All the way to the NBA
Staples-Motley’s Dave Joerger climbed rung by rung

By Bruce Strand

The list of high-profile basketball players from Minnesota does not include Dave Joerger.

He was a solid point guard for Staples-Motley, and later Minnesota-Moorhead, but not the big scorer type who leads teams to state championships and goes on to Division I.

Joerger, however, is the one from the Minnesota ranks who landed in the National Basketball Association as a head coach. He’s been one for six years, three with the Memphis Grizzlies and now three with the Sacramento Kings.

How did that happen? Well, Joerger embraced the old-fashioned virtues of dogged ambition, relentless dedication, love of the game, and willingness to work your way up from the bottom.

Joerger was better known as a tennis player at Staples-Motley, leading the Cardinals to Class A state championships his sophomore and junior year and winning the state singles championship as a senior in 1992.

The tennis team was coached by his father, Joe Joerger, who also coached girls basketball. Dave inherited his father’s passion for coaching. A former Moorhead teammate, Brett Besson, noted that, while conducting camps, Dave and Joe would monitor NBA playoff games, diagramming plays, offensive sets, and possible defensive adjustments.

In basketball, Joerger was not one of the school’s 22 thousand-point scorers, although he helped the Cardinals reach state as a sophomore, his first year as their point guard, and was MVP of the Mid-State Conference as a senior for his floor general skills.

“You could describe DJ as a point guard who did whatever you needed him to do,” said Lynn Peterson, his coach, interviewed by the Sacramento Bee when the Kings hired Joerger. “He is very intense, very motivated. You never had to kick him in the rear.”

Dave’s younger brother Blaine was a more renowned player, scoring 1,712 points, and leading the Cardinals to the state championship game in the Sweet 16 format in 1995, where they lost to Minneapolis North 54-52, and he outscored North’s great Khalid El-Amin 28 to 17. Blaine had a great college career at Minnesota State-Mankato.

As a 6-foot point guard with average speed, Dave Joerger played two seasons for Concordia-Moorhead, then moved to Moorhead State, where he played two years for Dave Schellhase, the former Chicago Bull who
Joerger: from UM-Moorhead guard to pro coach

Continued from Page 1

led the nation in scoring at Purdue.

Joerger averaged six points as a senior and ranked second in the NSIC in assists (4.8 per game) and steals (2.2). He was a feeder to Brett Beeson, the NCAA Division II national scoring leader who went on to coach pro teams in Europe.

“He certainly understood the game,” Schellhase told the MBBN. “He had a high basketball IQ. I knew he’d had good coaching in high school at Staples. He knew what to do out there. He didn’t make many mistakes, as I recall. He wasn’t big.”

“We had a real good team. We had the top scorer in the country, Brett Beeson from Eden Prairie, and Greg Duke, who started four years at guard for me.”

Schellhase, who never sent a player to the NBA at the small college he coached, is delighted to have sent one to the coaching ranks, and stays in touch. Joerger leaves him a ticket whenever his team plays in Indianapolis against the Pacers.

“He is a really hard worker and a tenacious guy,” Schellhase assessed. “He worked his way up for a lot of years and stuck with it. He is a very loyal guy. He’s had that staff with him all along, in Memphis and now in California, and that pays off in the long run.

‘He is having a really good year … In Memphis they had older, more experienced guys, and with Sacramen-to, they are going with a youth movement and they are running more.’”

Beeson told the Minnesota-Moorhead web site, for an article after Joerger entered the NBA ranks: “I recall him being a very cerebral player who was always in total control. He was a pass-first type of point guard (with) a very effective jump shot and an uncanny awareness of when to unleash it. He was a deadly free throw shooter. He was a delight to be around in the locker room as well,

Joerger: continued on Page 3
Continued from Page 2

because he always stayed so positive and up-beat.”

After finishing his career at Moorhead, Joerger got his start as fledging general manager of the Dakota Wizards of the International Basketball Association, a bottom-rung pro league. He became assistant coach during the 1997-98 season.

After three years, Joerger, then 26, was named head coach and became an immediate and perennial winner at every minor league stop.

His first Wizards team was IBA champions in 2000-01. The Wizards moved to the Continental Basketball Association and won titles there in 2001-02 and 2003-04.

He moved to Sioux Falls, another CBA team, and guided the Skyforce a 34-14 record and another CBA title while six of his players got called up to the NBA. He was named CBA Coach of the Year for the second time.

In 2006, Joerger left the Skyforce to rejoin the Wizards, who had jumped from the CBA to the NBA Development League, and captured his fifth minor league championship.

That’s when the NBA took notice — he had also worked in summer leagues with the Cleveland Cavaliers and San Antonio Spurs — and he joined the Memphis staff under Marc Iaquardoni in the 2007-08 season.

“The lights are pretty bright and the arenas are good-sized, but it’s still basketball,” said Joerger, in an article on the Concordia College web site at that time. “We had worked pretty hard and scrapped around for 10 years in the minors. We were in the CBA for five years and in the NBA Development League for one year. We had learned a lot, but still, it’s quite an opportunity to be here.”

In 2011, Joerger became lead assistant in charge of defense under head coach Lionel Hollins. His impact on the Grizzlies defense was profound. They had been 24th in team defense before he started, but moved ninth, seventh and second in 2012, 2013 and 2014. The Grizzlies generated 2,105 steals over those three seasons, 180 more than any other NBA team in that time span. They led the league in both steals per game and forced turnovers during the 2010-11 and 2011-12 seasons.

When the Grizzlies decided not to retain Hollins, despite reaching the conference finals for the first time, in 2013, they named Joerger head coach.

His first year, Joerger was named Western Conference coach of the month twice, and posted the best record (50-32) among the NBA's 10 first-year head coaches.

In three seasons in Memphis, Joerger compiled a 147-99 record and three NBA playoff appearances in which the Grizzlies went 9-13. He was fired, surprisingly, after a 42-40 season with a decimated club that set an NBA record for roster moves and deployed nine different point guards.

It took only two days to land another job. Sacramento, which had gone through eight coaches in 10 years, hired him in May of 2016 to replace George Karl, who had gone 44-68 in 14 months on the job. Joerger is under contract through the 2019-20 season.

Taking over a struggling Kings program, he posted records of 32-50 and 27-55 the first two years, but this season they’re turning the corner, 22-21 through Monday, led by shooting guard Buddy Hield averaging 17.9 points and 7.3 assists. Their potential star is 19-year-old, 6-11 Marvin Begley, No. 2 pick in the draft, from Duke, averaging 12.4 points.

Joerger professes that he’s found pro basketball at any level to be addictive. He told Mike McFeeley of KELO Radio (Sioux Falls) in 2013: “I loved the game. I loved the space. I loved the athleticism. I loved the length of the game. I loved that it was serious. There’s a high risk involved in professional basketball. You lose, you get fired. I kind of liked that.”
Edina clips No. 1 Hopkins 80-79

By Bruce Strand

The Edina Hornets foiled top-ranked Hopkins 80-79, with Jack Middleton delivering 31 points and Jacob Hutson notching the game-winner, Friday evening.

Edina (9-4) snapped a 12-game win streak by Hopkins (13-2), along with their own 10-game losing streak against the Royals over the last five seasons.


Not panicking when Hopkins went on “their patented runs” was the key, Edina coach Burger said.

“They’re just so good, and our guys know it’s coming. We did a great job responding with runs of our own and not forgetting the style of play keeping us in the game.”

The Hornets led by eight in the second half, then trailed by four, and were down 79-78 with 30 seconds left when they took a time-out to set up a play.

“I just wanted to get Middleton to the lane for a pull-up that I’ve rarely seen him miss in four years,” Burger said.

Middleton’s shot was short, leading to a rebound scramble with players hitting the floor. Matthew Enck finally scooped the ball up and threw a strike to Hutson at the rim for the go-ahead layup with :12 left.

Hopkins went right back into action with no time-out. Walton drove to the hoop with Middleton on him and missed the layup. Nnaji’s tip-in was also contested and missed at the horn, and Edina had its first win over Hopkins since the section finals in 2013.

“We did just a really good job of sustaining Hopkins’ pressure and running our offense,” Burger said. “We shared the ball well, and when we do that, we’re pretty difficult to defend.”

VARSITY BOYS & GIRLS
2019 PACESETTER

MIT
MINNESOTA INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT
Saturday - Sunday, July 27-28
College of St. Benedict
St. Joseph, MN (4 miles west of St. Cloud)
Scalia savoring best Stillwater season before joining Whalen, Gophers

By Bruce Strand

Sara Scalia’s coach at Stillwater is confident that the fleet, fluid guard has what it takes to be a Division I player. And Willie Taylor should know. He coached four of them at St. Paul Central a decade ago.

Scalia, who’s averaging 22.4 points for the No. 3 Ponies -- at 12-2, the best team by far in her five seasons -- was the first player signed by new Gophers coach Lindsay Whalen last May. She’s the lone in-state recruit.

“There are several similarities with Sara and the other Division One players that I have been lucky enough to coach,” said Taylor, who had Kiara Buford (Gophers), Theairra Taylor (Iowa), Angel Robinson (Marquette), and Georgie Jones (Marquette and Indiana) at Central. Taylor listed:

(1) Confidence — “Sara knows she is a great shooter. If she is open anywhere on her side of half court, she believes she can make the shot.”

(2) Work ethic/self-motivation — “Sara reminds me of Shannon Loeblein (former Gopher from St. Paul Harding). There are only two players that I have witnessed go into a gym and shoot by themselves, rebounding their own misses, for over an hour, dripping with sweat, daily; most kids get bored. I would get tired of chasing my own missed shots.”

(3) Competitive spirit — “The top-level players that I’ve coached all need to win; they do not accept losing at all. Losing for this type of kid can create a bad attitude. When the game is on the line, Sara wants the ball!”

Scalia was delighted when Whalen was named Gophers coach at the end of an WNBA career where she won four championships, returning to her alma mater. “I watched her with the Lynx — my family had season tickets for seven years — and I always looked up to her,” said Scalia. “When she became coach, I looked into the Gophers a lot more. She watched me play (in AAU), and when she offered me, I knew it was the right thing. I’m very excited for next year.”

Marquette and Wisconsin were also high on her list before Whalen kept her west of the border. “She liked how hard I play, my hustle, and how fast I get me shot off.”

Scalia pumped in 26 ppg last year. The Ponies added 6-2 junior Aliza Karlen (transfer from St. Paul Central) this year so scoring is more spread. Soph guard Alexis Prattis averages 17 points and Karlen 13.

The Ponies were 7-19, 9-18, and 11-16 in Scalia’s first three years and 17-11 last season. She is hopeful of playing her first state tournament and the Ponies’ first since 1988. At a school with more than 60 state titles, they’ve only gone to state twice in girls hoops. “Since my eighth grade year, we’ve improved each season,” Scalia said. “We are coming together and playing better as the season goes on. This is our year, and we feel we can accomplish a lot.”

Scalia holds Pony records with 2,184 career points and a 39-point game, mainly by 3-point shooting and blowing past defenders to the basket. “I used to take a lot more three’s, but they come out on me more now,” she said.

Scalia’s father, Dan, who played for Centenary College in Louisiana, was her coach until she joined the Pony varsity. Her older sister Taylor played for the Ponies, although her main sport was volleyball. The third sister, Amber, is a starter as a freshman, scoring 4.4 points per game while deferring to the big three.
The Triton girls have a 10-7 record through Tuesday. Nothing remarkable about that — except the the Cobras’ average record the previous 14 seasons was 4-22. They were 8-19 in 2004-05 and never even won that many games again until now.

Things turned around under a much-traveled coach, Melissa Young, in her second season there, as chronicled in a feature by Pat Ruff for the Rochester Post Bulletin. “(Young) has taught us a lot,” guard Sydney Gilliland told the RPB. “It helps having a new coach who is very experienced, with such a strong history. She’s taught me so many different aspects of the game.”

Young saw hope one evening after a game when a dozen girls were shooting in the gym at 11:30 p.m. “When you start seeing things like that happening, you know your program is turning around,” she told the RPB.

Gilliland averages 12 points and had a game with 18 assists. Kendra Petersohn leads with 16.5 ppg. Holly Kubat and Brylee Iverson add nine ppg each.

At long last, Triton girls turn it around

Young starred at Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop and Gustavus Adolphus, then embarked on a long, winding road of coaching — assistant college jobs with the Gophers, Winona State, Mankato Bethany and head coach at Hamline, along with high school head coach at Anoka, Nicollet, Hastings and St. Croix Lutheran, mostly fill-in jobs lasting one year.

She landed at Triton (Dodge Center, Claremont and West Concord) as PE teacher and coach on the recommendation of longtime Gustavus men’s coach Mark Hanson, a Dodge Center graduate who was Young’s work-study boss at Gustavus and always stayed in touch.

“Melissa has basically changed everything about the atmosphere,” Petersohn told the Post-Bulletin. “She’s getting everyone involved, and it is so much fun.”
Willmar hands Alex girls first loss

By Bruce Strand

The Alexandria girls took a 12-0 record and No. 1 ranking to Willmar on Tuesday evening but Willmar won this duel of Cardinals 45-44. “We didn’t shoot the ball well but battled down to the last possession,” Alexandria coach Wendy Kohler told the Echo Press.

Willmar (11-2) prevailed despite missing their star guard Hannah Johnson with an injury. They edged ahead 45-42 on Madi Linbo’s 3-pointer and Abby Berskow’s layup after a steal. Alexandria, still down by one, had the ball the last 11 seconds but Willmar held on.

Willmar concentrated on Alexandria’s formidable post players. “We really tried to pack it in and force them to shot a lot of three’s, and we did that for the most part,” coach Dustin Carlson told the West Central Tribune. Willmar had Berskow with 10 points and Linbo eight. For Alexandria, Ella Grove scored 10, Kaye Paschka and Emily Jones nine each.

***

J’vonne Hadley sank 48 points as Mahtomedi beat Hastings 82-67 at home Tuesday. The 6-6 junior guard connected on 18 of 23 field goals (4-for-5 on three’s) and was 8-for-11 on free shots. Hadley is averaging 30.2 points with a previous high of 37. Always a dangerous penetrator, Hadley added a much-improved 3-point shot to his game this year and is “very tough to guard,” said coach Keith Newman. While 48 would be a record at most schools, Mahtomedi had a 50-point game in 1961 by Mike Patterson, Newman said.

***

Noah Christensen became Breckenridge’s all-time scoring leader while notching 29 points, 17 rebounds, and six assists in an 84-79 win over Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton on Jan. 10. The 6-9 forward broke the record of 1,523 held by Breckenridge assistant coach Nate Lorenz. Chri-sensen, signed by North Dakota State, has played in two state tournaments and was Heart O’ Lakes Conference MVP as a junior.

***

The unbeaten Waseca boys are leading Class 3A with 84.7 points per game and averaging 8.6 three-pointers. “We’ve really shot the ball well, and when you do that, things get a lot easier,” coach Seth Anderson told the Mankato Free Press. Malik Willingham, senior guard, averages 16.7 points and 8.3 assists, shooting 42 percent on three’s. Soph post Andrew Morgan averages 16.4 points and 9.2 rebounds, shooting 69.5 percent. Two more sophs making a big impact are guards Ryan Dufault (16.3 ppg) and Kyreese Willingham (14.7 ppg).

***

Jax Madson, Mankato East junior guard, pumped in 39 points as the Cougars (10-1) beat Marshall 81-69 on Saturday. Madison shot 6-for-9 on three’s and 15-for-20 at the line. Madson sank 31 points two days earlier in a 67-31 win over Mankato West and is averaging 20.4 points.

***

The Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial girls were under .500 the last six seasons and never beat a winning team in that span, but the Knights have put that behind them, posting a 14-1 record. They were 6-19 two years ago and edged up to 12-15 last season, then had some summer success and built on that. It’s a very young team. Lakesha Carter, sophomore forward, is averaging 17 points, 9.8 rebounds, 5.6 assists and 3.8 steals. Sophomore Alexis Cloyd averages 19.3 points, eighth-grader Olivia Harazin 10.7, junior Reese Goeringer 11.3 and junior Grace Rydeen 7.9 points. Harazin is the point guard.

***

Brandon Adelman broke New London-Spicer’s career scoring record while sinking 23 points in the Wildcats’ 67-49 win over Watertown-Mayer at home Friday evening. Adelman eclipsed the record of 1,570 points, held since 1996 by Jamie Swenson, NLS’s lone Mr. Basketball finalist who played in three state tournaments. Adelman, 6-2 senior point guard, is averaging 21 points, six rebounds and five assists for the Wildcats (11-2). He has signed with St. Cloud State.

***

The Centennial girls are relying heavily on Taylor McAulay, who has responded mightily. Centennial had four Division I bound players last year, and still had two when practices started this year, but is currently down to just one. McAulay, senior guard signed by Drake, averages 18.9 points, 5.7 rebounds and 2.8 assists for the Cougars (11-4). Centennial’s 6-3 post Sara Stapleton, signed by Wisconsin, has not played yet, recovering from a knee injury. “While waiting for Sara’s return, our whole team has stepped up their game,” coach Jill Becken said, “but Taylor has been incredible on both ends of the court.”
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 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
### MBBN Boys Basketball Top 20

#### Class 4A
1. Prior Lake 10-1
2. Hopkins 13-2
3. Park Center 11-1
4. East Ridge 10-2
5. Edina 9-4
6. Lakeville North 10-3
7. Shakopee 10-3
8. Wayzata 10-3
9. Eden Prairie 8-5
10. East Ridge 10-2
11. Champlin Park 9-3
12. White Bear Lake 12-1
13. Cretin-Derham Hall 9-4
14. Tartan 11-2
15. St. Paul Central 8-4
16. Eastview 8-5
17. Minnetonka 8-4
18. Maple Grove 9-3
19. Robbinsdale Armstrong 8-4
20. North St. Paul 7-5

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

#### Class 2A
1. Minnehaha Academy 10-2
2. Minneapolis North 9-3
3. Perham 11-1
4. Breck 9-2
5. Lake City 12-2
6. Maranatha Christian 12-1
7. St. Croix Prep 10-3
8. Caledonia 9-4
9. Jordan 10-2
10. Holy Family Catholic 9-4
11. Spectrum 11-2
12. Hawley 10-2
13. Osakis 12-0
15. St. Cloud Cathedral 10-4
16. Breckenridge 8-4
17. Providence Academy 9-4
18. Pequot Lakes 9-2
19. Litchfield 10-2
20. St. James 11-1

#### Class 1A
1. Minneota 13-0
2. BOLD 15-0
3. Cass Lake-Bena 14-0
4. Minnesota Valley Lutheran 13-1
5. Springfield 10-2
7. Henning 12-0
8. Mountain Lake Area/Comfrey 10-1
9. Spring Grove 11-1
10. Ortonville 8-1
11. Randolph 14-1
12. Ada-Borup 11-0
13. Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 13-1
14. New Ulm Cathedral 11-2
15. Pine River-Backus 9-2
16. Hancock 9-2
17. Hayfield 13-2
18. Rushford-Peterson 9-5
19. Mayer Lutheran 8-4
20. Grand Meadow 12-3
**MBBN Girls Basketball Top 20**

**Class 4A**

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

**Class 3A**

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

**Class 2A**

1. Sauk Centre 12-2
2. Roseau 11-2
3. Eden Valley-Watkins 14-0
4. Minnehaha Academy 11-5
5. Holy Family Catholic 12-3
6. Rochester Lourdes 10-4
7. Rush City 10-1
8. Minneapolis North 9-3
9. Annandale 10-2
10. Hawley 8-1
11. Stewartville 9-4
12. Norwood-Young America 12-2
13. Medford 13-0
14. Esko 14-4
15. Winona Cotter 12-3
16. Maranatha Christian 8-6
18. Mesabi East 12-4
19. Lake City 11-4
20. Royalton 10-2

**Class 1A**

1. Minneota 12-0
2. Menahga 14-0
3. Goodhue 14-2
4. Grand Meadow 15-0
5. Pelican Rapids 13-1
6. Ada-Borup 10-1
7. Heritage Christian 12-1
9. Hills-Beaver Creek 16-0
10. Parkers Prairie 12-0
11. Stephen-Argyle 14-0
12. Lac qui Parle Valley 12-1
13. Cromwell-Wright 10-1
14. Belgrade-Broten-Elrosa 9-4
15. BOLD 10-4
16. SW Minnesota Christian 8-2
17. Park Christian 11-2
18. Cherry 12-3
19. Wabasso 11-2
20. Red Lake 10-4