

HIGH SCHOOLS

Mahtomedi defeats Chisago Lakes in boys hockey section final, heads to state

The Zephyrs have won six section championships in the past seven seasons.

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Less than five minutes into the game, Chisago Lakes and Mahtomedi had scored about a minute apart, and that tie lasted until the first intermission. Then the second.

That was the case even though the Zephyrs outshot the Wildcats 18-4 in the second period

"You kind of walk that fine line there. 'OK, 18-4. It's just a matter of time,' " Mahtomedi coach Jeff Poeschl said. "And then you think, 'Well, is it ever going to happen?' "

It finally happened with 6 minutes, 24 seconds left in regulation, when senior Jonny Grove skated up the middle of the ice to accept a pass from a teammate who skated wide. Grove buried his second goal of the game, and 10th of the season, to break the stalemate and send Mahtomedi toward a 3-1 victory for the Class 1A, Section 4 title Thursday at Aldrich Arena and a spot in the state tournament.

Grove, who scored in all three section tournament games, credited Chisago Lakes for playing a good defensive game, especially goaltender Jack Hanson. Mahtomedi had a few earlier chances to take the lead.

"It's definitely frustrating getting all those opportunities and not being able to capitalize," Grove said. "But we knew if we kept with it, we'd get one eventually."

The top-seeded Zephyrs (20-8-0), ranked No. 4 in Class 1A in the latest coaches' poll, won their sixth section championship in seven seasons.



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Mahtomedi's Carter Haycraft (22) and teammates headed to the glass to celebrate a goal.

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The game was a rematch of last year's section championship, which Mahtomedi also won. The Wildcats played more defensive-minded this time around and tried to limit Mahtomedi's chances, coach Cory Lushanko said.

"We knew ... if we kept the score tight we'd have a chance," Lushanko said. "They were the better team."

Chisago Lakes (16-11-1) is 0-5 in section championship games since 2015, after making its last state tournament trip the year before.
