



Submitted photos

Forest Lake senior Taylor Glumack practices her lacrosse skills at home on March 23 by playing wall ball (left) and by passing with her sister and Ranger teammate, sophomore Brooke Glumack. Spring sport athletes throughout Minnesota are stuck in a holding pattern due to the COVID-19 pandemic, uncertain whether their seasons will be played or not.

PLAYERS ON PAUSE: Local athletes,

Brad O'Neil
Community Editor

As would-be spring athletes go, the Glumack sisters are luckier than most. In a time when people all over the world are being encouraged to practice social distancing in response to the spreading COVID-19 pandemic, and in the midst of a Minnesota State High School League-mandated suspension of all high school sports activity that mirrors the closure of the state's schools, senior Taylor and sophomore Brooke have each other. While most of their Forest Lake girls lacrosse teammates are forced to train alone for the time being, the Glumacks can work together and keep each other motivated.

"During the quarantine, I have been watching game film, working on my stick skills and going for runs," Brooke said. "It has been very hard not being able to play or be with my team, but I'm very lucky that my sister also plays lacrosse, so we've been practicing together."

Taylor and Brooke play wall ball, practice passes and drill fundamentals at home, hoping the spring season will resume so that they and their Ranger teammates can build on what has been a meteoric rise in the lacrosse world. In 2017, the Glumacks were part of a Ranger program that won only four games. Head coach Jenna Brown took over the team in 2018, and that season, the Rangers scored eight victories, a program record. The Rangers shattered that mark in 2019, winning 15 games, the most memorable being a 7-6 overtime victory against Champlin Park in the Section 7 championship, which sent them to the state tournament for the first time.

The Rangers only graduated three players from last year's varsity squad and were rated No. 10 in the "Way Too Early" state rankings published by the Star Tribune last summer. The returning players, especially the seniors, came into 2020 excited to show the rest of the burgeoning Minnesota lacrosse scene what they could do with a year of state tournament experience under their belts.

The MSHSL sports suspension was instituted on March 13 with an announced end date of April 6, but with the pandemic spreading throughout the state, the country and the



File photo

In 2018 and 2019, Forest Lake sports venues like Schumacher Field were still snowed under in late March. In 2020, spring has come early, and yet the COVID-19 outbreak means that athletic fields remain empty.

world, there is a palpable worry among the players that there may not be a spring season at all.

Lost opportunities

Taylor (44 goals, 12 assists) and Brooke (24 goals, 18 assists) were among the most prolific scorers on the 2019 squad, making up two-thirds of a three-pronged attack that also included another 2020 senior, Bailey O'Donovan (37 goals, 17 points). While Brooke would be able to return to the Ranger field in 2021, even if the 2020 season never transpires, Taylor and O'Donovan would not – nor, among a sizable group of seniors, would Lily Walesheck, a player good enough to attract an offer from Concordia University - St. Paul.

"It's super-hard to think that I could never step foot on the field again to play with my best friends, a team that has worked so hard to be where we are now," Taylor said. "This season is supposed to be one of the best yet and I truly hope it turns out that way."

Senior Tatum Stevens fears she will miss more than just her last lacrosse season.

"This season was so important to me because I love playing with the team, and the coaching staff is amazing. They all make the sport so fun. I might not have a senior prom and graduation due to the coronavirus. I miss going to school and seeing my friends every day, and I miss going to lacrosse. This whole thing makes me sad," Stevens said.

Even for the under-

classmen, the loss of a full season would mean one less opportunity to contribute, one less opportunity to gain experience or to prove themselves.

Junior Hope Anderson has bounced between the Ranger varsity and JV squads the last several seasons. After playing with a summer club that took her to tournaments in different states and exposed to her to new coaches, teammates and opponents, she looked forward to her chance to show the Ranger coaches how much she had improved, and hoped to become a full-time contributor at the varsity level.

"I feel I have a good shot at playing varsity this year, that is if we still have a season," Anderson said. "I was very excited to show my improvements and finally get my chance. During this break, I still try to go outside and play every day. I am just hoping we still have our season."

Dry diamonds, dry powder

The number of COVID-19 cases has grown daily throughout the pandemic. At press time Tuesday, there were 262 confirmed cases in Minnesota, a figure that included 10 cases in Washington County, seven in Anoka County and two in Chisago County.

The efforts of local and state governments to contain the virus have been ever-changing. Restaurants, bars, theaters and other gathering places have been closed in Minnesota since March 10 by order of Gov. Tim Walz,

but as of Tuesday, Minnesotans were not yet subject to the kind of "shelter at home" orders that have been instituted in some other states, including Wisconsin, nor have schools been ordered closed for the remainder of the semester, as is the case in Virginia.

Thus, the relatively mild restrictions that have been implemented in Minnesota provide reason to hope that the schools could open again and that the spring season could be played. Concern that Minnesota could soon implement stricter measures akin to those in other states leads to fear that there will be no spring season. All the would-be players can do is "keep their powder dry," as the saying goes – keep preparing and training so they can be ready to play, should the chance come.

The Forest Lake baseball team had completed pitching tryouts in the week before the MSHSL suspension was implemented, but had not yet run tryouts for field players. This week, the Rangers were to have taken a Spring Break trip to Wisconsin Dells, which had to be canceled along with all other team activities.

"A lot of work and coordination went into [the Dells trip] and a lot of work goes into preparing for the season, so there was a lot of disappointment initially," head baseball coach Tal Gravelle said. "For a lot of us, though, reality has set in, and we know that everyone in the country is missing out on some-

thing, everyone's in the same boat. You really understand the seriousness of what's going on."

If the baseball season is lost, however, it would be a cruel blow to the Forest Lake class of 2020. Baseball rosters tend to be packed with seniors, and the class of 2019 ate up so many spots on last year's squad that there was only room for one class of 2020 player, pitcher and outfielder Max Kohlhepp. If the 2020 season is canceled, Kohlhepp's classmates would forever lose their chance to take the varsity field.

"You really feel bad for the senior class that doesn't get to have that varsity experience," Gravelle said. "There would have been more seniors on the varsity this year. Put in perspective, it's just a sport, but sports are an important part of the educational process. It's helpful to be a part of a team, have that structure and learn sportsmanship. This senior group would have started playing when they were about 5 years old, and now a big part of their life could be ending pretty quickly."

There is at least one irony to be found in the first days of spring this year: The snow has melted from the playing fields and the forecast, at least into next week, calls for mild weather. That means that, in marked contrast to the 2018 and 2019 spring seasons, outdoor teams could be practicing outside and preparing to start their competing schedules on time. When Minnesota was hammered by

unrelenting blizzards into the third week of April in 2018, the state's baseball and softball teams were forced to push the start of their season into May and try to squeeze 10 weeks' worth of games into one calendar month, making extensive use of doubleheaders among other measures. In the eventuality that the MSHSL would lift the COVID-19 suspension significantly later than April 6, the state's diamond teams would know how to adjust.

"If things do turn around, we've started seasons late before, so you just kind of hold out hope until there's no more hope," Gravelle said.

The senior girls who expected to suit up for softball this spring were sophomores during that heavily compressed 2018 season. That year's Rangers rolled through the endless string of May games – broken up only rarely by a practice day – to reach the Class AAAA state tournament, where it finished fifth. Last year, the Rangers improved to third place at state, powered by a roster that included nine members of the class of 2020 as compared with just two from the class of 2019. With most of the firepower returning, the Rangers would have gone into this spring among the favorites to claim the state title. For now, like their counterparts in other sports, the softball players must work out at home.

"We're sending out ideas [for training] to the girls each week, and we know they're trying to stay active on their own," head softball coach Sean Hall said.

Since 2020 would represent the chance for a very special season for Ranger softball, it would not be mere boosterism to hope that infielders Kate Gemunden, Sammie Schoonover, Kasey Rindels, Abby Drury and Ryleigh Eischens, and outfielders Bailey Dunaski, Autumn Reid and Hanna Pink will get to play their senior season and try to earn another trip to North Mankato.

"It's tough trying to hope that there's going to be a season, knowing that there's a realistic chance it might not happen," Hall said. "What's going on is more important than softball, so if we have to sacrifice our season for the greater good, if it saves lives, it's the right decision."

Sports



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Photo courtesy of Miami Athletics, Miami University, Ohio

Forest Lake alum and Miami University sophomore Ben Chatwin explodes off the blocks at the start of the 50-yard freestyle race at the Mid-American Conference championships in Illinois on March 5. A dual U.S.-Canadian citizen, Chatwin had qualified to race in the Canadian Olympic Trials this week before that meet, and later the 2020 Olympics themselves, were postponed as part of a worldwide effort to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

coaches adjust to sports shutdowns

Gopher grounded

Minnesota high schoolers can at least take heart in the fact that their sports season has not been officially canceled yet. Such is not the case for college athletes - on March 12, the NCAA halted all outstanding winter contests and championships, most prominently the "March Madness" men's basketball tournament that would otherwise be in progress this week, and canceled all spring championship tournaments and meets. Conferences around the country quickly nixed regular season schedules as well, canceling thousands of scheduled games.

The University of Minnesota baseball team, including starting second baseman Zack Raabe, Forest Lake class of 2018, was minutes away from heading to the airport for a trip to Colorado to play a March 13-15 series

against Air Force when the season came to a sudden halt. The Gophers already expected to play the Air Force games with no fans in the stadium due to COVID-19 concerns. After first hearing that only the Air Force series was canceled, players began seeing posts on social media that the entire season was being canceled, which was soon confirmed by their coaching staff.

"It started with, 'there won't be any spectators,' then an hour later it was, 'we can't go at all,' and then an hour after that, the season was canceled," Raabe said. "It was all very, very quick."

The sudden end to the season cut short what had been a stellar individual campaign. Through 18 games, Raabe was leading the Gophers in batting average (.463), slugging percentage (.612), runs (16) and total bases (41), and he had enjoyed

a four-hit performance in what turned out to be the Gophers' second-to-last game, a 5-3 home win over Creighton on March 10. The Gophers finished the curtailed season with a record of 8-10.

"From a personal standpoint, things were going really well," Raabe said. "I think the team is very talented and we have a lot of potential. We'll come back and have a really good year next year."

Raabe is now training at home doing bodyweight exercises, hill sprints and so forth - he has no access to weights since schools and gyms are closed. The Raabe household does have an indoor batting cage, however.

"Training is a little tricky; it's a lot of stuff in your basement," Raabe said. "I'm lucky enough to have an indoor cage, so I can still work on hitting and fielding."

Last summer, Raabe

played for the Green Bay Booyah of the Northwoods League and he planned to rejoin the team this summer. The league is "closely monitoring" the COVID-19 situation, according to a press release, but for now the 2020 season is set to proceed with opening games on May 26.

"It's all kind of 'wait and see' - no one knows what's going on with anything right now," Raabe said. "My guess is, the [summer] season's on until it's off. I'm trying to gear up for the summer season, but if that gets canceled, I'll just have to go back into training mode."

While spring athletes like Raabe will miss the greatest number of games, some Forest Lake graduates had winter sports championship tournament moments taken away.

Twin sisters Abby and Dana Buesseller, juniors at Ole Miss and Murray State, respectively, were both qualified to compete in the Division I rifle championships March 13-14. St. Cloud State senior James Pleski, a 2015 individual state title-winner in wrestling for the Rangers, had qualified for the Division II wrestling tournament only to see the event canceled. Lexie Hultman, a starting guard on the 2018 and 2019 Ranger girls basketball squads that reached the state tournament, was preparing for the opening round of the Division II women's basketball tournament with her Daemen College teammates when the NCAA announced the all-encompassing cancellation order.

Olympic chaos

One Ranger alum, Miami University (Ohio) sophomore Ben Chatwin,

saw his Division I swimming season come to an end in the middle of a meet. On March 12, Chatwin and his Red-Hawk teammates had completed the first preliminary round at the College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America National Invitational Championship at Cleveland State, which was scheduled to be a three-day event, when they - along with swimmers from 55 other schools - were informed that the evening finals session would mark the end of the competition and their season. Looking to go out with a strong result, Chatwin and teammates Nick Ward, Nic Wamsley and Cole Grosshans swam to a third-place finish in the 200-meter freestyle relay.

"Obviously, this was very disappointing for all of the athletes, coaches, and training staff who had made the trip to Cleveland from universities across the country to compete on a national stage," Chatwin said. "That being said, I believe that everyone knew this decision was made with the safety of every team in mind, and with the goal of not putting thousands of athletes at risk any longer."

Most of the NCAA swimming season, barring the national finals, had been completed by the time the shutdown order came. However, Chatwin had been looking forward to a rare opportunity outside the collegiate circuit. On March 1, he finished a 100-meter breaststroke race in 55.96 seconds in a 50-meter pool, a mark that earned him a spot in the Canadian Olympic Trials. Chatwin has dual U.S.-Canada citizenship through his parents, who are from Manitoba.

"My immediate reaction to seeing the time on the board was an overwhelming sense of relief, because the training I'd been putting in all season had finally paid off," Chatwin said. "I knew I had the ability to go faster than the cut time [56.33], it was just a matter of putting together a decent swim. It was a very exciting moment to see a 55.96 on the board."

Chatwin's excitement was dampened on March 13, when it was announced that the Canadian Trials would be postponed indefinitely. Chatwin lost access to his home pool when, like

many colleges around the country, Miami sent students home and switched to online learning, and the closure of Minnesota's gyms last week has left him without a pool here as well. Chatwin has not been in the water since he swam the relay at Cleveland State.

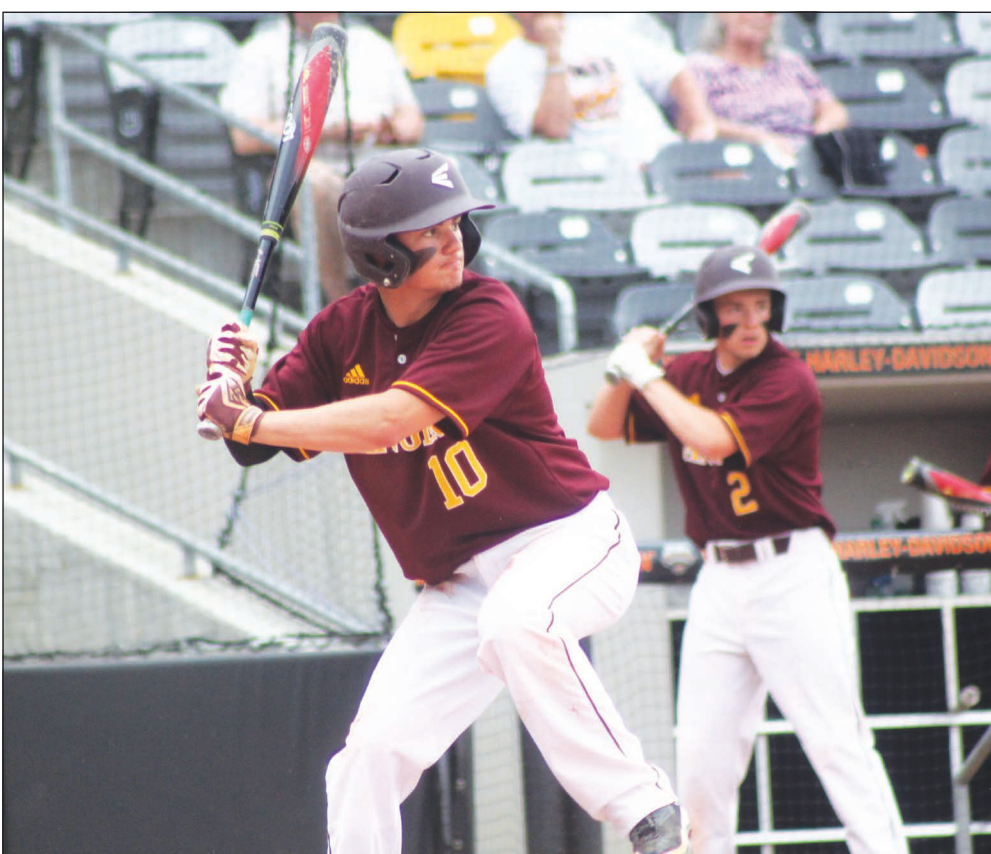
"[It's] a very long time for me to go without being in a pool, and unfortunately, it's only just the beginning," Chatwin said. "I probably won't be able to get in the water and train again for another two months, possibly longer. I haven't taken a break even half that long since I started swimming in 2008. Obviously, now is not the time I'd want to be taking such a big break."

While also adjusting to online learning - Chatwin is a dean's list student in Miami's pre-med program - Chatwin has been compensating for the lack of pool time with dryland training, though nothing can replace reps in the water. Since his last swim, he has closely followed the ever-changing status of the 2020 Olympics, originally slated to be held in Tokyo July 22 through Aug. 9. Last Friday, USA Swimming announced its position that the Games should be postponed to 2021. On Sunday, the Canadian Olympic Committee declared that it would not send athletes in any sport if the Games were held as scheduled, and Australia stated the same soon after. Early this week, the International Olympic Committee announced its intention to postpone the Games, with exact dates and details to be determined sometime in the next month - a decision Chatwin supports.

"Some of the best athletes in the world spend four years training day in and day out in pursuit of their dream, [and] the current pandemic disables their ability to be fully prepared for the Games," Chatwin said. "For many, it would erase a significant portion of the progress they've made now with their training."

The Olympics will probably be the biggest sports casualty of the COVID-19 outbreak, but the pandemic has also put a stop to the major professional leagues, which have all suspended play. Pro athletes with local ties, including Minnesota Twins prospect Matt Wallner and Winnipeg Jets skater

Players see next page



File photo

Forest Lake baseball star Zack Raabe sizes up a pitch during a Class AAAA state tournament game at CHS Field in 2017. Now a sophomore at the University of Minnesota, Raabe was leading the Gophers in a number of offensive categories before college sports came to a premature end on March 13.

PUZZLE BLOCK ANSWERS

A	S	A	P		B	A	B		A	M	A				
R	U	B	I	A	A	C	E		A	B	A	S			
C	L	I	M	B	N	O	R		B	E	N	I			
	A	B	A	C	A	A	N	A	E	T	O	N			
					G	E	N	I	T	A	L	S			
C	A	P	I	T	U	L	A	T	E	S					
S	P	A	N	I	E	L	E	D	T						
T	E	R	N	E					H	O	S	T	A		
					R	D	F		S	A	M	U	R	A	I
					C	E	L	E	B	R	A	T	I	O	N
					C	A	E	S	U	R	A	E			
B	L	A	H		I	V	A		S	A	B	E	R		
A	U	B	E		G	I	S		A	I	L	E	D		
S	C	A	M		N	A	E		R	A	B	B	I		
E	E	L			S	L	R		S	A	S	S			

CRYPTO FUN ANSWERS:

A) hobby B) yarn C) art D) woodworking

6	8	3	9	7	5	1	4	2
9	1	2	4	8	6	7	3	5
7	5	4	3	2	1	9	6	8
4	3	6	7	1	8	5	2	9
8	9	5	6	4	2	3	7	1
1	2	7	5	9	3	6	8	4
2	7	8	1	6	9	4	5	3
5	6	1	8	3	4	2	9	7
3	4	9	2	5	7	8	1	6

Sports



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Players

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C.J. Suess, are now playing the waiting game like so many athletes at other levels.

Winter impact

By the time the MSHSL suspension was announced, most varsity winter sports had already contested their state finals. Highlights from the Ranger winter include the state championship won by the boys Nordic skiing team on Feb. 14, and Derrick Cardinal's record-setting third career individual state title at the Class AAA wrestling championships Feb. 27-29, a competition that saw the junior complete a perfect 50-0 season and also surpass 200 career wins.

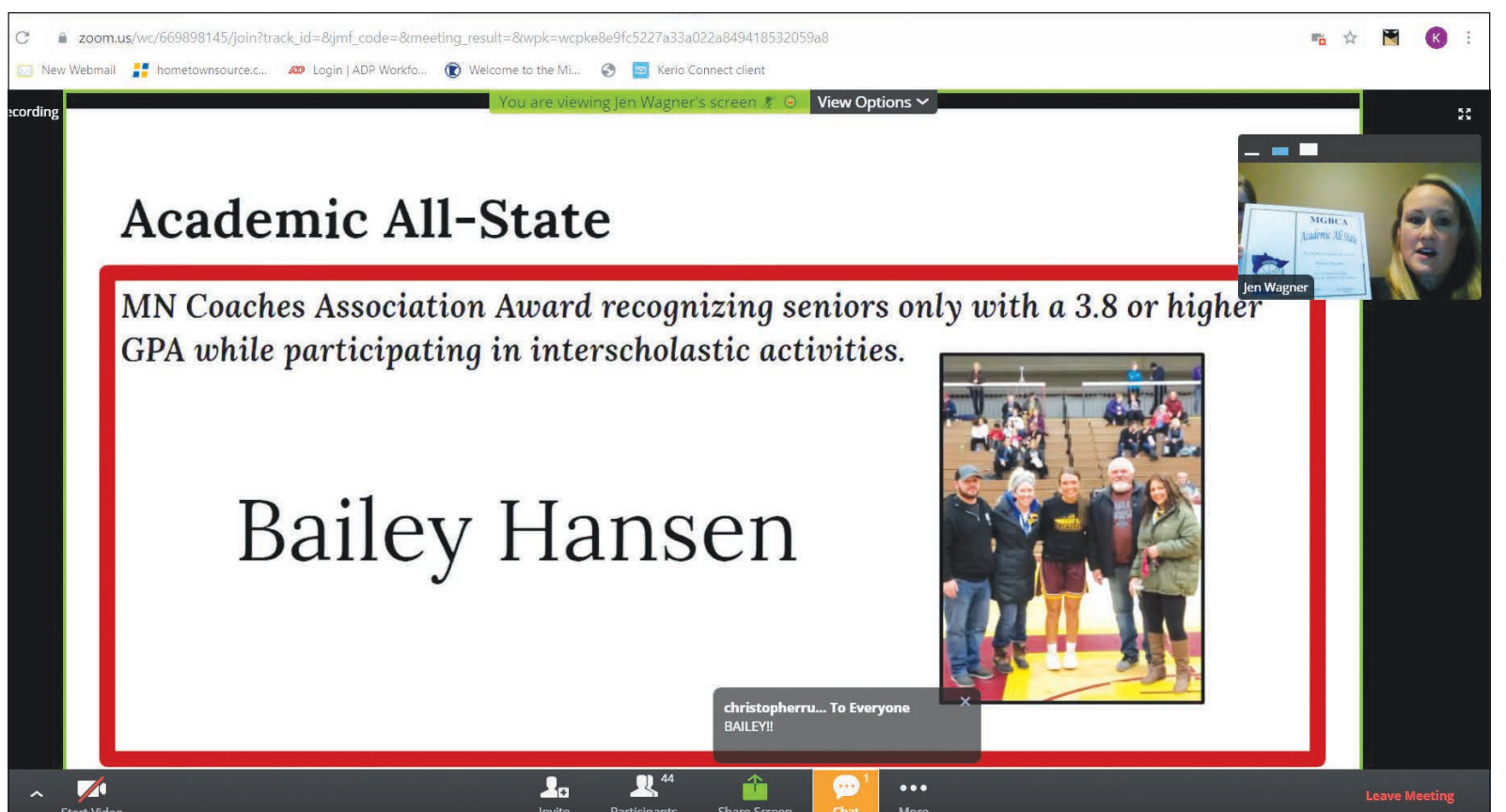
The timing of the suspension struck the greatest winter blow against the elite basketball programs of the state. The girls state tournaments were well underway by March 13, but were immediately halted – in Class AAAA, Hopkins and Farmington had already clinched their spots in a championship game that will never be played. The boys state tournament never commenced: After knocking out Forest Lake in the semifinals, Cambridge-Isanti claimed the title in Section 7AAAA on March 12 before learning half a day later that the section final was the end of the road.

All Forest Lake winter teams had completed their seasons before the MSHSL suspension was announced, but the end of team activities and the new social distancing protocols meant that banquets and other postseason events sometimes had to be postponed or canceled. The Forest Lake girls basketball team came up with a creative solution: Head coach Jen Wagner and director of basketball operations Maurya Laqua brought the team together on March 19 for a virtual banquet on the teleconferencing platform Zoom. Players and coaches were seen on screen in their living rooms, sometimes with guest appearances from a sibling or a dog.

"It was great to see everybody's faces again," Wagner said. "Players, coaches and parents all contribute to a season, and then all of a sudden it ends, and no matter when that is, it always feels so abrupt. This year, we felt like we didn't have the closure of celebrating the season at a banquet. You're never going to have the same team again, so to not know if we were going to be able to celebrate [this year's team] was tough."

After some preliminaries, Wagner presented a slideshow naming the various award winners while players and coaches posted congratulatory comments in a group chat app. Major team awards are listed in the box at right.

"I was nervous because [the platform] was new; I'd much rather stand up in front of people and talk," Wagner said. "It was very uplifting to see their faces again. The whole thing was way more powerful



With restrictions on large gatherings, the Forest Lake girls basketball team was unable to hold a standard awards banquet at the end of its season. Instead, the awards were announced over a teleconference on the Zoom platform. Head coach Jen Wagner displays the Academic All-State certificate that senior Bailey Hansen earned as an elite scholastic and athletic performer.



Forest Lake seniors who have enjoyed prior success in spring sports, like boys tennis player Harry Wohlberg (left) and girls golfer Maddie Krieger (above), are hoping for good news relating to the coronavirus pandemic and the status of the spring sports season.

than I anticipated. It was well worth it."

Wagner feels the strangeness of the current sports situation, not only as a coach, but also as a parent.

"My kids ask me, 'Mom, will I be able to play AAU; Mom, what's going on with baseball,'" Wagner said. "It's hard to say I don't know, because as a parent you're used to having an answer, even if you don't like the answer."

Even though no Ranger athletes missed out on varsity events this winter, some athletes still saw winter club seasons disrupted by COVID-19. Ben Chatwin's younger brother, Forest Lake senior Will, finished his varsity swimming season at the Class AA state meet on Feb. 29, but he nevertheless missed out on a major club meet. At the Section 7AA meet on Feb. 22, Will finished the 100-yard backstroke in 55.71 seconds, a time that qualified him for entry in the Speedo Central Zone Championships, a multi-state club championship which was scheduled for March 12-15 in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin. Will Chatwin also qualified for the Central Zone meet in the 50-yard freestyle with a time he swam in a club meet while representing the North Suburban Aquatics Club, and was also awarded a "bonus" entry in the 100-yard freestyle.

He was already en route to the Central Zone meet with his family when a call came through that the meet was canceled.

"It was disappointing and frustrating because I worked all summer and all season long to

get those cut times," Will said.

Like his classmates, Will is left in doubt as to whether he will get to experience the usual senior-year traditions like a graduation ceremony.

"I hope there's going to be a graduation, but right now, nobody knows," Will said.

The youngest Chatwin is eighth-grader Grace, a rookie star on the Ranger synchronized swimming team last year, performing as an aerial "flyer" with some of the team's top routines. The new synchro season had barely begun when the MSHSL suspension went into effect.

Hope springs eternal

One of a number of prominent senior spring athletes whose final seasons may not happen, beyond those named already, is Grace Chatwin's synchro teammate, Ella Anderson, who was named all-state as a junior last year. A curtailed synchro season would be especially difficult,

since swimmers build their routines throughout the season. Tennis players Gunnar Green and Harry Wohlberg made the Section 7AA quarterfinals in doubles last year, but now may not get their last crack at postseason success as seniors. Distance runner Max Charlsen was a top 10 finisher at the state cross-country meet in the fall and would likely be primed for a similar run at the state track meet. Maddie Krieger was expected to be a leader on the girls golf team as it tried to claim a sixth consecutive Section 7AAA title.

Among the charter schools, a new varsity team was set to debut, the LILA/North Lakes boys golf team. Unlike the charter schools' many prior co-op efforts, the golf team would be primarily driven by LILA players. The team, which will be based at Forest Hills Golf Course, grew out of an existing golf club at LILA, though with NLA in the fold, the team will be able to play

a league schedule in the Minnesota Classic Athletic Conference, whenever it plays.

"The MCAA coaches are still having their planning meetings over Zoom," LILA activities director Jenni Muras said. "We're looking forward to hopefully having a season."

Hope is the word of the moment, certainly, for spring athletes

across Minnesota – hope that their seasons can be played, hope that COVID-19 will come and go with minimal disruption, hope that lives and routines will someday return to normal.

Taylor Glumack summed up the situation well: "I'm hoping the COVID-19 pandemic will pass in time for all the spring athletes to get a season."

FL girls basketball awards

Varsity

Most Improved, Allison Olson; Hardest Worker, Paige Swanson; Ranger Award, Bailey Hansen and Hanna Maciej; Connie's Courage, Josey Kahl; MVP, Logan Anderson.

New team records: Greta Krieger, season 3-point percentage (51.72%); Logan Anderson, most free throws in a season (149) and in a game (15), best single-game free-throw percentage (100%).

Junior Varsity

Co-MVPs, Josey Kahl and Katie Johnson.

Sophomore

Most Improved, Megan Redepenning and Ellen Joesting; Hardest Worker, Jill DuPaul; MVP, Grace Frechette.

Freshman

Most Improved, Madi Schleusner; Hardest Worker, Lexi Duda; MVP, Sydney Wiener.

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