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Girls champs: Tonka, BSM, Providence, Goodhue



Bursting with joy after capturing state titles were, clockwise from top, Goodhue, Minnetonka, Providence Academy, and Benilde-St. Margaret's.



Boys tourney set: Wayzata, Totino-Grace, Breck, Cherry are top seeds

Boys section champions were crowned last week. Top seeds for the state tournament are Wayzata in Class 4A, Totino-Grace in 3A, Breck in 2A and Cherry in 1A. All four 2023 champions -- Wayzata, Totino-Grace, Albany and Russell-Tyler-Ruthton -- are back.

CLASS 4A — Farmington beat Lakeville North 70-59 in Section 1 for their first state trip since 1937 ... Minnetonka edged Shakopee 78-75 in Section 2 behind Jordan Cain with 31 points Egan topped Eastview 60-42 in Section 3 with Liam Madigan hitting 15 points and Max Busley 14 ... Cretin Derham-Hall beat Tartan 59-45 in Section 4 as Montell Dixon sank 16 points and Anthony Knight 15 ... Top-ranked Park Center beat Maple Grove 63-58 in Section 5 ... No. 1 Wayzata beat No. 3 Hopkins 105-76 in Section 6 led by Jackson McAndrew with 40 points and Christian Wiggins with 20. For Hopkins, Anthony Smith hit 31 points and Jayden Moore 22 Coon Rapids beat Forest Lake 65-62 in Section 7 as Jaxon Young hit 20 points and Kenny Jones 15. Their only other state trip was in 1983. Owen Waldoch sank 26 for the Rangers. ... Rogers beat St. Michael-Albertville 54-50 in Section 8.

CLASS 3A — Stewartville beat Byron 66-56 Section 1 Mankato East beat New Ulm 67-47 in Section 2, led by Dwayne Bryant with 19 points and Carson Schweim with 15. Colton Benson had 28 for New Ulm ... Minneapolis South nipped St. Thomas Academy 62-61 in Section 3 with Poet Davis netting 20 points and James Underwood and Jamarion Wes 12 each. Luke Dobbs had 27 for STA... DeLaSalle beat Columbia Heights 81-56 in Section 4 with Justin Johnson scoring 17 points, De'von Irvin 16 and Ray James Jr. 14 ... Top-ranked Totino-Grace beat Fridley 99-79, led by Isaiah Johnson-Arigo with 31 points, in Section 5 ... Nolan Groves tallied 45 points, capped by a game-winning half-court shot at the buzzer in the second overtime, Orono nipped Benilde-St. Margaret's 86-84 in Section 6. Groves also grabbed 18 rebounds. That was the third buzzer-beater of the game, coach Barry Wohler said. Jalen Wilson led BSM with 31. ... Chisago Lakes beat Hermantown 95-82 Section 7 with Patrick Rowe scoring 34 points and Zander Schmidt 24. Abe Soumis had 38 for Hermantown Alexandria beat St. Cloud Tech 91-45 in Section 8 as Mason Witt hit 25 points, Grayson Grove 18, Bralyn Steffensmeier 15 and Chase Thompson 13.

CLASS 2A — Lake City beat Cannon Falls 80-56 in Section 1 with Hunter Lorenson and Keegan Ryan scoring 17 points each ... Waseca beat Belle Plaine 70-66 in Section 2 as Damarius Russell sank 22 points and Deron Russell 18. Ethan Martin scored 24 for Belle Plaine ... Jackson County Central beat Morris Area/Chokio-Alberta 67-52 in Section 3, led by Roman Voss with 23 points Minnehaha Academy beat St. Paul Academy 73-57 in Section 4 No. 1 ranked Breck beat No. 2 Minneapolis North 91-74 in Section 5, powered by Daniel Freitag and Hanif Muhammad with 27 points each. Jordan Hurd had 25 for North ... In a duel of the last two state champions, Albany beat Annandale 63-53 in Section 6 with Zeke Austin sinking 25 points and Sam Hondl 17. Isaak Eenhuis scored 26 for Annandale ... Pequot Lakes beat Esko 55-42 in Section 7 as Brayden Spiczka hit 14 points, Ethan Quale 11 and Blake Spiczka 10 ... Pelican Rapids beat Park Rapids Area 82-49 in Section 8.

CLASS 3A — No. 6 seed Goodhue beat No. 1 seed Blooming Prairie 47-44 in Section 1 with Luke Roschen scoring 16 points ... Mountain Lake Area/Comfrey beat Lester Prairie 57-55 in Section 2 ... Russell-Tyler-Ruthton, defending state champion, beat Central Minnesota Christian School 67-47 in the Section 3 finals -- after CMCS had beaten Minneota 72-60, and after Minneota upset No. 2 ranked Dawson-Boyd 61-57 in overtime. D-B had gone 5-0 against those three teams ... Heritage Christian beat West Lutheran 85-74 in Section 4 with Owen Haag netting 22 points and Griffin Booms 17. Isaiah Ronning had 24 for West Nevis beat East Central 70-45 in Section 5 West Central Area beat Ada-Borup West 60-56 in Section 6. It's the first state trip for WCA and none of the towns ever went before they merged, either: Barrett, Elbow Lake, Hoffman, Kensington ... No. 1 ranked Cherry beat Mountain Iron-Buhl 99-55 in Section 7 to earn its third consecutive state trip as Noah Asuma scored 19 points, Noah Sundquist 18 and Isaac Asuma 18 points ... Fertile-Beltrami beat Red Lake 92-67 in Section 8 with Caiden Swemby scoring 25 points, Derek Sorenson 17 and Preston Hanson 16. Jack Brown 28 for Red Lake.

See state pairings on Page 21

Answer in Basketball: Aggressor Wins!

I have come to one important conclusion after watching thousands of basketball games and playing in a few hundred more: Aggressor wins.

I remember watching Paul McDonald coaching his Vermilion Ironmen in the Minnesota Community College State Championship in Minneapolis. Dressed as always in his dapper suit and tie, he was on the floor screaming at his players, "ATTACK!"

McDonald is no stranger to championship basketball, having won two high school state championships while playing for his legendary father, Bob McDonald, as a Chisholm Bluestreak in 1973 and 1975. Dad went on to win over 1,000 games in a coaching career spanning 56 years. Paul went on to win a North Central Conference championship at South Dakota State.

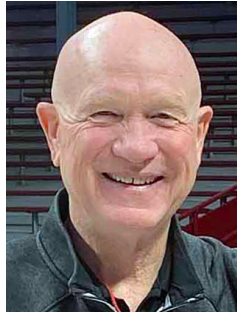
So, what did he mean by "ATTACK!"? He meant "Be aggressive! Take the ball to the basket!" So many good things happen when teams "attack". Either you get a layup, you draw a defender and pass to someone else for a lay in, you get fouled, or you kick it out to a teammate for an open three – more open because you drew defenders to the lane to try to defend your "attack". You also threw a pass from the "inside out", which is easier for a teammate to catch and shoot than a pass around the perimeter.

One common flaw, however, is trying to attack against stationary defenders. When the defense is just standing there waiting for you to make a move, it is so much easier to defend you. Wise coaches coach to get the ball moving with "easy passes first" to make the defenders move and adjust. While the defense is moving, they can be caught off guard by a fake and a drive to the basket much easier than when they are just standing there waiting for you.

A very common flaw in coaching, I believe, is "slowing the ball down" when your team has the lead. You likely got the lead by being more aggressive. When you ask your players to "Slow it down", YOU ARE INVITING THE OTHER TEAM TO TAKE OVER AS THE AGGRESSOR. You are INVITING A COMEBACK. Yes, you could still win and continue to think you did the right thing, but very often you'll win only after surviv-

ing a comeback – and many times you'll lose a game you should have won handily and wonder what happened. If I've seen it once, I've seen it....

It is natural for a team with a lead to relax and rest. That's when they are most vulnerable to a comeback.



Jeff McCarron

The wise coach pushes them to "attack" and stay aggressive. You can still "kill the ball" and "take time off the clock" but stay aggressive. Screen, cut, move to the ball, drive it in...but don't stand out there and just pass it around the perimeter and get trapped. It's going to be stolen soon, or you'll be forced to take a bad shot to beat the shot clock.

The next time you watch a game, watch which team is getting the ball into the paint more often. That should be the prize for the offense – get the ball into the paint off a drive or a pass before you take a shot – most of the time. You don't have to be Gene Hackman in Hoosiers and require three passes, but there is a lot of logic to the movement first – a drive or a couple of passes to get the defense off balance and out of position before you take a shot.

Another thing – when attacking, get down low. When the Timberwolves Ant goes to the basket, he's leaning forward. Many now call it going "downhill" because he is leaning forward, head low. It is very hard to stop someone attacking with his or her head first. Michael Jordan was a great one for leading with his head low and slipping by people. If the head gets past the defender's body, he's history. It will be a foul or a layup. The defender can't take a charge when the head is past his hip. He has to take you on his chest. Go low and go hard – ATTACK!

HATS OFF TO JIM LIEN

...for taking his Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Wolves to the state tournament. Jim has coached many good teams for over 40 years and finally reached the promised land of the state tournament. There isn't a nicer guy coaching or a man more deserving than Jim. One of his former players, Brian Negen, led his Rock Ridge (Eveleth-Virginia) team to the first state trip in their young history. Brian was a long-time assistant to Jeff Buffetta at Mountain Iron-Buhl, Jim Lien's first opponent. This basketball world is one big family! Congratulations to all three of you.



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Tonka wins round 3, title

4A: Skippers beat Hopkins, coach's former team, 64-56

By Bruce Strand

Minnetonka gave coach Brian Cosgriff his ninth state championship Saturday, against the school where he won his first eight. The Skippers fended off a rally by Hopkins 64-56 in the Class 4A finals and Williams Arena. The two teams alternated at 1-2 in the rankings all season and had split in Lake Conference play.

Leading the Skippers was highly-recruited junior guard Aaliyah Crump with 23 points and six rebounds before fouling out, along with Gopher signee Tori McKinney with 18 points, eight rebounds, three steals and three blocks. CeCe Nesseth provided a game-clinching three-point play. Sidney Reed led with 10 rebounds.

Cosgriff stepped down from the post at Hopkins after the 2020 season. He accepted an offer from Minnetonka when Leah Dasovich resigned. This is his second year there. "I was handed a great program. Leah Dasovich left me a really good program," Cosgriff said.

Minnetonka finished its championship season 29-2. Hopkins was 27-4. In conference play, Hopkins won 69-52 and Minnetonka won 64-61, each on the other's court. Minnetonka also split with Wayzata, leaving Hopkins the Lake champ by one game. Playing in separate sections, they still faced Lake rivals, Hopkins topping Wayzata 78-62 in the 6AAAA finals and Minnetonka edging Eden Prairie 41-39 in 4AAAA.

Minnetonka was playing in just its fourth state tournament and this was their second state title, the other in 2016. Hopkins made its 18th state appearance and reached finals for the 15th time, of which they've won eight.

Hopkins senior guard Liz McGill capped a stellar four-year career contributing 18 points, five rebounds and five assists, hitting 3-for-6 on three's. "We will graduate one of the the greatest leaders you could ever have, and a kid who really loves basketball," said coach Tara



Aaliyah Crump, who scored 23 points for Minnetonka, drove against Hopkins' Tatum Woodson.

Photos by Bruce Strand, MN Basketball News

Starks. "She had a great impact on the program."

Hopkins will return the other starters, though, including eighth-grader Erma Walker, already a rugged varsity forward, who notched 14 points and 11 rebounds, and soph guard Lauren Hillesheim, who sank 13 points. "We will work hard and get more momentum and try to come back next year and finish the job," said Hillesheim.

This was the second straight year Hopkins has won the Lake but lost to a conference rival in the state finals (St. Michael-Albertville last year.)

"I thought our kids battled through," Starks said. "They didn't come out with the fire that I wanted them to. We

needed to fight a little bit harder. But there’s no such a thing as quitting in us.”She also commented, “To be honest, there were several calls that didn’t go our way and I am not happy about it.”

Minnetonka led 39-30 at halftime with Crump scoring 14 points and McKinney 12. The Skippers were 4-for-9 on three’s and 9-for-9 on free shots. They had leads of 43-30 and 53-40 in the second half. Hopkins pulled within 56-54 after baskets by Hillesheim and McGill. “That’s the way it is in our conference. No lead is safe,”



Erma Walker, 8th-grader, scored 14 for Hopkins.

Cosgriff said. “We know they are capable of runs like that. We know they will bring pressure.”

Crump slashed for a three-point play, making it 59-54 with 2:14 left. However, when she drove to the hoop on their next possession, rather recklessly, she was called for charging, her fifth foul, with 1:45 left. The Skippers had to cling to their lead without her.

“Losing Aayilah, who’s also one of our best ball handlers, that hurt,” said Cosgriff. “But then CeCe Nesselth came up with a really big ‘and one’ play.” Crump said it was really hard to sit and watch, but added, “I have so much trust in my team. I’m so proud of my teammates.”

London Harris scored for Hopkins after a turnover was 59-56 with 1:34 left. That’s how it stayed for over a minute as both McGill and McKinney blocked shots and Hopkins lost the ball on a bad pass. The Skippers had the ball as the clock dipped under 20 seconds but almost ran out the shot clock. McKinney tried a three-pointer that missed.



Minnetonka coach Brian Cosgriff



CeCe Nesselth (right) celebrated a crucial late basket with Tori McKinney (14) while Hopkins star Liv McGill looked grim.

That’s when Nesselth emerged as the hero, soaring for the rebound, making a put-back, drawing Harris’s fifth foul and sinking the free shot for a 62-56 lead. “I knew we were running out of time and I saw Tori shoot and I put all my effort into it. I fought for position,” said Nesselth.

Her three-point play pretty much settled it, but she was fouled again with :02 left and added two more freebies. She finished with eight points, including a three-pointer.

Minnetonka reached the finals beating Andover 74-48 and St. Michael-Albertville 67-49. Hopkins reached the finals beating White Bear Lake 66-39 and Maple Grove 84-78.

Minnetonka	39	25	–	64
Hopkins	30	26	–	56

Minnetonka – 22-60 FG (4-14 3FG), 16-20 FT, 42 rebounds, 13 turnovers, 13 fouls ... Scoring: Harley Wock 4 (4r, 1s), Lanelle Wright 6 (4s, 3r), Tori McKinney 18 (8r, 3s, 3b), Aaliyah Crump 23 (6r, 2a, 2s, 1b), Grace Hamdorf 0 (3r), Anna McKinney 0 (3a, 2r, 1s), Celia Nesselth 8 (2r), Sidney Reed 5 (10r), Sydney Cummings 0 ... 3-pointers: Crump 2-4, Nesselth 1-2, T. McKinney 1-4 ... Fouled out: Crump

Hopkins – 21-58 FG (5-21 3FG), 9-11 FT, 36 rebounds, 14 turnovers, 20 fouls Scoring Tatum Woodson 5 (3a, 2r), Lauren Hillesheim 13 (8r), London Harris 4 (2r, 2a), Liv McGill 18 (5r, 4a, 4s, 1b), Erma Walker 14 (11r), Ava Cupito 2 (2r, 2s), Maliyah White 0 (1r), Le’Sedra Williams 0 (1b, 1r) ... 3-pointers: Woodson 1-6, Hillesheim 1-3, McGill 3-6 ... Fouled out: Walker

Resounding repeat for BSM

3A: Red Knights cruise at state, repel Islanders 81-58

By Bruce Strand

Benilde-St. Margaret's lost five of their first eight games this year, after their All-America guard was injured in the season opener. But once Olivia Olson got back in action, the Red Knights were clearly the best team in Class 3A for the second straight season.

The Knights romped 81-58 over DeLaSalle, the second-best team in 3A, in the championship game Saturday at Williams Arena, which was their 24th straight win and snapped the Islanders' 16-game streak. "We've talked about leaving a legacy and I think we have done that," coach Tim Ellefson said. "This is our second in a row. That's tough to do. Every team came at us hard all season but I think we handled it pretty well."

Olson drilled 30 points, snagged 15 rebounds and dished out six assists. She shot 9-for-18 on field goals and, fouled nine times, 11-for-13 at the line, leading an otherwise young lineup. Freshman Pressley Watkins notched 18 points, junior Zahara Bishop 11 points and six assists, freshman Sydney Freidly 11 points, and junior Kate Kapsner nine.

BSM was the only one of the four champions that didn't have a close call. They reached the finals beating Minneapolis Roosevelt 75-40 and Stewartville 73-42.

Olson, a 6-foot-1 guard, signed by Michigan and slated to play in the McDonald's All-America Game in Houston on April 2, broke her hand in the season opener against Providence Academy and missed eight games.

"It's crazy, for me to be sitting in this same place after another state championship," Olson said. "It was so hard for me to go down like that. I thought my senior season was over. But I think in a way it helped our team because we really rallied around each other. I'm so proud of everyone. I am so glad I got to come back and help our team win again."



Olivia Olson took aim on the way to 30 points for Benilde-St. Margaret's against DeLaSalle.

Smug Mug photo

One of the games she missed was BSM's 78-65 loss to DeLaSalle. The Islanders took over the No. 1 spot in the rankings and, because they kept winning, stayed there the rest of the season, with BSM at No. 2. But the coaches seeded BSM one and DLS two.

The Red Knights captured the school's fourth state title in nine appearances. They were 26-6 last year and nipped

Stewartville 66-60 in the finals. Olson, Friedly, Bishop and Kapsner were returning starters.

For DeLaSalle, Aneisha Scott notched 15 points and five assists, Madalyn Blaylark 14 points (4-for-8 on three's), and Jordyn Johnson 10 points and nine rebounds. Scott, the Islanders top scorer and floor leader, was limited to 19 minutes, picking up her fourth foul with 13:06 left. "We had some adversity. We played

without our emotional and offensive leader for much of the second half,” said James Fassett, Islanders coach.

DeLaSalle trailed by only 44-39 after a freewheeling first half. “The first half, we battled hard. The second half, it started to get away from us,” Fassett said. The Islanders were still within 48-46 with 15 minutes left. Then the Red Knights went on a 15-0 run, shaking loose four turnovers. Watkins delivered a three-point play on a hook shot, plus a fast-break layup, Bishop hit six points on two layups and a jump shot, and Friedly made breakaway layup. The Red Knights went on to outscore DLS 37-19 in the second half.



DLS’s Jordyn Johnson got inside Kate Kapsner to score and that led to more energy for us.”

“We did what we always do,” said Ellefson. “Other teams wear down, and we start getting turnovers and layups. Momentum is a great thing to have.” Added Kapsner: “You could see them tiring out

DLS’s Johnson was somber following the finals loss, but talked about how much she savored the experience. “It’s an honor to be here, to play on this court where a lot of great college players have played,” she said. “We worked very hard to get here.” They reached state last year, too, losing to BSM in the first round, then winning twice for fifth place.

Fassett pointed out: “On the plus side,

DeLaSalle star Aneisha Scott had foul trouble.



BSM freshman Pressley Watkins hit 18 points in the championship game.

these are two juniors and a sophomore sitting next to me,” beckoning to Scott, Johnson and Blaylark, who joined him to talk to the press. The Islanders should remain a top-five team at least next season.

It was the 13th tourney for DLS and eighth time in finals. They have four titles. The Islanders finished 27-4, with losses to both Class 4A finalists. Their 16-game streak included wins over Totino-Grace 81-49 and Alexandria 82-69 at state.

DeLaSalle 39 19 – 58
Benilde-St. Margaret’s 44 37 – 81

DeLaSalle – 20-51 FG (6-16 3FG), 12-13 FT, 29 rebounds, 16 turnovers, 11 fouls Scoring: Aneisha Scott 15 (5a, 3r), Laila Moses 8, Madalyn Blaylark 14 (3r, 3a), Erianna Moeschter 4 (6r), Jordyn Johnson 10 (9r), Naomi Whitaker-Hill 0, Taylor Starks 4, Mya McNeil 3, Clara Stevens 0, Elia Johnson 0, Samira Taylor 0, Belenn Samuel 0 ... 3-pointers: Blaylark 4-8, Scott 1-1

Benilde-St. Margaret’s – 30-59 FG (7-23 3FG), 14-17 FT, 33 rebounds, 16 turnovers, 15 fouls Scoring: Olivia Olson 30 (15r, 6a), Sydney Friedly 11 (3a, 2s), Zahara Bishop 11 (5r, 5a, 2s), Pressley Watkins 18 (2a), Kate Kapsner 9 (4r, 4a, 3s), Josephine Nnaji 2, Mirabel Wismer 0 (2r), Bella Stevenson-Shimek 0, Bella Yacoub 0, Ashley Skram 0, Zaida Jenkins 0 ... 3-pointers: Watkins 3-9, Olson 1-4, Friedley 1-6, Bishop 1-1, Kapsner 1-1

STATE GIRLS BASKETBALL RESULTS

CLASS 4A

QUARTERFINALS WEDNESDAY

Hopkins 66, White Bear Lake 39
Maple Grove 56, Lakeville North 55
Minnetonka 74, Andover 48
St. Michael-Albertville 68, Rosemount 57

SEMIFINALS THURSDAY

Hopkins 84, Maple Grove 78
Minnetonka 67, St. Michael-Albertville 49

FINALS SATURDAY

Championship

Minnetonka 64, Hopkins 56

Third place

St. Michael-Albertville 72, Maple Grove 54

CONSOLATION

Semifinals Thursday

Lakeville North 56, White Bear Lake 38
Rosemount 72, Andover 64

Finals Friday

Lakeville North 71, Rosemount 60

CLASS 3A

QUARTERFINALS WEDNESDAY

Benilde-St. Margaret's 75, Mpls. Roosevelt 40
Stewartville 47, St. Peter 46
DeLaSalle 81, Totino-Grace 49
Alexandria 67, Rock Ridge 50

SEMIFINALS THURSDAY

Benilde-St. Margaret's 73, Stewartville 42
DeLaSalle 82, Alexandria 69

FINALS SATURDAY

Championship

Benilde-St. Margaret's 81, DeLaSalle 58

Third place

Alexandria 69, Stewartville 55

CONSOLATION

Semifinals Thursday

St. Peter 75, Minneapolis Roosevelt 39
Rock Ridge 55, Totino-Grace 39

Finals Friday

St. Peter 61, Rock Ridge 34

CLASS 2A

QUARTERFINALS WEDNESDAY

Providence Academy 94, Perham 84
Crosby-Ironton 63, New London-Spicer 50
Albany 58, Rochester Lourdes 41
Minnehaha Acad. 75, Waterville-Elys.-Morr. 39

SEMIFINALS FRIDAY

Providence Academy 92, Crosby-Ironton 54
Albany 60, Minnehaha Academy 52

FINALS SATURDAY

Championship

Providence Academy 81, Albany 78

Third place

Minnehaha Academy 104, Crosby-Ironton 86

CONSOLATION

Semifinals Thursday

New London-Spicer 54, Perham 41
Rochester Lourdes 56, Waterville-Elys.-Morr. 38

Finals Friday

Rochester Lourdes 45, New London-Spicer 38

CLASS 1A

QUARTERFINALS THURSDAY

Goodhue 65, Mayer Lutheran 38
Underwood 64, Southwest MN Christian 52
Mt. Iron-Buhl 71, Walker-Hackensack-Akeley 36
Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart 72, Fosston 35

SEMIFINALS FRIDAY

Goodhue 63, Underwood 53
Mt. Iron-Buhl 69, Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart 50

FINALS SATURDAY

Championship

Goodhue 70, Mountain Iron-Buhl 65

Third place

Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart 66, Underwood 49

CONSOLATION

Semifinals Friday

Mayer Lutheran 61, Southwest MN Christian 45
Walker-Hackensack-Akeley 58, Fosston 52, OT

Finals Saturday

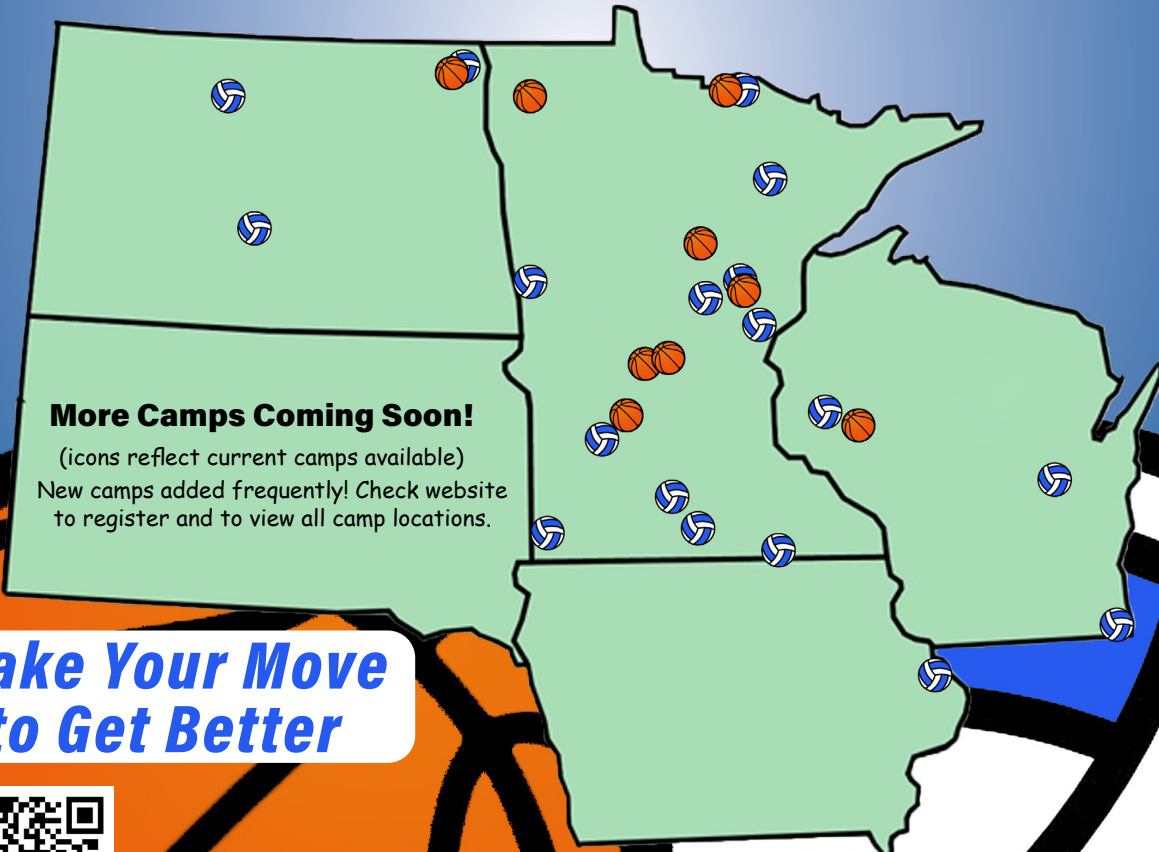
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Three-peat for Providence

2A: Lions trail Albany until 9 seconds left, win 81-78

By Bruce Strand

Providence Academy trailed the entire game against Albany as the city and country powers dueled in the state finals for the second straight year, and their superstar guard was not having her best game.

But in the end it was Maddyn Greenway blazing the length of the floor to give the Lions their first lead at 78-77 with nine seconds left, and the Lions adding two meaningless free shots with .4 left to make it 81-78 for their third consecutive Class 2A championship.

“We were like, no matter what happens, no matter the calls, whatever doesn’t go our way, like, we’re not losing this game,” said Greenway, whose team got a huge break on the biggest call of the whole tournament.

Greenway shot just 9-for-24 overall and 1-for-8 on three’s, while Albany shook loose 10 turnovers from her, but the mercurial 5-foot-8 guard came up big at the end as always, and totaled 27 points, seven rebounds, eight assists and five steals.

Brooke Hohenecker added 17 points on 5-for-6 three-point shooting, Ari Peterson 12 points and 10 rebounds, Hope Counts 12 points, and Emma Millerbernd 11 points and a crucial rebound.

Albany led 55-44 at halftime as their brilliant 6-foot-3 center Alyssa Sand delivered 20 points and eight rebounds, shooting 6-for-7 from the field and 7-for-7 at the line. But she also had three fouls. Sand would finish with 29 points and 17 rebounds. Kylan Gerads logged 23 points and 11 rebounds. Savannah Pelzer added 13.

The Lions captured the third of what could easily be five consecutive state titles — Greenway is still just a

sophomore — by this private school loaded with metro talent competing against the small towns. Last year, they beat Albany 74-60 in the finals. This season, Albany hosted the Lions and beat them 72-70 in December.

The call that sent Sand to the bench with her fourth foul occurred with 16 minutes left. Counts, driving, put her shoulder into Sands and knocked her down. It was initially called a charge, but officials huddled and decided that Sands’ toe was on the arc. They changed the call to shooting foul. There was massive booing when the replay was shown, and a long list of scathing comments received by the Star-Tribune in its coverage.



Maddyn Greenway went up for the game-winner for Providence with :09 left.

officially called a charge, but officials huddled and decided that Sands’ toe was on the arc. They changed the call to shooting foul. There was massive booing when the replay was shown, and a long list of scathing comments received by the Star-Tribune in its coverage.

“It was big,” acknowledged Lions coach Connor Goetz. “She’s obviously a difference maker down there. It’s really hard to score over her... So it was nice to be able to get to the middle a little bit more, and offensively too, it was one less dynamic scorer to worry about.”

The score was 57-50 after Counts made the free shots. Sand returned to action in short stints, playing tentatively, and the Huskies

were able to cling to their lead until the final seconds. The Lions pulled within 74-73 on Greenway’s lone three-pointer, and within 78-77 on Hohenecker three-pointer with :52 left. With :15 left, Albany guard Savannah Pelzer was fouled. It was Pelzer who sank two free shots with :02 left to beat the Lions 72-70 in December. But this time she missed. Millerbernd rebounded and got the ball to Greenway, who traversed the court like a cannonball and banked in the layup for 79-78 lead. “She just beat us down the court,” said Albany coach Aaron Boyum. “In that situation, she’s very explosive.”

The Lions made a defensive stop on the other end and time ran out, setting off a delirious celebration by the Lions. Except that the officials huddled again, detected a foul against Counts and put .4 of a second on the clock. After she made two shots, the celebration resumed.

Providence Academy finished 28-4, their other three losses against Class 4A state entrants Hopkins, Minnetonka and Maple Grove. The Lions set a state tourney record with 267 points, 106 by Greenway, as they reached the finals beating Perham 94-84 and Crosby-Ironton 92-54.



Alyssa Sand went up for two of her 20 first-half points for Albany. In foul trouble, she finished with 29.

The Lions played in their fourth straight title game and won their third in a row. They've played Albany in the finals three times. Albany won when Greenway was a seventh grader. Since then Providence has beaten Fergus Falls and Albany twice. It's the Plymouth school's fourth title overall as they also won in 2012.

Albany was playing in its 16th state tournament and eighth finals, of which they've won four. The Huskies finished 30-2. Their other loss was against Mountain Iron-Buhl 76-58. The No. 3 ranked Huskies reached the finals beating Rochester Lourdes 58-41 and No. 2 Minnehaha Academy 60-52 in the late game Friday. Boyum praised the Lions as a superb team but didn't concede that they were the best team. "I don't mean to be controversial with this comment, but I will always believe that this (Albany) is the best girls basketball team in Class 2A. They beat Providence Academy at our place. And for them to step on that court, after playing a run and gun Minnehaha team, eight o'clock the night before, and put forth the effort they just put forth ... without, you know, a couple unfortunate things happening ..." He didn't finish that sentence. "I couldn't be more proud of them."

There were five sad, misty eyed Albany starters in the press conference with him. Asked about that call, Sand said, "I think it was a charge. I mean, I looked at the replay and it looked like I was like pretty much set, but, I guess they said otherwise ... I just wanted to try step in and see if I could get a charge, and I thought I was outside the arc, but I don't know."

Gerads, who, like Sands, has played on one state champ team and two runners-up, was asked if she could express her emotions. Through sobs, she said, "Well, nobody wants to end their career like that ... We're sitting here, bawling our eyes out, and I think it's partly be-

cause we lost the state championship where we were up and leading, and we had the chance to do it, but it's more than that. It's, we've, we've played together since sixth grade. All the games we've had each other. And it's just so sad to think, that was our last game."

Albany 55 23 – 78
Providence Academy ... 44 37 – 81

Albany – 26-63 FG (8-22 3FG), 18-24 FT, 43 rebounds, 19 turnovers, 19 fouls Scoring: Alyssa Sand 29 (17r, 2a, 1s, 1b), Savanna Pelzer 13 (5a), Callie Holthaus 8 (3a, 2s), Tatum Findley 3 (2s), Kylan Gerads 23 (11r, 2a, 2s), Natalie Blonigen 2 (3r), Paige Lauer 0, Claire Levy 0, Eva Schwenzfeier 0 (1a) 3-pointers: Pelzer 3-7, Holthaus 2-8, Gerads 2-4, Sand 1-3 ... Fouled out: Gerads

Providence Academy – 27-62 FG (8-23 3FG), 19-26 FT, 36 rounds, 14 turnovers, 21 fouls Scoring: Brooke Hohenecker 17, Emma Millerbernd 11 (6r, 4a, 2s), Ari Peterson 12 (10r, 2a), Hope Counts 12 (5r, 3a, 2s), Maddyn Greenway 27 (7r, 8a, 5s), Beckett Greenway 2, McKenna Schaefer 0 3-pointers: Hohenecker 5-6, Millerbernd 1-3, Peterson 1-4, Greenway 1-8 ... Fouled out: Peterson

Goodhue dethrones MIB

1A: Gadiant was radiant in leading 70-65 finals win

By Bruce Strand

Goodhue's senior leader Elisabeth Gadiant started the final, and biggest, game of her career Saturday by nailing three-point shots in their first two possessions. That's all it took for the willowy 5-foot-11 guard to know it was show time.

Gadiant poured in 31 points in a brilliant all-around performance and helped keep the No. 1 ranked Wildcats in front the whole game as they dethroned defending champion, No. 3 ranked Mountain Iron-Buhl 70-65 in the Class 1A title game.

She got plenty of help as junior forward Kendyl Lodermeier delivered 21 points and 12 rebounds, sophomore guard Natalie Thomforde sniped for 11 points, and the Wildcats executed an excellent defensive game plan on MIB superstar Jordan Zubich.

"To see Elisabeth just go off like that, especially in the first half, boy, you talk about a big time player, raising her game in the biggest moments against the toughest opponents," said coach Josh Wieme. "And then to see Kendyl have one of her just monster games on both ends of the court, and I think you see a budding star here in Natalie."

Gadiant hit 20 points in the first half as Goodhue took a 39-29 lead and added 11 more in the second half, shooting 13-for-26 overall and 5-for-10 on three's, while

snagging nine rebounds and making five assists —and committing just two turnovers as the primary ball-handler. And it all started with those first two shots.

"I had a lot of confidence from it, even from just my first shot," said Gadiant, who averaged 22.8 points for the season, but had not shot well in the first two games at state (1-for-14 on three's). "I didn't have the best warmup, either," she grinned.



Elisabeth Gadiant sank five 3-point shots among her 31 points for Goodhue in the title game.

all-time in the state.

"Jordan did a good job moving the ball and had several assists," MIB coach Jeff Buffetta said. "But our offense, we did put up 65 points. Defensively, we just needed more stops."

About her huge title game showing in her Goodhue finale, the Minnesota-Mankato recruit reflected, "It makes me feel good that I went out like that and with the whole community out there, seeing it, was awesome."

There were two Miss Basketball finalists in the Class 1A title game, Gadiant and the more-heralded Zubich, a North Carolina recruit who led MIB to the 2023 title, averages 27.6 points this year, and scored 220 of her 3,490 career points in 11 state tournament games.

Goodhue limited Zubich to 12 points on 3-for-14 shooting the field, and zero three-pointers — this from a girl with 535 career three's, second-most

Zubich had 31 points when MIB lost to Goodhue 67-62 on Dec. 29. “So going into this one, I knew they were going to be playing little bit tighter,” she said. “They did a good job of just getting me in position where I had to pass the ball, and then just latching onto me when I was cutting. I couldn’t get a lot of shots so obviously they defended pretty well.”

Said Wieme: “She (Zubich) presents a ton of challenges. We didn’t want her getting loose on the sideline and getting into the open court. We tried to force her to the middle, so we would jump and switch and get the ball out of her hands that way.”

With Zubich bearing the brunt of Goodhue’s defensive efforts, senior forward Gabby Lira came up big with 24 points and nine rebounds, shooting a blistering 11-for-14 and hitting both her three-point shots, The Rangers also got 12 points from freshman guard Anna Neyens on 4-for-9 three-point shooting.

“Gabby has been the ultimate team player throughout her whole career,” Buffetta said. “She’s done everything we’ve asked, and scoring has not always been what we’ve asked, but she knows that when she needs to, she will step up.”

The Rangers, down ten at the half, got as close as 48-44, 55-52 and 62-59. Both times they got within three, Thomforde answered with a three-pointer. The Wildcats opened a 70-59 lead when Lodermeier scored after a turnover with 1:57 left.

“We were going back and forth with them but every time we’d get it down, they would just hit a big shot,” said Buffetta. “We needed to string together three or four (baskets) without them hitting one, but every time we would hit two, they would hit on one.”

Lodermeier’s ruggedness was a big factor as it always is. “I’ve just honestly grown up that way — be strong with the ball, get those rebounds. It’s how I like to play, to be physical,” said Lodermeier, honed by playing against older sisters who also starred for the Wildcats.

Wieme marveled at how well his team played together on both ends of the court. “They were like one person out there, just one unit moving together, talking together, thinking as one — it was just such beautiful execution of what we tried to set out to do.”

Goodhue captured its third state title — the others in 2016 and 2017 — in ten state appearances. MIB was playing in its 14th tournament and 11th in 12 years.



MIB’s Jordan Zubich was hounded by Goodhue defenders including Kendyl Lodermeier.

They were champs last year, their lone title, and have been runners-up four times.

Goodhue finished 28-5, including 13-3 in the Hiawatha Valley Conference, playing against 2A and 3A teams. The Wildcats reached the finals beating Mayer Lutheran 63-37 and Underwood 63-43. MIB got there beating Walker-Hackensack-Akeley 71-36 and Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart 69-50.

Mountain Iron-Buhl 29 36 – 65
Goodhue 39 31 – 70

Mountain Iron-Buhl – 24-54 FG (9-25 3FG), 8-11 FT, 36 rebounds, 12 turnovers 14 fouls ... Scoring: Hali Savela 14 (9r, 3a), Jordan Zubich 12 (8a, 5r), Gabby Lira 24 (9r), Suzy Aubrey 3 (7r), Anna Neyens 12, Aniyah Thomas 0, Isabella Wiita 0, Sami Warsaw 0 ... 3-pointers: Neyens 4-9, Savela 2-7, Lira 2-2, Aubrey 1-2 ... Fouled out: Zubich

Goodhue – 29-66 FG (11-25 3FG), 1-6 FT, 37 rebounds, 7 turnovers, 15 fouls ... Scoring: Natalie Thomforde 11 (5a, 7r, 2s), Kendyl Lodermeier 21 (12r, 2a), Maya Poncelet 0 (3r), Elisabeth Gadient 31 (9r, 5a, 4s), Julia Carlson 2 (2a, 3r), Mackenzie Lodermeier 0, Lola Christianson 2, Aubrey Christianson 3 ... 3-pointers: Thomforde 3-4, Lodermeier 2-3, Gadient 5-10, Christianson 1-2 Fouled out: Gadient

STATE CHAMPS

MINNETONKA SKIPPERS



BENILDE- ST. MARGARET'S KNIGHTS



PROVIDENCE ACADEMY LIONS



GOODHUE WILDCATS



ALL-STATE TOURNAMENT TEAMS



CLASS 4A

Front: Ja'Kahla Craft, Cail Jahnke, St. Michael-Albertville; Jordan Ode, Maple Grove; Trinity Wilson, Lakeville North. Back: Aaliyah Crump, Tori McKinney, Janelle Wright, Minnetonka; Lauren Hillesheim, Liv McGill, Tatum Woodson, Hopkins.



CLASS 2A -- Front: Addi Mack, Angel Hill, Minnehaha Academy; Tori Oehrlein, Crosby-Ironton; Lauren Hust, Rochester Lourdes. Back: Maddyn Greenway, Brooke Hohenecker, Emma Millerbernd, Providence Academy; Alyssa Sand, Kylan Gerads, Samantha Pelzer, Albany.



CLASS 3A -- Front: Madalyn Blaylark, DeLaSalle; Hadley Thul, Alexandria; Rhyan Holmgren, St. Peter; MaCee Linow, Alexandria. Back: Aneisha Scott, Jordyn Johnson, DeLaSalle; Olivia Olson, Pressley Watkins, Zahara Bishop, Kate Kapsner, Benilde-St. Margaret's.

CLASS 1A

Back: Hali Savala, Mt. Iron-Buhl; Liz Lukken, Underwood; Kristi Kottke, Rachel Kottke, Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart. Back: Elisabeth Gadiant, Natalie Thomforde, Kendyl Lodermeier, Goodhue; Gabby Lira, Jordyn Zubich, Mt. Iron-Buhl.



MORE STATE TOURNAMENT ACTION



Clockwise from top left: Maple Grove celebrates a game-winner by Claire Stern (14) against Lakeville North; Rachel Kottke (1) of BLHS gets fouled driving against Fosston's Lexi Mahlen and Teagan Duppong; Audrey Morrison of Walker-Hackensack-Akeley heads upcourt; Chance Colbert of Rock Ridge drives against Alexandria's MaCee Linow; Underwood's Elizabeth Lukken drives against SWMC's Makenzie Pap.

Perham post made presence felt

By Bruce Strand

Willow Thiel, Perham's powerful senior post, muscled for 41 points and 20 rebounds as the unseeded Yellowjackets gave Providence Academy a stern challenge in the Class 2A quarterfinals. Providence Academy got 49 points from Maddyn Greenway to fend them off 94-84. Thiel's teammates helped keep the pressure on the champs by shooting 9-for-18 on three-pointers. Thiel, committed to Minnesota-Crookston, passed 2,000 points and 1,000 rebounds during the season. Perham coach TJ Super was proud that Thiel showed what she can do at Williams Arena. "We don't get a lot of attention up there," he noted.

Crosby-Ironton topped New London-Spicer 63-50 in the first round, two months after losing to NLS 84-60. Super soph Tori Oehrlein tallied 35 points, 15 rebounds and eight steals, shooting 15-for-21.

Maple Grove got a last-second layup by Claire Stern, off a perfect inbounds pass from the sideline by Ava Cossette, over the defense, to beat Lakeville North 56-55 in the quarterfinals. Jordan Ode led with 16 points.

Addi Mack poured in 53 points as Minnehaha Academy beat Crosby-Ironton 104-86 in the Class 2A third-place game, with Tori Oehrlein right behind with 46 for the Rangers. Mack, a junior, shot 19-for-28 (7-for-11 on three's) and Oehrlein, a sophomore, was 14-for-21 with five three's and 13-for-14 at the line. Two state tournament records were set: the 104 by Minnehaha Academy and the 190 combined points.

Carlie Wagner, who led New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva to state championships in 2013 and 2014, scored 3,982 points (No. 2 all-time), and starred for the Gophers, returned to Williams Arena as a volunteer as-

sistant for Stewartville. She is a nurse in Rochester. No. 7 ranked Underwood beat No. 2 Hancock for the section title 71-61, after losing to the Owls twice in conference play. At state, the Rockets beat Southwest Minnesota Christian, shooting 11-for-23 on three-pointers, then lost to Goodhue and Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart to place fourth. Elizabeth Lukken led them with 62 points.



Perham's Willow Thiel, working against Providence's Hope Counts, was about to score two of her 41 points.

Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart twins Rachel and Kristi Kottke finished with 1,834 and 1,796 points, respectively, after leading the Mustangs to third place in the Class 1A tournament. The St. Cloud State-bound duo's combined total of 3,631 is, among twins, second only to Coco and Kelly Miller of Rochester Mayo with 4,264. The Millers led Mayo to state championships in 1995 and 1997. At state, Rachel had 45 points and Kristi 32. Sophomore Lily Hubin led with 57.

Walker-Hackensack-Akeley made its first state appearance (none of the three towns had made it, either, before they merged) and it was their 78-year-old head coach Jim Lien's first state trip also. It took Lien 734 wins (615 with girls) and 37 seasons to get there. "Finally," Lien grinned while awaiting their quarterfinal game. He'd been to section finals "six or seven times, counting my boys teams." WHA lost to Mt. Iron-Buhl, beat Fosston in OT and lost to Mayer Lutheran.

Minnehaha Academy senior guard Angel Hill scored 64 points in the tournament and went over 2,000 for her career. Her three older sisters were 2,000 or 3,000 point scorers for Minneapolis South.

Miss Basketball finalists set

Miss Basketball finalists were announced Sunday by the Minnesota Girls Basketball Coaches Association. All were seen this past week leading their state tournament teams. The finalists and their college commitments are:

Elisabeth Gadiant, Goodhue guard (Minnesota State-Mankato)

Liv McGill, Hopkins guard (Florida)

Tori McKinney, Minnetonka guard (Minnesota)

Olivia Olson, Benilde-St. Margaret's guard (Michigan)

Alyssa Sand, Albany center (St. Thomas)

Jordan Zubich, Mountain Iron-Buhl guard (North Carolina)

The Miss Basketball choice will be announced at the All-Star Series Banquet in Northfield at the Grand Event Center on Friday, April 5. The event will begin at 5:15 p.m.

The All-Star Series will be Saturday, April 6 at Carleton College in Northfield with games at 1:00 p.m. and 2:45 p.m. Prior to those games there will be a youth clinic in the morning.

MBBN picks all-tourney super six

By Bruce Strand

Minnesota Basketball News each year picks its own super all-tournament team from all four classes, usually five players but this year six who had three outstanding games. The MBBN's top player pick is Benilde-St. Margaret's senior guard **Olivia Olson**, who led the Red Knights dominating run to the Class 3A crown, notching 97 points and 30 rebounds, committing just four turnovers, and shooting 34-for-65 from the field and 22-for-25 at the line. **Maddyn Greenway**, Providence Academy sophomore guard, scored the game-winning basket in the Class 2A championship game, capping a 107-point tournament along with 26 assists, 28

rebounds and 13 steals. Minnetonka junior guard **Aaliyah Crump** led the Skippers to the Class 4A crown, logging 73 points and 21 rebounds, shooting 8-for-18 on three's and making just eight turnovers. **Alyssa Sand**, Albany senior center, tallied 69 points, shooting 25-for-40 from the floor and 16-for-19 at the line while leading all rebounders with 45. **Tori Oehrlein**, Crosby-Ironton sophomore guard, poured in tournament high 115 points, shooting 39-for-64 and 25-for-31, with 32 rebounds and 15 steals. **Addi Mack**, Minnehaha Academy junior guard, scored 53 points in the Class 2A third-place game and totaled 107 points, 15 assists and 15 steals, just eight turnovers, shooting 62 percent at 42-for-68.

MORE STATE TOURNEY ACTION



Clockwise from top left: Lakeville North's Gracie Winge eyes the hoop on a drive against Maple Grove; Alexandria's MaCee Linow launches a three-pointer that was good against Rock Ridge with coach Wendy Kohler and teammates watching; star guards Jordan Ode (on defense) of Maple Grove and Gabby Betton of Lakeville North duel; and Tori Oehrlein of Crosby-Ironton races to score after a steal against New London-Spicer with Delaney Hanson in pursuit.

All state tourney photos by Bruce Strand, MN Basketball News

STATE BOYS BASKETBALL PAIRINGS

CLASS 4A

QUARTERFINALS WEDNESDAY

At Target Center

- Rogers (21-8) vs. 1-Wayzata (27-1), 10 a.m.
- 5-Cretin-Derham Hall (24-4) vs. 4-Farmington (23-6), noon
- Eagan (17-12) vs. 2-Park Center (25-3), 2 p.m.
- Coon Rapids (16-13) vs. 3-Minnetonka (22-6), 4 p.m.

SEMIFINALS THURSDAY

At Williams Arena, 6 and 8 p.m.

FINALS SATURDAY

At Williams Arena, 8 p.m.

CONSOLATION GAMES

At Concordia-St. Paul

- Semifinals**, Thursday, 10 a.m. and noon
Fifth-place, Friday, 6 p.m.
Third-place, Saturday, 4 p.m.

CLASS 3A

QUARTERFINALS WEDNESDAY

At Williams Arena

- Stewartville (26-3) vs. 1-Totino-Grace (24-5), 10 a.m.
- 5-DeLaSalle (20-9) vs. 4-Orono (19-10), noon
- Chisago Lakes (22-7) vs. 2-Mankato East (26-2), 2 p.m.
- Minneapolis South (21-5) vs. 3-Alexandria (24-5), 4 p.m.

SEMIFINALS THURSDAY

At Williams Arena, noon and 2 p.m.

FINALS SATURDAY

At Williams Arena, 1 p.m.

CONSOLATION GAMES

At Concordia-St. Paul

- Semifinals**, Thursday, 2 and 4 p.m.
Fifth-place, Friday, 4 p.m.
Third-place, Saturday, noon.

CLASS 2A

QUARTERFINALS WEDNESDAY

At Williams Arena

- Waseca (20-10) vs. 1-Breck (28-1), 6 p.m.
- 5-Minnehaha Academy (14-14) vs. 4-Pequot Lakes (26-4), 8 p.m.

At Target Center

- Jackson County Central (21-7) vs. 2-Albany (28-2), 6 p.m.
- Pelican Rapids (24-5) vs. 3-Lake City (24-5), 8 p.m.

SEMIFINALS FRIDAY

At Williams Arena, 6 and 8 p.m.

FINALS SATURDAY

At Williams Arena, 5 p.m.

CONSOLATION GAMES

At Concordia-St. Paul

- Semifinals**, Thursday, 6 and 8 p.m.
Fifth-place, Friday, 2 p.m.
Third-place, Saturday, 2 p.m.

CLASS 1A

QUARTERFINALS THURSDAY

At Target Center

- Russell-Tyler-Ruthton (23-7) vs. 1-Cherry (28-2), 11 a.m.
- 5-Mountain Lake Area/Comfrey (27-3) vs. 5-Nevis (23-7), 1 p.m.
- 2-West Central Area (27-3) vs. Heritage Christian (21-7), 3 p.m.
- Goodhue (18-13) vs. 2-Fertile-Beltrami (25-6), 5 p.m.

SEMIFINALS FRIDAY

At Williams Arena, noon and 2 p.m.

FINALS SATURDAY

At Williams Arena, 11 a.m.

CONSOLATION GAMES

At Concordia-St. Paul

- Semifinals**, Friday, 10 a.m. and noon
Fifth-place, Saturday, 8 a.m.
Third-place, Saturday, 10 a.m.