

# Battle tested Hawks continue to collect wins

BY TJ RHODES  
The News

WELLMAN

Mid-Prairie, in the second half of a back-to-back, traveled to Wapello to take on the Arrows. Wapello, who is not having a good year, fell to the Golden Hawks 7-0. Each team had bright moments.

Scoring for the Hawks was freshman, Elise Gingerich, with two. Gingerich had a chance to score a hat-trick, missing the only penalty kick attempt on the night.

Sophomore, Lydia Beachy, scored her first of the year and then scored again. Two shots and two goals for the sophomore.

Junior, Zoey Curtiss, notched a goal in this game. Seniors, Paityn Jennings, and Kina Miller, each scored one to bring us to the score of 7-0.

Despite the lopsided score, Wapello sophomore goalie, Keelyn Griffin, stood on her head in an excellent showing, with 41 saves. That is right, 41 saves against a hungry Hawk squad taking advantage of a weak defensive squad in the Arrows. Griffin may have allowed 7 goals but having 41 saves is an extremely impressive feat for a goalie.

On the other side of the field, Miller and junior, Evangeline Marner, split time as goalie, each playing 40 minutes. Marner took her first minutes at Goalie during this game because of an injury that limited her movement at her typical defense position. Marner did not see one shot on goal whereas Miller only saw one, making the only save of the night.

This is the third time these teams have faced off, with Mid-Prairie holding the all-time series lead at 3-0. Last year, the outcome was not all that different, an 8-1 Mid-Prairie win on the road.

Despite missing seniors Sophia Baker and Amara Jones in this match, it was an expected win as Wapello is still searching for that first win of the year.

GAME STATS

	1	2	Total
Mid-Prairie	5	2	7
Wapello	0	0	0

MID-PRAIRIE SCORING: Elise Gingerich 2, Lydia Beachy 2, Zoey Curtiss 1, Paityn Jennings 1, Kina Miller 1.

MID-PRAIRIE ASSISTS: Gingerich 1, Beachy 1.

MID-PRAIRIE SAVES: Kina Miller SV 1

WAPELLO SAVES: Keelyn Griffin SV 41, GA 7.

MP 2, MAQUOKETA 0 (4/28)

No Amara Jones or Sophia Baker? No problem for the Mid-Prairie Golden Hawks as they win their second straight to knock off the Maquoketa Cardinals, keeping them winless in a 2-0 match. It wasn't the Hawk's best showing, but it got the job done.

"We found a way to stick it through there and just slug it out. We had a lot of girls get injured tonight and dinged up and it was warmer than most nights," head coach, Truman Shetler, said. "It was good to get



Left, Mid-Prairie senior, Kina Miller, lines up for a big shot attempt. Right, Mid-Prairie Freshman, Elise Gingerich, battles for the ball in a game on Friday, April 28th against the Maquoketa Cardinals.



TJ RHODES/THE NEWS

the win even when we didn't play our best."

Mid-Prairie had ample chances to score even more, the team as a whole was simply stifled by Maquoketa's goalkeeper, Laney Hafner, who denied 28 shots.

Scoring for Mid-Prairie was Elise Gingerich and Zoey Curtiss. Each had seven shots on net as well. They were the pumping heart of the team, stepping up in the absence of Jones who was participating in the Drake Relays in Des Moines and Sophia Baker who has had an unfortunate string of injuries this season, battling a concussion, forcing her to miss this game. Baker still leads the team in goals at seven.

This is the second straight game with at least one goal for Gingerich. For Curtiss, it's her third goal in as many games.

The first half was quiet. 28 minutes in and Gingerich finally broke away to get a primetime scoring chance in front of the net behind the Cardinal defense. She shot top shelf up close to the goalie, banking it and celebrating with the 1-0 lead.

Maquoketa countered. They had a good breakaway of their own, not able to elevate the ball, making it an easy save for Mid-Prairie's Kina Miller. The Cardinal team was very fast. They struggled to maintain possession in most cases but had no problem pressuring the Hawks into making mistakes and controlling play for long stretches. The Hawks then struggled in their transition game from defense to offense.

"With girls playing in different spots they weren't quite used to, and missing Amara and Sophia makes a big differ-

ence to us being able to stick it out and kind of stay with it, Shetler said. "We just couldn't quite get them home but we played pretty well and it was good to see that even when we didn't have all of our girls out there the other ones stepped up and did enough to get the win."

At half, the score remained 1-0. The first half was also engulfed in the sun, making it a much hotter game than the players were used to in this extremely cold spring season of soccer. After halftime concluded, the sun set behind a wall of clouds that remained for the game, bringing along a cool breeze that would, perhaps, energize the Golden Hawks.

Right off the bat, Zoey Curtiss rings a shot that the Cardinal goalie barely touched, leaving her fingertips, and reverberating off of the post, staying out of the net. Curtiss was not done.

After the Cardinals kicked the ball out of bounds, Gingerich made a great throw-in pass to Curtiss who collected the pass, bobbed and weaved her way through the defense on a one-on-one breakaway, scoring.

The Hawks smelled blood. The Maquoketa defense was showing signs of weakness. Directly after the goal, freshman, Meadow Flynn, kicked a shot that ricocheted off the crossbar, staying out.

Maquoketa wished these close chances would cease. They didn't, causing those on the Cardinal defense to experience heart palpitations each time the Hawks flew into their offensive zone.

Kina Miller hit the ball from a considerable distance as the Cardinal goalie made way to

collect it. Miller barely missed the net, watching as it soared just above and out of play.

Yet another chance was denied by the surging Hawk squad. Freshman, Cirina Lucas, was denied from up close and personal with the Cardinal goalie. She received a pass from Gingerich to find the prime scoring opportunity.

	1	2	Total
Maquoketa	0	0	0
Mid-Prairie	1	1	2

MAQUOKETA SAVES: Laney Hafner SV 28 GA 2.

MID-PRAIRIE SCORING: Elise Gingerich 1, Zoey Curtiss 1.

MID-PRAIRIE SAVES: Kina Miller SV 4; Niva Helmuth SV 2.

MP 1, REGINA 5 (5/1)

Mid-Prairie flew to Iowa City to take on the Regina Regals Monday night. Returning to the lineup was senior Sophia Baker, scoring the only goal of the night for the Hawks as they lost 5-1 against a tough Regina squad. The Hawks still played without Amara Jones, missing her for the third straight game.

This game gives the Hawks a taste of what playoff soccer will look like as Regina is one of their toughest opponents up to this point. It was an important game for placement in the conference.

"If we can beat Regina, we've got the upper hand on getting third place. If we lose it, it's going to be a harder road to get third place," Shetler said. "We're fighting [Regina] for third place behind Beckman and Anamosa."

They still have four games left this season, and an easier

week as a whole as they travel to Williamsburg on Thursday night and Goose Lake on Friday night to face Northeast Community Schools. The next two opponents have a combined record of 5-16 whereas the Hawks are sitting at 8-4 after their loss to Regina. They should enter into their next two games as clear favorites.

In this game however, the team only mustered six shots on net compared to the offensive onslaught of Regina, 24 shots on goal, according to the stat sheets uploaded to gobound.com.

Elise Gingerich assisted on the only goal of the night for the Hawks. She's continuing to be a presence for the Hawks, growing as the season goes on and giving their future hope as the seniors gear up for graduation.

As they've done so often this season, Kina Miller and Niva Helmuth split time at goalie for the Hawks. Miller is a captain of this team for a reason. When she is on the field, she communicates extremely well with her teammates, she makes clearing shots look easy and is a constant scoring threat.

The Hawks are looking to bounce back this week, with a tougher week looming ahead.

	1	2	Total
Mid-Prairie	0	1	1
Regina	2	3	5

MID-PRAIRIE SCORING: Sophia Baker 1.

MID-PRAIRIE ASSISTS: Elise Gingerich 1.

MID-PRAIRIE SAVES: Kina Miller SV 9, GA 3.

REGINA SCORING: Grace Gaarde 3, Natalie Gahan 1, Morgan Gahan 1.

REGINA ASSISTS: Madelyn Greve 1.

REGINA SAVES: Courtney Kessler SV 6, GA 1.

BOWKER/  
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first one that I went to and said, 'Hey, Pete's retiring.'

"She looked at me and smiled and said, 'So, you want to apply for that, too, huh?'"

"I said, 'Was that a yes?'"

"She's like, 'Yup.'"

It wasn't long before Lambert, 34, the Golden Hawks' defensive coordinator last year and the River Valley South Conference Basketball Coach of the Year in 2022, added head football coach to his nameplate and became one of the few in Iowa who are head coaches in both football and boys basketball.

Certainly, it was a dream realized.

"I have a passion for the two programs, the two sports," Lambert said. "I enjoy a passion for the kids. We build that connection here when they're 12 years old. To be a part of it until you get to see them graduate and go on to other aspects of their life."

Julie Lambert, who is mom to a 10-month-old son, Whitt, and a 4-year-old girl, Demi, and is also a speech pathologist



GIOVANNI CORONEL/THE NEWS

Mid-Prairie's Daren Lambert will be head coach in both football and boys basketball in the next school year. He served as football's defensive coordinator in 2022 and also was named River Valley South Coach of the Year in Basketball in 2022.

with the Grant Wood Education Area Agency, understood those feelings.

A spouse usually does. "I think she knows how much it means to me," Daren Lambert said, "just the community and both programs, how much passion I put into them and how much they mean to me. She's that support and obviously taking care of everything at home. And I still try and do my part, not let it take away from that family time and our two kids."

But let's be clear about how strong that home environment is in Kalona, just a short walk from the middle school where Daren teaches.

"If I didn't get the green light (from Julie)," Daren said, "I wouldn't do it."

The green light put Daren Lambert in rare company. There are many who coach two sports, or more. Truman Shetler, Mid-Prairie's new girls soccer head coach, is an assistant in girls basketball. Kelby Bender, an assistant coach on

Lambert's boys basketball staff and a former Mid-Prairie star, is the boys head golf coach. Danny Hershberger, a teacher at the middle school, is the head coach in girls basketball at Mid-Prairie and baseball at Hillcrest Academy. Mark Hostetler coaches girls and boys cross country, and girls track.

But head coach in both football and boys basketball? It's a rare double because of the demands of both sports.

Among those doing it now is Chet Knake at Bellevue High School.

"I love football," Lambert said. "And I love basketball. As a young kid, when I was going into teaching and coaching, this is something, a goal that I had. People say, that'd just be too much, are you sure, are you sure? It's one of those things, I'm very confident and very sure in what I want to do."

Cavanagh is a believer. "If anybody could do it, it would be Daren," Cavanagh said. "He has already had a huge role in the program so he already has been coaching sports back to back. The players love him because he is always so positive and works very hard. Brings great ener-

gy."

Football has been a part of Lambert's life for years. He has been an assistant at Mid-Prairie for seven years. He coached offense at Raytown South High School in the Kansas City suburbs before arriving at Mid-Prairie and will switch from defensive coordinator to offensive coordinator next fall.

And at a place like Mid-Prairie, a Class 2A school, Lambert already has a basketball roster filled with kids who also play football. Will Cavanagh, a starting guard for the Golden Hawks' state tournament hoops team in 2022, was also the starting quarterback in football. Justice Jones, a defensive star in football, was the first player off the bench in basketball.

"We push our kids to be multisport athletes," he said.

Still, all this starts at home. With Julie. And with Demi and Whitt.

"I may be a head coach in two sports, but I'm still not in charge of anything else," Daren Lambert said with a laugh. "Which is good."

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