

GIRLS TENNIS STATE TOURNAMENT

New 2A history erases the old

CLASS 2A Eastview's Young upends two-time champ Copeland. BY JIM McILHIN

Karin Young woke up Friday a bundle of nerves. The Eastview sophomore has played sodas of high-level tennis in her life, but this was different. A state championship was on the line.

But by the time Young and Edina's Nicole Copeland squared off for the Class 2A state title on Friday, those nerves were under control. And soon after, so was Copeland.

Young employed a defensive strategy that frustrated the two-time state champion. She also tricked in crucial diversity to take advantage of opportunities when they arose to win her first state singles championship, besting Copeland 6-4, 6-1.

"I think I did a good job of relating and just forgetting about all the pressure," Young said.

It helped that she had defeated Copeland twice in recent weeks in sectional play, victories that earned her the tournament No. 1 seed.

"I know how good of a player she is and how close our matches can be," Young said. "I was just focused on playing my best game and blocking out all the surroundings."

Her victory was a salute for two years of frustration for Young, whose father is University of Minnesota men's tennis coach Geoff Young. After finishing as runner-up in doubles as a sophomore in 2016, she was sidelined in 2017 by an injury that prompted her to play on the boys' team in spring 2018. Last fall she failed to qualify for the state tournament after losing in the sectional semifinals.

"Last year was definitely upsetting, but I tried to use it to motivate me," she said. "I made the mistake of putting too



Eastview's Karin Young, above, used her defensive style of play to defeat Edina's Nicole Copeland for the Class 2A singles championship on Friday.

much pressure on myself, so I learned from that. Winning this means a lot to me. It's one of my favorite tournaments."

Copeland's game is largely one of power, keeping the pressure on opponents by hitting the ball with depth and pace, and attacking mistakes. Young countered that strategy to near perfection Friday, bringing back ball after ball and forcing Copeland to play her style.

"I was trying to keep the ball deep to get it out of her strike zone," Young said. Copeland was up for the challenge early, winning consecutive games to reach a 4-4 tie in the first set. She had a chance to even the set at five games apiece, but Young stood firm, winning three consecutive points to take the first set 6-4.

In the second set, Young consistency stretched to take the ball deep to get it out of her strike zone. Young won the first

three games and controlled the match from there.

"She's a nice defensive player," Copeland said. "She always hits the ball back to me. It's more frustrating than difficult because you always have a lot coming. You have to deal with it."

While she failed to become the fourth Edina player to win three singles championships, Copeland said she was happy with her overall high school career, which featured five state and two individual titles.

"I'd certainly have asked for a better experience here," she said. "Can't complain." In Class 2A doubles, Minnesota's Sarah Shalhot and Annika Elvstrom put a shaky second set behind them and controlled the third and final set to defeating Ella Baber and Paige Serong of Rochester Century 6-3, 6-2 to win the championship.

Blake senior Shen repeats as champion

CLASS 1A She also was a singles state runner-up three times.

BY MATTHEW HILL Special to the Star Tribune

Blake's Ariana Shen won the Class 1A singles state title on Friday, repeating as champion after losing in the final match to her former opponent, Edina's Nicole Copeland.

Shen, a senior, won the title with a 6-4, 6-1 victory over Copeland. It was her second state title, having also won in 2017 and 2018.

"I was really nervous, but I knew I had to stay focused," Shen said. "I was just trying to play my best tennis and let the rest fall away."

Shen's victory was a testament to her consistency and mental toughness. She has been a dominant force in Minnesota tennis for several years.

"Ariana is a true champion," said her coach, Mike Ach. "She has the skill, the power, and the mental fortitude to win at the highest level."

Shen's success has inspired other players in the state. She is a role model for many young women's tennis players.

"I hope she continues to succeed in college tennis," Ach said. "She has the potential to be a national champion."

Shen's victory marks the end of a successful season for the Blake team. They finished as state runners-up in doubles.

The state tennis championships were held at the University of Minnesota. It was a historic event for the state.

FOOTBALL RESULTS/SCHEDULE

FRIDAY FOOTBALL
CLASS 1A
Mankato 37, Wadena 14
Cass Lake 20, Bemidji 14
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CLASS 2A
Eastview 20, Edina 14
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Cornucopia's Cornucopia 7U (left) celebrated the cheering student section following the Cornucopia 41-14 playoff victory over Stillwater on Friday night.

SUMMARY
Mankato 37, Wadena 14
Cass Lake 20, Bemidji 14
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CLASS 2A
Eastview 20, Edina 14
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THE PICKS

Ideal weather to favor offensive juggernauts

Prep sports reporter Jim Paulson went into Friday's games with a big lead over colleague David La Vaque, but that was based on regular-season results. And just as teams welcome the chance to go into the postseason with a clean slate, La Vaque sees playoff picks as a clean slate.

ELK RIVER (8-1) AT ROGERS (7-1), 3 P.M.
The edge: A little more than a week ago, Roger pulled out a thrilling 40-36 victory over the Elks in the regular-season finale. Expect an equally competitive matchup this time around if these teams played 10 times, each would win five.

DAVID AGAR (10-1) AT HUNTER (10-1), 3 P.M.
The edge: Agar has been a dominant force in the state, and he's looking to make a few defensive stops in other words, take the over in this game. Weatherwise, Saturday afternoon looks glorious for a team that can't find Rogers can, and that's why the Royals win. Rogers 69, Elks 42.

HOLY ANGELS (1-4) AT BENILDE-ST. MARGARET'S (8-0), 7 P.M.
Jim says Benilde-St. Margaret's reflect the gritty attitude of coach Tom Hanko, with physical, no-nonsense style that wears down opponents. A perfect approach for this time of year. Commitment, no matter the circumstances. Benilde-St. Margaret's 36, Holy Angels 18.

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MINNEAPOLIS SOUTHWEST (7-1) AT COOPER (4-2), 5 P.M.
Jim says Southwest and Elk Mountain, the most explosive running back in the area, have had a terrific season. But the over finds us playing well and have something to prove. Cooper 39, Southwest 24.

DAVID AGAR (10-1) AT HUNTER (10-1), 3 P.M.
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ROUNDUP

Buffalo snags its first 6A playoff victory

It took some time, but Buffalo broke through in the playoffs. In the Bison's fifth season in Class 6A, they finally took a state tournament victory by going on the road as the sixth seed and topping third-seeded Lakeland in a 28-20 victory on Friday.

The Knights got to within three points with a pass from Kolby Gattner to Kade Heuser with 11 minutes to go, but the Bison were able to run the clock on the next possession.

The Bison opened the scoring in the second quarter with an 83-yard touchdown drive following a faked fourth-down try by the Knights. Alden Bouman capped the drive with a 17-yard touchdown pass to Trevor Johnson.

The Bison extended the lead to 10-0 on a 38-yard field goal by Tucker Vitek as time expired in the first half. The Bison opened the second half with a 54-yard touchdown pass from Bouman to Luke Gendron to make it 17-0.

The Knights responded with a 17-yard touchdown pass from Bouman to Luke Gendron to make it 17-7. The Knights' touchdown run by Ben Fedder converted to a fourth down twice on the drive.