

Belle Plaine Bulletin

WRESTLING

Scott West Panthers place two at state Championship ends in heartbreak as Randolph repeats as runner-up

By Rachel Miller
Editor

One point. One point to make a dream and break another. One point to separate the heartbreaker from the heartbroken. One point to determine a champion.

Scott West sophomore wrestler Matt Randolph (42-3) saw his dream of a state championship vanish on Saturday evening, with a devastating 2-1 loss to Mound Westonka’s Jack Nelson in the Class AA, 120 lb. match.

The matchup was a bit of a grudge match, and all too familiar, as the pair faced off in the 106 lb. championship last year, with Nelson winning 7-2 to secure his first state title.

Randolph had twice bested Nelson this season, including a 4-2 overtime victory to win the Section 2AA Championship. But each match is different, and the third time was the charm for Nelson, who earned a take-down early in the first period. Randolph managed to get an escape in the second, but Nelson successfully held Randolph at bay to take his position atop



Scott West sophomore Matt Randolph (right) faced off against Mound Westonka’s Jack Nelson in the Class AA Championship at 120 lbs. It was a grudge match on both sides, as Nelson beat Randolph last year to win the 106 lb. championship, and Randolph beat Nelson twice this year, including in the Section 2AA Championship.

the podium and win his second state championship title.

“It is tough at this caliber to beat a guy that good three times,” said Jerold Stauffacher, who is in his second year as the Panthers’ head coach. “Unfortunately, they are 2-2 against each other, but he has two state titles and we don’t have one yet. It is heartbreaking for a kid like Matt because he does all

the things right we ask him to do.”

Randolph was 39-2 heading into the Class AA State Tournament. He opened the tournament by pinning Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton’s Jacob Luebke (22-5) at 4:47. Randolph then pulled out a reversal over Annandale/Maple Lake’s Noah Gindele (36-4) in the third to win 2-0 and advance to the semifinals.



Matt Randolph pulled out a 2-0 decision over Noah Gindele in the state quarterfinals (above). Randolph won his first three matches before dropping a devastating 2-1 defeat to Mound Westonka’s Jack Nelson in the state championship. Nelson also beat Randolph last year for the 106 lb. title.

Randolph then faced Zumbrota-Mazeppa’s Jack Krier in the Class AA Semifinals. Randolph started with a takedown in the first, earned a reversal in the second and another take-

down in the third to win 6-0 and secure his bid in the championship.

Stauffacher described Randolph’s wrestling style as “cerebral,” and said it is like he is

playing chess while other wrestlers are playing checkers.

“He is always thinking one

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CITY COUNCIL

Belle Plaine home values projected to increase by 23%

By Joshua Wilson
Independent Intern

A demand for rural living and working from home has drawn Minnesotans to Belle Plaine and has caused an increase in property values. Scott County Assessor Michael J. Thompson attended the Belle Plaine City Council meeting on Monday, March 7 to discuss the housing market update, changes for 2022 home value assessments, and appeal and relief options for county residents.

Residential property value interest rates are at a historically low number, with Scott County sitting at a 3.9% interest rate as of February 2022. Properties only spend up to 12 days on the market because of the low inventory and high demand to move to Belle Plaine and surrounding areas.

Due to the supply and demand of home sales, Thompson told the council there is currently a “Black Friday approach where people are lined up waiting and they’ve got their appointment scheduled to come in the day it’s available to look at.” The trend dates to 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic hit and there was an increase in listings.

LOW SUPPLY OF HOMES

The monthly supply of homes in Belle Plaine has been decreasing steadily since 2008 when it was near a supply of 13 homes a month, and now sits at less than two a month. There is a new and rapid way of residential property being sold. “We see people making site-on-scene offers,” Thompson said.

Residents will often go through a “limited walkthrough inspection” to which their offer isn’t contingent on a later inspection appointment.

“On their initial walkthrough to look at the house, if they think they’re really interested, they can bring an inspector along,” Thompson said.

The low supply of homes

is creating competition among homebuyers and investors. In 2021, the share of low-priced U.S. homes purchased by investors resided at 21.2%. Belle Plaine is currently seeing an upsurge of investors that purchase properties to use as rentals.

Altogether, the low supply and high demand of residential property has resulted in an average of more than 100% of the original list price collected by Belle Plaine residents.

NEW CONSTRUCTION AND HOME VALUES

Looking back to 2020 and 2021, there was an 8.7% change in the value added to new construction. Apartments, while the value added was lower between 2020 and 2021, continue to lead the way for new construction in Scott County.

Commercial and industrial are new construction areas that haven’t experienced growth in value added due to the economic impact of the pandemic and the process of opening new retail.

“Commercial we saw almost go flat at \$5.8 million, that’s a very low number for a county-wide total,” Thompson said.

New construction values for the county haven’t returned to the rates that occurred around 2006. However, residential home values are returning and surpassing previous records.

Carver, Sherburne, Wright, and Washington counties are experiencing a similar increase of more than 20% in residential home values.

“We just see people working from home more, moving out, wanting more space, wanting to move further out from the core, and then Scott County has invested a lot in fiber,” Thompson said.

Residents of Belle Plaine should be aware of the adjustment of property values. According to the MN Department of Revenue, the value changes of agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and apartments must be between 90% and 105%.

As of Jan. 2, 2022, the value changes assessment revealed that Scott County is at 75%. This means that the values of each area will need to be adjusted to meet this requirement. For instance, the residential area is estimated to increase by 23% to succeed the 90% that is needed for property values.

IMPACT ON TAXES

What impact does the low supply of homes and value adjustments have on Belle Plaine’s property taxes? Currently, Scott County is in the middle of a three-year tax cycle that began in 2020.

Residents in Belle Plaine will soon receive two notices: a 2022 Tax Statement and a 2023 Value Notice. The 2022 Tax Statement, a green-colored document, is the statement for the end of this year’s tax cycle and the values cannot be appealed.

On the other hand, the 2023 Value Notice, a red-colored document, is used to reassess the values of a resident’s property.

“It’s really looking at your new value and understanding, could I sell my property? Do I really believe that that’s what my property is worth?” Thompson said.

APPEALING ASSESSMENTS

If residents would like to appeal their property value assessment, they can start by calling the county appraiser. Then, for the appeal to continue, the resident must meet with the Scott County Assessor’s office to have an open book discussion about their property value.

Residents can also choose to attend the County Board of Appeal and Equalization in June or tax court before the April 30 tax date.

Along with the appealing process, taxpayers are provided with alternative options such as the Senior Citizen Property Tax Deferral, Disabled Veterans Homestead Property Tax, Exclusion, and Property Tax Refund.



PHOTO BY RACHEL MILLER

Belle Plaine Mayor Christopher Meyer presented (from left) St. Patrick’s Day Committee members Tilly Sullivan, Mary Patderner and Shannon Meyer with a proclamation for the annual St. Patrick’s Day Celebration that will be held this Saturday.

The overview of the market update and property assessments was well received by the Belle Plaine City Council. Thompson noted that residents should be on the lookout for their property tax and value notices arriving in the mail in about two weeks.

ST. PATTY’S DAY PROCLAMATION

As part of Monday’s agenda, the Belle Plaine City Council passed a resolution recognizing St. Patrick’s Day in Belle Plaine. Festivities will be held on Saturday, March 12, beginning with a Christian Mass at Our Lady of the Prairie Catholic Church at 12 p.m.

Following the Mass, 1 p.m. has been deemed “the most fit-

ting time and day for a good Irish celebration and parade.”

John and Jim Mahoney will serve as Honorary Grand Marshals, a 2022 Miss Shamrock will be crowned, and the Vet’s Club will entertain with the Northerly Gales playing at 1:30 p.m. and Broken Spokes Band at 4 p.m.

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Belle Plaine Bulletin

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Tigers denied chance at championship by single point

By Rachel Miller
Editor

It is every coach and player’s dream to qualify for the state tournament, yet it is a privilege very few ever achieve. The Belle Plaine Tigers girls basketball team had that dream cut short on Monday night, when they suffered a devastating, heartbreaking, one-point loss to Glencoe-Silver Lake in the final seconds of the Section 2AA Semifinals on the MSU-Mankato campus.

Despite leading the first half 37-24, Glencoe-Silver Lake battled back in the second half, and were trailing by just six points with six minutes left in the game. A three-pointer gave GSL a one-point lead with three minutes left, and the two teams were tied, 66-66, with 1:29 left.

The next 90 seconds were tense, as both teams struggled to break the stalemate. GSL got a turnover and deflection, but missed two shots in a row.

Then with just 13 seconds on the clock, Leah Lenz fouled, and GSL was granted two free throws. The first went in, which was enough to win, 67-66.

“I am very proud at how far our team has come this season. We graduated seven seniors last year and we played a lot of girls this year who were seeing their first varsity experience,” said Coach Mindy Chevalier. “We continued to get better and power through the ups and down....

You always want to keep winning, but the experiences, memories, and fun along the way is what truly makes the season great. We have an awesome group of seniors that will do great things as they graduate from Belle Plaine High School. We have a host of underclassmen with extremely valuable experience coming into next year. I am very proud of this team!”

As the victor, Glencoe-Silver Lake will be battling Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial in

the Section 2AA Championship game on Friday night for the honor of competing in the state tournament.

The Tigers’ offense was lead by Lenz, who racked up 18 points, followed by Courtney Eppen and McKenna Ziemke, who both scored 11 points. Josie Schmidt scored nine, Rachel Johnson added eight, Marley Ziemke scored seven and Bella Haefner scored two.

“That is the balanced scoring we are looking for night in and night out,” Chevalier added. “We shot 47% from 2’s, 37% from 3’s and 80% from the line. I can’t ask for much more out of our girls that that!”

TIGERS FEND OFF NORWOOD

The Tigers (16-11) earned an exciting 66-45 win over Norwood-Young America last Thursday night in New Prague in the Section 2AA Quarterfinals.

The Tigers had amassed a big 40-21 point lead by halftime, but Norwood began to put the pressure on in the second half. Norwood came out aggressively and managed to force more turnovers. They managed to intercept passes and won the rebound battle. Unfortunately, Norwood struggled to capitalize on many of those turnovers and turn them into points.

However, Norwood did manage to gain on the Tigers, and outscored the Tigers 13-7 over the first 10 minutes of the



PHOTOS BY RACHEL MILLER

The Belle Plaine Tigers girls basketball team after their 66-45 win over Norwood-Young America last Thursday. The Tigers finished the season ranked second in the Minnesota River Conference behind Mayer Lutheran, and made it to the Section 2AA Semifinals, where they lost by a single point to Glencoe-Silver Lake.

“We have an awesome group of seniors that will do great things as they graduate from Belle Plaine High School,” head coach Mindy Chevalier said. “We have a host of underclassmen with extremely valuable experience coming into next year. I am very proud of this team!”

get them one game closer to the state tournament.

The Tigers had 10 steals to Norwood’s five, while Norwood beat the Tigers on blocks, 4-1. Belle Plaine also won the rebound battle, 33-25.

The Tigers put forth a strong coordinated offense, with four players earning double-digit points. Lenz led the charge with 22 points, while teammates Schmidt and Johnson both contributed 11 points, and McKenna Ziemke scored 10. Rounding out the scoring was Malina Koepp with five points, Ciara Fahey with three, and Haefner and Eppen both scored two points.

Lenz also led on defense with 11 rebounds, Schmidt grabbed eight, and Eppen, Marley Ziemke and McKenna

Ziemke all had three.

TIGERS CRUSH WOLVERINES

The Tigers reached the quarterfinals after a crushing 79-31 first round win over the Sibley East Wolverines on Tuesday, March 1 in the home gym.

The Tigers amassed a 43-14 lead over the Wolverines by halftime, and went on to outscore them 36-17 in the second half to earn the blowout victory.

The Tigers had four players who hit double-digit points and collectively scored 52 of the team’s points. This time McKenna Ziemke led the charge with 17 points, while Lenz was a close second with 15. Schmidt and Johnson both scored 10 points, and Eppen added nine. Rounding out the scoring were Haefner and Koepp with four points each, Zoe Tanguma and Marley Ziemke with three points, and Mackenzie Murphy and Fahey with two points.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Tigers advance to section quarterfinals

By Rachel Miller
Editor

The Belle Plaine Tigers boys basketball team advanced to the Section 2AA quarterfinals on Thursday, March 10 after defeating the Tri-City United Titans, 82-45, on Tuesday night. More detailed game results were not available by the time the *Independent/Bulletin* went to press Wednesday morning.

The Tigers will be facing the Le Sueur-Henderson

Giants on Thursday. The Tigers are currently 2-0 against the Giants, with 9 and 14-point win margins.

The winner of the Tigers/Giants game will advance to the section semifinals on Tuesday, March 15 at 6 p.m. at MSU-Mankato. The section championship is scheduled for Friday, March 18 at 7:45 p.m. at MSU-Mankato.

The Tigers closed the regular season on Monday, Feb. 28, with an 80-55 loss to Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial.

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move ahead; he is a thinker, not a brawler,” Stauffacher said. “He is very smart and does things strategically. It is fun to wrestle with him in the wrestling room.”

Although nothing is ever guaranteed, Stauffacher is hopeful that Randolph will be back at the state tournament next year, and that the third time will be the charm.

TRACY BROTHERS

The Panthers placed a second wrestler atop the podium on Saturday.

Senior Zach Tracy (40-10) went 4-2 at 126 lbs. to earn his second individual career medal. As an eighth-grader, he competed in the team tournament, and he placed third his sophomore year.

Tracy had a very busy two days, as he wrestled in six matches to make it onto the podium.

Tracy opened the tournament with a 6-2 decision over Lucas Sheill, but then fell 8-4



Scott West senior Zacy Tracy (126 lbs.) finished his career with one more showing at the Class AA State Tournament. Tracy made it to the third place match, but struggled and lost 2-0 to Mound Westonka’s Cooper Rowe (above).

to Tyson Charmoli in the quarterfinals. Tracy had one more match to determine if he would go to the consolation bracket,

and defeated Taylor Johnson with a fall at 2:05.

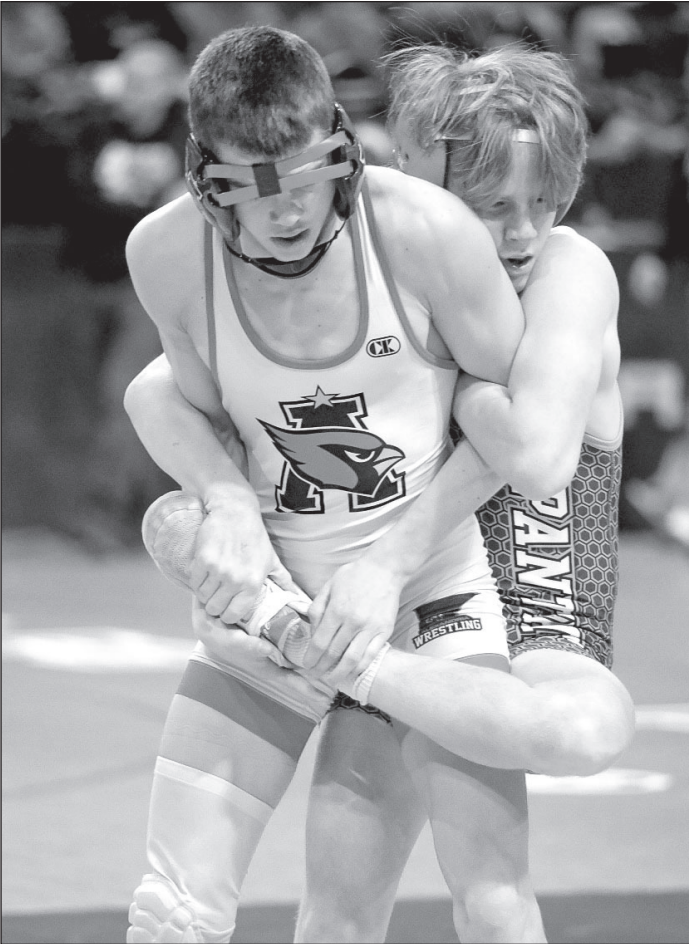
Tracy opened the consolation quarterfinals with a 7-1 win over Luke Ruter and defeated Jesse Potts 9-3 in the consolation semifinals to make it to the third place match.

Just like teammate Randolph, it was a Mound Westonka wrestler that would deal the disappointing blow. Cooper Rowe was 35-3 heading into the tournament, and managed to eke

out a reversal in the second period to defeat Tracy, 2-0.

“He gave up everything he had at the end of the year, and I am very proud of him for doing what he did for the program,” Stauffacher said.

Brother Caleb Tracy also qualified for the state meet, at 113 lbs. His performance was cut short as he got pinned at 3:48 by Alexandria’s Mason McGrane. McGrane then lost his quarterfinal match, which



PHOTOS BY CASEY EK

Scott West wrestler Caleb Tracy wraps up Mason McGrane in the opening round of the Class AA, 113 lbs. match. The two were evenly matched, and tied 4-4 in the second period before McGrane managed to pin Tracy.

denied Caleb a second match.

“It was a match we thought he could win, but he got caught in a headlock and it didn’t end well,” Stauffacher said.

Although Zach is graduating

this year, both Caleb and Randolph will be returning next year, and Stauffacher is setting his sights on hopefully getting the Panthers to the team competition.

“He is always thinking one move ahead; he is a thinker, not a brawler. He is very smart and does things strategically.”

- Panthers head coach Jerold Stauffacher, on Matt Randolph’s wrestling style