

SPORTS & OUTDOORS

BOYS & GIRLS GOLF

Cink, VandenEinde wrap up season at day two of sections



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Ayden Christ led the boys team with 93 strokes in the opening round of the Section 2AA tournament last Tuesday.



Senior golfer Darbi Dunning shot a 104 in her final match, helping the Giants to a sixth-place team finish in the opening round of the Section 2AA tournament.

By Rachel Miller
Editor

The Giants girls golf team closed the season on Tuesday, as Allison Cink and Cooper VandenEinde wrapped up the Section 2AA Tournament at the New Prague Golf Club.

Cink added 94 to her round one score of 98 to total 192 strokes and finish in 12th place. Cink was 10 strokes away from a state bid, as Blue Earth Area's Payten Gudahl shot 183 to finish seventh and earn the final state ticket. VandenEinde shot 102 for a two-round total 200 strokes to finish in 18th place.

Round one of the section tournament was held Tuesday, May 31. Senior Darbi Dunning shot a 104 in her final match for the Giants.

She was followed by Peyton Hartmann with a 114, Sofie Wilson with a 119, and Morgan Haggemiller with 123.

As a team, the girls shot 414 to finish a respectable sixth place, out of 13 teams.

A mere nine strokes separated the five teams that finished ahead of the Giants. Blue Earth Area shot 378, with Holy Family Catholic a very close second with 379. Jordan was third with 381, followed by St. Peter with 385 and Southwest Christian with 387.

The boys team did not advance anyone from the first round of competition on May 31. Ayden Christ was the top golfer with a 93, followed by Jack Feterl's 95, Nathan Tews' 100, Bryson Steinborn's 101, JD Reinhardt's 102 and Wyattte Devens' 106.



The Giants girls team finished sixth out of a field of 13 in last Tuesday's Section 2AA opening round. Pictured from left to right are Morgan Haggemiller, Cooper VandenEinde, Darbi Dunning, Sofie Wilson, Allison Cink and Peyton Hartmann.

TOWN BASEBALL

CLASH OF THE TIGERS

By Beth Cornish
Independent staff

A Tigers win was guaranteed on Saturday, the question was what breed?

The Henderson Tigers hit the road to play the Belle Plaine Tigers at Tigers Stadium on Wednesday, June 1, but the Belle Plaine nine proved a formidable foe and dealt Henderson a big 11-1 loss.

In the first five innings the Henderson team had only four total baserunners from a combination of a hit batter, an error and two singles.

A lead-off single to Nathan Gregersen in the sixth finally got Henderson on the scoreboard. He advanced to third on an error during Ben Miller's at bat, then scored on a ground out to Miller.

In the top of the seventh, trailing 10-1, with two outs, Henderson strung together back-to-back hits from Lon Berberich and Luke Frauendienst to put runners on first and second before Gregersen hit a grounder toward left center for the final out.

Belle Plaine took the field in the bottom of the seventh and the leadoff man walked, advanced to second on a balk, then scored on a single to end the game in favor of the home team Tigers 11-1.

Frauendienst and Miller shared the pitching duties for Henderson and while they did surrender 13 hits, eight walks and hit a batter, they did each strike out two men.

Also, two of the managers got into the act that night, with Dana Melius playing first and going one for two at the plate. Berberich got a pinch hit in the seventh.

GIANTS BASEBALL

Giants playoff run ends in extra-inning home run heartbreaker

By Beth Cornish and Rachel Miller
Independent staff

The Le Sueur-Henderson Giants saw their playoff dreams end last Thursday with a high-run extra inning that saw Maple River emerge victorious by a single run.

The Section 2AA elimination bracket opener started slow, with the Giants earning a 1-0 lead in the first, before LS-H and Maple River engaged in a high-scoring battle in the final inning.

The Giants took advantage of three walks, a Sam Gupton single, Ben Miller double and two stolen bases to score four times in the fifth inning. Maple River followed that up with four runs of their own.

Walks to Logan Feeny and Nathan Gregersen, and an Ethan Hathaway single brought Feeny home to give the Giants a 6-4 lead in the top of the sixth.

Maple River then responded with four hits of their own

to plate three runs and take a 7-6 lead in the bottom of the inning.

Jacob Stolley led off the seventh inning for the Giants with a single, advanced on a single from Brody Berndt and a walk to Feeny loaded the bases. A double from Gregersen plated Stolley and Berndt, then Luna's single to right center scored Feeny to bring the score to 9-7.

Unfortunately, the Giants were not able to fend off Maple River, who used two singles, a walk and a wild pitch to score the tying two runs and send the game to an extra inning.

The Giants started the eighth with a walk to Stolley, who

walked to second after a balk. A wild pitch put Stolley on third and Berndt on second. Feeny hit a sacrifice fly to deep center to score Stolley and put two outs on the board.

Gregersen then doubled to bring Berndt home, and Maple River intentionally walked Sam Gupton before unintentionally walking Hathaway, and Cayden Luna hit a two-run RBI single before Maple River threw the inning-ending strikeout.

With a 13-9 lead, things were looking good for the Giants.

Although Maple River opened the bottom of the eighth with a single, the Giants followed that up with a flyout and strikeout. With a four-run

lead, one batter on base and two outs, things were looking up, but then things started to unravel.

The Giants walked the next two batters to load the bases, and Maple River's Boden Simon hit a single to score, bringing the score to 13-11.

But it was Maple River's Lucas Doering who dealt the death blow, as he hit a home run to right field to score the winning runs.

That home run ended LS-H's time in the playoffs, while #5 Maple River had to play #2 NRHEG on Saturday, and lost 5-2.

Sibley East, ranked #3 going into the Section 2AA tourna-

ment, earned a big 13-2 upset victory over #1 New Ulm in the semifinals on Saturday morning. The Wolverines will have the advantage going into the Section 2AA Championship this Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

EAGLES BEST LS-H

The Giants were sent to the elimination bracket after falling 13-1 to #1 New Ulm on Tuesday, May 31.

Le Sueur-Henderson started okay with singles to Sam Gupton and Gregersen in the first inning, but neither was able to advance. They were unable to muster more than a single to Luna in the third. Going scoreless into the fourth, David

Gupton drew a five pitch walk and moved to second on a single from Berndt. Both runners moved up a base when Feeny hit a groundout, and David Gupton scored on a wild pitch for the Giants only run of the game.

New Ulm hit early and often, racking up five runs on three hits in the first, then doubled down in the second with six runs on five hits to bring their lead to 11-0.

They scored one more run in the third to bring their total to 12 and answered the Giants' lone run in the top of the fourth with a run of their own in the bottom half of the frame.

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LE SUEUR - HENDERSON ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Dylan Novak & Emily Sullivan

The two seniors had equally impressive performances at the Section 2A Track & Field meet on Saturday. Novak set three new personal bests to qualify for the state meet in the 100 and 200 meter dash and 300 meter hurdles, while Sullivan is the new state record-holder in the wheelchair shot put with a throw of 14 feet, 11.75 inches.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK SPONSORED BY:

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SPORTS & OUTDOORS

TRACK AND FIELD

Two senior Giants leave it all on the track

Sullivan smashes state shot put record; Novak triple PRs in section meet

By Rachel Miller
Editor

To say that Le Sueur-Henderson seniors Emily Sullivan and Dylan Novak each qualified for three events in the upcoming Class A State Track and Field meet this Thursday and Friday. Their performance at Saturday's Section 2A Track and Field meet at Mankato West was nothing short of phenomenal, as Novak boasted three personal bests, and Sullivan broke the state record in the wheelchair shot put competition.

Sullivan has made great gains this season, with PR after PR, as she set her sights on the shot put state record: 14 feet, 6.25 inches, set by Pine Island's Kathryn Lubahn in 2012. Throughout the season she has gained more and more ground as she trained hard and pushed herself to be the best.

It is no small feat, since Sullivan is typically the only wheelchair athlete at a meet, there is nobody to keep an eye on, no competition to help push her. She has to dig deep within herself to find that drive, that push, to aim for the stars and discover her maximum potential.

"We knew early on in the season that Emily was very close to breaking the state record in the shot, and that was one of our goals for the season," Coach Sue Hynes said.

Hynes pushed Sullivan this season, and many times she went home exhausted, but she kept coming back, doing the workouts and pushing herself.

On Saturday, all of that hard work finally paid off, as Sullivan threw the shot put 14 feet, 11.75 inches to smash the Class A record by a whopping 5.5 inches.

To help her visualize, last week during practice they placed markers at the state record level, and Friday's practice included having her visualize making the record-breaking throw.

"After the meet on Saturday, Emily and I were discussing how well that visualization worked, but neither of us thought it would work that well!" Hynes said.

Sullivan was all smiles and bursting with excitement after the meet, and would love to break the 15 foot mark at state.

"It has been awesome. I love the encouragement everyone else gives me. It is great and I

am going to miss it a lot," Sullivan said.

In addition to the shot put, Sullivan will also be competing in the wheelchair 100 and 200 meter dash at state. Sullivan turned in season best times of 31.50 seconds and 1:03.54 at Saturday's section meet.

NOVAK TRIPLE PRs

Ever just as impressive, Novak earned his ticket to the Class A State Track and Field meet in the 100 meter dash, 200 meter dash and 300 meter hurdles, with personal records in all three on Saturday.

Novak was crowned the Section 2A Champion in both the 100 and 200 meter dash, and placed second in the 300 hurdles.

The 100 meter dash is always a close race, and just 0.71 separated the top eight competitors. In the prelims, Novak ran 11.40 to finish fifth while GFW's Treay Taylor won in 11.09 seconds, but the finals were a different story. Novak blasted past the competition and Taylor and turned in a personal best 11.10 seconds to win the race, 0.05 ahead of Taylor.

The 200 meter dash was all Novak, who won the prelims in 22.79 seconds, and then hit another personal record, 22.76 seconds in the finals to beat LCWM's Brady Navemeier by 0.25 seconds.

Novak faced some stiff competition in the 300 meter hurdles, as nine of the 16 competitors achieved personal bests, including all top five racers.

LCWM's Miles Flack led the pack and won the race in 39.74 seconds. Novak said he was keeping an eye on Flack, and as it turned out, Novak hit a personal best as high as the hurdles he leaps over as he chased Flack. Just last week, Novak set a new personal best 41.01 seconds; on Saturday, Novak finished in 40.27 seconds and kept 0.38 seconds ahead of third place to solidify a third spot at state.

Novak left it all on the track, as he said his legs "felt like noodles" by the end of the day.

"I am excited, I could not be any happier," Novak said.

This will be Novak's second time competing at state in the 200 meter dash and the 300 meter hurdles, and his first qualification in the 100 meter dash. Last year, Novak was a little scared as he started the 300 meter hurdles; this year he hopes to be more relaxed to

be in a better mindset for his races.

"The best part of my life is running track; I have no regrets," Novak said.

Novak also competed in the long jump at the section meet, but came up short with a jump of 19 feet, 6 inches to place fifth overall. St. James Area's Anthony Sletta won the competition with a distance of 20 feet, 4.5 inches, and Sibley East's Zach Halverson earned the second and final state bid with a jump of 19 feet, 11 inches. LS-H junior Justin Terwedo jumped 18 feet, 3.25 inches to place 12th.

"Dylan is always a competitor to the end, and he was disappointed that he didn't make it to state in the long jump, but making it to state in three events and having three PR's is spectacular," Hynes said.

OTHER FINISHERS

Although Novak and Sullivan were the only Giants runners to turn in a top two finish to advance to state, a handful more ended the season with personal bests.

Junior Riley Thelemann had a great day, as he hit personal records in both the 110 meter hurdles (18.36 seconds) and 300 meter hurdles (45.25 seconds).

Other athletes hitting personal bests were Josiah Juarez, 13th in the 1600 meter run, 5:08.88; Norah Renstrom, 11th in the 1600, 6:03.93, and 14th in the 3200, 13:42.40; and Drea Terwedo, fourth in the 100 meter hurdles, 17.19 seconds.

Other finishers include Justin Terwedo, sixth in the triple jump, 38 feet, 10 inches; Stanley Brown, ninth in the 200 meter dash, 24.23 seconds; Owen Greisen, 16th in the 3200, 12:09.74; Mason Reinhardt, 14th in the discus, 100 feet, 9 inches; Grace Wagner, fifth in the 400, 1:03.59; Hailey Juarez, fourth in the 800, 2:38.72; Lexi Terwedo, sixth in the 800, 2:42.20; Riley Sater, seventh in the pole vault, 8 feet, 4 inches; and the 4x400 relay team (Wagner, Juarez and Drea and Lexi Terwedo), third in 4:24.86.

"As a team, we were really hoping to send more to state and we really wanted a relay to go, but I am very happy with all 14 athletes' performances," Hynes said. "About half of the 14 athletes will be returning next year and I anticipate that many of them will be advancing to state next year."



PHOTOS BY RACHEL MILLER

Le Sueur-Henderson will be sending two athletes to compete in six events at the Class A State Track and Field meet this Thursday and Friday. Senior Dylan Novak will be competing in the 200 meter dash and 300 meter hurdles for a second time, and also qualified for the 100 meter dash this year. Senior Emily Sullivan is making her third trip to state to compete in the wheelchair shot put, 100 meter dash and 200 meter dash. Sullivan hit a high note at the Section 2A meet on Saturday, as her shot put throw of 14 feet, 11.75 inches broke the state record by 5.5 inches.

State Track and Field Schedule

The State Track and Field meet will be held at St. Michael-Albertville High School, 5800 Jamison Ave NE, St Michael.

Dylan Novak and Emily Sullivan are competing in Class A. The Class A Preliminaries are scheduled for Thursday, June 9, starting at 4 p.m., and the Finals are Friday, June 10, starting at 4 p.m. Their tentative schedule is as follows:

Novak: 100 meter dash preliminaries, 4:30 p.m. Thursday; 300 meter hurdles pre-

liminaries, 6:11 p.m.; and 200 meter dash preliminaries, 6:49 p.m. If he qualifies for the finals on Friday, estimated start times are: 100 meter dash, 5:19 p.m., 300 meter hurdles, 6:58 p.m., and 200 meter dash, 7:28 p.m.

Sullivan: She does not have to compete in Thursday's preliminaries. Her Friday events are scheduled for: 4 p.m. in the shot put; 5:16 p.m. in the wheelchair 100 meter dash; and 7:23 p.m. in the wheelchair 200 meter dash.



Senior Hailey Juarez grabs the baton from fellow senior teammate Grace Wagner to start the second lap of the 4x400 meter relay to conclude Saturday's Section 2A meet. The Giants finished third in 4:24.86.



Owen Greisen pushes it in to finish up the 3200 meter run on Saturday.



SOFTBALL

DEFENDING THE TITLE

Giants clip Eagles wings in extra innings

By Rachel Miller
Editor

If there is one thing the Le Sueur-Henderson Giants softball team is good at, it is making games memorable. Whether it be extra innings in the playoffs, turning a 10-0 deficit into a 16-10 victory, or a high-flying catch in the state championship, they are good at keeping fans on their toes at key moments — perhaps a little too good.

Last Thursday's Section 2AA Championship game against the #1 New Ulm Eagles was an exciting, nail-biting affair, as the Giants found themselves trailing 3-0 after the top of the second inning and spent the rest of the game — all 11 innings — waging a come-from-behind battle and earning a 7-6 win to defend their Section 2AA Championship title, and hopefully, last year's state championship title.

As the only team thus undefeated in section play, the Giants were going in with an advantage: they needed to win just one more game to earn a return trip to the state tournament; the Eagles would have to topple them twice to earn a state trip.

The Eagles proved hungry for a win, as they scored once in the first and twice in the second to take a 3-0 lead.

Facing a 3-0 deficit in the bottom of the second, Samantha Wilbright and Chloe Brandt both got on bases with singles, and then Morgan Gregersen hit an RBI single to plate Wilbright. Dalaney Pavlo hit a grounder and got on base due to an Eagles error, while Brandt made it home safely to close the gap to 3-2, Eagles.

The Giants tied the game in the fourth, thanks to a Gregersen triple and Teagan Graham single.

The Giants then broke the tie in the fifth when Rhyan Fritz singled, reached second on a passed ball and advanced to third on a Bailey Lehman sacrifice bunt. Fritz successfully made it home on a Brandt fly ball and Eagles error, and the Giants took a 4-3 lead.

The Eagles hit a single and a Giants walk put runners on first and second in the sixth, but after a sacrifice bunt and

State Softball Schedule

The Giants, the defending state champions, have earned the #2 seed for the Class AA Championship Series, which opens Thursday, June 9 at Caswell Park in Mankato.

The Giants will open against Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton on Thursday at 11 a.m. on Field 5.

If they win, the Giants will play the winner of the #3 Chatfield/Mounds Park Academy in the semifinals at 5 p.m. on Field 2.

If the Giants lose their opening quarterfinal, they will play in a consolation game at 7 p.m. on Field 4.

Friday's action will all wrap up on Field 2: the consolation championship is scheduled for 9 a.m.; the third place match will begin at 11 a.m., and the Class AA Championship is scheduled to start at 2 p.m.

The Henderson Independent will be posting updates throughout the tournament, so make sure to follow us on Facebook to stay in the loop!

Brandt strikeout, the Giants appeared to have things in hand. The call was made to intentionally walk the next batter, which loaded the bases.

Fans who attended last year's state championship game against St. Charles might recall a similar situation in the fifth inning, and Halle Bemmels' game-saving catch. Unfortunately, this time the ball went uncaught, and the Eagles capitalized on a double to score three runs and reclaim a 6-4 lead.

It can be a hard lesson to hold onto, but Coach Eric Lewis said he teaches his players to hang in there during the rough times because the tide has to turn.

"Our philosophy for the playoffs is always positive — stay positive, stick with it and eventually good stuff will work itself out," Lewis said.

That philosophy paid off. The Giants chipped away at the lead in the bottom of the sixth as Brynn Biedscheid singled, then courtesy runner Anyssa Christ made it to third on a Graham double, and scored on a Madi Wilbright groundout.

The Giants denied the Eagles any hope to extend the lead with three quick outs, including two Brandt strikeouts, in the top of the seventh.

One more inning — one more chance to score. Samantha Wilbright opened with a popout to record the team's first out. Brandt followed that

up with a line drive to left field to get on first. Brandt managed to steal second during Gregersen's at-bat, and the Eagles sent Gregersen packing with a strikeout.

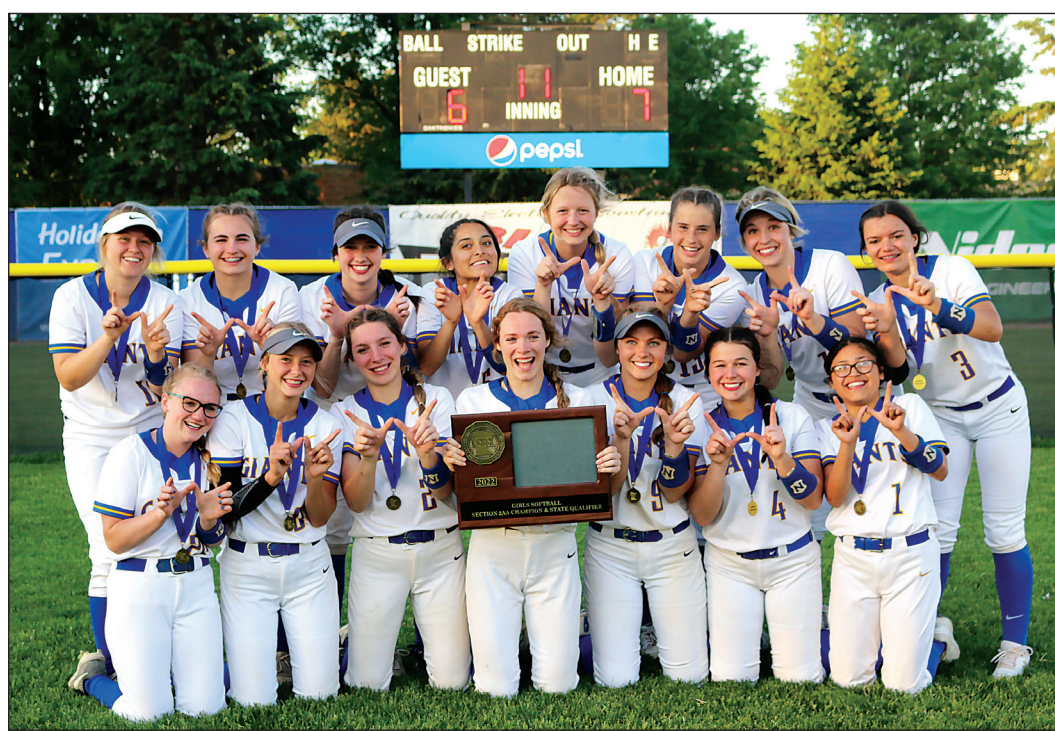
Two outs, and the tying run on second. Pavlo stepped to the plate...and hit a grounder...and Brandt took off running. An error by the Eagles first baseman allowed Pavlo to reach first safely, and Brandt successfully scored the tying run, much to the Giants' excitement.

The Eagles earned that third and final out on the next batter, sending the game to what would be the first of four extra innings.

Fans were on the edge of their seats, as the two teams traded quick innings, double plays, and looked for any error or weakness to exploit. Brandt wound up earning five strikeouts over the course of the four extra innings, including three strikeouts in the 10th inning.

The Eagles earned two quick outs on the Giants in the bottom of the 11th, and fans wondered just how many innings the game would last. But then Samantha Wilbright connected and hit a single to center field, and made it to second on a wild pitch. The Eagles chose to intentionally walk Brandt, and Gregersen earned her third hit of the night to score the game-winning run.

The win is a big moment for this year's team. Although the Giants are the defending state



PHOTOS BY RACHEL MILLER

The Le Sueur-Henderson Giants softball team repeated as the Section 2AA Champions last Thursday. The Giants turned a 3-0 deficit into a tie game by the seventh inning, and ultimately won 7-6 over the New Ulm Eagles in 11 innings.

champions, this year's squad is a very young one, as the Giants graduated eight seniors last year.

Samantha Wilbright is the team's sole senior, and sister Madi, Pavlo, Brandt and Fritz are juniors. But this year's squad also includes six sophomores, a freshman, two eighth-graders and sev-

enth-grader Graham.

In fact, Lewis said the last time he took a squad this young to state was their first state appearance in 2014, when the Giants were the Class AA state runner-up.

Last Thursday's section championship really was a team effort, as many players pulled out hits, catches and

runs at key moments. Gregersen managed three hits for two RBIs and one run; Graham had three hits and one RBI; Brandt had three hits, scored two runs and threw 16 strikeouts (including five in extra innings); Samantha Wilbright had two hits and two runs; Fritz earned three hits and one run; freshman Biedscheid earned one



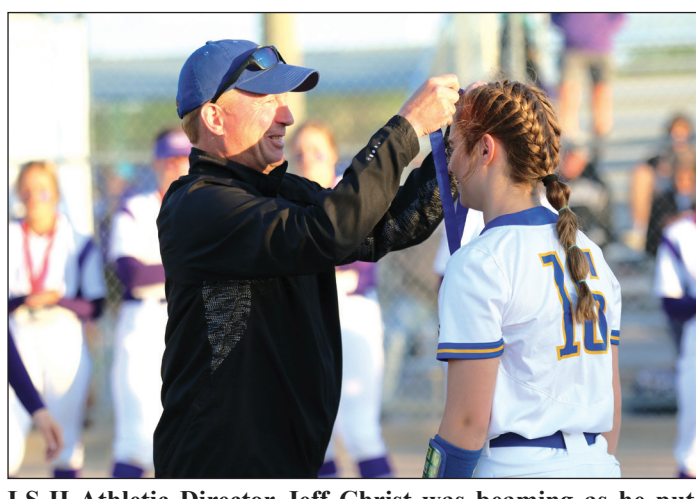
The Giants celebrate as a Teagan Graham double put pinch runner Anyssa Christ on third base in the bottom of the sixth. Right after this photo was taken, Madi Wilbright ground out to first, but Christ took advantage of the play to score a run.



Sophomore Morgan Gregersen had a big day for the Giants, with three hits, two RBIs, and one run scored.



Samantha Wilbright gets a hit in the section championship game.



LS-H Athletic Director Jeff Christ was beaming as he put the Section Championship medal around daughter Anyssa's neck last Thursday.