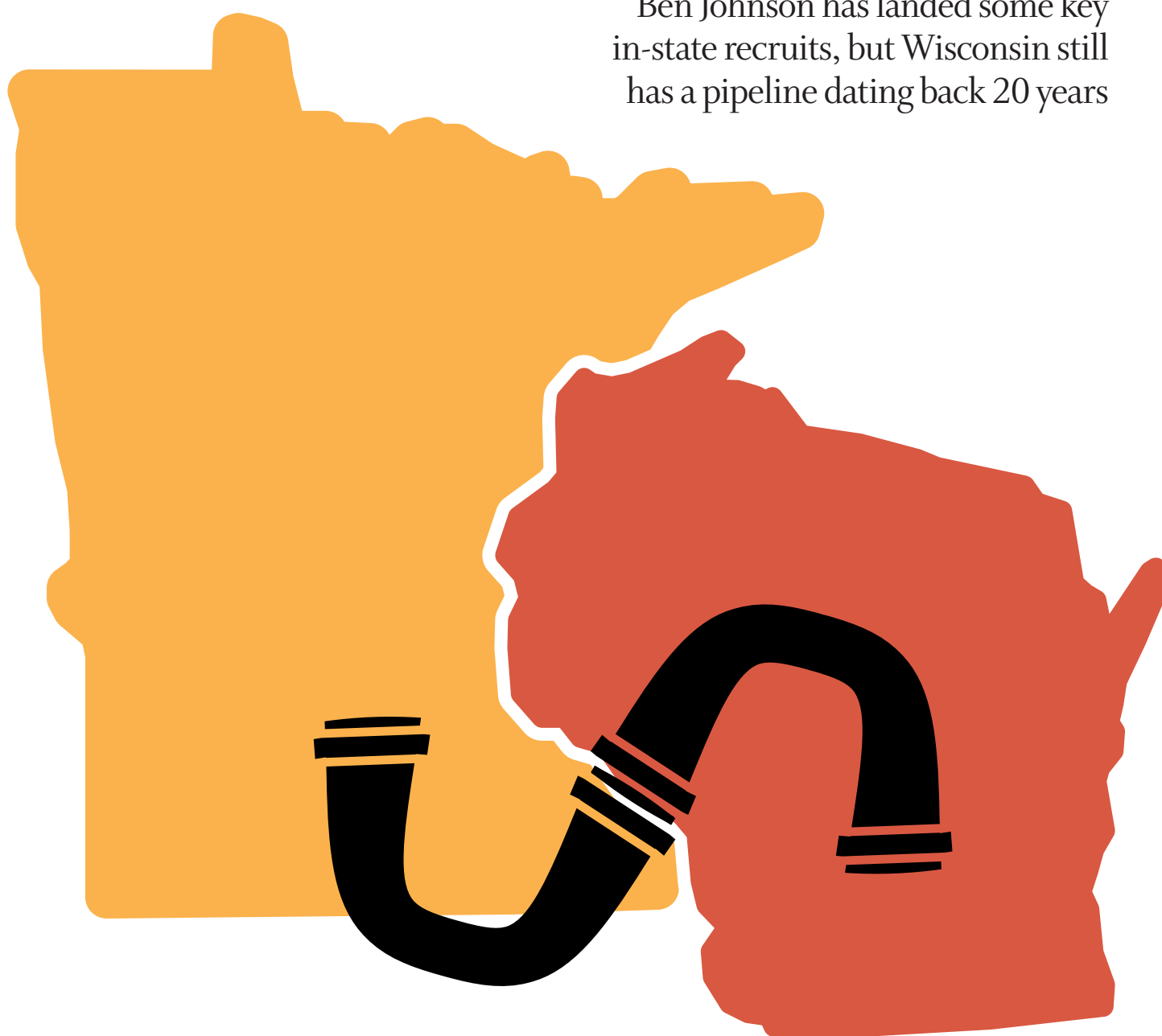


SPORTS

Gophers men's basketball coach Ben Johnson has landed some key in-state recruits, but Wisconsin still has a pipeline dating back 20 years



Why do so many players from Minnesota land at Wisconsin?

By MARCUS FULLER • marcus.fuller@startribune.com

Wisconsin basketball coach Greg Gard points back to his days as a Milwaukee assistant under Bo Ryan in the late 1990s as when recruiting in Minnesota really started for him.

And now Gard can't imagine where his program would be without Minnesota talent.

The Badgers established a recruiting pipeline across the border that's been challenging the Gophers for two decades, well before coach Ben Johnson took over at Minnesota in 2021.

Few things have frustrated Gophers hoops fans more over the years than seeing so many top Minnesota boys basketball players head to the Badgers. It's almost as bad as losing to them on the court.

On last Wednesday's signing day, Breck's Daniel Freitag and Lakeville North's Jack Robison gave Wisconsin six players from Minnesota since 2019, the same number of in-state players the Gophers have signed during that span. Last year, Gard signed Lakeville North's Nolan Winter, now an impact freshman.

"It's just a natural fit," Gard said. "It's far enough away but not too far away. It's a great academic school. Awesome campus and awesome city."

Johnson has yet to sign a Minnesota player who also received a Wisconsin scholarship offer, but he says not every top prospect in the state fits his program.

The Gophers signed in-state recruits Isaac Asuma from Cherry and Grayson Grove from Alexandria. In his first three U classes,

See **GOPHERS** on C6 ▶

BORDER CROSSINGS

Minnesota boys basketball players who signed with Wisconsin since 2013:

* indicates walk-on



2024
Daniel Freitag, G, Breck



2018
*Joe Hedstrom, C, Hopkins



2024
Jack Robison, F, Lakeville North



2017
Nate Reuvers, F, Lakeville North



2023
Nolan Winter, F, Lakeville North



2017
Brad Davison, G, Maple Grove



2023:
*Jack Janicki, G, White Bear Lake



2017
*Walt McGrory, G, Edina



2020
Steven Crowl, F, Eastview



2015
Alex Illikainen, F, Grand Rapids



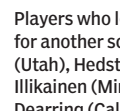
2020
Ben Carlson, F, East Ridge



2013
Riley Dearing, G, Minnetonka



2019
Tyler Wahl, F, Lakeville North



Players who left Wisconsin for another school: Carlson (Utah), Hedstrom (Valparaiso), Illikainen (Minnesota Duluth), Dearing (Cal State Fullerton)

FOOTBALL ACROSS MINNESOTA

He could be in NFL, or maybe governor?

CHIP SCOGGINS



The fourth of Jackie and Nate Travis' five children had such a proclivity for debate as a child that they gave young Jalen a nickname.

"We used to call him 'The Governor,'" Nate said, "because he used to debate everything that we said to him."

Same thing with teachers. Not in a smart-alecky way. He was an intelligent, passionate, independent thinker who loved to research topics to support his point. Those around him nurtured his inquisitive nature.

"He could have been the noisy kid who got sat in a corner," Jackie said.

Jalen Travis is still out front leading with his heart and voice.

A senior left tackle at Princeton University, Travis has ambitions to play in the NFL after he concludes his college career Saturday at Penn. He is a 6-9, 315-pound athletic tackle who followed older brothers Jonah and Reid as basketball standouts at DeLaSalle High.

If not football, his next step is certain to be impactful.

Travis' resumé is too lengthy and impressive to fit on one page. He helped start a nonprofit called The Just Action Coalition after George Floyd's murder with

See **SCOGGINS** on C4 ▶

Who wins Scandal Bowl? It's the Aggies

PATRICK REUSSE



Loel Schrader left a job as a columnist at the Long Beach newspaper in California to become the sports editor at the St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch at the start of the 1980s.

He brought with him an immense fondness for college football, based to a significant degree on a time spent covering the Trojans of Southern California, coached by John McKay and then John Robinson.

Schrader was stunned along with most college football followers in 1982, when Texas A&M — tired of its secondary status in comparison with the Texas Longhorns — lured 38-year-old Jackie Sherrill as its coach away from the University of Pittsburgh.

Sherrill's contract would total \$1.6 million for six years, an unheard-of average of \$267,000 per season. The Aggies also added the title "athletic director" to make the contract more palatable.

Sports Illustrated wrote about the contract under the headline: "Jackie Hits The Jackpot." The deal was described as "brehtaking."

That was certainly the case for Schrader. On arrival, he had done wonders to increase the PPD's travel budget, yet it came as a sur-

See **REUSSE** on C4 ▶

Hunter, aka Mr. Clean, racks up a rare penalty

Vikings pass rusher plays by the book, and Sunday's call was, um, off the mark.

ON THE NFL

MARK CRAIG

Danielle Hunter has played in 118 NFL games, including playoffs, sacked the quarterback 86½ times and has never once been penalized for roughing the passer or unnecessary roughness.

Think about that.

When that sinks in, think about a stat that's even harder to believe about a game-wrecking edge rusher who's trying to walk a fine line in a flag-happy

league that makes no apologies for favoring the offensive side of the ball in general and quarterbacks in particular:

The NFL has never fined Hunter.

For anything. Ever.

"I try to play the right way," Hunter said. "I try not to cost my team anything."

Mission accomplished — and then some for the guy who's tied for the league lead in sacks with 11.

Hunter has been in the NFL since 2015. A neck injury cost him the entire 2020 season. In the eight seasons he has played, he's been penalized eight times for 52 yards.

See **CRAIG** on C2 ▶



EXTRA HELPING OF CHEER

Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins spoke with Jase Peaslee, 10, on Tuesday while assisting in serving Thanksgiving dinner at the Salvation Army in St. Paul. **C2**

Photo by CARLOS GONZALEZ • carlos.gonzalez@startribune.com