

LOCAL SPORTS Journal

OCTOBER, 2018

FREE

A franchise record

7-0 start

for the Lumberjacks!

Plus...



Tyree Jackson leading a turnaround at Buffalo, just like he did at Mona Shores

SUBWAY

Good luck to all of the area teams!

Our team is here for you, no matter what sport.



Jeffrey K. Anhalt, D.O.
Dirk A. Bakker, M.D.
Rick A. Baszler, D.O.
J. Christopher Eyke, M.D.
Daniel J. Fett, D.O.
Yousif I. Hamati, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Reginald W. Kapteyn, D.O.
Brandon King, M.D.
Katie McCausland, D.O.
Mark J.R. Moulton, M.D.
Martin M. Pallante, M.D.*
Aaron D. Potts, M.D.*
Jeffrey D. Recknagel, M.D.
James R. Ringler, M.D.
Lindsay Rudert, D.O.*
Edward J.W. Shields, M.D.
Tyler T. Voss, D.O.*

*Fellowship Trained in Sports Medicine

Your Lakeshore Sports Medicine Specialists

We'll assess your pain to find its true source, and whenever possible, recommend non-surgical treatment options. We'll get you back to your active lifestyle.

Saturday Sports Clinics Held During The Fall

See your team trainer for referral and information about our acute sports injury clinic. Please arrive between 8-9am. Athletes under 18 must be accompanied by a parent. Bring identification and insurance card.

Ortho Walk-In Urgent Care

At our Muskegon office: Monday – Thursday: 8am – 8pm | Friday: 8am – 5pm.

OAM+ Orthopaedic Associates of Muskegon

OAM offices in Grand Haven and Muskegon.

GRAND HAVEN:
1445 Sheldon Road, Suite G1

MUSKEGON:
1400 Mercy Drive, Suite 100

231-733-1013
www.oamkg.com

PUBLISHER Jason Goorman

EDITOR Steve Gunn

ADVERTISING SALES Jim Goorman

WRITERS

Nate Thompson, Dave Hart,
Andrew Johnson, Mitchell Boatman,
Dave Tomczak, Noah Genson, Mitch
Ashcraft, Joe Dandron, Alex Plough

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Tim Reilly, Joe Lane, Michael Banka,
Kristine Tyler, Kris Rake, Scott Stone, Leo
Valdez, Mitchell Dixon, Marc Hoeksema

**Be an LSJ advertising
partner! Call Jim Goorman
at 231-206-4458**

4 **An Impressive Way to Start**

The Muskegon Lumberjacks have their fans pretty excited after bursting out of the gate with seven straight victories.

6 **Turnaround Specialist**

At Mona Shores High School, QB Tyree Jackson brought the football program back from years of despair. Now he's doing the same thing at the University of Buffalo.

8 **Instant Classic**

The Montague-Oakridge football game is great every year, but this year's version was off the charts.

10 **A Successful Sendoff**

Holton football coach Jack Nummerdor is leaving after this season, and his players have given him a great goodbye gift by posting a winning record and making the state playoffs.

12 **Tasting Victory**

The Fremont varsity football team suffered through a 30-game losing streak, dating back to 2014. But that ended with a huge victory this season.

14 **A Three-Time Champ**

Mona Shores senior Andrew Swirczek recently won the third city tennis title of his varsity career.

SERVICE
(888) 639-9752


**Preferred
of Muskegon**

SALES
(888) 637-9461



Jeep



2018 JEEP WRANGLER

CLEARANCE!

Flying out of the gate

By Steve Gunn
LocalSportsJournal.com

Just about everything is new with the Muskegon Lumberjacks this season.

They have a new head coach, Mike Hamilton (the father of former Jacks captain and current Grand Rapids Griffins Trevor Hamilton), who was a very successful coach of elite youth teams in the Detroit area for years.

They have a new general manager, Ryan Bennett, who was successful in the same job with the rival Chicago Steel for three seasons.

They're playing in a much-improved L.C. Walker Arena, which was given a \$1 million facelift over the summer, and features fewer seats but much wider aisles, party decks, a new beer garden, a "kid zone," executive suites that feature catered meals, food from the new arena-based restaurant Rad Dads, and fresh new flooring throughout the concourse.

The way the Lumberjacks have started the season is also new, and very exciting.

For the past two years the Lumberjacks got off to slow starts, and it cost them in the standings.

But they have roared out of the gates this fall. After the first three weekends of the season, the Lumberjacks boasted a perfect 7-0 record and led the USHL's Eastern Conference with 14 points in the standings.

The Jacks gave few hints of being that good in the preseason, when they posted a 3-3 record and lost three of their final four exhibition games.

But once they games started to count, they really hit their pace.

They opened with a pair of wins in the USHL Fall Classic in Pennsylvania - a 4-3 victory over defending Clark Cup champion Fargo and a 6-3 win over Sioux City.

The next weekend they visited the Youngstown Phantoms and came away with a pair of victories, 2-1 and 3-0.

That set the Lumberjacks up for a big home opener on Oct. 13 against the Chicago Steel, and more than 3,000 curious fans showed up to check out the renovated arena, and see if the home team was really as good as it had been playing.

They weren't disappointed, because the Jacks were dominant from beginning to end,

The Lumberjacks led 2-0 after one period, 5-0 after two, then added a goal for good measure in the third.

Forward Jagger Joshua, a returnee from 2017-18, led the offensive fireworks with a pair of goals. Daniil Gushchin added a goal and two assists, and Hunter Skinner had two assists.

Other goal scorers for the Jacks were Nolan Sullivan, Mikael Hakkarainen and John Farinacci.

Muskegon outshot Chicago 41-24.

On the other end of the rink, new Lumberjacks goalie Brandon Bussi continued a very hot streak, collecting his second straight shutout and extending his string of perfect periods to seven.

"Bus has been rock solid for us all year, and he's one of the reasons for our success," Hamilton said after the game. "He has kept us in games where we have been outworked. We are real happy for him. He was a find for us on the free agent side, and he's stepped into the role."

Bussi credited the Lumberjack defense for keeping Chicago from mounting too much of a threat.

"During the last two games the team has played the best defensively, and tonight's game was all about the defense," Bussi said.

The exciting home-opener victory left the Lumberjacks a little sluggish, and it showed the next afternoon in a home game against Youngstown.

The Jacks had a terrible first period and found themselves trailing 3-0 after one period. But they kept fighting back, tied the game twice, and finally claimed a thrilling 5-4 victory at L.C. Walker Arena.

The game-winner came with 12 minutes left in the game, when Farinacci sliced through a pair

of defensemen, broke in alone on Youngstown netminder Jon More, and buried a wrist shot that gave the Jacks yet another victory.

"I was just going down the wall with speed and (teammate Colby) Bukes made a nice pass and I saw the top wide open, so I just put the puck there," Farinacci said.

"Our backs were against the wall early and we didn't make any excuses. We just went out there and kept working hard, and obviously the results showed."

Hamilton was not thrilled with the team's overall performance, but was obviously pleased with the Jacks' ability to come from way behind and win.

"It was not pretty by any means, and we are not proud of it, but the fact we got a W, we will walk away and be happy about it," the

Muskegon Lumberjacks open 2018-19 season 7-0!



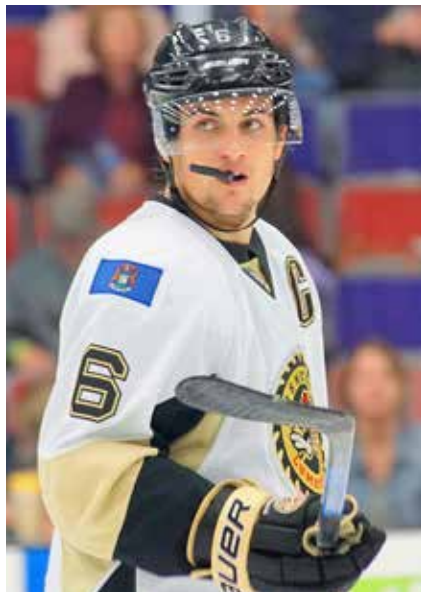
New Jacks goalie Brandon Bussi turned in two straight shutouts early in the season.

coach said.

The Lumberjacks continued to impress on Jan. 19, when they took to the road to face Chicago again in their only game of the week.

The game was tied 3-3 early in the third period after a Chicago goal, but then the Lumberjacks took control again, getting late goals from Bobby Lynch and Hakkarainen to seal up a 5-3 victory.

So seven games in, the the Jacks were a perfect 7-0. Who saw that coming?



Defenseman Colby Bukes had five assists through the first seven games.

Obviously the hot start guarantees nothing. There are 60 games in the regular season, and anything can happen.

And they are not alone when it comes to early-season hot streaks. Eastern Conference rival Central Illinois started out 5-2, and in the Western Conference Tri City opened with a 6-1 record while Sioux Falls was 5-1.

But the hot start gave real hope to Lumberjacks fans, who have never experienced a Clark Cup championship in eight seasons in the USHL.

Hamilton said he knew coming into the season that the Jacks had the talent to be very competitive, if the players were committed to working hard.

He also said the players have also been showing the

type of chemistry necessary for success, even though the season is very young, and most of the have never played with each other before.

"We spend a lot of time together as a team, doing team bonding stuff like going to Buffalo Wild Wings, and going to a Grand Rapids Griffins (game) together," Hamilton said after the home opener.

"Having the first two weekends on the road was good for us. They are falling in love with each other, and they have each other's backs."



Christoffer Bjork chases the puck in the Jacks' win over Youngstown. Photos/Jason Goorman



New coach Mike Hamilton has the Jacks pumped up for a big season. Photo/Leo Valdez

SSB | Shelby State Bank

Where Banking is Still a People Business!

**THE COMMUNITY BANK
FOR SPORTS LOVERS.**



GREAT CATCH!

www.shelbybank.com

Member FDIC



380 West Western Ave

Suite 120

Muskegon, MI 49440

(231) 727-8176

waddell.com

SHERRY BECKER

Financial Advisor

&

ROGER GARRETSON

Financial Advisor

Former Mona Shores quarterback Tyree Jackson is a

TURNAROUND SPECIALIST

and just might be a very high future NFL draft pick

By Mitchell Boatman
LocalSportsJournal.com

Wherever Tyree Jackson plays, the situation always improves dramatically.

Mona Shores High School fans know that better than anyone.

When Jackson took over at quarterback for Mona Shores back in 2011, as a skinny 13-year-old freshman, the Sailors were one of only two teams in the area that had never qualified for the state playoffs.



Jackson has thrown for 1,869 yards and 20 TDs through eight games this season for Buffalo.

There was even some talk about cancelling the football program altogether.

Three years later, Mona Shores was in the Division 2 state finals, thanks largely to Jackson's prolific throwing arm and leadership on the field.

Jackson accepted a full-ride scholarship to the University of Buffalo, a Mid-American Conference team that had also been in the dumpster for quite some time.

Before Jackson joined the Bulls' program, the team had only two winning seasons since 2000.

But in 2017, the Bulls won six games with Jackson under center and became bowl eligible for the first time in a long time. And this season Buffalo has really hit

its pace, posting a 7-1 record after eight weeks. Jackson's offense has been on fire, averaging more than 33 points per game.

The National Football League has taken notice.

According to CBS Sports, the redshirt junior is one of the top five quarterback prospects for the 2019 NFL Draft. Experts say his size, athleticism and arm strength as reasons why Jackson could be taken as high as the first round in April's draft, if he chooses to leave school early.

But Jackson says he couldn't care less about any of that right now.

"I don't hear a lot of things, I don't pay attention to social media or anything like that," he said. "It's going to sound cliché, but we really just take it one game at a time."

The quarterback added that looking ahead to a possible pro career would be setting himself up for failure.

"We don't look two weeks from now, a year from now, anything like that," he said. "If you're doing that, you're not focused on the goal. I've always thought that if I take care of my business, then I'll

have that opportunity, but I've never really spent too much time on it.

"If that's what you're looking at right now, or in high school, or freshman year of college, then you're not going to reach that goal, because you're focused on the wrong thing."

How it all began

Jackson had a challenging football education at Mona Shores, pretty much by necessity.

When he reported to high school as a freshman in 2011, the Sailors were coming off a 2-7 season, and lots of losing seasons before that.

New coach Matt Koziak quickly noticed Jackson's potential, saw that the team had a lot of building to do anyway, and threw him into the fire as a starting quarterback.

"We had some upper-classmen who were not on board with what we wanted to do," Koziak told Local Sports Journal during an interview in 2014. "I said if we are going to be awful, let's be awful with kids that will give us everything they have."

"Should he have played as a freshman? Absolutely not. But it's paying dividends now."

Jackson kept the job all four years of high school, and the Sailors kept improving. They were 1-8 in 2011 and 4-5 in 2012. In 2013, they vaulted to a 7-3 record.

A big highlight of that season came on Oct. 11, when the Sailors beat Zeeland East 49-26 to gain their sixth win and clinch a state playoff berth for the first time in school history.

When the clock ticked down to zero, the Sailors rushed to one of the end zones, where hundreds of former Mona Shores players who had never experienced the playoffs had gathered to celebrate the moment.

Jackson completed 7 of 11 passes in that game for 227 yards and four touchdowns.

"We really played for them," Jackson said about the Sailor alumni who showed up for the big moment. "They couldn't do it, so every snap and every play was for them. We just played our hearts out. We just did what we could do."

In 2014, when Jackson was a senior, Mona Shores posted a 12-2 record and advanced all the way to the state championship game, which they lost to Warren DeLaSalle while Jackson played injured.





MONA SHORES MEMORIES: From left, Jackson on the run against Muskegon; unleashing a pass during a playoff game; pitching the ball off against Muskegon Catholic in 2013.

A big highlight of that season was a 48-27 upset of powerful Muskegon on the Big Reds' home field, which clinched the O-K Black Conference title for Mona Shores and set them on course for the state finals.

Once again Jackson stepped up big, throwing for 197 yards and three touchdowns on 13-for-21 passing. He also rushed for 134 yards and two touchdowns.

"Everyone on this team believed we could do it from when we were freshmen," Jackson said. "I really expected this to be done. I couldn't be more pleased with my team and everyone in the community for coming."

Jackson moved on to college the next season, but the legacy of success he helped to establish has endured. The Sailors are 32-8 since he departed, and have qualified for the playoffs three of the last four seasons.

Leading another turnaround

Jackson did not start as a freshman at Buffalo, but as he worked his way into the lineup, the better things got for the team.

Jackson started 10 games as a sophomore in 2016, when the Bulls finished 2-10. He started nine games in 2017, when they improved to 6-6 and became bowl eligible, although they did not get a bid.

This year Buffalo, with Jackson starting each of the first eight games, is cashing in. The Bulls are 7-1, in first place in the MAC Eastern Division, and seem certain to get the bowl bid that was denied them last season.

Jackson, a 6-foot-7, 245-pound signal caller, has thrown for 1,869 yards and 20 touchdowns through seven games. The 18 passing TDs is good for eighth in the nation.

"Guys are really listening to Coach (Lance) Liepold and the coaches, who are doing a great job game planning each week," Jackson said. "The offensive line is playing great so far, the receivers are playing well and the running backs have really been going."

"It's been exciting and the coaches have done a great job."

Buffalo opened the season with four straight victories. The Bulls topped Delaware State 48-10 in Week 1 and followed that with a 36-29 win at Temple. They returned home for a 35-28 win over Eastern Michigan before dismantling Rutgers on the road.

The lone blemish thus far came in Week 5 against Army, 42-13. The Bulls bounced back with two straight wins, 34-24 over Central Michigan and 24-6 over Akron.

The win that stands out the most thus far is a 42-13 win on the road against Big 10 opponent Rutgers. To Jackson, though, it was just another game in the 'W' column.

"Any win is a good win, from our first week to this last one," he said. "We've just got to build on it and not get content with it or happy about it. It's cool that we're playing well, but we've got to continue it for the rest of the season."

Remembering his roots

The first real clue that Jackson has a serious chance to play in the NFL came when he was invited last summer to the Manning Passing Academy.

It's run by the three great Manning quarterbacks - Archie, a Hall of Famer with the New Orleans Saints, and his Super Bowl-winning sons, Peyton and Eli.

The Manning Passing Academy invites top college arms to serve as counselors at the camp, and soak up information. Jackson said he was able to gather a lot of information from the experience.

He also worked out in California over the summer with noted quarterback coach Jordan Palmer. He was there with current New York Jets rookie Sam Darnold, Auburn's Jarrett Stidham and Duke's Daniel Jones, working on technique and learning NFL plays and systems.

While those experiences were great, Jackson says the real credit for his constant improvement lies with his coaches at Buffalo.

"(Buffalo quarterbacks) coach Jim Zebrowski has done a great job coaching me up and staying on me," Jackson said. "Week to week there's always things to improve on. There's going to be things that, for the rest of my life, I'm going to have to work on."

"Each week coach Zebrowski does a great job of pinpointing those things from the last game. Each week there's a new challenge and there's a new thing to work on."

"If there's not things you think you need to work on, then you're complacent and you have no room to grow."

If and when Tyree Jackson makes it to the NFL, Muskegon area football fans will be sure to remind everyone where he started. But there's no need to remind Jackson.

Despite Buffalo being more than a six hour drive from home - and that's if you cut through Canada - the Mona Shores alum makes sure to stay up-to-date on his Sailors.

And he likes what he sees this season. The Sailors recently completed an 8-1 regular season and are once again headed into the Division 2 state playoffs as a team with a good chance to go a long way.

"I'm always locked into their games on Fridays when I'm in the hotel," Jackson said. "I'm always keeping track."

"The quarterback Caden Broersma, he's like a little brother to me. Coaches Matt Koziak and Aaron James, they're like father figures to me. They've been great, influential people in my life."

Jackson said Koziak and James still serve as coaches from a distance for him, even though he's been out of high school for three years.

"I talk to Coach James every day," he said. "I talk to Coach Koziak at least once a week. They've done a great job this year and I'm excited for them. I think they're going to have a lot of success this year."

Montague 25, Oakridge 24 - October 5, 2018

LocalSportsJournal.com

It takes courage for a coach to go for a two-point conversion and the win - and risk sudden and painful defeat - in the biggest show-down game of the season.

Montague head coach Pat Collins took the gamble, and it resulted in a dramatic victory for his team, and an unforgettable end to one of the most exciting high school football games played in the area in recent years.

Montague sophomore quarterback Drew Collins - the coach's son - completed a 5-yard touchdown pass to senior receiver Nick Stever to bring the Wildcats to within one point, 24-23, with one second remaining in a West Michigan Conference showdown against Oakridge on Oct. 5.

The touchdown nearly completed a dramatic comeback by Montague, which trailed by 14 points early in the fourth quarter.

But instead of kicking the game-tying extra point and sending the game to overtime, Collins had other ideas.

"We knew probably when we were down 14 points at 24-10, if these guys put us in position to be down one, I made up my mind we were going for two," Collins said after the game. "Then we scored with just a second left, and I was 100 percent sure we were going for two."

Instead of sending out kicker David Rumsey, Collins sent out senior Sebastian Archer at quarterback to go for the two-point conversion.

Archer, who has been battling injuries this season, was the starting quarterback who led Montague to an 11-1 record last season, before switching to running back this year.

He handled the pressure-filled assignment beautifully, taking a direct snap and running nearly untouched into the end zone, giving Montague an unbelievable 25-24 victory.

The win allowed Montague to gain an edge over previously unbeaten Oakridge in the West Michigan Conference standings, and the Wildcats clinched the league crown a week later.

Oakridge head coach Cary Harger said he was expecting Montague to kick the extra point, but understands that surprising things can happen in intense rivalry games.

"You instantly think back to a little history, when we went for two against them on the road a few years back," Harger said. "We thought our defense was prepared as best as they could be. But you look at it now and realize who scored. Maybe it was a statement by

them that Archer was here to play."

It was a stunning tumble for Oakridge, which had a seemingly commanding 24-10 lead with 3:48 remaining in the fourth, after quarterback Koleman Wall connected on a beautiful pass to a streaking Jaxon Fri for a 34-yard touchdown.

But the Wildcats answered right back - in controversial fashion.

Drew Collins threw a flare pass to junior Brennen Schwarz, who had to dip down low to snag the catch. His knee appeared to touch the turf, but Schwarz kept going, broke a pair of tackles and busted free for an 80-yard touchdown. The extra point cut the Eagles' lead to 24-17 with 3:21 left.

"At first glance, from our perspective on the sideline, it looked like his knee hit the turf when he squatted down," Harger said. "It makes you want to take a look at the film and see for yourself."

Instead of going for an onside kick, Montague chose to kick long and rely on its defense to get some stops. The defense responded, forcing Oakridge to punt with 1:35 left.

From there, Drew Collins showed poise at quarterback well beyond his years, directing a 14-play drive that was kept alive by a pair of pass interference calls on the Eagles.

"It was just good play calling by our coaching staff and good clock management," said the quarterback, who completed 11 of 21 passes for 178 yards and two touchdowns. "We were (frustrated) for a few minutes in the third quarter, but we needed to bring the juice, as our coaches like to say."

With one second remaining and the ball at the 5-yard line, the Wildcats ran trips left, with Stever split out wide on the right. He got separation in the end zone and caught a dart from Collins, bringing the Wildcats to within one.

"He's cool as a cucumber," Pat Collins said of his son. "He's always been that way. He showed a

lot of poise in some tense moments tonight."

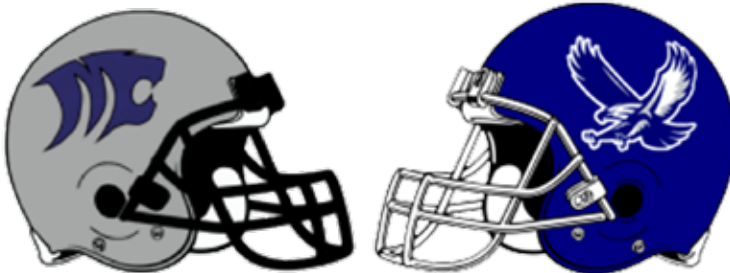
That led to the dramatic two-point conversion that settled the issue.

"It's just unbelievable," Pat Collins said. "It's one of the best games I've ever been a part of at Montague. Against a great Oakridge team, we put on a show."

Archer spoke in almost stunned disbelief after the big play.

"The game is on the line, I'm the type of player that wants to come and get that last play," Archer said.

"We just tried to stay positive. It didn't matter how much we were down by. We knew we could hang against that team. We came in with one goal, and that was to win."



INSTANT CLASSIC



SHORELINE MOTORS

SERVICE CENTER

- Oil Change - Batteries - Tune ups - Radiators - A/C
- Brakes - Suspension - Exhaust - Steering - Electrical

2221 Henry St.

231-755-2116

Eric Jones
Service Manager



MARIO FLORES

5906 COMMERCE CENTRE | MUSKEGON, MI 49444

231.332.6505
231.638.0200



Vandyk Mortgage is an Equal Opportunity Lender. Equal Housing Lender. NMLS #109862
Equal Housing Lender. NMLS #109862

Noordhoff PLUMBING

Residential • Commercial
Fast Reliable Service
Licensed Master Plumber



231-798-2777

BOWEN LAW OFFICES

Attorneys & Counselors
1042 TERRACE ST.
MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN 49442

BUSINESS PLANNING \ COLLECTIONS \ CONTRACTS \ ESTATE PLANNING \ LAND LORD - TENANT

LITIGATION \ ELDER LAW & MEDICAID \ PROBATE \ REAL ESTATE \ TAX

PHONE: (231) 726-4484

DAVID T. BOWEN
dbowen@bowen-law.com

JONATHAN R. HOOGSTRA
jhoogstra@bowen-law.com

OF Counsel: DAVID K. FATH, JR.



Buy 1 pound of candy, get 1/4 pound free

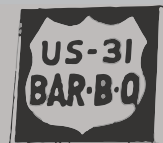
expires 11/30/18

1064 S. Getty St. - Muskegon
231-773-0319

Diane's
Compassionate Services
40 years experience specializing in
terminal illness and nutrition

231-722-8103

135 OTTAWA ST., Muskegon



151 W. Muskegon Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49440



MONDAY - THURSDAY 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM
FRIDAY & SATURDAY 11:00 AM - 8:00 PM
Closed all day on Sunday

George Buris

Phone: 722-3948

A successful sendoff

Holton Coach Jack Nummerdor is headed to Mona Shores, but not before he finishes his first winning season.

By Steve Gunn
LocalSportsJournal.com

For four seasons, Holton varsity football head coach Jack Nummerdor worked hard to put a winner on the field, but always fell a bit short.

That's not a mark against Nummerdor, his coaching staff or the athletes on the team. The challenge for the Red Devils has been playing nine teams from larger schools every season - often much larger schools - and finding a way to win more than they lose.



As Nummerdor put it, "We're the smallest school in our conference and on our schedule. The closest school to us (on the schedule) has 100 more kids than we do."

But this season Nummerdor, in his fifth and final season at Holton, finally got over the hump. The surprising Red Devils were 5-1 after the first six weeks of the season, guaranteeing a winning record. They also managed to qualify for the state playoffs for the first time in years.

As exciting as that has been for the players, school and community, the timing of the team's sudden success has been a little bittersweet for everyone involved.

That's because Nummerdor recently accepted the position of assistant principal and athletic director at Mona Shores Middle School, and began his new duties on a full-time basis on Oct. 8.

"It's been an unexpected season, to be honest. There were other years we felt we had better teams, and it didn't work out so well." - Jack Nummerdor

But he took the new job with the understanding that he could finish the season with his Holton football team, and he's all in to take the Red Devils as far as they can go before wrapping up his career at Holton.

As for leaving Holton, Nummerdor said it was an unexpected turn of events.

He applied to be the athletic director at Mona Shores High School earlier this year, and was the runner-up.

But then Mona Shores officials started recruiting him for the job at the middle school. Nummerdor said he was initially inclined to turn down the position, then realized it would allow him to spend a lot more time with his family than he currently does.

Nummerdor and his wife have a 5-year-old and a 2-year-old at home.

"I didn't apply, but they kept asking me," said Nummerdor, who has also served as athletic director at Holton. "I started to put things into perspective. My latest event at school (at Mona Shores) would be over at 7 p.m. At Holton we will just be starting varsity basketball



Nummerdor is interviewed at the LSJ football kickoff party in August. Photo/Leo Valdez

at seven.

"This will allow me to spend much more time with my wife and family. My 5-year-old is just starting to realize that I'm gone a lot, and wondering why."

Nummerdor said there was a lot of emotion, and a few tears, when he broke the news to his players.

"They took it pretty well, especially after I told them I would be finishing the season with them," he said. "Drew Trygstad (the quarterback) said 'Coach, we understand where you're coming from, needing to spend more time with your family.'"

As it turned out, the Holton players gave Nummerdor a great parting gift - the first winning season of his varsity head coaching career.

His 2014 and 2015 teams both finished with 4-5 records. The 2016 squad dipped to 2-7, while the 2017 team was 3-6.

But the victories have been far more frequent this year.

The Red Devils opened with a 26-18 victory over Hart, the captured a 46-7 win over Evart, a 20-6 win over neighboring rival Hesperia, a 65-8 win over White Cloud and a 34-24 victory over Lakeview.

While Nummerdor is obviously pleased with the success, he admits he's also a little bit surprised.

"It's been an unexpected season, to be honest," he said. "There were other years we felt we had better teams, and it didn't work out



Holton QB Drew Trygstad

so well."

This year's starting lineup includes a good mix of seniors and juniors, but Nummerdor wasn't sure what the juniors would bring to the table.

But they have outperformed expectations. One good example is Trygstad, the junior starting quarterback,

"Our junior class only had two wins prior to this season, including middle school," the coach said. "We knew they were a great bunch of kids, but they hadn't had much success on the field. But they have learned to play tough and play for each other. Without the juniors, we wouldn't be where we are now."

The five wins in their first six games guaranteed the Red Devils a winning season, they had a few other goals in mind. One was getting Holton into the state playoffs for the first time since 2007, when current Muskegon Big Reds coach Shane Fairfield led the program.

But it takes six wins to guarantee a playoff spot, and the Devils never quite got there.

They lost to undefeated Kent City 46-0, in a game that would have given them a share of the Central State Activities Association Silver Division championship. Then they fell 29-22 to LeRoy Pine River and closed the regular season with a 48-16 loss to Tri-County.

But a few 5-4 teams get a playoff nod each year, and on Oct. 21, when the MHSAA announced the Division 8 field, Holton was in the bracket, and Nummerdor had his first playoff team.

"It feels great, it's what we worked for, it's what we wanted for the kids," the coach said. "We had kids who deserved it in other seasons, but for this group it finally worked out."



Holton's powerful running back tandem of seniors Derek Pouch (left) and Aaron Herron.

Deur Speet
FREMONT

CHRYSLER DODGE Jeep RAM



**Guaranteed
Best Price
AND FREE
LIFETIME
WARRANTY
ON ALL NEW
AND USED.**

*SEE DEALER
FOR DETAILS

231-755-8600

Lakeside Cafe
Muskegon's finest American cuisine

1/2 OFF
Lakeside Cafe
BREAKFAST, LUNCH OR DINNER
With coupon. Buy 1, get the 2nd
1/2 off. (of equal or lesser value)
Dine-In only. May not be
combined with any other offers or
coupons. Valid thru 11/30/18
LSJ0715



Home of the Stuffed Hashbrown



Breakfast served ALL DAY!

1384 Laketon • Muskegon
(Just west of Catholic Central)

Check out our delicious menu at
lakesidetogo.com

TASTING VICTORY!

The Fremont Packers finally broke a 30-game losing streak, which dated back to October 14, 2014.

LocalSportsJournal.com

It was a long time coming for head coach Rick Tank, his staff, and the Fremont varsity football team.

The Packers endured a painful 30-game losing streak, dating all the way back to Oct. 14, 2014, when they beat Montague. Fremont went through the entire 2015, 2016 and 2017 seasons without a victory.



Rick Tank

And the winless seasons got pretty ugly at times, at least on the scoreboard. In 2016, the Packers went through their first five games without scoring a point. In 2017 they gave up 50 or more points in seven of nine games, and 48 points in one game.

In 2015 they were outscored 374-92. In 2016 the differential was 361-25. In 2017 it was 492-146.

But all of that suffering made it extra sweet when Fremont finally broke into the victory column once again.

That occurred on Sept. 14, when the Packers put it all together and beat

Central Montcalm 26-12 on their home field.

"This is great for our boys," said Fremont Coach Rick Tank just a few minutes after the game. "It feels good, obviously, after all the pressure. The guys focused and executed perfectly and got the win."

Tank was showered with water by the players after the win, and enjoyed every minute of it.

"It was great to get wet," the coach said. "That was the best shower of my life. The entire student section came down and sang the fight song with the team. It was one school, Packer Nation."

"I was just proud and happy to see the looks on these kids' faces. That's what it's all about."

Central Montcalm scored an early touchdown and took a 6-0 lead in the first quarter, but the Packers were not intimidated. Christian Kennedy scored on a 12-yard run midway through the first quarter, and the extra point by Wyatt Kaastra gave Fremont a 7-6 lead.

The Packers extended their lead later in the first when Kane Widing scored on a five-yard run. Another extra point from Kaastra made the score 14-6.

Central Montcalm found the end zone in the second quarter, and Fremont led 14-12 at halftime.

The Packers took control in the second half.

Zane Stroven hauled in a 24-yard touchdown pass from Cody Andree in the third quarter, then Stroven scored from 18 yards out in the fourth to seal up the victory.

Stroven finished with 123 yards on 19 carries. Widing added 101 yards on 23 carries, and led the team with 7.5 tackles.



Fremont students rush the field and mob the team after the win over Central Montcalm on Sept. 14. Photo/Lloyd Smith



Zayne Stroven scores a huge touchdown in Fremont's victory. Photo/Lloyd Smith

The victory was Tank's first in three seasons as head coach.

Looking back on it now, he said all of his joy came from watching the players' faces when they finally got to experience the feeling that they worked every week for, but never achieved.

"Through 10 years of coaching in this program, going that long without success, then finally achieving it and living it through the boys and their emotions, that was absolutely priceless," said Tank, a former JV and varsity assistant coach in the program.

"There were a mix of guys with smiles from ear to ear, to those with tears running down their faces. I don't think they knew whether to cry, laugh, jump up and down, do somersaults or whatever." It was just the emotion that hit them, and not only them but our staff and student section and the fans who have continued to support us, as well."

Finally getting that big victory would not have been possible without coaches working hard to keep the players interested, focused and determined.

Tank said he and the other coaches have always tried to remain positive, and the players have continued to respond, despite repeated disappointments.

"We just have kept our eyes on what the ultimate goal is, and that's the boys," Tank said. "We have tried to keep our heads on straight, keep the focus and keep the drive.

"The kids take everything we do and apply that to the way they play. If we get down and stay down, they will be that way. We know that, and we constantly work to try to build them up, not just as football players, but as young men.

"It's the same as in anything - when you experience loss, there is a level of frustration. We have just continued to reassure the boys that there are as many lessons to be learned in losing as there are in winning."

Fremont went into the final week of the season with just the one victory and seven losses. But in truth the Packers could have easily had three wins.

They lost a heartbreaker in their season opener to Ewart, 30-26.

"We were up in the fourth quarter, then they came down, had a couple of long pass plays, and got in on us," Tank said.

On Oct. 5, the Packers had an even closer call, losing to Tri-County 14-12.

"It came down to the last play of the game," Tank said. "There were seconds on the clock, we had the ball, fourth-and-one on their six, and we decided to kick the field goal. It was just like a PAT, but we missed it."

With a 1-7 record and only one game to go, a lot of teams would have just go through the motions and got the season over with. But not the Packers.

Following a 42-20 loss to Chippewa Hills in Week 8, Tank went to every player individually on the bus, asking them what had to change to turn things around.



Christian Kennedy rushes as Garrett Visscher blocks for Fremont. Photo/Lloyd Smith

The kids responded by calling a players-only meeting on the Sunday following that game, to discuss what they were doing wrong, and how they could address the issues and perhaps get one more win.

"They just wanted to get together and talk about things that have deterred them and hurt them, different mentalities and attitudes, and how they can fix them," Tank said. "They wanted to get things out in the open and work on them together, with just one week left."

With that sort of determination, it's a pretty good bet that there will be a few more football victories in Fremont in the seasons ahead.

GAME ON.

You've worked too hard to be held back by pain.

See us today for your sports-related injury. Our Physical Therapy team will have you back in the game in no time.

Schedule an injury screening

Call today!

18000 Cove St., Suite 202
Spring Lake MI 49456
616.847.1280

i'move Physical Therapy
Sports • Rehabilitation • Wellness Solutions

Grand Haven • Grand Rapids • Holland • Spring Lake • Rockford

Receive a **FREE** Standard Sink Base Cabinet with the Purchase of 5 or More Cabinets

Call Today

Waypoint LIVING SPACES
Exactly what you had in mind®

740 PAINTED EMBER GLAZE

LIVE YOUR LIFE IN STYLE

Your Waypoint® designer has the knowledge, experience, quality cabinetry and details you need to efficiently remodel kitchens, baths or any other living space into a unique expression of your personal style. Visit waypointlivingspaces.com for inspiration and contact your Waypoint® dealer today.

Rycenga BUILDING CENTER

1053 Jackson St. / Grand Haven
616-842-5600
Mon-Fri: 7:30-5:00 | Sat: 7:30-Noon | Closed Sunday
Visit us online at www.rycenga.com

THREE-TIME CHAMP

Mona Shores senior Andrew Swirczek recently won the third GMAA city tennis singles championship of his varsity career.

**By Andrew Johnson
LocalSportsJournal.com**

NORTON SHORES – Winning one Greater Muskegon Athletic Association championship is a proud accomplishment for any player.

Winning three is pretty uncommon, but that's exactly what Mona Shores tennis standout Andrew Swirczek has done in his career.

As a freshman, Swirczek won the No. 4 singles championship. By the time he was a junior, he had moved up to No. 1 singles, and



Swirczek follows through on a shot at this year's city meet.

The tournament didn't go quite as well for his Mona Shores team, which was edged out for the team championship by Whitehall, but Swirczek was still happy with his accomplishment.

"It feels good," said Swirczek just minutes after winning the match. "It's nice to come out here and feel like you've done something."

One thing that stuck out during Swirczek's match was that he won easily without completely focusing on the challenge in front of him. He frequently yelled encouragement to teammate Ezekiel Powell, who was playing on the court beside him.

"He's quite dominant," said Mona Shores tennis coach Nate Kunnen. "He's basically a student-coach, and we're really going to miss him next year."

Swirczek's season got even better on Oct. 11, when he finally accomplished a career-long goal of qualifying for the Division 1 state finals.

In each of the last two years, he lost to Connor Genschaw of Forest Hills Central at regionals. Genschaw went on to qualify for state each year, and won the No. 1 singles state title in 2017. Swirczek, meanwhile, was left at home.

But Genschaw graduated last spring, and Swirczek was able to advance to the No. 1 singles regional final this year, and earn an

automatic berth in the state tournament. He lost in the regional finals to Peter Renucci of Forest Hills Northern, after winning the first set. But making it to state put the icing on an already outstanding varsity tennis career.

"I felt a lot of relief once I won the semifinal match," said Swirczek, who advanced to the quarterfinal round at state. "During the finals I was a little bit more relaxed. I felt almost no pressure after that. But the day did kind of end on a sour note."

"I ended up losing after getting cramps during the second and third sets. It really ended up kind of stinking, because I felt like I had it and then started cramping up. I ended up missing opportunities I could've had and it was really rough."

Swirczek's success in tennis is kind of surprising, considering his background. While he started playing the game as a youngster, but quit for awhile to focus on baseball.

"I started playing when I was about eight or nine, but then I quit for a little while to play baseball before I started up playing again around the age of 11 or 12."

"It's definitely a different atmosphere with the sport than basebal," he said. "But I couldn't be happier with it. It's kind of nice to be in charge of how the match goes, and how it's solely based on me."

That doesn't mean he doesn't enjoy the team aspect of high school tennis, when every player in every match can contribute to the team's point total.

"With high school tennis, it's the fact that I can be a part of the team," Swirczek said. "Even if my team doesn't go to state and I do, I can keep going and some of my teammates will come and watch. I love the fact that you can control your own destiny, but that you're still a part of the team."

Kunnen said Swirczek is a great teammate, and the younger players have looked up to him for leadership and inspiration over the past few seasons.

"It would be very easy for someone in his situation to disassociate and think 'I'm better than you and I don't need to converse with you,'" the coach said.

"But he has no signs of it at all, and he's kind of like a big brother to his teammates. He gives really good advice and they all respect him, not just because of his play, but because he's a really good dude."



automatic berth in the state tournament.

He lost in the regional finals to Peter Renucci of Forest Hills Northern, after winning the first set. But making it to state put the icing on an already outstanding varsity tennis career.

"I felt a lot of relief once I won the semifinal match," said Swirczek, who advanced to the quarterfinal round at state. "During the finals I was a little bit more relaxed. I felt almost no pressure after that. But the day did kind of end on a sour note."

"I ended up losing after getting cramps during the second and third sets. It really ended up kind of stinking, because I felt like I had it and then started cramping up. I ended up missing opportunities I could've had and it was really rough."

Swirczek's success in tennis is kind of surprising, considering his background. While he started playing the game as a youngster, but quit for awhile to focus on baseball.

"I started playing when I was about eight or nine, but then I quit for a little while to play baseball before I started up playing again around the age of 11 or 12."

"It's definitely a different atmosphere with the sport than basebal," he said. "But I couldn't be happier with it. It's kind of nice to be in charge of how the match goes, and how it's solely based on me."

That doesn't mean he doesn't enjoy the team aspect of high school tennis, when every player in every match can contribute to the team's point total.

"With high school tennis, it's the fact that I can be a part of the team," Swirczek said. "Even if my team doesn't go to state and I do, I can keep going and some of my teammates will come and watch. I love the fact that you can control your own destiny, but that you're still a part of the team."

Kunnen said Swirczek is a great teammate, and the younger players have looked up to him for leadership and inspiration over the past few seasons.

"It would be very easy for someone in his situation to disassociate and think 'I'm better than you and I don't need to converse with you,'" the coach said.

"But he has no signs of it at all, and he's kind of like a big brother to his teammates. He gives really good advice and they all respect him, not just because of his play, but because he's a really good dude."



Swirczek makes a play at the net during his junior year bid for the No. 1 singles title.

LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED FOR OVER 50 YEARS

ARNOLD'S AUTO GLASS INC.

Mobile Service

480 W. Sherman Blvd, Muskegon, MI 49444

Phone 231.733.5544 Toll Free 800.754.1211 Fax 231.733.5574

MOBILE SERVICE 231.733.5544

**10% quantity discount and
FREE engraving!**

*TROPHIES
*PLAQUES
*T-SHIRTS
*RIBBONS
*ETCHING

PARKER'S TROPHIES & AWARDS

*MEDALS
*GLASSWARE
*CLOCKS
*BUTTONS
*ENGRAVING

HOURS
MONDAY-FRIDAY
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

231-739-6258 / 1-800-459-7738

3494 PENINSULA DRIVE (at SEAWAY DRIVE)
(one block east of Seminole Rd.)

PARKERSTROPHIES.COM



Reclaim Your Life.

Safe Harbour Counseling
Diane Russick 616-607-6958



Suicide Survivors Support Group.

Safe Harbour Counseling
Diane Russick - 616-607-6958



BAD BOYS BAIL BONDS

FUGITIVE RECOVERY AND INVESTIGATIONS

TOLL FREE 24 HOUR HOTLINE **866-728-6400**

"If we can't get you out, you aint gettin' out".



We offer **4%** APY
on checking accounts!
Call for details.

231-726-4871

www.muskegoncoop.com

2 Convenient Locations

1051 Peck Street, Muskegon, MI 49440
1920 Laketon Ave., Muskegon, MI 49442

MUSKEGON
CO-OP FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

\$89

2 year certification
with this coupon

Medical Marijuana Certifications



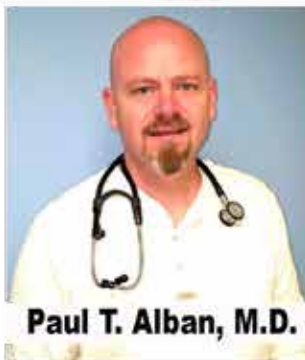
Muskegon
231-571-9400

Grand Rapids
616-719-0441



**Good luck to our patients in
high school football playoffs!!!**

**Accepting new
patients!**



PortCityPediatrics.com