



Alexandria's 200-freestyle relay team of Garrett Maras, Nick Olson, Nicolas Welle and Patrick Chromey stands on the podium after taking third in that event with a finals time of 1:26.77.

Eric Morken / Echo Press

CLASS A STATE SWIMMING

FORCED TO REGROUP

Cardinals battle back from early disqualification to take fifth

By Eric Morken
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The Alexandria boys swimming and diving program had visions of bringing home a trophy with a top-three finish at the Class A state meet, but nothing comes easy at this level.

Things did not get off on the right foot for the Cardinals. During the very first event in Friday's prelims, the 200-medley relay team that was expected to finish well was disqualified after the Cardinals were called on a stroke violation.

"It was kind of a shot in the shorts to lose that medley relay when we had counted on those points," head coach Kathy Walker said. "Losing that relay and those points is not who we are.

We've been behind the eight ball all season, and they just dug in and did really well."

The Alexandria swimmers had no choice but to put that behind them. The Cardinals advanced the rest of their lineup to Saturday in either the championship or consolation finals, except for eighth-grader Logan Tung, who finished 19th in the 100 breaststroke on Friday.

Friday's overall performances still set them up to score well, and they did that, finishing fifth as a team with 149 points. With the medley relay, the Cardinals were confident they would have finished third, but they were happy to bring home the second straight top-five finish in the Class A

field for the program.

"That (the DQ) happened in the first event was unfortunate, but I thought the kids rose to the occasion and came back after it and swam really well," Walker said. "This meet is so fast with so many records breaking, so to get a fifth place at the state meet, we're very pleased."

The 200 and 400-freestyle relays led the charge as Garrett Maras, Nick Olson, Nicolas Welle and Patrick Chromey teamed up in both of them to finish third. Alexandria came in with the fastest seed time in the 200 relay, but the Breck-Blake team won that race in All-American consideration time of 1:25.93. The Cardinals finished in 1:26.77.

"I feel like it went as good as it could have gone due to everyone doing

their part," Olson said of both relays. "Having everybody cheering us on here was really great. It was very exciting being a senior in the last meet. It went by so fast."

Chromey finished the day with four medals around his neck. In addition to his role in the relays, he took fifth in the 200 freestyle in 1:44.69 and eighth in the 100 freestyle (47.91).

"Knowing that this was my last state meet, I'm a senior and possibly these are my last races, so I gave everything I had," Chromey said. "I left it in the pool, so I'm happy with my performance today because I know I gave me best."

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STATE WRESTLING

Perfection: Revitalized Lakers crown champ, place 3 in top four

By Eric Morken
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The Minnewaska wrestling team was one of the top Class A programs in the state this season but could not make it out of its section due to top-ranked and state champion Long Prairie-Grey Eagle-Browerville sharing that field.

On Saturday, the Lakers put together a good consolation prize by having a state champion crowned and three total finish among the top four of their weight classes in Class A at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

Sophomore Tyson Meyer won the championship at 170 pounds. Junior Tyler VanLuik was second at 195 and Dylan Jergenson finished fourth at 220.

"Our team has come a long ways from three, four years ago," VanLuik

said. "We didn't barely have a team ... I just think we've grown as a family this year. We're going to all want to work harder next year and see if we can get down here."

VanLuik recalled coming into the varsity program as a young wrestler and the Lakers having to forfeit multiple weight classes in every dual. Times have changed a lot since then. Minnewaska featured a deep and talented lineup this year that was ranked fifth in the final Class A state rankings through the Guillotine on Feb. 21.

"When I came in as a seventh-grader, we would forfeit six, eight weights," VanLuik said. "It just wasn't a good deal. My grade, we did a lot of young wrestling like NYWA state and team stuff. That's what made us ready to step

it up, and we've just been growing ever since. It's really going good now."

The Lakers sent six guys total to the state meet, and four survived into Saturday's second day. Here is a look at how they did.

A perfect ending

For Meyer, Saturday was the perfect ending to a perfect season.

The sophomore finished 39-0 as he won by fall in his opening match of the weekend before getting a 5-2 win in the quarterfinals. He matched up against top-seeded and top-ranked Colton Krell (38-4) of Westfield in the semifinals and won a 7-2 decision.

Goodhue's Kaleb O'Reilly (46-5), ranked second in the state, was waiting for him in the championship match. Meyer, ranked third at 195 in the final Guillotine rankings, took care of him

in a 9-6 decision to wrap up the championship.

"These were kind of my expectations coming in," Meyer said. "It is just a great way to finish off a perfect season. I didn't want it to end with a loss."

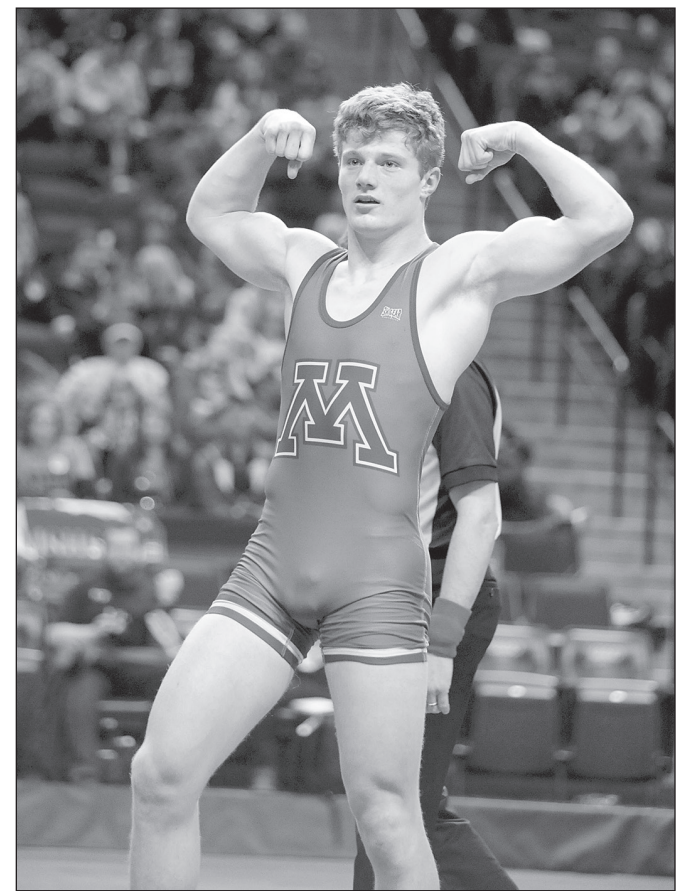
Meyer knew it was important to get off to an early lead against O'Reilly, and he did that with the first takedown. Meyer led 4-1 after the first period and then 8-4 after two. He rode out the final seconds on the mat, as O'Reilly tried unsuccessfully to get him on his back.

Meyer not only won the title, but he earned it by taking care of both the top two seeds.

"Just kind of proving it," he said. "Proving that I should be first."

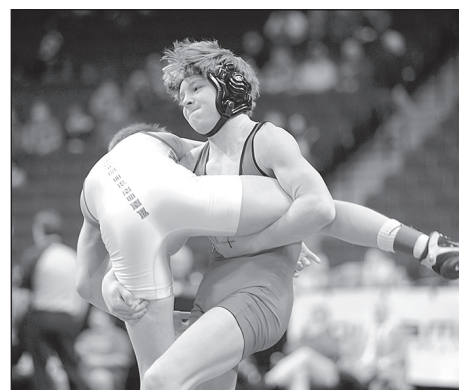
As just a sophomore, it is the start of what he

PERFECTION: Page B3



Eric Morken / Echo Press

Minnewaska sophomore Tyson Meyer flexes after wrapping up a perfect 39-0 season by beating Goodhue's Kaleb O'Reilly in the Class A 170-pound title match on Saturday.



Photos by Eric Morken / Echo Press

Left: Alexandria junior Ryan Borris lifts first-round opponent Cael Swensen of Wayzata at the Xcel Energy Center on Friday. **Right:** Alexandria 8th-grader Blaze Nelson lifts Lakeville North's Zach Hanson during the opening round Friday.

Ryan Borris, Blaze Nelson take positives from first trip to state

By Eric Morken
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Alexandria's Ryan Borris and Blaze Nelson were both getting a taste of the state wrestling tournament for the first time on Friday and both will take some positives away from this trip.

Borris, a junior, and Nelson, an 8th-grader, drew tough opening-round matchups as both fell by decisions in those first matches.

That forced them to wait to see their

fate. A quarterfinals win by their opening-round opponent would keep their season alive in wrestlebacks, but a loss would mean the end of their run. Nelson never got a chance to compete again as his opening opponent lost, but Borris did live to see another match after Cael Swensen of Wayzata advanced to the semifinals.

That sent Borris (36-10) into a must-win situation against Cole West (37-4) of

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