

BOYS BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

Lakers take playoff opener

Panthers and Silverstreaks win

By Eric Morken
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The Minnewaska boys basketball team pulled away in the second half of its playoff opener against Benson on Saturday.

The Lakers, 18-8 and seeded second in the North half of the Section 3AA field, led by just four at the half against seventh-seeded Benson (7-18). Minnewaska created some distance in the second half by outscoring the Braves 28-19 for the 50-37 win.

The Lakers shot 43 percent (18-41) as their defense helped them to the victory. Senior center Shawn Carsten had a big game of 17 points, 12 rebounds and two blocks. Junior guard Grant Jensen added nine points.

Minnewaska will now face third-seeded Morris Area (17-8) on March 7 at 7:30 p.m. in Willmar. The Lakers and Tigers split their regular-season matchups with Minnewaska winning 49-37 on Dec. 20 and Morris Area winning 59-27 on Feb. 5.

MINNEWASKA 22-28-50
BENSON 18-19-37
MINNEWASKA TOTALS - FG - 18-41; Three-point FG - 6-14; FT - 8-14; Assists - 9; Blocks - 2; Rebounds - 27; Steals - 12; Turnovers - 13
MINNEWASKA - Peyton Johnrud - 6 points, 2 assists, 2 rebounds; Jack Blevins - 6 points, 3 assists, 1 rebound, 3 steals; Grant Jensen - 9 points, 1 assist, 3 steals; Ryan Amundson - 4 points, 1 assist, 3 steals; Drew Nelson - 1 steal; Aaron Ver Steeg - 8 points, 1 assist, 9 rebounds, 1 steal; Luke Barkeim - 2 rebounds; Joe Piekarski - 1 rebound, 1 steal; Shawn Carsten - 17 points, 2 blocks, 12 rebounds

Panthers wrap up top seed

Parkers Prairie has been on a tear over the second half of the season and it has earned the Panthers the top seed in the south half of the Section 6A field.

Parkers Prairie (21-4) handed Henning (24-1) its first loss of the season on Feb. 26 in a 77-74 overtime game that was played in front of a packed crowd in Henning. Three nights later, the Panthers wrapped up their regular season with a 70-52 win over West Central Area (14-9).

"We got beat by a good team," WCA head coach Kraig Hunter said. "We hit a dry spell midway through the first half where we didn't score for several minutes. We cut back into their lead with a few minutes to go in the half until reserve Eli Simonson hit three big

threes, including one that banked in to end the half to put us down 35-22 at the half."

Hunter liked the way his guys fought in the second half. The Knights started with a 7-2 run after the break. They only turned the ball over four times in the final 18 minutes after 13 first-half turnovers, but Parkers Prairie never let things slip away.

Junior Alex Koep led the Panthers with a game-high 23 points. Noah Koep added 13 and Travis Yohnke finished with 10. Jack Van Kempen led the Knights with 18 points and six rebounds. Gage Staples had 13 points, six rebounds, two steals and two assists and Grant Beuckens added 11 points, four steals and three assists.

PARKERS PRAIRIE 70, WCA 52
WCA - Jack Van Kempen - 18 points, 6 rebounds; Gage Staples - 13 points, 6 rebounds, 2 steals, 2 assists; Grant Beuckens - 11 points, 4 steals, 3 assists; Teigen Moritz - 4 points, 8 rebounds, 4 steals; Jacob Bright - 4 points, 3 assists; Blake Koloski - 2 points; Gavins Paulson - 3 rebounds, 1 steal, 1 assist; Tate Christenson - 2 steals, 1 rebound

PARKERS PRAIRIE SCORING - Alex Koep - 23; Noah Koep - 13; Travis Yohnke - 10; Eli Simonson - 9; Andrew Warren - 8; Josh Helling - 6; Guy Euteneuer - 1

Osakis heads into playoffs 25-1

Osakis will enter the Section 8AA playoffs with a 25-1 record and as the second seed on the bottom half of the bracket.

The Silverstreaks wrapped up their regular season with a dominant 91-39 win on March 2 against Swanville (6-18). Osakis shot 68 percent (36-56), including drilling 15-of-29 threes. Thirteen different players scored. Daniel Savageau had 22 points on 8-of-10 shooting. Luke Imdieke had 14 points and five others scored at least eight.

After only one blemish in their regular season, the Silverstreaks now turn their attention to the postseason. Osakis hosts seventh-seeded Wade-na-Deer Creek (8-18) at 7 p.m. on March 7 in the playoff opener.

OSAKIS 55-36-91
SWANVILLE 21-18-39
OSAKIS - Jacob Backes - 2 points, 1 assist; Johnny Lara - 9 points, 1 assist, 2 rebounds; Luke Imdieke - 14 points, 4 assists, 2 rebounds, 1 steal; Kobie Lara - 8 points, 1 assist, 4 rebounds, 1 steal; Hunter Infanger - 1 rebound; Carter Grove - 8 points, 3 assists, 3 steals; Luke Staloch - 2 points, 4 assists, 3 steals; Bauer Klimek - 9 points, 1 rebound; Dylan Klukken - 1 assist; Owen Rajdl - 2 points, 1 assist, 1 rebound, 1 steal; Carter Rost - 2 points, 1 assist, 1 rebound; Mason Moore - 1 rebound; Kellen Anderson - 3 points; Daniel Savageau - 22 points, 2 assists, 4 rebounds, 2 steals; Brandon Boogaard - 8 points, 3 rebounds, 3 steals; Brady Mages - 2 points

BOYS BASKETBALL

Area playoff brackets set

By Eric Morken
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Area boys basketball playoff fields are set with the tournaments getting started this week.

Here is a look at how things set up for the Section 8AAA, 6A and 8AA brackets.

Section 8AAA

The Alexandria boys were seeded third in the eight-team Section 8AAA field.

The Cardinals (18-8) opened the tournament on Tuesday night by hosting sixth-seeded Sauk Rapids-Rice (5-21). The two teams split their two regular-season matchups.

The winner of that game faces the winner of seventh-seeded Little Falls (10-15) and second-seeded Sartell-St. Stephen (18-8) on Saturday at 7:45 p.m. at Moorhead High School. The section championship game is scheduled for 7 p.m. on March 14.

St. Cloud Apollo (14-12) was seeded fourth in the 8AAA field. Fergus Falls (15-11) is fifth. Detroit Lakes (11-15) is the

eighth seed and takes on top-seeded Bemidji (20-4) in its playoff opener.

Section 6A

Parkers Prairie (21-4) earned the top seed in the 6A South after winning 16 of its last 17 games.

The Panthers will host the winner of eighth-seeded Wheaton (7-16) and ninth-seeded Underwood (3-21) on March 7 at 7 p.m.

West Central Area (14-9) got the fourth seed in the South and will face fifth-seeded Ashby (16-7) on Thursday night at 7 in Barret. Brandon-Evansville (14-12) is seeded sixth and will travel to third-seeded Hancock (19-6) on Thursday at 7.

The tournament moves to the University of Minnesota-Morris on March 9 for the subsection semifinals. Those games are at 1 p.m. and 2:45. The subsection finals are scheduled for March 11 at 7:45 p.m. in Morris and the section championship game will be played in Morris at 7 p.m. on March 15. Henning (24-1) is the

top seed on the North side of the bracket.

Section 8AA

Osakis (25-1) got the second seed in the bottom half of the Section 8AA field and hosts seventh-seeded Wade-na-Deer Creek (8-18) at 7 p.m. on March 7 in the playoff opener.

A win there would send them into a quarterfinals game on Saturday against the winner of third-seeded Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton (17-9) and sixth-seeded Warroad (14-12). That quarterfinals game will be played at 7:30 p.m. at Concordia College in Moorhead.

Hawley (20-4) got the top seed on Osakis' side of the bracket. Breckenridge (14-11) is fourth, Park Rapids Area (8-16) fifth, and Bagley (6-20) eighth to round out that half of the field. Perham (25-1) is the first seed on the top side of the bracket.

The section semifinals are scheduled for March 11 at Concordia College in Moorhead. The section championship is back at Concordia on March 15 at 7 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Parkers Prairie still standing as Section 6A semifinals set

By Eric Morken
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The Section 6A girls basketball semifinals are set after games played on Saturday.

Parkers Prairie, 23-2 and the top seed from the South half, is among those final four teams as the Panthers beat fourth-seeded Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley (19-6) on Saturday in Morris with their defense leading the way in a 43-29 victory. That win sent

them into a game against Little Eight Conference foe Underwood (21-5) on Tuesday at 6 p.m. in the subsection championship. That game will be played at Concordia College in Moorhead.

Underwood, seeded third in the South, pulled off the slight upset by beating second-seeded West Central Area in a 57-52 game on Saturday. The Knights ended their season 19-7. The win by Underwood snapped what had been a nine-game

winning streak for WCA. The two teams still standing on the North half of the bracket are first-seeded Pelican Rapids (26-1) and second-seeded Ada-Borup (24-2). They will face off at 7:45 p.m. on Tuesday at Concordia College.

The winner of the subsection finals on Tuesday will face off back at Concordia in the Section 6A championship on March 8. That game is scheduled to start at 6 p.m.

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HOCKEY

Blizzard control playoff destiny

By Jared Rubado
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After a weekend series sweep of the Wausau RiverWolves (9-34-1-0) The Alexandria Blizzard will head into the final week of the regular season with a chance to clinch the fourth playoff spot in the NA3HL West Division.

On Friday night, the Blizzard throttled the RiverWolves 13-1. They followed up the blowout with a 4-1 win to com-

plete the sweep. Coming into the weekend, the Blizzard trailed the New Ulm Steel by two points for the final playoff spot with four games left to play. The Blizzard moved up in the standings after the Steel lost 7-3 to North Iowa on Saturday.

The Blizzard and the Steel have two more games left this season. On Friday night, Alexandria will travel to Will-

mar to take on the War Hawks (11-32-2-0). Willmar currently sits in last place in the West Division. Alexandria will then hit the road to take on the Granite City Lumberjacks (36-7-2-0). Granite City will be a tougher test as they currently hold the top spot in the division.

For the Steel, they host the Lumberjacks on Friday night before traveling to Willmar for the regular season finale.

Last season, both Alexandria and New Ulm made the playoffs. The Steel beat the Blizzard in two games in the best-of-three series in the opening round.

If Alexandria can win both games this weekend, it will clinch the final playoff spot regardless of how New Ulm performs. The first puck drop of the weekend is at 7 p.m. in Willmar.

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