Mr. Basketball list pared to 10

By Bruce Strand

The Minnesota Mr. Basketball Committee has announced 10 semifinalists for the 2019 award.

The list includes Matthew Hurt, Rochester John Marshall 6-9 forward who is the state’s most coveted (and still unsigned) recruit and No. 1 scorer with 36.9 points per game.

DeLaSalle has two of the ten. They are:

— Tyrell Terry, 6-3 guard averaging 24 points, committed to Stanford

— Jamison Battle, 6-7 forward averaging 21.9 points, committed to George Washington.

Other metro area Class 4A stars on the list are:

— Antwan Kimmons, Tartan, 6-0 guard averaging 21.7 points and six rebounds, committed to Idaho State

— Jaeden King, Cretin-Derham Hall, 6-6 guard, lone returning starter from last year’s state champion team, averaging 22.4 points, committed to Western Illinois

— Jack Middleton, Edina, 6-4 guard, averaging 25.7 points, committed to Minnesota-Duluth

— Zeke Nnaji, Hopkins, 6-11 forward averaging 24.9 points and nine rebounds, committed to Arizona

— Tyler Wahl, Lakeville North, average 19.8 points and 8.8 rebounds 3.5 assists, committed to Wisconsin

Two semifinalists from smaller classes are:

— David Roddy, Breck 6-5 forward, is the lone Class 2A player, averaging 29.4 points and 17 rebounds, committed to Colorado State

— Isaac Fink, Springfield 6-4 guard, is the lone Class 1A player, averaging 31 points, 11.8 rebounds and 5.6 assists, committed to Augustana
By Bruce Strand

The Menahga girls stayed unbeaten for almost 2 1/2 months before running into another unbeaten, Eden Valley-Watkins, on Saturday.

The EVW Eagles (22-0) prevailed 53-42 over Menahga (21-1) on the Braves’ court. Emma Schultz tallied 16 points and made four assists for the Eagles ranked No. 3 in Class 2A. Halle Jansen had 15 points, six rebounds and four blocks.

Menahga, ranked No. 4 in Class 1A, shot just 24 percent while the Eagles shot 56 percent, clearly the difference in the game.

“I’m encouraged that we were able to shoot so poorly and still be in the game,” Menahga coach Cody Pulju said. “Credit to EVW though — they are tough, and are rarely ever out of position. It was a great learning opportunity and experience for us.”

Menahga’s 42 points was the third-most scored all season against EVW, which has held 19 of 22 opponents between 15 and 36 points.

Menahga is 21-1 despite losing their best player with a knee injury over the summer — Megan Hendrickson, who was MVP of the Park Region Conference last year.

“We have had a bunch of young girls step up this season and commit themselves to getting better every day,” Pulju said, “and it’s really been paying off for us. We have had a season full of injuries and sickness, and night after night we have had to have different rotations, but our improved depth has been key.”

A senior guard tandem leads Menagha: Alyssa Peterson, averaging 18 points, and Cierra Ahlf, averaging 16 points.

Kate Hendrickson, sophomore sister of Megan, is one of the younger players stepping up, leading their inside game with 12 ppg. Most games, four or five 9th- and 10th-graders see significant minutes, Pulju said.
Shooting free throws out of turn costs Minneota its unbeaten record

By Bruce Strand

This may rank as one of the most unusual reasons ever for a team to be knocked out of the unbeaten ranks.

The Minneota boys, No. 1 in Class 1A, were missing their top three players — all suspended for fraudulent free throw shooting the game before — when they lost to Yellow Medicine East 57-55 on Saturday evening in Granite Falls. Brett Knapper scored 33 points for the Sting (3-14), who lost to Minneota 78-39 in December.

On Jan. 31, with Minneota engaged in a surprisingly close game against MACCRAY (10-11) in Clara City, Viking senior star Thomas Hennen, on two occasions, shot free throws when it was actually his teammates who’d been fouled. Hennen scored 45 points in that game, an 87-83 win. The players fouled were Jacob Hennen and Logan Sussner.

Apparently, the referees did not notice the wrong player shooting free throws. The opposing coach, Lucas Post, told the Marshall Independent he did not notice. Minneota coach Dave Busselman has not commented.

When this came to light, Thomas Hennen was suspended by the school for two games, and Sussner and Jacob Hennen for one game. All three missed the YME game. Sussner and Jacob Hennen were back when Minneota beat Adrian 90-44 on Monday.

Thomas Hennen issued an apology that was published in the hometown paper, the Minneota Mascot. Hennen acknowledged that “I took it upon myself to violate a Minnesota State High School League rule” and that he does “whole-heartedly accept the penalty given to me by my administrators.” He added, “In the heat of the game, my competitiveness emerged and I failed to think about the repercussions of my actions at that time.”

Four inductees named for girls coaches Hall of Fame

By Bruce Strand

Four 2019 inductees have been named for the Minnesota Girls Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

Rich Decker of Rochester Mayo, already a member of the boys coaches Hall of Fame, had a 115-49 record and one state trip with the Mayo girls in his 60’s. He posted 527 wins as boys coach, mostly at Rochester Lourdes.

Kent Hamre, St. Michael-Albertville coach, formerly at Win-E-Mac, has eight state appearances, a 301-85 record, one state title and two third-place finishes.

Larry Krieg, former Elk River coach, had over 150 wins, and five state trips, and has served on the Miss Basketball committee for a decade.

Rick Swanson was a top assistant for Spring Lake Park when they were a north metro power in the 1980’s and 1990’s, and then a decade at Blaine with four state trips.

Jr. NBA Global tourney open to age 13, 14 teams

By Bruce Strand

The Minnesota Timberwolves and Lynx Basketball Academy will host True North Qualifiers for 13-and 14-year-old boys and girls teams across the Upper Midwest with the goal of reaching the Jr. NBA Global Championships.

The qualifiers will be held in Fargo-Moorhead (March 30-31), Des Moines (April 6-7), Sioux Falls (April 13-14), St. Michael (April 27-28) and Lakeville (May 4-5).

The winning teams advance to Central Regionals in Council Bluffs, Iowa in May. The region champions will receive all-expenses-paid trips to the second annual Global tournament, broadcast by ESPN Wide World of Sports, near Orlando, Fla. in August.

Breakdown Sports USA, servicing youth sports since 2001, will function as the tournament operator. Tournament details and registration can be found at timberwolvesbasketballacademy.com. Registration is limited to 16 boys and 16 girls teams per tournament.
McDonald Award names 30 seniors

Thirty student-athletes have been named contenders for the 2019 McDonald Award to be presented by the Minnesota Basketball Coaches Association. Finalists will be announced in early March and the award will be presented in late March or early April, the group’s press release stated.

This award, in its second season, is named for Bob McDonald of Chisholm, the only Minnesota coach with over 1,000 victories, known for “instilling the values of hard work, teamwork, a strong moral code, and high academic expectations” in his players. It is patterned after the collegiate Wooden Award and takes into consideration character, team play, and offensive and defensive performance.

McDonald Award semifinalists

Big Lake — Logan Nagorski  
BOLD — Carter Henry  
Breck — David Roddy  
Breckenridge — Noah Christianson  
Champlin Park — Bennett Otto  
Chaska — Cole Nicholson

Cretin-Derham Hall — Jaeden King  
Delano — Derek Techam  
DeLaSalle — Tyrell Terry, Jamison Battle  
East Ridge — Courtney Brown Jr.  
Edina — Jack Middleton  
Fergus Falls — Matt Johnson  
Hopkins — Zeke Nnaji  
Lakeville North — Tyler Wahl  
Mayer Lutheran — Baden Noenning  
Minneapolis North — Eli Campbell  
Minnesota Valley Lutheran — Jake Kettner  
Moorhead — Maleeck Harden-Hayes  
New London-Spicer — Brandon Adelman  
North Woods — Cade Goggleye  
Park Center — Tommy Chatman  
Perham — Jenson Beachy  
Prior Lake — Robert Jones  
Rochester John Marshall — Matthew Hurt  
Springfield — Isaac Fink  
St. Paul Central — Deveonte Davis  
Tartan — Antwan Kimmons  
Waseca — Malik Willingham  
Wayzata — Jacob Beeninga

Register online: www.pacesettersports.net
It’s all relative for Blackduck duo

By Bruce Strand

The two Murray girls on the Blackduck basketball team are not sisters. Or cousins. Haley and Selena Murray are, in fact, aunt and niece.

It’s something they have fun with.

“I call her ‘Auntie’ during games,” Selena says, “because everyone kinda looks at us confused, and it’s just become an inside joke for us.”

Seven months to the day Haley was born, her sister Stephanie gave birth to Selena.

“People always seem confused when we tell them we aren’t sisters,” Haley said, “because they are so sure that we are. So then they act like, oh you must be cousins, because they think that that’s the only other option. It is very amusing.”

“They can’t comprehend it,” Selena adds.

Asked how the girls see their relationship, Selena said, “I would say more like sisters, since we’ve grown up together.” Haley added, “We fight like sisters, and act like buddies any other time.”

Haley, a senior, is a captain and third-year starter at forward, averaging nine points and eight rebounds for the Drakes (7-16). Selena is a junior guard, playing mostly on the JV and seeing some variety action.

They’ve played organized hoops together since sixth grade, and, outside of school, plenty of one-on-one and games of H.O.R.S.E., Haley said.

Basketball is the only sport they share. Haley is a softball standout (catcher, third base and shortstop) and a rare female football player, serving as the long-snapper for a 6-3 team. Selena’s other sports are volleyball and track. However, they are also teammates in the band.

Aunt and niece are both honor students. Selena sings in the choir and competes on the Business Professionals of America team. Haley is a stellar foreign language student.

“I have had both Haley and Selena in class, and it’s been fun to watch the combo grow and become wonderful young ladies,” Drakes softball coach Sheena Reese told the Bemidji Pioneer. “Haley is being looked at by college scouts. She’s so driven.”

Haley, asked about her involvement in football, explained that she always played football at recess in grade school, and then signed up for flag football. “So when my class got to sixth grade, it was kind of natural to keep playing football with all the boys, because that’s what I always did anyways.”

Daniel Hangaard, who coaches Haley in both basketball and football, praised her for never making a bad snap all season, no matter the weather. “This is an extremely important job on the football field, especially as much as we punted, ” Hangaard said.

Haley also saw a few plays at tight end and defense end. She was in on one tackle near the sideline where she took a pretty good jolt. “My coach was kinda concerned,” she said. But her football days are over now and she intends to play softball in college.
So. Dakota team hands Minneota 1st loss

Class 1A’s top-ranked Minneota girls were scuttled by Brandon Valley, ranked No. 3 in Class AA in South Dakota, 59-39 in Rapid City on Feb. 5.

The Vikings, absorbing their first loss, were knocked off their game by Brandon Valley, shooting just 10-for-22 on free shots, and suffering 25 turnovers while Brandon Valley (13-2) had just four. Lydia Sussner scored 20 of Minneota’s 39 points. Brandon Valley had Trinity Law with 15, Ashley Wells 11 and Danica Kocer 10.

Six teams still unbeaten


Islanders trip Hopkins in duel of 1’s

DeLaSalle won a duel of top-ranked boys teams over Hopkins 75-67 on Wednesday, Feb. 6. Tyrell Terry led the Islanders (14-4) with 29 points. Jamison Battle added 16 points and Kameron Givens 12. Zeke Nnaji sank 26 points for Hopkins (18-3). Nnaji scored 41 in the previous game, leading an 90-80 win over Wayzata.

* * *

Hadley sinks 52, missing just 4 shots

By Bruce Strand

Mahtomedi’s J’vonne Hadley tallied a school-record 52 points — missing only four shots! — as the Zeppys defeated Hill-Murray 105-41 on Friday evening at Hill-Murray. The 6-6 junior guard broke the school record of 50 set by Mike Patterson in 1961, after coming close with 48 on Jan. 15 in an 82-67 win over Hastings. Hadley sank 22 of 26 field goal attempts, including all four 3-pointers, and was 4-for-4 on free shots. He is averaging 29.7 points.

* * *

Emily Beseman of Swanville got the MN Basketball Hub player of the week nod after scoring 40 points in a 69-62 win over Holdingford and 22 in a 70-46 win over Ashby. The senior guard also had 27 rebounds and 10 steals in the two games.

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Myla Ruzek of Lewiston-Altura achieved a triple-double with 37 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists in a 59-46 win over Wabasha-Kellogg on Feb. 1.

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The 43 points scored by Hopkins’ Paige Buecker in the 69-66 win over Wayzata in a duel of unbeatens Feb. 1 was the single-game record in a program that has produced six state championships and dozens of college players. The Hopkins record was a relatively modest 33 by Nia Hollie against Eden Prairie in 2016 before Buecker notched 37 points in last year’s state finals and matched that against Cooper earlier this season.

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Masengo Mutanda is Robbinsdale Armstrong’s new all-time leading scorer for girls with 1,852 points currently. She passed the record of 1,616 by Heather Haanen that stood since 1997. Mutanda, a 5-7 senior guard, is averaging 19 points, eight rebounds, four assists and 3.6 steals for the Falcons (17-4). She also has the Falcon record for free throws made with 517.

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Jordyn Glynn, Grand Meadow senior forward, reached the 2,000-point marker while scoring 24 points in a 49-42 win over Goodhue on Feb. 8. She is averaging 17 points for the unbeaten Superlarks.

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David Roddy, Breck senior forward, notched his 2,000th point while scoring 20 in a loss to Minnehaha Academy, 71-49, on Tuesday.

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Tyler Baribeau, Mesabi East senior, recently recorded his 1,000th rebound. He’s averaging 14.3 points and 12.3 rebounds for the Giants (12-8).

‘Great Five-State’ playoffs get under way soon

The Minnesota Timberwolves and Minnesota Lynx are sponsoring a five-state NCAA-style fantasy playoff, “The Road to Target Center,” for all youth teams in grades 4-9, leading to an eight-team championship on the main Target Center floor.

Teams from Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin will play off February through April in their own state for a chance to reach the “Great Five-State Championship” final eight teams in Minneapolis. All teams will play 3-4 games in one day in the playoffs. Sites are Sioux Falls and Huron in South Dakota, Jamestown in North Dakota, Des Moines in Iowa, Ripon in Wisconsin, and eight regions in Minnesota: Rochester, Mankato, Redwood Falls, Moose Lake/Willow River, Hutchinson, Alexandria, Grand Rapids/Mountain Iron-Buhl, and Bemidji.

The “Great Five-State Championships” will be held at the Target Center in June and July in conjunction with Minnesota Lynx games. All players are being offered special prices for both Timberwolves and Lynx games. Registration and further information are available now online at www.pacesettersports.net.
MBBN BOYS BASKETBALL TOP 20

CLASS 4A

1. Hopkins 20-3
2. Prior Lake 17-2
3. Park Center 18-1
4. East Ridge 18-2
5. Lakeville North 16-4
6. Shakopee 16-5
7. Wayzata 16-7
8. Eden Prairie 13-7
10. Champlin Park 14-5
11. Edina 12-8
12. Cretin-Derham Hall 15-4
13. Tartan 18-2
14. White Bear Lake 17-4
15. Minnetonka 12-8
16. Maple Grove 14-4
17. Robbinsdale Armstrong 13-7
18. Moorhead 16-4
19. Osseo 11-8

CLASS 2A

1. Minnehaha Academy 16-2
2. Minneapolis North 14-5
3. Perham 20-1
5. Breck 17-4
6. Lake City 17-2
7. Spectrum 16-2
8. Jordan 16-3
9. St. Croix Prep 16-4
10. Caledonia 15-5
11. Holy Family Catholic 12-8
12. Osakis 19-0
13. Melrose 17-4
14. Litchfield 17-3
15. Hawley 15-3
16. St. Cloud Cathedral 13-6
17. Albany 15-5
18. Crosby-Ironton 16-3
19. St. Peter 16-4
20. Providence Academy 12-8

CLASS 3A

1. DeLaSalle 16-4
2. Waseca 19-0
3. Mankato East 15-2
4. Princeton 17-2
5. Austin 13-4
6. Mahtomedi 15-5
7. Delano 16-5
8. Holy Angels 17-3
9. Bemidji 16-2
10. Winona 10-8
11. Northfield 13-5
12. Sartell-St. Stephen 15-4
14. St. Thomas Academy 11-9
15. Waconia 11-9
16. Totino-Grace 10-10
17. Hibbing 13-6
18. Mound-Wentonka 15-6
19. Hermantown 15-7
20. Alexandria 13-7

CLASS 1A

1. Minneota 19-1
2. BOLD 18-1
3. Minnesota Valley Lutheran 18-2
4. Springfield 17-2
5. Cass Lake-Bena 21-1
7. Henning 20-0
8. Randolph 19-1
9. Ada-Borup West 18-0
10. Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 17-1
11. Mountain Lake/Comfrey 18-2
12. New Ulm Cathedral 15-4
13. Rushford-Peterson 15-7
14. Hayfield 18-4
15. Ortonville 12-2
16. Mahnomen-Waubun 12-6
17. Christ’s Household of Faith 14-4
18. Blooming Prairie 14-5
19. Mayer Lutheran 14-6
20. Spring Grove 15-4
MBBN GIRLS BASKETBALL TOP 20

CLASS 4A

1. Hopkins 23-0
2. Wayzata 21-1
3. Stillwater 19-2
5. Farmington 19-3
6. Park Center 18-3
7. Roseville 19-4
8. Centennial 18-4
9. Eastview 17-5
10. Chaska 18-4
11. Forest Lake 19-5
12. Eden Prairie 16-5
13. Apple Valley 17-6
14. Shakopee 17-6
15. Robbinsdale Armstrong 18-4
16. Elk River 16-6
17. Maple Grove 15-6
18. Lakeville North 13-9
19. Rosemount 14-9
20. Rochester John Marshall 16-4

CLASS 2A

1. Sauk Centre 19-2
2. Roseau 20-2
3. Eden Valley-Watkins 22-0
4. Minnehaha Academy 17-5
5. Holy Family Catholic 18-4
6. Rush City 18-1
7. Norwood-Young America 17-2
8. Medford 17-0
9. Rochester Lourdes 15-6
10. Annandale 15-3
11. Maranatha Christian 15-6
12. Stewartville 16-6
13. Caledonia 17-4
14. Esko 18-6
15. Winona Cotter 18-4
17. New London-Spicer 16-6
18. Lake City 15-5
19. Jordan 16-4
20. Concordia Academy 15-7

CLASS 3A

1. Red Wing 19-2
2. Waseca 20-1
3. Hill-Murray 20-2
4. St. Paul Como Park 19-1
5. Willmar 15-3
6. Alexandria 18-3
7. Robbinsdale Cooper 13-7
8. DeLaSalle 13-5
9. Simley 17-5
10. Becker 18-4
11. Waconia 16-6
12. New Ulm 18-3
13. Holy Angels 15-5
14. Mankato West 14-5
15. Grand Rapids 16-6
16. Hibbing 20-2
17. Fergus Falls 17-3
18. Benilde-St. Margaret’s 14-7
19. Northfield 12-8

CLASS 1A

1. Minneota 19-1
2. Grand Meadow 23-0
3. Goodhue 17-5
4. Menahga 21-1
5. Pelican Rapids 20-1
6. Ada-Borup West 19-2
7. Hills-Beaver Creek 20-0
8. Stephen-Argyle 21-0
10. Cromwell-Wright 17-1
12. Mountain Iron-Buhl 20-4
13. Parkers Prairie 16-2
14. Lac qui Parle Valley 19-2
15. BOLD 16-4
16. SW MN Christian 17-2
17. Wabasso 16-3
18. Cherry 17-5
19. Pine River-Backus 16-4
20. Red Lake 13-4