You’d have to be around 65 or older remember the last time — well, the only time — the little burg of Henning created a big splash at the state level in sports.

The Hornets made their only two state basketball trips in 1964 and 1965. In the latter, they took mighty Edina, in the first of three consecutive state title years, to triple overtime in the semifinals, losing 62-55. It was a one-class tournament then with the whole state watching, with no other sports on TV, not even the NCAA’s, and Henning’s Bob and Dick Peterson were instantly famous. The senior twins scored 46 of Henning’s 55 points in that game.

OK, that’s enough ancient history. The Henning Hornets of the here and now are really good, too, although with nobody nearly as tall as the 6-5 Petorschens.

Henning is 23-0 and averaging 81 points per game. The MBBN ranks them No. 8 in Class 1A. Facing no ranked opponents yet, they’ve had just one close game, an overtime 70-67 win over Ashby (13-6). Next-closest was 73-62 over Norman County East/Ulen-Hitterdahl (14-8). Both were in December.

This is a breakout year for the Hornets, who were 19-9 last year after going 26-52 the previous three.

“We play an up-tempo style and shoot the ball well from the perimeter. We try to press and speed up the game due to our lack of size,” assessed coach Randy Misegades, a Henning alum. “We hope to create points off turnovers. We have been out-sized in every single game this season and we’ve grown accustomed to being the smaller team.”

The starting lineup includes 5-10 senior Sam Fisher (15 points, 5.7 assists, 2.8 steals per game); 6-0 junior Blake Wall Evand (14.9 ppg, 4.0 apg, 3.5 spg, 54-percent shooting); 6-1 junior Parker Fraki (11.7 ppg, 2.8 apg, 47 three’s); 5-10 junior Isaac Fisher (9.6 ppg, excellent on-ball defender), and 6-0 senior Adam Lange (7.3 ppg, 5.7 reg, 16 charges taken).

Sam Fisher, the point guard, who recently passed 1,000 career points, will play in the coaches all-star game series.

Lange is “the closest thing we have to a ‘big’ guy,” said the coach. But, they get it done with athletic ability, skill and depth. Adding punch off the bench are 6-0 junior Blaine Wall Evand (5.5 ppg), 5-9 junior Lee Bjorklund (4.3 ppg), 5-11 senior Dylan Trana (4.6 ppg) and 5-10 junior Brandon Trana (3.8 ppg).

Henning got some attention in a recent column by Star-Tribune columnist Chad Koenen, Henning Advocate.
Stellar lineup of junior boys in state lauded

An impressive Minnesota prep junior class in boys basketball was recently profiled by the Star-Tribune.

“Led by Jalen Suggs of Minnehaha Academy, one of the top-ranked junior prospects in the nation, they personify the surging emergence of talent in the state, where as many as 15 players are seen as having Division I college careers,” wrote Jack Warrick, a U of M student on assignment for the paper. He consulted with Ryan James, national analyst for Prep Hoops.

His snapshot of six top metro-area juniors included, alphabetically (condensed for this article):

Ben Carlson, East Ridge, 6-9 forward, averaging 16.3 points and 11 rebounds, able to play the 2 through 5 positions, with 15 Division I offers.

Dain Dainja, Park Center, 6-8 power forward whose father and grandfather played in the Big 10, averaging 18 points, 14 rebounds and 3 blocks, with 24 Division I offers.

Dawson Garcia, Prior Lake 6-10 power forward, averaging 28 points and 10.5 rebounds when sidelined by a foot injury Jan. 22, versatile enough to play around the dial including point guard. He’s got 15 Division I offers.

J’vonne Hadley, Mahtomedi 6-6 guard, averaging 30 points and 8.2 rebounds, with games of 48 and 52 points, still under the radar with low-major attention although the Gophers are now showing interest.

Jalen Suggs, Minnehaha Academy 6-4 combo guard, averaging 24 points, six assists and 4.5 rebounds, leader of two state champion basketball teams and a football title this year as a quarterback. He reports 22 offers from Division I.

Kerwin Walton, Hopkins 6-5 shooting guard, averaging 16.7 points and shooting over 50 percent on two’s and three’s, with offers from Purdue and the Gophers among others.
Henning: brother-powered, like 1965

Continued from Page 1

nist Patrick Reusse, who recalled the Peterson twins and noted that the current roster is loaded with twins and other siblings. A good omen, perhaps?

There’s two sets of twins: Lee and Luke Bjorklund, and Blake and Blaine Wallevand, along with the Bjorklund’s older brother Jack. The Bjorklunds and Wallevands are first cousins. Sam and Isaac Fisher are brothers, and are cousins to the Bjorklunds on the other side. Brandon and Dylan Trana are brothers. Misegades is uncle to the Wall-evands. Jackson Nyhus has a twin sister. Assistant coach Jason Speer has a twin brother.

“The family connection is something you’d only see in a small town. Of our 13 varsity players, 12 of them have at least one parent who graduated from Henning,” Misegades said.

More family ties: the 1965 point guard, Neal Oscarson, was Misegades’ coach at Henning. Misegades, a special education teacher and activities director, later assisted Oscarson for several years before taking over. And now Neal’s son, Mark, is his assistant coach.

Another player whose presence is profoundly felt is Jacob Quam, who died April 13, 2017, in a car accident while on his way to the weight room at school. The Hornets take Quam’s No. 33 jersey to every game and enjoy being asked about him. Quam would have been a senior starter this year, the coach said. “He’s our ‘big guy’ that we are missing, and I truly believe he was never meant to be replaced. He holds a special place in our hearts.”

If Henning were to emerge from Section 6A this year, they would be the first Henning team in a state tournament since the football teams went in 1972 and 1973 (although, paired with Battle Lake as Otter Tail Central, they’ve gone six times in football).

It’s been a good hoops program, with four Park Region Conference titles in Misegades tenure, but this year it’s at another level. The community of about 800 is abuzz to have a ranked team for the first time since 1998, when the Hornets were No. 1 for a while and lost to defending state champion Hancock in the section final. The current girls team is doing well also, with a 17-7 record.

“Our little gym is pretty electric on game night and the kids get excited to play in front of the community,” the coach reports. “Everyone is excited, but we are trying to keep things at an even keel with the team.”

Hawley’s late charge deals Cougars first loss 78-77

The Hawley boys rallied from 13 points down to hand Ada-Borup West its first loss 78-77 in a thriller at home Tuesday evening.

Jayden Carlisle led Hawley (16-4) with 26 points, six assists, eight steals and eight deflections, while notchin his 1,000th point. Noah Glad notched 16 points, Mason Klevgaard 13, Jacob Vetter 10.

Ada-Borup West, down 78-75, had three free shots with 1.3 seconds left. The shooter made two but missed the third. The Cougars then missed a last-second shot.

“It was a game with playoff-like intensity that will make both teams better for March,” Hawley coach Nathan Stoa reflected.

About the furious finish after trailing 54-41, Stoa said, “We want five guys that are willing to defend the ball and five guys that are willing to share it. They epitomized that tonight.” Stoa cited freshman Hayden Grani for a huge boost off the bench, knocking down three 3-pointers during the rally. He had made only one previous “three” on varsity.

For Ada-Borup West (20-1), Mason Miller notched 22 points and 18 rebounds. Preston Gwin sank 18 points and Tommy Stewart 10.
Center’s return bolsters Centennial girls

Celebrating the return of Sara Stapleton to the lineup, the Centennial Cougars beat one of their top conference rivals, Elk River, 67-40, on Friday, Feb. 15. Stapleton, 6-3 center signed by Wisconsin, saw her first action of the season and scored 10 points. She injured her knee on the first day of practice in November.

“It is nice to see her back out there!” coach Jill Becken exclaimed. “Her minutes are currently limited to eight minutes max per half. Her physical therapist determines her minutes moving forward.” Stapleton then got her 1,000th point on Tuesday in a win over Armstrong. Even without Stapleton, the Cougars were 19-4 and ranked No. 8. Now they are 21-4 with 13 straight wins.

* * *

Red Wing, top-ranked in Class 3A girls, is 22-2 with 15 straight wins. Last week they rained in three-pointers to beat Faribault 66-39 with Kyli Nelson going 6-for-9 on the way to 22 points and Sydnee Nelson adding five for 15 points, then made 15 of 29 from outside the arc in a 74-33 win over Owatonna with Nelson sinking 20 points (six three’s), Lindsey Reps 15 and Nelson 14.

* * *

The Moorhead girls upset No. 6 Alexandria 46-44 on Monday evening. Ayana Blythe and Jalen Ennen led the Spuds with 10 points each. Moorhead has won six straight to get back to .500 at 13-13. For Alexandria (20-4), Ella Grove scored 14 points and Kaye Paschka 13.

* * *

The Waseca girls (24-1) beat Marshall 53-43 for the overall Big South Conference title Friday in the duel between division winners, led by Madison Gehloff with 19 points. The Bluejays’ main problem was Jordyn Hilgemann, who pumped in 30 points for the Tigers (18-7).

* * *

Grace Kirk of Duluth Marshall poured in 49 points and outscored the opposing team in Marshall’s 99-46 win over Duluth Denfeld of Feb. 5. Kirk is averaging 27 points, which doesn’t lead the team; Gianna Kneepkins averages 31 points for the Hilltoppers (19-7).

* * *

Caitlin Rorman, Blue Earth senior guard, passed 2,000 while sinking 28 points in a 64-57 win New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva on Feb. 19. She is averaging 26.8 points for the Buccaneers (13-10).
Fab five years for Springfield star

By Bruce Strand

Isaac Fink was going to be something special. The Springfield basketball coach knew that. And his young charge delivered right away, in his debut -- in eighth grade -- as the starting point guard.

“Isaac scored 25 points his first game, and made seven 3-point shots,” Lance Larson marveled. “He was a manager for our team as an elementary student, and he could always shoot it pretty good.”

Those were the first 25 of more than 3,000 points, in the first of 124 wins (against 19 losses) during Fink’s five-year tenure. The 6-4 senior who’s also logged more than career 1,000 rebounds is the only Class 1A player among 10 semifinalists for Mr. Basketball.

Fink, averaging 32.4 points, 12.4 rebounds, 5.7 assists and 2.3 steals, had a couple of his typical monster games in last week for the No. 2 ranked Tigers (22-2).

After sinking 36 points to pass 3,000 in a 85-36 rout of Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart on Friday night, Fink put on a show in a duel of top-five teams against Minnesota Valley Lutheran on Saturday night. He scorched the nets for 46 in a 101-81 victory, breaking his own record of 43.

Fink is a deadly shooter from all over the court, hitting 64 percent on two’s and 49 percent on three’s this year, along with 75 percent at the line. He has sunk 362 three-pointers in his career.

“I am a terrific outside shooter, and likes to get to the basket as well. We do post him up, as he is one our biggest players,” Larson said. “He has great vision and a very high basketball IQ. He has strong hands and jumps fairly well. He is a really good rebounder. If he played point more, he would have that many more assists, too.”

He experienced another state tournament in fourth grade; watching his brother Alex play point guard on the 2010-11 team that captured the state Class 1A championship with an upset of Belgrade-Broten-Elrosa in the finals.

“I have been craving to get that feeling back to Springfield my whole career,” Fink said. “My brother has given me a lot of advice and helps me train weekly. He often rubs it in that he has a state title in basketball and I do not, so that just adds fuel to the fire.”

Also a standout baseball pitcher, Fink has signed for both sports with Augustana, where his brother Alex played baseball. Fink said basketball has been his favorite since he was five, when he started out by trying to emulate fancy dribbling he saw in a movie about Pistol Pete Maravich. He enjoys baseball for “the control of the game that you get while pitching.”

The Tigers are aiming for the state tournament trip that barely eluded them last year when they went 28-2 but lost to Minnesota Valley Lutheran 78-75 in the Section 2A finals after beating them twice in conference.

“Many people are saying that our section is a mini state tournament,” said Fink, referring to a half-dozen ranked teams in Section 2A, “and I definitely agree. The talent in our area is at an all-time high. We believe we have the pieces to make another run at the state tournament. Coach Larson has done a great job preparing the team for what it takes.”

The Tigers did reach state his sophomore year, after averaging 91 points in four section games, and beat Nevis to reach the semifinals, where they fell to champion Minneapolis North. “The run we had to get to that point was pretty magical, playing at the Target Center,” said Fink.

Steve Muscatello, New Ulm Journal
New Ulm Cathedral boys got the “signature” win they’ve been seeking, a 94-87 conquest of Minnesota Valley Lutheran on Friday. Coach Alan Woitas told the Mankato Free Press: “We hadn’t had that signature win. But we’ve been in one-possession games with Springfield and (MVL, earlier) and we think we can play with anybody in this section.” That’s a daunting section (2A) with Springfield, BOLD, Waterville-Elysian-Morristown, Mountain Lake/Comfrey, Cedar Mountain and NUC all ranked. Alex Hillesheim scored 28 points for the Greyhounds (15-4) and passed 1,000 points. Chris Knowles added 21, Jon Zinniel 16, James Gillis 14 and Ethan Lirchberg 13. Jake Kettner had 26 for MVL (18-2), leading five double-digit scorers.

* * *

Also making its presence felt as a 2A contender was Cedar Mountain (17-5), handing BOLD just its second loss of the season 63-60 at home Saturday evening. The Cougars were led by Trey Peterson-Juhl with 20 points and eight rebounds, Tavi Nelson with 14 points, and Lewis Pendleton with 13 points and 11 assists.

* * *

The Austin boys (17-4) went 4-0 in a daunting six-day stretch, winning 71-59 over Mankato East (15-4) on Thursday (six players scored between eight and 11 points), 84-47 over Red Wing (2-20) on Friday, 72-65 over Rochester Mayo (14-8) on Monday (four players between 13 and 17 points) and 79-63 over Northfield (14-6) on Tuesday (sinking 14 three-pointers).

* * *

Lake City junior standouts each had a special game when the Tigers beat Red Wing 83-61 on Feb. 16, the Red Wing Republican Eagle reports. Reid Gastner got his 1,000th point while scoring 29. Nathan Heise had a triple double: 24 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists.

* * *

Cade Goggleye, two-time all-state tournament pick for North Woods, notched his 2,000th point on Feb. 18 while scoring 19 in a 103-34 win over Fond du Lac Ojibway. The senior guard is averaging 18.3 points and 7.7 assists.
Bell heads Minnesotans in Big 10

By Bruce Strand

The Minnesota Gopher women have just one home-grown player this year but fortunately for them, Kenisha Bell is making the greatest impact of the six Minnesotans seeing action in the Big Ten.

The 5-9 senior guard from Bloomington Kennedy averages 18.8 points, 5.7 rebounds and 4.2 assists for the Gophers. She’s a big reason the Gophers are 19-7 overall and have won six straight to push above .500 in conference at 8-7. Bell averaged 16 and 18 points the last two years.

Three had big games against the Gophers.

Abi Scheid, Northwestern’s 6-2 junior forward from Elk River, notched 18 points and 8 rebounds at Williams Arena, in a 73-64 overtime loss to the Gophers. Averaging 11.8 points and 5.1 rebounds, she has developed a 3-point shot in college, hitting 4-for-6 against the Gophers and 41 percent for the season.

Alex Wittinger, Illinois 6-2 senior forward from Delano, sparked a 66-62 upset of the Gophers at Williams Arena with six blocked shots, 11 points and eight rebounds.

That was one of only two Big Ten wins for the Illini (10-16 overall). She leads the team with 15.1 points, 7.9 rebounds and 2.5 blocks per game.

Sam Haiby, Nebraska’s 5-6 freshman guard from Moorhead, tallied 16 points off the bench in a 63-57 win over the Gophers. She was Big Ten freshman of the week Feb. 4 and averages 9.6 points and 2.6 assists for the Cornhuskers (7-8 conference, 12-14 overall).

Seeing action off the bench are Suzanne Gilreath, 5-6 junior guard from Fridley, averaging 5.6 points for the Wisconsin Badgers (3-11, 12-14), and Nia Hollie, 6-0 junior forward from Hopkins, averaging 3.8 points for the Michigan State Spartans (7-7, 17-8).

‘Great Five-State’ playoffs get under way soon

The Minnesota Timberwolves and Minnesota Lynx are sponsoring a five-state NCAA-style fantasy play-off, “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 21-3
2. Prior Lake 20-2
3. Park Center 20-1
4. East Ridge 20–2
5. Lakeville North 19-4
6. Shakopee 18-5
7. Edina 14-8
8. Wayzata 17-8
9. Cretin-Derham Hall 17-5
10. Chaska 18-5
11. Eden Prairie 14-9
12. Champlin Park 17-5
13. Tartan 20-2
14. Minnetonka 12-11
15. Maple Grove 16-4
16. White Bear Lake 18-5
17. Robbinsdale Armstrong 15-9
18. Moorhead 17-5
19. Osseo 14-8
20. Buffalo 16-6

CLASS 3A

1. DeLaSalle 19-4
2. Waseca 23-0
3. Austin 17-4
4. Mankato East 16-4
5. Princeton 19-3
6. Winona 13-8
7. Mahtomedi 17-5
8. Hibbing 16-6
9. Mound-Westonka 18-6
10. Delano 17-6
11. Bemidji 17-3
12. Holy Angels 18-4
14. Alexandria 16-7
15. Northfield 14-7
17. St. Thomas Academy 12-10
18. Waconia 12-10
19. Hermantown 16-7
20. Fergus Falls 11-10

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 1A

1. Minneota 21-1
2. Springfield 20-2
3. BOLD 20-2
4. Minnesota Valley Lutheran 19-3
5. New Ulm Cathedral 17-5
6. Cass Lake-Bena 23-1
8. Henning 23-0
9. Ada-Borup West 20-1
10. Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 20-1
11. Mountain Lake/Comfrey 20-3
12. Cedar Mountain 17-5
13. Parkers Prairie 17-3
14. Hayfield 21-4
15. Mahnomen-Waubun 14-6
16. Randolph 22-2
17. Ortonville 15-2
18. Christ’s Household of Faith 17-4
19. Mayer Lutheran 15-7
20. Rushford-Peterson 15-9
Pacesetter “College Prep” Basketball Camp

Mon., July 1
College of St. Benedict
Clemens Field House
St. Joseph, MN
(4 miles west of St. Cloud)

Director:
Paul McDonald

All coaches are college coaches.

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 MacDonald, 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
MBBN GIRLS BASKETBALL TOP 20

CLASS 4A
1. Hopkins 25-0
2. Wayzata 24-1
3. Stillwater 22-2
4. St. Michael-Albertville 22-3
5. Eastview 20-5
6. Centennial 21-4
7. Farmington 20-4
8. Park Center 20-4
10. Eden Prairie 18-6
11. Roseville Area 20-5
12. Chaska 19-6
13. Maple Grove 18-6
14. Shakopee 17-8
15. Rosemount 16-9
16. Lakeville North 14-10
17. Elk River 17-7
18. Apple Valley 18-7
19. Robbinsdale Armstrong 19-6
20. Rochester John Marshall 21-4

CLASS 3A
1. Red Wing 21-2
2. Waseca 23-1
3. Hill-Murray 23-2
4. Willmar 19-3
5. Cooper 18-7
6. Alexandria 19-4
7. DeLaSalle 16-5
8. Simley 19-5
9. Becker 21-4
10. St. Paul Como Park 21-2
11. Holy Angels 17-7
12. Waconia 18-7
13. New Ulm 20-5
14. Mankato West 18-6
15. Grand Rapids 16-8
16. Hibbing 23-2
17. Fergus Falls 18-4
18. Benilde-St. Margaret’s 16-9
19. Marshall 18-7
20. Kasson-Mantorville 18-7

CLASS 3A
1. Minneota 23-1
2. Grand Meadow 23-1
3. Goodhue 20-6
4. Pelican Rapids 23-1
5. Menahga 24-1
6. Ada-Borup West 20-2
7. Hills-Beaver Creek 23-0
9. Cromwell-Wright 20-1
11. Mountain Iron-Buhl 21-4
12. Stephen-Argyle 23-1
13. Parkers Prairie 19-2
14. Pine River-Backus 20-4
15. BOLD 18-5
16. Wabasso 20-3
17. SW MN Christian 19-4
18. Lac qui Parle Valley 21-3
19. Lyle-Pacelli 19-4
20. Hayfield 17-8