

SPORTS

On the clock

Litchfield coaches react to MSHSL decision to add shot clock in 2023-2024

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Minnesota high school basketball is on the clock.

By unanimous vote, the Minnesota State High School League's Board of Directors approved implementation of a 35-second shot clock beginning with the 2023-2024 season at a meeting earlier this month.

Minnesota is the 13th state association to adopt a shot clock. Others include Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, California, District of Columbia, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island and Washington.

"We are excited it passed," said Pat Barrett of the Minnesota Girls Basketball Coaches Association. "The state of basketball is excited to start using it."

But that excitement is not shared by everyone, among them Litchfield boys basketball coach Matt Draeger, who expressed concerns about the effect on the competitive balance of some games.

"I'd prefer not to have the shot clock, but the addition of it was going to happen regardless," Draeger said. "The shot clock will make the difference between the good teams and bad teams much greater. We will see more blowouts in the game."

Eric Hultersturm, who's in his first season as girls basketball head coach at Litchfield, described himself as "indifferent" to the shot clock decision.

"I think that it has pros and cons," Hultersturm said. "I think that they are trying to

keep the game moving and not have teams sit and hold the ball if another team is playing zone, or if another team just wants to run out the clock."

Approval is for the varsity level only, but member schools can use a shot clock at sub-varsity levels if both teams agree to it.

The last time the MSHSL considered the shot clock was at a 2019 Board of Directors meeting, during which it was rejected 13-5. Two other prior proposals failed as well.

MSHSL Board President Tom Jerome of Roseau said about 75% of schools are in favor of the shot clock, while a report done by the Minnesota Basketball Coaches Association showed that 82.7% of coaches in the state were in favor of a shot clock.

In the Wright County Conference, Hutchinson Activities Director Bill Tschida said reactions to the change have been mixed.

"I thought the game was fine as it was," he said. "But the coaches were in favor of it, so that is why it happened."

Litchfield Activities Director Justin Brown said he didn't think the addition of a shot clock was good or bad, and that it seemed likely to happen at some point.

"We have had several conversations in our conference AD and AD advisory meetings (about the shot clock)," Brown said. "We understood it was a matter of time before they became reality, but share the same concerns in regards to cost and finding someone to run the clocks."

A 35-second shot clock has been used in some Minnesota holiday tournaments over the years. The MSHSL allows the



Matt Draeger is not a fan of the shot clock in high school basketball, believing it could make the gap between good and struggling teams even wider.

use of it in the regular season, but the following guidelines must be met:

- The facility at which the game is played has the necessary equipment to allow the use of the clock.
- Both participating teams agree to use the clock.
- Teams and officials are notified at least one week prior to the game. If one of the teams does not consent to the use of the clock, it may not be used.
- Coaches and officials must file a report with the MSHSL office after any game in which a shot clock is used, so that the results can be tracked.

Litchfield's boys basketball team has played a few games with a shot clock, and Draeger said he thought scoring actually decreased in those games "because the quality of shots are decreased."

Hultersturm doesn't expect the addition of the shot clock to change much about the way the girls basketball team plays, at least offensively, because the Dragons typically do not reach 35 seconds with possessions anyway.

On the defensive end of the floor, Litchfield plays zone primarily, with a goal to create turnovers "rather than have to defend for a long time," Hultersturm said. "So I think it may force other teams to hurry their shots and maybe not take the best shot for their



STAFF PHOTOS BY BRENT SCHACHERER

Eric Hultersturm, who's in his first season as head girls basketball coach in Litchfield, says he's "indifferent" about the addition of a shot clock to Minnesota high school basketball games. It could force some change in strategy, but overall could be an advantage for Litchfield, he said.

team, so it could work in our favor."

This past May, the National Federation of State High School Associations approved a 35-second shot clock for high school basketball for the 2022-23 season, though did not mandate its use. Instead, each member state can determine if they want to implement it. But if a state chooses to, it is required to follow NFHS rules that include "displaying two timepieces that are connected to a horn that is distinctive from the game-clock horn."

Rules also stipulate there needs to be a stopwatch at the scorer's table in case the shot clock malfunctions.

Those stipulations caused

the greatest concern for MSHSL and its member schools, as the cost and logistics of adding the shot clock could be a challenge for some school districts.

Tom Critchley, executive director of the Minnesota Basketball Coaches Association, told the MSHSL board that the cost of shot clocks to schools that need them was estimated at about \$3,700.

Brown, however, said he expected the cost to add the shot clock will be \$10,000 to \$12,000. Because of that financial impact, he said, the district will wait until the spring or summer of 2023 to install shot clocks at the LHS gym.

Additionally, one more person will have to be added to

the scorer's table to manage the shot clock — at about \$40 a game in Litchfield's case.

"The other concern is finding a worker that has a complete understanding of the game to reset the shot clock when needed," Brown said.

In the end, Brown said, high school basketball will still be high school basketball after the implementation of the shot clock.

"I believe it will have very little impact on the game," he said. "The game of high school basketball is already a great game without shot clocks. The biggest impact will happen when a very good team plays a team that is struggling, which can create more blowouts."

SCOREBOARD

BOYS BASKETBALL

Tuesday result
Litchfield 60, Eden Valley-Watkins 36
EVW 13 23 — 36
Litchfield 26 24 — 50
EVW — Wyatt Moehrle 1, Alex Haag 6, Landon Neiman 6, Nolan Geislinger 7, Tyler Stanwick 2, Myles Dzingel 2, Parker Schultz 3, Noah Stommes 9. FG 12-34 (5-27 on 3-pointers), FT 7-15, PF 13.
LITCHFIELD — Logan King 3, Jack McCann 2, Tyler Pennertz 3, Alex Draeger 12, Beau Weseloh 17, Blake Aller 5, Dominic Dietel 8. FG 20-49 (5-13 3-pointers), FT 5-10, PF 13.
Dec. 7 result
Minnewaska 50, Litchfield 48
Minnewaska 20 30 — 50
Litchfield 26 22 — 48
MINNEWASKA — Tate Reichman 11, Ethan Quelle 16, Noah Danielson 1, Damon Uhde 11, Hunter Kosteletzky 11.
LITCHFIELD — Logan King 5, Jack McCann 3, Tanner Kohls 4, Tyler Pennertz 4, Alex Draeger 17, Beau Weseloh 4, Dom Dietel 11.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Dec. 6 result
Litchfield 65, Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City 44
Dec. 7 result
Minnewaska Area 48, Litchfield 42
Dec. 9 result
Eden Valley-Watkins 32, Litchfield 30

GYMNASTICS

Tuesday result
Litchfield 132.175, Dassel-Cokato 124.075
Vault — 1. Kimmy Aho (DC) 8.8 ... 3. Liv Holmgren (L) 8.6, 4. Grace Borowicz 8.55, Marisol Fragos-Padron (L) 8.5.
Uneven bars — 1. Borowicz (L) 8.075, 2. (tie) Emma Brown (L) and Lauren Abfalter (DC) 7.95, 4. Raina Kaping (L) 7.7, 5. Holmgren (L) 7.675.
Balance beam — 1. Jara Krummacker (DC) 8.3... 2. Abby Barus (L) 8.175, 3. Holmgren (L) 8.075, 4. Brown (L) 8.05, 5. Borowicz (L) 7.9.
Floor exercise — 1. Aho (DC) 8.95 ... 2. Kaping (L) 8.85, 3. Borowicz (L) 8.75, 4. Holmgren (L) 8.5, 5. Brown (L) 8.475.
All-around — 1. Borowicz (L) 33.275, 2. Holmgren (L) 33.85, 3. Kaping (L) 32.725.
Dec. 7 result
New London-Spicer 141.15, Litchfield 128.3
Vault — 1. Ciera Anderson (NLS) 9.35 ... 5. Olivia Holmgren (L) 9.0, 6. Raina Kaping (L) 8.95, 7. Grace Borowicz (L) 8.85, 9. Abby Barus (L) 8.275, 10. Lilli Chvatall (L) 8.25.
Uneven bars — 1. Anderson (NLS) 8.975 ... 6. Kaping (L) 7.425, 7. (tie) Borowicz (L) and Holmgren (L) 7.375, 9. Chvatall (L) 7.35, 10. Emma Anderson (L) 5.8.
Balance beam — 1. Anderson (NLS) 9.2 ... 6. Borowicz (L) 8.25, 7. Holmgren (L) 8.025, 8. Kaping (L) 7.575, 9. Barus (L) 7.35, 10. Chvatall (L) 7.0.
Floor exercise — 1. Kaitlyn Preheim (NLS) 8.275 ... 6. Holmgren (L) 8.4, 7. Kaping (L) 8.325, 8. Kaylee Sundve (L) 7.95, 9. Borowicz (L) 7.825, 10. Charley Estrada (L) 7.775.
All-around — 1. Anderson (NLS) 36.6 ... 3. Holmgren (L) 32.8, 4. Borowicz (L) 32.3, 5. Kaping (L) 32.275.

BOYS HOCKEY

Dec. 7 result
Litchfield/Dassel-Cokato 3, River Lakes 2 OT
LDC 1 1 0 1 — 3
River Lakes 0 1 1 0 — 2

First period: 1. LDC — Wyatt Larson (Trenton Evjen, Jaxon Gustafson) 6:27. Penalties: Chase Schulzetenberg (RL) high sticking, 14:38.
Second period: 2. LDC — Jack Hillmann (Gustafson) :35; 3. RL — Mason King (Cole Pientka, Joel Sowada) 3:16. Penalties: Evjen (LDC) interference 1:55; Sam Zeiher (RL) holding 2:24; Hillmann (LDC) roughing 2:24.
Third period: 4. RL — Jacob Philippi (Blake Schultz) :29. Penalties: none.
Overtime: 5. LDC — Grant Grochow (Daniel Estrada, Keyton Johnson) 1:36. Penalties: None.
Shots on goal: LDC 12-15-11-3 — 41; River Lakes 6-11-9-1—27.
Goalies: Travis Halonen (LDC) 25 saves; Carson Cronquist (RL) 38 saves.

Dec. 9 result
Waconia 4, Litchfield/Dassel-Cokato 3
Waconia 1 2 1 — 4
LDC 0 1 2 — 3
First period: 1. Waconia — Cole Machtemes (Tyson Wiese, Brett Siddons) 4:07. Penalties: None.
Second period: 2. LDC — Grant Grochow (Conno Taber, Calvin Jones) 2:10; 3. Waconia — Sidons (Wiese) 4:07; 4. Waconia — Ryan Molinari (Machtemes) 4:33. Penalties: None.
Third period: 5. LDC — Zachary Zwilling (Grochow) 4:59; 6. Wyatt Larson (Keyton Johnson) 12:28; 7. Waconia — Machtemes (unassisted). Penalties: None.
Shots on goal: Waconia 11-8-3—22; LDC 3-13-13—29.
Goalies: Carson Beckwith (Waconia) 26 saves; Travis Halonen (LDC) 18 saves.

Dec. 11 result
Litchfield/Dassel-Cokato 3, Bloomington Kennedy 2
Kennedy 0 0 2 — 2
LDC 0 2 1 — 3
First period: No scoring. Penalties: Tyler Jost (BK) roughing 10:25; Zachary Zwilling (LDC) cross-checking 14:25.
Second period: 1. LDC — Zwilling (unassisted) 4:59; 2. LDC — Zwilling (Ryan Schutz, Gavin Hanson) 3:26. Penalties: Jack Hillman (LDC) roughing 10:10.
Third period: 3. Kennedy — Noah Thornburg (Elijah Danielson) 1:17; 4. Kennedy — Nicholas Manning (Jost, Luke Dosan) 7:17; 5. LDC — Schutz (Gavin Lund) 13:08. Penalties: Carson Wendorff (LDC) tripping 11:13; Dosan (BK) holding 11:58; Clayton Deutsch (BK) unsportsmanlike conduct 16:50.
Shots on goal: Kennedy 9-7-7—23; LDC 10-21-13—44.
Goalies: Luke Skophammer (BK) 41 saves; Travis Halonen (LDC) 21 saves.

GIRLS HOCKEY

Dec. 7 result
River Lakes 4, Litchfield/Dassel-Cokato 1
RL 1 2 1 — 4
LDC 0 1 0 — 1
First period: 1. RL — Ayla McLellan (Paige Blattner) power play, 9:05. Penalties: Julia Peter (LDC) roughing 7:57; Amelia Benson (LDC) tripping 14:44.
Second period: 2. LDC — Stella Hillman (unassisted) 4:28; 3. RL — Abby Storms (Sophia Hess, Blattner) 12:58; 4. RL — Kianna Roeske (McLellan, Emma Stanley) pp. 15:12. Penalties: Brielle Creemers (RL) tripping 1:37; Emily Johnson (LDC) checking 13:45.
Third period: 5. RL — Jordyn Bebus (unassisted) 13:40. Penalties: Adriana Iverson (LDC) hooking 1:23; Johnson (LDC) interference 4:41; Aubree McDonagh (RL) tripping 15:44.
Shots on goal: River Lakes 9-11-16—36; LDC



STAFF PHOTOS BY BRENT SCHACHERER

Raina Kaping performs on the uneven bars during a match earlier this season. Kaping, a junior, finished fourth on bars and third all-around to help Litchfield top Dassel-Cokato 132.175-124.075 Thursday.

6-3-11—20.
Goalies: Natalie Kayser (RL) 19 saves; Kira Kuechle (LDC) 32 saves.
Dec. 11 result
Litchfield/Dassel-Cokato 12, Detroit Lakes 0
DL 0 0 0 — 0
LDC 5 5 2 — 12
First period: 1. LDC — Stella Hillman (Camryn Iverson) 1:37; 2. LDC — Emmy Haataja (Gabby Robertson, Emily Johnson) 6:38; 3. LDC — Grace Braaten (Lydia Schultz, Lauren Erickson) power play, 13:08; 4. LDC — Robertson (unassisted) 14:16; 5. LDC — Anna Holcomb (Haataja, Robertson) 16:58. Penalties: Hillman (LDC) interference 3:32; Adisyn Strand (DL) hooking 6:54; Ivy Geffre (DL) checking 10:45; Kaydence Thorsteinson (DL) hooking 12:36.
Second period: 6. LDC — Robertson (Haataja) :18; 7. LDC — Julia Peter (Braaten, Camryn Iverson) 2:35; 8. LDC — Haataja (Johnson) 14:54; 9. LDC — Robertson (Braaten) 15:07; 10. LDC — Camryn Iverson (unassisted) 15:25. Penalties: Emma Grangoth (LDC) body checking 5:24; Strand (DL) hooking 6:54; Geffre (DL) checking 10:45; Thorsteinson (DL) 12:36.
Third period: 11. LDC — Schultz (Lauren Erickson, Amelia Benson) 1:35; 12. LDC — Johnson (unassisted) 14:59. Penalties: Schultz (LDC) roughing 2:03; Schultz (LDC) slashing 16:50.
Shots on goal: DL 5-6-1—12; LDC 23-16-10—49.
Goalies: Emma Wahl (DL) 37 saves; Janelle Quast (LDC) 12 saves.

Tuesday result
Litchfield/Dassel-Cokato 4, Northern Lakes 3
LDC 2 1 1 — 4
Northern Lakes 1 1 1 — 3
First period: 1. NL — Riley Fogerty (Rose Aldridge) 4:54; 2. LDC — Grace Braaten (Stella Hillman) 14:53; 3. LDC — Camryn Iverson (Hillman) 15:23. Penalties: None.
Second period: 4. NL — Megan Muller (unassisted) :45; 5. LDC — Amelia Benson (Lydia Schultz) 7:28. Penalties: Emily Traut (NL) body checking :55.
Third period: 6. NL — Aldridge (unassisted) 4:08; 7. Schultz (Lauren Erickson, Benson) 6:30.

Penalties: none.
Shots on goal: LDC 6-7-7—20; NL 6-10-9—25.
Goalies: Kira Kuechle (LDC) 22 saves; Katherine Stephens (NL) 16 saves.
Thursday result
Holy Family 6, Litchfield/Dassel-Cokato 0
Holy Family 2 1 3 — 6
LDC 0 0 0 — 0
First period: 1. HF — Shae Messner (Taylor Koeppl, Grayson Limke) 11:59; 2. HF — Maddie Kaiser (unassisted) 14:05. Penalties: Olivia Paidosh (HF) hooking 6:33.
Second period: 3. HF — MacKenzie Moss (Messner, Justina Valentini) 6:35. Penalties: Maeve Kelly (HF) interference 2:16; Julia Peter (LDC) tripping 2:32; Stella Hillman (LDC) tripping 9:20; Josie Linn (HF) cross-checking 10 1 9
Lydia Schultz (LDC) body checking 11:49; Maddie Braun (HF) cross-checking 14:42.
Third period: 4. HF — Valentini (Ella Knewtson, Briar Charchenko) 2:34; 5. HF — Messner (Kelly) power play, 14:00; 6. HF — Limke (Maddie Morgan, Messner) 14:58. Penalties: Morgan (HF) slashing 7:35; Hillman (LDC) holding 13:51.
Shots on goal: HF 12-14-24—50; LDC 3-4-3—10.
Goalies: Quinn McDonald (HF) 10 saves; Janelle Quast (LDC) 44 saves.

WRESTLING

Dec. 9 results
Dassel-Cokato/Litchfield 43, Albany 27
106 pounds — Anton Cox (DCL) pinned Nathan Kollman 4:38; 113 — Ean Hansen (A) won by forfeit; 120 — Jimmy Carlisle (A) won by forfeit; 126 — Victor Franco (DCL) dec. Owen Carlson 8-4; 132 — Gabe Nelson (DCL) dec. Devin Hansen 3-2; 138 — Joseph Schmitt (A) pinned Brenden Aho (DCL) :48; 145 — Devin Steinhau (DCL) major dec. Mason Plumski 11-0; 152 — Shelby Fischer Lund (DCL) pinned Cole Moutzolf 4:01; 160 — Jude Link (DCL) pinned Connor Karki :33; 170 — Sam Marx (DCL) dec. Peyton Krumrei 8-3; 182 — Ivan Rameriz-Galvan (DCL) won by forfeit; 195 — Tate Link (DCL) won by forfeit; 220 — Declan Crumley



Senior Abby Barus leaps high off the beam while competing in a meet earlier this season. Barus earned a second-place finish in balance beam as the Dragons topped Dassel-Cokato Thursday.

(A) pinned TJ Christensen 6:32; 285 — Jacob Adrian (A) dec. Brenden Rokala (DCL) 3-1.
Dassel-Cokato/Litchfield 52, Zimmerman 27
106 — Anton Cox (DCL) pinned Zander Spitzmueller 4:18; 113 — Beau Dipprey (Z) won by forfeit; 120 — Christopher Belair (Z) won by forfeit; 126 — Victor Franco (DCL) won by forfeit; 132 — Gabe Nelson (DCL) won by forfeit; 138 — Kellen Martin (Z) pinned Brenden Aho 5:10; 145 — Devin Steinhau (DCL) maj. dec. Jon Weiser 11-3; 152 — Shelby Fischer Lund (DCL) pinned Brock Snow 5:31; 160 — Jude Link (DCL) won by forfeit; 170 — Joe Gardes (Z) dec. Sam Marx 7-1; 182 — Tate Link (DCL) pinned Brooks Howard 1:08; 195 — TJ Christensen (DCL) won by forfeit; 220 — Aiden Pardino (Z) pinned Hayden Hoernemann 3:04; 285 — Brenden Rokala (DCL) pinned Heath Lester :33.

Dec. 11 results
ETHAN HERMAN MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT At Chaska
Dassel-Cokato/Litchfield results
126 pounds
First round: Victor Franco (DCL) bye; Quarterfinal: Franco (DCL) pinned Jack Gronli (Owatonna) 1:58; Semifinal: Franco (DCL) pinned Benson Kozitka (Elk River) 3:18; Championship: Franco pinned Elijah Wald (Wayzata) 4:56.
132 pounds
First round: Gabe Nelson (DCL) dec. Shafer Ehme (Mankato West) 4-2; Quarterfinal: Andrew Larson (Wayzata) maj. dec. Nelson (DCL) 15-4; Consolation round 2: Nelson pinned Anthony Suendeck (Irontale) 2:49; Consolation semifinal: Nelson pinned Cristian Neville (Rosemount) 1:22; Fifth place: Kanin Hable (Owatonna) dec. Nelson (DCL) 9-4.
138 pounds
First round: Devin Steinhau (DCL) bye; Quarter-

final: Cael Rob (Owatonna) dec. Steinhau (DCL) 7-0; Consolation round 2: Steinhau (DCL) bye; Consolation semifinal: Steinhau (DCL) pinned Gavin Wilson (Woodbury) 1:30; Fifth place: Steinhau (DCL) maj. dec. Peter Hollingshead (osse) 14-2.
152 pounds
First round: Shelby Fischer Lund (DCL) pinned Mason Klemmensen (Owatonna) 2:35; Quarterfinal: Fischer Lund (DCL) dec. Cael Viesselman (East Ridge) 15-8; Semifinal: John Lundstrom (Osseo) pinned Fischer Lund 5:50; Third place: Fischer Lund (DCL) pinned Russell Gillette (Chaska-Chanhassen) 1:25.
160 pounds
First round: Jude Link (DCL) tech fall Nolan Krmarzick (Mankato West) 19-4; Quarterfinal: Link (DCL) pinned Calvin Brinkman (Irontale) 2:24; Semifinal: Owen Herbst (Buffalo) dec. Link 6-5; Third place: Link (DCL) pinned Jace Cacka (Glencoe-Lester Prairie) 5:38.

170 pounds
First round: Sam Marx (DCL) pinned Carson Turner (Chaska-Chanhassen) 2:23; Quarterfinal: Damian Riewe (Mankato West) dec. Marx (DCL) 7-4; Consolation round 2: Marx (DCL) pinned Graham Doherty (Sauk Rapids-Rice) 4:04; Consolation semifinal: Marx (DCL) dec. Jacob Reinardy (Owatonna) 4-2; Fifth place: Marx (DCL) won by injury default over Vincent Toleno (Osseo).
182 pounds
First round: Tate Link (DCL) pinned Josh Jones (East Ridge) 2:49; Quarterfinal: Link (DCL) maj. dec. Blake Fitcher (Owatonna) 16-3; Semifinal: Link (DCL) dec. Alejandro Torbenson (Minnetonka) 8-3; Championship: Keegan Lemke (Glencoe-Lester Prairie) dec. Link 3-1.

285 pounds
First round: Brendan Rokala (DCL) pinned Carter Walker (Buffalo) 3:13; Quarterfinal: Rokala pinned Noah Dinsmore (Mankato West) 4:51; Semifinal: Will Sather (Eden Prairie) pinned Rokala (DCL) 3:13; Third place: Rokala (DCL) pinned Thomas Lavin (Irontale) 1:27.

Thursday results
Dassel-Cokato/Litchfield 60, Delano 24
106 pounds — Tate Olson (D) won by forfeit; 113 — Victor Franco (DCL) forfeit; 126 — Aaron Bury (WMML) pinned Connor Shepersky 1:55; 132 — Gabe Nelson pinned Eli Hamberger 1:55; 138 — Devin Steinhau (DCL) pinned Jack Entinger (WMML) 3:20; 145 — Steven Duske (WMML) dec. Monte Gillman 7-5; 152 — Patrick Duske (WMML) pinned Shelby Fischer Lund 1:53; 160 — Jude Link (DCL) dec. Bryce Burkett 6-3; 170 — Tanner Burnmeister (WMML) dec. Sam Marx 5-3; 182 — Tate Link (DCL) dec. Jonah Blakstad 6-5; 195 — Jackson Drahos (WMML) pinned Ivan Rameriz-Galvan :41; 220 — Ashton Congdon (WMML) pinned Logan Sander 1:53; 285 — Brendan Rokala (DCL) dec. Jason Fenske 6-2.