

# SPORTS

## BADGERS FOOTBALL

# Alums believe in Leonhard as coach



CARLOS OSORIO, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wisconsin interim coach Jim Leonhard watches from the sideline during the Badgers' double overtime loss to Michigan State earlier this season in East Lansing, Mich.

Former teammates, Badgers speak out on interim coach

**JAKE KOCOROWSKI**  
 Wisconsin State Journal

The University of Wisconsin football program sits in uncertain times with four games remaining in the 2022 regular season.

Jim Leonhard took over as interim coach after UW athletic director Chris McIntosh fired Paul Chryst on Oct. 2, replacing one son of

the program with another. It was a move that surprised many, including former Badgers players. McIntosh promised a national search for Chryst's replacement and acknowledged Wednesday that the university has hired a search firm to help find the right person. But the AD otherwise has been light on details about the process for finding the Badgers' next coach.

The Badgers entered their bye week winners of two of their last three. The team now plunges into a home



**UP NEXT**  
**Maryland at Wisconsin**  
**When:** Saturday, 11 a.m.  
**TV:** Big Ten Network

mer UW players, spanning teams from Barry Alvarez's arrival in Madison through Chryst's tenure, about the coaching change, Leonhard's viability as Chryst's successor and the direction of the program.

Here is a sampling of their thoughts.

### Different attitude

UW has gone 2-1 since Leonhard took over as interim coach. The Badgers comfortably dispatched

Please see **FOOTBALL**, Page A5

## PACKERS

# Rodgers preaches patience

Packers searching for answers as skid grows to four games

**JONAH BRONSTEIN**  
 Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Aaron Rodgers' frustration following a fourth consecutive loss was familiarly apparent. This time, the Packers quarterback chose his words more carefully in expressing them.

A week after suggesting some players need to be benched and citing too many mental errors following a 23-21 loss at Washington, Rodgers was more understated

on Sunday night. He preached patience after a 27-17 loss to the AFC-leading Buffalo Bills dropped the Packers to 3-5 — their worst start through eight games since Rodgers took over as quarterback in 2008.

"The most important thing is to take a beat," Rodgers said. "After a frustration like this, the last thing you want is to respond in emotion. So take a beat. Let it sit. There's not a whole lot to say after the game that is really going to spark the team."

Rodgers snapped a 13-game win streak in prime-time, and the Packers have lost four in a row for the first time since 2016. Rodgers responded to that mid-season slump by declaring the Packers could "run the table."

They won the next eight on their way to the NFC championship game.

On Sunday night, Rodgers said the Packers just need to find a way to get one victory.

"I feel like if we just get one, then our whole momentum changes," Rodgers said.

The Packers haven't lost five of



Rodgers

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**UP NEXT**  
**Green Bay at Detroit**  
**When:** Sunday, noon  
**TV:** FOX, Big Ten Network

## COMMENTARY



BRANDON BERG, CHIPPEWA HERALD

The Chi-Hi volleyball team celebrates a point against River Falls in last Saturday's Division 1 sectional final in Eau Claire.

# Respect the feat

Chippewa County's state-bound programs deserve much praise

Twenty prep volleyball teams will head to Green Bay later this week to vie for state championships.

Of those 20 teams, three reside roughly 15 miles apart in Chippewa County.

Chi-Hi, Bloomer and McDonell will all be in action later this week at the state volleyball tournament in Green Bay, the cherry on the top

of an ice cream sundae of stellar seasons for each program.

The Cardinals (41-2) are heading to state for the first time after a scoring two come-from-behind victories in the Division 1 sectionals, most recently beating rival River Falls for the sectional championship. Chi-Hi's program has shown steady growth under coach

### Coming This Week

More stories on Chi-Hi, McDonell and Bloomer leading into the state tournament, including our special preview edition on Thursday.

Luke Heidtke, logging a 14-21 record in 2019 before an 11-3 mark in a COVID-19-shortened 2020 season. A big step forward took place last season when the Cardinals were 37-3 and advanced to the sectional finals before breaking through to state this year and earning the program's first Big Rivers Conference title since 2013.

The Macks (39-12) are no stranger to the Division 4 state tournament as they are making their third consecutive trip to state. McDonell is the defending state champion and has looked the part, especially down the stretch in winning five straight matches in straight sets. The Macks shared the Western Cloverbelt title in the regular season with Bloomer and Stanley-Boyd.

The Blackhawks (33-8) are at

### State Schedule

#### Thursday D1 Quarterfinal

(4) Burlington (37-4) vs (5) Chi-Hi (41-2), 7 p.m.

#### Friday's D2 Semifinal

(1) Appleton Xavier (37-7) vs (4) Bloomer (33-8), 2 p.m.

#### Friday's D4 Semifinal

(1) McDonell (39-12) vs (4) Wonewoc-Center (25-4), 9 a.m.

Division 2 state tourney for the second time in program history after ousting West Salem in four sets in Saturday's sectional championship. Bloomer has won 10 matches in a row dating back to its home invite at the start of the month, a tournament the three state-bound teams finished at the top of. Chi-Hi won the championship over McDonell with Bloomer taking third.

"When I just looked at that today I was like, 'Wow, all of us were first, second and third?'" Bloomer coach Heather Henry

said of those three teams at the time. "That just goes to show our talent for student-athletes is pretty amazing."

That talent showed again with all three making it to Green Bay.

"I think it's great," Heidtke said of the three schools advancing to state. "The smaller schools, McDonell specifically has had a lot of success in a longer amount of time, but for Bloomer and now us punch through, it shows that volleyball's not just an east and southern sport anymore. We have high-level players playing great ball."

Chi-Hi, McDonell, Bloomer and Stanley-Boyd each entered the postseason as legitimate contenders to make a run to state. The Orioles were tripped up by Auburndale in the Division 3 regional finals and others all had to overcome some adversity.

The Cardinals fell behind both Hudson and River Falls in sectionals but won sets four and five in exciting fashion,

Please see **BERG**, Page A5

## BADGERS MEN'S BASKETBALL

# Improvement areas show

Rebounding and 3-point shooting struggle in scrimmage

**ABBY SCHNABLE**  
 Wisconsin State Journal

University of Wisconsin men's basketball forward Tyler Wahl laughed off a question about the team's 3-point shooting against UW Eau-Claire on Sunday at the Kohl Center.

The men's hockey team played at the arena the previous night, meaning the gym may have been

colder than normal. Wahl joked that might have been why shots weren't falling.

Post player Steven Crowl said the Badgers haven't done a lot of practicing up and down the court. He thinks that may have contributed to their 5-for-20

accuracy from distance.

Almost nothing came easy for the Badgers in what should've been a simple exhibition against a Division III team. UW still won 76-45, but the game felt closer than the score indicated.

"We've got to continue to get (in shape)," UW coach Greg Gard said. "Conditioning will continue to improve as we go deeper into the season. That will come through as we play more games, more reps, less drills, more 5-on-5 than what we've done.

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**UP NEXT**  
**South Dakota at Wisconsin**  
**When:** Monday, 7:30 p.m.  
**TV:** Big Ten Network



STEVE APPS, WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL

Wisconsin Badgers guard Chucky Hepburn (23) drives on UW-Eau Claire guard Carter Hanke (34) in the second half on Sunday in Madison.



**BRIEFLY**

**COLLEGE FOOTBALL**

**Auburn fires coach Harsin**

AUBURN, Ala. — Auburn fired coach Bryan Harsin on Monday after less than two seasons, ending a rocky tenure in which the proud program struggled to compete in the Southeastern Conference.

Harsin went 9-12 overall and 3-5 this year. Auburn has lost four straight games while struggling against Power Five opponents, including a 41-27 loss to Arkansas on Oct. 29 that proved the final straw. Auburn will owe Harsin 70% of his remaining contract — more than \$15 million — and half of that must be paid within 30 days.

Auburn canceled its weekly football news conference about 90 minutes before Harsin was scheduled to speak. The school didn't immediately name an interim coach. The Tigers play at Mississippi State on Saturday.

Harsin was hired away from Boise State in December 2020 and Auburn gave him a six-year, \$31.5 million deal. He never came close to replicating his past success or making the Tigers competitive in the SEC, and he failed to keep up with rivals Georgia and Alabama on the field or on the recruiting trail.

Those results were unacceptable to a program that won a national title in 2010 and played for another in 2013, when it won the most recent of its eight SEC championships.

**Harbaugh expects 4 Michigan State players to be charged**

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Jim Harbaugh expects the four suspended Michigan State football players involved in roughing up two members of Michigan's team to be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

"I can't imagine that this will not result in criminal charges," the Michigan coach said Monday.

Michigan State coach Mel Tucker said later Monday that it would be irresponsible to respond to Harbaugh's call for criminal charges due to the ongoing investigation.

Harbaugh said defensive back Gemon Green was punched by a Spartan in the Michigan Stadium tunnel to spark the melee shortly after the fourth-ranked Wolverines beat their in-state rival on Saturday night and teammate Ja'Den McBurrows was attacked when he tried to help.

McBurrows is seen on a video shared on social media being pushed, punched and kicked by multiple Michigan State players, who pulled him out of the tunnel and into a hallway that doesn't lead to either locker room.

Harbaugh said both players have injuries, adding he did not know if Green, a starting cornerback for a third straight season, would be cleared to play Saturday night at Rutgers.

Tucker announced Sunday night that linebacker Tank Brown, safety Angelo Grose, defensive end Zion Young and cornerback Khary Crump were suspended immediately. Tucker said the decision was made after "reviewing the disturbing electronic evidence."

Brown, Grose and Young are seen on video getting physical with McBurrows.

Tucker was very close to the aftermath, standing in the tunnel as Green was surrounded by police and escorted to the locker room while he shouted at Michigan State players. One social media post shows a Spartan, whose identity is not clear, appearing to swing his helmet at Green.

**NFL**

**Bucs place Barrett on IR**

TAMPA, Fla. — The Tampa Bay Buccaneers have placed linebacker Shaquil Barrett on injured reserve and signed two other players to the practice squad.

Barrett suffered a season-ending Achilles injury last Thursday night against the Baltimore Ravens. He finished with three sacks in 2022, boosting his total to a team-leading 39½ over the past four seasons.

The Bucs also announced Monday that receiver Tyler Johnson and cornerback Ryan Smith were added to the practice squad.

Both players have spent time with the Bucs before, with Johnson catching 48 passes for 529 yards and two touchdowns over two seasons in 2020 and 2021. Smith spent five seasons in Tampa Bay from 2016-20 before signing with the Los Angeles Chargers as a free agent in 2021.

**MLB**

**Turner wins Clemente Award for philanthropy**

PHILADELPHIA — Justin Turner has won Major League Baseball's Roberto Clemente Award for character, community involvement and philanthropy.

The Los Angeles Dodgers third baseman was to be presented the award before Game 3 of the World Series on Monday night, two years after he was criticized by the commissioner's office for violating coronavirus protocols by celebrating with teammates following the title-winning Game 6.

Turner, 37, was nominated for the award for the fifth time this year.

The Justin Turner Foundation, funded by Turner and wife Courtney in 2016, supports homeless veterans, children and families battling diseases and illnesses, also helps youth baseball organizations and holds an annual golf tournament that raised \$650,000 this year for The Dream Center and Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

**LOCAL**

<p><b>Bowling</b> Tuesday Tavern <b>Oct. 25 at Falls Bowl</b></p> <p>High Men's Series: Brian Tylee 733, Jody Janish 713, Mike Nettland 657. High Women's Series: Krista Rediske 517, Megan Wegner 434, Cindy Facklam 432. High Men's Game: Jody Janish 277, Mike Nettland 258. Brian Tylee 257. High Women's Game: Cindy Facklam 187, Krista Rediske 180, Alyssa Vonnahme 159. High</p>	<p>Team Series: Struggler's II 2,797. High Team Game: Sweeney's 1,014.</p> <p><b>Tuesday Women's Classic</b> <b>Oct. 25 at Falls Bowl</b></p> <p>High Series: Denise Evjen 561, Kris Nyhus 500, Brittany Morford 469. High Game: Denise Evjen 213, Kris Nyhus 203, Ann Mueller 186. High Team Series: Nyhus Chiropractic 1,527. High Team Game: Nyhus Chiropractic 516.</p>
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**SPORTS ON TV**

**TUESDAY**

**COLLEGE FOOTBALL:** Ball St. at Kent St., ESPN, 6 p.m.; Buffalo at Ohio, ESPN2, 6:30 p.m.

**MLB WORLD SERIES:** Houston at Philadelphia, FOX, 7 p.m.

**NBA:** Chicago at Brooklyn, TNT, 6:30 p.m.; Minnesota at Phoenix, TNT, 9 p.m.

**NHL:** Montreal at Minnesota, BSNO and BSWI, 7 p.m.; Boston at Pittsburgh, ESPN, 7 p.m.; Anaheim at San Jose, ESPN, 9:30 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY**

**COLLEGE FOOTBALL:** W. Michigan at Bowling Green, ESPN2, 6 p.m.; Cent. Michigan at N. Illinois, ESPN, 6 p.m.

**WOMEN'S COLLEGE SOCCER:** Gonzaga at Santa Clara, ESPN, 9:30 p.m.

**GOLF:** LPGA: The TOTO Japan Classic, GOLF, 10 p.m.

**MLB WORLD SERIES:** Houston at Philadelphia, FOX, 7 p.m.

**NBA:** Boston at Cleveland, ESPN, 6:45 p.m.; Detroit at Milwaukee, BSWI, 7 p.m.; Memphis at Portland, ESPN, 9:05 p.m.

**NHL:** Pittsburgh at Buffalo, TNT, 6:30 p.m.

**Football**

From A4

Northwestern on the road and Purdue at home while falling in double overtime at Michigan State.

Matt Bernstein played fullback from 2001-05 and was teammates with Leonhard. He noticed a "different culture of football" during Leonhard's first game as interim coach.

"The guys look like they're having fun," Bernstein said about the win at Northwestern. "The offense was something I've never seen before. It was beautiful."

Kicker Vitaly Pisetsky was part of two Rose Bowl wins more than 20 years ago. He and Leonhard never played on the same team, missing each other by a season in the early 2000s. He noticed a similar difference in the Badgers, even when the result was a loss.

"Barry always said 'Don't confuse effort with results,'" Pisetsky said. "We didn't get the results against Michigan State, but I was watching that game and I saw the fire. I saw the fight. So that mental toughness is going to have to come back, but I think it will."

Chris Chambers was UW teammates with Pisetsky before playing 10 seasons in the NFL and earning one trip to the Pro Bowl. He now works as the receivers coach at Keiser University in Florida. He rarely gets to watch a Badgers game but said he caught the Northwestern game.

"The energy obviously is

way different," he said.

**Support for Leonhard**

Teammates have lauded Leonhard's work ethic since he was a walk-on with the Badgers. It's helped endear the Tony native to other players as well as coaches and fans throughout his football career.

"When you go from a small town to a walk-on to an all-American to undrafted to playing 10 years, he understands the mentality it takes to be successful and the work that needs to be done," said Brian Calhoun, a former UW running back and Leonhard teammate. "And so I think that's what kids would gravitate towards."

"And I think he has a certain 'it' factor or aura about him that recruits are going to want to be able to play for him and have a chance to follow his path. But I think he has all the tools to be successful."

Don Davey played defensive line on some of Alvarez's first teams in Madison, and he didn't hide his preference for the next Badgers coach.

"Everybody — the boosters, the players, the front office — everybody's cheering for Jim," Davey said. "Everybody wants him to be the full-time coach going forward, but we have to win games to do that. ..."

"Hopefully ... we run the table from the rest of here and he gets what we all want. We want him to sign a long-term contract and be heading our program for the

next several years."

**Program's direction**

Opinions became more varied when the former players discussed where UW should place its focus going forward. UW sits at 4-4 and there's the potential, albeit tenuous, to capture the Big Ten West crown, so it's not like the program has bottomed out.

But there were suggestions for improving the overall perception of the program, and recruiting was mentioned first by several players.

"Wrapping the state up again, not letting guys get out of here that shouldn't," said Scott Nelson, a safety on Alvarez's early teams.

That hasn't been the case recently. UW missed on key targets from within Wisconsin during the 2022 recruiting cycle, with tight end Jerry Cross (Penn State) and offensive linemen Carson Hinzman (Ohio State) and Billy Schrauth (Notre Dame) all choosing to play elsewhere.

Power Five programs already began homing in on 2024 standouts such as running back Corey Smith (Waukesha Catholic Memorial), offensive linemen Donovan Harbour (Waukesha Catholic Memorial) and Nathan Roy (Mukwonago), linebacker Sam Pilof (Midleton) and tight end Robert Booker II (Waunakee). All hold offers from UW and have visited the program this season.

"I think we got to put up a wall around Wisconsin," said Bernstein, the former fullback. "Barry Alvarez

didn't let anybody leave. Like you had one guy maybe leave and he turned out to be a bust. So we need to put that wall back up."

Several former Badgers also discussed players being paid for their name, image and likeness. Davey, an entrepreneur who owns a wealth management firm, tailgated with The Varsity Collective last weekend. He believes UW alumni, boosters and business owners within the community are approaching this new era "the Wisconsin way."

"We don't necessarily want the kid that's just looking for the highest dollar from the highest bidder," Davey said. "We want to look at these kids not for the next four years, but for the next 40 years."

"What can we bring to the table at Wisconsin, through our network and through our resources, and through our alumni, and through our business connections? What can we bring to the table that will benefit these kids for the rest of their lives?"

But McIntosh made clear with Chryst's firing that he isn't afraid to shake up things. And former offensive lineman David Moorman, who played for Chryst, said that can be a positive.

"It's a different world, and there's more money involved in it than ever before," he said. "And I think Wisconsin needs to realize that just in general, that what made us great for so long, we might need to make a few changes here and there."

Colten Bartholomew contributed to this report.

**Berg**

From A4

McDonnell had spirited starts by Eau Claire Immanuel and Clayton in the regional finals and sectional semis on their way to those eventual sweeps, and Bloomer dropped the first set in Saturday's sectional final to West Salem before roaring back to win in four.

This marks the first time in history three Chippewa County volleyball programs have advanced to state in the same season. In fact, this is the first season more than one county school has advanced to state — not counting 1989

when Stanley-Boyd and Thorp each qualified.

With Chi-Hi qualifying, six of the county's eight programs have at least one trip to state, with the Cardinals joining McDonnell, Bloomer, Stanley-Boyd, Cadott and Lake Holcombe. The Macks and the Orioles are the two programs to bring home WIAA state championships. Stanley-Boyd won a Division 3 state championship in 2006, and McDonnell brought home Division 4 crowns in 2009 and 2021.

Even outside county lines, local volleyball has shown plenty of skill in recent years. Fall Creek and

Osseo-Fairchild advanced to the 2020 Division 3 state tournament, as did Eau Claire Immanuel in Division 4.

The Cardinals, Blackhawks and Macks each took a different route but ultimately reached the same destination — Green Bay. Great accomplishments individually are even more impressive collectively and have set the tone for a frantic finish for what has been a can't-miss fall season.

As someone who has worked at the Chippewa Herald for more than 12 years, I can't recall anything quite like it. The only other instance that comes

to mind was 2015 when the same three schools advanced to state in softball, but all three programs have a much more established track record of success in those sports.

"I think it's awesome for our area, it's awesome for those kids but it really goes to show the strength of volleyball in our area," McDonnell coach Kat Hanson said. "That's three different divisions that are ending down at state, and we're fortunate enough to have played both those teams and to have one of them in our conference. So it helps us being the smallest school that we're battle tested."

**Basketball**

From A4

We are in better shape than we were in France, but we're not where we need to be."

It was actually the largest margin UW had beaten a WIAC team since coach Gard's first full year as head coach. The next highest would be against UW Stout in 2017 when the Badgers beat the Blue Devils 85-56.

Sunday's matchup with the Bugolds revealed more weaknesses for UW than it did strengths.

Eau Claire's tallest player on the court was junior Carter Huschka at 6-foot-7; the Badgers have five players of equal or greater height, led by the 7-0 Crowl. UW also has a higher talent level than Eau Claire, yet the Bugolds rebounded the Badgers.

It was only by one rebound, but they're going to play taller and more physical teams as the season goes on. Wahl said he's high-lighted rebounding as an area to clean up. Gard said he doesn't look at the numbers too closely.

"If they shoot 30% and we shoot 49% there's gonna be more rebounds for them to get," Gard said. "The first half that I saw two were air balls that we missed block-outs. There's some block-out responsibilities. It's

not really about height. It's technique-wise and if we're caught in rotation, do we get bodies and make contact. A couple of them that they got to we didn't."

Chris Hodges did show a lot of physicality and fight while in the post. He grabbed two of UW's offensive rebounds. He missed the second chance shot on one but passed to Markus Ilver, who scored a 3-pointer on the other.

He also had the only and-1 opportunity for the Badgers. Hodges drove to the basket, scored his lone two points and drew a foul. He did miss the free throw but showed his aggressiveness on the play.

"Just his motor today," Crowl said. "You saw him going after every single offense rebound. Everyone. His physicality ... then he had a couple of good finishes, too."

Sophomore guard Chucky Hepburn has been tabbed as a potential standout this season. He averaged 7.9 points and maintained a 1.97 assist-to-turnover ratio with 77 assists and 39 turnovers last season.

His outing in the exhibition was supposed to be telling of his offensive prowess this season, but it was anything but great. Hepburn shot 11% overall and 0-for-3 from 3-point range. All but two of his eight points came from the free throw line. Eau

Claire coach Matt Siverling said his team wasn't doing anything specific to guard Hepburn.

It felt like Hepburn was trying to do too much. There were two instances in which Hepburn had the ball on a breakaway. He could've finished with a simple layup, but instead tried to be fancy, resulting in a miss. He was fouled on both, earning free throw opportunities.

Scoring is going to have to come by committee this season for UW. Wahl, Crowl and freshman Connor Essegian scored 14, 10 and 10 points, respectively. However, there's not a lot of wiggle room for Hepburn to have an off-day come Big Ten Conference play.

He contributed one of UW's five turnovers — he lost control of the ball when driving to the basket — which led to Eau Claire's Brock Voigt finishing a dunk. The Badgers forced 22 turnovers.

The Badgers struggled from 3-point range, with Essegian being the only player to hit more than one. The three returning starters didn't make any of their nine combined attempts.

They had a hard time defending from 3-point range as well. All but six field goals for Eau Claire came from the 3-point line as the Bugolds shot 10-for-33. Junior Carter Huschka led the way

with nine points on 3-for-3 shooting from 3.

"I thought we took a lot of tough 3s, especially early," Gard said. "That's something just shot selection, shot quality, those things that these guys haven't spent a ton of time on. But that's something we'll (work on) and they understand how shot selection affects us in transition. Give Eau Claire credit, they were bombing away, which was good for us to have to guard multiple guys that could shoot it."

The Badgers were able to go 12 players deep, with only two of those playing under 10 minutes. UW struggled with depth last season — only 13.6% of its scoring came from off the bench. The non-starters scored 32 points, making up 42.1% of the scoring Sunday.

Chris Vogt was the only bench player to score in double-digit figures last season and it came in the final regular-season game. Essegian accomplished that feat against Eau Claire with his 4-for-7 shooting.

"Any experience, specifically those new guys, and for the most part, they're all new in terms of their role — whether they're new to the program or sliding one seat closer — any experience that we get to put them in live competition is beneficial," Gard said.

**Packers**

From A4

their first eight games since 2006, when Brett Favre was the team's starter. Their third double-digit loss this year matches the most they've had in a full season with Rodgers at quarterback. The five losses marks the most they've had in one

season under coach Matt LaFleur took over in 2019, and most since a 6-9-1 finish in 2018.

Now the three-time NFC North champions face an uphill climb in the division standings after falling three wins behind the Minnesota Vikings (6-1).

What encouraged Rodgers was the energy he felt from his teammates leading

up to the game, by noting it "felt like the Packers again." The only issue was how it failed to carry over into an outing Green Bay trailed 24-7 by halftime.

After holding Buffalo to its first three-and-out on the opening drive this season, the Packers' defense allowed touchdowns on three consecutive possessions, and field goals on the

next two, before stiffening to intercept Josh Allen twice in the fourth quarter.

LaFleur said the Packers need to play with more discipline.

Green Bay had eight penalties for 58 yards, including an offensive pass interference penalty on tight end Robert Tonyan that wiped out a touchdown on the first series of the second half.