

SPORTS SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2023

PREPS
BOYS BASKETBALL STATE TOURNAMENT

SEMIFINALS
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CLASS 2A GAME OF THE DAY MINNEHAKA ACADEMY 76, HOLY FAMILY 72 (OT)

Redhawks advance in a stunner

By HEATHER BUELL
Special to StarTribune

Minnehaka Academy junior Lorenzo Levy drained seven three-pointers Friday. He also made a baseline jumper with 2 seconds remaining in regulation to send the Class 2A semifinal to overtime. Before his night was over, he had a season-high 27 points and a chance to play for a boys basketball state title thanks to a 76-72 OT upset of top seed Holy Family at Target Center.

Could Levy have imagined such a memorable game? "Absolutely not," Levy said. "Especially because it's the semifinals in the state tournament."

The fifth-seeded Redhawks (23-8) didn't spend much time with the lead, but Levy started overtime with a three-pointer, before the Redhawks made free throws that secured the victory. They turned to defense to stifle Holy Family (28-3), ranked No. 1 in Class 2A by Minnesota basketball news. The Five had scored 80 points against the Redhawks in a January game, a 100-56 Redhawks loss.

"I imagine that might be one of the better state tournament games at least this year. It's just for a long time," Redhawks coach Lance Johnson said.

For the Five, seniors Boden Kayke (27 points, 11 rebounds) and Collin McLaughlin (20 points, 15 rebounds) recorded double-doubles. But they had to play overtime without Kobe Hancock and Brayton Cummings, who fouled out late in regulation.

"We had good looks inside," Holy Family coach Joe Burger said of the overtime. "They beat us to the basketball."

Minnehaka Academy guard Jerome Williams invaded the airspace of Holy Family's Brydon Cummings on Friday.

ALBANY 79, DELWORTH-GLYNDON, FELLTOW 44

Finalists for the first time

The difference Albany senior guard Yusef Gouda scored 31 points and teammate Sam Mondl just raised a triple-double with 14 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds. The Huskers reached the state title game for the first time after five state tournament appearances (1971, 1981, 1997, 2015). "They take a 28-game winning streak into the final game of the season. The quote: 'It was our goal to make it to the state championship, and here we are.'" — Gouda

CLASS 2A CHAMPIONSHIP GAME (CH. 45) MINNEHAKA ACADEMY VS. ALBANY 3 P.M. SATURDAY AT TARGET CENTER

CLASS 1A GAME OF THE DAY NEW LIFE ACADEMY 51, SPRING GROVE 35

Revved-up Eagles reach final

By RON HAGGSTRÖM
Special to StarTribune

New Life Academy coach Bobbie Whitney needed to change the script. He got exactly what he wanted following half-time.

The Eagles used a 34-point run to break open a close game and coil to a 51-35 victory over Spring Grove in the semifinals of the Class 1A boys basketball state tournament Friday at Target Center.

"We talked about dominating half-time," Whitney said. "We had to speed it up. That was big for us."

Senior forward Austin Woolf scored seven consecutive points midway through the run. He finished with 15 points.

The No. 3-ranked Eagles (26-3) were clinging to a 27-25 lead with 12 minutes, 27 seconds remaining when junior guard John Krachling ignited the sport with a three-pointer. He wound up with 10 points.

"We spent them up [with a full-court press]," said Eagles senior guard Maxwell Briggs, who had six steals and four assists.

The score was tied 38-38 after a sluggish first half.

"That first half was some ugly basketball," said Whitney, whose team shot 33 percent and turned the ball over 12 times in the opening half.

Senior forward Erick Rodehe, who will walk on for the Gebers, had a double-double (11 points and 15 rebounds) for the Eagles, who had a 41-21 rebounding advantage.

Junior forward Jason Strimmons scored a game-high 15 points for the No. 7 team (26-2).

New Life Academy's Austin Woolf put back a miss for two of his game-high 15 points Friday.

RUSSELL-TYLER-RUTHTON 61, CHERRY 57

Senior power prevails

The difference: Senior guard Alden Wichmann scored 23 points and dished out 10 assists, helping the Knights overcome a seven-point second-half deficit. Wichmann made six consecutive free throws in the final three minutes and went 3-for-9 from the line.

The quote: "It's tough to knock seniors out. There is no tomorrow for seniors."

— Russell-Tyler-Ruthon coach Darren Gravelly

CLASS 1A CHAMPIONSHIP GAME (CH. 45) NEW LIFE ACADEMY VS. RUSSELL-TYLER-RUTHTON 11 A.M. SATURDAY AT TARGET CENTER

CLASS 4A CHAMPIONSHIP PARK CENTER VS. WAYZATA

8 p.m. Saturday at Target Center. TV: Ch. 45
Records: Park Center 28-2, Wayzata 26-4
Seeds: Park Center 1, Wayzata 3
Minnesota Basketball News rankings: Park Center 1, Wayzata 3

The season

- Park Center won its first 22 games this season, then lost twice in a week, 79-70 to visiting Elk River and 67-66 at Maple Grove. Those six points separate the Prairie from a perfect season.
- Wayzata lost the first three games of the season, then won 17 in a row. The Trojans' only loss since Dec. 13 was to Eden Prairie on Valentine's Day.

Style points

- Park Center has six players averaging at least nine points per game. Camryn Chavis handles the playmaking. C'O'Dell Hill, Wade Jackson and Fowler run the wing, and Chang King is a powerful 6-4 post.
- Wayzata is built on guards, and the best of them is 5-11 senior point guard Hayden Tibbitts, a first-team Star Tribune All-Metro selection. Eves Wayzata's tallest player, 6-9 junior Jackson McAndrew, is listed as a guard.

CLASS 3A CHAMPIONSHIP TOTINO, GRACE VS. DELASALLE

5 p.m. Saturday at Target Center. TV: Ch. 45
Records: DelaSalle 26-5, Totino-Grace 23-8
Seeds: DelaSalle 3, Totino-Grace 2
Minnesota Basketball News rankings: DelaSalle 3, Totino-Grace 2

The season

- Seven of Totino-Grace's losses were to Park Center (twice), in successful programs from other states (three times) and another Class 4A state tournament team (twice). The Eagles are on a six-game winning streak, their longest run of the season.
- DelaSalle opened the season with a loss to Park Center and lost four times in the season's first month. Since Jan. 12 the Islanders have lost only once, at Wayzata in the last game of the regular season.

Style points

- DelaSalle features Star Tribune Metro Player of the Year Neale Whitelock, a 6-2 guard who averaged 27.7 points in the regular season and is headed to Lehigh for college.
- Totino-Grace wills with 6-4 guard Fabson Chatman, committed to Ohio State, but three teammates topped his 11.1 points per game in the regular season.

Do-overs loom for big-class finalists

The same four teams that played for the Class 4A and 3A championships last season will play for them again in 2022-23. Park Center defeated Wayzata 58-53 in the Class 4A final last year, and Totino-Grace beat DelaSalle 50-44. Here's a look at the two title games: