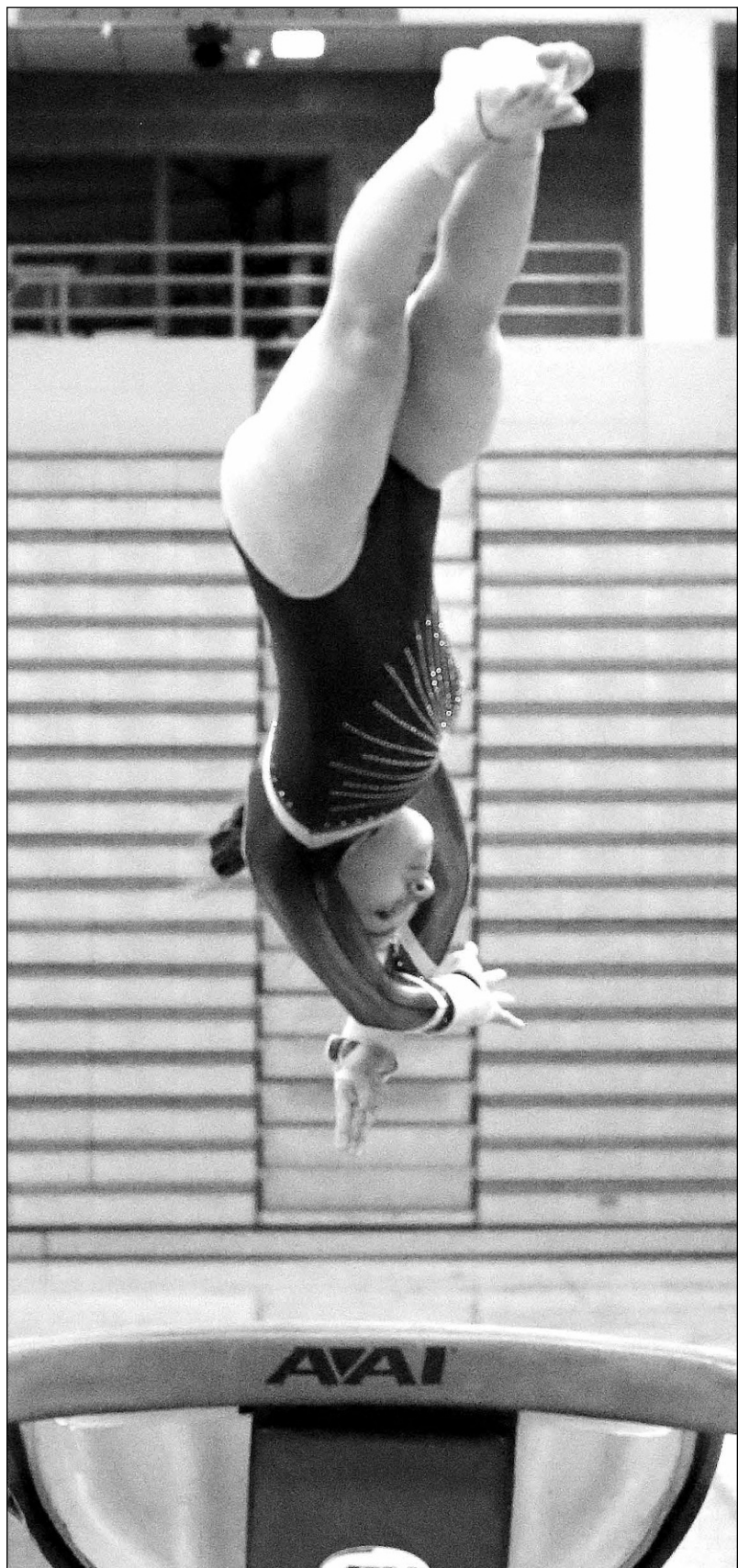


# SPORTS

## Bengals edge Coon Rapids



Blaine's Grace Gerard springs off the vault during competition at fifth-ranked Champlin Park Jan. 9. Gerard was fourth on vault (8.675), bars (8.425) and floor (8.825) to finish fourth in the all-around (34.175). Jemma Koenigs was fifth in the all-around (28.75). The Bengals went on to defeat Coon Rapids 129.375-128.875 Jan. 12. Gerard finished first on vault (8.95) and bars (8.3), second on floor (8.875) and third on beam (7.95) to win the all-around competition with a score of 34.075. Destiny Torgerson was runner-up in the all-around at 32.925, including a second-place finish on bars (8.125) and beam (8.0) and a fifth-place finish on floor (8.45). Haley Halvorson finished fourth on bars (7.325) and Peyton Block was fifth on vault (8.55).

Photo by Brian Flanary

## Bengal Nordic charging fast down stretch

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parent involvement and support of the team in our efforts as well."

In the girls competition, Sarah Olson had the second-fastest freestyle time in 8:34 and Kelsey Huver was 36th in 10:36. Stephanie Lewis was eighth in the classic in 10:23 and Natalie Bennett was 33rd in 11:48.

Phillip Marquardt tied for 11th in the boys classic in 8:57 and Gavin Kane was 38th in 9:49. Nic Jacobson took 12th in the boys freestyle in 8:13 and Nathan Smith was 26th in 8:45.

"Stephanie Lewis has become a really strong classic skier this year to make herself in a good position in the end of the season in our pursuit race for conference and sections," Schwen said. "Sarah Olson passed a lot of kids in her leg of the relay and has continued to be one of the top skiers in the metro area. On the boys side, Nic Jacobson had a great skate race and caught a bunch of kids as well on the way to our team finish. Phillip Marquardt had a good aggressive start out of the crowd and set our boys up for a solid top-10 performance."

The finishes bolstered the Bengals' confidence in putting together a strong stretch run, with the NWSC Championships looming Jan. 30 and the Section 5 meet just a week after that.

"I'm very pleased with how our team did this year at the relays," Schwen said. "We went up against some really good ski programs from around the metro area and our kids skied with a lot of heart. This is the highest



Blaine's Nic Jacobson comes down the hill for a pass during the ABC Relays Jan. 12. Jacobson was 12th overall in the freestyle race. Photo submitted

our girls team has placed in recent history.

"After our race performances the last few weeks, I think it is a very reasonable goal for both our boys and girls teams to make it to state out of our section. A lot can happen and we don't take anything for granted, but our kids ski with a lot of heart and passion. I'm always so proud of our kids when I see them fighting all the way to the finish line. We definitely have some individuals that can advance, and if everyone has a good race that day, there is a great chance the team may go too."

Also at the Relays:

The Andover girls 'A' relay placed third in 40:12, the Coon Rapids 'A' relay placed 10th in 42:34, the Spring Lake Park 'A' relay placed 17th in 44:05 and the Anoka 'A' relay placed 33rd in 52:47.

Coon Rapids' Abby Ellenbecker finished fourth in the girls classic in 9:54,

Andover's Julia Nielsen was ninth in the classic in 10:30, Andover's Lauren Johnson was 12th in the classic in 10:40 and Andover's Brenna Russell was 16th in the classic in 11:07.

Andover's Claire Beckman was eighth in the girls freestyle in 9:17, Andover's Alexa Havon was 16th in 9:45, Andover's Beth DeFoe was 18th in 9:52 and Andover's Emma Sherer was 20th in 9:55.

The Coon Rapids boys 'A' relay placed 11th in 35:53, the Spring Lake Park 'A' relay placed 16th in 37:19, the Andover 'A' relay placed 18th in 37:38 and the Anoka 'A' relay placed 23rd in 39:32.

Spring Lake Park's Joe Lynch was fourth in the boys classic in 8:30 and Andover's Blake Weiss tied for 11th in the classic in 8:57. Coon Rapids' Jared Heida was 17th in the boys freestyle in 8:25.

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## Robertson Cup set to return to Blaine

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being the League of Opportunity, no matter the time of year or setting. We look forward to build on last year and provide another memorable and incredible Robertson Cup Championship for our players."

"We are very proud to be chosen again to be the host site of the 2019 NAHL Robertson Cup Championship," said Fogerty Arena General Manager Rob Hall. "Last year's event was a huge success, and we want to make it even bigger and better. We

have an idea of what to expect now, and it is our goal to make the venue even more accommodating towards the NAHL and its teams and fans. We were thrilled with the attendance and atmosphere last year and hope to expand upon that in 2019."

The four NAHL divisional playoff champions will advance to the Robertson Cup Championship. Once the four NAHL Divisional Playoff Champions are determined, clubs will be seeded 1-4 based upon their finish in the NAHL regular-season standings.