

ECC FOOTBALL



MARISSA VANWINGEN/TIMES CITIZEN

Malcolm Gillie recorded four catches for seven yards and Ellsworth Community College's lone touchdown on Saturday. The Panthers struggled offensively against the Red Ravens and fell to 0-5 with a Homecoming loss.

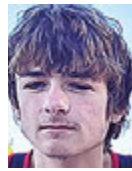
IF-A/AGWSR XC

Competition fierce at large Waverly meet

Season marks fall on Saturday

BY COREY MEINTS
cmeints@iafalls.com

Almost every member of the Iowa Falls-Alden/AGWSR cross country teams saw their season bests in the biggest meet any of them have been involved in Saturday. Running in the Steve Johnson Meet in Waverly, they saw hundreds of other runners from dozens of teams throughout Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin.



The Cadet girls grabbed third place – just six points out of second – behind four top-30 finishes. The boys weren't as successful, taking 26th with only one in the top-100, but they still provided highlights.

Nakia Ollivierre finished third, just over a second out of the runner-up spot, to pace the Cadet girls. Teah Miller grabbed 12th, with Demi Beaubien (19th), Abby Harding (28th), and Elizabeth Kielty (78th) rounding out the board – all with season bests.

Jase Beaubien led the Cadet boys, finishing 72nd. Hunter Miller (104th), Martin Beisel (173rd), Wilken Kube (180th) and Aaron Blackburn (205th) did the rest of the scoring.

In those finishes, Beaubien, Miller, Beisel and Kube all ran

Picked Off

Red Ravens record 5 INTs in 31-7 win

BY MARISSA VANWINGEN
mvanwingen@iafalls.com

There were positives to glean from Saturday for Ellsworth Community College's Kory Vaught, but not enough to pick up his first victory as head coach.

The Panthers played solid

defense for the majority of the game but too many turnovers and a struggling offense led to a 31-7 Homecoming loss to Coffeyville Community College.

"Anytime you lose four in a row, now five, it's hard to keep guys in that mindset. It's a challenge each and every week and it's a different challenge every week," said Vaught. "We're not playing off each other. Our offense doesn't play off defense, our defense doesn't play off offense, we come out

and score and then we give up two scores. The units have to play off each other, so that we have the success that we want. It's going to come with time, it's going to come with getting the right guys in here and continuing to preach the culture that we want."

The first ECC (0-5) mistake led to a Red Raven score. Joshua Bauer's first of five interceptions set up the visitors on the Panther 27-yard line and on the first play from scrimmage,

Isaiah Velez hit Jalen Clea for the score. For the rest of the first quarter, neither team could move the ball much as they combined for eight punts. Coffeyville (3-2) added their second score in the second period. Moving the ball just 19 yards they were within field goal range and Forrest Taylor put the ball through the uprights for the 50 yard field goal and the 10-0 lead at the half.

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FEATURE

The Language of Football



Ellsworth Community College offensive lineman, Kariem Al-Soufi (middle), came to the United States to play football. He has his sights at a D-1 scholarship.

German international player makes impact

BY MARISSA VANWINGEN
mvanwingen@iafalls.com

For most of Kariem Al-Soufi's life, Iowa was just another destination on the map.

He had never even heard of the Hawkeye state until less than a year ago when the Germany-native packed his bags and moved west to play football at Ellsworth Community College.

Through plenty of ups and downs in his playing career, Kariem knows he is where he belongs.

"I'm happy how everything turned out," he said. "Even though I'm still at a junior college, I'm still patient and I trust the process. I'm still working and I am happy with who I am and who I became."

Germany is not known for football. Soccer, handball and

ice hockey are the sports that are most popular. When Kariem was young, he had never even seen a football before. One of his friends showed up with one and they started talking. Kariem went to a football practice and was hooked – falling in love with the sport.

There are no high school athletics in Germany, instead they play for club teams. In order to be successful, Kariem knew he would have to leave his hometown of Paderborn and Germany all together and try to play football in the United States.

In 2018, Kariem went on a college tour in the US with his head coach of the Paderborn Dolphins and a recruiter. Over the course of two weeks, they went to 10 different football camps all over the East Coast. After three offers, the 6'4" 340-pound offensive lineman chose the University of Virginia.

"Overall, in the US football is way faster, more physical and you definitely have to build up a general knowledge of football," said Kariem. "It's required for you to be successful, that you

know the sport and that you understand it."

Because he was not up to speed, the first year he was red-shirted. The next year, during practice he was pushing a sled and heard a noise. Originally, Kariem thought he stepped on something. He couldn't walk and when he took off his cleat, his toe had already started to bruise. Kariem was diagnosed with turf toe and ended up having surgery a few days later.

Following the injury, Kariem missed the entire season.

"I got redshirted because the other guys were stronger (and) faster. It was definitely different and hard my first year. I was always used to being the bigger guy, the stronger one and then when I came here, Division I, Power 5 school and the guys were even stronger and faster so I had to get used to that," he said. "It changed as I went on because obviously I got stronger and bigger too, I had to get used to and then my second and third year, it changed a little bit again because I was one of the bigger, stronger guys again but then got

hurt."

He then got connected with a recruiter that had ECC ties and got Kariem to the Scenic City. He arrived on campus last winter and will be a December graduate with two years of eligibility left. In his one season with the Panthers he hopes he can be a leader and eventually, get re-recruited out.

"I just want to go Division I, I don't have a dream team or whatever," Kariem said. "Just make it to a Division I school and after that, hopefully to the NFL."

When Kariem started playing, he was a defensive tackle. His team didn't have enough players for the offensive line, so he had to do both. He was asked to be solely an offensive lineman and he considered quitting. At first, he didn't like being on the o-line. They get none of the recognition and all they do is block. Now, he wouldn't want to play anywhere else.

"I just love being physical," he said. "I like that you can move your opponent where you want against his will. I like that

you direct where it goes and what's going to happen next."

Through everything – moving to a new country, getting injured, transferring out of a DI program – Kariem has become tougher both mentally and physically. He overcame depression and anxiety the last four years. All of the adversity has made Kariem who he is on the gridiron.

"I thought I was strong playing football in Germany and then I came to the US at a DI football program and I noticed that mentally and physically I was really weak. I suffered from depression and anxiety because I used to be really big and the best and then I came to the US and I wasn't. That really messed with me," he said. "I noticed how mentally strong I got. Even though I didn't like what happened, or how it happened, I'm glad it happened because it made me stronger mentally. And tougher. That is the biggest point, I'm mentally way stronger than I used to and all the situations I went through, made me stronger." ■