

SPORTS

Sunday, February 8, 2015



LEFT: Lucas Pomeranski is hoisted into the air by Bailey McGrath after Pomeranski realized a dream come true Friday night by playing -- and scoring -- in a varsity basketball game for Bridgeport. Looking on are Eli Williams (2) and Tyler Darrah.

BOTTOM: Pomeranski eyes the basket on one of his successful three-point field goals Friday night. Eli Williams looks on.

Photos/PAUL KRAJNYAK

Park duo captures Panther Classic mat titles

• Martins Ferry has five individuals place

By KIM NORTH
Times Leader Sports Writer

CONNORVILLE — The 25th annual Pepsi-Ohio Coatings Panther Classic wrestling tournament turned into somewhat of a Pennsylvania Dual as five of the 14 weight classes featured finalists from the Keystone State.

While no eastern Ohio individuals would come away with championships, two Ohio Valley Athletic Conference grapplers won titles. They were Wheeling Park's standout senior duo of Dallas Baciak (126) and Dylan Taylor (145).

Martins Ferry fared well with five place-winners, including freshman Dalton Hoover who dropped a 5-1 decision to West Allegheny's Joshua Barr in the 182 pound finals. Hoover is now 25-5, while Barr improved to a sparkling 27-1.

The Purple Riders, who finished seventh as a team with 86.5 points, also had four third-place finishers in Theodore Zoumpolidis (106), Bryce Coleman (152), Hunter Bodkin (220) and Jonathan Bodkin (285).

Buckeye Local's Josh Sokolowski advanced to the finals at 160 pounds, but was pinned by West Allegheny's Nathan Hall in 1:08. Sokolowski is now 37-7. Hall improved to a nifty 27-1.

Baciak remained unbeaten in 36 matches with a 16-1 technical fall of Edison's Robert Daley in a rematch of their OVAC finals bout in January.

Taylor hiked his mark to 34-4 with a 5-0 blanking of West Mifflin's Austin Bonacci.

There were eight returning champions entered in the impressive field, and five of them repeated. Winning their second consecutive championships were Plum's Anthony DiNinno (106); Baciak, Plum's Tommy Zummo (132); Taylor and South Park's Jake Wentzel (152).

DiNinno decisioned Jerrod Hunziker 3-1, while Zummo won by injury default over Fox Chapel's Ian Moriz. Wentzel pinned his cousin Austin Digiandomenico in 2:34.

Other champions included Sheridan's Nathaniel Kehn (113); West Allegheny's Ryan Cunningham (120); Fox Chapel's Darius Booker (138); South Park's Greg Bulsak (170); Fox Chapel's Zach Carcy (195); West Allegheny's Luke Seifert (220); and Sheridan's Evan Loughman (285).

West Allegheny took the team title with 178.5 points, two more than runnerup Fox Chapel. Wheeling Park was third with 151.5 and Sheridan fifth at 93.

The team championship and runnerup trophies were named in the honor of the late Herman Deyarmon, a long-time Buckeye Local wrestler supporter.

North can be reached at knorth@timesleaderonline.com

Netting a hoop dream

• Pomeranski realizes this in Friday's hoop contest



Kim North
Sports Writer

WOLFURST — Don't try and tell me, nor the couple hundred fans that attended Friday night's Barnesville and Bridgeport high school boys' basketball game, that dreams don't come true.

Bridgeport High School has had a wealth of hardwood talent in its storied history, the most notable being former Ohio State University and Boston Celtics standout John Havlicek, an NBA Hall of Famer.

However, few — if any — have warmed hearts more — on both sides of Frank Baxter Court — than Lucas Pomeranski.

Friday night inside the building named in Havlicek's honor, the 5-3 Pomeranski realized his life-long dream that had those in attendance standing on their feet and applauding, with many, especially fellow BHS students, shedding tears during the final 4-minutes and 32-seconds that they had just witnessed.

Pomeranski, the Bulldogs' loyal basketball manager for four years, has scoliosis and has been receiving services at Shriners' Hospital in Erie, Pa., for the past eight years, according to his father, Carl, who was working the scoreboard during Friday night's bone-chilling event that even brought golf-ball-size goose bumps to yours truly.

Carl said his son is a die-hard Bulldogs' supporter and always had a



dream of suiting up for a varsity basketball game, even though he was only the manager.

"He had one dream that he wanted to accomplish before he graduated," his dad said. "He wanted to dress for a game kind of like the old movie, 'Rudy,' and he was fine with that. Tonight was actually a shock, not only to him, but me, as well, when he got in."

Not only did Lucas get to realize his dream of being able to dress for a varsity game, he also scored six points on a pair

of three-point field goals.

"It feels really good," Lucas said. "Everyone was excited. It felt good when Bailey (McGrath), QJ (Williams) and Koty (Seever) came running out on the court and lifted me in the air. It was unbelievable."

The idea of letting Lucas dress for a varsity game wasn't a spur of the moment thing at all, according to 10th-year Bridgeport head coach Donnie Cash.

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Ohio Valley Unsung Hero

Kelley knows ticket to success

By RICK THORP
Times Leader Sports Writer

CADIZ — Chriscel Kelley doesn't see herself as the face of Harrison Central High School sports.

But, in many ways, she is.

As the person in charge of tickets for most varsity sports, Kelley has a front row seat to most of the Huskies' events.

In fact, anyone attending Monday night's OVAC Class 4A girls' basketball tournament semifinal vs. Oak Glen will see Kelley as soon as they enter the

John W. Stephenson Center.

She'll be the person selling tickets just inside the door, something she's been doing since the late 1990s.

"It keeps me busy," Kelley said while setting up prior to last Thursday's boys' basketball game against Martins Ferry.

"I'm right here in town. I just live down the street. So, it's easy for me to leave work and go home for a little bit and be back here in time for a game."

"I don't mind it."

Kelley has been an employee of the Harrison Hills School District for 17 years. She currently works at the high school.

"I've done it all," she explained. "From janitor, to cafeteria, to multi-handicapped for about three or four years. Then, I was in the library for a while."

"I do crossing guard also."

Currently, Kelley is an educational aide at the high school, where she graduated in 1979 when it was Cadiz High.

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CHRISCEL KELLEY prepares tickets prior to the start of Thursday night's boys' basketball game between Harrison Central and Martins Ferry inside the John W. Stephenson Center.



T-L Photo/RICK THORP

St. C. grad Brown excited to be back on the oval



Seth Staskey
Sports Editor

YOUNGSTOWN — Jaylon Brown loved football and always had the dream of playing it at the collegiate level.

He also loved track and field, shining in that for four years as well.

As his times continued to drop last spring, he actually flirted with the idea of pursuing it in college, too.

Flirting has now become a full-blown relationship.

Brown has joined the Youngstown

State University track and field team and will be taking part in the 60 meters and 200 meter dashes during the remainder of the indoor season. He will remain a member of the Penguins' football program, too.

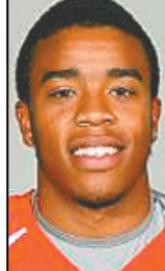
"I often wondered whether or not I made the right decision choosing football over track, but now I'm able to do both, so I am pretty excited about it," Brown said. "I can't wait to get back out (on the track), it's been

too long."

No member of the Penguins' track staff approached Brown about running. He went to the them.

"One day I was just thinking about how much I missed running and was looking at times from throughout the Horizon League and I started comparing them to my times from high school," Brown said. "I realized I'd be able to compete, so I went over to

See, BROWN, Page C4



● Pomeranski

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"When this group of seniors were sophomores we, my assistant coaches Rick Yourkovich and Greg Harkness and I, thought they could be pretty good," Cash recalled. "The seniors actually came to me and said 'if we get a chance our senior year, we would like for Lucas to play.'"

Cash was all for it, if the right situation came about.

So, with the Bulldogs in total control of Friday night's contest, Cash sent Pomeranski to the scorer's table — where his dad was seated — to check in.

"I thought, this is really going to happen. He is really going to go into the game," Carl recalled.

At the next stoppage of play, Lucas took the floor in his white No. 4 uniform to the delight of the those in the stands, both home and visitors.

The lefty misfired on his first two attempts from beyond the three-point arc. However, with Barnesville's defenders showing the utmost respect for what was going on, the lefty lofted his third shot from the top of the key that hit off the front of the rim, caromed high off the top of the backboard before tickling the twine as 2:19 showed on the clock, drawing a huge response from everyone in the gym who, at this point, were on their feet.

Not to be outdone, Lucas banked home his next attempt — from nearly NBA range — as the crowd once again went bonkers. He wound up 2-for-7 for the game.

"Even if he hadn't scored, it was a very nice gesture just to get him on the floor for a couple of minutes," Carl added.

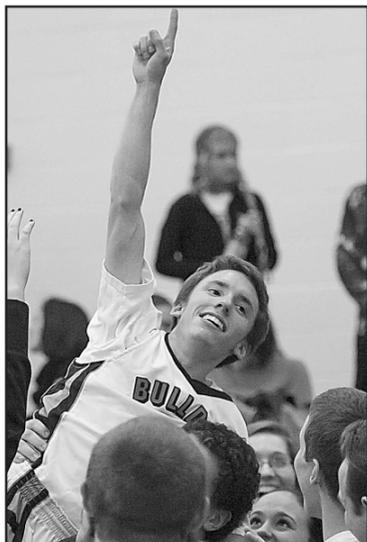
"I want to thank Barnesville for letting that happen," Coach Cash said as his emotions started to get the best of him. "That's a class act right there."

"Everybody knows Lucas," Coach Cash continued. "I've been around him for four years in football, basketball and track. He's a great kid and deserved a night like this."

I, personally, have to give Barnesville big-time kudos for, once the outcome was decided, allowing Lucas to realize his dream.

"My players kind of knew there was an outside chance he could get to play" Barnesville head coach Chris Pack revealed. "My point guard told me that if he did get in, they weren't going to guard him."

"It really put things in perspective for us because we were feeling sorry for ourselves about our offensive



woes and things," Pack noted. "We needed to be reminded that it is a privilege to get out on the floor, and we sometimes take for granted that how great it is to be a ballplayer."

"I'm glad he got the chance to experience that. It was good sportsmanship."

With the exception of injured senior Robert Teeman, whose jersey was worn by Pomeranski, who wasn't able to attend due to work obligations, the other five classmates had nothing but praise for their friend, and teammate for a night.

"The kids will tell you that this is the happiest moment of their season so far," Coach Cash said.

"It was the best thing we could have asked for," Bailey McGrath said. "He's been with us for four years and most of us have grown up with him through our younger days. To see him get in there and make two shots, not just one, was great."

QJ Williams added, "It meant everything to see him get in there and play. That was our whole goal for three years. It's amazing."

JC Cash said, "It's an awesome feeling to see Lucas get in the game and score six points."

"Amazing," was the first word that Koty Seevers came up with. "He's been with us for four years. I just love him to death."

Parker Dyson said, "It's really nice to see him get in the game. He's been with us for four years. He always shoots around in practice. Sometimes he shoots better than some of us."

"On behalf of the Bridgeport Board of Education and Administration, we

would like to thank Barnesville for its nice gesture of sportsmanship during Friday night's game," Superintendent Ted Downing stressed. "That was true sportsmanship."

Bridgeport High School principal Rob Zitzelsberger knows Lucas well.

"It was really exciting and a nice gesture by Barnesville in allowing it to happen. Lucas is in this gym for every practice the last four years with the boys' basketball team. He shoots every day. It didn't surprise me that he made those two."

However, Lucas's feel-good story doesn't end there. Not even close.

During his eight years of making trips to Erie, Pa., and the Shriner's Hospital, a lot of people have been responsible for helping Lucas get to where he is today.

He wanted to give back and has done so in a huge way.

"He told me that for everything they (Shriner's Hospital) had done for him and never asked for a penny, he wanted to do something to help those kids up there who need it most," Carl relayed.

So, using his efforts as a Boy Scout to earn the rank of Eagle Scout, he walked in a 5K race last June in Erie and raised an eye-popping \$5,236 that provided 87 gift bags for youth ages 8-18.

"He was glad to do it and is planning on doing it again."

Lucas also received his Eagle Scout Court of Honor just last weekend.

I've been covering athletic events across the Ohio Valley for nearly 25 years and I can never remember an event as touching as Friday night was.

Friday night was a class act all the way around. From Coach Cash and his seniors organizing the genuine gesture, to Barnesville — players, coaches, cheerleaders and fans — for graciously joining in the action, to the referees — Butch Minkemeyer, Lance Jacob and Kerry Langsdorf — for going along with what was playing out in front of them.

"Absolutely, one of the biggest highlights of my officiating career," Minkemeyer, a veteran referee, said in an email.

In addition to his father, Lucas's mother Barbara also witnessed the event.

Congratulations to all involved, especially Lucas who realized his dream and even more!

North can be reached at knorth@timesleaderonline.com

WLU sweeps pair

WEST LIBERTY — No. 10-ranked West Liberty sprinted out to a 24-point halftime lead and never looked back here Saturday afternoon, clinching its 11th straight 20-win season with a 103-84 win against UVA-Wise at the ASRC.

Zac Grossenbacher was the leading scorer off the bench for the second straight game with 19 points while senior All-Region standout C.J. Hester had another strong game with 18 points, 7 rebounds, 4 assists and 2 steals.

Seeger Bonifant added 16 points while Mike Lamberti had a dozen and Devin Hoehn chipped in with 10

to round out WLU's double-figure scorers.

Women
West Liberty 81
UVA-Wise 79

WEST LIBERTY — The West Liberty University women's basketball team stormed back from a double-digit halftime deficit to win their fourth straight.

Kailee Howe was almost unstoppable down the stretch, pouring in 19 of her game-high 29 points during the final 10:43.

Howe posted her eighth double-double in the last nine games with 10 assists to go along with her 29 points.

● Brown

Continued from Page C1

a practice and asked the sprints coach what he thought about me joining the team."

When you carry a track and field resume like Brown did during his prep years as a Red Devils, most coaches will find a spot for you.

Brown was state runnerup in both the 100 and 200 meter dash last spring. He was the OVAC champion in both, district champion in both and also the double regional winner. He owned best times of 10.66 and 21.47.

"Once the coaches realized what I had accomplished in high school, they were pretty anxious to get me on the team," Brown said.

Sprinting — especially for Brown — isn't something that requires a lot of practice per se, or time to shake the rust off. So, Brown feels confident he can make an impact quickly.

"The coaches are doing whatever they can to work around my schedule," Brown said.

Brown hopes to be competing in the Horizon League Championship meet, which YSU will be hosting on Feb. 28 and March 1.

Before he actually visited the YSU track practice, Brown received blessing from the Penguins' football staff, including newly hired head coach Bo Pelini.

"The football staff was all for it," Brown said. "They believe that running track will help with football and know a lot of great athletes who've done both in college."

Because of spring football upcoming, Brown's still unsure how much he may get to compete on the oval during the outdoor season, but he hopes to make a contribution in some capacity.

"As of right now, I am just running indoor, but the track coaches would love for me to be able to do both, but they know that football comes first," Brown admitted. "With spring ball, a lot of my time will be spent on the field."

Brown will pay particular attention to the schedule, however, and wants to run when it's feasible.

"Football will come first, but if I'm able to compete at a track meet without missing football then I'll be there," Brown said.

Along with his football commitments, there's also the academic side of college, so Brown had to spend some time gauging many pros and cons before formally approaching the Youngstown track staff.

"I didn't know if I'd be able to handle it all and I also didn't want to be that freshman who thought he could do whatever he wanted," Brown confirmed. "I was recruited here to play football, so that and classes had to come first."

Brown saw some playing time last season for the Penguins, primarily on special teams. He's hoping another year of weight training will help him gain more snaps on the offensive side of the ball.

"I'm excited about the new coaching staff," Brown said. "They came from a big-time school (Nebraska) and all want the same thing us as players want and that's to win a championship."

Though he's doing well in class and playing two sports, Brown admitted that he didn't handle the adjustment to college as well as he had expected.

"It was tough, but it was definitely worth it," Brown said. "At one point, I didn't know if I would make it (at Youngstown), but with Coach (Brett) McLean, Josh Johnson and my family telling me that it would pay off in the end, I was able to get it done."

FERNS NAMED ALL-AMERICAN

Two national high school media outlets recognized St. Clairsville junior Brendan Ferns on their all-American squads after his brilliant campaign this past fall.

CBS Sports Network named Ferns to its first-team all-American squad for the Class of 2016. Ferns was listed as one of six inside linebackers on the team.

Ferns was named to the MaxPreps Junior All-American Team's second-team defensive unit after his 110-tackle season for the Red Devils.

Ferns has a laundry list of college football offers, including from the National Champion Ohio State Buckeyes, Notre Dame, Stanford Ole Miss, Penn State, West Virginia, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Pitt.

SETH'S SCOOPS

ATHENS HIGH senior center Colter Thompson, who was a starting lineup on the Bulldogs' state runner-up football team, was recently named the team's MVP based on a players' vote. Thompson is the son of Union Local graduates Wendy (Brown) Rogers and Scott Thompson. He's the grandson of Margie and Don Brown of Bethesda and Bill and Carma Thompson of Morristown.

Winning that honor is especially impressive since Athens' quarterback Joe Burrow, who is committed to Ohio State, was named Mr. Football in Ohio and the Gatorade State Player of the Year.

KUDOS to former Linsly standout Akil Blount and current Boston College quarterbacks coach Todd Fitch, who is a Bellaire High graduate, on successfully nailing the Super Bowl pick and final score in last week's T-L Super Bowl Poll.

Staskey can be reached at sstaskey@timesleaderonline.com

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Seminoles trounce Redskins

CALDWELL — Allison Kuhn scored 24 points Saturday to go along with seven rebounds, four steals and four assists as Monroe Central thumped Caldwell, 65-25, in girls' high school basketball action.

Kaleigh Marley added 13 points and six boards for the Seminoles, while Carly Baker had 11. Olivia Gauding also grabbed seven rebounds.

Lexi Weisend paced the Redskins with nine points.

Monroe Central returns to action Monday by playing host to Steubenville Catholic in an OVAC Tournament consolation pool contest.

Holmes, English lead PGA event

SAN DIEGO (AP) — J.B. Holmes birdied all but one of the par 5s at Torrey Pines for a 4-under 68 and joined Harris English at the top of a crowded leaderboard Saturday in the Farmers Insurance Open.

English led by as many as three shots early until he ended his streak of 39 holes at par or better with a double bogey on No. 4. He dropped another shot on the 16th with a poor chip and shot 73.

They were at 9-under 207 with a host of contenders behind them.

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