

Sports



WRESTLING

Hausen competes at Class AAA state wrestling tournament. 2B

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Saturday, March 27, 2021

BOYS BASKETBALL



WEM's Ethan Bartelt drives to the basket during Wednesday's 75-64 double-overtime loss at St. Clair in the Section 2A South subsection championship. Bartelt finished with 18 points. (Michael Hughes/southernminn.com)

'THOSE KIDS ARE AMAZING'

WEM's playoff run, resurgent season ends in double-overtime loss

By MICHAEL HUGHES
michael.hughes@apgsomn.com

The dream run for the Waterville-Elysian-Morrissett boys basketball team came to a close Wednesday night.

After rattling off three consecutive wins in the Section 2A tournament, seventh-seeded WEM came up just short in a 75-64 double-overtime loss at top-seeded St. Clair in the South subsection title game.

That the Buccaneers reached that game, and had a shot to claim a subsection title, was remarkable in itself considering the team's 1-4 start to the season as the young Buccaneers overcame adversity of varying degrees, from the graduation of seven seniors from last year's team and a projected starter tearing his ACL during the football season.

The most challenging and heartbreaking was a teammate and friend dying in a car accident two weeks before practice was set to begin.

"To overcome that is amazing to me," WEM coach Jeff Wagner said. "Those kids are amazing to me."

In the second game of the season, St. Clair blew out WEM by 30 points.

Gradually, the Buccaneers started to come together and emerge as a growing threat in the post-season over the back half of the season. Wins in five

ST. CLAIR 75, WEM 64

WEM 29 34 10 1 — 64

SC 31 32 10 12 — 75

Points: (WEM) Domanik Paulson 25, Ethan Bartelt 18, Brady Nutter 17, Jonathan Remme 2, Gabe Androli 2.

of the last six regular-season games vaulted WEM to a No. 7 seed in the subsection, when two weeks prior a first-round home game looked like it might be unattainable.

With that first-round home game, it beat Madelia 75-64. Then it upset second-seeded Mankato Loyola in overtime 50-47, and followed that up with another road playoff victory at Mountain Lake/Comfrey. After three playoff wins in five days, the Buccaneers had reached the subsection title game for a second consecutive season.

"I told those guys (Tuesday) in practice and last week that I've never been prouder of a group of guys in my life than those guys," Wagner said. "They're a heck of a group of kids, and for them to make those kinds of improvements show what kinds of kids they are, too, and what kind of people they are."

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WEM's Brady Nutter attempts a layup during Wednesday's 75-64 double-overtime loss at St. Clair in the Section 2A South subsection championship. Nutter finished with 17 points. (Michael Hughes/southernminn.com)

GIRLS BASKETBALL

WEM falls just short in Section 2A championship

By MICHAEL HUGHES
michael.hughes@apgsomn.com

Only one team has slowed down the Sleepy Eye St. Mary's basketball team and its superstar junior Madison Mathiowetz this season.

Waterville-Elysian Morrissett did it twice, including in Thursday's Section 2A championship at Sibley East High School in Arlington.

Unfortunately for the Buccaneers, they still lost both those games, and the Knights avenged a loss in last season's section championship Thursday with a 64-59 victory to maintain their undefeated record and advance to the Class A state tournament.

"(Mathiowetz) is a heck of a player and she made some big shots," WEM coach Ty Kaus said. "We talked about how she's going to get her points and get her shots, and in the first half I thought we did an

absolutely fantastic job. We probably needed to score a little bit more."

In that first half, Mathiowetz scored only seven points, and Sleepy Eye St. Mary's managed only 21 as a team. After stifling a team that averages nearly 80 points a game, WEM was laying the foundation for a possible section championship.

The issue, Kaus said, was the Buccaneers did not take advantage offensively of all they achieved defensively. After senior Kylie Pittmann's layup put WEM on top 21-15 with 6 minutes, 58 seconds left in the first half, it did not score again until Pittmann's layup with 43 seconds left in the half provided a 23-19 lead.

"We got up six there and hit a lull where I don't think we scored for four or five minutes," Kaus said. "That's been our downfall lately, when we get into that rut and you can't seem to get buckets."

In the second half, Mathiowetz

found a rhythm and started scoring from the outside, on slashing layups and with back-to-the-basket post moves. She eventually finished with a game-high 25 points.

Even with the Knights finding their offensive footing, the Buccaneers answered every scoring run with one of their own. After Sleepy Eye St. Mary's scored 12 straight points to take a 40-36 lead with 10:24 remaining, WEM responded with a 7-0 run thanks to a 3-pointer from Pittmann, a pair of free throws from Brielle Bartelt and a layup via Toryn Richards.

After Mathiowetz' layup with 4:38 remaining provided the Knights with a 54-49 lead, the two teams essentially traded baskets and stops, with the Buccaneers unable to trim the deficit to fewer than three points the rest of the way.

SLEEPY EYE ST. MARY'S 64, WEM 59

WEM 23 36 — 59

SESM 21 43 — 64

Points: (WEM) Brielle Bartelt 16, Toryn Richards 14, Kylie Pittmann 13, Ellie Ready 7, Sadie Oorlog 4, Lindsay Condon 3, Allison Rients 2.

3-pointers: (WEM) Bartelt 2, Pittmann 1.

Free throws: (WEM) Ready 3, Condon 3, Pittmann 2

Rebounds: (WEM)

Richards 12, Condon 6, Oorlog 4, Ready 3, Bartelt 2, Taylor 2, Pittmann 2, Rients 1.

Assists: (WEM) Bartelt 7, Richards 3, Rients 1.

See GIRLS BASKETBALL on 4B



WEM senior guard Brielle Bartelt dribbles up the court during Thursday's 64-59 defeat against Sleepy Eye St. Mary's in the Section 2A championship at Sibley East High School. Bartelt scored 16 points. (Michael Hughes/southernminn.com)

NHL

Sabres begin overhaul by trading Eric Staal to Canadiens

By JOHN WAWROW
AP Hockey Writer

Sabres begin overhaul by trading Eric Staal to Canadiens

By JOHN WAWROW AP Hockey Writer

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The Buffalo Sabres' overhaul has begun, with the spiraling team trading veteran center Eric Staal to the Montreal Canadiens on Friday.

Buffalo acquired the Canadiens' third and fifth-round selections in the 2021 draft. The Sabres also agreed to retain \$1.625 million, which represents half of the final year of Staal's salary.

Staal is a 17-year veteran, who can provide the Canadiens a late-season boost to their playoff hopes. Staal won't be able to join the team immediately because he will have to first go into a mini-

mum seven-day self-quarantine under Canadian health regulations for those traveling from outside the country.

Montreal is 2-2-2 in its past six and 14-8-9 overall. With 37 points, the Canadiens sit fourth in the North Division, two ahead of Vancouver and four up on Calgary.

The Sabres, by comparison, are in sell-off mode.

The move comes a day after the Sabres extended their franchise-worst winless skid to 16 games with a 4-0 loss at Pittsburgh. Buffalo, which plays at Boston on Saturday, is 0-14-2 in its past 16, which marks the NHL's longest streak since the Penguins went 0-17-1 during the 2003-04 season.

The Sabres have a league-low six wins and been shut out seven times this season, while all but

mathematically in position to extend their playoff drought to a NHL record-matching 10th season.

Staal is expected to be but the first of several Sabres on the move before the NHL's trade deadline on April 12.

Forward Taylor Hall, signed in October to a one-year, \$8 million contract, acknowledged following the loss at Pittsburgh that he would be open to waiving his no-trade clause. Others on the trade block include defensemen Brandon Montour and Colin Miller.

The Sabres were informed of Staal being traded following practice in Boston, forward Kyle Okposo said.

"We just got off the ice to go wish him well. He's a character guy," Okposo said, while acknowledging more moves are

likely coming. "It's pretty obvious. I mean, nobody's naive here. Everybody knows what's going on with the situation that we're in."

Buffalo acquired the 36-year-old Staal in a trade that sent forward Marcus Johansson to Minnesota in September. It was the first trade completed by Sabres GM Kevyn Adams, who took over after Jason Botterill was fired in June.

Adams was teammates with Staal on the Carolina Hurricanes' 2006 Stanley Cup championship team. Staal was targeted to address Buffalo's need for a second-line center, and added experienced leadership to a team with a reputation of being fragile.

A 12-time 20 goal scorer, who scored 42 as recently as the 2017-18 season in Minnesota, Staal has managed just three goals and 10 points in 32 games, and hasn't scored in his past 23.

Staal's 439 career goals rank fifth among active players, and 68th overall, after moving ahead of Pavel Bure, Gary Roberts and Rick Nash this season. His 1,031 career points rank seventh among active players and 80th overall, one short of matching former Sabres star Alexander Mogilny.

Selected by Carolina with the No. 2 pick in the 2003 draft, Staal spent his first 11-plus seasons with the Hurricanes. He played a



Pittsburgh Penguins goaltender Casey DeSmith, center, stops Buffalo Sabres' Eric Staal (12) from scoring during the third period of an NHL hockey game, Thursday, March 25, 2021, in Pittsburgh. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic)

20-game stint with the New York Rangers to close the 2015-16 season, and then joined Minnesota.

WRESTLING

Hausen competes at Class AAA state wrestling tournament

By MICHAEL HUGHES
michael.hughes@apgsomn.com

Faribault freshman JT Hausen made his state wrestling debut Thursday afternoon at St. Michael-Albertville High School.

In the quarterfinals, Hausen was pinned by second-seeded Jacob Aho from Forest Lake. In the consolation semifinals, he lost an 11-2 major decision against Waconia's Lincoln Vick. Against Vick, Hausen had cut the deficit to 4-2 in the third period, but while trying to secure more back points to either tie Vick or take the lead, he gave up a reversal with 30 seconds left, which was followed by five back points that were awarded to Vick.



Faribault freshman JT Hausen wrestled at his first Class AAA state tournament Thursday at St. Michael-Albertville High School. Hausen lost both of his matches in the 113-pound weight class. (Photo courtesy of Faribault wrestling team)

Hausen was the first Faribault freshman to qualify for the state tournament since Josh Oathoudt in 2017, while also continuing a streak of six consecutive years the Falcons have sent an individual to the state wrestling tournament.

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