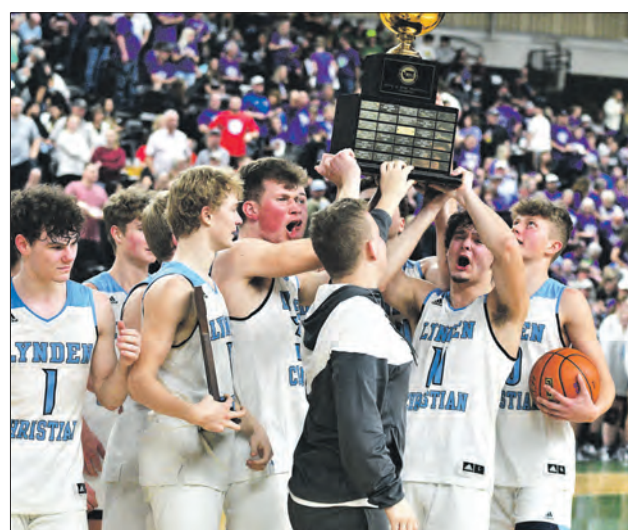




# Triple Crown Town



The Lynden boys and both the Lynden Christian boys and girls celebrate their state championship victories following wins on Saturday at the Yakima Valley SunDome. (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)

## Lynden boys, both LC teams claim state titles in Yakima

Lynden Christian 57  
Nooksack Valley 56

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

YAKIMA - It's only fitting that the third and final matchup between the bonafide top two teams in the state comes down to one shot, one moment, in overtime.

"I just can't believe it, I'm so happy that we got a team win like this. It took all of us, we all had a game-winning moment," said senior Libby Stump after the 57-56 win. "I love this team, I'm so happy we get to experience this. It's just so special."

However, while Stump's game-winning shot with three Pioneer hands in her face was the finalizer, multiple make-or-break plays could have decided the game earlier.

Stump and the Lyncs came through in all those moments, and their names will go into the 2022 record books in infamy. Nooksack Valley did not lose the game, Lynden Christian won it.

If this matchup was played 10 times over, it's likely both teams win five. That's how equally powered these teams were.

The season only had room for three, and the game is played until someone wins.

See **ROUND THREE** on B4

Lynden Christian 61  
King's 58

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

YAKIMA - Nothing comes easy in a state championship game, and the Lyncs had to work for every inch in the battle for the 1A crown.

Overcoming a huge second-half deficit, Lynden Christian earned their first state title since 2018 and first with Tim Zylstra as head coach. It was also Zylstra's first full season at the helm, as he took over the position beginning with last year's abbreviated spring season.

Despite that achievement, he kept it about the kids after the game.

"I'm just proud of them," Zylstra said after the 61-58 win. "This is about them, they put in all that work — every day we tried to get better. This is the pinnacle of that, and it shows what you can do with hard work, and once again 'staying the course' was our motto."

Meeting King's in the title game for the second consecutive postseason, Lynden Christian was determined to reverse the 2020 result. The mission was clear, but that didn't make completing it any simpler.

After leading 13-11 at the end of one quarter, LC slipped into an 11-point deficit at halftime, 34-23.

The King's lead reached its peak early in the third

See **VENGEANCE** on B3

Lynden 51  
Pullman 34

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

YAKIMA - This championship holds weight in the hearts of the Lions for many reasons beyond raising a gold ball over their heads.

The current Lynden seniors were sophomores when the Lions lost to North Kitsap in the semifinals in 2020. A short time later, the whole world shut down when the concern surrounding COVID-19 grew larger.

"It was a dream come true, it was the goal ever since we lost sophomore year," said senior Jordan Medcalf after the 51-34 win. "I wanted to lead this team, and that's what I did, and we won the gold ball."

High school sports, something so many in the Lynden community hold dear, was shelved for a while after that 2020 season. They weren't able to compete for a state championship in 2021.

In their first opportunity to capitalize on another, they pulled it off.

"I'm really happy coming out of COVID that our kids, our team, were able to give the Lynden community a reason to cheer, to come out and be part of that celebration," said Lynden's head coach Brian Roper. "We've been so isolated, and to look up and see that

See **MAKING A RETURN** on B2

## Foss "Smart Transformations"

24"x24" self-stick carpet tiles in Mosaic Gray

Simply peel & stick, will cover just about any floor surface

Reg. \$9.99 ea. Now just \$4.89 ea.!

8353 Guide Meridian, Lynden  
M-F 7:00 - 5:00, Sat 8:00 - 4:00  
360-354-5617  
[www.westsidebuildingsupply.com](http://www.westsidebuildingsupply.com)



# Making a return: Lions earn third title in four full seasons



Lynden senior Kaleo Jandoc was one of the four Lions players along with Max Moore, Trey Smiley and Kobe Baar to win the 2A state football championship on Dec. 4. They won their second title of the school year with the boys basketball team Saturday, March 5. (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)

Continued from B1

community vibe with the band, the cheerleaders, the amazing student section, the parents and fans, that just gives me a good feeling because I know it's not just about a basketball game."

It wasn't just about a basketball game. This was also the culmination of the hard work the Lions players have put in alongside one another since they were young.

Much of this team has either battled with or against one another most of their lives. They have now accomplished the ultimate goal as teammates.

"We've grown up together, we've played together, we've built that bond," said senior Dawson Adams said. "It's more than a basketball team, it's a brotherhood. So to win it with them it's just amazing, I wouldn't trade it for anything."

Lynden never trailed throughout the entire championship game. Both teams started a bit slow offensively, with the Lions leading 9-5 after one quarter.

They matched each other's scoring in the second with 11 each, leading to a 20-16 halftime score in favor of the Lions.

Defense leading to offense has been

this squad's key all season long. They held a Pullman team that scored 69 points in an upset over No. 1 North Kitsap just one night earlier to 34 points.

"We've been in positions like this before," Adams said. "In the first half our shots didn't fall, but we just kept hustling and kept grinding on defense just so we had a chance."

The Lions were plus-10 in the rebounding department and sank 80% of their free throws. On a night where both teams shot sub-30% from the field, those were key statistics that had to be won.

Lynden went on to outscore Pullman 31-18 in the second half. Adams fueled the Lions' third-quarter offense from the jump, draining back-to-back 3-pointers that rapidly pushed their 4-point half-time lead up to 10.

Sophomore Anthony Canales and Medcalf helped maintain that advantage the rest of the period, and the game.

"It doesn't feel real, to be honest," Canales said. "It's just an amazing feeling. I've always said it's been a dream of mine to do this, and we won."

The win gave Lynden their 11th state title in program history. It was their third in four seasons after they won back-to-

back in 2018-19, and it was Roper's fifth as the team's head coach.

That achievement still hasn't shaken his humility, even though Roper has now won the most state titles of any Lynden boys coach.

"Five state titles is humbling to think about, but in Lynden, there's only one Jake Maberry," Roper said. "There are many more Ropers, and I know that because I googled my name once."

Canales finished the game with 15 points, 6 rebounds, 2 steals and a block. He was also named the 2A state tournament MVP in his first-ever trip to the SunDome.

Adams matched Canales' scoring with 15 points and 10 rebounds. Medcalf did everything, posting 13 points, 6 rebounds, 7 assists, 2 blocks and a steal.

"Our kids are relentlessly competitive," Roper said. "I felt like we were not the best team, but I knew we were good enough to beat any team on a given night, and the last two nights showed that."

Lynden finishes their season with a 22-2 overall record, a gold ball in the trophy case and many childhood dreams fulfilled.

The Lions have now won a football and boys basketball state championship in the same year five different times: 1980-81, 1991-92, 2006-07, 2011-12 and 2021-22.

"It's amazing," Adams said. "I've been dreaming of this ever since I was a little kid shooting in the gym with my dad. Especially to win with this team, after last year, it makes it so much sweeter."



Lynden senior Dawson Adams cuts down the net after the win (BOTTOM). Lynden senior Trey Smiley and sophomore Anthony Canales share a moment after the final buzzer of the Lions' 51-34 win over Pullman in the 2A State championship game at the Yakima Valley SunDome on Saturday, March 5 (TOP). (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)



(From left) Lynden's Coston Parcher, Dawson Adams, Anthony Canales and Kaleo Jandoc celebrate a Lions 3-pointer in the fourth quarter of their 51-34 victory over Pullman in the 2A state championship game on Saturday, March 5, at the Yakima Valley SunDome (ABOVE). Senior Jordan Medcalf reacts after cutting off a piece of the net following the 51-34 win over Pullman (RIGHT). Medcalf rises up for a layup in Lynden's 51-34 victory over Pullman in the 2A state championship game (LEFT). (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)



**Congratulations State Championship Teams!**

**LTI INC. MILKY WAY**  
A Division of LTI, Inc.

**360-354-2101**

**Little Caesars**

*Congratulations on your state tournament success!*

1804 18th St,  
Lynden  
littlecaesars.com  
(360) 354-8656

**Congratulations on a great season!**

**2A 1st place:** Lynden Boys  
**1A 1st place:** LC Girls  
**1A 1st place:** LC Boys

**VAN'S**  
PLUMBING AND ELECTRIC, INC.

307 19th St., Lynden, WA  
(360) 354-2171





**GIRLS WRESTLING**

## Hard work pays off



Malia Welch wrestles a Bellingham United wrestler during a six-team scramble at Ferndale High School on Dec. 15, 2021. (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)

### Ferndale wrestler Malia Welch pays close attention to fitness, recovery to stay in competitive shape

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

FERNDALE — Ferndale's Malia Welch is not near the top of the girls wrestling state ranks by mistake.

Welch, a junior, currently sits at No. 3 in Washington State inside of her 115-pound weight class.

It's not easy to stay in competition shape to participate at an elite level in a combat sport. She has to closely monitor and train her weight, water intake, cardiovascular health and nutrition. One thing that does help is having her father, Tony Welch, as the team's head coach.

Malia's interest in wrestling was first sparked by childhood roughhousing sessions with her parents and Tony being a fan of combat sports himself. She brought home a flyer from school for wrestling club in second grade and has been in love ever since.

She started to take it more seriously in middle school and had to adjust

to the increase in intensity when entering high school.

COVID-19 shutdowns made a regular schedule difficult, but Malia was fortunate enough to be able to work with Emma Bruntl, a former Nooksack Valley and Mount Baker wrestler. Bruntl was a two-time national champion at McKendree University. She is currently training with the U.S.A. Women's National Team.

"Emma offered private lessons to a lot of my kids, she's since come back and run camps for the area," Tony said. "She's just awesome."

Malia attended a Western Regional tournament in Utah after training with Bruntl. She said despite all the work she'd been putting in, she lost two matches in a row every day, which results in elimination.

"It was a really eye-opening experience for me," Malia said. "To put it bluntly I got my butt kicked at that tournament if we're being honest."

That was when she decided to go all-in on wrestling. It was her main

focus athletically from that point on.

Tony said the tournament — which was after COVID-19 began canceling athletics and Malia had begun heavy training — as well as losing at districts in her freshman year, was when he saw Malia begin to turn the corner.

"That's when she kind of started to develop that hunger," Tony said. "She wanted to come back and avenge that [districts loss] but she understood at that point also that meant putting in the work in the offseason."

The freestyle season was supposed to start in March, and that led right up to when sports were canceled. Malia has been working hard ever since, leading right up to the current school season.

"From my perspective, she's always been a special kid," Tony said. "It was just a matter of trying to help her to understand that you're capable, but we have to make sure we're equipping you with the proper tools."

See **WELCH** on B2

**NEWS**

## VanDalen headed to Pro Bowl as Don Shula nominee



Blake VanDalen after the Lynden Lions won the 2A state championship on Dec. 4, 2021. (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

LAS VEGAS — Blake VanDalen thought the past year couldn't get any better.

He won his first state championship as a head coach, was named the All-Northwest Conference Coach of the Year and Seattle Seahawks High School Coach of the Year, then raised the 12th man flag overlooking thousands of screaming fans.

Now, he's headed to the NFL Pro Bowl in Las Vegas, Nevada, this coming weekend as one of 32 nominees for the Don Shula NFL High School Coach of the Year Award.

VanDalen will attend the practices for both the AFC and NFC teams on Friday, and then watch the Pro Bowl from a suite along with the other 31 nominees.

The winner and runner-up of the award will be announced during the game, and those two will also get an all-expense-paid trip to Super Bowl LVI in Los Angeles, California, on Sunday, Feb. 13.

Meeting the other coaches from around the country is one of the most exciting parts for VanDalen.

"I'm meeting people from all over the country that do what I do," he said. "From a relationship standpoint, I'm really excited to meet some of these people, spend four days with them and learn and get to know them."

The award is not based on football success, which makes it unique. VanDalen filled out a questionnaire after being nominated, and he said there wasn't a single question about championships, offensive and defensive schemes, etc.

Most of the criteria were how the nominees' programs focus on character building, handling discipline and adversity, community impact and more.

"Lynden has always won, and I get that," VanDalen said. "So one of the things that I've really tried hard to do is be about more than winning — be an

See **PRO BOWL** on B2

**BOYS BASKETBALL**

## Adams hits game-winner, Lions' defense holds on to defeat Lyncs

Lynden 63  
Lynden Christian 60

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

LYNDEN — Big-time players make big-time plays in big-time moments. In a contest so incredibly important to the community and teams, Dawson Adams was that guy.

After being sidelined with an injury in the 55-52 loss to Ferndale just two days prior, Adams had zero points in the scoring column after the first half. The Lions collectively didn't shoot well over the first two periods.

Then it was time for the show. Adams scored all 16 of his points in the second half, making up nearly half of Lynden's 32-point output. He connected on four 3-pointers as well.

"He's important to us not just as a shooter. He's senior leadership, he's a good communicator, he's a good rebounder," said Brian Roper, Lynden's head coach. "He just means a lot to our team, and nobody's worked harder. I think he's the most improved player in



Lynden's junior guard Coston Parcher goes up for a wide-open layup in the Lions' 63-60 win over Lynden Christian on Friday, Jan. 28. (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)

See **LIONS** on B3

**GIRLS BASKETBALL**

## Lyncs take rivalry game over Lions in convincing fashion

Lynden Christian 65  
Lynden 47

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

LYNDEN — In a cross-town rivalry there is only one game — one chance to secure bragging rights the rest of the year.

Lynden Christian got the better of the duel for the third season in a row, extending their current season win streak to eight games in the process. Lynden has lost two of their last three, mind you, to the two teams widely regarded as the top two 1A programs in the state.

The game doesn't have much impact on the postseason since both teams reside in separate classifications, but it's the long-standing success of both schools that make it a coveted notch in the win column.

"It means a lot to our kids, and there's no way around that," said Brady Bomber, Lynden Christian's head coach. "For both teams, you get a chance to enjoy this environment. It's great preparation for postseason as you get ready for the weeks ahead, and to see them just cele-



LC's Libby Stump attempts to go up strong over Lynden's Mya VanderYacht in the Lyncs' 65-47 win over the Lions on Thursday, Jan. 27. (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)

See **LYNCS** on B3

There's still time to fund your Traditional IRA or Roth IRA for 2022, or get a start on 2023.



**Shane VanDalen, Agent**



**NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY**  
www.newyorklifelynden.com | 360-354-4433 | 517 Liberty Street, Lynden, WA 98264

\*Registered Representatives offering securities through NYLIFE Securities LLC, Member FINRA/SIPC, A Licensed Insurance Agency.



**David Lewis, Agent**

Investments\* Life Insurance Retirement



## VanDalen: Opportunity of a lifetime

Continued from B1

impact program on the community, on the kids, on their families.”

Merit will be assessed by a “blue-ribbon panel” that includes Tony Dungy, Willie McGinest and Chad Pennington — all legendary NFL figures. The fact that Dungy, a Pro Football Hall of Fame coach, will be involved in the decision process is especially exciting for VanDalen.

“I wake up every morning, and every morning I do a Tony Dungy devotional. Every morning, I’ve done it religiously for about five years,” VanDalen said. “I

also have a Tony Dungy, like, flip card on my desk. So, every day I’m getting words of wisdom from Tony. It’s just crazy to me that this is someone I really do look up to, as a human being, as a coach, and now he’s going to be reading my answers to questions about our program. Whether I get the award or not, just letting that soak in really, really blew my mind.”

VanDalen will fly out on Thursday, Feb. 3, and return the following Monday, Feb. 7. It’s another honor that adds to his growing resume, which will also bring him his first trip to a Pro Bowl.

“We’re pretty excited,” he said. “Humbled and excited, for sure.”

### BOYS WRESTLING

## Oostra, Lions close out regular season strong



**Kaleb Oostra going for the pin over Alejandro Lbara of Glacier Peak at the Lynden Invitational tournament on Saturday, Jan. 22.** (Photo courtesy Daren Oostra)

## Kaleb Oostra takes second at 120 pounds, Lynden places eighth out of 16 teams

By **Connor J. Benintendi**  
connor@lyndentribune.com

LYNDEN -- The Lions concluded their regular season after placing eighth at the Lynden Invitational tournament on Saturday, Jan. 22.

A total of 16 teams attended the tournament at Lynden High School, with junior Kaleb Oostra leading the way for the Lions. Oostra was one of three medalists

for the host school, placing second in the 120-pound weight class.

Also medaling for Lynden was junior Steven Hollinsworth and senior Edgar Antonio. Hollinsworth placed fourth at 132 pounds, as Antonio took fourth at 150.

Lynden has had an on-and-off season like many wrestling teams around Whatcom County. The Lions finish the regular season 1-4 in duals with 88 total points on the year, finishing ninth overall in the Northwest Conference standings.

The Lions have endured four tournament cancellations as well as having a dual with Squalicum axed.

Lynden’s next match will be at the 2A subregional tournament against Anacortes, Burlington-Edison, Bellingham, Lakewood, Sehome, Squalicum. Sedro-Woolley.

It will be hosted at Sedro-Woolley High School on Saturday, Feb. 5, beginning at 9 a.m.



**Edgar Antonio squaring off against Phoenix Bowen of Ferndale at the Lynden Invitational tournament on Saturday, Jan. 22.** (Photo courtesy Daren Oostra)

## Welch: Keeping motivated when it’s toughest



**Malia Welch and her father, Tony, together after a wrestling tournament. Tony is the coach of the Ferndale High School girls wrestling team, which Malia competes on during the school season.** (Photo courtesy of Tony Welch)

Continued from B1

Mental toughness is among the most difficult aspects of the sport, Malia said. When it comes time to compete, it’s you and your opponent. That’s it. You succeed or fail, and it’s all on you; no teammates are there to have your back or compensate for mistakes.

“More than anything else, wrestling is — you have to mentally prepare for it,” Malia said. “You have to believe that whatever opponent steps out on the mat to wrestle you that you can beat them. If you go out on the mat with doubt, it’s kind of like you’ve already lost the match.”

Drilling and training help in triumph, but it all begins with the belief in yourself, Malia said. That you have the skills, tools and ability to win.

Continuing to train physically and mentally has been made that much harder by a lack of opportunity for competition. The Golden Eagles girls were off for nearly a month from Dec. 15 to Jan. 6 amid the holiday break coupled with weather and COVID-19-related cancellations.

All the while, Malia had to be ready to head back to the mat whenever an opportunity turned up. Ferndale just completed a three-day gauntlet, competing every night from Jan. 18-20.

“That definitely gets really challenging, and during this season, specifically,” Malia said. “It’s really important to keep training and keep the intensity at practice because you know eventually, you’re going to compete again. It does get a little discouraging, from time to time when you’re just training all the time and you don’t compete much. If you can get through that it makes you stronger for when you do finally get to competition.”

When she’s training for large — sometimes national — tournaments, Malia sticks to a pretty basic diet so she can easily keep tabs on her nutrition.

Plain Greek yogurt with peanut butter and apples in the morning. Cottage cheese and fruit for lunch, with a possibility of more apples and peanut butter, and a choice meal for dinner.

“I try to have a lot of good, clean

sources of protein,” Malia said. “When it comes to carbs and that kind of thing, they’re important for some people, but for me, I’ve eaten different things in my life, and I know that carbs don’t make me feel very good and don’t process very well.”

The secret: WinCo’s fresh peanut butter press, according to Tony. Specifically, the honey-roasted peanut option.

“Fresh-pressed honey roasted peanut butter — it’s like dessert,” Tony said. “It’s spectacular.”

Most of her non-organized training includes plenty of cardio combined with stance and motion training. It’s essentially simulating wrestling moves without needing another person in front of you. That allows Malia to train her technique around the clock.

Post-competition recovery includes light exercise, rest, icing and the occasional Epsom salt bath if she’s especially sore. Don’t forget the big meal in the morning after she’s had to work to make weight over the previous few days.

Keeping the lines unblurred between father and daughter, coach and athlete is a balancing act for the duo. They both love wrestling and that brings them closer together.

“It is something that we both enjoy and it’s a common ground that we share,” Malia said. “There are definitely times that I don’t necessarily want to talk about wrestling but we’re talking about wrestling and things like that, but at the same time it’s nice to have somebody as close to me as my dad is that is always there.”

Tony said it’s been a maturing process to keep that relationship balance, but it mostly comes down to supporting Malia in all her decisions and occasionally holding off on certain conversations for when the time is right.

He admits he’d be a little disappointed if Malia ever chose to walk away from the sport, but that’s when the father role has to take over.

“I love coaching, I love that we get to bond over wrestling,” Tony said. “But I support my daughter, and all my daughters, in whatever they do.”

## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Lynden junior guard/forward Dawson Adams scored all 16 of his points in the second half during Lynden’s 63-60 win over Lynden Christian. He also connected on the game-winning 3-pointer with just under 15 seconds remaining in the game to help upset the undefeated Lyncs. Adams was a key performer in what was a tightly-contested rivalry match up.



**DAWSON ADAMS**  
LYNDEN - BASKETBALL

Sponsored By:

**Coconut Kennys**

**Lynden Tribune**  
**Ferndale Record**

**A Smarter Way to Power Your Home.**

**GENERAC PWRCELL**  
SOLAR BATTERY STORAGE SYSTEM

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!

**ACT NOW TO RECEIVE A \$300 SPECIAL OFFER!\***  
1 (866) 954-2961

\*Offer value when purchased at retail. Solar panels sold separately.

**Prepare for unexpected power outages with a Generac home standby generator**

**GENERAC**

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!  
**888-674-7053**

**FREE** 7-Year Extended Warranty\*  
A \$695 Value!  
Limited Time Offer - Call for Details

Special Financing Available  
Subject to Credit Approval

\*To qualify, consumers must request a quote, purchase, install and activate the generator with a participating dealer. Call for a full list of terms and conditions.





FEATURES

## A 'surreal' experience



Lynden's head football coach, Blake VanDalen, poses with his Seattle Seahawks High School Coach of the Year award. VanDalen raised the 12th Man flag ahead of Seattle's Dec. 26 home game versus the Chicago Bears. (Photo courtesy of Blake VanDalen)

From volunteer assistant to multiple 2021 coach of the year awards, VanDalen made his 25th year with the Lions a memorable one

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

SEATTLE - Before raising the 12th man flag as the Seahawks' high school coach of the year, Blake VanDalen made sure to do his research on the previous honorees.

That only added to the shock when he realized he was going to have his own police escort up to the top deck.

"I'm sure Ken Griffey Jr. is used to this, and I'm sure Paul Allen was used to it; [Matt] Hasselbeck, Steve Largent," VanDalen said. "Trust me, I googled all the names of the people who have done this and I'm still trying to figure out how my

name fits in there."

The fifth-year head coach of the Lynden Lions has piled up a huge number of accolades this season, from state champion coach, All-Northwest Conference coach of the year, Seahawks high school coach of the week (and year), and now 12th man flag raiser.

"It truly is surreal, that's the only word that has stuck with me through this whole thing," VanDalen said. "It really doesn't feel real, even though it just happened, and I went through it."

He received an email from the Seahawks the Tuesday following Lynden's 2A state championship victory over Tumwater.

It asked him to join the other Washington state championship coaches at the flag on Sunday, Dec. 26, before Seattle's game versus the Chicago Bears. He, however, would be the one to raise it.

Since their state championship victory, he said he had already been waking up every day wondering if it was all a dream. This was even more difficult to fathom.

"I sat at my computer, I think I felt

my head spin around a couple of times, I got a little lightheaded," he said. "It just so happened to be my son [Weston VanDalen] and I were the only two in the weight room ... he had the same reaction. He read and it and you almost wonder if it's a prank, those kinds of things just don't happen to a guy that's never left Lynden."

After his 25th year with the Lynden program, VanDalen was getting the recognition he deserved, whether his servant's heart allowed him to think so or not.

Simultaneously, he understands the importance of his first 20 years with the Lions' program, picking the brain of his legendary predecessor, Curt Kramme.

In April 2017, Kramme, a hall of fame head coach who spent 26 seasons with Lynden's football program, died after a nearly year-long battle with bladder cancer.

The Lions won seven state championships under Kramme, including six in eight years from 2006-2013. Blake

See VANDALEN on B2

BRIEFLY



Ferndale's senior guard Mark Schlichting will look to build on an already-impressive season when the Golden Eagles resume play against Sedro-Woolley at home on Tuesday, Jan. 4. (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)

## Ferndale sports resume this week after winter break

FERNDALE -- Like many schools over the holiday break, the Golden Eagles were dormant.

In fact, the only teams that played any games over the week-long winter hiatus was the Meridian, Nooksack Valley and Lynden Christian girls basketball teams.

Other than that, it was a slow week. The Golden Eagles basketball teams don't have to wait much longer, as the boys will play Sedro-Woolley at home on Tuesday, Jan. 4. The girls had their game against Sedro-Woolley cancelled, and thus they will suit up on Friday, Jan. 7, at home against Mount Baker.

For the Ferndale wrestling teams, they have already been off for a much more extended period of time. The boys haven't hit the mat since Dec. 16, and the girls one day prior on Dec. 15.

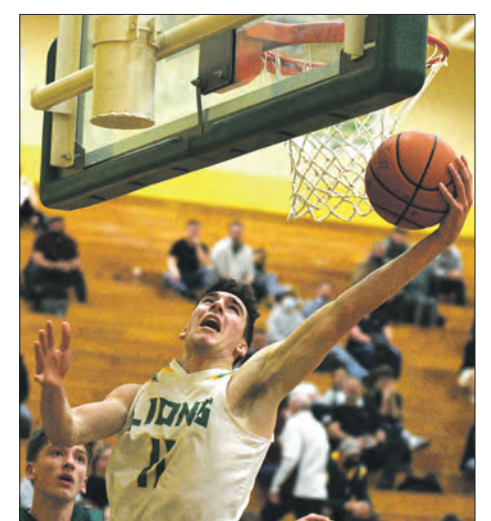
The boys are set to resume on Wednesday, Jan. 5 when they travel to Sedro-Woolley. The girls are scheduled for a dual versus Squilicum on Thursday, Jan. 6.

Girls bowling keeps things going with a Wednesday, Jan. 5, matchup at home against Anacortes.

- Connor J. Benintendi

BOYS BASKETBALL

## Lions disrupt Mariners



Lions senior guard/forward Jordan Medcalf led Lynden with a game-high 16 points in their 62-44 victory over Sehome on Monday, Jan. 3. (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

LYNDEN — The Lions came out on top in a battle between two of the top 2A Northwest Conference teams, defeating Sehome 62-44 at home.

Lynden (6-1, 4-1 NWC) utilized hustle and physicality in the rebounding department as well as quick hands in the passing

See LIONS on B3

GIRLS BASKETBALL

## Pioneers cruise to victory over 4A Mount Si

Devin Coppinger, Lainey Kimball's double-doubles propel Nooksack Valley to 63-48 win in Lynden Christmas Classic

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

LYNDEN - The Pioneers bounced right back after their loss to top-ranked Tumwater.

After being thrust into competition at the Lynden Christmas Classic a day prior, the Pioneers made good on their short voyage. Nooksack Valley took the tournament spot of late-dropout Tahoma.

The Pioneers didn't miss a beat against Mount Si, crashing the offensive boards to get second chance opportunities and converting at a much higher clip from the foul line.

See PIONEERS on B3



Pioneers sophomore guard/forward Lainey Kimball (No. 10) tallied 12 points, 12 rebounds and 2 assists in Nooksack Valley's 63-48 win over Mount Si on Wednesday, Dec. 29. (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)



**It's a new year! Now is a great time to review your financial goals.**

Retirement Solutions • Estate Planning Strategies • Business Solutions

NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

www.newyorklifelynden.com | 360-354-4433 | 517 Liberty Street, Lynden, WA 98264





# VanDalen: 'Humbling' to be honored by his peers

Continued from B1

VanDalen was there for all six during that stretch. "In 20 years, I was able to watch, observe, and see how our program not only was built, but how he [Kramme] was able to build his legacy, or his dynasty, or whatever word you want to put on his 26-year footprint on our program," VanDalen said.

With Lynden's head coaching position now vacant, and the program mourning the loss of a beloved man and mentor, the rest of the Lions' coaching staff contemplated taking a break.

Lynden's athletic director, Mike McKee, met with all the assistant coaches. When it was VanDalen's turn, McKee told him each of them was ready to be done, but they would all stay if he took on the head coaching role.

"That was as important as me taking over the program," VanDalen said. "The fact that every assistant stayed on, even if some of them believed - they might have thought it was a great time to transition out. I think a lot of that had to do with respect for coach Kramme, we didn't want to see it all just, poof, disappear."

Beginning as a volunteer assistant in the fall of 1997, VanDalen simply wanted to be around the program as a servant. He was happy in that role, knowing how integral committed volunteer coaches are to the success of a high school football program.

From there, Kramme promoted VanDalen to wide receivers coach, which was a paid position, and then later to defensive coordinator. He held that position for the next nine years.

"Then you get to that pivotal season when he was sick," VanDalen said. "For me it helped put everything in perspective: the 'why' of him wanting to coach and have an impact on kids' lives. Yes, he won a lot of championships, but he would tell you it was about the impact he had on kids and the time he got to spend with them."

VanDalen adopted that same calling. The kids needed someone they knew and could rely on, and he wanted to ensure they were aware they weren't being left behind. Humility, he said, was the number one thing he learned

from Kramme about how to be a head coach.

It didn't matter if he was winning titles or not, the important thing was whether he could look at his team's strengths and build around those. There was always room for growth, and it started with the coaching staff.

The Lions didn't spend much time away from their perennial dominance. In 2017, the team finished 5-5 (3-3 NWC) before losing to Tumwater in the first round of the state tournament.

The very next season they reached the 2A state championship against Hockinson after a perfect 12-0 season. Lynden led 31-28 with 10 minutes remaining in the game but surrendered back-to-back touchdowns, then trailing by 11. The Lions were unable to recover, losing 42-37.

"I don't know how each coach handles getting second, it's probably one of the hardest things in football," VanDalen said. "Getting third is a lot easier than getting second, believe it or not."

He told each freshman to hug a senior and tell them they were going to finish what they started. Those freshmen were this past season's seniors. It was the completion of a five-year journey that began when Kramme passed and VanDalen stepped in.

The Lynden program kept its unity and sense of family when the entire coaching staff stuck around, and it made bringing the gold ball home that much sweeter.

VanDalen's first thought as the clock hit zeroes in the state championship game? The names and faces of everyone who contributed, not just this season, but in the years leading up to it — all the way down to trainers and other team personnel.

"There's just this massive release of emotions," VanDalen said. "That hard work paid off, the selflessness of the kids paid off. It's really cool when you believe something whole-heartedly and then you're able to go out and execute it, and then, obviously, get the ultimate prize, too."

All of this came before raising the 12th man flag, an honor he never thought his name fit the criteria for.

The experience included getting a police escort to the

top deck, his youngest son Max getting to ride in the biggest elevator he's ever seen and being surrounded by his entire extended family before pumping up Lumen Field's thousands of fans.

Now, he is firmly into the basketball season as the program's junior varsity coach.

The football season moves further into the rear-view mirror, but VanDalen and the coaching staff have already begun plans for next year.



Lynden football head coach Blake VanDalen poses on the top deck of Lumen Field with his immediate family before raising the 12th Man flag on Dec. 26 (TOP). VanDalen raises the 12th Man flag ahead of Seattle's Dec. 26 home game versus the Chicago Bears (BOTTOM). (Photos courtesy of Blake VanDalen)

## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Nooksack Valley's sophomore guard **Devin Coppinger** led the Pioneers to a 63-48 victory over 4A opponent Mount Si to close out their two-game series in the Lynden Christmas Classic tournament. Coppinger recorded a double-double of 26 points and 12 rebounds while adding 4 assists and 2 steals.



**DEVIN COPPINGER**  
NOOKSACK VALLEY - BASKETBALL

Sponsored By:

**Coconut Kennys**

**Lynden Tribune**  
**Ferndale Record**



## Mt. Baker Rotary Students of the Month January 2022 • Lynden High School

**Sage Anderson**  
*Student of the Month*  
2022



With a GPA of 3.9, LHS senior Sage Anderson has kept busy both in the classroom and out of it. She has been involved in ASB for three years (currently serving as class president) and FFA for four years (where she served as vice president in her sophomore year).

Sage has been on both the JV and Varsity LHS tennis teams all four years, and also did JV and Varsity LHS soccer her freshman and sophomore years. Additionally, she has served as the LHS Varsity Boys Basketball manager for the past three years.

When she's not in class or on the field, she enjoys pottery, traveling, hanging out with friends, spending time with family, strengthening her faith and volunteering in various capacities.

She is in the process of applying to schools and plans to pursue an undergraduate, then graduate degree to become a Speech Language Pathologist.

**Case Zweegman**  
*Student of the Month*  
2022



Case Zweegman has had quite the senior year. In addition to being the LHS Football Team Captain during a championship year, he was also awarded the NWC Sportsmanship Award for 2021 and serves as the senior ASB president. He maintains a GPA of 3.9 and also plays baseball for LHS.

He is actively involved in community service, notably helping out at the Lynden Community Center and, with his fellow football players, building Bender Park's latest installments.

Seasonally, Case does farm & field work at a local dairy farm. He is interested in a career in medicine.

Depending on the university he chooses, he plans to obtain an undergraduate degree in either biology or chemistry.

**Haley Biemold**  
*Vocational Student of the Month*  
2022



Haley is a senior at LHS with a 3.76 grade point average and greatly enjoys her welding classes and biotech classes. Off-campus, she loves going on adventures with friends and traveling anywhere that's warm.

She has been actively involved in her role as an ASB senior class officer as well as in Lynden FFA. Haley has been a FFA officer for the last three years and has shown sheep, pigs, goats, and a dairy heifer in that time.

Her work history includes feeding calves at Eglemill Dairy for the past two years and, in 2021, helping to get the grounds ready for the Northwest Washington Fair. Haley has also done several volunteer activities in the community throughout high school.

She will be attending Washington State University in the fall and is planning on studying something in agriculture.

*"Serving the north Whatcom County Community since 1981!"*



# FERNDALE'S SIMON SEFZIK APPOINTED TO REPLACE SEN. DOUG ERICKSEN

A7



# Lynden Tribune

LEWIS FAMILY OWNED SINCE 1914

JANUARY 12, 2022

LYNDEN, WASHINGTON • \$1.50

## Lynden says goodbye to Jerry Kok

*Longtime Lynden Youth Sports board member and untiring servant of the community's youth dies at 70*

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

LYNDEN - Though his passions lied in coaching and providing athletic opportunities to Lynden's youth, Jerry Kok's identity and impact stretched far

further.

He was a father, grandfather, brother, husband, mentor, friend and no excuse volunteer who never requested anything in return for his countless hours of service. Sometimes it seemed impossible he could do so much in just a 24-hour day.

No matter the task, however glamorous or otherwise, Kok would do it without worrying about the amount of personal time he would have to sacrifice. That was simply who he was.

On Wednesday, Jan. 5, Kok, longtime Lynden Youth Sports board member and untiring servant of the community's youth, died at age 70.

"He was never the person who would say 'no,' and it's a big part of why I coach,

See **Kok** on A3



Lynden Youth Sports' Rich Walde-mar, Becki Berendsen, and Jerry Kok, from left. The trio won the Sol H. Lewis community award in 2018. Kok, 70, died on Wednesday, Jan. 5. (Calvin Bratt for the Tribune)

## Head-on accident on Birch Bay Lynden Road



First responders survey an accident off Rathbone and Birch Bay Lynden roads at approximately 9 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 9. Story on A2. (Photo courtesy Lynden Fire Department)

## 5.5 million at-home COVID-19 tests coming to Washington

By Leora Watson  
leora@lyndentribune.com

WASHINGTON — About 5.5 million at-home COVID tests coming to Washington state by the end of next week. This will help keep schools open and the likelihood that the pandemic in Washington state will get worse before it gets better.

These were among the array of items the Washington Department of Health covered in its Jan. 6 media advisory.



Shah

The at-home rapid tests will be available to Washingtonians by the end of next week, according to Dr. Umair A. Shah, Secretary of Health at the Washington State Department of Health, who spoke during the media advisory.

"One million of those set aside for schools, another million for our [health professionals] on the ground and 3.5 million that would be available to be ordered by Washingtonians," said Shah.

Dr. Lacy Fehrenbach, Deputy Secretary for COVID-19 Response from Washington State Department of Health: "We are also hoping that that number grows, we continue to order more tests and we'll do so through the month of January as we navigate this."

DOH has heard questions and concerns on protecting students and staff from COVID-19 and future outbreaks in schools, according to Fehrenbach.

However, the department wants to reiterate and emphasize that in person instruction is the best option for kids.

See **COVID-19 tests** on A2

## Post office says weather affecting mail delivery

After business hours were to have begun on Monday, packages wait for attention at the Lynden Post Office. (Courtesy photo)



By Bill Helm  
bill@lyndentribune.com

LYNDEN — The Lynden Post Office's hours are from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

However, the post office had not opened to the public on Monday, Jan. 10 until later that morning.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Lynden Tribune* and *Ferndale Record*

newspapers have been mailed, not delivered, to their subscribers.

For some, mail deliveries have come to a screeching halt over the past week.

Lynden resident Khush Brar said Monday that for "much of last week" her family had not had a mail delivery.

One reason for the delay in

See **Mail** on A2



### Weather

Thursday 51°/37°  
Friday 46°/36°  
Saturday 44°/34°  
Sunday 43°/34°

### 16 pages • Volume CXXXIV • Number 48

Classifieds • B4	News • A7	Puzzles • B5
Country Life • A9	Obituaries • A5	Roads • A2, A8
Dairy • A10	Opinion • A4	Sports • B1
Gardening • A10	Public Notices • B3	Weather • A2

## Nooksack Valley girls basketball team beats Meridian 75-44

See page B1

**Born in 1957? Ready for Retirement?**  
**GO SEE JEFF** for your Medicare insurance plan options!  
• Medicare Advantage Plans • Medicare Supplement Plans • Part D Rx Plans  
Your Hometown Medicare Insurance Specialists Since 2002



### LAMPHERE INSURANCE

113 Third Street, Lynden  
**360-354-5333**  
www.jefflamphere.com



# Kok: Lynden says goodbye to youth advocate

Continued from A1

and why I teach, and a big part of my program at Burlington is servant leadership," said Chas Kok, Jerry's son, and the head coach of the Burlington-Edison boys basketball team. "I think that comes from him - always being willing to serve others regardless of, maybe you don't have time or you're not in the mood for it - he was always willing to do that."

In 1994, Jerry Kok coached Chas' YMCA basketball team. He expanded his coaching duties as Chas continued to get older.

Jerry coached Chas and his Lynden class of 2007 teammates in football, basketball and baseball as they grew up. Chas said that's where he believes his father discovered his passion for coaching and ability to relate to kids. From there, he continued to be called into that role.

Even while serving so many others, he always reserved time for his family. Jerry never missed a home game when Chas played basketball at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia.

"If it was snowing out, he didn't really care. He was doing all that he had to in Lynden and still I could always count on him being at a game," Chas Kok said. "He was a pretty unbelievable father, that's for sure."

He served on the board of the Lynden Youth Sports organization for more than 15 years, though his efforts were not contained to that of a typical board member. Jerry had a hand in many other jobs and tasks that he also volunteered himself into.

"He was the ultimate servant warrior," said Blake VanDalen, Lynden's head football coach. "He had the servant's heart, there are so few things that he hasn't had a part in."

Since his impact started with kids at such a young age, the fruits of that labor were apparent in the success of Lynden's high school programs.

VanDalen said Jerry would see a kid play another sport and call him because he thought they would be great at football. He had a knack for helping kids realize and reach their potential.

"My first thought is it will honestly take 10 people to do all the things that he did, and that's just the epitome of a selfless person," VanDalen said. "I like the word legend, but he was almost like a father to the community."

Jerry would drive football gear to kids' houses if they weren't going to be able to get it themselves. It was never contingent on how it worked into his schedule, but rather whenever the family needed it.

He told VanDalen "I knew this was going to happen seven years ago," when the Lynden football team won the 2A state championship this past fall season, as that's when he coached the team in little league. Jerry could see their talent and promise well before they ever set foot on a high school field.

Mike McKee, Lynden's athletic director, said the structure Jerry put in place for football at the youth level provided opportunities for kids to learn to love the sport early. "Every kid was important, when we picked teams, we didn't have an All-Star team. We tried to balance all the teams so everyone, competitively, was having a great experience and everyone was getting to play," McKee said. "Some of those kids that were younger, as a result, ended up playing later on when they might not have been that good early on."

If there was a way to get kids excited about playing sports, Jerry would find it. He embodied everything the Lynden Youth Sports organization was trying to do with each passing year. Skill level didn't

matter, it was the ability to provide an opportunity for experience. It was important to him that every kid saw the field or court.

"He had a way of motivating and rallying kids to have fun, and play hard," said Rich Waldemar, a longtime friend of Jerry and president of the Lynden Youth Sports organization. "He was not doing it for pay, there's no pay for it ... He had a passion for kids. It was just unbelievable."

He wasn't worried about coaching the best of the best all the time. Jerry would be the first to respond to a call about leading the team of kids who didn't make final cuts and still wanted to play.

"He didn't so much as coach teams, but coached individuals on teams," said Brian Roper, Lynden's head basketball coach. "I think he really valued the role that he had in investing in young kids."

Roper said every one of the current players on the Lynden junior varsity and varsity basketball rosters was coached by Jerry at one point or another. His reach was so far beyond one generation.

Many classes of kids before now could likely say the same thing.

"The guy was always just upbeat and positive," Roper said. "You felt better when you saw him, he made each person feel special who he talked to - like you were the most important person to him. That's a unique quality."

Brady Bomber, Lynden Christian's head girls basketball coach and childhood friend of Chas, echoed Roper's feelings. Jerry coached Bomber in youth football and basketball.

Bomber said it was how Jerry made others feel that was so important to his legacy in the Lynden community.

"He was obviously very talented at what he did coaching others, but I think what truly set him apart was how much he cared for others," Bomber said. "He did so many things tangibly well with his organization, his coaching and his leadership, but I think it's the special character qualities and the way he made others believe, about themselves, is what sticks out most to me."

Jerry was also a committed basketball official, who would referee a game wherever he was needed. When

the COVID-19 pandemic slimmed the group of readily available officials, he was always prepared to fill in for middle school and C-team games.

Those were among the games that struggled the most to find officials, and Jerry was still there to do so the entire current season up until his passing.

"Every time I turn around and need something, and ask for it - Jerry was always there," McKee said. "He's just the absolute best, and he never, in all those years, asked for anything. It was just to serve and to do his thing."

Additionally, he helped coordinate referees to other games and always helped find someone if he couldn't be there himself. That method of operating was present in all things asked of him.

Similar to how VanDalen viewed Jerry's impact, Waldemar knows his role and level of servitude to so many people are utterly irreplaceable.

"You don't find volunteers that do that type of thing anymore, not like he was doing," Waldemar said. "As well as I know Jerry, and as long as

I've been on the LYS board, I'm not sure we know just how much he did and what it's going to take to try and replace him. We're going to find out now what we're missing, and I'm afraid the void is going to be even bigger than we think it is."

In 2018 Waldemar, his daughter Becki Berendsen and Jerry were awarded the Sol H. Lewis award for their work providing Lynden Youth Sports' services to the community. Chas said he'll always remember Jerry for the efforts he made to show up for every one of his games, in helping him realize he had a servant's

heart of his own, and the joy on his face when he met his two granddaughters for the first time. Additionally, Chas hopes that the strength of the youth sports culture remains in Lynden and the neighboring communities.

"I hope to find people that are passionate about that as well and that can continue on," Chas said. "It would just be great if people continued to step up and do what they do to honor my father and everything he did."

There will be an open house service for Jerry in the Gillies Funeral Home Chapel on Thursday, Jan. 13, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**Diane the Barber is Back to WORK!**



**Everson Family Salon**  
210 W. Main St, Everson WA  
Next to Smokehouse Café/west side door

Appointments: **(360) 319-4274**  
Tuesday & Thursday 9:30am-5pm  
Walk-ins welcome!

Regular Price \$16  
Seniors, Military, Children 12 years & under \$13  
Formerly worked  
Ferndale, Anacortes, Everson, Sumas & Bellingham



# FURNITURE CLEARANCE SALE



## SAMUEL'S QUALITY AT CLEARANCE PRICES!!

UP TO 70% OFF

- BEDROOMS
- RECLINERS
- SOFAS
- DINING ROOMS

- LAMPS
- CHAIRS
- SECTIONALS
- LEATHER

- OCCASIONAL TABLES
- MATTRESSES
- AREA RUGS

- ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS
- PICTURES
- ODDS & END




THIS IS ONE SALE YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS!

HUGE Savings  
Many less than cost items  
Floor samples  
No lay-aways  
Discontinued & overstocked merchandise  
Many items sold "As-is"

## CLEARANCE SALE ON NOW

Hurry In For Best Selection!

\*Plus, with approved credit and minimum purchase, take advantage of:

# 0% INTEREST FOR 12 FULL MONTHS! \*

\*See store for details

We follow state and local guidelines to ensure the safety of our guests at Samuel's Furniture.

The Largest Furniture Store in Northwest Washington

Store Hours: Monday-Saturday 10am-6pm  
Weather permitting Sunday 11am-5pm

# SAMUEL'S

FURNITURE • MATTRESS • LA-Z-BOY COMFORT STUDIO

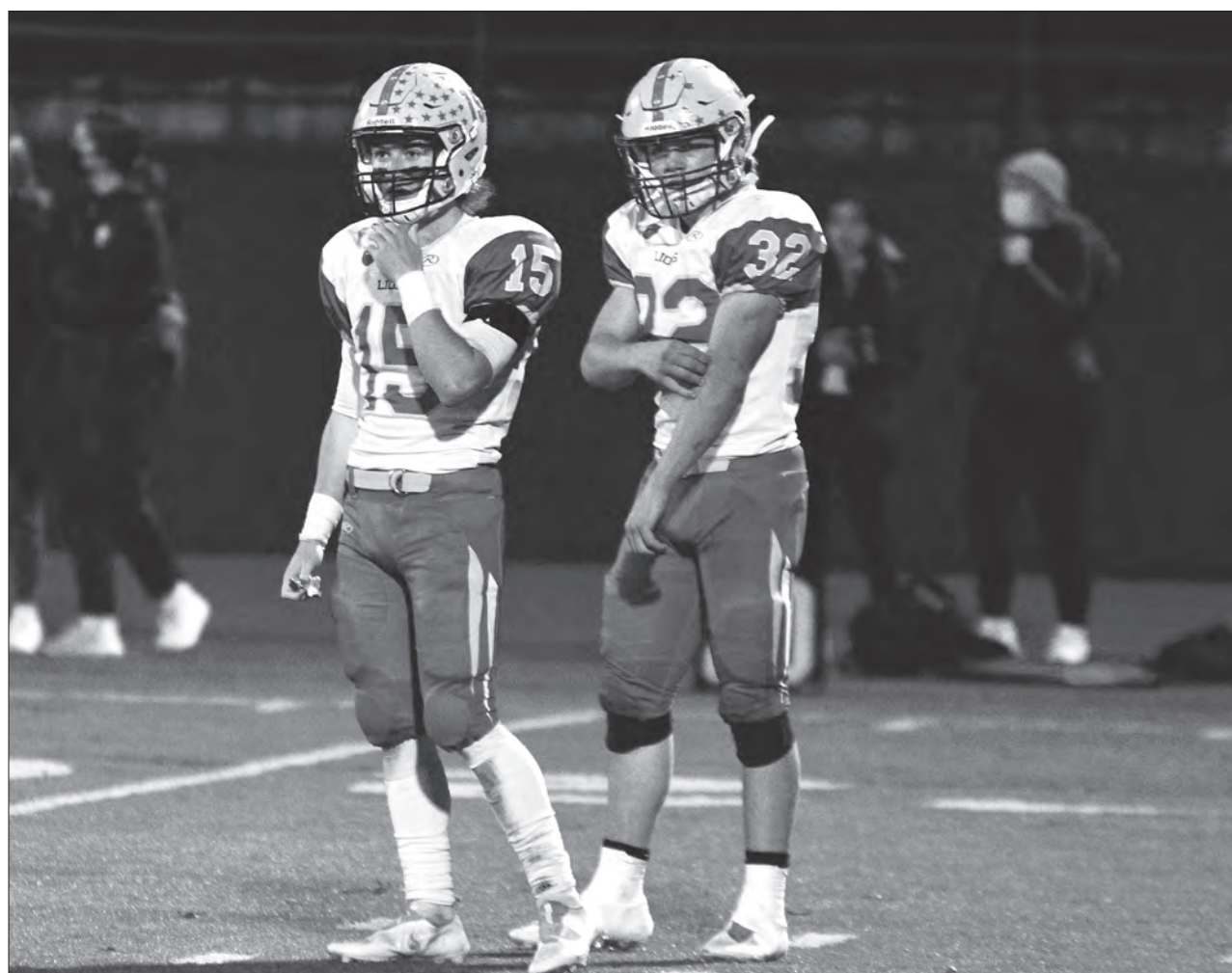
1904 Main Street, Ferndale (Exit 262) • Just 10 minutes north of Bellingham  
(360) 384-3388 • www.SamuelsFurniture.com





PREP FOOTBALL

# Hermanutz, Heeringa's hard work has paid off



Lynden junior quarterback Kaedan Hermanutz (No. 15), junior running back Lane Heeringa (No. 32) and the Lions secured the 1A Northwest Conference title on Friday, Oct. 22. (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)



Lynden junior quarterback Kaedan Hermanutz (Top). Lions junior running back Lane Heeringa (Bottom) (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)



## The Lions are 7-1 overall, led offensively by first-year starters Lane Heeringa, Kaedan Hermanutz

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

If you paid close attention to Lynden football's junior varsity squad last year, the Lions' varsity dominance this season probably comes as no surprise.

A year ago, Lynden's JV team went 8-0 while outscoring their opponents 329-18.

The leaders of that offense? The Lions' current varsity backfield duo of quarterback Kaedan Hermanutz and running back Lane Heeringa.

"I was able to watch them on JV, literally — no offense — tear it up," said Blake VanDalen, Lynden's head coach. "Lane and Kaedan, specifically, they were tornados on JV. Those were blowouts."

Both juniors, Hermanutz and Heeringa are a big reason why Lynden just secured the 2A Northwest Conference title on Friday night, defeating Archbishop Murphy 38-14.

The Lions are now 7-1 on the season and 5-0 in their league contests. They have won their last six in a row.

This exceptional run toward the conference's top spot has been long in the making for the duo — even before they took JV by storm.

Heeringa moved to Lynden from San Diego when he and Hermanutz were in seventh grade.

The two became friends almost right away but didn't share a football field until they were freshmen.

"Coming into freshman year we knew we were going to be back there together," Hermanutz said. "I think it just helped a lot that we were friends beforehand because it makes it fun in the backfield."

That chemistry has built over time. It became crucial heading into this season, as both Hermanutz and Heeringa were moved into starting roles on the Lions' varsity roster.

Lynden played six games in the 2020 abbreviated season. Starting quarterback Baylor Ayres and running back Caleb Wheeler were both seniors. Two of the roster's most important positions were about to be up for grabs.

"To be honest, not really," Heeringa replied when asked if he anticipated receiving most of the team's carries this season. "I knew I was going to play, but yeah, [it's been] definitely a lot more than I expected."

Heeringa added that he has "definitely grown" as a runner since week one. VanDalen said he couldn't

wait to watch Heeringa play this year after his performance last season.

"[Heeringa]'s a punishing runner who really loves contact," VanDalen said. "If he has a choice between bouncing it to the grass and running to the endzone or trucking a kid and running to the endzone — he would choose every time to truck a kid."

He has taken the "lions-share of the carries," as VanDalen put it, and Heeringa has two games this season scoring a pair of touchdowns. His largest rushing total of the season was in week four against Burlington-Edison, when he tallied 148 yards on 28 attempts.

A tough runner on offense, Heeringa also displays his physicality on defense.

He starts at linebacker for Lynden as well, and currently has the second most solo tackles on the team behind senior Taivin VanDalen. Coach VanDalen advised Heeringa before the season that he will be playing the two most physical positions on the field.

"There's only a handful of kids in Lynden history that we've allowed to do that because it is so physical," VanDalen said. "We usually make them do offense or defense; running back only or linebacker only."

Hermanutz shifted fully to quarterback upon assuming the starting role this season. He had played some defensive back last year but made the shift to reduce his chance of injury.

During the summer, Hermanutz was recovering from shoulder surgery that kept him on the sidelines for most of the team's activities. He was always there;

he just couldn't compete in a full capacity.

There was a quarterback competition heading into the season between Hermanutz and senior Max Moore. However, VanDalen generally likes to deploy a multi-quarterback system. They both knew they would see the field regularly, regardless of the outcome.

"I think we were both totally fine with that," Hermanutz added. "I like having him out there and I think he was okay with having me out there. We just tried to play off each other ... It's competition, but it makes us better and definitely didn't break us apart."

In the Lions' season opener against Hockinson, Hermanutz was trying to find his footing. He rushed for a score, threw for one, but also three interceptions in the 24-21 win.

The coaching staff was right there to help him shrug it off and provide reassurance. To say he bounced back from a rocky first start passing the football would be a severe understatement.

"I just tried to flush it, really, and focus on the good things — just try to build off those," Hermanutz said. "If you worry about the picks, it's just going to get to you, right?"

Since week one, Hermanutz has since accumulated a 13-3 touchdown-interception ratio while rushing for four more scores. His best passing performance of the year came in week six, tossing five touchdowns and racking up 208 yards through the air.

The trust these Lions have in one another builds every week, Hermanutz said. While the whole team has had a hand in Lynden's success, it's special watch-

ing the junior backfield duo grow into their roles simultaneously.

"[Heeringa] makes a good play, you pat him on the back and say, 'good job' and then vice-versa," Hermanutz said. "We just try to make each other feel better and get ourselves better even when we're back there."

Both players had high praise for their coach as well. It's apparent the culture that VanDalen cultivates within his program stretches beyond the football field.

"I feel like he's my uncle or something, [it's] like I've known him my whole life," Heeringa said. "He's just a really good guy. I trust him, I'll go to him if I ever need anything."

Hermanutz echoed that feeling. He explained the importance of VanDalen keeping a close connection with his players to help everyone grow together.

VanDalen emphasized the evolution of his team's cohesion and connection to each other.

"We just love to go to battle together, and this

group, it's one of our tightest groups. These kids love to spend time together," he said. "That gives a coach great joy, right? It's fun to coach kids like that talent-wise, but it's even better when they also are great kids."

The Lions will close out their regular season against Sedro-Woolley (5-2 overall, 2-2 NWC) this coming Friday, Oct. 29 at 7 p.m. Hermanutz, Heeringa and the rest of the Lynden roster will look to keep a good thing going heading into the postseason.

## Holiday Edition COUPON BOOK

November 24

6,000 inserted in the Lynden Tribune & Ferndale Record

Price: \$199

Includes TWO SIDES and FULL COLOR

Deadline: October 29, 2021

Entire publication will also be available on our websites as well as at local retailers:

www.lyndentribune.com • www.ferndalerecord.com

**FRONT**

**THE GREEN DARN**

Fresh Produce • Dairy Meats & Cheese • Wine & Beer • Grocery • Full Bulk Section • Deli Products • Full Deli Serving Breakfast Lunch • Coffee, Smoothies

211 Birch Bay-Lynden Rd, Lynden Monday-Saturday 8-6, Closed Sunday

**Party Platter Headquarters**

**25% OFF**

**Party Platters, no limits!**

Check out our selection at [anyurl.com/gbplatters](http://anyurl.com/gbplatters) or custom build to suit your needs!

Expires 1.5.2021

**BACK**

**THE GREEN DARN**

Fresh Produce • Dairy Meats & Cheese • Wine & Beer • Grocery • Full Bulk Section • Deli Products • Full Deli Serving Breakfast Lunch • Coffee, Smoothies

211 Birch Bay-Lynden Rd, Lynden Monday-Saturday 8-6, Closed Sunday

**ENTER TO WIN**

**\$500 Gift Certificate**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

With coupon. One entry per customer. Drawing to be held December 20, 2020.

Call to reserve your spot today!

Mitze, Mary Jo, or Laurie • 360-354-4444

Jan • 360-224-2037

For added exposure, ask about pickup rates into our weekly newspapers in December too!

**GENERAC**

Prepare for unexpected power outages with a Generac home standby generator

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!  
888-674-7053

**FREE** 7-Year Extended Warranty\*  
A \$695 Value!

Limited Time Offer - Call for Details

Special Financing Available  
Subject to Credit Approval

\*To qualify, consumers must request a quote, purchase, install and activate the generator with a participating dealer. Call for a full list of terms and conditions.

**GENERAC PWRCELL**  
SOLAR + BATTERY STORAGE SYSTEM

A Smarter Way to Power Your Home.

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!  
**ACT NOW TO RECEIVE A \$300 SPECIAL OFFER!\***  
|(866) 954-2961

\*Offer value when purchased at retail. Solar panels sold separately.