

'Unbelievable' finish to the season

Lakeland bowling club gets approved, wins five of their last six games

Brett LaBore

OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

After a slow start to the season, Lakeland's new bowling club ended on a high note, including a win over an undefeated team.

The Lakeland bowling club became official in January. At the Jan. 23 LUHS school board meeting, Lakeland bowling presented their case to the board in hopes of becoming a club.

"I worked with the high school and the athletic director (Emily Wizner), and she had a checklist of things we had to do. We put it all together, had a little meeting, reviewed it all, put it before the board," coach John Huber said. "(We were) first on the agenda, we had five of our bowlers show up, four when meeting started and three had their shirts on and stood in front of the board and Emily presented us as being a club."

The board approved the Lakeland bowling club, making it official.

"It certifies all the hard work that we've put in and gives like a physical reward and shows everything we've put forward and then some," junior Talon Haling said.

With the approval of the Lakeland bowling club comes benefits such as funding, transportation and varsity letters.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOGRAPH

The Lakeland bowling club officially got approved on Jan. 23, one day after beating an undefeated Antigo team. Bowlers are, from left, Trent Cleveland, Talon Haling, Talan Pockat, Cody Harris, Xavier Lamaide, Nick Blank, Amadeus King, Marissa Hilmer, Mason Bowling, Nick Theis, Ronnie Hilmer, Nick Waller.

"For the students they get recognized by Lakeland, receive letters — anyone on varsity receives a letter. Financially we had to be self-sustaining," Huber said. "Now we'll get some (funding) for traveling down there, get to use school buses."

Lakeland had a rough start to their season. They started 0-4, not the way they wanted to kick off their year.

"We lost a couple close matches in the beginning and had we won those (we'd be in) contention to go to state," Huber said.

Lakeland came together to ensure they would have a positive end to their season. They went 5-1 over their last six games to finish 5-5 on the season.

"We all kind of got together during practice.

'(We) got to do something, got to fix it.' (We) put in extra work, being more communicative and we won the next four and then the last day we split one and one and missed the playoffs by one game," Haling said. "Our rally at the end of the season built us so much as a team and our bond and I'm so proud of that."

One of the season highlights came the day before they got approved as a club. On Jan. 22 at a dual meet at Dale's Weston Lanes, Lakeland beat Antigo who were 7-0 at the time.

"We played against them, and we beat them pretty handily so we came out with two big wins, and we won our other match," Huber said. "Those two things (plus the) Monday meeting and we got approved (was) icing on the cake."

It was the first time Antigo had lost a regular season series in seven years.

"We went in there and beat them 6-3 and we were down a guy so we only had five guys that day, and it was probably the greatest feeling I've ever had," Haling said. "Such a great day and our team was super excited, and it was defiantly the high of our season as a team."

Meets take place on Sundays during the season at Dale's Weston Lanes.

"Every meet's on a Sunday and it's a Baker-styled tournament so it's five people and all five people together bowl one game against another team," Haling said.

Practices are held at Island City Lanes in Minocqua where bowlers are able to practice for free.

"Practices right now are Monday's after school. They're super fun, very relaxed, a very great team essence is built. You learn how to bowl, get help from the coaches as well as help from people around you," Haling said. "Great team atmosphere, very fun, very relaxed."

"Giving kids the opportunity is awesome. That's what the whole thing is about. These kids were much better bowlers than I was at that age," Huber said. "They're competing and getting ... some kids are getting college credit. Last year we qualified with one of the kids for an adult youth scholarship tournament."

Two other season highlights included two bowlers

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LUHS softball building on last season

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OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

A young Lakeland softball team came on at the end of last season, nearly upsetting Medford in the playoffs. The Thunderbirds return almost all of their production from last season as they look to build on last year's campaign.

Whitney Tornow takes over the Lakeland softball program. A volunteer coach last year, she is ready for her opportunity to coach a young team with tons of potential.

"I'm very excited and look forward to the opportunity to coach this group of young ladies," she said. "I'm fortunate to walk in to a program that already has a group of girls that are hungry

to learn and have what it takes to turn this program around."

First day

The Thunderbirds got their season started with the first day of practice on Wednesday, March 15. The team worked on a little bit of everything including fielding grounders and throwing.

By the end of practice, the team rotated through a variety of batting exercises that worked on bunting, live batting practice and hitting off the tee.

Season preview

Sophomore Saylor Timmerman had an outstanding freshman season last year. As a pitcher, she ranked fourth in the GNC in

ERA at 3.00. Her 169 strikeouts in 77 innings pitched ranked first in conference, 69 more than Martha Miller of Medford.

As a batter, Saylor Timmerman ranked third with a .475 batting average. She tied for first with 19 hits (Mosinee's Amber Gonzalez) and led the conference with three home runs. She also picked up 14 RBIs. All stats are from the conference season.

At times, Saylor Timmerman dominated competition. She threw a perfect game vs. Rhinelander last year and limited Shawano to one run in an upset playoff win.

"Saylor is just a pure



BRETT LABORE/LAKELAND TIMES

Whitney Tornow takes over as head coach of a young Thunderbirds team that made some noise in last year's playoffs.

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recording a 299. Haling got one of those 299s as did freshman Talan Pockat.

Haling received his 299 in the Vader Tournament on Jan. 21 on a sports shot.

"I'd give my two 300s for one 299 on a sports shot. It's a much more difficult shot and for this kid to do it in a tournament and we were sitting on the bubble," Huber said. "It

was a huge game and ... he's going to have 300s in his future."

Pockat scored his 299 Feb. 25 at the Badger State Games to an 818 series. He showed how bright his future is.

"I'd be surprised if he doesn't get a college scholarship. His parents, desire, work ethic are all leading him in the right direction," Huber said. "(He has) aspirations to be an Olympic bowler. He's getting really close to making that dream

come true, and (I'd) be surprised if he doesn't make it to at least the college level."

Huber continues to look to expand the bowling club as he also coaches Lakeland's youth bowling team.

"(We need) to develop our youth so we have bowling in the future," he said.

"If someone is not doing anything in the winter and wants to be part of a team ... come to a meet, meet some new people and maybe find a new sport that

they love," Haling said.

In order to expand upon this season, Haling says the team needs to keep working on their craft.

"The only thing we can do better is we have to keep practicing as much as we can," he said. "The bowling alley is open seven days a week as much as we can be there. Otherwise just about throwing strikes and winning meets."

Lakeland did not qualify for the state tournament. That is

one of their goals for next season.

"It was difficult to see us start 0-4. We learned from last year," Huber said. "First year (we went) 2-8 and 5-5 this year and next year I think if we're going to state, next year is the year to go to state."

A number of Lakeland bowlers competed at the state tournament. Haling and Pockat both got \$120 in scholarship money.

"It shows that everything me and my team

have put forth has meant something and allowed other bowlers in the future to join the team and have something that they're proud of," Haling said. "Overall a great season, I'm proud of everything we've achieved as a team and the individual growth among all our teammates."

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OPENING WEEK

Tristan Rainey goes through his pitching motion during pitcher instruction week Thursday, March 16 at the Lakeland Union High School fieldhouse in Minocqua.

LOCAL SCHEDULE

Tuesday, March 21

-Off-

Wednesday, March 22

-Off-

Thursday, March 23

Lakeland softball vs. Kingsford, Mich. at Rhinelander - 6:30 p.m.

Friday, March 24

Lakeland softball vs. TBD at Rhinelander - TBD

Saturday, March 25

Lakeland track at LUHS fieldhouse - 9 a.m.
Lakeland softball at Waupun - 12 p.m.

Sunday, March 26

-Off-

Monday, March 27

-Off-

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competitor. She will do whatever she can to win," Tornow said. "She also has worked very hard this off-season to get stronger, which will give her even more of an edge on the mound."

One of the goals is to keep Saylor Timmerman more consistent in 2023.

"I think if we can keep her focus smaller, such as, one pitch at a time, that will help her stay more consistent throughout the game," Tornow said.

Sophomore Ali Timmerman did the catching last year. The catching position is up in the air as the Thunderbirds see who will fit best in the position.

"We have a couple viable options to evaluate in the next couple days," Tornow

said. "Time will only tell."

Junior Hannah Louis is one of the few upperclassmen on the team. She finished honorable mention all-conference last year, batting .295 with a .380 on-base percentage. She had 13 hits, four doubles, seven RBIs and three stolen bases. She struck out only three times in 44 at-bats.

"Hannah is another girl that brings a lot of experience to our team," Tornow said. "Hannah has already proven to be a great leader and will be huge asset to our team."

Sophomore Kieran Petrie finished last year with a .279 batting average with an on-base percentage of .392. She is looking to be even better this year.

"Kieran is a natural athlete, that has worked hard this offseason, to improve

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BRETT LABORE/LAKELAND TIMES

Hannah Louis had one of the top bats for Lakeland last year. She is one of the leaders for the Thunderbirds.

LOCAL SCOREBOARD

BOWLING

ISLAND CITY LANES

Thursday Men's Major Bowling League
Thursday, March 16

High Game	
Paul Johnson	274
Jake Lelonek	266
Frank Sterzinger	266

High Series

Rod Deja	698
Jake Lelonek	671
Paul Johnson	659
Team High Game	
Quality Heating	1168
LT Tap House	993
Island City Lanes	986
Team High Series	
Quality Heating	3213
Island City Lanes	2822

LT Tap House	2768
Standings as of March 16	
Team	W-L
Dave & Dean's Tire	46-31
Headwaters	47-30
Little Brown Jug	45-32
Island City Lanes	46-31
LT Tap House	46-31
Misfits	46-31
Whitman's	44-33
Quality Heating	42-25

Quimette Painting	41-36
Big Bear Hideaway	29-48
Daniel's Distinctive Design	24-53

SOFTBALL

PREP SOFTBALL

GNC Standings as of Saturday, March 18	
Team	GNC Ovr

Antigo	0-0	0-0	12:30 p.m.
Lakeland	0-0	0-0	Wednesday's Game
Medford	0-0	0-0	Antigo vs. Cushing Academy, at Florida (NC), 10 a.m.
Mosinee	0-0	0-0	Thursday's Games
Northland Pines	0-0	0-0	Antigo vs. Archbishop Wood, at Florida (NC), 10 a.m.
Rhineland	0-0	0-0	Lakeland vs. Kingsford, Mich., at Rhinelander (NC), 6:30 p.m.
Tomahawk	0-0	0-0	Boyceville at Rhinelander (NC), 8:30 p.m.
Tuesday's Games			
Antigo vs. Cushing Academy, at Florida (NC), 9 a.m.			
Antigo vs. Grantsburg, at Florida (NC),			