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ALL-REGION REVIEW

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Fall Sports



FOOTBALL

Chargers' Wesolowski named Player of the Year

Witt-Birn, Lena/STAA earn team recognition

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

A total of six area football teams made the postseason this fall, with plenty of impact players leading the way.

Wittenberg-Birnamwood was one of the teams that made the postseason, with senior Ben Wesolowski having a monster season to lead the Chargers. Wesolowski was named the NEW Media Inc. Football Player of the Year.

"I just trusted my coaches' game plan and teammates, and they trusted me in return which helped make this season possible — along with putting in extra time with my teammates just trying to be they best team we could be," said Wesolowski.

During Witt-Birn's 13-game season, the quarterback was as dynamic as some of the state's best. Wesolowski threw for 1,967 yards and 29 touchdowns while rushing for 1,847 yards and 20 more scores. To add to his impressive resume, he also caught a touchdown pass.

Wesolowski credited his teammates for their work in the offseason as the biggest reason for his balanced season on offense. He added their "constant support and belief in me helped greatly."

On defense, he tallied 36 total tackles, five of which went for losses. Wesolowski also intercepted three passes.

In the team's 79-8 thumping of Nekoosa in mid-October, Wesolowski had a game for the ages.

The senior threw nine touchdowns in the contest, which set a new state record. Seven of the scores went to star wideout Kaden Schmidt, which set another state record.

Wesolowski finished with 522 passing yards in the contest. He also rushed for 78 yards and two more scores, while tallying seven total tackles and an interception on defense.

"It's awesome to have a record that rewards you for your hard work, and to have a record is not only a personal achievement but a team one," said Wesolowski. "I



Wittenberg-Birnamwood's Ben Wesolowski runs with the football during the team's playoff win over Amherst on Nov. 5 in Amherst.

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can't thank my teammates or coaches enough for giving me the opportunity to do something like that, because without them it wouldn't be possible."

Honorable mentions

With so many strong teams in the area, it should come as no surprise that several individual players enjoyed big seasons.

Wesolowski's teammate Ben Flak put together a big season on defense, totaling 94 tackles and 13 sacks. He also forced two fumbles.

Schmidt finished with 784 receiving yards and 16 scores on the season to go along with his new single game record.

Dealing with injuries for most of the season, Shawano's Carson Popp and Ashton Henning became one of the state's best duos in the passing game. Popp finished with 2,365 passing yards and 21 touchdowns, with 966 of those yards and 11 of the touchdowns going to Henning — who also intercepted three passes this fall.

Dylan Thomson led Oconto

Falls this fall. He rushed for 1,445 yards and 18 touchdowns and was the second-leading tackler on the defense. Lineman Mitchell Kallies enjoyed strong showings on both sides of the ball to earn some conference honors.

Despite a tough season as a team, Menominee Indian senior Andre Corn was an absolute force all over the field. Corn had 891 yards and three touchdowns as a receiver while tallying 141 total tackles, four interceptions and four forced fumbles on defense.

In Pulaski, the 1-2 running duo of Aaron Maroszek and Maverick Cole guided the Red Raiders to a strong fall. Maroszek had 1,058 yards and 13 touchdowns, while Cole had 1,023 yards and 14 scores.

At the 8-player level, the big seasons continued.

Lena/St. Thomas Aquinas saw Logan Shallow rush for over 1,000 yards and score 16 total touchdowns. He was also second on the team in tackles.

Suring's Taron Haak totaled 1,217 rushing yards and nine scores on the season and racked up six sacks and 17 tackles for losses on defense.

The Marion/Tigerton co-op was powered by Nick Malueg, who rushed for 701 yards and nine scores while adding a couple scores as a receiver. He also led the team in tackles.

Teams of the Year

Witt-Birn and Lena/STAA are the Teams of the Year after incredible fall seasons.

Before the season began, Witt-Birn coach Bernard Holsey said, "I feel we could do something special this season and surprise people." The Chargers did something special and surprised plenty of people on their way to a second-place finish in the Central Wisconsin Conference-Large Division and eventual run to the state semifinals.

Witt-Birn upset state power Amherst on its playoff run and had several players earn all-conference honors.

Lena/STAA posted a perfect record in the regular season to win the MONLPC-East Division crown. The co-op finished without a win just two years ago in 2019.

The co-op also earned a playoff win — the first in co-op history.

VOLLEYBALL

Gresham's Cerveny tabbed area's top player

Witt-Birn earns team honor

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

Several volleyball teams in the area enjoyed big fall seasons, with several teams and players accomplishing big-team feats.

Gresham kept up its recent string of success, with Valarie Cerveny leading the way. The senior was named the NEW Media Inc. Player of the Year for her efforts this fall.

"My teammates, coaches and family have helped me have a big season this year," said Cerveny. "They're always there to support me, and I wouldn't be able to receive this recognition if it wasn't for them. I have to give a lot of credit to my teammates and coaches, because if it wasn't for them I don't think I would be able to be as successful."

Cerveny averaged nearly four kills per set this fall, tallying 260 on the season. She also had 27 total blocks.

"Going into matches, it's hard to tell what the other team is going to do because you can watch so much film but yet they'll change it the day before the match," said Cerveny of how she was successful match after match. "A lot of times I'll watch the blockers to see what side they're taking away and if they're double blocking.

"If they double block, it's really easy to find an open spot on the court, so I generally tip around the block. When I'm going up and only have a single block, I watch the block out of the corner of my eye to see what side they're taking away, and then I'll hit the ball to the opposite side."

She wasn't just a strong player at the net though, also excelling as a server and on defense.

Cerveny racked up 159 service points and served 39 aces this fall. She also had 84 digs.

Her play in the Central Wisconsin Conference-North Division earned her the Player of the Year honor. The Wildcats won the conference title with a perfect record.

"My teammates are always so supportive and so hyped up," said



Gresham's Valarie Cerveny leaps up to spike the ball during the team's Aug. 28 match against Bowler in Gresham.

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Cerveny. "It's so fun playing when everyone is so close to each other and we just go out on the court and have fun. Winning is just a plus side of playing with them; it really was just an amazing year."

Honorable mentions

Nearly every team in the area had a player or two who enjoyed big seasons.

Shawano's Abby Bystol racked up 200 attack kills on the season and landed on the Bay Conference first team.

Bonduel's Allaina Robaidek was a first teamer in the CWC-East and finished the year with 234 attack kills, 244 digs and 156 assists.

Wittenberg-Birnamwood's Reese Rogowski was the Player of the Year in the CWC-East and accumu-

lated 352 attack kills, 299 digs, 208 service points and 44 aces for the season. Teammate London Metropulos had 344 attack kills, 69 total blocks and 221 digs for the year, and she was a first team selection in the conference.

Hailey Peitersen did a little bit of everything for Oconto Falls this fall, finishing with 738 assists, 306 digs, 50 total blocks, 213 service points and 165 attack kills. She made the North Eastern Conference first team.

Tigerton's Skyler Hauser was a first-team pick in the CWC-North, posting 237 attack kills, 46 block kills, 264 digs and 37 aces for the fall season.

Pulaski's Emily Bruss was an all-conference first-team pick in the Fox River Classic Conference

after tallying 634 assists, 161 digs, 32 blocks, 159 service points, 59 aces and 87 attack kills.

Team of the Year

Witt-Birn is this fall's Team of the Year after winning the CWC-East title and winning a regional title.

The Chargers went undefeated in conference play and were rewarded with six all-conference selections and Becky Rew being tabbed the conference's Coach of the Year.

Witt-Birn accomplished that all with a fairly young team. The Chargers graduate just three players from this fall's team and will return almost all of its starting lineup next year.



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BOYS SOCCER

Pulaski's Steeno named top athlete

Red Raiders the Team of the Year after deep postseason run

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

The Pulaski High School boys soccer team enjoyed a special fall season, finishing in the top half of the conference standings before a deep postseason run.

Senior Will Steeno was a big part of the team's success and has been named the NEW Media Inc. Boys Soccer Player of the Year for his efforts.

"I think what helped me the most was playing with and learning from previous varsity players," said Steeno of his big season. "I have been waiting for my senior season since freshman year and preparing for it throughout my high school career. I knew I had to step up and be a leader on the team, so that gave me motivation to have a successful season."

Steenno battled an ankle injury in the early portion of the season, but he rounded into form in time to help Pulaski to a fourth-place finish in the Fox River Classic Conference and then advance to a sectional final in playoff action.

Steenno was the hero for the Red Raiders in the team's playoff victory over Wausau East, scoring the only goal of the match in overtime.

"Starting from captains' practices in the summer, we knew we were going to have a strong team this year," said Steeno. "Through practices every day and going through training camp and tryout week with the team led us to success this season."

The senior capped the year with seven goals and an assist despite being a focal point for opponents. He made the all-conference first team.

Along with his play on the soccer field, Steeno also did some kicking for the football team, which also had a big season and deep postseason run.



Pulaski's Will Steeno chases down the ball during the team's conference match against Bayport High School on Sept. 28 in Pulaski.

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"I knew it would be difficult to fit both seasons in this fall, and I was drained, especially toward the end of the seasons," said Steeno.

"To balance out football and soccer, I would have two practices a day. When soccer and football game days overlapped, I would drive from the soccer games right to the football games, throw on my gear and play. I made it right before kickoff for a few games, but for the majority of the time, the combination worked out just fine. I'm glad I could be a part of two teams this fall."

Honorable mentions

Pulaski seniors Trentin Dauk

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and Joe Wacholz, Shawano senior Ethan Schwitzer and Gresham/Bowler senior Will Jensen all enjoyed strong seasons on the field.

Dauk helped anchor a stout Red Raiders' defense. He added four goals and an assist and was named to the all-conference second team.

Wacholz led Pulaski with 11 goals this season, while also chipping in seven assists. He was an all-conference honorable mention pick.

Schwitzer guided the Hawks on the field this fall, scoring 12 goals.

The senior landed on the Bay Conference second team for his play.

Jensen led the Gresham/Bowler co-op with nine goals this fall.

Team of the Year

After its regional title and sectional appearance, Pulaski was tabbed the Team of the Year for the 2021 season.

The Red Raiders finished 14-7-2 on the season, including playoff wins over Merrill (10-0), Wausau East (1-0) and Green Bay Southwest (1-0).

After Steeno had the only goal against Wausau East, Wacholz had the lone goal against Green Bay Southwest.

CROSS-COUNTRY

Beyer, Adams named Runners of the Year

Shawano boys and girls earn Team of the Year honors

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

It was another strong year for area cross-country runners, with plenty of top finishes and achievements being met along the way.

As the season came to a close, it was Shawano senior Grace Beyer and Oconto Falls senior Joe Adams who continued to deliver under pressure. For their efforts, Beyer and Adams were named the NEW Media Inc. Female and Male Runners of the Year.

Beyer was the top runner for the Shawano girls team all season, and she eventually helped the team qualify for state.

Beyer placed fourth at the Bay Conference Meet, fifth at sectionals and 24th at state.

"I owe a lot of my success this year to my teammates and coaches who pushed me every day at practice and made me work hard even when I was having an off day," said Beyer. "A few of the girls ran with me every day at practice, and we worked together to make sure we got the best workout in as possible.

"Another thing that I feel helped my success was the team bond we had this year. I enjoyed going to practice every day, which in turn helped me want to work harder and strive for the goals I had set in the beginning of the year."

Adams placed fourth at the North Eastern Conference Meet and at sectionals. He then capped his career with a 48th-place finish at state.

"The last four years of experience and advice from my coaches helped me to this great final year of high school cross-country," said Adams. "I used the positives and negatives of my past seasons to learn and grow as a runner."

Both Beyer and Adams served as leaders for their teams and thanked their teammates for their support.

Both runners mentioned the hard work they and their teams put in and added that their teammates pushed them to the strong seasons they had.

Beyer and Adams each had plenty of memorable moments this fall, with the biggest being state.

"The most memorable moment from this cross-country season has to be finding out that the girls qualified for state as a team," said Beyer. "Be-



Shawano's Grace Beyer runs at the 2021 State Boys & Girls Cross-Country Championships on Oct. 30 at The Ridges Golf Course in Wisconsin Rapids.

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fore the awards ceremony we didn't know who had qualified, but we had suspected that Grace Chelberg, Lily Guenther and myself had qualified.

"When they weren't calling our names individually, we slowly started to figure out that we had qualified as a team. There was so much joy in

everyone that day that I will remember that moment forever."

Beyer made her first state appearance, as did Adams.

"My favorite moment this past season was the state meet," said Adams. "Missing out on state the last three years was always rough, but getting there this year probably meant more to me because of that."

"The boys team went down to the meet with me, and that experience is one I will never forget. I am so glad I got to state this year and that my team went to support me. That was just one awesome day for sure."

Honorable mentions

The strong year of cross-country action meant there were plenty of runners worthy of being tabbed the area's best runners.

On the girls side, Shawano's Chelberg and Guenther each enjoyed big years behind Beyer, with plenty of top-10 finishes to their names.

Ashlyn Kurey was the top runner for the Bonduel girls team, which qualified for state.

Carleigh Kaczmarek and Angela Mosconi were the top runners for the Gillett girls, and both ended the season competing at state.

Olivia Noack has been the Suring girls top runner for a couple seasons, but she took it to another level this season and racked up a bunch of top finishes before also making it to state.

There were some strong showings

ONLINE

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on the boys side as well.

Ethan Onesti led the Shawano boys this season with a number of top finishes and then helped guide the team to state.

Cooper Uelmen was the top runner for the Bonduel boys. He ended his high school career competing at state.

Pulaski's T.J. Shaw had a similar story to Adams, making state for the first time as a senior.

The brother duo of Evan and Alex Peterson led the Gillett boys all season and both qualified for state.

Teams of the Year

The Teams of the Year are both from Shawano after both teams qualified for state.

The boys won a Bay Conference title before also taking first at sectionals. The girls were second in the Bay and second at sectionals.

What makes the team's big years even more promising is that many of the same runners will be back next fall. Only Beyer was a senior from the girls state team, while the boys team had only two seniors.



Oconto Falls' Joe Adams nears the finish line at the 2021 State Boys & Girls Cross-Country Championships on Oct. 30 at The Ridges Golf Course in Wisconsin Rapids. MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

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GIRLS GOLF

Shawano's Eggert named Golfer of the Year

Pulaski earns team honor after getting to sectionals

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

It's not too often that freshmen golfers lead their team on the links. It usually takes some experience before a golfer can settle into a groove and match other team's top golfers.

That wasn't the case for Shawano freshman Sophia Eggert, who was named the NEW Media Inc. Girls Golfer of the Year. The freshman looked like an experienced upper-classmen this season as she guided the Hawks at several events this fall.

"What helped me this successful season was the positivity around me from my team, coaches and family. My dad always helps me with everything and trained me for the season," said Eggert.

Eggert not only made the first team in the Bay Conference, but she was the conference's Golfer of the Year.

"My favorite moment from this season was winning the last Bay Conference Championship Meet at Wander Springs and ending the conference season as No. 1 Conference Player of the Year," said Eggert.

She then placed 11th at regionals to earn an individual spot at sectionals.

"My team helped me with the season by encouraging me and always being great sports. Also, it was a great experience to win meets as a team," said Eggert. "The work I put in this season really paid off — golf practice with the team is like fun work."

Honorable mentions

Despite only a few other girls golf teams in the area, there were plenty of honors to go around.

Eggert's teammate Teghan Kristof also landed on the all-conference first team before qualifying for sectionals.

Bonduel's Sarah Garside and Ava Pleshek each enjoyed strong seasons. Garside made the honorable mention team in the Bay before qualifying for sectionals alongside Pleshek.

Oconto Falls' Kate Pytleski was an honorable mention in the North Eastern Conference before making it to sectionals as an individual.



Shawano's Sophia Eggert looks on after taking a shot during a Bay Conference meet at Shawano Lake Golf Course on Aug. 19 in Shawano.

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Team of the Year

While Pulaski wasn't led by an individual golfer or two, the Red Raiders earned the Team of the Year honor.

After taking fifth in the Fox River Classic Conference standings, Pulaski placed fourth at its regional to qualify for sectionals as a team.

Vivien Ninham and Summer Jaeger were the team's top finishers at regionals before Ninham, Olivia Follese and Ella Ficarri led the team at sectionals.



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GIRLS SWIM

Wittenberg-Birnamwood's Stark tabbed 2021 area Swimmer of the Year

Chargers also take Team of the Year honor after big year

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

The Wittenberg-Birnamwood High School girls swim team has rostered several talented individual swimmers over the past few seasons.

Senior Olyvia Stark was one of those talented swimmers on this year's team and was named the NEW Media Inc. Girls Swimmer of the Year after a big fall season.

"Well, it's my senior year, and I wanted it to be my best and fastest season yet," said Stark on what led to her big year. "I showed up to as many

practices as I could and pushed myself to keep going even if I was exhausted. There were many days where I would feel like quitting, but I knew if I did I would regret it."

Stark swam individually in the 200-yard freestyle and 100 backstroke and helped form the 200 medley and 200 freestyle relay teams.

She finished in the top three in three of the four events to make an all-conference team in the Bay Conference.

Stark was the conference's second-best swimmer in the 200 freestyle and third-fastest swimmer in the 100 backstroke. The 200 freestyle relay team Stark was a part of came in third.

"We worked hard in and out of the pool," said Stark. "We would go into the weight room every day and do ab workouts. We all had hard workouts in the pool as well that we had to push through together — most of us cried

through some of them and fought through injuries. Even though they were hard, we pushed through, and if we didn't, I don't think we would have been as fast as we were."

Along with her strong finishes at the conference meet, Stark was often the top finisher in the team's duals this fall.

"Honestly this whole season has been a blessing and a blast," said Stark. "My favorite moments would have to be at the meets, cheering on my teammates and the opposing teammates. I met so many girls from the other teams that were just bundles of joy. The people from my team and other teams made this season one to remember for years to come."

Honorable mentions

Pulaski's Taya Schmidt and Witt-Birn's Faith Resch both had strong seasons, too.

Schmidt ended her season competing at state as a diver. She was the first-place finisher in the event at the Fox River Classic Conference Meet, along with finishing third in the 50 freestyle.

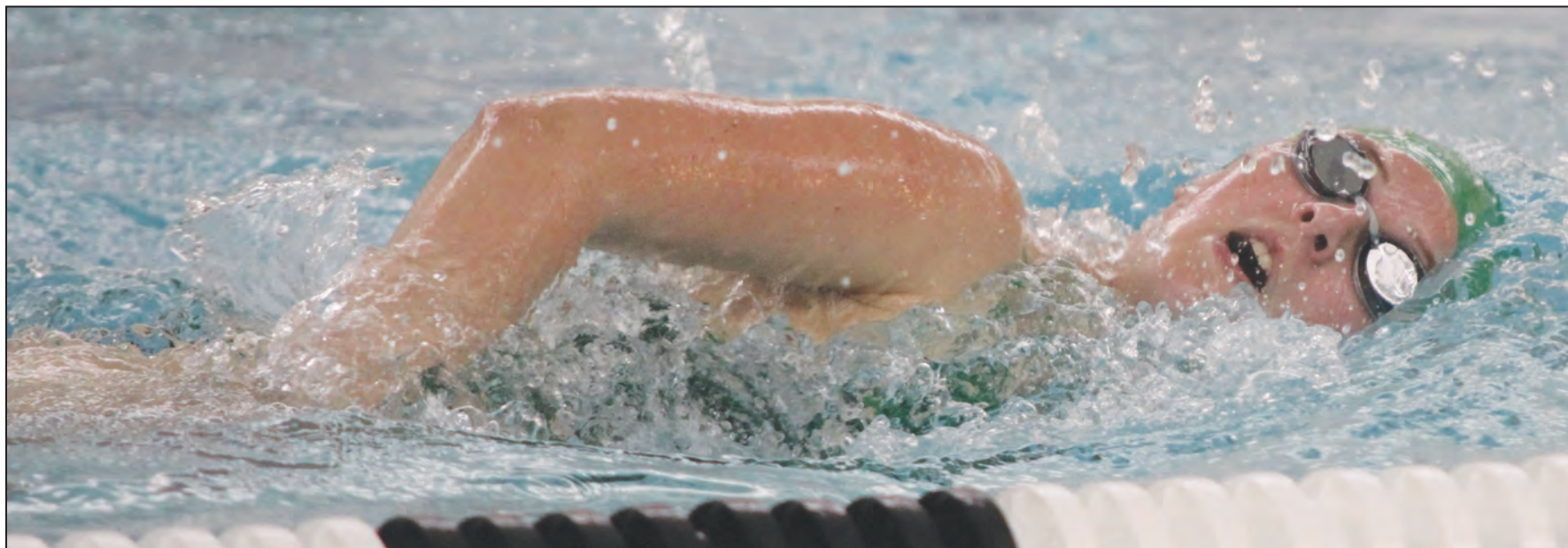
Resch capped her strong freshman year by taking third at the conference meet in the 50 freestyle and 100 butterfly individually, along with a third-place finish with Stark on the 200 freestyle relay team.

Team of the Year

Witt-Birn also takes the Team of the Year honor for continuing to succeed despite its limited roster numbers.

Competing in the Bay against primarily larger teams, the Chargers still won several duals and placed fourth at the conference meet.

Behind Stark and Resch, the Chargers had six total top-three finishes at the conference meet.



Wittenberg-Birnamwood's Olyvia Stark swims the 200-yard freestyle during a Bay Conference dual against Shawano on Oct. 5 in Shawano.

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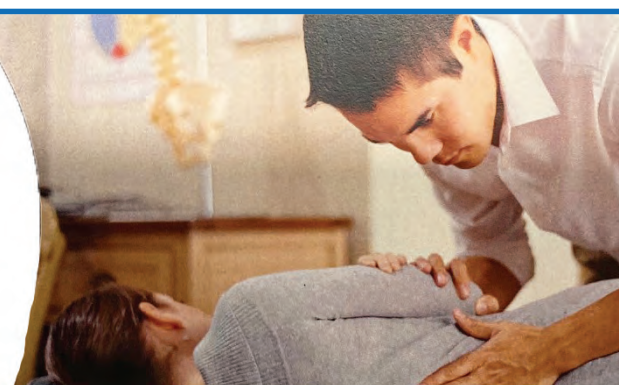
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GIRLS TENNIS

Hawks' Ainsworth named Player of the Year

Shawano also the Team of the Year

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

The Shawano and Pulaski girls tennis teams each turned in some memorable moments during the 2021 fall season.

Junior Jenna Ainsworth was a part of several big moments for Shawano and was named the NEW Media Inc. Girls Tennis Player of the Year.

"Most of my success comes from my mental strength. Tennis is truly a mental sport, and playing singles amplifies the loneliness felt," said Ainsworth.

"I always focus on the next point, whether I'm winning 5-1 or losing spectacularly. I always think, 'OK, let's win the next point, get to 15-love, next point, next point, next point.' Over and over. That was my mantra throughout every game, and it really helped me stay strong through some tough matches."

Ainsworth capped the year with an 18-8 mark and took third in the No. 2 singles bracket at the Bay Conference Tournament. She made the all-conference first team.

She helped the Hawks to a third-place finish at the conference tournament and for the overall standings.

"Our team is so supportive of everyone. Our practices are full of encouragement and fun, and my teammates heavily contribute to how much I enjoy playing," said Ainsworth.

"We help each other during the offseason with player-led open courts and group lessons, and I can tell through my and the team's success this year that those really

paid off. We had an amazing season, and though I excelled individually, I know I couldn't have done it without the support of everyone around me."

After regular season play wrapped up, Ainsworth picked up a win at subsectionals.

There were many matches or big days that Ainsworth could have considered her favorite of the season, but one conference match against West De Pere stood out.

"The girl I played this year I happened to play the previous year during the conference tournament," said Ainsworth. "What makes this match so special is that I lost to her pretty badly last year, but turned the tables this year. I won in two sets, so we didn't even end up in a close match tie break. Winning showed me how much I've improved in the offseason and makes me want to continue growing."

Honorable mentions

Shawano's Adison Moesch and the doubles team of Sarah Carroll and Anna Etten and the Pulaski doubles team of Paige Vanderveren and Madeline Diefenthaler also turned in big moments.

Moesch finished the year with a 15-8 mark. She took fourth at the conference meet at No. 3 singles and earned a win at subsectionals.

Carroll and Etten teamed up for a 10-5 record this season. They took second at the conference meet at No. 2 doubles and also picked up a subsectionals win.

Vanderveren and Diefenthaler represented Pulaski at sectionals at No. 1 doubles after a win at subsectionals.

Team of the Year

Shawano is this fall's Team of the Year after placing third in the Bay, which was a team goal set before the season.



Shawano's Jenna Ainsworth prepares to hit the ball during the team's home quad on Aug. 19 in Shawano.

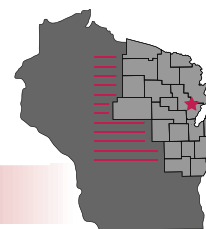
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Along with Ainsworth making the all-conference first team, Rylie Anderson made the second team singles list, while Kate Williams

and Nicole Piantek made the second team doubles list.

The team then picked up four wins at subsectionals.

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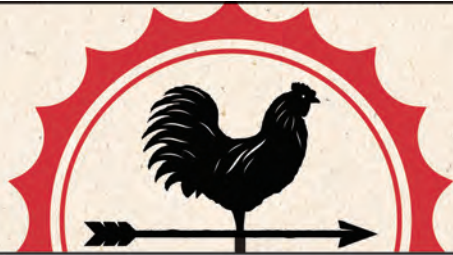


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