

SPORTS

Thursday, September 29, 2022

SENIORS SAVE KNIGHTS

Purple Knights outlast Lancers for 5-set victory

By JIMMY OSWALD
Staff Writer

BELOIT—Danny Hereford has been a dominant force on the Beloit Memorial boys volleyball team throughout his high school career.

So, it was only fitting that he would be the one to deliver a missile over the net in the fifth set for the match-winning point against Madison La Follette on senior night at Barkin Arena on Wednesday night.

Hereford didn't have a lot of words to describe the night. He didn't need to, the joy on his face said it all.

"It's the last home game of my high school career," he said. "I'm just happy we won, it was a really great game. This means everything. Everything."

The senior athletes definitely made their last match in Beloit a memorable one. After coming out with a strong 25-15 victory in set one, the Lancers stepped up their game for the second set. Madison held a 23-22 lead before a Hereford kill knotted it up and an ace from Miguel Delgado

and a kill from Aidan Donovan helped the Purple Knights take a 2-0 lead.

"We try to start strong," Hereford said. "Otherwise you kind of get lost in your own head. Today, we did that and kept that momentum going on throughout the night. That's what made us win."

Beloit was one point away from going home with a sweep, but back-to-back kills from the Lancers and an attack error from the Knights helped Madison win the third set 26-24.

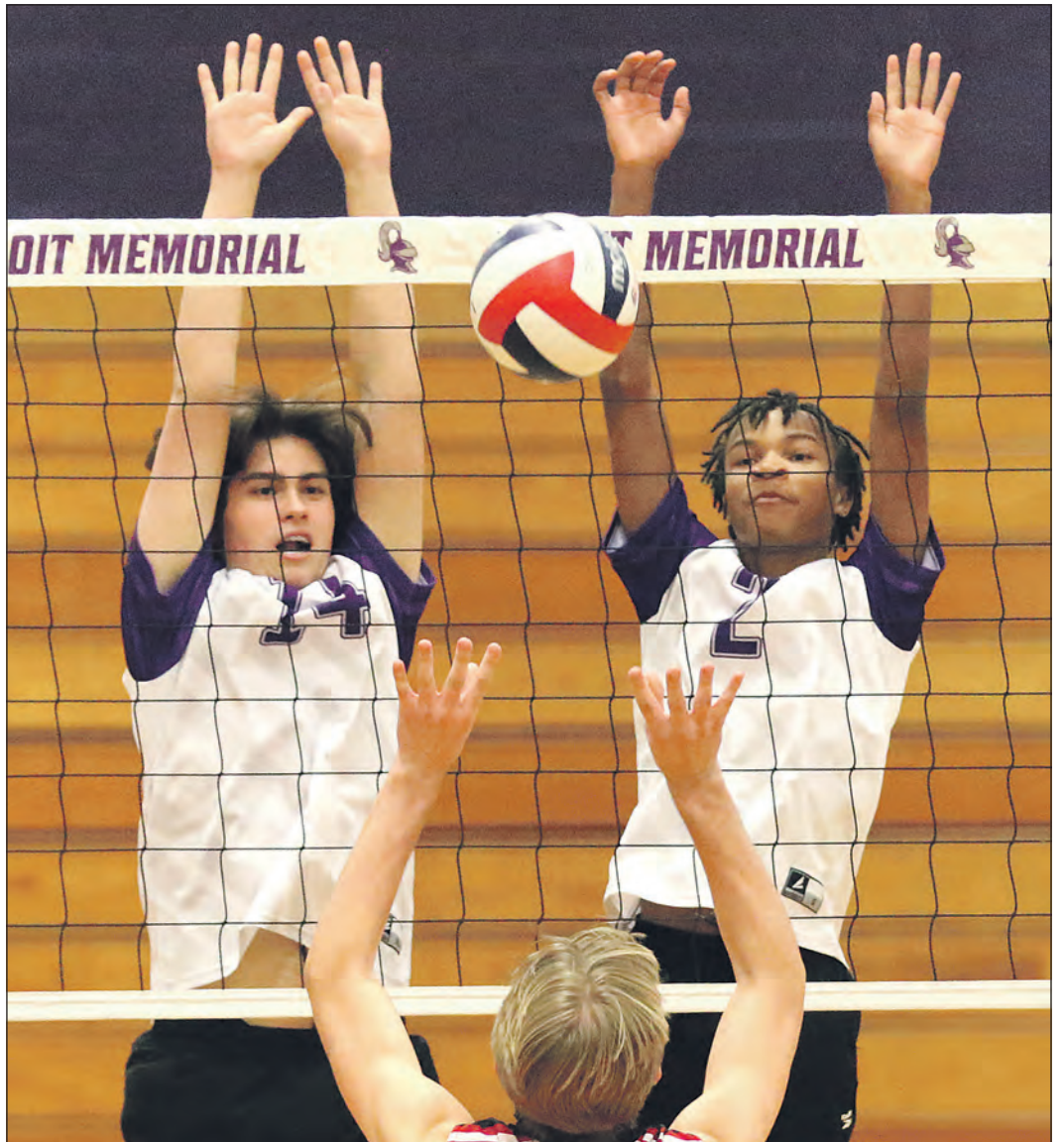
Set four was neck-and-neck once again, and the two teams were tied at 20 before the Lancers went on a 5-2 run to force a fifth set.

"Our serving really got us in that third set," head coach Karlin West said. "We started making errors and not letting them make the errors and we just let that get through into the fourth set."

The Knights had numerous serving errors throughout the night, and that is an aspect West said they focus on a lot.

"We practice getting the ball over and in, but not giving them a nice easy serve that they are just going to hit back at us," she said. "That's still one thing we struggle with."

Turn to **VOLLEYBALL** on Page A14



TIM MOORE PHOTO

Beloit Memorial's Jordan Toubi (14) and Danny Hereford team up on a block against La Follette Wednesday.

Knights looking to spoil Demons' homecoming

By JIM FRANZ
Sports Editor

BELOIT—Nothing against Tony Romo, who is one of Wisconsin's more celebrated pro athletes of recent times, but Beloit Memorial's Purple Knights will do their best to ruin both his homecoming as well as Burlington's Friday night.

The former Dallas Cowboys quarterback and Burlington alum will broadcast the Green Bay Packers vs. New England Patriots game at Lambeau Field on Sunday. That gave him the opportunity to return to his alma mater for a dedication of the school's new synthetic turf field.

Burlington Area School District named the field The Tony Romo Field in February 2020 to

recognize his continued connection to the community.

"Romo will be right behind their bench," Beloit head coach Brad Dement said. "We'll have to see what we can do to spoil his fun."

The Knights (2-4, 1-3) will have to do a lot better job in the red zone this week if they want to upend the Demons (2-4, 2-2). Last week Beloit had the ball on the Union Grove 5-yard line three times and came away empty-handed each time in a 35-0 loss.

"We also had a clear pick-six dropped 20 yards from the end zone," Dement said. "That's 28 points we left off the scoreboard. Any of those could have been momentum changers."

Turn to **KNIGHTS** on Page A13



JIM FRANZ/BELOIT DAILY NEWS

Leading rusher Decarlos Nora and Beloit Memorial's ground game will play a key role Friday night at Burlington.

Change at top needed for Badgers

Look, I could sit here and gush about how nobody expected the Bears to be any good and here they sit tied atop the lead in the NFC North with two other teams whose names I don't remember with another winnable game lined up Sunday. I could do that, but I might as well save it all for next week when they are 3-1. Just as I predicted.



ROB LUCAS

Turn to **LUCAS** on Page A13

SCOREBOARD

All Times EDT

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball

American League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-New York	95	59	.617	—
Toronto	87	68	.561	8½
Tampa Bay	85	69	.552	10
Baltimore	80	74	.519	15
Boston	73	81	.474	22

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Cleveland	86	68	.558	—
Chicago	76	78	.494	10
Minnesota	75	79	.487	11
Kansas City	63	91	.409	23
Detroit	61	92	.399	24½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Houston	102	53	.658	—
Seattle	83	70	.542	18
Los Angeles	68	86	.442	33½
Texas	66	87	.431	35
Oakland	56	98	.364	45½

National League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
z-Atlanta	97	58	.626	—
z-New York	97	58	.626	—
Philadelphia	83	70	.542	13
Miami	64	90	.416	32½
Washington	53	101	.344	43½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-St. Louis	90	65	.581	—
Milwaukee	82	72	.532	7½
Chicago	68	86	.442	21½
Cincinnati	60	96	.385	30½
Pittsburgh	59	97	.378	31½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Los Angeles	106	48	.688	—
San Diego	86	68	.558	20
San Francisco	76	78	.494	30

Arizona	71	84	.458	35½
Colorado	65	89	.422	41

x-clinched division

z-clinched playoff berth

Wild Card

American League

W L Pct WCGB

Toronto	87	68	.561	+3
Tampa Bay	85	69	.552	+1½
Seattle	83	70	.542	—
Baltimore	80	74	.519	3½

National League

W L Pct WCGB

San Diego	86	68	.558	+2½
z-Atlanta	97	58	.626	—
Philadelphia	83	70	.542	—
Milwaukee	82	72	.532	1½

Wednesday's Games

Pittsburgh 4, Cincinnati 3, 10 innings

FOOTBALL

National Football League

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

W L T Pct PF PA

Miami	3	0	0	1.000	83	64
Buffalo	2	1	0	.667	91	38
N.Y. Jets	1	2	0	.333	52	81
New England	1	2	0	.333	50	71

South

W L T Pct PF PA

Jacksonville	2	1	0	.667	84	38
Indianapolis	1	1	1	.500	40	61
Tennessee	1	2	0	.333	51	84
Houston	0	2	1	.167	49	59

North

W L T Pct PF PA

Baltimore	2	1	0	.667	99	77
Cleveland	2	1	0	.667	85	72
Cincinnati	1	2	0	.333	64	55
Pittsburgh	1	2	0	.333	54	66

West

W L T Pct PF PA

Denver	2	1	0	.667	43	36
Kansas City	2	1	0	.667	88	65
L.A. Chargers	1	2	0	.333	58	84

Las Vegas	0	3	0	.000	64	77
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NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

W L T Pct PF PA

Philadelphia	3	0	0	1.000	86	50
Dallas	2	1	0	.667	46	52
N.Y. Giants	2	1	0	.667	56	59
Washington	1	2	0	.333	63	82

South

W L T Pct PF PA

Tampa Bay	2	1	0	.667	51	27
Atlanta	1	2	0	.333	80	81
Carolina	1	2	0	.333	62	59
New Orleans	1	2	0	.333	51	68

North

W L T Pct PF PA

Chicago	2	1	0	.667	52	57
Green Bay	2	1	0	.667	48	45
Minnesota	2	1	0	.667	58	55
Detroit	1	2	0	.333	95	93

West

W L T Pct PF PA

L.A. Rams	2	1	0	.667	61	70
Arizona	1	2	0	.333	62	87
San Francisco	1	2	0	.333	47	37
Seattle	1	2	0	.333	47	70

Thursday's Game

Miami at Cincinnati, 8:15 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 2's Games

Minnesota vs New Orleans

at London, GBR, 9:30 a.m.

Buffalo at Baltimore, 1 p.m.

Chicago at N.Y. Giants, 1 p.m.

Cleveland at Atlanta, 1 p.m.

Jacksonville at Philadelphia, 1 p.m.

L.A. Chargers at Houston, 1 p.m.

N.Y. Jets at Pittsburgh, 1 p.m.

Seattle at Detroit, 1 p.m.

Tennessee at Indianapolis, 1 p.m.

Washington at Dallas, 1 p.m.

Arizona at Carolina, 4:05 p.m.

Denver at Las Vegas, 4:25 p.m.

New England at Green Bay, 4:25 p.m.

Kansas City at Tampa Bay, 8:20 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 3's Game

Rams at San Francisco, 8:15 p.m.



MORRY GASH—STAFF, AP

Milwaukee Brewers' Hunter Renfroe reacts after hitting an RBI single during the third inning of a baseball game against the St. Louis Cardinals Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2022, in Milwaukee.

Brewers boost playoff hopes topping Cards

Milwaukee closing in on Phillies

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Brandon Woodruff struck out 10 over six scoreless innings and Devin Williams delivered four big outs late to boost the Milwaukee Brewers' playoff hopes with a 5-1 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals on Wednesday night.

The victory, Milwaukee's first since last Saturday at Cincinnati, combined with the Phillies' loss to the Cubs in Chicago moved the Brewers within a game of Philadelphia for the third and final NL wild-card spot with seven to play.

Woodruff (13-4) was only at 98 pitches when Matt Bush took over to start the seventh. The move backfired immediately when Andrew Knizner led off the inning with his second homer in as many days to make it a 2-1 game.

After Ben DeLuzio followed with a double, Bush walked Brendan Donovan before getting his first out of the inning when Dylan Carlson grounded out to first.

Milwaukee then turned to Williams, who intentionally walked pinch-hitter Lars Nootbar to load the bases and got out of the jam when Juan Ypez grounded into a double play.

Williams came up big again in the eighth, stranding runners at the corners with back-to-back strikeouts of

Knizner and DeLuzio. Cardinals starter Jose Quintana (6-7) struck out seven in five innings. He allowed only one run on an RBI single to Hunter Renfroe in the third.

Milwaukee added an insurance run in the fifth on Keston Hiura's RBI double off Steven Matz and broke the game open with a three-run eighth, capped by Victor Caratini's two-run, ground-rule double.

• **TRAINER'S ROOM:** Cardinals: RHP Jordan Hicks (arm fatigue and neck spasms) has been making good progress with his throwing program and will throw off a mound Friday then again on Sunday. If all goes well, he could get activated in time for St. Louis' season-ending series at Pittsburgh and be available for the start of the playoffs.

Brewers: RHP Adrian Houser was placed on the 15-day injured list and miss the rest of the regular season because of a grade 2 strain of his right groin. RHP Justin Topa was recalled from Triple-A Nashville to replace Houser on Milwaukee's active roster.

• **UP NEXT:** Cardinals: Off Thursday before beginning a series against the Pirates on Friday.

Brewers: Milwaukee opens a four-game series against the Marlins with LHP Eric Lauer (10-7, 3.96 ERA) going up against Miami lefty Braxton Garrett (3-6, 3.52 ERA).

FASTBREAK: Judge hammers 61st home run

By The Associated Press

TORONTO (AP)—Aaron Judge tied Roger Maris' American League record of 61 home runs in a season, hitting a two-run drive for the New York Yankees in the seventh inning against the Toronto Blue Jays on Wednesday night.

The 30-year-old slugger drove a 94.5 mph belt-high sinker with a full-count from left-hander Tim Mayza over the left-field fence at Rogers Centre. The 117.4 mph drive took just 3.8 seconds to land 394 feet from the plate, and it put the Yankees ahead 5-3. They went on to win 8-3.

Judge watched the ball clank off the front of the stands and drop into Toronto's bullpen. It was picked up by Blue Jays bullpen coach Matt Buschmann, who turned it over to the Yankees.

Judge's mother and Roger Maris Jr. rose and hugged from front-row seats.

Judge moved past the 60 home

runs Babe Ruth hit in 1927, which had stood as the major league mark until Maris broke it in 1961. All three stars reached those huge numbers playing for the Yankees.

Barry Bonds holds the big league record of 73 for the San Francisco Giants in 2001.

Judge is hitting .313 with 130 RBIs, also the top totals in the AL. He has a chance to become the first AL Triple Crown winner since Detroit's Miguel Cabrera in 2012.

PRO FOOTBALL

• **BEREA, Ohio**—Browns defensive end Myles Garrett stayed home to rest and recover from injuries suffered in a car crash as his status for Cleveland's game on Sunday at Atlanta remains in doubt.

Garrett was not at the team's facility Wednesday, two days after the All-Pro rolled over his Porsche in a single-car accident on a rural road near his home. He suffered a sprained shoulder, strained biceps, cuts and bruises in the wreck.

The Browns said in a statement

on Tuesday night that their doctors will evaluate Garrett throughout the week before determining whether he'll play against the Falcons.

• **The Tampa Bay Buccaneers**, who moved their football operations to South Florida to avoid Hurricane Ian, remain hopeful of being able to return home to play the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday night.

The team practiced at the Miami Dolphins' training facility on Wednesday, describing the experience as different, but insisting the disruption to their routine will not hinder their ability to prepare for the team they beat in the Super Bowl two seasons ago.

NFL executive Jeff Miller said Wednesday that the game was still scheduled to be played in Tampa on Sunday night. If the teams can't play at Raymond James Stadium—a decision that could be made as late as Friday—the much-anticipated matchup between quarterbacks Tom Brady and Patrick Mahomes will be moved to Minneapolis.



Judge

Hoyer will start for Patriots if Jones can't face Packers

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)—If Mac Jones can't play Sunday for the Patriots visit to Green Bay, veteran backup quarterback Brian Hoyer will start in his place.

But Bill Belichick is still leaving open the possibility that his second-year quarterback will be ready to go.

That's about as much as the Patriots coach was willing to share about the status of the left ankle injury that's left Jones in danger of missing the first start of his career.

"Definitely getting better," Belichick said of Jones. "Made a lot of progress here in the last 48 hours. So keep plugging away and taking it day by day and see how it goes."

Jones did not participate in Wednesday's practice and Belichick also declined to confirm whether Jones' injury was a high ankle sprain.

"What do I look like, a doctor? An orthopedic surgeon? Like, I don't know. Talk to the medical experts," he said.

What have those experts conveyed?

"Day by day," Belichick said. "They'll evaluate him. What difference does it make to me? You think I'm going to read the MRI? That's not my job."

Hoyer has made starts for seven NFL teams during his 14-year career, but has lost his past 11 and amassed

a record of just 16-23. The 2020 start he made for New England in its loss at Kansas City was his lone start with the Patriots. He stepped in that day for Cam Newton, who was out with COVID-19.

"I've played for 14 years, I have a lot of bad memories. I have a lot of good memories, too," Hoyer said. "One game doesn't define me. One play doesn't define me. I'm excited for any opportunity I get a chance to go play. So, I really could care less about that."

Belichick said his confidence in the 36-year-old's ability to lead the offense is high.

"He knows it better than anybody from an overall experience standpoint," Belichick said. "This year is this year. But Brian's had a lot of experience. Been in a lot of different systems. Seen a lot of football. Taken a lot of snaps for us in various capacities. Played well in the preseason. If we need him to go, he'll be ready to go."

Hoyer did acknowledge that there was a difference this time around, with him starting the practice week taking reps with the first team and with a higher probability he'll be playing Sunday. He said he also took first-team reps last week when Jones missed practice with an illness.

Clinton runners capture crown in Jefferson Invite

By Daily News staff

JEFFERSON, Wis.—Sophomores Oliver Melson, Reagan Flickinger and Dylan Yurs powered Clinton to first place in the Jefferson Invitational cross country meet Tuesday while medalist Paige Damman helped the Cougars finish runnerup in the girls standings.

Melson (17:28.75), Flickinger (18:09.88) and Yurs (18:11.89) finished 2-3-4 to lead the Cougars. Nathaniel Ligman (19:09.93) and Nathan Shallenberger (19:23.0) also finished in the top 19 as Clinton finished with 44 points.

Evansville was runnerup with 124 and Big Foot third with 133. Kaeden Weberpal paced the

Chiefs, finishing 14th (19:07.28).

Turner tied for sixth place at 162, with Darren Niedfeldt finishing eighth in 18:48.76. The Trojans' next highest finisher was Leo Nollmeyer in 24th (20:00.85).

Parkview (181) was eighth with 181 points, led by Ethan Diddens' 13th place finish (19:04.11). Brodhead/Juda, led by Nathan Engen's sixth place (18:39.67) and Gavin Pinnow's 21st (19:26.92) finished ninth with 187.

Medalist honors for the boys went to Wayland Academy's Drew Benson (17:27.85).

In the girls competition, Damman won easily in 20:03.1 with Edgerton's Jessi Salimes

next in 20:13.73. Evansville won the team title with 36 points.

Runnerup Clinton had 55. Emma Maly finished third in 20:43.48, Ava Mueller was sixth in 21:42.4, Lylah Peters 19th in 24:18.51 and Natalie Bell 26th in 24:56.41.

Brodhead/Juda finished fifth with 103 points as Kalena Riemer took seventh (22:06.0) and Madilyn Arnold was 15th (23:41.13).

Parkview was sixth with 110. Paige Valley was 14th (23:39.7), Camilla Hauser 17th (24:00.53) and Annie Burchell 18th (24:10.9).

Turner and Big Foot had incomplete teams. Lydia Seifarth finished in 21:33.87 for

Volleyball

Continued from Page A16

Beloit jumped out to a 9-4 lead in the deciding fifth set, with two aces from Kai Wong, before Hereford got the final points of the night to win it 15-9.

Hereford was not only a force on offense, but he dug several of the Lancer's furious strikes to keep Beloit's rallies going.

"He is one of the best I've seen," West said. "The way he can get a full hit on a tight set, and he doesn't hit the net. He's not just a hitter, he's a great passer, one of the best we have. He's an all-around great athlete, and it shows." Hereford had a team-high 19 kills, and he was in a three-way tie for digs with Delgado and Wong.

While Hereford delivered the booming strikes, Wong had



TIM MOORE PHOTO

Beloit Memorial's Aidan Donovan and Jonathan Garrett (1) battle two La Follette players at the net Wednesday night at Barkin Arena.

plenty of tip kills at the net to get the Knights crucial points. He finished with 17 kills.

"He's been working a lot on the placement of his tips," West said. "He had a few really nice hits with great placement, and he's been working a lot on control. Not always getting the hardest hits, but placing it."

The Knights now move to 2-3 in the Big Eight, and they have several tough road games ahead of them. But for now, West and her team will enjoy the last home victory for many of the players.

"This night is very special," West said. "One thing that we've struggled with all season

is finishing. Madison came back, but we were able to finish. They kept us on our toes for sure."

• **BOYS SOCCER:** The volleyball team wasn't the only Beloit Memorial squad celebrating Wednesday night. The Knights soccer team defeated Sun Prairie West at Jacobson Field to improve to 8-3-2 overall and 3-1-2 in the Big Eight.

Baylor Denu tallied two first-half goals and Pablo Guzman made it 3-1 at the 72:50 mark before the Wolves' Tyler Nelson scored.

"It was a dominating performance from whistle to whistle," Beloit head coach Brian Denu said. "It was a great bounce back after a few tough games."

Beloit goalie Beckham Denu posted five saves. Denu said he was impressed with the play of Pablo Guzman, Danny Bruno, Eduardo Gonzalez-Terrero and Kevin Garcia.

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-Philip

Lucas

Continued from Page A16

But I wanted to talk about another local football team that isn't living up to the hype—the Wisconsin Badgers, with emphasis on the Bad in Badgers.

I did not expect the Badgers to be great this year. With their losses on defense and limited capabilities on offense, expecting a Big Ten Championship was likely out of the picture. But I did expect them to beat Washington State. And not be down 28-0 to OSU between me starting to give my kids a bath and me getting done with their baths (which are not long baths).

This is a team that should be competitive against great teams and should be able to roll over opponents they are better than (even if Wazzu looks decent after the way it played Oregon last week).

I think the current iteration of the Badgers has reached its peak and is now plateauing. It won't get any better with the current set up, aka Paul Chryst as head coach. Wisconsin as a program has been doing the same thing for like 30 years now, focusing on the run game, coaching up kids with less talent to fit into a system, and hoping they can either wear down a team with great running backs or shut them out on defense. It was successful, but it just won't work anymore.

In the current landscape of college football, that system is beyond outdated. It's like if you and your buddy are playing the new Madden game but your friend has a full playbook to choose from and you have four runs and four passes like it's Tecmo Bowl. Let's hope he doesn't guess your player or you're toast.

And I don't think Chryst is a guy who will change their current formula. Wisconsin is very proud of being very good, which is something to be proud of! They've been a consistently competitive program for a very long time. But I think it's time to change it up and try to be great.

And to be great, I see two potential options. First would be hiring current defensive coordinator Jim Leonard as head coach. Leonard obviously can run a great defense and it would keep that side of the ball intact. He would need to go out and find a

more innovative offensive coach who understands the current college landscape of read-options and creating throwing windows for your QB that don't take 4-5 seconds to develop.

I like this option. It keeps Leonard here and creates consistency in the program. But I don't think it's how the Badgers become great.

Many years ago, the men's basketball team took a shot on a local, D-3 college coach named Bo Ryan and the program had the most successful run in its history. No high level D-1 football program is pulling a D-3 coach up to run its program, but it could pull up a former D-3 coach who has now run two different D-1 programs successfully. And one with some local ties as well.

Lance Leipold, the former UW-Whitewater head coach and current coach of Kansas, should be the target for the Badgers. He's turned three different programs into winners with UW-Whitewater, Buffalo and Kansas. Before his arrival, Kansas had been called the worst college football program in Division I. The six seasons prior to Leipold, KU had nine wins. They have six already in his two years there, including two conference wins, which they only had three of in those six years. KU's last winning

season was 2008 and the last season with more than three wins was 2009 until Leipold got them off to a 4-0 start.

He's won at every stop he's been at. He still uses the run game effectively but can also pass it. His teams create turnovers and are 26th in the country in least penalties per game. But most importantly, they win.

Now, will the Badgers make this move? Unlikely. I love UW but they are very content with being good and not taking that step to be great. But I think Leipold would be great. And actually give the Badgers a chance to not be down 28-0 to Ohio State in the first half.

Speaking of great, what a W last week for my Bears. Last second field goal against a standout defense. We survived the David Mills onslaught—I had a great victory Monday celebration. (I didn't even watch the end of the game because I was golfing but I am sure it was great.)

I am in second place in Josh's picks pool, one behind him, but that's just me lying in wait, ready to pounce. And this week, I'm pouncing.

Picks: Dolphins, Vikings, Falcons, Cowboys, Lions, Colts, Bears, Eagles, Steelers, Bills, Chargers, Cardinals, Packers, Raiders (gotta win eventually!), Chiefs, Rams.

Knights

Continued from Page A16

Dement is unfazed by the fact Burlington knocked off that same Union Grove team 42-14 two weeks ago.

"High school football is all about momentum," he said. "We definitely had opportunities last week. We rushed for over 200 yards. But it came down to scoring and we missed on some passes, we missed on some blocks and we had some fumbles."

Dement points to

the fact Elkhorn was able to run for over 300 yards against Burlington in a 34-24 loss.

"That game was back and forth until the end," the coach said. "I really think we should be able to run the football effectively this week. We need a little better pass protection, but I think we can throw it, too."

Decarlos Nora rushed for over 100 yards last week and leads Beloit with 103 season carries for 561 yards and five TDs. Toby Robinson has 58 yards for 361 yards and three scores.

The Knights won't have to worry about Romo fading back to pass, but the Demons do have Jack Sulik, who has completed 91-of-163 passes for 1,083 yards and nine TDs. In a 42-21 loss to Badger last week, Sulik was 24-of-35 for 215 yards and two scores.

His favorite target, Tommy Teberg, has 33 receptions for 475 yards for the season.

"They have some playmakers and we have to stop their big plays," Dement said. "We have to make them drive instead of hit us with quick scores."

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Illini coach Bielema downplaying return to Madison

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Illinois' Bret Bielema wants to keep the focus off himself as the former Wisconsin coach returns to Camp Randall Stadium with an opposing team for the first time since his surprising exit a decade ago.

Bielema is following the same advice he gives his players.

"Really since we got together last January, we've said what's behind us is what's behind us," Bielema said. "What's in front of us is what matters."

Bielema posted a 68-24 record at Wisconsin from

2006-12 before leaving to take over Arkansas' program at the end of the 2012 regular season as the Badgers were preparing to play in the Rose Bowl.

Bielema's departure caused hard feelings among Wisconsin's fan base that might become apparent Saturday when the Fighting Illini (3-1, 0-1 Big Ten) visit the Badgers (2-2, 0-1).

"I would anticipate him getting booed just because that seems what fans do nowadays, whether right or wrong," said Wisconsin defensive

coordinator Jim Leonhard, who played safety for the Badgers in 2004 when Bielema was defensive coordinator.

Bielema was fired after going 29-34 at Arkansas from 2013-17 and got hired at Illinois in December 2020. Illinois lost 24-0 at home to Wisconsin last year in Bielema's debut season.

He's matching up with a former colleague. Bielema and Wisconsin coach Paul Chryst were assistant coaches together on Barry Alvarez's Wisconsin staff. Chryst was

Bielema's offensive coordinator at Wisconsin from 2006-11.

One of Bielema's most notable former players will be interested to see what happens.

Russell Wilson, the quarterback of Wisconsin's 2011 Big Ten championship team, had his own bittersweet homecoming earlier this month when his Denver Broncos faced his former teammates in Seattle. When he was asked Wednesday about this game, Wilson mentioned about a dozen former Badger teammates by name.

"Coach Bielema brought those guys in," Wilson said.

"Coach Paul Chryst helped coach them up. These are pillars of success I think in college football, both of those guys. I've been fortunate to be around some of the greatest, in that sense. I know Coach Bielema will have a blast."

Bielema's return isn't a big deal for Wisconsin's current players. After all, they were in grade school when Bielema last coached here.

"I don't really know anything about it to be honest," Wisconsin running back Braelon Allen said this week when the topic of Bielema's return came up.



Bielema

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