



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Old Town's Gabby Sherman (center), who is battling cancer, does the pregame cheer for her team during their game against Orono on Thursday in Orono.

Cancer

Continued from Page B4

and recently finished up radiation treatments.

"We can finally get our family back to normalcy," she said.

"Emily is definitely an inspiration, not only for us as a team but for the school and the community," Orono High School coach Kristen Espling said. "She had grabbed it by the horns and her family has been great."

'Softball is my sanity'

Emily LeClair missed virtually the whole first semester of her junior year because she would spend four days a week, every three weeks, getting chemotherapy and radiation treatments at Lafayette. She returned to school in mid-January.

She had a port in her chest in order to receive her dose of chemotherapy.

"Sometimes I would be there all day. In the middle, they had to up my chemo because the first kind didn't work as well as it was supposed to," LeClair said. "So I actually had to stay in the hospital [Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor]."

"That was really, really tough," she said. She began working out in late March-early April after having the port removed and the area where it had been was tender early in the season.

"I'm not as strong or as fast as I was because of the lymphoma but I'm getting there. When I get stronger, I'll be able to hit the ball farther and I won't have to run as hard," LeClair joked.

She also was surprised to see the number of youngsters who are stricken with the disease.

"It was pretty crazy. You never realize how many kids are affected by it until you actually go to the treatment center and see kids coming

in and out of there all the time," LeClair said. "It's really scary to see teenagers with something nobody should have to worry about, especially if you're a kid."

"Every story is different. That has been the most interesting part of it all. What Gabby and I have experienced is black and white. It is almost the complete opposite," LeClair said.

Her attitude has played an important role in her therapy.

"I've taken a positive attitude. I treat it like softball. Softball is my sanity in a way," LeClair said. "When you get down on yourself, you just have to pick yourself up."

She is ecstatic to be back on the field.

"I'm so happy. Like I said, it's my sanity. If I'm angry, I go hit some BP [batting practice]," LeClair said. "This is a pretty great game."

'My favorite sport'

Gabby Sherman said she began playing softball in second grade.

"It's my favorite sport. I play second base or the outfield," she said.

"It is a horrible thing to go through at such a young age," her father, Glen, said. "But she's a great girl."

He said his daughter passed out at home one day so he took her to the hospital.

"They did a scan and the day after that they operated on her," he said.

In December, they discovered that the tumor had started growing again "so they started her on chemotherapy."

So she spends four to five hours at Lafayette in Brewer every Friday for four consecutive Fridays at a time before getting two Fridays off, although she does have to go to Lafayette on those two Fridays to have bloodwork done.

This will continue through at least January,

Glen Sherman said. "And she has only missed three [other] days of school overall from being sick," he said.

Her father said the prognosis is "very good. That's what they keep telling us."

"I've been feeling better," Gabby Sherman said. "Sometimes, I'll have a headache."

Community support

The two girls were honored by their respective communities at the Orono-Old Town softball game Thursday. It was called the Cancer Awareness game and proceeds from the barbecue and the passing of the hat will go to LeClair's team that will participate in the Champion the Cure Challenge at the Lafayette Center Aug. 20.

"The support from the community has been so overwhelming," Glen Sherman said.

"My friends and everyone at Orono High School, especially my teammates, have been very, very supportive," LeClair said.

"There is something to be said for living in small community," said Tracy LeClair whose family lives in Milford. "There has been lots of encouragement and love."

"Emily has been one of my best friends since we were very young and she has always loved this game," Orono High School junior shortstop Katelyn Richards said. "When I heard the diagnosis, it was heart-breaking."

"But I knew Emily would come back and play," Richards said. Old Town High School junior shortstop Mikayla Richards said: "It makes us feel good doing stuff like that for them. They're part of our community so anything we can do to support them is good."

"This gets into everyone's heart and it's great to come here and support them," Old Town sophomore outfielder/pitcher Mckenna Smith said.

Hermon driver wins second straight at Speedway 95

HERMON — Hermon's John Curtis Jr. made it two in a row for the season Saturday night at Speedway 95 as he cruised to victory in the Dysart's Late Models.

Curtis won his qualifier, started the feature on the pole, and never looked back over the 40-lap distance to the checkers.

Dana Wilbur of Frankfort and Wayne Parritt Jr. of Steuben waged a battle for second and third that wasn't settled until the final five laps with Wilbur taking the runner-up spot and Parritt finishing third.

Also in the mix were Skowhegan's Kris Matchett, who finished fourth and Hermon's Scott Modery, who ran in second for the first half of the event, but faded to fifth.

OTHER SPEEDWAY 95 RESULTS (Top five) — Casella Recycling Street Stocks: 1. Asa Jones, Sullivan; 2. Bob Seger Jr., Frankfort; 3. Dean Clements, Brooks; 4. Greg Pung, Franklin; 5. Jeff Alley, Machias; **Casella Waste Systems Sport 4:** 1. Zach Audet, Skowhegan; 2. Cody Farnsworth, Orono; 3. Gary Richards, Exeter; 4. Cole Robinson, Clinton; 5. Marcus

Dunn, Newburgh; **Caged Road Runners:** 1. Tim Robinson, Clinton; 2. J.R. Ogden, Bucksport; 3. Henry Boudreau, Winterport; **NELCAR Legends:** 1. Corey Hall, New Brunswick; 2. Kevin Gerard Jr., Old Orchard Beach; 3. Chris Burgess, Buckfield; 4. Bob Weymouth, Topsham; 5. Alan Smith, Lincoln

Winterport Dragway Super Pro/ Pro Final: 1. Paul Henkle, Old Orchard; 2. Russell Calder, Welshpool; **Super Pro Eliminator:** 1. Paul Henckel, Old Orchard Beach, 2. Jennifer Fusco, Turner, Semifinalist, Rick Hunnewell, Ellsworth; **Pro Eliminator:** 1. Russell Calder, Welshpool, 2. Luke Beaulier, Winslow, Semifinalist, Wayne Paul, Belfast; **Street Eliminator:** 1. Bill Damier, Deer Isle 2. J.R. Condon, Chelsea Semifinalist, Tony Ryan, Bangor; **Bikes and Sleds:** 1. Ezra Boynton, Windham, 2. Jon Weeks, Waterville, Semifinalist, Brittany Marston, Winslow; **Jr. Dragster Race:** 1. Kerrigan Shorey, Lamoine, 2. Danielle Fusco, Turner, Semifinalist, J. R. Condon, Chelsea

Oxford Plains Speedway (Top 5 per class) Budweiser Super Late Model

(50 laps): 1. T.J. Brackett, Buckfield, 2. Josh Childs, Oxford; 3. Dennis Spencer, Jr., Oxford; 4. Shawn Martin, Turner; 5. Shawn Knight, South Paris; **Allen's Coffee Flavored Brandy Street Stock (30 laps):** 1. Zach Emerson, Sabattus; 2. Matt Dufault, Turner; 3. Calvin Rose, Jr., Turner; 4. Andrew Breton, Sabattus; 5. David Whittier, Poland; **Bandit (20 laps):** 1. Brian Hiscock, Turner; 2. Tyler Green, Turner; 3. Matt Mahar, Raymond; 4. Dustin Salley, Poland; 5. Jacob Hall, Oxford; **Figure 8 (15 laps):** 1. Jon Lizotte, Lewiston; 2. Eric Hodgkins, Minot; 3. Kyle Kilgore, South Paris; 4. Robert Morey, Lisbon; 5. Greg Durgin, South Paris

PASS North Series

(At Barre, Vt., top 5 per class) **Mekkesen RV 150-lap Super Late Models:** 1. Glen Luce, Turner; 2. Wayne Helliwell Jr., Dover, N.H.; 3. Travis Benjamin, Morrill; 4. Derek Ramstrom, West Boylston, Mass.; 5. Ben Rowe, Turner, **PASS Mods (30 laps):** 1. Andy Shaw, Center Conway, N.H.; 2. Ben Tinker, New Gloucester; 3. Ryan Robbins, Dixfield; 4. Mike Carignan, Lebanon; 5. Ron Henry, New Gloucester

Indy 500

Continued from Page B4

serve driver for several races yet to come this season. It doesn't mean he will have a European ride, however.

"I drive to the track in a road car," Rossi said.

Now, he's an Indianapolis 500 winner, the 10th first-timer to do that in 100 years of the event. The last true rookie to win was George Souders in 1927.

Rossi hails from Nevada City, Calif., but he wasn't the U.S. driver pegged to win this race. Others were teammates Ryan Hunter-Reay, Townsend Bell and Marco Andretti, among them.

The race featured 54 lead changes (second-most in 500 history) and 13 leaders. IndyCar's timing and scoring system clocked 850 passes during the 200-lap race.

The spectacle of the 100th was displayed from the dawning of the morning, with 350,000 people pouring into the historic facility for the first sellout in IMS history.

Buddy Lazier's car had a throttle problem ahead of the start, keeping him from taking the green flag. He missed the first 48 laps as his crew made repairs.

Pole winner James Hinchcliffe led the sprint to Turn 1, but as he predicted, he wasn't in the lead the first time the pack got to Turn 3. That honor went to

Hunter-Reay, his former Andretti teammate.

The two took turns swapping the lead — 12 times in the first 24 laps — and the chase was on. Hinchcliffe first incurred trouble on the first pit stop when the fueling mechanism stuck, costing him an extra five-plus seconds. He exited sixth.

After debris on the track at Lap 47 created the first caution, most of the competitors came to pit road. Exiting, Will Power drifted wide into the pit road path of Tony Kanaan, who lightly brushed the wall. Power was penalized for an unsafe exit, a penalty Team Penske teammate Simon Pagenaud later incurred as well after hitting Mikhail Aleshin.

Tennis

Continued from Page B4

was hoping I could get into his heads a little bit early, maybe fluster him," Backus said. "I know he can definitely outthit me, so I wanted to keep the ball in and try to out-rally him."

The strategy worked at first, with the unseeded Backus taking a 2-1 lead in the opening set.

"I have a pretty unique style of play," Backus said. "When you're playing a one-seed or a two-seed, they can figure you out pretty quick. I just try to mix it up a lot."

Forester did figure things out in the first, rattling off five consecutive games to take the set, 6-2.

Backus gave Forester everything he had in the second set, as well, at times matching the Falmouth No. 1 player's power shot for shot. But Forester was too much after he found his stride, taking the second set by an identical 6-2 mark.

"I'm pretty sure I was the first Mt. Blue player to get to the round of 16 for guys, and we had a player from our girls' team make it, too, so that was pretty cool," Backus said.

His counterpart on the girls' team, Eryn Doiron, advanced out of Friday's round of 32 with a three-set win over Falmouth's third singles player, Kate Kelley. She ran into a buzz saw in Campanella on Saturday, though.

"I enjoyed playing inside (Friday), and I didn't think I would," Doiron said. "But,

I've played here in the Lewiston courts, too, so that was fine.

"My goal was to do one better than last year," Doiron added. "This was icing on the cake."

Sixth-seeded Cole Ouellette of Lewiston battled through the heat against No. 11 Matthew Jarmusz of Morse High School, and lost both battles. After dropping the first set 7-6 (2), Ouellette ran out of steam in the second and fell, 6-1.

"First set, I was pretty good, but the second set, the heat kicked in," Ouellette said.

"He was more conditioned than me, I thought,

and he played better in the second set," Ouellette added. "He kicked it up a notch on his serves."

Top-seeded Nick Mathieu of Mt. Ararat High School advanced with little trouble through his draw to reach Monday's semifinals. He dispatched Alex Klemperer in the quarterfinal round, 6-2, 6-1. He will face fourth-seeded Michael Mills of Cape Elizabeth, who nearly lost to Lewiston's Timo Teckenberg in the round of 32 on Friday before rolling through his two matches on Saturday.

On the other side of the draw, Forester will face No. 3 Dary Vykhotsev of Thornton Academy.

Where in the Woods?

BDN

Aislinn Sarnacki

Bangor Daily News reporter for Outdoors

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