

Anoka County UNION HERALD SPORTS

Big leap carries Murillo to state

By Patrick Slack
Staff Writer

It was obvious there would be a leap of improvement.

Just how much, though, with no season a year ago to view, no one could quite expect.

Making the jump from competing for one of the top spots on the team to one of the top in the state, Coon Rapids boys tennis' Sam Murillo earned the program's first trip to state in singles since 2002 with a runner-up finish in the final four of the Section 7AA Tournament in Anoka June 3.

Murillo's wide-ranging game has only grown throughout his career. This spring, it helped him excel throughout the regular season. At the section tournament, it led to three straight-set wins with only eight games dropped in six sets en route to the finals, clinching a state bid.

"Sam has all the shots, so every match he can change his game based on what his opponent's strengths and weaknesses are," Coon Rapids head coach Scott Storrick said. "In addition, Sam is a mentally tough player. When he is frustrated, you cannot tell as he keeps it



Coon Rapids' Sam Murillo reaches up to return a forehand during the Section 7AA finals June 3. Murillo earned the Cardinals' first trip to state in singles since 2002 with a runner-up finish.

Photo by Patrick Slack

in and won't let his opponents know.

"Since we did not have a season last year, the coaching staff knew Sam improved immensely, but as the season went along he was playing exceptional. Two years ago, Sam played anywhere from third to fourth singles, so having him at first was a huge step. He was beating

players in matches that from last summer he was losing. Going into the sectional tournament, I knew that Sam could advance through the tournament if he played like he did all season. Sam ended the season with an 18-4 record at No. 1 singles, which is a phenomenal record."

A standout individu-

al, Murillo also served as a team leader for a young Cardinal roster. The accomplishments now serve as a guide for where future players can get to with time and dedication.

"I was so happy to see Sam make it through to the state tennis tournament," Storrick said. "It shows what hard work will do, so I hope other players in our program will use this to work on their game to reach their goals they are setting up."

"I feel like the season went well, not only for me, but also for my team as well," Murillo said. "We had plenty of younger players get their first varsity wins."

Murillo finished as the section runner-up in sweltering conditions. Now there will be one last tournament in store, competing at the Class AA State Championships June 10-11.

"Making it to state or getting in the top four for sections has been a goal of mine since eighth grade," Murillo said. "I really feel proud of myself for putting in the hard work over the offseason and I'm glad I can represent Coon Rapids in the state tournament."

patrick.slack@apgecm.com

Walk-offs power Andover baseball to 7AAAA finals

By Patrick Slack
Staff Writer

A rout, followed by a pair of dramatic victories, secured a spot in the Section 7AAAA championship for Andover baseball, with a winner-take-all clash against Forest Lake scheduled to be held June 9.

Andover led off the postseason with a 12-1 five-inning victory over Cambridge-Isanti June 2 behind four shutout innings from Samuel Angell. Max Hunter homered, Logan Myers doubled twice and Kyle Law scored three runs to power the Huskies at the plate.

The Huskies went on to win their second round game in dramatic fashion 2-1 over Blaine the next day. Trailing 1-0 in the bottom of the seventh, Myers leveled the score with a home run, followed shortly after by Carson Wadel doubling home Anthony Pardo for a walk-off win. Josh Stoll pitched four innings, allowing just one unearned run, and Adam Novak picked up the win with three scoreless innings of relief.

Andover delivered another rally in its next outing June 5, defeating Forest Lake 4-3 in nine innings to reach the section finals, with Hunter driving in Noah Dago for the walk-off score. Logan Gravink had three hits and Law reached base three times and scored twice. Eli Nyhammer earned the win with 2 2/3 innings of shutout relief.

Forest Lake emerged

back through the elimination bracket and defeated Andover 4-2 June 8 to force a decisive final game for a trip to state. The Class AAAA state quarterfinals, semifinals and third-place game will be held June 15-16 in Chaska, with the championship June 18 at Target Field in Minneapolis.

Coon Rapids split four games to reach the final four of Section 7AAAA. The Cardinals dropped their first round game 2-0 at Centennial, then bounced back to defeat Duluth East 10-7 and Blaine 4-0 before falling against Centennial 13-2 in an elimination game. Sam Halvorson and Jack Vlasaty both drove in two in the win over Duluth East.

In its playoff opener, Blaine rallied for a 4-3 win over Anoka. Adam Puder and Joey Powers each had a pair of hits and Gavin Gillen got the final five outs for the win in relief.

Anoka rolled to an 18-4 win over Cambridge-Isanti in its first elimination bracket game before falling 7-2 against Centennial. Jacob Deutschman drove in three and scored two runs and Jack Novack had a pair of hits and drove in two in the win over C-I.

In Section 5AAA, St. Francis rallied back after a first-round defeat to win three games in a row to reach the elimination bracket final, scheduled to be played June 9 against Monticello.

patrick.slack@apgecm.com

VanArragon, Roloff earn medalist honors at Section 5AAA, Wellen advances in playoff

By Patrick Slack
Staff Writer

Dominance and drama highlighted a trio of area golfers advancing past the Section 5AAA Championships and on to state.

Blaine sophomore Kathryn VanArragon dominated the field to earn section medalist honors by seven strokes, finishing with a two-day score of 141.

Spring Lake Park's Liz Bradley earned 13th overall and was joined in the final round by teammate May Richmond. Brooklyn Bauer and Lydia Wilson also reached the final day

for Blaine.

In the boys field, Spring Lake Park's Mason Roloff thrived as well, earning co-medalist honors at 6-under par to help lead the Panthers to a runner-up team finish. Jack Wellen also qualified for state with a clutch performance, winning a sudden death playoff for the final spot. Ben Wackman finished 18th, Owen O'Keefe 24th, Jake Birdwell 25th and Keegan O'Keefe 29th.

The Class AAA State Tournament is June 15-16 at Bunker Hills in Coon Rapids.

patrick.slack@apgecm.com



Blaine girls golf sophomore Kathryn VanArragon dominated throughout the Section 5AAA Championships, winning medalist honors by seven strokes. The Class AAA State Tournament is June 15-16 at Bunker Hills.

Photo submitted

Late rally carries Andover lacrosse to 7A finals

By Patrick Slack
Staff Writer

An electric second-half rally netted Andover girls lacrosse a spot in the Section 7A championship game.

The Huskies trailed 9-6 at the half before erupting for 10 goals in the second half to take down Centennial 16-14 in the semifinals June 7.

Andover produced a balanced offensive attack, as five players had multiple goals. Amanda Nelson led the way with four goals, Claire Lick-

felt scored three and Claire Nelson, Emma Schrepfer and Caitlyn Klein each scored two. Sara Kaiser added a team-high four assists and Bria Vannatta recorded 14 saves.

Andover opened the playoffs with a 17-5 win over Anoka June 3, led by Nelson with four goals and Katie Evans, Klein and Kaiser with three apiece.

The Huskies were scheduled to take on top-seeded Champlin Park in the championship game June 9 for a trip to state. The state tournament is June 16-18 in Stillwater.

Section 5A, 7A

Forest Lake broke a halftime tie with nine second-half goals to defeat Blaine 15-8 in the Section 7A quarterfinals June 3.

Spring Lake Park fell 10-2 against Robbinsdale Armstrong in the Section 5A quarterfinals June 3.

Anoka won its 7A opener 17-4 over Proctor/Hermantown June 1.

Grand Rapids clipped Coon Rapids 7-6 in overtime in the first round of 7A play June 1.

patrick.slack@apgecm.com

Close wins send Huskies softball to section finals

By Patrick Slack
Staff Writer

Taking down the top two seeds in back-to-back games, Andover softball earned a trip to the Section 7AAAA championship, scheduled to be played June 10.

After opening playoff action with a 6-2 win over St. Francis June 2, Andover outslugged Blaine 9-7 in the second round of the championship bracket June 5, then knocked off top-seeded Forest Lake 4-3 in the ensuing winner's bracket final.

Abby McQuay and Morgan Deuschle each had three hits for Andover against Blaine, with Katy Campbell and Deuschle both driving in three runs. Maddie Jurgensen homered in the win over Forest Lake, while Morgan Kustecka struck out five in earning

the complete-game win.

Blaine nearly worked its way back to the championship via the elimination bracket, defeating Coon Rapids 12-1 and Anoka 5-4 before falling 2-1 against Forest Lake June 8. Maddy Bryant and Kaitlyn Way each hit a double and a homer for the Bengals in the win over Coon Rapids; Allison Teery, Annika Hendrickson, Jade Bryant, Maddy Bryant and Hannah Neider each had two hits against Anoka; and Jordyn Petersen had two hits and stole three bases against Forest Lake.

With Forest Lake's win over Blaine, the Rangers earned a rematch against the Huskies, needing to defeat Andover twice in a row to advance to state.

The state tournament is June 15-16 in North Mankato.

patrick.slack@apgecm.com

Enjoy Golf!
The Links Gives You Driving Options!

Play At Your Convenience!
We Have "Loops" To Fit Your Schedule!
Choose From 3, 6, 9, 12, 18 Or 21 Holes.

THE LINKS AT
NORTH FORK
Golf Course & Banquet Center
9333 Alpine Drive NW, Ramsey, MN 55303
(Just off Hwy 10 between Anoka & Elk River)
www.facebook.com/linksatnorthfork
www.GolfTheLinks.com • 763-241-0506

For a wee bit
of Scotland
without the airfare

Visit our
website
to view
online
specials and
book online