

Sports

Pierz girls end incredible season with a second place finish

By BLAKE BARTELS  
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The Pierz girls basketball team traveled to Brainerd to face the Pequot Lakes Patriots, March 11, in the section 7AA Championship Game.

The Pioneers fought hard on the neutral court, but lost 70-54.

The Pioneers were on fire to start the game, scoring the first eight points to give them an early lead, all by Katie Leidenfrost, but the Patriots started playing aggressive defense.

Pequot Lakes forced a number of turnovers after that, to narrow the score to 8-5.

Pierz had a hard time getting the ball down the court due to the aggressive style of defense the Patriots displayed, having to pass the ball multiple times before getting to half-court.

Despite the Patriots' stout defense, the Pioneers kept their lead for the first part of the first half, but eventually the PL defense would get lucky and steal the ball, quickly closing the gap.

With the score 13-12, Pioneer Kiara Olesch hit a beautiful 3-pointer to try to give her team a more comfortable lead, but the Patriots responded by going on a 5-point run to take their first lead of the game, 18-15.

The Patriots tried to ramp up their aggressiveness on defense, pressing them as soon as they could.

Alyssa Sadlovsky was able to get open and sink a 3-pointer to tie the game, 18-18.

The Patriots still did not let up on the defense, forcing another turnover on the ensuing possession and scoring on a drive to the basket for two points.

After each team exchanged several more points, and the first half was winding down, the Patriots held a 31-23 lead.

It was a wild finish to the first half. Olesch scored on another drive to the basket resulting in a 2-pointer, but the Patriots responded with



(32022 Pierz Team Photo)

Staff photo by Blake Bartels

The Pioneer girls basketball team with the second place plaque after the March 11 game against Pequot Lakes. Team members include front row (from left): Ashley Kimman, Britney Schommer, Kiara Olesch, Katie Leidenfrost, Kenna Otte, Alyssa Sadlovsky, Lyndsey Strohmeier and Head Coach Matt Poepping. Back row: Mackenzi Mitchell, Samantha Brau, Emma Walcheski, Kara Bakke, Cameryn Herold, Kyla Krych, Kaleah Olesch, Lily Riley, Madelyn Gaffke, Assistant coach Jeremy Monson, Elissa Pawlu, Assistant Coach Becky Herman and Assistant Coach Scott Herold.

their own 2-pointer and a free throw. Then Olesch sank a 3-pointer, making it 34-28, but the Patriots were fouled and drained both of the free throws.

Olesch scored again, on a drive to the basket, scoring two points. But the Patriots evened it out, scoring two of their own right after.

The half would end with the score, 30-38.

The Pioneers inched back into the game, point by point, but needed to come out firing in the second half to make up the ground.

That was not the case, as the Patriots came out firing, scoring nine straight points.

Sadlovsky sank a 3-pointer, in an attempt to get the Pioneers back into the game, but the Patriots immediately matched it with one of their own, making the score 52-33.

The Pioneers were unable to do much to close the gap, the Patriots' defense was just too aggressive.

The final score was 70-54, with the Pioneers placing second in the section 7AA tournament.

Head Coach Matt Poepping praised his team for how they fought all throughout the season.

"I will always remember this team. Everything that was thrown at them this year and they responded to with a positive attitude," Poepping said.

"Outsized on almost every night, they consistently out hustled and outworked opponents. We ran up against a great Pequot Lakes team tonight, and give credit to them, they played and shot the ball well tonight," Poepping said.

In Pierz' final game, it was only fitting that the team's seniors, Olesch and Leidenfrost, were two of the three top scorers for the Pioneers.

Olesch was tied with Sadlovsky with 15 points, and Leidenfrost, was right behind both of them, with 12.

Coach Poepping praised both of his seniors for being an integral part of the team's playoff run.

"Kiara and Katie will be missed, they are special leaders and great ladies to have in our program," Poepping said. "When you spend as much time with these kids as coaches do they almost feel like your own. I hope that bond never breaks and they continue to come back and feel like they are part of the Pierz girls basketball program."

It was the first time since 2007 that the Pioneers girls basketball team had made it to the finals.

The Pioneers finished the season with an impressive 23-7 record and a second place finish.

Despite the heartbreaking loss in the championship

game this year, the Pioneers are primed to make a return next year, with coming back most of their players, hopefully to win it all.



(32022 Pierz GBB)

Staff photo by Blake Bartels

Pioneer's Kiara Olesch (3) making a layup over Pequot Lakes defender, Morgan Eckes (15), in the championship game.



Submitted Photo

Flyers Tyler Olson (middle) on the first place podium after winning state for the third year in a row, in the 109kg class with a 101kg Snatch and a 135kg Clean and Jerk.

Flyers weightlifters travel to state, Olson three-peats as state champion

By BLAKE BARTELS  
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The Little Falls weightlifting team competed at the state meet at Moorhead High School, March 12, and performed very well, with many lifters placing first, second or third.

The Flyers' Tyler Olson won state in the 109kg class, with a 101kg Snatch and a 135kg Clean and Jerk. With that victory, Olsen has claimed the state champion three years in a row.

Fellow Flyer, Avery Anderson, earned a second place finish, while Lindy Welinski and Maizee Kathrein earned a third place finish.

ish.

The JV weightlifters earned a second place title in state as a team, behind Lakeville South.

Tenth grader Emma Goertz placed third. Ninth graders Avery Selinski and Ryan Mikkelsen both finished with a first place victory. Ninth-graders Brody Lutzke and Bode Kapsner finished in second place, and ninth-grader Micah Laska finished in third place.

With so many lifters qualifying and winning state, it seems difficult for the Flyers to top their accomplishments from this season, but they will work to try to top their incredible performance next season.

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Sports

Pioneer boys take down EG, fall to Esko in the quarterfinals

By **BLAKE BARTELS**  
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The Pioneer boys basketball team hosted the Eveleth Gilbert Golden Bears, March 10, in the first round of the section 7AA playoffs.

The Pioneers trounced their opponent in a 54-37 win.

Ben Virnig and Noah Oberfeld both led the Pioneers in scoring, with 11 each.

Virnig went a perfect 5-of-5 on field goals, all of them coming on two points, as well as retrieving five rebounds.

Pierz moved on to the section 7AA quarterfinals, where it faced the Esko Eskomos in Hermantown, March 12.

Unfortunately for the Pioneers, the Eskomos were too much to handle, and they lost handily, 103-53.

In one of their toughest games of the season, the Pioneers gave up the most points all season.

Noah Oberfeld led the Pioneers in scoring, with 16. His brother Ian Oberfeld,

was right behind him with 12 points.

Pierz Head Coach Joe Kahl praised his team's performance this year.

"I'm proud of our boys for sticking it out during the tough times and never giving up," Kahl said. "I want to thank our seniors Andy Winscher, Ben Virnig and Zach Jones for being great leaders. Those boys played their hearts out and I cannot thank them enough. Also, I want to thank my coaching staff - Andy Leidenfrost, Dylan Pittman and Marcus Artner. They are great coaches and even better people."

The Pioneers played in many games that were nail-biters or close finishes. But, they came away with a loss more than they would have liked to.

"I have never coached a team before that played in so many close games," Kahl said. "Fifteen out of our 26 games were decided by a single digit. Even though we didn't win all of those games, I hope our boys learned something from each one of them."

It is tough losing so many games by single digit points, but Kahl believes it will only make the team tougher next year.

The Pioneers finished their season with a 10-17 record. They played well in the first round of the playoffs, upsetting the Golden

Bears, but were unable to extend their luck to make a deep playoff push.

Pierz looks to make it even further next year, as it

starts the off-season focusing on getting better each day.



Submitted photo

Booster Club hosts successful 'Lindy Taco Challenge'

The second annual Little Falls Lindy's Dance Team Booster Club Taco Challenge was held March 10, at the Falls Ballroom. The judge's choice winner was Sanchez Burrito, with the people's choice winner being the Falls Ballroom. The third annual Lindy Taco Challenge will be held in March of 2023. Pictured with the Lindy Taco Challenge traveling trophy are (from left): 2022-23 Lindy's Dance Team captains Emma Hershey and Ella Hershey, Sanchez Burrito owners Yunion Sanchez and Fredi Valle, 2022-23 Lindy's Dance Team captains Abby Hershey and Paige Fellbaum.



Submitted photo

Pierz native wins NCWA national wrestling title

Pierz native Brenna Andres, left, won the National Coaches Wrestling Association (NCWA) National Wrestling Title and is shown with Coach Lou Orr. Representing Winona State Wrestling Club, she traveled to Allen, Texas, and came away with the title after winning three straight matches. Andres is seeded fifth at 116-pounds opened up with a (4:12) pin over Jasmin Soclopez Ottawa-Arizona, in the semi-final round she defeated Mikayla Jardine (#1 seed) of Big Bend CC 7-1, then in the finals she won 8-2 over Kira Emma Texas-Arlington (#2 seed). Andres also won the Great Lakes Regional Qualifier in Toledo, Ohio, to qualify for the national tournament.

3-20-22 Crossword Answers

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | R | O | C | C | R | A | M | S | S | A | G | A |
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| M | A | A | R | S | A | L | I | P | A | S | E | S |
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| C | O | B | W | E | B | M | E | G | M | A | A | R |
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3-20-22 Sudoku Answers

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 5 |
| 2 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| 4 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 8 |
| 7 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 1 |
| 6 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 4 |
| 1 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 9 |
| 9 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 5 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 6 |
| 8 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 2 |

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Congratulations to the Flyer Olympic Weightlifting Team - competed at the state meet at Moorhead HS on March 12

The JV Lifters (Boys and Girls combined) earned 2nd place in state as a team behind Lakeville South



JV Lifters

- 10th grader Emma Goertz - 3rd Place
- 9th Grader Avery Selinski - 1st Place - State Champion
- 9th Grader Rylan Mikkelsen - 1st Place - State Champion
- 9th Grader Micah Laska - 3rd Place
- 9th Grader Brody Lutzke - 2nd Place
- 8th Grader Bode Kapsner - 2nd Place

Varsity

- Tyler Olson - State Champion for the 3rd year in a row - 109kg Class, 101kg Snatch, 135kg Clean & Jerk
- Maizee Kathrein earned a 3rd Place finish
- Avery Anderson earned a 2nd Place finish
- Lindy Welinski earned a 3rd Place finish.

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