

Pressure

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Janowski scored the Pirates first 20 points of the second half. They played with speed and swung the ball around the arc with efficiency.

"They like to play fast and one thing that helps when you're playing fast is if you can knock down shots. They were doing it all today," coach Ouimette said. "They couldn't miss ... traps and speed — it all speeds up the game quite a bit. I would say they did a nice job doing that, and we just had to keep battling and looking to do what we could do to counter that. They did a nice job today."

The Pirates led 57-33 at a media timeout with 10:59 left in the game. Lakeland trailed by as many as 26 points in the game.

Julianna Ouimette led the charge as Lakeland started to cut into the lead, gaining as many as 13 points on the Pirates.

"I just hope to leave behind the legacy that you got to work hard. Everything you do, give it your all, put your teammates first, bust your butt no matter what. You can have a terrible game, you can have a few turnovers, not be able to make a shot," Julianna Ouimette said. "But if you're out there getting every rebound, every steal, getting assists to everybody, you're going to impact the game in such huge way. It's how hard you play — that's what I want to leave behind."

Saylor Timmerman made a bucket in the paint. She also had three blocks and

six rebounds in the game. Then, Julianna Ouimette scored seven straight points, including her first triple at the top of the key.

Fortier scored her first points of the game with a layup. Kristina Ouimette made her second 3-pointer of the game, part of a quick 5-0 run. Quade had the assist.

Fortier scored five straight points, both assisted by Julianna Ouimette. Fortier made a triple from the corner before scoring in the paint when Julianna Ouimette dished it to her for two points.

Pewaukee called a timeout. The Pirates led 69-53 with 4:26 left.

Julianna Ouimette kept on scoring in what would be her final game of her legendary career. She nailed another triple before scoring a layup off a turnover in the paint. She also had four assists in the game.

"It was just great to see how much support we had from not only our school, but the whole community. All those little kids, they all look up to us. I had community members ... I didn't even know all week coming up to me, 'hey good luck, go represent Lakeland ... go represent the GNC.' It was awesome to see all the support this week and just having everyone excited for us. Everyone was just super happy for us, wanted the best for us and that was just an awesome feeling."

The Thunderbirds were in the midst of a 19-6 scoring run to cut the lead to 13 points.

Evenhouse swung the ball



BRETT LABORE/LAKELAND TIMES

Ava Evenhouse makes a 3-pointer during the first half of a WIAA Division 2 state semifinal game against Pewaukee Friday, March 10 at the Resch Center in Green Bay. Evenhouse scored eight points off the bench.

around the arc to assist Fortier in her second triple of the game to give her 10 points in her final game of her career.

Julianna Ouimette made two free throws late in the game to give her 30 points, the second straight game she scored 30 to lead all scorers. She then fouled out, leaving the floor to a loud ovation from the Lakeland crowd.

The loss ended Lakeland's season at 22-7 with

plenty of memories and highlights.

"I thought it was a great season. My kids aren't afraid of these challenges. (They) just kept doing everything we needed to, to get to where we could get to the state tournament some day," coach Ouimette said. "This season was phenomenal. It was just the culmination of everything coming together — all the open gyms, all the tournaments, all the leagues, all

the skill sessions and all the support of the families, the communities and the schools. The teachers are phenomenal. We've just been loved by everybody up there. I couldn't have wished for a better season for these girls. Very proud of them and happy with the season."

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Saying goodbye with a heart full of love



Brett LaBore

LAKELAND TIMES SPORTS REPORTER

Goodbyes are never easy. They mark the end of an era and can often be sad. Still, a goodbye can lead to a hello filled with new adventures. The Green Bay Packers might be doing that with their quarterbacks.

I grew up a huge fan of legendary Packer quarterback Brett Favre. He played with no fear, and he was always having fun.

The day he got traded to the New York Jets was hard for me. He was no longer on my favorite football team, and I didn't know whether to root for him or not. Seeing him in a Jets

uniform didn't seem right.

When Favre got traded to the Vikings, I felt like I was getting betrayed. I wanted to walk up to him and say 'are you sure this is the right decision?' Though he wasn't retired, I felt like I had seen the last of the Favre that I grew up watching as he played in the purple and gold.

Something similar might happen to Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers — at least I think he's a Packer. As of press time, Rodgers is still a Packer. However, trade speculations have grown as he might become a member of the Jets, just like Favre did.

I can't believe he is going to do the same thing as Favre did and go to the same team. As long as he doesn't go to the Vikings some day, I'm OK with it.

To be honest, I'm not going to be devastated if Rodgers leaves Green Bay. I've been a big fan of Rodgers ever since he became the starter

back in 2008. He's an all-time quarterback whose provided the Packers with countless moments of unbelievable play.

Whether Rodgers' fault or not, the drama is getting to me. Most of that has been led by the media, but I do feel like it is dragging the organization down. We need a breath of fresh air.

The only thing that bothers me is it would have been nice to see Rodgers play his entire career with the Green and Gold. Nowadays, that is hard to do.

No matter what happens, I am grateful for all that Rodgers did for the Packers and the memories that were made during his time here. Thank you, Aaron.

Sometimes it's time for a change. I'm a big believer in quarterback Jordan Love. He's waited long enough, he's learned and I think he's ready for the moment.

Rodgers has always been supportive of him which is something that has been cool to see.

Love will be in good hands with head coach Matt LaFleur.

Though this year was a down year offensively, I think LaFleur is going to go back to the drawing board to get things corrected. That starts with working with Love at OTA's, mini-camps, etc.

I also like the pieces around Love. Wide receiver Christian Watson looks like a future Pro-Bowler with his speed and size. Fellow receiver Romeo Doubs has a bright future ahead of him and looks to be a solid receiver. I also love that running backs Aaron Jones and AJ Dillon are returning. Both of those guys have great character as well and would help Love with anything he needs.

The Packers do need to improve at a few skill positions. Free agency is underway, and I'm sure the Packers are looking to add to the receiver or tight end position. I don't mind if wide receiver Allen Lazard doesn't re-sign — I hope he gets his money and signs

somewhere that will be best for him.

A player like DeAndre Hopkins would be great for Love and the Packers. If free agency doesn't work out, the Packers can always look to the draft again in late April. I do think that a veteran receiver would be great for this group led by Watson and Doubs.

Love has a limited sample size of playing time. He's played a lot in the pre-season, but that doesn't mean much. Back in 2021, he started a game on the road against the Kansas City Chiefs. It wasn't a great performance, but it was a tough place to play in for his first game.

Nobody knows Love better than the Packers. If they say he's ready, then he's ready. I like to point to the game vs. the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday Night football late last year. Love came in for a couple of drives when Rodgers left with an injury. I loved what I saw.

Love played calm, cool and collected. He

didn't panic against one of the best defenses in the NFL. He went through his progressions, and made smart decisions. Yes, it was only for one quarter. But, I liked what I saw. Imagine what a full offseason would look like with him as the starter.

Rodgers only had a small sample size too. He played against the Dallas Cowboys as he filled in for an injury Favre back in 2007. Rodgers played really well and the rest is history.

There's a lot left to be decided. The pieces are there for Love to succeed in the NFL. He's got coaches, players and leaders to help him. The Packers invested in him when they drafted him with their first round pick back in 2020. It is time.

It's never easy to say goodbye. Even when legends move on, their memory lives on forever and ever.

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