

West, Waseca open basketball tourney Wednesday

Both games are at Chanhassen

The Free Press

The Mankato West boys basketball team is playing in the state tournament for the first time since 2009.

Waseca was en route to the boys basketball state tournament last season when the pandemic pulled the plug right before the

section championship game.

Both teams will get their chance at state titles this season, having won section championship games Friday night. West won the Section 2AAA title with a 52-47 victory over Marshall, while Waseca rolled over Glencoe-Silver Lake 95-44.

This season, the eight teams that qualify for the state tournament are split into two groups, with Sections 1-4 and Sections 5-8, and seeded separately. The quarterfinal games are played at high schools around the state, with the winners advancing to the Target Center for the semifinals on April 7-8 and championship game on

April 10.

West (16-4) was seeded second in the south sections and will face Richfield (15-4) in the Class AAA quarterfinals at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at Chanhassen High School.

Alexandria (20-1), the No. 1 seed in the north, and Monticello (8-13) play in the other quarterfinal.

In the other half of the

bracket, Minnehaha Academy (17-1), the top seed in the south, faces Byron (17-2), and DeLaSalle (14-5) faces Hibbing (16-3).

Waseca (20-1) is the No. 1 seed in the south and opens the Class AA tournament with a game against Morris Area/Chokio-Alberta (19-2) at 4 p.m. Wednesday at Chanhassen High School.

The winner will draw

Annandale (18-1) or Fergus Falls (15-7) in the semifinals.

In the other bracket, Caledonia (21-1) takes on St. Croix Prep (20-1) and Minneapolis North (14-1) faces Moose Lake-Willow River (18-3).

Each school receives a limited number of tickets. There is no general sale of tickets to the public.

BRIEFS

MSU baseball wins eighth straight

MANKATO — Adam Schneider hit his first career home run, and the Minnesota State baseball team won its eighth consecutive game to remain undefeated in Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference with a 9-6 win over Mary on Saturday at ISG Field.

Schneider hit a three-run home to put Minnesota State on top in the first inning.

Teddy Petersen also homered. Joey Werner, Jack Waletich, Nick Altermatt and Ryan Freidges each had an RBI.

Jon Ludwig was the winning pitcher, allowing three runs on five hits in six innings with 10 strikeouts. Hunter Even pitched the final 1 2/3 innings for his second save.

Minnesota State (9-1, 6-0 in Northern Sun) and Mary are scheduled for a doubleheader at noon Sunday at Bowyer Field.

The Free Press

Scheffler reaches Match Play semis

AUSTIN, TEXAS — Scotie Scheffler delivered all the right shots Saturday and moved into the semifinals of the Dell Technologies Match Play by taking down Ian Poulter and Jon Rahm.

Scheffler was the highest seed remaining at No. 30. He advances to a final day that features three Americans and one European — Victor Perez of France, who made short work of Sergio Garcia in their quarterfinal match.

Matt Kuchar and Scheffler will meet in one semifinal match. Perez will face Billy Horschel, who never led in his quarterfinal match until Tommy Fleetwood sent his tee shot out of bounds on their 19th hole, the par-5 12th.

Kuchar won the Match Play in 2013 and lost in the championship match two years ago to Kevin Kisner.

Utah hires Smith as next coach

SALT LAKE CITY — Craig Smith, who quickly turned Utah State into one of the nation's best mid-major programs, was hired Saturday as Utah's basketball coach.

The Utes said Smith will replace Larry Krystkowiak, who was fired this month.

Smith led the the Aggies to the NCAA Tournament twice in three years. Utah State won the Mountain West Conference Tournament title in 2020, but didn't get a chance to play in the NCAA Tournament because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Utah State won the MWC Tournament again this season and won 20 games before losing 65-53 to Texas Tech in the opening round of the NCAA Tournament.

The Associated Press

IT'S ABOUT (OVER)TIME

Mavericks finally get first NCAA victory



Ashley Potts, special to The Free Press

Minnesota State's Ryan Sandelin celebrates his game-winning goal in a 4-3 overtime victory over Quinnipiac in Saturday's opening game of the NCAA West Regional at Loveland, Colo.

Sandelin caps rally with OT winner against Quinnipiac

By Kevin Dudley

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LOVELAND, COLO. —

Nothing was going right.

After being announced as the "Minnesota State Vikings" while taking the ice for the pregame skate, the Minnesota State men's hockey team surrendered a pair of early goals and looked relatively lifeless in the first period.

Trailing 2-0 going into the second period, it seemed like MSU's NCAA Tournament demons had returned.

The dreaded 0-7 felt dangerously close.

"I thought we played tight. I thought we had a little bit of the nerves going," MSU coach Mike Hastings said. "You can never be afraid of failure. I thought, after the first period, we played to win that hockey game."

The second-seeded Mavericks mounted a furious comeback, eventually defeating third-seeded Quinnipiac 4-3 in overtime Saturday in the quarterfinals of the West Regional of the NCAA Tournament at the Budweiser Events Center.

It's the Mavericks' first win in the national tournament in the Division I era, ending a six-game losing streak.

"You start thinking about some of the fans that have been through the heartbreak, they've stuck with us," Hastings said. "Before you ever visit the penthouse, sometimes you've got to visit the outhouse."



Ashley Potts, special to The Free Press

Gade Borchardt celebrates with teammate Dallas Gerads (22) after Borchardt scored the tying goal late in the third period of Saturday's NCAA West regional game.

Sophomore Ryan Sandelin scored the game-winner with 11:13 remaining in overtime, after playing one of the best games of his career.

For Sandelin, it's been a steady ascension up the pecking order over the last month, as Hastings has continued to give him more ice time.

He didn't necessarily view himself as the guy who would break the curse, but he's happy to do it.

"Somebody needs to play hero, and luckily it just happened to be me tonight," Sandelin said with a laugh. "I just couldn't be happier for this group. It's been a long time coming for Mankato hockey."

After the rough first period, MSU dominated from start to finish in the second. The Mavericks had countless scoring

chances go just wide but finally broke through when Jake Jaremko tipped Julian Napravnik's shot with just 1:51 remaining in the period.

"Us getting the tip-in goal was big," Hastings said. "All of the sudden the confidence grew, and it was like 'let's go.' ... We needed something good to happen, and (Jaremko) scores that goal."

After killing a 5-on-3 for 1:37 early in the third, the Bobcats' C.J. McGee made it 3-1 at 8:54, which felt like a crushing blow for MSU.

That's when Hastings put the game in the hands of the Napravnik-Nathan Smith-Cade Borchardt line, and they delivered.

Smith cut the deficit to 3-2 at 14:54 of the third, and Borchardt tied it with the goalie pulled with just over a minute to play.

Throughout the third period and overtime, the line seemed to play almost every other shift.

"What I liked, when the light was on brightest, they grew. I couldn't get them out there enough," Hastings said.

Hastings and Sandelin are happy with the win, but this is just the first step.

"We came here with the idea that we wanted to win a regional. We didn't come here with the idea that we wanted to win a hockey game," Hastings said. "Our goal is to get to Pittsburgh."

Minnesota State (21-4-1) faces the winner of top-seeded Minnesota and fourth-seeded Omaha in the West Region championship at 7 p.m. Sunday at Loveland, Colorado.

Follow Kevin Dudley on Twitter @Dudley7Kevin.

Mavs, Gusties work together

By Chad Courrier

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MANKATO — The numbers looked familiar, but many of the players were new.

On a rainy Saturday afternoon, the Minnesota State football team held a joint practice with Gustavus Adolphus at Blakeslee Stadium, taking advantage of the opportunity to work on skills and develop depth before things get more serious in the fall.

"Getting to work against a team with another color helmet improves your chances to improve," Minnesota State coach Todd Hoffner said. "It doesn't matter who you play, this is a good chance for development. The best chance to improve is to play a game, but this is just one notch below that. (Gustavus coach Peter Haugen) runs a first-class program, and it was a lot of fun to be out here, competing with them."

The proven starters and experienced players didn't get as much work Saturday. Like other spring practices, the majority of the time is spent with younger players, trying to find a few starters and develop depth on the two-deep roster, building the base for another run at a national championship.

There are also a few Minnesota State players that aren't participating this spring, saving the final season of eligibility for what they hope will be a normal schedule.

"We're trying to develop the quarterbacks," Hoffner said. "We know we have some depth in the receivers group, and we have some experience at tight end and the offensive line. The defense is new, young, fresh. There's some guys we want to look at there."

Terrell Jennings is a sophomore cornerback who transferred here from North Dakota, ready to play last fall. He was hoping it would be a little warmer Saturday, but he was just grateful to play some football this spring while other schools don't get that opportunity.

"We're out here, trying to find our identity," Jennings said. "This helps us get that figured out. It doesn't matter who you're playing; if you get a chance to work against another team, it makes you focus on fundamentals."

The Mavericks, who scrimmaged Morningside last weekend, will also practice against Grand View and Southwest

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