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preps



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GIRLS' TENNIS STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

CLASS 2A TEAM FINAL EDINA 5, MOUNDS VIEW 2

Edina makes it 14 in a row

● Behind every one of those state championships has been longtime coach Steve Paulsen.

By JIM HULLSEN
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The talent comes and stays awhile and then moves on, and then more talent arrives. And with the talent has come championships, one after another after another until they've added up to 14 in a row.

Through the changes and the years and the names there has been one constant in Edina girls' tennis team has established itself as the most dominant high school athletic program in the state.

Captain Steve Paulsen has presided over the entire streak. He guided his team past Mounds View — a team nearly Edina's equal in terms of talent — to a 5-2 victory in the Class 2A team final Wednesday at the Bluebell Tennis Center in Minneapolis. He did so as he always does, with an early-morning calm, never needing or lecturing.

A fist-bump, an arm around a shoulder, an encouraging word with an accompanying smile and he's on his way, leaving his players feeling appreciative and inspired.

"He might be the nicest person around. Certainly the nicest coach," said senior Madeline Medall. "The only pressure he puts on you is to play your best. He never talks about winning. He says that will take care of itself."

Paulsen took over the Edina program in 1992, the last year



Edina girls' tennis coach Steve Paulsen gave instructions to Caroline Wood during her singles match on Wednesday. For more of the day's photos go to startribune.com/gallery.

of a previous run of 15 consecutive team championships.

"I thought that championship just went along with the program," Paulsen admitted. "Then we went four years without winning one. I was lucky they let me keep my job."

Edina started winning titles again in 1997, and the success has yet to abate. And while no one, especially Paulsen, disputes that Edina has been unquestionably blessed with championship players, his approach makes that fact.

"Obviously, other coaching Mike Cartwright said. "But we're such a calming influence. He doesn't pull any tricks. He's very highly respected."

Senior Katie Medlar has played doubles for the Hornets for four years. Paulsen is the best coach she has ever had. The reason, she said, is his way of making the season less about tennis and more about life.

"He makes it a point to establish personal relationships with us," Medlar said. "He stresses keeping open lines of communication, and he means it. You can text him, e-mail him, call him, whatever. He gets to know the players. He recognizes if you're tired or sick or something. He always knows what each player needs."

Quick with a self-deprecating remark and quicker with a smile, Paulsen has a way of making even the most trying

GIRLS' SOCCER QUARTERFINALS



Wayzata battles into the semifinals

● The Trojans overcame the speed game of Duluth East and other issues on their way to a quarterfinal victory.

By DAVID LA VAQUE
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Wayzata's Lauren Ulke took the field Wednesday's Class 2A state soccer quarterfinal game wearing no gloves or long-sleeve undershirt to combat the cold.

Ulke embodied the Trojans' overall focus. The defending state champion disregarded their No. 3 tournament seed, Wednesday's cold temperatures and Duluth East's reputation as a winnable game.

Taylor Wodnick scored a rebound goal in the 16th minute and added an assist on Sarah Gaidner's goal in the 30th minute to build a 2-0 lead in the first half.

Gaidner also assisted on Chelsea Ulrich's goal to clinch the victory with less than two minutes remaining.

Wayzata (15-2), ranked No. 6 in the state, defeated the No. 9 Greyhounds, 3-2 after three periods.

Wayzata coach Mark Wadwick noted that to happen again, "Wodnick said, 'We knew they'd go full out, and we had to match them.'"

Wayzata's Chelsea Ulrich intercepted a pass from the Green Wave goalkeeper and scored the lone goal midway through the first half, putting the Trojans (8-4-2) in the semifinals, the only state team in the Class 2A bracket.

Wayzata got the third seed in the tournament behind an undefeated Eden Prairie team and a Stillwater team with one loss. But the Trojans, who you're still a solid team."

coming into last year's championship game despite an undefeated record, are unfazed.

"It's not about your record, it's about your play," Ulke said.

Ulke won't play in the quarterfinal game at Eden Prairie on Wednesday, but she will play in the semifinal game at Duluth East on Saturday.

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CLASS 1A TEAM FINAL ROCHESTER LOURDES 6, STAPLES-MOTLEY/VERDALE 1

New coach, same result for Rochester Lourdes

● Steve Tael took over after Kevin Rust's long tenure and led the team to its 13th Class 1A title in 14 years.

By HEATHER BULL
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Some teams are so strong that state tournaments and championships titles Rochester Lourdes girls' tennis is one of those teams.

Lourdes won its 13th Class 1A team title in the past 14 years Wednesday. Under their first-year head coach Steve Tael, the Eagles beat Staples-Motley/Verdale 6-1 at Bend-Sweet Tennis Center.

Lourdes surrendered only three sets in the entire match. Tael said winning a state championship still means

to do the trick — all seven Lourdes matches ended by winning the first set.

"I like how we continued even after the Brock match," Tael said. "We had one more match, we had one more step to take to reach that goal. And it's maybe easy to have a let-down when you play a great team like Brock, and Staples is an awesome team."

Not long after the first match ended, the state title was clinched. The first and second doubles teams secured straight-set victories with minutes of each other. Junior Margaret Pearson sealed it with a 6-3, 6-2 victory after singles.

The overall match was closer than a 6-3 score might suggest. Most of the matches had several long rallies. The two three-set matches each involved a tiebreaker. Staples-Motley had a strong lineup, but Lourdes players generally came through with the game- and set-winning points.

In his first year, Tael continued the program's success of former longtime coach Kevin Rust. Tael said he didn't feel a lot of pressure because he knew Rust and his coaching style. The situation for Tael was "somewhat comfortable."

"I just felt compelled to want to step into Kevin's shoes," Tael said. "You want to show people that you're still a solid team."

results, schedule

WEDNESDAY

WRESTLING

CLASSIFICATION: 120 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 120 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 150 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 180 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 215 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 285 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 360 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 440 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 520 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 600 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 680 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 760 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 840 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 920 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1000 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1080 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1160 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1240 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1320 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1400 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1480 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1560 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1640 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1720 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1800 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1880 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 1960 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2040 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2120 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2200 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2280 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2360 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2440 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2520 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2600 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2680 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2760 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2840 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 2920 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3000 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3080 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3160 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3240 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3320 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3400 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3480 POUNDS

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Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3640 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3720 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3800 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3880 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 3960 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 4040 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 4120 POUNDS

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Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 4440 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 4520 POUNDS

Staples-Motley/Verdale 3, 4600 POUNDS

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