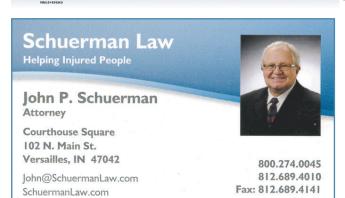




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BATESVILLE BULLDOGS



Batesville poses major threat

Rob Lafary SPORTS WRITER

It has been eight years since Batesville's girls and boys teams swept Ripley County Tournament championships but now the Bulldogs believe going for the clean sweep again is a very real possibility.

With the potential title games being against South Ripley, it was in fact the Raiders who Batesville beat in both championship games back in 2015. But the Bulldogs will have to get past Jac-Cen-Del in order for a chance at repeating history, a nemesis that beat both clubs in last year's tourney.

The Lady Bulldogs have wins against both Jac-Cen-Del and South Ripley already this season and the team is one of two -Milan being the second- who won a holiday tournament over Christmas Break. Batesville won the Mohawk Invitational at Waldron with wins over the host school and Tri-West and did some in such dominant fashion that you have to believe head coach Mitchell Taylor's team might be the slightest of favorites in this week's girls tournament. Even though a five-game losing streak stood prior to the two games at Waldron. Batesville found a way to quickly rebound and was impressive in its



ability to use its post play to lead the way to victory. Alyson Peters, who leads the team in scoring and rebounding, is only getting better as a sophomore and Lydia Haskamp is not only dangerous on the boards but provides another option on the blocks, mak-

and choose who to guard on the interior. Of course there are some other key players in the mix, and they'll gladly choose their spots off of drives and kick outs to the perimeter from their top two post players.

Now can that kind of ing defenses have to pick dominance and insideout play be consistent and break free of turnovers? We will just have to see but should both be successful then the Lady Bulldogs are one of the area's strongest teams and it makes them a difficult team to match up with. When it's inconsist-

BATESVILLE..... **CON'T TO PAGE B6**



PHOTOS BY RICH FOWLER

Whether it's Cade Kaiser, pictured at left, or Emma Weiler, pictured above, all of the team players are ready for the tourney.





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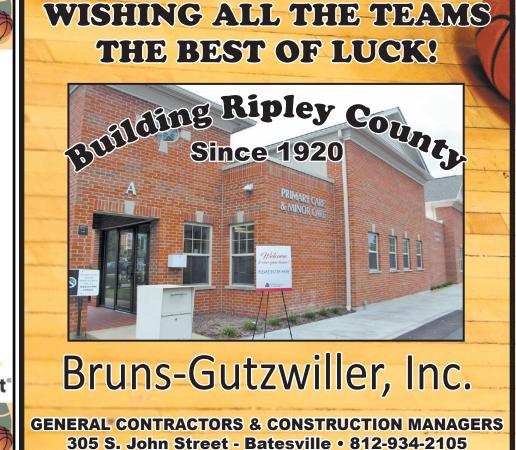
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JAC-CEN-DEL EAGLES



Eagles poised to fly high



PHOTOS BY RICH FOWLER

Reagan Hughes is pictured above with Devin Grieshop at right. The Eagles are ready!

Rob Lafary SPORTS WRITER

Jac-Cen-Del a contender in the Ripley County Tournament? It's a rather common occurrence and one Eagle team is coming into the week as a defending champion.

The Eagle boys won their first Ripley County title since 2007 a year ago with a 65-53 win over Milan and 58-46 victory over Batesville in the championship game while Jac-Cen-Del was knocked off 47-39 to South Ripley in the girl's championship game. That loss broke a streak of three-straight county titles for the Lady Ea-

A not so common occurrence is the Jac-Cen-Del girls team entering the county tourney with a sub .500 record, currently sitting at 6-9 against a competitive schedule. The Lady Eagles lost three-straight in the Triton Central Holiday Tournament last week and are limping into this week having lost five of their last six games. A 53-47 loss to 47 loss to Batesville are also included in those nine losses however one of the six wins is a 25-point win over Milan.

All three games against county teams took place in November which means Jac-Cen-Del has since improved and is in high hopes that a strenuous stretch of opponents only prepares them to come back this week against the local slate. The biggest key will be taking care of the basketball as the Lady Eagles are averaging 17 turnovers per game including some mistakes at times that have been costly in late-game situations. Dwindling down on those means Jac-Cen-Del's offense is able to get into a rnythm and gain possessions, another big factor that has been discussed throughout the season.

Jac-Cen-Del is at its best when the big three of Reagan Hughes, Olivia Neal and Julia Meyer are able to score in double figures while role players are able to contribute in addition. The Lady Eagles are 4-1 when being able to put together nights of 50-plus

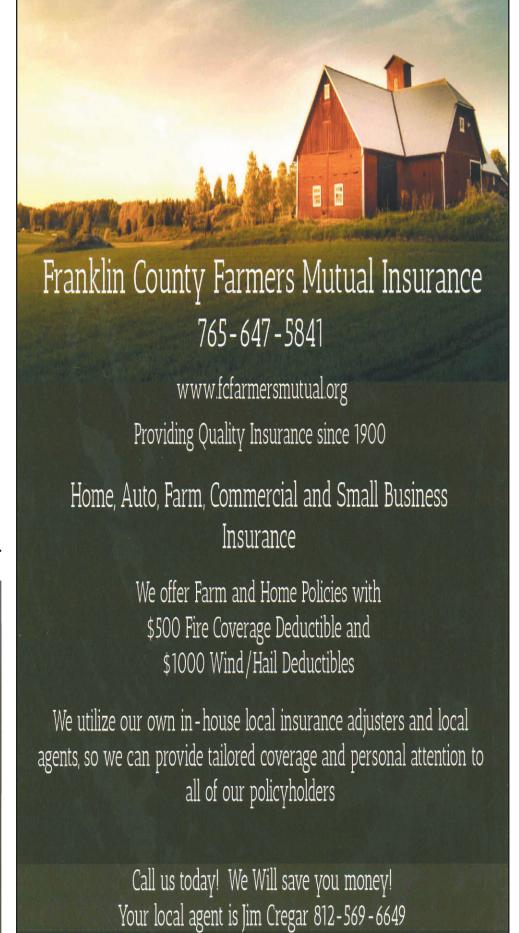
A rematch with Batesville looms not only for the girls but also for the Jac-Cen-Del boys who fell 69-59 to the Bulldogs on November 26, just four days after having beat South Ripley 65-60 in the season opener. Head coach Clint Bohman though has guided his troops well since opening weekend, having a 5-3 record which includes twostraight wins last week to close out the boys version of the Edinburgh Holiday Tournament.

The Eagles are going to rely heavily on big men Devin Grieshop and Matt Dickman and there's no question the team will need both, especially in round one tomorrow night when they go up against Batesville's two bigs in Cole Pride and Cade Kaiser. But one might venture to say that guard play might be what pushes Jac-Cen-Del into championship repeat territory. Seth Drockelman, who has shown capabilities as a third scorer, may in fact be that guard who can pose a threat if opposing defens-

EAGLES..... **CON'T TO PAGE B6**









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Indians set for sleeper role



PHOTO BY RICH FOWLER

Pictured above Milan's Kohen Rinear plays some serious basketball! He, along with the team, are ready to take on the upcoming challenge.

Rob Lafary SPORTS WRITER

There's no question that Milan can go into this week's Ripley County Tournament and compete but it is uncertain if many are going all in on saying that the Indians will

are going all in on saying that the Indians will be champions by the end of the week. Then again, there's nothing wrong with playing the sleeper against your county ri-

vals.

And it very well could happen as Milan looks to embrace such a role and get ready for a big week of local hoops. The Lady Indians are the only program still without a county championship and are hungry to win their first game in the tournament since 2008. Meanwhile, Milan's boys won the title

in 2020 and are trying to shake off an 0-2 mark in the 2021 version against Jac-Cen-Del and South Ripley.

The Lady Indians are 3-12 overall and 0-2 against county rivals -60-24 loss to Jac-Cen-Del and a 50-25 loss to South Ripley- but believe me when I say that the black and gold have some talent. Freshman Kaiya Rinear and classmate Emma Voss give Milan a bright future but there's legitimate growing pains with a roster mostly made up of freshmen and sophomores. Scoreboard may say otherwise but there are numbers beginning to improve, including an offense that has scored 40plus points six times in the last eight games after

averaging just 30 points at the beginning of December.

Luckily for MIlan, two big wins against Morristown and Cambridge City Lincoln to win the Cambridge City Classic last Thursday not only provides proof of such improvement but also puts two wins under its belt for some big-time momentum that typically in past years has not existed heading into Ripley County Tournament week.

Consistency is the biggest key of them all should Milan get its chance at competing this week and for the rest of the season. The Lady Indians have shown flashes of good play but have been unable to string that play together



PHOTO BY LORI SAMPLES

Kaiya Rinear, pictured above, and the Lady Indians are ready for the tourney.

for 32 minutes, which has allowed for opponents to take advantage and run away with wins. Even the slightest of strides, as seen last Thursday, means Karisa Voss's crew is right there on the scoreboard when the final horn sounds.

Milan's boys have suffered losses to Batesville and South Ripley but don't let that 0-2 mark against county opponents fool you. The Indians are much improved from a year ago and new head coach Matt Pickerill has to like what he sees out of his team even with a 3-5 overall record for the time being.

One of the big positives for the Indians is that there is no lack of talent who can go out and get points. At any given point on the floor there are five guys out there who can contribute and on nights where it all comes together, big things have happened. Milan is coming into the week posting back-toback games of scoring 70-plus points and names like Kohen Rinear, Ben Riehle, Brayden Rohrig and Micah Norman are all ones to watch for when it comes to points. When shots are falling, there's no debate over the fact that the Indians can match up toe-to-toe with just

about any opponent and that includes this week with a championship on their mind.

If shots are going in, then defense has to do enough to make some stops at the end. Right now Milan is allowing about 60 points per game and they have allowed 63 points to Batesville and 75 points to South Ripley in regular season matchups. Such numbers and cutting down on them will be a big emphasis point starting tomorrow night in an opening round showdown with the Raiders.











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SOUTH RIPLEY RAIDERS

Raiders eye county crown

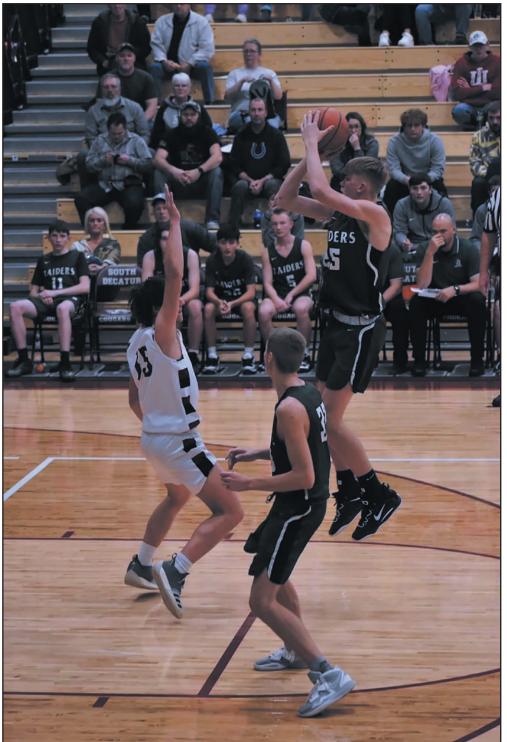


PHOTO BY DANIELLE MCGEE

RAIDIN 15

PHOTO BY LORI SAMPLES

South Ripley Lady Raider Lydia Cornett jumps for the sky just as she and the team are planning to do in the tourney.

The ball is in South Ripley Raider Cole Henry's hands as he and teammates are set to take the crown at the upcoming tourney.

Rob Lafary SPORTS WRITER

The girls team enters as defending champion while the boys aim to recapture county supremacy as South Ripley is unquestionably a contender inside this week's Ripley County Tournament.

In what many considered an upset last January, South Ripley knocked off Class A ranked Jac-Cen-Del 47-39 in the girls title tilt while the Raider boys fell 52-34 in the first round to Batesville before coming back strong for a 60-39 win over Milan in the Saturday night consolation game.

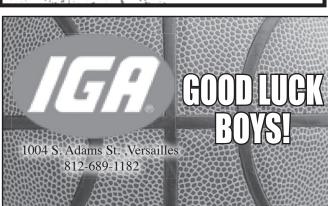
The Lady Raiders are red-hot entering this week, which was muchneeded considering the

green and white were just 2-6 during a stretch from November 17 through December 17. South Ripley won the Edinburgh Holiday Tournament over winter break, allowing for a three-game win streak heading into this evening and now a great chance lies ahead to keep momentum going. With the possibility of senior guard and 2021 County Tourney MVP Emily Flood returning to the lineup after being hampered by an injury, that would put the Versailles crew at full strength and in position for a repeat bid.

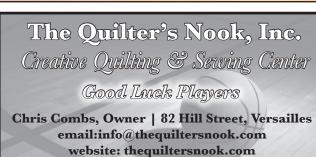
Defense could be the answer in how South Ripley earns a second-straight

RAIDERS.....CON'T TO PAGE B6









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Indians split M-Town openers

SPORTS WRITER

Milan boys basketball started the Morristown Holiday Tournament last Wednesday with a loss and win as part of two pool play games.

The Indians fell to eventual tournament champion Covenant Christian 68-36 in the first game for the two teams on Wednesday. Milan trailed 14-9 but Covenant broke the game open with a 20-10 run in the second quarter and never looked back, outscoring the black and gold 34-17 in the final two frames.

Micah Norman led Milan with 11 points and Kohen Rinear was just behind at seven points. Ben Riehle and Cole McClellan each had three points while Killian Budd, Jackson Voss, Brayden Rohrig, Holden Acra, Gabe Riehle and Alex Wenger had two points apiece.

Game two was much better as Milan's offense was able to come out strong inside a 71-50 win over host Morristown. Milan went on a 15-7 run in the second quarter and led 31-18 at intermission before adding 24 points in the third quarter and tacking on another 16 points in the final eight minutes as the margin only continued to increase.

Norman's scoring continued for the day as he led all scorers with 18 points including five made 3-pointers and Ben Riehle added 16 points to the cause. Rinear finished with 13 points and Rohrig turned in eight points. Gabe Riehle followed with six points, Voss and Jonny Volk scored three points apiece and Budd alongside McClellan each had two points.



BATESVILLE......Con't from B2

ent. Batesville becomes needed and that has been extremely vulnerable and a big plus. Jack Grunklacks in a few different ar- emeyer has caught on as eas, especially on offense. the safety net and do-it-all The blue and white, even kind of player out on the at 7-8 overall on the sea- perimeter while Carson son, is only averaging 44 Laker and Gus Prickel are points per game.

At 6-3 on the year, not tors on the floor. Such balonly is head coach Aaron ance was the big reason Garrett happy to see his for the Bulldogs running boys program out of its off four-straight wins prirebuilding stage, but also or to last Thursday night's happy to see that his Bulldogs are getting contributions from those expected to make an impact in the county tourney having preseason and a couple the ability to score points, others who are getting more comfortable playing have to resume its strong varsity basketball.

Whether it is on offense pick or defense, Batesville's inside duo of Cole Pride and any penetration, closing Cade Kaiser is a force to be out on shooters and taking reckoned with and those away any action on the two single-handedly can perimeter would make the cause some nightmares Bulldogs an even stronger for opposing teams, es- contender as they look pecially undersized ones. to get back on top of the But the two get help when county.

what Bohman's team can do in the post.

It is worth noting that the Jac-Cen-Del boys are 4-0 when scoring 60 or more aging 62 points.

EAGLES......Con't from Page B3

es are able to take away points but 0-2 on the year when scoring less than 50 points. Against the two county teams already faced, the Eagles are aver-

finding a niche as distribu-

loss against Class 4A No.

Batesville will not only

suits on offense but also

While height can combat

up defensively.

With each team in the

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Good Luck

championship. The Lady Raiders are allowing just 24.6 points per game in the last three ballgames and opponents have scored less than 30 points in three of the last six games. However with that being said, some offense will have to come into play as well. Head coach Matt McNew's team is averaging 42.9 points per game, the thirdlowest scoring offense among the four teams in the county tourney.

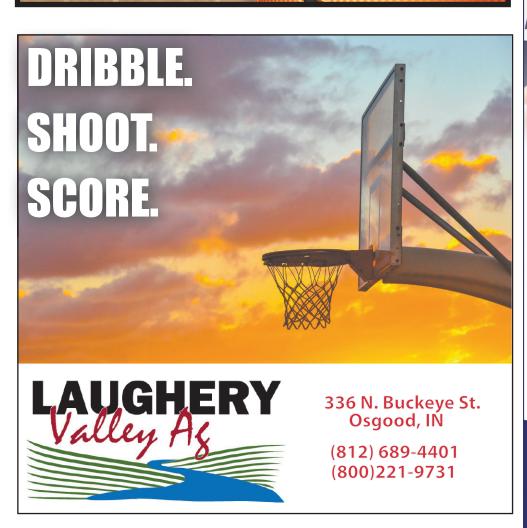
South Ripley's girls are 2-1 against the county tourney field, having defeated Jac-Cen-Del for a third-straight time in the overall season series by a 53-47 score while also having no trouble with Milan 50-25 back on November 8. The team's lone loss against a county foe is a 44-39 final to Batesville on November 19, a game that saw the Lady Raiders down big early before falling short in a late game

comeback. On the boys side, South Ripley just squeaked past first round opponent Milan 75-71 in the finale of the Morristown Holiday Tournament but now a quick turnaround means another battle with the Indians as the Raiders are now 1-1 against the tourney field.

After starting out the season with a 65-60 loss to Jac-Cen-Del, the Raiders have played through some ups and downs under head coach Seve Beach but back-to-back wins over at Morristown last week helped ease the pain of a four-game losing streak just prior. The sophomore duo of Cole Henry and Blaine Ward continues to do the damage in the score column and in several other statistical categories but there's no question that the Versailles squad is better when the two get some consistent help.

And when Henry and Ward get help, that tends to relieve some other nagging problems as well. Big nights offensively have been when three or four players have scored in double figures and a full team effort tends to put everything into rhythm on both ends of the floor. Scoring the basketball becomes even bigger given the fact that South Ripley is allowing about 57 points per game, a number that is part of a gradual seasonlong process with a young roster. No matter how you shake it, the Raiders are no question in the conversation of county champion but have two tough games ahead of them in order to achieve the feat.

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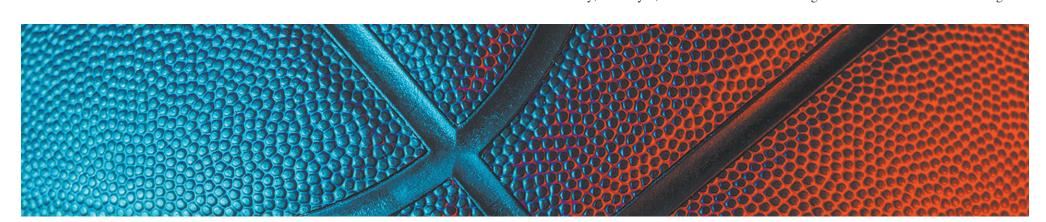
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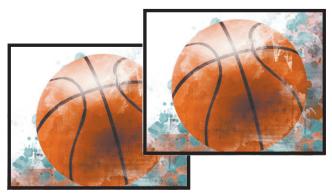


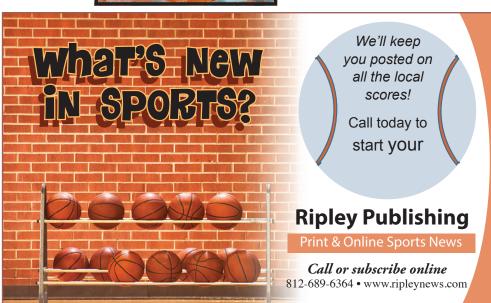


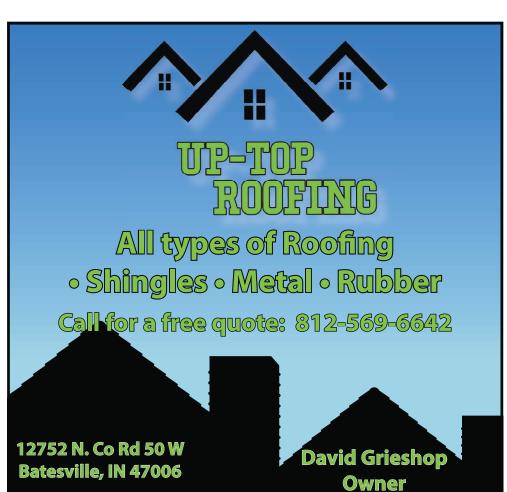
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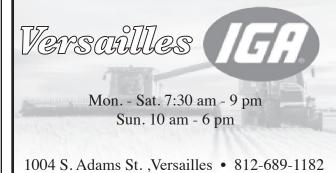
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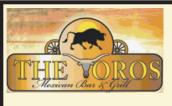
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