week is going to be a grind.

"It's understanding that not every play against a great team is going to be a positive play, but understanding that a consistent offense is one, against a good team that you can rely upon and lean on," he said. "We're going to have to grind it against them and be patient."

Here are five storylines going into tonight's game.

Battle tested

While Rhinelander has cruised to a 4-0 start, Medford has run a gauntlet as it comes in 2-2 overall. The Raiders opened with back-to-back tough non-conference losses to Rice Lake and Amherst before jumping into GNC play.

Even within the conference, things have been no cakewalk. Ashland jumped out to a first-half lead on Medford, and was still within a score until Medford punched it in with 3:14 to play and won 30-14.

Lakeland scored first on Medford last week and was within 24-20 in the third quarter before the Raiders finished the game with three unanswered touchdowns.

"Regardless of who they've played, they've still played well," Kraemer said. "This is a quality outfit. They won the conference the last couple of years. They have

tradition and they have a great running back, which is something that can allow some of the flaws to be covered."

Stopping Gardner

Junior quarterback Logan Baumgartner (knee) has missed the last two weeks and is not expected to play tonight against the Hodags. Ever since Baumgartner's injury, the Raiders have turned heavily to their bread-and-butter power running game with senior tailback Aiden Gardner.

Gardner comes in after rushing for a school-record 352 yards in last week's 45-20 win at Lakeland and is the focal point of the Medford offense.

Kraemer said there aren't many secrets to the Medford run game. The keys to stopping it include matching the Raiders' physicality at the point of attack, sound tackling and being alert for the plays when Medford breaks tendency.

"If you can tackle them, if you can get low and hit them low, especially Aiden Gardner, they can be neutralized," he said. "But it has to be a concerted effort to make the tackles, to drive the eyes through the thighs, to get the wrap-ups and get the guy to the ground. If you can do that, make contact at the line of scrimmage and make plays at the line of scrimmage, they can be neutralized."

Gardner has rushed for 648 yards and seven touchdowns so far this season while Tukker Schreiner has served as the counterpoint, averaging 5.0 yards per carry on only 39 rushing attempts. Tight end Caleb Guden has been the primary threat in the passing game, catching six passes for 160 yards and three scores.

Varied looks

Part of what makes Medford's offense difficult to stop is the number of looks it can throw at opposing teams. The Raiders primarily throw it back to the 1940s, operating out of the



PHOTOS BY BOB MAINHARDT FOR THE RIVER NEWS

In this Nov. 6, 2020 file photo, Medford's Aiden Gardner sheds a tackle by Rhinelander's Ben Sinclair during a GNC football game at Mike Webster Stadium. Gardner leads Medford's vaunted rushing attack with 648 yards and seven touchdowns — including a school-record 352 yards rushing in last week's win at Lakeland.

single wing — with a direct snap back to Gardner. But Medford can also run a four-man I, straight tee and many other looks that leave defenders scrambling to find their assignments.

Kraemer said the trick is realizing that Medford's play calling doesn't change much, despite what formation it is in.

"They like to run multiple formations with similar plays," he said. "They're not maybe exotic in terms of the plays that they run, but the dressing, the ways they formation you and show that play in certain different ways is definitely vast."

Beat the heat

Medford has a pressuring defense that has smothered Rhinelander over the past several years. The Raiders held Rhinelander to 63 yards on the ground last year with a defense that typically likes to send five or more rushers while playing tight man-to-man coverage on the outside.

But the Raiders' defense has not looked as daunting as it has in years past

through the first four games of the season. Though Medford is allowing only 217.5 yards of total offense, teams have averaged 22.8 points per game, and 5.0 yards per carry against the Raiders so far.

While Rhinelander showcased some different looks last week against Hayward, Kraemer said to expect a game plan that leans heavily on the team's two tailbacks — Neri and Caleb Olcik.

"It's been the same defense the last several years, we just have to figure out the answer to it," he said. "I think, this year, if we get over complicated and we try to do some crazy things we haven't done and show some crazy looks, I think that would be foolish. You can expect to see us do the things that we do, get the ball to Neri and Olcik often, utilize our passing game in ways to try to beat their man coverage and take a lesson from ourselves and don't beat ourselves."

Avoid the miscues

Each of the last two years,

Rhinelander has made at least one key special teams mistake early in the contest that has turned a defensive stop into a turnover and an eventual Medford touchdown.

Rhinelander responded last year to take a 7-6 lead on a 70-yard touchdown catch by Olcik, but lost linebacker/H-back Walker Hartman to a knee injury on that play and the Raiders wore down a compromised Hodag defense en route to a 24-7 win.

Two years ago, Rhinelander found itself in a 19-0 hole in the first quarter after turnover trouble, was down 27-0 at the half and eventually lost to the Raiders 39-14.

"The last two years, I thought we've put ourselves in positions against this team that are almost impossible to climb out of," Kraemer said. "If we fix some of those mistakes early in the game, we'll give ourselves a better shot to win."

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Stratford

From page 13

Both Rhinelander sides were a bit short-handed on Tuesday. The Hodag boys' won without Cody Ruetz (illness) and Greyson Gremban (soccer). Leah Jamison (hip) was scratched from her second straight race for the Hodag girls.

Jack DeNamur was second across the line for Rhinelander, in seventh overall at 19:11.95 with Ty Welk eighth at 19:15.16. Senior Jaden Beske, who's attempting to balance football and cross country this fall, turned in his best run so far, placing 12th at 19:35.01.

"Jaden was not in a medal, but he was our fourth and without his effort, we don't win," coach Laggis said. "The effort he gave tonight was awesome and I'm really proud of him for doing that. It shows that even he wasn't



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Rhinelander High School boys' cross country team poses with its medals and plaque after taking first place in the Stratford Tiger Invitational in Stratford Tuesday, Sept. 14.

going to medal, he ran for the team and really laid it down at the end. There's a lot to be said for that."

Gavin Denis was Rhinelander's fifth runner in 27th at 21:47.72 and Jason Zheng rounded out the varsity in 29th at 22:06.43.

Senior Emma Ger-

main medaled for Rhinelander in eighth overall at 22:30.28. Freshman Luna Grage was 12th and sophomore Eva Hetland finished 15th (23:33.81).

"I can't say enough about Emma's leadership and what she brings to our whole group. It's so valuable,"

M.J. Laggis said. "Luna just got stronger as the race went and Eva's been working really, really hard and doing the same."

"On the girls' side, I feel a lot like how I felt about the boys a year ago. I think they're a year away and they could be really decent."

What they're doing before races and after and how they're going about stuff, they're a really fun group to be around."

Juliana Smith (17th, 23:59.25), Reese Gehrig (18th, 24:20.75) and Maria Hubler (29th, 25:49.33) rounded out the varsity for Rhinelander.

The Hodags beat Stratford 53-70 for the boys' title. Mosinee edged Stratford 33-37 for the girls' title. Rhinelander was third with 51 points.

Rhinelander took four of the top five spots in the JV boys' race, with Travis White first, AJ Gillespie third, Zacha King fourth and Brody Kowieski fifth. Kyleah Hartman, Aubrey Younker and Kylinn Gechas finished third, fourth and fifth for the Hodag girls in the JV race.

Rhinelander will take part in the 65th annual Bill Smiley Invitational

Saturday in Wausau, which will be held at a new venue on the Wausau East High School campus. Coach Laggis said the event featuring teams from all over the state will provide a key measuring stick at the midpoint of the season.

"I very respectfully say this, but we need to get put in our place and that's going to happen Saturday," he said. "We're a Division 1 Small school and there are just some heavyweights at Smiley, 62 teams this year. That's good because when you leave Smiley, like on our boys' side we're pretty decent and we're going to compete here if we stay healthy, but you walk away from Smiley and you say, 'Hey, we've got work to do. There's a lot of big dogs out there.' That's good for us."

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