

INDEPENDENT SPORTS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2022

Wildcats smack Algona, 31-8, charge into state playoffs!

8-1 Wildcats host Hampton-Dumont-CAL Friday night in 1st round playoff game

Jordan Coon rushes for 206 yards, 4 TDs

By PHIL MONSON

In the typical workman-like, dominating fashion which they've played this fall, the Humboldt football team charged into the Class 3A state playoffs by whipping the Algona Bulldogs, 31-8 at Algona last week (Oct. 21).

Wildcat junior running back Lance Coon rushed for 206 yards on 22 carries and scored four touchdowns to power the Wildcats, who finished the regular season 8-1 overall and finished in a 3-way tie for the 3A District 2 title with Nevada and North Polk.

Humboldt's defense, one of the best in the state all season long, pretty much kept the Bulldog offense contained, led by senior end Tayeton Lohaus, who had three quarterback sacks in the first half alone.

The triumph in the final game of the regular season sets up Humboldt's first round state playoff this Friday night (Oct. 28) at Mason Maach Field when the Wildcats host Hampton-Dumont-CAL.

"I was real proud of the kids. Our defense stepped up bigtime and played a great game. They allowed one big play which allowed Algona to score their only touchdown, but still played really, really well," Elman said.

"We put a lot of pressure on Alex Manske. He's such a good quarterback and we had to make sure we put pressure on him and contain him," Elman said. "There were a few times he broke containment but we were able to chase him down. It shows that our kids never gave up and that's so important."

"It was nice to see Lance Coon do a really good job of feeling his blockers and then accelerate once he found that hole. Lance was able to spark us with his four touchdowns in the first half," Elman said.

"Our offensive line had a really nice game at Algona. They did a great job of making and sustaining blocks. It was great to see the level that they played at in the game," Elman said.

Humboldt needed just two plays to score on its opening drive of the game. After stuffing the Bulldogs' opening series to force a punt, Corey Dettmann's kick return gave Humboldt a first down at the



Humboldt senior defensive end Tayeton Lohaus exults after he made one of his three quarterback sacks in the first half of the Wildcats' 31-8 victory over Algona on Oct. 21 in Algona. The Wildcats finished in a 3-way tie for the district title and will host Hampton-Dumont-CAL Friday, Oct. 28, in a first round playoff game. Independent photo by Phil Monson. To buy this photo and more, visit our photo gallery at www.humboldtnews.com.



Humboldt junior running back Lance Coon rushed for 206 yards and scored four touchdowns in the Wildcats' 31-8 victory at Algona on Oct. 21. He also broke the 1,000-yard rushing mark for the season. Independent photo by Phil Monson. To buy this photo and more, visit our photo gallery at www.humboldtnews.com.



Humboldt freshman Brynn Malo (right) is congratulated by teammate Joslyn Orr after Malo earned a spot in the state cross country meet by placing runner-up in the qualifying meet in Humboldt on Oct. 19. Malo will run at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 29, at Lakeside Golf Course north of Fort Dodge. Independent photo.

Brynn Malo qualifies for state!

By PHIL MONSON

As Brynn Malo crossed the finish line with her arms raised, tears of happiness poured out of her eyes.

Malo, Humboldt's freshman sensation, had just qualified for the Class 3A state cross country meet by finishing runner-up in a qualifying meet in Humboldt on Oct. 19 at lower Sheldon Park.

Malo, who entered the meet with the seventh-fastest time, had no trouble securing the needed top-15 finish to advance to state.

"I'm really excited! I'm really happy right now. This means so much right now," Malo said.

"I was ranked seventh going in based on my time and I started off faster than I usually run. About the time I got to the little dip on the course I ended up second and I knew I had to keep going until the end," Malo said. "Getting off to a strong start was the key today. You have to do that and keep going, otherwise you get cut off and it's hard to move up," Malo said.

"The pace is fast in a meet like this and once I got ahead, I knew I just had to keep going. I try not to let it get into my head because it's just a normal race at the end of the day," Malo said.

"This is my home course and I like it here. I knew where I needed to slow down and where to speed up during the race," Malo said.

Malo will be Humboldt's lone entry in the state meet at Lakeside Golf Course on Saturday, Oct. 29.

The top three teams and the top 15 individuals advance to state. Humboldt's girls were eighth as a team and the boys were 12th. The Wildcat boys

were led by freshman Gabe Thumma, who was 39th in 18:49.54.

Malo has been Humboldt's leader all season long. Midway through the month of September, veteran Humboldt head coach Dean Clasen saw Malo take big steps forward from that point on.

"Brynn has been getting better and better, ever since the Clear Lake meet (Sept. 15). Things have been coming together for her and she's been competing and moving up the standings," Clasen said. "This was another example of another very good race. She beat Moriah Knapp of Algona who had beaten her at conference a week ago," Clasen said.

"It was really great to see Brynn go out and run strong.

She was in the top six from the very beginning and was running second by the 200-meter mark and was always among the top six. She kept herself in a good spot," Clasen said. "She allowed herself the opportunity to control her own destiny. That was fantastic."

The rest of Humboldt's varsity girls had Meg Zweibohmer 47th in 23:09, Alana Malo 50th in 23:19, Bella Metli 54th in 23:23, Joslyn Orr 58th in 23:44, Elsie Stettelman 66th in 24:52 and Reagan Lee 71st in 25:33.

For the Wildcat boys, Hayden Hansen followed Thumma by running 66th in 20:07, Jaden Himrod was 69th in 20:11, Austin Little 70th in 20:17, Jayden Gargano 71st in

SEE RUNNERS, 2B



Humboldt head cross country coach Dean Clasen (right) shouts encouragement to Meg Zweibohmer in last week's state qualifying meet in Humboldt. Clasen is retiring down at the end of the season. Independent photo.

SEE FOOTBALL, 3B

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Humboldt's Collin Vik closed out his cross country career last week in the state qualifying meet in Humboldt on Oct. 19. Independent photo.

Runners CONTINUED FROM B FRONT

20:23, Justin Ash 72nd in 20:26 and Collin Vik 83rd 22:00.

"Because of the nice, cool weather I figured it would improve our times by about 20 to 30 seconds. I challenged the kids to try to improve on their times from both Humboldt meets previously. Tonight, we had people running anywhere from 46 seconds to a minute and one-half faster," Clasen said. "That really says a lot."

"Alana Malo ran a really good race. She was a minute faster. Bella Metli, my goodness, she has been coming on the last half of the season with 1:38 improvement," Clasen said. "Elsie Stattelmann has been dealing with a hip injury and has been feeling better lately. She ran 1:29 faster."

"Meg was 48 seconds faster. Reagan Lee spent the first half of the season healing up from a broke leg last summer and she's been running herself into shape. For her to run 47 seconds faster and have one of her best times of the season is fantastic," Clasen said.

"Great effort by all of them," Clasen said.

"I ran a good race. I think I probably could have done better but this is alright," said Thumma, who has been the Wildcat boys' leader all season.

"I wasn't thinking about how fast everybody else was going into the race. I was just thinking about catching the person in front of me and running as fast as I could," Thumma said.

"Gabe was in the top 18 for the first mile. He probably went out too fast and ended up fading. For him, it was one of those things where he rolled the dice to see how fast he could go and get with the people he needed to be with and try to hang on for dear life. He was 18 seconds faster. For him to break 19:00 on that course was really good," Clasen said.

"He showed a lot of courage and fought through some discomfort by challenging himself," Clasen said.

"The other guys, Jaden Himrod and Hayden Hansen both had season's bests on one of the more challenging courses we've been on. That was really great. Collin Vik was 41 seconds faster than he had run a week ago. Austin Little was 52 seconds faster than a week ago. Jaden was 48 seconds faster and Hayden was 1:04 faster. Jayden Gargano was

1:28 faster. Guys ran as hard as they could. Even though we finished 12th in the field, we had a really good night and I'm really excited for the kids," Clasen said.

"Justin Ash ran 1:40 faster than he did a week ago. It's been a tough year for him with shin splints. Same thing with Jayden Gargano. Kids have been fighting through little nagging injuries. Those are things where off-season running would help eliminate some of those things," Clasen said. "But we're in the season and we have to get through that."

"Overall we had a tremendous season of learning. The boys didn't have anybody back who ran varsity last year so they've been finding it out on their own and I think there are pieces in place for both the boys and girls to have continued success next year. Hopefully the fire is ignited a little bit," said Clasen, who is retiring at the end of the season. "Hopefully they'll use this great experience as a confidence builder and have good things happen in the future."

"Team-wise we knew where we were going in because of all the strong teams in the field so I challenged the kids that we just need to make sure we improve on our times. Where we finished as a team isn't so important so it was important for each one individually to give it their very best in this final race and they did that," Clasen said.

"It was fun to be the leader on the team this past season, but I really wasn't expecting that going in," Thumma said. "It's a big jump from middle school to high school. I did pretty good for sticking it out all year."

"I didn't run much in the off-season but now that I know how tough it is, I know I'll have to run in the off-season," Thumma said.

"I'm really happy with today. I've got really great teammates this year," Malo said.

"The key for me at state is to keep going and don't let it get into my head. You can only do the best that you can do," Malo said.

"The state meet course isn't as challenging as the Humboldt course so I would say a goal of breaking 20:00 for Brynn would be a reasonable goal. If she does that it would put her in the top third," Clasen said.

Blue Jays sideline Wildcats

Humboldt's season ends in region 3 semifinal

By PHIL MONSON

Ninth ranked Bondurant-Farrar avenged an early season loss to the Humboldt volleyball team and did it when they needed it most.

In a Class 4A Region 3 semifinal round match in the Blue Jay gym on Oct. 20, Humboldt's season came to an end by scores of 25-15, 25-14 and 25-20.

The Wildcats finish the year at 19-13 overall while Bondurant-Farrar took a 23-10 record into their regional final match with No. 7 ranked North Polk on Oct. 25 at Alleman.

Humboldt won in five sets over the Blue Jays back on Aug. 25, but the Blue Jays enjoyed the return of their senior setter, who wasn't in the lineup in the first meeting.

"Bondurant is a very good team. A team we have to respect. It's been a good rivalry the last few years. It's been fun to add them to our schedule. Last year they came into Humboldt and we got up 2-0 on them and they came back and won. This year we went down there and they got up 2-0 on us and we came back and won the next three sets," Waldorf said.

"Going into this one I knew they would be hungry for the win. They have two really strong hitters. A middle hitter who is 6-2 and a really strong outside hitter. With their setter back, they passed really well to those two big hitters and we weren't able to shut them down," Waldorf said.

"Our goal going in was to win, obviously. The first set we did not pass well. They served really hard at us and had us out of our system the entire game. That

was a huge factor in that loss. We made some changes for the back row in the second game and our passing started to come on a little bit. It was better in game two, but our hitting just wasn't there," Waldorf said.

"We made a lot of hitting errors in that match and Bondurant's middle hitter caused us problems. We struggled defending her. We couldn't get a block up on her. It made it hard playing defense around that," Waldorf said.

In set three the two teams were tied 6-6 early on. A kill by Addie Thompson put Humboldt up 11-9. The Wildcats continued to push the tempo and led 17-14 before the Blue Jays scored four straight points to regain the lead at 18-17.

A kill by Kayla Gieber pulled Humboldt within three at 23-20, but the Blue Jays scored the next two points to win the set and the match.

"Going into the third set I decided to go to a 6-2 offense to add some extra blocking in the front row. We put in Ashlynn Works in the front row to add some blocking and try to add some more offense. Honestly, I thought we had it. We were passing well. Our hitting was starting to come on and we were defending them a little bit better. Towards the end of that set we made too many errors in a row and lost the lead," Waldorf said.

Thompson led Humboldt's offense with eight kills at the net. Gieber made seven. Mia Schluter and Tayla Wempen each had four. Livvy Becker made 22 assists while Thompson (18) and Beach (11) were double figures leaders in digs.

Oct. 20 at Bondurant
Humboldt 15 14 20 ...0
Bondurant-Farrar 25 25 25 ...3

HUMBOLDT STATISTICS
Sets: Addie Thompson 3, Macey Varangkounh 2, Jennika Beach 3, Livvy Becker 3, Mia Schluter 3, Tayla Wempen 3, Ella Olson 2, Morgan Mann 2, Shelbie Heinz 3, Ashlynn Works 1, Kayla Gieber 3.

Attacks (kills): Thompson 20-24 (8), Gieber 11-14 (7), Schluter 10-14 (4), Wempen 5-14 (4), Heinz 9-13 (1), Works 1-2, Olson 4-4, Becker 3-3, Beach 1-1.

Assists: Becker 22, Beach 1.

Blocks (solo-assist): Becker 0-1, Schluter 0-1, Wempen 1-0, Heinz 0-2, Gieber 0-1.

Digs: Thompson 18, Beach 11, Gieber 8, Mann 4, Varangkounh 3, Becker 3, Wempen 3, Heinz 2, Olson 1, Schluter 1.

Serves (aces): Olson 7-7 (1), Thompson 7-9, Varangkounh 5-5, Beach 7-7, Becker 5-8, Wempen 1-3, Mann 4-4, Heinz 2-3, Gieber 4-4, Totals: 42-50 (1) for 84%.

NORTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE VOLLEYBALL STANDINGS

Conf	All
Clarion-Goldfield-Dows	7-0 24-4
Humboldt	6-119-13
Algona	4-314-19
Webster City	4-321-16
Clear Lake	4-317-15
Hampton-Dumont-CAL	2-5 5-24
Iowa Falls-Alden	1-510-23
Fort Dodge St. Edmond	0-7 5-25

Humboldt served 84 percent. Ella Olson and Beach both were 7-for-7. Olson had the lone ace. Shelbie Heinz had two assist blocks.

"Post-season is a fun time of the year. It's a brand-new season. You wipe away the regular season. It's anyone's game," Waldorf said.

"We were right there, we just couldn't close the deal. You have to step up to the plate in those tough situations," Waldorf said.

"Addie Thompson had a great night. She hit one of the best games I've seen her hit all year, as far as being a smart hitter and controlling the match. She did a really nice job. Some other people stepped up," Waldorf said.

Wildcats topple Spencer in 3A opener

Humboldt overcame a slow start in set one to sweep the Spencer Tigers in three sets in a Class 4A Region 3 opening round match in the Humboldt gym on Oct. 18.

The Wildcats, 19-12 overall, downed the Tigers by scores of 25-22, 25-18 and 25-16. Spencer bowed out at 7-25.

"That first set was a rough one. Wow. I track our errors and in that set we had 10 errors combined with their 11 actual points. We were 100 percent beating ourselves in that set," Waldorf said.

"In the second set we kind of re-grouped after that first one. I told the girls we need people who can hit the ball over the net, inbounds and terminate. That was what we were really looking for and it seemed like a couple of the girls turned it around. Mia on the outside and Kayla on the right side started hitting a lot better," Waldorf said.

Even though Humboldt had beaten Spencer earlier in the season, Waldorf had respect for the Tigers, who finished fourth in their Lakes Conference stand-

ings.

"It this point in the season, anything can happen in post-season. To be able to close them out in three sets, I'm really happy about being able to do that. For us to continue to advance, we have to clean up our play," Waldorf said.

Humboldt opened set one with a 4-2 lead but allowed Spencer to stay in the game, holding slim leads of 8-7, 14-2 and 17-14. A Wildcat hit in to the net made it 21-20 at one point late. A kill by Shelbie Heinz made it 23-21 and Humboldt pulled out the 25-22 victory.

The Wildcats jumped out to a 4-1 lead in the second set. A combination of spikes and blocks by Tayla Wempen, Addie Thompson, Kayla Gieber and Heinz gave the Wildcats a 12-5 lead.

With the Wildcats serving and passing better, kills by Gieber and Thompson gave the Wildcats a 21-4 lead.

Spencer went on a run to make it 22-15 Humboldt, but the Wildcats got back on track for the 25-18 victory.

The Wildcats fell behind in

the third set at 3-0, but roared back to make it 8-3. A kill by Heinz in the middle made it 8-3. The Wildcats dominated play in all phases from that point on. Wempen's kill gave Humboldt a 16-9 lead.

Heinz later slammed the ball through the Spencer defense for a 21-14 lead and Humboldt finished off the Tigers 25-16.

Heinz, a senior, led the hitting attack with 11 kills. Gieber netted nine while Wempen and Thompson each had seven kills. Livvy Becker set up the offense with 37 assists.

The Wildcats served 89.2 percent as they converted 66 of 74 attempts. Ella Olson served 15 of 15 with five aces. Livvy Becker was 15 of 17 with four aces.

Defensively, Jennika Beach led with 21 digs, followed by Thompson with 16 and Becker with 11. Heinz had one solo block and one assist at the net.

"When we play the way we are capable of playing, we are hard to beat. We have some great players. The thing about our team is that we all have to play like that. We don't have



Humboldt's Tayla Wempen soars above the net to slam the ball for a point against Spencer in the Wildcats' regional tournament opener in Humboldt on Oct. 18. Independent photo by Phil Monson. To buy this photo and more, visit our photo gallery at www.humboldtnews.com.

Waldorf looked back on the 2022 season, where Humboldt finished 6-1 and runner-up in the North Central Conference.

"We toughened up our schedule this year and dropped some of the weaker teams. I know our record doesn't reflect the skill level of our team this year," Waldorf said.

"Even though we had some ups and downs this past season, we had a really good season and as a coach, I wouldn't trade any of these experiences," Waldorf said. "These girls are the group I had when I started my coaching

career. That means a lot to me. They are a really nice group of girls. They all have super bright futures. They are a really fun group. We had a lot of fun this past season and we had a ton of highs."

"They really wanted it bad and they left it all on the court tonight. I was really proud of how they ended the third set. We could have laid down but we continued to fight hard up until the very end. It's hard to see the season end but looking back, it was a lot of fun this past season," Waldorf said.

"We left it all on the court against a really good program. We lost to a great," Waldorf said.

Humboldt graduates six seniors, which include Darby DeWinter, Thompson, Macey Varangkounh, Beach, Becker, Heinz and Gieber.

"We have a lot of underclassmen who got playing time this past season and I'm hoping they want to work hard in the off-season. Get into the weight room, play volleyball and work hard and come back next year," Waldorf said.

Oct. 18 in Humboldt
Spencer 22 18 16 ...0
Humboldt 25 25 25 ...3

HUMBOLDT STATISTICS
Sets: Addie Thompson 3, Jennika Beach 3, Livvy Becker 3, Mia Schluter 3, Tayla Wempen 3, Ella Olson 3, Morgan Mann 3, Shelbie Heinz 3, Kayla Gieber 3.

Attacks (kills): Heinz 21-24 (11), Gieber 18-22 (9), Wempen 16-20 (7), Thompson 29-36 (7), Schluter 13-21 (4), Becker 2-3 (1), Olson 1-1 (1), Mann 3-5 (1), Totals: 103-132 (41).

Assists: Becker 37, Wempen 1, Beach 1, Thompson 1.

Blocks (solo-assist): Heinz 1-1, Mann 0-1, Wempen 0-1, Becker 0-1.

Digs: Beach 21, Thompson 16, Mann 9, Gieber 6, Olson 6, Heinz 3, Wempen 3.

Serves (aces): Olson 15-15 (5), Becker 15-17 (4), Mann 9-9 (1), Thompson 6-7, Beach 10-11, Heinz 9-11, Gieber 2-4, Totals: 66-74 (10) for 89.2%.

one, super-dominant player to carry us. We need to be consistent and terminate balls," Waldorf said.

"We have to look to everyone to step up and play well and do it with intensity and consistency," Waldorf said.

Humboldt advanced into a semifinal round match at Bondurant-Farrar, a team they beat 3-2 in the second match of



Humboldt's Mia Schluter defends at the net for the Wildcats in their regional volleyball victory over Spencer on Oct. 18 in the Humboldt gym. Independent photo by Phil Monson. To buy this photo and more, visit our photo gallery at www.humboldtnews.com.

the season back in August.

"To beat Bondurant-Farrar, the very first thing we have to do is eliminate our errors. We also have to pass very well, which starts our offense. We just have to focus on every single point," Waldorf said. "If we focus, we are fine."

"Our middles are doing a great job. Tayla Wempen and Shelbie Heinz did a nice job tonight both blocking and hitting on offense. Every time you step on the court you have to improve a little bit each time out,"

Waldorf said.

The other half of Region 3 had Carroll stopping Storm Lake (25-16, 25-17, 25-23). Carroll met North Polk in the other semifinal, where North Polk downed Carroll 25-11, 20-15 and 25-13.

Humboldt went on to lose 3-0 at Bondurant-Farrar on Oct. 20 by scores of 25-15, 25-14 and 25-20. The substitute final was Oct. 25 at North Polk (Alleman) to determine the state qualifier.

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