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# Wayzata eyes another title

## T-G, Goodhue, Pelican also ranked 1st

By Bruce Strand

Wayzata has reached the state Class 4A championship game five straight years, winning three of them, including last year, and the Trojans are ranked No. 1 again, with a chance to tie the record of six straight title games.

Totino-Grace, fourth place in the state last year after three consecutive Class 3A championships, looks like the team to beat again, and holds the No. 1 rank by Breakdown.

### BOYS BASKETBALL PREVIEW

There's no clear favorites for the top spot in the lower two classes. Goodhue is installed at No. 1 in Class 2A and Pelican Rapids in Class 3A.

We are using Breakdown's preseason rankings. The coaches association ranking won't start until next week, and we will use those the rest of the year. Breakdown only does pre season rankings.

If Wayzata reaches the finals again, they will tie the record set by DeLaSalle while nabbing six straight Class 3A crowns from 2012-17. Wayzata's domination is an especially remarkable feat with 10-time state champion Hopkins in their section. They've beaten Hopkins in the section the last three years.

In the last five years, Wayzata, coached by Bryan Schnettler, is 130-17, including 29-4 last season. The Trojans beat Cretin-Derham Hall in the 2021 finals, lost



**Christian Wiggins is one reason Wayzata is ranked first.**

SmugMug photo

to Park Center in 2022, beat Park Center in an overtime in 2023, lost in a huge upset to Minnetonka in 2024, and beat CDH last year.

Five of their top seven return, including the three senior guards who led them in scoring last year: Christian Wiggins (19.1 points per game), Nolen Anderson (17.5) and Isaac Olmstead (15.6). Wiggins is committed to Iowa State, Anderson to the Gophers and Olmstead to Minnesota-Duluth. Also back are 6-foot-5 strongman Tommy Shunmugavelu, effective at guarding big men, and junior guard Xaviahn Ivey. Key loss was Wyatt McBeth, all-conference guard now playing for Minnesota-Duluth.

Hopkins, always a top-five team, usually top-three, is ranked second, led by Jayden Moore (1,996 points), Ahmad Nur and Xavier Felix, a transfer from Park Center. Head coach Ken Novak Jr. -- who is seven wins from 1,000 -- is now assisted by James Ware, a former Hopkins standout who made Park Center a perennial power. Felix followed Ware to Hopkins.

Maple Grove, third place last year, bolstered by transfers Max Iverson from Delano and Jack Thelen from St. Michael-Albertville, alongside returning starter Baboucarr Ann (14.9 ppg), is ranked third.

Totino-Grace is top-ranked in Class 3A, an easy pick with 2025 champion Alexandria bumped up to Class 4A this year. Totino-Grace was state champion the three previous years. The Eagles were dethroned by Alex 73-65 in the semifinals last year, then lost the third-place game to Orono 87-85, finishing 23-7.

Totino-Grace lost a Mr. Basketball finalist (Chase Watley, now at Wofford) but brings back Drake recruit 6-foot-6 forward Dothan Ijadimbola (12.4 ppg) and all-conference guards Tian Chatman (9.6) and Malachi Hill (14.0). They gained Deangelo Dungey, a senior transferring from Breck, where he averaged 14 points and helped them place third in Class 2A.

Always-powerful DeLaSalle, led by Jaeden Udean (18 ppg last year) and Evan Miller (12 ppg), is ranked second. The Islanders have collected 12 state titles, most of any school, and hope to nab their first since 2019.

One interesting storyline is how Alexandria fares in its first year of 4A after nabbing its first state title in 3A. Their 2025 Mr. Basketball Chase Thompson has moved on to Clemson but the Cardinals, ranked No. 5 in Class 4A, still have plenty



**Mason Witt and Alexandria moved up to Class 4A.**

MN BB News photo

of firepower, led by cousins Mason and Talan Witt in the back court. In fact, the Cardinals won Pacesetter's Sweet 16 all-class showcase in August, beating Hopkins in the finals.

In Class 2A, Albany graduated heavily after winning its second title in three years. Goodhue, Montevideo and Jackson County Central are ranked 1-2-3. Goodhue moves up from Class 1A, after going 22-10 and placing sixth at state last year. The Wildcats bring back Alex Loos, who averaged 18.6 points last year as a freshman, along with Luke, Michael and Owen Roschen, who combined for 36 points per game. Luke quarterbacked the Wildcat football team to a state runner-up finish. Montevideo beat JCC 62-61 in last year's Section 3AA finals, led by Griffin Epema, a junior with 1,120 career points. See separate article on JCC.

In Class 1A, champion Dawson-Boyd graduated heavily. Breakdown put Pelican Rapids at No. 1. The Vikings return four starters who combined for 42 points per game, led by guard Miguel Torres, who nailed 84 three-pointers, from a 24-8 team that reached state and lost twice. Cherry, a state entrant four straight years with the 1A title in 2025, is ranked second, led by senior Noah Asuma (1,949 career points) and junior Isaiah Asuma (1,483), who've played on all those state teams.

## *Hills-Beaver Creek seeks another first*

**H**ills-Beaver Creek captured its first nine-man football state championship in November. The Patriots' next quest is to try reach the state basketball tournament for the first time.

Their top three players — seniors Micah Bush and Jamin Metzger, and sophomore Brodie Metzger — are the same trio that led the football team in their 46-22 win over Hillcrest Lutheran in the Prep Bowl. Jamin Metzger completed 16 of 18 passes for 238 yards and touchdowns to Bush and Brodie Metzger, while running for two TD's himself. Brodie Metzger ran for 126 yards and two touchdowns.

“Nearly our entire roster is made up of multisport athletes, and most of them were part of the football team's run to a state championship,” coach Chad Rauk said. “We do have two players currently recovering from lower-leg injuries.”

Jamin, a 6-foot-5 forward, Brodie, a 6-foot-3 guard, and Micah, a 6-foot-1 guard, were All-Red Rock Conference picks last season when the Patriots went 17-1 in conference and 26-3 overall. They lost to state champion Dawson-Boyd 59-52 in the Section 3A finals. Breakdown has the Patriots ranked No. 3.

“There is definitely excitement as we head into a new season,” Rauk said. “Every year brings a new group and new opportunities, so we focus on taking things one practice and one game at a time, with the goal of continually improving and playing our best basketball in March.”

# TOP 50 PLAYERS EACH CLASS

## CLASS 1A

**Bertha-Hewitt** — Brady Rach (sr)  
**Barnum** — Julian Beckstrand (sr)  
**Braham** — Tyler Eklund (sr), Soren Lilly (jr), Tanner Doble (sr)  
**Browerville** — Jayden Schultz (sr)  
**Cherry** — Noah Asuma (sr), Isaiah Asuma (jr)  
**Central MN Christian** — Asher Wieberdink (jr)  
**Dawson-Boyd** — Gunner Liebl (sr)  
**East Central** — Benjamin Carlin (sr), Xavior LeTexier (sr)  
**Edgerton** — Kade Moffitt (sr)  
**Ely** — Jack Davies (sr)  
**Fertile-Beltrami** — Preston Hanson (sr), Drew Gullickson (sr)  
**Floodwood** — Jonah Spindler (sr)  
**Frazee** — Adam Vigen (sr)  
**Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop** — Cole Jacobson (sr)  
**Hayfield** — Charles Walker (so)  
**Henning** — Kale Misegades (sr)  
**Hills-Beaver Creek** — Jamin Metzger (sr), Micah Bush (sr)  
**Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton** — Daulton Bauer (sr), Gavin Bauer (so)  
**Kelliher-Northome** — Anthony Johnson (sr)  
**Kenyon-Wanamingo** — Oliver Bauer (jr)  
**Kittson County Central** — Kellon Johnson (sr)  
**Lakeview** — Braylon Breyfogle (jr)  
**LeRoy-Ostrander** — Reid Hungerholt (jr)  
**Liberty Classical** — Sam Rupnow (sr), Ethan Richter (sr)  
**Madelia** — Kaydon Firchau (so)  
**Mankato Loyola** — Colvin Winter (so)  
**Nevis** — AJ Bessler (sr)  
**Norman County East/Ulen-Hitterdahl** — Jace Braseth (sr)  
**Park Christian** — Isaac Jacobson (sr)  
**Pelican Rapids** — Miguel Torres (sr)  
**Red Lake County Central** — Connor Duden (sr)  
**Schaeffer Academy** — Luke Friese (sr)  
**Sebeka** — Max Lake (jr)  
**Sleepy Eye** — Brayden Heiderscheidt (jr)  
**Southland** — Tate Goergen (jr)  
**South Ridge** — Gavin Willeck (jr)  
**Springfield** — Bryan Buerkle (sr), Brecken Heiling (sr)  
**Stehen-Argyle** — Caden Pagnac (sr)  
**Yellow Medicine East** — Wakinyan Greycloud (sr)  
**Win-E-Mac** — Joe Courneya (jr)

## CLASS 2A

**Aitkin** — Isaac Asmus (sr)  
**Annandale** — Colton Purcell (jr)  
**Belle Plaine** — Ethan Martin (sr)  
**Blake** — Carson McMichael (sr)  
**Blooming Prairie** — Gabe Staloch (jr)  
**Blue Earth Area** — William Bromeland (sr)  
**Caledonia** — Grant King (so)  
**Cannon Falls** — Ryan Hjellming (sr), Miles Rehtzigel (jr)  
**Crosby-Ironton** — Jack Kovatovich (sr)  
**Dover-Eyota** — Mathew Matejka (jr)  
**East Grand Forks** — Carson McDonald (sr), Chase Lindgren (sr)  
**Fairmont** — Logan Junkermeier (sr)  
**Foley** — Jack Abfalter (jr)  
**Glencoe-Silver Lake** — Ethan Sonju (sr), Lincoln Busse (jr)  
**Goodhue** — Alex Loos (so), Luke Roschen (sr)  
**Greenway/Nashwauk-Keewatin** — Stephen McGee (sr)  
**Hiawatha Collegiate** — King James (jr)  
**Holdingsford** — Dawson Hofer (jr)  
**Holy Family** — Lexn Grof (sr)  
**Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted** — Alex Stueven (jr)  
**Jackson County Central** — Roman Voss (sr), Weston Rowe (sr)  
**Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg** — Gavin Mulder (sr)  
**Lake City** — Gavyn Lorenson (jr)  
**LeSueur-Henderson** — Hunter Vinkemeier (jr)  
**Maple River** — Cole Davis (jr)  
**Maranatha Christian** — Marcus Marshall (jr)  
**Montevideo** — Griffin Epema (jr)  
**Morris Area/Chokio-Alberta** — Riley Asmus (sr), Alex Asmus (jr)  
**Norwood Young America** — Kyson Evenski (sr)  
**Osakis** — Andrew Jones (sr)  
**Paynesville** — Carter Flanders (sr)  
**Nova Classical** — Caleb Taylor (sr)  
**Pierz** — Nathan Cekalla (sr)  
**Roseau** — Jordan Borowicz (jr)  
**St. Cloud Cathedral** — Salifou Camara (sr)  
**St. Paul Academy** — Ezra Cunningham (sr)  
**Sauk Centre** — Jacob Drevlow (sr)  
**Spectrum** — Bryce Gaustad (jr)  
**Staples-Motley** — Eli Rutten (sr)  
**Thief River Falls** — Bridger Wilcox (sr)  
**Triton** — Pierce Petersohn (sr)  
**Waseca** — Deron Russell (sr)  
**Waterville-Elysian-Morristown** — Talen Taylor (sr)  
**Zumbrota-Mazepa** — Ethan Miller (sr)

# TOP 50 PLAYERS EACH CLASS

## CLASS 3A

**Austin** — Cole Hebrink (sr)  
**Becker** — Bryce Paumen (sr), Sawyer Brown (sr)  
**Byron** — Fisher Kruckeberg (sr),  
**DeLaSalle** — Evan Miller (sr), Jaeden Odean (jr), Kamar Thomas (jr)  
**Delano** — Maximus Iversen (sr)  
**Detroit Lakes** — Damarion Moss (sr)  
**Duluth Denfeld** — Carter Brown (jr), Lee Brooks (jr)  
**Faribault** — Ryan Kreager (sr), Breuer Wolf (so)  
**Grand Rapids** — Joseph Sutherland (sr)  
**Hermantown** — Sawyer Sens (jr)  
**Hibbing** — Raymond Brau (jr), Jack Bottoms (jr)  
**Holy Angels** — Blake Nixon (sr)  
**Mahtomedi** — Mark Graff (sr), Willie Roelofs (jr)  
**Mankato East** — Lucas Gustafson (sr), Amari Nobles (sr)  
**Minneapolis Roosevelt** — Calvin Peterson (sr)  
**Minneapolis South** — Jumair Wright (so)  
**New Ulm** — Mitchell Hopp (jr)  
**Northfield** — Kayden Oakland (sr)  
**North St. Paul** — Terrence Horton (jr)  
**Orono** — Grant Hansen (jr), Dane Skime (sr)  
**Princeton** — Noah Stencel (sr)  
**Richfield** — Demondre Collins (jr), Tyrese Hagler (jr), Waleed Muhammad (jr)  
**Robbinsdale Cooper** — Ajavion Wiley-Hunt (sr)  
**Sartell** — Bennett Bommersbach (sr), Maddox Lewis (sr)  
**St. Anthony Village** — Brett Siroin (sr)  
**St. Cloud Apollo** — Micah Nwachaukwu (sr)  
**St. Peter** — Owen Potts (sr)  
**St. Thomas Academy** — Lars Osteraas (sr)  
**St. Paul Como Park** — Hezekiah Bradshaw (sr), Contrell Jenkins (sr)  
**South St. Paul** — Donte Branch (jr)  
**Totino-Grace** — Dothan Ijadimbola (sr), AJ Taban (sr), Malachi Hill (jr), Tian Chatman (sr)  
**St. Paul Johnson** — Elijah Moseman (sr)  
**Willmar** — Avery Christensen (sr)  
**Zimmerman** — Thomas McEachern (sr)

## CLASS 4A

**Alexandria** — Talen Witt (sr), Mason Witt (sr)  
**Anoka** — Drey Ellis (sr)  
**Apple Valley** — Trey Parker (sr), Camare Young (sr)  
**Bemidji** — Jaxon Boecher (sr), Austin Riewer (sr)  
**Blaine** — Shiloh Ayitey (sr)  
**Centennial** — Tristan Hanson (sr)  
**Chanhausen** — Bennett Barger (jr)  
**Cretin-Derham Hall** — JoJo Mitchell (sr), Ty Schlagel (jr)  
**Duluth East** — Ty Nyberg (sr)  
**Eagan** — Kevin Kemp (sr), Alex Schroeffer (sr)  
**Eastview** — Ja'Carion Green (sr)  
**East Ridge** — Cedric Tomes (sr), Bennett Skinner (sr)  
**Eden Prairie** — Hamze Yusuf (sr)  
**Edina** — Vincent Cronin (jr)  
**Elk River** — Levi Harris (sr)  
**Forest Lake** — DJ Westman (sr)  
**Hastings** — Matthew Foss (sr)  
**Hopkins** — Jayden Moore (sr), Xavier Frelix (sr), Ahmad Nur (jr)  
**Lakeville North** — Owen Brezinski (jr), Dane Danielson (sr)  
**Maple Grove** — Jack Thelen (jr), Baboucarr Ann (jr), Max Iverson (sr)  
**Moorhead** — David Mack (jr)  
**Rochester Mayo** — Will Gyarmaty (sr), Reggie Parker (sr)  
**Prior Lake** — Kobby Sam-Brew (jr)  
**Rosemount** — Jack Burke (sr), Mayon Dixon (sr)  
**St. Paul Central** — Elijah Moseman (sr), Sefi Wittington (sr)  
**Spring Lake Park** — Nolan Myren (sr)  
**Tartan** — Kevin Wilson Jr. (so), Duke King (sr), Tyrel Pride (sr)  
**Two Rivers** — Lamont Michaels (sr)  
**Waconia** — William Kirsch (sr)  
**Wayzata** — Christian Wiggins (sr), Nolen Anderson (sr), Isaac Olmstead (sr)  
**White Bear Lake** — Colin Piper (sr)

# BREAKDOWN BOYS RANKINGS

## CLASS 4A

1. Wayzata
2. Hopkins
3. Maple Grove
4. Cretin-Derham Hall
5. Alexandria
6. Tartan
7. Prior Lake
8. East Ridge
9. Apple Valley
10. Rochester Mayo
11. Eagan
12. Minnetonka
13. Edina
14. Moorhead
15. Osseo

## CLASS 3A

1. Totino-Grace
2. DeLaSalle
3. Richfield
4. Mankato East
5. Mahtomedi
6. St. Paul Johnson
7. Orono
8. Becker
9. Hibbing
10. Faribault
11. St. Peter
12. Duluth Denfeld
13. Northfield
14. Holy Angels
15. Austin

## CLASS 2A

1. Goodhue
2. Montevideo
3. Jackson County Central
4. Minnehaha Academy
5. Holy Family Catholic
6. Breck
7. Pequot Lakes
8. Lake City
9. Maranatha Christian
10. Waseca
11. Belle Plaine
12. Lake Crystal-  
Wellcome Memorial
13. Glencoe-Silver Lake
14. Rushford-Peterson
15. East Grand Forks

## CLASS 1A

1. Pelican Rapids
2. Cherry
3. Hills-Beaver Creek
4. Red Lake County
5. Janesville-Waldorf-  
Pemberton
6. Dawson-Boyd
7. Braham
8. Fertile-Beltrami
9. Park Christian
10. Springfield
11. East Central
12. Central MN Christian
13. Henning
14. Liberty Classical
15. Nevis

# COACHES ASSN GIRLS TOP 10

(Issued Sunday, Dec. 1)

## CLASS 4A

1. Hopkins 3-1
2. Minnetonka 4-0
3. Rosemount 3-0
4. Lakeville North 1-1
5. Wayzata 1-1
6. Maple Grove 2-1
7. Eastview 2-2
8. Rochester Mayo 2-1
9. Waconia 4-0
10. Chaska 1-2

## CLASS 3A

1. Benilde-St. Margaret's 3-0
2. Orono 2-1
3. Marshall 0-0
4. Cretin-Derham Hall 1-2
5. Hill-Murray 2-1
6. Stewartville 2-1
7. Becker 1-0
8. Byron 2-0
9. Delano 1-3
10. Rock Ridge 2-0

## CLASS 2A

1. Providence Academy 2-1
2. Minnehaha Academy 2-1
3. Crosby-Ironton 0-1
4. Duluth Marshall 0-1
5. Goodhue 1-1
6. Rochester Lourdes 2-0
7. Minnewaska Area 1-0
8. New London-Spicer 1-0
9. Royalton 0-0
10. Sauk Centre 1-0

## CLASS 1A

1. Sleepy Eye St. Mary's 3-0
2. Mountain Iron-Buhl 3-0
3. MACCRAY 2-0
4. Kelliher-Northome 1-0
5. Hillcrest Lutheran 1-1
6. Sacred Heart 0-0
7. Mayer Lutheran 1-3
8. Hills-Beaver Creek 0-0
9. Braham 2-1
10. Hayfield 1-0

# Gridiron grit powers JCC

By Bruce Strand

Jackson County Central experienced both the agony and the ecstasy of championship games in 2025.

Last March, a late-season surge in basketball after they finally got two key starters healthy landed them in the Section 3AA finals, where the Huskies led Montevideo by seven with a minute left but lost just before the buzzer 62-61. Last month, the Huskie football team, with many of the same guys, were locked in a Prep Bowl thriller against Goodhue, both teams unbeaten. They took the lead with four minutes left, 20-15, and held on with a defensive stand.

That victory capped a three-year run when they went 38-1 with Class 2A titles the last two years and runner-up finish the year before. The Huskies also went to state in basketball in 2024.

This winter, two stars with football scholarships — Roman Voss and Weston Rowe — will lead the basketball team's efforts to bounce back from last year's near-miss and not only reach state but take aim at another state title. The Huskies are ranked No. 3 in Class 2A.

"We have a very motivated group. There is a lot of excitement about the team," coach Alex Hein acknowledged. "They put in a lot of work going into this season, hoping to avenge last season's section loss."

Voss, 6-foot-4, 225-pound quarterback, is the number one football prospect in the state and the pride of the Gophers recruiting class. Rowe, a 6-foot-6, 280-pound offensive lineman, signed with South Dakota State. Voss has 1,598 career points and Rowe 1,086.

Voss would be a D-2 cager if not for football, said Hein. "Roman is extremely strong and athletic. He is able to get to the rim at will, a great cutter, excellent in transition — and can guard one through five on defense. Great leader." Rowe, meanwhile, is both an inside and outside force. "He is strong, has great feet, can score in the post, and he shot over 38 percent last year on three's. Also a great leader."

The Huskies were 24-5 last year. Another key starter back is guard Ben Gallagher, a third double digit scorer. To an already strong lineup, an intriguing transfer student was added to the mix as 6-foot-10 Sullivan Hall, a senior, moved in from Iowa. "We're very excited about



**Roman Voss (1,598 points), starred in the Prep Bowl and sustained an injury.**

Smug Mug photo

him," Hein said. The fifth slot will be manned by senior Mason Foster and junior Carter Buhl.

Having a great football team cuts into basketball when half your roster also played football, as is the case with JCC. Injuries are a problem. This will be the third straight year they've had a starter sidelined early. Last year, Gallagher and Voss both missed 20 games. This year, there's just one player dinged up from football, but that's Voss, nursing a back injury after rushing for 252 yards and all three touchdowns in the Prep Bowl. "He has a back injury that we are hoping is minor," said Hein, estimating that Voss might miss only a few games or possibly more than a month.

There's also the matter of a football players having a very late start for basketball — but, as Hein said, "It is definitely a good problem to have. We have a lot of really strong and athletic kids."

Last year, JCC postponed one game, but this year they are diving into the schedule as is. "It is a challenge, getting fully prepared for the first game, with football players not having a lot of practice," Hein said. "So we don't get too complicated and try to focus on the things that we want to be really good at."

The JCC seniors were champions of Pacesetter's Great Five State tournament in fourth and fifth grades. That success got the boys thinking maybe they could do something big in high school, too. This is their chance.

"We truly enjoy the whole Pacesetter experience!" Mike Gunderson, Detroit Lakes

Boys & Girls Grades 4-9

# 2026 Minnesota YOUTH BASKETBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

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- Grades 8-9 register directly for State



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 Bemidji • February 21  
 Boys & Girls Grades 4 & 6  
 Bemidji • February 22  
 Boys & Girls Grades 5 & 7



**Northeast Region**  
 Mt. Iron-Buhl • February 14  
 Boys Grades 5 & 7  
 Grand Rapids • February 14  
 Girls Grades 5 & 7  
 Mt. Iron-Buhl • February 15  
 Girls Grades 4 & 6  
 Grand Rapids • February 15  
 Boys Grades 4 & 6



**Central Region**  
 St. Cloud • February 14  
 Boys & Girls Grades 4 & 6  
 St. Cloud • February 15  
 Boys & Girls Grades 5 & 7

### MN State

St. Cloud • March 20  
 Boys & Girls Grades 8 & 9



**Southwest Region**  
 Redwood Falls • February 21  
 Boys & Girls Grades 5 & 7  
 Redwood Falls • February 22  
 Boys & Girls Grades 4 & 6



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**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**

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 - 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 SCSU 2002-2005  
 - 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 1998, 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)

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 "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 - \$105/player/day  
 Two-groups - 4 hours each - \$65/player/day  
 Four groups - 2 hours each - \$45/player/day  
**6-hour day:**  
 One group - 6 hours each - \$85/player/day  
 Two groups - 3 hours each - \$55/player/day

For two-day camps, contact for pricing.  
 Invite a champion to your gym!  
 Email [pacesettersportsmbbn@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://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	\$70/player	\$85/player
	2 hours	\$85/player	\$105/player
	2.5 hours	\$100/player	\$125/player
	3 hours	\$115/player	\$145/player
	4 hours	\$145/player	\$185/player
	6 hours	\$205/player	\$265/player

Sign up soon! Directors' dates fill up quickly!

Choose any dates: May 26 - Aug. 6  
 Camps preferably should be:  
 Mon-Thurs, Mon-Wed or Tues-Thurs.

**To Become the BEST,  
Learn from the BEST!**

BOOK YOUR 2026 SUMMER CAMP SOON!  
 (Book by April 15 to receive registration discounts)

email: [pacesettersportsmbbn@gmail.com](mailto: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	\$85	\$105
10:00 - 12:00 noon	Girls Grades 5-8	\$85	\$105
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.	Boys Grades 5-8	\$85	\$105
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Boys Grades 9-12	\$85	\$105

  

B. Single-gender Program	Boys or Girls	3 days	4 days
8:30 - 11:30 a.m.	Grades 9-12	\$115	\$145
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Grades 5-8	\$115	\$145

  

C. "Young Stars" Program	Boys & Girls	3 days	4 days
8:00 - 9:30 a.m.	Grades 3-4	\$70	\$85
9:30 - 11:00 a.m.	Grades 5-6	\$70	\$85
11:00 - 12:00 noon	Grades 1-2	\$55	\$65
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Grades 7-8	\$115	\$145

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	\$205/week
4 days • 24 hours	\$265/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

# Kunze's take on Gophers

*Terry Kunze, a Gopher star guard in the 60's, former college and pro coach (in Europe), and current Mr. Basketball committee member, does occasional commentary for MN Basketball News. We asked Terry to assess the Gophers under new coach Niko Medved.*

After watching seven games, there are a lot of things that come to mind about the Gophers. First off, they have brought in 13 new players and have only two returning players, Isaac Asuma from Cherry and Grayson Grove (who red-shirted last year) from Alexandria.

The question is how are they going to compete in the loaded Big Ten Conference. Purdue is ranked No. 1 — big, experienced, talented, with chance to win it all — while Michigan, Michigan State, Indiana, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Maryland and Illinois are also packed with talent. The portal system benefits the best teams as they bring in the top talent year after year.

The Gophers, in Medved's first year, after a good run at Colorado State, will feature an offense that allows all players to score. They play together. But they must be at their best and shoot well to handle Big Ten opponents. They really lack size and won't get many points inside. It appears they are going to play a lot in transition, hoping to beat teams down the court. They're capable of shooting, but everyone knows defense and rebounding is what wins games. They'll struggle with offense, rebounding, and post-ups by the bigs they face.

They are focusing on the starting rotations and this may change at times to have the best lineups and rotations depending on the opponent.

The team is led by Cade Tyson, 6-7 senior forward, a portal transfer from North Carolina who played only 11 minutes per game there last year. The year before he played for Belmont, shot 47 percent on three's and

decided to try UNC. Cade can score for the Gophers and must not get in foul trouble. Although not overly athletic, he is skilled and knows how to play.

Chansey Willis, 6-2 junior guard, has good all-around skills, especially passing. He gets the break going in transition with great speed. A solid defender who will run the show offensively. He led Western Michigan with 16.8 points per game. He might be suspect from outside but looks to penetrate and dish rather than shoot.



**Cade Tyson, a portal transfer from UNC, will be a leader.**  
University of Minnesota photo

Isaac Asuma, 6-3 sophomore guard, is an excellent player with great skills and feel for the game, excellent passer and super defender. He must look to score more than last year (5.6 ppg) since he is a very capable offensive player. He makes the team better. It could be a breakout season for him as he matures.

Jaylen Crocker-Johnson, 6-9 junior

forward, came in with Medved from Colorado State, where he averaged about nine points and five rebounds as starter. Although not super athletic, he is a tough 240-pounder who will go after you. He plays inside-out and will not be outworked. Not a great shooter but will knock down three's if left open. Jaylen must have a good season for Gophers to be successful.

Langston Reynolds, 6-4 senior guard, was first-team all-conference for Northern Colorado, averaging 16 points and 5.6 rebounds, shooting 59 percent, shining against the better opponents. He is tough to cover, gets inside on drives and rebounds, but a poor shooter from the floor and the line.

Grayson Grove, 6-9 freshman from Alexandria, after redshirt year, has shown he belongs at this level. He's athletic with excellent passing skills and a capable shooter, runs the floor well and sets good picks. Eventually he will make shots after getting more playing time. A player with a fine future.

Robert Vaihola, 6-8 senior, started for San Jose State last year, averaging 7.5 points and 7.5 rebounds (fourth in the league). At 265 pounds, he will be able to keep some bigs off the blocks. He scores inside and looks to be an active offensive rebounder although undersized. He's a willing passer. He's also a major player for this team.

Kai Shinholster, 6-5 freshman, is a good athlete who can shoot and defend. He will command more time as the year goes on. I think he will blossom into a solid power five player

B.J. Omot, 6-8 junior who has struggled with injuries, is a skilled athlete. He made first-team all-conference at North Dakota, then went to California on the portal and missed the season with injuries. If he recovers he will be a big plus with scoring ability, athleticism, and as a defender.

Nehemiah Turner, 6-10 sophomore, may not be ready to help this year but could be a big surprise next year with weight lifting and fitness training. He has good hands.

Bobby Durkin, 6-7 junior, averaged 13.5 points and 5.9 rebounds for Davidson. He was their best 3-point shooter and can shoot off the bounce. He should be a solid backup. Durkin and Tyson will be the best 3-point shooters.



**Isaac Asuma, 2024 Mr. Basketball from Cherry, is a key home-state player for the Gophers.**  
University of Minnesota photo

Niko Medved is a winner. He turned Colorado State into a solid Division I program. Before that, he turned around programs at Drake and Furman. Although the talent may be slim at first, he can plant the seeds for the following years.

It's also nice to see that one of best high school coaches in the state, Dave Thorson (multiple state titles and DeLaSalle) will be helping Medved with future Gopher successes. He was Medved's assistant at Drake and Colorado State before returning to Minnesota to assist Ben Johnson, and now reunites with Medved.



# A New Era Begins: After Ron Haggstrom and Kevin Anderson

**Jeff McCarron, Publisher**

This is a bittersweet time at Minnesota Basketball News.

I am so happy for Ron Haggstrom and Kevin Anderson that they are able to retire - but what a void they leave behind for the rest of us to fill.

Ron and Kevin did much of the work behind the scenes to rank Minnesota's high school teams over the past 25 years. They listed Top 100 players and helped us invite the top four teams in each class to the Pacesetter Sweet 16. Ron was the over-all editor of Minnesota Basketball News for many years, and Kevin was the girls' editor.

I'm thrilled to put their names in the headlines because there may not be two greater contributors to Minnesota basketball in the last 2-3 decades - who more strongly prefer to stay in the shadows.

Many of the great ones in sports journalism just love what they do and do it quietly. Ron moved on to the Star-Tribune from MBBN and was a leading sports reporter there, but he always lent his time to Pacesetter and MBBN whenever needed. You just don't find two more dedicated people than Ron and Kevin. Irreplaceable. Thank you!

Bruce Strand, another quiet Hall of Famer, who keeps writing and taking photos for MBBN, has created Top 50 Player Lists for both boys and girls. We know there may be players overlooked, so we have asked head coaches to help us create a Watch List, and we are asking them to rate players by their "college potential":

- 1      Should start D-1
- 2      Should start D-2, could play some D-1
- 3      Should start D-3, could play some D-2
- 4      Should start community college, could play D-3
- 5      Could play some community college

We started by asking coaches to write in the names of players, their school, their grade, etc. That's too much to ask busy head coaches, so we are going to change the survey by listing the players and only asking for the ratings 1-2-3-4 or 5 for players they feel comfortable rating.

We will be sending out those surveys in January and publishing Coaches' Top 50 Players Lists in February.

## **NEW Top 10 Rankings**

Thank you to the girls' and boys' coaches associations for providing the Coaches' Top 10's for each class.

Thank you also to Breakdown for their Top 15 pre-season rankings.

## **Notes on boys' teams**

The way **Alexandria** handled **Hopkins** in the Sweet 16 gives them a solid chance of rising to #1 in 4A after winning 3A last year.

Two teams who are small in the frontline but play great team basketball are **Rushford-Peterson**, a real dark-horse new to 2A - ranked #14, and **Red Lake Co. Central**. Both impressed last summer in the Sweet 16.

I like the chances for **Jackson Co. Central** in 2A. Their football and basketball star Roman Voss did suffer a back injury in football but played through it to win the state title - without letting anyone know. A team to watch.

## **Holiday Tournaments - Grades 4-7**

BEMIDJI - Dec. 20-21                      See ad for grades.

VIRGINIA - Dec. 21

Register at [www.pacesettersports.net](http://www.pacesettersports.net)

## **Minnesota State Tournament - 5 regions - Grades 4-7**

ROCHESTER - Jan. 31-Feb. 1

REDWOOD FALLS - Feb. 21-22

ST CLOUD - Feb. 14-15

GRAND RAPIDS/VIRGINIA - Feb. 14-15

BEMIDJI - Feb. 21-22                      See ad for grades.

## **State Championships - St. Cloud - Sunday, March 29**

Teams in grades 8-9 register directly. 16-team limit.

REGISTER SOON: [www.pacesettersports.net](http://www.pacesettersports.net)

## **Pacesetter Great Five-State Championships**

MN • IA • WI • ND • SD

Target Center - Minneapolis - Summer 2026

Minnesota's top two teams in grades 4-9 will play!