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Alexandria has celebrated two Wendy Kohler milestones this season: 1,000th game, 700th win

Coach's 700th puts Alex in state

By Bruce Strand

Wendy Kohler posted her 700th career victory as Alexandria coach on Thursday evening, but of greater significance for Kohler and her Cardinals was that their 73-29 conquest of Fergus Falls got them into the state tournament.

This will be the 13th state trip for Section 8AAA champion Alexandria, all under Kohler, and third in the last four years. Her Cardinals are 25-4 with no senior starters, and ranked No. 3. They were 25-6 last year and placed fourth in the state tournament.

Kohler, who became Cardinals coach at age 22 in the 1983-84 season, has logged 700 wins against 307 losses in her 39 seasons. She's had one state champion team — in 1997 in Class 3A — along with three that placed fourth and one that placed fifth.

"Our success in Alexandria has been such a team effort," Kohler said. That includes "wonderful assistants with longevity," most notably Julie Wrobel. "We have been coaching together for 25 years and we are a 1-2 punch!" She adds, "I'm grateful for all of the hard-working girls past, present and future as well as their families."

She is No. 3 all time in girls coaching wins behind New London-Spicer's Mike Dreier (1,066 and counting) and Rochester Lourdes' Myron Glass (719, retired). She leads all female coaches. Only two of the top 15 on the career win list are women, the other being Erin Herman of Hill-Murray, a close friend. Kohler has been named state coach of the year three times.

Her 700th win was the second major milestone of Kohler's that Alexandria celebrated this season. On Feb. 3, the boosters had a huge banner ready,

noting her 1,000th game as a coach. The Cardinals lost that one at home to Fargo Davies, one of the top North Dakota teams, 65-61.

She was Wendy DeVorak at Bertha-Hewitt High School and Moorhead State, where she played basketball and softball. She is a Moorhead Dragons Hall of Famer.

Alexandria was her first teaching job (physical education) and she has never saw any reason to leave. "Alexandria is a special community in so many aspects," Kohler said. "It's a beautiful area with all of the lakes and our community supports our schools wonderfully. Our parents are very supportive."

Still physically fit at 61, Kohler has run several marathons and half-marathons but "now I prefer my Peloton workouts and treadmill" along with

lake activities. “And of course, countless hours in the gym keeps a person in shape.”

Wendy’s daughter Kendall is the fifth-leading scorer in Cardinal history. The top five are Angela Christianson (2010) with 2,286 points, Angie Converse (1990) with 1,656, Brooke Heggie (2015) with 1,321, Molly Reif (1995) with 1,302, and Kendall (2017) with 1,298.

Kendall played in the 2017 state tournament, went on to play for Northern State, and followed her mom as a PE teacher and coach. Her son Chase, a 6-foot-5 lefty sharp-shooter, played in the 2014 state tournament. “They are my best accomplishment and blessings in my life,” said Kohler. “Chase and wife Tori have a darling little boy, Cooper,” her first grandchild,

This year’s starting lineup has four juniors and a sophomore — six-footer Hadley Thul (who has gotten offers from Northwestern and Wisconsin, among others), MaCee Linow, Allie Haabala (committed to Southwest State), Chloe Scholl, and Kate Hennessy — all averaging in double figures. The bench is deep with Lauren Beyer, Camree Miller, Elle Heydt, Kaia Emter and McKinley Hoelscher all making an impact, Kohler said.

Alexandria went 14-0 in the Central Lakes Conference. Ranked teams they’ve beaten are Benilde-St. Margaret’s, Stewartville, and Mankato East. They’ve lost to two No. 1 teams: DeLaSalle 74-64 and Providence Academy 94-89, along with Orono and Davies.

Asked if there is a particular hallmark of Alexandria teams, Kohler said, “Our girls are known for our uptempo play and defensive intensity. We play **team** basketball and there is no star syndrome. We hold them to a high standard both on and off the court.”

To suggest an item for Minnesota Basketball News, send an e-mail to bruce.a.strand@gmail.com.



White Bear Lake celebrated its Section 4AAAA finals win over East Ridge.

Bruce Strand, MN BB News

State girls qualifiers start trickling in

State girls basketball qualifiers were determined Thursday evening in about a dozen section finals.

CLASS 4A — Rosemount beat Eastview 71-48 in Section 3 with Avery Miller hitting 20 points and Amisha Ramlall 17 **White Bear Lake** beat East Ridge 56-48 in Section 4 with Abby O’Brien sinking 14 points and Jordyn Schmittiel 13 ... **Maple Grove** topped Mounds View 80-48 in Section 5 ... **Hopkins** repelled Wayzata 78-62 with Tatum Woodson scoring 22 points and London Harris 16 in Section 6 ... **Andover** beat Anoka 90-77 with Maddy Freking scoring 34 points in Section 7

CLASS 3A — St. Peter topped Marshall 58-51 in Section 2, led by Rhyen Holmgren with 29 ... **Minneapolis Roosevelt** edged St. Paul Como Park 50-49 in Section 3, led by Olivia Wren with 15 **DeLaSalle** beat Mahtomedi 75-62 in Section 4 with Aneisha Scott scoring 20 points and Madalyn Blaylark and Jordyn Johnson 19 each ... **Totino-Grace** nipped Monticello 60-49 in Section 5 ... **Benilde-St. Margaret’s** beat Delano 83-64 in Section 6 with Olivia Olson drilling 40 points ... **Rock Ridge** beat Cloquet 58-41 in Section 7 **Alexandria** beat Fergus Falls 73-29 in Section 8

CLASS 2A — Rochester Lourdes beat Winona Cotter 50-33 in Section 1.

CLASS 1A -- No. 1 ranked **Goodhue** beat No. 5 Hayfield 78-49 in Section 1.

Stat central: One man's vigil

Pederson keeps tabs on all things basketball in MN

By Bruce Strand

Keeping track of basketball records in every category for the whole state of Minnesota might seem like a daunting task. And it certainly is.

But for Matt Pederson of Starbuck, it's an (unpaid) labor of love that he's been taking on for three decades now, and the boys and girls basketball communities are greatly appreciative.

"I found out that nobody was keeping track of state basketball records, so I gave it a shot," said Pederson, 65, of Starbuck, who's retired from a 30-some year career as a bank officer at First National Bank there.

Because of Pederson's work, you can look up, for instance, where did Emmerson Helget's 13 made 3-pointers for Annandale on Feb. 2 rank in state annals? (Tied for first.) How many three-generation 1,000-point families are there? (He can't be sure, but he's found three such families this season.) Was Eli Hoelz's 22-assist game for Brainerd in December a state record? (Nope, a Cass Lake-Bena player had 28 in 2008.)

Pederson's most dogged task is marshalling the state 1,000-point list, which now has over 8,000 names. That list was started by the West Central Tribune of Willmar from the late 1950's. Sometime in the 1990's it was passed on the Minnesota Basketball News, and then to Pederson in 2010. He keeps it all on an Excel program and provides a list of all current 1,000-pointers for publication in the MBBN each April.



One of Matt Pederson's favorite mementoes is this 1999 photo with two 1950's stars: Norm Grow, who had a 70-point game for Foley, and Ron Johnson, who had a 69-point game for Starbuck

His most impressive project is a massive list of team, individual, and coaching records — not just the records but the top ten or more entrants — for single game, single season, career, and for state tournaments, mostly provided by Pederson, posted on the MSHSL website.

Most points per game by a boys team, you ask? Minnesota Transitions with 102.89 in 2008-09 heads the list. Best girls coach winning percentage in state tournaments? Faith Patterson, .857 for Minneapolis North and DeLaSalle heads the list. Most career rebounds? Well, Tresa Baumgard of Chisholm recently broke Sari Noga's (Parkers Prairie) record of 1736. Most consecutive wins by a boys team? Edina, 69, from 1965-68, heads the list. Where does Norm Grow's 70-point game for Foley in 1958, the state record for almost half a century, rank now? (Fourth). Just a few of dozens of lists you can find there.

You can also look up his website, where the information is much more up-to-date than on the MSHSL site. That address is:

mail.info-link.net/~mattnet

What is the motivation for this, he was asked?

“Initially,” he responded, “I was motivated to do something that wasn’t being done other than what the MSHSL did with state tournament records and what the West Central Tribune did with the 1,000-point list. I wanted to get THE state record in various categories.

“Then, I decided to get the top 10 listings in the categories. Then I wanted a list of all the players with 1,000 rebounds, or that had scored 50 points in a game.

“Now, the motivation is to keep the lists updated, until the next person or entity takes over the project.”

Along the way, Pederson has established collaborations with the boys and girls coaches associations and the MSHSL for assistance while also monitoring media reports around the state. Meanwhile, the word has spread to coaches and fans and reporters to contact this guy Pederson with questions and information. He has leaned on dozens of coaches, mentioning Joel McDonald, former Chisholm star and Hibbing coach, as one who’s been especially helpful.

Pederson’s first experience with stats was while serving as student manager and statistician for the Starbuck High School basketball team, starting his freshman year, under coach Greg Starns. Pederson graduated from Starbuck in 1977 and

from Minnesota-Morris in 1981.

When Starbuck merged with Glenwood and Vilard to become Minnewaska Area in 1991, Pederson decided to create a list of Starbuck basketball records for posterity. He borrowed scorebooks from three coaches dating back to 1964, and pored over local newspaper archives at the Pope County Museum for information prior to that.

One of his discoveries was a 69-point game by Ron Johnson for Starbuck in 1953 that was believed to be a state record at the time.

(In 1999, Pederson was elated to be able arrange a meeting between himself, Johnson and Norm Grow, who broke that record, in a Bloomington hotel, to talk about those games. Both are now deceased.)

The booklets of data he compiled for Starbuck basketball history were delivered to him on December 21, 1993. A week later, he and Starbuck Times publisher Ron Lindquist were watching

a girls game in which Minnewaska Area guard Misty Burns sank 21 of 24 free shots.

“Ron wondered aloud whether Misty was setting some kind of record,” Pederson said. “That got me thinking, too.” So that’s where the state-wide project started. “I have often wondered, if Ron hadn’t made that statement, if I would have gotten involved in compiling state-wide basketball records.”

To that anecdote, he added, “In case you are curious, Misty’s 21 free throws made is still in 11th place on the state records list.”



Matt Pederson posed with Anders and Bjorn Broman, two of the top scorers in state history at Lakeview Christian.

Take Me Out to the Ballgame!

By Jeff McCarron

How about STATE CHAMPIONSHIP SATURDAY at Williams Arena?

Both the girls and boys state tournaments will feature a very special day – State Championship Saturday at Williams Arena. There's not a better place to watch all the drama unfold right before your eyes - so close to the floor.

Imagine a Thanksgiving dinner where the turkey is raised about 8 inches above the table. It would just stand out, overshadowing everything else. That's Williams Arena – where the court is the main attraction, served as the centerpiece of action. Everyone else is tucked down below – coaches, players, media, and fans. The players battle in the bright lights alone on the court.

The Minnesota state tournament is guaranteed to provide some fantastic games. You can check out the brackets on the Minnesota State High School League website at www.mshsl.org. The girls' teams are filling in fast in what promises to be one of the best ever.

Who will be watching the games?

I'm an idealist. I imagine every basketball program in the state getting a school bus and driving their players as ONE TEAM to State Championship Saturday. There will be two sessions, so pick one: A-AA or AAA-AAAA or both.

Let's do the math: an estimated 425 basketball programs each bring in 40 players grades 4-12. 17,000 fans! They would fill the arena to the top. Wouldn't that be something....

When I was in school, we had aggressive coaches, Dennis Christofferson and Bill Etter. They arranged one winter Saturday to take a school bus of players to a Gopher game. That became a 3-hour poker game in the back of the bus until it was time to get out on University Avenue and watch the Gophers. The band, the cheerleaders, the maroon and gold, Goldie Gopher, packed hallways...and then the FLOOR! Wow! The Rouser, the warmups, the bright lights. That was a blast of adrenaline into young hearts.

A month or so later, the school bus was packed again – this time with players and cheerleaders headed back to "The Cities" to the first-round of the Minnesota High School State Basketball Tournament. It was a Thursday, so we all got out of school to go. We watched our District 5 champion, Wells, battle Rochester John Marshall. We had lost to Wells earlier in the year. It was a

great game, but our Wildcats lost, and JM went on to win the over-all championship – in 1969. Wells fought back to win the consolation championship.

Events like that make a lasting impression on young people. It puts them close to other people. No one had cell phones then – can you imagine? We had fun with each other – singing, telling stories or jokes, flirting, pestering each other, or just daydreaming as the scenery passed by.

Five years earlier our 6th grade class went to the Shrine Circus in the southern suburbs. We stopped to see something new – a mall! Southdale Mall, I believe. The year was 1964. There was a large trampoline in it. I think our teachers wanted to sneak in some shopping. One of our classmates was wearing his Beatles wig and singing "I wanna hold your hand!" Good times.

Six years later, we were on a bus again – headed for a 7-day trip to Washington, DC. My brother Tom gets credit for this one. He was a senior at Sherburn-Dunell schools in 1966-67, and when the subject came up about taking the annual class trip to Mankato, he said, "Every class has done that. Why not go somewhere... like Washington, DC. About 5-6 major fund-raising events later, they were on their way – and every one of the 56 classes since has taken that same trip. The math at 56 trips times 50 kids is 2,800 lives impacted from someone's innovative thinking - and a lot of "elbow grease" behind the scenes by parents and the kids.

Do you have a Tom McCarron in your school? Or a Dennis Christofferson or Bill Etter? I'm sure glad we did. All three of those men went on to become highly successful in everything they did.

Having Tom as a brother was another bonus. He got me interested in sports. I was more of a Huckleberry Finn sort, running around barefoot, catching snakes and frogs and tormenting carp in streams at a young age. He said, "Pick a team." I picked the Pirates, of course, and Roberto Clemente as my favorite. What a role model he was! Tom also loved "Sweet Lou" Hudson, so I did too...and the love for the Gophers began.

So here's to the innovators – all of those who inspire goodness and greatness in young people and provide them with a pathway and a model to follow. Don't tell them "It can't be done!". It can be done. Help them make it happen. Who knows – maybe 2800 lives will be impacted...or one day 17,000 young players will fill an arena.

Saluting the conference champs

By Bruce Strand

Conference champions in boys basketball were **Wayzata** (11-1) in the Lake, **Cretin-Derham Hall** (17-1) in the Suburban East, **Totino-Grace** (15-0) in the Northwest Suburban, **Lakeville North** (16-2) in the South Suburban, **Tartan** (15-1) in the Metro East, **Benilde-St. Margaret's** (13-1) in the Metro West, **Mankato East** (15-2) in the Big Nine, **Minneapolis Washburn** (12-0) in the Minneapolis, **St. Paul Central** (12-0) in the St. Paul, **DeLaSalle** (14-2) in the Tri-Metro, **Breck** (9-0) in the Independent Metro, **New Ulm** (7-0) in the Big South, **Redwood Valley** (8-0) in the Big South West, **Waseca** (5-1) in the Big South East, **Alexandria** (15-1) in the Central Lakes, **East Central** (12-0) in the Great River, **Annandale** (13-1) in the Wright County West, **Holy Family Catholic** (9-1) in the Wright County East, **Minnesota Valley Lutheran** and **Springfield** (each 13-3) in the Tomahawk, **Stewartville** (16-0) in the Hiawatha Valley, **Cromwell-Wright** (8-0) in the Polar-Small, **Deer River** (5-0) in the Iron Range, **Barnesville** and **Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton** (each 10-2) in the Heart O Lakes, **Detroit Lakes** (8-0) in the Mid State, **Maranatha Christian** (15-1) in the Skyline, **Duluth Denfeld** (9-0) in the Lake Superior, **Southwest MN Christian** (16-2) in the Red Rock, **Dawson-Boyd** (10-0) in the Camden North, **Minneota** (10-0) in the Camden South, **Chisago Lakes** (13-3) in the Mississippi 8, **Eden Valley-Watkins** and **Paynesville** (each 13-1) in the Central Minnesota, **Albany** (14-0) in the Granite Ridge, **Fertile-Beltrami** (6-0) in the Pine to Prairie North, **Ada-Borup West** (8-0) in the Pine to Prairie South, **Hillcrest Lutheran** (15-1) in the Little Eight, **Spring Grove** (8-0) in the SEC East, **Kingsland** (9-1) in the SEC West, **Caledonia** and **La Crescent-Hokah** (each 7-1) in the Three Rivers East, **Lewiston-Altura** and **St. Charles** (each 7-3) in the Three Rivers West.

Kadence Hesse of Sleepy Eye passed one milestone after another — 2,000 points, 1,000 rebounds, 500 assists, 500 steals — in a prodigious prep career that ended last week. The 5-foot-11 point guard amassed 2,750 points, 1,020 rebounds, 526 assists and 529 steals. “She is also a great student with a 4.111 GPA, and is student body co-president,” said her mother and coach, Sarah Hesse. Kadence averaged 23.7 points this year, with a high of 37, in a 24-4 season that ended in a 64-59 upset loss to Sleepy Eye St. Mary’s, whom they had beaten twice previously. She will continue her basketball career at Southwest State in Marshall.

AROUND THE STATE

Another three-generation list of thousand-pointers has materialized. Maiji Lamppa, Rock Ridge sophomore, scored her 1,000th point during a playoff win over Duluth Denfeld on Feb. 28. Her father, Josh, scored 1,462 points for Tower-Soudan, graduating in 1996. Josh’s father, Lon Lamppa, scored 1,086 points for Embarrass, graduating in 1967.

Gerald Kingbird Jr. -- that’s a name that rings a bell with longtime prep hoops fans -- reached the 2,000th point marker for Red Lake on March 1 when he hit 38 in a 115-89 win over Northome-Kelliher. The senior point guard is averaging 29.8 points this year for the Warriors (19-7) with a high of 45, after averaging 17.5 last year. His dad, Gerald Kingbird Sr., was a key player in a legendary state tournament game in 1997 when Wabasso beat Red Lake 117-113 in overtime. Kingbird Sr. sank 37 points, including 13 in the final 68 seconds of regulation.

Koi Perich, a prize recruit of the Gopher football team, scored his 2,000th point for Esko on Monday in a win over International Falls. Perich reached the milestone with a dunk the ball after a steal. Coach Derek Anderson was resting Perich; he played him only a couple of minutes so he could get his 2,000th in his last home game. Asked what kind of college basketball potential Perich would have, Anderson said, “I think he would be a tremendous prospect if basketball was his main sport. He is very explosive and incredibly competitive”

JUMP SHOTS — Kendall Barnes, senior guard who was averaging 20.7 points for Roseville, transferred to East Ridge with two games left in the regular season. She scored 27 points to help the Raptors beat Stillwater 79-57 in the section finals, but White Bear Lake held her to five in the finals and beat them 56-48 Karly Juszczak of Pine City reached 2,000 points while logging 34 points and 23 rebounds in a 67-33 win over Spectrum on Feb. 29. Juszczak, a senior, went over 1,000 rebounds earlier this season Terry Miller of Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City coached his 300th win in boys basketball. The former three-sport star from nearby Paynesville has a 301-318 record with boys in 24 years and was 85-93 with the Ashby girls for a total of 386 wins Girls scoring over 30 ppg are Crosby-Ironton’s Tori Oehrlein (35.4), Minnehaha’s Addi Mack (31.4), Jackson Co. Central’s Rylie Cotter (30.7) and Holy Family’s Jocelyn Land (30.6).

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Region 1

Stewartville/Rochester • March 16 • Boys & Girls Grades 5 & 7
Stewartville/Rochester • March 17 • Boys & Girls Grades 4 & 6

Region 2

Lake Crystal • March 23 • Boys & Girls Grades 4 & 6
Lake Crystal • March 24 • Boys & Girls Grades 5 & 7

Region 3

Redwood Falls • March 9 • Boys & Girls Grades 5 & 7
Redwood Falls • March 10 • Boys & Girls Grades 4 & 6

Region 4

St. Cloud • February 25 • Boys Grades 4-7
St. Cloud • March 3 • Girls Grades 4-7

Region 5

St. Cloud • February 24 • Boys Grades 4-7
St. Cloud • March 2 • Girls Grades 4-7

Region 6

Alexandria • February 17 • Boys & Girls Grades 4 & 6
Alexandria • February 18 • Boys & Girls Grades 5 & 7

Region 7

Grand Rapids • February 17 • Boys & Girls Grade 5
Grand Rapids • February 18 • Boys & Girls Grade 4
Mt. Iron-Buhl • February 17 • Boys & Girls Grade 7
Mt. Iron-Buhl • February 18 • Boys & Girls Grade 6

Region 8

Bemidji • March 16 • Boys & Girls Grades 5 & 7
Bemidji • March 17 • Boys & Girls Grades 4 & 6

Southeast/Southwest Super Section-Regions 1-4

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MBBN BOYS TOP 20 FINAL

CLASS 4A CLASS 3A CLASS 2A CLASS 1A

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Wayzata 25-1 | 1. Totino-Grace 21-5 | 1. Breck 25-1 | 1. Cherry 24-2 |
| 2. Park Center 22-3 | 2. Mankato East 24-2 | 2. Minneapolis North 15-10 | 2. Dawson-Boyd 25-2 |
| 3. Hopkins 21-5 | 3. Stewartville 23-3 | 3. Lake City 20-5 | 3. West Central Area 23-3 |
| 4. Minnetonka 20-6 | 4. Minneapolis South 18-5 | 4. Albany 24-2 | 4. Henning 24-2 |
| 5. Shakopee 21-5 | 5. DeLaSalle 17-9 | 5. Annandale 23-3 | 5. Blooming Prairie 25-2 |
| 6. Lakeville North 21-5 | 6. Benilde-St. Margaret's 17-9 | 6. Eden Valley-Watkins 23-4 | 6. Hillcrest Lutheran 22-4 |
| 7. Farmington 20-6 | 7. Alexandria 22-5 | 7. Caledonia 21-4 | 7. Cass Lake-Bena 20-6 |
| 8. East Ridge 19-7 | 8. Delano 21-5 | 8. Holy Family 17-9 | 8. Mt. Lake Area/Comfrey 23-3 |
| 9. Minneapolis Washburn 24-3 | 9. St. Paul Johnson 18-4 | 9. St. Croix Lutheran 21-5 | 9. Southland 20-5 |
| 10. Cretin-Derham Hall 22-4 | 10. Mankato West 19-7 | 10. Legacy Christian 23-4 | 10. Spring Grove 24-3 |
| 11. Tartan 22-4 | 11. St. Cloud Tech 17-9 | 11. Cannon Falls 22-5 | 11. Fertile-Beltrami 21-6 |
| 12. Maple Grove 18-8 | 12. Columbia Heights 16-6 | 12. Esko 17-8 | 12. Ada-Borup West 21-5 |
| 13. Edina 15-11 | 13. Richfield 15-11 | 13. Paynesville 21-5 | 13. Heritage Christian 18-7 |
| 14. Lakeville South 17-9 | 14. Orono 16-10 | 14. Pequot Lakes 20-4 | 14. Springfield 19-7 |
| 15. Waconia 21-5 | 15. Detroit Lakes 23-3 | 15. Crosby-Ironton 21-5 | 15. Win-E-Mac 20-6 |
| 16. Osseo 18-8 | 16. New Ulm 19-7 | 16. Spectrum 22-4 | 16. Red Lake County 24-2 |
| 17. Rogers 18-8 | 17. St. Paul Harding 18-6 | 17. Redwood Valley 21-5 | 17. Nevis 19-7 |
| 18. Mounds View 18-8 | 18. Chisago Lakes 19-7 | 18. Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial 22-4 | 18. Goodridge-Gryg.-Gat. 20-6 |
| 19. St. Paul Central 19-6 | 19. Hermantown 19-7 | 19. Maranatha Christian 20-6 | 18. Rushford-Peterson 20-7 |
| 20. Rochester Century 19-7 | 20. Fridley 17-7 | 20. Montevideo 21-6 | 20. Sleepy Eye-St. Mary's 19-7 |



2024 Minnesota Basketball News • An Invitation-only Event

TOP 100 EXPO SHOWCASE

College of St. Benedict
St. Joseph, MN

Tuesday, July 2



The Top 100+ Players in each class are being invited along with select players from North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Iowa.

Seeking player nominations from head coaches for the 2024-25 Watch List. Email player name and school to Jeff McCarron at jmac8144@yahoo.com



COLLEGE PREP BASKETBALL CAMP

Monday, July 1

The Pacesetter "College Prep" program is designed for male and female players entering grade 9 through college freshman seeking to play basketball in college. Players will be taught high-level skills by college coaches in a comprehensive one-day, 7-hour format. Players will be given the best tips to become a successful college player on and off the court.





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