

SPORTS

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Park Rapids Enterprise

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MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Photos by Vance Carlson / Enterprise
Fans and the bench react after the Park Rapids volleyball team won the Section 8AA championship Saturday night at Fosston with a 3-0 win over Roseau. **Below:** Members of the Park Rapids volleyball team celebrate after defeating Roseau in the Section 8AA championship match Saturday night at Fosston.

Park Rapids volleyball team avenges loss to Roseau, earns first trip to state

By Vance Carlson
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A heartbreaking loss in last year's Section 8AA championship match provided incentive for a historic win in this year's Section 8AA championship match for the Park Rapids volleyball team.

A year ago, Roseau prevented the Panthers from qualifying for the state tournament for the first time in school history with a 25-23, 21-25, 25-18, 25-21 win at Fosston.

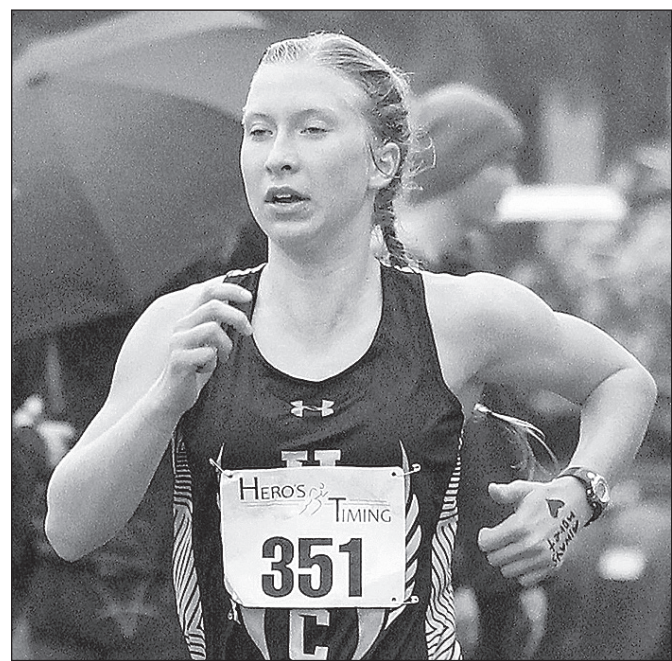
In the Section 8AA championship rematch Saturday night at Fosston, the Panthers avenged that loss with a

dominant 25-16, 25-13, 25-13 victory to capture their first section title and advance to state for the first time in program history.

"We had a very strong season last year and losing that championship match was heartbreaking. The girls learned from that moment and knew it was going to take something extra and they walked the walk," said Park Rapids head coach Stephanie Hanson, who shared Section 8AA Coach of the Year honors with Hawley's Jennifer Christofferson. "There are really no words when it comes to how satisfying the win was. These girls have put in a lot of time working towards getting to the big stage. State is an amazing experience, but you have to play among the best and beat them and we did that (Saturday night)."

In contrast to last year's title match, the Panthers took control midway through the first set and controlled the

VOLLEYBALL: Page B3



Vance Carlson / Enterprise

United North Central's Annika Aho concluded her senior season by placing 37th overall in her fourth appearance at the state Class A cross-country meet.

Local runners cap off season at state

By Vance Carlson
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Nevis' Jade Rypkema and United North Central's Annika Aho just missed earning all-state honors while Nevis' Jack McNamee just missed

clocking his personal-best time at Saturday's state Class A cross-country meet at St. Olaf College in Northfield.

"I couldn't be more happy for the kids," said

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Girtz posts highest average in state as Clay Dusters win conference title

By Vance Carlson
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Cole Girtz finished with the highest average in the state and the Park Rapids Clay Dusters claimed the 1A Conference 8 title as the Minnesota State High School Fall Clay Target League season concluded.

Girtz hit all 50 targets in Week 5 to finish the five-week season with a 24.7 average out of a possible 25.0. Girtz also had perfect rounds in Week 1 and Week 3. Norwood-Young America's Mason Milbrand, Richfield's Sydney Krieger (the top female) and St. Michael-Albertville's William Rahne tied for the second-highest average at 24.4.

The Clay Dusters ended the season with the highest score in Week 4 with 1,500 points and in Week 5 with 1,748.50 points for 7,721 total points. Duluth East was second with 6,759.5 points while Princeton

(6,457.5), St. Francis (5,050.5), North Lakes Academy (4,517), Denfeld (4,425.5), Ortonville (3,917), Luverne (3,592) and Blackduck (3,460) rounded out the nine-team conference standings. Park Rapids also topped the conference in Week 1 with 1,589.5 points, finished behind Duluth East's 1,529.5 points in Week 2 with 1,492.5 points and finished behind Princeton's 1,405.5 points in Week 3 with 1,390.5 points.

Girtz led the conference in average while Tayden George tied for seventh at 22.5, and Jediah Fischer, Brendan Landstrom and Kaiden Walsh tied for 11th place at 22.0. Also finishing in the top 25 among males were Drew Weiss (21.9), Isaac Hoverson (21.8), Cole Bethel (21.7) and Taylor Edelman (21.4).

For the girls, McKenzie Girtz tied for third with a 21.3 average and Megan Offerdahl finished eighth with an 18.9 aver-

age. Princeton's Madison Borgman had the top average among females at 22.8.

Other season averages for the Clay Dusters included Andrew Bittmann (21.1), Bode Lee (20.4), Jacob Zinniel (19.7), Sam Belina (19.6), Sam Meier (18.9), Wyatt Newman (19.0), Lee Edelman (17.2), Josh Crandall (17.0), Isaac Hartig (14.6) and Ashton Goeddertz (14.1).

Belina, Bethel and Landstrom all hit 25 straight targets in Week 5 while George and Newman hit 25 straight targets in Week 4.

There were 120 teams in 16 conferences that competed in the fall league.

Menahga places third

Menahga placed third in the final 1A Conference 3 standings.

In Week 4, Menahga finished fourth with 242 points, but scored 263 points to finish second in Week 5 to move up to

third place in the final standings with 1,233 points. Red Wing took first with 1,739.5 points and Providence Academy was second with 1,396 points.

Rounding out the seven-team conference standings were Rochester Area Christian with 1,203.5 points, Maple River with 1,015 points, Long Prairie-Grey Eagle with 708.5 points and St. Louis Park with 684.50 points.

Leading Menahga were Jadon Maaninga (seventh with a 20.3 average) and Ethan Trout (eighth with a 20.2 average). Also in the top 25 for the boys were Hunter Rasmussen (tied for 16th at 17.9) and John Carstensen (22nd at 16.8). Red Wing's Isaac Kosek had the top average among males at 22.3.

For the girls, Carter Hasbargen finished third with a 19.5 average and Melissa Trout was sixth at 18.0. Red Wing's Chloe Struss led the females with a 23.4 average.