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# Huskie heroes

## Austin, Hondl on ‘full go’powering Albany

By Bruce Strand

As soon as their coach laid eyes on Zeke Austin and Sam Hondl, he knew they would be great additions to the Albany Huskies.

“From the day they stepped into our practices, they have been 100 percent committed to improving their game and competing,” Cory Schlagel said. “Whether it’s a simple shooting drill, a 1 on 1 drill, or 5 on 5 play, those two are full go. I can’t tell you what that does to raise everyone else’s energy level on a daily basis and add attention to detail.”

The Albany seniors have more than lived up to what their coach anticipated from them. They’ve racked up over 2,500 points and helped the Huskies go 31-2 with a state title as sophomores, 30-3 at a state third place finish as juniors, and so far this year an 11-0 record and the top ranking in Class 2A. Austin has committed to Jamestown (N.D.) and Hondl to Minnesota-Moorhead.

“Zeke and Sam have both put in a tremendous amount of time to improve their individual skill sets over the years — on the basketball court and in the weight room — to physically and mentally mature into two of the best players in



**Sam Hondl, 6-7 forward, committed to MN-Moorhead**

school history,” Schlagel said.

Asked about the prospect of another state championship, Austin stated, “It would be amazing ... Winning another title would just show everyone the hard work we have put in to get to the spot where we would be. I think we have a good chance to do it again, but we have to take games one at a time, and no matter what, we have to keep working as hard as we possibly can.”

Austin, a 6-foot-2 guard, scores from all three levels. He was point guard on the state champ team as a sophomore. “Last year we moved him off the ball as well to force defenses to defend him from multiple angles,” the coach said. “He excels with and without the ball in his hands.”

Austin loves the big moments in games to hit three’s which he’s done for three years. He sinks mid-range jumpers when defenders over commit, and uses his physical strength to post up on occasion. “We have all of our guards work on footwork and post moves with their back to the basket, and he has taken on that challenge.”

Hondl is blessed with a 6-foot-7 frame that he’s grown into through hard work in the weight room. “Combine that with great ball handling skills that he developed in his youth playing days,” Schlagel said, “and you have a player that can play both inside and out, depending on how defenses are playing him.”

Hondl has great footwork and balance. “He can power finish with dunks, finish over the top, or use fade away jumpers to force defenses to be guessing as to how he will be attacking on the catch,” said Schlagel. He can knock down three’s when called upon, too.

In their state debut as sophomores, Hondl had 20 points, 12 rebounds and five assists, and Austin 13 points, going 3-for-3 on three’s. “For two sophomores to walk into a state playoff game under the bright lights and perform the way they did helped set the tone for our run



**Zeke Austin, 6-2 guard, committed to Jamestown.**

to the state title,” Schlagel recalled. Austin had 15 points and Hondl 14 in the finals against Minnehaha Academy.

In the state quarterfinal last year, Austin had 32 points and Hondl 16 in a come-from-behind win over Jackson County Central. They lost to Lake City in the semifinals but beat Minnehaha Academy for third place with Austin hitting 28 points and Hondl 17.

Starting their last year together, at the Breakdown Tip-Off in December, Hondl had 33 points and nine rebounds and Austin 18 points, nine rebounds and four assists in a win over Southwest Christian.

Austin is averaging 20.3 points this year and had 1,255 career points through last weekend. Hondl is averaging 23.3 points in six games—he’s missed five games with a sprained ankle — and has 1,282 points.

The Huskies beat Class 1A’s No. 2 ranked Dawson-Boyd 73-54 even without Hondl as Austin scored 30 points in the Granite City Classic. All of Albany’s wins have been by double digits except for a 63-58 win over Pequot Lakes (7-2) on Jan. 10.

Albany’s third-leading scorer is senior Elliott Burnett (11.5 points, 5.6 rebounds, 3.7 assists per game). The rotation also includes seniors Ethan Meyer (excellent defense, 6.2 rebounds), Braeden Justin (7.4 points, three-point shooter), and Bennett Hylla, and juniors Jake Buttweiller, Ashton Olson, Griffin Lange and Brady Rueter.

Tysen Gerards, senior leader for the 2023 champs, now plays for Minnesota-Moorhead. “He was a huge piece to the team,” Austin said. “This year, Sam and I both committed to playing D2 basketball. So, I think each team had its strengths and weaknesses, but both teams had very good players all around.”

# MBBN BOYS TOP 10

## CLASS 4A

1. Cretin-Derham Hall 11-0
2. Hopkins 13-0
3. Wayzata 12-2
4. Tartan 11-0
5. Anoka 11-2
6. Eagan 10-2
7. Apple Valley 9-1
8. Prior Lake 11-3
9. Moorhead 10-3
10. Sauk Rapids-Rice 10-3

## CLASS 3A

1. Benilde-St. Margaret's 9-0
2. Orono 7-3
3. Mankato East 11-1
4. Alexandria 7-3
5. DeLaSalle 11-1
6. Totino-Grace 9-3
7. Byron 10-2
8. Stewartville 11-2
9. Richfield 9-4
10. Marshall 10-3

## CLASS 2A

1. Albany 12-0
2. Waseca 15-0
3. Caledonia 11-2
4. Lake City 10-1
5. Jackson County Central 12-1
6. Montevideo 11-1
7. Breck 6-6
8. Blake 9-1
9. Warroad 13-0
10. Cannon Falls 12-1

## CLASS 1A

1. Cherry 16-0
2. Dawson-Boyd 10-2
3. Nevis 8-2
4. Henning 11-2
5. Deer River 12-2
6. Cedar Mtn. 10-0
7. Red Lake Co. 8-1
8. Springfield 11-1
9. Ada-Borup West 9-4
10. Park Christian 9-2

# MBBN GIRLS

## CLASS 4A

1. Hopkins 12-2
2. Maple Grove 10-2
3. Eden Prairie 13-2
4. Eastview 12-3
5. St. Michael-Albertville 11-3
6. Prior Lake 11-3
7. Wayzata 10-4
8. Minnetonka 8-4
9. Lakeville North 7-7
10. Rochester Mayo 10-4

## CLASS 3A

1. Marshall 15-0
2. Alexandria 11-2
3. Monticello 13-0
4. Orono 13-1
5. DeLaSalle 10-3
6. Benilde-St. Margaret's 6-5
7. Mahtomedi 7-3
8. Hill-Murray 10-4
9. Totino-Grace 9-3
10. Delano 12-4

## CLASS 2A

1. Providence Academy 14-0
2. Crosby-Ironton 14-0
3. New London-Spicer 15-0
4. Minnehaha Academy 10-4
5. Sauk Centre 13-0
6. Caledonia 13-2
7. Proctor 15-1
8. Minnewaska Area 12-2
9. Duluth Marshall 12-2
10. Jordan 7-4

## CLASS 1A

1. Goodhue 10-4
2. Mayer Lutheran 11-1
3. Hillcrest Lutheran 13-0
4. Sleepy Eye St. Mary's 13-0
5. Mt. Iron-Buhl 12-1
6. Kittson County Central 10-1
7. Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa 10-5
8. Hancock 10-2
9. Walker-Hackensack-Akeley 13-1
10. Central MN Christian 12-2

## 2A power Providence tops overall state girls ranking

Providence Academy is number one in the Minnesota Star-Tribune's overall state girls ranking. The Class 2A private school juggernaut has beaten three ranked 4A teams: Maple Grove 82-75, Lakeville North 82-58, and Hopkins 66-59, along with handing Orono (No. 4 in 3A) its lone loss 80-51 and tripping perennial 2A power Minnehaha Academy 99-78 in a conference duel. Another signature win was 71-69 over Caitlin Clark's alma mater, Iowa's No. 2 ranked Dowling Catholic, at White Bear Lake's Thanksgiving Tip-Off.

Cretin-Derham Hall, top ranked in boys Class 4A, beat Totino-Grace, state 3A champ the last three years, 82-77 on Jan. 3, led by 6-foot-11 Tommy Ahneman with 25 points and 17 rebounds, and JoJo Mitchell with 21 points and nine assists. Chase Watley scored 28 for the Eagles. Totino-Grace is 10-3, also losing to Farmington and East Ridge.

Hastings snapped the Mahtomedi girls 45-game win streak in the Metro East Conference 56-54 on Dec. 17, led by Keagan McVicker with 22 points. Piper Brockman got the game-winner with a put-back after grabbing a rebound of a teammate's missed shot.

Benilde-St. Margaret's, ranked first in boys Class 3A, won back to back close games over No. 5 DeLaSalle 75-73 on Dec. 20 and, after the break, 49-46 over No. 7 Byron. Jaleel Donley sank 22 points and Jalen Wilson 20 against DLS, which got 18 points each from Dorian Pruitt and Jaeden Dean. TJ Stuttley had 21 points and Wilson 14 in the defensive tussle against Byron. Colin Hansen led the Bears with 13.

Hopkins tumbled Eden Prairie 83-66 in a one vs. two girls duel Friday, Jan. 11, regaining the top spot in Class 4A rankings. Eden Prairie was briefly installed at No. 1 with a 12-1 record. The Hornets stormed to a 51-23 halftime lead and coasted. Lauren Hillesheim sank 19 points, Liv Bell 16, with Maliyah White and Jaliyah Diggs 10 each. Rae Ehrman hit 26 for the Eagles. Hopkins is 11-3 with losses to Providence Academy, Eastview and Iowa power Dowling Catholic.

Coaching milestones — David Smart of Ada-Borup West got his 500th win on Jan. 3. Reaching 400 were Josh Wieme of Goodhue on Dec. 9 and John Worke of Blooming Prairie on Jan. 9. Reaching 300 were Bob Southworth of St. Peter and TJ Super of Perham, both in December. All of the preceding are girls coaches. Jon Lillquist of the Sebeka boys also got his 300th.

## Mack reaches 4,000; 2 other girls close in

By Bruce Strand

With three Minnesota girls approaching 4,000 points at the start of the season. Minnehaha Academy senior guard Addi Mack got there first while scoring 30 in a 71-39 win over Stewartville on Dec. 28 at Hamline, reaching the milestone with a free throw. The Maryland recruit is averaging over 33 points.

One night earlier, Mack moved into second place in the all-time points list while scoring 36 in a 79-75 loss to Benilde-St. Margaret's. She passed Carlie Wagner, who had 3,957 for New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva, graduating in 2014. Number one is Braham's Rebekah Dahlman with 5,060.

Maddyn Greenway of Providence Academy and Tori Oehrlein each recently went past the 3,800 marker as juniors, each with a good shot at 5,000. Oehrlein has made four quadruple doubles.

Greenway had 51 points and Mack 39 when Providence beat Minnehaha 99-78 on Jan. 7. Two games earlier, Duluth Marshall freshman prodigy Chloe Johnson outscored Greenway 42 to 20 but the Lions won 91-70 — with kid sister Beckett Greenway (eighth-grader) scoring 22 points and McKenna Schaefer 18.

2,000 points -- Girls reaching 2,000 this season were seniors Aubrey Morrison of Walker-Hackensack-Akeley, Kaitlyn Rohloff of Hancock, and Ella Kuhlmann of North Branch/Rush City, and juniors Kate Thayer of Kelliher-Northome and Kadence Pierce of Ogilvie. Boys reaching 2,000 points, all seniors, are Azayah Washington of St. Cloud Apollo, Noah Sunquist of Cherry, CJ Armstrong of Richfield, Trevor Smith of Tracy-Milroy-Balaton, Brayson Boike of Dawson-Boyd, and Tommy Larson of Littlefork-Big Falls.



**Addi Mack, Minnehaha Academy senior**

# New gym named for '52-0' coach

By Bruce Strand

White Bear Lake's new gymnasium was dedicated as Gavin Court when the Bears had their home opener, a 68-55 win over Forest Lake on Dec. 13.

Jim Galvin coached the Bears to a 52-0 record and consecutive state championships in 1984 and 1985, in the first two seasons after White Bear Mariner and White Bear Lake merged back into one school. He was head coach from 1972 to 1998.

Galvin, 82, attending with wife LeeAnne and their children and grandchildren, said with a wink he's very proud "that this beautiful place *bears* my name." He was excited that 31 of his former players showed up for the event. One was his son Jim, a guard on the 1985 team, now activities director at Mounds View, who wore an old hoodie with "BEARS 52-0" on the back.

A ceremony was held between the JV and varsity games, led by Dr. Wayne Kazmierczak, superintendent, who noted that his recommendation to the school board to name the new arena after Galvin was "the most universally supported" that he ever made.

Joe Regnier, a Mr. Basketball finalist in 1985, said one of his best memories playing for Galvin was "two



**Jim Galvin, wife LeeAnne, and members of his two straight White Bear Lake state champion teams watched a video during the ceremony.**

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schools who had despised each other" coming together as one and uniting the community. Brian Leonard, Galvin's assistant and successor, was elated to have the new arena named after Galvin because it would ensure "that community would always remember" these two shining seasons, now four decades past.

## Cherry won rare Class 1A one vs. two duel over D-B

Class A rarely has a No. 1 vs. No. 2 matchup in the regular season, with the small schools so spread out, but one happened early this season when No. 1 Cherry beat No. 2 Dawson-Boyd 60-54 on Dec. 7 at the Breakdown Tip-Off Classic in Edina. Isaiah Asuma notched 20 points (shooting 10-for-11), Noah Sundquist 19, Carson Brown 15 and Noah Asuma 14. Brayson Boike tallied 25 points and Drew Hjelmeland 14 for the Blackjacks. The small school powers — 333 miles apart in opposite corners of the state — are still ranked 1-2, and they were 1-2 most of last season, too, when Cherry won the state title while D-B was upset by Minnesota in the section tournament. Both have beaten No. 3 Nevis. Dawson-Boyd nipped the Tigers 67-62 in the Granite City Classic. Cherry beat them 74-59. Dawson-Boyd's other loss was against Class 2A's top-ranked Albany 74-53, also at the Granite City Classic.

## Cotter girls coach Bowlin passes 700-victory marker

Pat Bowlin, Winona Cotter girls coach, notched his 700th win when the Ramblers beat La Crescent-Hoka 57-33 on Dec. 5. At that point his ledger was 700-397 in a career that started in 1983 at St. Bernard's. He's No. 4 in wins behind New London-Spicer's Mike Dreier, Rochester Lourdes' Myron Glass, and Alexandria's Wendy Kohler. Bowlin has also coached softball all along and is the state's all-time leader with 819 wins against 212 losses. He told the Star-Tribune: "For me coaching is a vocation, the benefits for kids being on teams was invaluable in 1983 and even more so today in 2024. While I am a competitive person, ultimately I'm trying to use basketball as a vehicle to teach lifelong lessons."



**Pat Bowlin**

# Tigers riding high at midpoint

By Bruce Strand

Marshall opened the girls basketball season with a signature win over Alexandria and has reached mid-January unbeaten and ranked first in Class 3A.

“This group has really been a treat to coach,” coach Dan Westby said. “As a coach, you can brow-beat a group to death, but if they don’t want to do something it’s not going to matter. This group has been the opposite. They’re always coming to practice starving for ways to get better.”

Marshall has made 14 state trips, with state titles in 2001 and 2002 under coach Terry Culhane. Westby, an assistant then, has been head coach for seven state trips with three runner-up finishes. He’s a coaching legend in volleyball with nine state championships and 19 trips.

The goals are “get better every day in practice and fight hard for each other,” Westby said. “We have always said that practices should be a war and games should be a party. The games are the time you should come together as a team and celebrate all of your hard work.”

Taleigha Bigler, 5-foot-9 junior guard, averages 15 points, eight assists and six rebounds. She has committed to the local college, Southwest Minnesota State, where her dad is the men’s basketball coach, and her mother, Heather, played volleyball. Bigler has been a state champion twice, with the Tiger cross county team and their 4x800 relay, both in 2023.

“We take a lot of pride in our toughness on defense,” Bigler said. “Coach Westby always tells us that no matter how good you are, there’s always somebody better. That motivates us to practice hard.”

Reese Drake, 5-foot-9 junior guard, averages 16 points and eight rebounds. An all-state volleyball player, she helped the Tigers win the 2023 state title and place second in 2024. Drake credits the coaching staff for spending hours looking at film to “prepare us for anything we may see in the game.”

Paige Gillingham, 5-foot-10 senior forward, averages 10 points and nine rebounds. A state entrant in track as a thrower, she is the grand-daughter of the late Gale Gillingham, Green Bay Packer all-pro offensive guard who played in the first two Super Bowls. “Our



**Taleigha Bigler, above  
Paige Gillingham, right**



team is well-rounded. Everyone gets along well both on and off the court,” Gillingham said. “Our coaches are always telling us to try to get 1-percent better every day.”

Avery Schneekloth, 5-foot-11 sophomore forward, averages eight points and seven rebounds. She also ran for the state CC champ in 2023. The fifth starter is either Avery Fahl, 6-foot-1 junior forward averaging seven points, and Ali Peterson, 5-foot-9 senior forward. Both were members of the volleyball state champ and runner-up teams.

The Tigers beat Alexandria 75-70 to open the season with Bigler scoring 23 points, Drake 20 and Schleckloth 11. Alexandria placed third in the state last year and has everybody back. “We’ve had some very competitive games with Alexandria,” Westby said. “The last four years we have gone 2-2 with them. All of the games have been tough, physical battles.”

Their only other close game was 83-69 over New Ulm, with Drake hitting 23 points and Gillingham 19 with five 3-pointers. The Tigers led by as much as 20 but New Ulm scored the last 13 points of the game to make it interesting.

Marshall, given its southwest location, plays mostly smaller schools, and usually wins by 25 to 40 points.

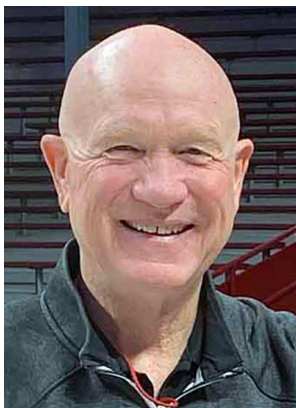
# For Buffalo SD girls - Dreams do come true!

I'm a dreamer. And there isn't much I like better than seeing an open highway stretching out for miles.

In 1976 I joined my college coach, John Thomas, to run basketball camps in his name in South Dakota and Minnesota. I loved it. This next summer will mark 50 years and 300+ camps.

One of my favorite stories happened last summer. I did a camp in Buffalo, SD. Population: 300. It is near the borders of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana.

The year before, over 100 players registered for the first year of the camp. That got our attention. *Who is the special human being out there who can get 100 players to attend a camp in a town of 300 people?*



I worked with Gary Thomas, brother of John, from 1977-1979 in a number of camps, running the camp in Lemmon for two years 1978-1979, so I knew he could find his way out there.

The Thomas brothers are not ordinary people. Their father was a prairie preacher who moved around South Dakota, raising six boys and a girl. When they fished the creeks south of Murdo, they were fishing for family food.

I golfed with John, Gary, and Dave Thomas two years ago in a flat out thunderstorm. No one said a word about the lightning, thunder or the possibility of a suspension of play. I was their guest. *If they're noy sayin' anything, I'm not sayin' anything!*

So Gary agreed to direct the Buffalo camp. Despite fracturing his pelvis in early June, he refused to be replaced as the camp director. John had to be out of the country, or he would have offered to do it in a heartbeat. Gary worked with the head girls' coach, Jay Wammen, and loved it!

The camp was arranged again for 2024, but Gary had already made late June plans to visit his daughter in

Alaska. I said "I'll do it." Now John is getting more jealous of me - traveling miles and miles into deep Dakota to teach basketball. "I'm going next year and taking my 3rd grade granddaughter!"

Jay has three young daughters, so he made the switch from boys' coach to girls' coach in 2023-2024. He went undefeated and took his team to the South Dakota state tournament, where they took fourth place.

So I traveled from Ely through North Dakota on Sunday and descended into Buffalo on Monday morning. I met Jay, that special human being, and discovered why Gary loved it. Jay was instantly likable and welcoming, the players were talented, well-coached, eager to learn and polite. I have never been thanked and called "Sir" so much in my life.

The gym was big and beautiful. Ranchers know how to do it right. Rather than someone saying, "Let's chop off eight feet to save \$76,000", they say "Let's add eight feet and make something we can be proud of for 70 years!" Everything was first-class.

Jay had heard of our Pacesetter Great Five-State Tournament at the Target Center - and long story short - later in the summer an opening popped up, and his 6th grade daughter's team was invited. It's a 12-hour drive from Buffalo to Minneapolis. They didn't hesitate... and they won it! At the Lynx game they spotted Paige Bueckers, who was happy to pose with each of Jay's daughters. More dreams coming true!

The camp is set for June 2025, and both Gary and John, who greeted the Buffalo group in Minneapolis, have committed to be camp coaches. The greatest compliment of the Buffalo girls came from John, former Celtic and lifelong coach, who said, "After watching them play, I don't know what I can teach them!"

The Buffalo girls will return to Great State in 2025.



# Kunze's Take on Gophers

By Terry Kunze

Before I begin with the Gopher men's basketball team, I would like to look at the larger picture of big-time college athletics. "NIL Money" could be the downfall of major college basketball as we know it. High school players are making big money on college commitments. Schools with big money behind them are attempting to buy championships, and this gives a lot of power to the companies that are paying the bills.

Soon, it is possible that these funders will pressure the schools on who to hire and who to fire as coaches. Basketball and football are the major sports that fund the non-revenue sports such as track, gymnastics, swimming, etc. The salaries of the coaches in major sports have sky-rocketed because of the pressure to have a successful season. It becomes a must-win situation for college coaches to keep their jobs. It also puts high school players in a bind because coaches would rather take portal players with experience and maturity over a high school prospect, thus eliminating some high school scholarships. If you are lucky enough to sign a great high school player, there is a good chance he will be grabbed by the pros or by a major college program. What is happening is that mid-major programs have become like the NBA G League for major programs. Without mentioning names, St. Thomas lost their best player (a freshman) to the University of Virginia, where he's currently playing.

The Gophers lost 4 players to the portal and one to the pros (LA Clippers) and a 4-star 7-foot post to Louisville for one reason – MONEY! In looking at the successes of Gopher Basketball, no coach has had success in recent years. Attendance for big games has dropped below 8,000 and that includes ticket holder "no shows". It's time to realize that a new arena is needed to be competitive and to put more money into the program. As an ex-Gopher coach and player, I found it difficult to show Williams Arena on a Friday night when recruits

visited. With two baskets, the site was not pretty. In my era, we were winning and an 18,000-seat arena filled was awesome. This brings me to the current Gopher program under Ben Johnson in his fourth season at the helm. Since I do not know the money situation, I can not put blame on the school administration policies. But I know for a fact that Ben and his staff are excellent recruiters and are very good at judging talent. That was shown with last year's class when they lost all players to other programs for money. These players did not leave because they did not like the coaching staff, and I hope the UM athletic director realizes that.



**Gophers coach Ben Johnson**

University of MN photo

The problem is that the program is in trouble and is trying to be as competitive as possible for the next 15 games. I hope Ben does not become the scapegoat for this year's team because it goes above that. If they let Ben go and then bring a new guy in and give him the things that are needed, is that right? The Gophers are not a good team! They are not able to compete against a Big Ten team for 40 minutes. They defend well and have some good athletes, but they do not shoot well. With a team free throw percentage of 61% and 31% from three's, it is tough to win games.

Aside from Garcia and Asuma and Fox, the staff does not have enough Big Ten quality players and must get a new roster from high school and portal players. They will need help by NIL donations to get the quality players needed to compete at this level. They have players who could step up their game because they have some talent: Edmonds, Mitchell, Paterson, Odukale. Rigsby must improve and show some consistency from game to game. Fox is playing well, and I think Asuma is a tremendous guard, who maybe should be in the lineup. Grove (red-shirt) has offensive skills and could help the team next year. Coach Johnson and his staff have a lot of work to do, and hopefully, can come away with a few W's. I believe they will be competitive and will pull some surprises. Let's go Gophers!



# Kunze's Take on Wolves

Trading Carl Anthony Townes certainly improved New York, but left the Wolves searching for ways to get DiVincenzo and Randle comfortably settled in the offense to play winning basketball. Initially, Randle dominated the ball and caused Edwards some frustration, and overall ball movement suffered. This affected shot opportunities, rebounding and shot selection. Adding to this situation, Conley was not as effective and seemed to lose a step and didn't shoot the ball well. Since the ball did not move, scoring for McDaniels dropped off. Edwards struggled with some double teams thrown at him and this resulted in some bad losses. Identifying the problem was easy, but the solution came very slow. They needed a line-up change but were unwilling to go that route. After 30 days of up and down struggles, a line-up change was finally made with some success. DiVincenzo activity has sped up the offense and created more player and ball movement. He seems more comfortable in that role, and Conley has also been effective off the bench.

The Wolves are not a good passing team, and turnovers have cost them. Many turnovers were not forced and were caused by bad decisions, poor cutting and lackadaisical play. With Gobert not being a scoring threat except for lobs and put backs, his defensive man bottles up the lane and hurts Edwards's ability to get to the basket. In a year's time we went from a great offensive team to an average one. Over the last 7 games I have seen Coach Finch change his end of the game. He now looks at who is playing well and lets them finish the game. This has really helped the offense, and I think, the morale of the players.

With the initial line-up we rarely ever closed the first quarter with a lead, and our back-ups brought us back into the game. The Wolves have hopefully solved some problems and can finish the year in the top 6 places. The West is strong, but most other teams are also going through similar situations as the Wolves.

Now with a settled line-up and consistent bench rotation, everybody can play relaxed and feel comfortable in the rotation. Naz Reid is now getting the minutes he deserves because he helps them out whether the shots are falling or not. Alexander's role is hitting shots and defending and generally being a pest on the court. Minott is a tremendous athlete and certainly can be a good player in this league for several years. I hope it is time to give him some trust by affording

him longer runs. It is not easy to get 2-4 minutes at a time for any player. I also believe Granza is ready to play some as he destroyed the G League. You must guard Granza or he can hurt you. With Gobert's inability to play away from the basket, more time should be spent keeping the middle open for Randle and Edwards.

It will not be easy to make a trade, so we will have to get better from within – which can be done! I do not like Rob Dillingham's situation. He is not going to get better watching from the bench. If they can send him down to the G-league for some experience that would be great. They did not work so hard to acquire him to not give him an opportunity to play. Shannon must be given his opportunity also. He showed his ability by knocking down 47 points in his last G League game.



**Timberwolves coach  
Chris Finch**

Coach Finch is a good coach. I'm sure he is thinking about some of these things. The NBA is a player league, and Coach Finch and his staff have gained their trust and love. One example I like is watching Randle adjust his game after a sit down with the coaches. The ball is not as sticky and this has allowed Edwards more opportunities to score. The Wolves have an offensive weakness moving the ball and get stagnant which makes them easier to defend. This must be corrected if they are to be more successful

These are my ideas, and whether right or wrong, they are based on watching every game and not just second-guessing after a particular game.

The Wolves have some fine players which projects the skill of the coaching staff in identifying talent. Garza, Dillingham, Minott and Shannon are players of the future, and I hope they bring them along as the season continues. The NBA is a tough league, and I think our Wolves will surprise with some nice wins and get into the playoffs. GO WOLVES!



**Terry Kunze**

- Former Asst MN Gophers Coach
- Head coach MN Fillies-Women pro-team
- MN State champion - Duluth Central
- Played for the MN Gophers
- Played & coached in Europe
- MN Basketball News Columnist

# ROAD TO THE TARGET CENTER

## PACESETTER 2025 MINNESOTA

### Boys & Girls Grades 4-9

# YOUTH BASKETBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

## 5-STAR REGION PLAYOFFS

**NEW in 2025!**

- Grades 4-7 - register at any of the 5 regions  
(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



*DREAMS DO COME TRUE!*



**Scan Code**

For More Info:

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

3-4 game guarantee

Team fee: \$215

All MN school/community-based teams may register to play at any site  
No AAU, Try-out or All-Star teams

### 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



**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

*Ell is very knowledgeable and the children really enjoyed his energy and how he taught different skills. Camp was well ran, 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 SCSU 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 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: 539-248 at Vermillion Community College

... and many more (see inside)

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



Website: [www.pacesettersports.net](http://www.pacesettersports.net)  
 Email: [pacesettersportsmbbn@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](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	\$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](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	\$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