

Sports

■ **Goalie Ben Myers** makes 30 saves to lead the IceRays to a pivotal 2-1 win at NAHL points leader Amarillo. **8C**



Junior confident for Daytona 500

■ **Earnhardt to start from 19th position in race**

By **Mark Long**
Associated Press



“We’ve got a good car. Anybody can win, but we’ve got a good piece. If we get that balance right and get the thing to turning good, we’ll have a great shot.”

Dale Earnhardt Jr., NASCAR driver

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — It’s been years since Dale Earnhardt Jr. was a non-factor during Speedweeks.

He finished second in the Budweiser Shootout and the Daytona 500 last year. He was the pole-sitter for the 500 in 2011, the 10-

year year anniversary of his father’s death at Daytona International Speedway. He started second and finished second in 2010, weaving his way through traffic in a frantic final lap.

He typically garners headlines and the majority of the attention leading

INSIDE

Crash mars Nationwide race; at least 30 fans injured. **4C**

up to NASCAR’s “Great American Race,” an event forever linked to his family name because of triumph and tragedy.

This year, Earnhardt has

been a mere footnote.

He qualified 19th for today’s Daytona 500, his lowest starting spot in 14 years at NASCAR’s premier event. His confidence remains high, possibly because he’s glad to be rid of the clunky Car of Tomorrow and the tricky tandem

racing that came with it at repaved Daytona.

“We’ve got a good car,” Earnhardt said. “Anybody can win, but we’ve got a good piece. If we get that balance right and get the thing to turning good, we’ll have a great shot.”

Early results say otherwise.

Earnhardt wrecked several cars during a Daytona test in January. He didn’t lead a lap in the exhibition Sprint Unlimited last

See **DAYTONA, 4C**



DIVING



Alaniz had previously won one silver and two bronze medals at the year-ending meet.

Alaniz splashes to gold in diving

■ **Ray senior prevails in 1-meter event**

By staff reports

AUSTIN — Ray’s Zoe Alaniz added another accolade to her senior-year haul Saturday — state diving champion.

After previously claiming one silver medal and two bronzes at the University Interscholastic League state meet, Alaniz brought home the gold this time.

Alaniz won the Class 4A 1-meter diving event at the Lee and Joe Jamail Texas Swim Center. She totaled 493.80 points, maintaining her comfortable lead after the preliminary round. Willis’ Chloe Helmink, who trailed Alaniz by almost 17 points after the prelims, placed second with 477.90 points.

It has been an eventful year for the 18-year-old Alaniz. The four-time

See **DIVING, 6C**

KLEBERG BANK COLLEGE CLASSIC



GEORGE TULEY/SPECIAL TO THE CALLER-TIMES

Zach Taylor (R) crawled back to third base ahead of the tag by Oklahoma’s Garrett Carey (L) in the third inning at Whataburger Field on Saturday.

SOONERS SINK ISLES

■ **Oklahoma shines on defensive play**

By **Lee Goddard**
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Scott Malone felt Oklahoma was one step better Saturday night than his Texas A&M-Corpus

Christi baseball team.

That one step might have been the jump Craig Aikin got from center field on a pivotal play in the fifth inning. Aikin’s diving snare in right-center of a potential game-tying, extra-base hit for the Islanders highlighted the differences between the two teams at Whataburger Field.

One step ahead, one notch better, Malone said.

The Sooners had a series of key defensive plays — accentuated by Aikin’s grab — while A&M-Corpus Christi’s follies in the field and on the base paths proved costly during a 4-2 Oklahoma victory on the second night of the three-day Kleberg Bank College Classic.

“Their center fielder was a notch better with the diving catch,” Malone said. “That’s a punch in the

gut that takes a lot to overcome. It killed my dugout. It killed the thousand fans behind me. I could feel a thousand people over my back acting like this is a tie game. ‘They’re going to beat them.’ Oh, sit back down. They were one step better.”

Sooners coach Sunny Golloway also pointed to the play as the turning

See **ISLANDERS, 7C**

OKLAHOMA	A&M-CC
4	2
KLEBERG BANK CLASSIC	
At Whataburger Field	
TODAY	
New Mexico vs. Oklahoma, 9:30 a.m.	
Texas A&M-CC vs. Iowa, 40 minutes after first game.	



Salazar captured the Class 4A title at 113 pounds.

Salazar garners shutout victory

■ **Senior from Beeville ends season at 28-3**

By staff reports

AUSTIN — In a rematch from the Region IV-4A wrestling meet, Beeville’s Rogelio Salazar reversed the decision Saturday against Austin Vandergrift’s Adrian Barraza.

Salazar won the University Interscholastic League Class 4A boys 113-pound wrestling championship by shutting down Barraza 4-0 at the Delco Center.

Salazar was seeded second in the region behind Barraza. But the Trojans’

See **WRESTLING, 6C**

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS

IWA rolls by Lutheran North

■ **Angels move within game of state tourney**

By **Stuart Duncan**
Special to the Caller-Times

There were no fourth-quarter heartbreaks in the TAPPS 4A playoffs for IWA this time.

Instead, the Angels continually crashed the offen-

sive boards and dominated the final quarter Saturday in beating area playoff opponent Houston Lutheran North at home, 73-58 in a battle of state-ranked girls basketball teams.

“It’s such a turnaround from my freshman year when we didn’t win a single district game,” said IWA senior guard Madison Longwell, who scored 11 of her team-high 17 points in the second half.

IWA	LUTHERAN N.
73	58
TAPPS	

“To go from 0-8, to district champs, to going to the next round of the playoffs — it’s unbelievable.”

The win moves No. 23 IWA to within one victory of a TAPPS 4A state tournament berth.

See **ANGELS, 6C**



MICHAEL ZAMORA/CALLER-TIMES

Incarnate Word’s Madison Longwell steals the ball from Houston Lutheran North’s Scarlet Rodriguez during their TAPPS area playoff game on Saturday.

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SPORTS

HIGH SCHOOL TRACK

Gregory-Portland girls win Wildcat Relays

By Javier Becerra
Special to the Caller-Times

PORTLAND — Gregory-Portland girls track and field coach Damaris King-Flack spent most of Saturday's Wildcat Relays in the press box coordinating results. Her team, meanwhile, was busy scoring points.

The host Wildcats piled up 161 points to nab the

girls team championship at the annual meet. Although King-Flack didn't get to see much of the performance, she commended the Wildcats on the effort.

"I was really proud of some of the girls, our third and fourth runners who had to step up because of some injuries," King-Flack said. "That always makes you proud to see as a coach, to know that they'll

do whatever it takes to be a team player and make sure that we get the points that we can on any given day."

Junior Haley Teel helped get things started by winning the discus and shot put. Her mark of 42 feet in the shot put set a meet record and missed tying her personal best by two inches.

"I had a good week of practice and set a new per-

sonal best in the discus," Teel said.

"I'm feeling pretty confident. I was trying to hit a PR in the shot. I came close, and that's good enough for me."

The Flour Bluff girls, who won last week's CCISD Metro Relays, finished second behind G-P with 145 points. A victory in the 1,600-meter relay gave Alice 103 points, more

than enough for third place in the team standings.

Flour Bluff claimed the boys team trophy by scoring 144 points. Ingleside finished third with 93 points, followed by G-P with 88.

Jamal Pradia led the Hornets with 37 individual points, a total that doesn't surprise Flour Bluff boys coach Clint Elwood.

"He's worked his tail

off," Elwood said. "Today he knew it was a big task, but we told him just to take it one event at a time and to leave everything on the track. That's what he did. He's one of our many components to the team and brings a lot to any event that he competes in. He pushes everybody else."

Like Pradia, Alice's Gabby Solis topped the girls with 37 individual points.



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ZAMORA/CALLER-TIMES

Incarnate Word's Cassidy Fought (14) high fives teammate Bianca Valderrama as Fought goes to the free-throw line against Houston Lutheran North on Saturday during their TAPPS area playoff game.

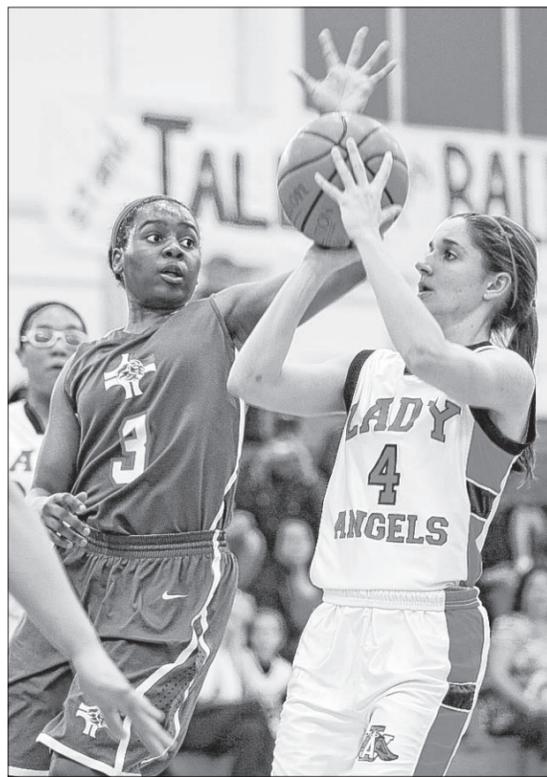
ANGELS from 1C

The TAPPS 3-4A champion Angels (28-10 overall) won their 11th consecutive game to advance to play Austin St. Dominic Savio for the TAPPS 4A regional championship Tuesday.

"Wow! We're going to the regional tournament," said IWA sophomore post Bianca Valderrama, who overcame second-half foul trouble to score 14 points in the game. "We're so close to state — that's what we're shooting for."

The Angels also made up for falling in the area round this past season to Houston Northland Christian, 53-51. That home game ended in painful fashion for the Angels, as an open fast-break opportunity for Longwell — which could've resulted in the game-tying layup late in the fourth quarter — was negated by a timeout called by IWA coach Malcolm Smith.

The Angels wouldn't put themselves in a similar position against the 22nd-ranked Lions (22-15), as they closed the game with a 25-7 run while erasing a



Incarnate Word's Maggie Pesek shoots the ball as Houston Lutheran North's Jae Branch tries to defend.

three-point deficit to take it.

"You saw the tears in (the IWA players') eyes — there are tears in my

eyes," Smith said. "After the way it ended last year and for them to come back and play so hard this year — it's great. This is a huge

win for us, there's no doubt about it."

The game was tied at 51 entering the fourth quarter before IWA outscored Houston Lutheran North, 22-7 in that decisive frame.

"We wanted this one so bad," said Angels junior guard Maggie Pesek, who was 6 for 6 from the free throw line and scored eight points in the game. "Especially after last year, this is a little redeeming. I'm glad we got to share this with our (fans)."

Junior guard/forward Annika Johnson's 3-pointer in the final minute of the third quarter started a 22-3 run by the Angels, which helped them build a 16 point, fourth-quarter lead.

Longwell had six points — four of those off two key putbacks — to lead IWA's second-half surge. Angels junior guard/forward Cassidy Fought added five of her 11 points during the big spurt thanks to a clutch three-point play and the second of her two key putbacks in less than a two-minute span.

"The other girls stepped up when (Bianca) went out (of the game because of foul trouble) and got the rebounds when they had

Area playoff scores, pairings

BOYS

REGION IV-5A QUARTERS

■ Carroll vs. Cibolo Steele, Tuesday at Goliad, time TBA

REGION IV-4A QUARTERS

■ Miller vs. Laredo Nixon, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at Weslaco

REGION IV QUARTERS

■ West Oso vs. Hidalgo, 7 p.m. Tuesday at Falfurrias
■ Orange Grove vs. Hondo, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at Pleasanton

REGION IV-2A QUARTERS

■ Aransas Pass vs. S.A. Randolph, 7 p.m. Tuesday at Three Rivers
■ Skidmore-Tynan vs. S.A. Cole, 7 p.m. Tuesday at Seguin

REGION IV-A, DIV. I QUARTERS

■ Port Aransas vs. Monte Alto, 7 p.m. Tuesday at Bishop
■ Woodsboro vs. Weimar, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at Victoria Events Center

GIRLS

REGION IV-5A FINAL

Cibolo Steele 58, S.A. Wagner 54

REGION IV-4A FINAL

S.A. Brennan 49, Cedar Park Vista Ridge 36

REGION IV-3A FINAL

Smithville 55, Boerne 50

REGION IV-2A FINAL

Poth 66, Schulenburg 38

REGION IV-A, DIV. I FINAL

Snook 40, Thorndale 39

IWA 73,

HOU. LUTHERAN NORTH 58
Lutheran North 13 18 20 7-58
Incarnate Word 14 19 18 22-73
Houston Lutheran North — Jae Branch 14, Scarlet Rodriguez 15, Haley Clements 4, Jessica Slomcheck 2, Tiffany Valentine 23.
IWA — Madison Longwell 17, Ashley Zawicky 8, Maggie Pesek 8, Annika Johnson 9, Cassidy Fought 11, Christina Matl 4, Bianca Valderrama 14, Emmie Anderson 2.
3-pointers — IWA, Fought 1, Longwell 1, Johnson 1, HLN, Rodriguez 5, Branch 1.
Records — IWA 28-10

DIVING from 1C

Region 8-4A girls diving champ was named the female Wendy's High School Heisman Award in December, is ranked first in Ray's International Baccalaure-

ate Program, was named a National Hispanic Program Scholar and was named the 2012 Caller-Times/Citgo South Texas Distinguished Scholar in the General Academics.

One other area individual and team brought home medals from the state meet.

Flour Bluff sophomore Anthony Hauglum placed second in the boys 4A 50-yard freestyle with a time of 21.01 seconds. Hauglum also was second after Friday's prelims.

The Hornets' 200 free relay team of Phillip Ugarte, Lucas Mestas-

Nunez, Hauglum and Oliver Garnier placed second, barely missing the gold. The Bluff foursome clocked a time of 1 minute, 25.5 seconds, just .03 seconds behind the winning time posted by San Antonio Alamo Heights.

The Bluff's 400 free relay

of Ugarte, Andrew Bylerly, Hauglum and Garnier finished fourth in 3:08.77, .31 seconds behind the third-place finishers from Frisco Wakeland.

Calallen's Jake McLaughlin finished fourth in the boys 4A 200 free in 1:42 and the Bluff's Kristina Prewitt

placed fifth in the girls 4A 50 free in 24:59.

Ray's Caitie Labay, finished 16th in the 1-meter diving event won by her teammate.

Dallas Highland Park won the boys and girls 4A team titles by comfortable margins.

WRESTLING from 1C

senior held the upper hand throughout the match in improving his record to 28-3.

Meanwhile, three other area wrestlers medaled. Ray's Christine Chesser placed second and Ray's Lucy Hamilton King's Lexi Escamilla posted third-place finishes.

King's girls placed sixth in the 5A team standings

with 54 points while Ray's girls were eighth in 4A with 50 points.

Boranza had lost only once coming into the state meet in 28 matches and the Vipers' sophomore had pinned two of his three opponents to reach the final. Salazar's road to the championship match was a little less taxing, as his closest match was a 6-4 win over Taygen Smith of Amarillo in Friday's semifinals.

The Texans' 215-pound

sophomore, Chesser lost in her bid for a state title to Jesse Grubbs of Azle 9-5. Grubbs, whose Azle team won the team championship, was the top seed out of Region II, as was Chesser in Region IV. It was just Chesser's second loss in 23 matches this year.

Chesser's teammate Hamilton took the 4A girls 138-pound bronze medal after defeating Saginaw's Martina Martinez 3-0. Hamilton finished her se-

nior year with a 35-5 record.

Escamilla pinned South Grand Prairie's Karla Fuentes at the 4:26 mark to win the 5A 110-pound third-place medal. Escamilla improved her record to 32-9.

In the 5A girls 148-pound class, Carroll's Jovanna Cortez finished fourth after losing in the third-place match to Cinco Ranch's Ashley DeLeon 13-11. Cortez finished the season with a 27-4 record while

DeLeon won four consecutive matches after losing in the second round to finish with a 43-1 record.

A junior at King, Kiley Gelabert was beaten by Clear Springs' Cassidy Jaspersen 5-0 in the 5A girls 119-pound third-place match. Another King junior, Naomi Ruiz, was pinned by Arlington Lamar's Shaude'Dre Franklin at the 4:56 mark in the 5A girls 148-pound match for third place. Ruiz finished

with a 24-8 record.

King's Fabian Mendez, who had reached the 5A boys 138-pound semifinals before losing twice, defeated Deandre Neros of Dallas Lake Highlands 7-6 for fifth place.

Beeville's Danielle Perez lost her bid for a fifth-place finish in the girls 4A 102-pound class, dropping an 11-0 majority decision to Azle's Bernadette Duhan. A junior, Perez finished with a 19-10 record.