

FOOTBALL

Defense stands tall in Stillwater's victory over sixth-ranked Knights

BY STUART GROSKREUTZ  
THE GAZETTE

OAK PARK HEIGHTS — Even after time expired, the Stillwater football team made one final defensive stand to secure a 7-0 East Metro sub-district football victory over St. Michael-Albertville on Friday, Oct. 12 at Stillwater Area High School.

The Ponies (1-5 EM, 2-5) snapped a three-game losing streak with a hard-fought shutout victory over the sixth-ranked Knights (4-1 North Metro, 4-3), who entered on a four-game winning streak.

Stillwater's improbable victory followed some

Woodbury stuffs Ponies in final regular season game. Stillwater will travel to Rosemount for Class 6A playoffs. See story, page B4.

anxious moments with STMA threatening in the final seconds.

After taking two penalties that backed them up to the 13-yard line, the Knights were left with one more shot and appeared to score on quarterback Jared Duda's pass to Brandon Langdok in the end zone. What first looked like a sure reception was broken up by defensive back Tony O'Keefe, who leveled Langdok with a hit

that jarred the ball loose — setting off an exuberant celebration for the Ponies.

"I saw a dude break over the middle and thought he caught it," O'Keefe said. "I hit him and then saw him lying on the ground and he didn't have the ball."

"That was huge. We needed to win something to get our spirits up and we needed that one. I just think everyone on that field wanted to win today."

That last defensive stand followed a furious sequence down the stretch.

The Knights, whose previous drive stalled on the Stillwater 10 with three

See Football, Page B4



Stillwater receiver Andrew Eichthen celebrates his first-quarter touchdown in an eventual 7-0 football victory over sixth-ranked St. Michael-Albertville on Friday, Oct. 12 at Stillwater Area High School. (Gazette staff photo by Stuart Groskreutz)

GIRLS SWIMMING AND DIVING

Ponies finish 4th at True Team state

BY STUART GROSKREUTZ  
THE GAZETTE

MINNEAPOLIS — The Stillwater girls' swimming and diving team hit on all cylinders while finishing fourth at the Class AA True Team state meet on Saturday, Oct. 13 at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center.

The Ponies finished with 2,097.5 points to place behind the Lake Conference trio of Minnetonka (2,509), Edina (2,274) and Wayzata (2,166). Stillwater landed just 68.5 points out of third place, but well ahead of fifth-place East Ridge (1,275).

Stillwater has recorded higher finishers at True Team state,

See Swimming, Page B2

SOCCER

Section win-win for Ponies



The Stillwater boys' and girls' soccer teams celebrated their Section 4AA championships on Tuesday, Oct. 16 at Stillwater Area High School. The girls returned victorious from East Ridge just as the boys' team finished off its home shoot-out victory over East Ridge. This is the sixth time in school history, but first since 2010, that the teams have each qualified for state in the same season. (Gazette staff photo by Stuart Groskreutz)

Peterson and Begin provide scoring as Stillwater girls net first trip to state since 2010

BY STUART GROSKREUTZ  
THE GAZETTE

WOODBURY — After getting eliminated by East Ridge each of the past two years, the Stillwater girls' soccer team broke through against the Raptors while prevailing 2-1 to claim the Section 4AA championship on Tuesday, Oct. 16 at East Ridge High School.

The Ponies (14-1-4), who were seeded second despite defeating top-seeded East Ridge 2-0 in the regular season, scored twice in the first half and held on to earn their first trip to state since 2010.

"It's super exciting, especially this year because we've worked together so hard this year and we've been working for this for three or four years now," said Ponies senior Halle Peterson.

The state quarterfinals are scheduled for Oct. 23-

25 at a site and against an opponent to be determined when seeding is announced on Saturday, Oct. 20. Quarterfinal sites include Chisago Lakes, Farmington, Prior Lake and St. Cloud.

"It was a great team effort and these girls have worked hard to get where they're at," said Ponies coach Mike Huber. "It's great to get where we are, but we're not done yet and we have to take the next step now and play for a state championship."

It was a windy evening and the Ponies played with the wind at their backs in the first half at East Ridge.

Peterson opened the scoring for Stillwater in the 13th minute, heading in a corner kick from Dara Andringa. It was the fourth goal in three section games for Peterson.

See Girls, Page B5

Huber is finalist for Mr. Soccer

Stillwater senior defender Logan Huber has been named one of five finalists for the Class AA Mr. Soccer Award, which will be presented at the MSHSSCA All-State Banquet on Sunday, Oct. 21. The other finalists for this honor are forward Tayeb Benjaafar of Minneapolis Washburn, midfielder Alejandro Ferrer-Lugo of Minnetonka, midfielder Seth Hoffman of Duluth East and midfielder Zinedine Kroeten of St. Louis Park.

Huber, a four-year starter who contributed to Stillwater's state championship team in 2016 and state runner-up squad a year ago, has provided 12 goals and 9 assists this season. To put those totals in perspective, the Ponies as a team have only allowed their opponents 10 goals and six assists this season.

"Logan is a unique soccer talent, especially where a lot of the foundation for an award like this typically falls on an attacking player," Ponies coach Jake Smothers said. "His consistency and intelligence as a soccer player and his physicality have ushered in this era of Stillwater success."

In the last three years as starting center back, Huber has helped the Ponies to a 56-3-4 record where they have out-scored opponents by a combined 214-33 with 28 shutouts.

"It's difficult to quantify what a center back does," Smothers said. "He just does his job and allows other people to do their job. That type of soccer player is very unique."

"I think he's deserving of the award."

The Ponies have produced three previous players who were named Mr. Soccer, including Marshall Morehead in 1996, Dana Kurttila in 1997 and Dan Horst in 2002. Stillwater's most recent finalist was Patrick Allan in 2016.



Huber

— Stuart Groskreutz

Stillwater boys edge Raptors in shootout to capture third consecutive section crown

BY STUART GROSKREUTZ  
THE GAZETTE

OAK PARK HEIGHTS — With a record 19th state tournament appearance on the line for the Stillwater boys' soccer team, coach Jake Smothers liked what he heard as the Section 4AA championship was being decided via shootout.

"In all honesty, I didn't watch a single kick," Smothers said. "I sat on the bench and looked at the ground and listened for the reaction."

It was cheers, and not groans, he heard from the Stillwater side as goalkeeper Rayce Johnson made a diving stop to seal a 2-1 victory over East Ridge on Tuesday, Oct. 16 at Stillwater Area High School.

Johnson's save followed an earlier miss from the Raptors and Stillwater

drilled all four of its tries in the overtime shootout to capture its third consecutive section crown. The Ponies won a state championship two years ago and finished second at state last season.

"I can't express how proud I am of this group," said Smothers, reflecting on the challenges that go along with producing a run like this. "In 2016, we graduated 74 of 94 goals and last year we go 18-2-2 and lose in the finals and graduated 7 of 11 starters, but we're right back to where we were last year."

Top-seeded Stillwater (16-1-2), went first in the shootout and Spencer Scott delivered, followed by Nicholas Purdie. The Raptors matched Stillwater through two shooters, but drilled the post when trying to answer Logan

See Boys, Page B5

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VOLLEYBALL

# Ponies upend potential section foes North St. Paul and Roseville

BY STUART GROSKREUTZ  
THE GAZETTE

ROSEVILLE — The Stillwater volleyball team is winding down the regular season with some impressive showings against highly regarded teams it could face in the upcoming Section 4AAA tournament.

The sixth-ranked Ponies, who closed out the regular season at the Chaska Invitational on Saturday, Oct. 20, wrapped up an undefeated Suburban East

Conference campaign by sweeping Roseville 3-0 on Tuesday, Oct. 16. Stillwater got stronger as the match went on, topping the Raiders 25-16, 25-12 and 25-10.

“We’re playing pretty well,” Ponies coach Bob Fisher said. “In the middle of this run, the girls are just really driving toward playing even better and we’re setting a good tone for the postseason.”

The Ponies did not let up against the Raiders. “It was a steady effort

throughout the whole match and each chunk we were playing better and better,” Fisher said. “That was real encouraging. We knew Roseville was a good team and a conference and section opponent so we wanted to make a statement and the girls came out firing.”

Stillwater (8-0 SEC, 18-5) has won 9 of its last 10 games against its last three opponents, who have a combined record of 58-16. Two of those teams, East Ridge and North St. Paul,

are ranked in the top 10 in Class AAA.

The Ponies swept the Polars (23-2) and Raiders (5-3, 17-5), who are seeded second and third behind Stillwater in the Section 4AAA tourney. The Ponies will host either eighth-seeded Irondale or ninth-seeded Spring Lake Park in the quarterfinals on Thursday, Oct. 25.

The Ponies defeated the Polars 25-15, 25-17 and 25-22 in their nonconference encounter on Friday, Oct. 12 at North St. Paul.

It was only the second loss of the season for the Polars, who Stillwater defeated in last year’s section finals.

“I thought our defensive intensity was on part with anything we’ve done all season,” Fisher said. “We were intent on matching the defensive intensity that North St. Paul is noted for and I think we accomplished that.”

Stillwater trailed 21-19 in the third game, but outscored the Polars 6-1 down the stretch to close out the

match.

“Maddie (Whittington) had some nice kills and we were serving well at that point,” Fisher said. “We had some nice kills and some nice blocks.”

Stillwater could also see some strong competition at Chaska, with top-ranked Champlin Park and third-ranked Eagan in the field, along with Stewartville, which is ranked No. 1 in Class AA.

“It will be a good tune-up for sections,” Fisher said.

## SWIMMING

(Continued from page B1)

but delivered a remarkable performance based on its previous times this season.

“We had 100 percent seasonal or lifetime bests — I’d say 80 percent were life,” said Brian Luke, now in his 44th season as Ponies head coach. “It was crazy. I’ve coached 1,421 meets at Stillwater and that was top 10 for sure.”

With four entries in each of 12 events there’s plenty of opportunities to slip in a poor race, but the Ponies were on their game from start to finish.

“It was a total team effort,” Luke said. “Way back when we started this idea, it was to try and get the team in there and we had 90 kids there. Not all were participating, but all were active in helping everybody be better. That was one of the keys, too, even the non-participants were very supportive and elevated the whole group.”

The Ponies easily exceeded the 1,795 points they scored while also placing fourth a year ago.

“I don’t know if I’ve ever walked away saying we legitimately had 100 percent (bests),” Luke said. “We’ve said like 95 percent, but in reference to just watching that meet it was a thrill. It was well worth the price of admission.”

Based on their seed times for this meet, which does not include driving, the Ponies gained even more than Luke thought was possible on a good night.

“I said I think we can gain 240 points if everything went perfect, but Wayzata gets to go forward, too,” Luke said. “The kids gained 260 points off their seed times.”

Stillwater closed out the meet with its only victory. Sydney Rogness, Schuyler DuPont, Eva Johns and Grace Rauker won the 400 freestyle relay in a time of 3:31.84, nearly half a second ahead of runner-up Wayzata (3:32.30).

“That last relay was fun,” Luke said. “That group went 3:40 at the Maroon and Gold, so



Eva Johns swims the opening leg for Stillwater’s top finisher in the 200 medley relay during the girls’ swimming and diving Class AA True Team state meet on Saturday, Oct. 13 at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center in Minneapolis. (Gazette/ECM photo by Mark Trockman)

that was an 8 1/2-second drop.”

Rogness finished second in the 200 individual medley (2:04.31) and the 100 freestyle (51.97). Schuyler DuPont placed third in the 200 freestyle (1:53.82) and fourth in the 500 freestyle (5:06.06), one spot behind teammate Rauker (5:05.99) — who erased a whopping 15 seconds off her seed time. Rauker also placed seventh in the 200 free with a time of 1:55.65, followed by Keaton Koenig (1:58.20) and Annika Johns (1:58.66) in 10th and 11th.

“We had four sub four-minute 200s, not too many teams can put that out there,” Luke said.

Eva Johns finished fifth in the 100 backstroke (59.33) and Malaina Fragnito placed sixth in the 100 breaststroke (1:08.35).

“It goes on and on in every event,” Luke said. “It was fun to watch.

“Six weeks ago, as example, our A medley was barely going 1:57 and now our D medley is going 1:57. Sarah Doeksen was going 1:03 in the 100 free and she went out in 57 (in the 400 free relay). Annika Fredeen was the same thing, they’re dropping four, five or six seconds in a 100.

“It was great. We got fourth and those other teams are very good — and we’re good. I was very proud of what the kids did.”

### Team standings

1. Minnetonka 2,509; 2. Edina 2,274; 3. Wayzata 2,166; 4. Stillwater 2,097.5; 5. East Ridge 1,275; 6. Hopkins 1,258.5; 7. Mounds View 1,250; 8. Maple Grove 1,089.5; 9. Buffalo 948.5; 10. St. Michael-Albertville 940.5; 11. Farmington 927; 12. Blaine 888.5.

### Stillwater results

**200 medley relay** — 1. Wayzata, 1:45.82; 6. Stillwater A (Eva Johns, Maddie Reed, Sydney Dettmann and Sydney Rogness) 1:49.94; 13. Stillwater B (Annika Johns, Malaina Fragnito, Avery Wright and Lily Mayek) 1:53.48; 17. Stillwater C (Lucy DuPont, Dorothy Chislett, Emily Shanley and Liza Karlen) 1:55.20; 23. Stillwater D (Sophia Chau, Estelle Auleciems, Hannah Dettmann and Ellie Kill) 1:57.88.

**200 freestyle** — 1. Claudia Chang (Ed) 1:51.92; 3. Schuyler DuPont (St) 1:53.82; 7. Grace Rauker (St) 1:55.65; 10. Keaton Koenig (St) 1:58.20; T11. Annika Johns (St) 1:58.66.

**200 individual medley** — 1. Jordan McGinty (Way) 2:03.18; 2. Sydney Rogness (St) 2:04.31; 9. Malaina Fragnito (St) 2:12.30; 13. Hannah Dettman (St) 2:14.40; 17. Anika Wright (St) 2:16.64.

**50 freestyle** — 1. Ellen Hofstede (Hop) 24.14; 12. Lily Mayek (St) 25.36; T16. Liza Karlen (St) 25.62; 26. Sydney Dettmann (St) 26.04; 36. Ellie Kill (St) 26.78.

**Diving** — 1. Megan Phillip (Ed) 521.45; 10. Peyton Classon (St) 342.25; 17. Emily Kranz (St) 211.00; 20. Sydney Majkowski (St) 193.75; 36. Madelyn Puhmann (St) 106.30.

**100 butterfly** — 1. Molly Meland (Hop) 55.54; 10. Sydney Dettmann (St) 59.20; 16. Avery Wright (St) 1:01.88; 18. Hannah Dettmann (St) 1:02.36; 21. Maddie Reed (St) 1:03.78.

**100 freestyle** — 1. Jordan McGinty (Way) 51.29; 2. Sydney Rogness (St) 51.97; 11. Eva Johns (St) 54.04; 14. Lily Mayek (St) 55.10; 20. Keaton Koenig (St) 55.78.

**500 freestyle** — 1. Claudia Chang (Ed) 4:58.31; 3. Grace Rauker (St) 5:05.99; 4. Schuyler DuPont (St) 5:06.06; 18. Avery Wright (St) 5:29.57; 21. Anika Wright (St) 5:31.39.

**200 freestyle relay** — 1. Minnetonka, 1:38.29; 6. Stillwater A (Schuyler DuPont, Lily Mayek, Sydney Dettmann and Grace Rauker) 1:41.36; 10. Stillwater B (Anika Wright, Maddie Reed, Keaton Koenig and Liza Karlen) 1:43.19; 16. Stillwater C (Dorothy Chislett, Julianna Silva, Hannah Dettmann and Ellie Kill) 1:45.04; 19. Stillwater D (Lucy DuPont, Luci Miller, Sarah Doeksen and Molly Puhmann) 1:45.32.

**100 backstroke** — 1. Molly Meland (Hop) 55.81; 5. Eva Johns (St) 59.33; T7. Annika Johns (St) 59.41; 15. Lucy DuPont (St) 1:00.93; 28. Sophia Chau (St) 1:03.72.

**100 breaststroke** — 1. Emma Lezer (STMA) 1:03.49; 6. Malaina Fragnito (St) 1:08.35; 16. Maddie Reed (St) 1:09.92; 19. Estelle Auleciems (St) 1:11.22; 22. Dorothy Chislett (St) 1:12.32.

**400 freestyle relay** — 1. Stillwater A (Sydney Rogness, Schuyler DuPont, Eva Johns and Grace Rauker) 3:31.84; 10. Stillwater B (Keaton Koenig, Annika Johns, Liza Karlen and Anika Wright) 3:44.39; 16. Stillwater C (Avery Wright, Ellie Kill, Sarah Doeksen and Lucy DuPont) 3:49.80; 23. Stillwater D (Emma Sneden, Annika Fredeen, Grace Sneden and Molly Puhmann) 3:52.61.

### Stillwater 99, Park 76

The Ponies wrapped up at least a share of their 16th consecutive Suburban East Conference championship with a 99-76 dual meet victory over Park on Thursday, Oct. 11 at Stillwater Middle School.

Stillwater (7-0 SEC, 8-0) can secure the title outright with a victory at Roseville on Thursday, Oct. 25.

Against Park, the Ponies finished first in all 12 events and occupied the top three places in six of those, including the 200 individual medley, diving, 100 butterfly, 100 freestyle, 500 freestyle and 100 breaststroke. Stillwater also finished 1-2 in all three relays. Nine different athletes recorded an individual victory.

It was a balanced performance and a fun way to celebrate Senior Night. With the True Team state meet set for Oct. 27, some of the swimmers competing in four events at that meet were limited to an event or two against Park.

“Some of the kids didn’t swim in True Team section so I tried to load them up at that meet four times and it worked out really well,” Ponies coach Brian Luke said.

Stillwater also lined up some all-sister teams — five in fact — for the 200 freestyle relay. The Ponies have 10 sets of sisters on

this year’s team and they were paired together for the race. Annika and Eva Johns joined Emma and Grace Sneden to win the event in 1:46.36. Finishing second in a time of 1:50.06 were Hannah and Sydney Dettmann and Bella and Sophia Chau.

“A quarter of the team is sisters — very fast sisters, too,” Luke said. “There’s good DNA there.”

First-place individual finishers for the Ponies included: Ellie Kill (200 free), Grace Rauker (200 IM), Annika Johns (50 free), Peyton Classon (diving), Rachel Duerr (100 fly), Maddie Reed (100 free), Malaina Fragnito (500 free), Lucy DuPont (100 back) and Sydney Rogness (100 breast).

Stillwater’s latest conference championship is especially impressive when you consider East Ridge and Moudns View finished fifth and seventh at the True Team state meet.

“Three of the top seven are from our conference and four from the Lake,” Luke said. “I’d say we’ve got the second best conference in the state so when you win our conference you beat good teams.

“We’ve been very fortunate to be able to win that conference championship a few years in a row and we want to keep that going. Nothing lasts forever, but we might as well try to keep that going as long as we can.”

### Stillwater 99, Park 76

**200 medley relay** — 1. Stillwater (Lily Mayek, Sydney Rogness, Schuyler DuPont and Eva Johns) 1:54.85; 2. Stillwater (Katherine Eisenbrandt, Dorothy Chislett, Malaina Fragnito and Anika Wright) 2:03.07.

**200 freestyle** — 1. Ellie Kill (St) 2:07.95; 2. Rachel Duerr (St) 2:09.74; 4. Julianna Silva (St) 2:11.73.

**200 individual medley** — 1. Grace Rauker (St) 2:19.60; 2. Sydney Dettmann (St) 2:24.31; 3. Annika Fredeen (St) 2:16.17.

**50 freestyle** — 1. Annika Johns (St) 25.90; 2. Liza Karlen (St) 26.57; 6. Emily Shanley (St) 28.62.

**Diving** — 1. Peyton Classon (St) 210.85; 2. Emily Kranz (St) 208.25; 3. Madelyn Puhmann (St) 145.65.

**100 butterfly** — 1. Rachel Duerr (St) 1:05.41; 2. Grace Rauker (St) 1:05.86; 3. Emily Shanley (St) 1:06.26.

**100 freestyle** — 1. Maddie Reed (St) 58.21; 2. Emma Sneden (St) 59.23; 3. Grace Sneden (St) 1:00.99.

**500 freestyle** — 1. Malaina Fragnito (St) 5:39.31; 2. Ellie Kill (St) 5:44.42; 3. Annika Fredeen (St) 5:47.26.

**200 freestyle relay** — 1. Stillwater (Annika Johns, Eva Johns, Emma Sneden and Grace Sneden) 1:46.36; 2. Stillwater (Hannah Dettmann, Sydney Dettmann, Bella Chau and Sophia Chau) 1:50.06; 3. Stillwater (Molly Puhmann, Madelyn Puhmann, Lucy DuPont and Schuyler DuPont) 1:54.85. Ex: Stillwater (Anika Wright, Raina Hoge, Avery Hoge and Avery Wright) 1:55.13; Stillwater (Caroline Reed, Maddie Reed, Hannah Bliss and Ellie Bliss) 2:00.52.

**100 backstroke** — 1. Lucy DuPont (St) 1:03.75; 2. Sarah Doeksen (St) 1:05.85; 4. Avery Wright (St) 1:07.96.

**100 breaststroke** — 1. Sydney Rogness (St) 1:07.89; 2. Anika Wright (St) 1:12.59; 3. Dorothy Chislett (St) 1:16.07.

**400 freestyle relay** — 1. Stillwater (Keaton Koenig, Emma Sneden, Molly Puhmann and Julianna Silva) 3:56.69; 2. Stillwater (Liza Karlen, Ellie Kill, Sarah Doeksen and Rachel Duerr) 4:02.99.

Contact [Stuart Groskreutz at stuart.groskreutz@ecm-inc.com](mailto:Stuart.Groskreutz@ecm-inc.com)

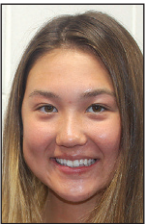


Seventh-grader Maddie Reed competes for the Ponies in the 200 medley relay during the True Team state meet on Saturday, Oct. 13 at the U of M. (Gazette/ECM photo by Mark Trockman)

### Sydney Rogness

#### Girls swimming and diving

The Stillwater girls’ swimming and diving team brought it all together for a superb performance while placing fourth at the True Team state meet and Sydney Rogness did her part with some high finishes.



The sophomore placed second in the 200 individual medley and added a runner-up finish in the 100 freestyle. She also anchored Stillwater’s sixth-place 200 medley relay team and led off the 400 freestyle relay team that finished first in a time of 3:31.84, which was eight seconds faster than the same group swam just three weeks earlier.



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### Rayce Johnson

#### Boys soccer

Taking over in goal following the graduation of Fred LeClaire, who was last year’s team MVP, Rayce Johnson has been steady in net for a team that has allowed just 10 goals all season.

The senior came through in the clutch for the Ponies with several stops in the second half of an eventual overtime shootout victory over East Ridge in the Section 4AA championship game. Johnson knocked down the fourth attempt from the Raptors to clinch a 4-2 victory in the shootout, sending Stillwater (16-1-2) to its third consecutive state tournament.





## LOCAL SCHEDULE

**Friday, October 19**

Nothing scheduled

**Saturday, October 20**

**Volleyball** — At Chaska Invitational, 9 a.m.

**Sunday, October 21**

Nothing scheduled

**Monday, October 22**

Nothing scheduled

**Tuesday, October 23**

**Boys soccer** — State quarterfinals, TBA

**Girls soccer** — State quarterfinals, TBA

**Adapted soccer** — At Minneapolis Edison, 4:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, October 24**

**Boys soccer** — State quarterfinals, TBA

**Girls soccer** — State quarterfinals, TBA

**Boys cross country** — Section 4AA Meet at U of M, 3:30 p.m.

**Girls cross country** — Section 4AA Meet at U of M, 3:30 p.m.

**Thursday, October 25**

**Boys soccer** — State quarterfinals, TBA

**Girls soccer** — State quarterfinals, TBA

**Volleyball** — Section 4AAA quarterfinals at SAHS, 7 p.m.

**Girls swimming and diving** — At Roseville (Parkview), 6 p.m.

**Adapted soccer** — At South Suburban, 4:30 p.m.

**Friday, October 26**

**Football** — Class 6A state playoffs at Rosemount, 7 p.m.

**Saturday, October 27**

Nothing scheduled

**Sunday, October 28**

Nothing scheduled

## GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

# Ponies run to SEC championship

## Title is program's first since 2000

BY STUART GROSKREUTZ  
THE GAZETTE

FOREST LAKE — Receiving a 1-2 finish at the top of the lineup and strong depth further down the list, the Stillwater girls' cross country team outlasted rival White Bear Lake to win the Suburban East Conference championship on Tuesday, Oct. 16 at Tanners Brook Golf Club.

It was the first conference title for the Ponies since 2000 and the program's ninth overall.

"It feels good," Stillwater coach Dawn Podolske said.

Stillwater's Ana Weaver and Avery Braunshausen were the top two finishers to help boost the sixth-ranked Ponies to a 49-62 victory over 11th-ranked White Bear Lake and the rest of the eight-team field. Forest Lake, which is ranked eighth in Class AA, finished third with 74 points.

Weaver won the individual conference championship in impressive fashion, crossing the line in personal best time of 17:52 — the first time she has eclipsed the 18-minute mark. Braunshausen held on to second place with a time of 18:44, just two and three seconds ahead of the next two finishers.

"The way Ana raced, she was really all by herself," Podolske said. "She was battling the wind and elements and it's a tough way to win a race and to go out and get a PR, too. That was huge for her. She knocked quite a few seconds off her time.

"Avery tried to go out with Ana, but Ana went out hard. It was pretty gutsy of her and she is a tough nut." Stillwater competed without one



Members of the Stillwater girls' cross country team move out fast during the start of the Suburban East Conference Meet on Tuesday, Oct. 16 at Tanners Brook Golf Club in Forest Lake. The Ponies won their first conference championship since 2000. (Contributed photo by Dave Brandt)

of its top runners in Morgan Peterman, who missed the race because of illness, but others ran well to pick up the slack.

Brooke Elfert was next for the Ponies in seventh place with a time of 19:13 while Elsa Huckels (19:42) and Megan Lampright (19:46) completed the scoring in 18th and 21st place. Annie Kiolbasa landed 29th in a time of 20:06.

"It tells you how strong of a team we are while missing Morgan," Podolske said. "A couple kids really stepped it up. Elsa and Megan went under 20 minutes for the first time and that's monumental. They really raced.

"Brooke really keys off Morgan, so Brooke is also learning to race her race."

Weaver, Braunshausen, Elfert and Huckels each earned All-SEC honors, which is reserved for the top 18 finishers, and Lampright received honorable mention all-conference

recognition.

• Stillwater's eight previous conference titles were achieved in 1979, 1980, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1992 and 2000.

• Stillwater scored 135 points to place fifth in the JV race, which was won by White Bear Lake with 23 points. Erin Rogers was the top finisher for the Ponies in 19th place with a time of 22:04.

### Team standings

1. Stillwater 49; 2. White Bear Lake 62; 3. Forest Lake 74; 4. Mounds View 111; 5. Roseville 116; 6. Woodbury 133; 7. East Ridge 138; 8. Park 260.

### Top 5

1. Ana Weaver (St) 17:52; 2. Avery Braunshausen (St) 18:44; 3. Jordan Parent (FL) 18:46; 4. Halle Mestery (ER) 18:47; 5. Morgan Dahl (MV) 18:52.

### Stillwater results

1. Ana Weaver 17:52; 2. Avery Braunshausen 18:44; 7. Brooke Elfert 19:13; 18. Elsa Huckels 19:42; 21. Megan Lampright 19:46; 29. Anne Kiolbasa 20:06; 48. Elise Riniker 20:58; 50. Bethany Olson 21:02; 55. Olivia Vette 21:12; 57. Bryn Carter 21:19.

## BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

# Mustangs pull away from Stillwater at SEC Meet

BY STUART GROSKREUTZ  
THE GAZETTE

FOREST LAKE — In another showdown between third-ranked Mounds View and fourth-ranked Stillwater, it was the Mustangs who continued their recent run of success while prevailing at the Suburban East Conference boys' cross country meet on Tuesday, Oct. 16 at Tanners Brook Golf Club.

The Mustangs placed three runners in the top four to outscore Stillwater 34-68 and win their second conference title in three years. White Bear Lake finished third with 97 points.

Mounds View also finished ahead of the Ponies at Milaca on Sept. 22 and Alexandria on Oct. 6.

"It's kind of more of the same," Ponies coach Scott Christensen said. "We're just a bit short in the areas I keep talking about and we just don't have any signs of getting out of it. On the other hand, there's four teams in the state that are clearly above everyone else and we're one of them."

Mounds View ended Stillwater's run of seven straight conference titles in 2016, but the Ponies returned to the top of the podium a year ago. Stillwater has won the conference championship 14 times in the past 18 years.

Roseville's Acer Iverson defended his individual title, crossing the line in 15:27 for a 16-second victory over Mounds View's

Austin Streit (15:43).

Mounds View placed three runners ahead of Stillwater's top finisher Addison Stansbury, who was sixth in a time of 16:10.

Yonas O'Malley was Stillwater's second finisher in a time of 16:16, which was good enough for second place. Ethan Vargas (16:29) followed in 16th place while Lars Dewall (16:35) and Johann Noer (16:36) completed the scoring in 19th place.

Stansbury, O'Malley, Vargas and Dewall each earned all-conference honors by finishing among the top 18 while Noer and Patrick McDowell (16:39), who finished 21st, received honorable mention all-conference recognition. It marked the first time McDowell has finished under 17 minutes in a race.

Jared Brandt (16:53), Ethan Selph (16:53) and Aiden Kilibarda (16:57) finished 30th through 32nd for the Ponies.

It wasn't the team's top performance of the season, but Christensen appreciates what the Mus-

tangs have put together this season. Plus, long-time Mounds View's Ross Fleming is one of his closest friends in coaching.

"We got beat by Mounds View, and it's the best team I've ever seen him have," Christensen said. "I'm happy for him. I love watching his team run and they're doing it the right way. The team is greater than the sum of its parts and I love teams like that.

"Ross reminds me that from 2000 to 2016 Mounds View didn't beat us once, not one meet. This dude has paid his dues and now he's got a team that I don't care what the distance was, they would have won. We were a beaten bunch, and they weren't. You've just got to tip your hat to them. Naturally I want my own team to win, but I'm happy that Ross has worked hard to get this fabulous team all put together. I think they would have won the state meet (on Tuesday)."

As for his own team, the coach is hoping to see his athletes race up to the potential they show during

workouts.

"I still like the kids and they're a good team," Christensen said. "I haven't given up, but I have no explanation and the kids have no explanation."

• Led by runner-up Adrik Kraftson (17:21), Stillwater placed three runners in the top five to outdistance Mounds View 31-50 for the title in the JV race on Tuesday. Jack Hesse-Withbroe (17:24) and Daniel Beletsky (17:25) finished fourth and fifth for the Ponies.

### Team standings

1. Mounds View 34; 2. Stillwater 68; 3. White Bear Lake 97; 4. Forest Lake 108; 5. Roseville 118; 6. East Ridge 124; 7. Woodbury 174; 8. Park 215; 9. Cretin-Derham Hall 273.

### Top 5

1. Acer Iverson (Ros) 15:27; 2. Austin Streit (MV) 15:43; 3. Lukas Hessini (MV) 15:47; 4. Finn Sokolowski (MV) 15:51; 5. Charlie Babcock (FL) 15:56.

### Stillwater results

6. Addison Stansbury 16:10; 9. Jonas O'Malley 16:16; 16. Ethan Vargas 16:29; 18. Lars Dewall 16:35; 19. Johann Noer 16:36; 21. Patrick McDowell 16:39; 30. Jared Brandt 16:53; 31. Ethan Selph 16:53; 32. Aiden Kilibarda 16:57; 51. Dylan Olson 17:44.

# 10 years ago this week ...

**Girls swimming and diving** — A strong finish in the last four events lifts the Ponies to a 21.5-point victory (2,263-2,241.5) over Edina and the rest of the field in the Class AA girls' swimming and diving state meet. It is the fifth consecutive True Team state title for the Ponies.

**Boys soccer** — After posting just three victories its first eight games to start the season, the Stillwater boys' soccer team defeats Woodbury 1-0 for its ninth straight victory to capture the Section 4AA championship. Austin Moore scores the game-winner for Stillwater in the second half and goalkeeper Brett Ylonen records his sixth straight shutout.

**Girls tennis** — French foreign exchange student Pauline Gilbert qualifies for the girls tennis state singles tournament after placing second for the Ponies in Section 4AA. The Stillwater doubles team of Natalie Phippen and Alex McDowell battle back after falling in the semifinals to win two matches and claim true second to join Gilbert at state.

*This is a look back at some of the people and teams making news in the St. Croix Valley 10 years ago, as reported in the Stillwater Gazette.*



Moore

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## GIRLS TENNIS

# Ponies eliminated from individual section tourney

BY STUART GROSKREUTZ  
THE GAZETTE

MINNEAPOLIS — After falling to top-seeded Mounds View in the finals of the Section 4AA team tournament, the Stillwater girls' tennis team finished its season with four entries competing in the individual section tournament on Friday, Oct. 12 at the University of Minnesota's Baseline Tennis Center.

Senior Ingrid Goldstrand received the No. 5 seed and posted back-to-back victories in straight sets before falling to fourth-seeded Lauren Splett of Mahtomedi 6-3, 6-1 in the quarterfinals.

Splett was later eliminated by top-seeded Nikki Ridenour of Roseville in the semifinals.

Stillwater's other singles entry, Claire Gorman, played well despite a tough draw in falling to No. 6 seed Elaine Franta of White Bear Lake 6-2, 4-6, 6-2 in the opening round.

In doubles, Stillwater's Rosie Braun and Catherine Monty received the No. 8 seed and won two matches before getting eliminated by Mounds View sisters Taylor and Paige Trondson 6-1, 6-1 in the quarterfinals. The Trondsons, who were the top-seed in the tourney, defeated their teammates Leah Brandt and Katerina Smircinschi 6-3, 6-1 in the finals.

Allison Benning and Erin Gallion of Stillwater advanced with an opening-round victory over a team from Irondale before getting stopped by seventh-seeded Sarah Hoffman and Chloe Irvine of Mahtomedi 7-5, 6-3 in the second round.

The top two finishers in the singles and doubles tournament qualify for the individual state tournament, which is set for Oct. 25-26 at the Baseline Tennis Center.

As a team, that Ponies finished the season with a 14-3 record, including 7-1 to place second in the Suburban East Conference. Mounds View defeated the Ponies 4-3 in the section finals.

### Stillwater results

#### Singles

**#5 Ingrid Goldstrand (2-1, DNP)** — def. Michelle Cho (Spring Lake Park) 6-0, 6-2; def. Megan Mihelich (Totino-Grace) 6-0, 6-0; lost to #4 Lauren Splett (Mahtomedi) 6-3, 6-1.

**Claire Gorman (0-1, DNP)** — lost to #6 Elaine Franta (White Bear Lake) 6-2, 4-6, 6-2.

#### Doubles

**#8 Rosie Braun-Catherine Monty (2-1, DNP)** — def. Natalie Anderson-Claire Smith (Fridley) 6-3, 6-1; def. Kunsel Rigzin-Emma Fagerlee (St. Anthony Village) 7-5, 6-0; lost to #1 Taylor Trondson-Paige Trondson (Mounds View) 6-1, 6-1.

**Allison Benning-Erin Gallion (1-1, DNP)** — def. Kahlan Jester-Annie Lyngdal (Irondale) 6-3, 6-2; lost to #7 Sarah Hoffman-Chloe Irvine (Mahtomedi) 7-5, 6-3.

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## SPORTS BRIEF

### Stillwater Ponies Nordic skiing information meetings on tap

The Stillwater Nordic (cross country) ski team will be holding information meetings at Oak-Land Middle School and Stillwater Middle School. The meeting SMS will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 30 in the auditorium from 7:50-8:10 a.m., and the meeting at Oak-Land will be held on Thursday, Nov. 1 in the auditorium from 7:30-7:50 a.m.

Middle School students in seventh and eighth grade are encouraged to attend and find out why the Stillwater Nordic program is one of the most success-

ful high school Nordic skiing programs in the country. More than 130 middle school and high school students enjoy participating on this team each year. Last winter, the Stillwater girls captured the program's 10th state championship and the boys placed second at state. Olympic gold medalist Jessie Diggins, who won three individual state championships, also participated in the program.

Whether you are an experienced skier or new to the sport, the Stillwater Nordic ski team welcomes you. Bring your questions or just come to hear what the skiers have to say about being a member of the Nordic team.



FOOTBALL

# Woodbury stymies Ponies in regular season finale

BY STUART GROSKREUTZ  
THE GAZETTE

OAK PARK HEIGHTS — On the heels of its biggest win of the season less than a week earlier, Stillwater was unable to match that performance while falling to Woodbury 33-7 in an East Metro sub-district football game on Wednesday, Oct. 17 at Stillwater Area High School.

The Ponies (1-5 EM, 2-6) managed just 95 total yards against the league's top defense.

That stingy defense led Woodbury (5-1, 7-1) to its first-ever sub-district/conference championship and a No. 1 seed in the Class 6A tournament.

Stillwater received a No. 7 seed and will travel to second-seeded Rosemount (6-2) for a first-round game on Friday, Oct. 26. The winner will face either third-seeded Minnetonka or sixth-seeded Anoka in the second round on Nov. 2.

The Ponies are looking forward to a fresh start following a flat showing against Woodbury, which scored on its first two possessions of the game and never looked back.

"They already had a piece of the title and probably already locked up the No. 1 seed, but regardless of what they did tonight I'm more disappointed with the fact that we didn't play as hard as we could," Stillwater coach Beau LaBore said. "We didn't look prepared to play and physically they took it to us. As coaches, we didn't do a good enough job preparing them in a short week, and our players have to take some ownership, too, to

East Metro					
	EM		Overall		
	W	L	W	L	
Woodbury	5	1	7	1	
C-D Hall	4	2	5	3	
East Ridge	4	2	5	3	
Mounds View	3	3	5	3	
White Bear Lake	2	4	4	4	
Roseville	2	4	3	5	
Stillwater	1	5	2	5	
Week 7 results					
Stillwater 7, St. Michael-Albertville 0					
Roseville 10, Mounds View 7					
Cretin-Derham Hall 36, WB Lake 28					
Woodbury 20, East Ridge 17 (OT)					
Week 8 results					
Woodbury 33, Stillwater 7					
Cretin-Derham Hall 21, Roseville 0					
Mounds View 21, White Bear Lake 7					
East Ridge 30, Centennial 26					

get after it more."

The Royals committed 90 yards worth of penalties, but rolled up 380 yards on offense and allowed Stillwater just seven first downs. Woodbury also ran 68 plays, compared to just 38 for the Ponies, and dominated the time of possession 34:18 to 12:51.

"On film throughout the season, Woodbury appeared to have the most physical and best overall defense and they played like it tonight," LaBore said. "They're bigger, faster and stronger, and tonight they played more physical as well."

Brock Rinehart led Woodbury with 16 rushes for 110 yards, including touchdowns of 5 and 36 yards.

The Royals also intercepted

three passes, including two by Kaiser Sund — who returned the second 35 yards for a defensive touchdown midway through the third quarter to give Woodbury a 33-0 lead.

Stillwater was limited to zero rushing yards on 13 attempts. Nearly half of the team's total yards came on a four-play scoring drive in the fourth quarter. Casey Venske hooked up with Ben Reckseidler for a 35-yard touchdown pass with 5:20 remaining to spoil Woodbury's shutout bid.

The Ponies entered the game on a high note after knocking off sixth-ranked St. Michael-Albertville on Oct. 12 and with the return of some key players previously sidelined by injuries.

"It's always tough when you're out of the lineup for a little while and come back in, regardless of position and a little more difficult in a short week," LaBore said. "We didn't do many things well tonight. There are some things that are fixable, but the biggest thing is our guys need to respond with a great attitude and we need to leave everything on the practice field for the last game that's guaranteed."

Woodbury	14	6	13	0	—	33
Stillwater	0	0	0	7	—	7

Wo — Brock Rinehart 5 run (Cade Keesling kick) 9:11.

Wo — Charlie Wilson 9 run (Keesling kick) 5:17.

Wo — Zach Anderson 24 pass from Zach Ames (kick failed) 8:27.

Wo — Rinehart 36 run (Keesling kick) 8:52.

Wo — Kaiser Sund 35 interception return (pass failed) 6:29.

St — Ben Reckseidler 35 pass from



Stillwater's Will Gleason and Andrew Weber stop Woodbury quarterback Charlie Wilson during an East Metro sub-district football game on Wednesday, Oct. 17 at Stillwater Area High School. (Gazette staff photo by Stuart Groskreutz)

Casey Venske (Zach Auleciems kick) 5:20.

Team stats		
	Wo	St
First downs.....	20	7
Rushes-yards .....	54-283	13-0
Passing yards .....	97	95
Total yards.....	380	95
Comp-Att-Int.....	7-14-0	8-25-3
Fumbles/lost.....	0/0	4/1
Penalties/yards .....	8/90	6/60
Punts/avg. ....	4/27.0	6/35.2

Individual statistics

**Rushing** — Wo: Brock Rinehart 16-110, Donald West 3-55, Charlie Wilson 14-48, Sam Bents 14-35, Drew Pearson 4-22, Cole Smutny 1-8 and Kobe Jurek 2-5; St: Luke Cullen 4-5, Case Venske 3-3, Tyler Thureson 2-2 and Tuanson DuFresne-To 4-(-10).

**Passing (com-att-yds-td-int)** — Wo: Charlie Wilson 6-12-73-0-0, Zach Ames 1-1-24-1-0 and Kobe Jurek 0-1-0-0-0; St: Luke Cullen 7-24-60-0-3 and Casey Venske 1-1-35-1-0.

**Receiving** — Wo: Zach Anderson 2-50, Zach Ames 1-21, Brock Rinehart 2-17 and Chase Robinson 2-9; St: Cooper Yeary 3-36, Ben Reckseidler 1-35, Maurice Pratt 2-16, Holton King 1-7 and Andrew Eichten 1-1.

**Kickoff returns** — Wo: Zach Ames 2-50; St: Andrew Eichten 4-62 and Jackson Carter 1-6.

**Punt returns** — Wo: Drew Pearson 1-8 and Charlie Wilson 1-0; St: AJ Schoenecker 1-0.

**Interceptions** — Wo: Kaiser Sund 2-35 and Drew Bramlett 1-0; St: none.

**Fumble recoveries** — Wo: Kaiser Sund 1-0; St: Sam Kavapalu 1-0.

## FOOTBALL

(Continued from page B1)

minutes remaining, regained possession with two minutes remaining and drove down to the 3-yard line before spiking the ball to stop the clock with two seconds remaining. After a delay of game penalty backed up STMA five yards, quarterback Jared Duda hooked up with Ethan Briggs for an apparent touchdown as time expired, but that was wiped away by an ineligible receiver downfield penalty.

This set up an un-timed play for the Knights at the 13 and another opportunity to even the score, which was thwarted by O'Keefe.

"We had to find a way to make one more play and we did," Ponies coach Beau LaBore said.

Making the victory even sweeter were the obstacles Stillwater had to overcome along the way while playing without seven starters — including its top two play-makers on offense — who did not play because of injury.

"I don't think you can underscore how difficult it is to be 16- or 17-years old and staring at 1-5 after having a bunch of situations where you wish you would have done this or could have done that and finding a way to make one more play and you have seven starters out and are playing one of the best teams in the state," LaBore said. "To stay with it and to practice hard and to come out and grind it out and come out on top the last play of the game is pretty special."

"It feels amazing," O'Keefe added. "I'm just so happy."

The Ponies blanked an opponent that scored a combined 85 points the previous two weeks in victories over Totino-Grace and Anoka. It was the first time the Knights have been shut out since 2016 when they fell to eventual state champion Elk River in the Section 6AAAAA finals.

It was also the first shutout victory for the Ponies since a 14-0 triumph over Roseville in Week 2 of the 2016 season.

"This is a formidable opponent," LaBore said. "They're as good of a team as we have seen all season and they're going to make a lot of noise in the playoffs. For our guys to stick with us, have faith, be optimistic and buy into the challenge of the next man up with our significant amount of injuries and being able to dig down and show some grit and not just get close, but find a way to be successful, is very impressive. It's one of the most impressive situations I've been in as a coach."

Stillwater scored the only points on its second series of the game. Sophomore quarterback



Defensive back Tony O'Keefe breaks up a pass in the end zone on the final play of Stillwater's 7-0 football victory over sixth-ranked St. Michael-Albertville on Friday, Oct. 12 at Stillwater Area High School. (Gazette staff photo by Stuart Groskreutz)

Casey Venske rushed for 28 yards on the 65-yard drive. He also completed two passes each to Maurice Pratt and Andrew Eichten.

The 8-yard touchdown pass to Eichten included a fortuitous break. The ball deflected off Pratt, who was tightly covered, and into the hands of Eichten for his second touchdown of the season. Zach Auleciems booted the extra-point kick for a 7-0 lead.

"We've had a fair number of bounces not our way, so I won't apologize for one going our way," LaBore said.

It was easily the best drive for the Ponies, who did not cross midfield on offense the rest of the game.

With the exception of the scoreboard, few of the offensive statistics nodded in Stillwater's favor.

Consider the following:

- The Knights outgained Stillwater 309-149.
- The Knights gained more first downs (17 to 10).

- The Knights ran 25 more plays on offense (71 to 46).
- The Knights owned a nearly 13-minute time of possession advantage (30:19 to 17:20).

But Stillwater made the most of that early scoring drive and its hard-hitting defense made it stand up against a tough assignment.

STMA tailback Desean Phillips entered the game with 886 yards rushing, which easily surpasses Stillwater's entire team total of 561 yards. Phillips finished with a 168 yards to go over 1,000 for the season, but was held under his 6.3 yards per carry average and the Ponies limited his big plays to just one 51-yard scamper on the opening play of the second half. That drive ended with a missed 24-yard field goal.

"They had a good plan for us," Knights coach Jared Essler said. "We moved the ball well at times, but couldn't close on it. I thought we'd have to make a few more throws, but we missed some opportunities there and

the missed field goal hurt us.

"I thought our defense played great. They made one more play than us on offense."

The Ponies were also solid on special teams. Seven of STMA's nine offensive possessions started inside its own 30-yard line.

"What an unbelievable job by our defense," LaBore said. "They're a power running football team and they have an outstanding running back, a veteran, big strong offensive line and our guys played with a lot of grit up front against a pretty nasty run game."

"It's the best running back we will see all season and we were able to make them go a long distance on some second and a lot of third downs. We got off the field as well as we have all season and we put ourselves in some pretty good situations. Our special teams were very good tonight and we gave them a lot of long fields."

Linebackers Zach Cowley Anders Thorager each led the Ponies with 10 solo tackles and 25 defensive points. Defensive

lineman Will Gleason finished with 24 defensive points while defensive back Hudson Day made eight solo tackles and totaled 23 defensive points.

"Their defense played great," Essler said. "They've got a nice set of linebackers and they played great."

Venske completed 12 of 23 passes for 77 yards for the Ponies, spreading the ball around to five different receivers. He also led the Ponies with 56 rushing yards on 11 attempts — contributing to 133 of the team's 149 total yards.

"The game was 7-0, so nobody is probably lighting up the statistics but we did get yards in clumps — most notably our scoring drive," LaBore said. "We also didn't have any turnovers and we had one penalty on a delay that we took. We were disciplined and we did it in all three phases of the game."

This marked Stillwater's first victory after six previous tries since the renovations at its home stadium were completed before the start of last season.

LaBore was happy to see his players rewarded for the hard work on persistence.

"We've played a lot of close football games and for two weeks in a row we've had to tell our guys that we had opportunities and we needed to make one or two more plays to be successful," the coach said. "We've been banging on the drum that we've got to find a way to get that last play so that we can enjoy it when the clock hits zero."

STMA	0	0	0	0	—	0
Stillwater	7	0	0	0	—	7

St — Andrew Eichten 8 pass from Casey Venske (Zach Auleciems kick) 3:24.

Team stats		
	STMA	St
First downs.....	17	10
Rushes-yards .....	48-230	23-72
Passing yards .....	79	77
Total yards.....	309	149
Comp-Att-Int.....	10-23-0	12-23-0
Fumbles/lost.....	0/0	1/0
Penalties/yards .....	4/30	1/5
Punts/avg. ....	5/31.2	8/32.5

Individual statistics

**Rushing** — STMA: DeSean Phillips 28-168, Brandon Langdok 5-34, Ethan Briggs 11-29 and Jared Duda 4-(-1); St: Casey Venske 11-56, Tuanson DuFresne-To 6-18 and Tyler Thureson 6-(-2).

**Passing (com-att-yds-td-int)** — STMA: Jared Duda 10-23-79-0-0; St: Casey Venske 12-23-77-1-0.

**Receiving** — STMA: Kale Hoselton 1-29, Rhoeshon Dillard 3-24, Desean Phillips 3-10, Brandon Langdok 1-9, Ethan Rice 1-7 and Ethan Briggs 1-0; St: Maurice Pratt 3-29, Andrew Eichten 5-20, Tyler Thureson 2-10, Holton King 1-10 and Tuanson DuFresne-To 1-8.

**Kickoff returns** — STMA: Davis Moseng 2-35; St: Maurice Pratt 1-20.

**Punt returns** — STMA: Gavin Wermager 1-(-4); St: Andrew Eichten 1-13 and Maurice Pratt 2-4.

**Interceptions** — STMA: none; St: none.  
**Fumble recoveries** — STMA: none; St: none.



# Boys

(Continued from page B1)

Huber’s conversion in Round 3. Chester Hearne also connected for the Ponies, who then sealed it when Johnson stopped East Ridge’s next attempt.

“I was comfortable with our shooters,” Smothers said.

The nail-biting victory qualifies the Ponies for their 19th state tournament, which is one more than St. Paul Academy and Apple Valley with 18 trips to state apiece.

East Ridge, which was ranked ninth in Class AA, finished the season with a 9-3-5 record.

“My heart goes out to East Ridge,” Scott said. “I know it can be a very devastating way to lose. They battled hard and they’re an incredible team, but when it comes down to it you’ve got to do what you’ve got to do to win.”

Stillwater, which defeated the Raptors 3-0 earlier this season, scored early in the first half while playing with notable wind from behind. Scott won the initial header on a goal kick to set up Max Stauffer, who chipped a left-footed shot past goalkeeper Nick Wagner in the 8th minute.

The Raptors answered eight minutes later as Brennan Featherstone evened the score on an assist from Mitchell Watanabe. It was a big goal for East Ridge, knowing it would have the wind advantage after halftime.

“We were definitely looking to be up by at least one, maybe two, coming into the second half with the wind against us,” Scott said. “It was a big factor. Both times when we had the option to choose, we chose to go with the wind right off the bat, especially in overtime to try and get that goal right away. It’s definitely very beneficial.”

It was just the second goal Stillwater has allowed in its last eight games and they remained stout defensively after switching ends for the second half.

“We made an adjustment to our formation and I thought in the second half we matched them shot for shot,” Smothers said. “We were determined to win that game in regular time.



Stillwater goalkeeper Rayce Johnson makes a diving stop to clinch a shoot-out victory for the Ponies over East Ridge in the Section 4AA championship game on Tuesday, Oct. 16 at Stillwater Area High School. (Gazette staff photo by Stuart Groskreutz)

I was really pleased with the way we played the second half and I was confident going into overtime we were going to see it out. Through both overtimes, we had plenty of chances to win that game and East Ridge did a wonderful job of denying us.”

Scott has been a central figure for the Ponies in each of these last three section titles and admitted it would be tough to have been denied another opportunity as a senior.

“It just would have been devastating and I can’t even fathom it, really,” Scott said. “I had tremendous confidence in this team throughout the whole season. I think it all started coming back when coming back from down 3-0 against (St. Paul) Central. Coming back from that, we knew we had something special here.”

Match-ups for the state tournament are scheduled to be announced on Saturday, Oct. 20. The Ponies are expected to receive one of the top two seeds and will play on Oct. 23-25 at

one of four state quarterfinal sites, which include Chisago Lakes, Farmington, Prior Lake and St. Cloud.

<b>East Ridge</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Stillwater</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>2</b>

St — 8:00 — Max Stauffer (Spencer Scott)  
ER — 16:00 — Brennan Featherstone (Mitchell Watanabe)

**Shots on goal** — ER: 1-6-0—7; St: 7-4-1—12.  
**Corner kicks** — ER: 1; St: 10.  
**Fouls** — ER: 11; St: 11.  
**Goalie saves** — ER: Nick Wagner 6-4-1—11; St: Rayce Johnson 0-6-0—6.

## Stillwater 1, Woodbury 0

At Oak Park Heights, for the second time in as many postseason games, Spencer Scott delivered the only goal Stillwater required in a 1-0 victory over Woodbury in the Section 4AA semifinals on Thursday, Oct. 11 at SAHS.

Scott also scored early in the second half of the Ponies’ 1-0 quarterfinal victory over White

Bear Lake.

This time, Scott scored in the 8th minute on an assist by Logan Huber on a long set piece.

“We timed our runs well into the box and Woodbury tried to do an offside trap and left him open,” Ponies coach Jake Smothers said. “He had a really nice left-footed volley into the side netting.”

The coach said he was happy to let his defense and goalkeeper Rayce Johnson take over from there. Stillwater finished with seven shots in the game, including just two in the second half.

“I love to get conservative (with a lead),” Smothers said. “The first half we played really well and the second half we just wanted to see what Woodbury would do, but they didn’t really change anything so from our perspective we didn’t need to do much more. We just kind of nullified possession in the attacking third and let them possess it in the back.

“These are skilled, intelligent soccer players and we didn’t

want to get caught going after a second (goal) when we just needed the one.”

Stillwater defeated the Royals 2-0 earlier this season. Woodbury finished the season with a 9-5-2 record.

“I thought the first half we came out with the right attitude and no anxiety,” Smothers said. “Woodbury has played a difficult schedule and is a top team, but we wanted to get after them early and kind of use our power up top to generate scoring opportunities. We got that and got the goal. We went into the second half and felt good about using the other strength of our team, which is to defend. Woodbury was not able to create much in the second half.”

<b>Woodbury</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Stillwater</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>1</b>

St — 9:00 — Spencer Scott (Logan Huber)

**Shots** — Wo: 2; St: 7.  
**Goalie saves** — Wo: NA; St: Rayce Johnson 1.

# Girls

(Continued from page B1)

“We’ve been really good on corner kicks all season and it was just like any other one,” Peterson said. “In the finals you don’t get many opportunities so to get my head on it was real exciting.”

The Ponies increased their lead less than a minute later as Abby Begin drilled a shot from 25 yards out that hit the cross bar and deflected down and into the goal for a 2-0 lead.

“It was a great shot without the wind, but it helps you get a little more power on it and the ball tends to float,” Huber said.

The strong start was critical for the Ponies, especially know they would be defending East Ridge against the wind in the second half.

“If we start out strong we’ve been able to keep it going throughout the whole game,” Peterson said.

Stillwater maintained its lead until just eight minutes remaining in regulation when Grace Thomas scored on a free kick for the fourth-ranked Raptors to climb within 2-1.

The Ponies, who have allowed just eight goals all season, held East Ridge scoreless the rest of the way.

“It seemed like the longest eight minutes of my life,” Huber said. “At 2-0 I was pretty comfortable, but as soon as they scored I knew this was going to be a battle. We dropped in some more people defensively.”

The Raptors earned a corner kick with about two minutes remaining, but Stillwater cleared that quickly.

“In the last few minutes our girls did a good job of getting the ball up the field and keeping out of dan-

gerous situations, but it was nerve-wracking at the same time.”

East Ridge, which was No. 4 in the final state coaches poll, finished the season with a 14-3-1 record.

With the roles reversed, the season played out similar to two years ago when the Ponies lost to East Ridge in the regular season but received the No. 1 seed and was upended by the Raptors 4-0 in the section finals.

This was Stillwater’s third trip to the section finals in the last four years.

“Especially after East Ridge knocked us out the last two seasons, I know the girls were pretty happy to beat them,” Huber said. “Especially for Abby (Begin), Evie (Kohn) and Evelyn (Flor) who have been around for four years and have lost two section finals, to come back and win one is really rewarding for everybody.”

The Ponies graduated four all-conference players and each of their top three scorers from last year’s squad, which caused some concern about whether they could score enough goals this season. Stillwater has outscored its opponents by a combined 48-8.

“I know for sure that was one of our fears was that we lost a lot of our forwards last year so we were afraid we weren’t going to be able to finish much on top,” Peterson said. “We found some really good forwards and the midfield and the defense has been able to score goals themselves, too.”

<b>Stillwater</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>East Ridge</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>1</b>

St — 13:00 — Halle Peterson (Dara Andringa)  
St — 13:00 — Abby Begin (unassisted)  
Wo — 72:00 — Grace Thomas

**Shots on goal** — St: 5; ER: 5.  
**Corner kicks** — St: 2; ER: 2.  
**Fouls** — St: 9; ER: 6.  
**Goalie saves** — St: Evie Kohn 4;

ER: Erika Freiberg 4.

## Stillwater 5, Woodbury 1

At Oak Park Heights, facing a goalkeeper who is a finalist for the Minnesota Ms. Soccer Award, the Ponies blitzed Woodbury with four first-half goals on the way to a 5-1 victory in the Section 4AA semifinals on Saturday, Oct. 13 at Stillwater Area High School.

Stillwater’s five-goal outburst was even more impressive when you consider the Royals (10-3-3) had allowed just two goals and recorded shutouts in 13 of 15 previous games this season.

Megan Howard led a balanced attack for the Ponies, scoring on an assist from Marisa Bonilla in the third minute of the game. Abby Begin extended the lead with a goal in the 10th minute before Lexi Huber and Dara Andringa also slipped goals past keeper Shweta Raje in the first 25 minutes of play.

“They way this game played out was completely unexpected from my end,” Ponies coach Mike Huber said. “I was anticipating a low-scoring and possibly 0-0 game. You have two of the best defenses in the state. Scoring in the first five minutes was a big deal and then we piled it on very quickly. It was probably the best start we’ve had to a game this year.

“I don’t think they’re used to giving up goals, especially when we scored two in the first 10 minutes. I think that was kind of a wake-up call and something they haven’t experienced.”

Halle Peterson added another goal in the 68th minute to build a five-goal cushion for the Ponies, who received at least one point from six different players.

“It’s been spread out amongst everybody,” Peterson said. “Everybody has gotten their chance to



Lexi Huber battles for the ball in traffic during Stillwater’s 3-0 Section 4AA quarterfinal victory over Mounds View on Thursday, Oct. 11 at Stillwater Area High School. (Gazette staff photo by Stuart Groskreutz)

find the goal.”

Stillwater outshot the Royals 14-5 and made the most of its opportunities.

The Ponies’ last three goals came on corner kicks, which has been a strength of the team all season.

The Ponies and Woodbury played to a scoreless tie earlier this season in a game that was called after 55 minutes because of storms.

<b>Woodbury</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Stillwater</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>5</b>

St — 3:00 — Megan Howard (Marisa Bonilla)  
St — 10:00 — Abby Begin (unassisted)  
St — 16:00 — Lexi Huber (Dara Andringa)  
St — 25:00 — Andringa (Begin)  
St — 68:00 — Halle Peterson (Begin)  
Wo — 70:00 — Emily Scheuble (unassisted)

**Shots on goal** — Wo: 5; St: 14.  
**Corner kicks** — Wo: 5; St: 5.  
**Fouls** — Wo: 4; St: 4.  
**Goalie saves** — Wo: Shweta

Raje 9; St: Evie Kohn 4.

## Stillwater 3, M. View 0

At Oak Park Heights, after getting held scoreless in the first half, the Ponies struck three times after the intermission to upend Mounds View 3-0 in the Section 4AA quarterfinals on Thursday, Oct. 11 at SAHS.

Halle Peterson delivered two goals, including the game-winner just eight minutes into the second half.

“Once Halle scored that first goal I thought we’d be fine,” Ponies coach Mike Huber said. “The first half we came out a little slower. There’s always a bit of nerves to start off.”

Sophie Steblay provided some breathing room with her goal on an assist from Abby Begin in the 63rd minute and Peterson notched her second goal in the 78th minute to pull away.

Peterson scored two goals in the regular season, but pumped in four goals during three postseason games.

“We had five different goal scorers against Woodbury and two different goal scorers who are not two of our top scorers against Mounds View,” Huber said. “It’s been nice that it’s been balanced quite a bit. It’s a perfect time of the year for Halle to step up. We have a lot of girls on the team who have four, five or six goals.”

<b>Mounds View</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Stillwater</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>3</b>

St — 48:00 — Halle Peterson (unassisted)  
St — 63:00 — Sophie Steblay (Abby Begin)  
St — 78:00 — Peterson (Dara Andringa)

**Shots on goal** — MV: 0; St: 15.  
**Corner kicks** — MV: 0; St: 5.  
**Fouls** — MV: 5; St: 17.  
**Goalie saves** — MV: Jolie Deuel 12; St: Evie Kohn 0.