

Ratskin’s Rumblings

Time for reckoning

A lot has been going on this past summer concerning conferences. And the talk of what’s yet to happen centers on what schools will belong to which conferences and why that is their best fit for reasons such as competitive balance and success, travel distances and so forth.

I guess I’m a traditionalist in some regards, but with all the outstanding invitations and community debate, it’s going to be hard to suggest any of our area conferences will remain the same a few years from now.

I know some media outlets have weighed in on conference affiliations and what they think might or should happen. Here’s a little of my own perspective:

– **Hawkeye Ten Conference:** I’ve weighed in on this before and my take isn’t all that much different as to my concerns for the future of the conference itself. Red Oak and Shenandoah were invited by the Western Iowa Conference, and the largest four schools – Council Bluffs Lewis Central, Denison-Schleswig, Glenwood and Harlan – all are being courted by the Missouri River Activities Conference.

League administrators met twice in the past three weeks, first to announce a large school and small school divisional structure, and more recently, to announce invitations sent to Carroll and Treynor.

So what’s the scoop? Well, nothing yet, but the matter was discussed at a recent Shenandoah School Board meeting and several administrators suggested that the WIC was the best fit. Nothing yet from Red Oak, but it’s been suggested the Tigers have the same concerns about competition and travel distance.

As for the MRAC invitees, there’s speculation that Lewis Central would be the most likely to accept, and that it was unlikely that Denison-Schleswig, Glenwood or Harlan would jump ship. But stranger things have happened, and if all those pieces fall into place, and then Carroll and Treynor would decline the Hawkeye Ten invitations, then what?

I noted before my grave concerns that other dominoes would fall and potential impact for Atlantic: Council Bluffs St. Albert for the WIC or perhaps even Western Valley Conference, Carroll Kuemper to the WVAC or Twin Lakes Conference, Clarinda perhaps also joining Clarinda and Shenandoah in the WIC, and Creston perhaps being courted by and going to the Raccoon River Conference.

Atlantic could potentially be left alone, forced into being an independent and an island onto itself, and much like Washington State and Oregon State in the late, great Pac-10, all alone, with no real fit. Too large for some conferences, too small for others and too far away for a conference of nearby like-sized schools with competitive balance to be formed, especially without the help of the Iowa Department of Education and/or the Iowa High School Athletic Association/Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union.

– **Rolling Valley Conference:** The real winner right now is the Rolling Valley Conference, which got big additions with Audubon and IKM-Manning. Audubon administrators really sold me on their future, given the fact they can form new rivalries with nearby schools they often play at some point in most of their sports anyway, plus still play a challenging schedule with their soon-to-be-former WIC mates and other schools. And the travel distances will be shorter as well, and the schools are of like size and demographics ... lots to look forward to.

– **Western Iowa Conference:** Again, Shenandoah is looking more and more like they’ll make the move, and my sense is Red Oak will probably go too. There’s a number of invitations out to schools to replace Audubon and IKM-Manning, among them ACGC, Nodaway Valley, Southwest Valley and West Central Valley, but most of those schools seem to be a distance away. Besides, several of them are, I believe, better fits for other conferences.

– **Corner Conference:** Bedford just completed its first year in the conference and there’s no real news to report here.

– **West Central Activities Conference:** Two schools voted earlier this year to jump to other leagues: Des Moines Christian’s move to the largely Class 4A Little Hawkeye Conference, and Woodward-Granger soon to be part of the Heart Of Iowa Conference, which has mainly Class 3A schools. That leaves 10 schools, including part-time member Woodward Academy, but four other schools – the aforementioned ACGC and West Central Valley, plus Earlham and Panorama – are also weighing WIC invitations.

Of the remaining schools, Van Meter is the largest and probably could fit in well with a new conference, with the Heart Of Iowa being the best fit, and they could fit in well in the Raccoon River, too. Then you have Interstate 35 of Truro, Madrid, Ogden and Pleasantville. So where do those schools fit in if the WCAC, by some chance, splinters into pieces?

The only cavaet in any of these changes, pending or ones decided on, is this: There’s a new state law, effective July 1, that requires the IHSAA and IGHS AU to decide on and approve conference changes. That means the two athletic associations could agree to the changes or make another decision completely different.

No matter what, a lot hangs in the balance, and it’s not just classroom time.

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As readers well know by now, the team that Atlantic’s softball team could have been playing Tuesday night was Albia.

Centerville, of course, played spoiler and eliminated the Trojans from the post-season and a potential trip to the southern Iowa community. But my comments center on the tragic fire that happened earlier this week in Albia.

As you no doubt have heard, a large blaze destroyed a historic downtown business building, displacing several residents who lived in the upstairs apartments and three businesses, including a hair salon, insurance office and consignment store. One person was still thought to be unaccounted for as of Tuesday morning.

There’s words of gratuity and thanks to the firefighters and others who helped at the scene, preventing more damage and making sure everyone is safe.

And certainly, thoughts and prayers need to go out to Albia as they deal with the aftermath of the fire. Sometimes, other things in life are more important than sports.



By Brian Rathjen
NT Sports Editor

Spartans

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the Bulldogs, it was senior Finley Netten that had the big bat, with two htis and four RBIs on the night, the final one on a two-run home run over centerfield in the bottom of the sixth.

But like last year, Exira-EHK/Audubon looked to play the part of spoiler.

Jordan Mulford reached on a perfectly-executed one-out bunt single in the top of the third, and was driven home on Anna Larsen’s line drive to left center to make it 1-0.

Van Meter, whose No. 3 batter Cali Richards drilled a deep fly that curved foul just before clearing the fence back in the first inning, got on the board in the bottom of the third when pinch runner Ashlynn Schnell was driven home by older sister Mady Schnell.

As the Bulldogs were switching between ace Jilian Wosmansk y and reliever Aniston Netten, the Spartans seemed to be exploiting their youth – both were eighth graders – with a two-run fourth. With the bases loaded on just two hits, Alissa Testroet singled Abby Wanser home, while Mulford laid down another hit that the Bulldogs threw away, scoring Liv Inman to make it 3-1.

But the Bulldogs began to take control in the bottom of the fourth with four runs, off Ava Hohen-dahl’s lead-off home run to dead center, an error that scored Bianca Prickett and Netten’s two RBI-single to left.

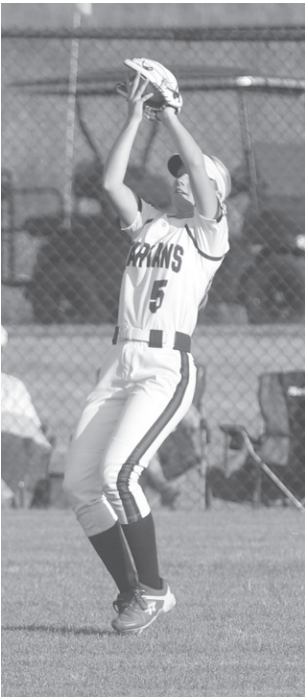
A three-run sixth all but sealed the win for the Bulldogs, with Netten’s two-run homer the icing on the cake.

Still, the Spartans didn’t go away. With the top of the order on deck, Taryn Petersen was hit by a pitch and eventually scored on Lucy Stanerson’s single to left with two out. But with runners at second and third, Wosmansk y got Zoey Rasmussen to ground to the pitcher, and the Bulldogs began to party.

The Spartans finished with eight hits off Wosmansk y and Netten, with Riley Miller and Wasner each having two. Anna Larsen, Stanerson, Testroet and Mulford each had an RBI.

Miller did well in the circle, giving up seven hits and walking just two while striking out three.

Exira-EHK/Audubon, in its second year of being a cooperative program, solidified itself as a combined force. After a mid-season slump where its own youth was showing at times, the Spartans re-



Brian Rathjen/NT Sports Editor

Payton Gust makes the catch in left field for Exira-EHK/Audubon against Van Meter Monday, July 14, at Van Meter..

grouped and finished with a 16-12 record.

And once again, it was a season where one of the highlights was having the state’s top Class 2A team, and one of the state’s top softball teams in any class, on the ropes before falling in a hard-fought, never-quit effort.

Van Meter goes on to Fort Dodge and next week’s Iowa Class 2A state tournament, where as the top seed they’ll play East Marshall. Game time is 12:15 p.m. Tuesday, July 22.

Riverside

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the lone highlight for the Viqueens, as it was all Lady Dawgs thereafter.

Adaline Martens scored off an error after her lead-off triple to tie the score, and Madison Kelley and Peyton Schafer each had RBIs to make it a 3-1 game.

“(Stanton’s home run) put a little fire under our butts and got us going,” said Patterson.

“Our offense got hot and defense was solid and we got the win.”

After a scoreless second and top of third, the Lady Dawgs got two more runs. With the bases loaded, a run scored on a wild pitch, and when they were re-loaded Kaycie

Perkins drove in a run after being hit by a pitch to make it 5-1.

A six-run fourth sealed the win, with Sophia Fenner, Kelley and Schafer each hitting doubles to lead off, and RBIs by Elly Henderson, Kayden Schnack and Lilli Reed before Fenner, batting for the second time in the inning, drilled a liner to left to send in the game-ending run.

“All of them, 1 through 9, produced and came through when we needed them,” said Patterson.

Martens and Kelley each were 2-for-3, with Kelley having two RBI. Schafer was 2-for-2, and helped her own cause by striking out three while scattering four base hits and not walking a batter.

This is Patterson’s third year as Riverside head coach. The Lady Dawgs were 15-11 her first season and went 20-12 and were regional semifinalists in 2024. This year, they broke through.

Riverside improved to 23-3 and drew the No. 4 seed at the Iowa Class 1A state tournament. They Lady Dawgs will play fifth-seeded Newell-Fonda at 5:15 p.m. Tuesday, July 22, at Harlan Rogers Sports Complex, Fort Dodge.

“Honestly, I don’t know anything about Newell-Fonda, and that’s how we like it,” said Patterson. “We come in and play our ball and normally if our bats are going the way we can and our defense is solid, we’ll come out with a win.”

Legal Notice

Ordinance No. 1056	
An ordinance amending the code of ordinances of the city of Atlantic, Iowa, by amending Chapter 6 entitled “City Elections”.	
BE IT ENACTED by the City Council of Atlantic, Iowa:	
SECTION 1. Chapter 6 of the City Code entitled “City Elections” is hereby amended to read as follows:	
6.01	NOMINATING METHOD TO BE USED. All candidates for elective municipal offices shall be nominated under the provisions of Chapter 45 of the Code of Iowa. (Code of Iowa, Sec. 376.3)
6.02	NOMINATIONS BY PETITION. Nominations for elective municipal offices of the City may be made by nomination paper or papers signed by not less than 25 eligible electors, residents of the City. (Code of Iowa, Sec. 45.1)
6.03	ADDING NAME BY PETITION. The name of a candidate placed upon the ballot by any other method than by petition shall not be added by petition for the same office. (Code of Iowa, Sec. 45.2)
6.04	PREPARATION OF PETITION AND AFFIDAVIT. Nomination papers shall include a petition and an affidavit of candidacy. The petition and affidavit shall be substantially in the form prescribed by the State Commissioner of Elections, shall include information required by the Code of Iowa, and shall be signed in accordance with the Code of Iowa. (Code of Iowa, Sec. 45.3, 45.5 & 45.6)
6.05	FILING; PRESUMPTION; WITHDRAWALS; OBJECTIONS. The time and place of filing nomination petitions, the presumption of validity thereof, the right of a candidate so nominated to withdraw and the effect of such withdrawal, and the right to object to the legal sufficiency of such petitions, or to the eligibility of the candidate, shall be governed by the appropriate provisions of Chapter 44 of the Code of Iowa. (Code of Iowa, Sec. 45.4)
6.06	PERSONS ELECTED. The candidates who receive the greatest number of votes for each office on the ballot are elected, to the extent necessary to fill the positions open. (Code of Iowa, Sec. 376.8[3])
SECTION 2. REPEALER. All ordinance or parts of ordinance in conflict with the provision of this ordinance are hereby repealed.	
SECTION 3. SEVERABILTIY CLAUSE. If any section, provision or part of this ordinance shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole or any section, provision or part thereof not adjudge invalid or unconstitutional.	
SECTION 4. WHEN EFFECTIVE. This ordinance shall be in effect from and after its final passage, approval, and publication as provided by law.	
Passed by the Council the 2 nd day of July 2025 and approved this 2 nd day of July 2025.	
/s/ Laura McLean, City Clerk	

Lockout

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limited contract guarantees associated with it, literally pits one player against another and is often what we share with players as the definitive non-competitive system. It doesn’t reward excellence. It undermines it

from an organizational standpoint. That’s why this is not about competitive balance. It’s not about a fair versus not. This is institutionalized collusion.”

The union’s opposition to a cap has paved the way for record-breaking salaries for star players. Soto’s deal is believed to be the richest in pro

sports history, eclipsing Shohei Ohtani’s \$700 million deal with the Dodgers signed a year earlier. By comparison, the biggest guaranteed contract in the NFL is \$250 million for Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen.

Manfred cites that 10% of players earn 72% of salaries.