

SPORTS

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WIAA DIVISION 1 STATE BOYS SWIMMING AND DIVING CHAMPIONSHIP



Dave Radcliffe/Freeman Staff

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
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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

with that."

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

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

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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 can."

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

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

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WAUKESHA — The sophomore-to-junior leap benefited 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 200-yard 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

WIAA Division 1 Boys State Swimming and Diving Championships with 188 points Saturday at Waukesha South.

"Coming off this past year I learned a lot," Johnson said. "Sophomore going into junior year is a milestone for 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 training to pay off, it's just the greatest gift in the world."

Johnson was no stranger

to the podium coming in to his third state experience. He finished third in the two aforementioned events last season, medaled in two relays, and as a member of Waukesha South/Catholic Memorial reached the podium in the 200 medley relay as a freshman.

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

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PIONEERS 84, VIKINGS 50

Pioneers enter postseason on high note



Mary Catanese/Special to The Freeman

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 penthouse.

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

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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.

West senior Magnus 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 fresh-

man Isaiah Guerrero at 126 pounds and his brother Xavier Guerrero, a junior, at 132.

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 runners-up. Pewaukee and New Berlin West-Eisenhower each had five qualifiers, and Waukesha South two.

The top two finishers at

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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 school's MBA program and has a full-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 year because of the COVID-19 pandemic — plans to return for a sixth season with the Pioneers.



Mary Catanese/Special to The Freeman

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 High School. "Everyone's frustrated when you lose, right? You're not a competitor if you're not frustrated 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

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