**SPORTS**

**Conrad drops 40 on Hawks**

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG

FORT MADISON - Head Coach John Hellige has been touting his team’s senior leadership as a special part of his varsity boys basketball team.

Senior Connor Conrad dove at that point home Tuesday night... 

...along with 4o points to knock down a frantic Central Lee 4th quarter rally as Holy Trinity Catholic came away with a 75-62 win.

Conrad’s 40, of which 35 came in the final periods, is a new school scoring record according to Hellige. Senior Cory Hopper was second on the team with 18 points.

“We just needed to do something for the team. We needed to get going and I tried doing as much as I could and it turned out all right,” Conrad said after the game.

The Crusaders came out on fire running to a quick 8-0 lead after just 3 minutes had passed in the game. Senior Bailey Merschman had a couple of buckets in the paint to go along with a Hopper jumper and two free throws in that stretch. The Hawks countered with a couple baskets from Isaac Moeller and two free throws from Evan Doyle.

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**Prairie plan back in play**

Margo Sprenger, pictured looking over a patch of native prairie grass in Montrose, is asking the Lee County Board of Supervisors to reinstate a state preservation program aimed at letting native plants and flowers grow along roads in the county.

**Program was cut in 2006 due to budget constraints**

**Police Chief to target Internet crimes**

**SPORTS**

**Hounds bury No. 9 Danville 68-29**

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG

DANVILLE - The Fort Madison Bloodhounds showed some teeth Tuesday night downing Class 1A No. 9 ranked Danville 68-29 on the road.

The win is the second in three days for the Hounds, who improve to 5-2, and head coach Ryan Wilson said Tuesday’s effort was one of the best to date on the young season. The Hounds played a zone defense that held Southeast Iowa Superconference scoring leader Kaleb Haefner to just four points on the night. Haefner was averaging just over 19 points per game prior to Tuesday night.

“We just played a really good zone defense and...”

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**You used to be able to drive down our county roads and see beautiful Iowa plants along the roadside...”**

- Margo Sprenger, local advocate

**“State of Iowa has one program through the DOJ. They grant funds to all the states to set up task forces to monitor and investigate Internet crimes against children. The acronym is ICAC,” Sittig said Monday morning. State of Iowa has one that is managed through the Department of Criminal Investigations at Ankeny. They have...”**

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but they’re going to bill us for it.” Fedler also indicated that he had spoken with officials with bordering states including North Dakota who said allowing the plants to grow tall next to the road causes drifting problems during the winter.

But Sprenger says in addition to the preservation aspect of her proposed changes, the county could see a cost savings by not mowing so deep into the ditch.

“I haven’t seen any budgets from neighboring counties, but I plan to ask for them. County officials from two of our neighboring counties mow along the roadway, and then manage the rest by allowing the natives to grow, and removing brush as needed.

The native plants, such as Purple Asters, Ohio Spider Wart and Iowa’s state flower, the Wild Rose also provide cover and nesting for Iowa’s wildlife such as rabbits, pheasants, quail, and many pollinators.

“Part of it is the eye, you know. People think this is what they want to see, this nice and mowed, but then the same people say, ‘where are the rabbits and pheasants?’ One neighbor told me yesterday: ” I used to be able to come out and see four pheasants in a morning and they just aren’t there anymore.”

Sprenger and her husband Randy have many acres of farmland that they care for between Donnellson and Belfast. They noticed the variety of wildflowers in the roadways blooming in the spring and early summer, then watched as they were one by one mowed off.

This year she approached the county to see about implementing what the state calls an Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management program. “The county is real careful and doesn’t mow through the nesting season. They’re very good about that and then around July 15th everything started to be mowed off until they were all gone,” she said.

Integrated roadside vegetation management is an approach to right-of-way maintenance that combines a variety of management techniques with sound ecological principles to establish and maintain safe, healthy, functional roadways. IRVM includes judicious use of herbicides, spot mowing, prescribed burning, mechanical tree and brush removal and the prevention and reduction of erosion and other disturbances to the right-of-way, according to the Tallgrass Prairie Center at the University of Northern Iowa.

In addition to providing a variety of resources to Iowa’s county roadside programs, UNI’s IRVM Program Office also provides guidance and support to Iowa counties establishing new IRVM programs, and strengthens IRVM statewide through partnerships with the Iowa Department of Transportation and other agencies.

“Truly, I think many people don’t understand that the mowed native plants are very beneficial. My goal is to get these natives back by only mowing that 5-6 foot strip where that is all that is needed. I agree that the county should be controlling the brush, but some of what they call brush is dogwood and elderberry, which are great habitat to feed the songbirds and other wildlife. I’d like to see this IRVM program put in place so that the weeds and invasive plants can be controlled, while the beneficial native plants will remain,” Sprenger added.

City Roadways in the county are being cut at about 15 feet, but Margo Sprenger wants the county to consider a 5-8 foot path to allow native prairielands to regrow.

“it’s more a budgeting issue than anything,” said Supervisor Gary Folluo. “And as the board changes it’s an issue of having that extra person. We get something planted and the next board doesn’t want to do it then we spend a lot of money for nothing. I certainly do enjoy it when I’m driving and I see native ditches and wildlife I think it’s pretty, but I also like to see the grass cut as well.”

Sprenger asked to have some other county officials from area counties and native experts to speak to the council and Fedler encouraged her to bring them in as part of a future meeting.
agreements with agencies throughout the state to be affiliate investigative entities for ICAC.”

Sittig said one of his intentions in coming from Pleasant Hill was to try to set up a similar affiliation with ICAC in Fort Madison because he looked and found no connection in Lee County.

“When I was in Pleasant Hill we were an affiliate but never had anyone assigned to it, so I assigned an officer to be the affiliate investigator. Along with that comes a lot of training and the opportunity to get equipment to investigate claims. While the focus is on trafficking of Internet child pornography, it also allows us to investigate other crimes that are electronic in nature,” Sittig said.

“I checked here and there is not an affiliate in Lee County, so I thought this is something we can start and get going here. We’ve had contact with the agency head in Ankeny and they’re looking forward to having someone down here,” he said.

According to the Iowa ICAC website, the state agency monitors electronic files that may be indicative of illegal trafficking. Sittig said if the agency gets a call in a certain area, in this case Fort Madison, they can contact the affiliate and give them a heads up and start the investigation.

“This allows them to spread their investigative fingers out because now there is someone here who can follow up on it,” he said. “We’re in the process of identifying the officer to do it here and we haven’t done that. Once we do, we would sign a memorandum of understanding with ICAC and this will provide us the opportunity to send that person to specialized training with computers, cellphones, Internet messaging that kind of stuff.”

He plans on having the program up and running by the middle of the spring. The funds used for the training are part of a yearly budget from the DOJ, but Sittig said the work itself will be part of a regular officer’s duties at the outset. He said with the rise in Internet crime, the position has a potential to be full-time position to follow up on everything, but after the affiliation is set up it would be absorbed into the current structure and be part-time.

“As you know crimes on electronic sources are just exploding. Identity theft, harassment, on a more national level - terrorism... and law enforcement is struggling to keep up with that. This is an opportunity for us to kind get out in front of those types of things,” Sittig added.

ICAC Task Force has been administered through the Iowa Department of Public Safety; Division of Criminal Investigation since its inception in the spring of 2004. The federal ICAC program began in September of 1998.

Eye on computer crimes

Fort Madison Police Chief Tim Sittig looks at the Iowa Internet Crimes Against Children website Monday morning. Sittig is looking for the FMPD to become an affiliate of the state program.

Fort Madison Police report
12/9/16 - 9 am - FM Police arrested Ernest William Sawyer Jr., 40, of 1133 16th St., FM in the 800 block of Avenue E on a warrant for failure to appear. Sawyer Jr. was held at the Lee County Correctional Center.

12/9/16 - 11:22 am - FM Police arrested Chad Michael Vose, 41, of 33 Alta Drive FM, at the Lee County Courthouse on warrant for failure to appear. Vice was held at the Lee County Courthouse.

12/9/16 - 12:50 pm - FM Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 4500 block of Avenue L.

12/9/16 - 2:38 pm - FM Police responded to report of a burglary in the 2100 block of Avenue C.

12/16/16 - 4:21 pm - FM Police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 4800 block of Avenue O.

12/9/16 - 9:24 pm - FM Police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 2600 block of Avenue L.

12/9/16 - 9:45 pm - FM Police arrested Jose Rafael Draper, 16, of 4635 Ave J., FM, in the 2400 block of Avenue L. He was held at the Lee County Correctional Center.

12/9/16 - 11:23 pm - FM Police arrested Jonathan L. Totty, 27, of 509 10th St. FM, in the 500 block of 10th St. on a warrant for parole violation on an original charge of burglary, theft. He was held at the Lee County Correctional Center.

12/10/16 - 12:01 am - Fort Madison police arrested Eric Scott, 33, no address given, in the 500 block of 10th St., FM on a warrant for parole violation on two original charges of robbery, theft and forgery. He was held at the Lee County Correctional Center.

12/10/16 - 10:08 pm - Kelly Joe Shultz of 109 Lasalle, Cincinnati, IA, was arrested in the 1700 block of Ave. H on a warrant for escape from custody and interference.

12/11/16 - 8:28 am - FM Police responded to a report of burglary in the 2800 block of Avenue A.

12/11/16 - 11:29 am - FM Police responded to a report of burglary in the 300 block of 18th Street.

12/11/16 - 3:32 pm - FM Police responded to a property damage accident in the 4800 block of Avenue O.
Hounds have three score in double digits

HOUNDS - Continued from Page 1

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG

The Crusaders pushed the lead hard in the last four minutes of the first quarter when Conrad hit a 3-pointer and bucked sandwitched around another Madison basket to push to a 21-10 first quarter lead.

The second quarter the Hawks came flying back to close the gap to five at halftime spurred by Doyle's 13 points including a nifty move inside that drew a foul and a converted free throw.

"Tonight was one of those games where we came out played an unbelievable 1st quarter. The 2nd quarter was not a good quarter for us," Hellige said after the win.

"You know, it's our thing. We're switching game-by-game, day-by-day. I wasn't a happy game-by-game, day-by-day. I wasn't a happy coach at halftime and the guys came out and responded and played a great second half," Hellige said.

The 2nd quarter saw the teams trade baskets and Holy Trinity had increased its lead to 7, but it was becoming apparent that the Conrad coach had arrived.

Conrad connected on three 3-pointers in four minutes, Merschman converted a 3-point play when he was hacked in the act inside and senior guard Nick Pothisitakis hit a 3-pointer at the 3:26 mark to keep HTC's momentum headed for the final crazy 4th period where the physical style of play surfaced highlighted by two technical fouls one assessed to Pothisi- takis in transition at the Hawks' end of the floor resulting in three of four free throws converted by the Hawk's Rick Galle.

From the 2:37 mark in the 4th, Conrad converted 10 of 12 free throws and an inside soft 11 footer for 12 points in the final period to help HTC seal the win.

"We got a great team," Hellige said. "Our scoring is pretty balanced after Cory and Connor and obviously we want those guys to take their fair share of shots."

"It's a team game and these guys are very much team players, but tonight was Connor's night. He's been the heart and soul of this team for many years and he deserves to have a school record." Conrad said he had no clue he was closing in on 40 points.

"I felt in a groove but I didn't know it was 40," he said.

Hellige said his game plan included getting ready for some physical play. "(Central Lee) has got a good thing going with their football program and we talked about their physicalness. The games with Fort Madison and West Burlington put us in a better position tonight," he said.

"The Crusaders move to 4-3 on the season and travel to Danville Friday night with junior varsity action starting at 4:30.

RANDOLPH PACES CRUSADERS IN LOSS

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG

FORT MADISON - If Head Coach Tony Johnson had a little more time, in lieu of a better played second quarter, his Lady Crusaders may have notched a win.

As it was, the Holy Trinity Catholic girls varsity basketball team dropped a Southeast Iowa Super conference tussle with Central Lee Tuesday night 64-53.

They worked hard... we had a six-minute stretch where we didn't play very well. I think it's a youth thing and we just had let down in focus," Johnson said.

Johnson was referring to a stretch in the second period where HTC only put up four points from the 5:48 mark to the end of the first half. The Lady Crusaders had several missteps where passes missed intended players and bounded into the rest of the game.

"So far we're doing well. We still have a long way to go. We're pretty far behind everyone else because of volleyball season going later. We just have to keep working hard and we're improving," Johnson said.

Randolph created opportunities for herself and that opened up her game. "She worked really hard inside. She did a good job of putting it back up," he said. Central Lee had three players in double figures led by MacKenzie Northup with 20, Kenzie Kreibiel with 16 and Anna Kreibiel with 10. Gady Stuecker added 9.

HTC falls to 3-4 on the season and travels to Danville on Friday with junior varsity action starting at 4:30.