



Edina Girls

Three Edina High girls soccer players have been selected first-team All-State by the Minnesota Girls Soccer Coaches' Association. They are senior midfielder Sophia Boman, senior defender Abby Swanda and sophomore forward Maddie Dahlien.

Howard Henderson

The Blake School senior defender was named first-team All-State in Class A by the Minnesota Boys Soccer Coaches' Association.

Kaitlyn MacBean

The Breck School girls soccer forward was named first-team All-State and 2019 Ms. Soccer for Class A.

Will Mortenson

The Blake School boys soccer forward was named first-team All-State and was also a finalist for the state Class A Mr. Soccer of Minnesota Award.

Amanda Mosborg

The Edina High graduate was brilliant in winning the MIAC women's cross country title for the Carleton College team Nov. 2 in Northfield. Mosborg ran a 6K time of 21:33. Carleton beat out St. Olaf for the MIAC women's championship.

Hank Stechmann

Edina High's junior boys soccer goalie allowed only 13 goals for the season in leading the Hornets to the state Class AA title with a 22-0-0 record. In six playoff games, Stechmann allowed only one goal. He was named to the All-State Tournament team Oct. 31 after the Hornets beat East Ridge 2-1 for the state crown. Stechmann was a first-team All-State selection.



(SUN STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN SHERMAN)

Edina High's new varsity baseball coach Tommy Nevers with his son Mason after a victory for the Edina Legion baseball team in the Gopher Classic last summer.

Nevers takes helm for Edina baseball

Local hero returns to his alma mater

By **JOHN SHERMAN**
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Some people in Edina know Tommy Nevers for his career with Edina Realty. Others know him as one of the most famous athletes ever to graduate from Edina High School.

Regardless, it is fair to say that he's one of the most recognizable men in town. He will no doubt increase that profile as the new varsity baseball coach at his alma mater. Athletic director Troy Stein announced that Nevers will take over the position from Carter Freeman, who won a pair of Lake Conference titles during his tenure in Edina.

Nevers brings 13 seasons of professional baseball experience to his new position as well as an Edina High Athletic Hall of Fame Award that he earned as an All-State baseball and hockey play-

er. After being selected in the first round by the Houston Astros in the 1991 Major League Baseball draft, Nevers played professionally, and was on the fringe of making it to the Majors. He advanced as high as Class AAA.

He is now active in Edina Youth Hockey and the Edina Baseball Association and has coached on Gene Larkin's Edina American Legion Baseball staff for several years, so he is a natural to move into the high school coaching ranks.

"When I played for Edina High School, Willard Ikola [hockey] and Jim Luther [baseball] were my coaches," Nevers said. "I always knew they cared about me and believed in me. Now that I am the baseball coach, I want to impact young men's lives."

Nevers' oldest son Mason graduated from Edina High earlier this year after leading the Hornets to the State Class AA Hockey Tournament title. Two younger boys in the family are in fifth and

eighth grades, and both play baseball and hockey.

As a high school coach, Nevers wants his team to be like a family.

"I want the players to know that they are my extended family," he said. "I will ask them to think about the team first and care about one another. And I want the value of being on this roster to go way up. If those things happen, the baseball experience at Edina High School will be off the charts. I want to look back three years from now and say that we have a program, not just a group of guys who play baseball."

Looking ahead to the 2020 season, Nevers projects the Hornets as a team with unusually good pitching depth.

"I believe we have eight pitchers who can get outs at the high school level," he said. "I want my best athletes on the mound, as much as I want my best pitchers, so we will be calling people in from other positions to pitch."

When he played high school ball in Edina, Nevers was the starting short-

stop and also took regular turns on the mound, throwing 90 miles per hour. Of course, not everyone has that kind of talent, but as a coach, Nevers doesn't want to see any potential talent go untapped.

"If you're on our pitching staff, you're going to get a chance to pitch," he said.

Nevers has met with the players and their parents once already.

"The platform has been set, and they know what the expectations are," he said. "We will shape the team to be ready at the end of the season. My knowledge will come out in my coaching, not by telling the players what I have done. Every year, feasibly, we want to make a run at going to state. I will be a fan of every player on the team. One thing I want to do is give each of them the confidence to be the best version of himself."

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Minnetonka Coach Praises Lake CC

After watching the State Class AA Girls Cross Country Meet Nov. 2 at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnetonka head coach Jane Reimer-Morgan said, "The Lake Conference has been called the toughest cross country conference in the country, and we saw proof of that, with teams from the Lake finishing 1-2-3 at state."

Edina won the title and will have almost its full team returning next season. Wayzata finished second with a squad that will return virtually intact. Lake newcomer St. Michael-Albertville took third place.

Although Minnetonka didn't qualify for state as a team this year, the Skippers have an extremely bright future.

"Anna Cherian ran the best race of her life [at state]," Reimer-Morgan noted. "She is our only All-State runner this year. Ella Graham, one of our eighth-graders, missed making All-State by three-tenths of a second. And Kate LeBlanc ran her best time of the year, even though she has been bothered by a quad pull for several weeks."

Reimer-Morgan pointed out how well other Lake Conference girls ran at state. Wayzata ninth-grader Abbey Nechanicky took second place with a career-best 5K time of 17:52. Hopkins seventh-grader Sydney Drevlow finished fifth and Eden Prairie senior Liesl Paulsen placed seventh.

In winning the championship, Edina lists four All-State runners - sophomore Maggie Wagner, ninth-graders Lauren Cossack and Mary Velner and senior captain Morgan Richter.

Edina, Minnetonka head All-Lake tennis team

By **JOHN SHERMAN**
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Twenty girls tennis players, including six from Edina and five from Minnetonka, have been named to the All-Lake Conference team for 2019.

It is not surprising to see more than half the selections coming from Edina and Minnetonka, since those were the state champion and runner-up teams at state. Edina defeated the Skippers twice during the regular season, 4-3 and 4-3, and then beat them 5-2 in the state finals. Those were Minnetonka's only three losses of the season.

Heading Edina's selections is senior captain Nicole Copeland, who has accepted a scholarship offer to play for Drake University next season. Copeland is one of the most successful players in Edina history, with six varsity letters, five state team championships, two state individual singles titles and one state singles runner-up berth.

After winning state singles honors in her sophomore and junior seasons, Copeland lost to Eastview's Karin Young 6-4, 6-1 in this year's state championship match.

Minnetonka's All-Lake selections are headed by the state Class AA doubles champions, sophomore Annika Elvestrom and ninth-grader Sarah Shahbaz. After playing singles most of the season, the two girls blended well as a doubles team with an 11-0 record.

Edina head coach Steve



Edina High girls tennis standout Nicole Copeland, a five-year All-Lake Conference player, serves in the state Class AA individual finals match against Eastview sophomore Karin Young.

(SUN STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN SHERMAN)

Paulsen, who retired at the end of the 2019 season, talked about Copeland's impact on the Hornet program.

"Nicole started with us in seventh grade," he said. "She has been a quality person on and off the court. People don't realize how tough it is when you're playing with a target on your back."

Edina's top doubles team, consisting of senior

captains Jessica Ip and Shaylynn Reger, placed third in the State Class AA Tournament doubles draw.

"Jessica and Shay complemented one another very well," Paulsen said. "Shay didn't play a singles match during her career. She is really talented in doubles. Jessica was a good partner for her, with her great ground strokes and aggressive volleys."

The Hornets' other three All-Lake players will return last year. Junior Ingrid Smith and ninth-grader Sami Hankinson played mainly singles this season, while Lizzy Van Ert went undefeated at second doubles with her partner, Nicola Santoni.

"Ingrid has worked hard on her singles game," Paulsen said. "She added more offense this year and was very successful at

second and third singles. Sami played some doubles with Shay Reger in several matches, but would probably prefer singles. She's a player who lays it on the line. Sami had a great win against Minnetonka in the state championship match."

Van Ert was named all-conference as an "at-large" selection. "It's too bad that Nicola [Santoni] isn't all-conference too,

but the coaches could choose only one at-large player," Paulsen said.

Santoni was named All-Lake honorable mention along with Paige Greene and Morgan Clark, who both played primarily doubles.

This was a year young players lifted the caliber of Lake Conference tennis. The 2019 All-Lake squad includes only four seniors - the Edina trio of Copeland, Ip and Reger and captain Madison Magnani from Eden Prairie.

2019 All-Lake Girls Tennis Team

Edina: Seniors Nicole Copeland, Jessica Ip and Shaylynn Reger, juniors Lizzy Van Ert and Ingrid Smith and ninth-grader Sami Hankinson.

Minnetonka: Juniors Sarah Bernet and Emily Jurgens, sophomore Annika Elvestrom, ninth-grader Sarah Shahbaz and eighth-grader Karina Elvestrom.

Eden Prairie: Senior Madison Magnani and ninth-grader Niyathi Bhupatiraju and Annika Anderson.

St. Michael-Albertville: Juniors Emma Thole and Meadow LaDuke.

Wayzata: Senior Kate Ainsworth, junior Miriam Shteyman and eighth-grader Greta Holmes.

Buffalo: Sophomore Anna Lee.

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(SUN STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN SHERMAN)

Edina senior Jessica Ip alternated between singles and doubles in earning an All-Lake Conference berth.



(SUN STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN SHERMAN)

Shaylynn Reger, Edina's doubles specialist, is a repeat selection on the All-Lake girls tennis team.



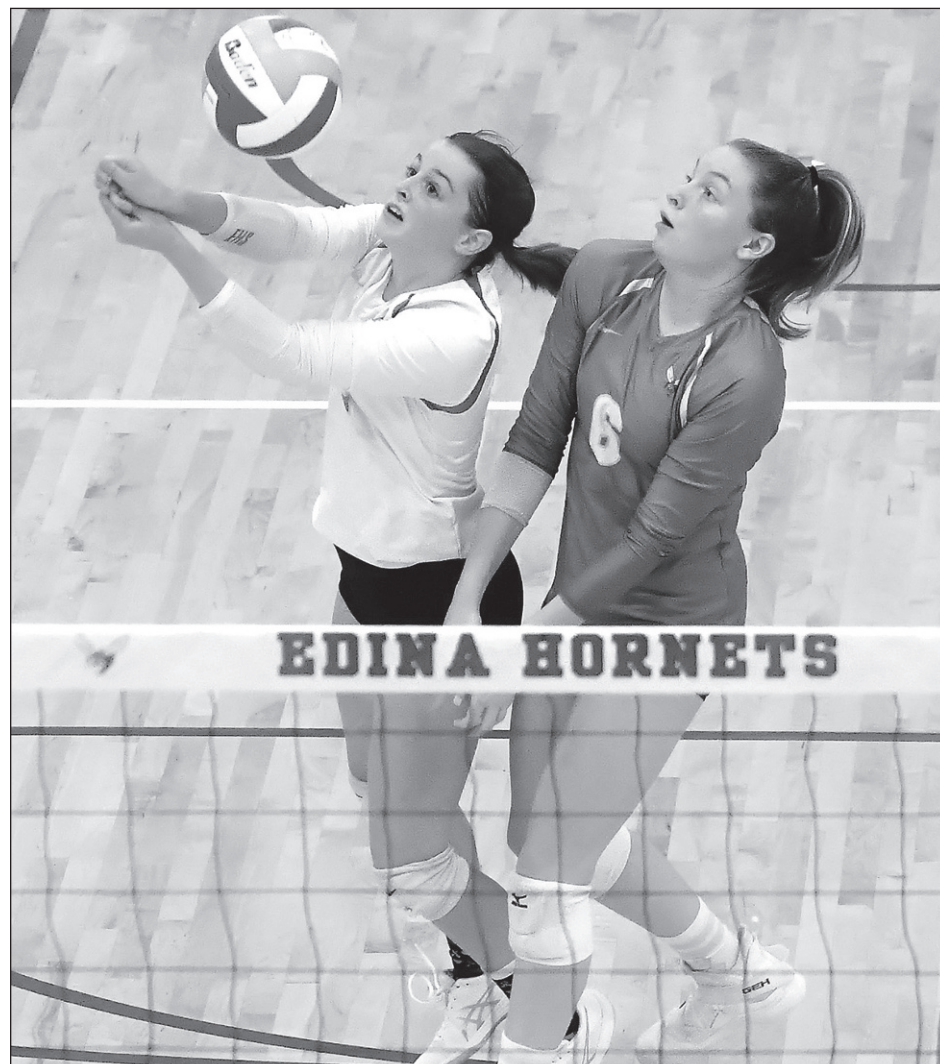
(SUN STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN SHERMAN)

Ingrid Smith will return to lead Edina High's girls tennis team in singles for the 2019 campaign.



(SUN STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN SHERMAN)

Edina volleyball captain Kat Warpinski (4) played setter this season, but still had her share of kills for the Hornets.



(SUN STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN SHERMAN)

Better two bumpers than one, as Edina libero Sarah Bohrer and Grace Hamerski cover in a match against Waconia.

Edina volleyball team builds for the future

Solid play from senior captains is 2019 highlight

By **JOHN SHERMAN**
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Although Edina's bid for a return trip to the State Class AAA Girls Volleyball Tournament ended with a first-round playoff loss to Hopkins recently, head coach Mark Nelson was pleased with the Hornets' effort throughout the 2019 season.

Edina finished 8-18

overall and had a 1-7 record in the Lake Conference, with the only win coming against Buffalo.

"We rallied around our two senior captains, Grace Hamerski and Kat Warpinski," Hornet head coach Mark Nelson said. "In the fourth game of our playoff match against Hopkins, Grace ripped off 11 straight points to give us a 25-24 lead."

The Hornets eventually lost that match and that is where their season ended, but it was still an incredible personal highlight for Hamerski.

"It was one of the greatest comebacks I have ever

seen," Nelson noted.

As for Warpinski, her versatility was always an asset.

"Kat played libero for her club team and played on the right side for us last season," Nelson said. "This year, we needed a setter. In high school volleyball, you have to work with the players you have, and Kat filled that role for us. She is really versatile."

Edina's other captain, sophomore Sarah Bohrer, had many good moments on the court and will return as a leader next season.

"Sarah is more of a quiet leader," Nelson said.

"One of her goals for next season is to step up and be more of a vocal leader."

Looking to next year, the Hornets will have significant varsity experience returning - certainly more than they had this year. At the same time, they will not have a lot of height.

"We regularly played two ninth-graders and three sophomores," Nelson said. "We're still going to be young, but not as young as Hopkins."

The Royals have played with three eighth-graders, including the starting setter this year.

"One of the best things

about our program is the way the kids buy into what we're doing," said Nelson, who just completed his second season as head coach. "We take the players we have and focus on the process. Our younger girls are hungry to get better. In the offseason, they will play volleyball and also work on developing their athleticism."

"We saw a lot of improvement this year. Looking back on it now, we came together as a group. We played some high-quality matches. We split with Waconia and took a game from Minnetonka [the Lake Con-

ference runner-up]."

In addition to Hamerski and Warpinski, the only other seniors on the 2019 varsity roster are middle hitter Jazmine Edmond, outside hitter Sophia Kessler and defensive specialist Bella Selle.

In addition to Bohrer, players who will return for 2020 are Brooke Bothwell, Aliya Dahlin, Ema Dinndorf, Tessa Dubbe, Elena Mathern, Maddy Slaughter and Avery Vogt.

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Two thousand runners may enter Turkey Trot

By **JOHN SHERMAN**
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From its modest beginning on Thanksgiving morning of 2009, the Tonka Turkey Trot has become one of the largest 5K races in the western suburbs.

Organizers are expecting 2,000 runners for the 10th anniversary race, which will begin at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 28, at Minnetonka High School.

The race serves a fundraiser for the Minnetonka High boys and girls track

teams, but more importantly it is an event to bring the running community together before families sit down for Thanksgiving dinner that afternoon.

"It is a wonderful event," Minnetonka High girls cross country coach

Jane Reimer-Morgan said. "We have had 2,000 runners each of the last two years. A lot of alumni come home that week, and it is good to see them. Some of our varsity runners will run that day and some will be volunteers. We will have the race in

rain, snow, or whatever."

Dan Meusi, one of the founders of the event, said that as many as four or five people from his family will enter the race.

"I haven't been directly involved in organizing the race for several years," he said. "Once we had

the first race [in 2009], a lot of people told me we had to keep it going. This is not intended to be a hard, competitive race. It is more of a family event."

The race is sponsored by the Minnetonka Track and Field and Cross Country Association