

GIRLS BASKETBALL

BOYS BASKETBALL

Spuds spoil Cihak's big scoring night

By Jared Rubado
Detroit Lakes Tribune

DETROIT LAKES – The Detroit Lakes boys basketball team suffered a close loss at home on Wednesday night despite a big night from senior Nate Cihak.

Cihak scored a season-high 32 points in the Lakers' (8-12) 87-81 loss to Moorhead (12-10). He made 13-of-18 shots from the field, including 4-of-5 from three-point range. He also added six assists in the win.

Mason Carrier scored 16 points and grabbed 12 rebounds to add another double-double to his sophomore resume. Devon Berg (9), Brandon Marsh (8) and Chris Breeden (8) also got in on the scoring action with at least eight points.

The Lakers head to Aitkin (6-12) and Little Falls (7-14) on Thursday and Friday before closing out the final week of the season against Park Rapids (14-5), Staples-Motley (6-14) and Crosby Ironton (16-6).

MOORHEAD 87, DETROIT LAKES 81
DETROIT LAKES: Nate Cihak 32 points, 3 rebounds, 6 assists, 1 steal; Mason Carrier 16 points, 12 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 block; Devon Berg 9 points, 2 assists, 2 steals; Brandon Marsh 8 points, 6 rebounds, 2 steals; Chris Breeden 9 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist; Ethan Carrier 5 points, 1 rebound, 1 assist; Mason Omberg 2 points; Caeden Yliniemi 1 point, 1 assist, 1 steal; Christian Solberg 5 rebounds, 4 assists, 2 steals

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Remembering a classic game in a storied rivalry

Editors note: This is a column from Tom Hintgen out of Fergus Falls. This does not necessarily reflect the views of the Detroit Lakes Tribune or the Forum News Service.

By Tom Hintgen
Fergus Falls Journal

At the start of the 1981-82 high school boys basketball season, coaches Bob Bjorklund of Fergus Falls and John Erickson of Detroit Lakes both felt that their squads were capable of reaching the state high school basketball tournament. So did their fans.

The Otter boys were hoping to reach state for the first time in 25 years, the last time being in 1957. The Lakers were experiencing an even longer drought, since 1918.

The Scott Mesker-led Otters played superbly 40 years ago, looking for a showdown with the Lakers in the 1982 north half of Region 8AA. That's when Minnesota still had two classes of high school basketball.

Fergus Falls, before getting its postseason game with the Lakers, received a confidence booster with a regular season 65-60 home victory over rival Moorhead. This gave the Otters win number 15 during the 1981-82 season.

The showdown with the Lakers in the north half region finals took place Saturday evening, March 13, 1982, at the Detroit Lakes High School gymnasium. Many fans entered the gym two hours before tipoff, with the attendance listed at 2,200.

Three rows of chairs were positioned on the south and west sides of the court, and there still was standing room only.

Otter star Mesker played the game with a stress fracture in his right foot.

"A gutsy athlete," Otter assistant coach Steve Atchison said.

Fergus Falls led 11-9 after one period, but Detroit Lakes had the upper hand by two points at halftime, 25-23.

After three periods it was 42-40 in favor of the Otters. Fans predicted the outcome would be decided in the final minute in a game in which the teams were evenly matched.

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Photos by Vance Carlson / Forum News Service

Detroit Lakes' Jacee Hauser, right, fights for a rebound with Mickey Clark in the Lakers' 60-46 win over Park Rapids on Tuesday.

Lakers grab Mid-State win on the road

By Vance Carlson
Park Rapids Enterprise

Park Rapids

A 13-0 run in the first half provided some separation as Detroit Lakes didn't trail in a 60-46 Mid-State Conference victory over the Park Rapids girls basketball team at the Area High School gym on Tuesday, Feb. 22.

Three-pointers by Abby Morris, Gabi Shepersky and Tori Weaver rallied the Panthers to a 9-9 tie with 12:59 to play in the first half before Detroit Lakes took the lead for good on layups by Ellie Lunde and Grace Gunderson. After a layup by Anna Yliniemi made it 13-11 at the 7:35 mark, the Lakers went on a 13-0 run sparked by three layups by Ella Okeson for a 26-11 advantage with 1:58 remaining before the break. Layups by Halle Eischens and Yliniemi cut the gap to 26-15 before a 3-pointer by Jacee Hauser gave the Lakers a 29-15 lead at the half.

A pair of 3-pointers by Weaver, a layup by Mickey Clark and a putback by Shepersky sliced the deficit to 40-31 with 12:18 to play. Two layups by Abby Larson helped push the Lakers' lead to 50-33 at the 7:10 mark. Three 3-pointers by Shepersky and two baskets by Yliniemi were offset by a pair of 3-pointers and a basket off a rebound by Hauser as the Lakers maintained a double-digit lead.

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Detroit Lakes' Abby Larson, middle, chases after a loose ball with Park Rapids' Halle Eischens, left, and Olivia Davis on Tuesday in the Lakers' 60-46 win.

The best thing I saw last week: Camaraderie between rivals

One of the things that made me most nervous about taking this job was how good gymnastics is in this part of the state.

The Detroit Lakes and Perham gymnastics teams are revered around the state, and neither program is showing signs of slowing down. Don't get me wrong,

I love getting chances to cover teams at a state championship level, but I had zero experience with the sport before this season.

The Section 8A championship was the first gymnastics meet I've covered. I did go to the Jackie Mann Invitational in Perham, but since we are still short-staffed in our sports departments, I couldn't stay until the end. Mix that in with some postponements and cancellations, and you end up being in my position.

I had a good idea of what to expect two Saturdays ago at sections. I followed both Detroit Lakes and Perham all year and did a fair amount of research on covering gymnastics. Over these last two weeks, I learned a lot about the sport, and I'm very excited to tackle more meets next season. But one thing I learned stood above the rest.

At the state Class A



Jared Rubado / Detroit Lakes Tribune

Jerzie Horner, left, Gabby Whitworth, middle, and Avery McAllister celebrate McAllister's bars routine at the state Class A individual championships at the Roy Wilkins Auditorium in St. Paul on Feb. 19.

individual championships, I saw three championship-level programs openly rooting for each other to succeed. Detroit Lakes, Perham and Melrose is considered by many as three of the state's best teams in Class A. They battle it out in duals and invitational all season just to have it come down to one day at sections.

When teams see each other that much, the athletes begin to know each other personally. That can create really good friendships or develop into bitter rivals. It was apparent there is a strong connection between the coaches and

gymnasts from the top three schools from Section 8A. However, I didn't expect them to openly root for each other.

The best thing I saw last week is the genuine well-wishes between some of the best athletes in the state competing for their ultimate prize. There are too many moments to count where a Perham coach or gymnast would be overjoyed seeing a Detroit Lakes gymnast put up a big score. I saw Lakers and Yellowjackets wholeheartedly pulling for Dutchmen to do their best even though they were competing against each

other. Detroit Lakes head coach Leesa Lindgaard's voice was nearly gone by the end of the second day because she cheered hard for three different teams.

"We met a couple of years ago," Detroit Lakes junior Gabby Whitworth said of the other gymnasts from Section 8A. "We all come to state together every year. Seeing them at sections and state all the time, it's a lot easier to cheer for them. It's a lot of fun when you're cheering them on, and they're cheering for you too."

What makes this so noteworthy is knowing how intense this sport is. To have programs at this level means the gymnasts are committed to being the best year-round. That's the culture established in these programs, and it shows every year at the state championships. For these kids to dedicate so much time to be good enough to beat these other girls, but also be able to put it all aside and cheer for them, takes a remarkable amount of goodwill.

"I feel like we've all competed against each other for a lot of years," Perham sophomore Avery McAllister said. "That really helps. These individual state days really bring us all together. I see those girls as my teammates. I practice with some of the DL girls in the summer, so these girls are sisters to me."

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