

SPORTS

Yellowjacket men and women advance to WIAC hockey semis, both play tonight

Yellowjacket Athletics

The Yellowjacket men dispatched UW-Stout, 2-1, on Monday night at Wessman Arena, while the women took down Northland, 6-2, earlier in the afternoon.

Yellowjackets 6, Northland 2

Starting with the women's team, four players registered multi-point games for the Yellowjackets, who dominated play after giving up an early first-period goal.

Senior Jenna Curtis (Webster, Wis./Webster) paced the UWS offense with a goal and two assists while classmate Amber Heidenreich (Phillips, Wis./Hayward) potted two goals, junior Jenna Byfuglien (Roseau, Minn./Roseau) and sophomore Hannah Magnusson (Thief River Falls, Minn./Lincoln) each added a goal and an assist.

The 'Jackets outshot Northland, 59-16, and dominated in the faceoff circle, winning 44-of-63 draws on the day. McKenzie Whalen (East Grand Forks, Minn./East Grand Forks) earned the win in net for the 'Jackets,

making 14 saves. Soleil Archambeault took the loss for the 'Jills, making 53 saves.

With the win, the fourth-seeded Yellowjackets advance to face top-seeded UW-Eau Claire in a two-game semifinal series Wednesday and Friday at Hobbs Ice Arena in Eau Claire.

Yellowjackets 2, UW-Stout 1

The 'Jackets closed the regular season with a pair of wins over UW-Stout, winning 6-3 at home on March 3 and following that up with a 4-1 win on the road March 5. When the WIAC playoff seedings were announced, the 'Jackets found out they'd be playing at home, but for the third time in six days they would be taking on Stout.

After a scoreless first period, the Yellowjackets broke the ice and took the lead at 9:55 of the second period. Dylan Johnson (Cloquet, Minn./Cloquet) took a pass from Levi Cudmore (Park River, N.D./Park River), skated into the Stout zone and took a wrist shot from the right circle that went off Blue Devil goaltender



Myles Hektor played a big role in keeping the men's hockey playoff hopes alive. The 'Jackets goalie finished with 34 saves on 35 shots against UW-Stout

Photo by Holden Law

Brennan Kitchen into the net to make it a 1-0 lead.

It stayed that way until the 6:07 mark of the third period when the Blue Devils drew even. On their second of four third period power plays, Kobe Keller got a rebound in tight and beat Hektor to tie the game 1-1.

The Yellowjackets got the eventual game-winning goal at 9:09 of the third when Chad Lopez (Arlington, Texas/University of Texas) got a rebound to the left of the net and scored his team-leading sixth of the year, putting them back in front, 2-1.

Myles Hektor (Lake Bluff, Ill./Lake Forest), who was making his third consecutive start in goal for the Yellowjackets was the star of the night, finishing with 34 saves, including

17 in the third period as Stout tried furiously to tie the game. No save was bigger than a stop Hektor made with the right pad in the game's closing seconds. With heavy traffic impeding his view of the puck, Hektor got his right pad on a shot, allowing the Yellowjackets to run out the clock along the boards.

Hektor improved to 3-0-0 on the year following his big performance. At the other end, Kitchen was equally good for Stout, finishing with 39 stops.

With the victory, the fourth-seeded Yellowjackets advance to the WIAC semifinals, where they will play on the road at top-seed UW-River Falls tonight. Opening faceoff at Hunt Arena is set for 7:05 p.m.

Bender, UWS baseball team, ready to play ball

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With spring just around the corner, UW-Superior's athletes are preparing to head outside and compete the best they can during a season regulated by COVID-19.

Although this is Dante Bender's fourth year playing at UWS, it may just be his most unique year yet. "This year has been extra stressful due to the

amount of regulations we have to follow and the overall uncertainty of whether or not we will be playing or practicing every day," said Bender.

Right now, the team is tested three times a week and will face a pause in practices or games if someone tests positive. Positive tests are then checked a second time through a PCR test to ensure that the person is positive before beginning contact tracing. Through-

out this process, the team is not able to participate in practices or games until they have finished contact tracing or guaranteed that the athlete is not positive for COVID-19.

"One of the biggest challenges I have witnessed is getting used to wearing a mask during practices and games. Although I don't find it uncomfortable, when you are sweaty and tired the last thing you want to do is put on a mask. Our team under-

stands that it's the right thing to do in order to play as much as we can, but all of the social distancing regulations also make it hard to connect with teammates when we can only see each other at practices and games," stated Bender.

The Yellowjackets will play against Concordia College (Minn.) on Thursday at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis. Spectators will not be allowed.

'Jackets fall to Bethany Lutheran in UMAC Quarterfinals, 71-70

The UW-Superior men's basketball season came to an end on Thursday, March 4 with a 71-70 loss to Bethany Lutheran in the quarterfinals of the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference (UMAC) tournament.

Trailing 65-60 with 30 seconds to play, J'Vaun Walker (Rosharon, Texas/Manvel) hit a layup to cut the deficit to three, but Jacob Milinkovich drew a foul and knocked down both free throws eight seconds later. Walker then found Mason Ackley (Superior, Wis./Superior Senior) for a 3-pointer to make it a 67-65 game prior to two more Mil-

inkovic free throws.

Xavier Patterson (Superior, Wis./Superior Senior) missed a 3-pointer on the next possession that would have made it a one-score game. He then stripped Jared Milenkovic of the ball and Walker converted a layup with nine seconds left. Out of a timeout, Walker stole the ball from Jared Milinkovic, but Brian Smith stole it right back with two seconds on the clock. Smith was fouled and hit both free throws to make it a four-point game. Eli Vogel (Appleton, Wis./Appleton West) hit a trey at the buzzer for the final margin.

The Yellowjackets received a team-leading 20 points, four assists and

three steals from Walker, who was 7-of-14 from the field and 6-of-7 from the line. Patterson added 12 points and a team-high-tying seven rebounds, while Vogel and Enrique Sanchez (Madrid, Spain/IES María Guerrero) contributed 11 points apiece. Sanchez's point total, five boards and three assists all represent career highs for the sophomore.

UWS was up as many as seven points in the first half when Walker completed a three-point play for a 12-5 lead with 7:25 gone. The 'Jackets held a 31-30 advantage at the break. The Vikings eventually rallied to take a 54-51 edge on a three-point play by Jaret Utpadel with 5:32 to play. The 'Jackets closed to within one on

three occasions in the final minutes, but did not regain the lead.

The Vikings will advance to the UMAC semifinals to face the College of St. Scholastica, while Superior's season closes with a record of 3-4.



J'Vaun Walker tallied 20 points, 4 assists, and 3 steals in the 'Jackets season-ending loss to Bethany Lutheran. UWS finished 3-4 this season.

Photo by Holden Law

Women's hoops

season ends, 73-67

Yellowjacket Athletics

The Minnesota Morris Cougars put together a 28-point fourth quarter to blow past the Yellowjacket's women's basketball team, 73-67, in the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference (UMAC) quarterfinals on Thursday, March 4.

The Yellowjackets carried a seven-point advantage on the road against the fourth-seeded Cougars into the fourth quarter, but UMM missed just eight field-goal attempts in the final 10 minutes to overcome the deficit.

Superior held leads of 17-10 after one quarter and 37-29 at halftime, but couldn't fend off the hard-charging Cougars. Lexus Eagle Chasing scored 14 of her game-high 22 points in the second half to fuel the comeback. For UWS, Kaelyn Christian (St. Michael, Minn./St. Michael-Albertville Senior) tallied 22 points, while Mady Sanders (Lino Lakes, Minn./Centennial) recorded the 'Jackets' third double-double of the season with 13 points and a game-best and career-high-tying 10 rebounds.

Leading midway through the first quarter, UWS engineered a 7-0 run to take a 17-9 advantage with eight seconds remaining in the period. Four different players scored in the 4:08 stretch. Morris cut the lead to three points two separate times over the second quarter, but Bryton Kukowski (Duluth, Minn./Hermantown), Sam Parendo (Proctor, Minn./Proctor), Kaija Davies (Aitkin, Minn./Aitkin) and Christian each helped UWS hit its next four shots for a 33-22 cushion with 3:21 remaining in the half.

The Cougars' Haley Wollschager registered four consecutive points to slice the deficit to 44-41 with 3:30 on the clock in the third quarter before Sanders completed a three-point play and Davies canned a trey to push the lead back to 10 with less than a minute left in the period.

Eagle Chasing gave her team its first lead since the early going with a jumper that made it 64-63 with 3:09 to play. Superior cut the lead to 71-67 with 26 seconds left, but got no closer.

The Yellowjackets finish the season with a record of 4-6.