

SPORTS

7A SOFTBALL CHAMPIONS



The Moose Lake/Willow River softball team celebrates in Cloquet Thursday with its Section 7A championship trophy. Photos by Dave Harwig/Pine Knot Sports

Rebels end 40-year wait for state

Kerry Rodd

sports@PineKnotNews.com

Last Tuesday the Moose Lake/Willow River girls softball team got a wake-up call. For only the fourth time this season, the Rebels lost — this time to Carlton/Wrenshall in the Section 7A playoffs. The Rebels used that loss as a catalyst to rebound by winning five straight games on their way to the Section 7A title.

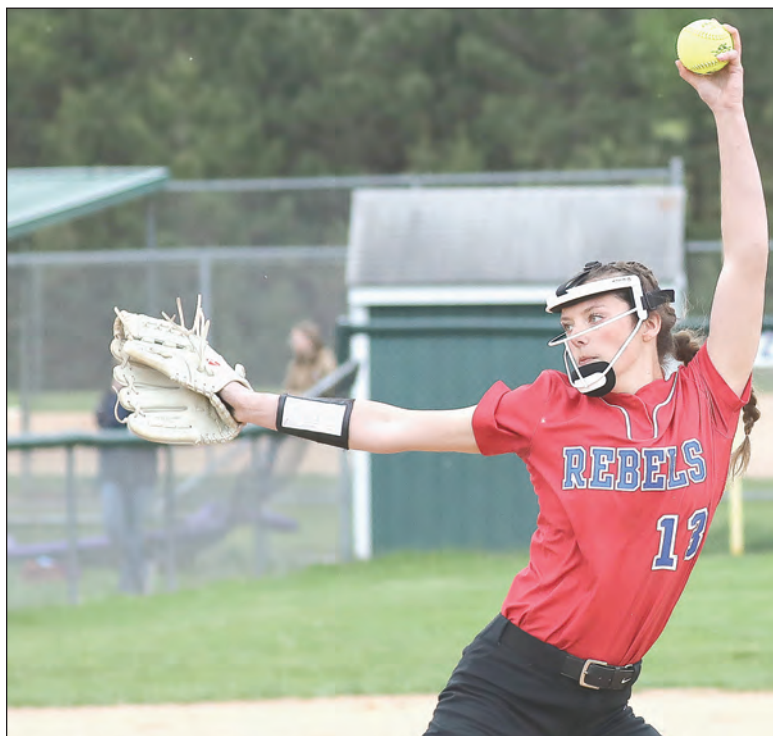
In those five games the Rebels piled up 53 runs while giving up just two runs.

“Give Carlton/Wrenshall and their pitcher Abby Mitchell credit when they beat us,” said Rebels coach Kelly Goeb. “Abby pitched a good game and we had a couple of fluke things happen, and we just lost.”

Following the loss, the Rebels returned to the practice field and spent the next few days hitting, hitting and ... well, you get the idea.

“We just didn’t hit well in that game, but we know we have a good hitting team and we wanted to come back and show that we are a good hitting team,” Goeb said.

Following the loss, ML/WR returned to the field the day after Memorial Day, where they won three straight — over South Ridge, Silver Bay and Carlton/Wrenshall — by a combined 34-0 score. Those wins set the Rebels up for the championship round against the Cherry Tigers, then unbeaten in tournament play. The Rebels would have to beat the Tigers twice in Cloquet



Moose Lake/Willow River pitcher Sarah Christy throws a pitch during Thursday's Section 7A championship softball game with Cherry.

Thursday in order to advance to their first state tournament in 40 years.

“Going into the finals on Thursday, we were confident,” Goeb said. “Our girls just had the desire to win and our plan was to play the two games like they were just one long game. I told them we need to be ahead at halftime and at the end of the game.”

Cherry got on the board in the first inning when leadoff batter Lauren Staples singled, was sacrificed to second on a bunt, stole third and then scored on a passed ball. That was the only run for the Tigers.

ML/WR tied the game in the fourth inning when Natalie Mikrot singled and went to second on a groundout before scoring on a base hit by Janna Bode. In the fifth inning, the Rebels exploded for four runs as Hannah Roach, Megan Hattenberger, Hallie Klavu and Sandra Ribich all scored to give them a 5-1 lead.

“That was a big inning for us and we fed off that momentum,” said Goeb. “The bats started slow, but once we got the run and tied it, the girls just knew they could get to their senior pitcher, and we did.”

The Rebels tacked on a single run in the top of the sixth by Roach and the final run of the game in the top of the seventh by Mikrot for the final of 7-1.

Sarah Christy was the winning pitcher for the Rebels. After allowing the first batter of the game to score, Christy shut down the Tigers and allowed only two hits in her six innings of work. Alexis Hoffman pitched the seventh for the Rebels and gave up one hit while striking out two.

“Sarah came out on fire and threw a heck of a game,” Goeb said. “We threw Hoffman in the seventh and she threw just as hard as any of the pitchers in the game for both teams.”

Staples pitched the first four innings for the Tigers, giving up four runs on seven hits. Lydia Greely tossed the final three innings, giving up three hits and three runs.

Entering the winner-take-all championship game, the Rebels won the toss and were the home team in what would turn out to be an 11-1 walk-off win.

Staples led the game off — as she did in the first game — by scoring the first run of the game and giving the Tigers a 1-0 lead. But the Rebels wasted little time in bouncing back by scoring three runs in the bottom of the first inning to go ahead 3-1. Klavu, Christy and Ribich all scored with the big hit in the inning being a two-run double by Lily Kahara.

In the second inning, Roach bashed a triple and scored on a sacrifice fly by Hattenberger to

push the lead to 4-1. The Rebels put the game out of reach in the fifth as Roach, Klavu, Christy, Ribich, Mikrot and Kahara all scored to push the lead to 10-1. ML/WR ended the game in the bottom of the sixth inning when Kahara singled to score Christy for the 11-1 win.

The Rebels smacked out 13 hits in the game with the sophomore Kahara leading the way with 13 hits. Klavu, Christy and Bode all had two hits each.

After the final run was scored, the Rebels erupted in celebration on the field.

“When you win, it is a mixture of relief and excitement,” Goeb said. “We knew we could do it with our pitching, our defense and our hitting. It was just a great moment.”

Christy picked up the pitching win by going the whole way, allowing one earned run and four hits and not walking a batter.

The section title is the first for the Moose Lake/Willow River cooperative in softball. It was 40 years ago when the Moose Lake Laker girls team won the state tournament with Annie Adamczak picking up the pitching win.

“The girls are excited and we are ready to go down and show what kind of team we have,” Goeb said. “We think with our hitting, pitching and defense that we can have a good showing down in Mankato.”

7AA BASEBALL

Esko's Joey Antonutti watches his seventh-inning base hit during Tuesday's Section 7AA playoff game with Marshall School. Antonutti's hit broke up a no-hitter bid by Marshall's Owen Marsolek. Photos by Dave Harwig / Pine Knot News

Esko eliminated after strong playoff run

Jana Peterson
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After going undefeated in the Section 7AA tournament, the Esko boys baseball team was eliminated Tuesday, losing 5-0 to Marshall in the afternoon, then 11-9 to Proctor that night.

Coach Ben Haugen said he was proud of the team.

"We battled to the end tonight, I was proud of our guys for that, all the coaches were proud of them," Haugen said. "The kids are doing their best and playing their hardest. Sometimes it just doesn't go their way, but we're still proud of the effort they gave us."

He was also realistic. "We only got one hit in the first game," he said, adding that the Duluth Marshall pitcher was really good. "Then the second game we committed nine errors. It's tough to win a ballgame with that many errors. We did not field the ball very well today."

In the game against Marshall, Esko didn't get a hit until the final inning, a base hit by Joey Antonutti. Cale Haugen was the starting pitcher for Esko against Marshall, while Finn Furcht started for Esko against Proctor.

The Eskomos had a number of chances to win the second game against Proctor, but ended more than one inning with players on base.

Trailing 6-0 entering the bottom of the fourth inning, the Eskomos exploded for five runs to cut the lead to a run at 6-5. In the top of the fifth the Rails responded with a three-run



Esko's Isaak Sertich makes a foul ball catch during Tuesday's Section 7AA baseball playoff game with Marshall School.

inning and then tacked on two more runs in the top of the sixth to move ahead 11-5. Esko again answered with three runs in the bottom of the sixth to pull within 11-8. Esko also added a run in the bottom of the seventh, but it was too little too late to rally past the Rails.

Esko ended its season with 20 wins and five losses.

It was a year that the veteran coach — who marked his 16th season as head coach in Esko — originally thought might be a season of rebuilding, but the team was strong pretty much right off the bat.

"We were really young — we didn't start a senior," Haugen said. "We exceeded expectations, I think. But I still thought we had a good

chance to win the section championship. It just didn't work out."

The team is losing one senior, Cade Gonsorowski, to graduation. They will return the rest of the team, including Haugen's two sons, who both pitch. Cale will be a senior and Sam will be a sophomore next year.

After the game, Haugen said he told the team he was proud of them and to not let the last day define their season.

"It's tough when it comes to a crashing halt like that, but you have to reflect and remember we had fun together, that's ultimately the most important thing," he said. "I enjoyed being around them all year."



Esko first baseman AJ Kazel stretches to catch a ball and get Marshall School's Carter Boos out during Tuesday's Section 7AA playoffs at Wade Stadium.

Congratulations Section 7A champions and statebound athletes!



Members of the Esko girls track and field team celebrate their Section 7A win Thursday at the University of Minnesota Duluth. The Esko girls scored 143 points to take first place. *Contributed photo*



Members of the Esko boys track and field team celebrate their Section 7A win Thursday at the University of Minnesota Duluth. The Esko boys scored 153.5 points to easily take first. *Contributed photo*



From left, Esko's Mason Perich, Koi Perich and Braden Lowe finished first, second and third, respectively, in the Section 7A 200-meter final at UMD on Thursday. The Perich brothers qualified for the state track meet at St. Michael-Albertville High School.
Dave Harwig / Pine Knot News



Barnum's Mark Hall throws the discus during Thursday's Section 7A track meet at UMD. Hall qualified for the state meet with a second-place throw of 122 feet 11 inches.
Dave Harwig / Pine Knot News



Braden Lowe runs the first leg of the 4x100 meter relay. Lowe and teammates Carter Zezulka, Makoi and Mason Perich took first place.
Amy Arntson / Pine Knot News



Esko's Emily Rengo runs to the 100-meter win during Thursday's Section 7A track meet at UMD.
Amy Arntson / Pine Knot News

**STATEBOUND
Track & Field**
Esko
Mason Perich
Makoi Perich
Braden Lowe
Ben Meysembourg
Chad Hart
Carter Zezulka
Keone Anderson
Brett Lillo
Nate Rengo
Nikolas Martineau
Emily Rengo
Kaitlyn McConnell
Tegan Erickson
Gwen Lilly
Megan Chopskie
Whitney Hanson
Madison South

Alternates:
Eilee Straub
Liberty Clifford
Reese Kuklinski
Michael Cornell
Gino Bertogliat
Jacion Owens

Moose Lake/Willow River
Joseph Mikrot
Jackson Thompson
Chase Clausen
Jakob Mossberg
Logan Orvedahl
Kaden Robbins

Barnum
Mark Hall

Cromwell-Wright
Noah Foster
Emaleigh Olesiak
Andres Angulo
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Congratulations Section 7AA champions and statebound athletes!



STATEBOUND Cloquet

Olivia Jameson
Taylor Wick
Seija Suominen
Bella Harriman
Katie Turner
Lauren Hughes
Erin "Soup" Loeb
Lydia Stone
Caley Kruse
Jake Mertz
Cale Prosen
Calvin Snesrud
Sam Buytaert
Miles Fisher
Jordan Aultman
Xavier Anderson-White
Alex Petersen
Reese Sheldon

Alternates:
Alexa Shepherd
Amelia Allen
Miigwan Tanner-Wostrel
Elijah Aultman
Thorin Brown

Members and coaches of the Cloquet girls track and field team celebrate their Section 7AA championship win Saturday in North Branch. The boys team took second. *Dave Harwig / Pine Knot News*



Cloquet's Jacob Mertz ran to a 3200-meter win during the Section 7AA track meet at North Branch. Mertz set a personal record and won the race with a time of 9:54.89.



Cloquet's Jordan Aultman and Hibbing's Amari Manning compete in the 100-meter dash at Saturday's Section 7AA finals at North Branch. Aultman would win the race with a time of 11.31 seconds.



Cloquet's Reese Sheldon anchors the boys 4x100 relay team to the win and a state meet berth with a time of 44.72. Relay team members are Sheldon, Jordan Aultman, Xavier Anderson, and Alex Petersen.



Cloquet's Seija Suominen makes the winning throw in the Section 7AA discus final at North Branch. Suominen won the meet with a throw of 118 feet 6 inches on her final attempt.



The Cloquet girls 4x800 relay team, (top l-r) Erin Soup Loeb, Caley Kruse, (bottom l-r) Katie Turner and Lauren Hughes celebrate their Section 7AA title on the podium during Saturday's meet at North Branch.

Cloquet jumping coach Michelle Wick poses with high jumpers (l-r) Caley Kruse, Olivia Jameson, and Taylor Wick. Jameson and Wick qualified for State, finishing first and second, and Kruse finished third in the meet.



Congratulations!

~ Good Luck at State ~

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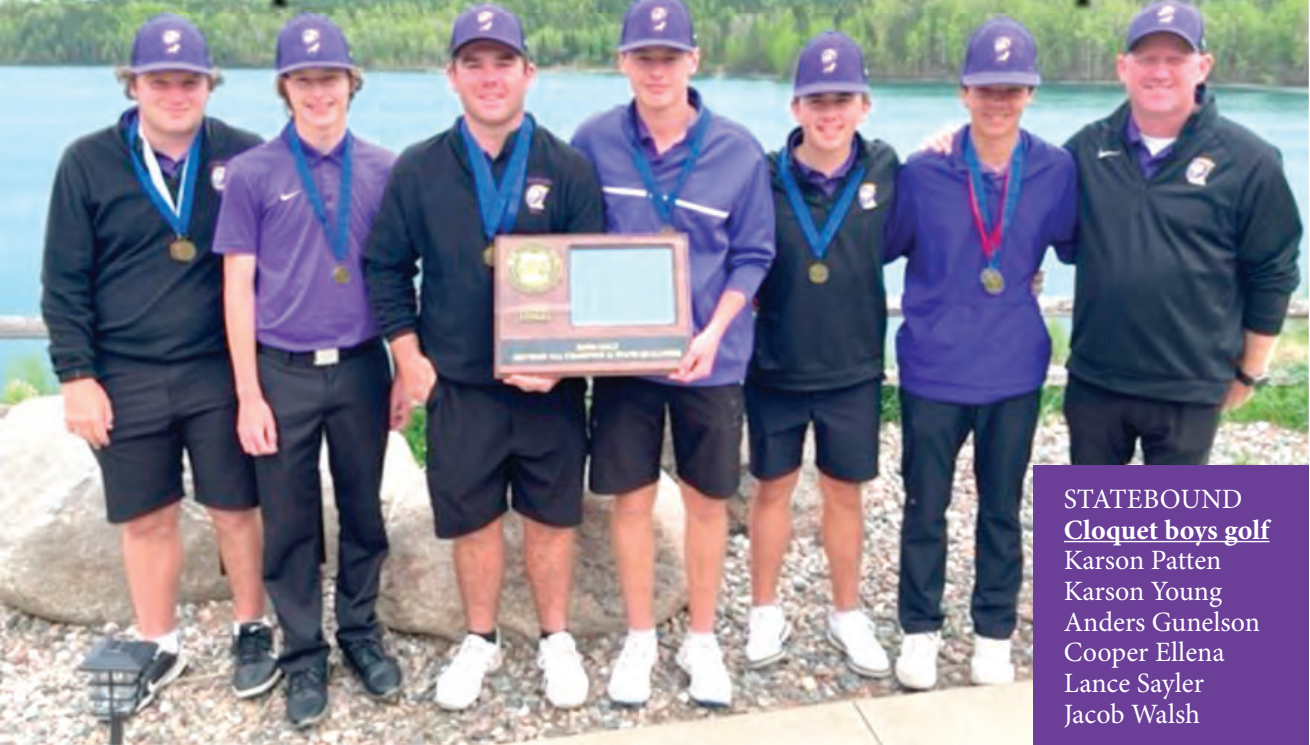
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Congratulations statebound athletes!

Cloquet Section 7AA Golf Champs!



The Cloquet boys varsity golf team crushed the competition at the Section 7AA championship on June 1-2, winning by 52 strokes. Section team players, from left, are Jacob Walsh, Lance Sayler, Karson Patten, Karson Young, Cooper Ellena, Anders Gunelson and coach Aaron Young. Patten, right, took first place.

Contributed photo



STATEBOUND
Cloquet boys golf
Karson Patten
Karson Young
Anders Gunelson
Cooper Ellena
Lance Sayler
Jacob Walsh

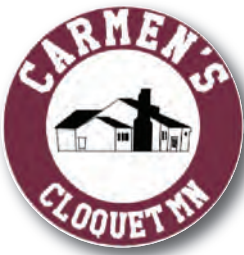
Moose Lake/Willow River Section 7A Softball Champs!



STATEBOUND
Moose Lake/Willow River softball
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Lily Kahara
Natalie Mikrot
Sarah Christy
Mackenzie Hoffman
Alexis Hoffman
Madison Wasche
Janna Bode
Hannah Roach
Gabby Gamst
Sandra Ribich
Maci Kukuk
Jorja Juszczak
Hallie Klavu
Elsie Leino

The Moose Lake/Willow River Rebels softball team defeated Cherry twice to win the Section 7A championship and earn their first trip to state in 40 years, and their first as the combined Rebels team. The team poses with coach Kelly Goeb after the win.

Dave Harwig / Pine Knot News



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7AA TRACK

Cloquet's Jordan Aultman (center) competes in the 100-meter dash at the Section 7AA finals on Saturday in North Branch. Aultman won the race and a state berth with a time of 11.31 seconds. Find a bevy of track photos at PineKnotNews.com. Photos by Dave Harwig / Pine Knot Sports

With new section, Cloquet shines

Kerry Rodd
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For the first 17 of his 18 years coaching Cloquet boys and girls track, head coach Tim Prosen and his team have been the small fish in the big pond. Cloquet was among the smallest schools in the state in Class AA. That all changed this year when the Minnesota State High School League went to a three-class system for track, leaving Cloquet in AA and moving the largest schools into Class AAA.

Last week the Lumberjacks benefitted from competing on a more-even playing field by having 23 athletes qualify for the state tournament. It's an enormous jump from the two athletes Cloquet sent to state last year.

"It was a great way to finish our season," Prosen said. "Our athletes and coaches work so hard. What I am proud of is that we have sprinters, distance runners, mid-distance, throwers, jumpers, and hurdlers. We are a balanced team and sent kids in all of these events. This is a testament to our coaches and their hard work."

The Lumberjacks girls squad won the Section 7AA title with 176 points, 25 points more than runner-up North Branch. Hibbing finished third, Chisago Lakes fourth, Hermantown fifth. Pine City was sixth and Rock Ridge took seventh. Proctor and Mora tied for eighth place, Grand Rapids took 10th and Denfeld was 11th.

On the boys side Grand Rapids won with 150 points, Cloquet was second with 116 points followed by Proctor, North Branch, Rock Ridge, Hibbing, Denfeld, Chisago Lakes, Hermantown, Mora and Pine City.

In total, Cloquet will send 11 girls and 12 boys to

this year's state meet. Both first- and second-place finishers qualify for State.

First-place winners for the Cloquet girls included Lydia Stone in the 400 meters, Olivia Jameson in the 100-meter hurdles and high jump, Taylor Wick in the triple jump and Seija Suominen in the discus. Cloquet got second-place finishes from Erin "Soup" Loeb in the 800 and Wick in the high jump. Bella Harriman was second in both the shot put and discus.

"Lydia Stone, she ran the race of her life and won the 400. We knew she had it in her, she crushed it," Prosen said.

The Lumberjacks also had a first place in the 4x800 relay from Katie Turner, Loeb, Lauren Hughes and Caley Kruse. Joining those four at the state meet will be alternates Alexa Shepherd and Amelia Allen.

"The girls 4x800 ran an incredible and strategic race," Prosen said. "Caley Kruse ran a brilliant anchor leg, Katie Turner got us in a good place to start, and Erin "Soup" Loeb and Lauren Hughes ran incredible PRs to get us the win."

This will mark Jameson's third trip to State for the high jump and 100-meter hurdles; last year, she also qualified in the triple jump.

Jordan Aultman took first place in the 100 meters and Jacob Mertz came in first in the 3200 to help lead the Cloquet boys to their second-place team finish.

The Cloquet 4x100 relay team of Xavier Anderson, Alex Petersen, Aultman and Reese Sheldon finished in first place and earned a trip to the state meet. Alternates for the 4x100 who will also be part of the state team include Miigwan Tanner-Wostrel and Elijah Aultman.

Cloquet's 4x800 relay



Cloquet's Olivia Jameson races to the win in the 100-meter hurdles Section 7AA final Saturday at North Branch. Jameson qualified for state with the win, with a time of 15.71 seconds.

team of Cale Prosen, Calvin Snedrud, Sam Buytaert and Miles Fischer finished in second place and also earned a trip to the state meet. Alternates for the 4x800 relay team are Mertz and Thorin Brown.

Activities director Paul Riess said the big haul at sections meant he had to arrange for a bus versus a van and more hotel rooms than usual. "That's a good problem to have," he said.

Beyond the state qualifiers, the Lumberjacks had numerous athletes who finished in top five spots in their respective events. The Class AA state meet is set for Friday and Saturday at St. Michael-Albertville High School. Watch the Pine Knot News Facebook page for news from the state meet this weekend.



Cloquet's Lydia Stone passes Hermantown's Liv Birkeland on the final stretch to win the 400-meter title at Saturday's Section 7AA meet at North Branch. Stone's 1:01.83 set a new personal record as well.

7A TRACK

Eskomos double the fun at sections

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Strong headwinds didn't help times, but there were plenty of top local performers in the Section 7A track meet last week at University of Minnesota Duluth. Both the Esko boys and girls teams took top honors at the meet. The Esko boys scored 153.5 points to easily take first and the girls scored 143 points to do the same on their side of the equation.

Gary Beaudot, head boys track coach, said Esko will have the most athletes representing Section 7A at the state meet this week.

"We definitely have more events that our athletes qualified in school history as far as I know," Beaudot said. "We qualified in 22 total events including the girls, so it should be a great experience for so many kids."

While Esko dominated as a team, a number of local schools are sending kids to state, those who finished first or second.

In a number of cases, however, it was Esko that finished first AND second. The Eskomos went 1-2 in the boys 100-meter dash with Mason Perich outpacing teammate Braden Lowe in a nip-and-tuck finish. In the 200-meter dash it was brothers Mason and Makoi Perich of Esko finishing

in first and second as both qualified for the state meet.

Silver Bay's Nate Bilben narrowly nipped Moose Lake/Willow River's Joseph Mikrot in the 800-meter run, but Mikrot's second-place finish gives him a trip to the state meet as well.

Noah Foster of Cromwell solidified his spot at state by winning the 1600 in a tight finish by slipping past Ian Thorpe of Two Harbors. The 3200 was won by Connor Thoennes of Greenway/Nashwauk/Keewatin with Ben Meysembourg of Esko capturing second place.

In the 110-meter hurdles, Esko's Chad Hart was the winner and South Ridge hurdler Tony Cummins blew away the field in the 300 i hurdles, winning by more than a second.

The Esko 4x100 relay team of Lowe, Carter Zezulka and the Perich brothers won with a time of 43.88. The ML/WR team of Chase Clausen, Jakob Mossberg, Logan Orvedahl and Kaden Robbins was second.

Cromwell-Wright will send its 4x400 relay team to State after finishing second in that event. Andres Angulo, Foster, Liam Schoenberg and Dylan Nyberg finished just behind Greenway in that event.

Esko took second in the 4x800 relay, with the team of Keone Anderson, Brett Lillo, Ben Meysembourg

and Nate Rengo doing the honors.

Sophomore Mark Hall of Barnum secured a spot at State by placing second in the discus behind Ethan Maas of Two Harbors.

Esko's Nikolas Martineau won the high jump, Jackson Thompson of ML/WR was second in the pole vault, while Makoi and Mason Perich of Esko went 1-2 in the long jump. Makoi Perich was also second in the triple jump.

Support team

Esko girls head coach Matthew Peterson said he was more excited than surprised that they did so well, adding that the girls are not only talented athletes, but they also "truly care for one another and support everyone's successes."

"[I'm] excited to see their hard work and dedication to themselves and their teammates pay off with their late season success."

Emily Rengo started things off by winning the 100-meter dash. Kaitlyn McConnell did the same in the 200 meters.

Cromwell-Wright's Emaleigh Olesiak qualified for state by finishing second in the 3200-meter run.

Esko provided some fireworks in the 100-meter hurdles with Gwendolyn Lilly narrowly defeating her teammate Megan Chopskie as the duo raced side by side



Kaitlyn McConnell takes first place in the long jump, at 16-06.25.
Photos by Amy Arntson / Pine Knot Sports

to the finish line. Lilly also ran to a first-place finish in the 300-meter hurdles.

Lilly and teammates Tegan Erickson, Kaitlyn McConnell and Emily Rengo finished second in the 4x100 relay. Esko captured first in the 4x200 with the team of Emily Rengo, Madison South, Whitney Hanson, Kaitlyn McConnell.

South Ridge high jumper Kaitaia Klementsén took top honors in the high

jump with a leap of 5 feet 2 inches. Esko went 1-2 in the long jump with Kaitlyn McConnell taking first and Emily Rengo second. Esko also took first in the triple jump with Whitney Hanson jumping 34 feet 2 inches to take the victory.

"Going into the season it was our hope to build off of last year's team success of winning the Conference and Section 7A championships," Peterson said. "The

girls accepted that challenge and really blossomed into an even better team and I couldn't be more proud of them."

The state meet will be held Thursday and Friday at St. Michael-Albertville High School. Peterson said he's optimistic about the Eskomos' chances.

"If they compete at their level or exceed them it could be a special day," he said.



Chad Hart of Esko takes first place in the 100-meter hurdles, with a time of 17.58. Find more track photos at PineKnotNews.com.

Baseball and softball tournament season is here!

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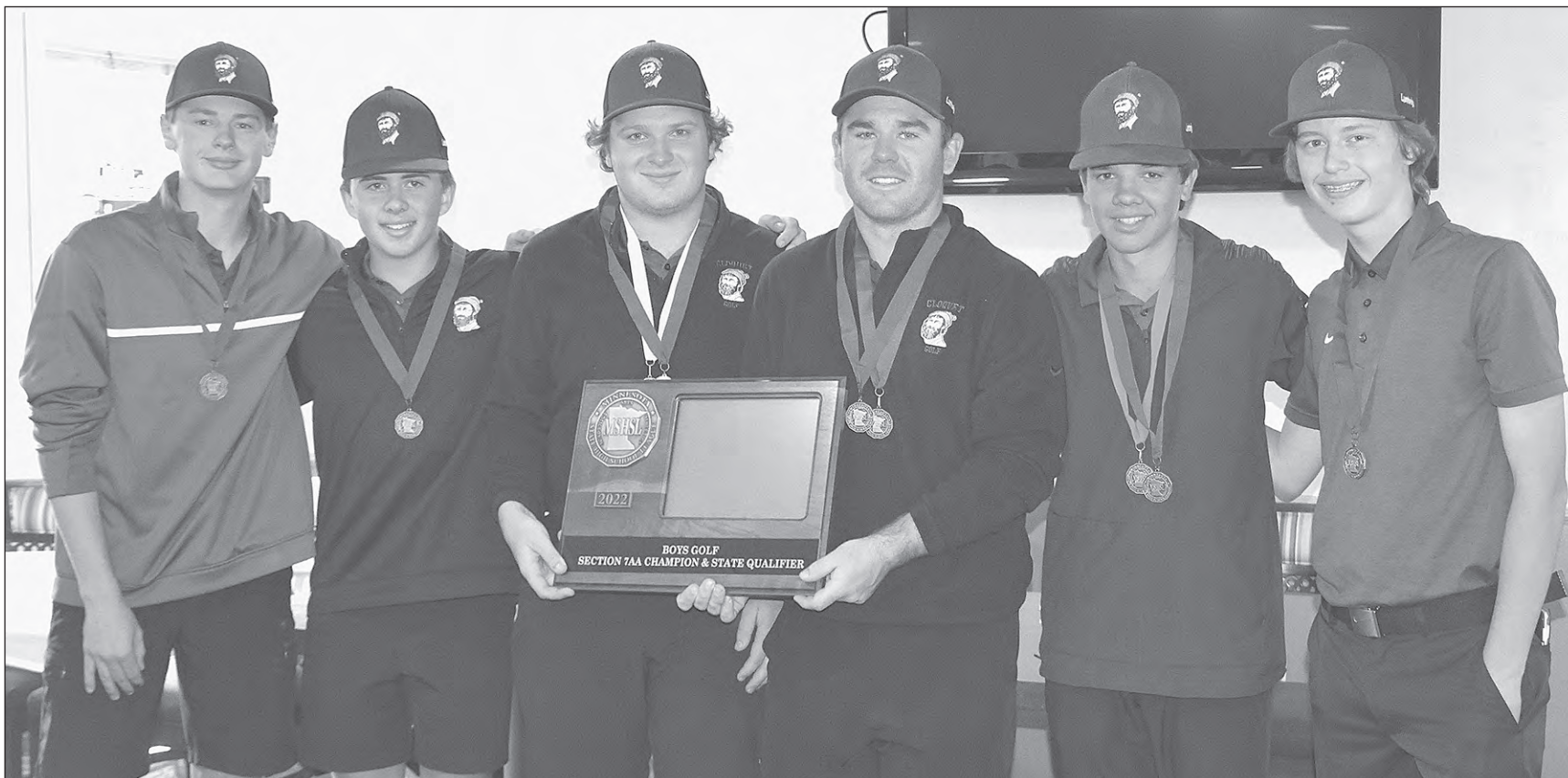
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Fri., June 17 @ 8:40 pm @ Diamondbacks



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7AA GOLF CHAMPIONS

The Cloquet boys varsity golf team left no doubt they deserved the Section 7AA championship crown, winning by 52 strokes. Section team players, from left, are Karson Young, Cooper Ellena, Jacob Walsh, Karson Patten, Anders Gunelson and Lance Sayler. Patten won the individual title, followed by Gunelson and Walsh for a sweep of the top three spots. *Contributed photos*

Another date at state for 'Jacks

Steve Korby
sports@PineKnotNews.com

The Cloquet High School boys golf team, the defending Class AA Minnesota state champions, are heading to the state tournament once again.

In windy and chilly conditions last week, the boys unequivocally won the Section 7A crown at the Quarry golf course at Giants Ridge in Biwabik June 1-2. The top three individuals in the two-round meet were all Cloquet players, with junior Karson Patten medaling as individual champion as well.

"On Day 1 it was windy and there was a lot of pollen in the air," said proud head coach Aaron Young. "It actually made following the flight of the ball difficult. Even so, we started out fast with six of our players in the top 10 on the front nine."

The Quarry was formerly an actual Iron Range sand quarry. "On Day 2 it was windier yet, making the challenging weaving canyon course even more difficult, but we even increased our team lead," Young added.

Patten scored 153 (76-77), followed by sophomore Anders Gunelson with 157 (77-80), and senior Jacob Walsh 163 (83-80) in third. The top four players of each team determine team scoring. Freshman Lance Sayler finished sixth overall in the Section 7AA meet with impressive scores of 166 (87-79) to make Cloquet's

team total of 635.

Patten said the win was no surprise. "We kind of expected to do that well," he said of the section meet. "We go there a lot — it's pretty much like a home course."

The win sends Patten on his third trip to state: he's been there every year since eighth grade except his freshman year, when there was no tournament because of the pandemic.

Mora was second with an overall score of 687 and Rock Ridge third at 689. Cloquet won the section title by a remarkable 52 strokes.

Not bad for a team that graduated three of its top players last year, including Class AA state champion Sam Baker.

Of the six tournament players — which also included sophomore Cooper Ellena and freshman Karson Young (both scored 176) — Patten, Walsh and Young played at the state tournament last year. Last year, Young had a fabulous tournament, finishing fifth in the state as an eighth-grader.

All six players will advance to state. Any one of them could do well, depending on the day.

"Everyone has their own hot days, but it all comes together and we always seem to have four solid scores," Patten said. "That's all that really matters."

The Cloquet girls team also competed at the Section 7AA meet in Biwabik last week. CHS

girls varsity players include Maddie Young, Avery Carlson, and Abby and Juli Steinert. Girls coach Matt Carlson said twins Juli and Abby made it to the second day. Juli Steinert was the top finisher for the Cloquet girls, taking eighth place at the section meet, missing the top five individual cutoff for her own trip to state.

The Class AA state tourney is, once again, being conducted at the Ridges at Sand Creek golf course June 14-15.

Most of the Cloquet boys varsity players have played the course and are familiar with the Ridges at Sand Creek layout. Interestingly, both the Sands (in Jordan, Minnesota) and the back nine at Cloquet Country Club were designed by legendary golf course architect Joel Goldstrand. With most practice rounds and home tournaments at CCC, maybe this gives the 'Jacks an overlooked advantage.

Still, practice makes perfect. The team went to the Ridges for a practice round on Tuesday and plan to play there again Monday before the state tournament begins Tuesday, June 14.

When asked what their goal was for state this year, Patten didn't hesitate.

"To win," he said.

Pine Knot editor Jana Peterson contributed to this story.



Cloquet junior Karson Patten lines up a putt on his way to winning the Section 7A golf tournament

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for extra news and photos and the online edition of the paper.

7A BASEBALL

South Ridge tracking another title

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Don't look now, but the South Ridge Panthers are one game away from their fourth straight tournament championship after a 7-2 win over Cherry Tuesday afternoon in the Section 7A playoffs. The 2 p.m. game was at Mesabi East High School in Aurora.

Cherry got on the board first when leadoff batter Isaiah Asuma was hit by a pitch, stole second and eventually scored on a ground ball out.

"We weren't worried because the guys knew we needed to score a run to win anyway," said Panthers head coach Aaron Weber. "The guys kept their composure and finally got things rolling on offense in the third inning."

While the Panthers were waiting to get their bats going, starting pitcher Aaron Bennett was doing a fine job of holding the Tigers off, giving his squad a chance to respond.

"I have a lot of confidence in all of our pitchers and Aaron did his job," said Weber. "Getting three runs in the third inning was a big key for us."

Christian Pretasky, Kaden Lane and Wyatt Olson all walked to start the third inning. With

bases loaded, Carter Anderson reached on an error, allowing Pretasky to score to tie the game at 1-1. A sacrifice fly by Bennett scored Lane and finally a base hit by Aydin Archambault pushed Zach Morse across for a 3-1 lead. Morse was courtesy running for Olson the catcher.

Cherry answered with a run in the top of the fourth, but the Panthers added another three-run inning in the bottom of the fourth when Pretasky, Lane and Morse all scored again to make the lead 6-2.

In the sixth inning, Bennett slammed a solo homerun for the final run of the game.

Wyatt Olson came on to pitch after the third inning for South Ridge and pitched the final four innings of the game. Bennett gave up two hits and one unearned run in his stint on the mound and Olson gave up three hits and one earned run in his outing.

At the plate Bennett recorded three RBIs, while Pretasky and Lane scored twice. Both teams recorded only five hits in the game, but the Panthers took advantage of walks, errors and timely hitting.

"I told the guys our game plan was to not let their pitcher get too comfortable," said Weber. "We

wanted to make the routine plays, get timely hitting, good pitching and just be aggressive, and when we do that we've been successful."

The win improves the Panthers record to 16-7 on the season, but most importantly puts them into Thursday's championship round where they will have to be beaten twice in the double-elimination tournament.

"Winning and staying undefeated is huge because you can save your pitching," Weber said. "When we come back on Thursday, we need to take the approach that we have to win that first game and we need to take care of business."

Christian Pretasky will get the nod on the mound, with a chance to pitch his squad back to State for a fourth season in a row.

"Our team strength is in our pitching staff," said Weber. "Our top three pitchers are interchangeable and our entire group can go out and win us a game."

The Panthers were scheduled to play at 5 p.m. Thursday, after this issue of the Pine Knot News was printed. If they won, they would head to state. If they lost, there would be a second game immediately following with the winner moving on to the Minnesota State Class A baseball tournament.



South Ridge pitcher Aaron Bennett unloads a pitch earlier this season. On Tuesday, Bennett was the starting pitcher and scored a solo homerun to complete the Panthers' 7-2 win over Cherry to advance to Thursday's title game. *Dan Saletel / Pine Knot Sports*

7AAA BASEBALL

Lumberjacks run ends in Hibbing

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The Cloquet Lumberjacks baseball team was eliminated from the Section 7AAA tournament in the second round Thursday in a 5-2 loss to the Bluejackets in Hibbing.

After giving up a single run in the first inning, the 'Jacks gave up three more in the third inning and fell behind 4-0. Alec Turnbull got the nod on the mound and pitched well, but the Lumberjacks defense struggled to make plays, leaving the door open for Hibbing.

"I thought Alec did a nice job pitching for us," said Cloquet head coach Tyler Olin. "He did his job and he gave us a chance."

Cloquet pitching allowed just five hits in the game, but three errors added to the problem. Turnbull went five and a third innings with Pat Dunaiski pitching the final two thirds of an inning.

Trailing 4-0 entering the top of the sixth inning, the 'Jacks got a pair of runs from Turnbull and Dayne Painovich to cut the lead to 4-2, but Hibbing answered with a run of their own in the bottom of the inning to go up 5-2. The Lumberjacks were unable to score in the top of the seventh inning and the game ended in favor of the Bluejackets.

"Hibbing threw strikes and played defense," said Olin. "They

didn't give us extra bases and they didn't give us extra outs."

Turnbull aided his own cause with a pair of hits, while Painovich, Kollin Bonneville, Marshall Hayes and Alex Yrjanson each had a hit.

Cloquet struggled at the plate in the playoffs and a lack of run production caught up with them.

"I don't know if the pressure got to us or not," said Olin. "I thought our hitting was our strongest point throughout the year, but it isn't easy in the playoffs when you see the best pitchers of each team."

The loss ends the season for the 'Jacks and dropped their record to 4-16.

"I told the players the biggest thing that sticks out for me is how slim the margin for error is," said Olin. "Just a play here and a play there would have made a difference. For us, it was our lack of defense this season. Other teams took advantage, and had we cleaned up that part of the game we should have been a .500 team."

Cloquet graduates four players as well as Jack Sorenson, who was injured during the football season and was unable to play this spring.

"He would have been our top pitcher," Olin said. "He also would have been a starter in the infield, so that was a tough loss."

Also graduating are Mason Anderson, Marshall Hayes, Alec Turnbull and Alex Yrjanson.

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"The Summer I Turned Pretty"

A love triangle develops between a girl and two brothers in this coming-of-age drama about first love, first heartbreak and the magic of that one perfect summer. Starring Lola Tung, Christopher Briney, Gavin Casalegno and Sean Kaufman, the series is based on the novel by Jenny Han, who is also its creator and showrunner. (ORIGINAL)



"Keeper of the Ashes: The Oklahoma Girl Scout Murders"

This four episode docuseries delves into the notorious murders of three girls in 1977 during their first night at Camp Scott, a Girl Scout sleepaway camp in Oklahoma. It examines the killings' impact on those close to the tragedy, details the search for and trial of the alleged killer and examines the mysteries still surrounding the case. (ORIGINAL)

NETFLIX



"Movie: Halftime"

Jennifer Lopez is front and center of this feature-length documentary from director Amanda Micheli ("One Nation Under Dog," "Vegas Baby"), in which the actress and singer reflects on her milestones and evolution as an artist and looks ahead to navigating the second half of her life and career. (ORIGINAL)



"Family Reboot" (June 15)

Spouses Kelly Ripa and Mark Consuelos are among the executive producers of this six-part unscripted series that follows families whose busy schedules and interests have drawn them apart as they undertake a journey to reconnect, spend uninterrupted time together and establish new relationships and bonds. (ORIGINAL)

KNOT NOTES

County offers free seeds

Free vegetable seeds are available at the Carlton County Extension Office while supplies last, courtesy of the Lakes and Pines Community Action Council. Stop in for seeds, and remember that the Extension Office provides gardening advice and information at no cost. Pickup is available 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at 317 Chestnut Ave. in Carlton.

Courts announce plan for hearings

The Minnesota Judicial Branch announced a framework for how remote and in-person hearings will be held, effective June 6. All hearings scheduled and hearing notices issued will follow the policy. Case participants will find the most accurate information about how their court hearings will take place on their hearing notices.

For non-criminal case types, including family, domestic abuse, harassment, eviction and civil cases, many hearing types are generally presumed remote. There is a presumption that evidentiary hearings — hearings where evidence is being presented or testimony is taken on issues in dispute — will generally be held in person. Judicial officers have the authority to grant case-by-case exemptions to these guidelines, but only under exceptional circumstances.

For hearings in criminal cases, each judicial district has developed its own localized plan for providing both remote and in-person hearings in criminal cases, which are backlogged because of the pandemic.

Sun Country flights to return

Duluth International Airport announced Sun Country will return seasonal flights later this year, including air service direct from Duluth to Phoenix and Fort Myers, Florida. Flights begin on Dec. 16 and continue through April 17. Flights will operate twice weekly, on Mondays and Fridays.

Essentia hosts planning classes

Essentia Health is hosting free advance care planning classes on the following days:

- Noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday, July 13
- 9-10 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 16

ACP is a process that helps people think and talk about choices for health care in the future.

Croquet in Cloquet is back in July

Pine Knot News

Who doesn't want to play a round of croquet in the city of Cloquet, especially if it's for a good cause?

The Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College Foundation will host the 12th annual Cloquet Croquet Invitational Tuesday, July 12, at the Cloquet Country Club. Proceeds from the fun event go toward the FDLTCC student scholarship fund.

The invitational kicks off at 1 p.m. The 20 teams of four will play one-on-one in a round robin followed by single-elimination

playoffs for the top eight teams. The event includes lunch, a silent auction, and lots of laughs.

Teams are encouraged to dress up safari-style in keeping with this year's safari theme. Prizes will be awarded for the best-dressed and championship teams.

Register for the Cloquet Croquet Invitational at fdltcc.edu/events-facilities-use/annual-events/cloquet-croquet-invitational. For more information, contact Stephanie Untiedt at stephanie.untiedt@fdltcc.edu or 218-879-0811.



The 13 Moons team members celebrate winning the 2021 Cloquet Croquet Invitational. Photo contributed by FDLTCC

Lacrosse status remains in limbo

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The prospects for a high school lacrosse program in Carlton County remain in limbo, but a group supporting placing teams under the Cloquet-Esko-Carlton umbrella is still pressing.

Administrators for school districts told the committee on May 12 that they still weren't convinced of the sustainability of a program. Until the administration is on board, the idea won't be going to school boards for discussion, said Paul Reiss, activities director at Cloquet High School. He said the number of athletes involved in the burgeoning youth programs, especially the number of girls, hasn't hit a level the districts are confident about.

"We're looking at options," Reiss told the Pine Knot News. It has been suggested in the past that the Northern Siege Youth Lacrosse board look at pairing CEC with another district to boost the numbers.

Lacrosse supporter Sean Hall said there are 200 athletes ages 5 to 14 involved in Northern Siege but they need somewhere to play after eighth grade. Without a high school program, players will have to stop playing or attend school in another district to play.

Northern Siege board members put forth a proposal that promises the organization would cover the costs of a high school program, something that Siege board member Jen Saletel said creates a "zero risk" situation for the districts. The board already runs a popular youth league, she said, and it could run the high school program as well.

Saletel said the number of girls participating needs to increase and that it likely would if athletes knew they could play beyond eighth grade. Saletel helped organize a branch of Northern Siege that allowed boys beyond eighth grade to participate as a club team, facing players from established high school programs who aren't on varsity or junior varsity rosters.

Hall sent out a letter to school officials in late May answering questions about what a CEC lacrosse team would look like. Some of those answers include:



A Northern Siege lacrosse team played at Irondale, a school in the northern suburbs of Minneapolis, earlier this year. Organizers are trying to get a high school lacrosse program going in Carlton County. Contributed photo

Plenty of field options with fields in Carlton, Cloquet and Esko.

No transportation concerns since players now prefer to drive themselves or carpool to practice and games. Busing to matches could be handled by a coach service. On a 13-game schedule, there would be six home matches, perhaps three with teams in Proctor, Duluth and Grand Rapids, and the balance against teams from the northern Twin Cities suburbs.

Gender equity issues under Title IX guidelines wouldn't be an issue because there would be a girls and boys team.

Youth enrollment is currently at 106 boys and 47 girls. The committee also noted that the sport can be picked up any time by students with a short timeframe to

competitive play. League organizers from other cities chimed in for the committee, saying the number of participants in Northern Siege bodes well for a high school program.

Right now, Northern Siege plans to pay for the program, as it does now, with its booster club and sponsors. It's how the Duluth and Proctor/Hermantown high school programs are run. This spring, the program paid for coaches to run a club program for older players.

The committee balked at pairing up with the Proctor or Duluth programs because all three are fairly well-established with growing numbers of participants. Northern Siege has discussed pairings with Marshall School and Stella Maris Academy in Duluth.

Hall said he expects the push

toward a high school lacrosse program to remain strong. "There is great frustration, with approximately 400 parents and 200 players in our area," he said. With nowhere to play upon entering high school "we have already lost several great, dedicated players."

The pitch for an upper-grades program began in 2019, was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the time is now to create opportunities for high schoolers, Saletel said.

She said her organization keeps answering questions about the sustainability of a high school lacrosse program but feels administrators "keep moving the goalline." She said that, for now, she will take them at their word that they remain open to the idea.