

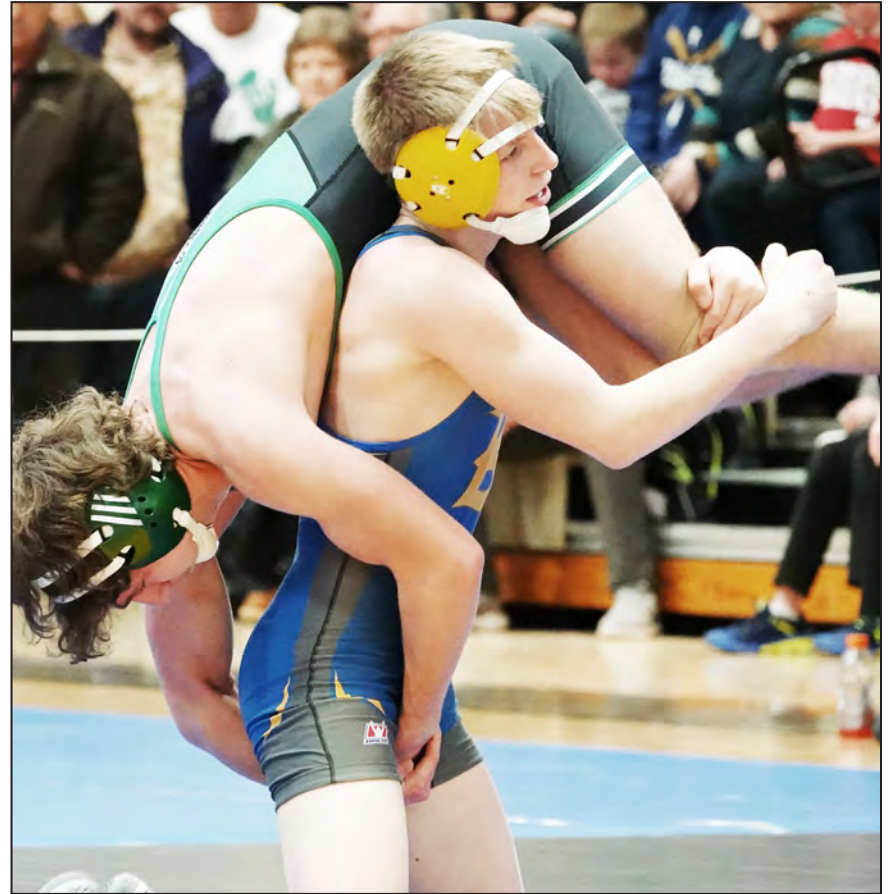
NEW MEDIA INC.

ALL-REGION REVIEW

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Friday, March 25, 2022

Winter Sports





Bonduel players celebrate the team's Division 4 sectional semifinal win over St. Mary Catholic on March 3 in Crivitz. Bonduel's deep playoff run was one of the special moments this winter for area athletes and teams.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

Winter sports season another memorable one for area

The winter high school sports season was full of incredible moments, from the highs of watching Oconto Falls senior Clayton Whiting win his fourth career state title to the lows of watching the Westfield girls basketball team stun Bonduel with a game-winning, last-second shot in a sectional semifinal game.

Through it all, area teams and individual athletes handled the ups and downs with class and dignity, which made for another memorable season for me as the NEW Media Inc. sports editor.

As my time in this position has played out, I've become more and more invested in area teams. With this being my fourth year, this marks the first year where I've been able to watch athletes go through an entire high school career, which makes the end to seasons even more bittersweet than it was in the past.

Of course, being acquainted with teams and athletes for that long makes setting expectations before seasons begin fairly easy to do. The fun part is that teams rarely fall short of the



MORGAN RODE

expectations I set, more often exceeding them.

Take Whiting, for example. I got to witness him win a state title as a freshman. As I watched him wrestle at the Kohl Center that year, I quickly came to the expectation that the talented wrestler would win four state titles.

The Panthers' wrestler did exactly that, but exceeded the expectations by doing it with a combined 163-5 record over those years. Oh yeah, and just before state this year, he was named the top wrestler in his weight class in the entire country!

Then there's the Bonduel girls basketball team, a team that's enjoyed plenty of success over the past four years. The Bears made it to sectionals three straight years, but lost in the sectional semifinal game each time.

This year, Bonduel got over that obstacle and expectation with a sectional

semifinal win over St. Mary Catholic. In the sectional final, the team fell behind 14-4 early to Westfield, at which point the team easily could have packed it in and been content with getting to within a game of state.

Instead, the team continued to fight and eventually tied the game on a shot from senior Allaina Robaidek (a key cog in the team's success the past four years) with about 25 seconds to play. I imagine you've seen the video I captured on how the game finished (it's part of the video gallery on www.newmedia-wi.com if you haven't), but when I think back to that game in the years to come, the big thing I'm going to remember is how the Bears never gave up. It was truly an incredible thing to watch and something each and every member of the team should remember in the future as they go on with their lives away from the game.

In the rest of the All-Region Review for the winter season, you'll find the area's top athletes and teams. Let me tell you right now, picking those honors was no easy feat and some-

thing I spent days mulling over at the end of the season. That's a testament to the hard-working athletes, coaches and teams in the area.

Just like watching the end of an athlete or team's high school career after four years, putting together this section brings out a bag of mixed emotions from me.

I love the fact that I'm able to shine a spotlight on the area's top talent, highlighting not only special winter seasons but amazing four-year careers. I don't like that I will never get to watch the seniors in these particular high school sports again.

But just like those athletes will move on with their lives, many without even playing these sports in college, high school sports will also continue and a new group of talented athletes will join the fold.

Here's to the amazing winter sports athletes, their careers and the standards they've set for the next athletes in line!

Morgan Rode is the sports editor for NEW Media. Readers can contact him at sports@newmedia-wi.com.

WRESTLING

Panthers' Whiting takes top honor

Oconto Falls, Shawano, Pulaski share team honor

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

The area continued to produce strong individual wrestlers and teams this winter, but at the end of it all, it was a familiar name that stole the headlines.

After earning a 50-1 record and capping the year with his fourth career state title, Oconto Falls senior Clayton Whiting was named the NEW Media Inc. Wrestler of the Year.

Along the way to becoming one of just 22 wrestlers to ever win four state titles, Whiting was also named the North Eastern Conference Wrestler of the Year, along with becoming the No. 1 wrestler in the country at the 182-pound weight class, according to FloWrestling.

"I think just positive mentality helped me get through the season with a lot of drive to show the state why I am No. 1," said Whiting, who won the Division 2 182-pound title this year.

The senior capped his high school career with a 163-5 record.

To achieve that eye-popping record, Whiting was fully dedicated to the sport.

"Well, I did a lot of cardio every day, ran 2-3 miles every day during the summer," said Whiting. "I also focused on increasing the size and strength in my legs by working legs twice a day. I also did a lot of shadow wrestling on my own to hold my wrestling cardio strong so I never get tired as well, and lifted every day to become the strongest 182 in the country."

Despite racking up all those wins, and then 50 more this winter, he never



Oconto Falls' Clayton Whiting wrestles at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament on Feb. 25 at the Kohl Center in Madison.

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got complacent.

"Every time I won someone was always training to beat me and take my title away so that kept me on my toes and kept me motivated to work even harder and longer than everyone else," said Whiting.

The Oconto Falls senior noted how his teammates helped him "become a better person and a wrestler" through their support in practices and matches. "They always have my back and helped me want me to keep getting better."

Honorable mentions

There was no shortage of talented individual wrestlers in the area, with 16

other state qualifiers proving that.

Pulaski sent five wrestlers — Trenton Gibbons, Mason Wells, Ethan Eggert, Chase Woosencraft and Brady Gille — to state in Division 1.

Gibbons placed second at 182 pounds, finishing the year with a 37-6 overall record. Wells came in third at 220 pounds and finished 36-3 overall, while Eggert claimed fifth at 113 pounds and went 39-9. Gille finished the winter 30-12, and Woosencraft was 27-15.

Wittenberg-Birnamwood's David Gauderman and Pierson Potrykus each qualified for the D3 state tournament. Gauderman placed third at 220 pounds and was 47-4 on the season. Potrykus

posted a 44-8 record in his senior season.

Dylan Comins represented Lena at D3 state, placing sixth at 106 pounds. He broke the school record with 50 wins this winter.

Whiting's teammates Graeson Pankratz and Cole Bozile each wrestled at state. Bozile capped his freshman year with a sixth-place finish at 126 pounds and a 24-9 overall record. Pankratz finished 37-12.

Bonduel and Shawano each sent three wrestlers to state this winter.

Bonduel's Tyson Bogacz placed sixth in the D3 160 weight class, and had a 43-11 record for the year. Hailey Berg and Maddy Sokolski ended their seasons at the first-ever state girls tournament, placing second at 120 and 132 pounds, respectively.

Shawano's Caden Young and Jackson Smits made the D1 boys state tournament, finishing the year with 28-4 and 32-9 records, respectively. Piper Novitski also competed at girls state, taking fifth place at 126 pounds.

Teams of the year

Pulaski, Shawano and Oconto Falls are the area teams of the year after serving as some of the best teams in the entire state.

Pulaski won the Fox River Classic Conference title with a perfect record and then went on to win a Division 1 regional title to qualify for team sectionals.

Shawano went undefeated in Bay Conference duals to claim its fourth consecutive conference title, and then sent nine individual boys wrestlers to sectionals.

Oconto Falls fared well in the tough North Eastern Conference before winning a Division 2 regional title. The Panthers finished just one dual win shy of team state.

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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Bears' Robaidek earns Player of Year honor

Bonduel, Gresham share team honor

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

The 2021-22 winter girls basketball season in the area was full of talented individual players and strong teams.

The Bonduel girls were the last team standing, and senior Allaina Robaidek earned the NEW Media Inc. Girls Player of the Year honor for guiding the team.

Robaidek ended the season with averages of 17 points, 1.9 rebounds, 2 steals and 1.9 assists per game. She connected on 70 free throws and 58 3-pointers.

In the regular season, she scored in double figures in all but two games, with eight points in the other two games.

"My teammates, coaches and family all pushed me to become the best player I could be this season by motivating me to accomplish my goals," said Robaidek on what helped her have a big season.

She added that playing basketball year round for several years helped her improve as a player and have a higher IQ on the court. "Lifting became a love of mine before and early in the season which helped me compete stronger on the court."

She added that playing volleyball and competing on the track and field team also gave her a greater appreciation for the sport.

The senior was named the Player of the Year in the Central Wisconsin Conference-East Division before helping the team reach a sectional final game.

The Bears had been eliminated from the postseason in the sectional semifinals in all three years of Robaidek's career, so the team's sectional semifinal win over St. Mary Catholic this winter was her favorite moment of the season. "Nothing will compare to that."

While she was able to score 17 points a game, there were times opposing teams tried to take Robaidek completely out of the game. She didn't try to force shots, instead doing what it took to help the team still win.

"When teams tried to take my



Bonduel's Allaina Robaidek watches a jumpshot of hers during a conference game against Amherst on Jan. 28 in Bonduel.

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shot away, it was as simple as becoming a passer," said Robaidek. "With the rest of the team being so talented, they couldn't completely take away my scoring without another team-

mate taking over the responsibility of scoring."

She credited her team as a whole for the success the Bears enjoyed this winter. The team went 23-5 overall

and tied Amherst with an 11-1 mark in the CWC-East.

"Coming into this season not even being predicted to win conference or regionals really made each and every one of us push each other and give everything that we had the whole year," said Robaidek.

Honorable mentions

Gresham enjoyed a strong winter season, guided by seniors Valarie Cerveney and Hannah Cerveney. Valarie Cerveney averaged 16.2 points, 10.6 rebounds, 4.5 assists, 3.6 steals and 2 blocks, while Hannah Cerveney added 15.7 points, 3.6 boards, 2.2 assists and 3.5 steals.

Wittenberg-Birnamwood's Reese Rogowski led her team in her junior season, averaging 18.6 points, 4.6 rebounds, 5.3 assists, 3.4 steals and 1.6 blocks.

Suring's Christine Sleeter turned in averages of 17.3 points, 11.5 rebounds, 2.4 blocks, 4.3 steals and 1.6 assists in her junior year.

Lena junior Natalie McNurlen averaged 12.1 points, 4.5 boards, 2.5 assists, 3.2 steals and 1 block.

Continuing the trend of strong area junior players in the Marinette & Oconto Conference, Gillett's Carleigh Kaczmarek knocked down 53 3-pointers and averaged 12.2 points, 3.5 rebounds, 1.9 assists and 1.9 steals.

Oconto Falls was led by the senior duo of Alexis Euclide and Hailey Peitersen. Both were named to all-conference teams after scoring over 10 points a game in North Eastern Conference play. Peitersen also was named one of the top defensive players in the conference.

Menominee Indian junior Mariah Fish was the third leading scorer in the CWC-East with 16 points a game.

Shawano senior Brooke Theis capped her career by averaging 12.1 points, 8 rebounds, 1.8 blocks and 1.4 steals a game to earn a Bay Conference honor.

Teams of the Year

Bonduel and Gresham shared the Team of the Year honor after their strong winter seasons.

Gresham enjoyed a similar fate to Bonduel, tying for the CWC-North crown. The Wildcats finished 19-5 overall and 11-1 in conference action to tie Manawa.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Shawano's Metcalf-Grassman, Lena's Beyer share Player of the Year honor

Gillett tabbed the top team after strong showing with young roster

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

There was no shortage of talented boys basketball players in the area this winter season, with just about every area team having a guy or two who could go for 20-plus points in any game.

At the end of the year, it was Lena senior Max Beyer and Shawano junior Michael Metcalf-Grassman that separated themselves and earned the NEW Media Inc. Co-Player of the Year honor.

For the season, Beyer put up averages of 23.8 points, 6.4 rebounds, 1.7 steals, 1.4 assists and 1 block a game. He led the Marinette & Oconto Conference in several statistics and was named the conference's top player.

Beyer scored in double figures in 22 of the 23 games he played in.

"Thanks to God first and also to my dad for helping me every day to get better," said Beyer on what helped him have a big season.

Despite the massive individual numbers, Beyer's favorite moment was one that Lena accomplished as a team.

"Getting a home playoff game and winning was definitely exciting and a big accomplishment," said Beyer.

Beyer continued to heap praise on the team and gave them a big shutout. "They were great teammates and always had my back. Couldn't have done anything without them or my coaches."

Beyer capped his high school career as the school's second-highest scorer all-time, tallying 1,628 points. He also set several school records, including: most 3-pointers in a game (10); most 40-point games (2); most 3-pointers in a season (83); and most triples in a career (236).

"My dad and I spent countless hours in the gym getting shots up and working on all aspects of the game to prepare myself and I give all the credit to him for never giving up through thick and thin to



Lena's Max Beyer takes a jumpshot during a conference game against Gillett on Feb. 3 in Lena.

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help me become the best version of myself," said Beyer.

After playing in just six games as a sophomore because of a broken

hip, Metcalf-Grassman became Shawano's go-to player as a junior.

Metcalf-Grassman averaged 19.7 points this season, shooting 47%

from the floor and making 102 free throws across 25 games. He also knocked down 61 3-pointers, shooting the 3 ball at a 35% clip.

He scored in double figures in all but two games, tallying nine points in the other two.

The junior also led his team in rebounding with 6.5 boards a game. Metcalf-Grassman also averaged 1.8 assists and 1.6 steals.

“Hard work and offseason training definitely helped me a lot, including AAU this summer,” said Metcalf-Grassman of what contributed to his big season. “My coaches also helped me to improve in the offseason.”

Metcalf-Grassman’s top moment of the winter was also a team accomplishment — beating Seymour twice, a team Shawano has struggled against in recent years.

The junior said his teammates did a good job of looking to him in the right spots on the court and

always pushing him in practice.

“My teammates did a good job of finding ways to get me open,” said Metcalf-Grassman. “Really they were the main contributors to getting the ball into my hands.”

Honorable mentions

As already mentioned, the number of really talented individual players was off the charts this winter.

Pulaski’s Derek Shaw was a big threat from the 3-point line, hitting 77 triples on his way to averaging 18.8 points a game. He tacked on 3.6 rebounds, 3 assists and 1.2 steals a game.

The Wittenberg-Birnamwood duo of Simon Schairer and Ben Wesolowski put up big senior seasons. Schairer averaged 17.2 points,

9 rebounds, 2 steals, 1.4 assists and 1 block a game, while Wesolowski averaged 14.4 points, 5.2 boards, 3.8 assists and 3.5 steals.

Bowler’s Emmitt Kietlinski nearly averaged a double-double with 16.6 points and 9.8 rebounds a game. He added 1.9 assists and 1.6 steals a game.

Bonduel had a strong duo in Reece Stoltenow and Noah Weier. Stoltenow made 87 3-pointers and averaged 16.7 points, 4.3 rebounds, 2.5 assists and 1.5 steals. Weier averaged 13.3 points, 3.6 boards, 4.2 assists and 1.8 steals per game.

Belasaire Vele and Lukas Pecore guided Gresham. Vele averaged 14 points, 10 rebounds, 4.6 assists and 1.8 steals a game, while Pecore had 15.6 points, 5.1 boards, 1.8 assists and 1.2 steals per game.

Isaiah Moss and Lloyd Reeves were a solid duo for Menominee Indian. Moss averaged 14.4 points, 6.9 rebounds, 3.2 assists and 2 steals, while Reeves was at 13.9 points, 6.8 boards, 2 assists and 2 steals.

Ethan Scheef led Marion with averages of 13.6 points, 6.9 rebounds, 3.6 assists and 2.2 steals per contest.

Despite Tigerton’s tough season overall, senior Zeke Griepentrog averaged 13.7 points, 3.3 rebounds and 1.3 steals.

McKai Davis capped an impressive three-year career at Wolf River Lutheran by exceeding the 1,000-point plateau this winter. He accomplished the feat in just 48 games.

Team of the Year

While there were plenty of talented players, no area teams secured conference titles. Gillett was the only team that made it to a regional title game, and the Tigers picked up the Team of the Year honor for their efforts.

Gillett won just three games during the 2020-21 season, with just one M&O Conference win. This year, the Tigers jumped up to nine conference wins and 12 overall. To end the season, Gillett pulled off back-to-back road playoff wins to get to the regional title game.

It was truly a team effort all season, with just one player, Ben Matczak, scoring in double figures, and he averaged 10 points a game.

The late-season push and improved play looks even more promising when taking a look at the team’s roster, which had just three seniors and was primarily led by freshmen and sophomores.

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Shawano’s Michael Metcalf-Grassman takes a shot during the team’s nonconference win over Merrill on Dec. 2 in Shawano.

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BOYS SWIM

Pulaski's Shaw the top swimmer in area

Shawano the top team after solid run in GNC

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

Pulaski and Shawano were the only area schools to compete in the boys swim seasons this winter, but each team enjoyed success.

Pulaski senior T.J. Shaw capped his season competing at state, and he was named the NEW Media Inc. Swimmer of the Year for his memorable season.

Shaw made it to the Division 1 state meet in the 500-yard freestyle. He placed 22nd with a time of 4 minutes, 55.1 seconds.

"I had a lot of support from my teammates, coaches, friends and family. I could not have done it without them," said Shaw of his big season.

To qualify for state, he placed fourth in the 500 at sectionals. His time of 4:53.56 beat his seed time

by about 12 seconds and set a new school record in the process. It was Shaw's favorite moment from the season.

The big swim season continued an impressive senior season of athletics for Shaw. He also made it to the state cross-country meet in the fall.

"It was very special to get the opportunity to compete at the state level in both swimming and cross-country," said Shaw. "It felt very rewarding to go to the next level of competition. Racing against the best of the best was an awesome experience and I'm very proud to have that be a part of my high school athletic career."

Shaw added that the cross-country season helped him prepare for the swim season. "I was already ready for swimming because of my cardiovascular endurance."

He said he took a week to rest after the cross-country season before ramping up things in the pool for the winter season.

Along with competing at state in the 500, Shaw placed fifth individually at sectionals in the 200 freestyle. He finished third in the 200 freestyle at the FRCC Tournament.

At sectionals, Shaw was also on the fifth-place finishing 200 freestyle relay team and sixth-place 400 freestyle relay team.

Honorable mentions

Ryan Ebent, Patrick Lara and Jace Olson helped fill out Pulaski's 200 freestyle and 400 freestyle relays at sectionals.

Individually at sectionals, Lara claimed seventh in the 500 freestyle and Ebent placed ninth in the 100 freestyle.

Shawano had a few third-place finishes at its conference tournament.

Josh Bergmann, Ben Langlois,

ONLINE

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Braden Barkley and Daniel Bergmann teamed up for third in the 200 medley and 400 freestyle relays.

Individually, Bergmann placed third in the 100 backstroke.

Team of the Year

Shawano earned the Team of the Year honor after finishing 6-2 in its Great Northern Conference duals.

The team also finished second at the GNC Meet, behind just Rhineland.

Shawano's relays turned in the team's top finishes at sectionals, with the 200 medley team of Bergmann, Langlois, Barkley and Bergmann taking third. The same four came in fifth in the 400 freestyle relay.

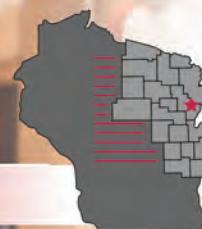
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Pulaski's T.J. Shaw competes in the 500-yard freestyle in a FRCC dual against Manitowoc Lincoln on Jan. 11 in Pulaski.

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HOCKEY

Pulaski's Simons tabbed area's top player

Bay Area girls the top team

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

High school hockey is growing in popularity in the area, with area players representing several co-op teams.

Pulaski junior Lincoln Simons, the goaltender for the Ashwaubenon boys co-op, was tabbed the NEW Media Inc. Player of the Year after a special winter season.

Simons spent time in goal during all 23 of the team's games this winter. He stopped 503 of the 539 shots he faced for a .933 save percentage. Simons posted seven shutouts and helped the team win 18 games.

For his efforts, he was named the Fox River Classic Conference Player of the Year, despite the team tying for second in the conference standings.

"One of the main things that contributed to the season I was able to have was the defense I had in front of me," said Simons, who also made the all-state honorable mention team. "The defense was able to be solid all season with clearing out any rebounds I may have let up — they were able to clear the pucks so there were no second opportunities."

He added that his teammates helped him out in practice by firing plenty of shots at him.

The main thing that can keep me consistent throughout the entire year is the practices daily and being able to just be confident in my ability to stop the puck day in and day out," said Simons.

The junior prepared for the winter season by playing even more hockey.

He was part of the Green Bay Bobcats roster, an 18-and-under team that has gone to nationals two years in a row.

Simons favorite moment from this season was a 2-1 overtime win over the Neenah co-op, where Pulaski teammate Zach Wescott hit the game-winning goal.

Honorable mentions

Pulaski had seven players competing on the Ashwaubenon co-op



Pulaski's Lincoln Simons defends the net for the Ashwaubenon co-op during the team's game against D.C. Everest on Jan. 28 at Cornerstone Community Center in Ashwaubenon.

LUKE REIMER | NEW MEDIA

and all of them made an impact for the team.

Griffin Kornowski and Anthony Steffen put together the two strongest seasons. Kornowski scored 12 goals and assisted on five others, while Steffen had nine goals and four assists. Kornowski excelled on the power play, netting four of his goals then.

Owen Dickman was the lone Wittenberg-Birnamwood player on the Antigo boys co-op team. Dickman finished the season with five goals and 13 assists.

The Shawano boys co-op was unable to earn any wins in its first

varsity season, but several players still enjoyed solid seasons.

Bonduel's Louis Hrabik capped the season with five goals and five assists. Shawano's Noah Davids scored a team-high six goals to go along with three assists. Goalie Dylan Prochaska, from Shawano, stopped 749 of the 905 shots he faced and earned a spot on the Badgerland Conference honorable mention team for his efforts.

Team of the Year

The Bay Area Ice Bears, a girls co-op that includes Pulaski, earned the Team of the Year honor this

winter season.

The Ice Bears, also known as the Green Bay East co-op, finished the regular season with a 21-2-1 record and 7-0 mark to win the Eastern Shores Conference.

Bay Area won a playoff game before being eliminated in a sectional title game.

Pulaski's Michaela Murray and Olympia Simons were part of the Bay Area team. Murray scored a goal and assisted on another this season, while Simons tallied three assists.

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