

# Panthers' softball stays alive

## NRHEG bounces back in consolation round

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS WRITER

After a tough 11-0 loss to Le Sueur-Henderson sent the NRHEG softball team to the consolation bracket of the double-elimination section tournament, the Panthers bounced back and advanced to the consolation semifinals with a 7-1 win over the Maple River Eagles on Saturday, June 5.

The biggest difference between NRHEG's game versus Maple River and its previous game versus Le Sueur-Henderson is the Panthers were able to get their offense going right away in the first inning.

Sidney Schultz got it started with a single and

then got into scoring position by stealing second base on the next pitch. Sophie Stork then drove Schultz with an RBI double. Grace Tufté followed with a single, which drove in Stork.

NRHEG added two more runs in the second inning and one in the fourth to give itself a 5-0 lead before Maple River scored its lone run.

Head Softball Coach Wendy Schultz said the Panthers as a team hit much better than they did against Le Sueur-Henderson.

Faith Nielsen had the biggest hit of the game with a triple and Stork and Knudson each hit a double.

In addition to their strong offense, she was also proud of how NRHEG's defense played.

"The girls had many balls hit to them defensively and they made the plays. I'm so proud of the way they played in the oppressive heat conditions," Schultz said.

On the mound, Stork was named the winning pitcher. She tallied four strikeouts, one walk, gave up seven hits and just one earned run.

Since the Panthers showcased strong hitting, fielding and pitching, Schultz called it a complete team win.

By beating Maple River, NRHEG advanced to the consolation semifinals

where it'll face Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial (LCWM), which boasts a 20-2 record.

*Editor's note:* The Panthers played the LCWM Knights on Tuesday, June 8, but since the Times has a Monday deadline, we don't yet know how NRHEG fared in that game.

**NRHEG stats:** Brenlee Knudson - 3/3, double and 2 runs scored; Sophie Stork - 2/3, double, 1 run scored and 2 RBI; Sidney Schultz - 2/4, 2 runs scored and 1 stolen base; Faith Nielsen - 1/3 with a triple; Bree Ihrke - 1/3, 1 run scored and 3 RBI; Grace Tufté - 1/3 with 1 RBI and Hallie Schultz - 1 hit, 1 RBI and 1 stolen base.

# One goal short, Huskies lacrosse teams fall in playoffs

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS WRITER

The Owatonna boys and girls lacrosse teams each entered the section tournament as the four seed and faced the fifth seed in the section quarterfinal; given how close the seeding was for Huskies and their opponents, it's no wonder that both games were decided by one goal.

The boys team won its quarterfinal game against Northfield in thrilling fashion when Flechter Schulz scored in the third overtime to give the Huskies a 10-9 win. The Huskies advanced to the semifinals where they faced the top-seeded Lakeville North Panthers. The Panthers proved why they're seeded so highly by cruising to a 20-6 win.

Meanwhile, the girls team faced a familiar foe, the Century Panthers, in the quarterfinals. The Huskies beat the Panthers 5-2 in April, but lost 5-4 in May so the playoff matchup represented the rubber match and Century came out on top 11-10 after Annie Moran's shot at the buzzer was just wide of the net.

Against Northfield, the Huskies took a 2-1 lead after Caleb Belting and Wyatt Oldefendt each scored in the first quarter, but the Raiders responded with back-to-back goals and took a 3-2 lead into the second quarter.

Northfield doubled its lead by scoring the first goal of the second quarter, but Preston Meier's goal trimmed Owatonna's deficit to one goal and Oldefendt's second goal of the game tied the game at 4-4.

However, the Raiders scored one more goal before halftime and led 5-4 at the break.

In the third quarter, Husky midfielder Casey Johnson scored, but besides that it was all Northfield, which scored three goals and took an 8-5 lead into the final quarter.

Belting made it a two-goal margin with his second of the goal. Owatonna's offense kept attacking and Schulz and Zack Kirsch scored back-to-back goals to tie the game at 8-8.

Just 40 seconds later, Northfield re-took the lead, but Belting's third goal of the game tied the game up again and forced overtime.

After no score in the first two overtimes, Schulz received a pass right in front of Northfield's goal and quickly deposited it in the back of the net to give the Huskies a 10-9 win in the third overtime.

Owatonna Head Lacrosse Coach Scott Seykora reported that the players of the game were goaltender Korban Stricklin, defender Dom Valento, midfielder Caleb Belting and Schulz.

For all their work defeating the Raiders, the Huskies were rewarded with a matchup against the number one seed in the section tournament, the Lakeville North Panthers.

The first quarter went back-and-forth until the final two minutes when the Panthers scored four goals and took a 7-3 win into the first break.

Lakeville North's momentum continued in the second quarter when it scored another seven goals all while holding Owatonna scoreless so the score was 14-3 at halftime.

In the third quarter, Preston Meier recorded a hat trick with his third goal of the game, but the Panthers scored two more goals and took a 16-4 lead into the last quarter.

The Huskies scored two goals, the first by Joe Bellomy and the second by Joe Webster, but it was much too little, much too late as they ended up losing 20-6.

Seykora said Bellomy and Webster were the players of the game because they each scored their first varsity goal.

**Girls fall in quarterfinals**  
Despite an 11-2 regular season record, the Owatonna girls team faced one of the two teams it lost to, the Century Panthers, in the section quarterfinals.

The Huskies got two first-half goals from junior attacker Audrey Simon and one from senior attacker Allie Keller, senior midfielder Elizabeth Harder and sophomore midfielder Annie Moran but were tied with the Panthers 5-5 at halftime.

In the second half, Moran scored two goals and Simon scored one more so they each recorded a hat trick. Additionally, senior defender Grace Smith and junior midfielder Karmen Eaton also scored in the second half, but Moran's shot at the buzzer was just wide and Owatonna lost 11-10.

The Huskies finish their season with an 11-3 record.

## SPRING SPORTS ROUNDUP

# Hayfield knocks Blossoms out of softball playoffs

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS WRITER

### Softball Blooming Prairie 13, United South Central 3

After a tough 11-1 loss to Waterville-Elysian-Morristown, the Blossoms kept their season alive by beating the United South Central (USC) Rebels by 10 runs on Saturday, June 5.

Blooming Prairie took a commanding lead by scoring six runs in the bottom of the first inning.

USC scored two runs in the fourth inning and one in the fifth, but the Blossoms responded with one run in each of those innings before erupting for five runs in the sixth inning.

Allison Krohnberg was named the winning pitcher. She struck out six Rebels and gave up just three hits and one earned run in five innings. Macy Lembke came in in relief and struck out three Rebels in a scoreless top of the sixth inning.

Blooming Prairie's offense was led by Rachel Winzenburg who hit a three-run triple, Lauren Schammel who went 2-for-3 with two RBI and two runs scored and Shawntee Snyder who went 2-for-4 with one RBI and two runs scored.

Later that day, the Blossoms saw their season come to an end when they suffered a 2-0 loss to Hayfield. Blooming Prairie ended the season with a 10-14 record.

### Fairmont 11, Medford 3

The first round of the Section 2AA softball tournament pitted the 6-13 Tigers against the 6-12 Fairmont Cardinals so despite both teams having below .500 records one of them was going to advance to the quarterfinals. Unfortunately for Medford, Fairmont was the team that cruised to an eight-run win on Tuesday, June 1.

This loss ended the Tigers' season. They finished the season with a 6-14 record.

### Baseball New Prague 17, Owatonna 8

The Owatonna baseball team came into the playoffs with a 12-7 record and it was looking to achieve more success in the playoffs, but it just couldn't limit the damage done by New Prague's offense so the Huskies lost by nine runs on Saturday, May 29.

The Huskies took an early 2-0 lead when Nick Williams' hit a bases-loaded, two-run RBI single in the first inning.



COURTESY FAIRMONT SENTINEL

A couple of Medford fielders scramble to find the softball as a Fairmont base runner puts down her hand to reach the base in Section 2AA playoff action June 1. Fairmont easily defeated Medford 11-3.

However, in the second and third inning, the Trojans scored a combined 10 runs and despite Williams hitting another two-run single, New Prague still held a commanding 10-4 lead after three innings.

The Trojans tacked on two more runs in the fourth inning, but the Huskies responded with three runs in the fifth so the score was 12-7 after five innings.

New Prague sealed its win by scoring five runs in the sixth inning.

The Huskies' offense was led by Williams who went 3-for-4 with 4 RBI and Taylor Bogen and Matt Seykora who each went 2-for-4.

After this game, Owatonna faced Rochester John Marshall in the consolation bracket and lost 9-1 so the Huskies finish their season with a 12-9 record.

### W-E-M 9, Blooming Prairie 1

After going 1-1 against Waterville-Elysian-Morristown (W-E-M) earlier this season, the Blossoms had the chance to win the rubber match and advance to the quarterfinals when they faced the Buccaneers in the first round of the Section 1A tournament. Unfortunately, it was the Buccaneers who took advantage of that opportunity and handily won on Monday, May 31.

The game was tightly-contested for the first three innings with W-E-M holding a 2-0 lead at the beginning of the fourth inning. However, the final four innings were an entirely different story - with the Buccaneers' offense erupting for seven runs to win the game in convincing fashion.

With this loss, the Blossoms' season came to an end. They end the season with a 6-12 record.

### Medford 2, Le-Sueur-Henderson 1

Whenever a team has great pitching, they have a chance to win the game and Medford had just that with AJ Vandereide who pitched a gem to lead the Tigers to a one-run win on Saturday, May 29.

Vandereide pitched all seven innings, struck out nine Giants and gave up zero earned runs.

Meanwhile, Medford's offense provided just enough run support. The Tigers collected six hits with Casey Chambers leading the team with two.

The Tigers advanced to the section quarterfinals where they lost to Belle Plaine 13-0. Then, in the first round of the consolation bracket, their season came to an end when they lost to NRHEG 4-0.

Medford ends the season with an 11-9 record.



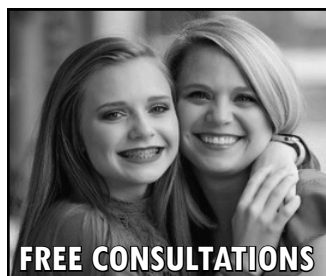
COURTESY PAM MERRITT/LIFE REGION

Blossoms pitcher Allison Krohnberg fires in a pitch against WEM Thursday in Waterville. The Blossoms came up on the short end by losing 11-1. BP came back on Saturday to smoke USC 13-3, but the season came to an end later that day when the Blossoms lost a 2-0 heartbreaker to Hayfield.



COURTESY PAM MERRITT/LIFE REGION

Shortstop Macy Lembke puts down the tag during the softball playoffs against WEM Thursday afternoon. After losing the game, the Blossoms came back to win a game



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Saturday before falling later in the day to end their season.