

2019 North Dakota Youth Basketball State Tournament

Frequently Asked Questions • Notes by Jeff McCarron, Director

What is Pacesetter Sports? *Celebrating our 40th Year!*

Pacesetter Sports was created in 1980 to provide high-level coaching through low-cost basketball camps for players of all ages. Pacesetter grew from offering 8 camps in 1980 to over 100 camps annually throughout North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. In 1992 Pacesetter began offering low-cost varsity/JV tournaments. Since 1993 Pacesetter Sports has conducted a youth basketball state tournament system for Minnesota teams with over 600 teams playing annually. In 2010 Pacesetter added state tournaments in Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota with the top two teams from each state advancing to the Pacesetter Great Four-State Championship at the Target Center in Minneapolis. Wisconsin joined in 2018. Starting with Minnesota Basketball News in 1994, where the Top 10 teams have been ranked weekly for the Associated Press, Pacesetter also provides newsmagazines for 5 states at www.pacesettersports.com. See Newsmagazines: MN BB News, IA BB News, ND BB News, SD BB News, WI BB News and MN VB News.

What is the background and mission of Pacesetter?

Message from Jeff McCarron, Pacesetter Director

Our mission at Pacesetter is to provide high-quality, low-cost basketball and volleyball camps and tournaments for players, coaches, and parents and enhance these sports and events with news coverage. I am from a small town, Sherburn, MN (pop.approx.1100), just 10 miles from the Iowa border north of Estherville - corn and bean country. Our high school team had a “Hoosiers” experience by winning the last single-class state basketball championship in Minnesota in 1970. I had a chance to be on MN Gopher football and basketball teams 1970-72, but when playing both sports was no longer allowed at the U of M, I decided to play both in the North Central conference at Augustana 1973-75. I have met many players and coaches and fans from the four-state area since that time. My high school coach was from North Dakota (Tolna), and my college coaches were both from South Dakota. One coach, John Thomas, made the cut for the 12-player roster of the 7-time world-champion Boston Celtics in 1969 and got me involved teaching championship fundamentals at his South Dakota camps in 1976. I started Pacesetter to expand the camps throughout Minnesota in 1980. This regional background is the reason we are focusing our efforts in this five-state area and the reason we focus on helping “Hometown Teams”. We love basketball, small towns, teaching kids and providing high-quality experiences at an affordable cost. I thank our staff and all who have participated in making Pacesetter a success for 39 years.

What is the Pacesetter North Dakota Youth Basketball Tournament?

The Pacesetter North Dakota Youth Basketball State Tournament for 2019 will involve a two-class playoff system, Class A and Class B. Teams with a (Gr. 9-12) high school enrollment of 325 or greater, will be designated Class A and schools under 325 will be Class B teams. Class B teams may play in Class A also in addition to playing in Class B.

The tournaments have been set for Jamestown. Each age/gender division will be limited to 16 teams. All teams that enter the initial round of playoffs will play 3-4 games in one day. The Class A state champion will be invited to represent North Dakota in the Pacesetter Great Five-State Championships at the Target Center in Minneapolis competing in an 8-team tournament with teams from IA, MN, ND, SD and WI. The Class B state champion and runner-up from North Dakota will play off in the Dakota “Border Battle B” championships against South Dakota teams for a bid to the Great Five-State tournament.

What is the Pacesetter Dakota “Border Battle B” Tournament?

The Pacesetter Dakota “Border Battle B” Tournament will feature the Class B champion and runner-up from North Dakota against the champion and runner-up from South Dakota. This tournament will have a Final Four-style format with a third place game, so all teams will play two full longer games with 8-minute stopped time quarters. The champion will receive an invitation to play in the Great Five-State tournament at the Target Center in Minneapolis.

What is the Pacesetter Great Five-State Championship?

Eight qualifying teams from five states are invited to play in the Pacesetter Great Five-State Championship, which is sponsored by the 3-time world champion Minnesota Lynx and Minnesota Timberwolves. Players and parents from these teams will be treated to a special summer weekend that will provide them with a chance to meet teams from the five-state area, play in a highly-competitive play off tournament in a world-class setting, and enjoy activities off the court as well in the Twin Cities. All Great State tournaments are held in conjunction with Minnesota Lynx WNBA games, so players and families attend a Lynx game and often join in special fan activities. It is a special weekend with lifetime memories. The Timberwolves will invite all Pacesetter teams to attend a “Pacesetter Player” game during the 2019-2020 season. More details will be provided when finalized.

Are teams separated by class?

Teams are not separated by class in the 5-state tournament. However, for the first time, smaller schools in North Dakota and South Dakota will be allowed to play off for a bid to the 5-state tournament.

How are teams rated and seeded?

For the initial play off brackets, teams will be seeded based on their team rating in an attempt to divide the strongest teams and balance the bracket. We also look at the previous year's bracket to help assess the strength of returning teams. Team coordinators are asked for a confidential team rating of WEAK-FAIR-GOOD-STRONG. Teams may also be rated “Fair/Good”, etc. It is never an advantage to rate a team lower than their ability. We separate teams by strength and try to balance the bracket. We try not to place a WEAK team against a STRONG team. As the tournament progresses, all teams will be playing teams that have fared the same, whether winning or losing, so the competition becomes more balanced as the day progresses.

What if there are fewer than four teams entered?

For this tournament system, one or two teams always advance to the next stage. **If we have three teams**, we will offer teams a 3-team Playoff with teams playing a double round-robin format of half games, followed by full games, so all three teams play two half games and two full games for the equivalent of three full games. Teams are refunded 1/3 of the fee under this format. **If we have two teams**, the teams are offered a “Best of Three” format, playing it off like an NBA/WNBA series with the first team to win two games declared the winner. Teams will have the option to play the third game even if one team starts 2-0. Teams are refunded ½ the fee under this format. If only one team enters, that team will be declared the winner and given the invitation to the next stage.

How are the brackets created? How long will the tournament be?

The format is set for all teams to play 3-4 games. Tournaments with 4-6 teams may involve some shorter pool play games that will be used for seeding into the main tournament. Tournaments with 7-16 teams will play only full games with single elimination from the championship. Teams that lose in the first round will play for the consolation championship.

We will do our best to avoid scheduling back-to-back games. If we do, we will try to allow extra time between games. We will also try to play the games as efficiently as possible. Coaches and parents need to be aware that larger tournaments with over 8 teams will require most of the day to complete in order to give teams some time to rest in between games. Teams should schedule some meetings, meals, trips to sites around the area or relaxation time to give the day some positive structure during all "down" time. Managing “down time” well with relaxation and positive energy helps to build good teamwork and mold great “teams”

Do all players have to be from the same school?

All youth teams in grades 4-9 from North Dakota are eligible to enter the state tournament playoffs under this guideline: All players on a team must either be enrolled in the same school system or live or attend school in the same city, the same school district or the same tribal community. Teams may combine, however, to form one team under the following guidelines: Class B: Two smaller schools may combine to form one team if the combined enrollment of their high schools grades 9-12 is less than 325. Class A: More than one school may combine to form a team if the combined high school enrollment for grades 9-12 is 400 or fewer. Schools that combine must be from neighboring schools. If any combining schools are not adjacent to the other school or schools, Pacesetter must approve the combination request. Email jeff@pacesetternet.com.

Some exceptions include private schools whose “feeder” schools are located in another school district, schools or programs consolidating for the following year and transfer students who have officially enrolled. In these circumstances, players are allowed to play together with their future teammates if the connection is official. The philosophy behind this decision is that the whole system is designed to help “hometown teams”, or area community-based teams, improve with their future teammates, and these players are part of that future.

A player who is “thinking” about transferring to another school would not be allowed to play for that school.

What is the Pacesetter “Lifetime” Rule? “Once a Pacesetter, always a Pacesetter!”

Once a team plays together in the Pacesetter system, all of those players will be eligible to play together through grade 9 – even if a player moves into another school district. Players often have no control over family moves, so this rule allows Pacesetter teammates to play together “for life” through ninth grade.

May players play at an older or younger grade level?

Players may play at an older grade level, but older players may not play at a younger level.

May players play on more than one team?

Players may play at more than one grade level and may even play at two grade levels on the same day if that is the decision of their coaches and parents.

Which teams qualify for the Pacesetter Great Five-State Tournament?

Minnesota (2 teams): State champion and state runner-up

Iowa and Wisconsin (3 teams): State champion and one runner-up (bracket with more teams). For example, if Wisconsin has 8 teams in the 4th grade boys’ tournament and Iowa has 7 teams, the Wisconsin runner-up team would be invited to “Great State”.

North Dakota and South Dakota (3 teams): State Class A champion from each state and Class B over-all champion from “Border Battle B” tournament.

Can teams play in both Class A and Class B?

Class B teams may play in Class A, but Class A teams may not play in Class B.

What happens if a team wins in both classes?

If a team would happen to win in both classes, a wild card team would be selected to advance for the “Border Battle B” tournament based on performance in the tournament.

Who should I contact with a question?

Please feel free to email either Tracey Haines, office manager, at tracey@pacesetternet.com or me at jeff@pacesetternet.com or call us at 320-243-7460 with any thoughts or questions.

Thank you for your cooperation and your efforts to make this tournament system a success.

Jeff McCarron
Director