

- Pacesetter STATE highlights
 - McAndrew, Olson are Mr. and Miss Basketball
 - UM-Mankato pulls off incredible NCAA double
 - Hancock girls: best FT team

Pacesetter youth state champions crowned

Pacesetter state champions for grades 4-9 were determined Sunday at five locations in the St. Cloud area. Champions and runners-up are automatic qualifiers for the Pacesetter Great Five State Championships at the Target Center on dates yet to be determined. A total of 224 teams competed, beginning with eight regional qualifiers. The state girls champions are Menahga (9th grade), Mountain Iron-Buhl (8th), RLCC (7th), Hawley (6th), Chatfield (5th) and Alexandria (4th). The boys champions are Waconia (9th grade), Chatfield (8th), Jackson County Central (7th), Marshall (6th), East Grand Forks (5th) and St. Cloud Tech (4th). **Scores on Page 14.**

Top: Alexandria 4th-grade girls celebrate. Right: Hawley's Bentlee Swenson shoots against Bemidji. Far right: Litchfield's Vincent Patten drives, with SC Tech's Augustin Martin trying to defend.



Wow! What a Finish!

By Jeff McCarron

14 courts, five sites, 106 teams, 12 state champions....

Putting our Money Where our Mouth is in 2025 - \$100,000 donation

We tried something new in 2024 – an 8-region NCAA-style format for Minnesota’s Youth State Championships.

Over 300 teams from 119 schools “Made the Playoffs”.

Grades 4-7 competed at 8 regional sites:

Region 1 – Stewartville

Region 2 – Lake Crystal

Region 3 – Redwood Falls

Region 4 – St. Cloud

Region 5 – St. Cloud

Region 6 – Alexandria

Region 7 – Grand Rapids/Mountain Iron-Buhl

Region 8 – Bemidji

Grades 8-9 were set to play off in four Super Sections, but a weather postponement sent all teams to the state championships for one big final weekend in St. Cloud: 106 teams, 14 courts, 5 sites, and 12 state champions crowned.

Over 100 teams from Warroad to Wabasha came to St. Cloud to battle for the all-Minnesota state titles. Each region was limited to 8 teams, so each grade was set to max at 64 teams – just like the NCAA.

The Minnesota state champions and runners-up have both been invited to represent Minnesota in the Pacesetter Great Five-State Championships at the Target Center in Minneapolis during the Lynx season. North Dakota teams qualified at the Jr. Grand Am in Grand Forks, South

Dakota teams at the Willie Mac tournament in Brookings, and Wisconsin teams at the Badgerland championships. Iowa teams will be invited through special invitations. Each “Great State” bracket will be set to feature 8 teams, each playing three games, including a minimum of one on the main Target Center floor, complete with a game announcer, musical introductions, and the big scoreboard.

Plans for 2025:

Pacesetter is truly “Where Dreams Begin...” We support school teams and hometown teams in their pursuit of creating the best possible high school team for their school and community. Having 8 teams in every regional bracket for grades 4-7 and 16 teams in each Super Section for grades 8-9 is the dream – so here’s what we are willing to do to reach that goal in 2025:

- 1) Veteran teams will be offered to keep their spot for only a \$100 fee – a discount of \$150.
- 2) New teams will be able to register for open spots for only \$150 – up to Sept. 30 – for a discount of \$100.

Check our website www.pacesettersports.net to see updates. Registration link will be added to MN Playoffs page once available.

If we fill out all 8-team brackets in 8 regions in 12 grade/gender groups at these rates, the Pacesetter contribution through discounts will be 768 teams x approx. \$130 discount = \$99,800 – about \$100,000. That’s our donation toward youth basketball development in Minnesota.

Let your teams’ dreams begin.... Plan to play in the Pacesetter Youth Basketball statewide 8-region playoff system in 2025 – for only \$150/team for new teams through September 30.

All head coaches and associations will be contacted when 2025 dates and sites have been set.

Girls state champs & runners-up

9th Grade Girls - Menahga



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

9th Grade Girls - Stephen-Argyle Central



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

8th Grade Girls - Mountain Iron-Buhl



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

8th Grade Girls - Staples-Motley



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

7th Grade Girls - Red Lake Co. Central



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

7th Grade Girls - Mountain Iron-Buhl



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

Girls state champs & runners-up

6th Grade Girls - Hawley



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

6th Grade Girls - Bemidji



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

5th Grade Girls - Chatfield



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

5th Grade Girls - West Central Area



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

4th Grade Girls - Alexandria



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

4th Grade Girls - Warroad



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

Boys state champs & runners-up

9th Grade Boys (Div I) - Waconia



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

9th Grade Boys (Div I) - New Ulm



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

8th Grade Boys - Chatfield



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

8th Grade Boys - Wabasha-Kellogg



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

7th Grade Boys - Jackson County Central



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

7th Grade Boys - St. Cloud Tech



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

Boys state champs & runners-up

6th Grade Boys - Marshall



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

6th Grade Boys - Pine Island



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

5th Grade Boys - East Grand Forks



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

5th Grade Boys - Albany



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

4th Grade Boys - St. Cloud Tech



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONS

4th Grade Boys - Litchfield



PACESETTER MINNESOTA
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Runner-Up

Boys & Girls Grades 4-9

ROAD TO THE TARGET CENTER



2024 GREAT 5-STATE YOUTH BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

IA • MN • ND • SD • WI

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, MN

When: Summer 2024 during WNBA MN Lynx home game

8 teams maximum per grade/gender • Top teams from IA, MN, ND, SD and WI

Teams have two ways to qualify:



1. Play in your state qualifying tournament
 MN - Pacesetter MN State Tournament April 6-7
 ND - Grand Forks Jr Grand Am April 5-7
 SD - Brookings Willie Mac Tournament April 5-7
 IA - Special Invite: Email Pacesetter
 WI - Badgerland Tournament March 9-10 & 16-17

2. Receive direct invitation from Pacesetter by emailing Pacesetter director, Jeff McCarron if your teams are interested, jmac8144@yahoo.com

Entry Fee: \$230/team + WNBA MN Lynx game ticket purchase

Guarantee of 3 games with at least one game on the main Target Center Floor

(Registration and details will be available once the 2024 MN Lynx game schedule is released and dates are finalized with the Target Center.)

More Info: www.pacesettersports.net



Scan Code
For More Info:

www.pacesettersports.net

Eligibility Guidelines:

All players must either live in or attend school in the same city, or cities that are part of the same school district.

Questions? 320.243.7460 • pacesettersportsmbbn@gmail.com • www.pacesettersports.net • Pacesetter Basketball



The marvelous Mavs

MN-Mankato sweeps men's, women's NCAA II titles



The Maverick men hoisted the trophy after beating Nova Southwestern 88-85 in the finals.

Minnesota State-Mankato photos

By **Bruce Strand**

Malik and Kyreese Willingham played in a state championship game for Waseca in 2019. They lost that one to DeLaSalle 63-56, but the brothers got another chance at an even bigger game March 30 — the NCAA Division II finals with Minnesota State-Mankato.

This time, their team emerged as champions, with Kyreese nailing a three-pointer in the final second to beat Nova Southeastern of Florida 88-85 at Evansville, Indiana.

That thrilling victory continued Mankato's magical season as the Maverick women, mostly Minnesota-grown, led by Natalie Bremer of Lake City and Joey Batt of New Ulm, captured their national title Friday with an 88-73 conquest of Texas Women's University in St. Joseph, Missouri.

"How about the last 24 hours for Minnesota State University?" gushed Matt Margenthaler, the Maverick men's coach, after the title game. He added, "It's a basketball school. It's a basketball town. It's a lot of fun. I'm proud of our women, proud of our men, and we're going to enjoy this one."

It was the first national crown for the Maverick men, who've advanced to 13 NCAA tournaments in 22 years under Margenthaler, and the first by a Minnesota team



Kyreese (left) and Malik Willingham of Waseca were Mankato's top two scorers.

since Winona State in 2008. It was the second title for the Maverick women, who had one in 2009. Their coach is Emily Thiesse in her 12th season.

The Maverick men, top ranked most of the season, finished 35-2. They beat Ferris State of Michigan 98-70 in

the Elite Eight and West Texas A&M 79-72 in the Final Four semifinals. They deposed Northwest Missouri, which had won four of the five previous national titles, 43-42 at home in the regional finals before 4,519 fans at the Taylor Center, on a last-second shot by Elijah Hazenkamp.

In the national finals, Kyreese Willingham sank the game-winner on a high-arching shot from the corner, off a pass from Malik, with .8 second on the clock. "All the credit to Malik for finding me," he said. Malik logged 12 points, five assists and five steals, and Kyreese 12 points, five rebounds and three steals. Dylan Peeters scored 19 points and Justin Eagins 17.



The Maverick women hugged after beating Texas Woman's University 88-73 in the finals.

Minnesota State-Mankato photos

Malik, senior guard, averaged 18.7 points 3.7 rebounds, and 4.3 assists. Kyreese, junior guard, averaged 14.5 points and 5.3 rebounds. Eagins, junior guard from Illinois, averaged 10.8 points and 6.9 rebounds. Haze-kamp, guard from Iowa who's a graduate student, averaged 9.7 points. Brady Williams, junior forward from Dover-Eyota, averaged 6.5 points, and Harrison Brands, junior guard from Kansas, 5.2 points.



Natalie Bremer, MSU Final Four MVP from Lake City

Malik is the Waseca career scoring leader with 2,005 points, and Kyreese is No. 5 with 1,516 points.

The Maverick women started the season 2-4, including a loss to the Texas team they beat in the finals. They went 30-1 after that and finished 32-5. The Mavericks were a No. 7 seed in their regional but posted three double digit wins. At nationals, the Mavericks pulled out close wins over Georgia Southwestern 93-88 and Cal

State San Marcos 70-68 to reach the finals. Emily Herzberg hit the game-winner against San Marcos.

Bremer was named Most Outstanding Player at nationals, logging 70 points, 17 rebounds and 11 steals. In the finals, she tallied 27 points, including 3-for-4 on three's and 6-for-6 at the line. Batt notched 10 points, seven steals six assists. Ava Stier delivered 13 points and eight rebounds. Herzberg added 12 points, five steals and five assists.



Joey Batt, MSU's All-America guard from New Ulm

career scorer with 2,495 points.

Destinee Bursch, junior guard from Eden Prairie, averaged 15.5 points. Herzberg, senior guard from Wisconsin, averaged 9.1 points. Hannah Herzig, 6-foot sophomore guard who was the star of Totino-Grace's state champion team two years ago, averaged 8.0 points and 2.6 steals. Stier, soph forward from Waconia, averaged 5.4 points and 5.5 rebounds. Mackenzie Schweim, soph guard from Mankato East, averaged 5.1 points.

Batt was named to All-America teams by Kodak and the Women's Basketball Coaches Association. The 5-foot-5 guard averaged 16 points, 3.3 assists and 3.8 steals, and was named NSIC defensive player of the year for the third time. She is New Ulm's all-time leader with 2,301 points.

Bremer, 5-foot-11 sophomore guard, averaged 15.6 points, 4.4 rebounds and 2.7 steals. She is Lake City's top

Wayzata's McAndrew is Mr. Basketball

By Bruce Strand

Jackson McAndrew, a unique talent who played in three state championship games for Wayzata, has been chosen as Mr. Basketball for 2024. The committee made the announcement on Thursday.

At 6-foot-9 but nimble as a point guard, McAndrew was a bit of a late bloomer. In his two years as a starter, he helped the Trojans post a 56-6 record and reach the state finals each year with a championship in 2023 and runner-up finish this year. He played off the bench on a state runner-up team his sophomore year.

McAndrew averaged 23.7 points and 10.1 rebounds, shooting 52 percent on field goals and 80 percent at the line. He is also an excellent three-point shooter and shot-blocker.

The first Wayzata player to get the Mr. Basketball award, he will continue his career at Creighton in Omaha, a team that reached the Sweet 16 this year.

The other Mr. Basketball finalists were:

Isaac Asuma, 6-foot-2 guard who triggered Cherry's run to the state Class 1A title, and to fourth-place finishes the last two years. He scored



Jackson McAndrew is Wayzata's first Mr. Basketball. He will play for Creighton.

MN Basketball News photo

3,318 career points and was an outstanding rebounder, passer and defender. Asuma will play for the Gophers.

Casmir Chavis, Park Center's masterful 6-foot-2 point guard who ran a high-octane offense and averaged nearly 23 points. He was the top scorer in the state tournament with 79 as the Pirates placed fifth, and led the Pirates to a state runner-up finish last season. He will play for Washington.

Daniel Freitag, 6-foot-2 guard who sparked Breck to the Class 2A championship and a 31-1 record. He averaged 24.7 points this season, and 28 points last season for Bloomington Jefferson. Also an excellent rebounder and passer, he will move on to the Big Ten with Wisconsin.

Isaiah Johnson-Arigo, soaring 6-foot-7 forward who powered Totino-Grace to the Class 3A state crown. The Miami recruit averaged 19.6 points and nine rebounds, and frequently fired up his team with spectacular dunks. He was a key player on T-G's state champ team last season, too, after transferring from Osseo.

Mr. Basketball is chosen by an independent committee. Miss Basketball (next page) is chosen by a coaches association committee.

Olson of Benilde-SM is Miss Basketball

By Bruce Strand

Olivia Olson, leader of Benilde-St. Margaret's back-to-back state championship teams, and a prep All-America pick, was named Miss Basketball last week.

The 6-foot-1 guard signed by Michigan was named to Naismith and McDonald's All-America teams and Gatorade state Player of the Year before becoming the first Miss Basketball from her school. She's also been selected for the Nike Hoops Summit in Portland, Oregon, on April 13.

The Miss Basketball announcement was made Friday during the coaches association's all-star weekend at Carleton College. Olson did not play in the state all-star games, having played in the McDonald's All-America game the week before in Houston, but was present to receive the award.

Olson averaged 25.5 points this season and 21.9 as a junior. In six state wins the past two seasons, she averaged 29 points, 11.7 rebounds and 3.7 assists. She amassed 2,619 career points and 1,076 rebounds. She had a 40-point game in eighth grade and scored 219 in eight state games the last three years.

Olson also won a state title in soccer as the goalie for a 19-0-3 team, allowing just one goal in three state tournament games.

The other Miss Basketball finalists were the following:

Jordan Zubich, Mountain Iron-Buhl guard who averaged 27.6 points and 6.4 assists and led the state with

132 three-pointers (with 45 percent accuracy). The North Carolina recruit totaled 3,490 career points, 220 of them in four state tournaments, leading the Rangers to a state title and state runner-up finish.

Liv McGill, Hopkins guard who averaged 22 points this year and showcased her remarkable all-around game in three state tournaments, averaging 17.4 points, 4.8 rebounds, 5.0 assists and 2.8 assists in nine games. The

Florida recruit helped the Royals earn a state title and two runner-up finishes. She scored 1,404 career points

Tori McKinney, 6-foot-1 guard who contributed to Minnetonka's 29-2, state championship season with stellar one-on-one defense and 14.9 points per game. In the state tournament, the future Minnesota Gopher averaged 14.3 points, 10.8 rebounds and 3.7 steals in the state tournament. She missed her junior year with injury.

Elizabeth Gadiant, floor leader for state Class 1A champion

Goodhue who capped her career with a brilliant state finals performance (31 points, nine rebounds, five assists and four steals) and averaged 22.8 points for the season. Signed by Division II national champion Minnesota-Mankato, she scored 2,036 career points.

Alyssa Sand, 6-foot-3 post who led Albany to the state Class 2A finals past two seasons, averaging 18.8 points and 12 this season. In three state games this year, the St. Thomas recruit averaged 23 points and 15.3 rebounds, shooting 63 percent. She played in four state tournaments and three state finals with one title as a freshman.



Olivia Olson is Benilde-St. Margaret's first Miss Basketball. Her next team will be Michigan.

MN Basketball News photo

VARSITY BOYS & GIRLS "SWEET 16" CHAMPIONSHIPS



By Invitation Only

SWEET SIXTEEN TOURNAMENT

August 3-4, 2024

COLLEGE OF ST. BENEDICT ST. JOSEPH, MN

The Pacesetter "Sweet Sixteen" Basketball Championship has become the premier summer tournament for varsity players as 32 top boys' and girls' teams in Minnesota gather to play for two over-all championships.

Four Class A, four Class AA, four Class AAA and four Class AAAA teams are invited to make up the 16-team fields for both boys and girls. One team from each class will be placed into each 4-team section of the 16-team bracket.

All teams will play 4 regulation-length games in a 16-team format. Teams that win the championships will receive beautiful individual plaques. Teams that win two or more games will be awarded individual medals with neck ribbons.

The College of St. Benedict Fieldhouse in St. Joseph, MN, is a first-class facility with four full air-conditioned courts with ample seating.



FOUR CLASSES...ONE CHAMPION



2024 Minnesota Basketball News • An Invitation-only Event

TOP 100 EXPO SHOWCASE

College of St. Benedict
St. Joseph, MN

Tuesday, July 2

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

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

COLLEGE PREP BASKETBALL CAMP

Monday, July 1

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



Pacesetter youth state tournament scores

4TH GRADE GIRLS

Alexandria 34, Grand Rapids 10
St. Peter 29, North Woods 9
Grand Rapids 24, North Woods 8
Alexandria 22, Bemidji 18
Warroad 25, St. Peter 23
(Championship)
Alexandria 21, Warroad 15
(Third place)
Bemidji 21, St. Peter 14

5TH GRADE GIRLS

Red Lake 22, Windom 17
West Central Area 19, Duluth East 10
Chisholm 13, New London-Spicer 11
Chatfield 34, Pine City 26
West Central Area 19, Red Lake 16
Chatfield 30, Chisholm 10
(Championship)
Chatfield 32, West Central Area 17
(Third place)
Red Lake 38, Chisholm 30

6TH GRADE GIRLS

Aitkin 20, Cloquet 19
Westbrook-Walnut Grove 16, Carlton-Wrenshall 0
Cloquet 35, Carlton-Wrenshall 7
Bemidji 46, Aitkin 10
Hawley 40, Westbrook-Walnut Gr. 18
(Championship)
Hawley 30, Bemidji 25
(Third place)
Westbrook-Walnut Gr. 26, Aitkin 12

7TH GRADE GIRLS

Red Lake County 35, Pillager 6
Mt. Iron-Buhl 29, St. Francis 25
Red Lake County 39, Mt. Iron-Buhl 35
Esko 29, Pillager 3
St. Francis 25, Esko 18
Mt. Iron-Buhl 39, Pillager 5
Red Lake County 25, Esko 8
St. Francis 30, Pillager 15
Mt. Iron-Buhl 22, Esko 16
Red Lake County 34, St. Francis 22
(Champion)
Red Lake Central
(Runner-up)
Mt. Iron-Buhl
(Third place)
St. Francis

8TH GRADE GIRLS

Staples-Motley 31, St. Cloud 21
Dassel-Cokato 28, Pillager 13
Dover-Eyota 44, Blackduck 11
Mt. Iron-Buhl 33, St. Cloud 22
Staples-Motley 33, Dassel-Cokato 25
Mt. Iron-Buhl 41, Dover-Eyota 38
(Championship)
Mt. Iron-Buhl 41, Staples-Motley 26
(Third place)
Dover-Eyota 43, Dassel-Cokato 13

9TH GRADE GIRLS

Menahga 48, United South Central 28
Stephen-Argyle 19, United South Central 14
Menahga 37, Stephen-Argyle 31
(Champion)
Menahga
(Runner-up)
Stephen-Argyle
(Third place)
United South Central

4TH GRADE BOYS

Benson 21, Stephen-Argyle Central 14
St. Cloud Tech 29, Maple River 10
Dawson-Boyd 33, Bemidji 32, OT
Litchfield 23, Lanesboro 14
St. Cloud Tech 32, Benson 22
Litchfield 32, Dawson-Boyd 21
(Championship)
St. Cloud Tech 47, Litchfield 38
(Third place)
Dawson-Boyd 29, Benson 26

5TH GRADE BOYS

East Grand 38, Sartell 31
Roch. Lourdes 37, Mt. Iron-Buhl 26
Albany 38, Pipestone 31
Sartell 45, Litchfield 30
East Grand Forks 35, Rochester Lourdes 32
Albany 37, Sartell 23
(Championship)
East Grand Forks 24, Albany 23
(Third place)
Sartell 28, Rochester Lourdes 18

6TH GRADE BOYS

Marshall 34, Hibbing 24
Jackson County Central 37, Pillager 22

Fergus Falls 34, Sauk Centre 31
Pine Island 31, Stephen-Argyle 29
Marshall 32, Jackson Co. Central 22
Pine Island 38, Fergus Falls 29
(Championship)
Marshall 29, Pine Island 25
(Third place)
Fergus Falls 38, Jackson Co. Cen. 1 24

7TH GRADE BOYS

Jackson Co. Cen. 43, Mt. Iron-Buhl 24
St. Cloud Tech 42, Park Rapids 39
Park Rapids 41, Mt. Iron-Buhl 32
Jackson County Central 35, East Grand Forks 18
St. Cloud Tech 45, Pine Island 35
(Championship)
Jackson Co. Cen. 51, St. Cloud Tech 37
(Third place)
Pine Island 28, East Grand Forks 25

8TH GRADE BOYS

Triton 38, Northome-Kelliher 32
Wabasha-Kellogg 43, Lyle-Pacelli Black 17
Maple River 39, Deer River 31
Wabasha-Kellogg 36, Triton 29
Chatfield 35, West Central Area 30
Lyle-Pacelli Blue 51, Red Lake 22
Aitkin 25, Cass Lake 21
Wabasha-Kellogg 36, Triton 29
TC/MCC/GG 38, Maple River 36
Chatfield 46, Lyle-Pacelli Blue 16
Mt. Iron-Buhl 35, Aitkin 8
Wabasha-Kellogg 37, TC/MCC/GG 30
Chatfield 39, Mt. Iron-Buhl 22
(Championship)
Chatfield 41, Wabasha-Kellogg 35
(Third place)
TC/MCC/GG defeated Mt. Iron-Buhl

9TH GRADE BOYS

New Ulm 35, Zumbrota-Mazeppa 20
Montevideo 52, Springfield 28
Waconia 44, Sauk Centre 17
Alexandria 29, Moose Lake-Willow River 26
New Ulm 28, Montevideo 27
Waconia 38, Alexandria 20
(Championship)
Waconia 29, New Ulm 27
(Third place)
Montevideo 32, Alexandria 31

PACESETTER STATE TOURNEY ACTION



Clockwise from top left: Jostling for rebound position were West Central Area's Lila Willard (23) and Chatfield's Reagan Sogla (26). St. Cloud Tech's Deniz Miller drives for a layup against Litchfield. Chatfield's Regan Urban (34) drives against West Central Area. Alexandria's Cora Simon (21) protects the ball while guarded by Warroad's Josie Lund (left) and Dreya Halvarson. Bemidji's Riella Ceballos (12) races to the hoop against Hawley, trailed by Bentley Swenson and Presley Petznick (4).

Salute to 3rd-place teams

By Bruce Strand

Third place in the state tournament. That's an excellent achievement for any program. Following is a tribute to this year's third-place teams.

BOYS

Class 4A: Eagan — The unranked Wildcats (19-13) were the lowest-profile 4A qualifier after winning a section against three teams with a 21-63 combined record. However, they upset No. 2 ranked Park Center 75-72, lost to champion Minnetonka 68-45, and beat No. 10 Cretin-Derham Hall 84-65. Sophomore Alex Schroepfer led with 51 points, followed by seniors Charlie Birk with 38, Liam Madison 34, Max Buslee 31, and Owen Bockenstedt 27.

Class 3A: DeLaSalle — The Islanders (22-10) topped Orono 70-64, lost to champion Totino-Grace 74-67, and beat Alexandria 58-54. Freshman sharpshooter Jaeden Udean led the win over Orono with 26 points, including six three-pointers. He had 38 in the tourney. Senior Ray James Jr. and junior De'Von Irvin sank 31 points each.

Class 2A: Albany — The Huskies, last year's state champions, were led by two juniors who made the 2023 all-tournament team. They had another great year, finishing 30-3 after beating Jackson County Central 87-66, losing to Lake City 69-59, and beating Minnehaha Academy 70-53. Zeke Austin poured in 76 points and the other junior stalwart, Sam Hondl, added 46 points.

Class 1A: Nevis — The Tigers (25-8), in their fourth straight tourney, beat Mountain Lake Area/Comfrey 78-54, lost to champion Cherry 76-58, and beat West Central Area 64-51. Scoring leaders were junior Alex Lester with 49 points, senior JohnPaul Benson 37, and senior Austin Ahrendt 33. The Tigers have placed second, third, fourth and fifth in their four-year run.

GIRLS

Class 4A: St. Michael-Albertville — The Knights (24-8), last year's state champion, graduated their Miss Basketball but came back strong. At state, they defeated Rosemount 68-57, lost to champion Minnetonka 67-49, and beat Maple Grove 72-54. Leaders were senior Ja'Kahla Craft with 54 points, sophomore Cail Jahnke with 53



Kristi Kottke scores for Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart in a win over Fosston.

points and 28 rebounds, and junior Abby Hoselton with 45 points. Craft and Hoselton were each all-tourney for the second time. Ava Haus, senior, added 24 points.

Class 3A: Alexandria — The Cardinals, 26-5 with an all-underclassman starting lineup, tripped Rock Ridge 67-50, lost to DeLaSalle 82-69, and beat Stewartville 69-55. Hadley Thul, 6-foot-2 junior, led with 74 points, with junior MaCee Linow chipping in 46 and sophomore Lauren Beyer 31. They should remain a leading contender next season.

Class 2A: Minnehaha Academy — The Redhawks (28-4) defeated Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 75-59, lost to Albany 60-52, and outgunned Crosby-Ironton 104-86. Powering the Redhawks were 3,000-point junior Addi Mack with 107 points (53 against C-I) and 2,000-point senior Angel Hill with 60 points. The Redhawks have placed third twice and fourth in the last three years.

Class 1A: Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart — The Mustangs won 74 games the past three years but didn't get through a loaded Section 2A until this year. Making the best of it, BLHS beat Fosston 72-35, lost to Mountain Iron-Buhl 69-50 and beat Underwood 66-49. Top scorer was sophomore Lily Hubin with 57 points. Senior twins Rachel and Kristi Kottke tallied 45 and 32 points, respectively, and senior Ellaina Bergstrom 30.

Hancock is all-time FT champ

By Bruce Strand

Hancock set a girls state record by shooting 80.5 percent at the free throw line this season while winning 27 of 30 games. The Owls made 413 of 513 attempts.

The Owls appear to have set a national record as well, pending any other entries from the recently completed season, reports Matt Pederson, state basketball statistician who also tracks national records.

Kaitlyn Rohloff led the way, shooting 99-for-112 for 88.4 percent. Next was Misti Zempel, 109-for-126 for 86.5 percent.

“It might sound crazy, but we don’t ever practice free throws in practice,” coach Chad Nuest said. “We are blessed with good shooters. We shot the ball incredibly well this year and especially from the three-point line and the free-throw line.

“Our girls have put in the offseason work, and that showed the last few years with our high percentages.”

The previous girls record was 80.0 percent by Eastview in a state championship season, 2013-14. The boys record is by Lakeview Christian, 79.1 percent in 2012-13.

Hancock, ranked No. 2 in Class 1A, fell one win short of state with a 71-61 loss to Underwood in the Section 6A finals after beating the Rockets twice in conference.

Their top free throw games were 24-for-26 in a 74-41 win over Wheaton-Herman-Norcross and 26-for-30 in a 84-48 win over Brandon-Evansville. When the Owls lost to B-E in overtime 70-67 in the rematch (their lone regular-season loss) they were 17-for-22. In close games, the Owls were 9-for-10 in a 57-55 win over West Central Area, and, against Underwood, 9-for-9 in a 56-55 win, 17-for-20 in a 78-73 win, and 8-for-9 in the 71-61, season-ending loss.

State boys tourney odds & ends

Follow-up notes from the boys state tournament, provided by Matt Pederson, state hoops historian:

- Five 1,000-point scorers in the state tournament have parents who were also 1,000-pointers — Noah Asuma of Cherry (mother Jolene, Cherry), Grayson Grove of Alexandria (mother Angie Converse, Osakis and Alexandria), Patrick Rowe of Chisago Lakes (father Mike, Chisago Lakes), Henry Tschetter of Stewartville (mother Kasey Morlock, Stewartville), and Drew Workman of Russell-Tyler-Ruthton (mother Bobby Jo Sichmeller, RTR).

- The DeLaSalle boys extended their state record of consecutive state appearances to 13. Minnehaha Academy extended its streak to eight, which is tied for second-most (with Moorhead, Tartan, and Lakeville North). Nevis and Wayzata currently have four in a row.

- The West Central Area boys were a first-time state entrant, and none of their communities, Barrett, Elbow Lake, Hoffman, and Kensington, ever got to state either prior to the mergers. Elbow Lake was the only one of the four to win a district title; 10 times, in fact, between 1929 and 1972. Barrett and Elbow Lake combined to

become West Central in 1986-87. Hoffman and Kensington joined them in 1993-94 and the name became West Central Area.

- Isaac Asuma of Cherry finished with 3,318 points (10th all-time in Minnesota), 1,259 rebounds (25th), 951 assists (11th) and 431 steals (13th).

- Minnetonka’s sweep of the boys and girls championships marked the 11th time a school has done so. The first was Hancock in 1997. Hopkins and DeLaSalle have done it three times each, and Minneapolis North, Minnehaha Academy and Totino-Grace once each.

- Bryce Tesdahl, coach of the Minnetonka state champions, is the grandson of Bob McDonald, the state record-holder for career wins with 1,012, mostly at Chisholm, with two state titles.

- Lance Johnson, Minnehaha Academy coach, has a 20-6 record in 11 state trips after the Redhawks were 1-2 this year. He has coached five state champions, which is tied for fourth. With his eighth straight section title, he tied the coach’s record held by Mark Kling-sporn of Tartan and John Oxtan of Lakeville North.

BEST Camp Coaches – Resume or Respect?

Pacesetter “Tour of Champions”...and a Musselman Story

We started something new a few years ago – the Pacesetter “Tour of Champions” Basketball Camps.

The concept was a win-win-win...and win.

- Hire coaches with championship backgrounds and pay them WELL.
- Ask them to give their BEST TIPS to kids in a 1 or 2-day program.
- Keep the player fees down with fewer hours.
- Invite area coaches to attend for FREE as a coaching clinic.
- Give the host 10% of the fees as a fundraiser.

Kids love it
Coaches love it
Parents love it. **Win-win-win....**
And it raises money for the program – **WIN!**

Here are some of the coaches who have directed Pacesetter “Tour of Champions” Camps over the past few years. I’ll just pick out one line on resumes that could have 10-15 lines. I may be off a number or two, but should be close.

Tom Vix, *Rushford-Peterson*, 16 state tournament trips, National Coach of the Year candidate

John Carlson, *Litchfield*, 3-time state champion, MN Coach of the Year

Wendy Kohler, *Alexandria*, over 700 wins, Coach of the Year, Nat’l Coach of the Year candidate

Larry McKenzie, *Patrick Henry and North*, 6-time state champion, including 4 in a row at Henry

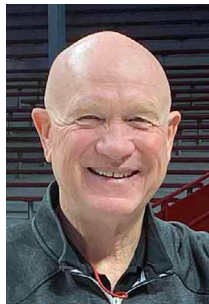
Sascha Hansen, *Marshall*, 3-time HS state champion as a player, Final Four at *St. Cloud State*

Tim Grove, women’s head coach at *UM-Morris*, multiple conference championships

Dave Galovich, *Crosby-Ironton*, over 700 wins, National Coach of the Year candidate

Barry Wohler, *Bird Island*, 2-time state champ as a player, state champion as a coach at *Orono*

Paul McDonald, *Vermilion CC*, 23 straight trips to state, 2-time HS state champion at *Chisholm*



Jeff McCarron

Jeff Wall, state champion, *Maranatha Christian Academy*, MN Coaches Hall of FAME

Steve Lingenfelter, MN Gopher, NBA player, HS state champion at *Bloomington Jefferson*

Katie Borowicz, *Roseau*, HS state champion, started for Gophers in Big Ten as a HS senior

Dave Walker, state champion - *Maple River*, Coach of the Year, an 4 camps for 4-time state champion, *SW Minnesota Christian*

What a line-up! They are like a Dream Team of Minnesota coaches.

Then there are the Thomas brothers from South Dakota:

John Thomas, head coach at *Augustana College*, Boston Celtic teammate of John Havlicek in 1969

Gary Thomas, head coach at *Augustana College*, state champion at *Watertown HS*

Coach John Thomas got me started in camps. He had Musselman intensity – with integrity, a perfect mentor.

Yes, there are great coaches missing....

If you would like to join this line-up as a coach, please let me know.

If you would like to have one of these coaches run a “Tour of Champions” camp at your school, please let me know.

Text: 320-290-3497

Email: jmac8144@yahoo.com

I could/should add myself, but I don’t like mentioning my own credentials. The traits I am most proud of are “learned the game, loves the game, loves kids, and loves teaching kids.”

My resume states HS state champion as a player, Big Ten champion, Director of Pacesetter.

So what is truly the most important as a camp coach? It is great that a coach has experienced success as a player or coach. It is also great if they have failed as both a player and coach - so they understand the difference and what it takes to succeed.

Probably the most important trait is that kids like you.. or at minimum, respect you. Perfect would be liking you and respecting you. If they don't like you, it may not matter what you say.

There are always a few that are willing to look past "not liking a coach" in order to learn and get better, but many, if not most, will turn off....if not immediately, eventually.

So have fun with kids! They love to compete – every drill can be made competitive. Be yourself and talk to them like the juniors and seniors and moms and dads and coaches many will soon be.

So here's a story I heard this winter that I feel I should share:

I am not going to use the names of the kids involved, but I will mention the coach's name since he was a prominent coach in Minnesota basketball with an impressive resume: College Coach of the Year in Ohio, Big Ten championship coach in his first year as Gopher head men's coach, head coach in the NBA, including first head coach of the Minnesota Timberwolves – Bill Musselman.

I was a player on the 1971-72 MN Gopher team that won the Big Ten Championship that year. There have only been two MN Gopher teams to win championships in the last 53 seasons, so that ring is becoming more special for each of these years: 1972 and 1982.

I'm going to tell this story as an older adult now, looking back on some misguided behavior by virtually a young kid as a coach. I was 19 at the time, Coach Musselman was only 31.

My friend, Jim, told the story to me this winter. He was a freshman the summer Bill Musselman took the Gopher job. Jim was in a camp in central Minnesota that summer of '71. "Musselman was invited to speak at the camp in front of hundreds of players and a handful of coaches. He told a kid to 'Run over and get me that ball!' The kid, (I'll call him, 'Willie'), walked over to get the ball and brought it back. Willie was a promising player, tall and athletic. 'I told you to RUN to get the ball!' Musselman screamed and threw the ball against the chain-link fence behind the group. The shaken kid jogged over to get the ball and brought it back. "I SAID RUN!"

Again, Musselman fired the ball hard into the fence, as he screamed at the 14-year old. The boy sprinted this time to the fence. There was a patch of grass just before the fence that was still wet with morning dew. As the boy tried to stop at the fence, his feet skidded and both of his legs slid under the chain-link fence, and the sharp metal sliced his shins. He was trapped. He couldn't pull his legs back out without tearing more flesh. The crowd of players and coaches were in shock. A few coaches ran to his aid, but

Musselman called them off and stood over the petrified kid and screamed at him for being a blankity-blank-so-and-so...fill in the blank....

Over 40 years later, Jim met a man from the same town as Willie. When he realized that the man must have been about the same age as Willie, he asked the man if he knew Willie and played high school basketball with him. The man said, "Sure, I knew Willie. He was really good, a great guy too. But he went to a basketball camp his freshman year...and never played basketball again."

I can't even retell that story without getting tears in my eyes. That's one of the saddest basketball stories I've ever heard.

Coach Musselman is no longer with us. I would like to think he learned the error of his young days. I'd like to think he had a good heart off the court...and maybe he did. I only retell it to make the point that a resume means nothing – if it is accompanied by damaging, hurtful behavior.

Over 19,000 fans jammed Williams Arena to watch young Musselman face young Bobby Knight – one in a gold jacket and one in a red jacket – in the opening game of the Big Ten season. Two terrifying young titans of the college basketball world. A cage match may have been a better venue. Minnesota won with a last-second free throw.

Thousands of fans in maroon and gold and the entire athletic department and the booster/alum clubs were ecstatic. Winning does that to people – a certain frenzy and willingness to 'jump on the band wagon' to become part of it – and also a certain willingness to look the other way when bad behavior arises. And arise it always does.

I thought the next day would be an easy shoot-around practice on a Sunday – WRONG - it was the longest, hardest practice of the year, clocking in at 3.5 hours. We learned to never underestimate Coach Musselman.

I often stray off in different directions with stories, but I'll get back to the point. Winning IS everything – in how you feel after a game – the immediate rush and satisfaction. The smiles, the cheers, the celebration. Bob McDonald referred to winning as "the paycheck". When you lose, you don't get the paycheck. No smiles, no cheers, no celebration.

But deep down in your heart is the most important part – *Did you give everything you have? Did you do your very best? Were you a good sport and a good teammate as well as a respectful opponent?*

That's what really, truly matters in the end. That's what we try to teach at Pacesetter Camps, where the coaches are champions and fully understand the part about the heart.

45th Year!

More info:

<https://www.pacesettersports.net/host-a-camp/>

or scan QR code



2024 **PACESSETTER**

Basketball Camps

Pacesetter has been providing high-quality, low-cost camps since 1980. Highly experienced directors and low player-coach ratios are a Pacesetter standard. Pacesetter focuses on teaching the most important skills to make the greatest possible improvement in a few days...for a cost most families can afford.

Area Camps – Pacesetter Area Camps serve players in many regions of the 5-state area. Camp hosts design the time schedule of the sessions and the grades and genders to meet their needs. These camps range from 3-4 days and provide sessions ranging from 1-6 hours per day for players in grades 1-12.

“Tour of Champions” Camp – Pacesetter also offers a special “Tour of Champions” series of camps in the 5-state area. These camps will be 1-2 days and feature the very best coaches in the Midwest – coaches who have won state championships or head college coaches or coaches who have reached other high levels of success – Hall of Fame, Coach of the Year, etc. Host coaches may also invite their coaching staff to attend these special camps as a free coaching clinic.

Camp of Champions...that comes to YOUR gym!

Customize your camp to YOUR program

To set up a camp at your school, please email Tracey at pacesettersportsmbbn@gmail.com

