

HIGH SCHOOLS

# Proctor/Hermantown survives Mankato East rally in girls hockey state quarterfinal

The Mirage led by three goals until a third-period surge by the Cougars made it close.

By Heather Rule, Special to the Star Tribune | FEBRUARY 22, 2023 — 1:10PM

Proctor/Hermantown coach Emma Stauber said it a couple of times after her team's quarterfinal game: "We did what we needed to do."

Her team seemed to know what it needed to do. Perhaps it was the experience of playing in the Class 1A state title game the past two years that helped the Mirage defeat unseeded Mankato East 4-3 in Wednesday's first Class 1A quarterfinal of the girls hockey state tournament at Xcel Energy Center.

No. 2 seed Proctor/Hermantown (20-6-2) settled into the game with a dominating effort in the second period, taking a 3-0 lead into the third. Mirage senior Reese Heitzman scored her team-leading 19th and 20th goals of the season in the game. The first, her tipped shot in front of the crease on a shot from the blue line, made it 2-0.

"We started to move the puck low to high to get more traffic out front so we could get it to the point and try to get some traffic ... to take away her eyes since she's such a good goalie," Heitzman said, referring to Cougars senior goalie Annaliese Rader.

The Cougars (20-7-0) roared early in the third with a pair of goals in 29 seconds to make it 3-2. Mankato East's leading scorer, senior McKenzie Keller, made it a one-goal game with 6:44 left in regulation. Otherwise the Mirage controlled play, outshooting the Cougars 41-14.

"I thought we responded really well in the third," Cougars coach Amber Prange said. "We didn't give them a shutout."

- **[BOXSCORE: Proctor/Hermantown 4, Mankato East 3](https://www.mngirlshockeyhub.com/game/show/38175359)**

GALLERY GRID 1/11



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Gallery: Proctor-Hermantown goaltender Neelah McLeod (1) makes a save against Mankato East in the third period at Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, Minn.,