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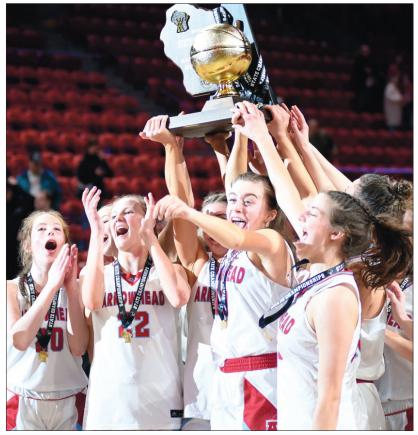
DIVISION 2: Pewaukee girls



Pewaukee junior Amy Terrian, left, and sophomore Giselle Janowski hold up the gold ball in front of the Pirates' student section following the WIAA Division 2 state championship game March 9 at the Resch Center in Ashwaubenon.

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DIVISION 1: Arrowhead girls



Dave Radcliffe/Freeman Staff

Arrowhead's girls basketball team celebrates with the gold ball after winning the WIAA Division 1 state championship game March 9 at the Resch Center in Ashwaubenon.

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WIAA DIVISION 1 STATE GIRLS BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP Arrowhead 69, Neenah 59

Arrowhead claims first state title since '91

By Dave Radcliffe dradcliffe@conleynet.com 262-513-2655

ASHWAUBENON — Allie Ziebell may have been the talk of the state. But Natalie Kussow made her statement loud and clear.

The star sophomore guard put the finishing touches on Arrowhead's WIAA Division 1 state championship victory, scoring 10 of the Warhawks' final 12 points to give the program its first gold ball in 33 years with a 69-59 triumph over Neenah on March 9 at the Resch Center.

"It's awesome. It feels so unreal," Kussow said. "I'm so grateful just to have the opportunity to be here and just play with my team."

The ever-humble Kussow stood with the ball near mid-court as the seconds ticked away and the third-seeded Rockets (24-6) waived the white flag. It wasn't until the final horn sounded that Kussow let her guard down and celebrated Arrowhead's first title since 1991 with her teammates.

Kussow was brilliant once again, finishing with a team-high 26 points, eight rebounds, six assists and four steals.

"She could easily just camp on the 3-point line, and we could have an offense where we pass it to her and she shoots it and we'd probably be pretty good," Arrowhead coach Ron Reichle said. "But she trusts her teammates. They work together"

The Warhawks were rewarded for Kussow trusting her teammates on this night.

At various moments, one after the other stepped up. Senior guard Erica Bub scored all 12 of her points in the first half to help top-seeded Arrowhead (27-3) jump out to a 34-29 halftime lead. Senior guard Abby Robel added 10 points, while sophomoreguard Libby Gilmore and senior reserve Taylor Thimmesch added eight points apiece.

apiece.

"Me, Erica and Taylor have been playing for together for so long and we have that connection," Robel said. "But the sophomores coming in have just completed our team and playing with the seniors and then the sophomores all together, we've just been having so much

Ziebell, a UConn recruit and Wisconsin Ms. Basketball winner, scored a game-high 35 points to cap her outstanding high school career. She paid her respects to the likes of Kussow and Hartford junior Makena Christian, the two fellow stand-



Dave Radcliffe/Freeman Sta

Arrowhead sophomore guard Natalie Kussow scores a breakaway layup during the WIAA Division 1 state championship game March 9 at the Resch Center in Ashwaubenon.

outs she went head-to-head with this past weekend.

"They bring so much energy and it's so fun to play against those great players," Ziebell said. "Wisconsin basketball I think goes so unnoticed. I think there's so much great talent here in every division."

Ziebell and her head coach, Andy Braunel, also noted the fatigue factor that came with playing a highlycontested game the night before against Hartford. While the Warhawks did have an easier time with their semifinal opponent, neither team goes deep into its bench.

"This is the kind of thing that we do because we are just really, really

good athletes," Reichle said. "We don't have a really, really tall person. So we just try to be as aggressive as we possibly can."

Neither team led by double figures in the first half. It was Kussow with a driving layup to put Arrowhead up 19-11 with 10 minutes, 35 seconds left until intermission. The Rockets battled back to knot the score at 22-22, but the Warhawks opened the lead back up to seven before a floater by Ziebell made it 34-29 through 18 minutes of action.

Neenah wrestled back its first lead since the opening stages of the contest when sophomore guard Rowan Klesmit (14 points) scored

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Dave Radcliffe/Freeman Sta

Arrowhead senior guard Abby Robel shoots against Neenah sophomore guard Rowan Klesmit during the WIAA Division 1 state championship game March 9 at the Resch Center.

off a steal to make it 38-36 with 14:46 to go. Two-and-a-half minutes later, Ziebell buried a step-back three to give the Rockets a 43-40 edge.

But Arrowhead answered with a critical 12-0 run, going ahead for good with 11:33 left on a fast-break score by sophomore guard Presley Samz. Gilmore's driving layup pushed the lead to 52-43 with 8:15 on the clock.

"Shots that were going last night, you just see the legs just weren't quite there," Braunel said. "I was concerned going into it."

The lead re-entered double figures on a Kussow three, making it 57-46 with 7:10 to play. Neenah would make one last push, closing within 59-55 on a corner trey by Ziebell.

But it was all Kussow from there. She went 4-for-4 from the line down the stretch and countered every attempt by Neenah to stay in the game. The exclamation point came with 31 seconds remaining when Ziebell lost her footing and Kussow took it the other way for an uncontested layup that doubled as a victory lap.

"It's just so much fun being around these people," Reichle said..
"They worked for it. We talked about one day at a time and they really bought into everything we were doing this year. It's awesome

you can tell them OK, this is the day that you've been wanting to have. So now we got to show up, we got to do it, and these guys were awesome."

Kussow, the Classic 8 Conference Player of the Year, was 9 of 18 from the field. The Warhawks outscored the Rockets, 38-12, in the paint and didn't allow a single fast-break point.

"We've been working hard in practice just to be able to prepare for this moment," Kussow said.

It marks the third state title in program history for the Warhawks, also winning it all in 1988 under Pete von Allmen. They become the third consecutive D1 state champion from the Classic 8, piggybacking on Kettle Moraine's back-to-back crowns in 2022 and 2023.

Reichle, who also coached Arrowhead back in the 2000s, was grateful to be hired full time last May by Activities Director Ryan Mangan after spending the 2022-23 season as the interim coach. In just the second season of his second stint, he guided the Warhawks to the promised land.

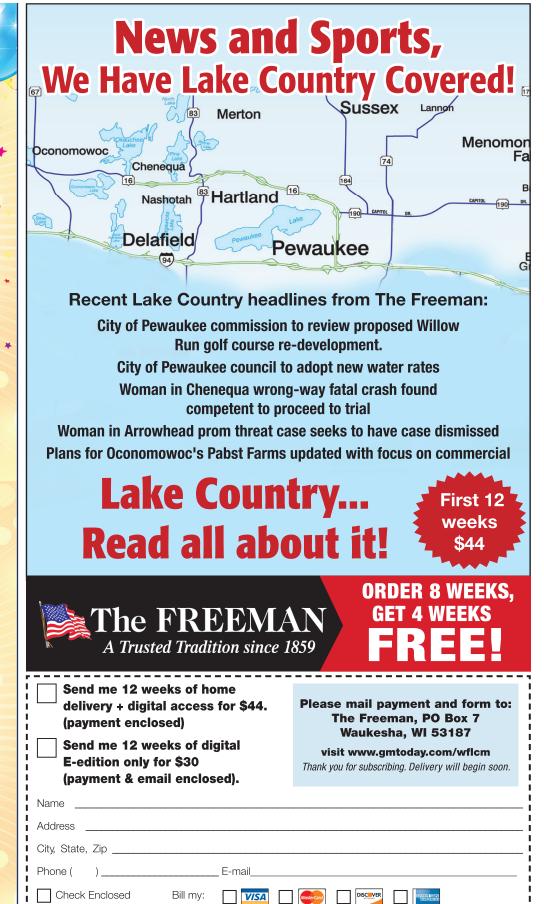
"It's awesome. If I didn't get to be with these people every day, it would have been just a huge disappointment," Reichle said. "So I thank him (Mangan) and I thank these people and it's just been awesome. It just hasn't sunk in yet."

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WIAA DIVISION 2 STATE GIRLS BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP Pewaukee 60, Notre Dame 52



Dave Radcliffe/Freeman Staff

Pewaukee junior guard/forward Anna Terrian shoots a three over Notre Dame junior guard Morgan Gokey during the WIAA Division 2 state championship game March 9 at the Resch Center.

3rd time's the charm

Pirates take down Tritons for program's first state title

By Dave Radcliffe dradcliffe@conleynet.com 262-513-2655

ASHWAUBENON — The emotion was palpable on the face of Amy Terrian.

Two years ago on this very stage as a freshman, Terrian and Pewaukee's girls basketball team watched Notre Dame celebrate at their expense after winning its second consecutive WIAA Division 2 state title.

As the final horn sounded, Terrian immediately offered a comforting embrace to teammate Sarah Newcomer. She then promised in the postgame press conference she'd one day help the Pirates bring home a gold ball.

That day, as it turned out, was March 9. This time as the clock hit zero and the Resch Center scoreboard read 60-52 in favor of Pewaukee, Terrian euphorically embraced sophomore teammate Giselle Janowski. That elation turned into tears,

the moment overwhelming the 5-foot-9 junior guard/forward — at least until that gold ball was in her hands, as she showed off her long jump skills to wrench the trophy away from head coach Jim Reuter during the postgame ceremony.

"I think everything happens for a reason," Terrian said. "I think the Lord put us in that path two years ago to fall short and to learn from it, grow from it, seek after Him.

"It's kind of unbelievable that we just did it."

Believe it. The Pirates more than earned

The second-seeded Tritons (28-2) were seeking their record fourth state title in a row, as no other girls basketball team in WIAA history had ever four-peated. On the

flip side, No. 1-seeded Pewaukee (29-1) was in search of its first championship in program history.

"Every morning looking at two silver medals, that's tough," Terrian said. "But I think each year we grew as a team, we got closer, we got stronger.

"'G' (Janowski) said come out with that gut-wrenching feeling in your stomach the last two years and just pound them."

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Dave Radcliffe/Freeman Staff

Pewaukee junior guard Kennedy Retherford tries to score against Notre Dame senior guard Paige DeMoulin, left, and junior guard Peyton Musial during the WIAA Division 2 state championship game March 9 at the Resch Center.

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Dave Badcliffe/Freeman Staff

Pewaukee junior guard/forward Giselle Janowski is fouled by Notre Dame senior guard/forward Gracie Grzesk during the WIAA Division 2 state championship game March 9 at the Resch Center.

Pewaukee

The hammer met the nail in the early going. Notre Dame turned the ball over on 10 of its first 12 possessions, and the Pirates opened up a 15-4 lead.

"We were on our heels a little bit to start said. "We knew they were gonna blitz ball screens, blitz handoffs, and we just didn't react to it very well for some reason.'

The past two years in the state final, Notre Dame gradually built a double-digit lead on Pewaukee and clamped down from there. The Pirates not only refused to let that happen the third time around, but managed to fend off every surge the Tritons made.

'They play so intense and they're so relentless, and they're always kind of able to dictate and have their way," Reuter said. "They're big, they're strong, they're physical. But to see our kids not back down today was very, very impressive.'

Junior guard Trista Fayta, who had a team-high 13 points but shot 6 of 15 from the field and didn't make a three, brought Notre Dame within 21-19 after a three-point play. Then a driving layup by junior guard Peyton Musial (10 points) completed the comeback with 4 minutes, 37 seconds left in the first half. Two minutes later, senior score with a three.

But the Pirates ended the half on a crucial 6-0 run, taking the lead for good on a pair of free throws by Janowski, who led all scorers with 20 points, with 2:27 to go until

"My mindset was get down hill, get them in foul trouble, and kind of just take their key players out of the game and allow us to

get on runs," Janowski said. Notre Dame had three players whistled for two fouls in the first half, including 6-

foot senior and Wisconsin recruit Gracie Grzesk, who was held to just five points. "We got in foul trouble in the first half and I think that hurt us," Rohde said. "She

(Janowski) pretty much took it to us in the post in the first half." That 6-0 spurt extended into a 16-0 surge

out of the break. Junior guard Kennedy Retherford was the catalyst, scoring 12 of her 14 points in the second half. She pushed the lead back to double figures with a transition bucket. then knocked down a three before Terrian hit one of her own to make it 42-26 with 15:32 remaining.

"She's kind of really come on this tournament," Reuter said of Retherford. "I think that's why we're here. We're able to go four or five kids deep and you've got to guard them all."

But the Tritons had a couple more surges of their own left in them.

Grzesk found Musial to cut the deficit to 44-41 at the 7:45 mark. Then Fayta scored off the game," Notre Dame coach Sara Rohde a steal to bring Notre Dame within 53-52 with 2:39 to go.

But the Pirates, a year older and wiser since last year's runner-up finish, wouldn't

"It was just a little frustrating how we couldn't get a stop or turned it over and then they'd score and keep getting the lead," said Fayta, as the Tritons never led.

Retherford righted the ship when she scored from the post on the other end. Then Fayta had her pocket picked and Pewaukee was able to milk the clock for over a minute before Janowski was fouled. She would make 3 of 4 free throws over the final 52 seconds to put the championship on ice.

'It happens so fast, it really does," Reuter said. "We're in a grinder, three minutes to go. All of a sudden it's over, we won. That's a testament to these kids and their toughness and their poise."

Terrian had 18 points and six assists. The Pirates, who also beat the Tritons 60-52 in the season opener, went 20 of 23 from the charity stripe.

"I don't think it's gonna soak in until maybe tomorrow," Terrian said.

Terrian's emotions were also fueled by sharing the achievement with her twin sister, Anna, and what she's dealt with over the past nine months. Anna was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes last summer, but both committed to Michigan State in the fall, and now both can finally call themselves state champions.

"This is what we dream of being little kids and winning that thing and to do with your best friend, your best teammate and your sister is just incredible," Anna Terrian said. "I have no words. It's just so excit-

Janowski remembered being in eighth grade watching the Pirates lose to Notre Dame the first time at the Resch Center. Now, like her and the Terrian twins' older brothers, she has a gold medal.

They've (the Pewaukee community) watched us lose. They've been with us when we fail and to now finally be with us when we've had success, you can't describe it. It's just an amazing feeling," Janowski

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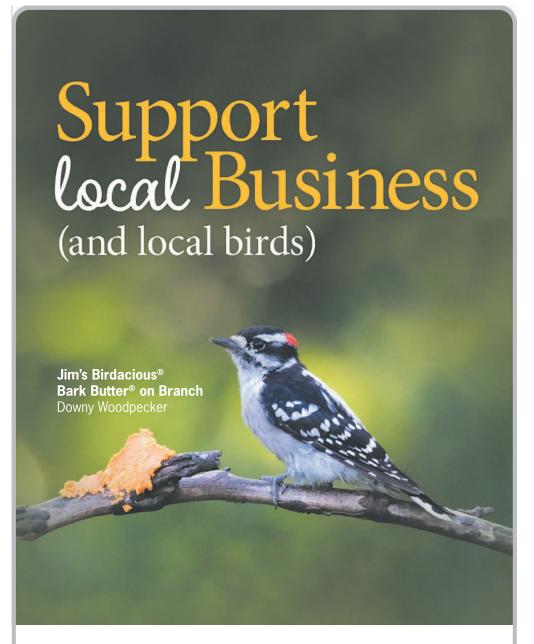
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