

Devils Lake football remains No. 4 after winning fourth straight game

By Mojo Hill, Journal Sports

Devils Lake was ranked No. 4 in Division AA football for the third straight week in the NDAPSSA polls released Monday. It received 41 points — the most it’s had thus far after getting 33 last week.

The Firebirds are coming off a 41-27 win over Jamestown. They’ve now won four straight, three of which came on their home field.

It’s the first time since 2021 that the Devils Lake football team has won four in a row. One more win would give the Firebirds their first five-game winning streak since 2010, when they won six six straight.

Of the four wins, only one has come against a ranked team. That was the Week 2 victory over Central Cass, which the coach and players have largely credited with igniting their recent success. Central Cass was ranked No. 3 at the time and sits at No. 5 now.

After three straight home games, Devils Lake goes on the road to face unranked Bismarck St. Mary’s this Friday. It’s the second of five region contests. St. Mary’s is 1-4 overall and 0-1 in region play.

The following week,



Devils Lake wide receiver Max Palmer (Photo by Cameron Carlson)

on Oct. 10, the Firebirds travel to face No. 1 Minot North. It’ll be a rematch of last year’s first-round playoff game. Minot North is 5-0. It’s the only AA team ranked above Kindred, which beat Devils Lake 42-12 in Week 1. Minot North is the heavy consensus No. 1, too, with 17 first-place votes

compared to Kindred’s four. The duel with Minot North is the biggest test left on Devils Lake’s regular-season schedule. The Firebirds will be the underdog there, while their ranking and record make them a favorite against St. Mary’s, Dickinson and Watford City.

In the West standings, Minot North, Devils Lake and Watford City are all 1-0. By overall record, Devils Lake sits in second place at 4-1. Watford City is 3-2, most recently scratching out a 20-17 win over Dickinson. The bottom three teams are all 1-4. The Firebirds are

making a strong bid to at least finish second in the region, in which case they’d host a playoff game. In 2024, they squeaked into the playoffs as the fourth seed from the East. It was their first playoff appearance since making it five straight years from 2017-2021.

Division AA footballMi-not North (17) – 100 points (Previous: 1) Kindred (4) – 88 points (Previous: 2) Grand Forks Central – 57 points (Previous: 3) Devils Lake – 41 points (Previous: 4) Central Cass – 29 points (Previous: 5) Received votes: None

Firebirds led by Brooklyn Johnson in Border Battle



Photo via Devils Lake XC Facebook

By Mojo Hill, Journal Sports

Earlier this season, Devils Lake cross country coach Nick Kavli said he was excited to see Brooklyn Johnson race against a higher level of competition.

He wanted people to challenge her, given that she came in first place in each of her first two varsity meets.


She got that experience Saturday in the Border Battle in Grand Forks. And it worked to her benefit — she set her personal best in a strong showing for Devils Lake against a host of teams from North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. There were more than 2,000 runners from sixth grade through varsity.

Johnson posted a time of 19:24.6 on Saturday. It was faster than her previous best by 27.2 seconds. The eighth-grader, in her first year running cross country, has beaten 20 minutes in all four varsity races she’s competed in. Johnson’s score placed her 17th among 186 contestants on Saturday. The Devils Lake girls’ team, overall, came in 13th out of 26 official placers with 362 points. Freshman Riley Schmiess was the second-fastest lady Firebird with a time of 20:11.5, good for 45th overall. It was her season record but not her personal record. Livia Nelson, Dottie Goss and Tenley Triepke placed 86th, 114th and 116th, respectively.

Elicia Nelson added a 131st-place finish with a personal-record 22:25.3. Ealynn Yoder rounded out the Firebirds’ varsity girls’ group in 138th, with a season-best 22:41.0. The Devils Lake boys, meanwhile, came in 22nd out of 29 official placers with 566 points. Junior Zane Bennett led the way, finishing 57th out of 200 runners. He ran a season-record 16:55.9. It was the second-fastest time of his career, short of only the personal record of 16:38.9 he set on Oct. 14, 2023. Those are the only two times he’s beaten 17 minutes; he finished above 17 minutes in all of his 2024 races. Freshman Isaac Kraft continued his strong season as the second-fastest

Firebird in the meet. He came in 68th with a personal-record 17:06.1. His previous best was 17:35.4, set on Sept. 11. He’s shaved nearly 90 seconds off his time from the season-opening meet. Aiden Ackerman, at 118th overall, also set a personal record of 18:05.9. Rylan Bennett, in 161st place, set a personal record of 19:05.3. The Devils Lake boys were rounded out by Keifer Wanner, Blake Nelson and Ty Kremer. Wanner and Nelson each set a personal record; Wanner ran a 19:24.4 for 172nd, while Nelson ran a 19:42.1 for 184th. Full results from the meet, including all the placers in JV and below, can be found on athletic.net.

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