

BOYS TENNIS

Mayo, Lourdes hope to beat the best at state

BY PAT RUFF
Post Bulletin

Phil Wisniewski has been on the Mayo tennis team the last three years. Never before have things felt quite this good for the Spartans junior.

Not that there was anything wrong with Mayo tennis in the past. But for Wisniewski, this season has been special.

“Our team has really grown and bonded,” said Wisniewski, who plays No 1 doubles for No. 4 ranked Mayo. “This has for sure been the closest team I’ve been on. I’ve enjoyed it a lot.”

Wisniewski has the best part of the sandwich waiting for him this week, as Mayo will take part in the state team tournament on Tuesday and Wednesday at the University of Minnesota’s Baseline Tennis Center. That will be followed by Wisniewski participating Thursday and Friday in the state individual tournament, along with Mayo doubles partner Ben Erickson.

But it is the team stuff that the 18-3 Spartans covet most. Mayo is a darkhorse to actually win the championship, but it is definitely in the conversation.

It got to state after beating Century 5-2 in the Section 1AA final. It also got there after challenging itself all season, with a pack of duals against fellow top-10 ranked teams.

Its most impressive win came against No. 5-ranked Mounds View, a team it split with during the year. And there were losses to No. 1 Wayzata and No. 3 Orono, as well a win over No. 9 Mahtomedi and two wins over No. 7 Century.

“We played a tough schedule to prepare us for this opportunity,” Mayo longtime coach Jeff Demaray said. “If you want to be the best, you have to beat the best. I feel like we are playing our best right now.”

Mayo will be favored when it opens the state tournament at 10 a.m. Tuesday, taking on sturdy but unranked Eagan.

Mayo is seeded No. 4 in the tournament, Eagan No. 5.

Should Mayo prevail, it would almost certainly play No. 1 seed Orono next. Orono is fresh off a 4-3 win over Wayzata in the Section 5AA championship.

A clash with Orono is daunting. It beat Mayo 6-1 earlier this season, though there were a pack of close matches in that one.

Demaray knows how good Orono is having seen it firsthand.

“They are No. 1 for a reason,” he said. “They have a lot of players who’ve been to state. There are four or five seniors on that team. They deserve the No. 1 seed.”

Demaray is not ready to get ahead of himself. A clash with Orono is no done deal for his team. Eagan, seeded just one spot below Mayo, will provide plenty of a challenge in the first round.

PROVING TIME FOR LOURDES

The Lourdes boys tennis team has been waiting for this literally since it headed home from last year’s state tournament.

Already, after losing 7-0 to Breck in the semifinals, they were telling themselves that 2022 would be their year. It would be their time to — with immense confidence — pursue a state championship.

Beginning Tuesday at Reed-Sweatt Tennis Center in Minneapolis, they’ll go about trying to prove that they’ve been right along, that they are the best that Class A has to offer in 2022.

“I am excited because we think we have a great shot at winning the state championship,” Lourdes senior Easton Blissenbach said. “We’ve been working hard at this. And we’re still working hard at it.”

No. 2-ranked Lourdes begins its state-title push at 10 a.m. Tuesday against No. 9 Foley

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Traci Westcott / Post Bulletin file photo

Junior Phil Wisniewski is a leader on a Mayo boys tennis team that opens play in the Class AA state tournament on Tuesday.

CLASS AA SOFTBALL



Traci Westcott / Post Bulletin

Chatfield’s Jaiden Zimmerman celebrates with teammate Sydney Allen after scoring a run during the second Section 1AA softball championship game against Cannon Falls on Thursday at Todd Park in Austin. Chatfield defeated Cannon Falls 11-0, advancing them to State.

PLAYING FOR PAST AND PRESENT

Chatfield heads to state with thoughts of 2020 team in mind

BY ALEX VANDENHOUTEN
Post Bulletin

Chatfield’s softball team expected 2020 to be a season to remember.

Standout pitcher Lexi Chase was one of nine seniors on a roster that went 19-6 from the previous season and had high hopes for the program’s first state trip in more than a decade.

Then the world turned upside down.

The opportunity for a special run was gone as COVID-19 wiped out the season.

It was a tough pill to swallow and one this year’s team hasn’t forgotten about.

“We were predicted to win state,” said catcher Peyton Berg, who saw plenty of playing time as a freshman in 2019. “Ever since then I always had that feeling like since they didn’t get to do that, we needed to fulfill that for them. We needed to play for them.”

“I said this at the beginning of the season, I remember thinking that we were gonna win this for them,” junior Claire Springer said. “It was just because I know that they would have been here if they’d had played.”

Two years later, the Gophers did what the 2020 team didn’t have the opportunity to do: Win a Section 1AA title.

Behind a high-powered

offense and Springer in the circle, the Gophers showed resilience by coming back to knock off Cannon Falls 9-1 and then 11-0 on Thursday in the Section 1AA championships in Austin.

The Bombers had beaten the Gophers 4-2 in the winner’s bracket final on Tuesday behind the hard throwing right arm of Abby Breuer and a four-run fourth inning. Yet, with a little help from Chase, who is home after finishing her last season at Iowa Lakes Community College and threw BP for the team in Wednesday’s practice, the Gophers looked back to their whole selves — a lineup one through nine that is as dangerous as they come.

In fact, one could make an argument that there isn’t a better top of the order than what the Gophers have in Kara Goetzinger, Berg, Jaiden Zimmerman, Springer and Alexis Hinckley.

Those five set the tone against the Bombers, combining for over 12 hits and 10 RBIs. But what makes the Gophers offense is the depth.

Claire Allen and Devann Clemens each had run-scoring doubles out of the six and seven spots in game two, while eight-hole hitter Brynn Irish finished with three hits in game one. Nine-hole hitter Brittin Ruskell had a two-run double against Zumbrota-Mazeppa in the elimination game.

Long story short, they all can hit.

“One through nine, their at-bats are solid,” Cannon Falls coach Tom Langfeldt said. “You really just have to play a solid, very solid game to win against them.”

The evolution of Springer in the circle has made the Gophers even more difficult to beat.

Her ability to control her off-speed and rise ball has kept hitters off-balance all season long to a tune of a sub-1.50 ERA. After giving up the four runs to Cannon Falls on Tuesday, Springer has tossed 21 consecutive scoreless innings.

She is also the one who keeps things light in the dugout. The design of the pink-and-black eye black, mixed with a touch of glitter that the Gophers all sport, was Springer’s idea.

“It’s so fun catching her,” Berg said. “She’s very bubbly, just a bubbly personality. Very funny, but she does what she needs to do and she works very hard in the offseason. Works hard all year round.”

With the combination of Springer and that lethal offense, it’s easy to see why the Gophers have won 25 of their 27 games so far this season. But they aren’t done yet.

“This is a fun group of girls,” coach Jerry Chase said. “They deserve this.”

The Gophers were given the No. 3 seed and will play Section 4AA champion Mounds Park Academy (19-2) at 11 a.m. Thursday, June 9, at Caswell Park.

CLASS A SOFTBALL

Things have come full circle for retiring Wabasha-Kellogg coaches

BY ALEX VANDENHOUTEN
Post Bulletin

The first season Steve Gosse joined Mike Schumacher as an assistant coach for the Wabasha-Kellogg softball team in 2003, the Falcons made the state tournament.

With the two calling it a career at the end of the season, they both talked about how great it would be if they could both end their time coaching together at the state tournament.

On Thursday, that vision became a reality.

In truly one of the most back-and-forth games to be played this season, the Falcons trailed by eight runs after two innings before scoring 19 of the game’s next 20 runs to beat Faribault Bethlehem Academy 21-11 in six innings in the Section 1A championship game last Thursday at Todd Park in Austin. That wild win sends

W-K to its second consecutive Class A state tournament.

“So we got our bookends,” said Schumacher, who is in his 42nd and final year of coaching. “First year with Steve and last year with Steve. Now we’re going to end the season in North Mankato.”

“We talked about this and the girls went out and did it, it’s just awesome,” Gosse said. “He’s a great coach. A great mentor. A great guy. That’s why they play for him.”

But there were points during the season when both Schumacher and Gosse didn’t necessarily think another trip to the state tournament was in the cards for the Falcons.

“At the end of last year, I wouldn’t have dreamed that we would have had this kind of shot,” Schumacher said.

Injuries in the middle of the season made an already tough Three Rivers Conference slate even tougher: The Falcons lost

six in a row at one point and entered the postseason with an 8-12 record and 10 losses in their previous 12 games.

But much like the Section 1A championship game, the Falcons never lost faith and relied on the leadership of Ella Lineweaver and Jacqueline Avilez, as well as some great play from Sophie Graner to make a postseason run that saw them outscore opponents 74-21 in five games. They scored in double digits in four of the five games, guaranteeing one last state tournament appearance for Schumacher and Gosse in the process.

“We really wanted to do this for him,” Graner said. “And for Steve, who is in his last year, too. So it’s just awesome we could do it two years in a row for them.”

“I will never forget this one,” Gosse said on Thursday.

The Falcons have an uphill battle, playing No. 2 seeded and



Traci Westcott / Post Bulletin

Wabasha-Kellogg cheers as they pull ahead during a Section 1A softball championship game against Bethlehem Academy on Thursday at Todd Park in Austin. Wabasha-Kellogg defeated Bethlehem Academy 21-11 advancing them to State.

Section 7A champion Moose Lake/Willow River (24-4) at 1 p.m. Thursday at Caswell Park in the state quarterfinals. But that has been a theme they have

handled all season.

“No doubt it will be tough,” Schumacher said. “But we wouldn’t want it any other way.”

SCOREBOARD

LOCAL CALENDAR

TUESDAY, JUNE 7
HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL
Section 1AA championship,
Lourdes vs. Plainview-El-
gin-Millville, 5 p.m. (Mayo
Field)
BOYS TENNIS
Class AA state tournament,
quarterfinals, Mayo vs. Eagan,
10 a.m. (Baseline Tennis
Center)
Class A state tournament,
quarterfinals, Lourdes vs. Fo-
ley, noon (Reed-Sweatt Tennis
Center)
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8
AMATEUR BASEBALL
La Crescent at Rochester Ro-
yals, 7:30 p.m. (Mayo Field)
Rochester Roadrunners at
Red Wing, 7:30 p.m.
BOYS TENNIS
Class A state tournament:
Lourdes vs. TBD, time TBD (at
Reed-Sweatt Tennis Center,
Minneapolis)
Class AA state tournament:
Mayo vs. TBD, time TBD (at
Baseline Tennis Center, Min-
neapolis)
NORTHWOODS LEAGUE
BASEBALL
Rochester Honkers at Manka-
to, 6:35 p.m.
SEMI-PRO SOCCER
Med City FC at LC Aris FC, 7
p.m.

NEXT 3
Next 3 games and TV info. for Min-
nesota sports teams:
MINNESOTA TWINS
• Tuesday, June 7: N.Y. Yankees,
6:40 p.m. (BSN)
• Wednesday, June 8: N.Y. Yankees,
6:40 p.m. (BSN, FS1)
• Thursday, June 9: N.Y. Yankees,
6:40 p.m. (BSN)
MINNESOTA UNITED FC
• Saturday, June 11: Paderborn
(friendly), 7 p.m. (BSN)
• Sunday, June 19: at New England,
7 p.m. (BSN)
• Saturday, June 25: at Miami, 7
p.m. (BSN)
MINNESOTA LYNX
• Tuesday, June 7: at New York, 7
p.m. (CBS SN, BSN Extra)
• Friday, June 10: Washington, 7
p.m. (BSN)
• Sunday, June 12: Indiana, 6 p.m.
(BSN)

TV HIGHLIGHTS

TUESDAY, JUNE 7
MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL
N.Y. Yankees at Minnesota, 6:30

p.m. (BSN)
L.A. Dodgers at Chicago White
Sox, 7 p.m. (TBS)
PRO BASKETBALL
WNBA, Minnesota at New York, 7
p.m. (BSN)
PRO HOCKEY
NHL Playoffs, Eastern Conference
Finals, Game 4, N.Y. Rangers at
Tampa, 7 p.m. (ESPN)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8
MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL
Detroit at Pittsburgh, 11:30 a.m.
(MLBN)
N.Y. Yankees at Minnesota, 6:30
p.m. (BSN, FS1)
N.Y. Mets at San Diego OR Boston
at L.A. Angels, 8:30 p.m. (MLBN)
PRO BASKETBALL
NBA Finals, Golden State at Bos-
ton, Game 3, 8 p.m. (ABC)
PRO HOCKEY
NHL Playoffs, Western Conference
Finals, Game 5 (if necessary), Ed-
monton at Colorado, 7 p.m. (TNT)
COLLEGE SOFTBALL
NCAA Women's College World
Series, Game 1, teams TBD, 7:30
p.m. (ESPN)
COLLEGE TRACK & FIELD
NCAA Division I outdoor champi-
onships, Day 1, 6:30 p.m. (ESPN2)

HIGH SCHOOLS
BASEBALL
SECTION 1A TOURNAMENT
TUESDAY, JUNE 7
(At Riverland Community College,
Austin)
Championship
Hayfield vs. Lyle/Pacelli, 5 p.m.
(second game at 7 p.m., if needed)

SECTION 1AA TOURNAMENT
TUESDAY, JUNE 7
(At Mayo Field)
Championship
Lourdes vs. P-E-M, 5 p.m. (second
game at 7:30 p.m., if needed)

SECTION 1AAA TOURNAMENT
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8
(At Marcusen Park, Austin)
Championship
Winona vs. Byron, 5 p.m. (second
game at 7:30 p.m., if necessary)

SECTION 1AAAA TOURNAMENT
TUESDAY, JUNE 7
(At Red Wing)
Championship Round
Farmington vs. Lakeville South, 5
p.m. and 7:30 p.m., if necessary

SOFTBALL
CLASS A STATE TOURNAMENT
THURSDAY, JUNE 9
(at Caswell Park, North Mankato)
Quarterfinals
No. 1 Nicollet vs. Menagha, 1 p.m.
No. 4 Red Lake Falls vs. No. 5 Edg-
erton/SW Christian, 1 p.m.
No. 2 Moose Lake/Willow River vs.
Wabasha-Kellogg, 1 p.m.
No. 3 Randolph vs. Upsala, 1 p.m.

Consolation semifinals
Nicollet/Menagha loser vs. RLF/
ESWC loser, 7 p.m.
MLWR/WK loser vs. Randolph/Up-
sala loser, 7 p.m.
Semifinals
Nicollet/Menagha winner vs. RLF/
ESWC winner, 7 p.m.
MLWR/WK winner vs. Randolph/
Upsala winner, 7 p.m.
FRIDAY, JUNE 10
Fifth place
Consolation semifinal winners, 9
a.m.
Third place
Semifinal losers, 11 a.m.
Championship
Semifinal winners, 2:30 p.m.

CLASS AA STATE TOURNAMENT
THURSDAY, JUNE 9
(at Caswell Park, North Mankato)
Quarterfinals
No. 1 Proctor vs. Pipestone Area,
9 a.m.
No. 4 Maple Lake vs. No. 5 St. Cloud
Cathedral, 9 a.m.
No. 2 Le Sueur-Henderson vs. Dil-
worth-Glyndon-Felton, 11 a.m.
No. 3 Chatfield vs. Mounds Park
Academy, 5 p.m.
Consolation semifinals
Proctor/PA loser vs. ML/SCC loser,
7 p.m.
LH/DGF loser vs. Chatfield/MPA
loser, 7 p.m.
Semifinals
Proctor/PA winner vs. ML/SCC
winner, 5 p.m.
LH/DGF winner vs. Chatfield/MPA
winner, 5 p.m.
FRIDAY, JUNE 10
Fifth place
Consolation semifinal winners, 9
a.m.
Third place
Semifinal losers, 11 a.m.
Championship
Semifinal winners, 2 p.m.

CLASS AAA STATE TOURNAMENT
THURSDAY, JUNE 9
(at Caswell Park, North Mankato)
Quarterfinals
No. 1 Winona vs. Rocori, 11 a.m.
No. 4 Chisago Lakes vs. No. 5 Benil-
de-SM, 11 a.m.
No. 2 Mankato West vs. Monticello,
11 a.m.
No. 3 St. Anthony Village vs. Sim-
ley, 11 a.m.
Consolation semifinals
Winona/Rocori loser vs. CL/BSM
loser, 5 p.m.
West/Monticello loser vs. SAV/
Simley loser, 5 p.m.
Semifinals
Winona/Rocori winner vs. CL/BSM
winner, 5 p.m.
West/Monticello winner vs. SAV/
Simley winner, 5 p.m.
FRIDAY, JUNE 10
Fifth place
Consolation semifinal winners, 9
a.m.
Third place

Semifinal losers, 11 a.m.
Championship
Semifinal winners, 1:30 p.m.

BOYS TENNIS
CLASS A STATE TOURNAMENT
(At Reed-Sweatt Tennis Center,
Minneapolis)
TUESDAY, JUNE 7
Quarterfinals
Rock Ridge vs. Minnewaska, 8 a.m.
Luverne vs. St. Paul Academy, 10
a.m.
Lourdes vs. Foley, noon
Litchfield vs. Breck, 2 p.m.
Consolation semifinals
RR/Minnewaska loser vs. Luverne/
SPA loser, 4 p.m.
Lourdes/Foley loser vs. Litch-
field/Breck loser, 6 p.m.
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8
Semifinals
RR/Minnewaska winner vs. Lu-
verne/SPA winner, 8 a.m.
Lourdes/Foley winner vs. Litch-
field/Breck winner, 10 a.m.
Fifth place
Consolation semifinal winners,
noon
Third place
Semifinal losers, 2 p.m.
Championship
Semifinal winners, 4 p.m.
CLASS AA STATE TOURNAMENT
(At Baseline Tennis Center, Minne-
apolis)
TUESDAY, JUNE 7
Quarterfinals
Orono vs. Duluth East, 8 a.m.
Mayo vs. Eagan, 10 a.m.
Edina vs. Eden Prairie, noon
Mounds View vs. Becker, 2 p.m.
Consolation semifinals
Orono/D.E. loser vs. Mayo/Eagan
loser, 4 p.m.
Edina/EP loser vs. MV/Becker los-
er, 6 p.m.
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8
Semifinals
Orono/D.E. winner vs. Mayo/Ea-
gan winner, 8 a.m.
Edina/EP winner vs. MV/Becker
winner, 10 a.m.
Fifth place
Consolation semifinal winners,
noon
Third place
Semifinal losers, 2 p.m.
Championship
Semifinal winners, 4 p.m.

BOYS LACROSSE
SECTION 1 TOURNAMENT
TUESDAY, JUNE 7
Championship
Farmington at Lakeville South,
time TBD
COLLEGE BASEBALL
NORTHWOODS LEAGUE

TUESDAY, JUNE 7
Great Lakes Conference
No games scheduled
Great Plains Conference
No games scheduled
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8
Great Lakes Conference
Kalamazoo at Traverse City, 10
a.m.
Kokomo at Battle Creek, 5:35 p.m.
Wausau at Wisconsin Rapids, 6:05
p.m.
Rockford at Kenosha, 6:05 p.m.
Lakeshore at Madison, 6:08 p.m.
Green Bay at Fond du Lac, 6:35
p.m.
Great Plains Conference
Waterloo at Duluth, 6:35 p.m.
Minn. Mud Puppies at Eau Claire,
6:35 p.m.
Rochester at Mankato, 6:35 p.m.
La Crosse at Willmar, 7:05 p.m.
Bismarck at St. Cloud, 7:05 p.m.

BASKETBALL

Professional
NBA Finals
Wednesday's Games
Golden State at Boston, 8 p.m.

HOCKEY

Professional
NHL Playoffs
Friday's Games
NY Rangers 3, Tampa Bay 2
Saturday's Games
Colorado 4, Edmonton 2
Sunday's Games
Tampa Bay 3, NY Rangers 2
Monday's Games
Colorado at Edmonton, 7 p.m.

BASEBALL

Professional				
MLB				
American League				
East				
	W	L	Pct	GB
NY Yankees	39	15	.722	—
Toronto	31	22	.585	7.5
Tampa Bay	31	23	.574	8.0
Boston	27	27	.500	12.0
Baltimore	23	33	.411	17.0
Central				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	32	24	.571	—
Cleveland	24	25	.490	4.5
Chi. White Sox	25	27	.481	5.0
Detroit	21	33	.389	10.0
Kansas City	17	35	.327	13.0
West				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	35	19	.648	—
LA Angels	27	28	.491	8.5
Texas	25	28	.472	9.5
Seattle	24	30	.444	11.0
Oakland	20	36	.357	16.0
National League				
East				
	W	L	Pct	GB
NY Mets	37	19	.661	—
Atlanta	28	27	.509	8.5
Philadelphia	25	29	.463	11.0
Miami	22	30	.423	13.0
Washington	21	35	.375	16.0
Central				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	33	23	.589	—
St. Louis	32	23	.582	.5
Pittsburgh	24	28	.462	7.0
Chi. Cubs	23	32	.418	9.5

Cincinnati	18	35	.340	13.5
West				
	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Dodgers	35	19	.648	—
San Diego	33	21	.611	2.0
San Francisco	29	24	.547	5.5
Arizona	26	29	.473	9.5
Colorado	23	31	.426	12.0
American League				
Saturday's Results				
NY Yankees 3, Detroit 0				
Toronto 12, Minnesota 3				
Baltimore 5, Cleveland 4				
Texas 3, Seattle 2				
Boston 8, Oakland 0				
Kansas City 6, Houston 0				
Chi. White Sox 3, Tampa Bay 2				
Sunday's Results				
NY Yankees 5, Detroit 4, 10 innings				
Cleveland 3, Baltimore 2				
Minnesota 8, Toronto 6				
Chi. White Sox 6, Tampa Bay 5				
Houston 7, Kansas City 4				
Seattle 6, Texas 5, 10 innings				
Boston 5, Oakland 2				
Monday's Games				
Texas (Gray 1-2) at Cleveland (Quantrill 2-3), 6:10 p.m.				
Seattle (Ray 4-6) at Houston (Javier 3-2), 7:10 p.m.				
Toronto (Stripling 1-1) at Kansas City (Lynch 2-4), 7:10 p.m.				
Boston (Wacha 3-1) at LA Angels (Syndergaard 4-3), 8:38 p.m.				
Tuesday's Games				
Texas (Hearn 3-4) at Cleveland (Pilkington 1-0), 6:10 p.m.				
NY Yankees (Taillon 6-1) at Minnesota, 6:40 p.m.				
Seattle (Flexen 2-6) at Houston (Verlander 6-2), 7:10 p.m.				
Toronto (Manoah 6-1) at Kansas City (Keller 1-6), 7:10 p.m.				
Boston at LA Angels, 8:38 p.m.				
National League				
Saturday's Results				
Chi. Cubs 6, St. Louis 1				
Pittsburgh 2, Arizona 1				
Miami 5, San Francisco 4				
San Diego 4, Milwaukee 0				
Washington 10, Cincinnati 8				
St. Louis 7, Chi. Cubs 4, 10 innings				
Atlanta 6, Colorado 2, 11 innings				
NY Mets 9, LA Dodgers 4				
Sunday's Results				
Pittsburgh 3, Arizona 0				
San Francisco 5, Miami 1				
Washington 5, Cincinnati 4				
San Diego 6, Milwaukee 4, 10 innings				
Atlanta 8, Colorado 7				
NY Mets 5, LA Dodgers 4, 10 innings				
St. Louis 5, Chi. Cubs 3, 11 innings				
Tuesday's Games				
Washington at Miami (Cabrera 1-0), 5:40 p.m.				
Arizona (Gilbert 0-2) at Cincinnati (Ashcraft 2-0), 5:40 p.m.				
Philadelphia (Suarez 4-3) at Milwaukee (Alexander 0-0), 7:10 p.m.				
NY Mets (Walker 4-1) at San Diego (Darvish 4-3), 8:40 p.m.				
Colorado (Marquez 1-5) at San Francisco (Rodon 4-4), 8:45 p.m.				
Interleague				
Saturday's Results				
Philadelphia 7, LA Angels 2				
Sunday's Results				
Philadelphia 9, LA Angels 7				
Tuesday's Games				
Chi. Cubs at Baltimore (Bradish 1-3), 6:05 p.m.				
Detroit (Skubal 4-2) at Pittsburgh (Quintana 1-2), 6:05 p.m.				
St. Louis at Tampa Bay (Springs 2-2), 6:10 p.m.				
Oakland (Irvin 2-2) at Atlanta (Wright 5-3), 6:20 p.m.				
LA Dodgers (White 1-1) at Chi. White Sox (Kopech 1-2), 7:10 p.m.				

Warriors send Finals back to Boston all-square

Reuters

SAN FRANCISCO — Stephen Curry scored 29 points and the Golden State Warriors dominated the second half of Finals Game Two on Sunday to beat the visiting Boston Celtics 107-88 and level the best-of-seven Finals at one game apiece.

Curry came out firing in the third quarter and Jordan Poole's three pointer at the buzzer from well beyond the arc capped a 35-14 third-quarter blitz that put the home team up 87-64.

The Warriors continued to play physical defense and make shots to extend the lead over the final 12 minutes and avoid a fourth-quarter collapse like the one they suffered in Game One.

Curry led the way for the "Dubs," draining five three pointers to go with six rebounds and four assists while playing outstanding defense.

"Steph was breathtaking in that third quarter," Warriors head coach Steve Kerr said.

"Not just the shotmaking but the defensive effort. He just doesn't get enough credit for his level of conditioning, physicality and defense," Kerr said.

"People go at him to try to wear him down because they know how important he is to us offensively. And it is pretty dramatic, the difference in Steph's strength and physicality between now and when I first got here eight years ago.

"The guy is amazing; he just keeps working."

The Celtics started the contest right where they left off at the end of Game One, using their superior size to frustrate Warriors shooters and swishing threes to take an early nine-point lead.

But 11 first-half Celtics



Darren Yamashita / USA Today Sports

Golden State Warriors guard Jordan Poole (3) and guard Stephen Curry (30) celebrate in the second half against the Boston Celtics during Game 2 of the NBA Finals in San Francisco on Sunday.

turnovers gave the Warriors life and the tense first half ended with an Andrew Wiggins putback layup that gave the Warriors a two-point lead.

It was all Warriors after the break as the Celtics struggled on offense, committing 19 turnovers that led to 33 Warriors points and shooting just 36% from the field.

The pivotal Game Three is set for Wednesday in Boston.

In previous Finals series split 1-1, the team that wins Game Three has gone on to win the series 82.1% of the time (32-7), according to the NBA.

Prior to the start of Game Two, players and coaches on both teams wore orange T-shirts that said "End Gun Violence" on the front and a list of advocacy organizations working to address the issue on the back, amid a surge in mass shooting in the United States.



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Tennis

From page B1

in the quarterfinals. Win that one and a rematch with No. 3 Breck would likely be looming in Wednesday's semifinals. Breck graduated some key players from a year ago and Lourdes has already beaten the Mustangs once this season, 5-2.

Win both of those and the 13-5 Eagles would find themselves in the final. Their foe would almost certainly be the tournament's favorite, No. 1-ranked St. Paul Academy, a team that beat it 5-2 a year ago.

But in Lourdes' minds, the odds should be in its favor, not SPA's. Which makes this week "proving time."

"We don't put any thought into (rankings)," said Blissenbach, one of six incredibly close and driven seniors on this year's Lourdes team. "We've not played (St. Paul Academy) this year. That (ranking) is based on last year."

Lourdes coach Steve Tacl also likes his team's state-tournament chances.

The Eagles, who are seeking their first state championship since 2018, seem to be playing their best tennis. Schaeffer Academy figured to be a bit of a challenge for Lourdes in the Section 1A final. But that never materialized, Lourdes romping 7-0.

The Eagles are extremely strong at the top of their lineup, with No. 1 singles guy Marjan Veldic ranked No. 1 in Class A, and Ethan Leeser considered possibly the best No. 2 singles player in the state.

And there is plenty more good stuff beneath them, including talented and versatile (singles or doubles) Freddie Suhler, who figured to play either No. 3 singles or No. 1 doubles.

Still, as much confidence as Tacl has in his team, he's not ready to print any state championship T-shirts yet. All he knows is that his Eagles have a chance at achieving their dream. But it's just a chance.



"At the end of the day, it comes down to who wins the bag matches, matches at state that are really close," he said.

Spring ahead with us.



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Mickelson named assistant softball coach

Rochester's **Frankie Mickelson** has been named assistant softball coach at the University of Sioux Falls.



Mickelson

Mickelson, a Century grad, was a standout softball player at Division II Sioux Falls (S.D.) from 2017-21. She joins a team that finished the 2021-22 season 27-25 overall, 11-14 in the NSIC, and advanced to the NSIC Tournament semifinals for the first time in program history. "I am not sure I have been more excited to bring an assistant coach on staff in my time at USF," Sioux Falls coach **Shannon Pivovar** said in a release. "Frankie brings a passion for the game of softball, for the growth of student-athletes, and for the USF family that is unmatched. I was able to watch what she was capable of with her work with our team this spring and am thrilled she has decided to come back to our family as a full-time coach moving into next season."



LOCAL SPORTS NOTEBOOK

Guy N. Limbeck

Mickelson, who graduated in the spring of 2021 with a Bachelor of Science degree in social work and social sciences from Sioux Falls, will be in charge of various duties related to the day-to-day function of the softball team. During her playing career, she was an outstanding center fielder who hit better than .300 twice and she helped the Cougars post 120 victories in five seasons.

She excelled offensively and defensively and is ranked in the top-10 of 12 different Sioux Falls career hitting and fielding categories. She was named to the NSIC Golden Glove Team as a senior. Mickelson was also named Sioux Falls' Gibby Award recipient in April 2021. In that recognition, Mickelson was honored for her perseverance and



Post Bulletin file photo

Frankie Mickelson, shown here during her playing days at Century, has been named an assistant softball coach at Division II Sioux Falls. Mickelson was a standout softball player at Sioux Falls from 2017-21.

character for overcoming injuries suffered from a car accident in summer of 2020.

She also excelled in the classroom. Mickelson was named to the NSIC All-Academic Team four times and was a three-time Academic All-NSIC Team of Excellence member (2019-2021). She was named to the Easton/National Fastpitch Coaches

Association All-America Scholar-Athlete Team in 2019.

Rochester's **Matthew Hayford**, a Lourdes grad, was a starter this season for the St. John's University baseball team.

Hayford, a junior, started in 36 of the team's 41 games as an infielder and he batted .328, fifth on the team. He hit five doubles, two

home runs, had 16 RBIs and scored 27 runs. He posted an OPS of .824.

Hayford helped the Johnnies finish the season 24-17.

• **Devin Vonderohe** of Caledonia, a freshman first baseman, and sophomore pitcher **Ben Kuehni** of Red Wing were also members of the St. John's team. Neither player saw any varsity action this season.

Rochester's **Jane Spading** has earned All-Conference honors in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference as a member of the St. Olaf College women's tennis team.

Spading, a freshman, was honored as part of a doubles team. She paired with Sarah Clark as the duo collected the first All-MIAC honors of their respective careers.

Spading and Clark spent much of the season at No. 3 doubles for St. Olaf, but they did play some matches at the No. 2 position. They posted an 8-4 overall record and 7-2 mark in MIAC play during their first season of collegiate tennis.

Spading is a Lourdes grad who played four years of varsity tennis with the Eagles. She helped Lourdes win a Section 1A title and earn a state team berth all four seasons, including one in which the Eagles were the Class A state runner-up. She also was an individual state qualifier.

Guy N. Limbeck is a sports writer for the Post Bulletin. His Local Notebook appears each Tuesday. He can be reached at glimbeck@postbulletin.com.

CLASS AAA SOFTBALL

Winona has unfinished business at state tournament

BY ALEX VANDENHOUTEN
Post Bulletin

The mindset for the Winona Senior High softball team has been the same all season long.

After making a run to the Class AAA state final last season, but falling to Becker 4-0, the Winhawks have attacked this season with a score to settle.

"This whole season from the start has been about unfinished business," Winhawks' coach Mitch Grossell said. "We've talked about ourselves quietly, haven't really put it out there. Nobody else has heard it, but the whole team knows. We want to get back to where we were last year and finish what we started."

The first step was completed last Thursday with a 4-1 win over Kasson-Mantorville to cap an unbeaten run in the Section 1AAA tournament.

But that first step was almost self-expected for a squad that returned the bulk of the team, including all-state performers Grace Fricke and Makayla Steffes, and



Traci Westcott / Post Bulletin

Winona celebrates after defeating Kasson-Mantorville 4-1 in a Section 1AAA softball championship on Thursday at Todd Park in Austin.

knew they had the talent to make another run. And so did everybody else across the state.

Yet, the Winhawks (22-1) had little issue with having a target on their backs.

They outscored opponents 170-31 this season and enter the state tournament having won 18 consecutive games, as well as being the top-

ranked team in Class AAA in the last two polls by the Minnesota Fastpitch Coaches Association. It seems this group that was already great, has only gotten better.

"They all worked their tails off in the offseason," Grossell said. "Makayla Steffes — nobody works harder than her in the offseason and during the

season. Grace Fricke put in so much time to hit the ball as well and as hard as she does. It's just amazing. I mean, she's been pitched around, too, every game."

Fricke's numbers are eye-popping.

She leads the team in batting average (.603), on-base percentage (better than .650), home runs (7), RBIs (35),

doubles (11), walks (13) and intentional walks (6).

Steffes, meanwhile, has been terrific in the circle (13-1 record, 0.79 ERA) and at the plate (.423 average, team-leading 35 runs scored and 12 steals). Steffes allowed just one run on three hits in the 4-1 win over Kasson-Mantorville in the Section 1AAA championship. But one of the unsung heroes for the Winhawks this season has been Ava Hamsund.

The junior left-hander really came on in last year's state tournament after battling some arm trouble during the season and has carried that momentum into 2022. She joins Steffes in giving the Winhawks the best 1-2 punch around. The two have combined to allow just 14 earned runs in 143 innings this year, with Hamsund accounting for 55 of those innings.

"I'm way more comfortable this season than I was last year," Hamsund said. "I'm way less nervous. I feel like I can get all my pitches going more. Plus, being able to split time with Makayla is very nice so

neither of us won't get burned out because I feel like last year, Makayla got a little burnt out. It's better that we can tag team it."

"We played it safe with her last year," Grossell said. "So we knew what we had in her. It's not a surprise to us at all. She's a stud pitcher and a heck of a hitter, too."

Hitting behind Fricke, Hamsund is hitting better than .400 with 23 RBIs. She has also struck out just four times.

"It's tough to get the ball by her," Grossell said.

With Hamsund now fully in the fold to combine with the likes of talented two-way players Macy McNally and Olivia Poulin, the top-seeded Winhawks are feeling good heading to Caswell Park in North Mankato. They will take on Rocori at 11 a.m. Thursday in a Class AAA state quarterfinal.

"We're really gunning for the championship and winning," Hamsund said. "We have unfinished business."

Century's Comfere making most of his 1st, last track season

BY ALEX VANDENHOUTEN
Post Bulletin

Max Comfere's first and only track season will continue after the Century senior sprinter showed off his incredible top-end speed to win the 100-meter dash and anchor the Panthers' winning 4x100 relay team on Saturday at the Section 1AAA championships at Lakeville South High School.

He also finished second in the 200 to qualify in three events for the Class AAA state meet that begins Thursday at St. Michael-Albertville High School.

It's an impressive feat for someone who is new to the sport, but Comfere downplays that aspect of it.

"It's not as if I started cold," the Century senior sprinter said. "I play a good amount of soccer and there's a lot of running. There's similarities between the two sports. From my

point of view, it's not unexpected."

But from his opponents' point of view, it's been something to behold.

"He has insane top speed," John Marshall sprinter Michael Nicometo said. "Especially in his first year of track, it's something else."

• JM's Michael Nicometo held off Comfere with a personal-best time of 21.84 to capture his second consecutive Section 1AAA 200 title.

• Mayo senior Yaihi Marial cleared 6-4 and then 6-6 on his first tries in the high jump, then cleared a personal-best 6-7, before attempting to break the school record of 6-9 3/4 set in 1981 by Paul Burmeister with a height of 6-10. That height also would have tied the Section 1AAA record set in 1973.

He just clipped the bar. Marial will compete in two events at state after winning the triple jump

title on Thursday.

• Mayo's Noah Smith, who placed sixth in the 200 at state a year ago, qualified with a third-place finish (by standard) on Saturday. Smith was also the anchor for Mayo's 400 and 800-meter relay teams that finished second.

• Sophomore Carter Holcomb was also a part of those relay teams, and he qualified for state in the long jump with a second-place finish.

• Century's Tyler White placed second in the 800 and anchored the 4x400 relay team that also placed second, qualifying for state in two events.

PANTHERS' GIRLS EXCEL IN RELAYS

The Century relay teams had a good hunch they could do something special at this year's Section 1AAA girls track and field championships.

Last Saturday, the Panthers made good on that feeling.

All four Century relay



Alex VandenHouten / Post Bulletin

Century's Max Comfere reacts after anchoring the Panthers' winning 800-meter relay team on Saturday at the Section 1AAA championships at Lakeville South High School.

teams qualified for the Class AAA state meet and the 4x100-, 4x200- and 4x800-meter relays had first-place finishes. Century's 4x400 relay was second. Now, all four will advance to the state meet on June 9-11 at St. Michael-Albertville High School.

"It's not something

we were expecting," said Megan Lund, who anchored the 4x100 and 4x200 relays.

The Panthers won the 4x100 (48.78 seconds) and 4x200 (1:43.97) by more than a second apiece.

The 3,200-meter relay team of Sophia Comfere, Kaia Berry, Addison Clarey and Penelopea

Gordon won the first event of the day by nearly 14 seconds.

Gordon dominated the 800, taking a commanding lead around the first turn and never looked back to capture the title. She will participate in three events at state as will Lindner, who won the triple jump with a leap of 35 feet, 6 1/4 inches, in addition to her being a part of the 4x100 and 4x200 relays.

Madison Habberstad claimed two individual titles, winning the pole vault on Saturday after claiming the long jump on Thursday.

• Mayo's Hannah Hanson was terrific on Saturday, cruising to an impressive victory in the 100 hurdles, before setting a personal best of 44.62 in the 300 hurdles to make it a clean sweep. She also finished second in the triple jump, thanks to a leap of 35-4 3/4 on her very last attempt.

Stewartville’s Strum state-bound in 3 events

BY PAT RUFF
Post Bulletin

Stewartville junior Haylie Strum has checked another box on her to-do list.

Strum is headed to the state track meet on the strength of a dominating performance in Saturday’s 300 hurdles at the Section 1AA meet at Lakeville South. Strum was timed in 45.72. That was more than two seconds faster than runner-up Allie Sveen of Plainview-Elgin-Millville. Sveen was also second in the 100 hurdles and will head to state in both events.

Tigers coach Dawn Miller thinks Strum can do even better next week.

“Once she is challenged in the race, she can drop another second or two off her time,” guessed Miller: “She is one who doesn’t like to lose. There is a lot of competitiveness in her heart.”

Strum is also state bound in the 4x100 relay (landed second Saturday) and the 4x400 relay (finished first, in 4:06.52). The latter consists of Strum, Taylor Klement, Avery Spencer and Audrey Shindelar.

“I am very excited and proud of my teammates for what we’ve done.,” Strum said. “In the relays, we all trust each other and have fun. I’m looking forward to state. I love the competition. I’m hoping I can get even faster times over there.”

Shindelar, an eighth-grader, is state bound in three events — the high jump, 400 and the 4x400.

• Byron showed off its speed on Saturday in the section meet. It was enough to land a bunch of the Bears’ runners spots in this week’s state meet.

Two sprinters stood above the rest, senior Olivia Amundson and sophomore Paige Halder. Both are state bound in three events, Amundson in the 100-meter dash and 4x100 and 4x200 relays. Halder is going in the 200, 400 and 4x200.

Amundson, a senior leader, has helped the Bears’ young runners excel this season. The 4x100 team includes seventh-grader Lilah Kurke, eighth-grader Carly Halder, junior Rachel Fode and Amundson. On the 4x200 team, there is Kurke, Carly Halder and Paige Halder.

• Winona had a handful of winning performances. Brenengen was first in the 100 (12.76), Mandy Duellman won the shot put (37-11 3/4) and its 4x800 relay team was a winner (Calla Pike, Ava Pike, Faith Quinn, Anna Gillmer, 10:00.69).

• Austin all-around athlete Olivia Walsh won the triple jump, the junior clearing 35-7 1/2. She was also second in the high jump on Thursday (5-1).

STEWARTVILLE THROWERS STATE-BOUND

Peyton Byrne and Tor Lunaas have an unbreakable friendship that gets tested at every track-and-field meet in which they compete. That’s what happens when best friends are competing in the same event, in this case the discus and shot put, and hate to lose.

“We push each other and are always trying to one up each other,” said the 6-foot-3, 260-pound Byrne, who like Lunaas (6-1, 210) is a junior at Stewartville.

The “best buds” will have some excellent company at the state meet this week — each other: Byrne won the discus section title with a throw of 157-feet-1. Lunaas tossed it 155-1, which was third, but good enough to reach state by standard. Plainview-Elgin-Millville’s Ashton Kisch was second (155-5).

The two will have plenty of time to be hanging around together at the state meet. That’s because they’ve qualified in two events. Both also made it in the shot put, which was conducted Thursday. Byrne was first (52-5) and Lunaas second (48-11 3/4).

Byrne surprised himself with his own discus showing. He hadn’t been producing the last five weeks in the event, stuck at 140 feet or less during that stretch.

But Saturday, something clicked for him. He thinks it was the good vibes from Thursday.

“I’d been in a (discus) drought,” he said. “But I think

winning the shot put gave me a lot of confidence, and it carried over to today.”

• Byron senior Trent DeCook won the 200 in 23.34 seconds, and landed second in the 100 with an 11.34 time. Waseca’s Kyle Ahlschlager got him in the 100 (11.23).

• Plainview-Elgin-Millville junior Kaiden Peters won the 400 in 50.68 seconds. Just behind him was Winona’s Brayden Draheim in 51.77.

• Austin’s A’triel Terry won the high jump (6-3), ran legs on Austin’s winning 4x400 relay team (3:29.62) and second-place 4x100 team (44.09), and finished third in the 200.

• Red Wing junior Aaron Freier won the 800 (1:59.07) and Winona’s Myles Rasmussen won the 1,600 (4:39.29).

• Byron won the 4x800 relay (Carson Pieper, Noah Schrooten, Jaxon Bounton, Ben Zimmerman-Moreno) in 8:20.38. Carter Anderson of Stewartville was second in the high jump (6-2) and Austin’s Joe Walker won the long jump (21-9 1/4).

Twins’ Sánchez, Urshela set to face former team

BY BETSY HELFAND
Pioneer Press

TORONTO — The day Gary Sánchez showed up at Twins camp this March after a late-night trade, he had already turned the page. The New York Yankees sent the catcher, as well as third baseman Gio Urshela, to Minnesota for infielders Josh Donaldson and Isiah Kiner-Falefa.

“That chapter is done,” he said of his Yankees career. “It’s in the past.”

Sánchez and Urshela will get to revisit it to an extent this week when the Yankees show up for a three-game series at Target Field that will begin on Tuesday.

For Urshela, who spent the past three seasons in New York but came up with Cleveland and also spent some time in Toronto, he said he expects it to be like playing just another team. For Sánchez, who signed with the Yankees as a teenager and became a two-time all-star in New York, the experience might be a little different.

“Maybe a lot of adrenaline that day,” he said. “But at the same time, (I’m) excited to come out with my new team. I’m also excited to see old teammates and friends.”

While Sánchez didn’t have much to say about his former team on Sunday, the change in scenery appears to have done him well. Sánchez arrived in New York as a highly-touted prospect. When he broke onto the scene in 2016, he lived up to those expectations, finishing second in Rookie of the Year voting after a 53-game stint where he hit .299 with a 1.032 OPS and 20 home runs.

“Gary was such a highly-touted young player that in those markets, really no matter what you do, you’re going to end up being the center of attention one way or the other, no matter what,” manager Rocco Baldelli said. “And when the expectation levels are so high, I think a lot of times in the big markets, the expectation levels are at points that are just not reachable for any player. And so it’s almost easy, it’s easier and almost better if you’re not one of those guys, and you can just go out there and play. But everyone’s eyes are on Gary Sanchez.”

Sánchez eventually became the target of frequent media criticism and fan ire over the remainder of his career in New York. But the catcher has seemed to settle well into this new home in Minnesota.

Since the March trade that brought him to the Twins, his defensive metrics have improved behind the plate, and Sánchez, who finished Sunday with two hits including a home run, has been producing offensively. Sánchez entered Sunday with a 109 OPS+ (100 is league average), a jump from his previous two seasons.

“I think he’s enjoying himself here,” Baldelli said. “I think he feels comfortable and able to just play the game over here.”

INJURY UPDATES

Carlos Correa, who tested positive for COVID-19 while the Twins were in Detroit, has returned to Minnesota, and Baldelli said he was “doing OK.”

The Twins have begun to test him and after two negative tests in consecutive days, he could be cleared to return.

“I think he’s going to need probably at least a couple of days of being on his feet and working out before we would get him back out there in the lineup. But I don’t see it being too far out, so that’s good news,” Baldelli said.

Starter Joe Ryan, who was also sidelined with COVID-19, has thrown a bullpen back in Minnesota and was scheduled to throw another one at higher intensity. Once that happens — Baldelli was unsure if that was scheduled for Sunday or Tuesday — the Twins will have a better sense of how he will slot in moving forward.

Baldelli said they “have to talk about a rehab start,” because of the time he has missed, but the Twins have not yet nailed down whether they will go that route.

Kenta Maeda, who has been rehabbing in Fort Myers, Fla., after last year’s Tommy John surgery, is in Minnesota currently, and Baldelli said the plan was for him to join the group periodically throughout the year to have check ups with team trainers and doctors as well as to be around his teammates. Baldelli again expressed hope that Maeda could be back later this season.

Randy Dobnak (finger), who has also been in Fort Myers rehabbing, suffered a setback within the past few weeks, and his return appears to be relatively far off still.

Breaking down the Section 1 baseball title games

BY JASON FELDMAN
Post Bulletin

Four teams will represent Section 1 at the state baseball tournaments next week.

Those four section champions will be crowned over the next two days at four different sites in Rochester, Austin and Red Wing.

Here’s a look at the four matchups that will determine the 2022 Section 1 champions:

SECTION 1A

Who: No. 1 seed Hayfield (21-2) vs. No. 3 Southland (17-7)

When: 5 p.m. today (second game at 7 p.m., if necessary)

Where: Riverland Community College, Austin

At stake: The winner advances to next week’s Class A state tournament, beginning June 14 in St. Cloud

In the driver’s seat: Hayfield needs to beat Southland just once to win the double-elimination section tournament. Southland needs to beat the Vikings twice to advance to state.

How they got here: Hayfield, the defending section and state champion, has breezed through three section playoff games, beating Fillmore Central/Lanesboro, Kenyon-Wanamingo and Lyle/Pacelli by a combined score of 30-4. ... Southland has taken a longer route, having won four consecutive playoff games after falling 6-5 to United South Central in the second round. The Rebels have defeated Wabasha-Kellogg, K-W, Rushford-Peterson and L/P to earn a spot in the title game. ... Hayfield has won 14 consecutive games. ... Hayfield and Southland have not faced one another this season.

SECTION 1AA

Who: Lourdes (17-4) vs. Plainview-Elgin-Millville (17-8)

When: 5 p.m. today (second game at 7:30 p.m., if necessary)

Where: Mayo Field, Rochester

At stake: The winner advances to next week’s Class AA state tournament, beginning June 14 in St. Cloud

In the driver’s seat: Lourdes needs to beat P-E-M just once to win the double-elimination section tournament. P-E-M needs to beat the Eagles twice to advance to state.

How they got here: Lourdes’ pitching and defense has been nearly impenetrable in the postseason. The Eagles have allowed just one total run in wins over Pine Island (10-0), Cannon Falls (4-0) and P-E-M (7-1). ... P-E-M battled back through an elimination game, beating Pine Island 6-3 to earn a spot in the section final. The Bulldogs have won seven of their past eight and have averaged 8.6 runs per game in that span. The lone exception in that stretch: the 7-1 loss to Lourdes on Saturday in the section semifinal. ... Lourdes has recorded seven shutouts this season and has allowed just one run in seven of its victories.

SECTION 1AAA

Who: No. 3 seed Winona (13-10) vs. No. 1 Byron (20-3)

When: 5 p.m. Wednesday (second game at 7:30 p.m., if necessary)

Where: Marcusen Park, Austin

At stake: The winner advances to next week’s Class AAA state tournament, beginning June 14 in Chaska

In the driver’s seat: Winona needs to beat Byron just once to win the double-elimination section tournament. Byron needs to beat the Winhawks twice to advance to state.

How they got here: Winona has handed Byron two of its three losses this season, including a 15-10 setback in the regular season on May 12, then a 6-5 win in the section semifinal game on Saturday at Byron. Winona was 6-9 at one point, but has gone 7-1 in its past eight games and has won its three playoff games by a combined score of 18-6. ... Byron has lost just three times this season, two against Winona and once against defending Class A state champion Hayfield. After falling to Winona on Saturday, the Bears bounced back with a 5-1 win against Northfield. Byron averages a section-best 7.2 runs per game and 2.8 runs allowed per game. Winona averages 5.7 and 5.3.

SECTION 1AAAA

Who: No. 1 seed Farmington (20-3) vs. No. 2 Lakeville South (13-11)

When: 5 p.m. today (second game at 7:30 p.m., if necessary)

Where: The Athletic Field, Red Wing

At stake: The winner advances to next week’s Class AAAA state tournament, beginning June 14 at CHS Field in St. Paul

In the driver’s seat: Farmington needs to beat South just once to win the double-elimination section tournament. South needs to beat the Tigers twice to advance to state.

How they got here: Farmington, the defending section and state champion, defeated John Marshall (8-4), Century (5-1) and South (2-0) to reach the title game without a loss in postseason play. The Tigers, who are 40-9 over the past two seasons, have lost just once in their past 19 games. They are 7-0 against section opponents this season, and average 7.7 runs per game, while allowing just 2.6. ... South averages 4.5 runs per game and allows 3.8. The Cougars are 0-2 against Farmington this season, having lost 9-0 in the regular season and 2-0 on Saturday in the section winner’s bracket final. The Cougars rallied past Mayo, 3-2, to reach the championship game.

LOCAL STOCK CAR RACING

Winona’s Timm has big weekend at home track

BY TODD NARVESON
For the Post Bulletin

Two of the three area race tracks were able to get their programs in this past weekend. Mississippi Thunder Speedway in Fountain City, Wis., had a special event with the Stars & Stripes 40 that included an appearance from the Dirt Kings Late Model Series.

DOUBLE THE CHECKERS FOR TIMM

With the USMTS swing through Kansas and Missouri canceled due to wet weather, Winona’s Jake Timm was able to stay home and race his Modified and Late Model at his family’s home track.

Timm had a spectacular night in both cars. He won his heat and led all 40-laps of the Late Model feature for the \$5,000 payday. It was Timm’s third career Dirt Kings Series win. Dustin Sorensen of



Timm

Rochester also had his Late Model there and finished in 13th. Veteran racer Lance Matthees of Winona was 20th in the field of 26 Dirt Kings Late Models.

Timm then jumped into his Modified where he drew the pole position for the start. Timm duplicated his Late Model performance when he led every lap to take the win. Timm finished ahead of Jeremy Nelson from Alexandria and Steve Lavassuer of River Falls, Wis. Rodney Sanders of Happy, Texas was fourth and Winona’s Josh Angst finished fifth.

Nick Schwebach of Fountain took home top honors in the USRA Hobby Stock division. Schwebach started third and got past pole-sitter Steve Larson for the win.

The USRA B-Mods had a wild end to their feature race. Shaun Walski of Rollingstone and Erik Kanz of Winona battled for the lead late in the race. Kanz got into Walski and caused him to spin in turn one.

The rest of the pack scrambled to avoid

Walski, but not everyone escaped. Darran Jonsgaard and Jacob Lynch got together and hit the turn one wall head-on. Jonsgaard’s car launched up and over the wall and Lynch rolled over. Both drivers were uninjured, but the race was delayed as crews retrieved Jonsgaard’s car.

Walski led the final lap to win the race.

6 GET 1ST WINS AT CHATEAU

The Chateau Speedway in Lansing had a gorgeous night for racing on Friday. Six drivers scored their first wins of the year in the six divisions that compete there.

Jason Cummins of New Richland took advantage of a mid-race restart to win the USRA Modified feature. Cummins made it a clean sweep as he also won his heat race. The story of the race was West Concord’s Ryan Wetzstein. Wetzstein rolled his car over in his heat race, but they were somehow able to get the damage repaired in time to make the feature. Wetzstein started 11th

and drove all the way up to second just ahead of his dad, Steve.

Last week Kobie Kath from Owatonna looked like he would win the WISSOTA Midwest Modified feature, until the final lap when he got pinned behind a slower car and his older brother Kadden stole the win.

Kobie found redemption this time when he won the feature over Northfield’s Trevis Underdahl. Kath started fifth and worked his way to the front and took the win.

Michael Johnson of Rose Creek also got his first win of the year in the USRA B-Mods. He is the fourth different B-Mods winner in four nights at Chateau.

Joe Schmit of Ventura, Iowa, ended Travis Shipman’s three-race win streak in the USRA Stock Cars.

Last year’s track champion Josh Eischens of Taopi started eighth to win the Pure Stocks.

Daniel Bjonfald of Bloomington topped a small four-car field in the Hornet division.

DEER CREEK RAINED OUT

The races at Deer Creek Speedway in Spring Valley were canceled due to rain on Saturday. This was the fourth time in seven scheduled nights the races have fallen to wet weather.

NARVY’S NOTES

- This Friday, June 10, Mississippi Thunder Speedway will hold a special event for the USRA Late Model class. All of its usual weekly divisions will also be in action. As part of the speedway’s county-free admission program, this Friday residents of Fillmore County will get in free with proper identification.

- On Friday, June 17, Chateau Speedway will have the Mid-American Renegade Sprint Car Series on hand. This is a non-wing sprint car event and the series will also appear on Aug. 19.

- Deer Creek Speedway will team up with Join The Journey for their annual “Pink Out Night” on Saturday, June 18. This event is held to raise money and awareness

for breast cancer. There will be 50/50 ticket sales, raffles, silent auction and a push-up challenge for the feature winners of each division.

A PROFESSOR NARVESON HISTORY LESSON

Fifty years ago, on June 7, 1972, at Dodge County Speedway in Kasson: For the second time this year the automatic Wednesday rain date was needed when rains washed out Sunday’s program.

Ron Donahue drove his Hobby Stock to a convincing win in the 20-lap Hobby Stock feature. Donahue took home \$134.60 and finished a full straightaway ahead of runner up Bob Jenkinson. Ben Wencil chased Ken Schwartz of Rochester in the 15-lap Street Stock race. Schwartz won the event and got the customary \$20, which goes to the winner. Rich Olson won the 30-lap Late Model feature with Wendell Kuehn second and Bob Saterdalen third. A total of 60-cars were in the pits with 28-Hobby Stocks the largest field.

Evina Westbrook thrown into fire in rookie season with Lynx

BY JACE FREDERICK
St. Paul Pioneer Press

Evina Westbrook was drafted in the second round by Seattle, then cut during the Storm’s camp. That’s the end of the story for a lot of draft picks. It’s difficult to make it in the WNBA with just 12 teams and small, hyper-talented rosters.

But Minnesota’s injury issues were the UConn product’s gain. The Lynx’s early season roster didn’t shape up the way Cheryl Reeve envisioned. And injuries and late arrivals left the Lynx scrambling to fill a roster.

Helping to round it out was Westbrook, who initially was added via a hardship exemption, but then because of League technicalities, had to be inked to a season-long deal.

Westbrook has taken advantage of her preseason fortune. Through 10 games, the wing has entrenched herself as a cog in the Lynx’s machine through her production and versatility.

In Thursday’s loss in Atlanta, Westbrook was both guarding rookie

sensation Rhyne Howard as well as playing heavy point guard minutes for Minnesota.

“It’s a young player that, as I told our staff, is being thrown into some situations,” Reeve said. “We just keep giving her more, and she’s been handling that well.”

And while Westbrook seems to be handling it in stride, she is not hiding from the fact that it’s been “hard.”

“I’d definitely be lying if I said it wasn’t. There’s a lot going through my mind,” Westbrook said. “I’m messing up.”

Which is to be expected. But Westbrook has received valuable support from her teammates, who were in similar spots earlier in their careers, and is cherishing the coaching and guidance she’s received from Reeve and Co.

“I love being coached, I love that she’s on me and stuff like that. And I take that and I try to just figure it out as much as possible,” Westbrook said. “But for me, because it’s so much, I just try to literally take it day by day.”

Westbrook said she’s still trying to figure out



Elsa / Getty Images / TNS

Connecticut’s Evina Westbrook (22) reacts during action against South Carolina during the NCAA Tournament championship game at Target Center on April 3 in Minneapolis.

her role on the team, while also trying to play within herself and grow her confidence.

“I feel like I just feel really rushed sometimes, and I’m just trying to get through the play or look for this or look for that, which they want me to just go out and play. They want me to be myself, but it’s hard when I have 100 million things going through my

mind, and I’m new to this and I’m trying to figure it out,” Westbrook said. “At the same time, they know what I’m going through, they know what I’m thinking and feeling. They don’t want me to think as much, and more just to play. I feel like as the games have gone by I’ve definitely gotten more comfortable, and I’ve had to step up, had to grow up and not really

be considered a rookie, even though I am. But no, it’s been a long learning process, but day by day.”

That would be the case even if Westbrook was only playing her more natural wing position. But Moriah Jefferson’s quadricpe injury left Westbrook as the backup point guard option behind Rachel Banham. The responsibilities continue to pile onto

Westbrook’s plate. While point guard might not be her primary position, Reeve did note Westbrook sold herself as a lead guard during the draft process. And even before the Atlanta game, there had been moments when the rookie would initiate Minnesota’s offense.

“She’s comfortable doing that, and she did that at UConn, and she identified herself that way,” Reeve said. “So I don’t think it’s as maybe eye popping or whatever for her when we had the conversation of, ‘OK, you initiate a little bit.’ She said, ‘OK, that’s what I’ll do.’ ”

Reeve always talks to her players about carving out value in the league. Westbrook does that partially through her positional versatility — a near must-have in modern basketball. She can legitimately play either guard spot or small forward. Reeve said Westbrook is doing what she can to make the most of her responsibility.

“I like the experience she’s getting and I think it’ll be helpful,” Reeve said, “obviously to her, and hopefully to us at some point.”

Vikings receiver Osborn wants to become ‘a home run hitter’ this season

BY DANE MIZUTANI
St. Paul Pioneer Press

Vikings receiver K.J. Osborn waited patiently in the batter’s box Tuesday night at CHS Field in downtown St. Paul. He already had showed off his power-hitting prowess, and with Adam Thielen’s charity softball game on the line, the 24-year-old Osborn knew it was time to step up.

In that moment, Osborn channeled his inner Byron Buxton, pulverizing the pitch over the fence to give Team Offense the win over Team Defense in walk-off fashion.

Perhaps that home run was a prescient warning to opposing teams. After emerging as a reliable target for quarterback Kirk Cousins last season, Osborn is hoping to become an even bigger threat this season.

A home run hitter so to speak.

“I want to be someone that can create those big plays,” Osborn said. “Not



John Autey / St. Paul Pioneer Press

Minnesota Vikings wide receiver K.J. Osborn (17) celebrates his 62-yard touchdown against the Pittsburgh Steelers in the fourth quarter of an NFL game at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis on Dec. 9.

so much catching the ball and getting down. I want to make a guy miss and then make another guy miss and break that big play for us. Just be a game-changer.”

Though the 24-year-old has the ability to beat people deep, Osborn acknowledged that his big plays are likely going to come via yards after catch. He’s focused on

getting stronger this offseason so he’s not as easy to bring down in the open field.

It should help that Osborn is feeling much more confident heading into this season. In the past, Osborn said he was so focused on not making a mistake that he would play it safe throughout a game. Instead of looking to hit a home run, for

example, he would settle for single more often than not.

“Just being confident is a big thing,” Osborn said. “Now I’m able to play fast and not be worried about messing up. That’s going to allow me to get that (yards after catch) and create those big plays. I’m trying to take it to the next level. That’s what I’m striving to do right now.”

After playing sparingly as a rookie, Osborn proved to be a pleasant surprise in his second season last fall with 50 receptions for 655 yards and 7 touchdowns. He provided a tertiary option for the Vikings with star receivers Justin Jefferson and Adam Thielen garnering most of the attention.

Maybe down the road Osborn can garner similar attention.

“I want to get to the level that Justin and Adam are at right now,” he said. “They push me every single day to get better. And obviously (receivers coach Keenan McCardell) played in the league for a really long time. We have a lot of great guys in our room. They help me elevate my game.”

Something else that could help Osborn elevate his game is the new offense under head coach Kevin O’Connell. With an offensive-minded guy running the show nowadays, there should be more opportunities for

the Vikings to push the ball down the field.

“It is definitely complex,” Osborn said of the new offense. “That’s what kind of makes it fun. We’re out here every day learning. We’re in the meeting rooms grinding. I’m a guy that likes to learn all the positions because I play all over the field.”

Not that Osborn feels entitled to a role. While he performed at a high level last season, and that likely gives him the upper hand heading into this season, Osborn knows the Vikings have a lot of talented receivers on the roster.

“I wouldn’t say I’m established or anything like that,” he said. “Obviously with a new offense I’m trying to learn that stuff and get it down and be the player that I want to be. My expectations for myself are probably higher than anybody else’s expectations for me. I’m my biggest critic. I’m expecting a lot out of myself.”