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SPORTS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022



PREPS

GIRLS' HOCKEY STATE TOURNAMENT



CLASS 1A QUARTERFINALS SOUTH ST. PAUL 3, LUVERNE 1

South St. Paul gets goal it needs

Victory ensued as usual when the Packers scored first; they handed Luverne only its fourth loss.

By HEATHER RULE
Special to the Star Tribune

Scoring first is usually a good sign. For South St. Paul, it almost guarantees victory.

The fourth-seeded Packers scored 2 minutes, 35 seconds into the game Wednesday on their way to defeating fifth seed Luverne 3-1 in the final girls' hockey Class 1A quarterfinal of the night at Xcel Energy Center. The Packers (16-10-2) improved to 16-11 this season when they score first. It's an important factor for a team that isn't high-scoring, averaging 2.57 goals per game.

"I don't want to put them in a box, like if we don't get it, we're in trouble," South St. Paul coach Dave Palmquist said. "It just gives our team a little momentum."

The Packers got off to that fast start Wednesday thanks to an Aliyah Danielson point shot redirected into the net by junior Inga Oelerking. Quite a time for Oelerking's first career goal.

"Having my first goal in the state tournament was, it felt amazing," Oelerking said.

South St. Paul doubled its lead on Luverne (23-4-0) later in the first period on a long shot from the other end



South St. Paul skaters buzzed Luverne goaltender Cheyenne Schutz in the first period, when the Packers outshot the Cardinals 16-4.

of the ice by Eva Beck that sneaked by Luverne's goaltender inside the post.

"You can't win a game in the first, but you can lose a game in the first," Luverne

coach Tony Sandbulte said.

The state's leading scorer, Luverne's Karmyn Van Batavia, scored her 81st goal of the season early in the second period

for a 2-1 game, giving her 125 points this season. But about four minutes later, Danielson scored on the rebound to rebuild the two-goal Packers lead.

WEDNESDAY'S RECAP

THREE STARS

1. **Orono senior forward Tyla Ryskamp:** She notched her seventh hat trick of the season, this one to aid a 7-1 Spartans triumph over Mankato East.

2. **Proctor/Hermantown junior forward Nya Sieger:** She scored two goals, one of them short-handed, and had an assist in a 6-2 Mirage victory.

3. **Warroad freshman forward Kaiya Sandy:** She matched her season-high three points in a game with a goal and two assists.

BY THE NUMBERS

1 Wednesday marked the first state tournament appearance for Albert Lea and Orono. Albert Lea exited, Orono is on to the semifinals.

246 Miles between high schools in Hermantown and Albert Lea, opponents in the second game of Day 1.

58 First-period goals Warroad has scored this season; it has allowed five.

52 Assists this season for Warroad's Talya Hendrickson, a mark that leads the state.

1 Penalty shot save made by River Lakes freshman goaltender Kayslee Koskela in the last minute of the second period.

125 Points this season for Luverne junior Karmyn Van Batavia, the state's leading goal scorer.

16 State tournament appearances for South St. Paul, the most of any program.

STATE TOURNAMENT

HOCKEY • GIRLS

At Xcel Energy Center

CLASS 1A

Thursday - Quarterfinals

• Eden (25-2-0) vs. Northfield (19-5-1), 11 am

• Hermantown (22-6-1) vs. Mankato East (22-6-1), 1 pm

• Andover (27-0-0) vs. Brainerd/Little Falls (17-14-0), 3 pm

Friday - Semifinals

• Century Academy (22-6-0) vs. Mankato East (22-6-1), 8 am

Saturday - Championship

• Semifinal winners, 7 pm

CLASS 1A

Wednesday - Quarterfinals

• Orono 7, Mankato East 1

• Proctor/Hermantown 6, Albert Lea 3

• South St. Paul 3, Luverne 1

Warroad 7, River Lakes 6

Friday - Semifinals

• Orono (25-2-0) vs. Proctor/Hermantown (22-6-0), 11 am

• South St. Paul (16-10-2) vs. Warroad (24-3-1), 1 pm

Saturday - Championship

• Semifinal winners, 4 pm

CLASS 1A QUARTERFINALS PROCTOR/HERMANTOWN 6, ALBERT LEA 2

Defending champions show scoring balance



Proctor/Hermantown's Hannah Graves skated around Albert Lea goalie Rachel Doppleshammer for an easy tap-in goal. The Mirage won 6-2.

By DAVID LA VAQUE
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Four goals from four different players not only built an early Proctor/Hermantown lead but confidence, too.

The defending Class 1A girls' hockey state tournament champion Mirage dispatched newcomer Albert Lea 6-2 in Wednesday's second quarterfinal game.

Proctor/Hermantown led 2-0 after the first period on goals from Nya Sieger and Jane Eckstrom.

Goals by Mirage players Iry Fairchild and Hannah Graves bumped the lead to 4-0 early in the second period.

"That's one of the philosophies we have as a program," coach Emma Stamber said. "We have a lot of talented girls, and to spread out their talent and make three strong lines has kind of been our bread and butter."

With the victory, the No. 3-seeded Mirage

(20-7-1) advanced to Friday's semifinals and will face No. 2 Orono.

Liley Steven gave Albert Lea (14-11-1) a lift with her goal midway through the second period. But the Tigers couldn't shrink their 4-1 deficit any further.

Sieger's second goal of the game, this one short-handed, restored a four-goal Mirage advantage.

It was definitely a good momentum-changer," Sieger said.

Graves added her second goal in the third period. Then Albert Lea's Esther Youso popped a goal of her own.

The Tigers didn't get the desired result. But that doesn't change the team's legacy as the first to break through and reach the state tournament.

"Growing up in southern Minnesota, it was like, 'Can we get there?' senior Lucy Siay said.

"So, this is a dream come true. I'm so very thankful for this opportunity."

CLASS 1A QUARTERFINALS ORONO 7, MANKATO EAST 1

Captain's first of three goals calms Orono in a rout

By DAVID LA VAQUE
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Orono hockey captain, Spartans leading scorer, senior forward Tyla Ryskamp has several identities. She added exterminator on Wednesday after squashing her teammates' jitterbugs.

The Spartans' Class 1A state tournament debut featured a goal by Ryskamp less than two minutes into the game. The pressure off Orono built a four-goal cushion in the opening period and went on to a 7-1 victory against Mankato East.

Ryskamp tallied her 43rd goal of the season for No. 2 seed Orono (25-3) just 1:51 into the game.

"We talked about it in the locker room and that we wanted to get ahead first and get rid of the nerves," said Ryskamp, who buried her breakthrough chance.

"It was huge; it kind of let our girls settle in," Orono coach Sean Fish said. "And then after that, I think we took over that period."

Two goals from the Spartans' Mia Lopez and another from her sister, Zoe Lopez, put Mankato East (21-6) into a considerable early hole.

Jess Ebykn gave her underdog Cougars a spark with her goal in the second period, making it 4-1. Ryskamp responded with her second goal of the game, this one on the power play.

"If they get the next one, it's a two-goal game," Fish said. "So getting that one was really big."

Ryskamp completed the hat trick in the third period.

Forward McKenzie Keller took solace in helping the Cougars reach their third state tournament in five seasons.

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Orono's Tyla Ryskamp shot the puck over Mankato East goalie Annaliese Rader for Orono's fifth goal of the game Wednesday. The Spartans' captain had a hat trick.

CLASS 1A QUARTERFINALS WARROAD 7, RIVER LAKES 0

After early-goal scare and review, Warroad gets down to business

By HEATHER RULE • Special to the Star Tribune

Seven players scored in top-seeded Warroad's 7-0 victory over River Lakes in Wednesday's Class 1A girls' hockey quarterfinal at Xcel Energy Center.

Already up 1-0, Warroad started the traditional huddle celebration when Cahillah Lindquist's shot appeared to hit both posts inside the net. Just one problem for the Warriors: The call was

no goal on the ice.

So River Lakes, based in Richmond, took the puck down ice and fired into an empty net, with Warroad's goalie waiting at the bench for the goal celebration.

"I was scared," Lindquist said. "Coach yelled at me and said he hopes it's a goal."

The play was reviewed, and it was determined Lindquist's shot was a goal, negating the River Lakes tally.

"Cahillah knew it was in," Warroad coach Dave Marvin said. "But thank goodness for video replay, or I don't know. That sequence probably would've went viral and wouldn't have looked very good. So I'm so happy for replay."

Offensively for Warroad, it's often leading scorers Talya Hendrickson and Kate Johnson carrying the load. Marvin said, so it was fun to see scoring from other players, including

defenders Lindquist and Katy Comstock.

Warroad freshman Kaiya Sandy led the way with a power-play goal and two assists.

Warroad (24-3-1), in its seventh consecutive and 13th overall state appearance, has never lost a state quarterfinal game.

"They're a really deep team," said River Lakes coach Alexis Klatt, whose team is 16-13.

"They fill the ice, and their decisions are just so quick. It's hard to react to."