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preps girls' hockey state tournament

CLASS 2A CHAMPIONSHIP AT XCEL ENERGY CENTER HILL-MURRAY 2, MINNETONKA 1

Hill-Murray makes it a double



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Hill-Murray players piled on top of one another in celebrating back-to-back Class 2A girls' hockey championships, this one earned with a 2-1 victory over Minnetonka on Saturday night.

The Pioneers came back from an early hole to repeat as champions and hand Minnetonka a rare defeat.

By DAVID LA VIGIE
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Coaches left the locker room and a Hill-Murray team meeting took place after the first period of Saturday night's Class 2A girls' hockey state championship game. The format mirrored the Pioneers' effective playing style. Players shared ideas for how to improve, contributions were made by all and supreme effort was the lone requirement. Though trailing by goal at the time, the Pioneers displayed a defending champion's smarts and won 2-1 at Xcel Energy Center. Their second consecutive title also marked Minnetonka's first state tournament loss ever. Senior Jenn Brode gave No. 2 seed Hill-Murray (25-0) its first lead 5 minutes, 3 seconds into the third period. Her goal helped set the winner, despite the Skipper's best effort by an alternate attacker for the game's final 1-40.

"We're pretty happy right now," Pioneers coach Hill Schallhauser said. Relief was in contrast to how the Pioneers felt early. Top seed Minnetonka (23-7) started fast as Emma Ingham scored the game's first goal only 21 seconds in. Schallhauser called the goal "a stunner" and admitted his team needed time to recover. "We were surprised; it was unexpected," Brode said. "But we took it as energy to get back out there." The 1-0 lead stood through the players' meeting at intermission and into the second. Dismantling a Minnetonka rush, the Pioneers transitioned fast to spring junior Laura Anderson. She tied the score with a blast over Dayana Delatini's blocker. Anderson led Hill-Murray with four tournament goals, including the winner in the semifinals. Both sisters inked with experience. Hill-Murray brought back 11



Hill-Murray forward Laura Anderson, left, and Minnetonka forward Emma Ingham scored the tying goal, but team-high fourth of the tournament. Anderson scored the tying goal, but team-high fourth of the tournament. Anderson scored the tying goal, but team-high fourth of the tournament. Anderson scored the tying goal, but team-high fourth of the tournament.

goals before the season, with the ultimate hockey-related pursuit being a section championship. "Getting to state is just icing," Crow said. "It's tough to be the one team out of what, 64 teams, to win." Nevertheless, Crow believed Minnetonka would find a way to tie the game late. "You've got to believe, right?" she said. "One of our four minutes, it's possible." For good reason. Before Saturday, Minnetonka had never lost a state tournament game. The Skipper went 9-0 winning three consecutive state titles, including a 2013 championship game victory over Hill-Murray. Saturday ended in a different way. Hill-Murray did most everything right, outshooting Minnetonka 22-7 and taking zero penalties. "We've known to compete hard and we had to keep stressing that," Schallhauser said. "They were deep and fast," Skipper coach Eric Johnson said. "Our kids competed hard, too. We knew it would be a tight, one-goal game."

CLASS 1A CHAMPIONSHIP AT XCEL ENERGY CENTER THIEF RIVER FALLS 3, BLAKE 1

Late goal lifts Thief River Falls to championship

Emily Bergland's score backed a strong effort by Frances Marshall as the Prowlers won their first title, halting Blake's streak at two.

By HEATHER RULE
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They couldn't ask for a better state tournament debut. The Prowlers of Thief River Falls emerged from their first trip to the girls' state hockey tournament as state champions. They spoiled Blake's bid for a third consecutive Class 1A title, defeating the Bears 3-1 Saturday in the final at Xcel Energy Center. Thief River Falls senior Emily Bergland scored the winning goal high on the glove side with 3 minutes, 6 seconds left in regulation. The Prowlers (26-3-3) still had a challenge, however, as they went short-handed with 1:23 left. "I just saw an opening," Bergland said. "I knew I had to get it up now." Her dad, Tim, was also in the building to see her goal. He coaches the

Thief River Falls boys' hockey team, which played Saturday night in Warroad in the Section 1A semifinals. "Are you kidding me? I would never miss it," Bergland said her dad told her. Facing the 2-1 deficit, Blake's title run appeared to run out of steam at the end of Saturday's game. Playing short-handed already, the Bears (26-9) pulled their goalie in the final minute. Prowlers sophomore Callie Fagerstrom got the puck in the offensive zone and simply shot it down toward the empty net. It went in with 44 seconds to go to tie the tide. She said she knew the net was empty at the other end. "Actually, I just kind of threw it in the general direction," Fagerstrom said. "Yeah, I'll never forget that." Thief River Falls took advantage of its first power-play opportunity in the

second period for its first goal. Sophomore Kera Torvelson jammed in a rebound right in front of the crease with 18 seconds remaining on the man-advantage to tie the score at 1-1. Blake took a 1-0 lead only 21 seconds in on a goal by Carly Bullock, but that was the only goal. Frances Marshall gave up on 27 shots. In beating Blake, Prowlers coach Whitney Restemeyer said her team succeeded in showing what not only Northern Minnesota can do, both also what Thief River Falls has, too. "These girls had huge goals for themselves," Restemeyer said. "They were really upset that we were not here last year." The Prowlers treated the final against Blake as any other game, Restemeyer said. For Bergland, she knew they needed to match Blake's play and score on their own opportunities. "We just wanted to be the team that could beat somebody like that," she said.



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Thief River Falls players struggled for the television cameras following their 3-1 victory over Blake, giving the Prowlers their first state championship.