

## MEN'S HOCKEY



Greg Vasil / Special to the Pioneer

The Beavers celebrate Ross Armour's first-period goal against Wisconsin in the NCAA East Regional semifinals at Bridgeport, Conn., on Friday, March 26.

# BEAVERS STUN BADGERS

**BSU knocks off Wisconsin in 6-3 win, advances to NCAA regional final**

By Austin Monteith  
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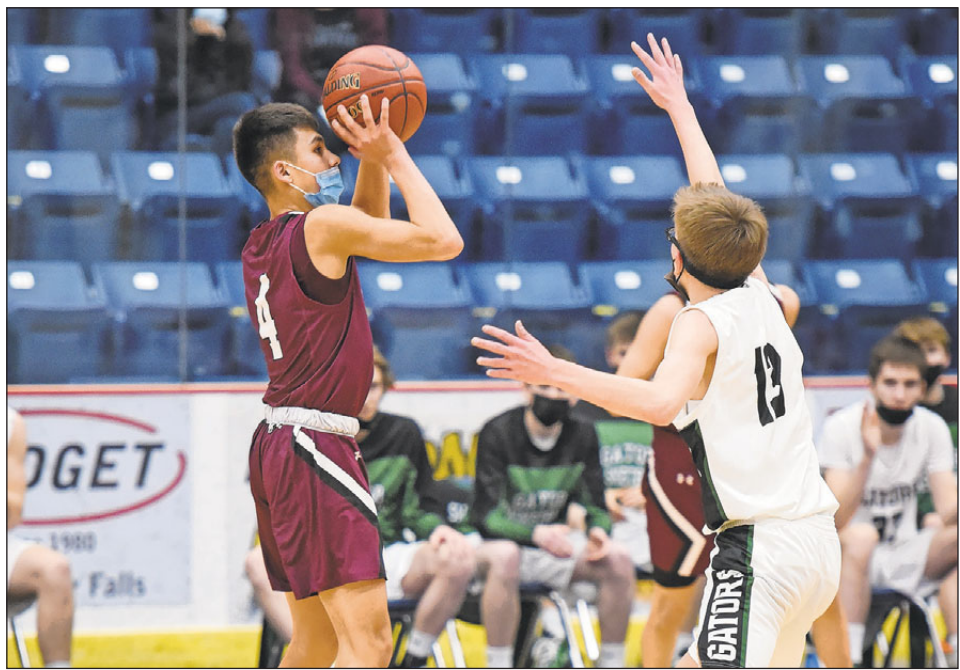
**Bridgeport, Conn.**  
Bemidji State is one win away from the Frozen Four. The fourth-seeded Beavers stormed out to a 2-0 first-period lead and knocked off top-seeded Wisconsin in a 6-3 victory in the NCAA men's hockey East Regional

semifinals Friday afternoon at Bridgeport, Conn. Ethan Somoza bucketed two goals and an assist in the first-round upset in a tenacious performance by BSU (16-9-3). "Our word all week was attack," BSU head coach Tom Serratore said. "That's how we play. We're a puck-pressure team and we wanted to make sure that we played our game." The Badgers (20-10-1) fell behind early and trailed 2-0 at the first intermission. Bemidji State outshot UW 16-7 in the opening frame and

were in control out of the gate, keeping Wisconsin's high-powered scorers in check. "I don't know. Maybe they weren't prepared for it, but we stuck to what we've been doing the whole year," Somoza said. "Our focus is being really aggressive on the forecheck and causing turnovers, keeping things really simple in the defensive zone." BSU took the lead on a fortuitous bounce off a Badger defender. The bouncing puck arrived at the stick of Ross Armour who backhanded it for the opening goal

6:33 into the contest. A turnover gave the Beavers a boost heading into the intermission. Elias Rosén scored an unassisted tally from the point with 15 seconds to go in the period. "We kept the momentum going there," Rosén said. "Taking a 2-0 lead coming into the second period is always huge." A pair of penalties on the Sillinger brothers, Lukas and Owen, gave UW 1:46 on a 5-on-3 opportunity early in the second. **BEAVERS:** Page A8

## BOYS BASKETBALL



Jillian Gandsey / Bemidji Pioneer

Cass Lake-Bena freshman Dominic Fairbanks (4) shoots to score a 3-pointer in the Section 8A championship game against Badger/Greenbush-Middle River on Thursday, March 25, at Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls.

## Cass Lake-Bena rally denied, Gators go wild as 55-47 Section 8A champions

By Micah Friez  
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**THIEF RIVER FALLS** — The final buzzer signaled what Cass Lake-Bena boys basketball head coach John Wind already knew: "We ran out of time." The Panthers nearly overcame a 16-point deficit in the final 12 minutes on Thursday, sneaking out of Ralph Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls with the Section 8A championship. Instead, the comeback ran out of steam and underdog Badger/Green-

bush-Middle River celebrated a dramatic 55-48 win for its first title since 2007. "We had a game plan and we didn't execute it. And then we ran out of time, basically," Wind said. "We came out flat and played flat most of the game. It goes back to us not executing our game plan. We didn't execute our offenses, and our defense just wasn't there. They're a decent team, a good team. They played harder." The Gators, seeded No. 2 in the West subsection, came in and seized

control over the East's top seed in CLB. And so they dictated the start, the stretch and the final celebration. In turn, they denied Cass Lake-Bena its ninth section championship and first since 2018. "We know what we have to do. Because we've done it," Wind said. "We've played games where we've (followed) the game plan, worked our offense and we play good defense. We've done it, tonight it just wasn't there." **BASKETBALL:** Page A9

## WRESTLING

# Bemidji's Barrick Nelson falls in state quarterfinals

Pioneer Staff Report  
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**ST. MICHAEL** — Barrick Nelson's run at a state title came to an end Thursday. The Bemidji High School sophomore was eliminated from the Class 3A Individual State Wrestling Tournament, falling in the quarterfinals at St. Michael-Albertville High School. Competing at 182 pounds, Nelson was the lone Lumberjack to

advance out of last Saturday's state prelims and qualify for the final eight in his weight class. The sophomore earned All-State honors by virtue of his top-eight finish. In the state quarterfinals, Nelson faced Little Falls senior Gabe Nagel, who entered the day at 33-0 and ranked No. 2 in the state. Nagel won by pin in 50 seconds. Shifting to the consolation bracket, Nelson attempted a comeback

on Wayzata freshman Dominic Heim, ranked No. 10 in the state with a 33-6 record. Heim held on for a narrow 9-8 decision that ended Nelson's tournament. Nagel went on to lose 3-2 in the championship to Waconia's top-ranked sophomore Max McEnelly for the state title. Finishing the year with a 24-8 record, Nelson is set to return for his junior season in 2021-22.



Joe Brown / Forum News Service

Bemidji's Barrick Nelson (left) tries to get away from Little Falls' Gabe Nagel during their Class 3A 182-pound state quarterfinal match on Thursday, March 25, at St. Michael.



GIRLS BASKETBALL

# BHS pulls away from Detroit Lakes, advances to section championship

By Robert Williams  
Forum News Service



Robert Williams / Forum News Service

Bemidji head coach Steve Schreiber celebrates with his starters, who watched the final minutes from the bench after creating a comfortable lead on the scoreboard in a Section 8-3A semifinal victory over Detroit Lakes on Tuesday, March 23, at Ralph Anderson Gymnasium.

to come together right away this season.

The Lakers have employed steady movement on the offensive end all season, picking up the speed of plays as the year progressed. Tuesday night, Bemidji found a way to throw a wrench in the machine.

“They disrupted the flow and offensively they had a great plan too and when you’re hitting stuff that makes it hard,” Detroit Lakes head coach Rachel Johnson said. “Just being able to penetrate and finish around the rim and also having to guard the kick out because they’re going to finish their 3-pointers too. It makes it a really difficult challenge for everyone to guard.”

The Lakers got into a groove late in the first half, finishing off a 12-6 run to the halftime horn to go to the break down a half-dozen 26-20. DL freshman Helena Daggett hit a big three from the corner to finish off the run and send the Lakers to the locker room with needed momentum.

Jacee Hauser and Gunderson had big threes in the early going of the second half as DL kept pace and trailed 36-31 at the 13-minute mark.

Bemidji’s Emily Wade scored on back-to-back

possessions, getting to the rim and the foul line to extend the lead to seven. On the ensuing inbounds play, Schreiber sent his team into a full-court press and Wade sniped a Laker pass and scored again to create a nine-point cushion in five seconds.

The Jacks held a 10-point lead for most of the final nine minutes.

Bemidji employed a backdoor cut to Wade with excellent assists from Beth Bolte to get to the rim late and sealed the game shooting freebies in the double bonus.

Wade led all scorers with 22 points; Jackie Johnson had 18. Bolte and Katelyn Milbrandt each scored eight points.

Hauser paced the Lakers with 14 points, and Alex Bettcher scored 12.

Top-seeded Alexandria (16-4) defeated No. 4 Sartell-St. Stephen 50-30 in the other semifinal and hosted the Section 8-3A championship game on Friday, March 26. The game began after press time, but full results are online at bemidjipioneer.com.

No. 3 Bemidji 67, No. 2 Detroit Lakes 51	
BEM 26	41 — 67
DL 20	31 — 51
BEMIDJI (10-10) — Wade 22, Johnson 18, Bolte 8, Milbrandt 8, Tatro 5, Huberty 2, Pemberton 2, Zetlah-Cornelius 2.	
DETROIT LAKES (12-7) — Hauser 14, Bettcher 12, Gunderson 8, Tangen 5, Larson 4, Daggett 3, Jones 3, Anderson 2.	



Photos by Greg Vasil / Special to the Pioneer

Bemidji State junior Ross Armour celebrates his first-period goal against Wisconsin in the NCAA East Regional semifinals at Bridgeport, Conn., on Friday, March 26.

## BEAVERS

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A 5-on-3 power-play goal by Linus Weissbach 2:38 into the period cut the deficit in half for the Badgers. BSU killed the remainder of the second penalty to limit the damage.

“We sure as heck didn’t get rattled,” Serratore said. “We stuck with it and that’s a testament to the players.”

Bemidji State has played well with a lead all season, and extended the advantage to 3-1 with 5:18 remaining in the stanza. Somoza fired a one-timer past goalie Robbie Beydoun to restore the two-goal cushion off of a dish from Aaron Miller.

The Beavers continued to pressure and forced another Wisconsin miscue.

Owen Sillinger took advantage of a misplayed puck by Beydoun and caught the netminder out of his crease, scoring on a wraparound. The shorthanded goal with only 1:21 to go in the frame proved to be a backbreaker.

Beydoun was pulled following the second period and replaced in net by Cameron Rowe.

Somoza netted his second goal of the day with 13:55 to go in the third, handing BSU a 5-1 lead.

But Cole Caufield wasn’t going to be held scoreless. The Hobey Baker Award favorite went down swinging, potting two goals for the Badgers in the final 12 minutes to raise tensions in the game’s final moments.

Caufield first converted on the power play with 11:41 to play. He then notched a goal at even strength with 5:04 remaining.

Wisconsin’s comeback attempt, however, came up short.

Brendan Harris added an empty-net goal with 1.2 seconds to play and the celebrations were on for the upstart



Bemidji State celebrates at the final horn following a 6-3 victory over Wisconsin.

Beavers.

The win was the third all-time in NCAA Division I tournament play for Bemidji State.

BSU will play the winner of second-seeded Massachusetts and third-seeded Lake Superior State in the East Regional final at 4 p.m. Saturday, March 27. The regional champion advances to the Frozen Four in Pittsburgh.

The Minutemen and Lakers met later Friday afternoon. Results were not available at press time.

Bemidji State’s win continues a streak of a No. 4 seed defeating a No. 1 seed in every NCAA Tournament since 2006.

“I guess they’re called upsets because you might be a lower seed,” Serratore said. “But a lot of times, it’s who’s playing best at that particular time of year as well. ... Nothing surprises us anymore.”

**Bemidji State 6, Wisconsin 3**  
BSU 2 2 — 6  
UW 0 1 2 — 3  
First period — 1, BSU, Armour (Rosén), 6:33; 2, BSU, Rosén (unassisted), 19:45.  
Second period — 3, UW, Weissbach (Caufield, Pelton-Byce), 2:38; 5v3 PP; 4, BSU, Somoza (Miller), 14:42; 5, BSU, O. Sillinger (unassisted), 18:39, SH.  
Third period — 6, BSU, Somoza (Harris), 6:08; 7, UW, Caufield (Holloway, Pelton-Byce), 8:19, PP; 8, UW, Caufield (Ahcan, Vorlicky), 14:56; 9, BSU, Harris (Somoza), 19:59, EN, SH.  
Goalies (saves-shots) — BSU, Driscoll (30-33); UW, Beydoun (24-28), Rowe (10-11).

Austin Monteith is the sports editor for the Pioneer. Readers can reach him at (218) 333-9787.

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