

— Fox Cities —

MARCH 26

SPORTS

Just a
Girl with
a Stick

**Ally
Rhoda**

Appleton North
Lacrosse

Cover photo by
Paul Stumpf, P.S. Portraits

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From the Editor



Welcome to March: Are we feeling the lion or the lamb?

I'm no meteorologist (nor is that groundhog, by the way), so I won't attempt to predict what March will bring, weather-wise. But I can tell you the March issue of *Fox Cities Sports* is coming in strong!

Many of our readers will be focused on their March Madness basketball brackets, so we've got a bit of basketball for you: On pages 10 and 11 you'll find answers to 20 Questions by Fox Valley Lutheran point guard Gabe Heiges and a parents' perspective from his folks, Bill and Emily.

Of course, there's more to March than basketball—there's also lacrosse! The high school and college seasons get underway this month. Ally Rhoda, this month's cover athlete, explains why more young girls should pick up sticks, and we learn about Sconnie Lacrosse, a nonprofit organization dedicated to growing the game. Lawrence University offers a preview into the upcoming season for its new-ish men's and women's lacrosse teams.



In honor of World Wildlife Day (March 3), Greg introduces us to the spotted musky, which he considers to be a prime contender for "comeback fish of the Great Lakes." Get an inside look at the work being done by the DNR's hatchery and fisheries crews to make Green Bay a trophy destination for this fish.

Nicole bravely and boldly tackles a tough question: What exactly defines a sport? It probably won't surprise you to learn that the answer changes over time and across cultures. Would you consider *hurling* a sport? Find out more about that one on page 18.

You'll also find in this issue fascinating profiles of WLUK's Doug Ritchay, Ed the Diver, and athlete-turned-physician Chuck McKee.

Come to think of it, this issue of *Fox Cities Sports* is a bit like March weather: It has something for everyone!

The poet Emily Dickinson called March the "Month of Expectation." One thing to look forward to: The APRIL issue, when we'll be announcing the winners of our FOUR "Future in Sports" scholarships! ■

Diane

— Fox Cities —
SPORTS

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Balancing the Game: Time and Stress Management Techniques for Multi-Sport Athletes

BY ANNA BOMBER, MS, CMPC

Competing in several sports throughout the school year is common for young athletes, and it naturally comes with its own set of benefits. Competing in different sports throughout the years helps diversify a student's athletic portfolio, increase involvement, and reduce risk of overuse injuries from using the same movements repetitively. Burnout can also be reduced because a student isn't specializing in one sport too early on.



On the other hand, balancing practices, games, schoolwork, friends, and family can create significant pressure. Without effective strategies, student-athletes may experience stress, injury, fatigue, and even declining academic performance and well-being.

The field of mental performance emphasizes time management and stress management as essential tools for success.

- Time management—This begins with setting clear priorities. Student-athletes benefit from using planners or digital calendars to schedule practices, homework, study sessions, and yes, even built-in time for rest and recovery. This also can include recognizing and asking for help when schedules are overly packed and risk for burnout is high.

- Stress management—Stress management is equally important. Techniques such as visualization and positive self-talk help athletes stay focused under pressure. Maintaining consistent sleep schedules and healthy nutrition also supports both mental and physical performance. Coaches, parents, mental performance experts, and school counselors can reinforce these strategies by teaching athletes how to set realistic goals and maintain a growth mindset.

Ultimately, high school athletes who play multiple sports gain resilience, adaptability, and confidence, setting them up for success in other areas of life such as work and school. With strong time and stress management skills rooted in sport psychology, they can thrive both on the field and in the classroom. ■

For more information, please schedule an informational session with Anna Bomber at Bomber Performance Consulting, LLC, phone 920-470-8118, website Bomberperformance.com, email bomberperformance@outlook.com.



Anna Bomber is owner of Bomber Performance Consulting, LLC, where she specializes in one-on-one and team sessions to help athletes thrive in their performance arena. Anna is a Certified Mental Performance Consultant (CMPC) through the Association for Applied Sport Psychology and works with athletes through a holistic approach on areas such as motivation, confidence, teamwork, communication, concentration, and so much more.

INSIDEMAR

Photo By Paul Stumpf, P.S. Portraits



◀◀ 12-14

ALLY RHODA - JUST A GIRL WITH A STICK

"Ever since I picked up a stick [at age 10]," Ally says, "I knew it was going to be something that I would fall in love with."

7 >>>

GETTING BACK TO NATURE IN THE FOX CITIES

We have had enough cold weather and being cooped up inside that it is time we start planning our outdoor spring adventures.



High Cliff State Park
By Geography21 Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0

◀◀ 16-17

ED THE DIVER

Ed Bieber, better known as "Ed the Diver," and Christie Barlament are making waves with their work cleaning up waterways, promoting healthy lifestyles, and educating the public.



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20 QUESTIONS WITH GABE HEIGES

"The Fox Valley is big enough to have everything you need."

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THE FOX RIVER HURLING CLUB

Called the fastest game on grass, Hurling is the national sport of Ireland.

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ONE ON ONE WITH BRYCE REDDICK

"My coaching philosophy revolves around communicating with players."

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OUTDOORS WITH GREG SEUBERT

If there's a species that can be called a comeback fish, it's the spotted musky.

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WLUK's Doug Ritchay Helps Local Teams, Athletes Shine

BY GREG SEUBERT

When it comes to covering high school sports in northeastern Wisconsin, Doug Ritchay has been there and done that. Ritchay is a familiar face to local sports fans, as he's covered high school teams for WLUK—Fox 11 in Green Bay—since 2010.

Originally from Green Bay, Ritchay attended the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater before transferring to UW-Green Bay, where he graduated with a journalism degree. He was the sports editor at the West Bend Daily News and Oshkosh Northwestern before joining WLUK 16 years ago after starting his career at newspapers in Marinette and Green Bay.

Newspapers to TV

"I was originally a newspaper guy," Ritchay said. "My first job was at the Marinette Eagle Star as a news reporter with some sports. In 1993, I went to the Green Bay News-Chronicle and covered the Packers for a decade during the Favre era. I ended up in Milwaukee at a sales job, just trying something different, and that lasted six months. I ended up in West Bend as the sports editor there for four years and Oshkosh for about 2-1/2 years."

Ritchay left the Northwestern in 2010 to join Fox 11, but admitted the transition from print to television wasn't easy at first.



High school sports has been Doug Ritchay's beat since he joined WLUK in Green Bay in 2010. Photo Courtesy of Doug Ritchay

"You're restricted in space (at a newspaper) and only have so much room to write a story," he said. "Fox 11 brought me on because they wanted me to be a beat reporter like I was for the Packers. They knew my background and wanted me to just go nuts on high school sports and use my reporting skills. Their goal was everyone knows the Packers, but high school sports would be No. 2.

"I had to learn the TV aspect of it and when I first got here, I'm like, 'No way, I'm never going to learn this,'" he said. "I was looking at the computers that they were writing stories and editing on, but I learned. I still have

the newspaper aspect of writing stories for the website, but TV is creativity. It added something to what I was already doing."

Ritchay has noticed a big change in high school sports since joining WLUK.

"The athletes have been so much better in all sports," he said. "We get more traction on our website on high school sports than anything else on the sports side of it. Today, I'm going to Winneconne to do a story on the girls basketball team. Some other time, I'll go to De Pere, Kimberly, or Appleton. I go to a game a night, but I can't go to four of them. We have people to help with that."

Deciding which games, matches, or meets to cover isn't always an easy decision, Ritchay said.

"I will always go to a game that hopefully has two of the better teams in the conference," he said. "Sometimes that's kind of hard to know

early in the season. I'm probably not going to cover a team that's going to go 2-22. You seek out the best teams and the best matchups. Maybe I'm doing a story on one of the best athletes in the area and I'll go and get video of them. It's based on the best games and the best athletes."

As part of his job, Ritchay keeps an eye on as many as 100 teams.

"It's the Green Bay area, it's the Fox Valley, west to Shawano, the lakeshore with the Manitowoc schools, up to Door County and Marinette," he said. "Obviously, I don't know every single thing, but if there's a good team in Manitowoc, Shawano, or Fond du Lac, I will know. There's never a shortage of things to do as far as covering teams and athletes."

Winning Streaks

Ritchay covered the Kimberly football team's 70-game winning streak that included five WIAA state championships and undefeated seasons from 2013-17, as well as the Kaukauna softball team's 108-game winning streak that included state championships in 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Ritchay said one of the most memorable games he's covered was Kimberly's win over Arrowhead in the Division 1 football championship game in 2015.

"It was the snow globe game—that's what they called it—and Kimberly won 49-42 in a snowstorm," he said. "They were down 21 points in the second half. They beat Arrowhead in an unbelievable matchup. That one was championship No. 3 in a row for them. That was win No. 42 in a row and they had two more years to go. I saw the 70th win and I saw the first loss the following year when they got beat by Fond du Lac."

The Kaukauna softball team's string of 108 straight wins is another record that Ritchay doesn't think will be broken anytime soon.

"That was completely insane, to go out there and win 108 games," he said. "People ask me, 'What's the better streak, softball or football?' I don't know, but those were two of my favorite teams to cover not because they always won, but because of the kids. They were so much fun to cover. The best part about these teams: the coaches were great and the kids were great. When you cover a team as much as I had to cover those teams, you get to know those kids and it's fun to get to know them for four years."

Among the current athletes Ritchay is keeping an eye on this season is Freedom boys basketball player Donovan Davis, who helped lead the Irish to state last year as a sophomore.

"He's one of a kind, one of the best juniors in the country," he said.

Ritchay said the favorite part of his job is giving athletes like Davis recognition that they might not get otherwise.

"For most of them, this might be the only time that they're on TV," he said. "The kids are cool to be around. They're all different. It's fun to talk with them, get to know them a little bit and hopefully put a smile on their face.

"They appreciate it when I show up and they let me know," he added. "They'll say, 'Thanks for coming to practice' or 'Thanks for coming to the game.' That's the best part." ■

Getting Back to Nature in the Fox Cities

BY ABBY MCDANIEL, FOX CITIES CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



With winter weather soon coming to an end, everyone is itching to get outdoors. We have had enough cold weather and being cooped up inside—it is time we start planning our outdoor spring adventures.

The Fox Cities is home to a variety of trails, nature, and wetland preserves available right in our backyard and ready to explore. We have worked to curate a list of the best locations in the Fox Cities to truly take in nature. These locations provide the best views of the Fox Cities and double as a great backdrop to make memories and capture experiences.

Location #1: High Cliff State Park

The Red Bird Trail at High Cliff State Park starts at the family campground and Indian Mounds trailhead with a short loop of 3.4 miles and a long loop of 3.8 miles. This is a mostly level trail that provides panoramic views of Lake Winnebago, historical limestone quarries, the Chief Red Bird Statue, and a must-experience observation tower. This trail is perfect to explore and make a day of it by adding on a picnic or capturing some incredible sunset views.

Location #2: 1000 Islands Environmental Center

1000 Islands is home to signature views from the Fishing Pier as well as the bench overlook on the Nelson Trail. The Fishing Pier is located right outside the nature center and provides up-stream views to see the falls. For a more personal experience with nature, starting at the Nature Center and heading on the Nelson Trail until the boardwalk

turns to gravel, you will find a secluded bench for you to take a seat and take in the views. (Tip: 1000 Islands has goats on the property each spring that can make your adventure extra special!)

Location #3: Bubolz Nature Center

The Four Seasons Trail at Bubolz Nature Center is great to experience all the sugar bushes in bloom and get up close with all the migratory birds on-site. The observation deck near the Nature Center also provides tremendous views as well as the Turtle Pond, where you may even get to feed the turtles on Memorial Day weekend.

Location #4: Heckrodt Wetland Reserve

Pond views are the must-see stops to experience at Heckrodt Wetland Reserve. From the nature center, you will follow the Orange Trail to the Green Trail. Both the Locust Pond and Bartz Pond are magical in spring with water views, blooming greenery, and the sounds of birds and frogs all around.

Location #5: Loop the Lake Trail

Loop the Lake Trail provides a variety of views in several of our communities, but an evening walk for sunset views along the Fox Cities Trestle between Fox Crossing and Menasha is unmatched. This trail provides a unique balance of urban and nature with the lights from the cities of Neenah and Menasha in the distance and nature and the lake surrounding you. You can appreciate how close you are to nature while never leaving the city. ■



Photo Credit: Chad Mazur

Looking to plan a tournament? *Let us help!*

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No More Excuses: Embrace the Encouraging Words

BY GINA GLOVER

With a half mile to go, two sentences appeared in my head almost as if the words were formed out of the clouds in the sky above. Without meaning to, I found myself slowing down—a thought had taken over.

“You aren’t young anymore.”

This negative and unwelcome thought lingered in my head for a moment longer before I shook it away and replaced it with my recent chance encounter with a superstar. I’d been in Florida the month prior and finished the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation half-marathon.



The race itself had not been one of my favorites. It wasn’t even in my Top 10. I was just shy of miserable the entire time: it was hot, flat, and due to the nature of the location (a highly secure Air Force base), there were no spectators allowed on the course. Without people along the way to clap and cheer, my only company was myself. And I’m not always the best company. While there were some interesting historical markers along the route, the race was grueling and I was happy just to finish.

The bright spot of the event was meeting Jeannie Rice at the awards ceremony. She had set a half-marathon record in the women’s Masters division not even two months prior in Akron, Ohio with a time of 1:37:07 at age 71—that’s a 7:25 per-mile pace for 13.1 miles! My fastest half EVER was 1:56 and while I am certainly proud of that, it was the year I turned 40—more than 30 years her junior! And lest you think she’s an elder

Shalane Flanagan or Molly Seidel*, nope. Rice didn’t even start running until she was 35. How’s that for inspiration?

I wondered, still wonder in fact, why those words even came up that day. Was I giving myself a pass, an excuse?

Excuses aren’t limited to athletic goals. They apply to all aspects of life including work, relationships, hobbies—anything where you might be pushing yourself into what my friend and fellow speaker calls “The Discomfort Zone”—which is, of course, where all growth happens.

Which of these excuses sound familiar?

- I’m not smart enough.
- I’m not certified yet.
- I’m not ready.
- I don’t have enough experience.
- I don’t have what it takes.
- I don’t have the right strategy.
- I’m not focused.
- I’m too busy.
- I don’t know how.
- I’ve never done that before.
- I might look stupid.
- I’m not good enough.
- People will think I’m [fill in the blank].

The list could go on, but I’m sure you get the idea.

Now imagine the most positive and supportive person you’ve ever known. It could be a parent, a grandparent, a friend, teacher, neighbor, or a co-worker. What would they say to you? Keep a list of their encouraging words in your notebook, on your phone, in your nightstand, taped to your bathroom mirror ... and read them again and again until you start believing them.

One day you may grow tired of listening to your own excuses, and I hope that day is today.

And imagine the most positive and supportive person you’ve ever known is you. ■

**Shalane Flanagan won the New York City marathon in 2017, the first American woman to do that since 1977. Molly Seidel placed 2nd in the 2020 Olympic marathon trial ... and it was her first-ever marathon. And, she’s from Wisconsin!*



Gina Glover is a professional speaker, career coach, and founder of Gina Connects LLC. She specializes in helping individuals and organizations build meaningful connections through her signature keynote, *The 5th Question™*. Since 1996, Gina currently serves as president of the Wisconsin chapter of the National Speakers Association. A coach’s daughter and parent of student-athletes, she inspires audiences with stories that bridge the sport of cross country and leadership.

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20 QUESTIONS

GABE HEIGES FOX VALLEY LUTHERAN BOY'S BASKETBALL

MY FAVORITE HOME-COOKED MEAL IS: My Mom's old family recipe - spaghetti and meatballs.

I WILL NEVER GO: Cave diving.

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT MY HOMETOWN IS: The Fox Valley is big enough to have everything you need, and small enough to know a lot of people and have a sense of community.

IF YOU COULD PICK ONE ANIMAL TO HELP YOU WITH A FIGHT, WHAT WOULD IT BE? A Grizzly bear.

I'M PROUD THAT: I was able to play Varsity sports with two of my brothers.

MY FAVORITE ATHLETE IS: Kyrie Irving.

MY FAVORITE TEAM IS: The Green Bay Packers.

MY FAVORITE TEAM TO ROOT AGAINST IS: The Chicago Bears.

THE BEST THING ABOUT MY SPORT IS: You can play year-round.

MY FAVORITE JUNK FOOD: Ice cream.

I PLAN TO GO TO COLLEGE TO: Study business and play basketball at Wisconsin Lutheran College.

WHAT ARE TWO REASONS YOU LIKE BEING PART OF A TEAM SPORT? Camaraderie and friendships.

WHO DO YOU WISH WAS WATCHING YOU PERFORM AT EVERY GAME OR MATCH? My family - they always show up!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SPORTS MOVIE? Hoosiers.

WHAT QUALITIES MAKE A TEAMMATE A GOOD TEAM CAPTAIN? Being confident, encouraging, and selfless and being a servant leader.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO CALM YOUR BUTTERFLIES WHILE YOU COMPETE? I pray before every game.

IF YOU COULD PLAY ANOTHER SPORT, WHAT WOULD IT BE? I have always wanted to try lacrosse.

WHAT AGE WERE YOU WHEN YOU STARTED YOUR SPORT? Age 3.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SMELL AND WHY? Our family business is Copper Rock Coffee. I grew up around my dad roasting, so I have always loved the smell of freshly roasted coffee.

IF YOU WERE AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE, WHAT SPORT WOULD YOU COMPETE IN? Downhill skiing.

Photos By Paul Stumpf



A Parent's Perspective

BY EMILY AND BILL HEIGES | PHOTOS BY PAUL STUMPF



We have four boys. Liam, age 20, is a sophomore at Wisconsin Lutheran College. He is a running back on the football team there. He also played basketball in high school. Braden, a junior, and Weston, a freshman, play football and basketball as well.

In addition to playing basketball, Gabe was a captain and played quarterback and safety in football for Fox Valley Lutheran, where he was voted unanimous 1st Team All-Conference for both offense and defense.

Gabe is planning on playing basketball at Wisconsin Lutheran College next year. He has had several concussions throughout his football career, which are always a tough thing to deal with. For this reason, we are happy that he decided to play college basketball instead of football. We have fought through our share of injuries over the years with our boys. We know this is part of playing sports and part of what builds toughness and resilience.

Gabe puts in so much work behind the scenes that most people will never see. It has been so rewarding to see him maximize the different skills and talents that God has given him.

Dad played college football and Mom played college basketball and volleyball. We both had the pleasure of coaching the boys through grade school basketball and Dad was able to coach them in high school football. Win or lose, we love to come home and gather in the kitchen as a family over lots of food while we talk about the highs and lows of the games.

The wins obviously make it more enjoyable, but even the losses have so many moments that are fun to talk over and re-play. We get only so many games every season, and health is never guaranteed, so we try to enjoy each one as it comes.

Time management and work/life balance are always a challenge when you have children who play multiple sports. Every week we build out the family calendar that shows work, school, and practice/game times. The boys have to figure out their schedules around that to get their shots up and workouts in, along with anything else they need to get done. Mom keeps the kitchen stocked, so meals and protein options are always available.

The different sports' seasons seem to bleed more and more into each other, which makes rest and recovery a challenge as well as getting quality family time. We have had to learn to say no to some things to protect our family time, and also work with coaches to make sure the boys are getting proper rest and recovery.

Gabe does a great job balancing it all and has learned the important life-long skill of time management to have success in sports while maintaining top-tier grades. Sometimes with more on your plate, it forces you to prioritize and learn how to structure your time better. Getting the reps and sleep you need to be at your best takes being intentional with how you structure your day. Without a plan and purpose, it's tough to succeed at all the facets of life these kids are involved in.

As for family time, we are thankful that our boys are such close friends with each other, always working out together and pushing each other. Every summer we choose to skip some sporting events for a couple weeks to make sure we get a National Parks camping trip in, or a Colorado ski trip in. As much as we love sports, these trips have remained some of our most precious family memories. For any younger families reading this and feeling the pressure to choose between sports and family trips, we have no regrets with choosing family time!

We have always preached that all the things they have learned and used to be successful in sports are transferable to every other area of life. School, work, and relationships all require the same hard work, sacrifice, and commitment that it takes to be an athlete. Being a leader and serving others doesn't stop when you take the uniform off, and the character to deal with adversity will be needed throughout life.

We think that most parents, along with hoping for athletic success for their kids, most importantly hope they turn into good and kind people who will contribute and make a difference with their lives. Gabe and our other boys have been blessed to have some amazing coaches, but also some great older teammates and leaders who have gone before them that they have looked up to. We pray that they can be humble leaders that the next generation can look up to and emulate. ■

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Ally Rhoda – Just a Girl with a Stick

BY DIANE BAST | PHOTOS BY PAUL STUMPF

Alicia “Ally” Rhoda thinks more young girls should pick up sticks. Lacrosse sticks, that is.

“Ever since I picked up a stick [at age 10],” Ally says, “I knew it was going to be something that I would fall in love with. I always knew lacrosse was going to drive my life and force me into a path that revolved around the game, and I was happy with that.”

She continues, “I want younger girls to know that being an athlete is something that has made me a better person. I have learned so much from everyone who got me to where I am and I want everyone seeing this article to know that lacrosse has changed my perspective on my life.”

A CO-OP SPORT

Ally wears No. 6 for the Appleton United co-op team, whose players come from Appleton North, East, and West as well as Fox Valley Lutheran, Freedom, Hortonville, Kaukauna, Menasha, New London, Oshkosh North, Oshkosh West, and Xavier.

They play against other teams in the Bay Valley Conference, which includes not only Appleton United but also Bay Port, De Pere, Kimberly, Neenah, Notre Dame, Pulaski, and Wausau.

The 2025–26 Bay Valley season opens March 24; Appleton United’s first game is on April 21 against Notre Dame Academy.

A NORMAL TEENAGER

Ally has been playing stick-sports—not just lacrosse, but also hockey—for seven years. She’s played for several teams: Fox Cities Stars, Appleton United, and Team Wisconsin/Scennie Lacrosse.

But when she’s out and about without a stick in her hand, she’s a normal Appleton North 11th-grader.



Lacrosse isn't the only stick Ally wields!

“Outside of lacrosse,” she says, “I hang out with my friends often. I play with my three dogs ... and I annoy my five siblings as well.”

BUILT-IN FRIENDS

Lacrosse is a team sport—there’s a dozen players on the field for each team at any given time—and Ally says she “loves being on a team.”

“Lacrosse has given me the ability to join a community that is like no other,” she says, “and I am so grateful for that.”

“Being on a team is like a built-in friend group,” she points out. “Everyone supports each other, both on and off the field, which is something that I really love about playing lacrosse.”

Her teammates “would describe me as very competitive both on and off the field,” Ally suspects.

“I really take the game seriously, which I think my teammates value. That drive translates into practice, warmups, and off the field. I try and push my teammates to be better ... even if that means we run laps to build endurance.”

GETTING IN THE ZONE

“Before every game, I stretch in the same order and listen to hype music,” Ally says, noting she mostly listens to American rappers Lucki, Mac Miller, and Nino Paid. And, she says, “I always pass with one specific teammate, which helps with getting me in the zone to play.”

Getting into that zone is important, Ally points out, because the “mental fight” is her biggest challenge.

“The biggest challenge throughout my career isn’t an injury or a lack of love for the game,” she says. “Ever since I began, the biggest battle when playing lacrosse is the mental fight.”

“Having confidence, being consistent, and performance in general are all mental battles that I think every athlete has a challenge with at some point of their career.”

How does she face that challenge? “The best way I have learned to deal with this is focusing on exactly what I want to accomplish and eliminating any outside influences, like if a coach is watching.

“Once I do this, I can perform to the best that is possible.”



Ally with dad David and mom Amy.



MEANT TO BE FUN

When the mental challenge gets difficult, she also reminds herself of the “best piece of advice” she’s received. “Eric Marsh is the reason I play lacrosse,” she says, “and ever since he handed me a stick, he’s always enforced the idea that lacrosse is what you make it and that the game is meant to be fun.”

Marsh is co-founder of Scinnie Lacrosse, a Northeast Wisconsin-based lacrosse organization dedicated to developing players, growing the sport, and building a strong lacrosse community throughout the state.

Eric “changed my idea of sports and has helped me grow as a player for years,” Ally says.

“I think my knowledge of the field has grown the most since I began to play,” she says. “I have the ability to see where people will be and when.”

Ally will graduate next year and has been looking at a few Division 2 schools. She plans “to continue to play lacrosse in college while studying nursing.” She is certain the sport has given her what she needs to succeed in the future.

“Lacrosse has not only given me a drive and a passion,” she explains, “but also connections with people across the country. Through the sport, I have met people everywhere from Texas to Rhode Island.

“Lacrosse has given me the ability to join a community that is like no other,” she says, “and I am so grateful for that.” ■



After 35 years as senior editor for the Illinois-based Heartland Institute, Diane Bast returned to the Fox Valley and now enjoys with her husband, Joe, a retirement of bicycling, kayaking, long walks, and tennis.

Scinnie Lacrosse: Growing the Game in NE Wisconsin

BY ERIC MARSH | DIRECTOR, SCINNIE LACROSSE

Scinnie Lacrosse is a Northeast Wisconsin-based lacrosse organization dedicated to developing players, growing the sport, and building a strong lacrosse community throughout the state. The term “Scinnie” is a nickname for Wisconsin residents, reflecting the organization’s deep local roots and pride in representing the Badger State.



Having fun on the field. From left to right, Candice Guerrero, Ellery Marsh, Ally Rhoda, Mikaela Sitzberger, and Lily Lyons.

Scinnie Lacrosse has played a meaningful role in that growth by offering organized programming that bridges the gap between introductory youth leagues and more advanced levels of play. We would love to see lacrosse in every school in Northeast Wisconsin, and we are always willing to help spread the game.

Player development remains at the heart of the program. Coaches focus on fundamentals—passing, catching, shooting, defensive positioning—while also teaching game strategy and situational awareness. As athletes progress, they gain confidence both on and off the field. Many participants use their experience with Scinnie Lacrosse as a stepping stone to high school varsity competition and, in some cases, collegiate opportunities. Our staff consists of college and high school coaches, as well as current and former players from all divisions of college lacrosse.

Today, Scinnie Lacrosse represents more than just a team name; it reflects a commitment to growing lacrosse in Wisconsin and building a culture rooted in hard work, pride, and community. As the sport continues to expand across the Midwest, Scinnie Lacrosse remains dedicated to developing the next generation of Wisconsin lacrosse players. ■



Founded to expand opportunities for youth athletes, Scinnie Lacrosse focuses on skill development, teamwork, and true sense of family. The program currently serves girls across multiple age groups, providing training and access to experienced coaching. Our mission extends beyond simply winning games; we emphasize character development, leadership, and a lifelong love of the sport. When first founded, our focus was solely on the boys game, but we have since turned to focus on the girls game as the need grew significantly! Currently our girls teams travel all over the Midwest throughout the summer and fall, and we also offer opportunities to our high-level players to play all over the United States. In the past few years, our oldest team has gone to play in places such as Virginia, Texas, and Rhode Island.

Lacrosse has steadily gained popularity in Wisconsin over the past two decades, transitioning from a niche sport to one with growing youth participation and high school competition.

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Ed the Diver and Christie B.: Diving Forward to Make a Positive Difference

BY NICOLE CAMPUZANO

Ed Bieber, better known as “Ed the Diver,” and Christie Barlament are making waves with their work cleaning up waterways, promoting healthy lifestyles, and educating the public. Using their extensive social media following, this dynamic and driven couple provides a unique window into the underwater realms of various Wisconsin waters that many people have never experienced before. Their waterway cleanup videos and content are at once entertaining and wholesome; their message and mission are inspirational, leaving viewers with a feeling of hope for a cleaner and better natural world.



Wisconsin’s lakes, rivers, and streams are one of our most precious natural resources. In the state’s more than 15,000 lakes and 12,600 rivers and streams there are 1.2 quadrillion gallons of water throughout this beautiful state (or think of it as 1.2 million billion gallons if that’s easier to wrap your head around ... and, yes, that’s a real number!). These waters draw people from near and far to enjoy their unmatched magnificence, but that comes with an unfortunate cost, however unintentional it may sometimes be.

It is estimated that millions of pounds of plastic pollution alone is dumped into Wisconsin’s waterways each year. Boaters, beachgoers, and fishermen often leave behind glass bottles, aluminum cans, fishing lures and line, clothing, and myriad other items when they recreate on or near lakes and rivers. All that litter has a negative effect on the natural environment and the many species that inhabit these ecosystems. With that much litter entering Wisconsin’s waters each year, it takes some serious effort to combat the problem. Bieber and Barlament are working hard to do just that through their business endeavors.

The couple made national news a few years ago thanks to their interesting love story. Barlament explains: “We met through my previous entertainment radio segment, What’s Up for the Weekend with Dennis and Christie. [...] A producer mentioned Ed’s work, and we invited him onto the show. I had never heard of him before then.” At the time, Bieber was auctioning off a 1993 Barbie doll he had found on one of his dives in Shawano, Wisconsin. Barlament placed the winning bid for \$1,225. “[Ed] hand-delivered the Barbie to me in a tackle box, took me out to dinner, and asked me out again. A month later we went to Florida, and he got a mermaid tattoo of me with my name on his left arm, and I got his logo on my left wrist. In August of that year, he proposed to me on a mountain in Alaska. We just bought our dream home in October of 2025,” Barlament adds.



Prior to becoming Ed the Diver and launching Bieber’s Underwater Recovery, LLC, Bieber earned a degree in Law Enforcement. He also worked in underground electricity for many years. Barlament holds multiple degrees, including a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies with a minor in Human Development. She also managed real estate and served as president of the Downtown Neighborhood Association in her hometown of Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Interestingly, neither Bieber nor Barlament had a background in water sports. Bieber started diving in 2017 using basic gear to retrieve lures his children lost while fishing, which eventually led to him becoming PADI certified in 2020. Since then, Bieber has completed dives in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and Minnesota. For Barlament, scuba diving was a new venture. She admits she had never even snorkeled before meeting Bieber. What started out as a useful hobby for Bieber has turned into a full-time business for the couple.

Despite the brutal Wisconsin winters, the business doesn’t stop during the cold months, though summer is their peak season. Barlament says, “We receive the most calls during the summer for items like phones, jewelry, and trolling motors. We have a success rate of approximately 90%.” Barlament has also recently completed her Open Water Scuba Certification in the Dominican Republic so that she can dive nearly year-round with Bieber. “We don’t dive in December and January; diving can start as early as February for lures as the Spring Walleye Run starts,” Barlament explains.

The list of items they uncover from the depths is long and interesting. “We find everything from household appliances, like washing machines, to electronics. Our biggest hauls of glass bottles occurred in Rhineland and Iron River. We clean, research, and sell



Ed and Christie B. have dived with Manitowoc Minute’s Charlie Berens three times now, with more to come.

the bottles we find on our website,” Barlament states. “We frequently find items like guns, laptops, and safes. We always contact law enforcement in these instances. Recently, the Minocqua Police Department issued us an honorary badge after we recovered a gun and two cash drawers that assisted in an investigation,” she adds.

The couple captures and shares their cleanup efforts via family-friendly videos that they post on multiple social media sites such as YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram. Their content is wholesome and uplifting, a refreshing take on social media that is so often rife with controversy and negative messaging. “We love making a positive difference in our communities, cleaning the waterways, and educating the public. We speak at schools, churches, and fishing clubs to teach children about the environment,” Barlament explains.

Their engaging content has grown the Ed the Diver fanbase to impressive numbers over the past several years. “It has been a surprise, but we have grown to over 370,000 followers across our platforms. We are proud that our content remains positive and family-focused,” Barlament says. “We get recognized daily, but our values remain the same [despite the growing celebrity]. We stay focused on our mission and supporting small local businesses,” she adds.

Recently, the Neville Public Museum hosted an exhibition called “Keep Our Waterways Clean with Ed the Diver and Christie B.,” which displayed many of the items retrieved by Bieber. Barlament was proud to report that “[the exhibition] was a tremendous success. Our dinner program sold out weeks in advance, and the exhibit received extensive media coverage.” Recently, several other museums have reached out to Bieber and Barlament regarding potential exhibits. The couple is also booked to speak at the Resch Center in Green Bay this year.

In the past, Bieber and Barlament were joined by the well-known Wisconsin comedian, journalist, content creator, and entrepreneur, Charlie Berens, best known for the video series called The Manitowoc Minute. They are scheduled to complete another dive with him later this year.

Bieber and Barlament are preparing for their upcoming 2026 Spring Walleye run. “We donate fishing gear to children to promote healthy lifestyles. Anyone 16 and under gets one free fishing lure and a fishing pole while supplies last,” Barlament says.

Going forward, Bieber and Barlament are focused on their new nonprofit organization called Midwest Environmental Restoration, or MER. The couple formed this organization “to provide community service and civic engagement opportunities focused on the preservation and restoration of aquatic environments,” Barlament explains. “Our mission is to protect the health of rivers, streams, and lakes by removing trash and pollution from primary waterways and secondary sources, such as ditches and piping, to ensure a cleaner environment for future generations,” she adds. More information about this nonprofit can be found at www.edthediver.com. Barlament explains that there is a “Donate” button in the top left corner for anyone who is interested in supporting their cause.

People like Bieber and Barlament are evidence that a small positive action can grow into something profound. What began as a father retrieving fishing lures for his children has expanded into a full-time business, a strong social media following, opportunities for others, and a cleaner, more beautiful world. It seems that if you pursue your ambitions, as Ed the Diver would say, “Ya just never know what you’ll find!” ■



Nicole Campuzano is an Antigo, Wisconsin native. She earned her bachelor’s degree in English Education from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. She taught high school English Language Arts for several years. She and her family recently relocated to the Fox Valley, where they are enjoying the many exciting opportunities the area has to offer.

Fox River Hurling Club

BY MITCH LEAHEY



When most folks talk about sports they are interested in, few would say they love the game of hurling. Many have never heard of the game!

Hurling is the national sport of Ireland. It's been called the fastest game on grass, where the ball can move from one side of the 140 meter field to the other in about three seconds. There are 15 players to a team, all wielding sticks called huris. The ball is shot through an H-shaped goal post like American football. Through the uprights scores 1 point, while shooting it into a netted goal awards 3 points.

In 2010, hurling was brought to the Fox Cities. Sixteen years later, the sport is going strong with the Fox River Hurling Club. This co-ed club welcomes folks from all walks of life to try out the sport. The club's main focuses are sportsmanship, education, and staying active. Members range in age from 18



to 60. The club recently brought back its youth hurling team as well. Kids of all ages now have the opportunity to learn the sport and have fun running around. The club will host its annual event, The Brian Pierce Memorial Tournament, at the UW-Oshkosh Dome on April 11 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The Fox River Hurling Club is a great way to stay active, and they have fostered a great sense of community among club members. Most of the club members have known each other for years and have become big parts of each other's lives.

If you're interested in learning more about the game, check out foxriverhurling.com or follow on Facebook at Fox River Hurling Club. ■

Spring into Sports Nutrition

BY KATE HARRELL JENKINS, MS, RD, CSSD, LD | YMCA DIETITIAN AND PERSONAL TRAINER, NEENAH-MENASHA

The benefits of training on performance are significant, building endurance, strength, flexibility, and more. The benefits of nutrition on performance can be equally as great.

Nutrition can be THE factor that helps or prevents you from reaching your fitness or performance goals. Nutrition can benefit any age, ability, or training level to improve results. The following are basic recommendations that can help you get more out of your training this Spring, whether you are gearing up for Spring sports, Summer races, or simply want to maximize your workouts!



Build a Strong Base Diet

A nutrient-rich diet is critical for health AND performance. Vitamins and minerals are our body's regulators. Exercise can magnify deficiency, so it's important to maximize your intake from food. For example, iron, one of our body's minerals, is essential for oxygen transport as part of the protein hemoglobin. If iron is deficient, an active individual may feel a deficiency more quickly because of the greater need for oxygen delivery, one of the classic symptoms being shortness of breath.

Part of this base diet includes carbohydrates. Unfortunately, carbohydrates can at times get placed in negative light, often a target for limiting, such as in certain fad diets. This can be a detriment to performance. Carbohydrates are our body's quickly accessible fuel for exercise, especially high-intensity efforts. Concerned about carbohydrates? Focus on the good ones! Healthy carbohydrates include: fruits, whole grains, vegetables, starchy vegetables like sweet potatoes, dairy like yogurt, beans, and legumes.

Consume Protein Consistently Throughout the Day

Unlike carbohydrates and fat, our body does not store protein, so it is important to spread out protein intake across the day so your body—and especially your muscles—has what it

needs to continue to recover. It is true that athletes may need more protein than those who are inactive, but many already consume enough total protein. Where most people could improve is to spread out that intake across the day.

The recommended range of protein to support muscle protein synthesis is 0.3–0.4g/kg per meal, as well as timing a protein source post-workout (aiming for 20–25g). These strategies are focused on improving muscle protein synthesis. This process is critical for recovery after exercise as well as maintaining our body's muscle mass as we age.

Other Unique Considerations with Protein

Additionally, when starting up a new training program or training season, your body and muscles may need additional protein to adapt/adjust to the new training program in the initial weeks. I strongly recall "hell week" in basketball way back in the day as we kicked off a new season, and I wish I had known more about nutrition to balance the soreness of that week.

Supplying a bedtime protein-rich snack can also help improve recovery, as your body does a significant amount of repair overnight. This also may be beneficial if one is aiming to increase weight or add lean mass in preparation for a Spring sport or upcoming training season.

Consume a Meal or Snack ASAP After Your Workout

Timing is a key aspect of sports nutrition. Ingesting fuel in the immediate time frame after a workout can improve how quickly we recover from our workouts. Consuming 20–25g of protein paired with a carbohydrate source (1.0–1.5g/kg) within 30 minutes to one hour after exercise can speed up recovery. Examples might include fruit smoothie, yogurt bowl, overnight oats, PB&J or deli sandwich or wrap, and low-fat chocolate milk.

Hydrate!

Our bodies consist of a high percentage of water, muscle even more so. Dehydration can have a negative impact on performance: fatigue, cramping, overheating, dizziness, and more. Try to hydrate consistently throughout the day and make sure to keep a water bottle with you when you are exercising. Thirst can be a helpful indicator of hydration status, as well as the color of your urine (pale yellow vs. dark yellow).

Wishing you a healthy and successful Spring training season. Don't hesitate to reach out with questions! ■



Kate Harrell Jenkins is a registered dietitian, certified sports dietitian, personal trainer and group fitness instructor. She loves all things wellness, and is an avid runner with over 20 marathons and ultramarathons under her belt. She also has a passion for working with Parkinson's and is certified in Rock Steady Boxing, PWR! Moves and Pedaling for Parkinson's. Kate believes in bringing together nutrition and fitness and would love to talk with you! Feel free to email Kate at kharrell@ymcafoxcities.org or kateharrellrd@gmail.com. Photo by David Schuhart, DRS Photos

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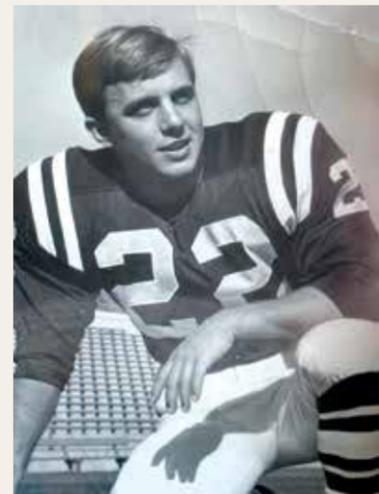
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Chuck McKee: Standout Athlete and Physician

APPLETON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Chuck McKee, an Appleton native, was co-captain of Appleton High School's conference championship team in 1963 with his friend, Gary Hietpas. The legendary Ade Dillon was the football coach. They also were the conference champs in track in 1963 and 1964, as well as basketball in 1964. The pair called this achievement the "Triple Crown." Gary also played football at Lawrence, earning Little All-American Honorable Mention in 1967.



Chuck McKee, QB, Lawrence University.

Chuck was recruited to play football in the Big Ten by the University of Wisconsin; he was offered a full scholarship to be a Badger. His dream was to be a physician, so he elected to attend Lawrence University, a choice that he never regretted.

In his three seasons as quarterback for the Vikings, he was a three-time selection as all-Midwest Conference quarterback. Chuck was the first quarterback to earn first-team All-America

honors in Midwest Conference history as a senior. His overall record was 20-4. In 1967, the Vikings won the conference title with an 8-0 record, the only time in history the team finished the season undefeated. This was the first conference championship for legendary coach Ron Roberts, who enjoyed a long, successful career at LU. Chuck considers the Banta Bowl the best small college venue in the country.

McKee set several LU passing and rushing records during his tenure. He also was outstanding in track, winning six conference track titles. McKee earned six letters at Lawrence at a time when freshmen weren't eligible for varsity athletics. He is thankful that he was surrounded by great teammates and great coaches throughout his athletic career. He was a charter member in LU's Athletic Hall of Fame in 1996. In 2021, he was chosen as one of 10 Lawrence University standouts included on the Midwest Conference's Centennial Top 100 list.

McKee's dream of becoming a physician was realized; Dr. Charles McKee served the Appleton community for 40 years.



Dr. Chuck McKee and his wife, Lesley, at Chuck's locker at the Appleton Historical Society Museum, 231 W. Franklin Street.

In August 1977, he joined Appleton Family Practice Associates. In 2000, he was one of eight physicians who founded Primary Care Associates of Appleton. In July 2007, the group, now with 15 physicians, opened a \$7 million clinic at 3916 N. Intertech Court on the northeast side of Appleton. He also served as the medical director at Lawrence and team physician for the Vikings for his entire 40-year career in medicine. Dr. McKee retired in 2016.

Dr. McKee's younger sister, Dr. Ann McKee, is a board-certified neurologist and neuropathologist in Boston. She has become the world's leading expert on CTE - Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy.

Each winter, Chuck floods his backyard, where he maintains "The Venue," an outdoor hockey rink that measures 35 x 100 feet. Several times a week, he and several of his friends can be found playing hockey and enjoying a cold beverage afterwards. The McKee basement, complete with a shower and sauna, has lockers from the old Minneapolis Lakers locker room and benches from the University of Minnesota.

Chuck has been married to his wife, Lesley, since 1968. Both are graduates of Lawrence University, and Lesley, a philosophy major, was Homecoming Queen in 1966. They are parents to four adult daughters and have eight grandchildren.

Chuck feels a great sense of gratitude for Ade Dillon and his AHS teammates, as well as for Ron Roberts and his Lawrence teammates. ■



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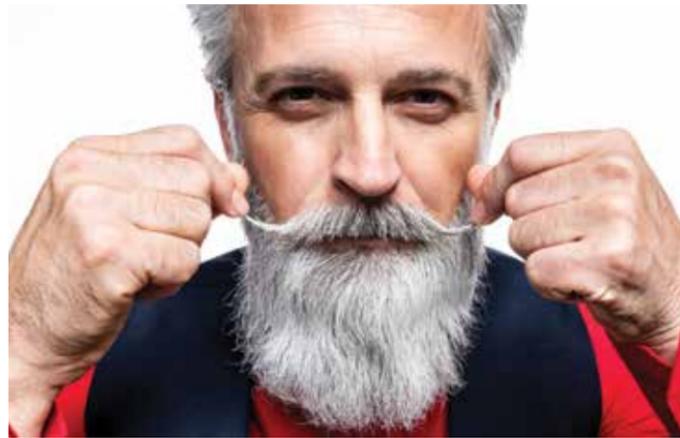
The Complexity of Defining a Sport

BY NICOLE CAMPUZANO

What defines an activity as a “sport”? Is there even a difference between a hobby, a game, or a sport?

The human species has been drawn to competition seemingly since the beginning of our existence, as if sports are in our very DNA. But what qualifies as a sport when there is so much variation and diversity in the world of athletics across the globe? Sports are defined by shifting factors influenced by culture, location, and societal values that are oftentimes subjective.

One definition for the word sport is “an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment” (Britannica). By this definition, the key words are “physical exertion” and “skill.” This seems like a straightforward concept, until one starts thinking about the innumerable activities that are considered sports around the world. For example, are E-sports considered a sport? They most definitely require a high level of skill, but perhaps not a lot of physical exertion. What about the Stinging Nettle Challenge? It probably causes physical exertion (or perhaps simply physical agony), but not a lot of skill.



If sports are meant to require both skill and physical exertion, it would be difficult to consider many of the activities listed as “sports” online as such. For instance, are the Beard and Mustache Championships held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a sport? What about the Darwin Lions Beer Can Regatta held in Australia? And how about the World Black Pudding Throwing Competition in England? Though these are all competitive activities, they may not quite fit the true definition of a sport.

Humans have a long history of interest in sporting activities. It is believed that forms of wrestling or boxing were likely the first sports ever played by modern humans, along with running competitions, or competitions involving throwing, hitting, or kicking an object. As far as organized sports go, the first modern Olympics was held in Athens, Greece in April 1896. However, the original Olympics began in 776 BCE in Olympia, Greece, and it is likely that the games started more than 500 years earlier than that (history.com). Furthermore, there is evidence that the Mesoamerican ballgame, Classical Nahuatl, dates back even further to 1650 BCE (Wikipedia). Both examples showcase the long history of the human desire to compete athletically. The games and competitions may change over time, but the desire to compete and win seems ever-present in the human psyche.

In today’s world, soccer, American football, and baseball are widely accepted as sports, but there are also a vast range of strange and unusual competitions from around the world that help broaden our understanding of what activities qualify as sports. For example, in the United Kingdom, there is a sport called underwater hockey, or Octopush, which is a variation of ice or field hockey that is played entirely underwater. Two teams compete to maneuver a puck across the bottom of a swimming pool in order to score on the other team’s goal.

Another interesting sport is ear pulling. This is a traditional Inuit endurance sport in which two competitors sit facing each other with their legs interlocked. A loop of string is hooked behind their ears, and each person pulls with all their might until one of the players gives up or the string comes free. This sport is often featured at the World Eskimo/Indian Olympics held in Alaska each year (Schilling 2021).

Then there’s Døds Diving, also known as Death Diving, which is a Norwegian extreme sport that entails divers jumping from very high platforms. The diver begins horizontally before curling into a fetal position just prior to entering the water. They cut into the water with their hands and feet or with their elbows first to avoid serious injury. The point is to maintain a dramatic pose for as long as possible. Without a well-developed technique, the diver risks injury or death (Wikipedia).

There are also cultural elements to what is considered a sport that vary depending on location. The national sport here in the United States of America is baseball; however, the most widely watched sport here today is American football. In fact, the Super Bowl is the top televised event annually. South Korea’s national sport is tae kwondo. For England, it’s cricket. In Japan, there’s sumo wrestling. In Canada, they love ice hockey. Mexico’s national sport is charrería. In Turkey, one can observe the traditional sport of camel wrestling. Oftentimes, the national sport of any particular country is a reflection of the interests of the people and the terrain of the locale.

What is considered an acceptable sport can also change with the changing values of the times. For example, in the 1900 Olympics, one of the events was live pigeon shooting. Because of the controversy this event received due to its cruelty, it was held only once, and never again. If those who witnessed the pigeon shooting were upset with the cruelty of that competition, they would have been aghast to have

A sport (or game) was “a voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles.”

experienced a time when the ancient gladiator fights took place. Of course, in those fights, the winner was the one who was still alive at the end of the competition. Both of these examples present changing cultural values.

Underground or non-mainstream sports are also something to consider. For example, skateboarding, which got its start in the 1950s on the West Coast, has now become a major sport. In fact, it became much more mainstream in 1995 thanks to skater Tony Hawk and the advent of the X Games (The Nostalgic Neighbor). Likewise, kick scooters have also grown in popularity.

Back in 1999, when Razor scooters hit the market, they became extremely popular. Since then, scootering has morphed and changed considerably. Freestyle scootering takes place primarily in skateparks, but there are more and more scooter competitions and sponsorships happening with the growing number of Scooter Jams, organized events in which scooter riders meet up at various street locations and show off their skills to win prizes and gear. Both skateboarding and scootering evolved from hobbies to recognized sports as they gained popularity, proving the fluidity of the way sports are defined.

Here in Wisconsin, there are several unique sports that seem to be custom-made just for ‘Sconnies. For example, in Mount Horeb, during the Scandihoovian Winter Festival, one can



compete in frozen turkey bowling. On Lake Winnebago, Lake Geneva, Green Lake, and the Madison Chain of Lakes, there is ice boating during the winter months. And, of course, sports such as snowmobile racing and polar plunges cannot be overlooked. These homegrown sports are all reflections of Midwestern culture, values, and location.

The quest to define what makes an activity a sport is difficult and subjective. Culture, location, and societal values and interests shape what is considered a sport, and these factors are flexible and shift over time. Perhaps Bernard Suits, author of *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia*, got it right back in 1978 when he said a sport (or game) was “a voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles” (Goodreads.com).

When it comes down to it, humans choose to engage in sports, pushing themselves to excel, to conquer, and to prove their excellence, over obstacles that they themselves design. Maybe whether an activity is considered a sport is simply in the eye of the beholder. ■



Nicole Campuzano is an Antigo, Wisconsin native. She earned her bachelor’s degree in English Education from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. She taught high school English Language Arts for several years. She and her family recently relocated to the Fox Valley, where they are enjoying the many exciting opportunities the area has to offer.

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My Kid's Pretty Good, Now What?

BY MICHAEL BOYLE | STRENGTHCOACH.COM

It might be your son, it might be your daughter. It doesn't really matter. In any case, you realize that you have a kid that has above average ability.

Coaches start to tell you that your child has potential. People start talking about special select teams and year-round dedication to one sport.

The big question is: What do you do now? How do you continue to help them develop?

I know, everyone loves the attention but, remember, these are youth sport coaches, most with their own agenda. Don't read too much into it.

The key is to keep the focus on development, not on a scholarship. You've got a good thing going now, don't let a bunch of armchair experts tell you how to handle it.

Also, don't handle things the way you do at work. This is not a mini-adult, this is a child. What made you a success at work won't necessarily work for your child. Think slow cooking vs. a nuclear approach.

I understand that everyone would love for their kid to get a college scholarship. However, I love to say that development is like farming. It takes time and you can't rush it. There is no such thing as speed farming.

Here are two things to think about:

1. Exposure is a word used to get you to invest money to play in often questionable tournaments.
2. Potential is just that. Potential is a word used to describe what someone might do in the future.

The key is to attack things logically. If your child is young (under 14), hold your horses, keep it fun, and don't listen to these so-called experts. Most of the "experts" running youth programs really have no idea what they are talking about.

These experts can range from opportunistic parents looking for good players to enhance their own kids' chances, to entrepreneurs looking to make club coaching pay the bills.

In any case, spend your time and money wisely. After age 14 the number one way to get better is to begin to follow what I like to call the professional athlete model.

In the professional athlete model, two things stand out:

1. There is always a distinct off-season. This off-season period is dominated by training to improve physical ability (think strength and conditioning).
2. There is always an in-season training program geared toward maintaining or enhancing the off-season program.

In other words: Pros don't play year-round, but they do train year-round.

One point to note. As kids age, skills get harder and harder to improve. However, physical abilities (size, strength, speed) still have a significant window for improvement. Kids who don't begin a training program, even if they are more skilled, risk being left behind their harder-working peers.

We see this all the time where one kid (usually the one identified early as "talented") plays a full schedule of weekend tournaments while another trains hard and plays very little.

The experts tell the parents that the kid not playing will be left behind his peers. However, as the real season rolls around, the kid that trained hard and worked to improve passes the "tournament kid." The tournament kid spends time travelling for what amounts to a few minutes of playing time, while the "training kid" stays close to home and physically improves.

Trust me, after 40+ years I have seen it happen over and over. The "can't miss" Pee Wee is forgotten and people are talking about the kid who's been doing the work.

The number one thing to realize is that long-term success is based on a combination of talent, hard work, and passion. If you have a talented child, start to add some of the work habits necessary for long-term success and remember, don't kill the passion. ■



ONE ON ONE

BY DIANE BAST | PHOTO SUBMITTED BY THE GREEN BAY GAMBLERS

COACH BRYCE REDDICK

ASSISTANT COACH
GREEN BAY GAMBLERS ICE HOCKEY

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN COACHING? This is my second year coaching hockey. I spent last season in the North American Hockey League (NAHL) with the Wisconsin Windigo. I am now in my first season with the Green Bay Gamblers in the United States Hockey League (USHL).

WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND IN HOCKEY? I come from a hockey family. My father played in the National Hockey League (NHL) for the Winnipeg Jets, Edmonton Oilers, and Florida Panthers; he won a Stanley Cup with the Edmonton Oilers in 1990. I was lucky to play professionally for 12 years across the world. Before my professional career I spent four seasons at Michigan Tech University.

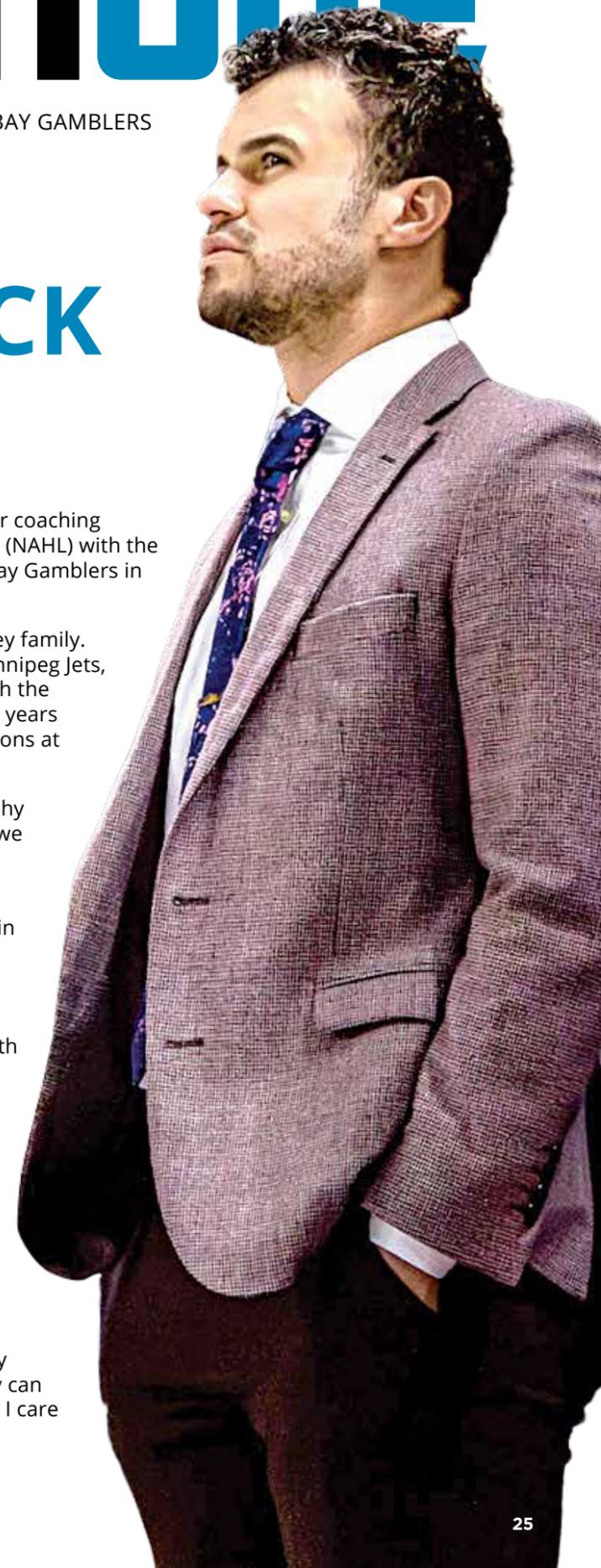
WHAT IS YOUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY? My coaching philosophy revolves around communicating with players and showing them we care about them as more than just hockey players.

ANY MEMORABLE GAMES/TOURNAMENTS/CHAMPIONSHIPS YOUR TEAM HAS WON? Considering I am in my very early years in my coaching career, I haven't had the experience to coach in any championships. Yet!

DESCRIBE YOUR PROUDEST COACHING MOMENT. My proudest moment in my short coaching career would be getting this job with the Green Bay Gamblers. The ability to come to work every day and help these 16- to 20-year-olds reach their dreams of playing in the NHL is something I don't take lightly. These kids are in the top 1 to 2% for their age group, so to be able to work with such talented kids is a huge honor.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST LIFE LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED FROM BEING A COACH? The biggest lesson I have learned from coaching thus far would be patience. Coaching definitely tests your patience. But when you see the rewards of the kids understanding concepts, it for sure makes it worth it.

WHAT LEGACY DO YOU HOPE TO LEAVE AS A COACH? I want my players to know when they are no longer playing for me that they can still reach out with any sort of problem. I want them to know that I care about them as human beings first and athletes second. ■



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Becoming Lawrence Lacrosse

SUBMITTED BY LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

Building More than a Team: Melissa Cartagena's Vision for Lawrence Women's Lacrosse

Melissa Cartagena didn't come to Lawrence University to simply coach lacrosse—she arrived to help build a program from the ground up. In just its second season, the young team represents both a blank canvas and a foundation already set by those who launched it. That combination is exactly what drew in Cartagena.

"What excited me most was the opportunity to help shape something from the ground up," Cartagena said. "Being part of a young program means you get to be very intentional: with culture, standards, and the type of experience you want student-athletes to have. There's a lot of potential here, and I was drawn to the chance to help guide that growth while building something meaningful for the athletes and the university."



From the start, Cartagena's approach has centered on listening first and leading second, ensuring that every next step honors where the program has been and where it's headed.

RESPECTING THE ROOTS, BUILDING THE FUTURE

Taking over a new program requires a delicate balance between embracing what exists and introducing a new vision. Cartagena has made respect her starting point.

"It starts with respect," she said. "It's important to acknowledge the work that's been done to get the program off the ground. Being new to Lawrence, my focus has been on listening. I've

taken time to learn who the players are, what they value, and where they want to go. My role is to build on that foundation while bringing my own structure and energy to help move the program forward."

That mindset has helped Cartagena earn trust within the team while setting a tone of collaboration. By learning from the returning athletes and understanding the traditions they care about, she's been able to layer in her own standards without erasing what makes Lawrence lacrosse unique.

DEFINING STANDARDS AND CORE VALUES

With any new chapter comes the need for clarity—especially around expectations. Cartagena and her team have centered themselves on both fundamentals and a shared set of values.

"Fundamentals are at the core of everything we do," Cartagena said. "From there, as a team we identified four core values: confidence, grit, communication, and accountability. Those values guide how we train, compete, and show up for each other every day. Growth doesn't happen without a strong foundation, and these standards help keep us aligned as we continue to develop."

By establishing these pillars, Cartagena has given the program a common language—one that shapes daily habits and long-term goals. It's not just about X's and O's; it's about who the team is becoming together.

LEADERSHIP FROM WITHIN

While Cartagena brings a new perspective, the returning student-athletes have played an essential role in carrying the program's identity forward and setting the tone for newcomers.

"Our returning student-athletes play a huge role in setting the tone," she said. "I have a number of returners who are stepping up and into new roles. Their willingness to embrace leadership and be role models for the first-years has been instrumental in establishing a positive and competitive environment."

That leadership has created a bridge between seasons—connecting the program's origins to its future. It's also helped foster an environment where first-year players feel supported and empowered to grow.

LOOKING AHEAD: VISION AND POSSIBILITY

Cartagena's aspirations for the program extend well beyond the current season. She sees a future where Lawrence lacrosse is a destination for driven student-athletes and a point of pride for the university.

"My vision is for the program to continue building toward competing with the top programs in the state and, eventually, the region," she said. "We will continue to build pride in our program and establish Lawrence as a place where lacrosse players can thrive. As we grow, the possibilities are endless."

That growth, she believes, starts with the current team's commitment to setting standards that will last.

"This team has the opportunity to help define what Lawrence lacrosse stands for," Cartagena said. "Through their work ethic, character, and commitment to each other, they are setting the standard for the future of this program. Their impact will extend beyond the field and is already felt in this athletic department and the community." ■

Leading the Way: How Kasey Burst Is Shaping Lawrence Lacrosse

When Kasey Burst stepped onto the Lawrence University campus, he saw more than a lacrosse program in its infancy—he saw a blank canvas. With experience in building teams from the ground up, Burst embraced the opportunity to mold something lasting, meaningful, and uniquely Lawrence.

"There's something exciting and rewarding about getting in at the ground level and being able to plant my flag," Burst said. "I like the idea of building with my own vision, my own standards, my own culture."

Now guiding the men's lacrosse team in its second season, Burst is channeling that passion into a program defined by strong values, steady leadership, and a clear sense of purpose. His approach isn't about quick fixes or shortcuts; it's about laying a foundation that will sustain Lawrence lacrosse for years to come.

HONORING WHAT'S THERE, BUILDING WHAT'S NEXT

For Burst, taking over a young program meant striking a balance between honoring the culture already in place and introducing his own ideas. Rather than overhaul everything at once, he chose to observe, listen, and make thoughtful adjustments.

"The culture is very strong here for such a young program," he said. "I'm letting the captains lead and watching how they do things. There's a good structure, and I don't want to mess with it—I want to add to it."

He's brought a clear on-field identity, implementing the style of play and schemes he believes fit the team's strengths. Off the field, he's kept things collaborative, encouraging players to take ownership while offering guidance when needed. It's a leadership style rooted in trust, respect, and a genuine belief in his student-athletes.

"I'm here to guide them," Burst said. "If I see something, I'll offer my two cents, but it's been fun to watch what they started last year carry over into year two."

STANDARDS THAT MATTER

Burst isn't interested in long lists of rules. Instead, he focuses on a few core standards that he considers non-negotiable: communication, honesty, and respect.

"Our biggest thing is effective communication," he said. "These guys have busy lives—class, labs, jobs. If they can't be somewhere, they just need to let people know. That's part of being an adult."

Honesty and respect follow closely behind. Burst talks with his team about being forthcoming, owning mistakes, and

treating everyone on campus with dignity—from classmates and professors to dining hall staff and teammates. It's a simple philosophy, but one he believes creates the kind of environment where players can thrive.

"This place is great because of the people," Burst said. "There's a lot of mutual respect here, and I want our team to reflect that in everything we do."

LEADERSHIP FROM WITHIN

With a roster made up largely of sophomores and first-years, the team's returning players have stepped into leadership roles sooner than most. Burst credits them for setting a tone of acceptance and accountability.

"They're doing a fantastic job leading realistically and creating a culture of belonging," he said. "There's no hierarchy—everyone's been accepting. They want to get better, and they're excited for anyone who can help us grow."

Having weathered the challenges of an inaugural season, those returning players have developed a sense of toughness and humility that's shaping the program's identity.

DREAMING BIG, GIVING BACK

Burst's vision for Lawrence lacrosse extends beyond the scoreboard. He sees the program becoming a pillar in the Fox Valley lacrosse community—hosting tournaments, clinics, and youth events that bring the sport to more people.

"There's nothing holding us back," he said. "The school has high value, the city sells itself, and once we figure out how to recruit the right student-athletes, we can be at the top of the league."

He imagines the Banta Bowl filled with fans for high school playoffs or state championships, and envisions Lawrence serving as a hub for growing the game in the region. For Burst, it's about building something that lasts—on the field and in the community.

"I'm a dreamer," he said. "I want this to be a program that people look to, that the youth come to watch and cheer for. I think we can be that team in the Fox Valley."

DEFINING SUCCESS ON THEIR TERMS

Ask Burst what success looks like, and he points to progress, not just results.

"I think success is something you define for yourself," he said. "For us, it's about competing, playing our style, being great teammates, and showing up every day with a good attitude. If we do those things, we can call this season a success."

With a clear vision, steady leadership, and a commitment to the values that matter most, Burst and his team are laying the groundwork for a program that's built to last—one quarter, one practice, one season at a time. ■





THIS MONTH IN SPORTS HISTORY

March 1, 1903 Major League Baseball Rules Committee rule that pitcher's mound must not be more than 15 inches higher than the baselines or home plate

March 2, 1962 Philadelphia center Wilt Chamberlain scores 100 points, the most ever by an NBA player in a single game

March 3, 1953 Boston Braves, who own Milwaukee minor league franchise, block St Louis Browns attempt to shift their franchise to Milwaukee

March 4, 1927 Babe Ruth becomes the highest-paid player in MLB history signing a 3-year, \$70,000 per year contract with the New York Yankees

March 5, 2023 Iowa's Caitlin Clark records 30 points, 17 assists, and 10 rebounds in the Big Ten tournament final against Ohio State

March 6, 1945 George Nissen of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, receives a patent for the first modern trampoline

March 7, 1935 Malcolm Campbell sets world land speed record speed of 276.71 mph driving his famous Blue Bird car

March 8, 1900 NL decides to go with eight teams. They exclude Baltimore, Cleveland, Louisville and Washington (in 1953 Boston Braves move to Milwaukee)

March 11, 1986 NFL adopts instant replay rule

March 12, 1978 American speed skater Eric Heiden sets world record in 1000m (1:14.99)

March 14, 1954 Milwaukee Braves future home run king Hank Aaron homers in his debut exhibition game against the Boston Red Sox

March 15, 1958 Oscar Robertson of the Cincinnati Royals scores a NBA midwest region record 56-point game

March 17, 1994 It is announced there is no smoking in Cleveland Indians new ballpark

March 18, 1892 Lord Frederick Stanley, 16th Earl of Derby, presents silver challenge cup for hockey (Stanley Cup) >>>

March 19, 1950 US Open Women's Golf, Rolling Hills Country Club: Babe Didrikson-Zaharias wins by 9 strokes over amateur Betsy Rawls

March 20, 1993 Dan Jansen skates world record 500m (36.02 sec)

March 22, 1979 NHL votes to accept four World Hockey Association teams (Oilers, Jets, Nordiques and Whalers)

March 24, 2020 Japan's Prime Minister Shinzō Abe announces the postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games to the summer of 2021 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic

March 27, 1988 Men's Figure Skating Championship in Budapest won by Brian Boitano (USA)

March 28, 1990 US President George H. W. Bush posthumously awards Jesse Owens the Congressional Gold Medal

March 31, 1994 Chicago White Sox assigns former NBA superstar Michael Jordan to the Birmingham Barons of Class AA Southern League; returns to NBA after one season



Jack Brucks Signs with 1st Impressions Race Team

Sets Sights on Rookie of the Year Honors in 2026 American Flat Track Season

SUBMITTED BY KATIE BRUCKS

Emerging talent Jack Brucks has officially signed with 1st Impressions Race Team to compete in the 2026 American Flat Track season, with a clear objective of contending for Rookie of the Year honors in his debut professional campaign.

Brucks enters the 2026 season as one of the youngest riders in the professional field, yet his recent results reflect the pace, consistency, and racecraft required to compete immediately at the top level. His ability to qualify well, advance through competitive brackets, and maintain top finishes throughout race weekends has positioned him as a legitimate Rookie of the Year contender.

"Signing with 1st Impressions Race Team puts me in the best possible position to fight for Rookie of the Year," said Brucks. "The team has the experience, equipment, and belief needed to run up front. I'm ready to put in the work, learn every round, and compete for results right away."

1st Impressions Race Team has earned recognition for developing riders and fielding competitive motorcycles across the American Flat Track paddock. With a strong technical program and proven support structure, the team expects Brucks to be competitive from the opening round of the 2026 season.

"Jack's maturity, focus, and race intelligence stand out immediately," said a representative from 1st Impressions Race Team. "He doesn't ride like a rookie. Our goal is to put him in

position to score points consistently, contend for podiums, and be in the Rookie of the Year conversation all season long."

The 2026 American Flat Track season will feature a national schedule with races broadcast on FOX Sports and covered extensively across major motorsports media outlets. Brucks and 1st Impressions Race Team will campaign coast-to-coast, targeting strong finishes at every round as they pursue Rookie of the Year honors. ■



IN THE BLEACHERS

BY BEN ZAEHRINGER



Spotted Musky Has Spotty History in Green Bay

If there's a species that deserves an award as comeback fish of the Great Lakes, the spotted musky has to be considered a contender.

Green Bay—the water body, not the city—has emerged in recent years as a trophy destination for the Great Lakes spotted musky. The state Department of Natural Resources spent three days at the Wild Rose Fish Hatchery in late October capturing spotted musky fingerlings, loading them on trucks, and stocking them in Green Bay, several of its tributaries, and a few inland lakes in the Lake Michigan watershed.



DNR fisheries biologist Jason Breeggemann measures a Great Lakes spotted musky fingerling at the Wild Rose Fish Hatchery. Greg Seubert Photo

"Great Lakes spotted muskies are native to the Great Lakes," Jason Breeggemann, a DNR fisheries biologist based in Green Bay, said while measuring fingerlings at one of the hatchery's six spotted musky rearing ponds.

"Green Bay used to have a naturally reproducing, self-sustaining population, but they were extirpated by the early 1900s due to habitat loss, declines in water quality, invasive species, things like that," he said. "We're still working on a restoration program to re-establish Great Lakes spotted muskies in the bay."

Appearance is the only difference between the Great Lakes spotted musky and muskies that are found throughout Wisconsin.

"It's just a different genetic strain, they're the same muskies," Breeggemann said. "We actually stock Great Lakes spotted muskies in inland lakes within the Lake Michigan watershed. If water were to flow out of a lake and drain down to Lake Michigan, those inland lakes get stocked with the native genetic strain of fish."

DNR hatchery and fisheries crews and volunteers from the Figure 8 and Titledown muskie clubs helped capture the fingerlings at the hatchery, located about 90 miles southwest of Green Bay, Oct. 27-29.

"These are all going to various locations around Green Bay and its tributaries," Breeggemann said. "They're not all going to the bay. We stock muskies in Egg Harbor, Sturgeon Bay, Little Sturgeon Bay, Point Sable, the Fox River, Deadhorse Bay, the Suamico River, Pensaukee River, Oconto River, Peshtigo River, Menominee River, and then right at the mouth of the Menominee River at Red Arrow Park.

"All of those locations get stocked," he said. "I don't know how long they'll stay in the rivers following stocking, but they are mostly in the rivers for spawning. Some fish will move into the Fox River in the fall. There are quite a few anglers fishing the Fox River in the fall following migrating shad and whitefish, but for the most part, once spawning is done in the spring, they spend the summers out in the bay itself."

Breeggemann hoped to capture 13,500 fingerlings over the three days.

"The range is 9 to 11 inches," he said. "The average size has to be around 10.5, 10.7 (inches). These fish were spawned the first week of May this year in the Fox River, our broodstock location. They grow that fast in six or seven months. They can reach 40 inches in five years and the females can reach 50 inches in 10 years in the bay."

The stocking effort boosts the fishery, which has little natural reproduction. Green Bay provides habitat and forage for spotted muskies to thrive.

"They grow fast and reach really big sizes," Breeggemann said. "In the spring when we're doing our adult population assessments in the Fox River and areas around the bay, the average-size female muskie that we handle is about 50 inches and we routinely handle fish over 55 inches. The males average 43, 44 inches, which is just gigantic. It's known for its growth potential and size structure. It's definitely a trophy destination.

"There's good habitat, but a lot of it is driven by the amount of forage," he added. "There are lots of different kinds of forage as well as abundant forage. There are various types of suckers, redborses, shad, alewives, shiners for them to eat when they're small. If one of the forage species has a really poor year as far as reproduction, there's something else for them to eat. And, it's an incredibly productive resource."

A CENTURY OF RAISING FISH

The Wild Rose Fish Hatchery has been restoring and enhancing Wisconsin's fisheries for more than a century.

Trout, salmon, sturgeon, and walleye are all raised at the hatchery before being stocked in the state's inland lakes, rivers, and streams, as well as Lake Michigan and Lake Superior.

Hatchery supervisor Jesse Landwehr said the facility's spotted musky stocking program has evolved over the years.

"Initially, we were getting spotted muskies from all over," he said. "There were some out of a university hatchery in Canada. We'd hold them here for a little bit and stock them out. We got some really nice fish out of Michigan. We would raise them and were trying to establish broodstock lakes. (Waushara County's) Long Lake was initially going to be a broodstock lake and we kind of shifted away from that. It wasn't working."



Great Lakes spotted musky fingerlings swim in a tub at the Wild Rose Fish Hatchery before being stocked later in the day in Green Bay. Greg Seubert Photo

Landwehr said a major change in the hatchery's stocking program came in 2008 with the discovery of viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS), a deadly fish virus, in Lake Michigan.

"That really limited what we could do," he said. "We would spawn fish and bring them into the hatchery. When VHS was discovered, there was no disinfection protocol for those eggs. We didn't want to run the risk of bringing something into the hatchery that could infect everything else. It wasn't just the muskies, it was our walleyes, our northern, all of our trout and salmon species. We didn't want to bring something inland that could potentially impact wild populations around here, too, because our water here goes out to a trout stream."

Eventually, the Wild Rose hatchery had a disinfection protocol in place.

"That worked really well because then we could disinfect the eggs right out of the Fox River and bring them to Wild Rose," Landwehr said.

Eggs for the hatchery's spotted muskies come from the Fox River.

"We set nets each spring at the Fox Point boat launch in De Pere," Landwehr said. "We're able to spawn the eggs and bring them back here. We have six half-acre ponds that we dedicate to muskie production. The fish come into the hatchery as eggs. We hatch them in early spring and we intensively rear them inside. We'll get them to about 5 inches or so by mid-August. They start indoors and we take them to the ponds to get the size on them that we need."

Landwehr called Green Bay's spotted muskie population a "quiet fishery."

"Not a lot of people talk about it, but it's rising quickly," he said. "I think a lot of people are starting to look at the Green Bay fishery and the trajectory that it's going. It has a lot of potential for some really big fish. We really enjoy being able to work with the fish, raise them, and put smiles on peoples' faces." ■



Greg Seubert is a freelance reporter, photographer and editor based out of his rural Weyauwega home. He spent 28 years covering high school sports for the Waupaca County Post, a Waupaca-based weekly newspaper, before stepping down in April 2024. Before that, he spent 10 years as a reporter and editor at four other newspaper in Wisconsin. He joined the Waupaca County Post prior to the start of the 1996-97 school year and eventually covered sports teams from Waupaca, Lola-Scandinavia, Weyauwega-Fremont, Little Wolf (Manawa), Amherst, Wild Rose, Almond-Bancroft, Stevens Point, New London, Clintonville and Hortonville high schools.

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"A father who coaches his child learns as much from his child as his child learns from him." ■

~ Unknown

Kaukauna boys basketball coach Ryan Bowers gives some last minute words of wisdom to his son Drew Bowers during a recent game.

PARTING SHOTS

Photo by Paul Stumpf - P.S. Portraits

