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SPORTS

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PREPS



GIRLS' BASKETBALL: CLASS 4A SECTION 6 FINAL HOPKINS 84, WAYZATA 66

Hopkins turns drip into torrent

The Royals began to pull away late in the first half and earned a chance to win the title that got away last season.

By JIM DAULSEN

Wayzata allowed only a trickle for as long as it could Thursday, but the leak in the dam could be contained for only so long.

Hopkins built a slight lead at the end of the first half, then slowly extended it throughout the second en route to a 66-44 victory.

Wayzata in the Class 4A, Section 6 final at Hopkins.

It was Hopkins' 13th consecutive victory over its Lake Conference foe and fourth in a row in the section championship game.

"I've lost to [Hopkins] four years in a row, so it does sting," Wayzata senior guard Brian Braun said. "But we came in with a lot of heart and determination. We couldn't get it done tonight, but I have a lot of hope for these guys in the future."

Knowing each other well, the two teams played straight up in the first half.

Hopkins (23-3), relentlessly attacking the basket, took a quick 6-0 lead. Braun put an end to that early run with a confidence-inspiring three-pointer.

Using a difficult-to-penetrate 2-3 zone defense, the Royals never let the Royals pull away while trailing for much of the half.

Wayzata avoided turnovers for most of the half and managed to take the lead at 24-17 with an 8-0 burst midway through the half.

Hopkins answered with eight consecutive points of its own, setting in motion a highly entertaining back-and-forth finish in the half, the teams exchanging leads twice.

The leak started to show in the final minutes of the first half. Hopkins trailed 33-30, then went on an 11-2 run to take a 41-30 lead into the break.

"We kind of already knew at halftime that the first half wasn't our best," senior guard Maya Njai said. "We had to turn it up in the second half to come out on top."

Hopkins maintained at least a six-point advantage in the second half, building the lead to double digits as the Royals wore down the Trojans (18-9).

The result was what the Royals have had in the back of their minds all year: the chance to redeem themselves and avenge a state tournament semifinal loss to Chaska a year ago.

"That was so much motivation," said junior forward Brian Agers, who finished with 20 points. "I'm itching for that championship this year."

Battle, who will play with Braun for the Gobbers next year, goes back further for some motivation.

"Not just last year, but 2020. Both of those have felt like this year, and we just want to win it all."



Hopkins forward Maya Njai scored as she collided with Wayzata guard Grace Weber during the first half Thursday.

Bump scores five goals in Prior Lake's win

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The first three goals of the game and ended with five for Beville-St. Marguerite's in the 2022 Class 2A championship game the Red Knights won 5-1 over Hill Murray.

A Minnesota hockey legend was on hand to witness Bump's performance. John Mayasich, the Finnish standout player holds the state tournament record for most goals in a game with seven in 1951 against Minneapolis Southwest. He also has the record for most goals in a period with four, a mark Bump had a nice at with his first-period hat trick.

Mayasich holds the record for most goals scored by an individual in a state tournament, 25 in 1951.

Mayasich congratulated Bump outside the locker room



Alex Bump was congratulated by Finnish hockey legend John Mayasich following his five-goal game Thursday.

afterward. "I told him I was lucky to see the game and his performance," Mayasich said. "What a show. What a talent. I kidded him that he was going to bump my records."

The Builders (24-4) were shut out for the first time all season. Prior Lake's Trevor Boschee made 22 saves for his fourth shutout of the season.

"I just kind of snowballed," Curtin-Derham Hall coach Matt Frank said. "We played against the best player in the state, and he picked the best day to have the best game. I've been watching the state tournament for a long time, and that performance he had today goes down as one of the best."



Attila Lippai (15) of Curtin Derham Hall battled for position in front of the Prior Lake net.

BOYS' HOCKEY STATE TOURNAMENT NOTES

Future of St. Paul Johnson's hockey program to be discussed

By DAVID LA VACKA and HEATHER BELL • Star Tribune

St. Paul, home to the boys' hockey state tournament since 1945, might be losing a public school program with an ever-longer history.

A meeting seeking community input toward creating a plan for the future of hockey in St. Paul is scheduled for 6 p.m. Monday at Highland Park High School. Scott activities director Pat Asman said Thursday.

While player numbers at Highland Park are solid, long-time Johnson coach Steve Moore Youngham said his program has reached a critical point. The Governors lose eight seasons from their 39-man roster.

Youngham said only seven or eight players are currently expected to come in next season.

Options for the future include a co-operative between Highland Park and Johnson or a consolidation akin to what's happened in Minneapolis, where there is one team for its seven public schools in 20 years since Johnson advanced.

While sensitive to Johnson's plight, Asman said blending programs comes with challenges.

"Our youth association members are good, not so

much with Johnson's members," Asman said. "I'm not sure that we have to make cuts of our players, that's political."

Then there are logistical concerns. Johnson plays at Gustafson Phalen Arena behind the school. Asman said the Scots are "second fiddle to Curtin-Derham Hall" at the neighborhood Charles M. Schulz-Highland Arena in terms of preferred ice time.

Highland Park revived its program, dormant since 1982, in 2008. Players come from there and nearby Central Johnson draws players from the Comoros.

Johnson boasts a proud tradition. The East Side school began play in 1911 and is the

only St. Paul public school to win a state title (1947, 1951, 1955, 1963).

Obscured shutout

Trevor Boschee's name won't be found on a list of players with college commitments or among the finalists for the Frank Brimsek Senior Goalie of the Year Award. He had to settle for a state tournament shutout and the respect of his Prior Lake teammates.

Alex Bump's five goals in a 6-0 quarterfinal upset of No. 2 seed Curtin-Derham Hall drew the headlines. Meanwhile, Boschee's 22 saves and fourth shutout of the season gave the Lakers peace of mind.

"Boschee stopped every puck he saw. I think that was

a huge one," Prior Lake coach Joe Paquette said. "Give our team confidence when he's back there solid. He needed to make some nice saves in the first period, he did that."

Returning to the ice, Boschee said: "It's really nice to see your team just get the puck deep early and kind of start dominating early. Because that kind of gives you a good mental state."

Pioneers goalie stars

Unlike some of his teammates, Hill Murray junior goaltender Jack Erickson hadn't played in a state tournament game before. He's in his second varsity season, but Pioneers forward Dylan Godbest and others won the 2020 Class 2A championship.

Erickson displayed his glove skills with the save of the night to keep his team up by a goal in the third period of Thursday's quarterfinal.

Erickson said he was just trying to save anything that came at him, "trying to stop the puck."

After the sprawling save, cameras caught the stunned-with-astonishment reactions of the Hill-Murray student section. Hill Murray players took time between faceoffs to congratulate the netminder for his efforts.

"I just hugged him as hard as I could," Godbest said. "Because I was just so dang proud of him. Erickson made 22 saves for his 17th win of the season."