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(From left): Seniors Maddie Reiter, Madasyn Rundquist, Ava Salay, Rhi Stutz, and sophomores Gabbi Matzek and Jeanne Rohl. The Cardinals roster celebrates a third consecutive Middle Border Conference championship after securing the league title at the Clifton Hollow Golf Course on Monday, Sept. 26. Photo courtesy of Prescott Girls Golf



Prescott senior Ava Salay hits driver off of the 10th tee during the 2022 Middle Border Conference championship meet at the Clifton Hollow Golf Course on Monday, Sept. 26. Salay posted a two-under par round of 70 that included two eagles on the back nine. Photo by Reagan Hoverman

## Prescott girls golf three-peats as Middle Border Conference champions

By Reagan Hoverman

There's going to be more hardware to add to the Prescott High School trophy case.

The Prescott girls golf team won its third consecutive Middle Border Conference championship on Monday, Sept. 26, at the Clifton Hollow Golf Course in rural River Falls. The Cardinals' team score of 337 beat second-place Altoona-Regis by an astonishing 47 strokes.

While Prescott certainly has been dominant throughout the season in league play, the Cardinals seemed to kick it into another gear for the conference title on Monday afternoon. While windy, cold conditions and fast greens shipwrecked scores for other teams, Prescott battled through to claim the title.

Prescott head coach Chad Salay spoke about winning the league title and playing a conference championship meet at a home course. He also spoke about how playing a familiar course factored into the final scores on Monday afternoon.

"It feels good. Three in a row is awesome and it feels great for our seniors to go out with a conference championship," Salay said after the round at Clifton Hollow. "We hosted today and we chose to host here for a reason — it's because our girls can play this course well. Altoona has probably only played here once. I wasn't necessarily expecting (winning by) 40, because (Altoona) has some good players."

Leading the charge for Prescott was senior star Ava Salay, who posted a two-under par

70 to earn medalist honors for the day. Ava Salay's score was nine shots clear of second-place junior Ava Peshia from Somerset.

While Ava Salay owns the course record at Clifton Hollow, a mark of 65 that she set in October 2021, there just wasn't a 65 out there on Monday afternoon. Given the ultra-fast greens, the gusting winds and the cold weather, Ava Salay thought that a level par round of 72 would have been an excellent score. "It was great (to shoot 70). After my front nine (37), I thought if I could shoot even today that would be ideal and that's where I was going into the last hole until I made that eagle," Ava Salay said after the round. "To shoot a 70, I'm very happy about that."

Ava Salay began the round by making bogey on two of the first three holes. She

bounced back with a birdie on the par-four seventh to solidify a front nine 37. When Ava Salay got to the back nine, that's when the fireworks started.

After making bogey on the tenth hole, Salay poured in a 10-footer for birdie at the par-four 11th. Two holes later on the short par-four 13th, Salay drove the green and then drained a 20-foot eagle putt to get into red figures for the tournament (-1).

She surrendered a shot at the par-three 14th by making bogey which moved her back to even for the tournament. Going to the 18th tee, Salay was sitting at even. That's when she blasted a drive down the middle of the fairway, hit her second shot onto the green

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The Ellsworth Panthers defensive line faces off against Rice Lake's offense during the Friday night battle. Ellsworth head coach Rob Heller praised Ellsworth's defensive line for shutting down a dynamic Rice Lake rushing attack. Photo by Reagan Hoverman



Ellsworth senior running back Bo Hines follows blockers and bursts through a hole during the Panthers' road game against Rice Lake. Hines finished the game with a team-high 115 rushing yards on 23 total carries. Photo by Reagan Hoverman

## Ellsworth football wins last-second thriller on the road against Rice Lake

*Panthers improve to 4-0 in MBC action, secure playoff spot*

By Reagan Hoverman

Ellsworth head coach Rob Heller couldn't have scripted a better ending to one of the most anticipated games of the season.

With the game on the line late in the fourth quarter, the Ellsworth Panthers put together a four-minute, 83-yard drive that culminated in senior running back Jurell Gooden punching in the go-ahead touchdown that helped secure a 16-8 victory against Rice Lake on Friday, Sept. 23.

Rice Lake entered the game with a 4-1 record and ranked as the No. 4 team in the state in Division 3. Ellsworth also entered with a 4-1 record and as the No. 4 ranked team in the state in Division 4, according to the weekly WISSports.com coaches' poll.

Ellsworth and Rice Lake went into the halftime locker room tied 8-8 and a fruitless third quarter by both teams meant that the game was going to be decided in the final

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River Falls seniors Taylor Peterson (#14) and Abi Banitt (#2) high five in celebration moments after defeating the Hudson Raiders 3-1 on the road in the annual rivalry game on Thursday, Sept. 22. Photo by Reagan Hoverman

## River Falls volleyball defeats Hudson in four sets

By Reagan Hoverman

It's been a rough couple of weeks for fans of the Hudson Raiders.

The River Falls High School volleyball team became the third Wildcats team in the last three weeks to defeat Hudson in an annual rivalry game. With the four-set victory, the volleyball team joined the soccer team and football program in knocking off Hudson this season.

While the volleyball team was certainly focused on beating the Raiders in that annual rivalry game, which was played in Hudson on Thursday, Sept. 22, River Falls head coach Sara Kealy noted that the excitement of another victory over a bitter rival was making its way into the locker room.

"Everything River Falls vs. Hudson, all I've heard about for the last week is about The Jug and us beating the boys' soccer team," Kealy said. "I said, 'Yeah. That's great, but you still have to go play volleyball.' Just trying to get them to focus and not be in the on-line media back-and-forth."

The River Falls volleyball team potentially used some of that momentum from reclaiming The Jug and upsetting the boys' soccer team in the first set on Thursday night. The Wildcats came storming out of the gate on the road in a hostile crowd environment.

River Falls strung together a scoring run in the middle of the first set to take a commanding 15-9 lead, which forced Hudson head coach Brittany Young-Sanchez to take a timeout. The pause in the action did little to slow

the Wildcats' momentum. River Falls turned that six-point lead into a 13-point victory in the debut set, 25-12, to take a 1-0 lead in the best-of-five series.

Hudson proved that it wouldn't go quietly, as the Raiders responded with a strong showing in the second set. Hudson jumped out to a quick 4-0 lead that coach Kealy quickly slowed with a timeout. However, Hudson continued to play hard and at one point led River Falls 17-9 in that second set. The Raiders cruised to a 25-16 victory. Kealy spoke about the stark difference between the first and second sets.

"I feel like we've done that a lot," Kealy said. "We would have a really strong first set and then we would just take the foot off the gas and you can't do that against talented teams. We find ourselves in the third set a lot, but that's going to be something we have to figure out because you can't go into the playoffs (doing that)."

River Falls did find itself in the third set, but Hudson's momentum continued. Both teams refused to allow the other to string together any notable scoring runs. The game was tied nearly a half dozen times at scores including 3-3, 12-12, 16-16, 18-18 and 21-21.

That's when River Falls' senior leadership took over and players like Brianna Brathol, Morgan Kealy and Taylor Peterson took the game over. The Wildcats scored four unan-

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Prescott senior Ava Salay hits a chip shot from just off the 10th green at the Bristol Ridge Golf Course in Somerset on Thursday, Sept. 22. Salay earned medalist honors with a round of 38. Photo by Reagan Hoverman



Spring Valley Cardinals football team members were escorted down the parade route Friday by Spring Valley Fire. The rain held off during the parade, although it was a gloomy day. Photo by Sarah Nigbor

## Prescott girls golf wins at Bristol, sweeps MBC meets

By Reagan Hoverman

The Prescott girls golf team made it a complete sweep of the Middle Border Conference regular season with a 13-shot victory over second-place Altoona/Regis on Thursday, Sept. 22, at the Bristol Ridge Golf Course in Somerset.

Bristol Ridge has proved to be a thorn in the side of Prescott in recent years. Last season, it was the only meet during the entire campaign that the Cardinals didn't win, which is saying something, considering last year culminated in the varsity roster and head coach Chad Salay hoisting a state championship trophy at University Ridge in Madison.

The win at Bristol Ridge on Thursday afternoon proved that Prescott doesn't rebuild, it reloads. The Cardinals finished Middle Border Conference play with a flawless 8-0 record in nine-hole meets. Coach Salay spoke about the victory to conclude the regular season.

"It was pretty solid overall. For us, Bristol is probably the hardest course we play," Salay said. "It's always been a thorn in our side. The margin of victory was a little closer than what it's been all year and it was tight there for a while, but we're happy to get the win."

Prescott scores include senior Ava Salay's medalist performance of 38, senior Rhi Stutz posted a 42, while senior Maddie Reiter and sophomore Jeanne Rohl rounded out the scoring with 45 each. Chad Salay spoke about Ava Salay's medalist performance and Stutz's 42, which secured a solo third individual finish.

"Ava was happy with her round but the par threes got her a little. She played those three over par and played the rest of the course one-under," Chad Salay said. "Rhi was a little frustrated because she made bogey on the last hole. We've had such a nightmare at Bristol in the past, I think they were happy to just be done with the course."

Chad Salay spoke of the match being close midway through the round, which at one point saw Altoona/Regis within single-digit strokes of Prescott. However, it was the



Ellsworth senior Kayley Bayer hits an iron from the middle of the 12th fairway during her team-best round of 51. Bayer and the Panthers earned a sixth-place finish at the final regular season Middle Border Conference meet of the year at the Bristol Ridge Golf Course in Somerset on Thursday, Sept. 22. Photo by Reagan Hoverman

Cardinals that finished the job and secured the eighth conference win of the season. Prescott posted a first-place team score of 170 compared to Altoona/Regis' 183.

While Prescott is undefeated in conference matches this season, the biggest meet of the year thus far will be at the Middle Border Conference Championship on Monday, Sept. 26, at the Clifton Hollow Golf Course in Prescott.

Prescott considers both Clifton Highlands and Clifton Hollow home courses, so Chad Salay and the Prescott Cardinals roster are confident heading into the MBC Championship on Monday morning. Chad Salay spoke about playing for a league title at a home course.

"It's one of our home courses and a lot of our girls play out there quite a bit. We're playing within friendly confines," Chad Salay said. "It's just a course that fits our girls' game, so we're feeling great about it. It's nice to host because we can set it up mostly how we want it, there are some things we have to follow, but it's just really comfortable because we have a nice healthy lead and we're at a home event, more or less."

The Middle Border Conference Championship was slated to begin on Monday,

Sept. 26, at 9 a.m. Prescott's players were expected to tee off shortly before 10 a.m. This week's edition of The Journal will contain a recap story.

### Ellsworth Panthers finish sixth at Bristol

The Ellsworth Panthers girls golf team earned a sixth-place finish at the Thursday afternoon nine-hole meet at the Bristol Ridge golf course with a total team score of 218.

Despite the sixth-place finish, Ellsworth was within striking distance of several other middling teams in the Middle Border Conference standings, including Osceola (212), Somerset (213) and Saint Croix Central (216). Ellsworth's scores include senior Kayley Bayer's team-best 51, freshman Lexi Marks' 53, sophomore Aaliyah Huppert's 55 and freshman Addy Huppert rounded out the scoring with a 59. Ellsworth's roster, although led by a senior, is built to win in the future with young freshman talent including the aforementioned Marks.

That young roster was put to the test on Monday, Sept. 26, at the Middle Border Conference Championship meet at the Clifton Hollow Golf Course in Prescott. Ellsworth was slated to tee off around 9:30 a.m.

it flying deep out of bounds. That remained true on Thursday night against Hudson.

"We're giving them serving zones but I honestly think we're just rushing," Sara Kealy said. "At one point I said when it comes to Morgan (Kealy), who's a great player. 'Just give her the center of the court. Just get the ball in bounds.' They work so hard to get a serve and then they rush through it. They need to slow down."

Figuring out serving and saving a couple of points in each set could be the difference between winning and losing a sectional championship later this fall. Coach Kealy spoke about taking advantage of scoring opportunities with good servers early in sets.

"We've got some really good servers right out of the gate. We've got Morgan (Kealy) Brianna (Brathol) and Abi (Banitt) right off the bat," Sara Kealy said. "We've got to score points when those kids are behind the line and we're letting people off the hook too easily."

With the win, River Falls improves to 17-5 overall and 2-1 in Big Rivers Conference action. The Wildcats have sole possession of second place in the conference standings and trail only Chippewa Falls' 4-0 record in league play.

Up next for the Wildcats is a game on Thursday, Sept. 29, at home against the 11-8 (2-2) Rice Lake Warriors. That contest is slated to begin at 7 p.m.

## Spring Valley topples Clear Lake in homecoming victory

By Reagan Hoverman

The Spring Valley football team gave their rowdy homecoming crowd a lot to cheer about on Friday night, as the Cardinals defeated Clear Lake 12-8 to remain undefeated (4-0) in Dunn-St. Croix Conference contests this season.

Spring Valley's annual homecoming contest featured a low-scoring affair between two ground-and-pound teams that worked to control the line of scrimmage in a game that could have gone either way late in the fourth quarter.

Sophomore Cade Stasiak opened up the homecoming game with a methodical drive down the field in the first quarter, which he capped off with a four-yard touchdown run to give Spring Valley a 6-0 lead with two minutes remaining in the opening frame.

After multiple defensive stops by both teams, Clear Lake put together a scoring drive late in the second quarter that culminated in a 10-yard touchdown pass from senior quarterback Jacob Burbach to sophomore wide receiver Jordan Blanchard. Clear Lake took an 8-6 lead after a successful two-point conversion.

Spring Valley head coach Ryan Kapping spoke about the low-scoring defensive battle between the Cardinals and Warriors.

"I thought both defenses were playing pretty well the other night," Kapping said. "We did make some mistakes that put us into down and distance situations that we don't like to be in like third-and-longs that we weren't able to convert. We also had a couple of turnovers that cost us scoring opportunities as well."

Some of those third-and-long situations were likely harder on the aforementioned Stasiak because he hasn't seen many of them this season. The Clear Lake game was only his second start of the year, as he took over for full-time starter junior Wyatt Goveronski after he went down with an ankle injury during the second half against Glenwood City in week four. Coach Kapping stated

there is no further status update on Goveronski's recovery timetable.

While Stasiak and the Cardinals' offense may have struggled in the passing game, Spring Valley returned to its bread and butter in the second half – the rushing attack. In the third quarter, the Cardinals marched down the field and regained the lead when Stasiak scampered into the endzone for a three-yard touchdown carry to make it 12-8 in favor of Spring Valley.

"Our run game was a combination of our offensive line playing a strong game and Cade (Stasiak) and Diego (Schmitt) both doing a nice job of gaining yards after first contact," Kapping said of the rushing attack.

A scoreless fourth quarter for both programs meant that Spring Valley had secured not only a 12-8 homecoming victory, but also another win in the Dunn-St. Croix Conference. Spring Valley improves to 5-1 for the season and 4-0 in league play thus far. Kapping spoke about homecoming and facing adversity in the game.

"I don't know how much homecoming itself factors into excitement about the win," Kapping said. "But we faced some adversity and were able to work through it and get a win."

Spring Valley is slated to face off against the Turtle Lake Lakers on the road on Friday, Sept. 30. Turtle Lake has proved to be one of the top teams in the conference this season. The Lakers are 4-2 this season and 3-1 in Dunn-St. Croix Conference games. Turtle Lake remains in a three-way tie for second place with Cadott (3-1) and Elmwood/Plum City (3-1). Kapping spoke about that upcoming matchup.

"Against Turtle Lake we will have to be much better than we were last week," Kapping said. "Defensively they will stress us both on the ground and through the air so a key for us will be to sustain drives on offense and finish them to help the defense out."

That potentially season-defining game on the road against Turtle Lake is slated to begin at 7 p.m. on Friday.



Prescott sophomore Gabbi Matzek lines up a putt during the Middle Border Conference championship on Monday afternoon at the Clifton Hollow Golf Course on Monday, Sept. 26. Matzek's round of 86 helped Prescott secure its third consecutive MBC title. Photo by Reagan Hoverman

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answered points to secure a 25-21 victory in the third set and take a pivotal 2-1 lead in the series.

Although those River Falls seniors are unquestionably the most talented on the team, coach Kealy stated that some of the younger players need to assert themselves on the floor and become more involved in the game.

"We've got a couple of kids that do a lot for us with Morgan (Kealy), Brianna (Brathol), Abi (Banitt) and Taylor (Peterson)," Sara Kealy said. "I'm trying to get those less experienced players to rise up and I think what's happening is those experienced players are dominating and the other players are happy to let them do it. We're having a lot of conversations about asserting yourself and doing your job."

River Falls closed out the series with a 25-15 victory in the fourth and final set on the road against Hudson to win the series 3-1. Coach Kealy was happy with the victory, but she also spoke about some areas that need to be cleaned up, especially serving.

Throughout the 2022 season, River Falls has had issues getting serves into play – whether it be hitting it into the net or sending

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and then sank a long eagle putt to secure the two-under round of 70.

Other Prescott scores include senior Rhi Stutz's round of 85, sophomores Jeanne Rohl and Gabbi Matzek both posted rounds of 86, senior Maddie Reiter shot a 95 and senior Madasyn Rundquist rounded out the scoring with a 103.

While Ava Salay will get a lot of well-deserved attention for her outstanding round of 70, Rohl and Matzek's rounds of 86 were just as impactful. Chad Salay stated earlier this year that if he can get a couple of the younger girls to start shooting around 90, it would make Prescott nearly uncatchable, and his girls are doing exactly that.

"Definitely Gabbi (Matzek), that was a huge round for her confidence-wise," Chad Salay said. "Jeanne (Rohl) has also kind of stepped into that range, 43, 44, especially at a course like this; it's not out of the question for her. Darren (Reiter) and I are so pumped knowing going into state that (Matzek) can shoot mid-80s in conditions like this."

Prescott graduated two of its most impactful players from last season's team in then-seniors Liz Rohl and Jessica Heinsch. Ava Sa-

lay spoke about trying to replace some of those scoring averages and how the younger players have stepped up to the challenge.

"It's awesome and I applaud them for how far they've come this year. We needed girls like that and they've stepped up," Ava Salay said. "Every time they play well and have a great score it's great to see. I hope they know that they're appreciated."

In the last couple of weeks, Prescott has found its groove in the varsity lineup. Ava Salay has continued posting collegiate-caliber scores while younger varsity players have begun stepping into roles previously filled by those aforementioned seniors from last season. For Ava Salay, it's all coming together in the quest for a third consecutive state championship.

"I think we're ready to go for another state championship," Ava Salay said. "Seeing what we shot today in this event, I think that we're ready and our whole team is prepared."

Prescott's third consecutive Middle Border Conference championship is potentially a good omen, as the two previous times the Cardinals won the league title, they won a state championship in those same seasons.

Prescott will begin its playoff run on Wednesday, Sept. 29, in the WIAA Division 2 Regional at the Phinney Hills Golf Course in Hammond. That meet is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m.