Eden Prairie rides its fab 4

Title contender is led by seniors with over 4,500 points already

By Bruce Strand

Four players in the same class, all scoring in double digits from their sophomore year on — that’s something you just don’t see in Class 4A basketball. Or Class 1A for that matter.

But that’s the case with an Eden Prairie foursome that started their senior season with a combined 4,577 points in the books, along with fourth- and fifth-place finishes at the last two state tournaments.

The Eagles, who took over the top spot in the rankings after knocking off the pre-season No. 1, Cretin-Derham Hall, 56-47 in their opener last Saturday, have done everything but win a state crown with this group. It would be the school’s first.

Coach John Flom, asked if this is a state championship or bust kind of season, said nobody’s getting ahead of themselves.

“We have gained wisdom over the past few years,” Flom said. “So far, we are wise enough to just focus on today.”

Austin Andrews, 6-6 power forward signed by Minnesota-Duluth, entered his senior season with 1,587 points. Drake Dobbs, 6-1 point guard set for Liberty University, entered with 1,486. John Henry, 6-5 forward, had 760. Connor Christenson, 6-7 forward headed for Dartmouth, had 744.

“I would be curious,” Flom said, “if there has ever been four guys in the same class score 1000-plus points at the same school, at any level -- A, AA, AAA, AAAAA. Drake and Austin have already hit it, but John and Connor are on pace.”

It’s been done just twice in Minnesota — by the Princeton boys, a Class 3A team, with their 2019 class (one of them a senior-year transfer), and the Browerville girls, a Class 1A team, with their 2016 class — according to state basketball historian Matthew Pederson.

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But for a Class 4A team with as grueling a schedule as Eden Prairie faces, numbers like that from four classmates are phenomenal.

Andrews and Dobbs have started since their freshmen season. Andrews averaged 18, 13, and 12.5 points his first three years. Dobbs averaged 17, 20 and 19 points. Henry tallied 13 points per game the last two seasons, and Christensen averaged 11 and 12 points.

Dobbs, Henry and Christensen have been together since first grade, Flom said, and Andrews joined them in ninth grade.

That’s a lot weapons, even after the Eagles lost a fifth scoring threat when guard Ariel Brand, who averaged 13.8 points in section and state games last year, transferred to a prep school.

They can play defense, too, witness the 56-47 victory over high-powered Cretin-Derham Hall. “It was a grind of a game. Obviously a defensive battle,” Flom commented. “Austin Andrews took three charges.”

Andrews scored 19 points, Dobbs 17, Henry 10 and Christensen eight against Cretin-Derham Hall. For the Raiders, Tre Holloman netted 16 points, Curtis Jones 11 and J’vonne Hadley 10.

The Eagles have a lot more than four good players. They’ve gotten 60 points the first two games from fifth starter Will Foster and a deep bench.

“Lots of great kids,” Flom acknowledged, about his roster. “Several could be playing at other schools, but it’s difficult to crack this lineup.”

If you have a tip for Minnesota Basketball News about a player, team, coach, issue, or anything else interesting, send an e-mail to bruce.a.strand@gmail.com
Kylie Borowicz, one of the greatest state tournament players in Minnesota girls basketball history, has ended her college career at Moorhead after two years due to a lifelong ailment, arthritis.

The 5-8 guard scored 3,223 points for Roseau, 259 of those in nine state games (a 28.8 average) and led the Rams to the 2017 state Class 2A title with a 32-0 record. They placed fourth and third the previous two years.

Borowicz averaged 13.9 points as a sophomore at Minnesota State-Moorhead, helping the Dragons post a 27-7 record, and was an all-Northern Sun Conference first-team pick. She had a 37-point game against Augustana.

“It was very hard (decision) for how much work I put into it,” Borowicz told the Fargo Forum in September. “I have had arthritis since I was nine months old. ... I just couldn’t do it anymore and I finally realized I had to look out for my future body.”

Dragon coach Karla Nelson said, ”I think she got to the point she just had enough physically. I think it’s a good decision for her.”

Kylie’s sister Kacie, Miss Basketball last year, scored 3,551 points, is averaging 6.8 points off the bench for North Dakota as a freshman. Youngest sister Katie is starting her junior season at Roseau with 1,557 points.
By Bruce Strand

Minnesota Gopher men’s basketball ended a losing streak with regard to recruiting in-state players when they got a commitment from Alexandria’s Treyton Thompson on Nov. 30.

Thompson is a 6-10, 180-pound junior forward who left Alexandria this year to play for La Lumiere, a prep school in Indiana. He’s assessed as a four-star recruit, ranked No. 75 in the class of 2021 by 24/7 Sports. He also had offers from Iowa, Oklahoma and Texas Tech, according to 24/7 Sports.

In his tweet about joining the Gophers, Thompson cited affection for his home state and wanting to play college ball with “Minnesota across my chest.”

Gopher coach Rick Pitino and his staff last signed in-state players when they landed 2018 graduates Daniel Oturu of Cretin-Derham Hall, Gabe Kalscheur of DeLaSalle and Jarvis Omersa of Orono, now sophomores. Oturu was the prize catch of that group, now leading the Gophers (4-4) with 17.5 points, 10.9 rebounds and 3.4 blocks per game. Kalscheur is also a starter, averaging 12.1 points.

The Gophers were long shots on two home-grown superheroes that everybody wanted — Apple Valley’s Tre Jones from the 2018 class, and Matthew Hurt of Rochester John Marshall, both of whom signed with Duke.

They also missed on a trio almost as highly-coveted — Zeke Nnaji of Hopkins (Arizona) from the 2019 class, and 6-11 forward Dawson Garcia of Prior Lake (Marquette) and 6-8 forward Dain Dainja of Park Center (Baylor) from this year’s class — along with four other seniors (keep reading).

Jalen Suggs. They’re also trying hard to land Hopkins guard Kerwin Walton.

The Gophers have signed a pair of four-star seniors in shooting guard Jamal Mashburn Jr. (Miami, and Brewster Academy prep school in New Hampshire) and center Martice Mitchell (Chicago Heights, Illinois).

Terry Kunze, the MBBN’s eye on college and pro basketball, was asked about the Gophers recent 1-for-10 slate on in-state recruits.

“I think Thompson is a good get — I saw him this summer,” said Kunze, a Gopher starter from 1962-65 and former college coach.

About the guys who got away, Kunze said, “The Gophers really wanted Garcia, but Marquette got on him early before Minnesota did anything.” And, in general, “If you are a great player, wouldn’t you want to play on national TV? And how many Gophers are in the NBA?” Kunze also opined, “I think the guy they really missed on was Zeke from Hopkins. He is better than Hurt.”

Carlson and Crowl will join five other Minnesotans on the Badger roster: Brad Davison of Maple Grove, Nathan Reuvers and Tyler Wahl of Lakeville North, Walt McGrory of Edina, and Joe Hedstrom of Hopkins.

The Gophers and everybody else are still on the trail of the state’s best athlete in many years, Minnehaha Academy point guard (and quarterback) Jalen Suggs. They’re also trying hard to land Hopkins guard Kerwin Walton.

The Gophers have signed a pair of four-star seniors in shooting guard Jamal Mashburn Jr. (Miami, and Brewster Academy prep school in New Hampshire) and center Martice Mitchell (Chicago Heights, Illinois).
Whalen signs Farmington post

By Bruce Strand

Farmington junior center Sophie Hart recently signed with the Minnesota Gophers, which currently has just one Minnesotan on the team.

Hart, who’s averaging 19.3 points after three games, got her offer from the Gophers after her freshman season.

Hart averaged over 10 rebounds per game in 9th and 10th grade, and averaged 12 points as a sophomore. She is a three-sport athlete, playing volleyball in the fall (previously cross country) and track in the spring, doing hurdles high jump and the 400.

Kevin Anderson, who does MBBN’s girls basketball rankings and has a girls basketball website (kjasr.com), assessed: “Hart is a 6-4 junior who is strong, physical, and mobile. She has defended on the perimeter. She is a rebound machine. Scores on many second chances. She sets solid screens up high. She is one of the few (I think you can count them on one hand) true posts left in the game.”

A Star-Tribune report on the signing noted that the Gophers were largely disconnected from the state during former coach Marlene Stollings’ four seasons — which second-year coach Lindsay Whalen is determined to change.

Whalen, who starred for Hutchinson, the Gophers and the Lynx, has made 13 offers to Minnesotans in grades 9-10-11. Hired in April of 2018, she was way behind on recruiting other players who were ready to commit, including the mostly highly-coveted player in state history, Hopkins senior Paige Bueckers, who’ll play for Connecticut.

Whalen’s first signee, that Minnesotan in maroon and gold, was Stillwater guard Sara Scalia, who is starting as a freshman and averaging 9.4 points for the Gophers (6-1).
Pacesetter Sports will conduct its 28th annual Minnesota Youth Basketball Championships for teams in grades 4-7, starting with region playoffs from February through April.

This one-class, statewide competition involving 600 to 800 teams will start with eight regional qualifiers — Region 1 in Rochester and Stewartville, Region 2 in Mankato, Region 3 in Redwood Falls, Region 4 in Mora and Willow River, Region 5 in Paynesville, Region 6 in Alexandria, Region 7 in Grand Rapids and Mountain Iron-Buhl, and Region 8 in Bemidji.

The region champions are invited to the Minnesota Youth Basketball State Championships in Maple Grove in June. The champion and runner-up at the state tournament are invited to the Pacesetter Great Five-State Championships in Minneapolis along with top teams from Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota. All teams in that tournament will have at least one game on the main Target Center floor.

Teams may register online now by visiting our web site at www.pacesettersports.net.

Officials needed

Officials interested in working Pacesetter basketball tournaments from March through July should write to jeff@pacesettersports.net. See www.pacesettersports.net for more information.
Are people happy to see you?

We have had a grocer in Paynesville for over 30 years who meets everybody with a smile and a greeting that makes you feel like he is so happy to see you. “Hello, Jeff and Diane,” we can expect every time we see him. “Hello, Wally,” we respond. He usually follows up with “How are you?” or “How are Maggie ad Joe?” Are people happy to see Wally? Absolutely! You start smiling before he even sees you because you know the response is coming.

I have another story about Wally. My mother had bought groceries almost her whole life from a family-owned grocery store in her small town. Thousands of visits. Then the owners decided to put in a “no check” policy. One day, my mother, in her seventies, placed her groceries on the counter and got out her check book. “I’m sorry, no checks,” was the response. She didn’t have any cash with her. She had to take the groceries back … She was so angry and humiliated … and never went back to that store. It went out of business a few years later. Now back to Wally. My mother was in Paynesville one day buying groceries while she and some friends were staying at our cabin. She again forgot her check book and cash. Oops. Wally didn’t know her, but he said, “Oh, don’t worry, you can pay later.” You can bet she came back, quickly and often, and that story has been passed on and on … and still lives. A salute to you, Wally Thyen of Paynesville. I can’t wait to see you again.

I had only met Jeff Wall, new head boys coach at Anoka, a couple times, but I always remember him because he was so complimentary about our work with Pacesetter. Whenever I saw him, was I happy to see him? YES! I knew compliments were likely to come my way. Last summer, I asked him if he could direct a “Tour of Champions” camp for us. He ran the camp at Moose Lake-Willow River. Guess who sent me a hand-written note afterwards “thanking me” for the opportunity. A handwritten thank-you note is still one of the classiest things a person can do to show appreciation. It should have been me writing him the note. So, Jeff, this is my thank you note back to you, a person who shows class and kindness and care every day.

Here is Jeff’s note (published with his permission).

Jeff — Thanks again for the opportunity to work with your outstanding Pacesetter organization. It is very impressive — the many lives and youth you have touched — positive impact on Minnesota Basketball. Classy organization that cares for others — Best wishes for continued success — Jeff Wall

The reactions to Wally and Jeff are examples of how positive actions and attitude expressed personally and directly to other human beings produces a reaction of loyalty, admiration, respect, and motivation to meet their expectations. And it is contagious!

I marvel at the reactions I see on Undercover Boss when the boss thanks his/her employees and tells them how important they are to the company and how appreciated their work and efforts are to the team. Almost everyone cries. They are shocked to have their efforts recognized. Everyone wants to feel appreciated. Praise and Thank You’s are gifts we can give that cost the least and deliver the most. It is easy to see the faults in people. We are being trained to find faults by much of what is coming out of our TV sets — critical analysis on sports broadcasts, and 24-hour partisan news stations tearing people down — so when someone rises above the “squalor” and spreads goodness, it is welcomed with a ready heart and makes a HUGE IMPACT. It all sets an example for others. It is no wonder that a movie like A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood (about Mr. Rogers) is being welcomed to the screen.

We all have many roles in life — parent, child, coach, player, employer, employee, friend, relative, and neighbor. We have many people we could thank. We at Pacesetter thank each of you for all you do to make sports and life a better place to be.

May the smiles and greetings of Wally Thyen and the kindness and class of Jeff Wall inspire you to give the best of yourself this holiday season and basketball season.

Cheers
Jeff, Tracey, Heather and Charnelle
Cotter’s Bowlin nabs 600th win; also has 715 in SB

Winona Cotter’s Pat Bowlin logged his 600th career win in girls basketball on Nov. 30, about a year and a half after notching his 700th in softball. Bowlin’s Rambler beat Visitation 50-23 to reach the longtime coach’s latest milestone. He got No. 700 in softball in the opener of the 218 season and currently has 715 in softball and 602 in basketball. Bowlin, who taught at St. Bernard’s and Hill-Murray before arriving at Cotter in 1991 as activities director, has taken two Cotter basketball teams to state tournaments (2001 and 2006). His softball ledger includes 13 state trips, and state titles in 2003 and 2006. Bowlin also coached football for 11 years and had two state qualifiers.

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Parents: Stop your screaming

By Rachel Blackmon Bryars

It’s acceptable – endearing, even – for Southerners to act a bit boorish when cheering on our college football teams.

“The bleachers provide fans a less complicated space where we can more comfortably display our more primal selves,” wrote Dr. Matthew Goldenberg, a Yale psychiatrist, Birmingham-native, and Alabama fan in a recent Al.com article about why humans love football. “Where else is chanting, yelling, booing or even crying not only accepted but expected?”

That’s fine at Bryant-Denny or Jordan-Hare. But it’s deplorable – shameful, even – at an elementary school. But that’s precisely what some parents do.

They scream at 9-year-olds. They berate referees (often volunteers). They demand that their bewildered child pass, score, run, hustle, or perform any number of barked-out commands that are often in direct opposition to the coach’s directions.

They spew rancor and verbal sewage all over their children, your children, and you – and spoil otherwise beautiful Saturday mornings.

And then, come Sunday, they lift those same hoarse voices high in a Hallelujah harmony at church.

Why, pray tell, do parents act like this? Goldberg said his sense is that some of the same psychological impulses driving fan behavior also drive parental behavior. Those behaviors can include “Displacement” – when we shift our bad feelings about one area of our lives to something less threatening, “Schadenfreude” – a tendency to take pleasure when others fail, and “Splitting” – avoiding life’s ambiguities by resorting to black-and-white thinking.

“And the stakes may feel higher because parents spend so much more money on their kid’s sports than parents did decades ago, Ross said.

What are these parents so mad about? Research suggests youth sports game anger is most provoked when parents perceive that referees, coaches, players, or other parents are acting uncaring, unjust, or incompetent, according to the Journal of Applied Sport Psychology.

Regardless of the reasons, bad sideline behavior at youth sports games is counter-productive. Research shows that when kids are yelled at, they can experience stress-induced physical responses that negatively affect their performance. They are also at risk of developing mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.

Parents should remember that kids are still learning and enjoy the process, regardless of wins or losses, Ross said. “We’re not at school standing over their shoulder yelling at them during their Algebra test,” Ross said. “We allow that process of learning to go through. It’s the same process in sports.”

I once attended a middle school basketball game at Lindsay Lane Christian Academy in Athens and was taken aback by how calm, quiet, and respectful their parents were. In all my years watching our five kids play roughly three sports each, I had never witnessed anything like it. What’s their secret?

Lindsay Lane Head of School Stephen Murr said in a phone interview he was grateful that the community was a good example, acknowledging that he does have to address inappropriate fan behavior from time to time.

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“There’s an emphasis on letting people know what we expect,” Murr said. “All of our athletes sign an agreement and the parents sign a code of conduct. We don’t think it’s a good thing for us to boo, to laugh at people who mess up. We’re there to cheer our kids.”

In other words, folks, ain’t nobody wants to hear you screamin’ at children. Save it for the stadium.

Rachel Blackmon Bryars is a Huntsville-based writer, co-host of Belle Curve Podcast and managing partner of Bryars Communications, LLC. Connect with her at rachel@bryarscommunications.com.
## BOYS TOP 20 RANKINGS

### CLASS 4A

1. Eden Prairie 2-0  
2. Park Center 1-0  
3. Cretin-Derham Hall 1-1  
4. Prior Lake 1-0  
5. East Ridge 0-1  
6. Hopkins 1-1  
7. Shakopee 1-0  
8. Eastview 1-0  
9. Wayzata 0-0  
10. Tartan 1-0  
11. Spring Lake Park 1-0  
12. Chanhassen 0-1  
13. Rochester Mayo 0-0  
14. Lakeville South 1-0  
15. North St. Paul 0-1  
16. Edina 1-1  
17. Osseo 1-1  
18. Moorhead 1-0  
19. Buffalo 1-0  
20. Chaska 1-0

### CLASS 3A

1. Minnehaha Academy 0-0  
2. DeLaSalle 1-0  
3. Mankato East 1-0  
4. Totino-Grace 1-0  
5. Marshall 0-0  
6. Waconia 1-0  
7. Austin 1-0  
8. St. Peter 1-0  
9. Mound Westonka 1-0  
10. Hibbing 1-0  
11. Sartell-St. Stephen 1-0  
12. Bemidji 0-1  
13. Delano 2-0  
14. Minneapolis Henry 0-0  
15. St. Cloud Apollo 1-0  
16. South St. Paul 1-0  
17. Alexandria 0-0  
18. St. Paul Harding 0-0  
19. St. Anthony Village 1-0  
20. Princeton 0-1

### CLASS 2A

1. Waseca 1-1  
2. Lake City 1-0  
3. Caledonia 0-0  
4. Minneapolis North 0-0  
5. Esko 0-0  
6. Cristo Rey Jesuit 1-0  
7. Perham 1-0  
8. Melrose 0-0  
9. Jordan 0-0  
10. Pine City 0-0  
11. Osakis 1-0  
12. Minnesota Valley Lutheran 1-0  
13. St. Croix Prep 1-0  
14. Maranatha Christian 1-0  
15. East Grand Forks 1-0  
16. Jackson County Central 0-0  
17. Stewartville 1-1  
18. St. Charles 0-1  
19. St. Cloud Cathedral 0-0  
20. Albany 0-0

### CLASS 1A

1. Henning 1-0  
2. BOLD 0-0  
3. Minneota 1-0  
4. Ada-Borup 0-0  
5. Cass Lake-Bena 0-0  
6. Southwest MN Christian 0-0  
7. North Woods 1-0  
8. Springfield 1-0  
9. Hayfield 1-0  
10. Christ’s Household of Faith 1-0  
11. Mayer Lutheran 0-1  
12. West Central Area 1-0  
13. Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 1-0  
14. Cromwell-Wright 1-0  
15. New Ulm Cathedral 1-0  
16. Pine River-Backus 1-0  
17. Lac qui Parle Valley 1-0  
18. Parkers Prairie 0-0  
19. Randolph 0-1  
20. Mountain Lake-Comfrey 0-0
## GIRLS TOP 20 RANKINGS

### CLASS 4A

1. Hopkins 5-0  
2. Wayzata 5-0  
3. Farmington 3-0  
4. Park Center 4-0  
5. Stillwater 3-2  
7. Lakeville North 1-1  
8. Elk River 2-0  
9. Centennial 2-1  
10. Eden Prairie 2-2  
11. Maple Grove 1-2  
12. Rosemount 3-1  
13. Shakopee 2-0  
14. Chaska 1-2  
15. Minnetonka 2-1  
16. Edina 2-0  
17. Cretin-Derham Hall 3-1  
18. Roseville Area 3-2  
19. Eastview 1-3  
20. Burnsville 2-1

### CLASS 3A

1. DeLaSalle 0-2  
2. Becker 0-1  
3. Holy Angels 3-1  
4. Austin 5-0  
5. Red Wing 2-0  
6. St. Paul Como Park 4-1  
7. Simley 0-1  
8. Alexandria 2-1  
9. Marshall 1-0  
10. Waconia 2-2  
11. St. Croix Lutheran 3-0  
12. Mankato West 1-0  
13. Hill-Murray 1-2  
14. Monticello 1-0  
15. Mahtomedi 3-0  
16. St. Peter 3-0  
17. Princeton 3-0  
18. Kasson-Mantorville 3-1  
19. Bemidji 2-0  
20. Willmar 2-1

### CLASS 2A

1. Rochester Lourdes 2-0  
2. Proctor 2-0  
3. Sauk Centre 2-1  
4. Duluth Marshall 0-0  
5. New London-Spicer 2-0  
6. Lake City 3-0  
7. Fergus Falls 2-1  
8. Minnehaha Academy 2-2  
9. Waseca 0-1  
10. Redwood Valley 2-0  
11. Norwood-Young America 2-0  
12. Medford 2-0  
13. Pine City 2-0  
14. Mesabi East 3-0  
15. Eden Valley-Watkins 1-1  
16. Roseau 3-0  
17. Albany 1-1  
18. Hawley 1-0  
19. Royalton 3-0  
20. Rockford 2-0

### CLASS 1A

1. Minnesota 3-0  
2. Cromwell-Wright 1-1  
3. Mountain Iron-Buhl 2-1  
4. Henning 2-0  
5. Heritage Christian 1-1  
6. Walker-Hackensack-Akeley 1-0  
7. BOLD 2-1  
8. Ada-Borup 1-0  
9. Sleepy Eye St. Mary’s 2-0  
10. Mayer Lutheran 4-0  
11. Red Lake 0-0  
12. Blooming Prairie 1-0  
13. Southwest MN Christian 1-0  
14. Cherry 2-0  
15. Sebeka 2-1  
16. Parkers Prairie 2-1  
17. Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart 2-0  
18. Hills-Beaver Creek 3-0  
19. Grand Meadow 2-0  
20. Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 2-0