

FOOTBALL



Photos by Eric Morken / Alexandria Echo Press

Alexandria senior Kristen Hoskins smiles for a photo after officially signing to play football for the University of Minnesota on Dec. 15, 2021. By his side are, back, left to right, Jay Steffensmeier, Bralyn Steffensmeier, Jenny Steffensmeier, younger sister Khamaria Vance, Ayden Steffensmeier, older brothers Yanta Hoskins and Yanshon Hoskins, Carter Steffensmeier, and Zach Witt. Front row next to Hoskins is his grandmother, Tomisien Hardy, and his mother, Kenyatta Hardy.

TURNING DREAMS TO REALITY

Hoskins signs with the Gophers after a journey that included the love and support of 2 families

By Eric Morken
Alexandria Echo Press

Kristen Hoskins sat down at a table in the Alexandria High School gym to put pen to paper and make a dream come true on Wednesday morning decked out in a buttoned-up white shirt and a maroon blazer with the University of Minnesota "M" on his cap.

At his side were the people who helped make this day a reality. Friends. Family.

"He's got a big heart. He's easy to love. He's been a big part of our lives. We're just super proud of what he's accomplished and where he's come from and what he's going to accomplish going forward."

ALEXANDRIA'S JAY STEFFENSMEIER ON KRISTEN HOSKINS

Coaches. Teammates. Hoskins, a receiver known for his game-breaking speed and

athleticism, is quick to say they all played an important role in going from a young kid who moved from Chicago to Minneapolis and then Alexandria to signing to play Big Ten football with the Gophers.

"This is surreal. As a kid where I grew up from, I never would have thought that I would be in this situation I am, but that's God's blessings," Hoskins said. "Thanks to my family, my mom, friends — without them none of this is possible."

The love and support of 2 families

Hoskins' journey to high school star in both football and basketball and a future with the Gophers was aided by the love and support of two families. His mother, Kenyatta Hardy, was born and raised in Chicago. Kristen has three siblings — older brothers Yanta and Yanshon and younger sister Khamaria.

"I moved to Minneapolis into a
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Alexandria's Kristen Hoskins smiles as his family and friends congratulate him after signing to play football with the University of Minnesota during the opening day of the national signing period in college football on Dec. 15, 2021.

BOYS HOCKEY

Second-period flurry halts the Storm

By Eric Morken
Alexandria Echo Press

Scoring chances were hard to come by in the first period on Tuesday night between the Alexandria and Sauk Rapids-Rice boys hockey teams. That all changed in the second frame.

The Cardinals were looking to snap a two-game losing streak and turn around a 1-3 start. A 6-goal second period did just that as Alexandria (2-3) beat the Storm (2-4) 9-4.

"All the boys were ready to go tonight," Cardinals' senior forward Josiah Gronholz said. "We've had a tough last stretch of games, and I think everybody in the locker room wanted to get that winning feeling back again."

Neither team could generate many offensive chances in the first period, but both had a goal at the first intermission. Gronholz jumpstarted a game that ended with a hat trick for him by taking a pass from Tyler Kludt and getting behind the defense for a breakaway.

Gronholz made a move to his backhand to get Sauk Rapids-Rice goalie Cole Young out of position just enough to send a shot in for a 1-0 lead. The Storm responded with a goal from Luke Pakkala off an assist from Easton Portner to even the game after one period.



Eric Morken / Alexandria Echo Press

Alexandria senior Josiah Gronholz handles the puck against Sauk Rapids-Rice on Dec. 14, 2021. Gronholz had the Cardinals' first goal in the game in the first period and finished with a hat trick after two more goals in the second period to help lead his team to the win.

"I think just going into the second being tied 1-1 with Sauk Rapids, we know we're a better team than that," Gronholz said. "It lit a little bit of a fire under all the guys' butts and got us going."

Gronholz came into the game as the sixth-leading scorer in Section 6A with 10 points (3 goals, 7 assists). He added to that total in the second period on a power play. Gronholz scored unassisted with a shot from a difficult side angle that

snuck just inside the post for a 2-1 Alexandria lead with almost 13 minutes left in the period.

The Storm answered with a goal from Portner, but it took almost 20 seconds for Alexandria to retake the lead. Sophomore forward Gavin Olson scored off assists from Mason Stennes and Mason Loch to make it 3-2. Seconds later, Gronholz completed the hat trick off a Loch assist to give the Cardinals a 4-2 lead that they never relinquished.

"It just feels good to finally be a senior," Gronholz said of his early-season success. "I've been on the team for a few years now. Got to watch all the older guys go through. I think it just helped me learn how to play more as a veteran out there."

It was a 7-3 game by the end of the second period. Nicholas Peterson snuck a shot just under the top bar for a three-goal lead off an assist

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GIRLS BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

Osakis sinks Staples-Motley

By Eric Morken
Alexandria Echo Press

The Osakis girls basketball team upped its record to 3-2 on Tuesday by rolling over Staples-Motley in a 62-33 game.

The Silverstreaks were coming off a 47-41 loss to Belgrade-Brooklyn-Elrosa (4-0), and they stepped up defensively against the Cardinals (1-6), holding Staples-Motley to 26.2% shooting (11-42).

"This was a solid win for the girls," head coach Pat Kalpin said. "We got off to a good start — 10-0 and never really looked back. We were able to force some early turnovers, which helped get our offense going. We did a really nice job of staying in good defensive position and taking away their strengths. On the offensive end, we took care of the ball and shared the ball well with each other."

Seniors Mara VanNyhuis and Alexis Johanson combined for 31 points to help lead the way for Osakis, while Kiley Kranz added 10 points and 8

rebounds. "Alexis Johanson and Mara VanNyhuis played great games for us," Kalpin said. "Not only did they lead us in scoring, they had solid stats all-around."

OSAKIS 35 27 - 62
STAPLES-MOTLEY 13 20 - 33
TOTALS - Osakis - FG - 26-64; 3-point FG - 5-21; FT - 5-7; Rebounds - 37; Assists - 13; Deflections - 22; Steals - 11; Turnovers - 10; Staples-Motley - FG - 11-42; 3-point FG - 4-16; Rebounds - 31; Turnovers - 20
OSAKIS - Tessa Stanek - 5 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist, 4 deflections, 1 steal; Lexi Spychalla - 4 points, 3 rebounds, 2 deflections; Mara VanNyhuis - 16 points, 4 rebounds, 6 assists, 3 deflections, 3 steals; Alexis Johanson - 15 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists, 4 deflections, 1 steal; Lexi Klimek - 2 points, 1 rebound, 1 assist, 1 deflection, 1 steal; Hayleigh Niehoff - 2 points, 3 rebounds, 4 deflections, 2 steals; Madeline Anderson - 1 deflection; Carlee Muenzhuber - 3 points, 3 rebounds, 2 assists, 2 deflections, 2 steals; Taylor Dirkes - 1 rebound; Madi Collins - 5 points, 2 rebounds, 1 deflection; Kiley Kranz - 10 points, 8 rebounds, 1 steal
STAPLES-MOTLEY SCORING - Mandy Carter - 3; Aften Robinson - 5; Alli Olander - 2; Addison Lorber - 12; Ashley Robben - 2; Allison Knosalla - 5; Lauren Ruten - 4

Chargers fall in LEC to Battle Lake

Brandon-Evansville has played two of the top teams in the Little Eight Conference in back-to-back games after falling to Underwood (5-0, 4-0 LEC) on Dec. 10 and Battle Lake in a 56-40 final on Tuesday night.

The Battlers (5-0, 4-0 LEC) led by just five at the break, but they put up 35 second-half points to pull away for the double-digit win over the Chargers (2-3, 1-2 LEC).

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Kranz