

- Top 20 teams in each class
 - Boys coaches HOF
- Around the state notebook
 - Pacesetter youth state playoffs set in 8 regions

Cherry on top?

Could happen this year or next with Asuma trio

By Bruce Strand

Cherry, a tiny Iron Range burg, population around 850, will be getting more state-wide attention than it ever has this winter and the next due mainly to the talents of a remarkable basketball family.

It started last March when the Cherry Tigers, then under the radar, ranked No. 19 at the end of the regular season, charged all the way to the Class 1A state semifinals before losing twice. Their only other state trip was back in 1997.

The state was introduced to Isaac Asuma, their silky, 6-foot-2 sophomore guard, who pumped in 31 points and nabbed 17 rebounds to lead the Tigers past Nevis 68-57 in the quarterfinals, the school's first state basketball tourney win.

Asuma drilled 36 points in the semifinals on TV, but eventual state champion Hayfield beat the Tigers 72-61. Cherry went flat in the third-place game and lost to New Life Academy 75-50, finishing 22-4.

After his 85-point state tournament, Asuma's profile was raised considerably and the Minnesota Gophers joined the list of colleges making offers to one of the best prospects ever from the Iron Range. Others in-



Isaac Asuma, recruited by the Gophers and others, leads the Cherry Tigers with help from

clude Iowa, Iowa State, Nebraska, Butler and Hampton.

Interviewed by Gopher Hole web site, Isaac reflected: "Our basketball team was 0-22 a few years ago (2018-19). I felt like we stepped up and took care of what we needed to do this year. We came down to state and competed."

The Tigers this year return not only Isaac Asuma, a 4.0 student, who averaged 27 points, seven assists and 9.8 rebounds, but also his brother, Noah, who averaged 13 points and six rebounds as a seventh-grader, and their cousin, Isaiah Asuma, who averaged seven points as an eighth-grader.

"With a cherry on top (of the cake)" is an oft-used phrase that portends to making some-

thing pretty good even better. That's what folks in Cherry are hoping for while these three are together in the lineup the next two years.

The Asuma family has a long history of gracing the Cherry basketball program. As coach Jordan Christianson delineated to Duluth's WDIO Radio late last season, "Isaac's mom played here, and is a 1,000 point scorer. Isaiah's mom played here; she is also a 1,000 point scorer. Their grandpa played here. Their grandpa's brother, Bob Asuma, the guy I took over for, was the head coach for 35 years. Plus their uncle Jay played here."

Jean Asuma, Class of 2001, Isaiah's mother, scored 1,517 points. Jolene Asuma, Class of 2004, Isaac and Noah's mom, scored 1,112 points. "They taught me, like, the basics and the positions on the court," Asuma told the Grand Rapids Herald. Isaac now has the family record (no small feat) and the school record, entering the season with 2,067 points and two years to go.

The current Asuma trio has been shooting hoops together in the driveway and gym since they were tots. "It's super cool," Isaac told WDIO, "to see we are playing varsity basketball together, we all are succeeding, and having a really good season." Noah added, "Not a lot of people can have that experience of playing with relatives, and I just cherish every moment of it." Isaiah said he loves playing with his cousins "because we know each other so well."

Christianson, asked by MBBN what he can expect from Noah and Isaiah, said, "They are battle tested, so they should be more poised for bigger games." And they are still in junior high school.

Another set of brothers, Nick and Sam Serna, were the fourth and fifth starters for Cherry last year, and they graduated.

Two sophomore transfers should bolster the lineup this year, Christianson said. They are Noah Sundquist, who averaged 18 points for Chisholm last year, and Carson Brown, who averaged 10 points for Hibbing. Also in the top seven, the coach said, will be their lone senior, Kaleb Rinerson, regarded as a tough defender, and Andrew Staples, a junior, who averaged nine points in an injury-shortened season.

Cherry won't sneak up on anyone this year. The Tigers start the season ranked No. 4 in Class 1A.

"We expect to compete for a state championship and build on our success from last year," Christianson said.

Isaac Asuma, also the quarterback on Cherry's 8-2 football team and a pitcher on the baseball team that went 19-5 last spring, is confident in his teammates. He told the Duluth News-Tribune: "The thing about us is, if they collapse on me, I can kick out to my teammates and they're going to make plays. I trust them to make plays, hit shots and just do their thing."

Six added to boys coaches Hall of Fame

Six coaches were inducted into the Minnesota Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame this year:

Dave Cresap, Perham — Cresap has coached five state tournament teams, including the 2011 state champions and 10 conference champs in 27 years at Perham. He has a 644-293 career record, including 10 years coaching in North Dakota. He's been voted state coach of the year twice, section coach of the year seven times, and Max Preps national coach of the year in 2011.

Dick Ghizoni, St. Agnes, Hill-Murray, Minneapolis Southwest — Ghizoni coached 33 years and had a 450-302 record. He took over a 1-18 team at St. Agnes in 1979 and won five conference titles, two section titles and the 1994 Class A state title. He was also a baseball head coach for 23 years at St. Agnes and had one state tourney team.

Grant Guzy, Spring Lake Park, Columbia Heights — Guzy coached Spring Lake Park for 30 years, racking up 390 wins and three section titles with the Panthers (plus section finals when the 2020 season was halted). Counting three years with Columbia Heights, he had over 400 wins. He retired after last season.

Pete Petrich, Red Wing — Petrich, who passed away in 2001, coached the Wingers from 1949-70, posing a 301-136 record with eight conference titles, eight district titles, and state one-class tournament appearances in 1953, 1954 and 1957. Prior to Red Wing, he had a North Dakota state champion team at Minot.

Vern Simmons, St. Paul Johnson — Simmons, a St. Paul policeman, coached nine state tournament teams, including a 32-0 state champion in 2010, and had 15 conference champs and five Twin Cities champs in an illustrious 20-year career, retiring in 2020. With a 401-161 record, he ranks second in wins and first in winning percentage (.718) in St. Paul history.

Jeff Wall, Anoka, Maranatha Christian, Minneapolis Patrick Henry, Irondale — Wall coached Coe College in Iowa for five years before starting a 34-year career as a Minnesota coach. He spent 18 seasons at Maranatha, logging 12 conference titles and five state trips where the Mustangs finished second twice, third and fourth. His prep career record was 582-298.

Hopkins foils Iowa powers

By Bruce Strand

Hopkins, the state's top girls team, beat a pair of Iowa powers to open the season at the St. Thomas Academy Thanksgiving Tip-Off. The Royals turned back Bishop Garrigan of Algona 72-45 with Taylor Woodson scoring 28 points and Nunu Agara 16, then foiled Dowling Catholic of West Des Moines 71-61 with Kelly Boyle sinking 13 points, Agara 12 and Liv McGill 10. Bishop Garrigan was Iowa's Class 1A champion last year and runner-up the two previous years. Dowling Catholic is a perennial Class 5A top ten team with five state titles.

AROUND THE STATE

* The Minneapolis South boys were 18-7 last year with four sophomores scoring in double digits, but three of them transferred: Chiang Ring (13 points, 9.8 rebounds) to Park Center, De'Mari Larkins (15.6 points) to Osseo, and Jerome Williams (16 points) to Minnehaha Academy. Staying at South is Poet Davis (11.7 points). Two other South players transferring to Osseo were Jaheim Houts, a senior, and Temi Omotoyinbo, a sophomore, who each averaged about eight points.

* Landon Dimler, a 6-4 guard who averaged 24.6 points and went over 1,000 points as a sophomore at Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton last season, transferred this year to Mankato West to play in the Big Nine.

* St. Croix Lutheran edged Mountain Iron-Buhl 61-59 in duel of girls teams ranked No. 2 in Class 2A and 1A, respectively, at the St. Thomas Academy Thanksgiving Tip-Off Classic. Laura Hauge sank 26 points and Callie Oakland 20 for SCL. Hali Savela netted 26 points, Sage Ganyo 15 and Jordan Zubich 11 for MIB. Zubich, who set a state record with 137 three-pointers last year, was a bit off-target, going 1-for-5 in this game. MIB beat Stewartville (No. 9 in Class 3A) 71-59 the day before with Zubich hitting 25 points and Savela 22.

* A new entity in Section 6A boys is Border West, a fusion of Wheaton-Herman-Norcross and Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley. Top veterans are seniors Cliff Determan and Dylan Bainbridge, who averaged 19.8 and 18.4 points, respectively, for WHN. Their coach is Jordon Roos, who was WHN's coach. WHN was 17-9 last year, ending a string of seven losing seasons. CGB was 6-60 the last three years, and their last winning season was 2015-16. The six schools have been togeth-



**Nunu Agara of Hopkins
snagged a rebound against
Bishop Garrigan.**

er for wrestling since 2007 as Border West. Meanwhile, the WHN and CGB girls teams remain separate.

* Cam Anderson, floor leader for West

Central Area's conference champion 22-5 team last year as a sopho-

more, will miss the season with a football injury. Anderson averaged 11 points and was the "catalyst" with his creativity and passing, said coach Kraig Hunter.

* Minnesotans were prominent on both sides as the Gopher women edged Lehigh (PA) 101-99 on Sunday, most notably Mara Braun, Gopher freshman from Wayzata, who drilled a three-pointer at the buzzer for the win and totaled 34 points. Amaya Battle, last year's Miss Basketball from Hopkins, had 17 points and nine rebounds, and fed Braun for the game-winner. Mallory Heyer, freshman from Chaska, added 12 points, as did Katie Borowicz, redshirt freshman from Roseau. For Lehigh, Mackenzie Kramer, junior from St. Michael-Albertville, scored 26 points, Frannie Hottinger, senior from Cretin-Derham Hall, scored 25, and Kayee Van Eps, sophomore from Chaska, scored 14.

* Timmy Guler, after an excellent sophomore season for Pelican Rapids, will miss his junior season due to a football injury, coach John Gullingsrud reports. The 5-foot-11 guard averaged 18.3 points, 3.4 assists, 4.8 rebounds, and 2.1 steals as the floor leader in a 22-6 season. Playing quarterback for the Vikings, he suffered a torn ACL in the last regular season game.

A new entity in Section 7AA boys is Rock Ridge, a fusion of Eveleth-Gilbert (12-14 last year) and Virginia (8-20). Rock Ridge's first head coach is Spencer Aune, who previously coached the Virginia girls. They have five players who scored in double digits last year. Grant Hansen transferred from Greenway, where he averaged 16.5 points and 7.8 assists. Others are Carter Mavec (13.5), Zane Lokken (11.9), AJ Roan (11.1) and Jalen Miskowetz (10.0).

BOYS PRESEASON TOP 20

CLASS 4A

1. Park Center
2. Lakeville North
3. Wayzata
4. Minnetonka
5. Eastview
6. East Ridge
7. Osseo
8. Lakeville South
9. Eden Prairie
10. Bloomington Jefferson
11. Shakopee
12. Andover
13. White Bear Lake
14. Stillwater
15. Rosemount
16. Hopkins
17. Moorhead
18. Robbinsdale Armstrong
19. Elk River
20. Northfield

CLASS 3A

1. Totino-Grace
2. DeLaSalle
3. Orono
4. Mahtomedi
5. Benilde- St. Margaret's
6. Stewartville
7. Columbia Heights
8. Austin
9. Mankato East
10. St. Cloud Tech
11. St. Thomas Academy
12. Princeton
13. New Ulm
14. Hermantown
15. Delano
16. Richfield
17. Kasson-Mantorville
18. Mankato West
19. Simley
20. Becker

CLASS 2A

1. Minnehaha Academy
2. Holy Family Catholic
3. Plainview-Elgin-Millville
4. Lake City
5. Perham
6. Minneapolis North
7. Maple River
8. Pequot Lakes
9. Watertown-Mayer
10. Mora
11. Albany
12. Sauk Centre
13. Esko
14. Maranatha Christian
15. West Central Area
16. Hiawatha Collegiate
17. Concordia Academy
18. New London-Spicer
19. Thief River Falls
20. Milaca

CLASS 1A

1. Hayfield
2. Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa
3. New Life Academy
4. Cherry
5. Cass Lake-Bena
6. Henning
7. MountainIron-Buhl
8. Goodhue
9. Martin County West
10. Russell-Tyler-Ruthton
11. Mankato Loyola
12. Spring Grove
13. Deer River
14. Fertile-Beltrami
15. Legacy Christian
16. Lakeview
17. Lyle-Pacelli
18. Border West
19. Nevis
20. Browerville

GIRLS TOP 20

CLASS 4A

1. Hopkins 2-0
2. Minnetonka 2-0
3. St. Michael-Albertville 1-0
4. Eden Prairie 0-0
5. Chaska 1-0
6. Maple Grove 0-0
7. Lakeville North 0-0
8. Wayzata 0-0
9. East Ridge 2-0
10. Roseville 2-0
11. Rosemount 1-0
12. Centennial 0-0
13. Elk River 0-0
14. Lakeville South 2-0
15. Stillwater 0-0
16. Rochester Mayo 0-0
17. Shakopee 1-0
18. Andover 0-0
19. White Bear Lake 2-0
20. Eastview 1-1

CLASS 3A

1. Becker 1-0
2. Benilde-St. Margaret's 0-0
3. Alexandria 0-0
4. Holy Angels 2-0
5. Grand Rapids 1-1
6. Detroit Lakes 0-0
7. Marshall 0-0
8. St. Peter 0-0
9. Stewartville 1-1
10. Orono 0-1
11. New Ulm 0-0
12. Jordan 0-0
13. Hill-Murray 0-0
14. Red Wing 0-0
15. Kasson-Mantorville 1-0
16. Monticello 0-0
17. Mankato West 0-0
18. St. Paul Como Park 2-0
19. DeLaSalle 0-2
20. Mahtomedi 1-1

CLASS 2A

1. Providence Academy 1-1
2. St. Croix Lutheran 2-0
3. Minnehaha Academy 0-0
4. Goodhue 0-0
5. Holy Family Catholic 0-2
6. Rochester Lourdes 0-0
7. Sauk Centre 1-0
8. Albany 1-0
9. Montevideo 1-0
10. Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial 0-0
11. New London-Spicer 1-0
12. Pequot Lakes 0-0
13. Glencoe-Silver Lake 0-0
14. Perham 1-0
15. Luverne 0-0
15. Pine City 1-0
17. Caledonia 1-0
18. Maple River 0-0
19. Minneapolis-Roosevelt 0-0
20. Plainview-Elgin-Millville 1-0

CLASS 1A

1. Hancock 0-0
2. Mountain Iron-Buhl 2-1
3. Hayfield 1-0
4. Underwood 1-0
5. Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart 0-0
6. Minneota 0-0
7. Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa 1-0
8. Mayer Lutheran 2-0
9. BOLD 3-0
10. United Christian 0-0
11. Lac qui Parle Valley 1-0
12. Wheaton-Herman-Norcross 0-0
13. Fosston 1-0
14. Grand Meadow 1-0
15. Tracy-Milroy-Balaton 2-0
16. Henning 0-0
17. Kelliher-Northome 1-0
18. South Ridge 0-0
19. Braham 0-0
20. Sleepy Eye 1-1

Pacesetter Minnesota Youth Basketball State Championship Playoffs Set

Teams in Grades 4-9 will play for 12 state championships in 8-region playoff system

Pacesetter Sports has set the 8-region Minnesota Youth Basketball State Championship schedule of playoffs in 8 regions:

Teams play 3-4 games in each region in one day.

FEE: \$220/team

Discounts:

December	\$160
January	\$180
February	\$200

Register: www.pacesettersports.net

8 MINNESOTA REGION SITES

Region 1	Rochester	March 25-26
Region 2	Lake Crystal	April 22-23
Region 3	Redwood Falls	March 25-26
Region 4	Moose Lake/ Willow River	April 15-16
Region 5	Paynesville	April 1-2
Region 6	Alexandria	April 15-16
Region 7	Grand Rapids/ Mountain Iron-Buhl	April 1-2
Region 8	Bemidji	April 22-23

See the ad on page 7 for specific grades and genders for both regions and state.

The champion from each region will be invited to play in the Minnesota Youth Basketball State Championships at The College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, MN, on one of two weekends, June 10-11 or June 17-18.

The Minnesota state champions and the runners-up will be invited to play in the 8-team Pacesetter Great Five-State Championships at the Target Center in Minne-

apolis against top teams from Iowa, Wisconsin, North Dakota and South Dakota.

This Pacesetter "Midwest Madness" playoff system provides all youth teams grades 4-9 in the 5-state area with a chance to compete against the best from other states and enjoy the fantasy of playing on the main Target Center floor. Each team playing in "Great State" will play one game minimum on the main floor, complete with an announcer and Target Center music for individual player introductions.

The Minnesota Lynx and Timberwolves cooperate in this playoff system. All players, coaches and fans from the youth games attend either a Lynx game or a Timberwolves game during their Great State weekend, which is most commonly in June-July-August-November.

Pacesetter players are also offered special ticket discounts at a selected game during the following Timberwolves season.

Teams that play in the Pacesetter playoffs must be school or community teams. All players must either live or attend school in the same city or tribal community. See Frequently Asked Questions, General Information, and Rules are posted on the Pacesetter website at www.pacesettersports.net.

Over 800-1,000 teams are expected to compete again in this 5-state playoff system, which began in 2010.

Pacesetter Sets Camp Attendance Record: 160!

After 43 years of Pacesetter Camps, a new attendance record was set this fall – 160 kids. The one-day "Tour of Champions" Camp featured 3-time state champion coach John Carlson from Litchfield as the director. Coaches who would like to host a "Tour of Champions" 1-2 day camp, should write Tracey at pacesetter-sportsmbbn@gmail.com. Pacesetter camp brochures will be sent soon to all head coaches.

2023 **PACESETTER**

Minnesota YOUTH BASKETBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP Region Playoffs

Boys & Girls Grades 4-9

ALL GRADES REFER TO THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

4B = 4th grade boys, 4G = 4th grade girls, etc. Teams may register for more than one region.

Region 1 Site	Date	Grade/Gender
Rochester-RCTC	March 25	4G, 6G, 8G, 5B, 7B, 9B
Rochester-RCTC	March 26	5G, 7G, 9G, 4B, 6B, 8B
Region 2 Site	Date	Grade/Gender
Lake Crystal	April 22	4G, 6G, 8G, 5B, 7B, 9B
Lake Crystal	April 23	5G, 7G, 9G, 4B, 6B, 8B
Region 3 Site	Date	Grade/Gender
Redwood Falls	March 25	5G, 7G, 9G, 4B, 6B, 8B
Redwood Falls	March 26	4G, 6G, 8G, 5B, 7B, 9B
Region 4 Site	Date	Grade/Gender
Moose Lake/Willow River	April 15	4G, 6G, 8G, 5B, 7B, 9B
Moose Lake/Willow River	April 16	5G, 7G, 9G, 4B, 6B, 8B
Region 5 Site	Date	Grade/Gender
Paynesville	April 1	5G, 7G, 9G, 4B, 6B, 8B
Paynesville	April 2	4G, 6G, 8G, 5B, 7B, 9B
Region 6 Site	Date	Grade/Gender
Alexandria	April 15	5G, 7G, 9G, 4B, 6B, 8B
Alexandria	April 16	4G, 6G, 8G, 5B, 7B, 9B
Region 7 Site	Date	Grade/Gender
Grand Rapids	April 1	8G, 5B, 7B
Grand Rapids	April 2	7G, 9G, 4B
Mt. Iron-Buhl	April 1	4G, 6G, 9B
Mt. Iron-Buhl	April 2	5G, 6B, 8B
Region 8 Site	Date	Grade/Gender
Bemidji	April 22	5G, 7G, 9G, 4B, 6B, 8B
Bemidji	April 23	4G, 6G, 8G, 5B, 7B, 9B

3-4 game guarantee • \$220/team

SAVE \$: REGISTER EARLY! Nov - \$140, Dec - \$160, Jan - \$180, Feb - \$200

Champions from each regional site will be invited to the MN State Championship. Other top finishers will receive an invitation to the Minnesota Invitational Tournament (MIT).

MN State Championships	Location	Date	Grades
MIT - MN Invitational	College of St. Benedict	June 10	B & G 4-6-8
State Championship	College of St. Benedict	June 11	B & G 4-6-8
MIT - MN Invitational	College of St. Benedict	June 17	B & G 5-7-9
State Championship	College of St. Benedict	June 18	B & G 5-7-9



GREAT 5-STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

IA • MN • ND • SD • WI



ROAD TO THE TARGET CENTER!

The MN State Champion and Runner-up in each grade are invited to the Great Five-State Championships at the Target Center in Minneapolis.



Scan Code

Or For More Info/To Register:

www.pacesettersports.net

Questions? 320.243.7460 • pacesettersportsmbn@gmail.com • www.pacesettersports.net • [Twitter](#) • [Facebook](#) • [Instagram](#) Pacesetter Basketball

March 4 & 5**College of St. Benedict
St. Joseph, MN****Boys & Girls Grades 4-8****2023 Pacesetter**

WINTER CLASSIC **Basketball** **Tournament**

**Saturday, March 4:****Girls Grades 4-5 | Boys Grades 6-7-8****Sunday, March 5:****Girls Grades 6-7-8 | Boys Grades 4-5**

Each tournament is a ONE-day tournament.
Limit 16 teams per grade/gender
All teams will play 3-4 games.

All players on a team must either be enrolled in the same school system or live or attend school in the same city, the same school district or the same tribal community.

\$190/team before Feb 5**\$210/team Feb 5 or later****Registration Deadline: Feb 22*****PACESETTER*****Scan Code:****Or For More Info/To Register:
www.pacesettersports.net**