



CLASS 2A, SECTION 7 DULUTH EAST 4, ANDOVER 3 (OT)



Duluth East's Dylan Donovan found his spot on the game-winning goal, 36 seconds into overtime, against Andover goalie Ben Fitzhager at Arnold Arena.

CLASS 2A, SECTION 5 BLAINE 2, MAPLE GROVE 1



Blaine forward Bryce Brodzinski scored the tying goal in the second period against Maple Grove.

PREPS

BOYS' HOCKEY SECTION FINALS

Duluth East wins in OT

The Greyhounds denied Andover its first state tournament berth with an overtime win in the section final for the second year in a row.

By DAVID LA VAGLE
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DULUTH — "How bout them Hounds?" Duluth East boys' hockey coach Mike Randolph repeatedly exclaimed as he left the Arnold Arena ice after his team's 4-3 overtime upset of Andover.

For a second consecutive year, Andover and Duluth East needed overtime to settle the Class 2A, Section 7 championship game. And once again, Duluth East prevailed. This time, Dylan Donovan scored on the power play just 36 seconds into the extra period to stun fourth-ranked Andover.

With Thursday's victory before an announced crowd of 5,092 fans, No. 12 Duluth East (18-4-2) advances to next week's state tournament. Meanwhile, Andover (24-9-3) once again found its first state tournament just out of reach.

Andover led the score 3-0 on Charlie Schoen's shallow-angle snipe for a power-play goal at 10:55 on the third period.

"I was pretty sure we would win right then, to be honest," Huskies coach Mark Manney said.

But Andover, which defeated Duluth East 2-1 in overtime on Dec. 8, couldn't find its next goal.

"I didn't think we'd be as nervous as we were,"

Manney said. "I didn't think our best players were our best players tonight except for [junior defenseman] Wyatt Kiefer.

"Nerves and adrenaline will fatigue you and make your mind go places it wouldn't normally go. I felt like we needed a little more grit, a little more participation."

Randolph got all that and more from his four senior captains.

"They've taken this team under their wing," Randolph said. "They all lead by example."

Defenseman Frederick Falme did all the little things well. Ricky Lyle scored twice and follow-forward Patrick FitzGerald added a goal. And Donovan, a No. 1 hockey finalist, scored the game-winning goal.

"Donovan left practice earlier this week because he had the flu and I went, 'Uh oh,'" Randolph said. "But knowing him, he wasn't going to miss this game."

Though not wearing a "C" on his jersey, Duluth East goaltender Brody Rabold has led by example for years. He entered the program three years ago ranked fifth on the depth chart.

On Thursday, he stopped Mr. Hockey finalist Charlie Schoen on a breakaway and moments later glove-d a rising slapshot from Gunnar Theoreus.

Blaine gets over the hump

Blaine junior forward Carsen Richels had his chances as teammates cycled the puck to him on early power plays against Maple Grove. He finally scored with 10 minutes, 19 seconds left in regulation during a tie game.

"I had a lot of shots all game, a lot of them weren't getting through," Richels said. "And then finally at the end there, that one squeezed upstairs. Big goal!"

Richels' team-leading 39th goal gave No. 6 Blaine a 2-1 victory over the No. 6 Citron in the Class 2A, Section 5 boys' hockey championship Thursday at Aldrich Arena.

After three consecutive seasons of section semifinal losses to Maple Grove, Blaine finally got past the Citron.

The Bengals fell behind only 17 seconds into the game on a Citron goal from sophomore Sam Jacobs.

"It's a bummer to give up a goal that quick," Blaine defenseman Joe Daninger said. "All of us stayed calm. We didn't get rattled."

Blaine senior forward and Mr. Hockey finalist Bryce Brodzinski tied the score four minutes into the second period with his 35th goal of the season.

The Bengals, who have won 17 consecutive games, made adjustments throughout the game as Maple Grove (27-4-3) shakewed Brodzinski.

"They moved him to the middle, which opened up a hole for Carsen," Blaine coach Chris Carroll said.

In the second period, he [Carroll] had some looks, too," Carroll said. "He just missed it. So finally got another look, and he hit that one."

HEATHER REILE

STATE QUALIFIERS

CLASS 2A

Blaine

Duluth East

Eden Prairie

Edina

Lakewood

Maple Grove

Minnetonka

St. Thomas Academy

White Bear Lake

WIS-Murray winner

CLASS 1A

Delano

East Grand Forks

Greenway

Minnetonka

New Ulm

North Branch

St. Cloud Cathedral

Totino-Graef

Waldorf

CLASS 2A, SECTION 1 LAKEVILLE SOUTH 4, LAKEVILLE NORTH 0

Lakeville South goalie rises to the occasion with shutout

Lakeville South's Henry Welch might have had his best game of the season in the Class 2A, Section 1 boys' hockey championship Thursday night at the Burnsville Ice Center.

Then again, it was just business as usual for the senior goaltender, who turned away 46 shots in the Cougars' 4-0 victory over Lakeville North.

"I think my best game every game," he said, smiling and looking to the "MVP" chants from classmates, teammates and parents swarming in excitement around South's latest state tournament entrant.

Welch's smile stood in stark contrast to last season's disappointment after a loss to Lakeville North in the section final. "This is just so much better," he said.

Sophomores Cameron Boche and Cade Ahrensboth each scored


first-period goals, when the Cougars (14-11-1) put 12 shots on Panthers starting goaltender Will Johnson, and each scored empty-net goals in the game's last 20 minutes.

"We wanted to set the tone early and throw a lot of pucks on net," said Ahrensboth, who saw has seven of his season's 15 goals in three playoff games.

For Lakeville North (15-13), which was playing in the Section 1 championship for the 14th consecutive season, it was a frustrating end to a sometimes frustrating season filled with injuries.

"It's good to get guys back, but when they're playing at 70 or 80 percent, it's not for anybody," Panthers coach Trent Elmer said. "But we had a full roster [Thursday]. It was off to South. They played a good game."

MARK IJVIDSTEN



Lakeville South's Cade Ahrensboth (15) supplied two goals vs. Lakeville North.

CLASS 2A, SECTION 3 ST. THOMAS ACADEMY 4, EAGAN 1

Cadets earn another state trip

Defense has been the difference this season for St. Thomas Academy, according to coach Greg Vannelli.

"The defense stepped up [Thursday] as the Cadets defeated Eagan 4-1 in the Class 2A, Section 3 boys' hockey championship at Braemar Arena in Edina.

Nico Vega scored twice and Andrew Bremer and Ryan O'Neill also scored for the top-seeded Cadets (24-3-1), who earned a third consecutive state tournament berth.

Senior goalies Muzzy Donohue and Wes Gervais combined to stop 34 of 35 shots on goal, as the Cadets held their opponent to one goal or none for the 17th time in 20 games.

"Those guys come together," Vannelli said of his defensemen. "It just seems like at the last second, they break up the plays."


St. Thomas Academy took a 2-0 lead in the first period on power-play goals by Bremer and Vega, after a five-minute major penalty by Eagan. Vega added a second power-play goal midway through the second period, after the Wildcats had the lead to one.

The victory gave St. Thomas Academy its seventh state berth in nine years. It came in the fifth and final session for Vannelli and his brother Tom, who have combined to win five state titles.

Vega said the Cadets are playing for both their outgoing coaches and for themselves.

Junior defenseman Aidan Byrne scored the lone goal for third-seeded Eagan (20-8), which was looking for its first state tournament berth since 2014.

NAVE GUTLIER



St. Thomas Academy goalie Muzzy Donohue blocked a shot from Eagan forward Brian Pearson on Thursday night.