

WRESTLING

Perham's Brian Ramos, left, hugs his family shortly after winning the 182-pound state championship at the Class AA individual state wrestling tournament on Friday at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

Contributed / Terry Bullock



# 'I'LL CHERISH IT FOREVER'

Brian Ramos proud to bring state championship back to Perham

By Jared Rubado  
Perham Focus

St. Paul

Brian Ramos was five seconds away from seeing the gold medal slip off his neck in the 182-pound Class AA state championship match, but it was that moment where he knew he'd bring a title back to Perham.

After his match-tying escape late in the third period, Ramos beat New Prague's Joey Novak in an 8-6 overtime decision. It was a highly

debated scoring decision that led to Ramos winning in overtime with a takedown 31 seconds into the extra session.

"There was a lot of controversy," Ramos said of the end of his state championship match. "I thought I got a reversal, which would've won it for me. Either way, they ended up just giving me one. I instantly knew I was going to win the match and become a state champion. I told myself

I was going to out-man this guy. I said, 'This is going to be mine. I'm taking this title home.'"

Ramos led 5-4 after two periods before Novak's reversal early in the third gave the tournament's top-seed a one-point advantage. Needing to pull a rabbit out of his hat, Ramos went into his bag of tricks to even the score.

"After they called the stalemate, we reset, and I was on the bottom," Ramos said. "It's funny because of how much

I practice this, but my first thought was a quick stand-up. From there, it was all reaction. I kind of hit a roll, and that's when it all came together."

Ramos needed just over a half of a minute to earn his 49th win of the season and cap off one of the best individual seasons in program history. The first thing he did as a state champion was celebrate with the ones

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Sam Stuve / Perham Focus

Perham's Brian Ramos, right, defeats St. Peters' Kole Guth in the opening round of the 182-pound Class AA state championship tournament on Friday. Ramos won the state championship on Saturday with an 8-6 decision win over New Prague's Joey Novak.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

## Yellowjackets clinch 8-2A semifinal berth, Super named coach of the year

By Jared Rubado  
Perham Focus

PERHAM - It took a big second half for the Perham girls basketball team to stave off a Section 8-2A quarterfinal upset on Saturday night against Roseau.

The third-seeded Yellowjackets came away with a 71-65 victory at The Hive after outscoring the sixth-seeded Rams by 13 points in the final 18 minutes. Roseau led 36-28 at halftime after a physical opening frame.

Both Roseau and Perham traded blows until the Rams pulled ahead in the final minutes before halftime.

The Rams' hot shooting cooled down in the second half, while Perham sophomore Willow Thiel collected double-digit rebounds in the post. She finished with another double-double in scoring 18 points. Perham senior Sydney Anderson hit three triples in the second half to lead her to a team-high 20 points.

Once Perham closed the gap midway through the second half, Roseau struggled to retake the lead. The Yellowjackets held a two-possession lead despite Greta Hillukka and Thiel being in foul trouble. Perham made 15 second-half free throws to close out a six-point win.

Perham is headed to the Section 8-2A semifi-

nal round on Wednesday in Detroit Lakes, where they will take on second-seeded Menahga. The Braves eliminated seventh-seeded Pelican Rapids 67-57 on Saturday to lock up the bottom set of Wednesday's final four matchups at Lakeshirts Fieldhouse.

Top-seeded Fergus Falls will play fifth-seeded Crookston in the first matchup on Wednesday. The Otters beat eighth-seeded Barnesville 64-47, while the Pirates went on the road to beat fourth-seeded Hawley 62-49. The first game tips off at 6 p.m. before Perham takes on Menahga shortly after.

You can find a recap from Perham's semifinal game online at [www.perhamfocus.com](http://www.perhamfocus.com).

### Jackets stave off first-round upset bid

The Perham girls basketball team hasn't been to state since 1991. In Thursday's Section 8-2A opening round, a lackadaisical first half wasn't enough to halt the third-seeded Yellowjackets.

Perham (20-7) outscored 14th-seeded Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton 36-14 in the second half to advance to the 8-2A quarterfinal round on Saturday. The Yellowjackets fended off the Rebels' first-half push



Jared Rubado / Perham Focus

Perham's Sydney Anderson carries the ball up the court in the first half of the Yellowjackets' 64-41 win over Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton on March 3 at The Hive.

before dominating on both ends of the floor over the final 18 minutes. "Halftime couldn't come soon enough," Perham head coach TJ Super said. "We missed some shots. That's the way it goes sometimes. We gave the girls a couple of goals in the second half, and they reached them. We seemed a little panicked in the first half. We only had five turnovers in the first half. Our defense wasn't really giving us

anything. We were up 22-10 at one point and wanted to keep it going. We missed some open shots and they started scoring."

DGF ended the half on a 17-6 run behind the sharp-shooting from Kaleigh Peterson and Ashley Taves. They combined for 17 points in the first half and took a one-point deficit into the locker room.

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WRESTLING



Sam Stuve / Perham Focus

Perham's Hudson Hackel competes in the opening round of the 195-pound weight class at the state Class AA individual tournament on Friday against New Prague's Evan Anderson.

## Perham, New York Mills wrestlers compete at state

By Jared Rubado  
Perham Focus

ST. PAUL - To go along with Ramos' state championship at 182-pounds, four other Perham wrestlers took the mat at the Xcel Energy Center over the weekend.

At 120-pounds, Rock Ridge's Asher Hedbloom pinned Perham sophomore Chandler Mickelson in 3:12 to advance to the winner's bracket. Mickelson did not get a wrestle-back opportunity.

Blake Lorentz fell in a pair of decision matches

in the 152-pound weight class. Becker's Mason Doucette sent Lorentz to the consolation bracket with a 5-0 decision win.

Lorentz got a wrestle-back opportunity but fell to Aitkin's Carson Kullheim in an ultimate tiebreaker. Lorentz and Kullheim needed two extra sessions before an escape gave the Aitkin senior a 5-4 win.

Sophomore Hudson Hackel ran into New Prague juggernaut Evan Anderson in the opening round of the

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BOYS BASKETBALL

# Perham takes down Bemidji, receives No. 3 seed in 8-2A tournament

By Jared Rubado  
Perham Focus

BEMIDJI – The Perham boys basketball team got one of its biggest wins of the season against Class AAAA's Bemidji on Thursday night.

The Yellowjackets (14-10) knocked off the Lumberjacks (15-7) 66-59 on the road behind a balanced scoring effort. Senior Chas Melvin and junior Soren Anderson each had 16 points to lead Perham, while juniors Micah Thompson and Alex Ohm each had 11.

Perham shot 59% from the field on 23-of-29 attempts. The Yellowjackets were lights out from three-point range, making 10-of-20 threes. Anderson and Ohm each hit three. Thompson also had 12 rebounds to complete the double-double.

Bemidji's Gavin Luksik had a game-high 25 points. He also collected 11 rebounds for a double-double. Sam Wilson put up 19 points, while Isaac Severts had 10.

### Section 8-2A playoffs

Perham's win over Bemidji was enough to avoid the QRF tiebreaker margin, according to Minnesota-Scores. The Yellowjackets are the No. 3 seed heading into the Section 8-2A playoffs starting Thursday night at The Hive. Perham will take on No. 14 Crookston (5-21) in the opening round of the playoffs.

Perham had a higher QRF rating than second-seeded Pelican Rapids (20-5), but couldn't beat out the Vikings for the No. 2 seed. The tiebreaker margin takes the average QRF rating between each team in the class and multiplies it by 7%. If two teams have QRF scores within that margin, the higher seed will be determined



Madelyn Haasken / Perham Focus

Perham senior Chas Melvin (2) controls the ball during the second half against Bemidji on March 3 at the BHS Gymnasium.

by head-to-head matchups. Pelican Rapids beat Perham twice this season. This is also significant for Perham's potential second-round matchup. Warroad (21-5) leaped Hawley (16-7) for the fifth seed despite having a lower QRF score. Warroad had a better overall winning percentage, which could set up the rubber match between the Nuggets and the Yellowjackets on Saturday night. Hawley and Perham have each beaten each other by 13 points this season.

Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton (19-5) didn't have to worry about losing the top seed in the field. The Rebels host Roseau (5-21) before an impending game against either Barnesville (14-10) or Park Rapids (15-9). Pelican Rapids will look to take care of business against Frazee (4-20) before a matchup against No. 7 Fergus Falls (9-17) or No. 10 East Grand Forks (14-12).

Thief River Falls (18-6) received the No. 4 seed after beating Perham in the final week of the regular season. The Prowlers host Red Lake (9-15) before a rivalry game against Warroad in the second round.

The high seeds host each of the first two rounds of the tournament on Thursday and Saturday. The semifinals kick off on Tuesday from Detroit Lakes at Lakeshirts Fieldhouse.

### Jackets drop last regular-season home game

Thief River Falls junior Jack Manning was a problem in the post for the Perham boys basketball team on Tuesday night.

Trailing 43-42, Manning hit a turn-around jumper with 43 seconds left to give the Prowlers a one-point lead. Hit then buried two free-throws 20 seconds later, which was enough to hand Perham a 46-43 loss.

Perham started the game trailing 16-9 with just over seven minutes left in the first half. Junior Alex Ohm hit a three to spark a 12-4 run. Manning added a pair of hard-earned layups in the pain in the final minutes before halftime.

It looked like Perham was content with taking its four-point deficit into the locker room after the first 18 minutes. That was until Jacob Daniels nailed a three-pointer as time expired. Dan-

iels had six points at the break in hitting two of Perham's three first-half three-pointers.

The Prowlers started the second half on a 10-4 run before senior Chas Melvin hit a three to pull perham within four points. TRF extended its lead to 39-31 before junior Soren Anderson scored two of his ten points with a cutting layup. It started a 6-0 Yellowjackets' run before TRF's Jack Rosendahl hit his second three of the game.

Daniels converted a pair of free throws before Anderson drove to the rim with 1:21 to give Perham its first lead of the half. That's when Manning took over the final minute of the game.

Manning finished with a game-high 15 points. Perham junior Micah Thompson had a team-high 13 points. The Yellowjackets struggled to see shots fall from any range on Tuesday night. Perham shot 33.3% from the field, including 21.1% from three on 4-of-19 shooting. Anderson and Thompson, Perham's two leading scorers, were a combined 7-for-27.

PERHAM 34 32 - 66  
BEMIDJI 30 29 - 59  
TEAM TOTALS- PERHAM- 23-39 FGA, 13-19 2PA, 10-20 3PA, 10-18 FTA, 29 rebounds, 17 assists, 1 block, 9 turnovers;  
BEMIDJI- 26-59 FGA, 18-36 2PA, 5-22 3PA, 8-9 FTA, 22 rebounds  
PERHAM- Micah Thompson 11 points, 12 rebounds, 4 assists; Chas Melvin 16 points, 1 rebound, 2 assists; Soren Anderson 16 points, 4 rebounds, 6 assists; Marcus Belka 4 points, 5 rebounds, 1 assist; Alex Ohm 11 points, 1 rebound, 3 assists; Jacob Daniels 9 points, 4 rebounds, 1 assist  
BEMIDJI SCORING- Sam Wilson, 19, Isaac Severts 10, Gavin Luksik 25, Khai Branham 5  
THIEF RIVER FALLS 25 21 - 46  
PERHAM 24 19 - 43  
TEAM TOTALS- PERHAM- 16-48 FGA, 12-29 2PA, 4-19 3PA, 7-11 FTA, 27 rebounds, 2 steals, 8 turnovers; TRF- 18-44 FGA, 13-31 2PA, 5-13 3PA, 5-7 2PA, 35 rebounds, 16 turnovers  
PERHAM- Micah Thompson 13 points, 8 rebounds, 2 assists; Chas Melvin 5 points, 1 rebound, 3 assists; Soren Anderson 10 points, 11 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 steal; Marcus Belka 2 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 steal; Alex Ohm 5 points, 2 assists; Jacob Daniels 8 points, 4 rebounds  
TRF SCORING- Jack Onkka 3, Jack Rosendahl 10, Caleb Rosendahl 8, Jake Fredrich 6, Brady Olson 2, Trevor Rose 2, Jack Manning 15

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BOYS SWIMMING AND DIVING



Contributed / Twitter @PerhamSwimming

Perham-New York Mills' Blake Swenson, middle, competed in the 50-yard freestyle at the Class A state championships on Saturday at the University of Minnesota.

# Blake Swenson takes 17th in first state appearance

By Jared Rubado  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

MINNEAPOLIS – Perham-New York Mills also had a swimmer compete at the state tournament. Freshman Blake Swenson was just 0.05 off of his seed time with a 17th-place finish in the 50-yard freestyle. Swenson took in his first ever state tournament appearance with a time of 23.06.

"We had the opportunity to watch some really great races during the finals, with Blake doing it right and asking questions about what makes the top swimmers so fast and how he can adopt those things," Yellowjackets' head coach Jensen Grimley said. "He made a game plan for the off-season and next year. The entire Yellowjacket team had

a phenomenal season, and we can't wait to see what these boys do next year."

Detroit Lakes senior John Gulon put a bow on his high school swimming career on Saturday at the Class A boys swimming and diving state championships.

Gulon finished 13th in the 100-yard backstroke with a time of 55.79. His preliminary time of 55.02 on Friday broke his school record set a week earlier.

Breck-Blake's Charlie Crosby won the 100-yard backstroke with a time of 46.64. He shattered the state record, and was just over a second off the national record set by Ryan Murphy from Jacksonville, Fla., in 2012.

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# RAMOS

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who got him there. "After I got my hand raised, I instantly ran up to my parents," Ramos said. "Without them, I wouldn't be here. Their support throughout elementary school, middle school and all of the time and money they put into me means everything. They did every single little thing they could do for me. Without them, I wouldn't have had this opportunity. Right away, they were my first thought. Just the sense of relief I shared with them meant the world to me. We did it. It's not an, 'I did it.' It's a 'We did it.' Because, without them, I don't have nothing."

The first two rounds of the state tournament were a breeze. Ramos beat St. Peters' Kole Guth by technical fall (27-12) in 5:59 before pinning Minneapolis Patrick Henry's Syrron White in 1:32. In the semifinals, Ramos led Kasson-Mantorville's Kail Wynia 3-1 heading into the third period. "Going into the third, I felt amazing," Ramos said. "I started to pick up the pace in the third and ended up scoring seven more points. I was pretty happy to make it a decently-sized finish there by the end of it."

"After my semifinal match, I remember the exact words that came out of my mouth. I just told my coaches, 'One more. We're not done yet,'" Ramos said. "I was already onto the next after winning the semifinal match. I wanted to prepare in every aspect for that state championship match. Again, I'm very grateful that I had the opportunity to wrestle in that final match. It's just one of those moments. I'll cherish it forever."

Despite coming in with a 45-1 record on the season, Ramos was the third-seed out of

the 16-wrestler field.

"I was overlooked coming into state," Ramos said. "The other two guys that were seeded above me were seeded for the right reasons. I just wanted to show that the seeding doesn't matter. I just wrestled my heart out. I laid it all out there. I reminisce a lot, and I'm just so thankful. All glory to God. This wouldn't be possible without him, and I'm so thankful he chose this path for me. I took the opportunity and ran with it."

Ramos has a lot of passion for his craft. Next fall, the standout senior is headed to Augsburg University to continue his wrestling career at the Division III collegiate level. While his love for wrestling goes deep, the amount of gratitude he has for his community is immeasurable.

"What helped me a lot was my support system," Ramos said. "Even going into the (championship) match, I kept repeating to myself during warmups, 'This isn't just for me.' This was for everybody back home and the whole Perham community. It's something I can bring back. It's not even just Perham. It's for the North and all of the area schools around here. To finally bring a title up here is such a great feeling to me."

"I don't think there's another community that's better," Ramos said of Perham. "They've given everything in every sport to me. The teachers and support system are so great, and I was riding on that the whole day. I did get a huge sense of overwhelming emotion at the end of it all. I thought about all of the people in Perham wishing me good luck, and we actually did it."

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# WRESTLING

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195-pound division. Anderson pinned Hackel in 1:23.

### New York Mills

New York Mills junior Simon Snyder fell to Crosby-Ironton's

John Paul Fitzpatrick in an 8-4 decision in the opening round of the Class A 145-pound wrestling tournament. In the 152-pound division, senior Dane Niemi fell to Minnewaska Area's Jacob Blair in an 8-7 decision. Neither Snyder nor Niemi earned wrestle-back chances.

In the 182-pound weight class, senior Bren Salo fell in the final minutes of his first-round match-up to Red Rock Central's Vander Mathiowetz. Senior Sawyer Wedde was pinned by Minneota's Jackson Esping in his opening-round match.

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# BASKETBALL

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Perham opened the game with a 15-8 lead behind three-pointers from Olivia Rosenthal and Sydney Anderson. DGF took a timeout midway through the half, and the jackets went cold from the field. Perham scored just six points in the final 7:42.

"It's the continuous theme of the thing I've been saying all year, and that's energy," Super said. "I felt like we relaxed, and our energy dropped. DGF kept bringing it. It's the playoffs. Everyone is playing to not make it their last day here. We have a couple of games against them where the scores got a little lopsided. I knew it wouldn't happen again, but it's hard to convince kids of that sometimes. DGF brought it. They had energy and intensity, and they just kept coming at us."

Perham opened the half on a 12-2 run. Olivia Pilgrim and Greta Hillukka hit three-pointers to upstart the slumping offense, but the momentum shifted on the defensive end of the floor.

"Olivia Rosenthal was awesome defensively, which got us going offensively," Super said. "We came out more focused. We wanted to keep them to 12 points in the second half, and they got 14. We were right there.

It doesn't matter what the number is. We needed that energy and intensity to make things difficult for DGF in the second half."

Sophomore Willow Thiel had 10 points for Perham in the second half, which totaled her game-high 18 on the night. The Yellowjackets found a mismatch in the post with Thiel in the final nine minutes of the game.

"We went through a stretch in the first half where we took a bunch of rushed shots," Super said. "Willow had to sit on the bench for a while with some fouls. The more we give her the ball, the better things look for us. In the second half, I think we passed up on some of those open shots. Once we did get her the ball, things started to open up. We can start shooting wide-open threes instead of rushed, contested threes."

Sixth-seeded Roseau knocked off 11th-seeded Thief River Falls to set up Saturday's quarterfinal matchup. The Rams come to town with an identical record after beating the Prowlers 63-52.

"Roseau is good. They have (20 wins) this season," Super said. "Roseau brings an intensity to the game. They bring pressure, have athletic girls and they have some size. They have some tall guards. Some of those girls have played in some pretty big games in the

past. They will come to play with a fearless intensity, and we're going to have to match that. They haven't played us, and we haven't played them. We're going to have to feel it out, but with our girls, I like our chances."

### Super named 8-2A coach of the year

When Super took over the program 10 years ago, he hoped the Yellowjackets would become a force in conference and section play. For the first time since 2008-09, Perham won the Heart O'Lakes title. Now, the focus shifts to what has the makings of a deep playoff run.

"It's the best chance we've had since I've been here, for sure," Super said on Thursday of aiming to clinch a state berth. "The goal is to build a program that competes every single year. We've beat every team we've played in the section this year. We played most of the top teams. We know we have it in us. Right now, the goal is to get to (Detroit Lakes) and play in the semifinals."

Perham has a win over each 8-2A opponent it faced this season, including top-seeded Fergus Falls.

"We set some goals throughout the season," Super said. "One of them was winning a conference championship, and the other was going to state. That's the end-result goal. Hopefully, after

Saturday, we'll be in the final four."

One of the best seasons in this program's recent history added another accolade before the section playoffs tipped off. Super was named coach of the year, which he credited to the community that supports him.

"It means so much to the program more than anything else," Super said. "I've gotten a lot of texts over the last day from former players. Some of those players played on teams that won two games. Then they win seven and nine and 14. It's that building process that takes shape.

There are a lot of people involved with that. There are so many youth coaches that are part of this. It takes a lot of time and effort with a great summer program. It takes great kids. We've had girls that have shown this group what it takes, and they've taken it to the next level."

"It's not really a coach of the year award. It's a program award," Super said. "It's nice to have the program recognized. There were five years there of taking hard losses. We got ripped up, but they helped build this."

ROSEAU 36 29 - 65  
PERHAM 28 43 - 71  
PERHAM SCORING - Olivia Rosenthal 1, Greta Hillukka 11, Kennedy Pilgrim 4, Olivia Pilgrim 14, Willow Thiel 18, Sydney Anderson 20  
ROSEU SCORING - Kayla Backleitner 10, Hanne Mooney 16, Anya Severson 12, Brooklyn Hust 7, Emma Basingthwaite 3, Shavonda Bender 12, Naveah Fletcher 3

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