Girls champions: Hopkins, DLS, Minnehaha, Minneota

Above, Minnehaha Academy celebrates a 72-63 finals win over Caledonia in Class AA. Right, Minneota’s Lydia Sussner duels Goodhue’s Lexie Lodemeier during Minneota’s 40-31 win in 1A. Below, Hopkins’ Paige Bueckers drives against Stillwater’s Sara Scalia in the 4A final won by Hopkins 74-45. Below right, the DeLaSalle girls celebrate their 61-59 semifinal win vs Holy Angels.

Bruce Strand, MN BB News
By Bruce Strand

Zeke Nnaji of Hopkins is the Star-Tribune’s choice for Metro Player of the Year.

“He stands 6-11 and is a slender-but-sturdy 215 pounds, with broad shoulders, long arms and oh-so-smooth on-court demeanor,” was the Trib’s description of the Arizona recruit who’s averaging 24.1 points and 9.4 rebounds heading into the state tournament.

Last summer, playing for D1 Minnesota against the top prepsters in the nation, he averaged 14.5 points and 5.9 rebounds, second on the team in both.

The All-Metro first team also includes:

Breck’s David Roddy, 6-5, 245-pound senior forward (29.8 ppg, 17 reg), a Colorado State recruit.

Minnehaha Academy’s Jalen Suggs, 6-5 guard ranked 14th among the nation’s juniors, averaging 24 points.

DeLaSalle’s Tyrell Terry, 6-2 senior guard averaging 22 points and seven assists, signed by Stanford.

Lakeville North’s Tyler Wahl, 6-7 senior forward (18 ppg, 10 rpg, 6.6 apg) headed for Wisconsin.

The second team consists of East Ridge junior forward Ben Carlson, Prior Lake junior forward Dawson Garcia, Mahtomedi junior guard J’vonne Hadley, Tartan senior guard Antwan Kimmons, and Chaska senior forward Cole Nicholson.

The third team includes DeLaSalle senior forward Jamison Battle, East Ridge senior forward Courtney Brown and sophomore guard Kendall Brown, North St. Paul senior guard Dajuan Carter, Park Center junior post Dane Dainja, and Edina senior guard Jack Middleton.
Hopkins reigns supreme

By Bruce Strand

The Hopkins Royals will never apologize for losing state championship games three straight years. “We were still playing on Saturday night,” was always coach Brian Cosgriff’s stock answer. But when the Royals broke through with a resounding state finals victory, 74-45 over Stillwater, on March 16, their celebration was positively delirious, more typical of a last-second victory than a thoroughly-expected outcome.

“This is MUCH better,” said their brilliant leader Paige Bueckers, who could not stop smiling after adding a gold medal to her three silvers. Hopkins is 121-7 in her four years.

Hopkins (32-0) completed the most dominant season of any team in any class since the 2007 St. Paul Central squad, which was coached by, coincidentally, Willie Taylor, who was on the other end of that this year as coach of Stillwater.

“This Hopkins team is probably the best team since the very good Central team,” Taylor acknowledged. “I think they could be an even better team next year. Their 8th- and 9th-graders will get better. Paige Bueckers is very special! I think she has potential to become an Olympian.”

Stillwater was 28-1 against everyone else (the loss in overtime against No. 2 Wayzata) but lost by 22 and 29 to Hopkins, whose only single-digit win was 69-66 over Wayzata, whom they beat 70-49 and 77-60 afterward.

Stillwater led 35-30 before Hopkins’ withering pressure and supreme skills kicked in and they obliterated the Ponies 44-10 the rest of the way, taking the lead with a burst of 12 points in a minute, 24 seconds.

Bueckers, 6-0 junior guard, two-time Star-Tribune metro player of the year, who was throwing up in the morning and still “white as a ghost” late in the day, according to Cosgriff, but she nonetheless left no doubt that she “would be out there with my girls!” and played 35 minutes, contributing 13 points, seven assists, five steals and five rebounds.

“Paige has won (championships) with Team USA, she’s won 3-on-3 (worlds), she’s won everything except this, and this has weighed heavily on her this year,” Cosgriff said. “This feels amazing. I’m not gonna lie, this is the best ever.”

Maya Nnaji, 6-3 freshman already coveted by big D-1 programs, delivered 18 points and 10 rebounds. Dlayla Chakolis, senior guard and Miss Basketball finalist, signed by Hampton, added 13 points and six rebounds. Those three made all-tourney.

Meanwhile, Kayla Adams drilled four of seven 3-pointers for 12 points, Amaya Battle notched 11 assists, nine points and nine rebounds. Eighth-grader Taylor Woodson had nine off the bench, including a layup off a Bueckers behind-the-back pass that was the highlight reel play of the day.

“This was not just Paige,” Cosgriff said. “Last year, against Eastview, Paige got 37 and we had three or four others score but not a lot so this was a total team effort.”

“That second half, that’s how Hopkins plays when we are having fun,” Bueckers said. Her team had 18 points off turnovers.

Hopkins, playing in its fifth straight final, collected its sixth championship in 13 state trips. The last three years they lost to Minnetonka 61-52, Elk River 64-60 and Eastview 68-63 in the finals.

Hopkins: Continued on Page 9
MS BASKETBALL FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

Kacie Borowicz
Roseau

The 5-8 guard, North Dakota recruit, averaged 27.7 points, 8.3 rebounds, and 3.8 steals. She played in 5 state tourneys, scoring 322 of her 3,551 points.

Frannie Hottinger
Cretin-Derham

A 6-0 forward signed by Le-High, she averaged 28 points, 11.7 rebounds and 2.4 steals. Scored 1,907 points including a 51-point game vs. Stillwater.

McKenna Hofschild
Prior Lake

The fleet 5-3 guard, set for Seton Hall, hit 2,488 career points and a state record 63 in one game. She averaged 23.8 points, 5.1 assists, 4.2 rebounds, 3.0 steals.

Sara Scalia
Stillwater

The 5-10 guard, a Gopher recruit, averaged 23 points and 6 rebounds for the state runner-up Ponies, hitting 109 3-pointers. She scored 2,614 career points.

Dlayla Chakolis
Hopkins

The forceful 5-7 guard averaged 14.4 points and 6 rebounds for the 32-0 state champs and tallied 1,395 career points. She’ll play for Hampton.

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FOR STRONG TEAMS ONLY!
DeLaSalle persists, prevails

By Bruce Strand

DeLaSalle was ranked No.1 at the outset, struggled to a 4-4 start with a rash of knee injuries and a daunting early schedule, but was at the top of the heap again when it counts, in mid-March. The No. 7 Islanders (25-6) capped their drive to the Class 3A crown with a 56-40 conquest of No. 9 Becker, their 15th straight wins.

“It shows the kind of dedication we have. This group knew they had to step up and work hard,” said coach Tanysha Scott, who deployed as many as six freshmen into action this season.

Four players scored in double digits — Nora Francois with 14, Kiani Lockett 12, Nurjei Weems 11 and Mary Claire Francois 10 — but it was shut-down defense that put them over the top.

“All five players have such long arms,” marveled Becker coach Dan Baird. “Through the season, we have been able to impose our will on teams, but that got reversed today. We are used to scoring in 70’s. Their pressure did not allow fast breaks. We shot 26.5 percent, a season low, which I attribute to their defense.”

Courtney Nuest led Becker with 11 points. DLS held Julia Bengtson, Becker’s 1,000-point sophomore star who had 44 in the first two games, to eight points. “We want to stay in their lanes. We know they have good drivers,” Scott said. “We had to move our arms and feet. We tried the zone in the second half to see if it would work, and it did exactly what we wanted it to do. It slowed them down.”

DeLaSalle has played in 10 state tournaments, reaching finals six times and winning four of those. One they lost was in 2007 when Becker beat them on a last-second shot for their only state title.

Their top player back from last year’s state qualifier, Elaina Jones (signed by Idaho State) was out with a knee injury in the fourth game. Suffering knee injuries last spring were Nora Francois, who returned late December, and Sydney Runsewe, who returned at mid-season. Also missing the season are starter Alexis Cochran-Starr and top sub Kate Graham. Ninth-graders Runsewe, Savannah White, Lockett, Leah Dengerud, Mya Williams, and I’Tianna Salaam were pressed into action and “more than held their own,” said the coach.

Becker (27-5) has a good chance to return. “We had a fantastic season,” said Baird. “This is an easy group to root for, never any trouble on the team or in class. We had four sophomores and a freshman starting and eighth-graders playing. The sky is the limit.”

Road to the finals

DeLaSalle repeled Hibbing 61-53 with Sydney Runsewe (5-for-6 on three’s) scoring 18 points and Nora Francois 15. Abby McDonald had 16 for Hibbing. In the semifinals, the Islanders nipped Holy Angels 61-59 with Weems hitting 18 points and the game-winner with six seconds left. Mary Claire Francois added 16. DLS overcame Francesca Vascellaro’s 35 points and 10 rebounds for Holy Angels.

Minnehaha surges back to top

By Bruce Strand

Minnehaha Academy was not one of those teams for whom just getting to state was satisfactory. No, not after six straight trips, and 11 in the last 12 years, without reaching finals since winning the 2010 title and placing second in 2011. And not after going 0-5 at state the last three years since placing third in 2015. “We came in with a chips on our shoulders from past tournaments. We had unfinished business,” said Taytum Rhoades.

Those chips were left on the Williams Arena floor after the No. 4 ranked Redhawks rolled to the Class 2A championship, capped by a 72-63 conquest of Caledonia.

Rhoades, senior point guard, poured in 29 points, cashing 14 of 15 free shots, while making five assists and four steals. She scored 71 points in the tournament. Mia Curtis was next with 18 points (47 in the tournament) but sat the last 8:03 after fouling out. The Redhawks trailed 53-48 after Kaitlin Conniff sank two free shots for Caledonia after that foul.

“If anyone had told me that Mia would foul out with eight minutes left and I would still win, I would have said no chance,” coach Matt Pryor admitted. “But, all season, we have had different girls step up in big moments. They never panic.” Said Curtis: “My heart dropped. I had tears in my eyes, I’ve fouled out before, but never with eight minutes left! Thankfully, my teammates stepped up. We were all super loud on the bench.”

Minnehaha (25-6) stayed calm, took the lead 56-55 on a 3-pointer by Tanna Gallo, and quickly expanded the lead to 62-55 as Rhoades knifed in for a three-point play and Kate Pryor drilled another 3-pointer. “I started to believe when Tanna made that 3-pointer,” Rhoades said. “We got the 3-pointer, and we were making stops.”

“Caledonia rebounds hard, they scrap, they make you earn everything,” Pryor said. “I told the girls, whichever team is tougher will win this game.”

“We attacked and attacked, and got them in foul trouble and had them where we wanted them, but they still came back,” said Scott Sorenson, Caledonia coach.

For Caledonia (26-5), which had won 22 straight, Ashley Schroeder laid in 21 points, going 11-for-11 at the line. Katie Tornstrom scored 19 points and pulled down 16 rebounds. Kaitlin Conniff notched 16 points, sinking all 10 free shots, and nine rebounds.

Road to the finals


Tornstrom, Bolduan, Conniff and Schroeder are all seniors. “It’s going to be tough walking into the gym next fall without these seniors,” Sorenson said, eyes welling.

Minnehaha surges back to top

Redhawk guard Taytum Rhoades scores two of her 29 points.
My Favorite Player

By Jeff McCarron, MBBN publisher

We are celebrating 40 years at Pacesetter Basketball this year and our 25th year of Minnesota Basketball News. That allows me to watch hundreds of youth games and teach kids in camps. Every now and then a special player grabs your attention.

I told Katie Borowicz about five years ago when she was a 5th grader that she was my favorite basketball player – youth, high school, college, pros, male, female.

A sophomore now, Katie has grown to about 5-foot-6 and maybe 110 pounds, just guessing, but pound for pound, she has become one of the best players in Minnesota. I have not taught her in camp, but I have watched her play in Pacesetter playoffs for five years as her team has won their region each year and advanced all the way through the Minnesota Youth Basketball State Tournament to the Target Center for the Pacesetter Great Four-State championships. She has also now played in three straight high school state tournaments as an 8th, 9th and 10th grader. Roseau has finished first, second and third.

Katie is the third daughter of Tracy and David Borowicz of Roseau, whose family is becoming one of Minnesota’s top basketball families -- right in the middle of hockey country! I love it! Oldest daughter Kylie led the Rams to the Class AA state championship in 2017 and helped Minnesota-Moorhead reach the D-II national semifinals this year. Kacie, a senior this year, lit up the state tournament last week with 101 points in three games, with a beautiful touch on 3-pointers, mid-range jumpers, and agile bank shots. She has signed with North Dakota and is a finalist for Miss Basketball.

Now Katie…. First of all, she absolutely loves the game. I asked her when she was about a 5th grader where she wanted to go to college. Without hesitation, she said, “U Conn.” She gives everything on every play and can’t stand the thought of losing … and doesn’t think about that possibility until the clock runs out. She will “body up” big players in the post, dive for loose balls, harass the ball, tie up the ball – chop it, hack it, slap at it, do everything to get it – and then look out! As she comes down the court on a fast break, anything could happen – long bounce pass, lob, bullet pass to teammate under the basket, a drive to the hole, a zip pass to the perimeter – her passing skills are creative and on target. Her one-handed off the dribble passes are reminiscent of a young lady from Hutchinson we all know and love. She even tried a behind-the-back left-handed bounce pass on a fast break.

Watching Katie inspired me to go to the hotel and watch a Larry Bird highlights tape! Bird was magical with his ability to see open teammates and get them the ball. Katie is the same way. She scored 37 points the first night of the state tournament in Williams Arena, so she can shoot it too, hitting six-for-nine on threes. She is also strong taking it to the basket. If she ever develops a mid-range jump shot off a dribble, look out!

She is also a great communicator, reading where to defend and directing the team from the point. If a teammate messes up, she is quick to give her encouragement. If someone falls, she helps her up – teammate or opponent.

When you can’t decide which aspect is a player’s greatest strength: defending, competing, shooting, passing, driving, or being a great teammate – then you know you have a special player.

It is rare for a player Katie’s size to play at UConn or the U of M, but I am guessing Lindsay Whalen noticed a lot of herself in this young dynamo from Roseau, who seems to still be growing. If anyone can do it, Katie can.
Minneota pulls off golden double

By Bruce Strand

The Minneota girls had the proverbial target on their backs all season, and if that ever bothered them, it certainly didn’t show. Ranked first from the opening tip, and coming off a state championship in volleyball, the Vikings lived up to high expectations by marching to the Class A hoops crown as well, capped by a 40-31 conquest of Goodhue in the finals.

Minneota finished 30-1, losing only to a South Dakota state champion, Brandon Valley, 59-39 on Feb. 5. The Vikings drubbed everyone else by double digits until they edged No. 8 ranked Heritage Christian 55-50 in the semifinals and then beat No. 3 Goodhue.

“This is a great group. I feel very fortunate to coach them,” Chad Johnston said. “To win both volleyball and basketball, that’s pretty unique. They were always hard working and focused, to be No. 1 in preseason and hold it all year.”

Lydia Sussner, all-stater in both sports and a Miss Volleyball finalist, said nobody took anything for granted.

“All year we wanted to go hard after the loose balls and do all the little things and look out for each other,” she said. About the twin titles: “Well, it’s a totally different experience, and we feel lucky to experience both.”

Added Abby Hennen: “We had to stay focused every practice, every day, work hard, get enough sleep night before games, and show up every game, because you never know. We knew we had a good shot; we just could not get ahead of ourselves.”

Hennen sparked the finals win with 13 points, seven rebounds, three steals and two blocked shots. Lizzy Gillingham sank 11 points. Minneota won despite getting just six points from their 2,000-pointer Sussner.

Neither team could get much offense going but Goodhue’s gritty defense got them the victory. “On defense, they just play smart. It’s not in your face defense, it’s not denial, not pressure. Just smart,” Johnston said.

Goodhue, with Minneota keeping them uncomfortable, had their lowest score of the season. “They do a good job guarding you,” said Kate Opsahl, led Goodhue with 14 points. The Wildcats shot 11-for-46 overall and 1-of-12 on three’s. “We could not get enough outside shooting two loosen it up,” coach Josh Wieme said. “Thirty-one points is not going to win a state final.”

This was Minneota’s second state title in eight state appearances.

Road to the finals

Minneota opened with a 66-46 conquest of Red Lake as Gillingham hit 19 points, Sussner 18 points (and 17 rebounds) and Hennen 16. Gerika Kingberg scored 17 for Red Lake. In the semifinals, the Vikings edged Heritage Christian 55-50. Hennen netted 20 points, including six free shots in the last minute. Sussner notched 13 points and 11 rebounds. Kirstin Robbins had 16 points and Taylor Schuck 15 for Heritage.

Goodhue (26-7) nipped Mountain Iron-Buhl 50-48, making two defensive stops in the final seconds. Lodermeier led with 11 points. Allie Negen scored 15 for MIB. Goodhue nipped Menahga 47-43 in the semifinals, breaking a 43-43 tie as Carlson drove through the lane and Arianna Thomforde hit two free shots. Carlson had 17 points, Lodermeier 16 and Thomforde 10. “It’s a dream come true, being a senior,” Opsahl said. “My best memories will be the bits of energy we had when we were down, and being with my teammates all year.”

Minneota (26-8) .........................................................  13  18  — 31
Goodhue (30-1) .......................................................… 20  20  — 40

Goodhue — 11-46 FG (1-12 3FG), 8-10 FT, 27 rebounds, 15 turnovers, 15 fouls ... Scoring: Kate Opsahl 14 (2 ast, 2 sta), Arianna Thomforde 6, Joslyn Carlson 3 (7 reb, 2 sal), Lexie Lodermeier 6 (8 reb), Elissa Lodermeier 2, Torrie Rehder 0 (5 stl) ... Fouled out: Rehder

Minneota — 12-36 FG (3-8 3FG), 13-18 FT, 33 rebounds, 20 turnovers, 11 fouls ... Scoring: Morgan Kockelman 4 (6 reb), Lizzy Gillingham 11 (2 ast), Morgan Hennen 5 (8 reb, 5 ast, 3 stl, 2 bek), Abby Hennen 13 (7 reb, 3 stl, 2 blk), Lydia Sussner 6 (6 reb, 3 ast, 2 blk), Natalie Rolbiecki 1
I’m going to college next year, so I’m so happy I could do it with these girls,” Chakolis said.

Stillwater’s 22-minute-long upset bid was led by Gopher recruit and Miss Basketball finalist Sara Scalia, senior guard, who finished with 24 points (4-for-9 on three’s), and speedy soph guard Alexis Pratt with 16. Their other all-tourney pick, 6-2 junior Liza Karlen, had foul trouble and was held scoreless.

It was only Stillwater’s third state trip, and their first final. “Starting in 8th grade, we weren’t very good but we got better every year and it was great to finish on a high note with second in the state,” Scalia said.

Road to the finals

Hopkins cruised past Lakeville North 68-46 in the quarterfinals with Bueckers hitting 29 points (shooting 10-for-12), and Chakolis and Nnaji 13 each. The Royals made 11 steals and notched 35 points off turnovers. Analiese Tschida scores 20 for North while Hopkins held all-metro guard Lauren Jensen nine.

Similarly, the Royals shattered Centennial’s 17-game win streak 75-51 with Bueckers scoring 28 points, Chakolis 12 and Nnaji 11. Again, they made 14 steals, converted turnovers into 34 points, and shut down an all-metro guard, holding Taylor McAulay to five. Sara Stapleton had 16 and Jodi Anderson 14 for Centennial.

Stillwater beat Shakopee 73-48 with Grace Cote scoring 16 points, Scalia and Pratt 12 each, and Karlen nine with 13 rebounds. The Ponies tipped Eastview 65-52 as Scalia delivered 22 points, Karlen 17 and Pratt 15. They were 22-for-25 at the line. Lauren Glas had 14 and Macy Guebert 12 for Eastview, the defending champion.

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<th>Hopkins (32-0)</th>
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<th>47</th>
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<td>Stilwater (28-3)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Hopkins</th>
<th>30-59 FG (4-11 3FG), 10-18 FT, 40 rebounds, 11 turnovers, 14 fouls ... Scoring: Paige Bueckers 13 (7 ast, 5 stl, 5 reb), Amaya Battle 9 (11 ast, 3 stl, 9 reb), Kayla Adams 12, Dlayla Chakolis 13 (6 reb, 4 ast), Maya Nnaji 18 (10 reb, 2 blk, 2 stl), Taylor Woodson 9</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stilwater</td>
<td>16-55 FG (5-18 3FG), 8-9 FT, 36 rebounds, 19 turnovers, 17 fouls ... Scoring: Alexis Pratt 16 (7 reb, 2 stl), Sara Scalia 24 (2 stl), Delaney Wagner 3 (8 reb), Mary Fultz 2 (2 reb)</td>
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State tournament summary

**CLASS 4A**

Quartefinals
- Hopkins 68, Lakeville North 46
- Centennial 74, Maple Grove 64
- Stillwater 73, Shakopee 48
- Eastview 48, Forest Lake 38

Semifinals
- Hopkins 75, Centennial 47
- Stillwater 65, Eastview 52

Championship
- Hopkins 74, Stillwater 45

Third place
- Centennial 68, Eastview 53

Consolation
- Maple Grove 47, Lakeville North 26
- Forest Lake 49, Shakopee 39

Fifth place
- Forest Lake 64, Maple Grove 56

**CLASS 3A**

Quartefinals
- DeLaSalle 61, Hibbing 53
- Holy Angels 58, Fergus Falls 57
- Robbinsdale Cooper, Austin 40
- Becker 68, Marshall 58

Semifinals
- DeLaSalle 61, Holy Angels 59
- Becker 69, Robbinsdale Cooper 66

Championship
- DeLaSalle 56, Becker 40

Third place
- Holy Angels 78, Robbinsdale Cooper 69

Consolation
- Hibbing 63, Fergus Falls 58
- Marshall 49, Austin 44

Fifth place
- Marshall 75, Hibbing 60

**CLASS 2A**

Quartefinals
- Roseau 75, Redwood Valley 74
- Caledonia 56, Proctor 44
- Albany 60, Holy Family Catholic 49
- Minnehaha Academy 56, St. Peter 37

**CLASS 1A**

Quartefinals
- Minneota 66, Red Lake 46
- Heritage Christian 67, Ada-Borup West 59
- Goodhue 50, Mountain Iron-Buhl 48
- Menahga 65, BOLD 54

Semifinals
- Minneota 55, Heritage Christian 50
- Goodhue 47, Menahga 43

Championship
- Minneota 40, Goodhue 31

Third place
- Heritage Christian 60, Menahga 52

Consolation
- Ada-Borup West 76, Red Lake 64
- Mountain Iron-Buhl 69, BOLD 68

Fifth place
- Mountain Iron-Buhl 53, Ada-Borup West 45
Girls state tourney snapshots

Caledonia’s Ashley Schroeder leads a fast break in the finals with Minnehaha Academy’s Taytum Rhoades, Mia Curtis and Nevaeh Galloway in pursuit. Minnehaha won 72-63.

Centennial’s Grace Johnson was pressured by Maple Grove’s Kylie Baranick (12) and Ari Gordon but got the pass off to a teammate in a 64-54 win.

Becker’s Amber Vogl (32) and Megan Gamble beam after beating Robbinsdale Cooper 68-66.

Lizzy Gillingham spears a rebound for Minneota during their 40-31 win over Goodhue.

Jordyn Hilgeman, Marshall sophomore, scored 74 points in three games as the Tigers placed fifth.
Boys state 1st-day snapshots

Minneapolis North’s Davon Townley Jr. tries to score with Esko’s Camden Berger (35) and Riley Fisher covering him. Esko stuck with North until the last half-minute when the No. 2 seeded Polars pulled away 61-53. Townley hit 14 points.

Austin’s Teyghan Hovland takes aim on a 3-pointer that hit nothing but net on the way to a 68-52 win over Monticello.

Jon Stimmier clamps unto one of his 17 rebounds for Princeton in a 68-63 win over Mahtomedi.

Malik Willingham of Waseca races up-court with Thor Holien of Holy Angels trailing. Willingham had 22 points in an 82-62 win.

Photos by Bruce Strand
MN BB News
Mahtomedi, Princeton: long wait

By Bruce Strand

Mahtomedi had a 58-year wait to get back to the state boys basketball tournament, but the team the Zephyrs face in the first round, Princeton, can top that. The Tigers waited 87 years.

Mahtomedi (24-5) had made only one state trip, in 1961, before breaking through with a 58-49 win over Totino-Grace for the Section 4AAA title. Their 28-ppg guard J’vonne Hadley was limited to 10 points but his dunk off an inbounds pass, driving layup, and pass to Zac Centers for a 3-pointer helped put it away. Sam Bell scored 13 points. Coach Keith Newman, previously 0-6 in title games, reflected, “We’ve had some really good teams, too, and never got over that hump until now. Having that (58-year gap) looming over us all this time, that’s been tough.”

Princeton had not reached state since 1932. Hibbing has not gone since 1989, when they made their 10th appearance. In the Section 7AAA finals, No. 5 Princeton (26-3) beat the No. 8 Bluejackets 91-76. Hibbing’s 6-7 post Jon Stimmer scored 34 points, and Adam Williams sniped for 18. Hibbing (22-7) had won 16 in a row, including one over Princeton 79-76. The Bluejackets could break through in the near future. Top scorers were freshman Ayden McDonald and senior Luke Lundell with 18 points each and sophomores Parker Maki and Mayson Brown with 15 and 11.

East Ridge, a ten-year-old Woodbury school, has its first state team. The No. 2 ranked Raptors (27-2) dethroned the defending state champion, No. 9 Cretin-Derham Hall, 71-45 for the Section 4AAAAA crown behind Ben Carlson with 26 points and Kendall Brown with 15. Freshman Tre Holloman led CDH with 17 points.

Top-ranked DeLaSalle repelled Waconia 78-63 in the Section 6AAA finals with Tyrell Terry netting 25 points, Jamison Battle 21 and Jalen Travis 20 points and 11 rebounds. The Islanders will try get back on top after their string of six consecutive titles ended last year with a third-place finish.

Rochester John Marshall superstar Matthew Hurt’s prep career has ended with 3,819 points and no state tournament appearances. RJM lost to Lakeville North in the Section 1AAAAA finals for the seventh straight year 84-69. The 6-9 forward scored 30 points in his fifth and final section final loss to North. Jack Rusch scored 23 off the bench and Tommy Jensen added 18 for the Panthers (25-4).

Two of the top three in the Class 3A rankings battled for the Section 2AAA crown with No. 2 Waseca beating No. 3 Mankato East 63-54 before 3,500 fans in St. Peter. Sophomore Andrew Morgan scored 22 of his 22 points in the second half, and nabbed 11 rebounds, for the Bluejays (28-1). Malik Willingham added 14 points and Matthew Olsem 10. Jax Madson led East (24-5) with 22 points and 10 rebounds.

It’s a hat trick for St. Peter as the boys basketball team (22-6) upset Jordan 71-68 for the Section 2AA crown, following the boys hockey and girls basketball teams into the state tournaments. “Everyone was saying, it’s your turn,” Seth Lokensgard told the Mankato Free Press. “We knew we had a big challenge.” Lokensgard sank a 3-pointer for a 69-68 lead with 21 seconds left and Ethan Grant sank two free shots with :03 left. Reagan Koch scored 29 for Jordan (23-4).
Minneota on short list with VB-BB double

By Bruce Strand

Yes, it’s been done before, but only four times in the 45-year history of the Minnesota volleyball and girls basketball histories. We refer to Minneota capturing the state championship in each sport, with the same group of athletes in the same school year.

Wearing gold medals for Minneota in both sports are Lizzy Gillingham, Lydia Sussner, Natalee Rolbiecki, Morgan Kockelman, Morgan Hennen, Abby Hennen, and Abby Rost.

The first to do it was Moose Lake, which won not only volleyball and basketball titles but also softball in 1981-82, going 79-0 in the three sports. All of them were led by superstar Annie Adamczak, who went on to star in volleyball at Nebraska.

MBBN contacted Adamczak, now director of Club 43 volleyball, before the basketball tournament. She listed Kris Jones, Diane Berg, Lauren Fink, and Julie Johnson as teammates in volleyball and basketball. She added, “Good luck to Minneota!”

Tracy-Milroy achieved the VB-BB double in 1995-96. Their coach, Terry Culhane, now volleyball coach at Southwest State in Marshall, listed Chris Brink, Sarah Hayes, Nadine Brandt, Kris Deruyck, Nancy Ankrum and Sonja Kamrud as having significant roles in both sports.


The leader was Kelly Roysland, who was Miss Volleyball, and played four years of basketball for the Gophers, for whom she’s now assistant coach. Roysland (whose mother coached volleyball) listed Shelly Francis, Kayla Bagaason, Chelsea Badurk Thompson, Ashley Stenberg and Jen Johnson as teammates in both.
MBBN picks all-tourney fab five

Minnesota Basketball News selects a Fab Five All-Tournament Team from the stars in all four classes. The MVP for the second straight year is Paige Bueckers, junior guard who spurred Hopkins (32-0) to a runaway championship in Class 4A with 70 points (shooting 29-for-45), 18 assists, 11 steals and electrifying leadership. Also tabbed is her 6-3 freshman teammate Maya Nnaji, who logged 42 points, 23 rebounds and five blocked shots in the title run. Kacie Borowicz, Roseau senior guard, is another repeat pick, leading the tourney with 101 points while snagging 26 rebounds for the Class 3A third-place team. Sara Scalia led Stillwater to second place in Class 4A, delivering 58 points along with eight assists and seven steals. Taytum Rhoades, senior guard, powered No. 3 seed Minnehaha Academy to the Class 2A title with 71 points, 14 steals, 13 assists and 12 rebounds.

MSHSL Wells-Fargo all-tournament teams

Class A — Front: Kirstin Robbins and Taylie Scott, Heritage; Cierra Ahlf, Menahga; Allie Negen, Mountain Iron-Buhl. Back: Abby Hennen, Lydia Sussner, and Lizzy Gillingha, Minneota; Joslyn Carlson, Lexie Lodemeier and Kate Opsahl, Goodhue.

Class 2A — Front: Paige Meyer, Albany; Katie Tornstrom, Caledonia; Kacie Borowicz and Katie Borowicz, Roseau. Back: Nevaeh Galloway, Mia Curtis and Taytum Rhoades, Minnehaha Academy; Heidi Bolduan and Ashley Schroeder, Caledonia

Class 3A — Front: Emma Mastre and Francesca Vascellaro, Holy Angels; Aja Wheeler, Cooper; Jordyn Hilgeman, Marshall. Back: Kiani Lockett, Nurjel Weems and Mary Claire Francois, DeLaSalle, Courtney Nuest, Julia Bengtson, and Adeline Kent, Becker

Class 4A — Front: Macy Guebert, Eastview; Sara Stapleton and Taylor McAulay, Centennial; Abigail Groenweg, Forest Lake. Back: Maya Nnaji, Dlayla Chakolis, and Paige Bueckers, Hopkins; Sara Scalia, Liza Karlen and Alexis Pratt, Stillwater
BOYS SECTION FINALS

CLASS 4A

Section 1 — Lakeville North 84, Rochester John Marshall 59
Section 2 — Eden Prairie 62, Prior Lake 45
Section 3 — Eastview 82, Burnsville 64
Section 4 — East Ridge 71, Cretin-Derham Hall 45
Section 5 — Park Center 57, Champlin Park 55, 3 OT
Section 6 — Hopkins 82, Wayzata 71
Section 7 — Cambridge-Isanti 61, Blaine 51
Section 8 — Maple Grove 77, Buffalo 64

CLASS 3A

Section 1 — Austin 57, Northfield 54
Section 2 — Waseca 63, Mankato East 54
Section 3 — Holy Angels 58, St. Thomas Academy 54
Section 4 — Mahtomedi 56, Totino-Grace 49
Section 5 — Monticello 56, Big Lake 54
Section 6 — DeLaSalle 78, Waconia 63
Section 7 — Princeton 91, Hibbing 76
Section 8 — Bemidji 67, Sartell-St. Stephen 55

CLASS 2A

Section 1 — Lake City 72, St Charles 40
Section 2 — St. Peter 71, Jordan 68
Section 3 — Redwood Valley 74, St. James 49
Section 4 — Minnehaha Academy 68, St. Croix Prep 48
Section 5 — Minneapolis North 62, Breck 53
Section 6 — Melrose 52, Albany 51
Section 7 — Esko 58, Pequot Lakes 45
Section 8 — Perham vs. Hawley (Sat.)

CLASS 1A

Section 1 — Spring Grove 72, Randolph 54
Section 2 — Springfield 92, Minnesota Valley Lutheran 85
Section 3 — Westbrook-Walnut Grove 80, Dawson-Boys 72
Section 4 — Christ’s Household of Faith 65, Hope Academy 50
Section 5 — Cromwell-Wright 65, Belgrade-Brooten-Eldrosa 52
Section 6 — Henning 60, Parkers Prairie 58
Section 7 — North Woods 78, Lakeview Christian 39
Section 8 — Ada-Borup West 66, Cass Lake-Bena 56

Springfield wins 2A super section

Springfield emerged as champion of the Section 2A tournament that had six of the top 12 teams in the Class 1A rankings. The No. 2 Tigers won 92-85 over No. 3 Minnesota Valley Lutheran in the finals, led by Mr. Basketball finalist Isaac Fink with 36 points and Decker Scheffler with 27. Dunwa Omot poured in 35 points and Jake Kettner 22 for MVL. A year ago, Springfield lost to Mayer Lutheran on a last-second three-pointer in the finals. “After that heartbreak last year, I’m just on Cloud 9 right now,” Fink told the Mankato Free Press. “Springfield beat No. 12 Mountain Lake-Comfrey 86-74 and No. 9 Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 93-64 to reach the finals. MVL beat No. 10 New Ulm Cathedral 72-56.

Spring Grove earned its first-ever trip to state 72-54 over Randolph in the Section 1A finals. A year after falling apart against Rushford-Peterson 66-30 in the finals, the No. 19 Lions were all-systems-go in their second chance, led by junior guard Alex Folz with 33 points. Ethan Mattke added 15 in the post. Spring Grove canned 27 of 32 free shots. “We’ve had a lot of heartaches, but this game tonight was worth every one of them,” said Wade Grinde, 24th-year head coach.

Henning (28-1) edged Parkers Prairie 60-58 in the Section 6A finals. Absent from state since making their only two trips in 1965 and 1966, Henning trailed 52-44 with 4:30 left. “We always have a run in us and we just kept going,” said Sam Fisher, who led with 24 points. The Hornets took their first lead 55-54 on an Isaac Fisher basket with 2:02 left. Free shots by Isaac and Sam Fisher kept the Hornets ahead. Parkers Prairie star Travis Yohnke (over 1,700 points and 1,000 rebounds) missed a last-second mid-range shot. Henning avenged its lone loss, 77-74 in overtime to the Panthers (24-5).

“We see Williams Arena on TV all the time. But to actually be on that court is gonna be amazing,” exclaimed Andrew Quade of Westbrook-Walnut Grove, to the Worthington Globe after WWG beat Dawson-Boys 80-72 in a duel of unranked teams for the Section 3A championship. Dawson-Boyd had upset No. 1 ranked Minnesota in the semifinals. Ethan Mischke tallied 28 points and Quade 20 as the Chargers (23-7) nabbed their first state trip since 1994. Ronnell Horton scored 21, Zach Durfee 16 and Bentley Boike 14 for D-B (15-10).
Boys and Girls entering grades 9-12 or freshman in college 2019-2020.
Parents are welcome to attend!

The Pacesetter “College Prep” program is designed for male and female players entering grades 9-12 through college freshman seeking to play basketball in college. Players will be taught high-level skills by college coaches in an intensive one-day, 7-hour format.

Paul McDonald will return as camp director. Paul is the head men’s coach at Vermillion Community College in Ely, MN, where he has guided teams to 23 straight state tournaments. He is the son of Bob McDonald, who finished his coaching career with over 1,000 wins - the most in Minnesota history. Paul played on two high school state championship teams. Other coaches on staff include college coaches from the MCAC.

Online Registration:
www.pacesettersports.net

SCHEDULE:
Monday: 10:00 am-5:00 pm

Camp Fee: $80
(College prep camp fee includes lunch on Monday)

Questions? Email info@pacesetternet.com or call 320-243-7460