

- *Miss BB final 30
- *Maple Grove rolling
- *Alex-BSM twin bill
- *JCC girl scores 61
- *Coaching miletones

Which boys' state prep stars are best bets for the next level?

By Terry Kunze

Terry Kunze is a former Gopher guard who has coached in the college and professional ranks. He follows all levels of basketball. MBBN asked for his impressions of players and teams this season.

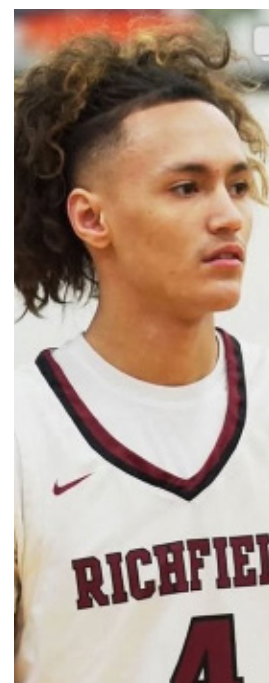
There are ten players graduating this season who I believe will have a nice career at the next level. Most have already committed to colleges. Here are a few who have impressed me.

Chase Thompson, 6-8, Alexandria (Clemson) — Great athletic skills to be outstanding at the next level. Leads Alexandria which has a good chance to reach state.

Tommy Ahneman, 6-11, Cretin-Derham Hall (Notre Dame) — Last year's North Dakota player of the year is college-ready with all the tools to step in and play as a freshman. Leads the No. 1 ranked team.

Nolan Groves, 6-5, Orono (Yale) — I feel he can be a factor at Yale as a freshman. Big scorer on a very good team. He can shoot it and put it on the floor. Strong and skilled.

Jalen Wilson, 6-8, Benilde-St. Margaret's (Northern Iowa) — I feel he is ready to play as a fresh-



Clockwise from top: Chase Thompson, CJ Armstrong, Jalen Wilson, Anthony Smith

man. Much improved over last season. Leads Benilde, the favorite in their section.

CJ Armstrong, 6-3, Richfield (Augustana) — A scorer! He can shoot and drive, excellent one-on-one player who can create his own shot. He should start at Augustana as a freshman.

Tyler Wagner, 6-6, Champlin Park — Athletic 6-6 guard, good shooter with strength that will work for D-1 but has not committed yet.

Miles Newton, 6-5, Breck — A real athlete with size and strength playing in Class 2A. They will play anyone anywhere big time.

Anthony Smith, 6-1, Hopkins — Shooter, shooter, shooter. He has added a solid 20 pounds and improved his ball handling skills and defense under a great coach.

Gandon Gosch, 6-5, Mankato East (Minnesota-Mankato) — Aggressive and skills, he should be ready to step in right away.

Brogan Madson, 6-1, Mankato East — talented guard, strong, great quicks, ready to play.

OTHER SENIORS TO WATCH

Brayson Boike, 6-8, Dawson-Boyd (Southwest State) — agile 6-8 sharpshooter

Brady Wooley, 6-9, Orono — a D-I prospect

Azayah Washington, 6-4, St. Cloud Apollo (St. Cloud State) — super quick

Marly Curtis and **Micah Curtis**, both 6-7, St. Louis Park (North Dakota) — both ready to play

TOP JUNIOR PROSPECTS

Jayden Moore, 6-0, Hopkins — great guard, big time

Christian Wiggins, 6-4, Wayzata — top recruit in his class

Ryan Kreager, 6-10, Faribault — Athletic 6-10, will bust out next year

Joseph Mitchell, 6-1, Cretin-Derham Hall — super player, always under control

Cedric Tomes, 6-1, East Ridge — clever guard who can score

Dothan Ijadimbola, 6-6, Totino-Grace — strong, athletic, big



Nolan Groves

TOP SOPH PROSPECTS

Ty Schlegel, 6-7, Cretin-Derham Hall — best shooting sophomore in state

Mustafa Mahamed, 6-10, South St. Paul — big guy with a future

Malachi Hill, 6-0, Totino-Grace — athletic, great future

Top contenders

CLASS 4A

Wayzata — Deep team that plays together and wins together. In a tough section but I like them

Hopkins — Their best team in years; must battle Wayzata to reach the big dance

Cretin-Derham Hall — Favored by many, great size and talent; it's tough to be the favorite

Sauk Rapids/Rice — Has the players. Lock to win section

Champlin Park — Has the talent; must get by Maple Grove

CLASS 3A

Benilde-St. Margaret's — Best club in years, the favorite; must get by Orono

Mankato East — Very athletic, will be a tough out

Orono — Well coached and can shoot it. Has tough schedule. Must beat BSM

Alexandria — Best in their section without a doubt

Byron — Good shooters with a big post player

DeLaSalle — Don't count them out; well coached, won't beat themselves

CLASS 2A

Albany — Solid favorite, will be a tough out

Breck — Playing a super tough schedule that will help them against 2A clubs

Pequot Lakes — solid team

Waseca — Weaker schedule than others but undefeated

CLASS 1A

Cherry — Four 3-year starters, defending champs

Dawson-Boyd — Talented with excellent size

Nevis — Tough team with size

MBBN BOYS TOP 10

CLASS 4A

1. Cretin-Derham Hall 18-0
2. Hopkins 17-1
3. Tartan 18-0
4. Watzata 16-3
5. Apple Valley 15-2
6. Champlin Park 16-3
7. Shakopee 13-5
8. Minnetonka 14-5
9. Anoka 16-4
10. Prior Lake 14-5

CLASS 3A

1. Benilde-St. Margaret's 16-1
2. Mankato East 17-1
3. Akexandria 14-3
4. Orono 13-5
5. Totino-Grace 13-5
6. Byron 16-2
7. Richfield 14-4
8. DeLaSalle 16-3
9. Stewartville 17-3
10. Monticello 17-3

CLASS 2A

1. Albany 17-0
2. Waseca 20-0
3. Caledonia 19-2
4. Jackson County Central 18-2
5. Breck 10-9
6. Blake 16-1
7. Montevideo 17-2
8. Warroad 18-1
9. Mora 16-1
10. Cannon Falls 17-3

CLASS 1A

1. Cherry 20-0
2. Dawson-Boyd 16-3
3. Nevis 15-3
4. Henning 17-2
5. Red Lake Co. 16-1
6. Springfield 18-1
7. Ada-Borup West 15-5
8. Deer River 18-1
9. Cedar Mountain 16-3
10. Park Christian 16-3

MBBN GIRLS TOP 10

CLASS 4A

1. Maple Grove 18-2
2. Hopkins 17-4
3. Eden Prairie 17-4
4. Eastview 17-3
5. Wayzata 16-3
6. Prior Lake 17-3
7. Minnetonka 13-9
8. St. Michael-Albertville 13-7
9. Lakeville North 12-9
10. Anoka 15-6

CLASS 3A

1. Monticello 20-0
2. Orono 19-2
3. Marshall 21-1
4. Benilde-St. Margaret's 15-6
5. Alexandria 17-3
6. DeLaSalle 15-5
7. Hill-Murray 16-5
8. Mahtomedi 16-4
9. Byron 19-3
10. Delano 17-5

CLASS 2A

1. Providence Academy 21-0
2. Crosby-Ironton 21-0
3. New London-Spicer 21-0
4. Minnehaha Academy 14-7
5. Caledodina 18-3
6. Minnewaska
7. Sauk Centre 17-2
8. Duluth Marshall 13--7
9. Proctor 19-2
10. Visitation 16-5

CLASS 1A

1. Goodhue 17-4
2. Mt. Iron-Buhl 18-2
3. Mayer Lutheran 18-2
4. Sleepy Eye St. Mary's 20-1
5. Hillcrest Luth. 18-1
6. Kittson County Central 18 -1
7. Central MN Christian 18-3
8. Breckenridge 15-5
9. Hancock 18-3
10. Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa 15-7

Jackson CC's Cother has 61-point game

Rylie Cother, Jackson County Central senior, exploded for 61 points in a 95-78 win over Maple River on Jan. 27. (The state record is 67 by Gianna Kneepkens of Duluth Marshall). The 6-foot point guard was 25-for-39 on field goals, 3-for-6 on three's, and 8-for-11 at the line, while logging six steals and six rebounds. Her previous high was 53 as a sophomore. She passed 2,000 points and became her school's all-time scoring leader mid-January. The Winona State recruit followed with 38 points against Pipestone in which she hurt her ankle but came back to score 53 with 14 rebounds in an 86-82 win over Belle Plaine. JCC is 16-6 with 13 straight wins.



Rylie Cother laid in two of her 61 points.

- CJ Armstrong of Richfield scored 53 points in a 113-92 loss to Hopkins, 38 in a 92-78 loss to Orono, and 42 in an 81-79 loss to DeLaSalle. He's averaging 33 points for the Spartans (14-4).

- Emily Anderson, Martin County West senior, scored a school record 46 points in a 62-52 win over Maple River on Jan. 3. That's one point more than her brother Zach, who has the boys record of 45. Anderson also had a 40-point game this year. The 6-foot forward is close to 1,900 career points.

- Griffin Epema of Montevideo had a quadruple double — 17 points, 12 rebounds, 14 assists, and 10 steals — in an 80-59 win over Redwood Valley on Jan. 14.

- Luke Means of Redwood Valley became the 5th boys basketball player in state history with back to back 50 or more point games. He scored 54 against Luverne on Jan 21 and 54 against Windom on Jan 24, Means is averaging 30.4 points, 4.6 assists, and 4.7 rebounds and leading state with 123 made 3-pointers.

Lester Prairie star breaks legend's record

Lester Prairie's school record for career points stood for 43 years before senior Addison Hoof broke Kay Konerza's mark of 2,715 when she scored 38 points on Jan. 17 in a win over Cedar Mountain at home.

Konerza, a 1982 graduate, was one of the state's first blue-chip recruits and played for Louisiana Tech, a power at the time, and eventually settled in Texas as a teacher. She also had a 56-point game that was the state record until 2018 and led the Bulldogs to their lone state tourney appearance.



Addison Hoof broke Kay Konerza's 43-year-old record of 2,715

Hoof, a point guard committed to Minnesota-Mankato, is averaging 33.6 points, third in the state, and has made 115 steals, fourth in the state.

Hoof told the local paper, the Herald-Journal, "It's really cool. I've heard a little bit about her (Konerza) and I know she was really good. I have some relatives who knew her and they all say she was amazing. It's just really cool that I can be up there with her."

Oehrlein and Greenway each reach 4,000 points

Tori Oehrlein, Crosby-Ironton junior, reached the 4,000-point marker while scoring 42 points in a 110-27 win over East Central on Jan. 28. Maddyn Greenway, Providence Academy junior, got her 4,000th while scoring 38 points in a 101-68 win over St. Michael-Albertville on Feb. 1. Those two joined Addi Mack, Minnehaha Academy senior, who reached 4,000 in January. They are 2-3-4 in career scoring behind Braham's Rebekah Dahlman, who had 5,060. Mack is averaging 33.6 points, Greenway 32.2 and Oehrlein 31.3. Mack has committed to Maryland, Greenway to Kentucky and Oehrlein to Minnesota.

Alex boys, BSM girls win in high-profile double header

By Bruce Strand

Two duels of Class 3A powers took place in Alexandria on Jan. 25 when the Benilde-St. Margaret's boys and girls teams visited.

The Alexandria boys won 83-80, the first loss for BSM, which was 11-0 and ranked first. Alex guard Mason Witt shot 6-for-11 on three's and totaled 23 points while his cousin Talen Witt drilled 22 points, shooting 9-for-18. Gavin Roderick added 19 points and Chase Thompson 17. For BSM, Jaleel Donley sank 26 points, Jalen Wilson 25, and TJ Stuttley 15.

"BSM has a nice team. Our kids made timely plays throughout the game," Alex coach Forrest Witt said. "This was a state tournament level game with a bunch of excellent players on both sides."

The BSM girls, defending state champions, cruised 79-53 over Alexandria, which placed third in the state last year and has everybody back. Kendall McGee sank 23 points, Pressley Watkins 17, Sydney Friendly 13 and Kate Kapsner 12. For Alex, which had won nine straight, Hadley Thul logged 18 points and 18 rebounds.

"Our focus on defensive intensity clearly paid off, as we were able to disrupt the opposing team's rhythm and force turnovers," said BSM coach Tim Ellefson. Looking ahead, he said, "Consistent rebounding and



Alexandria's Talen Witt, above, and Chase Thompson, below



Benilde-St. Margaret's TJ Stuckey, above, and Kendall McGee, below

Photos by Sam Stuve, Alexandria Echo Press

attention to detail are essential, especially as a two-time state champion facing best efforts from opponents."

The Alexandria boys have lost to Cretin-Derham Hall, Sauk Rapids-Rice and Mankato East. BSM has pulled out close games over Waconia 62-60, DeLaSalle 75-73 and Byron 49-46 and Orono (see below).

The BSM girls started 0-3 with losses to Minnetonka, Hopkins and Iowa power Dowling Catholic. They've also lost to DeLaSalle and Orono. All were close games. Alexan-

dria's other losses were against Marshall and Maple Grove.

BSM bounces back, trips Orono

The BSM boys had another high-profile clash on Jan. 30 and won that one 76-72 over Orono, the team that's beaten them in the last two Section 6AAA finals. The Red Knights overcame a 45-point barrage by Orono's Nolan Groves, the state's leading scorer. Jaleel Donley scored 19 points, including seven late as the lead kept changing hands, while TJ Stuckey added 17 and Jalen Wilson 12. Brady Wooley had 14 for Orono.

6 boys, 6 girls' teams unbeaten

By **Bruce Strand**

Twelve teams -- six boys' teams and six girls' teams -- remain undefeated as of the first week of February. Five girls teams absorbed their first loss last week.

The Cretin-Derham Hall boys' 18-0 record — they've been No. 1 in Class 4A all season — includes wins over Class 3A powers Alexandria 77-71, Orono 75-65, and Totino-Grace 82-77. The Raiders haven't played a 4A top-ten team. Their closest conference win was 63-49 over Mounds View.

Also unbeaten in Class 4A is Tartan, which also hasn't played a ranked 4A team. The Titans (19-0) pulled out close wins over Hastings 73-71 and Eagan 66-63 recently to stay unscathed.

Albany in Class 2A and Cherry in Class 1A, also No. 1 ranked all season, are unbeaten, along with Waseca, ranked No. 2 behind Albany in 2A, and Southland in Class 1A.

Albany, 17-0, has beaten everyone by double digits except Pequot Lakes 63-58. Waseca is 20-0 and their closest game was 72-63 over St. Peter. Cherry is 20-0 and has beaten No. 2 Dawson-Boyd 70-64 (their only single-digit win) and No. 3 Nevis 74-59. Southland is 20-0 with every win by double digits, but they are not ranked in the Top 10.

The only unbeaten girls' team in the top two classes is Monticello in 3A, after Marshall, which was 18-0, lost to Orono 59-56 last week. Monticello is 20-0 with their closest games being 69-58 over Elk River, 87-79 over St. Michael-Albertville, and 69-59 over Delano, all in the first two weeks of the season.

Providence Academy is 21-0, including wins over three of the top 4A teams (Maple Grove, Hopkins and St. Michael-Albertville.)

Crosby-Ironton is 21-0 after thumping No. 3-ranked



Dakota Rich is the floor leader for 21-0 New London-Spicer.

Minnehaha Academy 85-65 at home on Saturday. Each team has a 4,000-point scorer, but Minnehaha's Addi Mack missed the game. Tori Oehrlein had 40 points for the Rangers.

New London-Spicer is 21-0 after holding off Anandale 53-47 last week. Their only other close game was against Minnewaska Area, 54-47. A fourth unbeaten 2A team is Royalton at 19-0, their closest games against Milaca 61-53 and Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa 62-53.

Sauk Centre was 17-0 before losing to Minnewaska Area 51-48 last week. NLS had both Sauk Centre and Crosby-Ironton on the schedule the last two years but not this year.

There are no unbeatens in Class 1A. Hillcrest Lutheran was 17-0 before losing to Wheaton-Herman-Norcross (12-7) in a shootout 93-88 last week. Sleepy Eye-St. Mary's was 18-0 before losing to Mayer Lutheran (17-2) by 65-54 last week.

It could be Crimson's year

By Bruce Strand

Maple Grove, a program seeking its first state girls basketball title, has been ranked No. 1 in Class 4A for several weeks with a close-knit senior group that's played together since grade school. The Crimson, led by Jordan Ode, are 19-2 with 12 straight wins.

"We are definitely in the conversation with the top teams in Class 4A," coach Mark Cook said. "We have a veteran group that is very driven to build what we accomplished last year. We have played a tough schedule and competed with the top teams."

The Crimson were 25-4 last season and placed fourth in the state tournament, the program's top finish ever.

Opening the season against three of the state's top teams, they beat current No. 3 Eden Prairie 77-73, lost to Providence Academy (ranked first in all classes by the Star-Tribune) 82-75 and beat current No. 5 Wayzata 56-55.

Their other loss was to Hopkins 59-55 on Dec. 28. Hopkins has four losses and is ranked second. Since the loss to Hopkins, the Crimson have won 12 straight including conquests of No. 7 St. Michael-Albertville 78-47, No. 8 Minnetonka 72-40, and Class 3A power Alexandria 70-49.

Their star is Jordan Ode, a Michigan State recruit. A 6-footer who can play any position, she is usually at point guard or wing. She's averaging 24 points and has gone past 2,000 in her career. She's rated the state's top senior recruit, and ranked by ESPN as one of the nation's top 35. Cook calls her an amazing all-around player: "She has worked so hard on her skill set to make

sure she can beat you in different ways."

A strong No. 2 scorer is Kate Holmquist, junior guard committed to Montana, averaging 14.4 points.

The next three scorers are senior triplets Lexi Hanna with 9.8 ppg, Bella Hanna 8.0 ppg, and Addie Hanna 7.4 ppg. Addie will play for Augustana, Bella for Michigan Tech and Lexi for Missouri-St. Louis.

"They are incredible. Their games are very different, but they complement each other so well," said Cook,

citing Addie as the "heady floor general," Bella for "playing bigger than she is down low" while also hitting three's, and Lexi as "the one who does all the little things" including screens and rebounding. All three are "tenacious defenders," he added.

With Sophie Anderson, a junior, adding 7.2 ppg, the Crimson can truly score from all around the dial. "They are

the most complete shooting team I have ever coached," Cook said.

They all grew up together in the youth program, and it shows in how well they play together, he pointed out.

"We have to keep working, keep improving, and take care of what we have in front of us before we start thinking about the state tournament," Cook said. First, the Crimson want to nail down a fourth straight Northwest Suburban title — they've won 64 straight conference games — before moving into the mighty Lake Conference next year.



Maple Grove players celebrated with Jordan Ode (31, middle) when she reached the 2,000 point marker.

Miss Basketball top 30 named

The following 30 players remain in contention for the Miss Basketball Award, the committee announced this week. The five finalists will be announced Sunday, March 16. The winner will be named at the All-Star Series banquet Friday, April 4.

Zahara Bishop, Benilde-St. Margaret's
Lainey Braulick, BOLD
Rylie Cother, Jackson County Central
Hope Counts, Providence Academy
Gabrielle Fineday, Cass Lake-Bena
Elise Groppoli, Hill-Murray
Kailyn Grove, Underwood
Kendra Harvey, Byron
Sophie Hawkinson, Wayzata
Lauren Hillesheim, Hopkins
Addison Hoof, Lester Prairie
Abby Hoselton, St. Michael-Albertville
Regan Juenemann, Crosby-Ironton
Sierra Korten, Sauk Centre
Kendyl Lodermeier, Goodhue
Addison Mack, Minnehaha Academy
Autumn McCall, Centennial
Mylea Monahan, Glencoe-Silver Lake
Aubrey Morrison, Walker-Hackensack-Akeley
Chloe Nuss, Totino-Grace
Jordan Ode, Maple Grove
Dakota Rich, New London-Spicer
Kaityn Rohloff, Hancock
Tori Schlagel, Eden Prairie
Aneisha Scott, DeLaSalle
Annika Southworth, St. Peter
Hadley Thul, Alexandria
Morgan Turn, Kittson County Central
Brandi Washington, Fridley
Anna Westby, Rock Ridge
Sam Wills, Visitation
Tatum Woodson, Hopkins



Top left: Aneisha Scott (shooting) and Hadley Thul (defending). Right: Zahara Bishop



Lauren Hillesheim



Jordan Ode



Aubrey Morrison

State Championships for grades 4-7 begin Sat., Feb. 15

The Pacesetter Region Playoffs in five Minnesota regions for teams in grades 4-7 will begin Saturday, Feb. 15, in Mountain Iron-Buhl and Grand Rapids. Over 60 teams have registered.

All teams play 3-4 games in one day in the Region Playoffs. All teams play in one class. Teams may play in more than one region.

Region Playoffs sites – Grades 4-7:

Feb. 15-16	Northeast	MIB/Grand Rapids
Feb. 22-23	Northwest	Bemidji
March 8-9*	Southeast	Byron/Waseca
March 8-9*	Southwest	Redwood Falls
March 15-16	Central	St. Cloud

**Teams do not play on the same dates at both sites.*

Five region champions and three wild card teams will make up the 8-team bracket in each state championship.

MN State Championships – Grades 4-7

March 29 - St. Cloud

MN MIT Championships – Grades 4-7

March 30 - St. Cloud

All teams in grades 4-7 that play in the Region Playoffs are invited to play in the MIT, Minnesota Invitational Tournament, on Sunday, March 30. All teams will play 3-4 games in one day in this “Best of the Rest” tourna-

ment.

MN State Championships – Grades 8-9

March 29-30* - St. Cloud

Teams in grades 8-9 register directly into the state tournament bracket. *Brackets with over 16 teams will require some games on March 30.

Teams should register soon at <https://www.pacesettersports.net/youth-tournaments/>

2025 Pacesetter Great Five-State Championships: MN-IA-WI-ND-SD

Minnesota state champions and runners-up will be invited to represent Minnesota in the Pacesetter Great Five-State Championships, where all teams are guaranteed to play a minimum of one game on the main Target Center floor.

Teams from Iowa, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota will join Minnesota teams to make up the field in each 8-team “Great State” bracket.

Teams that play in the Pacesetter playoff system must be school/community teams with players who all live or attend school in the same school district. Smaller schools can combine with a combined enrollment of 400 or less for grades 9-12. See further information on the Pacesetter Sports website at www.pacesettersports.net.



Alexandria girls celebrated a 2024 title

All Minnesota 8th and 9th Grade Basketball Teams invited “Straight to STATE” on March 29 in St. Cloud

MN State champions and runners-up invited to represent Minnesota at the Target Center in the Pacesetter Great Five-State Championships in the Summer of 2025

All Minnesota 8th and 9th grade girls' and boys' basketball teams are invited “Straight to STATE” by registering for the over-all Pacesetter Minnesota State Championships in St. Cloud on Saturday, March 29.

Each grade/gender group will play in one state championship bracket to determine the over-all Minnesota champion. Teams will play 3-5 games, depending on the final number of entries.

All players must attend the same school or live in the same school district. Smaller schools may combine if the combined enrollment for grades 9-12 is 400 or fewer.

Teams should register soon at <https://www.pacesettersports.net/youth-tournaments/>. The final deadline to enter is Wednesday, March 19.

Pacesetter Sports has conducted the Minnesota state championship since 1993, providing the longest-running over-all state championship system in Minnesota. All teams play as one class.

2025 Pacesetter Great Five-State Championships: MN-IA-WI-ND-SD

The Minnesota state champion and runner-up will be invited to represent Minnesota in the Pacesetter Great Five-State Championships at the Target Center, where teams from Iowa, Wisconsin, North Dakota and South Dakota will join the 8-team “Great State” bracket.

Pacesetter began the “Great State” tournament

with the Great Four-State championships in 2010 and added Wisconsin in 2018. Great State games are held in conjunction with Minnesota Lynx home game weekends.

North Dakota teams qualify through the Jr. Grand Am in Grand Forks, South Dakota teams qualify through the Willie Mac state championships in Brookings, Iowa teams qualify through the Iowa “Great State” Playoffs in Mason City on Sunday, Feb. 23, and Wisconsin team qualify in Wausau April 5-6.

Further information/registration: <https://www.pacesettersports.net/youth-tournaments/>



Boys & Girls Grades 8-9

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STATE
Minnesota
Championships

March 29-30*
St. Cloud

Use Link or Scan QR Code Above:
<https://www.pacesettersports.net/mn-state/>
Registration Deadline: Teams are asked to register ASAP

DREAMS DO COME TRUE!

The 2025 Pacesetter Minnesota State Championships will be played in St. Cloud. For grades 8-9, all Minnesota school/community teams are invited to register directly into the state championship with no limit on teams. For grades 8-9 brackets with 16 or fewer teams, games will be played on Saturday, March 29 only. *For grades 8-9 brackets with more than 16 teams, most games will be played on Saturday with some games on Sunday March 30.

ROAD TO THE TARGET CENTER!
GREAT 5-STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
IA • MN • ND • SD • WI

The Minnesota state champion and runner-up in each grade will receive a bid to represent Minnesota in the Pacesetter Great Five-State Championships at the Target Center in Minneapolis this summer.

Questions? 320.243.7460 • pacesettersportsmbn@gmail.com • www.pacesettersports.net • [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [p](#) Pacesetter Basketball

Pacesetter 2024 state champs



9th boys: Waconia



8th boys: Chatfield



7th boys: Jackson CC



9th girls: Menahga



8th girls: Mt. Iron-Buhl



7th girls: Red Lake Co.



6th boys: Marshall



5th boys: East Grand Forks



4th boys: St. Cloud Tech



6th girls: Hawley



5th girls: Chatfield



4th girls: Alexandria

ROAD TO THE TARGET CENTER

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Boys & Girls Grades 4-9

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(All MN school/community-based teams may register to play at any site)
- Grades 8-9 register directly for State



Northwest Region

Bemidji • February 22
Boys & Girls Grades 4 & 6
Bemidji • February 23
Boys & Girls Grades 5 & 7



Northeast Region

Mt. Iron-Buhl • February 15
Boys Grades 5 & 7
Grand Rapids • February 15
Girls Grades 4 & 6
Mt. Iron-Buhl • February 16
Girls Grades 5 & 7
Grand Rapids • February 16
Boys Grades 4 & 6



Central Region

St. Joseph • March 15
Boys Grades 4-7
St. Joseph • March 16
Girls Grades 4-7

MN State

St. Cloud • March 29
Boys & Girls Grades 8 & 9



Southwest Region

Redwood Falls • March 8
Boys & Girls Grades 5 & 7
Redwood Falls • March 9
Boys & Girls Grades 4 & 6



Southeast Region

Byron/Waseca • March 8
Boys & Girls Grades 4 & 6
Byron/Waseca • March 9
Boys & Girls Grades 5 & 7



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Post-season Invitations

MIT (Grades 4-7) - March 29 • State (Grades 4-7) - March 30
State (Grades 8-9) - March 29 (Over 16 teams - March 29 & 30)
Great 5-State (Grades 4-9) Summer 2025



GREAT 5-STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
IA • MN • ND • SD • WI



Buffetta, Herman each reach 600 wins

Jeff Buffetta, Mountain Iron-Buhl girls coach, and Erin Herman, Hill-Murray girls coach, each reached 600 wins recently,



Buffetta

The MIB Rangers presented Buffetta with his 600th win (against 160 losses) when they nipped Cass Lake-Bena 60-57 on Jan. 22. Buffetta, in his 25th season, has brought 13 teams to state in the last 14 years, with one championship team (2023) and one runner-up (2024). The Rangers are currently 18-2 and ranked No. 2 in Class 1A.

The H-M Pioneers logged No. 600 for Herman (against 372 losses) when they beat South St. Paul 67-39 on Jan. 15. Herman, in her 36th season as the Pioneers coach, has taken nine teams to state with two runner-up finishes. The Pioneers are 16-5 and ranked seventh in Class 3A,



Herman

Honors for Lien, Cosgriff

Jim Lien and Brian Cosgriff have received honors from the Minnesota Girls Basketball Coaches Association. Lien, longtime Walker-Hackensack-Akeley coach, got the Carl Pierson Legacy Award Winner for 2025 for career dedication. Lien, 78, in his 47th year of coach, has over 750 wins and had his first state tournament team last year. He continues to coach despite battling cancer with the help of capable assistants. Cosgriff got the John Wooden Coach of the Year award for 2025. Cosgriff coached Minnetonka to the state championship last season. He had seven state championships with Hopkins and holds the highest career winning percentage of any coach.

Oxton wins 700th with Lakeville North

John Oxton, Lakeville North boys coach for 33 seasons, reached the 700-win marker on Jan. 31 when the Panthers won at Farmington 74-56. He's one of just six boys coaches with 700 or more wins.



Oxton

Oxton has taken 12 teams to the state tournament — two with Lakeville, ten with Lakeville North -- with a state championship in 2014 and three runner-up teams. He also had a state champion team at a small Montana school, Gardiner, in 1989. His current team has a 12-7 record.

Top 100 Camp news

Pacesetter recently contacted invitees from our Top 100 Camp last summer to ask about any season highlights they would like to report. Some responses --- Julia Schmidt broke the Wheaton-Herman-Norcross scoring record (which was 1,720) while scoring 20 against Ashby. Her teammate Rachel Spilde made eight 3-points vs. Rothsay, breaking the team record by one ... Lauren Hust, Rochester Lourdes junior, got her 1,000th point Jan. 30 ... Ma'lon McCoy, St. Agnes sophomore, had 26 points, 11 rebounds and three blocks against CHOF Ashby senior Easton Nelson had a 45-point game Libby Suckert of Park Christian got her 1,000th point Anna Neyens of Mt. Iron-Buhl hit six 3-pointers in a win over Braham, and six in the first half in a win over Sacred Heart (after, she reports, the bus broke down on the highway and the boys bus had to pick them up) Aniyah Thomas of MIB had 25 points (5-for-8 on three's) against Kelliher and nine steals against Grand Rapids Lilly Hendrickson of BOLD has missed two weeks with injury but on Jan. 16 had 18 points and 3 steals vs. Mayer Lutheran ... Trinity Baker of Underwood had six three's and 25 points in a close loss and had a four-game stretch with 80 points and 12-for-25 on three's ... Ole Skrien of St. Croix Academy had 17 points in a win over Fridley ... Quentin Guanella of Alden-Conger got his 1,000th point while scoring 22 against Mankato Loyola

Making a Case for allowing a 6th Personal Foul and dropping the 1-and-1

This is a drop in the ocean, but sometimes a lot of drops starts a wave.

I believe individual players should be allowed 6 fouls instead of the current 5. Here are my reasons:

1) First of all, there is no other sport that removes a player from a game when committing unintentional contact. Intentional contact is a different story. But in basketball, you can be trying to play the correct way by taking a charge, for example...and get a foul.

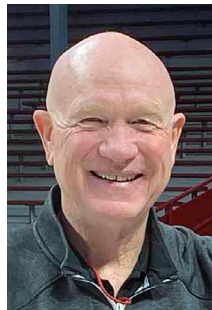
2) The game of basketball was created by James Naismith as an indoor winter game for football players. You can imagine the contact made by football players! It is no wonder the 5-foul rule was installed. But basketball became a sport of its own – so the need to expel a player for five fouls was no longer needed to assure the safety of others. Intentional fouls or flagrant fouls can be treated the same way they are today with two shots and possession.

3) Since basketball is a team game, why should it make any difference which player makes the foul? It is team defense. If the penalty is severe enough, it shouldn't matter which player fouls.

4) When a player gets two fouls early, it can affect playing time in the first quarter or first half. Three fouls mid-game or four fouls later in the game can also affect playing time. If 6 fouls were allowed, these limitations wouldn't occur.

5) Small schools or teams with a limited roster or teams dependent on one key player are disproportionately affected when playing time is affected. Losing minutes from a key player can cause a team to lose a key playoff game. Teams with a limited roster can find themselves in a very embarrassing situation – not having five players to finish the game. That circumstance is disrespectful to the game and uncomfortable for both teams and the spectators.

6) All of these issues could be alleviated by simply adding one personal foul. What's the harm? If a player fouls excessively early, the bonus rule will penalize the team. If a player fouls intentionally, the two-shot rule will penalize the foul.



Jeff McCarron

7) In Minnesota, small schools are getting smaller – and even some large schools are struggling to fill out their rosters. Community college teams also struggle to have more than eight players in many cases. Adding the 6th foul or even eliminating the player elimination for personal fouls would be much more of a blessing than a detriment.

8) Another plus is that the 6th foul takes pressure off officials, and that's good for everyone.

I tried implementing my own special foul rules in the early days of our Pacesetter tournaments because I believed in it so strongly. If I remember right, reaching 7 fouls was two shots – we have never used the 1-and-1 – and reaching 12 fouls was two shots and possession, the same as a technical foul. Individuals could not foul out. When teams reached the 12th foul, it was a killer for them because that rule also eliminated the intentional fouls late in the game. Teams couldn't get the ball back when behind late in the game, unless they stole it. There was no longer a benefit to foul – which there should never be. Penalize the fouls enough, and it doesn't matter who fouls.

Coaches reacted differently. Most understood the reasoning, but too many coaches felt it wasn't right to use this system when the rules of basketball during their seasons weren't the same. I eventually gave in. But we use the 6-foul rule for our varsity games, and I haven't heard one negative comment about it. The teams with small rosters have been very appreciative.

Added Note on Bonus Shots

The rules of the game have often changed to improve. The game originally involved a jump ball after every made basket. Into the 1970's the first five fouls in a half resulted in one free throw being given to the team fouled – so the team got one free throw instead of possession. The average number of points per possession is about 1.1, so getting one free throw – which would result .6 for 60% shooting – was more of a disadvantage to the team being fouled. Now teams get possession instead. The 1-and-1 free throw produces .96 points for 60% shooting, so that is a disadvantage for a team averaging 1.1 per possession. Two shots provides 1.2 points for 60% shooting and 1.4 for a 70% shooting. That's a good reason to eliminate the 1-and-1 and give teams two shots in the bonus. It's easier for scorekeepers and officials too.

Positive Athlete Opens Nominations for Minnesota's High-Character Student-Athletes

Publisher's Note:

I was contacted recently by Zack Phillips, who reached out to me in 2010 when he was working for the Minnesota Lynx/Timberwolves. That contact resulted in Pacesetter creating the Great Four-State Championships with all teams playing at least one game on the main Target Center floor. Over a thousand teams have enjoyed that thrill in 15 years. Zack is now director of the Great Lakes Region for Positive Athlete, which has just opened applications for Minnesota athletes. I invited him to introduce Positive Athlete to the Minnesota basketball community through this issue. We wish Zack and Positive Athlete success and look forward to seeing many benefits for Minnesota athletes. See their news release below.

-Jeff McCarron, Publisher

Minneapolis, MN (January 30, 2025) – Positive Athlete, a national organization that celebrates high-character student-athletes, is excited to announce that nominations are now open for the Positive Athlete network in Minnesota.

All 9th–12th grade student-athletes in Minnesota are eligible to be nominated by parents, coaches, teachers, administrators, or fans. Nominations are being accepted through May 9, 2025, via the Positive Athlete website: <http://www.positiveathlete.org>. Nominees, who are immediately eligible for local scholarships offered through the program, will also receive access to exclusive leadership and character development resources, as well as career networking opportunities.

Since its inception, Positive Athlete has recognized more than 50,000 high school student-athletes and coaches who demonstrate resilience, character, and a commitment to their communities. The program has also awarded over \$550,000 in college scholarships to student-athletes who make a difference both on and off the field.

“We are thrilled to bring Positive Athlete to Minnesota and honor young athletes who inspire others through their attitude and actions,” said Positive Athlete Regional Director Zack Phillips. “While athletic ability is often celebrated, we believe character, perseverance, and community impact deserve equal recognition. We are proud to partner with Pacesetter Sports to highlight and prepare Positive Athletes in Minnesota for success in life.”

NFL Hall of Famer Champ Bailey has joined Positive Athlete as the program's lead spokesperson. Bailey's dedication to youth development and leadership makes him the perfect advocate for Positive Athlete's mission to help student-athletes find value beyond their athletic ability and make a positive impact on the world around them.

Student-athletes across Minnesota who demonstrate positivity in the face of adversity, give back to their schools and communities, or uplift their teammates should be nominated. Winners will be recognized later this year through Positive Athlete's statewide awards program.

For more information or to submit a nomination, visit <https://www.positiveathlete.org>.

About Positive Athlete

Positive Athlete is a national recognition and scholarship program that is completely free to participants. Open to all high school athletes across the country, the program has been celebrating high-character student-athletes for over a decade and expanded nationally in January 2025. The program highlights student-athletes who inspire others through their character, commitment to community, and resilience.

**POSITIVE
+ATHLETE™**

MINNESOTA



CELEBRATE AND REWARD YOUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETES

Positive Athlete has expanded nationally to include Minnesota, with recognition and scholarships available beginning January 2025. We are looking for **high character student-athletes** who have overcome difficult circumstances, given back to their schools or communities in a significant way, or have an infectious positive attitude that makes everyone around them a better person.

THE POSITIVE ATHLETE MOVEMENT IS MORE THAN A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. WE HELP PREPARE ATHLETES FOR LIFE.

Nominees will receive access to exclusive leadership and character development resources, as well as career growth and networking opportunities.

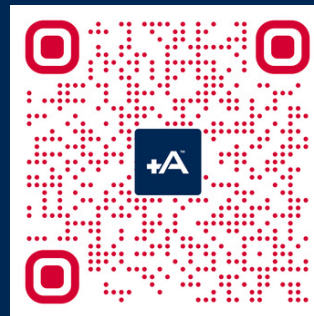
Our mission is to encourage student-athletes to find their value beyond just athletic ability and to make an impact on the world around them.

FREE AND EASY TO NOMINATE

- Takes as little as **5 minutes** to complete.
- There is **no limitation** on the number of kids you can recognize. Grades 9-12, any sport, and boys and girls are applicable for nominations.
- **Special category** for coaches and athletic directors.
- Every nominated student-athlete is immediately eligible to win a **\$2,500 scholarship**. Scholarship funds are increasing daily, with over **\$100,000 available** to be awarded in 2025!
- **Nominations close May 9th, 2025.**

NOMINATE TODAY!

POSITIVEATHLETE.ORG
OR SCAN THIS QR CODE



IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

GREAT LAKES REGION

ZACK PHILLIPS
REGIONAL DIRECTOR
ZPHILLIPS@POSITIVEATHLETE.ORG

PACESETTER "Formula for Success"

1) TOP COACHES: Who do you prefer?

-Master Coaches: Coaches who love to teach and have shown exceptional ability in relating the most important fundamentals for basketball success at all levels.

-Championship Coaches: Coaches who have won championships as a coach or player and have an intense motivation to share their secrets for success.

-Young Guns: Young coaches who have had early success as a player or coach and have demonstrated great enthusiasm and insight.

2) Strong Fundamental Teaching: Through 45 years Pacesetter has provided top coaches who teach the most important skills for game success at every age.

3) Low Costs: Pacesetter continues to keep fees at very affordable levels for the high quality of the program.

4) Low Ratios: Pacesetter averages one coach for every 9-10 players and tries not to exceed 15-1 for any session.

COMMENTS FROM COACHES:

The Tour of Champions camp was exactly what my players needed! Coach Walker connected with athletes, remembering them from one year to the next, and he individualized workouts based on my team's needs. Every kid got better after just a few hours!
Ally Meserole, Abbotsford, WI

Kids had a blast and did not even know they were increasing their basketball skills. I look forward to having them in the future.
Aaron Morris, Park Rapids, MN

This was an exceptional camp and every player that was there is better because of it. Players worked hard and had fun while learning several skill drills they can do on their own.
Tony Herder, Hankinson, ND

Eli is very knowledgeable and the children really enjoyed his energy and how he taught different skills. Camp was well run, engaging for kids, a great combination of fun and skills learning. Communication with Pacesetter leading up to camp was fantastic! Pacesetter was very easy to work with, did all the work, and was very organized.
Naomi Moerke, Barrett, MN

Do you want THE BEST for your players?

"Tour of Champions" Meet a few of our coaches....



JOHN CARLSON
• Former Litchfield Boys' Head Coach
• 3-time MN State champion
• MN Coach of the Year 2000
• MN BB Coaches Assoc. Hall Of Fame



WENDY KOHLER
• Winningest Female Basketball Coach in MN
• Class AAA State Champions - 1997, State appearances 11
• Minnesota "Coach of the Year" - 3 times
• National Coach of the Year finalist - 2019



SASCHA HANSEN
• Two-time state champion at Marshall 2001, 2002
• Played basketball at SCU 2002-2006
• Three-time captain and All conference
• Senior Athlete of the Year at St. Cloud State



TOM VIX
• 16 State tournaments - 684-239 record
• State Champion 3 times, Runner-up twice
• Minnesota State IA Coach of the Year 1996, 2018
• National Coach of the Year 2018 Finalist



PAUL McDONALD
• Former Head men's coach Vermillion Comm. College
• 18-time state coach MCC
• 2-time HS state champion
• Record: 538-248 at Vermillion Community College

... and many more (see inside)

**"To become a Champion,
Learn from a Champion"**



Website: www.pacesettersports.net
Email: pacesettersportsmbbn@gmail.com
Phone: 320-243-7460

CAMP OF CHAMPIONS! ...that comes to YOUR school!



PACESETTER BASKETBALL CAMPS

Quality Camps for Over 45 Years!

Customize your camp to YOUR program needs
Contact Tracey: pacesettersportsmbbn@gmail.com for more information and to book a camp at YOUR school

46th Year!

2025 PACESETTER BASKETBALL CAMPS

This summer will be Pacesetter's 46th year providing high-quality, low-cost camps.

"Seeking the BEST for players and coaches since 1980"



TOUR OF CHAMPIONS CAMPS • 1-2 days

6-8 hour program/day
(Option of one to four sessions per day)

College coaches • State champions • Coaching legends

Recent TOC directors:
Tom Vix, Dave Galovich, John Carlson, Wendy Kohler, Paul McDonald, Larry McKenzie, Dave Walker, Steve Lingenfelter, Jeff McCarron, Sascha Hansen, Katie Borowicz, Barry Wohler, Alex Carlson, Gary Thomas

"TOC" CAMP OPTIONS

8-hour day:

One group - 8 hours - \$100/player/day
Two groups - 4 hours each - \$60/player/day
Four groups - 2 hours each - \$40/player/day

6-hour day:

One group - 6 hours each - \$80/player/day
Two groups - 3 hours each - \$50/player/day

For two-day camps, double fees.
Invite a champion to your gym!
Email pacesettersportsmbbn@gmail.com

"To become a Champion, Learn from a Champion"

TOC Camps:

- High-profile coach directing
- Directors coach 100% of camp
- Host coaches get free clinic
- Players receive best coaching tips
- If no rent, 10% of fees donated back to program.* *TOC camps only
- Open to all players from area
- Ideal for players grades 5-12
- 1-day or 2-day camp options

website: www.pacesettersports.net



TRADITIONAL AREA CAMPS • 3-4 days

It's easy! Select one of the most popular "Area Camp" options from the samples on the right... or create your own using the following hours and fees:

Area Camp	Session Length	3-day camp	4-day camp
	1.5 hours	\$65/player	\$80/player
	2 hours	\$80/player	\$100/player
	2.5 hours	\$95/player	\$120/player
	3 hours	\$110/player	\$140/player
	4 hours	\$140/player	\$180/player
	6 hours	\$200/player	\$260/player

Sign up soon! Directors' dates fill up quickly!

Choose any dates: May 27 - Aug. 8
Camps preferably should be:
Mon-Thurs, Mon-Wed or Tues-Thurs.

To Become the BEST, Learn from the BEST!

BOOK YOUR 2025 SUMMER CAMP SOON!
(Book by April 15 to participate in the free t-shirt program)

email: pacesettersportsmbbn@gmail.com



AREA CAMP OPTIONS

Select one of these popular choices or create your own:
Prices per player

A. All-School Program	Boys & Girls	3 days	4 days
8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Girls Grades 9-12	\$80	\$100
10:00 - 12:00 noon	Girls Grades 5-8	\$80	\$100
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.	Boys Grades 5-8	\$80	\$100
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Boys Grades 9-12	\$80	\$100
B. Single-gender Program	Boys or Girls	3 days	4 days
8:30 - 11:30 a.m.	Grades 9-12	\$110	\$140
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Grades 5-8	\$110	\$140
C. "Young Stars" Program	Boys & Girls	3 days	4 days
8:00 - 9:30 a.m.	Grades 3-4	\$65	\$80
9:30 - 11:00 a.m.	Grades 5-6	\$65	\$80
11:00 - 12:00 noon	Grades 1-2	\$50	\$60
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Grades 7-8	\$110	\$140

D. Pacesetter Varsity Intensive Training 3 or 4 days
9:00 - 12:00 noon & 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. daily
3 days • 18 hours \$200/week
4 days • 24 hours \$260/week

E. Create your own (fees listed to left)
Camp format should involve five or more hours/day to attract top directors.

Area Camps:

- Great Directors
- Directors coach 100% of camp
- Low-cost options most families can afford
- Flexible hours/grades - customize the schedule to fit your needs
- Close camp or open to all area players
- Ideal for players of all ages
- 3-day or 4-day camp options

phone: 320-243-7460