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Courier Hub

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Boys basketball

Stoughton secures spot in Badger East title game

Vikings use balance attack to take down Silver Eagles

JACK MILLER

Digital sports editor

Stoughton is headed to the Badger East Conference champion-

The Vikings claimed their spot in the conference title game after a 74-54 Badger East win

over Monona Grove on Tuesday, its first conference title since Feb. 14, at Monona Grove High

Stoughton (17-6, 10-4 Badger East) – ranked 10th in the Division 2 WisSports.net Coaches poll will play Northeast Division winner Waunakee in the Badger East championship game on Thursday, Feb. 23, in Waunakee. The Warriors defeated the Vikings 71-67 on Feb. 10.

Stoughton is searching for

the 2019-2020 season when the Vikings won the Badger South.

"I think it's going to be really fun to play in a true conference championship game," Stoughton head coach Nolan Weber said. That doesn't happen too often. They're a good team that beat us the first time. I know our kids will be excited.'

The Vikings received a No.

Turn to **Basketball**/Page 8



Photo by Jack Miller Stoughton's LeShawn Brown goes up for a putback during the Vikings' 74-54 Bädger East win over Monona Grove on Tuesday, Feb. 14, at Monona Grove High School.

Girls hockey

Icebergs' regional rally comes up short

Gruner racks up 61 saves for Stoughton in loss to Fury

MARK NESBITT

Sports editor

Senior forward Ainsley Saling scored a third-period goal, but the Stoughton girls hockey co-op's rally came up short in a 2-1 regional road loss to the Rock County Fury on Friday, Feb. 17, at Edwards Ice Arena in Beloit.

The Fury outshot the Icebergs 63-30, and had a big 22-9 edge in the first period. Stoughton finished the season 4-19. It marks the third time this year the Icebergs lost to the Fury.

Rock County's Emma Kligora scored on an assist by Macy Murphy at 4 minutes, 33 seconds in

Turn to **Hockey**/Page 7

Boys hockey

Vikings fall in regional final

Vinson scores lone goal for Stoughton against St. Mary's **Springs**

JACK MILLER

Digital sports editor

Top-seeded St. Mary's Springs defeated the Stoughton boys hockey team 13-1 in a WIAA Division 2 regional final on Friday, Feb. 17, at Blue Line Family Ice Center.

The Ledgers scored five times in the first period and four times in both the second and third periods. Stoughton junior Colton Vinson scored the final goal of the game to put the Vikings on the board. The short-handed goal came with 9 minutes, 50 seconds left in the third period.

Forwards Gabe Braun and Austin Westergaard both finished with a goal and three assists for St. Mary's Springs. Stoughton ends its season with four wins after claiming just one victory last year.

Wrestling



Stoughton senior Griffin Empey at heavyweight completes a takedown against Waunakee's Jackson Lenzendorf in a semifinal in a WIAA Division 1 Waunakee sectional on Saturday, Feb. 18, at Waunakee High School. Empey pinned Lenzendorf to win a sectional title and qualify for state for a fourth

Stoughton sends five wrestlers to Division 1 state meet

MARK NESBITT

Sports editor

Five grapplers for the Stoughton wrestling team are still chasing a gold medal after their performances at the WIAA Division 1 Waunakee sectional vaulted them to the state tournament at the Kohl Center.

'It means a lot and not many guys get to do it," said Griffin Empey, a North Dakota State University football commit. "The goal is always higher than just making it there. It's kind of an expectation I set for myself and the coaches set for

The boys wrestling sectional champions who qualified for state on Saturday, Feb. 18, in Waunakee are senior Chance Suddeth at 132 pounds, junior Cole Sarbacker (145), junior Beckett Spilde (220) and Empey (heavyweight). Senior Claire Spilde qualified for the girls state tournament after winning a sectional title at 126 pounds.

'We are pleased we have a group of five going on to the state tournament," Stoughton co-coach Dan Spilde said. "Going into state, our goal is to come out with five medals. We won't have any No. 1 seeds. We will be the underdog in every single

Turn to **Wrestling**/Page 6

Team state tourney streak snapped

Vikings were seeking 10th straight state bid

JACK MILLER

Digital sports editor

An impressive state tournament streak was snapped when the Stoughton wrestling team lost its WIAA Division 1 team sectional final to Reedsburg 48-27 on Tuesday, Feb. 14, at Baraboo High School.

The Vikings had advanced to the team state tournament in nine consecutive seasons

Turn to **Team**/Page 8

Coming Up



Time, date, location subject to change. Check badgerconference. org for updates

THURSDAY, FEB. 23

Wrestling

WIAA Division 1 State Tournament, 3 p.m., Kohl Center

Boys basketball

Stoughton at Waunakee Badger East Championship, 7:15 p.m., Waunakee **High School**

FRIDAY, FEB. 24

WIAA Division 1 State Tournament, 10 a.m. / 7 p.m., Kohl Center

Girls basketball

Stoughton/Monroe vs. McFarland WIAA Division 2 Regional, TBD, McFarland High School

SATURDAY, FEB. 25

Wrestling

WIAA Division 1 State Tournament, 10 a.m. / 5:30 p.m., Kohl Center

Girls basketball

WIAA Division 1 Regional, TBD, TBD

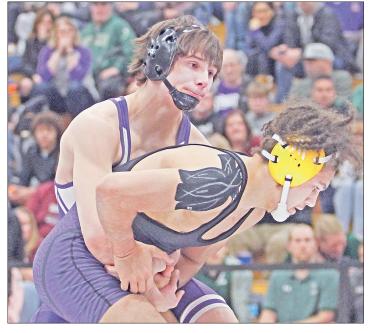
Athlete of the Week



Julian Callender

State Meet Stats

State championships: 1 Podium finishes: 3 100 breaststroke: 56.76





Left: Stoughton junior Cole Sarbacker looks to take down Madison East's Mikel Myadze in a 145-pound semifinal match in a WIAA Division 1 sectional on Saturday, Feb. 18, at Waunakee High School. Sarbacker defeated Myadze 7-2 and went on to win a sectional title to qualify for state for a third straight year. Right: Stoughton senior Chance Suddeth looks to turn Madison La Follette's Irie Jackson in a 132-pound semifinal match.

Wrestling: Empey clips Mankowski in heavyweight title

Continued from page 5

weight class."

Stoughton had 13 wrestlers in the sectional and seven earned top-four finishes. Empey (170) both took third each weight class advance to

"Sectionals is always bittersweet," Dan Spilde said.

He said there are wrestlers standards because of injury or illness and came short of qualifying for state.

went down to the wire included Griffin Empey - ranked second in the Division 1 Wisconsin Grappler state rankings - and Beckett Spilde - ranked sixth at 220.

Entering the third period, Empey led third-ranked Madison La Follette senior Jackson Mankowski 1-0. Mankowski – a state champion at 220 pounds last year - scored on left to take a 2-1 lead. Empey then turned the tables and pulled off a reversal late in the third period to clip Mankow-

It marks the third time this season that Empey has defeated Mankowski.

"It was a great high-level high school match," Dan Spilde said.

Empey opened the sectional by pinning Reedsburg's Isaac Henke in 51 seconds. Soderbloom bounced back moves was natural because ly, she can prove some people In a semifinal match, he beat and knocked off Madison it's similar to the skills he wrong." Waunakee's Iackson I dorf by fall in 1:34.

scored on an escape in the zalez for a 1-0 victory in the title match.

"Both wrestlers were good with their defense and lower half," Dan Spilde said. "I that gives him momentum going into the state tournament.

has knocked off Gonzalez. He championship match. defeated him in an ultimate tiebreaker in overtime in a semifinal in the Badger Conference Tournament. Then, he pinned Madison Memorial's beat Gonzalez 3-0 in a regional match.

sectional by pinning Waunakee's Tyler Endres in 1:39. To reach the title match, by a fall in 40 seconds in a said. "We want to build that

he pinned Mount Horeb/ Barneveld's Garrett Waefler in 1:33 in a semifinal match.

Both Suddeth (132) and Junior Ethan Soderbloom Sarbacker (145) breezed (152) and freshman Gatlin through in making a return to state. Suddeth (48-4) – ranked place. The top two finishers in fourth – defeated Parker Olson of Sun Prairie United 9-2 in a title match. He opened the sectional, rolling by Middleton's Aiden Dowd in a technical fall in 2:52, 15-0. Suddeth who didn't perform up to their then defeated Madison La Follette's Irie Jackson 7-1 in a semifinal match.

Sarbacker (45-7) - ranked Two thrilling matches that sixth – won all three of his matches to return to state for the third straight year. He defeated Oregon senior Brandon Liddle 8-2 in the championship match. Sarbacker dominated his first match, pinning Sauk Prairie's Austin Lankey in 56 seconds. In a semifinal match, he defeated Madison East's Mikel Myadze 7-2.

Claire Spilde didn't have to wrestle a match at the sectiona reversal with about a minute al in her weight class to reach state.

> Soderbloom, who was battling an illness, took third. He finished the season 38-11. Gatlin Empey (170) also took

5:23. In a semifinal match, for football. It turns out I'm the seeding and will have to Madison West's Damiano somewhat good at it." Madison West's Damiano somewhat good at it.' Cappellini defeated him 7-3. East's Braxton Weisenburger uses in football. in a major decision 9-0 in a Beckett Spilde (46-6) at 220 third-place match.

Gatlin Empey went 2-2 and second period and then rode finished the season at 23-25 out Reedsburg's Jesus Gon- in his first season of high school wrestling. Reedsburg's Devin Judd defeated him 6-2 in a second-place match. Gatlin Empey won his first two matches to reach the title think Beckett wrestled an match. He edged Sauk Praiextremely smart match and rie's Alex Katers 2-1 in his first match. He then pinned Waunakee's Joe Kaney in 2:44 in a semifinal match. Mid-It marks the third time this dleton's Bryce Falk pinned season that Beckett Spilde Gatlin Empey in 2:32 in the

Freshman Danil Kostetskyi placed fourth at 160. In a first-round match, Kostetskvi Ben Morrison-Phillips in 4:25. Reedsburg's Peyton Fry then Beckett Spilde opened the clipped him 3-0 in a semifinal match. Sauk Prairie's Brason Ballweg then beat Kostetskyi



Stoughton junior Beckett Spilde works for position against Mount Horeb/ Barneveld's Garrett Waefler in a 220-pound semifinal match in the WIAA Division 1 Waunakee sectional on Saturday, Feb. 18, at Waunakee High School. Spilde pinned Waefler in 1 minute, 33 seconds and captured a sectional championship to qualify for state.

third-place match.

Stoughton's Gabe Schneider (106), Lukas Hartberg (113), Victor Rivera (126), Will Hollister (138), Joe Wahlin (182), Kaeson Salonek (195) each lost first-round matches to finish the season.

Wahlin, who entered the season with no previous wrestling experience, qualified for the sectional at 182 and finished the season 8-13.

"I did not think I would Soderbloom went 2-1. He get here," Wahlin said. "It's opened the sectional with a a pretty big surprise. I came pin against Mount Horeb/ in here just thinking to do it Barneveld's Ryan Errthum in because it would benefit me

wrestling foundation next sea-"I will definitely wrestle my senior year," he said.

State preview

For three years Claire Spilde served as the Stoughton wrestling team's manager. That's until this year when she traded in a clipboard for head

Spilde (9-2) – ranked ninth at 126 pounds – is the Vikings' first ever girls WIAA state tournament qualifier. The WIAA sponsored a girls state wrestling tournament for the first time ever last season and it was open to all girls. This season, girls had to qualify for state at the sectional like boys wrestlers.

"She wanted to come in and put her wrestling shoes on and give it a shot," Dan Spilde

(girls wrestling program)."

Two signature wins for Claire Spilde this year are an 11-0 win over Neenah's Kylee Kurszewski, who at the time was ranked seventh, and a 4-1 victory over Amelia Adams of La Crosse Logan/Central, who at the time was ranked 10th.

Dan Spilde said one drawback for Claire is that she hasn't wrestled as many matches as other qualifiers this season and since she didn't wrestle last season, her criteria and resume for seeding is smaller.

She will have it tough in He said learning some of the will be an underdog. Hopeful-

Wahlin plans to build on his looking to take in the moment in her first state tournament as a prep wrestler, four other Stoughton wrestlers are looking to medal. Griffin Empey has finished as the Division 1 state runner-up at heavyweight the last two years.

Empey is just the third fourtime state qualifier in the history of the program. He joins Nicolar Rivera, a threetime state champion and Ron Pieper. Empey lost in the state title match to River Valls' Vito Massa 4-2 last year. Two years ago, he lost in the 220-pound state title match to Ashwaubenon's Nathan Moynihan, 2-1.

Suddeth took third at state at 120 last season.

Sarbacker went 2-2 at state last season and is looking to improve after getting knocked out in the second round in the consolation bracket after a

quarterfinal loss.

Boys basketball

Fernholz joins the 1,000-point club

Junior guard averaging 20.7 points per game, second in the state in made 3-pointers

JACK MILLER

Digital sports editor

On a day that celebrates love, it's only fitting that a player that loves the game of basketball as much as Ty Fernholz was honored.

The junior guard joined Stoughton's 1,000-point club during a 74-54 win over Monona Grove on Tuesday, Feb. 14.

Stoughton head coach Nolan Weber called Fernholz a special player.

'I haven't coached anybody who can put the ball in the basket the way he does." Weber said. "He has a knack for it. The amount of hours this kid has put into basketball to get to where he is – you wouldn't believe it."

Fernholz entered the game with 990 points. He scored his 11th point of the game off a 3-pointer with just over a minute left in the first half to eclipse the 1,000th-point milestone. Fernholz celebrated with a large Stoughton contingent after the game.

"As a kid growing up, I was the youngest brother in my family," Fernholz said. "I went to a lot of high school basketball games. Never really became a thought of mine until around the eighth grade. I had all these goals I wanted to accomplish and that (1,000 points) was one of them. It's a dream come true, it's awesome. It feels kind of surreal right now.

Family first

Fernholz's family played a



Above: Stoughton's Ty Fernholz looks to get by a defender during the Vikings' 74-54 Badger East win over Monona Grove on Tuesday, Feb. 14, at Monona Grove High School.

- specifically his father. Fernholz - who has a Division II scholarship offer from Michigan Tech – said he and his dad spent many hours in the gym over the

"Me and my dad, we get gym time and he runs me through footwork - he spends many hours watching videos on dif-ferent types of footwork I can work on," Fernholz said. "We just spend hours in the gym perfecting it. Can't thank that man enough. He's really helped me through the years.'

Fernholz also played two seabig part in the accomplishment sons with his older brother Luke.

"He's always been my mentor, my role model," Fernholz said. 'We've always been close, we're close in age. Playing with him last year was also a dream come

Stoughton's sniper

Fernholz has been the premier 3-pointer shooter in Division 2 and one of the best in the state this season. Fernholz sits second in the state in made 3-pointers with 96, according to the WisSports.net database. His 96 3-pointers is the most in the state by a Division 2 player – by 22

said. "To make over four 3s a game with the amount of pressure teams put on him - sometimes I don't know how he does

Everything earned

Fernholz - listed at 6-foot-2 – is averaging 20.7 points per game and is shooting 45.3% from beyond the arc.

He's scored in double digits in 22 of 23 games this season and has scored 29 or more points four times this year.

"It's really special for him because he earns all of it," Weber

"It's pretty amazing," Weber said. "He's not a freak athlete going and getting dunks or anything. He has to work his tail off for everything he gets."

Postseason prospects

With Fernholz leading the way, Stoughton looks to be in prime position to make some noise in the upcoming Division 2 tournament - which will start Feb. 28.

'We have to keep in our minds that we can do this, we've done it all year," Fernholz said. "We're one of the teams to beat. We just have to have that mentality.'

Girls basketball

Stoughton drops finale

Reott scores team-high 17 points for Vikings

MARK NESBITT

Sports editor

In a postseason tuneup, the Stoughton girls baskethall team couldn't slow down Watertown and lost a regular season road finale in the Badger East playoffs to the Goslings 64-44 on Friday, Feb. 17.

The Goslings jumped out to a 36-25 lead at the ing between the two teams, half. Watertown's Alyx Johnson scored a gamehigh 26 points. She hit 11

Stoughton senior guard Maddie Reott scored a team-high 17 points. Senior guard Ava Perkins chipped in seven points. Sophomore forward Gretchen Tangeman added six points.

Stoughton (9-15) will play Monroe in a WIAA Division 2 regional quarterfinal on Tuesday, Feb. 21, at Stoughton High School.

The Vikings beat the Cheesemakers 75-15 the third game of the season on Nov. 22. In the first meet-Stoughton had a balanced scoring attack with four players in double figures.

Hockey: Icebergs stymie Fury on the power play

Continued from page 5

the first period.

Rock County's Maizy Fonseca scored on assists from Kligora and Tabitha to give the Fury a 2-0 lead.

It was a defensive battle for both teams. The 61 saves.

Icebergs shut out the Fury on the power play (0-for-

Stoughton went 0-for-4 Utzig at 4:01 in the second on the power play. Stoughton senior goaltender Aven Gruner had a game-high



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Basketball: Vikings beat Fort Atkinson, but defeated by Newman Catholic

Continued from page 5

2 seed in the WIAA Division 2 tournament and will host the winner of No. 7 DeForest and No. 10 Fort Atkinson in a regional tilt on Friday, March 3.

Junior guard Ty Fernholz scored 18 points to lead Stoughton past Monona Grove. He also reached the 1,000-point milestone with a 3-pointer with just over a minute left in the first half.

The Vikings never trailed in the game. Back-to-back 3-pointers from junior guard Sawyer Schipper gave Stoughton an 11-5 lead with 13 minutes, 23 seconds left in the first half. Sophomore wing LeShawn Brown had putbacks on consecutive offensive possessions to extend the Vikings' advantage to 22-15 with 9:52 until halftime.

With 6:25 left in the first, an offensive rebound by senior forward Michael Turner led to a Fernholz 3-pointer to give Stoughton its first double-digit lead at 28-17.

The Vikings led by as much as 30-17, but an 8-0 Silver Eagle spurt cut the lead down to 30-25. Another Brown putback stopped the run with just under three minutes until halftime. That score was followed up with a layup from Brown to give the Vikings some breathing room at 34-25.

Brown - along with Turner, junior forward Ben Harman and sophomore forward Carter Sullivan controlled the offensive glass to give Stoughton extra posses-

sions throughout the night.
"That was huge for us," Weber said. "We talked about how we thought they were susceptible



Photo by Jack Miller

Stoughton's Jay Johnson fights through a defender during the Vikings' 74-54 Badger East win over Monona Grove on Tuesday, Feb. 14, at Monona Grove High School.

but they also transition well. I on the offensive glass, but still lead into the break. getting back well enough to take away their transition."

Fernholz scored his 11th point around – to take a 43-31 lead to 52-40.

to giving up offensive rebounds, of the half and his 1,001th of his start the second half. Monona high school career when he made Grove cut Stoughton's lead down thought our kids did a good com- a 3-pointer with 1:02 left in the to single digits at 49-40 with just bination of going and getting it first half. Stoughton took a 37-30 under 11 minutes to play - but

run – capped by a Fernholz turn- guard Mason Marggi to make it

an offensive rebound from Sulli-The Vikings raced off to a 6-1 van led to a 3-pointer from senior

"We've done this a few times where things don't go perfectly for us, but I felt like every time we needed a play, we made one," Weber said. "It wasn't always

Schipper scored 12 points, while Sullivan also broke double digits with 10 points. Harman and Marggi both had nine points, while Brown chipped in eight

"I thought our balance was good," Weber said.

"We haven't always had that this year. It's nice when we have balance."

Stoughton 59, Fort Atkinson 53

Stoughton overcame a sixpoint halftime deficit to earn a Badger Conference East win over the Blackhawks on Friday, Feb. 17, at Stoughton High School.

Fernholz led the way with 20 points, while freshman guard Jacob Hibner netted 15 points. Schipper added 11 points.

Newman Catholic 58, Stoughton 55

The Vikings nearly rallied to win a nonconference game against Newman Catholic on Saturday, Feb. 18, at Stoughton High School.

Stoughton trailed 36-21 at the half, but outscored Catholic 31-16 to send the game to overtime. The Vikings were outpaced 6-3 in the overtime period. Fernholz scored 18 points off six 3-pointers. Harman added 13

Team: Stoughton wins seven of first eight matches against Waunakee

Continued from page 5

- appearing in the state finals Mittlesteadt.

49-22 in the semifinal, while Reedsburg - the defending Badger Conference and Badger West champions - rolled by Sun Prairie United 57-19 in its semifinal.

Reedsburg 48, Stoughton 27

The first five matches of the dual all featured pins with Stoughton earning three of them to take an 18-12 lead. Stoughton's Chance Suddeth (132) tied the dual at 6-6 with Reedsburg's Jesus Gonzalez earlier this season, but the Empey (170) won via 8-2 and a 50-second pin against Brogan for the second time in three rematch wasn't nearly as close 7-2 decisions, respectively.

After a Reedsburg pin at Stoughton defeated Badger 138, the Vikings got consecu-East Conference foe Waunakee tive pins from Cole Sarbacker (145) and Danil Kostetskyi (152) to take an 18-12 advan-

The Beavers reeled off four straight wins - including a pair of pins at 182 and 195. Stoughton's Ethan Soderbloom lost a 3-1 decision to Peyton Fry - ranked No. 10 in Division 1 at 160 by Wisconsin Grappler in the 152 bout.

Reedsburg's four straight wins from 160 to 195 gave the Beavers a 30-18 lead. Stoughweeks with a 3-0 decision.

Spilde - ranked No. 6 at - ranked No. 7 - at the Badger Conference meet.

Spilde's win was followed by 51-second pin from Griffin Empey at 285 – who is ranked No. 2 in the weight class. That cut the Beaver lead to 30-27.

Reedsburg closed out the dual with three pins at 106, 113 and 120.

Stoughton 49, Waunakee 22

in the sectional semifinals.

Stoughton captured seven 220 - also defeated Gonzalez of the first eight matches to race out to a 31-5 lead. Claire Spilde got the Vikings on the board at 120 with an 8-3 win over Payton Schutz.

After a Waunakee forfeit at 126, Suddeth - ranked No. 3 at 132 - found a pin late in the first period (1:53) against Coltan Nechvatal.

Waunakee won at 138, but Stoughton responded with a Sarbacker pin (3:37) against Gabriel Metzler at 145.

Soderbloom (152) picked up The Vikings edged the War- a 12-4 major decision, while ton's Beckett Spilde beat riors 33-30 in a dual meet Kostetskyi (160) and Gatlin

D1 State Qualifiers

Rank **Team** No. 1 Kaukauna No. 3 Bay Port No. 4 Marshfield No. 5 Mukwonago No. 8 Germantown N/A Reedsburg N/A Waukesha West Muskego N/A

Other winners for the Vikings included Beckett Spilde (220, pin), Griffin Empey (285, pin) and Lukas Hartberg (113, pin).





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