

State Tournament Time



Football Level 4 Playoffs:

- Monroe earns first trip to state since 1996
- Darlington falls to Mondovi, one game from state

Girls' State Swimming and Diving:

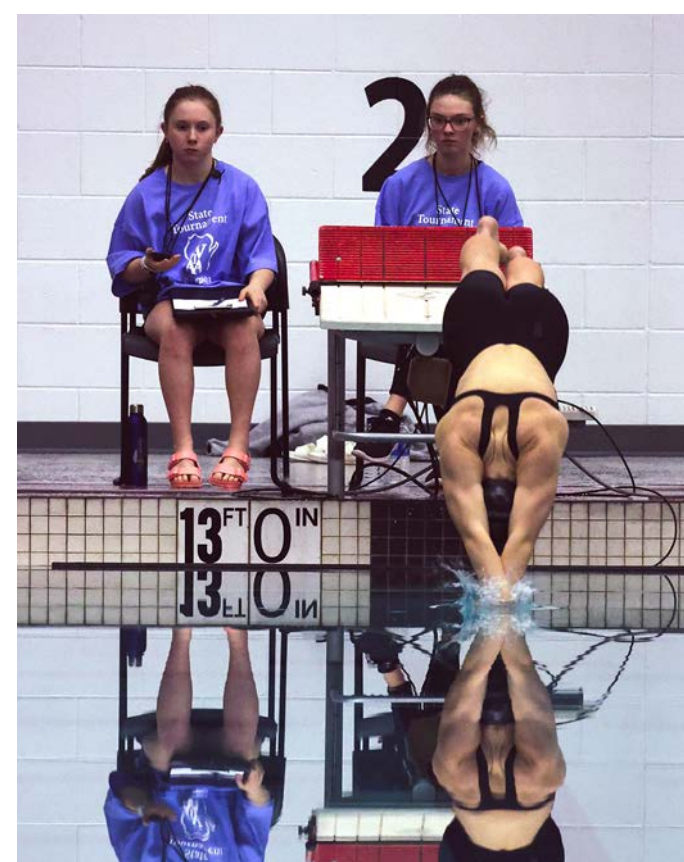
- MNG's 200-yard freestyle relay bests own record; individuals set personal records

National Signing Day:

- Young signs with University of South Dakota
- Fish goes from Cardinal to Phoenix
- Six Rivers POY Gustafson commits to St. Thomas

TOP LEFT: Alex Hernandez began and ended Monroe's Level 4 playoff win against New Berlin West with a rushing touchdown. **TOP RIGHT:** Seniors Max McGuire and Carver Fitzsimons embrace after Darlington's Level 4 loss to Mondovi on Friday, Nov. 11. **ABOVE:** Riley Hoesly sets for the 100-yard freestyle race at the Division 2 girls' swimming and diving state tournament on Friday, Nov. 11. **NEAR RIGHT:** Kaden Kuester's only carry against New Berlin West resulted in a 52-yard touchdown run. **FAR RIGHT:** Tye Crist breaks up a pass from Jarod Falkner to Jake Linse. **BELOW:** Brady Long tackles running back Dawson Rud. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Megan Chapman shares a moment at state with co-head coach Rachel Root. **BOTTOM CENTER:** Maddox Goebel celebrates a first-down rush against the Buffaloes. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Anna Zentner breaks the water's surface during one of her two races at state.

Monroe football photos: Adam Krebs
Darlington football photos: Natalie Dillon
MNG swimming photos: Kari Morrison



WIAA FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS, LEVEL 4

Cheese Punch Ticket



Times photo: Adam Krebs

Austin Fuchs (62) and Isaac Bunker (64) block for Keatin Sweeney (20) during Monroe's Level 4 win against New Berlin West on Friday, Nov. 11. Sweeney ran for a 45-yard touchdown to end the half.

Experienced coaching staff returns to Camp Randall

By Adam Krebs
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WALWORTH — The Monroe Cheesemakers punched their return ticket to Camp Randall Stadium after 26 long years. On Nov. 11, Monroe decimated New Berlin West 48-6 in the WIAA Division 3 state semi-final game at Big Foot High School.

"It's surreal. It's truly an unbelievable feeling, and it hasn't processed yet in my mind," said senior RB/DL Alex Hernandez. "We have an opportunity that 95% of schools in Wisconsin don't, and that's something that I will always be thankful for, especially being able to do it with all the guys that I love."

Monroe's program has a rich history, reaching state eight times under Hall of Fame coach Pat Martin in the 1980s and '90s, winning the championship five times in the process — 1986, '90, '91, '92, and '94. The last time the Cheesemakers played in a championship game was 1996.

"All of the boys have been working for this — going to Camp Randall — and it's just a dream come true," said senior RB/LB Tucker Markham. "Finally making it there, all the work we put in — it means so much. I can't wait. It's going to be a helluva time."

dropped into the low 20s, the Cheesemakers (13-0), the top-ranked team at the end of the regular season, did what they did nearly all year — pummeled their opponent into submission with a grueling rushing attack and staunch defense.

"We played that like we were the favorite," Monroe coach Toby Golembiewski said. "We stayed focused and bared down. I told them — whether things go wrong or right — to only be focused on the next (defensive) stop and the next (offensive) score. We're not going to put the cart ahead of the horse in any situation until there are zeros on the clock after four (quarters)."

After trading possessions to open the game, Monroe scored the second time around. On just three plays, fullback Alex Hernandez rumbled up the middle of field to cap a 45-yard drive with a 21-yard touchdown score. After a second 3-and-out defensive possession, Monroe got the ball back again near midfield and continued gashing the defense with small, but efficient gains. With 8:27 left in the second, Tucker Markham capped a 9-play, 53-yard drive with an 11-yard TD run to make it 14-0.

A possession later, Keatin Sweeney fumbled it away at Monroe's 40, giving New Berlin West some energy. Ten plays later, the Vikings were on the board, leaving the Cheesemakers with just 19 seconds left in the half. The options were to kneel it out and go into halftime up 14-6, or try to hit one big.

Golembiewski chose the latter, and the players executed.

Markham took the first play of the drive 25 yards on a run into Vikings territory, leaving five seconds left on the clock. Golembiewski then called Sweeney's number again, and the senior running back bounced a sweep around the outside, hit the sideline and out-ran two defenders to pay dirt as time expired. A Wesley Saunders PAT made it 21-6 at halftime.

"I was running as fast as I could. I knew I had to make it or else I wouldn't hear the end of it," Sweeney said. "It also meant so much because they were starting to gain momentum, and so that got us ready for the second half, too."

Monroe received the ball to open the second half, and promptly marched 68 yards for yet another score — this one a 23-yard second-effort run by Markham, who played like a man on a mission all night. On the ensuing defensive drive, Markham made all three tackles at the line of scrimmage, forcing another 3-and-out. He finished the game with 13 tackles.

"He really had a nose for knowing what was going on out there. He did a great job both offensively and defensively. He's playing some great football," Golembiewski said of Markham.

One play after a punt, Kaden Kuester — the state's Level 3 Jolly Good/WisSports Player of the Week — darted 52 yards for a score on his lone touch of the game. In Level 3, he had 158 yards and three TDs on eight carries.

New Berlin West, trailing 34-6, crumbled from there. Alex Hernandez had two more touchdowns in the second half to cap the scoring.

Hernandez finished with 198 yards and three touchdowns on 24 carries.

Markham had 115 yards and two TDs on 11 attempts. Sweeney had 81 yards on 10 carries. All 440 yards of Monroe's offense came on the ground. Defensively, Lane Meier joined Markham with 13 tackles. New Berlin West was held to just 7 yards passing on six throws, and 137 yards rushing on 39 attempts for a season-low 145 total yards.

"We're just doing our job. We've worked so hard, put in so much time in the weight room and in practice and just did our job," Sweeney said.

In the postgame ceremony, Golembiewski took the sectional championship plaque and immediately gave it to his captains. A frenzy at midfield ensued.

"They called me out there, but I really never should have touched it at all. It's all those guys. This is completely their plaque, and I am very proud of them for earning it," Golembiewski said.

While none of the current Cheesemaker players were alive during any of the program's previous runs to state, much of the coaching staff were teenagers and experienced it firsthand. Of Monroe's eight coaches, six played or coached in a state championship for MHS during that two-decade run of success. Only Golembiewski and current assistant coach Rob Schilt (Class of 2004) are experiencing the thrill of state for the first time.

"They are all going back, and they can't believe they are doing it as coaches. It got a little emotional there on the sideline," Golembiewski said.

For more on the upcoming state championship, which will be played at 10 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 18 at Camp Randall Stadium in Madison, see the special inside edition of today's paper.



Times photo: Natalie Dillon

Head coach Travis Winkers hugs senior Wyatt Davis after Darlington's Level 4 playoff loss to Mondovi on Friday, Nov. 11.

Darlington's playoff run just short of state

By Natalie Dillon
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WISCONSIN DELLS — In the Kwik Trip game of the week, Mondovi edged Darlington 14-7 to earn its first trip to state since 1990. The Redbirds maintained a 7-6 lead until five minutes left in the game.

"I love our kids; we have great kids," head coach Travis Winkers said of his squad and its performance. "You get to this level and its tough — its tough to win. We had a great season. I know we wanted to get to Camp Randall, but the kids have to be proud of what they did."

The Redbirds started off shaky, as the ball went through the arms of their returner on the punt. He was able to recover and run to the 30-yard line. Mondovi's defense went to work, forcing a three-and-out. It was the first time since Level 1 that Darlington hadn't scored on its opening drive.

Defensively, the Redbirds responded with their own three-and-out. Brady Long broke up a pass and Reagan Jackson applied pressure to quarterback Jarod Falkner, forcing a poor throw.

On Mondovi's next drive, the Buffaloes marched down the field with a 17-yard run and 20-yard reception on back-to-back plays. A tackle for loss by Bryan Lazaro-Mendoza and broken up pass by Long set Mondovi up for a deep field goal. With the miss, Darlington started at their 20.

After a 5-yard penalty by the Buffaloes, Tye Crist broke through the seam and ran 73-yards to the end zone. With the successful extra point, Darlington took a 7-0 lead with just over a minute left in the first quarter.

Not to be outdone, Dawson Rud ran for 31 yards on Mondovi's next series. Falkner nearly ran for another first down but was pushed out of bounds a yard short. He left the field, needing attention on the sideline. Rud took over at the helm, completing the first down and running 14 yards to the end zone. The Buffaloes went for two but were stopped short by Carter Murray.

Falkner returned to the game a few series later. The next three possessions — two by Darlington, one by Mondovi — resulted in three-and-outs.

With the half winding down, the Buffaloes looked to score and take a lead into the locker room. A 5-yard face-mask penalty by Darlington pushed Mondovi up the field, along with rushing first down. The next two passes were tipped at the line of scrimmage by Talan Crist, one of which was almost caught for an interception by Maddox Goebel.

Faced with third-and-ten at Mondovi's 42, Rud scampered 18 yards, putting the Buffaloes just outside the red zone. On the next play, Falkner's pass to Cade Fremstad was broken up by Long. He was called for passer interference, though, which gave Mondovi half the distance to the goal. With their backs against the wall, the defense came up with a stop.

The call could have swung momentum in favor of the Buffaloes, but in the end, Darlington came out on top.

"We got a stop," Winkers said. "It is what it is. It's karma. We got the stop."

Darlington received the ball with 49 seconds left in the half and ran the clock out in two plays. They

See REDBIRDS, Page B3

WIAA STATE SWIMMING AND DIVING

MNG breaks own relay record at state

By Natalie Dillon
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WAUKESHA — For the second straight week, Monroe-New Glarus' 200-yard freestyle relay team broke the school record.

The team — composed of Megan Chapman, Anna Zentner, Riley Hoesly and Delaney Lynch — set the new record last week in the sectional meet with a time of 1:42.40. This week at state, they beat the time by 0.01 seconds.

The same group also took 11th in the 400-yard freestyle relay with a time of 3:43.70.

Individually, each swimmer also set a personal best, co-head

coach Haley Neuenschwander said.

Chapman competed in both the 200-yard freestyle (1:59.15) and 500-yard freestyle (5:17.91). She finished 10 of 16 in both events, besting her seed time in both races.

Zentner also swam in two races, finishing 14th in both. She swam the 200-yard IM in 2:20.06, nearly three seconds better than her seed time and the 100-yard butterfly in 1:02.37.

Hoesly took 14th in the 100-yard freestyle, and Lynch tied for 8th in the 100-yard butterfly with Chloe Yerkes of Greendale. They both finished with a time of 1:00.90.

MNG finished 13 of 35 with 57 points. Edgewood won the meet with 350 points and six first-place finishes.



Photo for the Times: Kari Morrison

Delaney Lynch tied for eighth in the 100-yard butterfly.

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