Sweet hometown visit: Hutch renames gym for Whalen

Former Tiger now coaching Gophers attends ceremony

By Bruce Strand

While the whole state of Minnesota can proudly claim Lindsay Whalen as a favorite daughter, that is especially true of Hutchinson.

Accordingly, the basketball legend’s hometown, nestled amid the soybean and corn fields 63 miles west of Williams Arena, recently christened its newly-remodeled high school court Whalen Gymnasium.

The former Gopher, Lynx and Olympic team point guard and current University of Minnesota coach — whose Gophers have won their first 10 games under her, and are ranked No. 13 — was back in Hutchinson on Nov. 27 for the dedication.

“To think the gym would be named after me? I never thought of that when I was in line getting that doughnut,” quipped Whalen, after recalling how she grabbed a snack at a Super America one evening during childhood while pedaling to the gym for a summer workout.

Hutchinson High School doubled the size of the gymnasium where Whalen scored about half of her 1,996 points and signed her letter of intent 19 years ago. “It’s a beautiful place,” she marveled.

The ceremony prior to the season opener against Annandale included a video of Whalen highlights from the Tigers, Gophers and Lynx, along with brief tributes by school officials, and some humor and sincerity from the guest of honor.

“There’s no other place I’d rather be from than Hutchinson, Minnesota,” Whalen said. “There is no better place to grow up.”

To the current Tigers assembled nearby, Whalen advised them to savor the experience while it lasts because it goes by pretty fast.

Whalen sparked the Minnesota Lynx to four WNBA championships in nine years with the team. She took part in a WNBA record 325 victories in her career with the Lynx and Connecticut Sun.
Homegrown Gophers producing

By Bruce Strand

Seldom has the Gopher men’s basketball team enjoyed a more prominent home-grown presence. Three of the top five scorers on a 9-2 Gopher team are in-state recruits, two of those among a prized trio of freshmen.

Amir Coffey, 6-8 junior guard from Hopkins, leads the Gophers with 16 points per game, playing 32.7 minutes per game. Coffey averaged 14 points in 18 games as a starter last year before a shoulder injury forced him out.

Gabe Kalscheur, freshman 6-4 guard from DeLaSalle, averages 10.8 ppg and 29 minutes. He leads with 25 three’s and got Big Ten Freshman of the Week after he hit seven of them among 25 points in a 80-66 win over Santa Clara on Nov. 20, and beat Washington 68-66 the next night by sinking one with two seconds left.

Daniel Oturu, 6-10 freshman center from Cretin-Derham Hall, averages 9.8 points in 23.0 minutes. The hero of last year’s state championship game (you’ll recall the last-second dunk that beat Apple Valley) also leads the Gophers with 22 blocked shots and ranks second with 7.6 rebounds per game.

A third freshman, the very athletic 6-6 forward Jarvis Omersa from Oro-no, plays about 10 minutes per game and averages 1.6 points. Junior 6-7 guard Michael Hurt from Rochester John Marshall averages 7.5 minutes and 2.8 points.

The Gophers’ most productive player is Jordan Murphy, 6-7 senior forward from San Antonio, Texas, with 14.9 points and 12.6 rebounds per game. The other starter, Du-Pree McBrayer, 6-5 senior guard from Queens, NY, averages 9.9 points.

The Gophers (1-1 in conference) will return from a 10-day break hosting North Carolina A & T on Friday, 7 p.m., and Mount St. Mary’s on Sunday, 3 p.m.
North’s first win was upset of DLS

By Bruce Strand

North St. Paul, unranked in Class 4A, achieved what a pair of top-team teams couldn’t, beat Class 3A’s top-ranked DeLaSalle, 79-74, on the Islanders court, Friday.

The Polars were 0-3 entering the game but got it done. Dujuan Carter, 6-0 senior guard, nailed 39 points (15-for-17 at the line). Shaheed Muhammad, 5-11 junior guard, struck for 20 points (5-for-8 on three’s). Shawn West-Zimpel added nine.

“We did a great job playing team basketball,” coach Damian Johnson said. “We moved the ball and got great shots. When we play team basketball, we are able to compete with anyone in the state.”

Jamison Battle hit 34 points and Jalen Travis 24 for the Islanders (3-1), who have beaten Eden Prairie and Wayzata.

North St. Paul (now 2-3) lost to East Ridge, White Bear Lake and Cretin-Derham Hall, all ranked.

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Defenses ruled as Eden Prairie outlasted East Ridge 55-50 on Tuesday, Dec. 18. “Both teams really competed. Nothing was easy for either team due to very good defense,” said David Flom, Eden Prairie coach. Eden Prairie trailed 40-30 before outscoring the Raptors 25-10 at the end. Drake Dobbs, junior guard, scored 18 points and passed 1,000. Austin Andrews added 16 and Ariel Bland 15. Courtney Brown led East Ridge with 19, but the Eagles held their other luminaries to single digits.

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BOLD moved up to No. 4 in Class 1A after shutting down a ranked 2A team, Melrose, 68-44, in a conference clash Tuesday, Dec. 18. The Warriors (6-0) shot 51 percent, hitting from all over, with Drew Sagedahl notching 20 points (8-for-11, three 3-pointers), Jordan Sagedahl 17 (7-for-11), Gavin Vosika 15 and Carter Henry 12.

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Stewartville sophomore Will Tschetter generated 43 points and 11 rebounds in 95-87 upset of section rival Caledonia 95-87 on Saturday in Rochester. “He’s put in a lot of time (working on his game),” coach Adam Girtman told the Post-Bulletin about the 6-8 post who averaged 12 points as a freshman. Caledonia (4-2), which has won Stewartville’s section four of the last five years, led 48-39 at halftime. Tschetter caught fire for 32 points in the second half, shooting 8-for-11 on field goals and 11-for-11 at the line. Hunter Voight added 24 points for Stewartville (3-3).

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Undefeated Waseca showed “tremendous athleticism,” the Mankato Free Press noted, in thumping Mankato East 73-53 Thursday. It was a rematch of last year’s section final won by East. Senior guard Malik Willingham notched 23 points and six assists for the Bluejays. Three sophomores combined for 39 as Kyreese Willingham hit 15, and Ryan Dufault and 6-10 Andrew Morgan 12 each. “Our guys showed some good moves around the basket,” Waseca coach Seth Anderson said. “They’re all competitors and they just keep coming at you.”

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AJ Kloos flung the ball from beyond the half-court line and it went down the hatch to give United South Central a 67-64 win over Mankato Loyola on Thursday. Kloos was the right guy to take the desperation shot; the 6-3 junior forward logged 37 points and 10 rebounds for the game. Colby Klocek added 14 points for USC (5-1). Brendan Kane and Ben El-lingworth scored 17 each for Loyola.

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Andy Berkvam picked up his 500th coaching victory when Northfield opened with a 72-58 win at Red Wing on Dec. 6. Berkvam compiled a 419-203 record with the Lakeville North girls (state champs in 2010) before taking the job in his native Northfield. After a rough first year (7-20), the Raiders have an 82-62 mark under Berkvam.

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Breck, ranked No. 4 in Class 2A, were missing star forward David Roddy, who was playing quarterback in the state all-star football game, and got pounded by Brooklyn Center 68-46 on Thursday. Leading BC were Quyavant Douglas with 19, Danny Yates 13 and Roland Russ 10.
Back-to-back stars at New Ulm are school scoring leaders

By Bruce Strand

The top two scorers in New Ulm basketball history are just two years apart, their careers overlapping. And both played for their respective fathers.

Joey Batt became the Eagles career leader Tuesday, Dec. 18, sinking 33 points in a 92-56 win over Worthington at home, while also stealing the ball 10 times.

That gives the 5-6 senior point guard 1,869 points, passing the record of Meleah Reinhart, who graduated in 2017 with 1,842 points. Reinhart is currently averaging 10.8 points for Southwest Minnesota State.

Dan Reinhart was head coach when Maleah played and he stepped down after she graduated. Brian Batt has been head coach the last two seasons.

Coach Batt called time out and the feat was recognized, which Joey appreciated. “Because last year, when I got my 1,000th point, it was away, so it wasn’t as super special because he didn’t call a timeout, because it was a close game,” Batt told the New Ulm Journal. “But this year it was nice to get that recognition. It’s good to know that little kids look up to me, so it feels really good.”

The Minnesota-Mankato recruit is averaging 30.8 points, shooting 52 percent on 3’s, for the Eagles (7-1).

Abby Lewis to the Austin Herald after she supplied 18 points and seven rebounds, and made 7-of-8 free shots down the stretch. “We stayed calm and we worked together.” RJM got 29 points from freshman center Lilly Meister as they cruised in the battle for the Big Nine lead. Colie Justice had 21 for Austin. RJM is 6-0 and Austin, Mankato West and Red Wing all 5-1 in conference.

Stillwater had a grueling week, with back-to-back top-ten clashes, and the Ponies broke even. The Ponies defeated Roseville Area 78-60 on Friday with senior Sara Scalia and sophomore Alexis Pratt sinking 24 points each. They took No. 2 ranked Wayzata to overtime and lost 78-76 on Monday. The dynamic guard tandem of Scalia and Pratt again had the same point total, 27 each. For Wayzata, Mara Braun scored 24 points, Jenna Johnson 19 and Kallie Theisen 17.

Sleepy Eye St. Mary’s presented coach Bruce Woitas with his 400th win Thursday. It was a 67-29 rout of Sleepy Eye public, the local rival they had not beaten since January 2014. Cassie Heinrichs led the Knights (8-2) with 24 points. “It’s 30 years of coaching and a lot of kids contributing to those wins,” Woitas told the New Ulm Journal. He recalled some tough seasons early on, but “the kids worked hard, they believed in what we were trying to do.”

Class AAA’s top-ranked Alexandria girls are 6-0, facing just one team so far with a winning record (Detroit Lakes, which is 4-3) The Cardinals won 59-49 over DeLaSalle (3-3), expected to be Class 3A contender when back at full strength. Alexandria went 50-13 the last two seasons, with state trips each year. They have five players averaging nine to 11.5 points. Their holiday tournament at Perham includes Class 2A’s top-ranked Roseau and defending state champion Sauk Centre.

** Got a tip for Minnesota Basketball News? Send e-mail to bruce.a.strand@gmail.com **
The Pacesetter Minnesota Invitational Tournament has been one of the premier summer tournaments in the Midwest since 1991. NBA players Joel Przybilla, Mike Miller, Kris Humphries, and Nate Wohlers are a few of the many top male and female players who have played in the MIT.

The top teams from the 5-state area of Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin are invited annually. All teams play 5-6 games in two days. Teams play in “regional” brackets on Saturday (3-4 games) and advance to Final Four brackets based on Saturday results for Sunday (2 games).

Teams that win the prestigious MIT championship will receive individual plaques. Teams with high finishes receive medals with neck ribbons.

One of the top facilities in the area will host this event: Clemons Fieldhouse and Claire Lynch at the College of St. Benedict (St. Joseph).

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or call Tracey 320-243-7460

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## MBBN Boys Basketball Top 20

### Class 4A

1. Park Center 5-0  
2. Prior Lake 4-1  
3. Hopkins 5-1  
4. Eden Prairie 4-2  
5. East Ridge 3-2  
6. Chaska 4-2  
7. Lakeville North 3-2  
8. Champlin Park 3-1  
9. Wayzata 4-2  
10. Edina 3-2  
11. Minnetonka 4-1  
12. Shakopee 4-2  
13. White Bear Lake 5-0  
14. Cretin-Derham Hall 3-3  
15. Tartan 4-1  
16. Spring Lake Park 5-0  
17. St. Paul Central 3-1  
18. Eastview 4-3  
19. St. Michael-Albertville 3-1  
20. Maple Grove 2-2

### Class 3A

1. DeLaSalle 4-1  
2. Princeton 5-0  
3. Mahtomedi 4-0  
4. St. Thomas Academy 5-1  
5. Waseca 6-0  
6. Austin 3-1  
7. Delano 3-1  
8. Mankato East 3-1  
9. Robbinsdale Cooper 2-2  
10. St. Paul Johnson 3-1  
11. Hibbing 4-1  
12. Marshall 4-1  
13. Minneapolis Roosevelt 5-3  
14. Northfield 2-2  
15. Bemidji 3-0  
16. St. Cloud Apollo 5-2  
17. Waconia 4-3  
18. Holy Angels 6-0  
19. Sartell St. Stephen 4-0  
20. Hermantown 6-0

### Class 2A

1. Minnehaha Academy 4-1  
2. Minneapolis North 3-1  
3. Perham 4-1  
4. Breck 4-1  
5. Lake City 6-1  
6. Caledonia 4-2  
7. Osakis 5-0  
8. Breckenridge 2-2  
9. Spectrum 5-0  
10. Albany 4-1  
11. Hawley 6-0  
12. Holy Family Catholic 6-0  
13. Brooklyn Center 4-4  
14. La Crescent-Hokah 4-1  
15. St. Charles 5-1  
16. Pine City 5-0  
17. Minnewaska Area 5-1  
18. Greenway 5-0  
19. Litchfield 4-0  
20. Melrose 2-2

### Class 1A

1. Minneota 5-0  
2. Springfield 6-0  
3. Cass Lake-Bena 5-0  
4. BOLD 6-0  
5. North Woods 6-1  
6. Minnesota Valley Lutheran 6-0  
7. Mountain Lake Area/Comfrey 4-0  
8. Murray County Central 5-1  
9. Russell-Tyler-Ruthhton 4-2  
10. Mahnomen-Waubun 4-0  
11. Ortonville 4-1  
12. Cromwell-Wright 3-0  
13. New Ulm Cathedral 6-1  
14. Henning 6-0  
15. Ada-Borup 5-0  
16. SW Minnesota Christian 4-0  
17. Randolph 4-0  
18. Hancock 6-0  
19. Rushford-Peterson 4-3  
20. Mayer Lutheran 4-2
The Minnesota Gopher women have won their first 10 games under new head coach Lindsay Whalen while rising to No. 13 in the rankings. They will start Big Ten play on Dec. 28 against Wisconsin.

Kenisha Bell, senior guard from Bloomington Kennedy who’s the only Minnesota native on the roster, averages a team-leading 18.6 points, along with 5.8 rebounds.

Bell has been Big Ten Player of the Week twice. One of them came after she sank 24 points and grabbed nine rebounds to lead a 72-68 win over Syracuse, then ranked No. 12, in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge.

Also capturing a Big Ten Player of the Week honor was Taiya Bello, 6-2 junior from Southfield, Michigan, who’s averaging 9.9 points and 13.2 rebounds.

Destiny Pitts had a 35-point game to lead the Gophers past a solid Boston College team 77-69 on the road. The sophomore guard from Detroit, who’s averaging 13.8 points, drilled six of eight 3-pointers in the game and topped her previous high of 28 points last year. Boston College was 8-1 entering this game.

Whalen, the hometown hero who starred for Hutchinson, the Gophers and the Lynx, attracted a record crowd of 14,625 at Williams Arena for her coaching debut, which was a 70-47 win over New Hampshire on Nov. 14. The previous record for Gopher women’s basketball was 14,363 when Whalen was a senior in 2004.

The Gophers, after a 10-day break, will host Rhode Island on Saturday at 3 p.m. in the final tuneup before Big Ten play, which they will open at home against Wisconsin on Friday, Dec. 28, at 8 p.m.

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MBBN GIRLS BASKETBALL TOP 20

CLASS 4A

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

CLASS 2A

1. Roseau 4-1
2. Stewartville 9-1
3. Sauk Centre 5-1
4. Eden Valley-Watkins 6-0
5. Holy Family Catholic 6-2
6. Minnehaha Academy 4-5
7. Proctor 7-1
8. Rush City 5-1
9. Hawley 6-0
10. Annandale 6-1
11. Duluth Marshall 7-0
12. Maranatha Christian 3-2
13. Pine City 7-0
14. Rochester Lourdes 5-3
15. Lake City 6-1
16. Jordan 6-1
17. Norwood-Young America 5-1
18. Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial 7-0
19. Foley 7-0
20. Concordia Academy 6-2

CLASS 3A

1. Alexandria 3-0
2. Waseca 8-0
3. Hill-Murray 7-0
4. Willmar 4-1
5. Holy Angels 6-2
6. St. Paul Como Park 7-1
7. Mankato West 6-1
8. Red Wing 7-1
9. Waconia 6-2
10. New Ulm 7-1
11. Benilde-St. Margaret’s 9-1
12. Simley 5-2
13. Northfield 4-2
14. Becker 6-1
15. Austin 6-2
16. DeLaSalle 3-3
17. Grand Rapids 5-2
18. Hibbing 7-1
19. Fergus Falls 7-1
20. Robbinsdale Cooper 1-5

CLASS 1A

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