

SPORTS

SNOW DAYS

Local track teams adapt to cold, snowy spring

By Tom Miller
Grand Forks Herald

Grand Forks

It would take an awful lot to unseat the worst track and field spring for the career of Grand Forks Central boys coach Sean Allan.

His first year as head coach came during the 1997 flood of the Red River which forced the town to evacuate.

This spring, however, ranks No. 2.

“We’re encouraging guys to control what we can control,” Allan said. “We can’t control the weather, but we can control our attitudes and making the most of our competitions.”

With lots of snow on the ground locally in the second week of April, Greater Grand Forks track and field coaches are doing their best to battle the elements.

“A lot of North Dakota teams are already planning to go to South Dakota, and we’re planning to do Minneapolis,” Allan said. “Even once the snow melts, the fields are wet and sloppy. You can’t throw or jump in the pits.”

Central and Grand Forks Red River are hoping for a first outdoor meet this weekend in Minot.

For Allan, he thinks discus throwers have it the worst



Nick Nelson / Grand Forks Herald

Grand Forks Central runner Quinn Roehl, center, keeps a steady pace in the first laps of the boys 1,500 meter race during the EDC Indoor Meet at the Fritz Pollard Jr. Athletic Center in Grand Forks on April 2, 2022.

this spring — at least some level of shot put can take place indoors and javelin throwers can workout with javelin-like objects.

Central thrower Ethan Thomas, for example, throws the discus but not the shot

put. “We’re six weeks into the season, and he hasn’t competed,” Allan said.

Red River boys coach Jeff Bakke said this spring has been especially brutal for track and field because

driving conditions have meant even indoor meets have been called off. For example, when UND has been closed due to bad weather, the indoor Fritz Pollard Jr. Athletic Center is unavailable.

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UND fills defensive needs with Zmolek

By Brad E. Schlossman
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — UND has filled a major need on its defensive core.

Bennett Zmolek, who played one season at Minnesota State-Mankato, committed to UND after making a visit Tuesday.

“Obviously, everyone knows about North Dakota and the program it is, the atmosphere it brings and how the community comes to support us,” Zmolek said. “I’m very excited to step on the ice for the first time.”

“(The visit) was the first time I ever saw the rink and everything. Just seeing it, my jaw hit the floor.”

Zmolek, of Rochester, Minn., played 28 games on Minnesota State’s 2022 NCAA Frozen Four runner-up team. He scored two goals and seven points, earning all-rookie team honors in the Central Collegiate Hockey Association.

He sat out last season recovering from hip surgery, which was completed Nov. 3.

“Everything is going well,” said Zmolek, who started skating again in February. “So far, so good with everything on the ice.”

Zmolek will have three years of college eligibility remaining at UND.

He brings a number of attributes UND needs on its back end, which will have eight new members in 2023-24.

Size? Yes. He’s 6-foot-3, 195 pounds.

Defensive reliability? Yes. He was a plus-12 at Minnesota State.

“He takes pride in defending and that part of the game first,” said his father Doug, who played 467 NHL games with the Dallas Stars, San Jose Sharks, Los Angeles Kings and Chicago Blackhawks. “Then, he works toward the offensive side.”

Physicality? Yes.

“I want to be hard on the forwards every night,” Zmolek said. “I want to make sure whatever they get, they have to work super hard for.”

Right-handed shot? Yes.

Of the five potential incoming freshmen and one previously committed transfer, only one is right-handed.

The Fighting Hawks appear to have six of eight spots solidified on the defense.

Alaska captain Garrett Pyke, a senior, and Zmolek are coming in as transfers.

Four rookies are expected to come — Vegas Golden Knights draft pick Abram Wiebe of the Chilliwack Chiefs, Minnesota Wild draft pick Nate Benoit of the Waterloo Black Hawks, draft-eligible Jake Livanavage of the Chicago Steel and right-handed Tanner Komzak of the Whitecourt Wolverines.

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GGF teams at-a-glance

RED RIVER BOYS

- **Coach:** Jeff Bakke.
- **2022 finish:** Eighth at state meet.
- **Key returners:** Sr. Logan Arason (second in javelin, 13th in shot put, state discus champion); sr. Lukas Heydt (second in 300 hurdles, seventh in 110 hurdles); sr. Jonah Dafoe (eighth in 800); soph. Elijah Dafoe (13th in mile, 13th in 3,200); sr. Quinn Nelson (11th in javelin); sr. Carter Byron (16th in long jump); soph. Isaiah Gaye (15th in triple jump); sr. Caleb Severson; sr. Mason Reynolds; sr. Mike Mallory; jr. Grant Hoffarth; jr. Ben Strand; sr. Hudson Flom; jr. Micah Larsen-Schmidt; soph. JB Walters; soph. Brody Andrade; sr. Jack Kouba; soph. Pearce Parks.
- **Top newcomers:** Sr. Jaden Chine; sr. Amir Dorudian; sr. Cooper Schweigert; jr. Zach Oehlke; jr. Josh Neil; soph. Kyle Schafer.
- **Coach Bakke says:** “This is a very senior-heavy group. We’ve been working with a lot of these guys since they were in middle school. We’ve known for a number of years that it could be a talented, big group of seniors. We cover all event groups pretty well in terms of balance of all the different events. We have a huge group of sophomores and some of them will play a role at the varsity level this year but we’re also looking forward to them developing over the next couple of years.”

CENTRAL BOYS

- **Coach:** Sean Allan.
- **2022 finish:** Sixth at state meet.
- **Key returners:** Sr. Quinn Roehl (third in 800, fifth in mile, eighth in 3,200); jr. Ethan Thomas (13th in javelin); sr. Navy Oss; sr. Cade Lindseth; sr. Zach Kuznia; sr. Kevin Kubat; jr. Curtis Sande.
- **Top newcomers:** Soph. Danny Suedel; soph. James Fewster; soph. Aidan Fiala.
- **Coach Allan says:** “We have 30 freshmen out, and I’m really excited about the freshmen class. We have to keep working on improving every

day. The leadership of my senior group really stands out. Quinn came in to the season in great shape and is ready to put out some impressive times.”

EGF SENIOR HIGH BOYS

- **Coach:** Roger Hanson.
- **2022 finish:** Eighth place at Section 8AA meet.
- **Key returners:** Jr. Hunter Jordheim (seventh in mile in Section 8AA, ninth in 3,200); sr. Kaden Vanyo (11th in triple jump); sr. Cooper Smith (second in 300 hurdles, 10th in long jump); sr. Caleb Zejdlik (21st in shot put); soph. Messi Kalenda (26th in shot put, 19th in discus); soph. Maverick Martine (13th in discus); sr. Cole Olson (seventh in pole vault); sr. Braden Carlson; jr. Jace Fore.
- **Top newcomers:** Jr. Juvenal Chavez (24th in triple jump, 23rd in long jump); soph. Jaxon Mahar (20th in mile, 17th in 3,200); soph. Weston Mahar (24th in mile); sr. Jason Briones; jr. Cooper Boushee.
- **Coach Hanson says:** “They work very hard, and they’re good teammates. I know track can be an individual sport, but they’re into their teammates doing well. They’re good practice guys.”

RED RIVER GIRLS

- **Coach:** Adam Eckert.
- **2022 finish:** Ninth at state meet.
- **Key returners:** Jr. Jocelyn Schiller (third in 800, fourth in mile); sr. Lauren Dosch (seventh in 800, 10th in mile); soph. Ellery White; jr. Morgan Hartze (10th in 800); soph. Sophie Brakke (300 hurdles, 12th in triple jump); soph. Ella Weippert (fourth in javelin); sr. Lauryn Rydell (third in high jump); eighth-grader Jocelyne Hoefs.
- **Top newcomers:** Fr. Madeline Look; seventh-grader Danielle Buroko; soph. Brenna Shock.
- **Coach Eckert says:** “I think we have another good shot for our 4x800 and 4x400 with Schiller and Dosch and a couple of others. They’ve run

good times. Dosch has run a 2:15 (in the 800) and to do that indoors was pretty impressive. Schiller ran a sub-minute (400) in her first meet coming off the basketball season. Sophie is looking strong this year with offseason training. Hopefully, we can get a better performance with our short races but our distance and middle distance will be our strength. We’re looking forward to seeing how that pans out throughout the season.”

GF CENTRAL GIRLS

- **Coach:** Lindi Chadwick
- **2022 finish:** Didn’t score points at state meet.
- **Key returners:** Sr. Kaylee Baker (state qualifier in discus); sr. Camille Finney (11th in pole vault at state); soph. Ellie Walsh; jr. Emily Arnold; jr. Brynn Moen; jr. Aria Kindseth; sr. Kiara Holweger.
- **Top newcomers:** Fr. Jacie Reardon.
- **Coach Chadwick says:** “It’s a smaller team than previous years, but we’re able to fit in and compete in every event. That’s what I was a little worried as a new coach. As a small team, we’re able to be very diverse and fill all of our events and be competitive.”

EGF SENIOR HIGH GIRLS

- **Coach:** Liesa Hanson.
- **2022 finish:** 10th place for EGF girls at Section 8AA meet
- **Key returners:** Sr. Lydia Floden (10th in mile, 15th in 3,200); sr. Jessa Robles (26th in mile); jr. Shali Anderson (ninth in 100 hurdles); sr. Katelyn Kovarik (29th in shot put, 25th in discus); soph. Camryn Adams (15h in long jump); sr. Allyson Batko (22nd in triple jump); soph. Katie Allard; eighth-grader Jerzey Perkerewicz; sr. Grace Jordheim; sr. Cassidy Bustamante; sr. Tatem Spokely; soph. Erin Wolff.
- **Coach Hanson says:** “Even though we have quite a few seniors out, we’re still kind of a small, developing team. We have a lot of girls who can place and do well. We’re working on filling events. We don’t do that well right now.”

Five years and 200 starts later

Bison senior Brookshaw relishing life on the road

By Jeff Kolpack
The Forum

FARGO — The trip to play Texas Tech was such a long and winding road that eventually the North Dakota State baseball players turned to humor to get through it. For senior Peter Brookshaw, it went something like this:

Flight out of Fargo on Thursday got canceled because of the winter storm last week that affected air travel in the Midwest. That split the traveling party into different groups, with Brookshaw among the last three players to get to Lubbock, Texas.

On Friday, players were up

at 2:30 a.m. for a 5 a.m. flight out of Minneapolis, which got delayed. Flying standby, they found their way to Dallas, with Brookshaw getting into Lubbock an hour and a half before the game.

“You just try and have fun with it,” he said. “Definitely a character builder. It just shows how mentally tough and how resilient this team is. We could have folded, especially after the long travel day but we just stuck with it and it paid off for us.”

NDSU got the last laugh, beating the 23rd-ranked Red Raiders 8-1 before almost 3,700 fans at Rip Griffin Park.

The Bison will hit the road again this weekend resuming Summit League play at the University of St. Thomas. For the senior Brookshaw, it will represent another milestone of character building: Saturday will be his 200th career start at NDSU.

He’s currently sixth in team history in that category and needs only 11 more to move into second place behind all-time leader Bennett Hostetler, who started 225 games. The Bison have 21 regular season games remaining plus the Summit tourney, which they host May 24-27.

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Tim Sanger / NDSU Athletics

North Dakota State second baseman Peter Brookshaw will start his 200th career game this weekend at St. Thomas University (Minn.).

BRIEFS

Reports: Cubs nearing extension with OF Ian Happ

The Chicago Cubs are finalizing an extension with outfielder Ian Happ, multiple outlets reported Wednesday.

ESPN reported that it's a three-year, \$61 million deal to run from 2024-26. The Cubs avoided arbitration in January by signing Happ to a one-year, \$10.85 million contract for this season.

He made his first All-Star team and won his first Gold Glove in 2022, batting .271 with 17 homers and 72 RBIs in 158 games.

Entering Wednesday, Happ was batting .314 with a .981 OPS through 10 games.

Happ, 28, is a career 250 hitter with 105 homers and 314 RBIs in 688 games since making his Cubs debut in 2017.

Field Level Media

Mets closer Edwin Diaz hopes to return this season

New York Mets injured closer Edwin Diaz said Wednesday he hopes to

return this season after surgery to repair his torn patellar tendon last month.

Diaz spoke to reporters Wednesday for the first time since suffering the injury after a World Baseball Classic game last month. The expectations on recovery from surgery were six to eight months. A six-month recovery would be September.

"If everything goes well, I think I can be back sooner than that eight months," Diaz told reporters. "Everything is going in the right direction right now ... and the doctors say I'm doing great. So I'm really happy."

Diaz was injured celebrating Puerto Rico's victory over the Dominican Republic in Miami on March 15.

The right-hander closed out the game and was celebrating with his teammates in a huddle when he injured his knee. He dropped to the ground and was carried off the field to a wheelchair.

David Robertson has the only two saves for

the Mets so far this season.

Diaz, 29, posted 32 saves in each of the past two seasons with the Mets, earning his second All-Star Game nod in 2022. He was an All-Star with the Seattle Mariners in 2018, when he led the majors with 57 saves.

He's 16-29 with a 2.93 ERA with 205 saves in seven seasons.

Diaz signed a five-year, \$102 million contract with the Mets in the offseason.

Field Level Media

Former Stars forward Raymond Sawada dies at 38

Former second-round pick and Dallas Stars forward Raymond Sawada suffered a fatal heart attack while playing hockey earlier this week. He was 38 years old.

Sawada played in just 11 games for the Stars from 2008-11, scoring one goal. He played in 287 games in the American Hockey League.

"It is with heavy hearts we mourn the passing of former Stars player, Raymond Sawada," the

Stars said in a tweet.

In a note posted to a GoFundMe page, Sawada's family said he died Monday. He retired from professional hockey in 2016 after a stint in the Asian League and returned to his home in Richmond, B.C., to become a firefighter.

Sawada is survived by his wife, Nicole, and daughters, ages 9 and 6.

Field Level Media

Jake Paul to box UFC star Nate Diaz in Dallas in August

Jake Paul and UFC star Nate Diaz have scheduled an eight-round boxing match on Aug. 5 in Dallas.

The bout at the American Airlines Center will be contested at 185 pounds, organizers confirmed to ESPN on Wednesday.

Paul, 26, suffered his first loss in seven career fights in his most recent match, a split decision against Tommy Fury on Feb. 26 in Saudi Arabia.

"My last fight didn't end the way I wanted, but the result was the best thing that could

have happened to my professional boxing aspirations," Paul said in a statement. "Now, the world thinks I am vulnerable, when all I am is more focused than ever. My team wanted me to take an easy fight like KSI next, but that's not how I am built. Nate Diaz is considered one of the most bad-ass fighters of all time, but he and his team have been running their mouths for too long."

It will be the first professional boxing match for Diaz, 37, who owns an MMA record of 21-13. His last UFC fight was a win by submission against Tony Ferguson on Sept. 10, 2022, in Las Vegas.

Diaz is probably best known for handing Conor McGregor his first UFC loss in 2016.

"Besides Canelo (Alvarez), he's the biggest thang in boxing," Diaz said of Paul in a statement. "I'm here to conquer that. I'm the King of combat sports and then I'm headed back to get my UFC belts. I (messed) up Conor for acting out and now here

I am again, like a Super Hero of the Real Fight game, the King of the Real Fight game."

The fight is being co-produced by Paul's Most Valuable Promotions and Diaz's Real Fight Inc. The pay-per-view bout will be distributed globally by DAZN.

Field Level Media

Avalanche re-sign forward Callahan Burke for 2023-24

The Colorado Avalanche re-signed forward Callahan Burke for the 2023-24 season.

Terms of the deal announced Wednesday were not disclosed.

Burke, 26, registered 37 points (16 goals, 21 assists) in 68 games for the AHL's Colorado Eagles this season.

He appeared in two games with the Avalanche on Dec. 7 and 9, recording two shots, two blocks and one hit.

A Massachusetts native, Burke played four seasons at Notre Dame and was team captain as a 2019-20 senior.

Field Level Media



Minnesota State athletics

Bennett Zmolek skates the puck up the ice during a 2021-22 game with Minnesota State-Mankato

ZMOLEK

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Draft-eligible Andrew Strathmann of the Youngstown Phantoms is a possibility.

The Fighting Hawks will target one more veteran defenseman in the transfer portal, too.

Zmolek's hockey background

Zmolek grew up in a hockey-playing family.

His dad played for the University of Minnesota before embarking on an eight-year NHL career.

His oldest brother, Riese, played four years at Minnesota State from 2017-21. He's now with

the Iowa Wild, the top minor-league affiliate of the Minnesota Wild.

The middle brother, Will, just completed a four-year career at Bemidji State. Will ranked No. 3 in all of college hockey in average minutes per game last season with 26:16. He signed an NHL deal with the Philadel-

phia Flyers last month.

"I would say he's very, very similar to his brothers," Doug said.

Bennett, who will turn 21 next week, played in the USHL for Cedar Rapids and Youngstown before beginning college.

After a solid first season with the Mavericks, last season was difficult

because of the surgery.

"It was mentally draining," he said. "Figuring out I had to have surgery and being out of the lineup the whole year after going to the Frozen Four, it was pretty tough. I've been motivated to push and push and not get in that situation again."

Zmolek entered the NCAA transfer portal April 4 after Mavericks head coach Mike Hastings left for Wisconsin.

"I got contacted by a couple other teams," Zmolek said. "But with North Dakota, it's hard to pass up on them with all the great players they've produced."

TRACK

From Page 7

"It has been tough mentally for kids," Bakke said. "It's the amount of snow still around that's been challenging. It has been a tough few weeks, and it hasn't been until just recently that any predicted weather has been positive."

The Pollard has been a blessing for local track and field coaches.

"Without that, we'd be totally out of luck," said Bakke, who has more than 100 kids on his roster. "We'd be stuck in hallways and the basement. Going to UND has allowed us to work on some technical events that we wouldn't normally."

The Grand Forks teams have been practicing at the Pollard when it's available, which often means at night.

East Grand Forks Senior

High has competed in two indoor meets at Concordia College in Moorhead.

The Green Wave are also scheduled to host indoor meets at the Pollard each of the next two weekends.

"We're getting very good at making practices interesting inside," EGF girls coach Liesa Hanson said. "We're getting kids in shape, but we're still not running outside. We just have to be as creative as we can be."

Both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks coaches have had to turn away many teams looking to be included in meets at UND.

"We tell the kids, even though we're competing, it's like practices (during indoor meets)," Hanson said. "This is where we're getting our track time."

We're hoping to help kids get in shape and explore some of the events and hopefully we can have an outdoor meet by the last week of April."

BROOKSHAW

From Page 1

"It know it's crazy but it's definitely flown by," Brookshaw said. "It's a testament to the guys in the locker room for my five years but it's been a great group of guys to be around and a great coaching staff as well."

Brookshaw has started games in 20 states including multiple trips to California, Texas and Florida. He's seen some of the best college baseball stadiums in the country against some of the best perennial programs in Division I like the University of Miami, Stanford, Long Beach State, Nebraska with this year taking the cake in that department with games at

Arizona State, Arizona, Texas and Texas Tech.

NDSU played Texas on a Tuesday and Wednesday in front of about 6,500 fans in both games.

"Just great trips," Brookshaw said. "It's something that you'll remember for the rest of your life."

There was the memorable trip to Hawaii in 2020 before COVID-19 shut down the season in mid-March of that year. There was the Summit tournament title in 2021 and a berth in the NCAA tournament, which put the Bison in the Stanford Regional. NDSU went 1-2 in that tourney, beating Nevada.

The risk in playing a tough schedule like this year is losing games. There's nothing like a morale boost than winning, but NDSU seems

to have weathered the 4-21 non-conference mark and is 4-2 in the Summit heading into the St. Thomas league series.

"I think we've done a great job keeping our head down and sticking with it," Brookshaw said. "Even during that losing stretch we were playing good baseball. But those (Power 5) lineups, there are no holes and they have good hitters throughout their lineup. Our record could have completely flipped if some of those games went our way."

Brookshaw is leading the Bison in hitting at .315 with 41 hits in 130 at bats. He's added power to his attack in the last couple of seasons and has a team-leading nine home runs. Perhaps more impressive, as an

infielder, he has yet to commit an error.

It's the most impressive NDSU career for a player from small-town Prescott, Wis., since former Bison football player Nick Schommer, who spent time in the NFL with the Tennessee Titans for a couple of seasons. Schommer also played baseball for NDSU for one year.

Brookshaw remembers going to youth football camps where Schommer was a coach.

"He hit like 10 bombs in high school, which is crazy for like 23 games," Brookshaw said.

At NDSU, that's a fraction of the number of games that Brookshaw has started.

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