

WIAA STATE VOLLEYBALL

Ponies earn silver



Times photo: Natalie Dillon

The Monticello Ponies celebrate the first volleyball state trophy in program history. Monticello lost to defending champion McDonnell Central Catholic in the WIAA Division 4 state championship on Nov. 5 at the Resch Center in Green Bay.

Monticello senior Ellie Gustafson sets multiple state tournament records

By Natalie Dillon
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GREEN BAY — The Monticello volleyball team ended its 2022 season as WIAA Division 4 state runners-up to defending state champion McDonnell Central Catholic (41-12). With the silver ball in hand, Monticello set a program-best finish, improving upon last year's state semifinal loss.

"I'm at a loss for words. I never thought we'd say we finished our season at the state tournament — at the state champion-

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A photo page from the Ponies' trip to state. **Page A12**

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WIAA FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS, LEVEL 3

Monroe dominates WBE 35-0

Rain, mud, Cheese too much for West Bend East

By Adam Krebs
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MONROE — For the second straight year, the Cheesemakers have punched their ticket to the WIAA Division 3 state semifinal. On Nov. 4, Monroe pitched its seventh shutout of the season, drowning West Bend East 35-0.

"Another shutout — unbelievable," Monroe coach Toby Golembiewski said.

Rain fell constantly throughout the night — sometimes as a drizzle, most of the time heavier — and T.R. Holyoke Field became treacherously muddy. The conditions were not conducive to the Suns (9-3), which hadn't played a game this season on grass turf. The wet weather also factored into the WBE's passing game, hampering the ability to complete passes.

"Defensively we did a really good job of taking away their inside run," said senior linebacker Tucker Markham, adding that WBE needed to then push the ball outside, which was where the line-backing core was waiting on every play. He said that the sloppy conditions only added



Times photo: Adam Krebs

Monroe's James Seagreaves not only bats away a fourth-quarter West Bend East pass, but intercepts. The Cheesemakers picked off the Suns three times in a 35-0 win in their WIAA Division 3 Level 3 game Nov. 4 at T.R. Holyoke Field.

to the enjoyment of the win. "This was so fun. We came into it knowing it would be raining and hoping it wouldn't get called off. We knew they didn't want to come down here — they wanted to be on a turf field."

Monroe's strong, speedy and aggressive defense took full advantage, forcing three interceptions and recovering a fumble, all while holding the

Suns to just 78 yards of total offense and four first downs — three of which came on a single drive.

"I was surprised they didn't take a few more shots than what they did. I think they had trouble getting the ball off," Golembiewski said.

Offensively, the Cheesemakers (12-0) did what they do best: Pound it on the ground. Monroe running

backs ran for a combined 332 yards on 43 carries — a 7.7 yards per touch average. Impressively enough, the yards per play average was about two yards shy of Monroe's season average.

Kaden Kuester was the man of the night, gaining 158 yards on just eight carries and scoring three touchdowns. He

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WIAA FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS, LEVEL 3

Redbirds soar into semifinals

Darlington ruins Kenosha St. Joseph's perfect season 20-6, will meet Mondovi for third time in four years

By Natalie Dillon
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KENOSHA — Darlington took to the rode for its Level 3 playoff game against undefeated Kenosha St. Joseph, ending



Times photo: Natalie Dillon
Darlington's Talan Christ applies pressure to Kenosha St. Joseph quarterback Eric Kenesie during their WIAA Division 6 Level 3 playoff game Nov. 4 at Kenosha Tremper.

the Lancers' season with a 20-6 victory.

The Redbirds wasted no time scoring, marching 51 yards to the end zone in 1:26. In two carries, Maddox Goebel went 39 yards for two first downs, and Tye Crist finished the drive with a 10-yard TD run.

"When you come out and score like that its big," head coach Travis Winkers said. "When you do that to a team, all of a sudden they are thinking in the back of their mind, 'Holy smokes, these guys are physical.'"

In their opening drive, the Lancers gradually moved down field with three- to four-yard runs. Their top rushers — Eric Kenesie and Jayden Gordon — combined for three first downs. Near midfield, Kenesie pitched it to Gordon, but the wet ball slipped right through Gordon's fingers. Breylin Goebel recovered the ball on Kenosha's 37-yard line.

"It's pretty big. It changed the momentum as the game went on," junior linebacker Reagan Jackson said. "A lot of us built off that on the offensive side of the ball."

In Darlington's next possession, Breylin Goebel converted two rushing first downs, forcing Kenosha to use its first timeout. As the offense ran to the sideline, shouts of "They can't hang with us" and "Let's go" could be heard.

The Lancers' timeout did little to slow the Redbirds, as Ross Crist broke away for a 20-yard TD. On the two-point conversion, the entire offensive line pushed Breylin Goebel across the line to go up 14-0.

Nearing the end of the first quarter, Kenosha faced a fourth-and-two situation and elected to go for it. Darlington's defense was a brick wall, stopping the run and forcing a turnover on downs. The Redbirds were unable to capitalize though, going three and out.

Despite just being on the field, the Darlington defense remained strong. Mason Davis put pressure on quarterback Kenesie, whose lofted ball was nearly intercepted by Breylin Goebel. After a first-down pass to Gordon, Kenesie was brought down for a nine-yard loss by Jackson. The sack forced Kenosha to punt.

"I have to thank my other guys around me," Jackson said of his defensive performance. "They're a big reason why I get home on a lot of the blitzes; they make their gaps for me on the line."

The Lancers' punter shanked the ball, giving the Redbirds excellent field position at their own 44-yard line.

After runs by Ross Crist and Maddox Goebel, Darlington faced fourth and one with the half winding down. Winkers called a timeout to stop the clock and call his next play — a QB keeper for Cadyn Burbach that resulted in a first down. Burbach then threw a 21-yard pass to Will Murray to get in the red zone. With 25 seconds left, Breylin Goebel scored for a 20-0 lead.

Kenosha got only one snap off before the clock ran out in the first half.

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WIAA FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS, LEVEL 3

Warriors fall short at Cashton, 28-14

BHW finishes season with three 1,000-yard rushers

By Thomas Gunnell
For the times

CASHTON — At Cashton High School on Friday night, Mother Nature and a stingy Cashton defense teamed up to bog down Black Hawk/Warren high-powered rushing attack.

The No. 2-ranked and top-seeded Eagles held the Warriors' three 1,000-yard backs in check throughout the night while putting together a pretty strong ground attack of their own en route to a 28-14 WIAA Division 7 Level 3 playoff victory.

Senior running back Colin O'Neil ran for 199 yards and three touchdowns to carry the Eagles (12-0 overall) over the Warriors (8-4).

"We knew they were good and that it was going to take everything to beat them. We made some mistakes and didn't control the line of scrimmage," said Warriors' head coach Desie Breadon. "Obviously, we would have liked to see a different ending, but the players and coaches can keep their heads up after that game."

O'Neil gave the hosts the lead less than three minutes into the game when he ripped off a 46-yard TD run. A successful conversion run put the Eagles up 8-0 with 9:15 to play in the first quarter.

The Warriors answered

The Warriors are believed to be just the 13th team in WIAA history to feature three 1,000-yard rushers in the same season. Monroe most recently accomplished the feat in 2021.

back with a 15-yard scoring strike from senior quarterback Reed McNutt to senior running back Lucas Milz to trim the deficit to 8-6 midway through the opening stanza. However, the Eagles stopped the Warriors' conversion try to preserve their lead, and then O'Neil followed with a 22-yard TD run with 2:41 to go in the first frame and a 5-yard scamper with 7:26 remaining in the second quarter to pull ahead 22-6.

"It was frustrating at times because we knew exactly what they were going to do, but we just couldn't stop them. They were big, fast, and aggressive," said Breadon.

The Warriors pulled back within a score at 22-14 in the closing minute of the half on senior running back Landen Mahoney's 15-yard TD run and McNutt's conversion pass to Milz. But, that would be as close as they could get as Cashton's D put up a wall in front of their end zone in the second half and kept the Warriors out of it over the final 24 minutes to hold on for their 12th consecutive victory.

The 14 first-half points scored by the Warriors matched the total the Eagles had allowed in the first halves of their previous 11 games

this season.

"I think we definitely gave them a challenge. I just wish we could've made some more plays, especially coming out to start the third quarter and then again after stopping them in the red zone. Losing Brady Stietz to an injury in the second half definitely had an impact on both sides of the ball," Breadon commented. "I do think the weather played a factor. We knew slants were open, but were nervous of something bad happening because of the rain."

Milz, who came into the game leading the Warriors with over 1,200 rushing yards, was limited to just 21 yards on seven carries by the Eagles. Mahoney ran four times for 56 yards and a score, and McNutt added 51 yards on 15 carries to become the third Warrior back this season to top the 1,000-yard plateau.

The Warriors are believed to be just the 13th team in WIAA history to feature three 1,000-yard rushers in the same season. Monroe most recently accomplished the feat in 2021. Milz led the way with 1,233 yards, followed by Mahoney with 1,185 yards and McNutt with 1,031.

"I am thrilled that we ended up joining a small list of other



Photo for the Times: Tonya Milz
Black Hawk-Warren players walk off the field after their 28-14 loss to top-seeded Cashton in the third round of the WIAA Division 7 football playoffs Nov. 4.

schools who had three 1,000-yard rushers. I never even thought we would have that happen. It's a really neat thing for Lucas, Landen, and Reed," said Breadon. "I think one of the things that most people won't realize is that we had those three do that because of the hard work of our offensive line, tight ends and wide receivers, and scout team. It really is a team accomplishment."

The 128 rushing yards gained were the lowest for the Warriors in a game since their week three loss to Darlington, while the Eagles' 296 rushing yards were the most allowed by the Warriors this season.

"We have so much to be

proud of as a team and as individual players. I don't think anyone outside of our locker room expected us to make Level 3 and beat some of the teams we did. Most teams would be thrilled with finishing 8-4 and making Level 3, but we are maybe a little disappointed that we didn't have more wins and go farther. But, that's the good thing with having high expectations you keep striving to get better. I'm so proud of this team and coaches and love being a part of this program," said Breadon.

Playing in their final prep game for the Warriors on Friday night were seniors Lucas Milz, Landen Mahoney,

Seth Dunlavey, Jovanny Erickson, Reed McNutt, Dylan Haldiman and Tyler Heller.

"I can't say enough good things about this group of seniors. They are one of my favorite senior classes in the last 18 years. There weren't a lot of them, but they left a great legacy in this program. They were great leaders on and off the field. They showed the younger players how they need to work in the weight room, on the practice field, and leave it all on the game field to get to their goals. They are a group that will truly be missed. I really love this group of seniors. I think the world of them," Breadon said.

Monroe

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had TD runs of 49, 17 and 30 yards, and had a key interception on the Suns' lone drive that showed promise. Markham also had a solid game on the ground for Monroe, with 87 yards on 10 carries and a monstrous 39-yard catch that set up his first of two touchdown runs. In the third quarter, Markham broke off a 35-yard score that set in the mercy-rule running clock with 7:23 left in the period.

"We knew it was going to be a different game statistically with the weather conditions. If you go back and look at the numbers, the big difference is going to be the turnovers and turnovers on downs. It was about who could protect the ball and not put themselves in a situation where you had to be dangerous with the ball," Golembiewski said.

In the final 1:08 of the first half, Monroe scored twice and grabbed two turnovers on defense, all but deflating the Suns' hopes of going into halftime.

Defensively, it all started at the point of attack. Monroe ran a series of defensive linemen into the game, and all contributed in stuffing the run and forcing WBE QB Colton Kress into high-pressure passing situations deep into the pocket.

"Their linemen are good, but they're slow, so we knew our D-Line could in there and get penetration. We knew the running back wasn't going to get free, so we could go right over the top and get him," Kuester said.

Isaac Bunker had a sack, and James Seagreaves had several hurries and two knock downs, including one that he was able to bring down for his first interception.

"I just try to get to the quarterback if I can, but a lot of times it's a lot of quick slants and curls that you can't get to the quarterback, so you just have to get your hands up," Seagreaves said. The interception "was really exciting — I've knocked down a bunch all year and one finally fell into my hands."

"James is awesome, and I wouldn't trade him for anyone. All of those guys work so



Times photos: Adam Krebs
ABOVE LEFT: Monroe's Alex Hernandez rumbles into the defense level with a run in the second half of Monroe's 35-0 win over West Bend East in a WIAA Division 3 Level 3 game Nov. 4 at T.R. Holyoke Field in Monroe. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Jordan Klocke (52), James Seagreaves (8) and Kaden Kuester (34) tackle a West Bend East runner. **BELOW:** Players and coaches joined the MHS student section in the post game singing of the school fight song.

"This is such a cool experience to never lose on your home field. It's such a special feeling. It'll really stick with me for the rest of my life."

— Tucker Markham, Monroe senior RB/LB

hard in practice, and work so good together and with coach (Tom) Witt," Golembiewski said.

The win also marked the conclusion to the MHS seniors' run at T.R. Holyoke Field. With the home winning-streak now at 17 games, the seniors capped their careers in which only a few other classes at Monroe could: Unbeaten.

"This is such a cool experience to never lose on your home field. It's such a special feeling. It'll really stick with me for the rest of my life," Markham said.

Lineman Nathaniel Baker was also pleased with ending his home playing career with a win.

"It's amazing — a win in our last game at T.R. Holyoke. Now it's time for some road games and to kick some [butt]," Baker said.

While the defensive line has moving parts, the offensive line has remained untouched for basically two seasons on varsity. Dating back to youth football, the group has played thousands of snaps alongside each other.

"A band of brothers: We know what to do and we trust each other. We get in there, work hard and do our job," Baker said.

UP NEXT: NEW BERLIN WEST (10-2)

Monroe's Level 4 game — the state semifinal — will take place Nov. 11 at Big Foot High School on the newly renovated field turf stadium just off the west shores of Lake Geneva in Walworth. New Berlin West finished third in the Parkland Conference, behind Waukesha Catholic Memorial (12-0, D4) and Pewaukee (8-3), which Monroe defeated in Level 2.

If Monroe were to win, it would be the program's first trip to Camp Randall since 1996. The Cheesemakers have five state titles and eight state championship appearances in school history: winners in 1986, 1990, 1991, 1992 and 1994. Monroe also reached the title game in 1987, 1995 and 1996. New Berlin West has just one appearance at state, finishing runner-up in 1988.

On the far side of the bracket remain Onalaska (12-0) and West Salem (11-1). West Salem has three all-time state appearances, with a singular title in 2007. Onalaska has never reached the state championship.

To reach Level 4, the Vikings overcame Port Washington 49-35. The Pirates were up 22-7 in the second quarter, but an injury

to their quarterback turned the tides almost immediately. NBW scored twice before halftime to go into the break trailing 22-21, then scored back-to-back TDs in the third quarter, to go up 13. Port Washington quickly scored to bring it back to 35-29 before the end of the frame, but the Vikings scored twice more in the fourth to bury the Pirates, which had one final touchdown with 1:02 left to bring a 20-point deficit back to 14. Troy Blawat had 234 yards and five touchdowns on the ground, as the Pirates gained 347 rushing yards and didn't pass once in 52 plays.

The Vikings have outscored opponents 411-223 this season, and like Monroe have done most of it on the ground. NBW has 3,700 rushing yards (7.4 ypc) this year, averaging 308.3 yards per game. The Vikings have passed the ball just 48 times this season — an average of four times per game — for 285 yards total, with three TDs and three INTs.

"We're going to get our studying in immediately. We're going to have our work cut out for us. It's going to be a long weekend of scouting," Golembiewski said.

Meanwhile, Monroe has outscored opponents 523-83 and has rushed for more than



4,700 yards (393.8 ypg) with an average tote of 9.2 yards. Passing, Monroe is 28 of 28 (73.7%) for 555 yards with five TDs and two INTs.

Alex Hernandez leads Monroe in rushing (1,289 yards) despite being hampered by a leg injury in the postseason. Keatin Sweeney has 1,241 yards rushing and 22 TDs, and Kuester is third with 776 yards. Markham (471) and Lane Meier (407) have also gained big chunks of yards on the year. All five have averaged more than 8.7 yards per carry.

For NBW, Blawat is the leading man on offense. He has 1,226 yards (7.2 ypc) on the ground and 95% of the team's passing yards. Jack Wesolowski has 1,088 rushing yards this year (6.1 ypc) and 21 scores, and Sean Ryan is at 618 yards (7.8 ypc).

"We just need to keep doing what we're doing and stay locked in at every practice. The coaches make sure we are on our game, and we make sure we are on our game. If we just keep doing what we're doing, we can win," Kuester said.