

### PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

# Dakota squad giving thanks in meaningful way



Dakota freshman Jamiee Moshenko drives the lane as senior captain Tara Bieniewicz defends.

PHOTOS BY GEORGE SPITERI — FOR THE MACOMB DAILY

**By Jim Evans**

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What's the percentage of people in this country who actually say grace before their Thanksgiving meal?

Saying thanks for the turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, sweet potato casserole, green bean casserole, you-name-it-casserole, cranberries, rolls, pumpkin pie ...burp ...etc.?

That percentage is pretty high, at least among those on the Dakota girls basketball team roster.

Coach Phil McCune makes sure his players know they have something to be thankful for.

Every year since McCune began his coaching career at Trinity Catholic some 16 years ago, he has taken his players to



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serve Thanksgiving meals to the less fortunate at either the Capuchin Kitchen in Detroit or the Salvation Army on Church Street in Mount Clemens.

On Wednesday, the players gathered for practice at 9 a.m. at the high school. Some ninety minutes later, they hopped into their cars and went to the Salvation Army. For the first hour there, they prepped for the meal. When the 100 or more folks arrived to eat, the players served meals and poured drinks.

Afterward, they washed dishes.

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Dakota coach Phil McCune and his players took a break from basketball Wednesday to serve Thanksgiving meals at the Salvation Army in Mount Clemens.

### BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

# Becker 'can't wait' for first season as Armada coach

Former assistant spent eight years learning trade

**By George Pohly**

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Nothing's missing, but a thief has been on the loose in Armada for eight years.

Cleverly disguised as a Tiger assistant boys basketball coach, Mike Becker clandestinely tucked away ideas and strategy while on the staffs of Russ Collins and Joe McDevitt.

Now Becker is about to set out on his own, having taken the reins of the program when Collins stepped down with plans to relocate out of state following the end of last season.

"I can't wait to apply what I've stolen through the years," Becker said.

McDevitt won a Macomb County Coach of the Year award for breathing life into what had been a moribund Blue Water



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Area Conference program, and Collins employed a full-scale youth movement a few years ago, the benefits of which Becker's first team could feel.

"What they taught me was through the roof," Becker, who's

been an Armada teacher for eight years, said.

"I don't know if I could find better mentors in the area."

Adam Job and Dylan Szafranski were freshmen when Collins promoted them to the varsity in 2014.

Today they are senior back-court mates around whom Becker will build his initial team.

"They're both great guards," Becker said.

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### COLUMN



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Adam Thielen (19) reaches for yardage after the catch as Detroit Lions cornerback Darius Slay (23) defends during last year's game in Detroit.

## Thanksgiving, football, Detroit and wonderful tradition

It was the lowest point I can remember, for this area, and the Lions.

Thanksgiving Day 2008. The Lions vs. the Tennessee Titans at Ford Field.

It was the height of the Great Recession and the Lions were in the midst of their infamous 0-16 season.

I was riding down the elevator at a parking garage with a family all dressed in Lions' garb. There were donning No.20 Barry Sanders' jerseys, as I

recall.

"What do you think?" someone asked.

"Rough year," I responded.

"Yeah, but we have so much to be thankful for and we love the Thanksgiving game in Detroit," some else said.

The Lions were destroyed 47-10 that day.

Flash forward nearly a decade and it will be much differ-

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### THANKSGIVING DAY GAME

**Next:** Minnesota at Detroit, today (Thursday), 12:30 p.m. (FOX)

### NFL

## Keenum keeps on avoiding sacks for streaking Vikings

**By Dave Campbell**

*Of The Associated Press*

**EDEN PRAIRIE, MINN.** » Case Keenum dropped back to pass for Minnesota in the first quarter against Cleveland. He faked a short throw to his right to running back Jerick McKinnon before stepping up in the pocket with hope for a bigger play.

Keenum kept moving forward with his receivers covered, trying to run for at least a short gain before Browns defensive end Carl Nassib corralled him for a 1-yard loss.

The Vikings kicked a field goal at the end of that drive and recovered from a sluggish start that afternoon to win comfortably, leaving that sack harmlessly behind.

That takedown of Keenum behind the line of scrimmage still stands out almost a month later, though. That's the only time he has been sacked in the last 5 1/2 games since taking over again for the hobbled Sam Bradford late in the second quarter at Chicago on Oct. 9. With a vastly improved offensive line providing impeccable

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## COLLEGE CROSS COUNTRY

# MCC runner excels at 30

## Bachman earns NJCAA All-America honors

By **Chuck Pleiness**

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Aaron Bachman was motivated as a young triathlete to prove himself to his older competition.

Now the role is reversed. "It's like just the opposite, I'm old and I still want to cut it and hang with these guys," Bachman said. "It's motivating in the same way, just kind of flip-flopped."

The 30-year-old Bachman is now teammates with a bunch of teenagers on the men's cross country team at Macomb Community College and he's showed he's got a lot of life left in his tank.

"In endurance running you may just be hitting your peak in your mid-30s, or where I am right now, so it's not really that crazy I'm here," Bachman said. "What's different is I'm sort of making it a go after being away from it for a long

time where most runners in their 30s have been continually pursuing, building on or maintaining the level they're at.

"It was funny to look at results (from a recent race) and see freshman after my name," Bachman continued. "No one knows how old I really am. The guy that won that race was a sophomore and I'm probably 11 years older than he is."

Bachman was the Monarchs' best runner, out of a talented pool of 16 freshmen, all season long. He capped his year with a 31st place finish at the NJCAA Division I National Championships on Nov. 11 to claim All-America honors at Lakeside Golf Course in Fort Dodge, Iowa.

"Sometimes I feel older and sometimes it doesn't feel any different," said Bachman, who finished the 8K course in 26:07.8. "In the training environment it doesn't feel any different.

These guys are certainly faster than me at like short distant stuff."

Bachman, who helped MCC finish 17th as a team, was a swimmer growing up and then decided to try competing in triathlons. He competed in his first "kids" triathlon at 11 and at 15 he was competing on normal length courses.

"As an individual sport I saw myself as a swimmer more than anything else and that was the battle I always had," Bachman said. "All throughout high school I did well with running in gym class and they always wanted me to run cross country."

Bachman stopped competing competitively in the pool and turned to track & field in seventh, ninth and 11th grades before turning to cross country as a senior in high school.

"That was a tough decision I had to make, but it

definitely turned out to be a blessing," Bachman said of quitting swimming. "I was able to see what kind of runner I could become. My motivation was to see if I could run in college. I was really motivated that year."

Bachman did so well he walked on the cross country team at Michigan State University where he redshirted like every other freshman runner that season.

"I wasn't ready for that kind of mileage," Bachman said. "I had swam my whole life. I always had issues with injuries coming off of swim. I was good aerobically, but my body couldn't handle that kind of pounding."

Entering college Bachman said he ran about 45 miles a week over the summer. At MSU he was running 60 miles a week up to the low 70s.

That wear and tear on his body caught up with him and he decided to go back to competing in triathlons.

"I was capable of it as far as my cardiovascular, but my body wasn't ready for it yet," Bachman said. "I had a lot of injuries. The coaches wanted me to stick with running and not do triathlons and I totally understood that. I



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about a dozen triathletes and runners over the summer and helps his wife, who he met at MSU while competing on the club triathlon team, coach cross country and track and University Liggett.

stuck with triathlons at that point mainly because I was doing that at a higher level at the time."

Bachman, who graduated from MSU in 2009, ran his last triathlon in 2013 and soon after began regretting missing out on a chance to run collegiately.

That all changed after enrolling at MCC in the Physical Therapy program.

"I wanted to take a next step in my career," said Bachman, who graduated from Saline High School in 2009. "I had every intention of applying to MCC and if I got in I was going to look into running. I work with Dave (Munaf) at Hanson's (Running Shop) and asked him if I could run with the school if I'm enrolled. He checked and it all kind of fell into place after that. That was kind of cool. It wasn't expected, but it was super exciting when the opportunity presented itself."

Bachman also coaches

"I thought I kind of missed my chance at having this collegiate running experience," said Bachman, who still swims two to three days a week. "Going into it I wanted to do both (at MSU) or I would just run for four years and come back to triathlons afterwards as a stronger runner, but because of the injuries and maybe because that first year didn't go as well as I wanted I moved towards triathlon. Had maybe it had gone differently with running maybe I'd stuck it out."

"This is really exciting to be here because it's kind of like my second chance to just run again," Bachman added. "I really do like that medium- to long-distance race range so when track rolls around here 5K is where I'll find my niche, a 10K I could still do well and maybe do well in the mile if I work on that a bit. I'm just excited to be running competitively again."

## PREP FOOTBALL

# Essexville Garber's VanSumeren AP

## Division 5-6 top player

By **Dan Chalk**

Midland Daily News  
via the Associated Press

**ESSEXVILLE** » How good of a football player is Essexville Garber's Ben VanSumeren?

So good that the University of Iowa is considering playing him at linebacker when he joins the Hawkeyes next year, even though he made his biggest impact at wide receiver during his memorable senior season for the Dukes.

Despite only playing at wideout for just over seven games, the 6-foot-3, 230-pound VanSumeren hauled in 85 passes for 1,259 yards and 13 touchdowns. He is The Associated Press Division 5-6 high school football Player of the Year.

"We've had some really good players and good young men come through the program, but Ben is the best athlete and best football player we've had come through here in the 21 years I've been at Garber High School," Dukes coach Jake Coquillard said of VanSumeren, who also received scholarship offers from Purdue, Minnesota, Missouri and at least 10 other Division I schools.

VanSumeren consistently

tore up opposing secondaries, catching 10 or more passes and at least one touchdown in each of the last seven games after starting at quarterback the first two games and throwing for 249 yards and three TDs.

VanSumeren delivered despite frequently drawing double or even triple coverage. He has a 40-inch vertical leap and runs a 40-yard dash in 4.6 seconds.

"(Opponents) rolled the coverage to him all the time," said Coquillard, whose team went 4-5 with four losses to playoff qualifiers. "It was hard-earned yardage. It's a testament to his hands going up and catching it in traffic, and his route running is exceptional."

He also ran for 387 yards and six scores, and had 43 tackles at linebacker while playing part-time on defense.

"I like delivering hits. I love taking the will out of the opponent," VanSumeren said.

VanSumeren, a team captain, was grateful for the Player of the Year honor.

"I think it's an amazing honor and I'm blessed to receive it," he said.

Voting was by a panel of AP member sportswriters from around the state.

## 2017 Division 5-6 Associated Press All-State teams

The 2017 Division 5-6 Associated Press All-State football team, selected by a panel of 10 Michigan sports writers:

### PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Ben VanSumeren, Essexville-Garber, Sr.

### FIRST-TEAM ALL-STATE Quarterbacks

■ Joey Bentley, Ithaca, Sr.  
■ Zack Pickens, Watervliet, Sr.

### Running Backs

■ Phillip Jones, Reed City, Jr.  
■ Jalen Miles, Carrollton, Sr.  
■ Sebastian Toland, Jackson Lumen Christi, Sr.

■ Bryce Stark, Montague, Jr.

### Wide Receivers

■ Ben VanSumeren, Essexville-Garber, Sr.  
■ Nick Folkerts, Algonac, Sr.  
■ Bryan Kieft, Watervliet, Sr.  
■ Kejuan Sanders, Detroit Community, Sr.

### Linemen

■ Billy Koepf, Remus Chipewa Hills, Sr.  
■ Anthony Pelton, Reed City, Jr.  
■ Evan Geyer, Frankenmuth, Sr.  
■ Cameron Toth, Saginaw Swan Valley, Sr.  
■ Tyden Ferris, Delton Kellogg, Sr.

■ Luke Marsh, Montague, Jr.  
■ Chaim Austin, Detroit Central, Sr.

■ Ryan Lints, Traverse City St. Francis, Sr.

### Linebackers

■ Zach Hessbrook, Ithaca, Sr.  
■ Nathaniel Mitchell, Grand Rapids West Catholic, Sr.  
■ Dean Battley, Portland, Sr.  
■ Jacob Ager, Boyne City, Sr.

### Defensive Backs

■ Connor Davenport, Brooklyn Columbia Central, Sr.  
■ Jerodd Vines, Detroit Central, Sr.  
■ Eric Carson, Boyne City, Sr.

### Specialist

Brenden Sersaw, Clare, Jr.

### Kicker

Adam Culp, Ithaca, Sr.

### Punter

Jayce Bourcier, Freeland, Jr.

### Coach

Phil Martin, Frankenmuth

### SECOND TEAM ALL-STATE

(nominees receiving two or more votes)

### Quarterbacks

Gaetano Vallone, Grand Rapids West Catholic; El Julian Jordan, Detroit Central

### Wide Receiver

Heath Baldwin, Kalamazoo United

### Linemen

Nick Jungel, Olivet; Brandon Gross, Montrose; DaJon Wofford, Southfield Bradford Academy; Allante Todd, Detroit Community.

### Linebacker

Ryan Pummell, Clare

### Defensive Back

Terryon Liddell, Saginaw Swan Valley

### Specialist

Darrius Adkins, Detroit Central; Garhet Metiva, Freeland

### Kicker

Evan Morris, Ovid-Elsie

### Coach

Pat Collins, Montague

### HONORABLE MENTION

#### Quarterback

Justin Nicholas, Grayling; Jackson Blanchard, Houghton Lake; Zach Jacobs,

Frankenmuth; Bryce Bears, Millington; Charles Garrett, Bridgeport; Tracy Hubbard, Warren Michigan Collegiate; Jared Greenia, Marine City Cardinal Mooney; Khol Partridge, Brooklyn Columbia Central; Eric Wenzel, Kalamazoo United; Trenton Throop, Grant; Cole Higley, Chesaning; Melike Moore, Detroit Community; Cade Peterson, Maple City Glen Lake.

#### Running Back

Emmett Boehler, Saginaw Swan Valley; Hugh Brand, Harrison; Korbin Knapik, Hemlock; Chris Hill, Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard; Dawson Haney, Marine City; Heath Flower, Olivet; Cullen Cox, Leslie; Leroy Quinn, Muskegon Oakridge; Nate Nannfeldt, Berrien Springs; Giovanni Weeks, Kent City; Sam Forsyth, Chesaning; Ethan Mileski, Menominee; Armani White, Detroit Denby; Nick Apsey, Maple City Glen Lake.

#### Wide Receiver

Scott Crutchfield, Grass Lake; Haden Cockream, Grass Lake; Ethan Weatherspoon, Napoleon; Dayton Keller, Jackson Lumen Christi; Mason Gardner, Boyne City; Logan Joseph, Grayling.

#### Linemen

Zac Stickler, Clare; Bryce Lipovsky, Harrison; Lukas Selich, Millington; Jacob Eskilsen, Hemlock; Shawn McKinley, Houghton Lake; Austin Walker, Houghton Lake; Stephan Shewan, Reed City; Drew Kraatz, Standish-Sterling; Ben Schuler, Frankenmuth; Cooper Twardzik, Calumet; Ian Williams, Jackson Lumen Christi; Ben Pelletier, Jackson Lumen Christi; Shannon Peterson, Hillsdale; Patrick Hite, Michigan Center; Or-

vile Nixon, Byron; Brenden Shultz, Perry; Dave Blake, Detroit Denby; Tyler Revett, Traverse City St. Francis; Ray Cunningham, Charlevoix

#### Linebacker

Tyler Dard, Morley-Stanwood; Briar Bearss, Millington; Jerry Delgado, Carrollton; Marcel Cowley, Bridgeport; Travis Miracle, Yale; Justin Headlee, Marine City; Devin Miller, Portland; Kyle Minder, Jackson Lumen Christi; Mike Hulbert, Napoleon; Chandler Garcia-Vance, Hanover-Horton; Jace Dailey, Kent City; Cole Qualls, Chesaning; Logan Del Bosque, Ovid-Elsie; Jaylin Early, Detroit Denby; Joey Muzljakovich, Traverse City St. Francis; Gleo Wade, Clinton Township Clintondale

#### Defensive Back

Lucas Liebrock, Hemlock; Drew Martin, Frankenmuth; Josh Kramer, Lansing Catholic; Gavin Dennany, Portland; Nick Tordy, Michigan Center; Bryce Dolan, Ovid-Elsie; Alex Shoop, Muskegon Oakridge; Darin Johnson, Gladstone; Kholton Sherman, Millington; Germaine Williams, Detroit Central; Artie Dutmers, Traverse City St. Francis; Josh Sterzer, Maple City Glen Lake; Tom Ross, Benzie Central; Trevor Johns, Manistee

#### Specialist

Johnny Lynch, Shepherd

#### Kicker

Bryan Williams, Michigan Center; Josh Shaski, Montrose

#### Coach

Monty Price, Reed City

# Dakota

FROM PAGE 1

"When I first started coaching, I wanted to do more than just teach kids how to play basketball. I wanted to be an educator, too. I wanted to show them what giving back is all about," said McCune. "I think that is very important."

Every coach wants to win games. Don't do enough of that, and then that coach becomes an ex-coach. Every coach puts their best players on the floor. Some play nearly all of them time. Some do not get much playing time during games at all.

The scoreboard keeps track of progress, and the Dakota Cougars showed a whole lot of progress last year by that yardstick. They won the school's first regional championship by beating Fenton 63-51 in a game played at Port Huron Northern.

They beat Port Huron Northern and then Romeo to capture a district championship. They finished with a 19-7 overall record.

And they served Thanksgiving meals at the Salvation Army just before the 2016-2017 season began. And they spent a big chunk of Valentine's Day at the Glen H. Peters school on Heydenreich in Macomb. The school is one of two programs in the Macomb Intermediate School District serving students with moderate cognitive impairments, severe cognitive impairments and severe multiple impairments from age three through 26.

"It's called Hoops for Hearts," said McCune. "Paul Tocco, the boys' coach, started the program The boys' and girls' teams go to Glen Peters and just play games with the students. We shoot layups. We slap hands. Why do we do it? It's all about teaching life skills, and to me, community service is a life skill. I've been lucky enough to have great kids all of these years and when do things like serve Thanksgiving dinner or Hoops for Hearts, I can see it in the eyes of the players that it means something to them."

Something else that will obviously mean a lot to the coaches and players is the

upcoming season. The Dakota Cougars have a scrimmage Friday morning. They will go against Eisenhower and Troy. They open regular-season play with a home game against Anchor Bay on Friday, Dec. 1.

Dakota returns four players from last year's team; senior captain Tara Bieniewicz, sophomore Cameron Grant, junior Taylor Williams and senior Emily Basilia.

Bieniewicz is a four-year varsity player who will be both at point guard and shooting forward. Grant is a powerful presence down low. She is 6-1. Williams is another presence at 6-2. She will spend much of her time at power forward, while Basilia is a shooting guard.

"It's a whole different team, but one of the things I like about this year's team is what the underclassmen that came up can do. They are the perfect complement to our returning players. I told the players that this could be the best team I've had since I have been at Dakota. We have the capability to do a lot of different things," said McCune.

Despite that talent, it

will not be easy to finish on top of the MAC Red Division. McCune knows that Port Huron Northern once again should be very good. The Huskies will be aided by talent coming up from last year's outstanding junior varsity squad. Grosse Pointe North will be very competitive, led by Julia Ayrault, who has verbally committed to Michigan State University. Even though defending division champion Cousino lost Kierra Fletcher to Georgia Tech, Kate McArthur returns to the lineup. She has committed to Clemson. Coach Connie Hernden has talent returning to her Romeo team, too.

"We have two Division 1 type players in Taylor and Cameron, and that is something we haven't had before," said McCune. "Rio Dudgeon was our only Division 1 player. She went to Oakland University. She's now at Rochester College."

Dudgeon also served Thanksgiving meals with her teammates. She participated in Hoops for Hearts. Sometimes, the biggest wins for the biggest stars are not recorded by the scoreboard.

# Armada

FROM PAGE 1

Job is a point guard and Szafranski a "defensive guru," Becker said.

"They've seen all the different styles of play in the BWAC," the coach added. "We're trying to get the young guys to catch up. It's going to be a matter of how fast we pick things up."

Almont won the BWAC championship last season with a 13-1 record, and the Raiders won a district championship before bowing out with a 20-4 overall record.

Seniors Drew Revoldt, Ethan Hall and Chase Kapron return to coach John Hall's club.

Becker believes the Raiders, Imlay City, Richmond and Yale could challenge for the top half of the league standings.

The Tigers were 7-7 in the BWAC last season.

"I don't think we hit our full potential," Becker said. "Last year we missed some chances in close game, we mentally lost some bat-

ties."

Becker has structured practices around drills that he hopes will swing some of those battles in the Tigers' favor.

"I try to make our practices high-intensity, putting a premium on conditioning," Becker said. "I'm trying to harp on situational play."

"I'm going to run them through the wringer thinking-wise, so that when we get into game situations we've already seen things."

Becker is one of four new coaches in the league. Algonac, Crosswell-Lexington and Yale also have new coaches.

Three of the Tigers' first four opponents are Macomb County schools.

Armada opens at home against Memphis on Dec. 5; plays at Richmond on Dec. 19, and meets Anchor Bay at Imlay City on Dec. 22.

"We're going to have to have the right balance," Becker said. "We're going to run a little big when we have the right crew, and other times we'll have to play smart, intelligent basketball."