



Piece of history
Parts of historic gym floor for sale
Page 7



Cremisino retires
Rangers boys hoop coach closes career
Page 11

Forest Lake Times

April 1, 2021 | Volume #118

Issue #46 | 651-464-4601 | ForestLakeTimes.com | \$1.00

STEP to find permanent home at newly remodeled CLC

Joe Hiti
Community Editor

In 2008, the Forest Lake Area School District created a new transition program, the Student Transition Education Program, in order to help serve the needs of a specific group of students.

A few years before the start of STEP, an assessment was done of the district's special education program. The district identified that there were a number of students who were not learning with their age-appropriate peers. Thirty-six students ages 18 to 21 were in need of a transition program that could help them get ready for life after high school. After a few years of input from families, teachers, and staff within the district, the district's transition program that they created in 2005 was

Step see page 3

Cardinal flies to 4th state title for Ranger wrestling

Raway reaches title match at 195

John Wagner
Sports Editor

For Forest Lake senior Derrick Cardinal, everything came down to the ultimate tiebreaker.

Cardinal was locked in a tight struggle with Lakeville North's Zach Hanson in the championship match of the Class 3A 132-pound bracket at the state tournament hosted by St. Michael-Albertville on Thursday, March 25. The battle was tied at 2-2 as it ground through three overtimes.

What was at stake? Not just this year's title, but Cardinal's chance to be considered among the best wrestlers in Minnesota high school wrestling history as a four-time state champion.

"He was wrestling the perfect match against me," Cardinal said of Hanson. "I was getting a little frustrated, because I couldn't get to my offense. But I put it in my head that eventually something positive would happen, and that came in the ultimate tiebreaker.

"It was a little stressful, but I always knew I had the choice [in the tiebreaker] – and that, if I chose down, I could get away in 30 seconds and win the match."



Photo by Stuart Groskreutz, Stillwater Gazette

Derrick Cardinal is tied up with Zach Hanson of Lakeville North in the 132-pound title bout at the Class 3A state meet, which was held at St. Michael-Albertville High School on Thursday, March 25. Cardinal won 3-2 in overtime for his fourth individual state title.

And that is exactly what Cardinal did to claim a 3-2 victory and become just the 29th wrestler in Minnesota state wrestling history to win four individual high school titles.

"You wouldn't hear this from Derrick, but he has a banged-up knee, and his back is really hurting," Forest Lake coach Joe Kun-

shier said. "Hanson wrestled a very safe, conservative match, but I was never worried. ... I don't think there was ever a doubt Derrick would escape in that fourth tiebreaker. He wasn't going to be denied that fourth title."

After winning the title, Cardinal bowed to the emotions swirling in his head.

"It felt unreal that I had won my fourth state title," he said. "And it hit me hard that it was my last match as a Ranger, wearing that Forest Lake singlet. I just wanted to cherish the moment a little bit; I hugged my dad [assistant coach Tim Cardinal], and I

Wrestling see page 10

Forest Lake gymnasts stick it at state

O'Gorman, Sisco win individual titles while team's 2nd-place finish is best in school history

John Wagner
Sports Editor

The Forest Lake gymnastics team found itself in a most unusual position as the evening session of the Class 2A State Gymnastics meet began on Saturday, March 27, at Champlin Park High School. Due to COVID-19 protocols, the MSHSL broke up the day into sessions, instead of all of the teams competing in the facility at once.

The Rangers, who had competed in the afternoon session of the event, had to play the waiting game back in Forest Lake. And Forest Lake had a lot on the line: After their session, two individuals had the



Submitted photo

The competitors for the Forest Lake gymnastics team were introduced prior to the start of the afternoon session of the Class 2A state meet, which was held at Champlin Park High School on Saturday, March 27. The members of the team at the meet were, from left, Amelia Bonnett, Keely Sisco, Mackenzie Nenn, Jasmine Stamp, Delaney Nickles, alternate Hailey Henry, Claire O'Gorman and alternate Ellyana Stamp.

best scores in individual events, and senior Claire O'Gorman also had the top all-around score. What's more, the Rangers led the team competition entering the evening.

"It was nerve-wracking," O'Gorman admitted. "But you can't do anything

about it at that point; what's done is done."

So Forest Lake did its best to enjoy watching the competition from the high school's media center.

"Normally when we're at a meet, we can see what's going on – but we're also competing," coach Lind-

sey Pierron said. "But there was nothing we could do at that point. So we just enjoyed watching the rest of the meet."

And there was plenty for the Forest Lake gymnasts to enjoy. By the end of the evening, the Rangers learned they had two in-

dividual event champions – O'Gorman in the floor exercise and junior Keely Sisco on the balance beam – while O'Gorman placed second in the all-around competition.

The team's score of 146.775 put the Rangers in second place, trailing only

Sartell's winning score of 148.050 but more than a full point ahead of third-place Owatonna. That team finish is the best in Forest Lake gymnastics history.

"That was our best performance of the season," Pierron said. "We had 18 out of 20 routines 'hit,' meaning we really only had two falls in the entire meet. It was the best our team could have done, and I was really proud of them."

O'Gorman starts out strong

O'Gorman began the competition with her two favorite events, the floor exercise and vault. And she took that as a good sign.

"I liked starting off with my two best events," she said. "On the floor, I thought that was one of my best routines – I got the same score at section, and I was proud of that. I was happy about my vault;

Gymnastics see page 9

VICTORY AUTO SERVICE & GLASS

VictoryAutoService.com
Call or Text for an Appointment
651.462.1946

Family Owned & Operated Since 1997
5428 260th St. Wyoming, MN 55092
Hours: M-F 7AM - 6PM

BONUS SAVINGS ON YOUR REPAIR OR MAINTENANCE SERVICE

\$25 OFF
Service of \$100 or More

\$50 OFF
Service of \$250 or More

\$100 OFF
Service of \$750 or More

*Invoice must be over \$100, \$250 or \$750 prior to tax & fees. Excludes tires, glass and Intoxalock. Cannot combine with any other offers. Limited time only. Source: 00-045-003

NOW OPEN IN WYOMING, MN



Sports



John Wagner | 763-233-0707 | john.wagner@apgem.com

Wrestling

from page 1

hugged Coach Kunshier.”

Cardinal deserves extra credit for this fourth title, as he dropped to 132 pounds to set up the possibility of wrestling two of the state’s best: Hanson and four-time championship Reid Ballantyne of Stillwater.

“He could have stayed at 138 and won the state championship,” Kunshier said. “But he wanted that duel with a four-time state champ. Reid unfortunately was injured and had to drop out, but that’s the kind of kid Derrick is. He has never shied away from a challenge. He wanted to win a fourth state title, and he wanted to beat a four-time titlist to do it.

“So it was great to see him take a breath and hug his dad and I. You could tell he was taking in the moment, absorbing what he did.”

Cardinal, who will wrestle collegiately at South Dakota State University next year, finished his senior year with a 41-1 record after posting a 13-3 major decision over Will Bents of Woodbury in the opening round, then besting Colton Bornholdt of New Prague 13-5 in the semifinals of the state meet.

“Derrick is the pinnacle of what Forest Lake wrestling is about,” Kunshier said. “Derrick stayed in the program, and he was the rock. He felt Forest Lake had everything it needed to create a four-time state champion – whether it was the coaching, the facilities, the practice partners, the support from the community and the booster club.

“It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a coach like myself to be able to experience working with him.”

Since the state tournament, Cardinal said he has thought more about his accomplishments at Forest Lake, a legacy that includes not just four state titles, but also 240 victories – the most not just for a wrestler at Forest Lake, but for any wrestler in Class 4A Section 7.

“I’ve been blessed to have the opportunity to do everything and break these records,” he said. “I remember in seventh grade, when Kunshier allowed me to wrestle at 106 even though I only weighed 91 pounds. There was a tournament – at St. Michael’s, believe it or not – where I had a rough day where I got pinned twice.

“But Kunshier gave me a chance, and he believed in me. That helped me believe I could do big things at Forest Lake. It means a lot to me that I started my wrestling career at Forest Lake, and I got to win the state title for the fourth time wearing a Ranger singlet.”

Raway reaches championship match

Cardinal was not the only Forest Lake wrestler who set himself up for a potential title as fellow senior Tyler Raway advanced to the championship match at 195 pounds.

While Raway dropped a 6-3 decision to Roman Rogotzke of Stillwater in that title match, he finished the season with a 36-3 record and placed in the state tournament for the second year in a row.

“Tyler shouldn’t consider himself to be second fiddle to anybody,” Kunshier said. “He and Derrick are two of the best leaders we’ve ever had in the room. I don’t think Derrick would be where he is without Tyler being his equal, standing by his side and pushing him.”

Raway opened the tournament by pinning Aidan Wayne of Osseo at the 2:54 mark in his first match, then claim a 1-0 victory over Joey Johnson of Shakopee in the semifinals.

“The win over Johnson was a signature win,” Kunshier said. “Tyler was tenacious and kept after the kid. He forced the referees to make a stalling call, and that is extremely rare in a match at that level. But it was that obvious that Tyler was working hard and deserved the call.”

That lifted Raway into the title match against Rogotzke, the top seed in the tournament.

“I wrestled his younger brother at last year’s state tournament, but I think it has been about five years since I wrestled Roman,” Raway said. “I know he has a different style – he likes to go for big moves – so I tried to stay basic. I was a little disappointed [I did not win]. But at the same time, he’s a stud, and I wrestled as well as I could.”

Kunshier agreed that Raway wrestled well, adding: “He forced Rogotzke to wrestle. He kept the match close and gave himself a chance to win. If you would have told me before the season began that Tyler would be in the state title match, I would have said, ‘Of course he is.’ There was only one better wrestler in the state – and that means Tyler is better than a lot of



Submitted photos
Forest Lake senior Tyler Raway looks to gain an advantage in his Class 3A 195-pound state title match against Roman Rogotzke of Stillwater. Raway suffered a 6-3 loss to finish second in the state at that weight.

kids around the state.”

Raway said he would not allow a loss in his final match to cloud the view of a fine senior season.

“Looking back, just being able to have a season like this – because of COVID-19 making it uncertain we would even have a season, then the late start – I’m just grateful that we had a season,” he said. “Losing in the championship match still stings, but I think it will fuel me in my college career. It was a weird year, but I just tried to make the best of it.”

Kunshier said Raway’s contributions to the Forest Lake program have come both on and off the mat.

“He won 145 matches in his career, and that’s huge,” Kunshier said. “Tyler is a great kid, a great leader. To have his resolve, his attitude, in the room every day is something I’ll remember. He’s going to hang a picture on the wall for being a state finalist, and that’s a huge thing in our program.”

And Cardinal agreed that Raway, who will wrestle collegiately at Augsburg University, deserved praise for both a fine senior season and exemplary career at Forest Lake.

“I love Tyler – since eighth grade we’ve been close, and we’ve been the team captains the last two years,” Cardinal said. “In the past few years he really stepped up to be a team leader right beside me. He came to practice every day and worked hard, and pushed me at times when I was down.

“I was excited to see him make the finals. He shouldn’t feel as if he’s in my shadow at all.”

Aho places at state again

Sophomore Jacob Aho finished fourth in the state meet at 113 pounds, marking the second straight season he placed at that event. He pinned J.T. Hausen of Faribault in his opening match before losing to Caleb Thoennes of St. Michael-Albertville by a narrow 4-3 count in the semis.

“He definitely had the potential to make it to the finals, and I thought the match with Thoennes was a winnable match,” Kunshier said. “Jake is so athletic, and so strong and dynamic, he is in every match he wrestles.”

In the match for third place, Aho dropped an 11-6 decision to Alex Braun of Woodbury to finish the season with a 25-3 record.

“I take responsibility for the loss in this match,” Kunshier said. “Jake had beaten the kid earlier in the season, but he wanted to assert his dominance. Instead he got caught early and gave up back points, and it’s hard to come back against high-level kids when you give up back points.”

Aho finished the season with a 26-5 record despite missing time because of an injury, and Kunshier thinks the sophomore can take another step forward next season.

“The kids that he lost to are year-round wrestlers, and Jake tends to just wrestle during the season,” Kunshier said. “I think the key for him is to go out and do some wrestling in the spring and summer and train for the season. I think he’s scary-good, knowing he mostly trains during the season and minimally outside the season.

“He’s a great kid and hard worker; he placed sixth last year and fourth this year, so he’s progressing in the right direction.”

Lyden holds his own

Freshman Parker Lyden received no favors in his first state tournament appearance, losing his first match at 106 pounds to top seed and eventual champ Alan Koehler of Prior Lake before falling to Blake Beissel of Hastings to finish

the season with a 28-14 record.

“Going against the No. 1 seed right away was tough, and his draw in the second round happened to be a guy who beat him earlier in the season,” Kunshier said. “It was just one of those things. He was a bubble kid to make the state tournament, so to get that experience puts him in front of kids who stayed home. ... Getting there will make

him hungry to get back there as he moves forward with his career. Parker has a great attitude and is a year-round wrestler who is committed to the sport.”



Rangers sophomore Jacob Aho looks at a referees during one of his 113-pound matches at the Class 3A state tournament hosted by St. Michael-Albertville on Thursday, March 25.

Spring Into All That's Local!

Read up on Local News in Your Community Newspaper!

**Public Safety • Community Events • Local Sports
Government News • School News...And more**

**with a 1 yr paid subscription you will also receive FREE on-line access along with enrollment in our new program Reader Perks (on-line coupon access)!*

SIGN UP TODAY!

Only \$52 - Just \$1 Per Week!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

I will be paying by:

VISA MC AMEX Discover

credit card number:

Exp Date: ___ / ___ / ___ Sec Code: ___ / ___ / ___

I have enclosed a check

Expires April 30, 2021
Promo Code NWSPAD

Mail to:

ECM Subscriber Services
4095 Coon Rapids Blvd.
Coon Rapids, MN 55433
763.712.3544

EAST CENTRAL MINNESOTA