

SO CLOSE — The Waseca High School boys' soccer team almost knocked off powerful New Ulm last Thursday on the Bluejays' field, settling for a 3-3 tie. From left: Henry Huttemier (18) battles the Eagles' Austin Krohn on a header; junior midfielder Christopher Badillo (15) maneuvers the ball; Mason Jes (19) moves the ball against Justin Thompson; Logan Heyer (4) goes high in the air in front of the New Ulm goal. Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

WHS soccer boys almost knock off New Ulm

The Waseca High School boys' soccer team knew it would be in for a challenge last Thursday as undefeated New Ulm came to town for the home opener. The Eagles almost left Waseca with their first loss. The Bluejays built a 3-0 lead just 25 minutes into it, but the visitors rallied with three goals to escape with a 3-3 tie. New Ulm entered the match scoring 17 goals in three matches while only surrendering three on the season. Waseca came out with energy and pace early, taking advantage of the Eagles' willingness to play the ball back to their keeper. Mason Jes won a 50/50 ball in the ninth minute and dribbled past the keeper to find that back of the net. In the 17th minute, freshman Henry

Huttemier won another free ball in the box and eluded defenders and the Eagles keeper and buried the ball in the open net. Lucas Vasquez scored on a sensational free kick from distance to make it 3-0. New Ulm came roaring back. Sophomore Jackson O'Campo scored in the 27th and 66th minute. Junior Amoah scored the other New Ulm goal in the 63rd minute. "It's hard to put things into perspective when you prepare to achieve a goal, and the goal escapes you," said Waseca coach J.D. Delgado. "It's easy to fall prey into the scrutiny of opportunities missed, and the failure of execution. Our boys battled through the game effectively, graciously as a team." Delgado placed himself at the end of line

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— Waseca coach J.D. Delgado

greeting the New Ulm team." "We recognize a worthy opponent," he said. "But we recognize our ability to grow and be stronger. Kudos for an amazing boys' performance." Delgado praised several players, including goalkeeper Eddie Gallegos. "He was extremely fast and on task," said Delgado. "He dived to block some strong kicks. He look like "Superman" on two

plays, flying to to reach the ball with his fingertips." The coach also cited defenders Isaiah Johnson, Dominic Grunzke, Noah Dahle, Logan Heyer and Vasquez, midfielders Brady Tlougan, Adrian Arreguin, C.J. Badillo and Lucas McQuery, along with Jes, a forward captain, and Huttemier. "What a player," said Delgado of Huttemier. "He is a ninth-grader but is play-

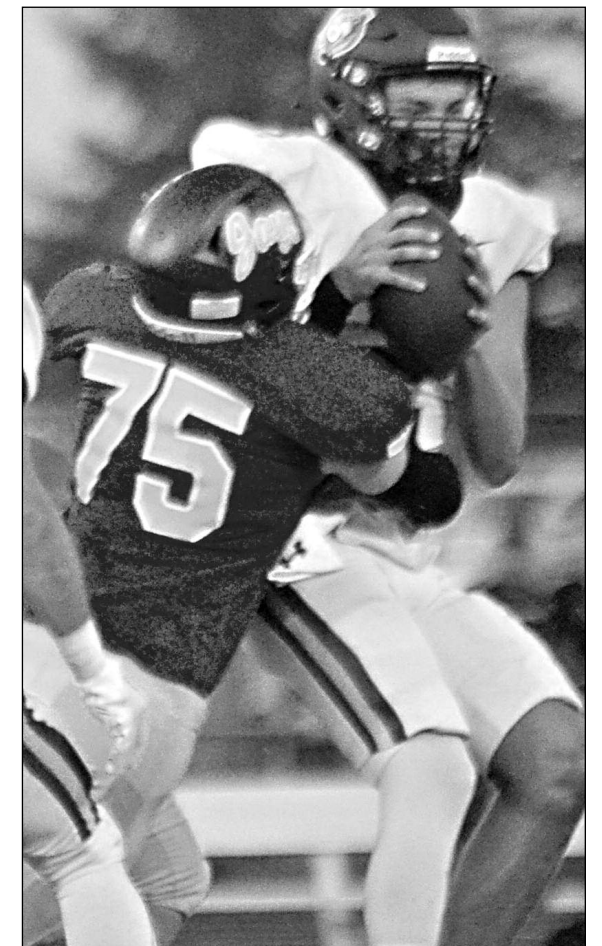
ing like a senior." The Bluejays debuted seventh-grader Mahin Lad, eighth-grader Matthew Nelson, freshmen Jacob Harguth Sunny Mei, and sophomore Amin. "Our bench is formed with younger players, when the majority of the teams have juniors and seniors," said Delgado. "Subbing gets extremely difficult. We are definitely getting there." Delgado thanked the fans and coaches. "This is a good learning opportunity," he said. The Bluejays are in action Saturday at home against Marshall at 11:45 a.m. They play Monday at Byron, hosting St. Peter Sept. 12 and playing Sept. 14 at New Ulm.

Stewartville stops Bluejays in opener

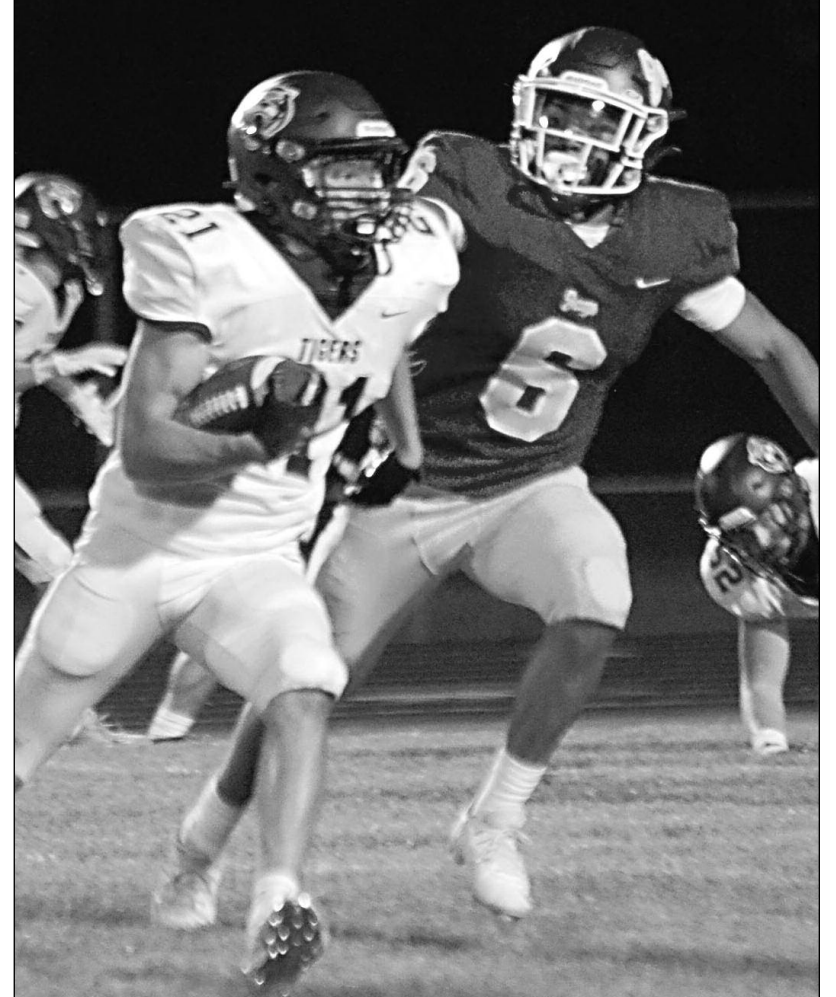
WHS football team falls 27-13

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor
If it's one thing the Waseca High School football team learned from the season opener, it's this: Stewartville has a very talented squad. The Tigers, section champions a year ago, handed the Bluejays a 27-13 setback Friday, Sept. 1 in Waseca. Stewartville, led by quarterback Ayden Helder, threw for 260 yards and four touchdowns. Waseca was led offensively by sophomore quarterback Jordan Johnston. He passed for 119 yards and two touchdowns, with one interception, while rushing for a team-high 30 yards. Damaris Russell led the receivers with four catches for 80 yards and a touchdown. Kaeden Johnson caught two passes for 24 yards and a touchdown. The Bluejays scored first, on a

20-yard touchdown pass from Johnston in the first quarter. Brody Dufault kicked the PAT. Stewartville tied it on a 6-yard touchdown pass. The Tigers took a 13-7 halftime lead with another scoring pass late in the second quarter. Stewartville received the opening second-half kickoff and marched to another score, this time on fourth-and-17 from the Bluejays' 28-yard line. Russell knotted it for the Bluejays with a 69-yard touchdown pass from Johnston. The Tigers put it away with a 50-yard touchdown pass. The Bluejays were led on defense by Carter Ellis with 10 tackles. Russell had nine, Tauston Rupe seven. Shane Engel-Mueller had two sacks. The Bluejays play at 7 p.m. Friday at St. Peter.



TOUGH OPENER — The Waseca High School football team faced strong opposition in its 2023 season opener and lost 27-13 to Stewartville at Waseca Friday, Sept. 1. At left, the Bluejays' Damaris Russell (3) eludes Tiger defenders Jayce Klug (6) and Isaac Larson (9) on his way to a touchdown. At right, Waseca's Shane Engel-Mueller (75) registers one of his two sacks on the night. Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens



2023 OPENER — From left: Waseca sophomore quarterback Jordan Johnston (12) escapes the grasp of Stewartville's Justice Deno (19); the Bluejays' Deron Russell (7) goes high in the air to catch a pass over Graysen Schnieder (6); Bluejay defender and leading tackler Carter Ellis (6) chases down Dylan Scanlan (21). Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

WHS soccer girls start season with 3 straight wins

The Waseca High School girls' soccer team is off to a strong start in the 2023 season.

To date, the Lady Jays are undefeated with a weather-shortened tie against Mound Westonka (0-0) and wins against Marshall (2-0), Fairmont (5-3) and New Ulm (4-1).

The Lady Jays are led by a strong contingent of seniors this season: Evelyn Nydegger (forward), Ella Krautkremer (midfield), Addison Weiseler (midfield) and Mallory Bruhn (defender).

Leading the charge in scoring, so far this season, has been MSU-

Moorhead commit Nydegger. Verses Fairmont, she scored four goals and assisted on the fifth. Against New Ulm, she scored two goals and had an assist.

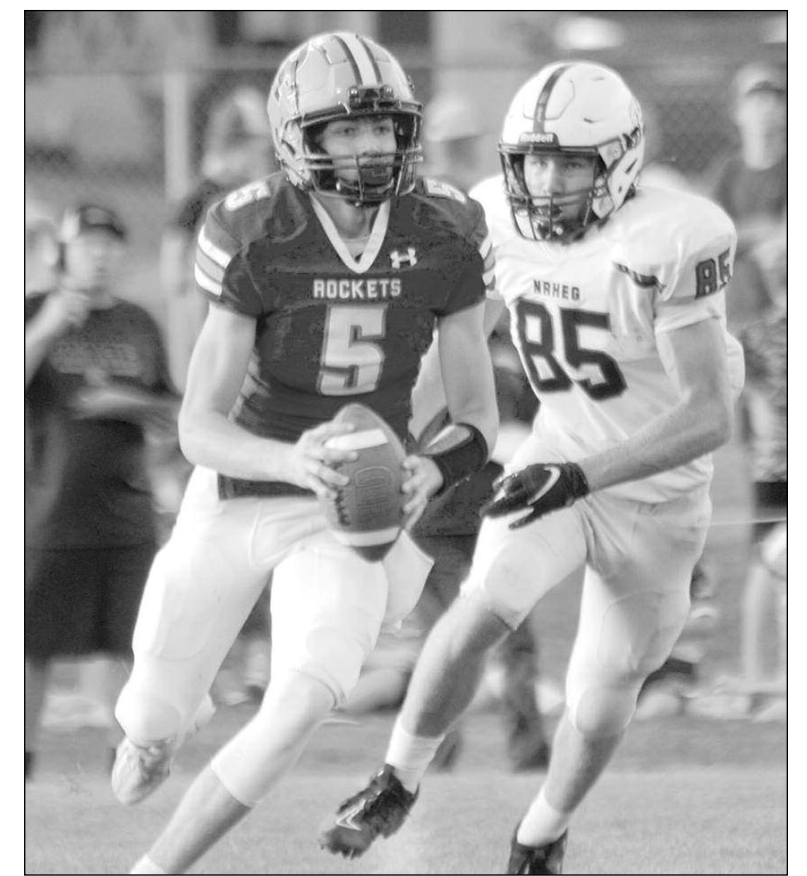
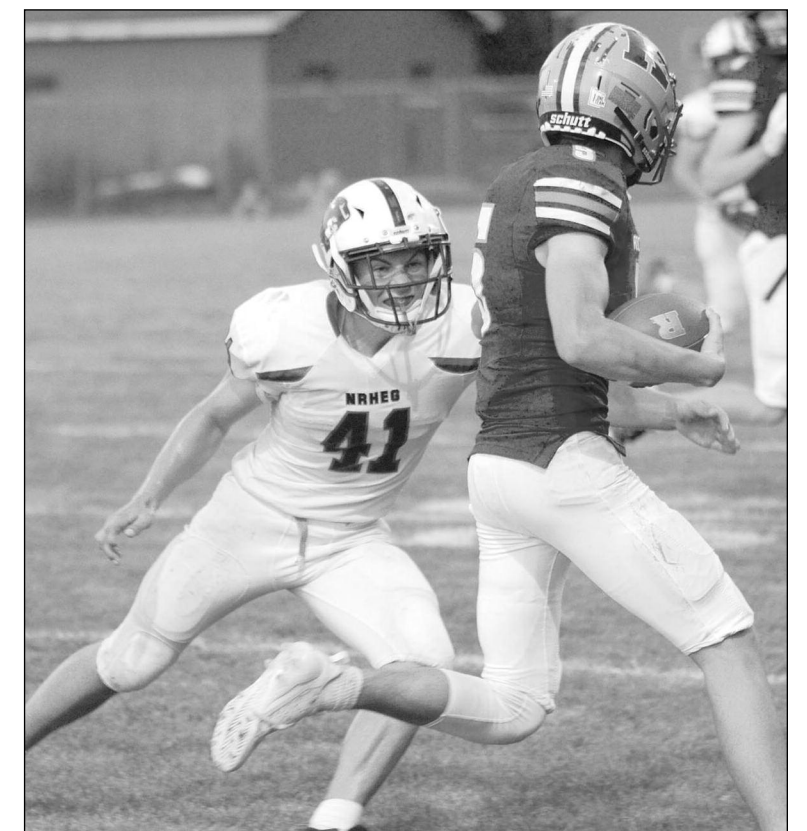
Also scoring this season have been Camilla Marquez and Gabby Lopez vs. Marshall, Rylee Schaffer vs. Fairmont, Ava Bruhn and Ella Krautkremer vs. New Ulm.

The Lady Jays have a home game against Marshall Saturday, Sept. 9 at 10 a.m. They play Tuesday, Sept. 12 at St. Peter and Thursday, Sept. 14 at New Ulm.



STRONG START — Evelyn Nydegger of the Waseca High School girls' soccer team, left, scored four goals and assisted on another as the Bluejays upended Fairmont.

Photo by McKenzie Mueller



OPENING-NIGHT ACTION — From top: the Panthers' Jaylin Raab (5); NRHEG linebacker Carter Flatland (41) tees off on a Randolph ball carrier; the Panthers' George Roesler chases J.D. Kuhn.

Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens

Panthers blanked 14-0 at Randolph

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Two plays. That was the major difference, according to coach Marc Kruger, as the NRHEG High School football team dropped its season opener 14-0 at Randolph Thursday, Aug. 31.

"It came down to two big plays for the Rockets in the end," said Kruger. "We played a good game, and had some great moments on defense."

But, aside from the passing of junior Alden Dobberstein, who threw for 130 yards, the Panthers' offense struggled, rushing for only 29 yards and producing just five first downs, one of which came on a pass interference penalty.

"We will need to do a better job on offense of getting the ball to our playmakers and making plays," said Kruger. "Alden did a great job in the passing game, and

was able to move the ball well."

The only score of the first quarter came on a 76-yard run by Randolph's Cris Flores-Miranda, who also carried for the two-point conversion.

It was 8-0 at halftime. In the third quarter, Flores-Miranda scored on a nine-yard run. The conversion run failed.

The Panthers ran 44 plays while totaling 159 yards. They had one penalty for five yards.

The Rockets totaled 261 yards, 217 of them rushing. Flores-Miranda finished with 158 rushing yards on 19 carries. Randolph drew four penalties for 36 yards. Dobberstein, who started last year as a sophomore, completed 12 of 27 passes, with no interceptions.

The Panthers are home for their next game, hosting Norwood-Young America Saturday, Sept. 9 at 1 p.m. in New Richland.



STRONG OPENER — At left, the Bulldogs' Dylan McWaters (21) and Nolan Morsching (1) combine to stop a Lester Prairie ball carrier. At right, the Bulldogs' Avery Fall (52) delivers a block.

Photos by Leanne Lens



Lester Prairie rallies past Bulldogs

The Janesville-Waldorf Pemberton High School football team opened the season Friday, Sept. 1 when the Bulldogs fell 30-20 to visiting Lester Prairie.

JWP scored first, on a 71-yard touchdown pass from Dalton Bauer to Dylan McWaters, but Lester Prairie responded with three unanswered touchdowns.

In the second quarter, Lester Prairie engineered a drive that resulted in a rushing touchdown and

go-ahead two-point conversion. The visitors blocked a punt and recovered it in the end zone, giving them a 16-7 advantage at halftime.

Lester Prairie received the second-half kickoff and drove for another score and two-point conversion.

A 17-yard touchdown pass from Bauer to Ryan Kronbach cut the deficit to 24-14 as the fourth quarter began.

Lester Prairie put it away with an

impressive drive, eating up the clock before scoring with 4:42 remaining.

JWP's final score came on a touchdown pass from Bauer to Kronbach.

Lester Prairie totaled 370 yards on offense to JWP's 274. The visitors outscored the Bulldogs 230-23.

Bauer totaled 251 yards passing while going 18-for-26. He ran for 19 yards and threw one interception.

Kronbach had 10 catches for 91

yards while McWaters added 91 yards on two catches. Landon Johnson had 57 receiving yards on four receptions.

Nolan Morsching led JWP's defense with 12 tackles while Austin Quast had nine.

JWP returns to action Friday, Sept. 8 when the Bulldogs travel to Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop with the opening kickoff scheduled for 7 p.m.

Sports in brief

WHS tennis girls drop 2 matches

The Waseca High School girls' tennis team dropped a pair of matches in the past week, 6-1 at New Prague Tuesday, Sept. 5 and 5-2 at home against Red Wing Thursday, Aug. 31.

Maddy Benson, No. 3 singles, picked up the win against New Prague.

Waseca's junior varsity lost 3-1. Against Red Wing, winners were Sarah Haley at No. 2 singles and the No. 2 doubles team of Paige Dufault and Vivian Mader.

The JV team won 5-2. The Bluejays host a triangular on Saturday.

WHS CC teams take 2nd, 10th

The Waseca High School cross country teams traveled to Bear Cave Park South of Rochester to compete in the Bill Glomski Invitational Thursday, Aug. 31. The Waseca girls second with 89 points while the boys were 10th with 226 points.

Girls' results: Callie Dufault, eighth, 21:40.78; Stella Omvedt, 10th, 21:50.1; Maren Schimming, 14th, 22:31.46; Taylor Markeson, 32nd, 23:37.98; Melanie Krueger, 34th, 23:48.97.

Times for the boys: Isaac Fjeldkamp, fifth, 17:39.46; Tyler

Jellum, 20:51.76; Tanner Hanson, 22:02.41; Colton Schroder, 22:22.25; Bobby Mortenson, 22:23.90.

The Bluejays compete Thursday, Sept. 14 at Kasson-Mantorville and Tuesday, Sept. 19 at Albert Lea. Starting time for both is 4 p.m.

NRHEG runners begin season

The NRHEG High School cross country teams participated at the Trail Run meet hosted by Medford at the River Bend Nature Center on Aug. 25th.

The meet was attended by LeSueur-Henderson, NRHEG, USC/AC and Medford.

For the Panther girls, Holly Bartness finished the 5-kilometer course in fourth place with a time of 25:50. Teammate Annabelle Petsinger finished 10th at 28:13.

On the boys' side, Panther runners Jacob Karl and Devon Nelton took the top two spots, Jacob finishing in 19:52, Devon 20:17. Jackson McGannon finished 15th with a time of 25:00.

"It was a good first meet," said NRHEG coach Larry Nydegger. "We hope to get our younger runners more experience before bringing them up to the varsity level."

The Panthers run Thursday, Sept. 7 at Hayfield's Oak View Golf Course. They compete Tuesday,

Sept. 12 at Blooming Prairie.

NRHEG girls hang on to win

The NRHEG High School volleyball team upended visiting Martin Luther/Granada-Huntley-East Chain-Truman 3-1 Tuesday, Sept. 5. Game scores: 25-21, 25-23, 22-25, 25-22.

"This match was a rollercoaster," said NRHEG coach Ashley Tolzman. "We made some really great plays and some really great swings. We also had several mistakes and gave up points. Overall, it was a good competitive match."

Individually for the Panthers: Gabby Schlaak 12 kills, 3 blocks, 18 digs; Camryn VanMaldeghem 8 kills, 4 blocks, 4 digs; Izzy Stadheim 1 assist, 1 dig; Elsie Schultz 1 kill, 6 blocks; Taylor Schmidt 1 assist, 8 kills, 11 digs; Hallie Schultz 31 assists, 4 kills, 1 block, 15 digs; Keira Lenort 2 kills, 1 block, 1 dig; Madi Murray 4 kills, 3 blocks, 1 dig; Chloe Stork 1 block, 2 digs; Faith Nielsen 3 assists, 14 digs.

The Panthers play Tuesday, Sept. 12 at home against United South Central.

JWP spikers swept by AC

The JWP High School volleyball